

BOOK REVIEW

Ibn Khaldūn. *The Requirements of the Sufi Path: A Defense of the Mystical Tradition (Shifā' al-sā'il fī tadhhīb al-masā'il)*.

Edited and translated by Carolyn Baugh. New York: New York University Press, 2022.

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Scholars and practitioners of Sufism have penned various works uncovering the prevalent teachings of the Sufi tradition throughout centuries. Some of the major early works are Abū Naşr al-Sarrāj's (d. 378/988) *Kitāb al-Luma'*, Abu'l-Kāsim Ƙushayrī's (d. 465/1072) *al-Rasā'il al-Ƙushayriyya*, 'Alī b. 'Uthmān al-Hujwīrī's (d. 465/1072 [?]) *Kashf al-mahjūb*, and al-Ghazālī's (d. 505/1111) *Iḥyā' 'ulūm al-dīn*. Among these early works, *Iḥyā' 'ulūm al-dīn* stands out as an attempt to reconcile Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*) with Sufism, thereby uniting the *ẓāhirī* (exoteric) and *bāṭinī* (esoteric) sciences.

Ibn Khaldūn (d. 808/1406), best known as a historian and a sociologist, also contributed to the vast scholarship on Sufism. He penned a treatise on Islamic mysticism, called *Shifā' al-sā'il li-tadhhīb al-masā'il*, which he wrote toward the end of his life. This work was a response to a question posed to Ibn Khaldūn about whether one should follow a master (*shaykh*). In his response, Ibn Khaldūn focused on the importance of self-discipline and the conditions under which one could achieve spiritual progress through individual effort, emphasizing that while attachment to a *shaykh* is highly beneficial, it is not strictly obligatory for attaining piety and righteousness. The treatise has been a critical reference for scholars analyzing the intersection of Sufism with Islamic jurisprudence and theology and has served as a seminal source for scholars.

Shifā' al-sā'il li-tadhhīb al-masā'il has recently been edited and translated by Carolyn Baugh under the title *The Requirements of the Sufi Path*. It has been published in a bilingual edition as part of the Library of Arabic Literature series. Baugh teaches history at Gannon University in Erie, Pennsylvania. She previously published a monograph on Islamic Law titled *Minor Marriage in Early Islamic Law* (2017), focusing on child marriage. She is also the author of a novel titled *The View from Garden City*, in which she narrates a young American student's impressions of Cairo and the women she encounters in the district of Garden City.

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In the introduction to *The Requirements of the Sufi Path*, Baugh underscores Ibn Khaldūn's distinctive role as a historian, diplomat, and jurist, illuminating how his extensive experience in these fields enriched his sophisticated analysis of Sufism. The introduction also includes a section discussing various manuscripts of the work as well as previous editions and translations.

Ibn Khaldūn's work is structured into six meticulously crafted chapters, which Baugh translates masterfully. The first chapter focuses on the harmonious relationship between the internal and external aspects of piety, emphasizing the importance of inner rectitude for true salvation. The second chapter delves deeper into the internal aspects, explaining the concepts of the soul, intellect, and heart and the different types of knowledge, including the highest form of knowledge, which is often only attained after death. The third chapter outlines the three spiritual struggles: piety (*taqwā*), rectitude (*istiqāmah*), and unveiling and awareness (*kashf wa-ittilā'*), and it highlights the necessity of a Sufi guide for the latter. The fourth chapter refutes various groups that Ibn Khaldūn believes have strayed from true Sufism, mainly focusing on theophanists and lettrists. The fifth chapter discusses when a master's guidance is essential, noting that while not always obligatory, it becomes crucial for the highest levels of spiritual struggle. The sixth chapter addresses the practicalities of finding a Sufi master, asserting that while books and ordinary scholars can provide some guidance, they cannot substitute for the tutelage of an experienced master, particularly for advanced spiritual practices.

Ibn Khaldūn's *Shifā' al-sā'il* occupies a distinguished position in Sufi literature, particularly for its profound discourse on the necessity of a *shaykh*, and Baugh's translation is a welcome addition to the growing scholarship on primary Sufi works. The translation is grounded in meticulous scholarship, and her edition of the original Arabic relies primarily on two key Arabic manuscripts provided by the King Hasan Library of Rabat. Manuscript 5522, transcribed in 1730 from a 1413 manuscript, and Manuscript 12143, dated 1485, served as the foundational texts. Manuscript 5522, with its intact and well-ordered pages, was preferred due to its closer transcription lineage, having been penned merely ten years after Ibn Khaldūn's death. Baugh undertook the editorial work herself. She standardized orthographic inconsistencies and resolved lacunae through careful comparison with the Rabat manuscripts and previous editions by Muḥammad ibn Tāwīt al-Ṭanjī (Istanbul, 1958) and Muḥammad Muṭī' al-Hāfīz (Beirut, 1996).

Baugh's approach ensures a faithful and accurate representation of Ibn Khaldūn's text, and it addresses the complexities of Sufi terminology and jurisprudential arguments with scholarly precision. Her meticulous comparison of various manuscripts and editions ensures a robust scholarly foundation for her translation. This attention to detail is evident in her critical notes, which address discrepancies and provide valuable context for interpreting difficult passages. These notes

clarify ambiguities and highlight the translator's decisions and reasoning behind them, offering insights into the translation process. The inclusion of a critical apparatus, with cross-references and explanatory notes, greatly enhances the translation's use for academic purposes.

In addition to the main text, Baugh's translation includes a comprehensive glossary of names and terms, which enhances the reader's understanding of key concepts and figures referenced in the work. Moreover, Baugh has also curated a list of further readings, which offers a pathway for scholars and readers to delve deeper into the intricate realms of Sufism. Moreover, Baugh's translation is notably precise, capturing the original Arabic text's intricate theological and philosophical nuances. Her ability to convey the essence of Ibn Khaldūn's thought, especially in complex discussions about Sufism and its practices, demonstrates a deep understanding of both the source material and the target language. The translation maintains a high level of clarity and readability, which is essential given the subject matter's dense and often abstract nature. Baugh's choice of words and sentence structures ensures that the text is accessible to a broad audience, including those who may not be familiar with Islamic jurisprudence or Sufi terminology.

Baugh's use of established translations for critical terms, such as "Exclusive Oneness" for *aḥadiyya* and "Inclusive Oneness" for *wāḥidiyya*, reflects a commitment to accuracy and consistency. This approach helps maintain the integrity of the original concepts while rendering them understandable to readers. Baugh successfully renders complex concepts into clear English, which makes this translation accessible. Given the goal of the Library of Arabic Literature series as a venue to make available major works of the canon of Arabic literary and scholarly heritage, Baugh's translation and edition of *Shifā' al-sā'il* is befitting. The reader will not only appreciate the flowing style of the translation but will also benefit from the helpful apparatus. The careful edition of the Arabic original will be a boon to those interested in advancing their knowledge of both Ibn Khaldūn's corpus and fundamental works on Sufism.

The work was previously translated into Turkish by Suleyman Uludag (Istanbul, 1984), into French by René Perez (Paris, 1991), and into English by Youmna Adal for a doctoral dissertation (Indiana University, 1989). Highlighting improvements or differences with these previous translations in interpretation would have underscored the translation's scholarly value. Adding more annotations to explain the context and significance of specific Sufi terms and concepts could make the translation more accessible to readers unfamiliar with Sufism. These recommendations do not deflate the value of this successful translation. Baugh's translation and edition of the Arabic original are a valuable contribution to Islamic studies and the scholarship on Sufism. It will serve as a definitive work for both scholars and students, bridging the gap between academic rigor and accessibility.