THE SCIENCE OF THE BREATH IN PERSIANATE INDIA

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ABSTRACT

Patrick J. D'Silva: "The Science of the Breath in Persianate India."
(Under the direction of Carl W. Ernst)

This dissertation examines a series of Persian manuscripts containing Indian divination

practices centered on knowledge of the breath. In Sanskrit, these breathing practices are known

shiva-svarodaya (the texts are presented as a dialogue between Shiva and Parvati). *Svara* refers

to "voiced breath," thus the term roughly translates as "attainment of voiced breath." In the 13th

CE, these practices are translated from Sanskrit into Persian in a text titled the

Kamarupanchashika ("the 50 verses of Kamaru"). This dissertation analyzes the different

abridgments of the *Kamarupanchashika* that circulate from the 14th CE onwards throughout

India and Iran. The authors of these texts use the phrase `ilm-i dam`, "the science of the breath,"

to describe this knowledge.

This project examines the process through which these practices came to be integrated

within Islamicate knowledge production in India and Iran, as well as how they factor in Euro-

American analyses of Islam and Sufism during and after the European colonial period. Chapter

One is an introduction to the project and to several of the key foundation texts that serve as

necessary background knowledge upon which the remaining chapters build. Chapter Two locates

this project within the Islamicate engagement with India (Arabic and Persian: *al-Hind*) by

surveying key authors writing in Arabic and Persian about this region from the 9th-16th centuries

CE, ending with an examination of Abu'l Fazl ibn Mubark, court historian to the Mughal

emperor Akbar, and the way that `ilm-i dam` appears in the *A'in-i Akbari* ("The Institutes of

Akbar"). Chapter Three places `ilm-i dam` in the broader context of other Indian practices such as yoga and Ayurveda, asking the question of how all of these ways of knowing understand the body and its relationship to the world around it. Chapters Four and Five analyze the way that `ilm-i dam` has been received by scholars in Iran and Europe, respectively, comparing how these two interpretive communities categorize `ilm-i dam` differently. While the former groups it with practical tools that are distinct from Sufism, the latter associates it with Sufism and Hinduism. Analyzing the motivations and outcomes of these categorizations is key for this project.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

It takes a village to write a dissertation. This particular project is no exception. There are so many people who contributed to my graduate work at UNC, as well as earlier years, that I am sure I will fail to recognize all of them. That said, the attempt must still be made.

My committee deserves first mention, for without their mentoring, this dissertation would have remained in the 'realm of the unseen'. From the outset, Prof. Carl Ernst guided me with his characteristically reserved style, making 'suggestions' here and there that I took for the mandates that they were. The inspiration for this project came out of a reading course in Persian poetry that I undertook for him during my first semester of the doctoral program, in which he recommended that I read E.G. Browne's travelogue. The results of that bedside reading are in your hands. Prof. Juliane Hammer pushed me to reflect critically on who I am as a scholar, and indeed as a person. Her mentoring has been hugely significant for me throughout my doctoral work; she is a model of the engaged scholar who conveyed to me the importance of each and every word we write because of its connection to the very real world that we all inhabit. Prof. Omid Safi provided much support, introducing me to critical reflection on the *mazhab-i `eshq* that I know will undergird much of my scholarly and personal life for many years to come. Prof. Emma Flatt encouraged me in myriad ways throughout the project, prompting me to "read sideways" and pursue the study of magic and occultism so as to "expand the realm of human knowledge," a charge that I take seriously. Prof. Randall Styers provided me with sound and judicious advice throughout the dissertation process. Of particular value was his comment at my prospectus

defense that I needed to decide what the "center of gravity" would be for my project, and let that guide me.

Beyond my dissertation committee, there are numerous faculty members at UNC, Harvard Divinity School, and Macalester College whose tutelage and mentorship greatly influenced the path I have taken.

In addition to those who have taken on the formal role of mentoring through this process, there are many more who have supported me in more material ways.

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NOTE ON TRANSLITERATIONS

In completing this project, I decided to simplify my transliteration system in order to facilitate legibility and prioritize accessibility, keeping in mind the adage that overly technical transliterations confuse the beginner, and are unnecessary for the specialist. Accordingly, I implemented a simplified version of the transliteration system endorsed by the International Journal for Middle Eastern Studies (IJMES), in which I have retained the Arabic letters *ayn* (`) and *hamza* ('). This applies to terms regardless of whether or not I am quoting a source written in Arabic, Persian, or Urdu. Given that pronunciation of certain Arabic letters is very different in the latter two languages, and that my project is weighted towards Persian sources, I have given prominence to the Persian pronunciation. I have similarly simplified the transliteration for terms rendered from Sanskrit.

Chapter 1: Introduction

"This is the practice [*`amal*] of the jogis [*jogiyan*]. It is not the activity [*fi`l*] of the people of Muhammad [*ummat-i muhammadi*], but it is correct [*durust*]."

      Muhammad Muhyi al-Din, *Kamaru Panchashika abridgement* (1748)[1]

"Even if differentiation is possible…in terms of the specific, inherently local, historically situated knowledge that is manifest in practice, one is always left with the question of where and when one 'ends' and the other 'begins.' The essentialized insularity of nominal designation works well at the centers of knowledge and practice…but fails to capture what goes on at the frontiers. And frontiers at one point in time are often somewhat arbitrarily defined as such with reference to the hegemony of essentialized centers at other points in time."

      Joseph Alter[2]

1 - Initial Questions

      This project analyzes a set of divination practices centered on knowledge of one's breath.

The evidence for these practices is taken mainly from a series of Persian manuscripts from India

and Iran dating to the early modern period (specifically the seventeenth- through nineteenth-

centuries, most of which use the term *`ilm-i dam* ("the science of the breath"). These manuscripts

are classified as Islamic for several reasons: the associations with their language of composition,

the identities of those who patronized the creation of a manuscript via copying and translation,

and the physical locations where they were originally collected. By the same token, these

manuscripts are also classified as un-Islamic, albeit for a different set of reasons: that they are

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[1] *Kamaru Panchashika abridgment* (Karachi recension), Karachi, Pakistan National Museum MS-1957.1060/18-1, fol 2b (marginal comment).

[2] Joseph Alter, "Yoga in Asia—Mimetic History: Problems in the Location of Secret Knowledge," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 29 (No. 2, 2009), 215.

translations from Sanskrit texts known as *svarodaya* (*svara* meaning "voiced breath," and *udaya* meaning "rising" or "attainment"), trace back to mythological pre-historical discourses between Shiva and Parvati (hence they are commonly referred to as *shiva-svarodaya*), and that they contain practices labeled as esoteric or occult by subsequent European interpreters. I am focusing on a set of texts that confound the received categories of Muslim and Hindu, Persian and Indian, religion and magic. The difficulty in delineating between these two groups of categories—as well as within them—is an aspect of this project that I want to highlight throughout the following pages as a series of examples in which Muslims in the pre- and early-modern periods incorporated and interpreted non-Muslim practices from India.

In studying these texts, again and again I have to account for the way they move between these various dichotomies, establishing a spectrum instead of a binary, and occasionally bypassing these rubrics altogether. As this inquiry moves through time from the pre- to the early-modern period, and through space from India to Iran and Europe, I ask the following question: who is defining these categories, and to what end? In particular, I contrast how Muslim and European intellectuals in the early-modern period receive and interpret `*ilm-i dam* differently. Categories matter, and this work is about physical objects that demand that we re-evaluate those categories.

As Sufi teacher Muhammad Muhyi al-Din expresses so concisely in the opening epigram above, these texts speak to a series of times and places in which Muslims engaged with knowledge that they recognized was non-Islamic, but nonetheless held as "correct." The task I have set before me is to make progress in untangling the how and why, as well as the where and when, of this reality. Additionally, Joseph Alter's admonition about the arbitrary designations of center and frontier serves as a reminder that while Arabic and Arabic-speaking communities

continue to be the default normative standard in studying Islam and Muslims, the overlapping importance of Persian as a language and India as a location for studying Islam cannot be overstated.

At the outset, an initial note on translation is warranted. There is great value in retaining a term, especially a non-English term, and refraining from translating it. In their persuasive and original work on the Greek and Latin terms *threskeia* and *religio*, respectively, Carla Barton and Daniel Boyarin describe their goal as seeing

> what it was possible to see when we ceased to look for what was not there, when we ceased to rely on the anachronistic word 'religion' and instead, attempted to study, in the most nuanced way that we were able, the conceptual networks and the cultures from which they came 'on their own terms,' integrated back into the endless depths and complexities of mundane existence.[3]

Substituting the word "breath" for that of "religion" in the above quote yields an accurate encapsulation of aspirations for this project. In studying *`ilm-i dam*, I have found again and again that translation does more to alienate than it does to endear. Writing from my immediate physical and cultural context of twenty-first century America, the divisions of time and space separating me from authors and texts tracing to fourteenth-century Persia or seventeenth-century India are already vast enough without imposing the additional linguistic barrier. Balancing this with the need to convey my work using terms intelligible for my readers means that the pages that follow are full of translations, many of them my own, working from (to date) unpublished manuscript sources.

2 - Terminological Legacies: *`ilm* as Science, *`ilm* as Knowledge

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[3] Carla A. Barton and Daniel Boyarin, *Imagine No Religion: How Modern Abstractions Hide Ancient Realities* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2016), 1.

When I do translate `ilm-i dam, it is as "the science of the breath," but there is a lot to be made of the decision to gloss `ilm as "science" instead of "knowledge." By way of background, I will share an exchange from several years ago with a senior scholar of religion in South Asia. Upon hearing about my research, he asked, "why does it have to be called 'science'"? When I offered that the texts themselves use the term `ilm, and that several different European interpreters of these texts from the 19th century has used the term "science" in translating the Persian `ilm, he nonetheless pushed me: "but 'science' is a different category with its own history. Why are these techniques 'scientific'?" He was pushing me to consider whether or not I was actually taking categories rooted in my own experience, and irresponsibly imposing them on my authors from early-modern India and Persia.

By way of reply, I turn to Bruno Latour, who points out that there is a need to "give evidence that 'science' and 'society' are both explained more adequately by an analysis of the relations among forces and that they become mutually inexplicable and opaque when made to stand apart."[4] Perhaps this is a version of the question regarding the sound made by a tree falling in a forest when no one is present. Re-phrased, one might ask whether a piece of scientific knowledge, say the existence of gravity, *exists* in the same way without a mountain of specialist literature produced with the sole purpose of understanding and articulating the operation of this key feature of our universe. What happens then, to experts, technicians, and "knowers," if deprived of a socially constructed field in which they are able to "know" these things? As Dominque Pestre notes, "Knowledge and science are words that can easily mislead us into inappropriate generalizations if we do not load them with precise social and material

[4] Bruno Latour, trans. Alan Sharidan and John Law, *The Pastuerization of France* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1993), 7.

configurations."[5] Along this journey, I interrogate the "social and material configurations" as they apply to the various *`ilm-i dam* texts. These texts come from such different places (India and Iran) and time places (fourteenth- to twenty-first-centuries), that the "configurations" vary greatly from one to the next. Fleshing out both the configuration of individual texts as well as the network that ties them together is one of this project's contributions.

When British Orientalist E.G. Browne purchased a manuscript while traveling in Iran in the late 19th century, he wrote about acquiring a manuscript containing "a treatise on the mystical science of managing the breath."[6] The term translated from Arabic into English as "science" is *`ilm* (pl. *`ulum*). The use of *`ilm* as a technical term regularly translated into English as science is well established from the pre-modern period through the present. For example, one of the most well-known and highly-regarded Muslim scholars from the pre-modern period, Abu Hamid al-Ghazali (d. 1111 CE), titled his famous treatise *ihya' `ulum al-din*, "The Revivification of the Religious Sciences." Subjects currently included as esoteric or occult in nature, such as letterism and astronomy, are titled *`ilm al-huruf* (literally, "the science of letters"), and *`ilm al-nujum* (literally, "the science of the stars"), respectively. The use of *`ilm* is consistent in Arabic language school curricula today, where *`ilm* functions in a comparable way to the Latin-derived suffix -*ology*, thus biology is *`ilm al-hayat* (science of life; i.e., biology), psychology is *`ilm al-nafs,*[7]

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[5] Dominique Pestre, "Regimes of Knowledge Production in Society." *Minerva* 41 (2003), 245-261.

[6] Edward Granville Browne, *A Year Amongst the Persians: Impressions as to the Life, Character, & Thought of the People of Persia, Received During Twelve Months' Residence in that Country in the Years 1887-1888* (London, A. and C. Black, 1893), 54. I interrogate Browne's use of the term "mystical" below.

[7] It is noteworthy here that in most cases the term for soul/self (*nafs*) looks exactly like the Arabic term for breath (*nafas*). They share the same consonants, and the only way of differentiating between them is that the former has a *sukuun* over the *fa'*, while in the latter we see a *fatha* over the same consonant. As I will describe below, this has led to mistakes in the way these texts have been catalogued over the years. Of course, some of the authors of these texts might be tempted to paraphrase the famous prophetic saying, "*man `arifa nafsahu fa-qad `arifa rabbahu*" and make the argument that one who knows their *breath*, in fact knows the most essential secrets to the universe, but that is a line of inquiry for another day.

(science of the soul/self, which is very close to the Greek roots of the English term, with *psyche* referring to the soul, and *logia* referring to order/rule of a subject) and so forth. Indeed, one of the terminological legacies in the Persian texts from the `ilm-i dam corpus is the use of Arabic in a manner somewhat akin to English writers using Latin terms. For example, the author of *Miz al-nafas* uses the Arabic terms *shams* and *qamar* when referring to the *solar* and *lunar* breaths, respectively, while then using the Persian terms *aftab* and *mahtab* when referring to the physical sun and moon :

> If the sun rise (*tulu`-i aftab*) is on the rising of the lunar breath (*dam-i qamari*), [then] its setting will be on the rising of the solar breath (*dam-i shamsi*). This hour is better. If the sun rise (*tulu`-i aftab*) is on the rising of the solar breath [then] its setting is on the rising of the lunar breath, it is better yet still.[8]

Thus, there is a similarity in the linguistic registers employed by authors writing in Persian in how they use Arabic terms on the one hand, and authors contemporary to the present-day writing in English and using Latin terms.

Translation is a tricky enterprise, and it is always worth pausing to consider the implications of the available choices. The term "science" has a particular genealogy in English that goes beyond the simplification of the Latin *scientia*. Similarly, the Arabic term `ilm is glossed as science, but has a root meaning of a particular type of knowing. There is a helpful contrast here between `ilm and *ma`rifa*,[9] in which the latter is understood as an experiential knowledge while the former is more cerebral or intellectual. Thus, *ma`rifat* is often glossed in translations of Sufi texts as *gnosis*, which itself imports particular cultural valences. These include, but are not limited to, the notion that when English-speakers use Latin terms, the subtext

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[8] *Miz al-nafas*, London: British Library Delhi Persian 796d, folio 59a.

[9] The Arabic feminine singular ending *ta-marbuta* is often vocalized and written as a straightforward *ta* in Persian, thus the Arabic term *ma`rifa* is spelled as *ma`rifat* in Persian.

is that both the person speaking and the term about which they speak are important. Given this, the question becomes: why retain the expression "science of the breath," when perhaps the phrase "knowledge of the breath" would do just as well? There is a great deal at stake when it comes to the precise terms that are used to describe these practices pertaining to the breath. The choices that have been made by scholars studying Islam when terms are used, for example, in Arabic and Persian, and what types of translation choices they have made to interpret those same terms for English-speaking audiences, provide some guidance.

2.1 What is "science"?

For some, science incorporates a kind of method or methodology, different from "knowledge," which shares valences with perception and understanding. There are severe limits on our linguistic ability to convey complex ideas – especially with written language – and so it behooves one to allow for a broader construal of valence and implication, and that the semantic range of a key term, such as "science," should extend far beyond the realm of the white lab coat, microscopes, and other technological trappings. The idea that science can be construed so restrictively is largely an outcome of the way the Enlightenment and the European colonial-era histories are told, in which Christian missionary expansion worked hand in glove with technological developments, especially in military and industry.

It is this type of broad construal that comes to mind in reading Justin Stearn's work on the need to decolonize the way scholars study the development of the natural sciences within Muslim communities:

> if we wish to truly understand what the natural sciences represented to
> Muslims in the pre-modern period, we will need to focus more on the
> ways in which *they constructed these sciences at the intersection of
> philosophy, theology, occult philosophy, mysticism and the various*

sciences themselves, than on the degree to which they prefigured what historians consider to be valid scientific knowledge today.[10]

As I demonstrate below, the placement of `*ilm-i dam* within the natural sciences by critical encyclopedia editors such as Amuli in the *Nafa'is al-funun* appeals directly to the type of intersectionality that Stearns urges his readers to focus upon. It is possible to examine how knowledge production varies over time and space, while still holding off on invoking *sui generis* categories and teleological developments? The terms science and knowledge could host any number of adjectives, all of which are investigated throughout the pages that follow. Bodily science/knowledge? Cosmological knowledge/science? Religious knowledge? Mystical knowledge? Political knowledge? Hindu or Indian knowledge? Muslim or Islamic(-ate) knowledge? To the extent that such a thing is possible, any "truth" of the matter lies at the intersection of each of these adjectives, along the edges of overlapping lines of flight.

3 - Key questions for religious studies, study of Islam, religion in South Asia

3.1 `Ilm-i dam and the Study of Religion

In analyzing `*ilm-i dam*, there are ramifications for disputes taking place across several different disciplines. In a theme that I will pursue through the pages that follow, these implications resonate across the spectrum of subtle and gross levels of the body. At the most general level, understanding `*ilm-i dam* adds to the argument in religious studies, anthropology, and the humanistic studies writ large that religion as a category has porous boundaries. What comes through these holes in the wall? Concepts and practices defined as magic, mysticism, esotericism, occultism, etc. In the case of `*ilm-i dam*, there is the added layer of science, of

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[10] Justin Stearns, "Writing the History of the Natural Sciences in the Pre-modern Muslim World: Historiography, Religion, and the Importance of the Early Modern Period," *History Compass* 9 (2011), 938, emphasis added.

thinking about the breath as a way of knowing that is directly applicable to the physical world. Discerning the precise degree to which `ilm-i dam` problematizes these boundaries is an important task, and I introduce it first here as a means of framing what will come next. My training within the academic study of religion has clear roots to the way the term and study thereof comes out of a European historical setting, and it should not be surprising that ideas and objects from outside of that context do not fit those categories. However, more and more scholars are also pointing out that the main thing hidden by the imposition of a dichotomy between religion and occultism is that the latter played such an important role in European society before, during, and after the precise time period in which religion is constructed and defined as a particular object sufficiently reified as to be fit for study, which supposedly erased the practice of occultism. In *Religion and The Decline of Magic: Studies in Popular Belief in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century England,* Keith Thomas cites the Protestant Reformation as leading to a seismic shift in the way people viewed the ability of the Church to establish the efficacy of rituals to improve one's circumstances. He cites low life expectancy, high disease rates, and natural disasters as evidence that English people felt increasingly vulnerable to the world around them. With vulnerability came more weight placed on tools for protecting oneself from various threats, and tools came in the form of magical rituals. The Reformation brought a change in popular attitudes towards the medieval Church, destabilizing its monopoly on efficacious ritual.[11]

Thomas argues against the common view that people let go of a belief in magic after new scientific "rituals" developed. Instead, people in late-medieval England began to believe in magic less and less, and only then were various scientific advances made. He does not state that there is a cause and effect relationship, only that the historical changes over time are such that

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[11] Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic: Studies in Popular Beliefs in Sixteenth and Seventeenth-Century England* (London: Penguin, 1973), 58-89.

one must re-evaluate assumptions about the relationship between a "rise" of science vis-à-vis a

"decline" of magic or religion.[12] Alongside Thomas' work on magic in England, there is also a

growing body of literature on magic and occultism on the continent. David Harvey writes that

while France is "the ancestral home of Cartesian rationalism and Voltairean skepticism…the

traditional emphasis on France's Enlightenment and Positivist heritage has long obscured a very

different, but far from marginal tradition of occultism."[13] Similarly, in his work on Germany

occultism in the nineteenth- and early-twentieth-centuries, Thomas Laqueur argues that any

coherent understanding of modernity requires engaging with occultism just as much, if not more

than, the much celebrated rationalist traditions that flourish during the Enlightenment.[14]

Changing views on the nature of language are also crucial for understanding the development of

our categories of religion, science, and magic. Robert Yelle's *The Language of Disenchantment*

outlines the key relationship between Protestant literalism and colonial policies towards Indian

religions and languages in British India, specifically describing how anti-ritual rhetoric was first

developed during the Reformation to critique Roman Catholicism and was then re-deployed in

India.[15] As noted above, there is substantial literature interrogating the boundaries between

religion and magic as objects of academic study. Randall Styers' work on magic is a helpful

resource, even if he does note its limitations as an academic lens through which to focus this

work.[16] For those who practice `*ilm-i dam*, the power of the breath literally suffuses the world

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[12] Thomas, 179-206.

[13] David Allen Harvey, "Beyond Enlightenment: Occultism, Politics, and Culture in France from the Old Regime to the *Fin-de-Siècle*," *The Historian* 65 (No. 3, 2003), 665.

[14] Thomas Laqueur, "Why the Margins Matter: Occultism and the Making of Modernity," *Modern Intellectual History* 3 (No. 1, 2006), 111-135.

[15] Robert Yelle, *The Language of Disenchantment* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).

[16] See Randall Styers, *Making Magic: Religion, Magic, and Science in the Modern World* (Oxford: Oxford

they inhabit. They draw it in and push it out without thinking. Through marshalling control over this ordinary substance, they are able to bring about extraordinary feats. There is substantial literature in Persian on breath control, which contains different Indic allusions and references than those in the Browne recension.

3.2 - `Ilm-i dam and the Study of Islam

To be clear, *`ilm-i dam* holds much more potential than simply another piece of evidence testifying to the limited nature of defining religion through the lens of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Protestantism. Building on the recent work of Shahab Ahmed's *What is Islam? The Importance of Being Islamic*, *`ilm-i dam* challenges the limits of the categories scholars use in studying Islam and Muslim practices and beliefs. Ahmed uses a series of phenomena – such as wine drinking and figural representation – to serve as heuristics for analyzing how the prohibition of something can be widely accepted as authentically "Islamic," despite massive historical evidence that Muslims often engage in both practices without deeming either as disqualifying them from claiming to be Muslim.[17] By contextualizing these practices, Ahmed confronts his audience with the question: how can *some* practices and beliefs be *Islamic*, while *others* are judged to be *non-Islamic?* While Ahmed deserves great praise for his critical re-evaluation of the field, at no point in his opus does he refer to magic, sorcery, or occultism. And yet these texts – the physical objects painstakingly copied and preserved by human beings over centuries – deserve the same questioning: do they or do they not fit within the normative

University Press, 2004): "Yet this notion of magic as intersubjective power leads once again to questions concerning the viability of magic as a useful analytical concept. If magic is seen as permeating human relations, as saturating the world of human interaction, this amorphous sense of intersubjective manipulation offers little in the way of conceptual illumination. If magic is everywhere, it is nowhere" (179-180).

[17] Shahab Ahmed, *What is Islam? The Importance of Being Islamic* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016), 43-73.

bounds of the term *Islamic*? One of the key challenges impeding research into subjects and

practices – such as `*ilm-i dam* – located at the intersection of categories such as mysticism and

occultism is that scholars such as Shahab Ahmed pursuing these inquiries today must work to

overcome generations of study that attempted to relieve Islamic Studies of this supposedly

scandalous burden. As Melvin-Koushki states:

> That the Islamicate occult sciences are still considered suspect reflects a
> certain ensorcellment of Islamicists by the specter of Enlightenment
> Science. Reacting to the depredations of European colonialism,
> orientalism's wellspring, the well-intentioned scholarly compulsion has
> been to exorcize Islamicate history and culture of "superstition" and
> "magic" in an effort to banish orientalist stereotypes of cultural and
> scientific stagnation.[18]

I see the study of `*ilm-i dam* as a contribution to the growing body of literature working towards

the eventual casting off of this spell that Melvin-Koushki describes. When scholars like Melvin-

Koushki and Noah Gardiner focus their work on luminaries of Islamicate esotericism such as

Sharab al-Din Yazdi (d. 1454 CE) and al-Buni (d. 1225 CE), they fight against the impression

that these thinkers from the pre-modern period engaged in things that were somehow not just

non-Islamic, but *un*-Islamic.[19] It is not that numerology and geomancy were accepted by

everyone in the pre-modern period, but rather that the type of debates taking place over the licit-

ness of these practices occurred without the type of "depredations" that would come later during

the European colonial period.

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[18] Matthew Melvin-Koushki, "Introduction: De-orienting the Study of Islamicate Occultism," *Arabica* 64 (No. 1, 2017), 288.

[19] See Matthew Melvin-Koushki, "In Defense of Geomancy: Sharaf al-Din Yazdi Rebuts Ibn Khaldun's Critique of the Occult Sciences," *Arabic* 64 (2017), 346-403; and Noah Gardiner, "Stars and Saints: The Esotericist Astrology of the Sufi Occultist Ahmed al-Buni" (*Magic, Ritual, and Witchcraft* 12, No. 1, 2017) 39-65, respectively.

3.3 `Ilm-i dam and the Study of India

Beyond the discipline of religious studies, and the particular branch of that discipline that focuses on the study of Islam, *`ilm-i dam* also raises difficult questions about religious difference in India. The earliest attested sources for using knowledge of the breath for divination purposes are in Sanskrit and come in the form of the god Shiva's discourses to his consort Parvati. Barring the introduction of new evidence, these are facts that cannot be disputed. The question is not really whether or not *`ilm-i dam* is part of the received knowledge traditions from India. There are examples of breath-centered divination in Shaivite tantra, Buddhist Garuda tantra, and Jain yoga treatises, dating back to as early as the seventh-century CE.[20] Over time Muslims in India become aware of these practices, and actively work to understand them. The evidence of this comes in the form of Persian, Urdu, and Arabic texts containing references and detailed information on these teachings. The earliest such reference is in a fourteenth-century Persian encyclopedia titled the *Nafa'is al-funun*, written by Muhammad Shams al-Din Amuli during the Ilkhanid period. Even more compelling is the fact that this specific encyclopedia entry is an abridgment of a much longer text known as the *Kamaru Panchashika* ("Fifty Verses of Kamaru"), the only extant copy of which actually post-dates the *Nafa'is al-funun* by almost three centuries. Kamaru refers to the region of India today known as Assam. Therefore, the earliest documentation for Muslim engagement with these quintessentially Indian techniques of *`ilm-i dam* comes from a location in modern-day Iran. This raises questions of who is defining these techniques as Indian-but-not-Islamic, Islamic-but-also-Indian, and so on.

One particular author to whom I turn multiple times below is the Shattari Sufi master Muhammad Ghawth (d. 1563). As an author in his own right but also as a translator and

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[20] See Appendix B for a list of Non-Islamicate sources on breath-centered divination texts.

interpreter of yogic texts, he provides many examples of the type of boundary-confusing Muslim

engagement with Indian knowledge that frames `ilm-i dam`. One particular version of the key

Kamaru Pancashika is written on the margins of a version of Ghawth's *Javahir-i Khamsa* ("The

Five Jewels"), this specific manuscript goes a long way towards documenting the extent to which

`ilm-i dam` is folded within the boundaries of South Asian Sufism.[21] In other cases, a lack of clear

identification with a particular Sufi order or lineage makes it difficult to come up with the

heuristic for expressing how and where `ilm-i dam` functioned in South Asian Muslim

communities in the pre- and early-modern period. It is here that another category, such as the

"Customary Islam" that Nile Green coined as a neologism in his *Bombay Islam,* may be of use.

According to Green, "Customary Islam" can be defined as "patterns of Muslim religiosity that,

while evolving in the centuries before the emergence of the more competitive religious economy,

still held sufficient—and indeed expanded—appeal in the new conditions so as to be successfully

reproduced for new sets of consumers."[22] Most importantly here is Green's broader point that

this heuristic of "Customary Islam" serves as an alternative appellation to that of Sufism, and as

such is an appealing nomenclature for `ilm-i dam`, when this particular set of "ways of knowing"

does not sit easily within the classifications long in use within the academic study of Islam and

Muslim practice. Green invokes this term in order to provide a type of category or label that

captures a wide variety of practices. The challenge is that one is not sure what precisely ties these

things together, other than the agreement that they do *not* fit in other categories. It would be

preferable to avoid this somewhat indiscriminate grouping, but perhaps for the time being it is

the best that can be done. The goal is to develop a theoretical framework that allows scholars to

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[21] Tehran MS 1-12622-2, ff. 177a-185b.

[22] Nile Green, *Bombay Islam: The Religious Economy of the West Indian Ocean, 1840-1915* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 19-20.

understand practices with a more finely tuned sense of what goes together, and what is different. For example, in the case of `ilm-i dam` and *habs-i dam* ("holding the breath"), it is not appropriate to group these together unless there are sources attesting to the two existing hand-in-hand.

There are several sets of overlapping and interlocking matrices going on here, all of which connect to `ilm-i dam`. The first is religion constructed as distinct from science *as well as* magic. The second is the application of those boundaries to the study of Islam, in which debates over the licit and illicit-ness of particular practices deemed *sihr*, which may or may not line up with what European observers have in mind as "magic." The slippage between these two sets of categories is one issue, but now there is the third matrix, that which is defined by how these debates and practices take place in a South Asian context. In each of these cases, `ilm-i dam` causes problems for neat and tidy classifications. How *should* one classify these practices? Rather than providing a cut and dried answer to that question, I present the way that different authors in the pre- and early-modern periods have situated the texts.

4 - Contents of `ilm-i dam`

Before proceeding with the analysis in the following chapters, it is helpful to specify the subjects encompassed by `ilm-i dam`. This includes seemingly abstract cosmological references to different types of breaths (i.e. solar, lunar, earthy, airy, watery, fiery, ether, and so forth), as well as very tangible embodied experiences (i.e. going to war, having sex, currying favor with one's ruler, purchasing livestock, getting dressed in the morning, etc). I say "seemingly abstract" because, as I will argue below, for the authors of these texts these references are not abstract at all. Rather, the references to the sun and moon and the concomitant linkages to the five elements

are just as concrete as the desired outcomes or reading of the cosmos that is available to those who develop knowledge of these practices.

While the material below is an honest beginning of *what* I mean by invoking the term *`ilm-i dam*, as well as *when*, *why*, and *how* one would go about practicing these techniques, there is another question lurking in the background. *Who* are the people who might be considered practitioners of *`ilm-i dam*, and on what grounds would any such determination be made? Drawing on Dominique Pestre's work, I must remember that "expertise is not a neutral political entity. The control of expertise is a major political bargaining chip; it implies the definition of collective and individual norms, and it directly impinges on key interests."[23] Where the patrons and translators/copyists are identifiable, there are links to encyclopedia compilers (Muhammad Shams al-Din Amuli in the fourteenth-century), Mughal court historians (Abu'l Fazl in the sixteenth-century), and a rough litany of Sufi teachers (Shaykh Jalal al-Din of Bengal, in the seventeenth-century, and Muhammad Muhyi al-Din in the eighteenth-century). It is fair to say that the authors about whom there is the most information are almost certainly those who were at the farthest remove from considering themselves practitioners of *`ilm-i dam*. Some of the texts are the product of imperial projects, while others appear to have circulated at lower levels populated by elites who were literate and concerned with questions such as how to improve their status with rulers. What were the "key interests" for those about whom such little information is available? I will return to this question repeatedly below and in subsequent chapters, but it remains one of the more challenging aspects of this project.

The crux of the matter is understanding the ways in which the gross and subtle, or macro- and microcosms, are inter-related, and then analyzing what that meant for those looking to

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[23] Pestre, 256.

preserve, practice, and ultimately promulgate this knowledge. I will begin by discussing what the key terms in this corpus are, and how have scholars engaged with those terms differently depending on genre, time period, geography, and other contextual layers. As noted above, there is a longstanding Sanskrit and Hindi corpus on using the breath for divination purposes, known as *svarodaya* or *shiva-svarodaya*, the latter name indicating that many of the Sanskrit texts come in the form of a discourse between Śiva and Parvati. While *svarodaya* and `*ilm-i dam* may indeed have important linkages, there are also a great deal of differences. The ambiguity of the differences and/or overlap between these two is something I highlight as part of my broader argument about the extent to which Persian-speaking Muslim communities within and outside of South Asia integrated non-Muslim Indian knowledge and used it for their own purposes. In what follows, I treat the Persian corpus as its own entity, making occasional references to appropriate segments of the Sanskrit corpus to note cases of agreement and lack thereof. Future iterations of this work would ideally treat the two in a more synthetic manner as a single corpus instead of related but separate creations.

To be clear, when I use the term "corpus" in this project, I am referring to a group of texts with very similar content in which the overlap between them is evident upon an even cursory reading. As I lay out below, these texts appear in a variety of formats, but what I argue here is that based on the content, one should understand them as constituting their own distinct genre, and even a "meta-text" unto itself. This goes beyond the type of grouping together of texts that share similar function or form, such as Qur'anic exegesis or written accounts of the Prophet Muhammad's words and deeds. `*ilm-i dam* texts contain so much overlap, at times it is quite difficult to keep straight which manuscript is under the microscope at a particular moment (although those written in Arabic are easy to distinguish from those written in Persian, and so

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forth). The amount of similarity is so extensive, in fact, that modern anti-plagiarism detection

software would "flag" these texts as being in effect copies of one another, at least in specific

sections.[24] In using the term "meta-text," I am aware of the way this may lead some to think of

an *Ur*-text, some type of now lost "original" volume in Sanskrit that inspired someone to render

its contents into Persian, vernacular Hindi, Urdu, Arabic, and other languages at different times

and in different places. My intention is decidedly different. While there is work to be done

tracking the translation process from "Indic" languages (Sanskrit and Hindi) into "Islamicate"

languages (Persian, Urdu, Arabic), several road blocks should convey a sense of caution. First, I

take issue with the facile manner in which some would declare that certain languages are

"quintessentially" carriers of a particular set of cultural and religious affects. In the multi-lingual

environment of South Asia in particular, this demarcation of boundaries that align Hinduism with

Hindi and Islam with Urdu belie the many ways in which Hindi and Urdu are two inflections or

even dialects of the same language. But the many (and well-) documented instances in which

Hindi-speaking Muslims or Persian-speaking Hindus (and Jains) participated in cultural

production of various types should set to rest the idea that the link between language and religion

is so easily reified. Second, in the case of *`ilm-i dam*, it is a mistake to view the Persian texts as

somehow derivative from the Sanskrit.[25] While this project does not take up the Sanskrit texts

directly, I do use a set of translations from Sanskrit into European languages (English, French,

and Italian) to document the ways in which translating *svarodaya* ends up producing a type of

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[24] Due to space constraints, I have not included a granular-level comparison of each and every text within the corpus. Instead, in addition to the specific examples cited in different chapters, please see Appendix A for a list that provides information on the manuscript and few published sources consulted for this project.

[25] In arguing that Persian texts should not be understood as derivative or lesser than Sanskrit "originals," I rely on Deleuze's points on the simulacrum, which "is not degraded copy, rather it contains a positive power which negates *both original and copy, both model and reproduction*." Gilles Deleuze, trans. Rosalind Krauss, "Plato and the Simulacrum," in *October* 27 (Winter, 1983), 53.

text that functions quite differently in practice, thus justifying the term `*ilm-i dam* to mark it as a distinct (albeit related) genre in its own right.

This project approaches `*ilm-i dam* as a nexus of the twin regimes of power and knowledge. Many scholars have worked on the idea that knowledge production in and of itself is never an apolitical act, that it is *always* connected both to those who wield power, and those upon whom said power is deployed. Pestre's work, cited above, is a good example, for while it is admittedly limited in scope to Europe over the past five hundred years, his work opens up some difficult questions. What would it look like if scholars today were to talk about the "knowledge economy" outside of Europe during the same time period, or earlier time periods altogether? The `*ilm-i dam* corpus stands as evidence of how knowledge moved across linguistic, religious, and—to a lesser extent— political boundaries. That said, the precise nature and articulation of said regimes of power and knowledge remain to be seen.  At its heart, `*ilm-i dam* is about gaining power through observing the correlation between the macrocosm and the microcosm. This power may be described as variously political, personal, or spiritual; the precise type of power depends on text and context, and is something that I address on a case by case basis. Finding this power to take action has an appeal that cuts across the types of categories scholars usually employ in humanistic studies generally, let alone South Asian religious practices in particular. In keeping with Eaton[26] and Gaborieu,[27] I argue that the texts under discussion in this chapter should be thought of more in terms of their relationship to power as pertaining to both personal and

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[26] See Richard Eaton, "Conversion to Islam in India," in *Approaches to Islam in Religious Studies*, ed. Richard Martin (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2001), 106-123. Eaton presents four theories for Indian conversion to Islam, discounting each in favor of his theory that "accretion and reform" takes place gradually over time. For a full-length treatment of this subject specific to Bengal, see his *The Rise of Islam and the Bengal Frontier, 1204-1760* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

[27] See Marc Gaborieau, "L'Ésotérisme Muslman dans le Sous-Continent Indo-Pakistanais: Un Point de Vue Ethnologique," *Bulletin d'etudes orientales* 44, (1992), 191-209, especially 203.

collective action than whether or not they fit cleanly into categories such as "Hindu" or

"Muslim." Culturally embedded efficacy outweighs any concern for doctrinally rooted

sectarianism. As noted in the epigraph above, one author wrote in the margins of an abridged

edition of the *Kamaru Panchashika* that, "this is the practice [*`amal*] of the jogis [*jogiyan*]. It is

not the activity [*fi`l*] of the people of Muhammad [*ummat-i muhammadi*], but it is correct

[*durust*]."[28] I will return to the full implications of this statement with regard to the religious

identities of the practitioners of the *`ilm-i dam* later in this study, but for the time being I want to

pause and note that Muhammad Muhyi al-Din chooses not to use any of a variety of terms that

can be translated as ways or types of *knowing*; terms whose importance I will unpack below in

some detail. Instead of focusing on *knowledge*, and the different ways to attain it, this author

chooses to contrast two different terms for ways or types of *doing*. His emphasis is *practice* or

action, and the efficacious nature thereof. In other words, if it works, you do it, no matter the

source.

This begs the question, what do I really mean when invoking the phrase *`ilm-i dam*? In

this section I answer that question from a bird's eye point of view. What are the implications and

connotations of the terminological choices made by scholars in discussing these texts? The large

quantity of date points represented in the different manuscripts and occasional printed text

includes varied vocabulary and a diverse set of forms (i.e., Sufi miscellany, medical

compendium, etc). I will present the similarities and differences between them, with brief

comments on aspects of this corpus that are particularly important for understanding its

relevance to the broader questions regarding the relationship between knowledge generation and

imperial power that I raise in this project.

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[28] *"in `amal-i jugiyan ast fi`l-i ummat muhammadi nist likan durust ast." Kamaru Panchasika abridgment*, Karachi,
N.M.1957.1060/18, folio 2a.

5 - When all breaths are not equivalent: `ilm-i dam and zikr, svarodaya and pranayama

I want to address a recurring concern that has come up throughout this project, namely that of explaining to my various interlocutors (both scholarly and public) how the "science of the breath" is different from what they expect it to be. Within Islamic Studies, specifically those who work on Sufism, there is an expectation that paying special attention to the breath is associated with *dhikr/zikr*, the widespread "remembrance" (of God) exercises that play such an important role in both individual and collective rituals associated with various Sufi communities. Within Hindu or Buddhist studies, I have frequently encountered the expectation that *svarodaya* is somehow linked to *pranayama*. While perfectly understandable, these connections and associations are also inconsistent. In the early-modern period, Mughal court historian Abu'l Fazl provides a clear demarcation between *svarodaya* and *pranayama* through addressing these practices in *separate sections* of the *A'in-i Akbari* ("The Institutes of Akbar"), his massive appendix to his biography of his ruler and patron, the Mughal emperor Akbar. As noted in Chapter Four, Amuli's organization of the *Nefais al-funun* clearly separates the sciences of *tasavvuf* (Sufism) from the natural sciences, within which one finds the material on `ilm-i dam in the form of an abridgement of the *Kamaru Panchashika*. This confusion has earlier precedent. In Chapter Five I will discuss the way that Alfred von Kremer places Naqshbandi *zikr* accounts involving specific instructions on breath control directly alongside Amuli's `ilm-i dam text, implying that these practices are very similar *because* of the shared interest in the breath, but without a very sophisticated examination of how the breath is functioning in each case. Instead, the presence of breath-focused practices plays into von Kremer's real aim, which is arguing for the Hindu and Buddhist origins of Indian Sufism. In the twentieth-century, a series of translations

from Sanskrit and Hindi into English occasionally present *svarodaya* using references to *prana*, but more often is the retention of the distinction between the two terms for breath.[29]

In addition to the oft-cited `*ilm-i dam*, there are other terms relating to the breath, such as "holding the breath" *habs-i dam*, "watching the breath" *pas-i anfas*, or even another way of "knowing about the breath" *ma`rifat-i dam*, or even `*ilm-i anfas*. The challenge I face is pushing back against the tendency to collapse all of these into a single category that usually invokes Sufism. These terms are related in particular ways, but they are also distinct. For the purposes of this project, I have deliberately placed an emphasis on the texts using the term `*ilm-i dam*, granting those texts pride of place within this iteration of my inquiry into breathing practices in Persianate India. Future iterations may include broader surveys not just of unambiguously Sufi breathing practices, but also breathing practices found in yoga and other Indian traditions. The main point here is that one should refrain from making automatic links between a reference to the breath in an Islamicate language and then Sufism. There are, of course, examples of texts on breathing techniques that are clearly linked to Sufi orders, but these are different practices, with different names, and thus must be recognized as such. Whether reading of *svarodaya* or `*ilm-i dam* in the *A'in-i Akbari* or in any of the many other sources that range from the fourteenth-to-nineteenth centuries, the point I want to emphasize is that the user or practitioner employs knowledge of the breath for practical gains. Drawing down power from the cosmos for one's own benefit makes a great deal of sense. Given that nature is by far the most powerful force experienced by humans, it is inherently logical that these actors would seek out the fulfillment of their agency through gaining and utilizing knowledge regarding the channeling of all that the universe has to offer.

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[29] See Appendix B for more information on these publications.

6 - Translation in Context

At the outset I made a brief mention on the decision to retain `ilm-i dam` in place of its translation. Here I would like to make a different type of comment on translation. Namely, to situate the context in which these texts are translated and interpreted by those rendering them from Sanskrit and vernacular Indian languages in Persian and Urdu.

It is quite challenging to render words and their implied meanings from one language to another, even without the layers of physical and temporal dislocation from a text's original context. Of particular interest is when scholars develop a set of expectations about the tools that premodern translators used to navigate at times treacherous waters in their attempts to disseminate knowledge across cultural divides. In her treatment of one of the texts that features within the `ilm-i dam` corpus discussed in this chapter, Sakaki states that

> A translation may manifest cultural differences based on the translator's background knowledge and intention. However, it should be an authentic and well-informed representation of the source text. On the other hand, readers may understand the translated text as a part of their own culture pervaded with concepts familiar to them. Islamication, if it may be so called, may have occurred in most works translated into Islamic languages. *The Muslim translators always kept in mind that the translation should not be treated as heretic. They often included references to Qur'anic passages, pious phrases and the Hadiths, the terminology relevant to the literary competence of the readers.* We may find many examples of this kind in the translations of the *Bhagavadgita*, the fifty Upanisads, the *Yogavasistha* and the *Mahabharata*.[30]

While I agree with the general statements on how translations bridge cultural and linguistic differences, I would hesitate before concluding that Muslim authors are *always* looking for a textual reference to the Qur'an or hadith in order to authorize their work. Limiting Muslim

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[30] Kazuyo Sakaki, "Yogico-tantric Traditions in the *Hawḍ al-Hayat*," *Journal of the Japanese Association for South Asian Studies* 17 (2005), 137.

scholars in this way restricts Islamic knowledge production to things like *tafsir* (Qur'anic exegesis) and *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence). Would one apply the same standards to writers with a different religious background? Does the lack of Qur'anic citations in some writings by philosophers such as al-Farabi (d. 951 CE) or al-Kindi (d. 873 CE) make them *less Muslim*, or is this designation more a function of the assumptions that scholars have about the external markers used to determine religious identity? Instead of the expectation that Muslim authors working on translating Indian texts from Sanskrit into Arabic and Persian somehow *need* to have Qur'anic references, what about considering an alternative framework of legitimization, one in which the knowledge in and of itself is understood to be of value? As I will demonstrate using the various texts reviewed for this project, rarely do our authors take this approach. Instead they appear to be eschewing any such references, arguably because they do not believe that these works on the science of the breath require Qur'anic authorization. At least in the *`ilm-i dam* texts reviewed for this project, there appears to be a distinct relationship to religious difference that does not imply that authors felt the need to invoke sacred text in order to legislate or otherwise authorize their translation activities. This may be a pressing concern in other contexts, and certainly charges of heresy or blasphemy would have been a serious concern, but the corpus in question for this project testifies to a different social, political, and religious reality. One explanation for the difference between these texts and the ones that Sakaki cites is that the latter fall into the category of court-sponsored translation projects. In those situations, there would arguably be a much greater degree of scrutiny imposed on translations of Indian epic or religious texts. By contrast, the *`ilm-i dam* texts are being translated, copied, and otherwise promulgated in a different social and political context. As the entries on the list in this chapter demonstrate, very few if any of the entries survive in some type of court-sponsored translation project. The one

main exception to this is the rendering of *svarodaya* material from Sanskrit into Persian for the compendium of Indian knowledge housed within the *A'in-i Akbari*, compiled by Mughal emperor Akbar's court historian, Abu'l Fazl ibn Mubarak in the 16th century. This exceptional case will be treated in Chapter Two.

7 - Foundation Texts: Kamaru Panchashika and Amrtakunda

Syncretism as a concept is often critiqued on the basis that it presupposes two pure "parents" giving birth to something that is a combination thereof. This position ignores the perpetually hybrid nature of identity and identities: that there is a constant re-layering, re-building, and re-constructing of belief and practice to help a community fit its needs. Unfortunately, the use of the term syncretism does more damage than simply reducing our ability to understand these dynamics. The reification of religious identity is one of those phenomenon that is as problematic as it is ubiquitous, especially in the modern period. As Flood cogently points out, the cosmopolitan nature of South Asia drew on Arab, Persian, Turkish, and Indic communities who were simultaneously *from* somewhere else as much as they were *of* the shared space. This dynamic and shifting reality is "incommensurate with sectarian historiographies, and inconceivable to purveyors of orthodoxies and purities of every sort."[31] As foundation texts, the *Kamaru Panchashika* and the *Amritakunda* raise the specters of hybridity, but a thorough analysis of these texts and the subsequent entries into the `*ilm-i dam* corpus disprove the supposition that these texts can be constructed as the product of two pure parents. Instead, studying the material and intellectual exchanges between groups that are today defined primarily

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[31]Finbar Flood, *Objects of Translation Material Culture and Medieval Hindu-Muslim Encounter* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 261.

as Hindu and Muslim reveals that it is far more productive to re-classify these groups as ruling elites, religious ascetics, and so forth. While religious affiliation is *one* qualifier, there are many others that are an equally accurate means of framing the study of knowledge production in South Asia.

7.1 Kamaru Panchashika ("50 verses of Kamaru")

The previously mentioned *Kamaru Panchashika* is a Persian text on yoga and divination, known by the Hindi name that translates as "50 verses of *Kamaru*." While the author is anonymous and the text's date of composition is unknown, excerpts of the text exist in Shams al-Din Muhammad ibn Mahmud Amuli's Persian encyclopedia of the sciences, the *Nafa'is al-funun*. Amuli's death date of 1353 CE establishes the latest date by which the *Kamaru Panchashika* could have been written, and the text was most likely written substantially earlier. Ernst's translation of the only full-length manuscript version of this text highlight a number of difficulties, including the scribe's use of numerical ciphers to describe occult practices, as well as the scribe's less than successful attempts at transcribing Sanskrit mantras in Persian. Still, the text "testifies to the ongoing engagement with yogic materials in Persianate circles over centuries."[32] In a separate article, Ernst lays out the manuscript's history as a text that Italian traveler Pietro delle Valle obtains in Persia in 1622.[33] The text is composed of some twenty chapters, listed below:

1. Preface[34]

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[32] Carl W. Ernst, "Enigmas of translation in the *Kamaru Panchashika*, an early Persian work on yoga," unpublished paper, 1.

[33] Carl W. Ernst, "Being Careful with the Goddess: Yoginis in Persian and Arabic Texts," in *Refractions of Islam in India: Situating Sufism and Yoga* (Los Angeles: Sage, 2016), 386-400.

[34] Chapter titles adapted from Ernst, "Enigmas of Translation," 2.

2. [The Science of the Breath]*
3. On the Rule of the Question of the Questioner*
4. Reading the Mind*
5. Recognizing Death*
6. Love and Hate*
7. Beginning of the Book
8. Incantation of Deeds*
9. Knowledge of the Breath*
10. Book of Imagination, Written by the Sages of India
11. Beginning of the Book of Breath and Imaginations
12. Description of the Shakti
13. Description of the Places of the Shakti and Its Stations
14. Description of Another Imagination [*rhin*]
15.Description of the imagination of the Soul [*hamsa*]
16. Imagining the *hamsa* in the center of a rose
17. [Verses of Kamyakha]
18. [On the Yoginis]
19. [Theurgy and Incantations]
20.[Theurgy and spells]
21. [Conclusion]

I include the full table of contents from the *Kamaru Panchashika* because it is a pivotal text for this project. In many respects, it forms the baseline against which all other entries in the `ilm-i dam* corpus is measured. The most frequently occurring form of the *Kamaru Panchashika* is a six-chapter abridgment with a brief preface in which the scribe relates a usually very brief story on the circumstances under which he came to (a) acquire the text, usually via contact with Indian *jogis*, or (b) translate the text from Indian languages, such as Sanskrit or Hindi, into Persian. The chapters for these abridgments (marked with an * above) are remarkably stable, typically consisting of (1) knowledge of the breath, (2) questioning the questioner, (3) mind-reading, (4) predicting the moment of death, (5) incantation of actions, and (6) love and hate. The order of presentation does vary, but the contents themselves of each section are very stable.

Ernst outlines a series of ciphers used in the full-length *Kamaru Panchashika* manuscript. These tend to occur when the author describes spells that have life and death implications for the user and the person(s) towards whom the spells are directed. He states that "in the translation of a

text of occult power from Sanskrit to Persian, the presence of such deliberate esotericism indicates that there were certain subjects that aroused discomfort and hesitation among at least some readers."[35] The use of ciphers and other linguistic means of obscuring or obfuscating intended meaning raises flags because it points to how an author or group of authors responded to a text, and it begs the question of whether or not these types of translations are constrained by limitations based on the scribes' affiliations, be they religious, political, or otherwise. Again, I hesitate before imputing that Muslim translators and copyists in any time period or location were unable to render something from one language into another *because of being Muslim*. Taken as a whole, the `ilm-i dam` corpus is a very large piece of evidence for active and sustained Muslim engagement with practices that were known to have non-Muslim roots. As I demonstrate below, at some points Muslims held up *ilm-i dam* as worth learning precisely because it was not Islamic, while at other points the techniques were interpreted as being sufficiently domesticated as to be placed along a litany of other esoteric practices. In studying the different *ilm-i dam* texts, the permeability of the line between translation and interpretation is quite evident. If one author retains references to goddesses and yogis, while another excludes them, can these really be understood as approving and disapproving response to a putative original text? Scholars today can formulate theories to explain the differences between translation and translated, but we must also recognize the very real limits on our knowledge.

The *Kamaru Panchashika*'s contents hold pressing ramifications for understanding the porosity and limits of religious boundaries in the premodern South Asian context. As Ernst has written, this genre of text reflects the extent to which yoga and yogic philosophy is Islamicized, thereby making familiar something that an external observer may expect Muslims to find strange

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35 Ernst, "Enigmas of Translation, pp. 7-8.

or other. The *Kamaru Panchashika* is a

> text [that] demonstrates an unselfconscious domestication of yogic practices in an Islamicate society. Among the breath prognostications, for instance, one learns to approach 'the *qadi* [Islamic judge] or the *amir* [prince]' for judgment or litigation only when the breath from the right nostril is favorable. Casual references mention Muslim magicians, or practices that may be performed either in a Muslim or a Hindu graveyard (47b), or else in an empty temple or mosque (49b)…[mean that] for the average Persian reader, the contents of *[Kamaru Panchashika]* fell into the category of the occult sciences, and its Indic origin would have only enhanced its esoteric allure.[36]

For scholars of Islam and India (let alone the combination thereof), discussion of "esoteric allure" may raise the specter of Orientalist discourse, which many understand as simultaneously the by product and contributing (i.e., legislating) factor in the European colonial project in the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries.[37] The notion that Persian readers – especially Muslim Persian readers – would have found texts such as the *Kamaru Panchashika* more exciting or appealing because of the strange and/or exotic nature of its contents raises some important questions about the relationship to difference as defined by religious, linguistic, or ethnic identity. The extent to which *al-Hind*, or "India," factored in Persian and Arabic accounts written by travelers and/or historians is something that I take up in Chapter Two. I will discuss several of the abridgements of the *Kamaru Panchashika* in Chapters Four and Five as examples of how `*ilm-i dam* has been received by Persian and European intellectuals. Having established the importance of one foundation text for the study of `*ilm-i dam*, I now turn to a second text boasting an equally complex history of translation and interpretation.

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[36] Carl W. Ernst, "Being Careful with the Goddess," 392-393.

[37] For an example a recent scholarship that deploys the tried and tested tools of philology towards a different end, see Karla Mallette, *European Modernity and the Arab Mediterranean; Toward a New Philology and a Counter-Orientalism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010).

7.2 Amritakunda ("Pool of Nectar")

This no-longer extant Sanskrit work on yoga and breathing techniques survives in Arabic and Persian translations, which in turn preserve excerpts of the *Kamaru Panchashika*. Both Arabic and Persian translations exist under the title *Hawd al-hayat*, literally "the Pool of Life."[38] In the mid-sixteenth century, Shattari Sufi master Muhammad Ghawth produced a translation in Arabic entitled the *Bahr al-hayat*, or "Ocean of Life." Perhaps not coincidentally, the "ocean" is much longer and contains much more material than the "pool." Additionally, there are also paraphrases and translations found in Bengali called *puthi sahitya,* "such as the *Yoga Qalandar* of Saiyid Murtada (d. 1662 CE), the *Jnana Sagara* and the *Jnana Pradipa* of Saiyid Sultan (d. 1648 CE). Thus, the Sufis incorporated yogico-tantric culture in their own religio-philosophical system through the translations and paraphrases of the [*Hawd al-hayat*] and the [*Bahr al-hayat*]."[39] Sakaki's presentation here begs the question of whether or not these translations are accurately understood as "incorporations" of Indian knowledge by Muslims. For example, Ernst demonstrates how Muhammad Ghawth' translation of the now lost *Amritakunda* makes a noticeable change in Chapter 9, in which Ghaus replaces material on summoning *yogini* goddesses with generic Sufi material on *dhikr*s.[40] This type of alteration marks an area of resistance to the original text. While breath control and related divination practices make it through Ghaus' filter, instruction on summoning goddesses does not.

While the *Amritakunda*'s overall importance is understood, there is a spectrum of opinion

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[38] For a detailed review of the translation history of the *Amrtakunda*, see Carl W. Ernst, "The Islamization of Yoga in the *Amrtakunda* Translations," in *Refractions of Islam in India: Situating Sufism and Yoga* (Los Angeles: Sage, 2016), 186-228.

[39] Sakaki, 136.

[40] Carl W. Ernst, "Sufism and Yoga According to Muhammad Ghawth," in *Refractions of Islam in India: Situating Sufism and Yoga* (New York: Sage Publications, 2016), 149-160.

as to the contours of that importance. Husain comments that this document is critical for the "study of the first contacts between Islam and Hinduism," and that the "bases of this contact was mysticism, which gave birth to syncretic religious movements in India during the Middle Ages."[41]

8 - Chapter Outline

This project pulls on many different threads in order to weave a comprehensive vision of the *`ilm-i dam* corpus and what scholars can learn about the construction of categories such as religion, magic, and occultism within several different contexts. The above introductory chapter presented a justification of the project and overview of *`ilm-i dam*, including some important background material that is necessary to apprehend before proceeding with the following investigation.

Chapter Two locates this project within the Islamicate engagement with India (Arabic and Persian: *al-Hind*) by surveying key authors writing in Arabic and Persian about this region from the 9th-16th centuries CE, including Biruni, Ibn Khaldun, and Ibn Battuta. While there is sizable literature on this subject, this is the first time that anyone has used *`ilm-i dam* and *svarodaya* as the mobilizing framework for understanding this complex history. While at the beginning of the stated time frame, India is a foreign and exotic locale whose inhabitants possess magic superhuman powers, by the end of the time period surveyed, Mughal court historians like Abu'l Fazl include the science of the breath as part of a packaged curriculum of Indian knowledge in an argument that Muslim elites must learn in order to rule India more effectively. This chapter makes the case that over time, Sanskrit texts containing Indian sciences and

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[41] Yusuf Husain, "*Haud al-Hayat*: The Arabic Version of *Amratkund*," in *On becoming an Indian Muslim: French Essays on Aspects of Syncretism,* trans. M. Waseem (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2003), 73.

philosophy cease to be foreign and fanciful, and instead become necessary and pragmatic. This change does not necessarily correspond to becoming "Islamicized," for Abu'l Fazl's argument rests on the fact that the science of the breath – along with a host of other practices – is essentially Indian in nature; the distinction between Islamic and Indic is part of his argument for why the latter must be learned.

Chapter Three analyzes the visioning of the body that emerges from close study of the `ilm-i dam corpus, including an understanding of the extent to which the `ilm-i dam authors implicitly gender this body that lies at the nexus of macro- and microcosms undergirding the fabric of the universe. After establishing a basis of comparison to other systems of embodiment – Ayurveda, yoga, and Indian wrestling – this chapter takes on ubiquitous components of the corpus, such as the five-fold typology of the breath, and compares how the various authors present these components. Similarities and differences are equally important in this treatment. While the former testifies to the consistency of the practices that are circulated as part of `ilm-i dam, identifying the latter creates points for analyzing difference, which in turn goes on to establish motivations and distinct sets of priorities on the part of each respective author. One of the key sources for this chapter is a seventeenth-century `ilm-i dam text titled Miz al-nafas, which is from the former Mughal royal library seized by British colonial forces after the Great Rebellion in 1857 in Delhi.

Chapters Four and Five present the Persian and European reception of `ilm-i dam, respectively. The crux of these last two main chapters is that they demonstrate how Persian authors (primarily from territory defined in the present-day as Iran) bring a different set of assumptions, priorities, and questions to the texts than observed in European authors from the early modern period. Chapter Four begins with the earliest datable Persian `ilm-i dam text, the

abridgment of the *Kamaru Panchashika* contained within Amuli's 14th century encyclopedia, the *Nefais al-funun*, and finishes with examining the version of this same text posted on the website for Ayatollah Hasan Zadeh Amuli in April 2013. In addition to touching on a variety of `ilm-i dam* texts from the early-modern period, this chapter focuses on the version of the *Kamaru Panchashika* that Edward Granville Browne purchases while traveling in Persia in 1886. In establishing the evidence for Persian and then Iranian interest in `ilm-i dam*, this chapter argues that there has been, and continues to be, substantial engagement with esotericism that both *is* and *is not* framed within the context of Sufism. Key interlocutors include Ata Anzali's and Alireza Doostdar's work tracing the links between Safavid-era debates over mysticism and more recent turns towards spiritism in Iranian intellectual and clerical circles, respectively. Particularly due to the way that Iranian society has been framed in Western discourse since the Iranian revolution of 1979, I am working to connect `ilm-i dam* with this more recent work arguing for a much more dynamic image of attitudes towards religion in Iran right up through to the modern day.

Chapter Five uses `ilm-i dam* as a vector for understanding the formulation of categories such as mysticism and Sufism in India within the framework of the Euro-American academy. There is much to learn from examining how E.G. Browne discuss his Persian interlocutors at the time of purchasing `ilm-i dam* manuscripts in the late nineteenth-century, as well as the way Austrian diplomat-scholar Alfred von Kremer uses Amuli's text for his argument regarding the Hindu and Buddhist roots of Indian Sufism. I examine not only the intellectual reception, but also the fact that these texts are physical objects with particular chains-of-custody from their original locations to eventual repose in the manuscript libraries and research institutes of Europe. In this way, Chapters Four and Five are closely related components of my inquiry, which is not simply about ascertaining the contents of `ilm-i dam*, but also very much about refusing to

separate those contents from the different ways that particular people and institutions have contributed to the packaging that surrounds those contents. For examples of these agents who have shaped the way `ilm-i dam* is received today, I focus on a particular individual in nineteenth-century British missionary-scholar Thomas Patrick Hughes, specifically his work *The Dictionary of Islam*, and then the *Encyclopedia of Islam*, a project that is first issued in the post-World War Two period and sees subsequent revision and re-invention manifested in the most recent edition currently being published today. In studying links to the early modern and colonial-era discourse to projects such as Thomas Hughes' *The Dictionary of Islam* and the various editions of the *Encyclopedia of Islam*, this chapter connects `ilm-i dam* to the twin discourses of power and knowledge in very explicit ways.

The **concluding** chapter looks back on the key questions I pose in this project, and gestures towards future directions that I anticipate taking to pursue those questions further. Lastly, I have compiled two appendixes containing lists of the unpublished manuscripts and published editions reviewed for this project. **Appendix A** lists the Persian and Urdu sources, while **Appendix B** lists the Sanskrit and Hindi sources. The vast majority of these have not been translated into European languages; parts of the work that follows constitute my efforts to remedy that gap.

Chapter 2: Translating *al-Hind*: Perso-Arabic Engagement with India

"One who has seen this cannot remember it, and one who has not seen does not believe it."[1]
Amir Khusraw, *Nuh Sipihr* (1318 CE), writing on amazing deeds by Indian Yogis

1 – Introduction

In this chapter, I present a narrative arc in which Muslim authors writing about India (Arabic: *al-Hind*) in Arabic and Persian transition from depicting this territory as foreign to one that is familiar. A unifying feature of this thread is the notion of India as a location in which fantastical things take place. The chapter is divided into two sections: first, there is a chronological list of authors whom I take as representative of Muslim depictions of India. This includes commonly discussed figures such as Ghaznavid scholar Biruni (d. ca. 1048 CE) and Mughal emperor Akbar (d. 1605 CE), but also Persian theologian Muhammad Shahrastani (d. 1153 CE) and Sufi musician and poet Amir Khusraw (d. 1325 CE). I will summarize each author's importance for the chapter's theme, and—where applicable—analyze the connections that can be made between their writings and the broader topic for this project: understanding the *`ilm-i dam* corpus. Second, I will discuss Akbar's preeminent court historian, Abu'l Fazl Ibn Mubarak `Allami, who authors his patron's official biography, the *Akbarnama* ("Life of Akbar") as well as an appendix entitled the *A'in-i Akbari* ("The Institutes of Akbar"). This appendix contains a wealth of information that has been mined by scholars primarily interested in

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[1] Adapted from the translation provided by Nath and Faiyaz in *India as Seen by Amir Khusraw* (Jaipur: Historical Research Documentation Programme, 1981) 99, para. 30. The original text reads "*an-keh bidid in sar azu bar nakonad / va an-keh nadid in hameh bavar nakonad.*"

understanding the administrative workings of the Mughal empire during Akbar's reign. My goal in studying it is to understand the political logic that governed Abu'l Fazl's engagement with religious difference, a point from which I extrapolate a different understanding of Akbar's approach to administering a religiously diverse polity from the position of a ruling minority. The key section from the *A'in-i Akbari* is the section entitled *ahval-i Hindustan* ("States of India"), in particular the treatment in this section on *svarodaya* and `ilm-i dam*. In a move that is representative of his broader treatment of Indian knowledge, Abu'l Fazl retains the Sanskrit term without making reference to any Persian translations. Abu'l Fazl's approach marks a critical juncture in Muslim writings (whether in Arabic or Persian) on India, its history, and the various philosophical and religious schools that spring from within it. At the very end of the chapter, I briefly interrogate the European reception of the *A'in-i Akbari*, a move that will set the stage for the critique presented in Chapter Five on the European treatment of `ilm-i dam*.

What were the translation strategies employed by each author in explaining India to their respective audiences? When Biruni argues for equivalence between Indian traditions on one side and the Greco-Arabic/Islamic traditions on the other, he is not very invested in preserving the Indian terminology in its original language. His eleventh-century Ghaznavid patrons may not have been very compelled to learn much Sanskrit. By contrast, Abu'l Fazl's project adopts the opposite approach: arguing that the systems are not equivalent, but that his audience within the sixteenth-century Mughal court must apprehend the original terms even when he translates them from Sanskrit into Persian. Abu'l Fazl does not use any of the major classifications of knowledge written by Muslims from the pre-modern period as his default, while Biruni typifies precisely one of those scholars actively engaged in producing said classifications. In comparing and contrasting the two, I focus on what can be learned from Abu'l Fazl in large part because his

contribution to this project is not just at the macro level. As I will discuss in detail, he includes a Persian translation of a *svarodaya* text within the *A'in-i Akbari*, but he does not "translate" it in the cultural sense to present it as `*ilm-i dam*. Understanding what motivated each of these authors will greatly aid my overall goal of untangling the conceptual knots woven over the centuries.

2 - Perso-Arabic Engagement with *al-Hind*

In his book on Persian theologian Muhammad Shahrastani, Bruce Lawrence provides a typology for Muslim sources on Indian religion: (1) the `*aja'ib* material that describes wonders of the world; (2) recorded writings of travelers and geographers, and (3) encyclopedic works and digests.[2] Rather than seeing these as distinct genres in which the first would serve as the earliest stage in some type of teleological journey towards an objective representation, I suggest a different approach. Encyclopedists such as Amuli (who I will review in detail in later chapters), writing in the fourteenth century, necessarily relied upon texts written much earlier, and then made editorial decisions about what to include and what to leave out. Evaluating these decisions is part and parcel of this entire project, especially in my focus on the Persian reception of `*ilm-i dam* and in analyzing the various abridgements of the *Kamaru Panchashika*.

In describing the authors from the tenth-century CE whose works fits within the `*aja'ib* genre, Lawrence argues that "their chief interest in India...centered on marvelous happenings which allegedly could be produced on the spur of the moment, often through manipulations pertaining to the occult sciences. Muslim writers whose works extended beyond the topic matter of `*aja'ib* also showed a fascination with this facet of Indian culture."[3] Space constrains a more

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[2] Bruce Lawrence, *Shahrastānī on Indian Religions* (Paris: Mouton, 1976), 17.

[3] Lawrence, 18. The principle authors that Lawrence uses for his description are Suhrab (10th CE), Ibrahim b. Wasif Shah (d. ca. 1000 CE), Buzurg b. Shahriyar (d. 1009 CE).

in-depth treatment of this material, but this chapter provides a skeleton view of it upon which I

will flesh out one major (pulmonary) system.

2.1 Biruni (d. ca. 1048 CE)

Abu Rayhan Muhammad ibn Ahmad Biruni (hereafter, Biruni) is undoubtedly one of the

most significant authors writing from within Islamicate civilization. Biruni is a key source for

developing an understanding of Islamicate views on religion in India. He is best known for his

Tahqiq ma li'l-Hind min qabula fi'l-`aql am mardhula ("Investigation of What India Says,

Whether Accepted by Reason or Refused"), completed in 1030 CE, and often rendered with the

shortened title *Kitab al-Hind* ("Book on India"). He is also known for his translation and analysis

of Patanjali's *Yoga Sutra*. "Written in Arabic, the *Hind* may very well be the first systematization

of 'Indian' beliefs into one 'Indian religion,' as Biruni calls it, preceding by almost 900 years the

definitions of Hinduism by nineteenth-century European Orientalists."[4] Thus, Biruni's

contributions are not only to the Perso-Arabic engagement with India; they also serve as an

important point of comparison with the later European constructions of Hinduism (and by

extension, Islam), a comparison that I take up in Chapter Four.

By drawing Biruni into this account of Perso-Arabic Indology, several questions emerge.

First, even though he wrote in Arabic, it would not be going too far to include him within the

sphere of the Persianate intellectuals, for just as Abu'l Fazl, who would come some five centuries

later, Biruni would have been fully conversant in both Arabic and Persian. Even if he did not use

Persian in the same way as Abu'l Fazl, he was part of a constellation of Muslim intellectuals

whose cosmopolitanism (by outlook) and pragmatism (in order to maintain steady employment)

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[4] Mario Kozah, *The Birth of Indology as an Islamic Science: Al-Biruni's Treatise on Yoga Psychology* (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 1.

mandated familiarity with multiple languages. Additionally, the fact that Biruni served as the

court astrologer for twelve years under Mahmud of Ghazna "afforded him ample opportunity to

gather information about India and acquire knowledge of Sanskrit and regional Indian dialects

which he then used to understand and translate texts on Hindu philosophy and science."[5] He was

thus in a similar position to Abu'l Fazl in that he was working for a ruler—albeit one who kept

him in a somewhat indentured service, unlike Abu'l Fazl, who was one of Akbar's main

proponents. Of course, he was also different from Abu'l Fazl in that Biruni was not living day in

and day out in India; he was thus always looking at it as a place quite different from his own

more familiar climes. Abu'l Fazl was born and bred in India, an important distinction to keep in

mind when comparing these two important cataloguers of Indian thought. By comparing Biruni's

rendering of Indian religions to that of Abu'l Fazl, key waypoints emerge that suggest a longer

arc for Muslim engagement with India. Along this arc one encounters those who view India as

foreign (such as Biruni), as well as those who see it as different, but who are themselves deeply

rooted in India as both a geographic and spiritual home (Abu'l Fazl). In terms of reception, Abu'l

Fazl's position as the court historian for Akbar and author of both the *Akbarnama* and the *A'in-i

Akbari* explain his influence. Less clear is why Biruni receives less consideration, even from

Muslim scholars from the pre-modern period: "Strangely enough, no important Muslim scholar

dealt with Biruni's analysis of Indian religion or continued his investigations until Rashid al-Din

(fl. *ca.* 1300 CE), and by that time the content of the *Indica* was no longer pertinent to the world

of Muslim scholarship."[6] Biruni focused on metempsychosis as the "banner" of Hinduism, with

[5] Kozah, 4.

[6] Lawrence, 25. What Lawrence refers to here as the *Indica* is what other authors, such as Kozah, refer to as the *Hind*.

Patanjali's Yoga Sutra elevated to its "Holy Book."[7] In so doing, he drew explicit equivalences between it and the *shahada* in Islam, Trinitarianism (*al-tathlitha*) in Christianity, and keeping the Sabbath (*al-isbata*) in Judaism, to the point where he claims that in each of these cases, "he who does not profess it does not belong to it and is not considered to be a member."[8] Biruni's focus on Patanjali's Yoga Sutra means that he necessarily left out a great deal of information on Hindu learning, traditions with which he nevertheless would have been familiar.

The major goal with bringing in Biruni is to leverage him as a comparative figure to Abu'l Fazl, especially in terms of their reactions to Indian knowledge traditions that they did not trace back to any type of Islamic roots. For Biruni, his literal job title as court astrologer placed him in a position to learn about some of the various divination practices circulating around India, especially northern India, and yet it is not clear that he included specific mention of them within any of his extant writings. What types of divination/astrology techniques did he use, and why?

Kozah's work is most helpful for background on Biruni, as well as his literature review critiquing the ways in which previous generations of scholars have failed to complexify their understandings of this medieval astrologer/scholar. This is especially important regarding the question of the degree to which he was influenced by Hindu teachings, for if he was influenced by Hindu teachings on things like metempsychosis/*tanasukh*, then this must lead to a re-evaluation of Biruni's status as a faithful Muslim, just as the histories written about Akbar and Dara Shikoh are constantly grappling with the question of whether or not their engagement with other religious traditions and texts, especially the Vedas, invalidates their status as Muslim. In reviewing the literature on Biruni, the most important point that Kozah makes is that Biruni is

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[7] Kozah, 2.

[8] Kozah 2.

more open and/or tolerant of the Hindu beliefs he studies in part because he is so clear that they are not Islamic. This is in contrast to the heresiographical work he wrote (no longer extant) in which he condemns non-`Asharite Muslim sects. Kozah's reading stands in contrast to that of Lawrence, who concluded that Biruni was "profoundly disturbed not so much by the nature of Indian views but by the fact that he was face to face with a different civilization which he felt he had to reconcile in its totality with his own," a disturbance that resulted in a profound sense of "culture shock."[9] Each of the authors reviewed for this chapter displays a different response to the question of regarding communities in India as *foreign* and *non-Muslim*, as well as the consequences of said evaluation.

Before taking up the case of another key medieval scholar, Muhammad Shahrastani, it is important to know something about Gardizi (d. ca. 1060 CE), a contemporary of Biruni whose work on India actually shows up as one of Shahrastani's more important sources. Abu Sa'id `Abd al-Hayy ibn al-Dahhak ibn Mahmud Gardizi worked under the patronage of Ghaznavid Sultan `Abd al-Rashid ibn Mahmud (r. 1049-1053 CE). His key text, *Zayn al-akhbar*, written in Ghazna circa 1050 CE, contains an appendix on India. Minorsky translates Gardizi's phrase *vahm va-fikra* as "telepathy," emphasizing a connection to occultism.[10] While Gardizi was from the same locale as Biruni, even claiming to be of his acquaintance, the former's material on India takes a different tone. In his brief account of Indian religious groups, he identifies them by name, provides a physical description, and then refers to their various *adab*, invoking a term that has broad meaning and could encompass specific behavior but also general custom. Indeed, in Persian literature more broadly, Sa`di's thirteenth-century masterpiece collection of poetry and

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[9] Franz Rozenthal, preface to Bruce Lawrence, *Shahrastani on Indian Religions*, 6.

[10] Vladimir Minorsky, "Gardizi on India," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 12, no. 3/4 (1948), 628.

stories, the *Gulistan,* would be considered one vector through which a sense of *adab* spread in the pre-modern period. Gardizi is a good example of the "parallel sources" that Lawrence cites in his study of Shahrastani's *Kitab al-Milal*.[11] Gardizi's text contains one of the earlier mentions of eastern India being of special prominence in terms of the existence of fantastical abilities on the part of its residents: "The men producing [these marvelous things] are in the east of India called *Kamrup*. They make such things that whoever sees them or hears them admits that they are not human beings, but peris."[12] By referring to these people as peris, Gardizi presents those who exhibit these abilities as more than human. This classification raises the question of whether or not this status is something inherent as compared to a skill that one may learn by following particular methods. I argue that over time these types of special powers, such as those contained within the `ilm-i dam* corpus, come to be seen in the latter category. Anyone can learn them, but the question is one of access and opportunity more than any sense of their having a special (even divine) origin.

2.2 Shahrastani (d. 1153 CE)

   Born in 1086 CE in Shahrastan in Khurasan, Taj al-Din Abu al-Fath Muhammad ibn `Abd al-Karim al-Shahrastani eventually trained as an `Ash'ari theologian. He made the *hajj* to Mecca in 1116 CE, then settled in Baghdad for three years. He then returned to his home town, where he taught and wrote until his death. In the current context, his *Kitab al-milal wa al-nihal* ("Book of Congregations and Cults"), written circa 1125 CE, is of particular interest. *Kitab al-milal wan-nihal* was an immensely popular text, for it contained, in as comprehensive a

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[11] Although Minorsky is too speculative in rendering *ra'isan* as "rishis." See Minorsky, 633.

[12] Minorsky, 629.

treatment as was possible for the author, a catalogue of every Muslim and non-Muslim sect that was known at the time. Lawrence notes that the theologian relied upon Ibn al-Nadim's *al-Fihrist* (completed in 987 CE), which referenced work by al-Kindi that was no longer extant (d. 873 CE), which was in turn produced based upon information from an anonymous emissary from the 'Abbasid vazir Yahya b. Khalid al-Barmaki. This emissary went to India circa 800 CE to collect medicinal plants and catalogue the religious groups there. Al-Nadim's rendering provides Shahrastani with his starting point.[13] Shahrastani composed "four general categories which encompassed all religious and quasi-religious groups known to him: (1) those who possess a revealed book, i.e., Jews and Christians; (2) those who possess something like a revealed book, i.e., Magians and Manichaeans; (3) those who subscribe to laws and binding judgments without benefit of a revealed book, i.e., the ancient Sabians; and (4) those who have neither a revealed book nor fixed laws, i.e., the ancient as well as the materialist philosophers, the star- and idol-worshippers, and the Brahmans."[14] Bruce Lawrence's treatment focuses on a section entitled *'Ara' al-hind*, "The Views of the Indians." Comparing Shahrastani with Biruni, he notes that the former's "personal situation was not such that it exposed him to a similar severe case of culture shock."[15] This is because he wrote about religious sects in India using sources available to him, rather than based upon direct experience living in or traveling to India. I am cautious about reducing the views of any particular author to purely a product of their experiences, but the differences in the lived experiences of any group of authors are always worth noting, even if only to have a more concrete picture of their immediate context.

[13] Lawrence, 21.

[14] Lawrence, 16-17.

[15] Franz Rozenthal, preface to Lawrence, *Shahrastani on Indian Religions*, 6.

"Shahrastani presents to his readers a typology; he allows them to compare Indians not with the rankest heathen or the most grotesque idolaters but with the most sophisticated non-Muslim group which he treats in the *Milal wan-niḥal*, namely the Ṣabians."[16] In so doing, Shahrastani demonstrates that he is not out to write a polemical treatise, but is instead attempting to paint his subjects in the best possible light that he can conceive: non-Muslims who are not *ahl al-kitab*, but who nonetheless merit a higher level of consideration and respect than the idolaters from the time of the Prophet Muhammad. Lawrence poses some important questions about the Sabians that Shahrastani mentions: what did this 11th century `Ashari theologian think about the Sabians, "whatever their origin or destiny—in relation to orthodox Islam? Were they *bona fide* religionists whose status, in the opinion of Shahrastani, was acceptable to Muslims even though not on par with the *sunna*?"[17] For Lawrence, Shahrastani's take on Indians rests partially on his comparison of them with the Sabians. This rough equivalence serves to validate those identified as Indian philosophers and followers of Brahman.[18]

Moving to the more specific connections between Shahrastani's work and the `ilm-i dam* corpus, Lawrence notes that the earlier-mentioned `aja'ib* sources appear but a single time: the description of people "known as the proponents of thought/[meditation] and imagination (*ashab al-fikra wal-wahm*); they are clearly practitioners of the occult sciences."[19] Here Lawrence is overly reliant on Minorsky's rendering of *i`tiqad-va-vahm* as "persuasion and telepathy," which

[16] Lawrence, 8.

[17] Lawrence, 64.

[18] Lawrence, 69-70.

[19] Lawrence, 18. Lawrence uses "thought" and "meditation" interchangeably in his translation of and commentary on the *Kitab al-Milal*. In this first instance, he uses the former term, however I decided to include the latter as well to emphasize the polyvalent potential of the key term, *fikra*.

should be "belief and imagination."[20]

In this section of *'ara' al-Hind*, Shahrastani notes some differences in Indian, Greek, and Persian approaches to astrology. Indians focus on the fixed stars rather than the planets, deriving "astrological judgements from the properties of the stars, not from their natures."[21] Shahrastani's key passage on this group states:

> The proponents of meditation attach great importance to thought. They uphold it as the intermediary between the sense world and the intelligible world, since the forms of the *sensibilia* and the essences of the *intelligibilia* alike go back to it. Thought, therefore, constitutes the meeting place of the combined wisdom of both worlds. The proponents of meditation exert every effort to divert imagination and thought from sense objects. They engage in intense exercises and make the utmost exertions so that when their thought is freed from this world, the other world is revealed to it. Sometimes meditation unlocks supernatural circumstances; sometimes it is able to hold back rains; and sometimes it directs the imagination on a living man and kills him instantly.[22]

To be clear, Shahrastani does not describe breath-centered practices here. However, his description does establish a pairing, what Lawrence refers to as "a close, complementary pattern, suggesting that the relationship between the former to the latter is that of means to end."[23] While Shahrastani links *fikra* to *wahm*, the authors composing `ilm-i dam* texts insert breathing exercises in place of meditation. It is striking here to note how, if one were to substitute *dam* for *fikra* in the passage below from Lawrence's commentary on Shahrastani, there is very little to distinguish them from the former's explicit emphasis on the physical breath:

> Hence, *fikra* provides the agency by which the individual can shuttle back and forth between the sense and intelligible world. It can produce spectacular events...but it acts mostly as a vehicle for *wahm*. *Wahm*, on the other hand, is the controlling force of the intelligible world; it only works

[20] Minorsky, 628.

[21] Lawrence, 44.

[22] Lawrence, 44.

[23] Lawrence, 117.

when the individual has removed himself from sense objects, and having
taken over, it then brings about extraordinary occurrences.... It seems
likely that Shahrastani himself has enlarged his depiction of *wahm* because
of the association of meditative activities with magical powers, such as the
rope trick.[24]

It should be noted that this is a different type of relationship to religious difference than seen in

earlier sources, which worked to validate (or invalidate) non-Muslim religious groups on the

basis of how well they fit within Islamic categories (such as the oft-discussed *ahl al-kitab*).

Lawrence argues that through introducing a parallel term for *rshis*, Shahrastani effectively

translated an Indic category for a sage possessing incredible powers into terms that his readers

would understand.[25] He may have had to explain precisely what he meant in this specific

instance of *fikra*, but ultimately the pairing of *fikra* and *wahm* was one that showed up in later

sources on *`ilm-i dam*, albeit with the substitution of *dam* for the former term.

That said, there are some important questions that remain unanswered. Based on

Lawrence's conclusions about *fikra*'s valence in Shahrastani's text, to what extent can *dam* be

seen as an equivalent to *fikra*? Based on the overview in Chapter One, using one's breath to

understand the connections between the macro- and microcosms through the *nadi*s could be

interpreted as facilitating the practitioner in his work to "shuttle" between gross and subtle

realms, but I would argue that this is not as straightforward a connection as one would hope. As

we will see, the texts in the *`ilm-i dam* corpus simply do not maintain these distinctions—such as

the one that Lawrence reports from Shahrastani between *fikra*/*dam* and *vahm*. Scholars creating

critical editions centuries after the fact may use the texts that do include these distinctions as

models for imposing similar differentiations on the texts that do not, but I believe it important to

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[24] Lawrence, 117.

[25] Lawrence, 115. Although as noted earlier, Gardizi's interpretation is specious, and one should exercise caution in adopting it too readily.

recognize when that type of interpretive act takes place.

There are some overlaps with the *'ilm-i dam* texts, specifically the last comment about the possibility of killing another person through the power of imagination. These are the types of acts that Lawrence links to *wahm*, i.e., when the practitioner takes the power gained from *fikra* and then applies it in the real world. The *Kamaru Panchashika* abridgment (Browne recension) prescribes specific rituals for those seeking this type of result, which rituals involve the combination of specific material objects, special actions, and then invoking the name of the targeted person, all of which must take place when the breath is of a particular nature. The aforementioned text by Gardizi includes a specific reference to *Kamrup,* further establishing the connection in the Perso-Arabic literature on Indian occultism or other types of magical acts and this specific region of India, today known as Assam. The other parts of Shahrastani's discussion here do not fit so cleanly with the six-chapter versions, but rather with the larger and broader versions of this corpus. More importantly, Shahrastani's equivalence of *ashab al-fikra w'al-wahm* with astronomers fits with the Persian manuscripts on *'ilm-i dam*, as well as connecting to the *svarodaya* texts that include substantial material on astronomy.

How then should one understand the driving forces behind Shahrastani's interpretations? "[His] instruction in *kalam* and his life's work as an exponent of the Ash'arite viewpoint influenced his composition of *'Ara' al-hind* in three major dimensions."[26] His knowledge of *kalam* is what provided him with familiarity with the Brahmins and informed his view of them as an anti-prophetic group. His status as a *mutakallim* prompted him to look for information on Indian philosophers as a separate group. Lastly, Shahrastani's status as a theologian meant he was familiar with the theological debates between the Sabians and those who would come to claim

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[26] Lawrence, 266.

some measure of orthodoxy. That he uses Sabian categories in framing his overview of non-Muslim sects is an important part of his own intellectual and theological heritage.[27]

Shahrastani's presentation of the various groups within India is not in a vacuum; the majority of the *Kitab al-Milal* is taken up with listing all of the various groups that were known to the author at the time of writing, and he paid more attention to those groups closer to home. However, the fact that India received its own category is significant because it demonstrates the extent to which it had been firmly established as a region with discernable boundaries in Islamicate cosmology. Even scholars writing about it without ever traveling to it could draw upon the records of those who had, and use these to recreate as comprehensive a list as possible. This was not intended really to prepare a prospective traveler for what they would find upon journeying to *al-Hind*. Instead, the interest in India was more in keeping with an intellectual project in which Muslim scholars in the eleventh-century were looking for equivalences and trying to determine the extent to which their own sets of working categories for sorting out different practices and beliefs could be squared away with the—at times literally—incredible diversity of belief and practice evidenced in the narratives of travelers.

2.3 Amir Khusraw

Abu'l Hasan Yamin al-Din Khusraw, more commonly known as Amir Khusraw, holds a special place in the pantheon of South Asian Muslim history. A scholar, musician, and poet, he was a disciple of Nizamuddin Auliya of Delhi, in whose dargah he is also buried. His family originated in Transoxiana but immigrated to the Delhi Sultanate during the Mongol invasions. Written in 1318 CE, his *Nuh Sipihr* ("Nine Heavens") is a survey of Indian customs written as a

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[27] Lawrence, 265-66.

masnavi, or in rhyming couplets. Its contents include sections on Indian food, music, languages, as well as a list of amazing or astonishing things that one finds in India. It also reflects Khusraw's passionate interest in holding up South Asia as a wondrous place. Some modern-day musicians from Pakistan give Khusraw credit for being the first one to set the Qur'an to music, thus birthing the hugely popular musical genre known as *qawwali*.[28] There are several key verses in this selection from the seventh chapter of the fourth *sipihr*. In this chapter, Khusraw focuses on marvels found within India and includes several key lines that directly pertain to the use of the breath for supernatural powers. Later parts of this same chapter contain Khusraw's insights into the importance of occult or magical powers on the part of Indian *jogis*. As to the powers of the breath, he writes:

> Another strange feature is that the Indians are capable of extending the age (of human beings) by different means and methods. It is because everybody has his fixed quota of breaths (*nafas*). One who acquires control over his breath (*dam*), he would live longer if he takes less breaths. The Jogi (Yogi) who suspends his breath (*dam*) through Yoga in a temple, can live, by this feat, for more than five hundred years. *It is wonderful that they (Indians) can spell out omens by distinguishing between the breaths (dam) blowing from the two nostrils. By a study of the breath (nafas) flowing by the right or the left nostril, (thus by distinguishing the open and the closed nostril) they can foretell something of the future.* The other thing is that the jogis can send the soul from its own body to another body through their yogic power. Many such jogis live in Kashmir in the mountains and many of them live in the caves.[29]

In comparison to some of the other texts on *`ilm-i dam*, these few lines do not provide any extensive information, but it is still notable that someone like Amir Khusraw thought to include them in this text. In the above quote, I have placed the key line establishing a link to the *`ilm-i*

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[28] Correspondence between author and the members of the Pakistani band, *Songs of Kolachi,* during visit to Chapel Hill in April 2017.

[29] I am using the English translation by Nath, R. and Faiyaz 'Gwaliari' (trans). *India as Seen by Amir Khusraw*, (Jaipur: Historical Research Documentation Programme, 1981) 198. For the original Persian text, see Muhammad Wahid Mirza, *Nuh Sipihr* (Calcutta: Oxford University Press, 1950) 97. Emphasis added.

dam corpus in italics. Khusraw is not citing a particular text, such as the *Kamaru Panchashika* and its abridgments, which I cover later under the label of the *`ilm-i dam* corpus. Khusraw has not identified *`ilm-i dam* or *svarodaya*, but he has nonetheless included material that fits within this genre. The tone of the *Nuh Sipihr* is that Khusraw is recounting things that he himself has witnessed, or at least he wants to give that impression to his readers.

As noted in the parenthetical annotation above, there are places where Khusraw switched back and forth between two different terms for breath, *nafas* and *dam*, using one within one couplet and then the other in the next couplet. Given that he was composing *masnavi*, there were metric considerations here in that Khusraw was choosing one term or the other based on how many syllables he had to work with for a given verse. But there is another possibility. Similar to the author of *Miz al-nafas*, Khusraw may have seen a technical difference between the two terms, in which the Persian and Arabic terms have different valences and connotations. For example, the reference to "the fixed quota breaths" (*nafas*) appears more abstract and almost technical in nature, while the references to the breath (*dam)* in other lines are more intimate because they refer to real people actually breathing. Then at the end of this section, he switches back to *nafas* when talking about the *study* of the breath. Khusraw thus demonstrates that it was popular knowledge that Indian ascetics known as yogis/jogis developed particular types of supernatural powers through understanding and controlling their breathing.

In contrast to the quote attributed to Gardizi, above, Khusraw did not depict the people who possessed these abilities as non-human; rather, they were a special class of human beings who had learned a very special set of skills. More of Khusraw's relationship to religious and cultural difference is clear in his account of *sati*, the practice in which a Hindu widow joins her deceased husband on the funeral pyre. Khusraw writes:

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> Some of these are facts of magic and some are stories, but one thing is there to which you will readily agree. It is wonderful that a Hindu sacrifices his life for his faith either by sword or by fire. A Hindu woman burns herself for her husband willingly. A Hindu man sacrifices his life for his deity or his chieftain. Although it is not allowed by the religion of Islam, yet it is a great and noble deed. Had it been lawful in our religion, good people would have sacrificed their life with pleasure.[30]

Khusraw cites *sati* approvingly, but also sees the willingness of Hindu men to give up their lives for both divine and temporal rulers in a similarly approving light. He notes that these acts are prohibited for Muslims, yet says they are still "great and noble" and that if Islamic law or customs were different, then "good [Muslim?] people" would have done the same. This tone is similar to the one taken by the author of the *Kamaru Panchashika Abridgment* (Karachi recension), who writes in the margins that the practices of which he writes are not "of the people of Muhammad," they are still correct. While I will examine this subject in greater detail in Chapter Four, it important to note for now that these texts are one place where there was a shift in the tone towards India and the religious or philosophical schools that originated therein. Rather than arguing for a type of equivalence, for example, arguing that the category of *ahl al-kitab* ("People of the Book") could be extended to Hindus on account of the Vedas, writers such as Khusraw instead viewed the different customs of Hindus as things that could still be appreciated as valuable while simultaneously maintaining that they were, indeed, different.

2.4 Ibn Battuta and Ibn Khaldun

Abu `Abdullah Muhammad ibn `Abdullah al-Lawati al-Tanji ibn Battuta (d. 1377 CE, hereafter "Ibn Battuta") and Wali al-Din al-Rahman ibn Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn Abi Bakr Muhammad ibn al-Hasan Ibn Khaldun (d. 1406 CE, hereafter "Ibn Khaldun") combine to

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[30] Nath and Gwaliari 100.

provide a key perspective on the spectrum of Perso-Arabic engagement with *al-Hind*. Together

they were important authors whose work circulated widely within the Islamicate world. While

both hailed from North Africa, both happened to address the subject of India, specifically with

regards to yoga. Both Ibn Battuta and Ibn Khaldun made references to the yogis, with the latter

author relying on the former's account for some of the material found in his well-known work on

the rise and fall of civilizations, known generally as the *Muqadima* (circa 1379 CE).

Ibn Battuta used the term *sihr* instead of *`ilm* to talk about the yogis and their practices.[31]

Given that he spent a considerable amount of time in India during his decades of travels, the

observations that he records in his *Rihla* are a valuable (if not always entirely reliable) resource

for learning about various practices during his time period. Ibn Khaldun makes references to the

yogis' "many writings," but fails to include any specific information that would reveal what

types of sources he has access to or has even heard of. He makes only a few references to yoga in

the *Muqaddima*. For example, in his discussion of different kinds of sense perception, he talks

about those who engage in exercises (*al-riyada*):

> …such people are the men who train themselves in sorcery (*sihr*). They
> train themselves in these things, in order to be able to behold the
> supernatural and to be active in the various worlds. Most such live in the
> intemperate zones of the north and the south, especially in India (*bilad al-
> hind*), where they are called yogis (*wa yusammuna hunalika al-jukiyya*).
> They possess a large literature (*kutub*) on how such exercises (*al-riyada*)
> are to be done. The stories about them in this connection are remarkable
> (*ghariba*).[32]

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[31] Ibn Battuta, *Voyages de ʻIbn Batoutah*, trans. C. Defrémery and D.B.R. Sanguinetti, (Paris, Imprimerie nationale, 1893-1922) 35. Defrémery and Sanguinetti render the Arabic *sihr* into French as "des choses merveilleuses."

[32] English translation by Franz Rosenthal (N.J. Dawood, editor), *Ibn Khaldun, The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), 85. Arabic text: *Muqadimat ibn Khaldun, kitab al-ʻabr wa diwan al-mubtada wa'l khabr fi ayyam al-ʻarab wa'l'ajam wa-l-barbar wa min aasirihim man dhuuwi al-sultan al-akbar*, ʻAllamat ʻAbd al-Rahman bin Muhammad bin Khaldun, ed. Saʼid Mahmud ʻAqil (Beirut: Dar al-Jil, 2013), 108.

Note that he used the same term here to talk about the spiritual practice or exercises (*al-riyada*) of yoga as he did for the many Sufi practices that came up throughout his massive book. Unfortunately, he did not provide any additional details in terms of what this "large literature" included.

Mushegh Asatrian's overview of Ibn Khaldun's approach to magic and occultism outlines how the fourteenth-century intellectual understood and explained the differences between prophecy, divination, talismans, astrology, dream interpretation, and philosophy. Of key interest is the notion that for Ibn Khaldun, the more actively one pursued knowledge of the spiritual realm (and hence, the accompanying power), the more illicit any realized powers would be.[33] With that differentiation in mind, one cannot help but believe that he would have seen `ilm-i dam as more illicit than licit, especially because the *svarodaya* texts always include much more astrological material, and he found that astrology was an especially problematic endeavor.[34] However, just because Ibn Khaldun is considered as one of the most important sources for Islamicate knowledge production from the premodern period, does not mean that his views can be considered to have carried the day even in his own time period. As Melvin-Koushki points out in the context of a recent volume of *Arabica* dedicated to the study of Islamicate occultism, "What modern scholars have persistently failed to recognize is that Ibn Khaldun lost this debate [i.e., regarding the validity of astrology], and lost it conclusively…."[35] It therefore seems more than reasonable to suggest that scholars need to take into account the possibility that Ibn

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[33] Mushegh Asatrian, "Ibn Khaldun on Magic and the Occult," *Iran & the Caucasus* 7, no. 1/2 (2003), 95.

[34] One key issue here is that those mastering astrology potentially claim full knowledge of the cosmos, which threatens God's absolute wisdom. See Asatrian, 112.

[35] Matthew Melvin-Koushki, "Introduction: De-orienting the Study of Islamicate Occultism," *Arabica*, Vol. 64 (2017), 287.

Khaldun's position was the minority view, thereby begging the question of why it is that his *Muqqadima* has been elevated to such a lofty position in the "canon," of sorts, within Islamic Studies.

2.5 Mughals: Akbar (r. 1556-1605 CE), Dara Shikoh (d. 1659 CE), and Aurangzeb (r. 1656-1707 CE)

Studying religion in India is no mean venture. Even curtailing one's focus to Muslim communities in *al-Hind* does not make the task much more manageable, because there are simply so many groups to choose from. A recurring tendency is the reduction of everything (especially everything pertaining to Indian Muslims) to being quintessentially *religious* in nature, a practice that flattens out social and political complexities in unacceptable ways. Recent studies have focused their considerable efforts on the period leading up to and including the Delhi Sultanate.[36] But the one dynasty that will most likely continually capture the greatest share of the imagination—both within and outside of India—is that of the Mughals. This is partially because in political, economic, and cultural terms, the Mughals were able to amass and project an incredible amount of power. As David Gilmartin states, "[T]he histories of the Mughal Empire and of contemporary India are in many ways inseparably linked. There are few historical visions of modern India, whether as 'nation' or 'state,' that do not in some way wind their way through an interpretation of the Mughal Empire, whether as forerunner or as foil for what was to come."[37]

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[36] See Finbar Flood, *Objects of Translation: Material Culture and Medieval Hindu-Muslim Encounter* (2009), Blain Auer, *Symbols of Authority in Medieval Islam: History, Religion and Muslim Legitimacy in the Delhi Sultanate* (2012), and Manan Hasan Asif, *A Book of Conquest: The Chachnama and Muslim Origins in South Asia* (2017). In particular, Asif's volume combines textual analysis and ethnography to understand the 13th CE *Chachnama* as the "origin" story of Muslims coming to India.

[37] David Gilmartin, "Imperial Sovereignty in Mughal and British Forms, *History and Theory* 56, no.1 (March 2017), 80.

It is this pivotal nature of the Mughal Empire that makes it so important to interrogate, not only to understand the early modern period in South Asia, but also to draw credible linkages between that period and the centuries that followed. In terms of chronology, the present chapter terminates in the Mughal period, but I take up the British colonial period in later chapters. Within the multicultural milieu that was Mughal India, one ruler in particular stands out within the historical record. Rightly or wrongly, Abu'l Fath Jalal-ud-Din Muhammad Akbar (b. 1542, r. 1556-1605 CE, hereafter simply "Akbar") is held up within the modern period as exemplifying the type of synergistic or syncretic approach to religious identity that appeals to many modern interpreters with cosmopolitan sensibilities. Studying—and writing about—pre-modern history in South Asia is a particularly fraught task for several reasons. In the scholarly attempts to describe and explain Akbar's engagement with religious systems other than Islam, the terms syncretic and hybrid are often found. For reasons that I outlined in Chapter One, both terms are problematic. Extrapolated from prominent figures such as Akbar and Dara Shikoh, this idea is then applied to the formation of an ideal type of an *Indian* Muslim, in which said person is more Indian than Muslim, as if the two characteristics can be so cleanly distilled. If Akbar, and to a lesser extent, Dara Shikoh, are painted as the "good Mughals," then there is no question that the latter's brother, Aurangzeb is the prime candidate for the "bad Mughal." Audrey Truschke's recent biography of the sixth Mughal ruler argues that it is a grave mistake to simplify these rulers into such dichotomous and diametrically opposed categories. In particular, she points out that while much attention is paid to Aurangzeb's decisions to restrict celebrations of *holi*, much less is said about his efforts to do the same with celebrations of `*id* and *muharram*.[38]

Echoing Gilmartin, I will note that it is extraordinarily difficult to understand the history

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[38] Audrey Truschke, *Aurangzeb: The Life and Legacy of India's Most Controversial King,* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2017), 8-9.

of a particular ruling dynasty—especially a Muslim dynasty—without having one's

understanding refracted by (1) the British period of direct imperial rule (1858-1947); (2) the

Partition of India in August 1947 into what would eventually become the three sovereign nations

of India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh; and (3) the heavily inscribed nature of religious and sectarian

identity within nationalist discourse. My goal throughout this project is to acknowledge the way

that this history mediates present understandings of India. In my view, there is no way *around*

that history, so instead I choose to go *through* it. In so doing, I hope to dredge up the many

different ways in which present understandings have been constructed in order to fit the agendas

of imperial projects, even when those empires are no longer (officially) with us.

If people within and outside of India construct it as a dazzling kaleidoscope of cultures,

languages, and peoples, then the Mughal dynasty was witness to some of the most ingenious

harnessing of this diversity towards establishing, maintaining, and furthering an imperial agenda

that lasted for some three hundred years. From its founding by Babur in 1526 CE, through the

deposing of the last ruler, Bahadur Shah II, by the British in 1857 CE, the Mughal Empire

continues to attract substantial attention from scholars of South Asia, as well as the so-called

"Gunpowder Empires," so famously glossed by Marshall Hodgson in his opus, *The Venture of

Islam* (1974).

As noted earlier, Muslim interest in texts written in Indic languages grew at times.

During the Mughal period, no less a figure than Akbar's grandson, Dara Shukoh (d. 1659 CE),

participated in the translation of Indian texts from Sanskrit into Persian, including his rendering

of the Upanishads as *Sirr-i Akbar* ("The Greatest Secret"). Alam writes that following a "critical

examination of Hindu religions [Shukoh] found that all religions are identical and lead to the

same goal. His work *Majma` al-Bahrain* ("Meeting of the Two Oceans") is devoted to

highlighting the similarity between the beliefs and practices prescribed in Islamic *tasawwuf* and Hindu *yoga*."[39] The temptation of later histories of the Mughal dynasty has been to elevate Dara Shikoh as a continuation of Akbar's ecumenism and deep engagement with other religious traditions (especially particular schools of thought within Hinduism), as if this was somehow exceptional. Work by Truschke, Kinra, and others on the presence and contributions of Sanskrit scholars at the Mughal court disproves this theory. For example, beyond Akbar's famed `*ibadat-khana*, "Shah Jahan, too, often surrounded himself with mystical consultants, and while he might have inclined more toward 'proper' Sufis, his court was awash with mystically-inclined Hindus like Chandar Bhan Brahman, not to mention various Hindu astrologers and other divines with whom he consulted almost daily."[40] However, Kinra shows through a close reading of texts by Dara Shikoh's contemporaries, such as Shir Khan Lodi, who includes stories about Dara Shikoh in his *tazkira* written circa 1690 CE, that there was criticism of the prince for exhibiting a variety of youthful immaturities, including his dabbling with the Vedas, because "only a childish mind…would be so easily be lured in such heterodoxy."[41] Kinra argues that "Baba Dara" was thought by many to be too immature to be able to take the throne in the war of succession that he so famously lost to his brother Aurangzeb.[42] In short, the popular image of Dara Shikoh as continuing Akbar's legacy is complicated somewhat when considering the contemporaneous sources that Kinra introduces.

While Dara Shikoh receives much attention from those interested in finding examples of

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[39]Muzzafar Alam, *The Languages of Political Islam*, 2004, 96.

[40] Rajeev Kinra, "Infantilizing Baba Dara: The Cultural Memory of Dara Shekuh and the Mughal Public Sphere," *Journal of Persianate Studies* 2 (2009), 169.

[41] Kinra, 184.

[42] Kinra, 190.

Muslim rulers in India who displayed a special engagement with Hindus and other Indian religious communities, it would not be fair to move on without briefly addressing his brother who actually succeeded in becoming emperor. Aurangzeb `Alamgir ("world-seizer") won the succession war between the four sons of Shah Jahan, ultimately executing his three brothers, including Dara Shikoh. He is famously described as "India's most controversial king" in the subtitle of Audrey Truschke's newly published biography. The popular (and often times, scholarly) narrative is that where Akbar was disposed toward toleration, Aurangzeb embraced fanaticism, expressed most notably in the destruction of Hindu temples, imposition of the *jizya* tax on non-Muslims (that Akbar had revoked under his rule), and rejection of Sufism. These claims are all complicated by historical evidence to the contrary. Aurangzeb's final resting place is inside of a Sufi shrine in Khuldabad. He employed far more Hindus in his court than any of his predecessors, and he issued edicts protecting Hindu temples and providing support to Brahmins.[43]

3 - Ruling from Within: The *A'in-i Akbari*, Abu'l Fazl, and Mughal Indology

Knowledge of the breath for divination purposes was assimilated and employed by the ruling Mughal dynasty as part and parcel of Mughal court culture (and arguably, any royal court), for whom maintaining power was a priority. This culture could mean currying favor with the ruler, or the jockeying that one might expect from nobles of various stripes who sought to improve their standing before the ruler in comparison to the other courtiers. This type of power-seeking is not surprising in any way. But as the manuscripts introduced in Chapter One describe so clearly, there was another side to this search for power and control, notably the search to

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[43] Truschke 2017, 12.

achieve some measure of dominance over the everyday chaos and unpredictability of life at its most mundane level. Is it a good time to go to market to purchase animals, travel (either near or far), enter into a marriage contract, or go into battle? Those who were able to consult their breath with the requisite knowledge would know the answer to those types of questions and more. Repeating the refrain that it is a mistake to view everything relating to the Mughals in terms of religion, I argue that Abu'l Fazl's taxonomy of Indian philosophical schools and scientific learning was a political project much more than it was an attempt to forge a new religious tradition or sect.

As noted before, the collection of texts referred to herein as the *'ilm-i dam* corpus were not the product of royal patronage. While Akbar (and other Mughal rulers) officially funded the translation of Indian epic literature from Sanskrit into Persian, there was no collective driving force behind the rendering of the *Kamaru Panchashika* into Persian, let alone the creation of all of the various recensions. Instead, this is a story in which it is much harder to pinpoint the *dramatis personae*. As a brief glance at the sources listed in Appendix A reveals, there were so many different people playing the role of (spiritual) patron and translator/copyist, that it can be difficult to generate a satisfactory theoretical frame for what the texts reveal about what was happening. For this reason, examining Abu'l Fazl's rendering of `ilm-i dam/svarodaya* holds much potential, for scholars have already paid a great deal of attention to him and his writings. By building on this bulwark, I aim to add a new facet to the scholarly understanding of this key figure from one of the most successful and powerful polities within north Indian history of the past millennium.

Audrey Truschke's recent monograph, *Culture of Encounter: Sanskrit at the Mughal Court,* contains a wealth of analysis not only of the overall attitudes towards Sanskrit literature

during the Mughal period, but also, specifically, on Abu'l Fazl and his role in serving the broader Mughal agenda of a "culture of encounter" that was at the very center of Mughal political identity and statecraft. Truschke's work is at the cutting edge of an exciting new era in scholarship on the history of South Asia that combines the usually separate realms of Sanskrit and Persian literature. As she notes in an interview on her book,[44] the "translations" that took place during this period were not ones in which a single person would translate from, say, Sanskrit as the source language, into Persian, as a target language. Instead, what Abu'l Fazl (and others like him) did was to speak with pandits and other learned Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain scholars who were present at the Mughal court. These people would describe aspects of their intellectual, philosophical, and religious beliefs to him using the lingua franca of vernacular Hindi/Hindavi/Hindustani, which he would then render into Persian. As regards the *A'in-i Akbari*, one is left with the impression that it is largely (if not entirely) Abu'l Fazl's work, even if he was relying on a series of informants. This would be in contrast to the translations of Indian epic literature such as the *Mahabharata*, which would have necessarily involved a team of translators working together to produce the text over a period of some years. Truschke also sees the translations sponsored by the Mughals as motivated by much more than a generic interest in comparative literature: "The Mughals developed a detailed exegesis of Indian, particularly Sanskrit, learning in order to formulate their sovereignty over the subcontinent and benefit from its multiple forms of knowledge."[45] In other words, mastering Indian knowledge systems was key to continuing the Mughal imperial system.

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[44] Audrey Truschke, interview with Kristian Petersen, *New Books in Islamic Studies, podcast audio,* April 3, 2017. http://newbooksnetwork.com/audrey-truschke-culture-of-encounters-sanskrit-at-the-mughal-court-columbia-up-2016/.

[45] Audrey Truschke, *Cultures of Encounter: Sanskrit at the Mughal Court, (*New York: Columbia University Press, 2016), 142.

These representatives of the Mughal dynasty were not exceptional in terms of their resorting to astrology. Indeed, within the broader post-Mongol Persianate cosmopolis represented principally by the Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal empires, "anti-occultist sentiments became definitively outmoded as philosophers, astronomers, inventors, physicians, jurists, historians, poets and calligraphers increasingly *declared themselves occult scientists in service of truth and empire*."[46] Recent work by Ahmet Tunç, Kathryn Babayan, and Azfar Moin has made clear that astrology was at the center of Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal imperial courts, respectively.[47] Whether or not Abu'l Fazl can be said to have made a "declaration" of the type referenced here is unclear. However, what can be said definitively is that he and his patron, Akbar, were participating in a much broader cultural trend, and thus the allure of Indian esotericism would have been much less exotic than one might think. Another hair that must be spliced here is the question of whether or not the Indian esoteric traditions that Abu'l Fazl includes in the *A'in-i Akbari* can be grouped with mysticism. The extent to which these two categories can be separated from one another in modern scholarship is largely a construction inherited from the colonial period, a topic to which I turn my full attention in Chapter Five.

4 - Abu'l Fazl, the *Akbarnama*, and the *A'in-i Akbari*

There is a trajectory, chartable over time, in which Perso-Arabic engagement with India shifts from regarding *al-Hind* as exotic, foreign, and mysterious, to viewing the region as different but simultaneously a necessary source of learning. If Biruni was the beginning of this

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[46] Matthew Melvin-Koushki 2017, 289, emphasis added.

[47] See Ahmet Tunç, "Astrology in the Service of Empire: Knowledge, Prognostication, and Politics at the Ottoman Court, 1450s-1550s" (2016), Kathryn Babayan, *Mystics, Monarchs, and Messiahs* (2002), and Azfar Moin, *The Millennial Sovereign: Sacred Kingship and Sainthood in Islam* (2012).

arc, then in this chapter that same arc terminates with Abu'l Fazl ibn Mubarak `Allami (1551-1602 CE). Raised by his father, Shaikh Mubarak of Nagaur (present-day Rajasthan), who directed a school of philosophy in the Mughal capital of Agra, Abu'l Fazl's formal introduction to the Mughal court occurred in 1574 under the auspices of his elder brother, Mughal poet-laureate Abu'l Faiz (more commonly referred to as Faizi). Abu'l Fazl rose through the political ranks, from being in charge of political correspondence, to eventually serving as military commander in the Deccan peninsula, appointed co-governor of Delhi in 1586, and sole governor of Khandesh in 1600. Along the way he would come to hold considerable sway with the emperor Akbar. Abu'l Fazl met an untimely end in 1602 when he was assassinated for opposing the succession of Prince Salim (known as Jahangir upon his ascension to the throne).[48]

Abu'l Fazl is perhaps best-known for composing the official biography of Akbar, the *Akbarnama*. The text also contains an appendix, the *A'in-i Akbari* ("Institutes of Akbar") that is primarily cited by historians mining it for statistical data on Mughal administration and military holdings. Richard Eaton maintains that Abu'l Fazl wrote the *Akbarnama* with three distinct goals. The first was to compose a description of Akbar's reign as Mughal emperor that was both synchronic and diachronic. Akbar is cast in the mold of the Sufi "Perfect Man," *Insan-i kamil*. The *A'in* especially plays a large role in this, for it "contains a mine of statistical information on the sixteenth century that is without parallel in the historiography of India before Abu'l-Fazl's time, or even after Abu'l-Fazl's time until the appearance of gazetteers in the nineteenth century."[49] The second goal was to emphasis the centrality of Akbar to the entire enterprise of

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[48] Abu'l Fazl Ibn Mubarak `Allami, *The History of Akbar,* vol. 1, Edited and Translated by Wheeler Thackston (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2015), *viii*.

[49] R. M. Eaton, "Akbar-Nama," *Encyclopædia Iranica*, I/7, 714-715; an updated version is available online at http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/akbar-nama (accessed on 25 April 2014).

Mughal imperium, framed simultaneously through Iranian political theory, full of the divine *farr*

("radiance") that one finds referenced so often in the ultimate Persian epic, the *Shahnama*. In so

doing, "Abu'l-Fazl effectively countered the claims of the `ulama' to ultimate authority in

Mughal India." [50] This conflict with the `ulama' was the crux of the political turmoil at the level

of the royal court, and in Eaton's eyes, this conflict centered largely on the treatment of Akbar's

non-Muslim subjects by their Muslim rulers. Truschke also argues that Akbar worked to lessen

the influence of the `ulama' through re-defining the vocabulary of knowledge production at

Mughal court. Through moving from *taqlid* (imitation) to *tahqiq* (verification), Akbar (via his

most trusted confidant, Abu'l Fazl) was able to generate a new framework in which knowledge

would be defined as "an active investigation that admits new sources of wisdom, including

Sanskrit texts."[51]

In his recent translation of the *Akbarnama*, Wheeler Thackston argues that it represents

Abu'l Fazl's attempt "to apotheosize Akbar." He does this by portraying his patron as "as the

ideal monarch, drawing from the models of both ancient Iranian kingship and the perfect man in

Sufism. He describes Akbar's birth as associated with supernatural occurrences and miracles, as

is usually done in recounting the birth of a prophet or deity."[52] In Abu'l Fazl's hands, Akbar was

"the latest and most perfect manifestation of the divine light that had infused Alanqoa, the remote

ancestress of both Genghis Khan and Tamerlane, and that continued, hidden, in the lineage for

many generations until it attained perfection and was revealed in the person of Akbar."[53] Through

[50] R. M. Eaton, "Akbar-Nama."

[51] Truschke 2016, 128.

[52] Abu'l Fazl ibn Mubarak `Allami (trans. Wheeler M. Thackston) *ix*.

[53] Abu'l Fazl (Wheeler M. Thackston, editor and translator), *vii-ix*. Tamerlane (1336-1405), the progenitor of the Timurid House, to which Akbar and the Mughals of India belonged, was not descended from Genghis Khan, but they had remote legendary ancestors, such in Alanqoa, in common. The Timurids of India were also of Genghisid

these various rhetorical moves, Akbar became not just another ruler, but instead his eponymous greatness was ordained by the cosmos itself.

Abu'l Fazl's most significant aim was crafting a Mughal ideology focused on imperial identity instead of Islamic imperialism. This was a departure from earlier Mughal chronicles that had cast Indian history as a series of contests waged between Muslim and Hindu polities. By contrast, Abu'l Fazl "stressed the imperial interests of a multi-racial and multi-communal state and saw Mughal history in the context of the court's political destiny."[54] In the *Akbarnama*, the stress is on the importance of maintaining and expanding the reach of an all-powerful imperial center that must rule over and above polities (be they Hindu, Muslim, or others) with power based at a distance from the capital. Similar to his invocation of Mongol bloodlines to demonstrate Akbar's power, Abu'l Fazl's emphasis on the power of the imperial center over others—regardless of sectarian affinities or differences—is traceable to the Mongol concept of *yasa*, in which all religious communities are allowed to exist and people may practice as they wish, so long as they pledge their allegiance to the central ruler. Those who are surprised by the type of attitudes towards religious difference manifested in the policies and actions of Mughals such as Akbar should remember that as much as emphasis was placed on its being a *Muslim* dynasty, it was equally important—if not more so—to frame it as a *post-Mongol conquest* dynasty.

4.1 What's in an A'in?

Beyond the macro-level view of the *Akbarnama* and *A'in-i Akbari* that Eaton and

descent through Babur's mother, Qutlugh-Nigar Khanim, whose father, Yunus Khan, was a direct descendant of Genghis Khan's son Chaghatai, *xvii*.

[54] R. M. Eaton, "Akbar-Nama."

Thackston provide, there is the pressing question of what a more micro-level analysis reveals. What are the terms that Abu'l Fazl invoked throughout this massive project, and what do his choices reveal to modern readers seeking to understand this sixteenth-century Indian author's motivations and the worldviews undergirding his analysis of the world around him? Abu'l Fazl's prose is a very ornamental style of Persian prose; it repeatedly uses Persian terms instead of Arabic equivalents. For example, he contrasts *nashinasi* (comparable to Arabic *jahiliyya* for "ignorance" that is typically used to refer to the pre-Islamic era) with *shinasa'i* (comparable to Arabic *ma`rifat*, "knowingness"). The title of the work in question is itself an excellent site of philological investigation. In what sense does Abu'l Fazl deploy this term, *a'in*? A quick perusal of Steingass' Persian-English dictionary lists several different entries for the term, including *bih-a'in* (of good principles, religious), *bihisht-a'in* (paradise like), *ḥikmat-i-a'in* (guided by wisdom), *ishwa-a'in* (coquettish), and *Liwa-a'in* (jocular or foolish disposition).[55] With a slightly amended spelling, Steingass provides the common translation of "institutes," as well as "a rite, custom, ordinance, canon, usage, prescription; common law (in contradistinction to the laws delivered by Muhammad, and which are called *shar`*); mode, form, manner; ornament, decoration," as well as tracing the term's origins to the Sanskrit term *ayana*.[56] This definition provides the reader with a completely different valence, in which one finds the expected term "institution," but also terms that in a Protestant or Catholic Christian context are explicitly religious, such as "rite," and "canon." While this last term is Greek, from which Arabic gets the term for statute or law (*qanun*), it is used more widely in the sense of a set of texts that are

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[55] Francis Joseph Steingass, *A Comprehensive Persian-English dictionary, including the Arabic words and phrases to be met with in Persian literature* (London: Routledge & K. Paul, 1892), accessed online at http://dsal.uchicago.edu/dictionaries/steingass/ on August 22, 2017, 134.

[56] Steingass, 134.

considered to be of a particular weight or merit within a community. The most important aspect of the definition that Steingass provides is that of "common law (in contradistinction to the laws delivered by Muhammad, and which are called *shar'*)."

This distinction between *a'in* and *shar`* is important because it illustrates another way in which Abu'l Fazl is drawing on a cosmopolitan framework for composing this text on the Mughal empire. On first glance, it would appear that none of these entries specify the sense of "institutes" or even "institution," therefore one must account for the difference. However, Steingass' dictionary, of course, is not the sole resource for settling this question. Sulayman Hayyim's *New Persian-English Dictionary* contains but two entries for *a'in*: rite, ceremony, custom, law, institution, manner, religion, decoration, and ornament; followed by the compound *a'in-nameh*, meaning a regulation.[57] Most tellingly, the *Lughatnameh* for *a'in* cites the Mongol concept of *yasa*, drawing an explicit connection between the Akbar's empire and the transformational upheaval to Central and South Asia as well as the eastern portions of the Middle East that came about through Chinghiz Khan's invasions.[58]

In this case of Abu'l Fazl's contribution to the literature, the *A'in-i Akbari*, his *A'in* appears to fall into the category of a regulation, institution, rite, or custom, but it is also much more than that. The purely descriptive sections, such as tax revenues, do not fit easily into a broader discussion of rite or custom. Instead, this *a'in* is a snapshot of the full machinations of Mughal imperial power. The fact that Abu'l Fazl inclues the taxonomy of Indian knowledge

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[57] Sulayman Hayyim, *New Persian-English dictionary, complete and modern, designed to give the English meanings of over 50,000 words, terms, idioms, and proverbs in the Persian language, as well as the transliteration of the words in English characters. Together with a sufficient treatment of all the grammatical features of the Persian Language* (Teheran, Librairie-imprimerie Béroukhim, 1934-1936), http://dsal.uchicago.edu/dictionaries/hayyim/, accessed on August 22, 2017.

[58] `Ali Akbar Dihkhuda, *Lughatnamah* (Tehran: Danishgah-i Tihran 1958/9-1965), vol. 2, 231-233.

alongside revenue collection data implies that all of this is necessary to continue and improve upon what Abu'l Fazl sees as the grandeur of Akbar's reign. This is another example of Pestre's twin regimes of knowledge and power. The knowledge of how to run an empire is only effective if one also develops an understanding of the appropriate intellectual stance to take towards one's subjects. In this sense, the entire *Akbarnama* could be read as a narrative regarding the custom of Akbar, and by extension, his age. *A'in* is a broader term than *shar`*, and through invoking both law and custom, Abu'l Fazl evokes a sense of grandeur on the part of Akbar's empire. In a way, *a'in* here could be seen as synonymous with *tariqa*, or the "way" of Akbar, in so far as that "way" is embodied in the administrative organization of the empire and the history that Abu'l Fazl establishes in these "institutes."

4.2 Why write the A'in-i Akbari?

The multiple strategies that Abu'l Fazl deployed in order to raise Akbar to a semi-divine status were outlined above. While this, along with working to establish Akbar as the central figure around which the welfare of the empire pivoted, is a good assessment of what motivated the composition of the *Akbarnama*, it does little to explain precisely why Abu'l Fazl composed the *A'in-i Akbari*. Why go to the trouble of assembling so much data on imperial administration, and then follow it with an extended discourse on the people, culture, and history of India? In a key passage from the preface, Abu'l Fazl reveals his motivation:

> It has long been the ambitious desire of my heart to pass in review, to
> some extent, the general conditions of this vast country, and to record the
> opinions (*guftar*) professed by the majority of the learned (*danesh
> anduzan*) among the Hindus (*hindi nazhad*). I know not whether the love
> of my native land has been the attracting influence or exactness of
> historical research and genuine truthfulness of narrative, for Banakati,
> Hafiz A'bru and other ancient chroniclers have indulged in vain
> imaginings and recorded stories that have no foundation in fact. Nor were

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the motives altogether these, but rather that when I had arisen from the close retirement of studious application and discovered somewhat of the ignorance and dissensions of men, I formed the design of establishing peace and promoting concord (*basich ashti dar sirr garaft va salik-ash dusti fariysh nahad*). My original desire now renewed its possession of me, but a multiplicity of occupations prevented its gratification until the turns of fate brought about the composition of this striking record which has already branched out into such numerous details. Although my pen had occupied itself with the description of the Súbahs and had briefly recorded the annals of Hindustan, and now that the ambition of my heart had attained the time of its realisation, not content with the information I had already acquired, I had recourse to the knowledge of others and set myself to gather instruction from men of true learning.[59]

In this passage Abu'l Fazl openly declares that the *ahval-i Hindustan* is really the climax

of his entire project, certainly of the *A'in-i Akbari*, but also arguably the entire *Akbarnama*

broadly construed. Additionally, his goal was to assure his readers that the widely held notion

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the commonly received opinion that the Indian/Hindu treats the incomparable/peerless deity as a group, does not have the glow of correctness. (*hindu izad-i bi-himal-ra anbaz girad furugh-i rasti nadarad*), for although with some regard to some points and certain conclusions, there is room for controversy, yet the worship of one God (*khuda parasti*) and the profession of His Unity (*vahdat guzini*) among this people (*ta'ifa*) appeared facts convincingly attested.[60]

Note that Gladwin's earlier translation elides the specific claim that Abu'l Fazl makes here,

namely that Hindus profess a divine unity (*vahdat*). This term would have held specific valence

[59] H.S. Jarret (trans) and J. Sarkar (ed), *The A'in-i Akbari,* Vol. III (New Delhi: Oriental Books Reprint Corporation, 1978), 1. Jarrett's translation is originally published in 1896, while Sarkar's edited version of it came out in 1947. I favor Sarkar's edition of Jarret's translation because Jarret actually chose a more literal style than Gladwin, as I demonstrate in this section. For the Persian text, I rely on the Calcutta edition compiled by H. Blochmann, printed in 1869. Where applicable, I have provided references to both Blochmann's edition of the Persian text as well as different translations (notably by Gladwin, Jarrett, and Sarkar, respectively) into English. To help keep things clear, I have chosen to cite according to the relevant editor or translator, rather than Abu'l Fazl himself, who is of course the actual author. Note that "the Hindus" here is Gladwin's translation of *hindi nazhad*, which is more properly understood as "Indian born," an inference that Jarrett and Sarkar continue in their own translation. I retain this translation here to demonstrate the types of subtle projections that flavor the *A'in-i Akbari*'s reception by European audiences.

[60] Jarret and Sarkar, 2, with amendation.

for Abu'l Fazl's readers, but for Gladwin it is reduced to "they are worshippers of God, and only one God."[61] In contrast, not only does Jarret's translation include the reference to God's unity, but Sarkar also provides an extensive footnote that attempts to substantiate this claim through citing British Indologists Thomas Colebrooke and Horace Hayman Wilson's analysis of the Vedas.[62]

It was important to Abu'l Fazl to present this information to his readers "in order that hostility towards them might abate, and the temporal sword (*shamshir-i `alamiyan*) be stayed awhile from the shedding of blood, that dissentions within and without be turned to peace (*ashti garayad*) and the thorny field of strife and enmity bloom into a garden of concord (*va kharistan-i mukhalifat va dushmani chaman zar-i dusti gardad*)."[63] Throughout this passage, Abu'l Fazl avoids explicitly Islamic vocabulary and nearly all Arabic terms, in particular when discussing whether the Hindus are guilty of associating things with the one God. For example, he does not invoke the Arabic term *shirk* that is so often translated as "associating" (i.e., polytheism). Following these introductory remarks, he provides a mixture of astrological information (e.g., names of the planets and days of the weeks, lunar stations, longitude and latitude), the manner in which the planet is divided up into different climates, scale of notation (in which Abu'l Fazl compares Indic and Greek notational systems in order to dispel the idea that the Brahmins "borrowed" a system from the ancient Greeks), and even some material on different systems of weights and measures. He then segues into a section on "the Learning of the Hindus," in which he describes nine philosophical schools, the eighteen sciences—of which the eleventh is

[61] Gladwin, *v*.

[62] Jarrett and Sarkar, 2, note 1.

[63] Jarrett, 2.

astrology (*jyotisha*)— and then a list of various arts and methods that he associates with his

Brahmin sources. This eclectic list included matters of dress, states of purification, prohibited

food, rules for fasting, as well as lists of incarnations of the deity, which, in keeping with his goal

to teach Sanskrit to his readers, he transliterates instead of translating the term simply as

avatara.[64] He lists important historical visitors to India, beginning with Adam and proceeding

through figures from both the Qur'anic narrative and Persian sacred histories, a list which

terminates with Humayun. He then lists the "saints of India" (*awliya'-i-Hind*), which includes

those associated with the founding (and continuation) of key Sufi orders in South Asia such as

the Qadiris, Naqshbandis, and Chishtis. This list terminates with the Quranic figures of Khizr

and Elias.

It is important to note that Abu'l Fazl (and his sources) do not class *svarodaya* with

sorcery or magic. But there are separate sections labeled as such. *Jyotisha* is regarded as a source

of wonders and amazements, but not sorcery, per se. *Indra-jala* is defined here as "the art of

sorcery, of magical spells, and sleight of hand" (*danesh-i niranjat va talismat va `amal-i tiz-*

dasti) and "the wonders performed by these means are beyond the powers of expression."[65] It is

worth noting that Gladwin's earlier edition provides a translation of "necromancy" instead of

sorcery.[66] Abu'l Fazl provides no other information on *indra-jala*.

Abu'l Fazl made explicit comparisons between Indic and Greek knowledge systems, even

emphasizing several times that the schools of knowledge in India were set up in accordance with

those of the Greeks. This begs the question of why the Greeks were such an important

[64] Blochmann, 164.

[65] Jarrett and Sarkar, 252. For the Persian text, see Blochmann, 129.

[66] Gladwin, 179.

benchmark for him. As I will discuss in detail in Chapter Five on the Persian reception of `ilm-i dam* outside of India, there was a clear trend in Islamicate encyclopedias and other similar taxonomies to divide knowledge into two main types: Islamic and ancient, with the former occasionally classed as licit and the latter as illicit or somehow suspect. From the `Abbasid period onwards, Greek thinkers such as Plato and Aristotle were part and parcel of Islamicate philosophical and theological sciences.[67] Abu'l Fazl draws this comparison to the Greeks in part because his audience was likely familiar with many of key Greek thinkers. Importantly, according to Abu'l Fazl *divergence from the Greeks does not merit denigration*. Part of what makes Abu'l Fazl's approach to religious difference so important is that he wanted to explain India (specifically Brahmin teachings) to his readers, but he worked to do so on India's own terms. For example, the comparisons between the notational systems is illustrative because he was not saying that one system was necessarily better than another. Instead, he was saying to his readers that "this is important, precisely *because* it is different." He wanted to make sure his audience understood that in order to rule *al-Hind* successfully (and Akbar's reign would surely serve as the best possible example), they must appreciate the value of the various forms of Indian knowledge that Abu'l Fazl had assembled in the *A'in-i Akbari*.

4.3 Abu'l Fazl's Reception by European Translators

In reviewing the considerable literature on Abu'l Fazl's crowning contribution to histories of the Mughal empire, one encounters a variety of views. Major Jarrett, one of the British colonial officers who translated the *A'in-i Akbari* into English, declares that this text "was meant

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[67] For one of the key works on the process through which Greek learning came to be internalized, interpreted, and this dispersed throughout Islamicate societies, see Dimitri Gutas' now classic *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture* (London, Routledge, 1998).

to serve as a handy encyclopedia for readers of Persian who knew no other language and had no access to standard works even in the Persian and Arabic languages." [68] Jarrett is not a huge proponent of Abu'l Fazl, and is highly critical of the Mughal courtier: "The merit and the only merit of the *Ain-i Akbari* is in *what* it tells and *not* in the matter of its telling which has little to recommend it. It will deservedly go down to posterity as a unique compilation of the systems of administration and control throughout the various departments of the Government in a great empire, faithfully and minutely recorded in their smallest detail."[69] Jarrett's view is that this source is worth translating for the raw data that it contains, but he is otherwise unimpressed: "as an annalist, the movements and conduct of his sovereign [i.e., Akbar] are surrounded with the impeccability that fences and deifies Oriental despotism."[70] Jarrett's reluctance in translating Abu'l Fazl is evident, and is partially ascribable to the fact that he is taking over this project following the premature demise of Blochman, who died after compiling the Calcutta edition of the *A'in*, but before he could complete an English translation.

Sarkar, a later translator who could be more accurately described as editing Jarrett's work, adds that in addition to giving his Persianate audience "a clear idea of the literature, philosophy, arts and sciences of the Hindus, and the saints and heroes of India,…he also tried to adorn the subject giving a brief account of the Muslim world, both in and out of India,—by means of a short compilation from well-known Arabic and Persian authorities composed outside India."[71] The last part of Sarkar's point here is worth mentioning because it brings into question the possibility that sources composed *outside* of India would be valued more highly than those

[68] Jarrett and Sarkar, *iv.*

[69] Jarrett and Sarkar, *vii.*

[70] Jarrett and Sarkar, *vi.*

[71] Jarrett and Sarkar, *v.*

composed *within* it. Undoubtedly, promoting Akbar's legacy is central to Abu'l Fazl's project in composing the *Akbarnama* and its all-too-important appendix, the *A'in-i Akbari*. The fact that he wrote these texts in the middle of Akbar's reign indicates that he sought to make the ruler's centrality crystal clear. However, much more research is needed on this appendix, which could be mined for far more than administrative statistics on the Mughal empire. Just the sections cited within this chapter make clear that one of the most important writers from the Mughal period had a particular vision in mind when setting pen to paper.

4.4 Svarodaya in the A'in-i Akbari

All of these Perso-Arabic depictions of India were important to Muslim understanding of the science of the breath and its reception by various interpreters. Its treatment in Persian (especially Iranian) and European hands was important, but so was its treatment in a particular text from the `ilm-i dam` corpus, namely the *svarodaya* material that Abu'l Fazl included in the *A'in-i Akbari*. As noted above, Abu'l Fazl's section on *ahval-i Hindustan* made his motivations for writing his hagiography of Akbar quite clear. His treatment of *svarodaya* needs to be situated within this broader framework. In this telling, *svarodaya* is one key example that illustrates Abu'l Fazl's overall methodology for educating his readers about India and its various ways of knowing. He argues that understanding Indian knowledge is critical for success on the part of Mughal rulers. This is not *in spite of* the fact that these ways of knowing are distinct from Islamicate forms with explicit roots in the Qur'an or hadith, but, instead, precisely *because* these ways of knowing have non-Islamic roots. For Abu'l Fazl, it is their Indian-ness that means it is essential for the Mughal rulers to develop an in-depth understanding.

The *ahval-i Hindustan,* which outlines (among other things) various Indian philosophical

teachings, includes a section entitled *Karma-Vipaka* or "the maturation of actions," meaning the

ways in which our past actions affect ourselves and others. Within this section readers find

material titled "Svara" and "Answers to Inquirers."[72] Taken together, these two sections match up

with much of the general concept of `ilm-i dam* introduced in Chapter One—for example, the

notion that knowledge of the breath and tracing its flow through the microcosmic channels

known as *nadis* in our bodies enables one to interpret the macrocosmic forces that control our

world. Abu'l Fazl uses the term `ilm* to describe this knowledge.[73] There are three principle

nadis, which Abu'l Fazl names as *ida* for the left nostril, *pingala* for the right nostril, and

sushumna for when the breath flows through both nostrils. The left nostril would map out onto

the left side of the body, the right onto the right side, while both nostrils correlate to the spinal

column. *Ida* is linked to the moon, *pingala* to the sun, and *sushumna* to *Mahadeva* (here

understood as the god Shiva—indeed, many of the Sanskrit texts on these techniques are known

as *shiva-svarodaya*). Abu'l Fazl recognizes diversity within this set of practices, stating that

some experts chart the correlations between the breath and the day of the week, while others

focus on the sun's course through the Zodiac signs. These techniques include an added layer of

complexity in that the breath is also mapped out onto the five elements (earth, wind, fire, water,

and heaven). Considering one's breath becomes a tricky proposition when the final analysis of it

must account for which nostril/side of the body, the astrological sign, the day of the week, and

then the element connected with that particular type of breath.

[72] Jarrett and Sarkar, 244-251. As for the question of why this material on *svara* would follow passages on *karma*, one possibility is that understanding one's *karma* would then precipitate wanting to act in such a way so as to generate good *karma*. Learning the science of the breath would facilitate the generation of positive merit.

[73] Blochmann, 124.

Characteristically of his work, Abu'l Fazl does not reference specific people as sources for this material on *svara*. Instead, he provides a reference to "the subtle and experienced who have seen much" (*azmun-karan-i didavar-i shigarf-i bini*), who "distinguish the excess or even breathing by placing the thumb beneath the nostril."[74] Abu'l Fazl's text on *svara* stands out in comparison to other `*ilm-i dam* texts because of the repeated emphatic concern with determining whether one's breath is "even" or "in excess," and that one's fate will in part be decided by which type of breath (i.e., solar or lunar) is dominant at both sunrise and sunset. He then provides various details on the relationship between the dominant breath at the moment of actions or inquiries pertaining to warfare, travel, predicting the health and gender of an unborn child, marriage, and currying favor with rulers. While Abu'l Fazl's section on *svara* certainly overlaps with the portions of the `*ilm-i dam* corpus reviewed herein, it is also clear that he was drawing on a different set of sources. It is unlikely that he or his informants were reading a version of the *Kamaru Panchashika*, for example. This raises questions for further research into the sources—both written and oral—that Abu'l Fazl consulted in his preparations of the *A'in-i Akbari*.

What then does one do with this highly sophisticated technical apparatus of breathing, according to Abu'l Fazl? It turns out that all manner of things are made possible through mastering these techniques. There was never any attempt to "Islamicize" this knowledge, and Abu'l Fazl never indicated any disapproval of this material, which was representative of the way he presented Indian knowledge generally. That he included these passages on *svarodaya* in this part of the *A'in-i Akbari* reveals not only that he viewed it as relevant for understanding the broader subject of Indian teachings, but also that his informants thought so as well. Further study

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[74] Blochman, 125.

is needed to contextualize what is essentially a curriculum of Indian philosophy from the late 16th century, presented in Persian to the Mughal court as part of a compendium accompanying the two volumes of the *Akbarnama*. Part of this contextualization would be to answer the question of why Abu'l Fazl packages *svara* and the "response to inquirers" together with a section on *karma-vipaka*? What is the connection between *karma*, or the idea that there is a causal relationship between one's actions in past lives and one's present situation, and the idea that specific powers are available to those equipped with knowledge of one's breath? There are two responses. First, once someone has read about the importance of *karma* and understands the link between past or present actions that will cause a person difficulty in proceeding towards release (*moksha*) from the eternal cycle of rebirth (*samsara*), then *svara* could be understood as a response to that knowledge. This would mean that applying the lessons in this section on *svara* could enable a person to increase the merit they would want in order to address karmic deficits. How much would Abu'l Fazl's readers have known or understood about concepts such as *samsara*? Perhaps this section of the *A'in* is intended to remedy any gaps in precisely that type of knowledge. This is not for the purposes of conversion; Abu'l Fazl is not an evangelist for the Buddhist and Hindu learning contained in the *A'in*, but he certainly wants his readers to understand these concepts.

The second approach to understanding nesting *svara* within *karma-vipaka* in the *A'in-i Akbari* makes sense when compared placed against the backdrop of the broader Persian tradition articulated in this chapter. The sections that immediately follow the material on *svara* include *agama* (incantations), *sakuna* (augury), *samudrika* (palmistry), *garuda* (treating injuries caused by venomous reptiles),[75] *indra-jala*, *rasa-vidya* (alchemy), and *ratna-periksha* (gemology). The material on *svara* is thus placed in the context of magic and occult techniques. This is consistent

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[75] See Appendix B for a list of Nepali Garuda Tantra texts that include using knowledge of the subtle breath.

with the packaging given to these types of practices in the Persian encyclopedia tradition dating back as far as the mid-fourteenth century with Amuli's *Nafa'is al-funun*, discussed in detail in Chapter Four.

The precise names that authors ascribe to particular types of knowledge is actually very important. In the case of Abu'l Fazl's material on using the science of the breath for divination purposes, translating the name of the technique made it more accessible to the reader, who could consider it as a set of practices that, while they did not originate in the time of the prophet, for example, were nonetheless relevant and worth knowing about. Abu'l Fazl's insistence not only on maintaining the Sanskrit terminology, but also explaining with painful precision how to pronounce the terms, means that he was erecting a boundary around this knowledge, while simultaneously creating a doorway through which his readers could pass once they had acquired a very special set of skills.

The fact that Abu'l Fazl used the Sanskrit term further emphasized that this was *Indian* knowledge, and its inclusion in a much longer section on Indian philosophical schools made it clear that he was marking this knowledge off as a separate body of work from the different Islamic traditions with which he would have been very familiar. As Truschke argues, this is evidence that he wanted to introduce his contemporaries to Indian knowledge. As anyone who reads the *A'in* can testify, Abu'l Fazl goes to great lengths to explain precisely how to pronounce the Sanskrit terms. For example, the aforementioned *ida* is written out in Persian, followed by the parenthetical comment reading: [with an 'i' (*kasra*) hamza and an "indian '*daal*'" and *alif*].[76] He does this repeatedly throughout the *A'in-i Akbari*, meaning that whole passages at times are basically Persian transliterations of Sanskrit terms.

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[76] Blochman, 124.

Stepping back for a moment for a comparative view, scholars of Islamic Studies who look at divination are familiar with earlier work by Toufic Fahd, but this is largely based on Arabic sources from the Middle East. There is very little work looking at how Muslim communities, such as the ruling Mughals in India, understood and applied divination techniques originally developed by non-Muslims. In the *A'in-i Akbari*, one finds not only a taxonomy of knowledge, but also indications that Abu'l Fazl tacitly approved of these practices. He went to pains to make the case in the section on karma there was complete agreement among Indian sages on this subject, bolstering his implicit claim that if so many sages concurred on this technique, then it must be worth knowing. Abu'l Fazl's openness to Indian learning is key for my project.

Abu'l Fazl reported that "according to the different conditions of hours (*sa`at*), days (*ayyam*), Zodiac signs (*buruj*), celestial movements (*kavakib*), and manner of breathing in the three ways (*atvar-i in seh hal*) [i.e., the three *nadis*], diverse events attended with gladness or sadness and other circumstances may be predicted."[77] That the Muslim court historian provided this information without denigrating it says something important about his overall position towards divination techniques that arose outside of Muslim communities. First, he had no objection to the practice of divination, which is unsurprising given its presence in many different forms in the Middle East as well as Central and South Asia. Second, he did not critique these practices for their Indian roots. He did not compare them to other techniques that read the Qur'an or other Islamic texts in esoteric ways, such as lettrism or numerology. Instead, he presented the art of *svara* as one among many possible ways for individuals, especially those operating in a court setting, to find their way to personal and public success.

[77] Blochmann, 126.

Reviewing this section of the *A'in,* one finds material on the climate, flora and fauna, Indian notation systems, languages, philosophical and religious schools, music theory, worship practices, dietary restrictions, marriage customs, childbirth ceremonies, miscellaneous festivals, and death.[78] This is then followed by a list of famous people from Abu'l Fazl's sacred history who have come to India from other lands, starting with Adam and ending with Humayun. This list cannot include Akbar because he is born in India, thus marking a change in status for the people whose lives and deeds serve as historical mileposts for Abu'l Fazl's rendering. The next list is of the saints (*awliya'*) of India. Taking all of this together, I argue that Abu'l Fazl is working to compile a comprehensive environmental study of India. This is his rendering of his native land in minute detail, all of which goes to serve the greater glory of Akbar, his ruler and patron.

5 – Conclusion

What, then, is the general impression developed from this narrative arc of Perso-Arabic engagement with *al-Hind*? The initial survey of Islamicate Persian and Arabic sources on India demonstrated how those writings differed so greatly from one another in terms of genre (court history vs. travel narrative), time period (ninth century vs. fifteenth century), and author affiliation (Ghaznavid court astrologer vs. Mughal courtier). These dichotomies are meant to be illustrative, but are no means exhaustive. Second, an explanation of why the Mughal period in general, and the *A'in-i Akbari* in particular, are important for how one understands the

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[78] In a way, this is quite similar to Jafar Sharif's method of depicting Muslims in the Deccan (and by extension, India generally) in the 1832 work, *Qanun-i Islam*. See Chapter Five for my discussion of Sharif and the role his text plays in the European reception of `ilm-i dam.

relationship between the twin regimes of knowledge and power in India before the British colonial period, which will itself be the focus in the penultimate chapter. Third, the *A'in-i Akbari* is situated within a broader context of Islamicate—especially Persian—writing about India and Indian knowledge traditions. As noted above, it is not typically mined as a source for information on mystical knowledge, but on a certain level that approach to the text yields more information than what is commonly found in the utilization of its contents to understand the machinations of Mughal imperial administration. And yet, I argue, it is within the very organization of that "mystical" knowledge that one finds important insights not only into the deployment of the twin regimes of power and knowledge, but also into the mindset of one of the most important architects of those regimes—a figure whose importance was so great in no small part because his patron would rule within India for many decades, outliving even the court historian he had employed to memorialize him.

An important difference between Biruni and Shahrastani is the latter's remove from India compared with the former's more intimate familiarity. Shahrastani based his accounts on literature that he had read rather than firsthand observations and experiences. While Biruni was certainly not conducting "field work" or "ethnography" in the same way that one uses those terms today, it is important to acknowledge the methodological distinction. Abu'l Fazl differs from both as someone who lived in India for the entirety of his life and whose methods appear to have included textual research informed by a great deal of interviewing of scholars who were knowledgeable about the Sanskrit sources. Even though Abu'l Fazl consulted those learned in Sanskrit, he was clear on not knowing the language himself. Given that Biruni knew Sanskrit, while Abu'l Fazl did not, "the real value of the *A'in-i Akbari* lies in what it tells us about India under Muslim rule after Biruni's time (c. 1020 AD) and the much ampler details about Hindu

philosophy and manners that Abu'l Fazl derived from the pandits engaged for 'Imperial Gazetteer' by orders of Akbar."[79] In comparing Biruni and Abu'l Fazl, Jarrett concludes that Abu'l Fazl copied Biruni's overall structure and methodology, minus the fact that Abu'l Fazl had to rely on pandits as informants. The fact that Biruni cites his sources, while Abu'l Fazl does not, merely underlines the latter's rhetorical strategy in which he works to convince his readers of the *sui generis* nature of the information he presents. He does not want his audience to think too much about the role that he himself played in composing and collecting this text into a unified whole from many disparate parts.

In discussing the reception of Abu'l Fazl's work by orientalist readers (and translators), I want to clarify how the colonial-era scholarship affects those researching the *A'in-i Akbari* today. Standing in the twenty-first century, there is little point in pretending that I am able to access the *A'in-i Akbari* without going through the mediating work of British-trained or -employed scholar-officers like Gladwin, Blochmann, Jarrett, and Sarkar. Figuratively, their fingerprints are all over the *A'in-i Akbari;* even the Calcutta edition of the Persian text was published by Blochman, let alone the various English translations that the others produced over time. Alongside close textual analysis, the reception history is equally important for understanding the ways in which this particular document has traveled over time and space. The *A'in-i Akbari* definitely fits within a larger imperial agenda in terms of the British construction of India, especially its religious sects, as a land that needed to be controlled and subdued.

In linking Biruni to Abu'l Fazl, what could one learn about Abu'l Fazl's use of horoscopes, such as for Akbar, and compare that with Biruni's use (or lack thereof) to support his various Ghaznavid patrons? How did these two Muslim scholars evaluate and validate particular

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[79] Jarrett and Sarkar, *vi.*

types of knowledge that they saw as "Indian" in nature, and in what ways did they invalidate it? Beyond Biruni, Ibn Khaldun's importance for this project is primarily that his work serves as one of the most influential and widely read pieces of cultural history and theoretical framings for the rise and fall of civilizations. On a side note, whereas Ibn Khaldun apparently never found the philosopher-king who could embody the ideals that he espoused, it certainly appears that Abu'l Fazl enjoyed more luck in this regard.

Through teaching his readers a significant amount of Sanskrit vocabulary, Abu'l Fazl made clear that those in his audience needed *to really know this stuff*, and that simply knowing *about* it would not suffice. By the time he completed the *A'in*, Abu'l Fazl was working within a Mughal imperium that had been established for generations in India. He had no reason to consider non-Islamic Indian knowledge as any less valuable than practices derived from the Qur'an or the hadith. Quite the opposite, his relation to sectarian difference was guided by the pragmatic need to ensure that he was able to maintain political and personal power.

As Thackston argues that Abu'l Fazl sought to "apotheosize" Akbar through deploying a variety of rhetorical strategies in the *Akbarnama*, then perhaps it could be argued that I have set out to do something similar with Abu'l Fazl in crafting a narrative arc of Perso-Arabic engagement with India. I have charted this course because in Abu'l Fazl's work, specifically the *A'in-i Akbari*, I find a pluralistic understanding of multiple religions and systems of rulership, power, and empire. In his overall approach to writing a history of India, Abu'l Fazl worked to ensure the superiority of the Mughal court over and against all other polities (Muslim and non-Muslim) within India during his time. He endorsed sets of practices (such as *svarodaya*) that could be used by courtly elites to maintain and improve upon their position. He also deployed a linguistic framework that affirmed the boundary between Sanskrit/Indian and Islamicate

terminologies, encouraging his readers to cross the language barrier to learn Sanskrit. One might add that he implicitly advised this step while also making it clear that he himself did not take it in terms of learning to read Sanskrit. In contrast with the later figure of Dara Shikoh, Abu'l Fazl's work is an example of cosmopolitan discourse that I would classify as more *realpolitik* than esoteric in nature. He may well have engaged in at least some of these esoteric practices himself, but proving or disproving his actual beliefs would require a far more comprehensive inquiry than possible in this short chapter. Truschke argues that Abu'l Fazl "intended for Sanskrit ideas to alter the nature of Indo-Persian knowledge."[80] I would add that he sought to expand the usual sources of that knowledge for explicit political gain.

Given this historical trajectory in hand, in the next chapter I turn to a more specific interrogation of how to interpret `ilm-i dam* more holistically. What kind of body is implicitly at work in these practices, and how, precisely, is the breath flowing through it? These are the questions to which this inquiry now turns.

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[80] Truschke 2016, 164.

Chapter 3 – "The Inspired Body: *`ilm-i dam* as Embodied Practice"

First, that the entire human body is held together with veins.
It is necessary that one of these veins has information (*khabar*).
Second, namely that the veins of the body are the source of the human breath,
which appears from those veins.
Third, one should know that each breath (*nafas*) individually goes by three paths.
The first is from the right side, they say it is of the sun.
The second is from the left side, they say it is of the moon.
The third is in the middle of two nostrils, they say it is heavenly (*asmani*).
Every breath (*dam*) has a special quality.[1]

Sayyid al-Din Bukhari, *Miz al-nafas*

How can we understand the depths at which technique changes us through practice, over time and sometimes radically? What is the relationship between knowledge and power, in the practice of embodied technique? Do we sing the song, or does the song sing us?[2]

Ben Spatz, *What a Body Can Do: Technique as Knowledge, Practice as Research*

…but I found I could not *fix* bodies as simple objects of thought. Not only did bodies tend to indicate a world beyond themselves, but this movement beyond their own boundaries, a movement of boundary itself, appeared to be quite central to what bodies 'are.'[3]

Judith Butler, preface to *Bodies That Matter*

Paraphrasing Spatz from above, do we breathe the breath, or does the breath breathe us?

What is the nature of the *khabar* that the breath contains, and how does this information alter the

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[1] *Miz al-Nafas*, British Library Delhi Persian 796d (London), folio 57b-58a.

[2] Ben Spatz, *What a Body Can Do: Technique as Knowledge, Practice as Research* (New York: Routledge, 2015), 8.

[3] Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"* (New York: Routledge, 1993), *ix.*

body (and mind) of those who learn to understand it? This chapter provides specific examples of how the breath operates within and in conjunction with the body as imagined by the texts from the *svarodaya* and `*ilm-i dam* corpus. As indicted in the Introduction, studying `*ilm-i dam* has ramifications generally for the study of religion, specifically for studying Islam, and the construction of boundaries between Hindus and Muslims in India. Engaging with the body and `*ilm-i dam* is a more intimate and direct way of analyzing how each of those three lines of inquiry exist simultaneously. My intention in this chapter is to add an analysis of `*ilm-i dam* to the growing body of knowledge that takes South Asian discourses seriously in a broader quest to establish "theory parity" in contemporary scholarly discussions that still suffer from over reliance on theories (and theorists) from Europe and North America.[4]

These bodies take on many different labels, which begin to apply, and then cease to apply, at unexpected junctures. Extending Alter's problematization of delimiting when a practice is yogic as opposed to Daoist,[5] when does a body *become* Hindu or Muslim? Indian or Persian? Mystical and sacred or profane? Ordinary or extraordinary? In light of the examples above, are there places where one could say that a body is deemed "yogic" or "ayurvedic"? These are all manifestations of the ways in which—to return to Judith Butler's words above—studying the limits of the body yields a study in how those limits are perpetually shifting, and refuse to be fixed in material realms. While these are questions that I pursue to various ends in the project as a whole, this is the chapter where I pursue them in detail. I divide the chapter into the following sections: **first**, an introduction to the questions that drive this chapter and a sketch of the ways in

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[4] Barbara Holdrege, "Introduction: Body Matters in South Asia," in *Refiguring the Body: Emobodiment in South Asian Religions*, ed. Barbara Holdrege (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2016), 2.

[5] Joseph Alter, "Yoga in Asia—Mimetic History: Problems in the Location of Secret Knowledge," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 29 (No. 2, 2009), 216.

which Islamic and other Indian systems of bodily knowledge connect to `ilm-i dam. **Second**, a

necessary component of this section is an overview of the Indian concept of *nadis*, or channels,

that course through the body and which are the manifestation of the connection between the

bodily microcosm and the worldly (or universal) macrocosm. **Third**, a description and analysis

of the associations between aspects of the body (especially the left and right sides) and particular

actions or states of being. This will include an analysis of how olfaction and breath combine in

specific places in several of the `ilm-i dam texts. **Fourth**, comparing the typologies of the breath

– a nearly ubiquitous feature of the texts within the `ilm-i dam corpus – specifically the way in

which the breath is classified according to the five elements of earth, water, wind, fire, and ether.

Fifth, a brief close reading of *Miz al-nafas*, a sixteenth-century Indian manuscript in Persian,

specifically for the sections pertaining to the political dimension inherent to applying knowledge

of the breath. **Sixth**, the conjunctions and disjunctions between astrology and `ilm-i dam,

specifically as seen when the focus is on the vision of the body. This last section will be an

important transition for the chapters that follow, in which the classification of `ilm-i dam by

Iranian and European interpreters hangs significantly on the way that each group regards

astrology and esoteric knowledge, particularly when that knowledge comes from India. The

science of the breath certainly includes a drawing down of astral power, but it also contains other

'technologies of the self' that articulate a particular vision of the body – both that of the

practitioner and those in the master's orbit.

1 - Introduction

As the previous chapter was more of a historical survey of Perso-Arabic engagement with

India, demonstrating the eclectic manner in which breath-related practices show up in various

texts, then the present chapter is intended as a series of case studies analyzing two things. First, the manner in which knowledge of the breath is applied by authors and practitioners described in the texts reviewed for this project, and second, the ethical and political implications of said applications. As I argue below, in the `ilm-i dam* corpus, there is a direct connection between knowing one's breath and being able to effectively assert a greater degree of control over both one's own body as well as the bodies of other people. This claim, that one can leverage or deploy the breath for various ends, reveals the political power of these skills.

My goal is to identify the various visions of the body at play in these texts, and then use those bodily visions to understand more thoroughly what these bodies are doing and how they operate within the socio-political worldview of these authors. Who controls these bodies? One initial question that motivated this specific inquiry on the body is the extent to which it is possible to see these bodies as gendered. Upon reading through the available sources, I came to the conclusion that there is little to no *explicit* mention of gender in `ilm-i dam* texts, but that does not mean that it is not still a useful analytic. In fact, the question of gender—whether on the part of practitioner or supplicant—allows for a reading of the textual silences that expands my understanding of the social context in which these techniques were practiced. What are the other classificatory systems at work in understanding these bodies? Given that the texts under the microscope in this project come from different time periods and geographic locations, where can I identify ruptures in the continuity with respect to conceptions of the body, and to what can I ascribe said ruptures? Rather than introduce an "original" conception of the body, I will take brief asides throughout the chapter to point out connection, overlap, and difference between the conception of the body and the breath in a given text, and other conceptions that I have identified from a similar time and place. This method allows me to avoid the thoroughly unproductive

pursuit of origins and influence, and instead reflects the theoretical approach through which I have framed the entire project. There is no "original" body, but instead there are always bod*ies* – within an emphasis on the plural form – that each have different contexts.

Future research is necessary to firm up the theoretical framework for understanding how to isolate the "ayurvedic" body from the "yogic" body and the " `ilm-i dam*" body. While this type of isolation is inimical to the general approach I use throughout this project, I acknowledge the utility of pulling back for a broader view when attempts at the granular level microscopic view yield an image with too much overlap and permeability to make for useful description and analysis.

1.1 Ayurveda

Moving to non-Islamic perspectives, one important system to take into consideration is Ayurveda, an ancient set of knowledge and techniques for maintaining bodily health that has enjoyed a great deal of popularity in recent times, spreading beyond India to Europe and North America. Of key importance for this project are the two visions of the body found in ayurvedic treatises. First, there is the "material body," corresponding to the notion of the body as static or fixed in nature, as it might appear in illustrated form on the pages of a medical textbook. Second, there is the "embodied self," which is of an entirely different conception. Where the first may be treated as an object that stands apart from any context, the second "presents a modal case of being-in-the-world; it presents a portrait of an active patient whose experience of health or illness cannot be fully knowable apart from her or his relationships with other people and the natural world."[6] This distinction in the ayurvedic traditions could be one example of developing a new

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[6] Anthony Cerulli, "Body, Self, and Embodiment in the Sanskrit Classics of Ayurveda," in *Refiguring the Body: Embodiment in South Asian Religions*, ed. Barbara Holdredge and Karen Pechilis (Albany: State University of New

approach to theorizing the vision of the body in the science of the breath texts. There is no discussion of homologous categories such as "embodied self" or "material body." Even in the *svarodaya* texts, one does not find these categories, thus it is unsurprising that they do not appear in the *`ilm-i dam* texts. Yet, the body in this context is certainly potent, and one is able to generate great powers through attuning an awareness of the breath. But who precisely is permitted to practice this science, and dispense the wisdom gained through its mastery? There are no stipulations listed as to bodily purity (anatomical, physiological, or ritually construed). The clearest indication regarding the practice for learning these skills comes in generalities:

> This should be paid attention to with experience (*tajriba*), so that one is able to understand: one should make known from which side one inhales.[7] When its knowledge (*ma`rifat*) is apprehended, after every practice, I will say which breath was good in correspondence to these actions, and which was not good.[8]

The context for the first excerpt here is that the practitioner must learn to discern on which side the breath is flowing. However, in the second excerpt, the author speaks in the first-person – a rare occurrence even within the corpus as a whole, where most of the references are oblique third person plurals such as "they say" – telling the reader what to expect in the passages that follow, where the author lays out a series of situations, identifying which type of breath is preferable.

1.2 Yoga

Another system identified very closely with India is that of yoga, which has seen exponentially more growth in India as well as its export to Europe, North America, and all over

York Press, 2016), 61

[7] *Kamaru Panchashika abridgment* (Browne recension), Cambridge University Library V. 21, Cambridge, folio 59b.

[8] *Kamaru Panchashika abridgment* (Browne recension), folio 60a.

the world in the past century. Yoga is a term that has come to encompass a great many sets of philosophies and practices. At present, the goals of those practicing yoga include everything from increased bodily flexibility to the attainment of union with the divine, with a great many stages in between. Just as the ends diverge, so too do the means. Control of one's breathing, mastery of the body, increased physical (and spiritual?) strength; all of these become considerations. One of the other names of *svarodaya* is *svara-yoga*, as shown in the twentieth-century English translation from Sanskrit by Swami Muktibodhananda entitled *Swara Yoga*: *The Tantric Science of Brain Breathing.*[9]

One challenge with invoking a term like yoga is that its definition is decidedly heterogeneous in nature. As David Gordon White outlines in the introduction to *Yoga in Practice*, yoga can refer to things ranging from the literal yoking of one's animals, to an astral conjunction, to a type of recipe, incantation, combination, application, contact, "…and the Work of alchemists. But this is by no means an exhaustive list."[10] In so far as it is possible to determine a fixed list of priorities or aims from such a vast discursive tradition, White stipulates that yoga encompasses four main principles: first, "an analysis of perception and cognition"; second, "the raising and expansion of consciousness"; third, "a path to omniscience"; and fourth, "a technique for entering into other bodies, generating multiple bodies, and the attainment of other supernatural accomplishments."[11] *Svarodaya* and *`ilm-i dam* could fit quite easily within all four of these.[12] For my purposes, the fact that the arts and sciences of understanding one's *svara* has

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[9] Swami Muktibodhananda, *Swara Yoga*: *The Tantric Science of Brain Breathing* (Yoga Publications Trust: Munger, Bihar, India, 1984), 72.

[10] David Gordon White, Introduction to *Yoga in Practice* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), 2.

[11] White, 6-10.

[12] Entering dead bodies is discussed in Chapter Seven of both Arabic and Persian versions of the *Amrtakunda*, referenced in Chapter One.

already been construed as a type of yoga makes the connection worth exploring in greater detail.

Even in cases that would typically not be classified as philosophical or religious, there are still connections between the notion of the body as an organism whose most effective functioning is rooted in knowledge of the breath. As Alter writes about wrestling in north India, *pranayama* (controlled breathing) is recognized as an important technique that wrestlers must master in order to improve their bodily powers. Breathing just to breath is insufficient, because it "only satisfies the needs of the gross body. To breathe properly harmonizes the body with the mind: the spiritual with the physical."[13] That the practice is understood to streamline the mind-body connection is clear, but the details are key:

> A wrestler must breathe through his nose while expanding his diaphragm. A great deal of emphasis is placed on this point. If one gasps for air with an open mouth and heaving chest, it is likened to the agency of an inanimate bellows. Breathing in this fashion performs the function of putting air into the body and taking it out, but as such it is purely mechanical.[14]

Here, the body is seen as being animated by the breath in very powerful ways. Beyond simple inhalation and exhalation, all breathers – that is to say, all human beings – are advised to pay attention to their breath in such a way as to transcend the "purely mechanical" experience of the world, and move into a more empowered state. In the case of wrestling, this has very clear applications to physical combat with one's opponent. In the `ilm-i dam` texts, there is little to no explicit references to this type of one-on-one fighting. Instead, the contexts in which combat takes place at larger-scale military ventures (i.e., one army fighting another), or more political or courtly intrigue (i.e., using knowledge of the breath to defeat one's adversary while enjoying an

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[13] Joseph Alter, *The Wrester's Body: Identity and Ideology in North India* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 95-96.

[14] Joseph Alter, *The Wrester's Body,* 96.

audience before one's ruler).

By comparison, for example, to the role of *brahmacarya* (celibacy) that Joseph Alter describes playing a prominent role in northern Indian notions of masculinity and bodily control, in which practices such as semen retention could have important consequences, in the `ilm-i dam` texts, one does not get the impression that practitioners would have understood the consequences of the breath in quite the same manner. The breath is vital, a potentially powerful aspect through which the universal power is literally taken into the body, but the body conceived here is a more passive entity than the wrestlers that Alter mentions.[15]

In the cases of Ayurveda and yoga, there are very rich philosophical contexts explicitly linked to these prasctices. As Cerulli describes, the conceptualization of the "embodied self" is rooted in specific notions of *atman*, "a nonmaterial self," which in turn is tied to the idea that caring for the body "is the foundational *dharma* to which all people must attend before everything else in their lives to ensure optimal performance of the complex array of all the other *dharma*s in the social and religious arenas."[16] In the case of yoga, one finds so many references and descriptions of the term that it is almost impossible to speak of the term in the singular. Instead, there are many different yogas, with each varying depending on specific context. I agree with Alter's statement:

> It is problematic to think of knowledge, ideas, and forms of embodied practice in terms of the same categories that define either trade and travel or the bounded geopolitical units between which these things are conducted. Although one can construct a history of ideas that outlines the ultimate developed of a tradition as encompassing as Yoga, and locate the development of those ideas in a particular place, there is no need to think of this tradition *as it developed through time as an essentially bounded*

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[15] Joseph Alter, "Celibacy, Sexuality, and Nationalism in North India" in *Bodies in Contact: Rethinking Colonial Encounters in World History*, eds Tony Ballantyne and Antoinette Burton (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), 310-322.

[16] Cerulli, 61.

entity.[17]

Part of the challenge in triangulating `*ilm-i dam*'s historical context is dealing with the porous nature of its boundaries. As referenced in the Introduction, deciding which analytic(s) to use in differentiating between the various potential classifications is no simple matter. Like so many others with yoga, I am attempting here to "construct a history of ideas" encompassing `*ilm-i dam*, but I find that each of the qualifiers (Islamic, Hindu, Indic, Persian(-ate), mystical, magical, religious, scientific, medical, etc.) leaves out important material.

It is helpful here to situate `*ilm-i dam* within the broader framework of *svarodaya*. As mentioned in Chapter One, the Sanskrit and Hindi texts include significant astrological material, with specific information on the role played by the position of the planets and other celestial bodies alongside assessing the nature of one's breath in determining the auspicious or inauspicious nature of particular actions. Known in India as *jyotisha*, practitioners of this knowledge have at times enjoyed prominent roles in courtly settings. Even today, there has been a resurgence in the active promulgation of this knowledge in Indian universities.[18] By linking `*ilm-i dam* explicitly to South Asian astrological traditions, I aim to contextualize these breathing practices in a cosmopolitan milieu where knowledge passed fluidly back and forth across religious, ethnic, and linguistic boundaries.

I want to exercise caution here in drawing a direct equivalence between those practicing `*ilm-i dam* and those who see themselves as astrologers of the type referenced earlier in this

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[17] Joseph Alter, "Yoga in Asia—Mimetic History: Problems in the Location of Secret Knowledge, in *Comparative Studies South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East* 29, No. 2 (2009), 217, emphasis added. I differ from Alter in rendering yoga in lower-case letters, which in my view helps emphasize its unbounded nature. By contrast, my readings of Ayurveda lead me the opposite direction, and so I follow Cerulli in capitalizing Ayurveda.

[18] Caterina Guenzi, "Faculté de prévoir. L'astrologie dans les universités indiennes," *Extrême-Orient, Extrême-Occident* 35 (2013), 141-170.

project, whether it is Biruni in eleventh-century Afghanistan, or Narapati in thirteenth-century India.[19] Still, because the `ilm-i dam` material consistently contains not only directives for understanding one's own fortunes, but also the fortunes of others, I believe I stand on steady ground in asserting that one can take scholarly insights on the role played by astrologers and apply them to those practicing `ilm-i dam`.

1.3 Islamicate Views of the Body

In exploring these various contexts, I have made recourse to different knowledge systems that circulated in India alongside *svarodaya* and `ilm-i dam`. Examining each system – even briefly – helps to triangulate the boundaries of the science of the breath. Given that I am primarily concerned with `ilm-i dam` as an expression of Muslim interest in Indian esotericism, and that many of the Muslim interlocutors in this process are explicitly affiliated with Sufi organizations, I will begin with a brief sketch of Islamic conceptions of the body with an emphasis on Sufi expressions thereof. In *Sufis and Saints' Bodies*, Scott Kugle argues that Sufis' affirming of God's immanent nature leads them "to value the body in ways fuller and deeper than other Muslim authorities."[20] This casts the interest in the body as part of a broader articulation and experience of God's love for creation, and puts Sufis in the position of seeing the body differently than non-Sufis due to a type of theological position that is more than doctrine. Kugle makes recourse to a text by Chishti Sufi Diya' al-Din Nakhshabi (d. 1350) entitled *Juz'-yat o Kulliyat* ("The Parts and the Wholes") as a guiding frame for his broader inquiry into Sufi

[19] I discussed Biruni's work in Chapter Two. Narapati composed the *Narapatijayacharya* ("Narapati's Acts of Winning Wars") in 1232 CE, in which he articulates the importance of *svarodaya* (breath-prognostication).

[20] Scott Kugle, *Sufis and Saints' Bodies: Mysticism, Corporeality, and Sacred Power in Islam* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 4.

conceptions of the body. "Sufis came to see the body not as the enemy to be opposed by strenuous ascetic effort…but, more subtly, as a sign of the creator, or rather as a whole constellation of signs."[21] As one might understand the universe through studying the stars, so too can one understand divine purpose and plan through studying the signs in the body. Most pertinent for connecting to `ilm-i dam` is the Qur'anic account of Adam's creation, which reads "I molded him and breathed into him of My spirit."[22] Kugle's interpretation of this scripture is key because it establishes an anchor point for one of the many understandings of the body in this chapter:

> This magisterial image of the material body being enlivened with the breath of the spirit that blows into it and through it from beyond is the central paradox of the human body from an Islamic point of view. It is material, therefore ephemeral, limited in space, fragile, even brittle; however, it is material infused with spirit and is therefore eternal, unbounded in space, opening into the infinite beyond waking consciousness and participating in durable cosmic being beyond personal weakness.[23]

The vision that Kugle conveys here maps nicely onto the conception of the body found in Ayurveda and yoga. The particular cosmology cited may differ, but there is a shared sense of the body as inspired (literally) with a type of breath that is cosmic and divine in nature.

Shahzad Bashir's work is more tightly focused on fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Persianate Central Asia, specifically on the way that Sufi texts from this period carry with them a sense of the body inscribed "not out of explicit intention but as a reflection of a socioreligious habitus that was integral to [the authors] way of seeing the world."[24] I would not argue that there

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[21] Kugle, 29.

[22] Qur'an 13:29, my translation.

[23] Kugle, 30.

[24] Shahzad Bashir, *Sufi Bodies: Religion and Society in Medieval Islam* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 13.

is an explicit theory of the body in the `ilm-i dam corpus. Instead, the normative standards, expectations, and potentialities incumbent on the practitioners is implicit. While Bashir examines textual and visual depictions of dream narratives involving the body, the `ilm-i dam corpus does not offer the same type of data. Still, Bashir's insights are helpful for giving a fuller form to a sense of the body rooted in Islamicate contexts that are roughly contemporaneous to some of the `ilm-i dam texts.

Both Kugle and Bashir work to integrate the study of Islam and Muslims within the broader—and rapidly growing—framework of modern-day scholarship on religion and embodiment, a fact that highlights the extent to which Islam has strangely been isolated from the application of this work to other communities – be they defined by religion or other factors. In the work that follows on `ilm-i dam, I seek to emphasize systems of understanding the body that are more contemporaneous with the pre- and early-modern periods in South Asia. Accordingly, Shaman Hatley's work on yoga and Sufism in Bengal provides perspective that is more grounded in the cultural milieu that I associate with many of the `ilm-i dam texts.

In examining the process through which Bengali Muslims translated yogic categories of the body into Islamic ones, Hatley identifies the Natha yogis as a starting point, specifically the sixteenth-century, with links to Shaiva Tantra dating to the twelfth- and eleventh-centuries.[25] Hatley points out that since Tantric yoga was integrated with Shaivism, Buddhism, Vaishnavism, and Jainism, it should not be surprising that it made its way into Islam, most notably Sufism.[26] This translation process was not patronized by a singular authority, but instead is polycentric in

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[25] Shaman Hatley, "Mapping the Esoteric Body in the Islamic Yoga of Bengal," in *History of Religions* 46 (No. 4, 2007), 362-363.

[26] Hatley, 352.

nature, with authors emphasizing or dealing with aspects of the translation process in a different way. For example, sometimes the references to Natha practice would be retained, while other times they were left out. Islamic categories would usually be translated into Bengali or Sanskrit equivalents, and both Persian and Arabic would be used as a type of technical vocabulary.[27] This delineation between using one language as for technical terms, while another is used for the vernacular, or applied register, is also found in the `ilm-i dam corpus. For the key terms of sun and moon, authors frequently use the Arabic *shams* and *qamar* when referring to the esoteric solar and lunar breaths, while the Persian *aftab* and *mehtab* are used when discussing the physical celestial objects. While Hatley finds differences between "classical Sufism" and the Sufi yoga texts over issues such as the immortality of the body, or the latter genre's lack of discussion of divine love, he nonetheless identifies a sustained interest concerning the organization of the subtle body, namely the homology between Tantric *cakra*s (centers) and Sufi *maqam*s ("stations"). Additionally, the body is mapped onto the system of *manzil*s ("abodes"), all of which undergirds the Sufi spiritual life:

> *shari`ah*, Islamic orthopraxis, *tariqah*, the path of Sufi discipline; *haqiqah*, the experience of truth or reality; and *ma`rifah*, ultimate gnosis. This homology of the *cakra*s with Sufi *maqam*s and the stages of the religious path seamlessly integrates Islamic orthopraxy within the framework of Islamic yoga and relegates it, as in many forms of Sufism, to a low but foundational station.[28]

I would urge caution in evaluating these homologies. There is no unitive moment of exchange between Sufis and yogis. As the review of texts in this project demonstrate, this is a dynamic series of exchanges, with individual actors expressing creative agency along the way. Adapting Judith Butler's invocation from above, to study the esoteric body is to see the myriad ways that

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[27] Hatley, 354.

[28] Hatley, 355.

the definitions of that body move with each attempt to capture an essence.

1.4 Gender and Class

There is nothing explicit about restricting the practice of *`ilm-i dam* to the exclusive

realm of men at the expense of women, though this might be implicit based on the fact that the

majority of the "areas of inquiry" in the corpus pertain to things typically conceived of as male-

dominated arenas of social and public life (such as waging war or navigating the ins and outs of a

courtly setting). Still, what is one to make of the claim in *Miz al-nafas*, that "the breath –

whosoever has complete capacity – comprehends it (*dam – har kasi-ra qabiliyyat tamam bashad

– dar yabad*)?[29] This seventeenth-century text *appears* to emphasize the egalitarian nature of the

practice. If each person holds the potential to realize the full power of the breath, then it would

seem that there are no limits on who could practice the science of the breath. This raises

Kemper's observation, taken from his research on Sinhalese astrologers practicing in the

twentieth-century:

> …because all persons are constituted by time and place, in this one way all
> persons are the same. Male and female, young and old, high caste and low
> caste-all are equally bound by these conditions. For the astrologer, this fact
> has important consequences: all persons can be scrutinized simply as
> persons. *There is no gender-specific astrological knowledge or technique;
> there is just astrological knowledge.*[30]

This claim neglects to take into consideration the material differential in how power—even astral

power—is experienced by different bodies in different ways. In addition to the striking

methodological contrast between modern-day ethnography and primarily textual analysis, this

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[29] *Miz al-nafas* (Delhi Persian collection 796d, British Library, London), folio 60a, emphasis added.

[30] Steven Kemper, "Time, Person, and Gender in Sinhalese Astrology," *American Ethnologist* 7, no. 4 (Nov. 1980), 744, emphasis added.

conceptualization of astrology as operating beyond or outside the realm of gender raises several questions. If astral power affects everyone equally, what if membership in the group who adjudicate or access that power is restricted to a particular group of people? Linking it to the practice of astrology within a courtly setting, one can conceive of `ilm-i dam as a type of performance. This raises the question: what type of gendered sensibility is being performed through the mastering of astral power? Since the texts from the pre- and early-modern era do not specify the gender of those who study and practice `ilm-i dam, is it fair at all to impute that these readers, copyists, and experts are all male? It is true that there are no known texts that mention female authors or practitioners, but women are present in the sections describing how to determine the health and sex of an unborn child (see section 3.1 below); after all, who is carrying these children whose future is being predicted? While some of the contents of the `ilm-i dam corpus encompasses stereotypically masculine tasks such as waging war, what about women present alongside men in a courtly setting? Did not women take trips to places near and far? Men are not the only ones interested in making friends of enemies, and bringing destruction down upon enemies. Kemper's earlier observation may be inspiring at first blush, but it quickly disappoints on a closer reading. I would like to refrain from reading astrology against modern-day notions of "progressive" or "conservative." Much more work is needed to generate a satisfying framework for incorporating gender into the analytical matrix I am crafting in order to craft a thick description of these texts and the knowledge they contain.

There are other considerations beyond a person's gender or anatomy. What about class? More research is needed to understand the identities of those practicing *jyotisha* in India before developing a clear understanding of how those identities might "translate" into the `ilm-i dam corpus? The science of the breath would have been part of a toolkit available to those who could

read the texts, which in and of itself speaks to an educated and elite audience given literacy rates in pre- and early-modern South Asia. Circling back to framing the science of the breath in connection to Ayurveda, while I am not arguing that `ilm-i dam is a form of medicine, I am arguing that in order to understand the vision of the body present in these texts, one must engage with the body in its fullest sense: this body stretches beyond its physical limits to touch upon other people, their bodies, and their minds. Instead of focusing on the "health" of a "patient," I am thinking about the "powers" of a "practitioner."

2 - Connecting micro- and macro-cosms through the *nadis*

The concept of the *nadi* is central for understanding the visioning of how and where astral power flows through the body. These *nadi*s are channels that map onto both the micro- and macrocosmic realms. Some renditions count millions of such channels labeled as such in Yogic and Tantric renderings of human physiology, in which they serve as conduits for the energy that drives the human body. Within the Sanskrit *svarodaya* corpus, there are references to three principle channels, flowing through the left side (*ida*), right side (*pingala*), and central axis (*susumna*) of the body. For example, Rai writes that "[t]here are numerous *nadis* of different sizes in the body and they should be known by the erudites for the knowledge about their own bodies. Originating like sprouts from the root situated a little above the navel, there are 72,000 *nadis* in the body." In his work on *nadi* divination and astrology, Martin Gangsten outlines a history of the different practices typically subsumed under this heading.[31] In the course of his investigation, Gangsten comments that there are several different derivations for the term. He

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[31] Martin Gangsten, *Patterns of Destiny: Hindu Nāḍī Astrology* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 2003).

notes that the Sanskrit term means "tube, hollow stalk," and dates back to the time of the Upanishads, and "is thought to pulsate through the body; hence, a derived meaning of *nadi* is 'pulse.' Some writers would connect the word in this sense with the divinatory art, while others again focus on *nadi* as a particular measure of time (synonymous with *ghati*), related to the rising of minute divisions of the zodiac over the horizon."[32] For a comparison from the `ilm-i dam* corpus, in Abu'l Fazl ibn Mubarak's text from the *A'in-i akbari*, he specifically references the three principle *nadis*, connecting *Ida* (vital spirit), or *Chandra-nadi*, with the left nostril, while *Pingala* (sun, or fire), otherwise known as *Surya-nadi,* connects with the right nostril. The third type of breath is called *Sushumna* or *Sambhu-nadi*, and is "attributed to the influence of *Mahadeva*" (*nam-zad-i maha-dev namand*).[33]

The discussion of the correspondence between the macro- and micro-cosmic worlds is by no means limited to the `ilm-i dam* corpus, or even the broader genre of astrology. The *nadis* are key, but equally important is the role played by the person who understands themselves as the nexus point at which the micro- and macrocosms meet. Lyssenko argues that "one common point characteristic of the micro-mascrocosmic speculations in India" is that

> …it is not the universe that is its starting point and basis, but the individual, the human being and more precisely his/hers sense capacities to grasp some properties (stimuli) of the surrounding world and to communicate with it in different manners proper to the human psychosomatic structure.[34]

This emphasis on the individual, thus the individual's body, is important because it highlights individual agency. However, at the same time, none of these individual bodies exist without

[32] Gangsten, 9-10.

[33] Abu'l Fazl ibn Mubarak ibn 'Allami (Blochmann ed.), *A'īn-i Akbari* (Calcutta: Baptist Mission Press, 1869), 125.

[34] Viktoria Lyssenko, "The Human Body Composition in Statics and Dynamics: Āyurveda and the Philosophical Schools of Vaśesika and Sāmkhya," *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 32 (2004), 31-32.

some type of collective society that shapes and molds them. The next sections introduce a series

of examples of different types of individuals and views on the role that the body plays mediating

the relationship between the individual and their social context.

2.1 Muhammad Ghawth (d. 1563 CE)

Given that there are so few individuals named in the `ilm-i dam* corpus, it becomes

difficult to contextualize the people who claimed to have developed such knowledge. One

exception to this is found in famed Shattari Sufi master Muhammad Ghawth Gwaliori, who

wrote of his personal ascension through the celestial realms. In his context of sixteenth-century

north India, and as someone who enjoyed great political sway with Mughal emperor Humayun,

but who also had to escape from charges of apostasy based on his claims of bodily ascension,

Ghawth and his writings are a prime example of Muslim figures working through the differences

in various worldviews that in today's language are often articulated as quintessentially

religious.[35] Ghawth was a hugely popular Sufi master of the Shattari order who played a role in

Mughal emperor Babur's campaign to conquer Gwalior. Ghawth's main claim to fame, as it were,

was that he had physically ascended to heaven and received an audience with the Prophet

Muhammad as well as visiting multiple celestial realms. Later when he was without a major

patron, he reduced this claim from a physical visit to a metaphorical one, but one of his lasting

contributions is the *Javahir-i Khamsa*. Both he and his brother, Phul, also a noted Shattari

master, were known for invoking the names of God at key moments such as in the lead up to

battle between their patron and his opponents. In one noteworthy episode, Shaykh Phul played a

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[35] For a recent analysis of Muhammad Ghawth's writings that specifically addresses these issues, see Ali Anooshahr, "Science at the court of the cosmocrat: Mughal India, 1531-56," *The Indian Economic and Social History Review* 54 (2017), 295-316. Anooshahr's treatment evaluates work by Azfar Moin, Eva Orthmann, and Scott Kugel, all of whom have studied Ghawth from various perspectives.

key role in holding off Humayun's young brother, Hindal Mirza, from sending his forces against a rebellion by their Timurid cousins. Though the opposing forces were encamped near one another for two months, the Sufi master argued that the time was not yet right for combat:

> 'Be patient, for I am busy invoking the Divine Names (*ba da`vat-i ismha mashghulam*). God willing, they will fall to pieces of their own accord.' This placated Hindal Mirza...[Then] the enemy grew impatient, mounted, and came to battle. Hindal Mirza asked Shaykh Phul what should be done. 'Since the enemy has mounted and come to do battle,' replied the shaykh, 'one must necessarily fight.'[36]

Understanding the auspicious time for going to war is one aspect of the *science of the breath* that appears across the various manuscripts. As such, one can recognize it as a major concern for those translating, copying, and transmitting this knowledge. This speaks to the importance of maximizing power, control, and agency in the types of decisions faced by rulers and other highly ranked officials.

Moin also notes that "the Shattari technique for invoking the 'divine names' (*da`wah al-asma'* in Arabic, *da`wat-i ism-ha* in Persian) involved commanding 'spirits' or 'agents' (*mutawakkil*) associated with the seven planets."[37] Perhaps most notably for the purposes of this discussion is Thomas Hughes' *A Dictionary of Islam* (1885) entry on *da`wah*, which cites this specific text as "largely made up of Hindu customs which, in India, have become part of Muhammadanism."[38] Moin follows Ernst in pointing out that, contrary to the statements of later Shattari writers, Shaykh Ghawth's engagement with "yogic spiritual knowledge" was not

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36 Jawhar Aftabchi, "Tadhkiratu 'l-Waqiat," in *Three Memoirs of Humayun*, ed. Wheeler M. Thackston (Costa Mesa, Calif.: Mazda, 2009), cited in Azfar Moin, *The Millennial Sovereign: Sacred Kingship and Sainthood in Islam* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 101.

37 Moin, 276. Note 26.

38 Thomas Hughes, *Dictionary of Islam* (Delhi: Oriental Publishers, 1973 [1885]), 73. I will discuss Hughes' work in detail in Chapter Five.

motivated "by a need to purify or Islamicize this knowledge."[39] Instead, Ghawth treats Islamic

and Hindu knowledge systems as "equally valid sources of cosmological truth," and was able to

demonstrate this equivalence by virtue of his mastery of the relevant languages."[40]

In terms of a singular statement from Muhammad Ghawth that exemplifies his approach

to reconciling the different cosmologies and religious systems he was so familiar with:

> The master of religious law [*sahib shar`a*, i.e., the Prophet Muhammad]
> says that after some definite time the spirit enters the body. The perfect
> jogis say that, without spirit, nothing is solid - the body would undergo
> dissolution, and in particular, they say that it could not sustain sperm,
> flesh, and skin for a single day. Here is a conflict between the theory of the
> jogis and the decree of religious law. A decisive answer is needed to
> reconcile the command of the religious law with the finding of the jogis,
> so that, except for the different order, no doubt remains regarding their
> words. The goal of the theory is a single link, each being receptive to the
> other's advice. With delicate understanding one makes refinement in subtle
> meaning, and one investigates the truth so that one realizes it, so that both
> sides are rooted and established in the heart, and a single essence
> appears.[41]

Here, Ghawth demonstrates the extent to which he takes the yogis' work seriously. When he

encounters a conflict between their teachings on one side, and Islamic teachings on cosmology

and the nature of the body on the other, he does not dismiss either. He does not present a new set

of facts or other type of knowledge that would bring the two into agreement. Instead, he asks his

reader to discern between gross and "subtle meaning," just as one would learn to differentiate

between macrocosmic bodies and their microcosmic reflections. As he says, at the level of the

subtle, "a single essence appears."

Ghawth is a crucial figure for understanding Sufism in South Asia, and for understanding

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39 Moin, 105, note 39.

40 Moin, 105.

41 Muhammad Ghawth, *Bahr al-hayat*, trans, Carl W. Ernst, cited in "Sufism and Yoga According to Muhammad Ghawth," in *Refractions of Islam in India* (Delhi: Sage Publications, 2016), 157.

the connections between highly regarded Sufi masters and certain Mughal rulers. Both parties sought the others' approval and patronage at different times, and of course there were times where rulers and living saints had contentious relationships. Improving one's ability to curry favor with powerful figures is a ubiquitous component to the `ilm-i dam` texts, but there are also many other practices that do not pertain to dealing with people more powerful than oneself.

2.2 Risalah-i dam as [hawz?] al-hayat

Second, the *Risalah-i dam az [hawz?] al-hayat*[42] ("Treatise on the Breath from the [Sea] of Life") is from the library of another important Indian Muslim court: Tipu Sultan, who died in battle against the British in 1799 at Seringapatam. The preface contains no information about the provenance of the knowledge contained in the text, but does include explicit references to correspondences between macro- and microcosms: *aftab va mahtab har che ta'sir-i dam dar `alam-i kabir darand va dar `alam-i saghir hami aftab va mahtab ast* ("the sun and moon each have an influence on the breath on the macrocosm, and they are also present in the microcosm."[43] This is the same conceptual language found in Sanskrit texts expounding upon the existence of the *nadis*, the channels running throughout the microcosm of the human body that then directly correspond to channels in the macrocosmic universe. Similar to other texts described in this section, the author of this particular text invokes Arabic terminology for technical terms such as `alam-i kabir` and `alam-i saghir`, literally meaning "large world" and "small world," respectively. Different from other texts, this author retains the Persian *aftab* and *mahtab* for sun and moon throughout the text, rather than the Arabic terms *shams* and *qamar*.

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[42] *Risalah-i dam az khavass al-hayat*. London, British Library IO Islamic 464, ff. 1b-5b. The copyist is likely referring to the *Hawd al-hayat*.

[43] *Risalah-i dam az khavass al-hayat*, folio 1b.

While this author eschews Arabic in some contexts, he invokes in others. The text includes instructions on using some Arabic phrases to enable success, such as *bi-tawfiq allah ta`ala* in a section on obtaining victory in warfare, or *qul huwa Allah ahad* ("say: he is Allah, the One").[44] At one point during the text, the author appears to switch from the Persian *dam* to the Arabic *nafas*, a combination that raises questions about how we might differentiate the valence of each term when (unlike as raised above) the Arabic is not being introduced as a technical term. At the conclusion, the author stitches together an assortment of amazing references. He writes that "most scholars of India" (*aksar `ulama'-i hind*) undertake these practices, and that "some of the people of Islam" (*ba`zi ahl-i islam*) undertake "the abovementioned action" (*`amal-i mastur*) as they "draw near knowledge" (*nazd-i ma`rifat*).[45] The final passage contains several lines that help draw out the distinctions between this manuscript and the other members of the corpus:

> This practice should be done repeatedly in other work. Most of the scholars of India (*'ulama'-yi hind*) carry out this work (*'amal*) have reached their essence, [and] some of the people of Islam (*ahl-i islām*) carried out the above-mentioned work [for] knowledge (*ma`arifat*), as it should be in order to obtain in practice (*shughl*) is not negligence (*ihmal nist*), whether it happens or not. After that the forty-day retreat will be recorded, according to which the master (*pir*) and disciple (*murshid*) have ordered that work be done.[46]

What emerges from this passage is the explicit links to other aspects of Sufi practices, specifically the reference to the forty-day retreat, the "scholars of India" as an identified class of individuals, as well as the aforementioned master/disciple relationship, and, last but not least, the "people of Islam." This is not so much a normative statement about what particular groups of Muslims believe, but invoking these terms makes the "Islamic" nature of the text much harder to

[44] *Risalah-i dam az khavass al-hayat*, ff. 3a and 5a (Qur'an 112:1), respectively.

[45] *Risalah-i dam az khavass al-hayat*, folio 5b.

[46] *Risalah-i dam az khavass al-hayat*, folio 5b.

debate.

2.3 Sufi treatise on macro- and micro-cosms

As a third example, there is an untitled and anonymous Sufi treatise from the Delhi Persian collection at the British Library that speaks of the connections between the macrocosm (`*alam-i kabir*) and the microcosm (`*alam-i saghir*), but in this case the connection is one in which the latter is a reflection of the former, and there is no mention of channels such as the *nadi*s serving as channels mediating the flow of power or correspondence from one realm to the other.[47] While the manuscript is untitled and anonymous, the final page contains a Kubrawi, followed by a Naqshbandi *silsila*, thus establishing affiliations with two important Sufi *tariqa*s in India. The text contains repeated mentions of the prophets Jesus, Moses, Noah, and Muhammad. It also tells the reader that the world is made up of ten things, five of which are the five elements of earth, water, air, fire, and "breath" (*nafas*).[48] These brief examples demonstrates that discussion of the correspondences between the gross and subtle realms was by no means the exclusive domain of authors writing in Sanskrit, Hindi, or other Indian languages.

These practices continue to be relevant well into the modern era. As Kemper discusses in his work on Sinhalese astrologers in the late-twentieth century, people rely on the astrological knowledge mediated through the astrologers, who in turn read highly complicated tables in order to determine "the astrologically appropriate initial for a child's name, for making business

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[47] Delhi Persian 1030b, London, British Library, ff. 97b-102a. While little information is available to aid in dating the manuscript, the text's presence within the Delhi Persian collection would put it at mid-19th century at the absolute latest, since the collection is taken from the royal Mughal library in 1857.

[48] Delhi Persian 1030b, 97b. *Nafas* could possibly be translated here as "ether," but the author's use of one of the possible Persian terms for "breath," in a place where the five-fold typologies of the breath to follow in this discussion all mention these same four elements *plus* the additional "ether" or "heavenly" element (*dam-i asmani*), stands out as another example of ways in which these cosmological references do not quite fit with another.

decisions in a rational way, for comparing the respective signs of potential marriage partners, and for discovering whether a client is about to enter a period of earthly misfortune because of astral influences…These tables constitute the astrologer's technology."[49] Kemper's classification of the astrological tables as "technology" that is put to use so that people may make "decisions in a rational way" is telling. For Kemper, describing astrology as "rational" is part of justifying it as a worthy subject of study. I would argue that scholars are not in the business of deciding which types of knowledge and practices are valid and invalid; instead, our role is to describe and analyze the decisions of other human beings, always looking for frameworks that aid in establishing meaningful points of connection. Dismissing a person's agency – whether it is on the grounds of their religion, race, gender, or other marking characteristics, is an often-unconscious consequence of dismissing culturally-embedded practices. That being said, there is no information in the texts that makes an explicit reference to who would have been practicing these techniques. Kemper's assertion is based on the idea that the astrological tables do not provide one set of readings or predictions for one gender, and then another set of predictions for another gender, but that is not necessarily the same thing as claiming that becoming an astrologer is something open to everyone.

Throughout this project, I face the temptation to read too much into what a particular author includes or excludes from a given text. For example, because the `ilm-i dam` texts are written in Persian, and there is a specious link made between language and religious identity in twentieth- and twenty-first century South Asia. Therefore the temptation is to presume that people who write in Persian are also Muslim, while those who write in Hindi or Sanskrit are automatically Hindu, Buddhist, or Jain. And yet, even as late as the nineteenth-century, there are

[49] Kemper, 745.

examples of Hindu authors who wrote in Persian, precisely because knowledge of Persian was a

prerequisite for particular types of employment, especially in the scribal ("munshi") class. For

example, Bahadur Singh, a *kayastha* (member of the Brahmin scribal community), completed a

massive encyclopedia entitled *Yadgar-i bahaduri* ("Bahadur's testament") in Lucknow in

Ramadan 1249/January 1834.[50] His entry on *`ilm-i dam* (or, as he phrases it, *`ilm-i nafas*)

includes a specific reference to *Mahadev*, otherwise known as the god Shiva, which is "specific

to the learned of Hindustan" (*khassa daneshvar-i hindustan*).[51] This reference stands out because

it is the only example where an author writes in Persian and uses the Islamicate terminology of

`ilm-i dam, but also references Shiva. By contrast, Abu'l Fazl makes reference to *Mahadev*, but

in his case he is presenting the science of the breath as *svarodaya*, emphasizing its Indian roots

as part of the larger curriculum of Indian philosophical and religious teachings that he presents in

the *A'in-i Akbari*.

For an earlier example, as described in Chapter Two, Abu'l Fazl likely compiled the

massive *A'in-i Akbari* by speaking in vernacular Hindi with scholars from different religious

traditions who were also present at the Mughal court. All this is to say that where there is a

temptation to say that the authors who *include* explicit discussion of the *nadis* are somehow more

comfortable with the Indic nature of this knowledge, I attempt to theorize alternative

explanations. Cataloging which texts include specific practices or terminology is very helpful for

understanding this diverse corpus. However, I would argue that for this corpus of texts on the

science of the breath, explicit mention of the *nadis* reveals more about the particular recension of

these techniques than it does about the author's relative comfort with recognizing those

[50] *Yadgar-i bahaduri* (*Testament of Bahadur*). London, British Library, Or. 1652-1653 (two volumes).

[51] *Yadgar-i bahaduri*, folio 330b.

techniques as *Indian* in nature. It is difficult to know precisely how these texts were originally received. As such, it is equally difficult to analyze the presence or absence of particular practices, techniques, and terms purely through the prism of authorial intent. Unfortunately (or perhaps, fortunately), a real inside view on how and when an author actively decided to edit a text is not available. Was something – such as discussing the *nadis*, or perhaps mention of the goddess Kamakhya – left out because it offended the author's sensibilities, or because they lacked the room to include every single piece of information? In a similar vein to the above discussion on the specific mention of the planets and stars, do I run the risk of reading a hierarchy of knowledge *eisegetically* when the texts do not provide specific clues for us to do more traditional exegetical work? Put another way, is there a way to avoid re-creating my own type of scholarly divinatory practices?

My goal in this brief overview of the *nadis* and other approaches to micro- and macro-cosmic correspondences has been to demonstrate that within pre- and early-modern India there were indeed different models for approaching and discussing this issue. The *nadis* may literally operate as channels through which the *svara* or *dam* flow to great effect, however I see further theoretical implications for them. Through understanding the vocabulary that authors use for discussing the interaction of the subtle and gross realms, I argue that we can analyze those authors' vision of the body as an entity inter-woven with the world around it. In approaching this "inter-woven-ness," I will first address the relationship between the different sides of the body, looking to see how the powers of the breath are balanced between left and right, and how the body itself is the balance point between solar and lunar forces.

3 - Left and Right, *Ida* and *Pingala*, *Sun* and *Moon*

This section is a detailed overview of the powers associated with the solar and lunar breaths. Linked with *ida* and *pingala* in Sanskrit, and typically rendered as *solar* and *lunar* breaths in the Persian corpus (*dam-i shamsi* and *dam-i qamari*, respectively), this is one area of the `*ilm-i dam* corpus on which there is absolute agreement. Even the briefest mention of the powers that the yogis possess, such as that from Amir Khusraw's *Nuh Sipihr*, refers to the ability to discern between when the breath flows through the right or left side as the absolute starting point. It is the first thing mentioned, and without this ability, none of the other elements of paying attention to one's breath (such as the dominant element, the day of the week, or the zodiac sign) need apply. In order to present the correspondences between each side of the body and a particular set of actions, incantations, and other applications of power, I have taken material from two `*ilm-i dam* texts to serve as representative examples. These comparisons demonstrate both the points of overlap and divergence when it comes to the kind of power that one might aspire to acquire through developing knowledge of the breath. These manuscripts are the *Kamaru Panchashika abridgement* (Browne recension) and *Miz al-nafas*. The former dates to 1808 and was acquired by Edward Granville Browne in Iran in 1886, while the latter is a sixteenth-century manuscript that is part of the Delhi Persian collection that originated within the Mughal royal library in Delhi, but which ended up in the hands of British colonial agents following the rebellion of 1857.

In the `*ilm-i dam* corpus, one finds material on many different issues. Given space limitations, in order to provide a useful excerpt here, I have chosen a few examples and then compared how each manuscript deals with each category. When the power to know the auspicious time to do everything from putting on one's clothing, to waging battle, or going before one's ruler, all comes through knowledge of the same thing, then it becomes very difficult

to maintain a neat and tidy distinction between "personal" and "political" actions, so I have maintained the lack of boundaries between them in the rendering that follows. Indeed, this messiness is a perfect example of why these types of distinctions fail to take into consideration the expression of individual agency in forms ranging from the seemingly mundane to the bold and very public.

Where applicable, I will note whether or not one of the five elements of the breath should also be considered in making a determination on a particular course of action or the evaluating the auspiciousness (or lack thereof) of a specific event.

3.1 Fate of the unborn child

Miz al-nafas:
> If asking whether a woman is pregnant, if asking in the state of the lunar [left] breath, a son will come.
> If asking in the state of the solar [right] breath, a daughter will come.[52]

Kamaru Panchashika abridgment (Brown recension):

> If the question is, "a woman is pregnant, what will she give birth to?"; if the   questioner comes from the side of the moon, then it will be a son, and he will be well, and if from the side of the sun, then it will be a son and she will give birth to a son, and if the questioner is sitting from a side when the right breath comes, it will still be a son, but he will not live. If the breath comes also from the left side, it will be a daughter and she will live. If it comes from both sides, the child will come healthy with all limbs and be strong in body and form. If it comes less, then it will be the opposite.[53]

Comparing these two excerpts pertaining to predicting the gender of an unborn child, one sees that *Miz al-nafas* is more straightforward than the Browne recension of the *Kamaru*

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[52] *Miz al-nafas*, folio 59b.

[53] *Kamaru Panchashika abridgment* (Browne recension), ff. 64a-64b.

Panchashika abridgement. While the shorter text simply requires the reader to consider their own state at the moment of asking the question, the newer text requires the reader to perform much more complex calculations. In this system, the person asking the question must know from which the breath comes, as well as the relative position of the questioner and the questioned. There are also more options than simply having a son or a daughter. Instead, the text of the *Kamaru Panchashika abridgement* here allows for a male child to be stillborn, as well a generic possibility of miscarriage. The first system may seem simple at first, and one could imagine that a parent who desired a child of one gender over another would possibly wait until their breath was lunar or solar and *then* ask the expert, but this misses the point. The supplicant in this situation *does not know how* to determine whether the solar or lunar breath is dominant, which is why they need the expert, who alone is capable of accessing this sacral power.

3.2 The full and the empty breaths

The following passage provides some insight into understanding the relationship between the quality of the breath, the side of the body, and the recommended action (or predicted outcome):

> Every breath that should be empty (*khali*), let him ignore it.
> In the breath of fullness (*dam-i purri*), let him expel it.
> If there is fullness in the lunar breath, go out with the left foot.
> If there is fullness in the solar breath, go out with the right foot.
> Whoever acts in this arrangement (*tartib*), his action does not fall into the
> danger of disaster and he reaches his goal by the best path, if God wills
> (*in-sha'allah ta`ala*).[54]

If at times there is no very clear correlations between the right and left sides of the breath, in *Miz al-nafas*, there is a clear judgment about the full breath (*dam-i purri*) in comparison to the

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[54] *Miz al-nafas*, folio 58a. Note that the reference to God here is the only other reference using the term *allah* than the *basmala* in the opening.

empty breath (*dam-i khali*). The full breath is definitely preferable to the empty breath; however, it is not linked with a particular side of the body. The important things for the practitioner to determine are whether or not the full breath is present, simultaneously with it the location of that fullness. Taking actions as mundane and simple as determining which foot is preferable for using to begin a journey or other venture, the important question is whether or not one's bodily actions are in line with the cosmic rhythm. To go against that rhythm is to increase the risk of failure, no matter the degree of difficulty assessed to the task at hand (or in this case, foot). To expel the full breath is to use the body to channel this energy generated from the macrocosm into one's immediate surroundings. Thus, there is an additional layer of the microcosm, or at least another way of understanding the extensions of the "bodily" microcosm into the space beyond the limits of the physical space occupied by that body.

I want to emphasize here that while the purposes of describing the experience in written form, one must necessarily break down the act of understanding the nature of the breath into a series of components, the impression gleaned from reading many `ilm-i dam` texts is that the master practitioner is able to understand the quality of their breath all at once, rather than sequentially. This is what differentiates the master from the student. It is the internalization of these components (side of the body where the breath flows, dominant element, zodiac sign, day of the week, etc.), and the attunement to the cosmic rhythm that produces the power sought by those who practice `ilm-i dam`.

> If asking with the full breath, the friend will be victorious.
> If asking with the empty breath, the enemy will be victorious.[55]

In this context, the questioner is asking not about himself, but about an associate who is going into battle. These passages raise questions about the range of the practitioner's powers. Is the

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[55] *Miz al-nafas*, folio 59b.

claim that this person is able to know the breath of the questioner's associate, or is the claim that the questioner will be able to look at the outcome of the battle after it has occurred and then use these teachings to rationalize the reason for the result? The heart of the matter is understanding the physical range of the practitioner's abilities. Developing a satisfactory theory of the physical range of the breath would be much easier if any of the `ilm-i dam texts included illustrations. Instead, one is left with a problem similar to what Anthony Cerulli describes applying to ayurvedic texts: "Yet without these visual aids we are forced to imagine the body according to the descriptive skills of the sources' authors. We must try to be, like the classical compilers of Ayurveda, morphologically articulate about the human body."[56] Like many textualists, I am left wanting more from my authors, asking them literally to draw me a picture. But they have done so, if only with their words.

On the question if one type of breath is better than the others, one answer is that each side has its relative strengths, and that the real question is the quality of that breath. For example:

> Every action beginning with the living breath (*dam-i zinda*) – begin that which sees a benefit as the sun [breath] or the moon [breath], contradicting this will mean a loss.[57]

What then, should one make of the following explanation of the breath:

> If asking with the full breath, it will be good.
> If asking with the lunar breath, good comes.
> If asking with the solar breath, the cause is not empty (*khali*).[58]

The cause may not be empty with the solar breath, but the lunar breath does seem to be stronger

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[56] Anthony Cerulli, "Body, Self, and Embodiment in the Sanskrit Classics of Ayurveda," in *Refiguring the Body: Embodiment in South Asian Religions*, ed. Barbara Holdredge and Karen Pechilis (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2016), 60.

[57] *Miz al-nafas*, folio 60a. Curiously, in this passage the author abandons the usual structure of "solar breath" (*dam-i shamsi*) and "lunar breath" (*dam-i qamari*), and instead simply writes "sun" (*shams*) and "moon" (*qamar*).

[58] *Miz al-nafas*, folio 59b.

in this case. Again, the key factor is whether or not the full breath is present.

3.3 – Recovery of the sick person

A recurring theme in the `ilm-i dam* corpus is the question of whether or not a sick person will recover. Comparing these two passages on this important matter shows how they are treated differently in the two manuscripts under discussion in this chapter:

> If asking about a sick person, if the lunar breath is flowing, the solar breath is empty, and a person is asking from the empty side, their life will not be in danger. If the solar breath is flowing, the lunar breath is empty, and [a person] is asking from the other side, there will be death. If each of these breaths is flowing, the good breath is full, the sick person is good with the solar breath or the lunar breath.[59]

> If the question is about "a sick or wounded person, will he get better or not?" If the questioner comes from the side where the breath exhales, he will get better quickly, and if he comes from the side where the breath does not exhale and sits on this side, in this matter the answer is that he will get better slowly. If he comes from this side when the breath does not inhale and then comes from the side where the breath inhales, a ruling is made that after considerable pain, he shall become well. If he comes from this side when the breath does not exhale, and he also sits on the same side, at once one says that he never gets better.[60]

The emphasis on the quality of the breath marks *Miz al-nafas* as distinct from the other texts within the corpus as a whole. The *Kamaru Panchashika abridgment* provides for more gradations in the healing process, and the emphasis is more coordinating the side on which the breath is flowing, and whether or not that breath is inhaling or exhaling. But this is not the last word on the matter for the anonymous author of this text. Later, in the section entitled "Mind-Reading" (*zamir guftan*, lit. "speaking of consciousness"), one reads of the role that numerology plays in determining the welfare of the sick person:

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[59] *Miz al-Nafas*, folio 60a.

[60] *Kamaru Panchashika abridgment* (Browne recension), Cambridge University, Cambridge, folio 63b.

> If the question is "will a sick person remain alive or not?" If the letters of the name of the sick person should be odd and the right breath exhales, and the questioner also comes from the right, the sick person will live, if the letters of the name should be even and the left breath exhales and the questioner also comes from the left side, the sick person shall die.[61]

Here the relationship that must be coordinated is the numerical value of the sick person's name (determined presumably using the *abjad* system), and then whether or not the breath is *exhaling* on the appropriate side of the body. For this author, the distinction between inhalation and exhalation remains a key component, to be kept in mind just as much as right or left, sun or moon.

3.4 Household tasks

Lastly, the following comparison of household tasks makes it clear that engaging in even the most mundane of activities brings about the possibility of success or failure based on knowledge of the breath:

> When it is morning and one gets up from the sleeping robe, if it is the right breath, one places the right foot flat on the ground. One leaves the left breath alone, and passes that day with goodness and felicity.[62]

The implication is not that the right breath is necessarily *better* than the left breath with regards to starting one's day. Instead, the conclusion is that *if* the right breath is flowing when one awakens, then the logical sequence that follows is determined by which breath flows. If one awakens to the left breath, then start with the left foot. This aspect of the `ilm-i dam* teachings are quite flexible and represent yet another example of how the vision of the body presented is one in which we as owners of our bodies are advised to develop this deeper understanding and

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[61] *Kamaru Panchashika abridgment* (Browne recension), folio 65b.

[62] *Kamaru Panchashika abridgment* (Browne recension), folio 60b.

awareness of the rhythm that guides us.

The above discussion of the different sides of the body is only one way of understanding the composition, or cosmic anatomy, of the body that I see operating in the `ilm-i dam corpus. The next section changes the perspective, this time approaching the body through the vector of the very substance said to carry such incredible power: the breath itself.

4 - Comparative Typologies of the Breath: Five elements

Moving from the previous section on the correlations between the sides of the body and the specific powers available to those who master their awareness of the breath, this next section switches the focus to the next aspect of this genre that is nearly as ubiquitous: the five elements of the breath. While many of the texts surveyed for this project make explicit reference to the five elements, the *Kamaru Panchashika abridgment* acquired by E.G. Browne in Persia in 1886 is only one of the Persian texts makes specific reference to the Sanskrit term *maha bhuta*s: "They say these are the great elements" (*wa in ta panj maha bhuta guyand*).[63] Indeed, it is a curious quirk of the corpus that the text acquired furthest away from India would contain the most explicit "Indic" references, in this case to terminology with such clear resonances with Indian cosmological references. The other related reference takes the form of a directive that if the reader seeks to bring destruction (*halak*) upon someone, they should take earth from the place where the *hinduvan* are burned, referring to a cremation ground, which in turn implies that the *hinduvan* in question should be understood as Hindu, rather than another possible meaning of the term as generic "Indians."[64] The use of earth infused with the burned remains of Hindus would

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[63] *Kamaru Panchashika abridgment* (Browne recension), folio 59b.

[64] *Kamaru Panchashika abridgment* (Browne recension), folio 62b.

appear to fit within the broader framework of practices usually referred to as "black magic." I will discuss this section in more detail in Chapter Four.

4.1 Five great elements

In her work analyzing the different visions of the body found in Ayurveda, Vashesika, and Samkhya, Viktoria Lyssenko clarifies the nature of the relationship between the individual body and the universal cosmos as mediated through the five *bhutas*:

> We can clearly see that this 'subjectivity' forms the very basis of the system of five elements (*pancabhutas*): hearing and sound being related to *akasa* (ether, space), the sense of smell and smell being related to earth, the sense of taste and taste being related to water, sight and form-color (*rupa*) being related to fire, the sense of touch and touch being related to wind.[65]

As noted immediately above, a fairly standard feature in most of the `ilm-i dam` texts discuss a typology of the breath. Individual texts may use different labels for this section. For example, the Browne recension of the *Kamaru Panchashika* abridgement refers to this as the *`anasir-i dam*` ("elements of the breath"), while the *Miz al-nafas* uses the term *ta'sir-i dam* ("influences of the breath"). Regardless of the label, the goal of this section from a given manuscript is the same: to categorize the breath using a typology based on the five primordial elements: earth, air, water, fire, and heaven. Thus, there is an "earthy breath," a "fiery breath," and so on. Each of these five breaths contains specific characteristics, including (but not limited to) color, direction or other type of movement, taste, and length measured by fingers (*angusht*). Curiously, there is no set order for presenting the various elements of the breath. The following chart provides an illustrative set of three examples.

Table 1

[65] Viktoria Lyssenko, "The Human Body Composition in Statics and Dynamics: Ayurveda and the Philosophical Schools of Vaśesika and Sāmkhya." *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 32 (2004), 31-32.

Kamaru Panchashika (Browne recension) [66]   Earth, air, water, fire, heaven
Kamaru Panchashika (Ashburner) [67]   Earth, water, fire, air, heaven
Ma`rifat-i `ilm-i dam (Hassan Zadeh Amuli) [68]   Earth, water, air, fire, heaven

While earth is listed first, and heaven (ether) listed last, the order of other three elements varies.

In this case, each of the three examples are taken from different recensions of the six-chapter

abridgment of the *Kamaru Panchashika*. When reading the different texts side by side, there is

no discernible difference that would account for the purpose behind the different orders in which

the elements are introduced. Thus, it is not the case that in one specific text, water is somehow

more important than air, or vice versa. As a subject for further study, one could perhaps use the

order of the elements to help chart the transmission process, and even the translation process

from Sanskrit into Persian, but even this last vector for analysis would be of limited utility

because at present I am not aware of any Sanskrit "*Ur*-texts" that would match the six-chapter

abridgments with regards to length.

4.2 Typology of the breath in ancient India

The first step in examining this apparatus is to assess the scholarship surrounding the

breath in Indian texts and practices that predate the Islamic era by a considerable period, but

which inform the non-Muslim communities who invest the breath with macro- and microcosmic

significance. Zysk's work on ancient Indian views towards the breath illustrates the long-

standing nature of this phenomenon within both yoga and Ayurveda:

For the ancient Indians, central to the control of the natural forces was knowledge,

[66] *Kamaru Panchashika abridgment* (Browne recension), Cambridge University V.21, Cambridge, folio 59b.

[67] Ashburner *Kamaru Panchashika*, India Office RS 258, London, folio 7b.

[68] Hassan Zadeh Amuli, *Ma`arifat-i `ilm-i dam-i hazarat-i `allamat ayatollah al-`azima Hassan Zadeh Amuli (raz va ramz-i `ulūm-i ghariba `ilm-i anfas)*. http://ansarolmahdiirdemousa.mihanblog.com/post/432, accessed on January 9, 2017

which involved a process of particularizing through naming and isolation through defining in order to create order out of chaos around them. Like the boundaries round the sacrificial altar, knowledge defined the limits of the natural world, and thereby facilitated its restraint and even its control.[69]

Zysk describes the five "bodily winds or breaths operating in the body to regulate and stimulate various internal functions" according to Table 2:

Table 2[70]

Breath	Description	Location & Purpose
Prana	Front breath	Mouth, ensures respiration and swallowing
Udana	Upward moving breath	Produces speech
Samana	Concentrated breath	Digestion
Apana	Downward moving breath	Ensures excretion and childbirth
Vyana	Diffused breath	Circulates in the limbs, motivates their movement

4.3 Typologies of the breath in `ilm-i dam texts

While this five-fold rubric for understanding the various types of breath does not match exactly with that described in either the Browne recension or *Miz al-anfas*, there are still similarities beyond the same number of breaths. Additionally, as I demonstrate below, there are connections between Zyst's rendering and those found in Sanskrit *svarodaya* texts. Each of these rubrics include breaths that move in specific directions, which will hold specific potentialities. The Browne recension describes five *maha bhuta* ("great elements"), which are linked to colors and exhibit different types of motion, as described in Table 3 below.

Table 3[71]

Element	Movement	Size (in	Color

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[69] Kenneth Zysk "The Bodily Winds in Ancient India Revisited," *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 13 (2007), S106.

[70] Adapted from Kenneth Zysk "The Science of Respiration and the Doctrine of the Bodily Winds in Ancient India" in *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 113, No. 2 (Apr-Jun, 1993), 201. Zysk creates his chart based on Jean Filliozat, *The Classical Doctrine of Indian Medicine,* trans. Dev Raj Chanana (Delhi: Munshi Ram Manahar, 1964), 28. For another example of a five-fold typology regarding the breath, Zysk cites definitions provided in the *Maitri Upanishad*, but these are physiological descriptions rather than prescriptions for controlling the breath.

[71] *Kamaru Panchashika* abridgment (Browne recension), folio 59b.

		fingers)	
Earth	Down	12	Yellow
Water	Quickly	2	White
Fire	Up sharply	4	Red
Air	Crookedly	8	Green
Heaven	Exhales	None	White

The anonymous author of the Browne recension lists the total breaths one should experience during "a day and a night" at 21,600. One sees this number in many of the other `ilm-i dam texts as well. For comparison, there is an account from the earliest yogic traditions listing the exact number as 22,736.[72] The discrepancy in number of daily breaths here is not as valuable as the simple fact that we see a shared interest in establishing a framework or guide for the number of breaths that a practitioner *ought* to experience, thus creating a normative standard of bodily function. Similarly, the notion of five elements or types of breath is symptomatic of overlapping cosmological foundations, of which we will encounter more as our inquiry continues.

For a point of comparison, Bhavsar lists the five *maha-bhutas* as follows: the earthy element is golden in color, its taste is sweet, the length is twelve *angaulas*, good effect, and *svara* touches middle of nostril. Water is white, its taste is salty, its length is sixteen, good effect, and *svara* moves down. Fire is reddish, its taste is pungent, the length is eight, medium good, *svara* moves up. Air is black in color, tastes sour, the length is four, bad (i.e., of not help), and *svara* moves zigzag. Ether (*akasha-bhuta*) is white (like a crystal), tastes bitter, the length is one *angaula,* bad (i.e. of no help), and *svara* moves in all paths.[73] Bhavsar also notes that discussions of exhalation should be understood as Shiva, while those of inhalations should be understood as Shakti.[74] The taste component almost maps smoothly onto ayurvedic "tastes," with the lone

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[72] See Zysk 1993, 210 for a precise description of breath control techniques in the early yogic traditions.

[73] S. N. Bhavsar, *Shivasvarodaya: Prana vidya*: *The Science of Sciences* (Mumbai: Softyog, 2005), 80.

[74] Bhavsar, 89.

exception being astringent, demonstrating that there is a shared set of traditions and sources shared between *svarodaya/`ilm-i dam* and Ayurveda.

In describing the *`ilm-i dam* corpus, there are many points of comparison. One that jumps out as being fairly straightforward is the typologies of the breath contained in most – but not all – of the texts within this corpus. Titled variously as "elements of the breath" (*`anasir-i dam*), "influences of the breath" (*ta'sirat-i dam*), or occasionally presented without any title, the summaries presented below are helpful for seeing how these texts relate to one another. The key questions are as follows: in what order do these authors present the elements of the breath (i.e. is the "earthy breath" always first, or not)? What about the other elements? It seems that the heavenly breath is always last, and is often times labeled as being "additional." What significance does that hold?

In the *`ilm-i nafas* cited by Hassan Zadeh Hassan Amuli, one reads that the earthy breath is yellow, it extends for twelve fingers, and that it exhales along the ground. The watery breath extends for two fingers, and exhales towards above the ground (*an niz su yi zamin)*. The airy breath is white and exhales. The fiery breath is green, extends for four fingers, and exhales above the ground. The heavenly breath is white, it moves inside, its color is white.

In the Browne recension of the *Kamaru Panchashika* abridgment, one reads that the earthy breath is yellow, extends for twelve fingers, and exhales down towards the ground. The watery breath is white, goes for two fingers, and moves quickly. The fiery breath is red, goes for four fingers, and move sharply (*tiz*). The airy breath is green, goes for eight fingers, and moves crookedly (*kazh ravad*). The heavenly breath is white, and exhales.[75]

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[75] *Kamaru Panchashika abridgment* (Browne recension), folio 59a.

Abu'l Fazl's text in the *A'in-i Akbari* contains yet another variant. The fiery breath goes up, while the watery breath descends, and is sensible at a length of twelve fingers. The airy breath goes no more than four fingers, and moves laterally. No information is provided on the earthy breath, while on the heavenly breath one reads that it extends up to eight fingers and that it moves on the level with the nostril, "neither upwards or downwards, nor high or low."[76]

Remembering a passage quoted in brief at the beginning of this chapter, in *Miz-i Nafas*, the relevant section tells the reader that they should "know that [the breath] has five influences. The breath – whosever has complete compacity comprehends it" (*bidan-keh panj ta'sirat darad. Dam, har ke-ra qabiliyyat-i tamam bashad, dar yabad*)."[77] The earthy breath is yellow, extends for sixteen fingers (*angusht*), has a little warmth, four corners [e.g. a square] per night and day, and fifty seconds.[78] Its taste is sour and it flows from the right side. "Every action that is an announcement of a garden, a building, a mosque, or a royal trade and so forth, start this with this breath." The watery breath is red, goes for twelve fingers, three ears per night and day, and forty seconds. Its taste is sweet. "Each action that has a benefit therein for trading, begin it with this breath." The fiery breath is white, goes for four fingers and thirty seconds, moves up, and its taste is bitter. "Each action that is doable with and without this (*ba-in va ghayr-an*), start the action with that breath." The airy breath is green, goes for eight fingers and twenty seconds, while its direction is round (*surat-i-u garad*), a mixture of cold and warm, and action that is fast (*shatabi*). The heavenly breath is devoid of the four other breaths (*chahar dam-i khali*), no length

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[76] Abu'l Fazl ibn Mubarak ibn 'Allami (trans. and ed. H. Blochmann). *A'in-i akbari* (Calcutta: Baptist Mission Press, 1869), 126.

[77] *Miz al-nafas*. Delhi Persian collection 796d, British Library, London. Ff. 60a.

[78] The term used for "seconds" here is the Hindi *pal*, which is also used by Abu'l Fazl in his description of *svarodaya* in the *A'in-i Akbari*.

and ten seconds, while it is impossible to find on left or right (*dam-ra yaftan az chapa ya rast mahal bashad*), one should use it to begin "each action in which one engages God (*har kari keh dar-u mashghuli haqq bashad*)."[79]

The second opening line of this section presents knowledge of the breath as something accessible to those with "complete capacity." The question remains as to how one would determine whether or not a particular person possesses that capacity. Of course, while the *capacity* to use the breath may be equal in everyone, the fact remains that only a select few are able to take advantage of that capacity in any kind of sustained manner. This type of accessibility increases the appeal of the knowledge and practices contained within this and other texts in the *`ilm-i dam* corpus, while simultaneously increasing the motivation to restrict the knowledge so that practitioners could maintain a competitive advantage.

Note that the number of "seconds" here decreases by ten from one breath to the next. It is unclear whether this is meant to imply a hierarchy within the elements of the breath. Fingers refers to the force of exhalation, while the corners or angles pertain to a shape (e.g. *panj-gusha* is a pentagon). This particular typology of the breath is reminiscent of the Indian ayurvedic tradition, in which foods are classified partially according to their taste (sweet, sour, salty, pungent, bitter, and astringent.) This material on the typology of the breath is actually split up in two different sections of the *Miz al-nafas*. I have compiled them together for purposes of comparison to the other *`ilm-i dam* typologies of the breath here.

In the aforementioned *Risalah dar dam zadan*, which, like its Delhi Persian compatriot, *Miz al-nafas*, dates to the seventeenth-century, reads that the airy breath has a strong color and proceeds and has a length of eight fingers, while the watery breath proceeds purely (*bisrahat*) for

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[79] *Miz al-nafas*. Delhi Persian collection 796d, British Library, London. Ff. 60a, 62b.

two. The fiery breath goes for four fingers and takes place on the exhale, while the earthy breath is yellow, extends for ten fingers, and exhales evenly along the ground. The heavenly breath is white and the right side is associated with the solar breath, while the left side is linked to the lunar breath, and that it occasionally exhales from both sides.[80]

In *Risalah dar dam zadan*, the reading appears to be systematic with tight parallel formulas:

1. Earthy, moves to ground, reaches twelve fingers (*ba 12 angusht bi-rasad*), color yellow

2. Watery, moves straight (*barabar*), reaches two fingers, color red (*surkh*)

3. Fiery, moves up and moves fast (*tiz*), reaches four fingers, (color illegible)

4. Airy, moves crooked (*kaj*), reaches eight fingers, color green

The purpose in laying out all of these typologies is simply to illustrate that while there are similarities for the categories employed by them in general, the specific details (i.e., number of "fingers," or even the color assigned to the same breath across the board) differ quite a bit. On the face of it, this is one fairly straightforward way of discerning a degree of intertextuality. If two texts share largely similar typologies of the breath, this would be one sign that one of them is drawing on the other as a source, or more likely that they are drawing on the same or a similar source text to begin with. Note that the typology of the breath is only one of several key features of a text on the science of the breath. If one envisions a context in which scribes copy one manuscript using another as a base, then these sections seem much more straightforward than the others. Simple vocabulary (red, green, blue, etc) abounds, and these sections are always quite short, thereby simplifying the copying process. On that basis, I would then attribute differences to distinct source texts rather than copying mistakes, although, of course, this always remains a

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[80] *Risala dar dam zadan*. British Library Delhi Persian 824, London, folio 1b.

possibility when one is looking at a handwritten manuscript tradition.

What else could be learned beyond demonstrating the ways in which these manuscripts are linked to one another? What connection is there with the typology of the breath in Persian texts as compared to Sanskrit, Hindi, Urdu, and Arabic? What changes, additions, deletions, etc., can one chart between these different bodies of text?

4.4 Typologies of the breath in svarodaya

At this point it is useful to compare the `ilm-i dam typologies of the breath with a few examples from the *svarodaya* corpus. Instead of the Persian/Arabic terms (*anasir*, *ta'sirat*), the Sanskrit texts use the term *tattwas* to refer to the "elements" of the breath. One extended example comes from a translation by Swami Muktibodhananda. In addition to color, shape, and direction, the text that Muktibodhananda renders has the following additional categories: planet, prana vayu[81], kasha, state of mind, function in body, mantra, tanmantra (i.e., the five senses), and chakra. For example, the earth *tattwa* is yellow in color, quadrangular in shape, mooladhara in chakra, *lam* for the appropriate mantra, is affiliated with the sense of smell, it is linked to the skin, blood vessels, and bone construction. It is located within the body in the thighs, associated with the *akamkara* (ego) state of mind, and the *annmaya* Kasha, and the *apāna* Prana Vayu, the planet Mercury, and the eastern direction.[82]

While the version of *svarodaya* that Muktibodhananda presents has many more aspects to the overall taxonomy than the Persian examples, there are also factors missing, such as the length

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[81] There are ten types of *vayus*, or "airs" in the body, including *prāna*, *apāna*, *samāna*, *udāna*, *vyāna*, *nāga*, *kūrma*, *krkara*, *Devadatta*, and *dhananjaya*. See Ram Kumar Rai, *Shiva-Svarodaya* (Varanasi, India: Prachya Prakashan, 2012), *vii*.

[82] Swami Muktibodhananda, *Swara Yoga*: *The Tantric Science of Brain Breathing* (Yoga Publications Trust: Munger, Bihar, India), 72.

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and duration of a *svara*. Another example is called for: Ram Kumar Rai's presentation of "Shiva-Svarodaya" adopts a slightly different taxonomy. Rai's source contains the following breakdown for each of the five *tattwas*: name of element, shape, quality (sense), color, taste, bija (i.e., mantra), svara's place, svara's duration. For example, Rai's entry for the earth element is that its shape is square, the sense involved is smell, the color is yellow, the taste is sweet, the mantra is *larh*, svara's place is the middle of the nostril, its length is twelve, and its duration is twenty.[83] From the Hindi source that Daniélou translates, one measures the distance of the *svara* in "thumbs" (*pouces*).[84] Since Daniélou does not provide the source text for his translation, it is uncertain whether he is rendering the same term into "thumbs" that the Persian translators have rendered into "fingers" (*angusht*). The similarities are clear, but so are the differences.

What should one make of this very specific set of classifications, especially when compared with the Persian typologies of the breath? The "purely" Indic taxonomies contains more specificity even than the ones from "ancient India" that Zysk cites (see above), which themselves more closely resemble the Persian examples. Note that Zysk's example used the *vayus*, or "airs" as the organizing principle for the taxonomy of the breath, leaving behind mention of the five *tattwas* altogether. One is left with little clarity as to the precise nature of an *Ur* text (or set of texts) for *svarodaya*, other than the obvious takeaway that these sources diverge in ways so numerous it is perhaps easier to numerate the points of divergence than those of convergence, no matter if dealing solely with the texts in Persian, Sanskrit, or otherwise. Stepping back from this microscopic view, if there is a unifying theory of *svara*/*dam*/*nafas* to be found in these texts, it is partially located in the very fact that each of the authors and interpreters

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[83] Rai, *xvi*.

[84] Alain Daniélou, *Le Shiva-Svarodaya: La naissance du Souffle de Vie révélé par le dieu Shiva* (Milano: Arche Milano, 1982), 47.

featured above at least makes a basic attempt to define the differences between the types of breath. This goes beyond the initial breakdown of the breath into solar, lunar, or joined breaths, and extends to the additional distillation of the breath into the five *tattwas*/ *'anasir*/ *ta'sirat*. Even if these authors and their sources do not necessarily agree on how to fill in the various charts, and even what to put in the categories upon which they do agree, they do concur that conducting such a procedure is an important part of the practice as a whole.

Lastly, there is a key difference between the ancient Indian typologies of the breath when compared with the `*ilm-i dam* corpus. Shankardass cites Jean Fillozat's work on tracing the relationship with and similarities between Greek and Indian medical systems, based on readings of the Hippocratic text, *Peri Phuson* (On the Winds) alongside the *Atharvaveda*.[85] The specifics of Fillozat's argument rest on noting similar origin stories for the breath and its role within Brahman and Greek cosmologies.

> For a long time there was speculation on whether Greeks and Indians conceived similar theories independently or if the old Vedic conception of prana had been received in the Hellenic countries from India. Fillozat suggests the possibility of the Indian influence on the Greek work. He states that the Hippocratic manual *On Breaths* teaches the same general doctrine, that is, making the wind the soul of the world and of the body, as is taught in the three great Indian texts – the *Caraka Samhita*, the *Bhela Samhita* and the *Susruta Samhita*.[86]

The specter of the *Ur* text is really a proxy assessment, standing in for the determination of which culture or civilization has contributed the most to others; this type of thinking is difficult to escape from as it is impossible to derive a satisfying conclusion.

There are three key points to take away from this brief discussion on the breath and its

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[85] Jean Fillozat, *The Classical Doctrine of Indian Medicine* (Delhi: Munshi Ram Manohar, 1964), 229-237.

[86] Mala Kapur Shankardass, "India's Interactions in Medical Knowledge and Practice," in *History of Science, Philosophy and Culture in Indian Civilization*. Vol. III, Part 2: *India's Interaction with China, Central and West Asia*, ed. A. Rahman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 278.

"original" typologies in ancient India and how one might go about connecting those typologies to the ones in the Persian `ilm-i dam` corpus. First, Fillozat is making the point that breath in Sanskrit is *prana*, and that the ancient Indian medical texts include the belief that *prana* suffuses both the human body and the natural environment. Second, my argument is that `ilm-i dam` is not the same as pranayama. While the former involves a passive paying attention to the breath, the latter involves an active alteration of one's breath. Both are active in the sense of closely observing the nature of one's breath, but the subtle difference lies in whether or not one works to modify the manner in which the breath flows. Third, the challenge is that in looking for rough equivalences, there is a temptation to say that all *dam* is the same. But it is not. *Habs-i dam* is "breath control" or "holding of [the] breath." *Pas-i anfas* is "watching the breath." `ilm-i dam` may literally translate as the "science of the breath," which in practice means measuring, noticing, and maybe even "listening" to that microcosmic breath and then connecting it to the broader macrocosmic correspondence. For example, does the act of measuring something necessarily change it? Thinking about how this would work in practice, surely one would *want* the breath to line up a particular way. Then, one could unconsciously alter the qualities of the breath so that it matched the macrocosmic characteristics that were most desirable at that moment. This might lead to the unending "chicken or egg" debate in which it quickly becomes impossible to determine what arrives first: the desire for the breath to manifest in a particular way, or one's recognition that it is presently manifesting in a particular way.

5 - Olfaction and `ilm-i dam`

Throughout the above section, there are several instances where specific reference is made to olfaction. With the emphasis on inhalation and exhalation through the *nose* instead of

the *mouth*, the smells that enter the body with each breath become an important vector for

understanding this science as a corporeal practice, as well as connecting it to other esoteric

practices in South Asia contemporary to the known `*ilm-i dam* texts. Much more work remains to

be done on using olfaction as a vector for exchange and sharing spaces between Muslims,

Hindus, and other religious communities in India. To date, most scholarship that takes smell

seriously for the study of religion, does so according to the expected groupings of religious

communities, such as in Mary Thurlkill's work on Islam and Christianity, or James McHugh's

work on Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism.[87] Whether in the Indic grouping of Buddhist, Jain,

and Hindu practices, or between Islam and Christianity, there is certainly textual evidence

attesting to the importance of smell; the question is namely that of exploring how this evidence

might connect to the `*ilm-i dam* corpus.

5.1 The Nujum al-`ulum

For an example of work on interaction and exchange between Hindus and Muslims in

South Asia, Emma Flatt's work on olfactory magic articulated in the sixteenth-century Bijapur

court of `Ali `Adil Shah's massive *Nujum al-`ulum* ("Stars of the Sciences") provides very

helpful context for understanding the interplay between "smells" and "spells," as well as an

opening for appreciating the degree of overlap between this aspect of magical or esoteric

sciences and `*ilm-i dam*:

> Essentially, underlying these pervasive theories of the transformative
> powers of smell, was a conception of the body as a porous entity, one
> which could be moulded by outside forces, including forces invisible to
> the human eye like olfactants, both those rubbed onto the body, and those
> inhaled through the nose or mouth. The non-tangible and ephemeral nature

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[87] Mary Thurlkill, *Sacred Scents in Early Christianity and Islam* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2016), and James
McHugh, *Sandalwood and Carrion: Smell in Indian Religion and Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013),
respectively.

of smells does not seem to have detracted from their power – indeed given the contemporary focus on undertaking actions at precise, auspicious times, particularly in the practice of esoteric sciences like conjuration and talismans, perhaps the very ephemerality of smells enhanced their power.[88]

This "ephemerality" that Flatt describes in relation to smell can be directly expanded to encompass a sense of the breath as well. Especially when inhalation takes place through the nose, it becomes very difficult to distinguish between the breath and any aroma or odor that accompanies it. The various ingredients mingle together, blending first within the nose but then expanding outwards throughout the body. Returning to the passage cited from *Miz al-nafas* at the beginning of this chapter, what reason would there be to exclude a sense of smell from the information (*khabar*) that the breath is said to possess? This also raises the question, in what ways are the body's porosity limited to the specific egress points of the mouth and the nose? There are no references to sounds in the `ilm-i dam` text. Where are the ears in this vision? This question is especially pertinent given that the term *svara* is translated as "voiced breath," which brings to mind the aural impact of breathing in some yogic traditions, today widely referred to as *ujjayi* ("victory") breath.

5.2 Olfaction in two `ilm-i dam texts

In *Miz al-nafas*, there is a passage on the human states (*ahval-i adami*), that one who is wise (`aqil`) will understand:

> In each breath, a different human state comes forward, that in that state, taste or other factors apply as these states of the breath are known, depending on which breath is flowing. Whereas, with the earthy breath, in human existence (*vujud-i adami*) one finds the smell of dry sandalwood, and the influence (*ta'sir*) of sandalwood on one's body is apparent, and a state is apparent that in this state

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[88] Emma J. Flatt, "Spices, Smells, and Spells." *South Asian Studies* 32, No. 1 (2016), 12.

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happiness is not apparent, nor is it known.[89]

Here, the sense of smell is not specified, but instead implied as one of the "other factors" to be considered alongside that of taste (*zawq*). The particular sense that comes to the fore with the earthy breath is smell, specifically of sandalwood, a substance known for its aroma and commonly used in incense. The aromatic value of sandalwood is important because it is through this aroma that the substance makes its "influence" on the body.

There are two examples from the *Kamaru Panchashika abridgment* (Browne recension) that deal specifically with smell. Both found in the section "On Explanation of Friend or Foe, Man or Woman," the first addresses the steps one must take to gain someone's attraction, while the second contains instructions for creating enmity between others. In the first example, the reader is told "at the time when the left breath exhales, give a nice fragrance to someone, so that she smells it, your love appears in her."[90] This is a fairly straightforward order of operations: you want someone's attention, so you give that person flowers, but factoring in the side of the body through which the breath is flowing. In the second example, the process is a much more complicated affair:

> If he wants to cast enmity between two people, at the time of the exhalation of the right breath, one makes one hundred and eighty wounds upon an apple tree with an axe while envisioning those two people, enmity shall appear between them. If he burns eight roses with the right breath in their name, mutual enmity shall appear between them at once.[91]

What I want to draw attention to is the implicit nature of olfaction invoked in this passage. One does not read explicitly about smelling something, but surely eight roses – whether freshly cut or

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[89] *Miz al-nafas*, folio 61a.

[90] *Kamaru Panchashika abridgment* (Browne recension), folio 62a.

[91] *Kamaru Panchashika abridgment* (Browne recension), folio 62a.

dried – would carry with them an aroma of some type, which would only intensify when burned. Similarly, the rendering of over one hundred wounds (*zakhm*) upon the apple tree could also elicit aroma, whether from the tree's sap or the likely hood of apple blossoms falling as a result of these strikes against the tree. The author does not say anything about the season in which these actions would take place, but I am speculating as to the range of possibilities in which it is happening. Much like the breath, smells happen constantly, and are an omnipresent component to lived experience.

If the science of the breath could be juxtaposed with other forms of bodily knowledge and physical discipline, such as wrestling in northern India, then again one finds an emphasis on the nostrils: "Breathing through the nose—with conviction, concentration, and rhythm—transforms a mundane act into a ritual of health."[92] This is contrasted with breathing through the mouth, which "performs the function of putting air into the body and taking it out, but as such it is purely mechanical."[93] This is yet another method of differentiating between types of breathing. Mechanical breathing will keep a person alive, but only through nasal breathing can a person achieve the type of deeper and more expansive power.

While this sketch above has introduced a variety of reference points for understanding *`ilm-i dam* and the body, in the next section I turn to a specific example of how a particular source speaks to the ways in which one version of *`ilm-i dam* both fits and does not fit with the earlier reference points. In analyzing this specific text, I will carve out a space for these practices that is equally Indian as Ayurveda or yoga, and as Islamic as *zikr*.

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[92] Joseph Alter, *The Wrester's Body: Identity and Ideology in North India* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 95-96.

[93] Alter, *The Wrester's Body,* 96.

6 - *Miz al-nafas* and Bodily Control of Self and Others

The quote opening this chapter provides the clearest vision of the relationship between the body, the breath, and the information (*khabar*) conveyed from the latter to the former. This vision of the body and the breath comes from *Miz al-nafas*, which details the circumstances surrounding the translation of an `*ilm-i dam*` text from Hindavi into Persian at a shrine known as Piranpatan in Gujarat. This text would come to be collected with ten others, all on different topics, but including medicine, physiognomy, interpretation of pulses, meaning of sneezes, and sexology, which were edited together in the sixteenth-century in a volume that was included in the royal Mughal library held at the Red Fort in Delhi. There are no other known copies of this text, so there is no way to determine with any accuracy how much earlier the reported translation took place, or if this manuscript itself is the original product of the exchange between the patron, Shaykh Jalal al-Din al-Bengali, and the translator, Sayyid Burhan al-Din Bukhari. The above excerpt, taken from the very beginning of the text, points to a very specific understanding of the relationship between the body and the breath. The fact that this breath comes *from* the veins (*rig-ha*), and not from some other source, indicates that in these practices, the body produces this breath all on its own. This would appear to be the very definition of mutually constitutive. Additionally, one of these veins "has information" (*khabar darad*). While the precise scope of this *khabar* is left unspecified in this passage, reading through the rest of the text helps a great deal in narrowing it down. The *khabar* referenced here is the information that comes with the awareness of the breath, which of the five elements is dominant, and the link to the sun or moon. This stands in important distinction to other terms of "ways of knowing" that are included in the text, such as `*ilm*` or *ma`rifat*. The term for vein, *rig*, could be one translation of the Sanskrit term *nadi*, referring to the channels through which the breath flows, and in turn through which the

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macro- and microcosms are connected. Another possibility is that the term *tariq*, here rendered as

"path," would be the Persian gloss of *nadi*. Given that the three principle *nadis* (*ida*, *pingala*, and

sushumna) are often listed in *svarodaya* and *`ilm-i dam* texts, if not by name than according to

their associations with the moon and the sun, then I am persuaded by the latter over the former.

As explained earlier in this chapter, the concept of *nadi* is rather expansive, so both *rig* and *tariq*

would be operable translations into Persian.

6.1 The complete and empty breaths

Consider this brief example of one application of this knowledge of the breath:

> If somebody wants to go on a short journey, let him go with the solar
> breath, but on the condition that the breath should be complete. Every
> breath that should be empty, let him ignore it. In the breath of fullness, let
> him expel it. If there is fullness in the lunar breath, go out with the left
> foot. If there is fullness in the solar breath, go out with the right foot.[94]

This is another layer beyond ascertaining the lunar or solar affiliation, for here the practitioner

has to understand when the breath is either complete (*kAmuliyyat*) or empty (*khali*). Later on, the

text introduces another element, which is determining when the breath is full (*purri*). These

technical terms carry with them a distinct sense of the breath that is in turn linked to the body. A

body holding a "complete" breath is capable of different things than one holding an "empty"

breath, which in actuality is no longer holding a breath at all. As the excerpt above demonstrates,

when the solar breath courses through the body, then this has consequences for how one controls

that body (i.e., starting travel with the right foot), as compared to the lunar breath and the left

food. This begs the question, what would happen to someone who did the opposite of the

prescribed order of operations, and knowingly started their travels with the left foot even with the

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[94] *Miz al-nafas*, folio 58a.

solar breath was present? Such a person would be flying in the face of the very cosmic order of things, and as such would most likely bring doom and destruction upon themselves and possibly those around them.

6.2 Three-dimensional breathing and envisioning of the body

> Know that of the six aspects [*jihat*], three aspects are related to the sun breath. Three aspects are related to the moon breath, whereby if it is before, above, and to the right, it is related to the sun breath. In front of, to the left, and under is related to the moon breath. [95]

In this passage, the author presents even more layers for understanding and visioning the way that the breath relates to the human body. In 360 degrees, three-dimensions, the practitioner can develop a sense of the breath where it envelops them, flowing in and out not just of their body but also the space immediately around them. In so doing, the body extends outside of its physical limits, powers generated solely through attuning one's knowledge of the breath to the cosmic rhythms that – like the ocean's tide – operate whether one notices them or not. In the same section, the author provides a detailed exposition in which the practitioner is faced with a question from someone "asking which army was victorious":

> If asking with the sun breath about an army distant from the person, there will be victory. If asking with the moon breath about an army that is nearby him, he will be victorious. If asking with the full breath, the friend will be victorious. If asking with the empty breath, the enemy will be victorious.[96]

Note the different elements that the practitioner must determine in order to ascertain the result of the battle: sun and moon, far and near, full and empty, friend and foe. There are associations

[95] *Miz al-Nafas*. folio 59a. The anonymous author of the *Kamaru Panchashika abridgment* (Browne recension) employs a similar typology, but using only four aspects instead of six, leaving out the aspects of above and under.

[96] *Miz al-Nafas*, folio 59a.

drawn between the full breath and the friend's victory, and then the empty breath and the

enemy's victory, but these associations are not consistently applied throughout the text.

> If someone is asking with the moon breath: If the letters of the name of lord of the army are even, he will be victorious because even letters are related to the moon breath. If someone is asking with the sun breath: If the letters of the name of the lord of the army are odd, he will be victorious because odd letters are related to the sun breath.[97]

Here in this passage, immediately following the one cited above, the author introduces

numerology in a manner consistent with other `ilm-i dam` texts. A numerical value is determined

by using the *abjad* system, in which each letter of the army leader's name has a specific value,

and then the total is either an odd or even number. But note here the added wrinkle: the outcome

is dependent on both the sum total determined by the *abjad* system, and whether the solar or

lunar breath is dominant in the body *of the person asking the question*. The implication here is

that the practitioner is able to assess not only the status of their own breath, but also the status of

another person's breath as well. This sets up a scenario in which practitioners of `ilm-i dam` are

able to see (or sense?) inside other human beings, understanding how they relate to the cosmic

order of things. This (literal) insight is a powerful ability with great ethical responsibilities.

7 - When the Discourses Are Misaligned: Astrology and `ilm-i dam`

As Azfar Moin notes at the beginning of *The Millennial Sovereign*, there is a sustained

interest in an array of human communities in different times and places in attempting to read the

celestial realm for knowledge on the happenings here on earth. I open up this can of worms here

because of the question about whether or not `ilm-i dam` is astrological in nature. The texts' own

terminology indicates it is not, for if it was, then surely some of the texts would invoke the

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[97] *Miz al-Nafas*, folio 59a.

terminology of *`ilm-i falak* or *kawakib*. More importantly, the encyclopedias compiled by Amuli and Rustamdari contains separate sections of *`ilm-i falak* and *`ilm-i dam*.[98] Despite this, divination is often classified as part of astrology. The challenge here with these classifications is that there are always exceptions that do not actually prove the rule. For example, there is an extended section in the Browne recension of the *Kamaru Panchashika* that provides instructions on how to manipulate other people for one's own benefits. This includes making friends out of enemies, driving a proverbial wedge between two allies, and even killing another person through a combination of ritual and possessing knowledge of the breath. Typically, scholarly definitions of astrology and divination paint it as a set of techniques aimed at actively reading or sensing the world around us. Once users are able to tap into this cosmic rhythm, then they are able to take advantage by virtue of having knowledge that others do not possess. Thus, the preparation for acquiring the knowledge is quite active, but the specific moment of gaining heightened awareness reads as passive.

7.1 Astrology and the Kamaru Panchashika

The older and longer versions of *Kamaru Panchashika* contain explicit and detailed discussion of the role played by the planets in determining things such as the auspicious and inauspicious times to undertake particular actions. One question about the *`ilm-i dam* corpus and explicit astrological techniques is how to evaluate the presence or absence of this material in a specific manuscript. For example, the six-chapter abridgments of the *Kamaru Panchashika* do not contain specific mention of the planets or the stars. I am operating under the premise that when editors or copyists were faced with the challenge of summarizing or abridging a longer text

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[98] Melvin-Koushki, "Powers of One," 150 and 167 for Amuli and Rustamdari, respectively.

such as the *Muhit-i Ma`rifat* or the *Kamaru Panchashika*, they had to decide which material was most important, which techniques or pieces of knowledge constituted an irreducible core. The fact that one reads about the five elements of the breath, the auspicious or inauspicious tasks that line up with specific types of breaths, etc., all leads to the conclusion that knowing one's breath is the crux of this corpus. This in turn necessarily means treating the specific information on the movement of the planets and stars as secondary in importance, at least so far as the editors were concerned. I should note here that none of the Sanskrit texts translated into English appear as abridgments, and thus contain lengthy sections on the planets and the stars. Space constraints here prevent me from studying the *siva-svarodaya* texts in detail, but needless to say, much more work remains to be done on this aspect of the corpus.

When discussing divination, it is quite common to find active engagement with the position of the planets, stars, and other celestial bodies. Based on the texts reviewed for this dissertation, it appears that the Sanskrit *svarodaya* texts all contain extensive discussion of the planets. At the same time, one finds a similar level of engagement in Islamicate writings with astrology, usually classified as `*ilm al-hayat,* as well as `*ilm al-nujum*. However, this Islamicate engagement with astrology, for the most part, does not extend to `*ilm-i dam*, as very few of the `*ilm-i dam* texts mention the planets and the stars, although they do all discuss the sun and moon. What accounts for this difference, and what does it tell us about the ways in which the planets' role in everyday life was conceived and understood by authors who at times operated within very similar geographic and chronological settings, while still accounting for differences of religious or philosophical nature?

At issue here is the categorical slippage or porous nature of the boundaries between categories such as magic, occultism, sorcery, divination, and science. Each of these terms has a

specific cultural and historical genealogy within various discourses (Euroamerican, Islamicate,

Indic, Chinese, etc), and charting those genealogies is well beyond the scope of this dissertation.

In a perfect articulation of a Deleuzian rhizome, the challenge is that these genealogies are

simultaneously distinct from one another *and* contingent or overlapping: "Perhaps one of the

most important characteristics of the rhizome is that is always has multiple entryways; in this

sense, the burrow is an animal rhizome, and sometimes maintains a clear distinction between the

line of flight as a passageway and storage or living strata..."[99] Multiple entry points mean that

this is a network that is always in motion.

There is substantial scholarly literature on astrology, or *`ilm-i nujum /falak*, in Islamicate

societies. Some general sources include Emilie Savage Smith's *Magic and Divination in Early

Islam*,[100] Toufic Fahd's *La Divination Arabe*,[101] as well as David Pingree's *From Astral Omens to

Astrology* (for a broader view that goes well beyond the usual boundaries of the Islamicate).[102]

But how does *`ilm-i dam* fit within this intellectual constellation? Below I introduce two

examples that will demonstrate a few specific instances in which knowledge of the breath and

knowledge of the stars do not entirely overlap.

7.2 Biruni and Astrology

In addition to his contributions towards Islamicate understanding of yoga, Biruni also

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[99] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari (trans. Brian Massumi), *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 12-13.

[100] Emilie Savage Smith (ed), *Magic and Divination in Early Islam* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004).

[101] Toufic Fahd, *La divination arabe; études religieuses, sociologiques et folkloriques sur le milieu natif d'Islam*, (Leiden: Brill, 1966).

[102] David Edwin Pingree, *From astral omens to astrology: from Babylon to Bīnāker* (Roma: Istituto italiano per l'Africa et l'Oriente, 1997).

authored a textbook on astrology. The *Kitab al-tafhim l-awa'il sana`at al-tanjim* ("The Book of Instruction in the Elements of the Arts of Astrology") is helpful not only because it speaks to Biruni's employment by the Ghaznavids as court astrologer, but also because he includes some mention of techniques responding to similar needs – specifically that of answering questions – that one finds in the *`ilm-i dam* texts. These practices are a helpful contrast to the ones that Abu'l Fazl includes in the *A'in-i Akbari*. As Wright notes in his translation of *Kitab al-tafhim*, this text is a "primer of eleventh-century science" because in addition to astrology, it also contains sections of geography and chronology, important additions because "Biruni insists that no one is entitled to call himself an Astrologer unless he possesses a thorough knowledge of these ancillary sciences."[103] This resonates with lines of argument made by both Stearns and Melvin-Koushki in Chapter Two, that astrology was a key part of the necessary sciences, and that to claim the status of a professional 'expert' in practical and applied sciences required a thorough understanding of how the celestial realm operated.

In comparison to the "questions and answers" section in the *`ilm-i dam* corpus that I have discussed above, there are important differences. Biruni describes how to deal with "idle and general questions" (*al-mas'ala al-bi-kariyya*):

> In case of an idle request or for a general prognostic the custom of the majority of astrologers is to follow the same procedure as in other questions, namely to ascertain the ascendant of the time of the query. They then examine the aspects as they would at a nativity and make conclusions i.e. as to the remaining period of life and the conditions therein.[104]

Whereas the practitioners of *`ilm-i dam* must take the precise location and nature of their breath

[103] R. Ramsay Wright, preface to Abu'l Rayhan Muhammad Ibn Ahmad Al-Biruni, *The Book of Instruction in the Elements of the Arts of Astrology*, trans. R. Ramsay Wright, (London: Luzac & Co., 1934), *iii*.

[104] Biruni, 332. Wright's footnote here indicates that "idle" here is his translation of *bi-kariyya*, derived from the Persian compound *bi-kar* (lit. "without work").)

(and at times, the breath of the person posing the question) into consideration, in Biruni's rendering the astrologer must simply determine "the ascendant" and then apply a similar set of rubrics as would apply when determining someone's horoscope at birth. Here, `ilm-i dam` and astrology share a set of ends, but an altogether different set of means for achieving those ends.

Towards the end of his rather lengthy primer on astrology, Biruni mentions one subject that comes up repeatedly in the `ilm-i dam` corpus, namely that of *zamir guftan* ("mind reading," literally, "consciousness-speaking"). The *zamir* (Ar. *damir*) refers to the secret thoughts of the person who asks the astrologer questions. Biruni does not look upon these practices very highly, stating "what greater ignominy is likely to be the part of Astrologers than that resulting from hasty dealings with such questions and in comparison how numerous are the lucky hits of Magicians who keep up a patter while they are on the look-out for tell-tale indications and actions!"[105] He concludes this section with a warning that anyone who goes beyond the limits of the sciences set out above runs the risk of bringing calumny down upon both himself and the practice itself.[106] Biruni really does not say much else about the process of reading other people's thoughts, what the Browne recension of the *Kamarupanchashika* abridgment labels "*zamir guftan*." Instead, he takes a very cautious tone, advising his readers that they should be careful when engaging in such actions so as not to bring "scorn and derision" upon them *and the science*.[107] That Biruni is wary of the astrologer doing things that would bring the profession, as it were, into ill-repute is a sign that he and other practitioners faced criticism in their own period. This too speaks to a difference between astrology in Islamicate contexts and the `ilm-i dam`

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[105] Biruni, 332-3.

[106] Biruni, 333.

[107] Biruni, 333 (emphasis added).

practices: while an authority on the former derides this type of prognostication, there are no such concerns listed by authors of the latter. Thus, both in terms of application and orientation, `ilm-i dam` and Biruni's vision of astrology do not align.

One other key source on Islamicate astrology that is only now receiving its due attention is the earlier-mentioned *Nujum al-`ulum* ("Stars of the Sciences") composed in the late sixteenth-century and authored by `Ali `Adil Shah in Bijapur. The *Nujum* contains over one hundred illustrations, especially anthropomorphized visions of the different degrees of the celestial arc, or *darajat*. Emma Flatt's work on this text demonstrates that this is a "manual of effective tools" that shows one way of dealing with a highly (and oftentimes, contentious) diverse society in which the Deccan was a key site for immigration from throughout the Persian cosmopolis.[108]

8 - Conclusion

Against the backdrop of a wider discussion on the body and its place(s) within `ilm-i dam`, it may appear that all of this is taking place centuries ago, when in fact there is much evidence to argue for its continuing relevance. One part of this discussion that becomes increasingly evident over time is that versions of the `ilm-i dam` techniques begin to circulate in the form of small pocket-sized treatises, available for purchase at the local market place. As Nile Green describes, the advent of the printing press in South Asia (as in other locales) seriously disrupted older, more traditional models in which knowledge was passed down from teacher to student. Additionally, this interest in the breath specifically as a source of power takes place against the broader political background of British colonization of India.

One example is found in the 1898 *Asrar-e-darwesh* ("The Dervish's Secrets") of Sufi

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[108] Emma J. Flatt, "The Authorship and Significance of the *Nujum al-'ulum*: A Sixteenth-Century Astrological Encyclopedia from Bijapur," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 131, no. 2 (Apr. 2011) 223-244. See 224-225 for the specific discussion of problems and questions regarding dating the *Nujum*.

Sa`adat `Ali. Nile Green describes this work as "a deeply pragmatic work whose position in the marketplace was analogous to that of the new practical Yoga manuals…that promised to yield vast powers from correct breathing." [109] Among other things, the *Asrar-e-darvesh* provides guidance to those wishing to purchase animals, avoid the evil-eye upon receipt of valuable gifts, search for lost property, learn if one was pregnant with a boy-child, journey safely in certain cardinal directions, meet a king, and prepare for invasion by foreign army.[110] These manuals provided people with the means to conceivably by-pass the traditional – and much more involved – discipleship method of acquiring this knowledge. Why bother with years and years of toilsome study when one could just as easily read a relatively short text and master these techniques? Thus, one may interpret the proliferation of texts in languages such as Persian, Urdu, Bengali, and Hindustani as evidence for a democratization of knowledge, in that aspirational individuals could access the same tools heretofore restricted to those ascetics who submitted themselves to traditional institutional practices and webs of relationship. The interest in these manuals reveals the shifting mores and attitudes – as well as introduction of new technologies such as the printing press – towards the 'traditional' educational systems that had governed the transmission and preservation of knowledge for generations.

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[109] Nile Green, "Breathing in India c. 1890," *Modern Asian Studies* 42 (No. 3, 2008), 290-291. For an earlier text on using knowledge of the breath for divination purposes, see the 1850 Urdu *Tashrih-i anfas* (London, British Library VT 141).

[110] Cited in Green, "Breathing in India," 291.

**Chapter Four: From India to Iran: `ulum al-ghariba* and Persian Receptions of `ilm-i dam*

> In this affair, unusual (*gharib*) things are discovered, which are strange (`ajab*).[1]
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> *Kamaru Panchashika abridgment* (Browne recension, 1806)
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> …among the scholars of Islam and the Iranians it [i.e., the science of yoga] is not common…One of the scholars of Islam who had made a journey to India and had acquired the scent of that . . . and one of the Brahmin Jogis had produced and composed an abbreviated book explaining that science, and he [the Muslim scholar] conveyed some of that to the Persian language, and since there are many benefits in the information of that science, here I relate a summary of that.[2]
>
> Blog post on website of Ayatollah Hasan Zadeh Amuli (2013)

Previous chapters have introduced the `ilm-i dam* corpus within a broad perspective, first featuring Perso-Arabic engagement with India as seen through the science of the breath; second, in treating the conception of the body and its intertwined operations with the breath. These next two chapters present case studies on the Persian and European reception of the `ilm-i dam* texts. First is a case study on the Persian reception, beginning with an important encyclopedia composed by Amuli (d. 1352 CE) while in service to the Mongols ruling over present-day Iran. This chapter also focuses on the version of the `ilm-i dam* text purchased by British orientalist

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[1] *Kamaru Panchashika abridgment* (Browne recension). Cambridge, Cambridge University V.21, folio 61b.

[2] Translation adapted from Carl W. Ernst, "Enigmas of Translation," unpublished paper.

Edward Granville Browne while traveling in Persia in the late 19th century, concluding with a very similar text on the website of Ayatollah Hasan Zadeh Amuli, with numerous sources populating the intervening centuries separating these two Amulis. My goal is to demonstrate sustained interest in Persian (i.e., "Iranian") circles in `ilm-i dam from Amuli's *Nefais al-funun* to the present day. These texts must be included in broader scholarly discourses surrounding religion, mysticism, esotericism, and occultism in Iran. I appreciate that the term "occultism" brings with it more than its fair share of baggage from the term's original usage in European contexts, and that as such the term "esotericism" may be less problematic. However, I argue in this chapter that the interest with which Iranian intellectual circles have pursued this type of knowledge makes for quite surprising connections between the way that the science of the breath has been received in Iran today and the more typical Eurocentric formulation of occultism.

1 - Introduction

The Persian term used for occultism is `ulum al-ghariba (literally "the unusual sciences"), but there has only lately been much scholarly attention invested in parsing out the extent to which it overlaps with and can be differentiated from mysticism, primarily through the work of Matthew Melvin-Koushki, Anzali Ata, Mushegh Asatrian, Alireza Doosdar, and a few others. Melvin-Koushki notes that the "unusual" element of these sciences is also understood to mean that they are excessively difficult. Just as "advanced mathematical and natural sciences [presuppose] mastery of a number of other such sciences, competence in the occult sciences was rare and usually exclusive to the scholarly-spiritual elite."[3] As referenced in the Introduction,

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[3] Matthew Melvin-Koushki, "Introduction: De-orienting the Study of Islamicate Occultism," *Arabica* 64 (2017), 288-289.

Stearns points out that understanding how Muslims in the pre-modern period viewed the natural

sciences requires studying how those sciences were constructed "at the intersection of

philosophy, theology, occult philosophy, mysticism and the various sciences themselves."[4] The

placement of *`ilm-i dam* within the natural sciences by critical encyclopedia editors such as

Amuli, as well as the later Rustamdari (late sixteenth-century) and Sadiqi Isfahani (mid-

seventeenth-century),[5] appeals directly to the type of intersectionality that Stearns urges his

readers to focus upon. Additionally, his comments are a call for scholars to carefully appraise the

shifts in the relative value of particular fields of knowledge over time and place. If occultism was

an important part of knowledge production for centuries in the Persianate world, then the fact

that it is less so today in some of those very same countries is no excuse *not* to examine it as part

of scholarly efforts to understand and reconstruct a dynamic and authentic historical record of

social and political life during the Safavid, Mughal, or Qajar dynasties. Thus, while in this

chapter I focus my inquiry on the way that *`ilm-i dam* was classified and received by various

authors working in Persia (especially in Iran), this chapter in particular is intended as a

contribution to growing scholarship looking at occultism in the aforementioned post-Mongol

dynasties that would come to control much of the eastern Islamic lands. Understanding the

important role that occultism—meaning, the practitioners thereof—played in these dynasties

comes in part through seeing the broader context in which specific sciences such as astrology,

letterism, and geomancy were moved from natural to mathematical sciences to bolster their

scientific legitimacy following centuries of "anti-occultist polemic, from Ibn Sina to Ibn

Khaldun; [and thus] reclassified as *the* sciences of *walaya* [sacral power]…which alone explains

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[4] Justin Stearns, "Writing the History of the Natural Sciences in the Pre-modern Muslim World: Historiography, Religion, and the Importance of the Early Modern Period," *History Compass* 9 (2011), 938.

[5] See Appendix A for information on both of these encyclopedias.

the massive increase in patronage of professional occultists at the Safavid, Mughal and Ottoman courts in the run-up to the Islamic millennium (1592 CE)."[6] In addition to the opposition that Melvin-Koushki notes here, there was also opposition to astrology from Muslim theologians who felt that believing in the causal power of the stars violated God's unity.[7] Despite these concerns about astrology, rulers (and those in their employ) saw it as part of the means of generating or accessing *walaya,* which helps make clear what was at stake for those seeking to maintain or attain power in this setting. Without securing this type of "universal" endorsement, what hope would a ruler or other elite leader have for staying in power or succeeding in their reign?

There has been—and continues to be—a sustained interest in these "unusual sciences" within Persianate circles straight through from the pre- and early-modern periods up to and including the present day in Iran. The engagement with `*ilm-i dam* is the driving example of this engagement and highlights the many aspects to this story.

Through his inclusion of `*ilm-i dam* within his section on the natural sciences, Amuli was treating this material scientifically. The reception history of `*ilm-i dam* within Iran is indicative of a situation in which Indian knowledge is internalized, even while a certain amount of ambiguity or anxiety persists regarding the question of whether or not said knowledge is licit or illicit. These acts of negotiation come to light most clearly in comparing the abridgments of the *Kamaru Panchashika* (see Appendix A for listings of individual sources), specifically the material that was left out of each abridgment with reference to the full version of the text. For example, why did some authors feel comfortable including the material on the goddess Kamakhya, while others did not? Why did some texts include specific practices used for

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[6] Matthew Melvin-Koushki, "Powers of One: The Mathematicalization of the Occult Sciences in the High Persianate Tradition," *Intellectual History of the Islamicate World* 5 (2017), 127.

[7] Stearns, 934.

destroying one's enemies, while other texts either included different practices or neglected to include them altogether? Rather than developing a comprehensive account of occultism (and permutations thereof) in Iran, the reception of the *Kamaru Panchashika* can be used as a case study, thereby adding to the scholarly literature in this field.

Two specific abridgments of the *Kamaru Panchashika abridgment*, namely the recensions from Browne and Amuli, are of particular use in tracking these developments more closely. They fit within a clearly identifiable sub-genre of this group of texts, the comparison of which reveals a great deal about the range and diversity that holds the corpus together. These texts have already been mentioned in the Introduction and appear also in Appendix A, where the various entries – especially those existing only in manuscript form – within this corpus are summarized. Expanding these entries will enable a much more detailed analysis of them as we ask where these texts differ, where they overlap, and what one can learn from analyzing that degree of similarity or difference. The *Kamaru Panchashika* abridgment has continued to receive attention in Iranian intellectual circles to the present day. The category of *`ulum al-ghariba* in general begs to be revisited with a view to asking why the science of the breath is placed within this broader framework of Persian occultism.

2 - *Kamaru Panchashika* abridgement (Amuli recension)

An abridged version of the *Kamaru Panchashika* is contained in the *Nafa'is al-funun wa `ara'is al-`ayun* ("Precious Objects of Sciences and Brides of Fountains", hereafter simply *Nafa'is al-funun*), a Persian encyclopedia compiled and edited by Shams al-Din Muhammad ibn Muhammad Amuli (d. 753/1352)[8] and published circa 1353 CE. At one time Amuli held the key

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[8] Shams al-Din Muhammad ibn Muhammad Amuli. *Nafa'is al-funun wa `ara'is al-`ayun*. Three volumes. Tehran:

position of *mudarris* (literally "teacher," but here more likely understood as superintendent or principal) at the Sultaniyya madrasa under Ilkhanid ruler Oljeytu (r. 703-16/1304-16). As noted above, he grouped breath control under the *'ulum al-ghariba*, "occult sciences," which was *not* part of the encyclopedia's section on *tasawwuf* ("Sufism"). This division right away makes clear that it is a mistake to restrict the use of these practices to groups identifying as "Sufi," and that those interested in the breath (*nafas*) for various purposes extended far beyond those seeking to efface the individual ego (*nafs*). The *Nafa'is al-funun*'s reference to the *Kamaru Panchashika* is divided into two sections, one on *'ilm-i dam* ("the Science of the Breath") and the other on *'ilm-i vahm* ("the science of magical imagination"). The latter involves meditating on the subtle centers of the body, known as the *cakra*s. Compared to the Persian translation of the *Amritakunda*, there are similar sections on the incantations of actions (chap. 2, para. 14), appearing at court (chap. 2, para. 14), purchasing animals (chap. 2, para. 9), wet-cupping (chap. 2, para. 12), association of particular actions with days of the week (chap. 2, para. 13), and discussions of the length and end of life (chap. 8, para. 2 – although, as with the Arabic translation of the *Amritakunda*, this is much more detailed than in the Browne recension). "He repeated the claim that these sciences derive from Kamak Devi, studiously avoiding the question of her status as a goddess, and he acknowledged that the adepts of these sciences are called jogis (yogis)."[9] It is worth noting, of course, that Amuli himself did not credit this realm of science, stating that "not much benefit could be conceived in mentioning [*'ilm-i dam o vahm*], so this much suffices" (*ama chun dar zikr-an ziyadeh faideh mutasur namishad bi-hamin iktifa raft*).[10] This ambivalence towards these

Intatharat Islamiyya, 1961.

[9] Ernst, "Enigmas of Translation," 3.

[10] Amuli, vol. 3, 365.

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practices does not begin and end with Amuli; instead it is traceable throughout different renditions of these texts as various authors in Iran worked to reconcile the Indian/foreign-ness of *`ilm-i dam* with its value and status as important scientific knowledge: worth preserving and promulgating in large part *because of its foreign-ness*. To be clear, Amuli's dismissiveness of *`ilm-i dam* is *not* a function—at least, not explicitly—of its foreignness, but instead represents his own view on the utility of this specific science that he nonetheless was compelled to include in his encyclopedia because it had become an expected part of the knowledge base he sought to encapsulate in his massive project.

The *Nefais al-funun* includes entries on all manner of topics and is an excellent example of Persianate encyclopedias. It includes an entry on the science of the breath. Amuli's recension of the six-chapter abridgment of the *Kamaru Panchashika* predates Browne's by almost five hundred years. Of key significance is the way in which Amuli classifies the science of the breath. While Browne refers to his text as "Sufi" in nature, Amuli does not. Although he did have a very long section on *tasavvof* (Sufism), the science of the breath does not appear within it. Instead, he listed it within the section on the natural sciences: one reads about physics, mathematics, dream interpretation, and finally, the Yogic sciences of the breath and imagination. This text's organization is important on the one hand simply for understanding Amuli's overall project, and on the second hand, for contrasting Amuli's schema with other widely read contemporaneous theorists, such as Ibn Khaldun. While the former divided knowledge up between that associated with Islam and that associated with the ancients, the latter divided up fields of knowledge based largely on an Aristotelian system. Amuli's text is also significant because it featured prominently in the work of Austrian diplomat-scholar Alfred von Kremer's writings on the development of Muslim societies. As I demonstrate in in Chapter Five, von Kremer deployed an excerpt from

Amuli's text in order to prove a broader point about the development of later (especially Indian) Sufism, arguing that Indian Sufism was largely derivative from Hinduism and Buddhism. As such, treating Amuli's text alongside its subsequent reception and interpretation by Orientalist sources allows for a clear articulation of the intertwining regimes of power and knowledge.

Melvin-Koushki notes that the *Nafa'is al-funun* stands out as a "watershed in the Islamicate encyclopedic tradition. It is the most extensive and polished *tasnif al-`ulum* work produced in either Arabic or Persian up to the mid-8th/14th century, and as such came to serve as the primary model for subsequent Persian encyclopedias."[11] He goes on to clarify more precisely what makes the *Nafa'is al-funun* so important for our understanding of the classification systems employed within this time period: it was "the first encyclopedia to register a) the rise of sufism to sociopolitical hegemony, and b) the sanctification of occultism."[12] For Melvin-Koushki, Amuli's classification system reflects the highly elevated position of the "science of letters" (*`ilm al-ḥuruf*) through its integration within Sufism, by virtue of its being part of the "science of the saints" (*`ilm al-awliya'*). If the "friends" (*al-awliya'*) of God engaged in this practice, then how could it not be seen as highly prestigious?

An important question here is how to understand both Browne's and Amuli's positions toward the scientific pedigree or general veracity of this knowledge. In Amuli's account, he discounted the veracity of this *`ilm-i dam*, but then he included it because he was writing an encyclopedia. This inclusion did not mean that he approved of or believed in it. It is unclear how much time Browne spent with this short text; one would not be surprised to find out that he gave it no thought after cataloging his purchases upon his return to England in 1888. While Amuli

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[11] Melvin-Koushki, "Powers of One," 147.

[12] Melvin-Koushki, "Powers of One," 147-148. He states that the latter process took place under the influence of Ibn 'Arabi and al-Buni during the 7th-8th/13th-14th centuries.

(and the subsequent copyists of the *Nafa'is*) must have looked over their version of the text in some detail, one doubts it would have been of significant importance to them. Similar texts on the science of the breath appeared in several other Persian encyclopedias, most notably Rustamdari's *Riyaz al-Abrar* ("Garden of the Virtuous"), completed in Qazvin in 979/1571 during the end of Shah Tahmasb's reign.[13] Thus, Amuli's choice to include it was not seen by subsequent compilers of Persian knowledge as anathema or otherwise non-normative. Instead, the science of the breath was an accepted part of Persian knowledge in the pre-modern era. However, to be clear, "accepted" is not the same as "approved," as Amuli implied by his statement that it was not of much benefit.

2.1 Amuli's organization of the Nafa'is al-funun

Before diving into the particulars of Amuli's text in the `ilm-i dam` corpus, it is worth examining how he organized his encyclopedia in general, as well as comparing his organizing principles to those used by other important figures, namely, a renowned traveler, a famous sociologist, and a highly influential philosopher, all of whose work was influential and widely read in pre-modern Muslim communities.

In organizing the *Nafa'is*, Amuli divided up all knowledge initially using the dichotomy of Islamic or contemporary sciences (`ulum-i avakhir`) and the philosophical or ancient sciences (`ulum-i ava'il`). This division is reminiscent of the distinction in Muslim history drawn between the pre-Islamic "time of ignorance" (*jahiliyya*) and the time of Islam, although in Amuli's case he certainly placed a great deal of value on the sciences of "the first ones" (*ava'il*). While the articulation of difference is not as severe or pejorative as in the case of the Islam/ignorance

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[13] See Appendix A for more information.

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binary, there is still a sense in Amuli's work and organization that progress is being made as Muslims develop their abilities through mastering all of these realms of knowledge. Amuli "employs a highly structured Avicennan schema" that established the roots (*usul*) of philosophy and mathematics before then articulating the branches (*furu`*) of the natural sciences and mathematical sciences.[14] This distinction could be interpreted as another version of the dichotomy between "transmitted" knowledge (*naqli*) and that which had been reasoned out independently (*`aqli*).[15]

Amuli divided up the sciences into two groups: those associated with Islam that were seen as contemporaneous to him (*`ulum-i avakhir*) and those associated with the philosophical or ancient sciences (*`ulum-i ava'il*). This is a variation on the dichotomies one sees in other encyclopedic sources produced by Muslim authors before Amuli, such as *`aqli* (intellectual) vs. *naqli* (transmitted), or simply a distinction between sciences used by Arabs vs. those used by non-Arabs. In adopting this schema, Amuli attempted to carve out space for Islamic revelation that was not subsumed under the philosophical regime, in contrast to someone like al-Farabi (d. 950 CE), who described the sciences using Aristotle's curriculum: the *Politics* being equivalent to Muslim *kalam* (speculative theology) and the *Ethics* equating with *shari`a*. Al-Farabi carried this so far as to refer to the Prophet Muhammad as *al-shari`* (the Legislator).[16] The categories used by key Muslim intellectual figures writing in Arabic and Persian from the pre-modern

[14] Melvin-Koushki, "Powers of One," 148.

[15] Space does not allow for this, but another extension of this dichotomy would be to track connections between *`aqli*/*naqli* and then the contrast in Hindu traditions between texts that are classified as *smriti* (Sanskrit: "what is remembered") compared with those seen as *shruti* ("what is heard"). The latter would be the product of divine revelation, while the former would be all that knowledge that is edited and passed down from one generation to the next.

[16] For an overview of al-Farabi's views on politics, specifically the ways in which he viewed certain religious categories as having direct corollaries in the political realm, see Fauzi M. Najjar, "Al-Farabi on Political Science," *Muslim World* 48, no. 2 (1958), 94-103.

period, such as al-Farabi and Ibn Khaldun, are typically inflected through the language of Greek philosophy. Amuli's work stands out as different because he was so systematic There are several possible ways to account for his approach, including one that is quite pragmatic in nature. Since he ran a madrasa, it stands to reason that he would have been quite interested in systematizing the knowledge that his teachers and their students used in the curriculum.

For Melvin-Koushki, Amuli's classification system "signals the emergence of lettrism as a simultaneously Islamic, natural and mathematical science—that is to say, a *universal* science—and a defining feature of the religio-intellectual landscape of the Islamicate heartlands from the mid-18th/14th century onward."[17] Melvin-Koushki goes on to make a point that has serious implications for this project. Later occultists who immigrated to Cairo, especially Sayyid Husayn Akhlati, inspired a wave of occultism through Persephone Islamdom. In particular, two of Akhlati's students—`Abd al-Rahman al-Bistami (d. 858/1454) in Anatolia and Ibn Turka (d. 835/1432) in western Iran—managed to refashion lettrism along the lines suggested by Amuli decades earlier. However, al-Bistami and Ibn Turka took this agenda even farther in that they "decouple[d] lettrism from sufism with the object of further valorizing the first."[18] This move was critical because it cuts to the one of the core questions of this project: to what extent do scholars align *`ilm-i dam* with "Sufism," and on what grounds do they make their determinations? The move that Melvin-Koushki describes taking place in al-Bistami and Ibn Turka's work is perhaps reminiscent of (though predating by over five hundred years) the "customary Islam" proposed by Nile Green as a heuristic device for classifying practices and beliefs that do not otherwise fit within the received intellectual categories, yet acknowledging the

[17] Matthew Melvin-Koushki, "Powers of One," 149.

[18] Melvin-Koushki, "Powers of One," 148.

need to do so without resorting to Sufism (or sufism) as a generic catch-all category that contains so many diverse practices and beliefs that it loses its utility as a descriptor.[19]

Many of the `ilm-i dam` texts contain instructions on predicting the success or failure of actions—especially military campaigns and meetings with powerful people—based on studying the numerical values of the letters of the powerful person's name in conjunction with the side from which the breath blew (solar or lunar). For example, in the Browne recension one reads that, "if one goes before a king or other great person, one quickly adds up the letters of the person's name. If it is odd, one should go before him with the right breath, and if it is even, one should go with the left breath."[20] Now, it might be argued by our pre-modern occult masters that such practices do not constitute lettrism, *per se*, but it remains true that these `ilm-i dam` texts nonetheless discussed using special knowledge of letters to understand the otherwise hidden future of particular actions.

Ibn Khaldun talks about the `ulum al-ghayb` as subsets of prophecy, but Amuli treats them as sciences of nature (*ṭabi'a*), which incorporates them into a rational approach that is not tied to the miraculous (i.e., random). The basic conclusion from surveying figures such as Ibn Battutah, Ibn Khaldun, and Amuli is that there was by no means a uniform way of classifying knowledge in pre-modern Muslim communities. Each intellectual figure had a unique approach to sorting out these categories and the place of `ulum al-ghayb` within them, ranging from prophecy to magic to philosophy.

As noted, Amuli located `ilm-i dam` and `ilm-i vahm` within the natural sciences (*furu`i-i*

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[19] Nile Green, *Bombay Islam: The Religious Economy of the West Indian Ocean, 1840-1915* (Cambridge University Press, 2011), 19.

[20] For a detailed study on the role of the *abjad* numerological system in magical practices in pre-modern Muslim communities, see Francis IV, Edgar Walter, "*Islamic Symbols and Sufi Rituals for Protection and Healing: Religion and Magic in the Writings of Ahmad ibn Ali al-Buni (d. 622/1225),*" Unpublished dissertation (University of California at Los Angeles, 2005), especially pages 140-150.

ṭabi`i), thus his material on breath control and visualization techniques appear alongside entries

on medicine, alchemy, letter magic, oneironmancy, physiognomy, judicial astrology, active

properties, and physiological professions (including divinatory scapulomancy and

spasmatomancy).[21] Ernst notes that "[Amuli] repeated the claim that these sciences derive from

Kamak Devi, studiously avoiding the question of her status as a goddess, and he acknowledged

that the adepts of these sciences are called jogis (yogis). Amuli dismissed the importance of this

entire subject, however, observing that 'discussion of that cannot conceivably be very useful.'"[22]

 With all this in mind, what then, is so important about Amuli's encyclopedia? Melvin-

Koushki argues that it is the first encyclopedia "to register a) the rise of sufism to sociopolitical

hegemony, and b) the sanctification of occultism."[23] Rediscovering the integration of occultism

within Sufism and other vectors of Islamicate discourse and practice across the Persianate sphere

is certainly an important intervention, one that Melvin-Koushki makes time and time again in his

ever-expanding *oeuvre*. In the broader sense, this may well be true, but for the purposes of the

present project, the most significant aspect of Amuli's work is that his inclusion of the *Kamaru*

Panchashika excerpt marks the earliest version of that text in its abridged form. What we see

from Amuli's organization broadly speaking is that *`ilm-i dam* is included but not given much

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21 Melvin-Koushki, "Powers of One," 149.

22 Ernst, "Enigmas of Translation," 3.

23 Melvin-Koushki, "Powers of One," 149. His argument on the "watershed" status of the *Nafā'is* continues: "As described above, the second process stemmed from the fusion of sufism and occultism primarily under the banner of Ibn 'Arabi and al-Buni during the course of the 7th-8th/13th-14th centuries, with a focus on the newly "suficized" sciences of letters (*`ilm al-hurruf*) as the science of the saints (*`ilm al-awliya'*) *par excellance*: equal parts magic, divination, mystical exegesis and cosmological speculation, and conferring control over the physical, imaginal and metaphysical realms. Amuli flags these twin developments by first elevating the science of sufism (*`ilm-i tasavvuf*) to the status of supreme Islamic science, equal in importance to all the other religious sciences (including jurisprudence, hadith and theology) combined, then designating lettrism the supreme sufi science. At the same time, he retains the category of *simiya*, letter and talismanic magic, as an applied natural science, further classifying it as one of the 'Semitic sciences' (*'ulum-i samiyya*)--i.e., positing a connection to Hebrew kabbalah. Yet even there he stipulates that proficiency in *simiya* is predicated on, among other things, a mastery of astronomy (a mathematical science) and astrology (a natural science)."

weight. It is a marginal form of knowledge (`ilm) for Amuli, which is a position that will stand in

contrast to the approach taken by Mughal court historian and sage, Abu'l Fazl ibn Mubarak,

whose work was discussed in Chapter Two. Perhaps because of its perceived Indic origins,

Amuli does not look at `ilm-i dam as having the same type of weight as the sciences that he

traces either directly to religious revelation via the Prophet Muhammad, or to the "first ones"

mentioned above.[24] Yet the fact of their inclusion signals that `ilm-i dam o vahm would from this

date forth become part of the usual collection of topics that required some treatment in the

Persian encyclopedias who would follow Amuli's precedent.

2.2 Technical analysis of Amuli's `ilm-i dam text

In comparison to the other texts mentioned in the Introduction, listed in Appendix A, and

discussed in this chapter, Amuli's recension of the *Kamaru Panchashika* stands out because it

does not make any mention of being a translation per se. Its status as a translation could be seen

as implicit, given that the *Kamaru Panchashika* is specified as the source of the text, but this is

still an important detail. Without a specific claim that it is a translation, one must ponder the

exact situation or context in which it was rendered from Sanskrit or Hindi into Persian. While the

full-length version of the *Kamaru Panchashika* does include this detail (see Chapter One), this

specific abridgment does not. There is a reference to the "city of *Kamaru*," but the most notable

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[24] Although, it would be interesting to know what Āmulī would have made of the short work, "On Breathing" (*Peri pneumatos*), appearing with Aristotle's collected works but which scholars appear to agree was not written by Aristotle. The editor of this volume from the Loeb Classical Library edition makes no secret as to the mystifying nature of the text, noting that "it appears to be a philosophical rather than a medical document," "it has caused much difficulty to editors and translators," and that "the author appears unsure when using the term pneuma whether it refers to the technical sense or to the ordinary breath." Aristotle, *On the Soul. Parva Naturalia. On Breath*, trans. W. S. Hett. Loeb Classical Library 288 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1957), 484-518. While this text attributed to Aristotle does not have any material of a divinatory nature, the fact that it does contain ambiguous language about the breath as both a medicalized phenomenon and the "ordinary" everyday phenomenon is worth noticing, for there is a similar level of differentiation between these various types of breath in the `ilm-i dam texts.

details in this abridgment are the specific articulation of practices surrounding the goddess

Kamakhya Dev. The specific location of Kamaru(pa), in present-day Assam in India, is important

because there is a temple complex associated with the goddess Kamakhya that by some accounts

dates back some 1,200 years.[25] There are a wealth of other details that this recension leaves out, a

fact that bears mentioning mainly because the specific inclusion of the material on Kamakhya

makes this text stand out from almost all of the others reviewed for this project (an exception

being the Karachi abridgment mentioned briefly in Chapter One). As Ernst describes in his

treatment of the full-length *Kamaru Panchashika*, "the portrait of Indian wisdom that emerges

from the pages of this manuscript is eccentric," containing so many examples that it could be

read "like a large recipe-book for occultists."[26] The idea of this abridgment being part of a longer

"sanctification of occultism," to borrow Melvin-Koushki's phrasing, makes sense in the wider

context of Amuli's project and perhaps explains why this text appears at all in the *Nafa'is al-
funun*.

There are lingering questions regarding why some recensions retain this material, while

others do not. Is it a product of scribal selective amnesia, i.e., a resistance to the original text? Is

it a function of the scribe's intended audience? There are no easy answers here—at least, not

without performing an exhaustive comparison of all of the extant copies, which goes far beyond

[25] Hugh B. Urban, "Matrix of Power: Tantra, Kingship, and Sacrifice in the Workshop of Mother Goddess
Kamakhya," *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* 31, no. 3 (2008), 500-534. Urban outlines the importance of
worship practices surrounding the goddess and their relation to a horizontal understanding of power relations, which
he explains using the concept of *shakti*, or female divine power. His description of the power generated by this
specific site of goddess worship is helpful for the present project because he frames it in bodily terms: "…power is
best understood not so much as an oppressive force that emanates from the top down in a given social hierarchy, but
rather as a kind of circulating, capillary network of relations that pervades all levels of society, flowing between all
social agents in the religious and political domains alike" (503).

[26] See Carl Ernst, "Being Careful with the Goddess: Yoginis in Persian and Arabic Texts," in *Performing Ecstasy:
The Poetics and Politics of Religion in India*, ed. Pallabi Chakrovorty and Scott Kugle (Delhi: Manohar, 2009), 195
and 191, respectively.

the scope of this dissertation (although it would be a worthwhile task for future research).

Amuli's recension of the *Kamaru Panchashika* includes additional features not seen in the other versions. These include instructions to imagine that it rains water of life (*ab al-hayat*) and that this will bring ruin to enemies and cure for sickness, as well as mention of the nine cakras and their locations.[27] The entry ends with the Arabic phrase "in the name of God, the Compassionate, the Caring, Praise be to God, who created the Heavens on high and the earth below (*alladhi ja'la al-simiwat al-'uli wa al-ardin al-safli*), and God's prayers be upon Muhammad, the sun of sacrifice (*shams al-duha*) and his children."[28]

In reviewing Amuli's `*ilm-i dam* text, I have made recourse to the manuscript published in Tehran in 1961, as well as the excerpt of the recension that Alfred von Kremer published in the mid-nineteenth century. I will treat this latter version in detail in the following chapter. Von Kremer's text may be seen as an abridgment of an abridgment, given that the text he presents is substantially shorter than that reviewed here. Having established the importance of this earliest abridged version of the *Kamaru Panchashika*, it is necessary to examine another version of the abridgement that dates to the early 19th century, acquired by Edward Granville Browne during his travels in Persia during the late 19th century. However, five hundred years separates these two manuscripts, during which there were critical historical developments in Persia, not least in the fields of religion, mysticism, and occultism. This can be seen most clearly in the most important polity in modern-day Iran during that time period: the Safavids.

In establishing the thread along which `*ulum al-ghariba* traveled within the religio-political machinery that drove major changes in Iran, the Safavid dynasty, more so than others,

[27] Amuli, *Nafa'is al-funun*, 161.

[28] Amuli, *Nafa'is al-funun*, 162.

provides several case studies in which a family member or individual made claims to kingship based explicitly on a reading of astrological phenomena. For example, Kathryn Babayan begins her study on the Safavid dynasty by citing the roughly once-per-millennium conjunction of Saturn and Jupiter as marking a new era, for it "formed the apocalyptic text from which an astrological reading forecasting a shift in terrestrial and celestial hegemony signaled the emergence of a new and final era," in which Persians would replace Arabs as those ruling over Muslim empires.[29] That Mughal emperors such as Akbar employed people from various religious traditions in the official role of court astrologer, *and* that Ottoman rulers engaged in the same practice, makes it clear that in the post-Mongol era astrology was a key ingredient in the complex soup that kept the empire functioning. These interpretations of the relationship between the celestial and terrestrial realms come from the same genre of knowledge as `ilm-i dam`, which is, at its heart, a set of practices based on the practitioner developing a keen understanding of the connection between the macro- and microcosms rooted in the powerfully mundane respiratory cycle.

3 - Between India and Iran: Exchange and Circulation

As part of the wider post-Mongol invasion re-making of Central and South Asia, connections between India and Iran were extremely strong. This is attested by the way in which artists, poets, and intellectuals circulated back and forth between the two (as well as the third power in the region, the Ottoman Empire). The mere existence of the Browne recension of the *Kamaru Panchashika* and the circumstances of its acquisition provide evidence that—alongside exchanges of artists, craftsman, and poets—esoteric practices moved just as easily through these

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[29] Kathryn Babayan, *Mystics, Martyrs, Messiahs* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 2002), 2.

routes and across these borders. While the *`ilm-i dam* texts are the focus here, it is important to come to grips with the broader historical circumstances in which those texts were being created, exchanged, and interpreted. Part of that history is the movement of people and ideas back and forth between India and Iran. This type of exchange is traditionally treated through a near-exclusive focus on the largest imperial dynasties that came into being during the early modern period, namely the Ottomans, Safavids, and Mughals. While there was a great deal of interaction and exchange between the Ottomans and the Safavids, it is important to note also the relationships between not only the Safavids and the Mughals, but also more generally between polities that connected modern-day Iran and India. These polities forged intellectual and commercial networks that facilitated a much greater amount of exchange and cross-pollination than is typically recognized. There has been a burst of recent scholarly publications precisely on this phenomenon in the context of the sixteenth-century, a period that is illustrative of broader trends taking place between Amuli's compiling of his *Nefais al-funun* and the copying of the manuscript, one of which Browne acquired several centuries later.

As Ali Anooshahr writes in his examination of Shirazi scholars and their movement from Iran to serve in Deccani polities, at times political fortunes would favor turns toward or away from more open engagement with knowledge produced in India. In reference to the kingdom of Bijapur, the transition from Ibrahim `Adilshah I (r. 1534-58) to `Ali `Adilshah (1558-80) included not only a restoration of Shi`ism but also more general changes in political-religious orientation: "So a turn away from a Sunni Islamic monarchy and 'orthodoxy' was a turn toward simplicity, mysticism, and 'non-Orthodoxy' encompassing Sufism, Shiism, Hinduism and even Christianity."[30] The presence of Shirazi scholars in the same political orbit as the `Adilshah

[30] Ali Anooshar, "Shirazi Scholars and the Political Culture of the Sixteenth Century Indo-Persian World," *The Indian Economic and Social History Review* 51, no. 3 (2014), 340.

ruling family in Bijapur was by no means a one-way street, but instead points to a nuanced

circulation of people (and ideas) that worked both ways.

Moving beyond the mid-nineteenth century and into the early twentieth century, Nile

Green's work on the "religious economy" that developed in Bombay demonstrates a more

modern twist on the circulation of people and ideas between India and Iran (as well as the entire

western basin of the Indian Ocean).[31] This model can be projected further back in time to help

theorize the spread of both people and ideas across geographic regions. Centers of courtly power,

such as Delhi or Isfahan, would attract scholars as well as artisans and merchants. The

combination made for an ever-increasingly complex network of social and political relations.

The notion of Sufism as being solely focused on, at times, arcane metaphysics is put to

the test by evidence that Green presents in a separate piece examining the circulation of

breathing practices in late colonial India. Through documenting the spread of pocket-sized

pamphlets in Urdu and Persian advising their readers of the proper way to breathe and otherwise

control the body, he establishes that this is a type of Sufism that is "social expression as

medicine, prognostication and amulet-making, all of which could of course be adapted for profit-

making enterprises."[32] He continues that "[f]urther undermining transcendentalist conceptions of

Sufism and Yoga, such works were forthright in their orientation towards physical as much as

spiritual ends."[33] One specific Urdu text that Green introduces here is Sufi Sa`adat `Ali's *Asrar-e*

Darvesh ("The Dervish's Secrets"), which contains much of the same type of material that is

mentioned in the `ilm-i dam* and *svarodaya* texts. For Green, this and other publications from the

[31] Nile Green, *Bombay Islam* (Cambridge University Press, 2011).

[32] Nile Green, "Breathing in India, c. 1890," *Modern Asian Studies* 42, no. 3 (2008), 291.

[33] Green, "Breathing in India," 292.

late nineteenth-century are examples of the transformational power of the printing press, which disrupted traditional modes of knowledge transfer from master (be it a guru, pir, shaykh, or otherwise) to disciple. The proliferation of "do it yourself" manuals stood "in contrast to more traditional works on either Sufi or Yoga practice effectively replaced the living master with the book."[34] The ability to walk to one's local marketplace and purchase a copy of a text that previously would have been available only to those who (a) were literate and (b) had access to incredibly expensive, thus very rare, manuscripts was a radical departure.

The *`ilm-i dam* corpus points to the circulation of texts within the broader Persianate cosmopolis that Shahab Ahmed invokes to frame *What is Islam? The Importance of Being Islamic*.[35] As stated in the Introduction, despite offering an intricate and detailed study of exchange and cross-pollination within what he terms the "Balkans-to-Bengal" region, nowhere does Ahmed make explicit reference to subjects such as magic, esotericism, or occultism. With the *`ilm-i dam* texts in mind, this seems like a very present absence, one that is indicative both of the contribution that I hope to make in the present study, as well as the state of the field more generally. Alongside the poetry and teachings of Hafez, Sa'di, Mawlana Jalal ud-Din Rumi, and so many other Persian authors from the pre-modern period who are celebrated and studied for influence and contributions in India as well as Iran, we must add the discussion of how knowledge is classified within the early-modern period with specific reference to the natural sciences. As Stearns indicates earlier, this formulation of the natural sciences includes *`ulum al-ghariba*, which in turn, includes *`ilm-i dam*.

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[34] Green, "Breathing in India," 289.

[35] Shahab Ahmed. *What is Islam? The Importance of Being Islamic* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016).

4 - Kamaru Panchashika abridgment (Browne recension)

In 1887, British Orientalist Edward Granville Browne (1862-1926) traveled to Persia with the goal of meeting adherents to the nascent religious movement that would come to be known as the Baha'i faith.[36] His travels took him to many different parts of what is now modern-day Iran. During subsequent decades of scholarly work, he compiled some of the most influential and widely-read works on Persian literature, the Baha'i faith, Sufism, and the study of Islam generally.[37] According to one of his biographers, "Browne's work in promoting Persian studies was epoch-making, for it must be remembered that in his lifetime (and sometimes still) Islamic studies were conceived, as the title of his chair suggests, primarily in terms of Arabic."[38] However, this great contribution in widening the scope of Islamic studies was not necessarily as broad-minded as one might hope. This same biographer notes that Browne "seemed to cherish a marked antipathy" for "Indian culture," considering it to represent "a debased version of all that he loved in Iran."[39] Indeed, this attitude even pervades his travelogue, in which he expresses great frustration that his original tutor in Persian instructed him for some two years, albeit with an incorrect accent, being the son of parents from South Asia and not Persia proper.[40]

As the person who acquired the first `ilm-i dam` text studied for this project, Browne holds a special place in this inquiry. What did he think about it when reading it? On what

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[36] G. Michael Wickens et al., "Browne, Edward Granville," *Encyclopædia Iranica*, IV/5, 483-488.

[37] In addition to his travelogue, he published *A Literary History of Persia (4 volumes), The Persian Revolution of 1905-1909* (1910), *Materials for the Study of Babi Religion* (1918), and *Arabian Medicine* (1921).

[38] Wickens et al., 483-488.

[39] Wickens et al, 483-488.

[40] Browne, *Year Amongst the Persians* (London, A. and C. Black, 1893). See page 11 for Browne's description of his initial tutor, but page 14 for the following passage explaining his need to sit and read poetry with an eccentric "poet-prophet-philosopher of Bawanat" in order to improve his accent: "For I had originally acquired from my Indian friend the erroneous and unlovely pronunciation current in India, which I now abandoned with all possible speed, believed the 'French of Paris' to be preferable to the 'French of Stratford atte Bowe.'"

grounds did he make the comparisons between this text and others with which he had so much more familiarity, and in which he had much more interest? The answers may begin to reveal themselves via a technical analysis of the manuscript itself.

4.1 Technical Analysis of the Kamaru Panchashika abridgement (Browne recension)

As mentioned in Chapter One, the Browne recension of the *Kamaru Panchashika* fits with the six-chapter abridgments that form the bulk of the `ilm-i dam` corpus. The Browne recension is divided into the following sections: (1) the nature of the breath, (2) incantations of actions, (3) problems of the breath, (4) explanations of friends and foes, (5) clarifying questions, (6) reading thoughts, and (7) ascertaining the moment of death. For comparison, the full version of the *Kamaru Panchashika* is divided into six subsections: (1) incantations, (2) answering questioners, (3) predicting good outcomes, (4) the signs of death, (5) love and hate, and (6) breath and positions.[41] As mentioned in Chapter One, the Browne recension opening invocation reads "He is God, the Besought" (*huwa allah al-mustaghath).* In contrast to many of the other entries within this corpus, this is the one and only reference to God within the entire manuscript, whether using the term *Allah*, *al-haqq*, or any other term. After the invocation, the text opens with the couplet, "*har keh 'z dawlat-i asari yafteh / az dam-i sahib asari yafteh.*" This translates to "whoever finds a trace of fortune / has found a trace from the breath of the master (*dam-i sahib)*." The copyist here has misquoted the opening line in a proverbial couplet that reads *har keh 'z dawlat-i asari yafteh / az dam-i sahib nazari yafteh,* the second line of which reads, *hammat mardan chu dar ayad bikar / barg gul tazeh bar-ayad khar*. In sum, the couplet translates as "whoever has found a trace of fortune has found it from the word of an insightful

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[41]Ernst, "Being Careful with the Goddess," 192.

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master. When men's concentration becomes effective, a fresh rose petal emerges from the thorn."

There are several possible reasons for the copyist's rendering of the proverbial couplet. One could be imperfect knowledge, i.e., that he simply made a mistake. Another possibility, and one that I would like to suggest, is that he knew the original couplet but wanted to adjust it ever so slightly for two reasons, only one of which is knowable. The new version of the text fits his allocated space more easily, given that the couplet occupies the first line of the manuscript past the opening invocation. The other possible reason is that somehow the meaning of the new version fits more closely with his understanding of the text and its overall connotations. This, of course, is conjecture that would need to be substantiated through reference to other sources where this couplet appears.

This particular manuscript contains features that distinguish it from others in the corpus. These include the reference to Indic terms such as *maha bhuta* (great elements), mandalas, and mention of rituals involving earth taken from Hindu cremation grounds and used to bring destruction (*halak*) upon someone. Having already discussed the specific typology of the breath in this manuscript (see Chapter Three), the statements occurring immediately before and after the typology are worth unpacking.

4.2 The importance of experience

In the opening passage of the text, as a sort of prefatory remark leading up to the typology of the breath, the text reads that "this should be paid attention to with experience, so that one is able to understand: one should make known from which side one inhales" (*va in bi-tajribeh bayad nagahadasht ta dam dar tuvan yaft: va bayad ma`lum kard keh az kodam janib mi-*

ayad).[42] A key term here is "experience" (*tajribeh*), which is a quality or skill that one is able to acquire over time with the appropriate opportunity and training. This would be in contrast to the idea of these skills developing spontaneously in someone, or perhaps by dint of divine providence. This would mark those possessing knowledge of the breath as different from those with special types of knowledge, such as prophecy, who typically receive their status by virtue of their special character or as ordained by God. The author then moves on to discuss the breath in more detail, establishing that in a twenty-four-hour period there are 21,600 inhalations; this number is consistent across many different texts in the *`ilm-i dam* corpus. Then the author introduces more specific information about the breath.

> They also say that the breath is five-fold, and that there are five elements accounted for, of which four are well-known: namely earth, air, water, and fire, *while the heavenly breath is additional. They say these are the 'great elements.'*[43]

The italicized phrases make two things clear. First, that the author saw the notion of a "heavenly breath" (*dam-i asmani*) as non-normative. Second, this is a prime example of the murky transmission pattern or lineage that plays such a big part in so many entries in the broader corpus. Repeatedly in the text, there are different iterations of "they say" without much explanation of to whom, precisely, the authors are referring. The reference to the *maha bhuta* (great elements) is most notable because it is a transliteration of the Sanskrit or Hindi term into Persian. Unlike Abu'l Fazl's careful transliteration of Sanskrit terms into Persian (see Chapter Two), the anonymous author of this text does not provide any instructions on precisely how one should go about pronouncing this phrase. This could imply that there was no need for such

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[42] *Kamaru Panchashika* abridgment (Browne recension), folio 59b.

[43] *Kamaru Panchashika* abridgment (Browne recension), folio 59b, emphasis added. See Chapter Three for an overview of the five elements as they appear in various *`ilm-i dam* texts reviewed for this project.

instructions in the mind of the author, suggesting that the intended audience would have been familiar with such terms. Another possibility is that keeping the term unfamiliar actually added to the esoteric or exotic allure of the text. Those reading it who were "in the know" would understand the terminology perfectly fine, but those without the necessary knowledge would be left grasping at straws. The fact that this manuscript was acquired in Khuy (in the northeastern region of present-day Iran) rather than in India requires thinking more carefully about making assumptions about the extent of the original readers' knowledge of practices and terms that one might want to construe as "in the air," so to speak, in an Indian environment. I would argue that no matter the well-documented extent to which people and ideas moved back and forth between Mughal and Safavid territories, one cannot presume that the `arif that brought this manuscript to Browne's guide for sale had in fact traveled to India himself. At the end of the typology of the breath, one reads that "each one has a principle, which will be explained" (*va har yek-ra hukumi ast keh gufteh khahad shud*).[44] In the next passage the author provides a certain amount of clarification as to just what type of explanation he will be providing:

> Know that when the breath comes from the right side, it is behind the back and is connected to the sun, and that which it comes from the left side is before the face and is connected to the moon. Since its knowledge is apprehended, after every practice, I will say which breath was good in correspondence to these actions, and which was not good.[45]

Note the use of the term *ma`rifat* in the second sentence of this passage, combined with the Arabic passive participle *ma`lum*. In choosing to render them as "knowledge" and "apprehended," respectively, I acknowledge that there is perhaps more than a little manifestation of the famous Italian proverb "*Traduttore, traditore,*" meaning "translators, traitors." I could also

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[44] *Kamaru Panchashika* abridgment (Browne recension), folio 59b.

[45] *Kamaru Panchashika* abridgment (Browne recension), folio 59b-60a.

render this sentence using *gnosis* for *ma`rifat* and "understood" or "known" for the compound

verb *ma`lum shud*. As noted in the discussion of these key terms in Chapter One, there are

certain issues with rendering *ma`rifat* as *gnosis*, and the authors of the entry on the term in the

second edition of the *Encyclopedia of Islam* argue that the particular valence of *ma`rifat* as

compared with `*ilm* (derived from the same root as *ma`lum*) is difficult to triangulate, as it varies

so much from one author to the next.[46]

In contrast to some of the other texts from the broader corpus, there is only one

occurrence each of *ma`rifat* and `*ilm* in the Browne recension. In comparing the mention of

*ma`rifat* discussed above with the following use of `*ilm*, one can begin to draw a basic

generalization about how the author uses the two terms. From the section "On Clarifying the

Question" (*dar bayan-i su'al*), one reads that

> If the question is 'will I learn knowledge (`*ilm*), be in the ranks of battle,
> or become a bridegroom, or a farmer, or some beneficial action?' if the
> questioner comes from a side where the breath exhales more, then each
> action reaches fulfillment, and if the opposite happens then there will be
> no such action.[47]

Remembering the author's earlier promise to explain the conditions obtaining for both the

success and failure of a desired action or set of circumstances, this passage also illustrates the

author's framing of "knowledge" (`*ilm*) in distinction to the rendering of *ma`rifat*. Knowledge is

placed in a list of pragmatic potential outcomes. Will the questioner "learn knowledge" is of

equal value to whether or not they will engage in military service, get married, become a farmer,

or some other generic beneficial action. This is in contrast with the use of *ma`rifat*, which is

deployed by the author in a solemn opening section to the text as a whole. It may be too far a

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[46] Ed., "`Ilm", in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, ed. P. Bearman et al., consulted online on 17 January 2018 http://dx.doi.org.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_3537.

[47] *Kamaru Panchashika abridgment* (Browne recension), folio 64a.

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stretch to claim that this *is* a case where *gnosis* could be used as a translation of *ma`rifat*, but at minimum it appears that we could qualify it as *esoteric* knowledge.

4.4 Problems of the Breath

There are severe dangers, according to this recension of the *Kamaru Panchashika*, for those who do not know (in any connotation of the term) the state of their breath. At the beginning of the section entitled "Problems of the Breath" (*mushkilat-i dam*), the author writes that, "Just as it brings madness when both breaths exhale out for a full day and night, [likewise] it becomes a problem if you do not know which breath is inhaling for a full day and night" (*chinan-keh az har do dam yek-shabanruz ravad devani-igi arad va agar mushkili shaved nadanad keh kodam dam miravad va yek-shabanruzi biravad*).[48] There is striking resonance between the term used here for madness (*devani-igi*) and what appears in the Amuli recension, where the text refers to the existence of the goddess Kamyak Dev.

4.5 Friends and Enemies

Another section of the text bears the title, "Explanation of Friends and Foes, Whether Man or Woman" (*dar bayan dusti va dushmani khwahu mard va khwahu zan*). We then encounter the line used as an epigraph for Chapter One, that "in this affair, unusual things are discovered, which are strange" (*dar-in muvad umarat-i ghariba payda bi-nayad [ke] 'ajab-ast*).[49] This is a curious statement, signaling to the reader that the contents in this section contain some surprising practices—practices that find no counterpart in the other manuscripts reviewed herein

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[48] *Kamaru Panchashika* abridgment (Browne recension), folio 61a.

[49] *Kamaru Panchashika* abridgment (Browne recension), folio 61b.

from the `ilm-i dam` corpus. Since these are rare occurrences, most of them can be examined in some depth for their relevance to the project at hand. First, there is a practice for creating friendship where there is none:

> If one wishes to make two sisters his friend, for seven days in the morning take a gulp of water with the breath from the left side with the intention of befriending that person at the time of the breath doing down—the goal is obtained.[50]

All in all, this is a fairly innocuous, easy-to-implement practice. Reading through the beginning of the manuscript, one will (in theory) understand the techniques for ascertaining on which side the breath is flowing. The practitioner must simply add the intention (*niyyat*) of becoming friends with the desired person. The next passage builds upon this theme, expanding it through including more and more of the senses:

> If one wishes to make a woman his friend, at that time when the breath exhales from the left, let him take a white wooden stick measuring seven fingers, in her name, and place it beneath her threshold, one reaches the purpose of arriving. At the time when the left breath exhales, give a nice fragrance to someone, so that she smells it, your love appears in her. If at the time when the right breath exhales, you take seven mouthfuls of dirt from under that person's feet, pick them up and mix with some other clay, and draw seven mandalas in front of that person. When the foot of that person reaches the mandala, he will take you as a friend.[51]

Notice that now the focus has shifted from two women to a single woman. Next come practices specifying the manipulation of physical substances. Reminiscent of the typology of the breath in Chapter One, it is not clear exactly how long a single "finger" is, let alone seven of them. Would this be a particular type of finger (the index, the middle, etc.?), and would it differ depending on the practitioner (i.e., would it be seven of the practitioner's finger, or is there a

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[50] *Kamaru Panchashika* abridgment (Browne recension), folio 61b.

[51] *Kamaru Panchashika* abridgment (Browne recension), folios 61b-62a. While I discussed some of these passages in Chapter Three, here I return to them in order to establish the full contours of the manuscript, whereas my earlier treatment focused in on the body and the use of its senses in the science of the breath.

standard measurement system being invoked here)? Next, the author invokes a common enough ritual of giving flowers to one's beloved. Note that the fragrance itself serves as the agent that mediates the transmission of love from the practitioner to their beloved. Then the register shifts slightly, from romantic love to platonic friendship. This time, the way to make someone your friend is to take dirt from under their feet, place that dirt in one's mouth, and then mix it with clay. As I note several times in this section, imagining how this all works in person is quite difficult. One imagines a certain awkwardness if the practitioner attempts to secretly take dirt literally from under the feet of a person—especially someone who is not yet the practitioner's friend—and putting this dirt into one's mouth before mixing it with clay, and then drawing the seven mandalas. The mention of the mandala in and of itself is significant because, like the *maha bhuta* reference discussed above, "mandala" would appear to be a term with clear Indic origin, being the Sanskrit term for "circle," widely interpreted as referring to a magical circle that serves as a focal point for meditative practice. The term is not entirely unknown within Persian literature, for it shows up in Steingass' Persian to English dictionary, defined simply as "a magic circle."[52]

I referenced the next passage in the previous chapter in discussing olfaction. I return to it here with a different emphasis, namely the physical actions involved in the outlined practices:

> If on Tuesday when the breath comes from the moon (*qamar*), one disapproves of an enemy and sits on his left, his enmity becomes friendship. If he wants to cast enmity between two people, at the time of the exhalation of the right breath, one makes one hundred and eighty wounds (*zakhm*) upon an apple tree with an axe while envisioning those two people, enmity shall appear between them. If he burns eight roses with the right breath in their name, mutual enmity (*dushmani yek-digar*) shall appear between them at once. [53]

[52] Francis Joseph Steingass, *A Comprehensive Persian-English dictionary, including the Arabic words and phrases to be met with in Persian literature* (London: Routledge & K. Paul, 1892), 1325.

[53] *Kamaru Panchashika* abridgment (Browne recension), folio 62a.

The violent physicality of this practice is most striking here. Making one hundred and eighty strikes, or wounds (*zakhm*), upon an apple tree is no small feat. Notice also that there is a way for the practitioner to escalate his efforts to sow discord amongst others through burning roses. In order for the practice to be effective, one must combine these external physical actions with knowledge of one's internal physiology (e.g., what type of breath you are experiencing), as well as the mental visualization of the person (or persons) who are the target of the ritual. In the context of the text as a whole, the author's use of the Arabic term *qamar* for moon (instead of the Persian term *mah*) is intriguing. In comparison to other texts in this corpus, this author seems more comfortable using *qamar* and *mah* as synonyms, whereas other authors tended to see the Arabic term as technical or symbolic in nature while using the Persian term to refer to the physical sun or moon.

The next passage raises some fascinating issues with what is possible for someone who wields this knowledge of the breath. The passage reads:

> If he wants that a person to be great, one takes seven pieces of wax in the mouth at the time when the right breath exhales, and make them one piece envisioning his name and watches it, that person will not be able to be distant from him. If you wish to ruin a person from his own position, first burn that wax, at the time of exhaling the right breath one takes seven pieces of earth, taking it in the left hand, and at the time of exhalation, you cast it into running water while intending that person; he becomes ruined.[54]

The question of how this manuscript fits into Sufi literature is intriguing and will be addressed later on, but for now it suffices to note the use of the term *maqam* here appears to be literal more than symbolic. While *maqam* is used to refer to one's "station" or "position" along the spiritual path in Sufi texts, here this is not the case. The first thing to note is the use of wax and the

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[54] *Kamaru Panchashika* abridgment (Browne recension), folio 62a.

requirement that the practitioner utilize their body in very intimate ways in order to properly

manipulate the wax, be it for positive or negative ends. The wax is consecrated through its

manipulation in synchronization with the breath. The positive work is associated with the right

side, while the more negative—or perhaps, more sinister—work is linked to the left side. This is

another example in which the author informs his audience how to manipulate physical

substances—in this case, wax and earth—and connects that manipulation with an interior, mental

state. There is differentiation between a person's name, which must be visualized and watched in

the ritual prescribed for bringing about success, and the person themselves, who is to be at the

center of the practitioner's intentions and thoughts when bringing about ruin. There is even

attention paid to the physical body in a broader sense, for the practitioner must use their left hand

to throw the wax and earth into running water.

The next passage contains material that, using the definitions offered up by Toufic Fahd

and others, would fall into the "black magic" arena:

> At the time of the right breath exhaling one gets some blood from ear of
> the black donkey and the wings of a black crow, from the side of the right
> wing take four feathers, and from the side of the left wing three feathers;
> one burns them in the name of this person, let the crow go; ruin shall come
> to pass upon that person.[55]

While the previous passage involved the implied use of one's saliva through the placement of

wax pieces into one's mouth, this section takes things further through the active manipulation of

blood, specifically from a black donkey and black crow. Note that this is not parsed as a ritual to

be pursued in conjunction with the earlier one, but instead is a separate ritual altogether. That the

author provides the reader with more than one way to bring about an opponent's destruction is

significant because it tells us that the author did not consider any one of these spells to be one-

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[55] *Kamaru Panchashika* abridgment (Browne recension), folio 62b.

hundred-percent effective.

But it is the final passage from this chapter of the Browne recension that represents an apogee of sorts when it comes to altering the affairs of others through manipulating physical substances, especially those of a human variety:

> If you wish that destruction come to pass upon a person, then take the earth from where the Hindus are burned in twenty-one handfuls with the intention of this person and put white glue on top. It increases the fire of the wood. At the time of the right breath exhaling, one packs that earth and glue twenty-one times into fire; destruction shall pass upon that person.[56]

This is one of the most striking passages in the entire text for two key reasons. First, the violent nature of the actions described, combined with the fetishization of ground infused with cremated human remains, demands some explanation. The use of the glue is incredibly practical, because the burning (or might one phrase it as a re-cremation?) of the remains is key to the ritual. If (and only if) one takes as a given that Muslim burial practices typically do not include cremation, what then is the implied value of using human remains that have been cremated and reduced to nothing more than ash? The author describes a vivid and intense relationship between (deceased) human matter, the earth into which these ashes have penetrated, the practitioner's physical body, the practitioner's mental or imaginative faculty, and a completely different person altogether— the person upon whom the practitioner seeks to wreak destruction.

Second, more broadly speaking, this passage raises many questions about the intended audience for this text, especially because E.G. Browne purchased the manuscript in northeastern Iran. Where is the hypothetical intended reader of this text supposed to go in order to find a

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[56] *Kamaru Panchashika* abridgment (Browne recension), folio 62b-63a. See Carl Ernst, "Enigmas of Translation," 7, for treatment of a comparable passage in the full-length *Kamaru Panchashika*, albeit one in which the equivalent word for *ḥalak* (destruction) is obscured by being depicted "by figures resembling the occult alphabets familiar from Arabic writings such as the *Shams al-Ma`arif* of al-Buni."

Hindu cremation ground in this setting? The existence of a Hindu community in this region of present-day Iran is not out of the question by any means, but it does seem that it would have been rare.[57] Such a likely local constraint is evidence for the wide-ranging circulation of `ilm-i dam texts, in this case contained within a larger manuscript alongside Shabistari's *gulshan-i raz* ("Rose Garden of Mystery"), and an anonymous text on dream interpretation. I would argue that since the `ilm-i dam text is clearly not the focus of the manuscript, it constitutes one example of the "strange and usual" matters, to paraphrase the text's author, that were given space in the recension.

4.6 Responding to Questions

The next section of the manuscript is entitled "on clarifying the question," in which the author used the terms `ilm and *ma`rifat*. One minor but noteworthy terminological shift that he made in this section was the switch within a single passage from the term *janib* for side to the term *tarf*. Both are Arabic in origin, but it is not clear what possible difference in connotation there could be. The specific passage deals with the question of whether or not a person will recover from a poisonous snake bite.[58] Even if there is not a discernible difference in the author's mind, we could view this as evidence for his knowledge of and comfort with Arabic.

In the following section, techniques for apprehending the thoughts of others are presented. Titled *dar bayan zamir-guftan*, or "on clarifying reading thoughts," the verb *guftan*

[57] Given the growing scholarly literature on the construction of Hinduism as a distinct religious identity, an additional question here would be what we mean precisely by a "Hindu" community. For a few relatively recent monographs on the subject, see David Lorenzen, *Who Invented Hinduism? Essays on Religion in History* (Yoda Press, 2006); Brian K. Pennington, *Was Hinduism Invented? Britons, Indians, and the Colonial Construction of Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); and Gavin Flood, *An Introduction to Hinduism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

[58] *Kamaru Panchashika* abridgment (Browne recension), folio 63b.

("to speak") perhaps indicates the oral nature of this activity. This is similar to the ways in which the Arabic terms *kalam* and *mutakallum* carry a literal meaning of "speech" and "one who speaks," but which contextually refer to speculative theology and theologians, respectively.

> If a person comes and says, "What am I thinking?" consider your own breath (*dam-i khud bangaz*). If the breath exhales earthy, say that your thoughts (*andisheh*) are of a vegetable (*nabatat*). If the breath exhales windy or watery, say that your thoughts are of an animal (*hayvani*). If the breath exhales fiery, say that your thoughts are forbidden (*maḥrami*). If your breath exhales heavenly, say that you have not intended a single thought (*hich andisheh kazj nakardeh*).[59]

This passage illustrates the general type of differentiations and classifications that the author claims are possible when reflecting on one's thoughts while layering the different types of breaths. How we are supposed to value or interpret these labels (vegetable, animal, forbidden, no thought) is implicit; it certainly seems to be the case that the heavenly breath is better than the others, in particular the fiery breath.

There are several examples of *`ilm al-hurruf* (numerology, lettrism) in this text. For instance, the text says that if someone comes and asks simply, "Will I perform an action, or I make a request," the reader should "count the letters of his [the questioner's] name (*harf-i nam-u bigirad*), if it should be odd (*taq*) and the breath exhales, this work will come to pass, and if the name should be even (*juft*) and the left breath exhales, this work will not come to pass."[60] This requires the practitioner to be familiar with the numerical values attached to each letter in the alphabet, otherwise known as the *abjad* system, in which each letter is assigned a numeric value.

4.7 Determining the end of life

The final section is entitled "Length and Ending of Life" (*ṭul va fana'yi 'amr*). While the term used here for "ending" (*fana'*) is much-used in Sufi texts to refer to the annihilation of the

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[59] *Kamaru Panchashika* abridgment (Browne recension), folio 65a.

[60] *Kamaru Panchashika* abridgment (Browne recension), folio 65a-65b.

lower self (*nafs*), it is unclear if the author here uses it with the same connotation. The passage itself contains precise instructions for "the person who wants to know how much of his life remains" (*kasi khwahad keh bidand chizi az 'amr 'z-u baqi mandeh ast*):

> …let him go to the desert at the time when the sun has come up and is high, he shall then face towards the west. He will be standing so that the shadow is opposite him evenly on the ground. He should not move, but sets two hands on the knee and meditates so that no other thoughts shall enter his thoughts and at this time lifts up his head with deliberation so that he stands without distraction, at that time his gaze will be above and he will see himself in the middle of the air appearing extremely large and white.[61]

The remaining lines provide some specific outcomes depending on what precisely the practitioner sees in this meditative state. The possibilities include long life, one month left, two years left, death in a single year, imminent death, and death after eleven days.[62]

Using these types of visualization techniques to predict the moment of one's demise is a consistent component of the `ilm-i dam` corpus. This is the closest thing to `ilm-i vahm` ("the science of visualization or imagination") in the Browne recension in terms of specific practices. In what is a helpful contrast between `ilm-i dam` and other types of breathing techniques, such as *pranayama*, where the practitioner attempts to achieve a specific spiritual state through controlling their breathing, the passage at the beginning of this manuscript does contain some directions, but they mostly have to do with counting the number of breaths one makes in a day and a night. Those instructions are limited to tips for understanding how to classify one's breath according to solar or lunar affiliation, or which of the five elements maps onto it most clearly. Beyond the breathing techniques described, which largely map onto the material covered above, this passage includes specific instructions on bodily posture. Much of the earlier material from

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[61] *Kamaru Panchashika* abridgment (Browne recension), folio 65b.

[62] *Kamaru Panchashika* abridgment (Browne recension), folio 65b.

the text contains no instructions and very little information that would allow us to answer natural questions such as "What does it look like to practice `*ilm-i dam*?" Given these last instructions, at last one may have a little bit of clarity.

After finishing the section on the length and circumstances surrounding the end of one's life, the author concludes the text by stating that "thus I have written at the rest of a friend" (*bikhwahesh dusti qalm gardam*), before providing a date of the final day of Holy Muharram, year 1223 Hijri (*salkh-i muharram al-haram suna 1223*). The term *salkh* literally means "snake skin," but here is understood to refer to the final day of the month. In fitting style, given that he began the text with a couplet, he ends with the lines, "I wrote so the work remains as a memory/ I don't remain, the writing remains forever" (*man navashtam ta bimanad yad gar/man namanam khatt bemanad ruz digar*).[63]

As noted earlier, Browne refers to this text as pertaining to "the mystical science of managing the breath."[64] On what grounds did he make this assessment, that this science was mystical in nature? It is here that considering the manuscript in its totality will be of great assistance. The bulk of it is taken up with a copy of Mahmud Shabistari's mystical poem, the *Gulshan-i Raz* ("Rose Garden of Mystery"), composed in the early fourteenth-century.[65] This poem came to be highly regarded by Persian-speaking audiences, and its importance was first noted by Europeans due to a French traveler and physician from the seventeenth-century, Jean Chardin, who referred to it as a type of "somme théologique" for Persian Sufis.[66] This status, of

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[63] *Kamaru Panchashika* abridgment (Browne recension), folio 66a.

[64] E.G. Browne, *A Year Amidst the Persians*, 54.

[65] See Leonard Lewisohn, *Beyond Faith and Infidelity: The Sufi Poetry and Teachings of Mahmud Shabistari* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press, 1995).

[66] Bruijn, J.T.P. de, "Maḥmud B. ʿAbd al-Karim b. Yaḥya Shabistari," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Second Edition, ed. P. Bearman et al, consulted online on 01 August 2017 http://dx.doi.org.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/10.1163/1573-

which Browne was surely aware, served as the primary signifier for him (and subsequent scholars) to classify this *Kamaru Panchashika* recension as also "mystical" or "Sufi" in nature. The manuscript then includes a brief anonymous text on dream interpretation, before concluding with the `ilm-i dam* text.

5 - Comparing Two Recensions of the *Kamaru Panchashika*

I have identified and analyzed a group of texts that I argue form a class that I (repeatedly) refer to as "the `ilm-i dam* corpus." Central to that corpus is the *Kamaru Panchashika,* which stands as a baseline against which all the other entries can be measured. This is due to the presumption that the *Kamaru Panchashika* is the earliest and longest rendition of this material in Persian, and that subsequent Persian (as well as Arabic and Urdu) translations would be based upon the longer text in some way. In contrast to the full *Kamaru Panchashika*, both the Browne and the Amuli recensions are much shorter and do not contain many of the explicit references to Hindu or Muslim practices that one would recognize using today's categories. There are no mantras, no mentions of a mosque at all, no hadith narratives or mention of the Prophet Muhammad, and no Qur'anic references. While the *Kamaru Panchashika* includes attempted transliterations from Sanskrit into Persian, the Browne recension features only one remotely comparable instance—that of the *maha bhuta*—and even there, the transliteration was done with comfort and ease by the copyist. The only mention of God is in the opening invocation, "He is God, the Besought" [*huwa allah al-mustaghath*]. That "the Besought" is one of God's ninety-nine names is significant, as it helps situate the text and makes an overt link to Muslim communities, but the lack of other "Islamicate" references is equally significant.

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There are some important comparisons to be made between the Browne recension and the Arabic translation of the *Amritakunda*. It includes the five elements of the breath (chap. 2, para 2, excluding reference to *maha bhuta*), problems of the breath (chap. 7, para. 10), using *mandala*s (chap. 9; noting that where the Browne recension prescribes the use of *mandala*s for enticing someone to notice and perhaps fall in love with you, in the Arabic version of the *Amritakunda*, one uses *mandala*s to summon goddesses), and predicting one's death (chap. 8; a far more detailed treatment than the one in the Browne recension). In comparing the two recensions, it is helpful to compare them not only to one another but also to the full-length *Kamaru Panchashika*. In doing so, it is clear that these later abridgments tended to take their contents from the first quarter of the full text, excluding the material from later chapters such as shakti, mantras, and yoginis.

Flood cautions against obscuring what was at times a contentious negotiation of power and influence between various communities in South Asia, and in particular the sorts of retroactive chauvinism that limits the subjectivity and agency of the individuals within those communities. "In one case the premodern subject is a permanent prisoner of his or her 'Hindu' or 'Muslim' identity; in the other, bludgeoned into a perpetual performance of harmonious hybridity."[67] Thus there must be another space wherein artifacts that refuse categorization—such as the Browne recension—can exist. This will perhaps result in a jettisoning of terms like "Islamicate" or "Sanskritic," but it may also result in redefining the goals of scholarship on Islam and Hinduism, as well as Iran and India.

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[67] Finbar Flood, *Objects of Translation: Material Culture and Medieval "Hindu-Muslim" Encounter* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 266.

6 - `ilm-i dam in Contemporary Iranian Esoteric Circles

Thus far I have examined when and how two different recensions of the *Kamaru Panchashika* abridgment make their way into Persian circles from the pre-modern to early-modern periods. There are several key sources that provide evidence for the sustained interest in the science of the breath in contemporary Iran. The Shi'i theologian Mulla Ahmad Naroqi (d. 1827) wrote prolifically during the Qajar-era in Iran. In one of his key publications, the *Khaza'in* ("Treasuries"), he included eight pages adapted from Amuli's encyclopedia entry in the *Nafa'is al-funun*. Naroqi largely followed Amuli's text, except that he offered a larger selection from the *Kamaru Panchashika*, meaning that he had independent access to a fuller version. He diverged from Amuli by offering material on predicting the future using knowledge of the breath instead of the advice on love and hate, the elemental breaths, and incantations.[68] Another encyclopedia from the Qajar-era, *Kashf al-sanayi`,* includes a rewritten version of the six-chapter abridgement taken from the *Khaz'in*, as well as an extra chapter on the merits of the breath, as well as information on sciences imported from Europe.[69]

Nur al-Din Chahardihi provides another example of Iranian interest in Indian esotericism, this time through the book *Asrar-i panhani: maktab-i yug* ("Hidden Secrets: The Book of Yoga"). Published in 1990, this eclectic work contains material on Zen Buddhism, the Upanishads, a reference to pre-Islamic Zoroastrian traditions in Persian such as the *A'in-i Hushang*, and other mystical practices. In his introduction, he describes his goal as being to

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[68] Ahmad Naraqi, Khaza'in, Dar ma`arifat-i dam, http://mbook.ir/content/166/6280/%D8%AF%D8%B1-%D9%85%D8%B9%D8%B1%D9%81%D8%AA-%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%85-%D8%AF%D9%85%E2%80%8C/, accessed on January 17, 2018.

[69] For a short article on this encyclopedia, see Fariba Afkari, "Kashf al-ṣanayi`, da'ira al-ma`arifī-i arzishmand dar ḥawza-i ṣan`at, hunar ,  `ulum o funun-i Iran-i `asr-i Qajar," Kitab-i mah kulliyat (Azar-Day 1385/December 2006), 73-74, ahttp://islamicdatabank.com/ViewArticle.aspx?ArticleID=12066686, accessed on January 17, 2018. The manuscript of Kashf al-ṣanayi` can be seen online at http://dl.nlai.ir/UI/7297ed51-2f33-41eb-acf0-2d549353ad82/LRRView.aspx?PageNo=93&Term=%D8%A7f%D8%A8f

provide the youth of Iran with the benefit of his many years' worth of practice *(riyazat)*, which has included a rigorous exploration of the different mystical techniques he describes.[70] At the end of the book, he provides a text that is largely based on the *Muhit-i ma`arifat* ("Ocean of Knowledge"), which itself is a Persian text based on a Hindi *svarodaya* text written by Charan Dasa in the twelfth-century CE. It includes a broad survey of yogic meditation practices, including several with direct relevance to `ilm-i dam*. Specifically, chapters seventeen and eighteen are entitled *dar ma`rifat-i nafas-i chap* and *dar ma`rifat-i nafas-i rast*. Chapter twenty-one is entitled `alamat-i dam zadan*, while chapter twenty-five is entitled *"habs-i dam"* (with the quotation marks original). Chahardihi's treatment includes a great deal of poetry interspersed with explication of the *Muhit-i ma`arifat*, and draws on many of the same topics under examination here.

In even more recent times, a version of Naroqi's text has been posted to a website dedicated to the life and teachings of Ayatollah Hassan Zadeh Amuli.[71] This more modern Amuli is known for his interest in `ulum al-ghariba*, and he is also the one who edits the most widely used edition of Naroqi's *Khaza'in*. Posted on April 10, 2013, this text speaks to the very recent engagement with `ilm-i dam*. It is largely a recasting of the text that the earlier Amuli included in the *Nefais al-funun.* The author begins with a preamble stating that while "among the scholars of Islam and the Iranians it [i.e., the science of yoga] is not common," and that there is an abridged version of the text in the *Nafa'is al-funun*, there is nonetheless an importance to this knowledge:

> One of the scholars of Islam who had made a journey to India and had acquired the scent of that . . . and one of the Brahmin Jogis had produced and composed an abbreviated book explaining that science, and he [the Muslim scholar] conveyed some of that to the Persian language, and since

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[70] Nur al-Din Chahardihi, *Asrar panhani: Maktab-i Yug* (Chapkhane Diba: Sahafi Tajiki), 5.

[71] Hassan Zadeh Amuli, "Ma'rifat-i 'ilm-i dam" ("Esoteric Knowledge of the Science of the Breath"), http://ansarolmahdiirdemousa.mihanblog.com/post/432. Accessed on January 9, 2017.

there are many benefits in the information of that science, here I relate a summary of that.[72]

Within the text proper, the author refers to the existence the goddess Kamyakh Dev, rituals dedicated to her, and of sixty-four women who are *sahiran* (magicians?), and who travel around the world in different forms. Additionally, the author claims that Indians have worked to translate the text into Persian, and that "amongst them, no book is more lofty than this" (*dar mian-i ishan kitab-i shariftarin-an nist*).[73] What book, precisely, is the author referring to? None other than the *Kamaru Panchashika*.[74]

All of these various sources on the science of the breath demonstrate (and document) the specifics of how particular versions of the `*ilm-i dam*` corpus have made their way from the pre- and early-modern era manuscript sources into printed texts and, now, online publications. The fact that European scholars and colonial-era officers engaged with the science of the breath from within the framework of orientalism is not very surprising. By contrast, it will be surprising to many that this type of material has so frequently found an audience outside of India and in Iran. As authors such as Melvin-Koushki and Stearns have argued, the fact that modern scholars are not expecting this type of interest in occultism has much more to do with our collective (and received) limitations than it does with the actual historical evidence for how intellectual circles in present-day Iran interacted with these particular practices over the centuries. Additionally, as the material on Abu'l Fazl has demonstrated, classifying the science of the breath as a type of magic and occultism is only one option. That Abu'l Fazl (and his likely Brahmin sources) sifted *svarodaya* out separately from *indra-jala*, while the early Amuli and subsequent interpreters

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[72] Translation adapted from Carl W. Ernst, "Enigmas of Translation."

[73] Amuli, "Ma'rifat-i 'ilm-i dam."

[74] Although it should be noted that the author uses a corrupted transliteration that reads as "kamaru bihasinka."

included *`ilm-i dam* with *`ulum al-ghariba,* reveals something beyond the obviously constructed nature of these categories and their contents: in the linguistic and cultural translation from *svarodaya* to *`ilm-i dam*, there is a type of code-switching that takes place. While the literal translation of the texts from Sanskrit and Persian into a third language—such as English— reveals so much overlap so as to make one corpus indistinguishable from the other, at the same time the way in which each corpus is effectively housed within the broader framework of knowledge production in the applicable language means that the texts are distinctive from one another. Future inquiries must be made of the *svarodaya* corpus in order to properly understand how it, too, has been classified within (sets of?) categories that are also constructed—and have been constructed differently—in particular times and places.

At the same time, it would be a mistake to read the work of Naroqi and the more recent Amuli as if it they exist in a vacuum. Occultism, after all, is a very broad category, and there are a great many religious (and governmental) officials in post-revolution Iran who are invested in policing the boundaries between religion and types of practices—or even effects—that differ from a range of acceptable "orthodox" orientations. Alireza Doostdar and Ata Anzali's recent contributions to the field provide much-needed context. The former's work analyzes the debates around religious Spiritism and psychical research found in the first half of the twentieth-century in Iran. Doostdar argues that government officials and other intellectuals sought to integrate modern (European) sciences within their own frameworks, and that eventually Shi'i clerics— including none other than Ruhollah Khomeini—would come to use the methods and insights of Spiritism as part of their ongoing reform efforts.[75] Addressing the prominent role of modern science in Iran, as well as Muslim societies more generally, Doostdar concludes that, "the power

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[75] Alireza Doostdar, "Empirical Spirits: Islam, Spiritism, and the Virtues of Science in Iran," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 58, no. 2 (2016), 335-336.

of the modern sciences in Iran was not built in spite of deep-seated moral and religious

commitments, but partly because of them."[76] In the same way that Hasan Zadeh Amuli's

treatment of an "Indian" practice such as `ilm-i dam may raise the eyebrows of those with a more

narrow definition of appropriately Islamic fields of knowledge production, so too would the

same observer be surprised at the description that Doostdar provides of Iranian clerics who

sought audience with long-departed religious leaders via psychic mediums and related rituals.

My point here is that this type of definition is narrow because it fails to account for the full range

of activities undertaken by religious leaders in Iran over the past century, to say nothing of the

centuries before.

In the case of Ata Anzali, his work brings to light the debate over the acceptability of

`irfan, usually translated as "mysticism," in contradistinction with *tasavvuf* (Sufism). Anzali

works to untangle the reasons that these two terms seen so different, especially within the corners

of the religious establishment in Iran today.[77] Anzali argues that during the Safavid period, the

rise of *ziyarat* to the shrines, especially those considered very pious, brought with it an important

shift in which "quasi-magical and magical practices such as charm writing (*du`a navisi*),

prognostication based on the Qur'an (*istikhara*), and the use of talismans, which had previously

been the domain of dervishes and Sufis, were increasingly taken up by a class of professional

mullas who did not hesitate to claim exclusive authority over these practices."[78] There is a link

here between patterns and habits of knowledge acquisition established much earlier during the

Safavid period, and the continuing modern-day interest in occultism (a term whose valence often

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[76] Doostdar, 343.

[77] Ata Anzali, *"Mysticism" in Iran: The Safavid Roots of a Modern Concept* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2017), 1-9.

[78] Anzali, 107.

includes, if not outright encompasses, the realm of magic) in the Persian context. That a contemporary official such as Hassan Zadeh Amuli would be interested in `ilm-i dam` is much less surprising than one might expect.

7 - Conclusion

In this chapter, I have argued for a sustained interest in `ilm-i dam` within Persianate circles, with an emphasis on the territory encompassed by modern-day Iran. The various versions of the *Kamaru Panchashika* abridgments testify to that interest, as well as providing important evidence for the interpretive battles taking place within the communities preserving and sharing these practices. Through comparing the full version of this key text to the abridgements, I have demonstrated the precise nature of the negotiations taking place within these interpretive communities. Most of these negotiations center on the extent to which the Indian-ness or foreign-ness of the practices may be balanced with looking at them as possessing a type of knowledge that is universally applicable, e.g., the notion that *anyone* can make use of these practices, regardless of one's sectarian affiliation. There is rarely a documented need to explicitly justify engaging with these texts; instead their very Indian-ness appears to satisfy any questions as to their validity. Amuli's classification of `ilm-i dam` (and `ilm-i vahm`) with the natural sciences *and Sufism* is the prime evidence that breathing practices were not originally thought of as being "mystical" in nature as much as they were part and parcel of practical knowledge. The things that one does to navigate the challenges of everyday life require all manner of tools, and the allure of being able to take advantage of a universally available tool such as the breath was very tempting. By the time of E.G. Browne's acquisition of another version of the *Kamaru Panchashika* abridgment in Khuy in the late 19th century, the material has been re-packaged so that it is

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included with a widely read and very popular Sufi treatise by Shabistari, the aforementioned *Gulshan-i raz*. Somewhere from the 14th to the 19th century, changes took place in classifications and attitudes towards this material so that it became linked to Sufism. And yet this classification did not hold, for the way that Naroqi and Ayatollah Hasan Zadeh Amuli engage these texts indicates that they were once again being seen as part of `*ulum-i ghariba*, the "occult sciences." Seeing this change in classification over time is evidence for the constructed nature of these categories. The text under consideration from one example to the next is largely the same; the key subject of interrogation is rather the framework in which these texts are contained. These frameworks constitute the *medium* that I see as the site of my analysis. As such, the frameworks are equally important aspects of the *message*. This methodological choice on my part is applied again in the following chapter, in which I examine the European reception of `*ilm-i dam*.

Chapter 5 – "Orientalist Legacies: European Reception of *`ilm-i dam*"

"*This book is largely made up of Hindu customs which, in India, have become part of Muhammadanism*, but we shall endeavour to confine ourselves to a consideration of those sections which exhibit the so-called science as it exists in its relation to Islam."[1]

>   Thomas Patrick Hughes, *Dictionary of Islam* (1885), on the *Javahir-i Khamsa* of Muhammad Ghawth

"But if the initial framework of Sufiism was specifically Muslim and Arab, *it is not exactly useless to identify the foreign decorative elements which came to be added to this framework and flourished there.*" [2]

>   Louis Massignon, *Encyclopedia of Islam* (1936)

1 - Discursive traditions and frameworks

This chapter shifts the frame of reference from the Persian setting to that of the European

reception and interpretation of *`ilm-i dam*. Since the previous chapter interrogated how this

material circulated and filtered through various intellectual circles in Iran, the present chapter

examines the historical arc along which European scholars operating in different roles (i.e.,

missionary, diplomat, colonial officer, librarian, etc.) actively contributed to the way that *`ilm-i

dam* is classified within the Euro-American academy today. More accurately, this will be an

analysis of how these contributions lead up to the present moment, in which practices such as

using knowledge of the breath for divination purposes are rarely accepted as fitting within the

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[1] Thomas Patrick Hughes, *Dictionary of Islam, A Dictionary of Islam, Being a Cyclopedia of the Doctrines, Rites, Ceremonies, and Customs, Together with the Technical and Theological Terms, of the Muhammadan Religion* (Delhi: Oriental Publishers, 1973 [1885]), 74, emphasis added.

[2] Louis Massignon, "Tassawuf," *Encyclopedia of Islam* vol. 8, 684-685, emphasis added.

implicit and explicit definitions of Islam. This classification means that the very idea of people

engaging in said practices while simultaneously claiming to be Muslim leads to a type of

cognitive dissonance. That this dissonance is stronger in the modern period—and arguably

within both Muslim and non-Muslim circles—speaks to the particular ways in which Islam has

been defined by the formation of religious identities as far more rigid today than they were

previously.

I am referencing Talal Asad's notion of a "discursive tradition" as described in the

famous 1986 essay, "The Idea of an Anthropology of Islam." In particular one passage has

received significant attention: "If one wants to write an anthropology of Islam, one should begin,

as Muslims do, from the concept of a discursive tradition that includes and relates itself to the

founding texts of the Qur'an and the Hadith."[3] It is curious that an anthropologist would

emphasize text at the expense of lived practice, but in a recent interview Asad clarifies his

thoughts on this passage, especially the three words italicized above. The "crucial point" for

understanding the full valence of a discursive tradition in the case of Islam requires appreciating

the diverse manifestations of those "living-as-a-Muslim" and, even more importantly, the extent

of the "disagreements among people who identify themselves as Muslims" when it comes to

understanding the core roots of their actions and beliefs.[4] Put more plainly, there are many

different ways of claiming to be Muslim, and Asad wants his readers to keep that in mind when

contemplating a conceptual framework that appears to flatten out the contours of such diverse

constituents. This raises the question of the unavoidable conflicts when one faction seeks to

elevate its own position over and above that of others, thus exercising a coercive amount of force

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[3] Talad Asad, "The Idea of an Anthropology of Islam," *Qui Parle* 17 (No. 2, 2009), 20, emphasis added.

[4] Basit Iqbal, "Thinking about Method: A Conversation with Talal Asad," *Qui Parle* 26 (No.1 June 2017), 200.

over the discourse that forms (and informs) said tradition. Asad cautions that his discursive

tradition "is not a bubble in which one is located but a set of aspirations, sensibilities,

commitments, and relationships of subjects who live and move in the different times of a

common world."[5] This rendering is much more dynamic than his initial articulation. In this

chapter on the European reception of `ilm-i dam, I juxtapose Asad's dynamic and creative

understanding of Islam alongside the fixed and frozen version found in Orientalist depictions.

There are several questions that arise repeatedly throughout this chapter. What did

European scholars who worked with Muslim communities in the Middle East and South Asia

think about these breathing practices? Edward Granville Browne and Alfred von Kremer are the

main examples because of the role that each played in building up the scholarly bulwark of

knowledge about Islam and Muslims during the mid- to late-colonial period of the late-19th and

early 20th centuries. Not only did their work attain a wide level of circulation and acceptance, but

they also played a role in bringing knowledge of `ilm-i dam to European audiences. What

motivated these individuals to study Muslim history, and what were the methods that they used

to do so? What types of links may be traced between their contributions from over a century ago

and the types of knowledge-production projects initiated within the Euro-American academy

during the decades since? To answer this last question, I examine a series of publications that

were widely read and thus can be elevated in status to exemplars of the type of scholarship on

Islam and Muslims produced after both von Kremer and Browne engaged with `ilm-i dam. These

publications are Thomas Arnold's *The Dictionary of Islam* (1885), and the *Encyclopedia of Islam*

(first published in 1913-1938; second edition 1954-2005; volumes from the third edition

beginning in 2007). As I have stated in previous chapters, the reception of `ilm-i dam and its

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[5] Iqbal, 200-201.

classification alongside other aspects of Muslim belief and practice has consequences for the ways that scholars theorize the boundaries of religious identity. An important aspect of that theorization is the relationship between Islam and Sufism. The tendency within Orientalist scholarship has been to place `ilm-i dam in the same category as Islamic mysticism, most typically termed Sufism, in large part because the Islamic credentials of Sufism were seen as questionable at best, and derivative from Christianity and/or Hinduism or Buddhism at worst.

2 - Interpreting `ilm-i dam: Alfred von Kremer and Edward Granville Browne

While the contents of the two recensions of the *Kamaru Panchashika* abridgment are similar, the contexts in which they appear and the way in which interpreters received them differs greatly. This last point is perhaps even more—or at least, equally—illustrative of these texts' importance than the detailed textual analysis that maps out precise terminological similarities and variances. These texts do not exist in any kind of vacuum, but rather are deeply embedded in particular historical contexts with implications labeled as political, religious, cultural, intellectual, or otherwise. Regardless of the category into which scholars place a text or the implications of the manner in which it has been classified, the central issue begging for attention is that of power and the regimes thereof. What does E.G. Browne mean when referring to one recension of the *Kamaru Panchashika* abridgment as a "Sufi" text? What are the implications when Austrian Orientalist Alfred von Kremer finds evidence for the corruption of "pure" "Arab" Sufism—stemming from the influence of Hindu teachings—when he examines Sufism in South Asia? The first text within this body of literature was first introduced to European scholarly audiences through the published work of Austria diplomat Alfred von Kremer, which means that far more people were exposed to von Kremer's recension of the *Kamaru Panchashika*

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abridgement than to that of Browne. As I demonstrate below, von Kremer's interpretation raises a host of different questions about European understandings of `ilm-i dam`.

There are two distinct but very closely related threads to be traced. The first is a traditional comparative textual analysis, while the second is about the reception history of these texts, using that reception history to extrapolate how these breathing texts play a role in modern-day academic constructions of religion, especially in South Asia. This includes an awareness of the texts as physical objects that also come to play a role in the scholarly construction of Muslim religious practice in South Asia, Persia, and beyond. Rather than treat these two threads completely separately, the methodology I embrace here is decidedly rhizomatic in nature, with multiple entry points, following the model of the warren that Deleuze and Guattari set forth in *A Thousand Plateaus*.[6] The key characteristics of the more horizontally-oriented rhizome (as compared to the arboreal tap root model that is hierarchical or vertical in orientation) described by Deleuze and Guattari in *A Thousand Plateaus* is best summed up as looking for multiple entry points to a discursive tradition, being open to cross-pollination between communities and their respective forms of cultural production, and "grabbing the blade of grass by the middle," as it were.[7]

Philological analysis, while a foundational part of so much scholarship, is empty if performed without due attention to the manner in which the *objects* of said analysis have been positioned by outside actors, who in turn benefited from the analysis. We as scholars fail to do our subjects much justice if we neglect to discuss the power dynamics at play in knowledge

[6] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, trans. Brian Massumi, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 12-13.

[7] *The Diaries of Franz Kafka*, ed. Max Brod, trans. Joseph Kresh (New York: Schocken, 1948), 12, cited in Deleuze and Guattari, trans. Brian Massumi, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 23, n. 22.

production, particularly in the context of European (here, British) imperial expansion and control

of India. While E.G. Browne and Alfred von Kremer introduce their respective versions of the

Kamaru Panchashika in different ways, they are unified in the fact that the end result of both

presentations is to create a version of Islam, and Sufism in particular, that fits very particular

Orientalist agendas characteristic of nineteenth-century European scholarship. In weighing these

various perspectives on Islam, Sufism, and the relationship between them, Thomas Hughes'

Dictionary of Islam, published in England and India in the latter stages of the nineteenth century,

as well as relevant entries once again from the different editions of the *Encyclopedia of Islam* are

invaluable. In reviewing these key reference works utilized by scholars of Islam over the past

century and beyond, the regimes of knowledge were constructed to put forward particular

viewpoints on issues such as religion vs. magic, and concepts such as Muslim communal self-

determination vs. a "need" to be brought under the control of "civilizing" bodies and enterprises

such as those thought to be found in the British colonial venture.

3 - Alfred von Kremer and the Interpretation of Amuli's `ilm-i dam text

A key difference between Amuli's recension of the *Kamaru Panchashika* and the

recension purchased by Browne is their reception by European scholars. Where Browne's

account received scant notice, being barely worthy of a footnote in his travelogue, Amuli's text

was included in an important work published in German by Austrian diplomat and Orientalist

Alfred von Kremer (1828-1889). Stationed at various times in Cairo and Beirut, he studied

Muslim communities in general as well as Egypt in particular.[8] In contrast with the scores of

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[8] He published (1875–77) *A History of Oriental Civilization under the Khalifs*, which firmly established his reputation as an Orientalist. Other important works were: *Egypt* (1863); *Legends of Southern Arabia* (1866); *History of the Dominant Ideas of Islam* (1868); and *The Idea of Nationality and the State* (1885).

British Orientalists who held administrative positions in addition to publishing scholarly works, Von Kremer's status as a "scholar diplomat" (*Privatgelehrter*) marks him as a bit of an outlier when compared to Orientalists from Germany and Austria.[9] This is mostly because these two countries had almost no colonies to administer,[10] so most of the scholarship on the Middle East and South Asia during the 18th and 19th centuries came squarely out of university environments. Apart from his diplomatic postings, von Kremer traveled to Istanbul and Syria in 1849, "funded by the academy of sciences at Vienna for the purpose of buying manuscript collections."[11] In a list summarizing work by German and Austrian Orientalists, von Kremer is credited with 60 publications, which is actually considerably more than scholarly luminaries more well-known in the English-speaking academy for their work on various aspects of Islamic studies.[12]

From Fück one also develops a sense of how von Kremer understood the entity of the state in relationship to culture and religion:

> Von Kremer considered the state to be a sociological phenomenon, the emergence, development and collapse of which are subject to its own laws, and which is inextricably linked to all manifestations of culture. Based on philosophical idealism, von Kremer finds the driving forces, which determine the individual from the character of the state, in the ideas whose effects are likewise manifested in politics, the constitution,

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[9] Ursula Wokoeck, *German Orientalism: The Study of the Middle East and Islam from 1800 to 1945* (London and New York: Routledge, 2009), 84.

[10] Von Kremer's work also contains some of the nationalist jockeying and critiquing that went back and forth equally in academic as in political or military circles. He notes that while France and Germany produce "volume after volume of sound scholarship on Oriental and particularly Islamic subjects, England shows but listless indifference towards such studies. It is all the more astonishing when we take into account the intimate relation which subsists between her and Muslim countries…[W]e have been noticing among English writers a marked tendency towards holding up to the world the tyrannical acts of isolated Caliphs and thereby showing that Islam breeds vices of the worse type and fosters nothing but hatred and bitterness towards non-Muslims" (von Kremer, 234).

[11] Wokoeck, n. 29, 300.

[12] Wokoeck, 224-225. These include Helmut Ritter (42 publications, especially Persian Sufism), Gustav Flügel (40, Qur'anic studies), and Joseph Schacht (35, Islamic law), among others. This list of contributions stands in some contrast with Johannes Fück's assessment of von Kremer: "But detailed philological work was not his thing" (*Doch war philologische Kleinarbeit nicht seine Sache*), Johann Fück, *Die Arabishchen Studien in Europa: Bis in Den Anfang Des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Leipzig: Otto Harrassowitz, 1955), 188. My thanks to Karen Williams for her assistance with translating Fück's account of von Kremer's life and career.

administration and legislation as well as in religion, culture and beliefs. Intellectual life is characterized by the constant struggle between conflicting ideas; as the struggle weakens, culture degenerates and ends in the religious and social circumstances which von Kremer saw in contemporary Islam.[13]

These are the sweeping, broad brush strokes of scholarly constructions of societies encompassing incredibly diverse communities, whose ties to one another hang on the notion of Islam as a universalizing signifier operating to unify distinct groups of people across time and space. Importantly, let us note that in Euro-American scholarship, Christianity (and therefore, any scholar thereof) is not expected to do the same type of work.

3.1 - Von Kremer's Stated Goals

When turning to the specifics of von Kremer's argument, he is quite clear about his motivations. In the build-up to his engagement with Amuli's text on `*ilm-i dam*, von Kremer's goal is to lay the foundations of his case regarding the Vedic origins of Sufism:

> I wish to show that *the real Sufism*, as it finds expression in the various orders of the Dervishes, which I sharply distinguish from the simple, ascetic movement which appeared in the earliest Christianity and even in the earliest Islam, *owes its origins mainly to the school of Indian Philosophy, which is known as that of the Vedanta school*.[14]

For von Kremer, "real Sufism" is closest to Christian asceticism, most likely of the type found in the Desert Fathers of Egypt. He states that each order of Dervishes possessed its own secret rules and rituals, "mainly concerned with the mode of bringing about mystic ecstasy."[15] These modes manifested variously by employing means ranging from meditation in dark rooms while fasting,

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[13] Fück,188.

[14] Alfred von Kremer, trans., S. Khuda Bakhsh, *Contributions to the History of Islamic Civilization* (1904; repr., Lahore: Accurate printers, 1976), 108, emphasis added.

[15] Von Kremer, 108.

to chanting litanies "until by exhaustion the sense vanished and visions presented themselves," to dances accompanied by music.[16] He then describes a Naqshbandi *dhikr* manual, in which there is a very detailed description of the words the practitioner should utter and the visualizations to be employed. This manual also includes mention of how the practitioner's knowledge of the breath intertwines with the utterances and visualizations. There is no mention of the five elements of the breath, however, and the manual presents the breath in a more instrumentalized or procedural form. For example, "when the person who is praying *dhikr* pauses, he should start on a fresh breath, but be careful between the breathings that his heart does not flag, but that the imagination should remain as before, lest there be a breach in the continuity."[17] This invocation of the breath engages more with the physiological process of inhalation and exhalation, telling the reader how to incorporate these physical limitations within their *dhikr* practice.

Von Kremer uses this Naqshbandi text as a model from which to extrapolate "a tolerably good account of the style of Arab and Persian mystics."[18] Apart from the generalizations that he makes here about *dhikr* practices, he proceeds to show his cards, so to speak, in the following sentence: "Another peculiarity which strikes our attention is that the breath is to be directed towards a particular portion of the body, a physical impossibility, which can only find faith in such enthusiasts as oriental mystics."[19] Here is a classic example of skepticism as a manifestation of the intersection of our two regimes. Von Kremer claimed the capacity to make sweeping judgments about Sufism because of his political position as a European diplomat who was stationed in the Middle East, but there is no evidence that he lived in or traveled to India.

[16] Von Kremer, 108.

[17] Von Kremer, 110. Von Kremer cites the *Mukhtasaru'l Wilayah* of Samarqandi (d. 791 AH), Vienna MSS.

[18] Von Kremer, 111.

[19] Von Kremer, 111.

Regarding his terminology, von Kremer repeatedly uses the term "holding back the breath (*Athemeinhaltens*)," which could be his translation of the Persian *habs-i dam*. He bases the overall importance of the breath on his reading of "various passages in oriental works," in which "we see that these mystics believed that holding back of the breath, artificially, conferred supernatural powers, and was a protection against dangers of every sort and even death itself."[20] It would be very helpful to know which texts von Kremer had accessed to develop this reading of "oriental works," but the footnotes in the original German and the subsequent English translation do not provide much detail.[21]

As a prime example of the types of powers that mystics believed derived from controlling their breathing, von Kremer introduces Amuli's text on *`ilm-i dam* from the *Nafa'is al-funun,* incorporating this text on the science of the breath into his broader treatment of Sufi breathing practices. Von Kremer's version is valuable because in addition to translating Amuli's text into German, he also included the original Persian text. This meant that he was introducing many primary texts to his audience, in addition to providing his analyses thereof.

3.2 - Von Kremer's excerpt from Amuli's Nafa'is al-funun

Given that this was a key moment in the Orientalist reception of *`ilm-i dam*, it is worth quoting in full the extract that he included:

> "*The Ninth and Tenth Sections.*" – The sciences of breathing and imagination (*`ilm-i dam o vahm*). The first deals with the movements of the breath and their symptoms; the second with the constraining of imagination and the mode of controlling it. The Indians value these two sciences very highly, and whenever anyone attains perfection in them they call him a jogy and reckon him among the holy spirits. The founder of

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[20]Von Kremer, 111.

[21] The footnote here reads: "Cf. Pers. MSS. In Von Kremer's possession." More research is needed to identify the precise manuscript that von Kremer uses for his version of the *Nafa'is al-funun*.

these two sciences, so they say, is Kamak Dyw [Dev]. They call spiritual beings Dyw, and they assert that Kamak is still alive, living in a cave in the town of Kamru. They make pilgrimage to this cave for their concerns, and some even assert that they have actually seen him. The King of this land sends daily to this cave rich food and splendid perfumes, which are placed at the mouth of it whence they immediately disappear. These two sciences are exhaustively discussed in the book of Kamru and Hagasaka[22] which is held among them in great honour. Every one of these sciences will be discussed in this section.

"On the Science of Breathing" – I. "Know that breath comes now from the right and now from the left side as also it comes from the two sides at one and the same time. They connect the right side with the sun, the left with the moon. They also assert that in the course of twenty-four hours 21,600 breaths are drawn, in every hour about 900. Not infrequently 900 breaths, more or less, are drawn in one hour. They say that frequently as many as 1,600 breaths are drawn in an hour, and that every two hours the breath comes from a different place. Not uncommonly for two or three days breath comes from one and the same place. There are some jogys who in the course of 24 hours breathe only twice; once in the morning and once in the evening, and they assert, that it is possible to restrain the breath to that extent, i.e., for half the day, so it is possible restrain it for six months. If one succeeds in holding his breath to that extent, they think it to be the best means of preserving life, avoiding illness and attaining happiness.[23]

To be clear, this is not anything close to the entirety of Amuli's text on `ilm-i dam*. Why does von Kremer only include this introductory portion of the longer text? There are several possibilities. First, perhaps the manuscript he worked from only had the material he quotes. In this case he was working from a manuscript that was very different from others that were available. Second, perhaps he has the full version but does not think that the other portions are worth including. This seems unlikely because these sections include a great deal of specificity regarding the type of breathing exercises and uses of the breath performed by those subscribing

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[22] Previous scholarship by Ernst and Sakaki revised our reading of this Persian text to the aforementioned *Kamaru Panchashika* (see Chapter One).

[23] Von Kremer, 112. Von Kremer does not differentiate his translation from Persian into German between *dam* and *nafas*, rendering each into various compound versions with the base noun *Athem. Culturgeschichliche Streifzuge auf dem Debiebte des Islams* (Leipzig: F.A. Brockhaus, 1873), 50.

to this rendition of `ilm-i dam`. In the paragraphs immediately before and after this one, von Kremer goes into great detail on precisely these types of beliefs and practices, for example in Naqshbandi circles. Third, he (and his publisher?) may not have had sufficient space for a full treatment, given all of the various subjects that von Kremer wanted to include in his work. My guess is that this last possibility is the most likely case.

After commenting upon "this information on the superstitious beliefs of the Indians as regards the holding of the breath," von Kremer then compares Amuli's account with that found in the *Dabistan-i Mazaheb*, according to which among the Indian jogys "the restraining of the breath is held in great esteem such as was practiced among the Persians by Azar Hushang and by the kings of those peoples."[24] Von Kremer then links these practices of restraining the breath to a Vedanta work titled "the Vedanta-Sara, in which even breaths are classified according to the parts of the body from which they come."[25] This Vedanta-Sara he then connects to his earlier discussion of the Naqshbandi *dhikr* manual in terms of the specific practices and even the specific instructions on the best possible seating position. The Vedanta-Sara includes instructions on the repetition of formulae such as *tat tvam asi* ("that thou art"), which von Kremer explicitly links to the repetition of the divine names of God in the *dhikr* ritual. Additionally, he states that the phrase found in Mullah Shah's writings, "the knot of the heart has been unloosened," means that "the pupil has attained initiation into the mysteries of mysticism and has commenced to see visions," while the phrase, "the knot of the heart is rent asunder, i.e., all doubts have been solved and set at rest."[26]

[24] Von Kremer, 113, op. cit., *Dabistan* Eng. Tr., Vol II, 130; also cf. vol. I, 79, 118, 111; vol. II, 137-8.

[25] Von Kremer, 113. The *Vedanta-Sara* is a work of *Advaita Vedanta*, most likely composed in the fifteenth-century by Sadananda Yogendra Saraswati.

[26] Von Kremer, 114.

3.3 - Von Kremer and Sufisms's non-Islamic Roots

What then does von Kremer conclude from these linguistic similarities? Naturally, for him, "this external resemblance between the two systems—those of the Vedanta and the Arab and Persian mysticism—obtains a further confirmation of their remarkable internal similarity. Both are pantheistic and have as their subject the union of the individual with God, with Brahma."[27] This analysis of Sufism, especially as found in India, is consistent with that found in the Hughes *Dictionary of Islam*, mentioned at the outset of this chapter. For these two Orientalists, it is simply incomprehensible that a set of practices such as these sub-schools of Vedanta and Sufism could be held as different from one another when there are such similarities in both form and substance. The last sentence fragment is very telling: "…with God, with Brahma." Von Kremer links these terms because for him the term Brahma is equivalent to God. He is certainly not the only person to draw this type of equivalence, but the fact that he does so while making his broader argument about the origins of Indian Sufism is cause for us to re-evaluate his work. With reference to the distinction that Deleuze and Guattari draw between *tracing* and *mapping*, von Kremer's work definitely falls into the former category. He views the landscape in a linear manner, with a single point of entry through which "influence" flows from one cultural entity into another.

However, the Vedantic roots of Indian Sufism is not the end of von Kremer's search for the origins of Muslim mystical practices. He also finds a great deal of overlap with Buddhism, a term he uses interchangeably with theosophy: "It is that the theosophist, sunk in mystic ecstasy and deepest meditations, perceives in a certain order of succession various coloured lights; a

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[27] Von Kremer, 114.

phenomenon, which only disappears when he has reached the final stage of glorification known among them as the colourless world (`alam bi-rangi`)."[28] Rather unhelpfully, he does not provide any citation for this view, not even to link it to the Naqshbandi *dhikr* manual that he had presented earlier. In the next sentence, he explains that for Buddhists "the highest state of mystic initiation is the condition of a Buddha…the next stage is that of *Dhyana* (meditation, *Muraqabah*)."[29] At no point does von Kremer pause to explain the possible pitfalls of claiming a direct, one-to one-correspondence between these two terms. He is the diplomat scholar, authoritative and privileged in his position to declare that such correspondences exist. Von Kremer then moves to a litany of specific ideas that he judges were borrowed by Islam/Muslim/Sufism/Sufis from other traditions. Christianity provided asceticism as well as the "foundation of the theology of Islam and the scholasticism of the Islamic schools." Manichaeanism "had a purely destructive effect inasmuch as it fostered and nursed among Muslims religious indifference and skepticism." Judaism provided the concept of a Messiah. Millenarianism and the concept of a resurrection were also taken from Christianity. "These religious fermentations produced free intellectual movement and awakened among Muslims the desire for the study of foreign culture," leading in no small part to the famed Greco-Arabic translation movement of the 'Abbasid era. This in turn led to Aristotle's rise to prominence within Islamic intellectual circles, while neo-Platonism inspired the Ishraqi school whose chief leader was Suhrawardi.[30]

After reading through von Kremer's rendering of Sufism, one is left with the clear

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[28] Von Kremer, 115.

[29] Von Kremer, 115. He gives no information on the specifics of who these Buddhists are, what lineage, which time period, etc.

[30] Von Kremer, 116-117.

impression that "original" Sufism was derived from early Christian asceticism, and that later

(i.e., corrupted) Sufism suffered from an infection of Vedanta and Buddhism.[31] The upshot of

von Kremer's view is that there is actually nothing original about Sufism, except perhaps in the

precise combination of influences that have lead it to a place of stagnancy and irrelevance before

the rising might of European Christianity. This diatribe aside, it is at the end of this extensive

discussion of Sufism's origins that von Kremer makes his ultimate position clear: "Islam, in

conformity with the universal law of history, has changed in the course of twelve centuries no

less than the other great religions, and not a trace is to be found of that immutability which many

erroneously regard as the distinguishing feature of oriental society."[32] One of the classic critiques

of Orientalism is that it positions "the West" as dynamic and evolving at the same time that "the

East" is depicted as static or decaying. In this sense, von Kremer is stating that "the East" is not

static, but at the same time the movement taking place within the boundaries of this civilization

is not to be applauded. While he does not use the term *Geist* ("Spirit") that proves so

fundamental to Hegel's understanding of history and its process, von Kremer is still referencing

at least this general idea that history is teleological.

> But as in the beginning of its career Christianity exerted a profound
> influence, so now, when the shadows of evening are hovering around it, it
> is remarkable that Islam should on all sides be exposed to Christian
> influences, which bring to it the benefits of European civilization and
> prepare it for far more extensive and important reforms, than all those
> which it has hitherto experienced. It would be a great error to suppose that
> the religion of the Qur'an could be destroyed by the introduction of such
> reforms. It is indeed too firmly planted and rooted in the people for that;

[31] In a fascinating demonstration of the extent to which Orientalists like Browne and von Kremer were in conversation with one another, Browne references von Kremer as an authority on the development of "later" Sufism, specifically the influence of Hinduism and Buddhism on Indian Sufi practices. See Browne, *A Literary History of Persia, Volume I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1928), 418-419. This connection is noted by S. Khuda Bakhsh, who translated von Kremer's work into English later, thus emphasizing the way this particular take on Sufi origins reverberated around Orientalist scholarship over multiple generations.

[32] Von Kremer, 117. While the original text does not use the term *Geist* (spirit), one cannot help here but think that von Kremer has some of Hegel's emphasis in a sense.

but it is to be hoped that it may come out of this struggle more strengthened, ennobled and purified. The more the Muslim is constrained to learn to adapt himself to the needs of the age and indeed learn them from the Europeans, whose powerful superiority he no longer fails to recognize, the more will he be induced to take the right and proper course and that of a practical life from which he has been estranged by superstitions, mystic visions and theological speculations.[33]

This lengthy passage is worth citing in full because von Kremer is not interested in hiding his views in the least. He believes that "European civilization" will bring its "benefits" to Islam, even if it is impossible to destroy "the religion of the Qur'an," because it is "too firmly planted and rooted in the people." This is a rendering of Islam and Christianity as reified entities, resonant with Samuel Huntington's (in)famous *Clash of Civilizations* thesis.[34] Note that at the end of von Kremer's argument, he specifically refers to esoteric beliefs and irrational practices as the *sine qua non* of failing to acculturate to modern sensibilities. Those who retain a belief in "superstitions, mystic visions and theological speculations" need not apply.

3.4 - Browne on Sufi Origins

For the sake of comparison, it is worth outlining the four theories on Sufi origins that Browne presents in *A Literary History of Persia*. First is that it represents the Prophet Muhamad's "esoteric views," as demonstrated by statements such as "whoever knows his self (*nafs*), knows his Lord." The second, "that [Sufism] must be regarded as the product of the Aryan mind against a Semitic religion imposed upon it by force," is divided into two parts, one Indian and one Persian. Browne disagrees with the theory that Sufism *originates* in India, *but he agrees*

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[33] Von Kremer, 117-118. See also Fück's assessment of von Kremer, that "[h]e was attracted to writing a cultural history of Islam, which would allow a future philosophy of history through the comparison of Islam with other cultures, to recognize those laws which determined the course of history," Fück, 188.

[34] Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Touchstone, 1997).

with (and cites as evidence) von Kremer's conclusions that later on we see a marked Indian

influence on Sufism. The "Persian" part of this equation would be the notion that what is

eventually referred to as *tasawwuf* closely resembles religious practice during the Sassanian

period immediately preceding the spread of Islam to encompass a land mass roughly equivalent

to present-day Iraq and Iran. Third is that Sufism is a direct descendent of Neo-Platonism. Fourth

is that it arose completely independently of any of the potential influences mentioned above. For

this last option, Browne cites Vaughan's *Hours with the Mystics* as demonstrating that

similarities between two (or more) traditions/practices do not mean that one *influenced* the

other.[35] Indeed, he writes that "I would venture to assert that many of the utterances of Eckart,

Tauler, or Santa Teresa would, if translated into Persian, easily pass current as the words of Sufi

Shaykhs."[36] This type of language suggests that Browne's position was very much in keeping

with the general tenor of his historical "moment" ranging from the late-nineteenth to the early-

and even mid-twentieth century. To be clear, Browne writes this in his opus, which served as a

venue for him to reflect on his decades of experience working with Persian literature. That one

sees such explicit connections between Browne, von Kremer, and Hughes indicates the extent to

which these scholars—and others working at the same time—were in conversation with one

another, and highlights that there was a certain amount of recycled argumentation and lines of

thinking taking place. That this takes place is not that surprising given the writers' proximity in

time and space, but it is surprising to find Browne retrospectively offering up these explicit links.

It may appear that the text itself has faded into the background a bit in this study of

Amuli's recension of the *Kamaru Panchashika*. If this is so, it is only because it represents a

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[35] R.A. Vaughan, *Hours with the Mystics: A Contribution to the History of Religious Opinion* (London: John W. Parker and Son, 1856).

[36] Browne, *A Literary History of Persia, Volume I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1928), 418-421.

fairly straightforward recension that provides a baseline, of sorts, against which the other two texts in this chapter, and indeed many of those briefly reviewed in Chapter One, are compared. If "the medium is the message," then the medium of each text (i.e., encyclopedia, imperial library, or Orientalist acquisition) reveals a great deal about the text, information that all too often is left out of the analytical representation proffered at terse conference paper readings and in expensive monographs. I have made a deliberate choice to spend more time looking at Amuli and von Kremer as the transmitters of this text, first to the Persianate audience of the 14th century, and second to the German-speaking (and then English-speaking) audiences of the 19th and 20th centuries. Additionally, other scholars have worked on Amuli's contributions, both in general (cf., Melvin-Koushki) and specifically as regards `ilm-i dam (cf., Ernst, Sakaki, et al). Von Kremer's work stands out as an example of how European Orientalists interpreted Persian/Indian Sufism as necessarily being more of Indic origins than anything "purely" Islamic. They supported this position in no small part by emphasizing Christian asceticism as the root of Arab (i.e., original) Sufism, thus doubly damning Sufism on the one hand as being a derivative of Christianity, and then on the other as derivative of Hinduism and Buddhism. There was no place left for Muslim agency or originality. Even if something like `ilm-i dam has its origins in Sanskrit (and therefore is arguably non-Muslim), that still does not mean that those who used these techniques and practices were somehow rejecting Islam or their status as Muslims in any way. The presence of `ilm-i dam in a widely circulated encyclopedia (as well as in later Persian encyclopedias such as that of Rustamdari) speaks to the degree to which Persianate Muslim audiences engaged with these materials; there is no indication that Amuli or any of the other encyclopedia compilers were running roughshod over cultural expectations in their respective time(s) or place(s) by including this material. In other words, what does it mean that they were

not taking great effort to hide it? Surely this confers some level of normalcy on this knowledge. That von Kremer and his contemporaries struggle to make sense of it says more about their own limitations than it does about any contradictions inherent to the text itself.

Von Kremer's contribution to the `ilm-i dam* corpus is important because it provides not just an example where these practices were made more accessible to European audiences, but also because of the precise way in which von Kremer utilized them. Making previously unpublished texts available to broader readership was and continues to be a valuable scholarly service, but von Kremer's approach and methodology here are actually more notable in terms of their implications for my project. As the examples below of Browne and Hughes also demonstrate, Indian Muslims were deemed peripheral as defined against the constructed Arabian center. This shows up not only in the publications of manuscripts, but also in the private journals from physically acquiring said manuscripts. It is to this type of more intimate example that I now turn.

4 - Browne's Acquiring the Manuscript and its Subsequent Reception

E.G. Browne was by no means the first European to write a travelogue after journeying to Persia. Such travelers as Johan Albrecht de Mandelslo (1616-1644) and Sir Jean Chardin (1643-1713) had provided testimony to their experiences that had met with varying degrees of awe and (in)credulity.[37] However, when *A Year Amongst the Persians* was first published, one reviewer noted that what held Browne's effort apart from its predecessors was that "he is the only writer of travels in Persia who has had full colloquial command of the language."[38] As stated earlier, E.G.

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[37] Adam Olearius, *The voyages & travels of the ambassadors sent by Frederick Duke of Holstein, to the great Duke of Muscovy, and the King of Persia* (London: John Starkey and Thomas Basset, 1669); and Sir John Chardin, *Travels in Persia, 1673-1677* (Mineola, N.Y.: Dover Press, 1988), respectively.

[38] Arthur Arnold, *The Academy*, Dec. 2, 1983, No. 1126, 480-481. For similar praise, see also the review from the

Browne acquires a manuscript containing an *`ilm-i dam* text while traveling in Persian in 1887. What then did E.G. Browne think about this fascinating text, so central and critical to the present dissertation?

The answer: not very much. A reality that I opt to integrate within the broader narrative on how he constructed Sufism as a subject fit for study. Browne's account of when he acquired the manuscript, as it appears in the published version of his travelogue, with a few references to the surviving notes on these events taken from his journals, says a lot precisely in what they do not say. In comparison to the other texts examined here —and by extension, the list of texts provided in Appendix A—the fact that this account exists at all gives current readers an enviable opportunity to understand how a very influential Orientalist scholar from the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century thought about a specific object, its contents, and the people with whom he was interacting at the time he came into possession of this manuscript.

4.1 - Browne in Persia, 1887

Early-on during his time in Persia, Browne came to know Mir Jalalud-Din, a man who served as guide and provider of introductions for the first stage of his journey. During a stop in the town of Khuy, in the northeast of present-day Iran, two key events occurred that have provided the foundation for this entire inquiry. First, Browne encountered a geomancer who claimed to be able to make predictions regarding Browne's future. Browne's written account leaves little doubt as to his feelings about this man. But even his depiction of his would-be guide and informant, Mir Jalalud-Din, proves quite revealing in terms of Browne's overall disposition

towards the people with whom he interacted on a daily basis:

> While the baggage was being unloaded, I perceived that we were
> undergoing an attentive scrutiny on the part of a magnificent-looking
> dervish, who wore on his head a green turban, of which one end depended
> over his shoulder, and carried in his hand a shining battle-axe.... He proved
> to be a native of Kirman, Mir Jalalud-Din by name; and his extraordinary
> fertility of imagination, which often carried him far beyond the bounds,
> not only of the probable, but of the possible, rendered him a very amazing
> companion, if not a very reliable informant.[39]

From the outset, Browne's readers are led to believe that this native informant's main function in

the story is radically distinct from Browne himself. While the latter is objective, staid, and

detached, the former possesses an "extraordinary fertility of imagination," which meant he was

an enjoyable traveling companion, but hardly the type of person who could be trusted to provide

verifiable information. It is almost as if Browne possessed a type of early-warning system for

potentially irrational and exotic "others," and this preternatural ability told Browne that he was

being watched by, and that he should be wary of, Mir Jalalud-Din. This tone continues

throughout Browne's account, which continues as such:

> On our return [from the hammam] we found our friend the dervish
> awaiting our arrival. He at once launched out into a disquisition on things
> pertaining to his order. The true *'arif* or adept, he informed us, was
> distinguished by four external signs: the *tabar*, or axe, which serves to
> protect him during his wanderings in the desert from ferocious beasts; the
> *keshkul*, or gourd slung on chains, in which he receives alms; the *taj*, or
> felt cap embroidered with texts, which crowns his head; and the *gisu*, or
> long locks, which fall over his shoulders.[40]

The image that Browne draws of Mir Jalalud-Din takes on more significance when compared

with that drawn by Thomas Hughes in the *Dictionary of Islam*. In his entry on "faqir," Hughes

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[39] Edward Granville Browne, *A Year Amongst the Persians: Impressions as to the Life, Character, & Thought of the People of Persia, Received During Twelve Months' Residence in that Country in the Years 1887-1888* (London: A. and C. Black, 1893), 50-51.

[40] Browne, *A Year Amongst the Persians*, 51-52.

provides a number of illustrations along with written descriptions of various dervishes and faqirs, examples taken primarily from the Middle East. He includes the commonly found longer hair, or *gisu*, as well as the felt *taj* and *kashkul* in his description, but does not mention anything about the *tabar*.[41] This difference is more likely than not simply a function of the respective scholars' sources, for Hughes does not appear to draw on any examples from the region of Persia where Browne met Mir Jalalud-Din.[42]

One receives a very particular vision of those seeking mystical knowledge. The basis for this depiction is the wandering mendicant, subsisting solely on the generosity of others while having to be on the defensive against fierce animals in the wild. There was not much room here for what one might refer to as "urban mystics," or those members of *tariqa*s, or Sufi orders, who did not live in rural outposts, but instead resided within the relatively safe confines of cities. Especially by the latter half of the nineteenth century, when Browne was traveling to Persia, there would have been a great many people who participated in Sufi orders who did not fit Browne's description of Mir Jalalud-Din. Browne's description of his guide, both in physical appearance as well as in general temperament, is that of the (occasionally) noble savage who plays the role of entertainer or court jester more so than equal partner in conversation. Once Browne turns his observation lens from Mir Jalalud-Din to the *rammal*, or geomancer, then additional layers of derisiveness become apparent. The *rammal* offers Browne a medication made using "a prescription of the sage Lokam [Luqman]," which he claimed "would not fail to produce a most delightful sense of exhilaration and ecstasy; but, although I complied with his

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[41] Thomas Patrick Hughes, *Dictionary of Islam, A Dictionary of Islam, Being a Cyclopedia of the Doctrines, Rites, Ceremonies, and Customs, Together with the Technical and Theological Terms, of the Muhammadan Religion* (Delhi: Oriental Publishers, 1973), 120-121.

[42] Browne would come to be aware of Hughes' work later on, for he cites Hughes in his discussion of Sufi origins. See Browne, *A Literary History of Persia, Volume 1: From the Earliest Times until Firdawsi* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1928), 427.

invitation, I failed to observe any such effect."[43] In this rendering, the reader receives the clear image of "Oriental" medicine as ineffective and derived from exotic and mythological means, which is of course to be contrasted with "western" medicine and related knowledge, which is supposed to be based on purely rational grounds.[44]

4.2 – Browne and the Rammal

The fact that the geomancer invoked the figure of Luqman is not surprising, for tales of his wisdom abound in a wide array of traditions found in Arabic, Persian, and Turkish. Browne's dubious reaction to the "pills of gladness" is probably not very surprising given that his first career was that of a physician (indeed, there are several accounts in the travelogue of him being called to administer medical treatment to people he encountered along the way). Browne then reported that his guide escorted him and his party to a *tekye*, or retreat for dervishes. Noting that the dervishes were a diverse and hospitable group, including "Persians, Kurds, and negroes," he then launched into a revealing description of the *rammal*, whom they met when they returned to their place of lodging:

> This votary of the occult sciences, Mirza Taki by name, was a native of Kirmanshah. So far as I could see, he never quitted his cell, dividing his time between opium-smoking, tea-drinking, and casting the four dice-like brass cubes pivoted together whereby he essayed to unravel the mysteries of the future. After offering us a share of his tea, he proceeded to cast his dice and tell me my fortune, scribbling on a piece of paper the while, somewhat as follows: '*Three, two, one, two*' (counting the numbers uppermost on the dice), 'Praise be to Allah! Thou wert born under a lucky star. *One, one, three, four;* thy journey will be a long one, and seven

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[43] Browne *A Year Amongst the Persians*, 52.

[44] It is a testimony to this travelogue's status within scholarly circles that in the latest edition of the *Encyclopedia of Islam*, Emilie Savage-Smith cites Browne's encounter with this *rammal* in the entry on geomancy. See "Geomancy," in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam, THREE*, ed. Kate Fleet et al., consulted online on 04 January 2018. Additionally, W. Crooke, who edited the 1921 publication of the aforementioned Jafar Sharif's *Qanun-i Islam* cites Browne on several occasions (see 221 on understanding the *abjad* system, and 223 on incantations). This testifies to Browne's constant presence and influence upon scholarship on Islam during this time period.

months at least will elapse ere thou shalt see again thy native land.'[45]

Before proceeding with the remainder of the passage, a quick comment is warranted: why does Browne render Mir Taki's speech in this Shakespearean register of English? Is Mir Taki speaking in a formal or stilted register of Persian? Or is Browne simply taking advantage of his position as translator to shape the way in which his audience will receive this particular character from his travelogue? What impact does it have on the reader in Browne's late-19th century, primarily British, audience that this person rarely (if ever) leaves his room, and that he smokes opium? That he drinks tea should be something that marks him as familiar to the British audience, yet somehow in this passage everything about Browne's description of Mirza Taki comes off as denoting strangeness, exotic-ness, an undeniable "other-ness" in comparison to Browne. This general feeling becomes explicit later on, when Browne makes clear for the reader how he has suffered, dealing with such an irrational person. The *rammal* predicts danger for Browne in his travels to Tabriz and that he will lose something important. He says it is a sign of God's fortune that Browne has "fallen in with one truly skilled in the occult sciences, and endowed with all kinds of knowledge."[46]

Enumerating all of Mirza Taki's offenses against Browne's rationalist position takes some doing. First, Browne believes him to be in league with Mir Jalalud-Din with reference to the declaration that Browne had lost an object of value. Second, there are predictions that Browne will escape further calamity and return home to marriage, seven children, and great prosperity. Third, the *rammal* moves to further ingratiate himself with Browne through offering up his services in the form of creating a talisman that will protect Browne from a sad fate. In the next

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[45] Browne, *A Year Amongst the Persians*, 52-53.

[46] Browne, *A Year Amongst the Persians*, 54.

passage, Browne presents himself as the embodiment of reason and rationality:

> "Honoured sir" I interrupted at this point, "before giving you the trouble
> of writing so many charms, I would fain have some further proof of the
> efficacy of your science. I do not, indeed, like many of my countrymen,
> deny its existence, but of its truth I would desire a proof which you can
> easily afford me. To describe the events of the past is without doubt less
> difficult than to predict those of the future. Tell me, then, the name of my
> birthplace, the number of my brothers and sisters, and the adventures
> which have already befallen me. *Then, indeed, shall I know for certain
> that you are a skillful magician, and that the science which you practise is
> not (as some of my unbelieving countrymen assert) a vain and useless
> thing."* Reasonable as this request appeared to me to be, it did not seem to
> meet with the approbation of the geomancer, who appeared suddenly to
> lose interest in the conversation…[47]

At the end of his own comments, Browne actually attempts to distance himself from other

Europeans, specifically those from Great Britain. He presents himself as being sympathetic and

open to the "ignorant native," but in fact he comes across as patronizing in the extreme. The very

next morning, Browne acquired the manuscript now known as *Kamaru Panchashika* (Browne

recension).

4.3 Browne's Acquisition of the Manuscript

The second, and for the purposes of the present project, most important episode occurred

when Browne's guide came to him to say that there was a "dying *aref*" (mystic) who had heard

about the *farangi* (foreigner) staying at the local hostel, and who wanted to sell him two

manuscripts. One of these consisted of Mahmud Shabistari's 13th century Sufi poem, the

Gulshan-i Raz, ("Rose Garden of Mystery"), an anonymous text on dream interpretation, and "a

Sufi text on the science of the breath." Browne describes the second manuscript as "a few

scattered pages from a work on medicine, which, he gravely informed me, had been written *by*

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[47] Browne, *A Year Amongst the Persians*, 54, emphasis added.

the hand of Galen himself, and discovered by himself and a comrade amongst the ruins of *one of the pyramids destroyed by the English*!"[48] Browne's incredulity is clear, as is his disdain for the work that Mir Jalalud-Din offered him. Browne purchased these two manuscripts for a modest sum, leaving the reader with the impression that he did not really care much for these objects, but that he felt somewhat obligated to buy them in order to part ways with his friendly guide. Upon his death, this manuscript would find its way to Cambridge University Library as part of his bequest. Known simply as v. 21, it does not appear to have attracted any scholarly attention until now.

Browne's response to the claims made by the previous owner of the two manuscripts belies a positivist stance in which an inability to provide empirically proven evidence means that not only was a specific claim dismissed, but the claimant along with it. Browne was not interested in the role of story, in the idea of "truth" as something distinct from, or even greater than, "fact." This reading of Browne is important especially when placed the published text of his official travelogue alongside the notes he took in his journals from this trip. For example, his depiction of Mir Jalalud-Din differs greatly. Compared to the extended passage above from the travelogue, in his journal entry for Wednesday, October 26th, he simply writes that his would-be guide was "a learned looking man with a green turban of great length and long *gesus*…and he is a Sufi."[49] In his entry for the following day, he mentions that Mir Jalalud-Din came to his room to discuss the "signs of the `*arif*," but then he states that his would-be guide was the one to introduce the pills concocted using a prescription purportedly from Luqman, while the published travelogue text clearly implies that Mir Takki, the *rammal,* is the one who introduced this to

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[48] Browne, *A Year Amidst the Persians*, 54, emphasis original.

[49] Edward Granville Browne, *Journals* (Cambridge University Library, MS Persian Journals Vol 1 & V, England-Tehran Oct. 4-Nov. 24 1887, Cambridge)., 42.

Browne. While the *barsh* is derided in the published account, Browne's private journal indicates that Mir Jalalud-Din indicated to Browne that anyone consuming this medication would experience a "charming of the mind" and "*wajd + `eshq*" (ecstatic love and divine love).[50] Lastly, and perhaps most pressing, Browne includes the details regarding the purchase of the manuscript on `*ilm-i dam*.[51] He uses this term whenever referring to the manuscript, and notes that he purchased it for two mejids. Curiously, he makes no mention at all in his journal of the *second* manuscript that he describes (and derides) at some length in the published travelogue.

There are many points of interest here as one reads over this passage from Browne's travelogue, especially in comparison with what he recorded in his journal from this trip to Persia. Why does he provide such an extended description of what Mir Taki says to him, his actions, etc., when at the end of it he so clearly dismisses what this *rammal* is doing? Is this not a set-up in a way, describing this in so much detail in order to present his English readership with a depiction of the exotic customs of these Persians, who believe in things like the occult sciences? It is not just that he does not believe the claims made by Mir Jalalud-Din and/or the "poor Sufi," but he belittles the whole presentation as ridiculous. Historical positivism pervades Browne's writing, and in that case he certainly fits in with other authors. The sarcastic way in which he presents the claims pertaining to the Galen manuscript are key to understanding Browne's overall tone. There are some similarities between this attitude towards "Oriental" thinking and the one espoused by Alfred von Kremer. This particular episode is very revealing of Browne's personal attitudes towards `*ilm-i dam*, which I extrapolate as a representation of overall British scholarly and Orientalist views towards this set of practices.

[50] Edward Granville Browne, *Journals*, 44. Browne had a habit of writing Persian words in the Persian script, and keeping a running list of vocabulary words from a given day at the beginning of that day's entry in his journal.

[51] Edward Granville Browne, *Journals*, 46.

In review, here is a convoluted story where on the one hand, the manuscript itself offers up a fascinating view upon the inner workings of one example from the `ilm-i dam` corpus. At the same time, here is an Orientalist who displays frank disregard for the values of the people from whom he acquired this same manuscript and with whom he was interacting during his travels in Persia.

The above two sections focused on how `ilm-i dam` was received by two specific scholars whose work proved highly influential in European scholarship on Islam. The next section looks at slightly later scholarly works that are more self-consciously framed as encyclopedia. Here I am asking questions regarding how and where `ilm-i dam` (and its cousins) fit within the universalizing projects that encyclopedias often claim to be.

5 - On Dictionaries and Encyclopedias: Regimes of Knowledge in Reference Works on Indian Islam

An early British encyclopedia entry on Abu'l Fazl reveals a great deal about the way this pivotal figure from Chapter Two was received by some European scholars of South Asia:

> Abu-Fazil (Abu al-Fadhl ibn Mubarak, called *Al Hindi*), vizier to the great Emperor Akbar from 1572. *Although by birth a Muhammadan, his investigations into the religions of India made him see equal worth in all, and, like his master, Akbar, he was tolerant of all sects.* His chief work is the *Ayin Akbary*, a statistical account of the Indian Empire. It was translated by F. Gladwin, 1777. He was assassinated 1604.[52]

This entry reveals several important things about the British reception of Abu'l Fazl, and by extension, the emperor Akbar. First, Abu'l Fazl is said to have achieved some type of enlightenment by virtue of his "investigations," which was in turn accompanied by developing a

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[52] Joseph Mazzini Wheeler, *A Biographical Dictionary of Freethinkers of All Ages and Nations* (London: Progressive Publishing Company, 1889), 8, emphasis added.

sense of tolerance for all religious communities. This sets up a situation in which Muslims who

engage in scholarly pursuits become more ecumenical in inclination. Second, notice that the

A'in-i Akbari is understood here as a "statistical" report on the Indian [i.e., Mughal] Empire. This

is indicative of the way it has been treated by many scholars even in the modern period, despite

the fact that—as seen in Chapter Two—the *A'in-i Akbari* contains far more than just statistical

information. This encyclopedia entry supports Richard Eaton's point that the British viewed

Akbarnama as an example of imperial ideology, even though more recent views in India

highlight the supposed "secular" elements of Abu'l Fazl's treatment of Akbar.[53] With this in

mind, I now turn to a much larger expression of British—and by extension, European—scholarly

treatment and reception of Islam, specifically Islam in India.

5.1 Hughes and the Dictionary of Islam

Published in 1885 by Anglican missionary Thomas Patrick Hughes (1838-1911), the

Dictionary of Islam is a perfect source for distilling British scholarly views on various aspects of

Islam and Muslim communities. Hughes served as a missionary to Peshawar for some twenty

years, from January 1865 until March 1884, when he returned to England. As one biographer

notes, "Like many Englishman of the cloth, his role as missionary was part of the expansion of

the British Empire, whether he, the Church of England, or the British Empire perceived it as such

at the time. He was proud of the civilization that had bred him and saw the British Empire as part

of a cherished and superior society."[54] In a description reminiscent of William Dalrymple's

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[53] R. M. Eaton, "Akbar-Nama," *Encyclopædia Iranica*, I/7, 714-715 (accessed on 25 April 2014).

[54] Elizabeth Hughes Clark, "Thomas Patrick Hughes, Missionary to British Indian: The Class Ceiling" (Project Canterbury, 2007), 3 (anglicanhistory.org), consulted on July 27th, 2017.

biography of various British officers in India in the 18th century,[55] Hughes apparently dressed

according to local custom and eventually spoke Pashto fluently so as to more effectively

communicate with the local people.[56] All this is to say that he was no "armchair anthropologist,"

writing a book about peoples, customs, and beliefs of which he had no real first-hand

knowledge.[57] Reviews of the book at its time of publication were largely positive, noting

Hughes' first-hand experience living within Muslim communities—especially in India—as

evidence of his expertise. By way of criticism, one reviewer actually took issue with the extent to

which Hughes "has scrupulously restrained" his missionary views, since Hughes relied at times

on the previously published work of other scholars in place of writing out his own views.[58] An

American review agreed on Hughes' qualifications (at the time of publication, Hughes was

apparently lecturing throughout the U.S. and thus became well-known here), and noted that

"[t]hough its author, as a Christian missionary as a representative of European civilization, is

outspoken in his condemnation of the defects and errors of the Asiatic system, he carefully

abstains from denunciation and polemical discussions. His object is simply to enlighten us, in

conveniently consultable form…."[59]

[55] William Dalrymple, *White Mughals*: *Love and Betrayal in Eighteenth-Century India* (London, Harper Collins, 2002).

[56] In addition to *The Dictionary of Islam*, Hughes authored a textbook for students to learn Pashto, *The Kalid-i-Afghani, Being Selections of Pushto Prose and Poetry for the Use of Students* (Lahore: Munshi Culab Singh and Sons, 1893).

[57] This would be in direct contrast to works such as James Mill's *The History of British India* (1817), which became highly influential among British imperial officers despite the fact that Mill never visited India.
[58] *The Athenaeum*, No. 3047, March 20, 1886, 385-386.

[59] "A Dictionary of Islam," *The Critic: a Weekly Review of Literature and the Arts*, May 22, 1886, 254.

5.2 Hughes' Motivations for the Dictionary of Islam

Understanding Hughes' intentions for how this work would operate and the type of need

it would fill becomes an easy task after consulting the volume's dedication:

> The "Dictionary of Islam" has been compiled with very considerable
> study and labour, in the hope that it will be useful to many;—to the
> Government official called to administer justice to Muslim peoples; to the
> Christian missionary engaged in controversy with Muslim scholars; to the
> student of comparative religions anxious to learn the true teachings of
> Islam;—to all, indeed, who care to know what are those leading principles
> of thought which move and guide one hundred and seventy-five millions
> of the great human family, forty millions of whom are under the rule of
> Her Most Gracious Majesty the Empress of India. – July 23rd, 1885.[60]

What this dedication reveals is an outline of Hughes' intended audience. Colonial

administrators needed this information in order to rule fairly over Muslim peoples. Christian

missionaries needed it in order to debate matters of doctrine with Muslim theologians. "Students

of comparative religion" must read it in order to ensure that they knew "the true teachings of

Islam." Lastly, anyone who wanted to know what motivated some "forty millions" of the queen's

subjects was also expected to find these answers in this encyclopedia. But these "millions" never

get the chance to speak for themselves. Instead, Hughes and his colleagues do all the

representing for them. If "the East is a career,"[61] then these Brits well and truly pursued said

career for all it was worth. This encyclopedia, and in particular this quote from its preface, testify

to the combination of knowledge production alongside the application of power. The two

regimes did not exist separately, but instead cohered together in a shared space.

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[60] Thomas Hughes, *A Dictionary of Islam, Being a Cyclopedia of the Doctrines, Rites, Ceremonies, and Customs, Together with the Technical and Theological Terms, of the Muhammadan Religion* (Delhi: Oriental Publishers, 1973), *vii*. One easily forgets that Queen Victoria claimed the largest number of Muslim subjects of any ruler in the world during this time period.

[61] This line, written by Benjamin Disraeli in *Tancred*, was perhaps most famously cited by Edward Said as an epigraph for *Orientalism* (Vintage Books, 1978).

Hughes' entry on *da'wah* gives us one illustration of the operating assumptions within his project. He defines the term as being "used to express a system of incantation which is held to be lawful by orthodox Muhammadans; whilst *sihr*, 'magic,' and *kahanah*, 'fortune-telling,' are said to be unlawful, the Prophet having forbidden both."[62] Hughes does not explicitly say how he would go about discerning the line between orthodox and unorthodox Islam, but readers are left with a few clues. For example, he writes that the "science of *da'wah* has, however been very much elaborated, and in many respects its teachers seem to have departed from the original teaching of their Prophet on the subject."[63] In this depiction Hughes relies upon a reification of the Prophet Muhammad as the one and only deciding factor when evaluating whether or not a given practice or tenet is legitimate. If textual evidence attests that the Prophet Muhammad did something or said a given action was acceptable, then it is licit. In this way, there are some important points of congruence between modern Salafist discourse and Orientalists writing in Hughes' period, and beyond.

In broader terms, Hughes breaks down the different forms of divination, *kahaneh*, noting that certain forms are "spiritual magic," while others classify as "natural magic," and yet another group fits in between these two: astrology. He states that at his time of writing, this practice was widespread amongst Muslims, and that "professors" of astrology were employed more so by Persians and Turks than by Arabs.

One of the most pressing specific examples from *The Dictionary of Islam* is found in this same entry on *da'wah*. One reads that "[i]n India, the most popular work on *da'wah* is the

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[62] Hughes, 73. Interestingly, the entry on *da'wah* is mentioned by a reviewer in the above-cited *The Athenaeum* as one of the more worthwhile articles in the entire *Dictionary of Islam*.

[63] Hughes, 73.

Jawahiru 'l-Khamsah, by Shaikh Abu 'l-Muwayyid of Gujerat,[64] A.H. 956, in which he says the science is used for the following purposes. (1) To establish friendship or enmity between two persons. (2) To cause the cure, or the sickness and death, of a person. (3) To secure the accomplishment of one's wishes, both temporal and spiritual. (4) To obtain defeat or victory in battle."[65] As noted in the list of texts forming the `ilm-i dam* corpus in Chapter One, this specific text was widely read. Hughes' description here fits quite closely with some of the major points of congruence unifying the corpus. Key for our understanding of how Orientalist scholarship interpreted this text in particular, and by extension, the corpus as a whole, is the following sentence from the same entry: *"This book is largely made up of Hindu customs which, in India, have become part of Muhammadanism*, but we shall endeavour to confine ourselves to a consideration of those sections which exhibit the so-called science as it exists in its relation to Islam."[66] In this instance, the *Javahir-i Khamsa* is classified as Hindu and not Islamic on the basis of its contents, no matter that its use by Muslims was well documented. It is as if Hughes and other scholars of his time could not imagine a version of Islam in which Muslims engaged in the types of practices described in this text. And yet the evidence is that Muslims in South Asia (and other regions) very much did (and continue to) engage in these practices of divination. For instance, Azfar Moin documents an instance in which Muhammad Ghawth' brother, Shaykh Phul, utilized the reciting of divine names to gain victory in battle.

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[64] Hughes appears to be confused here about the text's authorship, for all other sources agree that the *Jawahir-i Khamsa* was written by Muhammad Ghawth.

[65] Hughes, 73.

[66] Hughes, 74. Emphasis added.

5.3 Qanun-i Islam

It should be noted that the *Javahir-i Khamsa* appears in another important text on Islam from several decades before Hughes' work. Gerhard Andreas Herklots (d. 1834), a Dutch surgeon working for the East India Company, directed a madrassa teacher from the Deccan, Jafar Sharif, to compose the *Qanun-i Islam*: *The Customs of the Musalmans of India; comprising a full and exact account of their various rites and ceremonies from the moment of birth to the hour of death*. Completed in 1832, Herklots is identified as the translator. The full title indicates the audacious goal for this work, that it would serve as a comprehensive and universal guidebook specifically about Indian Muslims. In his preface, Herklots frames sponsoring and translating this work in the context of European imperial expansion around the world:

> If the manners and customs of other tribes of men be worthy of our study, certainly no less so are those of the Muhammadan natives of India. They are the immediate descendants of the race of conquerors who exercised supreme dominion over the greater part of that vast country for so many centuries, until it fell into British hands.[67]

The date here is important: while the East India Company could claim to wield influence and control over portions of India at this time, it is not until 1857, following the Great Rebellion in Delhi, that the British government officially took over, deposing the last Mughal ruler Bahadur Shah II. Twenty years *before* these events, Herklots is writing as if Great Britain already is in control of India and the Mughals are no more. He goes on to describe the importance of understanding Indian Muslims, stressing that it "is not a topic of philosophical speculation merely, but a matter of real practical utility, to understand thoroughly a people with whom we

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[67] G.A. Herklots in translator's preface to Ja'far Sharif, trans. G.A. Herklots, *Islam in India; or The Qanun-i-Islam; the customs of the Musalmans of India, comprising a full account of their various rites and ceremonies from the moment of birth to the hour of death* (London: Curzon Press, 1972), *xi-xii*.

have constant transactions and daily intercourse…"[68] In particular, Herklots sees this work as being of benefit to British military officers serving in India, for example to help them evaluate the veracity of a servant's request for leave to attend a religious ceremony.[69] He also sees the *Qanun-i Islam* as a step towards addressing the relative lack of comprehensive studies on Indian Muslims, while many such works had been published in his time on Hindus.[70] Alongside the justification for this large-scale venture, which I will compare later to Hughes' own motivations, I also want to draw the reader's attention to the chapters on magic, the use of charms and amulets, lucky and unlucky days, and Sufi mysticism. I highlight this last chapter because its existence speaks to the way that Sharif (and Herklots) formulate magic and mysticism as separate categories. The chapters that broadly comprise magic and its applications draw in many cases explicitly on the *Javahir-i Khamsa*. After beginning his discourse on magic, Jafar Sharif includes the following aside: "Should any one require further information that than given here, there is no better authority that the *Javahir-i Khamsa* by His Excellency Muhammad Ghaus Gaulieri—The mercy of God be upon him!"[71]

5.4 Contrasting Models: Hybridity and Syncretism, Exchange and Translation

Finbarr Flood presents compelling evidence for the material and intellectual exchange that was the rule far more than the exception in the centuries before the Mughal dynasty, as well as offering a thorough discussion of the "syncretic" policies adopted by Akbar and the *din illahi*

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[68] Herklots, translator's preface to *Qanun-i Islam*, *xii*.

[69] Herklots, *xiv*.

[70] Herklots, *xiii*.

[71] Jafar Sharif, *Qanun-i Islam*, 219. There is another reference on 229 advising "the Europeans" to consult the *Javahir-i Khamsa* for information on making invocations (*da`vat*).

("divine faith"). In the modern period, Anna Bigelow presents an ethnographic study on Malkerkotla in the Indian Punjab, demonstrating how Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs "share the sacred" by all participating in rituals affiliated with a particular shrine complex.[72] Philip Wagoner studies dress customs in the Hindu kingdom at Vijayanagara to shed light on the ways in which Hindu rulers adopted particular patterns of dress popular among Muslim rulers from surrounding areas in order to boost their own prestige.[73] Using translation theory, Tony Stewart brings to light the problematic nature of assuming the framework of syncretism in studying religious practice in Bengal, specifically in that scholars have idealized the supposedly pure parent entities of Islam and Hinduism.[74] Cynthia Talbot looks at inscriptions found at Andhra Pradesh from the fourteenth to seventeenth centuries, and identifies a wealth of evidence in the form of Sanskrit and Telegu inscriptions to counter the popular narrative that British colonial rule essentially created the sectarian discord that plays such a major role in Indian society up through today.[75] In short, scholars working on religious identity in India have challenged earlier notions that religion served (and continues to serve) as an impenetrable boundary. Instead, the evidence, including now the evidence from the `ilm-i dam,* suggests a state of affairs that was and is far more complex.

There is ample evidence that European Orientalist scholarship from the 18th and 19th

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[72] Anna Bigelow, *Sharing the Sacred: Practicing Pluralism in Muslim North India* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

[73] Philip B. Wagoner, "'Sultan among Hindu kings': dress, titles, and the Islamicization of Hindu culture at Vijayanagara." *The Journal of Asian Studies* 55, no. 4 (Nov., 1996), 851-880.

[74] Tony Stewart, "In Search of Equivalence: Conceiving Muslim Hindu Encounter through Translation Theory," *History of Religions* 40, no.3 (2001), 260-287.

[75] Cynthia Talbot, "Inscribing the Other, Inscribing the Self: Hindu-Muslim Identities in Pre-colonial India," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 37, no. 4 (Oct., 1995), 692-722.

centuries repeatedly treated Sufism in South Asia as an amalgamation of Hinduism and

Buddhism, cloaked in the robes of Islam. For example, the *Dictionary of Islam* contains a

lengthy entry on Sufism, including a sub-section on "the True Character of Sufism." Jalaluddin

"Rumi" is frequently set up as the apogee of Sufi teachings, especially as found in his epic poem,

the *Masnavi*. Hughes uses a passage from this poem to illustrate his point that "the great object

of the Sufi Mystic is to lose his own identity."[76] After citing the passage, he proceeds directly to

the claim that "[t]he Sufi doctrines are undoubtedly pantheistic, and are almost identical with

those of the Brahmans and Buddhists, the New-Platonists, the Beghards and Beguins."[77] These

last two groups were Christian lay orders from the medieval period, the first of which was

founded in Flanders in the 13th century. Through referencing these groups alongside "Brahmans

and Buddhists," but without specifying a time period, Hughes is in effect arguing for a timeless

understanding of this one group of Hindus, of all Buddhists, and of course, all Sufis. This is a

classic move for Orientalist discourse, in which "Eastern" groups are depicted as unchanging

over time, while the notion of progress is reserved for "Western" groups. Hughes goes on to state

that Sufis really only pretend to be Muslim:

> On certain tenets of the Qur'an the Sufis have erected their own system,
> professing, indeed, to reverence its authority as a divine revelation, but in
> reality substituting for it the oral voice of the teacher, or the secret dreams
> of the Mystic. Dissatisfied with the barren letter of the Qur'an, Sufiism
> appeals to human consciousness, and from our nature's felt wants, seeks to
> set before us nobler hopes than a gross Muhammadan Paradise can
> fulfill.[78]

Hughes does not provide a specific list of the "certain tenets" from the Qur'an that Sufis

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[76] Hughes, 620.

[77] Hughes, 620.

[78] Hughes, 620.

have appropriated for their own purposes, but his specific argument against them bears some expansion and analysis. First, he does not differentiate between all the many different schools of Sufism. Second, when Hughes writes that Sufis replace the Qur'anic tenet with "the oral voice of the teacher, or the secret dreams of the Mystic," he is leveraging a particular type of rationalist discourse that claims that knowledge acquired from dreams is invalid in comparison to that gained from reading text. For the first point, what is to be made of Hughes' disavowal of "the oral voice of the teacher"? The Qur'anic text is full of references to the power of the spoken word; indeed, the tradition holds that the very first verse revealed to the Prophet Muhammad by the angel Gabriel began with the imperative "recite" (*iqra'*).[79] Of course, this verb can be understood as either "recite" (i.e., read out loud), or simply "read." Literacy itself has become common today in many parts of the world, but this is strictly a modern phenomenon. Hughes may be critiquing the notion of meditation, or the emphasis that many Sufi orders place on the powerful status of teachers in disseminating knowledge. But he could just as easily be criticizing Catholic liturgy and hierarchical ecclesiastical structure as that of a Sufi *tariqa* (order), which indeed is part of Robert Yelle's argument in his work on the role of Protestant literalism in British attitudes and policies towards religious groups in India (especially Hinduism) during the colonial period.[80] Regarding his comment on the "secret dreams of the Mystic," this emphasis on reading scripture—which is printed, fixed, *externalized*, and thus standardized for anyone to read—over and against validating the private, unspoken, *interior*, and thus unverifiable experience of dreams, is illustrative of the biases that scholars like Hughes brought with them in their approach to the study of Islam (and other religious traditions). His comment on the "barren

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[79] Qur'an 96:1.

[80] Robert Yelle, *The Language of Disenchantment: Protestant Literalism and Colonial Discourse in British India* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).

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letter of the Qur'an" is itself indicative of how he understood the Muslim sacred text, in juxtaposition with his understanding of the Bible, with special emphasis on the New Testament.

In the first part of the cited passage, Hughes appears to be saying that Sufis are corrupting some type of pure Islam through the aforementioned emphasis on an authority figure's oral recitation of religious truth and teachings, as well as the potential for knowledge from unreliable sources such as dreams to rise up and be shared with the community. Curiously, he switches approaches in the next sentence, now presenting Sufism (and Sufis, presumably) as doing whatever possible to bridge the gap between "the barren letter of the Qur'an" on one side and "human consciousness" made up of "our nature's felt wants" on the other. In this reading, Sufism represents a more effective vehicle for finding one's way to fulfillment, and is clearly and definitively differentiated from Islam. This is part of the Orientalist tack, to de-root Sufism from its Islamic context because for someone like Hughes, the one cannot possibly be an authentic part of the other.

Hughes goes on. In his critique of "the result of Muhammadan mysticism," Hughes says, "It has dug a deep gulf between those who know God and those who must wander in the darkness, *feeding upon the husks of rites and ceremonies*."[81] This last sentence illustrates the same type of hostility towards ritual actions, which again would dovetail with Yelle's argument. Influenced heavily by a Protestant literalism that took much of its inspiration from the Reformation, British officers and ministers looked at Hindu religious practices, especially the reciting of mantras, as another version of the Catholic ritualism that their ancestors had denounced years and years earlier. Part of Hughes' concern is that without monotheism, a society

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[81] Hughes, 621. Emphasis added.

is doomed to chaos: "The logical result of Pantheism is the destruction of a moral law."[82] While

Hughes does not go into detail regarding this last point, one possible answer can be found in the

work of Dutch clergyman and reformer Abraham Kuyper, who wrote *Pantheism's Destruction of*

Boundaries.[83] First translated into English in 1893 and published in *Methodist Review*, Kuyper

argues that pantheism leads to moral chaos in large part because without the monotheistic

instance on boundaries between God and creation, the believer was left without sufficient

guidance and may even believe that they are themselves partially divine.[84] Ascertaining the

precise extent to which Hughes lined up with Kuyper's views would require a closer reading than

present space allows, but I believe it is sufficient to say that this is an example of how and why

Indian religions—Indian Muslim practices included—troubled some European observers. This

ends the discussion of individual contributions to the European reception of `ilm-i dam*. In what

follows, I turn to one of the most influential corporate undertakings that has shaped the study of

Islam in the twentieth- and twenty-first centuries.

6 - The Encyclopedia(s) of Islam

One of the standard academic sources for those studying Muslim societies is the

Encyclopedia of Islam. Now in its third edition, this continues to be an important resource, not

only for those seeking knowledge on various aspects of Muslim practices, beliefs, and history,

but also for those who seek to critique the very organization and classification of this complex

set of data. Published by Brill, the first edition (EI-1) was released from 1913-1938 (with an

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[82] Hughes, 621.

[83] Abraham Kuyper. *Pantheism's Destruction of Boundaries* (trans. J. Hendrik de Vries). New York: Methodist Review, 1893.

[84] Kuyper, 17.

abridged "Shorter Encyclopedia of Islam" – SEI published in 1953), the second (EI-2) from

1954-2005, while entries for the third edition (EI-3) began to be published in 2007. What

prompted this work? The publisher describes the reasons as "created by the increasing (colonial)

interest in Muslims and Islamic cultures during the nineteenth century."[85] Much like Thomas

Hughes' *Dictionary of Islam*, EI-1 was produced by Europeans, for Europeans, in order to assist

Europeans with their administration of the growing number of Muslim subjects under colonial

rule. As such, the questions that the writers ask reveal

> a specifically European interpretation of Islamic civilization. The point is
> not that this interpretation is "wrong", but that the questions addressed in
> these volumes often differ sharply from those which Muslims have
> traditionally asked about themselves. *EI2* is a somewhat different matter. It
> began in much the same way as its predecessor, but a growing proportion
> of the articles now come from scholars of Muslim background. The
> persons do not represent the traditional learning of Qom and al-Azhar to
> be sure; they have been trained in Western-style universities, and they
> share the methodology if not always the cultural values and attitudes of
> their Western colleagues. Even so, the change in tone is perceptible and
> significant.[86]

Tracking this "change in tone" occupies the following sections.

6.1 Sihr

For understanding the European scholarly orientation towards so many key issues, the EI-

1 is a useful starting point. Particularly in the case of Duncan Black MacDonald's entry on *sihr*

(commonly translated as "magic," but also sometimes "sorcery" and in at least one place, one

early European translation renders the term as "necromancy"), several things emerge.[87] From the

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[85] "Encyclopaedia of Islam First Edition Online." http://www.brill.com/products/online-resources/encyclopaedia-islam-first-edition-online. Accessed January 4, 2018.

[86] Stephen Humphreys, *Islamic History: A Framework for Inquiry* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 4.

[87] Francis Gladwin, *Ayeen Akbery: Or, The Institutes of the Emperor Akber. Translated from the Original Persian*

outset, MacDonald writes that "Islam is a system of frank supernaturalism; for it [sic] there is our material world of the sense and behind that a world of spirits, into relation with which we can enter by means of either magic or religion."[88] Much of MacDonald's entry is spent outlining Ibn Khaldun's views on *sihr*, with limited references to other Muslim authors from the pre-modern period. The emphasis is on discerning the latter's methods for differentiating between licit and illicit forms of magic, a process which is effected partially through analyzing the desired outcome of an action, and partially based on the means through which the practitioner is thought to have come by their powers. "It is plain from Ibn Khaldun's theory that he was faced by the necessity of distinguishing, not only legally but also psychologically, between the working of magic and that of the powers inhering in saints and prophets."[89] *Sihr* was something to be tolerated but could not be placed in comparison to the acts performed by the prophets, whose power came directly from God and was inaccessible to even the elite members of the rank-and-file, non-prophetic masses. One could learn to draw down the sacral power of the stars through uttering words and creating talismans, but for Ibn Khaldun (and, one gets the impression, for MacDonald), this would never compare with the truly divinely sanctioned miracle (*kiramat*) of the saints and prophets.

"On the psychological side, the first-hand phenomenon strongly suggest hypnotism and, on the religious, the attitude of Muhammad was almost exactly that of the modern Roman Church towards spiritism."[90] That MacDonald draws this link between Muslim (at least, the

(Calcutta: William Mackay, 1886), 179.

[88] D.B. MacDonald, "Sihr," in *Encyclopedia of Islam*, vol. 7, ed. T. Housma (Leiden: Brill, 1993) 409.

[89] MacDonald, "Sihr," 415.

[90] MacDonald, "Sihr," 409.

Prophet Muhammad's) views towards magic and that of the Catholic Church toward spiritism says much more about the context in which MacDonald wrote than anything else. In yet another link to *`ilm-i dam* and its closely connected cousin of *`ilm-i vahm*, MacDonald contributes an article on the same term, albeit restricted to Arabic-language texts, in which he notes that "the Indians have especially 'hypnotism' (*`ilm al-tawahhum*)."[91] MacDonald's article connects nicely to much of the engagement with spiritism and other forms of esotericism on the part of Iranian clerics as discussed by Alireza Doostdar.[92] In his EI-1 enty on *sihr*, MacDonald makes reference to "Indian books on [magic and sorcery] which have been translated into Arabic."[93] He does not specify which books he means, which raises a number of questions. Does he mean the *Javahir-i Khamsa*? Could he mean something like the *svarodaya* texts or other related Shaivite Tantra that was so often classified as magic by orientalists? Unfortunately, his lack of clarity means we are left with nothing less than speculation.

6.2 Jafr

Beyond *sihr*, MacDonald also contributed the entries on *djafr* (*jafr*) and *`ilm*. His treatment of *jafr* makes little attempt to "translate" the term into an equivalent using any European language. Instead, he begins with the statement that "there developed very early in Shi`ite Islam a belief that the descendants of `Ali were in possession of a secret tradition, a body of religious and political esoteric knowledge covering all things to the end of the world."[94]

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[91] D. B. MacDonald, "*Wahm* in Arabic and its Cognates," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society Great Britain and Ireland* 4 (Oct., 1922), 516.

[92] Alireza Doostdar, "Empirical Spirits: Islam, Spiritism, and the Virtues of Science in Iran." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 58 (No. 2, 2016) 322-349.

[93] MacDonald, "Sihr," 412.

[94] D.B. MacDonald, "Djafr," in *Encyclopedia of Islam*, vol. 2, ed. T. Housma (Leiden: Brill, 1993), 994.

Throughout the brief entry, MacDonald emphasizes that initially these esoteric beliefs were the exclusive domain of Shi`i Muslims, linked to their belief in the infallibility of the imams. He does refer to supposed books on *jafr* that were used by court astrologers to predict "the fates of the Muslim empires," for example during the Abbasid period, but which have long been lost.[95] He is vague about precisely when, but does acknowledge that "in time there arose a belief that in [*jafr*] it meanings were cabalistically expressed by separate letters, and `ilm al-djafr came to mean `ilm al-Huruf, the method of prediction by assigning (by *Abdjad*) numerical values to letters."[96] The entry on `ilm begins with the simple statement that "`ilm is the broadest word in Arabic for 'knowledge.'"[97] He also draws the distinction between `ilm and *ma`rifat*, emphasizing that while the `alim and the `arif possess completely different types of knowledge, the former is the "scientist" while the latter "is the mystical knower by immediate experience and vision."[98] Later editions of the *Encyclopedia of Islam* did not insist on such strict boundaries between the two "ways of knowing."

MacDonald himself represents a figure of note for the teaching of Arabic and other Semitic languages, primarily through his position at Hartford Seminary in Hartford, Connecticut. That he taught generations of students about Arabic, Islamic theology, and related subjects all in a setting where these students were being trained as missionaries who would travel to the Middle East has received a great deal of attention, with the two main schools of thought being that (1) yes, one can detect in his broader work a certain amount of condescension towards Muslims, and (2) no, he had a genuine interest in teaching—perhaps, especially teaching future missionaries—

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[95] MacDonald, "Djafr," 995.

[96] MacDonald, "Djafr," 995.

[97] D.B. MacDonald, "`Ilm," in *Encyclopedia of Islam*, vol. 4, ed. T. Housma (Leiden: Brill, 1993), 469.

[98] MacDonald, "`Ilm," 469.

to appreciate Muslim theology so as to approach discussions with Muslims not so much with an eye towards winning converts, but instead to engage in sincere inter-faith dialogue.[99] Similar to Hughes, von Kremer, and Browne, the contributions that MacDonald made must be considered in broad context.

6.3 Tasawwuf

It is here that the EI-1 entry on *tassawuf* becomes especially important, for the above-mentioned distinction between the two ways of knowing—and arguably, other types of strict boundaries—was a hallmark of this first attempt by (European) scholars to assemble a universalizing picture of Muslim beliefs and practices. Written by none other than Louis Massignon, this entry follows an established type for the EI-1 in general. He begins with a philological exposition on the origins of the term, *tassawuf*, meaning "the practice of wearing the woolen robe (*labs al-suf*), hence the act of devoting oneself to the mystic life on becoming what is called in Islam a *sufi*."[100] He then briefly reviews the various (Western) theories regarding the term's origins, particularly the theory that it referred to the Greek term for wisdom, *sophos*, which would resonate with parts of the Hellenistic-Christian origins for Sufism espoused by those such as von Kremer. As Massignon notes, "The attempt has even been made to derive *tassawuf* from theosophia," but this was rejected on the grounds that when Greek words enter Arabic, "the Greek *sigma* regularly became *sin* (and not *sad*) in Arabic and that there is no

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[99] For two recent reviews and assessments of MacDonald's legacy, see Suendam Birinci Pirim, "A Journey from Mission to Dialogue: Duncan Black MacDonald's Contributions toward Christian-Muslim Relations," *The Muslim World* 100 (October 2010), 368-376; and Najib George Awad, "'Understanding the Other From Within': The Muslim Near East in the Eyes of Duncan Black MacDonald," *The Muslim World* 106 (July 2016), 523-538.

[100] Louis Massignon, "Tassawuf," in *Encyclopedia of Islam*, vol. 8, ed. T. Housma (Leiden: Brill, 1993), 681.

Aramaic intermediary between *Sophos* and *sufi*."[101] The point of this extended narrative on

philology from Massignon's EI-1 entry is that it speaks to the way that scholarship in this era

frequently functioned: philology was often-times the first and most important entry point for the

encounter between scholar and object of study. The majority of Massignon's entry is spent

outlining the different approaches to mystical knowledge espoused by particular teachers and

representatives of Sufi orders (*tariqa*s). At the end of the entry, he returns to the question of

origins and influence, asserting that while "the critical study of the sources is far from being

completed," the theories on the non-Islamic origins of Sufi practices are

> untenable; indeed from the very beginning of Islam, it can be observed
> that the formation of the theses peculiar to Muslim mystics went on from
> within in the course of assiduous recitations of and meditations on the
> Qur'an and Hadith, under the influence of social and individual crises in
> the very centre of the Muslim community. But if the initial framework of
> Sufiism was specifically Muslim and Arab, *it is not exactly useless to
> identify the foreign decorative elements which came to be added to this
> framework and flourished there....* As to the Indian elements, few
> arguments have been added to the old similar conjectures of al-Biruni and
> Dara Shikuh on the parallels between the Upanishads or the Yoga Sutra
> and the ideology of primitive Sufism. On the other hand, it is probable that
> the critical student of the material processes producing the *dhikr* of the
> modern congregations would establish the infiltration of certain methods
> of Hindu asceticism.[102]

Massignon's equivocation here is revealing. He wants to maintain the Arab-ness of Sufism at its

fundamental core, but he also needs to account for the obvious diversity in practices found

outside of Arabia. He works to affirm that Sufism is Islamic to its core, but then he balances this

work by acknowledging some of the things about Sufi practices that diverge—in both his eyes

and in those of many of his interlocutors at the time—from a perceived "pure Sufism." His

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[101] Massignon, 681. Characteristically of this time period, the Greek terms are printed in Greek, but I have transliterated them here for ease of access, something that was not as highly valued by earlier generations of scholars.

[102] Massignon, 684-685, emphasis added.

closing could easily be read as a suggestion to future students interested in pursuing ethnographic work on modern Sufi practices, explicitly telling his readers that such studies would make clear the ways in which Hindu practices have come to be incorporated into older and more original techniques for *dhikr*. He still leaves conceptual room for a type of Indian Sufism that could be seen as separate from Persian and Arab varieties, for in his bibliography for the entry, Massignon lists none other than Alfred von Kremer as a source "on Hindu Sufis of the 17th CE."[103] Thus from the beginning of the EI-1, this attempt at universalizing knowledge about Islam and Muslims, there is the notion of Sufis as somehow existing outside of the fold.

When examining the entries in the EI-2 on subjects that potentially touch upon the practices encompassed by *ilm-i dam*, such as sorcery, magic, divination, and medicine, the main conclusion is that the lack of a stable theorization for these very practices is one of the most challenging aspects of studying `ilm-i dam*. Beginning (again) with the term *sihr*, sometimes translated as sorcery or magic, one learns about how Muslim sources that pre-date Hughes by a veritable millennium or more have approached these subjects.[104] One of the most noted scholars of divination in the Middle East, Toufic Fahd, writes that "`ilm al-sihr* is often seen as equivalent to `ilm al-nudjūm*. This results from the notion that the planets exert beneficial and baneful influences over the three domains of the created being." Of the early sources that Fahd cites, the

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[103] Massignon, 685.

[104] Toufic Fahd., "Sihr", in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, ed. P. Bearman et al, consulted online on 30 June 2017 http://dx.doi.org.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_7023. Fahd bases this conclusion largely on readings of *Ghayat al-hakim*, the 11th century text by Abu Maslama Muḥammad al-Madjriti, who in turn was inspired by *Rasaʾil* of the Ikhwan al-Safaʾ, and by a slightly earlier text known as *Nabataean agriculture*, by Abu ʾl-Ḳasim al-Zahrawi (d. *ca.* 400/1009). He quotes al-Madjriti on magic: "Magic essentially comprises two parts, one theoretical and the other practical. The first consists in knowledge of the positions of the immobile heavenly bodies (which is where, in fact, the forms are located), the modalities of their radiation on the planets and, finally, aspects of conjunctions of the celestial spheres at the precise moment that the successful outcome of a project is desired. Under this heading, the ancients placed everything having to do with discernment of the beneficial and of the baneful and with theurgy. As for practical magic, it consists in the knowledge of the three domains of the created being (*al-muwalladāt al-thalāth*) and of the qualities of the planets which would be disseminated there."

key is the 11th century writer al-Madjriti, who writes that magic is divided into theoretical and practical realms.[105] Ibn Khaldun includes extensive discussion of magic and astrology in his work, and he was definitely aware of the sources cited above in Fahd's work. Here ones the connection made very clearly between one of the most well-known and widely-read Islamicate writers from the premodern period and the field of magic as a completely accepted arena of human knowledge.

6.4 Ruqya

Next, in the EI-2 entry on *rukya*, or the enunciation of "magical formulae for procuring an enchantment,"[106] Fahd writes that it "is one of the procedures of sihr, used by the Prophet himself and, because of this, permitted in exceptional cases, on condition that it brings benefit to people and does not harm anyone. One may have recourse to it against poison, bites, fever, the evil eye, etc. According to Muslim, ii, 279, 'charms are forbidden as soon as they touch upon, in one manner or another, polytheism.'" This last statement by Muslim brings up one of the theological issues at play in assessing the licitness of practices such as `ilm-i dam*. When the text included in the *Nafa'is al-funun* by Amuli mentions the goddess Kamyak Dev, what would this Hadith compiler say as to whether or not this mention of the goddess crosses a line into *shirk* (association), e.g., polytheism? While ultimately the answer is impossible to know, nevertheless it remains an important question. As Fred Donner's work in *Among the Believers* demonstrates, when an assertion of radical monotheism rises as a key component of the early Muslim

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[105] Toufic Fahd, "Sihr," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, ed. P. Bearman et al., consulted online on 30 June 2017 http://dx.doi.org.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_7023.

[106] Toufic Fahd, "Rukya", in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, ed. P. Bearman et al, consulted online on 30 June 2017 http://dx.doi.org.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_6333.

community's sense of identity, hard choices are made regarding the precise drawing of these boundaries, and those choices are by no means static over time. Specifically, Donner outlines the difficulties for scholars working in the present day in identifying the precise valence of key terms used in texts from over a millennium ago, such as "Muslim" and "believer" (*mu'min*).[107]

Fahd provides a wealth of evidence from early Muslim sources indicating that the Prophet Muhammad approved of, and engaged in, practices like *ruqya*. Citing al-Tirmidhi, Fahd writes that

> The Prophet thought that beneficial *ruqya* could modify the fate decreed by God and that it was in fact part of it. For him, "the evil eye definitely exists. If something could forestall destiny, the [evil] eye would precede it" (Muslim, ii, 275). In this case, he recommended *ruqya*…He himself used *ruqya* in order to cure a sick man; he placed his right hand on him and pronounced a conjuration formula (Muslim, ii, 276-7). When he was ill, he recited over himself magical formulae and spat. ʿAʾisha used to do it for him when sorrow was particularly heavy upon him (ibid., ii, 277). The angel Gabriel would sometimes come to him and apply a *ruqya* (ibid., ii, 274-5)."[108]

The image of the Prophet Muhammad as not only condoning, but participating in a type of sorcery or magic is very striking. What does it mean that 'A'isha would help him with this task "when sorrow was particularly heavy upon him"? Additionally, what comparisons can be drawn between the invoking of the angel Gabriel here, and divine entities such as *Kamak Dev* or the yoginis that Muhammad Ghawth edits out of his version of the *Kamaru Panchashika*? With the Prophet Muhammad serving as the exemplar whom many Muslims would strive to follow, "*ruqya* from then onwards multiplied enormously, and, especially, amongst the more backward milieux of society. The intellectual classes were unanimous in formally forbidding the practise of magic, but, in the absence of a definition of the idea of *sihr* in the Kurʾan, as likewise in Islamic

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[107] Fred Donner, *Among the Believers* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), 57-59 and 204.

[108] Toufic Fahd, "Rukya"

law, this prohibition was watered down by the Prophetic example." Note Fahd's disdainful

attitude towards practitioners of these practices. The "backward milieu" is contrasted with the

"intellectual classes," the latter of which condemned its practice formally but in the end could

not negotiate their way past examples where the Prophet Muhammad at minimum tacitly

approved of it. This is reminiscent of the distinction drawn during the pre-modern period by

Muslim philosophers such as al-Farabi, who wrote about religion as a watered-down version of

philosophy. In al-Farabi's system, religion was a symbolic system necessary to communicate

philosophical truth to the vulgar masses (*'awwam*) by the "elite" (*khawass*). Between Fahd and

Hughes, these are illustrations of attitudes held by scholars separated by decades as well as

geographical provenance. Fahd cites the 'Ashari jurist al-Juwayni (d. 681/1283) and the

aforementioned Ibn Khaldun in making his point that early Muslim writers accepted the

existence of magic and sorcery, although they certainly had an array of opinions as to whether or

not it was licit.[109] For Fahd, al-Ghazali's contribution was to clarify that "magic is based on a

combined knowledge of the properties of certain terrestrial elements and of propitious astral

risings."[110] When Fahd cites al-Ghazali, it is true that he is bringing in one of the most

authoritative authors from the premodern period. Fahd then returns to Prophetic example to

justify al-Ghazali's words, thereby closing the circle so that no one can dispute his argument on

these stances taken towards magic and sorcery in Muslim theological and philosophical schools.

   This overview of the diverse opinions on magic and sorcery held by Muslim writers from

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[109] Toufic Fahd, "Sihr", in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, ed. P. Bearman et al., consulted online on 30 June 2017 http://dx.doi.org.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_7023. He quotes from Juwayni and Ibn Khaldun as follows: "Al-Djuwayni (d. 681/1283), an Ashʿari jurist, wrote, 'God has merely prohibited what is harmful and not that which is useful; if it is possible for you to be useful to your brother, then do it' (cited in Bousquet, op. cit., 301 n. 104); whilst Ibn Khaldun wrote, 'The religious law makes no distinction between sorcery, talismans and prestidigitation. It puts them all into the same class of forbidden things' (Muḳaddima, tr. Rosenthal, iii, 169)."

[110] Fahd, "Sihr.

the early Islamic period onwards should be placed alongside those of Hughes as found in *The Dictionary of Islam*. The contrast between them is evident in that the Muslim writers not only freely acknowledged the existence of sorcery, but provided examples from the Prophet Muhammad's life for specific places, circumstances, and methods where its use was approved of. At the same time, Hughes treated magic and sorcery as a foreign object that had infected Islam—specifically, Muslim religious practice—through the vectors of Hinduism and Buddhism. Certainly, Hughes' decades of experience living along the border areas between present-day Pakistan and Afghanistan cannot be dismissed as an insignificant factor, but so too are the broader scholarly, religious, and imperial setting in which he worked. For Hughes and his colleagues, "India" (broadly understood) was a key component of the British Empire. By the late nineteenth century, this status meant that a growing number of missionary societies sent representatives to all corners of the country with the goal of converting people to Christianity.

6.5 `ilm and ma`rifa

In the EI-2, there is an effort to draw a distinction between `*ilm* and *ma`rifa*, noting that the former is used to describe "knowledge acquired through reflexion, or experience, which presupposes a former ignorance," while the latter refers to "a knowledge which may be described as spontaneous; in other words, *ma`rifa* means secular knowledge and `*ilm* means the knowledge of God, hence of anything which concerns religion." [111] However, in a marked point of departure from the earlier-referenced EI-1 entry by Duncan Black MacDonald, the EI-2 editors quickly admit that "these distinctions are quite artificial and it is doubtful even whether a semantic study of the two terms based on an extensive collection of examples would throw any light on this

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[111] Ed., "'Ilm", in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, ed. P. Bearman et al., consulted online on 21 June 2017 http://dx.doi.org.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_3537.

problem, *so personal is the way in which the different writers use them and so varied according to their various disciplines.*"[112] Indeed, one of the key issues at stake, here, is the way that particular terms, such as `ilm, mean different things to different people depending on the particular context in which the authors deploy them. Beyond emphasizing the porosity of the boundaries between these two terms, there is also disagreement on the basic valence found in the EI-2 entry. For example, in his work on embodiment in Sufism, Scott Kugle notes that Sufis' understanding of divine revelation is one in which "it is intuitive paradigmatic knowledge that is given through reflection (*ma`rifa*) rather than rational practical knowledge that is learned through observation (`*ilm*)."[113] Both refer to types of knowledge, but there is disagreement about which has a connection to realms labeled as religious, spiritual, secular, etc. Regardless of the discourse on the permutations of *ma`rifa* and `*ilm*, the fact is that of the texts reviewed for this dissertation, only one refers to "knowledge/experience/*gnosis* of the breath" (Pr. *ma`rifat-i dam*). This is in the description of this material on the Ayatollah Hasan Zadeh Hasan Amuli's website.[114] In every other case, where one even finds a reference, it is to `*ilm-i dam*.

How then, should one understand the meaning of `*ilm* in this `*ilm-i dam* corpus? While the term is used more in the practical, observational side of the spectrum, there are definitely ways to read it as more on the insightful, reflective side as well. Reading through the various texts in the corpus, one sees that the hypothetical reader or user of these techniques is advised to observe their breath in order to know from which side its flows. Usually this is labeled as "sun-breath" (*dam-i shams*) or "moon-breath" (*dam-i qamar*). Typically, the sun-breath is associated

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[112] Ed., "`Ilm."

[113] Scott A. Kugle. *Sufis and Saints' Bodies: Mysticism, Corporeality, and Sacred Power in Islam* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 33.

[114] Hassan Zadeh Amuli, Hassan. "Ma'rifat-i 'ilm-i dam" ("Esoteric Knowledge of the Science of the Breath"). "Precious Secret," http://ansarolmahdiirdemousa.mihanblog.com/post/432, accessed on January 9, 2017.

with the right side (e.g., nostril), while the moon-breath is associated with the left side. Through

observing and counting the approximate number of breaths that they have in a twenty-four-hour

period (lit. "a night and a day," *shabanruz*), the practitioner gains knowledge that is

simultaneously observational and insightful. Without spending the requisite time observing the

breath, there is no way to gain the desire insight. The *insight* allowing one to predict success or

failure of going to war, entering into a marriage contract, or the health of a child is possible only

through developing the skill of *observing* the breath in the first place.

Speculating as to the subjective experience of practicing these techniques is very difficult.

While this *not* an ethnographic project, the fact remains that thinking through these issues from

the beginning is useful for framing a discussion. Scholars approaching `*ilm-i dam* must

understand that the foundational term itself is polyvalent, which requires pausing frequently

during the study to consider the precise implications of the specific term at a given moment, and

subsequently reflecting on the implications of attempting to measure a moving target. The act of

measuring one aspect naturally impacts the other. Peter Gottshalk invokes a similar set of issues

pertaining to the drawing of maps in South Asia, especially contrasting the approaches taken by

the Mughals and the British during their respective periods of control.[115]

In addition to discussing the pairing of `*ilm* and *ma`rifa*, the author of one of the above

epigraphs invokes a distinction between two types of action: *fi`l* and `*amal*. The EI-2 entry on *fi`l*

describes the difference between the two terms as such: "If `*amal* designates the realms of

'doing' and 'acting' (whence 'work', human acts, and moral action), and thus has at least in its

last meaning an ethical connotation, *fi`l* refers above all to noetic and ontological values: the fact

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[115] Peter Gottschalk, *Religion, Science, and Empire* (London: Oxford University Press, 2013), 57-65.

of actuating, of passing (or causing to pass) to the performance of an act."[116] Similarly, the EI-2

entry on `amal focuses on the term's valence within Muslim philosophical writings, as well as

legal and economic contexts right through to the modern period (with an emphasis on Morocco).

Pertaining specifically to mysticism as a field of study, EI-2 contributors take up the

connections between `ilm and ma`rifa under the entries for the latter term as well as that of

tasawwuf (Sufism). After some treatment of the term within lexicons such as al-Tahanawi's

Dictionary of Technical Terms, Arnaldez' entry on ma`rifa spends a great deal of space on the

term's general valence within Sufi circles, as well as the term's meaning for Andalusian scholar

Ibn al-`Arabi (d. 1240 CE). Arnaldez then concludes with a judgment on the error of translating

ma`rifa as the Greek term *gnosis* on the grounds that the latter term is not monolithic in nature,

thereby raising the question of precisely which type of *gnosis* one means when selecting this as a

translation of ma`rifa.[117] Citing the Greek term for Christian theological speculation, *he gnosis*

tes aletheias, "the knowledge of truth," Rosenthal notes that "[t]here can be no objection to the

use of `ilm here to translate Greek *gnosis*. The differentiation in Arabic involving a distinct

preference for employing the root `-r-f for translating *gignosko* and its derivatives is traceable

only in much later times."[118] Anzali describes how Muslim scholars have long held that since

`arif is *not* one of the Qur'anic ninety-nine names of God, there is a steadfast insistence on the

distinction between *types* of knowledge described using the different terms and their

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[116] L. Gardet, "Fi`l", in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, ed. P. Bearman, consulted online on 21 June 2017 http://dx.doi.org.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_COM_0221. Note that while there are multiple entries on *fi'l*, the present citation refers to the entry focused on the term as used in Muslim philosophical writings, while the other treats the term as used by grammarians.

[117] R. Arnaldez, "Maʿrifa", in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, ed. P. Bearman, consulted online on 21 June 2017 http://dx.doi.org.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_COM_0686.

[118] Rosenthal, *Knowledge Triumphant*, 24.

derivations.[119] This is all intended to demonstrate that when it comes to the use of `ilm vs

ma`rifa, one must pause and reflect upon who precisely is doing or performing the "knowing"

described in a given text, what exactly are they "knowing" about, and what (if any) contextual

clues exist to guide in discerning the parameters of said "knowing?"

The entry on *tasawwuf*—at 31,000 words, exponentially larger than the EI-2 entries on

`ilm and mar`ifa combined—breaks down into the following categories: "early development in

the Arabic and Persian lands," "Ibn al-`Arabi and after in the Arabic and Persian lands and

beyond," "Egypt in the 19th and 20th centuries," "in Persia from 1800 onwards," "among the

Turks," "in Muslim India," "in Chinese Islam," "in Africa south of the Maghrib during the 19th

and 20th centuries."[120] One is struck by the claim made in the first line of this entry that the most

basic definition of *tasawwuf* is "the phenomenon of mysticism within Islam."[121] Contrary to

Massignon's approach to this same term, the EI-2 entry spends little time on philological

exposition, and proceeds directly to theology and the development of practices. The extensive

treatment of Sufism—both in terms of the forms of the institutions that develop as well as in

terms of specific practices—is a marked improvement from Massignon's earlier entry. The issue

of non-Islamic origins is treated mostly in the sub-section on Sufism in South Asia, authored by

Carl Ernst, who emphasizes the colonial-era context for the formation of Sufism as a category of

study. While earlier travelers from Europe

> …had previously remarked upon 'dervishes' and 'fakirs' only as exotic
> curiosities, Orientalists applied the term 'Sufi' largely to the literary phase
> of Sufism, particularly as expressed in Persian poetry. These European
> scholars were persuaded that the elegant poems of Hafiz and Djalal al-Din

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[119] Ata Anzali, *"Mysticism" in Iran: The Safavid Roots of a Modern Concept* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2017), 10-11.

[120] Louis Massington et al, "Tasawwuf", in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, ed. P. Bearman, consulted online on 21 June 2017 http://dx.doi.org.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_COM_1188.

[121] Louis Massington et al, "Tasawwuf."

> Rumi could have nothing to with the Islamic ('Mahometan') religion, and therefore they unanimously believed to be derived from Indian sources; this position was reinforced by the anti-Sufi attitudes of Shi`i *mudjtahid*s in Persia.[122]

The entry attempts geographical comprehensiveness, but of course leaves out any mention of Muslim communities in Europe or North America, a feature that will hopefully be addressed in future editions. In conjunction with the fact that there is nothing within the voluminous entry pertaining to anything that might remotely be classified as divination, magic, sorcery, etc., it implies that there are clear boundaries between Sufism and `ilm-i dam.

EI-3 divides things up differently than EI-2. For example, a search for "Sufism" reveals that certain terms such as "action" or "presence" contain sections pertinent to Sufism, but then also to other fields such as theology or law. Additionally, there are far more entries on specific individuals from Muslim history than there are on generalized concepts. In that sense, the EI-3 is a move toward more particulars rather than abstractions. This would be in keeping with scholarly trends over the past century, in which it is less acceptable to publish "grand theories" (though one still finds them from time to time). The need to publish critical editions of more texts and for more detailed studies devoted to a single individual or community is quite clear. Searching through the EI-3 for `ilm produced articles on things such as astrology, astronomy, geomancy, and esotericism and exotericism but nothing on the term `ilm itself. Similarly, searches for an entry on "magic" produce a host of entries that reference magic in some way, but not a specific entry itself. This type of organization is more contextual, in that readers see how topics link to one another. In the EI-3, one is also more likely to find highly critical judgments of previous generations of scholarship on Islam. For example, Kevin van Bladel's entry on *gnosis* highlights

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[122] Louis Massington et al, "Tasawwuf." As Anzali Ata's work demonstrates, the roots of the "anti-Sufi" stance taken by religious officials in Iran is largely a function of the persecution directed against Sufi *tariqa*s during the Safavid dynasty.

that while scholars of ancient Greek and Roman mysticism, as well as early Christian mysticism, have criticized the idea of there being a coherent sect that would be rightly referred to as "gnostics," he argues that "scholars of Islam have shown no awareness of these criticisms, allowing scholarship on 'Islamic gnosticism' to flourish up to the present. With the development of the idea that gnosticism was a parasitic religious movement or a type of religion that could appear within any other religion, it is to be expected that historians of Islam would soon discover it in their materials."[123] Citing examples from Goldziher up through Henri Corbin, van Bladel lays out convincing charges against a series of widely read scholars whose work on Islamic theology and beliefs continues to be read today. This type of criticism is a marked point of departure from previous editions of the *Encyclopedia of Islam*, and is representative of the change in scholarly *adab* over the intervening generations. It reflects the push for more interdisciplinary research, which would require that scholars of a particular religious tradition (e.g., Islam or Judaism) become more conversant with the research on other traditions, especially when said research pursues similar types of questions, such as the expressions of mystical experiences.

6.6 Astrology

Given the fact that `*ilm-i dam* and *svarodaya* come out of the astrological genre, Charles Burnett's entry on this subject from the EI-3 is illustrative for tracing how scholarly views have changed with regard to how Muslim communities utilized knowledge of the celestial realm. By and large, his article has a wider scope than similar writings from EI-2, but there is one very important correlation. I noted above that in Toufic Fahd's entry on magic, he draws a clear line

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[123] Kevin van Bladel, "Gnosticism", in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, THREE*, Edited by Kate Fleet et al., consulted online on 04 January 2018 http://dx.doi.org.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/10.1163/1573-3912_ei3_COM_27490.

between elite and folk practices. After arguing that despite skeptics such as Ibn Sina writing refutations of astrological practices, they nonetheless were widely accepted and played an important role in Islamicate cultures, Burnett notes that this was a "scientific/mathematical astrology" that "was based on Greek philosophical principles [and] was remarkably resilient over the course of many centuries…,[but this] may be contrasted with 'folk astrology' [parallel to folk astronomy]."[124] To be clear, Burnett's deeper point within this EI-3 entry is that Arabic translations of astrological treatises from across the Middle East, Central Asia, and South Asia would come to play a central role in Western European astrology, but I would question the easy way in which he accepts the division between astrology and astronomy. Jamil Rageb's entry in the same edition of the *Encyclopedia of Islam* does not address the division between these two (supposedly) distinct ways of engaging the celestial realm, but he is in agreement with Burnett that detailed mathematical equations are key if someone if going to read the stars' and planets' positions for prognostic effect.[125] Additionally, there is no mention of breathing techniques in the EI-3 entries by Burnett and Rageb on astronomy and astrology, respectively, in this most recent version of the *Encyclopedia of Islam*. If the EI-3 is taken as authoritative, then the implication is that `ilm-i dam is quintessentially Indian (or, at minimum, non-Islamic) in nature. I would caution against that claim; the manuscripts reviewed for this project point to a more nuanced picture.

It is necessary to understand the precise reasons for this constructed divide, and the nature of the holes within those boundaries. The English term "science" carries with it a wealth of connotations, each with specific historical genealogies embedded in European discourse

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[124] Charles Burnett, "Astrology," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, THREE*, Edited by Kate Fleet et al., consulted online on 04 January 2018 http://dx.doi.org.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/10.1163/1573-3912_ei3_COM_0162.

[125] Jamil Rageb, "Astronomy," in EI-3. Edited by Kate Fleet et al., consulted online on 04 January 2018.

regarding the Renaissance, Reformation, and Enlightenment. There is a huge amount of scholarship on the investment of this term with specific meanings. Of particular interest is the interplay between science and religion and the differentiation between these terms—both together and separately—and magic and superstition. An open question then is this: what is the textual evidence supporting the employment of the phrase "science of the breath" to describe this rather large collection of manuscripts? There is evidence supporting keeping the term `ilm-i dam`. Sayyid Burhan al-Din al-Bukhari, the writer of *Miz al-nafas*, states that he came to learn of a text "in the Hindavi language on *the science of the breath*" (`ilm-i dam`), which he then translated into Persian at the request of a spiritual teacher, Shaykh Jalal al-Din of Bengal.[126] The writer of *Risalah dar dam zadan* ("Treatise on Breathing") does not use the exact phrase `ilm-i dam`, but does use the term `ilm` no less than six times, including one occasion when he says "those that have knowledge (`ilm`) of the breath say..." (*aknun keh `ilm dar dam-ra biguim…*).[127] In this particular case, in English it does not quite make sense to say "science of the breath" because of the grammatical construction in Persian, with the term *dam* carrying the direct object marker *-ra*. One could translate the phrase to "those possessing the science of the breath," and certainly translators take more liberty than this all the time, particular in literary or poetic contexts, but there remains something important about the word-for-word meaning of these terms and phrases. As such, I have opted to embrace a more literal translation style, noting when and where other translators adopt a more figurative style.

I may have adopted the term "science of the breath" from the above-mentioned Sayyid Burhan al-Din al-Bukhari, as well as from a 9th/14th century Persian encyclopedia writer, Amuli,

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[126] *Miz-i nafas*, London: British Library Delhi Persian 796d, folio 57b.

[127] *Risala dar dam zadan*, London, British Library Delhi Persian 824, folio 7b.

among others. Among more recent interpreters of this material, British Orientalist Edward

Granville Browne's description of the v.21 manuscript is not all that dissimilar. As mentioned

above, his account includes a reference to purchasing a manuscript including a short text on the

"Sufi science of managing the breath." One can see the act and/or process of "knowing"

something or someone as one of managing, or even controlling, that same something or

someone. Fittingly, the expression `ilm-i dam does not appear in the manuscript he effectively

labels with that name. In fact, the term `ilm does not appear until near the end of that text, and

even then, it is in a sentence regarding how one could gain knowledge (`ilm) regarding the type

of profession a given person might take up in adulthood. This begs the question: whence this

term? It is it possible that Browne here is connecting the manuscript to Sufi texts on *habs-i dam*,

usually translated as "holding" or "controlling" the breath. For example, there is an illustrated

manual on this subject in Urdu entitled *Risalah-yi Ashghal* ("Treatise on Practices") whose

author is affiliated with the Qadiri Sufi order and which dates to 1260 AH/1844 CE.[128] In

addition to detailed sections on the powers that come with reciting the *shahada* and the spiritual

advancement available to those who go on retreat (*khalvat*) as well as proceeding along a series

of *maqamat* (stations along the spiritual path), the author describes the techniques in this text as

habs-e dam, and makes specific references to the knowledge of the yogis.[129]

     In focusing on the terminological implication for the words used to *describe* these texts, I

note that sometimes the person describing them is the author, and sometimes it is a scholar

analyzing these texts many years after the fact. For someone writing about "the science of the

breath" today, there is a constant game of interpreting the different layers of meaning so as to

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[128] *Risalah-yi Asghal,* London, British Library OR 13298.

[129] I have transliterated this term as "habs-e dam" instead of "habs-i dam" to reflect that *Risala-yi Ashghal* is in Urdu, not Persian.

understand as clearly as possible what the original authors meant by the terms they used, as well as the reasons what later interpreters like Browne meant by their descriptive choices.[130]

The perspectives provided by an admittedly select group of Muslim sources (i.e., Ibn Khaldun, Hadith compilations, Qur'anic texts) and non-Muslim sources (i.e., Thomas Patrick Hughes and the *Dictionary of Islam*) show in general terms the different ways of speaking about magic and sorcery as practiced by Muslim communities in the pre- and early modern periods. Both groups contain diverse views on the subject, however the differences arguably lie *not* in the extent to which they see *sihr* as legitimate *per se*, but instead in the extent to which they view *sihr* as an authentically Islamic form of practice. For Ibn Khaldun, *sihr* exists, and there are some questions as to the specific iterations of *sihr* and whether or not they are licit or illicit. That is to say, among those who engage in *sihr*—even of the less-than-desirable forms—it is never debated whether or not these people are authentic Muslims. By comparison, for Hughes, the use of divination practices such as those outlined in the *Javahir al-Khamsa* (and related texts) actively disqualifies practitioners from being able to claim an authentic Muslim identity on account of their effectively being quasi-Hindus (or Buddhists). Hughes, the nineteenth-century non-Muslim Anglican missionary, has a much more restrictive notion of who can and cannot be Muslim than does Ibn Khaldun, the thirteenth-century Moroccan intellectual.[131]

7 - Conclusion

These last two chapters laid out evidence for how different groups, particularly Persianate

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[130] For a list of the manuscript and published sources consulted for this project, see Appendixes A and B.

[131] To be fair, most of Hughes' experience comes from decades spent in South Asia, where he was no doubt aware of Muslims' overall minority status, while Ibn Khaldun is writing in a Muslim majority setting. However, even with this qualification, these remain important differences.

Muslims and European Orientalists, engaged with different examples of `ilm-i dam`. The von Kremer text in particular stands out as an example of how a European scholar of Islamic civilization struggled to fit Sufism—especially the Indian varieties—within his pre-conceived notions of what authentic mystical practice looks like in Islam and other religious traditions.

Another part to this story is the relative silence found among British Orientalists and officials working within the colonial apparatus in South Asia when it comes to dealing with esotericism. Examining these silences, one must ask what it means that these Orientalists, such as Horace Heyman Wilson, did not discuss this type of material in their published work or personal written correspondence, despite living in India for decades. Wilson (d. 1860) held a variety of positions in India, ranging from surgeon to metallurgist at a mint, to superintendent of the Sanskrit College in Calcutta. He was the first person to hold the Boden Chair of Sanskrit at Oxford, a feat that required him to defend his religious credentials from rumors that he had become an apostate during his time in India.[132] These accusations were probably brought on by his opposition to switching the language of instruction in India exclusively to English, a position well-documented in his correspondence through numerous letters from associates in India testifying to on-going efforts by those who favored the "Anglicist" position. He is important because his voluminous writing on Indian epic literature, theater and drama, as well as his publication of a highly valued Sanskrit-English dictionary, all mark him as an illustrative example of what it meant to be an Orientalist in the first-half of the nineteenth century. And yet he does not appear to have written about anything remotely approaching the *siva-svarodaya* tradition. Perhaps he and his contemporaries, such as Sir William Jones and other members of

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[132] One can infer this because the records of Wilson's correspondence include several pages of newspaper clippings printing letters to the editor penned by those who supported Wilson's candidacy for the Boden Chair of Sanskrit at Oxford. "Horace Heyman Wilson papers," London, British Library EUR 301E/2, 20a-20b.

the Royal Asiatick Society, were more interested in establishing a baseline of "classical Hinduism," and accordingly they applied their attentions to producing edited texts of the Vedas and Puranas. Perhaps things like *siva-svarodaya* were too esoteric even for them.

What connections are there between this silence and the way that the British ruled India, especially from the mid-19th century onwards, in terms of administering Hindu and Muslim communities with different court systems? As mentioned in Chapter One, if there is a text (or two!) that begin with the *basmala*, but then these are labeled with the word Hinduism in the official catalog, what does that say about the type of court to which a practitioner of `*ilm-i dam* would go? This is not to say that practitioners of `*ilm-i dam* constituted a distinct religious sect or movement, but the clashing of sectarian categories raises some fundamental questions about how a regime of power—such as the British Raj—would decide to which regime of knowledge they would take recourse in resolving disputes involving people who did not fit so neatly into these categories. Where would von Kremer send his Hindu-influenced Sufis for legal rulings if they were not seen as "real" Muslims?

Orientalists and other colonial-era operatives had a vested interest in segregating different religious communities from one another. This separation worked to construct and re-inscribe a sense of difference between Hindus and Muslims that functioned quite differently than previous systems of government in South Asia. A corollary to the physical and political separation of groups is to distinguish between them in intellectual means as well, therefore Orientalists—at least from the colonial era—struggled to conceive of "Hindu knowledge" overlapping with "Muslim knowledge." As seen in Chapter Two, the Mughals did not have the same relationship to difference, and they were not as obsessed with keeping lines between groups impermeable. A key link here is that between Sufism on the one hand and "Indian esotericism" on the other.

Modernity is no straightforward event, but rather a process that has served to simplify that which was complex, simultaneously making the task falling to today's scholars that much easier and yet also harder. Easier, because the first few steps in the deconstructive process are quite straightforward. Harder, because the after-effects of modernity entail an infection of structures and "ways of knowing" with incredibly limited worldviews. One such worldview is manifest in the description of *Miz al-nafas* as "Hinduism" within the catalog for the Delhi Persian collection at the British Library. As I have attempted to demonstrate, classifying a manuscript (and by natural extension, the knowledge and/or practices contains in its text) as belonging to one religious tradition or group of practitioners, and *not* others, means that one misses an opportunity to see beyond religious labels altogether and try to grasp a sense of how people who lived centuries in the past may have related to the same set of labels and signifiers in use today. The key difference is that the symbol, the sign behind the signifier, is different today than it was in seventeenth-century Delhi, or nineteenth-century Khuy. The story of *Miz al-nafas* and its classification is a story that will need to be told at another time, but it is a story that pulls on the threads of history at the precise moment when the British Empire sought to officially take control of India, at the heart of a sequence of events that reveal the way in which the twin regimes of power and knowledge intertwined with that of control over India as a land that was never separated out from its peoples.

In this specific chapter, I have introduced two key points in the reception history of `*ilm-i dam*, as well as argued for the contextualization of those points within a broader history of knowledge production by European scholars studying Islam and Muslim societies. The contrasts between the Persian/Iranian reception of `*ilm-i dam* and the European reception thereof are quite clear. European constructions of India necessitated a division between Hindus and Muslims (as

well as other religious groups) that did not take place during the Mughal dynasty or earlier

periods of Muslim rule. This is not to say that the Mughals were naïve about the existence of

different religious groups, but is instead to say that they simply did not relate to religious

difference in the same way as the later Europeans did during the British colonial rule. The

reception of `ilm-i dam` differs from a practice such as *sati*, which the British largely rejected

(such as in the ban of 1829), while in Chapter Two I noted that Amir Khusraw approved of the

practice as a sign of devotion. In the case of *svarodaya* and `ilm-i dam`, the classification of these

practices can be linked to the broader operating definitions of religion and religious practice that

the parties in this situation—the British and the Mughals—used as part of their respective

imperial administrations. Moving forward into the modern period, artifacts such as Hughes'

Dictionary of Islam and especially the earlier editions of the *Encyclopedia of Islam* document the

change over time within knowledge produced by non-Muslims about Muslims. The time since

the end of the colonial era has seen a change in both the scholarly methods used for studying

Islam, as well as the growing number of Muslim scholars trained within the Euro-American

academy. Predictably, the changes in both methodology and membership of the academic guild

has yielded different results.

Conclusion: "Whose Breath?"

This project began with the stated goal of emphasizing, rather than dispelling, ambiguity. The question has never been whether or not divination practices known as *`ilm-i dam* should be thought of as Hindu or Muslim. Instead, the question is how did Muslims within and outside of South Asia adapt and integrate these practices, at times consciously retaining or emphasizing their Indian origins? How do accounts of the yogis' fantastic powers factor in Perso-Arabic writing about India? How do the authors of *`ilm-i dam* texts view the body, and how does that set of visions overlap with other frameworks for understanding the body that come from Islamic, yogic, and ayurvedic traditions? How did later interpreters in Iran and Europe receive *`ilm-i dam*, and how did those reception histories diverge from one another even while anchored in the same set of practices? While in this project I have endeavored to identify some answers, I have also found a great many more questions than I had in hand at the beginning.

Marc Gaborieau writes: "It goes without saying that Muslims never have doubted the effectiveness of Hindu occult practices and vice versa. The problem is not one of effectiveness, but instead one of licitness to import something from the other community."[133] This is a very specific point, worth expanding. In early-modern South Asia, the efficacy of the tools contained in divination texts is not in question. The extent to which this could be said for the modern period and in particular the present-day is one important subject for further study. Additionally, I would differentiate between the general question of whether a practice is licit, and the particular

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[133] Marc Gaborieau, "L'Ésotérisme Muslman dans le Sous-Continent Indo-Pakistanais: Un Point de Vue Ethnologique," *Bulletin d'etudes orientales* 44 (1992), 203, author's translation.

issue of whether or not someone is permitted *to know* that practice. The issue is that, once ascertained through individual or communal processes of acquisition, knowledge cannot be rendered unknown. The claim made here is that Muslims in India do not have any doubts about whether or not a given practice works, only whether or not they are permitted to use it. Eaton's argument then would be that the "accretion and reform" process would see practices seen as "foreign" slowly come to be accepted not only as effective, but licit as well.

For Gaborieau, the question of whether or not importing or borrowing these types of practices qualifies as syncretism is secondary in nature: "If the traditions of this and that are counterparts and non-contradictory, *the passage from one to another is possible without drama: the imports do not change the structure of the total*. The importing of yoga or of occult sciences was not perceived as a strain on orthodoxy. Sufis and Hindu magicians were perceived more as competitors in a single market than as adversaries offering irreconcilable solutions."[134] In his reference to "competitors" and a "market," one sees clear resonances with Nile Green's *Bombay Islam*, where he studies a "religious economy" in the colonial-era western basin of the Indian Ocean.[135] That Gaborieau's study is based largely on the texts such as Muhammad Ghaus' *Javahir-i Khamsa* and its reception by Orientalists such as Thomas Arnold in his *Dictionary of Islam*, rather than his own ethnographic work, demonstrates the importance of those sources in studying the history, reception, and interpretation of occultism in India.

Even suggesting the study of these types of practices gives rise to what Matthew Melvin-Koushki refers to as "Occultophobia,"[136] namely the anxiety found within both scholarly and

[134] Gaborieau, 203, author's translation, emphasis added.

[135] Nile Green, *Bombay Islam: The Religious Economy of the West Indian Ocean, 1840-1915* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

[136] Matthew Melvin-Koushki, "Powers of One: The Mathematicalization of the Occult Sciences in the High

popular writing whenever treating practices that are labeled as sorcery, magic, or occultism. In the context of his engagement with scholarship on the "mathematical turn" in Persianate sciences during the post-Mongol period, Melvin-Koushki describes a phenomenon that scholars treat "as the outcome of attempts to sidestep theological critique," which "ignores changes in the broader intellectual and religiopolitical context as encapsulated in contemporary Persian classifications of the sciences."[137] Finally, he argues that this practice dates to the "Victorian-era conviction that the categories *science*, *magic*, and *religion* can be surgically separated and evolutionarily ranked. It is this ingrained atomism, this religious frigidity, that continues to drive scholarly occultophobia, rendering occultism the largest blind spot in the historiography of Islamicate science."[138] The study of `*ilm-i dam* adds to the work of taking esotericism and occultism out of the shadows and into the light of day, with the important difference being that my work has its roots in South Asia in ways that scholars like Melvin-Koushki, Ata Anzali, and Mushegh Asatrian do not.

1 - **Project Review**

In this conclusion, my intent is to both tie together the strands of inquiry from the previous chapters, as well as gesture towards next steps for those who feel compelled to pursue this quixotic quest for clarity and understanding. In the introductory chapter, I made reference to the first questions that inspired this project. Studying the science of the breath – no matter the time period, language, or context – raises many more questions than are possibly answered. This is because the material involved has been classified in so many different ways over the preceding

Persianate Tradition," *Intellectual History of the Islamicate World*, Vol 5, Issue 1 (2017), 190.

[137] Melvin-Koushki, 189.

[138] Melvin-Koushki, 187, emphasis original.

centuries, and anyone giving it its due in the present day must grapple with the legacies of those classificatory acts. Who benefits and who loses from referring to the science of the breath as astrology? Magic? Occultism? Esotericism? How does that evaluation change when upon the introduction of religious qualifiers such as Hindu or Muslim?

In their introductory essay in the special edition of *Muslim World* dedicated to exploring new directions and boundaries of Islamic studies with regard to the humanities, Ilyse Morganstein Fuerst and Zahra Ayubi cite Charles Kurzman's assertion that scholars of Islam in Europe and North America benefit when Muslims commit atrocities because these acts of terror create more opportunities – both in academic as well as public arenas – to combat the ignorance and paranoia that motivates while also being a product of said atrocities.[139] This speaks especially to the post-9/11 era, in which military interventions lead by Euro-American forces into countries around the world have gravely impacted Muslim communities. Another side of this coin is that there is a market for scholarship that speaks to some sort of earlier, more innocent time in which inhabitants of South Asia who held different religious commitments got along in a way that is somehow more difficult today. Given that my work on the `ilm-i dam points to concrete incidents where people of various religious persuasions shared esoteric knowledge quite openly, then I am wary of this and future projects being placed in the category of scholarship arguing for the recovery of such halcyon days. Fully acknowledging difference (be it religious, political, corporeal, or otherwise) demands understanding the historical circumstances in which said differences have been formulated, as well as the ongoing nature of their re-formulation. Returning to Gaborieau, the study of `ilm-i dam would support his contention that "the idea that religions [e.g. Islam and Hinduism] opposing one another in India carry fundamentally different

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[139] Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst and Zahra Ayubi, "Shifting Boundaries: the Study of Islam in the Humanities," *The Muslim World* 106 (October 2016), 643-654.

occultist traditions is an illusion of modern fundamentalism."[140]

While I want to earnestly support the venture of undoing colonial-era contributions to boundaries that have undoubtedly lead to much human suffering in South Asia, I am also concerned with resisting the impulse to paper over differences that existed in the pre-colonial period. While these differences are often labeled as *religious* in nature today, I want to contribute to classing them – at minimum – as equal parts *religious* and *political*, although even that differentiation comes with its own historical baggage. I am struck once more by the powerful examples provided by Muhammad Ghawth in sixteenth-century India (see Chapter Three), who worked to reconcile the differences between Islamic and yogic cosmologies. Ghawth's work is a model in large part because he refuses to dismiss one system over the other, nor does he ask his readers to simply wait until the hereafter for divine powers to resolve things. Instead, his suggestion is to take advice from all sides, and that a shared link will become evident when this is done with sincerity.

Throughout the project, I have been keenly aware of my position along the margins of disciplinary lines that dividing up the scholarly bodies studying religion in general, as well as Islam and South Asia. As Ilyse Morganstein-Fuerst argues in an essay published on *The Maydan*, there is much work that remains to integrate South Asia within the broader framework of Islamic studies, and that by the same turn, scholars can learn a great deal from looking at Islamicate sources in South Asia more generally in the study of religion.[141] The study of *`ilm-i dam* and *svarodaya* is Exhibit A in this argument. Yet it has received very little attention until now.

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[140] Gaborieau, 203, author's translation.

[141] Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst, "Looking for Religion in South Asian Islamicate Sources," *The Maydan*, December 18, 2017, accessed December 20, 2017, https://www.themaydan.com/2017/12/looking-religion-south-asian-islamicate-sources/.

Acknowledging such clear circulation and exchange of ideas across religious boundaries begs the question: why forefront said boundaries in the first place? The answers to the question require wading through scholarly contributions of recent decades, such as those by Tomoko Masuzawa, as well as Brent Nongbri, whose work demonstrates the ways in which creating religion as the category it is today served imperial interests during the colonial era.[142]

For too long the field has been driven by agendas and blind spots constructed at the height of European imperialism. The number of stories remaining to be told is rivaled only by the equally varied approaches that we as academicians can take in formulating those tellings. This project is part of an intervention that demands increased interdisciplinary training in order to produce the type of scholarship that can add nuance and detail while also paving over some of the fault lines whose creation lead to the imposition of boundaries – at times, literally on a map – upon peoples that had not previously conceived of themselves as distinct, at least not according to religion as a function of imperial statecraft.

Chapter Two provided an overview of the ways in which Arabic and Persian writers engaged with India (*al-Hind*) during the pre- and early-modern periods. These writings included travelogues, 'wonders and oddities' narratives, as well as imperial lessons on the value of learning Indian knowledge systems. In each case, I was able to use specific mention of the science of the breath (*`ilm-i dam*) and the science of visualization (*`ilm-i vahm*) to highlight a narrative arc in which authors writing about India from afar eventually became authors writing about India from within. Thus, Gardizi's rendering of India is very different from Abu'l Fazl, partially because of the time periods in which they wrote, but also because of their respective

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[142] Brent Nongbri, *Before Religion: A History of A Modern Concept* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), and Tomoko Masuzawa, *The Invention of World Religion, or, How European Universalism was Preserved in the Language of Pluralism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), respectively.

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geographic and socio-political contexts. In particular, I argued that Abu'l Fazl's presentation of

Indian knowledge in the *A'in-i Akbari* is a milestone in a transformation in which Persian

literature *about* India is both *of* India as well as supported by an imperial patron such as Akbar.

Chapter Three shifted the frame of reference to the vision of the body presented in the

`ilm-i dam corpus. Drawing on comparisons to older Indian knowledge systems such as

Ayurveda and Yoga as well as Islamic perspectives, I situated the science of the breath within a

broader context and demonstrated how it overlaps and diverges with these other systems. This

particular discussion holds great potential for additional research that would place the science of

the breath firmly in Islamicate and Indic frameworks for understanding the body. What happens

when scholars stop trying to assign a practice or a text to one category or the other, and start

developing a more rigorous theoretical system for understanding things that fall into multiple

categories?

Chapters Four and Five took on two related but distinct reception histories of *`ilm-i dam*.

In Chapter Four, I examined the way that authors in Persia have interpreted and classified these

techniques, moving from the pre-modern era all the way through to the twenty-first century. The

level of sustained interest in Iran invested in *ulum al-ghariba* ("the hidden/occult/esoteric

sciences") may be a surprise to some, but only because that history has itself been actively erased

from mainstream conceptualizations of Islam. Contributions by scholars such as Matthew

Melvin-Koushki, Mushegh Asatrian, and Atta Anzali are complicating this vision, but my work

differs in its focus on South Asia.

Chapter Five shifted the focus from Iran to Europe, looking at how *`ilm-i dam* factored in

the Orientalist construction of Sufism, and especially how this took place in the context of

colonial India. Presenting how Alfred von Kremer and Edward Granville Browne viewed the

respective abridgments of the *Kamaru Panchashika*, packaged along with Thomas Hughes'

Dictionary of Islam, demonstrating the orientation of European and North American scholars

during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries towards India and Islam. In discussing the

different editions of the *Encyclopedia of Islam*, I sought to show how that orientation changed

over time, especially by the end of the twentieth century.

It could be said that this project has broken – or perhaps, stretched – a few conventions.

This is most pronounced with respect to time period. Tracing an idea, such as the notion that

human beings can discern the flow of subtle energy, made manifest in the breath, through their

bodies, from pre-modern times up through the present day is no small order. Add on top of that,

to demonstrate that the reception of this very idea has ramifications for understanding the

genealogies of categories such as "religion" and "mysticism," one would be forgiven for saying

that I am out of breadth (or is it breath!). Joseph Alter's admonition on the farcical nature of

dichotomies opened this discussion in the Introduction. It is fitting that I return to him for his

statements on "the just-past," his neologism to describe this most recent period of modernity.

> Essentially the present's just-past is a time frame of rapid remembering
> and forgetting, compounded by the transmission of knowledge from one
> generation to the next. In other words, the just-past of the present – which
> I take to be different from modern history, even though modern history
> seeks to deal with this time as a time period – is when facticity matters a
> great deal, but when individual memories produce competing and
> contradictory realities…there is, in the present's just-past, the seductive
> sense that someone is really right, and that with enough information the
> truth can be established.[143]

Parts of this study on ʿilm-i dam engage with "the present's just-past," while other parts look

much earlier.

Speaking of the "just-past," there is perhaps no better time to return to the claims I made

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[143] Joseph S. Alter, *Yoga in Modern India* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2004), *xvi*.

in the Introduction, namely that "categories matter." As much as this project is about this corpus of manuscripts on `ilm-i dam, it is equally about categories. Why do categories matter? They matter because they determine the very way that we perceive the world around us, the way we interact with that world, and ultimately, the way we treat other people. This is not to say that the authors of these pre- and early-modern manuscripts on `ilm-i dam were concerned with things like race, gender, sexuality, and class in any way that remotely approximates the obcession with these things in 2018. It would be a grave error to claim such a thing. Moreover, these authors do not have the same type of concern—where they have a concern at all—with the distinctions between religion, science, and magic that is so prevalent to our time period today. In reviewing this project and posing the question of how it intervenes in the various scholarly discussions taking place in the study of religion, Islam, and South Asia, several things emerge. Beyond adding another later to the work critiquing the constructed nature of religion as a category, or the limits imposed on Islam, or the idea of South Asian communities completely defined and bound by their religious affiliation, what do we have to learn from studying the science of the breath?

It is problematic to read into `ilm-i dam with categories like magic, religion, science, mysticism, esotericism, etc. Instead, my goal in invoking "the science of the breath" is that the authors (and their texts) describe something that fits into an ambiguous zone that refuses easy and smooth categorization. This make sense. Afterall, why would categories with a European Enlightenment geneology fit neatly onto ways of knowing from earlier time periods and different cultural contexts? Additionally, utilizing the term "science" as a translation of `ilm (or ma`rifat) effectively subverts the standard hierarchy in which "science" is always at the top, with things like "everyday, practical tools" very much on the bottom. And yet, is not science a set of practices? Like religion, "science" is not a *sui generis* category or way of knowing. It has its own

inflection points, and arguably that the notion of science and religion existing in an antagonistic

relationship with one another is a relatively modern phenomenon. My point here is simply to

claim that for the authors whose work I analyze in this project, they are largely unconcerned with

the extent to which this knowledge could be classified as religion, magic, or science.

Increasingly, more and more scholars in religious studies (and related fields of humanistic

inquiry) are taking seriously the study of ways of knowing/being/acting may be seen as *religious*

while simultaneously *not religious*. `ilm-i dam` is worth understanding because it is such a vexing

example of how limited these categories are. Chapter Five offered evidence for ways in which

European scholars viewed `ilm-i dam` at times as part of Sufism, but not Islam, and at times even

looked at specifically as Hinduism (but again, without the specificity of Shaivite Tantrism). Just

under the surface of these convoluted categorizations is the contested nature of religion,

alongside the overlapping fields of science and magic.

 For the study of Islam, here is an example of circulation and exchange that is not

beholden to doctrine, dogma, or theology in any of their usual forms. In the vast majority of

cases, there is little ot no reference to the Qur'an or any other "canonical" text. Instead, I see

Muslim actors seeking out forms of knowledge because of their desire of practical, effective

tools. As strange as it may sound, these Muslims are fully human, no longer reduced to doing

everything solely because of their religion. Whether in scholarly or popular contexts, this type of

full agency is rarely extended to Muslims, who all too often are defined exclusively by the

contents of the Qur'an or decontextualized references to prophetic traditions. More generally,

while type of determinism is rarely applied to the implied normative standard of educated

Protestant white men, any other group at times finds itself reduced to a function of its key texts.

Sufism becomes a container filled with things that scholars are not comfortable viewing as

"pure" Islam. Second, the interest in modern Iranian circles in Indian esotericism is important because it is an example that upsets the expectation that religious leaders and other intellectuals in Iran from the Qajar period forward were focused on something other than the "canonical" sources of Muslim knowledge such as Qur'anic interpretation. While the line of inquiry regarding agency is an important general point, the specific link to Iran is also important because it points to another taxonomy in which Sufism is completely separate from `ilm-i dam. There is no problem with magic, *per se*, but instead in Chapter Two and Chapter Four there is evidence then for the ways in which the debates over magic within Islamicate contexts largely focus on the practitioners' intent and occassionaly the means used to achieve particular ends.

For the study of South Asia, there is much scholarship on the region that explicitly or implicitly addresses the extent to which Hindus and Muslims are talking to one another in the time leading up to Partition. This concern is completely understandable, given the way that the advent of post-independence nationalism resulted in horrible violence and mass displacement of millions of people, all because of the notion that particular places are meant for particular religious communities. In the case of `ilm-i dam, I see Hindus and Muslims (as well as Buddhists and Jains) sharing knowledge of the breath to great effect. Just as the bodies under discussion in Chapter Three testify to the shared practices, so too does the existence of the corpus speak to a more dynamic and polycentered phenomenon in which different constituencies—yes, partially defined by religious affiliation, but also by their overlapping interest in the breath and its powers—developed ideas about the body specifically. The relationship between breath and body is clear in so far as the vessel is necessary in order to hold the vital essence. What is still murky is the extent to which all of these different groups drawing upon yoga, Ayurveda, and `ilm-i dam, actually would agree that they are doing something similar.

The narrative arc that I present in Chapter Two may fall into the trap of yet another teleology about South Asia, albeit one in which the predestined outcome is not assigning people to land based on religious identity, but instead one in which Muslims over time change their point of view on *al-Hind* from a foreign place to one that is familiar and, at the end of the day, home. I believe that most scholars would admit that they do not want their work to contribute to a simplified view of history, and that much work has been done in recent decades to demonstrate the great extent to which these very communities—whose presumed division in the past and is then used to justify divisions in the "just-past" and present—have been and continue to be much more integrated and in conversation with one another. That said, the opposite line of argumentation is equally specious, even if it fits with the cosmopolitain multicultural convictions. Just as it would be a mistake to read South Asian history through the lense of a teleology leading to Partition, so too would it be an error to read it with the presumption that everyone gets along. There may well be more productive frameworks, but I chose to depect a narrative arc because I was repeatedly struck by the presence in texts written in Arabic and Persian by Muslim authors from the Middle East, Central Asia, and South Asia, in which these fantastic stories about the powers of the breath showed up time and time again. The author I cite for my examples are from a wide variety of communities, and perhaps it is reductive to include them for this narrative solely because they are Muslims writing about India, but nonetheless I think there is something valuable in gathering together the longstanding nature of the claim that there are people in India who can do amazing things because of their knowledge of the breath. I would argue that the circulation of these stories is a large part of what makes the promulgation of *`ilm-i dam* possible. My choices in this area of the project sacrificed particularities in favor of generalities, although they are a fairly specific type of generality: the breath and the way these

authors deal with knowledge of that breath as an Indian practice.

Throughout the process of researching and writing this dissertation, I have struggled with dichotomies. Religion or science. Islam or Hinduism. Indian or Persian. At one point, I even considered developing a set of spectrums or scales, in which I might chart a given practice or text as "less religion/"more science" and so forth. Thankfully, I realized the futility of such practices. It is far more subversive *and* satisfying when ambiguity refuses to yield the floor to certainly. The material presented in Chapters Four and Five articulates some of the struggles for the different groups who received *`ilm-i dam*, and who sought to categorize it. The fact that Iranian and British scholars in the 19th and 20th centuries classified it differently is surprising only if one fails to take into consideration the political consequences of the classificatory act. Knowledge productions always serves particular needs, it is as subject to market forces as the decision of a manufacturer to make Widget A instead of Widget B. Production requires consumption, consumption leads to digestion, and what I have attempted in this dissertation is to demonstrate the particularities of how *`ilm-i dam* has effectively been digested by different bodies. In seeking for a way to cast or present *`ilm-i dam*, perhaps a three-dimensional model would be more effective. Just as many of the texts on *`ilm-i vahm* make use of a sphere that appears before the practitioner seated in meditation, perhaps a sphere of classification would be another heuristic that scholars could use to see not only how a given practice or datum of knowledge would fit within these categories, but also the way that the boundaries *between* these categories are actually much more porous than we usually imagine. There are pieces of science within religion, and vice versa. There is no "clean room" or *sanctum santorum* in which one can escape the other. Contamination and pollution is unavoidable. This is especially true when the vector through which power spreads is something as ephemeral as the breath.

2 - Following the Breath into the Future

While this is the conclusion of this project, the present iteration provides much ground for future work. This is by no means intended to be the last word on the subject. There remains a great deal of further research to be done on the science of the breath. In particular, the question of whether it is more accurate to discuss sciences of the breath, using a plural instead of a singular, requires more analysis. It is true that the Sanskrit and Hindi *svarodaya* texts contain similar topics and at times general organization of the Persian and Urdu `ilm-i dam* texts. However, one avenue of study I deliberately did not pursue here is a detailed side by side comparison at the truly granular level, assessing the degree of overlap between specific clauses of each section within representative examples from the different branches of this tree. What is the best way to classify and organize that 'family tree'? I have organized these texts primarily according to the language in which they are written, but this is not the only way. Time of composition, geographic region, and manner of organization would also be practical means for dividing them up for scholarly analysis. Another means of differentiating them would be in cases where the author's religious affiliation is clear, especially where it is possible to make comparisons across religious lines but in the same language. One question that I intend to pursue in future work is how to draw the line between when two `ilm-i dam* texts are different branches of the same tree, or when they come from different trees within the same forest, so to speak.

For example, comparing Sayyid al-Din Bukhari's mid-seventeenth century translation in *Miz al-nafas* alongside that of Bahadur Singh's entry on `ilm-i dam* in the early nineteenth century *Yadgar-i bahaduri*. In this specific example, both texts are in Persian, but one is written by a Muslim, while the other by a *kayastha*, a Brahmin scribe. One is part of a miscellaneous

medical compendium while the other is part of massive encyclopedia. More pressing is the difference in time of composition, as two hundred years is a significant gap. In terms of geography, one appears to be from Gujarat, while the other is from Lucknow. In particular when so many of the authors have left behind scant – if any – information on their own histories, is it possible to do more with this type of differentiation than simply creating more tables and charts? If my goal is simply to document that the science of the breath circulated widely over a significant geographic and chronological range, then said charts are indeed sufficient. But that strikes me as a rather paltry and unsatisfying goal, for in the future there is a great deal more to be learned by studying the science of the breath.

In particular, an ethnographic examination would be productive – to what extent is *svarodaya* integrated within broader astrological practices in South Asia today? To the extent that these practices continue to circulate, how are the practices different from earlier versions, and how are the classified differently? This question is especially important when taking into consideration relationships between the modern nation-states of India and Pakistan, as well as political conditions affecting the movement of people and ideas within the greater Middle Eastern and South Asian regions. Lastly, what types of lessons—both theoretical and applied—could be learned from studying other geographic areas where similar types of questions take place regarding the differentiation between religion and magic? In particular, work by Ariela Marcus-Sells in Mali and John Ricard Bowen in Sumatra are excellent starting points for grounding future study in west Africa and south-east Asia, respectively.[144]

Of all of the pieces to the puzzle that is the `*ilm-i dam* corpus, there is one in particular

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[144] Ariela Marcus-Sells, "Realm of the Unseen" (PhD diss., Stanford University, 2014); and John Richard Bowen, *Muslims through Discourse: Religion and Ritual in Gayo Society* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993).

that I could not fit within this dissertation, partially for space considerations but also because it opens up a whole different set of historiographical questions that deserve more thorough treatment then I could give them at the time of writing. At different points throughout the project, and especially in Chapter Three, I make reference to *Miz al-nafas*, one of two `ilm-i dam` texts from the Delhi Persian collection. The circumstances surrounding the capture of the Mughal royal library in Delhi that would eventually come to be known as the "Delhi Persian" collection is of huge significance for this project. The fact that both of these are labeled as "Hinduism" in the British Library hand list speaks to the clash of colonial and "native" classification systems, raising questions about who precisely is involved in defining things like Islam and Hinduism during the British colonial period in South Asia. It also raises many questions about the interplay between the application of military power to control territory and the related attempts to control knowledge through obtaining manuscripts. In Chapter Five, I interrogated the development and interplay of categories such as Sufism and mysticism against the backdrop of knowledge production during the European colonial period, with some extension to the modern day through publications such as the Encyclopedia of Islam (Third edition). I would like to expand this treatment to consider the circumstances surrounding the physical removal of manuscripts from colonized lands, and really bring to bear the full weight of the tools developed in other disciplines, such as art history and archaeology, to study these "texts" as concrete physical objects. While it pained me to excise this material from the dissertation, I did so recognizing that one cannot tell every story all at once.

Beyond the geographic boundaries of South Asia, what about breathing practices in other locales? What evidence is there for other communities cultivating knowledge of the breath as a technology of self-actualization? In studying `ilm-i dam`, knowledge of the breath is an

instrument that one wields as part of tapping into and drawing down astral power. Whether this is directed towards divination, or something else altogether, it would still be worthwhile to identify as many of these practices as possible and analyze how they connect and diverge from one another. The array of sources assembled in Appendix B provide another set of references that are both considerably older as well as broader in terms of geography.

In closing, there can be no more fitting final words than that offered by Sayyid al-Din al-Bukhari, the copyist and translator of *Miz al-nafas*:"Peace with Completion" (*va al-salam bil-itmam*).[145]

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[145] *Miz al-nafas*, British Library Delhi Persian 796d, London, folio 63a.

Appendix A – Chronological List of Persianate Texts on `ilm-i dam

This appendix contains a list of Persianate texts on `ilm-i dam. To the extent that is possible, the texts are listed in chronological order. I have also provided a brief annotation on each text when applicable. My hope is that this appendix will serve as a useful resource guide to those who would like to consult these texts directly, especially the ones that have yet to be published. For that reason, I have refrained from including any information on the *Nafa'is al-funun* by Shams al-Din Amuli (d. 1352 CE); this text is treated in detail in Chapter Four. Full reference information is listed for each text in this Appendix, as well as in the Bibliography.

1 - Muhit-i Ma`rifat

The *Muhit-i Ma`rifat* ("Sea of Knowledge") listed in the Ashburner catalogue under Persian occult sciences, in which it is describes as a "a treatise on Metaphysics, Yoga and Divination, principally based on the Hindi work *Svarodaya* of Charana Dása,[1] the pupil of Sukhadévají; to which are appended a number of quatrains by the author."[2] The work is substantially longer than many of the abridgments discussed in this section, coming in at 106 folios. This specific manuscript entry lists the author as "Satidasa son of Ram Bha'i, of the Khatri caste, known poetically as 'Arif, resident in the parganah of Kaythal, the ancient Kapistala." This text was composed in 1167 AH. It is divided up into sixteen chapters (*fasl*s),

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[1] At the time of writing, there was an effort underway by Peter Friedlander to translate Charana Dasa's *svarodaya* from Hindi into English. To my knowledge, this would be the first translation directly from Hindi into English, and as such, would be a wonderful contribution to the field.

[2] *Muhit-i Ma'arifat*. Ashburner catalogue, London, 89-90.

encompassing the subjects found in other entries to the `ilm-i dam` corpus. However, one additional aspect of this text is that it contains extensive material on astrology, which is something not seen in any of the abridged versions. This difference raises several questions that helps us to understand the relationship between the abridged versions of the *Kamaru Panchashika* and the longer texts, including the *Muḥiṭ-i Ma`rifat*. What is it about the six-chapter version as a form that apparently made it "just right" for those interested in acquiring this type of knowledge? Why do none of the six-chapter abridgments explicitly invoke the planets and the stars? Is it because that type of knowledge is widely available in other texts? In any case, the *Muhit-i Ma`rifat* is a valuable text for understanding the transition from the Sanskrit and Hindi *svarodaya* into the Persian and Urdu `ilm-i dam` tradition.

2 - Riyaz al-Abrar[3] ("Garden of the Virtuous")

Compiled by Husayn `Aqili Rustamdari, completed in the Safavid capital of Qazvin in 979/1571, nearing the end of Shah Tahmasb's rule. This is a "formal Persian encyclopedia" that relies heavily on the *Nafā'is al-funūn*, with systematic entries on roughly 90 sciences, which accounts for the text's alternate title, *Kitab-i Tis'in* (the Book of 90).[4] Rustamdari's entry on `ilm-i dam` appears in the ninth *rawzah*, or volume of his work. He groups `ilm-i dam` alongside meteorological phenomena; letter divination; planetary magic; jinn magic; celestial magic or talismans; terrestrial magic; soul projection; alchemy, *himiya*, letter magic and illusionism all in a series; and magic squares.

Rustamdari's entry opens with the line: "It is recorded in the *Ghayat al-murad* ("The Object of Desire") that the sages of India have exhibited four sciences for drawing out [*istinbat*]

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[3] London, British Library, Ms. Or. 3648, ff. 327a-327b.

[4] Melvin-Koushki, "Powers of One," 30.

the existence of the Self." *Ghayat al-murad* is likely a reference to a treatise on magic squares,

Ghayat al-murad fi wafq al-`adad, by Sufi Kamal Tustari (d. 774 AH). He then identifies the

four different sciences: "First is the science of the breath (*`ilm-i dam*); second [the science of]

imagination/visualization; third [the science of] changing the soul (*tassaruf-i nafs*); fourth, the

science of mysteries (*mughaybat*)." It is worth noting that he includes both the Persian term *dam*

for breath as well as the Arabic term for soul, *nafs*, which under different circumstances could be

mis-read as an author switching back and forth between the Arabic term for "breath," *nafas*, and

its Persian equivalent. Rustamdari's entry includes references to the "sages of India" (*hukama'-i*

hind). He also includes the typology associating the breath flowing through the right nostril with

the sun, while that which flows through the left nostril is associated with the moon. One

exceptional aspect to this entry in the corpus is that Rustamdari's text does not include any

mention of the typology of the breath (even Abu'l Fazl's entry in the *A'in-i Akbari* includes a

truncated version). In sum, this entry to the corpus serves as an example of the continuing

interest in the "science of the breath" within Persian encyclopedia compilers from the pre-

modern period.

Jawahir al-`ulum-i Humayuni ("Jewels of Humayuni Sciences") by Muhammad Fazil Miskini

Qazi Samarqandi (d. 936/1529-30).[5] Melvin-Koushki notes that while this encyclopedia was

written for Emperor Humayun (r. 937-63/1530-56) following his reclaiming of the throne in

962/1555, there is another theory that it was in fact composed for the ruler's accession to the

throne in 937/1530.[6] This encyclopedia from the Mughal era largely reproduces Amuli's account

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5 Cited in Carl W. Ernst, "Enigmas of Translation," 3. Muhammad Husayn Tasbihi, "*Jawahir al-`ulum-i Hu-mayuni*," *Wahīd* 211-212 (1356/1977), 34-43, citing page 37, no. 121 (`ilm-i wahm).

6 According to Melvin-Koushki, this alternative theory is held by Muhammad Husayn Tasbihi. For more information on this work, see Sonja Brentjes, "The Mathematical Sciences in Safavid Iran," in *Muslim Cultures in the Indo-Iranian World During the Early Modern and Modern Periods*, eds F. Speziale and D. Hermann (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz, 2010) 17, cited in Melvin-Koushi, "Powers of One," 169.

from the *Nafa'is al-funun*.[7] In broader terms, the entry on *`ilm-i dam* in this encyclopedia is labeled as *`ilm-i vahm*. It is contained in a section alongside solar and lunar ephemerides and elections; letter magic; divine-names magic and its conditions; the construction of ephemerides and star tables; judicial astrology; astronomy; the astrolabe; the celestial spheres; the seven climes; the constellations; administrative geography; fraction of numeration; magic squares; the science of letters; letter divination (for prognostication); celestial and terrestrial magic; alchemy; planetary magic; jinn magic; geomancy; geodesy, mechanics and visual objects; comptrolling; physiognomy; oneiromancy; spasmatomancy, scalpulomancy, determining the horoscope of a question, augury, and ornithomancy; horoscopes; Euclidean propositions; the Middle Books; music; yogic visualization (*`ilm-i vahm*); and chess.[8]

This table of contents is strikingly comprehensive, and emphasizes the breadth of knowledge that scholars in this time period sought to include in their works. For the purposes of this project, it is sufficient to note that *`ilm-i dam o vahm* here are included alongside other "standard" categories of Islamicate occultism, such as *`ilm al-huruf*. All of these are seen as valid forms of knowledge, attested multiple places in the Persianate encyclopedic sources.

3 - Javahir-i Khamsa[9]("The Five Jewels")

The *Javahir-i Khamsa* was written by Muhammad Ghawth al-Gwaliori (d. 1563 CE). This entry in the *`ilm-i dam* corpus is a version of the six-chapter text written in the margins of this particular edition of the *Javahir-i Khamsa*, followed by the *Khavass al-hayat*. That these texts occur together is of particular interest, for the *Javahir-i Khamsa* includes Muhammad Ghawth's

7 Ernst, "Enigmas of Translation," 4.

8 Melvin-Koushki, "Powers of One," 170.

9 Tehran MS 1-12622-2, ff. 177a-185b.

translation of the Sanskrit *Amrtakunda* into Persian, via an earlier Arabic translation. This manuscript serves as a prime example of how these texts combined to form part of a curriculum or set of teachings for those interested in reading Persian translations and interpretations of Indian knowledge. This version features specific references to the goddess Kamyakh Dev, as well as the usual six chapters found in abridgments of the longer *Kamaru Panchashika*.

4 - *Miz al-nafas ("Distinction of the Breath")*[10]

Relative to the other six-chapter abridgments, this one has a lengthy preface in which the author, Sayyid Burhan al-Din Bukhari, describes how he was ordered to translate this text from Hindavi into Persian by a spiritual leader named Shaykh Jalal al-Din of Bengal. This text begins with the *basmala* and praise for the Prophet Muhammad and his family. *Miz al-nafas* is treated in detail in Chapter Three, but for now it suffices to say that this text's value for the corpus (and thus this project) is two-fold. First, it represents a variant that appears to stand outside of the *Kamaru Panchashika* abridgments. Second, it is catalogued under "Hinduism" in the manuscript hand list at the British Library, where it has been stored for some time since British colonial forces looted the Mughal royal library in Delhi following the 1857 Sepoy rebellion. The same set of circumstances apply to another manuscript within the same Delhi Persian collection, *Risāla dar dam zadan* (see below).

Additionally, the very name elicits a certain degree of confusion. The catalogue reads the title as *maīz al-nafas*, which might translate roughly as "holding back the breath," which comes very close in meaning to the phrase *habs-i dam*, which is used to describe by some texts with definitive affiliations with Sufi orders for breathing techniques pertaining to *zikr*, or

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[10] London: British Library Delhi Persian 796d, ff. 57b-63a.

"remembrance (of God)" rituals. At the same time, there is another possible reading of the title: *mīz al-nafas*, where *mīz* would be an abbreviation of the Arabic term *tamīz*, which would then translate roughly as "distinguishment of the breath." Regardless of how one reads the author's title for the text, he goes on to say that it is a text on `*ilm-i dam*. This is yet another example where these texts defy easy categorization, in this case one sees these two labels appearing almost one line after another.

5 - Risala dar dam zadan[11] ("Treatise on Breathing")

The British Library catalogue entry for this manuscript reads "A short tractate on the significance and influence of the direction and control of the breathing. The author's name does not appear and the title as given on the old cover of the manuscript seems to read: *Risala-i saruda ya'ni dam dihan*], meaning Giving Speech to the Breath," or even "Giving Speech to the Breath of the Mouth." I would suggest that the term *saruda* is likely a transliteration from the Sanskrit term *svarodaya*. I will introduce another example of this transliteration into Persian below.

The text is composed of six chapters. It opens with a brief introduction in which the author explains that there are teachers [*ustadān*] who say that there is a science [`*ilm*] in which one watches the breath and that one must note which side it comes from. In terms of its overall contents, this text lines up with most of the entries in the broader `*ilm-i dam* corpus. However, where it stands out is that unlike the others, this text exists as a standalone manuscript, i.e., it is not "packaged" with any other texts in a compilation. It contains no specific reference to India, nor to it being a translation of any kind. This lack of outside context makes it quite intriguing.

The colophon contains no information about the author nor the general provenance of the text, we simply receive it "as is," unlike *Miz al-nafas* or any of the other entries that provide

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[11] *Risala dar dam zadan*, London, British Library Delhi Persian 824, ff. 1a-8b.

some type of indication on the text's history, even if it is scant. The text consists of six chapters, which cover the expected categories, with the exception of chapter six, "On Secret Knowledge of the Breath" (*dar ma`arifat-i dam*). Curiously, the contents of this last chapter simply provide more examples of linking the solar and lunar breaths to predicting the outcome of particular events, so the boundary between these particular techniques and those described elsewhere in the manuscript is unclear, and is something worthy of future exploration. The ending of this text is unclear, with the letters possibly reading "*sam kar sam kar sam.*"[12] Is this an attempted transcription of a mantra associated with the Hindi or Sanskrit version of the text? More work is needed to puzzle out the meaning. In terms of reception, there is no evidence that this text has been the subject of scholarly examination since its inclusion within the Delhi Persian collection.

6 - Shahed Sadiq[13]

This is a brief entry in the large encyclopedia compiled by Muhammad Sadiqi Isfahani (d. 1651 CE). Entitled *Dar `ilm-i dam o vahm*, this entry follows a section on the esoteric sciences (*`ulum gharibeh*, and is followed by a section on geomancy (*`ilm-i raml*). Sadiqi Isfahani begins by describing these practices as divination by breath and visualizations (*taskhir-i infas va awham*), before specifying that these are the techniques of jogis and wayfarers (*salikan*) from amongst the Indians (*hinud*). He goes on to say that these techniques would be appropriate for those going on retreat (*khalvat*), and that "this is the deepest preparation of spiritual practice"

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[12] While there are several other possible readings, I will simply provide the one I believe the most likely based on reading the manuscript directly.

[13] Mirza Muhammad Sadiq ibn Muhammad Salih Sadiqi Isfahani, *Shahid Sadiq, Bab-i sivvum, dar`aql va `ilm va `ayb va hunar* (Qum: Majma` Zakha`ir-i Islami, 2015), 221-222. While most of the entries in this appendix are unpublished manuscript sources, this entry is included because it adds to the evidence for `ilm-i dam within the Persian encyclopedia tradition.

(*faru-tarin martabeh dar riyaziat in ast*). The next section outlines the number of breaths (21,600) that should pass in a twenty-four period (lit. "a night and a day"). In the middle section of the entry, the author relays a story of someone visiting Benares, where he met with a jogi and learned something about using the breath for divination purposes. The final section of the entry discusses the auspicious times to do things such as appear before rulers, get married, wage war, and travel. Similar to Rustamdari's entry, there is more of an emphasis on material that the earlier Amuli would classify as *`ilm-i vahm*, instead of *dam*. A notable absence from this entry are the material on the five elements of the breath.

7 - Kamaru Panchashika Abridgment (Karachi recension)[14]

In some respects, this is an exemplary version of the six-chapter abridgments. Copied in 1748 in Karachi, the text begins with the author describing the connections between the "upper world", *`alam-i `alavi* and the "lower world," *`alam-i safali* (1a). The author then cites two Qur'anic phrases, *laqad khalaqna al-insana fi ahsani taqwimin* (95:4) and *ahsan al-khaliqin* (23:14 et al). The author describes this text as having been translated in *hindustan* (1a). The author dates this knowledge to a visit in 1161 AH / 1748 CE, dargah of Hazrat Shah Khah-Sar. It features the typical six-chapters of incantations, questions, news, recognizing death, dealing with friends and enemies, and then the elements of the breath. There is an extended section on divination using letter magic, and the text concludes with two magic squares. There is a note by the translator/copyist in the margin of this text, in which he states "this is the work (*`amal*) of the Yogis. It is not the action (*f`al*) of the community of Muhammad, but it is correct" (*in `amal-i jugiyan ast fi`l-i ummat muhammadi nist likan durust ast*). This is an extraordinary piece of

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[14] *Kamaru Panchashika abridgment*, Karachi, N.M.1957.1060/18, ff. 1a-4a.

textual evidence for one author's version of holding this shared space in which knowledge from the yogis is held up as equivalent in value to "activity of the people of Muhammad." The author's statement does not fit with a number of frameworks routinely used in both scholarly and popular approaches to religion in South Asia. It is a clear rejection of the notion that Hindus and Muslims are quintessentially different people whose interactions are limited to political and/or military conflict in which one seeks dominance over the other. It is also a rejection of the idea that Muslims in South Asia are always Muslims first, South Asians second, or the less-often cited reversal of those two descriptors. In this rendering, the boundaries of the region's modern nation-states (especially India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh) are retroactively projected onto the past thousand years.

This author's statement leaves us with a number of questions. First, what is the significance of using the term `*amal* to describe what the yogis do, but then employing the term *f'al* to describe what the "people of Muhammad" do? Second, how are we to understand the author's relationship to *difference* expressed in religious terms? The notion that something that is not "of the community of Muhammad" but that is still "correct" would strike many observers (both Muslim and non-Muslim) in the current modern period as concerning, to put it mildly. Yet for other observers (again, both Muslim and non-Muslim), this would be an affirming nod towards a type of pluralism or universalism. How are we to understand the way that this author – as well as the others who contributed to this corpus – engaged with difference, all the while using their own categories, while restraining ourselves from projecting our own baggage back into history?

8 - Risalah-i dam az [hawz?] al-hayat[15] ("Treatise on the Breath from the [Sea] of Life")

I discussed material from this manuscript in Chapter Three, but have included a small additional note on it here as well. This text is located at the beginning of the story of Lal and Gohar, in a translation by 'Izzat, a poet affiliated with the court of Tipu Sultan. The two texts were bound together, "and so were probably part of the original volume which would have existed in its current format in 1799," which Tipu Sultan lost (along with his life) in battle with the British at Seringapatam.[16] Similar to other texts on `ilm-i dam held at the British Library within the Delhi Persian collection, this manuscript features key words and phrases overlined or written in red throughout. There is an additional aid in that there are marginal notes written in black with the equivalent of footnotes.

9 - Kamaru Panchashika abridgment (Browne recension)[17]

This is a six-chapter text acquired by British Orientalist Edward Granville Browne while traveling in Persian in 1886. He refers to it as a "Sufi treatise on the science of managing the breath." The text opens with the couplet, "*har keh 'z dawlat asarī yāfteh / az dam-i sahib asari yafteh.*" This translates to "whoever finds a trace of fortune / has found it from the breath of a master of influence (*dam-i sahib).*" The copyist here has misquoted the opening line in a proverbial couplet that reads *har keh 'z dawlat-i asari yafteh / az dam-i sahib nazari yafteh*. The second line in the couplet reads, *himmat mardan chu dar ayad bikar / barg gul tazeh bar-ayad khar*. In sum, the couplet translates as "whoever has found a trace of fortune has found it from

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[15] *Risalah-i dam az khavaṣṣ al-ḥayat*. London, British Library IO Islamic 464, ff. 1b-5b. The copyist is likely referring to the *Hawd al-hayat*.

[16] Personal communication with Ursula Sims-Williams, British Library. June 2017.

[17] Cambridge, Cambridge University V.21, ff. 59a-66b.

the word of an insightful master. When men's concentration becomes effective, a fresh rose petal emerges from the thorn." There are several possible reasons for the copyist's rendering of the proverbial couplet here. One could be imperfect knowledge, i.e., that he simply made a mistake. Another possibility, and one that I would like to suggest here, is that he knew the original couplet but wanted to adjust it ever so slightly for two reasons, only one of which is knowable. The new version of the text fits his allocated space more easily, given that the couplet occupies the first line of the manuscript past the opening invocation. The other possible reason is that somehow the meaning of the new version fits more closely with the writer's understanding of the text and its overall connotations, but this is conjecture that would need to be substantiated through reference to other sources where this couplet appears. Additional key features that contrast this manuscript from the others in the corpus include terms such as *maha bhuta* (great elements), mandalas, and mention of rituals involving earth taken from Hindu cremation grounds and using it in a ritual designed to bring destruction (*halak*) upon someone. Apart from these features, it is a reliable representative of the six-chapter abridgements of the longer *Kamaru Panchashika*.

There are some important comparisons to be made between the Browne recension and the Arabic translation of the *Amritakunda*. It includes the five elements of the breath (chap. 2, para 2, excluding reference to *maha bhuta*), problems of the breath (chap. 7, para. 10), using *mandala*s (chap. 9 –it must be noted that where the Browne recension prescribes the use of *mandala*s for enticing someone to notice and perhaps fall in love with you, in the Arabic version of the *Amritakunda*, one uses *mandala*s to summon goddesses), and predicting one's death (chap. 8 – note this is far more detailed than the treatment what is found in the Browne recension).

10 - Kamaru Panchashika abridgment (Ashburner recension)[18]

This text uses *`ilm*, but not in the colophon to introduce the text. Also, the author of this version of the Kamaru Panchashika presents it at the beginning as a "copy (*nuskh*) of the *Baḥr al-ḥayat*. The author opens by saying "this is a copy of the *Bahr al-hayat*, put from Hindavi into Persian (*az zaban-i hindavi va parsi tartib dadeh shud*) and edited in Hindavi (*va dar hindavi aharat*). May God most high assist you. (*bidan as`adak allah ta`ala*)" (11a) This type of explicit invocation of God using Arabic terminology is not found across all versions of the *`ilm-i dam* corpus, but it is found often enough that it is difficult to generalize regarding the signification. Most importantly, in this manuscript the author is making an explicit connection to another text within the *`ilm-i dam* corpus, which is greatly helpful in terms of understanding the level of inter-textuality present when studying the science of the breath.

11 - Yadgar-i bahaduri (Testament of Bahadur)[19]

The author is Bahadur Singh, a *kayastha* (Brahmin scribe) originally from Shahjahanabad, but who settles in Lucknow circa 1232 A.H. He completes this extremely large encyclopedia in two volumes totaling approximately one thousand folios (!) on Ramadan 1, 1249 A.H. (January 12, 1834 CE). His section on *`ilm-i dam* contains specific mention of Mahadeva. The author's religious affiliation would be one explanation for his explicit mention of Mahadeva (Lord Shiva). Apart from Abu'l Fazl's section on *svara* in the *A'in-i Akbari*, there is no other known text from the *`ilm-i dam* corpus, written in Persian or Arabic, in which the author includes specific mention of Shiva. This mention is the clearest link to the *shiva-svarodaya* corpus, one that is not present

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[18] *Kamaru Panchashika abridgment* (Ashburner recension), London, India Office RS 258, ff. 11a-14b.

[19] London, British Library, Or. 1652-1653 (two volumes).

in the various recensions of the *Kamaru Panchashika* abridgments, such as that included in Amuli's 14th century *Nefais al-funun*, although Amuli does mention the goddess Kamakhya.

12 - Makhzen al-`ulum ("Storehouse of the Sciences")[20]

Written in 1280 AH (1863 CE) by Braj Mohan. This is another Persian encyclopedia containing a sizable section on *`ilm-i dam*, although the name that it uses is *`ilm-i saruda*. The latter term is the same as in Delhi Persian 824, *Risala dar dam zadan*, which contains an alternative title including the term *saruda*, which I believe to be a transliteration from Hindi/Sanskrit into Persian of the term *svarodaya*. This would be the first text from the corpus to combine the term *`ilm* with *svarodaya/saruda*. This particular section contains something unique to the texts that I have reviewed thus far for the project: a table, complete with ruled columns and rows, for the section on the five elements of the breath. I received a copy of the *Makhzen* very late in the writing process, and at that time had already created several such tables to compare the various typologies of the breath (see Chapter Three). In a note of comparison to the *A'in-i Akbari*, *Indra-jala* is discussed in the section immediately preceding the science of the breath.

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[20] Braj Mohan, *Makhzen al-`ulum*, Bombay: 1863, 141-145. This is a lithograph currently held at the British Library.

Appendix B – Chronological List of Indic Texts on *Svarodaya*

Similar to Appendix A, however this features both published and unpublished sources, for both are typically difficult to locate. This represents an initial effort at developing a longer view of the persistent interest in using the breath to monitor the subtle body as conceptualized in a variety of Indian traditions. The information listed here is intended as a starting point for much more detailed work in the future, and as such, is quite preliminary in nature. Readers will note that there is a gap from the twelfth-century to the twentieth-century. This has to do with the difficulty in dating the manuscript sources used by the translators writing and interpreting *svarodaya* in the twentieth-century. It is highly likely that many of their sources date to the intervening eight hundred years, but more research is required here to ascertain this with certainty.

1 - Svacchandatantroddyota[1]

This Shaivite text is believed to date back to the seventh- or eighth-century CE. Chapter seven of the text contains extensive material on using the breath to monitor the subtle-body, and through the text there are references to the types of rituals, typologies of the breath, and prognostication practices that form the key components of the `*ilm-i dam* corpus.

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[1] William James Arraj, "The *Svaddandatantram*: History and Scripture of a Śaiva Scripture" (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 1988).

2 - Catuspitha[2]

This Indian text on Buddhist Tantra dates to the late ninth-century CE. It contains passages known in the later Garuda Tantras about prognostication based on the subtle observation of the breath. See especially the section on using knowledge of the breath to treat snakebites. Note that the term for breath in this case is *prana*, not *svara*. The rituals described feature differentiating between the left and right nostril, the use of specific seed syllables (mantras), as well as a particular ritual in which the practitioner (*yogin*) would force the patient's exhalation back into their body.

3 - Narapatijayacarya or Svarodaya[3]

Completed by Narapati at Anahilangara in Saurastrain, 1177. In addition to the divination material from Narapati's text, he cites his sources as the "seven *yamalas* (of Brahman, Visnu, Rudra, Adi, Skanda, Kurma, and Devi), the Yuddhajayarnava, the Svarabhairava, the Ranahvayatantra, the Jayapaddliati, and various other tantric texts."[4]

4 - Tvaritamulasutra[5]

This is a Garuda Tantra that dates back at least 1,500 years. *Tvarita* is "the swift one," and is a Hindu goddess celebrated for saving the lives of those bitten by snakes. The ninth and final chapter describes techniques of yogic meditation on the movement of the breath through channels of the body, and visualization culminating in a vision of the goddess.

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[2] Péter-Dániel Szántó, "Selected Chapters from the *Catuspithatantra*" (PhD diss., Oxford, 2012), vol. 1, 222-235.

[3] David Pingree, *Jyotihsastra*: *Astral and Mathematical Literature* (Wiesbaden: Harrossowitz, 1981) 77.

[4] Pingree, 77.

[5] Michael Slouber, *Early Tantric Medicine: Snakebite, Mantras, and Healing in the Garuda Tantras* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 90-96.

5 - The Yogasastra of Hemecandra[6]

This 11th century Jain text features several chapters with extensive discussion of breath control and the powers available to those who master certain techniques. The term used for the breath in these passages is *prana*, and as such they are classified as *pranayama*. However, specific mention is made of the three arteries, or *nadis*.

6 - Kriyakalagunottara[7]

Chapter Five of this Nepali Buddhist Tantra text on dealing with snake bites is entitled "Stages of Envenomation, Astrology, and Subtle Prognostication." This includes instructions to discern whether the breath flows through the right or left nostril, as well as outlining the relationship of the breath relative to questioner and questioned. Chapter Six begins with a discussion of the five elements as part of a broader discussion of mantras. The oldest extant manuscripts of the *Kriyakalaguṇottara* date to 1184 CE.

7 - The Hindu-yogi Science of Breath: A Complete Manual of the Oriental Breathing Philosophy of Physical, Mental, Psychic and Spiritual Development[8]

Written by Yogi Ramacharaka in 1905, this text discusses the science of the breath as a type of yoga, and frames it within the context of Indian learning that the author wants to share with

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[6] Olle Qvarnström, *A Handbook on the Three Jewels of Jainism: The Yogasastra of Hemecandra* (Mumbai: Manish Modi, 2012).

[7] Slouber, 151-155. In addition to a comprehensive introduction to Garuda Tantras, Slouber provides a critical edition and translation of two texts.

[8] Yogi Ramacharaka, *The Hindu-yogi Science of Breath: A Complete Manual of the Oriental Breathing Philosophy of Physical, Mental, Psychic and Spiritual Development* (Chicago: Yogi Publication Society, c. 1905).

Western readers. He discusses exoteric and esoteric understandings of breathing, and various techniques that the reader can learn in order to become a yogi.

8 - Swara Chintamani (Divination by the Breath)[9]

Vidyaa Visaarada's translation into English is published in 1967. It contains much of the same material as other *svarodaya* texts, including extensive commentary on the embryonic cosmology and the nature of the *svara* (i.e., the way the *svara* affects and helps mold the body from conception onwards).

9 - Śivasvarodaya, text with English Translation[10]

Published by Rai in 1980, this is an example of both an edition of the Sanskrit text as well as an English translation. In his introduction, he discusses the value of these practices for the modern reader, and in particular how it is worth breaking the sense of taboo around sharing these secret teachings if doing so allows the user to succeed in life.

10 - Le Shiva-Svarodaya: La naissance du Souffle de Vie révélé par le dieu Shiva[11]

This is a commentary and translation from the Sanskrit text published by Alain Daniélou in 1982. He classifies *shiva-svarodaya* as a yogic tantric text, and dates the practices to "pre-Aryan invasions" of India. For his sources, he lists unpublished manuscripts, the Hindi-language

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[9] Vidyaa Visaarada, *Swara Chintamani - Divination by the Breath* (Madras: Kannan Publications, 1967).

[10] Ram Kumar Rai (trans), *Sivasvarodaya, text with English Translation* (Tantra Granthamala No. 1, Prachya Prakashan, 1980).

[11] Alain Daniélou, *Le Shiva-Svarodaya: La naissance du Souffle de Vie révélé par le dieu Shiva* (Milano: Arche Milano, 1982).

commentary of Bastirama, other unspecified commentaries, as well as astrological treatises.

11 - Śivasvarodaya: The Ancient Yoga Science of Bio-pneumatics[12]

Published by Rohiṇi-kumara Svami in 1987, this edition contains an extensive commentary on *Siva-svarodaya*, followed by the Sanskrit text and English translation thereof. The author is a former Ayurvedic physician who renounced his practice and then took monastic vows. He emphasizes that these techniques are a science, and that they are applicable to treating many ailments suffered by his modern readers.

12 - Tecniche Indiane di Divinazione (Sivasvarodaya)[13]

Albert Pelissero's critical edition and translation into Italian was published in 1987. He lists as his sources the texts published by Rai, Daniélou, Saraswati, and Gautama (all referenced above) as well as unpublished (and unreferenced) manuscript sources.

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[12] Rohini-kumara Svami, *Sivasvarodaya: The Ancient Yoga Science of Bio-pneumatics* (Berkeley: Varnashram Community Inc., 1987).

[13] Alberto Pelissero, *Tecniche Indiane di Divinazione – Sivasvarodaya* (Torino: Promolibri, 1991).

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Kamaru Panchashika abridgment (Javahir-i Khamsa marginalia). MS 1-12622-2, Tehran. ff. 177b-185a.

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