

"ILAYKA L-MUŠTAKĀ LĀ MINKA RABBĪ ..."
THE YOUNG GOLDZIHHER AT WORK

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"Exegi monumentum ..."

1. In 1870 Goldziher arrived to Leiden to continue his research after successfully finishing his studies in Berlin and Leipzig and receiving the title of doctor of Semitic studies at the age of 20. He was received cordially by the famous Dutch professors of the age, Dozy and de Goeje. The latter, as keeper of the Library, handed over to him many precious rare books and MSS to read in his room at long nights. Once he was given a unique MS for one day and one night¹. It was Ibn al-Ğawzī's *Kitāb al-qussās wa-l-mudakkirīn*, which he copied during this limited time². This work, as is well known today, is about the popular recitation of forged *hadīths* which, however, served in many occasions the purposes of serious ethical and religious education. Goldziher liked very much the style of Ibn al-Ğawzī's material, the nice anecdotes shedding light on the everyday life of the ninth-twelfth centuries as well as the significance and the character of the *hadīth* literature in those days. He had no special purpose with copying this special MS at that time, being basically occupied with linguistic and lexicographical studies, though he wrote three decades later into his diary, speaking about his youth: "I was lured more by the historical than the factual side" (Goldziher 1978b:45). But twenty years later he turned to these handwritten pages and made this work the core of a whole chapter in his famous study on the development of the *hadīth*, Chapter 5 on "*Hadīth* as the Instrument of Amusement and Ethical Building"³. If we closely investigate his hastily copied MS we can appreciate his achievement. Comparing Goldziher's copy with the fourth, seemingly the best, edition of the MS (that of aṣ-Ṣabbāğ), we find that the number of readings where Goldziher diverted from this modern and thoroughly examined and re-examined

¹ Ignaz Goldziher, who is considered one of the founders of modern Islamic scholarship, has carried out his research activity since his youth following the positivist-historic method. Its essence was the discovery of sources (as early as possible) and the interpretation of the facts (data) included therein, putting them in historic perspectives. At that time, when the Arabic printing press had just started to function, all this primarily meant an acquaintance with the manuscripts and their analysis.

² Now in the Goldziher Collection of the Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, see Goldziher, *Bequest*. It consists of 40 large pages, written with small letters and in serried rows. The information about the circumstances of the copying is given on a small paper to be found in the *Bequest*.

³ See Goldziher 1967-71, vol I.

edition is minimal (not considering the abbreviations and the omission of the repetitive *isnāds*). It is an extraordinary good result reached within the limits of one day and one night at the age of 20.

2. Previously, when Goldziher reached Leipzig in 1869 coming from Berlin, he was warmly received by Fleischer, the great *sheikh* or Teacher of the age. Fleischer directed the attention of his pupils to the importance of precise textual philology and linguistic studies. So Goldziher started studying lexicographic works extant in the German Manuscript collection and soon published a series of articles in Vienna under the title "Beiträge zur arabische Sprachwissenschaft". The second article of this series is devoted to al-Ġawharī and the works related to his *Ṣahāḥ*, what he calls the Ġawharī-literature⁴. On the 24th page of his article Goldziher turns his attention to an apologetic work with respect to al-Ġawharī's dictionary, which is in reality a *ḥāṣiya* commentary to al-Firūzābādī's *Qāmūs*. The name of the author is a certain Ibn Iyās Dāwūdzāde, the title of his book is *ad-Durr al-laḳīṭ fi aḡlāt al-Qāmūs al-muḥīṭ allatī al-Firūzābādī 'azāhā li-l-Ġawharī*. He did not find much in the biographical works on this Turkish author who died in the year 1017 AH (1608 AD). After stating these facts he unexpectedly starts citing long pages from the *Hāṣiya* of Ibn Dāwūdzāde just to testify the melancholic nature of the author, who had lost his desire to live in a dark age when foolishness directs the world and university professors are complete *ignorami*. In connection with the word *aš-šaraf* al-Firūzābādī mentions that there is an elevated place in Sevilla called *aš-šaraf* and there was a certain *ḥatīb* and *wā'iz* in Sevilla whose *nisba* was *aš-šarafī* from this place. How wonderful it is – says al-Firūzābādī. "Had the Imām al-Firūzābādī lived in our age he had found even more wonderful and stranger things than this" –says Ibn Dāwūdzāde.

At the word *wada'* al-Firūzābādī speaks of a certain Habannaqa *Dū l-wada'āt* (the one having sea-shells on himself) who received his name because he always wore a necklace of sea-shells, bones and pottery as long as his beard. When asked why he answered: in order not to lose my way going home, etc., and so his name became notorious for idiocy. Ibn Dāwūdzāde's commentary runs as follows:

{... وذو الودعات هبنتقة بن يزيد بن ثروان لأنه جعل في عنقه قلادة من ودع وعظام وخزف مع طول لحيته فسئل فقال لثلا أضل فسرقها أخوه في ليلة وتقلدها فأصبح هبنتقة وراءها في عنقه فقال له أخي أنت أنا ومن أنا فضرب لحمقه المثل انتهى ومن حمقه أيضا أنه ضل له بعير فجعل ينادي من وجد بعيري فهو له فقيل له فلما تنشده فقال فأين حلاوة الوجدان لعل وجهه كون هبنتقة مثلا في الحمق أنه كان في زمانه وحيدا منفردا فيه وأكثر المدرسين في زماننا أحقق منه لأنهم لا يقدرون على التكلم بلفظ تركي على وجه الصحة سيما المخاديم العظام المدرسين بالمدارس الرفيعة الشامخة فإنهم لا يفرقون المدارس عن حوانيت السفلة ولولا

⁴ See Goldziher 1972.

قدامهم خدامهم لضلوا وأضلوا الطريق وبيوت آبائهم الظلمة مع أنهم يتولون المدارس الخاقانية.

ومن جملة ما أساءني الدهر وأصابني به العصر أن المدرسة الشريفة السلطانية الخاصكية الواقعة في دار السلطنة السنية قسطنطينية المحمية أعطيت للمجنون المعتوه الجاهل ابن الجاهل ابن الجاهل الذي لا يقدر على التمييز بين الأسود والأحمر بل الشجر والحجر فضلا عن الذهب والمدر ولم تعط لهذا العبد الفقير الحقير ابن الفاضل النحرير ابن العالم الخطير المذنب الضعيف المؤلف لهذا التأليف المنيف مع كونها مشروطة إلى على شرط الواقعة المرموقة المرحومة بأن قالت متى خلت المدرسة الخاصكية الشريفة المنتمية إلى أعطيت لكل من وجد مدرسا بالمدرسة المعروفة بخانقاه التي بنيتها بمدينة قسطنطينية المحمية المحسكية والعبد الفقير الغريق في بحر العصيان كنت مدرسا بالمدرسة المزبورة في ذلك الزمان (بيت) إليك المشتكى لا منك ربي * فانت لناثبات الدهر حسبي

Perhaps the real reason why Habannaqa's name became proverbial for stupidity is that he stood alone in his time. In our time, the majority of teachers are more stupid than he, since they cannot speak Turkish in a proper way at all. Especially the great masters who teach at high-ranking, noble schools, they cannot even differentiate the schools from the taverns of the riff-raff and had their servants not escorted them they would go astray and lose their way even to their homes [i.e., the homes of their wrongful forefathers], although they are in charge of the Sultan's schools.

Of all the bad things with which time afflicted me [the worst] was that [the chair in] the noble imperial school "al-Hāṣikiyya" in the sublime capital of the Sultanate, Constantinople, [well] protected [by God], was given to a fool, an idiot, an ignorant, son of an ignorant son of an ignorant, who cannot differentiate black from red, nay a tree from a stone, or gold from clay. And it was not given to this poor and miserable servant – son of a skilful learned man, son of a distinguished scholar –, the guilty and weak author of this excellent work, although it had been stipulated for me in a condition by the eminent woman, the late donor of the *waqf*, since she said: When there is vacancy in the noble school of "al-Hāṣikiyya" which belongs to me, it should be given to those who teach at the so-called "Hānqāh" school which I had built in the town of Constantinople, [well] protected and armed [by God]. And I – poor servant, immersed in the sea of rebellion – was at that time teacher of the above-mentioned school.

To You, I complain my God, not of You *

Since You are enough for me in vicissitudes

These lines of complaints are strange enough in the original work of Ibn Dāwūdẓāde. But even stranger is the fact that Goldziher quoted Ibn Dāwūdẓāde's commentary in such length (the quotation runs even further). There are no such other quotations from other works in Goldziher's articles and this quotation has nothing to do with "Sprachgelehrsamkeit" or linguistics.

The answer may be found in Goldziher's *Tagebuch*. Speaking about these days he wrote (twenty years later, in the end of 1870): "My parents ... had more and more serious doubt in the reality of the chair of professorship which Eötvös [the minister

of culture and education in Hungary at that time] had promised to me"⁵. And in fact, Eötvös died in February 1871, and the chair was given to a completely ignorant person – during Goldziher's stay in Egypt in 1873 – who did not write an article on Islam or Arabic studies in his whole life and whose knowledge of Arabic was on a very basic level. So Goldziher had premonitions and unfortunately for him, they became true. He had written his own bad fortune by the lines of Ibn Dāwūd zāde as if he were a medieval painter painting his portrait into an altar-piece.

3. Goldziher set an incredible pace of work in his late teens and early twenties which made him highly-strung and responsive to the lives and works of earlier Muslim scholars. He had become especially interested in the life and oeuvre of the polygraph of the 15/16th century, Ḡalāl ad-Dīn as-Suyūṭī (d. 911/1505).

"My attraction to as-Suyūṭī urged me to scrutinise all *Suyūṭica* in the Library [in Leiden], collating and excerpting them; I copied the whole synonym literature, then examined all the MSS in Leiden relevant to the edition of [aṭ-Ṭa'ālibī's] *Fiqh al-luḡa*, a task assigned to me by Fleischer" (Goldziher 1978b:49).

A decisive impulse to write a brief history of Arab linguistics was given to him by as-Suyūṭī's *Muzhir*⁶ about which he expressed his admiration in his *Tagebuch*:

"It was an uplifting scholarly activity, in the true meaning of the word, to penetrate into its study that strengthened and consoled me in these days. I felt very fortunate to get acquainted with the *Muzhir*, and I was sitting day and night over it. It grabbed me so much! God bless the old Suyūṭī for it! Therefore my copy of this book has become a memorable piece of my library. It reminds me the deep spiritual excitement which overcame me during its study" (Goldziher 1978b:48).

So, interestingly enough, he interrupted his lexicographic research for a while and prepared an article on as-Suyūṭī⁷.

The subjects Goldziher dealt with were always turned into his personal matter, he did not keep aloof, but entered fully into their spirit. He handled the facts with objectivity, but at the same time he considered the scholar's attitude a moral question. His ideal was firm puritanism accompanied by modesty. Accordingly, he later condemned aš-Ša'arānī for his accessive self-assertion and immodesty (Goldziher,

⁵ In the German original it runs as follows: "... meine Eltern, die meine Fähigkeiten freilich überschätzten, meinen aufgewendeten Fleiß höher taxirten, als dass er zu einem jahrelangen Almosenleben führen sollte, zweifelten immer mehr und ernstlicher an der Realität des Katheders, welchen Eötvös mir in Aussicht stellte. Die Bedenken der Leute, die mir es doch unter allen Menschen am besten meinten, fand ich nicht unbegründet. Im Umgange mit den Menschen musste ich ja die Überzeugung gewinnen, dass Eötvös einen aus dem Meere von Beschränktheit und Schlechtigkeit herausragenden Felsblock bedeutet, einen Leuchtturm, eine hohe Warte, eine Oase inmitten der Wüstenei von mittelaltlicher Barbarei und geschmückter Rohheit" (Goldziher 1978b:46).

⁶ See Goldziher 1871b:63 ff. Cf. Goldziher 1878.

⁷ This article (Goldziher 1871b) is still considered of prime importance within the literature dealing with as-Suyūṭī. See its English translation: Goldziher 1978.

1910, Ch. Four). He rebuked even his beloved as-Suyūṭī, though he was attracted both by his immense literary output and his multi-coloured personality. "In this paper we shall have occasion to learn that our ingenious Suyūṭī did not shrink from drawing up treatises which ... prove to be nothing other than polemical works whose sole purpose is to serve as an exaggerated advertisement for their author and as instruction to his contemporaries in his unsurpassed and unsurpassable greatness and erudition" (Goldziher 1871b:53 = 1978a:80-81).

يبعث الله على رأس كل مائة سنة رجلا من أهل بيتي يبين لهم أمر دينهم. (حديث). وإنما حمل هذا الرجل على ذلك أنه فهم عني أنني ترجيت من نعم الله وفضله كما ترجى الغزالي لنفسه أنني المبعوث على هذه المائة التاسعة لانفرادي عليها بالتبحر في أنواع العلوم من التفسير وأصوله والحديث وعلومه والفقه وأصوله واللغة وأصولها والنحو والتصريف وأصولهما والجدل والمعاني والبيان والبديع والتاريخ وتصنيفي في جميع ذلك المصنفات البارعة الفائقة التي لم أسبق إلى نظيرها وغدتها إلى الآن خمس مائة مؤلف.

God sends at the 'head' of each century a man from among the people of my House who will explain to them the affair[s] of their religion ... That man was driven to what he did because he understood from me that I hope, through the bounty and favour of God, just as al-Ġazālī hoped for himself, to be the one sent to this ninth hundred, since I am the only person therein who has studied thoroughly all branches of the sciences: Qur'ānic exegesis and its principles, tradition and its sciences, jurisprudence and its principles, lexicography and its principles, grammar and morphology and their principles, polemics, rhetoric and history, and since I composed in all these branches of knowledge brilliant and outstanding works, the like of which none before me has produced, and which number five hundred to date.

It appears from Goldziher's article, that he recognized in as-Suyūṭī different types of scholars of his own age, side by side to the supercilious, presumptuously confident scholars he could see the innovator, the founder and initiator of new fields of research, whose death falls on the dawn of a new century, *i.e.* himself. It does not seem forced to say that with the excerpts taken from as-Suyūṭī's autobiography Goldziher drew his own (would be) portrait.

وقد اخترعت علم أصول اللغة وورثته ولم أسبق إليه وهو على نمط علم الحديث وعلم أصول الفقه وسارت مصنفاتي وعلوم في سائر الأقطار ووصلت إلى الشام والروم والعجم والحجاز واليمن والهند والحبشة والمغرب والتكرور وامتدت إلى البحر المحيط ولا مشاركة لي في مجموع ما ذكرته ولا اجتمع لأحد من الموجودين الآن مجموع العلوم التي اجتمع لي ولا وصل الآن أحد إلى رتبة الاجتهاد المطلق غيري فيما أعلم.

I have created the branch of knowledge called principles of philology which I have bequeathed and in which I have no precursor. It follows the pattern of the principles of tradition and the principles of jurisprudence. My writings and my knowledge have penetrated to all lands, reaching Syria, Rūm, Persia, the Ḥiḡāz, Yemen, India, Abessinia,

the Mağrib and Takrūr, even to the Atlantic Ocean. No one else shared with me all [these sciences] that I have mentioned, nor has any one save myself attained to absolute individual judgement (*iğtibād*) in our days so far as I know.

In his youth, when he was struggling between two branches of sciences, one prescribed by obligation and the other attracting his soul, he may have read with great pleasure what as-Suyūṭī had written on this:

علم الحديث واللغة أخوان يجريان من وادٍ واحد.

The science of tradition and the science of philology are two brothers [like twin rivers], flowing out of the same valley [i.e. they are alike in every respect].

4. Goldziher's personal adherence to subject matters and topics in his scholarly research originated many times from his personal attachment to his teachers and close friends, especially to Professor Fleischer. He promised him to edit one of the Leiden MSS, Ibn Sikkīt's *Kitāb al-alfāz*⁸ when he left Leipzig travelling to Leiden in 1870 and a quarter of a century later he fulfilled his promise. Although Fleischer had died some years earlier, he felt obliged to do so. It had taken a quarter of a century to complete his edition, since in the meantime he had finished some of his great studies in the field of Islamic research, among them especially the one on *ḥadīṭ* literature.

So he had finished his MS of the edition of Ibn Sikkīt's work, together with at-Tibrīzī's *Tabdīb*, but we cannot find the book in the list of Goldziher's works⁹. The reason is simply that although he had written on the cover of his MS "to be sent to the publisher" in 1894, but in the meantime Louis Cheikho, in Beirut, also had been working on the edition of the same work, based on the same MSS, and Goldziher may have heard about this edition or may have seen the book and so he had never sent his MS to the Dutch publisher. It could not be the publisher who dropped the idea of publishing Goldziher's edition, since there is no letter in the vast correspondence of Goldziher who preserved every letter written to him. Even more astonishing is the fact that Goldziher did not write any remark about the case in his *Tagebuch*. The whole story is very characteristic of Goldziher's shyness and proudness – he did not want any comparison between the two editions. Also, at that time if one edition was prepared there seemed to be no reason to do it in a second time. Goldziher, however, was not quite right in his decision, since after comparing the texts of the two editions it appears that his is the much better and reliable one. Louis Cheikho intimidates the reader with his list of corrections (but he left much to be corrected), and with the arbitrary and unnoted alterations of the MS.

⁸ "I copied the whole Ibn as-Sikkīt". Goldziher 1978b:49.

⁹ The MS is kept in the Goldziher Collection, no. 2. See Goldziher, *Bequest*.

Limited space does not allow us to go into details, but it must be emphasized that Goldziher edition, though it remained in manuscript, reflects not only his personal attachment to his late professor Fleischer, but also the exactness and thoroughness of his methods when working on the edition. His editorial technique may well be considered modern in his faithfulness to the original text, always noting and explaining the alterations¹⁰.

5. In conclusion, Goldziher's world of ideas and his moral standing can easily be identified from the works he published or intended for publication. He wrote himself and his *Weltanschauung* into almost every piece he wrote, sometimes *expressis verbis*, sometimes only through allusions.¹¹ "When he [Goldziher] is discussing and dissecting any phase of the development of Islamic thought, one feels that he is speaking not of an abstract subject with which he had familiarized himself over many years of unflagging study of books and manuscripts but of a live entity of which, for a short time at least, he himself was part" (Patai 1987:78).

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¹⁰ On Goldziher's edition of the *Kitāb al-alfāz* and his copy of the *Quṣṣās* as well as his editorial technique in general see Iványi, Forthcoming.

¹¹ The diaries, however, – the publication of which may be considered disquieting in itself, since they had never been intended for the public, not even after the death of their author – should not, one may think, be used for Goldziher's moral-ideological judgement. In the case of *The Oriental Diary* it is evident from the great number of unfinished sentences and phrases that Goldziher had meant it for himself only, to help him recall the events of his journey.

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