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Textual and Contextual Study of the *Ḥulāṣah* Manuscript Authored by Sheikh Badruddīn ibn Ubbiyy on Ethiopian Indigenous Muslim Scholars

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Abstract

This article examines the Islamic manuscript titled *Ḥulāṣatu Muḥtaṣari Tahrīril ‘UṣūliWal’awrād Fi Dikri Tarāğimi ‘Aṣyāhinā Wa ‘Aṣyāhi Nāhiyatinā Wal ‘Asyād*, authored by Šayḥ Badruddīn ibn Ubbiyy Muḥammad Al-Ḥağ Muḥammad Surūr, showing its importance for understanding the lives and teachings of indigenous Muslim scholars in the Zabbi Molla area of Ethiopia. The study aims to study the intellectual goals of the author, the discourse of his literary tradition, and the broader Sufi networks that shaped his work, while also examining how the manuscript presents a practical model of spiritual education grounded in Islamic principles. Using a descriptive and analytical approach, the research draws on both primary sources, including the manuscript itself and oral accounts, and secondary sources such as archival studies. The analysis focuses on the manuscript’s content, structure, and principles and intellectual guidance and locates it in the social, cultural, and intellectual context of its time. Moreover, the study offers valuable historical insights into Ethiopian Indigenous Muslim scholarship through an analysis of the *Ḥulāṣah* manuscript, while also revealing a coherent model of Sufi education that integrates mystical practice with Islamic doctrine, setting it as a significant contribution to Ethiopia’s Islamic intellectual heritage.

Keywords: Sheikh Badruddīn ibn Ubbiyy; *Ḥulāṣah* Manuscript; Ethiopian Indigenous Muslim Scholars; Sufi Education; Islamic Intellectual Heritage.

Cite as Rameta Muzeyen and Nuraddin Aman, 2025.
Textual and Contextual Study of the *Ḥulāṣah* Manuscript
Authored by Šayḥ Badruddīn ibn Ubbiyy on Ethiopian
Indigenous Muslim Scholars. Dhaxalreeb, 21 (2), pp.
149-181. DOI: 10.13169/Dhaxalreeb.21.2.0149



1. An Overview of the Zabbi Molla Collection

The Zabbi Molla Center holds a distinctive and important place within Ethiopia's Islamic heritage. Its value lies not only in the rarity of the manuscripts it preserves many of which are multi-disciplinary texts unavailable elsewhere, but also in its role as a guardian of some of the country's oldest and most treasured Arabic manuscripts. Through this unique combination of richness and long-standing, the center offers an essential get into the intellectual traditions of Islam in Ethiopia and the wider Horn of Africa.

The Zabbi Molla Center stands out for its remarkable collection of numerous manuscripts volumes that bring together theological, legal, and historical writings within a single codex. This distinctive feature sets the center apart from other manuscript repositories and has drawn growing scholarly attention. As noted by Sara,¹ the center's importance extends beyond preservation and it holds the only known copies of at least ten texts originating from the Gibe region of southwest Ethiopia, making it the sole custodian of these otherwise lost works. In addition to these unique holdings, the center is also known for preserving some of Ethiopia's oldest and most valuable Arabic manuscripts. Among them are works associated with prominent indigenous scholars, such as Sheikh Ḡamāladdīn Muḥammad al-Ānnī² from northern Ethiopia. Far from being mere historical relics, these manuscripts embody an enduring tradition of local Islamic learning and show a rich scholarly heritage that continues to shape Ethiopia's intellectual and cultural history.

¹ Sara Fani. (2016). Arabic Grammar Traditions in Gibe and Harär: Regional Continuity vs Specificity of Scholarship -Aethiopia 19.P:117.

² See, Faysel Hussien. (2009). Analysis of law and legal history (*fiqh*) of Jamal Al-Din Al Anni's manuscript: With Philological description and partial translation, (unpublished MA thesis, department of philology, Addis Ababa University); Kemal Abdulwehab. (2012). Critical Edition, Analysis and Annotated translation of *Kiitab Al-Tarikh Al-Anni* by Shaykh Jamal Al-Din Mohammed Al-Anni of Raya, (unpublished PhD thesis, department of philology, Addis Ababa University).

Research carried out by Gori³ as part of the *IslHornAfr* project (2013-2018) brought to light an important copy of *Kifāyat al-ṭālibīn*⁴ preserved in the Zabbi Molla collection. The project identified one manuscript alongside three printed editions, enabling scholars to compare the text across both manuscript and print traditions. Gori's detailed examination of the Zabbi Molla manuscript (shelf mark WOZM00009) shows that it includes folios 20v-112r and was copied by a scribe named Muḥammad in 1904 CE⁵. Gori's findings resonate with the writings of Sheikh Badr al-Dīn, who references Sheikh Muḥammad Rašād⁶, the founder of the *Rashādiyya* order, and a branch of the *Qādiriyya*⁷ order. As the head of the *Rashādiyya* order, Zabbi Molla plays a pivotal role in preserving Arabic and Islamic manuscripts in Ethiopia. Although mosques, *Zawiyās*, and Islamic schools across the country serve as guardians of these valuable texts, Zabbi Molla is particularly distinguished for its extensive collection.

This section situates the Zabbi Molla Center within its historical and spiritual foundations, tracing its contemporary role in manuscript preservation to the legacy of the *Rashādiyya* Sufi order. While recognizing that the safeguarding of Islamic manuscripts in Ethiopia relies on a wide network of institutions and local custodians, the discussion addresses the typical prominence of the Zabbi Molla Center. Owing to the size, diversity, and scholarly importance of its holdings, the center emerges as a key node within Ethiopia's broader manuscript preservation landscape. The study then turns to the writings of Ṣayḥ Badr al-Dīn, a central figure in Ethiopian Islamic intellectual history and the son of one of the founding figures of the Zabbi Molla Center. His work, *Ḥulāṣatu Muḥtaṣari Tahrīr al-Uṣūl wa-al-Awrād*, forms the core text of this analysis. As a

³ Gori, Alessandro. (2022), Early Ethiopian Islamic Printed Books: Manuscript and Print in the Islamic Tradition. Vol.26 P:252.

⁴ *Kifāyat al-ṭālibīn fī ma'rīfat muḥimmāt addīn* authored by Ḡamāladdīn Muḥammad al Ānnī.

⁵ Gori, Alessandro. (2022), Early Ethiopian Islamic Printed Books: Manuscript and Print in the Islamic Tradition. Vol.26 P:252.

⁶ Founder of Rašādiyya Sufi order with Haji Kamāladdīn al Ubbi, co-founder of the Mosque and Zawiya of Zabbi Molla. (*IslHornAfr*).

⁷ See the details of Qādiriyya Order in the discussion part of this article.

condensed version of a larger earlier composition, the *Ḥulāṣah*⁸ stands out as a rich, multi-layered compendium. It brings together biographical accounts of indigenous Muslim scholars associated with Sheikh Kamāl ad-Dīn al-Ubbī, alongside discussions of their Sufi affiliations (*ṭarīqahs*), devotional practices, pedagogical methods, and modes of social engagement. In doing so, the manuscript offers both a textual record and a contextual window into the intellectual and spiritual life of the region.

Although the manuscript *Ḥulāṣatu Muḥtaṣari Tahrīr al-Uṣūl wa-al-Awrād fī Dhikr Tarājim Ashyāḥinā wa-Ashyāḥ Nāḥiyatinā wa-al-Asyād* occupies an important place within the intellectual life of southern Ethiopia, it has never received a dedicated scholarly examination. This study seeks to fill that gap by offering a careful and comprehensive textual and contextual analysis of the work. While the core of the research is grounded in close reading of the manuscript itself, it is enriched by a small yet meaningful set of oral accounts from individuals connected to the author's family. These voices provide personal, lived perspectives that lighten the manuscript's spiritual, educational, and local significance, helping us better understand how it was composed, transmitted, and preserved within its community.

2. An Introduction to the Ḥulāṣah Manuscript and Its Author

2.1 Meaning, Origin, and Purpose of the Ḥulāṣah

Manuscripts are more than written documents and they are vessels of cultural memory. Within their pages, they preserve the laws, teachings, and lived traditions of a community, transmitting them across generations. As Mawlūd Qānī aptly notes, manuscripts “carry the landmarks and origins of heritage,”⁹ safeguard a nation's legacy from distortion and loss. It is for this reason that

⁸ Throughout this study, the full title *Khulāṣat Mukhtaṣar Tahrīr al-Uṣūl wa-al-Awrād fī Dhikr Tarājim Ashyāḥinā wa-Ashyāḥ Nāḥiyatinā wa-al-Asyād* is abbreviated as *Ḥulāṣah*. This shortened form is occasionally employed in the original manuscript itself and is also commonly used by scholars and readers familiar with the text.

⁹ Qānī, Mawlūd Boshlāq AbdulAzeez. (2021). The Importance of the Manuscript and How to Deal with It to Preserve Arab Heritage. *Journal of Arabic Language Sciences and Literature*, Vol:13, 1186.

scholars from both East and West have long regarded them as treasures worthy of meticulous care.

Sheikh Badruddīn ibn Ubbiyy was not only an author but also the custodian of his own library. This dual role allowed his intellectual discipline, creativity, and practical experience to come together in a unique way. His manuscripts therefore reveal both scholarly precision and deep personal engagement, marked by careful organization, deliberate structure, and thoughtful articulation. Among his works, *Ḥulāṣatu Muḥtaṣari Taḥrīr al-Uṣūl wa-al-Awrād fī Dhikr Tarājim Ashyāḥinā wa-Ashyāḥ Nāḥiyatinā wa-al-Asyād*¹⁰ stands out as one of the most valuable. Its significance lies not only in its content, rich with detailed biographies, Sufi teachings, and religious reflections; but also in the author's deliberate effort to summarize, refine, and reorganize material drawn from his earlier writings. The very title, *Ḥulāṣah*, meaning “the essence” or “the distilled core,” signals to the reader that what follows is the carefully chosen substance of a larger intellectual project.

Moreover, the term *Ḥulāṣah* in Arabic carries connotations of concentration and purity i.e. the essential part extracted from a larger whole. Classical lexicographers describe it as akin to what settles at the bottom of a pot, a concentrated remainder containing the core of the substance.¹¹ In his own introduction, Sheikh

¹⁰ This manuscript modified through three stages: First, the Shaykh authored his book entitled “Taḥrīr al-Uṣūl wa-al-Awrād wa-Tashīl al-Wuṣūl ilā Ma‘rifat Ādāb al-Qawm wa-Manāqib al-Asyād.” Then, he abridged the book and named it “Mukhtaṣar Taḥrīr al-Uṣūl wa-al-Awrād wa-Tashīl al-Wuṣūl ilā Ma‘rifat Ādāb al-Qawm wa-Manāqib al-Asyād.” Finally, he summarized the abridgment and named it “Khulāṣat Mukhtaṣar Taḥrīr al-Uṣūl wa-al-Awrād fī Dhikr Tarājim Ashyāḥinā wa-Ashyāḥ Nāḥiyatinā wa-al-Asyād.” The title of the third stage was modified for greater specificity. A general section was removed and replaced with a new part focusing on “the biographies of Sheikhs.” This change shows that “al-Ḥulāṣah” was condensed to concentrate on the biographies of the Sheikhs, transforming it into a practical and concise guide to the order's spiritual chain and its leading figures.

¹¹ Ibn Manẓūr, Abū al-Faḍl Jamāl al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Mukram al-Anṣārī (d. 711 AH/December 1311 CE). *Lisān al-‘Arab*. Volume 5, Page 126. Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 2003. mu’ğam almaṣāni : ḥ l ṣ root.

Badrudḏīn confirms that this manuscript is excerpted from his more extensive work *Mukhtaṣar Taḥrīr al-Uṣūl wa-al-Awrād wa-Taṣhīl al-Wuṣūl*,¹² intentionally refined to convey the essential teachings, biographies, and principles most useful to the community.

Besides, the manuscript also responds to several intertwined purposes. At one level, it is a spiritual undertaking by recording the lives and virtues of pious scholars, the author hoped to draw divine blessing (*barakah*) and strengthen the spiritual guidance available to readers. At another level, it serves as a historical archive, preserving the intellectual heritage of southern Ethiopia, particularly the legacies of his father Sheikh Muḥammad Surūr and his colleague Sheikh Muḥammad Rašād al-Qāqī¹³. Through these biographies, the text also documents the practices of Sufi orders such as the *Raṣādīyya*,¹⁴ *Qādirīyya*,¹⁵ and *Aḥmadiyya*,¹⁶ offering a rare space into local expressions of Islamic scholarship. Altogether, these layers reveal a manuscript shaped by three core motivations mainly; a spiritual aspiration to seek blessing, a scholarly commitment to preserving local history, and a deeply personal hope for salvation and intercession. The *Ḥulāṣah* thus emerges not only as a text but as a lived intellectual and spiritual development one that captures the essence of a vibrant scholarly tradition rooted in Ethiopian Muslim life.

¹² *Ḥulāṣat Mukhtaṣar Taḥrīr al-Uṣūl wa-al-Awrād fī Dhikr Tarājīm Ashyākhinā wa-Ashyākh Nāhiyatinā wa-al-Asyād* ver:2

¹³ Sheikh Muḥammad Rašād Ġamāl Al-Dīn Al-Qāqī (d.1919 CE), founder of the Al-Rashadia Sufi Order. His biography is detailed in the manuscript "Al-Ḥulāṣah" (The Summary) by Sheikh Badr Al-Dīn, from ff: 11 - ver: 33.

¹⁴ Rašādīyya Ṭarīqa, is a branch of the Qādirīyya Ṭarīqa, emerged at the hands of this Ṣaykh Muḥammad Rašād Al-Qāqī (d.1919 CE).

¹⁵ Al-Ṭarīqah al-Qādirīyyah is one of the oldest Sufi orders. It is attributed to ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī (d.1166 CE) Kāmil Muṣṭafā al-Shaybī, *Al-Ṭarīqah al-Qādirīyyah wa-A’lāmuhā* (Beirut: Dār al-Jīl, 2001), P:89–90.

¹⁶ Al-Ṭarīqah al-Aḥmadiyyah al-Rifā‘īyyah is attributed to Aḥmad al-Rifā‘ī (d.1182 CE) and is known for its unique spiritual system and collective dhikr rituals. Muḥammad Abū al-‘Aṭā, *Al-Ṭuruq al-Ṣūfiyyah fī Miṣr* (Cairo: Al-Hay’ah al-Miṣriyyah al-‘Āmmah lil-Kitāb, 1999), p:112–113.

2.2. *Spiritual Motivations and the Search for Barakah*

One of the central motivations behind Sheikh Badr al-Dīn's composition of the *Hulāṣah* is his desire to seek divine blessing and spiritual enrichment. Within Sufi tradition, the remembrance of saints and righteous scholars (*dhikr*¹⁷ *manāqib*¹⁸ *al-awliyā'*) is understood to open pathways to *barakah*, drawing spiritual grace to both the author and those who engage with the text. By recounting the virtues and exemplary lives of these figures, Sheikh Badr al-Dīn positions his work as part of a long-established devotional practice that views biography not simply as history, but as a means of spiritual connection. This motivation is expressed in deeply personal terms. The author hopes that writing the *Hulāṣah* will first benefit his own spiritual state, and then extend its blessings to his fellow seekers and readers. He reinforces this intention by citing the Egyptian Sufi master al-Sha'rānī,¹⁹ who wrote "I hope through mentioning my masters that their remembrance endures and that I attain abundant reward." By invoking this authoritative voice, Sheikh Badr al-Dīn situates his work within a recognized spiritual lineage where writing, remembering, and blessings are intimately linked.

In this sense, the *Hulāṣah* manuscript is not merely a compilation of biographies or teachings but it is also an act of devotion. Its composition becomes a form of worship, a spiritual investment intended to yield divine reward and sustain the flow

¹⁷ Dhikr in Sufism is the complete presence of the heart before God Almighty, through various forms of reverence and veneration. Abū Naṣr al-Sarrāj, *Al-Luma' fī al-Taṣawwuf* (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Ḥadīthah, 1960), p:85.

¹⁸ *Manaqib* (singular: *manqabah*) are the biographies, spiritual miracles, and noble morals of the righteous. Fārūq Aḥmad al-Dīdamī, *ʿIlm al-Manāqib wa-al-Tarājim* (Riyadh: Dār al-Ṣumayʿī, 2008), p:78. The *Awliya* (saints) are "those who know God act for God, and stand firm with God." ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Jīlī, *Al-Insān al-Kāmil* (Cairo: Al-Maktabah al-Azhariyyah, 1997), p:156.

¹⁹ Al-Sha'rānī; ʿAbd al-Wahhāb ibn Aḥmad ibn ʿAlī al-Ḥanafī al-Miṣrī (d1565), *Al-Yawāqīt wa-al-Jawāhir. al-Maṭbaʿa al-Maymaniyya*, 1306 AH Cairo, Vol. 2, p. 124.

of blessings through the Sufi chain (*silsila*²⁰). Through this view, the manuscript emerges as both a scholarly contribution and a heartfelt offering, crafted with the hope that it will revitalize the lives of the righteous and inspire the hearts of those who read it.

2.3. Preserving Local Scholarly Memory and Lineage

Alongside the universal Islamic aspiration for *barakah*, Sheikh Badr al-Dīn exhibits a clear and deliberate commitment to safeguarding the intellectual memory of his own region. The *Ḥulāṣah* manuscript is not intended as a broad survey of Sufi history but as a focused account of “the masters of our region” (*nāhiyatina*), with particular emphasis on southern Ethiopia. In addressing the lives of his father, Sheikh Muḥammad Surūr, and his close companion, Sheikh Muḥammad Rašād al-Qāqī; the author positions his work as an intentional archive of a local scholarly lineage that might otherwise fade from the wider landscape of Islamic historiography.

Furthermore, this local documentation serves several intertwined purposes. First, it affirms the religious authority and continuity of the regional scholarly community by connecting its leading figures to the wider tradition of “practicing scholars” (*al-‘ulamā’ al-‘āmilīn*). Second, it constructs a form of regional hagiography that nurtures communal identity, anchoring the universal values of Islamic scholarship in the lived experience of southern Ethiopia. Through these biographical portraits, the text functions simultaneously as a spiritual guide and as a record of a vibrant intellectual heritage. For Sheikh Badruddīn, these motivations are inseparable. His desire for divine blessing, his devotion to preserving local memory, and his personal hope for intercession form a single, coherent vision. The *Ḥulāṣah* manuscript becomes a comprehensive document one that sustains communal continuity, celebrates the spiritual and scholarly contributions of Ethiopian Muslim figures, and reflects the author’s own aspirations for otherworldly salvation. In this way,

²⁰ The *Silsila* in Sufi terminology is “the continuous spiritual lineage, with an authenticated chain of transmission, connecting the masters of the Sufi order, which ultimately traces back to the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him.” (‘Abd al-Majīd al-Khānī, *Al-Ḥuṣūn al-Ḥaṣīnah* (Damascus: Maṭba‘at al-Taraqqī, 1305 AH), 45.)

the manuscript stands as both testimony and legacy. It affirms the depth of intellectual and spiritual life among Ethiopian Muslim scholars and demonstrates their active participation within the broader currents of Islamic culture. Through the *Hulāṣah* manuscript, Sheikh Badruddīn fulfills his aims to seek blessing, to preserve history, and to honor a lineage whose memory continues to shape its community.

2.4. *Personal Aspirations for Intercession and Salvation*

Closely connected to Sheikh Badr al-Dīn's quest for *barakah* is his deeply personal hope for salvation and intercession (*shafā'ah*) on the Day of Judgment. This motivation is not merely implied it is explicitly and emotionally articulated in the poetic verses he cites throughout the introduction. For the author, writing the *Hulāṣah* manuscript is more than an intellectual exercise; it is an act of devotion rooted in love, reverence, and spiritual longing. By honoring the lives of his masters and meticulously compiling their virtues, Sheikh Badr al-Dīn seeks to align himself with their spiritual ranks. The very act of remembering and celebrating them becomes a pathway through which he hopes to receive their intercession in the hereafter. In this sense, the manuscript becomes a bridge between the earthly and the eternal; an offering of loyalty to his teachers and a plea for divine mercy.

Thus, the *Hulāṣah* manuscript shows not only the author's scholarly commitment but also his heartfelt aspiration to attain honor in the sight of God by remaining connected to the righteous. Through this intimate dimension, the work discloses its role as a spiritual companion for both its author and its readers, directing the possibility of grace, guidance, and otherworldly reward.

2.5. *Compilation Method and Authoritative Sources*

Sheikh Badr al-Dīn makes clear from the beginning that the *Hulāṣah* manuscript is not an entirely new creation, but rather an excerpt (*iqṭifā'*) and refined summary (*mukhtaṣar*) of a larger, more extensive document. He explains that the original *Tahrīr* drew upon "valuable books on the subject,"²¹ underscoring his commitment to established scholarly sources and his role as a

²¹ *Hulāṣat Mukhtaṣar Tahrīr al-Uṣūl wa-al-Awrād fī Dhikr Tarājim Ashyākhinā wa-Ashyākh Nāhiyatinā wa-al-Asyād* ff:3

faithful transmitter of earlier knowledge. His statement that he is merely “one drawing water from their ocean”²² referring to the great Imams and scholars before him reflects a longstanding expression of humility within the Islamic intellectual tradition. At the same time, it intentionally situates his work within a recognized chain of scholarly authority, grounding it in a legitimate and respected genealogy. To justify the act of producing a concise version of an already extensive text, Sheikh Badr al-Dīn invokes a well-known saying “For everything new there is a delight, and for every age there is a renewal.”²³ Through this principle, he positions the *Ḥulāṣah* manuscript as both a continuation of tradition and a timely contribution offering familiar knowledge in a new, accessible, and practically useful form. The manuscript thus becomes an example of renewal within continuity, preserving the substance of earlier works while making them more approachable for contemporary readers.

2.6. Intellectual and Sufi Foundations of Sheikh Badruddīn

Sheikh Badruddīn emerges as a figure deeply rooted in the Sufi intellectual and spiritual tradition, demonstrating mastery over a wide range of Sufi luminaries across centuries. His references to figures such as al-Ġunayd al-Baġdādī,²⁴ ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Ġilānī,²⁵ Abu al-Ḥasan al-Šādīlī,²⁶ among others, reveal both his scholarship and his immersion in Islamic sciences, particularly Sufism. The influence of Sheikh Ġamāl al-Dīn al-Ānnī²⁷ is

²² *Ibid*: 3

²³ *Ibid*: 3

²⁴ Abū al-Qāsim al-Junayd ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Junayd al-Khazzāz al-Qawārīrī (d. 910 CE). Abū Bakr Aḥmad ibn ‘Alī al-Khaṭīb al-Baġhdādī, *Tārīkh Baġhdād* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 2001), 7:241.

²⁵ Abū Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Qādir ibn Abī Šālīḥ Mūsā al-Jīlānī (d.1166 CE), Abū al-Faṭḥ Muḥammad ibn Abī Ṭāhīr al-Maqdisī, *Al-Najm al-Zāhīr fī Ṭabaqāt Ahl al-Bayt al-Ṭāhīr* (Beirut: Dār al-Šādīr, 2001), 145.

²⁶ Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī ibn ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Abd al-Jabbār al-Šādhilī (d. 1258 CE), ‘Abd al-Ḥalīm Maḥmūd, *Al-Ṭarīqah al-Šādhiliyyah wa-A‘lāmuhā* (Cairo: Dār al-Ma‘ārif, 2005) P: 89.

²⁷ Sheikh Muḥammad Ġamāl al-ddīn al-Ānnī (1797-1882) Ethiopian famous scholar especially in northern part of Ethiopia. Ṭaḥqīq Faṭāwā al-‘Imām Muḥammad Ġamāl al-Ddīn al-Ānnī by Dr. Ġaylān (2009)

especially visible, most notably in Badruddīn's integrated educational methodology and his focus on the practical path to God. For instance, he quotes al-Ānnī's assertion "*Among the means aided in the spiritual path is the study of the books and writings of the people,*" demonstrating his commitment to a pedagogical vision where engagement with the Sufi heritage is central to spiritual development. Sheikh Badruddīn's work draws upon a rich collection of foundational Sufi texts, including *Laṭā'if al-Iṣārāt* by al-Ānnī, *Al-Ṭabaqāt* by al-Ša' rānī,²⁸ *Ruḥ al-Bayān*²⁹ in Qur'ānic exegesis, and *Tuḥfat Ahl al-Futūḥāt*³⁰. These sources share key characteristics; they combine transmitted knowledge with intellectual insight, link *Shari'ah* (Islamic law) with *Ṭarīqah* (the Sufi path), rely on connected chains of transmission (*isnād*), and offer comprehensive treatment of spiritual and educational topics. Moreover, Sheikh Badruddīn's work reveals several interwoven objectives that shape the spiritual and educational production of the *Ḥulāṣah*. Foremost among these is fostering a sincere love for the righteous, presented not merely as admiration but as a guiding principle for drawing closer to God. He emphasizes the sanctity of the Sufi heritage, urging readers to study the lives and teachings of the saints as a vital means of spiritual growth.

At the same time, Sheikh Badruddīn cautions against the perils of opposing the righteous. He presents stern warnings about the

p.37. Ḥadīr Ḥusayn, Tārīḥ 'Ulam'ī mantiqati Rāyyā bayna al-māḍī wal-ḥādīr, p:3.

²⁸ *Al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā* A monumental biographical encyclopedia covering the lives of Sufis from the first Islamic century until the author's time. Authored by 'Abd al-Wahhāb ibn Aḥmad al-Sha' rānī (d. 1565 CE) Cairo: Maktabat al-Thaqāfah al-Dīniyyah, (2005).

²⁹ *Rūḥ al-Bayān* by Ismā'īl Ḥaqqī al-Burūsawī (d.1725 CE) A Sufi exegesis of the Quran that integrates both the apparent and esoteric meanings of the text, with reflections on the spiritual states of seekers and the stations of the gnostics. Published by: Dār Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī - Beirut (2001).

³⁰ *Tuḥfat Ahl al-Futūḥāt* by Ibn Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn al-'Arabī (d. 1240 CE) One of the most important texts of theoretical Sufism, explaining the terminology of the gnostics and the truths of existence according to the school of Ibn al-'Arabī. Publishwd by: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya - Beirut (2006).

consequences of such objections, showing the moral and spiritual risks involved. His writings further advocate for a balanced love, one that honors both the prophets and the saints, recognizing their respective spiritual significance while warning against exaggeration that might elevate saints above prophets a deviation from Islamic moderation.

Through these objectives, the *Ḥulāṣah* manuscript encourages readers to internalize the ethical and spiritual wisdom of the Sufi tradition, combining reverence with discernment. It promotes a form of devotion that is deeply heartfelt yet measured, ensuring that admiration and emulation remain within the bounds of proper religious guidance. Regarding the love of the righteous, Sheikh Badruddīn aligns with Islamic law, which affirms the virtue of loving them and acknowledging their *karāmāt* (miracles),³¹ as revealed in the Qur'an:

*"Your ally is none but Allah and [therefore] His Messenger and those who have believed."*³²

However, he also cautions against excess, noting that exaggerating this love especially equating the saints with the prophets can lead to spiritual extremism. Similarly, while Sheikh Badruddīn strongly warns against objection to the righteous, it is important to note that Islamic law allows for constructive criticism delivered with wisdom and good counsel, as the Qur'an instructs:

*"And cooperate in righteousness and piety."*³³

³¹ Karāmāt are defined as "supernatural acts that God Almighty performs at the hands of His righteous saints, these differ from miracles (mu'jizāt) in that "they are not used to challenge opponents, nor is prophethood claimed by them. Abd al-Qāhir al-Baghdādī, *Uṣūl al-Dīn* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 2003), 327 and Sā'id Fawdah, *Al-Masā'il al-Mushtaraka bayna 'Ulūm al-'Aqā'id wa-al-Taṣawwuf* (Amman: Dār al-Fatḥ, 2010), 156.

³² Al-mā'idah :55.

³³ Al-mā'idah :2.

In essence, the *Ḥulāṣah* manuscript represents a complete model of Sufi literature, blending knowledge and education, spirit and intellect. It exudes devotional fervor, reflects its author's deep scholarship, and offers a practical guide for spiritual ascent. Simultaneously, certain limitations are evident i.e. excessive veneration of individuals, occasional generalizations in rulings, and conflation of the varying ranks among the righteous. These shortcomings invite critical reading, weighing Sheikh Badruddīn's insights against Islamic law, and distinguishing between sound guidance and areas needing caution. Adopting a moderate approach, one can embrace the positive aspects such as legitimate love for the righteous and learning from their biographies while avoiding the negatives, including exaggeration in veneration and silencing constructive criticism. This balance reflects the Quranic principle:

*"And thus We have made you a median community."*³⁴

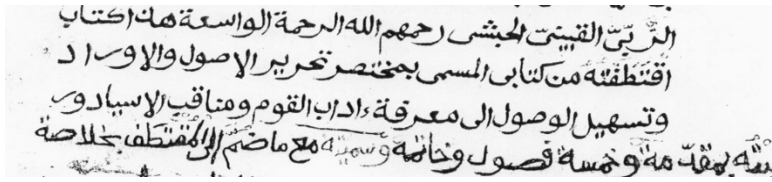
To sum up, the *Ḥulāṣah* manuscript remains a valuable contribution to the Islamic intellectual and spiritual heritage. Its careful study allows readers to extract its gems while contextualizing and moderating its potential excesses, in line with the moderate methodology that defines the Islamic tradition.

3. Textual and Contextual Analysis of the Ḥulāṣah

3.1. Textual Structure and Methodology

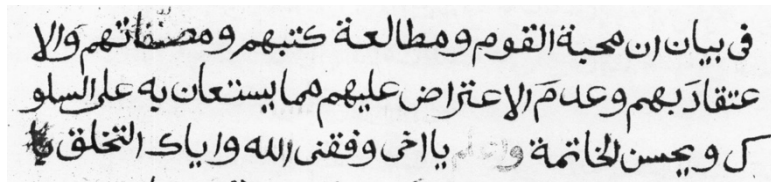
Sheikh Badruddīn presents a distinctive model of systematic authorship, and his manuscript *Ḥulāṣat Mukhtasar Taḥrīr al-Uṣūl wa al-Awrād...* exemplifies methodological rigor and careful organization. The text opens with a traditional preamble, in line with classical Islamic scholarly conventions, before the author explicitly outlines his methodology. He writes:

³⁴ Al-Baqarah: 143.



Translation: “This is a book I have excerpted from my book titled ‘*Muḥtasaru Taḥrīr al-Uṣūli wa al-Awrād*...’ and I have organized it with an introduction, five chapters, and a conclusion”³⁵.

This declaration shows Sheikh Badruddīn’s awareness of the importance of sequential and structured presentation, ensuring that the material serves both pedagogical and spiritual objectives. The manuscript follows a hierarchical methodology, moving from foundational theory to practical application. Sheikh Badruddīn begins with an introduction that establishes the theoretical principles underpinning the spiritual path, particularly emphasizing the love of the righteous and the study of their writings. He affirms:



Translation: “Loving the people of God, studying their books and writings, believing in them, and refraining from objecting to them are among the means aided in spiritual conduct and achieving a good end”³⁶

Following this theoretical grounding, the text progresses through specialized chapters in a carefully considered sequence.

³⁵ Šayḥ Badruddīn ibn Ubbiyy Muḥammad Surūr, Manuscript of *Khulāṣat Mukhtaṣar Taḥrīr al-Uṣūl wa-al-Awrād fī Dhikr Tarājim Ashyākhinā wa-Ashyākh Nāḥiyatinā wa-al-Asyād*, Ver;2

³⁶ Shekh Badruddīn, Manuscript of *Ḥulāṣah* Ver;4.

It starts with the biographies of prominent Sheikhs, illustrating their spiritual stature and exemplary conduct. It then moves to the virtues of the spiritual path and its associated invocations, followed by the politeness of spiritual retreat. Subsequent sections address vocal litanies and the performance of rituals, culminating in general ethical and spiritual guidance. Through this structure, Sheikh Badruddīn demonstrates not only scholarly precision but also a pedagogical sensitivity guiding the reader gradually from foundational understanding to practical implementation of the Sufi path. The *Ḥulāṣah* manuscript thus stands as both a meticulously organized indigenous work and a practical manual for spiritual cultivation.

3.2 Literary and Linguistic Features

Sheikh Badruddīn's writing stands out for its remarkable blend of eloquence, precision, and methodological clarity. His manuscript skillfully blends three distinct stylistic modes such as the discursive style, directly addressing the reader with phrases such as "O my brother";³⁷ the transmitted style, rooted in documented quotations from authoritative sources; and the expository style, used in presenting rulings and spiritual guidance. His mastery of composition is evident in reflections such as:

فَالْوَامِنُ طَالَعَ كَلَامَ الْقَوْمِ بِصِدْقٍ وَتَوَجُّهِ حَاضِرِ الْقَلْبِ مَتَى
دَبَّاءُ اخْتَلَا كَمَا سَمِعَهُ كَانَهُ حَاضِرًا عَنْهُمْ يَتَصَرَّفُونَ فِيهِ بِمَا
سَبَقَ لَهُ وَيُجَادُونَ بِحَسَبِ اسْتِعْجَالِهِ وَمَنْ طَالَعَ كُتُبَ الْقَوْمِ

Translation: "Whoever studies the speech of the people with sincerity, presence of heart, and reverence, receiving it as he heard it, it is as if he is present with them; they act within him according to what has been preordained for him and supply him according to his preparedness."³⁸

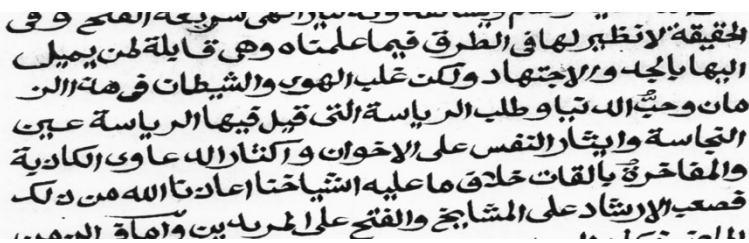
This sentence exemplifies his ability to convey profound meaning with clarity, combining semantic depth with verbal

³⁷ For more than thirty-five times in *Ḥulāṣah*.

³⁸ Sheikh Badruddīn, *Ḥulāṣah Manuscript Ver;4*.

precision. Furthermore, Sheikh Badruddīn demonstrates a meticulous methodology in transmission and quotation, consistently documenting sources and accurately attributing statements. Sheikh Badruddīn's approach to transmission is both flexible and precise. At times, he presents literal quotations, as in his reference to al-Ša'rānī *"And I hope through mentioning them the perpetuation of remembrance and my attainment of abundant reward."*³⁹ In other instances, he conveys the meaning of a statement while clearly attributing it to the original speaker, allowing the essence of the teaching to be understood even when the wording is adapted. He also skillfully employs a combined method, integrating transmission with analytical commentary, where he reflects on, explains, and situates the quotation within a broader spiritual or educational context. This variety demonstrates his careful attention to both authenticity and comprehension, ensuring that the wisdom of the sources is preserved while remaining meaningful to his readers.

Through these methods, he skillfully selects appropriate texts for each context, maintaining coherence and logical sequence throughout the manuscript. Besides, the linguistic and stylistic brilliance of the Ḥulāṣah manuscript is further revealed in statements such as:

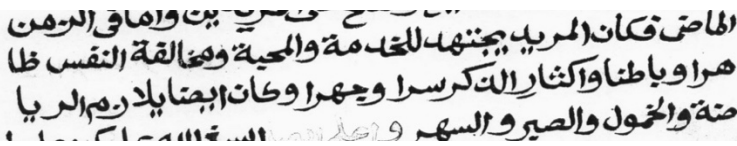


Translation: *"In truth, it has no equal among the paths to our knowledge, and it is accessible to those who incline toward it with seriousness and diligence; but in this age, whims and Satan have prevailed, along with love of worldly matters and the pursuit of leadership about which it has been said*

³⁹ Al-Sha'rānī 'Abd al-Wahhāb ibn Aḥmad ibn 'Alī al-Ḥanafī al-Miṣrī(d1565), Al-Yawāqīt wa-al-Jawāhir. al-Maṭba'a al-Maymaniyya, 1306 AH Cairo, Vol. 2, p. 124.

'leadership is pure impurity' and preferring oneself over brothers, and proliferating false claims and boasting about Qat, contrary to what our Sheikhs upheld may God protect us from that so guidance has become difficult for the Sheikhs and spiritual opening for the disciples."⁴⁰

Here, the author demonstrates eloquence, semantic precision, and stylistic beauty, using evocative vocabulary like *spiritual opening* (*al-fath*), which conveys meanings that transcend the literal sense. His stylistic diversity is also evident in his blend of analytical-descriptive and directive-constructive styles. For example, he contrasts past and present spiritual practices:



Translation: “As for in times past, the disciple would strive diligently in service and love, opposing the self both outwardly and inwardly, increasing remembrance both secretly and openly, and persistently practicing spiritual discipline, obscurity, patience, and vigil”.⁴¹

This comparative approach vividly shows differences across eras, guiding the reader’s understanding of evolving spiritual contexts. Sheikh Badruddīn’s rhetorical skill complements his linguistic mastery. The text frequently employs parallel structures, as in “outwardly and inwardly” (*ẓāhiran wa-bātinan*), wordplay, such as “secretly and openly” (*sirran wa-jahran*), and metaphor, like “leadership is pure impurity” (*al-ri’āsah ‘ayn al-najāsa*), demonstrating both depth of Islamic knowledge and literary artistry.

Moreover, the manuscript bridges transmitted knowledge and intellectual reasoning, addressing contemporary issues such as the

⁴⁰ Sheikh Badruddīn ibn Ubbiyy Muḥammad Surūr, Manuscript of *Khulāṣat Mukhtaṣar Taḥrīr al-Uṣūl wa-al-Awrād fī Dhikr Tarājīm Ashyākhinā wa-Ashyākh Nāhiyatīnā wa-al-Asyād*. Ver:99.

⁴¹ *Ibid*; Ver:99.

social phenomenon of boasting about *Qāt* with the same rigor as abstract spiritual matters. This careful balance of content diversity and stylistic unity makes the *Ḥulāṣah* a coherent and complete literary work. The manuscript also excels in narrative storytelling, transmitting Sufi tales in a way that is both accurate and engaging. For instance, the story of Sheikh Abi al-Mawāhib al-Ṣādīlī's encounter with the Prophet conveys spiritual lessons through an accessible and captivating narrative. Thus, the *Ḥulāṣah* exemplifies a rare balance between intellectual depth and expressive beauty, blending linguistic authenticity, methodological rigor, and contemporary relevance. It stands as a literary and spiritual masterpiece, central to the Ethiopian Islamic intellectual tradition.

3.3 Engagement with Sources and Evidence

Sheikh Badr al-dīn's *Ḥulāṣah* is a remarkable example of scholarship that breathes with life. Far from offering a compilation of dry doctrinal statements, the manuscript becomes an artistic genre, interwoven with poetic blossoms drawn from multiple eras, geographies, and scholarly traditions. Ideas are never left suspended in abstraction; instead, he reinforces and beautifies them with carefully selected lines of poetry, each acting as a witness that deepens meaning and stirs the reader's heart. This method reflects not only his refined literary taste but also his broad command of both the classical Islamic canon and the rich poetic traditions of his own homeland, Abyssinia (Ḥabesha).

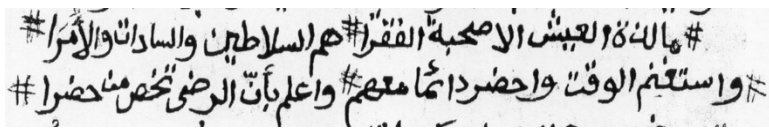
One of the most striking features of Sheikh Badr al-dīn's methodology is the bridge he constructs between two heritages namely; the classical Arab tradition and the intellectual world of Ethiopian Muslim scholars. On one side, he draws from towering figures of Arabic literature such as 'Antarah ibn Shaddād al-'Absī,⁴² whose poetry epitomizes pride and heroic valor; al-Aṣma'ī,⁴³ the celebrated linguist; and Abū al-Ṭayyib al-

⁴² 'Antarah ibn Ṣaddād al-'Absī an Arab poet (d.608 CE), renowned for his chivalric poetry and poetic epics in love and valor. Al-Zirikī, Khayr al-Dīn. Al-A'lām. Vol. 4. Beirut: Dār al-'Ilm lil-Malāyīn, 2002, P:19.

⁴³ 'Abd al-Malik ibn Qurayb al-Aṣma'ī (d.828 CE), a leading authority in language and literature, and one of the prominent scholars of the

Mutanabbī,⁴⁴ the unrivaled master of eloquence, wisdom, and regal self-confidence. Their verses provide him with expressive force and linguistic precision. On the other side of this bridge stand the imams and poets of his own land i.e. Sheikh al-Mukhtār al-Anqurī,⁴⁵ Sheikh Mūsā, Sheikh Muḥammad Karam, and Muḥammad Sirāj al-Ānnī each representing Ethiopia's vibrant scholarly and poetic heritage. By placing these two traditions side by side, Sheikh Badr al-dīn subtly conveys an important message that eloquence, insight, and spiritual depth are divine gifts distributed across peoples and places, not confined to a single linguistic or cultural sphere.

His poetic citations are far from random. Instead, Sheikh Badr al-dīn carefully selects verses according to clear rhetorical and spiritual purposes. A prominent example is his frequent use of the poetry of Abū Madyan,⁴⁶ especially the well-known lines:



Translation:

*“The only delight of life is the companionship of the poor;
They are the Sultans, the masters, and the commanders.*

Basra school. He was renowned for his compilation of Arabic poetry, Arab genealogies, and historical accounts. Ibn Khallikān, Abū al-Abbās. *Wafayāt al-Aʿyān*. Vol. 3. Beirut: Dār Sādir, 1994, P:140.

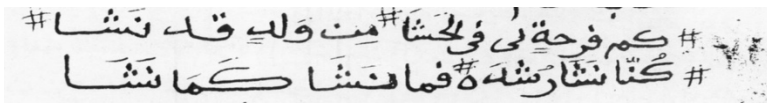
⁴⁴ Abū al-Ṭayyib al-Mutanabbī; Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Juʿfī (d.965 CE), the greatest poet in the Arabic language. His poetry is distinguished by its wisdom, pride, and description, characterized by robust structure and magnificent eloquence. Al-Shābushtī, Abū al-Ḥasan. *Al-Dībāj fī Shuʿarāʾ al-ʿAṣr al-Abbāsī*. Cairo: Dār al-Kutub wa-al-Wathāʾiq, 2011, p:87.

⁴⁵ Sheikh Muḥtār Al-Anqurī (d. 1941 CE) was a distinguished student of Šayḥ Muḥammad Surūr (the author's father). documented by Sheikh Badr al-Din in the manuscript *Al-Khulasa*, Ver: 73

⁴⁶ Abu Madyan Šuʿayb ibn al-Ḥasan al-Andalusi al-Tilimsani (1198 CE) was a Sufi poet and one of the prominent mystics in the Islamic West. This verse is mentioned in his collection of poems (Diwan), and it is in the Rajaz meter.

*Utilize the time and always be present with them,
And know that contentment is bestowed specifically upon
those who are present.*"⁴⁷

These verses function on several levels. They capture key Sufi values humility, companionship, and spiritual presence while simultaneously overturning social norms by elevating "the poor" to the ranks of sultans and commanders. The rhetorical power lies in the deliberate juxtaposition of worldly titles with spiritual poverty, creating a vivid image of moral inversion. The concluding line, which restricts true contentment to those who remain spiritually present, imbues the passage with a sense of divine selectivity and grace. Additionally, Sheikh Badr al-dīn also turns to poetry to voice his own emotions as a teacher and spiritual guide. To express sorrow over a student's failure to fulfill his potential, he cites:



Translation:

*"How much longing do we hold within
For a child who had grown;
We nurtured his uprightness,
But he did not grow as he should have grown."*⁴⁸

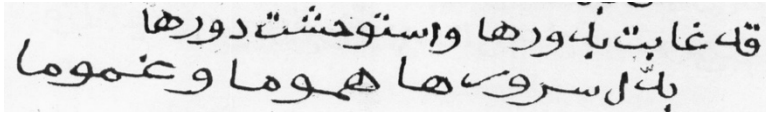
The verse is simple yet deeply expressive, employing a subtle wordplay (*jinās*)⁴⁹ between *naša'a* (to grow) and *našā'* (intent or

⁴⁷ Sheikh Badruddīn ibn Ubbiyy Muḥammad Surūr, Manuscript of *Khulāṣat Mukhtaṣar Taḥrīr al-Uṣūl wa-al-Awrād fī Dhikr Tarājim Ashyākhinā wa-Ashyākh Nāḥiyatinā wa-al-Asyād*, ver. 99.

⁴⁸ By Imam Abu Nasr al-Quṣayrī, and it was cited in his biography in "tabaqāt al-Šāfi'iyyah" (Vol.7, No. 163)

⁴⁹ Al-Jinās (الجناس) – Paronomasia; Al-Jurjānī Abū Bakr 'Abd al-Qāhir ibn 'Abd al-Raḥmān (d.1078 CE) explains in *Dalā'il al-I'jāz* that: "الجناس هو اتفاق اللفظين في الهيئة واختلافهما في المعنى، وأكمله ما اختلف فيه" ("Jinās is the agreement of two words in form and their

determination). This contrast between what was nurtured and what ultimately manifested evokes a universal pain familiar to teachers across generations. Similarly, in his treatment of loss and bereavement, Sheikh Badr al-dīn draws from the emotionally charged elegy of Sheikh Muḥtār al-Anqurī, beginning:



Translation:

*“Its full moons have set and its homes have become desolate;
Its joy has been replaced by worries and sorrows...”⁵⁰*

Here, the imagery is powerful; the deceased is likened to luminous full moons whose disappearance plunges dwellings into desolation. The imperfect paronomasia between *budūruhā* (its moons) and *durūhā* (its homes) enhances the sense of emptiness⁵¹. The hyperbolic image “*makes the solid rock weep*” underscores a grief so profound that even the envious cannot help but mourn. Through such lines, Sheikh Badr al-dīn transforms poetic sorrow into a shared human experience that transcends time and place.

3.4 Poetry and Intertextual Traditions

This tremendous diversity in poetic sources, from pre-Islamic and Islamic poets to Sufi scholars and Ethiopian poets, conclusively indicates the extraordinary breadth of Sheikh Badr al-dīn's knowledge. He was not merely a jurist or a Sufi; he was also a literary scholar and linguist, possessing a taste that distinguished between good and excellent poetry. His ability to attribute verses

difference in meaning, and its most perfect form is when the two opposites differ”) Pub: Dār al-Ma‘rifā, Beirut, 3rd edition, 1999. P:289.

⁵⁰ The verses are in the form of “Murabba’āt” (quatrains) in the Rajaz meter, where each line is divided into four equal metrical segments (parts), which enhances the sense of a regular and effortless rhythm.

⁵¹ Imperfect paronomasia (*jinās nāqis*) is a type of wordplay where two similar-sounding words differ in one of four aspects: the number of letters, the type of letters, the order of letters, or the form of the letters (vowels and diacritical marks).

to their authors and to choose the most appropriate one for its context demonstrates a deep understanding of word connotations and rhetorical styles. It is notable that Sheikh Badr al-dīn did not merely transmit poetry; he took care to attribute every saying to its author, whether a famous name like “al-Mutanabbī” and “‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī”, or scholars from his country like Sheikh Sirāj al-Dīn and Sheikh Mūsā. This scholarly integrity indicates a precise methodology in research and documentation, transforming the manuscript into a literary and historical reference documenting the movement of Sufi and scholarly poetry in Ethiopia.

By including poets like Sheikh al-Anqorī, Sheikh Muḥammad Karam, and Sheikh Muḥammad Sirāḡ al-Ānī⁵² in the same context as al-Mutanabbī and al-Aṣma‘ī. Sheikh Badr al-dīn was not only enriching his manuscript but also elevating the status of Ethiopian literary and melting it into the crucible of global heritage. He is telling the reader that Ethiopia possesses a tradition of poetic expression characterized by delicacy and wisdom, sustained by those who are its rightful heirs and practitioners. The poems and verses scattered throughout *Ḥulāṣah* manuscript can be considered artistic pivots that transition the reader from one state to another. They sometimes bring wisdom, and then take you to elegy and reflection, then to Prophetic eulogy and spiritual inheritance, and then to practical guidance. This emotional and intellectual sequence creates a holistic reading experience that touches both the mind and the heart.

Ḥulāṣa manuscript is not just an epistemic composition, but a complete cultural project, through which Sheikh Badr al-dīn attempted to offer a manuscript harmonizing thought and spirituality. He successfully addressed the authentic Ethiopian poetic heritage and connected it to the greater Islamic framework, proving that sublime literature is a language that transcends geographical boundaries. His refined taste was the golden thread that organized these scattered pearls into a single, coherent necklace, making *Ḥulāṣa* a scientific and spiritual beacon, and a literary document immortalizing a rare artistic sensitivity and a local genius reconciled with its global heritage. In this form, the

⁵² Sheikh Muḥammad Sirāj al-Ānī, Muftī of Raya in Northern Ethiopia.

manuscript constitutes a civilizational achievement that combines authenticity and contemporaneity, the local and the universal, in a high-level literary production.

Moreover, Sufi writings in Ethiopia represent unique models that combine spiritual depth and literary beauty. Among these distinguished models is the text of Sheikh Badr al-dīn in his description of the *Ṭarīqat al-Rashādiyyah*, which demonstrates exceptional rhetorical brilliance that places him among the classical Arab writers. This is evident in the following text that combines various types of rhetorical devices and embellishments such as *al-Saj*⁵³ (rhymed prose), *al-Ṭibāq*⁵⁴ (antithesis), *al-Jinās*⁵⁵ (paronomasia), and *al-Muqābalah*⁵⁶ (parallelism) devices used by great literati and writers in the classical era:

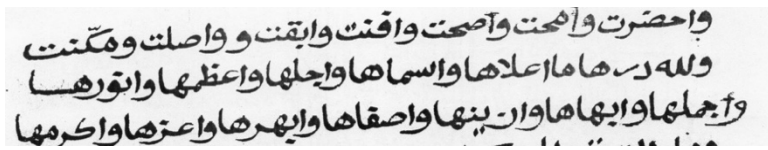
شمس الدين الشنكرى رضي الله عنهم ونفعنا بهم وهي يا ارحم طريقه علت و
وسمت وتمت وسكت وسارت وطهرت وشيئت وعرفت وكملت
ولاهلها بما عدها اشيعت واروت وقوت واسمت وجمدها ادرقت
واشريت وهيجت وانعت واقلت وابسطت وارتست واشهدت وغيت

⁵³ Al-Saj' (السنج) - Rhymed Prose Al-Sakkākī, Abū Ya'qūb Yūsuf (d.1229 CE) states in Miftāḥ al-'Ulūm (The Key to the Sciences): "السنج هو توافق الفاصلتين من النثر في الحرف الأخير، ويكون في الكلمتين فصاعداً" ("Al-Saj' is the correspondence of the final sounds of two prose phrases in their last letter, and it occurs in two words or more") Dār al-Nashr li-l-Jāmi'āt, Cairo, 2nd edition, 1987 p: 175.

⁵⁴ Al-Ṭibāq (الطباق) – Antithesis: Al-Qazwīnī Abū al-Qāsim Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Qazwīnī (d.1338 CE) defines it in al-Idāḥ as: "الطباق هو الجمع بين الشيء وضده في الكلام" ("Al-Ṭibāq is the combination of a thing and its opposite in speech") Al-Idāḥ fi 'Ulūm al-Balāgha (Clarification in the Sciences of Rhetoric) Publication: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, Beirut, 1st edition, 2003 P: 347.

⁵⁵ See the definition of the term al-Jinās under footnote 49 of this article.

⁵⁶ Al-Muqābala (المقابلة) – Parallelism Al-Qazwīnī (d. 1338 CE) defines al-Muqābala in Al-Idāḥ fi 'Ulūm al-Balāgha as: "أن يؤتى بمعنيين أو أكثر "ثم يؤتى بما يقابل ذلك على الترتيب" ("When two or more meanings are presented, then what corresponds to them is presented in the same order"), Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, Beirut, 1st edition, 2003 P: 354.



Translation: “O brother, this Order has ascended, undergone purification, fortification, and consummation imparting sacrosanct gnosis. Through its quintessential essence, it bestows upon its adherents plenitude of satiation, vigor, and substantial perpetuity. Its vinous elixir precipitates ecstatic *fana'* (absorption), precipitate *yaqza* (awakening), divine *baraka* (grace), intimate *munajat* (communion), visionary *mushahada* (witness), the annihilative *maqām* of encounter with the Divine, succeeded by *ṣahw* (sober presence), eternal *wahdat* (union), and firm establishment in the Real (*al-Ḥaqq*). By God! It is exalted, sublime, majestic, magnificent, radiant, beautiful, splendid, adorned, pure, resplendent, puissant, and noble.”⁵⁷

A reflective analysis of the text reveals a sophisticated integration of multiple rhetorical devices functioning cohesively within a single passage. The composition employs verbs imbued with exaggeration and continuity to amplify emotional and temporal dimensions, while semantic and metaphorical shifts dynamically redirect the flow of meaning. Through phonetic and rhythmic balance, the text achieves auditory harmony, further enriched by the structural elegance of antithesis (*al-Ṭibāq*) and parallelism (*al-Muqābalah*). The use of unforced rhymed prose (*al-Sajʿ*) imparts a natural lyrical quality, and the text’s resonance with classical stylistic traditions reinforces its authority and aesthetic depth.

Additionally, the Sheikh’s text includes a series of past tense verbs that convey exaggeration and continuity in Arabic style when he says: “*ʿalat wa-samat wa-namat wa-zakkat wa-rabbat wa-tahharat...*” (Move upward, raise, grow, purify, heighten, and clean...) This style resembles what classical linguists used in

⁵⁷ Sheikh Badruddin, Ḥulāṣatu Muḥtaṣari Taḥrīrīl ‘Uṣūli Wal’awrād Fi Dikri Tarāḡimi ‘Aṣyāḡhinā Wa ‘Aṣyāḡhi Nāḡiyatinā Wal ‘Asyād ver:97.

describing phenomena, giving a sense of dynamism and continuity, as if the movement never stops. Particularly, similar is al-Jāḥiẓ's⁵⁸ style in his book “al-Ḥayawān”⁵⁹ when describing human thought:

“*Fakkara fikran ba'da fikr, wa-naẓara naẓaran ba'da naẓar, wa-ta'ammala ta'ammulan ba'da ta'ammul, fa-htadā wa-htadā wa-htadā...*” (Through cycle after cycle of thought and careful planning, he found himself steadily guided.)

This verbal sequence is similar to Sheikh Badr al-dīn's style in accumulating verbs and suggesting continuity. The Sheikh skillfully employs semantic shift, as in his statement “*wa-bi-madāmiḥā adhāqat wa-aṣṣabat wa-hayyajat wa-az'ajat*” (its wine flowed for them to savor—a drink that both awakened and disturbed), where he transforms abstract spiritual experience into tangible sensory experience. This resembles the style of Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī⁶⁰ in his book *al-Imtā' wa-l-Mu'ānasah*⁶¹ where he said:

“*Fa-aṣṣaqat anwāruhū, wa-azharat asrāruhū, wa-ṭala'at anwāruhū, wa-nkaṣṣafat astāruhū, wa-njalat gūyūbuhū, wa-*

⁵⁸ Al-Jāḥiẓ: Abū 'Uthmān 'Amr ibn Baḥr al-Kinānī al-Baṣrī (869 CE) An Arab litterateur, critic, and theologian, among the most prominent figures of Abbasid literature and one of the founders of artistic Arabic prose. al-Jāḥiẓ, Abū 'Uthmān 'Amr ibn Baḥr. *Kitāb al-Ḥayawān*. Edited by 'Abd al-Salām Hārūn. 7 vols. Cairo: Maktabat Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1965.

⁵⁹ *Kitāb al-Ḥayawān*, Abū 'Uthmān 'Amr ibn Baḥr al-Jāḥiẓ; A seven-volume literary and scientific encyclopedia combining observations of nature, language, philosophy, and literature, with a focus on biology, animal behavior, and human nature. See *Ibid*.

⁶⁰ Abū Ḥayyān 'Alī ibn Muḥammad ibn al-'Abbās al-Tawḥīdī (1023 CE) A philosopher, litterateur, and critic, regarded as one of the foremost representatives of philosophical literature in the 4th Islamic century. al-Tawḥīdī, Abū Ḥayyān. *Al-Imtā' wa-al-Mu'ānasah*. Edited by Aḥmad Amīn and Aḥmad al-Zayn. 3 vols. Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-'Arabī, 1953.

⁶¹ *Al-Imtā' wa-al-Mu'ānasah*, Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī; A philosophical-literary work documenting nightly dialogues between the author and the vizier Ibn Sa'dān, covering topics in philosophy, literature, and culture. Edited by Aḥmad Amīn and Aḥmad al-Zayn. 3 vols. Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-'Arabī, 1953.

tağallat 'uyūbuhū.” (as its light shone and the curtains were pulled back, its secrets were unveiled, its mysteries laid bare, and its errors made plain.) where he transforms abstract meanings into visible tangible entities.

We find wonderful phonetic balance in the text through *Muqābalah* as in “*aqbalat wa-abṣaṭat wa-ānast wa-ashhadat wa-ghayyabat wa-aḥḍarat*” (simplified and brought close, it offered comfort and stood as a witness, presenting what had once been lost.), creating a balanced rhythm that is easy to memorize and induces tranquility. His style can be compared with al-Qāḍī al-Fāḍil's⁶² style in one of his literary letters:

“*Fa-aqbal wa-ajāb, wa-wa'ada wa-anjaz, wa-'āhada wa-waffā, wa-wa'ada wa-akhla fa, thumma 'āda fa-aṣlaḥa wa-waffā*” (He accepted and answered; he promised and performed. He established his covenant and saw it through. Though he warned, he stayed his hand—returning to mend what was broken and keep his promise) in terms of rhythmic balance and parallel structure.

The Sheikh skillfully uses *al-Ṭibāq* as in “*amḥat wa-aṣaḥat wa-afnat wa-abqat*”, where he combines negation and affirmation, annihilation and preservation, creating dramatic tension that serves the spiritual meaning. This resembles al-Jāhiz's style in “*al-Bukhalā*”:⁶³

“*Fa-minhum al-muqtaṣid, wa-minhum al-musrif, wa-minhum al-muqassir, wa-minhum al-mujtahid, wa-minhum al-bakhīl, wa-minhum al-jawwād*” (Among them, some are

⁶² Al-Qāḍī al-Fāḍil, Abū 'Alī 'Abd al-Raḥīm ibn 'Alī al-Baysānī al-Asqalānī (1200 CE) An Arab vizier, judge, and scribe, who served as a minister to Saladin and founded the chancery council (Dīwān al-Inshā') during the Ayyubid era. Ibn Ḥallikān, Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad. *Wafayāt al-A'yān wa-Anbā' Abnā' al-Zamān*. Edited by Iḥsān 'Abbās. 8 vols. Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1972.

⁶³ Al-Bukhalā'; A satirical social and literary study presenting humorous narratives about misers' lives, with psychological and social analysis of stinginess. Edited by 'Alī Jārim. Cairo: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1999.

diligent while others are wasteful; some are careless while others are hardworking; some live in misery while others live with charity) in terms of combining opposites in a single context.

The text features natural, unforced *al-Saj'*, as in: “*wa-waṣṣalat wa-makkanat*” and “*mā a'lāhā wa-asmāhā wa-ajallāhā wa-a'zamahā*”. This resembles the style and pattern of Ibn al-‘Amīd⁶⁴ in one of his letters: “*Fa-inna al-dunyā dāru maḍarr, wa-l-ākhiratu dāru maqarr, fa-khu dh min maḍarrika li-maqarrik*” (This worldly life is temporary, while the Hereafter is permanent; therefore, take from the transient to provide for the eternal.) in terms of light, unforced rhymed prose.

The style employed by Sheik Badr al-dīn in his text resembles al-Jāhiz’s style in “*al-Bayān wa-l-Tabyīn*”⁶⁵ in terms of transforming abstract concepts into interactive living entities. Similarly, it resembles Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī’s style in his book “*al-Hawāmil wa-l-Shawāmil*”⁶⁶ in converting abstract notions into tangible entities, and Ibn al-‘Amīd’s style in natural rhymed prose in terms of smooth integration of rhyme and meaning. Sheikh Badr al-dīn’s style is characterized by smoothness, naturalness, and lack of affectation. He does not artificially craft rhetoric; rather, rhetorical styles flow from the spring of his sincere spiritual experience. He excelled in spontaneously using

⁶⁴Ibn al-‘Amīd: Abū al-Faṭḥ Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn Muḥammad al-‘Amīd (970 CE) A Persian scribe, litterateur, and poet, who served as a vizier to the Buyid dynasty and was renowned for his literary epistles. Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī. Mu‘jam al-Udabā’: Irshād al-Arīb ilā Ma‘rifat al-Adīb. Edited by Iḥsān ‘Abbās. 7 vols. Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 1993.

⁶⁵Al-Bayān wa-al-Tabyīn; A fundamental work of Arabic literature exploring rhetoric, oratory, and advisory literature, containing literary texts from pre-Islamic and Islamic periods. Edited by ‘Abd al-Salām Hārūn. 4 vols. Cairo: Maktabat al-Khānjī, 1998.

⁶⁶Al-Hawāmil wa-al-Shawāmil; Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī and Miskawayh, A philosophical and literary dialogue featuring questions posed by al-Tawḥīdī and answers provided by Miskawayh, addressing philosophical, ethical, and literary issues. Edited by Aḥmad Amīn and al-Sayyid Aḥmad Ṣaqr. Cairo: Dār Iḥyā’ al-Kutub al-‘Arabiyya, 1951.

Ṭibāq, *Saj'*, *Muqābalah*, and *Jinās* in ways that serve the meaning without being pretentious. The text represents a refined model of spontaneous eloquence that springs from the depth of experience rather than artificial craftsmanship, making it deserving of a special place in the history of artistic Arabic prose.

Sheikh Badr al-dīn successfully combined the traditions of authentic artistic Arabic prose with his Sufi spirituality, in addition to his poetic ability through which he connected the scholars of his country with scholars of the Islamic world who were mentioned. Thus, he produced a text that embodies a living extension of the Arabic rhetorical heritage with a distinctive imprint that makes it a model worthy of study and analysis.

3.5 Intellectual and Sufi Networks

A close reading of *al-Ḥulāṣah* manuscript reveals Sheikh Badr al-dīn as a writer who thinks and teaches through connection. His text is shaped by a deep awareness of how ideas should unfold, how a reader should be guided, and how the intellectual and spiritual worlds of Islam intertwine across regions and centuries. Nowhere is this more evident than in his masterful use of transitions, introductions, and spiritual networks of elements that turn his manuscript into a living map of scholarly and Sufi relations.

One of the first qualities that stand out is his gift for beginning a new discussion with grace. Rather than entering a subject abruptly, he prepares the reader with gentle openings that set the tone and spiritual atmosphere. His phrase, “*I now commence the intended purpose of the book, and I say: with God’s guidance to what is correct...*”⁶⁷ is more than a formal beginning. It signals a shift, invites attentiveness, and positions the journey ahead under divinely guided intention. Even a single word *fa-ashra’u* (“I now commence”) works as a compass, telling the reader that they are stepping into a purposeful moment. Equally striking is his ability to move between topics with such ease that the reader senses no rupture. Sometimes he concludes a subject with a clear closing

⁶⁷ Sheikh Badruddīn, Manuscript of *Khulāṣat Mukhtaṣar Taḥrīr al-Uṣūl wa-al-Awrād fī Dhikr Tarājim Ashyākhinā wa-Ashyākh Nāhiyatinā wa-al-Asyād*. Ver:11.

statement “*This is what I intended to present...*”⁶⁸ allowing the mind to settle before opening a new door. At other moments, he connects topics with natural logic, such as linking the morning invocations to the sunset *rātib* simply through the order of prayer times. His phrase “*And know, my brother, that after the morning invocations comes the sunset rātib*”⁶⁹ reflects not only structural elegance but also emotional warmth. The address “my brother” turns the transition into an intimate act of guidance. And when he adds a bridge through authority invoking Sayyid ‘Uthmān al-Mirghani he reminds the reader that every moment in the text participates in a larger chain of knowledge and sanctity.

These transitions are not mechanical devices. They reflect an author who writes with a pedagogical consciousness and a literary instinct. He leads the reader gently, almost like a host ushering a guest from room to room, ensuring that each thematic movement feels natural and spiritually meaningful. Reading him feels like walking in a well-tended garden, moving from one flowerbed to the next without interruption. Yet, Sheikh Badr al-dīn’s creativity is not limited to textual structure. It extends into the heart of his intellectual and spiritual universe; his recognition of the scholars who shaped Islamic learning across lands and generations. The manuscript reveals a man deeply committed to honoring knowledge-bearers. His writing pulses with gratitude, humility, and reverence qualities that reflect authentic Islamic scholarly character. He unites names from different regions and Sufi paths into a single horizon such as al-Shādhilī of Morocco, Abū Madyan of Algeria, Ibn Idrīs of the Maghreb, al-Sammānī of Sudan, and Aḥmad al-Tijānī of Algeria, among others. By weaving these figures together, he demonstrates a vision that transcends geography and sectarian boundaries. For him, the spiritual path (*tarīqah*) is not fragmented; it is a continuum supported by multiple fountains, each flowing from the same prophetic source.

His reverence for these masters is manifold. It begins with language his consistent use of “*Sayyidi*” (“my master”) is not a mere courtesy but an expression of genuine affection and humility. He strengthens this respect with prayers for divine

⁶⁸ *Ibid.* ff:150.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.* ff:109.

acceptance “*Raḍiya Allāhu ‘anhum*” which turns scholarly mention into a spiritual invocation. And ultimately, he positions these scholars as active sources of blessing whose virtues continue to radiate into the present, not as relics of history but as living presences in the community’s spiritual life. In this way, Sheikh Badr al-dīn’s *Ḥulāṣah* manuscript becomes more than a book it becomes a network. It connects past and present, Arabs and Abyssinians, teachers and seekers. His careful sequencing of topics reflects his careful weaving of intellectual lineages. Both serve a deeper purpose to show that knowledge is inherited through companionship, respect, and spiritual continuity. Reading him, one senses that every transition, every name, and every prayer is part of a greater effort to preserve a unified, compassionate, and interconnected scholarly world.

4. Conclusion

This study of Sheikh Badr al-dīn’s *Ḥulāṣah* manuscript, approached through its pretextual foundations, textual construction, and wider intellectual context, reveals a manuscript that stands as a remarkable contribution to Ethiopian Islamic scholarship. Its value arises from three intertwined elements that together elevate the work beyond a conventional compilation of biographies and teachings.

First, the manuscript achieves a subtle spiritual and civilizational synthesis, bringing Ethiopian poetic and scholarly traditions into conversation with the broader corpus of Islamic learning. Through this integration, the *Ḥulāṣah* manuscript demonstrates that Sufi thought while shaped by local idioms, memories, and landscapes ultimately speaks a universal language of devotion and refinement. Second, the text shines with literary creativity. The Sheikh’s use of Arabic rhetorical devices, poetic citations, and elegant phrasing discloses not only technical mastery but also a natural eloquence grounded in sincerity. His writing avoids ornamentation for its own sake; instead, every stylistic choice deepens meaning and strengthens spiritual insight. Third, the manuscript illustrates a carefully crafted pedagogical method.

The thoughtful transitions, structured sequencing of topics, and gentle guidance extended to the reader reveal a teacher who understood both the responsibilities of scholarship and the sensitivities of the human heart. Overall, these dimensions show that the *Hulāṣah* manuscript is far more than a local record of Ethiopian Muslim scholars. It embodies a harmonious meeting between the local and the universal, between the intellectual and the spiritual, and between inherited tradition and lived experience. As such, the manuscript remains not only a source for historical inquiry but also a living testimony to the creative, interconnected, and deeply rooted nature of Islamic scholarship in Ethiopia. It invites its readers past and present into an intellectual journey that enriches understanding, strengthens spiritual consciousness, and reaffirms the enduring unity of the Islamic intellectual heritage.

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