

Published on Al-Islam.org (https://www.al-islam.org)

<u>Home</u> > <u>A History of Muslim Philosophy Volume 2, Book 4</u> > <u>Part 3: The Sufis</u> > <u>Chapter 43: Mahmud Shabistari, Al-Jili, and Jami > Bibliography</u>

Chapter 43: Mahmud Shabistari, Al-Jili, and Jami

A. Mahmud Shabistari

Mahmud Shabistari, so called after the name of Shabistar, a village near Tabiz in Adharbaijan, was born about the middle of the seventh/13th century and died about 720/1320. Little is known of his life. His *Gulshan-i Raz* (The Garden of Mystery) is a poetical exposition of the doctrine of the Unity of Being. It was written in 710/1311 in response to certain questions about mystical philosophy asked by one Amir Husaini from Khurasan.

The exposition of the doctrine of the Unity of Being in the book adds nothing to what had earlier been said by ibn 'Arabi. Mahmud, however, is much clearer and much more precise than his spiritual teacher. Being, by its very definition, he says, is existent, and non-Being, non-existent. There is nothing in existence except the one. The contingent and necessary were never separate; they existed from eternity as one. If you look at one side of One, it is one, and if you see the other side, it becomes many – the only difference being that the aspect of unity is real, while that of plurality is illusory. Reality is one but it names are many, and it is this plurality which becomes the cause of multiplicity. 1

Essence as such is beyond our knowledge or comprehension. But according to Shabistari, this inability on our part to know God's essence arises because of His nearness to us. Essence as absolute light is as invisible to the eye as non–Being which is absolute darkness. Nobody can look at the sun directly. But it can be seen as reflected in water. Relative non–being is like water. It serves as a mirror of the Absolute Light in which is reflected the illumination of *Haqq* (truth). This relative non–being is the latent reality ('ain al-thabitah') of ibn 'Arabi's system, which reflects the divine light in accordance with its natural propensities. The divine light as pure light was a hidden treasure, but when it was reflected in the mirror, the treasure became manifest. But, in this process, the essence that was One became many.2

Shabistari then describes the process of descent of the one after the manner of ibn 'Arabi. The first

manifestation of the essence is the universal reason ('aql al-kulli), the stage of unity (ahadiyyah); the second is the universal soul (nafs al-kulli). Then comes the Throne ('arsh), the heavenly Chair (kursi), seven heavenly spheres, and four elements, the three kingdoms of minerals, vegetables, and animals. The last in the series is man who is the acme of creation. Though temporally last in the series, man is logically first, as tree is potentially prior to the seed. The entire world was created for him while he was created for himself, as the embodiment of God's highest manifestation. But he possesses certain baser elements which, however, are essential for his moral progress. A mirror, to be able to reflect things, must have one side totally blackened. If it were a crystal, it would cease to serve as a mirror.

As man is the final cause of creation, everything is made to obey his command. All things are manifestations of the different names of God, but, being the reflection of the Named, man comprises within himself all the names; therefore, all the creation is within him. He is the most marvellous creation of the Lord and owes everything to Him, his power, knowledge, and will are all God's.

Reason is perfectly useless, according to Shabistari. It's a long, winding, and arduous path. A philosopher is like a cross-eyed man who sees duality everywhere. He starts with the objects of the world conceived as real. On this basis he argues the existence of the Necessary, as distinct from and other than the contingent. Arguing on the basis of a continuous series of causes and effects, Shabistari asserts that the Necessary Being is the Primal Cause of the process of creation. The whole process of reasoning, according to him, is wrong. There is no possibility of the knowledge of God through the category of contingency as the latter does not possess any similarity to the former. "It amounts to discovering the burning sun with the help of the dim light of a tiny candle."

The best method, therefore, is to give up logical reason and enter the valley of gnosis. 3 Knowledge gained though discursive reason leads one to sleep, while gnosis awakens one from slumber. Like Abraham, one must go beyond the divinity of the stars, the sun, and the moon which, according to him, represent sense-perception, imagination, and reason, respectively.4

In the sixth question of *Gulshan–i Raz* the Sheikh explicitly rejects the usefulness of reason in the mystic search for truth. He holds that there is "a way" beyond reason by which man is able to know the secret of reality. This intuitive power of man is hidden within him as fire is implicit in the stone. When this fire blazes forth, the entire world becomes bright and illumined.

Discussing the value of knowledge in the tenth question he says that by knowledge he does not mean the device by which people gain worldly power and prestige, for that is contrary to the spirit of a true mystic. Knowledge is useful only when it leads one to the right action, action that springs from the heart. Shabistari also suggests a study of both the sources of knowledge mentioned in the Qur'an – the external world (*afaq*) and the internal world of self–consciousness (*anfus*). But in practice the mystics' study of the internal world has always led them to emphasize the illusory character of the external world.

The account of moral qualities given by Shabistari is a mere reproduction of Platonic and Aristotelian

theories. Wisdom (*hikmah*), moral purity (*'iflah*), bravery (*shaja'ah*), and justice (*'adalah*) are the main moral qualities. He discusses briefly the Aristotelian principle of the mean. Paradise is the result of following this middle path, while adopting either of the extremes would lead to hell. When moral purification is attained, man is vouchsafed divine light (*tajalli*) which illumines his soul and raises him to the highest level. Saints and prophets are the persons who fall in the category of the illumined souls.

This manifestation (*tajalli*) of God is not only in things that are good but also in things which in common usage, we call evil. As God is the only being and the only cause of everything, so all things without distinction manifest His light. The logical position of pantheism is that good and evil are all alike and, as manifestations of God, stand on an equal footing. But when we come to the ordinary common–sense view, we distinguish between them and attribute good to God and evil to Satan.5

Like all other pantheists, Shabistari is completely deterministic. He holds that the so-called sense of freedom possessed by man is due to his consciousness of selfhood as an entity distinct from God. Man is by nature non-existent and, therefore, it is meaningless to attribute freedom to him. Believers in freedom of choice are Zoroastrians who make a distinction between the god of good and the god of evil. to attribute power, will, and action to man is wrong and in this matter, according to him, both the Mu'tazilites and the Ash'arites have gone astray – the former in saying that man is free in his choice and the latter in making man responsible for his deeds due to the power of "acquisition" attributed to him.

According to Shabistari, man is not created for exercising moral responsibility, bur for some other purpose. He does not explain what that other purpose is. His commentator, Lahiji, however, adds that it is to serve as a polished mirror for manifestation of God's essence, attributes and names. Can we ascribe any freedom to the mirror in reflecting objects? For every one of us, actions were predetermined. God's actions are inscrutable. "Can you explain," he asks, "why one man is born Mohammad and another Abu Jahl?" Man's dignity lies in being under compulsion and not in having a share in free-will.

But, then, why is man held responsible for his deeds? Is it not injustice? The Sheikh thinks that it is not injustice but an argument in favour of God's absolute power and arbitrariness. Again, the object of making man responsible for deeds over which he has no control is to compel him to renounce this world forever, as he is elementally incapable of fulfilling the obligation of following the right path and obeying God's Law, i.e. *Shari'ah.*6

What are the steps by which an individual reaches the stage of perfection? He is born, according to him, as the acme of creation, the purest of the pure, and the highest of the high. But due to illumination which he receives through his intuitive powers or his rational capacity man realizes his weakness and then sets on a journey backward. It is travelling from contingency to necessity from plurality to unity, from evil to good.

There are three stages in this journey. The first is called absorption. Here, the light of God shines

through his actions so that the mystic regards the actions of everything as illusory. Nothing besides God possesses any causal power. At the second stage the divine light shines through God's attributes and so the Sufi regards the attributes of everything else as merged in God. The last stage comes when the mystic receives illumination from the very essence and sees the real state of affairs. For him noting is existent except He and the being of all things is derived solely from Him. When he reaches this stage, he becomes perfect and attains a state of union with his Lord "so much so that neither angels nor prophets can equal him. The whole circle of existence is covered and man reaches the point from where he started."7

The religious Law (*Shari'ah*), the mystic Path (*Tariqah*), and Truth (*Haqiqah*) – all go to form the perfect man. *Shari'ah*, according to the Sheikh, is like the protecting shell of the almond. It is useful to a certain stage. When the stage of perfection is reached, the shell becomes useless and is better thrown away. Nevertheless, a perfect Sufi needs religion – not for himself but for others.

Shabistari follows the general trend of mystic writers in describing the nature of saint ship (*wilayah*) and prophethood (*nubuwaah*). Saint ship is a more general category than prophethood. Saints so called and prophets are all saints in the first instance. In a mystic saint ship is hidden, while in a prophet it is manifest. A saint is a follower of the prophet in Law and in this he attains the highest position and becomes equal to the prophet in realizing union with the Lord. With the death of the Holy Prophet the first cycle of saint ship, a cycle in which prophethood and saint ship were both manifest in the world, came to an end.

After the Final Prophet, saint ship continued and the new cycle began to take its shape. One day the seal of saints will appear, who shall be the acme of saint ship and, with his appearance, the cycle of the two worlds will come to an end. He will be the whole, of which all the previous saints were parts. Like the "Seal of the Prophets," he shall be a blessing to the whole world. He will succeed in bringing peace and security to man; justice and equity will reign. The word "seal," according to ibn 'Arabi, does not signify a mystic with who saint ship will come to an end, but with Shabistari, the seal of saints, like the "Seal of Prophets," would terminate saint ship forever. The last of the saints is the "seal" with which the world will come to an end.

This world of matter, however, being the locus of God's manifestation (*tajalli*) cannot come to an end at all. There shall be no time when the manifestation of *Haqq* can be said to have ceased. The present world and the world to come will meet and there is no dividing line between the two. The next world is something ever in the making. What we usually call this world and the next are mere names for what Shabistari, following ibn 'Arabi, calls the ever–new process of creation, an unending cycle of annihilation and recreation.

The life to come, man would be without body but it would be something subtle and transparent. Our deeds and mental dispositions of the present life would take concrete shape and become materialized in some tangible form. Good disposition will take the shape of light (paradise) and bad the shape of fire

After the death, the individuality of man shall vanish at last and many shall be dissolved into One. 10 Man shall be vouchsafed the beatific vision, but it will not be something external, it will be a manifestation within him. 11

B. Al-Jili

'Abd al–Karim b. Ibrahim al–Jili was born in 767/1365 and died at about 832/1428. Except for the few references in his book, almost nothing is known about his life. He was the disciple of Sheikh Sharaf al–Din al–Jabarti and lived in Zabid (Yemen). He also visited India during his travels. He claims that he received mystic illumination which led him to write his well–known book, *al–Insan al–Kamil fi Maʻrifat al–Awakhir w–al–Awa'il*. Its object is to expound and express the truth.

He holds that Absolute being is one and that all multiplicity is illusory. "Absolute Being is the essence (*'ain*) of what we call the phenomenal world (*khalq*) and God (*Haqq*). The Absolute Being manifests itself in two different realities, *khalq* and *Haqq*.12

Essence, Attributes, and Names

Absolute Essence is that to which names and attributes are ascribed. It is a Self (*nafs*) which exists by itself. It deserves every name which Its perfection demands. No description in words can fully convey Its essence. A thing can be understood by another thing which is related to it positively or negatively, but there is nothing in the universe which is so related to the Absolute. It is Pure Being which is equal to non–Being – a sum of contradictions. "It is two contradictories gathered in a unity and this sum of contradictions is not impossible." 13 It has two attributes: eternity and everlastingness, two qualities: God (*Haqq*) and the world (*khalq*), two descriptions eternity (*qidam*) and createdness (*huduth*), two names: *Rabb* and 'abd (Lord and slave).

It has two faces: outward (visible), i.e. the present world and inward (invisible), i.e. the world to come. It has two predicates: necessity and possibility, two points of view: according to the first, It is non-existent for Itself and existent for others, while, according to the first, It is non-existent for Itself and existent for others. Two modes (ma'refah): according to one, It is positive (wujub) in one plane and negative in the other, while, according to the other, the position is reversed. With regard to Its Self (nafs), It is simple, with regard to Its form, It is compound, with regard to Its essence, It is unique, with regard to Its emanation, It is light, and with regard to its indivisibility, It is darkness, and still It is beyond what we have said about It."14

It is clear that according to al–Jili reality is one 15 and belongs to divine Substance (*jauhar*) which has two different aspects: God and the world. Multiplicity is only subjective and relative. "You can say what you like. You are at liberty to say the circle [of reality] is God and its inside is the world or that the circle

is the world and its inside is God. It is God as well as the world."16 "You should know that knowledge of that lofty essence is that you should realize through mystic experience that you are He and He is you. This is neither union (*ittihad*) nor incarnation (*hulul*), for the slave is slave and the Lord is Lord: the slave does not become Lord, or the Lord a slave."17

A true mystic or the perfect man is able to realize in his super–sensuous experience that multiplicity is only a subjective way of look at things; otherwise reality that underlies it is one. 18 What we call the world is nothing but the manifestation of God. In another place, he says, "Just as God was present in eternity in the Dark Mist ('Ama') which is also called Reality or realities, Hidden Treasures and White (Pure) Chrysolite, so is He present now in all the things of the phenomenal world without incarnation (hulul) and mixture (imtizaj). He is manifested in the parts and atoms of the phenomenal world without becoming many."19

Like ibn 'Arabi, he deals with the problem of transcendence and immanence as differentiating attributes of the essence which correspond to the twin characteristics of God and the world. Immanence (*tashbih*) is the form of divine beauty which is manifested in all things to the phenomenal world without any distinction. 20 The Christians are right when they say that Jesus, Mary, and the Holy Ghost are all manifestations of God, but they are wrong when they limit this manifestation to three persons only. As a matter of fact, God is immanent in the whole world. 21 Any belief about reality that ignores any of these two characteristics, transcendence and immanence, is defective and wrong as is the case with Christianity for instance.

Transcendence (*tanzih*), when applied to God, implies that, in spite of His manifestation in all things, He is above and beyond all of them. But this sort of transcendence, according to al–Jili, is related to immanence and, therefore, does not fully represent the true essence which is characterized by what he calls essential which none claim to understand. He is, therefore, above even the transcendence which is asserted of Him in correlation with His Immanence.22

Name (*ism*) is that which specifies the named in the understanding, pictures it in the mind, brings it in imagination, arranges it in thought, preserves it in memory, and presents to the intellect. A man who does not know the named gets its knowledge through the name. The name and the named are related to each other as outside to inside (*zahir* to *batin*) but in fact both are identical. There are some names the named of which do not exist in actual reality, as, for instance, 'anqa' which exists only in name. 'Anqa' and Allah stand at opposite poles, while the object of 'anqa' is non–Being, the object of Allah is Absolute Being. We can reach knowledge of God through divine names and attributes or through the name of Allah which comprises in itself all names and attributes. Names are of two kinds: (1) of the essence, e.g. one (*ahad*), single (*wahid*), unique (*fard*), etc., and (2) of the attributes, e.g. knowledge, power, mercy, etc.23

An attribute of a thing is that which leads one to the knowledge of its state. This distinction between attributes and essence is operative only in the sphere of the phenomenal world. "Everything in the

phenomenal world which is qualified by an attribute demands that the attribute should be other than the thing, because it is subject to division and multiplicity. At the same time it demands that the attribute should be identical with it. We say that man is a rational man. It means that animality is a separate entity and so is rationality a thing different from man. But it also means that rationality and animality are both identical with man, because he is composed of both and is nothing beyond them. With regard to division, the attributes of a creature are different from its essence, while with regard to arrangement (*tarkib*) they are identical with it. But in God, this otherness disappears, for division and multiplicity does not apply to Him. His attributes are his essence and the two are identical."24

Thus, according to al–Jili, the material world is not a non–reality, a *maya*, but a reality which expresses the outward form of the Real. Plurality and division in the external world are the manifestations of the divine essence as attributes which are in the last analysis identical with it. If we do not accept this view of identity, the universe would not, according to him, lead to the essence.

In the 57th chapter of *Insan–i Kamil*, al–Jili says explicitly that thought or idea is the material of the universe. "Thought is the life of the spirit of the universe...Existence is nothing but a thought. Thought is the origin and the source of being (*wujud*) and is the essence in which God is completely manifested. Do you not see your belief about God as having names and attributes which pertain to Him? Where is the locus of the belief (i.e. the universe) in which God has manifested Himself for you? It is nothing but thought."25 Later on, he asserts that Being (*wujud*), as a matter of fact, is nothing but "a thought within a thought within a thought."26 Thus by identifying attributes and essence, he is able to give reality to the physical world of nature which to the mystic becomes a source of the direct knowledge of God.

Among the important divine attributes he mentions divinity (*ilahiyyah*), mercifulness (*rahmaniyyah*), and lordship (*rububiyyah*). Divinity is the sum of all the realities (i.e. all individualities) of Being and their maintenance in their respective positions (*maratib*) within the whole. It is the rank of God as Necessary Being. "You should know that Being and non–Being are two opposites, and the sphere of divinity comprises both. It is a sum of two pairs of contradictories: eternal and created (*hadith*), God and the world, Being and non–Being. At this stage God appears in the form of the world and the world in the form of God."27

Divinity is the highest manifestation of the essence and is invisible, while its effects in the form of nature are visible everywhere. Essence is visible to the eye but its locus is not fixed or visible; we see it manifested but cannot describe its quality. Take the example of man. He is characterized by some attributes, all of which never come within the compass of our comprehension, though we see man all right. It means that essence is visible while its attributes are not. Of the latter we see nothing but effects. For instance, we see the marching forward on the part of a generous man. "Marching forward, and "giving alms" are not bravery and generosity respectively, but only the effects of these attributes.28

Mercifulness (*rahmaniyyah*) is the manifestation of the essence in the realities of names and attributes. It refers only to the creative and not to the creaturely attributes, while *ilahiyyah* refers to both. In this

respect, mercifulness appears to be higher in scale than divinity, as sweetness of sugar does with regard to the sugar cane. If you prefer sweetness to the sugar cane, mercifulness is better than divinity, but if looking at the generality and comprehensive character of the sugar cane, you prefer it to sweetness, then divinity will be prior in rank. The name that manifests itself in this rank is that of *Rahman* (the Merciful) which includes both the attributes of the essence as oneness (*ahadiyyah*), uniqueness (*wahdiyyah*), eternity (*samadiyyah*), etc. and attributes of His Self which are seven, viz. life, knowledge, power, will, speech, hearing, and sight.29

The first mercy of God was the creation of the universe from His own Self. 30 His manifestation permeated all existents and His perfection appeared in every atom and particle. In spite of manifestation in the many, He does not become many but remains One as His nature demands. The nature of His permeation is that He created the world out of His Self which is not divisible.

God is the substance (*hayula*) of the universe. 31 In order to clarify his position, al–Jili gives the example of water and ice. God is like water which is the reality of ice and the world is like ice which is nothing but water (i.e. God) in a congealed form. The use of the term "ice" is only metaphorical and secondary, and not real. For the world and God are identical. "The world is nothing but ice, and ice, according to our opinion, is nothing but water. Or belief is that ice and water are identical."32

God permeates the whole of existence through His name *Rahman* and this permeation is neither incarnation (*hulul*) nor contact, for both these conceptions imply duality; as a matter of fact, He is consubstantial with existents (*'ain al-maujudat*).

Lordship (*rububiyyah*) is the name of the rank which demands those names that require the being of the existents and comprehends such names as the knower ('alim), the hearer (sami'), the seer (basir), the self–subsisting (qayyum), and the willing (murid). Each name under this category demands its logical correlate. The knower implies the object known and willing implies the objects towards which the will is directed.33

There are four kinds of attributes: beauty (*jamal*), perfection (*kamal*), majesty (*jalal*), and essence (*dhat*).

Every divine name and attribute has its effect which reflects one of the three: beauty, majesty, or perfection. All existents absolutely reflect all the names and attributes of beauty and some of the names and attributes of absolute beauty, while hell is the manifestation of absolute majesty. The perfect man alone is the complete manifestation of all these divine names and attributes.

Al-Jili then deals with the ten main attributes: life, knowledge, will, power, speech, hearing, sight, beauty, majesty, perfection, even though they are so innumerable that none can comprehend them in their entirety.34

1. Life

Complete life is the existence of a thing for itself, while incomplete or relative life is its existence for another. God exists for Himself, is living (hay) and, therefore, His life is complete and not subject to death. All creatures live for God and, therefore, their life is relative and hence subject to decay and death. Life of God as manifested in created beings (khalq) is one and complete and yet the creatures receive it in different degrees. In some, this life appears in tis complete form as, for instance, in the perfect man and the exalted angels and those things which are not composed of material elements, as the Exalted Pen, the Preserved Tablet, etc. In others, this life appears in its real form but is incomplete, as, for instance, in animal, man, lower angel, and jinn, because though each of them lives for his own self and knows that he exists and possesses different attributes, yet his existence is not real, for he is far removed from the sources of life. In others, as in animals, life does not appear in its real form. There are others for whom life has lost its real significance and, therefore, they live for others and for themselves as, for instance, plants, minerals, etc.

Everything existent is alive, for existence by itself implies life, through different things manifest it in various degrees; some enjoy complete life while others have imperfect life. But if we look at the matter from the transcendental point of view, life of everything is complete, though there seems to be a quantitative difference due to the inherent capacity of the thing itself. Life as such is a fountain, a unity, a substance, existent in everything by its own perfection and is not subject to diminution or division.

The essence of a thing is its life, that is, life of God, whereby everything subsists. The life of things with regard to themselves is created (*hadith*) but in relation to God it is eternal (*qadim*), for the life of a thing is in reality His life. "You should know that forms, shapes, actions, words, minerals, and plants to which we attribute 'existence' possess like man complete life by themselves and for themselves. But because most people do not know this fact, we include them in a category lower than that in which they should be placed. As a matter of fact, everything possesses being for itself and complete life with which it speaks, hears, sees, understands, and has power and will of its own and does what it wishes to do. This fact has been learned by me from direct revelation in mystic experience." 35 In other words, everything, material as well as non-material, is, according to al-Jili, self-determined, and possesses a unique individuality of its own.

2. Knowledge

Of all the attributes, knowledge is nearer to life as life is nearer to essence. Every living thing (or everything, for, according to him, everything has life) possesses knowledge in one form or another. The first form of knowledge is instinctive or what he calls inspirational ('ilm-i ilhami), possessed even by animals. The other is clear, necessary, or inferential knowledge possessed by man, angels, and jinn. Life and knowledge are correlated and each demands the other.

Al-Jili holds that knowledge by which God knows Himself and knowledge by which He knows the objects

of the universe are one and the same and there can be no division or difference in the two. According to ibn 'Arabi, God's knowledge of the objects is dependent on what they (objects) give of themselves to Him. Commenting on the Qur'anic verse (3:178), "Verily God is not unjust to His servants," ibn 'Arabi says, "No, I dealt with them only according as I knew them, and I knew them only by what they 'gave' me of themselves of what they themselves really are."36

Similarly, discussing the problem of creation, ibn 'Arabi says that when God says "Be" to a thing, it is not God's will that brings a thing into existence because God wills nothing and commands nothing the existence of which is not made necessary by the very nature and laws of things themselves. 37 Thus, according to him, God's will and knowledge are both dependent on the nature of the objects. Al–Jili rejects this view as wrong. God's knowledge of objects, according to him, is totally independent of the objects themselves.

It is true, he says, and that God's decree (*hukm*) with regard to a thing is determined by what its essence demands it to be, but it is wrong to infer from this that God's knowledge of objects is thereby determined by the nature of the objects themselves. As a matter of fact, the objects demanded of Him that very thing which He knew by His universal, essential, and fundamental knowledge before they were brought into existence. God's knowledge of objects is determined not by the necessity or demand of those objects but by its own inner demand.38

3. Will

God's knowledge manifests itself according to the demands of His essence and it is will which gives existence to His objects of knowledge as His Knowledge demands. Our created will is identical with God's will, but when attributed to us it becomes temporal, while attributed to God it is eternal, just as Being when attribute to us is created (*makhluq*) and when attributed to God is eternal.

Here again he disagrees with ibn 'Arabi, according to whom God is nothing but the name of immutable laws which operate in the universe. "Ibn 'Arabi rules out not only the individual freedom of man, but that of God's will, as well. God does not will in the sense that he chooses, but in the sense that He decrees what He knows will take place. That the thing or action which God has decreed should take place depends entirely on its own necessary laws."39

But, according to al–Jili, just as God is free and undetermined in His knowledge, so His will is absolutely undetermined and uncaused. God's will operates in every form and shape without any cause or condition; it is absolutely God's free act. He says that, according to ibn 'Arabi, it is wrong to call God free (*mukhtar*), for He does not operate in the universe by His free–will, His actions are determined by the necessity and nature of the objects. But, according to al–Jili himself, God operates in the universe through His free–will and is not determined by any necessity external to Him.40

4. Power

It is an attribute of the essence which brings objects of knowledge into the world of actuality. Power is the creation or bringing into existence of objects from the state of non–Being.

Here, again, he controverts the position of ibn 'Arabi according to whom there is no creation at all. The objects of the physical world existed from eternity as objects of God's knowledge. What we usually call creation is nothing but manifestation of these already existing objects of knowledge on a different plane. There is no question of temporal priority or posteriority nor is there any creation *ex nihilo* at all.41 Al–Jili does not accept this position in *toto*.

He says that it is true that creation means the coming into actual existence of things which are previously the objects of God's consciousness. 42 But ibn 'Arabi, according to him, forgot to note the fact that God's existence was prior to the existence of latent realities, things as objects of His consciousness (a'yan al-thabitah), and at this stage the things were non-existent and there was in existence nothing but Allah to whom alone we can attribute eternity (qidam). It follows that He created the objects of His consciousness from non-existence ('adam).

Allah is essence is independent and His being is first only as a matter of rank (*rutbah*); creatures are dependent on Him and, therefore, their being is posterior in the same sense. The creatures are non-being with reference to the First Being. There is no lapse of time between the non-existence of things and their becoming objects of God's consciousness. 43 The question of priority is only logical and not temporal.

The same line of argument is presented in discussing the nature of eternity (*azal*) and everlastingness (*abad*). Eternity is of two kinds. One is the eternity of a created thing. It refers to the time when it had no being. Eternity of one creature is different from the eternity of others. For instance, eternity of inorganic matter is different from that of organic substances, for it is prior to the latter. We can, therefore, speak of eternity with reference to the organic substances when the inorganic substances were in existence and had not yet developed and evolved into organic form; it does not, however, imply any temporal priority.

The other is absolute eternity which belongs only to God who is above Being and non–Being. God's eternity has no relation whatsoever with that of the creatures because He is (logically) prior to them. We cannot say, as ibn 'Arabi, for instance, holds, that in the state of absolute eternity the world existed, if not objectivity, as the object of God's knowledge, for if we accept this position, we would be bound to regard the verse (76:1) in support of his thesis, "Has there not been over a man a long period of time when he has nothing – to be spoken of?"

Al–Jili holds that time (*dahr*) in this context means Allah and a portion of time (*hin*) is one of His manifestations when man had no being, either as an intelligible (*'ilmi*, i.e. an object of God's consciousness in the form of latent reality) or an actual reality (*'aini*). The part of the verse "nothing – to be spoken of" signifies that he did not form the content of God's mind.44

Similarly, when we apply everlastingness to God, it is logical and not temporal. "Eternity and everlastingness are only logical determinations and not temporal events in reference to God." "These two, i.e., eternity and everlastingness with their temporal implications, have been employed only to clarify the real existence of God (in relation to the world), otherwise (as a matter of fact) there is neither temporal eternity nor everlastingness. Time has no reference or significance in relation to God."45

Difference between eternity and everlastingness is that eternity refers to the logical priority of God, while everlastingness means that He was never non-existent nor in need of an efficient causality for His Being. We apply to Him the term "everlastingness" only for understanding His eternity, otherwise ascription of temporal priority and posteriority to Him as related to the world is out of the question. Temporality (*huduth*) implies that things, although they have been in the knowledge of God since eternity, in respect of their existence are created things.46

5. Speech (Kalam)

Speech is a reflection of the Being of God, it is an over-flowing or emanation (*faid*) from the essence of God. It is an intelligible epiphany. It manifests itself in two directions. The first is of two kinds. (a) The kind of speech (*kalam*) issues forth from God's position of power (*izzah*) which must be obeyed by all. The Qur'anic verse 41:11, refers to this fact. 47 (b) The second kind of speech issues forth from the position of Lordship in the language of the people such as the revealed books. In this case, the question of obedience and disobedience arises. Some obey while others disobey the injunctions contained in them.

The second significance (direction) of speech is metaphysical and is the basis of the doctrine of Logos. The Word of God is the reality of the existents and every existent is a Word of God. Al–Jili refers to the Qur'anic verse, "If the sea were ink for the Words of my Lord, the sea would surely be consumed before the Words of my Lord are exhausted" (18:109). Thus, Nature is the materialization of the Word of God and exists in its physical form. It is the objective and material of the contents of God's consciousness, the physical shape that the objects of His knowledge, called *a'yan al–thabitah*, assume.48

6. Hearing is Divine Epiphany

It is an attribute of His essence which His perfection demands. He hears the words of His own consciousness as well as those of His manifestations (*shu'un*). The second hearing (of the manifestations) is the demand of His names and attributes which are to be manifested in the physical world. It is revelation of Himself to Himself in the state of self-consciousness.49

7. Sight

The attribute of sight with reference to seeing the object of knowledge is nothing but God as He is in His essence, and the same is the case with His attribute of knowledge. With regard to the epiphany of

knowledge which is the originator of the universe, it is the revelation of the attribute of knowledge from Himself to Himself, while the epiphany of 'ain, which is the objective physical world, is the manifestation of the attributes of seeing, and both are identical with His essence. Seeing and knowing are two different attributes and yet, with reference to His essence, they are one: His seeing is His knowing. When the things were on the plane of the unseen, they were the objects of His knowledge, when they appeared on the plane of existence; they became the objects of His hearing.50

8. Beauty

It is of two kinds. The first is real and is reflected in the "beautiful names" in which God sees Himself. The second is sensory and reflected in the physical created world. He is the absolute beauty, and reveals Himself in its different manifestations.

9. Majesty is Beauty in its Intense Form

Beauty signifies His exalted attributes, while majesty is His essence as manifested in His names and attributes.

10. Perfection is the name of Divine Essence which is perfectly unknowable

All attributes of God are identical with His essence and not added to it and so perfection is His by His very nature.51

Self-revelations of the One

The ultimate Reality, according to al–Jili, is One which manifests itself in the multiplicity of forms without thereby becoming many. The state of the One before It revealed Itself is called, after ibn 'Arabi, blindness (al–'Am'). The term was adopted from a prophetic tradition. The Holy Prophet was once asked about the place of God before creation. He answered that God was in 'Ama'. On the basis of this simple answer, ibn 'Arabi and al–Jili have built a super–structure of their pantheistic systems.

The essence is Absolute Being in which all relations, modes, and directions disappear. As such it cannot be called a necessary or eternal being for this implies determination of one sort or another. It is even above the characterization of absoluteness. 52 Al–Jili calls this essence 'Ama' and describes it as essence in its inwardness. It is like a flint which hides fire in its innermost recesses. Though sometimes fire is revealed, yet it remains hidden within it. It is the Reality of realities which is above the distinction of God (Haqq) and the world (khalq), beyond the determinations of names and attributes.53

It is the one epiphany which has no relation whatsoever with "other.' In spite of this, it comprises within itself all (later) manifestations or revelations which are present in it only potentially like stars in the light of the sun. In this epiphany of essence, God knows nothing but Himself, while in other epiphanies He knows Himself as well as others.54

This state of blindness is related to the Absolute Oneness (*ahadiyyah*), in both of which names and attributes are annihilated and nothing is manifested, with the difference that in the former the inward aspect is emphasized, while in the latter its outward aspect takes its form. 'Ama', with regard to inwardness and occultation or hiddenness, is the essence, while Absolute oneness with regard to God's manifestation to Himself in His mind (*nafs*) in which all relations are negated.55

Absolute Oneness denotes that the Pure Being is about to start on the process of descent, coming down towards manifestation. 56 This is the first stage of the descent or self–revelation of the essence from the darkness of 'Ama' to the light of manifestations. At this stage, unity is complete and all multiplicity is negated, although it resides in it; it is divested of all attributes, names, relations, and modes, and yet they all lie hidden in its innermost being. Its apparent unity is identical with its hidden plurality. It is like a wall when seen from a distance.

Although it is composed of different constituents like bricks, mortar, etc., and is, thus, a plurality, yet it shows itself to an observer as a unity which has a peculiar existence of its own and is not merely a conglomeration of different parts. It is the first self–revelation of the One and is above the distinctions of God and the world. No one can claim to receive illumination from the One at this stage, for it is beyond all multiplicity; what we experience is really unity in its second stage, *Rabb* or Allah.57

The unity (*ahadiyyah*) of God at a particular stage of manifestation spreads out into a pair of opposites which later on are reunited at the stage of uniqueness or simple oneness (*wahdiyyah*). The intervening stage between *ahadiyyah* and *wahdiyyah* is represented by He–ness (*huwiyyah*) and I–ness (*aniyyah*).58

Ibn 'Arabi employs the term *huwiyyah* (He-ness) as equivalent to divine essence. 59 But for al–Jili this He-ness is a stage removed from the essence. It is derived from the pronoun *huwa* (he) which refers to the "absent one" (*aha'ib*) and, therefore, refers to the essence of God from which names and attributes are absent, that is, to His unity which negates the many. It is the inward aspect of the unity which informs us about its inwardness (*batin*) and absence (*ahaibubiyyah*). It is the inmost consciousness of Allah.60

Aniyyah (I-ness) is the outward aspect of unity in which One blossoms froth into multiplicity. Zahir (outward) and batin (inward) are not two different aspects of the One but only Its different views; as a matter of fact, the outward and the inward are identical. He-ness and I-ness, outwardness and inwardness refer to the reality which is signified by the name Allah because *ilahiyyah* is a sum of contradictories.61

The stage of self-revelation called simple Oneness (*wahdiyyah*) is the manifestation of the essence in which all different attributes are gathered together. Here everything is One and many, many is One and One many.

At this stage, essence is manifested as attribute and attribute as essence. Every attribute is identical with the other, as generosity is with revengefulness, for both are identical with (and 'ain of) Allah. In

ahadiyyah, there is no manifestation of names and attributes and the Real is the pure essence. In wahdiyyah, names and attributes as well as their traces and effects are fully manifested, but they are not separate from the essence; here every attribute is identical with (the 'ain of) the other. In ilahiyyah names and attributes are manifested but are distinguished one from the other and are even contradictory to one another.62

Ascent of the Soul

The different grades of the self–revelations of the One are only a logical description of how, according to al–Jili, the Real, i.e., God, manifests Himself in nature and man. It is man in whom He becomes self–conscious and who realizes the ultimate truth that there is no multiplicity or division, for reality is one. But, as al–Jili says, this realization does not dawn on him all of a sudden. It is not possible for man to realize and comprehend all the divine realities at the time of birth. He ascends to the truth only by gradual stages. 63 Al–Jili enumerates four different stages which man has to traverse before he is able to achieve unity with the source and origin of life, the One.

1. Illumination of Action

At this stage man feels that God permeates all objects of the world; it is He who moves them and is ultimately responsible for their rest. The power of performing action is attributed by al–Jili to God only and man is looked upon as devoid of all power or will. He enumerates several degrees and grades of this stage. There are some who first see the divine will and then look to the action and, thus, they are made to realize the conflict between God's will and religious injunctions. There are some who follow His will, although thereby they violate His order (*amr*). With regard to the first, i.e. will, they are obedient, while, with regard to the second, they are classed among the disobedient. Al–Jili leaves the problem unsettled by asking the question, "Is it better for man, in order to win God's favour, to put on the dress of disobedience for the sake of fulfilling God's will or to put on the dress of obedience and defy thereby His will, though, as a matter of fact, only that happens which is according to the will of God?"64

2. Illumination of Names

When a mystic receives illumination from any one of the divine names, his being is completely submerged under the light of the name. Both are greatly identified that when anyone calls God by that name the response comes from the mystic. The result is that he comes to realize his unity with the Real. "Anyone who calls Laila (my beloved) by her name receives answer from me; when anyone calls me, then Laila answers on my behalf. We are one soul though in two different bodies or us two are like a person who in essence is one but has two names. As a matter of fact, we are not two persons that have become one, bur are one; the lover is the beloved.

Al-Jili enumerates several grades and degrees of this illumination, all of which are based on his mystical experiences. Other people may arrive at a different set of stages on the basis of their mystical

experience. The first is the illumination of the name Eternal (*Qadim*). Here God reveals to man his position as he existed before the creation of the world in the consciousness of God (i.e. as 'ain al-thabitah). His physical existence vanishes.

As the knowledge of God is eternal, so are the objects of His knowledge. This being so, the man who receives illumination from the name Eternal *ipso facto* loses his temporality and becomes as eternal as his latent reality ('ain al-thabitah). He who receives the epiphany of the name al-Haqq (the Truth) realizes the hidden truth contained in the Qur'anic verse (15:85), "We created the heavens, the earth, and whatever is in them with truth." For him the phenomenal world ceases to exist and only the essence, devoid of all attributes and relations, remains. There are others who receive epiphany of the name al-Ahad (the One). God reveals to them the true nature of the phenomenal world and they realize in their mystic revelation that this world is a reflection (buruz) of His essence and is related to Him as waves to the sea. In this state the mystic sees the One in the many; rather, the many disappear altogether and only the One remains as the Real.

Al–Jili sums up his position in these words, "I lost my (separate) being (*wujud*). On my behalf He represented me; rather, He was I and I, He. Being was one and there was no conflict or difference. I was annihilated and achieved abiding life (*baqa*') with Him and in Him, and all the veils of difference and dualities were removed. I raised my self (*nafs*), the veil was lifted and I awoke as if I had not fallen asleep. With the eyes of reality I found myself as *Haqq*. Then His attributes became my attributes and myself (*dhat*) His essence. As a matter of fact, my name is His name and the name of his essence is my name.

There are some who receive light (*tajalli*) from the name *al-Rahman* (the Merciful). At this stage, the mystic receives illumination gradually and turn by turn from all the divine names and is illumined according to the capacity of the light inherent in his nature. Then the name *Rabb* (Nourisher) and all other names that are related to it like *'Alim* (Knower), *Qadir* (Powerful), etc. descend on him. This process goes on until he is illumined by all the names. Last of all comes the epiphany of the Name *Qayyum* (Self–Subsisting). This is the final stage after which the mystic passes on to the next higher stage of the illumination of divine attributes.65

3. Illumination of Attributes

At this stage, the self (*nafs*) and existence (*wujud*) of the mystic are annihilated. When the light of slavehood ('*abdiyyah*) and the spirit of creatureliness in him pass away, God substitutes in his body, in place of the thing that has been snatched away, a spiritual substance of His own essence without incarnation. This spiritual substance, called the Holy Spirit (*Ruh al-Quds*), becomes an inalienable part of his self. God's epiphany to man in this state means His epiphany to His own Self, we call man slave, though, in reality, and there is no distinction between Lord and slave. When slave disappears, his logical correlate, Lord, must also disappear. The creatures are like waves which, though many, are parts of the sea. If the sea is in motion, it is all waves; when it is calm, there are neither waves nor number (i.e.

multiplicity)."

He enumerates several grades of this illumination which different people attain according to their inborn capacities and the magnitude of their knowledge of the power of their will. When a person is illumined by the divine attribute of life, he feels that he is the sole source of life as manifested in all the creatures in different proportions. Al–Jili says that when he was at this stage he felt that he was life itself, one and indivisible.

When a mystic is illumined by the attribute of knowledge or sight, he knows the reality of everything that was, is and will be and sees everything, even the unknown of the unknown (*ghaib al-ghaib*). When he is illumined by the attribute of hearing, he hears the speech of every creature: minerals, plants, animals and angels.

Some receive the light of the attribute of speech (*kalam*). In this condition, the recipient looks upon all existents as God's Word. Sometimes he hears the Words of God without a veil of names, without any direction, without the help of any bodily organ. This hearing of God's words cannot be described in usual physical terms, for the ear does not play any part in it. In this state man attains a very high position. He is addressed by God as His lover and beloved. "You are My mouth among My people. You are My inmost secret and the best reflection of My life. You are My name, My person (*dhat*), My attribute. You are the epitome and the (final) object of existence and creation (*huduth*). If there had been no Lord (*Rubb*), there would have been no slave. You manifested Me as I manifested you. You brought me into existence, as I created you. If you had not been existent, I would not have been existent. My lover, I am the (hidden) meaning of you and you are the (apparent) manifestation of Me."

A man who reaches this stage receives God's Word according to his capacity. When carried to the Highest Tree (*sidrat al-muntaba*) he is addressed by God. Then he sees light in the heart and is convinced by its very brilliance that its source is God. He is told, "My friend, your I-ness (*aniyyah*) is my He-ness (*huwiyyah*). 'You' is identical with 'I.' Your simplicity is My compositeness and your compositeness is My simplicity. You are a point (centre) round which the circle of existence revolves, and in that circle you are the worshipper as well as the worshipped; you are the light, the manifestation, the beauty."

Some are illumined by the divine attribute of will. At this stage the illumined person sees that everything in the world is subject to his will. Some are illumined by the attribute of power. At this stage, which al–Jili claims to have reached, he heard the ringing of bells, his whole physical body seem to have been torn asunder and his existence changed into non–being. He experienced here darkness upon darkness until by the grace of God he was relieved of all this and came upon light. At this stage, the illumine one gets extra–ordinary spiritual powers, a thing comes into existence at his bidding. The last stage is the illumination of the attribute of divinity (*ilahiyyah*), where two contradictory positions seem to be reconciled and incorporated into the world as true and yet he looks upon all of them (including Islam) as false, for, according to him all Muslims, believers, gnostics and the righteous ones are on the wrong path and he

does not accept the opinion of any but the perfect Sufi (muhaqqiq) as true.66

4. Illumination of the Essence

When God reveals Himself to man through this epiphany, man dies to himself and, in place of that, receives from God a divine substance (*latifah ilahiyyah*) which is either attributive (*sifati*) or essential (*dhati*). When this substance is essential, i.e. when man is illumined by divine essence, he truly becomes a perfect man.67

Doctrine of Logos and the Perfect Man

According to al–Jili there are three metaphysical categories: (1) Absolute Being which is completely unknowable. It is the essence above all kinds of determinations, relations, and modes. 68 (2) The reality viewed as *Haqq*, the aspect of He–ness or Divinity. (3) The reality viewed as *khalq*, the aspect of I–ness, or humanity. Ultimate Reality is One, but it appears in two different aspects of God and man (*Haqq* and *khalq*). 69 Sometimes he expresses this doctrine in a form which most Western writers (like Nicholson) construe to be the acceptance of the Christian doctrine of Trinity. Al–Jili says, "Essence has two aspect: 'You' and 'I'...'You" refers to your He–ness (*huwiyyah*); 'I' refers to my reality...'I,' as 'I'–ness, is God and 'You' in its creaturely aspect is man. You make look at yourself as 'I or as 'You'; in reality, there is nothing here except the Universal Reality."70

Later on, al–Jili says, "In itself the essence is one. If you say it is one, it is true. And if you say, it is two, and then it is, as a matter of fact, two. If you say, 'No, it is three,' you have spoken the truth." Explaining it further, he says, "Look at His oneness (*ahadiyyah*) which is His essence and here He is one (*wahid*) and unique. If you look at Him with regard to the two aspects of Creator and creature, Lord and slave (*Rabb* and 'abd'), He is two. And if you look at His real nature and at that wherein two contraries are gathered together, you will be amazed. You will not be able to call His loftiness lowly and His lowliness lofty. You will have to fix a third name to illustrate His nature which is characterized by the two attributes. This third thing is that whose name is Ahmad with reference to the celestial sphere and Mohammad with reference to the terrestrial sphere. 71 This is the doctrine of Logos or the perfect man which he discusses in detail in the 60th chapter of his book.

The perfect man, according to him, is the Pole (*Qutb*) on which the sphere of existence revolves from first to last. He has been one and unchangeable since being came into existence. He is dressed in different ways and in each guise he has a different name. His real name is Mohammad. In every age he has a name which is most suitable for that time. Referring to his personal experience he says that he had a chance of seeing him (i.e. Mohammad as a perfect man) in the form of his Sheikh, Sharf al–Din al–Jabrati, at Zabid in 796/1393, though he did not know at the time that he was Mohammad. The Holy Prophet, as a matter of fact, in his capacity as the perfect man, has the power of assuming different forms.

When the mystic observes him in the form which he possessed in his earthly life, he calls it the form of Mohammad. But when he (the mystic) sees him in some other form, though he knows that it is in reality, Mohammad applies to nothing except the reality of Mohammad (haqiqat al-Mohammadiyyah). Al-Jili is, however, very careful to point out that this is not the doctrine of metempsychosis. Mohammad has the power, according to him, to manifest himself in different forms and he has been appearing in the form of the perfect man in every age. Such men are outwardly his (i.e. Mohammad's) vicegerents, while inwardly he constitutes their essence. 22 At another place, al-Jili calls Mohammad as "the heaven and the earth and the length and the breadth."73

The basic reality of Mohammad is present in all people in proportion to their inherent capacities. Saints and prophets all partake of it in different degrees, while Mohammad alone possesses it in its fullness and, therefore, according to al–Jili, nobody except he can be called a truly perfect man. 74 Different names and attributes are manifested individually and separately in different saints and prophets, but in the perfect man they are manifested in their totality.

The perfect man is the whole of reality in miniature; he is the microcosm who combines in himself the inward and the outward aspects of reality. He is the copy of God as a tradition of the Prophet says, "Allah created Adam in His own image." God is living, knowing, mighty, willing, hearing, seeing, and speaking and so is the perfect man. Then there is the perfect man's he-ness (*huwiyyah*) as against God's He-ness (*huwiyyah*), I-ness (*aniyyah*) against I-ness, essence against essence, who against whole, universal against universal, particular against particular.75

The microcosmic character of the perfect man is further explained by al–Jili as follows, "The perfect man in his essence represents all the realities of existence. In his spirituality he corresponds to the spiritual realities and in his corporeality to the physical realities. His heart corresponds to the Throne of God (al–'arsh),76 his aniyyah to the Heavenly Chair (kursi),77 his mind to the Exalted Pen (al–qalam al–a'la),78 his soul to the Guarded Tablet (al–lauh al–mahfuz),79 his nature to physical elements, his potentialities to hayula, etc., etc. In short, every faculty of the perfect man corresponds to different manifestations in the physical world."80

According to al–Jili, there are three stages (*barzakh*) of development for the perfect man. In the first stage called beginning (*bada'ah*) the perfect man becomes endowed with divine names and attributes. In the intermediary stage (*tawassut*) he is able to grasp both divine and human realities. When he is able to acquire all that is possible to do at this stage, he gets knowledge of all hidden things and becomes aware of the secrets of the unseen world. In the third and final stage (*khitam*) he acquires creative power and is given full authority to manifest this power in the world of nature. "At this stage, there are only two things: he, the perfect man himself and God the Great."81

He is called "the guide" (*al-mehdi*) and the seal (*al-khatam*). He is the vicegerent to whom God refers in the story of Adam. All things are drawn towards him in obeying his order as an iron is attracted by the magnet. The entire world is subdued to his power and greatness, and he does what he wishes to do.

Nothing remains hidden from or unknown to him. The saint (i.e. the perfect man) possesses the divine substance as simple essence (like God Himself) and is not limited by any rank (*martabah*) of Creator and creature,82 and as such he is able to bestow on things what their nature demands without any lot or hindrance.83

Saint ship and Prophethood

Al–Jili quotes Sheikh 'Abd al–Qadir on the authority of ibn 'Arabi, "Oh prophets, you have been called prophets but we have received something which you did not get." Another mystic says, "We have dived in the river (saint ship) while the prophets are staying at its banks." Al–Jili remarks that there is truth in these statements, but a prophet as prophet is superior to a saint *qua* saint.84

Al–Jili regards prophethood as a developed stage of saint ship. The seventh stage of the spiritual development is nearness (*qurb*) which he calls great saint ship (*wilayat al–kubra*). It has four aspects. The first is friendship (*khullah*), the position attained by Abraham. The second is love (*hub*), where Mohammad was given the rank of a lover of God (*habib Allah*). The third is finality (*khatam*), the rank of Mohammad (*maqam–i Mohammadi*) where the banner of Ahmad was hoisted for him. The last and fourth is the rank of slave hood (*'abdiyyah*) where God called him by the name of slave (*'abd*).85 In this rank he was made a prophet and sent with a message to the people.

Other people who succeed in attaining this rank are only entitled to be called slaves and they are the vicegerents of Mohammad on all planes (*hadarah*) of existence. There are some saints who have undergone spiritual discipline and attained perfection, but their objective is not the reform of the people. Such saints are prophets, but their prophethood follows from that of Mohammad. They are his brothers about whom there is reference in the following tradition, "I have a great regard for those of my brethren who will come after my death." These people are prophet–saints. The prophethood of these saints, according to al–Jili, is institutional (*tashr'i*) but that of nearness, propagation (of the message of the Holy Prophet), and enforcement of the divine Law. These prophet–saints receive their prophetic knowledge directly i.e. from the same source from which the prophets derive their knowledge.86

Al–Jili draws a distinction between saint ship (*walayah*), prophecy of saint ship (*nubuwwat al–wilayah*), and prophecy of institution (*nubuwwat al–tashri'*). Saint ship is a rank in which God reveals to a mystic His names and attributes through knowledge, state, and power and, thus, becomes his protector and friend (*mutawalli*). In the prophecy of saint ship, the perfect servant (*al–'abd al–kamil*) is commanded by God to turn his attention to the people so that he may reform them in the light of the divine Law towards a better moral and spiritual life. He who performed this task before Mohammad was an apostle (*rasul*) and he who undertook this work after him is his vicegerent, but in his missionary work he has no independent status; he is the follower of Mohammad, like such saints as Bayazid, Junaid, 'Abd al–Qadir Jilani, ibn 'Arabi, etc. He who enjoys an independent status and does not follow any other prophet belongs to the rank of prophecy of institution, but this has come to an end after the death of Mohammad.

Thus, saint ship represents a peculiar relation between the Lord and the servant, prophecy of saint ship is an aspect of the saint which is common between the Creator and the creature; prophecy of institution is an independent and permanent assignment, an apostleship is an aspect which refers to the relation between the (Lord's) servant and the creatures.

A prophet is a saint as well as a prophet, but the aspect of his saint ship is superior to the aspect of his prophecy, though every prophet–saint is superior to a saint.87 According to al–Jili, Mohammad is the final prophet because he did not leave any wisdom, guidance, knowledge, and secret unexplained. Whatever was necessary for the people to know and learn had been communicated by him. No Sufi saint can know or experience anything which was not experienced by him and, therefore, he cannot but follow him. "After Mohammad institutional prophethood came to an end."88

Psychology - Qalb

The term "heart" (*qalb*) is very often used by the mystics as the repository of the innermost secrets of divine knowledge. It is definitely not the physical organ of the human body but a symbolical term for the rational or spiritual aspect of man. Following ibn 'Arabi, al–Jili identifies it with the spirit of God which, according to the Qur'an, was breathed into Adam (15:29).

The heart (*qalb*) is the eternal light which was revealed in the essence ('*ain*) of existents (i.e. in Mohammad or the perfect man), so that God may see man through it. It is the centre of God's consciousness and the circumference of the circles of all existents. It symbolizes that which is described in the Qur'an as the light (24:35). It reflects all the divine names and attributes and yet at times it directs its attention to some particular name and then becomes a complete reflection of it.

The true nature of the heart is divine and pure. 89 But due to animal passions sometimes it loses this purity which, however, can be recovered after a period of physical and spiritual training, the duration of which varies according to the degree of influence of the animal passions. Al–Jili holds that certain men of eminence subjected themselves to a rigorous mystic discipline as a result of which they received divine illumination as a right and not as a favour. In his support he quotes a verse of Sheikh 'Abd al–Qadir Jilani who says, "I continued grazing in the fields of *rida*' (submission to God's will) and attained a rank which was the result not of God's favour (but of my own efforts)."

Qalb is like a mirror to the realities of Being or it may be called the reflection of the universe. God says, "The sky and the earth do not contain Me, it is only the heart of My believing servant which can contain Me." This statement, according to al–Jili, proves that the heart is primary and the universe is only secondary.

God's comprehension by the heart is of three kinds: (a) by knowledge. Heart alone is able to comprehend and know God as He is. Other things can and do know God either in one or other of His aspects, but heart alone can know him in all-comprehensiveness. (b) By observation (*mushahadah*).

Through this seeing (*kashf*) the heart observes the beauties of the face of Allah and enjoys the taste of His names and attributes. (c) By vicegerency. At this stage, man becomes a complete embodiment of divine names and attributes so much so that he feels his essence to be identical with divine essence. He then becomes God's vicegerent.

Reason

There are three kinds of reason: the first intelligence ('aql al-awwal), universal reason ('aql al-kulli) and ordinary reason ('aql al-ma'ash). The first intelligence is the locus of the form of divine knowledge in existence and as such it is identical with the Exalted pen. It contains explicitly and analytically what is contained implicitly and synthetically in divine consciousness. It is the light of divine knowledge which became the first manifestation of the essence in the phenomenal world.90

Universal reason is the luminous percipient in which those forms of knowledge are made manifest which is deposited in the first intelligence. Al–Jili rejects the view of those who regard universal reason as the sum of reasons of all rational beings, for reason are a unit and a substance.

Ordinary reason is a light which is judged and measured by the laws of reflection. Its sphere of activity is confined only to one of the several aspects of the universal reason; it has no access to the first intelligence which is beyond logical inferences and is the sphere where sacred revelation takes place. Ordinary reason has only one scale, i.e., of nature, while knowledge gained through ordinary reason is of limited scope, fallible, and is mostly of the nature of conjecture. He relates the three reasons as follows: the first intelligence is like the sun, universal reason is like water which reflects the rays of the sun, while the ordinary reason is like the reflection of water which falls on a wall.91

Judgment (Wahm)

The *wahm* of Mohammad was created by God from His perfect light and, therefore, it was manifested in the phenomenal world in a perfect form. *Wahm* is the strongest faculty possessed by man because it over–powers reason, reflection, and imagination. It has, thus, the greatest capacity of (intellectual) apprehension and preservation. It has power and influence over all existence. It is through it that an intellectual person is able to acknowledge God and worship Him. It is the light of certitude and anyone who is able to attain supremacy over it becomes the master of the two universes, terrestrial and spiritual. But he who is over–powered by it becomes subject to darkness and bewilderment.92

Himmah is concentration of mind upon an object. It corresponds to what is usually called will or power of will. It is a very powerful faculty which, according to al–Jili, is always busy in the contemplation of God. If anybody decides to attain a particular objective and concentrates his will upon its attainment, he is sure to succeed in his aim. There are two necessary conditions for success, (a) determination in thought about the possibilities of the success or otherwise of the objective and then a conviction about the result, and (b) concentration of all effort on its achievement. If anybody fails to manifest this type of activity, he

has no chance of success. In the beginning one encounters great difficulties and hindrances but, once they are overcome, man is on the verge of conquest of his self as well as of the physical universe.

Al–Jili makes a distinction between will (*himmah*) and attention (*hamm*). The object of the former is God and the spiritual world, while that of the latter is the physical world and pursuits related to it. But for a mystic it is not proper to stay at the stage of attention for long, because after some time it becomes a hindrance to future progress.93

Reflection (Fikr)

It is a key to the Unseen. According to al–Jili, there are two methods of approaching the Unseen: (a) pertaining to God, which is attained through divine names and attributes, (b) pertaining to the world which depends on realizing the true nature of man, all of whose aspects are ranged against the aspects of the Merciful. One of these aspects is reflection by which we can peep into the mysteries of the Unseen. When a man is able to attain perfection in the exercise of reflection, he sees spiritual objects in a physical garb.

This ascent ('uruj') is of two kinds: (1) One kind of ascent is achieved by traversing the path chalked out by the Merciful. The man who adopts it is on the straight path and attains creative powers. (b) The second kind of ascent is the "red magic" which is involved in thought and imagination and in which truth and falsehood are mixed together. It is the path of speculative thought which lands man in the morass of uncertainty and doubt.94

But it does not imply that the exercise of reflection should be condemned outright. Al–Jili admits that reflection has the potentiality of leading men astray from the right path, but he also suggests certain principles by following which it is possible for men to benefit from the light of reflection and save themselves from its pitfalls and darkness. The first principle, according to him, is reason ('aql), which is in perpetual quest, as well as the acquired experience the veracity of which has been testified by men in their mystic life. The second is *naql*, i.e. knowledge gained through a study of the Qur'an and Tradition, by which a man comes to believe in the reality of the Unseen. But if a man refuses to follow these principles and gives himself over to purely discursive reason, he is sure to be led astray.95

The Self (Nafs)

According to al–Jili, as the title of chapter 59 illustrates, self is the origin of Lucifer (*Iblis*) and other evil powers. But it does not imply that the origin of the self itself is evil, for, as al–Jili says, its origin is the spirit itself of Mohammad. "The self of Mohammad was created by God out of His own Self and the self of Adam was made a copy of the self of Mohammad." Later on, he says, "Allah created the self of Mohammad from His own essence and as his essence is the unity of two contraries, two contraries emanated from Him."

Satan was cursed for his act of disobedience but this curse, according to al-Jili, consisted in removing

him from divine presence. The period of this separation is limited to the Day of Judgment after which he will be reunited with the divine presence. Thus, according to al–Jili, self is spiritual in origin and does not represent any evil power which is antagonistic to the forces of good. "The self is the inmost secret of the Lord and (a part of) His essence on account of which it has delights. It was created out of the light of attributes of Lordship and, therefore, possesses lordly qualities." Al–Jili, therefore, identifies self with the soul which was breathed into Adam and enumerates the following five stages of the development of the soul on the path of spiritual progress:

- 1. The animal soul is an aspect of the soul which governs the body.
- 2. The evil–prompting soul (*nafs al–ammarah*) is that aspect by which the soul is engrossed in fulfilling the demands of passions and, thus, becomes indifferent to divine commandments and prohibitions.
- 3. The inspired soul is that aspect by which human soul is directed and guided by God to do good action.
- 4. The self-reproaching soul is that aspect by which man is engaged in subduing his inclinations and passions and in turning his attention to God.
- 5. The tranquil soul is that aspect because of which all evil inclinations are totally removed and man feels satisfied with God.

But beyond these five stages, there is a final stage where body is completely under the control of the soul and partakes of the knowledge of the Unseen and is able to fly over the earth, etc. At this stage man is characterized by God's attributes and becomes identical with His essence.96

Religion

A theory of life which is based on pantheism ends in a conception of religion which is universal. As the unity of Godhead is manifested in the multiplicity of divine names and attributes, so the basic urge of man to worship God takes various forms all of which are equally valid and right. He argues his case on the basis of certain verses of the Qur'an and traditions. He holds that all existent things are created for the purpose of divine worship. Everything by its state and activity, nay bit is very nature and attributes, actually does worship God and, therefore, all existents are servants or worshippers of God.

The forms of worship, however, due to differences in the nature of names and attributes, are different. Though humanity was originally and by nature one, yet due to differences resulting from the manifestations of diverse names, people adopted various pathways towards God – pathways which appeared right to the people and which God had decreed for them; for none follows a path except that which he wish them to follow and all paths are undoubtedly paths leading to Him as the following verse of the Qur'an indicates, "There is no living creature but He has it in His control." (11:56).

Death is the extinguishing of the vital heat, while life is the soul's concentration on the body. The life of the body is maintained only so long as the soul continues to look at it. After death, the soul assumes a bodily form appropriate to it in accordance with the place it occupies. Some mystics wrongly deny resurrection of the body. Al–Jili believes on the basis of his personal experience and observation that bodies along with souls shall be resurrected.97

The stage intermediate between death and resurrection (*barzakh*) is an incomplete and non-permanent stage of life after death. It is a world of fantasy. There the people will meet with the forms appropriate to their actions. If a man had been doing good actions, he would experience different forms and shapes of these actions which would carry him progressively to better states. Similarly, an evil-doer would experience torments which will gradually increase in their intensity.

Al–Jili enumerates eight different levels of paradise the last of which, called the lauded station (*maqam al–mahmud*), and is meant for none but Mohammad. It is the paradise of the essence. Similarly, he describes seven different grades or levels of hell.

But after giving a graphic description of hell and heaven, al–Jili denies their existence as separate localities. As the epiphanies of the Lord, they are on an equal level; the inmates of hell will receive tidings of punishment as the people of paradise will receive tidings of reward. 98 Hell is nothing but the natural darkness which is fire. 99 In the 59th chapter he discusses in detail the nature of Iblis and his manifestations and yet he asserts that Iblis is not an individual; it is only the personification of the evil aspect of man's nature. 100

He tries to explain away the usual significance and nature of fire in hell. God will create in the people thrown into hell the power to bear punishment and, thus, this punishment will change into pleasure. 101 But even then this so-called punishment in hell will not last forever.

Al–Jili thinks that the beatific vision is the manifestation of God's *tajalli* and His nearness is not confined to the people of paradise or the so–called next world. Every individual, here in this life and in life after death, whether he is placed in hell or in paradise, continually receives God's *tajalli*; as a matter of fact, his existence is all due to it.102

According to al–Jili, God's will is absolutely free from external restraints; His actions are not determined by causes and conditions. 103 Man, on the other hand, according to him, is completely determined in his action. 104 He says that revealed books demand obedience, while people as a matter of fact act as they are determined by their nature. Freedom of choice (*ikhtyar*) is attributed to them only formally so that God's way to man may be justified. 105

God's decree, according to al–Jili, is of two kinds. One is unchangeable and in conformity with the demands of the divine attributes and as such is not subject to change. The other kind of decree is that which takes place according to the law of nature as demanded by the inherent capacity of the existents. Decrees of the latter type sometimes do not come to pass due to the contingent character of the things

of the world.

Al–Jili subscribes to the doctrine that Being as Being is good and evil is only relative and apparent. With regard to the Real, there is no distinction between good and evil, for everything without any distinction is the manifestation of the divine beauty and is as such good. Evil or defect in the phenomenal world is only due to certain relations. Fire is evil for a person who is burned but is good for the insect that lives in it and gets nourishment from it. In short, there is nothing in this world which is absolutely evil. 106

Al–Jili holds that what is called sin or disobedience is, in one respect, obedience between God's will and His command as enunciated by ibn 'Arabi. Sometimes an action takes place in full conformity with God's will, though His command may be against its occurrence. In such a situation man is disobedient with regard to His command but obedient with regard to His will. This point of view affects al–Jili's treatment of Satan's role. God rebuked him for his disobedience but he neither repented nor bewailed nor tried to seek forgiveness, for only that comes to pass which is according to God's will.

Al–Jili enumerates seven stages in spiritual progress. The first is what he calls Islam which covers five principles: declaration of God's unity and Mohammad's prophethood, prayer, fasting, poor–tax and pilgrimage.

The second stage is faith (*iman*). It is the first manifestation of the world of the Unseen and implies heart's acceptance of the truth thus revealed. It is something different from reason. Faith is not belief in a fact arrived at through discursive reasoning but acceptance without rational argumentation. Light of faith is superior to the light of reason. *Kalam* (scholastic theology) was invented to defend religion against disbelievers and innovators (*ahl al-bid'ah*). It never helps in producing faith in a person.

The third stage is called piety (*salah*) which results in good actions. But the motive is desire for divine rewards and safety from punishment. A person at this stage leads a life of obedience to the laws of the *Shari'ah* for the sake of his self.

The fourth stage is called *ihsan* where one observes the effects of divine names and attributes. Such a person does good actions not for the sake of his own self nor for rewards, but for his love for God.

The fifth stage is martyrdom (*shadadah*) which is of two kinds. The lower grade represents the death of a person in an epidemic or on a journey or in the battle–field for a righteous cause. The higher grade of martyrdom is to see the Real in every existent.

The sixth stage is called *siddiqiyyah* which is signified by the mystic saying, "He who knows his self knows the Lord." This stage has three different planes. The first is faith through knowledge or reason ('ilm al-yakin). The second is faith through personal experience and mystic *kashf* ('ain al-yaqin). The third is true and perfect faith (*haqq al-yaqun*). The mystic who has attained this stage of *siddiqiyyah* passes through all these planes of faith. In the first, he sees the Unseen and is able to observe with the light of faith those secret realities which are not open to the common people. Here he attains *fana*' and

then reaches the stage of *baqa*' where he receives the *tajalli* of all divine names one after the other. He perceives the essence through names. This is the final plane of *'ilm al-yagin*.

In the next plane, i.e. of 'ain al-yaqin, he receives illumination from the divine attributes one by one until he feels himself one with the Real in Its aspect of attributes. He progresses gradually until names and attributes lose their significance for him. He attains gnosis of the essence and through it he is able to understand the operation of names and attributes. He now knows the essence through the essence. Thus, he reaches the third and the highest plane, i.e. haqq al-yaqin, which is the first step in the seventh stage of nearness (qurb).

Here man is able to manifest in his person different attributes of the Real, though this manifestation cannot be total and absolute. A person who is able to bring a dead man to life, for instance is manifesting a particular attribute of God, though in a limited form. He stands in nearness to God. The first step in this stage is the station of friendship where he is able to create through the word "Be" (*kun*) after the manner of God. In the words of a tradition, "God becomes the ears by which he hears, the eyes by which he sees, the tongue by which he speaks, the hands by which he holds, the feet by which he walks." The second step in this stage is the station of love where the lover and the beloved become one and where the one represents the other. The last step in this stage is the station of *khitam* where the individual is characterized by the essence (*haqiqah*) of the Real. This station is beyond the reach of ordinary mortals.

C. Jami

'Abd al-Rahman Jami (817 – 898/1414 – 1492), a famous poet and great scholar, was the follower of ibn 'Arabi. His book, *Lawa'ih* (Flashes), is an exposition of the doctrine of the unity of Being. In the preface he states that this doctrine is the result of mystic experience of several eminent saints, but his role is that of a mere interpreter, for he has not undergone or experienced any mystic trances. He has only put in words what others had experienced at first hand. 107

His statement of the theory follows the logical definition of the word "existence." Existence (or Being) is sometimes used as a universal concept which in logic is called "secondary concept" (ma'qul-i thaniyyah) and has no objective reality corresponding to it but which attaches itself to the quiddity (mahiyyah) of a thing mentally. Taking Being in this sense, several critics have raised an objection against ibn 'Arabi's state that God is the Absolute Being. According to them, abstract existence having no objective reality cannot be said to be the source of external reality. Jami, therefore, tries to defend ibn 'Arabi by saying that Being or existence has another sense.

When pantheists use the word "Being" (*wujud*), they refer to reality which exists by itself, and on which depends the existence of other beings. As a matter of fact, none exists except He and all objective existents are His modes. 108 But the truth of this statement, according to Jami, is verifiable not so much through reason as through mystic experience and intuition. The Absolute Being is called God who is the

source of all that exists and yet is above all multiplicity. He transcends all manifestations and is unknowable.

Essence, pure and simple, is completely without any determinations and is above the distinctions of names, attributes, and relations. It is only when this essence descends towards manifestation that attributes such as knowledge, light, and existence makes their appearance. The essence is above all determinations but it is only when God is viewed by our human finite intellect that He is said to possess attributes.

Following ibn 'Arabi he rejects the Ash'arite theory of divine attributes according to which attributes subsist in and are co–eternal with God, and yet are neither identical with or different from Him. In "Flash" (*La'ihah*) 15, Jami explains that attributes are distinct from the essence in thought but are identical with it in fact and reality. God is knower due to the attribute of knowledge, powerful due to the attribute of power, active due to the attribute of willing, etc. There is no doubt that as these attributes are different from one another with regard to their content, they are similarly distinct from the essence. But in reality, they are all identical with the essence in the sense that in Him there is no plurality of existence.

The Ultimate Reality, i.e. God, is the ground of everything that exists. He is one so that multiplicity cannot affect Him. But when He reveals Himself in multiplicity of forms and modes, He appears to be many. These distinctions of one and many, however, are only subjective. God and the world are two aspects of the same reality. "The universe is the outward (expression) of God and God is the inner (reality) of the universe. Before manifestation the world God and God after manifestation is identical with the world." As a matter of fact, reality is one, and the dual aspects of God and the world are only our ways of looking at it. 109

The nature of things in the universe in relation to the Absolute is like modes which Jami, following 'Arabi, calls *shu'un*; they have no existence or reality in themselves and are mere adjectives of the One Being. 110 These modes are included in the Absolute as qualities in here in a substance or as a consequent follows from its ground – as half, third, and fourth, and other fractions are related to the integer; these fractions are potentially included in the integer one and become explicit only when repeated. 111

It is clear that the theological sense is not the actualization of the hidden potentialities of the Creator, but the production of individuals and things which, through deriving their existence from this source, yet enjoy self-determination and independence to some extent. According to Jami, Creator and creatures are two aspects of the same reality.

This subjective determination, according to Jami, has two stages. In the first stage called *martabah-i 'ilmi*, these existents appear in divine knowledge in the form of archetypal ideas (*a'yan-i thabitah*). In the second stage called rank of the physical world (*martabah-i 'ain*), they acquire the attributes and properties of external existence. "In short, there is nothing in the external world except one reality which

appears to be many on account of being clothed in diverse modes and attributes."112

As essence, the Real is beyond all knowledge; neither revelation nor reason can help anyone to comprehend it. No mystic saint can ever claim to experience Him as such. "His highest characteristic is the lack of all characterization and the end of all knowledge about Him is bewilderment." 113 The first stage of the descent is *ahadiyyah* which is a bare unity devoid of all modes and relations. When it is conditioned by these modes, it is called *al-wahdiyyah* where the Real characterized by manifestation, etc. It is at this stage that he assumes the attributes of being the Creator and Sustainer and is characterized by life, knowledge, and will. It is at this stage also that the existents first appear in the consciousness of God as the objects of His knowledge, but they do not involve multiplicity in the One.

At a later stage these objects of God's knowledge are clothed in existence and they assume multiplicity. They all exhibit in varying degrees some of the divine names and attributes. 114 But in spite of all these manifestations and splitting of the One into multiplicity, the unity remains unimpaired. It causes no change in the essence or in its attributes. "Although the light of the sun illuminates at once the clean and the unclean, yet it does not affect the purity of its light." 115

Though the one essence is interfused in all existents, it presence in them does not mean that everything is equal in this respect. There are differences of degree due to the power of receptivity of each thing. No doubt God and the world are two aspects of the Real, yet God is God and the world is the world. "Every grade of Being is determined according to its rank. If you ignore this distinction, you become an infidel."116

In ethics Jami follows the usual pantheistic tradition and advocates full-fledged determinism. As God is the essence of all things and is the inward aspect of the world, all actions that are usually ascribed to man should, as a matter of fact, be attributed to the Real. But if man is so determined, then how to account for the evil? Jami here again follows ibn 'Arabi. It is true, he says, that all actions of men are God's, yet it is not proper for us to attribute evil to God, for Being *qua* Being is absolute. According to him, therefore, evil has no positive content; it is privative content; it is privative, lacking something which should have been there. Take, for instance, the case of cold. There is nothing evil in it as such, but with reference to the fruits which it does not allow to ripen, it becomes evil. 117

The ultimate goal of man should be not only *fana*', passing away of consciousness, but *fana*'-i, passing away of the consciousness of having attained the state of *fana*'. At this stage, an individual loses not only awareness of self but also awareness of this "non-awareness of self." Then, according to Jami, faith, religion, belief, or *kashf* (mystic knowledge and experience) all become meaningless. 118

Bibliography

Mahmud Shabistary, *Gulshan-i Raz*; 'Abd al-Karim al Jili, *al-Insan al-Kamil*, Urdu translation by Fadal Miran, Lahore; Jami, *Lawa'ih*, lithographed edition, Lucknow, India, 1936; Whinfield, English translation

of *Gulshan-i Raz*, London; English translation of Jami's *Lawai'ih*, London; Iqbal, *The Development of Metaphysics in Persia*, Lahore; Lahiji, *Sharh-i Gulshan-i Raz*, Lahore; R. A. Nicholson, *Studies in Islamic Mysticism*, London; Affifi, *The Mystical Philosophy of Muhyid Din-Ibnul 'Arabi*, Cambridge; ibn al-'Arabi, *Fusus al-Hikam*, Urdu translation, Lucknow, 1927; *Encyclopaedia of Islam*.

```
1. Gulsham-i Raz, Question 12.
2. Ibid., Q. 2.
3. Ibid., Q. 1.
4. Ibid., Q. 2.
5. Ibid., Q. 10.
6. Ibid., Q. 9.
7. Ibid., Q. 4.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid., Q. 11.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid.
12. 'Abd al-Karim al-Jili, al-Insan al-Kamil, Urdu translation by Fadal Miran, Sufi Printing and Publishing Company, Pindi
Bahauddin, p. 4. All references to al-Insan al-Kamil are to this Urdu translation.
13. Ibid., p. 30.
14. Ibid., pp. 30 – 32.
15.
lbid., p. 27. He says that Being is of two kinds. One is Pure Being and that is the divine essence, the other is related to
non-Being and that is the phenomenal world.
16. Ibid., p. 39.
17. Ibid., p. 44.
18. The Qur'an (28:88) is usually translated as "Everything is liable to destruction except His Face." But al-Juli interprets
the word wajhahu pantheistically and translates it as "its (i.e. thing's) essence," thereby implying that one reality subsists in
all multiplicity; ibid., p. 36.
19. Ibid., chapter 62, para. 1.
20. Ibid., chapter 2, pp. 69 - 70.
21. He quotes several Qur'anic verses (25:58, 49:53, etc) to prove this point; ibid., p. 156. See also p. 145.
22. Ibid., pp. 67 - 68.
23. Ibid., pp. 33ff.
24. Ibid., pp. 120 - 21.
25. Ibid., pp 214 - 15.
26. Ibid., pp. 216 - 17.
27. Ibid., p. 48 – 49.
28. Ibid., p. 47 – 52.
29. Ibid., p. 58.
30. He refers to the Qur'an verse (45:13) in which the words jami' 'an minhu are interpreted by him to mean as "all (created)
from His own self."
31. He refers to the Qur'anic verse (46:3) for the phrase bi al-Haqq which is interpreted by him to mean that everything was
created out of Haqq, i.e. Haqq served as matter for the world.
32. Al-Insan al-Kamil, p. 60.
33. Ibid., p. 61.
```

- 34. Ibid., p. 116.35. Ibid., p. 96.
- 36. Fusus al-Hikam (Urdu translation, Lucknow, 1927), p. 172. See Affifi, The Mystical Philosophy of Muhyid Din-Ibnul

```
'Arabi, Cambridge, 1939, p. 152.
```

- 37. Fusus, pp. 155, 272; Affifi, op. cit., 31.
- 38. Al-Insun al-Kamil, pp. 96 100.
- 39. Affifi, op. cit., p. 156.
- 40. Al-Insan al-Kamil, pp. 101 04.
- 41. Ibid.,p. 105.
- 42. Ibid., pp. 105 06.
- 43. Ibid., pp. 127 33.
- 44. Ibid.,pp. 129 30.
- 45. In a certain sense, he argues, a'yan al-thabitah can be called eternal. God is eternal and His knowledge must also be eternal. As objects of God's knowledge, a'yan al-thabitah must of necessity be eternal. And yet, he adds, in their essence, they are hadith. Because huduth is an actual existential fact (amr al-'aini) and qidam only a logical determination (amr al-hukmi), al-Jili prefers to call a'yan hadith rather than gadim. Al-Insan al-Kamil, p. 132
- 46. The verse is as follows: "He said to (the heavens) and to the earth, 'Come both, willingly or unwillingly.' They both said, 'We come willingly."
- 47. Al-Insan al-Kamil, pp. 107 09
- 48. Al-Insan al-Kamil, pp. 109 11.
- 49. Ibid., p. 92.
- 50. Ibid.
- 51. Ibid., p. 64.
- 52. Ibid., pp. 65 66.
- 53. Ibid., p. 64 66.
- 54. Ibid., p. 92.
- 55. Ibid. pp. 54 55.
- 56. See Affifi, op. cit., p. 24, footnote 1. Also p. 114 where He-ness is identified with 'Ama'.
- 57. Al-Insan al-Kamil, p. 122.
- 58. Ibid. p. 124
- <u>59.</u> Ibid., pp. 56 − 57.
- 60. Ibid., p. 140.
- 61. Ibid., pp. 71 74.
- 62. Ibid., pp. 75 78.
- 63. Ibid., pp. 79 90.
- 64. Ibid., p. 93.
- 65. Ibid. p. 92.
- 66. Ibid., p. 4.
- 67. Ibid.. p. 8.
- 68. lbid., p. 17,
- 69. Ibid., pp. 260 61.
- <u>70.</u> The terms "length" and breadth" were first used by Jallaj for lahut (divinity) and nasut (humanity) and later employed by ibn 'Arabi and al–Jili to denote the two aspects of the essence.
- 71. Al-Insan al-Kamil, pp. 253 54.
- 72. Ibid., p. 262.
- <u>73.</u> 'Arsh, according to ibn 'Arabi and al–Jili, signifies universal body. "It is the theatre of majesty, the locus of tajalli and a characteristic of essence and is known as the place of that essence a place which is devoid of all (spatial) reference." Ibid., pp. 171 72.
- <u>74.</u> Kursi, the Footstool under the divine Throne, "signifies the tajalli of all (divine attributes of action. The divine activity in manifesting the realities of the universe looks first of all to kursi. At this stage the effects of contradictory attributes are manifested in detail and the Word of god (divine amr) comes into existences." Ibid., p.

- 75. Ibid., p. 262
- <u>76.</u> 'Arsh, according to ibn 'Arabi and al–Jili, signifies universal body. "It is the theatre of majesty the locus of tajalli and a characteristic of essence, and is known as the place of that essence a place which is devoid of all (spatial reference. Ibid., pp. 171 72.
- 77. Kursi, the Footstool under the divine Throne, "signifies the tajalli of all (difine) attributes of action. The divine activity in manifesting the realities of the universe looks first of all to kursi. At this stage the effects of contradictory attributes are manifested in detail and the Word of God (divine amr) comes into existence." Ibid., p. 173.
- 78. "The Exalted pen means the first individualization of the creatures analytically. First, the khalq is individualized in the divine consciousness generally and without differentiation, at the stage of 'arsh, its being is synthetic and logical; at the (third) stage of kursi, khalq is manifested analytically. At the (fourth) stage of the Pen, its existence is differentiated. In the first three stages, this manifestation (of khalq) was in the Unseen (i.e. in God), while in the fourth stage, its manifestation is made objective." Ibid., p. 174. See also p. 200, "The source of knowledge of the first intelligence and of the Exalted Pen is the same light. When it is referred to creatures, it is called the first intelligence, and when it is related to Haqq, its name is the Exalted pen.
- 79. Al-lauh al-mahfuz, according to al-Jili, stands for the universal soul. Ibid., p. 176.
- 80. Ibid., pp. 261 62.
- 81. Ibid., pp. 263 64. Cf. ibn 'Arabi: "Only two beings rightly call themselves God: God Himself who in His books and the perfect man like Bayazid." See Affifi, op. cit., p. 78.
- 82. Al-Insan al-Kamil, p. 93.
- 83. Ibid., p. 153. Al–Jili distinguishes between saint ship and prophethood as follows: "When Adam was sent down to the earth, he was made a prophet, for prophethood means legislation (tashr') and imposing obligation (taklif) which pertain to this earth. While in paradise Adam was a saint, nfor it is the place of miracles and observation and this is saint ship." Ibid.. p. 308.
- 84. Reference is to the Qur'anic verse (17:1), "Glory be to Him who carried His servant ('abdihi) by night from the Holy Mosque to the Remote Mosque.
- 85. Al-Insan al-Kamil, pp. 319 20.
- 86. Ibid., pp. 320 21.
- <u>87.</u> Ibid., p. 144. The qualifying word "institutional" implies that prophet of the other is still possible and, thus, on p. 320 he explicitly says that nubuwwat al-wilayah will continue.
- 88. "Names and attributes form the nature of the heart." Ibid., p. 193. he argues from the Qur'anic verse (95:4), "We indeed created man in the fairest mould."
- 89. "From the first intelligence which is referred to as the Principle of Mohammad, God created Gabriel. Thus, Mohammad in this sense becomes the father of Gabriel and the source and ground of the whole universe. The First Intelligence is called al-Ruh al-Amin (the Truthful Spirit) because it is the storehouse of divine knowledge and its protector." Ibid., p. 200.
- 90. Ibid., pp. 197 200.
- 91. Ibid., pp. 200 06.
- 92. Ibid., pp. 206 10.
- 93. Al–Jili relates that he himself was submerged in this path of speculative philosophy and this was due only the spiritual influence of his teacher, al–Jabarti, who was staying with a group of mystics in Zabid in 779/1377 at the house of one Shihab al–Din Ahmad. Ibid., pp. 212 13.
- 94. Ibid., pp. 210 14.
- 95. Ibid., pp. 292 93.
- 96. Ibid., pp. 272 73.
- 97. Ibid., p.239.
- 98. Ibid., 224
- 99. Ibid., p. 243.
- 100. lbid., p. 239
- 101. Ibid., 134

- 102. Ibid., Chaps. 17, 18.
- 103. lbid., p. 34. He argues, like other Muslim pantheists, from the Qur'anic verse (97:96), "Allah had created you and what you make," interpreting ta'malun as "what you do."
- 104. lbid., p. 108.
- 105. Ibid., p. 114.
- 106. Lawa'ih, Nawal Kishore Press, Lucknow (India, 1936, p. 4
- 107. He subscribes to ibn 'Arabi's doctrine that the universe is nothing but accidents, all pertaining to a single substance,
- i.e., the Ultimate Being. He tries to give rational arguments in its support. See Lawa'ih 18 and 26.
- 108. Lawi'ih 13, 14.
- 109. La'ihah 25.
- 110. See La'ihah26 where Jami tries to explain certain statements of ibn 'Arabi as discussed in Fass al-Shu'aibiyyah.
- 111. La'ihah 19.
- 112. La'ihah 18.
- 113. La'ihah 24.
- 114. La'ihah 17. See also La'ihah 24, where the idea of One's descent is further elaborated.
- 115. La'ihah 20.
- 116. La'ihah 23.
- 117. La'ihah 30.
- 118. La'ihah 8 and 9.

Source URL:

https://www.al-islam.org/history-muslim-philosophy-volume-2-book-4/chapter-43-mahmud-shabistari-al-jili-and-jami#comment-0