

E.S. Drower, noted for her work in Mandaean ritual and gnosis, supports Pedersen's harmonization of the dual designation, but includes some refinements. While she accepts the identification of the Šābī'ūn with the Mandaeans, she recognizes within the latter community a division between the elite or priestly caste, known as Naṣōraeans, and "the ignorant or semi-ignorant laity" who are called Mandaicans.⁵⁶ Given this distinction, Lady Drower finds little difficulty in identifying the famous medieval Ḥarrānian scholars, whom Chwolson had dubbed pseudo-Šābī'ūn, with the Mandaean priestly class, the Naṣōraeans.⁵⁷

These same medieval scholars and their co-religionists are the object of Bayard Dodge's interest in an article entitled "The Šābians of Ḥarrān."⁵⁸ He begins his study with a reference to the view that the Šābī'ūn of Ḥarrān adopted the appellation as a clever way of avoiding the disabilities to which all but members of the ahl al-kitāb were liable. Yet he also makes mention of Lady Drower's theory by citing the possible equation of the Ḥarrānian Šābī'ūn with a group of Naṣōraeans, the Mandaean elite. His own position in this matter, however, is that there is insufficient evidence for this identification. While quite comfortable with the correlation of Šābī'ūn and the Mandaicans of the Iraqī marshlands, beyond that he is unwilling to go, admitting that "we do not know how their name originated or what other groups might also have been Šābians."⁵⁹

Such an admission provides a useful summation of the exegetical views catalogued in this study. But a statement made by Lady Drower underscores, doubtless unwittingly, the major impression left by the mufasssīrūn's treatment of this group. The term *Šābī'ūn*, she remarks, was applied "indiscriminately to any non-Moslem, non-Jew or non-Christian, in the easy, inexact fashion of those who despised such religions and thought them unworthy of serious consideration."⁶⁰

Trinity College
Toronto, Ontario

JANE DAMMEN MCAULIFFE

⁵⁶ E.S. Drower, *The Secret Adam: A Study of Naṣōraean Gnosis* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1960), p. ix.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 111-12.

⁵⁸ Bayard Dodge, "The Sabians of Ḥarrān," in *American University of Beirut Festival Book*, eds. Fuad Sarrūf and Suha Tamim (Beirut: American University of Beirut, 1967), pp. 59-85.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 63.

⁶⁰ Drower, *The Secret Adam*, p. 112.

THE FIVE DIVINE PRESENCES: FROM AL-QUNAWĪ TO AL-QAYSARĪ

Probably the most famous teaching of the School of Ibn al-'Arabi after the "Oneness of Being" (*waḥdat al-wujūd*) and the "Perfect Man" (*al-insān al-kāmil*)¹ is that of the "Five Divine Presences" (*al-ḥaḍarāt al-ilāhiyyat al-khams*). Although often discussed, seldom has it been analyzed with reference to the original texts. In this article I propose to describe how the idea was developed by five figures who, in terms of the spread of Ibn al-'Arabi's influence throughout the Islamic world, may well represent his most important followers: Šadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī, Sa'īd al-Dīn al-Farghānī, Mu'ayyid al-Dīn al-Jandī, Kamāl al-Dīn 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Kāshānī, and Sharaf al-Dīn Dāwūd al-Qaysarī.

Al-Qūnawī (d. 673/1274) was Ibn al-'Arabi's chief disciple and more than anyone else responsible for systematizing his ideas and pointing out their essential harmony with the Qur'an and the Ḥadīth, thus making them more acceptable to the Islamic community at large. He is the author of nearly thirty works, mostly in Arabic but including a number of short Persian tracts. In one of his most famous books, *al-Fukūk*, he comments on the themes of Ibn al-'Arabi's masterpiece, the *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*.²

Two of al-Qūnawī's most important disciples were al-Farghānī and al-Jandī (both d. ca. 700/1300). Like their master, they wrote in both Arabic and Persian. Al-Farghānī composed his well-known commentary on Ibn al-Fārid's "Poem of the Way" first in Persian, based upon lectures delivered in that language by al-Qūnawī, then himself translated the work into Arabic, adding important clarifications in the long introductory section. Al-Jandī wrote one of the longest and earliest commentaries on the *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, thus providing the basis for many if not most of the later commentaries. He explains in its introduction that he had studied the *Fuṣūṣ* with al-Qūnawī, who then asked him to write a commentary on it. One of those to whom al-Jandī in turn taught the *Fuṣūṣ* was al-Kāshānī (d. 730/1329 or 736/1335-6), who was himself the master of al-Qaysarī (d. 751/1350). These last two figures are the authors of two commentaries on the *Fuṣūṣ* which have been studied perhaps more than any others by serious seekers of knowledge up to modern times.³ So four of these figures represent what deserves to be called the main line of transmission of the *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam* from Ibn-'Arabi,⁴ while the fifth, al-Farghānī, studied with

al-Qūnawī and wrote some of the clearest and most detailed early expositions of his and Ibn al-ʿArabī's ideas.⁵

For Ibn al-ʿArabī and his followers, the Oneness of God's Being and the consequent oneness of everything that exists dominate all other considerations. In their eyes, being or existence belongs only to God; only God truly *is*. Other things exist in a derivative or illusory manner; but ultimately, to the extent that they do exist, their existence is God's own Being, which is One. There cannot be two existents in any real sense, so all existent things are theophanies of the One Being. Since Being is One Reality, all things are one to the very extent that they partake of existence. Al-Qūnawī goes so far as to declare, "Just as Being in respect of Its Reality is one and undivided, so also in respect of Its [outward] Form It is one and undifferentiated."⁶

From where, then, does plurality appear? To summarize a complex teaching, Being displays Itself in keeping with a myriad of possibilities of outwardness contained within Its One Essence; but to people who are still behind the veil (*mahjūb*) each outward thing appears unconnected to the others. Nevertheless, each exists, and in that respect it is nothing but Being.

It is not the purpose of this article to try to explain the relationship between manyness and Oneness in keeping with Ibn al-ʿArabī's ideas. Rather, I want to take multiplicity for granted and ask, "In what modes does multiplicity appear to us?" Or, "When the One displays Itself as the many, what kinds of manyness can be observed?" If, for example, physical things can be divided into inanimate objects, plants and animals, what about "things" as such? If we study everything that can properly be called a "thing"—including God—into what categories can we divide them?

Ibn al-ʿArabī and his followers divide the "things" (*al-ashyāʾ*, plural of *shayʾ*)—which are also called the "entities" (*al-ʿayān*, pl. of *ʿayn*), the "realities" (*al-ḥaqāʾiq*, pl. of *ḥaqīqa*) and the "quiddities" (*al-māhiyyāt*)—from a number of different points of view. When referring to a general category of existence encompassing innumerable specific things, they often speak of a "Presence" (*ḥaḍra*), i.e., a particular manner in which the One Being of God manifests Itself, or a mode in which God displays His own Reality. Ibn al-ʿArabī himself often employs this term, for example when speaking of the mode and "location" in which one of the Divine Names exercises its influence: the "Presence of the Merciful" (*ḥaḍrat al-raḥmān*), the "Presence of the Self-subsistent" (*ḥaḍrat al-qayyūm*). Another context in which he

employs it is when speaking of the various worlds, as in the expression the "Presence of the Kingdom" (*ḥaḍrat al-malakūt*), meaning the spiritual world.

But as in so many other cases, it appears that al-Qūnawī systematizes his master's teachings. Ibn al-ʿArabī does not seem to discuss the "Five Divine Presences" as a separate doctrine. He refers to the Presences individually, but he does not state clearly and explicitly how they are related as a single whole.⁷ Beginning with al-Qūnawī, however, Ibn al-ʿArabī's followers adopt the doctrine as one of the major methods of explaining and referring to the different kinds of entities and things. In any case, an understanding of the basic concept involved is indispensable for a grasp of the writings of any of the members of Ibn al-ʿArabī's school, from the "Greatest Master" himself onward.

We will begin with al-Qūnawī, Ibn al-ʿArabī's great spokesman. He explains with characteristic clarity the nature of the Presences and the reason they are five, not more or less. Then we will observe how his students and followers modified his ideas, and how various expositions of the Five—or Six—Presences developed.

In general the word "Presence" is synonymous with "level" (*martaba*), a term which carries a more philosophical and less religious connotation. Ibn al-ʿArabī's followers often speak of the "levels of existence" (*marātib al-wujūd*), which they consider to be infinite in number but whose general categories (*kulliyāt*) may be reduced to five or six, i.e., the Divine Presences.⁸ But each of these five or six Presences may just as often be referred to as a level or, with a more or less synonymous term, as a "world." "The world" (*al-ʿālam*) is defined as "that which is other than God" (*mā siwā Allāh*), but "worlds" in the plural are the levels or Presence. Al-Qaysarī points out that the worlds are in fact infinite in number. He explains that the term derives from the root meaning "knowledge" (*ʿilm*), from which the word "sign" (*ʿālama*) is also derived. So a "world" is "any sign through which God may be known." And because each existent is a sign of God—since within it the One Being displays Itself outwardly—each existent is in fact a world.⁹

In short, the infinite worlds or ontological levels can be divided into general categories; these in turn may also be referred to as worlds, levels, or Presences, although other terms are also employed.

In religious civilizations, human experience invariably discerns two fundamental levels of existence. The Qurʾān refers to them as the

"Visible" (*al-shahāda*) and the "Unseen" (*al-ghayb*). God is "Knower of the Unseen and the Visible," while man, in order to be a good Muslim, must "believe in the Unseen" (*yu'min bi l-ghayb*). From another point of view, the fundamental dichotomy in the whole of existence is referred to as "God and the world," the world being precisely "what is other than God."

But on closer examination, it is seen that this preliminary dichotomy does not really encompass all that exists. For there remains a third reality which is neither completely Visible nor completely Unseen, but somehow mixes the two. It is a creature, therefore of the world, but created "upon God's Form" (*alā šuratihī*), and therefore Divine. In the words of Ibn al-'Arabī,

No part of the world can accept Divinity, and God cannot accept servitude. On the contrary, the whole of the world is a servant. God alone . . . may not be described by attributes which contradict the Divine, whereas the world may not be described by attributes which contradict temporality and servitude. So man possesses two relations: through the one he enters into the Presence of Divinity, and through the other he enters into the Presence of Engendered Existence (*al-haḍrat al-kiyāniyya*). So he is called "servant," since he is given directives by God and since he was not, then he was, like the world; and he is called "lord," since he is God's vicegerent and was made upon His Form and in the "best stature" (S. 95:4).¹⁰

In short, there are three fundamental ontological levels: God, the world, and man. In al-Qūnawī's words, "Although the levels are numerous, they are reducible to the Unseen, the Visible and the reality which comprehends these two."¹¹

Man is an "isthmus" (*barzakh*), i.e., something that stands between two other things, yet possesses the attributes of both. Hence man is "all-comprehensive" (*jāmi'*), for there is nothing on either side—God and the world—that escapes him. Of course here we must distinguish between the Perfect Man (*al-insān al-kāmil*), who truly actualizes and lives this reality, and ordinary men, who have not realized their potentialities. Only the Perfect Man may truly be considered as *the* All-Comprehensive Isthmus, who embraces within himself the realities of both God and the world.¹²

Although God, man and the world represent three different Presences, all three have one characteristic in common: they are

"entifications" of Being. "Entification" (*ta'ayyun*) means "to be or become an entity." An entity is a thing; and anything about which we may speak, or anything we can conceive, is an entity. So God is an entity, as are the world and man. Each is a particular entification and delimitation (*taqyid*) which has been assumed by Being as such, which is Nonentified (*ghayr muta'ayyan*) and Nondelimited (*mutlaq*).¹³

In other words, anything that exists is a particular mode within which the One Being displays Itself. But Being is not any *thing* that exists, for if it were one thing, it could not be, at one and the same time, another thing. Being is "thing in every respect,"¹⁴ not in one respect or another. "God," however, is a thing only in respect of being God. He is not the world. In like manner, the world is a thing only in respect of being the world, and man only in respect of being man. But Being is all things even though it is not delimited or defined by the particular characteristics of any one of them. For whatever *is*, by that very fact is a Self-manifestation of Being.

Hence we must refer to another fundamental dichotomy within reality, one that is the source and principle of all others: entification and nonentification. The Divine Presences are all manners in which Being—Nonentification as such—becomes entified. This Nondelimited Being is also called the "Essence" (*al-dhāt*) and the "Unseen He-ness" (*ghayb al-huwiyya*). It is not God as we usually conceive of Him, for when we "conceive" of God,—we do so in terms of certain attributes and properties. Thus we understand Him as He becomes entified in relation to us, not as He is in Himself. We cannot know Him in Himself, in His absolute Nonentification. At that level, in the words of the Prophet, "God is, and nothing is with Him," no attribute or description, and no "others" who might seek to know Him.

So when Ibn al-'Arabī and his followers speak of the "Divinity" (*al-uhiyya*), they usually mean God as we conceive of Him, God who embraces all perfections and who is the Source of all things. But God as He is in Himself is unknowable, since He is nonentified, or even a "non-thing." For every "thing" is only one mode of His Self-Manifestation. In Himself He can be none of these modes.

These remarks concerning the nature of Being will help us understand why al-Qūnawī limits the Presences to five and why other figures analyze them from different points of view and according to other schemes. In al-Qūnawī's teachings, Sheer Being, the Essence, is not a "Presence," since it is beyond all entification. And the Presences are precisely entifications of Being, or modes within which the One Being manifests Itself.

We have already seen that according to al-Qūnawī, Being undergoes three fundamental entifications: the Unseen, the Visible and Man.

If we analyze the first of these three entifications—the Unseen—more closely, we will see that it presents itself to us in two modes: uncreated and created. The uncreated Unseen is what we usually refer to as “God.” Al-Qūnawī prefers to call it the “Unseen, Luminous Presence of Knowledge,” i.e., God’s Knowledge of all things. At this ontological level, often referred to as the “First Entification,” God knows all the infinite possibilities of entification possessed by Nonentified Being, i.e., by Himself. On the basis of this Knowledge He bestows existence upon the known things, which is to say that Being manifests Itself outwardly, or actualizes Its own latent potentialities of entification. And God’s Knowledge is uncreated and immutable, just as He is uncreated and immutable. So He knows all things, all entities, from “eternity-without-beginning” (*al-azal*) to “eternity-without-end” (*al-abad*). Hence the objects of His Knowledge are called the “immutable entities” (*al-ʿayān al-thābita*).

As for the created Unseen, it is the intermediary between God and the Visible and is called the “World of the Spirits” (*ʿālam al-arwāḥ*), the Spirits being synonymous with the “intellects” (*al-ʿuqūl*) and the angels.

In a similar manner the Visible can also be divided into two kinds: that which is visible in all respects, and that which, in spite of belonging to the Visible, is relatively Unseen. These two kinds are the physical or sensory world (*ʿālam al-ḥiss*) and the World of Imagination (*al-khayāl*) or Image-Exemplars (*al-mithāl*).

Hence al-Qūnawī enumerates the Five Divine Presences as follows: the first is the Presence of Knowledge or of the Inward (*ḥaḍrat al-bāṭin*). It embraces God’s Names and Attributes as well as the immutable entities. Facing the First Presence in the opposite position is the World of Sense-Perception, or the Presence of the Outward (*ḥaḍrat al-zāhir*). Between these two is the Central Presence, which comprehends the two sides and pertains exclusively to the Perfect Man. Then on the right side of the Central Presence, between it and the Divine Unseen, is the Presence of the Spirits. Finally, on the left side of the Central Presence, between it and the Visible World as such, is the World of Image-Exemplars.¹⁵

The Five Presences can also be envisaged in descending or ascending order. For example, we can begin with the immutable entities and observe their mode of existence at each level. In God’s Knowledge, the entities are “nonexistent” (*maʿdūm*), although known by God for all eternity. At the level of the Spirits, the entities come into existence as

“luminous” (*nūrānī*) beings, subsisting in proximity to God, but nevertheless separate from Him. In the next level, that of Imagination, the entities are still luminous, but to a lesser degree, and now they are no longer “simple” (*basīṭ*) and noncomposite, but compounded of parts. In this World of Image-Exemplars, the visions of the saints take place. Here Spirits can manifest themselves in sensory forms, and here also, after death, the works and moral qualities of men assume corporeal forms. Finally we reach the lowest level of the outward manifestation of Being: the Sensory World, which is tenebrous (*ḡubmānī*) and composite (*murakkab*).¹⁶

These are the four basic levels of existence, referred to respectively as the “supra-formal” (*maʿnawī*, i.e., related to the “meanings” in God’s Knowledge, the term “meaning”—*maʿnā*—being synonymous with immutable entity), the “spiritual” (*rūḥānī*), the “imaginal” (*mithālī*), and the “sensory” (*ḥissī*). The first is uncreated, while the last three are created.

As for the Perfect Man, he embraces all four levels of existence. Ordinary man, also, embraces all four levels, at least in the sense that they are clearly reflected within him. His “reality” or “meaning”—i.e., his Divine level—is his immutable entity. His spirit corresponds to the World of the Spirits, his soul to the World of Image-Exemplars, and his body to the sensory world. Then as a unity he reflects the Perfect Man.

In the following discussion al-Qūnawī clarifies the nature of the three lowest levels of existence and man’s relationship to them:

The World of Spirits precedes the World of Corporeal-Bodies (*ʿālam al-ajsām*) [i.e., the sensory world] both in being and in level. The Divine Succour which reaches the corporeal-bodies depends upon the intermediary of the Spirits between the corporeal-bodies and God. Moreover, the governing (*tadbīr*) of the corporeal-bodies is entrusted to the Spirits, but no interrelationship can exist between the two sides, because of the intrinsic disparity between the composite and the noncomposite: All corporeal-bodies are composite, while the Spirits are noncomposite, so there is no affinity (*munāsaba*) between them, and thus no interrelationship. As long as there is no interrelationship, there can be no actualization of the exercising and receiving of effects (*taʿthīr wa taʿathīhur*), nor of the giving and receiving of succour (*imdād wa istimdād*). So God created the World of Image-Exemplars as an Isthmus comprehending the World of the Spirits and the World of the Corporeal-Bodies, in order that each

of the two worlds may establish a relationship with the other.

Through the World of Image-Exemplars and its characteristic, Spirits become corporealized within their imaginal loci of manifestation (*mazāhir-hā al-mithāliyya*), a fact alluded to in God's words, "He [the Spirit] became manifest to her [Mary] in imaginal form (*tamaththa*) as a man without fault" (S. 19:17). In a similar manner the Prophet said, "Sometimes an angel becomes manifest to me in the imaginal form of a man." There are also his words concerning the Garden and the Fire: "The Garden and the Fire were just now made to appear to me in imaginal form in the length of this wall". . . . Spiritualized men (*al-mutarawwihīn*) ascend to the World of Image-Exemplars in their spiritual journeys actualized when they discard these natural, elemental forms and when their spirits become clothed in spiritual loci of manifestation.

A similar situation can be discerned, both theoretically and actually, in the relationship between man's spirit and his natural, elemental body, which the spirit governs and encompasses: Since his body and spirit are separate in the manner alluded to, and since there is no possibility of the interrelationship upon which governing and the arrival of succour depend, God created his animal soul (*nafsuhu al-hayawāniyya*) as an isthmus between the body and the disembodied (*mufāriq*) spirit. So in the respect that it is an intellect-like faculty (*quwwa 'aqliyya*); the animal soul is noncomposite and has an affinity with the disembodied spirit. But in the respect that it comprises in its very essence diverse and multiple faculties, spread throughout the body and exercising diverse kinds of free-disposal (*taṣarruḥ*), and it is carried in the foggy vapor in the left chamber of the bodily heart, it has an affinity with the constitution, which is compounded from the elements. So interrelationship and giving and receiving effects become actualized, and bestowing succour and governing can be achieved.¹⁷

The reason for the division of the Presences into five can be summarized in slightly different terms as follows. There are two basic Presences, the Unseen and the Visible. But some things are more Unseen than others, just as some things are more Visible than others. So each Presence can be divided into "true" (*ḥaqīqī*) and "relative" (*iqāfī*). The True Unseen is God along with His Names and Attributes. The Relative Unseen is the World of the Spirits. The True Visible is the

sensory world, and the Relative Visible is the World of Image-Exemplars. Finally the Perfect Man comprehends all four Presences.¹⁸

If we leave aside religious symbolism and take a more philosophical approach, we can derive the Presences from the very nature of Being as discussed by the Peripatetic philosophers. Being is divided into three categories: Necessary (*wājib*), possible (*mumkin*) and impossible (*imkāni*). The Necessary Being is by its very nature and cannot not be. The impossible being can never exist, since it contradicts the very nature of Being. Therefore we can leave it out of the discussion. The possible being is that thing whose relationship to existence and nonexistence is equal. It may exist, or it may not. All the things of the world are possible beings which have come into existence because the side of their existence has been "preferred" (*tarjīh*) over their nonexistence. The Necessary Being has chosen to give them existence for a certain period, although It will choose to take it away from them when the exigencies of Its Reality so demand.

So on the one side we have the Necessary Being, the First Presence, and on the other we have the possible things. Now these are divided immediately into three kinds. First, there are those which are still completely dominated by the properties of the Necessary Being, i.e., Oneness and nonmanifestation; these are the Spirits. Then there are other things which are completely dominated by the properties of possibility, i.e., manyness and manifestation; these are the realities of the sensory world. Finally, there are things which are fairly well balanced in their properties, dominated neither by Necessity nor by possibility; these are the image-exemplars. The Perfect Man, then, becomes manifest in the form of all things, possessing the properties of all levels, from pure Necessity to pure possibility, and bringing all together into a single whole.¹⁹

These then are the Five Divine Presences as explained by Ibn al-ʿArabī's foremost disciple: the (1) Divine, (2) spiritual, (3) imaginal, (4) sensory and (5) all-comprehensive, human levels. Al-Qūnawī's exposition makes clear the progression from two to three to five Presences. Perhaps since he had already explained these points, or because they were so obvious, his followers never seem to bother to repeat the process of deriving the levels from the nature of things; nor do they concern themselves for the most part with the Perfect Man as the Central Presence, the other four Presences being ranged on the two sides. Rather they concentrate upon refining the discussion of the four

levels of descent, from God or the Presence of Knowledge to the sensory world.

Al-Qūnawī's disciple al-Farḡhānī prefers to speak of six universal levels of entification. A case can be made for saying that he considers the level of Nonentification as the first level, and then enumerates the other five like his master. But since he speaks of the first level as the "First Entification" and is careful in his use of terminology, I think we must say that he discerns an additional level of entification preceding the level of Knowledge.

It is not that al-Qūnawī does not discern this level. He does, but he prefers to leave it out of the picture when discussing the Presences, or rather, to assimilate it into the First. Moreover, al-Farḡhānī's writings are based explicitly on al-Qūnawī's teachings, and although al-Qūnawī's best known works discuss relatively few of the subjects treated by al-Farḡhānī, in this context one of his short works outlines practically all of them.²⁰

Concerning the First Entification, al-Qūnawī writes, "God's entification as Oneness is the mode (*ʔtibāʔ*) which follows Nonentification and Nondelimitation. After this Oneness follows the mode of His knowing Himself through Himself in Himself. . . . This mode opens the door to other modes [i.e., prepares the way for further entifications]. . . . So to the relation of Knowledge belongs the relation of Inclusive-Oneness (*al-waḥdāniyya*), which follows Exclusive-Unity (*al-aḥādīyya*), which in turn follows the Unknown, Nonentified Nondelimitation."²¹

Thus, the First Presence may in fact be considered as two Presences: Oneness, but a Oneness which excludes all other Attributes and Names; and Knowledge, which takes all the infinite entities and things as its object. These two levels will be known to those familiar with the teachings of Ibn al-ʔArabī's school as "Exclusive-Unity" (*al-aḥādīyya*) and "Inclusive-Unity" (*al-wāḥidīyya*). Al-Farḡhānī seems to have made these two terms popular through his commentary on Ibn al-Fāriḍ. But again it is al-Qūnawī who was probably the first to juxtapose them, in two passages in his works (in other places, such as above, he speaks of *al-waḥdāniyya* instead of *al-wāḥidīyya*). In one of these two passages al-Qūnawī writes, "Exclusive-Unity [is the level where] all the modes contained within Oneness are eliminated, whereas within Inclusive-Unity they are established."²² In the other he says, "God may correctly be called the principle and source of a thing or things only in respect of Inclusive-Unity. . . . Inclusive-Unity follows Exclusive-Unity and is the origin of the Names and Attributes, which possess relative manyness."²³

In short, when we conceive of God at the level of His Oneness, where nothing exists but He, we may consider Him as Being and nothing else; in this case all things are consumed by His Oneness. Or we may consider Him as the source of all things, as the Creator who knows all entities in His Infinite Knowledge and who can bestow existence upon them if He so chooses. From the first point of view His Oneness excludes the conception of any other things. From the second, His Oneness contains all things potentially.

Al-Farḡhānī considers these two points of view as the first and second levels of entification.²⁴ He writes,

The universal levels are limited to five, two of them pertaining to God, and three to engendered existence (*al-kawn*). Then a sixth comprehends them all.

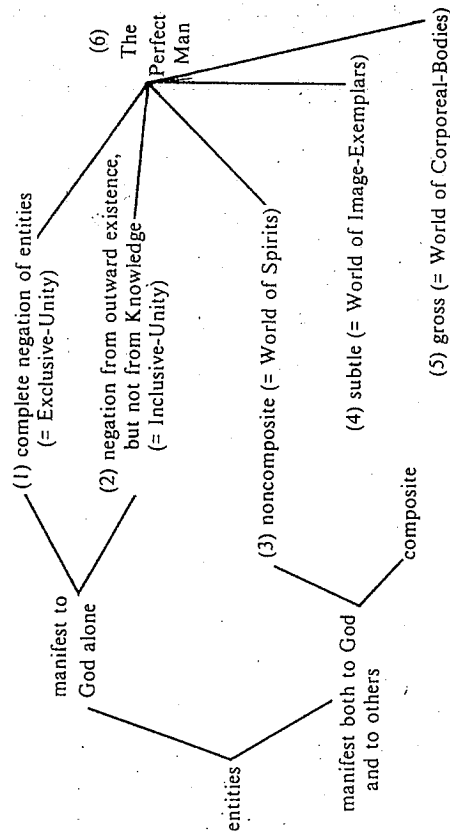
Since the levels are loci of manifestation and theophany, whatever becomes manifest within them must either become manifest to God alone, not to the engendered things; or to both God and the engendered things.

The first level is called the "Level of the Unseen," since within it every engendered thing is unseen by itself or by its like. So nothing becomes manifest there, except to God.

But manifestation may be negated from things in two ways. On the one hand their entities may be negated completely—since "God is, and nothing is with Him." So manifestation is negated from them both in Knowledge and existence, since their entities are completely negated. This locus of theophany (*majlāʔ*) is the First Entification or the First Level of the Unseen. On the other hand, the attribute of manifestation [within outward existence] may be negated from the entities of things, while they are realized, differentiated and immutably established within the Beginningless Knowledge. They are manifest to their Knower, but not to themselves or to their likes, just as is the case with the images fixed within our minds. This locus of manifestation is the Second Entification, the World of Meanings, or the Second Level. . . .

As for that which is a locus of manifestation and theophany within which what becomes manifest becomes manifest also to the engendered things, both in Knowledge and in existence, this is of three kinds. First, it may be a locus of manifestation within which what becomes manifest becomes manifest to things which are engendered and existent, but noncomposite in their essences. This is called the "Level of the Spirits." Second, it may be a locus

of manifestation within which what becomes manifest becomes manifest to composite existent things. Then these composite, existent things may either be subtle (*latif*)—in the sense that they do not undergo division, partition or breaking and mending—in which case their locus of manifestation and the place where things become manifest to them is called the “Level of Image-Exemplars”; or these composite existents may be gross (*kathif*) either in relation to those subtle things, or in reality, in the sense that they do undergo division, partition and breaking and mending. In the latter case their locus of manifestation and the place in which what becomes manifest to them manifests itself is called the “Level of Sense-Perception,” the “World of the Visible” and the “World of Corporeal-Bodies.” Then the True Man comprehends all things [see diagram].²⁵



Al-Farghānī's division of the entities into six universal levels

Elsewhere al-Farghānī includes both the First and Second Entifications within the First Presence, and thus he returns to the scheme of his master:

Certain realities act as loci for the manifestation of the universal realities we have referred to. . . . These loci are then called the “levels,” “worlds” and “Presences.” They are confined to four kinds, while a fifth kind comprehends them all in terms of both particularized deployment (*tafṣīl*) and summated unity (*ijmāl*).

The first is called the “Presence and level of the Unseen and the meanings.” It is the Presence of the Essence through the First and Second Entifications and what the two comprise, i.e., the [Divine] states (*shu'ūr*) and modes in the first place and the Divine and engendered realities in the second.

The second Presence, which is situated in the opposite position, is called the “Level of the Visible and Sense-Perception.” It extends from the All-Merciful's Throne to the world of dust, and encompasses everything that is born from them and everything that exists in between, i.e., the forms of the species, kinds and individuals of the world.²⁶

The third, which follows the Level of the Unseen in a descending direction, is called the “Level of Spirits.”

The fourth, which follows the World of Sense-Perception in an ascending direction, is called the “World of Discontiguous Image-Exemplars and Imagination.”

The reality of the world comprehends all of them in the mode of particularized deployment, while the human, elemental form comprehends them in the mode of summated unity.²⁷

Here al-Farghānī adds another element to the various classifications of the Presences by making the All-Comprehensive Level consist of two dimensions, the reality of the world and the form of man, a formulation I have not seen elsewhere. “Reality” like “entity” may be considered as “nonexistent” within Knowledge, “existent” in outward manifestation, or nondelimited by either existence or nonexistence.²⁸ And the “world,” as was said above, is “everything other than God.” So if we take reality in the widest and nondelimited sense, the “reality of the world” would encompass all entities and things known in Knowledge and deployed throughout the ontological levels. As for “form” (*ṣūra*), it stands in opposition to “meaning” and represents its outward aspect. The duality “form - meaning” is practically synonymous with that of “outward - inward.” “Elemental” (*unsūrī*), i.e., composed of the four elements, indicates that the form subsists at the level of the world of Corporeal-Bodies, and that in fact the physical reality of man is meant. So what al-Farghānī seems to be saying is that outwardly the Perfect Man is physical man, whereas inwardly he comprehends the realities of all things.

It is probably fair to say that al-Farghānī's first classification of the ontological levels—contained in the more popular Arabic version of his work—is the one that exercised more widespread influence. However, in order to maintain five Presences and avoid having to

expand them to six, the all-comprehensive ontological level to which he refers was often ignored.

Although al-Jandī constantly refers to the individual Presences in his enormous commentary upon the *Fuṣūṣ*, he rarely discusses them together, and only in one instance does he discuss them as the "Five Divine Presences." In this passage, he presents a still different scheme for dividing them, for he considers the World of Imagination as two Presences and does not speak of the Perfect Man as a separate level. Although I have seen this division attributed to al-Qunawī, I have not found it in his works.²⁹

Al-Qunawī and his followers divide the World of Imagination or Image-Exemplars into two kinds, but usually they combine the two when they speak of the Five Presences. One kind is called "discontiguous" (*murfasiḥ*), while the other is referred to as "contiguous" (*muttaṣil*). The first kind is independent of man's ordinary consciousness and reflects the World of the Spirits directly. Hence Ibn al-'Arabī calls the ninth chapter of the *Fuṣūṣ* the "Wisdom of Light as embodied in the Logos of Joseph." But instead of discussing the Divine Name "Light" as one might expect, he deals with the World of Imagination. The commentators explain that he is referring to discontiguous imagination, which is luminous in relation to the World of Corporeal Bodies, but tenebrous in relation to the World of Spirits.

As for contiguous imagination, that is the World of Imagination as it becomes connected to individual man and delimited by his faculties. Al-Qunawī refers to the two kinds of imagination in the following passage:

The World of Image-Exemplars is related to the outward form of the world—which is the locus of manifestation for God's Name the "Outwardly-Manifest" (*al-zāhir*)—in the same way that man's mind (*dhihr*) and imagination are related to his outward form In the World of Image-Exemplars no imperfection stains God's Knowledge or Power, that Power of which the representational faculty (*al-quwwa al-mutaṣawwira*) [the imaginal faculty] is a transcription (*nuskhah*). . . . So nothing assumes corporeal form in this world except in keeping with Knowledge. No ignorance touches that Knowledge. Hence the imaginal forms must correspond correctly [to the entities as they are in themselves]. The same thing may be said about the Spirits and the Supernal Souls (*al-nufūs al-'āliya*) [i.e., the Spiritual World, which also

manifests the realities of things directly]. But the situation in man is different. For his imaginal faculty is subordinate to the luminosity of his spirit and to what his spirit has already come to know. His spirit dictates to the imaginal faculty, and the faculty sets out to copy it, but in keeping with the excellence of the condition of the brain (*al-dimāgh*), the soundness or disequilibrium of the constitution, and the peculiarities of the time and the place. This contrasts with what becomes corporealized within the World of Image-Exemplars, i.e., first the Name "Inwardly-Nonmanifest" (*al-bā'im*), and second the Intellects and the Souls. Hence the relation of the delimited imaginations of men to the World of Image-Exemplars is the relation of streams to a great river from which they branch off but to which they remain connected. In other words, one side of every imagination is adjacent and contiguous to the World of Image-Exemplars. So the correctness of man's imagination and visions has a number-of causes. . . .³⁰

With this introduction, we can understand the logic of al-Jandī's description of the Presences, which I summarize here. First is the World of Meanings. These are the forms taken by the objects of God's Knowledge in Eternity-without-beginning. The People of God call them the "immutable entities."

Second is the World of the Spirits, to which pertain such attributes as transcendence, glorification, purity, oneness, noncomposition, nobility and luminosity.

Third is the World of Image-Exemplars. Here theophanies become corporealized, the supraformal entities become personified, the Names and Attributes assume forms, and the meanings and Spirits are manifested as images in shapes and appearances. For in this world all of these possess the power to become corporealized, to assume shapes and to manifest themselves in images. They are perceived as corporeal things, although in themselves they are supraformal or spiritual.

In the fourth Presence the Spirits and meanings are perceived as imaginal forms and shapes by every living thing that possesses the faculty of imagination. These meanings and Spirits assume forms and shapes in keeping with the means of perception's various concomitants and in accordance with the affinities, disparities, relations, and combinations between the two sides, but delimited by the imaginal faculty within the *sensus communis* (*al-ḥiss al-muṣhtarik*).

The difference between the third and fourth Presences is that the third Presence consists of the first imaginal forms, shapes and

conditions within which the Spirits, meanings and theophanies descend and become manifest. These forms, shapes and conditions are spiritual and luminous "bodies" (*qawālib*) or "edifices" (*hayākil*) for the Spirits and meanings in keeping with the Spirits and meanings themselves, not in relation to the means of perception or within the *sensus communis*. But in the fourth Presence the forms that are assumed follow the locus within which they appear and correspond to the locus's level and perception.

The fifth Presence is the World of Corporeal-Bodies. . . .³¹

Although al-Jandī does not speak of the Perfect Man as a separate Presence, in the next paragraphs he proceeds to discuss the manner in which all five Presences are combined and unified within him.³²

Al-Kāshānī summarizes his views concerning the Divine Presences in his commentary on the *Fūṣūṣ*:

In the views of the Sufis there are five worlds, each of which is a Presence within which God becomes manifest: (1) the Presence of the Essence; (2) the Presence of the Attributes and Names, i.e., the Presence of Divinity; (3) the Presence of the Acts, i.e., the Presence of Lordship; (4) the Presence of Image-Exemplars and Imagination; and (5) the Presence of Sense-Perception and the Visible. [In each case] the lower is an image and locus of manifestation for the higher. The highest is [the Essence or] the World of the Nondelimited Unseen, also called the "Unseen of the Unseens." The lowest is the World of the Visible, which is the last of the Presences.³³

Here we see that al-Kāshānī makes the level of Nonentification, which others have not usually considered a Presence, the first of the Presences. The Presence of Knowledge (al-Qūnawī) or the Second Entification (al-Farghānī) is then the second Presence. The third is the locus in which God makes His Power outwardly manifest, where His Lordship is *displayed* most clearly, i.e., the World of the Spirits. The fourth and the fifth are the same as in most schemes, and the Perfect Man is ignored.

In effect al-Kāshānī simplifies the Presences considerably, and makes them embrace the *whole* of Being, both entified and nonentified. But the Perfect Man has no place in his scheme, nor does he appear to clarify the Perfect Man's role in relation to the Presences in his other writings. Part of the reason for his classification of the Presences may be found in the fact that he identifies the Presence of Exclusive-Unity

with the Essence Itself³⁴ and thus ignores many of the subtleties of al-Qūnawī's and al-Farghānī's discussions of the Presences.

Al-Qaysārī's scheme corresponds largely with that of al-Qūnawī. He writes in the introduction to his commentary on the *Fūṣūṣ*:

The first of the universal Presences is the (1) Presence of the Nondelimited Unseen. Its world is that of the immutable entities in the Presence of Knowledge. Facing it in the opposite position is the (2) Presence of the Nondelimited Visible, whose world is that of the Dominion (*al-mulk*) [the World of Sense-Perception]. Then there is the Relative Unseen. It is divided into two parts: the first is (3) that which is nearer to the Nondelimited Unseen. Its world is that of the Spirits of the Kingdom (*al-malakūt*) and the Invincibility (*al-jabarūt*),³⁵ i.e., the world of the disengaged (*mujarrad*) Intellects and Souls. The second part of the Relative Unseen is (4) that which is nearer to the Visible. Its world is that of the Image-Exemplars; the reason the Relative Unseen becomes divided into two parts is that Spirits possess imaginal forms which have an affinity with the World of the Nondelimited Visible, and intellectual, disengaged forms which have an affinity with the Nondelimited Unseen. The fifth is the (5) Presence which comprehends the above four. Its world is the human world, which comprehends all worlds and everything within them.³⁶

In the lines immediately following this passage, al-Qaysārī looks at the Presences from another point of view and in so doing alludes to other schemes we have seen.

So the (1) World of the Dominion is the locus of manifestation for the (2) World of the Kingdom, which is the Nondelimited Imaginal World. It in turn is the locus of manifestation for the (3) World of Invincibility, i.e., the World of Disengaged Realities. And this world is the locus of manifestation for (4) the World of the Immutable Entities, which manifests the (5) Divine Names or Presence of Inclusive-Unity, which itself is the locus of manifestation for the (6) Presence of Exclusive-Unity.³⁷

In this second classification al-Qaysārī ignores the Perfect Man and divides al-Qūnawī's first Presence into three different levels: that of Exclusive-Unity, Inclusive-Unity and the Immutable entities. Al-Qaysārī says nothing about the level of the Essence or Nondelimitation as such in these two schemes. But it seems that like al-Qūnawī and

unlike his own teacher al-Kāshānī, al-Qaysarī considers it as the source of all entification and as such outside of any scheme.

By now it has become clear that there is no set description of the Five Divine Presences that all Sufis have followed. On the contrary, even in the works of these five figures, who wrote within 100 years of one another and were closely bound together by master-disciple relationships, there are several different interpretations. Obviously, innumerable other figures modified the views of these masters and added their own interpretations over the centuries.

Of course this is not to imply that any fundamental discrepancy separates the various schemes we have discussed. The differences derive from the particular point of view or the terminology employed; they relate mainly to descriptions of the "Unseen of the Unseens"—the ineffable Essence—and its immediate concomitants. By its very Unknowability God's inmost nature seems to preclude any sharp and fast definitions. But the overall scheme remains the same: The whole of Reality is divided into the Uncreated and the created; the latter in turn is divided into three primary levels (Spirits, Corporeal-Bodies and an Isthmus lying between the two); and a fifth reality—whether specifically mentioned or only implied—comprehends all the levels.

Encyclopaedia Iranica

New York, NY

WILLIAM C. CHITTICK

FOOTNOTES

¹ See W. Chittick, "Šadr al-Dīn Qūnawī on the Oneness of Being," *International Philosophical Quarterly*, XXI (1981), 171-84; also *idem*, "The Perfect Man as the Prototype of the Self in the Sufism of Jāmī," *Studia Islamica*, XLIX (1979), 135-57.

² *Al-Fukūk* was published on the margin of al-Kāshānī's *Sharḥ manāzil al-sā'irīn* (Tehran, 1315/1897-98), pp. 183-300. For a description of his most important works see W. Chittick, "The Last Will and Testament of Ibn 'Arabi's Foremost Disciple and Some Notes on its Author," *Sophia Perennis*, IV (1978), 43-58.

³ I have given ample documentation to establish all of these points in a forthcoming book on al-Qūnawī.

⁴ A further discussion is found in the work announced in the previous note. It may be that the only commentary upon the *Fuṣūṣ* which does not derive directly or indirectly from this line is that of 'Afīf al-Dīn al-Tilimsānī (d. 690/1291). Although he was a direct disciple of Ibn al-'Arabi, he was also al-Qūnawī's closest companion and follower, so that at his death al-Qūnawī willed his own writings to him (see my article mentioned in note 2 above). In addition, al-Tilimsānī's commentary is a short one, not nearly as detailed and exhaustive as al-Jandī's, only taking up those ideas of Ibn al-'Arabi that strike his fancy. I have examined two Istanbul manuscripts of the work: Šehid Ali Paşa 1248 and Hacı Mahmud 2654. See O. Yahia, *Histoire et classification de l'oeuvre d'Ibn 'Arabi* (Damascus, 1964), p. 242, no. 4.

⁵ See his *Muntaha'l-madārik* [in Arabic] (Istanbul, 1293/1876); also his *Mashāhīq al-darārī* [in Persian], ed. by S.J. Āshīyānī (Tehran, 1357/1938).

⁶ Al-Qūnawī wrote this sentence as part of a marginal note in his work *F'jāz al-bayān*, and Jāmī quotes it in *Naqd al-nuṣūṣ*, ed. by W. Chittick (Tehran, 1977), p. 73. Although *F'jāz al-bayān* has been published three times, Qūnawī's own marginal notes, which number at least thirty and would probably add as many pages to the text, have never been printed. The following is a list of Istanbul manuscripts which contain some or all of the notes: Ayasofya 402 (from a manuscript read before al-Qūnawī); Damad Ibrahim Paşa 126 (dated 880); Döğümli Baba 18; Fatih 293 (dated 677); Feyzullah 72 (dated 876); Halet Ef. 38/1, 43/1 (dated 853), 46 (collated with the Köprülü manuscript below); Kara Çelebi Zade 13 (dated 787); Köprülü 41 (in al-Farghānī's hand, but missing about ten folios); Nafiz Paşa 67; Pertev Paşa 48; Reisülküttab 16, 17, 55, 464 (dated 722, collated with a manuscript in al-Qūnawī's hand); Šehid Ali Paşa 135 (dated 811), 136, 137, 138/1; Üniv. A1759 (dated 809); Yeni Cami 62 (dated 860); Yeni Medrese 1742 (dated 826). In other Istanbul manuscripts I have examined, the notes have been dropped. These include: Ayasofya 4806/1; Bağdatlı Vehbi Ef. 2087/2; Crh. 37 (dated 863), 275/2 (dated 958), 2058/4; Fatih 295/1 (incomplete); Halet Ef. ilavesi 2; Lâleli 172/1; Nuruosmaniye 337; Šehid Ali Paşa 1389/1 (incomplete); Üniv. A 153, 842; Yeni Cami 63/1 (dated 964).

⁷ As is well known, Ibn al-'Arabi's corpus of writings is vast. His *al-Fuṣūḥāt al-makkiyya* alone contains more than most prolific authors write in a lifetime. I have not been able to discover any reference to the Five Presences as such in the works I have read by and about Ibn al-'Arabi, which are far outnumbered by those I have not read.

⁸ See *Naqd al-nuṣūṣ*, pp. 29-30.

⁹ *Sharḥ fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam* (Tehran, 1299/1881-82), p. 26; also in S.J. Āshīyānī, *Sharḥ-i muqaddima-yi Qaysarī bar Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam* (Mashhad, 1385/1966), p. 268. Other terms are also often employed as equivalent to "level" and "world," such as "plane" (*nash'ā*), "entification" (*ta'ayyun*), "descent" (*tanazzul*) and "theophany" (*tajallī*). Cf. *Naqd al-nuṣūṣ*, p. 34, fn. 26.

¹⁰ *Inshā' al-dawā'ir*, ed. by H.S. Nyberg (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1919), pp. 21-22; quoted in *Naqd al-nuṣūṣ*, pp. 102-103.

¹¹ *F'jāz al-bayān fi tafsiṣ unim al-Qur'ān*, 2nd ed. (Hyderabad-Deccan, 1368/1949), p. 113; also published as *al-Tafsīr al-ṣūfī li 'l-Qur'ān*, ed. by A.A. 'Atā' (Cairo, 1389/1969), p. 221.

¹² See my article on "The Perfect Man" mentioned in note 1.

¹³ See my article on "Šadr al-Dīn Qūnawī" mentioned in note 1.

¹⁴ 'Afīf al-Dīn al-Tilimsānī, *Sharḥ fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, chapter on Abraham.

¹⁵ *F'jāz al-bayān*, pp. 3-4/99; *al-Nafḥāt al-ilāhiyya* (Tehran, 1316/1898-99), p. 21; *Sharḥ al-ḥādīth*, nos. XVII and XXI. I have prepared an edition of this last work from the following Istanbul manuscripts: Šehid Ali Paşa 138/2, 1369/1, 1371/2, 1394/2; Crh. 2085/7, 2097/6; Hacı Mahmud 574; Ibrahim Ef. 870/1.

¹⁶ *Al-Fukūk*, pp. 204, 266-67.

¹⁷ *Sharḥ al-ḥādīth*, XXII. Most of this passage is quoted in *Naqd al-nuṣūṣ*, pp. 54-55; part of it has been translated by H. Corbin in *Spiritual Body and Celestial Earth* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), pp. 176-77, although he attributes it to Muḥsin Fayḍ Kāshānī, who in fact quotes it (without mentioning his source) from *Naqd al-nuṣūṣ*. See the Persian Introduction to the latter work, p. i, fn. 2.

¹⁸ Al-Qūnawī refers to this scheme in *F'jāz al-bayān*, p. 86/194, and al-Jandī alludes to it in his commentary on the *Fuṣūṣ*, chapter on Noah. S.J. Āshīyānī is preparing an edition of this commentary, probably the most important of the more than 100 commentaries on Ibn al-'Arabi's masterpiece. I have consulted an excellent manuscript dated 791: Kiliç Ali Paşa 606. Other valuable Istanbul manuscripts are the following: Nuruosmaniye 2457 (seventh century); Šehid Ali Paşa 1240 (copied for Mehmet the

In one passage al-Qūnawī explicitly places the damned at the level of the "lower world," a term which usually denotes the World of Sense-Perception, but in this passage more likely refers to the World of Image-Exemplars. He says that the damned are "dominated by the characteristics of composition and grossness . . . Their spiritual faculties and attributes have become effaced by their natural faculties (*quwāhum al-ḡabrīyya*). So their spiritual substance turns to nothing" (*Sharḥ al-ḥadīth*, XXI; see my article, "Commentary on a *Ḥadīth* by Ṣadr al-Dīn Qūnawī," *Alserat*, VI, no. 1 (1980), 23-30. On the stages of the two "arcs" of ontological descent and ascent, see *Miftāḥ al-ghayb*, on the margin of al-Fanārī's *Misbāḥ al-ins* (Tehran, 1323/1905-1906), pp. 225-26; *al-Fukūk*, p. 190; *Ḥāj al-bayān*, pp. 197-98/310-11.

²⁷ *Mashāriḥ al-darārī*, p. 36, most of passage quoted in *Naqd al-nuṣūṣ*, pp. 31-32.

²⁸ See the article on "Ṣadr al-Dīn Qūnawī" mentioned in note 1.

²⁹ The author of a short commentary on two lines of Ibn al-'Arabī's poetry (*kunnā ḥurūfān 'āliyat lam nuqallī mutā'allaqāt fī dhurā' al-ḡalal* . . .) divides the Presences in this manner and attributes the scheme to al-Qūnawī. Jāmī quotes this passage in *Naqd al-nuṣūṣ* (pp. 32-33; and see also pp. 515-17). In some manuscripts this work is attributed to al-Fanārī, one of al-Qūnawī's commentators. Since the manuscripts of this work are not classified under a single author or title—hence the only way to find them is by chance—I mention the ones I have come across: Reṣīd Ef. 344/6 (fols. 57-61; attributed to al-Fanārī); Hakīm Dolu 939/2; Crh. 2054/5 (fols. 49-51), 2061/26 (incomplete), 2097/2 (fols. 5-7); Faṭḥ 2630/5 (fols. 116-19; attributed to al-Fanārī and dated 881); Ayasofya 2090/3. There are at least two other commentaries on the same two lines of poetry. The first is by one Jamāl al-Dīn 'Abū 'l-Maḥāsīn 'Abdallāh in answer to Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad, known as Bādār, the son of Ṣadr al-Dīn Iskandar al-Sharīf al-Ḥasanī (mss.: Ṣehid Ali Paşa 1389/2, dated 777; Ṣehid Ali Paşa 1344/6, fols. 51-5; Kara Çelebi Zade 345/17, fols. 188-99). The level of discussion is high and displays an example of the writing of an unknown master of Ibn al-'Arabī's school. The second is attributed at the beginning of the codex to al-Kāshānī: Crh. 2054/4, fols. 47-49.

³⁰ *Al-Fukūk*, p. 205; also *Sharḥ al-ḥadīth*, XXII.

³¹ *Sharḥ fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, commentary on the *khūḍba*, tenth discussion concerning *al-ḥamd*.

³² It seems useful at this point to refer to another usage of the term "imagination" which might create confusion as to its exact place in the hierarchy of the Presences. In certain passages al-Qūnawī refers to the "World of Nondelimited Image-Exemplars" (*ālam al-mithāl al-nuṣūṣ*) while identifying it with the Central Presence, i.e., the Perfect Man (*Ḥāj al-bayān*, p. 62/167; *Sharḥ al-ḥadīth*, XVII). In such contexts he is following Ibn al-'Arabī, who identifies "Nondelimited Imagination" with the "Mist" (see above, note 26) and calls the latter the "all-comprehensive Presence and all-embracing level" (*al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya* [Beirut, n.d.], II, 310; cf. the invaluable lexicon of Ibn al-'Arabī's technical terminology by S. al-Ḥakīm, *al-Muḥjam al-ṣūfī* [Beirut, 1981], pp. 447ff., 820ff., and H. Corbin, *Creative Imagination in the Sufism of Ibn 'Arabī* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969], p. 186). Ibn al-'Arabī also identifies the Mist with the Breath of the All-Merciful, "within which all creatures become manifest" and which is the "substance of all the world" (*Futūḥāt*, III, 465; II, 313). Al-Qūnawī makes the same identification and adds that the Mist is "the station of the Perfect Man inasmuch as he is a Perfect Man" (*Ḥāj al-bayān*, p. 47/150). In short, by classifying Nondelimited Imagination as the Central Presence, al-Qūnawī is acknowledging that it is one of the names of the Perfect Man (for some forty other names employed by Ibn al-'Arabī as synonymous, at least from certain points of view, see *al-Muḥjam al-ṣūfī*, p. 158). But the correspondence between Nondelimited Imagination and the Perfect Man was soon lost to sight by Ibn al-'Arabī's followers. Al-Qūnawī refers to it, as indicated above; al-Farḡānī mentions it twice in the introduction to his Persian *Mashāriḥ al-darārī* (pp. 23, 39-40), but in his Arabic revision of the same work (*Muntaha'l-madārik*), he does not employ the term, perhaps indicating that it was already being discarded. In

Conqueror in 869), Lāleli 1417 (dated 824), Halet Ef. 261; Reṣīd Ef. 405 (dated 895); Ṣehid Ali Paşa 1241.

¹⁹ Al-Qūnawī discusses this division in *Ḥāj al-bayān*, p. 379/510-11.

²⁰ *Tahrīr al-bayān fī taqrīr shu'ab al-imān wa rutab al-iḥsān*. I have prepared an edition of this work from these Istanbul manuscripts: Crh. 1001/4, 2054/9; Faṭḥ 1394/2, 2630/1; Ṣehid Ali Paşa 1340/2, 1382/7; Halet Ef. ilavesi 66/6; Feyzullah 2163/13; Topkapı E.H. 546/3.

²¹ *Al-Hādīya*, in which al-Qūnawī replies to Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī's answers to his [al-Qūnawī's] questions. For a summary of the contents of their correspondence, see W. Chittick, "Mysticism versus Philosophy in Earlier Islamic History: The al-Ṭūsī, al-Qūnawī Correspondence," *Religious Studies*, XVII (1981), 87-104.

²² *Tahrīr al-bayān*.

²³ *Al-Fukūk*, p. 238.

²⁴ Al-Farḡānī discusses the First and Second Presences or Entifications in a far more complex and subtle fashion than these quotations might indicate. In the introduction to his commentary on Ibn al-Farīd—especially the Arabic version—he displays a desire to clarify al-Qūnawī's teachings on these questions to the greatest extent possible. Later figures in Ibn al-'Arabī's school for the most part ignore much of the complexity of his analysis. A thorough discussion of his views would entail an independent paper.

²⁵ *Muntaha'l-madārik*, p. 25; quoted in *Naqd al-nuṣūṣ*, pp. 29-30.

²⁶ Al-Farḡānī is alluding to a significant discussion closely connected to that of the Presences, i.e., their relationship with the traditional cosmological symbols such as the Pen (*al-qalam*), the Tablet (*al-lawḥ*), the Throne (*al-'arsh*) and the Footstool (*al-kursī*). This discussion is extremely complex, especially as related to Ibn al-'Arabī's own writings. Here I can allude to al-Qūnawī's scheme as a first contribution to some future study. Al-Qūnawī defines the descending order of the ontological stages in a number of places in terms that can be summarized as follows: The Reality of Realities, the Mist, the Pen [the Universal Intellect], the Tablet [the Universal Soul], the Throne [the ninth heaven], the Footstool [the eighth heaven], the seven heavens, the four elements, the three kingdoms, man. The correspondence between this scheme and the Five Presences can be deduced from various allusions in al-Qūnawī's works and also from the unique manuscript of one of his short Persian tracts, where he states some of them explicitly (Konya Mevlana Müzesi 1633, fol. 118b). The Reality of Realities corresponds to Exclusive-Unity or the Muhammadan Reality. The Mist (*al-'amā'*) is referred to in the Prophet's answer to the question, "Where was our Lord before He created the creatures?" He replied, "In a mist, neither above which nor below which was any air." This reality plays a major role in al-Qūnawī's metaphysics. It usually seems to correspond to Inclusive-Unity, although sometimes it appears wider in scope and then would be equal to the First Presence in his scheme (the First and Second Entifications in al-Farḡānī's scheme). The World of the Spirits extends from the Pen to the Tablet, and the World of Image-Exemplars from the Tablet to the Throne. Finally the World of Corporal-Bodies begins with the Throne itself, embraces the Footstool and the seven heavens and encompasses all the things of the physical world.

As for the eschatological becoming of man, or the ontological stages of the return to God after death, the first is the Isthmus, then the Resurrection, then heaven and hell, then the "Dune of Vision" (*kathīb al-rū'ya*), and finally the Reality of Realities. The Isthmus of course corresponds to the World of Image-Exemplars, whereas the Resurrection is the transferal from that world to the next stage. The various levels of heaven pertain to the Spiritual World, the Dune of Vision being its highest level. Then the Perfect Man transcends even the highest of the Spirits and returns to "nonexistence" and subsistence within God, at the level of the Mist or the Reality of Realities.

The position of hell in this scheme is still not clear to me. Certain considerations seem to place it in the lower spiritual world (*malakūt-i asfal*) [to which the devils and jinn pertain; hell's indefinite duration would place it within some sort of spiritual existence].

both passages of *Mashārīq*, al-Farghānī identifies Nondelimited Imagination with the Mist, and in the second he writes that discontinuous imagination "is like a stream branching off from the Nondelimited Mist-Imagination." Later followers of Ibn al-'Arabī revive the term Nondelimited Imagination as a synonym for discontinuous imagination (e.g., al-Qaysarī, *Sharḥ al-fuṣūṣ*, pp. 27, 184; *Naqd al-nuqūṣ*, p. 156). Corbin follows these later interpretations in his *Creative Imagination* (see especially p. 120) and this error becomes the basis for much of his argument.

³³ *Sharḥ fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam* (Cairo, 1966), chapter on Joseph, p. 132.

³⁴ He states this clearly in two of his short treatises, one on the subject of "*ḥaqīqat al-dhāt al-ilāhīyya*," the other entitled *Faṣl fī l-wujūd* (Ayasofya 4875, fols. 81-83 and 84-85).

³⁵ In one of his Persian treatises (*Tabṣīrat al-mubtadiʿ wa tachkīrat al-muntahāʾ*) al-Qūnawī divides the Kingdom into "Upper" and "Lower." He states that the former is the domain of the archangels or "Kerubim" (*karūbiyyān*) and is called the "Invincibility," while the latter is the domain of the lesser angels. Al-Qaysarī seems to be following this classification here, although many Sufis identify the World of Invincibility with the Names and Attributes.

³⁶ *Sharḥ fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, pp. 26-27; *Sharḥ-i muqaddima-yi Qaysarī*, p. 268. Al-Qaysarī provides the same classification, although phrased somewhat differently, in his introduction to *Sharḥ qaṣīdat al-idāʾīyya*, mss. Lāleli 357/3 (dated 808, only the introduction), Topkapı R. (only the introduction); Hamidiye 652/1, Bağdatlı Vehbi Ef. 702.

³⁷ *Sharḥ fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, p. 27; *Sharḥ-i muqaddima-yi Qaysarī*, p. 268.

A HISTORY OF BENGALI TRANSLATIONS OF THE HOLY QUR'ĀN

Bengali, one of the languages of the eastern group of the Indo-Aryan family, is spoken by more than eighty million Muslims living in Bangladesh and some parts of India. In its native tongue the language is known as Bāṅglā-Bhāṣā or Bāṅga-Bhāṣā, i.e., the language of Bāṅglā or Bāṅga. Although Bengali is one of the oldest languages of South Asia, having its own scripts, it was neither the official nor the religious language of Bengal. The Muslims conquered Bengal at the beginning of the thirteenth century and ruled it until the end of the eighteenth century. Under their rule Persian was the language of culture, administration and inter-state communication. As a result, as many as 2500 Persian words are said to have penetrated into Bengali vocabulary.¹

Although Bengal came under the sway of Muslims at the beginning of the thirteenth century, Islam came to this land much earlier. Modern research reveals a trace of Islamic propagation in northern Bengal as early as the time of Caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd (786-809),² and at the time of establishment of Muslim rule Islam had already a firm footing in Bengal. Unfortunately, neither the new Muslim settlers nor the newly-converted Muslims paid any attention to the translation of religious works in this language which rather was considered to be the language of infidels. But Persian, already the language of court and nobility, was accepted, after Arabic, as an Islamic language.

Persian is said to be the first language in which the Holy Qur'ān was translated, as early as during the time of al-Khulafā' al-Rāshidūn, by Salmān al-Farīsī, one of the companions of the Prophet.³ It was followed by the one made for Abū Saliḥ Maṅṣūr b. Nūh, Samanid ruler of Transoxania and Khurasan (961-976).⁴ Numerous others followed and there are as many as 250 early Persian translations of and commentaries on the Holy Qur'ān.⁵

The Persian venture was followed by the Turkish. From the eleventh century, starting with the Persian version of al-Ṭabarī's commentary,

¹ M. Abdul Hai, "Bengali," *E.I.*, New ed., I, 1167.

² Muhammad Enamul Haq, *Pūrva-Pakistāne Islam* (Dacca, 1948), pp. 10-12.

³ J.D. Pearson, "Al-Ḳur'ān: Translations of the Ḳur'ān," *E.I.*, New ed., V, 429-32.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*