INTRODUCTION

This dissertation is about the dreams and visions of the sufis of northern India who lived between the sixteenth and the eighteenth centuries. It is a study based on the hagiographies of the sufi shaikhs and other sufic literature composed during this period. The dream narratives contained in these texts are concerned with some of the major cultural themes of Islam in India. According to the internal perception of Islam dreams were considered sufficiently important so that a corpus of technical literature, called ta'birnamā, developed to interpret the dreams within its broader cultural framework. In this dissertation an attempt has been made to read the visionary experiences of the sufis through the analytical tools provided by the ta'birnamā and the perceptions of the sufis for an understanding of the role of the sufis in contemporary India.

I

Sufism in Northern India between the sixteenth and the eighteenth centuries: Trends in scholarship

Over the past five decades scholars of history and religion have produced a considerable corpus of literature on Indian Sufism which, broadly speaking, can be divided into two categories. The first category of writings includes histories that trace the evolution of institutional and ideological aspects of Sufism, while the second category of literature consists of monographs on personalities that exemplify certain trends in the
Sufism of the subcontinent. However, these two categories overlap, as problems regarding Indian Sufism remain the same.

The scope of historical writings on Sufism extends from intensive studies of individual mystic orders like K. A. Nizami’s Ta’rikh-i Mashāikh-i Chisht, to monumental surveys of Sufism in the subcontinent such S. A. A. Rizvi’s A History of Sufism in India.¹ A third category of sufi histories include regional studies like those done by Enamul Haqq, Richard Maxwell Eaton, A. Q. Rafiqi, Muhammad Sulayman Siddiqi, Carl Ernst, Abdul Latif and Muhammad Ishaq Khan.² In these works, the sufis have been regarded as an integral part of an evolving society in which an Indo-Muslim ruling establishment was imposed on an indigenous non-Muslim population. The scholars have explored how the sufis, belonging to different orders, interacted with the main components of the society in which they lived - the ‘ulamā’, the political elite and the non-Muslim population – against this background.³

Broadly speaking, the historian’s problems are structured by certain political and religious considerations. The history of Sufism in India is largely linked to the fortunes of

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¹ K. A. Nizami, Ta’rikh-i Mashāikh-i Chisht, 2 vols, Delhi, 1953; S. A. A. Rizvi, A History of Sufism in India in 2 vols. (Early Sufism and it’s History in India to A.D. 1600 and A History of Sufism in India), New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal; 19780-1983.
³ One of the earliest and till today a classic is K. A. Nizami’s treatment of these issues in his Some Aspects of Religion and Politics in India During the Thirteenth Century, Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1961. He was a trend setter and his interpretations were uncritically followed by subsequent scholars like S. A. A.
the Mughals during these centuries. In the sixteenth century Zahiruddin Babur came from the region of Mawara‘u ‘n-nahr (the land across the river Oxus) and founded the Mughal state in India. Through the next two centuries the Mughal emperors retained strong cultural links with their ancient homeland in Central Asia and its people. The imperial family remembered the devotion of Babur to one of the greatest Naqshbandi saints of Central Asia, Khwaja ‘Ubaidu’llah Ahrār and they maintained material and social relations with the lineages of the great Naqshbandi Khwaja Agān.\(^4\) It is then natural for modern scholars to explore the political dimensions of the Mughal-Naqshbandi relationship in the Indian context.\(^5\)

Despite overwhelming concern for the Naqshbandiya accounts of their activities are lopsided, as scholarly interest remained centered on two branches of the silsila headed by Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindī and Khwaja Khwurd respectively. An alternate pattern of Naqshbandī establishment has come in light in Simon Digby’s study of the Naqshbandī khānaqah (hospice) settled in Awrangābād by two immigrant Naqshbandī shaikhs from Ghujdawān, Bābā Palangposh and Bābā Shāh Musāfīr in the late seventeenth. Digby maintains that there is not even a single mention of Sirhindī’s revivifying influence in the

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Rizvi. A revised perspective about the political roles of the sufis is evident in the work of Eaton (see above) and Simon Digby (see below).


lodge. On the contrary antinomian practices of the Deccani Nashbandiya remind us of their Central Asian antecedents. However, it must not be assumed that the Naqshbandīs are the only significant sufi order that were functional in the subcontinent during these centuries. There were others like the Chishtī, Qādirī and Shāṭārī orders that have a significant role to play in this period as well.

Further, the treatment of Sufism in this period is framed within the context of the Islamic Millennium. The last quarter of the sixteenth century marked the end of the first thousand years of Islam. In Islamic historiography this event is characterized by a decline in the quality of religious life of the Muslim community and is associated with the community's anxieties regarding the inevitability of the Day of Judgement. In the Islamic world various possibilities were explored to avert the impending disaster. It was generally believed that the Muslim community could mitigate this disaster by alleviating its religious life under the leadership of a mahdī (guide) who was supposed to have appeared under these circumstances. This belief created an opportunity for ushering in several movements under charismatic leaders for the revival of Islam as it existed in the original days of Prophet Muhammad. Between the sixteenth and the eighteenth centuries, similar solutions were offered from within the subcontinent’s sufi traditions. One such tradition that predominates the writings on Indian Sufism, to the extent of exclusion of any other


response, is that of the silsila sponsored attempts at the revival of Islam in the movements of the Naqshbandiya and the Chishtiya. Historical writings on Indian Sufism have been framed within this context and can be illustrated through works of leading scholars like Rizvi and Friedmann.⁷

From the point of view of creativity of sufi thought nothing much can be said for this period on the basis of the existing secondary literature on the subject. Although the sufi authors had produced a wealth of works on both the theory and practice over the centuries, most of these writings have remained unstudied as modern scholars have focussed on social and political history and have shown little interest in the goals of the sufi authors themselves. However, the available literature on the theme indicates that a particular school of Akbarian philosophy has preoccupied studies on Mughal Sufism. During the reigns of Akbar and Jahangir (A.D. 1556-1628), numerous sufis were writing books and treatises that one may classify as belonging to the school of Ibn `Arabî (d. A.D. 1240).⁸ By this time, it was difficult to write anything on sufi theory without using the technical terminology of this school. This is not to say that all the authors had read the works of Ibn `Arabî or considered themselves as his followers, but rather, that this school


of thought had played a major role in shaping the intellectual language of the day. The well-known Naqshbandi Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi (d. A.D. 1624) is a case in point. Although he was critical of certain ideas of Ibn 'Arabî, his own writings are full of terminology and concepts developed by Ibn 'Arabî. On the other hand, mention may be made of Shaikh Muhibbullah Mubariz Ilahabadi, who died twenty-four years after Sirhindî in A.D. 1648 and is considered, among the many important sufi writers from the seventeenth century, as probably the most careful student of Ibn 'Arabî's works.\(^9\)

Ibn 'Arabî's entire system is generally designated by the term \textit{wahdat al wujud} (unity of being). Scholars have understood this concept in different ways. Some interpret the idea as 'pantheism' or 'monism', while others emphasize its non-pantheistic explanation.\(^10\) In the context of the subcontinent those who supported the ideas of \textit{wahdat al wujud} were considered promoters of Hindû-Muslim unity, while those who criticized Ibn 'Arabî and supported the alternate position on \textit{wahdat ash shuhud} (unity of witness) were considered as intolerant to the Hindûs.\(^11\) These views gave birth to two dominant trends in the writing of history on Sufism in India, which have been recognized as the 'conciliatory' and the 'orthodox' positions with respect to the \textit{wujudis} and \textit{shuhudis} respectively. Depending upon the primary ideological position of a sufi \textit{silsila} with

\(^9\) For the ideas of Muhibbullah Mubariz see S. A. A. Rizvi, \textit{Muslim Revivalist Movements in Northern India in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries}, op. cit., pp. 324-340.
\(^11\) S. A. A. Rizvi, \textit{Muslim Revivalist Movements in Northern India in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries}, op. cit.
respect to Ibn 'Arabī's doctrine, it is characterized as liberal or conservative in its attitude to the non-Islamic environment.

The effects of the debate between the wujūdīs and the suhūdīs were not confined to only the theological spheres but had serious repercussions in terms of the social worldview of the followers of the respective groups. The wujūdīs did not support religious differences and disputes and did not object even to idol worship or polytheism, so long as the object of worship was God Himself. At one level the wujūdī sympathy towards a more tolerant form of Islam is reflected in the poetic compositions of the sufis in regional languages, such as Sindhi, Punjabi, Awadhī, Bangla and Urdu. The shuhūdīs on the other hand, asserted superiority of Sunnīsm not only over Shi'ism but, also over other religious communities. To them Islam was not only the antithesis of Hinduism but could survive only at the cost of the latter. Thus, the honour of Islam, according to Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindī, required humiliation of the infidels through imposition of jizya and cow slaughter.

This brings us to the second category of modern scholarship on Indian Sufism which is dedicated to sufi personalities that exemplify the 'orthodox' and the 'conciliatory' trends. Perhaps, the most representative of this category are the writings of Saiyid Athar Abbas Rizvi who argues the case for both the trends in two separate monographs. The Muslim Revivalist Movements in Northern India in the Sixteenth and

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12 For the influence of the wujūdī ideas in the vernacular compositions of the sufis see A. Schimmel, "The Vernacular Tradition in Persianate Sufi Poetry in Mughal India" in The Heritage of Sufism, vol. 3, op. cit., pp. 417-434.

Seventeenth Centuries is an analysis of the movement of Saiyid Muhammad Jaunpurī and Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindī, who worked for Islamic revivalism. Rizvi’s other work, Shah Wali Allāh and His Times: A Study of Eighteen Century Islam, Politics, and Society in India, reflects the Naqshbandī wujūdī ideas of tatbīq (conciliation). The above concerns are also found to be central to the studies of scholars like H. T. Sorley, G. N. Jalbani, Yohanan Friedmann, Annemarie Schimmel and J. M. S. Baljon.

Although this framework of study has remained constant, there has been a noticeable shift in the focus of scholarly literature on the sufis. The writings of two scholars deserve special mention. Simon Digby has helped to remodel the stereotype image of the sufi which is often identified with dominant styles of behaviour associated with a silsila. Digby has stimulated interest in sufi texts in a unique manner by providing interpretations of anecdotal material related to the world of sufi miracles that was largely ignored in some other serious scholarly efforts on the subject. Richard Eaton, on the other hand, locates different roles for the sufis of Bijāpur in the Deccani

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society. He has also investigated the role of the sufis in the conversion of the local population in the regions of Punjāb, Deccan and Bengāl. Both scholars represent a change in that the emphasis shifts from the sufi stereotypes emulating scriptural texts and displaying consistent characteristic patterns of conduct to a relocation of concern. This concern delineates the multidimensional and changing personality of the sufi orders and Sufism over time and is studied by using the sufi ideological content and the manner in which it was moulded by a variety of factors such as the political, ideological and geographical environments of the subcontinent.

However, irrespective of the changing focus mentioned above, the two main trends of the 'orthodox' and the 'conciliatory' - that dominate the writings on Indian Sufism between the sixteenth and the eighteenth centuries. While the 'orthodox' trend wished to preserve Islam in its pure form and strove to protect it from encroachment of indigenous customs and beliefs, the ‘conciliatory’ trend represented the need to find a common denominator for the Hindūs and the Muslims, thereby establishing a mutually acceptable modus vivendi for their respective adherents. In other words, one of the standard issues concerning Mughal Sufism is the extent of cultural synthesis which is treated as analogous to the religious idiocyncracies of the Mughal kings. Thus, the reigns

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18 See Richard Eaton’s The Sufis of Bijapur 1300 – 1700: The Social Roles of Sufis in Medieval India, op. cit.
of Akbar, Jahāngīr and Shāh Jahān saw the co-mingling of the Hindū and Muslim traditions, on account of their liberal attitudes. However, during the reign of Awrangzeb, on account of the personal religious interests of the emperor and India’s improved contacts with the Hijaz, the attitude to non-Muslim cultural influences and eclecticism in general became rigid. State patronage was extended to the ‘ulamā’ and works on law, rather than to works of art that would reflect the synthesis of mystical elements in general to a wider public. Throughout these centuries an increase in intensity of Sunnī-Shī‘a polemics led to the worsening of enmity between Shi‘a leaders and the sufis, which culminated in the anti-Sunnī and anti-sufi movement led by Dildār ‘Alī (A.D. 1752-1819). At the end of the eighteenth century this movement culminated in the complete breakaway of Shi‘as of Lakhnau and Delhi with Sufism and its institutions.20

This stringent attitude marks a prelude to the eleventh hijrī / eighteenth milādī century in Muslim history which poses a number of problems. Traditionally, historians narrating the history of Muslim civilization have seen it as a period of stagnation and decline before the encounter with European forces and ideas which encouraged reform. In terms of Sufism, the period is considered as ‘baroque’21 in the sense of a flowering and confluence of a number of intellectual styles, but also the last gasp before the decline into

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popularization and saint cults. In this historiographical presentation the remedy for the ailing Muslim community was offered by Shāh Wālī Allāh’s movement.

Preoccupation with questions of revival, reform, and Hindū-Muslim rapprochement has led to the neglect of certain issues that are quintessential in the formation and acceptance of mystic personalities in Islam. Here, I refer to the sufi experiences of dreams and visions that are an ubiquitous phenomenon in Sufism, irrespective of ideological leanings, sectarian affiliations and silsila associations of the sufis. This is not to imply that discussion on these aspects of sufi imagination are altogether absent in secondary literature, but references are incidental in works of scholars who wished to construct a descriptive history of the sufis from such accounts. Even such histories remain incomplete, as they do not take the Uwaisīs into account. The Uwaisī phenomenon is part of a larger theme of sufi dreams and visions that I propose to study.

I have argued elsewhere that the mystical experiences of dreams and visions constitute an integral source of authority for the sufis. I had illustrated this hypothesis with anecdotes from the Classical and Medieval Islamic Civilizations of South Asia, Central Asia, Africa and Arabia. It was my submission that the mystical experience constitutes the essence of the sufi shakhshiyat (personality) and accounts for the sufi’s authoritative assumptions. This inward mystical experience, which links the sufi with the

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22 S. A. A. Rizvi’s, Shāh Wālī Allāh and His Times, op. cit.; Muhammad Umar, Islam in Northern India During the Eighteenth Century, New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1993.

supernatural world, becomes manifest in the behavioural peculiarities of a sufi; it is also manifest in the sufi’s interaction with individuals both within and outside the sufi community. The society’s belief in the supernatural element creates an opportunity for the sufi to exercise his influence in the mundane affairs of the people, thus re-enforcing his authority. On the basis of this understanding of the sufi visionary experience, I have made an attempt to read the dream narratives accounted for in the hagiographies of the sufis who lived between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries in the northern part of the subcontinent.

II

Understanding the Dream in Islam: Traditions and Interpretations

Since I propose to read sufi dreams within the cultural matrix of Islam, I have introduced my theme with a discussion about the classical tradition of the dream in Islam as it is preserved in the oneiric manuals called ta’bīrnama. The sufis, however, had a distinct perception of dreaming and, consequently, offered a particular interpretation for the phenomenon. But this does not mean that the sufis disagreed with the tradition of the ta’bīrnama. In fact, the sufis often used the analytical tools of ta’bīr manuals to interpret their experience. Yet, there were variations in the sufi’s interpretation of certain dream symbols from the meanings expressed in the ta’bīrnama. But such modifications were permissible within the methodological system of the oneiric texts. However, it is with respect to the philosophical understanding of the dream that sufis offered a radical stance.

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24 Meenakshi Khanna, “Kashf, Manām and Karāma: Aspects of Sūfī Experience and Sūfī Source of
Just as the scholars of Islamic religion and philosophy explained the dream as a function of the human imagination, so did the sufis. But, unlike other thinkers, the sufis granted an ontological existence to the realm of imagination, thereby securing a physical reality for their visionary experience.

In the first Chapter of this dissertation I have studied the evolution of ta'bîr (literally, interpretation of dream) tradition by tracing its antecedents to the pre-Islamic Semitic past of the Arab world where the dreams had a tremendous significance, primarily, as a source of divination. With the coming of Islam these traditions acquired acceptibility through the Quranic references to dreams. Further, legitimacy was granted to the dream and the practice of dream interpretation in the traditions of Prophet Muhammad (ahâdis, singular = ḥadîṣ). According, to one of these traditions after Muhammad's prophecy came to an end, good/true dreams were the bearers of good tidings. Further, dreams were considered as a forty-sixth part of prophecy. The Prophet's tradition also verifies that a vision of the Prophet in a dream is deemed equal to his actual appearance. In other words, whatever the Prophet said or did in the dream was granted a status akin to ḥadîṣ. A similar kind of valuation was presumed for dreams in which the deceased appeared. Dreams, therefore, possessed a tremendous source of authority in Islam.

On the basis of the above features, along with the influences of the Greek oneiric tradition, available in Arabic translations, the Arab Islamic world started compiling
manuscripts of dreams were classified as *ta`bīr nāma* in their Persian origination. In this Chapter I have traced the evolution of this textual tradition.

In the second Chapter I have elaborated on the principles of taxonomy and methodology of interpretation of dreams as defined in the tradition of the *ta`bīr nāma*. With regard to their origin dreams are divided into three kinds: dreams inspired by God; those suggested by the whispering of the Satan; and those caused by the dysfunctionality of bodily organisms. As the causation of dreams is given, Muslim oneiromancers concentrate on the classification and methodology of dream interpretation. The first category of dreams comprise of good, sound or true dreams that are known as *ru'yā*, *manām* or *ahkām*. The second category comprises of dreams which are 'confused' in nature and are known as *azghāsu`l ahlām*. According to the basic precepts of Muslim oneiromancy only the good dreams are worthy of interpretation.

With regard to the interpretation (*ta`bīr*) of dreams, various methods have been described in the dream manuals which also enumerate numerous requirements for the interpreter (*mu`abbir*). But the most interesting feature, that has bearing on this study, is that the principles of oneiromancy are changeable according to the person who dreams, his beliefs, profession and ambitions and also the time and period of dreaming. It is this flexibility which allowed the sufis to offer expositions that were different, sometimes even divergent, from the stylized interpretation of symbols in the oneiric manuals.

The extraordinary experiences of the sufis belong to the realm of imagination. Muslim philosophers and mystics have been intrigued by it and have evolved an elaborate notion of *`ālam -i miṣāl* or the world of idea-images to explain imagination. The genesis
of the idea of 'ālam-i miṣāl can be traced to Platonian and Iranian concepts of cosmology according to which the cosmos is divided in distinct spheres of existence. The highest sphere of existence is the world of absolute divine transcendence and the lowest sphere is the world of sensual perceptions. In between these two spheres is the world of mind or ideas. This theory was developed by the mystics and philosophers of Islam who explained prophetic revelation, mystical experience and certain eschatological doctrines through this concept.

In their prophetology, the Muslim philosophers have laid great emphasis on the function of imagination in prophetic revelation. The human soul provided it is pure and strong enough, can contact the unseen in waking life as well as in dreams. All that is required to achieve this is a withdrawal of the soul from the tumult of sensory life. But just as in dreams the role of imagination is fundamental and transforms purely spiritual truths into symbols, similarly in waking life when a prophet receives revelation, it becomes clothed in form of images and figures. Just as dreams require interpretation (ta‘bīr), so does revelation require a symbolic interpretation (ta‘wīl). Through this process the prophetic word is carried back to its original esoteric sense. Therefore, between the reality of the revealed word and the knowledge of what it reveals there is a world of symbols or 'ālam-i miṣāl.

The philosophers did not accord an ontological status to this world outside the experiencing body. The ontological reality of the images was first effected within Sufism and is an attempt to explain certain dogmatic beliefs, particularly of an eschatological nature. Al-Ghazālī (d. A.D. 1111) was the first to effect this transition and finally it was
Shihābuddīn Suhrawardī (d. A.D. 1191) who formally announced the existence of a new world between the physical and spiritual spheres of existence.

The various dimensions of the human imagination have been explained in the structure of Ibn `Arabī's cosmology (d. A.D. 1240). I have already made a mention of the immense influence of Ibn `Arabī's thought on Indian Sufism. In the sufi literature used for this study, I have often come across terms and references which indicate that Ibn `Arabī's ideas were frequently sought for, even if inaccurately expressed, to explain issues related to the sphere of imagination. In this Chapter I have discussed the evolution of the notion of `ālam-i mišāl and its application in the ideas of a leading theologian and mystic of the eighteenth century, Shāh Wali Allāh Dihlawī.

The third Chapter of this dissertation is devoted to a study of sufi dream narratives as described in the sufi literature of the period under study. In these writings the sufi visionary experience is referred to as – ḥāwb, manām, ru`yā and wāqi`a. Technically speaking, in the language of the sufis, these terms qualify two different types of visionary experience which, however, have been interpreted under the blanket term of dreaming. Standard sufi texts like the Kashf al mabjūb and the `Awārif al Ma`ārif make a clear distinction between two types of visionary experience, namely – dream and vision. A Kubrawī sufi, Najmuddīn Rāzī (A.D. 1171-1256) in his compendium, Mirṣād al `ibād min al mabdā` ila`l ma`ād, which was compiled in Anatolia and was much used in Iran, Central Asia, Turkey and Hindūstān, has defined the difference between the dream and vision with respect to their form and the meaning. A vision is seen between sleep and
wakefulness and results from the experience of a mystical state called *kashf* (literally, unveiling) when the imagination ceases to function. Dream, on the other hand, is a function of sleep and occurs when imagination begins to operate. In sufi sources the vision is referred to as *wāqi‘a*, while the dream is mentioned as *khwāb*, *manām* or *ru’yā*. The plausibility of either kind of experience is explained in terms of the ‘ālam-i misāl.

Sufi dreams and visions are part of their miracles (*karāmāt*). A simple translation of *karāmāt* as ‘miracles’ is ambiguous because Islamic tradition attributes miracles to the prophets which are distinct from and superior to those of the sufi *auliyā‘* (friends of God). While the former are known as *mu‘jizāt* (singular, *mu‘jiza*), the latter are called *karāmāt* (singular, *karāmat*). In the sixteenth century an Egyptian hagiologist, al Munāwī (A.D. 1545-1621), in his introduction to *Al-kawākib al-durrīya fi tarājim al ṣadāt al ṣūfīya* has discussed the privilege of having *karāmāt*, among which he mentions clear and true dreams (*al-ru’yā al-ṣāliha al-ṣādiqa*). The text is divided into *tabaqā* (layers) and each *tabaqā* is arranged alphabetically. Dreams are cited in almost every biographical notice, along with other miracles. By doing this, al Munāwī suggests that the ability to have good dreams may serve as an indicator of the piety of the biographee. In al Munāwī we can identify the sufi perception of the dream as a part of the miraculous. This expression is echoed in the *Hama’at* of Shāh Wali Allāh Dīhlawī who has explained the divinatory function of the dreams and visions in terms of the *karāmāt*.

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In a study of Moroccan Islam Ignaz Goldziher has referred to the ‘provincial peculiarities’ of a Maghribī sufī saint who while wandering through the desert might stick his staff into the ground and make a spring gush out, make bush vegetation appear, and consequently the zāwīya (hospice) of the saint is found in close proximity. What Goldziher has proposed for the African sufī’s miracles also holds true for sufī dreams of the subcontinent. I may mention here the environment specific visions of the subcontinent’s sufīs in which Hindū gods and goddesses appear. For example, in the Khairu’l bayān (also known as Baṭhru’l ābrār), which is the compilation of the miracles of a sixteenth century Qādirī sufī Abū ‘Abdu’llāh Shāh ‘Abdu’l Razzāq, there is an anecdote wherein this shaikh had a conversation with Devī Gangā on his visit to the house of a Pandit in Hastināpur. The goddess forewarned him about a forthcoming deluge in the Gangā. Environment specific variants are also cited in Manāqib-i Razzāqiya about another Qādirī shaikh, Shāh ‘Abdu’r Razzāq, of Bānsā in Lakhnau who lived in the late seventeenth and the early eighteenth centuries. He had become friendly with two bairāgīs, Chaitrām and Pārasrām. In a Krishna Bhaktī dance-drama organized by Chaitrām, Bānsawī fell into a trance and claimed Krishna to be present there. Some Hindū followers present there requested their gurū (teacher) for a darshan (vision) of Krishna. The teacher, however, guided them to Bānsawī for the vision of the Lord.

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The dream narratives of the sufis are like a screen on which the events of the daily life of the dreamer are projected. Thus, dream descriptions reveal a multitude of relationships both within and outside the sufi community. At the same time certain concerns that dominate studies of Sufism in this period find a reference here. One such aspect is the interaction between the Hindūs and the Muslims. The subcontinent has a long history of dreams that is traced back to the Vedic tradition. This meant that the dream provided an excellent point of contact for religious intermixing which has often been the beginning of conversion.

Medieval scholars have wondered about the nature of Hindū-Muslim interaction through a study of Persian translations of Sanskrit works. Of these translations the Laghūyogvāshiśa has a special relevance for the study of dreams. This is a text of Hindū philosophy, which originally contained thirty two thousand verses. This work was summarized to six thousand by Abhinanda, a Gauda Brāhmaṇa, who hailed from Kashmir. The earliest extant Persian translation of the Laghūyogvāshiśa was done during the reign of Akbar. A few decades later Dārā Shukoh commissioned a fresh translation of the Laghūyogavāshiśa identified as Tarjuma ‘i Jogabāhista. In the preface to the Tarjuma ‘i Jogabāhista the translator describes the circumstance responsible for his work. Although earlier translations of this work were extant and Dārā Shukoh had himself profitted from an earlier translation by Shaikh Sufi Sharīf Kūbhāhānī, the chief reason for ordering a re-

29 An illustrated copy of this work dated A.D. 1602 is kept in the Chester Beatty Library in Dublin. The illustrations are also signed by the painters of Akbar’s reign. Fourteen illustrations with inscriptions are narratives from stories about dreams, myths and illusions which are used by the translator of Akbar’s Laghūyogvāshiśa to illustrate the Vedantist philosophy. These illustrations have been reproduced by
translation was Dārā’s dream which is related by the Prince himself. At a glance this dream is a perfect representation of the ‘conciliatory’ trend in seventeenth century South Asian Islam.

The stories of the miraculous deeds of the sufis are situated in a historical context as they deal with historical personalities. However, these stories are rooted in biographical literature and present an exaggerated version. Nevertheless, what is important is the relation between those who are involved in the drama of the anecdote, and those who witness or give an audience to the narration of these stories. The anecdotes are often an exercise in the image building of the shaikh and express the nature of influence enjoyed by him in the society. So far scholars have overlooked the possibility of dreams as a means of securing legitimation for social, political, and religious actions in the medieval milieu. I propose to indicate the relevance of the same by citing evidence from my sources.

III

The Legend of Uwais Qaranī and the Uwaisī Tradition

In the recent years, scholars have understood the Uwaisī phenomenon in Central Asia as one of the dimensions of Islamization in that region. Although, occasionally, we come across references to the Uwaisī sufis in the subcontinent, as such, there has been no particular study devoted to them. In this dissertation I have explored certain aspects of the Uwaisī phenomenon as it evolved in the northern part of the subcontinent between the sixteenth and the eighteenth centuries. Since the Uwaisīs represent an organizational

pattern distinct from the *silsila*, visionary experiences have a distinct significance in their discipline. I have developed this theme in the course of three chapters.

There is a striking and colourful figure of Uwais Qaranî in the Islamic tradition. The oldest biographies of the Prophet do not mention him and this gave substance to the view that he never existed. Nevertheless, the legend of Uwais has developed around the records of the Prophet’s traditions and hagiographical accounts of the sufis. There are several characteristics attributed to Uwais in these collections and the primary one is about Uwais Qaranî’s association with the Prophet through extra-physical means. It is said that the two had never met but Uwais had imbibed the religion and the custom of the Prophet to perfection. Uwais is ascribed the status of the best of tâbi’î (someone who had not seen the Prophet but had met one of his companions). His legend states that the Prophet had requested him to pray for the salvation of the Muslims and therefore, Uwais’ intercession is desired on the Day of Judgement. Uwais’ physical appearance is much talked about in the Islamic literature where he is depicted as a poor, often, naked and shoeless person who is mocked by the society and hence preferred seclusion. The behavioural aspect of his character included an element of the majnû (here, the holy fool) who was overcome with love for God; and an intuitive sense which enabled a foreknowledge of events for him. These features are responsible for the evolution of the legendary personality of Uwais Qaranî who is the symbol of spiritual guidance and devotion for the Muslim community. For the sufis Uwais Qaranî exemplified a method of acquiring an association with a spiritual preceptor from a distance. Those who adopted this style of practice were known as Uwaisîs.
Despite the widespread veneration attributed to Uwais Qaranî, little research has been done on him. The first edition of the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* failed to include an essay on him. About three decades ago A. S. Hussaini had discussed the Islamic biographical, traditionist and sufi positions on Uwais Qaranî and the Uwaisî sufis. More recently, Julian Baldick and Devin DeWeese have explored the concept of the Uwaisî sufis in Central Asia where discussion of the Uwaisî spiritual type is supplemented by frequent identification of particular figures of Uwaisî saints. Baldick has studied the Uwaisî tradition in the sixteenth century East Turkistan through an analysis of the *Tażkira 'i Uwaisiya* or *Tażkira 'i Bughrâ Khânî* in which the compiler, Ahmad Uzganî, has presented the history of an imaginary sufi order of the Uwaisîs. Baldick has observed elements of Shamanistic, ecstatic and undisciplined mysticism, alongwith persistence of dominant Turkish themes in the biographies of Uzganî’s Uwaisîs. Devin DeWeese, on the other hand, has explored the Uwaisî dimension in the Timurid Māwarā’u’n-nahr through the study of an Uwaisî sufi, Saiyid Ahmad Bashīrī, and his biography the *Hasht hādiqa*. I have presented the legend of Uwais Qaranî and have discussed the notion of the Uwaisî sufis in the fourth Chapter of this dissertation. However, the notion of the Uwaisî is not stagnant and has evolved over a period of time,

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showing considerable variations in response to the diverse socio-cultural environment available in different regions of the Islamic world.

The Uwaisī tradition acquired a new significance with the appropriation of its initiation techniques by the Naqshbandī silsila of the Central Asian Khwājagān in the fourteenth century under Shaikh Bahā'uddīn Naqshband who claimed spiritual connection or rūḥāniyat with the spirit of the dead Uwaisī elder 'Abd'ul Khāliq Ghujdawānī (d.1179). The Naqshbandīs regularized the Uwaisī phenomenon into their practice and this created a distinct space for certain type of visionary experience which is identified as bearing the Uwaisī motif. The Naqshbandīs of the subcontinent have elaborated on the function of the Uwaisī nisbat (association) in their practice. In the fifth Chapter I have traced the growing influence of this tradition within the Naqshbandī silsila between the sixteenth and the eighteenth centuries.

The notion of the Uwaisī also developed independently of the support of a parent silsila, which is evident in attempts at formulation of an independent silsila of the Uwaisiya. Through the study of a hand-book for the Uwaisī sufis, the Laṭā'if-i nafigiya dar faṣā'il-i Uwaisiya, which was authored by one Ahmad Chenābī, I have tried to initiate a discussion about the process of silsila formulation in the case of the Uwaisīs. From the seventeenth century onwards there is a more frequent mention of the Uwaisīs in hagiographical dictionaries compiled in the northern part of the subcontinent. The evidence for the Uwaisī phenomenon as it developed in this region is quite different from the type offered in the case of Central Asian source the Tażkira'i Bughrā Khānī. In the

course of my discussions I have tried to read this contrast in Uwaisī traditions within the larger framework of Islam as it developed in different lands. The Uwaisī tradition also highlights the story of the missing links between the South Asian Sufism and its Central Asian and Turkish counterparts that have surfaced in an important way in recent scholarship.34

One of the major scholarly concerns in the writings on Indian Sufism, as mentioned above, is the problem of the Islamic Millennium and the Naqshbandī response to this problem. Since the basic guideline for any attempt at the revival of Islam was an emphasis on a close imitation of the Prophet’s actions for every faithful Muslim, this resulted in the rejuvenating of the veneration of the Prophet of Islam.35 It is in this context that an alternate response to the problem of the Islamic Millennium may be identified in the activities of certain sufis who lay outside the fold of the silsila. Such is the case of an Uwaisī sufi, Saiyid Ḥasan ‘Rasūlnumā’, who lived in the seventeenth century Mughal capital of Shāhjahanābād. He did not claim a link with the Prophet Muhammad through the mediation of a spiritual genealogy of a silsila. Instead he avowed a direct connection with the Prophet through the medium of his visions and dreams. His hagiographer relates a dream in which Prophet Muhammad consecrated Saiyid Ḥasan with the status of Uwais Qaranī. Looking back at the legend of Uwais wherein he is portrayed as an intercessor

34 Certain aspects of Turkish Sufism that came under the garb of the Naqshbandiya and Qādiriya have been ignored. Pointing toward this aberration, the Turkologist, Thierry Zarcone argues for the case of the Yasawīya (spiritual descendants of Ahmad Yasawī d. A.D.1167) who date back in India to the thirteenth century. Although the existence of an organized Yasawīya silsila is doubtful, it is argued that the Yasawīya were alive in the branches of the Naqshbandiya and Qādiriya through the presence of Central Asian immigrants like Shaikh Sharīf Muhammad al Hindi and ’Abdū’l Wāḥhab Khwāja Ḥāfīz Ahmad Yasawī Naqshbandī (d.1704) in Hindīstān; also see T. Zarcone, “Turkish Sufism in India: The Case of the Yasawīya” in F. ‘Nalini’ Delvoye, edited, Confluence of Cultures: French Contributions to Indo-Persian Studies, New Delhi: Manohar, 1994, pp. 82-92; idem, “Central Asian Influence on the Early Development of the Chishtī order in India” in M. Alam, Françoise ‘Nalini’ Delvoye and M. Gaborieau, edited, The Making of Indo-Persian Culture, New Delhi: Manohar, 2000, pp. 99-116.

35 On the evolution of the veneration of the Prophet from the earliest times see Annemarie Schimmel, Mystical Dimensions of Islam, op. cit., pp. 213-227.
for the Community on the Day of Judgement, Saiyid Ḥasan’s consecration as Uwais has a tremendous significance in the beginning of the second millennium of Islam. Saiyid Ḥasan is the *Uwais-i sānī* or ‘Second Uwais’ of the second millennium of Islam. Saiyid Ḥasan ‘Rasūlnumā’ is an able guide to the Prophet on account of his extraordinary ability to evoke the vision of Prophet Muhammad for those who desired his intercession. In the sixth Chapter of this dissertation I have explored the life and visions of Saiyid Ḥasan ‘Rasūlnumā’ as described by his hagiographer, Mīr Muhammad Hāshim, in the *Fawā'īh al irfān* which is also known as the *Manāqib-i Saiyid Ḥasan Rasūlnumā*.

IV

*Treatment of sufi dreams in modern scholarship*

Islamic civilization’s intense concern for the dream is reflected in the numerous accounts of dream narratives preserved in different genre of literature relating to Quranic material, traditions of the Prophet, juridical works, histories, biographical literature, compilations on rules of conduct, philosophical texts, sufi works, and in manuals on *ta‘ḥīr* or texts dedicated exclusively to recording and interpretation of dreams. An examination of these works reveals that there is hardly any field in the life of the Islamic community and the individual where the dream does not play a part. Since the nineteenth century, Islamic scholars, in a wide range of studies, have stressed the role of dreams in the Muslim community. Most of these studies concentrate on the interpretation of dreams, their reliability as a source of supernatural knowledge, as well as their position as a
legitimate source of authority in Islam. Nevertheless, there are still aspects of this subject that require further elaboration. One such theme is the application of dreams in Sufi biographical literature. What are the different kinds of dreams identified in these

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texts? What is the significance of the ‘Uwaisi’ motif in sufi dreams? How do the sufis perceive their dreams? Do dreams respond to specific environments? What is the society’s perception of the mystic’s visionary experience? These questions will provide the framework within which I shall try and understand the significance of dreams in some sufi texts that were compiled in the subcontinent between ca. (1500 to 1800) A.D.

The opinion of modern scholars on this aspect of sufi experience varies considerably. In 1832 John Russell Colvin had written an article about the principal tenets of Saiyid Ahmad Barelwī (A.D. 1876-1831) on the basis of the Şirāṭuʾl mustaqīm that was compiled by Maulawī Muhammad Ismāʿīl, the foremost disciple of the Saiyid. 38 In his discussion of Saiyid Ahmad’s views on Sufism Colvin had provided a literal translation of some of his dream-visions mentioned in the epilogue of the Şirāṭuʾl mustaqīm. The text states that after an external initiation into the Naqshbandī silsila at the hands of Shaikh ʿAbduʾl ʿAzīz (d. A.D. 1824) at Delhi, he had his real initiation in a supernatural way, as is translated by Colvin:

...by the propitious effects and influence (Barakāt-i tawajjūhāt) of the enlightened spirit of his instructor, the concealed excellencies of his [Saiyid Ahmad] nature developed themselves into a rapid succession of wonders. Of these, the first was that he saw the Prophet himself in a dream, who fed him with three dates in succession, which


circumstance he knew to be true from the effect which he found to be remaining (on his palate, it is to be supposed) when he woke. This was the commencement of his progress into the Tariq i nabûwat.39

In successive visions he was visited by ʿAlī and Fāṭima, two dominant figures of the Muslim iconography. In another series of visions he was initiated into the Tariq-i walāyat (way of the friends of God) directly by the founders of each of the three orders: ʿAbdu’l Qādir Jilānī, Bahaʾuddin Naqshband and Qutbuddin Bakhtiyār Kākī.40

Colvin’s attitude towards these visions was extremely reductive and dismissive: “The above is a sufficient specimen of the extravagances of enthusiasm and imposture that pervade the book”.41 About a hundred and fifty years later, when Mohiuddin Ahmad wrote his monograph on the life and mission of Saiyid Ahmad Barelwī, he did not mention these visions which might be a cause of embarrassment to the modern readers.42 And even Rizvi, who gives the most detailed summary of the Sirātū l mustaqīm, does not incorporate this epilogue.43 In fact, in the context of Sufism, dreams and visions are to be taken seriously and are considered by the people involved as true revelation from the other world. Saiyid Ahmad was not doing anything new by claiming a direct or ‘real’ initiation from the other world. He was simply following a pattern of an alternate style of sufi initiation norms that did not require the intermediation of a shaikh. In Sufism this situation is technically defined as Uwaisī nisbat or Uwaisī association between the initiate

39 Ibid., p. 496.
40 Ibid., pp. 496-498.
41 Ibid., p. 498.
and his unseen master. One of the major thrusts of this thesis is to explore the significance of the dreams and visions of the Uwaisī sufis.

Some other scholars, who have not adopted a dismissive approach to mystical experiences of the sufis, have tried to explain sufic causation in accordance to the principles of ‘rational’ science prevailing in their own day. One attempt in this direction was made by the Islamicist Duncan Black MacDonald who tried to locate a rational explanation for the Muslim belief in the “reality of the supernatural” and the latent capacity of mankind to perceive that reality. He was sympathetic to the claims of telekinesis and telepathy, and was interested in the work of Society for Psychical Research. MacDonald thus tried to locate “interpretative analogies” in paranormal research as developed in the West to explain such phenomenon:

The case of Muhammad himself, for example, can be indefinitely more completely illustrated and explained in the phenomena of so called trance-mediumship than by any other hypothesis... And it is noteworthy, further, that the theory of veridical hallucinations worked out by Gurney and Myers is essentially that of al-Ghazālī and Ibn Khaldūn.⁴⁴

MacDonald continues in the same note, drawing parallels between a certain Dr. Maxwell’s telekinesis (movement of objects at a distance without contact) and the miracles of the sufis. He described what he regarded as a remarkably modern concept of “subliminal selves” found in the Muqaddima of Ibn Khaldūn. By making a connection between the medieval Islamic intellectual position on human psychology as represented by Ibn Khaldūn on the one hand and the more modern doctrine of the working of the

different selves on the other, MacDonald tried to explain the occurrence of the veridical dreams in Islam. MacDonald's approach, in contrast to J. R. Colvin's, was sympathetic but, like the Muslim intellectuals he had studied, his understanding of mystical experience was guided by the need to prove its rationality in the language of the century he lived in.

The publication of Sigmund Freud's *Traumdeutung (The Interpretation of Dreams)* in 1900 offered a new tool – psychoanalysis – to the scholars for an understanding of the mysteries of human mind. With the growing popularity of psychoanalysis as a tool of interpretation, another attempt was made to ‘rationalize’ mystical experiences in terms of contemporary intellectual practice. Here I cite the example of a Swiss-German Islamologist, Fritz Meier, who made an attempt topsychologize Sufism by explaining mystical experience in terms of two constituent elements of the human psyche – the ‘conscious’ and the ‘unconscious’. In his study of Najmuddin Kubra (A.D. 1145-1221), founder of the Kubrawi silsila in Central Asia, Meier failed to appreciate the symbolism of Kubra's visionary experience and tried to establish an alleged similarity between the experience of a sufi and a schizophrenic. However, the only saving grace that Meier allows the mystic is that the sufi possesses a certain freedom of mind and knows the spiritual state in which he finds himself, while the

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one who is mentally ailing remains conditioned by his ailment and cannot make a
distinction between reality and “super reality”.47

However, if dreams and visions are reduced to projections of the unconscious,
these are likely to be highly individualistic and do not explain the appearance of the same
motif in the visions of several sufis separated by distance of time and space. Besides, the
psychological understanding of the individual in Sufism is different from the
psychological conceptualization of the human psyche in terms of a tripartite division.
For the psychoanalyst, dreams and visions result from the workings of the ‘unconscious’
mind. But for a sufi, these are manifestations that occur to his ‘supraconscious’ self,
which is not a psychoanalytical category. Perhaps, the psychological interpretation that
comes close to explaining sufi visions and dreams is the Jungian concept of archetypal
images located in the cultural context, in this case of Islamic spirituality. But this
approach is yet to be adopted in a significant study of sufi dreams.

The psychoanalytical approach is, however, not altogether missing in the
introspection of sufi dreams. For instance, in a more recent work, Jonathan G. Katz has
made a study of an extraordinary dream diary of a fifteenth century Algerian sufi
Muhammad al Zawāwī.48 In this diary, which is known as the Tuhfat al nāẓir wa nuzhat
al munāẓir, Zawāwī has kept a record of one hundred and nine dream conversations he
had with the Prophet. The Tuhfa has been studied against the socio-cultural background
of fifteenth century north Africa, which was a period marked by two significant
developments in Islamic society. In addition to the proliferation of the turūq (orders) and

47 See Fritz Meier’s introduction to Najmuddin Kubrā’s Arabic treatise that has been edited by Meier, Die
Fawā’īh al-Gamāl wa-Fawā’īh al-Galāl des Nagm ad-dīn Kubrā, Akademie der Wissenschaften und der
114. I am grateful to Fr. Leonard Fernando, S. J for translating the relevant passages for me.
48 Jonathan G. Katz, Dreams, Sufism and Sainthood: The Visionary Career of Muhammad al-Zawāwī, op.
cit.
the increased social prestige of the *auliyā*’, the fifteenth century marked an inauguration of the renewed veneration of the Prophet Muhammad and his descendants, the *shurafā’*. Katz has characterized Zawāwī as a would-be *wali* or a failed saint against this background.

One conclusion that Katz draws from the reading of the *Tuhfa* is that Zawāwī was delusional, but this fact in itself did not preclude Katz’s acceptance of Zawāwī as a saint. Indeed holy mania, whether genuine or feigned, has a long tradition in Islam, as in other religions. Michael Dols’ study of insanity in the medieval Muslim society suggests that it could be an asset for any aspiring holy man. 49 Zawāwī was not a *majzūb*, 50 an inspired ecstatic, nor a *malāmatī*, an antinomian dissembler, whose outward disregard for accepted norms disguised a genuine sufi. Zawāwī’s routine citing of the Prophet Muhammad was a potential asset for his career. Instead, Zawāwī is a failure and his failure, according to Katz, should be understood in the context of his personality and the role he assigned to Prophet Muhammad. Exploring the various psychoanalytical options for the study of personality disorder, Jonathan Katz dismisses the possibility of Freudian explanation of the Prophet Muhammad as a father figure for the “neurotically obsessive” Zawāwī. The author also disregards the Jungian analysis in which one may obtain a greater sympathy for the religious nature of Zawāwī’s experience, since his dreams and visions may be taken as a projection of his own persona as he wrestled with a mid-life crisis. In

Katz perception, from the twentieth century point of view, Zawāwī presents a disturbing psychological self-portrait in his relationship with the 'fictive' Muhammad. Throughout the diary Katz sees Zawāwī time and again retreat into the world of grandiose fantasy, and Zawāwī's personality, according to Katz, is stereotypically narcissistic, clearly conforming to a psychological type well known to the clinician and the therapist. 51

Zawāwī chose to represent himself as chief wa'īf, the unsurpassed expert on the 'īlm al sufīya' or sufi knowledge. The other aspects of Zawāwī's personality include the perfectionistic (one who is striving to live up to his own expectations) and the arrogant-vindicative (swollen with pride that masks self-contempt). Katz produces evidence to fit the three dimensions of neurosis in the case of Zawāwī who apparently suffers from a constant sense of superiority. His preoccupation with ritual purity of food underlines his sense of perfectionism, just as his vindictive triumph is represented in his hatred for his enemies, all of whom are doomed to die as Jews or as Christians. 52 Another symptom of personality disorder in Zawāwī was that he suffered from hypochondria. In the Tuhfā Zawāwī complains of chronic heart palpitations and backache. 53

51 The term narcissism originates in the fable of Narcissus, the young man who fell in love with his own reflection, and it is in this sense that Freud used the word. Contemporary psychology, however, has moved away from emphasis on self-love and instead emphasizes on self-inflation. Katz has used the term as developed by two psychologists, Karen Horney and Heinz Kohut, who explain that self-inflation means the psyche's inability to regulate self-esteem. From self-inflation, narcissism is placed in the general theory of neurosis to stress self-idealization. Imagination plays a crucial role here, which allows the neurotic to cast himself in his fantasies in any conceivable role. For Katz understanding and application of narcissism to Zawāwī see the author's Introduction to Dreams, Sufism and Sainthood: The Visionary Career of Muhammad al-Zawāwī, op. cit., 'Zawāwī's Narcissism', pp. 22-35.
52 Ibid., pp. 94-95.
53 Ibid., p. 27.
But the most incriminating evidence of Zawawi's narcissism, according to Katz, is his dream diary. Given the great value attached to dreams in medieval Islam and the circulation of dream books, writing of a dream as opposed to its mere recitation assumes the proportion of an event. Why should Zawawi divulge his innermost experience? Katz's answer is simple — Zawawi's visions of the Prophet Muhammad provide him an opportunity for self-glorification. The vision of the Prophet was a prerequisite of walāya. Now, in the context of Sufism the term walāya denotes intimate friendship with God, and its cognate wilāya implies political sovereignty over men. Taken together, they are twin formulae for grandiose fantasy.

The vision of the Prophet is proof of walāya that eventually came to be associated with the wali's soteriological ability to save souls in the world to come. Consequently, a vision of the Prophet had two-fold role in legitimizing the wali. First, it validated the status of wali in his own eyes. Secondly, it provided authority to the wali's ultimate intercessionary claim — that he could guarantee for his followers admission into heaven. But inspite of these visions Zawawi fails to become a narcissistic charismatic leader who actualizes his fantasy, and remains instead a narcissistic patient who faces repeated frustration. Katz assumes that it is Zawawi's sense of self-love and self-promotion that prompted him to write his dream diary, and rather than waiting for a disciple to write a hagiographical account, Zawawi ends up writing his own hagiography.

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54 Here Katz has referred to Vamik Volkan's description of the narcissist patient and the narcissist charismatic leader, see ibid., p. 33.
Jonathan Katz's attempt to explain Zawāwī's experience in terms of narcissism shows insensitivity to the philosophical dimension of visionary experience in Sufism that explains such phenomena in terms of the realm of the 'imaginal' which is distinct from fantasy. For the sufi there is nothing 'fictive' about apparitions seen in dream-visions as they have an independent ontological existence. Also, it is a universal Muslim belief that the one who has seen the Prophet in dream has seen him in actuality. Further, according to Katz, a dominant feature of Zawāwī's narcissist personality is that he saw the Prophet Muhammad as his perfectionist ideal and thought that he along with Muhammad shared in the same perfection. In the clinical textbook on narcissism this condition is called the "alter-ego transference or twinship". This psychological explanation of Zawāwī's visions shows a lack of understanding for the standard ideal of Imatio Muhammad (uswai i ḥusna) that is the ideal to be followed by the Muslims in general and the sufis in particular. And finally, Katz's representation of Zawāwī's diary as an ultimate expression of his narcissism needs to be understood in the larger context of the Islamic civilization where recording of ones' dream experience was not seen as abnormal, and certainly not as the working of an "overwrought psyche".

The study by the French islamologist Henry Corbin of the visionary experience in Sufism is a fine example of scholarship. Corbin has concentrated on the initiation visions of sufis and has explained their symbolism in terms of Islamic concept of prophetology and especially the sufi notion of walāyat/wilāyat. He argues that since mystic religion is

the true meaning (haqīqat) of the Prophetic religion, Prophet Muhammad's experience of the ascension (mi‘rāj) is a prototype to be imitated by the mystics of Islam. The gnostic verifies through his personal vision the testimony of Prophet's experience while simultaneously resolving the contradiction between the refusal given by God to Moses ("Thou shall not see me") and the paradoxical attestation of Prophet Muhammad ("I have seen my God in the most beautiful of forms").57 In Sufism the realization of this experience is not possible without the mediation of a shaikh who functions as a spiritual guide. This shaikh can be a visible person like the person he guides, but who can also be, as in the case of the Uwaisī sufis, an invisible personal guide.58 The most significant aspect of initiation visions in Islamic spirituality, according to Henry Corbin is the introduction of the image of a 'personal guide'.

Rather than trying to attest their authenticity, by using the structure of cosmology offered by Ibn 'Arabī, Corbin explains the symbolic function of visions and dreams. According to Ibn 'Arabī the visionary experience of sufis belong to the realm of the 'ālam-i mişāl (world of idea-images/symbols), an intermediary realm that exists between the worlds of spiritual and material substances. The adepts among sufis gain access to this realm in a state of sleep or wakefulness and acquire knowledge of events that are yet to descend into the material world. However, all knowledge transferred from this realm is encoded in symbols that need an interpretation (ta‘būr). The sufis, on account of favours

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58 On the notion of the Uwaisī sufi see Chapter IV & V below.
granted to them by God and by virtue of their spiritual discipline, are equipped to translate these symbols into sensible meanings. 59

My approach in this dissertation is inspired by that of Corbin, to the extent that, like him I have rejected the causal reduction of visionary dreams to an explanation grounded in psychology. Corbin's understanding of the initiation visions is derived from within the Islamic cultural tradition and is dominated by his concern for the Shi'a notions of prophetology, *walāyat* and imamology, and their subsequent adaptation to Sufism. Nevertheless, my questions regarding the theme arise out of somewhat different concerns that are guided by two factors: one, Sufism as defined in the historical context of Mughal north India between the sixteenth and the eighteenth centuries; and second, the nature of my sources. The first of these has been discussed in the beginning of this essay, and I shall discuss the latter in the following section.

The questions that concern this study, however, explore more mundane issues that are reflected in the dream narratives of our sources. The dream is an ubiquitous phenomenon, common to the experience of the sufis and the non-mystics. How is one to explain the occurrence and symbolism of dreams described in the sufi texts? Henry Corbin has unveiled the mystery of the initiation visions for us, but there are dreams other than those of initiation that require decoding. In order to understand the dynamics of dreams, following Corbin, eventhough in a qualified form, I have adopted a cultural approach. The most influential study in this ditrection is that of Roger Caillois and

59 I have elaborated on the notion of the *'ālam-i misal* in second section of Chapter II below.
Gustav von Grunebaum that appeared in 1966. The contributors to this volume, as practitioners in disciplines like psychology, anthropology, sociology and religion, have made a wide-ranging analysis of dreams within various cultures. Although, there is no one methodological focus that provides for a culture-specific or religion-specific perception of dreams, or any attempt to study dreams in a comparative cultural mode, the six essays on Islam are an exception. The latter are an exception not only in terms of the attention received in comparison to relatively little attention given to other religions, but also in the manner of treatment of dreams.

Within the Islamic civilizational context these essays represent diverse approaches to dreams and dream interpretation. For example, the essay by Jean Lecerf traces the antecedents of dream interpretation in Islam to its pre-Islamic Semitic past and explains its subsequent absorption, despite initial resistance, within the Prophetic tradition, thereby showing elements of continuity in the treatment of dreams at the popular level of Arab-Islamic culture. The essay by Fritz Meier elaborates on another aspect of popular culture that is the influence of demons on dreams. At another level of culture, Toufy Fahd's study of the oneirocritic literature in Islam represents elements not only of its Semitic past, but also those of the Greek oneiric tradition. Fahd has explained the process of codification of dream symbols in Islam and their compilation into ta'bīr manuals as principal works for dream interpretation. The essays by Henry Corbin and Fazlur Rahman concentrate on

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61 J. Lecerf, "The Dream in Popular Culture: Arabic and Islamic", op. cit.
62 T. Fahd, "The Dream in Medieval Islamic Society", op. cit.
the symbolism and the philosophical aspect of the dream in Islamic spirituality. And Grunebaum’s Introduction to the volume serves as an excellent summation of the cultural functions of the dream in Islamic society.

More recently, David Shulman and Guy G. Stroumsa have made a significant contribution in the comparative cross-cultural history of dreams. Unlike Caillois and Grunebaum, these authors have subscribed to a particular methodological assumption, for they treat dreaming as a cultural act. They surmise that all knowledge of the dream is through the dream report and that all subsequent interpretation and decoding are expressive of culturally specific themes, patterns, tensions and meanings. Even the act of telling a dream – first, perhaps, to oneself, then to another (perhaps, a professional interpreter), and finally to a still wider circle – is an overdetermined act that situates the self in relation to cultural meanings and implied metaphysical institutions. Given this perception of dreaming the authors seek to understand the significance of dreams in different religious contexts in a way that is different from the psychoanalytical tradition. The modern assumption that dreaming is the most private and personal of modes is not shared by many cultures represented in this volume, which see dreams as highly objectified, even capable of appearing in the consciousness of disparate subjects. Thus, as dreaming is considered to be strongly influenced by cultural traditions and religious

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attitudes, they have looked for cross-cultural patterns of dreaming and dream interpretation rather than attempting to identify universal patterns of dreaming.\footnote{For Schulman and Stroumsa’s approach see their Introduction to \textit{Dream Cultures: Explorations in the Comparative History of Dreaming}, op. cit., pp. 3-13.}

An important qualification in Schulman and Stroumsa’s approach is that they treat dreaming as a language. In their opinion, in most dream cultures dreaming is a language, and like most languages needs to be deciphered. To read a dream, or to understand it, is to address oneself to existence of one or more active codes. In other words, dreaming is a form of communication that uses language as a medium for its expression. Although comparative typologies of dreams have been presented earlier, in this volume Schulman and Stroumsa have made an attempt to address the issue of integration of dream culture and dream interpretation into the culture's semiotic and ontological maps.\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, pp. 7-13.}

I have tried to understand the dream narratives in my sources by relating them to the larger context of the tradition of dream interpretation in Islam as recorded in \textit{ta‘bīr} manuals. However, I am also aware that the immediate context of the dream narrative is to a significant extent responsible for lending meanings to the narratives. Therefore, it has been possible to point out certain symbols that result from the specific environment or situation of the dreamer, and are not otherwise referred to in the \textit{ta‘bīr} texts. However, the possibility of their occurrence in the \textit{ta‘bīr} texts is not denied.

In his Introduction to \textit{The Medieval Imagination}, Jacques Le Goff has defined imagination primarily as fantasy, the accounts of which are contained in dreams, works of
art and the supernatural; in other words, popular religious literature and beliefs as opposed to their Christian adaptations.\footnote{Le Goff treats imagination as a mental faculty which is unqualified by what is commonly understood as rationality and therefore consigns it to the realm of the fantastic. But the sufi world of imagination has an ontological existence outside the experiencing body. Besides, sufi imagination is not opposed to established Muslim traditions. On the contrary, the sufi verifies through his personal dreams and visions the testimony of the Prophet's experience of the Revelation. The extraordinary experiences of the sufis indeed contains element of the imaginary, but Muslim philosophers and mystics have been intrigued by it and have evolved an elaborate notion of \textasciitilde{alam-i mis\~al} or the world of idea-images to explain this imagination which is different, and sometimes even antithetical, to the western notions.}

V

\textit{A note on categories of sources}

I have not described here all the sources that have been used in this dissertation, nor do all of them fit the suggested classification that I shall use to categorize them. My intention here is to explicate the principal sources, to assess their contribution to the study as a whole and to draw attention to the problems arising from their use. These texts can be divided into two categories, namely, the descriptive and the analytical.

\footnote{See Le Goff's Introduction to \textit{The Medieval Imagination}, translated from the French into English by Arthur Goldhammer, Chicago/London: The University of Chicago Press, 1985.}
In the descriptive category of texts the main source material for this study are the hagiographical accounts of sufis preserved in the records of discourses of what transpired in the shaikh’s assembly and the biographical dictionaries. These two related classes of Persian (and Indo-Persian) devotional literature record and describe the activities and pronouncements of sufi religious guides of the medieval period down to the modern times. The genres are classified as malfūzāt (a term related to the Arabic lafz, “a word”) and the tazkira (similarly related to zikr, “recollection”). The first genre is a record of the words, the conversations and sometimes the more formal discourses usually of a single sufi shaikh or pīr, while the tazkira consists of remembered biographical narratives as well as pronouncement, often, of a number of sufi shaihkh in a common lineage or silsila.

These two related genres of hagiographical record became established in the Persian language by the twelfth century. The earliest attempt of this kind is available in the second section of the Kashf al mahjūb, which was compiled in the 1060’s by ‘Alī bin Uṣmān Hujwirī of Ghazna.68 But the tazkira form found its fullest expression in Farīdudīn ‘Aṭṭār’s thirteenth century dictionary of sufi saints called the Tazkiratu’l auliya’. By the late fifteenth and the early sixteenth centuries, outside the boundary of Iran proper the genre also took root in Central Asia, which was dominated by warlike people of Mongol or Turkish stock, who had accepted Islam and had acquired a Persianized culture. By this time hagiographical works were being compiled according to

various principles. One example is Jāmi’s *Nafahātu l uns min haẓrātu l quds*,69 a fifteenth century text, which is supportive of the principle of *silsila* based sufi communities but, is not overtly aimed at enhancing the prestige of a particular sufi lineage or community. I may also mention here the anonymous *Taẓkira’i Bughrā Khāṇī* or *Taẓkira’i Uwaisiya*70 from East Turkistan that deals with notices of sufis who subscribe to the Uwaisī style.

At the opposite end of texts devoted to particular patterns of sufi behaviour are collective *taẓkiras* that are not partial to any particular style of sufi organization, and are limited in scope to particular regions or cities, such as the *Kitāb-i Mullāzāda* that is dedicated to the saints of Bukhāra. In between these two categories we may situate a work like the *Rashahāt ‘ainu l hayāt*71 of Fakhruddīn ‘Alī Kāshifī compiled in 1504, in which saints of the Mawara’u’n-nahr and the Khurasan regions are grouped together in such a manner as to form a hagiographical preface to an individual hagiography clearly designed to promote the Naqshbandī lineage of Khwāja ‘Ubaiddullāh Ahrār.

This hagiographical tradition was carried to Hindūstān and took root in the sultanates of late medieval India, incidently providing us with information about social life not available from any other surviving source. Particularly notable examples survive of both genres regarding the activities of Chishtī shaikhs of Delhi in the thirteenth and the fourteenth centuries, and their contemporaries the Firdawsī shaikhs of Bihār (who derived

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from the Kubrawī tradition of Central Asia). By the fifteenth century works of these genres began to be compiled in many corners of India, including the Deccan, to which the great Chishtī Shaikh Saiyid Muhammad Gisūdarāz migrated.72

By the late sixteenth and the early seventeenth centuries a substantial body of hagiographical literature was composed in the subcontinent which was inspired from various principles for collating collective notices and individual biographies of saints in Iran and Central Asia since the eleventh century.73 'Abdu'l Ḥaqq Muḥaddīs Dihlawī's Akhīr al akhyār fi asrār al abrār, revised and finally compiled in A.D. 1590-91, is commonly known to be the first collective biography74 of two hundred and fifty five

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71 Fakhruddīn 'Alī Kāshīfī, Rashāhāt 'aimu'l ḥayāt, Kanpur: Munshī Nawal Kishore, 1912.
72 The earliest among the maṣūfẓare the Fawā'idu'lfu'iid (discourses of Niẓāmuddīn Auliya'), Anwā'rul majālis (discourses of Badruddīn Ishaq), Khāru'l majālis (discourses of Naṣīruddīn Chirāgh-i Dihlī). The tradition of specific biographical composition, however, developed around the same time and the earliest work in this field is Muhammad bin Kirmānī's Siyaru'l auliya' that was compiled in the early fourteenth century and is dedicated to the shaikhs of the Chishtī silsila. After this several biographies were composed that were dedicated to a particular shāikh or a group of shaikhs of the same silsila. Cf. Muhammad Habib, "Chishtī Mystic Records of the Sultanate Period" in Medieval India Quarterly, vol. 1 (1950), pp. 1-42.
73 Often, authors of the works compiled in the subcontinent would categorically mention, or extensively refer to, hagiographies compiled in the eastern Islamic world. Abū Nu'yām's Hilyat al auliya', 'Aṭṭār's Taqīrat al auliya', Jāmi's Naṣīḥātul uns, Fakhruddīn 'Alī Kāshīfī's Rashāhāt 'aimul ḥayāt, are some of the frequently used texts; Also cf. 'Abdu'l Ḥaqq Muḥaddīs Dihlawī's Akhīr al akhyār, Delhi: Matha'-i Mūjtaba'-i, 1892, p. 7, where the author has explained that although the practice of collecting "universal" biographies of sufis is common in the Arabic and Persian speaking lands, absence of any general biographical compilation of the shaikhs belonging to different orders in Hindūstān inspired him to compile a text of such nature.
74 Dr. Sharīf Ḥusain Qāsimī in his foreword to the text of Zīkr jamā' auliya' i-dihlī, which is edited by him, has discussed the various styles of hagiographical compilation followed by biographers in medieval India. He states that the first 'collective' biography of the mashāḥkh is Simrūtu'l quds min al shajāratu'l uns, which was compiled by Lāl Beg (d. A.D. 1614), the Bakhshi of Prince Murād. After the death of the author it was edited by Khwās Khān who was the student of Mullā 'Abdu'l Qādir Badhayūnī. The text is divided into four sections and contains a reference of about 589 Hindūstānī sufis. However, the text has not been published and Qāsimī has referred to a manuscript in the Sālārjung Museum Library. Cf. Ḥabību'llāh, Zīkr jamā' auliya' i-Dihlī, ed. Sharīf Ḥusain Qāsimī, Delhi: New Public Press, 1987-88, p. 17 of foreword. It is also worth mentioning that Mr. Shaukat 'Alī Khān, Director of the Arabic and Persian Research Institute at Tonk in Rajasthān, in his Introduction to the above text edited by Qāsimī, has referred to another anonymous and incomplete manuscript by the name of Serāhāl l ṣādūr in the Research Institute at Tonk which was probably compiled by an officer at Akbar's court who was born in A.D. 1560. Mr. Shaukat Ḥalī
Indian sufis of different affiliations. Although, clearly supportive of the principle of silsila based sufi communities, it is not aimed at enhancing the reputation or prestige of any particular sufi order. At the corresponding end of `Abdu’l Ḥaqq’s ‘universal’ compendium are the collective hagiographies which are particular to specific regions or cities. One may mention Kalimāt as šādīqīn of Muhammad Sādiq\(^7\) arranged in A.D. 1614 and Zikr jamī‘ auliyā’-i Dihlī of Ḥābību’llāh produced in A.D. 1737, both dedicated to the sufis of Delhi; while Ghulām Sarwar’s Ḥadiqatu’l auliyā\(^7\) was compiled in A.D. 1875 on the Punjābī sufis. For most part these texts pay little attention to the silsila, their purpose being to highlight the shaikhs of a particular region or city, notwithstanding their silsila affiliation or lack of it.

In between these two extremes one can place biographical works which are devoted to particular orders. The Mir’ātul āsrār of `Abdu’r Raḥmān Chishti\(^7\) and Siyaru’l aqūb of Ilāhdiyāh were compiled in the seventeenth century and contain biographies of Chishti saints.\(^7\) Similar examples may be cited of the notices of the Qādiri

\(^7\) Muhammad Sādiq Dihlawī Kashmīrī’s Kalimāt as šādīqīn, translated by Muhammad Saleem Akhtar as The Kalimāt as šādīqīn, New Delhi: Kitab Bhawan, 1990 (1978).

\(^7\) Ghulām Sarwar Lāhorī’s Ḥadiqatu’l auliyā’, edited by Muhammad Iqbāl Mujaddidi, Lāhor: Islamic Book Foundation, 1976. This book was originally written in Urdu and contains notices of 244 sufis of Punjāb from the time of Sulṭān Mahmūd Ghaznavī up till the 19\(^{th}\) century, and was first published in 1875 from Lāhor.

\(^7\) I have used the Urdu translation of the second volume of Mir’ātul āsrār of `Abdu’r Raḥmān Chishti by Wāhid Bakīsh Shīyāl Chishti Sābīrī, Lāhor: Sufi Foundation, 1402/1982. I have used the lithograph of Ilāhdiyāh’s Siyaru’l aqūb, published from Lāghnāu by Munṣī Nawāl Kishore in 1913. The author began writing his account of 27 Chishti shaikhs in 1626 and completed it in 1646-7.
sufis, like, the *Sakīnātul auliyaʾ* of Dārā Shukoh, and the *Taqżiratul kirām* (A.D. 1833) of Muhammad Abūʾl Ḥayāt is dedicated to the Qādirīs of Phulwārī in Bihār. Of the Naqshbandī *taḳiras* notice must be made of the *Ḩaṣrātul quds* of Badruddīn Sirhindī completed in A.D. 1643 which was designed on the line of the *Rashaḥāt* to promote the hagiography of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindī and that of the sufis of the Naqshbandī-Mujaddidiya school.

Other than these collective notices, there are accounts of individual sufī shaikhs like the *Laṭāʿifi Quddūsī, Ḥayāt-i Bāqīya, Ḥayāt-i Kalīm, and the Manāqīb-i Fakhriya*, which account for the lives of Shaikh ʿAbduʾl Quddūs Gangoḥī, Khwāja Bāqī Bīllāh, Shaikh Kalīmuʾllāh Shāhjahānābādī, and Shaikh Fakhruddīn Dīhlawī, respectively.

The earliest *malfūżāt* of the fourteenth century offer a deep insight into the structure of contemporary society and provide valuable glimpses of the *khanaqah* life. During the period covered by the present study there is hardly any *malfūżāt* like the *Fawāʾ iduʾl fuʿād*. I would, however, like to draw attention to three works that have been classified in this genre. The *Kalimāt-i tāyibāt* is the *malfūż* of Khwāja Bāqī Bīllāh that have been collected by an anonymous disciple of this shaikh during his lifetime. These

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80 This work records the biographies of 45 Bihārī shaikhs, who belonged to the 18th and the early 19th centuries. The first of these shaikhs is Muhammad Wāris Rasūlnūmā who died in 1166/1753. The work was compiled by Abū al Ḥayāt Qādirī Phulwārī al Bihārī in 1249/1833. For details see C. A. Storey, *Persian Literature: A Bio-Bibliographical Survey*, vol. 1/2, Luzac & Co., 1972, nos. 1504 & 1384, pp. 1114 & 1040 respectively. Although a lithograph edition was brought out from Lakhnau in 1880, this was not available to me. I have used a manuscript of the same dated A.H. 1280, which belongs to the private collection of Dr. M. Khwaja Piri, director of the Noor Microfilm Centre, Iran Culture House, New Delhi. The manuscript is marked for 151 folios, even as a few pages are missing. It is written in fair nastālīq, but
present a record of assemblies dating from the 1st of Safar A.H. 1009 to the 25th Jumādī‘u’l ākhir A.H. 1012, which are fairly authentic. It provides us with information about the life in Bāqī Billāh’s khānaqah, certain ideas and practices peculiar to the Naqshbandīs, and also describes some dreams and visions of the Khwāja and his disciples.

The Malfūzāt-i Saiyid Ḥasan Rasūlnumā is unique in the hagiographical corpus of the subcontinent sampled above. Although, the title categorizes it as a malfūz but the work actually relates the biography of a seventeenth century Uwaisī sufi Saiyid Ḥasan ‘Rasūlnumā’ that was compiled by his disciple Mīr Muḥammad Ḥāshim Sirhindī in 1694. The original text has not been published and I have consulted a manuscript of the same as is preserved in a microfilm at the Central Library of Jamia Hamdard in New Delhi. An Urdu translation of Saiyid Ḥasan’s biography was published in 1921 by the title of Manāqib al Saiyid Ḥasan Rasūlnumā wherein the translator had mentioned the original text by the name of Manāqib al Ḥasan wa fawā’ih al irfān. A detailed study of the Persian manuscript of the Malfūzāt-i Saiyid Ḥasan Rasūlnumā and the Urdu text of the Manāqib reveals that both refer to the same principal text.

On the basis of the information derived from this source I have studied the life and career of Saiyid Ḥasan. In the medieval sources this sufi is often referred to by his

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the name of the copiest is not mentioned. The number of lines is not uniform and several folios are dense with 23 to 27 lines a page.

81 Kalimāt-i tāyiibāt, anonymous, Persian text and Urdu translation lithographed in Delhi by the Afzal al Mutabā’ in A.H. 1332.

82 See A Descriptive Catalogue of Persian Manuscripts in the Library of Jamia Hamdard, New Delhi: Iran Culture House, 1999, p. For details about the manuscript see fn. 2 of Chapter VI below.
title ‘Rasūlumma’, meaning ‘guide to the Prophet’, because it was believed that he enabled people to have a vision of the Prophet. This source records numerous dreams and visions of Saiyid Ḥasan and those of his disciples. In the sixth Chapter I have reproduced the text and translation of such narratives and have analyzed their significance in the context of the biographical details and with reference to the expansion of Uwaisī tradition in Indian Sufism.

The *Malfūzāt-i Khwāja Uwais Qaranī* is a collection of conversations of Uwais Qaranī with individuals that are reported in a story-like form. The text is apocryphal in nature as is evident from its legendary nature. The text has not been published and I have studied a photocopy of its manuscript that belongs to Islāmābād’s Ganj Bakhsh library. The manuscript does not provide any clue about its author or date of composition. The only way to identify the period of its composition is to take help from a copy of the *malfūz* placed in the Dānishgāh-i Shīrānī in Lāhor that is marked by copyists for A.H.1080/A.D.1670. One can then assume that the text was most probably compiled somewhere around the seventeenth century, if not earlier. Unlike other works of the *malfūz* genre that usually give record of conversations from the assemblies of a shaikh.

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83 Saiyid Muhammad Hāshim, *Manāqib al Saiyid Ḥasan Rasūlmumā*, translated into Urdū by ʿUmar Bakhsh, Lāhor, 1921, reprint Karachi, not dated. I have used the reprinted version of this work.
84 The manuscript of *Malfūzāt-i Khwāja Uwais Qaranī* (No. 8867) belongs to the Kitābkhānaʾi Ganj Bakhsh of Islāmābād, Pakistan and is described in Ahmad Munzawi’s *A Comprehensive Catalogue of Persian Manuscripts in Pakistan*, vol. 3, no. 10962, p. 2022. The text is written in nastāliq and comprises of 47 pages, with 11 lines to a page, but is unfortunately incomplete towards the end. It begins from p. 2 with the usual formula of *Bismillāh*...and then “Malfūz-i bandagī haṣrat Khwāja Uwais Qaranī rażī allāh taʾāla ḍāʾīnu cinin awarda-and ki rażī badshāh ṣīn ṣīn ṣīn ittifāq uftīd ki mulāqāt Haṣrat Khwāja Uwais Qaranī rażī allāh taʾāla ḍāʾīnu bukunad...I am grateful to Dr. Khwāja Pīrī, Director of Noor Microfilm Centre, Iran Culture House, New Delhi, for procuring a photocopy of this manuscript from Islāmābād for me.
this work presents stories that have been worked into the legend of Uwais Qarani in Islamic literary tradition over a long period of time. The anecdotes in the malfūzat-i Khwāja Uwais Qarani, however, are not mere reproductions copied from earlier sources. These are adaptations that have been re-worked to suit the didactic purpose of the text. I have used this text in Chapter V of my dissertation to highlight the significance of the Uwaisī tradition in seventeenth century India.

This hagiographical material is extremely rich in information about the visionary experience of the sufis. On several occasions, the author makes a conscious attempt to explain the many layers of meaning hidden in the narrative. Sometimes a visionary narrative may be a metaphorical representation that can be decoded only with reference to the symbolism explained in sufi treatises (rasā’il). These interpretations are, however, situated within the larger context of the Islamic dream tradition. This aspect of dream interpretation brings us to the second category of sources that are analytical in nature.

These are the taʾbīrnamas or oneiric manuals that represent the classical approach to dreams in Islam. The significance of taʾbīr in my scheme has been outlined in my discussion of the historiography where I have emphasized the need to understand such dreams in their relevant cultural contexts in preference to the approaches followed by historians and practitioners of other disciplines. Sometimes, the meaning given to a dream by the sufi may differ from its symbolic representation in the taʾbīr manuals. This divergence can be explained in terms of the specific context in which the dream occurs,

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85 For example, Shāh Wali Allāh’s explanation of dreams in Hama’at that has been referred to in Chapter II below.
for example, a change in environment or the personality of the dreamer could be responsible for rendering different meanings to the same dream. Notwithstanding this, the difference in interpretation is also governed by the larger cultural context of the dream in Islamic civilization that provides a flexible methodology that legitimates an alternate explanation for the same dream symbol. I have discussed various aspects of this tradition in the second Chapter of my thesis.

In the descriptive category of sources I may mention court chronicles and miscellaneous accounts about the general history of the period that contain incidents of dreams. Often, in fact, in the biographical section of such works, one reads about dreams and visions of the biographee, who may be a scholar of Islam, a poet, a military commander, ruler, or even a sufi. Although such accounts display the medieval society's belief in the dream, these do not represent any specialized discussion of our theme. Therefore, I have concentrated on the hagiographical genre and the analytical texts dedicated to sufi and oneiric themes. Occasionally, I have used texts like the *Muntakhab ul lubāb, Chahārgulshan, Mirʾāt-i aftābnumā*, and others, but these have been used to as collaborate information derived from my primary source material. A full list of the sources will be found in the bibliography.

A note on translation and transliteration of Persian words and passages

In writing the translation of Persian passages I have tried to be as faithful to the text as possible. Long descriptions have been broken into paragraphs, but only to break monotony of continuous narration. Words that require explanation or comments have
been explained in simple brackets. Sometimes, I have introduced words and phrases in square brackets for the sake of providing continuity or explanation to the translation. The principle of expressing superior hierarchical rank through titles or appended Arabic phrases of blessing is frequently encountered in Islamic texts as literary representation of the hierarchical paradigm of religious authority that pervades the Islamic culture. I have not omitted designations like maulānā (our lord), khwāja (master), shaikh and pīr (elder and guide) and have reproduced them rather than translating them as such into English. The formulae for pious blessings have been translated like: sallā allāh ʿalayhi wa sallam, the preferred address for the Prophet Muhammad, meaning "God bless him and grant him salvation"; ʿalayhi as salām, used for prophets, meaning "On him be peace"; razı allāh ʿanhu, meaning "May God be pleased with him"; and quddisa sirruhu, "May his grave be hallowed".

The English transliteration of original Persian passages is provided in the footnote, while the passage in Persian script is reproduced in appendices attached at the end of every chapter. In case of passages reproduced from lithograph editions and manuscripts, I have taken the liberty of punctuate the text to provide coherence to, what might otherwise appear to be, a rambling narrative.

All transliteration of Persian and Arabic words follow the standard prescribed in F. Steingass’ *A Comprehensive Persian-English Dictionary*. I have not used the diacritical marks or put in italics some general words like sufi, Sufism, and in some
personal and place names like Muhammad, Ahmad, Delhi, except for indicating the "'ayn" with Greek spiritus asper (') and "hamzah" with Greek spiritus lenis (').