

## Virtues and Vices in *Akhlāq-i Nāşirī*

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### Abstract

In this study, I focus on Naşir al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī's (d.672/1274) *magnum opus* in Islamic ethical studies, *Akhlāq-i Nāşirī*, with a special analysis of his discussions on the subject matter of virtues (*fāḍā'il*) and vices (*radhā'il*). I portray briefly al-Ṭūsī's intellectual importance within the larger context of Islamic Studies, depict the significance of his work within the framework of Muslim ethical works, and then translate two sections (*fāṣl*) from the second division (*qism*) of the first discourse (*maqālāh*) from the original Persian text. I aim at presenting a nuanced translation of the original ethical terms and thus contributing to the field in this respect.

**Keywords:** Virtues (*fāḍā'il*), Vices (*radhā'il*), Wisdom (*ḥikmat*), Courage (*shajā'at*), Chastity (*iffāt*), Justice (*adālat*)

### Özet

#### *Akhlāq-i Nāşirī*'de Faziletler ve Reziletler

Bu çalışmanın ana konusu Naşirüddin et-Ṭūsī'nin (ö.672/1274) ahlāk ilmi sahasında yazmış olduğu *Akhlāq-ı Nāşirī* adlı eseridir. Daha özel bir çerçevede ise bu eserin ahlākī faziletler ve reziletler konusundaki tartışma ve değerlendirmeleri üzerinde durulmaktadır. Ṭūsī'nin İslam düşüncesi tarihindeki konumu ve *Akhlāq-ı Nāşirī*'nin İslam ahlāk çalışmaları içerisindeki yeri hususunda özet bilgiler verildikten sonra bu eserin faziletler ve reziletler üzerine olan bölümü Farsça asıl metinden İngilizceye çevrilmiştir. Bu tercüme bağlamında İslam ahlāk ilmine dair terimlerin incelikli manalarının nüanslı bir biçimde İngiliz dilinde ifade edilebilmesi ve bu sahada bir standardın oluşturulabilmesi konusunda bu çalışmanın mütevazı bir katkısının olması amaçlanmaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** faziletler, reziletler, hikmet, şecaat, iffet, adalet

Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī (d.672/1274) was one of the most prolific and influential Shi'ī scholars in the Middle Ages. He covered the spectrum of almost every scholarly field of his time including mathematics, geometry, physics, astronomy, astrology, medicine, philosophy, theology, and jurisprudence. In his philosophical works, he examined the extensive branches of the major philosophical disciplines. As indicators of his mastery in speculative as well as practical philosophy, one might mention for instance, his widely-known commentary on Ibn Sīnā's (d.429/1037) *Shifā'* and his ethical masterpiece *Akhlāq-i Nāṣirī* respectively. In the latter work, which he named after his patron Muḥtasham Nāṣir al-Dīn, the Isma'īlī governor in Qūhistān, al-Ṭūsī examines ethical topics much more extensively than previously treated in the works of his predecessors. Even though *Akhlāq-i Nāṣirī* does not look an original work in itself, al-Ṭūsī's competent amalgamation of ethical issues combined with his practical orientation have earned the work a highly respected position in Muslim intellectual history.

The work consists of three major discourses (*maqalāt*): in the first one (*tahdhīb al-akhlāq*), a treaty on ethics in the technical sense, al-Ṭūsī basically follows Miskawayh's (d.421/1030) *Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq'*, which bears the imprint of Aristotle's *Nicomachian Ethics* as well as traces of Platonic and Neo-Platonic ideas; in the second (*tadbīr al-manzil*) and third (*siyāsat al-mudun*) discourses, which are on economics and politics respectively, al-Ṭūsī makes use of the previous related works by al-Fārābī (d.339/950), Ibn Sīnā, and Miskawayh, and the like.<sup>2</sup> Through these chapters, al-Ṭūsī analyzes human behavior at three complementary levels: firstly, at an individual level, where man is directly related to creation and Creator; secondly, at an economical level, where he is a member of the family and other sub-political units; and thirdly, at a political level, where he becomes a member of bigger social groupings and organizations.<sup>3</sup>

1 In this section, al-Ṭūsī so much closely follows Miskawayh's writings that his explanations are basically some expository translations from the latter's work. Al-Ṭūsī even gives the same examples in his treatments; see for instance the examples of carpenter and ring. Al-Ṭūsī, *Akhlāq-i Nāṣirī*, Tehran: 1952, pp. 82-83; Miskawayh, *Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq*, Beirut: 1978, p.46. In his introduction, al-Ṭūsī mentions Miskawayh and his *Tahdhīb* influencing his own work, but he also calls attention to the incomplete content and structure of *Tahdhīb*. Al-Ṭūsī states that although that book contains the major topic of practical philosophy, it still omits two others, namely politics and economics. Al-Ṭūsī, p. 5.

2 Daiber, Hans, "al-Ṭūsī, Naṣīr al-Dīn" *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Leiden: 1960-2003.

3 Wickens, G.M., Introduction in *The Nasirean Ethics*, London: 1964, p. 10.

The style of the *Akhlāq-i Nāṣirī* is quite complex. Above all, the use of extensive Arabic vocabulary<sup>4</sup> would make the work almost inaccessible to a student of Persian unless s/he is trained in Arabic language as well. The length of the sentences creates another stylistic difficulty making the translation even more challenging. For, on the one hand, the sequence of the logical and grammatical threads of the sentences could be problematic, while on the other hand a literal translation into English will result in an unpleasant and non-flowing text to read.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, the Persian edition that my translation is based on has almost no system of paragraphing; nor does it have any reliable punctuation system to help the reader. I have chosen two sections (*faṣl*) from the second division (*qism*) of the first discourse to translate, namely, the third and fifth sections.<sup>6</sup>

### Third Section

#### In enumeration of the classes of virtues (*ajnās-i faḍā'il*) of which the excellencies of disposition consist

In the discipline of psychology (*'ilm-i nafṣ*), it has been established that the human soul has three distinct faculties. With respect to these faculties it (the human soul) becomes the source of different actions and functions in association with the will (*irādah*). And when one of these faculties overcomes the others, the latter are vanquished or lost.

First, the rational faculty (*quwwa-i nāṭiqah*), [also] called the angelic soul (*nafṣ-i malakī*) is the principle of reflection (*fikr*), of distinction (*tamyīz*) and of yearning to investigate the realities of things (*haqā'iq-i umūr*). Second, the faculty of irascibility (*quwwat-i ghaḍabī*), [also] designated as the ferocious soul (*nafṣ-i sabu'ī*) is the principle of irascibility (*ghaḍab*) and courage (*dilīrī*), of coming forward to meet dangers, and of yearning to rule, to rise, and to at-

4 That is the reason why I have transliterated the words according to their Arabic pronunciations.

5 Wickens' translation suffers from similar difficulties as well. Even though he tries to pay very careful attention to precision in his renderings, the English text does not seem very enjoyable to read. I would no way dare to claim a better competency in English; I will try, however, to give a more readable and expressive translation.

6 I have chosen these sections on account of my long-time interest in the concept of *ḥikmah* in Islamic thought. I have been examining this concept in diverse Islamic scholarly disciplines including ethics in which *ḥikmah* is one of the fundamental virtues. Therefore, I have allowed myself to take advantage of this opportunity to focus on this and other closely related concepts in the analyses of one of the biggest authorities in ethical studies in the Islamic intellectual tradition.

tain high status. Third, the appetitive faculty (*quwwat-i shahawānī*), [also] called the bestial soul (*nafs-i bahīmī*) is the principle of the appetites (*shahawāt*), of the search for nourishment, and of yearning to enjoy the pleasure through foods, drinks and women. A reference to this category has already been made in the First Division.

Thus, the number of the virtues of the soul must be in accordance with the number of these faculties. For whenever the motion of the rational soul is in equilibrium (*i'tidāl*) in itself and its yearning is for the acquisition of certain (*yaqīnī*) knowledges – not that which is thought to be certain, while in reality it is pure ignorance (*jahl-i maḥḍ*) – from that motion the virtue of knowledge (*'ilm*) comes into being, as the virtue of wisdom (*ḥikmat*) is a necessary consequence [of this process.]

[Similarly,] whenever the motion of the ferocious soul is in equilibrium – as it is submissive to the intelligent soul and content with whatever the intelligent soul determines for it without any untimely excitation (*tahyī*) and/or violation (*tajāwuz*) of limits in its own states – from that motion the virtue of forbearance (*ḥilm*) comes into being for this soul, as the virtue of courage (*shajā'at*) is a necessary consequence [of this process.]

[In the same manner,] whenever the motion of the bestial soul is in equilibrium – as it is obedient to the intelligent soul, limits itself to whatever the intelligent soul decides for it, and does not oppose it (the intelligent soul) in the pursuits of its own desire – from that motion the virtue of chastity (*'iffat*) comes into being, as the virtue of liberality (*sakhā'*) is a necessary consequence [of this process.]

When these three types of virtue are acquired, and as all three are in harmony with each other, from their compounding a homogenous (*mutashābih*) state comes into being. This state shows the perfection and completion of those virtues and is called the virtue of justice (*'adālat*). In this way, the consensus and agreement of all philosophers (*ḥukamā'*), both modern and ancient, have been established that the classes of virtues are four: wisdom, courage, chastity, justice.

No person deserves praise and/or is worthy of glorification and boasting, unless it is with respect to one of these four, or to all four together. For, those who are proud of nobility of lineage or greatness of family are referring to the fact that some of their grandfathers and ancestors were characterized by these

virtues. And if a man prides himself on superiority and mastery, or on great wealth, he is disapproved in the eyes of men of intelligence.

In another words, it has already been mentioned that the soul has two faculties: one is perception (*idrāk*) by essence (*bi al-dhāt*) and the other is movement (*taḥrīk*) by organs (*bi ālāt*), and each of these is divided into two further subdivisions. The faculty of perception is divided into a speculative (*naẓarī*) faculty and a practical (*‘amalī*) one. As for the faculty of movement by organs, it is divided into the faculty of repulsion (*daḥ*), i.e. irascibility, and the faculty of attraction (*jadhb*), i.e. appetitive. In this respect then the faculties are four; when each of them controls its own objects (*mawẓūdū‘āt*) in the state of equilibrium, as it is necessary and proper without taking any of the two extremes, namely, excess (*ifrāt*) and deficiency (*tafrīt*), then a virtue comes into being.

Thus, the virtues are also four: first, from purifying (*tahdhīb*) of the speculative faculty wisdom comes into being; second, from purifying of the practical faculty justice derives; third, from purifying of the irascible faculty courage arises; fourth, from purifying of the appetitive faculty chastity comes into being. Perfection of the practical faculty means that its applications (*taṣarrufāt*), over/in that which is related to action, are as they should be. As for the acquisition of these virtues, it is dependent upon action. Therefore, acquisition/realization of justice is dependent upon the acquisition/realization of three other virtues, just as it has been mentioned in the first consideration. However, there is a problem here. It lies in the fact that we divided philosophy (*ḥikmat*) into speculative and practical parts, and further practical philosophy (*ḥikmat-i ‘amalī*) into three kinds. And one of these three kinds includes the four-fold virtues among which is wisdom. Then the same wisdom (*ḥikmat*) is one of the parts of philosophy (*ḥikmat*), but this is an unreliable/made up (*madkhūl*) division. The solution of this difficulty is that just as action is related to speculation – for this reason, in the classification of the sciences, a part restricted to knowledge of things whose existence is dependent upon the application of the knower is described as the practical part – so speculative is related to the action, for speculation is one of the things whose existence is dependent upon the application of the speculating/intelligent person (*nāẓir*).

Therefore, from this perspective, the acquisition of the principle of wisdom becomes one of the parts of practical philosophy. This happens in such a way

that either just as justice derives from wisdom so wisdom derives from justice, or what is meant by wisdom in this place is the use of the practical intelligence (*'aql-i 'amalī*) as it should be. And this is also called practical philosophy. By taking the issue in different manners, confusion over the division disappears and doubt is dissolved.

Each one of these virtues necessarily gives the right to be praised to its possessor, provided that he passes it from himself to others. As long as the effect of that virtue stays in his essence alone, without passing it to others, he does not necessarily deserve to be praised. Its example is as follows: the possessor of liberality (*sakhāwat*) whose liberality does not pass from himself to another person is called spendthrift (*minfāq*), not a liberal man; when a possessor of courage (*shajā'at*) acts in such manner, he is called jealous (*ghayūr*), not courageous; [similarly], a possessor of wisdom is called smart/perspicacious (*mustabşir*), not wise (*hakīm*). But when the virtue becomes public and its effect passes to others, it evidently becomes a cause of fear (*khawf*) or hope (*rajā'*) to others. Likewise, liberality is a cause for hope and courage a cause for fear. However, [this is the case] in this world [alone], for these two virtues are related to the perishable animal soul, while knowledge is a cause of both hope and fear in this world as well as in the other, for this virtue is related to eternal angelic soul. And when hope and awe (*haybat*), which are the cause of sovereignty (*siyādat*) and magnificence (*ihtishām*), come into being, then praise becomes necessary.

Regarding the definition of these virtues, it has been [also] said that wisdom signifies acquiring the knowledge of everything in the direction of existence. However, since existent things are either divine or human, wisdom is of two kinds, one is 'knowable' (*dānistānī*) and the other 'doable' (*kardānī*), i.e. speculative and practical. Courage means that the irascible soul should obey the rational soul, so that it would not be agitated in dreadful affairs. And it should carry on according to its (the rational soul's) opinion, so that the action it actualizes becomes good and the endurance (*şabrī*) it shows becomes praiseworthy. Chastity denotes that the faculty of appetite obeys the rational soul so that its operations follow the latter's opinion; and the effect of goodness (*khayriyyat*) should be apparent in it as well as it should be free from the compulsory passion of soul and servitude to pleasures. And [finally], justice me-

ans that all these faculties are in agreement with each other and conform to the distinguishing faculty, so that the conflict of passions and opposite attractions (*tajādhub*) of the pleasures and faculties would not confound its possessors into perplexity, and the effect of equity and impartiality should be clear in it. God is the provider of success and succor.<sup>7</sup>

### Fifth Section

#### In enumeration of the opposites of these classes which are the kinds of vices

Since virtues are enumerated in four classes, their opposites which are the classes of vices might also at the first glance appear as four: ignorance (*jahl*), as the opposite of wisdom; cowardice (*jubn*), as the opposite of courage; unchastity/concupiscence (*shirrah*), as the opposite of chastity; and tyranny (*jawr*), as the opposite of justice. But, in accordance with through examination and detailed analysis, [it becomes clear that] each virtue has a limit that when it gets transgressed, in the direction either of excess (*ghuluw*) or of shortcoming (*taqṣīr*), it results in a vice. Assuredly, whenever a reputed (*mu'tabar*) regulation that delimits a virtue is neglected, or whenever a non-reputed (*nā mu'tabar*) regulation is observed, that virtue becomes a vice. Thus every virtue looks like a middle-point (*wasatī*) and the vice corresponding to it resembles peripheries,

7 Following this section, there is the fourth section in which al-Ṭūsī enumerates sub-classes under the fundamental virtues. This part is full of Arabic vocabulary and thus looks like an Arabic text rather than a Persian one. I have summarized this part, instead of giving the full translation. In this section, al-Ṭūsī states that under each of the fundamental virtues there are innumerable kinds of virtues of which he mentions the better known ones. Under the class of wisdom, he lists seven kinds, namely, sharpness (*dhakāʿ*), speed of understanding (*sur'at-i fāhm*), clarity of mind (*ṣafā-yi dhīhn*), ease of learning (*suhūlat-i ta'allum*), excellence of intellection (*ḥusn-i ta'aqqul*), retention (*taḥaffūz*), and remembrance (*tadhakkur*). Under the class of courage, he enumerates eleven kinds: greatness of soul (*kibr-i nafs*), intrepidity (*najdat*), high-mindedness (*buland-himmatī*), perseverance (*thabāt*), forbearance (*ḥilm*), calmness of soul (*sukūn-i nafs*), vigor (*shahāmat*), endurance (*taḥammul*), humility (*tawāḍu'*), sense of honor (*ḥamiyyat*), and compassion (*riqqat*). Under the class of chastity, al-Ṭūsī mentions twelve kinds, namely, shame (*ḥayā'*), gentleness (*rifq*), right guidance (*ḥusn-i hudā*), conciliation (*musālamat*), sedateness (*da'at*), self-control (*ṣabr*), contentment (*qanā'at*), dignity (*waqār*), moderation (*wara'*), self-discipline (*intizām*), freedom (*hurriyyat*), and liberality (*sakhā'*). Under the class of liberality, he states that there are many kinds of virtues of which he lists eight: generosity (*karam*), preference (*ithār*), forgiveness (*'afw*), chivalry (*muruwwat*), attainment (*nayl*), charity (*mu'āsāt*), open-handedness (*samāḥat*), and remission (*musāmaḥat*). And finally, under the class of justice, al-Ṭūsī lists twelve kinds: sincerity (*ṣadāqat*), amity (*uflāt*), fidelity (*wafā'*), concern (*shafaqat*), care of relatives (*ṣila-i raḥim*), recompense (*mukāfāt*), fair play (*ḥusn-i shirkat*), fair judgment (*ḥusn-i qadā'*), affection (*tawaddud*), acceptance (*taslīm*), reliance (*tawakkul*), and act of worship (*'ibādat*).

like center and circle. Just as on the surface of a circle, one point – which is its center – is the most distant of [all] points from the circumference, whereas the other surrounding point[s] – which are innumerable – whether on the circumference or within it, each of which – on whichever side it may lie – lies nearer to circumference than to the center.

Similarly, virtue has a delimitation, which is at the farthest distance from vices, and deviation (*inḥirāf*) from that limit – to whichever direction or side it may be – necessarily results in proximity to a vice. This is what the philosophers mean with their dictum that virtue lies at the middle-point and vices on the peripheries. From this it follows that corresponding to every virtue there are an infinite number of vices, because the middle-point is defined (*maḥdūd*), but the peripheries are not. Observing virtue resembles motion along a straight line, while the perpetration of vices is akin to a deviation from that line. It is obvious that between two limits there can be only one straight line, while non-straight lines may be innumerable.

Likewise, standing upright on the path of virtue is possible only along one course, whereas [possible] deviation from that course is unlimited. For that reason, the difficulty that occurs in following the path of virtues to which some allusions in the [divine] laws (*nawāmīs*) refer arises. The saying, “the path of God Almighty is thinner than a hair and sharper than a sword” refers to this idea. Because the finding of a true middle-point among infinite peripheries is very difficult and the adherence to it upon discovery is even more difficult. Referring to the same idea philosophers say, “to hit the target point is more difficult than to miss it, but to keep hitting it afterwards in order not to miss it is still more difficult and harder.”

It must be understood that one speaks of the “median-point” in two senses: [the first] one is that which is in itself the middle between two things; like four, which is the median between two and six, and its deviation from medianness (*wasāṭat*) is impossible. [The second] one is that which is relatively the middle, like the specific and individual equilibriums (*i’tidālāt*) in the opinion of the physicians (*aṭibbā*). The importance of the word “middle” in this science is analogous; this is the reason why the conditions of each virtue differ according to each individual. The variation of actions, states, time, and the like also necessitates a difference. Corresponding to each of the virtues of



each specific individual, there are infinite number of vices, as we have said. Thus, the vices of any individual could not be limited or numbered; for this reason the motives (*dawā'ī*) for evil are very many, while the motives for good are few. But the numeration of these individual things and numbers is not necessary for the master of a discipline (*šinā'at*), for he is responsible for giving fundamental principles and rules, not for calculating particulars.

Likewise, a carpenter or a goldsmith has a rule in conceptualizing a door or a ring. By means of that rule they can actualize an infinite number of individual things from these two types [of items]. In each situation they observe what is most opportune for that situation, as required by a particular material (and a particular amount), [whatever] the estimation of the need might be. It is not necessary for them to conceive the numbers of different doors and rings that could be brought into existence, or the numbers of glitch[es] (*fāsād*) that could occur in the course of the discipline.

Since deviations refer to two types, one necessarily coming from transgressing in the direction of excess (*ifrāt*) and the other necessarily coming from transgressing from the direction neglect (*tafrīt*), then corresponding to each virtue there are two classes of vice, the virtue existing in the middle-point and the two vices at two poles/extremes. Since it has already been explained that the classes of virtues are four, then the classes of vices are eight. Two correspond to wisdom, i.e. foolishness (*safāh*) and stupidity (*balah*); two correspond to courage, i.e. foolhardiness (*tahawwur*) and cowardice (*jubn*); two correspond to chastity, i.e. unchastity (*shirrah*) and sluggishness of appetite (*khumūd-i shahwat*); and two correspond to justice, i.e. injustice (*zulm*) and [submissive] suffering of injustice (*inzilām*).

Foolishness, which is on the side of excess, is the use of the reflective faculty (*quwwat-i fikrī*) for that which is not obligatory (*wājib*), or beyond that which is obligatory; some call this cleverness (*gurbuzī*) [as well]. As for stupidity, which is on the side of neglect, is the disuse (*ta'īl*) of this faculty, willingly (*bi irādah*), not out of natural disposition (*khilqat*). Foolhardiness, which is on the side of excess, means daring (*iqdām*) to do something when such daring is not proper (*jamīl*). As for cowardice, which is on the side of neglect, it denotes the avoidance of something when such avoidance is not praiseworthy (*maḥmūd*). Unchastity, which is on the side of excess, represents

the greediness (*wulūʿ*) for pleasure[s] beyond the obligatory extent. As for sluggishness of appetite, which is on the side of neglect, refers to rest – on the basis of free choice, not of deficiency of natural disposition – from motion in requesting necessary pleasure[s] to which religion and intellect have given their assent of engagement. Injustice, which is on the side of excess, denotes the acquisition of the means of livelihood through reprehensible approaches. As for suffering of injustice, which is on the side of neglect, it signifies letting one who desires the means of livelihood to take them by force and plunder, and [even further] submitting abjectly (*bi ʿarīq-i madhallat*) to their being taken without having any right to do so. Since the means of obtaining property (*amwāl*) and sustenance (*aqwāt*), and the like are many, the unjust and treacherous men are always rich, while the oppressed is poor, but the just man stands in an intermediate state.

In the same manner, one must pay consideration to the categories subsumed under the classes of virtues, as to know that the number of vices for each kind is two: one in the direction of excess, the other in the direction of neglect. It is possible that for each one of these kinds and types, no particular name has been coined in every language. But since the idea is conceived, the term may be left aside, for the term is used to arrive at ideas. For the sake of example, however, we will mention that which correspond to a few kinds, so that others may draw analogies from them.

[Accordingly] we say: we enumerated seven types of wisdom as follows: sharpness (*dhakāʿ*), speed of understanding (*surʿat-i fahm*), clarity of mind (*ṣafā-yi dhihn*), ease of learning (*suhūlat-i taʿallum*), excellence of intellection (*ḥusn-i taʿaqqul*), retention (*taḥaffūz*), and remembrance (*tadhakkur*). Sharpness is a middle-point between malice (*khubth*) and stupidity (*balādat*); the former stands on the side of excess, while the latter on the side of neglect, and by this “stupidity” we mean that which comes from ill-will (*sūʿ-i ikhtiyār*), not from want of natural disposition. Speed of understanding is a middle-point between quickness of imagination (*surʿat-i takhayyulī*), which occurs as a capturing (*ikhtīṭāf*) without a firmness of understanding (*iḥkām-i fahm*), and slowness (*ibtāʿī*), which becomes habit (*malakah*) from delaying of comprehension (*taʿkhīr-i fahm*). Clarity of mind is a middle-point between an inflammation (*iltihābī*), which is holding back the soul from the desired thing by

excess<sup>8</sup> of amount, and a darkness (*zulmatī*), which takes place within the soul as a result of which there occurs delay in deducing (*istinbāt*) conclusions. Ease of learning is a middle-point between an anticipation (*mubādaratī*), which allows no scope (*majāl*) for the confirmation of forms (*istithbāt-i šuwar*), and a difficulty (*taša‘‘ubī*) leading to impossibility (*ta‘adhdhur*). Excellence of intellection is a mean between using reflection on the perception of that which is excessive to the intellection of the desired thing, and a deficiency of reflection to intellection of the totality of the desired thing. Retention is a middle-point between an excessive care (*‘ināyati-i zā‘id*) to capture that the capturing of which is useless, and a negligence (*ghaflatī*) in confirming forms which leads to a turning away (*i‘rāḍ*) from that which it is important to retain. As for remembrance, it is a middle-point between an examination (*isti‘rādī*)<sup>9</sup>, which requires a waste of time and blunting of the instrument (*kalālat-i ālat*), and a forgetfulness (*nisyānī*), which necessarily comes from negligence (*ihmāl*) of what it is incumbent to follow.

In the same manner, one can speak of the categories of other classes. It is possible that some vices have a well-known name, such as in the case of impudence (*waqāḥat*) and being ashamed (*kharaq*), which are situated on either side of the virtue of shame (*ḥayā‘*); extravagance (*isrāf*) and stinginess (*bukhl*), which lie on either side of the virtue of liberality; arrogance (*takabbur*) and self-abasement (*tadhallul*), which are on either extremity of the virtue of humility (*tawāḍu‘*); or impiety (*fisq*) and scrupulosity (*taharruj*)<sup>10</sup>, which are situated on either pole of the act of worship (*‘ibādat*).

A virtue may also be positive (*wujūdī*) relative to the middle-point, like liberality and courage. Its direction of excess is ambiguous (*multabīs*) to some short-sighted people, who make no distinction between that vice and virtue itself. Therefore, the more extravagance and foolhardiness they see, the more perfect they imagine the virtue to be. But in the direction of neglect this confusion does not occur, as in the case of stinginess and cowardice, for this di-

8 Actually, the word here is *mujāwarat* (intimacy, neighborhood). But if we could read it as *mujāwazat* (transgressing, exceeding), i.e. with just an additional dot on top of “r”, it would make more sense. Thus I have translated it in accordance with the latter hypothesis.

9 In fact, the word here is *istighrādī*, instead of *isti‘rādī*, but the latter makes more sense. Therefore, I think the dot on top of ‘ayn is superfluous.

10 In the text, the word is written as *takharruj* (graduation). I think the dot on top of h is misprinted.

rection is negative (‘*adamī*’), and the difference between positive and negative is quite evident. In the case of virtue which is relative to the middle-point, however, it is negative; the opposite of this rule is valid. For example, in the case of humility and forbearance, it is their direction of neglect that is ambiguous, while in their direction of excess – which is positive – there is no ambiguity. As for in the case of a virtue unmarked by a predominance (*rujḥānī*) in any one direction, like justice, both directions are clear.

This is a brief explanation of the types of vices. From some of these types, certain kinds of sickness befall the soul, and after this exposition, the causes and signs of them will be given, if God Exalted so wills.

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