

⁶ That is why all those who enjoy bodily growth will not attain the spiritual perfection of the soul, and live at the boundary between man and animal.

⁷ Mullā Sadrā, *al-Asfār*, vol. 9, p. 294.

⁸ *Ibid.*, vol. 7, p. 126.

⁹ *Ibid.*, vol. 8, p. 13; al-Shawahid al-rububiyah, p. 313.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, vol. 8, p. 330; vol. 3, p. 330.

¹¹ In the science of logic, man is called rational animal, whose genus is corporeal; its differentiae is, Peripatetic philosophical and rational. This synthesis is what is called the synthesis of matter and form by the beginning of creation they are of two separate substances; but he maintains that the rational aptitude is exactly the same as animal aptitude, only at a more developed stage (*Ibid.*, vol. 8, p. 150).

¹² *Ibid.*, vol. 5, p. 289; vol. 8, p. 10.

¹³ *Ibid.*, vol. 8, p. 276.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. 7, p. 118.

¹⁵ Mullā Sadrā maintains two referents for body, one an external and destructible body, and the other a body which is hidden in the former one. It is the latter that is the real bearer of life and in direct relation with the soul (*Ibid.*, vol. 9, p. 98).

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, vol. 8, p. 347.

¹⁷ See Sayyid Muhammad Khamenei, *Sense Perception, Transcendent Philosophy*, vol. 1, no. 1, June 2000, p. 20.

¹⁸ Mullā Sadrā, *al-Asfār*, vol. 9, pp. 97-99.

¹⁹ The soul is, for its essence, simple and of one entity; for its relation with the body, it divides into various aptitudes (for example, concupiscent and irascible aptitudes, which for their dependence on the body, have a certain position; for their dependence on the soul, however, they have no certain positions). This analysis, which is performed in respect to accidents, is not inconsistent with the essential unity and simplicity. That is why it is maintained that the soul, while enjoying simplicity and unity, contains all aptitudes (See *Ibid.*, vol. 9, p. 105).

²⁰ *Ibid.*, vol. 8, p. 53.

²¹ *Ibid.*, vol. 8, p. 130.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. 8, p. 8.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, vol. 8, p. 129.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, vol. 6, p. 375.

²⁷ (*Trané des Passions de l'âme*).

²⁸ Mullā Sadrā, *al-Asfār*, vol. 4, p. 157; vol. 7, p. 66; see also his other books.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, vol. 7, p. 67.

³⁰ Mullā Sadrā, *al-Hashr (risalah fi)*.

³¹ Mullā Sadrā, *al-Asfār*, vol. 9, p. 143.

³² *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 233.

³³ Henry Corbin, *Philosophie Iranienne et Philosophie comparée*, p. 126.

³⁴ Mullā Sadrā described these stages as Sun, eye and its vision. See *al-Asfār*, vol. 3, p. 462.

WILLIAM C. CHITTICK

THE IN-BETWEEN: REFLECTIONS ON THE SOUL IN THE TEACHINGS OF IBN 'ARABI

Ibn 'Arabī was born in Islamic Spain in the middle of the twelfth century, and he died in Damascus in 1240. His most famous contemporary among Muslim philosophers was Averroes, whom he met in his youth, but unlike Averroes, he remained unknown in the West until the present century. Within the Islamic world itself, he was arguably the most influential Muslim philosopher of the past seven hundred years. If he is not normally classified as a philosopher, this is because Islamic "philosophy" (*ḥikmah*) tends to be defined as a school of thought that builds upon Plato, Aristotle, Plotinus, and other Greek thinkers. As such, it is distinguished from two other schools of thought—Kalam (dogmatic theology) and theoretical Sufism (*'irfān*)—both of which cover much of the same intellectual ground, but with different presuppositions and methodologies.

If we look at Ibn 'Arabī's writings without concerning ourselves with the extent to which he may or may not have been indebted to the Greek heritage, we can ask instead what he has to offer to contemporary students of Western philosophy in general and phenomenology in particular. From this point of view, we can easily see that he has made important contributions to philosophical thinking and that his writings prefigure many key issues that have come to the fore only in modern times. Here I would like to offer a few of his teachings on the soul as one small example.

Central to most everything Ibn 'Arabī has to say is the issue of epistemology. In his view, however, one cannot speak about knowledge without investigating the nature of the self that knows. Underlying his epistemology is a psychology, and the psychology in turn is embedded in a cosmology and a metaphysics.

In the Islamic texts, the basic term that was used to translate the Greek *'psyche'* was *'nafs'*, which is normally translated into English as 'self' or 'soul.' In Arabic, *nafs* is the reflexive pronoun, like *self* in English but unlike *psyche* in Greek. As a reflexive pronoun, *'nafs'* can apply to anything. But already in the Koran, the word is used dozens of times independently of any noun to which it refers. In these

instances, it designates the human self in general, and translators typically render the word in this specific Koranic context and in the philosophical writings as 'soul.'

As a designation for the human self or soul, '*nafs*' is used in all schools of Islamic learning. The word was given a variety of definitions, but generally it was taken to refer to the whole configuration of constituents that make up a human being, or to all the components of any living being that are more than simply the body. Sometimes *nafs* was distinguished from *rûh*, which can best be translated as 'spirit,' and sometimes it was not.

In keeping with one common usage, Ibn 'Arabî uses the term '*nafs*' primarily for human beings. He looks upon it as the net result of the divine act through which human beings were created. Mythically, this act is represented as God's preparing the clay of Adam with his own two hands and then blowing his own spirit into the clay. Once the clay came to life through the divine spirit, Adam "himself" came to be distinguished from the components that gave rise to him. Thus the *nafs*—the "self" or "soul"—is what comes to be when God combines body and spirit. It is neither the spirit, nor the body, nor is it completely different from the two. Already in the myth, the domain of the human soul is "in between"—that is, in between the divine breath and the earthly clay, or in between spirit and body.

Like many other Muslim thinkers, Ibn 'Arabî considers knowledge of self a prerequisite for all true knowledge, that is, for all knowledge that both coincides with the ultimate nature of things and helps to bring the self into harmony with that ultimate nature. Whereas the Hellenizing philosophers sometimes cite the Socratic maxim, "Know thyself," Ibn 'Arabî repeatedly refers to this maxim in its Islamic version, the saying attributed to the Prophet, "He who knows himself"—or, "his soul"—"knows his Lord." Without knowing one's *nafs*, one cannot know one's Lord, and without knowing one's Lord, one cannot know one's proper place in existence, nor can one accomplish the human task, which is that of becoming fully human.

For Ibn 'Arabî, knowing the self is the essence of all knowledge. But, the self can only be known in terms of a radical "in-betweenness" (*baynîyya*), and this leaves us with uncertainty in every domain. The knowing subject is in-between—in between spirit and body, light and clay, knowledge and ignorance, awareness and unconsciousness. So also the knowledge known by the self is in-between, because it is inseparable from the self that knows and therefore partakes of its very nature. When we think that we know something, in fact our knowledge lies in between truth and error, reality and unreality, accuracy and inaccuracy. All knowledge is true in one respect and false in another. All knowledge, one might say, is relative.

Nonetheless, the relativity of knowledge does not lead to relativism in any of its modern forms, because the absolute remains lurking beneath the surface and continues to demand that sharp differentiations be made. If Ibn 'Arabî insists on a certain sort of relativism, it is simply because he recognizes the actual human situation and acknowledges the limits of human possibility. In his view, nothing of value can be accomplished on the basis of ignorance and self-deception, and these are sure to result when one sets up false absolutes. Once we recognize where we do in fact stand—a recognition that depends upon knowing who in fact we are—then the path of deliverance from limitations may become clear.

In one passage, Ibn 'Arabî alludes to the manner in which the recognition of the relativity of all things leads to deliverance. He says, "Morning is not hidden from the Possessor of Two Eyes, who distinguishes the in-between from the in-between."¹ Anyone with true vision can see the in-betweens for what they are and recognize that they are not without order and significance. Only then will true understanding dawn from the horizon of darkness, delusion, and deception.

The expression "possessor of two eyes" refers to a basic principle of Ibn 'Arabî's teachings.² Briefly, human beings understand things in two primary modes, which can be called the "eye of reason" or rational thought, and the "eye of imagination" or intuitive apprehension. Seeing with only one eye leads to distortion. True understanding can only come when reason and imagination are kept in delicate balance. Grasping the in-betweenness of all things depends upon seeing with both eyes, because one eye acting on its own is able to perceive only one of the two sides that define the middle.

In the domain of theology, seeing with two eyes means that God must be looked upon both with the eye of reason, which sees him as transcendent and absent, and with the eye of imagination, which sees him as immanent and present. In actual fact, God is both absent and present, or neither absent nor present. If one looks at him with one eye alone, or with one eye predominating over the other, theological error is bound to occur. But the issue is not just theological error, the issue is all the errors that arise from not seeing the self, the world, and all things for what they are.

* * *

To know the actual situation of everything, one must know the principle and root of reality, a principle that is commonly called "the Real" (*al-haqq*). Only the Real is an absolute point of reference, which is to say that, in itself, it does not stand in-between. The Real establishes the nature of everything in the universe. But to know this Real, one must first know oneself. "He who knows himself knows his Lord." The problem with knowing oneself is that the soul has no fixed identity. The self is the embodiment of relativity. It is nothing but a flux, a flurry of relationships, an in-betweenness that can never be tied down to what it is, because it is nothing in particular. Rather, the soul is configured by the web of relationships that shape and mold it. This web embraces not only the social, political, historical, physical, biological, and psychological factors that preoccupy modern scholarship, but also everything that escapes the methods of rational and scientific inquiry.

In short, the self cannot be understood by grasping what it is, because it is nothing in particular. We can only grasp where it stands, and "where it stands" is smack in the middle of all of reality. The soul is the ultimate in-betweenness. It stands between all things, and all things have apparitions and signs within it. By knowing these signs, one can know the things and the self, and by knowing the self, one can know the configuration of all of reality.

Of course, the soul is not unique in its in-betweenness, because everything else is also situated between the absolute, undifferentiated reality of the Real and utter nothingness. What singles out the human soul from everything else is the all-encompassing range of the qualities and characteristics that it can come to possess when it

unfolds within its bodily configuration. Potentially, the soul can adopt every attribute and quality in existence. Made in the image of God, it has no essence or definition other than to be the point of conjunction for all things, that is, every realm of the in-between. Other things tend toward one side or the other, but the soul in its full actualization can only be understood as the point at the center of the circle.

Once the soul completes its trajectory in this life, it moves on to the next place of in-betweenness. Islamic texts commonly call the posthumous realm the "*barzakh*," that is, the "isthmus," because it is situated between the ocean of this life and the ocean of the resurrection. For Ibn 'Arabi, however, every place, time, and world, and indeed every single thing in existence other than the Real, is an isthmus, because nothing can be discretely itself by itself. Discreteness is definition and limitation, but definitions and limitations depend upon the configuration of surrounding realities, and all of these stay in constant flux.

Here we meet one of Ibn 'Arabi's most famous teachings, that of the "renewal of creation at each instant." In his view, everything other than God is destroyed and recreated at every instant, because nothing other than God has any existence in and for itself. Nothing other than the Real can subsist by itself, so each thing must be constantly renewed, just as a ray of light depends for its continuity on unbroken emission by its source.

God, in Koranic terms, is the "light of the heavens and the earth," and all realms of existence are simply rays of God's light. Any discrete point or location on a ray vanishes at once, only to be replaced by a new point at the next instant. Nothing in the realm of existence is ever the same for two successive moments. Everything is an in-betweenness configured on a radius emerging from a dimensionless center, a center that is unknown and imperceptible in itself. Nothing is discrete, nothing is fixed, and everything is constantly changing. The fact that we often do not notice the change does not negate the utter evanescence of all things. But unless we grasp this evanescence, we cannot begin to know our own selves, which can be only understood in terms of their intermediary status in the ocean of evanescence.

So, the existence of all things is constantly renewed. Each thing is an isthmus between other things, both spatially and temporally. In the same way, everything is "imagination" or "image" (*khayāl*). If there is one idea in Ibn 'Arabi's writings that sets him apart from all the other great theologians, philosophers, and Sufi theoreticians who had preceded him, it is certainly imagination. It was often discussed before him, but he made its in-between status the key to true understanding. As he writes,

The knowledge of imagination . . . is a magnificent pillar among the pillars of true knowledge. It is the knowledge of the Isthmus and the knowledge of the world of the subtle bodies within which spiritual things become manifest . . . It is the knowledge of the manifestation of meanings that are not self-standing as embodied . . . It is the knowledge of what people see in dreams, and [the knowledge] of the homestead in which creatures dwell after death and before the Resurrection. . . . Putting aside knowledge of the divine names and the all-pervasiveness of the divine self-disclosure, no pillar of knowledge is more complete, for imagination is the centerpiece of the necklace—the senses ascend up to it and the meanings descend down to it, but it never leaves its own homestead.³

Among the Muslim philosophers, imagination was discussed as one of several internal faculties or senses. It was Ibn 'Arabi who universalized the concept, showing that it is a proper designation for everything other than God. All things are imagination, which is to say that everything is in-between. Everything is an image of the Real, who is pure Being, Knowledge, and Compassion, and everything is simultaneously an image of utter nothingness. All things shimmer between being and nonbeing.

To be an image is to be an isthmus between an object that casts the image and the locus in which the image appears. It is to be located in a never-never land between Being and nonexistence, Light and darkness, Consciousness and unawareness. Like images in a mirror, all things are neither the mirror nor what is reflected in the mirror. From one point of view, the object that casts the image is the absolutely Real, or pure Being, and the locus in which the images appear is nonexistence. But, as Ibn 'Arabi often reminds us, "Nonexistence is not there,"⁴ so the analogy of the mirror can be misleading. Once we have dispensed with the analogy, we are left with a picture of reality akin to the nondualisms of India and East Asia. An infinity of images fills the universe, and all are nothing but the effulgence of Being's Light—dispersed, differentiated, and refracted in a cosmos without beginning and end.⁵

* * *

Discussion of the nature of the soul is utterly central to Ibn 'Arabi's writing. It is fair to say that, from one point of view, the self is his only topic. One of his common themes is that we can know nothing but what we are. All human knowledge is simply the rational articulation of human awareness and consciousness. Everything we know is our self, because awareness and knowledge are situated inside the self, not outside it. What we know is the image of what lies outside, not the things themselves. And everything outside is also nothing but an image. Things have no permanence or substantiality, despite the power of the divine imagination to embody them and display each as an integral part of an entrancing dream.

Human knowledge, then, is an internal image of an external image. To the extent that knowledge does in fact coincide with the thing known, it is closer than the external image to the object that casts it. The external image, after all, pertains to the physical, inanimate realm, but the internal image pertains to a higher realm of being that is identical with life, awareness, and consciousness. Inasmuch as true knowledge of the world becomes entrenched in the soul, world and soul become one. The soul will see itself as the subject that takes the totality of the world as its object. The two together will be a single, unitary reality, supported by the Object that throws the image.

All of Ibn 'Arabi's incredibly voluminous writings are concerned with articulating the diverse modalities of human knowing and awareness. He looks upon these as signs of God in both the soul and the world. He frequently quotes the Koranic verse in which God says, "We shall show you the signs on the horizons and in your own souls until it becomes clear to you that this is the Real" (41:53). To articulate and clarify the signs, however, Ibn 'Arabi needs to make sense of the infinite diversity of

human souls, the subjects that experience the signs in the world and in themselves. No human soul is exactly the same as any other, and each is the on-going, never-ending articulation of an infinite, external in-betweenness.

The soul, as Ibn 'Arabī remarks, is an ocean without shore. Awareness of this shoreless ocean can have no end. But the only way to be aware of it in any coherent fashion is to turn away from the multiplicity of the waves and foam and to focus on the unarticulated water itself, which is nothing but the ocean of awareness. To grasp the soul's fullness and integration, one must grasp the principle of all souls—the divine spirit that was blown into Adam's clay, or the divine image that embraces human unity and is refracted endlessly in human diversity. Any method of dealing with the unity and coherence of human selfhood—any true "psychology"—has to be explain how each human being can at once be human, unified with others through humanness, and, at the same time, unique.

* * *

This brings me to the issue of the root of the self. Knowing the soul is to situate it within the grand flux that is the universe, and to do this, one must know what the universe is, which in turn depends upon knowing the principles and roots of reality. Given the Islamic provenance of Ibn 'Arabī's teachings, the basic approach to explicating these principles and roots derives from the Koran and the teachings of Muhammad. Especially important are two fundamental myths: the divine names and the multiplicity of the prophets.

Generally speaking, Islamic thought employs the so-called "ninety-nine names of God" to speak about the relationship between the absolute unity of the Real and the multiplicity of the universe. The divine names designate the principles of multiplicity in God Himself, which is to say that they signify the basic modalities of Being, or of ultimate Reality. By understanding the names, one understands in a conceptual and abstract mode how God relates to the world and to human understanding. For Ibn 'Arabī, the first principle of in-betweenness is God himself, not in himself, but inasmuch he is named by all the divine names. This is the root of divine self-expressiveness, or the logos. Ibn 'Arabī gives it many names depending on the standpoint from which he considers it. Among these are "the Supreme Isthmus" (*al-barzakh al-a'īā*), "Non-delimited Imagination" (*al-khayāl al-muītaq*), and "the Perfect Human Being" (*al-insān al-kāmil*).

In a similar way, the traditional idea that God sent 124,000 prophets, the first of whom was Adam and the last Muhammad, functions as a bridge between the unity of the Greatest Isthmus and the diverse possibilities of human becoming. The prophets designate the divine roots of multiplicity as they become refracted through the Supreme Isthmus, so they signify the basic modalities of humanness. By understanding the prophets along with the diverse human qualities and characteristics that they embody, one comes to understand in relatively concrete terms how Being can be made present to the human soul and how its attributes and qualities determine human character traits.

What distinguishes Ibn al-'Arabī is not that he takes the divine names and the prophets as the basic terms of theological and psychological discourse; this is done

by most, if not all, Muslim theologians and philosophers. Rather, what distinguishes him is that he highlights the middle ground and emphasizes its in-betweenness. He is perfectly aware that discourse always pertains to the middle, that language is always ambiguous, and that nothing can be known or expressed without uncertainty and wavering. Everything other than God is an image, so nothing whatsoever can be known in and for itself, since its selfness is precisely the fact that it is an image of something else. Moreover, God cannot be known in Himself, because none knows God but God, and no image of God can ever coincide with God in every respect. This means that, in the last analysis, *nothing* can truly be known. Only the image can be known—not in itself, but as image, as in-between, as a sign in the soul pointing to the divine names. As Ibn 'Arabī expresses it in an often-quoted verse,

I have not perceived the reality of anything—
How can I perceive a thing in which You are?*

This approach leads to a radical "agnosticism," an admission of utter ignorance in face of the Real. In no way, however, does it lead to a suggestion that God is not there or to any attempt at defining human life and responsibility in purely human terms. Rather, God is there, but he cannot be known as he knows himself. The final reason that He cannot be known is simply that no one other than God is truly there to know him. The problem is not God's existence, but our existence, whose in-betweenness gives us no more permanence than a cloud. No cloud can be known in and for itself. Nonetheless, the certainty of its lying between sky and earth point to what configures it. Thus the reality of God is affirmed, the primary Islamic doctrine of God's unity is upheld, and the impossibility of escape from the sea of ambiguity without God's assistance becomes self-evident.

This way of looking at things can lead to a profound instability and unsettledness, but it can also lead to the conviction that nothing can be known other than what truly is, and that what truly is cannot be known in itself. The ultimate, final knowledge is the knowledge of unknowingness, or what Ibn 'Arabī likes to call *hayra*, "bewilderment" or "perplexity."

* * *

Ibn 'Arabī has been perceived with hostility by many Islamic thinkers. What I have said should be enough to suggest why. In brief, he threatens all the easy certainties. Theologians love to establish their catechisms and creeds, which offer in straightforward and seemingly unambiguous language a firm ground on which the believers can stand. However, Ibn 'Arabī launches a massive assault on all the theological certainties. Not that he denies their relative validity or their usefulness. He often reaffirms the standard dogmas, and he frequently tells us that the only safe road is faith in God as delineated in the Koran and the Sunnah. But, the moment he begins to meditate on the meanings explicit and implicit in the sources of the tradition, he tears the rug out from under unreflective minds. All the stark black and white distinctions that are the stock-in-trade of dogma are shown to be illusory shadows.

It should be obvious that Ibn 'Arabi's writings were inaccessible to the vast majority of Muslims. His works demanded far too much training in the Islamic sciences. In any case, he was not attacking the faith of the common people, for which he had great respect. Rather, his target was the opinions and teachings of the learned, especially the theologians and philosophers. Only they had enough training in sophisticated thinking to understand what he was getting at. He subjects their finely tuned explanations of God and the world to withering criticism. He refuses to let anyone claiming knowledge of the nature of things to stand on firm ground. He frequently shows the essential contradictoriness of rational discourse, and in doing so he attacks the most sacred of cows among Muslim intellectuals.

From the point of view of the in-betweenness that he highlights, Ibn 'Arabi's grand contribution to Islamic learning was to loosen and unhinge all the fixed points of reference to which people cling in their beliefs and opinions. This alone is enough to explain the intense hostility that he stirred up among a large number of Muslim scholars, especially those whose claims to authority were rooted in the fixed points in the reference. Nonetheless, the fact that he has been venerated by an even greater number of scholars and by the common people should be enough to tell us that his approach must also be rooted in some basic Islamic insight. That insight is simply the first article of faith, the statement "There is no god but God." This formula radically undermines everything other than God, including all beliefs and certainties concerning God. Whatever fixed point of reference one seizes upon must be other than God himself, who is beyond all points of reference. Hence everything that appears as fixed and stable must be thrown into the fire along with everything ephemeral and passing.

* * *

One of Ibn 'Arabi's more controversial teachings here is his analysis of the gods of belief. Given that everything other than God is an isthmus, an image, an in-between. Everything that people worship and serve can only be an image, because they worship and serve it on the basis of their own understanding and awareness. In actual fact, everyone is an idol-worshipper, because everyone worships a god that he has fabricated in his own mind, whether or not he gives the name 'God' to his god. In effect, everyone worships himself, because what we worship is what we conceptualize, what we grasp, what we believe, what we understand. Whatever an object of worship may be and wherever it draws us, it cannot be outside of our own selves. What is outside the self is unknown and inaccessible, unperceived and unbelieved.

This is not to say that all beliefs are equal, or that faith in the God described by the prophets is useless. It is simply to state the obvious—"There is no god but God." The god that we know is not the God who alone is, but rather the god that needs to be negated; none knows the God who alone is but God himself. All knowledge claimed by anything other than God is simply a phantom, floating between darkness and light, hovering in the foggy realm of the in-between.

Once it becomes clear that all understanding, including theological and scientific understanding, is simply an understanding of oneself, it becomes even more

imperative to know this self that knows. So again, this is Ibn 'Arabi's basic project—to describe the parameters of the soul on the basis of the object of which the soul is the image. He devotes many thousands of pages to this project; I can provide only the barest of descriptions in the broadest of strokes.

If everything the soul knows is nothing but itself, this can only be because the self has the potential to know everything. Here "everything" includes everything other than the Divine Essence itself, of which each thing and every concept in the universe is simply the reflection, or the image, or the "self-disclosure" (*tajallif*). The Real in itself cannot be known, but the Real as it discloses itself in images can be known, and those images exclude nothing that can be known or experienced, and nothing that knows or perceives.

The Prophet repeated the Biblical formula, "God created the human being in His own image" or, more literally "form" (*ṣūra*). That form is the *logos*, or the totality of God's self-disclosing Self, or the unity of all the images that make up the universe, or the Supreme Isthmus, or the Perfect Human Being. Individual human beings can know all things because the realities of all things—that is, the things as they are known to God—are already present within the soul. Coming to know oneself is coming to know the things, which are the individual facets of the all-inclusive divine image. Knowing the image of God, one knows God's self-disclosure and comes to know oneself. One knows that the knowing self is itself none other than the known object, that just as the soul can perceive nothing but the divine self-disclosures, so also the very act of perceiving and knowing is God's disclosing himself to himself. The human process of coming to know oneself, however, is never-ending, because the soul is an ocean without shore in both this world and the next.

It should be evident that coming to know self and Lord has almost nothing to do with the acquisition of information. Rather, it entails finding God's qualities within one's own awareness and actualizing them in one's character and activity. Hence the process is often called "assuming the character traits of God" (*al-takhalluq bi akhlāq Allāh*) or "becoming qualified by the names of God" (*al-ititāf bi asmā' Allāh*).

* * *

To conclude my remarks, let me cite a text that was in the back of my mind when I chose to talk about "the in-between." It comes from the 559th chapter of *al-Futūḥāt al-makkiyya*, the "Meccan Openings," which is Ibn 'Arabi's *magnum opus*. The chapter provides epitomes of the underlying themes of each of the 558 preceding chapters in rather enigmatic terms, and often in rhymed prose. This particular epitome pertains to Chapter 63, which is called, "On the true knowledge of the subsistence of people in the Isthmus between this world and the resurrection." The epitome, however, focuses not on the afterlife, but on the concept of "isthmus" itself. Much of what it says should by now be familiar.

The isthmus is in between,
a station between this and that,
not one of the two, but their totality.
It has the towering exaltation,

the lofty splendor,
and the deep-rooted station.
Knowledge of the isthmuses pertains, at the resurrection, to the Ramparts,
and, as for the [divine] names, to becoming qualified by them.
So the isthmus has come to possess the station of the equitable balance,
for it is not identical with the name, nor with the Named.
Its ipseity is unknown save to those who solve the riddle,
and equal concerning it may be the seeing and the blind.
It is the shadow between the lights and the darknesses,
the separating limit between Being and nonexistence,
and at it the near path comes to an end.
It is the limit of halting between the two stations
for him who understands.
Of the times, to it belongs the present moment,
which is perpetual Being.
The isthmus brings together the two sides
and it is the courtyard between the two knowledges—
to it belongs what is found
between the center point and the circumference.⁷

NOTES

- ¹ *al-Furūhāt al-Makkiyya*, Vol. IV, Cairo, 1911, p. 384, line 33. For the sentence in its context, see W. C. Chittick, *The Self-Disclosure of God: Principles of Ibn al-'Arabi's Cosmology*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998, pp. 323-24.
- ² See Chittick, *The Sūfi Path of Knowledge: Ibn al-'Arabi's Metaphysics of Imagination*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989, Chapter 20.
- ³ *Furūhāt* II 309.13; Chittick, *Self-Disclosure*, p. 333.
- ⁴ *Furūhāt* IV 410.30; Chittick, *Self-Disclosure*, p. 45.
- ⁵ Which is not to imply that Ibn 'Arabi denies the theological dogma of creation *ex nihilo*, simply that he interprets it in ways that are philosophically sophisticated. See, for example, Chittick, *Sūfi Path of Knowledge*, pp. 84-85.
- ⁶ *Self-Disclosure*, p. 20.
- ⁷ *Furūhāt* IV 337.29; Chittick, *Self-Disclosure*, pp. 333-34.

KATHLEEN HANEY

THE THREE MOVEMENTS OF THE SOUL
ACCORDING TO ANNA-TERESA TYMIENIECKA

"the meaningfulness of what is being presenced as the human universe of life, comprising the 'world,' originates in the on-going process of man's self-interpretation-in-existence."¹

The soul is this activity of world-making and self-making, according to Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka's phenomenological interpretation. With its focus on consciousness and self-experience, phenomenology provides a unique tool for analyzing the soul. Edmund Husserl, the father of transcendental phenomenology, believed that the entire history of philosophy has been a search for the phenomenological method. Truth, the *telos* of philosophy, discloses itself in the method of phenomenology, which verifies its self-evident insight into its discoveries. One of phenomenology's discoveries is that the description of the human being, as a sentient being, includes its body and soul.

Tymieniecka's critique of the modern use of reason reveals nature as the transcendently necessary condition for the possibility of experiencing self-evidence. Tymieniecka's version of a phenomenology of the soul includes descriptions of spontaneities, virtualities, affections and creativity within the scope of its rationality. With the phenomenological method applied to this vista, philosophy can again take up the topic of the soul, which Modernity overlooked, or to which it lacked access. Although discussion of the soul is rare in contemporary Western philosophy, the philosophic tradition, which the People of the Book share, has had much to say about it.

To introduce the question of the soul, let us begin with a condensed history of the soul in the philosophical tradition that informed both Western and Islamic thinkers. For the Ancients, the soul was the principle of animation. Anything that moved itself was besouled. The Pythagoreans believed that the soul was pre-existent, physical and dependent upon a physical body for its survival. In Plato's *Phaedo*, we learn from Simmias, who is reputed to hold to the Pythagorean doctrine that the soul may dwell in bodies in sequence, but does not necessarily