

A Chapter in the History of Coffee: A Critical Edition and Translation of Murtaḍā az-Zabīdī's Epistle on Coffee

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By

Heather Marie Sweetser, B.A.

Graduate Program in Near Eastern Languages and Cultures

The Ohio State University

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Thesis Committee:

Dr. Georges Tamer, Advisor

Dr. Joseph Zeidan

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Abstract

What follows is an edition and translation of an Arabic manuscript written by Murtaḍā az-Zabīdī in 1171/1758 in defense of coffee as per Islamic legality. He cites the main objections to coffee drinking and refutes them systematically using examples from Islamic jurisprudence to back up his points. The author also includes lines of poetry in his epistle in order to defend coffee's legality.

This particular manuscript is important due to its illustrious author as well as to its content, as few documents describing the legal issues surrounding coffee at such a late date have been properly explored by coffee historians.

The dictionary *Tāj al-'Arūs*, authored by Murtaḍā az-Zabīdī himself, as well as Edward Lane's dictionary, were used to translate the manuscript, which was first edited. Unfortunately, I was only able to acquire one complete and one incomplete manuscript; other known manuscripts were unavailable. Arabic mistakes in the original have been corrected and the translation is annotated to provide appropriate background to the epistle's commentary.

A brief introduction to the history of coffee, a sample of the debate surrounding the legality of coffee in Islam, and a biography of the author is provided.

Dedication

Dedicated to the fabulous students of Arabic I've had the privilege of teaching this past year.

Acknowledgments

My gratitude goes out to Prof. Stefan Reichmuth whose exhaustive work on Murtaḍā az-Zabīdī made this MA thesis possible. It was he who made my advisor, Prof. Georges Tamer, aware of the existence of the online database which allowed us to obtain the only complete available copy of the Epistle. Thanks also go to Dār al-Kutub in Cairo for providing access to a manuscript of the Epistle and to the University of Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, for making this and other manuscripts accessible online.

I am indebted to Prof. Bilal Sambur in Ankara who tried hard to acquire a manuscript of the Epistle.

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Prof. Tamer in particular spent countless hours improving the translation and introduction; without his assistance the translation would be inscrutable. Any remaining errors found in the text are strictly mine.

Vita

1997.....Minnetonka High School
2008.....B.A. Arabic, The Ohio State University
2008.....B.A. International Studies, The Ohio State
University
2008.....B.A. Islamic Studies, The Ohio State
University
2009.....University Fellow, The Ohio State
University
2010.....CASA Fellow, The American University in
Cairo
2011 to present.....Graduate Teaching Associate, Near
Eastern Languages and Cultures
Department, The Ohio State University

Fields of Study

Major Field: Near Eastern Languages and Cultures

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INTRODUCTION

“A new study came out that says that there is nothing bad in coffee! I heard it on the radio,” said the 300 lb. woman behind the computer at Campus Auto, where I was having my van repaired. For no particular reason, I chose to believe this woman for years and guzzled coffee regularly in full knowledge that I was not only doing no harm but perhaps even doing something healthy for myself. After all, I myself had read an article about the antioxidants present in coffee shortly after antioxidants became the latest newcomer to the health scene. I chose to actively forget the three weeks I spent in basic training shaking on the edge of my bunk going through severe caffeine withdrawal because the only beverages we were allowed to drink were water and a horrible concoction called ‘Victory Punch,’ a cross between chlorine and watered down Gatorade. At the tender age of 18, I was already addicted to coffee.

I have no doubt that the unnamed study quoted by the obviously healthy woman above was not only carried out but conducted under stringent guidelines as outlined by the FDA and the scientific method. I am equally as certain that a company that deals in coffee was the source of funding for this study, since currently all studies on coffee are funded by coffee manufacturers or companies that have serious stakes in the coffee business, like Nestlé, manufacturer of the ubiquitous instant coffee drink Nescafé¹. Studies such as these are frequently funded under subsidiaries in an attempt to conceal the origin of funding.

¹ For one example, see: “Does coffee enriched with chlorogenic acids improve mood and cognition after acute administration in healthy elderly? A pilot study” in *Psychopharmacology*, vol. 219, number 3 (2012), 737 -749.

Companies needn't bother with this kind of concealment. The vast majority of consumers today is content with hearing that a study was conducted; it doesn't necessarily matter where the study was conducted, or by whom. The important thing is that 'research,' however vague, is telling us what we already want to hear: that the beverage that fifty percent of Americans consume on a daily basis² is good for us. And if a well respected place like Vanderbilt is the one carrying out the research, well, so much the better.

Few, if any, stop to note that the Vanderbilt Institute for Coffee Studies, established 'for the study of the health benefits of coffee', is entirely funded by coffee companies³. What a clever way of marketing. No company would ever fund an entity that would sow the seeds of its own demise, not to mention the fact that despite the name 'Institute for Coffee Studies', only studies that show the health benefits of coffee will ever be conducted – the reason for establishment is to study the health *benefits*, after all, not the health *effects*. Even if such lingo wasn't built right into the institute, it wouldn't have to be. Researchers aren't stupid; they know where their funding comes from and are not about to bite the hand that feeds them. In today's economy, with research grants and other educational funds being slashed left and right, no one in their right mind would ever publish anything against almighty coffee, truth be damned. Poop would be shown to contain antioxidants if there was a market for this kind of information.

And yet, more and more American consumers are starting to wonder where their consumables are coming from. Concepts like 'fair trade' and 'organic' are finding their way

² Anthony Wild, *Coffee: A Dark History* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2005), 206.

³ *Ibid.*, 218-9.

onto all kinds of packages, from furniture to chocolate. Coffee itself has far more to choose from than just these labels. In addition to fair trade, organic coffees, we can also purchase ‘shade grown’, ‘rainforest alliance certified’, ‘sustainable’, and ‘bird friendly’ coffee. As globalization brings the world closer together and concepts like ‘responsible consumption’ come into our collective consciousness, more and more people are looking into their dark cups and wondering what kind of journey the beans took to get there.

My own interest was sparked after interviewing Shabbir el-Ezzi for the Yemen Today magazine. Originally from India, Mr. el-Ezzi is an entrepreneur who opened up a coffee company in Yemen after seeing the enormous potential there, today exporting high quality coffee to all parts of the world. “The first thing you should know about coffee is that the birthplace of coffee is Yemen! Not Ethiopia,” he told me. I smiled and took notes, hiding my ignorance about the issue behind my laptop and the cup of coffee he gave me. Like many Americans, I thought coffee came from Brazil, or maybe somewhere in Latin America. I had never given it much thought.

As I began to research the subject, I realized that coffee, although a relative newcomer to the beverage scene, has an extremely checkered history. Owing its origins as a social beverage to Sufis from Yemen in the 15th century, coffee quickly spread from there throughout the Ottoman Empire. Holding a place of uncertain legality under Islam since its inception, coffee has been alternately banned and blessed depending on the tastes of the ruling government.

The majority of coffee narratives spends perhaps a chapter on its earliest usage, with a sentence or two devoted to the legality of coffee in Islam, and then proceeds to coffee’s

introduction to Europe. Here the real story begins, with detailed descriptions of the first coffee shops in Europe and America and intriguing stories about how coffee affected the Western world. William Ukers' seminal work *All About Coffee* includes a map of coffeehouse locations in 18th century London⁴ and yet nothing even remotely resembling a map of the Middle East or Africa, where coffee supposedly comes from. Mark Pendergrast's book *Uncommon Grounds*⁵ includes photos documenting a history of coffee advertisements in the United States but does very little to elucidate how coffee was advertised anywhere else. In fact, fully ninety percent of his book deals exclusively with marketing coffee in twentieth century United States and in the Americas in general and ignores the rest of the world, despite the fact that his book is subtitled *The History of Coffee and How it Transformed Our World*. It is an accurate subtitle if one takes 'Our World' to consist entirely of 'America'.

To be fair, most readers are only concerned with the West and Western history, and most writers are only well versed in European languages. However, the lack of attention and information concerning coffee's origins and how it managed to conquer an Islamic empire, coffee drinkers overcoming initial religious objections and even the threat of capital punishment, is somewhat surprising. Ukers and Pendergrast are only two examples of coffee lore historians, but they are far from alone. Of all the literature written about coffee, only *Coffee and Coffeehouses* by Ralph Hattox⁶ deals intimately with the history of coffee in the Middle East, and not one book written in English explores coffee's spread Eastward and its

⁴ William Ukers, *All About Coffee*, (Reprint, New York: Gale Research Company, 1976), 72.

⁵ Mark Pendergrast, *Uncommon Grounds: The History of Coffee and How It Transformed Our World* (New York: Basic Books, 1999).

⁶ Ralph Hattox, *Coffee and Coffeehouses: The Origins of a Social Beverage in the Medieval Near East*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1985).

influence in China and the Far East – not even so much as a chapter. Perhaps it goes back to marketing; after all, it is not at all evident from the title *Coffee and Coffeehouses* that the book has anything to do with the Middle East. How many Westerners would be interested in reading a book about coffee over there? It should also be noted that funding for the publication of *Coffee and Coffeehouses* was provided in part by The Promotional Fund of the International Coffee Organization and The Exxon Corporation⁷.

The more I researched, the more I realized that perhaps the issue wasn't that no one wanted to know about the origins of coffee in the Middle East or the raging debate in Islam over its legality: it was the lack of translations into English surrounding its history and controversy that is creating this artificial barrier. Ralph Hattox is an Orientalist first, having received his PhD in Near Eastern Studies at Princeton in 1982, and an historian second. William Ukers was a coffee trader and had no training in history, and Mark Pendergrast is an historian first and not an Orientalist at all, with no background or training in that part of the world. Small wonder no one writes about its Oriental origins.

The translation that follows is intended for those who are interested in the historical background of coffee and yet don't have the years to devote to learning Arabic necessary for reading such medieval texts. The text itself is authored by Murtaḍā az-Zabīdī, a prominent Islamic scholar of the 18th century best known today for his epic dictionary *Tāj al-'arūs*, or The Bridal Crown, and for being the teacher of the more famous historian 'Abd ar-Raḥmān al-Jabartī, who so faithfully recorded the French incursion into Egypt in 1798. The epistle, titled "A Masterpiece for the Fellows of the Age in Explaining the Legality of the Coffee of Yemen,"

⁷ Hattox, *op. cit.*, ii.

succinctly describes formal opposition to coffee in the Islamic world from a religious-legal point of view, and includes az-Zabīdī's response to the opponents of coffee drinking. It is a document worthy of study not just due to its prominent author but due to the date of its content, as it was written in 1758, approximately two centuries after most historians attribute the death of the coffee debate in Islam⁸. This manuscript proves otherwise, as it indicates that the argument over whether or not coffee was legally prohibited in Islam was still going strong well into the eighteenth century. It is also noteworthy given that it was written at a time when European influence was not strongly felt in the Islamic world as it was in later centuries, and thus is an entirely self-contained document by someone who lived in Yemen during a portion of the coffee trade heyday there.

Before presenting the translation itself, an introduction concerning the origins of coffee is necessary as is a background to the religious debate over its usage amongst Muslims. In addition, a brief biography of the author Murtaḍā az-Zabīdī is also given.

May it be enjoyed over a fresh cup of coffee.

COFFEE IN ANTIQUITY

Coffee is widely regarded as the second most legally traded commodity after oil in the world today⁹, even though coffee is not technically a commodity since it is fresh produce and its value is directly affected by the length of time it is held. But no matter; coffee is bought and sold by roasters, investors, and price speculators as a tradable commodity. Coffee futures

⁸ See: Ukers, *op. cit.*, 17, who never mentions another coffee persecution in the Middle East after c. 1580; see also Pendergrast, *op. cit.*, 6-7.

⁹ Pendergrast, *op. cit.*, xv; Wild, *op. cit.*, 3.

contracts for Grade 3 washed arabicas are traded on the New York Mercantile Exchange under ticker symbol KC, with higher and lower grade Arabica coffees sold through other channels. Futures contracts for the lower quality robusta coffee, formerly banned from the New York Coffee Exchange as a ‘practically worthless bean’¹⁰ are traded on the London Liffe exchange and, since 2007, on the New York ICE exchange.

With all this trading going on and with so many people and countries in the world dependant on it, it comes as a surprise that coffee as a beverage only began to be imbibed sometime during the 15th century. Wine has been around for thousands and thousands of years; why does coffee have such a late start on the scene?

Efforts have been made by coffee enthusiasts to trace coffee back as far as possible, seeing coffee in any plant reference throughout antiquity that bears even a vague resemblance to the beloved coffee tree. Examples of this include the the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge in the bible (not an apple but a coffee bean!) to the ‘black broth’ of the Spartans to everything else inbetween. While these efforts have no doubt provided hours of harmless fun for a handful of charmed readers, any actual results are at best inconclusive.

Many scholars, including William H. Ukers who wrote All About Coffee in 1922, have identified bunchum as coffee¹¹. First recorded by the Persian physician Abū Muḥammad ibn Zakarīyā ar-Rāzī (865-925), known as Rhazes to the West, in his monumental medical encyclopaedia *al-Ḥawī fī aṭ-Ṭibb* in 901 A.D. he described bunchum as being “hot and dry and

¹⁰ Wild, *op. cit.*, 21.

¹¹ Ukers, *op. cit.*, 7.

very good for the stomach.”¹² He is joined by Ibn Sīnā (980-1037), or Avicenna, the physician from Bukhara, in describing bunchum as being “hot and dry in the first degree, and according to others, cold in the first degree. It fortifies the members, it cleans the skin, dries up the humidities that are under it, and gives an excellent smell to all the body.”¹³ One cannot help but notice that ‘bunchum’ is similar to the word ‘bunn’ which is used for coffee in Ethiopia and some parts of Arabia.

The word ‘bunchum’ is no longer in use and is not referred to as coffee anywhere. Later historians have identified bunchum as a drink made from a particular kind of root, now out of favor, and not coffee itself¹⁴.

In fact, there is no proof of coffee usage prior to the 15th century, neither in historical writings nor by archeological evidence. The drink that the world has gone crazy over and upon which depend so many people is of relatively modern invention.

What is certain is that by the end of the 15th century, coffee drinking was widespread amongst the Sufis in Yemen. How did the Sufis come to know coffee before anyone else? If coffee’s origins are in Abyssinia, or modern day Ethiopia as everyone claims it to be, how did it first come to be celebrated in the world’s backwater country of Yemen? And how did anyone come to start drinking coffee in the first place? The stories related here are as varied as their possible first appearance in our history books.

¹² As quoted in Ukers, *op. cit.*, 7; and in Wild, *op. cit.*, 29. Possibly referring to *Kitab al-Jāmi‘a al-kabīr*, or “Great Medical Compendium”, often confused with the *Ḥawī*.

¹³ As quoted in Ukers, *op. cit.*, 8; and in Wild, *op. cit.*, 30.

¹⁴ Ukers, *op. cit.*, 7; Wild, *op. cit.*, 29.

COFFEE ORIGIN NARRATIVES¹⁵

The stories of the first time coffee touched anyone's lips read almost like a child's bedtime story. Decide for yourself which of these following charming anecdotes is correct:

One fine 9th century day, a goat herder named Kaldi noticed his normally morose goats frolicking and dancing. Curious as to what made them act so, the next day he followed them and observed them eating the berries of an unknown tree. Being of a melancholy nature, he decided to try the berries himself to see if they would have the same effect. Lo and behold! The heavy-hearted Kaldi began dancing right along with the goats and became the happiest goat herder alive.

As they continued in this fashion, a monk happened to pass by and stopped short when he saw a most curious dance going on. Goats were executing pirouettes as the buck of the group escorted each one in turn, with the goat herder himself in the midst of it all, sporting some eccentric pastoral dance steps. The monk, instead of running away screaming as any sane man would do, interrupted the dance party and asked what it was that made them act so. It was then that the precious secret of the berries was told.

Piety and culinary arts not being mutually exclusive, this monk immediately recognized the value of the berries and thought to dry and boil the herder's strange fruit. This gave us the

¹⁵ Stories compiled from the following sources: Hattox, *op. cit.*, 11-26; Pendergrast, *op. cit.*, 3-7; Ukers, *op. cit.*, 1-12; Wild *op. cit.*, 25-33; and Tom Standage, *A History of the World in 6 Glasses*, (New York: Walker & Company, 2005), 136-138.

world's first coffee drink. All the monks in his monastery immediately started drinking coffee, which encouraged and helped them to pray long hours, and, in the words of one chronicler, "because it was not disagreeable," perhaps an indication of the quality of food and drink at the time. The news of the wakeful monastery spread rapidly, and the magic berry soon came to be in request throughout the whole kingdom. In due time, the other nations and provinces of the East fell under its spell.

Another recension has the passing-by monk outraged at the dance, stripping the herder of his berries, and throwing them onto a fire. The transformation of the coffee berry as it roasted in the fire gave off such a heavenly scent that the monk realized the fruit must be from God, and at that instant, all the monks in the realm started drinking coffee.

Here is a poem commemorating this wakeful monastery, written by the Abbé Massieu and entitled *Carmen Caffaeum*:

The monks each in turn, as the evening draws near,

Drink 'round the great cauldron – a circle of cheer!

And the dawn in amaze, revisiting that shore,

On idle beds of ease surprised them nevermore!¹⁶

How true could this story possibly be? The fact of the matter is that the tale of how mankind came to chewing qāt, a narcotic leaf popular in Yemen and the Horn of Africa, is exactly the same, ending with Kaldi and his goats dancing with each other. As coffee and qāt

¹⁶ As quoted in Ukers, *op. cit.*, 10.

both originate from the same area, it's possible that our melancholy Kaldi and his remarkable goats went through the realm eating every leaf and berry with a host of wandering monks behind him and happened to stumble upon two of the most stimulating substances the earth has to offer.

In my view, what is more likely is that someone who has little experience with goats penned the story, perhaps in an effort to bring coffee into the folds of Christendom as all the monks instantly, and some would say miraculously, started drinking the beverage. Goats eat literally everything: tin cans, plastic bags, and feces to name but a few items. While tin cans and plastic bags weren't around when Kaldi was, there can be no doubt that a goat herder of any century would be disinclined to eat something based on what his goats were sampling. What is more, this story doesn't turn up until the late 18th century; of the many stories collected by the first European coffee merchants about coffee's origins, Kaldi never makes an appearance¹⁷. The oft quoted 9th century date affiliated with the story seems to have been grafted on by a narrator at some point to make coffee drinking seem sufficiently antiquated, and coffee historians have followed suit ever since.

Here is another story based on the 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jazīrī manuscript which is, according to some, the first authentic account of the origin of coffee¹⁸:

In the year 1258, the mullah Shādhilī went on a pilgrimage to Mecca. As he arrived at the Emerald Mountain¹⁹, he turned to his disciple 'Umar and said, "Here is where I meet my

¹⁷ Wild, *op. cit.*, 43.

¹⁸ Hattox, *op. cit.*, 13; Ukers, *op. cit.*, 8.

end. When my soul departs, someone veiled will appear to you. Do not fail to execute any of his commands.” With this, he died.

In the middle of the following night, a large specter covered by a white veil appeared. ‘Umar was startled when the phantom drew back the veil and revealed himself to be Shādhilī himself. The specter started digging in the ground, and water miraculously appeared. He then bade ‘Umar fill a bowl with the water and proceed on his way, not to stop until he reached the spot where the water would stop moving.

“It is there that a great destiny awaits you,” the phantom said as he disappeared into thin air.

‘Umar faithfully and dutifully walked with the bowl of water until he reached the seaport of Mocha in Yemen. It was here that the water stopped moving; it was here that he must stop.

This village was ravaged by plague at the time. ‘Umar began to pray for the sick and many found themselves cured by his prayers. The King of Mocha’s daughter was also taken by the plague, and upon hearing of the holy man whose prayers cured, the king brought her to the home of ‘Umar. As most princesses in stories are, this one was of rare beauty, and ‘Umar carried her off as a reward for having cured her. Not being inclined towards this reward, the king pursued him, winning his daughter back and banishing ‘Umar from the kingdom. ‘Umar

¹⁹ Ukers identifies this as Ousab mountain, also written as Uṣāb, which is in fact the Wuṣāb mountains northeast of Zabīd. See: Ukers, *op. cit.*, 10., and C. Van Arendonk, Art. “Ḥahwa,” in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Second Edition, EI 2nd Ed., accessed on 5 June 2012.

was driven from the city and exiled on the mountain of Ousab²⁰ with herbs for food and a cave for a home.

“Oh Shādhilī!” cried ‘Umar. “If the things which happened to me at Mocha were destined, was it worth the trouble to give me a bowl to come here?” A lesser man might have prayed why it was worth the trouble to walk so many miles through the desert carrying a bowl of water that he was not allowed to drink.

Just then, a bird of incomparably marvelous plumage came to rest in a tree, singing a song of pure harmony. ‘Umar sprang towards the bird, but just then he saw on the branches of the tree previously unnoticed flowers and fruit. ‘Umar tried some of the fruit and found it delicious. Then he filled his great pockets with it and went back to his cave. As he was preparing to boil some herbs for his dinner, the idea came to him to roast some of his harvested fruit to add to his soup. From this he obtained a savory and perfumed drink; it was coffee.

Other recensions include ‘Umar carrying a wooden ball that came to rest at Mocha; that a group of his followers joined him on the mountain and after drinking coffee were all cured of a mysterious itch that had been plaguing the area; that ‘Umar was banished to this mountain where it was assumed he would die of starvation along with all of his followers, and out of desperation they invented coffee. Whatever the case, ‘Umar returned to Mocha laden with coffee, where he was promptly proclaimed a saint²¹.

Whether or not ‘Umar ever conducted himself poorly with the King’s daughter or carried a bowl of water or wooden ball through a desert, an ‘Umar probably did exist at some

²⁰ The same Emerald Mountain as above; see footnote 19.

²¹ Wild, *op. cit.*, 43; Ukers, *op. cit.*, 10; Van Arendonk, Art. “Ḳahwa”, *op. cit.*

point and is connected with a number of miracles, coffee being among them. Some state that his master Shādhilī and ‘Umar are the same man, one ‘Ali b. ‘Umar ash-Shādhilī, sometimes confused with the founder of the Shādhilīya order; however, later historians are confusing a meshing of these two individuals with a later individual by that same name, ‘Ali b. ‘Umar ash-Shādhilī who studied under Nāṣir ad-Dīn ibn Mailaq in the 14th century²². Our author Murtaḍā az-Zabīdī notes below that this particular individual was in fact the one who first popularized coffee.

Whatever his origins were, ‘Ali b. ‘Umar ash-Shādhilī has today become the patron saint of coffee-growers, coffee-house keepers, and coffee-drinkers, and coffee in Algeria is still sometimes called *shadhiliyye* after this man²³. Although not historically accurate, he is popularly regarded as the founder of Mocha, and a well, a gate, and a mosque over his grave preserve his memory in Mocha to this day.

There are many more pretenders to the throne of being the first man to drink and invent coffee, such as Abū Bakr b. ‘Abdallah al-‘Aidarūs, who somewhat unfortunately for coffee historians also went by the name of ash-Shādhilī. Murtaḍā az-Zabīdī refers to him as al-‘Aidarūs and quotes some of his poetry below. His story goes that as a Sufi, he was wandering around in the wilderness, as Sufis are wont to do, and chanced upon a coffee tree. He decided to eat some of their berries and noticed their stimulating effect. He took them and recommended them to his disciples, thus spreading coffee’s use in the area. History tells us that there was a renowned Sufi of this name who died in Aden in 1508 and whose grave is still honored there; in fact, the

²² Hattox, *op. cit.*, 20.

²³ Wild, *op. cit.*, 43; Ukers, *op. cit.*, 10; Van Arendonk, Art. “Ḳahwa”, *op. cit.*

above mentioned ‘Abd al-Qādir manuscript mentions this man’s fondness for coffee and quotes his *qaṣīda*, or epic poem, in praise of it. This man may have enjoyed coffee and propagated it, but as coffee was already being drunk around his time, he is more likely to be its propagator than originator.

Yet another story of coffee’s origin was printed in Harper’s Weekly in 1911²⁴, paraphrased here:

Sometime in the middle of the 15th century, a poor Arab was traveling in Abyssinia. Weak and weary and travel worn, he stopped near a grove and chopped down a tree for his fire. This tree happened to be covered with dried berries that the traveler threw into the fire along with its branches and everything else. As the tree burned, the traveler discovered that these roasting berries gave off a delightful fragrance. He gathered them together and decided to crush them with a stone, increasing the aroma greatly. While marveling at the strange substance, he accidentally let all the coffee grounds fall into an earthen vessel that contained his scanty supply of water.

Lo and behold! The formerly brackish water was purified and became delightful to drink. After a short rest, the traveler recovered such strength and energy that he was able to resume his journey. This lucky Arab gathered as many berries as he could and, having arrived at Aden, informed the mufti of his discovery. The mufti had been suffering for years under the spell of opium and all the afflictions cause by this poisonous drug. He sampled an infusion of this new berry and was so delighted to have recovered his youthful vigor that he called this tree “cahuhua,” which in Arabic means ‘force’.

²⁴ William T. Ellis, Art. “Shamu of Baghdad, servant” in *Harper’s Weekly*, Dec. 1911, 111-121.

This latter comment about “cahuhua” meaning force in Arabic is untrue; the author of this anecdote is confusing the word *qahwa* with or *qūwa*; the latter refers to power or strength while the former refers to coffee or, in the medieval period, wine. As few people researching coffee also speak Arabic, this error has had surprising persistence in the annals of coffee.

Antony Wild, author of Coffee: A Dark History, puts forward a new theory in connection with the Chinese Treasure Fleets, which were a number of voyages sent out by the Chinese emperor to trade with the kingdoms surrounding the Indian Ocean at the beginning of the 15th century. Wild ascribes the invention of coffee to Muḥammad b. Saʿīd ad-Dhabḥānī (d. 1470/1), also known as Gemaleddin. Wild’s new idea is that after being exposed to the concept of tea drinking via interactions with the anomalous Treasure Fleets, the Yemenis were not far behind in replacing ‘tea’ with coffee. After the Treasure Fleets disappeared, tea would have been impossible to come by and a substitute would have been looked for. Thus coffee was born into consciousness.

If this story is true, why is it that no one until the Chinese came along thought to experiment with the coffee bush? It’s not as though the plant suddenly sprung up out of nowhere, or that no one noticed its flowers and fruits. What perhaps happened is that the plant was thought to be poisonous, or at least not worth trying to find out if it’s poisonous or not. A similar situation occurred with the tomato, which was ignored for hundreds of years after being called poisonous in John Gérard’s book Herball, or Generall Historie of Plantes²⁵, published in 1597 and essentially an English translation of Rembert Dodoens Herbal of 1554. The tomato spent many a century rotting on people’s tables as decoration as a result. What is more, the

²⁵ John Gérard, *The herbal: or, General history of plants*, (Reprint: New York, Dover Publications, 1975).

taste of an untreated, unroasted coffee bean is bitter to the point of being unpalatable. Before being exposed to tea, it can hardly come as a surprise that no one thought to risk their lives by experimenting with wild plants, especially after the initial bitter taste and particularly given the combination modern coffee demands of plucking, husking, drying, roasting, pulverizing, and then boiling in water.

But wait! This is not the only way of drinking coffee. In fact, there are many, many ways to utilize the coffee plant and make it into a useful, delicious beverage other than just roasting the coffee bean. *Amertassa* is a tea made from coffee leaves, plucked, dried in the shade, and then infused, very similar to tea. *Kafta*, a drink made from the dried leaves of qāt, is prepared in the same way. In Yemen it is more common to find *qisher*, an infusion of the dried coffee cherry or shell around the beans, than it is to find actual coffee, or *bunn* as it is known there. These drinks, still common in Arabia today, point toward a tea origin²⁶. Regardless of the fact that no recorded mention of tea was made during the Chinese Treasure Fleets in any extant sources, that does not mean that no tea was drunk at all.

At last we return to our hero, Gemaleddin. A famous man and his death having been faithfully recorded in 1470²⁷, he was around at the time of the Treasure Fleets and would have been exposed to the stories about tea from China, if not tea itself. After the departure of the last of the Fleets in 1433, tea would have become impossible to obtain without taking the long trip to China. As noted above, a substitute would have been looked for.

²⁶ Wild, *op. cit.*, 41.

²⁷ Van Arendonk, Art. “Ḳahwa”, *op cit.*; Wild, *op. cit.*, 44.

Gemaleddin has the proper pedigree for being the first to invent such a substitute. Historical records show that he traveled to Ethiopia, which is convenient if one believes that the coffee plant originated there. He was the Mufti of Aden and early European writings state that he gave coffee his seal of approval in 1454, though this has yet to be substantiated by primary sources²⁸. This seal of approval, if not invention, of coffee gave it the impetus to be used in Sufi circles. A renowned man of science, Gemaleddin would not have just stopped at the infusion of tea leaves and the bean's shell; it is possible he also was the first to roast the bean. Alchemy being what it was in his day, the chemical transformation of the bean, turned black as the black stone in the Ka'ba, would have appealed to his mufti's heart²⁹. Then every Sufi in Arabia started drinking coffee simultaneously, and the rest, as they say, is history.

One story surrounding Gemaleddin relates that he traveled to Ethiopia in 1454³⁰, the same as when he gave coffee his seal of approval according to some sources. When he returned to Aden in Yemen, his health suffered. On his death bed, he remembered seeing coffee being drunk in Abyssinia and sent for some in hopes of finding relief. Not only did he recover from his illness due to the miraculous beverage, but because of its caffeine properties, he sanctioned the use of the drink "so that [Sufis] might spend the night in prayers or other religious exercises with more attention and presence of mind,³¹" as history records him as stating.

Excavations in Zabid, an inland Yemeni city associated with learning and scholarship in medieval times, have uncovered glazed bowls dating to 1450 with traces of coffee in them³².

²⁸ Wild, *op. cit.*, 44.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 46.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 44.

³¹ Quoted in Ukers, *op. cit.*, 12.

³² Wild., *op. cit.*, 47.

This kind of pottery had not been previously glazed, indicating the importance and respect coffee garnered. It also sports a rudimentary blue and white pattern not seen before in the area³³, perhaps in imitation of the classic blue and white Chinese patterns, furthering the connection between the Chinese Treasure Fleets and the first archeological evidence of coffee being drunk.

Ultimately, from Kaldi to Gemaleddin, concrete evidence is scarce and any narrative involving the first cup of coffee is held together by speculation based on a few loose facts and observations. The most likely event is that coffee, roasted and ground, was not invented by any one person or tribe. In an age without internet, the printing press, or mass media of any sort, coffee probably got its start by word of mouth, with more than one person reinventing the wheel as people heard of a new drink that improved wakefulness and concentration based on the coffee plant. Sufi circles staying awake all night chanting the name of God in *dhikr* ceremonies would have found the coffee plant to be incredibly useful during their pious devotions, and a culture was in place, perhaps for the first time in the region around coffee's native home, that appreciated the ability to stay awake all night long for nights on end.

COFFEE FINDS ITS SOUL IN YEMEN

Yemen is studded with terraces covering its landscape. Wherever a mountain can be turned into arable land, even in seemingly impossible areas, terraces are there. Farmers still plow the lands by hand on unreachable steep mountainsides no beast of burden or machine will ever touch.

³³ *Ibid.*, 47.

The results are spectacular.

Ask anyone in Yemen who built the terraces or where they came from, and they will tell you: our grandfathers built them, ‘grandfathers’ being a catch-all phrase for ancestors and not just for a spectacularly motivated generation building terraces all over Yemen. It has been speculated that it was coffee that first convinced the Yemenis to move out of the lowland Tihāma region and up into the mountains, carving and constructing these terraces out of rock and soil³⁴.

To be sure, terracing existed before coffee. Yemen was a well known wine producing country in the days before the coming of Islam³⁵, and were it not for Islam’s prohibition against alcohol, Yemen today would be a world class wine producing region. Coffee didn’t give the Yemenis the idea for terracing; it gave them the impetus to put terracing everywhere they could, right over the graves of the old vineyards. It was profitable, after all, and the Ottoman Empire, which held sway over most of Yemen in the 15th and 16th centuries, developed a thirst for coffee that at the time could only be quenched by the Yemeni coffee crop. A new monopoly was born, and with it, a new and wealthy Yemen.

Yemen had experience with trade on a global scale centuries earlier as the purveyor of incense. The Romans named it ‘Arabia Felix,’ a name the Yemenis proudly bear to this day, reflecting the kind of wealth the country had due to the incense trade. The insatiable desire for incense dying out, Yemen fell into the back pages of world economics until a new commodity came up: that of coffee.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 32.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 32.

History maintains that neither incense nor coffee is native to Yemen; the Yemenis just happened to be at the right crossroads at the right time to create a monopoly and maintain control. This push for coffee that only increased with time pushed the Yemenis off the Tihāma plateau and into the mountains, where many still farm coffee to this day.

Ultimately, no one is really sure when coffee first appeared in Yemen. Maintaining the coffee-from-Ethiopia legend, the Ethiopians invaded Yemen in the 6th century AD only to be pushed out by the Persians a century later³⁶. Some speculate that the Ethiopians brought coffee with them at that time³⁷. It is my opinion that this idea is a red herring and only tenable to those who are looking in the pages of the history books to see when Ethiopians were present in Yemen. Neither the historical record nor the archeological or botanical record indicate that anyone was drinking coffee, eating coffee cherries, or utilizing the coffee tree in any way, shape, or form that would make this tree precious enough for a marauding army to bring with them³⁸.

In any event, once the Yemeni coffee monopoly sprung up one thousand years after the 6th century Ethiopian invasion, care was exacted to ensure that no coffee tree left Yemen and fines were imposed on traders who were caught attempting to smuggle coffee seeds or trees outside of Mocha. Coffee historians frequently report that Yemeni authorities required that beans had to be boiled before they left Yemeni shores³⁹; this story is likely untrue. Logistical problems aside, boiling coffee beans before setting out on a long sea journey would have

³⁶ G. R. Smith, Art: “*al-Yaman*” in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, EI 2nd Ed., accessed on 16 May 2012.

³⁷ Pendergrast, *op. cit.*, 6.

³⁸ Wild., *op. cit.*, 32.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 7.

destroyed the quality of the beans entirely. The story was possibly circulated in order to prevent smuggling trees or seeds, helped by the fact that coffee beans, once removed from the berry, are difficult to germinate after a long lapse in time, such as that of a journey overseas⁴⁰. A curious oversight is that the berries of the coffee bush seem to have been labeled as ok for export; exporting logs frequently record berries being purchased at Mocha. Why the authorities of the time would have taken such care to ban the export of the plants and removed seeds but not the seeds as kept safe and fertile within the berries of the coffee bush is unknown⁴¹.

Within a few short decades, the previously unknown port of Mocha became a world class shipping destination where wealthy coffee merchants from all over the world traded coffee beans, launched ships, and ventured inland to an even greater coffee market where all the real action took place. It is from this port that the vast majority of the world's coffee was exported for over 150 years, and it is the name of Mocha that today's coffee market inherited, often referring to coffee that has chocolate added. "Yemeni coffee has an undertone of chocolate," noted Shabbir el-Ezzi, the entrepreneur mentioned in the introduction, "which is why the name Mocha was adopted for it."⁴²

Perhaps this name was chosen because everyone knew the port of Mocha. Or perhaps it was because this inland merchant city was known by the hilarious name 'Beetlefuckee,'⁴³ a corruption of the name Bait al-Faqīh. Beetlefuckee coffee doesn't have quite the same ring to it.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 76.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 76.

⁴² Interview dated October 2008.

⁴³ Wild, *op. cit.*, 105.

No matter what story one might be inclined to believe regarding when and why the first cup of coffee was drunk, historical fact tells us that by the end of the 15th century, coffee had become extremely popular in Yemen. Sufis and wandering going hand in hand, the drink spread northward to Mecca, and from there outward to all countries who had citizens going on the hajj. Referred to as “The Wine of Islam”⁴⁴ by outsiders, coffee had indeed become an international drink by the 16th century.

COFFEE AND COFFEE DRINKERS ARE THREATENED WITH DEATH AND DAMNATION

The first record of coffee being actively persecuted comes to us from Mecca in the year 1511.⁴⁵ Coffee had been on the questionable list for some time, as the word *qahwa*, the name for coffee in Arabic, was originally one of the names for wine. *Qahwat al-bun*, or ‘the wine of the coffee seed,’ was the original name coffee was given, which was shortened in many places to just *qahwa*, confusing matters in the minds of the magistrates who were unfamiliar with the new beverage. Wine being *ḥarām*, or unlawful and therefore forbidden in Islam, people were divided as to whether or not to classify this new beverage as alcohol, and therefore also forbidden⁴⁶.

Thus coffee’s first official persecution occurred in 1511 in Mecca, the year a man named Khā’ir Bey al-Mi’mār⁴⁷ was appointed governor of Mecca to the Mamlūk Sultan of Egypt, one

⁴⁴ Standage, *op. cit.*, 136.

⁴⁵ Hattox, *op. cit.* 30; Ukers, *op. cit.*, 13.

⁴⁶ Hattox, *op. cit.*, 19.

⁴⁷ Hattox, *op. cit.*, 31; Ukers, *op. cit.*, 13.

al-Ashraf Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī⁴⁸. The story goes⁴⁹ that as Khā'ir Bey was leaving the mosque one day he was offended by seeing a group of coffee drinkers. Originally thinking that they were drinking wine inside the mosque, he was astonished to learn of this new beverage and how common it was throughout the city.

Being unable to distinguish between liquor and coffee and thus determined to put a stop to this unholy beverage, the very next day he called for a council composed of judges, lawyers, physicians, Imāms, and leading citizens seeking advice on the subject⁵⁰. The chief complaint against coffee was the coffee houses that had sprung up all over Mecca, where men and women met together, played tambourines and other musical instruments, challenged each other in chess and other games for money, and did many other things done contrary to Islamic law.

Nūr ad-Dīn Aḥmad al-Kāzarūnī and 'Alā' ad-Dīn al-Kāzarūnī⁵¹, two brothers who were physicians by trade, were present on the council. One of them having recently written a book against coffee, they both came down against the beverage by stating that it was unwholesome, and any previous written statement that the plant was wholesome was merely referring to other plants by the same name. Others stated that coffee clouded their senses and that it intoxicated like wine. One gets the impression reading the histories that Khā'ir Bey stacked the odds purposefully against coffee and went out of his way to make sure that the brothers al-Kāzarūnī were there to testify against the beverage.

⁴⁸ P.M. Holt, Art. "Qānṣawh al-Ghawrī" in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Second Edition, EI 2nd Ed., accessed on 9 May 2012.

⁴⁹ Story culled from Hattox, *op. cit.*, 30-37; Ukers, *op. cit.*, 13-14; and Wild, *op. cit.*, 49-52.

⁵⁰ Hattox, *op. cit.*, 33; Ukers, *op. cit.*, 13.

⁵¹ Ukers incorrectly identifies these brothers as the Hakimani brothers. See: Ukers, *op. cit.*, 13; Hattox, *op. cit.*, 33.

Coffee defendants being in the minority, the drink was outlawed and the coffee houses closed. All the coffee in the city was burned. Coffee drinkers being what they are, the imbibing continued behind closed doors, despite the potential consequences. In one famous case, a man caught in the act of drinking coffee was publicly flogged and then sent through the streets of Mecca riding a donkey.⁵²

The governor sent a dispatch to the Sultan in Cairo about what had been going on, being unaware that the coffee craze had not only made it all the way to Cairo but into the palace of the Sultan himself. The Sultan sent a reply not only rescinding the edict against coffee in Mecca but verbally slapping him on the wrist for his indiscreet zeal. How dare Khā'ir Bey condemn something approved of at the seat of the capital, in Cairo, where physicians were more important and learned than those at Mecca? Nothing was found against the law in the use of coffee there, and so should it be in Mecca. Khā'ir Bey immediately recalled the prohibition against coffee.

Coffee lovers rejoice in the fact that this man who did so much against the early days of coffee was later exposed as an extortioner and public robber and was tortured to death, his brother committing suicide to avoid following in his footsteps. The Kāzarūnī brothers were similarly executed after supposedly cursing Selim I, ruler of the Ottoman Empire⁵³. No one mentions that Cairo was overtaken by the Ottomans in 1517, and the Sultan so friendly to coffee was killed doing battle with them⁵⁴.

⁵² Ukers, *op. cit.*, 14.

⁵³ Ukers, *op. cit.*, 14.

⁵⁴ Holt, Art. "Ḳānṣawh al-Ghawrī," *op. cit.*

Coffee houses in Mecca were once again closed in 1525⁵⁵ by the ruling qāḍī there, one Muḥammad ibn al-‘Arrāq, citing general disorder as the culprit⁵⁶. He was clear to state that coffee was legally permissible however, and coffee was not forbidden at home or in private. His successor reopened the coffee houses immediately after his death, where they have continued there to this day relatively undisturbed⁵⁷.

The Ottoman Empire itself boasts a checkered history with coffee. Suleimān the Magnificent, tenth and most illustrious of the Ottoman sultans⁵⁸, issued an order in 1542 that forbade the use of coffee in any of its forms, but no one appears to have taken it seriously, either by coffee drinkers or by local enforcement. Rumor had it that the order had been obtained only at the behest of one of the court ladies for reasons history has declined to record⁵⁹.

Outside of the capital, in 1534 a particularly talented Imam and orator in Cairo, Aḥmad b. ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq as-Sunbātī, launched a *khutba*, or sermon, against coffee. This *khutba* was so compelling that the worshippers, upon hearing it, left the mosque immediately and rioted against the coffeeshouses in Cairo, burning one down and mistreating all those found drinking coffee⁶⁰.

This uprising against coffee ignited the ire of many, the approbation of some. ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq as-Sunbātī was subjected to merciless poetic satire due to the incident despite the

⁵⁵ Incorrectly identified by Ukers as 1524. See: Ukers, *op. cit.*, 14; Hattox, *op. cit.*, 37.

⁵⁶ Hattox, *op. cit.*, 37.

⁵⁷ Ukers, *op. cit.*, 14.

⁵⁸ G. Veinstien, Art. “Süleymān,” in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, EI 2nd Ed., accessed on 16 May 2012

⁵⁹ Ukers, *op. cit.*, 14-5.

⁶⁰ Hattox, *op. cit.*, 39; Wild, *op. cit.* 52.

scholarly respect he commanded,⁶¹ a story which is related in further detail below by Murtaḍā az-Zabīdī in his Epistle. The physicians of Cairo meanwhile banded together and pointed out before judge Muḥyi ad-Dīn Muḥammad b. Iliās al-Ḥanafī that the question of coffee had already been decided by their predecessors, citing the Khā'ir Bey issue in Mecca that had already attained legendary proportions⁶². The judge, upon hearing the case, instantly called for some coffee to be served to all in order to settle the issue⁶³. Coffee has commanded a high regard in Cairo ever since, despite repeated attempts to close the coffeehouses. One example is that of the order calling for the prohibition of coffee from Istanbul sent to Cairo in 1544; this prohibition was only enforced for one day⁶⁴.

In Istanbul, although it is likely coffee was first introduced in 1517 after the successful conquering of Egypt⁶⁵, most in the capital city weren't aware of it until 1554, when the first coffee house opened its doors⁶⁶. It was such a huge success that a mere sixteen years later the local Imams were up in arms about the coffee houses, proclaiming that they are always full while the mosques were always empty⁶⁷. An investigation commenced. This time it was decided that since the Prophet Muḥammad could not have known about coffee, it must therefore be outlawed to his followers as well. Ukers states that the fact that coffee was roasted and ground to 'charcoal' before drinking it was in violation of the Qur'ān, which many includes

⁶¹ Hattox, *op. cit.*, 40.

⁶² Ukers, *op. cit.*, 15; Wild, *op. cit.*, 52.

⁶³ Ukers, *op. cit.*, 15.

⁶⁴ Wild, *op. cit.*, 53.

⁶⁵ Ukers, *op. cit.*, 15.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 15-6.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 16.

charcoal among the foods as being unfit for consumption⁶⁸, and this was the reason for coffee's prohibition. In fact, there is nothing in the Qur'ān that specifically prohibits this. What happened was that the belief that consumption of charcoal was unhealthy for the body was widespread at the time, and anything unhealthy must be legally prohibited.

Whatever the legal reasoning, in 1570 coffee was once again forbidden by law⁶⁹.

In 1580, a further prohibition was issued that classified coffee along with wine, thus making it legally prohibited without a doubt. Coffee drinking nevertheless continued and coffeehouse speakeasies dotted Istanbul, while officials, finding it impossible to uphold the law in the matter, frequently turned a blind eye⁷⁰. This is not at all surprising; Hattox points out that it is nearly impossible to read more than a page of a 15th or 16th century history of the Ottoman Empire without coming across yet another attempt by the Sultan to close the taverns, which were strictly and clearly forbidden in Islam. How much more difficult would it have been to close down the coffeehouses, which were legally ambiguous at best?⁷¹

Coffee's fortunes ebbed and flowed in the capital until along came a tyrant so vicious in the form of Grand Vizier Köprülü⁷² that he ordered all coffee houses closed once and for all and outlawed coffee completely. The man issued an edict stating that anyone caught drinking coffee was to be cudgelled; for a second offence, the hapless coffee addict would be sewn into a leather

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 16.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 16.

⁷⁰ Ukers, *op. cit.*, 16; Wild, *op. cit.*, 55.

⁷¹ Hattox, *op. cit.*, 41.

⁷² Mistakenly recorded as Grand Vizier Kuprili during the reign of Amurath IV by Ukers, *op. cit.*, 16-7, and copied by Wild, *op. cit.*, 55-6, and Pendergrast, *op. cit.*, 6. Amurath IV is another name for Murad IV, and they are taken by some to be two different Ottoman Sultans, thus placing the prohibitions against coffee of both Kuprili and Murad IV as separate prohibitions. It is likely that these two men worked together in attempting to eradicate coffee from Istanbul; more research into primary Turkish sources is needed to disambiguate this story.

bag and thrown into the Bosphorus⁷³. History books tell us that this was for political reasons, namely that coffee houses were seen by the Grand Vizier as hotbeds of sedition⁷⁴. If this was the case, why outlaw drinking coffee itself? The idea that coffee was against Islam cannot be the driving factor here; taverns serving alcohol and wine were permitted during Köprülü's time⁷⁵. Truly this man hated coffee.

Not even the threat of penalty of death could stop the coffee drinkers of Istanbul and, conceding defeat to coffee instead of opting for the more likely assassination due to his heavy-handed policies, Köprülü later rescinded the ban and reopened the coffee houses⁷⁶. Years later, Sultan Murad IV himself (1623-1640), under whom Köprülü was made Grand Vizier, launched his own attack against coffee drinkers as well as tobacco smokers. He brought back the edict about throwing coffee drinkers into the Bosphorus and even took it a step further; if he found any soldiers smoking or drinking coffee on the eve of battle he would execute them or have their limbs crushed⁷⁷. Coffee was instantly reinstated, along with tobacco use, as soon as this man met his demise⁷⁸.

Turkish coffee has been a mainstay of Istanbul ever since to the point where, up until the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, being unable to provide coffee for the household was considered sufficient grounds for a woman to divorce her husband⁷⁹. The majority of coffee histories leave the issue aside here, thus implying that after Murad IV all religious scholars

⁷³ Ukers, *op. cit.*, 16; Wild, *op. cit.*, 55.

⁷⁴ Ukers, *op. cit.*, 16.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 17.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 17.

⁷⁷ Wild, *op. cit.*, 56

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 56.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 54.

agreed that coffee was legally permissible and the matter was settled. However, as az-Zabīdī's manuscript below shows, the legality of coffee remained a contentious issue for years to come.

MURTAḌĀ AZ-ZABĪDĪ

The history of coffee in Europe and the West in general cannot detain us here, as fascinating as the subject is. Coffee's march Westward not being the concern of this essay, it is time to move Eastward to India, the land of our author Murtaḍā az-Zabīdī.

Born Abū al-Faiḍ b. Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. 'Abd ar-Razzāq in 1145/1732 in northwestern India⁸⁰, he later chose the name Murtaḍā az-Zabīdī in order to be more closely associated with the city of Zabīd, Yemen, where he studied for several years. In fact, his Indian origin was so well concealed that it wasn't until a century after his death that his background was brought to light thanks to the efforts of another scholar, Ṣiddīq Ḥasan Khān⁸¹.

In order to fully understand the translated text below, it is just as necessary to spend time examining its author as it is to explain the backdrop of the coffee controversy. What follows is an extremely condensed biography of a man who, thanks to political upheavals during and after his existence on earth, has been unfortunately relegated to the proverbial backwaters of history. As we shall see, in his own time he was a scholar to be reckoned with.

MURTAḌĀ AZ-ZABĪDĪ'S ORIGINS IN INDIA (1732 – 1748)

⁸⁰ C. Brockelmann, "Muḥammad Murtaḍā," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, EI 2nd Ed., accessed on 12 May 2012.

⁸¹ Stefan Reichmuth, *The World of Murtaḍā al-Zabīdī (1732-91): Life, Networks, and Writings*, (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2009), 1.

Despite coming from a prominent family in India, az-Zabīdī's exact birthplace is unknown. What is certain is that he was born in India in 1732 into the larger Bilgrāmī family; whether he was born in the town of Bilgrām itself or in the Bilgrāmī diaspora which at the time was spreading throughout India remains unclear.⁸² Az-Zabīdī furthermore frequently refers to himself in his writings as al-Ḥusainī al-Wāsiṭī, thus making the simultaneous claim that he is a descendent of the Prophet Muḥammad through Ḥusain, and that his original familial origin hailed from Wāsiṭ, Iraq⁸³.

Murtaḍā az-Zabīdī came from intelligent stock. His grandfather Muḥammad Qādirī was a prominent scholar who had been on pilgrimage to Mecca and had spent time in Iraq where he became a Sufi, bringing back this knowledge to India and initiating many into the Sufi fold there during his lifetime⁸⁴. Another more distant relative was 'Abd al-Jalīl Bilgrāmī. Closely affiliated with the court system in India and renowned for his poetic abilities in four different languages, he is widely regarded as the most prominent member of the Wāsiṭī sayyids from the early 18th century.⁸⁵ Ghulām 'Alī Āzād Bilgrāmī, a member of the same clan as az-Zabīdī, was a famous scholar of the 18th century as well and left behind a legacy of biographical, religious, and poetic writings⁸⁶. While the extent of az-Zabīdī's knowledge of his more famous relatives is unknown, as he does not mention any of them nor their writings in his own work, this familial basis in scholarship no doubt provided him with strong support for his own scholastic journey.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 1.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 1.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 9.

Az-Zabīdī was in India for only the first sixteen years of his life, leaving the subcontinent for Yemen in 1748⁸⁷. Nevertheless, he had a variety of teachers in India who are briefly mentioned throughout his works. Reichmuth identifies three specific teachers who must have had a large impact on az-Zabīdī during his formative years: Şifat Allāh al-Khairābādī, Shāh Walī Allāh ad-Dihlawī, and Khair ad-Dīn b. Muḥammad Zāhid as-Sūrātī.⁸⁸ These individuals introduced az-Zabīdī to hadith studies in conjunction with Sufi practices, a foundation upon which az-Zabīdī built his entire career. Furthermore, they had all studied previously in the Hijaz region of the Arabian Peninsula, which certainly influenced az-Zabīdī's own decision to study there himself.⁸⁹

However, a further reason to have left India so young was the political upheavals at the time. The disintegration of the Mughal Empire was causing problems on a number of levels for its citizens, particularly for Muslims. The empire never fully recovered from the sack of Delhi in 1739, and with repeated attacks from the Afghans in the north, ongoing skirmishes with the Sikhs in the Panjab, and the increasing control of the Marāthas of the Deccan, az-Zabīdī no doubt saw the writing on the wall. Thus he picked up his bags and went to Yemen.

MURTAḌĀ AZ-ZABĪDĪ IN THE YEMEN (1749 – 1754)

The city of Zabīd in Yemen was well known in the medieval period as a center for learning and scholarship. Although long past its heyday in Murtaḍā az-Zabīdī's time – Dutch traveler Carsten Niebuhr noted in the 1760's that its buildings occupied only half of the ancient

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 1.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 12-13.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 13.

area of the town⁹⁰ – it remained an international place for scholars and maintained its reputation as a place for learning⁹¹, which is likely the main reason why our author changed his name to reflect this location. Although az-Zabīdī describes himself as “Zabīdī by upbringing and by abode” in his writings⁹², he only spent a period of five years in the region, much of which was spent going on pilgrimage up to Mecca and in the environs of Zabīd, not actually in Zabīd itself. While the charms of Yemen are well known to anyone fortunate enough to travel there, his claim to being Zabīdī by upbringing and abode likely has less to do with the charms of Zabīd than with the charms of prestige such an attachment might bring. This appears true particularly considering the alternative, which would have been sticking with his less illustrious Indian Mughal background.

It was during this time that az-Zabīdī cemented his learning. Despite the overall decline in Zabīd’s fortunes, the 17th and 18th centuries in Yemen constituted a period of rich literary activities⁹³. Zabīd itself was still the center for Sunni learning in Yemen, focusing on the Shāfi‘ī and Ḥanafī legal schools as well as on Prophetic Tradition, particularly based on al-Bukhārī’s famous collection of hadith. Later credited with reviving the Prophetic Tradition in Cairo and throughout the Islamic world in general, az-Zabīdī certainly learned this kind of scholarship during his years in Zabīd. Several of az-Zabīdī’s teachers linked their scholarship directly back to al-Bukhārī through a chain of direct instructors, thus connecting az-Zabīdī himself all the way back to al-Bukhārī, a fact that was important to medieval Islamic scholars⁹⁴.

⁹⁰ Noha Sadek, “Zabīd,” in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, EI 2nd Ed., accessed on 14 May 2012.

⁹¹ Reichmuth, *op. cit.*, 18.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 1.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 17.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 17.

Zabīd also played host to a number of different Sufi paths which az-Zabīdī no doubt became familiar with during his time there. While az-Zabīdī never adhered to any one specific Sufi path in his lifetime, choosing instead to dabble in several, he still considered himself to be a Sufi as did many of his followers. It is probable that Zabīd is where he started building his strong foundation in Sufism, the initial idea having been implanted in his early days in India.

It was also during this time in Yemen when az-Zabīdī was likely introduced to coffee. Later coffee historians have attributed this time period to a period of decline in the Yemeni coffee trade. While this is certainly accurate, it would have been difficult to see this shift in the world's coffee resources from a Yemeni monopoly to coffee being imported through various colonies while living through this shift. Neibuhr travelling through the region in 1762-1763 remarked that Bait al-Faqīh was perhaps the world's largest coffee market⁹⁵. Being a mathematician on his first voyage outside of Denmark and thus totally unqualified to make such a remark, Neibuhr's total collection of positive comments on the region reflects at the least a stable and wealthy area that was receptive to foreigners. Indeed, at this time Yemen was the gateway for pilgrims and scholars migrating from the Indian Ocean⁹⁶ toward Mecca, Medina, and beyond. And although in decline, the coffee trade was still going strong in az-Zabīdī's time. Yemen played host to coffee merchants from all throughout the world – even Europe and China to some extent – during this time period. Although the coffee trade itself bypassed Zabīd to a large extent, its former reputation of being a haven for scholarly pursuits

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 15.

was no doubt bolstered by all the international trade as well as the pilgrims. It is furthermore recorded that az-Zabīdī visited the above mentioned Bait al-Faqīh on more than one occasion⁹⁷.

TRAVELS OF AZ-ZABĪDĪ THROUGH THE HIJAZ DURING HIS STAY IN YEMEN

Not only did az-Zabīdī travel throughout much of the Tihama region, he also went on pilgrimage to Mecca every year he was residing in Yemen. It was during these periods in which he met numerous scholars and friends who later became just as important to him as his Yemeni circles, if not more so⁹⁸. His knack for garnering close access to religious dignitaries and prominent scholars of the time while on pilgrimage betrays his remarkable capability to gain the confidence of others as well as his already impressive level of learning⁹⁹. Again, the number of acquaintances and friends he made and their precise influence on him during his stays in the Hijaz are too numerous to elucidate here; suffice it to say that he made so many contacts that his future was secured no matter where he went. One man in particular, ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān b. Muṣṭafā al-‘Aidarūs, is worth noting as not only does this individual’s ancestor have a link to coffee history in Yemen, but he was also highly influential in az-Zabīdī’s life, both in scholastics and in eventual career path. It was he who was instrumental in directing az-Zabīdī

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 14.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 28.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 28.

towards Egypt¹⁰⁰. Az-Zabīdī left the Hijaz for Cairo in December 1753 after performing the pilgrimage that year; he was never to return to Yemen for the rest of his life¹⁰¹.

AZ-ZABĪDĪ'S DAYS IN CAIRO (1753 – 1791)

Cairo in the days of az-Zabīdī's emigration was a hub of Islamic learning as well as for international trade. Enjoying a long period of political stability and economic prowess, scholars from all over the world came there. In the words of one scholar writing about Cairo in az-Zabīdī's day, "We met to delight ourselves in the gardens of wit and literature, or we nourished our minds in the forests of science and learning."¹⁰² Unfortunately this political stability was not to last long, as two of the three triumvirate leaders of Egypt died within a couple years of az-Zabīdī's arrival, creating a political vacuum that led to various skirmishes and assassinations. The political situation came to a head in 1775, when the struggle between the Mamluks and the Ottomans over Egypt led to increasingly disastrous economic conditions in the region until the French occupation in 1798¹⁰³, roughly seven years after az-Zabīdī's death.

Reichmuth divides az-Zabīdī's time in Cairo into three sections; the first, between 1753 and 1767, was largely spent traveling, writing, and collecting an audience. Upon arrival, az-Zabīdī resided in one of the large warehouse complexes common to new residents of Cairo¹⁰⁴. While seeking out new teachers and masters from the very beginning amongst the prominent Sufis and scholars of the city, he was also in his own right a scholar of renown and began

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 38.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 18.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 40.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 42.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 43.

transmitting important pieces of hadith almost immediately¹⁰⁵. He did not, however, study at al-Azhar, the famous Islamic educational institute in Cairo, although he did study independently with some who also taught there, such as Aḥmad b. ‘Abd al-Fattāḥ al-Mujairī al-Mallawī, famed for his knowledge of grammar, rhetoric, and logic. During this time, az-Zabīdī also established close links with several Sufi groups in Cairo, such as the prominent path of Sayyid Aḥmad al-Badawī, famous to this day for the seasonal festivities in Ṭanṭā in celebration of his memory¹⁰⁶.

It was also during this period when az-Zabīdī travelled to Palestine on two separate occasions, meeting prominent scholars and intellectuals and travelling as far as Cyprus while visiting important historical Islamic sites. His reputation and circle of friends and colleagues was now beginning to reach epic proportions thanks to his deep knowledge as well as his conviviality.

During this period, az-Zabīdī became more and more renowned throughout the Islamic world for his scholarship and remarkable memory. Travelling widely throughout Egypt, he was equally known to the elite as well as to the common people. He picked up some patrons and started wearing fine clothes and owning noble horses,¹⁰⁷ perhaps indicating the extent of social mobility in his day.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 43.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 44.

¹⁰⁷ Quoted from al-Jabartī in Reichmuth, *Ibid.*, 46-7.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 47.

Central also to this period was the development of his Sufi connections.¹⁰⁹ His former master 'Aidarūs returned to Egypt in 1755 and asked az-Zabīdī to put 'Aidarūs' Sufi transmissions together for him in a collected volume. This kind of activity in the service of leaders was to become a typical source of income for him, eventually producing other volumes of a similar nature,¹¹⁰ and helping his fame to spread. Az-Zabīdī also spent this time period shortening his chain of ḥadīth transmission back to the Prophet via discovering other teachers, as well as compiling his own full analyses of textual variants and ways of transmission for some of the Prophetic Traditions.¹¹¹ Other occupations of his included genealogy, calligraphy, Ottoman literature, and collecting contemporary poetry.¹¹²

The second period of az-Zabīdī's work in Cairo is largely devoted to his work on completing the massive lexicon *Tāj al-'arūs*, or The Bridal Crown, for which he is chiefly known. It remains the largest lexicographical project in Arabic to date, stopping just short of being a full-fledged encyclopedia. This project catapulted az-Zabīdī into the limelight, whereby he became an extremely prominent scholar under the then-ruling Mamluk Beys of Cairo.

Az-Zabīdī also got married during this period to Zubaida, a daughter of a declined but reputable military household.¹¹³

It is worth noting that at this time his Indian background was actively obscured, as the success of such a project as The Bridal Crown would not have been possible had it been known

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 48.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 48.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 49.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 51-3.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 56.

that it was compiled and written by a non-native speaker of Arabic.¹¹⁴ Praise for the volumes came from far and wide, and requests for the complete edition of the book by rulers from Morocco to Istanbul started coming in. Such fame gave az-Zabīdī a unique position in his time period as an international scholar.¹¹⁵

In addition to this major work, az-Zabīdī continued his services as a genealogist and literary figure, writing biographical and genealogical works in addition to writing speeches when requested for military and other prominent figures. He also got involved in politics by writing an Ayyubid genealogy at a time when the question of whether Mamluks or Ottomans should be ruling Egypt came to the forefront. Having painted themselves the successors of the Ayyubid caliphate, the Mamluks attempted to show themselves as the rightful rulers whereas the Ottomans were mere usurpers. An Ayyubid genealogy has a clear political implication that az-Zabīdī was throwing his weight behind the Mamluks.¹¹⁶

As az-Zabīdī's reputation grew, so did international visitors who wished to meet or study with him. The sons of the Moroccan Sultan visited him as did important intellectual and political figures from sub-Saharan Africa,¹¹⁷ thus establishing his lasting influence far and wide.

AZ-ZABĪDĪ: THE INTERNATIONAL SCHOLAR, 1775-1791

Az-Zabīdī's fame and wealth grew to the point where he was entertaining many visitors from all corners of the world. Having hailed from India, not only did he know Arabic but also

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 59.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 59.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 62.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 63.

the native tongues of India, as well as Turkish, Persian, and Georgian,¹¹⁸ thus inclining all kinds of scholars towards him. Due to his prestige, he began teaching at mosques on al-Bukhārī's collection of hadith, delivering lectures that were very well attended in part due to those who wished to attach themselves to az-Zabīdī's now highly-valued chain of transmission. In this way he was able to revive this form of scholarship which had all but died out in Cairo.¹¹⁹ It is also during this time when his famous student al-Jabartī began attending his lectures on a regular basis.

Despite having written a somewhat political treatise in favor of the Mamluks, his scholarship and fame attracted the attention of the Ottomans, who began to bestow lavish gifts upon him as well as a very high daily allowance of 150 silver paras in 1777.¹²⁰ In turn, az-Zabīdī wrote some poetry and praise in the form of treatises in favor of the Ottoman empire, although his general distaste for any caliphate was made known when he later published the introduction to his commentary on al-Ghazālī's *Iḥyā' 'ulūm ad-dīn*¹²¹.

During this period, az-Zabīdī also wrote a work entitled *'Uqūd al-jawāhir al-munīfa fī adillat madhhab al-imām Abī Ḥanīfa*, or *The Lofty Strings of Jewels in the Proofs of Imam Abū Ḥanīfa's School*, which was an attempt to demonstrate that Abū Ḥanīfa's doctrines were based on Prophetic Traditions as per al-Bukhārī's collection. Completed in 1782, it was also an

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 65.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 66.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 69.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 69.

attempt to further align himself with the Ottomans politically in response to increasing polemical pressure on the Ḥanafī School mainstream.¹²²

It is at this time when his fame began to be widely cemented throughout the Islamic lands, as reported by his student al-Jabartī. Az-Zabīdī began to exchange rarities and animals from different regions, and was recorded to have a large number of pocket watches of different origins found in his possession at the time of his death.¹²³ These activities, according to Reichmuth, showcase an encyclopedic curiosity that went along with his philological interests.¹²⁴

These exchanges also serve to highlight his vast and far-reaching network of correspondents and contacts. Via pilgrims coming and going to Mecca who came to see him on their way, az-Zabīdī was able to maintain contact with his customers from Morocco to India. He was also able to publicize his next large project, the above mentioned commentary on Ghazālī's *Iḥyā' 'ulūm ad-dīn*, by sending copies of completed chapters to Istanbul, Syria, and Morocco.¹²⁵ He is the only scholar to date to undertake such a commentary on the entirety of this long work.¹²⁶

His fame spread not just due to these scholastic undertakings but because of his vast knowledge of geography and genealogy. Az-Zabīdī was familiar with the homelands of the many scholars and pilgrims who came to see him, even areas that were regarded as uncultured

¹²² *Ibid.*, 71.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 71.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 71.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 72.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 79.

backwaters.¹²⁷ Furthermore, his kindness and hospitality that extended to all of his visitors regardless of social class made him a highly venerable figure¹²⁸; indeed, it is difficult to find another such scholar throughout Islamic history who was equally familiar with ruling elites and lowly scholars from far-flung regions.¹²⁹

Despite building up this international fame and wide range of contacts, the political situation in Egypt contributed to the demise of his local position in Cairo. The self-destruction of the Mamluk regime accompanied by the loss of political stability in the region as well as the general economic prosperity drove az-Zabīdī into seclusion towards his later years, spending all his time working on his commentary of the *Iḥyāʾ*. Although renowned throughout the Islamic world, his social position in Cairo turned out to be more precarious. The death of his wife Zubayda in 1781 as well as his only son ‘Abdallāh Abū al-Faḍl, who died in infancy that same year, was very hard on az-Zabīdī the years directly following, as revealed in this note written into the commentary on the *Iḥyāʾ*:

“I have written this while life has reached the verge of death, and I lament to God for what I suffer.”¹³⁰

Whether due to personal grief or due to the political and economic upheavals of the time, az-Zabīdī withdrew from public life. He gave up teaching and began to reject gifts from leading Beys of the area, perhaps out of dissention with their plundering of Egypt at the time.¹³¹

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 73.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 73-4.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 74.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 76.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 77.

He also rejected a gift sent by Moroccan Sultan Mawlay Muḥammad b. ‘Abdāllah in 1786, likely in response to the Sultan’s polemics against classical authors like al-Ghazālī as well as against Sufi doctrines, two issues close to az-Zabīdī’s heart.¹³² Closer to home, his students began to be annoyed with what they saw as his excessive commitment to ḥadīth studies.¹³³

At this same time, he did remarry someone who was related by marriage to a leading Mamluk belonging to Ismā‘īl Bey, a faction instilled by the Ottomans that was ended by the plague that also took az-Zabīdī’s life in 1791. Az-Zabīdī furthered his Ottoman connection by receiving and accepting honorary treatment by the Ottoman admiral Ghāzī Ḥasan Pasha while he occupied Egypt in 1786, who made a house call to az-Zabīdī in this year.

Az-Zabīdī finished his commentary on al-Ghazālī’s *Iḥyā’ ‘ulūm ad-dīn* in 1787 and began work on a biographical history of the 18th century.¹³⁴ Unfortunately this work was cut short when he died prematurely. No elegies were written for him and few attended his funeral procession, perhaps due to the ravages of the plague throughout the city, but also perhaps revealing the extent to which az-Zabīdī had lost contact with the scholars and elites of Cairo. As Reichmuth points out, his network is marked by being far-reaching but lacked a core of relatives, children, and students at its center. The absence of a center in this network coupled with the massive political upheavals at the turn of the century in Egypt and throughout the Ottoman Empire led to the total disintegration of az-Zabīdī’s scholarly system of connections and thus his almost total oblivion shortly after his death.¹³⁵

¹³² *Ibid.*, 78.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 77.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 79.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 81.

MURTAḌĀ AZ-ZABĪDĪ'S CONNECTION TO COFFEE

There can be little doubt that az-Zabīdī drank coffee during his lifetime. Having spent some of his formative scholarly years in Yemen, the seat of the coffee industry in az-Zabīdī's day – at least throughout the Ottoman Empire – and then the rest of his career in Cairo, whose coffee shops in the 18th century were world-renowned, az-Zabīdī could not have avoided coffee even if he tried. His further connection to Sufi groups lends as well as his description of coffee as 'blessed' in the text below lends itself to the idea that he was a regular drinker of it.

INTRODUCTION TO THE MANUSCRIPT IN QUESTION

In keeping with the literary conventions of the day, Murtaḍā az-Zabīdī gave the following treatise the rather lofty name of "A masterpiece for the fellows of the age in explaining the legality of the coffee of Yemen," a title which rhymes in the original Arabic. (*Tuḥfat ikhwān az-zaman fī ḥukm qahwat al-Yaman*). While not a very long treatise – a mere eight folios as per the manuscript copy from Riyadh, with only 26 lines per folio – az-Zabīdī does an excellent job explaining three of the main objections to coffee and its usage as per Islamic legality while refuting each one of the objections. His rationale is soundly based in Prophetic Tradition, as would be expected from a scholar so renowned for knowledge in the hadith and Prophetic Tradition; his defense of coffee is based on medical benefits as well. Az-Zabīdī additionally recruits snippets of poetry in coffee's defense, which is also anticipated given his collection of contemporary poetry which he gathered during Cairo's cultural

renaissance in the middle of the 18th century.¹³⁶ The treatise itself was written in 1758, a mere five years after he arrived in Cairo, at the behest of an Emir of the region.

The translation is largely based on a complete copy made in 1808 and currently stored in Riyadh. The fact that a copy was made nearly twenty years after az-Zabīdī's death indicates that either the coffee controversy was still an issue in the 19th century or that az-Zabīdī hadn't been entirely forgotten at this time; likely a combination of both of these factors is what led to its duplication. A further manuscript copy was located in Cairo, the seat of the majority of manuscripts from az-Zabīdī; this manuscript is unfortunately incomplete. A manuscript was identified in Ankara, but could not be located in the library¹³⁷.

The thesis includes an edition of the Arabic text; vocalization is added when needed in order to clarify potentially ambiguous points in the text. Punctuation has also been added for sake of clarification and easier reading. A red backslash indicates a folio break in the Riyadh manuscript. Corrections were made in the Arabic script where there were errors or colloquialisms written into the text; these changes are in footnotes by an R: standing for the Riyadh manuscript and a C: for the Cairo manuscript, followed by the original word found in the respective text.

Regarding the translation, any words found inside brackets are my additions in order to make the sentences flow better in English or to introduce or give background to a concept that would have been self-evident to az-Zabīdī and his contemporaries that are now lost on a 21st century English speaking audience. Annotations are also included for this reason, as az-Zabīdī

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 53.

¹³⁷ In particular the manuscript mentioned in Reichmuth, *op. cit.*, 138. The Cairo manuscript mentioned in Reichmuth's book was located but is incomplete, as noted above.

was writing for an audience expected to be familiar with the names of leading Imāms of the day. Some of the sentences are abridged to make the reading easier for English sensibilities that do not tolerate run-on sentences as Arabic itself permits.

However, the philosophy behind the translation itself is to keep as close as possible to the original text while still making it palatable for the English speaking reader. As this is a classical text, it is therefore to be expected that the translation sometimes feels ‘stilted’, as do other 18th century texts read today, even those that were originally written in English. All translators are traitors as the saying goes, and it felt particularly treasonous to translate az-Zabīdī into vernacular English. Forgiveness is asked for any other treasons that may remain.

Reading is further enhanced with a fresh cup of espresso.

Translation

A Masterpiece for the Fellows of the Age in Explaining the Legality of the Coffee of Yemen.

In the name of God, the most gracious, the most merciful.

Praise be to God, guider to the right path, shower of the way of truth to all who take refuge in and turn to Him, sender of the Prophet Muḥammad, peace be upon him, a mercy to all creation, and a blessing on all believers, without doubt, trepidation, or oppression. Peace upon his¹³⁸ family and best noble companions, as long as the approach to guidance is clear and the veils of its face are uncovered.

Thus, know that brown coffee, as its fame spread widely to the horizons as the sun spreads at the time of its rising and the jurists of the age disclosed [their] differences in knowing its essence – which spread to all countries and sides – some [jurists] went to make it legally permissible, and others to make it legally prohibited; [because of this], the dear Emir, who loves the knowledgeable people, our fellow the Amir Ismā‘īl Jawz Yaḥyā ‘Azabān¹³⁹, may God perpetuate his glory and increase his righteousness and his reward, asked me about disclosing the essence of coffee and the differences in what is being said about it. So I answered him in a rush, relying on God, raising in this investigation the veils of doubt and suspicion. And I called my answer “A masterpiece for the fellows of the age in explaining the legality of the

¹³⁸ i.e. Muḥammad’s

¹³⁹ Ismā‘īl Katkhudā ‘Azabān, Egyptian military leader of the 18th century. See: al-Jabartī as quoted in S. Reichmuth, *The World of Murtaḍā az-Zabīdī (1732-91): Life, Networks and Writings*, (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2009), 46.

coffee of Yemen.” (*Tuḥfat ikhwān az-zaman fī ḥukm qahwat al-Yaman*). It is, as you see, the product of a short period of time. May it be covered with pardon if deficiencies are found. And in God I depended, as he is my trust and I rely on him.

Be aware that of the coffee of Yemen, in summary, is among that which is legally permissible, and that its drinking is absolutely allowed. Whosoever makes the legally permissible thing legally prohibited deserves ignominy and exemplary punishment, and the claim of making something legally prohibited results from mere stubbornness and error which is caused by the illusion of the mind. This is particularly true since the Islamic community¹⁴⁰ is unanimous on the legality of drinking it, as the hadith says: “Clearly my community does not agree on an error.”¹⁴¹ Whosoever makes coffee legally prohibited is either a follower of whoever throws suspicion on human kind, or he is a seeker of reputation among those who have prestige, according to [the famous saying] “do the opposite and everyone knows you,” and [thus] he is not to be blamed.

There are ultimately three opponents’ suspicions (*shubah*) [concerning coffee] that cause delusions¹⁴²:

The first suspicion (*shubha*) is that coffee is intoxicating, inciting pleasure. And everything that is intoxicating is legally prohibited, according to the text of the hadith.

The answer to this is that the claim of [coffee’s] opponent of its ability to make one drunk is completely invalid; rather, it is almost as though this statement is like a myth.

¹⁴⁰ Lit: Muḥammadan umma.

¹⁴¹ Hadith number 320, p. 319 in the abridged book *as-Silsila aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥa* by Muḥammad Naṣīr ad-Dīn al-Albānī, (Damascus: al-Maktab al-Islāmī, 1970).

¹⁴² Lit: The suspicions of the opponents that cause delusions are ultimately three:

This is because [coffee] has been frequently tried, and no one saw drunkenness in it. There is no doubt that the experience of the trustworthy is considered a certainty. As for the scholars of logic, the true experience elevates to the ranks of certainty. Furthermore, verily drunkenness has effects and signs that anyone can witness and judge by them that its drinker is drunk. [Among these signs] are the roaring of drunks, carousing, swaying from right to left, redness of the eye, a lack of stillness and gravity, vomiting what is in the stomach of what has been eaten, numbness of the body, a heaviness of the head, strutting, and laziness, whether by sleep or by slumber. Verily the Greatest Imām¹⁴³ said, “The drunken man is he who is neither fully nor less aware, and is unable to differentiate between a man and a woman, nor the ground from the sky.” Imām Abū Yūsuf¹⁴⁴ and [Imām] Muḥammad¹⁴⁵ said, “Rather, the drunken man is he who mixes his words, and is babbling in the sea.” Most religious scholars agree with this saying. In al-Khāniyya¹⁴⁶, the scholars issued fatwas based on the sayings of both of them [Imām Abū Yūsuf and Imām Muḥammad]. It was said that the Imāms of Balkh¹⁴⁷ agreed that the drunken man should read a chapter from the Qur’ān, and if he is able to read it, then he is

¹⁴³ Abū Ḥanīfa al-Nu‘mān b. Thābit, c. 80/699 – 150/767. Theologian and religious lawyer; founder of the Ḥanafī school of thought that adopted his name. Frequently referred to as al-Imām al-A‘ẓam. See: Art. “Abū Ḥanīfa al-Nu‘mān” written by J. Schacht, *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, EI 2nd Ed., accessed on 14 May 2012.

¹⁴⁴ Abū Yūsuf Ya‘qūb b. Ibrāhīm al-Anṣārī al-Kūfī, c. 113/731 – 182/798. Prominent Ḥanafī jurist whose opinions along with those of Abū Ḥanīfa and Muḥammad ash-Shaibānī form the core of Ḥanafī jurisprudence. See: Art. “Abū Yūsuf” written by Brannon Wheeler, *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, EI 2nd Ed., accessed on 09 May 2012.

¹⁴⁵ Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan b. Farqad ash-Shaibānī, 132/750 – 187-9/803-5. Famous disciple of Abū Ḥanīfa and Abū Yūsuf. Famous scholar and jurist of the Ḥanafī school. See: Art. “al-Shaybānī” written by E. Chaumont, *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, EI 2nd Ed., accessed on 09 May 2012.

¹⁴⁶ Al-Fatāwā al-Khāniyya, a theoretical work on Islamic jurisprudence written by Fakhr ad-Dīn al-Ḥasan b. Maṣṣūr al-Farghānī (d. 592/1196), a Ḥanafī scholar who wrote commentaries on Abū Muḥammad’s works. See: Art. “Ḳādi Khān” written by Th. W. Juynboll and Y. Linant de Bellefonds, *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, EI. 2nd Ed., accessed on 09 May 2012.

¹⁴⁷ Important ancient and medieval city and center of Zoroastrianism; currently a village located in northern Afghanistan. Known as Bactra to the Greeks. See: Art. “Balkh” written by R.N. Frye, *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, EI 2nd Ed., accessed on 09 May 2012.

not drunk. This is how az-Zaila'ī¹⁴⁸ mentioned it, and added that both of them [Imām Abū Yūsuf and Imām Muḥammad] said that the drunken man babbles and mixes up his seriousness with his hilarity based on convention. Don't you see what 'Alī¹⁴⁹ said, may God be pleased with him: "When the drunken man becomes drunk he raves, and when he raves he lies"? Then he said, "And as for the acme of drunkenness, happiness overpowers the mind, and it loses the ability to differentiate between things. What is less [drunk] than that is not free from the suspicion of being wakeful." End. Al-Baḥr¹⁵⁰ agrees with him.

Then az-Zaila'ī said, "Don't you see the Almighty's statement: ﴿[D]o not approach prayer while you are drunk, until you know what you say﴾¹⁵¹ [4:43]." Thus [God] clarified the state of wakefulness as the state of knowing what you say. Az-Zaila'ī said in *Kitāb aṭ-Ṭahāra* (The Book of Purity), "Drunkenness means he who does not know a man from a woman." This is also the choice of aṣ-Ṣadr ash-Shahīd¹⁵². As for al-Ḥalwānī¹⁵³, "[The person is considered

¹⁴⁸ Az-Zaila'ī, d. 743/1342-3. Ḥanafī scholar and author of texts on Islamic jurisprudence such as the commentary *Tabyīn al-ḥaqā'iq*. See: Art. "Ḥanafīyya" by W. Heffening and J. Schacht, *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, EI 2nd Ed., accessed on 14 May 2012.

¹⁴⁹ 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, c. 24bh/598 – 40/661. Cousin and son-in-law of the prophet Muḥammad, and fourth and last of the 'rightly guided caliphs' of Islam. One of the first to convert to Islam and source of Qur'ānic exegesis, Islamic jurisprudence, and religious thought. See: Art. "'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib" written by L. Veccia Vaglieri, *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, EI. 2nd Ed., accessed on 14 May 2012.

¹⁵⁰ 'Abū al-'Ayyāsh 'Abd al-'Alī Muḥammad b. Niẓām ad-Dīn Muḥammad b. Quṭb ad-Dīn al-Anṣārī al-Laknawī, aka Baḥr al-'Ulūm, 1144/1731 – 1225/1810. Highly distinguished Indian scholar and the most prominent scholar of the famous school of Farangī Maḥall in Lucknow, India, who later became a mufti in Madras, India. See: Art. "Baḥr al-'Ulūm" written by Moḥammad Shaft', *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, EI 2nd Ed., accessed on 14 May 2012.

¹⁵¹ Translation Majid Fakhry.

¹⁵² Aṣ-Ṣadr ash-Shahīd Ḥusām ad-Dīn 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz b. 'Umar b Māza, d. 536/1141-2. Famous Ḥanafī instructor. See: Art. "al-Marghīnānī" written by W. Heffening, *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, EI 2nd Ed., accessed on 14 May 2012.

¹⁵³ Shams al-A'imma Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Abī Sahl Abū Bakr, d. c. 483/1090. Often referred to as Shams al-A'imma al-Ḥalwānī having studied under 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Ḥalwānī in Bukhara. Most important Ḥanafī jurist in Transoxania of the 11th century. See: Art. "al-Sarakhsī" written by N. Calder, *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, EI 2nd Ed., accessed on 14 May 2012.

drunk] when there is an imbalance in his walking.” In *Sharḥ al-Wiqāya*¹⁵⁴ (The Explanation of Protection) [it is written], “A person is considered drunk when there is [strange] movement in his walking.” This is what is correct. It is also explained in Abū Hanīfa’s Book of Penalties that when a person knows nothing, even the heavens from the earth, there should be penalties of drunkenness¹⁵⁵. And any drinking that makes a person babble is forbidden.

As for the two [Imām Abū Yūsuf and Imām Muḥammad], the drunken man should be punished when he absolutely babbles, and most of the religious scholars agree with this. According to Imam ash-Shāfi’ī¹⁵⁶, the influence of drunkenness appears in his¹⁵⁷ walking, his movements, and his limbs. I said: this is a good detail. The legal school [madhhab] of Imam ash-Shāfi’ī agrees with what al-Ḥalwānī¹⁵⁸ says. This has been explained previously. So it appears to you in these statements that the coffee drinker is not called drunk due to a total lack of the appearance of the mentioned effects and signs. Rather, it’s true that blessed coffee does the opposite of all of this. By my life, the one who claims that it causes drunkenness is a slanderer; rather, a bold liar. So it must appear to you that he who says this is corrupt, and the one who says that coffee is doing so is either being an arrogant or an obstinate person. If the drunkenness of it is not proved, then it is proved that it [coffee] may legally be passed around,

¹⁵⁴ Famous book of Ḥanafī jurisprudence penned by ‘Abīdallāh b. Masa‘ūd Tāj ash-Sharī‘a, aka. Tāj as-Sharī‘a al-Aṣghar (d. 747/1346).

¹⁵⁵ Lit: the time of the obligation of punishment

¹⁵⁶ Al-Imām Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. Idrīs b. al-‘Abbās b. ‘Uthmān b. Shāfi‘ b. al-Sā’ib b. ‘Ubayd b. ‘Abd Yazīd b. Hāshim b. al-Muṭalib b. ‘Abd Manāf b. Quṣay al-Qurashī ash-Shāfi’ī, c. 150/767 – 204/820. Student of Mālīk b. Anas and later opponent of the Mālakī school of thought; founder of the Shāfi’ī school of thought. See: Art. “al-Shāfi’ī” written by E. Chaumont, *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, EI 2nd Ed., accessed on 14 May 2012.

¹⁵⁷ Gender neutral.

¹⁵⁸ Shams al-A’imma al-Ḥalwānī. See footnote 153.

and the lack of coffee drunkenness negates its prohibition. Thus, coffee becomes legally permissible despite whatever has been said.

The second suspicion: the adversary claims that it is cold and dry, harming the body. So it is therefore prohibited, as a result of the harm present in it.

The answer is that this statement is not supported by what doctors say. Rather, it is the words of the commoners. [This is] because the wise philosopher Dāwūd ibn ‘Umar al-Anṭākī¹⁵⁹ mentioned in his book *at-Tadhkira* [The Memorandum] in its text, “and it [coffee] is hot in the beginning, and dry in the third [degree]. Its coldness and dryness has been popularized, but it is not so, because it is bitter. And everything that is bitter is hot. It is possible that the skin of the coffee is hot, as is [the seed of] coffee, either moderate or cold in the beginning.” End. So the claims of the one who prohibits coffee drinking are weak. If we assume that it [coffee] is harmful to the body, and we assume that it is cold and dry, as is what is claimed, then not everything that is cold and dry is legally prohibited according to all scholars; rather, it is not even hated.

Islamic law does not prohibit having permissible things, even if they are harmful to an extent. Haven’t you seen that beef, which is cold and dry, is harmful to the body? Because in it is that which stirs up the black bile, generates distasteful wind, makes the mind extremely slow, burns the blood, causes pustules and eczema on the skin, elephantitis disease¹⁶⁰, and causes one’s testicles to swell. Who says that eating beef is legally prohibited, since it is harmful to the

¹⁵⁹ Dāwūd b. ‘Umar al-Ḍarīr al-Anṭākī, d. 1088/1599. Famous Arab physician born in Antioch and author of a number of medical texts and handbooks, including *Tadhkirat Uṭī al-Albāb wa-l-Jāmi‘a li-l-‘Ajab al-‘Ujāb*. See: Art. “al-Anṭākī” written by C. Brockelmann and J. Vernet, *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, EI 2nd Ed., accessed on 14 May 2012.

¹⁶⁰ A swelling of the lymphatic glands.

body? He must be unanimously considered as an infidel, because it deviates from what the Qur'ān says,¹⁶¹ and false speech and slander comes [from him]. Legally permissible sexual intercourse is not legally prohibited due to absolute coolness and dryness, not even because of ascribed harm. For how many pills and medicines with their coolness and dryness strengthen the body? And how many cold and dry foods have had their benefits made famous in gatherings? For if the harmful thing that is the cause for it to be legally prohibited is negated, then the cause for it to be legally prohibited is negated.

The third suspicion: the adversary says that coffee is administered in councils like alcohol, and it is like it in its being legally prohibited. The answer is that its passing around as alcohol is passed around is not a reason for it to be made legally prohibited. This is because it returns to the intention, which is an affair of the heart, as has appeared in the hadith: “Works but by intentions, and to each man that which he intended.”¹⁶² So if it was as such, then from where do they say that the coffee drinker turns a pure thing into a filthy, legally prohibited thing? Have you opened his heart and then seen what he intended? This wisdom is not known by anyone other than Him [God]. The claim that it is judged by the recognition of the public is therefore risky, as we have previously explained that the experience of the trustworthy yields itself to certainty. Does [the wisdom of this person] come as a lightning bolt, while he was awake or asleep? Therefore, we say: this is a thing that has no basis in Islamic law, but rather this claim clearly violates the texts of each legal school and in no way constitutes evidence against coffee, nor quenches the thirst. As such, if [coffee] is to be prohibited because it is

¹⁶¹ Lit: it is shocking to the Qur'ān [i.e. he came with something that is the opposite of what the Qur'ān says]

¹⁶² Hadith number 1 in the book *Kitāb Bad' al-waḥī* by al-Bukhārī, as related in *Sharḥ al-Arba'īn an-nawawīya* (Rabat: wizārat awqāf al-mamlaka al-maghribīya: 2010), 125-6.

administered in the act of passing around [as alcohol is], then [the one who says that coffee is legally prohibited] should prohibit sugar cane when administered in clean bottles, as well as milk and honey.

However, no one says this among the trustworthy, because the absolute legally permissible thing is not prohibited merely because of being passed around. Rather, and the scholars have mentioned the sunna¹⁶³ of passing around milk, because the prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, passed it [milk] around amongst his honored companions. Yes, it might be said: if someone places pure water in the cup, then moves his head and shoulders move, shakes his body and limbs, fans with his hand towards it to take it as he capers and his tongue stutters, then this ugly action is legally prohibited for him, as it is a hated act, and rather he is rebuffed with a severe beating. As for the water being in that glass, it is not at all legally prohibited, as its state does not affect the eyesight and does not cause it to be made legally prohibited. And if a man is lying with his wife or his slave, imagining in his mind a beautiful foreign woman for the sake of his pleasure, this is legally prohibited for him due to the temporary state of thinking of the forbidden foreign woman. And no one says that sex is legally prohibited at all. So how could legally permissible coffee be made legally prohibited just because of its being passed around? This is a temporary state. The one who made this claim has forgotten the meaning and the condition of [coffee] being passed around, which would cause legal prohibition. This is the completion of the three answers.

¹⁶³ A custom of the Prophet Muḥammad.

As for its essence and its benefits, the wise man Dāwūd¹⁶⁴ mentioned in “*at-Tadhkira*” in summary that “coffee beans are a fruitage of trees in Yemen, whose seed is planted in March and which grows and is picked in August. Its height is about three cubits¹⁶⁵, and the stems are about the thickness of a thumb. It flowers white, and its seed leaves are like the hazelnut. It may be spread out like beans; when it’s peeled, it is divided in two halves, the finest of which is the heavy golden bean and the worst is the black.” End.

I said that it has been originally grown since ancient times in the mountain pathway in Radhwān¹⁶⁶, in the district of Raima¹⁶⁷, and between it and Zabīd¹⁶⁸ is about a day and a night. It is said that Alexander ‘the possessor of two horns’¹⁶⁹ was the first one who discovered it by indication from his instructor the wise Aristotle, whereby he allowed him to go to Yemen, and he conquered Bāb al-Mandab¹⁷⁰, which is the small sea. They unanimously agreed that coffee was first popularized by al-Quṭb al-Kāmil Sayīdī Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī ibn ‘Umar al-Qurashī ash-Shāfi‘ī ash-Shādhilī¹⁷¹, the student of Nāṣir ad-Dīn ibn bint al-Mailaḳ¹⁷², who is buried in

¹⁶⁴ Dāwūd b. ‘Umar al-Ḍarīr al-Anṭāki. See footnote 159.

¹⁶⁵ One ‘arm’ from the finger to the elbow is equal to one cubit. One cubit roughly half a meter; thus the coffee tree is approximately 1.5 meters tall.

¹⁶⁶ Located in central Raima.

¹⁶⁷ A small district located in West Central Yemen between the Tihāma region and the Harāz mountains.

¹⁶⁸ An oasis city in the Tihāma region of Yemen approximately 15 miles from the Red Sea. See: Art. “Zabīd” written by Noha Sadek, *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, EI 2nd Ed., accessed on 14 May 2012.

¹⁶⁹ In reference to Alexander the Great, whom both Muslim commentators and Orientalists agree is ‘the possessor of two horns’ recorded in the Qur’ān 18:82-98, as seen here by az-Zabīdī’s reference. See: Art. “al-Iskandar” written by W. Montgomery Watt, *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, EI 2nd Ed., accessed on 14 May 2012.

¹⁷⁰ The straits between the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden that separate the Arabian Peninsula from the Horn of Africa. See: Art. “Bāb al-Mandab” written by G. Rentz, *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, EI 2nd Ed., accessed on 14 May 2012.

¹⁷¹ Sheikh ‘Alī b. ‘Umar ash-Shādhilī d. 821/1418, one of the many claimants to having discovered coffee. Patron Saint of coffee and supposed founder of the port of Mocha, although this is not accurate. Not to be confused with Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī b. ‘Abdallāh b. ‘Abd al-Jabbār ash-Shādhilī, founder of the Shādhiliya Sufi order. See: Art. “al-Mukhā” written by E. van Donzel, *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, EI 2nd Ed., accessed on 14 May 2012.

Mocha.¹⁷³ He discovered the benefits [of coffee] and made its characteristics evident. He urged his students to drink it during *dhikr*¹⁷⁴ and [during] acts of worship. They found in it strange benefits and marvelous characteristics. Thus, they wrote in books about it, expanded good and excellent compendiums about it, and spoke about [its] hidden secrets and evident symbols until its name spread to the horizons, and its virtues filled the bellies of folders and pages of papers. This was not restricted to a specific country, but to all countries by all different kinds of people and [in] all eras. When the wise and highly-skilled intelligent doctor Badr ad-Dīn Muḥammad Ibn Muḥammad al-Qawṣūlī¹⁷⁵, doctor of the Ottoman court, was asked about its essence, its temper, how to drink it, and its characteristics, he answered in such a way that freezes hearts in their chests and delights the eyes. I'll mention later exactly what he said, because I left the book in which this message is included in Zabīd, and I have not seen it for a long time. As for the wise Dāwūd¹⁷⁶, may God sanctify his secret as he is among the highest of the elite, said, "Coffee has most certainly been tried to drain the humidities, the coughing of phlegm, bronchitis, relieve a stuffed-up nose, and diuresis. What is boiled after roasting is known now by coffee. It alleviates the boiling of the blood, and cures smallpox, measles, and blood infections. Anyone wants to drink it to feel active and push laziness away should [do so with] a lot of sugar, pistachio butter, and ghee. Some other people drink it with milk, and this is wrong. It may cause leprosy." End.

¹⁷² Sheikh Nāṣir ad-Dīn ibn Mailaq, one of the mastes of the sheikhs of the Shādhilīyya order. See: Hattox, *op. cit.*, 18.

¹⁷³ A port on the Southern Red Sea coast of Yemen. Once the world's largest shipping port for coffee, now a small town dependant on fishing. See: Art. "al-Mukhā" written by E. van Donzel, *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, EI 2nd Ed., accessed on 14 May 2012.

¹⁷⁴ Communal Sufi worship services usually held at night; chanting the name of God repeatedly is often associated with *dhikr* ceremonies.

¹⁷⁵ I was unable to identify this individual.

¹⁷⁶ Dāwūd b. 'Umar al-Ḍarīr al-Anṭāki. See footnote 159.

If you say: The wise [doctor] mentioned that coffee causes a regular headache, makes someone skinny, diminishes sex drive, and might even result in melancholy, to this I say: there is no medicine that does not have both benefit and harm. And this is not our concern. Verily the wise [doctor] has mentioned, to prevent what we have mentioned, i.e. these diseases, that the cure for these diseases is to use sugar, pistachio butter, and so on. Regular headaches, emaciation, and melancholy do not occur unless with repeated drinking of it, and adhering to coffee most of the time. As for those who drink what is suitable to their need and adequate for it, we see none of these things we have mentioned. Among its proven characteristics is that it kicks out sleep and laziness, and that it helps in staying up late in acts of worship and studying the Qur'ān. It helps in acquiring knowledge and recitation of *awrād*¹⁷⁷ and staying up late in prayer and recitation. This is something that no two people disagree upon. Among its benefits are that it prevents the feeling of nausea and vomiting, strange humidity, external hemorrhoids, fissures, and it makes the flavor of the breath pleasant, and with Ḥuzanbil¹⁷⁸ or myrrh-tree sap, [it is used] to prevent internal hemorrhoids. Its grounds prevent the release of the stomach, and in it is the usefulness of colic. He who drinks it early in the morning finds that it stimulates the desire for food and prevents the eye from slumber; drinking it in the evening prevents the rise of bad fumes. Rather, for some types of conjunctivitis its usefulness for a disease resembling rust on the eyelids has been reliably attested.

¹⁷⁷ A section of the Qur'ān recited on a specific occasion; specified time of day or night devoted to private worship.

¹⁷⁸ A certain medicinal plant.

The young Mālikī scholar in Damascus, Syria, Abū al-Faḥ Muḥammad Ibn ‘Abd as-Salām¹⁷⁹, [wrote] in praise of it a muwashshah¹⁸⁰ whose rhyme consists of two consonants¹⁸¹, in a pattern in which no one wrote better, and no other literary talent could produce any other similar poem. And here is his statement:

“A little coffee of the pot is highly valued, the moon of its cup appeared at dark night as beautiful

Oh what goodness! Like melted jet

It’s red; it captivates minds with the black of its eyes.

Like musk in view and in fragrance

Melted aroma surrendered to it, and a magic stick of incense suckled its love like a child.

How lovely is a glass of coffee without bubbles on top.

The jewel of its ruby has a flame.

The daughter of coffee beans – its father, a meteor.

How much lightening glitters around it! How could it be hated, while its beauty is bright?

No wonder if the coffee survived in Dhū Salam¹⁸²

A pretty girl with dark lips who healed my pain when sipping from her [lips]

¹⁷⁹ I was unable to locate this individual.

¹⁸⁰ A certain genre of stanzaic poetry which originated in al-Andalus at the end of the 9th century. See: Art “Muwashshah” by G. Schoeler, *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, EI 2nd Ed., accessed on 14 May 2012.

¹⁸¹ *Mardūf*: A rhyme consisting specifically of two vowelless consonants.

¹⁸² I was unable to find this location.

Originally legally permissible, though among the legally forbidden [things].

When its spirit goes around the Ka'ba and walks between [aṣ-Ṣafā and al-Marwa¹⁸³], the Imam welcomes it

[Like a bride], al-‘Aidarūs brought it forth from its boudoir,

And prepared it for noble drinking companions;

With good qualities he embroidered it.

The masses fell in love when he named it Rāḥ¹⁸⁴, the best he did.

Its benefits verily appeared among people.

The inexperienced person, out of ignorance, opposes it

[and] lowers it, but God raises its value.

Oh you who blame me [for drinking it], you make me fond of it; the loveliest thing for a person is what prohibited to reach.¹⁸⁵

How delightful is staying up late while drinking it in Ṭayba¹⁸⁶

¹⁸³ Two small mountains located in Mecca, now in the Grand Mosque in Saudi Arabia, between which Muslims travel back and forth seven times during Hajj and ‘Umra. See: Art. “al-Ṣafā” written by F. Braemer, B. Joel, and M.C.A. Macdonald, *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, EI 2nd Ed., accessed on 14 May 2012.

¹⁸⁴ A type of wine.

¹⁸⁵ Referring to a famous poem by Abū Nuwās, poet of the ‘Abbāsīd period.

دع عنك لومي فإن اللوم إغراء ودأوني بالتّي كانت هي الداء

Don’t blame me, for blame is tempting But cure me with that which is the disease

See: Art. “Abū Nuwās” written by E. Wagner, *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, EI 2nd Ed., accessed on 16 May 2012.

¹⁸⁶ An honorific of Medina. See: Art. “al-Madīna” written by R.B. Winder, *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, EI 2nd Ed., accessed on 14 May 2012.

Drinking coffee removes sorrow in aṣ-Ṣafa¹⁸⁷

Its fragrance spread in ash-Shām¹⁸⁸

How many a singer, while the people are sleeping, would sing of it, bringing it together with the saints

Oh friend that dispels with its drink my slumber!

From the hand of a pretty girl with beautiful looks

And say to the people of the Hijāz and Yemen:

He who blames, may he be punished! He did not reach perfection at all.”

His [above] statement of “al-‘Aidarūs [brought it forth] from its boudoir” refers to the scholar ‘Abdallāh ibn Abī Bakr¹⁸⁹, governor of Aden, for verily he was passionately fond of drinking it a lot, as are also others who are descendants of the prophet. His saying, “it has the name of wine (*rāḥ*),” indicates that [the word] coffee is among the names of wine. Offering it [coffee] roasted is a new development, as the saying of the wise [doctor] points to, which was mentioned earlier. And perhaps the joint thing between them¹⁹⁰ is the color only, or the color and the way of passing it. His [above] statement “He lowers it but God raises its value” is an indication that the number [of its letters] is the same as in the name of the Almighty “Powerful” or “Strong,” for it never actually lessens in strength. In regards to that, a story has

¹⁸⁷ See footnote 183.

¹⁸⁸ i.e. Syria, Palestine, Lebanon, and Jordan.

¹⁸⁹ Fakhr ad-Dīn Abū Bakr b. ‘Abdallāh al-‘Aidarūs, 851/1447 – 914/1508. Famous Sufi and patron saint of Aden where he spent his last 25 years. One tradition states that he discovered coffee. See: Art. “‘Aydārūs” written by O. Löfgren, *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, EI 2nd Ed., accessed on 14 May 2012.

¹⁹⁰ i.e. wine and coffee.

been related about some of the greatest of the ‘Ulama along with the Sharīf of Mecca, may God Almighty exalt it [Mecca], that I heard several times from trustworthy scholars. Professor Abū al-Ḥassan al-Bakrī¹⁹¹, may God make holy his secret, said about it masterfully:

“I say to he whose chest is filled with anxiety and became among the most of the busiest thinkers

I recommend you of the drink of the pious people, for it is a drink of purity, high value and fame.

Verily, the fame of the drink of the roasted rinds of the coffee bean has spread around; you must have it, to survive worry in the chest.”

And let Ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq¹⁹² give his fatwā, and take it due to a fatwā from Abū al-Ḥassan al-Bakrī¹⁹³.

I said: who is meant by this is the jurist and scholar of hadith ash-Shihāb Aḥmad ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq as-Sunbātī ash-Shāfi‘ī,¹⁹⁴ the Sheikh of the jurist Ibn al-Ḥajr¹⁹⁵ and others. Ibn al-Ḥajr had a debate with some of the scholars of Mecca that lead to his victory in 950 [1543] to

¹⁹¹ ‘Abu al-Ḥassan Muḥammad al-Bakrī aṣ-Ṣiddīqī, d. 950-60/1543-1553, an important theologian who issued a fatwa in favor of coffee, most notably in the verses quoted here by az-Zabīdī. See: Art. “Ḳahwa” by Van Arendonk, *op. cit.*

¹⁹² Aḥmad b. ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq as-Sunbātī, Islamic preacher who declared coffee forbidden in 939/1532-3. In 941/1534 at al-Azhar he gave the speech that so incited its hearers against coffee and coffee drinkers that after the speech was concluded they destroyed several coffeeshouses and attacked the coffee drinkers there. See: Art. “Kahwa” by Van Arendonk, *op. cit.*

¹⁹³ In reference to the author of the poem himself, ‘Abū al-Ḥassan Muḥammad al-Bakrī aṣ-Ṣiddīqī. See footnote 191.

¹⁹⁴ Aḥmad b. ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq as-Sunbātī. See footnote 192.

¹⁹⁵ Ibn Ḥajr al-Haitamī Abū al-‘Abbās Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. ‘Alī Shihāb ad-Dīn, 909/1504 – 974/1567. Famous Egyptian scholar and prolific writer of the Shāfi‘ī school who argued vehemently in favor of coffee. See: Art. “Ibn Ḥadjar al-Haytamī” written by C. van Arendonk and J. Schacht, *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, EI 2nd Ed., accessed on 14 May 2012, and art. “Ḳahwa” by Van Arendonk, *op. cit.*

prove its legality. In his dictionary, he also points to what happened to his Sheikh in Egypt Ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq¹⁹⁶ when he pronounced a fatwā making [coffee] legally prohibited, [and he points out] the censure and humiliation and the emergence of the noble matter, firstly, and secondly, throwing the coffee bean into the sea, and the fines of the sultan against him [Ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq], and finally [fines] taken from his treasury. Then Shaikh Ibn Ḥajr said at the end of his speech, “And as for now, the issue became clear and doubt disappeared, and nothing remains of uncertainty concerning all of the reasons to make it legally prohibited among drunkenness, narcosis, corrupting, and making one sleep.” Read [about] it in “*ad-Daw’ al-Lāmi*” (The Gleaming Light)¹⁹⁷ of al-Ḥāfiz as-Sakhāwī¹⁹⁸, may God Almighty have mercy on him. Another man, may God Almighty have mercy on him, said in praising it in good lines [of poetry], in which he excelled and [that are] useful, as some related:

“For the coffee of the bean secrets and pleasures; a blessing drink, in writing it has habits

Brings comfort, no sadness to its drinker; in it is activity, relief, and flavors

Black in color, white in its beauties, as wearing a black garment is a decoration to the white [woman].

Hot in the taste, firebrands¹⁹⁹ when cold; in both cases, it has spaces for combining opposites.

How beautiful coffee is, how many wonders it contains; its beauties never end.

¹⁹⁶ This story is related in the introduction; see p. 26 above.

¹⁹⁷ Massive biographical dictionary of 15th century notables, including women. See: Art. “al-Sakhāwī” written by C. F. Petry, *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, EI 2nd Ed., accessed on 14 May 2012.

¹⁹⁸ Shams ad-Dīn Abū al-Khair Muḥammad b. ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān ash-Shāfi‘ī, 830/1427 – 902/1497. Famous Egyptian ḥadīth scholar and prosopographer who studied under the above Ibn Ḥajr. See: Art. “al-Sakhāwī” written by C. F. Petry, *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, EI 2nd Ed., accessed on 14 May 2012.

¹⁹⁹ In description of the ripe coffee berry, which is red.

It dispels concerns, sadness, and laziness, and the cold also; and how much fun is in it!

It is the drinking companion, for any night you stay up, for drinking it in the dark of darkness is worship.

And for every disease overtired our doctors, it is the medicine for a secret that beats²⁰⁰.

So seize the opportunity to drink it, and leave him who blames in embarrassment; how many ladybugs have died by the smell of the roses!”

Our sheikh al-‘Afīf ibn al-‘Afīf²⁰¹ the muezzin recited to us a poem in the coffee pourer, coffee, and cup metaphorically by Abū Bakr al-‘Uṣfūrī²⁰², may Almighty God have mercy on him, in his saying:

“A cup of coffee, that of deepness and wide eye, causes minds to be confused.

And its blackness is like [the eye’s] blackness and its whiteness is like [the eye’s] whiteness, and its smoke is the eyelashes.”

And he also recited to us:

“Our black coffee makes our body stagger, wonder at it, what a black!

It removes the disease of black bile.”

And our friend Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn ‘Abdallah al-‘Abbāsī²⁰³ also recited to us:

²⁰⁰ i.e. the heart.

²⁰¹ I was unable to identify this individual.

²⁰² I was unable to identify this individual.

“I am the beloved brown lass, and the clearest in the cups: enjoy yourself with me, enjoy yourself with me, for even in China they talk about me.”

And as for some meanings which are to be taken from its name, letters, and numbers, the number [of letters in the word coffee] is the same number of [letters] in the name of God Almighty. [His name is] “Strong.” It’s obvious that it is no secret that the second letter is the house of strength. And the *qāf* that starts [the word *qahwa*] is [the start of] the name of God the Greatest (*qawī*). And if you take the first and last [letter] away [from coffee] then it becomes the name of [God] the Greatest (*huwa*), which is the personal pronoun. And if you take away the first and the third [letter] then what is left is the two *hās* [one from the middle and the other from the end], and those are two names according to a saying. And if you delete the second [letter], then what is left is ‘strength’ (*qūwa*). The number of letters [in the word coffee] is four, and that is the same as the number of the rightly guided caliphs²⁰⁴, and the number of the four diligent Imams²⁰⁵, and the imams of the path who are dependent on them, and the number of the four directions²⁰⁶, and the number of the ‘poles’²⁰⁷ are four, and if you take the last of the word [coffee] it is the *hā* which resembles the number five (۵), from which are taken

²⁰³ I was unable to identify this individual; poss. Muḥammad Fākhīr b. Muḥammad Yaḥyā al-‘Abbāsī al-Allāhābādī, ḥadīth and Sufī scholar from India who was one of az-Zabīdī’s teachers there. See: Reichmuth, *op. cit.*, 11.

²⁰⁴ i.e. the first four caliphs of Islam after the Prophet Muḥammad, who are: Abū Bakr b. Abī Quḥafa, ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭab, ‘Uthmān b. ‘Affān, and ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib. See: Art “al-Khulafā’ al-Rāshidūn” written by C.E. Bosworth, *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, EI 2nd Ed., accessed on 14 May 2012.

²⁰⁵ i.e. the founders of the four orthodox legal schools of Sunni Islam, who are: Abū Ḥanīfa an-Nu‘mān b. Thābit, Mālik b. Anas, Muḥammad ibn Idrīs ash-Shafī‘ī, and Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Ḥanbal. See: Art. “Madhhab” written by the editors, *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, EI 2nd Ed., accessed on 14 May 2012.

²⁰⁶ i.e. north, south, east, and west

²⁰⁷ Probably referring to the four poles of sainthood in Shiism descending from Ḥassan: ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī, Aḥmad Rifā‘ī, Aḥmad Badawī, and Ibrāhīm Dasūqī.

the five pillars of Islam, and the number of the five prophets of determination²⁰⁸, and the five [daily] prayers. And if you add this 5 to the second 5 (5+5), the result is ten, which is the number of the ten who were promised paradise (*al-‘ashara al-mubashshara*)²⁰⁹, and the ten nights God gave the commandments to Moses, peace be upon him. If we continue mentioning the words and the essential letters and take from it names of God, verily we would lengthen [this treatise] and stray from what is intended. Unless being busy in mind with other things, we would bring what delights the hearts of men. And in this amount is enough to those who have a mind, and to Him we return. May God Almighty bless Muḥammad and his family and his companions, and peace be upon him.

The draft of this treatise was completed by the writer, may God have mercy on him, and may God make us benefit from him, on Thursday evening of the 21st of Dhū al-Qi‘da in 1171²¹⁰. The writing of the manuscript was completed on Monday night, the 3rd of Jumādā al-Ūlā in 1223²¹¹ by the hand of the poor man to God, may he be exalted, who hopes for God’s pardon for all his sins, Muḥammad ibn as-Sayyid Aḥmad, known as Harāwī ash-Shāfi‘ī. May God pardon and him, his parents, his teachers and he who calls on God for their forgiveness. Amen. And peace be on the messengers, and praise be to God, Lord of the worlds, and He is my Helper and the Agent of blessing.

²⁰⁸ i.e. Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and Muḥammad.

²⁰⁹ i.e. Abū Bakr, ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭab, ‘Uthmān, ‘Alī, Ṭalḥa, az-Zubair, ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān b. ‘Awf, Sa‘d b. Abī Waqqāṣ, and Sa‘īd b. Zaid. The tenth individual is either the Prophet Muḥammad or Abū ‘Ubayda b. al-Jarrāḥ. See: Art. “al-‘Ashara al-Mubashshara” written by A.J. Wensinck, *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, EI 2nd Ed., accessed on 16 May 2012.

²¹⁰ Thursday, July 27th, 1758.

²¹¹ Monday, June 27th, 1808.

Edition of the Arabic Text

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

الحمد لله الهادي لطريق الصواب، الموضح سبيل الصدق لكل من التجأ²¹² إليه وأنان، الباعث محمداً، صلى الله عليه وسلم، رحمة للخلق كافة، ونعمة على المؤمنين عامة، بلا شك ولا ارتياب وتحايف. التسليم على آله والأصحاب وخيرته الأنجاء، ما أتضح نهج الهداية ورُفِعَ عن وجهها الحجاب.

وبعد، فاعلم أن القهوة البنية لما سار ذكرها في الأفاق مسير الشمس وقت الإشراق، وأظهر فقهاء العصر في تحقيق ماهيتها الخلاف، وشاع ذلك في جميع البلدان والأطراف، فذهب بعض إلى تحليلها وبعضٌ لتحريمها، سألني الأمير العزيز، محب أهل العلم، صاحبنا الأمير إسماعيل جوز يحي عزبان، أدام الله مجده وأجزل برّه ورفده، في تحقيق ماهيتها، وما اختلفت فيها من الأقوال. فأجبت باستعجال، مستعيناً بالله، رافعاً عن التحقيق نقاب الشك والإشتباه. وسميتها "تحفة إخوان الزمن في حكم قهوة اليمن". وهي، كما تراها، بنت ساعة من الزمان. فليُسبَل عليها ستر العفو إن وُجد النقصان. وعلى الله اعتمدت، وهو ثقّتي، وعليه التكلان.

إعلم أن حكم قهوة اليمن بالإجمال أنها من جملة الحلال، وأن حكم شربها الإباحة المطلقة. ومن حرّم الحلال يستحقّ الخزي والنكال. ودعوى التحريم ناشئة عن محض العناد والغلط الذي من وهم العقل يستفاد. لاسيما وقد اجتمعت الأمة المحمدية على شربها. وفي الحديث: "لا تجتمع أمتي على ضلالة". فالحرّم لها إما متبع إلقاء الشبهة على الأنام، أو لسمعة عند ذوي الجاه من قبيل "خالف تعرف"، ولا يُلام.

وغاية شبه الأخصام الموقعة في الأوهام ثلاثة:

الشبهة الأولى: أنها مسكرة تورث النشوة. وكلّ مسكر حرام، بنصّ الحديث.

الجواب: ادّعاء الخصم إسكارها باطل بالإجماع، بل كاد أن يكون قوله من قبيل الخرافات. وذلك لأنّها قد جُرِّبَتْ مراراً، فما رأوا فيها إسكاراً. ولا خفاء أن تجربة²¹³ الثقات²¹⁴ معدودة من اليقينيّات. وعند علماء المنطق، أن التجارب الصحيحة ترتقي إلى مراتب اليقين. ثم إنّ للسُّكر آثاراً وعلامات يشهد بها الإنسان، ويحكم بها أن شاربها سكران. منها العريضة، والتعربد، والتكفي إلى اليمين واليسار، واحمرار العين، وعدم السكون والوقار، واستفراغ ما في المعدة من المأكولات، وخدر الجسم، وثقل الرأس، والتبختر، والكسل، إما بنوم أو الإغفاء. وقد قال الإمام الأعظم: "السكران هو الذي لا يعقل منطقاً قليلاً ولا كثيراً، ولا يعقل الرجل من المرأة، ولا الأرض من السماء". وقال الإمام أبو يوسف ومحمد: "بل السكران هو الذي يختلط كلامه، ويهذي في البحر". وإليه مال أكثر المشايخ وفي الخانية بقولهما أفتى المشايخ. وحكي أن أئمة بلخ اتفقوا على أنه يستقرأ²¹⁵ سورة من القرآن، فإن أمكنه أن يقرأها فليس بسكران. وهكذا ذكره الزيلعي وزاد أن عندهما أن يهذي ويخلط جدّه بهزله بناءً

²¹² R: التجأ

²¹³ R: تجربة C: تجربت

²¹⁴ R: الثقات C: الثقة

²¹⁵ R: يستقرأ C: يستقرأ

على العرف. ألا ترى إلى ما يُروى عن علي رضي الله عنه: "إذا سكر هذى، وإذا هذى افتري". ثم قال "ونهاية السكر أن يغلب السرور على العقل فيسلبه الإمتياز بين شيء وشيء. وما دون ذلك لا يعرى عن شبهة الصحو". انتهى. ووافقه البحر.

ثم قال الزيلعي: "ألا ترى إلى قوله تعالى: (لا تقربوا الصلاة وأنتم سكارى حتى تعلموا ما تقولون). عبّر عن الصحو بعلم ما يقولون. وقال في كتاب الطهارة: "والمراد بالسكر من لا يعرف الرجل من المرأة." وهو اختيار الصدر الشهيد. وعن الحلواني: "إذا دخل في مشيه اختلال". وفي شرح الوقاية: "أن يدخل في مشيه تحرك." وهو الصحيح. وفيه في باب الحدود عند أبي حنيفة في حق وجوب الحد أن لا يعرف شيئاً حتى السماء من الأرض. وفي حرمة الشرب أن يهذي. وعندهما أن يهذي مطلقاً. وإليه مال أكثر المشايخ. وعند الإمام الشافعي أن يظهر أثره في مشيه وحركاته وأطرافه. قلت وهذا تفصيل حسن. ومذهب الإمام الشافعي يوافقه قول الحلواني. وقد تقدّم. فظهر لك بهذه النقول أنه لا يطلق على شارب القهوة اسم السكران لعدم ظهور الآثار والعلامات المذكورة أصلاً، بل صحّ أن القهوة المباركة تفعل بخلاف ذلك كله. ولعمري، أن المدّعي إسكارها مفترى بل على الكذب مجتري.²¹⁶ فظهر لك أن القول به فاسد، وقائله إما مكابر أو معاند. وإذا لم يثبت لها الإسكار، ثبت الوصف للحكم الذي هو المدار، وانتفى التحريم بانتفائه، وعادت حلالة على رغم أنف قائله.

الشبهة الثانية: يدّعي الخصم أنها باردة يابسة، تضرّ بالأبدان، فتكون حراماً لوجود المضرة فيها.

الجواب إن قوله هذا لا مستند له من أقوال الأطباء. بل هو قول العوام. لأن الحكيم الفيلسوف داود بن عمر الأنطاكي ذكر في كتابه التذكرة ما نصّه: "وهو حارّ في الأولى، يابس في الثالثة. وقد شاع برده ويُبسه، وليس كذلك، لأنّه مرّ. وكلّ مرّ حارّ. ويمكن أن القشر حارّ، ونفس البين، إمّا معتدل أو بارد في الأولى". انتهى. فظهر/ بذلك ضعف ما ادّعه المحرّم. وإذا سلّمنا أنّها مُضرةٌ بالأجسام، وسلّمنا أنّها باردة يابسة، على ما زعم، فليس كلّ بارد يابس حرام عند أحد من العلماء، بل ولا مكروه. والشرع لا يمنع من استعمال المباح، ولو وُجد هناك ضرر ما. ألا ترى لحوم البقر باردة يابسة، تضرّ الأبدان لأنّ فيها تهيج السودا، وتولّد الرياح الغليظة، وتبليد العقل وإحراق الدماء²¹⁷، وأنّها تورث القوباء²¹⁸، وداء الفيل والقبليظة. فمن قال إنّ أكل لحوم²¹⁹ البقر حرام، لكونها مضرةٌ بالأبدان، فقد كفر بالإجماع، لأنّه صادّم القرآن وأتى الزور والبهتان. فلا ينشأ تحريم حلال الجنس عن مطلق البرودة واليبس، كلاً، ومطلق الإضرار. فكم من عقاقير وأدوية مع برودتها ويبيسها للأبدان مقوية؟ وكم من غذاء بارد يابس اشتهر نفعه في المجالس؟ وإذا انتفى الإضرار الذي جعله سبباً للتحريم، انتفى المسبّب الذي هو عين التحريم.

الشبهة الثالثة²²⁰ يقول الخصم إنّ القهوة تدار كالخمر في المجالس، فكانت مثله في الحرمة. الجواب: إنّ إدارتها على هيئة الخمر ليس سبباً في تحريمها، لأنّ مرجوع ذلك إلى النية، وهي حالة قلبية كما ورد في الحديث: "إنّما الأعمال بالنيات وإنّما لكل امرء ما نوى". فإذا كان كذلك، فمن أين يقال إنّ شاربها جعل طاهرًا عيّنًا كحرام نجس؟ هلّا شققت قلبه فأطلعت على ما نواه؟ وهذه²²¹ حكمة لا يعلمها ما سواه. ودعوى أنّه حُكِمَ باعتراف القوم فمجازفة، لما قدّمنا أنّ تجربة الثقات²²² عدّت من اليقينيّات. أو أنّه برق له سنا بارق الكشف في اليقظة، أو في النوم؟ فنقول: هذا شيء لا تثبت به الأحكام الشرعية. بل الكشف مع المخالفة الصريحة لنصوص المذهب لا يقوم دليلاً ولا يُطفي غليلاً. ومع ذلك، إذا اعتُبرت هيئة المجلس، يلزم عليه تحريم إدارة السكر النبات في الزجاجات الصافيات، وكذا اللبن والعسل. ولم يقل به أحد من الثقات، لأنّ الحلال القطعي لا يحرم بمجرد

²¹⁶ مجتري C:

²¹⁷ الدما R:

²¹⁸ القوبا R:

²¹⁹ Here is where the Cairo manuscript ends

²²⁰ لعله الثالثة in the text; corrected in the margin: الرابعة

²²¹ حكمة written in the margin

²²² الثقا R:

²²³ فنقول R:

الإدارة. بل، وقد نصّ العلماء على سَنِيَّة إدارة اللبن، لأنَّ النبيَّ، صَلَّى الله عليه وسلَّم، أداره بين أصحابه الكرام. نعم، قد يقال: إذا وضع الإنسان في الكأس ماء صرَقاً، وحرَّك رأسه وكفيه، وهزَّ جسده وأطرافه،²²⁴ وهوى بيده إليه ليأخذه، وهو يعربد، ويلجج لسانه، فإنَّه يحرم عليه هذه الفعلة القبيحة والهيئة الذميمة، بل يُزجر عليها بالضرب المبرح. وأمَّا الماء الكائن في ذلك الكأس، فليس بحرام قطعاً، إذ الهيئة لا تؤثر في العين بالتحريم. وشاهد رجل جامع امرأته أو أمته، مستحضرًا / في ذهنه أجنبيَّة جميلة، لأجل لذته، يحرم عليه ذلك لهيئة عارضة، وهو الاستتكار في الأجنبيَّة المحرمة. ولم يقل أحد بحرمة المباشعة أصلاً. فكيف تحرّم القهوة الحلاله بمجرد الإدارة، وهي هيئة عارضة، حتى غفل قائله عن معنى الإدارة الموجبة للحرمة نفسها وعن شروطها؟ وهذا تمام الأجوبة الثلاثة.

وأما حقيقتها ومنافعها، فقد ذكر الحكيم داود في "التذكرة" ما ملَّخصه: بئن ثمر شجر باليمن، يُغرس حبّه في آذار، وينمو يقطف في أبيب ويطول نحو ثلاثة أذرع على ساق في غلط الإبهام،²²⁵ ويزهر أبيض، يخلف حبّها كالبنديق. وربما تفرطح كالباقلا واذ فُشِر، انقسم نصفين وأجوده الرززين الأصفر وأرداه الأسود. انتهى.

قلتُ: وأصل منشئها من قديم الزمان في ثنية رذوان بمخلاف ريمة، بينها وبين زبيد يوم وليلة. قيل، أوّل من أظهرها الإسكندر ذو القرنين بإشارة من شيخه الحكيم أرسطاطاليس حين أذن له بالمسير لليمن، وفتح باب مندب، وهو البحر الصغير. وأجمعوا على أنّ أوّل من نشر صيتها القطب الكامل سيدي أبو الحسن علي بن عمر القرشي الشافعي الشاذلي، تلميذ ناصر الدين ابن بنت الميلي، وهو المدفون بثغر مخا. فأظهر منافعها، وبيّن خواصّها، وحثّ تلامذته على شربها في مجالس الأذكار والعبادات. فوجدوا فيها منافع غريبة، وخواصّ عجيبة. فصنّفوا فيها الكتب، وأكثروا فيها التآليف الحسنة البديهة، وتكلّموا على أسرار خفيّة، ورموز جليّة، حتّى امتلأ ذكرها في الآفاق، ومُلئت من فضائلها بطون الدفاتر وصفحات الأوراق. ولم يختصّ بذلك قطر دون قطر، بل في سائر البلدان بسائر أنواع الأشخاص والأنواع في سائر الأزمان. حتّى سئل الحكيم الماهر والطبيب الشاطر بدر الدين محمد بن محمد القوصولي، طبيب الدولة العثمانية عن طبعها، ومزاجها، وكيفية شربها، وخواصّها. فاجاب بما يُنلج القلوب التي في الصدور، ويقرّ العيون بالسرور. وسأذكر بعض ما قاله إجمالاً لأنّ الكتاب الذي فيه هذه الرسالة قد خلّفته بزبيد، وبعُد عهدي به. وأمّا الحكيم داود فُدس سرّه، فإنّه من ذي عمق الخواصّ، فقال: "وبالجملة فقد جرّب لتجفيف الرطوبات، والسعال البلغمي، والنزلات، وفتح السدود، وإدراار البول. والمطبوخ منه بعد التحميص هو المعروف الآن بالقهوة. يسكن غليان الدم وينفع من الجدريّ والحصباء²²⁶ والسرا الدموي. ومن أراد شربه للنشاط ودفع الكسل، / فليكثر معه أكثر الحلو ودهن الفستق والسمن. وقوم يشربونه باللبن وهو خطأ²²⁷ يخشى منه البرص. انتهى.

فإن قلت: قد ذكر الحكيم أنّه يجلب الصداع الدوريّ، ويهزل ويقطع شهوة الباه، وربّما أفضى إلى المايخوليا، قلت: ما من دواء إلّا وفيه نفع وضرر. وهذا لا يعنيني. وقد ذكر الحكيم، ولدفع ما ذكرنا، أي هذه الأمراض، فذكر دواءها²²⁸ وهو استعمال الحلو ودهن الفستق وما أشبه ذلك. ثمّ إنّ الصداع الدوريّ والهزال والمايخوليا لا يتولد منه إلّا بتكرار شربه، وشدة ملازمته في غالب الأوقات. فأما من شرب منه على قدر الحاجة وكفاية المطلوب، فلا يرى ممّا ذكرنا شيئاً. قلت: ومن خواصّها المجربة طرد النوم والكسل، والإعانة على السهر في الذكر، والعبادة، ودرس القرآن، واستفادة العلم، وتلاوة الأوراد، وقيام الليل. وهذا شيء لا ينكر فيه اثنان. ومن منافعها أنّها تمنع التهوّج وهو إرادة القيء، والرطوبة الغريبة، وداء المقعدة، والشقوق، وتطيّب نكهة الفم، ومع الحزنبل أو دهن المرّ، لدفع البواسير. وحثّالتها تمنع إطلاق البطن، وفيها نفع للقولنج. ومن داوم على شربها بكرة

²²⁴ R: اطرفه

²²⁵ R: الابها

²²⁶ R: الحصبا

²²⁷ R: خطأ

²²⁸ R: دواها

النهار، نَبَّهت شهوة الطعام، ومنع العين عن الإغفاء؛ أو عشيَّته، منعت صعود الأبخرة الرديَّة. بل نفعه في بعض أنواع الرمد، وفي جرب الأُجفان قول يعتمد.

ولفتي المالكيَّة بدمشق الشام أبو الفتح محمد بن عبد السلام في مدحها موشح مردوف، لم يُنسج على منواله، ولا سمحت قريحة أدب بمثاله. وهو قوله:

قهيوه القدر قدرها ارتفعاً
يا حسنهما مثل ذائب السيج
حمر آء تسبي العقول بالدعج
كالمسك في منظر وفي أرج
لها مذايب العبير قد خضعا
أحبيب بكأس لم يعلها حبيب
جوهر ياقوتها له لهب
إبنة بن لها الشهاب أب
كم بارق منه حولها لمعا
/ لا غرّ وإن سلمت بذي سلّم
لمياء في رشفها شفا ألمي
منشأها الحلّ وهي في الحرم
ما طاف بالبيت طيفها وسعا
من خدرها العيدروس أبرزها
وللندامى الكرام جهّزها
وبالمعاني الحسان طرّزها
وهيّم القوم عندما وضعا
قد ظهرت في الورى منافعها
والغرّ من جهله يدافعها
يخفضها، والإله رافعها
يا عاذلي زدتنى بها ولعا
كم طاب في طيبة بها السمر
وزال عند الصفا بها الكدر
وضاع بالشام نشرها العطر
ورب شاد والقوم قد هجعا
يا صاح شرّد بشر بها وسني
من كفّ ظبي ذي منظر حسن
وقل لأهل الحجاز واليمن
من لام في شربها دُعاه دعا
فإنه بالكمال ما اجتمعا أصلا

قوله "من خدرها العيدروس" المراد به القطب عبد الله بن أبي بكر، صاحب عدن، فإنه قد تولّع بشربها كثيراً، وكذا غيره من السادة. وقوله: "لها اسم راح"، إشارة إلى أنّ القهوة من أسماء الخمر. ووضع على هذا المطبوع بهذه الكيفيَّة مستحدث، كما يشير لذلك عبارة الحكيم، فيما تقدّم. ولعلّ الجامع بينهما التشبيه في اللون فقط، أو به وبالإدارة. وقوله "يخفضها والآله رافعها"، فيه إشارة إلى أنها بعدد اسمه تعالى قويّ فهي لم تنزل في قوّة. ونقلوا في ذلك قصّة لبعض أكابر العلماء / مع شريف مكّة، شرفها الله تعالى، سمعتها مراراً من الثقات²²⁹ ولأستاذ القطب سيّدي أبي الحسن البكريّ، قدّس سرّه، فيها وأجاد:

أقول لمن قد ضاق بالهمّ صدره وأصبح من كثر التشاغل بالفكر

²²⁹ الثقة: R:

عليك بشرب الصالحين، فإنه
فمطبوخ قشر البنّ قد شاع ذكره
وخل²³⁰ ابن عبد الحق يفتي برأيه
شراب طهور سامي القدر والذكر
عليك به، تنجو من الهَم في الصدر
وخذها بفتوى من أبي الحسن البكري

قلت: والمراد به الفقيه المحدث الشهاب أحمد بن عبدالحق السنباطي الشافعي شيخ الفقيه ابن حجر، وغيره. وقد جرى لابن حجر في شأنها مع بعض علماء مكة في الخمسين والتسع مائة من المباحث ما أدى إلى انتصاره عليه في حليتها. وأشار أيضًا في معجمه إلى²³¹ ما حصل من شيخه ابن عبد الحق بمصر، لما أفتى بالتحريم، من الإهانة والذلّ وبروز الأمر الشريف، أولاً، وثانيًا، برمي البنّ في البحر، وغرامة السلطان له، آخرًا، من خزانته. ثم قال الشيخ ابن حجر في آخر الكلام: وأما الآن فقد انكشف الغطاء²³² وزال الشكّ، ولم يبق أدنى ريبة عن جميع أسباب التحريم من الإسكار والتخدير والإفساد والتنويم. وراجعته في "الضوء اللامع" للحافظ السخاوي، رحمه الله تعالى. ولغيره، رحمه الله تعالى، في مدحها أبيات مستحسنة، أجاد فيها وأفاد، كقول بعضهم:

لقهوة البنّ أسرارٌ ولذات
جلابة البسط، لا قبض لشاربها
سوداء في اللون، بيضا في محاسنها
حرّاء في الذوق، نار وهي باردة
فيالها قهوة، كم قد حوت عجبًا
تنفي همومًا كذا وأحزانًا كسلا
هي النديم، إذا ما الليل قمت به
وكلّ داء عيت فيه اطببتنا
فاغنم لشرب، ودغ من لام في خجل
نعم الشراب، لها بالخطّ عادات
فيها نشاط وتفرّيج ونكهات
وزينة البيض لبس السود حلّت
لمجمع الضدّ في الحالين ساحات
ما للمحاسن فيها قطّ غايات
والبرد ايضاً وكم فيها فكاها
فشربها في دجى الظلما عيادات
هي الدواء لسرّ فيه دقّات
من فكهة الورد كم ماتت جعالاتُ.

وأنشدنا شيخنا العفيف بن العفيف المؤدّن، في تشبيهه الساقى والقهوة / والفنجان، لأبي بكر العصفوري، رحمه الله تعالى، ما قوله:

فنجان قهوة ذا اللجّ²³³ وعينه النجلاء حارت فيهما الألباب
فسوادها كسوادها وبياضها كبياضها ودخانها الأهداب

وأنشدنا أيضًا:

قهوتنا السويدا ترنج السويدا فاعجب لها من سودا. تزيل داء السودا.

وأنشدنا صاحبنا محمد بن أحمد بن عبد الله لعباسي:

أنا المعشوقة السمرء وأجلى في الفنجانين
تهنى بي تهنى بي، فذكرى شاع في الصين.

²³⁰ وخلي R:

²³¹ omitted إلى R:

²³² الغطا R:

²³³ اللليج R:

وأما بعض ما يؤخذ من اسمها وحروفها وعددها، فإنَّ عددها عدد اسم الله تعالى. "قويّ" وقول ولا يخفى أنَّ الثاني بيت القوّة. والقاف المبدوء به اسم الله الأعظم. وإنَّ حذفَ منه الأوّل والآخر كان الإسم الأعظم وهو ضمير الشأن. وإذا حذفَ الأوّل والثالث، كان الباقي هأن، وهما اسمان على قول. وإنَّ أسقطتَ الثاني، كان الباقي "قوّة". وأما عدد حروفها أربعة، يؤخذ منها عدد الخلفاء الراشدين وعدد الأئمّة الأربعة المجتهدين، وأئمّة الطريق المعولّ عليهم، وعدد الجهات الأربعة. وعدد الأقطاب الأربعة وإذا أخذتَ آخر الكلمة، وهي الهاء بخمسة، يؤخذ منه الأركان الخمسة وعدد أولي العزم الخمس، وعدد الصلوات الخمس. وإنَّ ضممتها مع الهاء الثانية، فيؤخذ منها عدد العشرة المبشّرة، والعشر ليال التي أتمَّ الله بها ميقات موسى عليه السلام. ونحن لو تتبّعنا لذكر الألفاظ والحروف الرسميّة واستخراج أسماء الله منها، لأطلنا وخرجنا عن المقصود. ولولا شغل البال لأتينا بما يشرح صدور الرجال. وفي هذا القدر كفاية لذوي الألباب وإليه المرجع والمآب. وصلى الله تعالى على سيّدنا محمّد وآله وصحبه وسلّم.

نجز من مسودّتها المؤلّف، رضي الله عنه، ونفعنا به، عشية الخميس 21 ذي القعدة من شهور سنة 1171 وكان الفراغ من كتابتها نهار الإثنين اليوم الثالث من جمادى الأولى من شهور سنة 1223 على يد الفقير إليه، عزّ شأنه، الراجي منه غفران المساوي، محمّد بن السيّد أحمد المعروف بالهراويّ الشافعيّ، عفى عنه، وغفر له، ولوالديه، ولمشايعه، ولمن دعا لهم بالمغفرة. أمين. وسلام على المرسلين، والحمد لله ربّ العالمين. وهو حسبي ونعم الوكيل.

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