

**THE REFLECTION OF THE WAḤDAT AL-WUJŪD DOCTRINE
(THE ONENESS OF BEING) IN THE MODERN TURKISH
THOUGHT: AHMED AVNİ KONUK AND HIS *FUSŪSU'L-ḤİKEM*
TERCŪME VE ŞERḤİ (TRANSLATION OF AND COMMENTARY ON
FUŞŪŞ AL-ḤİKAM)**

Tahir Uluç*

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this article is to examine the tradition of writing commentary on one of the most important and controversial Sufi texts, *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam* by Muḥyiddīn Ibn al-'Arabī (d. 1240), who is known as the founder and first-explicator of the teaching of *waḥdat al-wujūd* (the Oneness of Being). This article consists of two main parts. First, it attempts to outline the tradition of writing commentary on the *Fuṣūṣ* and introduce the life and works of Ahmed Avni Konuk (d. 1939), who can be seen as the most important expositor of the Akbarī teaching in the Turkish language in modern age. Second, it includes English translation of the first twenty-five pages from his introduction to his *Fuṣūṣ* commentary and an analysis of the text.

Key Words: The Oneness of Being, Ibn al-'Arabī, *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*, Ahmed Avni Konuk, Turkish Thought

Introduction²⁹⁷

Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam is one of the most important and famous works of the Andalusian Sufi, Muḥyiddīn Ibn al-'Arabī (1265-1240), who is known as al-Shaykh al-Akbar²⁹⁸. This work has been seen as the compendium of Ibn al-'Arabī's teachings which he scattered throughout his other works. The author asserts in the following remarks that this work was given by the Prophet to explain to the people.

“On the last ten days of the year 630 (1230 A.D.), I saw the Messenger of God [Muḥammad] in a glad-tiding vision (*mubashshūra*) which was shown to me. He held a book. He told me, “This is the *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*. Take it to the people so that they may benefit from it.” I replied, “It is my pleasure to obey God, His Messenger, and the rulers among us.” So I realized my hope to explain the book to the people just as the Messenger of God defined for me,

* Tahir Uluç has Ph.D. in Islamic Philosophy, and is Research Assistant at Selçuk University, Theology School (Konya/Turkey). **E-mail:** mehmetahir@hotmail.com

²⁹⁷ I send my special thanks to Dr. Qamar-ul Huda and Terence J. Demerse for editing and commenting on the draft of this article.

²⁹⁸ For further information on the biography of Muḥyiddīn Ibn al-'Arabī, consult Claude Addas, *Quest for the Red Sulphur, The Life of Ibn 'Arabī*, English translation by Peter Kingsley, The Islamic Texts Society, Cambridge 1993; Asin Palacios, *Ibn 'Arabī, Ḥayātuhū wa Madhhabuhū*, Arabic translation by 'Abdurrahmān Badawī, Dār al-Qalam, Beirut 1979; İbrāhīm el-Kārī' el-Bağdādī, *Muḥyiddīn İbn ul-'Arabī'nin Menkabeleri* (ed-Durr uş-Semīn fī Menākib iş-Şeyḥ Muḥyiddīn), Turkish translation by Abdulkadir Şener-M. Rami Ayas, A.Ü.İ.F. Yayınları, Ankara 1972.

making no addition or diminution of it²⁹⁹.”

The *Fuṣūṣ* consists of twenty-seven chapters, each of which deals with the wisdom particular to the twenty-seven prophets whose names occurred in the Qur’ān or *hadīths*. So we can describe the *Fuṣūṣ* as an esoteric interpretation of the verses and the *hadīths* related to the careers of these twenty-seven prophets. The text begins with the exposition of the wisdom of Adam and ends with that of Muḥammad; however, it follows neither a chronological order nor a theoretical system. In addition, one can hardly recognize the logical relationship which Ibn al-‘Arabī establishes between the chapter headings, i.e., the prophets, and the contents of the chapters, except a few of them³⁰⁰. Even Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qunawī (d. 1274), who is Ibn al-‘Arabī’s immediate disciple and son-in-law, makes the following remarks about the ambiguous nature of the work: “If God had not displayed His bounty towards me by giving me a share in the root and origin of the Shaykh’s spiritual perceptions, I would not be able to discern his purpose from the sense of his words.”³⁰¹

One of the pioneering experts on the thought of Ibn al-‘Arabī in the West, R.A. Nicholson, depicts the style of the *Fuṣūṣ* as follows: “The theories set forth in the *Fuṣūṣ* are difficult to understand and even more difficult to explain. Many years ago I translated the greater part of the work, with the commentary by ‘Abdu ‘l-Razzāq al-Kāshānī for my own use, but the author’s language is so technical, figurative, and involved that a literal reproduction would convey very little. On the other hand, if we reject his terminology, we shall find it impossible to form any precise notion of his ideas.”³⁰² Abū‘l-‘Alā ‘Afīfī, who prepared his dissertation under the supervision of Nicholson, makes similar statements about the *Fuṣūṣ*³⁰³. These two examples explain why in the past the *Fuṣūṣ* has never been read without a commentary, a teacher, or both³⁰⁴. And similarly, it explains why so many commentaries upon this text were written³⁰⁵.

²⁹⁹ Muḥyiddīn Ibn al-‘Arabī, *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*, ed. by Abū ‘Alā ‘Afīfī, Baghdad 1989, p. 47.

³⁰⁰ Mahmud Erol Kılıç, “Fusūsü’l-Hikem”, *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi* (henceforth referred to as “DIA”), Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, İstanbul 1996, vol. XIII, p. 231. For more information on *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*, see Abū‘l-‘Alā al-‘Afīfī, *The Mystical Philosophy of Muḥyiddin Ibnul Arabi*, Cambridge 1939; R.A. Nicholson, “Some Notes on the Fusus al-Hikam”, *Studies in Islamic Mysticism*, Curzon Press, England 1994; William C. Chittick, “Ibn al-‘Arabī’s Own Summary of the Fusūs”, *Journal of the Muḥyiddin Ibn Arabi Society* (henceforth referred to as “JMIAS”), number 1, Oxford 1982, pp. 30–93; “The Chapter Headings of the Fusūs”, *JMIAS*, year 1984, vol. II, Oxford, p. 101.

³⁰¹ Chittick, “The Chapter Headings”, p. 45.

³⁰² Nicholson, “Some Notes”, p. 149.

³⁰³ Ebu‘l-Ala Afifi, “İbn Arabi Hakkında Yaptığım Çalışma”, *İbn Arabi Anusına*, ed. by İbrâhîm Beyyûmî Medkûr, Turkish translation by Tahir Uluç, İnsan Yayınları, İstanbul 2002, p. 26.

³⁰⁴ Chittick, “The Chapter Headings”, p. 101.

³⁰⁵ See ‘Uthmân Yahyâ, *Muallafātu Ibn ‘Arabī, Ta’rīkhuhā wa Taṣnīfuhā*, Arabic

Since the time of its composition, the *Fuṣūṣ* has been the topic of severe disputations taking place between a variety of sections of Muslim society. As the critics of Ibn al-ʿArabī wrote refutations to the *Fuṣūṣ* and the doctrine of *waḥdat al-wujūd* (the Oneness of Being), his followers formed a vast literature of justification and exposition of the Akbarian teaching. So, although the *Fuṣūṣ* commentaries were written primarily to explain the work from textual and doctrinal aspects, they should also be regarded as being intended to justify and defend the doctrines of Ibn al-ʿArabī³⁰⁶.

Among these commentaries, the earliest was composed by Ismāʿīl Sawdakīn (d. 1248). This work does not include the explanation of the full text and only explains the Chapter of Idrīs³⁰⁷. *Al-Fūkūk fī Mustanadāti Hikam al-Fuṣūṣ* is one of the most important *Fuṣūṣ* commentaries as its author, Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qunawī, is the immediate disciple of Ibn al-ʿArabī and the foremost propagator of his teachings. ʿAbdurrazzāq al-Kāshānī's (d. 1330) *Sharḥ Fuṣūṣ al-Hikam* does not provide much help for the reader to understand the textual and grammatical aspects of the *Fuṣūṣ*; instead, its main concern is to explain the doctrinal points of the text. Dāwūd al-Qaysari's (d. 1350) *Maṭlaʿu Khuṣūṣ al-Kilām fī Sharḥi Fuṣūṣ al-Hikam* is a commentary *par excellence* for it construes the text of the *Fuṣūṣ* line by line. This work had a great influence on the subsequent *Fuṣūṣ* commentaries written in the Arabic, Turkish, and Persian languages³⁰⁸. Kātib Chalabī describes ʿAbdullāh Bosnawī's (d. 1644) *Tajalliyāt ʿArāis al-Nufūs* as the best commentary on the *Fuṣūṣ*³⁰⁹.

The earliest Turkish translation of the *Fuṣūṣ* was produced by Ahmed Bican in 1453 or 1466 in Gelibolu. Afterwards, Bahāzāde Abdürrahīm-i Nakşibendī summarized it under the title *Lübb-i Müntehâ-yı Fusûs*. This text is registered under the number 1251 in Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Library, Emanet Hazinesi Section³¹⁰.

Bayezîd Halife wrote a commentary on the *Fuṣūṣ* in Arabic after having

translation by Aḥmad Muḥammad al-Ṭīb, Cairo 1992, pp. 479–500; Kātib Chalabī, *Kaṣḥf al-Zunūn*, Istanbul 1972, vol. II, p. 1261–1265.

³⁰⁶ Mustafa Tahralı, “Fusūsu'l-Hikem, Şerhi ve Vahdet-i Vücūd İle Alâkalı Bazı Mes'eleler” (in Ahmed Avni Konuk, *Fusūsu'l-Hikem Tercüme ve Şerhi*, ed. by Mustafa Tahralı-Selçuk Eraydın, Dergah Yayınları, Istanbul 1987), vol. I, p. XXXI.

³⁰⁷ Dilaver Güner, “Fusūsu'l-Hikem”, *Tasavvuf*, year 5, number 13, July-December 2004, Ankara, p. 403.

³⁰⁸ Mehmet Bayrakdar, “Dāvūd-ı Kayserî”, *DIA*, Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, Istanbul 1994, vol. IX, p. 34. For more information, see Muḥammad Suhayl Umar, “The Influence of Daʿūd al-Qaysari on the *Fuṣūṣ* Commentary Tradition (in the published papers presented in *International Dāvūd el-Kayserî Symposium*, ed. by Turan Koç, Ankara 1988), p. 85 and on.

³⁰⁹ Mustafa Kara, “Abdullah Bosnevî”, *DIA*, Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, Istanbul 1988, vol. I, p. 87. For more information, see Christopher Shelly, “Abdullah Effendi, Commentator on the *Fusūs al-Hikam*”, *JMIAS*, Oxford 1995, number XVII, pp. 79–83.

³¹⁰ Kılıç, *ibid*, p. 233.

performed *khalwat* (retreat) under Dede Ömer Rüşenî's supervision. Then he wrote *Sırr-ı Cânân*, which consists of over five-thousand and five-hundred verses. In this book, the author explains some important themes of the *Füşûş* in verse³¹¹.

'Abdullâh Bosnawî's (d. 1644) *Tajalliyât 'Arâis al-Nufûs* is the first *Füşûş* commentary written in the Turkish language. This book was published twice, in 1836 in Bulaq and in 1872 in Istanbul. Bosnawî composed this commentary firstly in Turkish and it became very famous in Arab lands. Then the Sufis who did not know Turkish asked him to translate it into Arabic and so the author himself completed a translation of the book into Arabic³¹². This work was also translated into English by Bülent Rauf and published in 1986-1991 in Oxford³¹³. However, the translator wrongly ascribed it to İsmail Hakkı Bursevî (ö. 1725)³¹⁴.

In modern Turkish, there are two Turkish translations of the *Füşûş*. First is M. Nûri Gençosman's *Füşûsu'l-Hikem*, which was published in 1952. This translation includes many ambiguities and obscurities. The other Turkish translation of and commentary on the *Füşûş* is *Füşûsu'l-Hikem Ter-cüme ve Şerhi* by Ahmed Avni Konuk (d. 1938), which is the topic of this study.

Tajalliyât 'Arâis al-Nufûs, the first Turkish *Füşûş* commentary is well-known both to the Muslim and Western world because it was translated into Arabic by its author and recently into English by the late Bülent Rauf. However, Ahmed Avni Bey's commentary on the *Füşûş* is not known by the non-Turkish speaking Sufis and academicians, or at least its contents are not accessible. Therefore, we felt a need to study this Ottoman-Turkish Sufi-thinker and his commentary on the *Füşûş*.

Konuk's work is distinguished from the previous commentaries by its many features. First of all, its author lived at the period of transition from the Ottoman to the renascent Turkish Republic. So he both obtained the Ottoman-Sufi-intellectual heritage and encountered the challenge of adopting the Western values *en masse*. Furthermore, he was well-aware of the modern intellectual trends which took shape at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century. This can be seen in his criticism of materialism which runs through the work.

It may be recognized that in order to be able to translate and comment on a text like *Füşûş al-Hikam*, which has been viewed as the most profound and complicated work of Ibn al-Arabî, who carried mystical symbolism to the furthest point possible both literally and spiritually, one should be the great

³¹¹ *Ibid.*

³¹² Gürer, *ibid.*, p. 410.

³¹³ 'Abdullâh Bosnawî, *İsmail Hakkı Bursevî's Translation of and Commentary on Füşûş al-Hikam*, English translation by Bülent Rauf, Oxford 1986-1991.

³¹⁴ Kılıç, *ibid.*, p. 234.

postman, A. Avni Konuk, who combined in his life music and Sufism, modern science and gnosis, *belles letters* and life.

The Biography of Ahmed Avni Konuk

I would like to quickly touch on the political and intellectual situation of Ottoman society in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, in which Konuk lived. In this period, there took place a set of political, social, cultural as well as educational changes. The declaration of Tanzimat meant a speedy process of westernization of the country starting with the substitution of the classic Ottoman institutions of education, i.e. *Medreses*, with Western-type schools. The contemporary Ottoman intellectuals who had received Western education in European universities with the state's financial support played a significant role in importing materialist and positivist thought by translating the works of materialist and positivist writers into Turkish. In response to the domination of materialist and positivist trends over Turkish intellectualism, idealist and spiritualist thinkers, who can be classified into the Islamist-conservativist category, wrote many books to fight against the two trends noted above. The struggle against materialism and positivism culminated especially after the declaration of the Second Constitutional Era (1908). Thus, Ahmed Avni Konuk was born and raised against such an intellectual and political backdrop³¹⁵.

Ahmed Avni Konuk was born in 1869 in Istanbul. His father is Kadı Ali-Zâde İbrâhim Effendi's son Mûsâ Kâzım Bey and, his mother is Fatma Zehra, daughter of Hâfız Mustafa Effendi of Bukhara. After Ahmed Avni graduated from the local primary school, he memorized the Qur'ân by heart and studied Arabic³¹⁶. Then he attended Galata Rüşdiyesi (secondary school). He lost his father when he was around 9-10 years old, and a few months later, his mother passed away, as well³¹⁷. In 1884, he was transferred to Darüşşafaka (school for orphans) and graduated from in 1890³¹⁸.

On July 23, 1890, Sultan Abdülhamid II appointed him as a postal clerk

³¹⁵ For further information on the political and intellectual character of that period, consult Şerif Mardin, *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey: The Case of Bediüzzaman Said Nursi*, Albany 1989; Süleyman Hayri Bolay, *Türkiye'de Ruhçu ve Maddeci Görüşün Mücadelesi*, Ankara 1985; İsmail Kara, *Din ile Modernleşme Arasında, Çağdaş Türk Düşüncesinin Meseleleri*, Dergâh Yayınları, İstanbul 2003.

³¹⁶ İbnülemin Mahmut Kemal İnal, *Hoş Sadâ, Son Asır Türk Musikînasları*, Maarif Basımevi, İstanbul 1958, p. 40; Reşat Öngören, "Konuk, Ahmed Avni", *DIA*, Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, İstanbul, vol. XXVI, p. 180.

³¹⁷ Sadettin Nüzhet Ergun, *Türk Şairleri*, İstanbul 1936, vol. II, p. 573.

³¹⁸ Nazmi Özalp, *Türk Müsikîsi Tarihi*, Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı Yayınları, İstanbul 2000, vol. II, p. 65; Sezai Fırat, "İnsân-ı Kâmil'in Mütercimi Ahmed Avni Konuk'un Hayatı ve Eserleri" (in Azizüddin Neseî, *İnsân-ı Kâmil*, Turkish translation by A. Avni Konuk, ed. by Sezai Fırat, Gelenek Yayınları, İstanbul 2004), p. 51.

to the İttihad Post Office.³¹⁹ In the following year, he entered Mekteb-i Hukûk-ı Şâhâne (law school) and graduated from with a degree of honor in 1898. He served forty-three years on different posts in this department and retired in 1933³²⁰. He got married with Emine Hâdiye Hanım at a late stage in his life³²¹. In a document registered in the Department of Post, Telegraph, and Telephone, it is stated that he was well-versed in the French, Arabic, and Persian languages³²². He died on March 20, 1939 and was buried in the Merkez Efendi Cemetery, Istanbul³²³.

Ahmed Avni Konuk was initiated into the Mawlawî Order by Mesnevihân Es'ad Dede of Salonica (d. 1911) in 1904. He attended the courses which Es'ad Dede taught at Çayırılı Medrese, in Istanbul. He was one of the three distinguished students who attended Es'ad Dede's *Mathnawî* courses, the other two being Tahirülmevlevî (Tahir Olgun) and Abdülhay (Öztoprak). Under the supervision of Es'ad Dede, he studied Persian, the *Fuşûş* and the *Mathnawî* and received a certificate qualifying him to teach the *Mathnawî*³²⁴.

Es'ad Dede taught public courses after the congregational prayer on Fridays and after the afternoon prayer in the months of Ramadan at Fatih Mosque. In addition, he taught special courses at Çayırılı Medrese after the dawn prayer on Tuesdays. In the second type of courses, he taught Jalâl al-Din Rûmî's (d. 1273) *Mathnawî*, Ibn al-'Arabî's *Fuşûş al-Hikam*, and Mahmûd Shabistari's *Gulshan-i Râz*. Avni Konuk and his two friends attended the classes after the dawn prayer until the death of their master³²⁵.

It seems Konuk acquired most of his erudition from Es'ad Dede and drew upon that education in writing his commentaries on the *Mathnawî* and the *Fuşûş*. So we need to know some more about this Mawlawî shaykh. Es'ad Dede was born in 1843, in Kadı Abdullah Effendi Neighborhood, in Salonica³²⁶. His father, Receb Effendi, was among the notables of the city. His mother's name is Hânuş Hanım. Es'ad Dede took his first education from an imam in Salonica. At his age of sixteen, he began to serve as intern officer in the Secretary of Finance in Salonica. Meanwhile, he entered into the Sufi path under the supervision of Osman Effendi, a shaykh of the Badawî Order.³²⁷

³¹⁹ İnal, *ibid*, p. 40.

³²⁰ Özalp, *ibid*, p. 66; İnal, *ibid*, p. 40.

³²¹ Selçuk Eraydın, "Ahmed Avni Konuk'un Hayatı ve Eserleri" (in Ahmed Avni Konuk, *Fuşûsu'l-Hikem Tercüme ve Şerhi*, ed. by Mustafa Tahrallı-Selçuk Eraydın, Dergah Yayınları, Istanbul 1987), vol. I, p. XVI.

³²² Eraydın, *ibid*, p. XVII.

³²³ Özalp, *ibid*, p. 66; İnal, *ibid*, p. 41.

³²⁴ Eraydın, *ibid*, p. XVII.

³²⁵ Mustafa Tatcı-Cemal Kurnaz, "Mehmed Esad Dede", *DİA*, Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı Yayınları, Ankara 2003, vol. XXVIII, p. 469.

³²⁶ *Ibid*.

³²⁷ *Ibid*.

In 1863, he moved to Istanbul and settled in Çayırılı Medresesi, where he would spend most of his life. He studied Islamic sciences with such famous Ottoman scholars as Hoca Şevket Effendi, Gelibolulu Adil Effendi, Şeyh Temimi, and Hoca Abdülkerim Effendi³²⁸. Afterwards, he affiliated himself to Osman Selahaddin Dede, the Grand Shaykh of Yenikapı Mevlevihanesi and studied the *Mathnawī* and the *Fuṣūṣ* with him. In addition, he attended the *Futūḥāt* courses of Mustafa Effendi of Tunis³²⁹.

Es'ad Dede was invested with the certificate of *khilāfa* (viceregency) and *Mesnevihanlık*³³⁰ by the Grand Shaykh of Eskişehir Mevlevihanesi, Hasan Hüsnü Dede. He got *ijāzas* from many different Sufi orders. After retiring from his official teaching post at high school, he continued to teach public and special courses of Islamic sciences until his death on August 9, 1911³³¹.

As is seen above, Konuk's shaykh Es'ad Dede got *ijāza* from both the Mawlawī and Akbarī shaykhs. We should be aware that the term "*ijāza*" is originally employed in the exoteric Islamic sciences and especially in the science of Hadith. In Islamic tradition, the transmission of knowledge relied fundamentally on a close relationship between teachers and students, and on what we have called a "genealogical"³³² style of authority. Teaching was carried on in "circles" (*halaq*, sing. *halqa*), which centered on a particular shaykh. And the term "*suhba*" was used to refer to the close relationship and personal bond between teacher and pupil. In the context of classic Islamic education, this term designates both the concepts of companionship and discipleship. Through it, a teacher transmits less a body of knowledge than a very personalized authority over certain texts. The "*ijāza*", which means literally permission, was a certification that an individual had studied a particular text and with a particular shaykh. By acquiring *ijāzas* from shaykhs, a student would himself become a link in the chains of personal authority³³³.

In addition to the classical training described above, we infer that Konuk was aware of the modern Western intellectual trends from his critique of materialist philosophy in his commentary on the *Fuṣūṣ* as well as from his essays he composed as answer to the questions asked about religious, social, and musical topics by the teachers of Robert College in Istanbul. And some of these essays were embedded in the bulletin of the college and sent to the European scholars. By means of such essays, he became known to the contemporary European scholars.

However, due to his extreme humility, he remained unknown to the

³²⁸ *Ibid.*

³²⁹ *Ibid.*

³³⁰ This is a certificate which qualifies a shaykh to teach the *Mathnawī* publicly.

³³¹ Tatcı-Kurnaz, *ibid.*

³³² Jonathan P. Berkey, *The Formation of Islam, Religion and Society in the Near East, 600–1800*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2003, p. 225.

³³³ Berkey, *ibid.*

contemporary Turkish academic circle. To show this character of him, we would like to cite the below episode narrated by Halil Can:

“In the year 1925, there came a Swedish scholar to Istanbul. Mehmed Ali Aynî (d. 1945), who was then professor at Darulfünun [Istanbul Technical University], wanted to meet this Swedish scholar. Aynî and Swedish scholar became very glad to meet each other. Meanwhile, the Swedish scholar asked Aynî about Ahmed Avni Konuk and said that he wanted to meet him and kiss his hand, as well. Aynî replied that he did not know someone by this name. Being surprised by this reply, the Swedish scholar said: “How do you not know such a person? We read his essays published in the European journals. He is a very valuable scholar.”³³⁴

In addition to his Sufi identity, Konuk was a skilled musician and poet. He took his first music courses from Eyyübî Zekâî Dede when he was a student at Dârüşşafaka³³⁵. Even after he graduated from that school, he continued his musical studies with Zekâî Dede. He took music courses from Kirâmî Effendi as well. He was so excelled in music theory that he could produce a song depending only on the definitions found in the *advâr* books. He composed the most lengthy *kâr-ı nâtik*³³⁶ of Turkish art music³³⁷. He is considered one of the last representatives of the Itrî School in Turkish music history³³⁸.

At the same time, Konuk was a poet. In general, he himself wrote the words of songs which he produced. He versified some of the Arabic and Persian lines and quadruples existing in the works which he translated into Turkish. His poem “Ben” which he added to the end of his translation of *La-ma‘ât* by Fakhraddîn İraqî (d. 1289) demonstrates his skill in poetry.³³⁹

II. His Works

As mentioned before, Konuk’s shaykh, Es’ad Effendi studied both the books of Rûmî and Ibn al-‘Arabî with a number of teachers and acquired both the Mawlawî and Akbarî *ijâzas*. And in turn, he passed this knowledge on to Avni Konuk. As the last link of this chain, Konuk set down all this knowledge in his commentaries on the *Fuṣûṣ* and the *Mathnawî*.

Ahmed Avni Konuk is a prolific writer, whose writings in the field of Sufism, poetry, and music exceed thirty books. The cardinal role which Ko-

³³⁴ Eraydın, *ibid*, p. XVII.

³³⁵ Sadeddin Nüzhet Ergun, *Türk Musikisi Antolojisi*, Rıza Koşkun Matbaası, İstanbul 1943, p. 463.

³³⁶ Karl L. Signell defines this term as the following: “The literal meaning of the name is “talking Kâr”; its purpose is both entertaining and pedagogical. Each line or couplet of the text contains the name of makam (or usul) cleverly woven into the poetry and often involving wordplay.” See Karl L. Signell, *Makam (Modal Practice) in Turkish Art music*, Da Capo Press, New York 1986, p. 121.

³³⁷ Ahmet Şahin Ak, *Türk Musikisi Tarihi*, Akçağ Yayınları, Ankara no date, p. 132.

³³⁸ Öngören, *ibid*, p. 181.

³³⁹ Eraydın, *ibid*, p. XIX.

nuk played in the field of Sufism in particular and in Turkish intellectualism in general is that he rendered the works of Ibn al-'Arabî and Rûmî as well as other Islamic classics accessible to a greater section of the Turkish reader. That is because the works of Ibn al-'Arabî and Rûmî had been hitherto remained accessible only to a tiny percent of elite scholars who had the knowledge of Arabic and Persian. Now we can proceed to analyze some of his works.

1. Mesnevî-i Şerîf Şerhi (Commentary on the Noble *Mathnawî*): This work is composed of thirty-four notebooks and registered under the number 4740–4773 in the Konya Mevlana Museum. The author wrote it between the years 1929 and 1937³⁴⁰. The first volume of this commentary was edited and published by Selçuk Eraydın and Mustafa Tahralı in 2004. In his commentary, Konuk drew upon the earlier Persian and Turkish commentaries on the *Mathnawî* and perused the *Mathnawî* commentaries published in India which had escaped the attention of other Turkish commentators.³⁴¹

The method of the author in commenting the *Mathnawî* is as the following: He first writes and enumerates the Persian text and then gives the Turkish translation of the verse. Then he provides a literal explanation of the verse. Afterwards, he elaborates upon the doctrinal aspects of the text. Konuk's explanation of the verses in accordance with the ideas of Ibn al-'Arabî has been seen something regrettable by some followers of Rûmî; however, the other Ottoman and Indian commentators of the *Mathnawî* did the same, as seen in the case of İsmâil Rusuhî Ankaravî's (d. 1631) *Mathnawî* commentary³⁴².

2. Kitâbü Tedbîrâtî'l-İlâhiyye fi Islâhi Memleketi'l-İnsâniyye (Translation of *Kitâbu Tadbîrât al-İlâhiyya fi Islâhi Mamlakat al-İnsâniyya* by Ibn al-'Arabî): Konuk composed this work between the years 1922 and 1925. The manuscript of the book is registered under the number 4522 in the Konya Mevlana Museum and under the number 21 in Istanbul Municipality Atatürk Library, Osman Ergin Manuscripts³⁴³. Mustafa Tahralı transliterated it into Latin script and published in 1992³⁴⁴.

3. Tercüme-i Risâle-i Vahdet-i Vücûd (Translation of *Risâle-i Wahdat-i Wujûd*): It is Turkish translation of a small Persian treatise of the Indian Sufi, İmdâdullâh Fârûqî Tahânavî³⁴⁵. Written in the style of dialogue, this treatise is translation of a Persian letter involving the justification of Chistî

³⁴⁰ A. Avni Konuk, *Mesnevî-i Şerîf Şerhi*, ed. by Selçuk Eraydın-Mustafa Tahralı, Gelecek Yayınları, İstanbul 2004, p. 29.

³⁴¹ Mustafa Tahralı, Introduction to *Mesnevî-i Şerîf Şerhi*, p. 15.

³⁴² Tahralı, Introduction to *Mesnevî-i Şerîf Şerhi*, p. 16.

³⁴³ Fırat, *ibid*, p. 58.

³⁴⁴ A. Avni Konuk, *Tedbîrât-ı İlâhiyye Tercüme ve Şerhi*, İz Yayıncılık, İstanbul 1992.

³⁴⁵ Nisar Ahmad Farugi, "İmdâdullâh Tehânevî", *DIA*, vol. XXII, p. 223.

shaykhs³⁴⁶. The manuscript is registered under the number 3649 in the Konya Mevlana Museum and under the number 31 in Atatürk Library, Osman Ergin Manuscripts. It is composed of seven folios and fourteen pages³⁴⁷.

4. Kitābü Lema'āt Tercümesi (Translation of *Kitābu Lama'āt* by Fakhr al-Dīn ʿIrāqī (d. 1289): *Kitābu Lama'āt* was translated and partially commented by Konuk between the years 1914 and 1916. The manuscript is registered under the number 3582 in the Konya Mevlana Museum and under the number 35 in Istanbul Municipality Atatürk Library, Osman Ergin Manuscripts. The text is composed of twenty-seven and one hundred forty-four verses, sixty-seven pages³⁴⁸.

5. Fīhi Māfih Tercümesi (Translation of *Fīhi Māfih* by Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī): This work of Rūmī too was translated into Turkish by Avni Konuk. In translation, Konuk tried to get the most correct text by comparing seven-eight copies of the *Fīhi Māfih*, however, he did not show the differences between the copies³⁴⁹. This work was transliterated into Latin script, indexed, and published by Selçuk Eraydın in 1994³⁵⁰. The manuscript is registered under the number 3895 in the Konya Mevlana Museum and under the number 24 in Atatürk Library, Osman Ergin Manuscripts. The latter copy of the manuscript is made up of one hundred and twenty-four pages and written in the *riq'a* style.

6. Menākıbı Hazret-i Mevlânâ Celâleddīn Rūmî or Sipehsâlar Tercümesi (The Hagiography of Mawlânâ Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmî or Translation of Sipahsâlar): It is Turkish translation of the Persian hagiography of Rūmî composed by Feridun bin Ahmed Sipehsâlar. This book was published by Arşah Garoyan Press in Istanbul in 1331 H. Its manuscript is registered under the number 144 in Atatürk Library, Hacı Pektaş Section.

7. Azîz bin Muhammed en-Nesefî'nin Yazdığı Yirmi Risâlenin Tercümesi or **İnsân-ı Kâmil** (Translation of Twenty Tracts by Azîz bin Muḥammad al-Nasafî (d. 1287) or The Perfect Man): It is a translation of twenty-two Persian tracts written by al-Nasafî. Sezai Fırat transliterated, indexed, and published the work as a master thesis under the supervision of M. Erol Kılıç in Marmara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi in 2003³⁵¹. Fırat added a lengthy biography of the writer and translator as well as a glossary to the text.

8. Şerh-i Gazel (Commentary upon the Ode by Farîd al-Dīn 'Attâr (d. 1221): It is a commentary upon the seventeen-verse ode by 'Attâr³⁵².

³⁴⁶ Eraydın, *ibid*, p. XXV.

³⁴⁷ Eraydın, *ibid*, p. XXV.

³⁴⁸ Eraydın, *ibid*, p. XXV; Fırat, *ibid*, p. 58.

³⁴⁹ Eraydın, *ibid*, p. XXV; Fırat, *ibid*, p. 59.

³⁵⁰ Avni Konuk, *Fīhi Māfih Tercümesi*, İz Yayıncılık, İstanbul 1994.

³⁵¹ Azîzüddin Nesefî, *İnsân-ı Kâmil*, Turkish translation by A. Avni Konuk, ed. by Sezai Fırat, Gelenek Yayıncılık, İstanbul 2003.

³⁵² Fırat, *ibid*, p. 59.

9. Hânende: It is a collection of the song-words of Turkish art music. Konuk wrote this work at the age of twenty-seven and published by Mahmud Bey Press, in 1899 in Istanbul³⁵³. The Turkish music anthologies largely built upon this work.³⁵⁴

10. Hz. Meryem ve İsâ'ya Dair Risâle (Treatise about Jesus and Mary): This work is intended to put an end to the disputes over the Prophet Jesus, his prophethood, miracles, Advent and, death. So we can describe this treatise as a Christological work written from the Islamic perspective. It was published at the end of the third volume of *Fusûsu'l-Hikem Tercüme ve Şerhi*³⁵⁵.

11. Vahdeti Vücûd ve Vahdet-i Şühûd Risalesi (The Treatise about the Oneness of Being and the Oneness of Witness): This work was intended to answer the criticisms which the Naqshbandî Shaykh, M. İhsan Oğuz, leveled at the *Fusûş* in his *İslam Tasavvufunda Vahdet-i Vücud* (The Position of the Oneness of Being in the Islamic Sufism). Made up of 46 folios, the treatise is registered under the number 1813 in Atatürk Library, Osman Ergin Manuscripts.

12. Fusûsu'l-Hikem Tercüme ve Şerhi (Translation of and Commentary on *Fuşûş al-Hikam*): We will analyze this work under the following heading.

III. An Analysis of *Fusûsu'l-Hikem Tercüme ve Şerhi*

The manuscript of the work is registered under the number 3853-3880 in the Konya Mevlana Museum. The work was inscribed by the author himself and it amounts to twenty-eight notebooks, being made up of 1676 folios. Selçuk Eraydın and Mustafa Tahralı transliterated it from Ottoman script to Latin letters, indexed, and published in four volumes, between the years 1987 and 1992. They also added a glossary for facilitating the job of the non-specialist reader.

The editors made no simplification of the original Ottoman-Turkish language of the book firstly because it is almost impossible to find the equivalents, in Modern Turkish, of the Akbarian terminology which had been used by the Ottoman-Turkish authors for centuries. Secondly, the editors aimed at restoring the lost linguistic unity of Ottoman and Turkish and bridging the gap between the old and new generations³⁵⁶.

The commentary begins with an introduction which involves the praise of God, the Prophet Muḥammad, and his companions. Then the

³⁵³ Eraydın, *ibid*, p. XVII.

³⁵⁴ İsmail Hakkı Özcan, "Güfte", *DIA*, Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, vol. XIV, p. 218.

³⁵⁵ Konuk, *ibid*, vol. III, pp. 355-382.

³⁵⁶ Selçuk Eraydın-Mustafa Tahralı, Introduction to *Fusûsu'l-Hikem Tercüme ve Şerhi*, p. IX.

commentator says that the *Fuṣūṣ* is not the result of reasoning or speculation; it is the grant of the Prophet Muḥammad to the Greatest Shaykh, Ibn al-‘Arabī. Therefore, one can understand it only through the heart which is purified with Sufi exercises.

In the following pages, Konuk presents an apology and justification of the works and ideas of Ibn al-‘Arabī. In respect to their position towards the Greatest Shaykh, Konuk classifies people into six groups. This classification can be seen in the works of Ibn al-‘Arabī and his early followers³⁵⁷.

Afterwards, the commentator starts the exposition of such concepts as *vujūd* (existence), *‘adam* (non-existence) and, *vujūd-i iḍāfi* (relative existence or being). In line with the Akbarian philosophy, Konuk considers all creatures as the theophany or the divine self-manifestation. He divides the stages of existence into seven categories and explains them thoroughly which we can summarize as the following:

1. First Stage: Konuk employs a number of terms to refer to this stage and some of them are *lā-ta‘ayyun* (non-determination), *itlāq* (non-delimitation), and *Dhāt-i Baḥt* (Pure Essence). In this stage, the Essence of God is far exalted above all attributes and qualities and there is no stage above that stage.

2. Second Stage: He calls this stage as “first determination” (*ta‘ayyun-i auwval*). In this stage, The Almighty Reality has the universal knowledge of His attributes, qualities and all the beings.

3. Third Stage: He calls this stage “second determination” (*ta‘ayyun-i thānī*). In this stage, the Reality knows His attributes and qualities in differentiation.

4. The Stage of souls (*martaba-i arwāḥ*): This stage is composed of the abstract and simple cosmic beings. So in this stage, we cannot speak of matter and combination. These beings are cognizant of their selves and origin. In a chapter devoted to this topic, Konuk first deals with Islamic angelology and then discusses the nature of Satan and the nature of Adam and Eve.

5. The Stage of similarity or imagination (*martaba-i mithāl*): This stage is composed of the cosmic subtle compound beings. In the chapter devoted to this stage, Konuk explains the nature of the domain of imagination. He divides this domain into two groups. He calls first domain “discontiguous imagination” (*khayāl-i munfaṣil*) and the other “contiguous imagination” (*khayāl-i muttaṣil*) for the former exists independently of the viewer and the latter’s existence is connected to the viewing subject.

³⁵⁷ For example, Ibn al-‘Arabī likens *fuqaha’* (jurists or the scholars of Islamic law) to Pharaoh. See, William C. Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge, Ibn Arabi’s Metaphysics of Imagination*, State University of New York Press, Albany 1989, p. 247; İbrāhīm el-Kārī’ el-Bağdādī, *ibid.*

6. The stage of the visible (*martaba-i shahādat*): In chapter devoted to that stage, Konuk discusses such subjects as substance-accident, the renewal of divine creation or theophany, Nature, cause-effect, the beginning of creation, the stages of creation, the creation of the heavens and earth, the stages of the creation of the heavens and earth and, the creation of Adam.

7. The stage of the Perfect Man: This is the last stage and includes all the former stages, that is, corporeal and incorporeal stages.

After the explanation of the stages of existence in detail, the commentator discusses such topics as prophetology, the diversity of religions, and the concept of religion. He ends the introduction with the elaboration of eschatology. The commentator explains all these subjects from the perspective of the Akbarian philosophy.

Then he proceeds to explain the introduction of the *Fuṣuṣ al-Hikam*. He provides literal and doctrinal expositions of the terms “*fuṣuṣ*” and “*hikam*” and then starts explaining the text of the *Fuṣuṣ*. He first provides a Turkish translation of the piece on which he will commentate and then explains the literal meanings of the words. He brings out the different meanings and usage of the words. Then he explains the terminological senses of the words. Lastly, he elucidates the text by proceeding from the general philosophy of Ibn al-‘Arabī.

The author frequently quotes the *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya* by Ibn al-‘Arabī to corroborate his interpretation of the *Fuṣuṣ*. In addition, he quotes abundantly Rūmī’s *Mathnawī* and ‘Umar Ḥayyām’s *Rubā‘iyyāt*. He also mentions the words of exoteric scholars and philosophers to make his point. For example, when trying to prove that the knowledge of the universal nature of the being cannot be acquired by reason or rational consideration (*nazar*), he cites Abū ‘Alī Sīnā’s words. According to the narration of the commentator, this philosopher, just before his death, confessed that his all efforts to attain the reality of being were in vain and read the following verse: “The protection of creatures is by Your forgiving. Those, who tried to qualify You, failed to do that. O all-Forgiver, forgive us! For we are human beings. We are unable to know you truly.”³⁵⁸ To make the same point, he quotes the following verse of Imām Shāfi‘ī (d. 820): “The end of the comprehension of the reasons (*‘uqūl*) is fetter (*‘iqāl*). And the results of the toils of scholars are perplexity.”³⁵⁹

The author employs myriad analogies to clarify his points. For example, he illustrates the need of a temporarily-generated thing (*hādith*) for its existence to a generator (*muḥdith*), by mentioning the analogy of steam and cloud.

“When the essence of steam becomes denser in some degree, the steam

³⁵⁸ Avni Konuk, *ibid*, vol. I, p. 124.

³⁵⁹ Avni Konuk, *ibid*, vol. I, p. 121.

turns to cloud. The existence of the steam is prior to the existence of the cloud. In respect to the existence of the steam, the existence of the cloud is temporal or temporally-generated (*ḥādīth*). For the cloud in itself has no independent existence, it needs the existence of the steam, i.e., its originator. So the temporarily-generated existence of the cloud came from the existence of the subtle steam, which is other than the existence of the cloud. So the connection of the temporarily-generated dense creatures to the eternal subtle Real is like this analogy.³⁶⁰

Because the writing of this work coincides with the era in which materialist philosophy reached its apogee, the author takes this opportunity to fight materialism which reduces the metaphysics to absolute matter. For instance, when explaining the uniqueness of the human being in accepting and bearing the divine trust, i.e., soul, he criticizes the materialist philosophers who deny the spiritual aspect of the human being and claim that the human mind is no more than a particular composition of the carbon and phosphor elements³⁶¹.

In the following quotation, Konuk criticizes the materialist philosophers of being unaware even of their own being for they accept no originator or creator for the cosmos.

“Therefore, in the context of explaining the principle of matter the materialists postulate, “In respect to the generality, there is no cause for the cosmos”, which is essentially from the fact that they lack the knowledge of reality. These materialists are incognizant of their own entities, which are the perfect models of all. This ignorance and incognizance, combined, emanates from their conjecture that they are able to ascend through the intellectual faculty and reason alone from the lowest of lowers, the corporeal world, to the highest of highs, the Essence³⁶².”

One of the most important features of Konuk’s commentary is that it makes an abundant use of the data given by Modern sciences in explaining the Akbarian metaphysics and especially ontology. For instance, when he discusses the genesis of the cosmos, he quotes the following *ḥādīth*:

“God created a white pearl and looked at it by His glance of majesty and splendor. So the pearl melted out of its timidity (*ḥayā*). And one-half of it became water and the other half became fire. There emerged smoke out of it. He created the heavens from the smoke and earth from its foam. Then His throne became (*kāna*) upon the water³⁶³.”

After interpreting this *ḥādīth* according to the Akbarian philosophy, he adds the following remarks:

³⁶⁰ Avni Konuk, *ibid*, vol. I, p. 151.

³⁶¹ Avni Konuk, *ibid*, vol. I, p. 121.

³⁶² Avni Konuk, *ibid*, vol. I, p. 15.

³⁶³ Avni Konuk, *ibid*, vol. I, p. 45.

“The scholars of astronomy say as follows: The bodies, in their beginning, were in the form of cloud and then gradually became dense taking the form of the globe. This vapory cloud or this wide airy globe was, in its beginning, homogenous and composed of a gas which is even lighter than hydrogen... Presently, the oceans which are wavering around us were composed of hydrogen, oxygen, and sodium. When the heat decreases and the aerial steams become dense, there sprung up plants and primitive organisms from the coaly composition, i.e., the sticky clay [i.e., the magma]. So the above noble *hadīth* is the explanation and interpretation of the verse, “Anbiya, 21:30). Thus, we conclude that the heavens and earth at the beginning of creation were in the joined form of matter. Afterwards, they were separated from each other. And the bodies were composed of water as well. For the Divine Throne is over the water.”

In the second part of this study, we would provide English translation of first twenty-four pages from Konuk’s introduction to his commentary on the *Fuṣūṣ*. In this introduction, the commentator summarizes Sufi metaphysics and especially ontology. In the following pages, we will furnish only the first three sections of the author’s ontological exposition for the pages, which we selected for translating into English, dealt with the beginning of the theophany of the Being. In addition, the volume of this article cannot afford translation of the whole introduction which amounts to over seventy pages.

IV. English Translation of the First Three Sections from *Fusûsu'l-Hikem Tercüme ve Şerhi*

In the name of Allah, All-Merciful All-Gracious¹

Introduction

I praise the Essence of the Necessary Being (*Dhāt-i wājib al-wujūd*) through the language of His divine possibility. Through His breath of mercy, He gave relief to His infinite names and attributes that had been in the constraint of nonexistence (*ḍiq-i 'adam*). He granted them with [a share of] existence from His own existence being full of generosity in the measure of every single stage of the descent hierarchy (*martaba-i tanazzul*). Then He took their total entities (*hay'at-i majmū'a*) as a mirror within which to witness His divine perfection in differentiation.

Blessing and peace be upon Muḥammad Muṣṭafā, who is the most knowledgeable of the prophets and, the seal of prophecy, whose reality is the highest and the most obvious in the stages of the divine self-disclosure and, whose determination is the most comprehensive and inclusive in human stages. His effusion (*fayḍ*) came from the all-comprehensive divine name, which is the fountainhead of all lights, from whose [Muḥammad's] reality the divine mercy was distributed to all of His realities.

Endless gratification is to the household of the Prophet, to the companions, and perfect inheritors of our master Muḥammad, who is the perfect locus of the name Guide. Each one of them is an illuminating star in the heaven of guidance, who guides those who are perplexed in the nature of darkness to the Real and truth.

O those who are believers and sages, who are thirsty for the truth! This distinguished book is *Fuṣūṣ al-Hikam* [*The Bezels of Wisdom*]. It is one of the noble writings of our master Ibn al-'Arabī (d. 638/1240), who is the quintessential of the perfect ones and the example of illuminated saints (*muḥaqqiqūn*). In the respect that the contents of this book were cast into his heart by our Master Muḥammad and, its fine name was given by his Excellence, they are neither the products of active intellect located in the corporeal body, nor the deductive fruits of contemplative consideration (*naẓar*). They are entirely out of the gnosis and divine wisdom sent down from the true origin to the hearts of the prophets. They are full of realities of which the people of constraints, i.e., the people of reason (*ahl-i 'aql*), do not have the knowledge and perception. "God knows, you do not know."²

So those who thoroughly read this lofty book and comprehend its contents through spiritual tasting (*dhawq*) are able to grasp the meanings of

¹ Avni Konuk, *ibid*, vol. I, pp. 1-24.

² The Qur'an, 2:216.

the present and here-after, i.e., where he and his surroundings are coming from and going to, and why he is staying in every abode and, the reality of existence. Following the vanishing of ignorance, “why” and “how” no longer exists. Hence, the cosmos becomes like a subtle scenery in their sight. However, the disappearance of ignorance alone is not sufficient. In addition, the faculty of fantasy (*wahm*), which is the most significant faculty of human body, must be exterminated too. One can perform it only through the spiritual guidance of a mentor, i.e., perfect human being, who will implement the method appropriate to one’s nature. That is because cognition is totally different from actualization. To know alone is not sufficient to efface the existence of the fantasy [or delusion] and reach the true unity. Though those for whom the divine solicitude was predestined are exempted from this, the principle is the necessity of [following in the footsteps of] a skillful spiritual doctor.

A Persian poem:

Translation: “O human being, the marrow of the cosmos and existence! There is no way to attain the Oneness of the Real by means of words. Go and erase your delusory existence so that you can find the secret within yourself that you have not been able to find in Fakhr al-Dīn ‘Irāqī’s (d. 1289) *Lama‘āt* and Ibn al-‘Arabī’s *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*.

One should know that there are so many opponents of the Greatest Master [Ibn al-‘Arabī] and critics of especially the lofty book under review. I would like to categorize them in the following way:

First group: They are jealous of the Greatest Master, proud of their knowledge and gnosis. Since they grow jealous of the inner and outer virtues of the Greatest Master, their disrespect toward him leads them to further opposition.

Second Group: They are emulators of the first group and not noteworthy.

Third Group: They are those who are incapable of understanding the fine elaborations of the Sheikh. The reason of their opposition stems from their incapability of understanding and their biases. Therefore, one should feel bad for them. Taking the Shari‘a [Islamic law] as pretext, they maintain that the above truths are not consistent with the Shari‘a. So even those who only study and ponder these truths, will fall into the pit of infidelity. Not only did they stray from the truths, but they also led others astray. Contrary to their claims, these truths are completely grounded in the Qur’ānic verses, *hadīths* and wisdoms sent down to the noble hearts of the prophets. Another sense of *kufir* [infidelity] is to veil truths. Therefore, those who veiled truths are also called *kāfir*. An idolater is called *kāfir* because he confines the self-disclosures of the Real to some things yet veils and denies other divine self-disclosures. If one is to become infidel just because he reads the knowledge of witnessing the Real Absolute Existence within [the loci of] all creatures, it

will be unfair to attribute the title “believer (*mu'min*)” to the biased ones who divide the existence into different groups as the Real and creatures. There is no doubt that in the biased ones there exists the veiled *shirk* [associating other gods with the One Allah].

Fourth Group: These are imitators of the third group and they are in miserable situation.

Fifth Group: These are the Gnostics whose spiritual tasting and inclination differ from that of the Greatest Master. These people possess the knowledge of Allah and, though they venerate the Sheikh and confirm to his sainthood, they disagree with him on some points.

Sixth Group: They are aware and capable of comprehending the Greatest Master's fine elucidations. These are in agreement with him on all points. But they keep silent and do not like revealing the divine secrets. Furthermore, they inhibit ordinary people of reading *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*. First, although they know very well that these truths and gnosis are true, they fear that the people of weak understanding may misunderstand these truths and fall into a wrong belief about the Real. Second, this group are worried because they are in fact clever, yet they are inclined to profligacy and love for [the pleasures of] the worldly affairs and fame. They may indeed read these gnostic truths but they then go about claiming guidance and exploiting the truths for their own sensual pleasures. Therefore, the fear of this group comes from the mercy toward the servants of God.

This poor servant [Ahmed Avni Konuk is referring to himself] says that *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam* has two features common with the words of God. Both texts lead astray many and at the same time they guide many to the truth. “By it, He causes many to stray, and many He leads into the right path; but He causes not to stray, except those who forsake [the path].”³ Hence, some of its readers achieve the guidance; some go astray. Although The Qur'an has such features, it is not permissible to inhibit people from reading it. That is due to the fact that the holy Qur'an is a touchstone, and it was sent down to distinguish between golden and copper substances. In a similar way, *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam* is also such a touchstone. The people who have reason and inner knowledge should test themselves through this touchstone so that there becomes established the cogent evidence for Allah. Consequently, be the secret of “A group is in the Paradise and other in the Hellfire”⁴ materialized from potentiality.

Since the knowledgeable Sufis have already given healing answers to the oppositions against the precious explanations of the Greatest Master and, the treatises and books that include the vindicating answers are clear to the people, there is no need to reiterate them here in detail. I advise those who

³ The Qur'an, 2:26.

⁴ The Qur'an, 42:7.

want to acquire more knowledge on this subject to refer to the late Bursalı Tâhir Bey's published treatise entitled *Tercüme-i Hâl ve Fezâil-i Şeyh Muhyiddîn İbn-i Arabî* and other treatises mentioned in it.

Chapter 1: Existence

The correspondent of the “*wujūd* [existence]” in the Turkish language is “*varlık*”, and in Persian “*hast*”. Its literal meaning is “to find the desire”. Its connotations such as “matter” and “body” employed in custom were cited only allegorically in the dictionaries. In Sufi terminology, it implies “the existent being (*maujūd*)”. Therefore, by the existence, they meant the reality being able to self-subsist. Furthermore, the existence of subsistent beings is derived from and stands upon it. The enlightened (*muḥaqqiq*) Sufis refer to this reality in the world of speech (*‘ālam-i kalām*) as “non-determination (*lā ta‘ayyun*)” and “the Absolute Being (*wujūd-i muṭlaq*).” That is because the Essence of the existence was not as of yet determined in this stage through its being delimited with any “name, attribute” and “act”. He is free from all limitations. In this stage, all determinations are identical with the Essence.

They call it “the Pure Existence (*wujūd-i şıff*)” because the Essence, through its own purity, is purified of the names, descriptions, qualities and attributes.

They refer to it as “the unmixed Essence (*dhāt-i sādij*)” for He is cleaned from the colors of names, attributes, and acts; He is by no means colored with any color.

They call it “that of which quality is unknown (*majhūl al-na‘ī*)” because in this stage, the whole attributes are unknown and unseen. Furthermore, the quality is synonymous with the names of confirmation and negation. In this stage, there does not exist concepts of confirmation or negation. Therefore, it is the Unknown of quality.

They call this “the eternity of eternities (*azal al-āzāl*)” for there is no higher stage of existence. The whole stages are inferior to that stage.

They refer to it as “the unseen of unseen ones (*ghayb al-ghuyūb*)” because in this stage, the entire stages of relatively unknowable ones beginning from the immutable entities down to the absolute ideal are the absolute unknowable. They have neither outward nor cognitive (*‘ilmī*) conceptualizations.

They designate it as “that of which indications are severed (*munqata‘ al-ishārāt*)” for in this stage, all the indications of the names and attributes are cut off. In this stage takes places “the Oneness is to drop away the interrelationships (*al-tawḥīd isqātu’l-iḍāfāt*).”

They term this “that of which consciousness is severed (*munqata‘ al-wijdānī*)” because in this stage there exists no idea of consciousness. Yet, it

does not mean that “the Essence has no consciousness” since the conceptualization of consciousness comes into being in the stage of cognition. Nonetheless, in this stage there is no conceptualized the cognition. Therefore, there exists not even the consciousness, which, in final analysis, is the effect of the cognition.

Question: Is it possible for the Essence not to be unconscious of Himself?

Answer: Being able to take something out of something else requires the subsistence of either one at least in the imaginary mode. Yet, since there is no cognition and imagination in respect to the Real Existence, there takes place no negation of quality.

The above names are synonyms of the term “non-determination”. The stage of non-determination is identical with negation of all determinations. As such, the Essence becomes the consciousness severed from the conceptualization of non-determination. The term “*munqata’a* (severed)” is with the *fatha* of *tā* and, “*yā*” in the “*wijdān*” signifies relation.

This is also known to them as “*ghayb-i huwiyya* (the unseenness of the He-ness)”⁵ because at this stage, all stages of existence with respect to the stages of manifestation are at loss and absence. That is similar to the fact that the things as a whole are outwardly existent at a dark night though, on account of the density of darkness, they do not come into sight. That is because to non-exist is completely different from being existent yet not apparent.

They designate it as “the Entity of the Absolute (*‘ayn al-Mutlaq*)” for in this stage, the Pure Essence is free from all aspects. In a regard, He is non-delimited from non-delimitation too.

They call it “the Essence with no aspect” (*Dhāt-i bi-lā i’tibār*) for in this stage, all aspects of the Essence is with no aspect. “Allah was existent and there was no existent thing with Him” alludes to this stage.

As a correspondent to the stage of non-determination, the enlightened ones employed a host of terms:

The essence of unity, the essence of He-ness, the essence with no manyness, the unknown unseen, the treasury of affairs, the first with no end, the absolute existence, hidden treasury, the pure unity, the essence of “He He (*Huwa Huwa*)”, the pure existence, the preserved divine mystery, the nonexistence of nonexistence, the last with no beginning, the pure existence, the absolute unknown, the absolute unity, the absolute essence, the pure existence, the concealed divine mystery, the infinitude of infinitudes, the most extreme of extreme ones, the pure existence, the real existence, the

⁵ “He-ness” does not imply gender, but comes from the noun “Huwa” employed in the the Qur’ān to refer to God.

unity of essence, the pure essence, the pure Deluge, the concealed of concealed ones, the hidden of hidden ones, the ultimate of ultimate ones, the reality of realities, the actual reality, the knowledge of essence, the pure essence, the absolute divine mystery, the innermost of innermost ones, the station of “or closer”, the absent of signs, the most intimate of the intimate ones.

Because the reality of existence is a luminous and all-comprehensive idea, it is so subtle that one cannot comprehend it purely through rational faculty and perception, fantasy, senses or syllogism. This is because these mentioned mediums of perception are the densest of dense ones with respect to this subtlest of subtle ones. The dense cannot encompass the subtle, which is the origin of the former, as far as the former stays in its stage of density.

The Absolute Existence is such an infinite treasury that what it conceals is more secretive than what it reveals. That is because the Pure Existence is absorbed into the beauty of His essential beauty (*jamāl-i dhātī*). Since the self-consciousness is a quality, it is also negated from the Pure Existence in this stage. The existence of temporally originated thing (*hādīth*) cannot grasp this stage for the eternity and temporally origination is opposite to each other. According to the principle “two opposites can never come together”, for if one opposite appears, the other disappears. Therefore, our Master Prophet Muhammad, who is the most knowledgeable amongst the prophets, said, “Do not contemplate on the Essence of Allah” alluding that the servant, who is a temporally originated being, cannot grasp this stage through contemplative consideration. The existence is far from self-disclosure because it occurs through will. However, since the will is a quality, the Pure Existence is far exalted above it either.

The Real Existence is such a comprehensive idea, of which entity is single one, that it accepts no limitation and aspect. If one was to accept a limit, it would follow that beyond this limit begins another existence. Moreover, it would become possible to count every single existence, which is [assumed to be] located at the end of farther one. That is opposed to the unity. As for the aspect, for it is the face of something corresponding to the face of something else, it also requires limitation. Accordingly, it is impossible to imagine any aspect about the Existence. Therefore, the unity of the Existence is not a numeral concept. On the contrary, it is all-comprehensive existent being. It has no origin, and furthermore, it is the origin and source of all existent beings. Let us assume that a delimited and determined figure is flying up to the space at limitless times departing from a given direction of earth. He cannot reach an end because his course will never go beyond the boundary of the “existence”.

Question: Does this existence have an origin?

Answer: This is a pointless question for it is the faculty of fantasy which

raised it. Although there seems such a question to the faculty of fantasy, in fact it does not exist. Furthermore, the rational faculty can demonstrate from several points of view that this question is absurd:

1. To imagine an origin (*mansha'*) for the existence means that the existence originated after having been nonexistent. But it is impossible to refer to a thing, which did not exist before, as existent thing. Moreover, to acknowledge this assumption requires that the "nonexistent" has transformed into something opposite to itself. But the nonexistent cannot become existent nor can existent become nonexistent.

2. That of which existence is depending on a beginning (*mabda'*), is not an actual existence. On the contrary, it should be considered as only relations or connections of the existence prior to them. This case is similar to the relationship between water and ice.

3. If one were to ascribe an origin to the existence, he would be able to ascribe another origin to the first one. So this ascription continues *ad infinitum*. Furthermore, this is the succession of nonexistence, not existence. Accordingly, it would not be possible to become grounded on an actual support. Therefore, such an assumption cannot stand sound reason because it is only an image produced by the fantasy. In fact, nonexistence is emptiness and stillness, whereas the succession is not but fullness. So the succession is not the quality of nonexistence. In this regard, it is not logical that a thing, which was nonexistent before, would arise through the succession.

Chapter 2: Nonexistence

The concept of nonexistence is a universal meaning of dark nature (*zulmānī*) occurring in the mind and, it is opposite and contrasted to the existence, which is a universal bright meaning. One can define existence as the "nonexistence of nonexistence" and, nonexistence as the "nonexistence of existence". Nonexistence is an eternal and infinite meaning of dark nature from which eternally and infinitely nothing arises; and an eternal and infinite calmness from which eternally and infinitely no motion emerges. Since the existence is infinite and endless, there is no [empty] space wherein the nonexistence becomes established. Therefore, the nonexistence is pure nothing (*maḥḍ lā shay'*). The existence is forever single one and, stands upon its own true reality without transformation or transmutation. In the same manner, the nonexistence stands upon its own quality of nonexistence. The existence does not transform into the nonexistence nor does the existent being transform into the nonexistent being. Further, the nonexistent being never becomes the existent being because the transformation of realities is impossible. So the "existence" is truth, the "nonexistence" void. The enlightened Sufis allude to this meaning with the following terms: "the actual nonexistence", "the pure nonexistence", "the absolute nonexistence", "the

absolute void”, “the nonexistence of existence” and “the actual void.”

The nonexistence is divided into two groups: One has been already mentioned. The other is “relative nonexistence”, “imaginative nonexistence” or “delimited nonexistence”. This is similar to the seed of a tree or an infant in a womb. So they are potentially existent yet regarded actually as nonexistent things. The relative nonexistent is an isthmus between the pure existence and pure nonexistence.

Chapter 3: Relative Existence

Relative existence rests upon an actual root and originates from it. It is referred to as “shady existence”, “delimited existence” and “contingent existence”. Relative existence stands between the pure existence and the pure nonexistence for its one face looks to existence and the other to nonexistence. It is thus “pure delusion (*mawhūm-i mahd*)”. In fact, it has no independent existence. Therefore, it is equivalent to the degree of density, which is accidental quality of the subtle pure existence. For instance, while vapor exists, it does not become perceived by sensory sight due to the former’s perfect subtlety. Inasmuch as it becomes gradually denser, it can become perceived. In the first stage of density, it becomes cloud and perceived by sensory sight. Yet if one closes up his eyes and passes through it, he cannot feel it through the sense touching. Inasmuch as the cloud becomes denser and then water, all of the five sensory senses can perceive it. If water becomes ice by being frozen, its perfection of density becomes more evident. If vapor is regarded as an actual existence, its actual forms of cloud, water, and ice are then its accidental qualities.

Since the essence of accidental quality is nonexistence, they thus cannot be called the possessors of actual existence. Actual existence is exclusively vapor and [the existence of] these forms stand upon it. In addition, the successive transformations and transmutations have nothing to do with the actual existence; they only can be the accidents of this existence. That is because actual existence is far exalted above the transformation and transmutation.

According to this analogy, the existences of your and my dense bodies, illusory forms and abstract substances, are no more than transformations of the actual existence’s accidental attributes. Therefore, Sufis call the engendered things “imaginary forms” and “illusory selves”. Shady and supplementary things are the evidences and signs of the actual existence. In the same manner, if we see a piece of ice, we infer the existence of water, and if we see a shadow in front of us, we conclude that there is an owner of the shadow behind us. Therefore Almighty Allah in the verse, “And among His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the living creatures

that He has scattered through them: and He has power to gather them together when He wills”⁶ says that the heavens and earth and animals which are scattered upon them are the signs of the existence and, thereby imparted this shining truth to us.

Chapter 4: Self-disclosure of the Existence

Let it be it known that the existence’s self-disclosing to the various stages in the manner of descent is possible only through the “inclination” to becoming manifest. Further, the “inclination” is identical to the will. Since the will is a quality and relation, the existence, from which all relations and attributes are negated, is far exalted above the quality of willing too. That is because the Absolute Existence is absorbed into His essential beauty and, there exists no will. Therefore, the descent of the existence to the stage of Oneness, i.e., the stage of Divinity, is identical to the course [which moves] from its absorption in its essential beauty toward the stage of self-consciousness. This occurs through the essential necessity (*iqtiḍa-i dhātī*), not by will alone. It is impossible to speak of cause and effect within the essential necessity. The existence has seven stages of self-disclosures.

1. Non-determination (*lā-ta’ayyun*); 2. First determination (*ta’ayyun-i auwval*); 3. Second determination (*ta’ayyun-i thānī*); 4. The Stage of souls (*martaba-i arwāh*); 5. The Stage of image (*martaba-i mithāl*); 6. The stage of the visible (*martaba-i shahādat*); and 7. The stage of the human being (*martaba-i insān*).

This hierarchy is drawn in respect to the universals; yet in respect to particulars, it is impossible to count and limit the stages of existence. Therefore, these stages are visional and logical, not temporal and actual. So to speak, the existence did not manifest itself temporally and, at the time, all of His names and attributes faded away and disappeared into His own self. Then there came a time in which He recovered out of this absorption and realized the attribute within Himself. After the passage of the time, He considered and said to Himself, “I have so many attributes, why not to reveal their traces and do such-and-such things, in this and that way.” In subsequent to this consideration, He began to bring things into being and created all of them out of nothing. This episode did not take place in such an exact manner. This is with respect to the spiritual vision and reason. It has nothing to do with the time for the existence’s descents and self-disclosures are eternal through the existence. Temporally origination exists only in respect to the numerous forms of worlds. The cosmos is not limited to our world. In the infinite space, there exist infinite worlds and, they gradually originate and corrupt. That is because the fashion of creation is eternal and infinite; it has neither a beginning nor an end. The qualities of beginning and

⁶ The Qur’an, 42:29

ending can be thought only in respect to the creatures.

Chapter 5: The Stage of Non-Determination, the Stage of Unity

This is the existence's stage of non-delimitation. Thus, He is far above (*munazzah*) all the qualities and attributes, and far above all limits even the limit of non-delimitation (*qayd-i itlâq*). This is the essence (*kunh*) of the Almighty Real, above which there is no stage. Since I have already discussed the stage of the existence in detail, there is no need to repeat them here.

Chapter 6: The Stage of Oneness, the Stage of First Determination

This stage is identical with the Pure Existence's descent [which moves] from its absorption in its own beauty down to the stage of self-consciousness. This descent comes out of the necessity of the Essence. The stage of its self-consciousness is referred to as "the stage of divinity". In this stage, the existent generally knows its attributes and names in an inclusive manner. Furthermore, in this stage, the quality of the existence is identical to itself; this knowledge therefore is identical with the knowledge of its Essence. Since the existence is named and qualified with all the names and qualities, this is the stage of the name Allah, which is the all-comprehensive name, and in this stage, existence is named with this name [that is, the name Allah]. This is the former stage, in which the non-determined Essence disclosed itself in the form of determination. Sufis refer to it as "first determination" and "the absolute knowledge". That is because the consciousness and conscience of the Essence are known and absolute without delimitation of otherness (*ghayriyya*).

They also call it "actual Oneness" because this is the name identical to "first determination", which means, "From one arises only one (*Lā yasūdur min al-wāḥid illā al-wāḥid*). In this stage, there exist no counting, no numbers, nor manyness and nor individuals. It is that of which both sides are coextensive between negation and confirmation (*bayn al-nafy wa al-ithbāt musāwī al-tarafayn*).

They also call it "the sphere of the Absolute's friendship (*falaku walāyati'l-muṭlaq*)" for the first determination, which is identical with "the primordial substance", has inner and outer aspects. They call its inner aspect "absolute friendship". Here the friendship is exclusively for Allah.⁷ This is also called an allusion to the friendship. They call its outer aspect the "absolute messengerhood" because it is intermediate between the existence of unity and of Oneness. It directly receives the most sanctified emanation from the waves of unity. Hence, it is named the "absolute friendship". Through the waves of Oneness, it takes the most sacred (*muqaddas*)

⁷ The Qur'an, 14:44

emanation and it extends to the creations; it is thus named with the “absolute messengerhood”. “I was messenger while Adam was between water and clay” alludes to this messengerhood. From it originate and arise all the sainthoods of saints and the messengerhoods of messengers. For that reason, they refer to it as “the sphere of immutable ones”. As all planets and stars are located in the sphere, the universal and particular messengerhoods of messengers and sainthoods of saints are established in the “absolute friendship or sainthood (*walāyat-i muṭlaqa*)”.

They also call it “first self-disclosure (*tajallī-i auwwal*)” because it self-disclosed before (the stage of) non-determination and, became luminous before the stage of non-manifestation.

They also call it “first capacities (*qābiliyyāt-i auwwal*)” since it is substance of all creations and existent beings. All capacities become manifest from it.

They also call it “the station of or closer (*maqām-i aw-adnā*)” because above it there is no stage other than the stage of the pure Essence.

They also call it “the isthmus of isthmuses (*barzakh-i barāzikh*)” since it stands between determination and non-determination, and encompasses all isthmuses.

They also refer to it as “the greatest isthmus (*barzakh-i kubrā*)” since it includes two greatest stages, which are the stage of unity and the stage of Oneness.

They also call it “the unity of bringing together (*aḥadiyyatu'l-jam'*)” since, “respecting no dropping and fixing, with respect to ‘she’ (*bī i'tibār-i isqāt wa ithbāt, min ḥaythu hiya*)” is aspects of the Essence.

They also call it “the source of manyness (*ma'dan-i kathrat*)” for the substance of the names and attributes emanated from this source.

They also call it “the origin of the other (*manshau's-siwā*)” since all the contingent things arise from this stage.

They also call it “the capacity of manyness (*qābiliyyat-i kathrat*)” because all the multiplicities of universal divine names and the universal names of creations originated from it.

They also call it “the sphere of life (*falaku'l-hayāt*)” since the axis of the world of life is hung onto this stage. This stage includes the realities of the world of souls and the world of bodies. Each stage is trained by a divine name. Each cosmic or engendered stage (*martaba-i kiyāniyya*) obtains the reality of life from it. The term “sphere” is an allusion to the loftiness of its degree. This stage has a number of names and some of them are listed below:

First shadow, first isthmus, first stage, the absolute matter, the world of symbols, the reality of realities, the greatest love, first disclosure, first sign,

first intermediate, the pure Oneness, the treasury of treasuries, the unknown reality, the join of join, first intellect, the supra-sensory world, the world of Oneness, the treasure of attribute, the distance of two bowls, first created thing, universal intellect, the Muhammadan Reality, the stage of mercy, the world of attribute, the reality of Adam, spiritual world, first existence, first pen, the Muhammadan Light, the world of non-differentiation, the protected tablet, the greatest name, the holiest spirit, first existent being, the loftiest pen, the white pearl, the undifferentiated existence, the mother book, the greatest spirit, the tablet of destiny, first beginning, first cause, all-comprehensive isthmus, the presence of non-differentiation, the light of lights, the father of souls, the noble domain, the station of witnessing the join of join, the source of multiplicity, the source of other.

The name of this stage is “Allah”, which encompasses all attributes, names, and innate preparedness and capacities. No matter whether the effects of these attributes and names are manifest or not upon this name, the name of this name is Allah. The Qur’anic verse, “Allah is independent of all worlds”⁸ signifies this stage.

Example: While a man is in the state of unconsciousness, there emanates from him neither effects nor disclosure. During this time, neither knowledge, hearing, seeing and will nor power is manifest upon him. All of them faded away and withered (*mustahlak wa mutalāshī*) within him. Then, when he comes out of the state of unconsciousness to the state of consciousness, he becomes qualified with these qualities mentioned. Further, his passing from the former state to the latter is out of the necessity of his existence, not of his own will. When he comes to the state of consciousness (*hāli āgāhī*), he passes through a state in which all of his manners (*shuūnāt*) become incorporated into him. The man, who includes his names and attributes as a whole, is a man, no matter whether or not he discloses the effects of the names and attributes. The man needs not becoming manifest through the effects to establish his humanness (*ādamiyyat*). It is independent of that.

Chapter 7: The Stage of Second Determination, the Stage of Oneness

The existence has undifferentiated knowledge of its names and attributes, but all the universal and particular meanings and their forms required by these attributes and names become differentiated within the stage of second determination. Every single of these forms, which are identical with the realities of engendered things (*ashyā-yi kawniyya*), has no consciousness of either its own self or the consciousness of its self’s likes.

⁸ The Qur’an, 29:6

That is because their existence and differentiations are cognitive (*'ilm*). Because of these cognitive forms, the existence becomes numerous forms. In other words, these cognitive forms serve as a cause to the Essence of Divinity in His creation. Because the cognitive forms' cause of existence is the Essence of Divinity, which includes all the attributes and names, there arises the true conclusion, which is opposite to the speculative proof (*dalil-i nazari*): The Essence of Divinity, which is the cause (*'illat*) of the effect (*ma'ul*), acts as the cause of the effect, i.e., the cognitive forms, which act as the cause of the Essence of Divinity. In other words, the cognitive forms, which are the cause of the effect being their cause, act as the cause of the creation on part of the divine Essence. Yet, in view of the speculative proof, the reason or logic judges as, "It is impossible for the cause to become effect for its own effect." As explained above, the knowledge, which was acquired through the self-disclosure, refuted the judgment of reason through the counter judgment: "It is possible for the cause to become effect for its own effect."

If one considers the following parable through sound tasting, one can understand that this judgment is not out of the rumors (*qıl u qāl*) that the Westerners referred to as "scholastic"; on the contrary, they are evident truths.

Example: The cause of a plate that a calligrapher had written is the existence of the calligrapher. That is because if the calligrapher were not to exist, then the plate would never exist. Hence, the existence of the calligrapher is the cause and essentially the existence of the plate is the effect of this cause. Nevertheless, if the quality of calligraphership, which is one of that person's relations, not to be and, were this quality not to ask him through its tongue of preparedness (*lisān-i isti'dād*) to inscribe a plate and exhibit, there would not arise such a plate from him. In this regard, the cause for the plate's coming into being is its demanding its existence from its maker. In that case, though the plate is effect, yet at the same time, it is cause for the act of becoming manifest. In this regard, being the cause, the existence of the calligrapher acts as the cause of the plate, which is the cause of becoming manifest. Thus, while the existence of the calligrapher acts as effect and cause for the production of the plate, the existence of the plate acts as both cause and effect together.

Therefore, in the context of explaining the principle of matter, the materialists postulate, "In respect to the generality, there is no cause for the cosmos" is essentially from the fact that they lack the knowledge of reality. These materialists are incognizant of their own entities, which are the perfect models of all. This ignorance and incognizance, combined, emanates from their conjecture that they are able to ascend through the intellectual faculty and reason alone from the lowest of lowers, the corporeal world, to the highest of highs, the Essence. Furthermore, they did not take heed of the valuable statements and lofty accounts of the prophets (peace be upon them) and the saints who are the inheritors of the prophets.

Within this stage, every single determined cognitive form corresponds to the reality of each of the outward things. In addition, every single form is a specific master of that with which it is charged. In Sufi terminology, every single of the cognitive forms is referred to as “immutable entity” and, in plural form, as “immutable entities”. Scholastic theologians (*mutakallimîn*) call it, “non-existent being of knowable nature (*ma'lûm-i ma'dûm*)”; philosophers “entities (*mâhiyyât*)” and, Mutazilite “immutable thing (*thâbit shay*)”. In the respect that the first determination is identical with the Muhammadan Reality, this reality includes all realities. The second determination is referred to as “Oneness (*wâhidiyya*)” and “human reality”. They also refer to it through the below terms.

Second disclosure, the capacity of manifestation, the presence of manifestation, second beginning, the sum of souls, the hereafter of souls, the innermost domain, the sphere of life, second isthmus, all-inclusive cosmos, second origination, second emergence, the presence of souls, the presence of lordship, the extreme of gnosis, second self-disclosure, the angelic world, the world of names, the curtain of Oneness, the presence of bringing together, the source of other, the extended shadow, the innermost world, the world of existence, the shadow of Oneness, the origin of manyness, the presence of divinity, the breath of mercy, the world of decree, the treasury of souls, the manifest of quality, the unity of multiplicity, the extreme of servants, the emanated existence, second world, the source of souls, the certainty of witnessing (*'ayn al-yaqîn*).

The “immutable entities”, which are synonymous with the cognitive forms, stand upon their own original quality of nonexistence. They have never smelled the scent of existence. The forms being manifest in the visible world are merely reflections and shadows of these entities. That is what they mean by the statement, “Immutable entities have never smelled the whiff of existence (*al-a'yân mâ shammat râiha al-wujūd*).” I will expound this reality through several examples in the chapter of witnessing.

Chapter 8

Subdivision I

Let it be known that the origin of the things as a whole is the source of life since life is dynamic and, there is no stillness within it. If there were stillness, then nonexistence would prevail. From the stillness nothing becomes manifest. As for the naturalist philosophers' principle “None can transform its calm into motion, its motion into calm without a cause”, if the Real existence, which is the source of the things as a whole, did not have life, there would be no cause for the existence to pass from calmness to motion. The absence of cause for motion requires that the forms of the cosmos, which come out of motion, will not become manifest. So it is understood both logically and cognitively that the existence's becoming manifest in

various ranking degrees (*darajāt*) arises from its own reality. The existence of motion requires the existence of a mover and of a living matter. Furthermore, aliveness is an attribute. Since an attribute cannot be separated from that to which the attribute was ascribed, the former is identical with the latter. Since the existence is ascribed with the quality of aliveness, it ensues that the existence should perceive its own self and essence. That is the knowledge of its essence. Knowledge is also an attribute. Therefore, the existence becomes attributed with the knowledge. It is impossible for the existence being attributed with aliveness and knowledge not to become attributed with will and power. For the latter qualities are identical with the former ones. Along with the substance of these attributes, the attributes of “hearing”, “seeing”, “speaking” and “origination” must subsist as well. Consequently, the existence becomes ascribed with the seven essential attributes mentioned here. The attribute of aliveness is the foremost among them. If there were no aliveness, there would be neither motion and knowledge nor power and origination. Hence, attribute is the source of name. If a thing has no attribute, the thing does not become named with any name. For instance, the names “alive” and “knowledgeable” or “knowing” cannot be given to a thing which does not have the qualities of aliveness and knowledgeableness. For the Essence becomes manifest through the attribute and the attribute becomes manifest through the name, the name becomes the outward aspect of the attribute and, the attribute becomes the outward aspect of the Essence. In addition, the Essence becomes the inward aspect of the attribute and, the attribute becomes the inward aspect of the name. And the “thing” also becomes the outward aspect of the name, and the name becomes the inward aspect of the “thing”. Therefore, while the thing, which is the named one, becomes manifest, the name becomes concealed and obliterated within the thing.

Thus, in the respect that there are both the relationships of becoming manifest and non-manifest alike among the “Essence”, “attribute” and “name” and, in the respect that the concept of self-manifestation is different from that of non-manifestation, there occurs divergence among the above three. Since from the perspective that the attribute is identical with the self-disclosure specific to the Absolute Essence and, the self-disclosure is not extraneous to Him, the attribute is identical with the Essence’s entity. The attributes and divine names can be counted in respect of their universality. Thus, it has been an Islamic tradition to recite the ninety-nine beautiful names of Allah. Yet in respect of their particularity, they cannot be counted and reckoned.

All the divine names have two faces. One is their indication to the Essence, the other is to the meaning specific to themselves. For instance, the names of all-Knowing, all-Hearing and all-Seeing indicate both the Essence and the meanings specific to themselves. Thus if one asks who are the all-Knowing, all-Hearing and all-Seeing the answer will be the divine Essence in

respect of the Oneness of His names. So, all of them indicated the Essence. However, the meanings specific to respectively each one of them is different. That is to say, the attribute of knowing, hearing, and seeing are all different. So in respect of their indication to the Essence, the names are united and identical with each other; but in respect of the discrepant notions (*mafhumāt-i mutaghāyira*), they are differentiated and different from each other.

So the evidence of the subtle existence of the Real is the visible worlds, which are His stage of density. And the earth, on which we dwell, is one out of the worlds of the visible. Witnessing the scenes of the world which has arisen from the Real, we conclude from the properties and effects which we see in those scenes that the Real is alive. That is to say, because there springs life from every points of the world, which is the proof of His existence. Likewise, the Real is all-Knowing. Its proof is the fact that we, who are a single form out of the forms of the cosmos and one particular world of the universal cosmos, are ascribed with the attribute of knowing. Such is the case with All-Hearing, all-Seeing, Wisher, All-Powerful, Speaker, Originator, Fashioner etc.

Subdivision II: The Immutable Entities are Non-made (*ghayr-i maj'ūl*)

For the immutable entities are identical to the forms of the divine names, they do not have outward existence (*wujūd-i khārijī*). Yet, making (*ja'*) is identical with the influence of cause. However, since they [the immutable entities] are not the loci of influence and action, there is no way to speak of their quality of being created. That is to say, they are not brought into being by means of “making” since they are synonymous with the affairs (*shuūnāt*) of the Essence. Furthermore, the affairs are identical to the necessities of the Essence and are eternal through the Essence. They have not been brought into being by the creation of a creator nor are they susceptible to the influence of any agent (*muaththir*). If the existence of the Essence subsists, so undoubtedly they are also existent through Him.

Example: Human beings have numerous qualities such as laughing and weeping and the like. At the time a human being does not laugh or weep, these manners are potentially existent yet actually nonexistent. When he laughs or weeps, these acts do not take place depending on his will, making or effect. On the contrary, they take place as his own innate necessity depending on no will, making or effect. So to speak, no human being prepares himself before laughing or weeping. Though weeping and laughing are something single and united within the meaning of the human being, they are diverse in their respective expressions. That is because laughing is not the same as weeping. So while these are potentially existent actually nonexistent within the personality of human being, the effects of

these nonexistent manners are witnessed upon that existent person. Therefore, when the existent person manifests himself, i.e., through weeping or laughing, these manners also come into being actually. Furthermore, their existence comes into being depending on the existence of that person. Provided that the human being is existent, these manners are potentially existent through him. In accordance with the innate necessity, they become actually manifest depending on no will, making or effect. In the same way, through the effect of these manners which are actually nonexistent within the Essence of Allah, who is the Real Existent Being, the Essence of Allah self-discloses in accordance with these of His manners. So the immutable entities are cause for the manifestation and, the Essence of Allah effect of it. In conclusion, it is impossible to deny and denigrate the influence of the causes on the effect.

The topic of causation (*'illiyyat*) and being the object of causation (*ma'lūliyyat*) was explained above with a cosmic example. For the matters of affecting (*ta'thīr*) and being affected (*taaththūr*) and, causation and being the object of causation are identical to the essential relations of the single existence of the Real, one cannot regard them as a property incompatible with the divine affairs.

Subdivision III: Unmade Preparedness and Capacity

Every single of the immutable entities, which are what the Essence requires (*iqtidā-yi dhāti*), has a preparedness and specific capacity, each of which never resembles others. In consistent with the preparedness of each of the immutable entities, the Real's absolute existence (*wujūd-i mutlaq-i Haqq*) self-manifests within the form of that entity. Because the immutable entities are unmade, their preparedness and capacities are unmade neither. However, for these capacities and preparedness come from the necessities of the immutable entities and, they [i.e., the necessities of the immutable entities] come from the capacities of the Essence, and since the cause of [the existence] of both is the existence of the Essence of Allah and, for it is naturally possible the cause exerts influence upon the object of causation, the cause of the preparedness and capacities is also identical with the existence of the Essence of Allah. Mawlānā Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī alludes to this truth in his *Mathnawī-i Sharīf*:

Translation: "The cure to one whose heart has become hard is a bestowal by one who exchanges (*mubdil*). The bestowal of exchanger is not conditional upon capacity; on the contrary, the capacity is conditional upon his bestowal for the bestowal is core, and the capacity is shell."

This stems from the fact that the Essence bestows upon the immutable entities; furthermore, if there were no divine assignment, there would become no form manifest in the stage of divine knowledge; their preparedness and capacities cannot become talked about. Thus, the divine's

ability to grant and His beneficence are like a core, and the capacities and preparedness like a shell. It is important to understand the point that there is no compulsory upon preparedness and capacities. Essential bestowal, divine self-disclosure and giving-relief equally take place. Following the moment when the divine presents relief (*tanfis*), each immutable entity is determined according to its own preparedness and innate capacity. Therefore, each entity exerted compulsion upon itself.

Example: If one breathes out onto a smooth glass during the cold weather of winter the breath has no form, and it equally comes onto the glass. But when the breath becomes denser and freezes up on the surface of the glass because of the cold, there appear diverse shapes on the surface of the glass. Yet those shapes do not resemble one another in terms of length or width. Each of these shapes is included in the amorphous breath. By means of density, they so became manifest. As a result, they displayed their own preparedness and capacity. The breather has exerted no compulsion upon the capacities or preparedness. On the contrary, within the same breath, they themselves brought themselves into being in accordance with their own preparedness and capacity. However, the existence of the breather played as the cause for their self-manifestation and the breath became the object of causation. So one of these shapes cannot direct the question to its breather, “Why have you not fashioned me in the mold of this beautiful flower near me and thus I remained so tall?” If it were to ask, he would say, “I have never exerted any force upon you in your coming into being in this way. All I have done is to breathe you out. According to your own preparedness and capacity, you have become configured upon this fashion through your own potentially existent actually nonexistent preparedness and capacity. The compulsion has befallen you only from yourself. Why do you raise this question to me?”

At the time of blowing out the breath of Mercy, each entity configured itself following the command “be” at the time of breathing. Therefore, because there was no effort of force on their form, “the Real is not to be called to question concerning what He has done.” That is because the act of the Real is just to blow them out and to pour forth existence upon them. That is the essential bestowal. Does one have the right to raise a question to the Real about His bestowal? One who should be called to question is one who prefers the lower to the higher and thereby becoming engendered according to the measure of his preparedness. The Almighty Real is far exalted above leading compulsorily Zaid to wretchedness and ‘Amr to felicity. The will of the Real is related merely to the preparedness and capacity, for the Almighty Real only wills what is prefixed in His knowledge and He does what He wishes.

Subdivision IV: Knowledge Follows the Object of Knowledge (*ma'lūm*)

It should be known that the divine knowledge has two aspects. The first one is the Essence of Divinity's undifferentiated knowledge of all His attributes and names in the stage of Oneness and first determination. In this stage, there is no distinction among "knowledge", "knowing" and "known" for this kind of knowledge is identical with the knowledge of His own Self. All of them are one entity. Furthermore, this is not the type of knowledge that follows the object of knowledge since it [i.e., this kind of knowledge] is eternal through the Eternal Essence. The second aspect of the knowledge is after when He has descended to the stage of Oneness and second determination and, after all the names and attributes, which were included in His divine knowledge, become manifest within the divine knowledge. Each one of the attributes and names discloses its own preparedness and capacity, which are its innate necessity. After having become manifest, the preparedness and capacity became known to the Real in a differentiated manner. For the Real's knowledge of those comes into being after their becoming known [to Him], one should understand "the knowledge of the attributes and names" from the statement "Knowledge follows the object of knowledge." The proof for the principle of "Knowledge follows the object of knowledge" is the Qur'anic verse reading, "We truly test you so that we know who the fighters out of you are."⁹

One should not explain away (*ta'wīl*) the Real's words "so that we know". None but the possessors of imaginary negation (*tanzīh-i wahmī*), as the case with the scholastic theologians, distort it. Because they think of the existence of the engendered things as something different from the existence of the One, if were the Real's knowledge to follow the object of knowledge, the Real would take His knowledge from the other. Since this consists of attributing ignorance and incapacity to Him, they regard it as unworthy to the Real. In fact, the existence is a single one. The manyness is the shade of the forms of His names. The shade, which is reflected within the mirror, is no other than the form of the person standing in front of the mirror. When this person looks at the mirror and acquires knowledge by means of the form upon which he has seen [himself], it does not mean that he gets this knowledge from the other. Because there is no otherness, which the scholastic theologians perceived, it is not required to ascribe ignorance and incapacity to the Real. The subjects of otherness and sameness will be explained in the subdivision of the stage of witnessing.

Subdivision V: Predestination (*qadā*) and Destiny (*qadar*)

According to their extent of preparedness and capacity, the immutable entities demand manifestation from the Real. This demanding takes place

⁹ The Qur'an, 47: 31.

through the language of manner not that of word.

Mathnawī:

Translation: “We were naught; nor did even a single limb of ours exist. Your grace was hearing our melody of *nāy* [or reed] (*nā-goftah*).”

That can be compared to the fish’s demanding water and the human being’s fresh air. The existence of their preparedness and capacity is like the above example. So according to what their existence requires, every single entity demanded its own self-disclosure from the Real. As their demands became known to the Real, He willed, replying to their demands, to engender them in accordance with [the quality of] their becoming known. Hence, the will of the Real followed His knowledge and, His knowledge followed the immutable entities. It is the divine measuring out (*qaḍā-yi ilāhī*) that the Real decided their becoming manifest according to their preparedness and capacity in all the stages; furthermore, this measuring out is a universal undifferentiated governing rule (*hukm-i kullī-yi ijimālī*).

Likewise, He decided that Zaid has knowledge and felicity and ‘Amr has ignorance and wretchedness according to their respectively essential preparedness. Yet there is no compulsion in the decision since the immutable entities made the decision upon their own selves. Furthermore, the Real is, at the outset, one that upon whom the decision was made (*mahkūm ‘alayh*). Therefore, each immutable entity manifested its own innate preparedness to the Real and said, “O the possessor of bestowal, please confer upon me the property of felicity and make me manifest within the range (*dāira*) of that property!” That is a decision made upon the Real by the immutable entity. So the immutable entity is the decision-maker and the Real is one upon whom the decision is made. Accordingly, the compulsion took place upon each entity out of its own preparedness and capacity.

I have explained above that the preparedness and capacities are unmade. The innate preparedness neither changes nor comprises two opposites. For instance, the immutable entity, which once became known as felicitous to the divine knowledge, would never become known as wretched through transformation. Likewise, an immutable entity never possesses both felicity and wretchedness alike at once for these two are the opposite of each other. So a thing cannot be both white and black at the same time.

The divine predestination (*qaḍā-yi ilāhī*) is divided into two groups. One is conclusive (*mubram*), the other is conditional (*mu‘allaq*). The “conclusive predestination” is the kind of predestination which has to be fulfilled depending upon no condition or provision (*bilā qayd u sharṭ*). This type of predestination cannot be pushed back through either prays of word or deed, i.e., taking measures. The “conclusive predestination” has two aspects. The first kind of divine predestination is that “conditional” in the presence of Allah, but seems as “conclusive” to the angels and to the perfect ones. This sort of predestination can be pushed back by means of praying and taking

measures. “Conditional predestination” is that which is required to become realized depending upon condition and provision. This type of predestination may not occur if the measures are taken to hinder it. The provision is also involved in predestination. To that truth, there is indication in the *hadīth*, “The predestination can be fended off by means of the [counter] predestination.”

Example for the conclusive predestination: Though a player of backgammon plays the game well and gathers together a strategy before his partner does and, begins collecting them before his opponent, he sometimes may toss such a dice that there will be no room to avoid the inevitable loss. That is because there is no possibility to play another way. In this case, skill and taking measure make no change. This is an example of conclusive predestination.

Example for the conditional predestination: As is known, the players of backgammon are subject to the judgment of dice. For instance, each player wishes the dice will roll to the favor to their own game. Yet when he tosses the dice, it may turn out to be the opposite to his own desire. So the player is compelled to do that for he should play it [i.e., the number the dice has brought]. However, he is free to make the best move if there is any possibility to play in different ways according to the dice. So he is not forced in that case. If he plays by choosing the best option according to the dice, he may be able to win the game. So being subject to the dice opposite to the wish is predestination; in order to win the game, playing with the best choice is predestination too. Although he might lose the game because of the relevant dice, he won the game due to his ability to play the game well. As a result, the player fended off the predestination through the [counter] predestination. In this case, the second case is conditional destination.

Mathnawī

Translation: The noble couple reads: “The saints possess such a power, which comes from the side of Almighty Allah, that they are able to push back the arrow being shot.” This is said concerning the conditional predestination, not the conclusive predestination. As for ‘Abdul Qādir al-Jīlānī’s (d. 1164) statement, “I am able to push back the conclusive predestination too”, it should be translated as the conditional predestination, which is present in the presence of Allah but seems as conclusive predestination to the angels. Otherwise, none can push back this kind of predestination.

“Fate (*qadar*)” is a slightly different from predestination (*qada*). While predestination is not limited to a given time, fate means measuring out of the situations of each immutable entity which will become at a certain time (*waqtan min al-awqāt*) manifest within all stages under the specified conditions. After making the undifferentiated universal decision about Zaid as he is felicitous, all that Zaid will be performing out of acts such as his becoming manifest within the world of witnessing in such-and-such times.

As a believer, there will be good deeds to his credit; he will move to the isthmus (*barzakh*), and after attaining different kinds of blessings in the isthmus etc., there will be a whole differentiation of that destiny. Therefore, all of these acts are called “fate”.

While the predestination is related to the kind of unmade preparedness of immutable entities, fate is directly related to the kind of made preparedness of immutable entities, which becomes manifest in every stage of the immutable entity. Therefore, the mystery of the fate is that each immutable entity becomes manifest, in existence, in the modes of essence, attributes, and acts, in the measure of its own innate preparedness and essential capacity.

The mystery of the fate can be explained as follows: The immutable entities are not out of affairs which have outer existence being independent of the Essence of Divinity. In fact, they are the forms of the Almighty Real's relations and essential manners (*shuūnāt-i dhātiyya*). The Almighty Real's relations and essential manners are far from (*munazzah*) transmutation and transformation. Therefore, it is impossible for the immutable entities to transform either. I have explained this topic above. In brief, being the differentiation of predestination, fate becomes instant-by-instant manifest, and it becomes known inasmuch as it becomes manifest and, it becomes measured out inasmuch as it becomes known.

V. An Analysis of the Text and the Stages of Existential Theophany

I would like to shed some light on the topics discussed above by Konuk. The term “*waḥdat al-wujūd*” is typically rendered as the “oneness of existence” or “being.” According to the followers of Ibn al-‘Arabī as well as the Muslim scholastic theologians, God is the only being whose existence depends on his own existence. In this sense, existence belongs only to God, who cannot not exist¹⁰. Furthermore, this existence accepts neither multiplicity nor division, nor transformation. Having no form or limit, Existence, at this stage, is so pure and absolute that it is not delimited even by the concept of non-delimitation. In this context, Konuk claims that one cannot understand through reason Existence at this stage.

The Akbarian Sufis very often explain the relationship between God and the cosmos by means of analogies such as the following; in respect to the existence of the cosmos, the existence of Reality is like a mirror wherein all intelligible and sensible things appeared. In other words, Reality manifests Himself in respect of His attributes or names, not in respect of His Essence,

¹⁰ Affifi, *The Mystical Philosophy*, p. 1 and on; William C. Chittick, *Imaginal Worlds, Ibn al-‘Arabī and the Problem of Religious Diversity*, State University of New York Press, Albany 1994, pp. 15-7; also see the same author, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge, Ibn Arabi's Metaphysics of Imagination*, pp. 1-12.

in every form and individual, without losing His absoluteness and undergoing neither transformation nor transmutation. In the latter respect, all the creatures become like a mirror wherein God discloses Himself¹¹.

The Akbarian theosophists describe the existence of beings other than God as a shadowy existence, for a shadow exists with the existence of the individual and disappears with the absence of the individual, having no existence independently of the individual. That is why Konuk calls the existence of beings other than God as “being of shadowy or dark nature”. To illustrate the relationship between real existence, which belongs only to God, and what he calls “illusory existence”, Konuk appeals to the analogy of vapor, water, and ice.

“*A’yan-i thābita*” is another topic which Konuk explains in the above text. “*Ayn*” (pl. *a’yān*) literally means eye, source, and entity; “*thābita*” designates something fixed or immutable. In the philosophy of Ibn al-‘Arabī, this term is used to refer to the intelligible entities or realities fixed in the pre-eternal knowledge of God. These entities are contrasted to the things exteriorized in the empirical world¹². Konuk situates these realities between existence and non-existence for, on one hand, they exist in the divine knowledge but have not yet appeared in the outward world and on the other, their existence depends on the existence of God.

Ibn al-‘Arabī and his followers held an absolute monism by saying that the real existence belongs merely to God and the other beings have no existence in a true sense. On the other hand, like other people, they experienced the existence of the empirical world. So they were challenged to handle this intractable ontological problem of holding their monist attitude on the one hand and recognizing the existence of the empirical world on the other. So how did they explain the way in which beings come into being and stay in the sphere of existence? In other words, what kind of ontology did the Akbarī Sufis propose? Ibn al-‘Arabī and his interpreters attempted to overcome this problem by a scheme of seven-stage hierarchy known as “*al-marātib al-sab‘a*”. In what follows, I will try to outline these stages.

1. The Absolute Existence or the Stage of Non-Determination: In this stage, the Existence is in the mode of Pure Essence and far away from any name, attribute, quality, and action. He is so unconditioned that He is far away even from the restriction of non-delimitation. In one respect, determination or individualization involves the sense of being restricted and distinguished. Therefore, the Akbarī Sufis negate the concept of non-delimitation from the Essence because they argue that if the restriction of non-delimitation is considered, this stage may be contrasted to it and thus

¹¹ İsmail Fenni Ertuğrul, *Vahdet-i Vücûd ve İbn Arabi*, ed. by Mustafa Kara, İnsan Yayınları, İstanbul 1991, p. 15.

¹² Chittick, *Imaginal Worlds*, p. 17; Afifi, *The Mystical Philosophy*, p. 47 and on.

delimited by it¹³.

2. First Determination or the Stage of Unity: This stage is called thus because the Essence self-manifests in Himself by Himself and for Himself. This self-manifestation is caused by the necessity of the Essence. In this stage, the Essence knows His names and attributes in a universal way. The Essence is called with the name “Allāh”, which brings together all names in Itself. In this stage, neither God nor His attributes are differentiated from the creatures nor are the creatures differentiated from one another. One cannot imagine an existence for the creatures in the Essence and His attributes nor can one imagine that the Essence and His attributes have existence in the creatures¹⁴.

3. Second Determination: In this stage, the Real knows his Essence, names and attributes as well as all the creatures in differentiation. The Sufis explain the second and third stage by the seed analogy. A seed is the origin of a tree. If we take this seed as something “knowing itself”, so its thinking of itself without the distinction of its features and details –like its root, stem, bud, shoots, leaves, flowers, and fruits- from one another in its knowledge can be compared to the first determination or individualization. And the seed’s thinking of these details and features in general can be likened to the second determination.

4. The Domain of Spirits: In this stage, the archetypes of the divine knowledge appear as simple substances, which have neither shape nor color, nor are limited by time or space as the qualities of temporality and spatiality are features of corporeal things. In this stage, each spirit knows itself, its similars, and its God on the stage of Lordship. That is the first stage where the concept of Otherness appears¹⁵.

5. The Domain of Imagination or Similarity: This stage is situated between the stage of spirits and corporeal bodies. In this stage, the Absolute Being self-manifests in the forms which accept no division, separation, or union. This stage is referred to as the domain of similarity for in this domain there emerges a form resembling the form of each individual which appears in the domain of the corporeal. The Sufis term this stage as the domain of imagination because man can perceive this domain through his faculty of imagination¹⁶.

6. The World of the Visible or The Domain of the Corporeal: This domain is composed of dense, cosmic, and compound bodies which accept particularization and division¹⁷. In this stage, the Absolute Being self-manifests outwardly in the forms of matter and corporeal things. In this

¹³ Ertuğrul, *ibid*, p. 21.

¹⁴ *Ibid*.

¹⁵ Konuk, *ibid*, vol. I, p. 24–24.

¹⁶ Konuk, *ibid*, vol. I, p. 111.

¹⁷ Ertuğrul, *ibid*, p. 24.

stage, the forms can be broken apart, dissolved, and re-united. This stage is called the domain of the visible and sensible, for man can perceive this domain through his senses¹⁸.

7. The Stage of the Perfect Man: This is the last stage of the existential theophany. We can summarize the views of Sufis about the doctrine of the Perfect Man. The human being is the reason for the creation of the cosmos and the most perfect being among all other creatures. In respect of his physical constitution, involving a sample of every cosmic element, man is the last created being; but in respect of his spiritual aspect, he is the first created being. His spirit was temporally originated by the divine breath. Thus, he became unique in being able to perceive the realities of things and the divine mysteries and was able to bring together all the divine names and attributes in himself¹⁹. Because the origin of the human being is the Divine Essence, he also possesses the names of Majesty and Beauty²⁰. If man traverses through all the spiritual stages and achieves spiritual perfection under the supervision of a perfect spiritual guide, he becomes like a mirror wherein all the divine names and attributes which are latent in him manifest themselves. However, man has a double nature; corporeal and spiritual. Thus, whereas his corporeal aspect, which is referred to as "*al-nafs al-ammāra*" or the lower soul, tends towards the worldly pleasures and vile things and finally falls into the most base of base degrees, his soul of divine origin aspires to re-unite with God²¹. Thus, the human being is like a battleground where two opposite forces fight. The task of man is to purify the soul which was veiled by seven veils during its descent to the physical world by traversing back through the spiritual stages. Whoever realizes this journey, he/she attains to the station of the perfect man and the vicegerent of God on earth²².

¹⁸ Konuk, *ibid*, p. 24–5.

¹⁹ Reynold A. Nicholson, "The Perfect Man" (in *Studies in Islamic Mysticism*, Curzon Press, England 1994), p. 84.

²⁰ Chittick, *Imaginal Worlds*, p. 34.

²¹ Şahin Filiz, *İslam Felsefesinde Mistik Bilginin Yeri*, İnsan Yayınları, İstanbul 1995, pp. 176–77.

²² Osman Türer, *Ana Hatlarıyla Tasavvuf Tarihi*, Seha Yayıncılık, İstanbul 1995, p. 236.