

## Untitled

Fourth-Century Ashʿarī Father and Son:  
Abū Sahl and Abū al-Tayyib al-Suʿlūkī  
by GF Haddad - Rabīʿal-Akhīr 1426

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Abū Sahl al-Suʿlūkī, Muhammad ibn  
Sulaym—n ibn Muhammad ibn  
Sulaym—n al-Sh—fiʿ al-ʿIjl al-Nays—būr  
al-Ashʿar al-  
Sūf of the Banū Hanfa (d. 369), the  
Im—m of Khur—s—n among the jurists  
and scholars of kalām , tafsīr , and Arabic  
in  
his time. He accompanied Abū Ish—q  
al-Marwaz in fiqh and al-Shibl in  
tasawwuf , and took hadth from Ibn

## Untitled

Khuzayma, Ibn Abī H—tim, Ibn al-Anb—r, and others. Al-Sulamī in *Tabaqāt al-Sūfiyya* and al-Qushayrī in *al-Risāla*

related from Ibn Fūrak that al-Su‘lūk defined tasawwuf as “the turning away from objections” (al-i‘rād ‘an al-i‘tirād) . Among his sayings also: “Whoever says to his Shaykh: ‘Why?’ shall never succeed.” He spent seven years in Baghdad—during which he said that he never let pass a day of jumu‘a except he visited al-Shiblī or asked him a question. The latter visited Abū Ish—q al-Marwazī one day and saw Abū Sahl there, whereupon he said to Abū Ish—q: “Is that crazy one one of your companions? No – he is

## Untitled

one of ours!” In Baghd—d he also studied with al-Ash‘ar— according to Ibn Fūrak. His son Sahl (358-434) became one of the Renewers of the Fifth Hijri Century. 2Abū al-Tayyib al-Su‘lūkī, Sahl ibn Muhammad ibn Sulaym—n ibn Mūs— ibn ‘®s— ibn Ibr—h—m al-‘Ijl— al-Nays—būr— al-Sh—fi— of the Banū Han—fa (d. 403), “the erudite im—m,” like his father Abū Sahl mufti of Nays—būr and among its chief jurists and educators. He took fiqh and had—th from his father, Abū al-‘Abb—s al-Asamm, al-H—kim, and others. From him narrated, among others, his own shaykh al-H—kim and al-Bayhaq—. Al-H—kim reported that his gathering counted five

## Untitled

hundred inkwells. His father Abū Sahl praised his intelligence and energy and said of him: Sahlun wālīd – “He is a father to me” – and in his last sickness: “Sahl’s absence weighs more heavily upon me than the state in which I find myself.” Al-H—kim said: “I heard Abū al-Asbagh ‘Abd al-‘Az̄z ibn ‘Abd al-M—lik say in Bukh—r—: ‘Since I left my homeland in the farthest part of Morocco, I have never seen anyone like him.’” Abū ‘—sim al-‘Abb—d̄ said: “He is the Im—m in Arabic literature, fiqh , kalām , and grammar; and a brilliant debater.” Among Sahl al-Su‘lūk̄’s sayings: “The approval of people is hard to obtain and unattainable, but Divine approval is

## Untitled

easily within reach and indispensable.”

“Whoever takes up leadership before his time undertakes his own disgrace.”

3On playing chess:

Idhā salima al-mālu min al-khusrān  
was-Salātu ‘an al-nisyān.

fadhālika unsun bayn al-khillān  
katabahu Sahl ibn Sulaymān.

If money’s safe from loss and Prayer from  
oversight,

Chess is intimacy among friends. Signed,  
Sahl ibn Sulaym—n.

4Abū Sa‘d al-Shahham said: “I saw Abū  
al-Tayyib al-Su‘lūk in my sleep and said to  
him: ‘O Shaykh!’ He replied:

‘Drop the title of Shaykh.’ I said: ‘What  
about those spiritual states?’ He said:

## Untitled

‘They availed us nothing.’ I said: ‘What did All—h do with you?’ He said: ‘He forgave me for questions which old women used to ask me.’” Some scholars considered him the renewer of the Religion at the head of the fifth Islamic century, together with Ibn al-B—qill—n— and

Shaykh al-Isl—m Abū H—mid al-Isfar—y—n—.

This statement was reiterated by Shaykh ‘Abd al-Q—dir al- G—l—n— in his Ghunya among others of the great Masters.

Siyar (12:341-344 §3366); Tabyīn (p. 184-187). Ibn al-Qayyim, Madārij (2:39).

Im—m Zufar said something similar:

“Whoever sits to speak before his time

## Untitled

shall be brought low.”

See the permitted status of chess in Isl—m in our documentation of the forgery “Whoever plays chess (shitranj) is cursed” in our forthcoming translation of Mull— ‘Al— al-Q—r’s al-Mawdū‘āt al-Kubrā – in shā Allāh .

Tabyīn (p. 212-215); Siyar (13:126-127 §3735); Tabaqāt al-Shāfi‘iyya al-Kubrā (4:393-404 §418). Abū H—mid al-Isfar—y—n— is Ahmad ibn Ab— T—hir Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Baghd—d— (344-406).