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Junayd al-Baghdādī and Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī: An Analysis of a Sufi Continuity in the Context of the Understanding of Tawḥīd

Cüneyd-i Bağdâdî ve Mevlâna Celâleddîn Rûmî: Tasavvufî Bir Sürekliliğin Tevhid Anlayışı Ekseninde İncelenmesi

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Junayd al-Baghdādī and Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī: An Analysis of a Sufi Continuity in the Context of the Understanding of Tawḥīd

Summary

Junayd al-Baghdādī (d. 297/909), one of the prominent figures of early sufism, stands out as among the first sufis to systematically and analytically articulate sufi concepts during the formative period of sufism. His explanation of the experience of tawḥīd (divine unity) within a framework of self-purification (tazkiyat al-nafs), contemplation (tafakkur), annihilation (fanā'), subsistence with God (baqā'), the primordial covenant (mīthāq), and freedom (ḥurriyya), along with his interpretation of death as "attaining union (wuṣūl)," profoundly influenced subsequent sufis. Although many sufis in the history of sufism bear traces of Junayd's thought, one of the figures most intensely and distinctly shaped by this intellectual legacy is Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī (d. 672/1273). The references to Junayd in Rūmī's works and the parallels in their systematic approaches to tawḥīd demonstrate that Rūmī is among the sufis most intensely shaped by this intellectual legacy.

While Rūmī is often associated in sufi history with ecstatic (sukr-oriented) sufis such as Bāyazīd al-Biṣṭāmī (d. 234/848[?]) and al-Ḥallāj al-Mansūr (d. 309/922) -known for their mystical utterances (shaṭaḥāt), the traces of Junayd's sobriety-centered (ṣahw-oriented) sufi philosophy are distinctly evident in Rūmī's works. A comparative analysis of the emphasis on tawḥīd and its systematic treatment in Rūmī's writings with Junayd's understanding of tawḥīd underscores this reality. Rūmī conceptualizes the soul as an entity confined within the prison of the body, asserting that the soul's liberation is contingent upon the realization of tawḥīd. His emphasis on the soul's potential to re-experience the state of the mīthāq and thereby construct a new consciousness aligns with Junayd's systematic articulation of this idea, marking a critical doctrinal continuity in sufi thought.

This study examines the approaches of these two distinguished figures in sufi history to tawḥīd -a central concept in sufism- through a comparative analytical method. The first section investigates the contexts in which Rūmī alludes to Junayd in his works, tracing the nature and significance of this intellectual admiration. The second section undertakes a thematic comparative analysis of core concepts shared by both sufis: fanā', baqā', mīthāq, ḥayrah (bewilderment), ḥurriyya (freedom), and the theme of death.

Another notable commonality between the two sufis is their integration of the theory of tawḥīd with the concept of death. Both interpret death as a means of union (wuṣūl) and regard it as the true realization of tawḥīd. Junayd's principle "the end is a return to the beginning" and Rūmī's opening reed flute (ney) metaphor in the Mathnawī both point to the same foundational insight: the soul's journey is a return to the primordial covenant (mīthāq), and death constitutes its ultimate completion. Furthermore, Junayd's dialectic of fanā' and baqā' finds a dynamic continuation in Rūmī's concepts of divine love (maḥabbatullāh) and spiritual absorption (istighrāq), whereby the annihilation of the ego does not lead to ontological non-existence but to a renewed, God-centered selfhood.

By undertaking this analysis, the study aims to elucidate the doctrinal continuity and profound intellectual influences within sufi thought, and, through an academic perspective, to address a specific gap in the literature; namely, that the convergence between Junayd and Rūmī has not previously been examined directly and comparatively through the lens of tawḥīd. Rather than positing a simple relationship of influence and reception, the study situates both sufis within a shared tawḥīd-centered framework, demonstrating how Junayd's profound theoretical legacy was reinterpreted and given new expression in Rūmī's poetic and mystical discourse.

Keywords: *Sufism, Junayd al-Baghdādī, Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī, Tawḥīd, Mīthāq, Fanā'.*

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Özet

Erken dönem tasavvufunun önemli simalarından olan Cüneyd-i Bağdâdî (ö. 297/909), tasavvufun teşekkül döneminde tasavvufi kavramları sistematik ve analitik bir biçimde açıklayan ilk sûfîlerdendir. Onun nefis tezkiyesi, tefekkür, fenâ, mîsâk, bakâ ve hürriyet sistematiği içinde tevhid tecrübesini izah etmesi ve ölümü vuslata ermek biçiminde yorumlaması, kendisinden sonra gelen sûfîler üzerinde derin izler bırakmıştır. Cüneyd-i Bağdâdî, tasavvuf tarihinde yalnızca bir sûfî şahsiyet olarak kalmamış; aynı zamanda sonraki kuşaklar için belirleyici bir referans noktası ve entelektüel bir eksen işlevi görmüştür. Tasavvuf tarihinde Cüneyd-i Bağdâdî'nin düşünce geleneğinden beslenen pek çok sûfî

bulunmakla birlikte, bu entelektüel mirasın en yoğun ve belirgin biçimde yansıdığı isimlerden biri Mevlâna Celâleddîn Rûmî'dir (ö. 672/1273). Mevlâna'nın eserlerinde Cüneyd-i Bağdâdî'ye yaptığı doğrudan atıflar, ona yüklediği manevi değer ve tevhid anlayışındaki paralellikler, onun bu etkiyi belirgin şekilde taşıyan sûfîlerden biri olduğunu açıkça ortaya koymaktadır.

Tasavvuf tarihinde genellikle vecd ve şatahatlarıyla bilinen Bâyezîd-i Bistâmî (ö. 234/848[?]) ve Hallâc-ı Mansûr (ö. 309/922) gibi sekr merkezli sûfîlerle ilişkilendirilen Mevlâna Celâleddîn Rûmî'nin eserlerinde, Cüneyd-i Bağdâdî'nin sahv odaklı tasavvuf anlayışının izleri son derece belirgin olması dikkate şayandır. Mevlâna'nın eserlerindeki tevhid vurgusunun ve sistematiğinin Cüneyd-i Bağdâdî'nin tevhid anlayışıyla karşılaştırmalı bir analize tabi tutulması bu durumu açıkça ortaya koymaktadır. Nitekim Mevlâna, ruhu beden zindanına sıkışmış bir unsur şeklinde değerlendirmekte; ruhun hürriyetine kavuşmasını ise doğrudan tevhidin idrakine bağlamaktadır. Onun, tevhid tecrübesini ifade ederken ruhun mîsâk hâlini yeniden yaşayabileceğine ve böylelikle yeni bir bilinç inşa edilebileceğine yapmış olduğu vurgu, bu meseleyi tasavvuf tarihinde sistematik bir şekilde ilk defa ele alan Cüneyd-i Bağdâdî'nin görüşleriyle örtüşmektedir. Bu örtüşme tesadüfi bir benzerlik olmayıp, tasavvuf düşüncesinde bir doktriner sürekliliğe işaret etmektedir.

Bu çalışmada, tasavvuf tarihinin iki mümtaz şahsiyeti olarak Cüneyd-i Bağdâdî ve Mevlâna Celâleddîn Rûmî'nin tasavvufun merkezi kavramlarından biri olan tevhidi ele alış biçimleri incelenmiş; karşılaştırmalı analiz yöntemiyle bu iki şahsiyetin ortak kavramsal çerçevesi akademik bir perspektiften değerlendirilmiştir. Çalışmanın birinci bölümü, Mevlâna'nın eserlerinde Cüneyd'e yaptığı atıfları, ona biçtiği entelektüel ve manevi değerin mahiyetini ve bu hayranlığın kaynaklarını ortaya koymaktadır. İkinci bölümde ise iki sûfînin tevhid anlayışındaki fenâ, bakâ, mîsâk, hayret, hürriyet ve ölüm meselesi gibi temel kavramlar tematik ve karşılaştırmalı bir çerçevede ele alınmaktadır.

İki sûfî arasında dikkat çeken ortak noktaların başında tevhid nazariyesiyle ölüm düşüncesini bütünleştirmeleri gelmektedir. Her iki sûfî de ölümü vuslat şeklinde yorumlamış ve ölümü hakiki tevhidin fiilî gerçekleşmesi olarak nitelendirmiştir. Cüneyd'in "Son, başa dönüştür." ilkesi ile Mevlâna'nın Mesnevî'nin açılışında ney metaforu üzerinden kurduğu mîsâk bağlantısı, bu ortak zemine işaret eden en çarpıcı örnekler arasındadır. Her iki sûfîde de ruhun yolculuğu, ezelî ahde (mîsâka) dönüşün hikâyesidir ve ölüm bu dönüşün nihai tamamlanışını temsil etmektedir. Öte yandan Cüneyd'in fenâ-bakâ diyalektiği, Mevlâna'da ilahi aşk (muhabbetullâh) ve istiğrâk kavramları aracılığıyla dinamik bir sürekliliğe ve yeni bir söyleme kavuşmaktadır. Bu süreçte benliğin yok oluşu ontolojik bir yokluğa değil, ilahi merkezli yenilenmiş ve olgunlaşmış bir benliğin inşasına işaret etmektedir.

Böylece tasavvuf düşüncesindeki doktriner sürekliliğin ve derin entelektüel etkilerin ortaya konulması, iki sûfînin tevhid anlayışının bugüne kadar doğrudan ve karşılaştırmalı biçimde ele alınmamış olmasından kaynaklanan literatür boşluğunun giderilmesi hedeflenmektedir. Çalışma, salt bir etki-tepki ilişkisi kurmaktan ziyade, her iki sûfîyi ortak bir tevhid merkezli çerçeve içinde konumlandırmakta ve Cüneyd-i Bağdâdî'nin teorik ve derin mirasının Mevlâna'nın şiirsel ve tasavvufi söyleminde nasıl yeniden yorumlanarak yeni bir ifadeye kavuştuğunu göstermeyi amaçlamaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Tasavvuf, Cüneyd-i Bağdâdî, Mevlâna Celâleddin Rûmî, Tevhîd, Mîsâk, Fenâ.*

Introduction

People are influenced by the intellectual and social structures of their period, but they also have the ability to shape and direct these structures. This dynamic allows for the study of any discipline that has persisted from the past to the present by examining it through the perspective of the individuals who contributed to its development. Throughout history, trailblazing individuals combined existing intellectual traditions with their own ideas, which frequently resulted in the formation of schools of thought that began small but gradually grew and spread. Junayd al-Baghdādī (d. 297/909) was one of the most important contributors to the development of sufi vocabulary, methodology, and ideas during the ninth century, the period when the language of sufism first began to take shape. He became

a model for the majority of sufis who came after him, and his views were generally accepted in sufi communities.

Junayd learned about the exoteric sciences (ʻulūm al-ẓāhir) while young and participated in the sufi gatherings of his uncle Sarī al-Saqaṭī (d. 251/865), who has also his spiritual guide. As time passed, Junayd became increasingly knowledgeable about sufism, developing its theology and defining its language and method.[1] His interpretation of sufism was based on the principles of tawḥīd and ṣahw (sobriety). One of the eleven recognized sufi schools is Junayd's ṣahw-oriented school, as noted in al-Hujwīrī's (d. 465/1072[?]) *Kashf al-mahjūb*.[2] Junayd created a sufi viewpoint on tawḥīd and carefully examined related ideas such as fanā' and baqā'.[3] He criticized several sufis of his period for their ecstatic moods (jadhba) or for prematurely revealing esoteric matters.[4] In articulating his spiritual experiences, he adopted a figurative but rational mode of expression, so as to forestall misunderstanding and keep sufi teachings safeguarded within the circle of initiates.[5] His balanced approach, combining the Sharīʻa with spiritual truth, went beyond that of his contemporaries and became a lasting influence.

Rūmī (d. 672/1273) lived in thirteenth-century Konya and influenced religious and spiritual thought for centuries. From Balkh, Khorasan, he studied rational and traditional sciences under his father Bahā'uddīn Walad (d. 628/1231), a Kubrawiyya shaykh, and later under Sayyid Burhān al-Dīn Muḥaqqiq Tirmidhī (d. 639/1241). Endowed with a powerful intellect and a deep emotional sensibility, Rūmī composed highly symbolic poetry. Asceticism rooted in knowledge and wisdom, themes of divine unity later systematized within the Akbarian (Ibn al-ʻArabī) tradition, and divine love underpin Rūmī's sufi worldview. His views were influenced by his father, his spiritual mentor, and contemporary figures such as Shams al-Dīn Tabrīzī (d. 645/1247[?]), Awḥad al-Dīn Kirmānī (d. 635/1238), Ṣadr al-Dīn Qūnawī (d. 673/1274), and Fakhr al-Dīn ʻIrāqī (d. 688/1289), as well as by Aḥmad Ghazālī (d. 520/1126), Ḥakīm Sanā'ī (d. 525/1131[?]), and Farīd al-Dīn ʻAṭṭār (d. 618/1221).[6]

[1] Abū al-Qāsim Zayn al-Islām ʻAbd al-Karīm b. Hawāzin al-Qushayrī, *al-Risāla*, critical ed. ʻAbd al-Ḥalīm Maḥmūd (Damascus: Dār al-Khayr, 2003), 71-72.

[2] ʻAlī b. ʻUthmān al-Hujwīrī, *The Kashf al-mahjūb*, translated by Reynold A. Nicholson (London: Luzac & Co., 1911), 189.

[3] Abū Saʻīd al-Kharrāz (d. 277/890) was the first sufi to speak about fanā' and baqā'. He defined fanā' as 'a servant fulfilling their duties without perceiving themselves as the agent,' while he explained baqā' as 'a servant drawing closer to God and forgetting themselves'. On the other hand, Junayd grounded the concepts of fanā' and baqā' in a tawḥīd-centered interpretation of the mīthāq. Gökhan Özbek, *Cüneyd-i Bağdâdî'nin Tevhid Anlayışı [Junayd al-Baghdādī's Comprehension of Tawḥīd]* (Sivas: Sivas Cumhuriyet Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Yüksek Lisans Tezi/Master's thesis, 2019), 16-17.

[4] Abū Naṣr al-Sarrāj, *al-Lumaʻ fī al-taṣawwuf*, critical ed. ʻAbd al-Ḥalīm Maḥmūd and Ṭāhā ʻAbd al-Bāqī Surūr (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Ḥadītha, 1960), 382, 488; Hujwīrī, *The Kashf al-mahjūb*, 189.

[5] Knysh states that the language used by Junayd is "profoundly subtle, meditated language" and asserts that it served as a source for the works of later sufis. Alexander D. Knysh, *Islamic Mysticism: A Short History* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 53-54.

[6] Mehmet Necmettin Bardakçı, "Mevlânâ'nın Tasavvufî Düşüncesinin Kaynakları" [The Sources of Mevlānā's Sufi Thought], *Tasavvuf İlim ve Akademik Araştırma Dergisi* 8/19 (2007), 76.

Although these luminaries are often cited, many other intellectuals profoundly shaped Rūmī's intellectual milieu. Junayd is a notable figure among them. Despite the almost four-century gap and partly methodological differences between the two sufis, a notable relationship can be established, one that demonstrates the presence of a Junaydian tradition[7] in sufi philosophy and exemplifies Rūmī's extensive scholarly base. The influence under consideration is understood as an intellectual and textually mediated one, rooted in Rūmī's engagement with the earlier sufi literary tradition rather than in institutional affiliation or a direct silsila.

The preliminary section of the study, titled "Junayd in Rūmī's Works," investigates the contexts in which Rūmī alludes to Junayd. The second section, "Common Concepts in Junayd and Rūmī: The Theory of Tawḥīd," analyzes the concepts of fanā', baqā', mīthāq, ḥayrah, and ḥurriyya, as well as the theme of death. Primary materials, including the writings of Rūmī and the treatises of Junayd, have been analyzed, supplemented by classical sufi literature and contemporary research. Methodologically, the study proceeds through thematic and comparative analysis: it first reconstructs how each figure conceptualizes tawḥīd on the basis of these primary materials and then juxtaposes the two accounts in order to identify their points of convergence and divergence.

1. Junayd in Rūmī's Works

Rūmī occupies a central position in the intellectual and spiritual history of sufism. In his distinctive and creative style, he often cited the sufi tradition and figures that preceded him. In *Fīhi mā fīh*, a compilation of his discourses, Rūmī underscores Junayd's acquisition of divine knowledge (ma'rifatullāh) and the congruence between his external and internal conditions through the following account.

As a young man, Bāyazīd al-Bisṭāmī (d. 234/848[?]) was enrolled by his father in a madrasa to study fiqh. When introduced to the lecturer, he questioned whether the teachings represented divine jurisprudence and was told they followed Abū Ḥanīfa's school. Expressing his desire for divine knowledge, he made a similar inquiry to a grammarian and, upon learning that the teachings followed Sībawayh, rejected them as well. This pattern continued, leading his father to relinquish control over his education. Ultimately, he reached Baghdād in quest of this wisdom. Upon observing Junayd's condition, he declared: "This is the jurisprudence of Allah."[8]

Historical sources lack evidence of a meeting between Bāyazīd and Junayd – a meeting that seems chronologically improbable. Rūmī's emphasis in recounting this occurrence is not on its historical veracity but on the correspondence of

[7] For traces of the Junaydian tradition in the history of sufism, see Süleyman Gökbulut, "Tasavvuf Tarihinde Cüneydî Çizgi" [The Junaydian Tradition in the History of Sufism], *Dokuz Eylül Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 36 (2012), 169-200.

[8] Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī, *Discourses of Rūmī (Fīhi mā fīhi)*, translated by A. J. Arberry (Ames, IA: Omphaloskepsis, 2000), 266.

Junayd's spiritual condition with its intrinsic significance rather than superficial formalism. This harmony is encapsulated in *The Mathnawī*: "Junayd received that support (which he received) from its army, his maqāmāt (stages of progress in the mystical life) became innumerable."[9]

Rūmī often references Junayd and Bāyazīd collectively throughout his writings. In sufi history, Junayd's route is associated with ṣahw, whereas Bāyazīd's path is connected to sukr (intoxication).[10] Despite appearing contradictory at first, these two modes signify interconnected stages in the mystical journey. Without sukr, love cannot be cultivated; without ṣahw, comprehension of divine truths (ma'rifa) cannot be achieved.[11] The differentiation between the two ways pertains ultimately to emphasis rather than methodology. In *The Mathnawī*, under the segment "The Gardener Separating a Faqīh, a Sharīf, and a Sufi," the gardener inquires of the sufi: "Did Junayd or Bāyazīd direct you to behave in this way?"[12] Through the gardener's persona, Rūmī illustrates the perception of sufis among those unacquainted with the mystical journey.[13]

Rūmī lauds Ḥusām al-Dīn Chelebī (d. 683/1284) as "the Junayd of the moment, the Bāyazīd of the age."[14] In sufi philosophy, the notions of waqt (moment) and zamān (time) are profoundly significant. A sufi who meets the demands of the current moment is termed ibn al-waqt (son of the moment).[15] Rūmī classifies time into three categories: transcendent time, which resists temporal partitioning; horizontal or linear time; and a timeless dimension accessed through the state of ibn al-waqt.[16] A sufi cannot completely perceive this eternal realm within the sphere of possibility; to genuinely encounter it, one must achieve the unitive secret (tawḥīdī sirr).[17] Rūmī's commendation of Ḥusām al-Dīn implies that Junayd adeptly navigated the moment he occupied and lived fully in accordance with it. Alongside this commendation, Rūmī ascribes further virtues to Ḥusām al-Dīn -including his status as a friend of God, abundant generosity, devotion to worship, life of seclusion

[9] Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī, *The Mathnawī*, translated by Reynold A. Nicholson (London: Cambridge University Press, 1926), book 1, verse 926.
[10] Hujwīrī, *The Kashf al-mahjūb*, 184-189.
[11] Seyyid Hüseyin Nasr, *Gülşen-i Hakikat: Tasavvuf Geleneğinin Vizyonu ve Vadettikleri [Gulshan-i Ḥaqīqat: The Vision and Promises of the Sufi Tradition]*, translated by Nurullah Koltaş (İstanbul: İnsan Yayınları, 2015), 213.
[12] Rūmī, *The Mathnawī*, book 2, verses 2167-2211.
[13] Rūmī, *The Mathnawī*, book 2, verse 2183; see also Annemarie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 47, 58-59, 129.
[14] As a complete and critically reliable translation of Rūmī's *Maktūbāt* is not available, this study relies on the Turkish translation. Rūmī, *Mektûbât [Maktubât: The Letters of Rūmī]*, translated by Abdülbâki Gölpınarlı (İstanbul: Inkılâp ve Aka Kitabevleri, 1963), 51, 120.
[15] Ethem Cebecioğlu, *Tasavvuf Terimleri ve Deyimleri Sözlüğü [A Glossary of Sufi Terms and Expressions]* (İstanbul: Ağaç Kitapevi Yayınları, 2009), 687-688.
[16] Rūmī, *The Mathnawī*, book 1, verse 133; book 3, verses 1425, 1432.
[17] Betül Gürer, "Sırrı Zamana Sığdırmak Mümkün mü?: *Mesnevî*'ye Yansıyan Yönüyle Mevlâna'nın Zaman Anlayışı" [Is It Possible to Contain the Secret within Time?: Rūmī's Conception of Time as Reflected in the *Mathnawī*], *Türk Kültürü ve Hacı Bektaş Velî Araştırma Dergisi* 106 (2023), 65, 78.

(khalwa) and contemplation (murāqaba)[18] - qualities that Rūmī evidently also attributed to Junayd.

A core tenet of Rūmī's sufi philosophy is divine love (maḥabbatullāh). Rūmī's understanding of this divine love and the subsequent annihilation of the self is deeply rooted in the tradition of Junayd al-Baghdādī.[19] In Junayd's thought, ultimate spiritual subsistence (baqā') following the annihilation of the ego (fanā') is fundamentally built upon maḥabba and divine contentment.[20] Building on this Junaydian foundation, Rūmī illustrates that in the condition of maḥabba, the soul expands and overflows like droplets, encircling the sufi's spirit akin to a vine, leaving no trace of the ego.[21] While Rūmī frequently explores the ecstatic intoxication (sukr) of this love in his poetry, he ultimately channels it through Junayd's principle of spiritual sobriety (ṣahw), transforming divine love into a source of wisdom and societal guidance.[22] Thus, through the complete erasure of the ego -a state Junayd defined as the core of fanā'- the sufi advances toward the Absolute Being.[23]

Rūmī highlights that love converts suffering[24] into sweetness and transforms a prison into a rose garden. He articulates his devotion to God with the statement "My beloved, I have utterly lost myself in you," exemplifying this commitment through the narrative of the Egyptian women who, captivated by the beauty of Prophet Yūsuf,[25] inadvertently severed their hands, oblivious to pain.[26] He employs the metaphor of a tree and a woodworm to illustrate the emotional condition of Junayd: the love that consumed Junayd eroded him like a woodworm gnawing at

[18] Rūmī, *Mektûbât*, 117.

[19] Büşra Canbaz - Abdürrezzak Tek, "Cüneyd-i Bağdâdî ve İbnü'l-Arabî'nin Görüşleri Bağlamında Fenâ Kavramının Tasavvufî Terbiye Yönteminden Metafizik Bir Konuya Dönüşmesi" [The Transformation of the Concept of Fanā' from a Sufi Training Method to a Metaphysical Issue in the Thought of Junayd al-Baghdādī and Ibn al-'Arabī], *Eskişehir Osmangazi Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 13/1 (Mart 2026), 25.

[20] Zehra Betül Aksoy, *Cüneyd-i Bağdâdî'de İnsanın Kemali [Junayd al-Baghdādī's Views on the Perfection of the Human Being]* (İstanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Yüksek Lisans Tezi/Master's Thesis, 2021), 55-58.

[21] Rūmī expresses the overwhelming expansion of the state of love through the following analogy: "The drops of the sea cannot be numbered: the Seven Seas are petty in comparison with that Ocean". Rūmī, *The Mathnawī*, book 5, verse 2732.

[22] Süleyman Uludağ, "Cüneydiyye" [Junaydiyya], *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi* (İstanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 1993), 8/125; Süleyman Ateş, "Cüneyd-i Bağdâdî" [Junayd al-Baghdādī], *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi* (İstanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 1993), 8/119; Aksoy, *Cüneyd-i Bağdâdî'de İnsanın Kemali*, 43-44.

[23] Ateş, "Cüneyd-i Bağdâdî," 8/119; Aksoy, *Cüneyd-i Bağdâdî'de İnsanın Kemali*, 43-44.

[24] It is well known that in Rūmī's works love leaves nothing behind and draws a person closer to the ultimate goal. To provide an example: "Love is that flame which, when it blazes up, consumes everything else but the Beloved. He (the lover) drives home the sword of Not in order to kill all other than God: thereupon consider what remains after Not. There remains except God: all the rest is gone. Hail, O mighty Love, destroyer of polytheism! Verily, He is the First and the Last: do not regard polytheism as arising from aught except the eye that sees double". Rūmī, *The Mathnawī*, book 5, verses 588-591.

[25] Sūrat Yūsuf 12/31.

[26] Rūmī, *Dîvân-ı Kebîr [The Great Divan]*, trans. Abdülbâki Gölpınarlı (Eskişehir: Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1992), 6/314.

a tree, leaving neither Junayd nor Baghdād intact.[27] Rūmī asserts that this condition does not engender a vacuum but instead cultivates a renewed self.

In *Dîvân-ı Kebîr*, Rūmī asserts that the sun of love illuminates every particle of the universe, and every drop that immerses itself in the infinite ocean of love manifests as Junayd.[28] He also characterizes Junayd as an individual who has partaken of the "wine of love" and contends that this divine libation ought to be savored in the presence of luminaries like Junayd, Bāyazīd, Shiblī, and Edhem.[29] Rūmī regards these figures as beacons whose footprints should be emulated on the spiritual journey.

In sum, Rūmī depicts Junayd as a sufi who has attained elevated spiritual objectives -whose external and internal conditions are in full alignment, who has been engulfed by the fervor of love, and who has received divine favor. The influence of Junayd's concepts and spiritual status on Rūmī is evident; this influence is analyzed in the following section from a tawḥīd-centric perspective.

2. Common Concepts in Junayd and Rūmī: The Theory of Tawḥīd

The interdisciplinary intellectual tradition demonstrates that humanity's fundamental inquiries into existence, knowledge, and truth tend to converge around shared conceptual concerns. Within the Islamic intellectual milieu, the principle of tawḥīd constitutes the core of this convergence. Beginning to institutionalize in the third Islamic century, sufi thought approached tawḥīd not merely as a theological doctrine but as a comprehensive ontological and epistemological framework. The contributions of Junayd al-Baghdādī to this emerging theoretical structure were pivotal in shaping a distinctly tawḥīd-centered sufi epistemology and ontology.

Notwithstanding this epistemological and ontological duality, Junayd's concept of "death before death"[30] and his reluctance to articulate transcendental experiences significantly impacted subsequent sufis, especially Rūmī. Rūmī's focus on divine love ('ishq-i ilāhī/maḥabbatullāh) illustrates a dynamic continuity that serves as the practical embodiment of Junayd's theoretical framework.

2.1. Tawḥīd and Its Classification

The unity of Allah, the understanding of tawḥīd, and the pursuit of conceptualizing the Absolute One have historically been analyzed through epistemological and methodological frameworks by philosophy, kalām, and diverse theological fields. Sufism distinguishes itself from these disciplines by transcending a purely

[27] Rūmī, *Dîvân-ı Kebîr [The Great Divan]*, 5/188.
[28] Rūmī, *Dîvân-ı Kebîr [The Great Divan]*, 5/417.
[29] Rūmī, *Dîvân-ı Kebîr [The Great Divan]*, 4/22.
[30] Ismā'īl b. Muḥammad al-'Ajlūnī, *Kashf al-khafā' wa-muzīl al-ilbās 'ammā ishtahara min al-aḥādīth 'alā alsinat al-nās* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Qudsī, 1351 AH), 2/29. The attribution of this statement as a ḥadīth is disputed. Nevertheless, the Sufis accepted its meaning as sound: "Die before death comes upon you," that is, by abandoning carnal and ego-centered desires.

theoretical quest for truth; it embraces a distinctive metaphysical framework that asserts the ontological accessibility of the Absolute Being and systematizes this access through the concept of the "experience of tawḥīd."[31] In sufi philosophy, tawḥīd is attained not solely by self-purification (tazkiyat al-nafs) and heart purification (taṣfiyat al-qalb), but through a transcendent experiential journey of spiritual witnessing (mushāhada).[32]

Sufis have employed a tripartite classification of 'awām, khawāṣ, and khawāṣṣ al-khawāṣ in their discourse on tawḥīd.[33] Junayd examines tawḥīd via a fourfold categorization. The tawḥīd of the 'awām (ordinary people) is solely a verbal acknowledgment of divine oneness. The tawḥīd of the ahl al-ẓāhir (exoteric scholars) encompasses both recognition of divine oneness and compliance with divine precepts, actualized through the emotions of khawf (fear) and rajā' (hope). His description, "Tawḥīd is to differentiate the eternal from the contingent,"[34] is regarded as a sign of the tawḥīd of the khawāṣ, encompassing mostly esoteric knowledge. Rūmī asserts that all created entities possess an antithesis, whereas Allah exists independently of any opposition; everything acquires significance through its counterpart, yet the Divine receives significance exclusively from Himself.[35] This methodology, grounded in the differentiation between Creator and created, aligns with Junayd's assertion.

The acknowledgment of divine unity at the khawāṣ level positions the sufi at the brink of fanā'. Junayd elucidates the tawḥīd of the khawāṣṣ al-khawāṣ (the select among the select) through a process that commences with fanā' and culminates in mīthāq, fundamentally rooted in authentic freedom. In sufi philosophy, the experience of tawḥīd denotes incremental advancement through fanā', baqā', and ḥayrah, ultimately attaining the culminating stage of mīthāq.[36]

2.2. Fanā', Baqā', and the Formation of a New Self

The term fanā', often translated as "annihilation," does not denote absolute ontological non-existence, but rather the effacement of selfhood and the dissolution of ego-consciousness in the presence of the Divine. In classical sufi thought, this concept is typically paired with baqā', which signifies a transformed mode of subsistence grounded in divine awareness. Junayd al-Baghdādī conceptualized

[31] Ebu'l-Alâ Afîfî, *Tasavvuf: İslâm'da Manevî Hayat [Sufism: The Spiritual Life in Islam]*, translated by Ekrem Demirli and Abdullah Kartal (İstanbul: İz Yayıncılık, 2021), 20.

[32] Hamide Ulupınar, "İlk Dönem Sûfîlerinde Tevhid Anlayışı" [The Concept of Tawḥīd among Early Sufis], *Tasavvuf İlmi ve Akademik Araştırma Dergisi* 22 (2008), 238.

[33] Sufis have commonly employed a threefold classification in most sufi concepts, including tawḥīd. For instance, Qushayrī and Hujwīrī categorized it as: the tawḥīd of the Truth (Ḥaqq) for Himself, the tawḥīd of the Truth for creation, and the tawḥīd of creation for the Truth. Qushayrī, *al-Risāla*, 451; Hujwīrī, *The Kashf al-mahjūb*, 278. In another classification, tawḥīd is divided into humanitarian tawḥīd and divine tawḥīd: Sarrāj, *al-Lumā' fī al-taṣawwuf*, 54.

[34] Qushayrī, *al-Risāla*, 451.

[35] Rūmī, *The Mathnawī*, book 1, verses 1131-1134.

[36] Knysh, *Islamic Mysticism: A Short History*, 309-314; Abdel-Kader, *The Life, Personality and Writings of al-Junayd*, 81-88.

fanā' not as a final state but as a transitional condition leading to baqā', wherein the servant persists through God after the annihilation of egocentric attributes.[37] Al-Qushayrī frames fanā' as the passing away of blameworthy qualities (ṣifāt al-madhmūma) and baqā' as the abiding of praiseworthy dispositions (ṣifāt al-maḥmūda).[38] Al-Hujwīrī emphasizes that true realization lies not in annihilation itself but in abiding with God.[39]

Junayd underscores that mīthāq is a reversion to the original state of existence prior to the individual's entry into the world, reestablishing a connection with the primordial alast covenant.[40] Fanā' involves the understanding of tawḥīd in its physical and metaphysical aspects. Reaching this stage requires stringent self-discipline (riyāḍa), systematic mental purification (tadhakkur), and deep contemplation (tafakkur). Fanā' should be perceived not as passive annihilation but as active transformation.[41] This active sense is precisely what binds fanā' to the mīthāq in Junayd's framework: by stripping away the acquired, ego-bound attributes that accrued after the soul entered the world, the sufi is returned to the mode of pure servanthood that characterized the soul at the moment of the primordial covenant. Fanā' is therefore not the terminus of the path but its pivot—the point at which the dissolution of the contingent self opens onto baqā', the renewed subsistence through divine attributes. Within this lo-gic, riyāḍa, tadhakkur, and tafakkur are not ascetic ends in themselves but the discip-lined means by which the remembrance of the mīthāq is reactivated in the sufi's consciousness, so that annihilation and subsistence describe two phases of a single, continuous transformation rather than two separate states. The greatest obstacle to this transformation is the nafs, which binds the human being to worldly desires. Therefore, its purification becomes an indispensable component of the process of fanā'. Junayd characterizes sufism as "a conflict without respite."[42] Riyāḍa and dhikr act as preparation tools for the re-experiencing of the mīthāq.[43]

Junayd asserts: "When the sufi relinquishes selfhood, he achieves authentic existence. His corporeal existence persists, while his personal identity vanishes. He thereafter exists in an alternate form by divine grace and experiences the joy of existence with the Truth."[44] This explanation suggests that the sufi's conscious will is diminished in the state of fanā'. This event does not denote ḥulūl but rather aligns with ittisāl in sufi language.[45] Junayd's perspective fundamentally signifies

[37] Abdel-Kader, *The Life, Personality and Writings of al-Junayd*, 81-87.
[38] Qushayrī, *al-Risāla*, 146.
[39] Hujwīrī, *The Kashf al-mahjūb*, 242-246.
[40] Abū Ḥafṣ Shihāb al-Dīn 'Umar al-Suhrawardī, '*Awārif al-ma'ārif*, critical ed. 'Abd al-Ḥalīm Maḥmūd and Maḥmūd b. al-Sharīf (Cairo: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 2021), 2/312-314.
[41] Andrew Wilcox, "The Dual Mystical Concepts of Fanā' and Baqā' in Early Sufism," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 38/1 (2011), 104.
[42] Qushayrī, *al-Risāla*, 428.
[43] Mehmet Uyar, *Sûfî Benliğin İnşasında Nefs [The Nafs in the Construction of the Sufi Self]* (İstanbul: Litera Yayıncılık, 2017), 251.
[44] Abū al-Qāsim Junayd b. Muḥammad al-Khazzāz al-Qawārīrī al-Baghdādī, *Rasā'il al-Junayd*, critical ed. Ali Hassan Abdel-Kader (London: Luzac & Co. Ltd., 1962), 55.
[45] Bardakçı, "İlk Dönem Sûfîlerin Tevhid Tecrübesi Üzerine Bir Değerlendirme," 265.

an endeavor to establish a new identity via the enhancement of human qualities -a process he designates as baqā'.[46]

While Rūmī is celebrated for his allusions to love-intoxication and sukr, his employment of fanā' also denotes an effort to forge a new identity. Rūmī posits that human nature consists of two identities: the worldly self, constrained by time and place, composed of false illusion; and the everlasting self, capable of achieving divine truth. His methodology is predicated on surpassing temporal existence to achieve one's eternal essence.[47] Rūmī underscores the importance of orienting human will toward God rather than advocating for the obliteration of the human self, contending that human nature must not be destroyed, as it is a crucial conduit for achieving divine presence.[48]

Rūmī's notion of istighrāq (spiritual absorption) aligns with Junayd's conception of fanā'. Moreover, Rūmī's concept of fanā' corresponds with Junayd's baqā', the formation of a new identity infused with divine qualities rather than a reversion to former human traits.[49] About four centuries subsequent to Junayd, Rūmī articulated a comparable perspective by designating his *Mathnawī* as a "shop of unity" (waḥdat dukkān),[50] asserting that neither the cosmos nor humanity has an autonomous reality; both arise from unity.

2.3. Mīthāq, Ḥayrah, and Ma'rifa

Junayd's assertion, "The end is a return to the beginning,"[51] exemplifies a distinctive perspective regarding the relationship between tawḥīd and the mīthāq.[52] In contrast to his predecessors and contemporaries, Junayd connects these two concepts, asserting that when a sufi attains the ḥayrah, he transcends his self and reverts to his original state at the time of the mīthāq. The focus on mīthāq in Junayd's philosophy is a unique aspect absent in earlier sufi traditions.

A crucial component guiding the sufi toward the experience of tawḥīd is tafakkur (contemplation). As Junayd articulated, the most exemplary gatherings of

[46] Sami Bayrakcı, *Cüneyd-i Bağdâdî, Hayatı, Eserleri ve Tasavvufî Görüşleri [Junayd al-Baghdādī, His Life, Works and Sufi Thought]* (Konya: Necmettin Erbakan Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Doktora Tezi/PhD diss., 2021), 276.

[47] Kamuran Gökdağ - Yunus Cengiz, "Oluşun Akıl ve Ahlak Ötesi Hali: Mevlâna'da Özgürleşme Ya Da Kendini Aşma Pratiği Olarak Fena" [The State of Becoming Beyond Reason and Morality: Fanā' as a Practice of Liberation or Self-Transcendence in Rūmī], *Şarkiyat İlmî Araştırma Dergisi* 13/1 (2021), 220-241.

[48] Küçük, *Fihi Mâ Fih Ekseninde Mevlâna'nın Tasavvufî Görüşleri*, 43.

[49] "When the soul is transformed, this sword, namely, the body, remains in the hand of (is wielded by) the action of the Beneficent (God)". Rūmī, *The Mathnawī*, book 6, verse 3829.

[50] Rūmī, *The Mathnawī*, book 6, verses 1528-1529. See also Janis Eshots, "Why Is the *Mathnawī* Called 'The Shop of Oneness'?: Reflections on Rūmī's Methodology," in *Rūmī Teachings*, ed. S. G. Safavi (London: London Academy of Iranian Studies Press, 2008), 150-158.

[51] Suhrawardī, '*Awārif al-ma'ārif*, 2/312-314.

[52] "Your Lord took from the children of Adam -from their loins- their descendants and made them testify concerning themselves, saying, 'Am I not your Lord?' They replied, 'Yes, indeed! We bear witness.' This was done so that on the Day of Judgment, you would not say, 'We were unaware of this.'" Sūrat al-A'rāf 7/172; Afifî, *Tasavvuf: İslâm'da Manevî Hayat*, 149-150.

tawḥīd are those established on tafakkur.[53] The tawḥīd achieved through tafakkur is intrinsically linked to submission and qurb (closeness to Allah).[54]

A sufi undergoing self-reconstruction through fanā' encounters the spiritual state of ḥayrah (bewilderment). Junayd asserts, "The pinnacle of thought is bewilderment,"[55] alluding to ma'rifa, the outcome of tawḥīd.[56] He concurs with Abū Bakr's assertion: "Glory be to Him who has revealed no alternative means to comprehend Him other than through the acknowledgment of one's limitations."[57] Similarly, in *Fīhi mā fīh*, Rūmī elucidates the sufi's condition in the maqām of confusion by employing an example related to the angels. The container designated for dhikr attains spiritual fullness, ultimately resulting in the sufi being overwhelmed by Divine Majesty, thereby attaining the state of astonishment.[58]

Ma'rifa can be characterized as the "outcome of tawḥīd." Sufis acknowledge the limitations of words in expressing their experience of tawḥīd. Discussing tawḥīd reflects the estrangement articulated in Junayd's statement: "For twenty years, the banner of tawḥīd knowledge has been folded, and now individuals only speak from its periphery."[59] Junayd offers a comparable viewpoint on ma'rifa, differentiating between the eternal (qadīm) and the temporal (ḥādith), and contending that reason becomes inadequate beyond a certain threshold.[60] Rūmī likewise underscores the inadequacy of reason in the experience of tawḥīd: he asserts that endeavoring to understand the unseen through reason is a fruitless pursuit, and that the attainment of tawḥīd and ma'rifa is ultimately a condition bestowed by divine favor.[61]

Rūmī begins his *Mathnawī* with a metaphor referencing the mīthāq, asserting that individuals who witnessed the fundamental covenant will inevitably recall their commitment.[62] The human, having taken on a physical form, has been distanced from the Divine presence and endures the suffering of longing in worldly exile.[63] Rūmī posits that this longing terminates only upon the reacquisition of the mīthāq. Like Junayd, he contends that the inception and conclusion of tawḥīd are defined by the experience of the mīthāq.

[53] Qushayrī, *al-Risāla*, 26.
[54] Mehmet Necmettin Bardakçı, "İlk Dönem Sûfîlerin Tevhid Tecrübesi Üzerine Bir Değerlendirme" [An Evaluation of the Tawḥīd Experience of Early Sufis], *Sufiyye* 11 (2021), 259-261.
[55] Qushayrī, *al-Risāla*, 453.
[56] Erhan Yetik, "Hayret" [Ḥayra], *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi* (İstanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 1998), 17/60-61.
[57] Sarrāj, *al-Lumā' fī al-taṣawwuf*, 172.
[58] Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī, *Discourses of Rūmī (Fīhi mā fīhi)*, 160.
[59] Qushayrī, *al-Risāla*, 455.
[60] Bayrakcı, *Cüneyd-i Bağdâdî, Hayatı, Eserleri ve Tasavvufî Görüşleri*, 291.
[61] Kadir Özköse, "Mevlânâ'nın *Mesnevî*'sinde Akıl Eleştirisi ve Aklın İşlevselliğine Yönelik Yaklaşımlar" [The Critique of Reason and Approaches to the Functionality of Intellect in Rūmī's *Mathnawī*], *Bozok Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 11 (2017), 32; Özbek, *Cüneyd-i Bağdâdî'nin Tevhid Anlayışı*, 35.
[62] "Whoever drank that milk on the Day of Alast distinguishes the milk (in this world), even as Moses (distinguished and knew his mother's milk)". Rūmī, *The Mathnawī*, book 2, verse 2970.
[63] Ahmed Avni Konuk, *Mesnevî-i Şerîf Şerhi [Sharḥ al-Mathnawī al-sharīf]*, critical ed. Mustafa Tahralı and Selçuk Eraydın (İstanbul: Kitabevi, 2005), 1/71-75.

2.4. Freedom (Ḥurriyya) and Death as the Culmination of Tawḥīd

In sufi philosophy, freedom signifies that the devotee refrains from yielding to personal whims and desires, resists the allure of materialism, and maintains separation from all that is not God (mā-siwā). Junayd asserted that the 'ārif achieves authentic freedom by cleansing themselves of all corporeal and human wants, focusing attention exclusively on God.[64] Rūmī, akin to Junayd, asserts that freedom is fundamentally a state of spiritual tasting (dhawq) and that genuine freedom is achieved by focusing one's will on the Divine and removing all other distractions.[65] Rūmī defines freedom as the result of the principle of tawḥīd, contending that entities must obliterate their own existence to acknowledge the One.[66] He underscores that prophets are defined by their autonomy due to their witness to the One.[67]

Upon reviewing the entire discourse, it is clear that tawḥīd constitutes the paramount objective of earthly existence for both sufis. The ultimate aspect of this theory is shaped by reflections on mortality. Sufis view death not as a continuation of the experience of tawḥīd but as the final state of union (wiṣāl). Junayd persistently engaged in dhikr, Qur'ānic recitation, and prayer until his last moments. When questioned over his persistence, he replied, "It is a blessing."[68]

The achievement of fanā' and the realization of tawḥīd through baqā' are significant spiritual gifts. Junayd offered prayers articulating his longing for death and the fulfillment of this connection.[69] The sufi who most accentuated death as a connection is unequivocally Rūmī. He termed death the "Wedding Night" (Shab-i 'Arūs). He recommended that upon his demise, individuals should refrain from mourning, as he believed death would signify the conclusion of earthly exile. Rūmī characterized death as attaining the supreme state of love and merging with the Absolute Reality (al-Ḥaqq al-Muṭlaq).[70] He asserted that genuine connection is achieved in death, since it represents the soul's return to its primordial birthplace and its liberation from bodily constraints.

Conclusion

Junayd and Rūmī are pivotal figures in the history and methodology of sufism. In their respective ages, both their methodologies and presented ideas inspired their contemporaries and established a foundation for future sufis. Rūmī was influenced by Junayd, who predated him by nearly four centuries, and interpreted his ideas through his own distinctive lens.

[64] Sarrāj, *al-Lumā' fī al-taṣawwuf*, 450; Bayrakcı, *Cüneyd-i Bağdâdî, Hayatı, Eserleri ve Tasavvufî Görüşleri*, 403.
[65] Ramazan Altıntaş, "Mevlâna'da İrade Hürriyeti" [Free Will in Rūmī], *Cumhuriyet Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 8/2 (2004), 14.
[66] Rūmī, *The Mathnawī*, book 1, verses 3003-3012.
[67] Rūmī, *The Mathnawī*, book 1, verse 3824.
[68] Qushayrī, *al-Risāla*, 459; Abū Nu'aym al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyā' wa-ṭabaqāt al-aṣfiyā'*, critical ed. Muṣṭafā 'Abd al-Qādir 'Aṭā (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 2018), 10/299.
[69] Bayrakcı, *Cüneyd-i Bağdâdî, Hayatı, Eserleri ve Tasavvufî Görüşleri*, 118-119.
[70] Rūmī, *Dîvân-ı Kebîr [The Great Divan]*, 1/309.

Rūmī referenced Junayd in his writings and extolled him with numerous commendations. He characterized his close associate Ḥusām al-Dīn by employing Junayd's attributes, suggesting that Junayd's exceptional qualities were evident in his own day. Furthermore, Rūmī emphasized that Junayd had achieved several spiritual stations and obtained divine love.

Notwithstanding a temporal disparity of approximately four centuries, the two sufis' approach to the interpretation of tawḥīd is exceptionally significant. Junayd elucidated the status of the sufi in fanā' while preserving the distinction between the Creator and the created. He posits that fanā' is a process that equips the sufi for baqā', guiding them toward the condition of mīthāq. In this process, the sufi maintains humility, reverts to a primordial state, and cultivates a new consciousness by assimilating this experience into daily life. Although Rūmī employed a more poetic language, he also articulated a tawḥīd experience grounded in the differentiation between Creator and created, asserting that the sufi achieves fanā' through self-discipline and profound contemplation. In both sufis, the oneness attained in fanā' does not indicate ontological amalgamation but rather a condition of spiritual sensation in which human identity is maintained.

Moreover, Rūmī's notion of fanā' includes the condition of baqā'. Upon experiencing fanā', the sufi, before establishing a new awareness, undergoes the state of mīthāq. Rūmī commences his *Mathnawī* with the metaphor of the reed flute to exemplify this condition. A new personality -new consciousness- is formed in accordance with this symbol. Both sufis linked the reconstruction of consciousness to the notion of freedom, arguing that genuine freedom is achieved by servitude to God, which is the ultimate consequence of tawḥīd.

Finally, Junayd and Rūmī saw death as the revelation of divine reality and a favor bestowed upon the servant. Death, fundamentally representing reunion, enables the achievement of authentic tawḥīd for both sufis. In this perspective, death represents a crucial element within the structured framework of their tawḥīd doctrines and acts as a manifestation of both completion and fulfillment.

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