
CHAPTER SEVEN

The Martyrdom

THE PERIPETEIAS OF THE EXECUTION*

In the eager crowd of onlookers, contained by a strong peace-keeping force that did not make it easy for him to notice, Hallaj did not have only exultant enemies. There were spectators, sympathizers also, and the rather fanatic followers, expecting some rescuing miracle to give them the courage to overthrow a hated government. There were even friends, who could not be deterred from their love of him by the sickening carnage of an ignominious execution.

The Official Testimony of the Clerk of Court, Zanji: Its Lacunae

The next evening, at nightfall, Muhammad-b-‘Abd al-Samad made his way to Hamid’s convocation with foot policemen and pack mules. At that time the vizir notified his guard to escort the commissioner on horseback right to the police headquarters (west bank); and he issued the order to the official in charge of Hallaj’s guard to take him out of his dungeon and turn him over to M-b-‘Abd al-Samad’s escort. And this man told how, when he opened the gate for him and ordered him to leave, at a time when it was unusual for the gate to open, Hallaj asked him: “Who then is with the vizir?” “M-b-‘Abd al-Samad” [was the reply. Hallaj said:] “O God, we are done for.” Taken from prison, put on one of the pack mules, Hallaj was led away, jostled by grooms who ran alongside them (Ibn Dihya: “On the way the crowd formed into a mob; the commissioner, afraid of being killed [or: lest someone kill Hallaj] said: “this is not he, Hallaj; Hallaj is still in the *Dar al-Wazir*”); while the men of Hamid’s (mounted) guard escorted him [the commissioner] on horseback as far as the bridge; then they went away. And Muhammad-b-‘Abd al-Samad spent the night there, with his men stationed around the police headquarters.

And when morning came, on Tuesday, 24 *Dhu’l-Qa‘da* (309/922), the commissioner had Hallaj led out on the very esplanade of the police headquarters on the western end of the bridge of boats (fastened on the east bank opposite Bab al-Taḡ),

*From *Passion of al-Hallaj*, vol. 1, pp. 560, 569–73, 598–600, 605–7, 609–13, 628–31, and vol. 3, pp. 218–19

and ordered the executioner to scourge him. A large crowd formed whose numbers were considerable, countless. (Ibn Dihya: at the four hundredth lash from the whip, Hallaj cried out: "now Constantinople is taken," without anyone hearing him; at the six hundredth lash, he murmured: "here are two men in the Sultanian service with 200,000 dinars" without anyone paying attention to it; but it was feared he might die without undergoing the full prescribed punishment; and so the commissioner ordered the executioners to stop the flagellation, and the remainder of the thousand lashes were cancelled).—(N.B.: probable version: five hundred lashes = *darb al-mawt*; which is the figure used by Ibn Bakuya. But Zanjī says: he was beaten a thousand times all told without crying out "enough"—or "ah." He said only, after the six hundredth blow, to M-b-ʿAbd al-Samad: "let me give you a piece of advice which is worth as much as the capture of Constantinople." But Muhammad answered him as follows: "I have already been warned that you would say that and much more, but there is no way to stop the blows you still have coming to you.")

Once the thousand lashes had been administered, they cut off one of his hands, then a foot; then the other hand, followed by the other foot (N.B.: he then had to be hoisted in full view, on a stake.) His head was cut off. (Ibn Farhun: then his body, in which there was still a trace of life, was hurled to the ground from the flagellation platform). And the trunk was burned (Watwat, *Ghurār* : wrapped in his mantle.—N.B.: or in a mat, which was customary and in accordance with Shibli's account.—"In oil—The cost of this cremation: nine dirhams.")

I was there, that very moment, motionless, on the back of my mule; the trunk twisted on the embers and the flames blazed forth (cf. ʿAttar, *Mantiq*: "Then a foolish love-smitten man came forward, stick in hand; squatting near this handful of live coals, he began to speak glowing words to them while stirring them [with his stick]: tell the Truth . . ."). When there were only ashes left, they were thrown into the Tigris. The head was on display in Baghdad for two days, on the bridge, afterwards it was taken to Khurasan, where it was shown around from district to district.

This detailed account by an eyewitness directly involved in the incidents has some more or less unintentional omissions and even some deliberate misrepresentations. Why does Zanjī insist that the thousand lashes were indeed administered, when two other independent sources deny it? Why does he say nothing about the time, perhaps two hours, perhaps twelve hours, elapsed between the intercision and the decapitation, when the punished victim had to be hoisted, in full view of everyone, according to the Qurʾanic rule, onto a gibbet, which was more or less in the form of a cross? Why, since he admitted that he was present at the cremation to the very end, in his capacity as vizirial secretary, doesn't he say that he was there next to Vizir Hamid: who came in person to verify the execution of the condemned man, bearing witness with the "upright witnesses" scattered through the crowd to the lawfulness of this execution? It is not only

the Sufi source of Tuzari that is explicit about it, but also the theological source of Ibn Dihya: "they cut off his hands, his feet, his head; they burned the body, they scattered it in the water (of the river); then they hoisted his head (on the end of a pike, before hanging it on a post), and the Muslims shouted '*Allah akbar*' ('God is the greatest'), and recalled the warning of the Prophet of the Lord of the Worlds against antichrists and imposters; they acknowledged it to be true, according to his word: 'God will show that this word is true.'" Zanjī specifies neither the place from which the ashes were thrown nor, above all, where the head was displayed. Now, the place where the ashes were thrown was still a pilgrimage site in the time of Maʿarri in 399/1008: "his disciples still waited there, on the banks of the Tigris, in the hope that he would arise from it," *ghufrān*; one of them saw him there (Baqli) and later, according to the legend of the shaykhs of the Bata'ih (Rifa'i), of the holy Ahmad Kabir cited by the Mongol vizir, Rashid al-Din, and of his sister, who became pregnant there by swallowing his ashes (Yazidis).

It was customary to have next to the displayed head, pinned to its ear, a placard identifying it and bearing the following inscription: "This is the head of the blasphemous conniver and deceiver N-b-X, one of those whom God has put to death at the hands of *Imam Y* (= the Caliph), after proof was produced showing that he claimed the sovereignty of divine law; glory be to God, Who hastened him to shed his blood and to curse him."

Let us resume the account by Zanjī:

His disciples began to make preparations for his return after forty days. It just so happened that, in this particular year, the flooding of the Tigris (measured by the Miqyas, built in 293, copied from the Nilometer of Roda) was high (*fadl*: it measured eighteen cubits, according to Hamadhani) at the end of *Hijja* (end of April): his disciples claimed that this was due to him, because his ashes had mixed with the water.

And one of Hallaj's disciples maintained that the one who had been executed was an enemy of Hallaj, changed to look like him (Ibn Sinan: just as in the case of Jesus, son of Mary). Some of them claimed that they had seen him the very next day (Ibn Sinan: on the same day) where they had seen him meet his end and his punishment, mounted on a donkey, going along the Nahrawan route; and, as they were welcoming him, he said to them: "Can it be that you are like those people who delude themselves into thinking that I am the one they scourged and put to death?" And one of them maintained that it was a mule that had been changed into his image.

After the execution, Chamberlain Nasr went into mourning (*taraththi*) publicly, declaring that this man had been wronged (*mazlum*), that he was a true servant of God.

And they (Ibn Sinan: Hamid) summoned the booksellers (*warraqin*) to appear in a group; and they promised neither to sell nor to buy any of Hallaj's books.

Can we ascertain the number of spectators at the execution? A "countless" number (Zanjī). "This was a solemn day" (*yawman ʿaziman*; cf. Qur'an 83:5),

says Mas'udi, "on account of the ideas that were attributed to him concerning religion, *diyana*." "It was told that no one was present at this event who was not overtaken by some misfortune, *usiba*," says Ibn Fadlallah. "There was no one in Baghdad at that time who was not present at his execution" (*Manaqib*, quoted by AY Qazwini).

***The Testimony of Ibn al-Haddad, Head of the Shuhud of Cairo,
Concerning Hallaj's Last Vigil and "Spiritual Testament"***

Isnad of AB ibn al-Haddad; Ibrahim ibn Fatik, according to Shakir:

When night fell on the place where he was to be taken, at dawn, from his cell, Hallaj stood up for the prayer and performed one that consisted of two *rak'a*. Then, when this prayer was finished, he continued to repeat himself, saying "illusion, illusion": until the night was almost over. Then, he was silent for a long time; and then he cried out "truth, truth." And he stood up again, put on his head veil and wrapped himself in his coat, stretched out his hands toward the *qibla* (= in the direction of Mecca) and entered into ecstatic prayer (*munaja*):

"We are here, we, Your witnesses (*shawahid*). We are seeking refuge in the (pre-eternal) splendor of Your glory, in order that You show (finally) what You wanted to fashion and achieve, O You who are God in heaven and God on earth.

"It is You Who shine forth when You desire; just as You shone forth (in the pre-eternal heaven, before the Angels and Satan) Your decree under "the most beautiful form" (= the human form, in Adam): the form in which the enunciating Spirit resides, present in it through knowledge and speech, free will and evidence [of being].

"You then bestowed on this present witness (= myself, Hallaj) Your "I," Your essential Ipseity.

"How is it that You, . . . You Who were present in self, after they had stripped me, Who used me "to proclaim Myself to me," revealing the truth of my knowledge and my miracles, going back in My ascensions to the Thrones of My pre-eternities to utter there the Word itself which creates me.

"(You now wish) me to be seized, imprisoned, judged, executed, hung on the gibbet, my ashes to be thrown to the sand storms which will scatter them, to the waves which will play with them.

"If only because their smallest particle (of my ashes), a grain of aloes (burned in this way to Your glory), assures to the glorious body (literally: "temple") of my transfigurations a more imposing foundation than that of immovable mountains."

Then he recited the following verses:

I weep to You for the Souls whose (present) witness (= I myself) now goes
—beyond the "where" to meet the very Witness of Eternity.

I cry to You for hearts so long refreshed (in vain)—by clouds of revelation,
which once filled up with seas of Wisdom;

I cry to You for the Word of God, which since it perished,—has faded into
 nothing in our memory;
 I cry to You for the (inspired) Discourse before which ceases—all speaking by
 the eloquent and wise orator.
 I cry to You for Signs that have been gathered up by intellects;—nothing at all
 remains of them (in books) except debris.
 I cry to You, I swear it by Your love,—for the self-controls of those whose
 mastered mount was the discipline of silence;
 All have crossed (the desert), leaving neither well nor trace behind;—vanished
 like the ‘Adites and their lost city of Iram;
 And after them the abandoned crowd is muddled on their trails,—blinder than
 beasts, blinder even than she-camels.

The Waqfa of the Offering and Forgiveness (“Kill Me . . .”)

Ibrahim-b-Fatik said:

When they brought Hallaj out to crucify him, and when he saw the gibbet and the nails (*masamir*), he laughed so much that his eyes were weeping. Then he turned to the crowd and recognized Shibli in it: “Abu Bakr, do you have your prayer rug with you?” [Shibli said:] “Yes.” [Hallaj said:] O Shaykh, spread it out for me.”

Shibli spread out his prayer rug: then Hallaj prayed two *rak’a*: and I was near him. In the first *rak’a*, he recited the *Fatiha* and the verses (Qur’an 2:155–157): “Surely We will afflict you, when the occasion arises, with fear and hunger, and losses of goods, of lives and of fruits. Give good tidings to the patient, who, when they are struck with a misfortune, say: we belong to God and to Him we shall return. It is upon them that blessings and mercy from their Lord descend, and those—they are Rightly Guided.”

In the second *rak’a*, he recited the *Fatiha* and the verse (Qur’an 3:182): “Every soul shall taste of death, and you shall be paid your wages on the Day of Resurrection; whosoever is saved from Hell and admitted to Paradise shall be blissfully happy: for what is the present life but the precarious enjoyment of vanities?” And after he finished this *rak’a*, his final *salam* and his *rukhsa*, he uttered a prayer (*du’a*): I do not recall all of his words, but only some of them, among them these: “O our God, it is You Who radiate on every side without being located on any side: through the right of Your attestation (*bihaqqi qiyamika*) that affirms me; through the right of my attestation that affirms You (and my attestation that affirms You is subordinate to Your attestation that affirms me, for mine comes from *nasut* [human nature] and Yours comes from *lahut* [divine nature]; and yet, this is what I have of *nasut*, which is lost in Your part of *lahut* without mingling with it, and what Your *lahut* has possessed of my *nasut* without having touched it);—

through the right of Your Eternity ruling over my temporality: through the right of my temporality: clothed in the disguise of Your Eternity: I beseech You, O my Master, to grant me the grace to thank You (*an turziqani shukran*) for this joy that You have given me, to the point of concealing from everyone else's sight what You have revealed to me of the flames of Your countenance (which has no form), and of forbidding to any other the look that You have permitted me to cast on the hidden things of Your (personal) mystery.—See these people, Your worshippers: they have assembled to kill me, out of zeal for You, in order to draw nearer to You Forgive them (*irhamhum*).—If You had revealed to them what You have revealed to me, they would not do what they are doing, and if You had concealed from me what You have concealed from them, I would not be able to undergo the ordeal that I am enduring. Praise be to You in whatsoever You do, praise be to You in whatsoever You will.” And he recited:

Kill me, O my faithful friends (*Uqtuluni, ya thiqati*),
for to kill me is to make me live;

My life is in my death, and my death is in my life.

Then he was silent and conversed with the Lord in silence. Then the executioner, Abu'l-Harith, approached and hit him in the face so hard that his nose was broken and blood flowed from it over his clothing (variant: his white hair).

And Shibli let out a cry, tore at his robe, and fainted, just as did Abu'l-Husayn Wasiti (= Qannad) and the group of well-known (*madhkurin*) *fūqara'* who were there. A riot failed to materialize, for many of his disciples set fire to houses while his execution was being carried out.

The Crucifixion, the Last Utterances, and the Coup de Grâce

IBN BAKUYA

The official sources (Zanji, Ibn Dihya) say nothing about the interval, during the execution, between the intercision and the decapitation, when, in accordance with Qur'anic law, the condemned man, maimed in his four limbs, but still alive, must be hoisted up, according to the formal rule of the Qur'an (Qur'an 26:49: confirming Qur'an 5:33) on a form of gibbet, not necessarily a raised post (*sari*), but a pillory (*nigniq*) overlooking the esplanade, fixed on a base (*mastaba*) with steps, so that the crowd and the official witnesses could see that justice was carried out. Before the *coup de grâce*.

The old Sufi sources are unanimous in affirming that “crucifixion” in which the condemned man was allowed even to utter some *ultima verba*; it is difficult, however, to distinguish which are authentic among those that have been handed down to us. Many are the fruit of a *post eventum* meditation, having undeniable “liturgical” value for anyone who reflects on them.

The synthetic account of Ibn Bakuya attributes to Hallaj, on the cross, two Qur'anic quotations, one "response," and two ecstatic sentences, and blocks together under a single *isnad* (that of Hamd) these five utterances that Sulami had previously collected with independent *isnads*: "my God, here I am now in the dwelling place of my desires . . ."; Qur'an 15:70: "have we not forbidden you from receiving any Guest . . ." (Shibli reprimands Hallaj, who is silent, for this verse is "his"); "what is *Sufism* (asks Shibli)?"—"Its lowest degree you are seeing now, . . . and tomorrow you will see . . ."; "everything for the ecstatic is to be alone with his Only One, in Himself; Qur'an 42:18: "Those who do not believe in the final Hour seek to hasten it; but those who believe in it await it. . . ."

The Last Utterances

1. Here I am now in the dwelling place of my desires . . ." (Sulami)

Abu Ishaq Ibrahim-b-M Qalanisi Razi said to M-b-Husayn Warraq: "when Husayn-b-Mansur was crucified, I was standing before the post, and he cried out 'O my God, here I am now in the dwelling place of my desires (*Ragha'ib*), and my gaze is surprised by Your marvels. My God, I see You show Your love specifically to those who wrong You (*yudhika*); how therefore does it happen that You do not show Your love to the one (this one = myself) to whom injustice is done in You (*yudha fika*)?'"

2. "What is Sufism?—Its lowest degree you are seeing now . . .," taken from Khargushi.

Hallaj was asked on the cross: "What is Sufism?" [He answered:] "Its lowest degree you are seeing now."

This independent testimony by a great, good, and widely cultivated man, shows that, seventy years after the event, people characterized him just as in this response. Directed to Shibli, according to the synthetic account, studied above, and used again, by Ibn Bakuya. We have seen that [the latter account] is somewhat longer and adds this: "(Shibli asks further:) and its highest degree?" [Hallaj responds] "You cannot (yet) reach it; however, tomorrow you will see (what will happen). For I witness it in divine mystery (*Ghayb*), where it exists; and where it remains hidden to you."

We have here a case of a "response" that was probably not actually given, but which expresses what Shibli must have felt, assuming it is true that he remained "until evening" before the gibbet of his friend, and what he communicated very quietly to his closest disciples as an initiation: the goal of mysticism is to be beheaded and burned "tomorrow" by the Law out of love of God.

This is what 'Abd al-Malik Iskaf in Balkh and the Turkish Qastamunian *Hikaya* were to repeat.

One Sufi tradition which was later, but which was already known by the

historian Hamadhani (d. [513/1119]), reproduced by Baqli and Jildaki, gives to the question "what is Sufism?" a different answer, preceded, which is strange, by lines of verse from Khali' (the author of the *Nadimi* quatrain, also put in the mouth of Hallaj):

Then Shibli arrived, in the midst of a group: someone had put his sash around his neck and was pulling him toward Husayn-b-Mansur Hallaj for him to curse him also. He said to them: "let me go." [They said:] "We shall not release you until you curse him (on the cross) or send a messenger with your curse." He looked both right and left, and saw Fatima Naysaburiya: "come here to me." She approached him, and he said to her: "Go find Husayn-b-Mansur: tell him: 'God gave you access to one of His secrets, but because you made it public, He has made you taste the blade.' Remember what he says to you in response, then ask him, *what is Sufism?*" he said, and she went to him and said: "I am the messenger of Abu Bakr Shibli." [He said:] "Give me your message." [She said:] "He tells you: God gave you access to one of His secrets, but because you have made it public, He has made you taste the blade." But he recited: (*Tajasartu* . . .):

I was rash, I revealed Your Name, yes, when my patience was exhausted;
What is more beautiful in regard to the likes of You than to remove [Your]
veils?

If I am criticized for doing it, my excuse is in Your face, for the full moon is
poor next to Your face, O full Moon.

Then he said: "go and find Shibli and tell him: by God, I did not divulge His secret; and if it had happened as he said, then the best thing would be to speak of the tribulations (*mihan*) of the prophets, that they were designed to punish them." Then she said: "O master, what is Sufism?" [He answered:] "That in which I am (*ma ana fihi*); by God, I have never been able to dissociate for a moment its good fortune from its bad (*ma faraqtu bayna ni'matihi wa bala'ihī sa'atan qatt*)."

Another Sufi tradition puts the question "What is Sufism?" in the mouth of another of Shibli's messengers, his disciple Bundar-b-Husayn Shirazi, which is strange: for Bundar, one of the early Ash'arite theologians, was later obliged to force Ibn Khafif, who had also become an Ash'arite, to repudiate Hallaj. This is the text, abridged:

Ibn Khafif (*sic*), after a fortnight, was present, calm and collected, at the inter-cision of Hallaj; afterwards, on the gibbet, when questioned by Bundar, Hallaj, looking at him sternly, answered: "the beginning (*ibtida'ahu*) (of Sufism) you are seeing here; its end you will see tomorrow." Of which Shibli commented: "Husayn-b-Mansur is right: Sufism is spiritual sacrifice; pay no attention to the 'follies' of mystics."

Another Sufi account, after giving Hallaj's statements to Caliph Muqtadir, the condemnation by the canonists, the flagellation (with a thorny *sidra*), the

prayer for deliverance "*Ya Mu'in*," presents Shibli sending a woman (*jariya*: not named) to ask the question, "what is Sufism?" and also to ask Hallaj why he revealed the arcanum; after a long dialogue, Shibli comes and repeats the question himself: Hallaj responds, "its exterior (*zahiruhu*) is what you see; its interior remains hidden to men; its beginning is today (*awwaluhu*), its end will be tomorrow."

Abu Bakr (M-b-M) ibn Thawaba said: "I saw my brother Zayd al-Qasri writing down verses uttered by Hy-b-Mansur Hallaj on the gibbet:

Through the sacred holiness of this Love which the world
cannot lust after to corrupt
I have felt no harm since suffering came upon me, nor
has it caused me any injury;
No limb, no joint of mine has been cut off which has not
made you remember (God).

3. "Have we not forbidden you from receiving any Guest . . . ?" (AH 'Ali-b-Ibrahim Basri Husri) said:

Shibli came and stood before the gibbet from which Husayn-b-Mansur (looked at him) and cried out to him: "Have we not forbidden you from receiving any Guest, whether man or angel?" (Qur'an 15:70). About which the qadi (= Abu 'Umar), who had arranged this crucifixion to be carried out, declared (to Shibli, who was brought before him): "That one had pretended to be a prophet, and now this one pretends to be God?" Shibli retorted: "I said the same thing he did, but my madness was certified, and his sanity killed him."

(Sulami):

Mansur 'Abdallah (Sadusi Harawi) said: "I heard one of our friends say: 'Shibli came and stood before the crucified Hallaj, looked at him and said: "Have we not forbidden you from receiving any Guest, whether man or angel?"' "

This is the famous verse in which the people of Sodom accuse Lot of treason against the Perfect City, in which human nature is self-sufficient with respect to the racist secret of its original identity: how dare you transgress the order of the arcanum by giving, you our host, hospitality to Angels, messengers from a threatening foreigner?

Shibli's application of it to Hallaj is ambivalent: did he really betray his Sufi brothers by giving himself over to a public apostolate of mysticism, in opposition to the rule, held to by Islam, of not throwing pearls to swine? One piece from Hallaj's *Diwan*, revealing a truly sarcastic irony with regard to the discipline of the Sufis' arcanum, shows that in this he was following the advice of Hasan Basri, prophesizing to those who do not want to be delivered of what they have conceived to be good, that their womb will burst open. Shibli, who was living the Qur'an profoundly, utters this verse as a challenge. Has the time

for divulging the secret come, since you may dare transgress the Law, so that it may execute you for having sworn that you received God Himself as your Guest? Do you intend to save Sodom this way, and, with it all those human societies that wish to abuse the Angels of God, your guests?

One will note that Hallaj is silent: for "at sunrise, the 'Clamor for Justice (*al-Sayha*) surprised them';" his cry, uttered by the Angels, overthrew, says the Qur'an (15:73), the accursed City.

Indeed, Shibli knows in his conscience that Qur'an 15:73 answers Qur'an 15:70. But insofar as the Hour has not yet come to pass, he approves of the Law's forbidding (*yumna'*, he says at the trial = here, *nanhaka*) any premature apocalyptic divulgence.

Our interpretation is confirmed by Shibli's legendary gesture of throwing a rose at Hallaj, whom the crowd was stoning; to throw a rose is an act of challenge.

4. "All that matters to the ecstatic is the increasing solitude of his Only One, in Himself."

'Isa Qassar Dinawari said: "I was present when they took Husayn-b-Mansur from prison to kill him; his last words were: 'All that matters to the ecstatic is the increasing solitude of his Only One, in Himself.' " He added among the shaykhs of Baghdad at that time there was not one who did not admire these words uttered by him.

5. Qur'an 42:18: "Those who do not believe in the Hour seek to hasten it; but those who believe await it with a reverential fear, for they know that is the Truth." (Sulami: "he said nothing more after that.")

The Public Grief of Grand Chamberlain Nasr and Its Effect

It was Zanji, a member of the vizir's secretariat, who noted the public mourning (*azhara'l-taraththi*) for Hallaj, "unjustly put to death" (*mazluman*). He did not add *talafan*, unavenged. Nasr, by this show of grief, worked out in accordance with the Queen Mother, at least on behalf of the military House of Nasr, merely asserted his Belief that Hallaj had died a Muslim and not a turncoat.

This public mourning led to several events:

—*public recitation of the Qur'an* at the home of Nasr for the repose of the soul of Hallaj, given by renowned *Qurra'* (such as AB M-b-J-Adami, b. 250/864, d. 348/959) with the authorization and attendance of Hanbalite jurisconsults (from Nasr's school), with visits of condolence, on the first three days, the first Friday (27 *Qa'da* or rather 5 *Hijja*), and the fortieth day (= 3 *Muharram* 310/923);

—*distribution of alms* in the prison shelter that Nasr had prepared for Hallaj, particularly to the prisoners, repentant bandits 'Ayyarin *Tawwabin*, whom Nasr had placed at that time in Hallaj's spiritual care;

—*recovery of relics*, in the absence of burned parts (the trunk and clothes?)

or preserved parts (the head, kept for a year in the Museum of Heads) of the body, hands, and feet (?); for the purpose of burying them secretly in the fixed site referred to as "*maslib al-Hallaj*" and revealed publicly by the Court in 437/1045 (near the *waqf*-supported tomb of Gharib, the brother of the Queen Mother; a *waqf* supervised, I believe, by the *shahid* Da'laj). In fact, legend tells of a mantle (*khirqā*) belonging to Hallaj which was "entrusted by" Nasr to ward off floods. And that implies that he was already venerated as a martyr;

—the *release from prison* of Hallaj's son and daughter, his *khadim*, and most of his imprisoned disciples (a release authorized for M-b-A Qunna'i, AB Hashimi: for the daughter, who was to marry a Sunnite, the son of Shaykh Ibn Shaluya [= Salbin?]; for his widow and his sister, who were permitted to go into mourning [dark blue clothes, bare feet, as the story goes]). Nasr thus managed to get the vizir to exempt the Hallajiya from the statute on "turncoats," which would involve the death sentence: a statute that was to be issued only around 361/971 (Baqillani; AI Isfara'ini; particularly against Faris, and the Hululiya). It appears that Vizir Hamid made this concession to Nasr out of fear (cf. his shifting of his responsibility onto the *shuhud*; hence the delay in the *coup de grâce*?), or out of remorse for having yielded to his Shi'ite adviser Shalmaghani, who was soon to let him be persecuted and killed by Muhassin.

The simultaneous participation of the officers of Nasr's military House and the repentant bandits of the prison in this mourning demonstration against the legal execution of an excommunicate got Nasr more involved in organizing an anti-Shi'ite clandestine resistance movement made up of militant Turks and Kurds on whom Caliph Qadir, and especially Caliph Qayim, would count for shaking off the political and financial tutelage of the Buwayhids; in cooperation with the Hanbalites, whose demonstrations Nasr had encouraged as far back as 309/921. It was at Nasr's home that his son Ahmad was to shelter and to arrange the burial of Barbahari, the leader of the Hanbalites who was ostracized and banished, and to assemble the Barbahariya Hanbalite traditionists who would supervise, after the pro-Hallajian Murta'ish, the Sufi convents of Shuniz, defending them against the Buwayhid Shi'ite sultanate.

It was as a result of Nasr's gesture of mourning that the devotion of the 'Ayyarin *Tawwabin* (and of the Hanbalite women) for Hallaj resumed.

The Intersigns, Dreams, and Apparitions

Hallaj, perhaps more than any of his predecessors, had been deeply involved during the course of his travels in the life of the Muslim Community. Though Islam was intensely "stirred up" already by the dynamic, centralizing, and unifying ritual of the hajj to Mecca, Hallaj, the eternal pilgrim, committed himself intimately to that stirring.

While taking part in the elitist intellectual quest for technical terms enabling

him to formulate a spiritual orthodoxy, he had kept "in touch" with the passerby, *ibn al-sabil*, among craftsmen or workers daily crossing the frontier, with the man in the street and on the highway, with nomad and soldier, shopkeeper and peasant. It was particularly there, in dialectal folklore and popular melodies, that his memory persisted; whereas the scholiasts of classicism and scholasticism increasingly were to pass over him in silence, as was the usual way of treating an excommunicate.

We recall a man after his death, first of all, by intersigns. Which is to say, by unusual and unforeseen events of his life whose imprint we rediscover in ourselves through "correspondence." These "correspondences" are not rational normalizations that reduce individual existences to fortuitous series of analogous and impersonal components: they are shared anomalies. And instead of depicting individual lives as an infinity of segments of parallel straight lines, of commonplace probabilities computable by statistics, the philosophy of history must arrange them inwardly in curves, marking the nodes of realization, the "points of osculation": through which they "communicate" where souls recognize each other outside the dimensions of time. At first psychological analysis had a difficult time establishing the authenticity of social "communication" through such intersigns. The infrarational musicality of signs begins, in Hallaj's life, with coincidences in vocabulary, valueless as long as the scope of his spiritual life, his "consonance" with the traditional archetypal themes of Islam, did not arouse the instinctive sympathy of the humble and of the "enlightened" sarcasm of the learned. On his part, the imagination "works" in its way and *dreams* loom into view, suggesting a finalistic explanation of observed *intersigns*. The right to dream exists in Islam; and oneirocriticism is practiced with regard to it by experts, sometimes Hanbalite and sometimes Shi'ite, to determine the validity of the "responses" obtained by dreams that are "guided" during sleep.

Islam forbids one to dream about the Prophet when one is *awake*; but other ordinary *apparitions*, of those absent or dead, are allowed. And it is not impossible for the shapes momentarily assumed by these apparitions to embody authentic significations related personally (and even exclusively) to us: be they imaginary projections or preternatural "opalizations" of the surrounding atmosphere.

The torrent of signs, dreams, and apparitions observed at the time of Hallaj's death gives the impression that the working of the Muslims' collective imagination had come to a halt on his person; it fixed a "time-origin," an *epochè* permitting a recapitulative remembrance by introversion and consideration of the interdependence of the destinies of other Muslims with his own.

One could quote various passages by 'Izz al-Din Maqdisi and Jalal al-Din Rumi. We will merely give here, *in extenso*, a very beautiful chapter of the *Mirsad al-'ibad* by Najm al-Din Razi (d. 654/1256), where Hallaj's voluntary sacrifice is examined with penetration: Book III, chapter XX:

To unite with the divine presence, without becoming absorbed in it or separated from it:

The being of the sincere lover produces a scent of fire, so that the entire human tree, outwardly flesh, but (spiritual) kingdom of God inside, burns and blazes. Then the fire makes all the parts of the being of this tree luminous, the entire being of the tree becomes an incandescent fire, so that all that was tree is now a fire of live coals. It is here that the true mystical union is accomplished.

Along with the green wood, Satan also becomes the prey of the essential fire, which draws fire from green wood for you;—God, who “gives you fire from green wood” (Qur’an 36:80), who cries, “it is I who am the fire, not the tree, without the tree’s knowing it.” The cry went up from the banks of the right hand wadi, in the blessed valley, from the tree “Oh Moses, it is I, God . . .” (Qur’an 28:30).

Poor Husayn Mansur! While the divine fire smouldered under the tree of his being, without yet consuming his members, “I am the Truth!” sparks flew out of it. As other men (immoral men, his enemies) were standing nearby, Husayn, who was ablaze with the very clemency of the All-Powerful, asked for their salvation by means of these “I am the Truth!” sparks, and thus made himself their intercessor. For you must know that this fire is such that both he who is in it and he who is near to it are equally blessed by it. “Blessed is the man who is in the fire and he who is in the vicinity of it” (Qur’an 27:8). Oh Husayn! this fire in you is blessed! As for those who are near to you, it does not need to burn them, it will be a benediction for them as well:

For my friend, I am benediction, and for my enemy also.

. . . In fact, not only did Husayn Mansur sacrifice himself, but putting himself ahead of malicious men, he attempted to obtain their pardon and placed his physical being in the fire, between them and the fire, saying, “Oh my God! Since You have consumed my humanity in Your divinity, by the right of my humanity over Your divinity, I ask You to have mercy on these men who have conspired to have me killed.”

Certainly it is not in every tree of the human condition that the fire of sacrifice comes to set ablaze such aloes, which rise into the air in this way, perfumed with mercy, asking to be a benediction for those men also.

Oh, Husayn! when this fire of Our love was ignited in your human tree and when “I am the Truth!” sparks flew forth from it, since your personality was not consumed, these sparks diffused some of its smoke. But when you became the prey of the fire in the entire tree of your being, and when the form of your mold, the smoke of your self rose up from it and disappeared, when the ashes of your body were burned by the fire of Our grief,—We commanded that they be thrown into the waters of the Tigris, and We then raised the pierced veil that hid the beauty of your perfection. Upon the surface of the water the smokeless fire of your being wrote for all to see “God! God!”. . .

Louis Massignon

THE PASSION OF AL-HALLAJ

MYSTIC AND MARTYR OF ISLAM

ABRIDGED EDITION

Translated and edited by
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