

# AL-MU'AYYAD AL-SHĪRĀZĪ AND FATIMID *DA'WA* POETRY

A Case of Commitment in  
Classical Arabic Literature

BY

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## Chapter on the Tradition of Munajaat: Communion with God

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## CHAPTER FOUR

### OTHER GENRES

O [my] Lord, I complain of  
the wretchedness of my  
condition  
endlessly, and I sincerely  
supplicate you,  
in order that you bestow  
[upon me] a glance  
which suffices me [in] the  
oppression of the nights.

يَا رَبِّ أَشْكُو سُوءَ حَالِي  
أَبَدًا وَأَخْلِصُ فِي ابْتِهَالِي  
كَيْمَا تُجِئَ وَدَّ بِنَظَرَةٍ  
أَكْفَى بِهِ ضَمِيمَ اللَّيَالِي

(Al-Muʿayyad, *Dīwān*)<sup>1</sup>

Al-Muʿayyad was not a man to squander his talents in frivolous pursuits. Accordingly, his *Dīwān* contains not a single poem that could be considered in the least bit frivolous. For example, there is no poem dedicated solely to invective (*hijāʾ*); even where sporadic *hijāʾ* of the Imam’s enemies does occur, the criticism is about ideological beliefs—unlike the norm for this genre—rather than personal shortcomings. Another common medieval genre of poetry predictably absent from al-Muʿayyad’s *Dīwān* is love poetry (*ghazal*) and when he employs the love prelude in a few poems, he employs it primarily to highlight the Imam’s role as true beloved. We can fully expect that al-Muʿayyad’s poetry would comprise solely of serious genres, genres that would serve his purpose of achieving salvation (for self and others). What bears examining, though, is the features that make these serious genres aesthetically meritorious and those that highlight their daʿwa nature.

In addition to praise poetry, al-Muʿayyad’s *Dīwān* contains three<sup>2</sup> major genres: an original genre of poetry composed to commune with

<sup>1</sup> #28, p. 267, vv. 1–2.

<sup>2</sup> A fourth genre in the *Dīwān*, that of the “letter poem,” is attested by just one poem in the form of a letter to Abū Kālījār in explanation of al-Muʿayyad’s words and actions, asking the Buyid king to resume his allegiance to the Fatimid state and daʿwa and to reinstate their dāʿī (himself) in the amīr’s favor (#62, pp. 316–322).

God (*munājāt*),<sup>3</sup> a second genre with a disputational-heresiographical bent focused on the need for rational thinking and, subsequently, for *tāwīl* and its explicator, and a third genre of poems describing the poet's temporal condition and spiritual stature. Other than some of his disputational verse, these genres are clearly artistic, with a large quantity of metaphorical imagery and poetic innovation. Furthermore, they are all genres that deal with the weighty spiritual issues of belief and prayer, and are, consequently Fatimid da'wa poetry.

### Munājāt: *Communion with God*

The term "*munājāt*" is the verbal noun of the form III verb *nājā*, meaning "to hold a secret conversation with someone, to whisper something to someone, or to confide in someone." All these meanings have the sense of intimate communion. The Qur'ān uses derivatives of *nājā* (but not the term *munājāt*) eighteen times in several different contexts: *tete-à-tetes* among Muslims (most common usage),<sup>4</sup> dialogues between a Muslim and the Prophet Muḥammad,<sup>5</sup> and a private conversation between Moses and God; the Qur'ān says about Moses: "We [God] called him from the right side of Mount Sinai, and drew him close in private conversation (*wa qarrabnāhu najjyyā*)."<sup>6</sup> This last Qur'ānic usage is picked up in Arabic religious literature, where the term "*munājāt*" denotes a literary genre, namely, that of communion with God, supplication, or extempore prayer (in contrast to the ritual prayer, *al-ṣalāh*). The term *munājāt* is generally reserved for poetry, while prose *munājāt* are commonly termed "*du'ā*"<sup>7</sup> (lit. invocation). Muslims use *munājāts* and *du'ā*'s composed by pious people as private liturgy in popular devotional practice.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>3</sup> *Munājāt*, in the singular form, is transcribed in Arabic with a final *tā'* *marbūṭa*, and in Persian with a *tā'* *maftūḥa*. (The term sometimes occurs with a *tā'* *maftūḥa* in Arabic works too, but this is a Persianism). The Arabic pausal form pronunciation is *munājāh*. In the plural form, in both Arabic and Persian, it is transcribed with a final *tā'* *maftūḥa*.

<sup>4</sup> Qur'ān 4:114, 9:78, 17:47, 20:62, 21:3, 43:80, 58:7–10.

<sup>5</sup> Qur'ān 58:12–13.

<sup>6</sup> Qur'ān 19:22.

<sup>7</sup> For a discussion of the scope and practice of the *du'ā'*, see article by L. Gardet on "Du'ā'," *EF*, vol. 2, pp. 617–18. For a study of Sufi *du'ā'*, see A. Schimmel, "Some Aspects of Mystical Prayer in Islam," *Die Welt des Islam*, n.s. 2 (1952), pp. 112–25.

<sup>8</sup> For a study of this kind of private liturgical use of the *munājāt*, see C. Padwick, *Muslim Devotions: A Study of Prayer-Manuals in Common Use*, London, 1961.

The Shi‘a, especially in the Indian subcontinent, also use the term *munājāt* to include supplicatory poetry addressing the Prophet and his family, especially ‘Alī and the present Imam.<sup>9</sup> The Twelver Shi‘a in India, the Nizārī Ismā‘īlīs, and the Ṭayyibī Ismā‘īlīs of India and Yemen, all use the term *munājāt* for such poetry.<sup>10</sup> The Ṭayyibīs, however, more often call these “*istighāthiyya*” or “*iltijā’iyya*” (plea for succor) verses, and generally reserve the term *munājāt* for poetry composed to commune with God.<sup>11</sup>

Al-Mu‘ayyad uses the term *munājāt* to mean a genre of prose or poetry composed to commune with God. In his *Majālis Mu‘ayyadiyya*, he quotes both prose and poetry prayers composed by anonymous authors before him and refers to them by the term *munājāt*.<sup>12</sup> In one of his poems, he also employs the active participle *munājjiyan* and the verb *unājī* (but not the verbal noun *munājāt*, which is the technical term for the genre) within a description of his visit to ‘Alī’s shrine, in the context of private communion with ‘Alī.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>9</sup> It is interesting to note that a *Dīwān* of the Lebanese born Australian Christian, immigrant poet, Charbel Baini, which contains direct address “conversational” poetry with ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, is titled *Munājāt ‘Alī* (Sydney, 1992; trans. into English by N. Mourad et al, Merrylands, New South Wales, Australia, 1992, titled *In praise of ‘Alī*).

<sup>10</sup> In the Twelver Shi‘ite tradition of India, poems addressed in a plea for succor to the Imams are popularly known as *munājāt*, and titles of popular compilations of such “*munājāt*” addressed to ‘Alī, or the Imam, contain the actual term, e.g. *Maqbūl faryād-i nawha va munājāt*, Hyderabad, n.d. An Iranian Twelver Shi‘ite popular compilation of *munājāt*, also contains a few poems addressed to Muḥammad and to ‘Alī, and some poems in their praise which are in the third person; these are probably random inclusions (*Naghma-yi āsmānī: majmū‘a-yi munājāthā-yi Dhabīhī az Rādyo Īrān*, Tehran, n.d.) The term is reserved for communion with God in the clerical version of Iranian Twelver-Shi‘ism.

In the Ṭayyibī Ismā‘īlī tradition, the term *munājāt* has been used in the manual of prayer, *Ṣaḥīfat al-Salāh* (Bombay, 1409H, pp. 356, 434) to introduce supplicatory verses addressed respectively to the Imams and ‘Alī. This might indicate that this usage was at one time more common than it is now.

<sup>11</sup> The term “*munājāt*” has also been used in modern times for poetry that communes with the corporeal beloved, i.e., *nasīb* and *ghazal*, although not consistently enough to constitute a sub-genre (cf. the modern compilation of medieval love poems titled *Munājāt al-ḥabīb fī al-ghazal wa al-nasīb*, by B. Ramaḍān, Beirut, 1327H). Another modern usage of the term is to mean communication with the spirit world (“*munājāt al-arwāḥ*”) through a psychic medium (cf. discussion of this topic in Y.T. al-Bustānī, *Bahjat al-afrah fī munājāt al-arwāḥ*, Cairo, 1919).

<sup>12</sup> These are collected in the *Jāmi‘ al-ḥaqā’iq* (ch. 15, fols. 525 ff.) in a separate chapter, alongside exhortations and sermons. Some of these may be found in *al-Majālis al-Mu‘ayyadiyya*, vol. 4, majlis 14, 22, 24, 25, 43.

<sup>13</sup> #17, p. 246, vv. 28–29.

Verses addressing the Imam in supplication have been discussed earlier in the section on plea-for-succor closures. This chapter contains an analysis of al-Mu'ayyad's poems that were composed to commune with God.

*Development of the munājāt Genre in Prose and Poetry*

The medieval literary critics do not include the *munājāt* genre in their discussions of the various genres of Arabic poetry. This neglect is probably due to a combination of various factors, among them the late development of the genre, its religious character, and its peripheral nature in terms of popularity. Nevertheless, the genre is quite visible within the corpus of medieval Arabic literary texts, and the following paragraphs outline some of its important milestones, in poetry as well as prose.

The Qur'ān contains a large number of short supplications to God that are made by various prophets and believers,<sup>14</sup> and the Hadith compilations contain many short *du'ā's* of the Prophet (d. 11/632).<sup>15</sup> 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib (d. 40/661) is believed to have composed a large number of prose *munājāt*,<sup>16</sup> as is his son, the second Shi'ite Imam, al-Ḥusayn (d. 61/680),<sup>17</sup> and his grandson, the third Imam, Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn 'Alī b. al-Ḥusayn (d. 95/714). Those written by the latter are some of the earliest lengthy Arabic prose *munājāt* of relatively certain authenticity, and they include prayers that Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn

<sup>14</sup> For *du'ā's* prayed in the Qur'ān by various prophets and by the believers, see A. Farid (ed. & trans.), *Prayers of Muḥammad* (Karachi, 1959, in original Arabic with English translation), and A.M.Q. al-Rifāʿī (ed.), *al-Adʿiyya wa al-adhkār al-maʿthūra ʿan al-nabī al-mukhtār* (n.d., n.p., popular edition, pp. 33–40).

<sup>15</sup> For *du'ā's* believed to have been composed by the Prophet culled from early Hadith compilations of al-Bukhārī, Muslim, al-Tirmidhī, Abū Dāʿūd, etc., see *Prayers of Muḥammad* and *al-Adʿiyya wa al-adhkār*.

<sup>16</sup> For *du'ā's* believed to have been composed by 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, see *al-Ṣaḥīfa al-alawiyya al-mubāraka* (Beirut, n.d.); *Nahj al-balāgha* (compiled by al-Sharīf al-Raḍī, commentary by M. ʿAbduh, analysis of sources for individual sermons, etc., by Ḥ. al-Aʿlamī, Beirut, 1993, pp. 155, 253–55, 290–91, 444–45, 448, etc.); and *al-Munājāt al-ilāhiyyāt* (lithographic print, [Tehran?], 1381H, with interlinear Persian translation).

<sup>17</sup> For *du'ā's* believed to have been composed by al-Ḥusayn, the martyr of Karbala, see his supplication on the day of ʿĀshūrā, beginning: “O God, You are my support in every trouble”—*allāhumma anta thiqaṭī fī kullī karbīn*, and his *du'ā's* for each day of the week recorded in the Ṭayyibī tradition, in a manual of daily morning supplications, titled *Ghamām al-raḥma* (Bombay 1365H, pp. 256–57, 94–98, 114–15, 135–40, 154–61, 175–80, 197–202, 221–225).

composed on various religious occasions (such as his prayer on the day of 'Arafa), times of human need (such as his prayer for rain during drought), or more generally to praise God and ask for forgiveness of sins; they are collected in the *Ṣaḥīfa Sajjādiyya*,<sup>18</sup> and the term *munājāt* is used in them in the sense of private communion with God.<sup>19</sup> In the Fatimid tradition, two and a half centuries after the Imam Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn, the Imam al-Muʿizz (d. 365/975) composed some prose *munājāt*,<sup>20</sup> thus it was a genre known to and used by the Fatimids before al-Muʿayyad.

Over the next several centuries after Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn, the genre became closely identified with Sufism.<sup>21</sup> The Sufi prose *munājāt* focused on God's unveiling of Himself to His servant, and the annihilation (*fanāʾ*) of the servant in the path of union with his Creator. The Sufi master al-Junayd (d. 298/910) is said to have composed a book by the title *Kitāb al-Munājāt* (The Book of Munājāt).<sup>22</sup> The Sufi martyr al-Ḥallāj (d. 309/922) is believed to have uttered several brief prose (and a couple of very short poetic) expressions primarily on union with God collected anonymously within the framework of biographical reports in a slim volume titled *Kitāb akhbār al-Ḥallāj* or *Munājayāt al-Ḥallāj*.<sup>23</sup> A hundred years later, Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī (d. 414/1014) composed *al-Ishārāt al-ilāhiyya* (Divine Signs), a work

<sup>18</sup> ʿAlī Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn, *al-Ṣaḥīfa al-kāmila al-sajjādiyya*, published in a large number of editions, including the one in Beirut, 1992; trans. into English alongside the original Arabic by W. Chittick, titled *The Psalms of Islam*, Oxford, 1988. Fifteen prayers in the *Ṣaḥīfa* are termed *munājāt*, the rest are termed *duʿāʾ*; the fifteen "*munājāt*" are also translated into Persian by M. Shujāʿī, titled *Dar yāfī az munājāt-i khams ʿashara: dast-i duʿāʾ, chashm-i umīd*, [Tehran,] 1366H.

<sup>19</sup> *Al-Ṣaḥīfa al-sajjādiyya, duʿāʾ yawm ʿArafa*, p. 180.

<sup>20</sup> See one such *munājāt* by al-Muʿizz in M.S. Guyard, *Fragments relatifs a la doctrine des Ismaʿīlīs*, Paris, 1874, text pp. 48–53, French trans. and notes, pp. 168–82; and one in L. Massignon, *Recueil de textes inédits concernant l'histoire de la mystique en pays d'Islam*, Paris, 1929, p. 217.

<sup>21</sup> There are some brief studies of the *munājāt* genre, and these focus exclusively on Sufi *munājāt*. See, for example, articles by A.J. Arberry, "The Divine Colloquy in Islam" (*BJRL* 39/1, 1956, pp. 20–44); and the two-paragraph article by C.E. Bosworth, "Munādjāt" (*EI2*, vol. 7, p. 557). Other brief studies of *munājāt* occur within studies of Sufism, like C.E. Farah's section on "Literature of Divine Converse," in his chap. on "The Prose Literature of Sufism" (*CHALRLSAP*, pp. 67–68); and A. Schimmel's chap. on "Free Prayer" in her book *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* (Chapel Hill, 1975, pp. 155–67).

<sup>22</sup> See article on him by A.J. Arberry, "al-Djunayd," *EI2*, vol. 2, p. 600.

<sup>23</sup> Anon., *Kitāb akhbār al-Ḥallāj aw munājayāt al-Ḥallāj*, eds. L. Massignon and P. Kraus, Köln, 1999, first published 1936.

largely influenced by Sufi ideas, roughly half of which is prose *munājāt*.<sup>24</sup> Another half century after that, the Sufi ‘Abd Allāh al-Anṣārī (d. 481/1089) composed his Persian work, the *Munājāt*.<sup>25</sup> All in all, the prose *munājāt* genre had become fairly well known by al-Mu‘ayyad’s time.

Al-Mu‘ayyad (who died, as we know, in 470/1078) composed prose *munājāt* (termed *du‘ā*) which were collected (perhaps by Lamak?) in his *Ad‘iya Mu‘ayyadiyya*.<sup>26</sup> The compilation also contains several *du‘ā*’s composed by anonymous da‘wa authors, and these might have been quite early, even as early as the Umayyad period.<sup>27</sup> Al-Mu‘ayyad’s prose *munājāt* are distinct from those in the Sufi style but somewhat similar in content to the *Ṣaḥīfa Sajjādiyya*. They praise God, and contain prayers that implore the intercession of the progeny of Muḥammad for the forgiveness of sins. They are also different from al-Mu‘ayyad’s own poetry *munājāt* in their highly esoteric nature and their heavy use of cosmic symbolism.

In Arabic poetry, the earliest attestations of *munājāt* are the few ascribed to the very same figures who composed the earliest prose *munājāt*, ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib<sup>28</sup> and his grandson Zayn al-‘Ābidīn.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Abū Hayyān al-Tawḥīdī, *al-Ishārāt al-ilāhiyya*, ed. W. al-Qāḍī, Beirut, 1973. For an analysis of the contents of the book, and an evaluation of its Sufi outlook, see al-Qāḍī’s introduction, pp. 11–22. Also edited earlier by ‘A. al-Badawī (Cairo, 1950), who calls the *Ishārāt* a pioneering work in its genre, and one with tremendous influence on later Sufi *munājāt* (Introduction, pp. 1–t).

<sup>25</sup> See article on him by S. De Beaurecueil, “al-Anṣārī al-Harawī” (*EI2*, vol. 1, pp. 515–16), and a translation of his *munājāt* into English by W. Thackston, titled *Intimate Conversations* (New York, 1978); and earlier by A.J. Arberry, titled “Anṣārī’s Prayers and Counsels” (*Islamic Culture* 10, 1936, pp. 369–89).

<sup>26</sup> Al-Mu‘ayyad, *al-Ad‘iya al-Mu‘ayyadiyya*, lithographic print, Bombay, 1380H; another lithographic print titled *al-Tuḥfa al-du‘ā’iyya al-fakhīma*, Bombay, 1412H.

<sup>27</sup> These *du‘ā*’s by anonymous authors are quoted by al-Mu‘ayyad in the *Majālis: al-Ad‘iya*, #1, in *al-Majālis*, vol. 4, majlis 25; #6 in vol. 6, majlis 12; #10 in vol. 4, majlis 43; #18 in vol. 4, majlis 14; #19 in vol. 4, majlis 24; #20 in vol. 4, majlis 22.

<sup>28</sup> In the Ṭayyibī tradition, two *munājāt* attributed to ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib are: “*yā dha ‘l-ma‘ālī ‘alayka mu‘tamadī*” (O You of elevated actions upon You is my support), and “*wa kam li llāhi min lufin khaṣṣiyī*” (How many a mysterious benevolence does God grant!) (*Khazā’in barakāt al-du‘ā*, popularly known as “*bihōrī nī haṭī*,” in Bohra Gujarati meaning “manual for late-night prayer,” Bombay, 1389H, pp. 9–10, 91–92). In the Twelver Shi‘ite tradition, a *munājāt* attributed to ‘Alī is “*laka l-ḥamdu yā dha l-jūdī wa l-majdī wa l-ulā*,” (All praise is for You, O [God] of generosity and nobility and elevation), (cf. Aghā Buzurg al-Tīhrānī, *al-Dharī‘a ilā taṣānīf al-shī‘a*, Beirut, 2nd ed., 1983, vol. 22, pp. 237–38, under “*munājāt*”); the *munājāt* is quoted in full in *Naghma-yi āsmānī*, pp. 122–24.

<sup>29</sup> In the Ṭayyibī tradition, a *munājāt* attributed to Zayn al-‘Ābidīn is “*yā man ilayhi l-mushtakā*” (*Khazā’in barakāt al-du‘ā*, pp. 34–35).

However, according to many scholars, the attribution of these *munājāt* cannot be positively confirmed. Next we have a *munājāt* poem composed by a proto-Fatimid, possibly from the Umayyad period (ended 132/750), and quoted by al-Muʿaḥḥad in his *Majālis*.<sup>30</sup> Parts of Sufi poetry, beginning in the eighth century with the poems (also of uncertain authenticity) of Rābiʿa al-ʿAdawiyya (d. 185/801) have some of the characteristics of the *munājāt* genre. Unlike Sufi prose supplications, however, most Sufi poetry is not written in direct address (an essential element of the *munājāt* genre), but in the third grammatical person, and it follows the descriptive *ghazal* tradition, with the divine beloved taking the place of the corporeal one; hence, it cannot be categorized as true *munājāt*.<sup>31</sup> Thus, al-Muʿaḥḥad is the first to whom we can, with any degree of certainty, ascribe Arabic poems from the *munājāt* genre.

The earliest Persian *munājāt* poems were written by poets contemporary with, or a little later than al-Muʿaḥḥad. One is the above-mentioned author of the *Munājāt*, Anṣārī (d. 481/1089), who included snippets of poetry *munājāt* within his prose; another is al-Muʿaḥḥad's contemporary Fatimid dāʿī Nāṣir Khusrau (d. c. 481/1088), who included a short set of *munājāt* verses at the end of his long didactic poem, the *Rawshanāʾī Nāmeh*,<sup>32</sup> a third is the founder of the Nizārī state, Ḥasan Ṣabbāḥ (d. 518/1124).<sup>33</sup> Hence, as with Arabic *munājāt*, there is no definite attestation of Persian *munājāt* before al-Muʿaḥḥad, and we can state with caution, barring any new findings, that al-Muʿaḥḥad seems to have been the first to compose poetic *munājāt* consistently as a genre in any language in the Islamic world.

<sup>30</sup> *Al-Majālis al-Muʿaḥḥadiyya*, vol. 4, majlis 14. Al-Muʿaḥḥad says he is quoting a *munājāt* by "one of the truthful, sincere ones, who composed a *munājāt* at a time of dissemination and fear, and a period of the stretching of hands of one of the oppressors (named as the Umayyads in the poem, v. 8) upon the people of the dāʿwa, in oppression and tyranny". The opening line is "[O] my God, hopelessness has surrounded us from every side / and every path has become narrow for us" (*ilāhī aḥḥā l-yaʿsu min kullī jānibī / binā wa binā dāqat jamīʿ-u l-madhāhibī*). The poem is incorrectly included in al-Muʿaḥḥad's *Dīwān* ed. by Ḥusayn, #63, p. 323).

<sup>31</sup> For a survey of the major poets and trends in Sufi poetry, see A. Schimmel, *As Through a Veil: Mystical Poetry in Islam*, New York, 1982; and M. Lings, chap. on "Mystical Poetry," in *CHALAB*, pp. 235–64. A study of the poetry of the famous Sufi Ibn al-Fāriḍ is by Th. Emil Homerin, *Umar Ibn al-Fāriḍ: Sufi Verse, Saintly Life*, New York, 2000.

<sup>32</sup> Nāṣir Khusrau, *Rawshanāʾīnameh* (appended to Nāṣir's *Dīwān*) eds. Taqīzādeh & Mīnovī, Tehran, 1368H, p. 542.

<sup>33</sup> For a translation and analysis of Nāṣir's, Ḥasan's and ʿAṭṭār's *munājāt*, see Van den Berg, *Minstrel Poetry*, chapter on "Prayer-Poems: Munājāt and Duʿā," pp. 287–300.



Later, the genre became more prolific, although never as popular as praise-poetry. The Ṭayyibīs continued the composition of *munājāt* in al-Muʿayyad's tradition.<sup>34</sup> In addition, the modern Shiʿite bibliographical work *al-Dharīʿa* contains notations of some later *munājāt* poems in Arabic and several more in Persian.<sup>35</sup> *Munājāt* poetry also began to be composed in the other, new languages that Muslims used, such as Urdu, Sindhi, and Pashto in the Indian subcontinent.<sup>36</sup> Arab Christians, too, utilize the term for prose and poetry composed to commune with God.<sup>37</sup>

*Analysis of al-Muʿayyad's munājāt Poems Composed to Commune with God*

Al-Muʿayyad's *Dīwān* contains six *munājāt* altogether, which comprises about ten percent of his *Dīwān*: four complete poems from the *munājāt* genre,<sup>38</sup> a short-piece *munājāt*,<sup>39</sup> and a *munājāt* which comprises the last four verses of a twenty-verse poem.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>34</sup> Cf. compilations of poetry *munājāt* composed by the Ṭayyibī dāʿī T. Sayf al-Dīn (d. 1385/1965, *Majmūʿat al-Munājāt al-sharīfa al-ramaḍāniyya*, Dubai, 1411 H) and the current dāʿī M. Burhān al-Dīn (b. 1334/1915, *al-Munājāt al-sharīfa al-ramaḍāniyya*, Dubai, 1410 H).

<sup>35</sup> *Al-Dharīʿa*, vol. 22, pp. 234–42. Also see collection of poetry (and some prose) *munājāt* in *Naghma-yi āsmānī*; mostly Persian, some Arabic; contains *munājāt* of medieval poets like Anṣārī and Saʿdī, and modern ones like ʿAbbās Shahrī and Muḥammad Jaʿfar Irānpūr. Some other Persian *munājāt* collections are: Mīrzā Abū al-Ḥasan Hamadānī Tūfī, *Munājāt-nāmeḥ khamsat ʿashar yā kilīd-i dūstī bā khudā* ([Tehran]: Sharq, [1920]; Raḥīm Kārg, ed., *Chalchirāgh-i ashk: Munājāt-o madāʾih-o marāthī-ye ahl al-bayt*, ([Tehran]: Mashʿar, [1958]).

<sup>36</sup> In Urdu, for e.g. the *munājāt* of the poets Jōsh Malihābādī (in Faḍl-i ʿAbbās (ed.), *Intikhab-i Kulliyāt-i Jōsh*, New Delhi, 1989, pp. 168–77), Aḥmad Farāz, *Jānān Jānān*, Hyderabad, 1993, pp. 16–17, Maqbūl Karīmī, *Munājāt-i Maqbūl Karīmī*, Allahabad: Asrār-i Karīmī Press, [1970], pp. 89–152.

<sup>37</sup> E.g. the Lebanese Maronite bishop Kh.A. Aṣṣāf's translation of Saint Augustine's writings (Beirut, 1867), where he uses the term *munājāt* for Augustine's supplications to God (Introduction, p. 4, & pt. 2, p. 4 ff.); and the Syriac Christian J. Shulhūt's *Kūtāb al-Najwā fī al-ṣināʿa wa al-ʿilm wa al-dīn* (Beirut, 1903), where he says his introduction and conclusion are “on *munājāt* with God” (*fī munājāt Allāh*) and the four parts in between are “on *munājāt* with the soul” (*fī munājāt al-naḥs*, p. 7). Cf. also the *munājāt* of ʿAlī Shēr Navāʾī in Chagatay (trans. into Persian, German and Russian, Tashkent, 1991.)

<sup>38</sup> #21, p. 253, 15 verses; #26, p. 265, 15 verses; #27, p. 266, 13 verses; #28, p. 267, 14 verses.

<sup>39</sup> #43, p. 289, 6 verses. Two more short pieces (#49, p. 297, 5 verses; #53, p. 301, 5 verses) reiterate al-Muʿayyad's love for the Prophet and ʿAlī and their progeny, and assert that his hope lies in them. These, with their sense of supplication, have a flavor of the *munājāt* genre, but not being in direct address, nor directly supplicatory, they cannot be termed *munājāt*.

<sup>40</sup> Written in challenge to the vizier who was responsible for his exile. #20, p. 252, vv. 17–20, end.

Al-Mu'ayyad's *munājāt* poems have eight features that are common to all *munājāt*, prose and poetry, earlier and later, Arabic and Persian, Sufi (except for direct address), Twelver Shi'ite, and Fatimid, and they may be said to define the genre:

- Direct address to God
- Spontaneous, personal style
- Plea for forgiveness of sins
- Appeal for succor
- Invocation of the names of Muḥammad and his progeny
- Vocabulary dominated by terms of pathos and complaint
- Poignant imagery
- Qur'ān and Hadith quotations

In his *munājāt*, al-Mu'ayyad addresses God directly, pleading with Him in various ways, begging, informing, and describing his pitiful condition. The *munājāt* poems all begin with direct address in the second person: "O my God" (*ilāhī*, three poems), "O my Lord" (*yā rabbi*, two poems), and more unusually, "O You Who see the spreading of the mosquito's wing" (*ya man yarā madda l-ba'ūḍi janāḥahā*, one poem). He explicitly uses the vocative "*yā*" as the first word in three and implicitly in the other three. He personalizes the address, using the personal pronoun explicitly in three (*ilāhī*) and in a truncated form in another two (*rabbi*). The following is an opening verse of a *munājāt* addressing God directly:<sup>41</sup>

[O] my God, I hope  
for salvation,  
by the vast mercy of the  
One Who grants it.

إِلَهِي إِنِّي لَأَرْجُو النِّجَاةَ  
بِوَاسِعِ رَحْمَةٍ وَهَابَةٍ

Not only do they begin with direct address to God, but the *munājāt* poems are entirely in direct address, and the vocative particle (*yā*) and the expressions "My Lord," "My God" and the like recur after every few verses in the poems. The imperative form of verbs is often used in supplication, such as "End our night!" (*ikshif laylanā*), "Give me ease!" (*yassir*), "Be generous with . . . !" (*jud bi- . . .*), "Grant me . . . !" (*ummun 'alayya*).

The formal aspects of the *munājāt* all convey a sense of spontaneity. The length of al-Mu'ayyad's *munājāt* is shorter than that of both his

<sup>41</sup> #27, p. 266, v. 1.

praise-poetry and his disputational verse: the four complete poems range from thirteen to fifteen verses, the short piece six verses, and the *munājāt* included in another poem, four verses. This brevity gives the impression of probable composition in one sitting. The rhymes, despite the shortness of the *munājāt*, are all relatively simple ones (*l* –two, *n*, *r*, *b*, *j* –one each), reinforcing the feeling of spontaneity, as does the fact that in four of the six poems, the *maṭlaʿ* (opening verse) is without *taṣrīʿ* (rhyming of the two hemistichs); this feature seems to make the *munājāt* more occasional pieces rather than deliberated-upon odes. His preferred meter is *mutaqārib*, (three *munājāt*, followed by two in *kāmīl* and one in *rajaz*), which a medieval critic said has “softness and simplicity” as well as “continuity and uninterrupted sequence.”<sup>42</sup> The use of the *mutaqārib* meter thus confers an impression of extemporaneity. Moreover, all three of these meters are “simple,” having a single repeated *tafʿīla* (metrical foot), which also contributes to the feeling of spontaneity.

Al-Muʾayyad also exploits the spontaneous, conversational possibilities of some other syntactical devices. He uses the conditional for the purpose of reasoning, for explaining to God why He should forgive the poet: If I, he says, with my paltry, insignificant strength, were to have my enemy in my control, I would still forgive him. And I am not an enemy. You with Your omnipotence are more worthy of generosity.<sup>43</sup> In addition, as in the following verses, he uses the rhetorical question to emphasize the poet’s dependence on God for all his hopes.<sup>44</sup>

*I see something like  
a barrier*

*between the answer and  
the plea.*

*If You turn away the  
hand that*

*I have stretched out towards  
You, O Sublime One,*

*do I have any other lord  
[to go] towards whom I  
can fasten my saddles?*

وَأَرَى كَمِثْلِ السَّدِّ مَا

بَيْنَ الْجَابِئَةِ وَالسُّؤَالِ

فَلَمَّا رَدَدْتَ يَدًا إِلَيْكَ

مَدَدْتُهَا يَا ذَا الْجَلَالِ

أَسْـؤَالَكَ لِي رَبُّ أَشْـؤَدُّ  
إِلَيْهِ يَسْـأَلُ أَمْلَسِي رَحْمَالِي

<sup>42</sup> *Sabāṭa wa suhūla*, and *ḥusn al-ittirād*; al-Qarṭājannī, *Minhāj al-bulaghāʾ*, pp. 268–69.

<sup>43</sup> #26, p. 265, vv. 4–8.

<sup>44</sup> #28, p. 267, vv. 4–7.

Will you make sorry with  
the answer,  
like me, like the iniquity of  
my deeds?

أَتَسِيءُ رَّبَّ إِجَابَةً  
مِثْلِي كَسُوْنِي فِي فَعَالِي

A plea for forgiveness of sins is a common theme, and often carried over a number of verses.<sup>45</sup> Al-Mu'ayyad does not, however, describe or recount his individual sins, but mentions them as a large, umbrella category. He begs God to pardon his sins, even though he is most unworthy and of no significance, for granting pardon is what God is worthy of. In the following two verses, he asks God for forgiveness and clemency:<sup>46</sup>

Your pardon is not too narrow  
[to encompass] my sins,  
even though they have the  
weight of mountains.

مَا ضَاقَ عَفْوُكَ عَنْ ذُنُوبِي  
لَوْ حَوَتْ ثِقَلُ الْجِبَالِ

Far be it from Your forbearance  
to become slight<sup>47</sup>  
at my weighty transgressions!

حَاشَا لِحِلْمِكَ أَنْ يَخِفَّ  
لِذِي خَطَايَايَ الْثِقَالِ

Asking for aid and succor is also a recurring motif in the *munājāt*. The succor al-Mu'ayyad requests is either this-worldly, in the context of the poet's many troubles, or eschatological, in a plea for salvation. In making his plea effective, the poet recounts why he should be granted God's aid: his proclamation of the unity of God; his love for the true Imams—the progeny of Muḥammad—and the trials and tribulations he has faced in their cause. He says in one such plea:<sup>48</sup>

So forgiveness, O my God!  
For I am a man  
who has "entered the city  
from its door;"<sup>49</sup>

فَعَفْوًا إِلَهِي فَإِنِّي أَمْرُؤُ  
دَخَلْتُ الْمَدِينَةَ مِنْ بَابِهَا

<sup>45</sup> For a discussion of the role of repentance in Muslim worship and the concept and vocabulary of sinning in Muslim prayer manuals, as well as of God's forgiving nature, and traditional petitions for forgiveness, see *Muslim Devotions*, pp. 173–203.

<sup>46</sup> #28, p. 267, vv. 8–9.

<sup>47</sup> Lit., to become light.

<sup>48</sup> #27, p. 266, vv. 9–10.

<sup>49</sup> Refers to a Prophetic Hadith which says: "I am the city of knowledge and 'Alī is its door. Whosoever wishes [to enter] the city must enter through the door." (*anā madīnatu l-'ilmi wa 'alīyyun bābuhā wa-man arāda l-madīnata fa'l-yadhkhul bi'l-bāb*).

And I have fought well in  
God's cause,  
and have offered my life  
for its lords.

وَجَاهَدْتُ فِي اللَّهِ حَقَّ الْجِهَادِ  
وَجُودْتُ بِنَفْسِي لِأَرْبَابِهَا

He also asks God to punish the Imams' enemies soon and severely with hellfire. The same poem continues.<sup>50</sup>

And punish their enemies,  
the followers  
of their divining arrows and  
graven images.

وَعَذِّبْ عَذَابَهُمُ التَّابِعِينَ  
لِأَرْزَامِهِمْ وَلَا نَصَابِهَا

And cut out their garments  
from hellfire,<sup>51</sup>  
and indeed, the time to cut  
its garments has arrived.

وَقَطِّعْ مِنَ النَّارِ أَثْوَابَهُمْ  
فَقَدْ أَانَ تَقْطِيعُ أَثْوَابِهَا

For Your hellfire, O my Lord,  
is deserving of them,  
and they, O my God, are  
deserving of it!

فَنَارُكَ يَا رَبِّ أَوْلَى بِهِمْ  
وَهُمْ يَا إِلَهِي أَوْلَى بِهَا

Asking for wishes to be granted, either general or specific, is not a theme that occurs in al-Mu'ayyad's *munājāt*. Pleading for an "answer" (*ijāba*), however, is a fairly common one; so is imploring a "look" (*naẓra*), that, al-Mu'ayyad says, would suffice him in the oppression of the nights and revivify him into eternal life.<sup>52</sup>

Grant me a look that  
I become alive by,  
as it was of old in the first age.

أُمْنُنْ عَلَيَّ بِنَظْرَةٍ أَحْيَا بِهَا  
كَانَتْ قَدِيمًا فِي الزَّمَانِ الْأَوَّلِ

Invocation of the names of the Imams and appealing for their intercession is a well-known Shi'ite motif<sup>53</sup> that takes its legitimacy from the Qur'ānic verse "O believers, fear God, and seek the means to come to him (*al-wasīla*)."<sup>54</sup> The Fatimids placed great importance on this invocation. Al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān's *Kutāb al-Himma* expounds on this motif, quoting a saying of the Imam Ja'far al-Šādiq (d. 148/765):<sup>55</sup>

<sup>50</sup> #27, p. 266, vv. 11–13, end.

<sup>51</sup> Reference to Qur'an 22:19.

<sup>52</sup> #43, p. 289, v. 6, end; "the first age" refers to the time of first creation, before the original sin, and before the creation of the heavens and earth.

<sup>53</sup> See also Schimmel's comments on the importance to all Muslims, including Sunnis, of invoking the name of the Prophet Muḥammad (*Deciphering the Signs of God: A Phenomenological Approach to Islam*, Edinburgh, 1994, p. 146).

<sup>54</sup> Qur'an 5:35, trans. Arberry; see also Qur'an 17:57.

<sup>55</sup> *K. al-Himma*, Ḥusayn ed., p. 51, *Code of Conduct* (Eng. trans.), p. 42.

We are the doors to God, and the means [to get near to] Him for His servants: whosoever seeks nearness through us gets near; whosoever seeks intercession from us, his intercession is successful; whosoever begs mercy through us gains mercy; and whosoever turns away from us has gone astray.

Al-Mu'ayyad invokes the names of Muḥammad and his progeny in almost all his *munājāt* and seeks from God the success of their intercession for himself. He uses the term “*tawassul*” (lit. seeking a means of coming near to God, here, through the Imams) explicitly in this context in one poem.<sup>56</sup>

The vocabulary of the *munājāt* reflects its poignant contents. Forgiveness (*ʿafw*, *ghafr*) is a common word, as are words related to its theme, such as sins and errors (*dhunūb*, *khaṭāyā*). Words conveying the poet's troubles and his distressed condition also recur, such as night(s) (*layl*, *layālī*) and care (*hamm*), heat (*ḥarr*) and its antonym, shade (*zilāl*), hardship (*usr*) and its antonym, ease (*yusr*), weeping (*abkī*) and complaint (*ashkū*), grief (*ḥazan*), injury (lit. injured person, *mustaḍām*) and troubles (*miḥan*). Words used to convey the positive pleas of the *munājāt* are mercy (*raḥma*), salvation (*najāt*), hope (*amal*, *rajāʾ*), plea (*daʿwā*, *suʿāl*) and answer (*ijāba*).

The imagery is not abundant, but it is moving and powerful where it does occur: a mendicant stretching out his hand for alms;<sup>57</sup> the poet constantly prostrating himself before God during the day and continuously weeping and complaining in the darkness of the night;<sup>58</sup> the roaring sea of God's strength (*qudra*), which has swamped the poet's ship from anchoring or from setting forth;<sup>59</sup> al-Mu'ayyad having become pure gold for the sun of right guidance (Imam) and the futility of fire trying to consume pure gold.<sup>60</sup> In the following verse, personified night strikes the poet with all kinds of hardships:<sup>61</sup>

[O] my God, verily, for the  
Progeny of the Prophet,  
the nights have struck me  
with their sufferings.

يَا إِلَهِي إِنِّي بِسَالِكِي  
دَهْشَتِي اللَّيَالِي بِأَوْصَالِهَا

<sup>56</sup> #28, p. 267, v. 11.

<sup>57</sup> #28, p. 257, v. 5.

<sup>58</sup> #20, p. 252, v. 18.

<sup>59</sup> #26, p. 265, v. 6.

<sup>60</sup> #26, p. 265, vv. 12–13.

<sup>61</sup> #27, p. 266, vv. 7–8.

How they have made me  
swallow of their bitter drink!<sup>62</sup>  
and how they have wearied  
me by raising up their  
banner[s]!<sup>63</sup>

فَكَمْ جَرَعْتَنِي مِنْ صَابِهَا  
وَكَمْ أَنْصَمَ بَيْتِي بِتَنْصَابِهَا

From time to time in his *munājāt*, al-Mu'ayyad alludes to Qur'ānic verses and Prophetic Hadiths just as he does in his other genres. In one verse, he quotes a verse from the Qur'ān verbatim, "Verily, with hardship comes ease" (*inna ma'a al-ʿusri yusrā*),<sup>64</sup> prefacing this with a plea for ease. Another time, he alludes to the Hadith "I am the city of knowledge and 'Alī is its door" (*anā madīnat al-ʿilmi wa ʿaliyyun bābuhā*):<sup>65</sup>

In addition to these eight features of *munājāt* that apply universally to the genre, there are two more features that are relevant to our discussion of al-Mu'ayyad's *munājāt* in particular. First, praise of the Imams, which occurs in almost all al-Mu'ayyad's poems regardless of their genre, is relatively light here. It occurs only in the context of the poet's invoking their names and declaring his love for them. Thus, there are one or two verses in some *munājāt* that contain praise of the Imam in passing,<sup>66</sup> and none in others.<sup>67</sup> The longest praise section in al-Mu'ayyad's *munājāt* is the following five verses.<sup>68</sup>

...for I have gained sanctity,  
O Sublime One,  
through [salvation's] masjid  
and pulpit:

the prophet of right guidance  
and his legatee,<sup>69</sup> who,  
when war bares its fangs,

his sharp sword smites necks,  
like fire's burning of its logs.

فإِنِّي تَحَرَّمْتُ بِهَا ذَا الْجَلَالِ  
بِمَسْجِدِهَا وَمِحْطَرِّهَا

نَبِيِّ الْهُدَى وَالْوَصِيِّ الَّذِي  
إِذَا أَفْزَرَّتِ الْحَرْبُ عَنْ نَابِهَا  
تَلَفَّحَ صَارِمُهُ بِالطَّلَاسِي  
تَلَفَّحَ نَارُهَا بِأَقْصَاهَا

<sup>62</sup> *Šāb*: a bitter tree, or the milky juice extracted from it (cf., Lane, ṣ-w-b); could also be taken from *šaʿb* (ṣ-ʿ-b), with the hamza dropped to form *šāb* for poetic need, meaning "full [cup]."

<sup>63</sup> *bi-tinšābihā*: *tinšāb tanšāb* does not occur in any of the many lexicons I have looked at; could be 1) *qiyāsī tafʿāl/tifʿāl* form of *našaba*, or 2) *tanāšīb*: banners, back-formation to singular.

<sup>64</sup> #26, p. 265, v. 15, Qur'ān, 94:5–6.

<sup>65</sup> #27, p. 266, v. 9, Hadith cited in *Sharḥ al-akhbār*, 1: 89–90.

<sup>66</sup> #26, v. 11, #27, vv. 3–4, #28, v. 12.

<sup>67</sup> *Diwān*, poems 20, 21, 43.

<sup>68</sup> #27, p. 266, vv. 2–6.

<sup>69</sup> I.e., the masjid and pulpit of salvation are the prophet and his legatee. Grammatically, the latter two terms are in apposition (*badal*) to the former pair.

And his progeny,<sup>70</sup> a progeny  
that has become elevated  
in its lineage and its good  
character.

وَعْتَرَتْهُ عَتَرَةٌ قَدْ عَلَتْ  
بَأَنْسِهَا وَأَبَاحِهَا

Allegiance to them, for the  
people of allegiance,  
is a sign of purity of line.

وَلَا يَسْتُهِمُ إِلَّا رِجَالُ الْوَلَاءِ  
عَلَامَةُ طُهُرٍ لِأَنْسِهَا

Second, the contents of four out of al-Mu'ayyad's six *munājāt* do not refer to any particular time or series of events. Two *munājāt*, however, are clearly grounded in a historical context, both were composed during his yearlong exile in Jerusalem. The first historically grounded *munājāt*<sup>71</sup> contains a number of images that refer to the poet's temporal reality: his old, infirm body shaken in howdahs and thrown into the corner of a masjid in Jerusalem, after having spent all sixty years of his life in the service of the Fatimid da'wa. Al-Mu'ayyad expresses shock at the unexpected pain and humiliation forced on him by this exile, and he asks God to end his night and usher in the morning of deliverance. The second historically grounded *munājāt*<sup>72</sup> is part of another poem, and the historical connection (a challenge to the Fatimid vizier who was responsible for al-Mu'ayyad's exile) is established in the sixteen verses preceding the four *munājāt* verses. The *munājāt* itself has no historical reference; al-Mu'ayyad turns away completely from the vizier, and addresses God in an impassioned plea for aid and deliverance.

Since al-Mu'ayyad's two historically grounded *munājāt* were both composed during his Jerusalem exile, it is possible that all his *munājāt* were composed either just around this time or a little later, during the last stage of his life between exile in 453/1061 and death in 470/1078.

The following is a complete *munājāt* from al-Mu'ayyad's *Dīwān*, which displays all the features discussed above:<sup>73</sup>

[O] my God, I have called upon  
You in private and in public,  
O master of the kingdom  
in creation and command!<sup>74</sup>

إِلَهِي دَعَوْتُكَ سِرًّا وَجَهْرًا  
أَيَا مَالِكِ الْمَلِكِ خَلَقًا وَأَمْرًا

<sup>70</sup> Grammatically, conjoined with (*ma'īūf 'alā*) the prophet and his legatee.

<sup>71</sup> #21, p. 253.

<sup>72</sup> #20, p. 252, vv. 17–20, end.

<sup>73</sup> #26, p. 265, vv. 1–15, complete.

<sup>74</sup> Cf. Majālis Mu'ayyadiyya, vol. 1, majlis II: *khalq* is *dār al-dunyā*; *amr* is *dār al-ibdā'*.



*O You who dispatches us  
however he chooses,  
in life and in death, in  
congregation [after death]  
and in resurrection.*

*[O] my God, I have fastened  
the saddles of hope  
towards You, so pardon,  
my God, and forgiveness!*

*[O] my God, if I were to  
have power over the enemy,  
I would stretch out a veil of  
pardon over him.*

*And what is my value among  
[Your] servants,  
such that I have the power  
of benefiting another or  
harming him!*

*And wherefrom such strength  
for me, [for] the sea of  
[God's strength]  
has swamped my ship  
while anchored and  
while on course!*

*Then if someone like me,  
with my littleness,  
and my being the littlest  
of the little in value,*

*can be generous with pardon  
if I have power [over my  
enemy],  
then You are more worthy,  
and [yet] more worthy,  
of generosity!*

*[Moreover,] I am not an  
enemy, for I have laid open,  
[my] heart,<sup>75</sup> by Your Right,  
O [my] Lord, for religion.*

وَيَا مَنْ يُصَرِّفُنَا كَيْفَ شَاءَ  
حَيَاةً وَمَوْتًا وَحَشَرًا وَنَشَرًا

إِلَهِي شَدَدْتُ رَحَالَ الرَّجَاءِ  
إِلَيْكَ فَعَفُّوا إِلَهِي وَغَفْرًا

إِلَهِي لَوْ أَنِّي مَلَكَتُ الْقُدُورَ  
مَدَدْتُ عَلَيْهِ مِنَ الْعَفْوِ سِتْرًا

وَمَا قَدَرُ مِثْلِي بَيْنَ الْعَبِيدِ  
فَأَمْلِكْ نَفْعًا لِعِبْرِي وَضَرًّا

وَمِنْ أَيْنَ لِي قُدْرَةٌ تَحْرِهَا  
تَعْظُمُ طَرْسُيَ لِفُلْكِ مَجْرَى

فَإِنْ كَانَ مِثْلِي عَلَى قِلَّتِي  
وَكُونِي أَقْلَ الْأَقْلَسِينَ قَدْرًا

أَمْنُ بَعْفُو إِذَا مَا قَدَرْتُ  
فَأَنْتَ بِالْمَنْ أَحْرَى وَأَحْرَى

وَلَسْتُ عَدُوًّا فَإِنِ شَرَحْتُ  
وَحَقَّقْتُ يَسَارَ رَبِّ لِلْسَّادِينَ مَدْرًا

<sup>75</sup> Lit. breast.

*And the proclamation of my  
Lord's unity, has become,  
in my insides,  
the concealed secret of its  
secrets.*

وتوحيده ربّي بين الحشا

غدا سراً أسرارهِ المستسراً

*And I have turned my face  
towards the progeny of the  
Messenger  
in allegiance, and I have  
turned my back to the  
malicious one.*

وولّيت وجهي لآل الرسول

ولاءً وولّيتُ ذا البُغضِ ظهراً

*Then what do I care about  
hellfire? The long hands  
of my right understanding  
make hellfire's hand short!*

فمالي وللنار طولى يدي

رشادي تُردُّ يد النار قصراً

*I have become pure gold for  
the sun of right guidance,  
and fire dare not consume  
pure gold!*

وأصبحت نيراً لشمس الهدى

وهيّهات أن تأكل النار نيراً

*[O] my God, my intention  
is good,  
so be generous with that which  
is good as an abode!*

إلهي لقد حسنت نيتي

فجُدْ بآلتي حسنت مستقراً

*And give me ease from  
my hardship,  
for indeed You have said,  
"Verily, with hardship  
comes ease."<sup>76</sup>*

ويسّر لي اليسر من عُسري

فقد قلت إن مع العسر يسراً

Thus, we see that al-Mu'ayyad contributed to the development of a new genre in Arabic poetry. Moreover, in the Ṭayyibī da'wa, his own *munājāt* are still used in liturgy and prayer today.

### *Disputational-Heresiographical Verse*

Al-Mu'ayyad was a master of the art of disputation (*munāẓara*) that was popular in the medieval Islamic world, and he had participated in at least two religious-sectarian disputations while in attendance at

<sup>76</sup> Reference to Qur'ān 94:5, 6.

## Munājāt

Four of al-Mu'ayyad's six *munājāt* are used for "ihyā' *al-layl*" (lit. "keeping the night alive"), as a means to pray and commune with God in the deep of the night (*ilāhiya ḍāqa 'alayya l-khunāqū, ilāhī da'awtuka sirran wa jahra, ilāhiya innī la'arju n-naḡata, yā rabbi ashkū sū'a ḡātī*).<sup>17</sup> All five *munājāt* are included in a Ṭayyibī manual titled *Khazā'in barakāt al-du'ā'*, which contains instructions for supererogatory ritual prayers (*ṣalāt al-taṭawwū'*) meant to be recited in the deep of the night.<sup>18</sup> The manual generally contains prose *du'ās* and poetry—*munājāt*, *iltijā'iyya* verses and panegyrics—taken from various Fatimid-Ṭayyibī sources.<sup>19</sup> The verses are included in the *du'ā's* that are the prose counterpart of the poetry *munājāt*, which are meant to be recited after each of the *taṭawwū'* prayers. Al-Mu'ayyad's *munājāt* are included with the *du'ās* that come after the five *taṭawwū'* prayers for forgiveness of sins (*maghfirat al-dhunūb*), granting of wishes (*qaḍā' al-ḡawā'ij*), removal of grief and cares (*kashf al-ḡamm wa al-ḡamm*), light in the grave (*nūr al-qabr*), and the twelve-*rak'a* late night prayer (*al-taḡajjud*).<sup>20</sup>

The manual is used by Ṭayyibīs most intensively during the month of Ramaḍān when they pray late in the night, either alone at home or in a maṣjīd congregation. *Laylat al-qadr* is the most important of the nights of Ramaḍān, and almost every single Ṭayyibī, everywhere in the world, attends one of the small or large congregational gatherings convened on this night. Al-Mu'ayyad's *munājāt*, along with the other poems in the manual, are chanted collectively in the congregation led by a designated clergyman. The following is one of the shorter *munājāt* that is used as liturgy:<sup>21</sup>

<sup>17</sup> #20 (p. 252, vv. 17–20, end), #26 (p. 265, 15 verses), #27 (p. 266, 13 verses), and #28 (p. 267, 14 verses) are recited in Ṭayyibī liturgy. #21 (p. 253, 15 verses) and #43 (p. 289, 6 verses) are not. Also used for liturgy is the *munājāt*-like short poem #53 (p. 301, 5 verses). Many of al-Mu'ayyad's *munājāt* have been translated earlier in this study. See Index.

<sup>18</sup> Bombay, 1389. The deep of the night is the preferred time, but these *taṭawwū'* prayers may be prayed at any other prayer-time as well, and the *du'ās* may be recited at any time during the night or day.

<sup>19</sup> E.g. *du'ā's* from *al-Ṣaḡīfa al-kāmila al-sajjādiyya* of the Imam 'Alī Zayn al-'Ābidīn; *du'ā's* from *al-Ad'iya al-Mu'ayyadiyya*; *du'ā's* composed by the previous Ṭayyibī dā'ī Ṭāhir Sayf al-Dīn (d. 1385/1965), and a couple of *munājāt* attributed to 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib (one of these <yā dha l-ma'ālī 'alayka mu'tamadī> cited partially in *al-Ṣaḡīfa al-Alawiyya* pp. 160–61).

<sup>20</sup> *Khazā'in barakāt al-du'ā'*, pp. 35–36, 51, 68–70, 82–83, 93–95.

<sup>21</sup> #20, p. 252, vv. 17–20.

O my God, my throat  
is choked  
and I have no strength left  
[to face] trials;  
I shall lay my cheek on the  
ground before you in the  
day,  
and complain and weep  
when night becomes dark—  
perhaps in pity you will  
deliver me from cares  
and remove my sorrows.  
O my God, grant asylum to  
your wronged servant  
by your grace, you are the  
one worthy of bestowing  
grace.

إِلَهِي ضَاقَ عَلَيَّ الْخَنَاقُ  
وَلَمْ تَبْقَ لِي طَاقَةٌ بِالْمَحَنِ  
سَأَفْرِشُ خَدِّي لَدَيْكَ النَّهَارَ  
وَأَشْكُو وَأُبْكِي إِذَا اللَّيْلُ حَنَّ  
عَمَسَى أَنْ تُفَرِّجَ عَنِّي الْهُمُومَ  
حَنَانًا وَتُزِيلَ عَنِّي الْحَزْنَ  
إِلَهِي أَجِرْ عَبْدَكَ الْمُسْتَظَامَ  
بِمَنِّكَ إِنَّكَ أَهْلُ الْمُنَنِ

### Ilṭijāʾ

Ṭayyibī liturgy uses three sets of al-Muʿayyad’s plea-for-succor (*iltijāʾiyya*) verses. Two are pieces from larger poems, and the third is a complete short poem. The first piece is made up of six verses from the closure section of a long panegyric, in which al-Muʿayyad addresses the Imams and begs them for succor (*yā bani l-muṣṭafā*).<sup>22</sup> The Ṭayyibī prayer manual *Khazāʾin* includes this piece along with the *taṭawwūʿ* prayer for the granting of wishes (*qaḍāʾ al-ḥawāʾiyy*).<sup>23</sup> This same set of verses is also chanted from time to time in various daʿwa religious assemblies (called “*majlis*”) convened for commemorative or celebratory purposes. The components of the *majlis* are many and varied, integral among them Qurʾān recitation and the chanting of religious poems. Al-Muʿayyad’s poems often form part of the ritual liturgy.

The second piece is made up of three verses from the last part of a description-of-self poem, and in it, al-Muʿayyad asks the Imams and ʿAlī for aid (*idhā*<sup>24</sup> *ḍāqa bī*).<sup>25</sup> It is recited at the beginning of

<sup>22</sup> #3, p. 209, vv. 44–50, 52.

<sup>23</sup> *Khazāʾin barakāt al-duʿāʾ*, pp. 51–52.

<sup>24</sup> “*Idhā*” is the current Bohra version, meaning the same as the original “*faʾin*” (cf. all Dīwān mss. and ed.) The change was probably deemed appropriate because a conjunction (here, the *faʾ*) is not needed when these verses are recited without their preceding ones of the original poem.

<sup>25</sup> #39, p. 282, vv. 13–14, 16.