

Ehud Krinis / Through the Sufi Curtain: Bahya ibn Paquda's *Duties of the Heart* and the Islamic *Zuhd* Tradition

Introduction

General Information About Ibn Paquda

We have in our disposal only a few direct and indirect pieces of evidence regarding the time of Baḥya ibn Paquda and the only treatise of his known to us, *al-Hidāya ilā farā'īḍ al-qulūb* (*The Direction/Guidance to the Duties of the Hearts*), commonly known in Hebrew under the shorten title *Hovot ha-Levavot* (*Duties of the Heart*). Taking together, these few external and internal evidence about Ibn Paquda and his work buttress the assumption that *Duties of the Heart* was written in Saragossa on the second half of the 11th century, during the later part of the period known in the Spanish\Andalusian history as the period of the “party-kings” (1010-1090).

Based on that same thin body of evidence, we can conclude that Ibn Paquda who served as a judge (*dayyan*) in Jewish community of Saragoza, was active in this city shortly after, and perhaps already during the time two other Jewish luminaries, the grammarian and physician Jonah Ibn Janāḥ (c. 973- c. 1050) and the poet and philosopher Solomon Ibn Gabirol (1021 – c. 1058) were active in this major Andalusian city.

Major Editions and Translations of *Duties of the Heart*

Duties of the Heart is considered as the early prime example of systematical presentation of the subject of ethics within the Jewish context. It initiated a new genre in Jewish literature, the genre known under the Hebrew title *Musar*. Throughout the centuries, the work circulated widely among the Jewish readers. Below is basic information about the work's major editions and translations.

* *Al-Hidāya 'ila Fara'id al-Qulūb des Bachja ibn Josef ibn Paquda*, ed. A. S. Yahuda, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1912. Based mainly on MS Oxford, Bodl. Ms. Poc. 96 (copied in 1191 by Abraham bar Ṭahor) and MS Paris, BN Ms. héb. 756. The Hebrew script of the Judeo-Arabic in the manuscripts is transliterated to Arabic script.

* *Torat Hovot ha-Levavot / Al-Hidāya 'ila Fara'id al-Qulūb*, ed. and trans. Yosef Qafiḥ, Jerusalem, Akiva, Yosef 1973. Based mainly on the above-mentioned Oxford and Paris manuscripts. Judeo-Arabic in the original Hebrew script vis-à-vis Hebrew translation.

* *Torat Hovot ha-Levavot*. A translation of *Duties of the Heart* by Judah ibn Tibbon (d. c. 1190). Printed in over hundred editions between 1488 and the middle of the 20th century (See J. Habermann, “A Contribution to the Study of Duties of the Heart and its Hebrew Editions,” *Sinai* 28, 1951-1952 [Hebrew]) and in more editions since then. For centuries Ibn Paquda’s work was widely disseminated in the Jewish world mainly by this translation. Since the early modern period *Duties of the Heart* was translated (mainly from Ibn Tibbon’s Hebrew translation) to other Jewish languages such as Judeo-Spanish and Yiddish and to the major European languages, in some of the cases few times in the same language. The major translations from the Judeo-Arabic original in last century are to French (André Chouraqui, 1950), to English (Menahem Mansoor, 1973) and to Spanish (Joaquin Lomba Fuentes, 1994).

The Arrangement of *Duties of the Heart*

Duties of the Heart is divided into ten parts which are subsequently divided into chapters. It begins with a lengthy introduction and ends with two lengthy Hebrew poems by ibn Paquda. The names of the parts are as follows:

1. On the Explanation of the Aspects of Pure Devotion of the Creator's Unity (*ikhhlāṣ tawḥīd al-khāliq*)
2. On the Explanation of the Aspects of Contemplation upon Creatures (*al-i 'tibar bi 'l makhhlūkīn*) and God's Abundant Grace (*faḍl al-ni 'ma*) Shown to Them
3. On the Aspects of the Obligation of Obedience to God (*iltizām ṭā 'at Allah*)
4. On the Reliance (*al-tawakkul*) upon God Alone
5. On Purifying the Acts (*ikhhlāṣ al- 'aml*) to God Alone
6. On Humility (*al-tawāḍḍu '*) before God
7. The Explanation of the Aspects of Repentance (*al-tawba*), what is Essential to It, and Its Consequences
8. On the human Self-Reckoning (*muḥāsbat al-insān fī nafsihi*) for God's Sake
9. On the Kinds of Renunciation (*al-zuhd*) and What is Fitting for us From It.
10. On the True Love (*ṣidq al-maḥabba*) of God

The titles of the book's ten parts give us some idea regarding its nature as a well organized and systematical work. From the point view of Jewish literature, the first three parts should be considered as the less remarkable ones. In those parts Ibn Paquda situated himself well within rationalistic trends that were prevalent in the Judeo-Arabic culture of his time, such as Neoplatonism and *Kalām*. Thus, his innovative contributions, in terms of this culture, can be traced in the following seven parts.

Scholars Assessments Regarding the Main Stremes of Thought Behind *Duties of the Heart*

* “Among the works of Arabic literature that influenced the author of *Duties of the Heart*, one part has so far remained unconsidered, which appears to have been of particular importance for the creation of *Duties of the Heart* and from which Baḥya may have received the initial inspiration for composing his work. These are the Muhammadan ascetic (*al-zuhd*) writings. If we take a look at the writings available to us in this field, we find that in these works, which are counted as *ṣūfī* literature but are clearly distinguishable from *ṣūfī* writings of the type of Ibn ‘Arabī or al-Sha‘rāwī, many of the same subjects are treated as in *Duties of the Heart*” (Martin Schreiner, *Der Kalām in der jüdischen Literatur*, 1895, p. 25).

* “By studying the ascetic doctrine of Baḥya, we were able to discern the presence of three (or even four) different inspirations: that of Muslim *zuhd* (with certain elements of Mu‘azilite thought), that of a Platonist philosophy, and that of rabbinic Judaism” (Georges Vajda, *La théologie ascétique de Baḥya ibn Paquda*, 1947, pp. 137-138).

* “Baḥya ibn Paquda ... in whose Arabic work, the *Duties of the Hearts*, the teachings of *ṣūfism* play a preponderant part ... Baḥya composed an individualistic spiritual theology based almost entirely on *ṣūfī* pietistic manuals” (Paul Fenton, *The Treatise of the Pool/al-Maqāla al-Hawdiyya By ‘Obadyah b. Abraham b. Moses Maimonides*, 1981, introduction, p. 2).

“As for the Sufi type of Jewish mysticism, it, too, had its offshoots in al-Andalus, as can be seen from the groundbreaking work of Baḥya Ibn Paquda, *The Duties of the Heart* ... Indeed, to the best of my knowledge, the first work to have appeared in al-Andalus which can be qualified as Sufi was a book in Judeo-Arabic titled *al-Hidāya ilā farā’id al-qulūb* (*The Guidance to the Duties of the Heart*). It was written by Ibn Ḥazm’s Jewish contemporary, Baḥya ibn Paquda. The first

indigenous, Andalusian compilation written by a Muslim and fashioned on eastern Sufi-type works appeared much later: it was *Maḥāsin al-Majālis* (*The Loveliness of the Assemblies*) by Ibn al-‘Arīf (d. 1141)” (Sara Sviri, “Mysticism,” *Cambridge History of Judaism, volume 5: Jews in the Medieval Islamic World*, 2021, pp. 895-896).

What we can learn from the above-cited passages is that scholars of previous generations, Schreiner and Vajda, brought forth the assessment that identified *zuhd* as a main, if not the main background of *Duties of the Heart*. However, in contemporary scholarship, this assessment was abandoned, and replaced by a confident assessment that identifies Sufism as the main inspiration for Bahya’s work. This change culminated in Diana Lobel’s 2006 monograph, titled *A Sufi-Jewish Dialogue: Philosophy and Mysticism in Bahya ibn Paquda’s “Duties of the Heart.”*

The fading out of the *zuhd* background and its replacement with the *ṣūfī* background as a main factor at the root of *Duties of the Heart*, reflects developments in the academic world, where until recently, the study Sufism eclipsed the study of *zuhd*. Scholars’ negligence of the study of *zuhd*, treating it as a mere prelude to Sufism, if treating it at all, led to many misconceptions and mistakes. In the last few decades, the study of *zuhd* starts to emerge out of the shadow of the study of Sufism, mainly by the efforts of Christopher Melchert. Melcher’s book *Before Sufism: Early Islamic Renunciant Piety*, was published in 2020 and seems to be the first monograph to approach *zuhd* in a critical-historical manner. Building on such serious academic efforts, my aim is to shift the assessment regarding *Duties of the Heart*’s sources in Islamic culture back to the *zuhd* direction.

My presentation dedicated to this subject will be divided to three parts: the first part is devoted the characteristics of *zuhd* and its representation in early Islamic literature. The second part is devoted to different aspects of the representation of

zuhd in *Duties of the Heart*. The third part is devoted to the Andalusí context of the subject under discussion.

1. The Characteristics of *Zuhd* and its Representation in Early Islamic Literature

What is *Zuhd*?

Zuhd is an early Islamic trend. Its beginnings might be traced back to the first century of the Islamic period (seventh century AD), yet it was fully developed and made its decisive impact on the Muslim culture and society during the second and the third centuries (eighth-ninth centuries AD). Thus, *zuhd* proceeded Sufism, which only came to age in the second half of the third century (ninth century AD).

There is an interesting difference between the way the *zuhād* (s. *zāhid*) – the practitioners of *zuhd* - situated themselves in the historical continuum, and the way their trend should be depicted historically. The *zuhād* of the Muslim age depicted themselves as standing on the line of *zuhād* that started with virtuous persons such as Adam and Noah and continue with the prophets of the ancient people of Israel, David appears in *zuhd* tradition as the great repentant. Among the figures of early Christian age, Jesus is portrayed in this tradition as the *zāhid* par excellence. The Muslim *Zuhād* also express admiration to the Christian ascetics of their time. Nevertheless, from an historical perspective, *zuhd* is a distinct phenomenon. As such it exhibited special features that set it apart from Christian asceticism as well as other historical manifestations of asceticism.

We will gain a better understanding of *zuhd* by depicting it not as an ascetic trend, but as a trend of renunciant piety. Many of the *zuhād* did their best to conceal their extraordinary acts of devotion and even to internalize it altogether. In the *zuhd* praxis in general, the latent aspects of attitude and intention that motivate action, were considered to be more important than the aspect of execution of the devotional acts.

Zuhd as an Attitude

Zuhd as an attitude revolves around the opposition and tension between two realities or stages in human life – the reality of the present world (*al-dunyā*) and the reality of the next world (*al-ākhirā*). These two worlds are depicted as excluding one another. As a result, the *zāhid*, as one who aspires to secure his or her place in the next world, must turn away from the present world. The *zuhd* motto “the renunciation of the present world” (*al-zuhd fī l-dunyā*), is sometimes supplemented by the saying “and the passion for the next world” (*al-raghāba fī l-ākhirā*). Consequently, the *zāhid* and the *zāhida* must judge each of his or her thoughts and acts from the perspective of the next world, which is their true destination and permanent place of dwelling, and not from the perspective of his temporary, misleading and elusive place of dwelling in the present world. The *zuhād* cannot come to terms with their life in the present world by perceiving it just as a test and a prelude to the life in the next world. By their constant awareness of death and its implications (*dhikr al-mawt*), they aspire to be counted, already here and now among the people of the next world (*abna’ al-ākhirā*), and not among the people of the present world (*abna’ al-dunyā*).

Zuhd as a Private Religion

From the angle of the comparative study of religion, it seems to me that a most fertile assessment of *zuhd* can be reached, not by treating it as a manifestation of asceticism in Islam, but by evaluating it as the embodiment of the private religion in the early Islamic period. Evaluating *zuhd* as a private religion is based, among other things, on the following *zuhd* features:

* **Individual responsibility** – In *zuhd*, the meaningful axis of religion is the one that run between God and the individual. The believer is standing by himself

alone before God. As all-knowing and constant observer, God observes and evaluates each of the individual's intents and deeds. From his side, the individual believer is judged directly by God and is accountable to Him without the mediation of intermediate agents such as prophets, saints and communities. Thus, the individual believer holds complete responsibility for his or her fate and attainment of salvation or punishment in the next world.

*** Non-normative informal way of worship** – In general, the *zuhād* did not separate themselves in a permanent and visible manner from general Muslim society. Most of them continued to reside in Muslim communities, saw themselves obliged to the dictates of the normative religion and participated in public worship. Nonetheless, the *zuhād* could not satisfy themselves only by fulfilling the duties of the normative religion. For them, the thrust of the worship of God lied, not in its normative part, but in its additional non-normative part. The practices of the normative-public religion are formulated according to fixed quota and precise procedures and should be implemented by everyone in the community in the same manner. Contrary to this, early *zuhd* practices were defined by each practitioner according to his or her inclinations and inner call. As such, those practices may have differed greatly from practitioner to practitioner, and did not follow any specific formulation.

*** Absence of institutionalizing** – as the realm of *zuhd* is a private one, the *zuhād* did not see the need to unite or create any specific establishment for themselves. Thus, there were hardly any signs of institutionalizing among them. One becomes a *zāhid* or *zāhida* by his or her own initiative (*mubādara*). No preparation and no training are required. The *zuhād* teach by self-example and by giving advice when asked for it. As a result, contrary to Sufism, no formal teacher-novice relations, and the institutions attached to it - were established in realm of *zuhd*.

The literature of *zuhd*

During its heyday, in the second and third Islamic centuries, in the eastern part of the Islamic world, *Zuhd* was already distinguished by its own literature in different genres:

Traditionalist books of *zuhd* – The basic layer of *zuhd* literature, are books of *zuhd* (*Kutub al-zuhd*) in the form of tradition (*ḥadīth*), compiled by compilers who belonged to the proto-Sunnī stream of the “people of the tradition” (*ahl al-ḥadīth*). The earliest examples of this genre to have reached us, in part or complete, are the books of *zuhd* by ‘Abd Allāh ibn al-Mubārak (d.181/797), al-Mu‘āfā b. ‘Imrān al-Mawṣilī (d. 184/800), Wakī‘ ibn Jarrāḥ (d. 196/812), Asad b. Mūsā (d. 212/827), Hannād ibn al-Sarī (d. 243/857) and Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal (d. 241/855).

Non-traditionalist works of *zuhd* – Early *zuhd* literature found its expression not only in *ḥadīth* but in other forms as well. In the numerous writings of al-Ḥārith al-Muḥāsibī (d. 243/857), most notably in his *Book of Observance of the Rights of God* (*K. al-Ri‘āya li-ḥuḳūk Allāh*), al-Muḥāsibī presented the renunciant worldview in an ordered-methodological manner, one which goes way beyond the traditionalist format. Al-Muḥāsibī, who is identified with the inner procedure of self-reckoning (*muḥāsabat al-naḥs*), was the main formulator of the inward, internalized type of *zuhd*. This type focuses on the motives behind the worshiper’s acts, not on the acts themselves. Put it differently, the inner side of religious life is more important than its outer side. Al-Muḥāsibī’s way of writing and thinking was a major inspiration for Ibn Paquda. The main aspects of al-Muḥāsibī’s writing - his style, his terminology and his psychological inclined type of *zuhd*, are present abundantly in *Duties of the Heart*.

Zuhd poetry – Early *zuhd* found its poetic expression in the genre of *zuhdiyyāt*. The leading representative of this genre was Abbasid poet Abū al-‘Atāhiyya (d. c. 210/825).

The Infiltration of *Zuhd* Material to Different Sorts of Islamic Literature

Beyond its own unique literary expressions, different corpora from a variety of trends and denominations in early Islam dedicate significant portions to *zuhd* traditions:

Sunnī ḥadīth compilations – *al-Muṣannaf* by Ibn Abī Shaybah (d. 235/849) already includes a section on *zuhd*. Sections on *zuhd* are included in most of the early ḥadīth collections that were later on recognized as canonical in the Sunnī tradition. Ibn Ḥanbal’s *Musnad* in particular includes a wealth of *zuhd* material.

Shī‘ī ḥadīth – early Shī‘ī traditionalists incorporated and appropriated *zuhd* material into their works. They put in the mouths of their imāms sayings that are ascribed in the *zuhd* literature to early *zuhād*. We find this procedure in works like *Kitāb al-zuhd* by al-Ḥusayn ibn Sa‘īd (d. after 254/868) and in major Shī‘ī ḥadīth collections such as *al-Kāfī* by Muḥammad ibn Ya‘qūb al-Kulaynī (d. 329/941).

Adab literature – sections on *zuhd* traditions and pieces of poetry were included in major early *adab* compilations, such as *al-Bayān wa-al-tabyīn* by al-Jāḥiẓ (d. 255/868), *‘Uyūn al-akhbār* by Ibn Qutayba (d. 276/889), *al-Kāmil fī l-lughah wa l-adab* by al-Mubarrad (d. 898) and *al-‘Iqd al-farīd* by the Andalusī compiler Ibn ‘Abd Rabbih (d. 328/940).

The Baghdadi courtier and man of letters Ibn Abī al-Dunyā (d. 281/894) compiled, among others, many monographs dedicated to *zuhd* subjects. The inclusion of a wealth of *zuhd* material in *adab* works, first and foremost in Ibn Abī al-Dunyā monographs, is of a special importance from a Jewish perspective.

For educated Andalusī Jews who seek to take part in the courtier society and culture of their time and place, reading *adab* literature was a must.

Šūfī literature – *šūfī* literature of the late tenth century and the first half of the eleventh century, most conspicuously the compilations and other works by al-Sarrāj (d. 378/988), al-Kalābādhī (d. 380/990), al-Makkī (d. 386/996), al-Sulamī (d. 412/1021) and al-Qushayrī (d. 465/1074) exhibited clear signs of appropriation of the earlier *zuhd* heritage. In this literature, notable *zuhād* are portrayed as progenitors of Sufism. *Zuhd* terms, conceptions and traditions are used abundantly, but their original use is transformed significantly by its placement in the setting of the *šūfī* mystical framework of stations (*maqāmāt*) and states (*aḥwāl*). A main exception to this rule is Abū Nu‘aym al-Iṣfahānī (d. 430/1038), who in his lengthy *Ḥilyat al-awliyā’* reconstructed faithfully *zuhd* traditions and materials while adding to, in the last part of the work, traditions and materials related to later *šūfī* personalities.

2. Signs of *Zuhd* in *Duties of the Heart*

The signs of *zuhd* in *Duties of the Heart* are manifold. Far from exhausting this subject, in the framework of this presentation I will provide some examples that illustrates the impact of *zuhd* on Ibn Paquda’s thought.

Zuhd Terminology in *Duties of the Heart*

Throughout the book, Ibn Paquda is using a wide variety of terms and expressions stemming from the *zuhd* literature. The *zuhd* motto, “the renunciation of the present world” (*al-zuhd fī l-dunyā*), appears in the book no less than twenty times, and the term *zuhd* itself also appears many times and a whole part of the book (part 9) is dedicated directly to it.

Other terms are indicated in the headlines of parts 4-10 of *Duties of the Heart*: reliance (*tawakkul*), purifying the acts (*ikhlāṣ al-‘amal*), humility (*tawāḍḍu’*), repentance (*tawba*), self-reckoning (*muḥāsbat al-naḥs*), and true love of God (*ṣidq al-maḥabba*). The ways in which Ibn Paquda deals with these terms in these parts - are akin to *zuhd* literature.

Duties of the Heart includes many terms and expressions of *zuhd* origin, especially al-Muḥāsib’s inward type of *zuhd*, such as ‘interiority’ (*ḍamīr*), ‘hidden association’ (*al-shirk al-khaṭī*), ‘purifying the intention’ (*ikhlāṣ al-niyya*), ‘prolongation/curtail of hope’ (*tūl/qaṣr al-amal*), ‘worries of the present world’ (*humūm al-dunyā*), ‘abstaining from the development of the present world’ (*tark ‘amārat al-dunyā*), ‘excesses of the present world’ (*fuḍūl al-dunyā*), to name few.

The Absence of *Ṣūfī* Terminology from *Duties of the Heart*

Ṣūfī terminology that doesn’t stem from the *zuhd* is hard to find in *Duties of the Heart*. Indeed, there are many terms in Ibn Paquda’s treatise that are well attested in *ṣūfī* literature, but almost all of them can be traced back to *zuhd* literature. Among them we can find such terms as ‘retreat from the world’ (*khalwa*), ‘intimacy with God’ (*uns*), ‘longing to God’ (*shawq*), and ‘training of the self’ (*riyāḍāt al-naḥs*).

Had *Duties of the Heart* been a work closely related to Sufism, as scholars of the last generation deem it to be, we would have expected it to include familiar terms that are unique to the *ṣūfī* tradition. For example, terms that allude to the inner mystical senses such as taste (*dhawq*) or vision (*baṣīra*); or names of the pairs of opposites (*aḍḍād*), that point to different stations and states along the *ṣūfī* mystical path, such as ‘annihilation’ (*fanā’*) versus ‘subsistence’ (*baqā’*); “sobriety” (*ṣabr*) versus ‘drunkenness’ (*shukr*); Inconsistency (*talwīn*) versus stability (*tamkīn*) etc. Ibn Paquda does not mention the terms remembrance (*dhikr*) and listening

(*sama*) in the specific ritualistic meaning attached to it in the *ṣūfī* tradition. He doesn't make any use of the term 'the truth' (*al-ḥaqq*) as an appellation to God.

Anonymous *Zuhd*-oriented Sayings and Anecdotes in *Duties of the Heart*

Another good indicator of the balance or rather the imbalance between *zuhd* and Sufism in the background of *Duties of the Heart*, can be found in the 90 or so anonymous sayings and anecdotes from non-Jewish sources, that Ibn Paquda inserted throughout his work.

Many of these anonymous sayings and anecdotes are distinguished by their *zuhd* content and some of those can be tracked down to the earliest books of *zuhd* that are available to us. For example, two sayings that can be tracked down to ibn al-Mubārak's *K. al-zuhd wa'l-raqā'iq*:

* "It was said that this world and the next (*al-dunyā wa 'l- ākhira*) are like two wives of the same man: when you please one you necessarily anger the other" (p. 341, ll. 20-21)

This saying expresses in a tangible manner *zuhd*'s basic assumption that caring for the present world and caring for the next world are incompatible.

* "According to the saying of one of those who put their trust in God (*al-mutwakkalīn*): 'I never started the day in any condition such that I wished I were in some other'" (p. 226, ll. 14-15)

This saying reflects *zuhd* attitude of indifference towards everything that occurs to you in the present world.

Other sayings that appear in *Duties of the Heart* are attested in sections dedicated to *zuhd* in early *adab* compilations, such as Ibn Qutayba's '*Uyūn al-akhbār*, or the comprehensive *zuhd* monograph *dhamm al-dunyā* by Ibn Abi al-dunyā. Look at the following examples:

* “One of the wise men said in this respect: ‘Whoever renounces the present world (*al-dunyā*) for the present world's sake is like he who extinguishes the fire with straw’” (p. 142, ll. 10-11)

* “It was already said by one of the wise men: ‘As fire and water cannot dwell together in one vessel, so also the love of the present world (*ḥubb al-dunyā*) and the love of the next (*ḥubb al-ākhirā*) cannot dwell together in the heart of the believer’” (p. 341, ll. 18-20)

Here is an example of *zuhd*-oriented anecdote attested in non-traditionalist works of *Zuhd*:

* “It is told of a pious man that he met some people returning from a great war with an enemy. He said to them, 'You are returning, praised be God, from a smaller battle (*al-jihād al-aṣghar*), carrying your booty. Now prepare yourself for the greater battle (*li'l-jihād al-akbar*).' They asked, 'What is that greater battle?' and he answered, 'The battle against the inclination and its armies’” (p. 232, ll. 8-11)

For years scholars assumed that this anecdote, that in its Muslim garb is usually related to the prophet Muhammad, originated in *ṣūfī* circles. Finally, a few of them noticed that it had already appeared in *K. al-khalwa*, a work ascribed to al-Muḥāsibī, but according to some scholars, written by a contemporary, perhaps an older contemporary of al-Muḥāsibī – Aḥmad Ibn ‘Āṣim al-Anṭākī (d. between 220/835 and 239/853). In its original historical setting, this anecdote represents the approach of adherents of the psychological type *zuhd*, who emphasized the importance of the combat or holy war (*jihad*) against the self/soul (*jihad al-naḥs*). They stated this approach vis-à-vis those who, from a *zuhd* point of view, emphasized the importance of the participation in military holy war against non-Muslims.

Anonymous *Ṣūfī*-oriented Sayings and Anecdotes in *Duties of the Heart*

Ibn Paquda does include in his work some, albeit few, sayings and anecdotes that stem from *ṣūfī* sources and are non-*zuhd* in their content. Interestingly, all of these *ṣūfī* quotations, that in the *ṣūfī* sources are attributed to early notable Sufis such as Sahl al-Tustarī (d. 283/896) and Yaḥyā ibn Mu‘ādh al-Rāzī (d. 258/872), are centered around the figure of ‘the knower’ (*al-‘ārif*):

* “One of the knowers (*al-‘ārifīn*) has said: ‘the most knowledgeable among the people (*‘ārafhum*) concerning God is the one among them who is the most perplexed (*taḥayyuran*) concerning Him’”. (pp. 81, l. 19 – 82, l. 2)

* “As said one of learned: ‘The hearts of those who know God (*al-‘ārifīn*) have eyes, for they see what the careless do not see’” (p.340, l. 1-2)

Duties of the Heart also includes a few sayings and even a whole passage that Islamic sources attribute to Dhū al-Nūn al-Miṣrī (d. ca 245/859-860), who is considered by the Sufis as one of their foundational figures, and was known outside the *ṣūfī* literature primarily as a *zāhid*. Indeed, in Ibn Paquda’s work, the sayings that are connected with Dhū al-Nūn’s are *zuhd*-oriented and does not exhibit any specific *ṣūfī* characteristics.

On the basis of the evidence from *Duties of the Heart* presented above, it can be concluded that ibn Paquda was familiar to same extent with *ṣūfī* sources. Nevertheless, his interest in the specific *ṣūfī* content those sources offered was narrow and limited. It certainly pales in comparison with his interest in *zuhd*, and especially in the psychological type of *zuhd*.

Some of Ibn Paquda’s Observations on *Zuhd*

Taking into account that *zuhd* is one of the most, if not the most, understudied trend of early Islam in western academia, it is not surprising that scholars who, in

general, devoted so little attention to this topic, are susceptible to misunderstandings when they refer to it. Unlike modern scholars, Ibn Paquda had a keen interest in Islamic *zuhd*. He knew a whole lot about it and had a deep appreciation of its nature. Thus, reading what Ibn Paquda has to say on *zuhd* is a rewarding experience.

A dominant approach among modern scholars is the one that depicts *zuhd* as an Islamic version of asceticism. Building on this understanding, some scholars distinguish between ‘extreme asceticism’ and ‘mild asceticism’ in Islamic *zuhd*. Scholars of Ibn Paquda use this distinction to characterize his approach as belonging to the category of ‘mild asceticism’. However, Ibn Paquda himself, in his discussion in chapter three, in the part of his book dedicated directly to the topic of *zuhd* (part 9) - presents an altogether different approach regarding the essential division within *zuhd*, one which is reflected in the sources much better.

Authentic and Inauthentic *Zuhd* According to Ibn Paquda

The Categories of Authentic Practitioners of (*Zuhd* (*ahl al-zuhd al-sādiq*))

First category: “... They escape the inhabited world completely, fleeing to the barren deserts and to the wilderness of the mountains, where there is no man, and no company. They eat whatever they find, like grass and leaves. They wear rags and rough woolen robes, and they dwell in caves” (p.360, ll. 18-21).

A common denominator of the manners of this category is that they are all manifest and visible. The one who practices those manners, or part of them, is declaring himself wide open that he is a *zāhid*.

Second category: “... They cut themselves off from all thoughts of luxuries, but they do not consider it proper to flee the inhabited world because the members of the group must be able to gain their necessary livelihood. Instead of going to the

deserts and the mountains, they find solitude in their houses and loneliness in their own homes” (p/ 361, ll. 8-11).

What characterizes the members of this category is that instead of manifesting their detachment from the present world publicly, they prefer practicing it inside of their own dwellings, where it stays hidden from the public eye.

Third category: “.... They renounce the present world in heart and conscience (*bi-qulūbihim wa-ḍamīrihim*), but they share with the other inhabitants of the world in its cultivation, construction, and reproduction, which they conduct in obedience to God. They have understood the form of man's trial in this world, his state of imprisonment and strangeness in it, how the present world has snatched him away from the spiritual world, and they loathe this world and its affairs, their souls longing for the other world and awaiting death in this one” (p. 361, ll. 13-17).

Everything that is mentioned in this description points to the fact that all manners which set apart the *zuhād* who belong to this category are connected to their inner awareness. Nothing in their external behavior betrays them as substantially different from other people. From the point of view of those who depict *zuhd* as asceticism, Ibn Paquda's move of including the people of this category among the ranks of the *zuhād* is problematic. Yet, from the point of view that depicts *zuhd* first and foremost as an attitude towards the present and the next worlds, and as a private religion, the inclusion of this category among the categories of *zuhd* makes perfect sense. In a private religion, the individual stands alone in front of God. So, if other people are not aware of one's rejection of the present world and longing for the next, because everything that signifies it belongs to his inner realm, that can be counted as an advantage for him. For Ibn Paquda, all the three above-mentioned categories are equally genuine modes of practicing *zuhd*. Yet, according to him, the practitioners who are included in the third category have the advantage of belonging to the group which is “closer to the way of moderation

prescribed by the Law (*al-iʿidāl al-sharīʿ*) than are the ones mentioned before” (p. 361, l. 20 – 362, l. 1).

The Categories of Inauthentic Practitioners of *Zuhd* (*al-zuhād al-mutazahidīn*)

Why is it that according to Ibn Paquda, the authentic practitioners of *zuhād* split among themselves regarding the right way to express their renunciation of the present world? Why is it that not all of them share the visible ways that were common among the ascetics? Why is it that some of them limit their renunciation practices to their own homes, and others choose to be withdrawn from the present world in their inner dimension only? Ibn Paquda tackles those questions by supplementing his list of the three categories of *zuhd* authentic practitioners (*al-zuhād al-ṣādiq*) with a list of three categories of inauthentic practitioners of *zuhd* (*al-zuhād al-mutazahidīn*). Whereas among the authentic practitioners of *zuhd*, only the first category is characterized by its visible-extrovert practices, in the case of the practitioners of inauthentic *zuhd* all three categories adhere to visible-extrovert practices.

The adherence of all the practitioners of inauthentic *zuhd* to visible-extrovert practices reveals the problem at the basis of using this kind of *zuhd* practice: One’s use of visible-extrovert practice can be considered authentic only when his inner motivation is pure, i.e. it has nothing at all to do with the seeking of worldly gains. Contrawise, those who use visible-extrovert practices inauthentically, are the ones who are motivated by seeking worldly gains of different kinds: they might receive materialistic gains from others who admire their visible pietism. According to Ibn Paquda, such is the case with the first and worst category of the practitioners of inauthentic *zuhd* (p. 362, ll. 3-8). They might find, in adhering to *zuhd* practices, consolation for their failure to gain materialistic gains. Such is the case with the second category (p. 362, ll. 8-15). Finally, there are those who might use it as a

default for their inability to make materialistic gains. Such is the case with the third category (p. 362, ll. 16-21), The problem here is how can one tell who is authentic and who is an inauthentic practitioner of *zuhd*, while their visible practices might be the same, and what distinguishes between them is the inner-concealed motivation only? This kind of problematic, which is very relevant to the use of visible-extrovert practices, is less relevant when the use of *zuhd* practices is concealed and limited to one's own dwellings, and is not relevant at all when the *zuhd* practices are completely internalized.

Thus, in his orderly-methodological way, Ibn Paquda addresses, in this important chapter *Duties of the Heart* (part 9, chapter 3) the problem of the risks of the corruption of *zuhd* by those who choose to practice it in outward manners. In the early *zuhd* literature, we find an abundance of evidence for the awareness to this problem, as well as for the understanding of the primacy of the inner attitude over the manifest actions. These two factors played an important role in the emergence and the evolution of the concealed and inward types of *zuhd*, alongside its outward type.

B. The Notion of “Estrangement” (*ghurba*) and the Figure of the “Stranger” (*gharīb*)

Another highly valuable and original contribution made by Ibn Paquda to the understanding of *zuhd*, appears at the end of chapter three of part eight of *Duties of the Heart*. This chapter is the longest in the book. It encompasses most of the issues discussed in the book and thus regarded by the author himself as a concise presentation of the whole book. This chapter comprises no less than thirty different aspects of self-reckoning (*muḥāsabat al-nafs*). The last one of them includes a detailed discussion on the notion of “estrangement” (*ghurba*) and the figure of the “stranger” (*gharīb*). Ibn Paquda's decision to place the discussion

dedicated to this topic as the thirtieth and last in the longest and most comprehensive chapter of his book, attests to the special importance ascribed by him to the notion of “estrangement” and the figure of the “stranger”.

In the early Islamic period, these notion and figure received their fullest expressions in the *zuhd* literature. The figure of the “stranger” is a cherished figure in the *zuhd* tradition. It’s not hard to understand why. The practitioners of *zuhd*, who aspired to be counted already here and now as people of the next world (*abna’ al-ākhirā*), depicted themselves as strangers among the people of the present world (*abna’ al-dunyā*). Thus, sayings like: “Be in the present world as though you are a stranger (*gharīb*) or a traveler, and count yourself from the inhabitants of the graves” are well attested in the early books of *zuhd*. Some Sufis pointed to the stark difference between *zuhd* and *ṣūfī* portrayals of the figure of the stranger, by pointing out that “the renouncer (*al-zāhid*) is a stranger (*gharīb*) in the present world, while the knower (*al-‘ārif*) is a stranger in the next world.”

While Ibn Paquda’s overall treatment of the notion of “estrangement” and the figure of the “stranger” in *Duties of the Heart* includes some Neoplatonic elements, the central discussion he devotes to this topic in the thirtieth aspect of self-reckoning falls quite comfortably within the *zuhd* framework. A tenth century monograph dedicated to this topic is titled “The Book of the Strangers” (*K. al-ghurabā’*). In this work, which is comprised mainly from *zuhd* traditions, the author, Abū Bakr al-Ājurī (d.360/970), speaks about the “strangers of our time” as ones who avoid exposing their estrangement towards the present world and other people:

The strangers of our time (*al-ghurabā’ fī waqtinā*) are those who follow the Sunna and are patient with it ... their request from the world is that which is sufficient for them and they leave the excess that makes them arrogant, and they are accommodating to the people of their time and do not flatter them, and they are patient with that.

Following this path, Ibn Paquda portrays the situation of “estrangement” and the figure of the “stranger” as the summation of the type of *zuhd* favored by him, the inward type. Thus, while the believer as stranger is connected with other people and the affairs of the present world in the outward dimension of his existence, he is completely detached and alienated from it in his inward dimension. Those acts of detachment and alienation are necessary for him to clear his inner space from the worldly relations and make it available only for the relation that matters the most – the intimate relation with God. As Ibn Paquda puts it:

“Take upon yourself, O my brother, the obligations of one who is a stranger in the present world, since you really are a stranger in it ... lonely and isolated (*ka’l-farīd al-wahīd*). One who does not have any intimate friend (*anīs*) but his Lord ... In short, take upon yourself the conditions of a stranger, which I have stressed to you here, as long as you live in the present world, for in this way you will arrive at the bliss of the next world” (p. 347, l. 16 – 348, l. 18).

The detailed presentation of the concept of the “stranger” offered by Ibn Paquda in the thirtieth aspect of self-reckoning is daring and provocative. It emphasizes the elements of the believer’s loneliness and alienation towards his society and human society in general and reveals the *raison d’être* of private religion. It enables us to understand that although remaining hidden, *zuhd* inward type represents a way of renunciation of the present world which is not easier and not less extreme than the way of the outward type. But whereas in the outward renunciation the hardship lies in the extreme physical measures one takes upon himself, in the case of the inward renunciation the hardship is fundamentally a psychological one.

In conclusion, it should be noted that Ibn Paquda addressed *zuhd* in a direct manner and offered several definitions of it, as well as illuminating insights about it such as the ones discussed above. Nothing of this sort can be found in his work

regarding Sufism. Ibn Paquda never addressed Sufism directly and decline from offering insights about it.

3. The Andalusī Context

Turning now to the Andalusī context of *Duties of the Heart*, my claim that *zuhd* played a much more important role than Sufism at the basis of Ibn Paquda's work, is substantiated by the following three types of evidence: The information we have regarding the dissemination of *zuhd* and *ṣūfī* works in al-Andalus up to Ibn Paquda's time; the understanding that the development of western-Andalusī mysticism between the fourth/tenth and the six/twelfth centuries should not be reduced to the eastern *ṣūfī* type of mysticism; and the specific evidence stemming from the work of Ibn Khamīs, who was Ibn Paquda's contemporary.

Dissemination of *Zuhd* and *Ṣūfī* Legacy and Works in al-Andalus up to Ibn Paquda's Time

The database project directed by Maribel Fierro *History of Authors and Transmitters of al-Andalus (Historia de los Autores y Transmisores de al-Andalus – HATA)* is very helpful in this respect. With its help we can see that up to time *Duties of the Heart* was written, i.e. by the later part of the period of the “party-kings” (1050-1090), the availability of *zuhd* literature of all sorts was significantly higher than that of *Ṣūfī* literature. This includes some of the early books of *zuhd*, quite many of Ibn Abī al-Dunyā's *zuhd* monographs, and some of al-Muḥāsibī's works, including *al-Ri'āya li-ḥuḳūḳ Allāh*. We also have evidence concerning *zuhd* works that were written by Andalusī authors. For Example, *K. al-zuhd* by Abū Bakr Yumn ben Rizq al-Tuḳlī (d. before 933), or *ḥayāt al-qulūb (The Life of Hearts)* by Ibn Abī Zamanīn (d. 399/1008).

As shown for example in studies by Manuela Marín, *zuhd* in al-Andalus obtained a long and notable present not only in the form of literary legacy, but also in the form of a living legacy. One of the main features of the *zuhād* of al-Andalus before and during Ibn Paquda's lifetime, was withdrawing from public life (*inqibāḍ*). This practice corresponds roughly with Ibn Paquda's second category of authentic *zuhd* presented above.

Turing to Sufism, the above-mentioned database reveals that up to Ibn Paquda's time of activity, the availability of *ṣūfī* works in al-Andalus pales in comparison to the availability of works on *zuhd*. Up to this time, we lack concrete information about *ṣūfī* treatises written by Andalusī writers, and about the presence of *ṣūfī* circles in al-Andalus. It means that *Duties of the Heart* as a treatise which includes a wealth of material related to *zuhd*, and only little material which can be related specifically to Sufism, reflects the state of affairs in al-Andalus during and before its author's time.

The Development of Western-Andalusī Mysticism

Among the scholars of the Andalusī culture it was common to identify mysticism with Sufism. Thus, at least from the time of Ibn Masarra (d. 319/931), Andalusī authors and figures who exhibit or reported to exhibit mystical tendencies, were considered to be Sufis or Sufi-inclined by those scholars. In recent times, this common scholarly attitude was criticized and challenged, most significantly and comprehensively in the two following books: *Mysticism and Philosophy in al-Andalus: Ibn Masarra, Ibn al-Arabī and the Ismā'īlī Tradition* (2014) by Michael Ebstein and *The Mystics of al-Andalus: Ibn Barrajān and Islamic Thought in the Twelfth Century* (2017) by Yusuf Casewit. Both scholars subscribe to the attitude that in development of Andalusī mysticism between the tenth and twelfth centuries, the role reserved to Sufism was secondary and even marginal one.

Andalusi mysticism of that period was shaped mainly by other tendencies such as Neoplatonic philosophy mixed with shī'ī-Ismā'īlī ingredients and occult sciences such as 'the science of the letters' (*ilm al-ḥurūf*) of the non-*ṣūfī* type. Thus, contra to much of what was written on this topic in the past, Andlusi figures with mystic proclivities should not be regarded as Sufis. From his perspective, Casewit shows that Andalusi mystics, including Ibn Paquda's younger contemporary Ibn Barrajān (d. 536/10141) describe themselves as *Mu'tabirūn*, i.e. the practitioners of the art of contemplation (*i'tibār*) or crossing (*ibra*). Through the use of this art, its practitioners can cross and elevate themselves from the realm of visible present world into the unseen higher cosmological and eschatological worlds.

Ebstein and Casewite's assertions regarding the characteristics of Andalusi mysticism corroborate with what we find in *Duties of the Heart*. Ibn Paquda devote the second part of his work to the concept of contemplation (*i'tibār*). Within this part we find an intriguing reference to an important mystical symbol of this concept, the symbol of the 'ladder (*sullam*) of ascension': "The clever and intelligent man should extract from this world the knowledge of its spiritual and subtle elements, making them into a ladder for inference on the omnipotence Creator" (p. 101, ll. 7-8).

In addition, the most elaborate passage Ibn Paquda devote to the all-important doctrine, from the Islamic-mystical perspective, of the "friendship with God" (*walāya*), the use of Ismā'īlī elements is discernible (pp. 292, l. 14 – 293, l.3 and an article I devoted to the subject, to be publish soon).

Furthermore, *Duties of the Heart* contain handful of detailed descriptions of a mystic nature (p. 321, ll. 1-13; pp. 350, l.11 – 351, l. 13; p. 379, ll. 13-24; pp. 392, l. 2 -393, l. 16). In those descriptions, few *ṣūfī* elements are traceable, but Neoplatonic and *zuhd* elements are evident even more.

The Case of Ibn Khamīs

The case of Muḥammad ibn Khamīs al-Yāburī (d. 503/1109) deserves special attention. Qāḍī Iyāḍ (544/1149) report that Ibn Khamīs was a disseminator of al-Muḥāsibī writings in al-Andalus, and that he himself studied with him al-Muḥāsibī's major work, *al-Ri'āya li-ḥukūḳ Allāh*. Like Ibn Paquda, only one work of Ibn Khamīs has reached us. This work is *K. al-gharīb al-muntaqā min kalām ahl al-tuqā* (*The Selected Wonderous Sayings of the God-Fearing Ones*). A comparative reading of Ibn Paquda's and Ibn Khamīs works, reveals that, although Ibn Paquda's work is longer much more systematic, there are many points of similarity between them. There is no room for me here to get into the thick of this issue. Suffice is to say that it seems that among the works of that era, *al-gharīb al-muntaqā* is the closest work to *Duties of the Heart* and vice versa. Both works share the special blend, in which *zuhd* in general, and al-Muḥāsibī's inward type of *zuhd* in particular, is by far the major compound, philosophy is a secondary compound and Sufism is another secondary compound. Like Ibn Paquda, Ibn Khamīs does not offer direct references to Sufism, while offering plenty of direct references to *zuhd*. As for the rationalistic-philosophical tendencies, its role in *Duties of the Heart* greater than in *al-gharīb al-muntaqā*. On the other hand, Sufism plays a greater role in Ibn Khamīs' work. Most conspicuously, *al-gharīb al-muntaqā* includes two short passages (pp. 188-189 in the printed edition) that are immersed with terminology typical to the kind of Sufism which descended from the principal Baghdadi teacher al-Juayd (d. 298/910). Nothing of this sort can be found in *Duties of the Heart*.

In conclusion, we see that placing *Duties of the Heart* in its the Andlusi context is fruitful and helpful. Along with Ibn Khamīs' work, Ibn Paquda's stand as the major evidence for the reception of Muḥāsibī's inward type of *zuhd* in al-Andalus. On the sometime, in addition, with Ibn Khamīs' work, as well as with works by Ibn Barrajān and others, *Duties of the Heart* supply us with evidence, that by the

later part of the eleventh and the beginning of the twelfth centuries, the reception of the Sufism among intellectual Andalusí circles was still in a rather early stage of its development.