

JESUS IN THE ŞŪFĪ INTERPRETATIONS*

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Abstract

This article aims to examine the Şūfī interpretation of the story of the prophet Jesus in the Qur’ān. The fate of Jesus, who came to the world in a miraculous way, resulted in a similar way. The fact that the verses in the Qur’ān that mention the Jews wanting to kill him (as well as other verses) do not state what his ultimate fate was has been the focus of much discussion. The interpretations made by the Şūfīs, who put forward a different method in the Islamic tafsīr tradition in terms of their interpretation style, contributed to the emergence of original interpretations in Islamic thought. In this article, the approach of the Şūfīs in the debates around the issues of “the ascension of Jesus” and “the return of Jesus” in Islamic thought will be outlined, and the interpretations of the Şūfīs in terms of their methods in interpreting the stories about Jesus will be examined within the framework of eight leading Şūfī tafsīr books.

Keywords: Tafsīr, interpretation, Ishârî Tafsīr (Allusion), Sūfī, Jesus (Îsâ), Sūfī Classics.

Sūfī Yorumlarda Hz. Îsâ

Öz

Bu makale, Hz. Îsâ peygamberin Kur’an’da geçen kıssasının sufi tefsirlerdeki yansımalarını incelemeyi hedeflemektedir. Dünyaya gelişi mucizevi bir şekilde gerçekleşen Îsâ’nın, akıbeti de benzer bir şekilde sonuçlanmıştır. Kur’an’da, İsrailoğullarının onu öldürmek istemesinden bahseden âyetlerde, âkıbetinin nasıl olduğunun çok net belirtilmemiş olması, ilgili diğer âyetlerle birlikte tartışmanın odağını oluşturmuştur. Yorum tarzı bakımından İslâm tefsir geleneğinde farklı bir yöntem ortaya koyan sufilerin, yaptıkları yorumlar, İslâm düşüncesinde özgün yaklaşımların ortaya çıkmasına katkıda bulunmuştur. Bu yorum anlayışının Hz. Îsâ’nın kıssasının anlatıldığı âyetlerde nasıl gerçekleştiğini ortaya koymak bu makalenin temel hedefleri arasında yer almaktadır. Ayrıca önde gelen işârî tefsirlerin kaynak olarak alınması araştırmanın özgün yanını oluşturmaktadır. Bu çerçevede makalede İslâm düşüncesinde daha çok urûc-i İsa ve nuzûl-i İsa konuları etrafında oluşan tartışmalarda sufilerin yaklaşımı belirlenecek ve Hz. Îsâ ile ilgili

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kıssalarda sufilerin yöntemleri bakımından oluşturdukları yorumlar önde gelen sekiz tasavvufi tefsir çerçevesinde incelenecektir. Diğer taraftan Hz. İsa'nın tasavvuf düşüncesindeki yerinin belirginleştirilmesi ile de bunun Kur'an yorumlarına etkisi belirlenmeye çalışılacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Tefsir, İşârî Tefsir, Hz. İsa, Sûfî.

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Introduction

Jesus, who is considered the fourth of the magic prophets, is referred to as Jesus Son of Mary (İsâ ibn Maryam) and Messiah in the Qur'ân.¹ Jesus, who is reported to have been given the Bible² and heralded Muhammad,³ is referred to as "a spirit and word of Allah".⁴ He is linked to Adam in terms of creation because he was born miraculously without a father.⁵ The miracles of Jesus also differ from other prophets. Among his miracles, it is mentioned that he speaks as a baby, heals the variegated and resurrects the dead.⁶ The fate of Jesus, who differed from other prophets in terms of his birth and miracles, was also different.

The Qur'ân clearly states that the Jews wanted to kill Jesus, but he was not killed or crucified by them.⁷ In the Islamic tradition, the death of Jesus and his coming back to the world as a sign of the Judgment Day is generally discussed under the title of "the return of Jesus".⁸

In the tradition of Islamic interpretation, the commentaries made by the Şūfîs to the Qur'ānic verses are defined as allusions (ishārāt). This interpretation genre differs with its subjective character from tafsîr and ta'wîl, that is, the other two methods of interpretations. It is an undeniable fact that the religious texts made by the Şūfîs have made important contributions to the content of Islamic thought. This richness of interpretation will be better understood when taking into account a considerable amount of ishārî tafsîrs that have found their place in the tafsîr literature. The Şūfîs expanded their

1 See Āl 'Imrân, 3/45-46; al-Nisâ', 4/157-158, 171-172; al-Mâ'ida, 5/72-75; al-Tawba, 9/31.

2 See Āl 'Imrân, 3/347-49, al-Mâ'ida, 5/46, al-Ĥadîd, 57/27.

3 See al-Şaff, 61/6.

4 See Āl 'Imrân, 3/39; al-Nisâ', 4/171-172.

5 Omer Faruk Harman, "İsâ", *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (İstanbul: TDV Yayınları, 2000), 22/465.

6 See Maryam, 19/29-34.

7 See Āl 'Imrân, 3/49-51.

8 İlyas Celebi, "İsâ", *Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (İstanbul: TDV Yayınları, 2000), 22/472.

tools for deriving understanding and meaning by developing an interpretive methodology which centers on the moral perfection of man. Prophets have a special importance in the spiritual interpretations of the Şūfī. This article will seek to identify the originality of the interpretation that the Şūfī brought to the verses mentioning Jesus and his parables. By way of introduction to the subject, it will be shown first based on the mystical classics how Jesus features in the idea of Şūfīs. Thus, in the context of the verses about Jesus, the contribution made by the Şūfī to the tafsīr and Şūfī literature will be determined.

Jesus in Şūfī Thought

The Prophet Jesus, who found his place in the Islamic tradition on the axis of discussions around “the ascension of Jesus” and “the return of Jesus”, was mostly discussed in the Şūfī literature in the context of “*spiritual states*” (*aḥwāl*) and “*spiritual stations*” (*maḳāmāt*). In Şūfī classics, *renunciation* (*zuhd*), *hope for Allah’s mercy* (*rajāʾ*), *intimacy with Allah* (*uns*), *expansion* (*bast*), *spiritual retreat* (*kḫalwa*), staying in a mosque for a certain days to worship (*iʿtikāf*), *generosity* (*sakḫā*) and *journey* (*sefer*) were presented as examples of the words and states of Jesus. According to the Şūfīs, Jesus is a prophet of the highest rank. Because Jesus, who traveled in isolation from everything, would have nothing but a bowl and a comb. When he saw the water with his palm, he combed his hair with his fingers, and when he saw it, he threw away his comb and showed his grace. In order to draw attention to the importance of renunciation (*zuhd*) and poverty (*faqr*), the Sūfīs convey⁹ that Jesus did not eat for days, he advised his disciples to fast, he slept on a pillow of mud, he did not build a house for himself, he likened the world to a bridge that ran over him.¹⁰ According to al-Hujwirī, Jesus, who had attained the spiritual stage (*maqām*) of *rajāʾ*,¹¹ never cried throughout his life because he was always in a state of spiritual expansion (*bast*).¹² Likewise, according to Attar, Jesus, who was always in a state of *the radjā and bast*, lost his joy when he heard of death, and the sweat leaking from his body with fear covered him with blood from head to toe.¹³ al-Ghazzālī considers that some of the words of Jesus in the Qur’an are spoken in the form of *uns and bast*. According to him, Jesus’ ascribing “peace” to himself by saying “*Peace be upon me the day*

9 ‘Ali b. ‘Uthman al-Jullabī al-Hujwirī, *Kashf al-mahjūb: Hakikat Bilgisi*, trans. Süleyman Ulu-dağ (İstanbul: Dergâh Yayınları, 2018), 102; Abū Hāmid Muhammad al-Ghazzālī, *Iḥyā’ ‘ulūm al-dīn*, Critical ed. Committee (Jeddah: Dār al-Minhāc, 2011), 8/169.

10 Abū Tālib al-Makkī, *Qūt al-qulūb fī mu‘āmalat al-maḥbūb wa-waṣf ṭarīq al-murīd ila maqām al-tawḥīd*, ed. Mahmud Ibrahim Muhammad Razvānī (Qāhirah: Mektebetu Dār at-Turās, 2001), 2/744; al-Ghazzālī, *Iḥyā’ ‘ulūm al-dīn*, 5/290, 299; 6/58, 63.

11 al-Hujwirī, *Kashf al-mahjūb*, 430.

12 al-Hujwirī, *Kashf al-mahjūb*, 434.

13 Feriduddin Attar, *Mantıku’t-tayr*, trans. Yasar Kececi (İstanbul: Kaknūs Yayınları, 1998), 210.

I was born, the day I die, and the day I will be resurrected.” (Maryam, 19/33) was realized by the influence of the state (ḥāl) of baṣṭ in the stage (maḳām) of intimacy with Allah (uns).¹⁴ al-Ghazzālī also narrated Jesus’s words about generosity (*sakḥā*), *spiritual retreat* (*kḥalwa*) and *i’tikāf*.¹⁵

Some of the practices of Şūfī life are also based on prophet Jesus. It has been accepted as one of his sunnah to train people with the method of “journey”. It is reported that he traveled widely to invite people to tawḥīd and encounter the religion of Allah. Junayd al-Baghdādī, who said that the Şūfīm was established for eight virtues, attributed the travel to Jesus and stated that the Şūfīs should follow him in this regard.¹⁶ Kalābādhī also reported that Jesus wore a dress made of bristle, and he based the Şūfī custom of wearing clothes made of bristle to him.¹⁷

Before Ibn al-‘Arabī, the Şūfīs gave place to Jesus mostly with regard to asceticism. They attributed certain states (*ḥāl*), stages (*maḳām*) and practices to him. It can be said that Ibn al-‘Arabī, who attributed the science of letters to Jesus, focused more on two of his characteristics. The first is the feature of his creation, which he discusses in the context of “superiority/rif‘at” wisdom in the *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*. The other is the position of “the last of the guardians” (*hatam al-awliyā’*), which he specifically mentioned in *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya*, and its association with Jesus.¹⁸ In the *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, Ibn al-‘Arabī focuses on the extraordinary creation that forms the basis of his thoughts on the wisdom of Jesus. He examines in detail the marvelousness of Jesus’ creation and his coming into the world without a father.¹⁹ According to him,

14 See. al-Ghazzālī, *Iḥyā’ ‘ulūm al-dīn*, 8/520.

15 See. al-Ghazzālī, *Iḥyā’ ‘ulūm al-dīn*, 6/160; al-Ghazzālī, *Iḥyā’ ‘ulūm al-dīn*, 5/399.

16 al-Hujwirī, *Kashf al-mahjūb*, 102

17 Muhammad ibn Ibrāhīm Kalābādhī, *al-Ta’arruf li-madhhab ahl al-tasawwuf*, Critical ed. ‘Abd al-Halīm Mahmud – Taha Abd al-bakī Surūr (Qahirah: Mektebe es-Sakāfe ed-Dīniyye, n.d.), 22.

18 Ismail Taspinar, “Narratives about Jesus in Islamic Mystic Sources: Ibn al-Arabī, Mevlana and Yunus Emre Example”, *International Symposium on Islamic-Christian Dialogue II (Jesus in Islamic and Christian Sources)*, Istanbul: 2005, 241.

19 Ibn al-‘Arabī explains the survival of the Virgin Mary with real water from Mary and a dream water by Gabriel. According to him, the body of Jesus was composed of a mixture of real water and imaginary water. In this respect, he establishes the relationship between Jesus’s resurrection of the dead and his creation by blowing souls in this way: Blowing the prophet in the spirit of resurrection is a blessing to God, even though he is apostate of Jesus. In this case, in its creation, blowing has an effect on Gabriel and the word is to God. Jesus was created from real and imaginable water, so he gathered these two in himself. Because it is both reality and imagination in its creation, it has the power to resurrect and heal the blind by blowing. The fact that there is a resurrection feature in Jesus as a human being is a result of Gabriel appearing in the form of a human being to Mary. Because if Gabriel had appeared in his own spiritual surah or any other chapter, Jesus would have only been able to use the quality of resurrection by entering it. See Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn al-‘Arabī, *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, Critical ed. Mahmut Erol Kılıç – Abd ar-Rahim Alkis (Istanbul: Litera Yayıncılık, 2016), 128-129.

the features and miracles attributed to Jesus depend on the extraordinary nature of his creation. In this regard, Gabriel (Jibrīl), who appears in the form of a handsome man, blows upon Mary, who is human, has an effect. In addition, the feelings that Mary felt during her pregnancy with Jesus are also influential.²⁰

According to Ibn al-‘Arabī, those who could not see the divine work that Jesus carried out in resurrecting the dead either accepted him directly as a Allah or did not understand how the resurrection took place. Jesus is a prophet who has the qualities of being the word, the prophet and the servant of Allah. Therefore, those who looked at him evaluated him according to the qualification they thought was dominant among these qualities.²¹ In the opinion of Ibn al-‘Arabī, all human beings are the words of Allah in terms of being the words of “be/kun”, and the feature that distinguishes Jesus from others is that his bodily presence exists with the blowing of the soul. For, in the creation of other people, as the verse “*When I arrange it and blow my soul into it.*” (al-Ĥijr, 15/29), Allah blew his soul after creating the body.²² Ibn al-‘Arabī associated the idea that the spiritual blowing occurs at the same time with the body composed of the elements, with the attribute of Allah’s Mercifulness (Raḥmān). Thus, he tries to justify how the opposite elements in human creation came into being.²³ Ibn al-‘Arabī claims that Bāyazīd Bisṭāmī follows the same course of action as Jesus in terms of giving life to beings. He reports that Bisṭāmī revived an ant and that he killed it by blowing it.²⁴ Ibn al-‘Arabī attributes the science of letters in *al-Futūḥāt* to Jesus and associates the giving of the ability to blow with the science of letters. The knowledge that belongs to him is the knowledge of the letters. His resurrection by blowing upon a dead body or a bird made of mud is subject to the permission given to him by Allah on this issue.²⁵

According to Ibn al-‘Arabī, there are prophets as well as saints who are disposition of the Isrāfīl’s heart. Jesus is a prophet who is disposition of the Isrāfīl’s heart. There are also saints (awliyā) who are disposition of Jesus’ heart. Everyone who is disposition of Jesus’s heart is also disposition of the Isrāfīl’s heart. However, not everyone who is disposition of the Isrāfīl’s heart is disposition of the Jesus’s heart.²⁶

20 Dilaver Gurer, *Fusūsu’l-Hikem ve Mesnevî’de Peygamber Hikayeleri* (İstanbul: İnsan Yayınları, 2005), 232.

21 Ibn al-‘Arabī, *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, 129-130.

22 Ibn al-‘Arabī, *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, s. 154.

23 Ibn al-‘Arabī, *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, s. 156.

24 Ibn al-‘Arabī, *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, 155.

25 Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn al-‘Arabī, *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyyah*, Critical ed. Ahmed Shams al-Dīn (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 2011), 1/556.

26 Ibn al-‘Arabī, *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyyah*, 3/18.

In Şūfism, the idea of “seal of saint” (*khātam al-awliyā*) is among the topics associated with Jesus. This thought, which started with al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī, became one of the main topics of Şūfism with Ibn al-‘Arabī. The starting point of the subject is the characterization of Muhammed as “seal of the prophets” (*khātam an-nabiyyīn*). Based on this information about the Prophet, al-Tirmidhī claimed that there was a “*khātam al-awliyā*” as well as “*khātam an-nabiyyīn*”. According to this, “*khātam al-awliyā*” is not only the last of the saints, but also the one whose rank is highest. There’s no better saint (*walī*) than him. Tirmidhī’s thoughts on sainthood influenced Ibn al-‘Arabī’s idea of guardianship.²⁷ Ibn al-‘Arabī, who discusses the subject in detail in *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya*, divided the guardianship into general (*walāye al-āmma*) and private (*walāye al-hāssa*). He associated the general acceptance in Islamic thought that Jesus would descend in the afterlife with the “last saint” (*khātam al-walī*). He stated that Jesus would descend as an absolute prophet and as “*heir and khātam*” before the Judgment Day. According to him, although there are those who follow disposition of Jesus among the saints, the general guardianship (*walāye al-āmma*), in which no saints will come after him, will end with him.²⁸

Mawlānā drew a comparison between the words of the master (*murshid*) and the resurrecting breath of Jesus. In the *Mathnawi*, he established a relationship between the miracle of Jesus to resurrect the dead and the master’s resurrection of dead souls. He compared man to the breath of Jesus to tell the secret of his existence.²⁹ In addition, he draws attention to the divine qualification of a person by saying that the spirit in the being of a person is in fact the breath of Jesus.³⁰ According to him, in order to have a breath like Jesus, one must first pass through material existence.³¹ To bring life to the heart, he must find those who have breath like Jesus and benefit from them.³²

According to Imām Rabbānī, since Jesus is spirit of Allah (*rūhullah*) and word of Allah (*kalimatullah*), his attribute of guardianship is stronger than his prophethood. Imām Rabbānī, who thinks the adjective that educates Jesus is power (*qudrat*), says that Ali and Mahdi are also subject to Jesus

27 Abdullah Bereke, “Ḥakīm et-Tirmizī”, *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi*, 15/196.

28 Ibn al-‘Arabī, *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyyah*, 3/15; 7/172. For a general evaluation of Ibn al-‘Arabī’s nubuvvet-custody opinion and criticisms of this, see M. Mustafa Cakmaklıoğlu “Ibn’l-Arabī’s Views on Custody and Ibn Teymiyye’s Criticisms in This Regard” *Journal of Şūfī, Scholarly and Academic Research (Ibn’l-Arabī Special Issue-1)*, 2008: 9/21, 213-255; İsmail Taspınar, “Narratives about Jesus in Islamic Mystic Sources: Ibn al-Arabī, Mevlana and Yunus Emre Example”, 242.

29 Mawlana, *Mathnawi*, trans. Veled Izbudak (Istanbul: Meb Yayinlari, 1995), 3/348-349.

30 Mawlana, *Mathnawi*, 1/128.

31 Mawlana, *Mathnawi*, 1/152.

32 Mawlana, *Mathnawi*, 4/177-178

in terms of guardianship. Ali, whose guardianship is stronger because he is devoted to Jesus, also has the guardianship of Muhammad. Imām Rabbānī, who thinks that there are five degrees of guardianship, says that each degree is below one of the major prophets (ulu'l-'azm).³³ Accordingly, Jesus has the fourth degree.³⁴

The Interpretation of Verses About Jesus in Ishārī Commentaries

The Qur'ān mentions Jesus on various occasions in terms of his birth, proclamation and miracles. His miracles such as coming to the world without a father and his resurrection of the dead draw attention as the features that distinguish him from other prophets. It is possible to categorize the verses about him under four main headings in the way that birth without a father, being a messiah, miracles and death (urūc). Here, the interpretations made by the Şūfīs will be examined under these headings in order to determine the boundaries of the subject. However, before moving on to the relevant verses, the general framework of the interpretations of the Şūfī commentators will be identified.

In the first period of ishārī interpretations, Jesus was described as an/ the exemplary person (imām) for the ascetics (zāhids) in the world and the wayfarers (sāliks) in the hereafter, similar to the classics of Şūfism.³⁵ According to Baklī, Jesus is a prophet who is endowed with the attributes of Allah and who has attained closeness, ultimate union (vuşlat), guardianship (walāye), prophecy (nubuwwah), knowledge (ma'rifa), affection (muhabbah), protection (iṣmah) and divine help (tawfiq). With these blessings given to him, his external was made the leader (imām) to the disciples outside. The his inner being was made a divine light for the hearts of the wise.³⁶ In addition, it is bestowed upon him to discover the Jamāl (beauty) of Allah, to reveal His knowledge in him, to be thrown into his mother's belly as a word and to exist as a manifestation of Allah's light from there.³⁷

He is a messenger in which the light of Jalāl (nūr al-Jalāl) is manifested for Allah's servants on earth. Because of the appearance of this light, the angels were captivated by Adam's face and prostrated to him, and the Israelites also fell in love with the Prophet Jesus. Because of this light in Jesus, they

33 Imām Rabbānī, *Mektübāt-ı Rabbānī*, trans. Taha Hakan Alp et al (İstanbul: Semerkand Yayınları, 2011), 1/810.

34 Imām Rabbānī, *Mektübāt*, 2/51

35 Abū 'Abd al-Raḥmān Muḥammad b. al-Ḥusayn al-Sulamī, *Ḥaqā'iq al-tafsīr*, ed. Sayyid 'Imrān (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya), 1/425.

36 Rūzbihān al-Baqlī, *'Arā'is al-bayān fī ḥaqā'iq al-qur'ān*, ed. Ahmad Farīd al-Misyadī, (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 2008), 3/281.

37 al-Baqlī, *'Arā'is al-bayān*, 1/335.

sympathized and fell in love with him. This light is from the pre-eternal word of the Allah that appeared in Mary. As a spirit composed of pre-eternal attributes, it is present in both the apparition and internal qualities of Jesus. However, Jesus is closer to this light than Adam in terms of the uniqueness of his attributes. Therefore, Allah said on Adam, *"I breathed my soul into him."* (al-Ḥijr, 15/29), he said, *"He is a soul from Allah"* (al-Nisā', 4/171) for Jesus. In other words, Jesus is the manifestation of Allah's form and His spirit in total. The whole world is form and spirit. Prophets and saints are His form.³⁸

Since Allah appeared in Jesus with the light (nūr), he was endowed with the attributes of Allah. For this reason, his heart, spirit and mind are heralded with the graceful secrets of Allah. When Allah completed him with His existence, it was filled with the divinity of divine secrets. This situation did not prevent him from seeing the servitude. He saw that those, who were created afterwards, were destroyed with the help of Allah. Therefore he also did not claim to be a Lord. While he was still in the cradle, he said *"I am the servant of Allah"* and confessed his servitude.³⁹ Therefore, he is a guide for those who desire closeness and intimacy with Allah. He shows the beauty of his attributes to the wise by manifesting them in Jesus.⁴⁰

Najm al-Dīn Dāya-yi Rāzī interpreted the verses about Jesus by focusing on the concepts of *heart, soul, self, fanā'-baqā'* as in other prophets. He explained the people and events in the parables in the context of these concepts by applying them to the inner journey (sayr wa sulūk). According to him, Mary symbolizes the heart, Jesus symbolizes the spirit and the apostles symbolize the heart and its attributes. Jesus is characterized by the attributes of Allah and the miracles he shows are a result of his having this qualification. The commandment of *prayer* and *zakāt* (the Islamic obligation of charitable giving) to him is for him to fulfill his servitude correctly and thus to purify the soul from bad attributes. Allah states that Jesus said: *"Peace be upon me on the day I was born, on the day I die, on the day I rise from the grave and resurrect!"* (Maryam, 19/33) Dāya makes some inferences about the spiritual path (sayr wa sulūk) based on the expression *"on the day I die"* in this verse and points to the example of Jesus on this issue. Accordingly, Jesus (soul) was created in a structure that accepts death with the attributes of the soul and the names of the deeds that arise from it. Thus, it has been shown that the meaning in the hearts of Şūfīs who live with Allah will not die.⁴¹

38 al-Baqlī, *'Arā'is al-bayān*, 1/290.

39 al-Baqlī, *'Arā'is al-bayān*, 1/290-291.

40 al-Baqlī, *'Arā'is al-bayān*, 2/456-457.

41 Najm al-Dīn Dāya-yi Rāzī, *al-Ta'wilāt al-najmiyya*, ed. Ahmad Farīd al-Misyadī. (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 2009), 4/168-169; Dāya, *al-Ta'wilāt al-najmiyya*, 2/40-41.

Considering that Jesus refers to the heart and Mary refers to the nafs al-mutmainnah, such as Dāya, al-Ḳāshānī made allusions to “spiritual journey” (sayr al-sulūk) from related verses.⁴² According to him, since Jesus was anointed with light, his name is the messiah. He is honorable and respected both in the world and in the hereafter because he has a partial and universal understanding. Humans and jinn, who are exoteric and esoteric powers, are in his service. Since he comprehends the infinite meanings and holy knowledge, he manages the hereafter and guiding Allah in the best way. In addition to being one of those who have been brought closer to Allah, he has an ability to accept the manifestations and rewards (*mukāshafa*) of Allah.⁴³ The special blessing mentioned in chapter al-Mā’ida, verse 110 is the granting of prophethood and guardianship to Jesus. Jesus’ speech in the cradle and in adulthood occurred when his body reached perfection. He was taught the wisdom of the sulūk in Allah by achieving morality, stage (māqām) and state (hâl), experience and solitude with the unchangeable information in the *Lawh al-Mahfūz* and book of truth. He was taught the principles of the state of the heart and deeds, as well as the science and decrees related to the manifestations of Allah’s attributes with the Torah and the external sciences with the Bible.⁴⁴

Aḥmad Ibn ‘Ajība, based on Jesus and Mary, puts forward the understanding of saints in Şūfism by stating that Allah made the saints in the form and legitimacy of the prophets. According to this, some of the saints are on the level of Jesus in terms of ascension and isolation from the world and attachment to Allah.⁴⁵

1.1. Birth of Jesus

In the Qur’an, the story of Jesus begins with his mother, Mary, because his birth into the world was spiritual, without a father through his mother. Mary is a woman who was devoted to the worship of Allah by her mother, was chosen by Allah and put above the women of the world (Āl ‘Imrān, 2/42). In addition, Allah described her as a righteous woman with a devotion to chastity (al-Taḥrīm, 66/12), honesty and virtue (al-Mā’ida, 5/75). Since Mary is seen as one of the most beautiful examples of the rank that women, as well as men, can reach,⁴⁶ some Şūfīs have called the female saints “Second

42 ‘Abd al-Razzāk al-Ḳāshānī, *Ta’wilāt al-Qur’ān* [Ibn al-‘Arabī, Muhyiddīn. *Tafsīr Ibn al-‘Arabī*], ed. Samir Mustafa Rebāb(Beirut: Dār Ihyā’i Turās al-‘Arabī, 2001), 2/67.

43 al-Ḳāshānī, *Ta’wilāt al-Qur’ān* 1/105.

44 al-Ḳāshānī, *Ta’wilāt al-Qur’ān* 1/188.

45 Aḥmad Ibn ‘Ajība, *al-Baḥr al-madīd fī tafsīr al-Qur’ān al-majīd*, ed. Omar Ahmed al-Ravī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 2002), 3/579; Ibn ‘Ajība, *al-Baḥr al-madīd*, 2/46.

46 Ibn al-‘Arabī, *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyyah*, 2/241.

Mary” (*Maryam as-Sânî*) and “Regent of Mary” (*Nâib-i Maryam*).⁴⁷ Şūfî commentators also accepted Mary, who is mentioned in the Qur’ân on the occasion of the birth of Jesus, as a guardian.⁴⁸

Şūfî commentators explained that Mary gave birth to Jesus miraculously with the manifestation of Allah in the form of light. According to al-Baqlî, the spirit that came to Mary is from the holiness of Allah’s essence (Zât) and it is a light manifested to the extent that Mary can endure.⁴⁹ With the inspiration of Allah, Mary knew that Jesus was prophesied and that he would talk about the slanders of his people while he was in the cradle. This situation is a result of his inspiration due to his closeness to Allah.⁵⁰ al-Ķāshānî regarded the virginity of Mary (Āl ‘Imrân, 3/47), who was given the glad tidings of a child, as a sign that Allah could bestow the position of heart with divine attraction (jadhbah) and unveiling (kashf) to whatever He wishes without the training of a sheikh and the instruction of a teacher.⁵¹

Ibn ‘Ajîba, based on the verse (al-Mu’minûn 23/50), which mentions Allah’s placing Jesus and Mary in a high place, pointed to the relationship of worship and zuhd, prophethood and sainthood. Accordingly, Jesus is an example for men who worship and have pursued asceticism, and Mary for women who worship and have pursued asceticism. Just as Jesus is an example for men who worship and have asceticism in terms of distancing himself from material affairs and giving himself to worshiping, Mary is an example for women who are devoted to worshiping and withdrawn from the world.⁵²

47 Mary has been shown by some Şūfîs as a role model for the Şūfî. In fact, Râbi‘a al-‘Adawiyya, who had a reputation for the love of God in the imagination, was presented as the second Mary in terms of her devotion to God by never marrying. See Feriduddin Attar, *Tezkiretu’l-Evliya*, trans. Suleyman Uludag, Bursa: Science and Culture Publications, 1985, 110; Ahmed Eflâkî, *Menâkibu’l-ârifin Âriflerin Menkibeleri*, trans. Tahsin Yazici (Istanbul: Hurriyet Publications, 1973), 1/166, 374. For an assessment on the subject, see Suleyman Derin, “From The Love of Leyla to the Love of Mevlâ”, *Human Relations on the Basis of Love in Islam - Controversial Provincial Meeting-* (16- 17 October 2009) (Istanbul: ISV Publications, 2010), 132; For an assessment of the perception of Mary in Şūfîs, see Hatice Cubuk, “Mother Mary in Şūfîsm (Islamic Mysticism)”, *e-Oriental Journal of Islamic Studies*, 2019, vol. 11/issue: 2 (24), 559-572. In addition, for a study on the interpretations of the verses related to The Virgin Mary in the works, see. Mahmut Ay, “Mary in Esoteric Interpretations of The Qur’an”, *Istanbul University Faculty of Theology Journal*, 2011: 25/123-138.

48 ‘Abd al-Karîm al-Qushayrî, *Latâ’if al-ishârât*, ed. Abdullatif Hasan Abdurrahman (Beirut: Dâr al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 2007), 1/148.

49 al-Baqlî, *‘Arâ’is al-bayân*, 2/456.

50 al-Baqlî, *‘Arâ’is al-bayân*, 2/459.

51 al-Ķāshānî, *Ta’wîlât al-Qur’ân*, 1/106.

52 Ibn ‘Ajîba, *al-Baḥr al-madîd*, 3/579.

1.1. Jesus: “the spirit of” (Allah Rūhullah) and “the word of Allah” (Kalimatullah)

In the Qurʾān, Jesus is described as “the spirit of Allah” (rūhullah) and “the word of Allah” (kalimatullah). Among the Ṣūfī commentators, Dāya associated this description of Jesus with his miraculous birth without a father. According to him, Allah threw his soul into the womb of Mary without the darkness of his parents’ lust because of His love for Jesus and granted him the ability to accept the light of His attributes. Miracles such as speaking to people in the cradle and in adulthood, writing and reading the Torah and the Gospel without any education, curing the blind from birth and leprosy, resurrecting the dead etc., were realized by the manifestation of divine attributes on this ability. Allah has given him the discovery of true knowledge and mysteries. Jesus, who was born as the caliph of Allah and the spiritual spirit, with the command “Kun/be” without a father from the realm of causes, is the greatest miracle in the creation.⁵³

Dāya thinks that Jesus was made superior to other prophets and saints in two ways by being “His word” (kalimatuh) (al-Nisā’, 4/171). The first is that Jesus was created with the ability to accept this perfection without the need for discipline. The second is that Allah took it upon himself to create the soul of Jesus’ ancestor in a unique way with the order of “Kun/be” without a father’s semen. Thus, He named him “His word” and made him honorable by attributing to Himself.

1.1.1. Two Similar Prophets in Creation: Adam and Jesus

In the fifty-ninth verse of the chapter of Āl ‘Imrān, it is stated that the creation of Jesus, who was born miraculously, resembles Adam. Ṣūfī commentators discussed the similarity in the creation of these two prophets from different aspects. According to some, Ṣūfīs like al-Qushayrī, both prophets are similar in that they were born without a father, and Adam is the only one with the title of beginning (being the first), while Jesus is the only one with whose soul was granted to him by blowing.⁵⁴ In this respect, there is similarity between them.

al-Baqlī regarded the similarity between the creation of Adam and Jesus as a situation peculiar to holy spirits. For, Allah creates holy spirits from the source of *divine lordship* (rubūbiyya) and manifests them with his light in witnessing (mushāhadah). Just as Adam was created from the spirit of the invisible realm (malakūt), his descendants from the prophets and the faithful

53 Dāya, *al-Taʾwīlāt al-najmiyya*, 2/38-39; Dāya, *al-Taʾwīlāt al-najmiyya*, 4/169, 293.

54 al-Qushayrī, *Laṭāʾif al-ishārāt*, 1/150.

(sādiq) are like him in this respect. Therefore, the things that Allah has made peculiar to Adam's soul including closeness, mercy, observance, knowledge, rewarding, exemplary and tawhīd are also relevant to the spirit of Jesus. For, like the spirit of Adam, the spirit of Jesus is also in stations of closeness⁵⁵ The spirit of eternal knowledge, which is instrumental in the birth of Jesus to the world, is the spirit that Allah had breathed into Adam as a manifestation of Jemāl (Beauty) and Jelāl (Glory).⁵⁶

Dāya applies the resemblance of the creation of Jesus to the creation of Adam to the honoring of the soul and heart. According to this, when Allah wanted to make the spirit honorable from other beings, this spirit came into being with the command of "kun/be", without the implication of anything else.⁵⁷ al-Ḳāshānī explained this similarity with the fact that the souls of both were created from the realm of command (ālam al-amr), which did not have matter and duration.⁵⁸

Based on the similarity in the creation of Jesus and Adam, Ibn 'Ajība says that Allah combined two opposite states in man and placed the secret of the two worlds in him. The creation of man takes place by putting the spirit, which has the characteristics of the luminous and the divine, unseen realm, into the semen that has the characteristics of the tangible world. However, the creation of Jesus and Adam is an exception to this. This feature in the creation of Jesus is also the basis of his weakness in the face of the world. Since it does not consist of a semen mixed with tangible properties, it does not have an attribute that will attract it to the concrete world. This feature, which is present in Jesus and other prophets, is also found in saints. Since they cleanse the material darkness in their souls through the striving (mujāhadah), the souls of the saints are annihilated in the love of Allah, and they lean towards secret spiritual sciences.⁵⁹

1.1.2. Event of the Birth

It is explained that the pregnancy of Mary to Jesus and the birth process are in the 17-27. verses of Sūrat Maryam. The Şūfīs thought that these verses symbolized the spiritual journey, and therefore they interpreted them by associating with some states achieved during this time. According to some Şūfīs, the retreat of Mary, who was pregnant with Jesus, away from her family and into seclusion towards the East (Maryam, 19/16-23) is the spiritual journey of the heart from the tangible world to the spiritual world. Mary

55 al-Baqlī, *'Arā'is al-bayān*, 1/153.

56 al-Baqlī, *'Arā'is al-bayān*, 1/335.

57 Dāya, *al-Ta'wīlāt al-najmiyya*, 2/238, 319; Dāya, *al-Ta'wīlāt al-najmiyya*, 4/165.

58 al-Ḳāshānī, *Ta'wīlāt al-Qur'ān*, 1/108.

59 Ibn 'Ajība, *al-Baḥr al-madīd*, 1/362.

turned away from all kinds of things that prevent her heart from dhikr and mushāhadah (witnessing) and turned towards the invisible realm (ālam al-malakūt).⁶⁰

The fact that Mary, who was provided for without any action or effort when she retreated in this way, later obtained sustenance by pulling the palm branch, was attributed to her relevance to the world. When Mary's heart started to take care of Jesus, then it was said to her "*Shake the date tree towards yourself so that fresh dates will be poured into you.*" (Maryam, 19/25).⁶¹ According to al-Qushayrī, Allah prepared Mary for the miraculous birth by providing for her needs in a way that was far beyond her expectations of what was possible.⁶² Considering that the date branch ordered to be shaken is dry, al-Qushayrī regarded the extraction of fresh dates from a dry date tree as a sign that Jesus would be created without a father.⁶³ According to Ibn 'Ajība, the second state of Mary is superior to the first, as the order to shake the date palms indicates that she was returned to causes when her certitude (*yaqīn*) became stronger. This situation indicates that the people of isolation should not turn to tangible causes before gaining strength and having "*tamkīn*" in *the knowing of Allah* (ma'rifa). While the sustenance comes to Mary without any causes in the first state, in the end, it is said that "*Pull the palm branch to yourself and shake it!*" (Āl 'Imrān, 37).⁶⁴

Unlike other Ṣūfī authors, al-Ḳāshānī interprets the verses that talk about how Jesus was born without a father from Mary with their literal meaning. It is quite remarkable that he examines the miraculous birth in detail with an original approach by attributing certain apparent characteristics to Mary. According to him, the reason why Maryam conceived without a relationship with a man is because she is among those women whose masculinity is dominant. Since Maryam has a strong femininity characteristic suitable for masculine temperament, the right side of her lung secretes a substance similar to the male semen, while the left side secretes semen with the attributes of femininity. When the soul of a woman who possesses such masculinity, unites with the holy spirit or another angel, her masculinity becomes dominant when she is both asleep and awake. "He appeared to himself in the form of a complete human being." As the verse (Maryam, 19/17) indicates, this is how Maryam became pregnant with Jesus.⁶⁵ These explanations of Ḳāshānī about

60 al-Baqlī, *Arā'is al-bayān*, 2/455; al-Ḳāshānī, *Ta'wīlāt al-Qur'ān*, 2/7; Ibn 'Ajība, *al-Baḥr al-madīd*, 3/326.

61 al-Sulamī, *Ḥaqā'iq*, 1/424; al-Qushayrī, *Laṭā'if al-ishārāt*, 2/239.

62 al-Qushayrī, *Laṭā'if al-ishārāt*, 1/149

63 al-Qushayrī, *Laṭā'if al-ishārāt*, 2/239.

64 Ibn 'Ajība, *al-Baḥr al-madīd*, 3/331.

65 al-Ḳāshānī, *Ta'wīlāt al-Qur'ān* 1/108; al-Ḳāshānī, *Ta'wīlāt al-Qur'ān*, 2/7.

Jesus' fatherless birth appear as a unique interpretation of how Maryam became pregnant with Jesus without touching a man's hand. As far as we can determine, such an interpretation does not exist in other Şūfīs. In the works of exoteric (*zāhir*) scholars, a similar comment on the subject is only included in Elmalılı Hamdi Yazır's *Hak Dîni Kur'an Dili*.⁶⁶

1.2. Prophethood of Jesus

According to the Qur'ān, Jesus is a prophet who proclaimed Allah like other prophets. He was sent to the Children of Israel as a confirmation of the Torah and the Bible was given to him as a book. Sūrat al-Mā'ida verses 10, 46, 71, 75 and Sūrat Āl 'Imrān verses 48-52 mention his prophethood. Based on these verses, the Şūfī commentators stated that the outward side of Jesus was made an "leader" (imām) for the disciples, and his inner part was made a light for the hearts of the wises.⁶⁷ al-Baqlī defines Jesus as a prophet who is endowed with the attributes of Allah and possesses the lights of closeness, ultimate union (vuslat), guardianship, prophethood, knowing Allah (ma'rifa), divine love and innocence.⁶⁸ al-Ḳāshānī also attributed Jesus' isolation from the world and authoritative priesthood towards his subordinates to the strength of his heart and the victory of his light. According to him, because of these features, the invocation of the Bible is related to the manifestations of attributes, morality and preaching, the states and purification of the heart, which are all things for inward.⁶⁹ al-Ḳāshānī interpreted Allah's "teaching the writing, wisdom, the Torah and the Bible" to Jesus, as well as the support of Jesus with the holy spirit as the teaching of morals and states, makams, wisdom of seyr u sulūk, the Torah and inherent sciences, and the biblical sciences in addition to the support of Jesus with the holy spirit.⁷⁰

2.1. The Apostles

One key part of the story of Jesus as narrated in the Qur'an is the emergence of his prominent followers known as the apostles. These verses were also evaluated by the Şūfīs in the context of the mentor-disciple relationship and the "inconstancy/changeableness" (talvīn) and "stability" (tamkīn) in the Islamic mystical way (sulūk). According to al-Sulamī, the belief of the apostles is the light in the hearts of the asfiyan (the most purified). They were subject to Jesus in order to reach the love of Allah.⁷¹ Dāya attributes the apostles' belief in Jesus to their ability to accept this. According to him,

66 See Muhammed Hamdi Yazır, *Hak Dini Kur'an Dili*, 2/368.

67 al-Sulamī, *Ḥaqā'iq* 2/235; al-Baqlī, *'Arā'is al-bayān*, 3/281.

68 al-Baqlī, *'Arā'is al-bayān*, 3/281.

69 al-Ḳāshānī, *Ta'wīlāt al-Qur'ān*, 1/177.

70 al-Ḳāshānī, *Ta'wīlāt al-Qur'ān*, 1/188.

71 al-Sulamī, *Ḥaqā'iq*, 1/102; al-Baqlī, *'Arā'is al-bayān*, 1/151.

there is an acquaintance and bond between the spirit of every ummah and its messenger. Because of this acquaintance, souls observe and recognize each other in the realm of martyrdom.⁷² According to Ibn ‘Ajība, the apostles who obey the invitation of Jesus are examples of denying oneself and making confessions of a faithful disciple who seeks the remedy of the heart. Just as the apostles obeyed the call of Jesus, the disciple should be subject to the approximated saints and righteous who are the helpers of Allah in terms of religion.⁷³

al-Baqlī explains the 112th verse of the Sūrat al-Mā’ida, which mentions the apostles’ request that Jesus miraculously cause a table spread with food to descend from heaven with the concepts of “tamkīn” and “talvīn”. According to this, although the apostles observed their secrets, spirits and hearts and their unseen realities, they were not in a state of “tamkīn”. Since they were people of “talvīn”, they desired miracles to banish the opposition of the soul and to make the heart happy.⁷⁴ According to him, the apostles, although having attained the mystical knowledge of Allah (ma‘rifa), acted like beginner by demanding miracles.⁷⁵ Upon the request of the apostles, Jesus demans a table by saying *“My Allah! O our Lord! Lower us a table from heaven so that it will be a feast for us and a sign from you, from the first to the last one. Provide us with sustenance, you are the best of providers.”* (al-Mā’ida, 5/114). al-Baqlī explained the expression “our former, those who came after” in this verse as the beginning and the last stage (maqām) of the the spiritual journey (sulūk) and explained the “former ones” as disciples and the “later ones” as sages. According to him, the apostles saw the attributes of Allah and witnessed his miracles. In this way, they are like saints (‘ārif) who have achieved vuslat. However, if they return to the pleasures of the soul and prefer the lust of the world, the greatest torment for them in this case is to be unable to observe the attributes of Allah, the light of Jamāl and Jelāl as their hearts were veiled in earthly desires. For those who seek the Truth (Haqq), the biggest punishment is to be separated from that same Haqq. If a person who is devoted to Allah prefers someone else to Him, he will suffer the greatest punishment in the world.⁷⁶

Dāye and Ibn ‘Ajība made similar comments regarding the nature of the table requested by the apostles. The fact that the table has a heavenly character in the verse has made it easier for Dāya and Ibn ‘Ajība to interpret

72 Dāya, *al-Ta’wīlāt al-najmiyya*, 2/319-320.

73 Ibn ‘Ajība, *al-Baḥr al-madīd* 1/359.

74 al-Baqlī, *‘Arā’is al-bayān*, 1/337-338.

75 al-Baqlī, *‘Arā’is al-bayān*, 1/338.

76 al-Baqlī, *‘Arā’is al-bayān*, 1/338-339.

the issue according to the understanding of mystery and truth in Şūfism. The aspect of the sky that symbolizes the lofty and supreme realms has enabled such an interpretation. According to Dāya, this table contains “truths and secrets”. However, the apostles whose faith was not genuine desired worldly gain, not the benefits provided in the religion conveyed to them by Allah through prophets like Jesus. When they received what they desired, they lost the benefit of otherworldly bliss. If they had had true faith and devotion, they would have known that hearts can only be satisfied by the remembrance of Allah. Consequently, they lost the main benefit because they demanded a table with their fleshly impulses and lust of the heart.⁷⁷ Dāye thinks that the Jews who turned into pigs because they violated the Saturday ban in the Qur’ān were the ones who demanded this table. As a result of their eating from this table, their attributes of mischief became clear, and Allah removed their human faculties and gave them attributes clearly better suited to their inclinations. Ibn ‘Ajība interpreted the table that the apostles demanded from Jesus as “divine secrets” and “interior knowledges” (ma‘arif). Just as the food for the body comes out of the earth, the food of the heavenly spirits is the religious sciences and divine secrets that descend from the heavens. These descend to the hearts of the wises (‘ārif) and from there spread to the hearts of the listeners. Some people can request these sciences before the appropriate time and without preparing themselves for it, as is the case with the apostles. In this regard, the wise (‘ārif) should warn him to behave in accordance with manners.⁷⁸

1.2. Did You Say?

It is stated in the Qur’an that Christians accepted Jesus as a Allah after his death. In the verses of Sūrat al-Mā’ida 116-117, the conversations between Allah and Jesus are narrated in the context of the adoption of Jesus as a deity.⁷⁹ Şūfīs think that this dialogue occurred when Jesus was in the state (maqam) of annihilation and complete extinction in Allah (fanā’), in the state of “expanse” (bast). Christians’ acceptance of Jesus as deity is the result of inadequate reasoning. According to al-Baqlī, Allah’s address here is an

77 Dāya, *al-Ta’wīlāt al-najmiyya*, 2/321-322.

78 Ibn ‘Ajība, *al-Baḥr al-madīd*, 2/92.

79 The meaning of the relevant verses is as follows “Allah said, “O son of Mary, Jesus! Did you say to the people, “Accept me and my mother as gods besides God?” “I’d like to thank you. It’s not for me to say what I don’t have the right to say. And if I had told you, you would have known it. You know what’s inside of me, but I don’t know what’s in yours. You’re the only one who knows the secrets. (116) I told them only what you ordered me to do; I said, “Worship God, my Lord and your Lord.” As long as I was among them, I was a witness to their deeds. But you’re the only one who knew and saw them after you passed away. You’re a witness to everything. (117) If you punish them, they are your servants. If you forgive them, you have wisdom and wisdom.” (118) (al-Mā’ida, 5/116-118)

address He made to the prophets in the position of majesty and observation. Jesus was able to respond to Allah's address because he was in the position of "baṣṭ".⁸⁰ Here, when he moved away from his natural state and attributes, he was like a "unifying Allah" (muwahhid) without a veil between him and the Haqq (truth). Since he had reached a complete annihilation ("fanā"), his speech and silence originated from Haqq.⁸¹

According to Dāya, Christians' conception of Jesus as a deity is the result of inadequate reasoning. When they wanted to lead the true path, they could not understand the sanctity and intimacy because they viewed the prophets with a mind. They evaluated the birth of Jesus with their minds and accepted his birth without a father as an evidence that he should be the son of Allah. Based on this, they proved that he resurrected the bird sculpture and healed those who were born blind and who were addicted to the tawny disease. For, the realization of these actions is only reserved for the attributes of Allah. Therefore, they thought that if Jesus had not been the son of Allah, he would not have been able to do all these deeds. From another point of view, they came to the conclusion that the sacredness of Allah was revealed to the body of the Messiah Jesus, who was one of the attributes of visible realm (nāsūt), and that he is Allah.⁸²

al-Ḳāshānī, also attributes the Christians' deification of Jesus to the narrowness of their understanding. According to him, Jesus invited people to unity in detail by affirming that his words, deeds, attributes and existence all belong to Allah. As their understanding was narrow, they made a mistake by seeing Allah as a part of the details and therefore they made Jesus divine.⁸³

Dāya compared the Israelites' misconception to prove the deity of Jesus with the way the Ummah of Muhammad entered the path of Truth. According to him, the ummah had the burden of bringing evidence obtained by meeting Allah. Because they were subordinate to Allah with affection and they were subjected to the temptations of divinity. It is a futile effort to engage in evidence that will reveal the existence of Allah after reaching Allah. This ummah correctly understood that the miracles emerged from the hand of Jesus belong to Allah in terms of external appearance and to the divinity as the source of his attribute of creation, since Jesus had observed the attributes of Allah in Jalāl in sulūk.⁸⁴

80 al-Baqlī, *Arā'is al-bayān*, 1/338-339.

81 al-Sulamī, *Ḥaqā'iq*, 1/189; al-Baqlī, *Arā'is al-bayān*, 1/341.

82 Dāya, *al-Ta'wīlāt al-najmiyya*, 2/295.

83 al-Ḳāshānī, *Ta'wīlāt al-Qur'ān*, 1/190.

84 Dāya, *al-Ta'wīlāt al-najmiyya*, 2/296.

The request of Jesus for forgiveness of the polytheists caught the attention of al-Baqlī. Although he stated that the commentators agreed that Allah will not forgive the polytheists who died in polytheism, he believes it was a different sort of forgiveness that Jesus was requesting. According to him, Jesus' speech here reflects God's having revealed to him secret knowledge that is otherwise hidden from other creatures. For, it is impossible for Jesus not to know that those who associate shirk (unbelief) will not be forgiven. And yet, his asking forgiveness from Allah for the polytheists shows that he wished it based on secret knowledge. al-Baqlī says that the secret lies in Ibn Abbas and Ibn Mas'ūd's interpretation of the verse that mentions how the polytheists and unbelievers will remain in Hell forever. According to Ibn Mes'ūd, such a time will come when Hell that its doors will move without anyone in it. This will happen after being there for centuries.⁸⁵

1.3. The Miracles of Jesus

It is mentioned in the Qur'ān as a miracle that Jesus spoke in the cradle, healed the blind and tawny, gave life to the bird and resurrected the dead. The point that Şūfīs draw attention to in the verses on the subject is the qualification of these miracles given to Jesus and the possibility of similar miracles in those who assume the same attributes. Some Şūfī commentators have argued that similar extraordinary situations may occur in those who progress spiritually based on these miracles shown by Jesus. al-Sulamī accepted the possibility that extraordinary events could occur in those who reached the level of "fanā" as in the case of Jesus.⁸⁶

Some Şūfīs linked the miracles shown by Jesus with his extraordinary creation. His coming to the world was with the holy spirit Allah breathed into him through Gabriel (Jibrīl). According to al-Baqlī, this spirit, which was blown to Jesus at birth, is the source of his ability to perform miracles. With this spirit of holiness that he received from Allah, Jesus became holy by joining the realm of Allah to the realm of prophethood and his whole existence became a holy spirit.⁸⁷ According to Dāya, this spiritual ability that emanates from the word of Allah in Jesus is placed in the nature of every human being. Allah revealed this ability in Jesus without any effort from him. For, his spirit did not flow from the loins of fathers and mothers' womb like our souls. His essence was apparent in his own body without being originating from human father. Therefore, since the light in the spirit of Jesus appeared, Allah revealed various miracles in him from the beginning of his childhood.

85 al-Baqlī, *Arā'is al-bayān*, 1/341.

86 al-Sulamī, *Haqā'iq*, 1/102.

87 al-Baqlī, *Arā'is al-bayān*, 1/335.

As for us, we need to extract this spiritual substance from the source of our body by obeying Muhammad's orders and prohibitions. Therefore, those whose spiritual substance escapes from its human source become the Jesus of their time and Allah revives dead hearts with his breath, opens deaf ears and blind eyes with him. Thus, he has the position within the ummah of the prophet among his people.⁸⁸

1.3.1. Speaking in the Cradle

The first of Jesus' miracles is speaking when he was a newborn baby. The subject is explained in verses 110 of *Sūrat al-Mā'idā* and in verse 46 of *Sūrat Āl 'Imrān*. The explanations about this miracle were made only by al-Baqlī. He explained the verse with the concepts of "wideness" (*inbisād*) and "the state of unity" (*ittihāt*). According to him, the speech of Jesus in the cradle is to testify to his prophethood, his will and that his mother is pure. His speech in his middle age originated from his "wideness" (*inbisād*) and the state of unity. While he was initially in the language of servitude, he eventually wore the adjectives of *rubūbiyyah*.⁸⁹ al-Baqlī says that from the beginning of Jesus saying "Surely I am the servant of Allah" (*Maryam*, 19/30), Mary speaks in the apparent language and Jesus speaks in the language of "*fanā*". For, while Allah made Jesus speak with the words of oneness and his servitude, he ordered his mother to be silent. This is the case with the disciples; when the apparitions are silent, the speech of the unseen and the language of their souls begin to speak.⁹⁰

1.3.2. Healing the Blind and the Variegated

Another miracle shown by Jesus is that he heals the blind and the variegated. The subject is mentioned in *Sūrat al-Mā'idā* 110 and *Sūrat Āl 'Imrān* 49. al-Baqlī, who explained the verse with a report from Ali Ruzbārī, attributed the occurrence of such a miracle from Jesus to the emergence of Allah's *rubūbiyyah* in him. For, the limit of *rubūbiyyah* is on the border of servitude. When a servant is on his way in servitude, Allah reveals in him one of the attributes of *rubūbiyyah* with his fortune and might.⁹¹

al-Ḳāshānī interpreted Jesus' performance of these miracles in light of the relationship between a master's discipline to the disciple's soul. Accordingly, unborn blindness means being veiled from the light of Allah. The leper (variegated) is a person caught in the worldly speech and overcome by his desires. The dead body that Jesus resurrected is the ignorant person he

88 *Dāya, al-Ta'wīlāt al-najmiyya*, 2/239, 319; *Dāya, al-Ta'wīlāt al-najmiyya*, 4/166; Ibn 'Ajlba, *al-Baḥr al-madīd*, 1/356-357.

89 al-Baqlī, *'Arā'is al-bayān*, 1/150.

90 al-Baqlī, *'Arā'is al-bayān*, 2/459

91 al-Baqlī, *'Arā'is al-bayān*, 1/336.

brought out of his grave and the world of the soul. Since they do not know the state and position of Jesus, Allah has blinded the ignorant ones who stand against him in the manifestations of his attributes.⁹²

1.3.3. Giving Life to a Bird

Another event mentioned among the miracles of Jesus in the Qurʾān is his “giving life to the bird”. The subject is mentioned in the 49th and 110th verses of Sûrat Āl ‘Imrān. According to al-Baqlī, who is one of the interpreters of the verse, this miracle took place as the manifestation of Allah’s lordship (rubūbiyyah) in Jesus. When Jesus breathes with the holy spirit within himself, the bird he made out of mud comes to life.⁹³ At the same time, al-Ḳāshānī has used these verses to bring to light dynamics regarding the purification of the soul and the purification of the heart under the guidance of a teacher (murshid/Şūfī master). He thought that in the interpretation of the verse 49 Sûrat Āl ‘Imrān, mud symbolizes the gifted yet imperfect souls, in the 110th verse of the Sûrat al-Mā’ida, it symbolized the spiritual (huyūlānī) mind. On the other hand, in the interpretation of the verse 49 according to Āl ‘Imrān, the bird refers to a living soul that flies to Allah with the wings of enthusiasm and good will, while in the interpretation of the verse 110 in Sûrat al-Mā’ida, it refers to flying hearts. According to him, Jesus made the hearts flying from this world to the holy glory like birds flying to the Holy Prophet by means of self-discipline and devotion, and by means of conversation and discipline from the breath of divine knowledge, he breathed the true life for them.⁹⁴

1.4. Yahya, Jesus, Muhammad

Şūfī commentators compared Jesus with Yaḥyā and Muhammad in terms of state (maqām) and position (hāl) in the interpretation of the verses in which his story is told. al-Baqlī compared the greetings made to Yaḥyā, Jesus and Muhammad based on the verse that mentions what Jesus said while he was in the cradle.⁹⁵ According to this, the greeting given to Yaḥyā is a special salutation Allah sent to his beloved servant. The salutation of Jesus as “Peace be upon me” (Maryam, 19/33) is the salutation that comes from the authority to observe Allah in everything. Probably, al-Baqlī has indicated that Jesus was in a state of witnessing (mushāhadah), “baṣṭ” and “ayn al-cem” because the salutation about Jesus was expressed in his own mouth and not by Allah in the verse. According to him, Jesus attained this peace when he passed away from bad to life. Therefore, Jesus is characterized in

92 al-Ḳāshānī, *Taʾwīlāt al-Qurʾān*, 1/188.

93 al-Baqlī, *Arāʾis al-bayān*, 1/336.

94 al-Ḳāshānī, *Taʾwīlāt al-Qurʾān*, 1/106, 188.

95 “Peace has been given to me on the day I was born, on the day I die, and on the day I will be resurrected.” (Maryam, 19/33).

terms of mystical knowledge of Allah” (ma’rifa), monotheism (tawḥīd), affection/divine love (muḥabbah) and enthusiasm (shewk). When he is one with Haqq, his language has become the language of Allah in terms of ‘ayn al-cem’. In this respect, he is superior to Yahyā. However, according to al-Baqlī, Allah’s direct salutation to Muhammad by expressing the Jamāl in ascension (mi’rāc) shows that his rank is higher than that of Yahyā and Jesus. If Allah had greeted with the tongue of an angel, he would have saluted with the tongue of a created being, which cannot reach the level of salutation Allah has given directly with his pre-eternal attributes.⁹⁶

Dāya compared Jesus and Muhammad in terms of their mercy. Accordingly, Allah recorded His mercy on Jesus with the preposition (من), which expresses a part in terms of Arabic grammatical rule, “a mercy from us/mercy minna” (Maryam, 19/21). Therefore, His mercy is limited only to those who are subject to him. What Jesus brought has also been subjected to the sending of Muhammad. With his coming, the decree of the religion of Jesus disappeared. For this reason, Jesus’ mercy towards his ummah ceased. In response, In the verse “We sent you only as mercy to the realms.” (al-Anbiyā’, 21/107), it is clearly stated that the sending of Muhammad was an act of mercy towards the whole world. Therefore, Muhammad’s mercy never ceases upon the worlds. In fact, according to Dāya, this mercy is valid in the hereafter with the continuation of the rule of the religion, and the fact that all creatures in the world, up to the prophets, need this mercy.⁹⁷

Some Ṣūfī commentators compared Jesus and Muhammad in terms of intercession on behalf of their ummah and drew attention to the superiority of the Prophet due to his position of a exalted status (maqām al-mahmūd). According to this, Muhammad will continue to intercede (shafa’ah) by saying “my ummah” until every member of his ummah is answered. Jesus, on the other hand, abandoned the “inbisād” by leaving to ask for the forgiveness of his ummah. For, in this case, he has ceased to reclaim with the Haq regarding his actions.⁹⁸

1.5. The Fate of Jesus

In the Qur’ān, the fate of Jesus, whose story begins with birth in a miraculous way, ends in this manner. Verse 55 of Sūrat Āl ‘Imrān, verses 157-158 of Sūrat al-Nisā’ and Sūrat al-Mā’ida verse 117, which mention the Jews’ desire to kill him and his ascension to heaven by Allah (‘urūc) form the crux of the matter. The death of Jesus and his coming back to the world before

96 al-Baqlī, *‘Arā’is al-bayān*, 2/461; Ibn ‘Ajība, *al-Baḥr al-madīd*, 3/331.

97 Dāya, *al-Ta’wīlāt al-najmiyya*, 4/166.

98 al-Sulamī, *Ḥaqā’iq*, 1/190; al-Baqlī, *‘Arā’is al-bayān*, 1/343.

the end of the Day of Judgment is generally discussed under the name of “the return of Jesus”.⁹⁹ In order to elucidate the approach of the Şūfīs on this subject, we will examine the issue here in the context of the relevant verses under these two headings:

1.5.1. The Ascension of Jesus in Islām

Although it is clearly stated in the Qur’an that Jesus was neither killed nor hanged by the Jews, the debate about whether he died and how he ascended to heaven continues to this day.¹⁰⁰ In the verses about the end of Jesus’ worldly life, the expressions “to die” (tawaffi) and “to raise” (raf’) are used.¹⁰¹ The majority of the commentators have interpreted the news about “Jesus’ descent as killing the Dajjal” and the death in the verse as “raising the sky”.¹⁰²

Although the ascension of Jesus to heaven is certain in the Qur’ān, there are two different approaches about its essence. There are those who think that the ascension to heaven is by spirit. However, the general opinion is that his spirit was raised to the heaven with its body. Almost all of the commentators following the traditional line such as al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Qutaybah, al-Zamakhsharī, al-Bayḍāwī and Ibn Kathīr are of the opinion that Jesus did not die of his own term, he was elevated to the heavens, and that the body and the soul came together.¹⁰³ Those who claim that ascension (raf’) happened only with the spirit are modern-era commentators.¹⁰⁴ On the other hand, Şūfī commentators interpreted the relevant verses in the context of perfection of the spirit. Their explanation of the ascension in this way may create the perception that they are in agreement with those who claim that ascension occurred only with the spirit. However, the Şūfīs emphasized that they made a statement regarding the spiritual aspect of the event by saying that their interpretation was allusion. Therefore, while the commentators of the modern period realize their views on the subject within the framework

99 Ilyas Celebi, “Hz. İsa”, 22/472-473.

100 For a recent study on the fate of Jesus in light of the basic sources and acceptances in Islamic thought, see Mahmut Aydin, *Hz. İsa’ya Ne Oldu?*, Ankara: Otto Yayinlari, 2017.

101 The text of the 55th verse of the Sūrat Āl ‘Imrān about the death of Jesus is as follows: *He said, “O Jesus! I will make you pass away, raise you to my sight, purify you from the unbelievers, and make those who follow you superior to those who disbelieve until the Day of Resurrection. Then you’ll come back to me. Then I will judge you on what you used to differ from.”*

102 al-Shawkānī, Muhammad b. ‘Ali, *Fath al-Kadīr* (Beirut: Dār Ibn Kathīr, 1994), 1/395-396. For a study on how the subject is handled in the literature of interpretation and its state from a literary point of view, see Huseyin Aydin, “Finality of Jesus Christ According to the Holy Qur’an”, *Kelām Araştırmaları* 6/2 (2008), 17-46.

103 M. Sami Baybal, *The Matter of Consequence of the Jesus Christ According to the Islamic Sources*, Doctoral Thesis, Konya, SUSBE, 1999), 154.

104 For detailed information on the approaches of the authors of the commentary on the subject, see Baybal, *The Matter of Consequence of the Jesus Christ According to the Islamic Sources*, 158.

of the apparent meaning of the verse, the concentration of Şūfīs on the intangible meanings shows that they approach the issue differently in terms of methodology. For this reason, it is difficult to say that the Şūfīs agree with them since they did not express an opinion about the apparent meaning of the verse. Moreover, looking at the comments made by the Şūfīs to the relevant verses, the difference will be better understood.

The Şūfī commentators did not pay much attention to the apparent meaning of how Jesus was ascended to heaven, rather they focused on signic meanings. However, al-Baqlī and al-Bursawī said that Jesus was circumambulating the throne with the angels as a heavenly, desirable and angelic human being, and made it clear that he was ascended to heaven with spirit and body.¹⁰⁵ Using the clearest expression on the subject, Ibn ‘Ajība stated that Jesus was raised to the sky in the form of spirit and body.¹⁰⁶

The words “to die” (mutawaffike) and “to rise to the top” (rāfi’uke) expressed in the verse 55 of Sūrat Āl ‘Imrān, which mentions the death of Jesus and his ascension to Allah, have been interpreted by Şūfīs as Allah’s killing Jesus from the evil attributes of his soul and the purification of his will and desires.¹⁰⁷ al-Qushayrī evaluated the address made to Jesus in the verse as an address to every servant directed to Allah, and associated the expression “*I will make you die*” (Āl ‘Imrān, 3/55) with the concept of fenâ in Şūfīsm. According to him, the death of Jesus means his being purified from his human attributes and reaching the level of “annihilation” (fanâ’).¹⁰⁸ al-Baqlī interpreted the verse within the framework of the thought of “annihilation-subsistence” (fanâ’-baqâ’). According to this, the holy spirit of Jesus, whose image was blown, was trained with the lights of prophethood and servitude and reached the level of authority of the prophets and the saint. When he ascended to Allah with the attributes of rubūbiyyah, he found worse than his attributes and thus pre-eternal attributes became apparent in him.¹⁰⁹

According to some Şūfī commentators, Jesus’ ascension to Allah took place with the attribute of love. As a requirement of this attribute, Allah cleansed Jesus from complimenting the angel. For, one of the conditions for the beloved to be one with the loved one (ittihad) is that nothing created later should enter between the two. When wise reaches the position of oneness

105 al-Baqlī, *‘Arā’is al-bayān*, 1/288; Ismā’īl Haqqī al-Bursawī, *Rūh al-bayān fī haqā’iq al-qur’ān*. ed. Abdullatif Hasan Abdurrahman (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 2018), 2/324.

106 Ibn ‘Ajība, *al-Baḥr al-madīd*, 1/360.

107 al-Sulamī, *Haqā’iq*, 1/103; al-Qushayrī, *Latā’if al-ishārāt*, 1/150; al-Baqlī, *‘Arā’is al-bayān*, 1/152; Ibn ‘Ajība, *al-Baḥr al-madīd*, 1/361.

108 al-Qushayrī, *Latā’if al-ishārāt*, 1/150; al-Kāshānī, *Ta’wīlāt al-Qur’ān*, 1/190.

109 al-Baqlī, *‘Arā’is al-bayān*, 1/152.

only, the light of Allah's community shines on his body and his presence prostrates to him. For, anyone who sees the beauty of Allah's Jelâl through means, if he has not attained the truth of divine knowledge, he likens it to occurring in means.¹¹⁰ In addition to his comments above, al-Baqlî compared the ascension of Jesus to the heavens with the miracle of resurrecting the dead. Accordingly, the light of divinity has emerged through Jesus, who has a divine spirit and spirit with which the dead are resurrected. When Allah wanted to raise Jesus to his level, he removed the veil from his soul, and his spirit appeared for some of his characteristics. Thus, the image of Jesus is woven with the embroidery of the spirit of Allah.¹¹¹

Dāya explained the verse in question by establishing similarities between the ascension of Jesus and the mi'raj of Muhammad. Accordingly, the fact that the soul and animal attributes in Jesus were killed and elevated to Allah with grace is similar to Muhammad's execution at night. Dāya, who connects this subject with the states of the people of Şūfism, says that those who are subordinate to Jesus with the apparent deeds of the shari'ah and the inward deeds of the sect are in fact superior to the unbelievers with dignity, demonstration (burhān), and indignation. Because they were subject to the religion and circumcision of Jesus.¹¹²

al-Ḳāshānī likens the Jews' setting up a trap to kill Jesus to deceiving the heart through delusions, suspicions etc. According to him, Allah raised Jesus (heart) to the spiritual realm in order to void their attempt with rational proofs and definite scriptures. al-Ḳāshānī understands the expression "I will make you die" in verse 55 of Āl 'Imrān as Allah elevating you to Himself, and the expression "I will raise you to my presence" as elevation to the spirit heavens. According to him, in this way, Jesus was cleansed by the spiritual forces and was supported by spiritual forces.¹¹³ In addition, according to al-Ḳāshānī, the lifting of Jesus to the heavens is the integration of his soul with the lofty realm. Considering that the source of the enchantment in the soul of Jesus is the sun sphere (falak), al-Ḳāshānī also attributed the elevation to the fourth-floor sky to its relationship with this falak. His presence here is due to the fact that the source of the prosperity (fayz) reflected from his soul is the Sun sphere (falak).¹¹⁴

Ibn 'Ajība reaches a general rule that may be a matter of course for those who make spiritual journey, from ascension of Jesus to the heaven. According

110 al-Baqlî, *'Arā'is al-bayān*, 1/153.

111 al-Baqlî, *'Arā'is al-bayān*, 1/288.

112 Dāya, *al-Ta'wīlāt al-najmiyya*, 2/40-41.

113 al-Ḳāshānī, *Ta'wīlāt al-Qur'ān*, 1/107.

114 al-Ḳāshānī, *Ta'wīlāt al-Qur'ān*, 1/160.

to him, Allah takes the souls of everyone who cleanses his secret and soul from other things and pulls his benevolence from the world to the heavenly heaven like Jesus. He raises his secret to observation of the world of ceberut. The soul of a person who moves away from egotistic pleasures ascends to the heavenly realm and the place of intimacy as in the case of Jesus. This is the sunnah of Allah (sunnatullah), which will continue among His servants until the Day of Judgment.¹¹⁵

As it can be understood from this detailed examination, the Ṣūfī commentators explained the verses that mention the death of Jesus and his ascension to the heavens, in the context of the spiritual development of the soul, adapting it to the idea of fānā and bākā. It is seen that the word meanings of “death” and “ascension” (ref’) in these verses have made it easier for the Ṣūfīs to make such an interpretation.

1.5.2. Jesus’s Descent to Earth

Another issue that is at the center of the discussions about Jesus is the question of whether Jesus will come to earth as a sign of him just before the apocalypse, which is conceptualized as “Jesus’s descent to earth”. Although there is no clear verse on the subject, “Jesus’s ascension to the heaven” and certain verses have been evaluated together with the hadiths on the subject and it is stated that Jesus will come to earth as a sign of doom.

Three verses are cited as evidence for the “the return of Jesus”: Āl ‘Imrān verse 46, which states that Jesus will talk to people in his adulthood; al-Nisā’ verse 159 that inform the people of the book that he will believe in him before his death and the doom of Jesus; al-Zukhruf, verse 61 regarding the fact that it is a sign. Ṣūfī commentators regarded the verses shown as evidence for the coming of Jesus as a sign of the “the return of Jesus” (nuzūl-i ‘Īsā) like the apparent scholars. Except for Dāya and al-Ḳāshānī, other Ṣūfī interpreters stated that the word “kehlen (adulthood)” in 46 verses of Āl ‘Imrā¹¹⁶ refers to the birth of Jesus.¹¹⁷ Interpreting the verse, al-Baqlī explained the speech he made in this age as a speech made in the form of “expansion” (inbisād) and ittiḥād (fanā’ fī Allāh), referring to the “kehlen”, which refers to the adulthood of Jesus. The speech he made while in the cradle is to be evidence of his prophethood. His speech in his mature age stemmed from grace. He made the resurrection of the dead, healing the blind and leper by adhering to the language of servitude in his prayer. Ultimately, he stuck to the adjectives of

115 Ibn ‘Ajība, *al-Baḥr al-madīd*, 1/360.

116 The meaning of the verse is as follows: “He will speak to the people in the cradle and in adulthood, and he will be one of the righteous.” (Āl ‘Imrān, 46)

117 al-Sulamī, *Ḥaqqā’iq*, 1/100; al-Qushayrī, *Laṭā’if al-ishārāt*, 1/148; al-Baqlī, *‘Arā’is al-bayān*, 1/151; al-Bursawī, *Tafsīr rūḥ al-bayān*, 2/35; Ibn ‘Ajība, *al-Baḥr al-madīd*, 1/354.

rubūbiyah.¹¹⁸ According to al-Ḳāshānī, Jesus made the speech he gave while in the cradle while in the body. He made the speech in “adulthood” as one of the righteous who had reached the position of mârifet.¹¹⁹ According to Ibn ‘Ajība, Jesus is an example of the state of devout servants who are purified by his bounties and miracles. Those who are attached to Allah with all their existence, who move away from the desires of the soul and seek the remedy of their heart by worshiping Allah, will attain divine good news like Jesus in this world and in the hereafter. In this way, they are cleansed of faults and bad situations, and they acquire many sciences that most people will be incapable of understanding.¹²⁰

The second verse which is brought as evidence for the the return of Jesus, is the 159th verse of Nisa,¹²¹ which mentions that the people of the book will believe in Jesus before his death. Dāya, al-Ḳāshānī, al-Bursawī and Ibn ‘Ajība regarded this verse as a sign of the coming of Jesus. Among the Şūfī commentators, only al-Ḳāshānī made an explanation about the reason for the descent (nuzūl) in the interpretation of this verse. According to him, Jesus realized his ascension before he reached perfection. For this reason, it has been necessary for him to return to a new body in the afterlife. When he descends, everybody will know him and the people of knowledge who have come to the creation (mabda’) and the hereafter (ma’ād) will believe in him from beginning to end, before Jesus’s fanā’ in Allah. Doomsday will come when they believe in him, so that they will be freed from the corporeal curtains, get rid of their negligence and awaken from the state of sleep they are in.¹²² Dāya states that Allah elevated Jesus to his rank due to his perfection and accepts that his birth will come true because he did not die. The verse indicates that Jesus will die after falling from the sky. This is also a response to Christians who perceive Jesus as the son of Allah. Because if Jesus were the son of Allah, he would not be born again after he rose to the top or died.¹²³

The last verse brought as evidence for the return of Jesus is the 61th verse of the chapter of al-Zukhruf,¹²⁴ in which Jesus is described as a knowledge of the doomsday. Among the Şūfī commentators, al-Qushayrī, al-Ḳāshānī, al-Bursawī and Ibn ‘Ajība explained the verse as Jesus will descend before

118 al-Baqlī, *‘Arā’is al-bayān*, 1/150.

119 al-Ḳāshānī, *Ta’wīlāt al-Qur’ān*, 1/105.

120 Ibn ‘Ajība, *al-Baḥr al-madīd*, 1/356.

121 The meaning of the verse is as follows: “There is no one of the People of the Book who will believe in him before his death. On the Day of Resurrection, he will bear witness against them.” (al-Nisā’, 4/159)

122 al-Ḳāshānī, *Ta’wīlāt al-Qur’ān*, 1/160.

123 Dāya, *al-Ta’wīlāt al-najmiyya*, 2/228.

124 The meaning of the verse is as follows: “Indeed, it is knowledge of the Hour. So do not doubt about it, so follow me, and it is the right way.” (al-Zukhruf, 61).

the doomsday.¹²⁵ al-Bursawī explained the verse in detail by narrating the interpretations and hadiths in the Islamic tradition on the subject. Accordingly, on the Day of Judgment, while Jesus collects the Shari'ah and imamah, he combines mahdi, sword and caliphate in himself. al-Bursawī, who is a follower of Ibn al-'Arabī, uses his view on guardianship in interpreting the verse by stating that Jesus is the ruler of absolute guardianship. Just as the Mahdi is the ruler of absolute caliphate, Jesus is also the rule of absolute guardianship. Because he passed prophethood, his prophethood is not prophesied. Since it is certain that the prophetic will not come after Muhammad, Jesus descends with his shari'a.¹²⁶

Conclusion

In this study, it was tried to determine how Jesus, one of the major prophets (ulul-'azm), was handled by Ṣūfīs in Ṣūfī classics and Islamic commentaries, and to what extent the approach in classics was reflected in the signifying interpretations. It is mostly referred to by the Ṣūfīs in terms of its ascetic aspect. He is a prophet who is based on certain mystical states, positions and practices. Although the aspect of asceticism is emphasized in Ṣūfī classics, attention was also drawn to the guidance of the Ṣūfīs in the subjects of the *radjā*, *uns*, *baṣṭ*, *khalwa*, *i'tikāf* and *sakhā*. It is based on the "travel" method to train those who enter the sect. Unlike the other Ṣūfīs, Ibn 'Arabi, who compared the science of letters to Jesus, examined the characteristics of Jesus' creation in the context of "superiority/rif'at" wisdom. He linked his miracles with this extraordinary creation. As a reflection of his view of prophethood-guardianship, he evaluated the position of "hātam al-awliyā" in the context of the prophethood of Jesus. He argued that Jesus would descend as "heir and hātem" in absolute prophecy and in the hereafter.

The Ṣūfī commentators interpreted the verses about Jesus by contacting with some spiritual states and stages in the signposts. Similar to the Ṣūfī classics, Jesus was considered as the imām of the zāhids in the world and the sālik in the hereafter and the verses were considered as the spiritual experiences of the Ṣūfīs in the context of mystical journey (sayr al-sulūk). Jesus was described as a prophet who was endowed with the attributes of Allah and attained sacrifice, blessings, guardianship, prophethood, ingenuity, affection, innocent.

The Ṣūfī commentators also deduced the meanings of Ṣūfīsm from the verses that mention the birth of Jesus in a miraculous way, and drew

125 al-Qushayrī, *Laṭā'if al-ishārāt*, 3/179; al-Ḳāshānī, *Ta'wīlāt al-Qur'ān*, 2/239; al-Bursawī, *Tafsīr rūḥ al-bayān*, 8/425; Ibn 'Ajība, *al-Baḥr al-madīd*, 5/259.

126 al-Bursawī, *Tafsīr rūḥ al-bayān*, 8/425.

attention to his superiority over other prophets and saints with this aspect. The Şūfīs also explained the miracles performed by Jesus by establishing their connection with the special situation at his birth. On the basis of this, those who reached the level of fanā' by the spiritual journey, have seen it possible that extraordinary events took place, as in Jesus. The spiritual gem becomes the Jesus of the time of those who survived the human and human resource, and Allah revives dead hearts with his breath, opens deaf ears and blind eyes. Thus, they have the position within the ummah of the prophet among his people.

Reflecting many practices and concepts regarding Şūfī life in their interpretations, the Şūfī commentators explained the verses that talk about the death of Jesus and his ascension to the heaven in the context of the purification of the soul and the purification of the nafs in the context of spiritual progress and adapting it to the thought of fanā'-baqā' in Şūfism. The word meanings of "death" and "raf" in this verse made it easier for Şūfīs to make such an interpretation. As a result, the verses about Jesus are interpreted in the context of mystical elements in isharī tafsīr and his mystical aspect is brought into the forefront.

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