

IBN 'ARABI'S HADITH PERSPECTIVE IN HIS WORK *MISHKAT AL-ANWAR*

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Abstrak

Artikel ini mengkaji sebuah karya penting yang disusun oleh Syekh al-Akbar Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi (1165–1240) berjudul *Mishkāt al-Anwār fīmā Ruwiya 'an Allāh min al-Akhbār* (Relung Cahaya Terkait Sebagian Riwayat dari Tuhan). Tujuan kajian ini adalah menyoroti pemahaman mendalam dari 101 hadis qudsi yang dihimpun dalam kitab tersebut, yang mencakup beragam tema keagamaan seperti prinsip ibadah, ajaran akhlak, nilai spiritual, konsep keimanan, ideologi hukum, pandangan metafisik, dasar eskatologis, dan lain-lain. Naskah ini dikenal sebagai salah satu kumpulan hadis bernilai yang dihasilkan oleh sang mistikus Islam pada abad ke-13 M, dan merupakan satu-satunya karyanya yang menyebar luas. Penelitian ini bersifat kualitatif dengan pendekatan deskriptif-analitis, filosofis, dan historis. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kitab *Mishkāt al-Anwār* (Relung Cahaya) diilhami Ibn 'Arabi untuk mensintesis pemahaman hadis dalam tradisi ortodoks dan sufistik yang beragam serta pragmatis. Inti hadis-hadis tersebut dipahami melalui penakwilan dan interpretasi simbolik terhadap pernyataan-pernyataan ilahi yang alegoris dan mistik. Menurut Ibn 'Arabi, “cahaya” adalah firman Tuhan yang memantul dalam “relung” Nabi Muhammad saw., yang menampakkan keagungan dan keindahan cahaya itu sebagaimana hakikatnya.

Kata Kunci: Ibn 'Arabi, *Mishkāt Al-Anwār*, Hadis Qudsi, Al-Qur'an, Tasawuf

Abstract

The paper analyzes Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi's (1165-1240) seminal work *Mishkat al-Anwar fima Ruwiya 'an Allah min al-Akhbar* (101 Divine Sayings) that compiled profound work of sacred hadith (hadith qudsi) as directly reported by the Prophet (saw) from God. It aims to survey its theological impact and postulate pertaining to the mystical ideas of God, which brought forth diverse religious themes underlying its arguments pertaining to the moral and religious values and symbols that constituted basic ritual and legal practice and its spiritual and mystical implications as highlighted by the Great Master Shaykh al-Akbar throughout this work. The study is based on qualitative method in the form of library and literature survey. It uses descriptive, analytical, philosophical and historical approaches to collectively process the data derived from primary and secondary sources that were further objectively and scientifically analyzed. The study concludes that the work *Mishkat al-Anwar* (The Divine Reports) portrays significance ideas and understanding of sacred hadith (hadith qudsi) and its broad ethico-legal and mystical conception in light of the synthetic ideology it brought forth that synthesize dogmatic orthodoxy and liberal sufi tradition. It set forth profound metaphysical and eschatological principle and value as well as its spiritual aspect and dimension in light of prophetic guidance derived from revealed law and its sacred interpretation and viewpoint. It reflected unprecedented allegorical and mystical connotation of the Divine Sayings, in light of the Word of God that inspired the light of prophetic reality and its metaphysical manifestation.

Keywords: Ibn 'Arabi, *Mishkat Al-Anwar*, Hadith Qudsi, Al-Qur'an, Tasawuf

INTRODUCTION

This paper offers a concise analysis of the book *Mishkāt al-Anwār fīmā Ruwiya ‘an Allāh min al-Akhbār* (“The Niche of Lights Concerning Some Reports Narrated from God”) authored by Shaykh al-Akbar Muḥyiddīn Ibn ‘Arabi (1165–1240), focusing on the intent and understanding of its hadiths. It is a profound work that gathers together *ahadith qudsiyyah* (sacred or divine sayings) collected and narrated by the renowned Andalusian scholar and mystic Ibn ‘Arabi—also known as *al-Shaykh al-Akbar* (“the Greatest Master”).

The book presents more than one hundred and one hadiths attributed directly to God and conveyed through the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). These hadiths are venerated in Islamic tradition for their spiritual depth, communicating divine speech that is distinct from, yet illuminated by, Qur’anic authority. The text is arranged in three principal sections: (1) hadiths with complete chains of transmission (*isnād*) ending directly with God; (2) hadiths without *isnād* but traced back to divine utterance; and (3) additional sacred hadiths focusing on divine mercy, judgment, and spiritual insight.

Its recurring themes include God’s mercy, justice, decree, divine presence, and the intimate relationship between the Creator and His servants. Many hadiths emphasize the transformative power of *dhikr* (remembrance), love for others for God’s sake, sincerity, and contentment with divine destiny. The compilation also addresses eschatological realities such as paradise, divine retribution, and intercession. Ibn ‘Arabi compiled these hadiths in part inspired by the prophetic tradition promising assistance to those who preserve and transmit forty hadiths for the benefit of the ummah (Ibn ‘Arabi, 2025).

Accordingly, this article seeks to broaden the study of this work, regarded as one of the most powerful spiritual compilations in the Islamic tradition, reflecting the inner light of divine declarations. It highlights both the traditional chains of transmission and the authoritative sources drawn from the recognized hadith and Sufi traditions, as well as Ibn ‘Arabi’s interpretive principles. Furthermore, it explains the foundational concepts he developed in understanding the sacred hadiths, providing symbolic meaning and addressing questions of authenticity surrounding the mystical reports presented in his classical theological and Sufi writings, which reveal the cosmological and metaphysical frameworks shaping his thought. In situating this discussion, it is difficult to find any explanation as comprehensive and integrative as that offered by Ibn ‘Arabi in *Mishkāt al-Anwār*.

A survey of previous studies reveals a range of scholarly work on *Mishkāt al-Anwār*, including monographs, theses, manuscripts, and translations. One significant English translation was undertaken by Stephen Hirstenstein and Martin Notcutt in 2004 under the title *Divine Sayings: 101 Hadith Qudsi*, published by Anqa Publishing (Ibn ‘Arabi, 2004). This translation was based on some of the earliest manuscripts held in the Suleymaniye Library in Istanbul. In 2025, Imam Ghazali Publishing released another English version entitled *The Divine Reports*, translated by Moustafa Elqabbany and comprising 138 pages (Ibn ‘Arabi, 2025).

Ibn ‘Arabi’s thought in this book has also been explored by A. N. Amir in his Malay translation titled *Relung Cahaya* (Ibn ‘Arabi, 2023). The Malay edition draws from the authoritative Arabic text of *Mishkāt al-Anwār fīmā ruwiya ‘an Allāh min al-akhbār*, originally published by Matba‘ah ‘Ilmiyyah, Aleppo, 1927; earlier critical editions include the bilingual Arabic/French version by Muhammad Valsan (1983).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs an analytical–descriptive method to examine the content of Ibn ‘Arabi’s *Mishkāt al-Anwār* (*The Divine Reports*). In analyzing the text, it applies qualitative (narrative) approaches that are analogical, phenomenological, historical, theological, and thematic, grounded in hermeneutic theory as well as the historical and socio-functional perspectives of Nurcholish Madjid, and draws on the hadith critique methods of al-Albani for both *isnād* and *matn* analysis. These frameworks are used to evaluate Ibn ‘Arabi’s spiritual and scholarly conclusions regarding the sacred hadiths and to distill the key themes imperative to the understanding of *ahadith qudsiyyah*. All data and materials were collected from library research and related literature, encompassing both primary and secondary written sources.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section details the key findings distilled from the essence of the *Mishkāt al-Anwār*. The original title of Ibn ‘Arabi’s work is *Mishkāt al-Anwār fī-mā Ruwiya ‘an Allāh min al-Akhbār* (“The Niche of Lights concerning some Reports Narrated from God”). These reports are so rich in meaning that it is impossible to capture them all with a single word or phrase. Recurring themes include our absolute dependence on God and His readiness to forgive and embrace those who sincerely return to Him. Their universality allows appreciation by audiences of any background. The words of God in *Mishkāt al-Anwār* are called hadith qudsi, generally understood as divine utterances heard by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and transmitted outside the Qur’anic revelation. There are 101 such hadith gathered in this collection, most of which are well known in the Islamic tradition. Among the many compilations of hadith produced by the 13th-century Islamic mystic al-Shaykh al-Akbar Muhyiddin Ibn ‘Arabi, this is the only manuscript that became widely disseminated (Ibn ‘Arabi, 2004).

Brief Profile

Born in Murcia in southern Spain (al-Andalus) on 28 July 1165 CE (560 H), Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muhammad ibn ‘Alī ibn Muhammad ibn al-‘Arabī al-Hātimī al-Tā’ī al-Andalusī al-Mursī al-Dimashqī (d. 16 November 1240) — known as al-Qushayrī and *Sultān al-‘Arifīn* — was an Andalusian Arab scholar, mystic, poet, and philosopher of immense influence in Islamic thought. Ibn ‘Arabi began his hadith studies in Seville at about fifteen or sixteen, following an extraordinary spiritual experience. During a period of seclusion he encountered three major prophets of the Western tradition — Jesus, Moses, and Muhammad (peace be upon them) — each giving him particular guidance. In that vision, the Prophet Muhammad saved him from danger, saying, “My beloved, cling to

me and you will be safe.” Ibn ‘Arabi recounts, “From that moment I occupied myself with the study of hadith” (Ibn ‘Arabi, *Kitāb al-Mubashshirāt*).

Inspired by this vision he began an earnest spiritual quest, quickly displaying exceptional gifts and meeting numerous spiritual teachers in al-Andalus. In Córdoba in 1190 CE (586 H) he experienced a grand vision of all the prophets from Adam to Muhammad, in which he was informed of his own role as the *Seal of the Saints* (*Khatm al-Awliyā*). He studied with eminent scholars and mystics across al-Andalus and North Africa, travelled to Mecca, Anatolia, and finally Damascus, where he taught and wrote extensively. Of the approximately 850 works attributed to him, about 700 were original and roughly 400 survive. His most celebrated writings include *Fusūs al-Hikam* and *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya*, exploring metaphysics, divine love, and spiritual reality. He mentored Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī and influenced generations of thinkers. His legacy continues to shape Islamic spirituality and philosophy today.

His cosmological teachings became a dominant worldview in many parts of the Islamic world. Revered among Sufi practitioners as *al-Shaykh al-Akbar* (“the Greatest Master,” from which the Akbarian school takes its name) and *Muḥyī al-Dīn* (“Reviver of Religion”), Ibn ‘Arabi was regarded as a saint. Medieval Europe knew him as *Doctor Maximus* (“Greatest Teacher”). A member of the Tayy tribe, born in Murcia on 17 Ramadan 560 H, he was Sunni, though his writings on the Twelve Imams were widely respected by Shi‘a audiences. Scholars debate whether he adhered to the Zāhirī school before affiliating with the Ḥanbalī. He died in 1240 CE (638 H) at the age of seventy-five and was buried in the Ṣāliḥiyya district of Damascus, just north of the city walls, where his tomb remains a site of visitation and reverence.

After his death, Ibn ‘Arabi’s teachings rapidly spread throughout the Islamic world. His writings were not confined to Muslim elites but reached wider communities through extensive Sufi networks. His works were translated into Persian, Turkish, and Urdu, inspiring many renowned poets trained in Sufi orders. Contemporary scholars such as al-Munāwī, Ibn ‘Imād al-Ḥanbalī, and al-Fayrūzābādī praised him as “a righteous friend of God and steadfast scholar,” “an absolute mujtahid,” and “the guide of Sufis in practice and knowledge, and the shaykh of shaykhs in spiritual experience (*dhawq*) and understanding (*fiqh*)” (Claude Addas, 2004).

Background of the Work

The Mishkāṭ al-Anwār (“The Niche of Lights”) by Ibn ‘Arabi represents one of the earliest and most influential collections of *ḥadīth qudsī*, comprising 101 reports drawn from both oral tradition and written compilations. This concise yet profoundly contemplative anthology assembles Divine utterances with remarkable literary and spiritual economy. Extant manuscripts are preserved, among other places, in the Süleymaniye Library in Istanbul, and the work appears to have played a pivotal role in popularizing this genre of sacred tradition. Among the many compilations produced by the thirteenth-century Islamic mystic al-Shaykh al-Akbar Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn ‘Arabi, this is the only text to have circulated so widely. It is not merely the effort of a scholar of *ḥadīth* literature, but a carefully curated selection by an accomplished spiritual master. Indeed,

throughout the Islamic world Ibn ‘Arabi is reverently known as *al-Shaykh al-Akbar*—“the Greatest Master”—a title reflecting his lifelong dedication to unveiling the primordial Unity that underlies all human and natural existence in its full richness and complexity.

Author of several hundred works spanning the breadth of Islamic mysticism and spiritual thought, Ibn ‘Arabi exerted an unparalleled influence on successive generations of Muslims. Many of his disciples became luminous beacons of wisdom in their own right. In recent decades, as an increasing number of his writings have been translated into Western languages, recognition of his importance as a champion of boundless divine compassion has grown steadily. That spirit of compassion resonates throughout the *ḥadīth qudsī* collected here, which he transmitted with both refined discernment and the exacting standards of a consummate *muḥaddith* (traditionist) (Hirtenstein & Notcutt, 2004).

Close examination of *Mishkāṭ al-Anwār* indicates that it functions in many respects as an epitome of discussions on *ḥadīth qudsī* frequently cited in his monumental *Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya*—especially its final chapter (chapter 560). That chapter offers foundational guidance for all who embark on the spiritual path, presenting nearly 170 practical counsels (*waṣāyā*) (Ibn ‘Arabi, 2021). In effect, this concise “reminder of what God has commanded,” drawn from the Qur’an, Prophetic traditions, and both his own and other mystics’ experiences, distills the earlier expositions of the *Futūḥāt*. Several sections quote and occasionally comment upon *ḥadīth qudsī*—almost invariably drawn verbatim from the *Mishkāṭ*. Careful analysis shows that no fewer than sixty of the 101 reports are repeated word for word, particularly those that constitute direct admonitions to humanity rather than divine addresses to the inhabitants of Paradise. Although the arrangement differs, two long passages (Futūḥāt IV 527–29 and 534–36) reproduce the precise sequence of *Mishkāṭ al-Anwār*, suggesting beyond reasonable doubt that Ibn ‘Arabi relied on this collection in composing the final chapter.

Notably absent are *ḥadīth qudsī* with dubious chains of transmission or contested authority, such as the oft-quoted saying, “I was a hidden treasure and desired to be known; therefore I created the world that I might be known.” Ibn ‘Arabi acknowledges awareness of this report’s authenticity through spiritual unveiling (*kashf*), remarking that it is “sound on the basis of mystical disclosure but not established by transmission” (*Futūḥāt* II.399, l.28). Yet he carefully distinguished between these different forms of knowledge and therefore did not include such traditions in this compilation (Ibn ‘Arabi, 2021).

Equally significant is Ibn ‘Arabi’s reliance on the canonical *ḥadīth* sources: of the six recognized collections, five—those of al-Bukhārī, Muslim, al-Tirmidhī, al-Nasā’ī, and Abū Dāwūd—account for no fewer than forty-five of the 101 reports selected (Ibn ‘Arabi, 2004).

Ḥadīth Qudsī

Ḥadīth qudsī—sometimes called *ḥadīth ilāhī* or *ḥadīth rabbānī*, often rendered in English as “Divine” or “Sacred Sayings”—refers to a distinct category of Prophetic report in which God Himself is the ultimate speaker, with the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) serving solely as transmitter. At times these sayings are addressed by God to earlier prophets such as Abraham, Moses, or David, or to the angels, and are then reported

by the Prophet Muḥammad. A number of such traditions are also directed explicitly to “the children of Adam” or to humankind in the hereafter. In *Mishkāṭ al-Anwār*, for example, five reports are addressed to the Prophet Muḥammad, eight to other prophets, twelve to angels, eighteen to the children of Adam, and twenty to humanity in the afterlife (for instance, on the Day of Judgment or within Paradise).

Although both the Qur’ān and *ḥadīth qudsī* convey the direct speech of God, it is essential to distinguish between them. The Qur’ān was revealed through the agency of the angel Gabriel and constitutes an inimitable miracle; *ḥadīth qudsī* need not involve Gabriel and may be imparted through inspiration (*ilhām*) or dream. Moreover, while Muslims are required to recite portions of the Qur’ān during the prescribed prayers, it is impermissible to substitute *ḥadīth qudsī* in its place. The two also differ in their modes of preservation and transmission. The Qur’ān was revealed to the Prophet Muḥammad—born in 570 CE—beginning at the age of forty, over a span of twenty-three years. Individual passages were recited by the Prophet at various times, memorized by numerous Companions, and committed to writing under his direction.

By contrast, *ḥadīth qudsī* never formed a discrete canonical corpus within the major *ḥadīth* compilations. Nearly five centuries passed after the Prophet’s death before the first dedicated collection was completed. The earliest known anthology, cited by William Graham in *Divine Word and Prophetic Word in Early Islam* (1977), is *Kitāb al-Aḥādīth al-Ilāhiyya* by Zāhir b. Ṭāhir al-Shahhāmī al-Nīsābūrī (d. 533/1138), compiled roughly half a century before Ibn ‘Arabi’s birth. Remarkably, Ibn ‘Arabi’s *Mishkāṭ al-Anwār*—completed in 599/1203—constitutes the second-oldest such text identified by Graham. It is distinctive not only because it draws upon established *ḥadīth* sources but also because it includes a section of forty *ḥadīth qudsī* furnished with full chains of transmission (*isnād*), each tracing back to Ibn ‘Arabi himself. Subsequent anthologies by later authors expanded the genre, the most extensive being Muḥammad al-Madani’s collection of 858 *ḥadīth* (d. 881/1476).

One notable characteristic of *ḥadīth qudsī* is their “concise and piercing expression,” brief utterances that convey profound layers of meaning. They exemplify the quality the Prophet Muḥammad described as *jawāmi‘ al-kalim*—the gift of conveying wide-ranging significance in few words (Ibn ‘Arabi, 2004).

Ibn ‘Arabi’s Engagement with Ḥadīth

Modern scholarship has paid relatively little attention to the role of *ḥadīth* in Ibn ‘Arabi’s life and writings, tending instead to emphasize the depth of his metaphysical thought and his close engagement with the Qur’ān. Yet any careful reading of his works reveals that he possessed an exceptionally comprehensive knowledge of the entire Islamic tradition and was recognized in his own time as a reliable transmitter of *ḥadīth*. One of his disciples, Ayyūb b. Badr al-Muqri’, routinely referred to Ibn ‘Arabi as “the shaykh, the imām, the learned scholar, the *muḥaddith* (traditionist)” (Martin Notcutt, n.d.).

Renowned as a master of spiritual teaching, Ibn ‘Arabi nonetheless pursued *ḥadīth* study throughout his life whenever opportunity allowed, eager to acquire knowledge whenever it appeared. In mid-life he spent two and a half years in Mecca, where he

compiled *Mishkāṭ al-Anwār* and at least four other works: *al-Mahajjat al-Bayḍā'* (also devoted to *ḥadīth*), *Ḥilyat al-Abdāl* (on the path to sainthood), *Tāj al-Rasā'il* (a collection of devotional letters to the Ka'ba), and *Rūḥ al-Quds* (including narratives of his Andalusian teachers) (Hirtenstein, 1999).

In his *Fihrist*, a catalogue enumerating 248 of his writings composed up to 627/1229, Ibn 'Arabi lists numerous additional *ḥadīth*-focused works besides *Mishkāṭ al-Anwār*. These include *Kitāb al-Mahajjat al-Bayḍā' fī al-Aḥkām al-Shar'iyya* (a legal treatise compiled in Mecca a year after *Mishkāṭ al-Anwār*), *Kitāb Miftāḥ al-Sa'āda* (drawn from the collections of Muslim and Bukhārī as well as selected reports from al-Tirmidhī), *Kitāb al-Miṣbāḥ fī Jam' Bayn al-Ṣiḥāḥ* (a synthesis of the six canonical *ḥadīth* books: Bukhārī, Muslim, Tirmidhī, Ibn Mājah, Abū Dāwūd, and al-Nasā'ī), *Kitāb Kanz al-Abrār fīmā Rūwiya 'an al-Nabī* (a compendium of supplications and invocations), *Kitāb al-Arba'īn Ḥadīthan al-Mutaqābila wa-l-Arba'īn al-Tāwīlāt*, and *Kitāb Mishkāṭ al-Ma'qūl al-Muqtabasa min Nūr al-Manqūl* (a nine-chapter study comparing rational reflection with inspired transmission), among others (Martin Notcutt, n.d.).

Narrations and Reports

Ibn 'Arabi's *Mishkāṭ al-Anwār* opens with a concise preface and concludes with a khātimah that seals the transmission chain (*riwāyah*) through a series of teachers (*turuq*) leading back to his accredited masters (*musnid*), ending in Mecca as recorded in the final section of the work. The book begins by invoking the Name of God, the Most Gracious and Most Merciful, followed by blessings and prayers upon the Prophet ﷺ, his family, and his Companions, and by the author's own supplication for the acceptance of his work:

"May the mercy of the Lord be poured upon our master Muhammad, his family, and his Companions, and peace be upon them all... The servant who places his greatest hope in his Lord, Muḥammad ibn 'Alī ibn Muḥammad ibn al-'Arabī al-Ṭā'ī al-Ḥātimī al-Andalusī—may God grant him the best of endings—says: Praise be to God, Lord of all the worlds, the ultimate reward for those who fear Him. There is no power nor strength except through God, the Most High, the Magnificent. May blessings and peace be upon Muḥammad, the master of all creation, upon his pure family, upon his Companions, his followers, and all the believers." (Ibn al-'Arabī 1927, 17)

The work ends with a final report transmitted from al-Naqqāsh and with a meticulous listing of transmitters responsible for the narrations contained within the text, along with the location where it was last compiled:

"Hadith number one hundred and one—this is the final sacred report, and with it this book concludes... This ḥadīth was conveyed to me repeatedly by my shaykh, the Imam, a descendant of the Prophet ﷺ, the ḥadīth transmitter Abū Muḥammad Yūnus b. Yaḥyā b. Abū al-Ḥasan ... [long chain of transmitters] ... from 'Abd Allāh b. Mas'ūd. He narrated from 'Alī the hadith concerning the 'Station on the Day of Resurrection' and from the Prophet ﷺ the hadith on 'God's Address to the Inhabitants of Paradise,' both of which we have mentioned."

The colophon further states:

"Here ends the book entitled The Niche of Lights Concerning a Selection of Reports Narrated from God, Exalted is He. This third part is hereby completed, and with it the entire work, in the Sacred Precinct of Mecca on the evening of Sunday, the third

of Jumādā al-Ākhirah, in the year 599 [16 February 1203]. Written in the author's own hand by Muḥammad b. 'Alī b. Muḥammad b. al-'Arabī al-Ṭā'ī al-Ḥātimī. May God show mercy to whoever reads it and bless the one who compiled it. And may God's mercy be upon our master Muḥammad ﷺ, his family, and his Companions, and may He grant them peace. O You, my firmest trust! O You, my unfailing hope! Seal my work with success!" (Ibn 'Arabī 2004, 133)

This final prayer, found in only some manuscripts, appears to echo a hadith transmitted by al-Naqqāsh (see *Mishkāt al-Anwār*, Cairo 1999, p. 69). In the closing remarks Ibn 'Arabī records the place and time of composition: the Sacred Sanctuary of Mecca in the year 599 AH. The one-hundred-and-first hadith, learned while facing the Ka'bah, also appears in full in chapters 64 and 65 of the *Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya* (Ibn 'Arabī 2004, 107).

In the introduction, the author cites the motivation for compiling the collection, inspired by well-known prophetic traditions promising merit to those who preserve forty hadiths:

"According to Ibn 'Abbās, the Messenger of God ﷺ said: 'Whoever preserves for my community forty hadiths from the Sunna, I shall grant him my intercession on the Day of Resurrection.' According to Anas ibn Mālik, the Messenger of God ﷺ also said: 'Whoever preserves for my community forty hadiths they are in need of, God will record him as a learned and knowledgeable person.' ... Having learned these sayings of the Prophet ﷺ, and realizing that humankind stands in greater need of the Hereafter—its final abode—than of this world, I have gathered these forty hadiths in Mecca, may God protect it, during the months of the year 599 [AH]. I resolved to select only those hadiths whose chains of transmission connect directly back to God, exalted be He." (Ibn al-'Arabī 1927, 18)

Mishkāt al-Anwār is the only work in Ibn 'Arabī's vast corpus devoted specifically to sacred hadith (*ḥadīth qudsī*). As he explains in the preface, the compilation responds to the two traditions cited above. Believing that people need the afterlife more than worldly life, he presents two sets of forty hadiths, then adds twenty more and finally one extra to honor the "oddness" (*witr*) beloved to God—again echoing the well-known saying, "God is One and loves the odd number."

The 101 hadiths are therefore arranged in three parts:

1. First Forty (al-aḥādīth al-musnadah): each with an unbroken chain (*isnād*) reaching God through the Prophet ﷺ.
2. Second Forty (al-aḥādīth al-marfū'ah / *khābar*): divine sayings without a complete chain through the Prophet, many drawn from canonical collections such as *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* and *Tirmidhī*. Seven of these derive from the long hadith on the Station of the Day of Judgment narrated by al-Naqqāsh (d. 351/962).
3. Final Twenty-One (al-aḥādīth al-mursalāh): mostly from the same source, the last of which carries a direct chain.

This tripartite structure explains the various titles by which the work is known. The book's content follows the hierarchy of these transmissions, beginning with the fully-chained reports, followed by those lacking full chains but traced to divine utterance, and

concluding with additional sacred sayings emphasizing God's mercy, judgment, and mystical insight.

The text further enumerates its topics and subthemes in sequence, for example:

Part One (Hadith 1–40): Prohibition of injustice; eliminating associationism; the believer with little provision; God reconciling believers; the veil of Paradise and Hell; reciting the Fātiḥa in a single breath; “The Son of Adam reviles Me”; remembrance and forgetfulness of God; “My hand is full”; “I am with My servant when he remembers Me”... and so on through Hadith 40: “There is no god but God.”

Part Two (Khabar 1–40): Abraham and disavowal of the beloved; David and the bonds of the heart; Moses and the deed most loved by God; “I know My friends”; the man who killed himself; “Remember Me when facing the enemy”; “My mercy outstrips My wrath”... continuing through Khabar 40: “I have forgiven them.”

Part Three (Hadith 1–21): God's promise to the one who goes forth in jihad; God's wonder at the warrior; gifts to the martyr; the people of remembrance; Moses' supplication; God's blessings upon the Prophet; maintaining kinship ties; the necessity of compassion; “When God loves a servant...”; divine forgiveness; “My servant draws near to Me”; acceptance of deeds; and finally Hadith 21: God's response to the inhabitants of Paradise and His answer to their requests (Ibn al-‘Arabī 1927, 3).

This careful arrangement underscores Ibn ‘Arabī's intent: to provide a spiritually charged, meticulously transmitted anthology of divine utterances that guide the believer toward the ultimate reality of the Hereafter.

Fiqh al-Ḥadīth (Understanding the Hadith)

In *Mishkāṭ al-Anwār (The Niche of Lights)*, Ibn ‘Arabī interprets “light” as the divine Word (*kalām Allāh*) that shines forth within the “niche” of the Prophet ﷺ, manifesting the majesty and beauty of this light exactly as it truly is (Ibn al-‘Arabī, 1927). Ibn ‘Arabī rarely adds explicit commentary to the hadiths collected in this work. Yet one can discern his intended meaning from the way he evaluates their authority and chains of transmission (*isnād*), and from his careful selection of narrations that embody divine values, servanthood, and the essence of humanity.

Accurate understanding of these hadiths has allowed scholars and jurists to engage in *istinbāt*—deriving legal and ethical rulings—from the apparent meaning (*ẓāhir*) of the texts. An example is the very first hadith, which emphasizes justice and the absolute prohibition of wrongdoing:

Hadith 1: Narrated from Abū Dharr, the Prophet ﷺ reported these words from God, ever Praiseworthy and Exalted: “*O My servants, I have forbidden oppression for Myself and I have made it forbidden among you, so do not oppress one another. O My servants, all of you are astray except those whom I guide, so seek guidance from Me and I will guide you. O My servants, all of you are hungry except those whom I feed, so ask Me for food and I will feed you. O My servants, all of you are naked except those whom I clothe, so ask Me for clothing and I will clothe you. O My servants, you sin by night and by day, and I forgive all sins, so seek forgiveness from Me and I will forgive you. O My servants, you can neither harm Me nor benefit Me. O My servants, if the first of you and the last of you, humans and jinn alike, were as*

pious as the most pious heart among you, that would not add anything to My kingdom. O My servants, if the first of you and the last of you, humans and jinn alike, were as wicked as the most wicked heart among you, that would not diminish anything of My kingdom. O My servants, if the first of you and the last of you, humans and jinn alike, were to stand together and ask of Me, and if I were to give each what he requested, that would not decrease what is with Me any more than a needle decreases the sea when dipped into it. O My servants, it is but your deeds that I record for you; then I will recompense you for them. Whoever finds good, let him praise God, and whoever finds otherwise, let him blame no one but himself.”(Ibn al-‘Arabī, 1927:21)

Ibn ‘Arabī offers a symbolic reflection: just as a needle immersed in the ocean withdraws only a drop without reducing the sea, so too do human actions fail to diminish God’s boundless sovereignty. He repeats this hadith in *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya* (Chapter 560), briefly commenting that it demonstrates humanity’s complete dependence on God for guidance, sustenance, and forgiveness. He likens the hadith to “a remedy for whatever spiritual sickness afflicts the ignorant souls who fail to grasp the meaning of His words, ‘There is nothing comparable to Him.’” He exhorts the reader:

“If you neglect what I have advised you to do, you have only yourself to blame. If you are ignorant, I have informed you. If you forget, I have reminded you. If you are a believer, this reminder will benefit you. As for me, I have fulfilled God’s command to warn you; your heeding the warning is testimony to your faith. This is my teaching—hold fast to it. This is my counsel—know it well.” (Stephen Hirtenstein & Martin Notcutt, 2004)

The **second hadith** affirms pure monotheism (*tawḥīd*) and rejects any association of partners with God:

Hadith 2: From Abū Hurayrah, the Messenger of God ﷺ said that the Almighty declared: *“I am the One who has no need of partners. Whoever performs a deed in which he associates someone else with Me, I disown him, and he is left to the one he associated with Me.”* (Ibn al-‘Arabī, 1927:23)

This hadith resonates with Qur’ānic passages condemning idolatry, such as:

“When he saw the sun rising, he said, ‘This is my Lord; this is greater!’ But when it set, he said, ‘O my people, indeed I am free from what you associate [with God]. Truly I have turned my face toward Him who created the heavens and the earth, inclining toward truth, and I am not among those who associate others with God.’” (Q 6:78)

Here the Qur’ān and the hadith converge on the rejection of shirk and the affirmation of the primordial Abrahamic faith (*al-ḥanīfiyyah al-samḥah*).

Toward the end of *Mishkāṭ al-Anwār*, the focus shifts to eschatology. Hadith 99 presents a vivid scene of the Last Day, revealing the divine judgment that exposes the hidden depths of human hearts. Hadith 100 points to the possibility of the believers beholding God in the hereafter. Finally, Hadith 101 portrays the overflowing mercy and generosity of God toward the people of Paradise:

“In Paradise, God—Most High, the One, the Self-Sufficient, the Ever-Faithful to His promise—will say: ‘This is My Garden, and I have granted you full authority within it. Here I reveal Myself to you. This is My hand that scatters the dew and rain, freely

and without withholding. I watch over you without ever turning away. Ask of Me whatever you desire... You shall have no need or want, no pain or sorrow, no weakness or aging, no dissatisfaction or oppression, and this will never change for all eternity. The gift of everlasting life is your joy. You are honored and blessed forever. Bring Me your needs and I will fulfill them in abundance.’ They will answer: ‘Our Lord, our only desire is the perpetual vision of Your Noble Face and Your good pleasure with us.’ Then the Exalted will say: ‘Here is My Face unveiled to you forever. Rejoice, for I am forever pleased with you. Enter your gardens, delight with your companions, enjoy your dwellings, and rest by the rivers of Kawthar, Kāfūr, Tasnīm, and Salsabīl...’” (Ibn al-‘Arabī, 1927:129)

This vision aligns with Qur’ānic descriptions of Paradise (e.g., Q 55:76; 56:29–33; 36:55–58; 25:24). Classical and modern commentators, including Muhammad Asad, elaborate that *al-Kawthar* refers to a celestial river or fountain revealed to the Prophet ﷺ during the Mi‘rāj, symbolizing “abundance” and the unity underlying multiplicity (Asad, *The Message of the Qur’an*, 1980).

Asad further explains the imagery of *Tasnīm* (Q 83:27) and *Kāfūr* (Q 76:5–6): these names evoke exalted, life-giving sources of spiritual bliss. *Tasnīm*, derived from the verb *sannama* (“to elevate”), alludes to a “wine of revelation” tasted by those drawn near to God, a symbol of the highest knowledge and honor (Asad, 1980, note on Q 76:27).

Through these hadiths and Qur’ānic resonances, Ibn ‘Arabī underscores the core of *fiqh al-ḥadīth*: recognizing the absolute sovereignty of God, the futility of associating partners with Him, and the eternal reward awaiting those who seek His guidance, sustenance, and forgiveness with undivided hearts.

CONCLUSION

From this concise discussion of *Mishkāṭ al-Anwār*, it can be concluded that Ibn ‘Arabī presents an authoritative and universal approach to the ḥadīth tradition, emphasizing the moral and ethical core distilled from the broader meanings of the prophetic texts. The work stands as a classical source that gathers a rich selection of ḥadīth qudsī along with succinct legal implications, all linked to the great Sufi masters (*mashāyikh*) and leading ḥadīth scholars of his time.

Its narrative strength and methodological rigor—covering both the transmission (*riwāyah*) and critical analysis (*dirāyah*)—are widely recognized. Ibn ‘Arabī highlights a continuous chain of transmitters that ultimately connects back to God, thereby demonstrating the authenticity and reliability of the ḥadīth qudsī he records. In his hands, these sayings are enlivened as a vital treasury of the ḥadīth qudsī tradition, clearly distinguished from the Qur’ān while still encompassing profound metaphysical sanctity and divine authority.

Moreover, the trustworthiness of these reports rests on their transmission through orthodox spiritual teachers (*mashāyikh mursyid*) who are unanimously accepted within the framework of Islamic law. Ibn ‘Arabī also maintains a balanced consideration of both the clarity of the isnād (chain of transmission) and the integrity of the matn (text), as seen in the divine discourses he cites. These discourses carry symbolic layers of mystical

teaching that underscore absolute dependence on God and the vastness of His forgiveness.

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