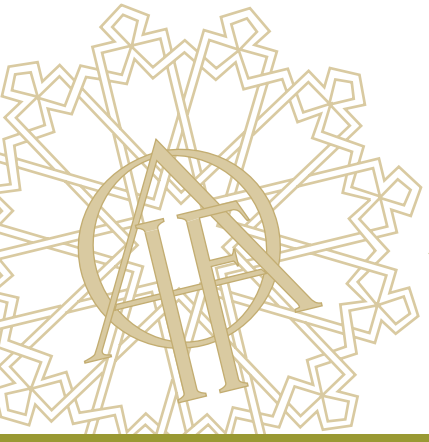
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Richard McGregor

Being and Knowing According to an 8th/14th Century Cairene Mystic.

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Richard McGREGOR

Being and *Knowing* According to an 8th/14th Century Cairene Mystic

THE EIGHTH CENTURY HIJRA in Cairo, despite the occasional famine and earthquake, saw a flowering of intellectual activity. Mamluk rule had taken hold, and its princes joined the civilian élite in patronizing institutions of learning and religion. This was also the period which saw the expansion of the sufi orders, the most important being the Aḥmadiyya, the Rifāʿiyya and the Shādhiliyya. The last order was established by Abū al-Ḥasan al-Shādhilī in the middle of the 7th/13th century, and was refined by the able mystical thinker and second *khalifa* of the order, Ibn ʿAṭā Allāh al-Iskandarī (d. 709/1309). The former had provided the figure of a saintly founder, while the latter wrote not only the founder's hagiography, but also inspired poetry and several works on sufi practice and theory.[1] Another intellectual force of the era was the mystical philosophy of Muḥy al-Dīn Ibn ʿArabī (d. 638/1240), the impact of which was unparalleled in the history of sufism. Even in his lifetime, Ibn ʿArabī was a famous figure.[2] His works were certainly known in Egypt, although there does not seem to have been much of an Ibn ʿArabī "school" *per se*.[3] In the same period Cairo itself produced its greatest mystical poet, Ibn al-Fāriḍ (d. 632/1235).[4] His compositions advanced mystical ideas much in line with those of Ibn ʿArabī. The former's work was the subject of many commentaries, some of the most important of which were produced by thinkers deeply influenced by Ibn ʿArabī. Another ingredient in this rich intellectual mix was philosophy, which had come into Islamic thought early on.[5]

[1] On the history and literature of the Shādhiliyya see chapter two of my *Sanctity and Mysticism in Medieval Egypt; the Wafāʾ Sufi Order and the Legacy of Ibn ʿArabī*, forthcoming from the State University of New York Press.

[2] In his *Risāla*, Ibn Ẓāfir records his having met Ibn ʿArabī, saying of him:

"وكان من أكبر علماء الطريق وشهرته عظيمة وتصانيفه كثيرة".

Cf. *La Risāla de Ṣafi al-Dīn ibn Abī al-Manṣūr ibn Ẓāfir*, ed. and trans. D. Gril, Cairo, 1986, p. 83.

[3] The efforts to propagate his teachings by his step-son and most important follower Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī were more successful in the Turkish and Iranian milieux than they were in Egypt. See C. Addas, *Ibn ʿArabī ou la quête du soufre rouge*, Paris, 1989, p. 276.

[4] G. Scattolin, "L'Expérience mystique de Ibn al-Fāriḍ à travers son poème al-Tāʾiyyat al-Kubrā", *MIDEO* 19, 1989, p. 203.

[5] F. Klein-Franke, "Al-Kindī", in S.H. Nasr, O. Leaman (eds.), *History of Islamic Philosophy*, London, 2001, p. 163, and R. Arnaldez, "Falsafa", in *EI*[2] II: 770-771. See also A. Badawī, *La Transmission de la philosophie grecque au monde arabe*, Paris, 1968, p. 47-55.

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It is into this milieu, in 702/1302, that Muḥammad Wafā' was born. His grandfather had come from Tunisia, settling in Alexandria and establishing his own *zāwiya* (mosque-shrine complex). Muḥammad Wafā' travelled around Egypt, finally taking up permanent residence on the island of Roda. Here in Cairo his fame as a mystic spread, and although he had been a member of the Shādhilyya order, he began to lay the foundation of a new order, that of the Wafā'iyya. This effort was continued by his son ʿAlī Wafā' (759/1357-807/1405), who played an important role in defining the character of the order. ʿAlī also marked the beginning of a long line of prominent figures from the Wafā' family, who would impact public religious life for the next five-hundred years.[6]

The mystical writings of Muḥammad Wafā' drew on the devotional techniques of the Shādhiliyya order, the theosophical insights of Ibn ʿArabī, and certain elements of Islamic Neoplatonism.[7] The following pages will explore his development of some central ontological and epistemological subjects, in particular the following:

1. Supreme being and its relation to creation,
2. The dimensions of divine being,
3. The nature of mystical knowing,
4. The levels of existence,
5. The existential dimension of spiritual direction.

At the outset it should be said that Muḥammad Wafā' does not write in a systematic fashion. His project is the inspired exploration of a mystical reality. In this effort he draws on various strands of mystical thought; his tools include poetic language, traditional sufi vocabulary, the insights of Ibn ʿArabī, and Neoplatonic concepts. The portrait emerging from this brief study provides historians of thought insight into the workings and production of mystical tradition in 8th/14th century Egypt.

Absolute Being and Its Self-Disclosure

The idea of absolute being (*wujūd muṭlaq*) revolves around the question of the nature of existence in relation to the divine. The implications of this viewpoint are significant. Seeing God's existence as the only existence, while a logically tenable position, was not generally acceptable to Muslim orthodoxy. The need was felt, even among a majority of mystical thinkers, to preserve some recognizable distinction between the Divine and creation. The relationship between the central Islamic tenet of the Oneness of God (*tawḥīd*) and the existential nature of creation became the matter of debate. Although a small but impressive school developed around the idea that material existence is essentially spiritual, sharing in the single existence of All,[8] the dominant understanding in sufism was one which recognized both the absolute being (*wujūd muṭlaq*) of God and a qualified or contingent being for all else.

[6] For more on the history of Wafā's see *Sanctity and Mysticism in Medieval Egypt*, ch. 3. Muḥammad Wafā died 765/1363.

[7] For a survey of both Muḥammad and ʿAlī Wafā's writings see my "New Sources for the Study of Sufism in Mamluk Egypt" to appear in *BSOAS*.

[8] A. Taftazani, O. Leaman, "Ibn Sabʿīn", in S.H. Nasr, O. Leaman (eds.), *op. cit.*, p. 247.

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Doubtless the most sophisticated exposition of this Oneness of God in relation to the plurality of creation, came from Ibn ʿArabī. His position on this, thanks to his later followers, came to be called "Oneness of Being" (وحدة الوجود).[9] This doctrine posited first the absolute Being, "…for nothing exists other than God, His attributes and His acts. Everything is Him, is through Him, proceeds from Him, returns to Him; and were He to veil Himself from the universe even for the space of the blinking of an eye, the universe would straightaway cease to exist."[10] To this is added the idea of God's Self-disclosure (تجلي), thus providing a mode of existence with apparent independence. This Self-disclosure must occur through His names and attributes, since absolute being is beyond creation's ability to comprehend. Ibn ʿArabī writes, "God does not disclose Himself in the name One, and there cannot be Self-disclosure within it, nor in the name God. But Self-disclosure does occur in the other Names that are known to us."[11] This Self-disclosure is unlimited in its possibilities, but its divine origin is concealed by the veils it acquires as it takes particular form. Only through spiritual insight can any of these existential veils be lifted.

Ibn ʿArabī's teachings on this subject are elaborate, but these are the basic outlines of what in short-hand came to be called "Oneness of Being". With this explanation in mind, let us turn our attention to Muḥammad Wafā' in order to situate him within the discussion of the nature of Divine and created existence.

There is no shortage of passages in which this Oneness is referred to. We read, for example:

> The essential existence (الوجود الذات) is (God) the Encompassing, since it is the existence of all the existents. It is the (divine name) "god", since it is described by the encompassing attributes. Through the connections of wisdom, its name is Allah.[12]

In this quotation it is important to note that Muḥammad Wafā' follows comments on the absolute being of God with descriptions of this being's particularization. Both of these are present in the passage just cited. Mention is first made of the encompassing nature of God's existence, but this is immediately followed by its particularization. The point here is that Muḥammad Wafā' at once upholds the concept of a single absolute existence, but also emphasizes the dynamic relative existence of particular entities derived from this absolute.

The vehicle for the particularization of this absolute existence–according to both Muḥammad Wafā' and Ibn ʿArabī[13]–is the dynamic of Self-disclosure (تجلي). The *Shaʿā'ir al-ʿirfān* describes this process as part of the divine aspect of Encompassing: "The Encompassing (إحاطة) is multiplication of the one by Self-disclosure into various forms,

[9] W. Chittick, "Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī on the Oneness of Being", *IPQ* 21/2, 1981, p. 171-184.

[10] From Ibn ʿArabī's *Risālat al-anwār*, M. Chodkiewicz, *Seal of the Saints. Prophethood and Sainthood in the Doctrine of Ibn Arabi*, trans. L. Sherrard, Cambridge, 1993, p. 149.

[11] W. Chittick, *The Self-Disclosure of God. Principles of Ibn ʿArabī's Cosmology*, Albany, 1998, p. 53.

[12] Muḥammad Wafā', as presented in ʿAlī Wafā's, *Kitāb al-masāmiʿ al-rabbāniyya*, Dār al-kutub al-Miṣriyya, Taṣawwuf Ḥalīm 174, fol 3b. (In this and the following passages quoted from the Wafā' manuscripts I have not edited the texts.)
"الوجود الذات هو المحيط من حيث هو وجود جميع الموجودات وهو الاله من حيث هو موصوف الصفات المحيطة بالتعلقات الحكمية اسمه الله".
Elsewhere these connections are described as a thing's esoteric name, linking it to Divine necessary being. It serves as a link, for the people of spiritual tasting, to the Eternal. See Muḥammad Wafā', *Kitāb al-azal*, p. 53.

[13] W. Chittick, *The Self-Disclosure of God*, p. 91.

like water as it thickens with cold."[14] These Self-manifestations take place through a complex process, moving from non-existent possibility to existential necessity. Muḥammad Wafā' describes necessary existence as the sustainer of the divine Attributes, but adds,

> This (existence) Self-discloses upon levels of possibility according to the preparedness (استعداد) of each level.
>
> Preparedness is the reality (حقيقة) of prime matter (هيولانية) which subsists in the essence of the possible. This reality is divinely derived (من الاختراع), rather than directly created (الإبداع).[15]
>
> The reality of this derivation is the preparation of prime matter for the accepting of form. This form is directly created.[16]
>
> …The reality of its preparedness is the acceptance of the Self-disclosure of the Necessary.[17]

Thus, the result of Self-disclosure–moving things from the possible into the necessary– is determined by the particular abilities of the various levels of prime matter to accept the Self-disclosure of Necessary Being. This ability is essential to (possible) prime matter; in other words, it is not as such part of the process of divine Self-disclosure.[18] The result of the preparedness receiving the Self-disclosure is the form. What results from this reception is "direct creation", that is, a moving into existence according to a form, which itself was determined by the simply derived (i.e. possible) preparedness.

This Self-disclosure plays a dual role. On the one hand it serves to bring the Divine nearer to His servants, but on the other, it acts as a veil. In a discussion emphasizing the need of the worshipper to transcend the product of Self-disclosure, the highest level of forgiveness is that in which one's derivative existence is surpassed.

> Forgiveness and unbelief are both from the veil (of Self-disclosure); yet there is a difference between them since unbelief is the hiding of al-Ḥaqq by creation, and asking forgiveness is the hiding of creation by al-Ḥaqq.[19] Asking forgiveness occurs on three levels:

[14] Muḥammad Wafā', *Sha'ā'ir al-'irfān,* Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya, no. 23797 b, fol 43b.

[15] That is, as a simple possible, it has no concrete existence.

[16] That is, it moves fully into creation.

[17] Muḥammad Wafā', *Kitāb al-azal*, ed. Sa'īd 'Abd al-Fattāḥ, Beirut, 1992, p. 51.
"وإنما هو يتجلى في مراتب الإمكان بحسب حكم استعداد القبول في المرتبة. والاستعداد: هو الحقيقة الهيولانية القائمة بذات الإمكان. وهي من الإختراع الإلهي لا الإبداع. وحقيقة الاختراع: هي تهيء المادة بالهيولانية (sic) لقبول الصورة. والصورة هي الإبداع ... وحقيقة استعداده هو قبول قيام تجلي الواجب بحكم المطابقة".

[18] In other words, this prime matter is a kind of pre-existential entity, and should not be confused with manifest creation, which is the result of creation via *tajalli.* See W. Chittick, *The Self-Disclosure of God*, p. 89. This creation scheme is similar to that of Ibn 'Arabī, which also describes things coming into existence according to their preparedness. W. Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge. Ibn 'Arabī's Metaphysics of Imagination*, Albany, 1989, p. 91-92. Ibn Sīnā (d. 428/1037), also uses an emanative system of creation, but for him *ibdā'* refers to that creation which is not subject to form; cf. L. Gardet, *La pensée religieuse d'Avicenne*, Paris, 1951, p. 63. He also distinguishes between formal (*ṣūrī*) and material (*hayūlānī*) creation. A.-M. Goichon, *Lexique du langage philosophique d'Ibn Sīnā,* Paris, 1938, p. 414, and S.H. Nasr, *An Introduction of Islamic Cosmological Doctrines*, Albany, 1993, p. 219.

[19] In his definition of *taḥqīq* (verification), al-Qāšānī says: "...the verifier is neither veiled by al-Ḥaqq from creation, nor by creation from al-Ḥaqq"; *Kitāb iṣṭilāḥāt al-ṣūfiyya* (*A Glossary of Sufi Techincal Terms*), ed. and trans. N. Safwat, London, 1991, no 485.

1. By wearing down (استهلاك)[20], which is asking forgiveness essentially, and which is that no sign (أثر) persists for the servant, and there is no notice to be had of his (own) being.

2. By drowning (استغراق), which is asking forgiveness by the attributes, which is that the asker of forgiveness knows that it is he who has been forgiven.

3. By being veiled (استتار), which is asking forgiveness by the acts, which is that his being in things is by his Lord, and not by himself.[21]

Thus "unbelief" is essentially allowing creation to distract from the Divine, while "forgiveness" is allowing the Divine to distract the individual from creation. The three modes of asking forgiveness then, are the levels of existential rapprochement with the absolute Being. The highest level is one at which the servant's being is obliterated in his essence. The other levels entail an existential differentiation of the servant from his Lord.

Also, by serving as a link between created beings and God, *tajallī* provides potentially limitless knowledge. Human perception (إدراك)–like any other creation–is the product of a particular reception of Self-disclosure.

Without doubt, perception is the mirror of the unveiling of the Self-disclosure of knowledge in the known. So in perception manifests the known containing the Self-disclosure, without attaining quiddity…[22]

Every known thing has a locus which accepts its Self-disclosure at the time of reception, so its image manifests in it (the locus) as it (the locus) is then. It is said of this image, by virtue of this Self-disclosure, that it is a "possible occurrence".[23]

So by this, everything from the unseen reality has a position in perception able to receive its Self-disclosure by (God's) determination.[24]

Thus one's knowing a thing consists in accepting the Self-disclosure which engenders an image, according to its locus. This image is understanding. Although it is the result (at least initially) of a Self-disclosure, it remains only a non-necessary possibility. This determination is due to the receptive locus.[25] In the last line of the passage it is made clear that all things in the realm of the unseen truths are potentially subject to becoming a Self-disclosure.

[20] The Dār al-Kutub ms, 28b, has استهلال (beginning or opening) here which would seem to be a copiest's mistake. By this wearing down the mystic's carnal soul may be controlled, so that his spirit (*rūḥ*) can rise upwards; cf. L. Massignon, *The Passion of al-Ḥallāj* III, trans. H. Mason, Princeton, 1982, p. 347.

[21] Muḥammad Wafā', *Shaʿā'ir al-ʿirfān*, al-Maktaba al-Azhariyya (Cairo), Majāmīʿ 1076, Zakī: 41313, fol 142b.
"المغفرة والكفر ماخوذان من الستر و [ك. الترقي /ز. التوقي (؟)] و بينهما فرق لان الكفر تغطية الحق بالخلق و المغفرة تغطية الخلق بالحق والاستغفار على ثلاث مراتب استهلاك وهو استغفار الذوات وهو ان لا يبقى للعبد اثر ولا لكونه خبر الثاني استغراق وهو استغفار الصفات وهو ان للمستغفر شعور انه مغفور له والثالث استتار وهو استغفار افعال وهو كونه في الاشيا بربه لا بنفسه…"

[22] That is, to know *of* a Self-disclosure, rather than to know or simply see a Self-disclosure.

[23] Ibn Sīnā uses the Hadith in the same way. See A.-M. Goichon, *Lexique*, nos. 136, 64.

[24] Muḥammad Wafā', *Kitāb al-azal*, p. 38-39.
"الإدراك: مرآة انكشاف تجلي العلم بالمعلوم من وراء امتناع الإثبات. فيظهر فيه المعلوم مشتملا بالتجلي لا بحصول الماهية … فما من معلوم إلا وله محل قابل لتجليه عند المقابلة فيظهر مثاله فيه على ما هو به. فيقال على هذا المثال، بحكم هذا التجلي: بحادث ممكنا. فعلى هذا، فما من حقيقة غائبة إلا ولها مرتبة في الإدراك، مستعدة لقبول تجليها بالتعيين."

[25] This recalls our earlier discussion of preparedness, and Ibn ʿArabī's claim that Self-disclosure takes form according to the disposition of the recipient: "والتجلي… لا يكون أبدا إلا بصورة استعداد المتجلى له" (*Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, p. 61).

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As for Self-disclosure as an active creative principle, the following passage provides an example of its use specifically from the perspective of the creation of the intellects and material beings. The technical terms used would reward closer analysis, but such an exercise will have to wait for another study. The general message, however, is first that God, through His aspect as the Encompassing Intellect, moves by *tajallī*, to give rise to form, which itself is the reception of an absolute. From this form are generated the souls and the (necessary) intellects, which are the progenitors of humanity. From here Muḥammad Wafā' goes on to restate the creative descent according to a neoplatonic model. Here the First Intellect is described as engendering the souls and intellects within the absolute Soul, or the spiritual world, giving rise to creation in all its varieties. The passage begins as follows:

> When the Essential Will turned towards creating the form of all-encompassing Knowledge, It originated through Self-disclosure, with respect to the form of intellected encompassment, absolute receptacles (to receive) the encompassing influences in various particular ways. That Will gave to the form of knowledge–through its receptacles for divine origination, in this respect–intellects as fathers and souls as mothers, like Adam and Eve.[26]

Thus the entity knowledge, through its essential disposition, receives from the exitentiating Will the specifics that are intellects and souls. Within the physical realm, each of these,

> established the form of itself and the multiplications of the individuals (constituting) its species within the comprehension of its genus, like the plants in their morphological differentiation and in their variety of taste, smell and touch, beyond what the human imagination may conceive.

Within this existential drama the First Intellect[27] gives rise to the absolute principle (in this case) of souls and intellects, located in the absolute Soul.[28] These principles function as the "seeds" for each particular subsequently created.

> If this is understood, then we say, according to similitude, that the First Intellect as the first fatherhood originates intellects and souls in the absolute Soul. Each of these (intellects and souls) is an absolute in itself, and the encompassing of their species and genera is like the seed of the plants. If it brings out its branches, leaves and fruit, then its particular form appears in its very fruit, which is its unique and ultimate level.

Thus the fruit, or the various things in creation, are in some sense the fulfillment of their principles in the Universal Soul. Muḥammad Wafā' then moves to the question of humanity, and its variety in intellect and soul. We saw above that the principles of intellect and soul are unitary and undifferentiated in the First Intellect, and that the fathers and mothers in the absolute Soul constitute differentiation. Our intellects may share a common source, but they have different fathers and mothers, representing different predispositions to receiving the creative Self-disclosure.

[26] Ibn ʿArabī uses the terms father and mother in much the same way, yet in a less philosophical context. W. Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge*, p. 142.

[27] The First, or Primary, Intellect in traditional neoplatonic philosophical cosmology is the first thing the Divine thought when It considered Itself. The resulting First Intellect is the primary creative principle.

[28] The Universal Soul is located below the First Intellect, from which it receives the creative emanation.

> When the fruit of the whole is the children of Adam, all of them (the fruits) are based upon intellect and soul, being the fruit of diversity. And the fathers and mothers which were from the divine Self-disclosure are the creators and originators. Every tree is (from) a seed of their fruit, a root of their tree. Thus, the world occurred in its form with innumerable faces, and inexhaustible (divine) help. So each intellect judges the world by the form which has occurred in it, like… the viewpoints of the creeds and the sects[29] according to the differences of their conceptions.

This is the existential blueprint for God's progressively differentiated Self-disclosure, yet also possible is a "perfect intellect" which offers a mystical return to the unified.

> In various spheres and horizons, each (sect) knows its own *ṣalāt* and praise, but the perfect intellect is the seed of the fruit of the encompassing tree of all roots and divisions. Vision does not know this face (of the perfect intellect), yet it knows all visions. As is said, "is it not He who encompasses all things?" (Q. 41:54).[30]

The world thus occurs in an endless variety, yet the perfect intellect knows these forms within itself. It knows these forms are not inherent, but derived ultimately from God's Will. This unitive perspective is possible only within the existential framework, based on divine Self-disclosure, laid out above by Muḥammad Wafā'.

The Pre-Existential and the Everlasting

A peculiar set of concepts which Muḥammad Wafā' develops is that of *azaliyya* (pre-existence) and *abadiyya* (everlastingness). Although he does not take up the wider philosophical or theological questions of time in his writings, Muḥammad Wafā' nevertheless addresses this pair of ideas on more than one occasion. In one instance, the two are distinguished categorically:

> Know that the encompassing Throne is that below which is the likeness of everything. It has two sides to it: a side of Omniscient-Merciful-Necessary-Pre-existence (أزلية واجبية رحمانية عالمية), and a side of All-Hearing-Compassionate-Possible-Everlastingness (رحيمية ممكنية سميعية ابدية). The first is by knowledge and the second is by perception (إدراك).[31]

These two sides might be awkwardly named, but the essential point is that the Pre-existential is distinct first because it is "necessary", while the Everlasting is of the "possible" realm. We have here the distinction between contingent beings; one class (intelligences and angels)

[29] Compare this to Ibn'Arabī's position that the servant sees God in the form of his own (predisposed) belief. *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, ed. A. 'Afīfī, Beirut, 1946, p. 121: "عبده ثم رفع الحجاب بينه وبين فرآه في صورة معتقده".

[30] Muḥammad Wafā', *Nafā'is al-'irfān*, al-Maktaba al-Azhariyya, Majāmī' 1076, Zakī 41313, fol 100a:
"لما توجهت الارادة الذاتيه لوضع صورة العلم المحيط بما لا يتناهي اخترع بفرض التجلى من وجه صورة الاحاطة العلميه قوابل كليات لموثرات احاطيات من وجوه متميزات بجهات مخصوصات فاعطت صورة العلم في قوابلها بالابداع الالهى من هذا (هذه: read) الوجوه عقولا آبا ونفوسا امهات كادم وحوي وكلا وضع صورة نفسه وتكثرات اشخاص نوعه فى احاطة جنسه كالنبات في تفريع اصله وتنويع ذوقه وشمه ولمسه الي غير ذلك مما يضيق عنه تصور عقل البشر وحدسه فاذا فهم هذا فنقول علي فرض المثلية ان العقل الاول فى الابيه الاوليه ابدع فى النفس الكليه عقولا و نفوسا فكان كلا منها كليا فى نفسه واحاطة نوعه وجنسه كحبة النبات اذا اخرجت غصنها وورقتها وابرزت ثمرتها كانت صورتها الخاصة لها فى عين ثمرتها وهي المرتبه الغاية لها فلما ان كانت بنو ادم ثمرة الشجرة الجامعة كان كل منها قايما بعقل ونفس وهي ثمرة وجه من الوجوه المتنوعه والابا والامهات التى كانت عن التجلي الالهي مخترعة ومبدعة وكل شجرة لب ثمرتها اصل شجرتها فحصل العالم بصورته فى وجوه لا يتناهي عددا و لا ينفد مددا فكل عقل يحكم علي العالم بصورة ما حصل فيه... كوجوه الملل والنحل على اختلاف تصوراتها وكذلك فى ساير الافلاك والافاق كل قد علم صلاته و تسبيحه و العقل الكامل هو لب ثمرة الشجرة المحيطه فى جامع الاصول وكل فصل مفصول وهذا هو الوجه الذي لا تدركه الابصار وهو يدرك الابصار وكما قال الا انه بكل شى محيط".

[31] Muḥammad Wafā', *Sha'ā'ir al-'irfān*, Dār al-Kutub, fol 33b.

is necessary, while the other (sublunary bodies subject to decay) is contingent[32]. As is clear from the other adjectives provided, God "knows" everything before creation, and He "hears" everything in time after creation. The second side of the Throne, the contingent, is fully within time. The same kind of temporal/existential distinction is made elsewhere by our author. We read: "Pre-existence is encompassing in oneness, while Everlasting is encompassing in plurality… The first is by necessity while the second is by possibility."[33] Pre-existence is thus understood to be in the realm of God's necessary attributes, while Everlastingness is the corollary present as temporalized individualization.

In a further elaboration, Muḥammad Wafā' introduces an inverse relationship. He describes each element as a dimension of the other:

> What is interior to the Pre-existent is what is manifest in the Everlasting; and likewise the opposite. None other than the servant appeared in the Everlasting, yet his opposite was hidden in him. None other than a Lord appeared in the Pre-existent, while that which was hidden was the form of the first (i.e. the servant). Thus, that which appears because it was hidden, was hidden because it appeared.[34]

These brief remarks are the extent of the substantive discussion in the sources. However, there are a few observations we can make. It is clear that the two aspects, the Pre-existent and the Everlasting, function as the necessary and the possible (or divine and human) realms. The aim of the last passage however is to highlight the link between the two. The created servant appears in the Everlasting created realm, but he is, at the same time, the possessor of "his opposite". This opposite is an existential opposite, a Lordly potential. Likewise, the Lord's standing in Pre-existence contains within it its opposite, a potential servanthood. This elaboration goes beyond the philosophical treatment–at least that developed by Neoplatonists like Ibn Sīnā. The linking, or resolution, of the two aspects represent Muḥammad Wafā''s turn once again to the "unity of being" for perspective.

Spiritual Anthropology

For Muḥammad Wafā', the nature of humanity must be understood as at once having its source in the Divine, yet being a manifestation of one particular aspect of God: the Name al-Raḥmān (the Merciful). Like Ibn ʿArabī, Muḥammad Wafā' attributes to Adam a share in the Divine Names. In the *Shaʿā'ir al-ʿirfān* we are told that in the spiritual realm, before creation of the material world, Adam was not simply taught the names of things, but was himself the product of Divine Names: "Know that humanity is a collection of the Lordly Names which were known by Adam in the spiritual realm of Malakūt, and which contain both essential realities and particulars, and thus are the strongest links (رقائق) (to God)…"[35]

[32] See S.H. Nasr, *An Introduction of Islamic Cosmological Doctrines*, p. 198.

[33] Muḥammad Wafā', *Shaʿā'ir al-ʿirfān*, Dār al-Kutub, fol 50b.

[34] Muḥammad Wafā', *Shaʿā'ir al-ʿirfān*, Dār al-Kutub, fol 38b. See also fol 50b.

[35] Muḥammad Wafā', *Shaʿā'ir al-ʿirfān*, Dār al-Kutub, fol 27a, b. "الذي بطن في الازل هو ظهر في الابد والعكس فما ظهر في الابد غير عبد وبطن فيه عكسه وما ظهر في الازل غير رب والذي بطن شكل الاول فما ظهر من حيث بطن بطن من حيث ظهر"

Ibn ʿArabī, in a different context, also assigns Divine Names to Adam: "God created Adam upon His own form. Hence He ascribed to him all His Most Beautiful Names."[36]

Muḥammad Wafā' goes on to single out the name al-Raḥmān as the source of humanity's spiritual reality. First, the act of creating is tied to al-Raḥmān: "Knowledge and the known, creation and the created, origination (تكوين) and becoming (كون); the first pair is (engendered) by God, the second by al-Raḥmān, and the third is by al-Ḥaqq"[37]. However, not only is al-Raḥmān the source of creation and the created, it is the Divine aspect which is immediately accessible and linked to mankind. We are told,

> God is the unseen of all things, and everything is identical (عينه) with Him… for the absolute Unseen only appears as identical (to something), either by Self-disclosure or act or likeness or composition… "Your Lord creates and chooses what He wills; they have no choice in the matter." (Q. 28:68) But when the lights of the knowledge of (divine) Presence burn the perceiving sense, it sees the unseen of all things in its essence (i.e. God). "Say: None in heaven or on earth knows the unseen except God." (Q. 27:65) Humanity is the couch (سرير) of al-Raḥmān; in gnosis is the extinction of man and the subsistence of al-Raḥmān. Al-Raḥmān is the source (عين) of the unseen of everything…[38]

Thus, by its faculty of gnosis, humanity may see the unseen. It is by being the couch of al-Raḥmān (i.e. the receiver of the divine Self-disclosure) that mankind attains this perspective. It is as a mode of al-Raḥmān (the Eternal, the Necessary) that the individual is more than simply one who is in heaven or on earth (the created, the possible).

This same spiritual anthropology is echoed in Muḥammad Wafā''s comments on the veils of creation. He describes a striping away which leads from humanity to the Divine. A passage from the *Shaʿā'ir* makes on this point:

> The interior (باطن) of the heart is the mirror of al-Ḥaqq and the site of sincerity; and he to whom his Lord makes Himself known his heart is turned toward Him (قلبه انقلب إليه); and in it (his heart) are Self-disclosed the lights of His truth, and in it are confirmed (the meanings) of the signs of His creation.[39]

In the section quoted, the essential connection between an individual and God is recast in physical terms. The perception of this Divine presence within oneself allows an understanding which is beyond the normal perspective of a created being. It is by the existential link between the Divine and humanity–usually described as a process of Self-disclosure–that one may share in God's knowledge. This dynamic appears to go both ways, that is, downwards into creation, as well as upwards. We read: "the heart of the gnostic

[36] W. Chittick, *The Self-Disclosure of God*, p. 276.

[37] Muḥammad Wafā', *Shaʿā'ir al-ʿirfān*, Dār al-Kutub, fol 41b.

[38] Muḥammad Wafā', *Shaʿā'ir al-ʿirfān*, Dār al-Kutub, fol 48a: "الله غيب كل شي و كل شي عينه... فان الغيب المطلق لا يظهر ابدا الا بعين اما بالتجلي و اما بالفعل اما بالتمثل واما بالتركيب... ومتي حرق نور العلم اللدني نظر (ز.بصر) الحس المدرك راى غيب كل شي في عينه قل لا يعلم من في السنوات والارض الغيب الا الله والانسان سرير الرحمن وفي العرفان فنا الانسان وبقا الرحمن والرحمن عين غيب كل شي".

The term *ʿayn* may signal a number of different meanings, including eye, entity, essence, source, or "identical with". The tension between extinction and subsistence is a classical sufi distinction.

[39] Muḥammad Wafā', *Shaʿā'ir al-ʿirfān*, al-Maktaba al-Azhariyya, fol 154a.

is the Pen of al-Raḥmān, by which He writes upon the Tablet of possibility what is, and what has been".[40] Although brief, this passage clearly points to the heart as a tool used in the process of creation, that is, the process of divine Self-disclosure. Note also the association once more between al-Raḥmān and creation.

This essential link between God and humanity has implications for the latter's self-knowledge. In short, humanity's knowledge of self is also knowledge of the Divine:

> He who finds the reality (حقيقة) of God's secret has found his heart, and he who knows it (his heart) knows his Lord, and he who is ignorant of it (should know) "there is no power except in God". (Q.2:165).[41]

This is of course an often repeated idea in the work of Ibn ʿArabī, as it is for Muḥammad Wafā'. However, knowledge may be described in a rather different way. Muḥammad Wafā' more than once speaks of the individual as the source of his own knowledge: "What unveils to you is your own known (things), from you and to you–at every level according to its measure…"[42] In the same vein is the following comment on gnostics and verifiers:

> The gnostic is identical (عين) with his gnosis, and the verifier is the reality of what he realizes (المحقق حقيقة ما حققه). Commensurate with the witnessing of perfection and completion is the love of the witness for what he witnesses. Commensurate with the sincerity of love is the realization of the lover in his beloved. Commensurate with realization is the manifestation of the Realized by virtue of what is realized to him by the source and by the sign. God is All-knowing and All-encompassing. It is He, in as much as He is it (هو بما هو هو هو)…[43]

Here the initial assertion that the verifier is himself the source of verification is subsequently shifted to point to the Divine as the ultimate source. According to this later emphasis, the gnostic is the source of his gnosis in as much as it is manifested to him through his sincerity of witnessing and love. In other words, it is by the fact that God may be found in himself that the gnostic or verifier may find his "own" gnosis and reality. The last sentence of the passage may therefore be better understood–be it awkwardly sounding–as "He (the gnostic) is Him, in as much as He is him".

[40] Muḥammad Wafā', *Nafā'is al-ʿirfān*, al-Maktaba al-Azhariyya, fol 98b.

[41] Muḥammad Wafā', *Sha'ā'ir al-ʿirfān*, Dār al-Kutub, fol 22a.

[42] Muḥammad Wafā', *Kitāb al-masāmiʿ al-rabbāniyya*, Dār al-Kutub, fol 2b:
"لا ينكشف لك الا معلومك منك واليك في كل مقام بحسبه" unclear
Al-Fārābī echoes this idea (which doubtless had earlier Greek roots) when he says: "In the intellect, the observing thing and the things observed are one." G. Anawati, *Études de philosophie musulmane*, Paris, 1974, p. 187.
"ونقول إن في العقل الشيء الناظر والأشياء المنظور إليها هي واحدة".

[43] ʿAlī Wafā', *Kitāb al-masāmiʿ al-rabbāniyya*, Dār al-Kutub, fol 50a:
"العارف عين معروفه والمحقق حقيقة ما حققه وعلى قدر شهود الكمال والتكميل تكون محبة الشاهد لمشهوده وعلي قدر صدق المحبة يكون تحقق المحب بمحبوبه وعلى قدر التحقق يكون ظهور المتحقق بحكم ما تحقق به عينا واثرا والله بكل شيء عليم انه بكل شيء محيط وهو هو بما هو هو".
The last phrase appears also in the writings of ʿAlī Wafā'. See his *Kitāb al-waṣāyā*, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, no 1359, fols 48a, 104b.

Cosmology

The question of how existence, in all its forms, is organized is important to any mystical or philosophical speculation. The ultimate order of things provides a structure within which all else must operate. In Muḥammad Wafā''s thinking however, cosmology is much more than a simple accounting of stars and spheres; it includes the human being.

As we saw earlier, Muḥammad Wafā' was no stranger to the Neoplatonic understanding of the universe which was headed by the First Intellect, followed by an absolute Soul.[44] However, this cosmological system was not the one earnestly or systematically adopted by him. Instead, he focused on a cosmology which recognized three worlds–the world of omnipotence (*jabarūt*), the world of sovereignty (*malakūt*) and the corporeal world (*mulk*). Despite similarity in terminology, this was not exactly the system adopted by Ibn ʿArabī, since the latter held, in at least one important discussion, *jabarūt* to be an intermediary world between the worlds of *mulk* and *malakūt*.[45] It is interesting to note, however, that al-Qāshānī's definitions of the three worlds, a century later, are in line with those of Muḥammad Wafā'.[46] As we shall see, Muḥammad Wafā' has a number of ideas play out in his descriptions of the cosmos.

In one cosmological model Muḥammad Wafā' describes a universe, each part of which has its own ruler. The focus of this model is, however, the human form which becomes a microcosm of the larger cosmology. We are told,

> The world is divided into two: the world of spirits (أرواح) and the world of bodies. Then it is divided into four branches: spirits of prophethood, angelic spirits (أرواح ملكية), spirits of jinn, and the Adamic forms. The First Intellect is the father of the spirits of prophethood, like Adam is the father of the human forms (أبو الأشباح), and likewise Gabriel[47] is the father of the angelic spirits, like Iblīs (Satan) is the father of the jinn spirits. All that is of human form has a prophetic spiritual form manifesting to it and rising from it, commanding it and forbidding it, inspiring it, improving it and making it pious. To each Adamic form there are two associates (قرين), one is angelic and the other jinn-like. These two struggle, and if the angelic triumphs over the jinn-like, then clearness is established in the water by the falling of the sediment, and the commanding prophetic spirit rises, and its image appears in him/it by manifestation–like the shape of the seer appears in the mirror. If it conquers the jinn, then its affinity is close to the angelic, but if it is far, then it is Satanic and muddiness that prevails. Sight is then veiled and communication is

[44] In all the Wafā' writings however, there is no explicit mention of Aristotle or the Arab and Persian philosophers (e.g. al-Fārābī, d. 339/950, Ibn Sīnā, d. 429/1037) who used this cosmology, which saw the divine emanation take form as a series of spheres or intellects. For a concise description of this cosmolgy see P. Heath, *Allegory and Philosophy in Avicenna (Ibn Sīnā)*, Philadelphia, 1992, p. 37.

[45] Ibn'Arabī, *Iṣṭilāḥāt al-ṣūfiyya*, p. 243 (text appended to Jurjānī's *al-Taʿrīfāt*, Cairo, 1938) describes Jabarūt thus: "According to Abū Ṭālib (al-Makkī), it is the world of Might (عظمة). According to most it is the median world." This "most" would include Ibn'Arabī himself. In this model *jabarūt* functioned as a *barzakh*–and Imaginal realm–between *mulk* (the apparent world) and *malakūt* (the unseen world of meanings). See Chittick's *The Self-Disclosure of God*, p. 259-260, and *The Sufi Path of Knowledge*, p. 282. Abū al-Ḥāmid al-Ghazzālī (d. 505/1111) held this view also. See Tj. De Boer, L. Gardet, *EI*^{2}, *s.v.* "'Ālam", 1:349-352, and F. Jabre, *Essai sur le lexique de Ghazali*, Beirut, 1985, p. 46, 256, 257.

[46] Al-Qāšānī, *A Glossary of Technical Terms*, entries 284, 285, 286.

[47] In the *Nafā'is al-ʿirfān* text, Gabriel is replaced by Jabarūt.

> cut, for "he to whom God does not give light, has none" (Q. 24:40). This Commanding Spirit is that which will settle the account of the servant on Judgement Day, and will reward him according to his acts, since, "your soul suffices to make an account against you" (Q. 17:14). He who knows himself, knows his Lord.[48]

This model–which is perhaps as soteriological as it is cosmological–has as its ultimate concern the fate of each "Adamic form", that is, the individual soul. In this system the First Intellect engenders the spirits of prophecy, which function as warners and moral aids to the soul. Despite this help, the soul becomes the battleground for the forces of Satan and those of Gabriel. The final lines of this passage, evoking the image of one's own soul standing as witness, provide a novel perspective on the oft-repeated hadith "he who knows himself knows his Lord". The implication is that if one wants to know God the keeper-of-accounts, one need only know oneself.

All things may be divided between the necessary and the possible. The first category is engendered by God's Command, while the second is brought about by His aspect as Creator.

> (1) The Spirit of Command (روح الأمر) is from the treasury of the world of divine Power (قدرة), and in it the unseen of the Necessary determines itself through Self-disclosure of the beautiful Names and lofty Attributes… and the archangels by the Throne and the Seat and the Tablet and the Pen…
> (2) The Spirit of Creation (روح الخلق) is from the treasury of the world of (divine) Wisdom, and by it the bodily forms and spiritual shapes are determined; … and these two are Mulk and Malakūt, and the world and the hereafter, and what is in them of things heard, seen and felt.[49]

Here Muḥammad Wafā' has divided the cosmos into two, the necessary realm of God's Names and Attributes, angels etc., and the realm of possible created beings–whether seen or unseen. The lower realm consists of Mulk and Malakūt, while the higher will elsewhere be identified as Jabarūt. In a brief, but clearer, distinction between the three worlds, Muḥammad Wafā' writes,

> The world of command, the world of creation, and the world of becoming–these are Jabarūt, Mulk and Malakūt; charity, faith and submission; the reality of certainty, the eye of certainty, and the knowledge of certainty; need, poverty and needfulness. These three levels are the beginning, the end and the middle.[50]

Here the division of worlds is extended to mirror certain virtues, to distinguish between modes of spiritual insight. Another brief statement ties the three worlds directly to specific divine aspects:

> The worlds are three: the world of Mulk, which accepts (قابل) divine Acts only; the world of Malakūt, which accepts the divine Self-disclosures; and the world of Jabarūt, which accepts the divine Realities. The first is by Act, the second by Attribute and the third by Essence.[51]

[48] Muḥammad Wafā', *Sha'ā'ir al-'irfān*, al-Maktaba al-Azhariyya, fol 154a, b, and Muḥammad Wafā', *Nafā'is al-'irfān*, al-Maktaba al-Azhariyya, fol 76b.

[49] Muḥammad Wafā', *Nafā'is al-'irfān*, al-Maktaba al-Azhariyya, fol 78a:
"روح الامر من كنز عالم القدرة وفيه يتعين غيب الوجوب بالتجلي من اسماء حسني وصفات علي ومراتب اجل و... ملكيات الملا الاعلا بالعرش والكرسى واللوح والقلم... وروح الخلق من كنز عالم الحكمة وبه يتعين ما فيه من الاشباح الروحانيه والصور الجسمانية... وهما الملك والملكوت والدنيا والاخره وما فيها من مسموعات ومبصورات ومحسوسات".

[50] Muḥammad Wafā', *Sha'ā'ir al-'irfān*, al-Maktaba al-Azhariyya, fol 150a.

[51] Muḥammad Wafā', *Nafā'is al-'irfān*, al-Maktaba al-Azhariyya, fol 76b.

The model here represents a simplified emanative scheme. The lowest world, that of Mulk, is the realm which exists by–or receives–only God's Act. Above that, Malakūt has received the less formal Self-disclosures, and above that in turn the world of Jabarūt represents the first step of emanation, that of the divine realities communicated essentially. Elsewhere the point is much the same, even though the terminology is reshuffled. In his *Kitāb al-azal*, Muḥammad Wafā' writes: "Jabarūt is by the Essence and Attributes; the Malakūt is by the Names and the Named; the Mulk is by the tenuities and the moments."[52] Here the Attributes are placed at the level of the Essence, with the successive level of Malakūt representing the Names and the Named. That the Attributes have now moved up to the Jabarūt signals an inconsistency, and the exact difference between the Names and the Attributes is not clear, yet the scheme of I. unknowable essence, II. general particularization, III. specific entities, remains clear.

Elsewhere Muḥammad Wafā' supplies a more detailed account of the worlds, one which introduces their constituent elements. Of the three worlds,

> … the first is the world of Jabarūt, which is the divine world, the second is the Malakūt, which is the spiritual world, and the third is Mulk, which is the world of formal soul. The first in Jabarūt is the divine world, and what reaches it does so at two bows'-length[53]. The second world is that of Malakūt which is the world of spirit, and what reaches it is "gabrielness" acquired through angelic inspiration descending upon the heart. "The sure Spirit came down with it to your heart" (Q. 26:193-194). The third is Mulk, which is the world of pillars (of the physical world), of the engendered. And what reaches it is the jinn, by the righteous Command…
>
> The world of Mulk is centered in the body encompassing the four elements, which are water, fire, earth, and wind, from which are born the minerals, the plants, the animals and the (practical) reason used for the lives of people. The world of Malakūt is centered in the separated Spirit[54], which encompasses the four substances: the intellect, the soul, the creative faculty, and the commanding Spirit. Present through these are the Preserved Tablet, the Pen, the Throne and the Seat. The world of Jabarūt is self-standing by encompassing the absolute Being, distinguished by the four (divine) realities: Knowledge, Life, true Existence and the encompassing Face–(all of which) descended (from this realm) by the Attribute, the Name, Light and Self-disclosure…[55]

This description of the three worlds presents a progression from the most elemental, up to the spiritual substances, finally ascending to the eternal attributes of the Divine. There is here also an association of specific figures with each world: the Prophet (by two-bows'

[52] Muḥammad Wafā', *Kitāb al-azal*, p. 74.

[53] Two bows'-length is either an allusion to Gabriel communicating revelation to the prophet Muḥammad (Q. 53:9), or, as is more likely in this context, Muḥammad's direct encounter with God.

[54] That is, the divine Spirit, after it has been separated from the One, and has taken distinct (non-material) forms.

[55] Muḥammad Wafā', *Nafā'is al-'irfān*, al-Maktaba al-Azhariyya, fol 95a, b:
"الاول الجبروت وهو العالم الالهي والثاني الملكوت وهو العالم الروحاني والثالث الملك وهو العالم النفساني الصورى الاول بالجبروت وهو عالم الالهيه والحاصل فيه الذي كان قاب قوسين والعالم الثاني الملكوت وهو عالم الروح والحاصل فيه الجبرياليه وهو المستفاد بالوحي الملكى المتنزل عن القلب نزل به الروح الامين على قلبك و الثالث الملك وهو عالم الاركان والمتولدات والحاصل فيه القرين الجان بالامر الصالح… عالم الملك مركوز فى الجسم المحيط بالاجسام الاربع البسايط وهي الماء والنار والتراب والهوا المتولد عنها المعدن والنبات والحيوان والعقل المعيشى من شخص الانسان وعالم الملكوت مركوز فى الروح المفارق وهو المحيط بالجواهر الاربعه العقل والنفس والقوة الفعاله وروح الامر الموجود عنهم (؟) اللوح والقلم والعرش والكرسى وعالم الجبروت قيوم فى احاطة الوجود المطلق المتميز بالحقايق الاربعة العلم والحياة والوجود الحق والوجه المحيط المتنزل بالصفة والاسم والنور والتجلى"

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length) with Jabarūt, the angel Gabriel (by "gabrielness") in Malakūt, and the elemental jinn with the lower world of Mulk.

The three worlds are also represented by unique kinds of angels. We read of the "pure illuminated angels and cherubs" of the Jabarūt; the angels Gabriel, Michael, Isrāfīl and ʿIzrāʾīl of the spiritual world that is the Malakūt; and the "earthly angels, the souls of the spheres and the knowing messengers" to be found in the world of the four elements, that is, the world of Mulk[56]. In marked distinction from this angelology, Muḥammad Wafā' elsewhere simply says, "Gabriel is the Jabarūt, the eye of all unseen of the Godhead… and Michael is the Malakūt, the eye of all the spiritual, angelic, soulful and imaginal shapes…"[57] Thus the archangels may have a metonymic function, each representing an entire realm.

A particularly interesting element of Muḥammad Wafā''s understanding of the three worlds is his description of the connections between them. In Peripatetic psychology the five bodily senses are accompanied by a "common sense" (حس مشترك), which is the cognitive faculty lying behind the five senses. Muḥammad Wafā' introduces this sense as the link (*barzakh*) between the world of Mulk and Malakūt. More significantly, he describes a related link, between Malakūt and Jabarūt, which he calls the "common intellect" (عقل مشترك).[58] In a passage describing these links we read,

> The possible is divided into the visible (ملكي) and the invisible (ملكوتي) realms. The visible is divided into six parts: the five senses[59] and the "common sense". The invisible is divided into six parts: estimation (متوهمة), imagination, preserving, remembering, reflection and the "common intellect". The "common sense" is the link between the visible and invisible. The "common intellect" is the link between the invisible and the Jabarūt.
>
> Know that the five senses, along with the "common sense", are the six days in which God made creation. They are known as "days" because they are the lights of elucidation, the clarification of vagueness and the revealing of the unseen. They are the keys to the heavens and earth.
>
> Thus, seeing (بصر) is the key to the treasure-house of visible things, and their light and elucidation. And (so are) hearing, … smelling, … tasting, … touching. The "common sense" is all of these things, their presence and preservation, in the state of the absence of their original sources.[60]
>
> Imagination is their treasure-house and the utmost occasion of their pure form. This is the clear horizon, and the furthest Lote-tree.[61] Thus the invisible lights (of the unseen world) are face to face with these visible lights.

[56] Muḥammad Wafā', *Nafāʾis al-ʿirfān*, al-Maktaba al-Azhariyya, fol 81b.

[57] Muḥammad Wafā', *Shaʿāʾir al-ʿirfān*, al-Maktaba al-Azhariyya, fol 143b.

[58] This term seems to be an innovation of Muḥammad Wafā's. On the philosophical term *muštarak*, see A.-M. Goichon, *Lexique*, p. 70, and Ibn Sīnā, *Livre des directives et remarques*, trans. A.-M. Goichon, Paris, 1951, p. 317, fn. 5.

[59] According to Ibn Sīnā, these would be the external senses of the perceptive faculty of the Animal soul. Ibn Sīnā, *al-Išārāt wa al-tanbihāt*, ed. S. Dunyā, Cairo, 1992, II:380-383.

[60] That is, the "common sense" synthesizes and organizes the data from the five senses.

[61] The clear horizon (Q. 81:23) recalls Gabriel's revelation to Muḥammad, while the Lote-tree is the *sidrat al-muntahā* (Q. 53:14), which is the limit of the Prophet's ascension to God.

> These twelve lights are the realities of the preparedness of the tablet. All of its levels are accepting of the emanated forms from the Pen. This is the "rational faculty" (القوة الناطقة). God has elucidated this in the transcript that is humanity. So he who knows himself knows his Lord. He is the throne, under which is found the likeness of all things.[62]

The definition given here of "common sense" is straightforward. This sense, along with that of the "common intellect", as stated at the end of the quotation, constitute the "rational faculty". The "common intellect" operates in parallel to "common sense", but at the point between Malakūt and Jabarūt. The "rational faculty", according to Ibn Sīnā is the highest part of the soul, and receives from the eternal Active Intellect[63]. Yet this is not Muḥammad Wafā''s final word on the matter.

Elsewhere, to these two linking senses is added a third, the "choice connection" (وسط مختار). This connection links Jabarūt (here representing a further set of abilities) to the absolute Necessary. This set is described not with philosophical terminology, but rather with traditional mystical terms.

> There are three worlds: the world of Mulk, which is a place from the viewpoint of sensation by the five senses. The "common sense" is the link (برزخ) between the Mulk and Malakūt, which is the second world. This is a place from the viewpoint of the intellect (عقل), which is the five interior senses, like estimation (وهمية), imagination, preserving, remembering and thinking. The "common intellect" is the link between Malakūt and Jabarūt. Jabarūt is the third world, and is the place of the five comprehensions (احاطات)[64]: the heart (قلب), the inner heart (فؤاد), the spirit, the secret, the unseen secret; and the "choice connection" is the link between the absolute Necessary and Jabarūt. This "choice connection" is the Throne of al-Raḥmān, hidden in it by Omnipotence and appearing from it by Self-disclosure; and it acts without restriction by choice because absolute Necessity effuses from the Essence.[65]

[62] Muḥammad Wafā', *Kitāb al-azal*, p. 60:
"فالممكن ينقسم إلى ملكي وملكوتي. والملكي ينقسم إلي ستة أقسام وهي: المشاعر الخمس، والحس المشترك. والملكوتي ينقسم إلى ستة أقسام: المتوهمة، والمتخيلة، والحافظة، والذاكرة، والفكرية، والعقل المشترك. فالحس المشترك برزخ بين الملك والملكوت. والعقل المشترك برزخ بين الملكوت والجبروت واعلم أن المشاعر الخمس، والحس المشترك هم الأيام الستة التي خلق الله فيهن السموات والأرض وسموا بأيام لأنهم أنوار بيان وإيضاح إبهام (here as per Azhar 105b) وانكشاف غيب وهم مقاليد السموات والإرض والمقلد هو المفتاح البصر : مفتاح خزائن المرئيات، ونورها، و بيانها. والسمع مفتاح خزائن المسموعات، ونورها. والشم ... والذوق ... وكذلك اللمس. والحس المشترك جامعها، وحاضرها، وحافظها في حال غيبة أعيانها. والخيال خزائنها، ومنتهى حاصل صورها الروحانية المجردة. وهذا هو الأفق المبين، وسدرة المنتهى. وكذلك الأنوار الملكوتية بإزاء هذه الأنوار الملكية. وهذه الأنوار الاثني عشر حقائق استعداد اللوح. وجوامع مراتبه القابلة للصور المفاضة عن القلم، وهي القوة الناطقة. وقد بين الله بيان ذلك في النسخة الإنسانية الأدمية. فمن عرف نفسه فقد عرف ربه، وهو العرش، الذي تحته مثال كل شيء".

[63] This is Ibn Sīnā's position, distinct from that of al-Fārābī. See R. Walzer, "Al-Fārābī's Theory of Prophecy and Divination", in his *Greek Into Arabic: Essays on Islamic Philosophy*, Oxford, 1963, p. 216-218.

[64] These comprehensions equate with the concept of the *laṭā'if* (subtle substances) of earler sufi thought. These substances –as spiritual rather than physical or psychic faculties–function as organs linking the human and divine worlds. Details of the definitions of these substances vary; see H. Landolt, "Stages of God-cognition and the Praise of Folly according to Najm-i Rāzī (d. 1256)", *Sufi* 47, 2000; N. Isfarāynī, *Le Révélateur des mystères*, ed. and trans. H. Landolt, Paris, 1986, p. 56.; "Two Types of Mystical Thought in Muslim Iran", *MuslWorld* 68, 1978, p. 196; and J. Elias, *The Throne Carrier of God*, Albany, 1993, p. 157-160. The *laṭā'if* may also be found in the model of creative divine emanation; see *ibid*, p. 72-75.

[65] Muḥammad Wafā', *Nafā'is al-'irfān*, al-Maktaba al-Azhariyya, fol 72a, b.

Thus the "common intellect" is the cognitive faculty behind the internal senses, leading to the world of Jabarūt. This Jabarūt itself is then linked to the Divine by the "choice connection"–another term which Muḥammad Wafā' appears to have coined. This connection is equated with the function of the Throne of Mercy, although in the previous quotation it appears at a lower level. It is noteworthy that the proviso is made that it "acts without restriction and by choice". This is probably a nod to the Qur'anic vision of God as unfettered and omnipotent, as distinct from the philosophical vision which often denied God any choice in the matter of emanation. Perhaps more interesting though, is this term "choice connection". In the previous quotation we met the "rational faculty" which seemed to be the highest human point; yet here the "choice connection", located beyond a further set of (mystical) senses, seems to represent that point. This connection functions much as the *ʿaql qudsī* did for Ibn Sīnā; an intelligence which is described as having ready access to the Active Intellect.[66] Significantly, Muḥammad Wafā''s formulation presents a dimension beyond the Neoplatonic "rational soul". This development (which is more anthropological than it is cosmological) shows us where Muḥammad Wafā''s true intellectual allegiance lies. That is, he is above all a mystical writer, and thus the highest human dimensions are described using sufi terminology. It would be fair to conclude that Muḥammad Wafā' uses philosophical models and language as far as they may be of service to him in presenting his own mystical vision.[67]

Thus this "cosmology" is not a physical model of the universe. For Muḥammad Wafā' the structure of existence may be made sense of in a number of different ways. We saw earlier in this section that the lower worlds represent possible existence, while the upper represents necessary existence. This is a philosophical perspective, yet we also saw a theological one. There Jabarūt was associated with God's Realities and Essence, with Malakūt presenting God's Attributes, and Mulk the divine Acts. We were elsewhere presented with a rather linear perspective which simply presented the lowest world as the material realm, the median as spiritual realm, and the higher as the divine realm.

Spiritual Direction

Although this study has not presented the reader with a historical portrait of Muḥammad Wafā' or of his sufi order, it may be noted generally that the Wafā'iyya was quite elitist in character. A quick survey of the writings of Muḥammad Wafā' shows a distinct lack of the prescriptive counsel one might expect from the founder of a mystical order. Instead he seems to have nurtured for himself an inspired and mysterious image, one which did not much care for the details of spiritual direction.

[66] A.-M. Goichon, *Lexique*, p. 230. The polished soul (*sirr*) looking at the Majesty of holiness (*janāb al-qudus*) is similar. See Ibn Sīnā, *al-Išārāt wa al-tanbihāt*, IV: 92.

[67] It is probably no coincidence that the earlier discussion of the rational faculty and its position as the highest human point was to be found in his most "philosophical" text, the *Kitāb al-azal*.

Nevertheless, help for the aspirant on the sufi way is not wholly absent in his writings. Muḥammad Wafā' was, after all, striking out from the Shādhiliyya on an independent course, which necessitated at least some attention to the development of aspirants. One short work, *Maqāmāt al-saniyya li al-sāda al-ṣūfiyya* (The Sublime Stations of the Sufis), presents brief definitions of mystical vocabulary followed by cursory elaborations.[68] The tone and form suggest this is a pedagogical text, a kind of manual intended for the novice. However, this kind of writing within the œuvre of Muḥammad Wafā' is a remarkable exception. The composition in question covers only nine folios of the approximately three-hundred folios his writings occupy.

Yet this is not to say that all of Muḥammad Wafā''s writing is speculative and abstract. At the beginning of the *Shaʿā'ir al-ʿirfān* the reader is provided with basic definitions of a number of mystical terms:

> *Servanthood* fixes the command of Lordship. *Oneness* is the last level of with-ness (معية) … *Humility* is the quieting of the soul along the paths of pre-existence… *Asceticism* is leaving all things (ترك الكل)… *Courtesy* (أدب) is standing in the provisions of the moment. *Certainty* is the absence of indecision. *Remembrance* (ذكر) is the summoning of the remembered… *Perspicacity* (فراسة) is the extraction of the unseen from the seen. *Extinction* is consuming everything in God. *Persistence* is the fixing of everything by God.[69]

Beyond these rudimentary pronouncements, we do find other passages which treat some of the basic distinctions an aspirant should be made aware of. In the following, the categories of spiritual men are described.

> For the ascetics, their sciences are embodied in their acts. For the sufis, their sciences are embodied in their states. For the gnostics, their acts are embodied in their gnosis. For the verifiers, their states are embodied in their realities. Thus the ascetics find what they know by what they do; and the sufis find what they verify by the traits they assume[70]; and the gnostics find what they do by what they know; and the verifiers find what they assume as traits by that which they are verified of.[71]

The distinctions being made here are rather straightforward, adhering to a spiritual hierarchy which privileges realities (*ḥaqā'iq*) and gnosis over temporary states and acts. In the same line of discussion–that of the basic categories of mystics–Muḥammad Wafā' elsewhere writes:

> The face of the gnostic is a mirror of the Self-disclosures of known Attributes. The verifier is the model of what is verified to him. And the sufi has assumed the traits, which are related

[68] *Al-Maqāmāt al-saniyya li-l-sāda al-ṣūfiyya wa hiya risāla li-l-sayyid Muḥammad Wafā'*, al-Maktaba al-Azhariyya, Majāmīʿ 1076, Zakī: 41313.

[69] Muḥammad Wafā', *Shaʿā'ir al-ʿirfān*, al-Maktaba al-Azhariyya, fols 129b-130a.

[70] A popular hadith among sufi writers is one attributed to the Prophet: "Assume the character traits of God!" See W. Chittick, *Sufi Path of Knowledge*, p. 286-288.

[71] Muḥammad Wafā', *Nafā'is al-ʿirfān*, al-Maktaba al-Azhariyya, fol 87a:

"الزهاد اندرجت علومهم فى اعمالهم والصوفيه اندرجت علومهم فى احوالهم والعارفون اندرجت اعمالهم فى معارفهم والمحققون اندرجت احوالهم فى حقايقهم فالزهاد وجدوا ما علموا فيما عملوا والصوفيه وجدوا ما تحققوا فى ما تخلقوا والعارفون وجدوا ما عملوا فيما عرفوا والمحققون وجدوا ما تخلقوا فيما تحققوا".

(attributed) to the object of his desire in sanctification. Union is the source of his perfection, occurring only with the melting together of opposites, which is impossible normally and conceptually.[72]

These discussions of categories are rather brief, and they are noticeably missing the expected advice as to how the novice is to make head-way on the spiritual path. It seems that Muḥammad Wafā''s advice, on this level, is restricted to making observations such as "the knower (عالم) realizes al-Ḥaqq from the side of creation, but the gnostic (عارف) realizes creation from the side of al-Ḥaqq".[73] The apparent lack of concern exhibited for the spiritual advancement of lowly aspirants is striking, especially from the perspective of a hopeful founder of a new sufi order.

However, it should not be surprizing that Muḥammad Wafā' presents some interesting speculations on the deeper mystical aspects of the subject. He characterizes the relationship between the spiritual aspirant and the master as one of existential union. This union even comes to mirror that between the servant and God. To start with, he ties together the essence of the aspirant, his spiritual guide and his Lord.

He who has no teacher, has no protector; and to him who has no protector Satan draws near.[74]

He who knows himself knows his shaykh.

He who has not found his shaykh has not found his heart, and he who has not found his heart has lost his Lord.[75]

The details of the presence and function of the shaykh are also described. This relationship is rather mysterious, but seems to centre on the attributes of the shaykh. The description runs as follows:

Your shaykh is he who causes you to hear when he is silent. He makes you oblivious when he speaks. He causes you to be lost when he finds (God in ecstasy); and he causes you to find (God) when he is silent. Your shaykh is he who informs you by his speech, and he verifies you by his (spiritual) state, and he establishes you by his vanishing, and effaces you by his perfection…[76]

The point that the aspirant is existentially linked to the attributes of the shaykh is clear. Elsewhere, Muḥammad Wafā' describes this relationship as extending beyond the visible world. We read: "The heart of the aspirant is the house of his teacher, and his body is

[72] Muḥammad Wafā', *Nafā'is al-'irfān*, al-Maktaba al-Azhariyya, fol 84a, b:
"وجه العارف مراة تجليات صفات معروفة و المحقق عنوان ما تحقق به الصوفى هو المتخلق بالاخلاق المضافة الي مطلوبه بالتقديس والجمع عين كماله لا يحصل الا مع وجود اجتماع النقيضين المستحيل عادة وعقلا".

[73] Muḥammad Wafā', *Nafā'is al-'irfān*, Dār al-Kutub, fol 8a. Cf. *Nafā'is al-'irfān*, al-Maktaba al-Azhariyya, fol 100a.

[74] A popular sufi saying, quoted by al-Qušayrī from Basṭāmī, runs: "He who has no shaykh his master is Satan". See al-Qushayrî, *Das Sendschreiben al-Qushayrîs über das Sufitum*, trans. R. Gramlich, Wiesbaden, 1989, p. 538.

[75] Muḥammad Wafā', *Nafā'is al-'irfān*, al-Maktaba al-Azhariyya, fol 99a, b:
"من ليس له استاد (*sic*) ليس له مولي ومن ليس له مولي فالشيطان به اولي". "من عرف نفسه فقد عرف شيخه نفس من لم يجد شيخه لم يجد قلبه ومن لم يجد قلبه فقد ربه".

[76] Muḥammad Wafā', *Sha'ā'ir al-'irfān*, al-Maktaba al-Azhariyya, fol 139b:
"شيخك من اسمعك اذا سكت وغيبك اذا نطق وافقدك اذا وجد واوجدك حيث سكت وشيخك من علمك بقاله وحققك بحاله واثبتك بزواله ومحقك بكماله".

his grave in which he is buried, and from which he rises."[77] This image is further developed by Muḥammad Wafā' when he concludes: "He who has no son is not remembered." The gist of the images is that the timeless unseen spiritual presence of the shaykh is to be found in the heart of his follower.[78] The connection between aspirant and shaykh is also explained in the context of the "oneness of being" insight. We encountered a passage earlier which is worth repeating here:

> If you know your teacher and *imām*–guiding you by his necessary divine existence–then you know your Lord, al-Ḥaqq. Do you know who He is? He is simply the source of your divine existence, as determined for you on the level of distinction of your being, by which you see that you have no existence except Him (لا كون لك سواه).[79]

Thus the guide, by his own share in necessary existence, is to his follower the divine Presence. An individual may find the Divine in himself, but also, and perhaps more easily, it may be accessed in certain others. It is also made clear that knowing al-Ḥaqq in the teacher is a specific insight, which hinges on ones seeing that there is no real existence except in God.

In an even more dramatic formulation of the relationship of the aspirant with his guide, Muḥammad Wafā' describes the former as a kind of manifestation of the latter. In one brief statement the follower is identified with the creative "mercy" of his master. We read: "The heart of the aspirant is a throne for the *raḥmāniyya* (mercifulness) of his teacher to sit upon."[80] As we noted earlier in section four of this paper, the creative impulse of the Divine is associated with the name al-Raḥmān and the Throne; here that function is being transferred through the teacher. This transference is repeated at a lower level by other statements describing the aspirant as a kind of mouthpiece for communication of the insights of the shaykh. One such passage runs:

> The sincere aspirant is the eloquent pulpit (منبر ناطق) whom the teacher climbs after his divesting himself of the physical worlds (عوالم الجسم). He (the aspirant) informs, by his sincere tongue, of what he has witnessed of the realities.[81]

[77] Muḥammad Wafā', *Nafā'is al-ʿirfān*, al-Maktaba al-Azhariyya, fol 100a:
"قلب المريد بيت استاده وقالبه قبره الذى يدفن فيه وينشر منه".

[78] The Iranian mystic ʿAyn al-Quḍāt al-Hamadānī (d. 525/1131) noted that the aspirant is to contemplate God in the mirror of the spirit of his teacher. In turn, the teacher will contemplate himself in the mirror of his disciple, as God contemplates Himself through the mirror of creation. See H. Landolt, "Two Types of Mystical Thought in Muslim Iran", *MuslWorld* 68, 1978, p. 197; and F. Jahanbakhsh's "The Pir-Murīd Relationship in the Thought of ʿAyn al-Quḍāt al-Hamadānī", in J. Āshtiyānī (ed.), *Consciousness and Reality: Studies in Memory of Toshihiko Izutsu*, Leiden, 2000, p. 132.

[79] ʿAlī Wafā', *Masāmiʿ al-rabbāniyya*, fol 3a.

[80] Muḥammad Wafā', *Nafā'is al-ʿirfān*, al-Maktaba al-Azhariyya, fol 100a:
"قلب المريد عرش لاستوا رحمانيه استاده".
The same verb is used in the Qur'an for God's sitting on the Throne. See 7:54, 20:5 or 57:4.

[81] Muḥammad Wafā', *Nafā'is al-ʿirfān*, al-Maktaba al-Azhariyya, fol 100a:
"المريد الصادق منبر ناطق يراقه الاستاد بعد تجريده عن عوالم الجسم فيخبر بلسانه الصادق عما شاهده من الحقايق"

From this it is clear that the follower becomes a medium for use by the spiritually elevated (or deceased?) shaykh. Further, it seems this follower must himself have first achieved a purifying spiritual insight. The passage ends by stating that this follower's task is then to broadcast what has been communicated to him.[82]

It would be fair to say that Muḥammad Wafā''s advice to novices in general is rudimentary and does not hold our author's attention. Yet the idea of the spiritual function of the shaykh, and the aspirant's relationship to him, received substantial reflection. It should be no surprise to find Muḥammad Wafā' at some point referring the question back to the immanent existential divine Reality of creation. In this context the shaykh serves as simply one of a number of possible divine Self-disclosures. Thus, to know the shaykh is to know the Lord. More intriguingly perhaps, Muḥammad Wafā' also describes the transference of spiritual insight from the shaykh to the aspirant–and emphasizes the latter's central function as an inheritor, as it were, and as a transmitter.

In these five short discussions a variety of subjects touching upon existence and insight have been broached. Central to Muḥammad Wafā''s mystical perspective is the overarching concept of existence, at base belonging only to God. This is not to say that a degree of individuality is not held by created entities. On the contrary, this is the result of the Divine Self-disclosure. Muḥammad Wafā' follows Ibn ʿArabī here, yet presents his own refinements. We saw him laying out his understanding of the relationship between Self-disclosure and the "preparedness" of prime matter. We also saw him moving beyond this by presenting the "perfect intellect" as an ultimate perspective which transcends this process of creation. Divine Self-disclosure is important to understand, but a deeper unitary perspective is the desired next step. The second discussion dealt with the concepts of pre-existence and eternity. Here there is first an identification of pre-existence with oneness and necessity, and of eternity with plurality and the possible. Yet the turn is then made to integrate these two poles. Each is hidden within the other, and thus in some sense essential to it. In the discussion of Muḥammad Wafā''s mystical anthropology, we saw that it is through God's name *al-Raḥmān* that the individual is linked to Necessary existence. This link may be accessed not only by the knower understanding that knowledge is within himself, but also that this interior knowledge is in essence of divine origin. In the fourth discussion, that of "cosmology", we saw Muḥammad Wafā' building on the received neoplatonic model. He lays out the worlds, the senses and the intellects, but then proceeds to build upon them. Here sufi terminology is used to complete and build upon a philosophical structure. The last discussion touched on the relationship between follower and spiritual guide. Of note here was the slide from a transmission of knowledge to a kind of transmission of being. The guide becomes the follower's link to the necessary divine Existence.

[82] In the previous "gem" we are told that the "...eloquent speaker (*nāṭiq*) is he who speaks by the tongue of his follower after his divesting (or purification)." Therefore, it is the "eloquent pulpit" who "informs... of what he has witnessed of the realities" and not the shaykh himself. This makes all the more sense when read in light of ʿAlī's implied claim to be the continuation of his his father's sanctity.