Salim Barakat, Mahmud Darwish, and the Kurdish and Palestinian Similitude

Salim Barakat, Mahmud Darwish, and the Kurdish and Palestinian Similitude:
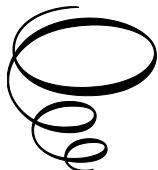
Qamishli Extended

By

Aviva Butt

Foreword by Reuven Snir

Salim Barakat, Mahmud Darwish, and the Kurdish and Palestinian Similitude: Qamishli Extended

By Aviva Butt

This book first published 2021

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Lady Stephenson Library, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2PA, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Copyright © 2021 by Aviva Butt

CONTENTS

The creativity of Salīm Barakāt and Maḥmūd Darwīsh from the 1980s onward.
In *Niqābat al-Ansāb* (Lineage) (1973), Barakāt takes onto his shoulders
responsibility for the collective.

In his poem *Ḥazā'in Manhūba* (Stolen Treasures) (1986), Barakāt hearkens
back to but does not directly mention the poetry of Shāh Ismā'īl Khaṭā'ī
(Sinner), the Shāh's name as a Sufi poet.

The recurring theme of insurgence and its consequence relies heavily on the
unadorned Story of Iblīs as told in Sūrat Al-Ā'rāf 7:11-25—the story of the
disobedience, punishment and reprieve of Iblīs.

Written well before Maḥmūd Darwīsh's death, the structure implies that this
poem is only part of an epic never to end.

What the epilogue to Barakāt's eulogy assumes you know about his friend.
Darwīsh's early poems: *Abī* (My Father) (1966); *Rīta' wa-l-Bunduqiyya* (Rita
and the Rifle) (1967); *Qaṣīdat al-Raml* (The Poem of the Sand) (1977), and
others.

Darwīsh's *al-Hudhud* (The Hoopoe) (1990) hearkens back to the allegorical
genre established by the poet-philosopher Ibn Sīnā. Darwīsh's pantheistic
Sufism. *Aḥada ʿAshara Kawkaban* (Eleven Stars) (1992), a "ballade."

Darwīsh tells the tale of the Palestinian collective, the collective that the poet
himself epitomizes. A discussion on the poet's concept of identity and new
road for the nation.

The continuity of poetry from the oral to our modern times. The far-reaching
butterfly effect of poetry's soft power. Barakāt's *al-Mathāqīl* (Weights)
(1998/1999), and *Sūrya* (Syria) (2014).

Darwīsh's poem *Laysa lil-Kurdī illā al-Rīḥ [Ilā: Salīm Barakāt]* (The Kurd
Has Only the Wind [For Salīm Barakāt]) (2004), modern panegyric. Kurdish
and Palestinian identity perpetuated.

Anthology

FOREWORD

REUVEN SNIR
(THE UNIVERSITY OF HAIFA,
DEPARTMENT ARABIC LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE)

The present book, *Qamishli Extended* by the highly experienced translator and talented scholar Aviva Butt, is about roots and origins of both identity and culture. The author follows the method of the Kurdish poet Salīm Barakāt (b. 1951), as well as being inspired by the poetry of the Palestinian poet Maḥmūd Darwīsh (1941—2008), and the works, both poetic and critical, of the Alawite Syrian poet ʿAlī Aḥmad Saʿīd, nicknamed Adūnīs (b. 1930). Through their re-introduction of the search for origins, the above three modernist revolutionary secular authors, each in his own particular way, have taken a genuine turn into an ascent leading not only to a state of ecstasy and ability to remain in the liminal state, but also to catch glimpses of the world of the transcendental. Barakāt and Darwīsh in the period of their intimate acquaintance and maturing of their creativity, such as when they both were editing the prestigious Palestinian magazine *al-Karmil*, have taken on a new role and responsibility, that of perpetuating the identity of their respective collectives. Barakāt took on an aware ambition of reinstating authentic Kurdish culture.

Darwīsh always wished to escape the world of politics, but as the Palestinian national poet he was tragically committed to what he recognized as being a futile and unachievable goal in his own lifetime. On the other hand, Barakāt as a Kurd has been free, not tied to any particular religious orientation or political goal. The author of *Qamishli Extended* writes:

> Salīm Barakāt is a Kurdish poet, a part of the Kurdish collective. Being a poet he has the opportunity to revive the Kurdish heritage, and in so doing to reach meaning. In any case, he strives to go step by step towards the source, towards the origins of creativity. His focus on origins is not only in keeping with his aim to write good poetry, but is also in keeping with his overall commitment as a guide who treads the road of the Sufi. At the same time, he strives to bring the collective to an understanding of the implications of the ever pending Day of Judgment, clearly delineated in the ritual and scriptures of remote antiquity, as well as in the Qurʾān.

Barakāt is apolitical, not politicizing religion or beliefs, not reinforcing any country's politics. He is accepting of the multitude of beliefs encompassed in the Iranian worldview, accepting of the Kurdish spectrum which in itself embraces many doctrines. Unlike him, Darwīsh, as he himself confesses in his poem "The Kurd Has Only the Wind [For Salīm Barakāt]" and elsewhere does not enjoy any such freedom:

> . . . . . .   *And the alphabet*
> *Bestows fantasy as a ram for his convictions, and meaning*
> *To language: I myself take vengeance on absence.*
> *I do what the mist did to my brethren.*
> *And I torture my heart as if a game. It isn't*
> *As I'd want.*

As for Adūnīs, the meaning of rebirth and revival, associated with the figure of the Ṣūfī poet and revolutionary activist al-Ḥusayn ibn Manṣūr al-Ḥallāj (858–922) has stirred up in his poetry the commitment to both his society and nation, as in his poem "Marthiyat al-Ḥallāj" ("Elegy for al-Ḥallāj"), published in his collection Aghānī Mihyār al-Dimashqī (Songs of Mihyār of Damascus) (1961):

> *Your green poisonous quill.*
> *Your quill whose veins swelled with flame*
> *With the star rising from Baghdad*
> *Is our history and our immediate resurrection*
> *In our land—in our recurring death.*

The book Qamishli Extended is needed because of the importance of the actual subject matter from the viewpoint of the history of literary development and also since Barakāt writes Qur'ānic *ta'wīl* in for example his epic entitled *al-Mu'jam* (The Obscure), a semblance of this genre being taken up by Darwīsh in his collection of poems *Ward Aqall* (Fewer Roses) and his epic *al-Hudhud* (The Hoopoe). The methodology of the author of *Qamishli Extended* starts from translation with annotation, with some rather interesting linguistic explanations in the Introduction. Understanding the nature of the impact of Barakāt's poetry on Darwīsh gives new insights into especially the most important poems of Darwīsh's mature period, the aforementioned *Ward Aqall* and *al-Hudhud*, as well as his *Aḥada 'Ashara Kawkaban* (Eleven Stars).

Especially Adūnīs and Barakāt heed postmodern theoreticians who reinforce their concepts of modernity by invigorating the techniques needed for their expression as a means of invigorating Middle Eastern culture. However, traditional notions of identity instead of receding come into play. For some decades, discussions around the idea of identity have been

channelled into two major positions, primordialist and non-primordialist. The first position assumes that there is an essential content to any identity which is defined by common origin or common structure of experience. In the words of the Lebanese writer Amin Maalouf (Amīn Maʿlūf) (b. 1949), it "presupposes that 'deep down inside' everyone there is just one affiliation that really matters, a kind of 'fundamental truth' about each individual, an 'essence' determined once and for all at birth, never to change thereafter." Although discredited among cultural theorists and sociologists, this view, for obvious reasons, is popular among politicians, particularly as regards ethnic identity. The second position, which encompasses non-primordialist views regarding identity, including the instrumentalist and the constructivist views, argues that identities are constructed through the interplay between cultural reproduction, everyday reinforcements, and institutional arrangements. The non-primordialist position emphasizes the impossibility of distinct identities. Any identity depends upon its difference from some other identity: "Identity is a structured representation which only achieves its positive through the narrow eye of the negative," Hall writes, "it has to go through the eye of the needle of the other before it can construct itself." In other words, identity becomes a freely chosen game, a theatrical presentation of the self, in which one is able to present oneself unconcerned about shifts, transformations, and dramatic changes. Nevertheless, while still grappling with the two issues that preoccupied these poets and thinkers, the value of poetry and identity, Darwīsh more than welcomes Barakāt's vision of the world of the transcendental, the very process of resurrection, "the completion," as asserting the ongoing identity and continuation of the nation ad infinitum. Barakāt clearly articulates this vision throughout his poems of this period, the subject of his poem of 1986, *Khazāʾin Manhūba* (Stolen Treasures):

. . . .   *I have the capacity*
To guide you to a golden lair that seduces the blossoms, and they abide through me.
They perpetuate the torrent that we expand in the blast of the lifelike clay sensing the
Twilight in its plentitude; and they smiled. A little. And then the completion penetrated,
Like with the Garden's orchard, unto our anthem. They smiled as my contrition was
Complete of the freewill that cauterizes unto the bone.

Too many times, Kurdish populations have been crushed, and a deliberate attempt made to wipe out their culture and in some cases to annihilate them. This oft repeated story is part and parcel of Middle Eastern history, relevant to the fate of many minority populations. However, there is one obvious unique point as concerns the Kurds. The "Kardu" or "Kurdu," as the ancient Kurds are called, are survivors from prior to the flood in the times of the prophet Noah.

They are recognized in Iran as the population having a glorious culture prior to the three ancient Iranian empires. Since the days of their glorious and largely oral culture, with the loss of a viable literary mode, the Kurdish language has sunk into disrepute and consequently disuse, and one wonders why it is that Kurdish identity clings so strongly regardless. In our modern times, identity has become an aware issue, and Kurds who want to carry on as Kurds find that the reconstruction work to be done is enormous. It involves discovery of what constituted their early culture. As it was an oral culture, there are almost no records. There largely remains but traces in non-Kurdish sources. Thus, intellectual Kurds can dream of creating a continuum from the days in ancient times when Kurdish culture was in full bloom—by updating from (?), at the linguistic level, and the musical and literary heritage. It is only Salīm Barakāt who has substantially progressed beyond the dream, and created a distinctly Kurdish literature that is viable in the modern world—from both the linguistic and the literary viewpoints—reaching into the Mother-of-the-Book that Prophet Muhammad rescued.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Salim Barakat, Mahmud Darwish, and the Kurdish and Palestinian Similitude: xiii
Qamishli Extended

Beyond the Horizon
I dreamt a genuine dream, indeed
I was in a barren land with no trees. No stones.
A herd of white oxen cut through the sky, shattering the horizon, as though glass.
Just that was what I saw.

Translated by 'Abid 'Ali al-Afrawi and Aviva Butt
(October 2017).

INTRODUCTION

SALIM BARAKAT AND MAHMUD DARWISH:
THEIR MATURE PERIOD

Qamishli Extended focuses on four long poems, all of them epics: Salīm Barakāt's *al-Muʿjam* (The Obscure) as well as his eulogy *Maḥmūd Darwīsh*, and Darwīsh's *al-Hudhud* (The Hoopoe) and *Ward Aqall* (Fewer Roses). Other relevant poems will be introduced, such as Barakāt's epics *Khazāʾin Manhūba* (Stolen Treasures) and *Sūrya* (Syria), and a miscellany of Darwīsh's poems. Mention is made of the importance of the Syro-Lebanese poet Adūnīs' epic of 1998, *Fihris li-Aʿmāl al-Rīḥ* (Index to the Acts of the Wind).

To understand Salīm Barakāt's long poem *The Obscure*, the starting point of the present research, one must constantly call to mind the quranic text. As shall be shown, *The Obscure* is literary *taʾwīl* written in an ancient Kurdish genre. The poet's method is similar to *taʾwīl* of the Ismāʿīlī branch of Shiʿism.[1] There is an undercurrent of ancient Kurdish religion likewise with a concept of inner (*bāṭen*) and outer (*ẓāher*), familiar from the beliefs and traditions of the Yāresān.[2] To quote from the long poem that precedes *The Obscure*, utterance 3 of the 45 utterances of *al-Mathāqīl* (Weights): *Your angels are hurled in crystal clusters, and still the sciences are fettered in your name / The one has nothing except bloodied keys; the other has nothing except keys to haughtiness.* On one hand, Barakāt is alluding to Sūra 2:30 Al-Baqarah (And then your Lord said to the angels indeed I have placed on earth a vicegerent / They said: Have you placed upon her what will harm her and will you spill blood / We exalt you exceedingly / He said: Indeed I know what you do not

---

[1] "Historically speaking, when the Shiʿa were sub-divided, the Shiʿa sect "Ismaili" came into existence. They gave their allegiance to Imam Jafar as-Sadiq's eldest son Ismail, from whom they derive their name." https://the.ismaili/community-0.

[2] See Philip G. Kreyenbroek (2014), "The Yāresān of Kurdistan" Chapter One in Khanna Omarkhali, ed., *Religious Minorities in Kurdistan: Beyond the Mainstream* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag): 3-11. In Iran, the Yāresān are best known as the Ahl-e Ḥaqq, Kurds who are associated with the Iranian province of Kermanshah, esp. the Guran region. In Iraq Kurds are known as Kākāʾī. Today's Yāresān live in communities scattered roundabout in the territories comprising Kurdistan, and in Europe.

know.[3] On the other hand, Barakāt is referring to the Yāresān account of Creation. To quote Kreyenbroek:

> . . . the existence of the world begins with Creation. God created a Pearl and came to dwell in it. In the Pearl God created seven angels (*Haft Tan*), to whom he delegated responsibility for the world. The Pearl also contained the prototypes of all earthly creations. . . . the first man was created and God made a [primordial] pact with him [p. 6]. The contrast between inner [*bāṭen*] and outer [*ẓāher*] reality is mirrored by Yāresān theology: God and *Haft Tan*, with whom God made the primordial Pact (*bayāwbas*), belong to the sphere of inner reality, while another Heptad [Seven], the *Haftawāne* are said to belong to the 'outer' sphere. Some Yāresān believe that there is an element of conflict between these two groups of Seven, others hold that they are complementary.[4]

The above quotation from utterance 3 of *Weights* says that Barakāt takes the former view, that there is conflict. The former view is in keeping with the subject of his epic *The Obscure* in which his main protagonists are Evil and Good, making their appearance in that order. His use of exact numbers in a modern poem gives a fleeting impression that he is writing not a multi-layered poem but rather modern programmatic poetry. In the following passage from *The Obscure*, the poet gives an exact description of the human tragedy in the unceasing queue of multitudes waiting for Judgment on High. He starts out by addressing the collective, but winds up by turning to the protagonist Evil, saying:

Do not fear. Listen to my heart—the heart of the bereaved in the place was besmirched
Seven times during their confinement; the sixth rolled in oil;
The fifth in whetstone powder; the fourth in starch;
The third in modern doctrines among modern projected certainties;
Twice in hoopoe faeces; having been rolled at length in oblivion
The bereaved are guided by their specters, O Evil.

Barakāt's symbols are greatly his own, symbols that provide an aura of the scientific, and are as "unimaginative" as possible being symbols of the most basic kind, symbols that hearken back to the primordial. The signs found in the Qur'an become his symbols by virtue of their use in poetry, and searching back into antiquity as is his wont, Barakāt references accounts of the Creation from Zoroastrian sources, accounts which tell of primordial flora and fauna. In his vision, the long poem *Stolen Treasures*, the poet describes the great value

---

[3] Sūra 2:30 Al-Baqarah:

وإذ قال ربك للملائكة إني جاعل في الأرض خليفة قالوا أتجعل فيها من يفسد فيها ويسفك الدماء ونحن نسبح بحمدك ونقدس لك قال إني أعلم ما لا تعلمون

[4] Kreyenbroek, "The Yāresān of Kurdistan": 7.

of body parts stored in heavenly vasts and used in the process of resurrection. As such the body parts are valuable, "golden." However, there is another connotation, a hint of the Azerbaijani poet 'Imāduddīn Nesīmī's Hurufism: "the plain sense is that the morrow / Bespeaks of its unraveled interface. // And the departure of the golden, the dying: / A golden knee cap. Golden cartilage." Barakāt like other poets works from within poetry traditions. In the poems under consideration, he finds continuity not from the pantheistic medieval poets reinvented in the nineteenth century by poets in Arabic-speaking countries, but rather from the onset of the modernity in the times of Ottoman Sultan Selîm I, and in particular with the intellectual awakening in the realms of Shāh Ismā'īl I Safavid (b.1487-d.1524), founder of the Iranian Safavid dynasty.[5] Barakāt could not have overlooked the Sufi poems of the Shāh, who was hereditary head of the Kurdish Safaviyya (Safavid Sufi Order) established by his direct ancestor, the Kurdish Shaykh Safī al-Dīn Ardabilī (1252-1334 CE). Under the penname of "Shāh Ismā'īl Khaṭā'ī," the Shāh wrote most of his poems in Azeri Turkic in preference to Persian, the latter being the language of the élite in his time. Minorsky suggests that he chose Azeri Turkic as a means of publicizing to more of his subjects. Glancing at Aida Gasimova's list of great medieval Sufi poets writing in Azeri Turkic,[6] it seems probable that Shāh Ismā'īl Khaṭā'ī (Sinner) as a poet pursuing a Sufi path may have preferred to be included with other innovative poets such as Qāḍī Burhānuddīn (1344-1398); 'Imāduddīn Nesīmī (1369-1417)—whose *Dīvān* [Arabic: *Dīwān*] and *Ghazāl* styles he further developed.[7] And continuing with the list: Hidāyat (15th c.); Ḥaqīqī (1397-1467); Ḥabībī (14th-15th c.); Kishwarī (15th c.); and Muḥammad Fuḍūlī (1494-1556).[8] An additional rationale for Barakāt's turn to the writings of Shāh Ismā'īl I for a new turn in his own poetry is that the Shāh initiated the partial reconstruction of the traditionalism of Imāmī Shi'ism in the course of the Safavid dynasty. Amir-Moezzi writes:

> Already in its earliest texts, Shi'ism defines itself as a hermeneutical doctrine. The teaching of the Imam / *walī* comes essentially to reveal the hidden meaning

---

[5] The Safavid dynasty lasted from 150l to 1524 CE.

[6] These poets were multi-lingual, writing in Persian as well as Azeri Turkic, and sometimes even in Arabic.

[7] Nesīmī introduced the *Dīvān* and *Ghazāl* styles into Azerbaijani poetry and these styles were further developed by the poets Qāsem-e Anvār (1356-1433), Muḥammad Fuḍūlī and Shāh Ismā'īl Khaṭā'ī. The poet Ḥaqīqī wrote love poems (the Sūfī's love for the Divine) in the *Ghazāl* style.

[8] Aida Gasimova (2014), "If All the Trees on Earth Were Pens: A Survey of the Qur'anic Symbolism of the Pen in Medieval Azeri Turkic Sufi Poetry," *The Journal of Turkish Literature* 11 (Ankara Turkey: Center for Turkish Literature at Bilkent University): 7.

(or meanings) of the Revelation. Without the commentaries and the explanations of the *walī*, the scripture revealed by the Prophet (*nabī*) remains obscure and its deepest levels cannot be understood. For instance, already in the fragments which seem to belong to the most archaic layers of the *Kitāb Sulaym b. Qays*, considered the oldest Shī'ī text (first half of the 2nd / 8th century), we can read:

‘Alī proclaimed: Question me before you lose me! By God, at the moment of revelation (*tanzīl*) of every verse, the Messenger of God recited it to me, so that, in my turn, I could recite it to him, and I had the knowledge of the interpretation of its hidden meaning [*ta’wīl*].[9]

Accepting of their diverse cultures, histories, and beliefs, Shāh Ismā'īl consolidated the multitudes of Persian and Turkic peoples. His contemporary, Ottoman Sultan Selîm I (reigned from 1512 to 1520) objected to Shāh Ismā'īl's inclusive outlook in regard to Zoroastrianism, its doctrines and legends and in general Persian culture. In the course of their correspondence, writing in Persian he says ". . . you have rent the noble fabric of Islam with the hand of tyranny, and. . . you have called the Glorious Qur'an the myths of the Ancients. The rumor of these abominations has caused your name to become like that of Harith deceived by Satan."[10] The dispute between Sultan Selîm and Shāh Ismā'īl encapsulates the raison d'être for two branches in Islam, one designated "Shi'ism" and the other "Sunnism."[11] To further simplify, the present-day Iran Chamber Society goes so far as to say that the Shi'a were created to preserve Iranian culture, especially to prevent the Arabic language taking over after the Islamic Conquest, which actually happened in some countries, notably Egypt.[12]

The aims Barakāt expresses in his poems often seem to parallel those of the historical Shāh Ismā'īl. He too wants to keep alive the language and culture of his nation. Shāh Ismā'īl imagines himself to be a pilgrim circum-ambulating the Kaaba, a sinner repenting in public, and assigns to himself the penname Khaṭā'ī (Sinner), which can be understood as referring to the "inherent sin given you that you do not embrace; the sin that is as redeemed in you" to quote

[9] M.A. Amir-Moezzi (2014), "The Tafsīr of al-Ḥibarī (d. 286/899): Qur'anic Exegesis and Early Shi'i Esotericism," trans. O. Mir-Kasimov in *The Study of Shi'i Islamic History, Theology and Law*, eds. G. Miskinzoda, F. Daftary (Bloomsbury Publishing): 116. The original article was published in French in 2009. Mir-Kasimov's translation to English updates.

[10] Vladmir Minorsky and Shah Isma'il I (1942), "The Poetry of Shah Isma'il I," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP).

[11] Sultan Selîm instated Sunnism as normative Muslim religion.

[12] See www.iranchamber.com/literature/articles/persian_parsi_language_history.php An Iran Chamber Society online posting of December 07, 2019.

Barakāt's line on the Kurdish-Yemeni martyr al-Bahlūl. Similar to Khaṭā'ī's above experience is when Barakāt in his early poem *Niqābat al-Ansāb* (Lineage) (1970) as the grief-stricken "I" of the poem is awakened to his mission as poet-prophet.[13] In his vision, he sees himself as a pilgrim among the crowd and seeks shelter at the holiest shrine in Islam, the Kaaba. The young pilgrim is horrified to see before him the Kaaba in flames—the Kaaba, the sanctuary for barefoot pilgrims like himself. The Umayyad forces opposing the right of the Prophet's family to the Caliphate have defeated the Meccans and Medinans. Barakāt accepts the mission of poet-prophet as imposed upon him in this vision, taking it upon himself to live his life in the shadow of the Kaaba: "War horses whinny at the doors of the Kaaba, O Tribes of Shalim / And alone I expound to refugees, if not to the black stone's shadow, my robe."[14] In his above poem, arriving he has a vision, not of the future but rather of a past historical event that occurred in the aftermath of the death of Prophet Mohammad. Ever after, characterizing Barakāt's thought and writings is always the journey to the past with the object of reaching an ever more "remote antiquity." Barakāt will always strive to prevent the signs of Allah and the history of Allah-and-the-*Ummah* from being destroyed and lost to mankind. At this point, a word of caution to the reader! It should be borne in mind that both Barakāt and Darwīsh are secular mainstream poets, intellectuals who do not feel bound to any religious branch or sect. Both are driven by Islamic mysticism, in other words "Sufism" in the most general sense of the word. In the case of Barakāt, the poet is also driven by the mysticism built into the antiquity of Kurdish beliefs and the Kurdish language. In accord with his desire to reach remote antiquity, as a poet he transmits ancient grammatical structures and poetic devices through his use of the ancient oral genre Iranian *Kurdish Shāhnāma*. Moreover, he has at his disposal the cumulative vocabulary of the Kurdish dialects, which tend to retain words with their original meanings, and to create new words for new concepts. In a chapter on "Life as Ritual: Devotional Practices of the Kurdish Ahl-e Ḥaqq of Guran," Partow Hooshmandrad writes that from the viewpoint of the Ahl-e Ḥaqq *Kurdish Shāhnāma* are not sacred poems, but that "mystical and epic Kurdish poems may also be sung with the non-sacred solo *naẓms* of the Ahl-e Ḥaqq musical repertoire."[15] On this subject, Behrooz Chamanara, who has researched extensively on ancient oral Kurdish genres writes:

---

[13] At the end of the poem, Barakāt wrote in the date of composition as 1970; the poem later appeared in his first collection of 1973, *Kull Dākhil saYahtif li-'Ajlī, wa-Kull Khārij Ayḍan* (All Entering Shall Linger With Me, and Likewise All Leaving).

[14] See the Anthology of this book for the entire poem.

[15] In *Religious Minorities in Kurdistan: Beyond the Mainstream*: 54.

. . . the characters, figures and concepts of the Kd.Sh [*Kurdish Shāhnāma*] have been integrated into the Kalām-e Yārsān [sacred poems of the Ahl-e Ḥaqq] in an inseparable way. The names of the Kayānid kings and Iranian paladins [16]. . . and other Kd.Sh motifs, form part and parcel of the Yāri intellectual tradition. . . The Yāri religious tradition, in which the narratives of the Kd.Sh have been preserved, evidently reflects the native beliefs of the inhabitants of the Zagros region.[17]

In his poem, which has a quranic substratum, Barakāt's text avoids the connotative but nevertheless provides an alternate reading by way of a second reading through multi-layered linguistic connections. That is, there is sometimes a possible second reading of the text in Kurdish beneath the Arabic. At times he throws in a few Persian words. One could say that Barakāt writes modern literary Islamic poetry in which the choice of language for the manifest layer is in any case open to choice.

The present book, compares the output of the two poets Salīm Barakāt and Maḥmūd Darwīsh and deals with their creativity as evidenced on one hand in the poems of the Kurdish poet and on the other hand in the poems of the Palestinian poet. The insights presented regarding the connection between the two poets and their creativity has to all intents and purposes allowed the present writer to translate Barakāt's poems, as well as some of Darwīsh's mature output either in a more comprehensive way than done by others or to include a translation of poems that have not previously been translated to English. The Syrian Alawite poet, a pioneer of modern Arabic poetry,[18] Adūnīs (b. 1930 as 'Alī Aḥmad Sa'īd Esber) wrote his epic *Fihris li-A'māl al-Rīḥ* (Index to the Acts of the Wind) in 1998. He thus joined ranks with Salīm Barakāt (b. 1951 in Qamishli Syria) and Maḥmūd Darwīsh (1941-2008). As a Sufi poet, Adūnīs wrote *Shāhnāma* in his own individual style. In so doing, he brings about the inception of a trend that has not taken off.

A note on translation techniques

From the viewpoint of Arabic prosody, Barakāt's poems are written in *qaṣīdat al-nathr*, a modernistic prose poem genre; likewise, Adūnīs' poem of 1998,

---

[16] The mythology of Persian *Shāhnāma*.

[17] Behrooz Chamanara (2013), "An Investigation into the Kurdish Genre of the Shāhnāma and Its Religious Dimensions," *Journal of Persianate Studies* 6 (Leiden: Brill) 2013: 169) on 'Epic Narrations in the Religious Texts of the Yārsān.' Yāresānism is an Old Iranian religion practiced by Kurds who lived in the Yāresān region of the Zagros Mountains. Currently, the Yāresān in Iran are widespread and are best known as Ahl-e Ḥaqq. In general, they practice a syncretic religion that combines Sufi elements.

[18] Alawite: Syrian religion that is similar to the Alevi Shi'ism in Turkey.

"Index to the Acts of the Wind." Darwīsh's poems cling to meter, although his poems of this period could be said to have moved on from *al-shiʿr al-ḥurr* (Arabic free verse) to a semblance of the Arabic prose poem. The prose poem with its irregular lines and absence of meter and rhyme is indistinguishable from the style of most translations. This of course looks encouraging to the would-be translator of the poems under discussion. I maintain that Barakāt's poems are in any case all translations to begin with. To explain: literary writing could be said to start from a poem. That is, in the first instance, there is the poem-of-the-writer's-being that Blanchot calls "the work." From this arises the poem that is "a concentration of thought," the poem that will "become" in the sense that it will come into existence.[19] Thought as meaning / content will be translated into words, and depending on the skill of the writer inevitably lose at least something of itself in the process of translating. In the case of Barakāt, his thought is clothed in the structures of a long tradition of oral poetry wearing the robes of his mother tongue, namely Kurdish. The content he translates to Arabic is therefore a translation from Kurdish clothed in Kurdish structures and genres into an Arabic prose poem, the prose poem being the language of the translator, a style with a minimum of artifact such as rhyme and meter. Therefore, Barakāt writes an Arabic prose poem and with relative ease also a poem in the genre *Kurdish Shāhnāma*, as well as the "*ballade*" of the bard as known in oral societies. Once working within structures from orality, the poet has at his disposal the myriad of its complexities, such as features of repetition, poetic devices in general, especially alliteration and other devices that rely on sound, and also the technique of surrealism known in ancient Kurdish writings,[20] and revived in mainstream modern poetry. He is able to adopt the multilayeredness of the Qur'an, and in addition to his narrative's chronicling also find an additional mode of usefulness for his poems as quranic *ta'wīl*. The next two chapters attempt to describe the features, devices, and structures of Barakāt's modern Islamic poem *The Obscure*.

---

[19] On "the work," see Maurice Blanchot (1982), *The Space of Literature*, trans. Ann Smock (University of Nebraska Press).
[20] Surrealism was alive in Kurdish literature as least as far back as 2,500 years ago; see online https://doi.org/10.21600/ijoks.846130 Aviva Butt, "The Kurdish Prophet Nahum and His Attitude towards Nineveh" in the *International Journal of Kurdish Studies* 7 (2), 2021.

CHAPTER TWO

THE OBSCURE AS KURDISH SHAHNAMA AND LITERARY TAW'IL

دُلَّهِم،
أيها الشرُّ،
على نُصْنِكَ
كي يُحْسنوا قياسَ الحجر بحقائقهِ.

Enlighten them,
O Evil,
About yourself as originator
So that they can assess the reality of the size of the stone.

- Salīm Barakāt

Salīm Barakāt (Selîm Berekat [Kurdish], b. Qamishli Syria, 1951) completed his thirty-page Arabic prose poem *al-Muʿjam* (The Obscure) in 2004.[1] The poem's narrative tells of the relationship between the poet and Evil, the relationship of Evil to Good, and the failure of Good to persuade in the face of Evil's deceptive ways. We see the poet as a failed arbiter between Evil and Good. The poet largely converses with Evil, trying to reason with Evil, pleading with Evil. Reason and rationality do not prevail. Consequently, there is a need for an intercessor at the time of *al-Qiyāmah*. The poet is convinced that remorse will win an acceptable intercessor, which is, as the poet sees it, the Mercy of Allah.

Even glancing at Barakāt's poem *The Obscure*, it seems to be complicated and to say the least unusual. In fact, it has a content that might otherwise be available to Ismāʿīlī and Sufi scholars, and the Kurdish peoples of the Zagros Mountains. Moreover, although it is written in Arabic, and here I turn to

---

[1] Published in *al-Aʿmāl al-Shiʿriyyah Salīm Barakāt* (The Poetry Works of Salīm Barakāt) (Beirut: al-Muʾassash al-ʿArabiyya lil-Dirāsāt wa-l-Nashr, 2007): 552-592. Barakāt wrote his poem *al-Muʿjam* (The Obscure) between January 2003 and August 2004.

Behrooz Chamanara's article *An Investigation into the Kurdish Genre of the Shāhnāma and Its Religious Dimensions*, Barakāt's poem is virtually a modern carry over from older Gurāni literature known collectively as *Gurāni Shāhnāma*. Chamanara recently defined *Gurāni Shāhnāma* as being a distinct genre: "The genre exhibits unique characteristics in language, poetic form, themes, beliefs, story lines, and story structures, and we have thought it appropriate to refer to the genre as a whole as "Kurdish Shāhnāma." The genre *Kurdish Shāhnāma* can be further divided into three categories: the mythic-heroic category; the religious category; and finally the historic category."[2]

Chamanara puts Kurdish *Shāhnāma* into his "religious category," and stresses that the Kurdish genre renders Good and Evil differently to Ferdowsi's Persian *Shāhnāma*:

> As is well known, generally, the bipolar intellectual system of Zoroastrianism seems to infuse Ferdowsi's *Shāhnāma*. Within the system, as is well known, Good and Evil and their corresponding elements, light and darkness, lend themselves, more often than not, to opposing participants. In Ferdowsi's *Shāhnāma*, one might argue, most concepts have two distinctly opposite poles, creating, generally, a clear dividing line between the two. While there are certainly nuances in this dichotomous scheme of Ferdowsi's *Shāhnāma*, these are not as clearly articulated as they are in the Kurdish *Shāhnāma*. This rather clear dichotomous pattern in Ferdowsi's *Shāhnāma*, is replaced by a tertiary model in the Kurdish *Shāhnāma*, wherein a third element usually affects the outcome of the struggle between Good and Evil. In this latter genre there is no clear line, therefore, in the conflict between Good and Evil, and their corresponding elements, light and darkness. . . . While the dichotomy exists. . . a third element, namely "Fate," comes to equally affect both parties. . . . Besides Fate, another third element, namely demons, also affect the dichotomous opposition of Good and Evil in the Kurdish *Shāhnāma* and confirms its tertiary schema. While in Ferdowsi's *Shāhnāma* demons are symbols of darkness and evil par excellence. . . in the Kurdish *Shāhnāma* they play an ambivalent role in the struggle between Good and Evil. [3]

Barakāt's poem *The Obscure* starts with a description of the tragic fall of Iblīs, alluding to "Iblīs," not "al-Shaytān." The poet-protagonist inserts himself into the narrative as arbiter between Evil and Good, in that order, and includes the traditional "third element" that Chamanara speaks of—in this case

---

[2] Behrooz Chaman Ara (2013), "An Investigation into the Kurdish Genre of the Shāhnāma and Its Religious Dimensions," *Journal of Persianate Studies* 6 (Leiden, Brill): 170. Behrooz spells his name variously in English, both as Behrooz Chamanara or Chaman Ara or as ChamanAra.

[3] Chaman Ara, "An Investigation into the Kurdish Genre of the Shāhnāma and Its Religious Dimensions": 173.

"predestinations," otherwise "fate," and there is even mention of a "jinn," otherwise "demon." Barakāt as the guide (*murshid)* of the Kurdish collective converses with the persona Evil, pleads and reasons with Evil to have pity on the suffering of the people he is misleading. And, at the same time the poet explains to the collective what insurgence is on all levels, and the deceptive reasoning that Evil uses to persuade them to stray from the path of Allah, wherein even "remorse" can be deceptive. In this vein, the poet tries to bring all concerned to a rational understanding of what it is to be an unbeliever and how important it is to understand that *Yawm al-Qiyāmah*, the Day of Rising [for Judgment] is ever pending. The word *qiyāma* is usually translated as "judgment," and it commonly means "rising" for the weighing of someone's good and bad deeds on a balance scale; or, it could mean the Day of Rising in the sense of ascending for being renewed in the world of the transcendental. When the poet describes the crowd awaiting a decision as to their fate and how they will be grouped, he alludes to the tumult, the "clamor" on *Yawm al-Qāri'a*, the Day of Clamor. He also mentions *Yawm al-Dīn,* variously translated as the Day of Judgment or Day of the Covenant; and, calling up the memory of the covenants starting from time immemorial, he alludes to the first covenant or pact described in Sūra Yā-Sīn, according to *The Qur'an with Annotated Interpretation in Modern English by Ali Ùnal*, as follows:[4]

أَلَمْ أَعْهَدْ إِلَيْكُمْ يَا بَنِي آدَمَ أَنْ لَا تَعْبُدُوا الشَّيْطَانَ إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُبِينٌ (60)
وَأَنِ اعْبُدُونِي هَذَا   رَاطٌ مُسْتَقِيمٌ (61)
وَلَقَدْ أَضَلَّ مِنْكُمْ جِبِلًّا كَثِيرًا أَفَلَمْ تَكُونُوا تَعْقِلُونَ (62)

36:60. "Did I not make a covenant with you, O children of Adam, that you should not worship Satan? Indeed he is a manifest enemy to you.[5]
36:61. "And that you should worship Me alone. This is a straight path (for you to follow).
36:62. "Yet he has assuredly caused great multitudes of you to go astray. Should you not reason and take heed?

   Barakāt alludes to the message of the above *āyāt* (verses of the Qur'an) and mentions the covenants more than once in his long poem, his aim as guide and

---

[4] Online: www.mquran.edu . I thank Kocaeli Devrim Akdeniz for calling to my attention Ali Ùnal's translation of the Qur'an on academia.edu. Ùnal's effort in translating the whole of the Qur'an is praiseworthy; however his translation and commentary are marred by the premise that the Qur'an is a later book than the Christian or Hebrew scriptures.
[5] Note the translator's excellent choice of the word "manifest" (S. 36:60 above), a hint that there is an esoteric interpretation. Many times the poet will ask Evil to assist him, and Evil will do so.

task in this poem being to bring the collective to the point of expressing their remorse. It is only at that point will the Mercy of Allah intercede for the fearful crowd who have strayed. It is only then that the poet can reassure the clamoring masses with confidence and a tone of finality, and say: Do not fear!

It should be borne in mind that modern secular poets and writers view the Qur'an as literature, and feel free to imitate, or utilize as it were, the quranic literary style; thus the manifest dimension of the poem. The Qur'an supplies Barakāt with a literary ideal: a frame for his narrative and in addition both a model and a need for a poem that is literary *ta'wīl*.

Techniques used in the poem al-Muʻjam (The Obscure)

Barakāt is aware of the inner quranic exegesis that deals with words having different meanings in different quranic passages, described by C.H.M. Versteegh as the second category of quranic exegesis of the lexicon in early Islam. It is "usually treated under the name *wuǧūh*. . . . The term *wuǧh* in the sense of 'aspect, nuance' is used by Muḥammad al-Kalbī. . . ."[6] I have chosen to describe the *wuǧh* in Barakāt's poems as "shifts-in-meaning." Of course, my translation to English of necessity uses a different English word for the one Arabic word, aside from one or two coincidental possibilities. Therefore, any translation is of necessity interpretative, and stands to be justified by Ferdinand de Saussure having demonstrated that a sign's meaning is derived from its context (syntagmatic dimension) and the group (paradigm) to which it belongs.[7] In Barakāt's poems there are also instances of what in Arabic would be described as *ḍidd* (plural: *aḍḍād*), the term for a word with two basic meanings, one the opposite or contrary to the other. Two examples of *aḍḍād* in the poem *The Obscure* are the words *shades* [*hues of color*] /*shadows*, both *al-ẓilāl* (الظلال) and *sempiternity* / *remote antiquity*, both *al-qidam* (القِدَم). In the main there is a continuous string of words undergoing shifts-in-meaning, the above technique of *wuǧh* that according to early quranic exegesis the Qur'an itself uses to indicate underlying meaning. Therefore, Barakāt's technique of entering the realm of meaning cannot be regarded as mere poetic device.

The passage below affords an example of Barakāt's technique using the shift-in-meaning. The Arabic (نَكِّل) initially used to mean "fetter," undergoes a shift-in-meaning to become "constrain yourselves." The attached preposition (ب) is used to mean "by means of," and "by" / "at," then "because of":

---

[6] C.H.M. Versteegh (1993), *Arabic Grammar and Qur'anic Exegesis in Early Islam* (Leiden, New York: Köln: E.J. Brill): 86-7.
[7] N. Lacey (2000), *Narrative and Genre* (UK: Red Globe Press, an imprint of Palgrave-MacMillan): 64.

نَكِّلْ بالشَّفَقِ والغَسَقِ معًا؛ بالقِدَم؛ ببراهينِ الخير على أن الخيرَ يقيئُكَ إذا حُوِ ِ رْتَ.
نَكِّلْ بالرقَمِ العقلِ؛
بالمغاليقِ؛
بالسُّحُبِ الدُّفوفِ؛
بالأرض نافذةِ السماءِ- أَرَقِ السماءِ؛
بالبواباتِ؛
بالأعمدةِ؛
بالأقلامِ؛
بالأملِ مُعْتَصَرًا في قبضةِ الخيرِ- تُرْجمانِه الركيكِ.

نَكِّلْ بالأقدار الخفيضةِ الصوتِ إذا خُوطِبَتْ.
نَكِّلْ بالمواثيقِ؛
بالعتباتِ؛
بالخمائرِ؛
بالفروقِ تُقفلُ الصباحَ عليكَ بقُفْلِ المساءِ.
نَكِّلْ بالبيعةِ الشّجار بين الآلهةِ ورُعاةِ نمورِها؛
بالجِدالِ المُستهتر بترفِ الآدميِّ؛
بالحقائقِ الشَّغَبِ؛
بالقيامةِ؛

Fetter both twilight and dusk; by means of remote antiquity; by means of displays
Of good
On condition that good is your surety if you are compromised.
Fetter the mind by means of the records;
By means of stirrings [of the reason];
By means of bolts;
By paling the tanburs;
By the earth's window to heaven—heaven's best pleasures;
By the gates;
By the columns;[8]
By the pens; [9]
By expectation of invincibility

Through the power of Good, their translator to the prosaic.

Constrain yourselves by means of volition regarding the muffled sound
Whenever you are addressed.

---

[8] *Columns*: see Chapter 30 *Bundahiŝm* 4: The sky arose from the substance of the ruby, without *columns*, on the spiritual support of far-compassed light. www.avesta.com/.
[9] Sūrat Luqman 31:27: And if all the trees on the earth were pens and the sea (were ink wherewith to write), with seven seas behind it to add to its (supply), yet the Words of Allah would not be exhausted. Verily, Allah is All-Mighty, All-Wise. http://dar-us-salam.com/TheNobleQuran.

Constrain yourselves because of the covenants;
Because of the thresholds;
Because of the leavens;
Because of the differences for you at the close of morning to the close of evening.
Constrain yourselves by homage to the bars between the gods
And their tigers' herdsmen;
By discourse awake to human extravagance;
By the realities of riots;
Because of al-Qiyāmah;

The above passage urges self-control in view of the alarming approach to the drama in the world of the transcendental that Barakāt is about to describe. It illustrates Barakāt's use of the shift-in-meaning, as well as his skill in using repetition to signify variations in meaning. Hammering away at the word "because," he delivers his message.

The poet has introduced the subject of reason and rationality into his discourse on Good and Evil from the outset:

هَيِّي، وبّخ الخيرَ توبيخَ العادل. قُلْ:
«أنتَ، أيها الخيرُ، تشوي السماء مُثَبَّلَةً بحرائق الأرض».
خيرٌ خِتَانٌ في مخدع الندم. خيرٌ ليعودَانَّ عاقلاً في استقصائه مغاليقَ العقل، راضيًا بقِسْمَةِ الشرّ أن
يشفق عليه من ندمِهِ ـ ندم المُحْتَضِر. نادِهِ أيها الشرُّ. نادِ الخيرَ من النهاية التي بلا إرثٍ قَبْلُ؛ بلا إرثٍ
بَعْدُ.

Now, he [Evil] rebukes Good, with self-righteous reproach. Saying:
"As for you, O Good, the skies roast stupidity with the earth's blazes."
Good is penetration as to the deceptiveness of remorse. Good shall surely revert
To the rational for his investigation of the mind's stirrings, be resigned to his pitying
Evil's fate as a result of his remorse, the remorse of the dying. Call to him, O Evil;
Call Good away from an end that is without prior succession;
Without future succession.

In stressing the principle that the inner meaning of the Qur'an is based on reason, Barakāt lets us know here and elsewhere that meaning starts from reason. The online forum ShiaChat tells us that

The Ismāʿīlī *ta'wīl* is based on reason. The word *ta'wīl* in Arabic means to go to the first, primary or basic meaning of the word. According to the Ismāʿīlīs, each and every verse of the Qur'an has a basic meaning or hidden meaning apart from the manifest or secondary meaning. . . . [the *Mu'min*] believes in the hidden or original meaning (*bāṭin*) of the Qur'anic verses. The Ismāʿīlīs maintain that there is difference between a Muslim and a *Mu'min*. One who recites the *kalima* and performs all the manifest rituals (*ẓāhirī*) like offering prayers, fasting, giving *zakāt*, performing *ḥajj* etc. is a Muslim. But a *Mu'min* is

more than being a Muslim. A *Mu'min* is one who not only performs the *ẓāhirī* rituals but also believes in *bāṭin*, the real, the original, the intended, meaning of these rituals.[10]

From the above scholar's words, one can understand the rationale behind Barakāt's reiterating that he starts from reason and to arrive at the inner meaning goes back to the first, primary or basic meaning of the word, thus pointing to the quranic text. Although in modern times, the Ismāʿīlī belief system explicitly concentrates on the deeper, esoteric meaning (*bāṭin*) of the Islamic religion, Barakāt does not have in mind to advance the particular viewpoint of the Ismāʿīlī branch of Shi'ism. It is more likely that the poet would be interested in the early Imāmī tradition that Shāh Ismāʿīl I Ṣafavī and subsequent Safavid rulers partially reconstructed.[11] On early Shi'ism, Amir-Moezzi explains: "I call this pre-Būyid Shiʿism or more specifically, its foundational doctrines, the 'original esoteric and non-rational' tradition. The situation changed when the Būyids acquired access to the leadership shortly before the end of the first half of the 4th/10th century. . . ." And he goes on say: "The combination of these historical, political and religious reasons led, in particular, to the emergence of a new class of Twelver jurist-theologians in the circles close to the Būyid princes, who aimed at justifying their rule." And explaining how the rational entered Twelver Shi'ism, he says:

> They begin, therefore, to distance themselves from their predecessors belonging to the 'original non-rational tradition' and to criticize them. This is the beginning of the development, within Twelver Shi'ism, of the new 'theologico-legal rationalistic' tradition which will from now on constitute the dominant majority, pushing the primitive esoteric tradition into isolation. In regard to the exegetical literature, the monumental commentary of al-Shaykh al-Ṭūsī (385–460/995–1067), the brilliant representative of this new tradition, al-Tibyān fī tafsīr al-Qurʾān, is a hallmark of this turning point.[12]

As described by Amir-Moezzi, a rationalistic tradition entered Twelver Shi'ism. This point of reference would be more in keeping with Barakāt's own intense search for origins and also in keeping with his admiration for Shāh Ismāʿīl who was a direct descendant of the Kurdish Shaykh, Ṣāfī ad-Dīn Isḥāq

---

[10] Mu'min is usually translated as "believer" e.g. in Sūrat Al-Mu'minūn (S. 23). See www.shiachat.com/forum/topic/235010386-quran-interpretation-according-to-ismaili-tāʾwīl/.

[11] Shāh Ismāʿīl I (شاه اسماعیل) was the founder of the Safavid Dynasty; he ruled from 1501 to 23 May 1524 as Shah of Iran.

[12] M.A. Amir-Moezzi, "The *Tafsīr* of al-Ḥibarī (d. 286/899): Qur'anic Exegesis and Early Shiʿi Esotericism": 115.

Ardabīlī (1252–1334), founder of the Safaviyya Sūfī order, and son-in-law of
the Sūfī *murshid* (guide), Shaykh Zahed Gilani in northern Iran. When Barakāt
describes himself as "guide" for the collective, he uses the same supreme Sufi
title *murshid* (guide). His poem *The Obscure* is the culmination of the new turn
in his writings that he laid the ground for in his narrative of 1986 entitled
Ḥazāʿin Manhūba (Stolen Treasures). The latter poem hearkens back to but
does not directly mention the poetry of Shāh Ismāʿīl Khaṭāʾī (Sinner), the
Shāh's name as a Sufi poet. In *Stolen Treasures*, the poet introduces himself as
a guide (*murshid*), and explains his qualifications. By writing most of his
poems in a Turkic dialect rather than Persian,[13] Shāh Ismāʿīl Khaṭāʾī provided
the starting point for a linguistically more versatile modern Islamic literature;
genre would be defined not by language but rather by cultural movements.
Worthy of note is that his contemporaries in the Azerbaijan community of
Azeri Turkic poets wrote not only in Azeri Turkic but also in Persian, and
sometimes even Arabic. Shāh Ismāʿīl Khaṭāʾī is included in a list of innovative
Azerbaijani poets such as ʿImāduddīn Nesīmī (1369-1417), whose *Dīvān*
(Arabic: *Dīwān*) and *Ghazāl* styles he further developed.[14] Otherwise, the
young Shāh wrote narrative, but both he and other poets writing poems on his
behalf frequently used the *qaṣīd* form that traditional Iranian prosody uses in
common with classical Arabic prosody. Such the modernity of his times!

Barakāt's poem *The Obscure* is complex. It is multilayered and
multivalent, in itself a literary rendition of *taʾwīl*. *Taʾwīl* could be defined as
esoteric quranic interpretation as distinct from *tafsīr*, the commentary that
usually accompanies English translations of the Qurʾan. Relevant to the poem
and the poet under discussion is that Shīʿī scholars recognize *taʾwīl* as being a
way to understand the Qurʾan as the perpetuity of a living tradition. The
Alawite poet Adūnīs theorizes saying that modern poetry is continuation from
the output of medieval Sūfī poets; however, on a relatively recent You-Tube
interview (2015), he indicates that there is a lot more to be said.[15] In any case,
in his book of 1985, he comes to the conclusion that "we can say that the
Qurʾan, which was regarded as constituting some sort of a rejection of poetry,
led indirectly to the opening up of unlimited horizons in poetry and to the
establishing of a genuine literary criticism." [16] Barakāt sees poetry as an

---

[13] He also wrote poems in Persian, unfortunately lost.
[14] See Gasimova, "If All the Trees on Earth Were Pens: A Survey of the Qurʾanic
Symbolism of the Pen in Medieval Azeri Turkic Sufi Poetry": 7.
[15] See https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oa7XaOoF3W4 published 13 January 2015,
Adonis Interview: Religion Corrupted Poetry.
[16] See Adonis (2003), Chapter 2: "Poetics and the Influence of the Quran" in *An
Introduction to Arabic Poetics,* trans. Catherine Cobham (London: Saqi Books): 42.