that the sacred has to be limitless, and could appear at any time. As a composer of the Sacred, I will continue to experience sound of God', but this must necessarily lead to the first word. But, as Goethe reminds us, metaphysical reality is not a simple thing, and is also something more than that, 

So with music and Schuon as my guide, I move to the closing pages of The Hymn of Dawn, by Schuon, as a kind of 'prolongation' of his. The 

The closing singers who represent the 'mystical lovers' are 'buried in the Godhead', as they sing almost the same words of the Upanishad: 'Where you no longer see, you no longer hear anything, where you no longer 

Ibn ‘Arabi and Rûmi

by William C. Chittick

The thirteenth century was a period of many great Sufis, so much so that it might be called the golden age of Sufi teaching and writing. In terms of subsequent radiance, however, Ibn ‘Arabi (d. 1240) and Rûmi (d. 1273) tower above their contemporaries. The relation between the two figures has been the topic of much speculation, not only in the East, but also in countries like Iran and Turkey. I am not about to set the record straight, but it might be worthwhile to suggest some of the problems that arise as soon as we mention the two names in the same sentence.

Early modern scholarship was much enamored of "borrowings" and "influence" as explanatory categories. One difficulty with this approach is that it typically tells us little about what was actually at issue for the authors supposed to have been lending and borrowing, and the methodology has now largely lost its luster. Nonetheless, its early popularity led many people, both among Orientalists and Orientals, to suggest or even declare that Ibn ‘Arabi influenced Rûmi, and this still widely reflected in the secondary literature.

For example, R. A. Nicholson, the greatest Western authority on Rûmi, claimed in his commentary on Rûmi's Mathnawi that Ibn ‘Arabi was the source for certain of Rûmi’s specific teachings. In fact, the textual evidence is simply not there. No doubt, there is a certain amount of circumstantial evidence — Rûmi was a younger contemporary of Ibn ‘Arabi, he may have met him in his youth, he was on close terms with his most prolific disciple, Sadr al-Din Qânawi (d. 1274), and many lines of his poetry seem to be obvious assertions of wâbadat al-unîfîd, the
Oneness of Belag, which — "as everyone knows" — is the belief system of Ibn 'Arabi.

On an earlier occasion I addressed in some detail the weakness of both the textual and the circumstantial evidence for Arabi's influence on Rumi, and I will not repeat myself here. ¹

Briefly, I pointed out that influence can be a meaningful category only if we can cite specific, concrete instances in which one author employs the concepts and terminology of another in a manner that allows us to say with some degree of certainty that the second has taken them from the first, whether directly or indirectly. But as soon as we define influence in these terms, it becomes impossible to find — so far as I have been able to detect — any idea or concept in Rumi's writings characteristic of Ibn 'Arabi's writings (all of which are in Arabic) and not found in Persian works with which Rumi was much more likely to have been acquainted.

Some might object by claiming that the relationship between Ibn 'Arabi and Rumi was much more profound than a simple borrowing of concepts and terminology, because it was a spiritual link. But the "spiritual" is by definition invisible and, in any case, totally inaccessible to scholarship. To speak of it is to appeal to what the Sufis call dha'wq — "tasting" — but that can only be convincing to people who have it or to their disciples. Unless talk of spiritual links is backed up with concrete, textual evidence, it is simply speculation.

A point of special importance has to do with the concept of wabdat al-wujūd or Oneness of Being, which, as I just said, "everyone knows" is the belief system of Ibn 'Arabi. In fact, most of those who know this are wrong, unless they can provide a definition that coincides with what Ibn 'Arabi was actually saying. This expression is difficult to deal with, because people have a passing acquaintance with Islamic intellectual history usually talk as if they knew what it means, whereas few specialists can provide an explanation that would do justice to the way in which the term was used in the texts where it appears.

The expression became controversial within a few years, and heated debates about it have continued. Opinions vary as to whether it is better to use an alternate translation, such as "the unity of existence," or whether even the term should be avoided altogether. Many scholars have been hesitant to call it wabdat al-wujūd without any suggestion that it has any significance. As soon as we say that it designates the Being and Reality of God — an Islamic theology, philosophy, and Sufism — the problem is the same: because it simply means that God is one, how the term is understood when it is used. The reason is obvious: For some, it means that Ibn 'Arabi believed in wabdat al-wujūd, not that he merely accepted it.

For the fourteenth century, the term had many, and different authors understood it differently, to say that Ibn 'Arabi believed in wabdat al-wujūd, or that he believed in wabdat al-wujūd, not least because he followed Ibn 'Arabi in this belief.

I do not deny that Rumi and Ibn 'Arabi may have believed in wabdat al-wujūd. Neither employs the expression. But can we say that the term in question is better than the latter? The answer is yes, and it is even better than wabdat al-wujūd, not least because it is more inclusive. The term is better, and that is because it is more inclusive.


² See Chittick, "Rumi and Wadad al-wujūd.

³ See Chittick, "Oneness of Belag."
in which the term was used in the texts where it was in fact employed. The expression became controversial within a century of Ibn `Arabi's death, and heated debates about it have continued ever since. Modern assertions about it typically reflect eighteenth and nineteenth century opinions uncritically. Most scholars have simply assumed that the term was used by Ibn `Arabi and that it represents his perspective, and they have also assumed that the expression was used in the same sense over the centuries.

However, as soon as we look at the texts, we can easily find at least seven different meanings that were given to the expression. None of these is what we might immediately expect from the literal meaning of the two words. When we look simply at that, there is nothing strange or surprising about \textit{wabdat al-wujud}. It simply means "the oneness of being" or "the unity of existence." It sometimes occurs in discussions of \textit{wujud} without any suggestion that it has a technical significance. The reason is obvious: As soon as we say that \textit{wujud} in the strict sense designates the Being and Reality of God — a notion that is found in Islamic theology, philosophy, and Sufism — then \textit{wabdat al-wujud} is a truism, because it simply means that God is one. But this is clearly not how the term is understood when it is criticized or when it is used to designate the basic position of the Sufis. If that were all there was to it, then every Muslim would accept \textit{wabdat al-wujud} as self-evident.

By the fourteenth century, the term had come to have a special significance, and different authors understood it in different ways. Therefore, to say that Ibn `Arabi believed in \textit{wabdat al-wujud} without a clear definition is not helpful, and it is even less helpful to say that Rumi believed in \textit{wabdat al-wujud}, not least because we are implying that he followed Ibn `Arabi in this belief.

I do not deny that Rumi and Ibn `Arabi may indeed have believed in \textit{wabdat al-wujud}. Neither employs the expression in his writings, so one can support such a contention by providing a definition and citing relevant texts. But why would anyone want to say that they believed in it? People who do so typically have no textual basis for what the expression means, but they do think that \textit{wabdat al-wujud} somehow summarizes much of later Sufism and that it is either a good thing or a

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bad thing. What they really want to say is that those who believed in it were great Sufis and pious Muslims, or that they were not really Muslims at all, but some sort of infidels. This loaded usage of this term goes back to some of its earliest instances.

So again I ask, what exactly does wabdat al-wujūf mean? Can it be defined in a way that would allow us to say that both Ibn 'Arabi and Rumi believed in wabdat al-wujūf? And if so, would we not be forced to conclude that most great Sufis of Islamic history — and indeed, most philosophers and theologians as well — also believed in wabdat al-wujūf? If we define the term broadly enough to include both Ibn 'Arabi and Rumi but narrowly enough to exclude non-Sufi Muslims, then are we not really saying that both of them asserted the unity of God while stressing the lived vision of God’s presence in all things? In other words, would not wabdat al-wujūf then simply be another word for taubid, the assertion of God’s unity that lies at the foundation of Islamic thought and practice, but with an emphasis on the Sufi side of things?

Lest I be accused of not defining my own terms, let me say that I use the word Sufi in a broad sense, in keeping with the usage of many authorities over Islamic history. The basic reality of Sufism as they understood it — over and above the fact that it includes practice of the Shariah and adherence to the teachings of the Qur'an and the Sunnah — is the recognition of the presence of God in all things. Sufism is an intensity of faith and practice that highlights and inserts into the midst of daily life the Prophet's definition of ibadn (doing the beautiful, virtuous, perfection): "It is that you worship God as if you see Him, for, if you do not see Him, He sees you." Among the advanced adepts of Sufism, the "as if" disappears, and the vision of God promised to the faithful in the afterworld is given already in this world. The greatest of the Sufis worship God while seeing Him, and this includes both Ibn 'Arabi and Rumi, by their own repeated testimony. The prototypical expression of this fully realized ibadn is found in the well-known saying of the Prophet’s cousin and son-in-law ‘Ali: "I would not worship a Lord whom I do not see."

The vast majority of authors who have mentioned the term wabdat al-wujūf have not in fact used it to mean taubid with a stress on ibadn. Most have employed it as an emblem to specify Ibn 'Arabi specifically or the Sufi approach to Islamic theology generally. Throughout the Islamic world for a couple of centuries now, wabdat al-wujūf is practically the same as mentioning Ibn ‘Arabi; it is certainly a connection to be made, identifying him as a man of great knowledge, someone whose writings express the idea, then we need to make clear that they express many other ideas.

The earliest author to suggest how Ibn ‘Arabi’s notion of wabdat al-wujūf per se seems to be Farghani (d. ca. 1295), a disciple of Sadr al-Din in the expression many times, though he never uses the term ‘Arabi. He does not suggest that in itself it is a three-component notion. Its significance appears in what he writes — the manyness of knowledge, wujūf — the being of God — is not one, but three, through God’s knowledge of Himself and all the world.

As Farghani explains, God’s wujūf — the outer root of all oneness, and God’s knowledge — the inner root of all multiplicity. Knowing His wujūf along with the infinite possibilities of wujūf demands. God is, as Ibn ‘Arabi likes to say, wujūf (al-wujūf al-kibār). He is one through His wujūf, and He is many through His knowledge and attributes.
Ibn 'Arabi and 'Ismail — William C. Chittick

Islamic world for a couple of centuries now, to mention wabdat al-
wujūd is practically the same as mentioning Ibn 'Arabi. Although there
is certainly a connection to be made, identifying the two causes too
much confusion to be of any real value, especially if one would like to
know what Ibn 'Arabi was talking about. The only way to have an intel-
ligent and critical discussion of his ideas is first to disassociate him from
wabdat al-wujūd, or at least from most of the meanings that have been
understood from it over the centuries. Once we have defined our terms,
then we may want to say that wabdat al-wujūd does indeed express
his position.

In short, there is no special reason to say that Ibn 'Arabi's point of
view can best be summarized by wabdat al-wujūd. It is especially wrong
to say that he believed in wabdat al-wujūd and to leave it at that, as if
this could mean anything without a thorough explanation of what the
expression signifies, or as if the expression is a sufficient designation
for a vastly prolific author of non-repetitive books. If we do say that Ibn
'Arabi's writings express the idea, then we need to show how they do so
and make clear that they express many other ideas as well.

The earliest author to suggest how Ibn 'Arabi's works support the
notion of wabdat al-wujūd appears to be Ibn Sulaym al-Qarqūshī (d. 1348),
the Sufi and mystic. He does not suggest that in itself it is a technical term (unlike its
two components). Its significance appears when it is contrasted with
hadib al-'ilm, "the manyness of knowledge." His basic point is that
wujūd — the very Being of God — is not only one, it is also many
through God's knowledge of Himself and all things.

As Farghani explains, God's wujūd — the only true wujūd — is the
root of all oneness, and God's knowledge — the only true knowledge
— is the root of all multiplicity. Knowing Himself, God knows His one
wujūd along with the infinite possibilities of manifestation that His one
wujūd demands. God is, as Ibn 'Arabi likes to say, "the One and Many"
(al-wujūd al-kitābī). He is one through His own Essence, which is
wujūd, and He is many through His knowledge, or through His names
and attributes.
No one has yet been able to find the actual expression *wahdat al-wujud* in Ibn 'Arabi's writings. Nor apparently did anyone say explicitly that he believed in it before Ibn Taymiyya, who died ninety years after him. None of Ibn 'Arabi's early followers thought that the expression was especially important. It was only after Ibn Taymiyya attacked Ibn 'Arabi and accused him of believing in *wahdat al-wujud* that various Sufis began to assert that Ibn 'Arabi did indeed believe in it. They seem to have concluded that if Ibn Taymiyya — a notoriously narrow-minded theologian — had attacked it, it must be a good thing. Naturally they found appropriate definitions for it, and they rejected Ibn Taymiyya's opinion that it was synonymous with *kufr*, *zindiga*, and *illaad* — unbelief, heresy, and atheism.

Ibn Taymiyya's explanation of *wahdat al-wujud*, let it be said, has a strong basis in Ibn 'Arabi's writings. He, for one, explained the significance of the term as he understood it and supplied supporting texts to prove his contentions. According to him, it means something like what is nowadays called "pantheism." He saw it as denying any distinction between God and creation. His understanding is similar to that of those supporters and detractors of *wahdat al-wujud* who felt that it was expressed in Persian by the famous exclamation of the poets, *bama ist* ("All is He") — which can be traced back at least to the *Mundud* of Khwaja Abu Alhām Ansārī of Herat (d. 1089). In the Indian debates about *wahdat al-wujud* exemplified by Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindī in the seventeenth century, this Persian expression was often used to give it a nutshell definition.

It is worth remembering that a number of the early Orientalists claimed that Ibn 'Arabi was a pantheist. Pantheism is a philosophical position that maintains that "everything is God." It is a relatively modern idea, and when it is ascribed to various philosophers and mystics, it is typically done so as a critique. In the hands of an historian, the word may sound like objective scholarship, but it is simply a roundabout way of saying that the person to whom it is being ascribed was not very astute. Moreover, once "pantheism" is correctly translated back into Arabic or some other Islamic language (into Persian, for example, as *bama-khuda*), it is obvious that it flies in the face of the most basic of Islamic tenets.

Nowadays, many of those who support or criticize Ibn 'Arabi in his own name have something like "All is He" in mind as a crucial expression. But if we are to say, on the basis of what he believed that all is God, we must also say that he believed that nothing is God. Ibn 'Arabi had no particular faith in the reality of the creatures most succinctly referred to as existing in and from God's Being and attributes, and that everything is truly He but He, and each created by God precisely to be itself and nothing else.

Any meaningful comparison of Ibn 'Arabi and Rumi must first take into account specific ideas, images, symbols, expressions, and conceptual schemes that are found in their writings, and then relate, historically or conceptually. To do so correctly, we first need detailed and thorough studies of both authors. Rumi has been studied relatively recently, and the results of the careful study of all of Ibn 'Arabi's works reveal much less than the teachings of those of his disciples. Rumi knew or could have known. And we will not see Ibn 'Arabi at any time soon, since he was enormous and incomparably more difficult, and no less than the age.

The difficulty and significance of Ibn 'Arabi's works partly by the fact that over one hundred comments have been published on the *Pusas al-bikam*, one of his relatively early works, teaching the *Pusas* became a major mission and discussion of Ibn 'Arabi's ideas, and scholars wanted to join the conversation by writing their own. But no one should imagine that it is enough to understand Ibn 'Arabi on his own terms. First of all, the *Pusas* is not easy; it was never read without a good commentary. Second, the *Pusas* clarifies only a tiny portion of his themes and concepts. Although certain major ones from it, this is not to say that the reader has now...
been able to find the actual expression *wabdat al-umūjād* in Ibn 'Arabi's writings. Nor apparently did anyone say it in it before Ibn Taymiyya, who died ninety years before Ibn 'Arabi's early followers thought that the phrase was actually important. It was only after Ibn Taymiyya that the phrase *wabdat al-umūjād* was generally used in religious discussions to suggest that Ibn 'Arabi did indeed believe in it. Ibn 'Arabi—a notoriously polemical commentator—had attacked it, it must be a good thing to appropriate definitions for it, and they rejected its importance, as it was synonymous with *kufr, zindaqa*, and atheism.

The notion of *wabdat al-umūjād*, let it be said, has a long history in Islamic philosophy. Ibn ‘Arabi, for one, explained the signification of the phrase as “it means something like what Pantheism.” He saw it as denying any distinction between the Creator and the created. His understanding is similar to that of those who follow him. This phrase can be traced back at least to the Mongol philosopher Ibn Qāsim of Herat (d. 1089). In the Indian debates on *wabdat al-umūjād* exemplified by Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindī in the 12th century, the Persian expression was often used to give it a particular meaning that a number of the early Orientalists understood as a pantheistic or monotheistic belief. Pantheism is a philosophical doctrine that “everything is God.” It is a relatively modern concept that is ascribed to various philosophers and mystics, and it has been variously understood. In the hands of an historian, the word “pantheism” is correctly translated back into Persian, for example, as *‘ism al-wujūd* in the case of Ibn ‘Arabi. Thus, the phrase could be translated as a critique of the idea of Pantheism (or *‘ism al-wujūd*).

Nowadays, many of those who support or criticize *wabdat al-umūjād* do not have the same understanding of it as Ibn ‘Arabi. Yet, he believed that all is God, and he must also say that the same breath that he believed that all is God, Ibn ‘Arabi expresses his position on the reality of the creatures most succinctly with the Arabic phrase *bawa la bawla*, “He is not He.” He understands this to mean that everything discloses God, because all things gain their existence and attributes from God's Being and attributes, and everything also veils God, because nothing is truly He but He, and each thing is truly itself, created by God precisely to be itself and nothing else.

Any meaningful comparison of Ibn ‘Arabi and Rûmî will need to discuss specific ideas, images, symbols, expressions, themes, and perspectives that are found in their writings, and then show how these are related, historically or conceptually. To do so with any finality, however, we first need detailed and thorough studies of the writings of both authors. Rûmî has been studied relatively well, but no one has come close to a careful study of all of Ibn ‘Arabi's specific teachings. Much less the teachings of those of his disciples, like Qūnawi, whom Rûmî knew or could have known. And we will not have such a study of Ibn ‘Arabi’s teachings. Since he was enormously more prolific than Rûmî, incomparably more difficult, and no less interesting.

The difficulty and significance of Ibn ‘Arabi’s writings may be gauged partly by the fact that over one hundred commentaries have been written on the *Fusus al-bikam*, one of his relatively short books. From early on, teaching the *Fusus* became a major means for the transmission and discussion of Ibn ‘Arabi's ideas, and scholars of every generation wanted to join the conversation by writing their own commentaries. But no one should imagine that it is enough to read the *Fusus* to understand Ibn ‘Arabi on his own terms. First of all, understanding the *Fusus* is not easy; it was never written without a good teacher, or at least a commentator. Second, the *Fusus* clarifies only a tiny portion of Ibn ‘Arabi's themes and concepts. Although certain major notions can be gleaned from it, this is not to say that the reader has now become familiar with
Ibn 'Arabi and can judge with finality how his teachings might be related to those of Rumi.

Despite the various difficulties connected with discussing the relationship between Ibn 'Arabi and Rumi, it is not necessary to keep silent. A great deal can be said, at least tentatively and in general terms, so I turn to positive suggestions. I have said that it is historically inaccurate and certainly misleading to characterize Ibn 'Arabi's perspective by the term waahdat al-wujud. Let me offer an alternative characterization, one that is firmly grounded in Ibn 'Arabi's own writings. I will do this by trying to answer the question, "What did Ibn 'Arabi think he was doing?" If we can gain a clear answer, we can then ask the same thing about Rumi, and finally suggest how the goals and methodologies of the two authors were similar or different.

In trying to answer this question, we can look for a word or an expression that Ibn 'Arabi himself employs to summarize his point of view. At this stage in my research, I can say with some confidence that there is one word by which he would be especially happy to be characterized — even though there may be other words that would also satisfy him. The word is tabaqq, and the person who accomplishes it is called by the active participle of the same word, muhtaqq. These terms are well-known to Arabic and Persian speakers. Nowadays in Persian the word tabaqq means "research" in the modern sense — which is quite a decline from what it meant for Ibn 'Arabi and his followers. At least in Persian the word has preserved some of its honorable aura; in Egyptian Arabic it is likely to mean "interrogation." In the context of Ibn 'Arabi's writings, I translate it as "realization" and "verification."

The word tabaqq derives from the same root as baqq, which is a noun and an adjective that means truth and true, reality and real, propriety and proper, righteousness and right. As a Qur'anic divine name, it is usually translated as "the Truth," though I prefer "the Real." From very early times, the word was used as a synonym for the name God (Allah in Arabic and khuda in Persian). Its specific connotation as a divine name is that there is nothing real, true, right, proper, and appropriate in the full senses of these words save God Himself. God alone is truly baqq in every sense of the word.

The word baqq is commonly juxtaposed with "creatures." The juxtaposition suggests an opposition is ambiguous. In fact the status of khuda in to be investigated. We cannot say that creatures proper, and appropriate in the full senses, nor, have a certain truth and appropriateness. Both baqq, but it is not totally different either.

In discussing baqq and khuda, Ibn 'Arabi likes verse, "He has given each thing its creation," (absolute baqq, who has given everything its khuda). Hence each created thing, even the worst of evils — a certain righteousness, appropriateness, truth, important practical consequences. To bring these to the Prophet's saying, "Your soul has a baqq against you, your guest has a baqq against you; so give to each that has.

Ibn 'Arabi reads the last clause of this saying — a baqq its baqq — as a general commandment cases simply as among the most important iner. He understands the saying to mean that everything an appropriateness, and everything with which has a baqq against us. It is our duty and responsibility by the fact that God has put it there.

Ibn 'Arabi sees this hadith as providing the primary to understand tabaqq. By giving all things their has placed on us the obligation of recognizing responds to these baqq in the right and properly recognize that people were created in the image names by God, and appointed God's viceroyation, then it becomes clear that accomplishing fullest sense would demand knowing the wholesing appropriately to its every creature.

The fundamental problem that people face stand the baqq of things: How do we go about baqq and then acting in the appropriate man 'Arabi's books are about. In other words, his business of the human state, or Perfect Man (al-insa
The word *baqq* is commonly juxtaposed with *khalaq*, "creation" or "creatures." The juxtaposition suggests an opposition, but the opposition is ambiguous. In fact the status of *khalaq* in relation to *baqq* needs to be investigated. We cannot say that creatures are real, true, right, proper, and appropriate in the full senses, nor can we say that they do not have a certain truth and appropriateness. *Khalaq* is not the same as *baqq*, but it is not totally different either.

In discussing *baqq* and *khalaq*, Ibn 'Arabi likes to cite the Qur'anic verse, "He has given each thing its creation" (20:50). It is God, the absolute *Haqq*, who has given everything its *khalaq*, its created nature. Hence each created thing, even the worst of evils, has a relative *baqq* — a certain rightness, appropriateness, truth, and reality. This has important practical consequences. To bring these home, Ibn 'Arabi quotes the Prophet's saying, "Your soul has a *baqq* against you, your Lord has a *baqq* against you, your guest has a *baqq* against you, and your wife has a *baqq* against you; so give to each that has a *baqq* its *baqq*.*

Ibn 'Arabi reads the last clause of this saying — "give to each that has a *baqq* its *baqq*" — as a general commandment and the mentioned cases simply as among the most important instances of its application. He understands the saying to mean that everything has a rightness and an appropriateness, and everything with which we come into contact has a *baqq* against us. It is our duty and responsibility to what is demanded by the fact that God has put it there.

Ibn 'Arabi sees this *badīb* as providing the proper context in which to understand *tābqīq*. By giving all things their creation, God Himself has placed on us the obligation of recognizing the *baqq* of things and responds to these *baqq* in the right and proper manner. Once it is recognized that people were created in the image of God, taught all the names by God, and appointed God's vicegerents (*khalaqīs*) over all creation, then it becomes clear that accomplishing the task of *tābqīq* in its fullest sense would demand knowing the whole universe and responding appropriately to its every creature.

The fundamental problem that people face in their lives is to understand the *baqq* of things. How do we go about recognizing things' *baqq* and then acting in the appropriate manner? This is what Ibn 'Arabi's books are about. In other words, his books investigate the fullness of the human state, or Perfect Man (al-insān al-kāmil), and, at the
same time, they attempt to clarify the *baqqaq* that pertain to human beings inasmuch as they are the divinely chosen intermediaries between God, who is the Absolute *Haqq*, and creation, which is the relative *baqqaq*. Naturally, Ibn 'Arabi cannot deal with all the *baqqaq* since they have no end, so most of his books present various ways of conceptualizing and organizing the relative *baqqaq* in terms of the Absolute *Haqq*. To a certain degree he adopts the methodologies of earlier Sufis, theologians, and philosophers, but in each case he puts these to his own use in the project of *tabaqq*.

For example, Ibn 'Arabi often discusses the "stations" (*maqâms*) on the Sufi path, but he does not organize them as other authors do. His basic point is to show that people who have reached full human perfection have realized all the stations, that is, all the possibilities of human existence, all the perspectives of knowledge, all the *baqqaq* in the universe. To stand in one station rather than another station, to have one set of virtues rather than another set, to have one perspective rather than another perspective, to know in one way rather than in another way, is to be less than fully human. On the path toward perfection, the travelers to God adopt each station and each perspective as their own. Then they pass on, never, however, rejecting the legitimacy, the righteousness, and the *baqqaq* of each station and perspective. The ultimate goal is to pass beyond every station and every standpoint and to attain to what Ibn 'Arabi calls "the Station of No Station" (*maqâm lâ maqâm*). Once the traveler has achieved this station, he has achieved the true and perfect understanding and realization of "He/not He." He sees God present in and absent from every individual thing, and he knows the exact manner of both presence and absence. He responds to God's *baqqaq* in each thing as it rightfully demands.

To come back to Rûmî, he may indeed have stood in the Station of No Station and given each thing that has a *baqqaq* its *baqqaq*. However, his goal in his writings and teachings was not to elucidate all and everything, as *tabaqq* demands, but rather to focus on what is absolutely essential in the path to God — what he calls "the roots of the roots of the roots of religion" (*usûl-i usûl-i usûl-i din*). These roots can be summarized in one word — "love" — and Rûmî, in a manner that is unparalleled in Islamic if not human history, takes what Ibn 'Arabi would consider an extremely exalted, station on the path to God, the Station of No Station, or at least into the highest of all stations. Rûmî invites every human heart, which in his writing is the *baqqaq* of all *baqqaq*, exalted Rûmî's project may be, Ibn 'Arabi must set back and, with passionate and explicit experiences not only in the station of love, in the station of perfection.

Ibn 'Arabi and Rûmî had very different goals in life; they do not mean that each of them set out with a plan of action in mind. Concerning Ibn 'Arabi it is jump to the conclusion that he was busy with protomodem sense (reading the term to mean and therefore that he was a muqaddîq more of rary Iranian sense of the word — a researcher) conclude that, like any researcher, he decided to set out to accomplish it. We could then contrariwise was not a scholar, but a lover; not a sober thinker, a philosopher, but an intoxicated celebrant of divine love to reach this conclusion (as some recent ones would have done so without proper consider of the texts).

Rûmî tells us repeatedly that he is not speaking simply the flute, and his intoxicating music came. The first line of the *Mathnawi* makes precisely this reed as it complains / telling the tale of so to understand that Ibn 'Arabi was also not a so to goals. He tells us that he never speaks for himself of his own volition. Always, he says, it is the diving through him and forcing him to put down the disclosed within his heart. It is the divine *Haqq* process of *tabaqq* through him. The very baqqaq knowledge to be given by God, since no human is equate to any situation whatsoever in the create
In an attempt to clarify the baqqs that pertain to human understanding, the divinely chosen intermediaries between the Hāqq, and creation, which is the relative baqq, cannot deal with all the baqqs, since they have no ability to present various ways of conceptualizing and classifying baqqs in terms of the Absolute Hāqq. To a certain extent, the methodologies of earlier Sufis, theologians, and philosophers help to use the baqqs to achieve the “stations” (maqāmāt) of the human soul.

Ibn 'Arabi often discusses the “stations” (maqāmāt) of the human soul. People who have reached full human perfection have achieved stations that is, all the baqqs in the universe and are separate from another station, to have one station and another set, to have one perspective rather than another, to know in one way rather than in another fully human. On the path toward perfection, each station and each perspective as their own.

Ibn 'Arabi and Rūmī had very different goals in their writings, but this does not mean that each of them set out with a specific project and plan of action in mind. Concerning Ibn 'Arabi in particular, it is easy to jump to the conclusion that he was busy with tabqūq in a sort of proto-modern sense (reading the term to mean “spiritual research”), and therefore that he was a mubâqqiq more or less in the contemporary Iranian sense of the word — a researcher, a scholar. We could conclude that, like any researcher, he decided on a scholarly goal and set out to accomplish it. We could then contrast him with Rūmī, who was not a scholar, but a lover, not a sober thinker, but an ecstatic, not a philosopher, but an intoxicated celebrant of divine love. But, if one were to reach this conclusion (as some respected Orientalists have), one would have done so without proper consideration of the testimony of the texts.

Rūmī tells us repeatedly that he is not speaking for himself. He was simply the flute, and his intoxicating music came from the divine breath. The first line of the Ḥaṭburūd makes precisely this point: “Listen to this reed as it complains / telling the tale of separation.” But we need to understand that Ibn 'Arabi was also not a scholar who set his own goals. He tells us that he never speaks for himself, that he never writes of his own volition. Always, he says, it is the divine Hāqq who is speaking through him and forcing him to put down on paper what is being disclosed within his heart. It is the divine Hāqq that is carrying out the process of tabqūq through him. The very baqq of knowledge is for the sake of God, since no human knowledge can be adequate to any situation whatsoever in the created world — not to men-
tion the divine world — because the created world is also God's world, God's bāqya, the self-disclosure of the absolute Haqqa. The only possible way to know things as they truly are — that is, to recognize the bāqya of things — is to be given knowledge of them by God.

The title of Ibn 'Arabi's greatest work, al-Futūḥat al-makkiyya, indicates the nature of the knowledge that he was given. Futūḥat is the plural of futūh, which means "opening." Ibn 'Arabi often explains that seekers can reach the door to divinely inspired knowledge by their own efforts, but then they have to stand at the door and knock. Knocking consists in giving everything its bāqya to the extent that is humanly possible, and this begins with giving God His bāqya. God's first bāqya upon human beings is for them to remember Him constantly — this is the practice of dhikr. One knocks at God's door by remembering Him in all one's words, thoughts, and deeds; if He chooses, He opens the door. There is no possible way to get past the door unless God opens it.

Of course it is rather clear that Ibn 'Arabi and Rūmi display a certain complementarity of function and thereby answer to the vast diversity of human types. They mark, as it were, the two major modalities in terms of which the inner meanings of Islam may be expressed, modalities that might be designated as "sobriety" (sulh) and "intoxication" (sabw). This is a complementarity, however, not a contradiction, and like yin and yang, each modality is found in the other. Ibn 'Arabi's sobriety is intoxicated, and Rūmi's intoxication is sober. For his part, Ibn Arabi — as Michel Chodkiewicz has written — has an answer for every question, and there are people whom God has created with the drive to know all the answers. There are others who see this drive as dispersion and wish only to be immersed in the One Beloved, and Rūmi speaks much more directly to them.

Finally, in their voluminous output, both Rūmi and Ibn 'Arabi give voice to the paradox of the inexpressible — the Station of No Station, the vision of He/not He — the fact that, although the Ultimate cannot be explained, there is nothing else to talk about. Rūmi suggests something of his own role here — and its contrast with Ibn 'Arabi's role — in one of his gha'azals. In the penultimate line, he asks, "What is it to be lover?" Then he answers his own question: "Perfect thirst." "So," he says, announcing his divinely inspired project — "let me explain the water of life." In the final line, he changes his mind and rejects the possibility of explanation, seemingly in response to his project of tabqyā: "I will not explain, I will stay explained — that is what I will do."3

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3 Rūmī, Kulliyat-i Shams, edited by B. Parāzūnāf (Ikhraa: Dānīshgāh, 1334-45/
His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales: A Sense of the Sacred: Building Bridges Between Islam and the West
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