The Complex Relationship between Sunni Scholars and Sufi Mystics in the Middle Ages: A Case Study of al-ʿIzz ibn ʿAbd al-Salām

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Abstract

This article interrogates the intricate nexus between Sunni jurisprudence and Sufi mysticism during the Ayyubid and early Mamluk eras, utilizing the preeminent jurist al-ʿIzz ibn ʿAbd al-Salām (d. 660 AH/1262 CE) as a focal point. The study addresses a core historiographical problem: the presence of discordant medieval narratives regarding al-ʿIzz's formal affiliation with Sufi orders and his jurisprudential stance on Sufi praxis. To resolve this, the research pursues two pivotal questions: To what extent was al-ʿIzz genuinely integrated into Sufi circles, and how did his legal framework delineate the boundaries of permissible Sufi conduct and institutionalization? Employing a qualitative inductive methodology, the research systematically triangulates evidence from al-ʿIzz's authenticated legal and ethical treatises (primary corpus) against diverse medieval biographical and hagiographical sources (secondary corpus/Ṭabaqāt). This analytical framework facilitates a critical distinction between established doctrinal positions and retroactive hagiographical attributions. The findings demonstrate that while al-ʿIzz maintained a profound intellectual rapport with orthodox Sufi luminaries—notably al-Shādhilī—and embraced the ethical-ascetic dimensions of Taṣawwuf, his verified writings articulate a rigorously selective endorsement. As a reformist jurist, he sanctioned Sufism only insofar as it remained tethered to Shariʿah-centric orthodoxy, while vehemently repudiating ritualistic innovations (Bidʿah) such as Samāʿ (ecstatic sessions). Consequently, the significance of this study lies in redefining al-ʿIzz not as a formal Sufi initiate, but as a paradigmatic "juristic gatekeeper." These conclusions contribute to the broader discourse on medieval Islamic intellectual history by elucidating the mechanisms of scholarly policing of spiritual boundaries and the complexities of manuscript-based historical reconstruction.

INTRODUCTION

The Ayyubid–early Mamluk transition is increasingly recognized as a formative moment in which Sunni juridical authority and organized Sufism were simultaneously consolidated through institutions, patronage, and public religious life. Under Sunni rulers, the expansion of madrasas and Sufi establishments helped reassert orthodoxy after the Fatimid period and amid external pressures, while also giving Sufi networks durable urban presence and legitimacy (Amir, 2024; Ephrat & Mahamid, 2015). Recent studies emphasize that this institutional landscape cannot be reduced to a simple opposition between "law" and "mysticism," because jurists, Sufi masters, and patrons often cooperated through shared social infrastructures, especially waqf-based endowments (Arad, 2023; Igarashi, 2019).

Within Damascus and Cairo, the relationship between jurists and Sufi authorities was marked by reciprocal benefit as well as periodic contestation. Scholars have highlighted that jurists supplied legal frameworks that stabilized communal norms, whereas Sufi leaders offered forms of spiritual legitimacy and moral cohesion that could widen the social reach of religious elites (Lev, 2007; Miller, 2023). Yet the same scholarship insists that compatibility was neither automatic nor uniform, because Sufi repertoires of narrative, ritual, and embodied devotion sometimes provoked juristic concern about innovation and doctrinal drift (Petry, 2022; Smarandache, 2018). These dynamics make jurist–Sufi encounters a crucial lens for reconstructing medieval Islamic authority.

Within this context, Al-ʿIzz ibn ʿAbd al-Salām (d. 660 AH/1262 CE) offers an especially revealing case for examining how a high-

profile Sunni jurist negotiated the expanding authority of institutional Sufism. The present study takes as its point of departure a persistent historiographical tension: medieval reports alternately attribute to Al-ʿIzz formal Sufi affiliation and deny it outright, while also disagreeing about how his jurisprudence regulated Sufi praxis. This contradiction is not merely biographical; it bears directly on broader debates about the "Sufization" of the legal class and the mechanisms through which jurists policed spiritual boundaries in a period of institutional growth.

Recent scholarship treats "jurist–Sufi relations" as negotiated through institutional, social, and political constraints rather than assumed doctrinal incompatibilities. For example, the institutionalization of Sufism in urban settings—through lodges and their public functions—helped normalize Sufi presence while also heightening juristic oversight (Ephrat, 2009; Ephrat & Mahamid, 2015). The same period saw waqf systems become a major axis through which communal identity and authority were shaped (Arad, 2023; Sayfo, 2017). In Mamluk contexts, Sufi leadership could intersect with political authority, further incentivizing jurists to clarify the boundaries of permissible religiosity (Chih, 2022; Post, 2016).

More specifically, the literature on Al-ʿIzz's Sufi engagements is divided along methodological lines. Some scholars foreground textual readings that detect "Sufi" elements within ethical and legal discourse and thereby infer proximity to particular orders (Bora, 2015; Ephrat, 2009). Others argue that such readings risk over-inference unless they are situated within broader sociopolitical dynamics, where affiliation may function as strategic alignment as much as theological commitment (Hirschler, 2016). At the same time, a partial consensus holds that Al-ʿIzz navigated Sufi influences while prioritizing legal orthodoxy, even as disagreement persists over what his alleged Sufi connections imply (Miller, 2023; Petry, 2022) and whether affiliation claims are historically secure (Amir, 2024; Ephrat, 2009).

A parallel body of scholarship clarifies why affiliation claims are difficult to adjudicate: historians increasingly scrutinize the reliability of ṭabaqāt and hagiographical materials that often serve as the backbone for medieval scholarly biographies. Such sources are valuable but vulnerable to pseudepigraphy and didactic reshaping, requiring philological caution and contextual reading (Amharar, 2024). Scholars note that hagiographies may privilege doctrinal agendas over factual precision (Gaiser, 2020), while portrayals of scholarly authority can reflect sectarian or political pressures (Banerjee, 2017; Booth, 2021). Methodologically, researchers therefore combine literary analysis of compositional strategies (Bray, 2010) with attention to didactic framing (Geissinger, 2011; Giladi, 2010).

Recent work further shows that disputes about jurist–Sufi relations cannot be separated from jurists' regulatory authority over contested devotional practices. Jurists issued evaluations of samāʿ, dhikr gatherings, and claims of karāmāt in ways that both constrained and, at times, legitimized Sufi practice (Bori, 2023; Wolper, 2014). This regulatory function is often described as boundary-setting: jurists established norms within which Sufis could claim public legitimacy, while Sufis adapted by framing their practices as consonant with Sunni orthodoxy (Amharar, 2024; Gaiser, 2020). In this context, Al-ʿIzz has been theorized as a "juristic gatekeeper," mediating between spiritual aspiration and legal discipline (Hendrickson, 2016; Maarif et al., 2020).

A closely related stream of scholarship identifies manuscript misattribution as a major driver of distorted intellectual genealogies, especially when later transmitters attach texts to prominent names to enhance authority. Studies on Islamic manuscript transmission emphasize non-linear copying practices and frequent ambiguities of attribution (Byron, 2014; De Nicola, 2022). Misattribution can produce long-term historiographical effects by obscuring genuine doctrinal

positions and reinforcing misleading binaries between law and mysticism (Akasoy, 2012; Morsel-Eisenberg, 2022; Pfeffer, 2022; Timmermann, 2020). It also shapes modern reception through translations and secondary studies that perpetuate earlier errors (Leket-Mor & Sharon, 2022; Long, 2012), and comparative cases show how reattribution can force reassessment of intellectual profiles (Smith, 2020; Storti, 2018; Zeddies, 2019).

Building on these debates, this article aims to resolve the contradictory portrait of Al-ʿIzz by applying a principled evidentiary strategy: a framework of doctrinal priority that privileges his authenticated legal-ethical writings over anecdotal biographical attributions. The study's working justification is that doctrinal corpora more reliably represent a scholar's intellectual commitments than later narrative constructions (Montel, 2022), while still allowing a synthetic use of biography when critically cross-checked (Ephrat & Mahamid, 2015; Syed, 2015). The novelty lies in integrating juristic regulation, hagiographical critique, and misattribution-aware manuscript reasoning to argue that al-ʿIzz's "Sufism" is best understood as selective authorization rather than demonstrable formal affiliation.

METHOD

Research Design and Analytical Orientation

This study employs a qualitative research design grounded in an inductive analytical approach. It is primarily concerned with resolving the historiographical ambiguity surrounding Al-ʿIzz ibn ʿAbd al-Salām's relationship with Sufism, which is often characterized by conflicting medieval narratives and divergent modern interpretations. To address this problem, the study adopts critical textual analysis and historiographical deconstruction as its central methodological tools. The research is structured around a systematic evaluation of doctrinal evidence against biographical attributions, allowing for an

interpretation that is not dependent on isolated reports but on patterns of consistent reasoning. The inductive framework is particularly suited to reconstructing intellectual positions because it enables conclusions to emerge from recurring textual structures rather than from presupposed theoretical claims.

Hierarchical Framework: Doctrinal Priority as Methodological Principle

A core methodological pillar of this study is the application of a hierarchical evaluative framework based on the principle of doctrinal priority. This approach privileges al-ʿIzz's authenticated legal and ethical treatises over anecdotal biographical claims when contradictions arise. The assumption underlying this hierarchy is that systematic juristic writings provide more reliable access to a scholar's stable intellectual commitments than later narrative constructions, which may reflect ideological motivations or institutional agendas. By weighing biographical narratives against established juridical axioms, the study distinguishes between Al-ʿIzz's personal spiritual sympathies and the broader institutional dynamics of organized Sufism. This methodological choice allows the research to avoid overreliance on hagiographical portrayals and instead produce a historically grounded interpretation of whether Al-ʿIzz's "Sufism" indicates formal affiliation or selective ethical engagement.

Delineation of Research Corpora and Source Selection

The study draws on a bifurcated corpus consisting of primary and secondary sources in order to balance doctrinal rigor with historiographical context. The primary corpus comprises Al-ʿIzz's authenticated writings, particularly *al-Qawāʿid al-Kubrā* and *Shajarat al-Maʿārif wal-Aḥwāl*, which are treated as foundational evidence for his jurisprudential reasoning and ethical worldview. These texts are analyzed to extract his conceptual boundaries regarding sainthood,

ascetic discipline, and ritual legitimacy. The secondary corpus includes major medieval ṭabaqāt and biographical sources, especially the works attributed to Al-Subkī and Al-Dhahabī, which are employed to trace the evolution of Al-ʿIzz's reputation and to map later claims about his affiliations. This corpus structure ensures that biographical material functions as contextual evidence rather than as determinative proof.

Historiographical Deconstruction and Evaluation of Biographical Narratives

A crucial methodological component is the historiographical critique of medieval biographical traditions. The study explicitly recognizes that ṭabaqāt literature frequently incorporates hagiographical motifs, particularly miracle narratives (karāmāt), intended to amplify the spiritual prestige of prominent figures. Such narratives, while historically informative, cannot be treated as neutral accounts of lived reality. Therefore, this study maintains analytical distance from miracle-centered reports and treats them as interpretive constructions shaped by piety, communal memory, and later institutional needs. The reliability of these accounts is assessed through cross-referencing: claims found in biographical works are examined against doctrinal statements preserved in Al-ʿIzz's authenticated writings. This method allows the study to filter retrospective embellishment from verifiable intellectual positions and to explain why later sources often sought to integrate jurists into Sufi genealogies.

Analytical Procedure: Cross-Textual Comparison and Inductive Synthesis

The analytical procedure is built on cross-textual comparison, whereby Al-ʿIzz's jurisprudential reasoning is systematically compared with claims about his Sufi engagements found in

biographical narratives. Instead of extracting conclusions from singular incidents—such as reported participation in samāʿ or dhikr gatherings—the study identifies recurring argumentative structures within his writings. These patterns are then synthesized inductively to reconstruct a coherent stance toward taṣawwuf. The logic of this synthesis is cumulative: doctrinal evidence is treated as a stable interpretive anchor, while biographical material is evaluated as supplementary testimony that must be consistent with the jurist's broader intellectual trajectory. Through this inductive synthesis, the study develops a holistic portrait of Al-ʿIzz as a scholar whose legal worldview regulated the legitimacy of Sufi practice, rather than affirming unconditional acceptance or rejection.

Limitations and Methodological Safeguards

Given the nature of medieval Islamic historiography, this study acknowledges several methodological limitations. First, the biographical record is fragmented and often shaped by retrospective agendas, making definitive conclusions about institutional affiliation difficult. Second, attribution problems within manuscript traditions complicate the reconstruction of Al-ʿIzz's intellectual corpus. To mitigate these challenges, the study applies methodological safeguards through strict corpus delimitation and doctrinal prioritization. Only texts that are widely accepted as authentic are treated as primary evidence, while disputed works are excluded from doctrinal reconstruction unless corroborated by internal consistency and external attribution analysis. In addition, biographical claims are treated probabilistically rather than conclusively, meaning that they are evaluated for plausibility and coherence rather than accepted at face value. These safeguards ensure that the study's findings remain grounded in verifiable textual evidence rather than in hagiographical accumulation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Al-ʿIzz ibn ʿAbd al-Salām

ʿIzz al-Dīn ʿAbd Al-ʿAzīz ibn ʿAbd al-Salām ibn Abī al-Qāsim al-Salamī, known by Abū Muḥammad and his title Al-ʿIzz ibn ʿAbd al-Salām (This is the name we will use in the article),[1] was a renowned scholar and a leading jurist of the Shāfiʿī school of Islamic jurisprudence. He was born in Damascus in 577 or 578 AH (1181 or 1182 CE)[2] to a family of Maghrebi origin and passed away in Cairo in 660 AH (1262 CE) at the age of eighty-three. His titles, such as Sulṭān of the Scholars and Seller of Princes,[3] attest to his significant religious and political stature in his time. Al-ʿIzz was born of Moroccan origins, and grew up in Damascus, until he left for Cairo, where he died and was buried. Al-ʿAsnawī (d. 772 AH / 1370 AD) explained this in the beginning of his translation of it, when he said: "Moroccan in origin,

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[1] The practice of using religious titles to honor individuals was prevalent in medieval Islamic society. These titles, often derived from the term "al-Dīn" (meaning "of the religion"), were bestowed upon scholars, jurists, and other prominent figures as a mark of respect and recognition for their contributions to Islamic scholarship and piety. One notable example is ʿIzz al-Dīn 'Abd al-Salām, a renowned scholar and jurist during the Ayyubid era. His title, ʿIzz al-Dīn, signifies his devotion to Islam and his unwavering commitment to upholding Islamic law and tradition. However, the use of religious titles was not without its critics. Some scholars, particularly during the period of Turkish hegemony in the Islamic world, expressed concerns about the potential for these titles to promote pride and self-aggrandizement, contradicting the Islamic principle of humility and reliance on God's guidance. Imām al-Nawawī, a prominent Shāfiʿī scholar of the 13th century, is reported to have said, "I do not permit anyone to call me 'Muḥyī al-Dīn' (Reviver of the Religion)". This statement reflects his disapproval of titles that could be interpreted as self-promotion or glorification. See in Ibn al-Hājj (1995, pp. 127–128).

[2] See about the slight difference in determining the year of his birth in Ibn Kathīr (2004, p. 799), Al-Subkī (1964, p. 209), and Al-Kutbī (1974, p. 350).

[3] Al-Subkī (d. 771 AH/1370 AD) narrated in his biography of Al-ʿIzz that his student Sheikh al-Islam Ibn Daqīq al-ʿĪd (d. 702 AH/1302 AD) was the one who called him the Sultan of the Scholars. This can be seen in Al-Subkī (1964, p. 209), and Al-ʿAsnawī (1987, p. 84).

Damascene in birth, Egyptian in residence and death" (Al-`Asnawī, 1987, p. 84).

Al-'Izz was prominent scholar and a leading jurist of the Shāfi'ī school of Islamic jurisprudence,[4] he was renowned for his unwavering adherence to truth and his harsh demeanour in his dealings with kings and princes.[5] Despite his reputation for eloquence, his occasional poetry (Al-`Asnawī, 1987, p. 84; Al-Kutbī, 1974, p. 351; Ibn Kathīr, 2004, p. 800), and his knowledge of anecdotes, he achieved great eminence in knowledge, jurisprudence, and issuing legal opinions (Al-`Asnawī, 1987, p. 84; Al-Subkī, 1964, p. 214). He was also known for his piety and his asceticism. He served as the chief jurist of Damascus until he was dismissed by Sulṭān al-Ashraf Mūsā (d. 635 H/1237 CE) and imprisoned in his house after a brief disagreement between them. He was then released, and subsequently appointed as the imam of the Umayyad Mosque in Damascus in 637 H/1239 CE (Al-Maqrīzī, 1997, p. 404), during the reign of Sulṭān al-Ṣāliḥ `Ismā'īl (d. 648 H/1251 CE), the ruler of Damascus. However, al-Ṣāliḥ `Ismā'īl dismissed him from this position a year later, ordered his imprisonment, and confined him to his house. He was then taken prisoner by al-Ṣāliḥ `Ismā'īl's Military headquarters in Palestine for a while,[6] following al-'Izz denunciation of al-Ṣāliḥ `Ismā'īl's alliance

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[4] His Ash'arism is attested to by what was reported about him in the Council for the Defence of the Ash'arī Doctrine before the Ayyubid King Mūsā al-Ashraf in Damascus before his departure to Egypt. The news of the council was reported in full from his son, Sheikh Sharaf al-Dīn `Abd Al-Latīf Ibn al-'Izz (`Abd al-Salām, 1987; Al-Subkī, 1964, p. 218).

[5] One of the types of evidence of this in him is that one day he was harsh to King al-Ṣāliḥ Najm al-Dīn Al-Ayyūbī in Egypt, and when he left, he was told: "Aren't you afraid that he would harm you?" He said: "I invoked the greatness of God Almighty, and he became in front of me more despicable than a cat" (Al-`Asnawī, 1987, p. 84). See also Al-Suyūtī (1967, p. 315) and Al-Subkī (1964, p. 212).

[6] See in the tradition of `Abd al-Latīf Ibn al-'Izz in Al-Subkī (1964, pp. 244–245).

with the Crusaders.[7] After the victory of King al-Ṣāliḥ Najm al-Dīn over al-Ṣāliḥ `Ismāʻīl and the Franks, al-ʻIzz traveled to Egypt.[8] There, he was met by Sulṭān al-Ṣāliḥ Najm al-Dīn al-Ayyūbī (d. 647 H/1249 CE), who honored him, appointed him as the imam of the Mosque of `Amr ibn al-ʻĀss (the Old Mosque) and as the chief judge.[9] Al-ʻIzz eventually relinquished these positions after repeatedly resigning (Al-Kutbī, 1974, p. 351; Al-Maqrīzī, 1997, p. 416; Al-Subkī, 1964, p. 210; Ibn Kathīr, 2004, p. 800), devoting himself to teaching at the Ṣāliḥiyyah School in Cairo until his death (Al-`Asnawī, 1987, pp. 84–85; Al-Maqrīzī, 1997, p. 545). It was narrated that al-ʻIzz Ibn `Abd al-Salām was the first to teach interpretation in Egypt (Al-Suyūtī, 1967, p. 315).

Al-ʻIzz reached a high status at the end of his life, and his influence among the public was great, testifying to his important

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[7] See Al-Kutbī (1974, p. 351), Ibn Kathīr (2004, p. 799), Al-Subkī (1964, p. 210), Al-Maqrīzī (1997, p. 107), and he stated in detail the news of what happened: "al-Sāliḥ `Ismāʻīl allowed the Franks to enter Damascus and buy weapons, and they increased their purchase of weapons and war machines from the people of Damascus, but the Muslims denied that, and the religious scholars among them went to the scholars and asked them for a fatwa. Sheikh `Izz al-Dīn Ibn `Abd al-Salām prohibited the sale of weapons to the Franks, and interrupted the sermon in the Damascus Mosque to pray for al-Sāliḥ `Ismāʻīl, and began to pray in the sermon with a supplication of his own: "O God, for this nation is a coming of age, in which you honor your saints, humiliate your enemies, in which it works in obedience to you, and in which disobedience to you is forbidden". And the people were busy praying, and al-Ṣāliḥ was absent from Damascus, so he wrote about that, and he returned his letter by removing Ibn `Abd al-Salām from preaching and arresting him and Sheikh Abū `Amr Ibn al-Hājib, because he had denounced them, so they were arrested. Then when al-Ṣāleh arrived, he released them, and forced Ibn `Abd al-Salām to remain with him. His home, not to give fatwas, and not to meet with anyone at all".

[8] Some of them mentioned that he left for Egypt with Ibn al-Hājib after the owner of Damascus released them (Al-Dhahabī, 2002, p. 16).

[9] His arrival in Egypt coincided with the death of the Egyptian judge; Sulṭān al-Ṣāliḥ al-Ayyubid (d. 647 AH / 1249 AD) appointed him as judge of Egypt and Upper Egypt and a preacher in the `Amr Ibn al-ʻĀss Mosque. See Al-Kutbī (1974, p. 351), Ibn Kathīr (2004, p. 800), Al-Subkī (1964, p. 210), Al-Maqrīzī (1997, p. 411), and he mentioned that his arrival in Egypt was on the nineteenth Sunday of Rabī` al-Awwal in the year 639 AH.

position in his time,[10] and the story of the sale of the Mamluk princes on his orders is evidence of his high status and the strength of his influence in the private and public. The news of his sale to the Mamluks stated that al-ʻIzz Ibn ʻAbd al-Salām refused, after assuming the judiciary in Egypt, to allow the Mamluks to assume general mandates, emirates, and major positions because they were slaves who were bought by Sulṭān Najm al-Dīn Ayyūb, and then he ordered them to do so without freeing them. They were under the rule of slaves and were not permitted to have guardianship over free people. He issued his fatwa prohibiting their guardianship. Which ultimately forced the Sulṭān to accept his fatwa and offer the Mamluks at a public auction to emancipate them for sale, and al-ʻIzz was the one who disposed of that matter (Al-Subkī, 1964, pp. 216–217; Al-Zuḥaylī, 1992, pp. 179–182).

It is not unlikely that his fame and the grandeur he enjoyed in Egypt brought him together with Sufis and their ways in many meetings and contexts that brought together scholars of Islamic law and Sufism, at a time when these orders were spreading, and in a place saturated with Sufi thought and practices; to the point that it was said that the seventh century AH in Egypt was the century of Sufism. This was supported by researchers in the history of Islamic Sufism in Egypt, as they pointed to the spread of Sufism in its practical sense during the seventh century AH corresponding to the thirteenth century AD in it, through the emergence and prosperity of the largest Egyptian Sufi orders, which are: al-Desūqiyyah, al-Badawiyyah, and al-Shādhiliyyah, in addition to strengthening the status of the two

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[10] This is attested to by the words of Sultān al-Zāhir Bībars (d. 676 AH / 1277 AD) when he received the news of al-ʻIzz's death: "My kingship was not settled until now, for if he had ordered the people regarding me to do what he wanted, they would hasten to obey his order" (Al-ʻAsnawī, 1987, p. 85; Al-ʻImād Al-Ḥanbalī, 1991, p. 524).

orders: Qādiriyyah and Rifāʿiyyah (Al-Najjār, 1983, pp. 98–99; Hofer, 2022, pp. 2–3).

Al-ʿIzz and Sufism: An Examination from His Biography

Biographers have recounted that al-ʿIzz actively participated in Sufi rituals, attending their gatherings for Dhikr (remembrance) and Samāʿ (listening to Dhiker) (Ibn Kathīr, 2004, p. 800), and even joining them in their dancing (Al-Dhahabī, 2002, p. 17; Al-Kutbī, 1974, p. 351; Al-Shāzlī Al-Tūnisī, 1985, p. 69). These engagements have led many to classify him as a Sufi, a notion further reinforced by accounts attributing to him the authorization to participate in Sufi gatherings and circles. To provide a coherent framework for these biographical claims, it is essential to identify the specific Sufi orders with which he was linked: primarily the Suhrawardiyya during his Syrian years and the Shādhiliyya following his move to Egypt.

The evidence supporting al-ʿIzz's connection to Sufism can be categorized into two distinct periods:

1. The Syrian Period (61 years): This is the earlier and longer phase, spanning 61 years. It chronicles al-ʿIzz's interactions with Sufi figures from Damascus, as well as prominent Sufis who visited the city during his time. This period was briefly interrupted by a few months spent in Baghdad (Al-ʿAsnawī, 1987, p. 84; Ali, 1978, pp. 60–63).

2. **The Egyptian Period (22 years):** This is the later and shorter phase, lasting 22 years. It documents al-ʿIzz's relationships and connections with Sufi shaykhs in Egypt.

During his time in Syria, al-ʿIzz's Sūfī affiliation is documented by several sources. One notable account comes from al-Suyūtī (d. 911H/1505M), who mentions that Al-ʿĪzz "received the Sufi cloak from Shihāb al-Dīn al-Suhrawardī" (d. 632H/1234M) (Ali, 1978, p. 56; Al-Subkī, 1964, p. 214). He also reportedly recited the *Qushayriyah*

treatise in al-Suhrawardī's presence (Al-Subkī, 1964, p. 214),[11] and exhibited miraculous abilities (Al-Suyūtī, 1967, p. 315). This information, if accurate, suggests a strong connection between Al-ʿIzz and the Suhrawardiyya Sufi order.[12] It is important to note that al-Suyūtī's account is derived from the works of Qādī ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Hakkārī (d. 727H/1326M), who composed a biography of Al-ʿĪzz. He is the judge ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz Ibn Aḥmad al-Hakkārī, the Egyptian Kurd, the Shafiʿī, known as Ibn Khatīb al-Ashmūnīn. He was a distinguished scholar and wrote many books (Al-ʿAsqalānī, 1930, pp. 368–369). Al-Suyūtī may have accessed this information directly from al-Hakkārī's writings or through intermediaries, such as Taqī al-Dīn al-Subkī (d. 771H/1371M) in his *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfiʿiyyah al-Kubrā*. We believe the latter scenario is more likely.

Supporting Evidence of al-ʿĪzz's Encounter with al-Suhrawardī

Further evidence of al-ʿĪzz's connection to al-Suhrawardī comes from a historical account of al-ʿĪzz's visit to Damascus as an envoy from Baghdad to King al-Ashraf Mūsā. During this time, Al-ʿĪzz reportedly met with scholars in Damascus, including al-Suhrawardī.[13] This encounter could have occurred during this visit or earlier, in 597H/1201M when al-ʿĪzz traveled to Baghdad in pursuit of knowledge. The latter possibility seems more probable. It seems that

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[11] *Al-Risālah al-Qushayriyyah* is a work by the Sufi sheikh ʿAbd al-Karīm Ibn Hawāzin al-Qushayrī (d. 465 AH/2107 AD), and its material is biographies of major Sufis in the first Islamic centuries and Sufi narratives about the most important Islamic Sufi concepts (Ṭāher, 2010, p. 34).

[12] The Suhrawardī Order: One of the Sunni Sufi orders founded by its sheikh Shihāb al-Dīn ʿOmar Ibn Muḥammad Ibn ʿAbdullāh al-Shāfiʿī al-Suhrawardī (d. 632 AH/1234 AD), which appeared in Baghdad, then spread in Iraq, Iran, and India. It focused on work and benefit for the public good (Al-ʿAzzāwī, 1965).

[13] See the news of the arrival of Shihāb al-Dīn ʿOmar al-Suhrawardī (d. 632 AH/1234 AD) in Damascus in Al-Dhahabī (Al-Dhahabī, 1996, p. 376).

al-'Izz traveled there to seek knowledge, when he was more than twenty years old at the time (Al-Dhahabī, 2002, p. 16).

During his time in Egypt, al-'Izz's Sufi affiliations were evident in several ways. Some biographical sources attributed miraculous powers (karāmāt) to him, indicating his piety and devotion, and associating him with Sufi saints (Al-Suyūtī, 1967, p. 315). One such account relates to the Battle of Mansura (648H/1250M), which pitted the Crusaders led by King Louis IX of France against the Ayyubid army under the command of Amir Fakhr al-Dīn Yūsuf. The battle resulted in a decisive Ayyubid victory, halting the Seventh Crusade and hastening the Crusaders' departure from Egypt. Al-'Izz is credited with a miracle that is said to have contributed to the victory at Mansura. As the Crusaders arrived by ship and gained an advantage over the Muslims on the Nile, Al-'Izz, witnessing the Crusaders' dominance, invoked the wind with his voice, saying, "O wind, take them!" He repeated this plea several times, and the wind turned against the Crusaders' ships, breaking them and drowning many of them. The Egyptians emerged victorious, and one of the Muslims exclaimed, "Praise be to God who has shown us in the community of Muḥammad- peace be upon him- a man to whom He has subjugated the wind" (Ali, 1978, pp. 57–59; Al-Subkī, 1964, p. 216). This account portrays Al-'Izz as a figure possessing miraculous powers, akin to prominent Sufi saints,[14] who are often depicted in Sufi narratives in this manner.[15]

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[14] Karāmah and its plural Karāmāt are every extraordinary matter that is not associated with a prophetic call or a prophetic challenge, and it appears at the hands of God's saints out of honor for them and a statement of their status before Him. See the concept of karāmah in the Islamic heritage in Gardet (2005) and Aigle (1995). The concept of Karāmāt in the Sufi heritage, as it was permitted by the Sufis in their sheikhs and saints regardless of their classes and paths, is considered in Aigle (1992).
[15] The above supplication of glory embodies a form of supernatural power and dignity that changes the course of reality, bringing about a revolution in it. The

It is also mentioned in Al-'Izz's translation that he used to attend the sessions of the Sufi Sheikh Abū al-Hasan ʿAlī ibn ʿAbd Allah al-Shādhilī (d. 656 AH/1258 CE) in Egypt (Al-Najjār, 1983, pp. 124–154), and that he revered him and took some of his Sufi knowledge from him,[16] which reinforces Al-'Izz's connection to the Egyptian Sufi orders prevalent in his time. There is a Sufi text that carries a story about al- 'Izz's connection to al- Shādhilī, the founder of the Shādhiliyyah order in Egypt, which was reported by the Sufi Shādhilī ʿAbd al-Wahhāb al-Shaʿrānī (d. 973 AH/1565 CE) in al- Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā, which states: "And Sheikh 'Izz al-Dīn ibn ʿAbd al-Salām- may God be pleased with him- used to say after meeting Sheikh Abū al-Hasan al- Shādhilī and handing him over to the people: One of the greatest proofs that the Sufis have settled on the greatest foundation of religion is what happens in their hands of miracles and wonders, and nothing of this happens to a jurist except if he follows their path as is evident, and Sheikh 'Izz al-Dīn- may God be pleased with him- used to deny the people before that and say: Do we have a way other than the Book and the Sunnah? So, when he tasted their taste and cut the iron chain with a paper booklet, he began to praise them all the praise, and when the scholars and scholars gathered at the battle of the Franks in al-Mansoura, near the port of Damietta, Sheikh 'Izz al-Dīn sat down. Makīn al-Dīn al-Asmar, and Sheikh Taqī al-Dīn ibn Daqīq al-ʿīd and their like, and they read to them The Treatise of al-Qushayrī, and each one began to speak when Sheikh Abū al-Hasan al- Shādhilī- may God be pleased with him- came, they said to him: We want you to hear something from the meanings of this speech, He said: You are the scholars of Islam and the elders of the time, and you have spoken,

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impact of supplications on the heritage of Sufism and its connection to their literature of miracles is examined by Al-Nabhānī (2021).

[16] See Al-Suyūtī (1967, p. 315). He mentioned his saying: "He used to attend Sheikh Abū al-Hasan al-Shādhilī, and he would listen to his words in truth, and venerate them".

so there is no place for my speech like it, they said to him: Speak, so he praised God and praised him, and he began to speak, so Sheikh 'Izz al-Dīn shouted from inside the tent, and came out shouting at the top of his voice: Come to this speech that is close to God Almighty and listen to it" (Al-Shaʿrānī, 2005, p. 29).

The latter text indicates al-'Izz's meeting with al-Shādhilī, and his acknowledgment of the miracles of Sufism with his own eyes, and it also indicates that he was a denier of Sufism before tasting their literature and reading their books and turning to praise them. This contradicts the story of his wearing the khirqah at the hands of al-Suhrawardī during the Shami period, as well as his acknowledgment of Sufi miracles calls for a reading of his texts to prove that. As for what was mentioned in the context of the latter text of the gathering of a group of Shādhilī saints such as Abū al-Hasan al-Shādhilī and Makīn al-Dīn al-Asmar, both of whom are among the greatest Shaykhs of the Shādhiliyyah order, in the tent of the Egyptian army, this is in line with the custom of the great shaykhs of the orders and scholars of the Sharīʿah in encouraging the soldiers and spreading the spiritual fighting spirit in their souls; In order to support the Muslims against their enemy, it is also evident from al-Shādhilī's speech and al-'Izz's reaction after hearing it and inviting the soldiers to hear it that al-Shādhilī did a good job in his speech; So al-'Izz resorted to spreading and broadcasting it. It is known that al- Shādhilī at that time had reached a very old age, and that his eyesight had failed, but that did not prevent him from supporting the army, and the like of him is able to ignite the souls of the soldiers and supply them with a spiritual talk that inspires them with enthusiasm and the desire to fight, which is what the scholars demand, headed by al-'Izz. It is worth noting the mention of al-'Izz's reading of the Qushayrī epistle, which is an old Sufi composition that connects Sufism and its knowledge to the Sharīʿah and its teachings, and this indicates the connection between

scholars and Sufis in that era in which Sufi orders spread and scholars and jurists enjoyed a high status among the general public and the elite.

Collectively, these biographical accounts imply that al-ʿIzz maintained a nuanced, dualistic relationship with Sufism- one characterized by both intellectual affinity and professional scepticism. While he actively participated in Sufi circles and defended the spiritual "tasting" (dhawq) of eminent figures like al-Suhrawardī and al-Shādhilī, his background as a rigorous jurist suggests he was likely a "denier" of practices he viewed as being outside the Book and Sunnah. The tension between his reported formal affiliation (the khirqah) and his initial scepticism reveals a personality that sought to reconcile spiritual introspection with juristic discipline, ultimately positioning Sufism as a valid "foundation of religion" only when it aligned with legal orthodoxy.

Perhaps the most notable chapter on Sufism is al-ʿIzz al-Subkī (d. 771 AH/1371 AD) in his translation of it, in which he said: "Sheikh ʿIzz al-Dīn had the upper hand in Sufism, and his writings confirm that" (Al-Subkī, 1964, p. 215), which is what the next papers in the article monitor.

Al-ʿIzz and the Issue of Writing about Sufism

Al-ʿIzz left behind numerous works that attest to his knowledge, jurisprudence, and expertise in issuing fatwas. His biographers have documented his writings, which are distributed among the sciences of Tafsīr (Qur'anic exegesis), ḥadīth (narration of the Prophet's sayings), sīrah (prophetic biography), Tawḥīd (Monotheism), Shāfiʿī jurisprudence, ʿUsūl al-Fiqh (principles of jurisprudence), Fatwas, Ethics, and Virtues. Some of his books are universally accepted and

trusted, while others have been questioned as to their authenticity.[17] It is evident from the sources of his biography that the disagreement over the attribution of some of his books also extends to books on Sufism, which makes his authorship of works in Sufism uncertain, preventing us from relying on what has been attributed to him of books in Sufism as evidence of his connection to Sufism. This phenomenon of name confusion was common in medieval scholarly circles, often arising from the repetition of honorary titles (Alqāb) and the similarity of patronymics. In this specific context, the challenges of manuscript transmission and the lack of standardized indices frequently led to the conflation of al-ʿIzz with contemporaries bearing similar names. Perhaps one of the most prominent Sufi works attributed to al-ʿIzz is the book *Hall al-Rumūz wa Mafātīḥ al-Kunūz* (Solving the Symbols and Keys to the Treasures), which is an edited and printed book. In it, its real author, ʿIzz al-Dīn ibn ʿAbd al-Salām ibn Ghānem al-Maqdisī (d. 678 AH/1279 CE), provides an explanation of some of the obscure Sufi terms (Ibn ʿAbd al-Salām, 2011). Many people were misled into believing that it was written by Ibn ʿAbd al-Salām due to the similarity of their names. It seems that al-Subkī (d. 771 AH/1371 CE) may have mistaken it for Ibn ʿAbd al-Salām's when he said: "Sheikh ʿIzz al-Dīn had a remarkable hand in Sufism, and his works are a testament to that" (Al-Subkī, 1964, p. 215). This phenomenon of name confusion was common in medieval scholarly circles, exacerbated by the challenges of manuscript transmission and

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[17] Including, for example, but not limited to, books whose attribution to al-ʿIzz was confused due to a similarity between him and their authors, the following books: *Kaff al-ʿIshkālāt ʿan baʿd al-ʿĀyāt*, which is a verified letter printed for someone else; *Farāʾid al-Fawāʾid watʿārud al-Qawlqyn Limujtahidin Wāḥid*, and he is a published verifier for others; *al-ʿImād Fī Mwārīth al-ʿibād*, which is manuscript; *Nukhbat al-ʿArabiyyah Fī Alfāz al-Ājrūmiyyah*, and it is attributed to him, even though Al-ʿIzz died more than ten years before the birth of Ibn Ājrūm; *Kashf al-ʿAsrār ʿan Hukm al-Ṭuyūr wa-al-ʿAzhār*, a published verified book (Al-Thubaytī, 2010, pp. 40–41; Al-Zuḥaylī, 1992, p. 149).

the use of popular titles like ʿIzz al-Dīn. This error likely led later scholars, such as al-Subkī, to mistakenly claim that al-ʿIzz's writings confirmed his superior knowledge of Sufism. This error likely led later scholars, such as al-Subkī, to mistakenly claim that al-ʿIzz's writings confirmed his superior knowledge of Sufism.

The very debate surrounding the attribution of Sufi texts to Ibn ʿAbd al-Salām is sufficient to refute such claims. A figure as renowned as he, both among the general public and scholars, should not have fallen into such confusion and contradictions. Methodologically, relying on these misattributed texts poses a significant risk; it distorts contemporary interpretive frameworks and obscures the true intellectual boundaries al-ʿIzz established in his legal works. Moreover, the reliance of some on the story of the khirqah (Sufi robe) bestowed by Suhrawardī is not a valid proof of Ibn ʿAbd al-Salām's Sufism. There is no confirmed connection between him and the Suhrawardiyya order that would substantiate such a claim. It is more likely that he wore the khirqah during his youth during his early studies in Damascus, simply to participate in the study circles held in the mosque, where Sufism enjoyed a presence and a following. As Suhrawardī himself explained, wearing the khirqah takes two forms: the khirqah of intention, which is for the true seeker, and the khirqah of blessing, which is for the imitator, not the seeker (Al-Suhrawardī, 2006, pp. 112–113). It is more probable that Ibn ʿAbd al-Salām wore the khirqah for blessing, otherwise he would have continued to wear it and maintain his affiliation, which has not been proven. The historical implication of this persistent debate reveals the later Sufi communities' desire to associate a pillar of the Sharīʿah like al-ʿIzz with their tradition. By claiming such a prestigious jurist, these communities sought legitimation for an orthodox, juristically approved Taṣawwuf. Furthermore, his reported receiving of the khirqah from al-Suhrawardī is more probably the less formal khirqah

of blessing, which does not imply the lasting affiliation of the khirqah of intention.

In summary, the misattribution of texts and the symbolic nature of the *Khirqah* suggest that while al-ʿIzz respected the spiritual path, he did not necessarily adopt the formal identity of a Sufi author or initiate as later hagiographers claimed.

Al-ʿIzz and Sufism in His Established Texts

The most precise understanding of al-ʿIzz's position is gleaned from his authenticated doctrinal works, which establish the Sharīʿah as the non-negotiable criterion for judging all Sufi concepts and practices. This rigorous, text-based assessment serves as the corrective lens through which to evaluate the often-contradictory biographical accounts.

An examination of the stance of jurists towards Sufism and the image of Sufism in their Sunni perspective can be gleaned from the legal texts included in the principles of jurisprudence. This can be observed in a few of al-ʿIzz Uşūl texts dealing with the jurisprudence of benefits and harms, including his statement in the *Qawāʾid al-Sughrā* (Minor Rules) in the section on balancing benefits and harms: "The sanctity of the prophets is more emphatic than the sanctity of the saints" (Ibn ʿAbd al-Salām, 1996, p. 74). This theoretical framework provides a vital context for the biographical accounts of al-ʿIzz's encounters with figures like al-Suhrawardī; it suggests that while he may have sought their company for spiritual "barakah," he remained dogmatically committed to the primacy of Prophetic law over any saintly inspiration. This statement indicates that the sanctity of the saints falls under the sanctity of the prophets. This statement confirms his acceptance of the concept of saints (Awliyāʾ). Crucially, however, it sets a juristic boundary: any text or personal Ijtihād (independent legal reasoning) associated with a saint must be negated if it conflicts with a prophetic text.

Sanctity is what cannot be violated in terms of honor, right, company, or the like. The statement, therefore, refers to al-ʿIzz`s acceptance of the sanctity of the saints, which is undoubtedly the position of the majority of Sunni scholars who believe in their miracles and their high status after the prophets (Al-Ṭaḥāwī, 1995, pp. 30–31; Ibn Abī al-ʿIzz al-Dimashqī, 1987, pp. 746–747). However, the statement comes in the context of balancing benefits and harms, so it comes to negate the sanctity of the saints if it conflicts with the sanctity of the prophets. If what is associated with the saint from a text or ijtihad conflicts with a prophetic text, it is not permissible to follow it. The prophetic Sunnah is the criterion for judging what the saints approve in terms of behaviours. Thus, al-ʿIzz`s rule has a connection with Sufism through its acceptance of what is mentioned in Sufi thought and texts of words and deeds that conform to Sharia, and its rejection of what contradicts it. This is the position of the majority of Sunni jurists, including Ibn ʿAbd al-Salām. What can be inferred from the latter text is that al-ʿIzz accepts Sufism that is consistent with Sharīʿah, which is in line with his acceptance of *al-Risālah al-Qushayriyyah*, one of the early Sufi texts that expresses Sufism in agreement with the Qur'an and Sunnah.

Similarly, he acknowledges miraculous manifestations (Karāmāt). Yet, he classifies them as a temptation (Fitnah) for the recipient. He warns that preoccupation with these honors, rather than God, can lead to deviation. He further categorizes the Mystics (al-ʿĀrifūn) as receiving karāmāt, placing them in an intermediate rank: better than the workers (al-ʿIbād) but below the prophets. This scholarly categorization sheds light on a significant tension: while biographers attribute to him the supernatural "subjugation of the wind" at Manṣūrah, his own texts reveal a profound caution toward such events, viewing them as potential distractions from the Divine. His use of non-Sufi terminology in this classification is consistent with

his broader strategy of incorporating orthodox spiritual concepts into a rigorous, Sharīʿah-based ethical framework. The book *Shajrat al-Maʾārif wal-ʾAḥwāl wa-Sāliḥ al-ʾAqwāl wa-ʾAlʾaʾmāl* are among the works of al-ʿIzz that deal with a wide range of benefits and morals required in Islam, which a Muslim is created to follow the divine approach in his life. A subsequent book was printed with it entitled The Tree by ʿIzz al-Dīn ibn ʿAbd al-Salām ibn Aḥmad ibn Ghānem al-Maqdisī (d. 678 AH / 1279 AD), a book with Sufi material that may have confused the biographers who attributed to Al-ʿIzz a large number of works in Sufism due to the similarity of their names.

In the introduction to the *Shajarat al-Maʾārif* by al-ʿIzz, in the chapter on the causes of virtues, there is a general statement about the miracles, in which it says: "The miracles: such as uncovering the unseen and breaking customs, and they are a temptation for those who follow them. Whoever stands with them will be cut off due to his preoccupation with them from his Master, and whoever turns away from them by turning to God will be exalted due to his preoccupation with his Master" (Ibn ʿAbd al-Salām, 2003, p. 18). The meticulousness of his textual treatment of miracles serves to balance the hagiographical zeal of later biographers; it indicates that for al-ʿIzz, the "miracle" of the heart—steadfastness in law—far outweighed the "miracle" of breaking physical norms. The meaning of what al-ʿIzz mentioned indicates his recognition of the miracles first, then dividing them into two forms: revealing the unseen and knowing what will happen in the future on the one hand and performing supernatural miracles of human nature on the other hand. However, he also sees them as a test for those in whom they are combined, so it is not evidence for him. On the dignity of its owner. Rather, it is a deep examination from the Lord, in order to test his morals and his relationship with his Lord and the creatures through it and after it. Glory classifies the people of dignity into two types: a type that does

not distract or tempt them from their Lord, but directs them to Him, and thus attains exaltation from Him, and a type that He has given priority to. Among those who are distracted by honors from their Lord; He is deceived by her and falls into her temptation, and she falls for him. Such a brief treatment of the issue of miracles raises before us a question about al-ʿIzz's position on the people of miracles among the great Sufis. It was previously mentioned that he communicated with some of them, and that he is considered one of them according to what was mentioned in his written biography by some of those who recorded his stories, as they attributed miracles to him, so his words fall here. He ensured that he reminded himself and directed others towards rising above arrogance and being infatuated with dignity that might distract them from absolute submission to the Lord. So that they may humbly draw closer to Him more and more.

In another chapter titled "On the Manner of Preferring" in his book *Shajarat al-Maʿārif*, Ibn ʿAbd al-Salām states: "Whoever excels over all creation in every one of these causes is the best of all creation and the most beloved to the Creator. Each of these causes has ranks, some of which are better than others. Thus, the prophets are ranked closely together, as are the messengers, the ʿārifūn (Mystics), the ascetics (Zāhidūn) and the devout (ʿibād), and those of noble dispositions and sound morals. Prophethood and messenger ship are the best of these causes, the messengers are better than the prophets, the prophets are better than the knowers, the knowers are better than the workers, and the workers vary in degree according to their works and states. Similarly, the ranks of inspirations, karāmāt (miraculous manifestations), and otherworldly degrees are ranked. And no matter how much the servants differ in these causes and attributes" (Ibn ʿAbd al-Salām, 2003, pp. 19–20). Ibn ʿAbd al-Salām's classification of the ranks of excellence based on one's closeness to God indicates his acknowledgment of the awliyā` (saints), whom he refers to as the

ʿārifūn (Mystics). He does not use any Sufi terminology in his classification, but rather places the knowers (i.e., the awliyāʾ) in an intermediate rank between the prophets, who are above them, and the workers, who are below them. He considers them to be the recipients of karāmāt, whose ranks vary according to the causes and attributes mentioned.

Within the folds of the book al-ʿIzz, *Shajarat al-Maʿārif*, which is in its entirety an explanation of the morals and conditions of a Muslim in words and deeds, there is no conclusive evidence to support his affiliation with Sufi thought, even though the material of his book provides theoretical and practical guidance on how to imitate God's character in people's conditions, speech, and behavior.

In his seminal work on Sunni legal principles, *al-Qawāʿid al-Kubrā* (The Major Principles), Al-ʿIzz presents a clear stance against certain Sufi practices that he deems contrary to Islamic law.[18] He vehemently criticizes the Sufi concept of Samāʿ (spiritual audition), particularly when it involves elements such as dancing and clapping, which he considers to be impermissible innovations. He says regarding the meaning of this prohibition: "As for dancing and clapping, they are signs of frivolity and recklessness, akin to the behaviour of women. None but a reckless or deceitful person would engage in such acts. How can one dance rhythmically to the melodies of singing when one's mind is lost and one's heart is absent? The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, 'The best of centuries is my century, then those who follow them, then those who follow them'. None of those who are to be emulated engaged in such behaviour. Rather, the devil has taken hold of a people who believe that their ecstasy during samāʿ is connected to God Almighty. They have indeed gone too far in their claims and have lied about what they assert..." (Ibn ʿAbd al-Salām,

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[18] For a discussion of the Sufi concept of Samāʿand its origins, see Avery (Avery, 2004, pp. 1–3).

2000, pp. 357–358). Al-ʿIzz further condemns clapping and dancing during Samāʿ rituals, denouncing the involvement of women and singers, and considering it a sin prohibited by Islamic law (Ibn ʿAbd al-Salām, 2000, pp. 358–359). Despite his criticism of certain aspects of Samāʿ, Al-ʿIzz does not condemn it entirely. He permits Samāʿ that does not violate Islamic principles, considering it permissible and indicative of states of hope, fear, and piety towards God (Ibn ʿAbd al-Salām, 2000, p. 360). Al-ʿIzz's classification of Samāʿ into permissible and impermissible categories reflects his approach to Sufism. He rejects any Sufi practices that contradict Islamic law and the authority of the Qurʾān and Sunnah, but he accepts those that align with them. Ultimately, there is a clear continuity between al-ʿIzz's textual rigor and his historical reputation as a reformer. His established texts function as the "limit" to his biographical persona. They confirm that his engagement with the Shādhiliyya or Suhrawardiyya was never a surrender of his juristic faculty, but a deliberate attempt to infuse the spiritual life of the community with scriptural integrity.

A critical examination of ibn ʿAbd al-Salām's intellectual trajectory and historical accounts reveals a nuanced relationship with contemporary Sufi orders- one characterized by both principled engagement and measured critique. While he maintained cordial ties with prominent Egyptian Sufi figures, whose sermons he reportedly attended with reverence- his stance was far from uncritical. As a jurist deeply committed to scriptural orthodoxy, Ibn ʿAbd al-Salām distinguished between Sufism's ethically oriented, ascetic dimensions and certain ritualistic practices that contravened Qurʾānic and Prophetic norms. Historical sources document his disapproval of ecstatic musical assemblies (Samāʿ) and exaggerated claims of mystical charismata (Karāmāt), which he regarded as potential deviations from Sunni orthopraxy.

Nevertheless, his intellectual exchanges with Sufi luminaries underscore a deliberate effort to bridge juristic rigor and spiritual introspection. Thus, Ibn ʿAbd al-Salām emerges as a paradigmatic reformer who navigated Sufism with discursive selectivity: rejecting antinomian excesses while respecting its orthodox manifestations. This dialectical approach reflects the broader Ayyubid-Mamluk zeitgeist, where ʿUlamā` and Sufis often coexisted within a framework of mutual, though cautious, recognition.

Al-ʿIzz's classification of Samāʿ into permissible and impermissible categories perfectly reflects his approach to Taṣawwuf: rejection of any practice that contradicts the Qur'ān and Sunnah, and acceptance of those that align with them. This textual evidence provides the necessary doctrinal rigor to evaluate the biographical claims, confirming that while he engaged with Sufi figures, his juristic commitment to scriptural orthodoxy was paramount. He thus emerges as a paradigmatic reformer who rejected antinomian excesses while respecting orthodox manifestations.

CONCLUSION

The analysis successfully synthesizes the findings across the biographical and textual evidence to provide a definitive picture of al-ʿIzz ibn ʿAbd al-Salām's relationship with Sufism.

This study concludes that while there is no definitive evidence to confirm that al-ʿIzz was a formal Sufi adherent, an initiate of a particular order, or that he underwent a formal Sufi experience involving mystical states (*aḥwāl*), he was clearly not an opponent of Sufism. Instead, he represents a unique model of "Juristic-Sufi engagement" that characterized the Ayyūbid–Mamluk transition. By distinguishing between hagiographical embellishment and doctrinal evidence, this research demonstrates that the claims of formal affiliation stem primarily from later accounts and misattributed

writings, reflecting a persistent desire among later Sufi communities to claim legitimacy through association with a "pillar of the Sharīʿah." The major findings and their broader implications for Islamic intellectual history are as follows:

Synthesis of Findings

Al-ʿIzz maintained cordial ties with leading orthodox Sufi figures like al-Shādhilī and inclined toward the ethical and ascetic aspects of *Taṣawwuf*. However, his authenticated legal texts, particularly *al-Qawāʿid al-Kubrā*, definitively show that he acted as a doctrinal gatekeeper. He accepted the spiritual hierarchy of saints and *karāmāt* only when strictly subordinate to the Sharīʿah, while vehemently condemning ritualistic innovations like rhythmic dancing and clapping.

Implications for the Ayyūbid–Mamluk Period

This study highlights a broader historical phenomenon where the boundaries between legalism and mysticism were not rigid but negotiated. Al-ʿIzz's stance indicates that for the ʿUlamāʾ of this era, Sufism was acceptable only as an ethical extension of the Law, not as an independent source of authority. * Contribution to Scholarly Debates: By critically deconstructing the "Sufi persona" of al-ʿIzz, this article contributes to the ongoing debate in Islamic history regarding the "Sufization" of the legal class. It suggests that many attributions of Sufism to prominent jurists may be retroactive hagiographical constructions aimed at harmonizing the spiritual and legal domains of Islam.

The Value of Discursive Selectivity

The reflection on al-ʿIzz's life provides a crucial case study in "critical incorporation." It shows how a high-profile jurist could respect and engage with the spiritual path while using his legal

authority to police its boundaries. This distinction—between being a "practicing Sufi" and a "jurist who approves of Sufism"—is a vital nuance often overlooked in medieval hagiographies and contemporary scholarship alike.

In conclusion, Al-ʿIzz ibn ʿAbd al-Salām emerges as a paradigmatic reformer. His legacy is not one of formal Sufi initiation, but of a deliberate intellectual effort to bridge juristic rigor with spiritual introspection, ensuring that the "heart's path" never strayed from the "path of the Law."

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The author declares no conflicts of interest.

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