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Consciousness and Reality

*Studies in Memory of
Toshihiko Izutsu*

Edited by
Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī
Hideichi Matsubara
Takashi Iwami
Akira Matsumoto

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Contents

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Foreword (<i>Shinya Makino</i>)	ix
Preface (<i>Seyyed Hossein Nasr</i>)	xi

I. Perspective on History and Global Society

1. Islamic Resurgence <i>Wilfred Cantwell Smith</i>	3
2. Al-Wāqidi, the Orientalists and Apologetics <i>Charles J. Adams</i>	17
3. The Quranic Commentaries of Mullā Ṣadrā <i>Seyyed Hossein Nasr</i>	45
4. The Meaning and Experience of Happiness in Islām <i>Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas</i>	59
5. <i>Danishnamah-i</i> Maysari, the Oldest Medical Compendium in Persian Verse <i>Mehdi Mohaghegh</i>	79

II. Religion and Aesthetical Order

1. Why Decline of Buddhism Took Place in India? <i>Hajime Nakamura</i>	89
2. The Paradise Garden Paradigm <i>Nader Ardalan</i>	97
3. The Pīr-Murīd Relationship in the Thought of 'Ayn al-Quḍāt Hamadāni <i>Forough Jahanbakhsh</i>	129
4. Refiguring Postmodern Times <i>Mark C. Taylor</i>	149

5. In the Gardens—A Psychological Memoir
James Hillman 175
6. Legacy of the Prophetic Experience in Judaism
Hiroshi Ichikawa 183
7. Avatars japonais de l'ascension d'Alexandre
Hideichi Matsubara 201

III. Structured Analysis and Methodological Possibilities

1. Ibn 'Arabi's Conception of God's Universal Mercy:
The Chapter on Zakariyya' in the Fusus al-Hikam
Ronald L. Nettler 213
2. The Unique Arabic Manuscript of Aristotle's *Arts Rhetorica* and its two Editions published to date by 'Abdurrahmān Badawī and by M[alcolm] C. Lyons
Estiphan Panoussi 233
3. On the Originality of "Izutsu" Oriental Philosophy
Shinya Makino 251
4. Le Soufisme entre Louis Massignon et Henry Corbin
Christian Jambet 259
5. La Révélation coranique et la Gnose islamique
Mikio Kamiya 273
6. Hallāj in the *Sawānih* of Ahmad Ghazālī
Nasrollah Pourjavady 285

IV. Being and Knowing

1. An Essay on "Creatio ex Nihilo"
Masao Matsumoto 297
2. The Structure of Consciousness in Śaṅkara's Philosophy
Yoshitsugu Sawai 323
3. On Sufi Psychology: A Debate between the Soul and the Spirit
William C. Chittick 341
4. Unity of Ontology and Epistemology in Qaiṣarī's Philosophy
Akiro Matsumoto 367
5. 'Azīz-i Nasafī and the Essence-Existence Debate
Hermann Landolt 387
6. La Voie de Hallāj et la voie d'Ibn 'Arabi
Mokdad Arfa Mensia 397

7. Suhrawardi, Philosopher or Mystic?
Golden Triangle of his Worldview
Shiva Kaviani 423

Curriculum Vitae of Toshihiko Izutsu 439

Bibliography of Toshihiko Izutsu's Writings 441

Appendix: Catalogue of Lithographed Books of Iran in the Library of
Toshihiko Izutsu (Compiled by Takashi Iwami) 451

Editors 470

Contributors 471

- Hokuseido Press, 1973), I. 17. 64, p. 141. Cf. *ibid.*, I. 15. 22, p. 112.
13. *ibid.*, I. 11. 11, p. 89; Sengaku Mayeda, *A Thousand Teachings, The Upadeśasāhasrī of Śaṅkara* (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1979), p. 127. Cf. *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad*, IV. iii. 9, p. 877.
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3

*On Sufi Psychology:
A Debate between
the Soul and the Spirit*

William C. Chittick

The writings of Professor Toshihiko Izutsu have long been savored by those convinced of the pertinence of Islamic thought to the social and spiritual crises of the contemporary world. The publication last year of his *Creation and the Timeless Order of Things* reminds us that his works, which occupy the intellectual tip of the iceberg that is interest in Sufism, have a wide and growing audience in North America. The current popularity of Sufism is part of the broader fascination with everything that breaks with the mechanistic and scientific world view that has brought modern civilization to its present impasse. All sorts of people are searching for solutions to the encroaching dissolution of personalities, social structures, and environments that are all too obvious in the modern world. The interest in Professor Izutsu's brilliant and broad-ranging works suggests that for many of them the intellectual roots of the present predicament need to be elucidated before lasting practical solutions can be found.

Although Professor Izutsu, in his search for what he has called a “metaphilosophy of oriental philosophies,”¹ focused on philosophical issues, he frequently reminded his readers that the Islamic and Oriental traditions have always kept in view the necessity of psychological and spiritual transformation. One cannot come to understand the nature of existence without transcending ordinary consciousness.

If people do not recognize the world for what it is, the problem lies in the subject, not the object. As Professor Izutsu remarks in a typical passage from his writings,

[M]etaphysics or ontology is inseparably connected with the subjective state of man, so that the self-same reality is said to be perceived differently in accordance with the different degrees of consciousness.²

In works on Sufism, the issue of degrees of consciousness is addressed far more often than questions of ontology or metaphysics. In what follows, I offer a glimpse of the types of issues that are addressed in Sufi studies of human consciousness by presenting the example of a single text, written probably in the seventeenth century by one 'Abd al-Jalil of Allahabad, who can be considered an intellectual follower of the school of Ibn al-'Arabī. He is probably identical with 'Abd al-Jalil ibn Ṣadr al-Dīn Ilāhābādī, the author of a book called *Irshād al-sālikīn*, a collection of invocations (*adhkār*) of the Chishtīs and others. In a manuscript copy of this book, he says that he was requested to write it because "I had written many treatises in the science of *tawhīd* concerning the realities, the gnostic sciences, and the intricacies, but a treatise was needed...in the science of the wayfaring [*sulūk*], the invocations, and the disciplines that take the traveler in the direction of the divine gnostic sciences, a treatise that would be the key to gnosis as such in a manner that opens the lock of the hearts."³ He may be identical with the Chishtī shaykh, 'Abd al-Jalil of Lucknow (d. 1043/1633-34), who, according to Saiyid Athar Abbas Rizvi, showed "great frankness in expressing his belief in the *Wahdat al-Wujūd* and little concern for the strict observance of the *Sharia*."⁴

'Abd al-Jalil first attracted my attention when I came across a work by him listed as *Su'āl wa jawāb* in the library of the Institute of Islamic Studies in New Delhi.⁵ This short treatise (27 pages of 21 lines in length) describes a visionary conversation with Ibn al-'Arabī. During the discussion, Ibn al-'Arabī answers a number of questions connected with difficult passages in his works, mainly *al-Futūḥāt al-makkiyya*. Most of the questions have in view the long-standing current of criticisms directed by well-known Sufi teachers against

some of the technical terminology and phraseology of Ibn al-'Arabī's writings. This current had been set in motion by figures such as 'Alā' al-Dawla Simnānī (d. 737/1336) and it was continued by Gīṣū Darāz (d. 825/1422) and others. The last part of the work alludes briefly to the position of the most famous of these critics, the Naqshbandī shaykh, Aḥmad Sirhindī (d. 1034/1624).

Like many other works I saw in India, this treatise provides evidence that the importance of Shaykh Aḥmad Sirhindī's criticisms of Ibn al-'Arabī in the history of Sufism has been vastly overrated by modern scholars.⁶ Most of the later authorities who supported Ibn al-'Arabī's positions hardly even bothered to refer to Sirhindī, since they found his criticisms superficial and self-inflating. In *Su'āl wa jawāb*, 'Abd al-Jalil alludes to Sirhindī as "one of the recent Sufīs [who] have objected to your persuasion, saying that Oneness is in *shuhūd*, not in *wujūd*." Ibn al-'Arabī responds by pointing out quite rightly that in the *Futūḥāt*, he has already said everything such critics have said, because there he presents all valid points of view. The problem lies in the critics' inability to see beyond their own limitations.

The manuscript that I want to discuss here, *Rūḥ wa nafs* or *'Ubūdat al-tazyīn*,⁷ is similar to the first in both length (22 pages of 21 lines) and the fact that it is presented as a visionary conversation, but in this treatise the two principles are the spirit (*rūḥ*) and the soul or self (*nafs*). On the one hand this work discusses many of Ibn al-'Arabī's ideas on existence or being (*wujūd*) and its levels, the nature of the "things" (*ashyā'*) or the "immutable entities" (*al-a'yān al-thābita*), the unknowability of the Divine Essence, and the experiences that take place in the afterlife. On the other it provides an interesting example of spiritual psychology, since it analyses the forces at work in the human microcosm in terms that recall earlier currents of Sufi teachings and reflect the developments and debates going on in the subcontinent. It is the psychological theme that I wish to follow up on here.

Given the current dismal state of our knowledge of the development of Islamic thought in India, it would be impossible to trace the numerous Sufis, theologians, and philosophers whose views may be

reflected in the treatise. The best I can do is to point to the roots of some of the ideas in the writings of Ibn al-'Arabî and other relatively early figures. It would be difficult to say to what extent 'Abd al-Jalîl is influenced directly by Ibn al-'Arabî in these two treatises, since he may have known Ibn al-'Arabî's works largely through the tradition of criticism and commentary. The one book that he almost certainly had read, though he refers neither to its title nor to its author, is *Naqd al-nuṣṣaṣ fî sharḥ naqsh al-fuṣṣaṣ* by 'Abd al-Raḥmân Jâmî (d. 898/1492). In *Rûḥ wa nafs* this work is quoted or paraphrased at least twice, and a passage that is attributed to "one of them" is taken from *al-Fukûk* by Şadr al-Dîn Qûnawî, most likely through the intermediary of *Naqd al-nuṣṣaṣ*.⁸

Sufi Psychology

Much of Sufi theoretical teaching has to do with the invisible dimension of the human being, the ambiguous something that fills the vast "space" between the human body and the Essence of God, a something that we might today refer to as "consciousness." In discussing this something, the earliest texts usually employ various terms derived from the Koran and the Hadith—such as soul (*nafs*), spirit (*rûḥ*), heart (*qalb*), intellect ('*aql*), and mystery (*sirr*) without much elaboration or explanation. But already by the third/ninth century, Sufi authors like al-Ḥakîm al-Tirmidhî⁹—not to mention the early Muslim philosophers—employ such terms to describe a hierarchy of increasingly invisible levels, tendencies, or dimensions reaching as far as the divine realm. In the theoretical discussions provided by al-Tirmidhî, al-Ghazâlî (d. 505/1111),¹⁰ 'Izz al-Dîn Kâshânî (d. 735/1335),¹¹ and many others, it is clear that the multiplicity of words does not imply a multiplicity of independent entities. Instead, the words are diverse names given to a single reality—the unseen dimension of the human being—in respect of its different attributes, dimensions, or stages.¹²

Since these aspects of human consciousness are by definition invisible and difficult to pinpoint, the terminology tends to be fluid. For example, the definitions some authors provide for *nafs* frequently correspond to what others refer to as *rûḥ*. This is seen most clearly

in the discussion initiated by the philosophical tradition concerning the three basic levels in which the inner dimension of things manifests itself outwardly, that is, the plant, animal, and human levels. Some texts speak of the plant, animal, and human "soul," while others prefer the term "spirit." Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawzî's work *Kitâb al-rûḥ* devotes a good deal of space to the fact that the early sources do not clearly distinguish among the terms. Nevertheless, many authors do distinguish among them, and their descriptions of the differences provide us with detailed insights into the Muslim understanding of human consciousness.

The discussion of the different levels or dimensions of the human being was by no means simply theoretical, particularly for the Sufis. In other words, these unseen realities were defined and differentiated with a specific aim, which was for them to be experienced as distinct levels of consciousness by the traveler on the path to God. Without the theoretical and linguistic "embodiment" of the tendencies of the soul, it is impossible to come to grips with one's own inner nature. The descriptions made it possible for spiritual travelers to picture, localize, and personify their own psychic and spiritual tendencies within the sea of consciousness, that unbounded imaginal universe that is sometimes called the "ocean of the soul" (*baḥr al-nafs*). Once this was accomplished, it was possible to strengthen what needed strengthening or pass beyond what needed to be overcome.

One can recall here the distinctions among the ascending levels of the human reality made by Kubrawî authors, distinctions that have been studied in some detail by Henry Corbin and others. Thus, for example, the founder of the Kubrawî Order, Najm al-Dîn Kubrâ (d. 618/1220), refers to five basic levels of the self—intellect, heart, spirit, mystery, and the hidden (*khafî*). A later Kubrawî authority, 'Alâ' al-Dawla Simnânî, refers to seven levels—body or mold (*qâlab*), soul, heart, mystery, spirit, the hidden, and the Real (*ḥaqq*).¹³ These authors clearly bring out the practical relevance of these classifications for the spiritual travelers, since they also discuss the vision of colored lights, or "photisms" as Corbin calls them, that signal the experience of the different levels.¹⁴

Ibn al-'Arabî provides a vast amount of material on the different

levels of the self, but the six or seven ascending “subtle realities” (*laḥā'if*), so important in the Kubrawī literature and much of the later tradition, are probably not discussed in his works in any systematic manner. In general, he speaks of three basic levels in both the macrocosm and the microcosm—spiritual, imaginal, and corporeal; or spirit, soul, and body. Inasmuch as these three levels are tied to the experiential side of the path to God, the traveler’s goal is to bring them into harmony, and this takes place through the “heart” (*qalb*), which is the spiritual organ par excellence in Ibn al-‘Arabī’s teachings.¹⁵ In the writings of Ibn al-‘Arabī’s followers, especially Ṣadr al-Dīn Qūnawī and his immediate disciples, emphasis is placed on the heart as the harmonious union of all the attributes of spirit and soul.¹⁶

Ibn al-‘Arabī also discusses the “mystery” (*sirr*) as a still higher stage of awareness, beyond the level of spirit. In his teachings, the mystery, or, more often, the “divine mystery” (*al-sirr al-ilāhī*), is the individual’s reality as known by God himself. It marks the furthest limit of what the gnostic can come to know, since ultimately no one can know anything but himself, while the Divine Essence remains forever unknowable. In other terms, the mystery is the “immutable entity,” the reality or quiddity of a thing fixed forever with God. It is also called the “specific face” (*al-wajh al-khāṣṣ*), that is, the face of God turned toward one individual rather than any other, thereby defining the reality of the individual.¹⁷ Not only human beings, but everything in existence has a specific face, different from the specific divine faces turned toward other things, since, if God “looked at” two things in exactly the same way, they would be the same thing. Here we have a corollary of one of Ibn al-‘Arabī’s most oft-repeated axioms: God never discloses himself in the same manner to two individuals. Or, “Self-disclosure never repeats itself.”¹⁸

The Setting

Although ‘Abd al-Jalīl’s treatise deals with two major dimensions of Sufi teachings—the psychological and the metaphysical—the narrative development emphasizes psychology. The text reaches a climax with an integration of diverse dimensions of human consciousness and a vision of the oneness of all things in God. The manner in which

this is achieved recalls both a Kubrawī-style hierarchy of levels and the specific teachings of Ibn al-‘Arabī and his followers concerning the soul, spirit, heart, and mystery.

The text is presented within the context of the long-standing debates in India over the status of the human being in relationship to God. More specifically, what are the practical results of the spiritual realization of the gnostic? Once the supreme union is achieved, can any distinction be drawn between God and the world? Granted that “All is He” (*hama ūst*)—the slogan that was taken as typifying the position of those who believed in the “Oneness of Being” (*waḥdat al-wujūd*)¹⁹—of what relevance to the gnostic are the commands and prohibitions of the Shariah?

Shaykh Aḥmad Sirhindī’s criticisms of Ibn al-‘Arabī arose out of this background. Sirhindī is not in fact criticizing Ibn al-‘Arabī himself, but rather the position ascribed to Ibn al-‘Arabī by certain groups of Muslims who then used this position to justify their own neglect of the Law or of doctrinal teachings that Sirhindī considered essential. It is clear that ‘Abd al-Jalīl had this same background in view, since he goes to great lengths to disprove some of the important arguments of those who maintain the commonly accepted misconceptions concerning Ibn al-‘Arabī’s position, what one might call “popularized *waḥdat al-wujūd*” or the “religion of ‘All is He.’”

The treatise begins as follows: ‘Abd al-Jalīl is sitting in meditation when two forms appear to him, one luminous and one dark. The two forms greet each other and then introduce themselves. The dark form calls itself the governing power of the whole universe, a power so intermixed with the creatures that they refer to it as their own “self” or “soul” (*nafs*). The luminous form tells him that it is the power through which all things have life; it is called “spirit” (*rūḥ*), because within it all creatures find their “rest” (*raḥ*) and “repose” (*rayḥān*).

In the Sufi discussion of spirit and soul, the spirit is almost invariably conceived of as lying on a higher plane, as is clearly the case here, since light is higher than darkness. The spirit’s “luminous” appearance connects it with the divine name Light and the radiance of the world of the angels, who, according to the Prophet, are “made of light.” The soul is then connected to the opposite pole of manifesta-

tion, where light has lost its original intensity and become thoroughly mixed with darkness. 'Abd al-Jalil does not mean to imply here that the soul is absolutely dark, but rather relatively dark, as compared to the spirit. Absolute darkness would be absolutely nonexistent and therefore imperceptible in any mode. Moreover, the soul manifests certain positive dimensions of reality, as becomes obvious later in the text.

The two forms then speak about their respective religions. The soul says that it follows the great lover Iblis, who is the locus of manifestation (*mazhar*) for the divine name Misguider (*al-muḍill*). The spirit says that it follows him who carried God's Trust (*amāna*) and became his vicegerent (*khalīfa*), the prophet Muhammad, who is the locus of manifestation for the names God (*allāh*) and Guide (*al-hādī*).

With the mention of the term *mazhar* or "locus of manifestation" we are alerted to the fact that the text looks back to Ibn al-'Arabī's specific technical terms and his mode of discussing relationships. The general idea that the divine names are the roots or realities of the phenomena that appear in world and the soul, while the phenomena are the places where the names manifest their properties and effects, is of course found in a wide range of Sufi writings, not only in Ibn al-'Arabī, and it is plainly prefigured in the Koran. But the term *mazhar* in this meaning is one that Ibn al-'Arabī claims as his own coinage and that typically occurs in discussions of his ideas.²⁰

A "locus of manifestation" for a divine name is a place where the name displays outwardly its properties (*aḥkām*), traces (*āthār*), or specific characteristics (*khawāṣṣ*). Each name has innumerable loci of manifestation, and an individual entity may act as the locus of manifestation for many different names. Thus the human being, for example, is made in "the form of God," which is to say that he is the locus of manifestation for the specific name God. By the same token, a human being manifests the specific characteristics of every divine name, since God itself is the "all-comprehensive name" (*al-ism al-jāmi'*), which embraces the properties of all the names.

Although all human beings manifest the name God—it is this, and this alone, according to Ibn al-'Arabī which makes them human²¹—

only those who merit the title "perfect human being" manifest the name God in a mode that corresponds to God as he is in himself. Other human beings—whom Ibn al-'Arabī refers to as "animal human beings" (*al-insān al-ḥayawān*)—fail to actualize the full potentiality of the human state. Hence they are dominated by characteristics that pertain to one or more of the lesser names embraced by the name God. In the case of the "friends of God" (*awliyā' allāh*) and the faithful, these lesser names are names of mercy and gentleness, while in the case of the unbelievers, these names project wrath and severity. As the *ḥadīth qudsī* tells us, God's mercy takes precedence over his wrath, so mercy is closer than wrath to God's essential reality. Hence the names of mercy and gentleness demand nearness to God and "felicity" (*sa'āda*) in the next world, while the names of wrath and severity demand distance from him and "wretchedness" (*shaqāwa*).

The gentle and merciful divine names bring about the actualization of the full human potential along with harmony and equilibrium among the loci of manifestation. In other words, a human being who is the object of God's mercy in this sense²² manifests fully and appropriately all the individual divine names (including the wrathful names) embraced by the name God. That is why, in this passage, the spirit does not limit itself to saying that Muhammad is the locus of manifestation for the name God, since all human beings share in this particular characteristic, though clearly not in the same mode or degree. The spirit adds that the Prophet is also the locus of manifestation for the name Guide, the function of which is to spread God's salvific mercy among the creatures and to open them up to ultimate felicity.

The opposite of the Guide is the Misguider, a divine name that is found in some of the traditional lists of the ninety-nine names and is implied by several passages in the Koran where God is the subject of the verb "to misguide." The Koran attributes this name specifically to Satan in one verse (28: 15). That the soul or self is connected to satanic forces is suggested by a number of Koranic verses and made more explicit in the *ḥadīth* literature.²³ In short every human being has a tendency that is opposed to guidance and rejects the truth, and this is referred to as *nafs*—soul, self, or ego.²⁴

The fundamental tendencies or inclinations of the inner dimension of the human being are summarized in the well-known distinction, based on Koranic terminology, among three types of *nafs*, representing three main stages of human consciousness: the soul "commanding to evil" (*ammâra bi'l-sâ'*), the soul "blaming" (*lawwâma*) itself for its own shortcomings, and the soul "at peace" (*mu'tma'inna*) with God. At the first stage, the soul dwells in the darkness of ignorance, forgetfulness, and misguidance, while in the third stage the soul has been transmuted into the light of knowledge, remembrance, and guidance. The middle stage represents a struggle between the opposing forces that are frequently, as in 'Abd al-Jalil's treatise, ascribed respectively to "spirit" and "soul." These are guidance and misguidance, knowledge and ignorance, remembrance and forgetfulness, light and darkness.

In short, 'Abd al-Jalil's description of the spirit and soul reaffirms the well-known opposition between the ascending, luminous, and angelic tendency of the human being, and the descending, dark, and satanic tendency. We are prepared for a replay of the struggle between guidance and misguidance, the prophets and the satans. But we are also dealing here with Ibn al-'Arabi's intellectual universe, a fact that is announced at the beginning by some of the technical terminology and confirmed by many passages in the text itself, where Ibn al-'Arabi's terms are constantly employed and where he himself is quoted twice.

Since Ibn al-'Arabi and *wahdat al-wujûd* lie in the background, it is natural that both the Prophet and the Satan—the leaders of the two religions represented by spirit and soul—are represented as loci of manifestation for the divine names. The discussion cannot take an exclusively dualistic and oppositional form in the manner of the legalistic and polemical approach characteristic of both jurisprudence and Kalâm. Rather, what follows will have to show that opposition among the loci that manifest the divine names can be harmonized and made complementary through Unity, or in other words, through the fact that the name God is the coincidence of all opposites (*jam' al-âddâd*).

The point of the debate is not so much that one side should win and

the other lose. Rather, the opposition between the two sides prepares the way for a stretching and expansion of comprehension and consciousness. Opposite positions necessarily have to manifest the same Reality, since God comprehends all things. The task is not to answer yes or no, but to discover the right relationship between two yes's. This does not imply that error has no reality, quite the contrary. But error arises not so much from the position itself as from one's standpoint when one claims the truth of the position. It is a mistake to affirm a truth related to one level when one is standing in another level. Error derives from the mixing of levels, and deliverance from error can only come through a transmutation of consciousness that situates every level in its proper place.

The Debate

The main part of the text, detailing the contents of the debate between spirit and soul, is interesting both for the topics covered and the intrinsic content of the arguments. At the same time it reflects 'Abd al-Jalil's perception of long-standing controversies over many important doctrinal issues in Sufism. Some of these issues are still relevant in the contemporary scene, where one often meets conflicting positions similar to those maintained by spirit and soul. But in the contemporary "New Age," the standpoint represented by the soul seems to have gained the upper hand, while the spirit's perspective appears to be increasingly unpopular, since it reaffirms the necessity of the practice of the Law as the *sine qua non* for the understanding and affirmation of Unity.

The soul is depicted as a rather clever and crafty fellow, skillful in the intricacies of debate and not afraid to change its position when it is opportune to do so. The spirit is much more stable and somewhat stolid, reflecting the far-seeing prophetic wisdom that it manifests. At the outset the soul mentions Iblis as its guide, so the spirit feels duty-bound to warn it of Iblis's shortcomings. The soul replies by having recourse to the esoteric knowledge of the spiritual path (*tarîqa*), which transcends the Shariah mentioned by the spirit, and by claiming—in the manner of the well-known Sufi defenses of Satan²⁵—that Iblis was the lover of God par excellence whose secret pact with

his Beloved would not allow him to bow to anyone else.

The soul appeals to a privileged, esoteric knowledge in several more passages in the ensuing debate, most of which focuses on the nature of oneness (*wahda*) and that of Being or existence (*wujūd*), though the famous expression *wahdat al-wujūd* is never mentioned. In brief, the soul wants to claim an absolute Oneness that obliterates distinctions within *wujūd* and at the same time to maintain its own privileged identity with *wujūd*. Thereby it wants to show that distinctions among things are sheer illusion, so the Shariah is a veil that misleads the stupid. Those who are truly enlightened follow their own inner light, which is God himself.

The spirit protests that this appeal to absolute Oneness is in fact an appeal to one of *wujūd*'s many levels, thereby distorting *wujūd*'s reality. It is contradictory to affirm the absolute Oneness of God's Essence and then to deny the relative manyness of his attributes. Both have to be affirmed, and then it will be seen that the divine attributes demand the reality—relative of course—of the cosmos. The Shariah's necessity follows from the relative reality of the cosmos and the real distinctions among the levels.

In the first part of the treatise the soul makes a rather good case for an individualistic type of spirituality shorn from traditional supports. In the second part, where the soul has taken another tack, the arguments attempt mainly to claim the independence of the material world from any first principle. In both cases, the practical result of the soul's argument is to declare the Law irrelevant and prophetic guidance useless if not positively harmful.

By the end of the debate, it is not completely clear who has won. Certainly anyone who inclines toward the religious universe of Islam will read the text as giving victory to the spirit, since all the soul's arguments have been neatly answered from within the perspective of the Shariah in general and Ibn al-'Arabi's school in particular. But much of what the soul has said would be quite convincing to those who incline toward a Sufi esotericism cut off from the Shariah and alien to scholastic philosophizing.

Although 'Abd al-Jalil means to support the spirit's arguments over the soul, he also wants to acknowledge the relative validity of the

soul's positions. The soul is a locus of manifestation for a divine name, the Misguider, and this name has its rights. The Misguider cannot be negated, but must be harmonized with the higher names from which it derives. Although "God's mercy precedes His wrath," and therefore, by analogy, "God's guidance precedes His misguidance," both wrath and misguidance are divine attributes that have a positive, if limited, role to play in the total constellation of existence.

The beginning of the process whereby 'Abd al-Jalil will harmonize the positions of soul and spirit is announced at the end of the debate proper, when the spirit realizes that its words have had no discernible effect on the soul. Hence the spirit proposes that they take their dispute to a third party to decide between them.

The Mystery's Judgment

The third party to whom the spirit and soul have recourse is the "mystery," the more inward dimension of the human reality that Ibn al-'Arabi identifies with the "specific face" or immutable entity. In this context, however, 'Abd al-Jalil does not have in mind Ibn al-'Arabi's definition of the mystery, but rather the seven-part hierarchy of the human being which by this period had become a commonplace in Sufi writings—body, soul, spirit, heart, mystery, hidden (*khafī*), and most hidden (*akhfā*).

The mystery enters the discussion by addressing first the soul and then the spirit. It criticizes the soul for ruining the world of obedience and bringing Adam out from the Garden, but it praises the soul's grasp of the station of oneness and its description of God's self-disclosure (*tajallī*) in all things. Then the mystery says,

It is clear to me that oneness has become manifest to you in the station of nature. That is why your love is completely fixed upon the world of form. You love absorption in sensory passions and immersion in the illusory pleasures that darken the mirror of the heart and bring about punishment and disaster in the next world. If an appropriate love for form were to become established within you, you would undertake good acts and works, since forms in the next world will last forever, while the forms of this plane are obviously perishing and have no subsistence. You must

turn your attention toward the high level in order to reach the [divine] self-disclosure that is beyond the outside and inside worlds. In that self-disclosure, no name or description remains, no expression or allusion.

The mystery then compares the soul to a frog in a puddle of filthy water who thinks that it lives in the ocean. What the frog needs is for a stream of pure water to pass over the puddle and take it to the ocean. Although the soul's perception of oneness is true enough, no two people perceive the Essence in the same way, and hence there are diverse levels of consciousness. In explaining this the mystery refers to the basic degrees of *wujūd* through which God reveals himself, what in another context might be called the "Five Divine Presences" along with the level of Non-entification (*lā ta'ayyun*) standing beyond them.²⁶

O soul, although it is impossible to see the Essence without the veil of the attributes, there is much diversity in the veils. The veil of the World of the Visible is the densest of all veils. Then there is the veil of images [*mithāl*]. Within both these veils the Beloved wears the clothing of form, which is the most tremendous veil. After this, the veil of subtlety remains in the World of Spirits. Then there is a veil of subtlety in the World of Meanings which is the reality and immutable entity of the traveler and which is called the "smaller isthmus [*barzakh*]." All the gnostics see the Real in this veil. Greater than this is the veil of "the most subtle of the most subtle" in the Presence of the First Entification and the Muhammadan Reality. This is called the "greater isthmus." Our Prophet sees the Essence of the Real in this veil, which is the thinnest of veils. Some of the most elect of the friends of God who follow that leader of the prophets observe a flash there by tagging along with him. Finally there is the level of the Disengaged Essence, to which no one has access.

In concluding this address to the soul, the mystery focuses on the soul's particular problem, which is the affirmation of selfhood or "soulhood" (*nafsāniyya*). The only way to achieve the vision of the inward levels of Oneness is to negate one's selfhood, or to undergo "annihilation" (*fanā*'). "There is no remedy except becoming lost and obliterated: They buy nothing there but a thing's nonexistence and annihila-

tion".²⁷

The mystery then turns to the spirit and praises it for its obedience and its attentiveness to the good that can be gained in the next world. But it warns the spirit that it also is not yet free of love for form. The danger remains that it will be so entranced by the garden that it will forget the face of the Gardener. The mystery criticizes the spirit for perceiving the station of oneness from the standpoint of the rational faculty (*'aql*) and for not abandoning itself to love. The soul's emphasis upon self-identification with the Real is a valid one, and it can only be experienced through love. 'Abd al-Jalil then summarizes the rest of the mystery's advice to the soul and spirit:

The mystery made clear that the entity of the servant has two sides, one the side of nondelimitation [*iṭlāq*] and the other the side of delimitation [*taqyīd*]. Servanthood [*'ubūdiyya*] and lordship [*rubūbiyya*] must both be taken into account, since both are established in the servant's entity. The soul had taken lordship into account and had desired to embrace immediate joy and pleasures, while the spirit had taken servanthood into account and had chosen the ease of obedience in order to grasp endless and everlasting deferred ease. Although both were flying in the world of *tawḥīd*, out of caprice [*hawā*] the soul-vulture would in the end have stayed with the bones, while the spirit-nightingale would have inclined away from the rose garden of the Beloved's face toward the garden's fruit.

'Abd al-Jalil's assessment of the situation depends upon various teachings of Ibn al-'Arabi's school that have been touched on during the debate and are here harmonized and put into relationship. Since the meaning of the passage is far from self-evident, it calls for a few words of explanation:

The inner human reality has two basic dimensions, here symbolized by the terms spirit and soul. In one dimension, which stands opposite God's transcendence—or, in Ibn al-'Arabi's language, his incomparability (*tanẓīh*), independence (*ghinā*), and overwhelming power (*qahr*)—human beings are servants overcome by poverty, incapacity, and weakness. They possess nothing with which to affirm their own reality and are totally dependent for their existence and attributes

upon the Real (*al-ḥaqq*). This dimension is manifested more clearly in the lower levels of the human being, that is, in the soul and the body, which display relatively little of the divine light.

In another respect, human beings manifest nothing but God. They are created in God's form and worthy of being his vicegerents. To them "God has subjected," as the Koran puts it, "everything in the heavens and the earth" (31: 20, 45: 13), so they are "lords" over all other creatures. This dimension of the human reality corresponds to God's similarity (*tashbīḥ*) and immanence, whereby he discloses himself in all things and most clearly in his chosen vicegerents. In this respect humans are "nondelimited," since nothing limits the degree to which they can expand in knowledge and consciousness. In this context Ibn al-'Arabī speaks of "perfect man" as the full outward manifestation of the Real, or the human being who has assumed all the divine names as his own character traits (*al-takhalluq bi asmā' Allāh*).

Although servanthood and lordship appear at first sight to be contradictory and irreconcilable, in fact nothing but total and absolute servanthood allows a human being to be a true lord. Only the perfect servant can be God's vicegerent. Just as God is God because he is both incomparable and similar, nondelimited and delimited, Essence and attributes, so also human beings are fully human only by being both servant and vicegerent, nothing and everything. This is one of the secrets of Muhammad's title, *'abduhu wa rasūluhu*, "His servant and His messenger."

The soul manifests servitude and weakness, since it is overcome by darkness or distance from God, while the spirit manifests vicegerency, theomorphism, and lordship, since it blazes with the divine light. In other terms, the spirit is connected intimately to nearness, mercy, and guidance, while the soul dwells naturally in the domain of distance, wrath, and misguidance.

One might expect that 'Abd al-Jalīl would follow these correspondences and connect lordship to the spirit and servanthood to the soul, instead of saying, "The soul had taken lordship into account, ... while the spirit had taken servanthood into account." But along with distance and darkness go ignorance and arrogance. The soul looks at

itself and does not see its own dark nature, but rather the luminosity that allows it to exist and be itself. Ignorant of its own darkness, it lays claim to a light that does not belong to it. In contrast the spirit possesses the luminosity of knowledge and sees itself in its proper relationship with the Real. It is, in Ibn al-'Arabī's terms, "god wary" (*muttaqī*), which means that it ascribes light, knowledge, and power to God and darkness, ignorance, and weakness to itself. Though it sees its own luminosity, it knows that next to the absolute light of God its own created light is nothing. Hence it acknowledges its servanthood.

Nonetheless, even in its claim to lordship, the soul manifests a positive dimension of the Real, for lordship is a divine attribute. The sin of the soul's prophet, Iblis, is to have said, "I am better than he" (Koran 38: 76) and to have refused to prostrate himself before Adam. As the spirit says at the beginning of the debate, "According to the clear meaning of the verse, 'I am better than he,' the claim of betterness and selfhood—which negate the stage of love—became manifest from Iblis."²⁸ Following Iblis, the soul claims selfhood and betterness for itself. In doing so, it manifests the characteristics of lordship. In other words, by affirming selfhood and I-ness, the soul claims for itself a prerogative of God, since none truly has a right to say "I" except God.²⁹ Just as "There is no real but the Real," so also "There is no true I but the divine I."

At the deepest level, the positive nature of the soul's self-affirmation goes back to the fact that it finds *wujūd* in itself. *Wujūd* as such is the Divine Essence or Selfhood—the divine "I-ness"—and it manifests itself even in the darkest realms of the cosmos. And *wujūd*, it should be remembered, means not only "existence" or "being" but also and primarily "finding." God's "finding of himself" is known as *wujūd*, and so also the soul finds itself through *wujūd*'s light, but it does not notice that the light is not its own. The divine self-affirmation irradiates the darkness of nonexistence, and the soul in its darkness clings to the trace of light as its very self and survival. "Selfhood" and self-affirmation manifest God's Essence.

In short, the spirit represents the human reality inasmuch as it sees itself and its own limitations objectively and effaces itself before God,

while the soul represents the human self inasmuch as it sees itself as central and affirms its own right to exist. The spirit rises beyond itself and affirms the Other, while the soul sinks within itself and affirms itself.

At this point in the text 'Abd al-Jalil once again acknowledges the soul's rights to its mode of manifesting the Real, while admitting his limited knowledge of the true situation: "O friend," he says, "I do not know which point of view God will take into account tomorrow." In other words, he does not know if God will treat the human being as a lord or a servant on the Day of Resurrection. However, one should exercise caution in one's dealings with God, and therefore one should observe the instructions brought by the prophets. The creature should actualize his servanthood here and wait to become a lord in the next world.

It strikes my mind that in this plane one should act by taking servanthood into account because of the sending of scriptures and angels, so that through their warning one can come out of the well of nature, remain protected from the disease of ignorance and atheism [*ta'fil*], and reach the perfections of knowledge and works. Then, in the manifest abode of the next world, one will seal all this in the mode of lordship, in accordance with "My mercy precedes My wrath" and "My mercy embraces all things" [Koran 7: 156]. For in that place acts of obedience will be eliminated and all forbidden things will be allowed.

The Birth of the Heart

Having given advice separately to both spirit and soul, the mystery now addresses them together, telling them to become one. And, says 'Abd al-Jalil, who is observing the goings-on, "From the unification [*ittiḥād*] of the two, a marvelous state and wondrous shape appeared, called 'the heart,' which brings together the two sides and fluctuates between them."

The idea that the heart should be born from the marriage of spirit and soul goes back at least to Shihāb al-Dīn Suhrawardī (d. 632/1234) in *'Awārif al-ma'ārif*.³⁰ I have not come across this image in Ibn al-'Arabī's writings, but it is probably present somewhere, since his

chief disciple Ṣadr al-Dīn Qūnawī expands on it in some detail, as does Qūnawī's disciple Sa'īd al-Dīn Farghānī.³¹ The connection between the heart (*qalb*) and fluctuation (*taqallub*) is an important element of Ibn al-'Arabī's teachings, but of course it has a long history in Islamic thought, being referred to in a number of hadiths, including mention of God as "He who makes hearts fluctuate" (*muqallib al-qulūb*).³²

Next 'Abd al-Jalil says, "When the mystery found worthiness for the gathering of all meanings in the heart, it pulled the heart to itself and joined it with itself." Once the heart is born, the mystery sees that the heart has the power to gather within itself all meanings (*ma'ānī*). This point, so briefly stated here, is based on a rather complex exposition of the nature of the heart found in Ibn al-'Arabī's works. In short, he maintains that human beings perceive the Real in two fundamental modes, that of the afore-mentioned incomparability (*tanzīh*) and similarity (*tashbīh*). Incomparability is the point of view natural to the rational faculty (*aql*), which innately desires to prove that "Nothing is like Him" (Koran 42: 11). Similarity is the point of view of imagination, which perceives the Real in his self-disclosure (*tajallī*), that is, in the forms and images that make up the cosmos or "everything other than God." Neither point of view is sufficient for a total view of God or of the things as they are in themselves.

The spirit personifies the rational dimension of human nature that can only understand "God" as being incomparable, while the soul represents the imaginal dimension that can only grasp God in images and symbols, or in the forms of his self-disclosure. That is why the mystery criticized the spirit for putting too much stock in reason, and the soul for perceiving the Real only at the level of self-disclosure in the forms of nature.

The heart, in Ibn al-'Arabī's perspective, is limited neither by reason nor by imagination, neither by rational thought nor by the perception of forms. The heart represents the dimension of the human reality that brings together both kinds of perception in harmony, and since these cannot be maintained simultaneously, the heart "fluctuates" from one vision to the next. But the heart never denies the Real, whether in his incomparable and unknowable Essence or in

his self-disclosure to imagination through the sensory forms of the cosmos.

The spirit's self-effacement is connected with reason and incomparability because the spirit grasps that "Nothing is like Him" and that all positive qualities belong to God; hence it sees that it is nothing in itself. In contrast, the soul's self-affirmation is connected to imagination and the vision of similarity, since it sees God manifesting himself within itself; hence it grasps that everything it possesses is similar to God and that all the divine attributes belong to it.

In short, by speaking of the heart's worthiness for "gathering all meanings," 'Abd al-Jalil means to say that the heart had integrated and harmonized the points of view of spirit and soul by combining nondelimitation with delimitation and incomparability with similarity. Hence the mystery saw that the heart's level of consciousness involves awareness of all meanings, not simply those that pertain to one standpoint or the other. The mystery understood that the heart was worthy for knowing the level of inwardness and integration represented by itself, so it drew the heart to itself and became united with it.

But this is not the end of the story. Beyond the mystery, in the typical classification of the degrees of human consciousness, lie the "hidden" (*khafî*) and the "most hidden" (*akhfâ*). All differentiation must be eliminated before the vision of absolute Unity.

Final Union

'Abd al-Jalil now provides an explanation for the two terms "hidden" and "most hidden." They represent the innermost dimensions of the human being that can be discerned when the microcosm and macrocosm are viewed as possessing a number of levels. From this point of view, the mystery perceives the nondelimited light of the Real manifest both within itself and beyond itself.

In the beginning, when the light of Nondelimitation had shone upon the mystery, it had found a flash of that light evident in itself; it had seen a kind of "hidden" light outside itself, and a kind of "most hidden" light that its understanding and imagination could in no way reach but that it knew to be further away

from itself.

At the beginning, in other words, the mystery had perceived the hidden and most hidden lights beyond itself, just as it had perceived a light within itself and saw the spirit and soul as below itself. Hence it would seem that "mystery" signifies a middle point of human consciousness, suspended halfway between the darkness of the body and the infinite Light of God. Once the two lowest levels of consciousness, soul and spirit, join together and become the heart, the mystery is able to integrate them into itself. Now it can become integrated into the higher levels, the hidden and most hidden. It is able to accomplish this because it has been strengthened through the two powers represented by the spirit and soul within the heart. "Through joining with the all-comprehensive heart, a strengthening appeared within the mystery."

The spirit and soul, as dimensions of the heart, now become the means for a two-fold experience of both the hidden and the most hidden lights. The spirit's attribute is self-effacement before the One, since it tends toward annihilation (*fanâ'*) in the Real. But the soul's attribute is self-affirmation, since it tends to see the divine light as its own and to perceive itself as subsisting (*baqâ'*) through the divine attributes. "Through the light pertaining to the spirit, the mystery dissolved into the hidden light, and through the strength of the I-ness pertaining to the soul it became identified with that hidden light." In other words, the luminosity of the heart's spirit-nature allows the mystery to become effaced and annihilated in that even greater light called the "hidden." But the soul-nature demands self-affirmation, so in the midst of dissolution the mystery finds itself and sees that it is now identical with the hidden light.

Next 'Abd al-Jalil offers an explanation for the "words of ecstasy" (*shahîyyât*) of the Sufis. For now the mystery, like Ḥallāj and Bâyezîd, speaks from the viewpoint of "I am the Real": "Here it became a stream joined to the ocean and called out, 'Glory be to me, how tremendous is my rank!'" At the same time, this invisible core of the human reality experiences the "fluctuation" of the heart, so its gaze shifts from the point of view of the soul to that of the spirit,

from that of affirming itself to that of negating itself before the source of light.

When the mystery's gaze fell upon the infinity of the Ocean, it said, "My God, though I said, 'Glory be to me, how tremendous is my rank!,' now I repent. I cut off the belt of unbelief and say, 'There is no god but God,' so that through the blessing of these words I may be obliterated in the most hidden light."

Once again the mystery experiences annihilation, but the selfhood of the soul reasserts itself, and identity with the most hidden is established. "It lifted its head within the world of annihilation and began to say through the strength of the I-ness of the soul, 'I am the most hidden,' and it threw up the waves of claiming to be the ocean."

At each level—hidden and most hidden—a dual experience has occurred. Only after self-affirmation within the most hidden light can all trace of duality be erased so that the ultimate union may be experienced. Beyond the most hidden lies the infinite light of the Essence, also called the Unseen He-ness (*ghayb-i huwiyyat*), and at this point in the narrative, the Essence asserts its authority: "Just as this happened, the voice of the He-ness shouted out, 'and within the most hidden am I.'" Here 'Abd al-Jalil is alluding to what is ostensibly a *ḥadīth qudsī*, whose text I have seen recorded as follows: "Verily within the body of the son of Adam is a lump of flesh, within the lump of flesh a heart, within the heart a spirit, within the spirit a light, and within the light a mystery; and within the mystery am I."³³ With this re-assertion of God's ultimate authority, the right relationships are established, and all levels of the human reality experience a mode of identity with the One. Even the most hidden, which is the highest level, finds itself negated in the Real.

Through awe before that sound, the ocean of the most hidden became dry, such that none of the water of existence remained within it. In this state, all of them became one. The most manifest and the most hidden mixed together. All of itself cried out, "Whose is the kingdom today? God's, the One, the Overwhelming!" [Koran 40: 16].³⁴

In the supreme union, everything in the human being is negated as a self-subsistent reality only to be reaffirmed as God's self-disclosure.

As a result of this vision, 'Abd al-Jalil loses consciousness.

Here I had passed away from myself and become selfless. When I became slightly aware, the sound of "and within the most hidden am I" kept on falling into my ear from my own tongue. Out of the terror of this business I awoke. I said, "There is no power and no strength except in God, the High, the Tremendous."

This prophetic formula expresses once again the true reality of the servant—his nothingness before God.

Finally, 'Abd al-Jalil offers a comment that situates the whole episode firmly within the imaginal universe described by Ibn al-'Arabi. He tells us that everything that he had witnessed had been the imaginal embodiment of unseen realities.³⁵

I understood that all of this had been I; all of these were the forms of my own knowledge. These discussions had been my own imaginal concepts [*takhayyulāt*] that had assumed form.

'Abd al-Jalil's concluding prayer reestablishes his feet firmly on the ground of servanthood, the right attitude to be maintained in the present world: "I ask forgiveness from God for everything that God dislikes and I repent to him, and I am the first of those who have faith."

In short, this brief treatise demonstrates a sophisticated grasp of the teachings of Ibn al-'Arabi's school and a profound awareness of the complexity of the human reality. 'Abd al-Jalil offers none of the simple-minded polemics that often occurs between supporters of *waḥdat al-wujūd* and *waḥdat al-shuhūd*, but instead demonstrates that he—like many other Indian Sufis—was completely aware that the only way to bring out the highly nuanced structure of the human reality and the subtle transmutations of consciousness experienced on the path to God is to acknowledge the validity of a wide variety of perspectives while recognizing the relativity of each of them, since absolute truth resides in God alone.

Notes

1. See his article, "An Analysis of Wahdat al-wujūd: Toward a Metaphilosophy of Oriental Philosophies," in Izutsu, *Creation and the Timeless Order of Things* (Ashland, Oregon: White Cloud Press, 1994).
2. Izutsu, *Creation*, p. 7.
3. Aligarh, Habibganj 21/365 Fārsī folio 2a.
4. *A History of Sufism in India* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1978-1983), vol. II, pp. 289-90. Rizvi also refers to one 'Abd al-Jalīl Ilāhābādī as a famous Chishtī shaykh, without any further elaboration (vol. II, p. 97).
5. Institute of Islamic Studies, ms. no. 2139.
6. For information on other relevant Indian Sufi texts, see Chittick "Notes on Ibn al-'Arabi's Influence in India," *Muslim World* 72 (1992), pp. 218-41.
7. Lucknow, Nadwat al-'Ulamā' Maj. 31/2; a second manuscript, of which I do not have a copy, is found in Aligarh (Subhanullah 297. 7/46 [4]).
8. Jāmī quotes the passage twice (cf. *Naqd al-nuṣṣ fī sharḥ naqsh al-fuṣṣ*, ed. W. C. Chittick [Tehran: Imperial Iranian Academy of Philosophy, 1977], pp. 28 and 201). One passage of *Rūḥ wa naḥs* seems to be paraphrased from Jāmī's *Lawā'ih*.
9. *Bayān al-farq bayn al-ṣadr wa'l-qalb wa'l-fu'ād wa'l-lubb*, ed. N. Heer (Cairo: Dār al-Iḥyā' al-Kutub al-'Arabiyya, 1958); translated idem, "A Sufi Psychological Treatise," *Moslem World* 51 (1961), pp. 25-36, 83-91, 163-72, 244-58.
10. See, for example, the section of al-Ghazālī's *Iḳyā' 'ulām al-dīn* (Book 3, Section 1) on the "wonders of the heart." Al-Ghazālī rewrote this passage in Persian at the beginning of *Kīmīyā-yi sa'adat*, an extremely influential work in the subcontinent ('Unwān 1, Faṣl 1 et seq.; ed. A. Ārām [Tehran: Markazī 1319/1940], pp. 9 ff.).
11. *Miṣbāḥ al-hidāya*, ed. Jalāl al-Dīn Humā'ī (Tehran: Majlis, 1325/1946), Bāb 3 (pp. 80 ff.).
12. For a detailed discussion of some of the nuanced terminology employed in Islamic psychology, see Sachiko Murata, *The Tao of Islam: A Sourcebook on Gender Relationships in Islamic Thought* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1992), chapters 8-10.
13. *The Man of Light in Iranian Sufism* (Boulder & London: Shambhala, 1978), pp. 109-10, 124-25. For other relevant Kubrawī texts, cf. H. Landolt, "Deux opuscules de Semnānī sur le moi théophanique," in S. H. Nasr (ed.), *Mélanges offerts à Henry Corbin* (Tehran: McGill University Institute of Islamic Studies, 1977), pp. 279-319; Landolt, *Nuruddīn Isfarayīnī: Le Révélateur des Mystères* (Lagrasse: Verdier, 1986), pp. 54-66 et passim; H. Algar (trans.), *The Path of God's Bondsmen from Origin to Return: A Sufi Compendium by Najm al-Dīn Rāzī* (Delmar, N. Y.: Caravan, 1982), esp. pp. 134-35.
14. The idea that a human being is composed of several levels, whether three, four, seven, or some other number, is deeply rooted in Sufi thought, and is therefore a commonplace in the texts. A well-known Iranian scholar (Jalāl al-Dīn Humā'ī, in a footnote to his edition of Kāshānī's *Miṣbāḥ al-hidāya*, p. 82) remarks

- that the hierarchy "in general use among the gnostics" is nature (*ṭab'*), soul, heart, spirit, mystery, the hidden (*khafī*), and the most hidden (*akhfā*). In discussing the general view of the later tradition in the subcontinent, Mir Valiuddin distinguishes self (*nafs*), heart, *sirr*, and spirit as the main levels (*Contemplative Disciplines in Sufism* [London: East-West Publications, 1980]).
15. On various aspects of the heart in Ibn al-'Arabi's thought, cf. Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge: Ibn al-'Arabi's Metaphysics of Imagination* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1989), index. Also S. al-Ḥakīm, *al-Mujam al-ṣūfī* (Beirut: Dandara, 1981), pp. 916-20.
 16. Cf. for example, al-Qūnawī *Tahrīr al-bayān fī taqrīr shu'ab al-īmān* (Istanbul mss. Carullah 1001/4, 2054/9; Fatih 1394/2, 2630/1; Feyzullah 2163/13; Halet Efendi ilavesi, 66/6; şehid Ali Paşa 1340/2, 1382/7; Topkapi E. H. 546/3). Detailed elaborations of these teachings can be found in both the Persian and Arabic versions of Sa'īd al-Dīn Farghānī's recension of al-Qūnawī's lectures on Ibn al-Fāriḍ's *Naẓm al-sulūk: Mashhāriq al-darārī* (ed. S. J. Āshtiyānī, Mashhad: Anjuman-i Islāmī-yi Hikmat wa Falsafa-yi Irān, 1398/1978) and *Muntaha'l-madārik* (Cairo: 1293/1876).
 17. On the specific face, cf. Ibn al-'Arabi, *al-Futūḥāt al-makkiyya*, I 46. 12; II 304. 21, 434. 17, 647. 15; III 32. 13, 30. 31, 385. 17; also Chittick, *The Self-Disclosure of God* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1997), chapter 4.
 18. Cf. Chittick, *Sufi Path of Knowledge*, especially chapter 6.
 19. In fact, this slogan is highly misleading if it is taken to represent the position of Ibn al-'Arabi and his more sophisticated followers, just as it is misleading to attribute the expression *wahdat al-wujūd* itself to Ibn al-'Arabi. Professor Izutsu provides us with brilliant analyses of how *wahdat al-wujūd* was understood by certain of Ibn al-'Arabi's followers (e.g. *Creation*, chapter 3), but when he tells us that the concept goes back to Ibn 'Arabi (p. 66), he fails to point out the rather tortuous route. See Chittick, "Rumi and *wahdat al-wujūd*," in *The Heritage of Rumi*, ed. A. Banani and G. Sabagh (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 70-111.
 20. For a detailed explanation of the role of the divine names in Ibn al-'Arabi's teachings, cf. Chittick, *Sufi Path of Knowledge*, Chapters 2-4. For the term *mazhar*, see *ibid.*, pp. 89-91.
 21. Cf. Chittick, *Sufi Path of Knowledge*, p. 276.
 22. This is the specific, "compassionate mercy" ("the mercy of obligation"), not the general, "merciful mercy" ("the mercy of gratuitous gift"). See Izutsu, *Sufism and Taoism*, pp. 121 ff.
 23. See P. Awn, *Satan's Tragedy and Redemption: Iblis in Sufi Psychology* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1983), pp. 60-69.
 24. For a wide selection of texts from the great Sufi Rūmī on the *nafs* and its negative qualities, see Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Love: The Spiritual Teachings of Rumi* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1983), pp. 33-35 and index, under "ego".
 25. Cf. Awn, *Satan's Tragedy*, Part III.
 26. See Izutsu, *Sufism and Taoism*, pp. 11 ff.; Chittick, "The Five Divine Pres-

ences: From al-Qūnawī to al-Qayṣarī," *The Muslim World* 72 (1982), pp. 107-128; also Chittick and P. L. Wilson, *Fakhruddin Iraqi: Divine Flashes* (New York: Paulist Press, 1982), introduction.

27. On the importance of annihilation for establishing a true perspective on the nature of things, see Izutsu, *Creation and the Timeless Order*, pp. 11-20 and *passim*.

28. On this claim as a characteristic of Iblis in Sufi psychology, cf. Awn, *Satan's Tragedy*, p. 34.

29. Ibn al-'Arabī points out that any "claim" (*da'wā* or *iddi'ā*) contradicts the fundamental ontological poverty of creatures and therefore displays ignorance of the true situation (cf. Chittick, *Sufi Path of Knowledge*, p. 152 and index under "claim"). See also Awn, *Satan's Tragedy*, pp. 90-96; and Rūmī, as quoted in Chittick, *Sufi Path of Love*, pp. 191-93.

30. In Chapter 56, "Fī ma'rifat al-insān nafsahu wa mukāshafāt al-ṣūfiyya min dhālik" (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-'Arabī, 1966, p. 450). These passages are amplified on in Persian by 'Izz al-Dīn Kāshānī in *Miṣbāḥ al-hidāya*, pp. 97 ff. English translations of both Suhrawardī's and Kāshānī's discussions are found in Murata, *Tao of Islam*, chapter 10.

31. Cf. for example *Taḥrīr al-bayān fī taqrīr shu'ab al-tmān*; Farghānī discusses the idea in the introduction to his *Muntaha'l-madārik*. For details, see Murata, *Tao of Islam*, chapter 10.

32. Cf. Chittick, *Sufi Path of Knowledge*, pp. 106 ff.

33. Muḥyī al-Dīn Pādīshāh Qādirī, *Miftāḥ al-ḥaqā'iq fī kashf al-daqā'iq* (Hyderabad: Maṭba'-i Sarkār-i Āṣafiyya, 1293), p. 57.

34. Ibn al-'Arabī and his followers frequently quote this verse as asserting the point of view of the overwhelming authority of God's Unity, which erases all difference and otherness. Cf. Chittick, *Sufi Path of Knowledge*, p. 314 (note 6).

35. In Ibn al-'Arabī's perspective, human beings perceive only through the veil of imagination, so they never worship anyone but the god of their own beliefs (see Izutsu, *Sufism and Taoism*, pp. 83 ff.; Chittick, *Sufi Path of Knowledge*, chapter 19; idem, *Imaginal Worlds* [Albany: SUNY Press, 1994], chapter 9).

Unity of Ontology and Epistemology in Qayṣarī's Philosophy

Akiro Matsumoto

This paper aims at clarifying the logical relationship of the theory of "the unity of being" (*waḥdah al-wujūd*) with two key Sufi concepts, namely "prophethood" (*nubūwah*) and "closeness to God" (*walāyah*). Both concepts of "prophethood" and "closeness to God" have Qur'anic origin, but they were elaborated and enriched as the Sufi theory on world understanding developed. These two concepts have worked as mainstays in the philosophic construction of the "Unity of Being" ever since Ibn 'Arabī (1165-1240) established its foundation.

In the school of the Unity of Being, God is the unique, eternal and absolute being, and nothing has real existence except God. If anything is said to have existence, it has it in a metaphorical sense and not in a real sense. In addition, the world is understood as a manifestation of God, the absolute being. So, the philosophy of the Unity of Being is a theory for a holistic understanding between the eternal and the finite.

Yet in the tradition of Ash'arite theology (which is the dominant theological school in the Sunnite world), the eternal-finite relationship is usually explained from the viewpoint of a personal relationship between God and his creatures. In this school, the creation and destruction of things are explained by making use of the concept of "preponderation" (*tarjih*), which means that God shifts the centre of