

Re-experiencing the Myth of Adam: The Primordial Covenant on Junayd's Idea of *fanā'* and *baqā'*

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Introduction

Baghdād in the Abbasid dynasty was the center of cultural base known well as the “House of Wisdom” (*bayt al-ḥikmah*), where texts were translated from Greek into Arabic.¹ In parallel to this translation work there, the Qur'an came to have diversified interpretations in accord with its readers. Sufism that was historically originated in Baghdad² explored the ways of interpretation for unifying with God in the Qur'an. Abū al-Qāsim al-Junayd (d. 298/910), who is well-known figure in the classical period of Sufism, influenced later generations.

Study of Sufism since the twentieth century has been mainly focused on the early periods of Sufism, which J. S. Trimingham calls the “golden age of Islam.”³ In considering Sufis' standpoints, Junayd has a landmark role. When scholars describe an outline of Sufism in this period, they cannot avoid mentioning him. The typical example is the contrast between Junayd and his famous disciple, Abū al-Mughīth Manṣūr al-Ḥallāj (d. 310/922). Whereas Ḥallāj is regarded as the Sufī of “drunkenness” (*sukr*) through the popular anecdotes, which tell us that he was executed for saying “I am the Real” (*anā al-Ḥaqq*), Junayd is regarded as an individual of “soberness” (*ṣaḥw*) according to his anecdotes. In other words, the moderate image⁴ found in Junayd is mainly argued by comparing to Ḥallāj, his “heretical” disciple. This contrast in early Sufism was demonstrated in later biographical or genealogical descriptions by such authors as Abū al-Qāsim al-Qushayrī (d. 465/1072)⁵ or Farīd al-Dīn 'Aṭṭār (d.

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1 D. Gutas, *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture: The Graeco-Arabic Translation Movement in Baghdad and Early 'Abbasid Society (2nd-4th/8th-10th Centuries)*, (London; New York: Routledge, 1998).

2 Some scholars point out that Sufi movement (*ṣūfīyah*) spread from Kufa and Basra to Syria and Baghdad (A. D. Knysh, *Islamic Mysticism: A Short History*, [Leiden: Brill, 2000], pp. 17–18), whereas others argue that it came to be originally used as term indicating a group that acted in Baghdad (A. T. Karamustafa, *Sufism: The Formative Period*, [California: University of California Press, 2007], p. 8).

3 J. S. Trimingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam*, (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 103.

4 In regard to the comparison of Sufis' classification between “drunken” and “sober,” J. Mojaddedi, “Getting Drunk with Abu Yazid or Staying Sober with Junayd: The Creation of a Popular Typology of Sufism,” in *School of Oriental and African Studies Bulletin* 66, 2003, pp. 1-13; H. Mason, “Hallaj and the Baghdad School of Sufism,” in L. Lewisohn (ed.), *Classical Persian Sufism: from its Origin to Rumi*, (London: Khaniqahi Nimatullahi Publication, 1993).

In terms of the historical role of Junayd in development from asceticism (*zuhd*) to Sufism, C. Melchert, “The Transition from Asceticism to Mysticism at the Middle of the Ninth Century C.E.,” in *Studia Islamica* 83/1, 1996, pp. 51–70.

5 Concerning the contrast between “drunkenness” and “soberness,” Qushayrī mentions as follows: “sobriety is to return to self-consciousness (*iḥsās*) after absence (*ghaybah*) [from it]. Drunkenness is to be absent [from it] through a strong epiphany (*wārid*) of God.” Abū al-Qāsim al-Qushayrī, *al-Risālah*

618/1221). Although introductory works of Sufism typically mention Junayd in contrast to Ḥallāj, there are not many detailed studies on Junayd that focus on his own thought.

Specifically, previous studies failed to fully consider the relationship between *fanā'* meaning “annihilation” and *baqā'* meaning “subsistence.”⁶ Both terms are crucial key-terms in order to elucidate how Junayd reaches God by using such terminologies, and to understand how he formulates his thought through interpreting the Qur'an in the context of the myth of Adam. Being a Sufi who emphasized “subsistence” (*baqā'*) of unity with God after the “annihilation” (*fanā'*) of self, Junayd's mystical experience is not blurted out in divinely inspired statements (*shaṭahāt*) that might occur in drunken situations, but is reflected through his sober mind. The pair of *fanā'* meaning annihilation and *baqā'* meaning subsistence can be seen in the Qur'an: “All that is on earth will perish: But will abide (forever) the Face of thy Lord, — full of Majesty, Bounty and Honor” (Q55:26–27).⁷ Such a contrast between God and human beings depicts the relationship between God as the Lord and human beings as His servants.⁸

The pair of *fanā'* and *baqā'* is actually used by Sufis to reach *tawḥīd*, which literally means “professing God as one” and which is the central doctrine in Islam. This is clearly reflected in the part of confession of Islamic faith, known as one of five pillars in Islam: “there is no god except Allah, Muḥammad is the apostle of God” (*lā ilāha illā Allāh, Muḥammadun rasūlu Allāh*). Such bearers of Islamic thought as theologians, philosophers, and Sufis inquire the divine oneness on their own paths to God. In other words, there are various meanings of the oneness of God or various approaches in accordance with their standpoints. Theologians do so through speculation, philosophers through logics, and Sufis through their insights of experience.

Moreover, in the context of Sufism, the term *tawḥīd* is added to the meaning of “unity with God.” Sufis who call themselves the “select” (*al-khāṣṣ*) testify the divine oneness through their experiences of unification with God. They make an attempt to express their ineffable experiences and speculations by using various terminologies mainly derived from the Qur'an. Previous studies have also considered Junayd in the context of the primal contract between God and human beings generally known as the “primordial covenant” (*al-mīthāq* Q7:172).

al-Qushayrīyah fī 'ilm al-taṣawwuf, Ma'rūf Zurayq and 'Alī 'Abd al-Ḥamīd Balṭajī (eds.), (Damascus/Beirut: Dār al-Khayr, 1988), p. 71.

6 A. J. Arberry, *Sufism: An Account of the Mystics of Islam*, (London: Allen & Unwin, 1950), pp. 56–59; M. Molé, *Les mystiques musulmans*, (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1965), pp. 61–68.

7 The English translation of the Qur'an in this paper is mainly referred to Abdullah Yūsuf Alī's translation of the Qur'an. Abdullah Yūsuf Alī, *The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an*, (Kuala Lumpur: Islamic Book Trust, 2007).

8 Massignon classifies terminologies of Sufism into following four sources: the Qur'an, Arabic custom, theology, and acquisition from other religions. L. Massignon, *Essai sur les origines du lexique technique de la mystique musulmane*, (Paris: Paul Geuthner, 1922), pp. 27–34.

When thy Lord drew forth from the Children of Adam (*banū Ādam*)⁹ — from their loins (*zuhūri-him*) — their descendants (*dhurrīyata-hum*), and made them testify concerning themselves, (saying): “Am I not your Lord (who cherishes and sustains you)? (*alastu bi-rabbi-kum*)” — They said: “Yea! We do testify!” (*balā shahidnā*) (This), lest ye should say on the Day of Judgment: “Of this we were never mindful” (Q7:172).

According to a literal reading, God drew out whole human beings in pre-existence and made a contract with them. At that time, Adam, a primordial man, was at least already created by God whereas his children, whole human beings, had not come into existence with their physical bodies. In response to the call from God “Am I not your Lord,” human beings testified by saying “Yea! We do testify!” The relationship between Lord as God and servants as human beings was clearly settled in this primordial covenant. As far as individuals acknowledge the Lordship of God in their pre-existence, they are expected to spend their life appropriately as servants by following God. On the day of resurrection (*yawm al-dīn*, *yawm al-qiyāmah*), therefore, it is inevitable for human beings to deny making a contract with Him because they already contracted with Him in their pre-existence itself. The day when the primordial covenant was concluded is called the “day of contract” (*yawm al-mīthāq*) because of such a primordiality of contract. Moreover, it is also called the “day of *alast*” (*yawm alast*) denoting God’s question to human beings “Am I not...” (*alast*).¹⁰

Concerning this verse, the commentary on the primordial covenant executed by Abū Ja‘far al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923) is discussed in the context of predestination and the day of resurrection. He who was active in Baghdād at the same period of Junayd collected the

9 Because the verse seemingly narrates that the descendants of Adam occurred from their loins, it is possible to understand that they would have occurred not from Adam, but from human beings. The *banū Ādam* (children of Adam) which indicates human beings are literally written in plural form. It is the same as not Adam but from the children of Adam, as not his loin but their loins, and as not his descendant but their descendants. Gramlich suggests the possibility that not all made a primordial covenant, and that the descendants are regarded as polytheists (R. Gramlich, “Der Urvertrag in der Koranauslegung [zu Sure 7, 172-173],” in *Der Islam* 60, 1983, p. 209).

10 The verse of the primordial covenant responds to the verse of trust (Q33:72).

We did indeed offer the Trust (*al-amānah*) to the Heavens and the Earth and the Mountains; but they refused to undertake it, being afraid thereof: but man (*insān*) undertook it; — He was indeed unjust and foolish (Q33:72).

Though God required the heavens and the earth to show their trust before He proposed a covenant with human beings, the heavens and the earth declined the offer from Him, whereas human beings received it. The trust, in this meaning, is regarded that whole human beings made contact with God. It seems that the verse shows the privilege of human being to others, as well as the arrogance of human beings who do not fear God. Cf. W. C. Chittick, *Sufism: A Short Introduction*, (Oxford: One World, 2000), p. 115.

Qādī points out that the commentary on the verse of trust was not merely run in pre-modern period (Wadād al-Qādī, *The Primordial Covenant and Human History in the Qur‘ān*, Occasional Papers sponsored by The Margaret Weyerhaeuser Jewett Chair of Arabic, [Beirut: American University of Beirut, 2006], pp. 7–8).

traditions of prophet Muḥammad and his companions in his commentary of the Qur'an (*tafsīr*). Moreover, in most of these traditions, the verse on the primordial covenant through Adam is also interpreted as a related topic of the Qur'an (Q2:28–29).¹¹ However, the context of the primordial covenant shown in Junayd's treatises is different from that of the primordial covenant shown in Ṭabarī's *tafsīr*. The verse on the primordial covenant (Q7:172) has been interpreted specially by Sufis because of its uniqueness.¹² By employing the term used in the Qur'an, they inquire about the invisible aspect, *bāṭin*, rather than the visible aspect, *ẓāhir*, in the divine revelation. Then, how is the interpretation of the primordial covenant shown in the context of Junayd's treatise?¹³ Additionally, in which context is the verse used and how is it related to *fanā'* and *baqā'*?

1. Three Stages of *fanā'* in the Primordial Covenant

On the way to reach *tawḥīd*, Junayd mentions three stages of *fanā'* though his discussion on the three stages does not look very sophisticated.¹⁴ His discussion itself is located in

11 "How can ye reject the faith in Allah? — seeing that ye were without life, and He gave you life; then will He cause you to die, and will again bring you to life; and again to Him will ye return. It is He Who hath created for you all things that are on earth; [Moreover His design comprehended the heavens, for He gave order and perfection to the seven firmaments; and of all things He hath perfect knowledge]" (Q2:28–29).

Ṭabarī discusses this verse in relation with the other verse of two lives and deaths: "twice hast Thou made us without life, and twice hast Thou given us Life!" (Q40:11)

Abū Ja'far b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī: jāmi' al-bayān 'an ta'wīl āy al-Qur'an* (vol. 1), 'Abd Allāh b. 'Abd al-Muḥsin al-Turkī (ed.), (Riyadh: Dār 'Ālam al-Kutub li-l-Ṭibā'ah wa-l-Nashr wa-l-Tawzī', 2003), pp. 443–451.

12 Concerning Sufi's contemplation of the primordial covenant, Kamada considers the exegesis of Qur'anic commented by Abū 'Abd Allāh Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1209) and interpretation of Junayd and 'Umar b. 'Alī b. al-Fāriḍ (d. 633/1235) known as Ibn al-Fāriḍ. S. Kamada, "The Contract in Islam: the Primordial Covenant" (*Islām ni okeru Keiyaku: "Gensho no Keiyaku o Megutte"*), in Y. Itagaki and M. Takeshita (eds.), *The Way of Thinking of Islam (Islam no Shikō Kairo)*, (Tokyo: Eikō Kyōiku Bunka Kenkyū-sho, 1995), pp. 145–174; S. Kamada, "The Primordial Covenant and Mystic in Islam," in Mikasanomiya Denka Beijyu Kinen Ronshū Kankō-kai (ed.), *The Commemorable Essays of Eighty-eight Birthday of Mikasano-miya Imperial Highness (Mikasanomiya Denka Beijyu Kinen Ronshū)*, (Tokyo: Tōsui Shobō, 2004), p. 243–254. Böwering considers Sahl al-Tustarī (d. 283/896) who lived in the same period of Junayd. G. Böwering, *The Mystical Vision of Existence in Classical Islam*, (Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1980). Concerning the primordial covenant in the context of Shī'ī tradition, moreover, Ebstein denotes the general framework. M. Ebstein, "Covenant (religious) pre-eternal" in *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (3rd. edition).

13 As to text critique, this present paper refers to the latest text edited by Su'ād al-Ḥakīm. His edition which is based on several previous publications of Arabic texts, collects the words of Junayd seen in various works. Abū al-Qāsim al-Junayd, *Tāj al-'arīfīn*, Su'ād al-Ḥakīm (ed.), (Cairo: Dār al-Shurūq, 2005); Ali Hassan Abdel-Kader, *The Life, Personality and Writing of al-Junayd*, E. J. W. Gibb Memorial Series, New Series 22, (London: Luzac & Company, 1962), pp. 121–183; *Rasā'il al-Junayd*, 'Alī Ḥassan 'Abd al-Qādir (ed.), (Cairo: Bur'ī Wajidāwī, 1988); *Junayd-i Baghdādī (Tāj al-'arīfīn): taḥqīqī dar zindagī va afkār va āsār*, Farīd al-Dīn Rād'mihr (ed.), (Tehran: Rawzanah, 2001–2002), pp. 365–402; R. Deladrière, *Enseignement spirituel: traités, lettres, oraisons et sentences*, (Paris: Sindbad, 1983), pp. 129–170; M. A. Sells, *Early Islamic Mysticism: Sufi, Qur'an, Mi'raj, Poetic and Theological Writings*, (New York: Paulist Press, 1996), pp. 251–265.

14 There is a comparative work related to *fanā'* between Junayd and Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (d.

the earliest phase of Sufism in which methodology of Sufism such as subtleties of the soul (*laṭā'if*), spiritual stations (*maqāmāt*), and Sufi order (*ṭarīqah*) has been discussed.

Know that you are hidden from you by you, and that you do not reach God by you, but reach Him by Him.¹⁵

According to Junayd, one cannot reach God as long as the self is an obstacle to reach Him. This is also denoted in his words in *The Book of Annihilation (Kitāb al-Fanā')*: "I am the most harmful thing to me."¹⁶ The unification with God as the goal for Sufis, *tawḥīd*, reaches not by human effort, but by the majesty of God. After the confirmation on this point, he proceeds to three stages of *fanā'*, which is the process of annihilating self. The process develops by tearing off addictive elements of the self in order to reach pure self.

[The first stage of] *fanā'* is on attributes, characteristics, natures. [It is executed] through your [spiritual] establishment by guidance to your action, and through granting efforts and inconsistency with the lower ego (*nafs*), and [through] suppressing it by halting their wish.¹⁷

The first stage of annihilation indicates erasing various attributes surrounding ego, i.e., removing the self. As the way for it, one practices control *nafs*, which is the lower level of self. The process of establishing one's spirituality includes a commitment to obey God such as a confession (*shahādah*), which is one of five pillars. Thus, it proceeds according to *sharī'ah* as a norm of action ordered by God. At the same time, it leads to having an attitude that does not follow the lower ego. This stage of self is supposedly named "Self A."

The second [stage of] *fanā'* is your annihilation from showing up of pleasure and tasting (*dhawq*) of sweetness and joyfulness [seen] in obedience [to God]. [This is] for [you] corresponding to request of God (*al-Ḥaqq*) to you, for your dedication to God, and for your being without any mediator between you and Him.¹⁸

In the second stage, one draws delight and comfort from submission to God after he devotes himself to God. Turning away from happiness with submission, he surmises what God wishes.

505/1111): Majdī Muḥammad Ibrāhīm, *al-Taṣawwuf al-sunnī: ḥāl al-fanā' bayna al-Junayd wa-l-Ghazālī*, (Cairo: Maktabat al-Thaqāfah al-Dīniyah, 2002).

15 Junayd, *Tāj al-'arīfīn*, p. 264.

16 *Ibid.*, p. 247.

17 *Ibid.*, p. 265.

18 *Ibid.*, p. 265.

In this regard, Junayd intends that one removes the absolute gap between God and human beings when he dedicates himself to God without any greed. The self in this second stage is named “Self B.”

The third [stage of] *fanā'* is your annihilation from seeing the Reality of your existences (*mawājīdi-ki*), through overwhelming the witness of God on you. In this time, you are of annihilation (*fānin*) and of continuance (*bāqin*). You are a firm existent (*mawjūd muhaqqaq*) due to your annihilation [in which you exist] through the Existence (*wujūd*) other than you when the trace of your [self] remains through disappearance of your name.¹⁹

The third stage of *fanā'* occurs in situations in which God reveals His presence to the self of spiritual wayfarer and the self dissolves in His Realities. Purifying his own identity (*innīyah*) that is temporal and external, he exists not by himself but by God. The word “witness” (*shāhid*) that can be rephrased as “presence” of God, has an important role as Junayd points out the condition of *tawhīd*. In *The Book of Light (Kitāb al-Luma')*, Abū Naṣr al-Sarrāj (d. 378/988) explains the term “witness” through quoting the words of Junayd.

Junayd, may God peace upon him, was asked why witness (*shāhid*) is named witness. Then he said, the real witness is to witness your innermost and deep pleasure, and is to witness the beauty in creatures and slaves of God. When the seer sees it, he sees (*shahada*) that he knows through his seeing himself.²⁰

When he witnesses God, he leads to comprehend God in his presence and proceeds to contemplation (*mushāhadah*). By seeing God in their minds, he accomplishes the unification with God, *tawhīd*, in the condition of *fanā'* and *baqā'*.

He continues [in God] through the continuance of [the unification with] God. That is, unification of the one who issues oneness of God (*tawhīd al-muwaḥḥid*) continues through the continuance of the One. Though one who issues the union with God annihilates, then you are you. That is, you are not through you, you continue inasmuch as you annihilate.²¹

19 Ibid., p. 265.

20 Abū Naṣr al-Sarrāj, *Kitāb al-Luma' fi-l-taṣawwuf*, R. A. Nicholson (ed.), E. J. W. Gibb Memorial Series 22, (London: Luzac & Co, 1914), p. 229. Cf. R. Gramlich, *Schlaglichter über das Sufitum: Abū Naṣr as-Sarrāḡs Kitāb al-Luma'*, (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag Stuttgart, 1990), S. 348.

21 Junayd, *Tāj al-'ārifīn*, pp. 264–265.

The self unites with God by disappearing into Him and annihilates in God and also continues in the One. In other words, the self keeps its duration with God, after annihilating in God. At this point, one is existent through God though one still maintains the self. The self that reaches the eternal duration with God in the third stage is regarded as the “Self C.”

When one passes the three stages of self — Self A, Self B, and Self C, it becomes clear that the self in each stage is different from the others. These characteristics are summarized as follows: the first stage of *fanā'* is obtained by concentrating on self-devotion, following divine laws, and religious duties; the second stage of *fanā'* is reached after keeping a distance from the happiness of submitting to God and removing the mediator between God and human beings; and the third stage of *fanā'* is accomplished through the annihilation of the self. When Junayd enquires about the unification with God, he opens the way to reaching the divine unification and expresses it in terms of *fanā'* and *baqā'*, which are tools used to purify one's self and soul. While the literal meaning of *tawhīd* i.e., swearing God as one, in the context of Sufism, it demonstrates the spiritual meaning of *tawhīd* i.e., professing oneness of God in the unification with Him.

3. The Meaning of *fanā'* in the Primordial Covenant

When the primordial covenant was entered into, there occurred the absolute disconnection between God as the Lord and human beings as the servants, which cannot be bridged. In *The Book of the Primordial Covenant (Kitāb al-Mīthāq)*, too, the idea argued by Junayd keeps the divine initiative to human beings and the disconnectivity between God and human beings, as we saw in the last chapter that *tawhīd* is executed by God.

As the main characteristics of the primordial covenant, Junayd begins with his discussion by depicting the pre-existential condition of human beings. Because the primordial covenant was entered into before human beings came into existence, their condition was narrated in their pre-existence.

Those whom God made them exist on Him in the condition of eternity *a parte ante* (*azal*) and in the vessel (*marākib*) of oneness on Him. When He called them, they replied [to Him] instantly. [It is] generosity on them and grace [on them]. He corresponded with Him on them when He made them exist. Then, they are a calling [itself] from Him. He notifies them Himself when they are not other than the [divine] will (*mashī'ah*) in which He puts in His power.²²

The “eternity *a parte ante*” (*azal*) denotes the condition of human beings before they came into existence. At this time, God and human beings were united because God encompassed them in the vessel (*marākib*) of divine oneness. They cannot exist without the calling from

²² *Ibid.*, p. 229.

God. In other words, they came into existence only through the divine addressing. Since they had not made a contract with God, they are encompassed in God. Therefore, human beings are still regarded as the “calling [itself] from Him” and the “will” of God. According to the interpretation of Sahl al-Tustarī (d. 283/896) and Shī‘ī on the primordial covenant, God is symbolically comprehended as the light.²³ In such an interpretation where God is understood as the light, the primordial covenant and the creation, in the beginning, are developed as result of the interpretations of the Muḥammadan light (*al-nūr al-Muḥammadī*), which is led in the context of the verse of the light (Q24:35). Though such discussion is not found in Junayd’s treatises, he discusses *fanā’* and *baqā’* in the context of eternity *a parte ante*:

He (God) is One Who finds (*wājid*) them, One Who surrounds [them], and One Who witnesses [them]. He frees them in the condition of their annihilation [in God]. Those who are in eternity *a parte ante* due to eternity *a parte ante* are annihilated existents in [the situation of] their annihilation, and continued existence in [the situation of] their continuance.²⁴

When God extricates human beings from the situation of annihilation, they are free in two meanings: on one hand, free condition means that human beings annihilate in God. On the other hand, free condition means the human beings in pre-existence who are not separated from God. The eternity *a parte ante* represents these conditions, in which human beings simply annihilate in the state of *fanā’* and just continue in God in the state of *baqā’*. Letting things ride, therefore, human beings as pre-existence stand in so-called static eternity.

Moreover, in non-separation from God, human beings in eternity *a parte ante* are at last drawn towards God as a “particle” (*dharr*), which indicates creature (*khalq*). The term *dharr* is derived from *dhurrīyah* which is translated as the “children” of Adam in the verse of the primordial covenant (Q7:172).²⁵ Following such a background of the verse, Junayd represents human beings in their pre-existence as “particle” and applies the myth of Adam as a motif to his narrative on the divine unification.

God made them such as particle (*dharr*), and got them out in accordance with His wish as creature (*khalq*). He put them down on loins of Adam, peace on him. Then, He said, “When thy Lord drew forth from the Children of Adam — from their

²³ Böwering, *The Mystical Vision of Existence in Classical Islam*, pp. 147–153; U. Rubin, “Pre-Existence and Light,” in *Israel Oriental Studies* 2, 1975, pp. 62–119.

²⁴ Junayd, *Tāj al-‘arīfīn*, p. 230.

²⁵ In Ṭabarī’s commentary of the Qur’an, too, *dhurrīyah* is used to denote as if human beings are located in condition of particle in the loin of Adam. In another context, *dhurrīyah* is shown the soldiers who were defeated in the battle that the prophet Muḥammad headed and were captured after they ran away and scattered. Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī: jāmi’ al-bayān ‘an ta’wīl āy al-Qur’ān* (vol. 13), p. 231.

loins — their descendants (*dhurrīyata-hum*), and made them testify concerning themselves, (saying): “Am I not your Lord (who cherishes and sustains you)? (Q7:172). Indeed, He notified that He is the One Who made a speech to them. That is, they are not existents without through His finding them (*wujūdi-hi la-hum*).²⁶

Human beings came into existence by being taken out. This means that they are not existent without the calling from God. The existential emergence of human beings is caused only by the calling of God for human beings. God’s calling for human beings is equal to His finding them, called the process of existentialization. In other words, they are existent as long as they are found by God. Although God and human beings were united existentially before the primordial covenant, such a situation has dramatically changed through the contract when God drew them out from Himself. This covenant is the moment in which human beings as intermediate existence located between pre-existence and existence recognize remoteness from God. Junayd states the ontological change occurred in human beings as an opportunity to the primordial covenant:

He made them separate, made them hide in their union (*jam ‘i-him*), and made them present in their separation (*tafrīqi-him*). Because their absence (*ghaybu-hum*) is cause of their presence (*ḥuḍūri-him*), and their presence is cause of their absence. He grabbed them through the witness of display [given] from Him to them when He made them present. Then, He took them away when He made them hide. He brought their annihilation to perfection in the condition of their continuance, and brought their continuance to perfection in the condition of their annihilation.²⁷

In his argument, “union” (*jam ‘*) corresponds to “separation” (*tafrīq*), whereas “presence” (*ḥuḍūr*) corresponds to “absence” (*ghayb*). That is, human beings are in absence when they unite with God and are in presence when they segregate from God. Therefore, “union” and “absence” correspond to “separation” and “presence” as Sarrāj explains.²⁸ Junayd applies these correspondences to *fanā’* and *baqā’*. Comparing to afore-mentioned “static” eternity in eternity a *parte ante* that one annihilates in *fanā’* and continues in God in *baqā’*, both *fanā’* and *baqā’* seem to be rather “dynamic” because they ontologically change through transferring from union in the eternity a *parte ante* to separation in the primordial covenant, as well as when moving from absence in pre-existence to presence in existence as human beings.

26 Junayd, *Tāj al-‘arīfīn*, pp. 229–230.

27 *Ibid.*, p. 230.

28 In *Kitāb al-Luma’*, Sarrāj discusses the correspondence between “unification” (*jam ‘*) and separation (*tafrīqah*), and between “presence” (*ḥuḍūr*) and “absence” (*ghaybah*), and picks up the relationship among those four terms. Sarrāj, *Kitāb al-Luma’ fi-l-taṣawwuf*, p. 340.

Significantly, Junayd argues the oneness between God and human beings in the primordial covenant. Such oneness is also reached when one unites with God in this world. For Junayd, to unite with God in this world is to recur the united condition between God and human beings in pre-existence, especially in the eternity a *parte ante*. It is possible to explain such a condition in accordance with the first separation (*farq awwal*) and the second separation (*farq thānī*) in *The Lexicon of Sufism (Iṣṭilāḥāt al-ṣūfīyah)* which ‘Abd al-Razzāq al-Kāshānī (Qāshānī, d. 730/1329) writes.²⁹ The condition, being regarded as the first separation, means the detachment from God which results into human beings coming into existence as creatures in this world. Moreover, in the second separation, the elected such as the Sufī separates from God again as well as abides in God, though they annihilate in God by their unification with Him in this world. This condition is when one has the gap from God in the first separation, reaches unification with Him, and segregates from Him in the second separation. Based on the primordial covenant, one aims for re-experience of the eternity a *parte ante*, which can be concretely accomplished through the three stages of *fanā’*.

4. Oneness of the Select in the Primordial Covenant

A part of the people put the three stages of *fanā’* and the stage of *baqā’* into practice, which Junayd puts as his own destination. Calling them the select (*al-khāṣṣ*) which is Sufī, he argues in the treatise named as “The Oneness of the Elites,” (*Tawḥīd al-khawāṣṣ*) the ideal condition of Sufī with four stages of oneness and the explanation on each.

The aspect among four aspects of *tawḥīd* is *tawḥīd* for the general. The aspect among them is *tawḥīd* of the people of realities (*ahl al-ḥaqā’iq*) through the external knowledge (*‘ilm al-zāhir*). And, the two aspects out of the four aspects are *tawḥīd* of the select among the people of spiritual knowledge (*ahl al-ma’rifah*).

Concerning the *tawḥīd* for the general, it is to confess the oneness by leaving to see lords and equivalentents [to God], opposites [to God], similarities [to God], and resemblances [of God], to stop resisting to desire and fear one who is equal to Him. This is because he has the reality of accomplishment in actions by continuing (*bi-baqā’i*) to confess [the oneness].

As to *tawḥīd* for the [people] of truths of external knowledge, it is to confess the oneness by leaving to see lords and equivalentents [to God], opposites [to God], similarities [to God], and resemblances [of God], and by executing order and ending inhibition externally. These are brought from them, i.e., fountains of desiring, fearing, hoping, and expecting [God]. Establishing the reality of accomplishment in actions is

²⁹ ‘Abd al-Razzāq al-Kāshānī (Qāshānī), *Iṣṭilāḥāt al-ṣūfīyah*, Majīd Hādī Zādah (ed.), (Tehran: Mu’assasa-yi Intishārāt-i Hikmat, 2002), p. 108.

for establishing the reality of true confirmation by confessing [the oneness].³⁰

Concerning *tawhīd* for the general, in the first stage, it is executed by segregating from the object of obedience which is contrary to God and by confessing His oneness. It means that one does not put the object that is equal to God by uttering the oneness of God because he “has the reality of accomplishment in actions by continuing to confess [the oneness].” Moreover, the second stage of *tawhīd* is for one who has “external knowledge.” In addition to discussing how to avoid hindrances that interfere with *tawhīd*, he also explains external and formal content that one needs to do what is ordered and not what is forbidden. It seems that this indicates legal issues which are based on *sharī‘ah*.

Against such external aspects of *tawhīd* for the general, Junayd offers internal aspects of *tawhīd* that are reached by the select. Although he differentiates the two stages in the internal aspect from the two stages in the external one, the internal levels of *tawhīd* are apparently added to the external one. It denotes that he stresses *tawhīd* in terms of internal aspect as well as external one.

As to the first aspect of *tawhīd* for the select, it is to confess the oneness by leaving to see these things [mentioned in previous two stages] by executing the order [of God] in the outer level and the inner one. [It is] through eliminating the oppositions of desire and fearing one who is equal. These are brought from the fountain of agreement on the existence of witnessing the Real with him, i.e., with the existence of witnessing [His] calling and [their] reply.³¹

Though he does not mention the concrete method to reach *tawhīd*, it is extremely close to the internal aspect as well as the external one. One can encounter God perfectly by removing the vicious mind. However, there are still boundaries between God and human beings. On the other hand, Junayd discusses the second aspect of *tawhīd* for the select, in which there is no gap between God and human beings.

[Concerning] the second aspect of *tawhīd* for the select, one who is like shade (*shabah*) is standing in front of Him, where there is no third person between them. Bestowal on him is His motion of drawing off, in the one who bestows wisdom of His power in depths of seas of His oneness. [It is achieved] through the annihilation from himself, from calling of the Real to him, and from his reply to Him, [is achieved] through realities of the existence [showing] His oneness in the truth of His closeness, and [is

30 Junayd, *Tāj al-‘arīfīn*, p. 260.

31 *Ibid.*, p. 260.

achieved] through removing his sense and motions. This is because the Real makes him stand as He wishes from him.³²

As a result of devotion to God, “one who is like shade” is the intermediate of human beings. When he faces God, he is a phantom as if he is a shade of God. The self-annihilating in God is a part of the ocean, that is, the oneness of God. Moreover, the self-devoting to the divine oneness disappears in God’s calling to the self as well as in one’s response to God. Junayd discusses the condition by using the primordial covenant.

The knowledge in this [level] is that the end of slave returns to his start. That is, he is as if he was when he was before he had been. The indication about this is the word of God, “When thy Lord drew forth from the Children of Adam — from their loins — their descendants, and made them testify concerning themselves, (saying): “Am I not your Lord (who cherishes and sustains you)?” — They said: “Yea! We do testify!” (Q7:172). Who existed before he had existed? Did anyone without the spirits (*arwāḥ*) who are pure, sweet, and sacred reply based on the penetrating [divine] power and on the perfect [divine] will? Now, he is as he was before he was. This is the utmost of truth of *tawḥīd* for the one who unites because of the one [achieved] by leaving himself.³³

As argued in *The Book of the Primordial Covenant*, the last stage in *tawḥīd* is to return to the beginning, which means the recurrence of the relationship in the previous stage of creation where God and human beings are not separated. Thus, “now, he is as he was before he was” expresses the situation in pre-existence, i.e., the situation in which human beings neither have a physical body, nor entire non-existence, nor a temporal existence. Junayd suggests the term “one who is like shade” for the human beings in the pre-existence. In this context, the primordial covenant is used as proof in order to argue the pre-existential unity between God and human beings in the eternity a *parte ante* and the fourth stage of *tawḥīd*.

Regarding the condition of annihilation, Junayd states in *The Book of Annihilation*: “God annihilates in annihilated condition of me what I produce as if what I produce in this world.”³⁴ In this treatise, too, the primordial covenant is quoted while discussing it in the context of *tawḥīd* as a result of the annihilation. In the primordial covenant, before human beings made a contract with God, there was neither a clear line nor a separation between them.³⁵ Though

32 *Ibid.*, p. 261.

33 *Ibid.*, p. 261.

34 *Ibid.*, p. 248.

35 In *The Introduction (al-Muqaddimah)*, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Khaldūn (d. 809/1406) known well as Ibn Khaldūn describes the different aspect of unification and separation in order to relationship between God and human beings. By using the similar terms: *ittiḥād* meaning “unification” and *mubāyanah* meaning

Junayd who is regarded as one of the “sober” Sufis does not identify himself as God, he understands that the condition of union with God is the ideal situation for spiritual wayfarers. Therefore, the verse of primordial covenant has an important role when we consider the meanings of *fanā’* and *baqā’* on which Junayd speculates.

Conclusion

In this paper, I have clarified how Junayd’s treatises on the primordial covenant are the source of his mystical thought by analyzing *fanā’* and *baqā’*. His discussion of the primordial covenant deals with the condition of human beings in pre-existence and focuses on how one makes an attempt to re-experience the mythical age of Adam. For Muslims, the story of Adam did not happen in myth, but actually happened in the past that leads to the present. When the word expressing the pre-existential condition is *azal* (eternity a *parte ante*), to which Sufis try to recur as their goal, his use of *fanā’* and *baqā’* has an organic relationship with pre-existence. In the context of the primordial covenant, *fanā’* and *baqā’* are used to denote the pre-existential situation of human beings because it is possible for Junayd to explain that *tawḥīd* in the eternity a *parte ante* indicates the unification between God and human beings. In this sense, Sufis can demonstrate the union with God through their spiritual approach. Therefore, through the verse of primordial covenant, one can understand that Junayd encourages his readers to re-experience this ideal primeval situation of human beings in the myth of Adam.

After the primordial covenant between God and human beings, *fanā’* and *baqā’* are used with their new implications. Because they hide in their unification with God and present in their separation from God, there is an ontological change. In other words, their annihilation is completed by continuance, and vice versa. The unification between God and human beings is discussed in three stages of *fanā’* and four stages of *tawḥīd*. The situation brought *baqā’* after *fanā’*, which means that the continuance in God lasts in spite of the annihilation of self in God. In Junayd’s thought, the primordial covenant is the tool for re-experiencing ideal situation in the myth of Adam, which is the ontological goal for human beings. At the same time, *fanā’* and *baqā’* are the concepts weaving multiple semantic contents and contexts in order to reach their ideal united condition.

“separation,” he regards unification as that human beings share the same attribute with God, or as that he annihilates in Him. Based on the argument of Imām al-Ḥaramayn al-Juwaynī (d.478/1085), on the other hand, Ibn Khaldūn discusses that separation means God does share neither space nor attribute and nature with human beings because He is the Creator. ‘Abd al-Rahmān b. Khaldūn, *al-Muqaddimah*, ‘Abd al-Salām al-Shaddādī (ed.), (al-Dār al-Bayḍā’: Khizānāt Ibn Khaldūn, Bayt al-Funūn wa-l-‘Ulūm wa-l-Ādāb, 2005), pp. 54–56.

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