

***Tadhkirat al-Awliyā'*: What is *Tadhkirat*?
Who are the *Awliyā'*?**

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Abstract

As is apparent from the literal meaning of the word *tadhkirah*, it is the book of the remembrance of the *awliyā'*. It is not a biographical work in the modern sense which focuses on the physical life of any particular person. Thus, one should not judge it according to the standards of modern historical criticism. The stories of the *awliyā'* in it are not confined to any certain time or location but can be true for the wayfarers of other ages and situations. In some respects, it is similar in method to the *Fuṣuṣ al-Ḥikam* of Ibn 'Arabi, except that the subject of the *Fuṣuṣ* is the prophets while the *Tadhkirat* is about the Sufi sheikhs, the *awliyā'*. Likewise, it is similar to the Qur'an itself, insofar as the Qur'an relates the spiritual states of the prophets through its narratives. Although these sheikhs have different spiritual states, in the words of Attar, some are people of knowledge, some are people of action and others are people of love with no similarities among them; there is a hidden spiritual thread that binds them together, and this is *walāyat*. Since these sheikhs have been perfected in the Sufi path, they became *awliyā'*. In its true meaning, *walāyat* is the principle of Sufism. This is why Attar begins his book with the remembrance of Imam Ṣādiq, and shows his spiritual aspect rather than the jurisprudential or theological aspects emphasized by so many Shi'ite authors. One of the main requisites of *walāyat* is spiritual devotion to the *awliyā'*, and Attar shows his devotion to them in his remembrances, although he does not

explicitly mention his own personal spiritual master or order.

What does any of this have to do with the plight of spiritual seekers today? In the introduction to the book, as he discusses his reasons for writing it, Aṭṭār says that he wants to remind us of the forgotten truth and spirituality. He invites us to turn our attention to those who practiced the disciplines of solitary retreats, the *awliyā'*, in order that we may find the way to eternal salvation. But how is it possible to understand Aṭṭār's message in a world that has become so alien to the one in which he lived? In the language of Mawlavī, we need to find heart-felt sympathy with Aṭṭār in order to enter into a dialogue with him: "*Oneness of heart is better than oneness of tongue.*"

Key terms: Tadhkirat al-Awliyā, Tadhkirat, awliyā, Aṭṭār, walāyat.



Ibn Sina and the classification of philosophy

Risālat Aqsām al-Ḥikmat

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Abstract

One of the indisputable works of Avicenna (*Abū 'Alī Husayn ibn 'Abd-Allāh ibn Sīnā*) (980-1037) is his treatise called "The Divisions of Philosophy" (*Risālat al-Aqsām al-Ḥikmah; Taqāsīm al-ḥikmah wa- Aqsām al-'Ulūm al-'Aqliyyah*) which was written approximately between 1002 and 1022. The treatise comprises a preface, eleven chapters, and a conclusion. In it, Avicenna gives a concise introduction to fifteen parts of Physics, fifteen branches of Mathematics, seven branches of Metaphysics, three branches of Practical Philosophy, nine branches of Logic, and in total forty nine basic and minor types of philosophy, as well as names of the most essential references in their respective fields. He has mentioned twenty books of Aristotle, as well as the writings of Plato, Euclid, Bryson, and Porphyry. The content of this treatise has been continued and completed in Avicenna's other works, such as the introduction of logic and the metaphysics of *al-Shifā' Dānishnāmah 'Alā'ī*, *'Uyūn al-Ḥikmah and al- Ḥikmat al-Mashriqiyyin*. However, this treatise is the most comprehensive work of Avicenna in the classification of sciences and the division of Philosophy.

The classification of philosophy by Avicenna in his treatise has been derived from the Aristotelian legacy. The framework of the classification of

philosophy into theoretical and practical philosophy, and the further tripartite division of each of the two in the Islamic philosophy can be seen in the two treatises of al-Fārābī entitled *Al-Tanbīh ‘alā Sabīl al-Sa’ādah and Mimmā Yanbaghī an Yuqaddamm qabl Ta’allum Falsafat Arastū*, and Khārazmī. *Mafātīḥ al-‘Ulūm*. The classification of Mathematics and Physics has appeared in the treatise written by al-Kindi entitled, *Kammiyat Kutub Arastā’ātālis wa-ma- Yuhtāju ilayhi fi-Taḥsīl al-Falsafah*.

Key terms: Avicenna, Risālāt al-Aqsām al-Ḥikmah, Taqāsīm al-ḥikmah, Aqsām al-‘Ulūm al-‘Aqliyyah, (classification of Sciences, classification of philosophy.)

