<p style="text-align:center">ABSTRACT</p>

ṢŪFĪ TERMINOLOGY AND ITS MEANING IN MAIMONIDES'
GUIDE OF THE PERPLEXED

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The presence of *ṣūfī* terminology in Maimonides' *Guide of the Perplexed,* though acknowledged in scholarship, has yet to receive a detailed study. As early as 1986, Shlomo Pines suggested, in two articles, that Maimonides' discourse in *Guide* III:51 is charged with 'terms and notions borrowed directly or indirectly from the Moslem mystics, the Ṣūfīs'. But apart from Pines' concise remarks, the question of *ṣūfī* terminology in the *Guide* has only been scantly noted, and always in very general terms.

In this article I argue that in *Guide* III:51 Maimonides does not adhere to a *ṣūfī* path, but appropriates *ṣūfī* language in a dialectical fashion to his own philosophical framework and to the epistemology he developed in the course of his *Guide.* As I demonstrate, Maimonides was not the first to perform the discursive gesture of recasting *ṣūfī* language. Following recent scholarship, I argue that Maimonides was preceded by Abū 'Ali ibn Sīnā, in the concluding chapters of his *Kitāb al-Ishārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt* (Pointers and Reminders). An exploration of the parallel strategies employed by Maimonides and ibn Sīnā – by Maimonides following ibn Sīnā, as I argue – reveals that both utilized *ṣūfī* language in a mode different from that of the Ṣūfīs, in order to present a religious ideal that centers on the intellect, whose characteristics are those of the *falsafa*. This exploration not only reveals a previously overlooked source that influenced Maimonides in one of the key chapters of his *Guide*, but also shows the content with which he charged the *ṣūfī* language and the intervention he sought to make in a cultural milieu in which Ṣūfīsm was an ascending force.

The article studies *ṣūfī* terminology in *Guide* III:51 in two modes: the first is an analysis of the function of the *ṣūfī* terms in the chapter, which is then compared to the use of these terms in preceding *ṣūfī* and *ṣūfī*-inspired works. The second is a high-resolution analysis of *Guide* III:51 in light of ibn Sīnā's *al-Ishārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt*, a source that has hitherto been largely neglected in the study of Maimonides' *Guide*. This two-pronged study reveals both that Maimonides' employment of the terms is incompatible with the *ṣūfī* approach and the source of Maimonides' recasting of *ṣūfī* terminology.