



## The Perfect Man as the Prototype of the Self in the Sufism of J#m#

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## THE PERFECT MAN AS THE PROTOTYPE OF THE SELF IN THE SUFISM OF JĀMĪ

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No single technical term in the vocabulary of Jāmī's Sufism conveys satisfactorily the various meanings denoted by the English word "self".<sup>(1)</sup> Rather these meanings are expressed through the use of a number of different terms. A brief discussion of some of these can act as an introduction to the particular dimension of Jāmī's concept of the self which we wish to explain.

The first and most common term which conveys the meaning of "self" is *nafs*, which in the Arabic dictionary is also translated as "soul, psyche, spirit, mind, life, person", etc. In the context of Jāmī's technical terminology it can probably best be rendered as "soul". It usually refers to the animating principle of the body, the intermediary between the bodily constitution and the spirit, or to the immortal aspect of man's being which can be perfected through the spiritual life. It may also refer simply to the individual consciousness, and as such is nearly equivalent to *anā'iyyah* ("I-ness" or ego), a term, however, which Jāmī rarely employs. Man's *nafs* or soul possesses potentially a

(1) The word "*khwud*" in modern Persian is near to being an equivalent for the English word "self". But although it is used as a technical term by certain Sufis, such as Aḥmad Ghazzālī, as far as I have been able to discern it is not employed technically by Jāmī.

number of different stages of perfection. By traversing these stages it moves ever closer to God and farther from its own fallen nature. The soul in its fallen state—or in its ordinary everyday reality far from its primordial nature (*fiṭrah*)—is referred to as the “soul which incites” (to evil, *nafs-i ammārah*). Through entering upon the path of spiritual perfection it becomes the “soul which blames” (itself for its own shortcomings, *nafs-i lawwāmah*) and at the end of the Path it attains the station of the “soul at peace” (*nafs-i muṭma’innah*). One can also speak of the “inward dimensions” of the self or soul, dimensions which are only actualized through the path of spiritual perfection, but each of which at a certain stage represents man’s subjective reality. Here such terms as “heart” (*qalb* or *dil*), “secret” (*sirr*), “hidden” (*khafī*) and “most hidden” (*akhfā*) are mentioned as ascending stages of the self.

Another term which is often translated as “self”—*dhāt*—in Jāmī’s works refers almost exclusively to the divine Essence or the Godhead. Here “Self” with a capital “S” would be an appropriate translation. When employed to refer to human beings (a rare usage), the term *dhāt* denotes the individual essence and is usually used—just as it often is in the case of the Divine—to distinguish a person’s essence or reality from his attributes (*ṣifāt*) and acts (*af‘āl*).

A third term also listed in dictionaries as meaning “self” is ‘*ayn*. For Jāmī it usually refers to the reality of a thing as it is known in the divine Knowledge, i.e., the thing’s immutable archetype (*‘ayn thābitah*), or to the reality of a thing as externalized and manifested in the corporeal world.

Thus if we accept a typical dictionary definition of the word “self” and say that it denotes “the integrated unity of subjective experience” or “the individual consciousness in its relation to itself” the word *nafs*, particularly in its ordinary signification (equivalent to the first level of the soul, *nafs-i ammārah*), or perhaps the word *anā’iyyah*, approaches most closely to what we would mean by “self”. If on the contrary we take “Self” to refer to Ultimate Reality, then *dhāt* is the term which more or less corresponds to this concept.

In the present paper, however, it is not my purpose to deal

with the individual self at its ordinary level of consciousness or the divine Self, either of which concepts in Jāmī's thought would require detailed expositions. Rather I wish to deal with a third definition which I feel is more relevant to an understanding of Jāmī's concept of the self in its overall meaning and in its relation to all dimensions of reality: the self as the consciousness and existence of man in the state of perfection, a state which is neither the self of ordinary human experience nor the Divine Reality as such. I am referring of course to a further technical term which plays a role of utmost importance in Sufism from the time of Ibn 'Arabī (d. 638/1240) onward, the *insān-i kāmīl* or Perfect Man.

The Perfect Man is precisely the human self at its final stage of perfection and completion. For man there is nothing conceivable beyond this state. Only the Divine and Absolute He-ness or Ipseity (*huwīyyah*, *dhāl*) can be said to be beyond it. Ultimately the Perfect Man may be said to contain within himself all the ontological states of God as well as all those of creation. In fact the only difference between the Perfect Man and the ontological level designated by the Name "Allāh", i.e. God as we understand Him and as possessing all positive Attributes (*ṣifāt*), is that God is the Lord and man is the servant; or that God is the Necessary Being in His own Essence whereas man is the Necessary Being by means of another (*wājib bi'l-ghayr*). Otherwise, everything which can be said about God can be said about the Perfect Man. <sup>(1)</sup>

(1) See Jāmī's *Naqd al-nuṣūṣ*, ed. by W. C. Chittick, Tehran, 1977, pp. 63 and 93. Sa'd al-Dīn Sa'id Farḡhānī identifies the highest stage of the Perfect Man—which is equivalent to the Muhammadan Reality (*al-ḥaqīqat al-muḥammadīyyah*) or the Reality of Realities (*ḥaqīqat al-ḥaqā'iq*)—with the station of "Or Nearer" (*aw adnā*), i.e., the First Determination (*al-la'aggun al-awwal*) or the ontological level of Unity (*aḥadiyyah*). This station is above Unicity (*wāḥidiyyah*) or the Second Determination, which is the ontological level of the Divinity or the Name "Allāh", but below the unknowable Essence. See the index to *Mashāriq al-darārī*, edited by Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī, Tehran, 1979; also *Naqd al-nuṣūṣ*, pp. 36-37, a passage quoted from Farḡhānī. In another passage of the same work Jāmī writes as follows about the Prophet Muḥammad: his reality "was the first immutable archetype effused by the Most Holy Effusion (*al-fayḍ al-aqdas*). Thereby he attained Supreme Uniqueness through his unitary essence (i.e. his essence at the level of Unity or *aḥadiyyah*), his divine level (i.e., the ontological level of the Name "Allāh") and his immutable archetype" (p. 274).

The Perfect Man has two aspects, only one of which we will consider here. First he is the ontological prototype of both man and the universe. He is the first creation of God, or rather the primordial and original theophany (*tajallī*) of the Essence, and thus the first point in the descending arc (*qaws-i nuzūlī*) of the manifestation (*zuhūr*) or effusion (*fayḍ*) of existence. But the descending arc must reach its lowest point, which is the corporeal world (*‘ālam al-ajsām*) or world of sensory perception (*‘ālam al-ḥiss*, *‘ālam al-shahādah*). Then the circle closes upon itself. The goal of the ascending arc (*qaws-i šu‘ūdī*)—the return to the Principle or Creator—is likewise the state of the Perfect Man. The whole practical or operative (*‘amalī*) side of Sufism is oriented towards the realization (*taḥaqquq*) of the state of primordial perfection which belongs only to the Perfect Man. For example, the various discussions of the stages of the perfection of the soul or *nafs* all refer to the ascending arc through which man returns to his original state. Likewise the complicated and detailed expositions of the stations (*maqāmāt*) of perfection found in many Sufi texts refer to this same reality.<sup>(1)</sup>

Hence the two dimensions or aspects of the Perfect Man are that he is first the ontological prototype of man and the universe—or the origin of the “descending arc” of creation—and second the exemplar to be emulated, or the goal of the “ascending arc” of creation. Here we are only concerned with the first dimension, as reflected in the writings of the great Persian Sufi poet of the ninth/fifteenth century, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Aḥmad Jāmī (d. 898/1492). Although best known for his poetry, Jāmī is also the author of eight relatively long prose works—such as his *Lawā’ih* <sup>(2)</sup>—and eight or nine shorter prose works, all dealing directly with Sufi metaphysics.<sup>(3)</sup> We will be relying mainly on his first attempt to explicate the theoretical teachings of Sufism, *Naqd al-nuṣūṣ fī sharḥ naqsh al-fuṣūṣ*, which in fact of

(1) The 650 pages of Farghānī’s *Mashāriq al-darārī*, for example, are devoted mainly to the stations of the spiritual path.

(2) The *Lawā’ih* was translated into English by E. H. Whinfield, London, 1906.

(3) I have listed these works and given a brief description of each in my Persian introduction to *Naqd al-nuṣūṣ*, pp. 21-28. See also the following note.

all his prose works is the one in which he deals with Sufi doctrine at the greatest length and with the most freedom to follow his own inclinations and preferences. Most of his other long metaphysical works are commentaries relatively limited by the texts upon which they are based. <sup>(1)</sup>

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But when we propose to discuss "Jāmī's concept of the Perfect Man", we must be aware of what this signifies: Jāmī is not an original thinker in the sense that he has his own peculiar concept of the Perfect Man and other Sufi doctrines. His concepts are those of the school of Ibn 'Arabī and his special role is that he represents a culmination of that school in the history of Sufism. After Jāmī Ibn 'Arabī's school produces no more figures of the first magnitude. Although certain representatives of Ibn 'Arabī's pure gnosis (*irfān*), such as 'Abd al-

(1) Jāmī's longest philosophical work is his Arabic commentary on the *Fuṣūṣ* of Ibn 'Arabī, but it follows the text very closely and offers practically no detailed theoretical elaborations or digressions. *Naqd al-nuṣūṣ* on the contrary consists of 255 pages of commentary upon a ten page text and includes a 65 page introduction in which Jāmī deals with most of the major teachings of Ibn 'Arabī's school in a detailed manner which is not to be seen in any of his other works. Over 50 pages of this work are devoted exclusively to the Perfect Man, and of course many more pages relate to him. If the proportion of commentary to text in *Naqd al-nuṣūṣ* were the same as in Jāmī's commentary on the *Fuṣūṣ*, the work would have 25 pages instead of 265.

Jāmī's other long prose works on metaphysics and philosophy are the following: a commentary on the *Lama'āt* of 'Irāqī (*Ashī'at al-lama'āt*), which contains a relatively independent introduction of about 15 pages and a few one or two page discussions of certain concepts. *Lawā'ih*, which is not a commentary but compared to *Naqd al-nuṣūṣ* is very short; *Sharḥ al-rubā'iyyāt*, a commentary on some of his own poetry covering about 80 pages, about one third of which—as I have shown in my introduction to *Naqd al-nuṣūṣ* (p. 22)—is quoted or translated from the latter work; *Lawāmi'*, a commentary on Ibn Fārid's *khamriyyah* ("wine song"), which contains an independent introduction of about 25 pages on mystical love; *Sharḥ-i ba'ḍ-i az abyāt-i qasīda-yi lā'iyya-yi fāridiyyah* ("Commentary on a few verses of Ibn Fārid's *Poem of the Way*"), a brief translation and explanation of about one-tenth of the poem; and finally *al-Durrat al-fākhira* (recently critically edited by N. Heer but not yet published), a relatively short Arabic work comparing the views of the philosophers, theologians and Sufis. For a discussion of the relationship between these works in terms of the ideas and themes they discuss see my English introduction to *Naqd al-nuṣūṣ*.

Ghanī al-Nābulusī (d. 1143/1730-1), Aḥmad ibn ‘Ajibāh (d. 1224/1809) and Aqā Muḥammad Ridā Qumshā’ī (d. 1306/1888-9), continue to exercise considerable influence upon Islamic thought, to a large degree metaphysical speculation, particularly in the eastern lands of Islam, is gradually taken over by the “theosophers” of the School of Isfahan, figures such as Mullā Ṣadrā (d. 1050/1640), Mullā Muḥsin Fayḍ Kāshānī (d. 1090/1679) and their successors. However this may be, no subsequent representative of Ibn ‘Arabī’s school can be compared to Jāmī in terms of fame and influence in the Islamic world.

Thus Jāmī’s “originality” is that he summarizes a whole school of thought in himself and brings it to a climax. Moreover he carried this out in a language often clearer and almost invariably more eloquent and beautiful than that of his predecessors and thus more readily accessible to a larger audience. This is true both of his prose and his poetry. Of the other Sufi poets and authors who reflected Ibn ‘Arabī’s doctrines in their verses and writings—figures such as ‘Irāqī, Maghribī and Shāh Ni’matallāh Walī—none, with the possible exception of Shabistarī, was able to express the Greatest Master’s (*al-shaykh al-akbar*) teachings as directly, beautiful and simply as Jāmī. Certainly the tremendous popularity of Jāmī’s writings in the Indian subcontinent is one of the major reasons for the spread of Ibn ‘Arabī’s school in that region.

In short, Jāmī is a spokesman for Ibn ‘Arabī and his school. In his works numerous references to and quotations from most of the major figures of this school can be found. After the Greatest Master himself, most important for Jāmī is Ṣadr al-Dīn Qūnyawī (d. 673/1274-5), Ibn ‘Arabī’s foremost disciple and the close friend of Rūmī. In fact, although there can be little doubt that after Ibn ‘Arabī Qūnyawī is the most important figure of this school, his writings have been neglected by modern scholars. These works, mostly in Arabic but also in Persian, <sup>(1)</sup>

(1) Concerning Qūnyawī and his works see the recent Ph. D. thesis of S. Ruspoli, *La clef du monde suprasensible*, Sorbonne, V<sup>e</sup> section, Sciences religieuses, n.d. (1976?). I am currently editing and translating two of Qūnyawī’s Persian works: *Tabṣīrat al-mubtadi’* and *Maṭāli’ al-īmān*.

represent a major step in the integration of Ibn 'Arabī's teachings into the intellectual world of the eastern lands of Islam. The originality of Qūnyawī can be observed particularly in his mode of presenting Ibn 'Arabī's teachings, a mode almost completely different from that of his master. The writings of Ibn 'Arabī tend to be like sudden inspirations flowing from his pen with such force and velocity that they destroy horizontal and logical continuity. Qūnyawī on the contrary is the model of logical consistency and point-by-point reasoning.<sup>(1)</sup> Thus even though the universe he speaks about and the teachings he presents are completely in harmony with those of the Greatest Master, Qūnyawī could write with complete justification, "I have written my works without ever mixing with them the words of other writers, for that is not my habit. God has protected me from that and delivered me from the need for it."<sup>(2)</sup>

Two other figures of Ibn 'Arabī's school who are of first importance and frequently quoted by Jāmī<sup>(3)</sup> are Mu'ayyad al-Dīn Jandī (d. ca. 700/1301) and Sa'd al-Dīn Sa'id Farghānī (d. ca. 700/1301), both direct students of Qūnyawī and authors of works in Arabic and Persian. Jandī's commentary upon Ibn 'Arabī's *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam* is probably the first complete one and in Jāmī's view is the basis for all subsequent commentaries,<sup>(4)</sup> which number over one hundred.<sup>(5)</sup> Farghānī commented Ibn Fāriḍ's famous *Poem of the Way*<sup>(6)</sup> in Persian and

(1) On the difference between "Semitic inspirationalism" and "Aryan intellectualism" see F. Schuon, *Logic and Transcendence*, New York, 1975, pp. 149-150; also S. H. Nasr, "Persia and the Destiny of Islamic Philosophy", *Studies in Comparative Religion*, vol. 6, 1972, pp. 31-42, especially pp. 39-40.

(2) *Al-Nuṣūṣ*, printed in the same volume as 'Abd al-Razzāq Kāshānī, *Sharḥ manāzil al-sā'irīn*, Tehran, 1315 A. H. lunar, p. 281.

(3) For details of the quotations made by Jāmī from his predecessors in *Naqd al-nuṣūṣ*, refer to the work's Persian introduction, pp. 53-67. I was able to find the source of 65 % of the work and confirm Jāmī's remark in his introduction that the work resembles the "patchwork cloak" of the Sufis.

(4) See *Nafahāt al-uns* of Jāmī, ed. by M. Tawḥīdīpūr, Tehran, 1336 A. H. solar, p. 558.

(5) O. Yahia, *Histoire et classification de l'œuvre d'Ibn 'Arabī*, Damascus, 1964, pp. 241-257.

(6) Translated by A. J. Arberry, London, 1952.



then translated his own work into Arabic, adding a great deal to his introduction in the process. This work, called *Mashāriq al-dārārī* in Persian and *Muntahā'l-madārik* in Arabic, <sup>(1)</sup> is perhaps the most detailed exposition of the stations of the spiritual path to be found in the works of Ibn 'Arabī's followers.

Finally it should be mentioned that Jāmī makes extensive use of the famous commentaries upon the *Fuṣūṣ*, such as that of 'Abd al-Razzāq Kāshānī (d. 736/1335-6) and even more so that of Kāshānī's disciple Dā'ūd Qayṣarī (d. 751/1350-1). Qayṣarī's rewritings of Ibn 'Arabī's ideas, especially in the introduction to his commentary on the *Fuṣūṣ*, are unequalled in their clear and beautiful Arabic prose.

In short, when "Jāmī" is mentioned in the present paper, we are referring to Jāmī's understanding of the consensus of opinion of 250 years of Ibn 'Arabī's school. Moreover there is no doubt that Jāmī himself saw this school as a unified and harmonious whole, with differences of opinion only on minor points.<sup>(2)</sup> His continuous quotations in *Naqd al-nuṣūṣ* from figures who composed their works at various times throughout this long period reveal this harmony, and other than minor differences of point of view and variations in prose style few discrepancies can be seen among these writings.



Jāmī discusses three major aspects of the Perfect Man as the ontological prototype of creation: First, the Perfect Man as the locus of manifestation for the Name "Allāh"; second, as the goal of creation; third, as God's vicegerent. Each of these concepts will have to be examined separately.

(1) Concerning *Mashāriq al-dārārī* see note on p. 45. The Arabic text was published apparently in Istanbul in 1293 A. H. lunar.

(2) In his own glosses on *Naqd al-nuṣūṣ* Jāmī points out a number of instances where Kāshānī, Jandī, Qūnyawī and others disagree with Ibn 'Arabī or with each other on a point of doctrine. But in each case the point discussed is a minor one. See *Naqd al-nuṣūṣ*, glosses # 23, 35, 45, 51, 193. These glosses, moreover, seem to indicate that if Jāmī had been aware of major points of difference, he would have mentioned them.

Practically all of Islamic religious thought goes back to the Names and Attributes of God (*al-asmā' wa'l-ṣifāt*). God in His Absolute Essence cannot be known, but we can know Him in so far as He has revealed His Names, and therefore His Attributes, in the Quran. The primary knowledge of God revealed through the Holy Book becomes the basis for all other knowledge. Without a knowledge of the Names and Attributes we cannot know the universe. The whole of the universe in fact is nothing but the manifestation or theophany of God's Names. To say that "God created the world" means in this context that the world derives its relative and limited existence from the Absolute and Infinite Being of God and that the characteristics and properties which we observe in the world are nothing but dim reflections of God's Attributes. If certain things possess the property of life, this is because God is the Living and they receive effusion (*fayḍ*) and succour (*madad*) from that Name. If certain things see, that is because God is the Seeing, and so forth.

In the context of the Islamic teachings themselves, then, the key to the understanding of the Perfect Man lies in the doctrine of the Names and Attributes. According to Ibn 'Arabī's school the relationship between the Names and the Perfect Man is that he is the locus of theophany (*maẓhar*, *majlā*), or the direct manifestation in the world, of the Name "Allāh". "Allāh" is the "all-embracing Name" (*ism-i jāmi'*)—therefore also often called the "Greatest Name" (*ism-i a'ẓam*) (p. 17) <sup>(1)</sup>—in which all of the Names of God are contained. In Jāmī's words, "The Name 'Allāh' is a unity in which is comprised all the divine Names. Therefore any heart which knows it knows all the Names. This is in contrast to the other Names, for the knowledge of not one of them entails the knowledge of the Name "Allāh" (p. 199).

In the Quran it is said that God "taught Adam the Names, all of them" (II, 31). At first sight and in the context of the verse these names seem to be the names of the created things, including the angels, but as explained above the created things

(1) Page numbers mentioned in the article refer to the text of *Naqd al-nuṣūṣ*.

themselves are theophanies of the divine Names. So the Sufis are quite justified in saying that according to the Quran Adam was taught all of God's Names, since the names of the created things are the Names of God inasmuch as they are manifested in this world. Ibn 'Arabī and his followers state explicitly that "Adam" means man as such, and that what is said about Adam refers to all men (p. 86), or at least to all men in their state of perfection. Now since Adam or man was taught all the Names, this is equivalent to saying that he was taught the knowledge of the Name "Allāh", which is precisely the Name which embraces all the others. So Adam as the knower of Allāh is the first locus of theophany for that Name in the world and the first corporeal manifestation of the eternal reality of the Perfect Man. Therefore also Adam as an individual was the first prophet. Ibn 'Arabī calls the first chapter of the *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam* the "Wisdom of (the ontological level of the Name) 'Allāh' as embodied in the Logos of Adam", alluding to the fact that Adam—i.e. man himself in his state of perfection—is the theophany of the divine Name "Allāh". Ibn 'Arabī then proceeds to discuss in this first chapter of the *Fuṣūṣ* the Perfect Man.

A second Quranic verse which is taken to refer to man's all-comprehensive nature as the locus of theophany for the Name "Allāh" occurs also in the story of the creation of Adam. After God created Adam and taught him all the Names, He commanded the angels to prostrate themselves to him—for Adam also knew their names and thus possessed power over them, while they themselves did not know the names which Adam had been taught (Quran II, 31).<sup>(1)</sup> But Iblīs refused to prostrate himself. Then God asked him, "What prevented thee from prostrating thyself to him whom I have created with my two hands?" (XXXVIII, 75). Jāmī points out that what distinguishes man is that he was created with *two* hands, whereas everything else

(1) The fact that the angels did not know all the Names indicates that they are only "partial" or "peripheral" beings and do not possess the centrality (*quṭbiyyah*) and all-embracing nature of man's state. But of course their luminous nature endows them with a certain superiority over man, at least in his fallen state. See F. Schuon, *Dimensions of Islam*, London, 1969, p. 120.

was created with only *one* hand. The Two Hands refer to the division of God's Attributes into two categories, the Attributes of Beauty (*jamāl*) and those of Majesty (*jalāl*) (p. 87).<sup>(1)</sup> Everything other than man is a locus of manifestation only of the Attributes of divine Beauty, or only of those of divine Majesty. Nothing else was created embracing all the Attributes (p. 87).

Jāmī's interpretation of the famous *ḥadīth* of the Prophet, "God created Adam in His own form," illustrates more fully how he understands man as the locus of theophany for the Name "Allāh". After remarking that the exoteric authorities simply understand from the *ḥadīth* that man partakes of all of God's Attributes, he states that the Sufis understand "form" (*ṣūrah*) to signify the means whereby unseen realities (*ḥaqā'iq ghaybiyyah*)—which are "disengaged" (*mujarrad*) from and transcend physical realities—can be conceived or understood (p. 94). In other words the form of a transcendent reality—perhaps "symbol" would be a better translation—is the means whereby that reality (*ḥaqīqah*) or that "meaning" (*ma'nā*—the term employed in contradistinction to *ṣūrah*) manifests itself in the physical world. The form is ontologically connected to its own meaning. Hence man as the "form" of Allāh is ontologically the manifestation of Allāh and the means whereby He is known in the physical world. Without man the Name "Allāh" would have no single locus of manifestation.

Of course it is also true that since the Name "Allāh" embraces all the Names, we can say that the manifestation of all the Names, which is equivalent to the universe as a whole, is a manifestation of the Name "Allāh". This is why Jāmī distinguishes between the summated (*mujmal*) and single manifestation of the Name "Allāh" in man and its particularized (*mufaṣṣal*) and multiple manifestation throughout the whole universe (p. 95).

This "two-pronged" theophany of the Name "Allāh" is the basis for Jāmī's exposition of man's relation to the universe. Man the microcosm (*'ālam-i ṣaghīr*) is the mirror of the macrocosm (*'ālam-i kabīr*). But in man the Name "Allāh" is

(1) For other interpretations of the "Two Hands" see *Naqd al-nuṣūṣ*, pp. 107-108.

manifested in such a way that each one of the individual Names which are comprehended by it is equivalent to all others. In other words the divine Unity is manifested directly in man in the midst of the multiplicity of the world. But the world itself, though also a reflection of the Name "Allāh", is so in a particularized mode which manifests the relative multiplicity inherent within that Name. Each of the individual Names embraced by the Name "Allāh" finds its own separate and independent locus of manifestation only in the external world.

This same point can be explained by saying that man is more directly a manifestation of the First Determination (*ta'ayyun-i awwal*) or the Level of Unity (*aḥadiyyah*), while the universe is more directly a manifestation of the Second Determination or Level of Unicity (*wāḥidiyyah*). As Jāmī explains in detail (pp. 34 ff.), at the Level of Unity the divine Essence is non-manifest (*bāṭin*) and all relations (*nisab*, *ītibārāt*, *iḍāfāt*) and attributes are negated from it. At this level one can say that each Name is equivalent to all other Names. God as the Inward (*bāṭin*) is the same as God as the Outward (*ẓāhir*) and God as "He who gives life" (*muḥyī*) is identical to God as "He who gives death" (*mumīt*). But at the Level of Unicity each Name can be envisaged as a separate reality. There is a certain relative multiplicity (*kathrat-i nisbī*) which can be discerned in the Divine Nature, since to envisage God as the Hearing, for example, is to understand Him in a different aspect from God as the Seeing. Hence the Perfect Man reflects more directly the First Determination, because all of the divine Attributes are integrated into his own Essence and are equivalent to it (p. 92). But the world contains a definite multiplicity, which confirms concretely and in a particularized mode the separate and individual reality—albeit relative reality—of each of the Attributes.

The key term which is ascribed to man as the manifestation of the Name "Allāh" is the Arabic word "*jāmi*", meaning, "all-embracing, all-comprehending, that which brings all things together into a unified whole". The state thus described is called "*jam*" or "*jam'iyyah*", "all-comprehensiveness." It is

a state which can be well symbolized by a cross, <sup>(1)</sup> the vertical axis indicating that the Perfect Man encompasses all the ontological levels (*marātib*) or divine Presences (*ḥaḍarāt*), and the horizontal axis indicating that he embraces each of these worlds or levels in its full extension. Thus when Jāmī enumerates the vertical levels of existence from the divine Essence to the Corporeal world—i.e., the First Determination, the Second Determination, the World of the Spirits, the World of Image-Exemplars (*miḥāl*) and the World of Corporeal Bodies—he states that the sixth level is the Perfect Man, who embraces (*jāmī*) all levels. It is also clear that because the Perfect Man embraces all of the divine Names (whether we consider them to be 99, 1001 or infinite in number—p. 84), he embraces all the myriad theophanies of the Names on each of the horizontal levels. For example, in the physical world all the celestial spheres, the elements, the animals, vegetables and minerals are included within him (p. 110).

A further method of expressing the reality of man as the locus of manifestation of the Name "Allāh" reminds one of the expositions of later schools of philosophy: pure and undefiled existence whose source is the Necessary Being (*wājib al-wujūd*), is characterized by certain attributes, and whatever exists, by the mere fact of its existence, must possess these attributes at least potentially. These attributes can be summarized as the seven principal divine Names (the "seven leaders"—*a'immah-yi sab'ah*): Living, Knowing, Willing, Powerful, Speaking, Hearing and Seeing (p. 40). Wherever existence is found these attributes are also found, but in most beings one or more of these attributes is *in potentia* and not *in actu*. Only in man can all of the attributes of existence be manifested actually. Other creatures, even if they attain the fullness of their own actuality, can not manifest all of the Names and Attributes. Thus to say that man is the locus of manifestation for the Name "Allāh" is equivalent to saying that in him all the Attributes of the Divine Being are actualized in external existence.

(1) See R. Guénon, *The Symbolism of the Cross*, London, 1958.

In Jāmi's words, "The Name 'Living' is the 'Leader of the Seven Leaders,' since the other attributes, such as knowledge, will, power, etc., can not be imagined to exist except after life... Everything has a peculiar kind of life in keeping with its own nature, such that life and its concomitants—i.e., knowledge, power, will, etc.—appear within it in keeping with its own constitution. Hence if its constitution is near to equilibrium, such as is the case with man, all of these attributes, or most of them, will appear; but if it is far from equilibrium, as is the case with inanimate objects and minerals, life and its concomitants will remain hidden within it" (p. 216). Moreover, "Since man is a unity which brings together all of the loci of manifestation, all perfections appear within him in actuality and individually... It is this all-embracingness (*jāmi'iyah*) which is peculiar to man" (p. 61).

. . .

But why does God *need* a locus of manifestation for His Name "Allāh"? This of course is almost the same as asking why God needs a locus of manifestation for *any* one of His Names. In other words, "Why did God create the world?" When making use of the "mythical" language of the Quranic revelation the Sufis answer this question by referring to the famous *ḥadīth* of the Prophet in which God speaks through him in the first person and says, "I was a hidden treasure and I wanted to be known, so I created the world." The Sufi theoreticians then explain the meaning of this *ḥadīth* in more explicitly metaphysical language. Jāmi writes, "In the inherent perfection of His Essence and in His unitary Self-subsistence God gazed upon His own Self by means of a vision which was in no way superadded to Himself or distinguished from Himself. He saw His Names and His Attributes as relations inherent in Himself, or as Unseen states whose properties had been annihilated by the all-subjugating power of His Unity. Their effects were in no way manifest and their realities were in no way distinguished one from another. But God wanted to manifest these relations and states in order to display the complete perfection of His Names and to gaze

upon them in their loci of manifestation in such a way that their realities and effects would be distinguished" (p. 85).

Thus for Jāmī the meaning of the sentence "I was a hidden treasure" is that in the Essence Itself, the Attributes of God are nowise manifest or distinguished one from another, and therefore none of them exists separately. The door to the Treasure is locked and the precious jewels within (=the Attributes) are hidden from sight. The words "I wanted to be known" refer to the divine Infinity and Perfection, which require that no mode of existence be denied to Absolute Reality, not even limited and finite existence. This finite existence itself adds a new dimension of knowledge to the non-manifest Essence, for the Names and Attributes which in the Essence are known only inasmuch as they are one with the Essence, are known in manifestation or creation as separate and distinct realities in the midst of multiplicity. Each of the jewels within the Treasure is seen as an independent entity. To deny this separative and pluralized reality to the Essence would be in effect to limit It and negate from It one of the dimensions of Its infinite Perfection.

Thus the meaning of the *ḥadīth* of the Hidden Treasure is that God knows Himself in Himself in summated (*mujmal*) and unitary form, whereas He also must have particularized (*mufaṣṣal*) and pluralized knowledge of Himself, which can only come about through the externalization of His Attributes and their "separation" from Him. As a result of this externalization, this transfer from Unity to multiplicity, each of the Attributes can be contemplated in all of its individual traits and in a separative mode. The Attribute of "Sight" for example, which on the one hand manifests itself in God's vision of Himself, becomes manifested in all of the myriad possible forms it can assume as an independent—or rather semi-independent—reality. In the physical world it manifests itself in countless individuals as the sight of man and animals, the photosensitivity of plants, the vision of the sages, etc. Each mode of manifestation exists potentially within the reality of Sight within God's Knowledge, but it exists in actuality only through separative existence in the manifested universe.

But what has just been explained answers only part of our



question, i.e., "Why did God create the world?" Although the world is the locus of manifestation for all of the Names, and thus in its totality for the Name "Allāh" as well, we still want to know why the Name "Allāh" should manifest itself particularly in man.

Jāmi answers this question in a long passage which is worth quoting *in toto*: When the One Essence manifests Itself in the diverse loci of theophany which make up the world, "Its manifestation is in a mode which does not allow for the appearance of all-comprehensiveness. These loci are the various levels of existence, which particularize and disperse the One Reality. Hence (as a result of manifestation) the properties of multiplicity gain sway over the properties of Unity, and the reality of Unity becomes hidden in accordance with the requirements of actualized diversification and objectified particularization. (Because Unity becomes thus veiled by multiplicity), the One Essence wants to manifest Itself in a single perfect locus of manifestation which will embrace all of the loci of theophany, whether they be of the nature of light or of darkness; and which will encompass all of the hidden and open realities of the universe and all the manifest and non-manifest intricacies of creation.

"(The reason for this desire) is that the One Necessary Essence perceives Its Own Self through a perception in no way super-added to Itself or distinguished from Itself... Likewise It perceives Its Attributes and Its Names as inherent and non-manifest relations whose realities are in no sense separate from one another. Then when It manifests Itself upon the basis of the exigencies of the divine Will, in keeping with the diverse preparednesses of the loci of manifestation and in accordance with the multiple intermediaries between Itself and the creatures in such a manner that It becomes particularized in the diversified loci of the various levels of existence, It does not perceive Its own Reality in a manner which unites all the objectified and externalized perfections with the totality of the divine Names and Attributes. The reason for this is that Its Self-manifestation in any given locus of theophany is in accordance with that locus only. Do you not see that the Self-manifestation of God in the

spiritual world is different from His Self-manifestation in the corporeal world? For in the first His manifestation is simple, active and luminous, while in the second it is composite, passive and tenebrous.

"Therefore the One Essence willed to manifest Itself in the universal locus of manifestation, the all-embracing generated being (*al-kawn al-jāmi*)" which also encompasses the divine Reality. This is the Perfect Man, for he is a locus of manifestation for both the Absolute Essence and the Names, Attributes and Acts, because of the all-comprehensiveness and equilibrium of his universal mode of existence and because of the scope and perfection of his state of being a locus. Moreover he unites the realities of the Necessary Being and the relations pertaining to the Divine Names with the realities of the possible beings and the attributes of creatures. So he brings together the level of all-comprehensive unity with that of particularization and embraces all that there is from the beginning to the end of the chain of being" (pp. 60-61).

In sum, only through man does God gaze upon Unity in multiplicity. In Himself He sees nothing but Unity, and in the world nothing but multiplicity. But in man Unity and multiplicity are combined in such a way that all of God's Attributes—or in other words the Name "Allāh"—are manifested within one unitary locus of theophany in the midst of the plurality of the world. Without man, a certain mode of divine Knowledge would not exist and the infinity of God would be limited. This is the same as saying that man must exist.

In Itself the Hidden Treasure knows Its own Essence in a unitary mode, so that every Attribute is equivalent to every other. In the world, the Hidden Treasure observes each of Its Attributes manifested singly or in various combinations as semi-independent realities. Only in man does the Hidden Treasure know Itself as a unity objectified and externalized within the heart of multiplicity.

That the Perfect Man is the locus of theophany of the Name "Allāh" is indicated by the Quran when it states that man is the vicegerent of God (*khalīfat Allāh*). Jāmī interprets this key term to mean precisely that man is the vicegerent of "Allāh" and of no other Name, and that since he manifests the All-embracing Name within the world, he has been given responsibility for the whole of creation. By encompassing all of the Names man contains the principles of all creatures. He is the microcosm or small world as opposed to the macrocosm or great world, since all that the world contains he also contains. But in reality and in terms of his rank "Man is the great world and the world is the small man, because the vicegerent is superior to his subjects" (p. 91).

Envisaged as the vicegerent of the Name "Allāh" the key function of the Perfect Man is to act as the "isthmus" or *barzakh* between God and the world and thereby to maintain the existence of the world. "*Barzakh*" is a Quranic term sometimes translated as "purgatory", since it is the bridge between this world and the next. It is also one of the names of the World of Imagination (*‘ālam al-khayāl*) or World of Image-Exemplars (*‘ālam al-mithāl*), the intermediary world between the physical world and the spiritual world (pp. 52-53). As such the *barzakh* is similar to the animal soul, which is an intermediary between the body and the spirit (pp. 54-55). Now it is characteristic of a *barzakh* that as an isthmus or intermediary between two realities, it possesses the attributes of both. Thus the World of Image-Exemplars possesses a luminous substance (*jawhar nūrānī*) like the spiritual world, but it is perceptible to the senses (*maḥsūs*) and capable of division (*miqdārī*) like the physical world (pp. 55). Likewise the animal soul is similar to the spirit in that it is simple (*basīl*), but similar to the composite constitution of the body in that it embraces multiple faculties (p. 55).

The Perfect Man then is the isthmus between God and the world, embracing the attributes of both. Jāmī quotes Ibn ‘Arabī as follows: Man is like "an isthmus between the world and God, bringing together and embracing both the creatures and Him. Man is the dividing line between the shadow and

the sun. This is his reality. So he has absolute perfection in temporality and Eternality. But God has absolute perfection in Eternality, and He does not enter into temporality... And the world has absolute perfection in temporality; it does not enter into Eternality. Thus man has brought together and embraced all that exists" (p. 106).

It is precisely man's quality of being an isthmus which has made him worthy of being God's vicegerent. Since he is an isthmus, he comprises the attributes of both lordship and servanthood. Through his attribute of lordship—i.e., his divine nature—he takes from God what the creatures demand. And through his attribute of servanthood he is able to establish contact with the other creatures and to see that they receive what they need from God (p. 103).

Expressed differently, the Perfect Man is the means whereby the world is maintained. The Perfect Man in his aspect of lordship, or inasmuch as he embraces the divine realities, receives the effusion of God, i.e., of the Name "Allāh". Then the reflection of the lights of God's theophany overflows into the world, which subsists by receiving this reflection (p. 89). The beings of the world are the loci of manifestation for the Names and Attributes, or their forms, symbols or "seats" (*mahall-i istiṭwā*). Since each being is the locus within which certain particular Names are manifested, it remains under the sway of the Perfect Man, who is the locus of manifestation for the universal Name which contains in itself all the others.

It follows that without man, there would be no world. Here Jāmī quotes Qūnyawī: "The true Perfect Man is the isthmus between Necessity and possibility and the mirror which unites the attributes of Eternality with those of temporal events... He is the intermediary between God and creation. Through him and from his level of existence the effusion of God and the succour which is the cause of the subsistence of 'other than God' reach the world, all of it, both its celestial and terrestrial parts. If it were not for the fact that he acts as the isthmus unopposed to either of the two sides, nothing in the world could be the receptacle for the unique divine succour, because of the lack of correspondence and relationship. The succour would not reach

the world and the world would cease to exist. The Perfect Man is the pillar of the Heavens and the earth. Because of this mystery, when he leaves the center of the earth, which is... the station of Allāh's vicegerency, ...the order of the earth and the Heavens will be destroyed and they will be changed into other than themselves" (p. 97).

In a strangely modern manner Jāmī anticipates an objection which might occur to many people at this point: Before the actualization of the human form the world existed and the planets revolved. So how can you call man the Pole (*quṭb*) of the universe and the means whereby it is maintained? Jāmī replies that although man did not exist in the Sensory World, he did exist in the Spiritual World, and the effect of his existence was manifested in the lower world. To prove this point he cites the famous *ḥadīth* of the Hidden Treasure quoted above. According to his *ḥadīth*, the goal of creation is the perfection of God's Self-manifestation. If God's Essence were not to be manifested, He would remain a Hidden Treasure. This Self-manifestation of God takes place in two modes: the mode of particularization and multiplicity, i.e., in the form of the universe as a whole; and the mode of summation and unity, i.e. in man's form. So the Self-manifestation of the Essence as It is in Itself, i.e. in Its Unity and as embracing all Attributes at once, only takes place in the elemental form of man. In the world as such the Essence manifests Itself as dispersion and multiplicity.

The role of man as perfecting the Self-manifestation of God is referred to in the Quran in the famous verse of the "trust" (*amānah*): "We offered the trust to the Heavens and the earth and the mountains, but they refused to carry it..., and man carried it" (XXXIII, 72). In this verse "Heavens" refer to the celestial parts of creation, while "earth" refers to the physical world. "Mountains" are an allusion to the worlds and levels of existence which lie between. All of these levels of existence refused to carry the trust because they are loci of manifestation for only certain Names of God. Thus they do not possess the necessary receptivity (*qābiliyyah*) to be the locus of manifestation for the divine All-comprehensiveness, i.e., for all of the

Names embraced by the Name "Allāh". But man did carry the trust, since he possesses a perfect and total receptivity for all of the Names. Thus the divine goal in creation, i.e., the Self-manifestation of God, only became actualized through man's form. Therefore even before man was created in the physical world, the world could only exist through the effusion of existence carried out through him and directed toward his actualization in the external world (pp. 90-91).



In sum, the Perfect Man as the ontological prototype of the human self, or as the self in its ultimate state of perfection and realization, is the locus within which is manifested directly the Greatest Name of God, which includes in itself all other Names. Thus the Perfect Man is the goal of creation, for through him the Self-manifestation and Self-unfolding of the Infinite Ipseity is actualized. And since he is the goal of creation, all other creatures depend upon him, for "without the fruit in mind the gardener would never have planted the tree" (p. 101). In other words, the individual and particularized Names of God, whose loci of theophany are symbolized by the tree with its myriad branches, are only manifested under the sway of the universal and all-embracing Name, whose locus of manifestation is symbolized by the fruit, which contains in itself the principle of the whole tree.

Finally, one of Jāmī's numerous versified descriptions of the Perfect Man may be quoted here: (1)

"Before Eternity, the states of God  
are held within the First Determination  
united in their essences with one another,  
embodied within each other,  
hidden behind the curtain of Unity,  
free from separation and its decrees.

(1) This poem is from one of Jāmī's *mathnawī's*, *Silsilat al-dhahab*, and has been put into its final English form with the help of Peter Lamborn Wilson. The Persian text can be found in Jāmī, *Mathnawī-yi haft awrang*, ed. by M. Mudarris-i-Gilāni, Tehran, 1337 A. H. solar, pp. 70-71.

Both in their being and in the Mind of God  
multiplicity and distinction have not touched them.  
Then in the Second Determination  
each hidden state becomes distinct,  
the realities become distinguishable  
each from the other, but still  
within the veil of mystery—  
a distinction in Knowledge alone,  
still inferior to ontological distinctions.  
Then, in the footsteps of this becoming,  
these realities emerge from the Inward  
into the Outward world, though they remain  
still unmanifest within the Essence:  
the external face of the Essence  
is like a mirror in which  
the Inward shows itself in the Outward,  
and possibility becomes the veil of Necessity;  
through this reflection of the Inward,  
Necessary Being is tinted with the hue  
of each possible being—  
one in Essence, but in the eye  
of perception, revealed as multiple.  
By the differences in the varieties of manifestation  
the levels of the Worlds become known:  
First the World of Intellects and Souls,  
then the World of Imagination,  
finally the sensible world.  
One by one within these worlds  
the divine Names are manifested.  
Each thing in each realm  
comes into being from a particular  
and different Name. All the Cosmos  
becomes a mirror, still unpolished,  
in which the Face of the Master  
of Glory and Bounty can not yet  
perfectly be shown, for this  
numerical dispersion obstructs  
the unitary and all-embracing Mystery.

Adam is the polishing stone  
for this mirror, since the Essence  
and all its Attributes are within him—  
he becomes an all-embracing and universal  
locus of manifestation; from within him,  
the mystery of the Essence and the Attributes shines forth;  
and within this locus, this man,  
each of the Names reveals itself.  
He becomes the unitary form of all  
the individual particularities of the Cosmos—  
through him the circle is closed,  
the last becomes the first.  
He is a book embracing all verses  
and signs, his being is the goal  
of all goals."

William C. CHITTICK  
(Teheran)