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27. *Ibid.*, 772.

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11

Islamic Mysticism

WILLIAM CHITTICK

When you dance

you leave the two worlds behind—

The spiritual concert

takes place beyond heaven and earth.

—Rumi, *Kulliyat-i Shams*, verse 13685

SOME time back a colleague introduced me to a student as the teacher of a course on Sufism. "Sufism?" she said, "That's dancing, isn't it?" I answered that although this is a common misconception, Sufism has little to do with dancing as such. Those Sufis who do dance, such as the famous "whirling dervishes," consider the practice a secondary and nonessential part of their spiritual way. What is more, the whole concept of "dancing" as understood by the great Sufi masters seems to have little to do with what most people understand by the term today. By way of introducing the reader to Islam's mystical dimension, let me expand on this answer in some detail.

Sufism has been found in some form or another, though perhaps not under this name, wherever a sizable community of Muslims has existed. (The word is thought to derive from Arabic *suf*, meaning "wool," from the coarse woolen garments that some of the early Muslim ascetics wore.) Within Islam, Sufism plays a role analogous to that of depth in space. The religion is not just a plane surface made up of dogma and ritual, but possesses an inner dimension that will be grasped to some degree or other by every Muslim who dedicates himself sincerely to God. The Islamic revelation, the *Koran*—which is considered to be the literal Word of God conveyed to the Prophet Muhammad by the angel Gabriel—is addressed to everyone, but not

everyone is expected to understand the full depth of its meaning. A religion can persuade its followers to accept certain tenets of faith and obey certain prescriptions, but it can hardly force them to understand the full significance of what they are being taught. Each individual must establish his own personal relationship with his religion and God. The profundity of the relationship will depend on his sincerity, intelligence, love, and aspiration. Islam recognizes the existence of a vast range of human understandings, the majority of which will be satisfied by the teachings and practices that are obligatory for all Muslims. But Islam insists that "God charges no soul save to its capacity" (*Koran* 2:286; cf. 6:152, 7:42, etc.), which means that those who have the capacity to do so must pass beyond the surface of Islam into its depths, a region that has been mapped in detail by the saints and sages—often known as "sufis"—who have journeyed through it. Certainly you can begin this journey with only love and sincerity as your guides, but as the goal is to pass beyond your own self, and to give up your self, you need the instruction of those who are already selfless. Sufism, like other spiritual paths, insists that no real progress can be made without the guidance of a master who has reached the goal.

Entering the Way without a guide?
Then you'll take a hundred years to make a two-day journey!¹

Who are the Sufis? Those Muslims who, while standing with their co-religionists on the circumference of the circle of Islam—the Shari'ah or "Divine Law"—have set off on a journey within their own beings toward the circle's Center—God Himself. The model for this spiritual life was provided by the Prophet Muhammad, who said, "The Law is my words, the Way is my works, and the Truth [God] is my inward states." Muslims have followed him on this path since earliest times, often with opposition from those who lack the insight to realize that Islam is more than a plane surface, possessing as it does an inward dimension of infinite depth. The word "Sufism" itself did not come to be used until about the ninth century, three hundred years after the founding of Islam, but it has persisted as the most common designation for Islam's spiritual dimension down to the present day. In an essay—or in a book—one cannot hope to do justice to this 1,400-year-old tradition of spiritual teach-

ings; one can only try to evoke a few characteristically Sufi—and Islamic—ways of looking at things.

The Divine Names

Neighbor, friend, companion—all are He.
In beggar's rags and sultan's satin—all are He.
Dispersed in assemblies, gathered in retreats,
By God, all are He! By God, all are He!²

In this short Persian poem, Jami (d. 1492) employs a refrain that has echoed through Sufi writings for centuries, at least since the time of Ansari (d. 1089). At first sight, the words suggest a kind of simple-minded pantheism (the belief that the sum total of all things is God), and indeed many unsympathetic and ill-informed observers have interpreted them as such. But the Sufis were far too sophisticated to consider such formulae anything but devices to awaken forgetful and negligent human souls to a side of reality that is too often ignored. If in some sense "All things are God," it is also true that "All things are not God"; that is to say, "Nothing is God, except God Himself," a statement that paraphrases the fundamental testimony of faith (*shahadah*) in Islam: "There is no god but God." If one can say that "All are He," one must say that "Nothing is He." In short, the exact nature of the relationship between God and the world cannot easily be expressed, and hundreds of Sufi treatises have been written attempting to explain it.

It is difficult to read the *Koran* without noticing how often God is mentioned by "name." Practically every chapter begins with the words, "In the Name of God, the All-merciful, the All-compassionate"—a formula that still suffuses the lives of practicing Muslims. But God has many names besides these three, and the *Koran* makes constant reference to a large number of them. We are told that God is All-mighty, All-wise, All-gentle, All-benign, All-seeing, All-hearing, All-knowing, All-powerful, All-forgiving, All-glorious, and so forth. "To God belong the Names Most Beautiful," says the *Koran*, "so call Him by them" (7:180); traditionally, these Names are said to number ninety-nine.

The Divine Names are central to the Islamic understanding of reality. For one thing, they connect the world to God. For example, God is called by the Names Living, Knowing, Willing,

and Powerful, and these are said to refer to his attributes or qualities of Life, Knowledge, Will, and Power. (The two terms—Names and Attributes—are often mentioned together and are practically synonymous, if a distinction is drawn, it is only in the sense just mentioned, e.g., God as he who is called by the *Name* Living possesses the *Attribute* of Life.) These four Names or Attributes are often viewed as the fundamental creative principles of the universe, though most of the other Names are also involved in creation. Inasmuch as God is the Living, he bestows life on living creatures; as the Powerful, he bestows power and strength. The nature of this "bestowal" is explained in many ways, which we cannot begin to enumerate here. Perhaps the simplest way to conceive of it is through the analogy of the sun and its rays: the sun corresponds to God in Himself (called the "essence" in Islamic theology), its light corresponds to God's Attributes, and the individual rays of light correspond to the "creatures," which are often referred to in theological language as God's "effects" or "acts." Just as a given ray of light that enters the window of a room is an effect of the sun, so a given creature—a tree, a bird, a river, a mountain—is an "effect" of God. If the word "act" is also employed, this is to suggest the Wisdom, Will, and Power that are involved in God's creativity.

In short, everything in the universe derives from God; all positive qualities need to be traced back to their source in the Divine. The Prophet alluded to these points when explaining the origin of the mercy and compassion found in this world: "God has one hundred mercies, of which He has sent down one mercy among jinn and men, animals and crawling things; through it they show compassion to each other, through it they have mercy upon one another, and through it the beasts are kind to their young. But God has kept back ninety-nine mercies, by which He will show mercy to His servants on the Day of Resurrection." In a similar manner, the *Koran* says as follows (note that God is speaking, employing the first person plural pronoun as is commonly the case in the text): "There is not a single thing whose treasures are not with Us; but We only send it down in a known measure" (15:21). As explained by the great Sufi theoretician Ibn al-ʿArabi (d. 1240), these treasures are the creative possibilities latent within the Divine Being. The famous Sufi poet Rumi (d. 1273) compares the universe to a stream of flowing water, "within which shine the Attributes of the Almighty."³ He says: "The world is foam, God's Attributes the ocean—the foam veils you from the Ocean's purity!"⁴ Ibn al-

ʿArabi expresses the same idea in more philosophical language when he writes: "The whole cosmos is the locus within which God's Names become manifest."⁵ He concludes that, in the last analysis, "there is nothing in existence but God's Names."⁶

To express this in the words with which we started: "All are He." As Ibn al-ʿArabi writes: "There is nothing in existence but God. Though we also exist, our existence is through Him. But he who exists through something other than himself is in fact nonexistent."⁷

To say that the creatures borrow all their existence and attributes from God and that in themselves they are "nonexistent" is a little like saying that the colors we perceive all around us display nothing but the existence and attributes of light. If we look at a colored object, we seem to see an independent and self-sufficient color. Yet we know that we are only perceiving light, which has been given a particular color by the nonexistence of certain other colors, or certain wavelengths. Hence, a single light appears to us in a great variety of hues. In a similar way, the only thing we perceive in creation is God's Being—"All are He"—yet he appears to us in a tremendous variety of shapes and forms, which are called "creatures." In the words of Jami:

The things are multi-colored windows,
upon which falls the rays of Being's Sun.
Whatever tint the window takes—red, yellow, blue—
thus shines the Sun within it.⁸

The Sufis often quote a saying of the Prophet in which God explains why he created the universe: "I was a Hidden Treasure and I wanted [literally: I "loved"] to be known, so I created the creatures." If God has not brought the world into existence, the Hidden Treasure—that is, His Names and Attributes, or more correctly, their "effects," "acts," and "properties"—would have remained hidden from sight; there would be nothing but pure light with no colors to be seen. Hence, the universe as a totality, in its full spatial and temporal extension, displays the properties of the whole array of Divine Names and Attributes in an infinite deployment.

Like the other Semitic religions, Islam maintains that man was created in God's image or, as the Prophet put it, "upon His form." Without entering into details, one can say that this was understood to mean that man is a theater within which all the Names of God are displayed in a unified whole, just as the uni-

verse manifests the properties of the Names in infinite array. The difference between a human being and any other individual creature is that he or she is made upon the form of God Himself, thus possessing at least the potentiality to display the effects and properties of all of God's Names, while other creatures manifest some of God's names, but not all of them.

It is often said that the basic divine Attributes that bring the universe into existence—attributes that are called the "Seven Leaders"—are the four mentioned above, that is, Life, Knowledge, Will, and Power, along with Speech, Generosity, and Justice. An inanimate object does not reflect any of these attributes except in a passive way; a stone certainly tells us something about the divine Will and Power, but one could hardly maintain that it possesses these attributes as its own. In contrast, a plant possesses life and exercises a certain amount of power, while animals possess the attributes of plants and add to them traces of knowledge, will, and speech. Finally, human beings manifest knowledge, will, power, and speech in a far more perfect manner than the animals, while different human individuals display these and other divine Attributes in a tremendous variety of degrees. Moreover, only at the human level can justice and generosity appear, since these demand a degree of moral and spiritual perfection. In short, only human beings have the capacity to manifest such attributes, since they alone are made upon God's form in an integral manner.

The Spoken Universe

The *Koran* refers to its own verses as "signs," since they give news of God and remind human beings of their own nature, created in the divine image. The *Koran* also refers to the things of the universe as signs, since each of them displays the properties of God's Names and Attributes, each is an effect or act of God. "And of His signs is the creation of the heavens and earth and the variety of your tongues and hues" (*Koran* 30:22). "And of His signs are the night and the day, the sun and the moon" (41:37). If everything in the outside world is a sign, so also is everything inside ourselves. "We shall show them Our signs in the universe and in their own souls" (41:53). Both inside and outside man, God's acts and effects are plain to see. "Will you not understand?" asks the *Koran* repeatedly, "Will you not remember?"

"Understanding" and "remembrance" of God's signs comes from recognizing them for what they are, whether we perceive them in the *Koran*, in nature, or in our own souls. We may "read" the signs as we read the verses of the *Koran*, and hence many Sufis spoke of the cosmic book or the book of the soul. But we may also "listen to" the signs, since the *Koran*—a term which means literally "recitation"—was recited to the Prophet by the angel Gabriel, and Muhammad in turn recited it to his followers. Indeed, recitation of the *Koran* remains the key element in most Islamic ritual. But how do we "listen" to the signs in the universe and in ourselves? Is it enough to recognize the Divine Beauty in the songs of the birds and the rustling of the leaves? Or does "listening" involve something more?

In the *Koran*, God says, "Our only word to a thing, when We desire, is to say to it 'Be!' and it is" (16:40). In other words, each thing in the universe comes into existence as a result of God's spoken word. And just as our own speech is possible only through breath, so also God's speech takes place through the divine exhalation known as the Breath of the All-merciful. According to the *Koran* (7:156), God's mercy encompasses all things. The Sufis understood this to mean that God bestows upon the creatures, through the fact that He "loves to be known," an existence that belongs only to Him. So the Mercy that encompasses all things is existence itself, which is a "mercy for everything that exists."⁹ In Ibn al-'Arabi's words, "Because of this love to be known God breathed, and the Breath became manifest."¹⁰

The Breath of the All-merciful is existence itself, while the divine words are the particular forms and shapes within which existence becomes manifest. Though each thing is addressed by the single command "Be!" each in its own turn is a word that takes shape in the Divine Breath. Hence, "There is nothing in the cosmos—or the cosmos itself is nothing—but the words of God."¹¹

The Breath of the All-merciful bestows existence upon the forms of the possible things, just as the human breath bestows existence upon letters. So the cosmos is God's words in respect of this Breath. . . . And He has told us that His words will not be spent, so His creatures will never cease coming into existence, and He will never cease being a Creator.¹²

It is impossible for news of God—His revelatory activity—to be cut off from the cosmos. Were it to be cut off, the cosmos would have no nourishment upon which to feed in order to stay in existence.

"Say: 'If the sea were ink for the words of my Lord, the sea would be spent before the words of my Lord are spent,' though We brought replenishment the like of it" (*Koran* 18:109).

Though all the trees in the earth were pens, and the sea [were ink]—seven seas after it to replenish it, yet would the words of God not be spent (31:27).

And God gave news that there is nothing whose creation He desires without His saying to it "Be!" So these "words of God" are not cut off, they are a nourishment that pervades every existent thing.¹³

Primordial Audition

According to the Koranic verse, "When We desire a thing, We say to it 'Be!' and it is." How can God say "Be" to a thing that does not yet exist? To avoid a complicated discussion of Islamic metaphysics, we can simply say that before the things come to exist in this world, they exist in a certain manner in the treasures of the unseen world, for these "things" are the potentialities of outward manifestation possessed for all eternity by the Divine Names. When God says to a thing "Be!" it enters into existence, fulfills the function for which it was created, and returns again to the unseen world. As the *Koran* insists, "Unto God all matters are returned" (2:210, 3:109, etc.).

God speaks, the things "hear" his words, and then they enter into the cosmos. How did we experience the sounds of the word "Be" that brought each and every one of us into existence? In Arabic, the term "to hear" (*samaʿ*) is also employed to mean "listening to music" and, by extension, "music" itself. By the end of the third century of Islam (ninth Christian century), "listening to music," or "audition" as the word is often translated, became a common Sufi practice, often accompanied by dancing. Some Muslim authorities considered this a transgression of the spirit if not the letter of the Divine Law, while the Sufis defended it as a means of remembering God. There is something in music, they said, that can transport man into the invisible world, to his very origin in nonexistence. Ibn al-'Arabi explains this as follows:

At base the cosmos comes into existence from a single Divine Attribute, which is Speech. For the cosmos knows nothing of God but His Speech, hearing His speech, it enjoys this audition, for it cannot not come into being. Because of their audition, the creatures of the cosmos—the hearers or "auditors"—are attuned to motion,

turmoil, and transferal, for the thing that hears the word "Be" is transferred and moved from the state of non-existence into the state of existence, thus entering into the cosmos. This is the root of the movement of the People of Audition [i.e., those Sufis who listen to music and dance to it], who are the people of Ecstasy.¹⁴ What the people of Audition perceive in the words of the singer is God's word "Be" to a thing before it enters into existence.¹⁵

In trying to grasp the role of Audition in the world's creation, we must not forget that of love. It was God's love for the Hidden Treasure to be known that made Him speak the word "Be" and exhale the Breath of the All-merciful. As the source and motivating energy of the cosmos, love suffuses its existence. In Rumi's words:

The creatures are set in motion by Love,

Love by God in all eternity—

The wind dances because of the spheres,
the trees because of the wind.¹⁶

All things are moved by love, so all things are lovers.

God's wisdom in his destiny and decree made us lovers, each of another.

That foreordainment paired each part of the world, setting it in love with its mate.¹⁷

What then did we experience when we heard the word "Be?" We experienced love, we delighted in its melody, we danced into the created world.

The lover was at rest with existence and nonexistence. He had not yet seen his beloved's face when the melody of the word "Be" woke him from the sleep of nonexistence. The audition of that melody produced rapture, and that rapture (*wajid*) gave him existence (*wujud*). . . .

Love at times conquers the ear before the eye.

Love overwhelmed him and transformed his outward and inward stillness into dance and movement.¹⁸

Many Sufis identify the primordial music heard by man with the words of God at the "Covenant of Alast." According to the *Koran* (2:30ff), when God created Adam as His own vicegerent, he presented him to the angels and commanded them to bow down before him. At this same plane of spiritual preexistence,

before Adam's entrance into the corporeal world, God made covenant with his children: "Am I not (*alast*) your Lord," He asked. They all answered, "Yea! We testify" (7:172). This Covenant of Alast has been a recurrent theme of Sufi teachings: man must remember that day and once more acknowledge his love for his true Beloved.

The spirit has been drunk with Thee from the Day of Alast, though for a time it was distracted by water and clay.¹⁹

Just as music reminds the People of Audition of the command, "Be," intoxicating them with its beauty, so also it brings back to them the memory of the eternal covenant with their Lord.

Junayd (d. 910) was asked, "How is it that a man can be at peace, yet when he hears the Audition he is thrown into turmoil?" He replied, "God addressed Adam's progeny at the Covenant with the words, 'Am I not your Lord?' All their spirits were overcome by the delight of these words. When they hear the Audition in this World, they enter into motion and turmoil."²⁰

Imperfect Man

Do you know what words they speak, lute and rebeck?

"Thou are my sufficiency, Thou art my all, Oh Loving God."

Dry and dismal, you have no taste of Audition—

Listen! The world is full of song.

Oh that Minstrel! one tune

and all existence began to dance.²¹

One tune—"Be"—and the creatures danced into existence, displaying the Hidden Treasure, showing those who are able to recognize the "signs" that "All are He." But the dance is not yet complete. God said, "I was a Hidden Treasure, so I loved to be known," that is, by the creatures that He created. No doubt all things do possess a certain knowledge of God by the very fact of their existence. According to the *Koran*, "All that is in the heavens and the earth extols God" [57:1; 59:1, etc.]. Hence Ibn al-'Arabi can write:

Everything God created is alive and speaking, whether it be mineral, plant, or animal. This is shown by God's words, "There is nothing

that does not extol His praise, but you do not understand their extolling" [*Koran* 17:44].²²

So each creature was created to possess a specific mode of knowledge of the Divine Reality through which it is able to praise God. But human beings, made upon God's form, were created to know God in respect of all His Names and Attributes, and this knowledge does not arise as a matter of course. Created free, man must employ his own will to actualize it. This is precisely the significance of the Covenant of Alast, when man accepted to carry God's "Trust," or the responsibility to live up to his human potentiality: "We offered the Trust to the heavens and the earth and the mountains, but they refused to carry it and were afraid of it; and man carried it" [*Koran* 33:72].

God created Adam upon His own form, so He ascribed to him all of His own Most Beautiful Names; through the power of these Names man is able to carry the Trust that was offered to him. The reality of his divine form did not allow him to reject the Trust, as did the heavens, the earth and the mountains, all of which refused to carry it.²³

Only when man has actualized his divine form is he able to understand the true significance of "All are He." In the meantime, he remains ignorant of his own nature and the nature of the universe, continuing to imagine that "Nothing is He." Ibn al-'Arabi explains these points by referring to the *Koranic* verse, "He [God] is with you where you are" (57:4):

God accompanies us in our every state, but we do not accompany Him unless we stand within His limits [as prescribed by the Divine Law]. So in reality we do not accompany Him, we only accompany His statutes: He is with us, but we are not with Him.²⁴

In more philosophical terms, Ibn al-'Arabi makes the same point as follows:

God is identical with what becomes manifest [in the cosmos], but what becomes manifest is not identical with Him. For He is the Nonmanifest just as He is the Manifest (so *Koran* 57:3) in the state of His manifestation. Hence we say, "He is like the things, but the things are not like Him," since He is identical with the things, but they are not identical with Him.²⁵

In short, since "Nothing is God but God Himself," we are not like him. But, one should protest, were we not created upon God's form? Does that not mean that we are like him? The answer is yes, if by "we" is meant those human beings who are "truly human," those whom the Sufis call Perfect Men, i.e., perfect human beings, whether male or female. But the vast majority of human beings have not actualized that state, so they cannot claim to possess such a likeness except in an imperfect and distorted manner.

When God created Adam as his vicegerent, he made him a Perfect Man. This means, briefly, that he made him the "locus of manifestation" for his own "all-comprehensive" Name, i.e., Allah, which is the Name that embraces and includes all ninety-nine Most Beautiful Names. For "He taught Adam the Names, all of them" [Koran 2:31]. "Adam entered creation upon the form of the Name 'Allah,' since this Name embraces all the Divine Names."²⁶ Hence, "God's Names do not become manifest in their entirety except in the human being."²⁷

In Adam, the properties of the Names were fully actualized, while in those who have not reached perfection, they are only latent. Because Adam was a Perfect Man, God made him his vicegerent and the first prophet. According to Islam, prophets are by definition sinless and inerrant, and thus Adam is not considered to have committed a sin but rather an "oversight." Ibn al-'Arabi points out that there is a great difference between the fall of man and that of Satan:

God did not punish Adam and Even through the fall, only Satan; for Adam was made to fall in order that God's promise could be fulfilled, since He said, "I am placing in the earth a vicegerent" (Koran 2:30). . . . So the fall of Adam and Eve was a mark of honor, while that of Satan was a mark of loss and punishment.²⁸

Although Adam was a perfect Man, this is by no means true of all his children; only the prophets and saints achieve this station. That is why Ibn al-'Arabi writes, "When a human being does not attain the rank of perfection, he is an animal whose outward form resembles the form of a man."²⁹

All human beings are made upon the form of God, which means that all possess the potentiality to be Perfect Man. As Ibn al-'Arabi points out, the Muslim authorities agree that man can assume the Names of God as his own character traits.³⁰ Moreover, it is an axiom of Islamic thought that there can be

no fundamental plurality in the structure of reality, since that would mean two or more totally independent beings, two or more gods. "Is there a god with God?! Little indeed do you remember!" (Koran 27:62). Since reality is fundamentally one, all things are intimately connected. Hence the "separation" between God and His form—cannot be absolute; in some sense it must be bridgeable. The Perfect Men are those who have closed the gap between outward form and the inward reality. Outwardly they may appear to be mortals like the rest of us, but inwardly they open up to the Infinite.

Once a person traverses the spiritual path, thus bridging the gap between "Nothing is He" and "All are He," he makes actual the Names that are latent within himself. Then he can say with al-Hallaj (d. 922), "I am the Absolute Truth," or with Bayazid (d.874), "There is nothing in my robe but God."

At the station of perfection, the human being is the microcosm or "small world," containing within himself, in summary fashion, everything that is manifested in infinite detail in the outward cosmos. As the famous al-Gazzali (d. 1111) put it:

God blessed Adam by giving him a summary form comprehending every kind of creature in the cosmos. It is as if Adam is everything in the cosmos, or a summary transcription of the whole universe.³¹

Hence Ibn al-'Arabi refers to the world outside of man not only as the "great world" or macrocosm but also as the "great man."

The Men of God call the cosmos the "great man," while they call its summary the "small man," since he is a being in whom God has placed all the realities of the macrocosm. So man entered into creation in the form of the cosmos, in spite of his small size, and the cosmos is upon the form of God, so man is upon the form of God, as indicated by the Prophet's words, "God created Adam upon His own form."³²

In man is found the power of every single existent in the cosmos, since he possesses all ontological levels; for he alone was singled out for the divine form. As a result he combines the divine realities, i.e., the Names, and the realities of the cosmos.³³

"The Perfect Man combines the form of God with the form of the cosmos. . . . He becomes a mirror in which God gazes upon His own form . . . since all the Divine names are ascribed to him."³⁴

Man combines within himself the powers of the whole cosmos and of the Divine Names in their perfection. So no existent things is more perfect than the Perfect Man. That human being who does not reach perfection in this world is a rational animal, a part of the divine form, but nothing more. He does not attain to the degree of Man. On the contrary, his relation to Man is like the relation of a corpse to a human being; it is human in shape, but not in reality, for a corpse lacks all powers.³⁵

The Ascent of the Soul

For a time you were the four elements,
for a time an animal.

Now you have been a spirit, so become the Beloved!
Become the Beloved!³⁶

By the very fact of being made upon God's form, a human being possesses the potentiality of infinite development through the actualization of the Divine Names. The *Koran* often expresses astonishment at those who look upon God's signs in the cosmos and themselves and do not recognize that even the "natural order" is built upon transformation and change with a view toward spiritual perfection. Death and resurrection are but two further stages of the growth that begins in the womb.

Oh men, if you are in doubt as to the Resurrection—Surely We created you of dust, then of a sperm-drop, then of a blood-clot. . . . And we establish in the wombs what We will, till a stated term. Then We deliver you as infants, then that you may come of age. (*Koran* 22:5)

The Sufis see the stages of physical life as the outward signs of an inward development, i.e., the ascent of the soul in the direction of the Divine. Rumi in particular is famous for his description of the soul's growth from a stage that is practically inanimate to one that surpasses the station of the angels. The Islamic view of the soul's ascent provides the profound reason why, though "All are God," human beings cannot be truly aware of this fact until they have attained the station of the Perfect Man. As long as we have not passed through the stages of psychic, moral, and spiritual growth and perfection, we must remain ignorant of our own true nature.

Man begins his journey to perfection at the stage of "nonexistence" with God. Once he hears the command "Be" and acknowledges God's Lordship at the Covenant of Alast, he is brought into this world, the point of creation farthest from the Origin. Then man begins his ascent to God, for all things return to Him, just as all have come from Him. These two journeys— from God to the world and from the world to God—are often referred to as the two "arcs" of the Circle of Existence.³⁷

In one sense the return to God is "compulsory," since neither man nor any other creature has a choice in the matter. "To Him has surrendered whoso is in the heavens and in the earth, willingly or unwillingly, and to Him they shall be returned" (*Koran* 3:83). But there is another kind of return, known as "voluntary," that is the prerogative of human beings, since they alone, made upon God's form, have been given a sufficient share of the divine freedom to shape their own destinies. Only humans are addressed by Revelation, which provides instructions on how to return to God "willingly," before we are taken to Him through death.

In short, the soul undergoes a "natural" or "compulsory" development that leads to physical death and carries man on to the Resurrection and the meeting with God. "Oh Man! Thou art laboring unto thy Lord laboriously, and thou shalt encounter Him" (*Koran* 84:6). But the soul also undergoes a "voluntary" growth in keeping with its own free choice. If in the first case man is compelled to grow and die, in the second he is free to choose what sort of existence he will have in the next stages of his becoming. In other words, to employ a symbolism that is as current in Sufism as in Islam in general, human beings are given religious directives so that in the next life they can enter into a joyous mode of existence known as paradise, but they are free to reject the guidance that is offered and suffer the consequences, the state known as hell.

The "natural" or "compulsory" growth of the soul begins in the womb, when God "breathes of His Spirit" (*Koran* 15:29, 32:9) into the body. This spirit, coming from the realm of Alast, is a pure and living light, while the body is dark and dead clay. The conjunction of spirit and body gives rise to the soul proper, which embraces both worlds, the spiritual and the corporeal. The soul is thus the intermediary through which the pure and transcendent spirit is put in contact with the corruptible body; it is the sum total of the life and consciousness that is produced by the meeting of spirit and clay.

The human spirit—which is also God's spirit—is a ray of divine light qualified by all the Divine Names. But these Names can only manifest their properties in this world through a body, just as the Hidden Treasure can only be known by outward manifestation. Within the soul, acting as the link between the spirit and the body, the perfections latent within the Divine Names can display themselves. The image of light is helpful here: The spirit is pure light, while the body is pure darkness; the mixture of light and darkness allows the myriad colors to show their properties. Within the soul the life, knowledge, will, and power of the spirit assume specific and individual characteristics, so that each person's soul becomes distinct from everyone else's even though all men are created from the single divine spirit or divine breath.

During the soul's development, the effects of the Divine Names manifest themselves only gradually. The Sufis compare the fetus in its early stages to an inanimate object or mineral, little by little the properties of life and sensation appear within it, so that it passes to the stage of a plant. By the time the child is born, it has acquired all the attributes of an animal, though imperfectly. It is not until around the time of puberty, when the highest human faculties—intelligence and speech—begin to be perfected, that a person deserves to be called a human being, though in Ibn al-'Arabi's terms, we all remain "animal men" until we actualize the full range of Divine Names within ourselves.

By the time of puberty, the properties of five of the Seven Leaders referred to earlier—Life, Knowledge, Will, Power, Speech—can be clearly discerned, but the other two—Generosity and Justice—may be hardly noticeable if present at all. This fact helps to show that the soul's development toward the actualization of the Divine Names does not take place as a matter of course, factors that could be called "environmental" are of importance in determining how a person's nature and character develop. If it is clear that a child's upbringing will have an effect on the extent to which knowledge and speech develop within him, it is even clearer that generosity and justice involve moral and spiritual values that are intimately connected to such considerations as the goals and ideals a person accepts for himself in life.

Islam, like other religions, discerns a normative model for human perfection and provides directives as to how to reach it. The "natural" development of the soul can never take a person

to this goal. Certainly we all return to God, but will we return to his mercy or his wrath, to felicity or chastisement, to heaven or hell? Islam makes the practice of the religion incumbent upon its followers when they reach puberty, that is, when the intelligence [the divine attribute of "knowledge"] has sufficiently developed to discern the difference between right and wrong. The religious prescriptions are designed to bring out those potentialities that lie hidden within man by virtue of his being made upon the divine form. Every one of the ninety-nine Most Beautiful Names must be actualized within the soul in perfect harmony with all the others.

If Sufism differs from the Islam of the masses in its vision of the soul's development, it is in the awareness of the exact nature of the goal and the intensity of the means employed to reach it. There are always certain human beings who feel compelled to return to God in the present life, those who do not have the patience to remain separated from their beloved until after death. Hence they follow the command of the Prophet, "Die before you die!" By dying to their own individual limitations, they are born into the unlimited expanse of the Divine Beauty. They have no fear of death, since they have died many times and each time been reborn to something greater. As Rumi puts it:

I died from the mineral realm and became a plant,
I died as a plant and became an animal.

I died to animality and became a man.

Why should I fear?

When did I ever become less through dying?

Next time I will die to human nature,

so that I may spread my wings and lift up my head among the angels.

But then I will jump the stream of angelic nature, for "Everything is perishing but God's Face"

(Koran 28:88).

Once I am sacrificed as an angel,

I will become what enters not the imagination.

I will become nothing, for nonexistence calls to me in deafening tune: "Unto Him we shall return."

(Koran 2:156)³⁸

This entrance into "nonexistence," sometimes alluded to as the "annihilation" of the ego's limitations and "subsistence" in God, is the end of the path to God. Here the traveler actualizes the command of the Prophet, "Assume the character traits of

God!" "traits" which are invariably interpreted to mean the Divine Names. So central is this idea to Sufism that Ibn al-'Arabi can write, "Assuming the traits of the Divine Names—that is Sufism."³⁹ His disciple al-qunawi (d. 1274) describes the ascent to God, modeled on the Prophet's ascent during the "night journey" (mi'raj), as the shucking off of creaturely limitations, stage by stage:

The Sufi travels toward the Upper World, and from the time he separates himself from the earth he never passes by any element, ontological level, or celestial sphere without discarding within it that part of himself which corresponds to it, i.e., the part that he acquired when he first entered into this lower world. Thus he obeys God's words, "God commands you to deliver trusts back to their owners." (*Koran* 4:58)⁴⁰

Every human being returns to God, whether in this world or the next. But as Ibn al-'Arabi likes to point out, this return will be to that specific Divine Name which the person actualizes during his sojourn in the world. So one must keep in mind the different properties of the Names:

How are the Avenger, the Terrible in Retribution, and the Severe comparable to the All-compassionate, the All-forgiving, and the Kind? . . . For each Name looks upon things in keeping with its own reality.⁴¹

Al-Quaniwi describes the return to the name Allah, upon the form of which man was created, as becoming established at the "Central Point of the Circle." Significant divergence from this "Point of Equilibrium," wherein are centered all the Names of Mercy and Gentleness, means falling to the periphery of existence, the domain of Wrath and Severity.

Whoever leaves the equilibrium of the Central Point—which is the point of human perfection—will be judged in respect of his distance from or proximity to the Center. Between the total disequilibrium that pertains to satan and the perfect equilibrium manifesting all the Divine Names, are located all the habitations of the blessed and the damned.⁴²

The goal of the voluntary return to God is to actualize the full range of the Divine Names, or the Name Allah, which comprehends them all. The means employed to reach the goal are

varied, but they can be summarized in one word: *dhikr*, the "remembrance" of God. Remembrance is made incumbent upon Muslims in many verses of the *Koran*, a Scripture which itself was revealed as a "remembrance unto all beings" (*Koran* 12; 104, 38:87, etc.). Only through turning one's mind and indeed one's whole existence toward God can one hope to become god-like in a true sense. "God will give you what you seek. Where your aspiration lies, that you will become, for 'the bird flies with its wings, but the believer flies with his aspiration.'"⁴³ Constant remembrance of God through various ritual activities and the unceasing repetition of His Name fans the fire of love in the heart, "a flame that burns away everything except the Beloved."⁴⁴

In the outside world, wind sets the trees in motion—
On the inside, remembrance rustles the leaves of the heart's
tree.⁴⁵

For the Sufis, all creatures are signs of God, calling the soul to remembrance. Music in particular "refreshes the mind from the heaviness of human nature."⁴⁶ According to Rumi:

We were all part of Adam,
we heard those melodies in paradise.
Though water and clay have covered us with dust,
we still remember something of those sounds . . .
Hence Audition is the food of lovers—
within it they find the image of the meeting
with their Beloved.⁴⁷

Najim al-Din Razi (d. 1256) explains the attraction of music in terms of the remembrance of the primeval covenant:

When the soul hears the singer sing words clothed in fine garment and measured rhythm, it tastes the address of "Am I not your Lord?" This sweet sound causes a movement of yearning toward God. . . . Once the soul finds the taste of this address, the bird of the spirit cannot rest but falls into turmoil. It tries to smash the cage of the bodily frame and return to its own realm.⁴⁸

Ruzbihan (d. 1209) describes the state of the spiritual traveler who contemplates the unseen world and listens to its primordial music:

He delights in God and all but flies out of his human frame, but he remains trapped and bewildered in the cage of his own nature. As much as God's light is unveiled from him, he inclines toward the ascending stages of the spiritual realm, but he drags the tail of his physical form in this world. His delight in God makes him dance, move, and turn.⁴⁹

Dancing, then, is the traveler's expression of his inward joy and his rejection of the limitations of his own ego. Razi explains that the soul's agitation and turmoil at being confined by the limitations of this lower world throw the body into motion. Thus, he says:

Dancing is not to keep on jumping,
nor to float around without heartache like dust.
Dancing is to jump out from the two worlds:
Smash your heart, transcend your soul!⁵⁰

Rumi explains that the Sufis' dance takes place within their own hearts and spirits; it is the joyful resurrection of the soul after it has been killed in the holy war against its imperfections.

People dance and frolic in the square—
Sufis dance in their own blood.
Delivered from their own hands, they clap their hands!
having jumped outside their own imperfection,
they dance.
Within themselves their minstrels play the tambourine—
their uproar makes the ocean clap its waves.⁵¹

Dancing, then, has no necessary connection to the body, since it is a state of the soul. True music cannot be heard by the imperfect ears of animal men, and the true Sufi dance cannot be observed with the eyes, since it takes place in another world, even if, on occasion, it displays its effects in this world. If this is the case, one can understand the derision in Ruzbihan's words:

A group of the delirious dance, recite poetry, listen to music, clap their hands, and tear their clothing, imagining that, having achieved this, they have attained to the spiritual states of the saints. What nonsense! How can you ascend in the stations of perfection through such fabrications?⁵²

Jami expresses similar disgust at the excesses of certain so-called Sufis of his day:

They show no spark of remembrance's light,
no sign of Audition's spiritual state.
Their remembrance pains their heads and necks,
their dancing weakens their bellies and backs.⁵³

The imperfect dance toward imperfection,
the perfect move but do not "dance,"
For the bird of their spirit flaps its wings
to gain freedom from the depths of harm.
Though a single sound causes both
to leap up for the sake of Audition,
The perfect spread their mantel over the spheres,
the imperfect descend into the earth. . . .
The wretched owl sits next to the falcon,
but once they begin to fly,
The falcon returns to the king's castle,
the owl goes back to a corner of the ruins.
Every person inclines toward his own habitat,
every bird flies to its own nest.⁵⁴

Dancing with God

The Sufis follow a long and difficult path back to their Beloved; in the process they pass through numerous states of the soul—such as hope and fear, joy and sorrow, gathering and dispersion—and acquire various spiritual perfections, all of which have been described in detail in Sufi works. In *The Conference of the Birds*, one of the most famous and at the same time entertaining accounts of the spirit journey, 'Attar (d. 1220), tells how the birds gathered together and decided to travel to their king, the Phoenix; guided by the hoopoe and undergoing many adventures on the way, they flew across the seven valleys— aspiration, love, knowledge, independence, unity, bewilderment, and annihilation—before finally reaching their goal. Other Sufis enumerate the stages of the journey as 10, 40, 100, or even 1,000. Here a single poem by Rumi, dedicated to his spiritual companion Shams-i Tabrizi, will have to suffice to suggest the trials and delights of the traveler.

Wine! I know nothing of wine—annihilated,
without place, I know not where I am.
One minute I fall to the depths of an ocean,
the next I rise like the sun.
one instant the world carries me in its womb,

the next I give birth to the creatures
like the world.

When the spirit's parrot nibbles sugar,
I fall down drunk and nibble the parrot.

No place in the world can hold me—

I am worthy only for that place-less Friend.

Look at me—dangerously deranged,

shouting and roaring among the profligates.

You say, "Why don't you come to yourself?"

Fine, show me myself, I'll come to it.

The shadow of the Phoenix has caressed me so often,

the bird has become shadow, I Phoenix.

I saw Beauty drunk—it said,

"I am affliction, affliction, affliction!"

A hundred souls cried out from every direction.

"I am yours . . . , yours . . . , yours . . . "

"You are that burning light which said to Moses,

"I am God . . . , God . . . , God . . . "

I said, "Shams-i Tabrizi, who are you?"

He said, "You . . . , you . . . , you" ⁵⁵

The human soul, which began its journey in the lower world as the connecting link between the transcendent spirit and the lifeless body, realizes the fullness of its own nature by returning to the divine source from which it arose, yet without losing anything actualized along the way. Having begun as a kind of infinite potentiality, it grows by making the properties of all the Divine Names its own. Man comes to know all creation within his own soul, for he travels through all things and all worlds. He keeps on ascending in the spiritual degrees until, having reached God, he begins the never-ending journey in God and with God. Ibn al-'Arabi reminds us of the Koranic verse, "He is with you wherever you are (57:4) and the fact that, though God is with us, we are not with Him. But, once the traveler attains to the station of the Perfect Man, "he is with God just as God is with him."⁵⁶ The Perfect Man, descending into the unfathomable oceans of his own existence, travels with God wherever he goes. For does not the *Koran* say that he is God "in the earth" (43:84), and did not the Prophet report that God descends every night to "the heaven of this lower world?" So the Perfect Man accompanies God and each of the Divine Names as it manifests its properties within creation. "He accompanies creation in its journey from nonexistence to existence, and he accompanies the prophets in their journeys, just as he accompanies Adam in his journey from the Garden to the earth. . . ." ⁵⁷ The Perfect

Man remains with God and with all things in this world and the next, free of the limitations of time and space.

The cosmos is not a static entity; it is God's never-ending revelation of the Hidden Treasure. As Ibn al-'Arabi constantly reminds us, God is infinite, so He cannot be constrained in any manner whatsoever. As a result, his acts—the creatures—are infinitely variegated. Instant by instant all things undergo constant transformation, and no act—no "theophany" or self-manifestation of God—is ever repeated. "There is no repetition whatsoever in creation, because of the Divine Amplitude."⁵⁸

Because of God's theophany the existent things undergo constant transferal from state to state. . . . God reveals himself in theophany continuously. . . . His station is theophany, while the station of the existent things is change and transferal from state to state.⁵⁹

Change, flux, and movement are intrinsic to existence. When the traveler reaches the utmost limits of the spiritual path, he enters into the oceans of divine knowledge, where all is bewilderment—not the bewilderment of being lost but the bewilderment of having found all and everything.⁶⁰ Hence, says Ibn al-'Arabi:

"Guidance" is to be led to bewilderment. Then you will know that the whole affair is bewilderment, that bewilderment is agitation and movement, and that movement is life. There is no rest, no death, only existence, nothing of nonexistence.⁶¹

So it continues for all eternity, in this world and the next. In reality the saints already taste in this world, through their bewilderment, the never-ending theophanies that the blessed find in the next.

At every instant the people of paradise see a new creation and a new bliss . . . for if one thing were to follow another without any change, they would become bored. . . . If God did not nourish the blessed with renewal at each moment so that their bliss might continue, boredom would overcome them. Hence every time an inhabitant of paradise looks upon his own kingdom, he perceives things or forms that he has not seen before and he delights in the new appearance. Each time he eats or drinks he finds a new and delicious flavor, one he had never before tasted.⁶²

In his lengthy spiritual diary, Baha Walad (d. 1230)—Rumi's father and first spiritual master—records in great detail the ex-

perience of God's continuous theophany through the phenomena and signs of the universe. Though he writes in prose, one can see how this type of vision must be the well-spring of a great deal of Sufi poetry.

When I awoken from sleep I see the whole world as God's Thou-ness. When I begin to stir, I take God's Thou-ness in my embrace to see what will come to hand and enter my senses from it. . . . Each instant I mix with God's Thou-ness and gaze upon its inward wonders. I see its wonders and drink the wine of each one's taste such that I remain senseless until late. In the same way, the sweetest state of Moses was theophany and "Show me that I may behold Thee" (*Koran* 7:143). Each moment I take God's Thou-ness into my embrace: "When my servants ask about Me—I am near" (*Koran* 2:186). Every instant I have the ardor of Jesus, the ecstasy of Moses, the certainty of Muhammad, the unveilings and the ease of the saints, the beauty of the beloveds, and the state and sweet prosperity of their lovers. I have been given two feet to run to these sweet things of theirs. I gaze upon these wonders and say, "Oh God, give me of these, for Thou hast brought them into being from the Unseen. Thy bounty has made them such—give also to me. Say 'Be!' so that it may be and also come into existence for me. . . ." The sweet things of the outward world take replenishment from the sweet things of the inward world, and the inward takes replenishment from God's Attributes. Hence the doors to the everlasting garden known as paradise are God's Attributes, and in each kind of sweet thing in the world, one door—God's Attributes—is opened, so that He may breathe into it and increase it. So come, let me throw myself before those doors of God's Attributes and enter into paradise, so that I may no longer remember the world but remember God and belong to God.⁶⁵

The Perfect Man journeys into the Infinite, listening to the music of God's existentiating command, repeated instant by instant for every state and every creature. Each moment God says "Be" and a new theophany, more glorious and perfect than the preceding delights the eye. In the words of 'Iraqi (d. 1289):

The song will never cease, nor the dance come to an end, in all eternity, for the Beloved the infinite. Here the lovers hums,

The moment I turn my eyes,
I see Thy face,
The instant I lend an ear,
I hear Thy voice.

So the lover continues dancing and moving, even though he may appear to be still. "You see the mountains that you suppose fixed passing by like clouds" (*Koran* 27:88). How could he remain still? Each atom of the universe prods him to motion: each atom is a word, each word gives news of a Name, each Name has a tongue, each tongue a song, and for each song the lover has an ear. Pay attention: the singer and the listener are one, for "Audition is a bird that flies from God to God."⁶⁴

Notes

1. Rumi, *Mathnawi*, ed. R. A. Nicholson (London: Luzac, 1925-40), Book III, verse 588; cf. W. Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Love* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1983), 123.
2. Jami, *Lawa'ih: A Treatise on Sufism*, ed. and trans. E. H. Whinfield and M. M. Kazwini (reprint; London: Theosophical Publishing House, 1978), 25 [my translation].
3. *Mathnawi*, VI 3172; cf. Chittick, *Sufi Path*, 43.
4. Rumi, *Kulliyat-i Shams*, ed. B. Furuzanfar (Tehran: Tehran University Press, 1957-67), verse 9695.
5. *Al-Futuhat al-makkiyyah* (Beirut: Dar Sadir, n.d.), II, 34, line 3.
6. *Ibid.*, II 303.13
7. *Ibid.*, I 279.6.
8. *Naqd al-nusus fi sharh naqsh al-fusus*, ed. W. Chittick (Tehran: Imperial Iranian Academy of Philosophy, 1977), 72.
9. *al-Futuhat*, II 281.27.
10. *Ibid.*, II 310.21.
11. *Ibid.*, II 402.30.
12. *Ibid.*, II 459.5
13. *Ibid.*, II 90.14.
14. *Ibid.*, II 352.14.
15. *Ibid.*, II 366.29.
16. *Kulliyat*, 5001; cf. Chittick, *Sufi Path*, 197.
17. Rumi, *Mathnawi*, III 4400-4401; cf. Chittick, *Sufi Path*, 198.
18. 'Iraqi, *Lama'at*, ed. J. Nurbaksh (Tehran: Khanaqah-i Ni'matollahi, 1974), 34-35; cf. W. C. Chittick and L. Wilson, *Fakhruddin 'Iraqi: Divine Flashes* (New York: Paulist Press, 1982), 108.
19. Rumi, *Kulliyat*, 23769; cf. Chittick, *Sufi Path*, 300.
20. 'Attar, *Tadhkirat al-awliya'*, ed. M. Isti'jami (Tehran: Zuvwar, 1967), 446.
21. Jami, *Diwan*, ed. H. Rati (Tehran: Pirus, 1962), 301.
22. al-'Arabi, *al-Futuhat*, III 393.23.
23. *Ibid.*, II 170.6.
24. *Ibid.*, II 287.7.
25. *Ibid.*, II 488.25.
26. *Ibid.*, II 124.5.
27. *Ibid.*, I 216.12.
28. *Ibid.*, I 231.34.

29. *Ibid.*, II 468.15.
 30. *al-takhalluq bi'l-asma'*, *Ibid.*, III 398.21.
 31. *Miskat al-anwar*, ed. A. 'Affi (Cairo: Al-Dar al-Qawmiyyah, 1964), 71, cf. W. H. T. Gairdner, *al-Ghazzali's Mishkat al-Anwar* (Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1952), 134.
 32. *al-Futuhat*, II 150.26.
 33. *Ibid.*, II 396.2.
 34. *Ibid.*, III 398.16.
 35. *Ibid.*, II 441.3.
 36. Rumi, *Kulliyat*, 22561, cf. Chittick, *Sufi Path*, 78.
 37. Cf. Chittick, "The Circle of Spiritual Ascent According to al-Qunawi," in *Neoplatonism and Islamic Thought*, ed. P. Morewedge (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992), 179-209.
 38. *Mathnawi*, III 3901-106, cf. Chittick, *Sufi Path*, 79.
 39. *al-Futuhat*, II 267.11.
 40. *Miftah al-ghayb*, on the margin of al-Fanari's *Miftah al-ins* (Tehran, 1905-06), 296; cf. Chittick, "The Circle of Spiritual Ascent", 180.
 41. *al-Futuhat*, II 93.19.
 42. Al-Qunawi, *F'jaz al-bayan fi tafsir umm al-Qur'an* (Hyderabad-Deccan: Osmania Oriental Publications Bureau, 1949), 300, cf. Chittick, "The Circle of Spiritual Ascent", 185.
 43. Rumi, *Fihri ma fihri*, ed. B. Furuzanfar (Tehran: Amir Kabir, 1969), 77; cf. A. J. Arberry, trans. *Discourses of Rumi* (London: John Murray, 1961), 89; Chittick, *Sufi Path*, 212.
 44. Rumi, *Mathnawi*, V 588, cf. Chittick, *Sufi Path*, 215.
 45. Rumi, *Kulliyat*, 9778, cf. Chittick, *Sufi Path*, 159.
 46. Ruzbihan, *Risalat al-quds*, ed. J. Nurkhabsh (Tehran: Khanaqah-i Ni'matallah, 1972), 50.
 47. *Mathnawi*, IV 736-37, cf. Chittick, *Sufi Path*, 326.
 48. *Mirsad al-'ibad*, ed. M. A. Riyahi (Tehran: Bungah-i Tarjamah wa Nashr-i Kitab, 1973), 364-65; cf. *The Path of God's Bondsman*, trans. H. Algar (Delmar, N.Y.: Caravan Books, 1982), 354-55.
 49. *Mashrab al-arwah*, ed. N. M. Hoca (Istanbul: Edebiyat Fakultesi Matbaasi, 1974), 87.
 50. *Mirsad al-'ibad*, 365, cf. *Path*, 35.
 51. *Mathnawi*, III 97-98, cf. Chittick, *Sufi Path*, 327.
 52. *Ghalatat al-salikin*, ed. with *Risalat al-quds* (see above, n. 48), 99.
 53. Jami, *Mathnawi-yi haft awrang*, ed. M. Mudarris-i Gilani (Tehran: Sa'di, 1958), 25.
 54. *Ibid.*, 24.
 55. *Kulliyat*, ghazal no. 1526.
 56. *al-Futuhat*, II 384.2, but cf. II 507.12.
 57. *Ibid.*, II 384.7.
 58. *Ibid.*, II 302.18.
 59. *Ibid.*, II 304.30.
 60. Ibn Al-'Arabi, *Fusus al-hikam*, ed. A. 'Affi (Beirut: Dar al-Kitab al-'Arabi, 1946), 73; cf. R. W. J. Austin, *Ibn Al-Arabi: The Bezels of Wisdom* (New York: Paulist Press, 1980), 79.
 61. *Arabi, Fusus*, 199-200, cf. Austin, *Ibn Al-Arabi*, 254.
 62. Ibn Al-'Arabi, *al-Futuhat*, II 280.27.

63. Bahg' Walad, *M'arif*, ed. B. Furuzanfar (Tehran: Idara-yi Kull-i Intiba'at, 1954-59), I, 147-48, cf. Chittick, "Beatific Vision and Poetic Imagery in Bahg' Walad" *Studies in Mystical Literature*, 5/2 (1985), 21-32, also *Sufi* 7 (1990), 5-9.
 64. *Lama'at*, 35; cf. Chittick and Wilson, *Fakhruddin 'Iraqi*, 108-9.

Mysticism
and
the Mystical Experience

East and West

Edited by
Donald H. Bishop



Selinsgrove: Susquehanna University Press
London and Toronto: Associated University Presses