The Labyrinth of Subjectivity:
Constructions of the Self from Mullā Ṣadrā to Muḥammad Iqbāl

By

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Abstract

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Referred to by some philosophers as "the knot of the universe," investigations concerning human selfhood and subjectivity can help unravel questions of central contemporary relevance, such as what it is to be human in a globalized, secular world. As one scholar has pointed out, understanding our "selves"—our natures, capabilities, and possibilities—is the most captivating of all questions because, in the final analysis, it cannot be attained through empirical research alone. That is, there are no *facts* which can help us decisively determine whether our selves constitute parts of our bodies, or are incorporeal substances which somehow inhere in our bodies, or are epiphenomena of our minds.

Against the general backdrop of these kinds of concerns, my dissertation investigates the creative ways in which concepts of selves and selfhood have been constructed in early modern and late modern Islamic philosophy (spanning from the sixteenth to the twentieth centuries). I draw on the work of the three major thinkers during these time periods who made unique and lasting contributions in this regard: Mullā Ṣadrā (d. 1640), Shāh Walī Allāh (d. 1762), and Muḥammad Iqbāl (d. 1938). Alongside detailed analyses of each of these thinkers' views on the self and selfhood, my study also situates their insights within the wider constellation of related discussions in late modern and contemporary philosophy, engaging the seminal theoretical insights on the self by thinkers such as William James, Jean-Paul Sartre, Michel Foucault, Richard Sorabji, and Daniel Dennett. This allows me to theoretically frame my textual inquiry within what can be called a tri-partite model of selfhood, taking in bio-physiological, socio-cultural, and ethico-metaphysical modes of discourse and meaning-construction.

One key insight which emerges from my comparative inquiry is that the Muslim philosophers whom I study reveal themselves to be fundamentally concerned in their own unique ways with the problem of the human condition in general. Their manner of addressing this central issue from their differing perspectives devolves on the cultivation of what can be called an anthropocentric notion of the self that emphasizes self-knowledge, self-perfection and self-transformation.

By putting the first-person perspective at the center of their conception of the self, these philosophers invite us to take a fresh look at our understanding of the self. This is because if the self is reduced to a set of cognitive functions or identified exclusively with various brain-states,

as in neuroscience, one would downplay how the self appears from the first-person vantage point, thereby attenuating the concrete connection between human ethical agency and moral responsibility.

For my teachers
who opened the gateway to learning and self-discovery

جان بی جمال جانان میل جهان ندارد   هر کس که این ندارد حقا که آن ندارد

با هیچ کس نشانی زان دلستان ندیدم   یا من خبر ندارم یا او نشان ندارد

هر شبنمی در این ره صد بحر آتشین است   دردا که این معما شرح و بیان ندارد

(حافظ)

Contents

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Chapter One: The Problem of the Self

Introduction

In this chapter I introduce the topic of my inquiry, explain the significance of the figures who form the background of my investigation, and define the range of issues with which I will be dealing. I also outline several disciplinary challenges confronting the conceptualization of selfhood and its relation to philosophical psychology (the study of the soul), and lay out a methodology for conducting my investigation. In the methodology section, I develop a tri-partite model of selfhood (bio-physiological, socio-cultural and ethico-metaphysical) based on my reading of the primary sources that will be useful when assessing various conceptions of selfhood in Islamic intellectual thought. In addition, I also clarify some key distinctions concerning the "self" e.g. the first-person versus third-person perspective. Finally, I review the contemporary scholarship on the self, drawing on both Islamic and Western studies on the topic.

Background and Disciplinary Challenges

The English word 'self'—like existence/being—is without doubt one of the most frequently used words in both everyday speech and scholarly discourse. Like existence, its immediate sense is self-evident, but an inquiry into its philosophical meaning reveals the inherent ambiguity surrounding the term.[1] In fact, some would go so far as to argue that there is no such thing as the 'self' in the ontological sense, since as soon as we look for it, it tends to dissipate into vapor.[2] However, even those thinkers who ultimately deny the existence of a self (i.e. the self's having an essence or being a substance) nevertheless end up positing a 'conventional self,' since much of ordinary life hinges upon the presumption of such a sense of self. In any event, an overview of contemporary literature on the philosophy of self in disciplines as wide as neuroscience, analytic philosophy, phenomenology, and religious studies, shows little sign of consensus or convergence regarding what constitutes the fundamental nature or structure of the self.[3] Moreover, what is missing in these debates is any reference to the 'Islamic'[4] ideas concerning the self, even though several studies exist concerning analogous traditions such as Hinduism, Buddhism or Christianity.[5] What makes this particularly striking is that, in contrast to thinkers of the

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[1] The historical origin of the word 'self' goes back to John Locke's famous *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, in which he tries to provide a new philosophy of human nature. For more information on Locke and the self, see George Makari, *Soul Machine: The Invention of the Modern Mind* (NY: Norton, 2015), 115.

[2] Although I am using the metaphor of 'vapor' which is borrowed from Nietzsche's *Twilight of the Idols* (where he uses this imagery to refer to 'being'), I have in mind the Buddhist doctrine of no-self, the bundle theory of Hume, and various forms of "eliminative materialism" that deny that there is such a thing as self. For 'eliminative materialism,' see Paul Churchland, *Scientific Realism and the Plasticity of Mind* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979). For a treatment of other views, see pp. 31ff. of this study.

[3] See for instance, Shaun Gallagher (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of the Self* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 27-28. As Gallagher notes, it is thus important to keep one's 'methodological options' open so that one may explore different conceptions of self and no-self in diverse disciplines such as philosophy of mind, moral and social philosophy, psychology, phenomenology, neuroscience, psychoanalysis, history, literature, narrative theory, ethnology, religious studies, and so on.

[4] Following Shahab Ahmed's pioneering study, I use the term 'Islamic' to denote and connote "all possible 'Islams,' whether abstract or 'real,' mental or social," religious or philosophical. See Shahab Ahmed, *What is Islam?: The Importance of Being Islamic* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016), 104.

[5] See e.g., Alan L. Mittleman, *Human Nature & Jewish Thought: Judaism's Case for why Persons Matter* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015); Gavin Flood, *The Ascetic Self: Subjectivity, Memory and Tradition*

aforementioned traditions such as Buddhism, Islamic philosophers seemed to be the ones who inherited various Graeco-Roman notions of selfhood and appropriated them for their own purposes, while also incorporating certain views from their sacred scripture, the Qur'an.[6] It is also worth noting in this context that the Western scholastic reception of various Greek ideas of the self was usually mediated by Avicenna (d. 428/1037), as Dag N. Hasse has shown extensively.[7]

The aim of the present research, however, is not to tease out a theory of the self from the repository of the Islamic sources to establish how the contribution of the Islamic thinkers fits into the overall conception of Western history of selfhood. Although such a scholarly undertaking would be fine and laudable in its own right, my purpose in this dissertation is different. To begin, I would like to ask "what is the nature and experience of the self?" in the Islamic intellectual tradition, or, "how have representative Muslim thinkers conceptualized their theories of the self?" These are pertinent questions to begin the inquiry, since a rapid survey of much of the Islamic philosophical/mystical texts does give the impression that the question of the self occupies a position at center stage, as evidenced by numerous treatises/book chapters bearing its title.[8] Mullā Ṣadrā (d. 1050/1640), perhaps the most influential Islamic philosopher after Avicenna, goes as far as to claim that "knowledge of the self is the mother of philosophy (*umm al-ḥikma*) and the root of happiness (*aṣl al-saʿāda*), and that if one fails to attain assured certainty of the immateriality (*tajarrud*) and subsistence (*baqāʾ*) of the self, one then fails to attain the rank of a philosopher." "And how is it possible," he asks rhetorically, "to have any certainty concerning anything, if one did not have knowledge of one's self in the first place?"[9]

(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Ram-Prasad Chakravarthi, *Divine Self, Human Self: the Philosophy of Being in two Gita Commentaries* (London; New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013); and Phillip Cary, *Augustine's Invention of the Inner Self: The Legacy of a Christian Platonist* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

[6] It is also important to keep in mind that the Western and Islamic traditions influenced each other at different points in history. That is why, when western scholars (e.g. Martin, Barresi et al.) document the historical trajectory of "western subjectivity", they generally include some chapters on the influence of Muslim philosophers on the West. Some useful literature on the history and varieties of self/selfhood are the following: R. Martin and J. Barresi, *The Rise and Fall of Soul and Self: An Intellectual History of Personal Identity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006); Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: The Care of the Self* (vol. 3), trans. R. Hurley (NY: Vintage, 1986); R. Sorabji, *Self: Ancient and Modern Insights about Individuality, Life, and Death* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006); Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge (MA: Harvard University Press, 1989); J. Kaukua and T. Ekenberg (eds.), *Subjectivity and Selfhood in Medieval and Early Modern Philosophy* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2016); and Jari Kaukua, *Avicenna on Subjectivity: A Philosophical Study* (Jyväskylä: University of Jyväskylä. 2011).

[7] Dag N. Hasse, *Avicenna's De Anima in the Latin West* (London: The Warburg Institute, 2000), *passim*. See also his, *Success and Suppression: Arabic Sciences and Philosophy in the Renaissance* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2016), *passim*.

[8] However, the importance of the self should not be judged based only on book/chapter titles. Rather, this is to be gleaned from textual evidence itself, as will be shown in this study.

[9] Mullā Ṣadrā, *al-Mabdaʾ wa-l-maʿād*, ed. by Muḥammad Dhabḥī and Jaʿfar Shāh Nāẓirī (Tehran: Bunyād-i Ḥikmat-i Islāmi-yi Ṣadrā, 2002) 1: 6. Ṣadrā also asserts that the science of 'self-knowledge' (*maʿrifat al-nafs*) is the most noble of all the natural sciences (*afḍal al-ʿulūm al-ṭabīʿiyya*), see *al-Mabdaʾ wa-l-maʿād*, 1:5. Such a view, which seems to assert 'primacy of the self' in epistemological matters, has an interesting parallel in analytic philosopher Davidson who also acknowledge the foundational role of what he calls 'subjective' knowledge: "That knowledge of the contents of my own mind is special, and basic to all my knowledge, is, of course, part of the Cartesian and empiricist dreams. And this much is correct: such knowledge is basic in the sense that without it I would know nothing (though self-knowledge is not sufficient for the rest), and special in that it is irreducibly different from other sorts of knowledge." See Donald Davidson, *Subjective, Intersubjective, Objective* (Oxford:

He then goes on to aver that "whoever knows herself attains apotheosis (*man ᶜarafa dhātahu taʾallaha*)," a saying that he attributes to ancient philosophers.[10] Shams al-Dīn al-Shahrazūrī (d. ca. 1288), one of the most important commentators of Suhrawardī's (d. 587/1191) Philosophy of Illumination, similarly claims that "In sum, understanding his [Suhrawardī's] words and unraveling his writings and their mysteries are contingent upon knowing one's self (*bi-l-jumla, maᶜrifat kalāmihi wa-ḥall kutubihi wa-rumūzatihi mutawaqqif ᶜalā maᶜrifat al-nafs*)."[11] Dimitri Gutas has recently argued that the lynchpin of Avicenna's philosophy is the 'metaphysics of the rational soul.'[12] Moreover, the Qurʾan contains hundreds of references to the word "*nafs*" (lit. self or soul) and its modalities such as the blaming self (*al-nafs al-lawwāma*) or the tranquil self (*al-nafs al-muṭmaᶜinna*). Furthermore, the word '*nafs*' is one of those rare words where the sacred book of Islam and its Arabic rendition of the Greek '*psuche*' seem to converge and have a significant overlap, which is not devoid of implication as will be made clear in course of this study.[13]

Despite the aforementioned points and concerns, the topic of the self has received scant attention from the historians of Islamic thought, even though secondary literature abounds with various uses of the term. What can be surmised regarding such neglect? One general reason that comes to mind right away is that the field of Islamic intellectual history is still passing through its adolescence compared to Western intellectual history. A brief bibliographical survey of the number of studies published on, say, Aristotle's or Plotinus's psychology vis-à-vis that of

Clarendon Press, 2001), 87. However, for Davidson the 'intersubjective' mode of knowledge (or third-person knowledge) whose basis lies in the social and language is more primary than subjective knowledge, see *idem*, *Subjective, Intersubjective, Objective,* 3-12, 40-49, 85-90, 205-15.

[10] Mullā Ṣadrā, *al-Mabdaʾ wa-l-maᶜād*, 1:7.

[11] Shams al-Dīn al-Shahrazūrī, *Nuzhat al-arwāḥ*, in *Majmūᶜah-yi muṣannafāt-i Shaykh-i Ishrāq*, ed. Seyyed Hossein Nasr (vol. 3) (Tehran: Imperial Iranian Academy of Philosophy, 1976–7), 14.

[12] Dimitri Gutas, "Avicenna: The Metaphysics of the Rational Soul," *The Muslim World* 102.3/4 (2012): 417-25.

[13] The lexical meanings of *nafs* in Arabic include, soul, self, spirit, mind, desire and appetite, among others. However, it also denotes reflexivity, as in *nafsī* (myself) and *bi-nafsihi* (by himself). What is important to note however is that in mystical and philosophical texts (unless it is used as a compound word), the word normally connotes either self or soul. The issue of whether self and soul denote the same reality, has been debated a great deal by scholars. For instance, Richard Sorabji has affirmed that there is already a concept of self (*autos*) alongside soul (Gr. *psuche; La. anima*) in ancient and medieval philosophy, see Richard Sorabji, *Self: Ancient and Modern Insights about Individuality, Life, and Death* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 17ff. This does not, however, mean ancient philosophers do not use the term *psyche* to talk about self. The sense of demarcation between self and soul is due to what some have called the Cartesian moment, that is, when Descartes formulated his radical dualism and others such as Locke began to respond to him. In the Islamic context, as has been noted by scholars, it is rather difficult to disambiguate whether or not *nafs* denotes self or soul. There are contexts in which only the "reflexive" sense of the word, i.e. self, will make sense. Hence, although I have tried to be consistent with the translation of *nafs* as 'self,' there are cases when the term is rendered 'soul.' However, it is to be noted that the concept of the soul in Islamic intellectual history is not altogether separable from that of the "self," although there are instances when Islamic thinkers clearly have in mind "the sense of I-ness." I discuss these points again in the Methodology section. Also, despite *nafs* being the key word for self, there is more than one term that renders the self in Islamic discourse such as *nafs, wajh* and *dhāt*. There are also other terms denoting selfhood or subjectivity such as *huwiyya (identity, ipseity)*, *anāʾiyya* or *anāniyya* (I-ness, selfhood, I-subjectivity) and *nafsanī* (subjective). Broadly speaking, these terms refer to the relationship between consciousness (or, the human self), God and the cosmos. The Persian term "*khūd*" can also be rendered as "self." The richness of a concept can often be gauged by the profusion of compound terms that emanate from it, e.g. *wujūd*, and such is also the case with the word *nafs*, e.g.: *nafs ammāra, nafs insānī, nafs barzakhī, nafs juzʾī, nafs ḥāssa, nafs rūḥānī, nafs zamīnī, nafs shahwānī, nafs ṭabīᶜī, nafs ᶜāqila, nafs ghādhiya, nafs ghaḍabī, nafs fānī, nafs fardī, nafs falakī, nafs qudsiyya, nafs kulliyya, nafs lawwāma, nafs mutakhayyil, nafs mujarrad, nafs muṭmaʾinna, nafs muᶜallaq, nafs malakī, nafs nāṭiqa, nafs nabatī, nafs wāḥida, nafs samawī*. In this context, the parallel with the word 'self' in English is revealing.

Avicenna's makes this disparity abundantly clear. Moreover, it seems that "philosophy of self" in Islamic philosophy has received relatively much less attention compared to ontology or theology. For instance, while there are over twenty books on various aspects of Mullā Ṣadrā's philosophy, none of them exclusively deals with his philosophy of the self or philosophical psychology.[14] The same can be said, *mutatis mutandis*, of the philosophical Sufism (*ᶜirfān*) of the School of Ibn ᶜArabī (d. 638/1240). At any rate, the general considerations mentioned above, by themselves, do not explain why scholars have ignored the self as a major topic of study in Islamic intellectual history.

The deeper reason has to do with the fact that until now metaphysics/theology seems to have overshadowed the study of the self, for the following reasons: first, in many philosophical and mystical texts (especially, of the later period, ca. 1200 AD onward) *knowledge of God* is often paired with *knowledge of self*. For most of these authors, knowledge of self is a function of the knowledge of God. In other words, self-knowledge is inseparable from divine knowledge, and also the nature of the human self is incomprehensible without understanding the contours of divine manifestation. This is another way of affirming that there is a relation of identity between the individual and the divine Self (God). Second, both the nature of God and the self are often cast in the language of being (*wujūd*), even in cases in which the underlying motive of a given author was to address the human self.[15] The following quote from Ibn ᶜArabī's 37-volume magnum opus, *al-Futūḥāt al-makkiyya* is illustrative of this trend:

> So in this voyage I attained the meanings of all the divine names. I found that they all go back to One Named Object, One Essence (*musammā wāḥid wa-ᶜayn wāḥida*). That Named Object was what I was witnessing, and that Essence was my own *wujūd*. So, my voyage had been only in myself, and pointed to none but myself *(illā fiyya wa-dalālatī illā ᶜalayya)*.[16]

That is to say both metaphysics and theology seem to have taken pride of place instead of the philosophy of self. However, a closer look at the texts themselves and their core objectives convinces one that their focus is often the human self and its transformation.[17]

In a rather different but parallel context, Michel Foucault also argues how the privileged status of the famous maxim, *gnothi seauton* (Gr. 'know thyself'), closely related to the concept of *epimeleia heautou* (Gr. 'care of the self'), has led Western scholars to neglect the latter, which according to him, was more fundamental to the Hellenistic philosophers.[18] While we need not

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[14] It will be noted later that 'philosophical psychology' is not exactly identical with 'philosophy of self.'

[15] Mullā Ṣadrā's name instinctively comes to mind in this regard, so much so that one Ṣadrā scholar claims that the self does not emerge as a major concept in the former, which I think is somewhat misplaced (although I generally agree with what he says concerning the difference between modern subjectivism and the Sadrian self), see Ibrahim Kalin, *Knowledge in Later Islamic Philosophy. Mullā Ṣadrā on Existence, Intellect, and Intuition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), xvii.

[16] Ibn ᶜArabī, *Futūḥāt al-makkiyya,* edited by Nawāf al-Jarrāḥ (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1997)*,* 6:65. Similar assertions can also be found in Rumi, e.g.: *We and our existences are really non-existences; Thou art the Absolute Being which manifests the perishable phenomena.* (*Masnavī* 1:601-3m) trans. Nicholson; *The human being is the substance, And the celestial spheres are his accidents.* (*Masnavī*, 5:3574-5m); *The Divine Sun has veiled Himself in man; Apprehend this mystery, and God knows best what is right.* (*Masnavī* 1:2964).

[17] See for instance, pp. 7-9 and 23 of the present study. See also, n. 9.

[18] Michel Foucault, *The Hermeneutics of the Subject: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1981-82*, edited by Frédéric Gros; translated by Graham Burchell (New York: Picador, 2006), 8ff. A number of scholars have challenged Foucault's interpretation of the *epimeleia heautou* and 'spiritual exercises' as being a set of practices to

agree with Foucault's conclusion that the *epimeleia heautou* is indeed more fundamental than the *gnothi seauton*, since in our estimate the latter inevitably implies the former and the goal of the former is precisely to attain knowledge of one's self, it is nevertheless possible to speculate that when there are two closely related concepts as in our case with 'knowledge of self' and 'knowledge of God,' confusion might arise as to the relative importance of one over the other. All of this calls for serious textual evidence, which we will provide in the course of our inquiry.

Another important reason for the above-mentioned neglect could be due to misidentification of the term 'soul' with 'self.' That is to say, if we assume both 'soul' and 'self' to be synonymous, we would be prone to identify the latter with a set of cognitive functions only, e.g. memory, imagination, and intellection.[19] Another way to explain this would be to say that when the self is exclusively identified with the soul, one tends to analyze it in terms of psycho-somatic abilities or soteriological realities such as moral deserts, thereby ignoring the writings of Muslim thinkers who approach the self from a first-personal standpoint. That is to say, when scholars discuss the concept of the soul, they do so from a 'third-person perspective'[20] that leave aside any references to 'subjectivity'[21] which is bound up with the notion of the self. It should be

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aid the subject to turn inward and disclose herself to herself through a diagnosis of mental representations, see Pierre Hadot, "Reflections on the Idea of the 'Cultivation of the Self,'" in Pierre Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life: Spiritual Exercises from Socrates to Foucault*, edited by Arnold I. Davidson (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1995), 207-13. More recently, James Porter has argued that the self in Antiquity was not formulated as the object of self-fashioning and self-care, as Foucault has claimed. Rather a number of ancient thinkers such as Heraclitus and Augustine actually saw it as an enigma and also, a disconcerting source of inquiry, see James Porter, Time for Foucault? Reflections on the Roman Self from Seneca to Augustine, *Foucault Studies* 22 (2017): 113-133. Indeed, one of Plotinus's seminal Enneads (i.e. iv.3) on the soul is entitled "*Peri psykhés aporiai*, indicating how the soul/self is to be seen as a problem. However, in fairness to Foucault, it should be noted that his project was not to bring out a philological study of "technologies of the self" (although, it did bear consequences to that effect). Rather, he wanted to find out what sorts of cultural phenomena or intellectual concepts in Antiquity can still be useful in the modern mode of being a self (hence, his project inevitably involved subjective interpretation of some of these ideas). For instance, Foucault says: "[T]he challenge for any history of thought, is precisely that of grasping when a cultural phenomenon of a determinate scale actually constitutes within the history of thought a decisive moment that is still significant for our modern mode of being subjects." See Foucault, *The Hermeneutics of the Subject,* 9.

[19] Another way to put it would be to say that when the self is exclusively identified with the soul as discussed primarily in the 'psychology' part of the philosophical science, one tends to reduce it to a set of cognitive and cogitative powers, and neglects how the human subject might appear from the first-person view.

[20] For an explanation of this term, see p. 19.

[21] For more discussions on 'subjectivity,' see Flood, *The Ascetic Self,* 17-19. Also, Daston and Galison note that the word 'objective' meant something very different when it was first used in its medieval context. In medieval philosophy 'objective' had meant 'as object of the mind', as opposed to the essence of the subject, which can be thought of as 'subjective.' However, in the post-Kantian period the word 'objective' became nature "in its passive and material sense", whereas the word 'subjective' came to denote "everything that can be understood through the self or intelligence," see Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison, *Objectivity* (Cambridege: MIT Press, 2010), 29-33, 36-37, 63, 197-98, 205, 228, 258, 361. See also, Ronald de Sousa, "Twelve Varieties of Subjectivity: Dividing in Hopes of Conquest," in *Knowledge, Language, and Representation,* edited by J. M. Larrazabal and L. A. Pérez Miranda (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 2002), 147-164. See also Alain de Libera, "When did the Modern Subject Emerge?" *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 82.2 (2008): 181-220, who argues that subjectivity is a medieval theological construct, based on two conflicting models of the mind *(nous, mens)* inherited from ancient philosophy and theology. For him it is the idea of some 'thing' that is both the owner of certain mental states and the agent of certain activities. According to Regenia Gagnier, the term 'subjectivity' can mean many things simultaneously: First, the subject is a subject to itself, an 'I,' however difficult or even impossible it may be for others to understand this 'I' from its own viewpoint, within its own experience. Simultaneously, the subject is a subject to, and of, others; in fact, it is often an 'Other' to others, which also affects its sense of its own subjectivity… Third, the subject is also a subject of knowledge, most familiarly perhaps of the discourse of social institutions that delimit its terms of being.

noted that the term 'subjectivity' (Gr. *Subjecktivität;* Fr. *subjectivité*) has only been in use since the nineteenth century, but its connotations were certainly present in pre-modern philosophical discourse. The term derives from the Latin *subiectum*, which translates the Greek *hypokeimenon*, a term which designates an underlying foundation. Generally speaking, it refers to self-consciousness as the basis of which all knowledge is possible. Minimally speaking, subjectivity is indicated simply by the first-person pronoun, the subject of first-person predicates. In this study, I use the term to refer to the states of being an 'I' or being an individual subject that involves self-consciousness. It refers to the phenomena that are present to an experiencing subject, to which she has access from a first-personal standpoint.

By no means is this distinction meant to indicate that there is no connection between the soul and the self. Rather, my contention is that pre-modern Islamic thinkers were often conscious of the difference between the self and the soul (see pp. 12-15), and took into account the fact that the concept of the self, itself multi-layered, is centered on the 'first-person perspective,'[22] i.e. one's subjective standpoint. All of these conceptual subtelties may help explain why, despite there being a number of studies on the soul, there is no comprehensive study on the self in Islamic thought, although certain aspects of selfhood have been explored.[23]

Setting the Parameters

It is against the background of such concerns that I wish to investigate theories of self and subjectivity in Islamic intellectual history through an examination of the thought of Mullā Ṣadrā, Shāh Walī Allāh (d. 1175/1762), and Muḥammad Iqbāl (d. 1938). The dissertation puts forward a tri-partite model of selfhood, comprising bio-physiological, socio-cultural, and ethico-metaphysical levels, that aims to expand our knowledge of the nature and experience of the self in Islam.

My first author, Mullā Ṣadrā, synthesizes classical Islamic philosophical and mystical discourses on the self and takes the inherited intellectual canon in creative and new directions.[24] In particular, Mullā Ṣadrā's notion of selfhood highlights the importance of pre-reflective, primal awareness that makes self-knowledge possible. Ṣadrā demonstrates this by arguing that any phenomenal states or mental events that one ascribes to oneself already presuppose an underlying awareness of the self. That is to say, any perceptual acts, e.g. thinking, reflection or doubting already presuppose a prior acquaintance of the self with itself. Ṣadrā is notable among the Islamic philosophers in that he places unusual emphasis on knowing the true nature of the self. Ṣadrā writes:

Fourth, the subject is a body that is separate from other human bodies; and the body, and therefore the subject, is closely dependent upon its physical environment. See Regenia Gagnier, *Subjectivities: A History of Self-Representation in Britain, 1832–1920* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 8.

[22] For an explanation of this term, see p. 19.

[23] Also, the modern notion of 'psychology' makes it difficult to see the self beyond its psychological dimension. For a review of studies that explore aspects of selfhood in Islam, see pp. 36ff.

[24] One particular reason why an investigation of the self in Sadrian corpus is so daunting is due to his voluminous writings. Scholars generally focus on his so-called philosophical tomes such as the *Asfār* (itself consisting of 9 vols.), *al-Mashāᶜir* and *al-Shawāhid* (among a few others), in order to study his ontology or epistemology. While these treatises do contain elaborate philosophical doctrines (including selfhood), Ṣadrā discusses his notion of the self throughout his writings, and, in particular, in the selected passages of *Sharḥ Uṣūl al-kāfī (*5 vols.), *Tafsīr al-Qurʾān al-karīm* (7 vols.)*, Mabdaʾ wa-l-maᶜād, Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*, and a number of other short treatises such as *al-Maẓāhir al-ilāhiyya.*

Everything that humans see or experience in this world, or what's more, when they journey to the next world, they only see it within their self (*fī dhātihi*)… And they do not see anything that is not already within themselves or the world around them (*lā yarā shayʾan khārijan ʿan dhātihi wa-ʿan ʿālamihi*), but then their self encompasses the world within it. The particularity of the human self (*al-nafs al-insāniyya*) lies in that it reaches a point when everything that exists becomes a part of it, and its powers permeate the entirety of existence. Then its reason of existence realizes its goal.[25]

Philosophical demonstration and the Qur'an agree entirely that learning the divine wisdom and the knowledge of the human self… is to win endless subsistence, and rejecting it is the source of eternal loss… This knowledge makes man the possessor of a great kingdom, because it is the most magnificent elixir. It necessitates universal freedom, the greatest felicity, becoming similar to the Ultimate Good (*al-tashabbuh bi-l-khayr al-aqṣā*), and assuming as one's own the character traits of God.[26]

I then turn my attention to Shāh Walī Allāh, who presents an original model of the self that evinces strands of influence ranging from Stoicism and Neoplatonism to the Graeco-Arabic medical tradition and Islamic mysticism. In fact, apart from Ṣadrā, the other figures chosen for this study all hail from the subcontinent of India. This is significant because much has been made of Mullā Ṣadrā's influence on the thought of Indian Muslim thinkers. For example, Ṣadrā's *Sharḥ al-hidāya* was a part of the famous *Dars-i Niẓāmī* system of education (known as *Ṣadrā*) of the Farangī Maḥall.[27] Shāh Walī Allāh must have been familiar with Ṣadrā's writings not only because his father's *Madrasa-yi Raḥīmiyya* was in a rivalry with the rationalist tradition of the Farangī Maḥall, but also because one of his sons, Shāh ʿAbd al-Azīz (d. 1239/1824), wrote a commentary on Ṣadrā's aforementioned *Sharḥ al-hidāya*. All of this raises the question as to what extent Walī Allāh's writings show the influence of Ṣadrā. Regardless, Walī Allāh's theory of the self deserves study of its own. According to Walī Allāh, the self, being the most subtle of all the forms, cannot but be dependent on a body which is also the most subtle of all the bodies (*alṭaf al-ajsām*) maturing at the finest degree of subtlety and equilibrium. Walī Allāh calls this 'subtle body' *'pneuma'* (*nasama*)[28] which is an intermediary between the self (immaterial) and

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[25] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*, edited by Muḥammad Khwājawī (Tehran: Bunyād-i ḥikmat-i Islāmi-yi Ṣadrā, 2005), 945.

[26] Ṣadrā, *al-Ḥikma al-mutaʿāliya fī l-asfār al-ʿaqliyya al-arbaʿa,* edited by Ghulāmriḍā Aavani et al. (Tehran: Bunyād-i ḥikmat-i Islāmi-yi Ṣadrā 1981), 6.9.

[27] On Mullā Ṣadrā in India, see Francis Robinson, *The 'Ulama of Farangi Mahall and Islamic Culture in South Asia* (London : C. Hurst, 2001), 14-50, 215-18, 221, 245; Akbar Thubūt, *Filsūf-i Shīrāzī dar Hind* (Tehran: Hermis: 2000); Syed Ali Rezavi, The Philosophy of Mullā Ṣadrā and its Influence in India, in *Religion in Indian History*, ed. Irfan Habib (New Delhi: Tulika Books, 2007), 177-86; and Sajjad Rizvi, "Mīr Dāmād and the Debate on *ḥudūth-i dahrī* in India," in D. Hermann and F. Speziale F (eds.), *Etudes philosophiques et scientifiques dans le monde irano-indien* (Berlin/Beirut: Orient-Institut Beirut, 2010), 449-474.

[28] The history of *pneuma* (Gr. air, wind, breath, spirit, soul, among others), intimately associated with the Greek word *psuche* (soul, but also meant "breath" in early Greek thought), shows the fascinating trajectory of how an ancient idea that was once accepted by the most sophisticated thinkers across cultures for nearly two millennia, was ultimately superseded by the modern discovery of "animal electricity" and various electrical ideas in the 1700s. It will be impossible, in the confines of this footnote, to capture the rich tapestry of this concept, but a few brief remarks may be pursued. It was the Ionian philosopher Anaximenes (d. 528) who first postulated the idea of air (*aer*) and its flowing impulse (*pneuma*) to be the "soul" of the universe. Air in movement is thus breath or *pneuma* with the holding power of life. The concept played a notable role in almost all major Pre-Socratic and Classical philosophers. Aristotle conceived of *pneuma* as "hot air" which he inherited from Diogenes, but at the same time developed the idea of connate *pneuma* as the "substrate" of vital heat in the heart. For the action of the vital heat on

the body (material). In this way he is able to resolve the tension between the material *pneuma* and the immaterial self by reinterpreting Aristotelian hylomorphism, so that *pneuma* becomes the 'matter' for the 'form' of the immaterial self.

Finally, I look at Muḥammad Iqbāl, a controversial modern thinker whose concept of selfhood seeks to forge some kind of middle ground between Islamic sources on the self and the views of Western philosophers such as Hegel, Nietzsche, James, and Bergson. In many ways, Iqbāl and Ṣadrā stand at the opposite ends of the spectrum. They both showed unusual interest in non-Islamic thought (for Ṣadrā it is mostly ancient Greek thought, while for Iqbal it is Western thought broadly speaking). However, when it comes to the Islamic intellectual tradition (i.e. Sufism, theology and philosophy), Ṣadrā's works show a thorough and critical engagement with the peaks of that tradition such as Avicenna, Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 607/1210) and Ibn ᶜArabī, while Iqbāl's engagement with these and similar figures are at best obscure and at worst misleading.[29] These problems are exacerbated by Iqbāl's status a national figure and object of

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blood, from which all other bodily parts are formed, necessarily produces in it the *pneuma*. Thus connate *pneuma* is the initiator of various formative processes and vital heat in it is the active *phusis*. In contrast, the Stoics developed the idea of the soul as constituted of *pneuma* with the admixture of air and fire. The Stoics claim the 'pneumatic soul' to be composed of eight parts, seven of them being branches that would stem from a reasoning center, the *hegemonikon,* which is located in the chest. After Aristotle Erasistratus (304-250 BCE) develops the crucial ideas of *pneuma zootikon* (vital spirit) and *pneuma psychikon* (animal spirit), which were then refined by Galen through the mediation of the Alexandrian medical school. As we move on to medieval Islamic medical tradition, we see that thinkers were divided as regards their investigation of *pneuma* and *pneuma psychikon*. Thus Ḥunayn b. Isḥāq (d. 259/873) sides with Galen (although he was critical of the latter at times), while others such as Avicenna tries to strike a fine balance between Aristotle and Galen. Galen, in contrast to Aristotle, argues that it is the brain, and not the heart, which is the physiological center of sensation and voluntary motion. In his *al-Qānūn fī-l-ṭibb*, Avicenna follows Galen and his Islamic predecessors in accepting that the animal spirit in the brain is confined in three ventricles, giving rise to the famous ventricular theories of the internal senses. However, he retains the Aristotelian Cardiocentric model as well. In all, beginning Ḥunayn and his *al-Masāʾil fī-l-ṭibb li-l-mutaᶜallimīn*, Zakariyā b. al-Rāzī (d. 313/925) and *Kitab al-Hawi fi al-tibb*, ᶜAli b. al-ᶜAbbās al-Majūsī (d. 384/994) and his *Kitāb Kāmil al-sināʾat al-ṭibbiya*, Avicenna and his Canon of Medicine, and Ibn al-Nafīs (d. 687/1288) and his *Kitāb al-Mūjaz fī-l-ṭibb*, the Islamic medical tradition developed a range of views concerning the *pneumata*, i.e. *pneuma zootikon* and *pneuma psychikon*. Unfortunately, the intellectual history of later Islamic medicine which encompasses the Persianate world of the Ottomans, Safavids and the Mughals is yet to be written, but it is apparent that Walī Allāh, who also authored treatises on medicine, inherited this Galenic-Aristotelian-Islamic synthesis of *pneuma*. If we remember when Walī Allāh was active, we would notice that this was the time when the *pneuma psychikon* doctrine in Europe was already being challenged and discarded in the hands of Albrecht von Haller (d. 1777), John Hunter (d. 1793), Luigi Galvani (d. 1798), and Felice Fontana (d. 1805), and others. In particular, Galvani's 1791 concept of "nerve electricity" proved to be the decisive demise of the concept of *pneuma psychikon*. For more information on the history of *pneuma* from the beginning until its extinction in the West, see C. U. M. Smith et al., *The Animal Spirit Doctrine and the Origins of Neurophysiology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012). For a good Aristotelian account of *pneuma*, see Gad Freudenthal, *Aristotle's Theory of Material substance: Heat and Pneuma, Form and Soul* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1999), 106ff. The writings of Shāh Walī Allāh and most likely his contemporaries, on the contrary, do not seem to show a sign of unease with the idea of the *pneuma psychikon* as the 'animating force' responsible for sensation. More surprisingly, Walī Allāh leans toward the Aristotelian Cardiocentric model, as far as aspects of neuro-physiological accounts of *pneuma* are concerned. However, this is only one aspect of his theory of the pneumatic self. Walī Allāh develops his account of *penuma* (*nasama*) in a number of his major works. See Walī Allāh, *al-Tafhīmāt al-ilāhiyya* (Arabic and Persian) (Sindh: Shāh Walī Allāh Academy, 1967), I: 23, 45-47, 51-56, 71-73, 161-63, 224, 225, 260-61, 307, 324, 326, 329, 341; II: 96ff.; *al-Budūr al-bāzigha* (Sindh: Shāh Walī Allāh Academy, 1970), 28-31, 171-92.

[29] However, critics can argue that Iqbāl's project was to build a new foundation of Islamic thought in face of modernity, hence he did not see the need to engage deeply with these figures because he might have thought much of the tradition is irrelevant to modern challenges. This, however, goes against the numerous references to various Muslim thinkers in Iqbāl's writings.

adulation.[30] Despite the existence of several books/articles (mainly from the subcontinent) on various aspects of Iqbal's thought, there is hardly any serious academic study that critically evaluates his conception of the self in relation to his Islamic predecessors.[31] In any event, Iqbāl, like his predecessors, maintains that the self is immortal and its highest goal is to meet God, but he differs significantly from Ṣadrā et al. by emphasizing the self's immanence, individuality, dynamism, activity, life, and self-affirmation. In Iqbāl's scheme of things, regardless of the self's development and spiritual progress, it always retains its individuality and egohood when it encounters God.

Degrees and Dimensions of Selfhood

In this study, my aim is to reconstruct a theory of the self through historical hermeneutics. That is to say, my goal is to present various theories of the self in the Islamic tradition in philosophically readable English, without misrepresenting the texts or ignoring the nuances of their historical contingencies. The process of such a reconstruction involves several key steps:

1. Identify key concepts/passages in the primary sources and providing suitable translations and definitions.
2. Create a 'framework' in terms of the key concepts found in the source texts.
3. Provide a critical evaluation of the arguments.

In addition, attention will be given to the social and historical circumstances that shape the intellectual orientation of the authors. For example, although I mentioned "psychology" in relation to the self at the beginning of this study, *philosophical psychology* and *philosophy of the self* are not co-extensive.[32] This is so because even though the topic of the self is not conceptually independent from issues of philosophical? psychology, a discussion of the self nevertheless brings to the fore a distinct dimension of the sense of "I-ness" or what I call "self-talk" that would otherwise be absent in the former. Moreover, since the concept of the self revolves around that distinct sense of I-ness, many issues such as the details of the internal perceptions or refutation of the reincarnation of the soul that are usually discussed in philosophical psychology (ᶜilm al-nafs) are not necessarily germane to the philosophy of the self. On the contrary, the topic of the self raises metaphysical and ethical issues that may be of little interest from a purely psychological point of view.[33] Some of the most important issues that all of figures in this study address are: 1) What is the true nature of the self and how does this differ from what we conventionally treat the self to be? 2) What is self-knowledge and how does the self know itself? and 3) What is the relation between the self and consciousness? The question of

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[30] See for instance, the following remark by Fazlur Rahman, an otherwise fine scholar of Islam: "Strictly speaking… the only philosopher of modern Islam is Sir Muhammad Iqbāl." Fazlur Rahman, "Iqbal and Modern Muslim Thought [sic]," in *Studies in Iqbal's Thought and Art*, ed. M. Saeed Sheikh (Lahore: Bazm-i Iqbal, 1972), 43.

[31] On the need for such a reassessment, see the recent article on Iqbal by Sajjad Rizvi, "Between Hegel and Rumi: Iqbal's Contrapuntal Encounters with the Islamic Philosophical traditions [sic]," in Chad Hillier and B. Koshul (eds.), *Muhammad Iqbal: Essays on the Reconstruction of Religious Thought* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015), 123.

[32] This point was developed also in Paulina Remes, *Plotinus on Self: The Philosophy of the 'We'* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), introduction.

[33] In particular, the sense of being an 'I' evokes certain moral responsibility. See also, Remes, *Plotinus on Self*, 8.

the self is intimately connected with the question of how one may have self-knowledge in the first place, which is shot through with ethical implications: our authors all believe that in order to have true knowledge of one's self, one must overcome spiritual and moral obstacles that prevent one from seeing one's true nature. This means one must commit oneself to certain ethical norms.[34]

The Ambiguity of the Self

It must be noted that the word 'self' is notoriously ambiguous the word 'self' that evokes all sorts of connotations in contemporary scholarly discourse. So the questions of "how should one use the word 'self' in the Islamic context" and "what are the ambiguities one must void while discussing the self" must be addressed first. Important methodological issues arise concerning the term 'self,' whose use is riddled with terminological confusion both in English and in the source-text languages such as Arabic and Persian. So it would be helpful to look at how various 'self' theorists have used the term. The following is a selection drawn from a wide range of sources. According to Willian James, "the 'Self'…, when carefully examined, is found to consist mainly of the collection of these peculiar motions in the head or between the head and throat."[35] In his own way Carl Jung defines the self "as a sort of compensation in reference to the contrast between inward and outward." "Such a definition could well be applied to the self," Jung continues, "in so far as the latter possesses the character of a result, of an aim to reach, of a thing that has only been produced little by little and of which the experience has cost much travail." Thus, in Jung's estimation, "the self is also the aim of life, for it is the most complete expression of that combination of destiny we call an 'individual', and not only of man in the singular but also of a whole group, where the one is the complement of the others with a view to a perfect image."[36] From an altogether different perspective, the analytic philosopher of Buddhism, Miri Albahari defines the self "as a bounded, happiness-seeking/*dukkhā*-avoiding (witnessing) subject that is a personal owner and controlling agent, and which is unified and unconstructed, with unbroken and invariable presence from one moment to the next, as well as with longer-term endurance and invariability."[37] Drawing on Greek sources, Christopher Gill notes a structural pattern in the definition of the self, and calls it the "structured self," which "sees human beings, like other animals, as structured wholes or units rather than as a combination of a psychic 'core' and a body or as a complex of distinct psychic parts."[38] E. J. Lowe, on his part as a Neo-Aristotelian, analytic philosopher, describes the self as "a possible object of first-person reference (assuming for the moment that there are such objects): a being that can identify itself as the necessarily unique subject of certain thoughts and experiences and as the necessarily unique agent of certain actions."[39] For Jonardon Ganeri, the scholar of Indian philosophy, "the self is a unity of immersion, participation, and coordination; the first-person stance is at once lived,

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[34] This will be fleshed out in chs. 2-4.

[35] William James, *The Principles of Psychology* (1890) (NY: Cosimo, 2007), I:301.

[36] Carl Jung, *Two Essays on Analytical Psychology* (NY: Meridian Books, 1969), 240.

[37] Miri Albahari, *Analytic Buddhism: The Two-Tiered Illusion of Self* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 73.

[38] Christopher Gill, *The Structured Self in Hellenistic and Roman Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), xv. According to Gill, the Stoic and Epicurean self is also associated with a moral structure based on the Socratic ideal of wisdom.

[39] E. J. Lowe, "Substance and Selfhood," *Philosophy* 66.255 (1991): 81-99, at 82.

engaged and underwritten."[40] For his part Galen Strawson talks about the sense of the self that people have of themselves "as being, specifically, a mental presence; a mental someone; a single mental thing that is a conscious subject, that has a certain character or personality, and that is distinct from all its particular experiences, thoughts, hopes, wishes, feelings, and so on."[41] The phenomenologist, Dan Zahavi puts 'experience' at the center of the self and defines the experience of the self as being whatever it is like for someone to have this experience. In Zahavi's view, although we live through various different experiences, there is consequently something experiential that remains the same, namely, their first-personal character.[42] Consequently, he says that "all the different experiences are characterized by a dimension of mineness, or for-me-ness, and we should distinguish the plurality of changing experiences from their persisting dative of manifestation."[43]

From the above, one can hardly find any recognizable pattern in what these authors describe as the nature of the self. In addition to such eclectic ways of defining the self, there are also those who refuse to grant any reality to the self. Foremost among the deniers of the self are Hume, Nietzsche, and a number of analytic (or analytic-minded) philosophers. The following, then, enumerates those views that deny that there is such a thing as a self.[44] In his *Treatise of Human Nature*, David Hume claims that the self "as far as we can conceive it, is nothing but a

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[40] Jonardon Ganeri, *The Self: Naturalism, Consciousness, & The First Person Stance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2012), 332. Ganeri develops his model on the basis of insights found in Indian (notably Cārvāka) and Western philosophies (Analytic).

[41] Galen Strawson, "The Self," *Journal of Consciousness Studies* 4.5/6 (1997): 405-28, at 4. He also refers to the self as SESMET or Subjects of Experience that are Single Mental Things, see *idem.*, "The Self and the SESMET," *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, 6.4 (1999): 99–135, at 118.

[42] It is to be noted that philosophers such as Daniel Dennett challenge such first-person accounts of the self. See Daniel Dennett, *The Fantasy of First Person Science*. Available at:
https://ase.tufts.edu/cogstud/dennett/papers/chalmersdeb3dft.htm. For a counter response to Dennett, see Dan Zahavi, "Killing the Straw Man: Dennett and Phenomenology," *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Science* 6.1/2 (2017): 21-43, and Daniel Hutto, "Consciousness Demystified: A Wittgensteinian Critique of Dennett's Project," *Monist* 78.4 (1995): 464-479.

[43] Dan Zahavi, *Self and Other Exploring Subjectivity, Empathy, and Shame* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 19.

[44] For more on the analytic denial of the self, see Derek Parfit, *Reasons and Persons* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987); Elizabeth Anscombe, The First Person, in *Metaphysics and the Philosophy of Mind* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1981) 2: 21-67; Norman Malcolm, Whether "I" is a referring expression, in Cora Diamond and Jenny Teichman, eds. *Intention and Intentionality: Essays in Honor of G. E. M. Anscombe* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1979), 15–24; and Thomas Metzinger, *Being No One* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2003). Drawing on various psychiatric and neuroscientific evidence, Metzinger asserts that there is no immutable, unchanging soul-substance, although most people might have an experience of being a self in their everyday life. Rather, the self is an illusion created by a multitude of interrelated cognitive modules in the brain. See Metzinger, *Being No One*, 370, 385, 390. See also, Metzinger, "The Pre-Scientific Concept of a 'Soul:' A Neurophenomenological Hypothesis About its Origin," in *Auf der Suche nach dem Konzept/ Substrat der Seele. Ein Versuch aus der Perspektiv der Cognitive (Neuro-) Science*, edited by M. Peschl (Würzburg: Königshaursen und Neumann, 2003), 185-211, that deconstructs the notion of the soul. It is interesting to note that such a denial of the self based on scientific hard facts seemed to have emerged from one's faith that "empirical observation" should be enough to settle all philosophical issues. See, for example, the following revealing editorial by Thomas Wakley, a former editor of *The Lancet* (printed on 25 March 1843): "From the fact that the philosophy of the human mind has been almost wholly uncultivated by those who are best fitted for its pursuit, the study has received a wrong direction, and become a subtle exercise for lawyers and casuists, and abstract reasoners, rather than a useful field of scientific observation. Accordingly, we find the views, even of the most able and clear-headed metaphysicians, coming into frequent collision with the known facts of physiology and pathology." [quoted in Ian Hacking, *Rewriting the Soul: Multiple Personality and the Sciences of Memory* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 221].

system or train of different perceptions."[45] Nietzsche is more vocal in his denial of the self when he argues that "there is no 'being' behind doing, effecting, and becoming." In his measure, "the doer is merely a fiction added to the deed—the deed is everythin. This is because "it posits the same event first as cause and then a second time as its effect." Nietzsche goes further and claims that scientists do no better when they say 'force moves,' 'force causes,' and the like, since "our entire science still lies under the misleading influence of language and has not disposed of that little changeling, the 'subject.'"[46] Some of the analytically trained philosophers also express radical denial of the self. According to Anthony Kenny, "the self… is a mythical entity," and "a philosophical muddle to allow the space which differentiates 'my self' from 'myself' to generate the illusion of a mysterious entity distinct from… the human being."[47] Finally, Daniel Dennett explains that "a self… is not any old mathematical point, but an abstraction defined by the myriads of attributions and interpretations (including self-attributions and self-interpretations) that have composed the biography of the living body whose Center of Narrative Gravity it is."[48]

Given the conflicting nature of the aforementioned views, one might ponder if the 'self' was a 'philosophical problem' for the Muslim philosophers as well, or, if this is distinctly a Western problem for Anglophone thinkers first and foremost, who are constrained by the factors that led to a complicated development of philosophy of self since the seventeenth century.[49] One way to approach the issue would be to find certain common connotations of the various expressions in Arabic and Persian in order to show that they all in fact belong to the same 'spectrum' concept,[50] which will yield what the 'self' might be for these Arabic and Persian texts. Let's assume we try to find the common connotations of terms such as *nafs*, *rūḥ, nafs nāṭiqa, anāniyya, khūd, dhāt* etc. in the texts, and this will lead to one of the two possibilities: a) we failed to find any such connotations or, b) we succeeded in doing so, and let's say these connotations are X, Y and Z.

If it is [a] then there is no self in these texts, but if it is [b], even then we cannot be sure if it will lead us to a notion of 'self' in the texts. This is because how can I ascertain that these 'X, Y, Z' connotations do in fact correspond to a notion of self, when any such exercise already presupposes that I know 'what a self' should look like, if there is one? In other words, for me to claim that these 'connotations' might refer to some notion of self, would already imply that I know or what a self is, or what it is supposed to be like, and that involves prior assumptions because my understanding of the word 'self' might have been shaped by my linguistic grounding in English and also, my familiarity with the literature on self. So any attempt to establish a claim that says that "such and such is the notion of self" in Arabic texts would be at best arbitrary, i.e., it may be right, wrong or simply coincidental. The situation is exacerbated by the fact that most,

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[45] David Hume, *Treatise of Human Nature* (NY: Barnes & Noble, 2005), 657 and Abstract §38.

[46] Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals and Ecce Homo,* trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Random House, 1967), .I.13: 4. For a recent appraisal of the concept of the self in Nietzsche, see Paul Katsafanas, *The Nietzschean Self: Moral Psychology, Agency, and the Unconscious* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 164ff.

[47] Anthony Kenny, *The Self* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1988), 3-4.

[48] Daniel Dennett, *Consciousness Explained* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1991), 426-27.

[49] A number of excellent surveys exists that investigate the seventeenth century background (notably, taking into account the rise of modern science and its effect on the way philosophers were reformulating traditional concepts of the self) to various modern conceptions of the self, see e.g. Udo Thiel, *The Early Modern Subject: Self-Consciousness and Personal Identity from Descartes to Hume* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 35ff.; Raymond Martin and J. Barresi, *The Rise and Fall of Soul and Self: An Intellectual History of Personal Identity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 123ff.; and Seigel, *The Idea of the Self*, 87ff.

[50] On the notion of 'spectrum,' see pp. 16-17.

if not all, of the early texts are fragmentary, elusive and unsystematic when it comes to theirdiscussion on *nafs*, *rūḥ* etc. So, we need to develop a strategy that would involve minimum assumption or zero assumption.

In light of the above situation and the inevitability of operating with a prior notion of the 'self,' let us adopt a new strategy and assume that we know nothing about the controversies regarding the self in English or in any other languages. All I know is the word 'self,' *simpliciter*. Moreover, somehow I also know the basic lexical meanings of the English word 'self' in Arabic, Persian and Urdu. That is, I only know that the words in Arabic and Persian are *nafs*, *dhṭt*, *khūd, khwiīshtan* etc., and nothing about their philosophical or theological significance. And I also know that sometimes these words are used simply in the reflexive sense, e.g., Zayd himself. Now I am ready to begin my investigation, and luckily, someone just informed me about the problems with early *kalām* and Sufi texts, and instead pointed out that Mullā Ṣadrā is someone who has voluminous writings on these terms. So I proceed to analyze all the relevant texts in Ṣadrā in the hope of producing a 'theory' out of all these terms (but I still do not know if there would anything like a 'theory of self' in the end). When I am done with my analysis, one of the following results would hold:

1. All the thousands of instances in which Ṣadrā employs these words show that they have no philosophical import beyond their ordinary meaning, reflexive or otherwise.

Hence there is no theory of self in Ṣadrā, or,

2. All the thousands of instances in which Sadra uses these words show that such words as *nafs* or *dhāt* produce clear statements such as "the *nafs* is an immaterial entity," "the *nafs* is the first actuality of an organic natural body," "the *nafs* is a sacred substance (*jawhar qudsī*)," "the *nafs* is other than the body," "the *nafs* is all of the faculties," "the *nafs* goes though substantial motion," "the *nafs* has many dimensions and states," "the *nafs* is capable of self-knowledge through self-consciousness," "the *nafs* is always present to itself," and so on. Moreover, such statements are not disparate, rather they are systematically related to various arguments in relevant contexts and they occur throughout his 40-45 tomes. Furthermore, there are several compound words such as *maᶜrifat al-nafs* or *shuᶜūr bi-l-dhāt* that also suggest technical usage.

If my analysis yields such a outcome then I believe it would be sufficient to show that Ṣadrā has a 'theory' of the *nafs*. However, someone can still object and say that whatever I said above rather corresponds to what we call 'soul' in English, and not 'self.' She would indeed be right if by using the term 'soul,' we are able to refer to all such philosophical statements. However, as I argued earlier, the word 'soul' is ill equipped to meaningfully refer to some of these statements, especially the ones involving a first-personal phenomenological stance. One may still artificially stretch the extension of the world 'soul' to include everything under the *nafs*, but why do so when there is a candidate that can serve us better, i.e., self and also, when that sort of stretching might lead to a 'private language' fallacy.

All this is to say that we can begin our investigation on self in Arabic from Ṣadrā and regard him as a baseline example to either go forward or move backward, in order to analyze different notions of the self in various authors. Indeed, textual evidence from the Islamic intellectual tradition shows that very early on Muslim thinkers took stock of the ambiguity of the

term *nafs*.[51] Avicenna clarifies how the word *nafs* might refer to both 'soul' and 'self' in his *De Anima* of *al-Shifāʾ* and also in other treatises.[52] In his *Aḥwāl al-nafs*, Avicenna explains that the term *nafs* is very the thing that each one of us would refer to as 'I.'[53] He further elucidates his point by suggesting that the 'I' refers to one's essence while one's bodily organs are denoted by 'it' which are distinct and separate from what is 'I.'[54] The little known Ismāʿīlī poet-philosopher of the tenth-eleventh centuries, Abū al-Haytham al-Jurjānī,[55] for instance, explicitly poses the question, "What is the self?" in the following passage, as there was little agreement in his time if the 'self' or the 'I' refers to the soul, body, spirit or human:

> Everyone joins the self to 'I' but to what does this 'I' refer?[56]

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[51] However, this is not to suggest that Muslim thinkers reached the same conclusions as their Western counterparts.

[52] See for instance, Avicenna, *Avicenna's De Anima (Arabic Text),* 4-6; for other references, see pp. 5-6.

[53] Avicenna, *Aḥwāl al-nafs: risālah fī al-nafs wa-baqāʾihā wa-maʿādihā, ed. Aḥmad Fuʾād al-Ahwānī* (Cairo: Dār Iḥyāʾ al-Kutub al-ʿArabīyah, 1952), 183.

[54] Avicenna, *al-Nukāt wa-l-fawāʾid,* edited by J. Kenny, *Orita* 29 (1997): 68-98, at 73-76.

[55] I chose to begin with Jurjānī, because he seems to be one of the earliest poet-philosophers who came up with an explicit formulation of the "problem of self." Unfortunately, not much is known about his life and works, except what has survived through posterity, see Renate Würsch, "Abū l-Haytham al-Jurjānī", in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam, THREE*, Edited by: Kate Fleet, Gudrun Krämer, Denis Matringe, John Nawas, Everett Rowson. Consulted online on 21 September 2017 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_ei3_COM_24733>

[56] A great deal has been said in recent Analytic philosophy concerning the first-personal indexical "I," and its "ambiguous" reference(s). Kripke thinks that Wittgenstein (*Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* 5.632, 5.64) develops his account of the self based on the Hume-Lichtenberg thought experiment, that enables him to see it as a rather mysterious 'limit of the world' that 'does not belong to the World' and 'shrinks to an extensionless point.' The self that emerges out of Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations* has the characteristics of something not to be identified with any entity picked out in any ordinary manner, but it is thought of as deriving from a 'grammatical' peculiarity of the first-person pronoun, and not from any special metaphysical mystery, see Saul Kripke, *Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982), 144-45. For Wittgenstein's reflections on the nature of the "I," see Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology,* vol. ii, ed. G. H. von Wright and H. Nyman, trans. C. G. Luckhardt and M. A. E. Aue (Oxford: Blackwell, 1980) and *Last Writings on the Philosophy of Psychology*, vol. i, ed. G. H. von Wright and H. Nyman, trans. C. G. Luckhardt and M. A. E. Aue (Oxford: Blackwell, 1982); William Child, "Wittgenstein on The First Person," in *The Oxford Handbook of Wittgenstein*, edited by Oskari Kuusela and Marie McGinn (Oxford Handbooks Online, 2011). DOI: 10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199287505.003.0018. It seems to me that what Wittgenstein says concerning selfhood and the "I," is that solipsistic thought experiments *à la* Descartes do not refer to the "I" of the individual self. However, this does not imply that we have to give up the notion of the "self" altogether. This is because Wittgenstein also hints at the idea of 'immunity to error through misidentification' (an expression coined by Shoemaker later) that says that judgments about the self in terms of reference can only be true when the self is regarded as subject (and not object). That is to say, if someone is in pain it would be non-sensical to ask "someone has a pain, is it me (I)?" In other words, the first-person pronoun as subject I cannot be mistaken in regard to whom it refers. This does not hold, however, when the "I" is treated as object, hence intelligibility of Anscombe's famous remark "the 'I' does not refer." I think this distinction is vital because P. F. Strawson ascribes a theory of non-ownership view of the self to Lichtenberg and Wittgenstein, which I think is somewhat arbitrary. Even though Wittgenstein criticizes a theory of "ownership" that does not really show that Wittgenstein accepts a "non-ownership theory of the self." See, e.g. P. F. Strawson, *Individuals: An Essay in Descriptive Metaphysics* (London: Methuen, 1977), 90-99. According to Anscombe, the "quasi-inexpressible" nature of ego-centered language does not amount to complete ineffability but rather it manifests itself in the use and application of language. This "quasi-inexpressability" should not therefore be understood in terms of a rejection of the self. The grammatical experience rather shows that to give expression to solipsistic desires with regard to ordinary language leads us to nothing other than to changing these desires in the first place. According to Anscombe, the indexical 'I' is not like other referring expressions, and it is even different from the demonstrative 'this,' as in the case of "I" no possibility of failure exists. For an in-depth discussion of these debates, see G. E. M. Anscombe, *Metaphysics and the Philosophy of*

> Speak, do not just scratch your beard!
> Is it the body? Or the soul? The intellect? Or the spirit?
> Or is it like the amalgam of horse and man in the knight?[57]

In like manner, the 16th century Persian philosopher Mīr Dāmād (d. 1040/1631), the famous teacher of Mullā Ṣadrā, poses the question whether or not the 'I' represents the core of one's essential self that is other than the body by asking rhetorically, "Are you yourself your material, tarnished, earthly body or your immaterial, pure, divine self? Do you not signify every part of your body and the whole of your body by 'it' and signify that by which you are you by 'I?'"[58]

The multifarious ways in which the aforementioned authors describe the self may, despite first impressions, turn out to be a methodological strength. This is because, as Long points out, understanding our 'selves'—our natures, capabilities, and possibilities—is the hardest thing in the world and yet endlessly captivating because it cannot be settled by empirical research.[59] There are no *facts* to decide (scientifically speaking), once and for all, as to whether the self is part of the body, a spiritual substance, or an epiphenomenon of the brain. We still do not know (and perhaps can never know), in a *scientific* sense, what the real nature of consciousness is. That is to say, despite such divergent views investigation concerning the self will not come to an end and will continue to fascinate many because the issue cannot be settled by empirical research alone, hence there will always be space to approach it from different angles. As Sorabji has argued, one reason why the notion of the self inevitably figures in our experience is that humans and animals could not cope with the world at all unless they saw things in terms of 'I.'[60]

The Self as a 'Spectrum and Aspirational' Concept

Given the ambiguity, diversity and polyphonic use of the term 'self,' it seems to me that concepts such as these can be best thought of in terms of what I would call 'spectrum and aspiration' concepts that can be approached from a multi-disciplinary perspective and that form a wide range of often non-overlapping spectrums. Let us first see how the self can be understood as a 'spectrum' concept. Examples of spectrum concepts include but not limited to self, time, space, imagination, science, and consciousness. Stated differently, just as there is a 'continuous spectrum' when white light is passed through a prism and a "discontinuous spectrum" (often called the line spectrum) when it is passed through gases due to some absorption, there are concepts such as space, self and imagination that show a wide range of meanings that are related to each other as in a continuous spectrum, while also being completely unrelated at other times (as in a line spectrum). Take for instance the concepts of 'space' and 'imagination' respectively.

Mind (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1981) 2: 21-36; Roderick M Chisholm, "On the Observability of the Self (1969)," in Quassim Cassam (ed.), *Self-Knowledge* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), ch. 5.

[57] Jurjānī, verses 33-36, in Nāṣir-i Khusraw, *Kitāb Jāmiʿ al-ḥikmatayn, ed. Muḥammad Muʿīn* (Tehran: Kitābkhāna-yi Ṭahūrī, 1984), 97.

[58] Mīr Dāmād, *Kitāb al-qabasāt*, ed. Mehdi Mohaghghegh (Tehran: Mu'assasah-'i Chāp va Intishārāt-i Danishgāh-i Tihran, 2016), 393. Similarly, one also finds echoes of the "problem of self" in the Sufi tradition, see e.g., Maḥmūd Shabistarī, *Gulshan-i rāz*, ed. by Parvīz ʿAbbāsī (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Ilhām, 2002), 58; and Bābā Afḍal al-Dīn Kāshānī, *Muṣannafāt-i Afḍal al-Dīn Muḥammad Maraqī Kāshānī*, edited by Mujtabá Mīnuvī (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Khvārizmī, 1987), 754.

[59] A.A. Long, *Greek Models of Mind and Self* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2015), *intro*.

[60] Sorabji, *Self: Ancient*, 20ff.

On the one hand, there are well-known theories of space in physics and philosophy that are different in their meaning but still form a continuous spectrum. Thus Aristotle's definition of space as "two-dimensional container that envelops the body" can be discussed alongside other theories (in the sense of continuity) such as 1) space is only a determination or a relation of things, yet would exist even if it were not intuited (Leibniz's relational view), 2) space as universal container of all material objects (Newton's absolutist view), 3) space and time belong only to the form of intuition, and therefore to the subjective constitution of our mind, apart from which they could not be ascribed to anything whatsoever (Kant's 'idealist' view), and, 4) space and time are intertwined and have both absolute and relational 'structures' as in Special and General Relativity.[61] On the other hand, social scientists talk about 'social space' and mystics often bring up the idea of 'inner space'— none of which bear any direct relation to the theories of space mentioned earlier. Thus we have a 'discontinuous spectrum,' even though the grammatical and linguistic points of reference remain the same. The same argument can be applied to the concept of 'imagination' which ranges from meaning "the ability to think of something that is not presently perceived, but is, was or will be spatio-temporally real" and "the non-rational operations of the mind" to "the ability to create works of art" and "the entirety of phenomenal existence" (Ibn ʿArabī's mystical view), among a dozen others.[62] Moreover, aesthetes talk about 'aesthetic imagination' while religious thinkers often broach the phrase 'religious imagination'—all of which points to the 'spectrum' nature of these concepts. As will be seen throughout this study, the self as a spectrum concept will be a useful point of reference, when it comes to delineating its multifaceted nature.

However, while addressing the question, "what is the nature of the self," Ṣadrā et al. also ask "what it means to be a self" (or, what kind of self one should *aspire* to be), so that one may come to consider the meaning of one's existence. Thus the term 'self' has an 'aspirational' content as well, which is to be conceived in dynamic terms consisting of an inner journey from a one given mode of existence to another. It is to be noted that although all of the authors discussed in this study will agree on the spiritual nature of this journey, they will differ on the specifics of these spiritual journeys. For example, the self in Mullā Ṣadrā's philosophy attains higher states by pursuing a philosophico-spiritual life that gradually enables it to peel off its layers of materiality that impedes self-perfection. This systematic pursuit of a philosophico-spiritual life entails, among other things, detachment from worldly desires, acquiring intrinsic virtues, and meditative and invocatory practices such as invocation (*dhikr*). Shāh Walī Allāh would concur with most of the practices of the self that Ṣadrā recommends, with the exception that he would not think of pursuing philosophy as part of the process of self-discovery. In the

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[61] Minkowski spacetime is 'absolute' in a certain sense. For Minkowski's own interpretation on this, see H. Minkowski, Raum und Zeit, *Physikalische Zeitschrift* 10 (1909): 104-111. The nature of space (also, time) as a philosophical problem is yet to be settled, despite the success of Einstein's General Relativity. For a wide ranging critique of this concept in both modern and ancient physics, see Max Jammer's classic, *Concepts of Space: the History of Theories of Space in Physics*, forwarded by A. Einstein (New York: Dover, 1993). It is to be noted that both Indian and Islamic theories of space can also be added to the 'continuous spectrum' I cited above. See also, Edward Grant, *Much Ado about Nothing: Theories of Space and Vacuum from the Middle Ages to the Scientific Revolution* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981). For a critique of the Aristotelian notion of space by later philosophers (this shows how philosophical discussions of time, space, motion etc. continued to thrive even after the Classical and Hellenistic periods contrary to popular perception), see Simplicius and Philoponous, *Place, Void, and Eternity*, trans. David Furley and C. Wildberg (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991).

[62] Some of these notions of the imagination are drawn from L. Stevenson, "Twelve Conceptions of Imagination," *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 43.3 (2003): 238–259. See also, E. T. H. Brann, *The World of the Imagination* (Rowman & Littlefield, 1991).

main, as a spectrum reality, the self consists of multiple degrees and dimensions, while as an aspirational entity, it aspires to realize the ideal human state as exemplified by the perfect human (al-insān al-kāmil). However, we must point out that these two poles of the self are inseparable from each other.

The Self: A Multi-dimensional Approach

In addition to what is laid out above, a comprehensive account of the self requires looking at it from multiple standpoints. Accordingly, after perusing my primary sources, I attempted to come up with an internally consistent framework that would act like a formal guide to interpreting the broad structure of the arguments advanced by my authors. It is in this sense that I am using 'theory' in this study, which, in my own vocabulary can be construed as being either 'bottom-up' or 'top-down' in nature. To explain, one can use theories through what I call a 'top-down' approach which employs theories from a representative theorist, e.g. Merleau-Ponty's theory of embodied consciousness or Sartre's theory of ego and freedom, and reconstructs/interprets one's source texts through the lens of the former. The disadvantage of such an approach is that it tends to ignore the context and historical contingencies of a given source text; hence often falls into the labyrinth of anachronistic adventures. In contrast, the approach embraced in this study takes the opposite route and tries to 'define' a theory based on one's reading of primary sources themselves. Thus, after contemplating my sources, it became clear to me that the best way to approach the question of self and subjectivity in Islamic philosophy and philosophical Sufism, is to make use of a *multi-dimensional* concept of selfhood, since our authors often analyze the self from multiple viewpoints (though often unsystematically). In his celebrated *The Principles of Psychology*, American philosopher-psychologist William James uses a three-dimensional scheme of 'selfhood-analysis' to explicate the nature of the human self: 1) the material self, 2) the social self, and 3) the spiritual self. For James, "the body is the innermost part of *the material Self,'* some of whose parts are closer to us than the rest. James then explains 'the social self' by suggesting that it consists of 'recognition' and 'images' that others confer on the individual. As for 'the spiritual self,' James' opinion is that it can be regarded as a person's 'psychic dispositions,' including the abilities to argue and discriminate and to have 'moral sensibility,' 'conscience,' and an 'indomitable will.' He further suggests that the spiritual self can be regarded as "the entire stream of our personal consciousness."[63] So my framework, while inspired by James' multi-dimensional notion of selfhood, also departs from the latter, since the context, exposé, and intentions of my authors are very different.[64]

Consequently, my framework involves analyzing the self from three distinct modes of meaning constructions: bio-physiological, socio-cultural, and ethico-metaphysical. Even though each of these dimensions seems to be different from one another, there is often a common thread (i.e. unity of the self) that binds them together. However, it shall be seen that the link between

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[63] William James, *Principles of Psychology,* 1: 294-401.

[64] It is to be noted that Jerold Seigel also uses a multi-dimensional approach to the problem of self in his study of Western notions of self since the seventeenth century. According to Seigel, the basis of selfhood in Western philosophy since the time of Descartes can be sought in three dimensions, namely 1) material, 2) relational, and 3) reflective. In his view, the first refers to corporeal existence of individuals, the second to social and cultural interactions that give rise to collective identity, and finally, the third to the human capacity to experience the world and objectivize that experience, see Seigel, *Idea of the Self,* 5ff.

these different dimensions of selfhood in our authors varies from one another—sometimes weak, or sometimes strong.[65]

Being a Self: Definition and Conditions

Given the plethora of definitions and approaches to the study of the self, it is pertinent to ask, at this point, about the line of demarcation this study draws in order to investigate selfhood in Islamic thought. So for present purposes, this study defines the self in terms of "having a sense of 'I' that involves self-awareness and self-knowledge." That is to say, the basic sense of the self for the authors concerned in this study implies self-knowledge, first-person subjectivity, and agency.

The above line of demarcation allows me focus to on those issues that are directly related to the first-person perspective such as self-knowledge, consciousness and ethico-spiritual transformation, while avoiding a detailed analysis of issues such as the mechanism of the external or the internal senses, although they are not entirely unrelated. Also, in English words such as 'person,' 'individual,' 'human,' 'self,' and 'consciousness' are often interrelated or intertwined, which sometimes leads scholars to distinguish between these terms, but which itself becomes the source of dispute as to what constitutes the self.[66] It is however crucial to clarify some of these terms before we proceed further, as the authors under consideration in this study often employ them with respect to the word 'self.' It may appear rather intuitive that if there were no human beings as species, there would be no 'selves' to begin with, but then, unlike the former, the latter category refers to the question of what it means to be an 'I,' or what parts of the human being are considered 'most our own.' In like manner, the word 'person' can be taken to mean someone who owns psychological states and actions, along with various bodily characteristics,[67] although many authors such as Gerson uses the words 'self' and 'person' interchangeably in his study on the Platonic self.[68] In the present study, the relationship between human, person, individual, self and consciousness can be summarized through the help of a concentric circle, where the outermost circle represents 'human,' and then the circle inside it 'person' and 'individual' (assumed to be synonymous in this study) respectively, while the innermost circle represents both 'self' and 'consciousness.' It should, however, be noted that this is only one of the possible modes through which the relationship can be demonstrated. Since the self is a multidimensional entity, it can also be conceived as being all-encompassing in the sense that at its core it is identified with the minimal, background awareness, whereas at its apex, it is

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[65] One central issue that any studies of the self must take into account is whether different characterizations of the self refer to its diverse aspects of some unitary phenomenon, or whether they pick out different and unrelated phenomena. This point is also noted in Gallagher, *Oxford Handbook of the Self*, 27.

[66] Other related words are ego and the mind, which, when used in this study, have no technical import. Sometimes our authors use 'ego' and 'self' synonymously as in Iqbāl. See ch. 4.

[67] Sorabji, *Self: Ancient and Modern*, 21. Yaḥyā b. ʿAdī (d. 363/974), who is said to have become al-Fārābī's student, also distinguishes between person and the self. According to ʿAdī, humans in their true being is called the rational self (*al-nafs al-ʿāqila*), which is a single thing (*shayʾ wāḥid*), whereas they are many in persons (*al-ashkhāṣ*), see *idem.*, *The Reformation of Morals*, translated by Sydney Griffith (Provo: Brigham University Press, 2002), 107.

[68] See Lloyd P. Gerson, *Knowing Persons: A Study in Plato* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 4-6.

identified with the perfect human (*an-insān al-kāmil*). This should explain why Ṣadrā and others sometimes use these terms (e.g. *insān* and *shakhṣ*) interchangeably.[69]

Also, earlier I explained the difference between the terms 'soul' and 'self' by drawing attention to the first-person versus the third-person perspectives. In what follows, I will elaborate on this distinction further. Mental phenomena such as pain, pleasure etc. can be analyzed both from the first-person and the third-person standpoints. From the third-person perspective, one can analyze a given mental event and observe the corresponding brain-state, e.g. neuron firing at the time and its causal effect on other parts of the brain, and the behavior to which it gives rise. Later the scientist can provide the world with all the scientific details and results.[70] However, although scientific observation, which inevitably takes place from the third-person view, may exhaust all the physical descriptions of the phenomenon under scrutiny, it still leaves out the question, "what-it-is-like-to-experience" or "what-it-is-like-to-feel" such and such mental state, e.g. pain. In other words, the subjective feel of pain or any mental states for that matter can only be 'experienced' from the first-person stance, or what we might call "the domain of the 'I.'" Notice, however, that a physical system, e.g., the brain—no matter how complex it is—is, after all, a physical system, which like all other such systems, is constituted at bottom by atomic and sub-atomic particles, obeying the laws of physics. So even though its behavior could be analyzable and predictable, it cannot encompass the first-person stance by the very definition of subjectivity that restricts the 'I' to its individual possessor.[71] So a proper distinction must be drawn between the soul and the self—the former being a third-person while the latter being a first-person concept.[72]

Additionally, Galen Strawson has argued that if one wants to understand the condition of being a self, one should look at the experience that appears from the viewpoint of an individual 'I,' since self-experience provides us with a vivid sense that there is something like a self. Strawson further argues that if there is such a thing as a self, then it must have properties that feature in any genuine form of self-experience or first-personal stance. That is to say, nothing can fail to seem as a self if it possesses such properties. If these conditions hold, then one can respond to the nay-sayers of the 'self' such as Nietzsche or Dennett. Otherwise it leads to the following contradictions: (1) that there are entities that have the properties attributed in self-experience, but nonetheless it doesn't follow that selves exist, and (2) that even though there might be selves, we have no understanding of their fundamental nature.[73]

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[69] See e.g. Ṣadrā, *al-Maẓāhir al-ilāhiyya fī asrār al-ʿulūm al-kamāliyya*, edited by Muḥammad Khāmina-yi (Tehran: Bunyād-i Ḥikmat-i Islāmi-yi Ṣadrā, 1981), 105; *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb,* ed. Muḥammad Khwājawī (Tehran: Bunyād-i Ḥikmat-i Islāmi-yi Ṣadrā, 1981), 2:803-05; and *Asfār* 9:128.

[70] David Chalmers, "How Can We Construct a Science of Consciousness?" in M. Gazzaniga (ed.), *The Cognitive Neurosciences III* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2004), 1111-1120, at 1111ff. See also Francisco Varela and J. Shear, "First-Person Methodologies: What, Why, How?" *Journal of Consciousness Studies* 6/2–3 (1999): 1–14. Cf. also Thomas Nagel's 'objective' versus 'subjective' self in *The View from Nowhere* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 67ff.

[71] Some psychologists dismiss first-personal accounts of self-knowledge by referring to children who consistently report wrongly about some of their own immediately past psychological states. However, this conclusion follows from the failure to distinguish 'reflective' from 'pre-reflective' self-knowledge that is discussed at lenth in ch. 2, 49ff. See Alison Gopnik, "How We Know Our Minds: The Illusion of First-Person Knowledge of Intentionality," *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 16 (1993): 1–14.

[72] However, as was mentioned before, the self does incorporate aspects of the soul, but it does so from the first-person stance.

[73] Galen Strawson, "The Phenomenology and Ontology of the Self," in *Exploring the Self*, edited by Dan Zahavi (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2000), 40; and *Selves: An Essay in Revisionary Metaphysics* (Oxford: Clarendon

Some other key ideas running throughout this study such as 'spiritual practices' and 'disembodiment' can also be found in Foucault's seminal study on 'subjectivity' in Graeco-Roman thought.[74] This should not cause much surprise, since Islamic authors inherited the Graeco-Roman philosophical heritage (as mentioned earlier), and many philosophical and mystical ideas in Islam are habitually branded as 'Neo-Platonic.' Moreover, as Sajjad Rizvi and Azadpur have also noted, it is perhaps best to characterize the activity of doing of Islamic philosophy (and philosophical Sufism by extension) as comprising a set of 'spiritual exercises' alongside mastering the theoretical intellect (study of logic and epistemology for instance).[75] Brifely put, Hadot and others have pointed out that philosophy in ancient Greece involved both a cultivation of the self, i.e., a transformed way of seeing the world, and a conceptual achievement. Accordingly, philosophers would practice self-cultivation through prescribed regimens of spiritual exercises in order to neutralize passional elements in their character. Such exercises are 'spiritual' insofar as they help reorient the self toward a higher mode of being. These exercises would include meditative, cognitive, or even somatic (e.g. vegetarian diet) practices that one would perform on the body and mind in order to bring about a gradual transformed state. As will be seen, such a paradigm corresponds to the relation between theoretical and practical philosophy in the Islamic context. However, what is of paramount importance in all this is to realize that even though the broad pattern of many ideas or practices in say, Neo-Platonic and Islamic authors may sound familiar (sometimes even word-for-word), it should not lead one to conclude that they might mean the same thing when, for instance, they talk about the same thing, e.g. 'transformation of self.' It may well be that the 'transformation' with regard to the self that many Islamic authors have in mind does not involve "becoming at one with the One (*hen*)."

With all this said, the objective of the present study is to probe the following questions:

i.   Is there a problem of the 'self' in Islamic thought? If so, how should we understand or articulate the notion of self in Islamic thought, given a plethora of terms/concepts associated with it?

ii.   What is the true nature of the self? How and why does this differ from what we ordinarily perceive, think, and treat the self to be?

iii. What is the relation between self and consciousness? What essential features does the 'I' share with animals or with other human beings? How do Muslim philosophers address such issues and why do they matter?

Press, 2009), 56-7. Similarly, Ganeri also sets forth two conditions of being a self, although from a slightly different angle: "A theory of self must do two things. It must tell us what kind of thing a self is: an immaterial substance; a suitably interconnected series of conscious experiences; the categorical basis of such a series; or something else. But a theory of self must also give us materials to answer, within the specified kind, the question: "Which one is me?" This question is often overlooked, but to neglect it is to court solipsism." See Jonardon Ganeri *The Self: Naturalism*, 6.

[74] See e.g., Foucault, *The Hermeneutics of the Subject*, 15-17, 26, 86-192, 242-44, 326-27, 437-50, 526,

[75] See e.g., Sajjad Rizvi, "Approaching Islamic Philosophical Texts Reading Mullā Ṣadrā Shīrāzī (d. 1635) with Pierre Hadot," in *Philosophy as a Way of Life: Ancients and Moderns -Essays in Honor of Pierre Hadot*, edited by Michael Chase, Stephen R. L. Clark, and Michael McGhee (West Sussex: Wiley Blackwell, 2013), 132-47; Mohammad Azadpur, *Reason Unbound: On Spiritual Practice in Islamic Peripatetic Philosophy* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2011), 8-20. Cf. T. L. Perreira, "Die before you die": Death Meditation as Spiritual Technology of the Self in Islam and Buddhism," *The Muslim World* 100 (2010): 247-267.

iv.   What does it mean to be a self in Islamic mystical and philosophical thought? What kind of selfhood will make for the best and happiest life in these thought-systems, or what kind of 'self' should one aspire to be in order to realize true happiness?

v.   Can we preserve our sense of what it means to be human while at the same time accepting what modern science tells us to be true, namely that human nature is coterminous with the rest of nature? What, in other words, does it mean to be a self in a world of things and objects in modern times?

A Critical Review of Previous Scholarship on the Self

In a certain sense a review of various theories on the self is a Sisyphean task, not only because it is a 'spectrum concept,' but also because new ideas of the self continue to appear from a wide range of disciplines such as quantum mechanics and social studies. Thus, no literature review could ever aspire to be comprehensive. On the one hand, there are socio-political or socio-religious studies of the self and subjectivity that primarily focus on the boundaries of the self, questions of (social or political) identity and community belonging, rather than its metaphysical nature[76]; o while on the other hand, there are also philosophical explorations of the self (and this is the focus of the present investigation) that range from an explanation of the very nature of consciousness as the core experience of the self to the inner reality of a human being as the universal self, reflecting both God and the cosmos.[77] Although by no means exhaustive, these latter theories of the self can be broadly classified into "positive self" and "negative self" theories, that is, theories that either affirm or deny the self.[78]

The Self in a Global Context

In the category of 'no-self' theories, Buddhist no-self doctrine (Pali: *anatta*, Skt. *anātman*) and the bundle theory of Hume take pride of place.[79] The Buddhist view (of which

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[76] On the relationship between self and society and how identity is constructed through their interaction, see George H. Mead, *Mind, Self, and Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), 135-226; Viktor Gecas, and P. J. Burke, Self and identity, in K. Cook, G. A. Fine, & J. S. House (eds.), *Sociological Perspectives on Social Psychology* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1995), 41-67; and Jan E. Stets and Peter J. Burke, A Sociological Approach to Self and Identity, in *Handbook of Self and Identity*, Mark Leary and June Tangney (eds.) (NY: Guilford Press, 2003), 128-152. On religious and political identities, see Gerald Izenberg*, Identity: The Necessity of a Modern Idea* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015), 228-32. 297-98 and 360ff; Amartya Sen, *Identity and Violence: The Illusion of Destiny* (NY: Norton, 2006), 18ff. For our purposes, one's identity can be thought of as that particular set of traits, beliefs, and allegiances that, in short- or long-term ways, gives one a consistent personality and mode of social being, while subjectivity implies always a degree of thought and self-consciousness about identity, at the same time allowing a myriad of limitations and often unknowable, unavoidable constraints on our ability to fully comprehend identity. For more information, see Donald E. Hall, *Subjectivity* (London, NY: Routledge, 2004), 3. See also Lacan's 'mirror stage' theory of the self, *idem., Le moi dans la théorie de Freud et dans la technique de la psychanalyse. The Ego in Freud's Theory and in the Technique of Psychoanalysis, 1954-1955*, translated by Sylvana Tomaselli (New York: W. W. Norton, 1988), 175ff.

[77] In addition, there are also theories that are formulated by physicists/philosophers such as Hermann Weyl and Erwin Schrödinger. See e.g. Erwin Schrödinger, *Meine Weltansicht* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Bücherei, 1963); *Nature and the Greeks, and, Science and Humanism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014); Hermann Weyl, *Mind and Nature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009).

[78] This categorization is based on the present author's own deliberation. For a diagrammatic representation, see Table 2.1 below.

[79] There are also post-modern variations to no-self theories that either denies any enduring self or poses it as a fractured reality having no center, see e.g. Paul C. Vitz, and Susan M. Felch (eds.),

there are a number of variations) of self starts with the premise that our ordinary sense of self (the basis of designation) is the source of suffering in life.[80] The Buddhists reject the concept of an enduring, substantial self or *ātman*.[81] When Buddhist philosophers deny the self they point to the ever-changing nature of the five aggregates (Pali: *khandhas*, Skt. *skandhas*) such as material form, feelings, perception/discrimination, mental formation and sense-consciousness that comprise an individual, but this does not mean there is no concept of "underlying" consciousness in Buddhism.[82] Such a view stems from the premise that any particular entity, event, or process is characterized by a dynamic pattern of interdependence[83] within and through which it arises, has effects, and also, passes away.[84] The supposedly unitary, unchanging and the eternal *ātman* of the Brahmanic tradition is no exception.[85] However, in contrast to certain modern exponents of no-self theorists (e.g. Parfit), it is important to remember that some Buddhist thinkers do

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The Self: Beyond the Postmodern Crisis (Wilmington, De.: ISI Books, 2006), xii-xviii; Kenneth J. Gergen, *The Saturated Self: Dilemmas of Identity in Contemporary Life* (New York: Basic Books, 1991); Philip Cushman, "Why the Self Is Empty Toward a Historically Situated Psychology," *The American Psychologist* 45.5 (1990): 599-611. In addition, a number of scientists also deny that there is anything called the self by either reducing the mind to the functions of the brain or claiming that there is no such thing as 'human nature' from an evolutionary perspective. For instance, Steven Pinker says the following: "The mind is what the brain does; specifically, the brain processes information, and thinking is a kind of computation." Setven Pinker, *How the Mind Works* Work (NY: Norton, 2009), 324-27; *The Blank Slate: the Modern Denial of Human Nature* (New York: Viking, 2002), 5-13; Jesse Prinz, *Beyond Human Nature: How Culture and Experience Shape our Lives* (London; New York: Allen Lane, 2012), ch. 1. For a response to modern denial of 'human nature,' see Marilynne Robinson, *Absence of Mind: The Dispelling of Inwardness from the Modern Myth of the Self* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 3ff.

[80] While talking about the Buddhist doctrine of the self, one must also ask whether the Buddha taught a 'philosophical doctrine' at all or he was more concerned with practical matters of ethics and avoidance of suffering. On earlier Buddhist theories of *anātman*, see the foundational studies of Steven Collins, *Selfless persons Imagery and thought in Theravada Buddhism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999). For a variety of interpretations of the no-self doctrine, see Matthew Kapstein, *Reason's Traces: Identity and Interpretation in Indian and Tibetan Buddhist Thought* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2001) pt. 1, and Georges Dreyfus, "Self and Subjectivity: a Middle Way Approach," in M. Siderits, M. et al. (eds.), *Self, no self?: Perspectives from Analytical, Phenomenological, and Indian traditions* (Oxford University Press, 2010), 114-156. For an analysis that incorporates insights from cognitive and neuroscience on how the self is a changing process, and not a static thing, see Evan Thompson, *Waking, Dreaming, Being: Self and Consciousness in Neuroscience, Meditation, and Philosophy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014). Finally for an analysis of the no-self doctrine that serves practical (religious) purpose, see Bhikkhu Thanissaro, *The Mind like Fire Unbound* (Barre: DhammāDānā Publications, 1993).

[81] On the misappropriation of the Buddhist doctrine of the self by analytic philosophers such as Parfit and Strawson, see Steven Collins, "A Buddhist Debate About the Self; and Remarks on Buddhism in the Work of Derek Parfit and Galen Strawson," *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 25 (1997): 467–493.

[82] In fact, later schools of Buddhist philosophy (esp. Yogācāra) develop very complex of doctrines of various forms of consciousness such as storehouse consciousness (*alayavijñana*) and pre-reflective consciousness through the works of Vasubandhu (fl. 5th century AD), Dignāga (d. 540 AD), and Dharmakirti (d. 660). For more information on these doctrines, see e.g. Thomas A. Kochumuttom, *A Buddhist Doctrine of Experience: A New Translation and Interpretation of the Works of Vasubandhu the Yogācārin* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1982), and M. Hattori, *Dignāga, On Perception, being the Pratyakṣapariccheda of Dignāga's Pramāṇasamuccaya* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968).

[83] I.e. the doctrine of dependent co-arising.

[84] Mark Siderits et al. (eds.), *Self, no Self?: Perspectives from Analytical, Phenomenological, and Indian Traditions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 240.

[85] *Anatta* is not an unqualified refutation of all types of Upanishadic self, rather its arguments are directed against "cogito" form of self. Cf. Miri Albahari, Against No-Atman Theories of Anatta, *Asian Philosophy* 12:1 (2002), 5-20.

accept the "conventionally posited person (*pudgala*)" as a form of self.[86] David Hume, while responding to Locke's 'identity over time,' claims that our error in positing 'the self" emanates from mistaking the connectedness of consciousness (relation) for the existence of a soul (identity over time).[87] The passage often found in the literature is the following:

> For my part, when I enter most intimately into what I call myself, I always stumble on some particular perception or other, of heat or cold, light or shade, love or hatred, pain or pleasure. I never can catch myself at any time without a perception and never can observe anything but the perception. When my perceptions are removed for any time, as by sound sleep, so long am I insensible of myself and may truly be said not to exist. And were all my perceptions removed by death and could I neither think nor feel nor see nor love nor hate after the dissolution of my body, I should be entirely annihilated, nor do I conceive what is further requisite to make me a perfect nonentity."[88]

On Hume's view, which exerted considerable influence on Kant's 'the I-think'[89] and the 'unity of apperception,' the structural feature of our perception leads us to mistakenly attribute a substantial identity to the object in consciousness, when in reality consciousness is more like "a

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[86] On Buddhist thinkers who accept the 'conventionally posited' persons (pudgaalvādins), see James Duerlinger, *Indian Buddhist Theories of Persons: Vasubandhu's "Refutation of the Theory of Self"* (London: Routledge: 2003), 8-14, 26-34.

[87] For Locke the nature of the self is inextricably bound up with one's reflections on one's memory-consciousness. For Hume, this means that the self is nothing over and above a constantly varying bundle of experiences. Locke thinks of the self as a "thinking intelligent Being, that has reason and reflection, and considers itself as itself, the same thinking thing in different times and places." See John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Peter Nidditch (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), II.27.ix. This suggests that for Locke, the self is defined by our actions and what we can attribute to ourselves through memory-consciousness. Locke explicitly states that such "personal identity" or identity over time "extends itself beyond present existence to what is past, only by consciousness,- whereby it becomes concerned and accountable; owns and imputes to itself past actions, just upon the same ground and for the same reason as it does the present," Locke , *An Essay,* II.27.xxvi. For Hume, this means the self is nothing other than a constant stream of varying experiences, lacking any fixed identity.

[88] Hume, *Treatise of Human Nature*, I.4.6, 526.

[89] It should be noted first that in his *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, Kant is concerned with perception and the possibility of knowledge, and so, the disparate remarks that he offers there regarding the self should be understood in their proper contexts. In the *Kritik,* Kant rejects the substantialist view of the self and agrees with Hume that we never directly apprehend the self. Kant basically conceives of the self as a thinking subject expresses an indeterminate perception that signifies "something real that is given, given indeed to thought in general and so not as appearance, nor as thing in itself (*noumenon*) but as something which actually exists, and which in the proposition, 'I think,' is denoted as such," see his, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1956)*/ Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. P. Guyer and A. Wood (Cambridge and NY: Cambridge University Press, 1997), footnote (a) B422) [References to *CPR* are in the standard pagination of the 1st (A) and 2nd (B) editions]. In Kantian epistemology, all representations are subject to the synthetic unity of apperception (self-consciousness). That is to say, the *cogito* (the I-think) must be able to accompany all the representations for otherwise something would be represented in the subject which could not be thought of in the first place (CPR B153-4). And I tend to agree with Melnick that in the *Kritik* Kant's self is presented as an "intelligence-in-act" and not as an entity as Kant himself states that the "I-think" is "the application or employment of the pure intellectual faculty" (footnote (a) to B423). Cf. Arthur Melnick, *Kant's Theory of the Self* (NY: Routledge, 2008), 3-6. For a discussion of alternative views, see Colin Marshall, "Kant's Metaphysics of the Self*," Philosophers Imprint* 10.8 (2010): 9ff. It should also be noted that a full spectrum of the Kantian notion of the self should incorporate his views presented in treatises such as *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*, where he talks about the self in terms of the human being, equating it with the 'I,' see *Anthropology From A Pragmatic Point of View*, Robert B. Louden (ed. and trans.) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 183ff.

kind of theatre, where several perceptions successively make their appearance; pass, repass, glide away, and mingle in an infinite variety of postures and situations."[90]

The category of positive 'self' doctrines, on the contrary, can be further classified into 'maximalist' or 'minimalist' view of the self or what I call 'the in-between' view of the self (see Table 1). Maximalist theories of the self like Neo-Platonism or Sufi metaphysics begin with the premise of the lower self's neglect and ignorance of its own true nature and divine origin. The proponents of such theories, for whom anthropology is implicated in metaphysics, put forth the idea of 'levels of the self' vis-à-vis the structure of the cosmos. Thus in Plotinus's hypostases, the intellect is both the intelligible paradigm of the cosmos and a higher source of consciousness, while the One (or, *hyperousia/epekeina tes ousias*) is both the source and ground of reality and the innermost layer of the self.[91] At the other end of the spectrum lies the 'minimalist' account of the self advocated by phenomenologists such as Dan Zahavi.[92] Drawing on previous philosophers such as Husserl and Sartre, Zahavi argues for a pre-reflective, non-substantial awareness of self. He calls this the core or minimal self, consisting in the first-personal character or 'mineness,' which is the root of all human experience.[93] Midway through the maximalist and minimalist views feature various substantialist and non-substantialist selves. Unsurprisingly, René Descartes's *res cogitans* is the paradigmatic substantial self, which posits itself as a substance that is completely other than the body and the rest of nature with its sole essence being 'thinking.' Such a drastic dualistic view of the self is hardly tenable today, as philosophers in the phenomenological tradition, alongside many others, have repeatedly emphasized the active powers of embodiment in shaping our consciousness and our views of the self.[94] Between substantialist and non-substantialist accounts of self lie the narrative and neuro-scientific conceptions of the self. Of course, the categories delineated in this scheme are not watertight, and there is often overlap between these different theories of the self. In various neuroscientific accounts of the self, Antonio Damasio's emergent model stands out for its rigor and comprehensiveness.[95] Similar to his earlier *Descartes' Error* in which he contends that various

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[90] Hume, *Treatise of Human Nature*, 302.

[91] Pauliina Remes, "Inwardness and Infinity of Selfhood: From Plotinus to Augustine," in *Ancient Philosophy of the Self*, edited by Pauliina Remes and Juha Sihvola (Dordrecht and London: Springer, 2008), 155-76. In Sufi metaphysics too the self is often viewed as possessing multiple states of consciousness, see e.g. William Chittick, Reason, Intellect, and Consciousness in Islamic Thought", in *Reason, Spirit and the Sacral in the New Enlightenment: Islamic Metaphysics Revived and Recent Phenomenology of Life*, edited by Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka (Dordrecht: Springer, 2011), 11-35.

[92] Zahavi, *Subjectivity and Selfhood, passim.*

[93] It should however be noted that in his most recent book on the self, Zahavi acknowledges that the minimal, experiential self "is quite a minimal notion and that it is unable to accommodate or capture all ordinary senses of the term 'self.'" See his *Self and other*, 49. The minimalist account cannot be the full story about the self, since our life consists of phenomena where we need to be able to say something about our selves in that more extended period.

[94] For an interesting interpretation of Descartes' *cogito*, see Judith Butler, *Senses of the Subject* (NY: Fordham University Press, 2015), 17-35. See also Barry Dainton's notable book *The Phenomenal Self,* which is a sustained effort to give a neo-dualist account of the self in terms of a neo-Lockean account of personal identity. Barry Dainton, *The Phenomenal Self* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), ch.1. For a refutation of Cartesianism from a materialist perspective, see David Armstrong, *A Materialist Theory of the Mind* (London: Routledge, 1968), 15-38.

[95] Antonio Damasio, *The Feeling of What Happens: Body and Emotion in the Making of Consciousness* (London: William Heinemann, 1999). Exact references are provided below. Other notable studies in this regard are Vittorio Gallese, "Embodied Simulation: From Neurons to Phenomenal Experience," *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences*, 4.1 (2005): 23–48; "Before and Below "Theory of Mind:" Embodied Simulation and the Neural Correlates of Social Cognition*," Philosophical Transactions: Biological Sciences* 362.1480 (2007): 659–69; "Embodied Simulation: From Mirror Neuron Systems to Interpersonal Relations," *Empathy and Fairness: Novartis Foundation*

kinds of practical and social reasoning depend upon our ability to experience emotions and feelings, Damasio addresses two major issues concerning the self and consciousness.[96] The first deals with how the brain, operating within an organism that is interacting with its environment, gives rise to mental images comprising thoughts, objects, feelings and actions, and the second how, in parallel with creating mental patterns for an object, the brain also produces a sense of the self in the knowing subject.[97] He begins with the 'proto-self,' which is "a coherent collection of neural patterns which map, moment by moment, the state of the physical structure of the organism in its many dimensions."[98] In Damasio's scheme, such a proto-self is necessary if the organism is able to maintain itself in its current physical state. However, there is no associated 'consciousness' at this level, as the functions of the organism are confined mostly to bio-physiological processes. Nevertheless, the proto-self, Damasio claims, is sufficient to give birth to what he calls "core consciousness" (with its correlative 'core self') that endows the organism with a feeling of how it is affected by aspects of the surrounding environment at a given time.[99] It is at this stage that humans begin to develop a sense that certain present experiences belong to their core self.[100] Finally, humans develop 'extended consciousness' which is a capacity to connect the present with the past and an anticipated future. At this level, the sense of the self can be termed 'autobiographical' that is responsible for myriads of artistic and scientific activities.[101] Damasio's central claim is that his three-tier model of the self is perfectly capable of explaining the 'bodily' basis of the self, along with the ad-hoc claim that language is not necessary for the proto- and core selves, that ultimately give rise to the most complete form of selfhood, i.e. the autobiographical self. However, others are still unconvinced by such accounts of the self that squarely portrays the brain as the 'black box' where all mysteries of the self should be sought.[102] In particular, one can object on phenomenological grounds that we do not experience the brain as causing our actions; rather we have an unmediated experience of ourselves as being in command of our actions, both mental and physical. Thus it would be incorrect to say that the brain acts or the mind acts; rather it is the 'I' of the individual which is directly engaged with its activities.[103]

Symposium 278 (2007): 3–19; Gordon G. Gallup, "Self-Awareness and the Emergence of Mind in Primates," *American Journal of Primatology* 2.3 (1982): 237–48.

[96] Antonio Damasio, *Descartes' Error: Emotion, Reason, and the Human Brain* (New York: G.P. Putnam, 1994).

[97] Damasio, *The Feeling of What,* 3ff.

[98] Damasio, *The Feeling of What,* 154.

[99] Damasio, *The Feeling of What,* 160.

[100] Damasio explains 'core consciousness' as follows: "Core consciousness occurs when the brain's representation devices generate an imaged, nonverbal account of how the organism's own state is affected by the organism's processing of an object, and when this process enhances the image of the causative object, thus placing it saliently in a spatial and temporal context," see Damasio, *The Feeling of What,* 169.

[101] Damasio, *The Feeling of What,* 177.

[102] See the wide-ranging survey by Kai Vogeley and S. Gallagher, Self in the Brain, in S. Gallagher (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of the Self* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 111-138, in which they evaluate all the evidence both in favor of and against "self in the brain" views. See also the widely cited study of Gillihan and Farah (2005) that claims that there is no specialized or common area responsible for self-related representations. According to them, when the entire reach of self-related tasks is considered, the entire cortex seems to be involved, see Seth J. Gillihan and M. J. Farah, "Is Self Special? A Critical Review of Evidence from Experimental Psychology and Cognitive Neuroscience," *Psychological Bulletin* 13.1 (2005): 76–97. One can also argue that the right methodology concerning neuroscientific studies of the self would be to ask what happens in the brain when a given subject as the self is engaged in various activities, through the sophisticated tool of the neuroimaging lab.

[103] For arguments against, see the many studies of Walter J. Freeman, *How Brains Make up their Minds* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1999), 13-38, 121ff; "Self, Awareness of Self, and the Illusion of Control," *Behavioral and*

As we shall see later in the study (ch. 2), versions of these arguments can also be found in Mullā Ṣadrā and his predecessors such as Suhrawardī.

Let me bring this section to a close by outlining the narrative self. The narrative account of the self asserts that the self is the product of a narratively structured life constructed variably through social and linguistic conventions.[104] Situating himself within the hermeneutico-phenomenological tradition, Ricoeur interprets human subjectivity as being "fictive" in the sense that it is a product of the imagination which takes the form of story-telling over time.[105] In other words, the narrative view considers each individual as having a unique story to tell about their lives that has moral and ethical implications. These, in brief, are some of the accounts of the self that are currently debated in contemporary scholarly circles. In the next section, I turn specifically to studies devoted to concepts of the self in Islamic intellectual history.

Self ⬇			**No-Self/Fragmented Self[106]** ⬇
Minimalist View ⬇	**The In-Between** ⬇	**Maximalist View** ⬇	Buddhist no-self doctrines
i. Phenomenological self, e.g. Zahavi et al.	i. Substantialist view ii. Non-substantialist view iii. Narrative view iv. Ownership view v. Embodied self vi. Selves view (pearl on a string) vii. Neuro-scientific view	i. Advaita Vedanta, ii. Neo-Platonism, iii. Sufi/Islamic metaphysics	Bundle theory, e.g. Hume Analytic denial of self, e.g. Parfit Post-modern varieties, e.g. Lacan, Foucault, Butler et al.

Table: 1

Brain Sciences 20.1 (1997):112-113; and Understanding Perception through Neural "Codes," *IEEE Transactions on Bio-medical Engineering* 58.7 (2011): 1884-90.

[104] Two most prominent proponents of the narrative view of the self are MacIntyre and Ricoeur. See A. MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory* (London: Duckworth, 1985), 237ff. and Paul Ricoeur, *Soi-même comme un autre* (Paris: Seuil, 1990), 15ff.; *Oneself as Another*, trans. K. Blamey (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1992).

[105] Ricoeur, *Soi-même,* 140ff.

[106] Admittedly, the picture of 'no-self' theories is more complicated than presented here, since the Buddhists, as argued earlier, do not deny some form of 'transcendence' when it comes to the highest level of spiritual realization. See also, John Mcdowell, *Mind and World* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994), 87-105, for a complex, analytic theory of the self that does not necessarily deny the self.

The Self in the Islamic Tradition

I will begin with the Qur'an since it offers some of the earliest musings concerning the self in Islam that were further developed by later thinkers. Earlier I argued that the self is a multi-dimensional reality comprising three distinct levels: bio-physiological, socio-cultural, and ethico-metaphysical. In light of such a model the Qur'anic conception of the self falls within the ethico-metaphysical level that has both moral and soteriological implications. Linguistically, six different forms of the root *n-f-s* occur 298 times in the Qur'an: *tanaffasa* (to breathe out) once, *yatanāfas* (to vie, to compete) once, *mutanāfisūn* (one aspiring) once, *nafs* (self) 140 times, *nufūs* (plural of *nafs*) twice, and *anfus* (themselves) 153 times.[107] At least four lexical meanings of *nafs* can be discerned in the Qur'an: 1) 'soul' as in 31:28, 2) "an individual," a single human being, or a person as in 5:32, 3) 'self' as in 3:30, and 4) "the inner self", the heart, the essence of human nature as in 33:37, 39:53, 12:32, and 16:7.[108]

The *tafsīr* (commentarial tradition) literature is quite eclectic and seems open-ended regarding various uses of the *nafs* in the Qur'an. Sayyid Muḥammad Ṭabāṭabāʾī (d. 1981), an influential contemporary Shi'ite theologian/exegete, avers that whenever the term *nafs* occurs in the Qur'an it is used in one of the following three senses:[109]

i)   Reality of an entity or the thing-in-itself that encompasses soul, body and even God.[110]
ii) Person/individual (*shakhṣ al-insān*), the human being, the body-soul composite.[111]
iii) The immaterial entity that is distinct from the body as in philosophy (*falsafa*).

In his exegesis Ṭabāṭabāʾī engages the great Sunni theologian Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī in a polemic, as the latter argues that the Qur'an rejects the philosophers' immaterialist self (see the next section). While Ṭabāṭabāʾī defends the philosophers' view of the self, Rāzī, for his part, strikes a middle course by trying to reconcile Graeco-Islamic theories with the *kalām* physicalist self. Rāzī's interpretation of the self in the Qur'an affirms its immateriality and divine origin but at the same time its capacity to be infused within the body.[112]

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[107] See Elsaid M. Badawi and Muhammad Abdel Haleem (eds.), *Arabic-English Dictionary of Qur'anic Usage* (Leiden: Brill, 2008) 954-55; and al-Rāghib al-Isfahānī, *Mufradāt alfāz al-Qurʿān*, ed. Ṣafwān ʿAdnān Dawūdī (Beirut: al-Dār al-Shāmīyah, 2009), 818 .

[108] Badawi and Haleem, *Arabic-English Dictionary of Qur'anic Usage*, 954-55.

[109] Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ṭabāṭabāʾī, *al-Mīzān fī tafsīr al-Qurʾān* (Beirut: Muʾassasa al-Aʿlamī li-l-Maṭbūʿāt Al-Mīzān, 1997) 14: 286-9.

[110] But he adds that the word *nafs* is not used to refer to God because of the verse that states that "there is nothing like Him" (42:11).

[111] In these and similar instances, *nafs* and its plurals do not appear to designate a spiritual substance or soul but rather aspects of human character, including selfishness, concupiscence, personal responsibility and individual conscience. In other verses, however, *nafs* has a more general meaning as a living person or human life. When God called Moses to go to Egypt, Moses replied: "Lord, I have killed a person (*nafs*) among them, and I fear they will kill me!" (Q. 28:33). Similarly, the Qur'an declares: "And do not kill a person (*al-nafs*), which God has forbidden, except for a just cause" (Q. 17:33; cf. 18:74; 25:68) and most explicitly: "And we decreed for them in a life (*al-nafs*) for a life, an eye for an eye, a nose for a nose…" (5:45), see Th. Emil Homerin, "*Soul*", in: Encyclopaedia of the Qurʾān, General Editor: Jane Dammen McAuliffe, Georgetown University, Washington DC. Consulted online on 08 September 2017 <http://dx.doi.org.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/10.1163/1875-3922_q3_EQSIM_00398>

[112] See Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb (al-Tafsīr al-kabīr)* (Tehran: Shirkat Ṣaḥāfī Nawīn, 1980), 26:199; 24:124; cf. Tariq Jaffer, *Rāzī: Master of Qurʾānic Interpretation and Theological Reasoning* (Oxford, NY: Oxford University Press, 2015), 193-95. For evidence of the soul/self being a body, rather than an accident, al-Ashʿarī reportedly cites the standard expression, "the spirit departed (*kharaja*)", and the Qur'anic verse, "When it [the spirit]

The Qur'anic self is intimately linked with spiritual psychology in that it talks about human states through sensations, emotions and perceptive feelings, all of which prompted the Sufis to develop a paradigm for the transformation of the ordinary self through various spiritual practices such as self-examination, disciplining of desires, and introspection into a heightened state of spiritual awareness. For instance, the Qur'an states that the self is characterized by desires (*al-hawā*), appetites (*al-shahwa*), jealousy (*al-ḥasad*), conceit (*al-kibr*), anxiety (*al-ḍīq*) and distress (*al-ḥaraj*), regret (*al-nadm*), and grief (*al-taḥassur*), but also positive human traits such as patience (*al-ṣabr*), generosity (*al-jūd*), and god-consciousness (*al-taqwā*). In addition to the above-mentioned character-traits, the Qur'an constructs a 'spectrum'[113] of the ethico-metaphysical aspect of self that can be outlined as follows:[114]

i) The evil-inciting self (*al-nafs al-ᶜammara bi-l-sūʾ*)
ii) The self-reproaching self (*al-nafs al-lawwāma*)
iii) The inspired self (*al-nafs al-mulhama*)
iv) The satisfied self (*al-nafs al-rāḍiya*)
v) The satisfying self (*al-nafs al-marḍiyya*)
vi) The tranquil self (*al-nafs al-muṭmaʾinna*)

The purpose of the above scheme is to explain the psycho-spiritual states that the self experiences as a consequence of its motives, actions, thoughts, deeds and will. For example, the dimension of the self that inclines to bodily pleasure is the source of all blameworthy characteristics such as greed, pride, arrogance and envy.[115] The next layer of selfhood that the Qur'an elucidates is called the self-reproaching self, which manages to elevate itself from the state of habitual heedlessness, since as soon as it performs a blameworthy action it feels regretful for such actions. The other dimensions of the self explain its further spiritual development, culminating in the highest level which called the tranquil self—a serene, illuminative state in which all the undesirable attributes of the lower self have been obliterated and the self attains paradisal happiness.[116]

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reaches the throat" (56.83), both of which indicate that the spirit can move in space: a feature that distinguishes atoms from accidents, see Ibn Fūrak, *Mujarrad maqālāt al-Shaykh Abī l-Ḥasan al-Ashᶜarī*, ed. D. Gimaret (Beirut: Dār al-Mashriq, 1987), 257; cf. Daniel Gimaret, *Théories de l'acte humain en théologie musulmane* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1980), 127.

[113] For the notion of "spectrum," see ch. 1, 19.

[114] Cf. Gavin Picken, *Spiritual Purification in Islam*: the Life and Works of al-Muḥāsibī (New York: Routledge, 2011), 129-38; Sachiko Murata, *The Tao of Islam: a Sourcebook on Gender Relationships in Islamic Thought* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1992), 254-82.

[115] In this case, the *nafs* reflects a negative human trait, namely selfishness, against which the Qur'an warns: "So be mindful of God as much as you can, listen and obey and spend on charity to help yourselves. For those who are saved from their selfish greed (*shuḥḥ nafsihi*), they are the successful ones!" (Q. 64:16; cf. 53:23; 59:9). This *nafs* corresponds to the appetitive faculties discussed in ancient and Hellenistic philosophies, especially in Plato. As such, the Qur'an links *nafs* with greed, envy, and lust (Q. 12:18; 20:96, 120; 47:25; 50:16), see Homerin, "*Soul*", in: Encyclopaedia of the Qurʾān, General Editor: Jane Dammen McAuliffe, Georgetown University, Washington DC. Consulted online on 08 September 2017 <http://dx.doi.org.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/10.1163/1875-3922_q3_EQSIM_00398>

[116] It should be noted that not all exegetes conform to the interpretation offered above, see e.g. Abu al-Qāsim Maḥmūd b. ᶜUmar al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf ᶜan ḥaqāʾiq al-tanzīl*, ed. ᶜAlī Muhammad Muᶜwwiḍ et al. (Riyāḍ: Maktabat al-ᶜabīkān, 1998), 100. However, I chose to focus on those interpretations that have a more mystical resonance, as my authors seemed to be influenced by this particular genre of *tafsīr*. Nonetheless, one does see how

In addition to delineating the ethico-metaphysical self, the Qur'an also contains verses in which God speaks in the first person, e.g. "and I breathed into him (i.e. the human self) of My Spirit" *(wa-nafakhtu fīhī min rūḥī)* that bespeaks of divine and human identity.[117] To corroborate this metaphysical claim, Sufis who espouse such a view maintain that God sends each and every messenger with the message "There is no god but I" *(lā ilāha illā anā),*[118] and since this message affirms God's all-encompassing Selfhood, it is the essence of all revelation. Thus when the believer utters the first-personal pronoun 'I' with which God also addresses her in the Qur'an, the believer in essence refers to nothing but the divine Selfhood that resides at the center of her individual subjectivity.[119] In early Sufism, it was perhaps Bāyazīd al-Basṭāmī (d. 874) who first articulated a theory of identity between the human and divine 'I' through his statements such as, "My 'I' is not the human 'I;' since my 'I' is He, I am 'he is He.'"[120] In saying my selfhood does not consist of the human "I" with which we ordinarily identify ourselves, Bāyazīd was not referring to his "empirical self"[121] that is conditioned by human situatedness in a given socio-cultural milieu. Rather, he is alluding to the ultimate stage of spiritual realization in which the human 'I' realizes its essential identity with the divine 'I' through a process of spiritual transformation. As Bāyazīd himself asserts: "I shed my self *(nafsī)* as a snake sheds its skin, then I looked at myself, and behold! I was He *(anā huwa).*"[122] The same conception of the fundamental identity between the human and divine self is also found in Manṣūr al-Ḥallāj (d. 310/922), ᶜAyn al-Quḍat al-Ḥamadānī (d. 525/1131), and Rūzbihān al-Baqlī (d. 606/1209), and it finally reaches its most systematic articulation in Maḥmūd Shabistarī (d. after 737/1337), who affirms how human subjectivity is subsumed by divine subjectivity through God's utterance of the 'I.'[123] For our purposes we need not delve too deeply into the intricacies of the human/divine identity here, but I will revisit this theme in later chapters.

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such interpretations have even influenced theologians such as Mīr Sharīf al-Jurjānī (d. 1414), see e.g. Jurjānī, *al-Taᶜrīfāt,* ed. Ṣadīq al-Minshāwī (Cairo: Dār al-Faḍīla, n.d.), 204-05; cf. Picken, *Spiritual Purification,* 137-139.

[117] Q. 15:29; 38:72. For a comprehensive analysis of the tern *rūḥ* and its cognates in the Qur'an, see Sarra Tlili, "From Breath to Soul: The Quranic Word *Rūḥ* and Its (Mis)interpretations," in Joseph Lowry and Shawkat Toorawa (eds.), *Arabic Humanities, Islamic Thought: Essays in Honor of Everett K. Rowson.* (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 1-21.

[118] cf. Q. 16:2; 21:25

[119] This point is persuasively argued in Hamilton Cook, "Beyond 'Love Mysticism:' Yūnus Emre's Sufi Theology of Selfhood," *Journal of Sufi Studies* 6.1 (2017): 47 – 81.

[120] Quoted in Carl Ernst, *Words of Ecstasy in Sufism* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1985), 26; cf. Abū al-Yazīd al-Basṭāmī, *Abū-l-Yazīd al-Basṭāmī: al-majmuᶜa al-ṣūfīya al-kāmila*, ed. Kassem Mouhammed Abbas (Damascus: Al-Madā, 2004), 47 and Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, 62–77.

[121] In general, many Sufis would argue that what we call as the everyday embodied experience of life involving our immediate desires, hopes, fears, expectations, thoughts, memories, and daily activities seems to hide another fundamental level of experience which is not obvious to everyone and which involves a different mode of consciousness. They assert that the ordinary sense of the self or the 'empirical self' that everyone possesses is a 'construct' because it is always changing, whereas for something to be called 'true' or real, it must be unchanging and imperishable. They also conceive the given, empirical self through morally loaded descriptions such as desires, negative emotions and tendencies that one must overcome through one's effort in order to reach the transcendent mode of being. In other words, for these thinkers, there is not just the 'I,' there is rather 'I and I,' one of which must be disciplined and overcome.

[122] Quoted in Ernst, *Words of Ecstasy*, 27.

[123] Ḥallāj: Between You and me there is an "I am" that overcrowds me,

So take away, by Your grace, this "I am" from in between (trans. Martin Lings, *Sufi poems: a Mediaeval Anthology* (Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society, 2004), 28. Similarly in Ḥāfiz: "Thou thyself art thy own veil O Hafez Lift the veil of thyself from in between." See Ḥāfiz, *The Divan of Hafez: A Bilingual Text, Persian-English, trans. Reza Saberi* (Lanham: University Press of America, 2002), 351.

In his pioneering article on selfhood and subjectivity in Islamic philosophy, Sajjad Rizvi offers valuable preliminary insights concerning the topic.[124] As a kind of prolegomenon, Rizvi's short article addresses a number of crucial methodological questions that one must answer before attempting an investigation of the self in Islamic philosophical thought. Rizvi also provides crucial methodological clues concerning how the language of self is portrayed in Islamic philosophy. His remark that "the compartmentalization of the modern humanities that tends to separate out disciplines and sub-disciplines" would limit the scope and vision of Safavid thinkers is particularly apt, since these thinkers "often mix linguistic conventions between theological, mystical and philosophical language and at times revert to the authority of scripture to bolster a point."[125] Moreover, as Rizvi points out, it is crucial to remember that for these philosophers the vision of philosophy also incorporates a theological/religious commitment that merges material reality with divine origins. I further concur with his assertion that the ideas of "how to care for the self and its techniques and developments in this embodied context through processes of *askesis*" form a notable part of the overall 'philosophy of self' in such thinkers.[126] However, it is rather striking when he argues, while probing the question of whether or not there is a self, that for most Islamic thinkers the ontological reality of the self (or the soul) is not doubted. This seems to be rather surprising because a number of philosophers, for instance, Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī (d. 673/1274), probably the most important peripatetic philosopher after Avicenna, actually attempts to prove the existence of the self at the very beginning of his famous ethical treatise *Akhlāq-i Nāṣīrī*.[127] This shows that for many Islamic philosophers the existence of the self is not self-evident. In any event, Rizvi's useful study serves as a stepping stone for the present inquiry, since, among other things, it affirms to the centrality of the self in Sadrian philosophy:

> Mullā Ṣadrā's systematic approach arguably places the self at the heart of the inquiry: philosophy is an unfolding of four journeys that the mystic undertakes starting from himself out towards God and his cosmos and returning to the self. It is further expressed in the statement found consistently in the wisdom tradition popular with him, that places the words in the mouth of the first Shi'i Imam 'Alī: Philosophy studies three aspects— the whence, the where and the whither of the human self.[128]

In many ways, Jari Kaukua's *Self Awareness in Islamic Philosophy* is a groundbreaking study on the notion of self-awareness in three key Islamic philosophers, namely Avicenna, Suhrawardī and Mullā Ṣadrā.[129] In his book, Kaukua asserts that arguments from self-awareness

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[124] Rizvi, "Selfhood and Subjectivity in Safavid Philosophy: Some Notes on Mīr Ġiyāṯuddīn Manṣūr Daštakī," *Ishraq: Islamic Philosophy Year Book* (2014): 97-115.
[125] Rizvi, *Selfhood and Subjectivity*, 99.
[126] Ibid., 100.
[127] See Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī, *Akhlāq-i Nāṣīrī* (Tihrān: Intishārāt-i Khwārazmī, 1978), introduction and ch. 1. More to the point, such proofs of the existence of the self are also provided both in Avicenna's seminal work on psychology, the *De Anima* of *al-Shifāʾ,* see *Avicenna's De Anima (Arabic text),* 4ff. Such similar proofs for the existence of the self can also be found in Suhrawardī's various treatises such as *Partow Nāma* and *Ḥikmat al-ishrāq*, and also, in Sabzawārī's *Sharḥ-i Manẓūma*. See e.g. *Sharḥ-i Manẓūma*, edited by Mehdi Mohaghegh and Toshihiko Izutsu (Tehran: McGill University Institute of Islamic Studies, 1969) 12ff.
[128] Rizvi, *Selfhood and Subjectivity*, 103.
[129] Jari Kaukua, *Self-Awareness in Islamic Philosophy: Avicenna and Beyond* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

have a bearing on cognition, second-order awareness and personal identity.[130] The book, among other things, convincingly demonstrates how "individuation" or the mark of personal identity hinges on the phenomenon of minimal, background "self-awareness" that is irreducible and has the features of immediacy, certitude, continuity and self-referentiality. This seems to anticipate John Locke in the seventeenth century, who is famous for the modern formulation of "personal identity," and who was very likely familiar with Avicenna's works.[131] The book is also successful in bringing out how the famous 'flying man' argument of Avicenna provides the background for further development of self-awareness and self-cognition (notably, Suhrawardī's presential knowledge or *al-ʿilm al-ḥuḍūrī*) and for the concepts of the self that emerged in later Islamic philosophy.[132] Although *Self Awareness in Islamic Philosophy* is rigorously argued both philosophically and interpretively, one of its central arguments seems to me less well supported.

Kaukua's study is focused on the 'minimal' conception of the self as identified with self-awareness (*shuʿūr bi-l-dhāt* or *shuʿūr bi-nafsihi*) and seems to neglect other dimensions of selfhood such as the ethico-metaphysical dimension that Ṣadrā and others discuss. Thus, he formulates a one dimensional view of the self that falls short of taking into account the numerous passages where Avicenna, Suhrawardī and Ṣadrā talk about the relation between the self and spiritual psychology. This is significant because both Suhrawardī and Ṣadrā are largely concerned with 'self-knowledge,' and issues stemming from it such as "why knowing the true nature of the 'I' matters," while self-awareness (at its most basic form) appears in the equation insofar as it is the self's primary mode of knowing itself. This is evident from the quotes that I cited earlier (pp. 2-3), where both Ṣadrā and Shahrazūrī underscore the primacy of self-knowledge.[133]

Furthermore, Kaukua's discussion of the Sadrian self in relation to self-awareness limits itself to the *Asfār*, *Sharḥ Ḥikmat al-ishrāq*, and *al-Mashāʿir*. While for the concepts of self-

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[130] Based on Avicenna's works, Kaukua provides the following features of self-awareness: It is 1) continuous, 2) innate to the self, 3) pre-reflective, and 4) identical with one's existence, see Kaukua, *Self-Awareness,* 52-4. Cf. Ahmed Alwishah, "Avicenna on Self-Cognition and Self-Awareness," in *Aristotle and the Arabic Tradition*, edited by Ahmed Alwishah and Josh Hayes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 143-163.

[131] However, it seems to me that Avicenna's arguments concerning individuation are stronger than those of Locke, since the latter does not adequately distinguish between awareness itself (i.e. minimal awareness) and reflective awareness. Moreover, Locke's idea of personal identity depends on memory-consciousness, rather than the core, background awareness making it further prone to criticism. One seriously neglected figure in this whole debate is the figure of Thomas Reid, whose criticism of Locke has close resemblance to the Avicennan account of the function of awareness, see Thomas Reid, *Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man*, edited by Derek R. Brookes (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002), esp. III.6. On Locke and his possible connection with Avicenna, see Dimitri Gutas, The Empiricism of Avicenna, *Oriens* 40 (2012) 391–436. Perhaps the first historical formulation of "personal identity" appeared though the dialogue that took place between the Buddhist sage Nagasena and King Milinda, see T. W. Rhys Davids, *The Questions of King Milinda* (NY: Dover, 1963).

[132] On the distinction between 'knowledge by representation' and 'knowledge by presence,' see Mahdī Hāʾirī Yazdi, *The Principles of Epistemology in Islamic Philosophy: Knowledge by Presence* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992), 43ff. and Muḥammad Taqī Miṣbāḥ Yazdī, *Philosophical Instructions: An Introduction to Contemporary Islamic Philosophy* (Binghamton: Global Publications, 1999), 120-25. The distinction between 'presential' and 'representational' knowledge rests on the premise that sometimes an object of knowledge is known directly, while at other times the same object is known through a representation. The knowledge and awareness that everyone has of himself/herself (i.e. the self is the object of knowledge here) is direct and unmediated, which is an instance of 'presential knowledge' (*al-ʿilm al-ḥuḍūrī*), whereas if we were to objectivize our 'I,' it would involve a 'form' (*ṣūra*) or a mental concept (*mafhūm dhihnī*) in which case it would no longer be 'presential knowledge,' and be called 'representational knowledge' (*al-īlm al-ḥuṣul*) instead.

[133] I shall provide many similar quotes in ch. 2, alongside showing the centrality of self-knowledge.

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awareness and self-cognition this might have been sufficient, the same cannot be said of the overall Sadrian theory of the self which Ṣadrā further elaborates in many of his multi-volume tomes such as *Tafsīr al-Qurʾān al-karīm*, *al-Mabdaʾ wa-l-maʿād*, and *Sharḥ Uṣūl al-kāfī* and other voluminous treatises such as *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb* and *Asrār al-āyāt*. It should also be noted that the concept of self-awareness is not exactly synonymous with the concept of the self in Ṣadrā. Nevertheless Kaukua is right when he claims that Ṣadrā's self does away with the idea of a substantial core (contra Avicenna et al.) transparent to itself. However, his conclusion that the Sadrian self is overly deterministic and that such notions are derived from Ibn ʿArabī's doctrine of 'fixed entities' (*al-aʿyān al-thābita*), is not without caveats. Kaukua writes:

> Notwithstanding the variety of views with regard to the constitution of the self, it remains the case that the self of all Islamic philosophers is something each of us simply has to accept as given. In a sense, I am what I am irrespective of my own choice and effort. Nothing like the malleable self which is a product of social construction, various contingent economic, historical and libidinal factors, or even the individual's reflective efforts to guide her own existence, and which becomes increasingly to the fore in early modern European thought, seems to emerge in the Islamic context.[134]

Even though it may appear as though Islamic philosophers posit the self as a 'given,' it is far from being the case that they do not spend time devising techniques and formulating strategies on how to 'transform' this self through one's effort and will so as to attain happiness and eternal bliss.[135] Numerous passages in Ṣadrā, Suhrawardī and even Avicenna, point to "what kind of self one should aspire to be" or "how one should sculpt oneself"[136] in a given milieu, so that one's way could be paved toward the attainment of ultimate happiness. Moreover, as Zargar's recent, erudite study on Islamic virtue ethics has documented, Islamic ethicists such as Miskawayh (d. 421/1030) and al-Ṭūsī consider human character to be malleable.[137] Following Galen, Miskawayh sees humans as having different innate potentials and inclinations that are not static, which can be reformed through appropriate moral actions. As Zargar says:

> Human character, according to Miskawayh, is malleable… Miskawayh envisions human reform as on a spectrum of malleability affected by inborn inclination, not solidified in some unchangeable nature.[138]

Indeed, all of the authors explored in this study mention the conventional self as something that needs to be reformed and transformed in order to actualize higher states of consciousness.[139] It is thus difficult to see how the self remains static and unchanging in such a picture.[140] Also, Kaukua's otherwise excellent study does not take into account the view of the self insofar as it is

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[134] Kaukua, *Self-Awareness,* 229.

[135] The idea of 'the transformation of the self' is brought out succinctly by Sara Sviri in her article "The Self and its Transformation in Sufism" in *Self and Self-transformation in the History of Religions,* eds. David Shulman and Guy G. Stroumsa (Oxford, NY: Oxford University Press, 2012), 195-215.

[136] The inspiration for the phrase 'sculpting the self' comes from Plotinus, *Enneads* I.6.9.7–25.

[137] Cyrus Zargar, *The Polished Mirror: Storytelling and the Pursuit of Virtue in Islamic Philosophy and Sufism* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2017), 86-91.

[138] Zargar, *Polished Mirror*, 89.

[139] See chs. 2-4 of this study.

[140] For more discussions on this, see ch. 5.

represented by the 'perfect human' (*al-insān al-kāmil*). The concept of the perfect human, which is *the highest level of selfhood at its utmost degree of perfection*, plays a notable role in Ṣadrā's metaphysical anthropology.[141] Thus, a comprehensive account of self in Ṣadrā would have to address the question of "what does it mean to be human" in the metaphysical sense. This means, much like in Neo-Platonism, an account of the self will be incomplete without considering what it is to be human in relation to God and His manifestation (e.g. nature) and human's existential return, since what is important in this system of thought is not just the question of "what a given self is," but rather "what a given self must become," implying that it is up to the individual to construct her own destiny. The doctrine of the "perfect human" comes full circle when the individual self is able to overcome and transcend the accidental factors of her personal identity, i.e. the conventional self usually shaped by heredity, personality, personal tendencies, capacities, fate and vocation, the fact of being born at a given place, given moment and undergoing given influences and experiences, and so on. In view of all this, I developed a "multi-dimensional" approach in this study, that would include bio-physiological, socio-cultural, psycho-metaphysical dimensions in order to present a more balanced and nuanced view.

Sara Sviri's brief but richly-documented article *"The Self and its transformation in Sufism"* fleshes out the dynamics of true self vs. false self (also called, the illusory or the lower self) dichotomy that takes the center stage in Sufi literature since its earliest days.[142] The study discusses how the Qur'anic vocabulary of self (*nafs*) that describes progressive states of the self eventually prompted the Sufis to develop a paradigm for the transformation of the lower self through various spiritual exercises such as effort, discipline, introspection, and also, divine grace into "the desired state of fulfilment."[143] In a similar vein, Taneli Kukkonen also analyzes Sufi philosophical conception of the self, especially in the writings of Qushayrī (d. 464/1072) and al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111).[144] On his view, the Platonic of view of a lower and a higher (true) self

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[141] The idea of the ultimate human (Gr. *anthrōpos teleios*), which became a fundamental doctrine of Islamic mysticism, goes back to Iranian and Hellenistic (Gnostic) sources; see e.g. A. Christensen, *Les Types du premier homme et du premier roi dans l'histoire légendaire des Iraniens* (Leiden-Uppsala, 1917 –34); M. Molé, *Culte, mythe et cosmologie dans l'Iran ancien: le problème zoroastrien et la tradition mazdéenne* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1963), 469ff.; On the notion of *anthrōpos teleios,* see Bryan S. Turner, *Orientalism: Early Sources*, vol. 1 (London, NY: Routledge, 2000), 577ff. As for Islamic sources, see Ibn ʿArabī, *al-Insān al-kāmil / min kalām Muḥyī al-Dīn ibn al-'Arabī* (ed.) Maḥmūd al-Ghurāb (Dameshq: Maṭbaʿat Zayd ibn Thābit, 1981); ʿAzīz-al-Dīn Nasafī, al-Ensān al-kāmel, ed. M. Molé (Tehran and Paris, 1962); Abd al-Karīm al-Jīlī, *Al-insān al-kāmil fī maʿrifat al-awākhir wa-l-awāʾil* (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Tārīkh al-'Arabī, 2000); Toshihiko Izutsu, *Sufism and Taoism: A Comparative Study of Key Philosophical Concepts* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1984), 247-286; R.A. Nicholson, *Studies in Islamic Mysticism* (Richmond: Curzon, 1994), 77-142; A. E. Affifi, *The Mystical Philosophy of Muḥiyy al-Dīn ibn al- ʿĀrabī* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1921), 78ff.; F. Meier, "Der Geistmensch bei dem persischen Dichter ʿAṭṭār," *EJ*, 13 (1945): 283 –353; L. Massignon, "L'homme parfait en Islam et son originalité eschatologique", *EJ*, 15 (1947): 287 –313 (*Opera Minora*, vol. 1, 107–125). See also ʿA. R. Badawī, *al-Insān al-kāmil fīʾl-Islām* (Kuwait: Wikālat al-Maṭbūʿāt, 1976).

[142] This may be said regarding the writings of most Islamic philosophers as well irrespective of their affiliation. For instance, Suhrawardī's Persian treatises are replete with self-talk and "what to make of oneself." The important point to realize is that these thinkers are not talking about the self in exactly the same ways, despite their pre-occupation with it. As many scholars including Rizvi (*op. cit.*) have pointed out, it is difficult to draw a line between philosophy, mysticism and religion in the case of many later Islamic thinkers. This is because these thinkers draw on a wide variety of texts from the rich menu of the Islamic intellectual tradition and often incorporate methods/insights from various scientific disciplines.

[143] Sviri, *The Self and its transformation in Sufism*, 197.

[144] Tuneli Kukkonen, "Sources of the Self in the Arabic Tradition. Remarks on the Avicennan Turn," in J. Kaukua and T. Ekenberg, eds., *Subjectivity and Selfhood in Medieval and Early Modern Thought* (Springer), 37–60.

echoes throughout the writings of these Sufis, although the direct or indirect influence of the former remains unclear at least in the formative period of Sufism.[145] Kukkonen also brings to light how the Sufis have developed the technique of "self-examination" that emphasizes the role of virtuous habits as the key to true self-knowledge.[146]

Summary

In summary, it can be said that the self is a notoriously ambiguous term for a number of reasons. It should be clear by now that without first distinguishing the soul from the self and taking into account various approaches by which contemporary scholars are trying to make sense of what the self might mean, any investigation of it would be limited, confused, or both. In particular, it would simply be anachronistic to use the word 'self' in English to talk about its counterpart(s) in Arabic or Persian, without first clarifying all the conceptual baggage that accompanies the term. One notable stumbling block in approaching the self in Islamic thought is the absence of a proper 'theoretical framework' that would be convenient in bringing out the multiple dimensions of the concept and its corresponding reality. It is here I believe my tri-partite model with its attendant idea of the self as a 'spectrum' and an 'aspirational' concept can be meaningfully employed.

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[145] Ibid., 49.

[146] Ibid., 54. Cf. Wayne J. Hankey, "Self and Cosmos in Becoming Deiform: Neoplatonic Paradigms for Reform by Self-knowledge from Augustine to Aquinas," in *Reforming the Church Before Modernity: Patterns, Problems and Approaches*, edited by Christopher M. Bellitto and Louis I. Hamilton (Aldershot: Ashgate Press, 2005).

Chapter Two: Mullā Ṣadrā: The Deliverance of the Self

Introduction

In the preceding chapter mention has been made of the significance of clarifying ambiguities regarding the word 'self' in English. In the present chapter, my aim is to probe Mullā Ṣadrā's theory of the self through the philosophico-philological method. I begin with the intellectual context in which Ṣadrā's philosophy flourished and the specific issues to which he found himself responding. After that I discuss the problems in and limitations of previous scholarship insofar as it deals with aspects of Ṣadrian selfhood. Next, I analyze at length Ṣadrā's contention that any perceptual acts, e.g., thinking, reflection or doubting already presuppose a prior acquaintance of the self with itself, which means self-knowledge precedes any form of activity, be they mental or physical. Following that I examine Ṣadrā's arguments for the levels of consciousness within the phenomenological structure of the self. In the next section, I explore Ṣadrā's central argument for the self's immateriality and its ethical implications. Thereafter I provide a synoptic analysis of the importance of self-knowledge as a stepping-stone into the 'aspirational' aspect of the Ṣadrian self. Subsequently, I dwell on Ṣadrā's claim that the self needs to perform a variety of 'spiritual exercises' if it is to attain felicity. Finally, I analyze the texts in which Ṣadrā ruminations about the mystical concept of the perfect human (*al-insān al-kāmil*) as being the highest level of selfhood that at the same time encapsulates the self's manifold dimensions through its all-encompassing consciousness.

Intellectual Context

In many ways the writings of Mullā Ṣadrā mark a new horizon in the history of Islamic philosophy, and he is duly credited with being the founder of an influential intellectual perspective commonly referred to as 'transcendent philosophy' (*al-ḥikma al-mutaᶜāliya*).[147] As a wide-ranging thinker and philosopher, Ṣadrā left a great body of work spanning a vast array of fields from Qur'anic exegesis (*tafsīr*), commentary on the traditions (*aḥādīth*), logic (*manṭiq*), philosophical Sufism (*ᶜirfān*), and ethics (*akhlāq*) to natural philosophy/physics (*ṭabīᶜiyyāt*), theology (*kalām*), and metaphysics (*ilāhiyyāt*). His oeuvre contains over forty-five works (some in several volumes) that draw on practically every field of Islamic intellectual learning from its inception until his own day.[148]

Mullā Ṣadrā was born in Shiraz into a relatively prosperous family (his father was a court

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[147] For Ṣadrā, philosophy is a "graded" concept in the sense that it allows one to move from one stage of philosophy to another. Thus, 'transcendent philosophy' makes room for discursive philosophy but at the same time, it "transcends" the latter by other higher modes of "intellection" such as unveiling (*kashf*), illumination (*ishrāq*) and direct witnessing (*shuhūd*). Moreover, Ṣadrā's philosophizing should be understood in the light of what Hadot calls "philosophy as a way of life," because it involves a set of "spiritual exercises" that goes hand in hand with conceptual understanding and mastering philosophical principles (that is, spiritual practices and epistemology go hand in hand). For an overview of the project of Ṣadrā's "transcendent philosophy," see Muhammad Faruque, "Mullā Ṣadrā and the Project of Transcendent Philosophy," *Religion Compass* 10.1 (2016): 3–14.

[148] For a chronology of Ṣadrā's works, see Sajjad Rizvi, *Mullā Ṣadrā Shīrāzī: His Life and Works and the Sources for Safavid Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press on behalf of the University of Manchester, 2007), 51ff. Nāhīd Bāqirī Khurramdashtī, *Kitābshināsī-i jāmiᶜ-i Mullā Ṣadrā* (Tehran: Bunyād-i Ḥikmat-i Islāmī-i Ṣadrā, 1999), 5ff.

employee) in the year 979–80 AH/1571–72 CE.[149] After completing his early education in various 'transmitted sciences' (al-ʿulūm al-naqliyya) such as grammar, (naḥw), Qurʾanic exegesis (tafsīr), jurisprudence (fiqh), and the science of the prophetic traditions (ʿilm al-ḥadīth), he moved first to Qazvin in 1591, and then to Isfahan in 1597, successive capitals of the Safavid empire. It was in these major centers of culture and civilization where Ṣadrā studied philosophy (both peripatetic philosophy and the Illuminationism of Suhrawardī) and theology with Mīr Dāmād, and tafsīr and Shīʿī aḥādīth (traditions of the Prophet and the Shīʿī Imams) with Shaykh Bahāʾī (d. 1031/1622). Both of these influential thinkers left an indelible impression on his intellectual and spiritual life, even though he disagrees with them on a number of philosophical issues.[150] Also, Ṣadrā was the immediate heir to some two hundred years of philosophico-theological speculation that had begun in the Tīmūrid period (1370-1507) in the city of Shiraz, where major figures such as Ṣadr al-Dīn Dashtakī (d. 903/1498), his son Ghiyāth al-Dīn (d. 949/1542) and Jalāl al-Dīn Dawānī (d. 907/1501) were active.[151] In his pioneering study, Reza Pourjavady avers that together with Jalāl al-Dīn Dawānī, the Dashtakīs are the three best-known scholars who were teaching philosophy and theology in the late 15th century Shīrāz.[152] It is important to note that the work of these figures played a prominent role in the intellectual formation of Ṣadrā, to whom he would often refer as "baʿḍ al-mutaʾakhkhirīn" (some of the modern/recent philosophers) in his treatises.[153] The revival of Islamic philosophy in Iṣfahān during the Safavid period, and especially the synthesis of Avicennian philosophy, Illuminationism and ʿirfān that came to characterize the philosophy of Mullā Ṣadrā himself, owes much to the Dashtakīs. In addition, Ṣadrā's philosophy shows a strong influence of Ibn ʿArabī and his school, especially in regard to his ontology and philosophy of self.[154]

Since Ṣadrā scholars often emphasize the synthesizing quality of Ṣadrā's philosophical project, in which the latter often harmonizes his philosophical views with the Qurʾan and Sufism, it is crucial to shed some light on the socio-religious context that was instrumental in giving rise to it.[155] Ṣadrā faced severe opposition from both extreme Sufis (ghulāt al-ṣūfiyya) and exoteric

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[149] The most comprehensive biography of Ṣadrā to date is Sayyid M. Khāminahʿī, Mullā Ṣadrā: zindagī, shakhṣiyyat wa-maktab-i Ṣadr al-Mutaʾallihīn (Tehran: Bunyād-i ḥikmat-i Islāmi-yi Ṣadrā, 2000) 7ff. See also, Ibrahim Kalin, Mullā Ṣadrā (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2014), chs. 1 and 2; Sayeh Meisami, Mullā Ṣadrā (Oxford: Oneworld, 2013), 1-17; Peter Adamson, A History of Philosophy without Any Gaps: Philosophy in the Islamic World (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 54-55.

[150] See, e.g. Khāminahʿī, Mullā Ṣadrā: zindagī, 206-22.

[151] See Qāsim Kākāʾī, "Āshnāyī bā maktab-i Shīrāz: Mīr Ghiyāth al-Dīn Dashtakī (1)," Khiradnāma-yi Ṣadrā, 5-6 (1996-97), 83-90; "Āshnāyī bā maktab-i Shīrāz: Mīr Ghiyāth al-Dīn Dashtakī (2)," Khiradnāma-yi Ṣadrā, 7 (1997), 59-67; "Āshnāyī bā maktab-i Shīrāz: Ṣadr al-Dīn Dashtakī (Sayyid-i Sanad)," Khiradnāma-yi Ṣadrā, 3 (1996-97), 82-89.

[152] Reza Pourjavady, Philosophy in Early Safavid Iran (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 32.

[153] For instance, in his general metaphysics (al-umūr al-ʿāmma), Mullā Ṣadrā broaches the debate between Jalāl al-Dīn Dawānī and the two Dashtakīs and evaluates their views concerning several key issues including the primacy (aṣalat) and modulation (tashkīk) of being, mental existence (al-wujūd al-dihnī), primary and essential predication (ḥaml al-awwalī al-dhātī), bodily resurrection, and the proof of the truthful (burhān al-ṣiddīqīn), all of which lend support to the underpinning of his own philosophical project, see Asfār, passim.

[154] On the influence of Ibn ʿArabī on Ṣadrā, see the excellent monograph of Nadrī Firishta, Taʾthīrāt-i Ibn 'Arabī bar Ḥikmat-i muṭaʿāliya (Tehran: Bunyād-i Ḥikmat-i Islāmi-yi Ṣadrā, 2007).

[155] For a comprehensive survey of the Safavid political, cultural and religious contexts when Ṣadrā was active, see the authoritative work of Rasūl Jaʿfariyān, Ṣafawiyah: Dar ʿurṣa-yi dīn, farhang wa siyāsat (3 vols.) (Qom: Pazhūhishkadah-i Ḥawza u Dānishgāh, 2001), 1:124-125, 2:518-548, 726-740. See also Kathryn Babayan, Mystics, Monarchs and Messiahs: Cultural Landscapes of Early Modern Iran (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002), 121-55, 398-420.

scholars, who were hostile to philosophy in general, and to Ṣadrā's transcendent philosophy in particular.[156] His philosophical project can largely be seen as a response to the aforementioned groups whose views, according to him, distorted the true face of tradition. Ṣadrā was in fact considered a heretic by the exoteric scholars, and was exiled to a small village called Kahak near the city of Qom for ten years after he had returned from Isfahan.[157] In response, Ṣadrā launches a vehement attack on whom he considered pseudo-Sufis and exoteric jurists in several of his tomes such as *Kasr aṣnām al-jāhiliyya*, *Sih aṣl*, *Asfār, Mafātīḥ al-ghayb, al-Mabdaʾ wa-l-maʿād* and *Tafsīr al-Qurʾān.* It is important to note, however, that he shows great respect for the Sufis whom he calls *mashāyikh al-ṣūfiyya* (the masters of Sufism) or *ʿārifūn* (gnostics), or *fuqarāʾ* (people of spiritual poverty), while he chastises those who embrace a more popular form of Sufism, associated mostly with popular practices such as wearing a Sufi garb, Sufi music (*samāʿ*), uttering ecstatic words, clapping, stamping and claiming miracles.[158] In speaking of the pseudo-Sufis' extravagant claims Sadra states:

> They [pseudo-Sufis] claim that Shariah is for someone who is still veiled, and not for those who have attained union (*wiṣāl*). Shariah is the husk (*qishr*), and until one does not tear it apart, one will not reach the kernel of secrets (*lubb al-asrār*); and so and so Shaykh has spoken with God innumerable times…[159]

Although he regards essential Sufi practices such as invocation (*dhikr*) and retreat (*khalwa*) highly, he thinks one needs to have a firm grounding in the Shariah before embarking on the true Sufi path.[160] In his autobiographical work *Sih aṣl* (*The Three Principles*), Ṣadrā introduces himself as '*khādim al-fuqarāʾ*,'[161] which is a noticeable allusion to the Sufis and might be taken to mean that he considers himself one of them.[162] In a similar vein, Ṣadrā also castigates legal

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[156] Some of the most vocal critics of Ṣadrā were Rajab ʿAlī Tabrījī (d. 1080/1669), Āqā Ḥusayn Khwānsārī (d. 1098/1687), Qāḍī Saʿīd Qummī (d. 1107/1696), Mīr Lawḥī (fl. 17th cent.) and Mullā Ṭāhir Qummī (d. 1134/1722). For more information on these figures, see Muhammad Faruque and Mohammed Rustom, "Rajab ʿAlī Tabrīzī's Refutation of Ṣadrian Metaphysics," in *Philosophy and the Intellectual Life in Shīʿah Islam*, edited by Sajjad Rizvi (Bloomsbury: The Shīʿah Institute Press, 2017), 184-207; Ata Anzali and S.M. Hadi Gerami, *Opposition to philosophy in Safavid Iran: Mullā Muḥammad Ṭāhir Qummī's Ḥikmat al-ʿĀrifīn* (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 3-30; Maryam Moazzen, *Formation of a Religious Landscape: Shiʿi Higher Learning in Safavid Iran* (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 215, 222-35, 239.

[157] For more documentation on this, see Kathryn Babayan, Sufis, Dervishes and Mullas, in Safavid Persia, edited by Charles Melville (London: I.B. Tauris, 1996), 126-130; and Sajjad Rizvi, *Mullā Sadrā Shīrāzī: His Life, Works and the Sources for Safavid Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 31-36.

[158] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Kasr aṣnām al-jāhiliyya,* edited by Muḥsin Jahāngīrī (Tehran: Bunyād Ḥikmat-i Islāmī-i Ṣadrā, 2002), 10-12, 63-64. For Ṣadrā's positive appraisal of Sufism, see p. 42 of this chapter.

[159] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Kasr aṣnām*, 26. The practice of distinguishing true Sufism from 'pseudo-Sufism' can be traced back to al-Ghazāliī. But it was Abū Ḥafṣ al-Nasafī (d. 536/1142) who wrote a brief treatise detailing twelve groups of claimants to Sufism, only one of which was on the right path. For an extended analysis, see Hamid Algar, "Impostors, Antinomians and Pseudo-Sufis: Cataloguing the Miscreants," *Journal of Islamic Studies*, 29.1 (2018): 25–47.

[160] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Kasr aṣnām*, 12-15.

[161] See Mullā Ṣadrā, *Risāla-yi sih aṣl,* edited by Seyyed Hossein Nasr (Tehran: Dānishkadah-'i ʿUlūm-i Maʿqūl va Manqūl, 1961), 5. On *Khādim al-fuqara,* see Leonard Lewisohn, "Sufism and School of Isfahan: Taṣawwuf and ʿIrfān in Late Safavid Iran Sufism," in *The Heritage of Sufism: III,* eds. L. Lewisohn and D. Morgan (Oxford: Oneworld, 1999), 3:97.

[162] On Ṣadrā's complex relation with Sufism, see Sajjad Rizvi, "Reconsidering the Life of Mullā Ṣadrā Shīrāzī (d. 1641): Notes towards an Intellectual Biography," *Iran* 40 (2002): 181-201.

scholars who, he asserts, have deviated from the true goal of Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*) and busied themselves instead in seeking wealth, fame, and power through their association with rulers. Ṣadrā denounces their failure to fathom the profound wisdom of the true Sufis and their inability to distinguish authentic Sufism from its deviant tendencies. Although by no means against the specific legal concept of *taqlīd* (imitation), Ṣadrā is decisively against blind following of one's tradition or custom, or rehearsal of arguments without an intellectual understanding, which is an oblique reference to the *akhbāriyyūn* (scripturalists) of his time who reject all forms of rational inquiry including philosophy and philosophical Sufism (*ʿirfān*).[163] Ṣadrā says:

> And how can one hope to attain guidance who is only satisfied in accepting the traditions (*al-athar wa-l-khabar*) with no proof, and who rejects the rules of thought and reflection?... Also, how can one hope to be guided to truth by merely adopting intellectual proofs, and without illuminating himself by the light of revealed religion (*bi-nūr al-sharʿ*)? I wish I knew how one may seek refuge in the intellect, when it is afflicted by incapacitation and limitation (*ḥaṣr*)… Surely, one who does not harmonize religion with intellect (*bi-taʿlīf al-sharʿ wa-l-ʿaql*) in this manner fails…[164]

Ṣadrā makes it abundantly clear that his philosophical project is a middle ground between Sufism, philosophy and the Shariah, while not underestimating the significance of any of these. So he urges the reader not to take his statements as "the result of unveiling (*mukāshafa*) and tasting (*dhawq*) or blind imitation of religion (*taqlīd al-sharīʿa*), without going through the process of intellectual proofs (*ḥujaj*) and demonstrations (*barāhīn*) and the rules they entail."[165] He holds that unveiling without demonstration is an insufficient condition for wayfaring (*sulūk*), just as mere discourse without unveiling is a great deficiency in spiritual wayfaring.[166] In his view, philosophy (*ḥikma*) does not challenge the truths of divinely ordained paths (*al-sharāyiʿ al-ḥaqqat al-ilāhiyya*). Rather, the aim behind both is one and the same (*shayʾ wāḥid*), i.e. the knowledge of Ultimate Truth (*al-ḥaqq al-awwal*), His attributes, and His acts…[167] He further asserts that "one who does not possess the knowledge of how to harmonize religious discourses (*li-taṭbīq al-khiṭābāt al-sharʿiyya*) with philosophical demonstrations says that they stand opposed to one another."[168]

Thus, according to Ṣadrā, one can strike a harmony between the Qurʾan, *burhān* (demonstration), and *ʿīrfān* (gnosis), without lapsing into contradiction because *true* philosophy does not contradict the 'essence' of scriptural truths.[169] In fact, Ṣadrā claims that philosophy has a 'prophetic' origin as it started not with Thales but with the prophet Adam and continued through Hermes and a number of other prophets until finally it reached ancient Greece, and thence to the Islamic world.[170] For Ṣadrā the attainment of truth requires illumination by the

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[163] For the Akhbārī-Uṣūlī dispute, see Robert Gleave, *Scripturalist Islam: the History and Doctrines of the Akhbārī School of Shīʿī School* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 1ff.

[164] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Sharḥ Uṣūl al-kāfī,* edited by Subḥānʿalī Kūshā (Tehran: Bunyād-i Ḥikmat-i Islāmī-yi Ṣadrā, 2007), 5:5ff.

[165] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Asfār*, 7: 326.

[166] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Asfār*, 7: 326.

[167] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Asfār*, 7: 326-327.

[168] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Asfār*, 7: 327.

[169] See e.g. Gholamreza Aavani and Nāṣir Muḥammadī, "Zaban-i Qurʾān wa-zaban-i tamthīl az dīdgāh-i Ṣadr al-mutaʾallihīn," *KNS* 54 (2008): 4–17, for an insightful analysis.

[170] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Ḥudūth al-ʿālam*, edited by Muḥammad Khājawī (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Mūlā, 1989), 272ff.

light of religion, even though one may have mastered all intellectual proofs/methods. He ends the discussion on the three-way relationship between philosophy, scripture and mystical illumination with an autobiographical note:

> Earlier I used to engage in [theoretical] discourse and its reiteration and often busied myself in studying the books of theoretically oriented philosophers (*al-ḥukamā᾽ al-naẓẓār*), until I thought I had learned something. However, when my inner eyesight (*baṣīra*) opened a little and I cast a glance at my own state. I saw therein that, although I had attained knowledge pertaining to the states of Origin, His transcendence over contingent and temporal attributes, and of the return of the human self (*al-nafs al-insāniyya*), I am far from apprehending the science of true realities, which cannot be known except through tasting (*dhawq*) and immediate intuition (*wijdān*). And these matters are also mentioned in the Book [of God] and the Sunnah under the [rubric] of knowledge of God, His attributes and Names, His prophets and books… all of which can only be learned through the teaching of God, and can only be unveiled by the light of prophecy and sanctity (*wilāya*).[171]

The Problematic of the Self

Perhaps a good place to begin Mullā Ṣadrā's exposition of the self would be to ask the question "how is knowledge of the self possible at all?" This is because any reflective statements concerning the nature and structure of the self presuppose the existence of a conscious self that is able to make all such statements. This is the reason Ṣadrā's theory of the self is initially determined by the question of 'self-knowledge' as we shall see in a moment. But before I address Ṣadrā's exposition of self-knowledge within the larger scheme of his theory of selfhood, it would be necessary to see how he problematizes the self and how previous scholarship has dealt with this issue.

Ṣadrā begins by admitting the difficulties that beset any investigation of selfhood owing to its multi-dimensionality and multiple modes of being that resist any simplistic considerations. He says:

> [T]he human self (*al-nafs al-insāniyya*) does not have a known station in its identity (*huwiyya*),[172] nor does it have a determined level (*daraja muᶜayyana*) in existence like other natural, psychic and intellectual existents, for each of these has a known station. Rather, the human self has different stations and levels (*maqāmāt wa-darajāt*), and it has both antecedent and subsequent modes of being (*wa-lahā nash᾽āt sābiqa wa-lāḥiqa*), and in each station and world it takes a different form. As it is said:

> > My heart has become capable of every form:
> > It is a pasture for gazelles and a convent for Christian monks.[173]

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[171] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Tafsīr al-Qur᾽ān al-karīm*, edited by Muḥammad Khwājawī (Qom: Intishārāt-i Bīdār, 1987-90), 7:10.

[172] To remain consistent, I render *huwiyya* as 'identity,' although in Ṣadrā's usage, the term sometimes has the connotation of 'I-ness.'

[173] Ibn ᶜArabī, *Tarjumān al-ashwāq*, trans. R. A. Nicholson (London: Royal Asiatic Society, 1911), XI, 5:67.

However, it is very difficult to perceive and hard to comprehend both the nature of its reality (*ṣaʿuba idrāk ḥaqīqatihi*) and its identity (*huwiyyatihi*). The [philosophers'] tribe has only understood the reality of the self insofar as what is necessary for its existence with respect to the body and its accidents of perception and motion (*ʿawāriḍihi al-idrākiyya wa-l-taḥrīkiyya*). They have not grasped its states except from the aspect of what is attached to it from perception and movement.[174]

The above passage is representative of how Ṣadrā approaches the problem of selfhood. Although he accepts the peripatetic definition of the *nafs* as the "first perfecttion of an organic natural body that has life potentially,"[175] he criticizes them for falling short of understanding the self's true nature beyond its functional activities such as nutrition, locomotion and perception that correspond to nutritive, sensitive and rational souls respectively. The poem of Ibn ʿArabī that Ṣadrā cites in this context sets the tone for his conception of selfhood and subjectivity, since through it he affirms that the self is capable of taking on every form, i.e., various religious identities such as Christians, Jews, Muslims or even idol worshippers[176] depending on the beliefs and customs associated with one's environment and upbringing.[177]

However, in Ṣadrā's view, philosophers are not the only ones who fail to appreciate the self's (*nafs*) true reality. He also launches a scathing attack on the masses, who are unable to conceive the self's transcendence beyond its sensible structure (*al-bunya al-maḥsūsa*):

The majority of Muslims are of the opinion and believe that human is nothing but this sensible structure (*al-bunya al-maḥsūsa*), I mean the body composed of flesh, blood, bones, blood-vessels and what resembles them from the material bodies, and what inheres in them from accidents and qualities, activity and passivity (*al-aʿrāḍ wa-l-kayfiyyāt al-fiʿliyya wa-l-infiʿāliyyā*) in a particular mode which is the human form...[178]

Ṣadrā complains that most of his contemporaries are heedless of the self's (*al-nafs*) true reality, its mode of higher and lower levels (*kayfiyyat darajātihā*), its way-stations and its places of ascension, and the fact that its origin is from God and its setting and return is toward Him.[179] In his view, one who ignores the self (*al-nafs*) and does not know the reality of its essence remains the most ignorant concerning the knowledge of one's Creator, while one who comes to know the

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[174] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Asfār,* 8: 398-99.

[175] Aristotle, *De Anima*, 412b5, in *The Complete Works of Aristotle: The Revised Oxford Translation*, edited by Jonathan Barnes (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1984); Cf. *idem.*, *Metaphysics*, 1017b, 1035b.

[176] The full poem reads as follows: My heart has become capable of every form: it is a pasture for gazelles and a convent for Christian monks,
And a temple for idols and the pilgrim's Kaʻba and the tables of the Tora and the book of the Koran.
I follow the religion of Love: Whatever way Love's camels take, that is my religion and my faith, see Ibn ʿArabī, *Tarjumān al-ashwāq*, trans. R. A. Nicholson, XI, 5:67.

[177] This is what I call 'the socio-cultural dimension' of the self. It is important to note however that although the self may be influenced by various socio-cultural factors, the ideal, according to Ṣadrā, is to realize its metaphysical nature. For more analyses, see pp. 101-02 of the present chapter.

[178] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Asfār*, 9: 250. *'Insān'* here connotes the reality of human nature, hence the passage indirectly refers to the self.

[179] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Asfār* 9: 251.

reality of the self, alongside its inner reality,[180] the mode of its attachment to the body (*ḥaqīqat al-nafs wa-māhiyyatahā wa-inniyyatahā wa-kayfiyyat taᶜalluqahā bi-l-badan*), gradual ascent, intensification in its being (*ishtidād wujūdihā*), resurrection to the next level, return to the intellect in actu (*rujūᶜahā ilā al-ᶜaql bi-l-fiᶜl*), and finally, its journey to God, attains the status of the divine knower (*al-ᶜārif al-rabbānī*).[181] Such an individual, owing to the experience of her inner illumination, realizes that the self begins its journey as a corporeal entity yet to be called a self and then through substantial motion (*al-ḥaraka al-jawhariyya*) becomes a self, then an intellect, and then a divine ray that attains transcendence by its immersion in the ocean of God's exclusive unity (*al-aḥādiyya*).[182] Ṣadrā then goes on to state that both Milesian (*al-maliyyīn*)[183] and the foremost Islamic philosophers establish the view that the motion of the self (*nafs*) after death is not biological, as is the case when it resides 'in' a physical body. Rather, the post-mortem stage of the self's (*nafs*) development takes shape in an imaginal body (*al-jism al-mithālī*) based on previous deeds and spiritual actions performed on earth. In other words, an imaginal body begins to develop from the physical body in accordance with the "acquired" dominant dispositions of the *nafs*.[184] Ṣadrā also takes religious scholars, especially the jurists (*fuqahā*) to task for paying insufficient attention to the matters of the self (*al-nafs*).[185] He expresses his dismay at people who claim to have knowledge of religion and yet remain satisfied at the level of the masses, and do not occupy themselves with the purpose of knowing the reality of their self. He laments that legal scholars spend all their time on secondary matters of jurisprudence (*fiqh*) such as marriage and divorce, inheritance, political succession (*khilāfa*) etc., whereas they take the self's return (*maᶜād*) to its origin (*mabdaʾ*) for granted, without knowing

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[180] The word *anniyya* or *inniyya* (if vowelled) is almost certainly derived from the conjunction *anna* (that), or from the adverb *inna* (truly). In his *al-Taᶜrīfāṭ*, al-Jurjānī defines it as "the realization of individual existence in view of its essential degree," which is also found in al-Kāshānī's (d. 1329) *Iṣṭilāḥāt al-ṣūfiyya*. The 'Kindī circle' first developed the term *anniyya* to render a specific Greek infinitive *'to einai'* (to be, being), which in Arabic transliteration reads as *āniyya*. Richard Frank argues that the term's real model lay in Syriac rather than in Greek, which, however, is not the prevalent view. In any case, the notion that *anniyya* connotes existence at the level of the individual resulted in a trend in Sufism to relate it to the first person singular pronoun in Arabic, *anā* ('I'). This was most likely prompted by the analogy of the term *huwiyya*, an abstract noun self-evidently derived from the masculine third person singular pronoun, *huwa*. In Ṣadrā's usage the term, in the context of his theory of selfhood, is always vowelled and strongly suggests something related to the reality of the 'I.' I thus consistently render it as 'inner reality' (i.e. inner reality of the self). An alternative possibility could be 'I-ness.' For more information, see Richard M. Frank, The origin of the Arabic philosophical term *annīyah*, *Cahiers de Byrsa* 6 (1956), 181–201; and Toby Mayer, "Anniyya," in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam, THREE*, Edited by: Kate Fleet, Gudrun Krämer, Denis Matringe, John Nawas, Everett Rowson. Consulted online on 20 December 2017 <http://dx.doi.org.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/10.1163/1573-3912_ei3_COM_22817>
[181] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Asfār,* 9: 251.
[182] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Asfār,* 9: 251.
[183] I.e. Thales, Anaximander et al.
[184] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Asfār,* 9: 121, 252. However, it must be kept in mind that this is not another body or even a 'thing' that is superimposed upon or attached to the physical body. Rather, this doctrine is to be understood in the sense of the physical body's integration into the subtle body. The more the soul becomes perfect in its existence (according to Ṣadrā's doctrines of the primacy of being (*aṣālat al-wujūd*) and substantial motion), the more the body becomes limpid and subtle, and its attachment with the soul becomes stronger and more intense.
[185] A similar scathing attack on the jurists and the exoteric scholars of religion has been carried out by Ibn ᶜArabī in the chapter 54 of his magnum opus, *al-Futūḥāt al-makkiyya*, which might have had an influence on Ṣadrā, see *idem*., *al-Futūḥāt al-makkiyya*, ch. 54. For an extended analysis of this chapter, see James Morris, *Ibn ᶜArabī on the Contrasting Perspective of 'Sufis and Mullahs,'* forthcoming. [Thanks to Prof. Morris for kindly sharing the draft of this article.]

what such a return in terms of the self's movement entails.[186] Moreover, Ṣadrā's believes that only having faith in the Resurrection or carrying out ordinary religious injunctions would not be enough, since real resurrection will not take place until one realizes that there are subtle bodies (*ajsām laṭīf*) other than the physical body that must be cast aside as the self (*nafs*) continues its ascent toward its origin.[187] According to Ṣadrā, the reason why most of these people have failed to realize the true identity of their self is that they have mistaken their physical body for the 'I,' which represents their true self. This mis-identification occurs because of the unified species (*nawᶜ waḥdānī*) that comes about when the body and the *nafs* form a natural bond (*ᶜalāqa ṭabīᶜiyya*), thereby giving rise to a true compound:

> It is because of the natural bond (*ᶜalāqa ṭabīᶜiyya*) that exists between the *nafs* and the body that a unified species (*nawᶜ waḥdānī*) results from their union, which then gives rise to a definition of the true compound as the genus (*jins*) is derived from the body and the differentia (*faṣl*) from the *nafs*… And it is because of that very bond of union that the *nafs* points to the body by the referent 'I,' (*anā*), just as it points to its own self by the same 'I,' even though most people have forgotten their self (*dhātihā*) and imagined that their identity (*huwiyya*) lies with the body (*wa-ẓannū anna huwiyyatahum hiya l-badan*).[188]

So much for Ṣadrā's criticism of philosophers' and the multitudes' failure to grasp the self's complexity and multifacetedness. Let me now briefly assess the merits of previous scholarship that sheds some light on Ṣadrā's theory of the self before moving on to present his original conception of selfhood. In his 1975 monograph on Ṣadrā's general philosophy, Fazlur Rahman analyses the latter's concept of the soul[189] in some measure by placing it in the Aristotelian-Avicennan framework of 'faculty psychology.' This enables him to discuss such issues as 'cognitive functions' of the soul and 'body-soul dualism' within the larger Aristotelian-Avicennan synthesis. Nevertheless, Rahman manages to identify several novelties in Ṣadrā's 'psychology' such as the doctrine that "the soul/self is all of the faculties" (*al-nafs kull al-quwā*) in light of another fundamental principle in Ṣadrian metaphysics—"the simple reality is all things but none of them at the same time" (*basīṭ al-ḥaqīqa kull al-ashyāʾ wa-laysa bi-shayʾ minhā*).[190] Rahman rightly points out that for Ṣadrā, such a doctrine does not mean that the self is the aggregate of all the faculties, since for Ṣadrā, an aggregate has no existence apart from the particulars which comprises it. Rather in light of the principle—"the simple reality is all things"—one should understand that what the multiplicity is at one level of existence, unity is precisely that at a simpler, higher level of existence. Thus the faculties appear real and distinct at their own level but at the higher, simpler level, they are subsumed by the unity of the soul.[191] In

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[186] Mullā Ṣadrā, *al-Mabdaʾ wa-l-maᶜād,* 2: 714-15. Ṣadrā's criticism of the jurists is a running theme in several of his tomes, although it must be kept in mind that he is not opposed to the legal dimension of Islam in itself. Rather, he criticizes the jurists' worldliness and their neglect of the true of purpose of the Shariah, which, according to him, is self-knowledge and knowledge of God, see for instance, Mullā Ṣadrā, *Kasr al-aṣnām*, 38-41, 154-55, 186.

[187] Mullā Ṣadrā, *al-Mabdaʾ wa-l-maᶜād,* 2: 715.

[188] Mullā Ṣadrā, *al-Mabdaʾ wa-l-maᶜād,* 2: 465.

[189] Rahman does not make a distinction between the soul and the self, although he does use the word self at times, see Fazlur Rahman, *The Philosophy of Mullā Ṣadrā* (Albany: SUNY, 1975), *passim.*

[190] For the Plotinian background of this doctrine in the *Enneads*, see Sajjad Rizvi, *Mulla Sadra and Metaphysics: Modulation of Being* (Oxford, NY: Routledge, 2009), 104.

[191] See Fazlur Rahman, *The Philosophy of Mullā Ṣadrā*, 204.

addition, Rahman also deals with Ṣadrā's account of the first-order and the second-order awareness, although he misinterprets the latter's position in this regard, as will be made clear soon.[192] Furthermore, Rahman mistakenly concludes that the highest goal of the Ṣadrian self is to attain union with the Universal Intellect or the Active Intellect as one normally encounters in peripatetic Neoplatonism.[193] Christian Jambet's *L'acte d'être* is a hermeneutical study of Mullā Ṣadrā's philosophy in the tradition of Henry Corbin with a focus on the concepts of 'the act of being' and 'the imagination.' Nevertheless, the study treats the notion of the soul/self[194] at some length. However, like Rahman, he restricts his analysis of the Ṣadrian self within the larger Aristotelian-Avicennan paradigm, and consequently, fails to address issues pertaining to 'self-knowledge,' 'disembodiment' (*tajarrud*) and 'self-cultivation' that are central to Ṣadrā's conception of the self. Jari Kaukua's seminal treatment of the concept of 'self-awareness' in Islamic philosophy has already been discussed in chapter 1 (see ch.1, pp. 30-32). In many ways, this recent study improves upon both Rahman's and Jambet's study by bringing out the first-personal distinctiveness of the notion of 'self-awareness.' While Kaukua's analysis of 'self-awareness' in Ṣadrā is illuminating, it nonetheless fails to ground the phenomenon in its proper context. A close reading of the texts themselves show that what Ṣadrā is largely concerned with is 'self-knowledge,' while first-personal self-awareness appears in the equation insofar as it is the self's primary mode of knowing itself. Also, it should be noted, as Kaukua himself admits, that there is no chapter bearing the title "self-awareness" in Ṣadrā's oeuvre.[195] So the reconstruction of the notion seems inadequate as a 'theory of the self.' It is thus no surprise that Kaukua's Ṣadrian self, as primitive, first-personal self-awareness, is too thin or minimal to account for the more foundational issues of self-knowledge and ethico-spiritual transformation, or simply, the multidimensional, hierarchic structure of the Ṣadrian self. As will be made clear, Ṣadrā spends a great deal of time explaining how self-knowledge and spiritual exercises mutually inform and condition each other, which in turn results in the full actualization of the self through substantial motion (*al-ḥaraka al-jawhariyya*). In all, the following table summarizes the limitations of previous scholarship:

Issues	Rahman (1975)	Jambet (2002)	Kaukua (2014)
Multidimensionality of the self[196]	no	no	no

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[192] Rahman, *The Philosophy of Mullā Ṣadrā,* 214. Rahman quips that Ṣadrā's distinction between first-order and second-order statements concerning self-knowledge is unsound, since according him, Ṣadrā does not show how first-order statements such as "I know myself" can be identical with the self. This is because one can express primary self-intuition statements such as "I know myself" in an indirect manner, e.g. "I know *that* I am," hence primary self-knowledge itself will be of conceptual order, unable thereby to establish its identity with the self. However, this way of putting things misconstrues what Ṣadrā says concerning the identity between the self and self-knowledge because it neglects Ṣadrā's careful distinction between 'pre-reflective self-knowledge' and 'effective self-knowledge,' which I analyze at length in the following pages. See pp. 44ff.
[193] Rahman, *The Philosophy of Mullā Ṣadrā,* 232.
[194] Jambet uses the terms soul and self interchangeably without explaining their first-personal vs. third-personal positionality. However, Jambet's brief foray into Ṣadrian subjectivity has the virtue of emphasizing the dynamism of the self or what I call the self's 'becoming,' which is significant.
[195] Kaukua, *Self-Awareness in Islamic Philosophy*, 61. In contrast, there are several chapters or even parts of the book (e.g. *Asfār, Mabdaʾ wa-l-maʿād, Mafātīḥ* etc.) that explicitly bear the title 'self' or 'self-knowledge.'
[196] See chapter 1 of the present study.

Soul-self distinction[197]	no	no	no
First-person perspective vs. third-person perspective (i.e. subjective vs. objective view of the self)[198]	no	no	limited
Self-knowledge and its relation with ethico-spiritual transformation	no	no	no
Disembodiment (*tajrīd*) of the self	very limited	very limited	limited
Ṣadrā's integration of mystical concepts of annihilation (*fanāʾ*) and the perfect human (*insān al-kāmil*) into this theory of selfhood	no	very limited	no
Heavy reliance on *Asfār*	yes	yes	yes

The View from the 'I:' Consciousness and Self-Knowledge Prior to Ṣadrā

It was not perhaps until Avicenna (and Suhrawardī after him) that the question of "how self-knowledge is possible at all" was addressed in a systematic manner by introducing the concept of self-awareness (*shuʿūr bi-l-dhāt*). Although Avicenna is read in some circles as being a forerunner of Cartesianism and a proponent of 'substance-dualism' because of his sharp distinction between the body and the soul as being two different substances, in reality Avicenna's philosophy of self is much more nuanced in that it begins with a concept of the self that must be phenomenologically discerned at the level of pre-reflective, background awareness preceding any conscious action, perception or reflection. This means consciousness and self-knowledge precede any third-personal psycho-physiological descriptions involving various external and internal senses. In other words, consciousness is not explicable on the basis of the self's physiological activities. Below is a representative passage from the *Ishārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt* (Remarks and Admonitions) that fleshed out how self-knowledge through self-awareness is prior to any human activities including elementary perception:

> Return to your self and reflect. If you are healthy, or rather in some states of yours other than health such that you discern a thing accurately, do you ignore the existence of yourself and not affirm it? To me this [ignoring and not affirming] does not befit one who has intellectual vision. One's self does not escape even the one asleep in his sleep and the

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[197] See ch. 1 of the present study.

[198] See ch. 1 of the present study. Although Kuakua treats 'self-awareness as first-personality' at length in his book *Self-Awareness in Islamic Philosophy*, he does not dwell on the distinction between 'first-person' and 'third-person' perspectives on the self, as elaborated in ch. 1.

intoxicated in his intoxication, even though its representation to oneself is not fixed in memory.[199]

In the above Avicenna argues that one never ceases to be aware of oneself, even during sleep or in a state of drunkenness, a theme which Suhrawardī elaborates further as we shall see shortly, because any human action, conscious or subconscious, presupposes the existence of a background self or subject that must be there to experience it (e.g. to experience the state of intoxication).

Suhrawardī, the founder of illuminationist philosophy, like Avicenna, stresses the significance of phenomenological approach (see below) when it comes to investigating the basic nature of the human self. For instance, using phenomenological arguments Suhrawardi brings to light the following features of the self or the "I:" it is "simple," i.e. cannot be split in two; it is indivisible (as it cannot be a composite of genus and species); it must be self-given and no part of it can remain hidden from itself; it is self-referential; and finally, its self-awareness is continuous that is unbroken even during sleep.[200] Since Mullā Ṣadrā's (and to some extent Iqbal's) theory of the self relies heavily on Suhrawardī's discussion on the relationship between self-knowledge and consciousness (i.e. how does the self know itself), I will spend some time unpacking the latter's exposition concerning it.

Suhrawardī argues that the way one has knowledge of one's self or one's 'I' cannot be through a representation or a mental form because the representation always presents itself as an 'it' (*hiya*) in relation to the 'I.' In other words, my 'representation' of myself is something other than my "self," precisely because it is a "representation" in relation to my 'I.' Someone might object at this point by suggesting that perhaps the 'representation' is exactly identical with the 'I' so that one cannot differentiate the 'I-it' dichotomy with regard to it. However, Suhrawardī would then appeal to the phenomenological premise that "one is never absent from oneself," which means the self's knowledge of itself is always presential (*ḥuḍūrī*) and not acquired (*ḥuṣūlī*). That is, it is a bare fact of existence that the self simply is "present" to itself, and it *cannot be otherwise* if we are to make sense of anything in the world. This is because for there to be any proposition in the form of "I know X" or "X is Y" one must presuppose a "subject" that knows something or makes judgement about something. This is true even of those propositions where the subject term does not directly involve any indexicals, e.g. every effect has a cause. In other words, one must presuppose a conscious subject in order to make any meaningful statement about the world.[201] Suhrawardī says:

> The self-subsistent, self-conscious thing does not apprehend its essence by an image of its essence in its essence. If its knowledge is by an image and if the image of its self is not

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[199] Avicenna, *al-Ishārāt wa-al-tanbīhāt, li-Abī ʿAlī Ibn Sīnā maʿa sharḥ Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī wa-taḥqīq Sulaymān Dunyā* (Cairo: Dār al-Maʿārif [1957]-), 343-45, trans. S. Inati, modified in *Ibn Sina's Remarks and Admonitions: Physics and Metaphysics: an Analysis and Annotated translation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014), 94.

[200] See Shihāb al-Dīn Suhrawardī, *Majmūʿah-yi muṣannafāt-i Shaykh-i Ishrāq*, *passim*. Exact references are given below. Although both Yazdi and Kaukua have dealt with Suhrawardī's notion of self-awareness, my analysis differs from them in at least two important respects: 1) in contrast to both Yazdi and Kaukua, I have drawn from Suhrawardī's Persian treatises (in addition to the Arabic) that discuss self-knowledge and self-awareness from a different angle, and 2) my analysis bring to light the relationship between self-knowledge and self-awareness that is absent in these authors. Cf. Yazdi, *Principles of Epistemology in Islamic Philosophy*, 54ff. and Kaukua *Self-Awareness in Islamic Philosophy,* 106ff.

[201] See, e.g. Suhrawardī, *Muṭāraḥāt*, in *Majmūʿah-yi muṣannafāt-i Shaykh-i Ishrāq*, 1:484.

the self itself, the image of the self would be an "it" in relation to the self. In that case, that which was apprehended would be an image. Thus, it follows that while the apprehension of its self is precisely its apprehension of what it is itself, its apprehension of its essence would also be the apprehension of what it is itself, its apprehension of its essence would also be the apprehension of something else—which is absurd. This is not the case with external objects, since the image and its object are each an "it."[202]

Another way to argue about why knowledge of the self cannot be through a representation is to say that one either *knows* that the representation is identical to one's self or one does not. However, if one says that one does not know oneself that implies a contradiction because it is still a form of cognition, and hence implies knowledge. So this is ruled out. If, on the other hand, one knows that one's representation is "identical" to oneself, then one knows that it is "identical" to oneself. However, the twist in the argument, according to Suhrawardī, lies in the second-order awareness[203] because "I come to know that my 'I' is identical with its representation," i.e., I know that "I is equal to its representation," which is enough to show that the 'I' is other than "its representation." Suhrawardī's argument is presented below:

> Know that when you know yourself, you do not do so because of a form of thou-in-thou, because knowing your thou-ness by a representation can be in only of two ways: either you know that the representation of your thou-ness is equal to thou or you do not. If you do not know that the representation is the same as your thou-ness, then you would not know your self, while we are here assuming that you do know it. If you do know that representation of your thou-ness is equal to thou, then you would have known yourself with the representation of your thou-ness so as to know that it is equal to your thou. Therefore your knowledge of yourself is not by the representation. It can only be that your self is a self-subsistent entity, free from corporeality and always self-conscious.[204]

In his *Muṭāraḥāt*, Suhrawardī also argues that the most basic form of 'self-cognition' is always characterized by its particularity. That is to say, if I were to know myself through a representation then that representation, insofar as it is a mental concept, has to be a universal (*kullī*) that does not individuate (universals such as animal can be predicated of several individuals at the same time), whereas my knowledge of myself as being a 'me' is always particular and has the character of "for-me-onlyness."[205] In other words, my knowledge of myself has the feel that it is only me who is the subject of this particular experience, and such an experience, for the reason of its particularity, will not be applicable to another self. All of this goes on to show that my knowledge of myself must be 'presential' (*ḥuḍūrī*), since otherwise we would always fall into the trap of the 'I-it' distinction that Suhrawardī mentioned. Suhrawardī also broaches several arguments to prove that the self must exist as an incorporeal entity that is always self-conscious. The following argument can be termed as 'argument from universality:'

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[202] Suhrawardī, *Ḥikmat al-ishrāq (The Philosophy of Illumination),* ed. and translated by John Walbridge and Hossein Ziai (Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 1999), 85.

[203] I.e. the awareness whereby we reflect on our conscious activities.

[204] Suhrawardī, *The Book of Radiance*, 39 (trans. modified).

[205] Modern philosophers also talk about the feature of "what-it-is-likeness" that is irreducible to anything further, see Thomas Nagel, "What Is It Like to Be a Bat?," *Philosophical Review* 83 (1974): 435–450. For views that oppose Nagel's perspective, see P. M. S. Hacker, "Is There Anything It Is like to be a Bat?," *Philosophy* 77.300 (2002): 157-174.

You know the idea of 'animal' as a universal such that you are able to predicate it of an elephant just as you predicate it of a mosquito. You have not determined a specific measure or a specific nature for this general animal. Thus, there exists a form in you that can be predicated equally to all particular animals differentiated by measure and place. If this general meaning 'animal' in your mind required taking on the particularized form of an elephant, then it is certain that it would no longer be general and could no longer be predicated in the same manner to a mosquito. But since the idea 'animal' is predicated equally of all animal kinds—and it has no specific shape, measure or position—then it does enter into a body or anything subsisting in a body; for bodies have quantifiable attributes… your essential self is, therefore, neither a body nor anything in a body nor anything extended in space.[206]

In the above Suhrawardī begins with the premise that bodies have quantifiable attributes; hence whatever is determined by a body must necessarily result in specifically measurable attributes such as position and shape. Now if we take a universal such as an animal we see that as a universal it does not possess any specific measure or shape, which is to say that it is equally predicable upon all particular animals such as elephants and giraffes. Then we observe that this universal enters the body and subsists in it as a universal. However, the body qua body cannot sustain or give birth to something that is unquantifiable or indeterminate. Hence the presence of the universe in us proves that our self must neither be a body nor anything extended in space-time, implying that it is immaterial.

Moreover, Suhrawardī argues that we know ourselves directly through our consciousness that is the very nature of the self. This means I can't be absent from my self because my reality is ever-present to myself through the uninterrupted self-awareness that is indistinguishable from my 'mineness.' Suhrawardī writes:

Know that you are never absent from your self and never unaware of it. Even though you may be in a state of wild intoxication, and forget yourself and become unaware of your limbs, yet you know that you exist and your self too exists… every now and then your flesh and skin changes but your 'thou-ness' does not. In like manner, the knowledge of your parts, limbs, heart, brain and whatever is inside can only be obtained through dissection, without which you are hardly aware of their states. However, you become aware of yourself through self-perception. This shows that your reality lies beyond your bodily organs and your thou-ness cannot be found in your body. Your self cannot be found in something of which you are sometimes aware and sometimes forgetful. Know that what is indicated by your 'self' is called 'I,' and whatever lies in the material world belongs to the realm of 'it.' And whatever is indicated by 'it' can be either universal or particular, since you dissociated your self from it by your 'I-ness.'[207]

Several points can be noted from the above. In the first part of the passage Suhrawardī refers to what I call "the never-absent awareness" of the self. At first blush, his statement that even in a state of intoxication where one forgets one's ordinary self one is not really absent from oneself may strike us rather strange, since it is a commonplace that one's consciousness does seem to get

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[206] Suhrawardī, *The Book of Radiance*, 25 (trans. modified).
[207] Suhrawardī, *Bustān al-qulūb* in *Majmūᶜah-yi muṣannafāt-i Shaykh-i Ishrāq*, 3:363-64.

cloudy in those moments. However, the argument starts to make much sense as soon as we discern the phenomenological differences that exist between various kinds of actions. For instance, when my eyes focus very attentively on the computer screen in front of me, there are three components that can be analyzed distinctly from one another: 1) the subject (my eyes), 2) the object (the screen), and 3) the experience of seeing. Now under normal circumstances when we operate with our ordinary awareness we can always identify these components as being distinct from one another. However, what happens when my eyes are too focused on the screen because I have just seen something extremely interesting? Immediately after having that kind of experience we come to a momentary realization that "it seems as though for a few moments 'I' lost myself in that experience, or as though 'I' was not there for a while!" But can it really be granted that "I was not there" while the "act of seeing" took place? Can there be an act without presupposing a bearer of that act, i.e. a subject? If the obvious answer is 'no,' how else might one explain the fact that there are indeed those moments, e.g. being completely absorbed in something when one seems to lose one's awareness? One would explain such phenomena by asserting that in the absorbed or focused moments 'the subject of experience' and 'the experience' itself become one and the same, giving one the impression that the subject or the 'underlying consciousness' somehow disappeared from the scene, which cannot be the case because of its ontological impossibility. That is to say, even when one is intoxicated, there is a background awareness that is operative in those moments, even though the intoxicated person may not be aware of that awareness. This is because without this background awareness it makes little sense to say that "there is the experience or the phenomenon of intoxication, while there was no one (i.e. subject) to experience it!" If this is now established, then Suhrawardī can say that one's awareness of oneself is continuous and unceasing. However, one may still point out that our ordinary experience of the first order and second order awareness is never uninterrupted, and Suhrawardī must be aware of this commonplace observation.[208] Thus the background awareness to which he refers must be pre-reflective, i.e. one that does not involve conscious reflection.[209] With this in place, Suhrawardī is now in a position to argue that our awareness of the various parts of our body is hardly continuous or unmediated. But this is not so with regard to our self about which we have a direct knowledge (as proved earlier). This again shows that the

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[208] Cf. Andrea Nightingale, "The 'I' and 'Not I' in Augustine's Confessions," *Arion* 23.1 (2015): 55-78.

[209] A number of modern philosophers have also developed the concept of 'pre-reflective awareness,' though via a different route than the one Suhrawardī pursued. More importantly, some of these recent philosophers (e.g. the early Sartre) draw a non-egological concept of self from the phenomenon of pre-reflective awareness, which, however, is not the case with Suhrawardī or other Islamic philosophers. On non-egological self, see A. Gurwitsch, "A Non-Egological Conception of Consciousness," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 1.3 (1941): 325–38; J. P. Sartre, *La transcendance de l'ego* (Paris: Vrin, 1936); *The Transcendence of the Ego,* trans. F. Williams and R. Kirkpatrick. New York: The Noonday Press, 1957. 67ff. In addition to Sartre, many other phenomenologists, including Husserl, Stein, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty and Henry defended the view. For a comprehensive discussion, see Dan Zahavi, *Self-Awareness and Alterity: A Phenomenological Investigation* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1999), 14ff. Apart from phenomenology, similar ideas can be found in the work of a group of German philosophers comprising Henrich, Cramer, Pothast and Frank and known as the 'Heidelberg School.' For more information, see Dan Zahavi, "The Heidelberg School and the Limits of Reflection," in *Consciousness: Studies In The History Of Philosophy of Mind,* edited by S. Heinämaa et al. (Springer, Dordrecht, 2007), 267ff. Recently, analytic philosophers of mind such as Kriegel have defended comparable ideas by advocating a type of neo-Brentanian self-representationalism. See e.g. Uriah Kriegel, "Consciousness and Self-Consciousness," *Monist* 87.2 (2004): 182–205. See also, Edmund Husserl, *Husserliana 18: Logische Untersuchungen. Erster Band. Prolegomena zur reinen Logik. (Den Haag: Martinus Nijhoff,* 1975*) 35ff./ Logical Investigations* (Trans. J. N. Findlay (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1970), 41–247.

reality of our self must be incorporeal. Finally, he also identifies the self with the first-personal indexical 'I.' The same argument with some modification was also presented in *Hayākil al-nūr*:

> Know that you are never unaware of your self, while there is no part in your body of which you remain unaware sometimes or the other. However, you never forget yourself and knowing everything depends on depends on knowing their parts so that if you do not know the particular you cannot know the universal. So if your "thou-ness" belonged to the body or parts of it, you would not have known at that time if you have forgotten your self. Therefore, your "thou-ness" is neither this body, nor some of its parts; rather it is beyond all these.[210]

Finally, in *Bustān al-qulūb*, Suhrawardī presents some thoughtful meditations on the nature of the relationship between self-knowledge and the body:

> Know now that you have lost your self and you do not know who you are, which is why sometimes you point to your body as the reality of your self, while at other times you fall into doubts about it whether or not you really are this body or something beyond it… It is strange that you have lost yourself in your self and you are looking for it from afar, just like the man who is sitting on his donkey while looking for it![211]

Self-Knowledge and Consciousness of the 'I' in Ṣadrā

I stated earlier that any reflective statements about the self presuppose the existence of a conscious subject that is able to make such statements. But how I know that I am the one making those statements, or more fundamentally, *how do I know that I am 'me?'* Even though this way of putting things rings familiar with the Cartesian inquiry into the '*cogito*,' it will be seen by the end of this section that Ṣadrian response to this question is diametrically opposed to Descartes' "*cogito, ergo sum.*"[212] In what follows, I will analyze Ṣadrā's response to the question, how is self-knowledge possible at all?[213] Ṣadrā writes:

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[210] Suhrawardī, *Hayākil al-nūr* in *Majmūᶜah-yi muṣannafāt-i Shaykh-i Ishrāq*, 3: 85.

[211] Suhrawardī, *Bustān* in *Majmūᶜah-yi muṣannafāt-i Shaykh-i Ishrāq*, 3: 368-9.

[212] In his *Discourse on the Method* (second Meditation) Descartes famously claims "I think (or, am thinking), therefore I exist" to affirm both the infallibility of 'I am thinking,' and the infallibility of 'I exist' premised on the infallibility of 'I am thinking.' Much ink has been spilled over the centuries on the soundness of Descartes claim. Kant, for example, criticizes Descartes' *cogito* by arguing that one's consciousness of one's own thinking grounds a consciousness of one's own existence in which one is to oneself *das Wesenselbst*. However, this 'consciousness' fails to tell one anything at all about *what* one is, except for the fact that one (the self currently engaged in thinking 'I think'), thinks. For a sophisticated modern analysis of Kant's and other philosophers' take on the *cogito*, see Béatrice Longuenesse, *I, Me, Mine: Back to Kant, and Back Again* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 73-95. For a wide-ranging understanding of Descartes' claim and various controversies surrounding it, see Jerome Katz, "Descartes' Cogito," in *Demonstratives*, edited by Palle Yourgrau (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 154-81; and Jean-Claude Pariente, "La Première personne et sa fonction dans le Cogito," in *Le Langage à l'œuvre* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2002), 89–113. For Descartes own view, see both René Descartes, *Discourse on the Method*, translated by Robert Stoothof, in *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes* (*Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,* 1985 [1637]), 1:111–51; *Principles of Philosophy*, translated by John Cottingham, in *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985 [1644]), 1: 177–291.

[213] It should be noted that Ṣadrā is not concerned here with those aspects of self-knowledge that are contingent on external facts such as one's linguistic or socio-religious identity. Rather he is probing the most basic form of self-knowledge that can establish the self's identity as a particular 'I.'

A thing's perception of itself (*idrāk al-shayʾ li-dhātihi*) is identical with the thing itself; and its essence possesses continuous awareness of itself (*dāʾimat al-idrāk li-dhātihi*). Its continuous self-awareness is proven when humans attend to their mental states and find therein that their self-perception is contingent upon the [existential] continuity of their self (*dāʾim bi-dawām al-dhāt*)… All [perceptual acts] presuppose a prior self-knowledge (*ʿilmihi bi-dhātihi*). So it is evident that humans' self-knowledge and their self precede all other knowledge, and [self-knowledge] is always present to them without a break.[214]

That is to say, my perception of myself is identical with my I-ness, or else it will lead to misidentification. However, how do I know that I am that 'I,' which is perceiving itself now? Is it possible to be certain of the 'I' that is currently perceiving itself through self-perception? Perhaps it can be argued that I have an immediate awareness or experience of my self as me which is simply indubitable. Nonetheless, one may still wonder if stronger arguments can be provided. So Ṣadrā begins with the phenomenological premise that our awareness of our self is continuous and never-interrupting. Then he goes on to argue that such continuous awareness is proven when we reflect on the act of self-perception, which shows that such an act is contingent upon the continuity of self-awareness. This is because any perceptual act already presupposes a prior knowledge of the self that is the subject of such an act. Ṣadrā explains further:

It is wrong to say that "I can argue for the knowledge of my self (*ʿilmī bi-nafsī*) on the basis of my actions (*fiʿlī*), since my knowledge of myself is mediated through my actions."[215]

Here we come to the focal point of his argument, which is that self-knowledge or the fact that I know that I am 'me,' i.e., the subject that has the minimum knowledge of itself as itself, is prior to self-perception. That is why he forcefully asserts that one cannot have knowledge of one's self as a bare 'I' by means of one's actions. Ṣadrā further clarifies:

It is as though I were to argue for the existence of my self (*dhātī*) on the basis of general actions (*al-fiʿl al-muṭlaq*) or on the basis of actions that emanate from me (*min nafsī*). If I were to argue for the existence of my self on the basis of [general] actions, it would so happen that a general action requires nothing but a general agent. It thus affirms a general agent (*fāʿil muṭlaq*), and not a specific agent which is me (*lā fāʿil huwa anā*). However, if I were to argue for the existence of my self (*nafsī*) on the basis of my own actions, it would not be possible for me to know my action, except after having knowledge of my self (*an aʿlama nafsī*). And if I did not know myself (*nafsī*) except after knowing myself, it would result in a vicious circle (*lazama al-dawr*), which is inadmissible. This shows that humans know themselves through themselves (i.e. know themselves directly) without the mediation of their actions.[216]

In other words, no phenomenal states of mind, even though it may in the form of my 'I,', can bear testimony to the existence of my self as an 'I.' This is because any phenomenal states or

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[214] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Asfār*, 3: 505.
[215] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Asfār*, 3: 505. Cf. Mullā Ṣadrā, *al-Shawāhid*, 254.
[216] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Asfār*, 3: 505.

mental events that the self ascribes to itself already presupposes an *underlying awareness of the self*. For this reason, Ṣadrā says that even instinctive actions such as quickly withdrawing from something too hot or too cold bear witness to an underlying awareness of the self which is identical with one's 'I-ness.' That is why it would be wrong to argue for the existence of my self on the basis of any general actions (*al-fiᶜl al-muṭlaq*) such as thinking, believing, or even doubting because they are not self-subsisting phenomena, and so, presuppose *an underlying subject to which they occur*. Another way to explain Ṣadrā's argument would be to say that if knowledge of my action functions as a cause of my knowledge of myself, it leads to circularity because knowledge of my self is already implied in and serves as the *cause* of the knowledge of my very action. This is so because the moment I try to infer existence or knowledge of my self through a perceptual act such as doubting, I notice that it would not be possible for me to know my act of doubting, "except after having knowledge of my self. And if I did not know myself except after knowing myself, it would result in a vicious circle." So no matter how I try to infer my knowledge of myself though *thinking*, it is bound to fail, since such performative actions already presuppose an underlying subject that makes *thinking* possible first. The only way to avoid this vicious circle would be to assert that I am already acquainted with my self in some *a priori* fashion, which is existentially identical with the very being of the reality of my self. In other words, I know my self directly through my consciousness that is the very nature of the self because the essence of my self at its most basic level is this *very* consciousness. If this is granted then one does not need to perform perceptual acts such as doubting in order infer self-knowledge. So we can see that Ṣadrā's view is opposed to that of Descartes[217] because for Ṣadrā it is on the basis of the reality of the self which is present to itself that one is able to ascribe perceptual acts to it, and not the other way round, i.e., inferring knowledge or the reality of the self on the basis of actions such as 'thinking.'[218] There is an intriguing parallel between Ṣadrā's arguments above and a contemporary reflection on the topic:

> How should the reflective subject be able to know that it has itself as an object? Obviously only by knowing that it is identical with its object. But it is impossible to ascribe this knowledge to reflection and to ground it in reflection. The act of reflection presupposes that the self already knows itself, in order to know that that which it knows when it takes itself as an object is indeed identical with the one that accomplishes the act of reflective thinking. The theory that tries to make the origin of self-awareness comprehensible through reflection ends necessarily in a circle that presupposes the knowledge it wants to explain.[219]

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[217] Yazdi, on the contrary, asserts that Ṣadrā rather anticipates Descartes regarding his *cogito*, which I think is misplaced. Cf. Yazdi, *Principles of Epistemology*, 55.

[218] One finds a similar line of argument in Suhrawardī's *al-Talwīḥāt*, in which he argues that one's awareness of the self is nothing other than itself. Moreover, he asserts that one knows the self by the self. This is because even the concept of the 'I,' *qua* concept, is a universal, and as such, is of no help in affirming self-knowledge. He further maintains that one knows the self as a particular 'I' or simply oneself in such a way that one's 'I' refuses to be shared by other selves. So the reality of one's selfhood is a unity of self-knowledge, the self-knowing subject and the self-knowing object, see Suhrawardī, *al-Talwīḥāt,* in *Majmūᶜah-yi muṣannafāt-i Shaykh-i Ishrāq*, 1:70-74, 116.

[219] Konrad Cramer, "'Erlebnis.' Thesen zu Hegels Theorie des Selbstbewußtseins mit Rücksicht auf die Aporien eines Grundbegriffs nachhegelscher Philosophie." in H.-G. Gadamer (ed.), *Stuttgarter Hegel-Tage 1970* (Bonn: Bouvier, 1974), 563; cited in Dan Zahavi, *Collective Intentionality and Plural Pre-Reflective Self-Awareness*, forthcoming, 2.

That is to say, in order for me to recognize myself as myself, I need to accept something true of it that I already know to be true of myself, and the only way to avoid circularity or an infinite regress is to grant that my self possesses a prior non-objectifying self-acquaintance with itself that precedes any reflective acts.[220]

Self-Identity as Presence

In the previous section I have shown that for Ṣadrā, self-knowledge is coextensive with all forms of mental actions including 'self-perception or perceiving that one is perceiving,' since one cannot be said to know anything without having, what I call, 'pre-reflective self-knowledge.' However, the important point to note is that this knowledge of oneself as oneself comes about through sheer presence (ḥuḍūr) that the self has of itself. That is, the self's presence to itself is self-given. Mullā Ṣadrā accepts Suhrawardī's distinction between 'representational knowledge' (al-īlm al-ḥuṣul al-irtisāmī) and 'presential knowledge' (al-ʿilm al-ḥuḍūrī), and affirms that self-knowledge can be both representational and presential. When knowledge of the self is obtained through its faculties, e.g. the imagination it is mediated and represented, while when it is obtained as presence it is direct and unmediated (without involving any representation) because the self is identical with its presence. Ṣadrā writes:

> Knowledge of the self (ʿilm al-nafs) is the same as the self itself (dhātihā) …[221] It has been shown that the perception of human's identity (huwiyyat al-insān) and the attaining of his own self (dhātihi) through presential unveiling (bi-l-kashf al-ḥuḍūrī) is different from the perception of his quiddity (māhiyya).[222]

Ṣadrā explains the difference between representational self-knowledge (i.e., perceiving one's quiddity) and presential self-knowledge in the following passage:

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[220] As Shoemaker too argues, this is true even for self-knowledge obtained through introspection. This is because even if through introspection one is able to claim exclusive private knowledge of oneself (since no other self can share this private experience of my self), it will be insufficient to establish self-knowledge, since one will still be unable to identify an introspected self as oneself by the fact that it is *introspectively* (still a mental action!) observed by one, unless one knows it is the object of one's introspection, i.e., unless one knows that it is in fact one that undertakes this introspection. But this knowledge cannot itself be based on identification if one is to avoid an infinite regress, see Sydney Shoemaker, "Self-reference and Self-awareness," *The Journal of Philosophy* 65 (1968): 561-563. Shoemaker further clarifies the point that seems to affirm Ṣadrā's argument cited above, although their ultimate conclusions concerning self-knowledge remain radically apart: "The reason one is not presented to oneself 'as an object' in self-awareness is that self-awareness is not perceptual awareness, i.e., is not a sort of awareness in which objects are presented… But it is worth noting that if one were aware of oneself as an object in such cases (as one is in fact aware of oneself as an object when one sees oneself in a mirror), this would not help to explain one's self-knowledge. For awareness that the presented object was φ, would not tell one that one was oneself φ, unless one had identified the object as oneself; and one could not do this unless one already had some self-knowledge, namely the knowledge that one is the unique possessor of whatever set of properties of the presented object one took to show it to be oneself. Perceptual self-knowledge presupposes non-perceptual self-knowledge, so not all self-knowledge can be perceptual," see Sydney Shoemaker, "Personal Identity: A Materialist's Account," in Shoemaker and Swinburne (eds.), *Personal Identity* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1984), 105.

[221] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Ajwibat al-masāʾil al-kāshāniyya,* in *Majmūʿa-yi rasāʾil-i falsafī-yi Ṣadr al-Mutaʾallihīn*, ed. Ḥāmid Isfahānī (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Ḥikmat, 1990), 127.

[222] Mullā Ṣadrā, *al-masāʾil al-kāshāniyya,* 128; *Asfār*, 8: 50-51. Cf. Suhrawardī, *Ḥikmat al-ishrāq*, in *Majmūʿah-yi muṣannafāt-i Shaykh-i Ishrāq,* 2: 110-116.

When a human comes back to his self (*rajaᶜa ilā dhātihi*) and feels his inner reality, he sometimes become unaware of all universal concepts (*al-maᶜānī al-kulliyya*) even the notion of being a substance (*jawhar*), or a person (*shakhṣ*), or the one governing the body (*mudabbir al-badan*). When I attend to my self (*dhātī*) I only perceive the being which perceives itself in a particular way (*yudriku nafsiha ᶜalā wajh al-juzʾiyya*). Whatever is other than that particular identity (*al-huwiyya al-makhṣuṣa*) to which I refer by 'I' is outside of myself, including even the very concept of 'I,' (*mafhūm anā*) the concept of existence (*mafhūm al-wujūd*), the concept of the perceiver itself (*mafhūm al-mudrik nafsihi*), the concept of the one governing the body or the self, and so forth. All of these consist of types of universal knowledge (*ᶜulūm kulliyya*), and each one of them is indicated by an 'it,' whereas I refer to myself as an 'I' (*ilā dhāti bi-anā*).[223]

In this very important passage, Ṣadrā puts forward the first-personal character of the self's subjectivity, which can only be experienced by a particular 'I.' That is to say, when the self turns its gaze inward and attend to itself it has the subjective experience of what-it-is-like-to-be-me which is non-representational and non-universal, and which excludes all other 'Is.' In other words, the self can think of the quiddity of human, i.e. humanness, to identify itself, or other universals such as substance, person, or even the very concept of 'I' (which is a universal as a concept) to refer to itself, but in such cases it would be mediated 'universal knowledge,' and as such, would fail to refer because each 'I' experiences itself as a concrete and *particular* 'I.'[224] Hence, even the concept of 'I' would be an 'it' in relation the particular 'I,' or the owner of a given subjectivity. So true knowledge of the self can only be presential (*ḥuḍūrī*), where "knowledge of the self is the same as the self itself."[225] Moreover, in knowledge by presence, the self experiences its distinct subjectivity directly, which is independent of any conceptual or definitional knowledge that consists of a genus (*jins*) and a differentia (*faṣl*). Hence Ṣadrā says:

[T]he existence of the self (*nafs*) that is denoted by everyone by the first-personal pronoun 'I' is other than what is denoted by the word 'it' (i.e. mental form of the self). So it is possible to witness the one while remaining unaware of the other.[226]

In addition, Ṣadrā also presents a somewhat commonsensical argument for the identity of the 'I.' In his view, it is self-evident that we see entities, hear sounds and perceive intelligibles (*maᶜqūlāt*), which proves that we are numerically one. This is because if the perceiver of intelligibles was other than the perceiver of sensibles, we would not be able to perceive the two

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[223] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Asfār,* 8: 50-51, 3:315. Cf. Avicenna, *Ishārāṭ*, 2:343-345; and Suhrawardī, *Ḥikmat al-ishrāq*, 85-86.

[224] The self doesn't have a quiddity and one can point to every quiddity as an 'it.' But to the reality of the self one can only point by the indexical 'I,' which implies that its reality is without a quiddity. However, this does not mean the self's existence is an intellectual existence. A huge number of studies exists in analytic philosophy concerning the true reference of the 'I,' see e.g. Anscombe, *The First Person*, 21ff.; Shoemaker, "Self-reference and Self-awareness, 562ff.; Gareth Evans, *The Varieties of Reference*, ed. J. McDowell (NY: Oxford University Press, 1982), *passim*.

[225] Mullā Ṣadrā, *al-masāʾil al-kāshāniyya,* 127.

[226] Mullā Ṣadrā, *al-Shawāhid al-rubūbiyya fī manāhij al-sulūkiyya*, ed. Muḥaqqiq Dāmād (Tehran: Bunyād-i Ḥikmat-i Islāmi-yi Ṣadrā, 2003), 254. Although in a completely different context, Martin Buber has a fascinating discussion on the 'I-it' relation. For Buber, the 'I' of the 'I-It' (*Ich-Es*) relation, in contrast to the 'I' of 'I-thou' (*Ich-Du*) relation, is a limited, solitary individual (*der Einzige*) that takes itself as the subject of experience against a world of objects. For more information, see Martin Buber, *I and Thou,* translated by Ronald G. Smith (New York: Scribner, 1984), *passim*.

together. But since we do perceive the two together it means that we are one self which is the perceiver of the two. According to Ṣadrā, if this does not hold, one will be two different selves at the same time, which is inadmissible.[227] Ṣadrā further argues that even though one has faculties that perform different functions one's identity as a particular self is still affirmed when one observes that one is same the subject that desires sex, or gets angry at one's enemy.[228]

Self-knowledge and levels of consciousness[229]

After establishing self-knowledge for the self, Mullā Ṣadrā turns his attention to consciousness[230] and its modalities, that further substantiate the self's knowledge of itself. He begins by affirming that the self (*al-nafs*) "is not the body, and has self-consciousness (*shāʿirat bi-dhātihā*)."[231] Then he distinguishes between the first-order and second-order self-awareness. Ṣadrā says:

> Our knowledge of ourselves is the very same as the existence of our selves (*ʿilmunā bi-dhātinā nafs wujūd dhātinā*), whereas our knowledge of our knowledge of ourselves (*ʿilmunā bi-ʿilminā bi-dhātinā*) is other than our own existence and it is a mental form (*ṣūra dhihniyya*) superadded to it. This mental form is not equivalent to our personal identity (*huwiyyatinā al-shakhṣiyya*); rather it has a different mental identity. Similarly, our knowledge of our knowledge of ourselves by means of this knowledge is a form added to the two former identities of knowledge (*huwiyyat al-ʿilmayn*)…[232]

In the above Ṣadrā discerns two distinct levels of self-awareness. To begin with, I can have knowledge of my self in terms of first order propositions such as "I am in pain" or simply, "I am." It should be noticed that in such propositions the subject and the predicate are one and the same. That is, when "I am in pain" or "I simply am," my being in 'pain' or my being 'me' is inseparable from my existence. For this reason, Ṣadrā asserts that in such cases existence is identical with self-knowledge, or knowledge of the self is the same as the existence of the self, which involves no subject-object dichotomy. However, such an instance of self-knowledge is different from a second order reflection of self-knowledge.[233] In other words, *ʿilmunā bi-ʿilminā bi-dhātinā* is different from simply *ʿilmunā bi-dhātinā.* This is because a second-order reflection of self-knowledge involves a 'mental form' (*ṣura dhihniyya*) that is superadded to our true identity, in which knowledge and existence of the self are one and the same, as mentioned earlier. But since our self is capable of such reflexive actions, it is still part of our identity, albeit

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[227] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Asfār* 8: 265.

[228] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Asfār* 8: 265. See also section 3.5, where he uses a version of this argument to prove the self's immateriality.

[229] In this study, I use 'awareness' and 'consciousness' interchangeably. Following the principle of Ockham's razor, I also make no particular distinction between 'self-awareness' and 'self-consciousness.' This is to avoid an unnecessary proliferation of technical terms, although some writers do make a distinction between these terms.

[230] For Ṣadrā's definition of 'consciousness' (*shuʿūr*), see *idem., Asfār*, 3: 526.

[231] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb,* 2:818. Ṣadrā talks about self-consciousness in various places, see e.g. *Asfār*, 4:222, 8:77-79, 265, 395; *Taʿlīqāt li-Sharḥ Ḥikmat al-ishrāq, in al-Ḥikmah al-ishrāqīya: Majmūʿah-i muṣannafāt-i Shihāb al-Dīn Yaḥya al-Suhrawardī*, edited by Muḥammad Malikī (Tehran: Pizhūhishgāh-i ʿUlūm-i Insānī wa Muṭālaʿāt-i Farhangī, 2012), 66ff. See also Kaukua, *Self-Awareness in Islamic Philosophy*, 161-91.

[232] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Asfār* 3:321.

[233] Ṣadrā goes to great lengths to clarify the connection between the self and its knowledge of itself in terms of self-consciousness, see e.g. *Asfār*, 1: 134-35; 3: 408, 435-36, 501-06; 4: 458-64; 8: 50-51, 70-79, 151; *Mafātīḥ*, 2: 818, 836, 851-52, 854-55, 939-944, 1003, 1083.

a different one. More interestingly, such a reflective act of self-awareness can be performed indefinitely, in which case it will continue to add more 'identities' in the form of "Tom 1, Tom 2, Tom 3… and so on" to our primary identity. That is the reason Ṣadrā argues that our self-consciousness of the self is never identical with our self, since secondary statements are about the self and not the self itself:

> Also, we perceive ourselves through ourselves because we are never absent from ourselves. But our self-consciousness of the self (*ammā shuʿūrunā bi-shuʿūri dhātinā*) is never identical with our self, just like when we perceive things external to ourselves.[234]

That is, I cannot be absent from myself because my reality is ever-present to myself through the uninterrupted self-awareness that is indistinguishable from my "mineness." Ṣadrā provides another argument to prove how self-awareness of the self is different from first order awareness of the self:

> The perception of a thing involves the coming to obtain of its form to the perceiver (*ḥuṣūl ṣūratihi li-l-mudrik*), and whoever perceives his self (*man adraka dhātahu*) must be separate from its substratum (i.e. the locus of perception). This is because if it were to inhere in the substratum (*maḥall*), the form of its self would be obtained for its substratum rather than for itself, because that which inheres by nature can only exist in its substratum. And this involves a contradiction.[235]

This is because if the perception of something were to consist of the grasping of its form in the perceiver, whoever perceives herself would be different from the locus of perception, which is herself. Thus this results in a contradiction because it would be saying like, "I perceive myself" and yet "I do not perceive myself," since 'I' and my 'self' are different, which is inadmissible.

After talking about the first order and second order awareness, Ṣadrā also brings up the issue of how one can be aware of other selves. He broaches the phenomenological experience of 'shame' (*al-khijāla*) in order to shed light on one's awareness of others:

> If there occurs to a human being an awareness that others (*shuʿūr bi-anna ghayrahu*) have come to know of an ugly act (*fiʿlan qabīḥan*) that he has committed, then that awareness is followed by a passive [mental] state (*ḥala infiʿāliyya*) in his self called 'shame' (*al-khijāla*).[236]

So an act of shame makes one aware of other selves because such an act puts oneself in a passive state from which one can deduce the existence or presence of others. This is because the experience of shame is a distinct experience that requires the presence of others. Unfortunately, Ṣadrā does not elaborate further on this distinct form of awareness that requires the intervention

[234] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Shawāhid*, 253. Cf. Mullā Ṣadrā, *Asfār* 3: 321: Self-knowledge is different from second-order reflection of self-knowledge. The latter is representation and is not identical with the very reality of the self. On some Safavid background to the analysis of this passage, see Jalāl al-Dīn al-Dawānī, *Shawākil al-ḥur fī sharḥ Hayākil al-nūr li-l-Suhrawardī*, edited by Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq and Muḥammad Kawkan (Beirut: al-Furāt lil-Nashr wa-al-Tawzīʿ, 2010), 73ff. and Ghiyāth al-Dīn Manṣūr Dashtakī, *Ishrāq Hayākil al-nūr li-kashf ẓulumāt Shawākil al-gharūr*, edited by ʿAlī Awjabī (Tehran: Mīrāth-i Maktūb, 2003), 93ff.
[235] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Shawāhid*, 253.
[236] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Asfār,* 9: 107.

of the other, which, in modern parlance, is known as 'intersubjective consciousness,' thanks to Sartre's famous analysis of 'shame' in the third part of his *L'Être et le Néant.*[237] After discussing reflective and pre-reflective modes of consciousness (see below), Sartre argues there that there is a form of awareness that is intersubjectively mediated, or that has the other as its condition of possibility. According to Sartre, shame is the subject's experience of being discovered in an embarrassing situation because of her awareness of another self. Sartre asserts that the experience of shame presupposes the intervention of the other, and not merely because the other is the one before whom one feels ashamed, but also and more significantly because the other is the one that constitutes that of which one is ashamed. Sartre writes:

> Consider for example shame… I have just made an awkward or vulgar gesture… I realize it in the mode of for-itself. But now suddenly I raise my head. Somebody was there and has seen me. Suddenly I realize the vulgarity of my gesture, and I am ashamed. It is certain that my shame is not reflective, for the presence of another in my consciousness, even as a catalyst, is incompatible with the reflective attitude; in the field of my reflection I can never meet with anything but the consciousness which is mine. But the Other is the indispensable mediator between myself and me. I am ashamed of myself as I appear to the Other. By the mere appearance of the Other, I am put in the position of passing judgment on myself as on an object, for it is as an object that I appear to the Other.[238]

So far we have been talking about two principal modes of consciousness in relation to self-knowledge and the structure of the self:

1) Reflective consciousness = first-order and second-order consciousness
2) Intersubjective consciousness

However, as we discussed extensively in chapter two of this study, Suhrawardī, via Avicenna, develops a more primitive form of consciousness which I called 'pre-reflective consciousness,' after reconstructing the notion from the source texts themselves. Ṣadrā accepts Suhrawardī's arguments for the pre-reflective consciousness, but refines them further by adding nuances, as we have seen in pp. 44-49. There, Ṣadrā's discusses the self's prior knowledge of itself vis-à-vis its reflective acts such as doubting,[239] which can also be cited as a case in point for the phenomenon of pre-reflective consciousness, since such an instance of self-knowledge, by its

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[237] 'Intersubjectivity' or 'intersubjective consciousness' is a loaded term with wide-ranging applications in psychology, philosophy and social science. Here I use it in the sense of having an ability to form an awareness of the other (including the body). For some relevant literature on the term, see Dan Zahavi and S. Overgaard, "*Intersubjectivity*," in H. LaFollette et al. (eds.): The International Encyclopedia of Ethics (New York: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), 2755-2765; Dan Zahavi, *Husserl und die transzendentale Intersubjektivität. Eine Antwort auf die sprachpragmatische Kritik* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1996); "Intersubjectivity in Sartre's Being and Nothingness," *Alter* 10 (2002): 265-281; and "Phenomenology and the problem(s) of intersubjectivity," in Steven Crowell, Samuel J. Julian, and Lester Embree (eds.), *The Reach of Reflection: Issues for Phenomenology's second Century at* www.electronpress.com. 2001, 265-278.

[238] Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness: An Essay on Phenomenological Ontology*, transl. by Hazel E. Barnes, (London: Methuen, 1958), 221-23. For extensive analyses on Sartre's notions of 'shame' and 'intersubjective consciousness,' see Dan Zahavi, "Shame and the Exposed Self," in Jonathan Webber (ed.), *Reading Sartre: On Phenomenology and Existentialism* (London: Routledge, 2011), 211-26.

[239] Some traces of this argument can be found in Avicenna, *Ishārāt*, 2:434ff. See also, Kaukua, *Self-Awareness in Islamic Philosophy*, 72-75.

internal logic, escapes any reflective stance. Moreover, my analysis has so far shown how consciousness, self, and knowledge are mutually implicated, so that any discussion of one of them inevitably involves some explanations of the others.

In any event, Ṣadrā brings further clarity to this particular mode of awareness in the following argument. He argues that our ordinary reflective actions such as writing, walking, eating, and drinking are preceded by a form of knowledge which is additional to it. And if we did not presuppose a pre-conceptual, pre-linguistic subject to which these acts can be attributed, it would not be possible to give assent to these acts, in which case there will be actions but no agent performing them, which is a contradiction. As for the bodily acts, Ṣadrā suggests that we can only be aware of them by being aware of our self first.[240] In addition, he makes use of Suhrawardī's oft-repeated phrase "*anta lā taghību ᶜan dhātika*" (you are never absent from yourself) to affirm pre-reflective consciousness:

> You are never absent from yourself (*anta lā taghību ᶜan dhātika*), even while you are asleep or intoxicated, whereas it is possible that sometimes you may be unaware of all of the organs of your body or at least some of them, which means that you are more than your physical entirety…[241]

As I explained earlier, the only way one can describe phenomena such as dreamless sleep or an intoxicated state is by asserting that in these moments "the subject of experience" and "the experience" itself become one and the same, giving one the impression that the subject or the 'underlying consciousness' somehow disappeared from the scene. But this cannot happen because it makes little sense to say that "there is the experience or the phenomenon of intoxication or sleep, while there was no one (i.e. no subject) to experience it." And yet such background awareness transcends even the first order reflective stance in which one simply posits "I am." That is the reason it is helpful to call it, following some contemporary philosophers, 'pre-reflective' consciousness, i.e. one that does not involve conscious reflection.

As with 'intersubjective consciousness,' it would be helpful to put Ṣadrā into conversation with Sartre, since their respective perspectives can mutually illuminate one another on this particular issue.[242] Sartre explicitly uses terms such as '*conscience préréflexif*' and '*conscience*

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[240] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Asfār,* 8: 79.

[241] Mullā Ṣadrā, *the Shawāhid*, 254.

[242] Methodologically, I take lead for such a cross-cultural approach to doing philosophy with pre-modern texts from Jonardon Ganeri, who, e.g. says: "I bring in Indian theory because methodologically I am an <u>advocate</u> of cross-culturalism or cosmopolitanism in philosophy, the view that philosophy—and especially philosophy of mind—must make appeal to a plurality of intellectual cultures if it is to avoid parochialism in the intuitions that guide it and the vocabularies in which it is phrased," see Jonardon Ganeri, *Blueprint: An Institute for Cosmopolitan Philosophy in a Culturally Polycentric World*, available at <u>www.academia.edu/8434737/</u>. Moreover, Galen Strawson has the following to say regarding the importance of such a dialogue between modern and pre-modern philosophers: "Philosophers from the further past feature constantly in this book because their ideas lie in the vanguard of thought. If the history of philosophy is some sort of separate academic corral, then I'm not doing history of philosophy when I discuss Descartes, any more than I am when I discuss Dennett, Dainton or Damasio. The older philosophers regularly express ideas and formulate problems with greater clarity, directness, or insight than their most read twentieth and twenty-first century descendants. Their lack of certain present-day assumptions shows how questionable—blinding—some of those assumptions are, even as it increases one's appreciation of others. Philosophers of mind who think that recent science—or indeed philosophy—has radically changed the map of their discipline, rather than providing various forms of expression and concrete illustrative support for long existing hypotheses, don't know much about their subject," See Galen Strawson, *Selves: An Essay in Revisionary*

réflexive' in his *La transcendance de l'ego* and *L'Être et le néant* to draw a distinction between these two fundamental levels of consciousness as they feature in the structure of the self (*le soi*).[243] In both of these texts, Sartre offers a phenomenological description of how '*conscience préréflexif*' is different from '*conscience réflexive.*' Let me first turn to *La transcendance de l'ego* which contains his early and less developed views on this.[244] Sartre writes:

> It is however certain that the 'I' appears on the non-reflected level (*le plan irréfléchi*). If I am asked, 'What are you doing?' and I reply, preoccupied as I am, 'I am trying to hang up this picture', or, 'I am repairing the rear tire', these phrases do not transport us on to the level of reflection, I utter them without ceasing to work, without ceasing to envisage just the actions, insofar as they have been done or are still to be done—not insofar as I am doing them. But this 'I' that I am dealing with here is not, however, a simple syntactic form. It has a meaning; it is quite simply an empty concept, destined to remain empty. Just as I can think of a chair in the absence of any chair and by virtue of a mere concept, in the same way I can think of the I in the absence of the I.[245]

Similar to my example in chapter two (pp. 43ff.), or Ṣadrā's own example of being asleep or intoxicated, Sartre asserts that the 'I' or the 'self' can manifest itself even when it is not reflectively aware of itself. So when I am too preoccupied with 'hanging up a picture' I am no longer reflectively aware of myself. Yet my 'I' goes on to do the work in which it was engaged, demonstrating that the 'I' can be an 'I' in its absence. Therefore, the 'I' has a pre-reflective

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Metaphysics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), xvi. Since my purpose is to engage with my sources critically, without however doing violence to the texts themselves, I find it helpful to bring in more contemporary perspectives whenever relevant that might enable the reader to look at the writings of Islamic philosophers from multiple standpoints.

[243] Sartre's starting point, along with his famous '*en-soi*' and '*pour-soi*' categories of being, is 'intentionality' or the claim that "all consciousness is consciousness *of* something," which he borrows from Brentano via Husserl. 'Intentionality' in Brentano's and Husserl's perspective emphasizes 'directedness' or 'aboutness' as the key feature of the mind. Similarly, Sartre has been influenced by Heidegger as well, since the latter also asserts something very similar about the 'pre-reflective' mode of the *Dasein*: "Dasein as existing, is there for itself, even when the ego does not expressly direct itself to itself in the manner of its own peculiar turning around and turning back, which in phenomenology is called inner perception as contrasted with outer. The self is there for the *Dasein* itself without reflection and without inner perception, before all reflection…," see Martin Heidegger, *Die Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie*, Gesamtausgabe Band 24 (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1989), 226; *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, trans. A. Hofstadter (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982), 159.

[244] One notable pitfall in Sartre's argument is that he navigates his writings with a very narrow concept of the self/ego. He himself seems to be aware of this particular problem, as in *La transcendance de l'ego* he characterizes the pre-reflective field of consciousness as *non-egological*, whereas in both *L'Être et le néant* and in the article "*Conscience de soi et connaissance de soi*" he overturns this view by granting pre-reflective consciousness some kind of egoity. For instance, he argues that it is not the ego which personalizes consciousness, rather it is consciousness which by means of its fundamental self-givenness or selfhood (*ipséité*) allows the ego to appear. This is a major point of difference between Ṣadrā and Sartre et al., as the former does not go toward any form of 'non-egological' view of the self from 'pre-reflective' awareness. For more information on Sartre's views, see *idem.*, "Conscience de soi et connaissance de soi," *Bulletin de la Société Française de Philosophie* 42 (1948): 49-91, at 63; cf. Sartre, *L'Être et le néant: Essai d'ontologie phénoménologique* (Paris: Gallimard, 1943), 114, 142–143, 284. For a helpful treatment of these issues, see Dan Zahavi (ed.), "Self and Consciousness," in *Exploring the Self: Philosophical and Psychopathological Perspectives on Self-Experience* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2000), 64-66.

[245] Jean-Paul Sartre, *The Transcendence of the Ego: A Sketch for a Phenomenological Description,* translated by Andrew Brown (London: Routledge, 2004), 23 (trans. slightly modified); cf. *idem.*, *La transcendance de l'ego* (Paris: Vrin, 1966), 70-71.

consciousness of itself that is prior to our act of reflecting on our experience, just as Ṣadrā argued earlier (see pp. 49-52). Indeed, like Ṣadrā, Sartre also claims that reflective self-consciousness is possible only because there is a pre-reflective self-awareness that is constitutive of all reflective acts and never absent from itself. Sartre also calls it '*non-thétique*' or '*conscience non positionnelle*'[246] because the self or consciousness in the pre-reflective mode does not have a particularized position.[247] In his *L'Être et le néant* Sartre elaborates on these categories at length:

> In other words, every positional consciousness of an object (*conscience positionnelle d'objet*) is at the same time a non-positional consciousness of itself (*conscience non positionnelle d'elle-même*). If I count the cigarettes which are in that case, I have the impression of disclosing an objective property of this collection of cigarettes: *they* are a *dozen.* This property appears to my consciousness as a property existing in the world. It is very possible that I have no positional consciousness of counting them. Then I do not know myself as counting…Yet at the moment when these cigarettes are revealed to me as a dozen, I have a non-thetic consciousness of my adding activity. If anyone questioned me, indeed, if anyone should ask, "What are you doing there?" I should reply at once, "I am counting." This reply aims not only at the instantaneous consciousness which I can achieve by reflection but at those fleeting consciousnesses which have passed without being reflected-on, those which are forever not-reflected-on in my immediate past. Thus reflection has no kind of primacy over the consciousness reflected-on. It is not reflection which reveals the consciousness reflected-on to itself. Quite the contrary, it is the non-reflective consciousness which renders the reflection possible; there is a pre-reflective cogito which is the condition of the Cartesian cogito.[248]

Immateriality of the Self

The analysis thus far has shown that self-knowledge has to be affirmed of the self, if we are to make sense of any mental events or phenomenal states (pp. 49-51). It is however crucial to note that by 'self-knowledge' Ṣadrā does not mean to suggest that the self at this stage (i.e. at the level of pre-reflective awareness) knows itself to be a microcosm or a cosmic intellect or a divine consciousness of some sort.[249] Rather 'self-knowledge' at this level implies the self's knowledge of itself, *simpliciter*, in the form of "I am."[250] In other words, at this level, knowledge, existence, and consciousness are identical with the self. Nevertheless, the basic phenomenological structure of the self also contains 'reflective' and 'intersubjective' awareness, as in the following figure:

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[246] Sartre is infamous for his careless use of terminology. So 'consciousness' in his philosophy may mean (1) the entity that is conscious, (2) the essential property of the conscious entity or body as 'for itself,' or (3) an occurrent state of that entity. The context usually sheds light on which meaning is prevalent in each case. For more information on this, see Béatrice Longuenesse, *I, Me, Mine*, 68.

[247] Cf. Sartre, *La transcendance de l'ego*, 3-6. According to Longuenesse, the unity of non-thetic consciousness is sufficiently maintained by the synthesis of conscious states generated by the directedness at an object, whether that object is a concrete object that is empirically given, or whether it is an abstract object such as a mathematical object, see Longuenesse, *I, Me, Mine*, 46.

[248] Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, liii (trans. modified); cf. *idem., L'Être et le néant*, 19.

[249] For Ṣadrā, self-knowledge comprises in degrees, as we shall see in the following pages. With the self's gradual perfection through 'spiritual exercises,' its self-knowledge too attains a greater degree of perfection.

[250] This, however, should not be understood in the reflexive sense.

Figure: 2.1 Phenomenological Structure of the Self

Moreover, according to Ṣadrā, self-knowledge and levels of consciousness also point to the self's immateriality because the structural features of the self, as described above, cannot be of the nature of the body, since bodies have extension (hence they are divisible).[251] Given all this, it is perhaps less surprising that Ṣadrā would capitalize on the aforementioned features of the self to argue for its '*immateriality*.' He deploys several arguments throughout his corpus including but not limited to the *Asfār*,[252] *Mafātīḥ*,[253] *al-Mabdaʾ wa-maʿād*,[254] and *the Shawāhid*[255] to prove that the self is 'immaterial.' For Ṣadrā the self's immateriality is laden with ethical implications as well, which I shall discuss in the next section. In what follows, I will first show how Ṣadrā grounds this concept within the larger religious context, and then systematically analyze all the
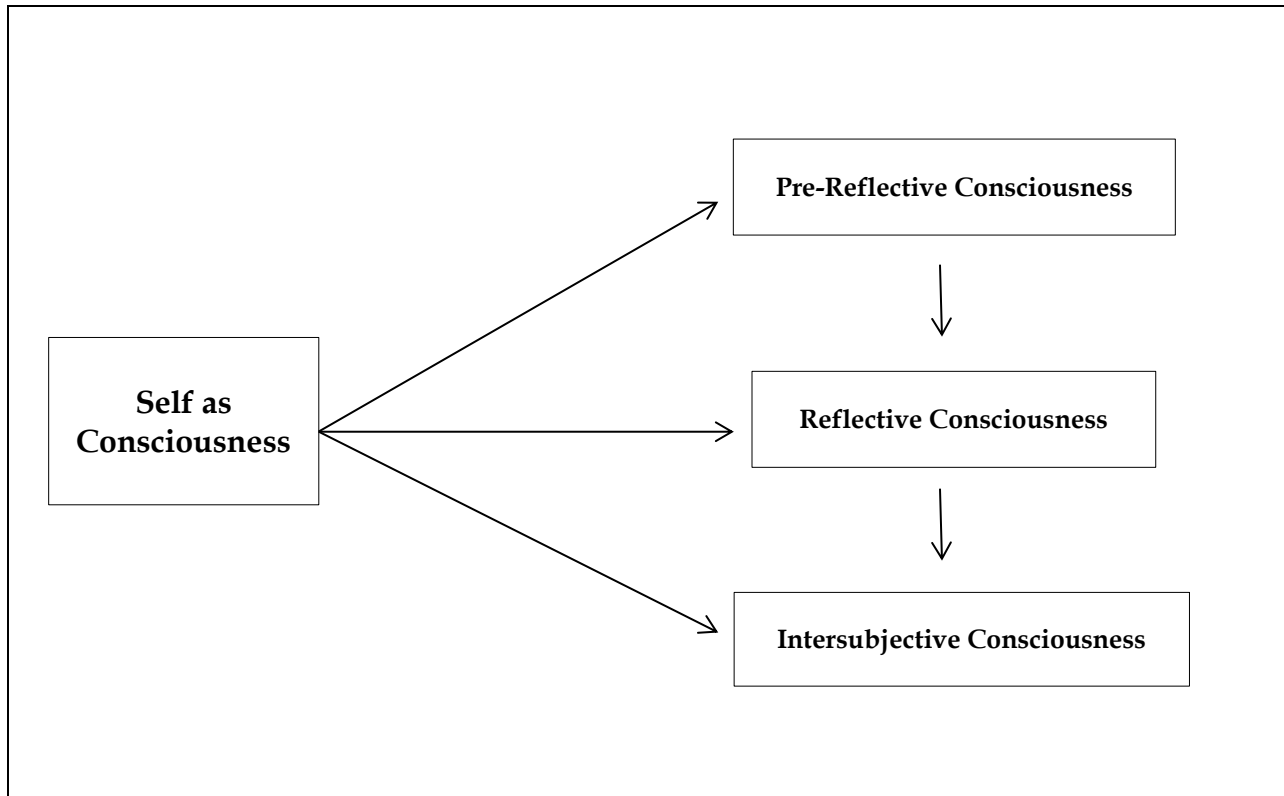
arguments presented for the self's immateriality.

Ṣadrā begins by stating that most people in his time believe in the disembodiment of the human self (*tajarrud al-nafs al-insāniyya*) through imitation (*taqlīd*) and revelation, but they do not have any real knowledge of it through any philosophical demonstration. He bemoans their being far removed from the knowledge of the self and its inner reality (*maʿrifat al-nafs wa-inniyyatihi*). He reckons it is impossible to understand the mode of the self's upward journeying in rising degrees or descent into the abyss into the lowest hell without having knowledge of its

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[251] This is what the phenomenology of self-experience reveals. The question of the self's 'emergence' is a separate issue that Ṣadrā deals from the point of view of 'substantial motion.'

[252] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Asfār,* 8:310-56; See also, *Sharḥ al-hidāya*, 1:430ff.; and *Kasr al-aṣnām*, 210ff.

[253] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Mafātīḥ,* 2:847-65.

[254] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Mabdaʾ wa-maʿād,* 2:467-99.

[255] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Shawāhid,* 257ff.

immateriality. Ṣadrā criticizes the masses for being ignorant of the reality of the self and its mode of attachment to the body. In his view, even though some people have mastered various specialized sciences (*al-ʿulūm al-juzʾiyya*) such as mathematics or law, they are still ignorant about disembodiment of the self and the independence it attains from the body in different states. Moreover, they are ignorant of the reality of the self (*ḥaqīqat al-nafs*) and the two resurrections—both bodily and spiritual resurrection (*al-maʿādayn al-jismānī wa-l-rūḥānī*)—and of the self's return to God.[256]

Although '*tajrīd*' or '*tajarrud*' literally means disembodiment or disengagement, in reality, it refers to the self's immateriality. In the *Asfār*, Ṣadrā explains *tajrīd* as the self's transcending matter and material conditions (*anna al-nafs al-insāniyya mujarrada ʿan al-mādda wa-lawāḥiqihā*).[257] The concept has a long pedigree in the history of Islamic philosophy, and Ṣadrā pays close attention to his predecessors while discussing it.[258] After perusing all the relevant texts, it seems to me that Ṣadrā's most decisive argument concerning the issue can be found in his *al-Mabdaʾ wa-maʿād*, in which he also responds to all the possible objections in the form a dialogue.[259] In order to give the reader a more authentic flavor of how Ṣadrā presents his case, I will quote him at length before teasing out all the salient features of the argument. The following dialogue offers Ṣadrā's argument concerning the self's immateriality:

> I say (i.e. Ṣadrā): We perceive our self (*dhawātinā*), and everyone who intellectually grasps (*kullu man ʿaqala dhātan*), grasps his own quiddity (*māhiyya*). Therefore, we grasp our own quiddity. However, we grasp our self either through another form which is equivalent to our self or through our self. The first option is absurd because it implies conjoining of two similar entities (*al-jamʿ bayn al-mithlayn*), hence the second option is affirmed. And whatever grasps its self through itself is self-subsistent. So the intellectual faculty must be self-subsistent, because everything that is either a body or bodily cannot be self-subsistent, which proves that our intellectual faculty must be non-physical (*lā-jismānī*).[260]

> The Questioner: There is no certainty that we perceive ourselves through intellection (*annā naʿqul dhawātanā*); why can't we say that our perception of ourselves refers to a

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[256] Mullā Ṣadrā, *al-Mabdaʾ wa-l-maʿād,* 2: 713-14.

[257] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Asfār,* 8: 356. This is also evident from various chapter headings that Ṣadrā uses under which he discusses all the arguments concerning the self's immateriality, while still using the word '*tajrīd*' to talk about it, see e.g., *idem.*, *Asfār,* 8: 307, 309.

[258] See e.g. Avicenna, *De Anima* of *al-Shifāʾ*, 5.2; *al-Mubāḥathāt,* ed. Muḥammad Bīdārfar (Qom: Intishārāt Bīdār, 1991), 155ff.; Mullā Ṣadrā, *Asfār* 8: 270, 8: 309-56; Suhrawardī, *al-Talwīḥāt,* in *Majmūʿah-yi muṣannafāt-i Shaykh-i Ishrāq,* 1: 73ff.; *Muṭāraḥāt,* in *Majmūʿah-yi muṣannafāt-i Shaykh-i Ishrāq,* 1: 506; Suhrawardī, *Ḥikmat al-ishrā,* 2: 633ff.; Fakhr al-Dīn Rāzī, *Al-Mabāḥith al-mashriqīyya fī ʿilm al-ilāhīyāt wa al-ṭabīʿīyāt li al-imām Fakhr al-Dīn ibn ʿUmar al-Rāzī,* ed. Al-Baghdādī (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-ʿArabī 1990), 2: 352; *al-Maṭālib al-ʿāliya min al-ʿilm al-ilāhī,* edited by ʿAbd al-Salām Shāhīn (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1999), 7: 82; Ibn Kammūna, *al-Tanqīḥāt fī sharḥ al-Talwīḥāt*, edited by Hossein Ziai and Ahmed Alwishah (Costa Mesa: Mazda Publishers, 2003), 55ff.

[259] Cf. Mullā Ṣadrā, *Asfār,* 8:320ff. This argument can also be found in Asfār along with the other arguments. There is no substantial difference between *al-Mabdaʾ wa-l-maʿād* and *Asfār* in this regard. However, in *al-Mabdaʾ wa-l-maʿād* Ṣadrā presents it in with additional points that are not found in *Asfār*. Ṣadrā mentions that he finds this to be the most advanced proof on the self's immateriality. He acknowledges his adoption of this argument from Avicenna's *al-Mubāḥathāt*, and states that he has added additional points to make it more complete.

[260] Mullā Ṣadrā, *al-Mabdaʾ wa-l-maʿād,* 2: 478. Cf. Mullā Ṣadrā, *Asfār,* 8: 320.

mode that is different from intellection? This is because intellection is defined as the coming to obtain of the quiddity intellected for the one who intellects (*ḥuṣūl māhiyyat al-maʿqūl li-l-ʿāqil*). It is not possible that we know ourselves as the agent of intellection except when we can already affirm self-perception for the self. Then it would be possible to explain the reality of our self without having recourse to intellection (*dūn wasāṭat al-taʿaqqul*). So why should it be said that we perceive ourselves and that our reality of our self (*ḥaqīqat dhawātinā*) is affirmed by means of it (intellection)? If it were not thus, it would not be possible to explain how we are able to intellect anything at all except by explaining the self's grasping of itself, and it is not possible to explain it except by means of the self's intellection, and this leads to circularity.[261]

I say: It is enough to state the mode of "unconditioned perception" (*muṭlaq al-idrāk*) as our proof. Our argument is not directly related to intellection or consciousness (*taʿaqqulan aw shuʿūran*) because it has already been shown that perception is grasping the object's quiddity by the perceiver.[262]

The Questioner: Granted. We do perceive ourselves, but this does not prove that whoever perceives himself grasps the quiddity of his self. For instance, even though we perceive heavenly bodies and the intellects (*al-samawāt wa-l-ʿuqūl*), their realities remain unknown to us.[263]

I say: We only grasp the quiddities and species (*māhiyyātuhā wa-nawʿiyyātuhā*) of things that are external to us. However, we do not grasp them insofar as they are individuals. Moreover, their modes of being (*anḥāʾ wa-wujūdātuhā*) are different from each other, even though they are grasped with respect to their accidents. However, the reality of [our self] as the object of intellection is grasped in respect of its identity, which is not different as far as its species, quiddity, accident or personhood (*shakhṣiyya*) are concerned. Our intelligible form is our very individuality but when it comes to the Active Intellect, the intelligible form is a single species, and does not consist of personhood.[264]

The Questioner: That much is granted, but why is it now allowed to say that I do not perceive myself through the estimative faculty, just as the intellective faculty perceives by means of the former (*kamā anna l-quwwa al-ʿāqila yashʿuru bi-l-wahmiyya*)?[265]

I say: Your awareness of your identity (*shuʿūrika bi-huwiyyatika*) is not mediated by your faculties, or else, that by which one becomes conscious would not be the same as consciousness itself. The consequent is false, so is the antecedent. As for the explanation of mutual implication: whatever possesses self-consciousness grasps itself through itself (*ḥaṣil li-dhātihi*). If the faculty by which you perceive yourself subsists by yourself then your self is affirmed, which is the desired conclusion, but if it subsists by your body, then your self too either subsists by your body or it does not. If it does not subsist by the body

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[261] Mullā Ṣadrā, *al-Mabdaʾ wa-l-maʿād,* 2: 478-79. Cf. Mullā Ṣadrā, *Asfār,* 8: 320-21.

[262] Mullā Ṣadrā, *al-Mabdaʾ wa-l-maʿād,* 2: 479.

[263] Mullā Ṣadrā, *al-Mabdaʾ wa-l-maʿād,* 2: 480.

[264] Mullā Ṣadrā, *al-Mabdaʾ wa-l-maʿād,* 2: 480.

[265] Mullā Ṣadrā, *al-Mabdaʾ wa-l-maʿād,* 2: 481.

then you should have no awareness of your self, [which is false].[266] If it does so on the contrary then both your faculty and your self are grasped by the body… but they are not conscious of each other, rather both of their quiddities are grasped by the body… one should also remember the rule that state that the grasping of an entity for another entity is contingent upon the former's grasping of itself…

The Questioner: why is my self-perception (*idrākī li-dhātī*) is not like something where I perceive myself in a medium just like I see myself in a mirror?[267]

I say: It is evident that which is seen by means of a mirror has an impression in the mirror, which is then reflected in the pupil. Likewise that which is represented as our form must be reflected a second time in the mirror of our self… but it is not possible to have the medium of mirror as 'perception of the self' for the self.[268]

The Questioner: Why can't I say that self-perception occurs through another form? Its explanation: When I perceive the self of Zayd, I also perceive myself because whenever someone intellects something and brings it to actuality from the proximate faculty (*al-quwwa al-qarība*), it becomes aware of itself at the same time. So that which is grasped at that moment in my self about my self (*fī nafsī min nafsī*) and Zayd must be either two forms or one form. The second is rejected, or else it leads to having a form of both me and the other person at the same time. The first holds since my perception of myself comes about through a form of me in me (*min dhātī li-dhātī*).[269]

I say: When you perceive yourself unconditionally (*idhā ᶜaqalta al-nafs muṭlaqan*), you perceive your parts as well. Whatever you perceive in addition to it, e.g. Zayd, does not repeat itself… However, with the unconditioned perception, the self does not become a part itself…[270]

The Questioner: Our saying "existent by essence" has two meanings: 1) in its Essence It is not attached to anything else 2) it does not inhere in another like that of form in matter or accident in substance; this is also rejected...[271]

I say: The essence of a thing is something different from its conceptual determination (*mafhūm taᶜayyunihā*)… e.g. the Necessary Being… my self and your self… your self can be added to your self… But this implies no dualism.[272]

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[266] Mullā Ṣadrā, *al-Mabdaʾ wa-l-maᶜād,* 2: 481. al-Ghazālī takes some issue with this argument that may have played some part in al-Rāzī's later critique of Avicennan self-awareness, see Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī, *Tahāfut al-falāsifa*, ed. Sulaymān Dunyā (Cairo: Dār al-Maᶜārif, 1966), 198-202; and Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *al-Mabāḥith al-mashriqiyya* (Qom: Intishārāt-i Bīdār, n. d.), 2: 345ff.
[267] Mullā Ṣadrā, *al-Mabdaʾ wa-l-maᶜād,* 2: 481.
[268] Mullā Ṣadrā, *al-Mabdaʾ wa-l-maᶜād,* 2: 482.
[269] Mullā Ṣadrā, *al-Mabdaʾ wa-l-maᶜād,* 2: 482.
[270] Mullā Ṣadrā, *al-Mabdaʾ wa-l-maᶜād,* 2: 482. Cf. Mullā Ṣadrā, *Asfār,* 8: 324.
[271] Mullā Ṣadrā, *al-Mabdaʾ wa-l-maᶜād,* 2: 483.
[272] Mullā Ṣadrā, *al-Mabdaʾ wa-l-maᶜād,* 2: 483.

The Questioner: Even though animals don't have an immaterial self, they perceive themselves. They look for comfort and flee from the harmful… This shows that they have awareness.[273]

I say: Only the human self perceives itself through itself (*nafs al-insān tudriku bi-dhātihā dhātahā*). Animals (*al-bahāʾim*) perceive themselves by means of the estimative faculty (*bi-awhāmihā dhawātahā*) and their selves are represented by the instrument of this faculty.[274]

The Questioner: What is the proof that our perception of ourselves is not like that of the animals?[275]

I say: We possess a self-reflexive faculty. Our self-awareness allows us to disengage various individuating accidents (*al-ʿawāriḍ al-shakhṣiyya*) it perceives through its own awareness… Animals don't have self-reflexivity. Also, animals can't disengage themselves from their body… Their awareness is limited to estimation (*wahm*)… They do not have self-awareness, since they lack an intellective faculty.[276]

Also, the human self is always aware of itself (*mashʿūr bihā fī jamīʿ al-awqāt*), even in a state of sleep, intoxication, and fainting, and it is not one of the parts of the body such as the heart, brain, and vaporous spirit (*rūḥ bukhārī*), even though it may be forgetful sometimes. Most people hardly perceive all of their bodily organs, or even when they do, they do so through dissection or by some other means. However, their awareness of themselves remains continuous. That whose awareness is continuous cannot remain unaware of itself for some time. But consciousness of the body, or parts of it, or some of its accidents that subsist on it, or on some of its parts, is never continuous in itself. So that by which things are made conscious must be other than the body, or its states, or another body with its given states. All of this is plain.[277]

By now the broad contour of this argument should seem familiar from our discussions in previous sections.[278] This argument, which I call 'argument from self-knowledge and self-consciousness,' begins from the premise that 'everything that perceives itself, grasps its own quiddity.' This is because a thing that is able to perceive itself, by definition, implies that it is able to know its 'whatness,' which distinguishes it from everything else. Then he proceeds to assert that since we perceive our self (which is a self-evident fact), we must be able to grasp our own quiddity (*māhiyya*). However, if we perceive ourselves through a quiddity, it implies that we are adding another form to our 'self.' This means we do not really perceive ourselves as ourselves, since our 'quiddity' comes in between. The only way to get around this infinite regress would be to accept that our self perceives itself directly, since "the essence of our self is present before itself" (*nafsu dhātinā ḥāḍiratan li-dhātinā*).[279] From this Ṣadrā further deduces

[273] Mullā Ṣadrā, *al-Mabdaʾ wa-l-maʿād*, 2: 483.
[274] Mullā Ṣadrā, *al-Mabdaʾ wa-l-maʿād*, 2: 484.
[275] Mullā Ṣadrā, *al-Mabdaʾ wa-l-maʿād*, 2: 484.
[276] Mullā Ṣadrā, *al-Mabdaʾ wa-l-maʿād*, 2: 484.
[277] Mullā Ṣadrā, *al-Mabdaʾ wa-l-maʿād*, 2: 485-86.
[278] See pp. 18-33.
[279] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Asfār*, 8: 320. Cf. Suhrawardī, *Muṭāraḥāt*, in *Majmūʿah-yi muṣannafāt-i Shaykh-i Ishrāq*, 1: 484-88.

that whatever grasps its self through itself must be self-subsistent, since anything that is bodily cannot be self-subsistent.[280] The opponent objects by saying that even though we perceive our self, this does not mean we perceive our inner reality, since we intellect heavenly bodies or the Active intellect or even God, but their realities remain hidden from us. Ṣadrā responds by saying that we only perceive the specific (nawᶜiyya) nature of the heavenly intellects because the species of every one of the immaterial intellects is restricted to its individual instance. This means they are different from common entities around us. On the contrary, the reality of our self as the object of intellection is grasped in respect of its identity, which is not different as far as its species, quiddity, accident or personhood are concerned. As for God, He does not have a quiddity, so His Essence remains unknown to us.[281] Then the opponent raises objection concerning 'animal awareness' by arguing animals also perceive themselves, but they do not have an immaterial self. In response, Ṣadrā retorts that animals perceive themselves through their faculty of 'estimation' (wahm), and that they do not have the capacity to carry out intellection.[282] Hence their selves are not immaterial, although they do possess some limited form of awareness. Humans, on the contrary, have self-reflexivity, continuous awareness of themselves. And that whose awareness is continuous cannot remain unaware of itself for some time. But the body or any of its parts do not have continuous awareness. So that by which things are made conscious must be other than the body, or its states, or another body with its given states, which is to say that the self must be other than the body or immaterial. In addition, Ṣadrā also deploys ten other arguments to demonstrate the self's immateriality, as outlined below:[283]

i) Argument from 'universal natures' (al-ṭabāʾiᶜ al-kulliyya) that cannot inhere in a body.
ii) Argument from 'the perception of universals' (al-kulliyyāt).
iii) Argument from 'the self's ability to create an infinite (ghayr mutanāhī) array of acts.
iv) Argument from 'self-perception without involving the organs of body.'
v) Argument from 'strengthening of intellectual capacity despite weakening of material faculties with age.'
vi) Argument from 'the perfection of the intellect in contrast to the other faculties.'
vii) Argument from 'the independence of the self in its acts.'
viii) Argument from 'the unity of perception.'
ix) Argument from 'the unity of consciousness.'
x) Argument from 'memory-consciousness.'

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[280] For an updated argument on the immateriality of the self, see Ḥasanzādah Āmūlī, ᶜUyūn masāʾil al-nafs wa Sharḥ al-ᶜuyūn fī sharḥ al-ᶜūyūn (Tehran: Amīr Kabīr, 2006), 389-404. For a critique of some of Ṣadrā's arguments, see Muḥammad Taqī Miṣbaḥ Yazdī, Sharḥ-i jild-i hashtum-i Asfār-i arbaᶜa (Qom: Muʾassasa-yi Āmūzishi u Pazhūhishi-yi Imām Khumaynī, 2000), passim.

[281] This is because for the philosophers God's quiddity is His existence, see e.g. Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī, al-Ishārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt maᶜa al-sharḥ li-l-muḥaqqiq Naṣīr al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Ṭūsī wa-sharḥ li-l-ᶜAllāma Quṭb al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. Abī Jaᶜfar al-Rāzī (Qom: Nashr al-Balāga, 1996), 3:58.

[282] On animal cognition in Ṣadrā and its Avicennan background, see Ahmed Alwishah, "Avicenna on Animal Self-Awareness, Cognition and Identity," Cambridge Journal of Arabic Sciences and Philosophy 26.1 (2016): 73-96; Kaukua, Self-Awareness in Islamic Philosophy, 165ff. For a contemporary take on the subject of 'animal cognition,' see Kristin Andrews (ed.), Animal Mind: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Animal Cognition (London, NY: Routledge, 2015).

[283] Mullā Ṣadrā, Asfār, 8: 310-56. A full elaboration of all of these arguments is beyond the scope of the present focus, but I will nevertheless analyze another argument, namely 'argument from the unity of consciousness.' Furthermore, Ṣadrā maintains that the imaginal faculty is also capable of disengaging itself from matter.

I will analyze Ṣadrā's argument from 'the unity of consciousness in the following. Ṣadrā says that if we assume the body as such to be the perceiver of things, then it follows that all parts of the body somehow partake in perception, which is absurd. Likewise, if we assume that there is a bodily faculty of perception that either exists in all parts of the body or in some of its organs, the following absurdities follow. First, if this faculty exists in all parts of the body, every part of the body would then be seeing, hearing, imagining, thinking, and so on, which clearly is not the case. For the sight cannot hear, the hand cannot imagine, or the leg cannot think. It is also absurd to claim that there is a faculty of perception that exists in some of the organs of the body. Because this would imply that there is an organ in the body which is the hearer, the seer, the subject of imagination, the thinker, the intellect, but at the same time we do not know which one it is and where it is located. This argument also brings out the absurdity of the one who claims: "The faculty of perception for all these perceptions subsists in the subtle body (*jism laṭīf*) which it is encompassed by some organs."[284] However, one might respond by saying that just because we do not know its location, it does not mean it is non-existent. Ṣadrā replies by having recourse to primitive self-knowledge. He makes the point that we know that we hear, see, imagine, and think. So, if something from the body, be it a part of the body or something within a part of the body, is the perceiver of all the perceptibles, then our reality would only be that part of the body described by that faculty which has the attribute of these perceptions. If that were the case, and we are yet not aware of it, then we could not be the knowers of the reality of our self.[285] Since this is a *reductio ad absurdum* argument, the premise must be rejected. Therefore, our self must be an immaterial entity which is able to perceive without giving up its unity.

Furthermore, Ṣadrā suggests that the self's immateriality can be demonstrated from the fact that with time our sense-organs weaken, whereas our mind and intellect become sharper, although not always. I call these 'supplementary arguments,' which are presented below:[286]

1) When the sense-organs are afflicted, they either stop perceiving or their perception becomes weak, or they misperceive things.
2) The sense organs stop perceiving themselves, for instance, vision stops perceiving itself or its instruments.
3) Even if their [sense organs] quality remains intact, they do not perceive. Even though due to mal-functioning of temperament (*mizāj*), the substance of the body is affected, as in pulsation, the organ of touch does not perceive it.
4) The sense organs do not perceive themselves; so even if the estimative faculty wants to conceive of its nature, it cannot do so.
5) When something intense is perceived, it is not possible to perceive something else that is relatively less intense, except after elapsing some time. So for example, after hearing a high-pitched voice one cannot hear a low voice because the sense of hearing is still attached to the former sound.
6) If the sense-organs are assailed by an unbearable object of perception, they may lose their capacity to function, e.g. the sight after an intense beam of light, or the hearing after a high-pitched sound.

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[284] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Asfār* 8: 353-4.
[285] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Asfār* 8: 354.
[286] Mullā Ṣadrā, *al-Mabdaʾ wa-l-maʿād,* 2: 486-87.

7) The corporeal faculties become weak once they reach the age of forty due to the weakening of bodily temperament. But when it comes to the intellective faculty, it is the opposite of all the above. Most of the time it sharpens after forty… It perceives itself and uses the heart/brain as its instruments.

After presenting all the intellectual arguments, Ṣadrā proceeds to say that the majority of people are incapable of grasping such abstruse proofs, if they are not accompanied by the sensible phenomena. So he goes on to prove the self's immateriality from the Qur'an, prophetic traditions, and the sayings of ancient philosophers such as Pythagoras, Empedocles, Plato, Plotinus (i.e. pseudo Aristotle) and Sufi masters.[287] Ṣadrā also stresses that the Divine Law and the intellect mutually reinforce one another, and cautions that one should be careful before declaring sacred scripture incompatible with intellectual proofs.[288]

Ṣadrā's interpretation of the Qur'anic verses concerning the self puts him at odds with the theologians who advocate a physicalist self (see ch. 2). *Contra* the theologians, Ṣadrā affirms the self's immateriality by quoting verses such as "and I breathed into him (i.e. the human self) of My Spirit,"[289] and "Thus did We show Abraham the kingdom of the heavens and the earth that he might be of those possessing certainty."[290] He argues that 'the spirit' mentioned in the above verse must be above bodily nature, and should not be confused with the animal spirit (*al-rūḥ al-ḥaywānī*).[291] Moreover, the material body and its faculties are incapable of having spiritual visions which were granted to various prophets such as Abraham and Moses. Ṣadrā also interprets the verse "O the tranquil self…"[292] as being an argument against the physicalism of the theologians because he thinks this shows that the Qur'an addresses a self which is a self-subsistent reality that does not perish at death. The addressees of this verse cannot be something bodily because bodies disintegrate after death.[293] He also states that religious scholars differ in

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[287] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Asfār* 8: 354ff. It was a common practice among many Safavid philosophers to quote ancient authorities on different issues. The Safavid period saw a renaissance of interest in the works of the ancient philosophers, although, in contrast to the European Renaissance, Iranian scholars did not have access to material in its original language, i.e., Greek. Also, no attempt was made to search for any "original" material or to acquire the relevant linguistic expertise to be able to read material in languages other than Arabic. For an extensive treatment of this issue, see Reza Pourjavady and Sabine Schmidtke, "An Eastern Renaissance? Greek Philosophy under the Safavids (16th–18th centuries AD)," *Intellectual History of the Islamicate World* 3 (2015): 248–290.

[288] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Asfār,* 8:354.

[289] Q. 15:29; 38:72.

[290] Q. 6:75.

[291] Cf. Mullā Ṣadrā, *Mafātīḥ*, 2:853-63. Three medical senses of the word spirit: 1) vital spirit which is hot and dry, has its center in the left ventricle of the heart, preserves life, causes the body to grow, move and reproduce, and travel within the arteries, 2) the animal spirit which is cold and wet, has its center in the brain, causes sensation and movement and moves within the nerves, 3) the natural spirit which is hot and wet, has its center in the liver, is concerned with the reception of food, growth and reproduction and travels within the veins. For more information, Āmūlī, *ʿUyūn masāʾil al-nafs,* 265-70, and Nahyan Fancy, *Science and Religion in Mamluk Egypt: Ibn al-Nafis, Pulmonary Transit and Bodily Resurrection* (New York: Routledge, 2013), ch. 4.
Rūmī also differentiates between 'the immaterial *spirit'* and 'the animal spirit,' which is corporeal:
But there is no dread for the self from (being named in) the feminine gender,
(because) the spirit has no association with (the qualities of) man or woman. (For) it is higher than feminine and masculine. It isn't the spirit which is (in the form) of dry and moist. (And) it isn't the spirit which increases by (eating) bread, or is sometimes like this, sometimes like that, see Rūmī, *Masnavī*, 1:1975, trans. Nicholson.

[292] Q. 89:27

[293] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Mafātīḥ*, 2: 875.

their opinions concerning the "spirit" about which the Prophet was also asked. In his view, some traditions indicate that the inquirers believe in the eternity (*qidam*) of the spirit, while others believe in its temporal origination (*ḥuduth*).[294] For instance, he cites al-Mujāhid who had an anthropomorphic understanding of the spirit as in his saying, "The spirit is like the form (*ṣuwar*) of the children of Adams. They have hands, feet and they eat food, but they are not angels."[295] However, Ṣadrā interprets it figuratively by claiming that the intention behind mentioning bodily parts for the spirit is not to affirm its corporeal limbs, but to assert its spiritual organs (*ajzāʾ rūḥāniyya*) and faculties which are proper to the subtle nature of the spirit. He then draws an analogy between such sayings and the *Enneads* (i.e. *Uthūlūjiyā)* by arguing: "the sensory human (*al-insān al-ḥissī*) is an icon (*ṣanam*) of the intellectual human (*al-insān al-ʿaqlī*), and the intellectual human is spiritual, and his parts are all spiritual too. The intellectual human's place of hand is not different from his place of foot, nor is his parts placed in different places. Rather they are all in one place."[296]

Ṣadrā then goes on to quote several Sufi masters in support of his view on the immateriality of the self.[297] To give more contexts to such sayings and to trace the development from early Sufism to Ṣadrā's time, I will now sketch the construction of the self in Sufism's early phase.[298] Concerning the self, Sufis, from the beginning, seemed to lay a great emphasis on the 'aspirational' content of the self, i.e., "what kind of self should one aspire to be," even though each person may be endowed with a given empirical self. Moreover, the logic of the question posed above entails that the realization of one's true self would depend on one's moral and spiritual actions. This is important to keep in mind, since Sufi views of the self often contain moral exhortations concerning "what should one do" in order to realize one's true and transcendent self. While theologians generally talk about obligation, duty or moral consequentialism in relation to the agent or the obligated person (*mukallaf*), Sufis often espouse a 'virtue ethics' that promotes what a given self must undergo in order to actualize its full potential.[299]

Nonetheless, one is rather surprised to discover that despite an emphasis on the self's spiritual development, early Sufi literature on the self often presents a quasi-physicalist or a combination of physicalist cum immaterialist view of self.[300] It should also be noted that early

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[294] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Asfār,* 8: 364.

[295] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Asfār,* 8: 365.

[296] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Asfār,* 8: 365. Cf. Plotinus (Ps.-Aristotle), *Uthūlūjiyā*, in *Aflūṭīn inda l-ʿArab*, edited by ʿAbd al-Rahmān al-Badawī (Kuwait: Wikālat, 1977), 144ff.

[297] Most of the following sayings were adopted from Shihāb al-Dīn ʿUmar al-Suhrawardī's *ʿAwārif al-maʿārif*, see *idem.*, *ʿAwārif al-maʿārif*, edited by Sayyid al-Mahdī Aḥmad (Makkah: al-Maktaba al-Makkīya, 2001), 218ff.

[298] Like other schools of Islamic thought such as 'theology,' the origin of Sufism is also a subject of intense scholarly debate. Some say its origin can be traced back to Indian mysticism, while others suggest Christian or Zoroastrian sources for that matter, but the most recent appraisal maintains its Islamic provenance. At any rate, the historical appearance of Sufism took shape during the Umayyad period (661–750 C.E.) in opposition to the materialism and excesses of the caliphs. Adherents of early Sufism usually lived a simple and ascetic life, and often secluded themselves from the wider society. For more information, see Nile Green, *Sufism: A Global History* (Chichester, West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 1ff. In addition, see also Carl Ernst, *The Shambala Guide to Sufism* (Boston: Shambala, 1997) chs. 1-2; Ahmet Karamustafa, *Sufism: The Formative Period* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), ch.1; Alexander Knysh, Islamic Mysticism: A Short History (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 8ff.

[299] For a detailed discussion on 'virtue ethics' in Islamic thought, including Sufism, see Zargar, *Polished Mirror,* 9-11, 15-16, 153-176, 263-265.

[300] This might be due to the influence of *kalām* in Sufism or it may be due to figures who were both theologians and Sufis, such as Qushayrī. However, even as late as 13th century, Sufi Najm al-Dīn Rāzī (d. 645/1247) puts forward a

Sufis use a constellation of terms such as *rūḥ*, *nafs*, *sirr* etc. to talk about the self. Moreover, their deployment of these terms is often inconsistent. It is only with later Sufis such as al-Ghazālī or Walī Allāh that we get a refined sense of what the self might look like in Sufism.[301] At any rate, in Abū Bakr al-Kalābādhī's (d. 380/990) *Kitāb al-Taᶜarruf li-madhhab ahl al-taṣawwuf*, we are told that according to Sufi Abū ᶜAbd Alāh al-Nibajī (ca. 9th cent.) the self (*rūḥ*) is a body which is too subtle to be perceived, and too great to be touched, so that it cannot be expressed in any other way than as being an existent (*mawjūd*).[302] Another unnamed Sufi says the self is a subtle essence materializing in a dense body, just as sight, which is a subtle essence, materializes in a dense body.[303] Yet another unnamed Sufi says the self is a light, fragrant breath through which life subsists, while the soul (*nafs*) is a hot wind through which the motions and desires exist.[304] According to al-Kalābādhī, most Sufis of his time held that the spirit (*rūḥ*) is an entity (*maᶜnā*) through which the body lives.[305] Among the early Sufis, Sahl b. ᶜAbd Allāh al-Tustarī (d. 283/896) provides one of the most organized models of the self his *Tafsīr al-Tustarī*.[306] Tustarī discerns two fundamental and opposing forces within the human constitution. The positive force, for him, is represented by the heart or the spiritual center (*qalb*), while the negative force is called the lower self (*nafs*) that drags the human toward immoral acts.[307] When asked about the reality of human nature (i.e. the lower self) and how one might attain the highest level of selfhood associated with divine beatitude, Tustarī says:

> Truly, the evil-inciting self (*nafs ammāra*) is lust (*shahwa*), which is the role played by man's [basic] nature (*ṭabᶜ*); *"…unless my Lord shows mercy,"* is the role played by the [divine] protection (*ᶜiṣma*). The tranquil self (*nafs muṭmaʾinna*) is the self of gnosis (*nafs al-maᶜrifa*). God, Exalted is He, created the self and made ignorance its nature (*ṭabᶜ*) and made desire (*hawā*) the closest thing to it.[308]

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combination of physicalist cum immaterialist view of self. He says e.g.: "Know that the soul, in the usage of the people of the path, consists of a subtle vapor arising from the fleshy form of the heart. It is that which the physicians call the animal spirit. From it arises all reprehensible attributes, as God Almighty says: "Truly the soul commands unto evil." (Q. 12:53), Najm al-Dīn Rāzī, *Mirṣād al-ᶜibād*, ed. Muḥammad Amīn Riyāḥī (Tehran: Shirkat-i Intishārāt-i 'Ilmī wa Farhangī, 1987), 174.

[301] See ch. 3 for a comprehensive analysis of various 'self' terms such as *nafs* and *rūḥ* in Sufism.

[302] Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm Kalābādhī, *al-Taᶜarruf li-madhhab ahl al-taṣawwuf*, ed. A. J. Arberry (Cairo: al-Maktaba al-Khānijī, 1994), 40. Other early Sufis who developed notable theories of the self are al-Ḥārith al-Muḥāsibī (d. 243/837), Abū al-Ḥusayn al-Nūrī (d. 295/907) and al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī (d. between 295/905 and 300/910). On Muḥāsibī, see Josef van Ess, *Die Gedankenwelt des Ḥārith al-Muḥāsibī* (Bonn, 1961). Nūrī is said to be the author of a work entitled *Maqāmāt al-qulūb*, ed. with introduction by Paul Nwyia in *Mélanges de l'Université Saint-Joseph* 44 (1968), 117–54, while a comparable work on the inner make-up of human beings is ascribed to al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī, entitled *Bayān al-farq bayn al-ṣadr wa-l-qalb wa-l-fuʾād waʾl-lubb* (Cairo, 1958); English trans. by Nicholas Heer, with Kenneth L. Honerkamp, *Three Early Sufi Texts* (Louisville, KY: Fons Vitae, 2003).

[303] Kalābādhī, *al-Taᶜarruf*, 40.

[304] Kalābādhī, *al-Taᶜarruf*, 41.

[305] Kalābādhī, *al-Taᶜarruf*, 41.

[306] Sahl ibn 'Abd Allāh al-Tustarī, *Tafsīr al-Tustarī*, Muḥammad Bāsil 'Uyūn al-Sūd (Bayrūt: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmīyya, 2002), 81-83.

[307] He uses *rūḥ* and *nafs al-rūḥ* (spiritual self), *nafs al-ruh al-nūrī* along with *qalb* and *ᶜaql*, while *nafs*, *ṭabᶜ* (natural instinct), and *nafs al-ṭabᶜ* (natural self) along with *nafs*, see Gerhard Böwering, *The Mystical Vision of Existence in Classical Islam: the Qurʾānic Hermeneutics of the Ṣūfī Sahl At-Tustarī (d. 283/896)* (Berlin; New York: de Gruyter, 1980), 241ff.

[308] al-Tustarī, *Tafsīr al-Tustarī,* 82.

Human nature (*ṭabᶜ*) comprises four natural dispositions (*ṭabāʾiᶜ*): the first is the animal disposition (*ṭabᶜ al-bahāʾim*), that of the stomach and genitals; the second is the satanic disposition (*ṭabᶜ al-shayāṭīn*), that of play (*laᶜb*) and diversion (*lahw*); the third is the sorcerous disposition (*ṭabᶜ al-saḥara*), that of delusion (*makr*) and deception (*khidāᶜ*); and the fourth is the devilish nature (*ṭabᶜ al-abālisa*), that of refusal (*ibāʾ*) and arrogance (*istikbār*). [Divine] protection (*ᶜiṣma*) against the animal disposition is through faith (*īmān*). Safety (*salāma*) from the satanic disposition is through glorification (*tasbīḥ*) and sanctification [of God] (*taqdīs*), which is the natural disposition of angels. Safety from the sorcerous disposition is through truthfulness (*ṣidq*), sincere counsel (*naṣīḥa*), equity (*inṣāf*) and graciousness (*tafaḍḍul*). Safety from the devilish nature is through taking refuge (*iltijāʾ*) in God, Exalted is He, by humbly imploring him (*taḍarruᶜ*) and crying out to Him (*ṣarākh*). The nature of the intellect (*ᶜaql*) is to have knowledge but the nature of the lower self (*nafs*) is ignorance.[309]

In addition, a systematic treatment of selfhood in early Sufism is also found in Abū al-Qāsim al-Qushayrī's famous *al-Risāla*, in which he explains that for the Sufis the word *nafs* or self does not mean either existent (*mawjūd*) or a physical body (*jism*). Rather Sufis have in mind spiritual qualities or the lack thereof, when they discuss the self. Al-Qushayrī writes:

In the Arabic language, a thing's 'self' (*nafs*) is its being (*mawjūd*). However, when the Sufis utter the word 'self' they imply neither being nor a [physical] body. Rather, they imply the deficiencies of one's character traits as well as one's reprehensible morals and deeds. The deficiencies of one's character traits fall into two categories: first, those which one acquires by oneself – namely, one's acts of disobedience and one's sins; second, one's [inherent] base morals. They are blameworthy in and of themselves. However, when a man seeks to treat them and fight them, these bad morals are extinguished in him through a strenuous and uninterrupted effort.[310]

However, a few lines later he suggests that the self may also refer to a subtle substance placed in the human body:

[T]he self (*nafs*) may also mean a subtle substance placed in the [human] body, which is the repository of blameworthy character traits in the same way as the spirit is a subtle substance placed in the [human] body, which is the repository of praiseworthy character traits. All these elements are subjugated to one another and their sum total constitutes a human being. The spirit (*rūḥ*) and the *nafs* are subtle substances residing in a certain form in the same way as the angels and demons are characterized by subtlety. This is also the case with vision being the repository of seeing, the ear being the repository of hearing, the nose being the repository of smelling, and the mouth being the repository of tasting.[311]

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[309] al-Tustarī, *Tafsīr al-Tustarī*, 82.
[310] ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Qushayrī, *al-Risāla al-Qushayrīya*, ed. ʿAbd al-Ḥalīm Maḥmūd (Cairo: Dār al-Shaᶜb, 1989), 174.
[311] Qushayrī, *al-Risāla*, 174-75.

Apart from the *nafs*, and *rūḥ*, the Sufis also use a cluster of terms such as *sirr*, *khafī* and *akhfā* that denote various aspects of the self.[312] Al-Qushayrī, for instance, notes:

> [T]he innermost selves are a subtle entity placed in the body. According to Sufi principles, [the innermost self] serves as a repository of direct vision [of God], in the same way as the spirits are the repository of love and the hearts are the repository of knowledge… According to the terminology and principles of the Sufis, the innermost self is more subtle than the spirit, while the spirit is nobler than the heart. They say that the innermost selves are free from the bondage of all things [other than God], from traces and remains. The words "innermost self" denote the [mystical] states that are kept secret between God – glory to Him – and His servant.[313]

In the main, some Sufis conceive of a physicalist or quasi-physicalist self, while others incorporate certain 'incorporeal' dimensions, e.g. inner consciousness into their conception of the self. Coming now to Mullā Ṣadrā, it is interesting to observe that he interprets away the physicalist overtone of many early Sufi sayings on the self by highlighting its immaterial dimension. For example, he explains that Junayd's saying "the spirit (*rūḥ*) is an existent" means it is a pure being (*mawjūd baḥt*), and sheer existence (*wujūd ṣirf*) like the rest of the simple intellects, which are pure inner realities different from each other in strength and weakness.[314] He also refers to al-Basṭāmī's, "I searched for my self (*ṭalabtu dhātī*) in both worlds, but I did not find it" to suggest that the self is above the realm of nature and the imaginal world (*ᶜālam al-mithāl*). Then he cites al-Basṭāmī's, "I came out of my skin and found out who 'I' was (*man anā*)" to argue that the noetic/spiritual self is other than the body because al-Basṭāmī called his physical body a peel and skin.[315] Ṣadrā also mentions those Sufis such as Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī who favors a quasi-physicalist view of the self. Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī states in his book that the spirits are specific entities in the body (*aᶜyān fi-l-jasad*).[316] However, the movements of the spirit do not negate the immateriality of the self (*tajarrud al-nafs*).[317] Ṣadrā admits that the literal meaning of some of these sayings may be subject to criticism but, in his view, they nevertheless indicate profound intuitions when interpreted allegorically.[318]

Ṣadrā then engages with early theologians whose conception of the self is based on the notion of a subtle body (*jism laṭīf*) intermingled in a gross body (*al-ajsām al-kathīfa*) like the intermingling of water in green stalk. In order to properly contextualize Ṣadrā's critique of early

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[312] For a systematic discussion on these terms as aspects of the self, see ch. 3. Also, on how these terms refer to various levels of consciousness, see William Chittick, "Reason, Intellect, and Consciousness in Islamic Thought," in *Reason, Spirit and the Sacral in the New Enlightenment: Islamic Metaphysics Revived and Recent Phenomenology of Life*, edited by Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka (Dordrecht: Springer, 2011), 11-35.

[313] Qushayrī, *al-Risāla*, 176.

[314] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Asfār,* 8: 363. On Junayd al-Baghdādī's life and sayings, see the excellent study by Suᶜād al-Ḥakīm, *Tāj al-ᶜārifīn, al-Junayd al-Baghdādī: al-aᶜmāl al-kāmila* (Cairo: Dār al-Shurūq, 2004).

[315] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Asfār* 8: 363. Al-Basṭāmī, like al-Ḥallāj, is famous for his ecstatic utterances (*shaṭhiyāt*), many of which were compiled by later Sufis such as Rūzbihān al-Baqlī (d. 1210), see Rūzbihān al-Baqlī, *Sharḥ-i shaṭḥīyāt: shāmil-i guftārhā-yi shūrangīz wa ramzī-i Ṣūfiyān*, edited by Henry Corbin (Tehran: Qismat-i Īrānshināsī, Instītū Īrān wa Farānsa, 1966), *passim*.

[316] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Asfār* 8: 370.

[317] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Asfār* 8: 370.

[318] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Asfār* 8: 375. Ṣadrā also opines that the Sufi masters (*mashāyikh al-ṣūfiyya*), by following the etiquette of the Prophet, do not unveil the mystery of the spirit except by way of allusion and symbol (*al-ramz wa-l-ishāra*), see Mullā Ṣadrā, *Asfār* 8: 363.

kalām view of the self that rests on animating principles such as the subtle body and the animal spirit (*al-rūḥ al-ḥaywānī*), let us now embark on a brief journey into the early phase of Islamic theology.[319] It might appear rather startling if I suggest that early *kalām* views on the self are closer to the spirit of modern neuroscience than to Islam's sacred scripture because of its physicalist overtone.[320] Nonetheless, as will be seen, *contra* the philosophers, the theologians do not embrace a self that is immaterial or incorporeal; nor do they treat it as having an internal unity within itself. There is nothing like 'the unity of consciousness' or even 'consciousness' (*shuᶜūr*) in the early *kalām* view of the self. Given all this, one might wonder how the *mutakallimūn* came to accept such a view, which poses a threat to key religious doctrines such as resurrection (*maᶜād*) and issues pertaining to ethics and morality. The answer seems not too far-fetched once one takes into account *kalām* physicalism that forms the background of their philosophy of self. In response to the ontological question, "what are the ultimate constituents that make up the universe or all that exists," the early *kalām* proponents affirm that at heart all of reality is comprised of God, atoms (*jawāhir*) and accidents (*aᶜrāḍ*).[321] This implies that all the phenomena of the universe, be they physical or psychological, as well as the relationships between them, for instance the relationship of cause and effect, must be explained by having recourse to the three aforementioned categories. Although most theologians would not go as far as to argue that even God is a physical entity, they would nonetheless consider everything else in the world as physical. In fact, when one surveys early theological texts, one invariably observes the dominance of cosmology and epistemology rather than psychology, and much less 'philosophy of self.' All of this goes on to show that the theologians embrace a physicalist self

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[319] According to Josef van Ess, Islamic theology started as an inner-Islamic discussion when, mainly through conflicting political developments, the self-confident unity of the early days was gradually eroded. However, subsequent criticism by Michael Cook and Fritz Zimmermann caused him to revise this thesis which was based on the supposed authenticity of certain early texts on theological matters. In any event, Islamic theology emerged in a multi-religious, multi-ethnic milieu in which a Muslim ruling minority was trying to define its religio-cultural identity amid the local populations. Since these populations spoke a variety of languages such as Greek, Syriac/Aramaic etc., it is plausible to surmise that kalām proponents came in contact with a host of Hellenistic or Christian ideas, although the exact nature of these transmissions remains a matter of scholarly controversy. For our purposes, it is not necessary to probe into the origins of theological views on the self, since I only intend to sketch the trajectory by which later ruminations on the self can be traced back to the earlier sources. For the 'origins of *kalām*' debate, and a more recent evaluation of these debates, see Josef van Ess, "The Beginnings of Islamic Theology," in J. E. Murdoch and E. D. Sylla (eds.), *The Cultural Context of Medieval Learning* (Dordrecht and Boston: Reidel, 1975) 87–111; Alexander Treiger, "Origins of Kalām," in Sabine Schmidtke (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Islamic Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), ch. 1; Michael Cook, "The Origins of Kalām," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 43 (1980):32–43; *idem.*, *Early Muslim Dogma: A Source-Critical Study* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981); Fritz Zimmermann, [Review of *Anfänge muslimischer Theologie: Zwei antiqadaritische Traktate aus dem ersten Jahrhundert der Hiǧra* by Josef van Ess], International Journal of Middle East Studies 16.3 (1984): 437–41.

[320] It goes without saying that beside the similarity of propounding a "physical self" or a theory of "no-self," the method and objective of *kalām* and modern neuroscience are hardly comparable. Nevertheless, certain conclusions about their theory of the self are strikingly similar, despite each having a very different notion of what an "atom" is. Ayman Shihadeh also notes how the numerous references to the "spirit" in the Qur'an and the *Ḥadīth* make it difficult for the theologians to do away with an immaterial self. Thus they reduce the "spirit" to the attribute of life, or explain it away as the mysterious air that flows through the nostrils and mouth in and out of the body, see Ayman Shihadeh, "Classical Ashᶜarī Anthropology: Body, Life and Spirit," *The Muslim World* 102 (2012): 433–477, at 475.

[321] For an excellent overview of *kalām* physicalism, see Alnoor Dhanani, *The Physical theory of Kalām: Atoms, Space, and Void in Basrian Muᶜtazilī Cosmology* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 8ff. The classic discussion is Shlomo Pines' *Beitrage zur islamischen Atomenlehre*, (Berlin, 1936). Harry Wolfson discusses *kalām* atomism in "Chapter VI: Atomism" in his *The Philosophy of Kalam* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976), 466-517.

by the internal logic of their materialist ontology (atoms and accidents populating the cosmos), which leaves no room for 'consciousness' or immaterial minds. It is thus not surprising that we do not find any systematic exposition of the self in early or classical *kalām* until perhaps al-Ghazālī, although the situation changes with later *kalām* which begins to have more frequent polemical exchanges with the rival traditions such as *falsafa* and 'philosophical Sufism.'[322] The rather unsystematic and often sporadic remarks that one encounters in early theology present a self which is often treated synonymously with the human being (*insān*) or the spirit (*rūḥ*).[323] In all, the *kalām* physicalist self is more or less confined to the bio-physiological level, having little to say about its metaphysical dimension.

For the vast majority of the theologians who remain loyal to a cosmology of atoms and accidents in which atoms, when combined with one another, form bodies that occupy space, and accidents, including color, weight, and other similar phenomena inhere in bodies, the self is either a kind of body (or one of its atoms), or an accident inhering in the body. In what follows I examine a broad selection of texts that describe the early *kalām* view on the self.

The Muᶜtazilite theologian, Bishr b. al-Muᶜtamir (d. 840) who belonged to the Baghdad school of the branch defines human or the self as "a compound of body and soul (*jasad wa-rūḥ*) and a subject of bodily acts (*afᶜāl*)," while the pioneer of the Basran Muᶜtazilism, Abū l-Hudhayl al-ᶜAllāf (d. 225-35/840-50) states that "the self (*nafs*) is not made of hair, nails and the like, and is also not "the body itself."[324] Rather, Hudhayl continues, "the self is other than the life of the body."[325] He also recognizes that the self is other than the spirit or *rūḥ*.[326] Hudhayl's student Abū Isḥāq Naẓẓām (d. 845) develops an early influential view of the self that equates it with the human being and the spirit.[327] Naẓẓām claims that "the self is a subtle body (*jism laṭīf*) that penetrates the dense body (*jism kathīf*)..., while the spirit is life infused (*mushābik*) with the body. He also goes on to assert that it is a unique atom (*jawhar wāḥid*) that does not have contraries (*mutaḍād*).[328] Moreover, according to Naẓẓām, the body is a defect (*āfa*) and it constrains the self's freedom.[329] The Muᶜtazilite Jaᶜfar b. Ḥarb (d. 850) states that "the self is an accident," while pre-Muᶜtazilites such as Abū Bakr Aṣamm (d. 816-7) claim that "the self by its essence is this body but it flows throughout the body." Finally, Abū ᶜAlī al-Jubbā'ī (d. 321/933), the teacher of Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ashᶜarī (d. 324/935-6) opines that "the self is a body, and it is other than life because life is an accident."[330]

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[322] On the notion of "philosophical Sufism," see Mohammed Rustom, "Philosophical Sufism," in *The Routledge Companion to Islamic Philosophy*, edited by Richard Taylor and Luis Xavier López Farjeat (New York: Routledge, 2016), 399– 411.

[323] The *rūḥ*, in this context, does not imply anything immaterial.

[324] Abū al-Hasan ᶜAlī b. Ismāᶜīl al-Ashᶜarī, *Maqālāt al-Islāmīyīn wa-ikhtilāf al-musallīn*, ed. H. Ritter (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1980), 329.

[325] al-Ashᶜarī, *Maqālāt,* 329.

[326] al-Ashᶜarī, *Maqālāt*, 337. As can be seen, it is very difficult to draw a definite conclusion from such negative definitions. However, even when these theologians use the "spirit" to refer to the *nafs*, they don't have mind anything like the immaterial self.

[327] On Naẓẓām and his theory of the self/spirit, see "Abū Esḥāq al-Naẓẓām," in *Encyclopedia Iranica*, 1:275–280 and David Bennett, "Abū Isḥaq al-Naẓẓām: The Ultimate Constituents of Nature Are Simple Properties and *Rūḥ*," in *Abbasid Studies IV: Proceedings of the 2010 Meeting of the School of Abbasid Studies*, Ed. M. Bernards (2013): 207–217.

[328] ᶜAbd al-Qāhir al- Baghdadī, *al-Farq bayn al-firaq*, ed. Muḥammad Ḥusaynī (Cairo: Maktaba Ibn Sīna, n.d.), 122.

[329] al-Ashᶜarī, *Maqālāt,* 333-34.

[330] al-Ashᶜarī, *Maqālāt,* 333-34.

The Ashᶜarite view of the self does not differ from that of the Muᶜtazilites in any significant detail because in essence they also subscribe to the physicalist ontology which entails that all human attributes and activities are to be explained by a range of accidents that inhere in the atoms of the body-composite (*jumla*), including mental events or states. Also, just as the Muᶜtazilites present a variety of opinions on the self, the Ashᶜarites too offer a "spectrum" of views on the nature of the self as spirit.[331] Moreover, they also affirm that *nafs*, *rūḥ* and *insān* are terms that can be used interchangeably. Al-Ashᶜarī and Ibn Furāk (d. 406/1015) believe that the spirit (*rūḥ*) refers to the wind (*rīḥ*), while al-Qalānisī refers to it as the accident of life.[332] Al-Ashᶜarī also maintains that the spirit is a subtle body—i.e. a body made up of sparsely-dispersed atoms, in contrast to dense bodies *(ajsām kathīf)* —that goes in and out of the cavities of the human body *(mutaraddid fī tajāwīf aᶜḍāʾ al-insān).*[333] In addition, al-Ashᶜarī asserts that the spirit atoms can be either living because of the inherence of the accident of life in them or inert.[334] The idea of the self as a subtle body gains a wide currency when influential theologians such as al-Juwaynī too begin to uphold it. As al-Juwaynī says:

> If it is said, "Explain the *nafs* and its meaning, since disagreement concerning it is evident."
> We would respond: The clearest position on this matter is that the *nafs* consists of subtle bodies intermingled with the sensible bodies (*ajsām laṭīfa mushābika li-l-ajsām al-maḥsūsa*). God, the transcendent, ordinarily preserves life as long as the sensible body continues to be intermingled with the *nafs*. If it is separated (*fāraqtahā*) from the sensible body, then in the normal course of things death will follow life (*yuᶜqib l-mawt l-ḥayā fī istimrār l-ᶜāda).*[335]

However, al-Juwaynī does not clarify how exactly the spirit is intermingled with the body, because in his own words two composite bodies cannot interpenetrate each other (*tadākhul*) and hence cannot be co-located. But it should be noted that this physical principle does not apply to subtle bodies because in al-Juwaynī's view, non-human creatures such as jinns can actually interpenetrate (*dākhala*) human bodies.[336]

The Ashᶜarites also deny that the self possesses any kind of unity, which lends more credence to their theory of *kasb* (acquisition) and divine omnipotence.[337] While the Muᶜtazilites

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[331] For al-Anṣārī, the "reality of human" is "this body-composite (*jumla*) that consists of multiple parts (*dhāt al-abᶜād*)." He adds: "If we are asked, "What is your definition of 'human?,' we say: ['Human' is] that which has this specific structure by which he is distinct from the structures of cattle, horses, palm trees and the like. Every man has this form (*ṣūra*) and structure; and all that has this form and structure is a man." Al-Anṣārī, *al-Ghunya fī-l-kalām*, ff.155b; 156a, quoted in Shihadeh, *Classical Ash'arī Anthropology*, 439.

[332] Shihadeh, Classical Ash'arī Anthropology, 466.

[333] Ibn Furāk, *Mujarrad*, 257; cf. Gimaret, *La doctrine d'al-Ash'arī¯*, 70–2; 127–8.

[334] Ibn Furāk, *Mujarrad*, 257. Ibn Ḥazm (d. 1065) criticizes al-Ashᶜarī's concept of the spirit because according to the former it would be absurd to argue that the air one inhales and exhales, which changes with every breath, can be a component of the human being that survives the death of the body, see Ibn Ḥazm, *Fiṣāl*, 5, 76–7, quoted in Shihadeh, *Classical Ash'arī Anthropology*, 469.

[335] Imām al-Ḥaramayn al-Juwaynī, *Kitāb al-Irshād ilā qawāṭiᶜ al-adilla fī uṣūl al-iᶜtiqād*, eds. M.Y. Mūsā and ᶜA. ᶜA. ᶜAbd al-Ḥāmīd (Cairo: Maktabat al-Khānjī, 1950), 377.

[336] Al-Juwaynī, *al-Shāmil fī uṣū al-dīn*, eds. ᶜA. al-Nashshār et al. (Alexandria: Munsha'at al-Maᶜaʾrif, 1969), 160–2. Cf. Shihadeh *Classical Ash'arī Anthropology*, 472.

[337] The Ashᶜarites believe humans acquire their "acts", while God creates them—a theory known as "*kasb*." It is not entirely clear if Rāzī subscribes to the early or later Ashᶜarite view of this. For a detailed discussion of "*kasb*" in

assert that the aggregate atoms in the body-composite (*jumla*) are given a unified structure by composition or *taʾlīf*, the Ashʿarites think this unity is only figurative, since properties such as knowledge, life and will inhere in individual atoms and not in the entire composite.[338] They also refute the Muʿtazilite thesis that the self behaves in an integral manner by the activity of both the animal spirit (*al-rūḥ al-ḥaywānī*) that originates in the heart and the natural spirit (*al-rūḥ al-ṭabīʿī*) that originates in the liver, which run throughout the entire body via the nerves and the veins.[339] Moreover, as Shihadeh point outs, the Ashʿarite doctrine of the subtle body only exacerbates the fragmentary conception of the self because it is distinct from the human body, and has no association with either the heart or any of human's mental properties.[340] The subtle body conception of the self makes it particularly difficult for the Ashʿarites to explain its postmortem experiences in a non-physical medium where parts of the body are subjected, independently of the spirit, to an interrogation and possibly punishment in the grave.

The Muʿtazilites, in contrast, accept the self's structural unity, but fall into the same difficulty when it comes to maintaining its identity through the interim period between death and resurrection. In an excellent study, Sophia Vasalou examines the topic at length and shows that the physicalist ontology of atoms and accidents adopted by the Muʿtazilites theologians prevents them from providing a satisfactory response to moral agents and their deserts.[341] To explain fully, let us first analyze how classical Muʿtazilites such as Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār (d. 415/1024) define the self or human (the words are used synonymously). In ʿAbd al-Jabbār's view the human self possesses a 'material unity,' which means that it is not a combination of corporeal and incorporeal units. There is nothing either inside or outside the human body that can be called immaterial. Rather the body or the physical frame that can be observed from the outside is the domain of the self proper.[342] For ʿAbd al-Jabbār, the word *nafs* indicates the human frame or the body-composite (*jumla*), although at times he identifies it with the heart (*qalb*).[343] By *qalb* (unlike the Sufis) ʿAbd al-Jabbār has in mind the accidents such as knowledge, will and perception that inhere in the heart atoms. But this is not to say that the heart is something like an immaterial entity which has mental capacities. Rather the heart possesses the required structure (*binya*) in which mental atoms and accidents such as knowledge can inhere, and when a person knows or uses his will, it is her entire bodily composite that knows or wills, and not the heart

Rāzī, see his *al-Arbaʿīn fī uṣūl al-dīn* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Kullīyāt al-Azharīyah, 1989), 320ff., where he enumerates all the different views on *kasb*.

[338] The most detailed extant discussion of the doctrine that man is not a unity and of the problems it gives rise to is found in al-Anṣārī's *Ghunya*, where the author turns seamlessly to the subject following his denial of any intrinsic relationship between accidents and bodily composites, see Shihadeh, *Classical Ashʿarī Anthropology*, 469-71. For a modern parallel to the idea of the fragmented self, see Raymond and Barresi, *The Rise and Fall of Soul and Self*, 300-304. On the self's lack of "unity," see also Hendericus Stam, "The Dialogical Self, Meaning and Theory: Making the Subject," Paper presented at the First International Conference on the Dialogical Self, Nijmegen, Netherlands, June 2000; and Ulrich Neisser, "Five Kinds of Self-Knowledge," *Philosophical Psychology* 1 (1988): 37–59. On the self's structural disunity, see Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Structural Anthropology*, Allen Lane (ed.), trans. Clair Jacobson and Brooke Schoepf (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1968).

[339] Shihadeh, *Classical Ashʿarī Anthropology*, 460-61.

[340] Shihadeh, *Classical Ashʿarī Anthropology*, 475.

[341] Sophia Vasalou, *Moral Agents and Their Deserts: The Character of Muʿtazilite Ethics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 157ff.

[342] Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *al-Mughnī*, eds. Ṭāha Ḥusayn (Cairo: al-Muʿassasa al-Miṣrīya al-ʿĀmma, 1961-74), 11: 358.

[343] al-Jabbār, *al-Mughnī* 8:14-20. *Qalb* is the physical heart. Cf. J. Peters, *God's Created Speech* (Leiden: Brill, 1976), 159 ff.

alone.[344] On this physicalist view, it thus becomes very challenging to provide a consistent account of the "moral deserts"— an immensely significant religious concept that tackles the issue of identifying various actions performed by an individual whose self ceases to exist after the physical death (i.e. if one claims that there is nothing more to it than the material body). More specifically, if there is no immaterial self, where may one locate an enduring moral identity on the basis of which one would receive one's deserts? Like the Ashᶜarites, the Muᶜtazilites too fail to answer if the same person who lived and acted in this world is the same as the one who will be either rewarded or punished upon resurrection. Vasalou provides us with a striking image of the Muᶜtazilite selves as "a robotic army of generic human beings summoned out of nothingness to undergo experiences of pleasure and pain."[345] Vasalou also notes how, in making the criterion of personal identity dependent on a mere agglomeration of atoms and accidents, the Basran Muᶜtazilite account contrasts sharply with the account that begins to prevail among later theologians once the philosophers' immaterialist self infiltrates *kalām* from eleventh and twelfth centuries onward, bringing with it a psychology that challenges the physicalist foundation of *kalām* ontology. For instance, Rāzī is explicit in his acceptance of the immaterialist self, although he does not completely abandon the *kalām* view of the self as a subtle body, which he accepts regarding the body-soul relationship. In his *al-Mabāḥith al-mashriqiyya fī ᶜilm al-ilāhiyyāt wa-l-ṭabīᶜiyyāt*, Rāzī asserts the immateriality of the self by reasoning that anyone who apprehends a thing possesses the quiddity of that thing, and since we apprehend our self and since our self is directly present to us, we possess a self.[346] The important thing to note in the above is that unlike the *kalām* physicalist view, this account begins with self-awareness and self-intellection that has a long-standing history in Avicenna's and Suhrawardī's philosophy. Similarly, later influential theologians such as ᶜAḍud al-Dīn al-Ījī (d. 766/1365), Saᶜd al-Dīn al-Taftāzānī (d. 792/1390) and al-Sayyid al-Sharīf al-Jurjānī (d. 817/1414) incorporate important insights from the *falsafa* tradition while at the same time try to chart a middle course between the materialist and immaterialist conception of the self.[347] Al-Taftāzānī for example, seems to be acutely aware of the philosophers' self but nonetheless defends a physicalist view by arguing that the self's actions and perceptions originate in the body. Thus it is correct, in his view, to say that the self is material insofar as its attachments are concerned but not qua its essence.[348] Jurjānī, for his part, acknowledges that the immaterialist view of the self is accepted by Muslim thinkers such as al-Ghazālī and Rāghib al-Iṣfahanī (d. 501/1108) and a group of Sufis. He also engages with the Sufis regarding the nature of the self, but defends a materialistic view in the end, though

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[344] al-Jabbār, *al-Mughnī* 11: 329; Peters, *God's Speech*, 160ff. It is interesting to note that there are many parallels between the *kalām* physicalist self and the materialist conception of the mind that became prevalent in the eighteenth century Europe in the wake of the Scientific Revolution. For more information, see John W. Yolton, *Thinking Matter: Materialism in the Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983), 90-126; Raymond Martin and John Barresi, *Naturalization of the Soul: Self and Personal Identity in the Eighteenth Century* (NY: Routledge, 2000), 30-48); Edward Reed, *From Soul to Mind: The Emergence of Psychology from Erasmus Darwin to William James* (New Haven : Yale University Press, 1997), 16-58.

[345] Commenting on later theologians' response to the issue of personal identity, Vasalou argues that despite having a philosophical horizon, they rely on divine intervention in securing the identity of persons no less than the Muᶜtazilites did. Short of an enunciated ontology for non-existent selves, one thus faces a primitive notion of God's knowledge that keeps track of one's identity-bearing material parts, see Vasalou, *Moral Agents*, 174.

[346] Fakhr al-Dīn Rāzī, *al-Mabāḥith al-mashriqiyya* (Qom: Intisharāt-i Bidār, n. d.), 2:345-46; cf. *al-Maṭālib al-ᶜāliya mina l-ᶜilm al-ilāhī* (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-'Arabī 1987), 7:57ff., where he presents his more matured views.

[347] See e.g. ᶜAḍud al-Dīn Ījī, *al-Mawāqif fī ᶜilm al-kalām* (Beirut: ᶜĀlam al-kutub [n.d.]), 241-60.

[348] Saᶜd al-Dīn Masᶜūd b. ᶜUmar Taftāzānī, *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid fī ᶜilm al-kalām* (5 vols.), ed. ᶜA. ᶜUmayra (Beirut: ᶜĀlam al-Kutub, 1998). 3: 299.

he grants that the self can be a rational being.[349] According to al-Jurjānī, the self is a subtle, vaporized substance with the properties of life, knowledge, perception, and so on.[350] On the whole, even though the theologians advocate a physicalist self, one nonetheless discerns a stream of interrelated views within this 'spectrum.'

In contrast to many early theologians (*mutakallimūn*) who conceived of the self as an animating principle involving a subtle body (*jism laṭīf*) or some form of spirit (*rūḥ*), Mullā Ṣadrā argues that they conflated the 'animal spirit' (*al-rūḥ al-ḥaywānī*) with the type of the spirit (*al-rūḥ*) mentioned in the Qur'an. Although Ṣadrā agrees with theologians such as al-Juwaynī in part when they say that the subtle body is intermingled in the gross body, he refutes their view by arguing that the spirit's being in the body is not because it is intermingled in the body as e.g. al-Juwaynī holds but because the soul and the body resemble each other.[351] According to Ṣadrā, theologians have conflated the 'divine spirit' in the Qur'an with the 'animal spirit,' which is indeed a form of subtle body. He writes:

> The animal spirit (*al-rūḥ al-ḥaywānī*) is the locus and entry-point of the high spirit (*al-rūḥ al-ᶜalawī*). The animal spirit is bodily (*jismānī*) and subtle (*laṭīf*), and is the carrier of the faculties of sensation and movement. All animals have this spirit.[352]

Ṣadrā also makes use of evidence from the medical sciences to prove the existence of the 'animal spirit.' In this context, he suggests that the animal spirit's severance from the heart results in sudden death. More importantly however, he claims that it is through the animal spirit that the immaterial self interacts with the body. He further suggests that since the self is one, there has to be one organ by which it can interact with the body. So the animal spirit, which contains vaporous spirit (*ruḥ bukhārī*), is the meeting-place of the self and the body.[353] Ṣadrā states:

> The substance of the self (*jawhar al-nafs*) in its being is from the spiritual realm and the world of pure intellectual luminescence (*ᶜālam al-ḍiyāʾ al-maḥḍ al-ᶜaqlī*). It does not dispose in the gross dark elemental body (*al-badan al-kathīf al-muẓlim al-ᶜunṣurī*) except through an intermediary whereby from the two a natural unified species is obtained. This intermediary between the two, between the gross body and the self, is a subtle substance (*al-jawhar al-laṭīf*) called the "spirit" (*rūḥ*) by the physicians, which is an intermediary between the two sides.[354]

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[349] Mīr Sayyid Sharīf Jurjānī, *Sharḥ Kitāb al-Mawāqif li-ᶜAḍud al-Dīn ᶜAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Aḥmad al-Ījī*, ed. 'Abd al-Raḥmān ᶜUmayrah. Bayrūt: Dār al-Jīl, 1997), 7:254; *al-Taᶜrīfāt*, 204-05.

[350] Jurjānī, *al-Taᶜrīfāt*, 205.

[351] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Asfār* 8: 369. He further attacks those theologians who insist that the spirit is an accident (*ᶜaraḍ*), see Mullā Ṣadrā, *Asfār* 8: 370.

[352] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Asfār* 8: 371.

[353] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Asfār* 9: 98-100. Ṣadrā's discussion of 'the animal spirit' doctrine is variegated. As we shall see, Walī Allāh too makes use of 'the animal spirit' doctrine to explain his 'pneumatic self.' Ṣadrā seems to lean toward Avicennan cardio-centric view of the spirit, although he expresses some doubts regarding its validity. He urges the reader to consult more medical books for this.

[354] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Asfār*, 9: 98.

Sculpting the Self: The Self's Ascension through Virtues and Self-Cultivation

The Nature and Significance of Self-Knowledge

At the beginning of this chapter we mentioned how selfhood is intimately related to the question of how one may have self-knowledge at all, which is laden with ethico-spiritual implications because Mullā Ṣadrā claims that in order to have *true* knowledge of one's self, one must overcome the spiritual and moral obstacles that prevent one from seeing one's true nature. For Mullā Ṣadrā, the self is the Archimedean point from which one is able to make sense of the nature of reality because he argues that all that we see or experience in the world, we can only see it through our self (*dhātinā*), and that there is nothing out there that is not already within the self, which means nothing is completely mind-independent.[355] Moreover, the self as an 'aspirational reality' reaches ultimate perfection at its apex, at which point "everything that exists becomes a part of the self (*dhātihā*), and its powers permeate the entirety of existence."[356] So for Ṣadrā, the world, in a certain sense, is the knowing subject. It is thus not so difficult to see that for Ṣadrā, self-knowledge is inseparable from any conception of the self, as was mentioned earlier. Since Ṣadrā places unusual emphasis on both the ethics and the metaphysics of self-knowledge, I would like to spend some time going over some of the texts that flesh out this particular aspect of Ṣadrā's thought. In *Iksīr al-ʿārifīn* (The Elixir of the Gnostics), Ṣadrā makes the point that there is something in humans that naturally motivate them toward knowing things, probing, and cogitating on them.[357] According to him, the human self (*al-nafs al-insāniyya*) is unique in that the more it increases in knowledge the more desirous it becomes in seeking even more knowledge:

> Human identity (*al-huwiyya al-insāniyya*) is innately inclined toward knowing things, scrutinizing them and penetrating deeply into them. Humans cannot restrain themselves from striving to understand things that are elevated beyond his ken... The more one increases in knowledge the more he increases in seeking and yearning without any pause, except for the weaklings or the one who is immersed in worldly pursuits (*al-shawāghil al-dunyawiyya*).[358]

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[355] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb,* 2: 945. This puts Ṣadrā's perspective very close to that of the Yogācāra Buddhism, although a fuller comparison of this is evidently beyond the scope of this study. See e.g. Vasubandhu, *Paving the Great Way: Vasubandhu's Unifying Buddhist Philosophy,* translated by Jonathan Gold (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015); *Seven Works of Vasubandhu: the Buddhist Psychological Doctor,* translated by S. Anacker (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1984). Cf. F.W.J. Schelling, *System of Transcendental Idealism* (System des transcendentalen Idealismus), translated by P. Heath (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1978), 204ff; *Philosophische Untersuchungen über das Wesen der menschlichen Freiheit und die damit zusammenhängenden Gegenstände* (Of Human Freedom), translated by J. Gutmann (Chicago: Open Court, 1936).

[356] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb,* 2: 945. It should, however, be noted that the self to which Ṣadrā refers in this context is not what we experience in our ordinary life. Rather, he is referring here to the highest level of the self, which is identified with the reality of the perfect human (*al-insān al-kāmil*). For a full treatment of this issue, see pp. 104ff. of this chapter.

[357] The theme of 'self-knowledge' as the beginning and the end of humans' search for truth and reality is ubiquitous in the history of philosophy. Cf. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 980a21: "All men by nature desire to know." See also Ursula Renz (ed.), *Self-knowledge: A History* (NY: Oxford University Press, 2017), *passim*. See also the following paragraphs in which I will analyzw Al-Kindī's and others' views on the importance of self-knowledge.

[358] Mullā Ṣadrā*, Iksīr al-ʿārifīn*, 36-37, trans. modified; in *The Elixir of the Gnostics*, edited and translated by William Chittick (Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 2003).

Moreover, in Ṣadrā's view, the self has the receptivity for every form, since all existent things are parts of it in the sense that it has the potential to know everything that exists.[359] To explain this more fully, Ṣadrā transforms the traditional macrocosm-microcosm analogy. Instead of portraying the world as a macrocosm, and the human self a microcosm, Ṣadrā claims that the self is the macrocosm, while its body the microcosm. This means, the human self, for Ṣadrā, encapsulates all of reality, since, it can also identify itself with the Divine Self after experiencing the mystical states of annihilation (*fanāʾ*) and subsistence (*baqāʾ*) and reaching the level of the perfect human (*al-insān al-kāmil*), which is the highest degree of selfhood in Ṣadrian philosophy of self.[360] Ṣadrā writes:

> It belongs to human to know everything, and his self has the receptivity for every form (*wa-li-dhātihi qābilat kull ṣūrā*), since there is nothing without an equivalent within him (*mā min shayʾ illā wa-lahu naẓīr fīhi*). So all existent entities are parts of his self (*dhātihi*), and despite his oneness, he is all things (*waḥdatuhu jamīᶜ al-ashyāʾ*), because his self is a macrocosm (*li-anna dhātahu ᶜālam kabīr*), his body a microcosm (*ᶜālam ṣagīr*). There is nothing in reality that is not under his subjection.[361]
> Whosoever knows his self attains transcendence (*man ᶜarafa dhātahu taʾallaha*). That is to say, he becomes a lordly knower (*ᶜāliman rabbāniyyan*) by being annihilated from his human self (*fāniyan ᶜan dhātihi*), and is drowned in witnessing the beauty of the First (*jamāl al-awwal*) and His glory. The First Teacher (Aristotle) says, "he who fails to know himself, fails to know his Creator as well," for knowing one's self and its attributes is the ladder to knowing one's Creator.[362]

Ṣadrā continues further by suggesting that the goal of philosophy is to prepare the self to ascend to the higher realm of being and attain its ultimate perfection:

> What is intended by philosophy (*al-ḥikma*) is that it prepares the self (*al-nafs*) to ascend to the higher plenum (*al-malaʾ al-aᶜlā*) and reach the ultimate goal... And no one attains it unless he detaches himself from both the world and the self through god-consciousness (*al-taqwā*), piety (*al-waraᶜ*) and true asceticism (*al-zuhd al-ḥaqīqī*).[363]

Furthermore, Ṣadrā lists numerous benefits of self-knowledge in more mystically flavored exegetical work *Asrār al-āyāt,* which I call 'virtues of self-knowledge.'[364] The main argument of these pithy statements (see below) is that self-knowledge is the gateway to the knowledge of everything else, i.e. the world, which in turn causes the self to know God. More importantly, he underscores how self-knowledge is an ethical pursuit as well. For instance he maintains that

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[359] Even though an individual self may not know all things, as a 'species' humans have the capacity to know everything.

[360] On how Ṣadrā incorporates the mystical doctrine of 'the perfect human' into his theory of selfhood, see pp. 60ff. of this chapter.

[361] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Iksīr al-ᶜārifīn*, 19, trans. Chittick, substantially modified.

[362] Mullā Ṣadrā, *al-Mazāhir al-ilāhiyya fī asrār al-ᶜulūm al-kamāliyya*, edited by Sayyid Muḥammad Khamani-yi (Tehran: Bunyād-i Hikmat-i Islāmi-yi Ṣadrā, 1998), 4-5.

[363] Mullā Ṣadrā, *al-Mazāhir al-ilāhiyya,* 7.

[364] This is one of the many instances where he fuses philosophy with Sufism and the Qur'an, as hinted at the beginning of this chapter.

"whosoever knows the self, never sees any faults in others and never tries to backbite or speak ill of others. Whenever he notices any blemishes in others, he ascribes them to himself and strives to correct himself accordingly."[365] The following is a translation of all such sayings from his *Asrār al-āyāt*.

Virtues of self-knowledge:[366]

1) It is through the self (*al-nafs*) that everything else [in the world] is known. If one remains ignorant of the self, one will remain ignorant about everything else.
2) The human self (*al-nafs al-insāniyya*) is the aggregate of all existent things as will become clear (*al-nafs al-insān majmaᶜ l-mawjūdāt kamā sayaz̧haru*). Hence whoever knows it, knows the totality of all beings (*al-mawjūdāt kulluhā*). It is for this reason, He, the transcendent, said, "Have they not pondered upon themselves? God created not the heavens and the earth, and that which is between them, save with truth and for a destined end. But truly most of the people are disbelievers in the meeting with their Lord (Q. 30:8)."[367]
3) Whoever knows the self (*man ᶜarafa nafsahu*), knows the world and whoever knows the world witnesses the divine in it because God is the creator of all things.[368]
4) It is by means of the spirit of the self that one comes to know about the spiritual world (*al-ᶜālam al-rūḥānī*) and its permanence, just as it is by means of knowing the body one comes to know about the physical world (*al-ᶜālam al-jasadānī*) and its impermanence. (Plato). And also, the self can discern which one is the higher world.
5) Whoever knows the self, knows its enemy too—enemy which remains hidden through it. The Prophet said the most dangerous enemy is one's own self, and he always sought protection from it.[369]
6) In knowing the self, one is able to control and manage it, and this can bring much good to the world. Such a person deserves to be called God's vicegerent in the world.[370]

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[365] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Asrār al-āyāt wa-anwār al-bayyināt,* edited by Muḥammad Khwājawī (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Ḥikmat, 1981), 133. This is so because Ṣadrā seems to believe that if one has knowledge of God, then one is fully virtuous, which implies that one is kind, compassionate, forgiving, just, generous, humble, and so on. But Ṣadrā has already alluded how self-knowledge is implicated in knowledge of God, which means that if one knows God, one already knows one's self.

[366] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Asrār al-āyāt wa-anwār al-bayyināt,* edited by Muḥammad Khwājawī (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Ḥikmat, 1981), 131-134.

[367] Ṣadrā furthermore asserts that t is by means of the mirror of the self that one comes to learn about the natural world.

[368] Cf. Ibn ᶜArabī, *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, edited by ᶜĀṣim Ibrāhīm al-Kayyālī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ᶜIlmiyya, 2009), 134.

[369] Ṣadrā then quotes the following verses: "Hast thou seen him who chooseth for his god his own lust? Wouldst thou then be guardian over him?" (Q. 25:43); "But (the other's) mind imposed on him the killing of his brother, so he slew him and became one of the losers" (Q. 5:30). That is to say, whoever is able to know the tricks of the lower self, which consists of desires and appetites hence the enemy, should try to free himself from its ruses and aim toward attaining the divine within.

[370] He then adds following verses: "And when they feared the consequences thereof and saw that they had gone astray, they said: Unless our Lord have mercy on us and forgive us, we verily are of the lost" (Q. 7:149); "And (remember) when Moses said unto his people: O my people! Remember Allah's favor unto you, how He placed among you Prophets, and He made you Kings, and gave you that (which) He gave not to any (other) of (His) creatures" (Q. 5:20).

7) Whoever knows the self never finds faults with others and never tries to backbite or speak ill of others. Whenever he notices any blemishes in others, he ascribes them to himself and strives to correct himself accordingly. The Prophet's prays for such a person: "May God shower mercy on the one who is occupied with correcting herself rather than trying to find fault with others."

8) Whoever knows his self (*man ᶜarafa nafsahu*) knows his Lord. All the holy scriptures are in unison in saying "know your Lord." It has three aspects:

    i) By knowing the self, one comes to know God, just as by learning Arabic one may come to learn about the science of jurisprudence (*al-fiqh*).

    ii) Self-knowledge (*maᶜrifat al-nafs*) leads to knowledge of God (*maᶜrifat Allāh*), just as light of the day is coterminous with rising of the Sun.[371]

    iii) Knowledge of God is the highest knowledge. This is the goal of all self-knowledge.

Ṣadra's emphasis on the significance of attaining self-knowledge has numerous precedents in early Islamic philosophy[372] beginning with al-Kindī who also stresses the relation between the self and self-knowledge.[373] Early philosophical views also bring up the concept self-knowledge when talking about the self and call attention to human's place in nature, as al-Kindī writes:

> Philosophy is the human's knowledge of himself. This statement is of extreme nobility and profundity. For example, I assert: Things are either corporeal or incorporeal; what is incorporeal is either substances or accidents; humans consist of body, self, and accidents; the self (*nafs*) is a substance and incorporeal. If man knows himself, he knows the body with its accidents… and the substance which is incorporeal. Hence if a human knows all of this, he knows everything. Therefore, the wise people of old called man a microcosm.[374]

In the above, al-Kindī asserts that the *nafs* is a substance that is incorporeal. This sets the philosophical self apart from its *kalām* and Sufi counterparts, as we shall soon see. Al-Kindī also accepts the Aristotelian definition of the soul as "the perfection (*tamāmiyya*) of the natural,

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[371] Cf. Ibn ᶜArabī, *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, edited by ᶜĀṣim Ibrāhīm al-Kayyālī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ᶜIlmiyya, 2009), 205-06.

[372] As with the origin of *kalām* and Sufism, there is some controversy regarding the precise source and inspiration behind the rise of Islamic philosophy (*falsafa*). See Cristina D'Ancona, "*Greek Sources in Arabic and Islamic Philosophy*," available at https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/arabic-islamic-greek/ (accessed 9/09/2017). Generally speaking, the dominant opinion seems to be that it was the translation movement from Greek into Arabic that gave birth to the intellectual tradition of *falsafa*. The broad contour of the self in *falsafa* does clearly show the prominence of Greek sources, although at times the philosophers also seems to draw inspiration from their sacred book, i.e. the Qur'an. See also, Ulrich Rudolph (ed.), *Philosophie in der Islamischen Welt, Band 1, 8.-10. Jahrhundert* (Basel: Schwabe Verlag, 2012), chs. 1-3.

[373] It is now well-known that Ancient Greek philosophers conceived of philosophy as having a concrete practical dimension, see Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life,* 81ff. and M. Chase, Clark, S. and McGhee, M. (eds.), *Philosophy as a Way of Life: Ancients and Moderns: Essays in Honor of Pierre Hadot*. West Sussex: Wiley Blackwell, 2013). For views that challenges some of Hadot's interpretation, see J. M. Cooper *Pursuits of Wisdom: Six Ways of Life in Ancient Philosophy from Socrates to Plotinus*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2012); 1-50, and John Sellers, *The Art of Living: The Stoics on the Nature and Function of Philosophy* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), chs. 1-2.

[374] al-Kindī, *Rasāʾil al-Kindī al-falsafīya* I, ed. Abū Rīdah (Cairo: Dār al-Fikr al-ᶜArabī, 1950-53), 173.

organic body that receives life." Following Aristotle, he further explains that it is "the first perfection (*istikmāl*) for the natural body having life potentially."[375] However, his remarks on the self also show Platonic-Pythagorean influences, e.g., he says that the *nafs* "is an intellectual substance, self-moving by means of a harmonious number."[376] Al-Kindī further explains the nature of the *nafs* in the following:

> [The] self *(nafs)* is separate and distinct from this body, and that its substance is divine and spiritual, as we can see from its noble nature and its opposition to the desires and anger that affect the body. This is because the irascible faculty incites human at times, and urges him to commit a serious transgression. But this self opposes it, and prevents the anger from carrying out its action, or from committing an act of rage and wrongdoing; the self restrains it… This is a clear proof that the faculty by which the human becomes angry is not this self which prevents the anger from attaining what it desires; for the thing which prevents something is doubtlessly not that which is prohibited, since one and the same thing is not opposed to itself.[377]

As noted above, al-Kindī emphasizes the ethical implications that follow from the self's fragile nature. Since for al-Kindī the self is incorporeal and something whose substance is divine and spiritual, one should do one's best to attain to one's divine nature. He thus devotes pages to elucidate "what kind of life one should live" in order to achieve that desired goal. Less surprisingly perhaps, such reflections sound familiar to what many Sufis also say regarding the same topic. Here is a classic example:

> O ignorant human being, know you not that your stay in this world is but a brief instant, and that you shall then come to the true world, where you will stay forever? You are but a transient wayfarer here, according to your Creator's will, transcendent is He…Plato was indeed right to use this analogy of the Sun, and with it has hit upon a valid proof… Those who, in this world, aim only at enjoying food and drink, and who moreover aim at the joys of sex, cannot through their intellectual self reach knowledge of these noble things. [Because of the appetitive self's immersion in the world of senses], the intellectual self is unable to attain a state where it becomes similar to the Creator, praise be to Him.[378]

Like al-Kindī, al-Fārābī (d. 950/51) also pays much attention to the human self in his various treatises, namely *Kitāb al-siyāsa al-madaniyya* (The Political Regime), *Mabādiʾ ārāʾ ahl al-madīna al-fāḍila* (The Principles and Opinions of the People of the Virtuous City) and *Risāla fi-l-ʿaql* (The Treatise on the Intellect). But whereas al-Kindī's model of the self often involves analyses from the first-personal stance (esp. when he brings up self-knowledge), al-Fārābī's model seems mostly limited to the third-personal consideration of the self's psycho-somatic functions. For instance, in his *Mabādiʾ ārāʾ ahl al-madīna*, al-Fārābī presents a compact view of

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[375] Al-Kindī, *Rasāʾil*, 165; *The Philosophical Works of Al-Kindī*, trans. Peter Adamson and Peter E. Pormann (Oxford : Oxford University Press, 2012), 300.

[376] Al-Kindī, *Rasāʾil*, 165-66, The *Philosophical works of Al-Kindī* 300.

[377] Al-Kindī, *Rasāʾil,* 273; *The Philosophical Works of Al-Kindī,* 113. Cf. Plato, The Republic 436b-441c, in *Plato: Complete Works*, edited by John Cooper and D. S. Hutchinson (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1997).

[378] Al-Kindī, *Rasāʾil*, 280; *The Philosophical Works of Al-Kindī*, 118.

his faculty-based concept of the self, in which cognitive capacities of the self from the faculty of nutrition to the faculty of the intellect are explained:

> When humans come into being, the first thing to arise in them is the faculty by which they consume food. This is called the nutritive faculty (*al-quwwa al-ghādhiya*) … Together with the senses another faculty comes into being, which is inclined toward the objects of perception in order to either desire or dislike them. After that there arises another faculty in them by which they retain (*yaḥfaẓū*) impressions of the sensibles (*al-maḥsūsāt*) when they are no longer perceived, and this is called the faculty of imagination (*al-mutakhayyila*)… After that the rational faculty (*al-quwwa al-nāṭiqa*) originates in human by which he is able to perceive the intelligibles (*al-maʿqūlāt*) and by which he discriminates good (*jamīl*) from evil (*qabīḥ*) and by which he grasps the arts (*al-ṣināʿāt*) and sciences (*al-ʿulūm*).[379]

The Brethren of Purity (*Ikhwān Ṣafāʾ*, fl. 10th century), a society of philosophical brotherhood, narrate the virtues of 'self-knowledge,' while not undermining the Neoplatonic idea of the self as found in al-Kindī and al-Fārābī.[380] The Ikhwān divide self-knowledge into three distinct domains, stating that all knowledge starts from one's knowledge of oneself.[381] In the beginning, the self knows itself as a corporeal being, while at the next stage of its development it comes to know that the soul rules the parts of the body.[382] Finally, at the third and highest level, the self's knowledge results in holistic understanding of things. Self-knowledge at this level also includes knowledge of "morality, actions, movements, skills, works, sounds, and so on."[383]

Finally, with al-Ghazālī we find a comprehensive expression of the classical view of self-knowledge. In his *Kīmiya-yi saʿādat* (The Alchemy of Happiness), Ghazālī observes that "nothing is closer to us than our own self," and that without 'self-knowledge' it is not possible to know the world or other people. Unlike his theologian colleagues, al-Ghazālī espouses an immaterial self, showing clear influences from Avicenna and others, place a great deal of emphasis on its spiritual development.[384] Al-Ghazālī writes:

> If you want to know self, know that you have been created from two things: One the manifest mold, which is called the 'body' and which can be seen with the manifest eye; the other the nonmanifest meaning, which is called the 'soul,' (*nafs*) is called the 'heart,' and is called the 'anima.' This can be known with the nonmanifest insight, but it cannot be seen with the manifest eye. Your reality is this nonmanifest meaning, and all the rest are your subordinates, army, and soldiers. We call it by the name 'heart.' When there is

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[379] Al-Fārābī, *Mabādiʾ ārāʾ ahl al-madīnat al-fāḍila*, 164 (translation mine), (Great Books of the Islamic World; Chicago: Distributed by KAZI Publications, 1998), 164.

[380] For instance, the Ikhwān does talk about the vegetative soul (*al-nafs al-nabātiyya* whose features includes inclinations (*nazʿāt*) and desires (*shahwāt*), the animal soul (*al-nafs al- ḥayawāniyya*) containing movement, ethical tendencies and senses, and The rational soul (*al-nafs al-nāṭiqa*) which possesses discernment (*tamyīz*) and knowledge (*maʿrifa*), see Ikhwān Ṣafāʾ, *Rasāil Ikhwān al-Ṣafā wa-Khillān al-Wafā* (Frankfurt am Main : Institute for the History of Arabic-Islamic Science at the Johann Wolfgang Goethe University, 1999) II: 387

[381] *Ikhwān Ṣafāʾ, Rasāil* II: 379.

[382] *Ikhwān Ṣafāʾ, Rasāil* II: 379.

[383] *Ikhwān Ṣafāʾ, Rasāil* II: 379.

[384] For the Avicennan influence on Ghazālī, see Alexander Treiger, *Inspired Knowledge in Islamic Thought. Al-Ghazālī's Theory of Mystical Cognition and its Avicennian Foundation* (New York: Routledge, 2012).

talk of the heart, we mean the reality that is called now 'spirit,' now 'soul'—not the piece of flesh that has been put in the breast.[385]

Concerning the self's spiritual development, he asks the reader to begin a self-inquiry with questions such as "what thing are we?" "where have we come from?" "where are we going?" "why have we been created?" and "what is happiness, and in what does it lie?" after which he advises the following to the reader:[386]

> The nourishment and felicity of cattle is eating, sleeping, and having sexual intercourse. If you are a cow, exert efforts to keep aright the work of the stomach and pudendum. The nourishment and felicity of rapacious animals is tearing, killing, and exercising anger; the nourishment and felicity of devils is stirring up evil, deceiving, and acting deviously. If you are one of them, keep yourself occupied with their work, so that you may reach your comfort and good fortune. The nourishment and felicity of angels is witnessing the divine beauty. If you are an angel in substance, exert efforts in your own root so that you may know the Divine Presence. Make yourself familiar with witnessing that beauty and free yourself from appetite and wrath.[387]

Sculpting the Self

From the foregoing, we learned that it is based on the knowledge of the true nature of the self that one can hope to attain eternal happiness, fulfilment in life and better relations with others. Moreover, for Ṣadrā one cannot hope to have access to the higher reaches of the self, unless one has attained complete immateriality by detaching the self from both the ordinary, 'empirical self'[388] and the world. Thus for Ṣadrā, talk of the 'self's immateriality' or 'self-knowledge' is already an ethical movement away from the sensible world to the inner recesses of subjectivity. Ṣadrā mentions this 'movement' in terms of the soteriological journey that every entity in the world undertakes, even though they may not be aware of it. More importantly, this journey of the self comes full circle[389] in the being of the 'perfect human,' who is able to traverse all the trails of the arc of ascent (al-qaws al-ṣuʿūd) until s/he reaches God:

> We have explained earlier that everything in this world (jamīʿ al-mawjūdāt) is travelling toward God the Exalted, even though they may be unaware of it (la yashʿurūn) due to the thick veils and piling up of darkness over them. But this essential movement (al-ḥaraka al-dhātiyya), this journey toward God the Exalted is more evident and manifest in human, especially in the perfect human (al-insān al-kāmil) who crosses all these levels of the arc of ascent (al-qaws al-ṣuʿūdiyya). This is like half of the circle from creation to the Real.[390]

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[385] Abū Ḥāmid Imām Muḥammad al-Ghazālī, Kīmiyā-yi saʿādat, ed. Ḥusayn Khadīvjam (Tehran: Markaz-i Intishārāt-i 'Ilmī va Farhangī, 1983), 15.
[386] al-Ghazālī, Kīmiyā-yi saʿādat, 13-14.
[387] al-Ghazālī, Kīmiyā-yi saʿādat, 14.
[388] For an explanation of the term 'empirical self,' see ch. 1, n121.
[389] See the diagram on p. 105.
[390] Mullā Ṣadrā, Asfār, 9: 67.

Ṣadrā reminds the reader once again that 'knowledge of the self' is one of those fields in which philosophers, despite their talents for abstract discourse have met with scant success. In his view, true self-knowledge cannot be attained until one has also recourse to the niche of prophecy (*min mishkāt al-nubuwwa*), traditions based on the Shīʿī Imams, and self-cultivation through 'spiritual exercises.' Ṣadrā says:

> Know that knowledge of the self (*maʿrifat al-nafs*) is one of those abstruse fields of knowledge in which the philosophers *en masse* were very neglectful, despite the length of their discussions, the power of their thought, and the depth of their immersion in this field, and despite the fact they were better than the mere dialecticians (*jadaliyyīn*) at all this. This knowledge cannot be obtained except through borrowing from the niche of prophecy (*min mishkāt al-nubuwwa*) and through following the lights of Revelation and prophetic mission and the lanterns of the book (i.e. the Qur'an) and the tradition that has reached us in the path of our Imams…[391]

Moreover, Ṣadrā defines philosophy as perfecting the self (*istikmāl al-nafs*) by grasping the inner reality of things or by knowing things as they are in themselves through rational demonstration, and not through opinion or adherence to authority.[392] For Ṣadrā, the implication of perfecting the self entails partaking of knowledge in the intelligible world by disciplining the self which is immersed in material bodies, hence to all its attachments (*taʿalluqāt*).[393] All this is to say that Ṣadrā is interested not only in providing a response to the question "what is the nature and reality of the self," but also in asking "what it means to be a self" so that one may realize the meaning of existence. In other words, what is important in his thought is not just the question of "what a given self is," but rather "what a given self must become," which implies that one makes one's own 'self' by one's actions. Numerous passages in Ṣadrian corpus point to "what kind of self one should aspire to be" or "how one should sculpt oneself" in a given milieu, so that one can achieve the goal of ultimate happiness. For this reason, Ṣadrā is not simply interested in making a philosophical argument of how the self is capable of 'self-knowledge' at the pre-reflective and reflective levels, or how it is capable of perception through the external and internal senses. Rather, he also asserts that the self has a divine nature which can be realized by performing various spiritual exercises. The performing of such spiritual exercises, along with cultivating 'virtues' is what I call 'sculpting the self,' which has a celebrated history in both Sufism and philosophy (although each tradition deals with it in a different manner) prior to Ṣadrā.

To better situate and analyze Ṣadrā's own musings on 'sculpting the self,' I will now cite some of his predecessors (among many others), whose views on the topic have exerted considerable influence on him. Among the classical philosophers, Avicenna's method of 'sculpting the self' through the methodic and therapeutic use of reason and intellect, acquiring virtues, and following God's commands stands out:

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[391] Mullā Ṣadrā, *al-Ḥikma al-ʿArshiyya*, in *Sharḥ al-Ḥikma al-ʿArshiyya* by Mullā ʿAlī Nūrī, edited by Masʿūd Khudāwardī (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Ḥikmat, 2011), 32. For a commentary on this, see *idem.*, 32-33.
[392] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Asfār* 1: 23.
[393] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Asfār* 1: 25-26. At the beginning of *Asfār*, Ṣadrā underscores the nexus between self-knowledge and pursuing an ethico-spiritual life by drawing attention to the importance of 'the spiritual exercises' in transforming and perfecting the self, see Mullā Ṣadrā, *Asfār* 1:6-7. See also Sajjad Rizvi, *Approaching Islamic Philosophical Texts Reading Mullā Ṣadrā Shīrāzī (d. 1635) with Pierre Hadot*, 132-47.

The bliss of the self comes about when its substance is rendered perfect, and this is accomplished when it is purified through knowledge of God (*bi-tazkiyat-i bi-l-ᶜilm Allāh*) and works for God. Its purification through works for God consists of (a) its being purged of vile and wicked qualities of character, (b) its being far removed from blameworthy attributes and evil and offensive habits by following intellect and religious law (*ᶜaql wa-sharᶜ*), and (c) its being adorned with good habits, praiseworthy qualities of character, and excellent and pleasing traits by following intellect and religious law.[394]

In addition, Avicenna also maintains that human beings alone possess the faculty to grasp the universal forms or intelligibles, which is called by various names, including the core self (*lubb*):

Know that human beings alone, to the exclusion of all other living beings, possess a faculty capable of grasping the intelligibles (*darrāka li-l-maᶜqūlāt*). This faculty is sometimes called the rational self, sometimes "the tranquil self,"[395] sometimes the sacred self, sometimes the spiritual spirit, sometimes the commanding spirit, sometimes good word (*kalima ṭayyiba*),[396] sometimes word that unites and separates, sometimes divine self (*sirr ilāhī*), sometimes governing light, sometimes chief commanding light, but sometimes true heart, sometimes core of the self (*lubb*), sometimes understanding (*nuhan*), and sometimes brains (*ḥijan*). It exists in every single human being, young or old, adolescent or adult, insane or sane, sick or sound.[397]

Avicenna continues his discourse on 'sculpting the self' by stressing the importance of performing religious duties, and by urging to control the desires of the lower self that 'incites to evil' (i.e. the Qur'anic term for the lower self, *al-nafs al-ᶜammāra*) so that it can be transformed into the 'tranquil self' (*al-nafs al-muṭmaʾinna*), which he equates with the rational self of the philosophers. Avicenna says:

Purification (*tazkiya*) through works is accomplished by methods mentioned in books on Ethics and by assiduous performance of religious duties (*al-waẓāʾif al-sharᶜiyya*), both legal and traditional, such as observances relating to [the functions of] the body, one's property, and to a combination of the two. For being restrained at the places where religious law and its statutes place such restraints, and undertaking to submit to its commands, have a beneficial effect on subjugating the self that 'incites to evil'[398] [and thus transforming it] into the rational self which is 'at peace,' (*bi-l-sūʾ li-l-nafs al-nāṭiqa al-muṭmaʾinna*) i.e., making the bodily faculties of the soul, the appetitive and the irascible, subservient to the rational self which is 'at peace.'[399]

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[394] Avicenna, *Risāla al-nafs al-nāṭiqa* (appended to the treatise *Aḥwāl al-nafs*, ed. al-Ahwānī), 196, trans. modified, in Gutas, *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition,* 71.
[395] Qur'an 89:27.
[396] Qur'an 14:24.
[397] Avicenna, *Risāla al-nafs al-nāṭiqa* (appended to the treatise *Aḥwāl al-nafs*, ed. al-Ahwānī), 195, trans. modified, in Dimitri Gutas, *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition: Introduction to Reading Avicenna's Philosophical Works* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 68.
[398] Qur'an 12:53.
[399] Avicenna, *Risāla al-nafs al-nāṭiqa,* 197 (trans. modified), in Gutas, *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition,* 71.

On the next stage of 'sculpting the self,' he suggests (like al-Kindī and the Greek philosophers before him) that in order to receive divine effluence (*al-fayḍ al-ilāhī*) and realize one's true self one has to turn away from the body or things bodily (i.e. avoid physical pleasures or excessive attachment to sensual things), since this would prevent the intellect from detaching "forms" (*ṣuwar*) from their embodiment:[400]

> As long as the rational self is associated with the human body, no corporeal entity can be completely ready to receive the divine effluence or have perfectly revealed to it all the intelligibles. But when a person expends all his efforts to purify [his rational self] through knowledge, acquires the propensity for contact with the divine effluence (i.e., with the intellective substance which is the medium of the divine effluence and which is called "angel" in the language of Revelation and "active intellect" *(ᶜaql-i faᶜᶜāl)* in philosophical terminology).[401]

The very last paragraph of Avicenna's magnum opus, *al-Shifāʾ* (The Healing), in a sense, summarizes how a budding philosopher should sculpt the self in order to realize happiness, as it furnishes a comprehensive account of how the ordinary, empirical self should purify itself through attaining virtues and prophetic qualities:

> Since the motivating powers are three—the appetitive, the irascible, and the practical— the virtues (*al-faḍāʾil*) consist of three things : [(a)] moderation (*hayʾa al-tawassuṭ*) in such appetites as the pleasures of sex, food, clothing, and comfort, [as well as] other pleasures of sense and imagination ; [(b)] moderation in all the irascible passions, such as fear, anger, depression , pride, rancor, jealousy, and the like ; [and (c)] moderations in practical matters. At the head of these virtues stand restraint, wisdom (*ḥikma*), and courage; their sum is justice (*ᶜidāla*), which, however, is extraneous to theoretical virtue. But whoever combines theoretical philosophy (*al-ḥikma al-naẓariyya*) with justice is indeed the happy man. And whoever, in addition to this, wins the prophetic qualities (*al-khawāṣṣ al-nubuwwa*) becomes almost a human god (*rabbun insāniyyan*). Worship of him (*ᶜibādatuhu*), after the worship of God, exalted be He, becomes almost allowed. He is indeed the world's earthly king and God's deputy (*khalīfat Allāh*) in it.[402]

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[400] Avicenna discusses the ethical consequences of failure to perform *tajrīd* at length in his *De Anima* V.5 (trans. McGinnis and Reisman): "The inability of the intellect to conceptualize things that are at the upper limit of being intelligible and abstracted from matter is not on account of something in those things themselves, nor on account of something innate to the intellect, but rather on account of the fact that the self is distracted while in the body by the body. It needs the body for many things, but the body keeps it at a remove from the most noble of its perfections. The eye cannot bear to gaze at the Sun, certainly not on account of something in the Sun nor that it is not clearly visible, but rather on account of something about the natural makeup of the body [of the eye]. When this state of being immersed and impeded is removed from the self we have, it will intellect these [extreme intelligibles] in the noblest, clearest, and most pleasurable ways. Our discussion here, however, concerns the *nafs* only inasmuch as it is a *nafs*, and that only inasmuch as it is associated with this matter. So we should not discuss the return of the self when we are discussing nature, until we move on to the discipline of philosophy [i.e., metaphysics] and there investigate the things that are separate [from matter]."

[401] Avicenna, *Risāla al-nafs al-nāṭiqa,* 197, trans. modified, in Gutas, *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition*, 73.

[402] Avicenna, *The Metaphysics of the Healing* (trans. modified), translated by Michael E. Marmura (Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 2005), 378.

In his various treatises on the self and what the self should strive for, Bābā Afḍal al-Dīn al-Kāshānī (d. 607/1210),[403] a thirteenth century Sufi metaphysician, uses the notion of disembodiment (*tajrīd*) to explicate how one should attain the state of ultimate felicity.[404] First he explains what he means by *tajrīd*:

> Disembodiment (*tajrīd*) is that he separate things one by one from himself (*az khūd judā mi-kunad*) and see that none of them is his reality (*wa hīch yek ḥaqīqat-i ū nīst*). Rather, if it belongs to him, it is other than him. Finally, he will have removed all the accidentals and coverings (*ʿawāriḍ wa gishāwāt*) and will have come to see. If something is left without any state and attribute, he will grasp that this thing is his own reality and self (*ḥaqīqat wa dhāt-i ūst*), and all things endure and are fixed by it. Since nothing remains but this thing, he does not endure by anything else. That which does not endure by another endures by self, and its existence is from self (*wa wujūdash az khūd buvad*). If something's existence is from self, annihilation is not allowable for it.[405]

What Bābā Afḍal intends to say through the abstract language above is that one must first of all discern that the self is other than the body, and that if the former is conditioned by the bodily factors such as various accidents, habits and personality, then it would have a negative bearing on one's intellectual vision. If on the other hand, one is able to disengage the body from the intellect or the true self then one would not confuse an image with it reality. That is to say one has to know which attributes and qualities belong to the intellect and which to the body, but at the same time one must also know that body and the self are profoundly united.[406] Bābā Afḍal further explains the body-self relationship and what one must know to disembody the self from the body:

> Since it is clear that the body is not like the self (*chūn rawshan ast kih jism bi-nafs namānad*), and it is clear that a thing becomes strong through its own like, it is also clear that a thing becomes weak and bad in state from its own incompatible. Hence, the self becomes weak and bad in state from mixing with the body. The self's mixing with the body (*āmikhtan-i nafs ba jism*) is to appoint its seeing over the body and over nurturing the body's states, to become heedless of self (*az khūd ghāfil shudan*) and to attend to the body, to seek bodily enjoyments, and to be occupied with the alien, bodily life rather than with the essential life of self. This is the blight that obstructs the human self from arrival at perfection… The self (*nafs*) is held back from the spiritual nourishment (*ghadhā-i rūhānī*), which is knowledge and which corresponds with it, and it becomes weak. The

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[403] Bābā Afḍal's influence on Ṣadrā is well documented in that Ṣadrā's *Iksīr al-ʿārifīn* is a substantial reworking of Bābā Afḍal's *Jāwidān-nāma*. For more information on this, see Mullā Ṣadrā, *Iksīr al-ʿārifīn*, xviiff. On Bābā Afḍal's thought in general, see William Chittick, *The Heart of Islamic Philosophy: The Quest for Self-Knowledge in the Teachings of Afḍal al-Dīn Kāshānī* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), chs 1-2.

[404] *Tajrīd* can be used both in the sense of 'disembodiment' when referring to the self and 'disengagement' (or, separation from matter) when referring to epistemology. In the previous section, I analyzed the notion from an epistemological point of view. However, as the quoted passages demonstrate, one cannot really separate the psychological from the epistemological dimension, since "happiness" for these thinkers also consists in being able to grasp the intelligibles.

[405] Bābā Afḍal, *Muṣannafāt-i Afḍal al-Dīn Muḥammad Maraqī Kāshānī,* edited by Mujtabá Mīnuvī (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Khvārizmī, 1987), 655.

[406] Bābā Afḍal, *Musannafāt,* 662.

body comes to be dominant (*jism ghālib shavad*) and the self dominated over… Because of so much looking upon the body, it fancies the body as self (*nigaristan-i bi-jism jism rā khūd pindārad*). This is the worst state of the human self (*nafs-i insānī*).[407]

According to Bābā Afḍal, one must first of all have knowledge about the true nature of the body-self relationship in order to sculpt one's self through the virtues, because oftentimes theoretical insight determines the course of one's practical life. In his view, the self's mixing with the body prevents it from seeing its true nature, and this mixing causes the self to become weak and heedless and to seek physical pleasures. In short, the self gets entangled in bodily life and forgets its essential nature. And this obstructs the self's spiritual nourishment and knowledge that corresponds to it. In fact, excessive involvement with the things bodily makes it fancy the body as its true nature, which is the worst human state. According to Bābā Afḍal, the self will reach its desired state once it learns to direct its attention and consciousness inward, and controls the senses from being occupied with corruptible sensibles.[408] In sum, for Bābā Afḍal as for Avicenna, one sculpts one's self not only through virtuous activities, but also by gaining knowledge of the true nature of things.

When perusing the above passages on *tajrīd*, purification and virtues, one cannot help but notice the profound similarity between Neoplatonism and Sufi/Islamic philosophical thought. Ṣadrā himself makes the connection most explicit by citing Plotinus (i.e., *Plotinus Arabus*) repeatedly in several of his works. It should be noted that Plotinus' *Enneads* were mistaken for a work of Aristotle, which subsequently became known as *Theologia Aristotelis*.[409] To measure the importance of this text, one need only consider how various Islamic thinkers would constantly refer to it for inspiration. This becomes all the more evident when Mullā Ṣadrā, while explaining the paradigm of his 'transcendent philosophy,' compares the life of the author of the *Enneads* with that of the great Islamic philosopher, Avicenna (taken here as the paradigmatic discursive philosopher). Sadrā says:

> Most of the words of this great philosopher [i.e. the author of *Uthulūjiyā* (*Theologia Aristotelis*)] indicate his power of unveiling (*quwwat kashfihi*), his inner light, and his proximate position before God. He is indeed from the perfect friends (*awliyāʾ al-kāmil*) of God. For his occupation with the affairs of the world, governing the people, the welfare of the worshippers and restoring the countries was after going through those ascetic practices (*riyāḍāt*) and spiritual struggles (*mujāhadāt*). After his self (*nafsahu*) was perfected, his inner core (*dhāt*) was also perfected, and he became perfect in his inner self so that nothing could preoccupy him. And he desired to unify the two positions and perfect the two modes of being [i.e. the theoretical and practical].[410]

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[407] Bābā Afḍal, *Musannafāt*, 43.
[408] Bābā Afḍal, *Musannafāt,* 728. The Neoplatonic overtone of these passages cannot be ignored. One of the most frequent themes in Plotinus' *Enneads* concerns his exhortation to dissociate the self from things that are bodily and impure. In the Ennead III.6.5, Plotinus suggests that one of philosophy's prime tasks is to free the self from affections such as fear, anger, greed, intemperance etc. Reason seeks to remove the affection by removing its cause, the false opinion, to ensure the well-being of the self. Plotinus says at the end of chapter 6 that sense perception belongs to the descended soul, which is sleep, and the awakening from this sleep is through purification (*catharsis*) and withdrawal from the body away from the sensible world, which does not have the real "being" of the intelligible world. Cf. Plotinus, *Enneads* I 1.10.5-13.
[409] It should be noted that the work itself, known as the *Uthūlūjiyā,* was a translation and paraphrase of the *Enneads*.
[410] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Asfār*, 9: 146-47.

It is not clear from the above whether Ṣadrā has in mind Aristotle or Plotinus, which, in any event is irrelevant in this context, since for him, the *author* of *Uthulūjiyā* (whoever he is) represents the model par excellence of his 'transcendent philosophy.' The contrast becomes sharper when he comments on Avicenna:

> As for the Shaykh, the author of *al-Shifāʾ* [i.e. Avicenna], his preoccupation with the affairs of the world (*umūr al-dunyā*) was not according to the above way [i.e. *à la* the author of *Uthulūjiyā*]. It is strange that when he completed his discussion at the end of the investigation of the existential identities (*taḥqīq al-huwiyyāt al-wujūdiyya*), and not the general matters (*al-umūr al-ʿāmma*) which contain the rules regarding them, his mind became dull-witted, and there manifested in him the incapability [to penetrate beyond them]. This is so with him in many matters.[411]

Ṣadrā continues his criticism of Avicenna in the following:

> These are the issues which the Shaykh al-Raʾīs (Avicenna) could not perceive in spite of his fine wit, deep understanding, and subtle nature… Know that this subtle point and the likes from the properties of the existents are not possible to attain except through inner unveiling (*mukāshafāt bāṭiniyya*), the supra-sensible witnessing (*mushāhadāt sirriyya*), and existential visions. In order to attain them the memorization of the discursive rules and the laws of essential and accidental notions are not sufficient. These unveilings and witnessing are not attained except through ascetic and spiritual practices retreats (*khalwāt*) together with deep separation from the company of people, severance from the accidental matters of the world, its futile pleasures, its high fantasies, and its false hopes.[412]

The above citations show clearly how Plotinus is venerated by Ṣadrā, so much so that he is considered the paradigmatic philosopher, in contrast to even the greats of that tradition such as Avicenna. This is important to note, since Ṣadrā's account of 'sculpting the self,' although it retains a great deal of peripatetic elements, departs significantly from the Avicennan paradigm. In his *Sharḥ al-hidāya al-athīriyya,* which is an early philosophical summa, Ṣadrā argues that the self has two essential faculties, viz. theoretical and practical.[413] While his division of the 'theoretical intellect' (*al-ʿaql al-nazarī*) hardly shows any departure from the standard peripatetic model, Ṣadrā's scheme of the 'practical intellect' incorporates key ideas such as 'purification' and 'annihilation of the self' from Sufi spiritual psychology. The following classification of the intellects clearly betrays Ṣadrā's synthesis of Sufism and peripatetic philosophy:

    I.   Theoretical intellect (*al-ʿaql al-nazarī*):
        i.   Material intellect (*al-ʿaql al-hayūlānī*)
       ii.   Habitual intellect (*al-ʿaql bi-l-malaka*)

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[411] Ṣadrā, *Asfār*, 9: 147.

[412] Ṣadrā, *Asfār*, 9: 146.

[413] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Sharḥ al-hidāya al-athīriyya*, edited by Maqṣūḍ Muḥammadī (Tehran: Bunyād-i Hikmat-i Islāmi-yi Ṣadrā, 2014), 1: 417-21.

iii. Actual intellect (*al-ʿaql bi-l-fiʿl*)
iv. Acquired intellect (*al-ʿaql al-mustafād*)[414]

II. Practical intellect (*al-ʿaql al-ʿamalī*):
    i. Purification of the outer [self] (*tahdhīb al-ẓāhir*)
    ii. Purification of the inner [self] (*tahdhīb al-bāṭin*)
    iii. Adorning of the self (*taḥallā al-nafs*)
    iv. Annihilation of the self from itself (*fanāʾ al-nafs ʿan dhātihā*)[415]

Ṣadrā explains the relationship between the 'theoretical intellect' and the 'practical intellect' by noting that the former needs the help of the latter to reach perfection.[416] He further observes that even though humans have a primordial nature (*fiṭra*),[417] it is their acts that enable them to realize either good or evil in their life. That is to say, for Ṣadrā, self-construction is a process, which is not pre-determined.[418] Ṣadrā repeats the above scheme in his much later works such as *al-*

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[414] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Sharḥ al-hidāya,* 1: 418-21.

[415] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Sharḥ al-hidāya,* 1: 418-21.

[416] The theoretical intellect contains several degrees, each of which represents a higher level in the process of intellection that reaches its perfection in the acquired intellect. The theoretical intellect requires an external agency (i.e. the Active Intellect) to actualize its ability to grasp the universals. The Active Intellect acts like the Sun that illuminates human intellectual faculties and makes it possible for them to move from potentiality to actuality. However, it should be noted that a great of contention exists regrading the process of acquiring the intelligible forms, with Dag Hasse strongly supporting 'abstraction,' while Black opting for 'emanation.' For their respective views, see Dag N. Hasse, "Avicenna on Abstraction," in *Debates in Medieval Philosophy Essential Readings and Contemporary Response*, edited by Jeffrey Hause (London, NY: Routledge, 2014), 102-25, and Deborah Black, "How Do We Acquire Concepts? Avicenna on Abstraction and Emanation," in *Debates in Medieval Philosophy Essential Readings and Contemporary Response*, edited by Jeffrey Hause (London, NY: Routledge, 2014), 126-44. Like Hasse and Black, scholarly opinion is divided on this issue, see e.g. Cristina D'Ancona, "Degrees of Abstraction in Avicenna: How to Combine Aristotle's *De Anima* and the *Enneads*," in *Theories of perception in Medieval and Early Modern Philosophy*, edited by edited by Simo Knuuttila and Pekka Karkkainen (Dordrecht: Springer, 2008), 47-71; J. Michot, "L'épître sur la disparition des formes intelligibles vaines après la mort d'Avicenne," *Bulletin de Philosophie Mėdiėvale* 29 (1987): 152–170; M. Sebti, "La distinction entre intellect pratique et intellect théorique dans la doctrine de l'âme humaine d'Avicenne", *Philosophie* 77 (2003): 23–44; D. Gutas, "Intuition and Thinking: The Evolving Structure of Avicenna's Epistemology," in R. Wisnovsky (ed.), *Aspects of Avicenna* (Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2001), 1–38; J. Janssens, "Creation and Emanation in Avicenna," *Documenti e studi sulla tradizione filosofica medievale* 8 (1997): 455–477; Herbert Davidson, *Alfarabi, Avicenna, and Averroes, on Intellect* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), *passim*. For Avicenna's own texts on this, see Avicenna, *al-Ishārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt*, trans. S. Inati, in *Ibn Sina's Remarks and Admonitions: Physics and Metaphysics: an Analysis and Annotated translation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014), 100-10; Fazlur Rahman, *Avicenna's Psychology: an English translation of Kitāb al-najāt, book II, chapter VI* (Westport: Hyperion Press, 1981), 35-36, 68.

[417] The Arabic word *fiṭra*, often translated 'original disposition,' 'natural constitution,' or 'innate nature,' appears in the Qurʾān and *ḥadīth* literature and finds its way into Islamic legal and philosophical discussions about human nature and knowledge. On the complex understanding of this term, see Jon Hoover, "*Fiṭra*," in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam, THREE*, Edited by: Kate Fleet, Gudrun Krämer, Denis Matringe, John Nawas, Everett Rowson. Consulted online on 04 July 2018 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_ei3_COM_27155>

[418] See, e.g. Mullā Ṣadrā, *Shawāhid*, 266. Although the self's substantial motion, together with the doctrine of 'fixed entity' (*ʿayn al-thābit*) might suggest that the life of a given self is already pre-determined through the 'spectrum' of various stages of the self, namely from the vegetal, animal to the rational and postmortem stages, the doctrine of the perfect human makes it clear that for Ṣadrā, human selves have a dimension that even transcends God's knowledge of things as distinct objects (i.e. entities that are forever fixed in God's knowledge). This is because Ṣadrā distinguishes between two distinct levels of unity in the divine order, namely exclusive unity (*aḥadiyya*) and inclusive unity (*wāḥidiyya*). So the fixed entities appear as objects of divine knowledge at the level of *wāḥidiyya*,

Shawāhid and *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*, with changes only in minor details such as '*tanwīr*' (illumination) in place of '*taḥliya*' (adorning) and '*al-nawāmīs al-ilāhiyya*' (divine law) to Shariah.[419] In any event, Ṣadrā explains that the 'practical intellect' must be purified in several steps. First, the outer layer of the self or the empirical self must be molded according to the Shariah and the prophetic example, i.e., how the Prophet lived his own life. Next, the inner layer of the self should be purified through ethics and morals such as cleansing it from appetitive qualities. After that the self should adorn itself with virtuous qualities and get rid of vile character-traits. It should also adorn itself through right knowledge. Finally, the self arrives at the end of the journey by annihilating itself from itself, i.e., annihilating itself from its illusory mode which is the habitual, empirical self of everyday life.[420]

In other parts of his oeuvre, Ṣadrā details in concrete terms how the self should realize its true reality by casting aside its illusory appearance, which is another way of explaining 'annihilation of the self from itself' ((*fanāʾ al-nafs ʿan dhātihā*). Just as Avicenna delineates a comprehensive account of how the empirical self should purify itself through attaining virtues and prophetic qualities, Ṣadrā too draws our attention to the importance of virtues and self-cultivation. Ṣadrā avers that the self attains happiness (*saʿāda*) and felicity (*bahja*) by pursuit of deeds and acts which purify the self (*ṭahārat al-nafs*), and refine the mirror of the heart from dirt and pollution.[421] Ṣadrā also makes use of the Platonic tripartite model to explicate how the self should control its evil tendencies.[422] Like Plato and Avicenna, he puts 'reason' in charge of all other faculties, and claims that when the faculty of knowledge (*quwwat al-ʿilm*) is balanced and made beautiful, it is able to perceive the difference between truth and falsehood in speech, real and the futile in beliefs, and beauty and ugliness in deeds.[423] Moreover, he maintains that when

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whereas the level of *aḥadiyya,* identified with the Divine Essence, transcends any mode of differentiation. Since human consciousness is able to transcend itself (i.e. *fanāʾ*) and realize its identity with the Divine Essence, the self at its highest degree, like the Essence Itself, is beyond any determination. Ṣadrā makes it abundantly clear that it is up to every individual self whether or not it wants to realize its highest nature through spiritual exercises or choose some other destiny following common beliefs and custom. For more on these, see pp. 63-79 of this chapter. Cf. Kaukua, *Self-Awareness in Islamic Philosophy*, 209-10, 229-30, with which my interpretation differs. It is to be noted that in later Islamic philosophy, fixed entities are directly identified with the quiddities; see Mohammed Rustom, *The Triumph of Mercy: Philosophy and Scripture in Mullā Ṣadrā* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2012), 61-62, and 189-190 (notes 36-38). For a general discussion of fixed entities, see William Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge: Ibn al-'Arabī's Metaphysics of Imagination* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989), 12, 183, 245. The Muʿtazilites believe that immutables or non-existents subsist as things (*ashyāʾ*) distinct from God; see H. A. Wolfson, *The Philosophy of the Kalam* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976), 359-372; and Richard M. Frank, "*al-Maʿdūm wal-mawjūd:* The Non-Existent, the Existent, and the Possible in the Teaching of Abū Hāshim and His Followers," *MIDEO* 14 (1980): 185–209.

[419] Cf. Mullā Ṣadrā, *al-Shawāhid*, 241-248.

[420] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Mafātīḥ,* 2: 843.

[421] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Asfār,* 9: 169.

[422] Following the Neoplatonic tradition, Ṣadrā distinguishes three 'faculties' that are responsible for one's moral behavior. These three principle faculties are also called souls: the appetitive soul, the irascible soul, and the reasoning soul. All of the moral qualities emanate from these faculties. See Yaḥyá ibn ʿAdī, *The Reformation of Morals*, translated by Sydney Griffith (Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 2002), 15. For the Platonic tripartite self and Plato's self in general, see Rachel Barney et al. (eds.), *Plato and the Divided Self* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), parts I and II. Plato discusses his tripartite soul in the *Republic*, *Phaedrus* and *Timaeus*. These dialogues portray human nature as both multiple and diverse—and yet somehow also one—divided into a 'reasoning part' (*logistikon*), a 'spirited part' (*thymoeides*) and an 'appetitive part' (*epithumetikon*). However, the overall Platonic self is much more complex than what is presented in the tri-partite model, see e.g., Sorabji, *Self: Ancient and Modern*, 6, 34-37, 44, 115-117.

[423] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Asfār,* 9: 119.

the irascible faculty/soul (*quwwat al-ghaḍab*) is in a deficient state, the traits of lowliness, weakness, and low self-esteem become apparent in one's personality. However, he also claims that the excess of this faculty results in hastiness, conceit, haughtiness, uncontrolled anger, false pride and vanity, while its balanced constitution gives rise to bravery.[424] Furthermore, the excess of appetitive faculty/soul (*quwwat al-shahwa*) brings about viciousness, dullness, while its deficiency causes covetousness, impudence, boasting, flattery, jealousy, and malice, and its balance chastity, modesty, and generosity.[425] Ṣadrā also adds that the faculty of justice (*quwwat al-ʿadāla*) restrains the irascible and the appetitive faculties through religious injunctions and the intellect.[426]

Moreover, in line with Avicenna and Bābā Afḍal, Ṣadrā also asserts that the self needs to withdraw from the body if it is to attain God. According to him, our self-awareness (*shuʿūr bi-l-dhāt*) at the moment of our separation from the body is very intense because our self-presence at that time is more complete and more intense. However, since the majority of people—due to their immersion in their material bodies (*li-istighrāqihim bi-abdānihim al-māddiya*) and their obsession with them—forget their self, God also causes them to forget their self.[427] However, he duly acknowledges the positive role of the senses, as it is through them that the self at the beginning of its existence reflect on knowledge. However, the senses (*al-ḥawāss*) eventually become an obstacle in the end, as they hinder pure intellection.[428] The following summaries Ṣadrā's musings on the 'disembodiment of the self:'

> The external veil is the body and its senses are like a covering on the polished mirror...[429]
> Know that as long as the self is attached to the body (*mutaʿalliqa bi-l-badan*), not arrived at the perfect, intellectual mode of being (*al-nashʾat al-kāmila al-ʿaqliyya*), its disposal is only in the animal faculties (and it cannot reach the higher intellectual states).[430]
> When preoccupation with the body (*shagal al-badan*), the whisperings of fantasy and the delusions of the imagination fade, the veil is lifted (*irtafaʿa al-ḥijāb*)…[431]
> When the attachment between the self and the body (*al-ʿalāqat bayn al-nafs wa-l-badan*) is severed, then this mixing [between the self and the body] ceases, and the intelligibles become the object of witnessing, since awareness of them becomes a presence (*ḥuḍūr*) in the self.[432]

Ṣadrā then goes on to quote a number of ancient philosophers to bolster his arguments for *tajrīd*. He quotes Plotinus Arabus as saying "A philosopher is rewarded for his philosophy after the separation of his self from his body (*mufāraqat nafs ʿan jasadihi*),"[433] and "The self is not in the body (*laysat al-nafs fi-l-badan*), rather the body is in it (*bal al-badan fīhā*) because it is vaster

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[424] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Asfār,* 9: 120.
[425] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Asfār,* 9: 120.
[426] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Asfār,* 9: 119; cf. *Asfār* 8: 161-62.
[427] Q. 59:19: "They forget God, so He caused them to forget their selves."
[428] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Asfār* 9: 170.
[429] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Asfār* 9: 170.
[430] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Asfār* 8: 163.
[431] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Asfār* 9: 170.
[432] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Asfār* 9: 168.
[433] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Asfār* 8: 360.

than the body (*awsaᶜa minhu*)."[434] He refers to Empedocles as saying "The self was in a lofty place (*al-makān al-ᶜālī*), but when it committed an error, it fell down to this world..." Ṣadrā then claims that Empedocles used to call people in a loud voice and urge them to abandon their attachment to this world and journey to the higher realm.[435] Ṣadrā also mentions Pythagoras, who, according to him, was the author of the science of number. Ṣadrā reports that Pythagoras said to Diogenes at the end of his [*al-Aqwāl*] *al-Dhahabiyya*: "When you detach yourself from the body (*idhā fāraqat hādha l-badan*), you are in that void in the higher atmosphere (*al-jaww al-ᶜālī*). Then you are a traveler not returning to the human-state, and not receptive to death."[436] Finally, he informs the reader that it was reported of Plato in the *Uthūlūjiyā* that the latter said beautiful things about the attributes of the self. However, Ṣadrā also notes that Plato's descriptions concerning the attributes of the self are complex, as he neither accepts the utility of the senses (*al-ḥiss*), nor denies their use completely, when it comes to his remarks on the self. But Ṣadrā states that Plato does repudiate the *nafs* for being attached to the body (*ittiṣālahā bi-l-badan*) because the *nafs* in the body is confined, being devoid of rationality. According to Ṣadrā, Plato was in agreement with Empedocles, except that he called the body an "obstacle" (*al-ṣadiya*) by which he meant this world.[437]

Seen from within, it is not so much the question of an effort to literally separate oneself from the body; rather it is a matter of continuous attention to the divine through focused concentration. What is at issue is that in the Ṣadrian perspective, reality is considered in terms of being (*wujūd*) and its reality (*ḥaqīqa*). Thus the perfection of the self too, is a particular mode of being. But knowledge of being as a concrete state of consciousness cannot take shape until the self is able to separate itself from matter (*mādda*). The human self is a combination of both baseness and perfection. However, the essence of the self possesses a perfection that stretches to the very limit of the transcendent One.[438] So metaphysics requires honing of both theoretical and practical faculties in order to attain what Ṣadrā calls 'illuminative presence' (*ḥuḍūr ishrāqī*).[439] However, the self (*al-nafs*) due to its immersion in matter cannot attain such a lofty state of "presence" unless it is able to separate itself from material (worldly) attachments. Although theoretical or speculative philosophy may enable one to gain knowledge of being through rational argumentation, it will only result in mental ossification in contrast to presential knowledge, as 'modes of consciousness' will not correspond to the "modes of being" in such a condition. Hence such a philosopher will remain trapped in an existential impasse. Ṣadrā asserts, via quoting Plotinus, that even though the *nafs* and the intellect were one entity, they became two

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[434] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Asfār* 8: 360. Plotinus too argues that the soul is not in the body; rather the body is in the soul. This way of looking at things is opposed to reducing the soul to its various faculties, some of whose activities, he would admit, are located in the body. It also safeguards, according to Plotinus, the unity and incorporeality of the soul. Thus, according to him, the parts of the soul are not "in" the three main bodily organs (i.e. the brain, the heart and the liver) in the ordinary sense—only their 'activity' takes place there. Plotinus avers that the essential functions of the soul consist in contemplating the forms and finding a paradigm of the sensible world in it. Thus, it is the logos of everything, and its main functions are intellection and perception respectively. For an extensive analysis of these points, see Teun Tieleman, "Plotinus on the seat of the soul: reverberations of Galen and Alexander in Enn. IV, 3 [27], 23," *Phronesis* 43 (4), 306–325; Damian Caluori, "The Essential Functions of a Plotinian Soul," *Rhizai* 2.1 (2005): 75-94; and Muhammad Faruque, "The Internal Senses in Galen, Plotinus and Nemesius: the Beginning of an Idea," *Ancient Philosophy* 10.2 (2016): 119-139.

[435] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Asfār,* 8: 360-61.

[436] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Asfār,* 8: 361.

[437] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Asfār,* 8:361.

[438] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Asfār,* 1: 23-25.

[439] Mullā Ṣadrā, *al-Mashāᶜir* (Tehran: Kitābkhāna-yi Ṭahūrī, n.d.), 24.

and separated when the *nafs* turned away from it due to its desire for individuation.[440] However, the self can still attain immateriality by transcending bodily attachments, and Ṣadrā believes Plotinus to be someone who was able to demonstrate its truth. Ṣadrā quotes Plotinus:

> "At times I withdrew into my self and removed myself from my body (*innī rubbamā khalawtu bi-nafsī wa-khalaᶜtu badanī*) and became as though I was a disembodied substance (*jawhar mujarrad*) without a body. I was inside my self, but outside of all things. I saw in myself (*fī dhātī*) beauty (*ḥusn*) and loveliness (*bahāʾ*), and I remained utterly astonished about all this. Then I came to know that I was a part of the preeminent divine world possessing active life (*ḥayā faᶜᶜāla*).[441]

To compare Ṣadrā's method of sculpting the self with that of Plotinus, let us now cite the famous passage from the *Enneads* in which Plotinus uses the analogy of "sculpting an unformed statue:"

> Go back into yourself and look; and if you do not yet see yourself beautiful, then, just as someone making a statue which has to be beautiful cuts away here and polishes there and makes one part smooth and clears another till he has given his statue a beautiful face, so you too must cut away excess and straighten the crooked and clear the dark and make it bright, and never stop 'working on your statue' till the divine glory of virtue shines out on you, till you see "self-mastery enthroned upon its holy seat." If you have become this, and see it, and are at home with yourself in purity, with nothing hindering you from becoming in this way one, with no inward mixture of anything else, but wholly yourself, nothing but true light, not measured by dimensions, or bounded by shape into littleness, or expanded to size by unboundedness, but everywhere unmeasured, because greater than all measure and superior to all quantity; when you see that you have become this, then you have become sight; you can trust yourself then; you have already ascended and need no one to show you; concentrate your gaze and see.[442]

Plotinus urges his readers to be a sculptor of their selves. That is to say, one should cut away all that is excessive in terms of all the negative character-traits, and straighten what is crooked and illuminate all that is overcast. The subtleties of the analogy are accessible by explicating its reminiscences to Plato. 'Superfluous' refers to the immoderate care of the body in the *Republic*, 'crooked' to the life of bodily pleasures and falsehoods without virtue that leaves its marks on the self—discussed in both the *Phaedrus* and the *Gorgias*—and 'straightening' to the role of reason in sculpting the self.[443] Plotinus refers to ethical self-improvement as a matter of turning inward and actualizing powers that are innate to the self. The final goal of such a process is a

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[440] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Asfār,* 8: 413.

[441] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Asfār* 8: 360. Cf. *Enneads* IV.8.1.1-11: "Often I have woken up out of the body to my self and have entered into myself, going out from all other things; I have seen a beauty wonderfully great and felt assurance that then most of all I belonged to the better part; I have actually lived the best life and come to identity with the divine; and set firm in it I have come to that supreme actuality, setting myself above all else in the realm of Intellect. Then after that rest in the divine, when I have come down from Intellect to discursive reasoning, I am puzzled how I ever came down, and how my soul has come to be in the body when it is what it has shown itself to be by itself, even when it is in the body."

[442] Plotinus, *Enneads* I.6.9.7–25.

[443] Cf. Plato, *scholia* in *Grg.* 525a; *Phdr.* 253e, perhaps also *Tht.* 173a; *katharos, kathairein* in *Phd.* 67c; 69c.

pure intelligible being, a true self and a fully integrated unity. Only this kind of being can properly see the goodness of the One.[444]

All this is to say that a true aspirant of philosophy should try to free herself from carnal desires and material ambitions by ascetic practices (*riyāḍāt*) and by following the precepts of the Divine Law.[445] She will strive to become god-like by adorning her self with divine attributes. In short, the practices of virtues and self-cultivation are intertwined with theoretical philosophy. Thus it should not come as a surprise when Ṣadrā exhorts his readers in the *Asfār* that before they begin to read this book they should 'purify' their selves from vain desires and mindless fancies.[446] In order to purify one's self or what is also known as catharsis, one needs to perform various 'spiritual exercises' related to both the body and the self. Although Ṣadrā never specifies whether he had a Sufi/spiritual master (*shaykh*), he nonetheless emphasizes that without guidance and learning it will be very difficult to practice a philosophical method, i.e., the techniques of spiritual exercises.[447] According to Ṣadrā, one who is given acute mental power, subtleness and quick wit, should strive to attain 'presence of heart' by committing oneself to performing 'spiritual exercises.' He then outlines the nature of some of these spiritual exercises:

> In sum, the central and important thing for the one whom God has blessed with a pure primordial nature (*fiṭra ṣāfiya*), subtle nature, powerful mental acuteness, penetrating understanding, and vast capacity, should not occupy himself with the affairs of the world, the seeking of position and elevated place. Rather, he should distance himself from the people, seeking retreat, intimacy with God, and keep away from everything other than Him, with presence of heart and focused spiritual concentration (*ijtimāᶜ al-himma*), and exert his thinking on divine matters.[448]

Further elucidation of the spiritual exercises is provided below:

> And the difference between the knowledge of theoretically oriented intellectuals and possessors of inner insight (*dhū-l-abṣār*) is like the difference between those who learn the definition of sweetness and those who taste the same… Thus, I gained the certitude that the realities of faith could not be comprehended except through cleansing the heart of vain desires (*taṣfiyat al-qalb ᶜan al-hawā*), purifying it of [the distractions of] the world, … and contemplating the Qur'anic verses and the tradition of the Messenger and his household (peace be on them all) and following the path of the virtuous for the remainder of one's limited life-span.[449]

But Ṣadrā's project of transcendent philosophy requires one to master 'theoretical sciences' as well. As he says:

> This should be after he has attained some knowledge of the sciences pertaining to literature, logic, physics, and cosmos, which travelers on the way to God the Exalted (*al-sālikīn ilā-*

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[444] Cf. Remes, *Plotinus on Self*, 179ff.

[445] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Tafsīr al-Qurʾān al-karīm,* edited by M. Khwājawī *(*Qom: Intishārāt-i Bīdār, 1987), 1: 2-4.

[446] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Asfār,* 1: 12-18.

[447] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Tafsīr*, 1: 2-3; cf. *Kasr al-aṣnām*, 104ff.; Rizvi, *Approaching Islamic Philosophical Texts*, 143.

[448] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Asfār*, 9: 159.

[449] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Tafsīr,* 7: 10-11.

llāh taᶜālā) should be knowledgeable about, but not so the ecstatic ones (*majdhūbīn*) of God, whose scales become balanced at the first instant of the divine ecstasy. Without one of the two ways mentioned above, how can anyone arrive at the degree of the cognitive unveiling (*al-kashf al-ᶜilmī*), and direct witnessing of the heart (*shuhūd qalbī*) concerning divine knowledge, the states of the origin and the return, the knowledge of the self, its stations, and ascent to God the Exalted, if one is engaged in worldly matters, its attachments and its snares?[450]

Nature of the 'True I'

So far we have seen how Ṣadrā has addressed the question of self-knowledge and its attendant moral implications, namely what should one make of oneself in order to have *true* self-knowledge. However, Ṣadrā repeatedly affirms that the self is a mulita-dimensional and hierarchical reality that contains the Divine Reality at the center of it being. Ṣadrā says:

> The human self (*al-nafs al-insāniyya*) has many levels and dimensions (*maqāmāt wa-darajāt kathīra*), from the beginning of its generation to the end of its ultimate goal. It also has numerous essential states and modes of being (*aṭwār wujūdiyya*). At first, it appears as a corporeal substance (*jawhar jismānī*) in its state of attachment to the body. Then it gradually attains intensity in being and develops [existentially] through the different stages of its given constitution until it subsists by itself and voyages from this world to the other world, and so *returns to its Lord* (89:27).[451]

Consequently, Ṣadrā looks at his theory of selfhood from multiple standpoints. Sometimes he expounds the self through 'substantial motion,'[452] while at other times he discusses it in the

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[450] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Asfār*, 9: 159

[451] Mullā Ṣadrā, *al-ᶜArshiyya*, 32. This last phrase refers to the Qur'anic verse (89:27-30): "O the tranquil self, return to your Lord, well-pleased and well-pleasing! Enter thou among My servants! Enter my Paradise!," as well as to the numerous other verses that mentions the self's return to its divine Origin. In Sufism, the 'tranquil self (*al-nafs al-muṭmaʾinna*) refers to the paradisal state of the fully realized self.

[452] See Ṣadrā, *Asfār*, 3: 97-136. The relevant parts of Ṣadrā's discussion on substantial motion in the *Asfār* are now available in English translation as *Transubstantial Motion and the Natural World*, trans. Mahdi Dehbashi (London: ICAS, 2010). For useful analyses of this doctrine, see Christian Jambet, *The Act of Being,* 197–203; Kalin, "Between Physics and Metaphysics: Mullā Ṣadrā on Nature and Motion," *Islam and Science* 1.1 (2003): 59–90; Eiyad Al-Kutubi, *Mullā Ṣadrā and Eschatology*: *Evolution of Being* (London: Routledge, 2015), 52-67; Meisami, *Mulla Sadra*, 61–80. For an Avicennan background on this, see Jon McGinnis, "On the Moment of Substantial Change: A Vexed Question in the History of Ideas," *in Interpreting Avicenna: Science and Philosophy in Medieval Islam, Proceedings of the Second Annual Symposium of the Avicenna Study Group*, ed. J. McGinnis (Leiden: Brill, 2004, 42–61. Although this article presents valuable insights, it does not engage with Aristotle in depth concerning the origin of "substantial motion." It should be noted that Aristotle also makes claims on "gradual" substantial change/motion in his *Physics* (esp. Book 1). For instance, he says in *Physics* I.7, 190b1-190b4 the following: "But that substances too, and anything that can be said to be without qualification, come to be from some underlying thing, will appear on examination. For we find in every case something that underlies from which proceeds that which comes to be; for instance, animals and plants from seed"; and in III.1 200b33-201a3: "There is no such thing as motion over and above the things. It is always with respect to *substance* or to quantity or to quality or to place that what changes changes." See also, *On Generation and Corruption*, *passim*. For more literature on substantial change in Aristotle, see Montgomery Furth, *Substance, Form and Psyche: An Aristotelian metaphysics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988) and Frans de Hass and J. Mansfeld (eds.), *Aristotle: On Generation and Corruption, Book 1* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), chs. 3 and 4.

context of Neoplatonic-Avicennan 'faculty psychology.' Moreover, he also makes use of the Platonic tri-partite model to elucidate various psycho-somatic tendencies within the self, as we have seen in the previous section. Furthermore, he appropriates mystical concepts such as 'the perfect human' and 'annihilation of the self' (*fanāʾ*) to explicate the highest degree of selfhood. A daunting interpretive issue that arises from all this is how does such a multi-dimensional, wide-ranging theory of the self cohere as a whole? So I identify three fundamentally distinct but interrelated dimensions or levels in Ṣadrā's overall theory of selfhood that I think best explains how different dimensions of the same self cohere in a 'spectrum.' I call these three dimensions bio-physiological, socio-cultural, and ethico-metaphysical self respectively, as I mentioned in chapter 1. In my scheme of things, 'the bio-physiological self' in Ṣadrā's transcendent philosophy refers to that dimension or mode of the self where its nature is explained in terms of bodily structures, e.g., that the self has a 'corporeal' origin as a fetus, or various cognitive capacities such as the senses through which the self can relate to the external world. Sometimes Ṣadrā goes to great lengths (see below) to expatiate on the physiological structure of various sense-organs such as the ear or the eye and how they affect the self's perception.[453] Next, 'the socio-cultural' dimension refers to the mode of the self in which it is seen through the lens of generic cultural or ideological constructs such as Safavids, Mughals, Sufis, the elect (*al-khāṣṣ*), the commoners (*al-ʿawāmm*) etc. As we shall soon see, Ṣadrā sometimes uses such sweeping categories to talk about how common beliefs and socio-religious-cultural upbringing determine experience of the self at the level of a given collectivity.[454] Finally, the ethico-metaphysical

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[453] See e.g. Mullā Ṣadrā, *Asfār*, 8: 194-232.

[454] It should be noted that Ṣadrā does not attempt to construct an overarching 'socio-cultural' theory of the self in the manner of e.g. Adorno and Horkheimer as in the *Dialectic of Enlightenment* or such post-colonial authors as Homi Bhabha as in *The Location of Culture*. For instance, Contemporary post-colonial theorists such as Bhabha have drawn attention to the practices of 'representation' that reproduce an image of subordination that endures even after former colonies gain independence. Drawing on concepts such as 'mimicry,' 'hybridity' and 'third space,' Bhabha understands selfhood in terms of endless 'performance,' which he sees as a response to the signifier and the signified. For Bhabha, there is no a-priori, metaphysical identity to which one can refer, since selfhood or the act of self begins by imitating the 'other.' As such, selfhood is always a production of 'image' of an identity (here he shows the influence of Lacan's mirror stage theory of self) and the transformation of the subject. Bhabha makes use of such broad-brush categories as the 'colonizer' (or the settler) or the 'colonized' (or the native) to illustrate his conception of selfhood. Thus there is no place for pre-reflective, pre-predicative or pre-linguistic self/consciousness in such a paradigm, since everything is determined through various socio-cultural-historical identities that are always in a state of a flux, see Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), 28-92. Similarly, Adorno and Horkheimer articulate an ambitious theory of the Enlightenment subjectivity (i.e. modern Western selfhood) vis-à-vis the pre-historical Magical subjectivity. According to the, the self of the Enlightenment is characterized by 1) the subject-object dichotomy, 2) a tendency to control nature, 3) a faith in progress, 4) a denial of anything religious, and 5) a propensity to quantify things. In their view, the self of the Magical age (before the Myth of Odysseus) is the opposite of all the aforementioned features, see Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 1-90. My point in discussing these theories is that there is a certain parallel between these authors and Ṣadrā when they both use all-encompassing categories such as the colonizer/colonized, elite seekers of knowledge/commoners, and Sufis/pseudo-Sufis etc. to take stock of a given subjectivity based on their foray into and assessment of history, culture, society, and religion (and potentially other factors) in that they are only considering what I call the 'socio-cultural' *dimension* of selfhood to the exclusion of other dimensions such as the first-personal subjective standpoint. Needless to say, Ṣadrā brings up the other dimensions in other places, as he tirelessly affirms the multi-dimensionality of the self. However, for Ṣadrā, the socio-cultural dimension is subordinated to the ethico-metaphysical dimension, whereas for the authors mentioned above, it is the very opposite, although it must be noted that they don't talk about the 'pre-reflective first-personal self' that features in every form of human experience. See also, Gayatri Spivak, "Can the Subaltern

aspect of the self corresponds to the first-personal subjective stance in which one gets to experience the self as an 'I,' which is already implicated in an ethico-metaphysical worldview.

As was mentioned, Ṣadrā explains the bio-physiological self from several viewpoints, to which I am going to turn now. In the *Asfār*, Ṣadrā maintains that the human self (*al-nafs al-insāniyya*) has three perceptual modes of being (*nashʾāt thalāth idrākiyya*):[455]

1) In the first mode it is a natural sensory form (*al-ṣurat al-ḥissiyya al-ṭabīʿiyya*), whose loci of manifestation (*maẓhar*) are the five external senses. [Ṣadrā compares this mode of the self to the empirical world because it is perceived by the senses. He further states that the good and evil pertaining to this world are known to all. Also, in this mode the existent is always in motion and transformation (*ḥaraka wa-istiḥāla*).]

2) In the second mode it is of the nature of apparitions (*al-ashbāḥ*) and forms veiled from the five external senses, whose locus of manifestation (*maẓhar*) are the internal senses. [Ṣadrā compares it to the next world, i.e., the imaginal realm. According to him, paradise and hell are manifested in this mode.]

3) In the third mode, it is a noetic being (*al-ʿaqliyya*), which is the abode of the intimate ones to God. [Ṣadrā calls this mode of the self the abode of the intellect and the intelligible, whose locus of manifestation is the intellective faculty (*al-quwwa al-ʿāqila*) when it reaches the degree of the actual intellect (*al-ʿaql bi-l-fiʿl*).]

From another different but related angle, Ṣadrā describes the self's movement from the moment its career begins as a fetus in the womb. Initially, the corporeal faculties that are attributed to the plants are generated at this level. However, it should be noted that he conceives of the self as having a form that potentially contains all the perfection of animals, humans and the intellects. So the human embryo, although it functions as a plant, is a potential animal. Next the human embryo attains the level of animal self with all their cognitive powers, e.g. the capacity to cognize as animals until it reaches maturity of the human form when it actualizes the powers of the rational self. At this level, the self is capable of perceiving the world around it through its reflective faculties. The self's becoming continues until it reaches spiritual maturity, while developing 'the practical intellect' which facilitates internal growth by the strengthening of good habits and moral qualities. According to Ṣadrā, it is at this point that the self realizes its identity as an actual human self, while still being a potential angel or demon. Then if the intellect is perfected through knowledge and the heart purified through disembodiment, the self attains proximity to the divine. Ṣadrā also makes it plain that these later developments occur only in a small numbers of individuals. In addition, he states that merely human effort is not sufficient to attain higher degrees of selfhood, since divine agency is required to materialize such effort.[456] Ṣadrā writes:

> So long as the Adamic self (*nafs ādamiyya*) remains in a fetus in the womb, its level is the level of the vegetal self (*al-nafs al-nabātiyya*) with all its dimensions. It realizes these levels after traversing the levels of the mineral faculties (*al-quwā al-jamādiyya*) in nature.

Speak?" in C. Nelson and L. Grossberg (eds.), *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press), 271–313; and Terry Eagleton, *The Ideology of the Aesthetic* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990), *passim*.

[455] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Asfār*, 9: 31-32. This is again an instance of the fusion of peripatetic philosophy and Sufism.

[456] He quotes here the Prophetic tradition "A single attraction from God outmaneuvers the combined effort of both humans and jinns," see Mullā Ṣadrā, *al-ʿArshiyya,* 33.

So the human embryo is an actual plant (*nabāt bi-l-fiᶜl*) while still being a potential, and not actual animal, because it can neither perceive nor move [like the actual animal]… When the baby emerges from the womb of its mother, its self attains the level of animal self until it reaches maturity of form (i.e. adulthood). Then the person is actually a human animal (*ḥaywān basharī bi-l-fiᶜl*), and potentially a human self. At this point, his self perceives things by reflection and deliberation, employing them for the development of the practical intellect (*al-aql al-ᶜamalī*). This process continues until the period of spiritual maturity (*al-bulūg al-maᶜnawī*) and internal growth by the strengthening of habits and inner ethics (*al-akhlāq al-bāṭina*). And most of the time this happens when one is around forty. At this level of [self-development], he becomes an actual human self, while still potentially an angelic or a satanic human being… His intellect is perfected by knowledge and his heart is purified by disembodiment (*tajarrud*) from matter (or things bodily), and he becomes one of the angels of God who possesses the higher rank and proximity to Him.[457]

However, Ṣadrā offers a thorough critique of the people who, as he claims, surmise that the human self is only composed of a natural form (*ṣūra ṭabīᶜiyya*) having three souls, namely vegetal, animal and human.[458] In his view, these people get it wrong when they observe in humans the traces of various natural principles, such as heat (*ḥarāra*) and cold (*burūda*), attraction (*jadhb*) and repulsion (*dafᶜ*), dissolution and ripening etc., or other traces related to plants, such as nutrition, growth and reproduction, or to animals, such as sensation, imagination, or traits such as rational perceptions and reflective movements that are specifically human, and assume that there is nothing beyond these psycho-somatic functions.[459] According to Ṣadrā, the human self is a sacred substance (*jawhar qudsī*) that has a close affinity with the divine kingdom. Moreover, it has one identity (*huwiyya wāḥida*) comprising several modes of being (*nashʾāt*) and stations, and its unity, which is comprehensive, reflects divine unity.[460] Ṣadrā also asserts that the human self descends from the highest degree of disembodiment (*min aᶜlā tajarrudihā*) as a 'sacred substance' to the degree of matter and the level of the senses (*al-ḥāss*) and the sensible (*maḥsūs*).[461]

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[457] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Asfār*, 8: 156-57. Cf. Rūmī, *Masnavī*:
"I died to the inorganic state and became endowed with growth, and (then) I died to (vegetable) growth and attained to the animal.
I died from animality and became Adam (man): why, then, should I fear? When have I become less by dying?
At the next remove I shall die to man, that I may soar and lift up my head amongst the angels;
And I must escape even from (the state of) the angel: everything is perishing except His Face.
Once more I shall be sacrificed and die to the angel: I shall become that which enters not into the imagination.
Then I shall become non-existence: non-existence saith to me, (in tones loud) as an organ: '*Verily, unto Him shall we return* (Q. 2:156).'" (III: 3901-6, trans. Nicholson).
[458] Ṣadrā further clarifies: "It is also inclusive of animal faculties at different levels, from the level of imagination to the level of tactical sensation (*al-iḥsās al-lamsī*), which is the last and the lowest degree of animality. It also possesses the vegetal faculties (*quwwa nabātiyya*) at different levels, the lowest of which is nutritive and the highest of which is reproductive. It also possesses the faculty of natural movement (*muḥarraka ṭabīᶜiyya*) subsisting by the body. He then explains that when Aristotle says, "The soul possesses three faculties: vegetal, animal and rational," he does not mean the soul is a composite of these faculties since it is simple in existence (*basīṭ al-wujūd*). Rather he refers to its substantiality (*jawhariyya*), existence and unity that encapsulate these various levels, see Mullā Ṣadrā, *Asfār*, 8: 154-55.
[459] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Asfār*, 8: 153-54.
[460] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Asfār*, 8: 154.
[461] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Asfār*, 8: 154-55.

The self (*al-nafs*)… has the existential levels (*darajāṭ wujūdiyya*) in the noble, vertical order from one rank to another. Its substantial perfection (*al-istikmāl al-jawharī*) is characterized by an [upward] motion (*ḥaraka*). Whenever it reaches a degree of perfection in its substance-hood (*jawhariyya*), it becomes more expansive and more complete in its ability to encompass all the previous degrees of [existence]. The most particular and complete species (*al-nawᶜ al-akhaṣṣ al-atamm*) existentially contains the imperfect species, e.g., the animal species and its nature is the perfection of the plant species and its nature, the plant is the perfection of the composite mineral nature (*al-ṭabīᶜa al-murakkab al-maᶜdanī*), and the nature of the minerals is the perfection of the nature of the body. In a similar manner, human nature, I mean her self (*nafsahu*) and essence, is the perfection of everything that precedes it, i.e. the animal, vegetal and elemental species (*al-ḥaywāniyya wa-l-nabātiyya wa-l-ᶜunṣuriyya*)… The human in reality encompasses all these species, and its form is the form of all of them.[462]

Although Ṣadrā talks about the self's becoming through 'substantial motion,' it should not leave us the impression that every step in the self's journey is naturally determined. This is because as Ṣadrā insists, even though the self is capable of passing through all the stages until it reaches its destination in God Himself, it acquires various habits, either noble or lowly, and opinions and beliefs (*iᶜtiqādāt*), either true or false during its earthly life. Consequently, the postmortem stage of the self is shaped by the actions it performs or the beliefs it harbors in this world.[463] That is to say, Ṣadrā does leave room for the socio-cultural milieu to either positively or negatively influence the self's becoming.[464] He quotes in this context the famous tradition of the Prophet, which states that every child is born in a state of *fiṭra* (one's primordial nature), after which their parents turn them into either a Jew, Christian, or a Zoroastrian etc., implying that as the child grows they are prone to acquire various beliefs, habits and other characteristics from their surroundings.[465] In his *Kasr al-aṣnām*, Ṣadrā explicitly mentions how people's nature may be shaped by common beliefs that are transmitted to them and how being in a particular socio-cultural context influences one's religious outlook.[466] Like many of us, Ṣadrā saw his society in light of the dominant socio-cultural groups of his day. In the abovementioned treatise, he himself provides a typology of the two main trends that he observes among his fellow countrymen. In *Kasr al-aṣnām*, Ṣadrā informs the reader that people of his era can be broadly categorized into either 'pseudo-spiritual aspirants' or 'miracle-seekers.' The pseudo-spiritual aspirants mostly

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[462] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Asfār,* 8: 263-64.

[463] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Asfār,* 9: 39. For a detailed exposition of Ṣadrā's views on how self-making activities shape the form of the self in the postmortem stage, see Henry Corbin, *Spiritual Body and Celestial Earth: from Mazdean Iran to Shī'ite Iran* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), 165-70.

[464] This is supported by Avicenna as well, who asserts that the self acquire good or bad qualities by force of habit: "Good conduct, like bad conduct, is acquired by habit or custom (*ᶜāda*). We must say that the acts through which one archives good conduct, once we are used to them, are those performed by persons who follow good moral norm; likewise if we grow used to acting like people who follow bad moral norm (*al-akhlāq al-qabīḥa*), the result will be bad. The same thing happens in arts: a person gains skill in carpentry, for instance, when he grows accustomed to the action of a skilled carpenter, but he will set a bad example of carpentry if he is used to what a bad carpenter does," Avicenna, *Fī ᶜilm al-akhlāq* 120, (trans. Vilchez, modified), cited in José Miguel Puerta Vilchez, *Aesthetics in Arabic thought: from Pre-Islamic Arabia through al-Andalus*, translated by Consuelo López-Morillas (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 609.

[465] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Kasr al-aṣnām,* 21-22.

[466] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Kasr al-aṣnām,* 26-27.

busy themselves with various ceremonial functions that are part of some Sufi orders. Thus they show themselves off by participating in ostentatious forty-day seclusion, paying allegiance to the Sufi master, wearing the Sufi cloak (the patched costume) and performing the ecstatic dance, while paying little attention to acquiring knowledge of God or the self or the transformative practices of the spiritual path such as the invocation (*dhikr*). Similarly, the other group, namely the miracle seekers is mesmerized by anything extraordinary, charismatic or exotic. They are deceived by people who claim to have supernatural powers, or by fortune tellers, soothsayers and charlatans who play tricks on them.[467]

However, it should be noted that such a generic assessment of the socio-cultural dimension of the self is informed by an *a priori* anthropology (i.e. what it means to be human) rooted in a metaphysical worldview that categorizes humans according to their primordial nature (*fiṭra*). That is to say, like most of his peers, Ṣadrā's socio-cultural outlook is shaped by soteriological concerns that envision both an origin and a *telos* for each given self. In his *Īqāẓ al-nāʾimīn*, Ṣadrā thus dwells on the attitude and rank of different people with respect to their understanding of and approach to truth and reality, since that is what concerns him the most. Ṣadrā writes:

> The first level refers to the people of unveiling (*aṣḥāb al-mukāshafa*); those who know the ultimate truth by diverting attention away from themselves and annihilating their [illusory] self… They witness His signs.
> The second level comprises the noblest of the philosophers (*afāḍīl al-ḥukamāʾ*). They perceive Him only through intellect… When they intellect forms, their imagination represent these forms in the best subtle manner in accordance with [actual] intelligible forms. However, they know that those [forms] are superior to the imaginal forms [that their imagination describes].
> The third level refers to common believers of faith (*ahl al-īmān*), who are incapable of [ascending] to a higher level. The most they can do is to construct imaginary forms [in their minds]…
> The fourth level consists of the people of submission (*ahl al-taslīm*) [i.e. those who imitate authority]. They do not even possess the capacity to conjecture, let alone imagination… They conceive of truth and the angelic reality in terms of material forms.
> The fifth level refers to those who are incapable of reflecting beyond the physical realm (*al-jismāniyyāt*).[468]

Nevertheless, Ṣadrā stresses time and again that the substance of the self does not remain static from the beginning of its existence as a child until it reaches the level of the actual intellect. He rejects the view which says that the self undergoes changes only with respect to its accidents such as color, height, size and shape. This is so because it implies that the self of the prophets is no different from that of other human beings including the dim-witted, and the children. In contrast, Ṣadrā affirms that the substance of the self of the Prophet (*jawhar nafs al-nabiyy*), in accordance with his identity (*huwiyya*), is the most perfect and noblest among the substances of the Adamic selves (*jawāhir al-nufūs al-ādamiyya*).[469] In his view, the self of the

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[467] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Kasr al-aṣnām,* 11-12.

[468] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ al-nāʾimīn*, 108-09.

[469] Ṣadrā asserts that prophetic selves differ greatly from ordinary selves in that the former's perfection is realized before they are sent to this world, hence their experience of things is qualitatively different from that of other human beings, see Mullā Ṣadrā, *Mafātīḥ*, 2: 938.

Prophet is most intense in perfection, most illuminated, and most powerful in substantiality and essence.[470]

Ṣadrā makes it plain that the self of each person has an inner reality, which acquires perfection by gaining the likenesses of the intellects (*ʿuqūl*) and God. In Ṣadrā's ontology *wujūd* or being is a gradational reality (*al-ḥaqīqa al-mushakkaka*) that self-determines itself due to its unconditioned nature, and consequently becomes conditioned into various "forms and existents" that after mental analysis are identified as quiddities.[471] He maintains that *wujūd* has three distinct levels, namely physical (*jismānī*), imaginal (*mithālī*) and intellectual (*ʿaqlānī*). Furthermore, all beings are located in these three distinct modes of existence (*wujūd*).[472] However, when he discusses the perfect human (*al-insān al-kāmil*), he mentions a fourth mode of existence—the divine imperium. This is to bring home the point that the perfect human is the reflection of the greatest name of God, 'Allah,' which encompasses all other innumerable divine names and embraces existence at all levels.[473] Even though Ṣadrā talks about the self as having many levels and dimensions, which allows him to discuss it from multiple standpoints, he avers that its true nature is reflected in the 'I' of the perfect human in which all the perfections of the divine attributes are realized.[474] In so doing he decisively parts company with Avicenna and like-minded peripatetic philosophers. Ṣadrā does grant that philosophers do not limit the power of the human self to the rational soul,[475] as they admit the existence of the 'intellective soul' and its ability unite with the intelligible world (*ʿālam al-ʿaql*), but he takes them to task for not being able to go further.[476] He levels scathing remarks at Avicenna and his followers concerning their understanding of the ultimate goal of the self's journey. Ṣadrā claims that the views of his peripatetic predecessors regarding the self's return (*al-maʿād*) and its eschatological states are very shallow.[477] He further opines that most of the philosophers including Avicenna have failed to master the science of the self due to their neglect of the self's perfection and imperfection, and origin and end.[478] Ṣadrā writes:

> This is the utmost limit at which the Islamic philosophers can arrive (*fa-hādhihi ghāyat min waṣalat ilayhi afkār al-falāsifa al-islāmiyyīn*), I mean the author of *al-Shifāʾ* (Avicenna), al-Fārābī and those of their colleagues who follow them in this matter. This clearly falls short of true verification.[479]

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[470] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Asfār*, 8: 291.

[471] See for instance, Mullā Ṣadrā, *Asfār*, 2: 330-40.

[472] E.g. Mullā Ṣadrā, *al-Mabdaʾ wa-l-maʿād,* 1: 200, 2: 446.

[473] Ṣadrā does not usually devote a discussion to mystical concepts such as 'the perfect man' in his 'philosophical' corpus, although his *Asfār* contains many references to them (see, for example, Mullā Ṣadrā, *Asfār*, 2:350ff.). But, in his more mystical writings, he treats them at great length. See for instance his, *al-Mazāhir al-ilāhiyya,* 41-51, 72-106; see also Ibrahim Kalin, *Mullā Ṣadrā, passim*, and Mohammed Rustom, *The Triumph of Mercy: Philosophy*, chs. 3-7.

[474] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Mafātīḥ*, 2:853-54; cf. *Asfār*, 8: 367ff.

[475] This is in the sense that the perceiver of all the perceptions related to the human faculties is the rational soul. It is also the mover of all the movements issuing from the animal, plant and natural faculties of human, see Mullā Ṣadrā, *Asfār*, 8: 261.

[476] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Asfār*, 8: 155.

[477] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Asfār*, 9: 204.

[478] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Asfār*, 8: 155.

[479] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Asfār*, 9: 207.

The above remark makes good sense when we conceive of the self as a 'continuous spectrum' that contains all the modes of existence within itself and compare it with the reality of the perfect human. Ṣadrā avers that the perfect human has four lives in this world, namely vegetal, animal, rational and sacred. In his view, the first two of these pertain to this world, while the remaining two concern the next life. He further maintains that only the sacred life mentioned above is worth calling the human life, which is the life of the divine spirit.[480] In a series of quotes below, Ṣadrā unpacks the identity of the perfect human, which for him, represents the highest level of selfhood, since it contains all the perfections of God. Ṣadrā says:

> Know that "Allah" is the name of the Divine Self (*al-dhāt al-ilāhiyya*) which, through its comprehensiveness (*jāmiᶜiyyatihi*), encompasses all the perfections of the attributes, and the perfect human (*al-insān al-kāmil*) is the form of this name.[481] The greatest name of God (*ism aᶜẓam*) encapsulates all other divine names in an undifferentiated manner (*al-ijmāl*).[482] He is the spirit of the universe, and the locus of manifestation of the name Allah. He is also His vicegerent.[483]

The following figure presents the relation between the perfect human and all other selves by means of, what I call, 'the circle of self:'

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[480] Mullā Ṣadrā, *al-Maẓāhir*, 105.
[481] Mullā Ṣadrā, *al-Maẓāhir*, 40.
[482] Mullā Ṣadrā, *al-Maẓāhir*, 41.
[483] Mullā Ṣadrā, *al-Maẓāhir*, 72.
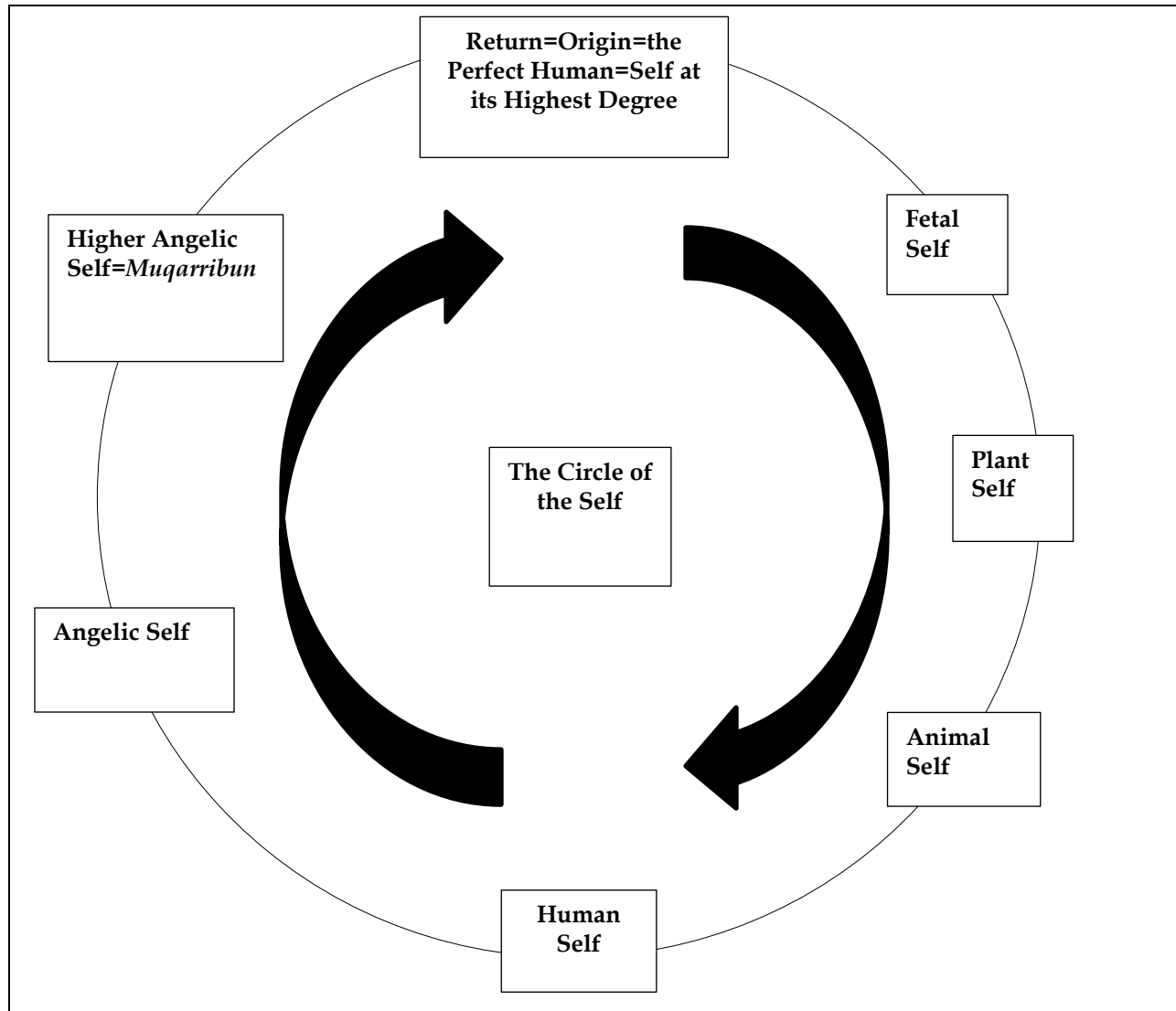
Figure: 2.2 The Circle of the Self in Ṣadrian Philosophy

Ṣadrā also explains the reality of the perfect human through al-Basṭāmī's saying, "everything is in everything (*inna l-kull fi-l-kull*),"[484] that suggests that everything in the cosmos manifests divine attributes and effects in different degrees of hiddenness and transparency. That is, the reality of the perfect human, which should not be thought of in terms of any individual self, permeates all of existence as it is the spirit of the universe and manifestation of the greatest name of God, Allah. Ṣadrā further quotes al-Basṭāmī's saying, "If the divine Throne and all that it contains were put a million times in the corner of the knower's heart, they would not fill it…" to link it with what he claims the Greeks say about the highest level of selfhood, which is that "The self is a sacred substance (*al-jawhar al-qudsī*) similar to a circle that has no dimension (*dāʾirat lā buʿd lahā*) and whose center is the intellect."[485] All of these sayings are in line with what Ṣadrā has said earlier concerning the self's ultimate perfection, namely that "it reaches a

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[484] Mullā Ṣadrā, *al-Maẓāhir*, 41. For the phrase "everything is in everything" in Anaxagoras, see Anna Marmodoro, *Everything in Everything: Anaxagoras's Metaphysics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).
[485] Mullā Ṣadrā, *al-Maẓāhir*, 52.

point when everything that exists becomes a part of it, and its powers permeate the entirety of existence. Then it realizes the goal of existence."[486] In addition, like his Sufi predecessors he also holds that the purpose of creating everything else in the cosmos including mineral, vegetal, and animal kingdoms is the perfect human, who is the *telos* of the existence of all other beings. To show that everything that exists in the cosmos is created for the sake of human, Ṣadrā quotes the verses in which the Qur'an says: "And He it is Who hath constrained the sea to be of service that ye eat fresh meat from thence, and bring forth from thence ornaments which ye wear. And thou seest the ships ploughing it that ye (mankind) may seek of His bounty, and that haply ye may give thanks (16:14). And "Allah is He Who created the heavens and the earth, and causeth water to descend from the sky, thereby producing fruits as food for you, and maketh the ships to be of service unto you, that they may run upon the sea at His command, and hath made of service unto you the rivers (14:32)."[487] Although the reality of the perfect human is potentially existent in every human being, it is only through the prophets and the great saints that it reaches its actuality. Ṣadrā quotes the sacred tradition (*ḥadīth qudsī*) in this connection, in which God says to the Prophet, "Were it not for you I would not have created the heavenly spheres," which affirms the perfect human's role as the *telos* of the universe."[488] Quoting the first Shīʿite Imam, i.e. ʿAlī b. Abū Ṭalib this time, Ṣadrā writes:

> The perfect human (*al-insān al-kāmil*) is called the great world (*al-ʿālam al-kabīr*) which is a comprehensive book that contains all other books, as the divine knower, the sage of the Arabs and non-Arabs says:
>
> > Your remedy is within you yet you perceive it not,
> > Your disease stems from you yet see you not,
> > You are the manifest book (*al-kitāb al-mubīn*)
> > Whose verses manifest the hidden content (*al-muḍmar*).
> > You think you are a small body,
> > While enfolded within you is the great world.[489]

In Ṣadrā's philosophy, the reality of the perfect human can only be realized when the ordinary self is delivered from its veil, or the bondage of its illusory existence.[490] However, this can only happen when the empirical self is transcended in the mystical experience of annihilation (*fanāʾ*) by a higher mode of consciousness. And this whole process requires embracing a philosophico-spiritual life that would facilitate such an end, and this involves several key steps. First of all, the would-be philosopher should comprehend the metaphysical doctrines theoretically, which involves self-knowledge, and knowledge of Absolute Being (*al-wujūd al-muṭlaq*) and the modes of Its self-manifestation (*ẓuhūr*).[491] Then she should concentrate on spiritual exercises that include, *inter alia*, detachment from the world and things bodily by way of disembodiment, retreats (*khalwāt*) and invocatory practices (*adhkār*). Moreover, she should

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[486] See ch. 1, 7.
[487] Mullā Ṣadrā, *al-Maẓāhir*, 74.
[488] Mullā Ṣadrā, *al-Maẓāhir*, 72.
[489] Mullā Ṣadrā, *al-Maẓāhir*, 51-52. Cf. Quṭb al-Dīn Muḥammad Bayhaqī, *Dīwān Imām ʿAlī*, ed. Abū al-Qāsim Imāmī, 236.
[490] Mullā Ṣadrā, *al-Maẓāhir,* 13.
[491] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Asfār*, 2: 331ff.

attain intrinsic, spiritual virtues such as generosity, reliance (*tawakkul*) on God, truthfulness, charity, patience, humility etc. that will purify the lower self and purge it of vile qualities, and will prepare it for the reception of divine grace and illumination.[492] As the philosopher-seeker progresses on the path and continues to focus on spiritual exercises, she reaches a point where her 'ego-consciousness/I-ness' is completely transcended, and she comes to know the reality of her *true* self is 'identical' with the Divine Self, i.e., the mirror-image of the perfect human. Ṣadrā expresses this doctrine as the 'identity of the invoker, invocation and invoked,' which constitutes a single reality.[493] It is worth emphasizing that such a culminating moment occurs through the practice of invocation (*dhikr*),[494] which Ṣadrā expounds at great length in his *tafsīr* of *Sūrat al-jumuᶜa*, among other places.[495] The well-known Sufi practice of invocation is the meditative repetition of a certain sacred formula (much like the Jesus prayer in Orthodox Christianity or the Japa yoga in Hinduism), usually one of the divine names of God or the great name Allah itself, that results in focused attention toward one's inner states.[496] Ṣadrā argues that *dhikr* or invocation of the divine is the best of all spiritual acts because its real agent is God Himself.[497] According to Ṣadrā, the aspirant's *dhikr* is the result of God's *dhikr* of him/her, which is to say that the *dhikr*, as a cosmogonic act, originates in God. Ṣadrā makes an explicit the connection between self-knowledge and the *dhikr* in the following passage:

> Since forgetfulness of God is the cause of forgetfulness of self, remembering the self will necessitate God's remembering the self, and God's remembering the self will itself necessitate the self's remembering itself: Remember Me and I will remember you (Q. 2:152). God's remembering the self is identical with the self's existence (*wujūd*), since God's knowledge is presential (*ḥuḍūrī*) with all things. Thus, he who does not have knowledge of the self, his self does not have existence, since the self's existence is identical with light (*nūr*), presence (*ḥuḍūr*), and consciousness (*shuᶜūr*).[498]

Ṣadrā then goes on to describe the modes and dimensions of the *dhikr*, which comprises six ascending degrees:[499]

    i. Invocation of the tongue (*dhikr al-lisān*)
    ii. Invocation of foundation (*dhikr al-arkān*)
    iii. Invocation of the self (*dhikr al-nafs*)
    iv. Invocation of the heart (*dhikr al-qalb*)
    v. Invocation of the spirit (*dhikr al-rūḥ*)
    vi. Invocation of the arcana (*dhikr al-sirr*)

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[492] See the previous section.

[493] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Tafsīr sūrat al-jumuᶜa*, edited by Muḥammad Khwājawī (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Mūlā, 2010), 290.

[494] On Dhikr and its importance in Sufism, see al-Ghazālī, *Invocations & Supplications: Book IX of The Revival of the Religious Sciences, Iḥyā' ʿulūm al-dīn = Kitāb al-adhkār wa'l-daʿawāt*, trans. by K. Nakamura (Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society, 2010).

[495] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Tafsīr Sūrat al-jumuᶜa*, 287-92.

[496] See Ibn ᶜAṭā' Allāh al-Iskandarī, *The Key to Salvation: A Sufi Manual of Invocation*, translated by Mary Danner (Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society, 1996), *passim*.

[497] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Tafsīr surāt al-jumuᶜa*, 289.

[498] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Sih Aṣl*, 14. Cited in Rustom, "Philosophical Sufism," 407.

[499] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Tafsīr surāṭ al-jumuᶜa*, 288-89.

The point of the above schema is that the practice of invocation can be deepened gradually that helps one to unravel corresponding higher modes of consciousness within the self. Ṣadrā says that at the highest level of this practice (which probably takes years) the invoked (*madhkūr*) or the name of God sinks deep into the heart of the invoker and actualizes its inner illumination in such a way that the invocation becomes a subtle state in the heart of the invoker (*dhākir*). In that state, Ṣadrā continues, the invoker becomes so absorbed in her state of invocation that she loses awareness of both the invocation and the invoked, implying that she is totally absorbed by the one who is invoked (*al-madhkūr*). That is to say, the intensity of the invocation makes the invoker forget herself in a way that she becomes absent from herself (*yaghību ʿan nafsihi*). She can no longer perceive her bodily organs or internal accidents (*al-ʿawāriḍ al-bāṭina*) due to her one-pointed focus on the act of the invocation.[500] In Ṣadrā view, as one continues the practice of the invocation, one reaches a point, depending on one's effort, wherein the distinction between the invoker, the invocation and the invoked melts, as they all become one and the same (*yaṣīru al-dhikr wa-l-dhākir wa-l-madhkūr shayʾan wāḥidan*). Ṣadrā makes use of the analogy of "wine in a transparent goblet (*al-zujāz*) which is indistinguishable from it" to describe the experience of such a unitive state. That is, at the highest degree of the *dhikr*, the identity of the invoker and the invoked (i.e. the Divine Self) becomes one and the same.[501] Yet, Ṣadrā seems to go one step further and asserts that the most perfect state is one in which one is annihilated from one's self (*yafnā ʿan nafsihi*) and in turn, annihilated again from annihilation itself (*yafnā ʿan l-fanāʾ ayḍan*). Thus according to Ṣadrā, annihilation from annihilation is the *telos* of annihilation (*al-fanāʾ ʿan l-fanāʾ ghāyat al-fanāʾ*).[502] In Ṣadrā's view, the highest degree of selfhood requires one to somehow disappear from one's ordinary mode consciousness in which things appear distinct from one another without an underlying consciousness holding them in one piece. However, the perfect human, whose presence pervades all of existence, encompasses everything in the cosmos as he/she is the face of God turned toward His manifestation. Therefore, in order to realize one's true 'I,' which is the 'I' of the perfect human (which in turn is the Divine 'I'), one has to annihilate one's empirical 'I' or transcend it so that the divine within can be liberated. Ṣadrā writes:

> Those who have annihilated the selfhood of their existence (*anāniyyat wujūdihim*) in the sway of His glory, have reached the bottom of the sea of reality and have known God through God (*ʿarafū Allāh bi-Allāhi*), and have affirmed His unity and sanctity, they begin to *hear, see, speak and grasp by Him*.[503]

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[500] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Tafsīr surāṭ al-jumuʿa*, 289.

[501] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Tafsīr surāṭ al-jumuʿa*, 289.

[502] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Tafsīr surāṭ al-jumuʿa*, 290. Anticipating criticism from the circle of the religious scholars, Ṣadrā is quick to add that the exoteric jurists (*al-faqīh al-rasmī*) might think all of this is pure nonsense (*ghayr maʿqūla*). He taunts them by noting that they don't understand any of these lofty teachings because they occupy themselves with the pursuit of name, fame, or wealth, or seeking nearness to kings, see Mullā Ṣadrā, *Tafsīr surāṭ al-jumuʿa*, 290-91.

[503] Mullā Ṣadrā, *al-Maẓāhir*, 74. For the *ḥadīth nawāfil* "hear, see, speak and grasp by Him" whose full version is the following—When I love him, I am his hearing through which he hears, his eyesight through which he sees, his hand through which he holds, and his foot through which he walks—see *Bukhārī*, *Riqāq*, 38; For Ibn ʿArabī's commentary on this famous *ḥadīth*, see Chittick, *Sufi Path of Knowledge*, 325-31. For a general discussion of the nature of *ḥadīth qudsī*, see William Graham's classic, *Divine Word and Prophetic word in Early Islam: A Reconsideration of the Sources, with Special Reference to the Divine Saying or Hadīth Qudsī* (Hague: Mouton, 1977), 51ff. Ṣadrā quotes Ṭūsī at length in his *Sharḥ al-hidāya* (based on the latter's commentary on Avicenna's Part IX of the *Ishārāṭ*) to explain that when the self is able to adorn itself with all the divine attributes, it attains the station (*maqam*) of the *ḥadīth nawāfil* and consequently realizes the 'divine I' that lies at the center of its being. That

Ṣadrā's saying "they have known God through God" brings out the crucial point of 'identity' that exists between any individual self and the Divine Self. This is because in the ordinary epistemic state, the self knows God as an 'object' or as an 'Other,' whereas in the unitive state of annihilation, there is no longer a 'self' qua individual that knows God. In other words, the subject-object dichotomy that characterizes much of ordinary life is sublated by a transcendent consciousness in which the knower and the known becomes one and the same. For this reason, there is a marked difference between affirming 'knower *of* God' and 'knower *through* God.' Ṣadrā further clarifies this important point:

> The furthest end of knowledge which is known through demonstration (*bi-l-burhān*) is that knowledge Him is not possible except by means of [God's] own Self and not through anything else (*lā-li-shayʾ ghayr nafsihi*)… So as long as the identity of the servant remains (*mā dāmat huwiyyat al-ʿabd bāqiyya*), he is veiled by his own self and its inner reality (*fī ḥijāb inniyyatihi wa-dhātihi*), and it would not be possible for him to arrive at the highest station of union (*wuṣūl*) and disembody himself, just as [Ḥallāj said], "What interferes between You and me is my own 'inner reality or I-ness,' With your generosity and munificence lift up my 'I-ness' from in between."… Since the self becomes annihilated from itself (*faniya ʿan dhātihi*), it is able to know the Real.[504]

Ṣadrā asserts that as long as the 'identity' of the servant or the spiritual seeker remains, she is veiled by her own self, i.e., by her empirical self.[505] This means, as Ṣadrā maintains, the ordinary identity of the self which acts as an obstacle or illusion must give way to the immanent Divine Self, if it is to arrive at the highest station of selfhood. Also, Ṣadrā's quoting of Ḥallāj is symbolic in this context, since the latter is famous for his "I am God" (*ana l-Ḥaqq*). That is to say, Ṣadrā wholeheartedly endorses what Ḥallāj says above, which is that as long as any traces of 'individuality' remains, the self cannot realize its identity with the Divine Self. This is so

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is to say, the self attains *fanāʾ* of itself. Ṣadrā also states that those who fail to realize higher stations of selfhood end up identifying themselves with their body, see Mullā Ṣadrā, *Sharḥ al-hidāya,* 1: 423-27.

[504] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Sharḥ Uṣūl al-kāfī,* edited by Fāḍil Yazdī Muṭlaq (Tehran: Bunyād-i ḥikmat-i Islāmi-yi Ṣadrā, 2006), 3:105-06; cf. Mullā Ṣadrā, *Asfār,* 1:136. For the Ḥallāj quote, see Manṣūr al-Ḥallāj, *Akhbār al-Ḥallāj,* edited by Saʿīd ʿAbd al-Fattāḥ (Cairo: al-Maktaba al-Azharīya li-l-Turāth, 2000), 76.

[505] The self's veil or what I call the empirical self (as opposed to the true self) is a frequent *topos* that one encounters in Sufism as early as in the ten century in the work of Muḥammad al-Niffarī (i.e. *al-Mawāqif*) (d. 354/965), Abu Ibrahim Bukhari Mustamli (d. 433-34/1042–43), al-Hujwīrī (d. 469/1077), al-Ghazālī, Maybudī (fl. 12 cent.), Ibn ʿArabī, Rūmī, Ḥāfiz and many others. Niffarī, for instance, maintains that the greatest veil of the self is nothing but itself because it is through the self, or more properly, the empirical dimension of the self, that one sees the world or reflects upon oneself, thereby bringing in all the other veils into existence. That is, the senses (both external and internal), fleeting images of the mind, memories and the intellect—all that is part of the empirical self—veil the true nature of the self, which is identical with God. So Niffarī says that when we speak of the vision of God, we are discussing either God's vision of Himself, or the other's vision of God. However, as long as the "other," i.e., the self is part of the discussion, the vision cannot be identical in every respect with God's vision of Himself, meaning there will be a veil between God and the self. The only way one can overcome this gulf between God and the self would be to transcend one's limited human nature or the ego in the experience of 'annihilation' or, as Ṣadrā says, "annihilation from the self itself." For more information, see *The Mawāqif and Mukhāṭabat of Muḥammad b. ʿAbdī al-Jabbār al-Niffarī,* edited by A. J. Arberry (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1935), 14:14, 18; and William Chittick, *Sufism: a Beginner's Guide* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2001), 189-95; *The Self-Disclosure of God: Principles of Ibn al-ʿArabī's Cosmology* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998), 109; *The Sufi Path of Knowledge*, 176-79.

because individuality presupposes ontological duality between the subject and the object. Another way to express this would be to say that so long as there is 'I' (as the subject of the empirical self) there must be 'thou' as the other to give meaning to our experience. Ṣadrā continues:[506]

> Whoever from the great friends of God comes to know the Divine Self, can only do so by means of the Essence/Self Itself (*lam yaᶜrifuhu illā bi-dhātihi*), and not through anything else.[507]

That is, the individual as such cannot realize the Divine Self (the infinite nature of God) because knowing God qua the empirical self implies duality that must be transcended at this level. That is why Ṣadrā reiterates that the self must annihilate itself from itself because its greatest veil is none other than itself, i.e., the ordinary mode of consciousness. At the highest level, the self must disentangle itself from all states of matter so that it can realize its identity with the Divine Self. However, this is only possible if there is something within the individual that already transcends the empirical self, so that in the state of annihilation, that which realizes its identity with the divine has already been divine from the start, although it was veiled by the lower, empirical self. For this reason, Ṣadrā acquiesces with the Sufis that when spiritual poverty (*faqr*) is complete, one is God, meaning at the end of the self's journey that which realizes its identity with God is God Himself. Ṣadrā says:

> Until and unless the wayfarer is not completely annihilated from himself (*lam yafna al-sālik ᶜan nafsihi bi-l-kulliyya*), he is veiled by his own self (*ḥijāb nafsihi*)… when spiritual poverty (*faqr*) is complete, one is God (*idhā tamma al-faqr fa-huwa Allāh*).[508]

That is, the individual as such cannot know the Divine Self because the finite self cannot embrace the infinite Self. So Ṣadrā carefully avoids pantheism or panentheism because he preserves the gulf between God and the world through his doctrine of 'gradation' (*tashkīk*).[509]

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[506] Ṣadrā expresses this non-duality through the voice of Pythagoras: "O my beloved, if it is possible for you to elevate to the higher levels of your being, you will see a number of identities different from each other in existence. All of them together are your complete identity; nothing from you lacks in them, and each one of them is alluded to as "I." This is also said in a famous proverb, "You are I, so who am I?," see Mullā Ṣadrā, *Asfār*, 8:422-23.

[507] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Sharḥ Uṣūl al-kāfī*, 3: 361.

[508] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Sharḥ Uṣūl al-kāfī*, 3: 301-02. He then quotes the Ḥallāj poem cited earlier: "What interferes between You and me is my own 'inner reality or I-ness,' With your generosity and munificence lift up my 'I-ness' from in between." Cf. Baqlī, *Sharḥ-i Shaṭhiyyāt*, 421. For the saying "When spiritual poverty is complete, one is God," see ᶜAyn al-Quḍāt al-Hamdānī, *Tamhīdāt*, edited by ᶜAfīf ᶜAsīrān (Tehran: Dānishgāh-i Tihrān, 1962), 20.

[509] The origin of *tashkīk* in Arabic and Islamic philosophy lies in *manṭiq* (logic), where two types of concepts can be discerned: concepts which either correspond to their external instances (*maṣādiq*) by way of univocity (*tawāṭuʾ*), or by way of gradation. An example of the former is the concept of man (*insān*) while that of the latter are light (*nūr*), time, number etc. For an overview of the treatment of *tashkīk* in Avicenna and his Greek and Islamic predecessors, see the excellent study by Alexander Treiger, "*Avicenna's Notion of Transcendental Modulation of Existence (taškīk al-wuǧūd, analogia entis) and Its Greek and Arabic Sources*," in F. Opwis and D.C. Reisman (eds.), *Islamic Philosophy, Science, Culture, and Religion: Studies in Honor of Dimitri Gutas* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 327-363, at 353-61. However, it should be noted that this study does not discuss *tashkīk* in relation to the ontological status of natural universals. Before analyzing the principle of *tashkīk*, it is necessary to specify its criterion of which at least three are relevant in the present context. They are as follows: *tashkīk ᶜāmm* (general), *khāṣṣ* (specific) and *akhaṣṣ* (most specific). The 'criterion' of gradation that pertains to *wujūd* is the 'general criterion' (*tashkīk ᶜāmm*) that states that that by which a thing differs (*mā bi-hi l-ikhtilāf*) is exactly the same as that by which that very thing shares in

For Ṣadrā, the happiness of the self (*saʿādat al-nafs*) and its perfection lies in being the independent, disembodied existence (*al-wujūd al-istiqlālī al-mujarrad*), in knowing the realities of things as they are (*haqāʾiq al-ashyāʾ ʿalā mā hiya ʿalayhā*), and witnessing luminous essences. He claims that the pleasure derived from such activities cannot be compared with what the senses (*al-ḥiss*) perceive from the objects of sensual pleasure. According to him, the reason why most people are unaware of the intellectual pleasure is that they are preoccupied with the pleasures of the body.[510]
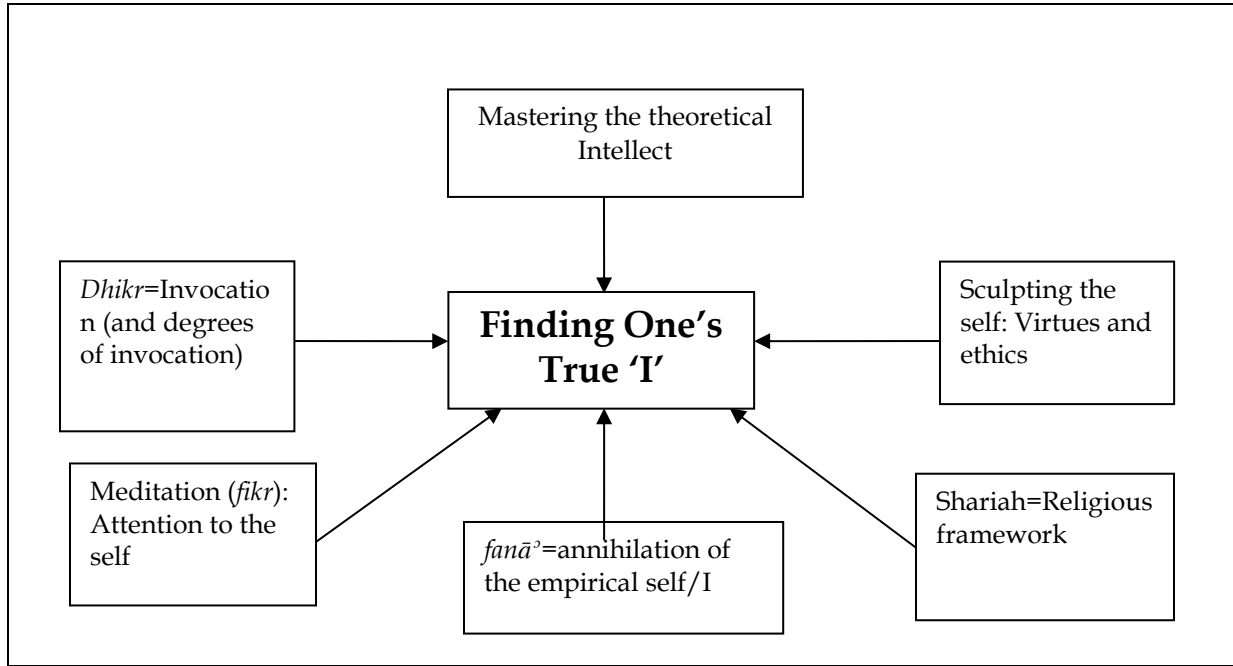
Figure 2.3   Finding One's True 'I' in Ṣadrian Philosophy

All things considered, the odyssey of Mullā Ṣadrā's self begins as a physical entity which is embedded in the natural world, but since it is capable of 'substantial motion' it traverses the stages of the plant soul, animal soul and human soul at which point it acquires various cognitive powers such as sensation, imagination and reflection. That is, the human self takes on various forms in the various stages of its own life, moving from the embryonic (fetal), to the vegetal, to

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common (*mā bi-hi l-ishtarāk*). Indeed, that by which contingent beings differ from the Necessary Being is nothing other than *wujūd*, while that which is common between them is also *wujūd*. But between the *wājib* and the *mumkin* lies an insurmountable gulf since there is gradation in *wujūd*. Based on the preceding analysis, it appears that Avicenna's conception of gradation does not flesh out all the different ramifications of *tashkīk*. For a detailed analysis of *tashkīk in* Ṣadrā, see ʿAbd al-Rasūl ʿUbūdiyyat, *Niẓām-i Ṣadrā-yī: Tashkīk dar wujūd* (Qom: Intishārāt-i Muʾassasa-yi Āmūzishī wa-Pazūhishī-yi Imām Khumaynī, 2010), 17-32, 55-97, 191-257. This study is particularly useful in explaining the problematic of gradation in Ṣadrā, and its historical roots in Avicenna. A typical demonstration of *tashkīk* in Ṣadrā would take the following syllogistic form: 1) existence is primary 2) existence is synonymous (*al-mushtarak al-maʿnawī*) in all existents 3) multiplicity in existence is real 4) existence is simple (*basīṭ*). Therefore, existence must be a gradational reality (*amr mushakkik*) embracing unity in multiplicity and multiplicity in unity. For more proofs of *tashkīk* and how Ṣadrā's exposition of it differs from that of Avicenna, see ʿAbd al-Rasūl ʿUbūdiyyat, *Dar āmadī baniẓām-i Ṣadrā-yī* (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Samt, 2014), 1:137-60. For an excellent analysis of *tashkīk* in English, see Sajjad Rizvi, *Mullā Ṣadrā and Metaphysics: Modulation of Being* (London: Routledge, 2009), 57ff.

[510] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Asfār*, 9: 173.

the animal, to the human, and finally to the stage of the spiritually subsistent.[511] In all these stages, the unity of the changing form is preserved through the underlying 'matter' or stuff of the soul, which remains unchanged in the process. Also, as we have seen, the human self is capable of self-knowledge through self-awareness which is present to itself by its self-giveness. That is to say, self-presence is an intrinsic, undeniable feature of the self. However, since the self is also a sacred substance (*jawhar qudsī*), its becoming is not limited to the cognitive development only. Thus Ṣadrā mentions higher stages of the self that can be developed through one's intelligence and 'spiritual exercises' that may bring about a transformation of the self. If the self remains grounded in a religious framework and adopts a philosophical life, its upward journey continues even through the postmortem stage. The self finally discovers its true identity by attaining the highest degree of selfhood which corresponds to the level of the perfect human. The self at the level of the perfect human also realizes its identity with 'the Divine I' that lies at the center of every individual self, in principle if not in fact. However, as long as one is veiled by one's empirical self, one can never unveil 'the Divine Self' that is essentially one's true nature. So to uncover one's true nature one has to transcend the empirical self that hides it, which is the meaning of Ṣadrā's phrase 'annihilation of the self from itself.' This does not mean the self is literally annihilated; rather in the mystical experience of annihilation (*fanāʾ*) the self comes to know, through a unitive state of cognition in which the subject and the object of knowledge is identical, that its 'I' is none other 'the Divine I.' However, contrary to this successful paradigm, the self, according to Ṣadrā, may also fail in its attempt to gain true self-knowledge due to various socio-cultural conditionings and common beliefs that have no basis in philosophical demonstration. That is to say, whether or not the self will be able to deliver itself, would depend very much on its own self-making acts that it chooses through freewill.

Summary

This chapter has analyzed Ṣadrā's conception of the self. For Ṣadrā, the human self has intrinsic self-knowledge, which he demonstrates through the phenomenon of self-awareness which is an undeniable feature of the self. Moreover, Ṣadrā argues that self-knowledge and levels of consciousness point to the self's immateriality because such features cannot be of the nature of the body, which, by definition, has extension. Furthermore, for Ṣadrā, selfhood is a multidimensional reality comprising three fundamental levels, namely bio-physiological, socio-cultural, and ethico-metaphysical. He claims that in order to realize the self's higher dimensions one has to attain complete immateriality both epistemologically and ethically by systematically pursuing a philosophico-spiritual life that entails, among other things, detachment from the world, acquiring virtues, meditative and invocatory practices such as invocation (*dhikr*). Thus for

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[511] Cf. Rūmī, *Masnavī*: "First he came into the clime (world) of inorganic things, and from the state of inorganic things he passed into the vegetable state.

(Many) years he lived in the vegetable state and did not remember the inorganic state because of the opposition (between them);

And when he passed from the vegetable into the animal state, the vegetable state was not remembered by him at all… (IV: 3637ff., trans., Nicholson).

For the implications of substantial motion in terms of the self's final destiny, see, William Chittick, *In Search of the Lost Heart: Explorations in Islamic Thought*, eds. Mohammed Rustom, Atif Khalil, and Kazuyo Murata (Albany: SUNY, 2012), 227–31; Eiyad Al-Kutubi, *Mullā Ṣadrā and Eschatology*, 104-125; and Mohammed Rustom, "Psychology, Eschatology, and Imagination in Mullā Ṣadrā Shīrāzī's Commentary on the *Ḥadīth* of Awakening," *Islam & Science* 5.1 (2007): 9–22.

Ṣadrā, talk of the 'self's immateriality' or 'self-knowledge' is already an ethical movement away from the sensible world to the inner space of the self. Although it begins its life as a physical entity, the self at the end of its journey discovers its true identity by attaining the highest degree of selfhood, which corresponds to the level of the perfect human—the supra-individual reality that manifests the Divine 'I' at the center of every self. In so doing, the self completes its circle of existence.

Chapter Three: Shāh Walī Allāh: The Subjectivity of the Subtle Body

Introduction

In the previous chapter, I examined Mullā Ṣadrā's theory of the self, showing that for Ṣadrā, the human self has intrinsic self-knowledge, which is demonstrated through the phenomenon of self-awareness. In the present chapter I aim to probe Shāh Walī Allāh's account of selfhood through first-person subjectivity (i.e. phenomenal experiences involving the first-person pronoun 'I'), spiritual emotions (*wajd*) and the subtle fields of consciousness known as the *laṭāʾif*. I begin with a brief survey of the history of Islamic philosophy in India in order to trace the link from Mullā Ṣadrā to Walī Allāh. After providing sufficient context for Walī Allāh's thought, I delve into his theory of selfhood by analyzing and clarifying the 'lead terms' for self in his oeuvre. In the next section, I tackle the issue of the self's knowledge of itsef in terms of first-person subjectivity. My analysis reveals that Walī Allāh appropriates the Suhrawardian distinction of representational and presential knowledge (*īlm al-ḥuṣūlī wa-ḥuḍūrī*) in order to demonstrate self-knowledge. Next, I examine Walī Allāh's epistemological arguments for perceiving incorporeal entities, namely the *laṭāʾif* that constitute the bio-physiological dimension of the self through *pneuma* (*nasama*) or a subtle breath-like entity. A large part of Walī Allāh's writings is devoted to explicating the nature of the self through the *laṭāʾif* and one's spiritual journey within them. That is to say, the *laṭāʾif* must be deciphered and discovered through spiritual exercises, since they reveal the true nature of the self. In the last part of the chapter, I analyze and unravel the nature of ultimate selfhood and method of its realization. Moreover, I deal with issues pertaining to the transcendent states of the self such as whether the individual self is dissolved and become God in such states or some form of individuality is still retained. In the main, Walī Allāh constructs a highly original concept of the self that shows threads of influences from Stoicism, Islamic Neoplatonism, Graeco-Islamic medical tradition and Sufism, all of which are traced in this chapter.

Between Persia and India: From Mullā Ṣadrā to Walī Allāh

Research on the nature and development of Islamic philosophy in India is still in its early days, even though bio-bibliographical literature lists hundreds of names with thousands of texts, most of which consist of commentaries and glosses that are still in manuscript form.[512] Therefore, recent scholarship is right to suggest that "at this stage of research… the tradition be gauged in a preliminary fashion from three related angles: socio-intellectual networks of relevant scholars; a

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[512] Recent scholarship has seen a boom in post-Avicennan studies after Ernest Renan's (d. 1892) infamous thesis that philosophy in the Islamic lands disappeared after Averroes. However, it is noteworthy that just as Renan's study asserts a false myth concerning the fate of philosophy in the Islamic world after the classical period (ca. 800-1200), some contemporary scholars tend to give the impression that after Averroes (or gradually after al-Ghazālī's famous attack on *falsafa*) Islamic philosophy had *only* continued in Persia. This seems like the beginning of another 'myth' that is flatly contradicted by the facts on the ground, as the studies of many contemporary scholars, such as Robert Wisnovsky, Khaled al-Rouayheb, Sajjad Rizvi and Asad Ahmed have shown (for references, see below), demonstrating how philosophical activity continued in various Islamic lands such as Egypt, Ottoman Turkey and Muslim India up to the twentieth century. For a wide-ranging critique of the Orientalist view that Islamic intellectual thought was marked by stagnation in the post-classical period, and that *taqlīd* was the order of the day, see the excellent recent study by Khaled El-Rouayheb, *Islamic Intellectual History in the Seventeenth Century: Scholarly Currents in the Ottoman Empire and the Maghreb* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 173ff. and 357-58.

tally of the most significant texts; and brief references to prominent debates and to the contribution of certain outstanding personalities."[513] Thankfully, a series of pioneering articles (and a forthcoming book) by Asad Ahmed now fills this desideratum in part by providing maps of the most important scholarly networks and the texts that were studied in madrasas.[514]

In any event, when scholars narrate the story of Islamic philosophy in India, they usually trace its source and transmission to two Iranian scholars, namely Fatḥ Allāh al-Shīrāzī (d. 997/1589) [515] and Mīrzā Jān Ḥabīb Allāh al-Bāghnawī (d. 995/1587).[516] Both of these scholars originally hailed from Shīrāz and studied with the two foremost philosophers of the city, namely

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[513] Asad Ahmed and Reza Pourjavady, "Theology in Muslim India," in Sabine Schmidtke (ed.), *Oxford Handbook of Islamic Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 607.

[514] See Asad Ahmed, *Palimpsests of Themselves*: *Rationalism, Commentaries, and Glosses in Post-Classical Islam* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, forthcoming); "The *Mawāqif of* Ījī in India," in A. Shihadeh and J. Thiele (eds.). *Ashʿarism in the Later Periods* (Leiden: Brill forthcoming); "What Was Philosophy in Muslim India?," in Ulrich Rudolph (ed.), *What Was Philosophy Outside Europe?* (Springer, forthcoming); "The *Sullam al-'Ulūm* of Muḥibballāh al-Bihārī," in Khaled El-Rouayheb and Sabine Schmidtke (eds.), *Oxford Handbook of Islamic Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017); "Post-Classical Philosophical Commentaries/Glosses: Innovation in the Margins," *Oriens* 41.3-4 (2013): 317-348; "Logic in the Khayrābādī School of India: A Preliminary Exploration," in Michael Cook, Najam Haider, Intisar Rabb, and Asma Sayeed (eds.), *Law and Tradition in Classical Islamic Thought*: *Studies in Honor of Professor Hossein Modarressi* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2013); and "The *Shifā'* in India I: Reflections on the Evidence of the Manuscripts" *Oriens* 40.2/3 (2012): 199-222. See also, Jamal Malik, *lslamische Gelehrtenkultur in Nordindien: Entwicklungsgeschichte und Tendenzen am Beispiel von Lucknow* (Leiden: Brill, 1997); 70ff.

[515] Some have identified the significant role of Fatḥ Allāh al-Shīrāzī, a philosopher trained in the school of Shīrāz and a student of Mīr Ghiyāth al-Dīn Dashtakī (d. 949/1542), and an emigrant to the court of Akbar (r. 1556-1605). Numerous works, both academic and popular, stress his role as the foremost philosopher and scientist of his time in the Persianate world, and attribute to him a series of important technological innovations and reforms of the administration, including the adoption of Persian as the official language of the Mughal chancellery; he is also regarded as the main conduit for the serious study of philosophy and theology in India, laying the foundations for the *Dars-i Niẓāmī* method of education, which emphasized the study of the intellectual disciplines (*maʿqūlāt*). For more information, see Ahmed and Pourjavady, "Theology in Muslim India," 612; Rahman ʿAlī, *Tuḥfat al-fuḍalāʾ fī tarājim al-kumalāʾ* (Lucknow: Nawal Kishore, 1914), 160; Sayyid Ghulām Bilgrāmī, *Maʾāthir-i kirām*, ed. M. Lyallpūrī (Lahore: Maktaba-yi Iḥyāʾ-yi ʿUlūm-i Sharqiyya, 1971), 226, 228-29; ʿAbd al-Ḥayy b. Fakhr al-Dīn al-Lakhnawī, *Nuzhat al-khawāṭir bahjat al-masāmiʿ wa-l-nawāẓir* (Multān: Idārat-i Taʾlīfāt-i Ashrafiyya, 1993)*,* 5: 155-6, 5: 539-44; Saiyid Athar Abbas Rizvi, *A Socio-Intelleclual History of the Isnā ʿAsharī Shīʿis in India* (Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1986), 2: 196-98; M. A. Alvi and A. Rahman, *Fatḥ Allāh Shīrāzī: A Sixteenth Century Indian Scientist* (Delhi: National Institute of the Sciences of India, 1968); Sharif Husain Qasimi, "Fatḥullāh Shīrāzī," in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, ed. E. Yarshater (New York: dist. by Eisenbrauns, 1982-); Malik, *lslamische Gelehrtenkultur in Nordindien*, 86-95; Sajjad Rizvi, "Mīr Dāmad in India: Islamic philosophical traditions and the problem of creation," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 131.1 (2011): 9-10.

[516] However, one should also note the intrusion of other currents of Islamic philosophy such as Suhrawardī's illuminationism that has had a long career in India. For instance, Both van Lit and Muḥammad Karīmī mention the possible connection between Suhrawardī and Walī Allāh. And Muḥammad Karīmī notes that Walī Allāh mentions the imaginal places of Jābulqā and Jābursā and the imaginal word (*ʿālam al-mithāl*) in various contexts that indicates that he might have been familiar with Suhrawardī's writings. See Muḥammad Karīmī Zanjānī Aṣl, *Ḥikmat-i ishrāqī dar Hind* (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Iṭṭalāʿāt, 2007); 69-74; L.W.C. van Lit, *The World of Image in Islamic Philosophy: Ibn Sīnā, Suhrawardī, Shahrazūrī, and Beyond* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press Ltd, 2017), 166-67. For some pertinent literature on the penetration of ishrāqī philosophy, see the aforementioned Muḥammad Karīmī Zanjānī Aṣl, *Hikmat-i ishrāqī dar Hind;* van Lit, *The World of Image in Islamic Philosophy;* and Carl Ernst, "Fayzī's Illuminationist Interpretation of Vedanta: The *Shāriq al-maʿrifa,*" *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 30.3 (2010): 356-364. In his article, Ernst argues that the Mogul court poet Fayzī (AD 1547–95), who composed the *Shāriq al-maʿrifa*, offers an interpretation of Indian philosophy by drawing on the light symbolism from Suhrawardī's illuminationism.

Jalāl al-Dīn al-Dawānī and Ghiyāth al-Dīn al-Dashtakī.[517] It is important to note that Bāghnawī and Fatḥ Allāh al-Shīrāzī represent the two rival intellectual lineages and perspectives of al-Dawānī and al-Dashtakī respectively, which became significant in the trajectory of philosophy in India through the mediating role of the all-too-important but the neglected figure of Mīr Zāhid al-Harawī (d. 1101/1689).[518] Al-Harawī, who was appointed as judge of the Mughal army and granted the administrative leadership (ṣidārat) of Kabul later in his life, studied with Mullā Muḥammad Yūsuf who himself was a student of Bāghnawī.[519] One way to establish the link between Shāh Walī Allāh and the Iranian tradition would be to follow the intellectual genealogy of al-Harawī, which includes Walī Allāh's own father, Shāh ꜥAbd al-Raḥīm (d. 1131/1719), as he was an immediate disciple of al-Harawī (see Table 3.1 below).

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[517] On these two figures, see Qāsim Kākāī, *Ghiyāth al-Dīn Manṣūr Dashtakī wa falsafa-yi ꜥirfān (with a critical edition of Manāzil al-sāʾirīn wa-maqāmat al-ꜥārifīn)* (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Farhangistān-i Hunar, 2007); "Āshnāyī bā maktab-i Shīrāz: Mīr Ghiyāth al-Dīn Dashtakī (1)," *Khiradnāma-yi Ṣadrā*, 5-6 (1996-97/1375 Sh): 83-90; "Āshnāyī bā maktab-i Shīrāz: Mīr Ghiyāth al-Dīn Dashtakī (2)," *Khiradnāma-yi Ṣadrā*, 7 (1997/1375 Sh): 59-67; "Āshnāyī bā maktab-i Shīrāz: Mīr Ghiyāth al-Dīn Dashtakī (3)," *Khiradnāma-yi Ṣadrā*, 11 (1997/1377 Sh): 22-32; Reza Pourjavady, *Philosophy in Early Safavid Iran*, 1-44.

[518] But the importance of Fatḥ Allāh al-Shīrāzī should not be underestimated, since he was the main channel for a serious philosophical undertaking in India. For this reason, historians of Islamic thought in India trace a lineage from Fatḥ Allāh al-Shīrāzī to the scholars of Farangī Maḥal in the eighteenth century CE. See Ahmed and Pourjavady, "Theology in Muslim India," 612; Ahmed, "Logic," 228-29. For a detailed presentation of al-Harawī's life and works, Mīr Zāhid al-Harawī, *Sharḥ al-Risālah al-maꜥmūlah fī al-taṣawwur wa-al-taṣdīq wa-taꜥlīqātuh*, edited by Mahdī Sharīꜥatī (Qom: Maktaba al-Shahīd Sharīꜥatī, 2000), 7-69; ꜥAbd al-Salām Khān, *Barr-i ṣaghīr kē ꜥulamāʾ-yi maꜥqūlāt awr un kī taṣnīfāt* (Patna: Khudā Bakhsh Oriental Public Library, 1996), 27-31: Mīr Zāhid al-Harawī (d. 1101/1690), 27-31; Ahmed, "The *Mawāqif of* Ījī in India," 4ff.

[519] Ahmed, "The *Mawāqif of* Ījī in India," 4-8.

116

Table 3.1: Intellectual Genealogy Connecting Shāh Walī Allāh to the Iranian Tradition[520]

Jalāl al-Dīn al-Dawānī

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ʿImād al-Dīn al-Ṭārimī

↓

Wajīh al-Dīn al-Gujarātī

↓

To the Farangī Maḥall Family   Mirzā Jān al-Shīrāzī

↓

Mullā Muḥammad Yūsuf

↓

Mīr Zāhid al-Harawī

↓

Muḥibb Allāh al-Bihārī   Shāh ʿAbd al-Raḥīm

↓

Qāḍī Mubārak ⟷ **Shāh Walī Allāh**

Shāh ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz

Key: ⟶   immediate disciple
         ⟷   possible direct connection
         ——   commented on al-Bihārī
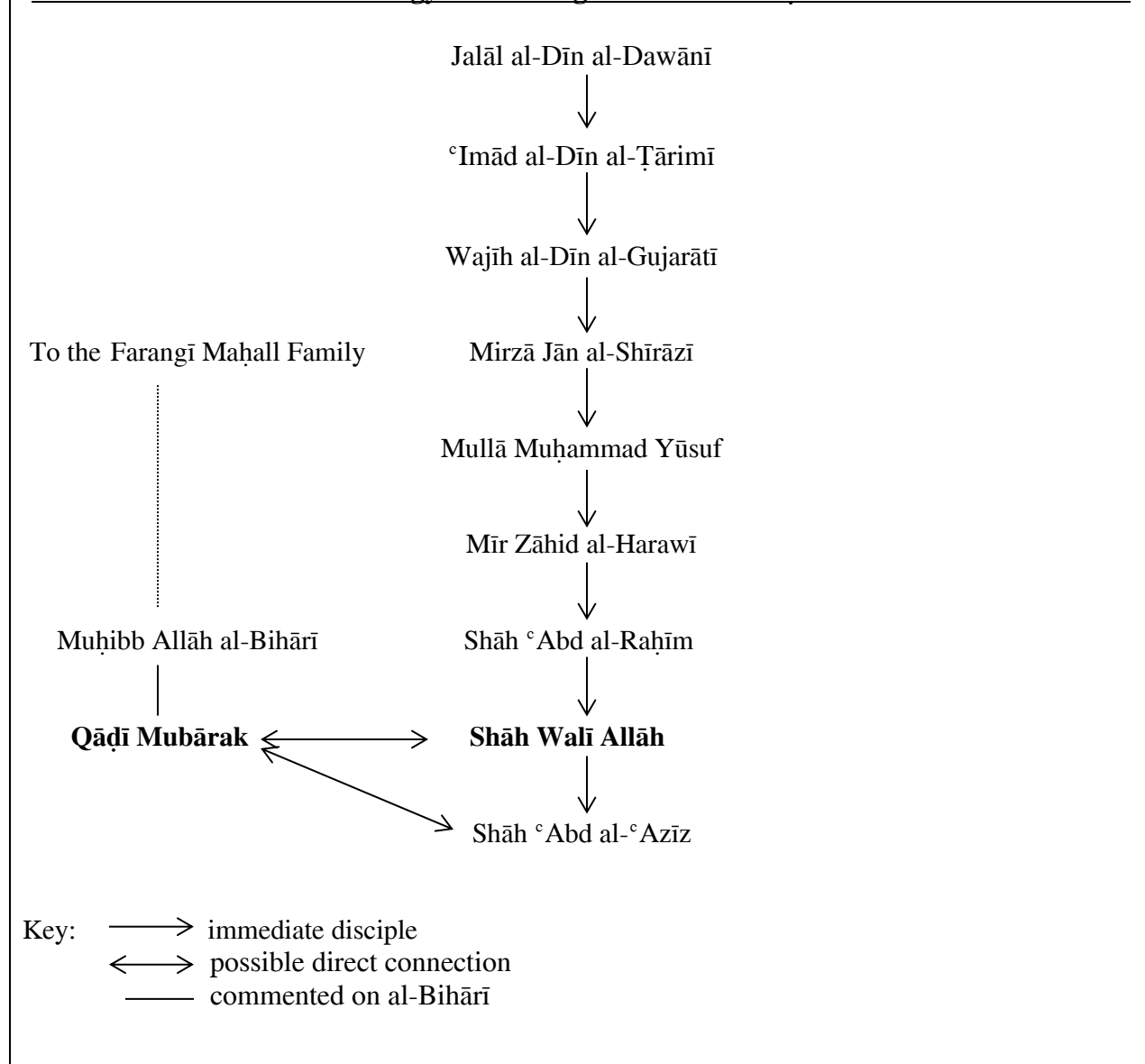
Al-Harawī, the author of a number of important glosses, wrote mainly on theology and philosophy including works such as a gloss on al-Sayyid al-Sharīf al-Jurjānī's commentary on al-Ījī's *Mawāqif*.[521] He also composed a gloss on Shams al-Dīn al-Iṣfahānī's (d. 749/1348) commentary on the *Tajrīd al-iʿtiqād*.[522] In addition, he authored a highly influential commentary

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[520] This table is largely based on the findings of Ahmed, "The *Mawāqif of* Ījī in India," 5-7.

[521] See Mīr Zāhid al-Harawī, *Sharḥ al-Risālah al-maʿmūla,* 28; *Ḥawāshī ʿalā fann al-umūr al-ʿāmmah min Sharḥ al-Mawāqif*, MS Arab SM4154 (Houghton Library, Harvard University); ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq al-Khayrābādī, *Sharḥ ḥāshiyat Mīr Zāhid umūr ʿāmma* (Kānpūr: Niẓāmī Press, 1298 AH). For a scholarly treatment of al-Ījī's *Mawāqif*, see Alnoor Dhanani, "*Al-Mawāqif fī ʿilm al-kalām* by ʿAḍud al-Dīn al-Ījī (d. 1355), and Its Commentaries," in *The Oxford Handbook of Islamic Philosophy,* ed. Khaled El-Rouayheb and Sabine Schmidtke (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 375-96.

[522] Mīr Zāhid al-Harawī, *Sharḥ al-Risālah al-maʿmūla,* 30.

on Quṭb al-Dīn al-Taḥtānī's (d. 766/1364) *al-Risāla fi-l-taṣawwur wa-l-taṣdīq*, which generated numerous further glosses in the later tradition.[523] Furthermore, al-Harawī composed a gloss on al-Dawānī's commentary on Suhrawardī's *Hayākil al-nūr*, and penned a commentary on the Qur'an, among others.[524] In his commentary on *al-Risāla fi-l-taṣawwur wa-l-taṣdīq*, al-Harawī engages both with Mīr Dāmad and Mullā Ṣadrā and reserves for them honorifics such as '*min al-afāḍil*' (from the ranks of the virtuous) or '*baʿḍ al-afāḍil*' (some of the virtuous shcolars).[525] This aforementioned commentary, which is a logico-epistemological work, deals with issues such as the difference between conception (*taṣawwur*) and assent (*taṣdīq*), the relation between presential and representational knowledge (*al-ʿilm al-ḥuṣūlī* and *al-ʿilm al-ḥuḍūrī*), God's knowledge of particulars and relational existence (*al-wujūd al-rābiṭī*)—all of which were also discussed extensively in Ṣadrā's various works.[526] Apart from the Bāghnawī-Harawī intellectual chain (*silsila*), the other scholarly network which might have made Ṣadrā familiar to Walī Allāh was the famous Farangī Maḥall.[527] This is because some of the leading figures of the Farangī Maḥall wrote commentaries on Ṣadrā's *Sharḥ al-hidāya,* and one of the scholars associated with the Farangī Maḥall, namely Qāḍī Mūbārak Gūpāmawī (d. 1162/1749) was in Delhi when Walī Allāh was active.[528] However, before we provide more details on this, it is necessary to say a word about Ṣadrā's 'alleged influence' in India concerning which much ink has been spilled in secondary literature.[529] Probably, the first person who made Mullā Ṣadrā known in India was Maḥmūd Fārūqī Jawnpūrī (d. 1072/1662), who was a student of Mīr Dāmād.[530] More importantly, it was Niẓām al-Dīn Sihālawī (d. 1161/1748), the fountainhead of the *Dars-i Niẓāmī* method of education, who wrote a commentary on Ṣadrā's *Sharḥ al-hidāya*, which was also one of the core texts that was studied and commented.[531] In his commentary, Niẓām al-Dīn's opinion about Ṣadrā seems to be a combination of both critical attitude and measured respect. For instance, he takes issue with Ṣadrā's famous doctrine of substantial motion (*al-ḥaraka al-jawhariyya*) and its demonstrations in the *Asfār* and the *Shawāhid* vis-à-vis the latter's *Sharḥ al-hidāya*, arguing that there are discrepancies between these accounts.[532] But in other contexts, he reverentially mentions Ṣadrā's name: "Perhaps about this matter he (i.e. Ṣadrā) possessed unsurpassable knowledge compared to everyone else including this humble man studying his

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[523] See Mīr Zāhid al-Harawī, *Sharḥ al-Risālah al-maʿmūla,* 41-50. It is to be noted that a gloss on this commentary of Harawī by Ghulām Yaḥyā b. Najm al-Dīn al-Bihārī (d. 1180/1766) came to be of great interest for discussions of the nature of God's knowledge.

[524] Mīr Zāhid al-Harawī, *Sharḥ al-Risālah al-maʿmūla,* 30.

[525] Mīr Zāhid al-Harawī, *Sharḥ al-Risālah al-maʿmūla,* 92, 109, 121, 123, 138, 173, 221, 241, 252, 283, 287.

[526] Mīr Zāhid al-Harawī, *Sharḥ al-Risālah al-maʿmūla,* 91ff., 200-13.

[527] On Farangī Maḥall, see ch. 1, 11.

[528] For more information on this, see Akbar Thubūt, *Fīlsūf-i Shīrāzī dar Hind* (Tehran: Markaz-i Bayn al-Milalī-i Guftugū-yi Tamaddunhā: Hirmis, 2001), 49.

[529] See, ch. 1, 7.

[530] For bio-bibliographical notes on this figure, see Ahmed, Asad, "al-Jawnpūrī", in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam, THREE*, Edited by: Kate Fleet, Gudrun Krämer, Denis Matringe, John Nawas, Everett Rowson. Consulted online on 09 May 2018 http://dx.doi.org.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/10.1163/1573-3912_ei3_COM_27005; Sajjad Rizvi, "Mir Damad in India: Islamic Philosophical Traditions and the Problem of Creation," 17; Sayyid Ghulām ʿAlī Azad Bilgrāmī, *Subḥat al-marjān fī āthār Hindustān*, ed. M. Fazl al-Raḥmān Nadwī (Aligarh: Institute of Islamic Studies, Aligarh Muslim University, 1972), 2: 145.

[531] See Robert Wisnovsky, "The Nature and Scope of Arabic Philosophical Commentary in Post-Classical (ca. 1100-1900 AD) Islamic Intellectual History: Some Preliminary Observations," in *Philosophy, Science, and Exegesis in Greek, Arabic, and Latin Commentaries,* ed. Peter Adamson, H. Baltussen, and M.W.F. Stone (London: Institute of Classical Studies, 2004), 177-8; For a list of its manuscript, see Akbar Thubūt, *Fīlsūf-i Shīrāzī dar Hind, 44-47.*

[532] Niẓām al-Dīn, *Sharḥ-i Ṣadrā (Sharḥ al-hidāya),* MS, cited in Akbar Thubūt, *Fīlsūf-i Shīrāzī dar Hind,* 41.

works. His knowledge is like an ocean without shore."[533] He also uses the honorific '*baḥr al-ʿulūm*' (the ocean of knowledge) for Ṣadrā.[534] Niẓām al-Dīn's son, the celebrated ʿAbd al-ʿAlī Baḥr al-ʿUlūm (d. 1225/1810), also penned a commentary on Ṣadrā. But unlike his father, Baḥr al-ʿUlūm sometimes levels scathing remarks at Ṣadrā that in fact contains innuendoes. For instance, concerning Ṣadrā's theory of substantial motion, Baḥr al-ʿUlūm writes:

> Know that Ṣadrā accepts the occurrence of 'motion' (*ḥaraka*) in substance (*jawhar*), and in his *Asfār* brings evidence to support this, all of which is nothing more than poetry (*shiʿr*) and sophistry (*mughālaṭa*), although he (i.e. Ṣadrā) calls them demonstration (*burhān*); it is a waste (*taḍyīʿ*) of time to recount them.[535]

However, at times Baḥr al-ʿUlūm engages Ṣadrā in a highly technical polemic. For instance, concerning Ṣadrā's ontology and the theory of secondary causation Baḥr al-ʿUlūm says:

> Ṣadrā goes on to state that existent by itself/essence (*mawjūd bi-l-dhāt*) is being (*wujūd*), whereas quiddities, on account of their (*ittiḥād*) with being, are existents by accident (*mawjūdāt bi-l-ʿaraḍ*). Moreover, existent by itself/essence accompanied by simple instauration (*jaʿl basīṭ*) is also being, while being itself is the same between what is shared in common (*mā bihi al-ishtirāk*) and what is different (*mā bihi al-imtiyāz*).[536]

> We say: This reasoning is devious (*makhdūsh*) because if being itself (*nafs al-wujūd*) is ascribed to something that is instaurated (*majʿūl*), then the instaurer (*jāʿil*) will be its constituent, which, consequently, will raise its rank to the degree of the reality of being (*ḥaqīqat al-wujūd*), while according to Ṣadrā, being is simple (*basīṭ*) and the property of being an instaurer lies outside of it.[537]

Interestingly, although Baḥr al-ʿUlūm disagrees with Ṣadrā on a number of philosophical issues, his views regarding the perfect human (*al-insān al-kāmil*) and God's self-disclosure (*tajallī*) are

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[533] Niẓām al-Dīn, *Sharḥ-i Ṣadrā,* MS, cited in Akbar Thubūt, *Fīlsūf-i Shīrāzī dar Hind,* 41.

[534] Niẓām al-Dīn, *Sharḥ-i Ṣadrā (Sharḥ al-hidāya),* MS, cited in Akbar Thubūt, *Fīlsūf-i Shīrāzī dar Hind,* 41.

[535] Baḥr al-ʿUlūm, *Sharḥ-i Ṣadrā,* MS, cited in Akbar Thubūt, *Fīlsūf-i Shīrāzī dar Hind,* 119. Concerning Baḥr al-ʿUlūm's *Sharḥ-i Ṣadrā* and its manuscript locations, see *Akbar Thubūt, Fīlsūf-i Shīrāzī dar Hind,* 123-25.

[536] Baḥr al-ʿUlūm, *Sharḥ-i Ṣadrā,* MS, cited in Akbar Thubūt, *Fīlsūf-i Shīrāzī dar Hind,* 120.

[537] Baḥr al-ʿUlūm, *Sharḥ-i Ṣadrā,* MS, cited in Akbar Thubūt, *Fīlsūf-i Shīrāzī dar Hind,* 120. The word *jaʿl*, translated as 'instauration,' and its derivatives *jāʿil* and *majʿūl* occupy a special place in Ṣadrā's philosophical vocabulary. It signifies putting something into a specific state or condition in conformity with its essential properties. Ṣadrā divides it into two kinds: simple and composite. Simple instauration refers to the construction of something by itself-when we say, for instance, 'man is man.' In logic, this corresponds to essential primary predication (*al-ḥaml al-dhātī al-awwalī).* As for composite instauration, it refers to cases where the definition of a quiddity involves the convergence of both essential and accidental properties, such as when we say, "Man is a rational animal" and "Man is a writer." For Ṣadrā, what is instaured by itself *(al-majʿūl bi-l-dhāt)* is not essence, but *wujūd,* because *wujūd* does not need an external agent to make it a specific substance, whereas all essences need some cause external to them in order to exist in the external world. In this sense, essences are instaured, or produced 'by accident' *(al-majʿūl bi-l-ʿaraḍ).* See Ṣadrā, *Asfār,* 1:65-66; Mullā Muḥammad Jaʿfar Lāhījī, *Sharḥ al-Mashāʿir*, edited by Sayyid Āshtiyānī (Qom: Muʾassasa-yi Būstān-i Kitāb, 2007), 2:805. See also Ṣadrā's extensive analysis in *Asfār,* 1: 396-423, concerning conception *(taṣawwur)* and assent *(taṣdīq)* as cases of simple and composite instauration.

paradoxically similar to Ṣadrā. Here is a token example excerpted from Baḥr al-ʿUlūm's commentary on Rūmī's *Masnavī*:

Chūn bi-nālad zār-i bī-shukr u gila   uftād andar haft gardūn ghulghula
As he (i.e. the perfect human) laments passionately   There stirs commotion in the seven heavens

> That is, since the perfect human (*insān-i kāmil*) yearns for the purity of love (*maḥḍ-i ʿishq*), it causes the earth and the sky to be agitated and ebullient. And no one, except the perfected souls, can understand this ebullience (*jūsh*) [of the earth and sky]. The cause of this lament (*nāla*) is that the Pure Self (*dhāt-i baḥt*) is free from any conditioning whatsoever, who, moreover, in His innermost reality (*kunh-i ḥaqīqat*), is beyond any witnessing (*mashhūd namī-shawad*). And one can only witness Him through the manifestation (*tajallī*) of His names that are infinite (*nahāyatī nīst*). Since the lover (*ʿāshiq*), i.e. the perfect human, witnesses the Real (*ḥaqq*) through one of His manifestations, his thirst remains unquenched. So, he fervently wants more of it, and forever remains thirsty of [His Love].[538]

This is strikingly similar to what Ṣadrā says in his *Asfār* regarding the self-disclosure (*tajallī*) and manifestation (*ẓuhūr*) of God's names and qualities and how the perfect human is able to see Him in all of His manifestations.[539] The reason why both of their views converge regarding philosophical Sufism (*ʿirfān*) is that they both draw from Ibn ʿArabī and his School, which can be gleaned from their explicit references to him. Apart from Baḥr al-ʿUlūm, Shāh Walī Allāh's son, Shāh ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz (d. 1239/1824) also wrote a commentary on Ṣadrā's *Sharḥ al-hidāya*, which is occasionally polemical. For example, regarding Ṣadrā's definition of 'philosophy,' Shāh ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz quips that the former misconstrues the meaning of the word '*falsafa*,' which is of Greek origin and means 'love of wisdom.' But according to ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz, since Ṣadrā was not familiar with Greek, he explains its meaning as 'becoming similar to God.'[540] Nevertheless, in his *Tuḥfa-yi Ithnā ʿAshariyya*, he leans heavily on Ṣadrā's doctrine of 'bodily resurrection' (*maʿād jismānī*) and accepts the latter's distinction between two kinds of bodies. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz writes:

> In his *Shawāhid al-rubūbiyya*, Ṣadrā Shīrāzī says… there are two kinds of bodies: the first kind is that which is directly controlled (*taṣarruf bilā-wāsiṭa*) by the soul, while the second kind is that which is controlled by the soul through another body. This body is not perceived by the senses (*iḥsās*) since the senses only perceive bodies that are their receptacle (*maḥall*) such as skin… So this body is called the illuminated body (*badan nūriyya*) that belongs to the afterlife, and it possesses essential life (*ḥayāt dhātī*) that never extinguishes… This body is more spacious compared to [the outward] body that is exists here and the spirit (*rūḥ*) which is known as the animal spirit (*al-rūḥ al-ḥaywānī*).

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[538] Baḥr al-Ulūm, *Masnavī-yi Mawlawī bā ḥāshia-yi chandīn maḥshshī az jumla-yi ʿAbd al-ʿAlī*, 1:135, cited in Akbar Thubūt, *Fīlsūf-i Shīrāzī dar Hind,* 125-6.

[539] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Asfār*, 2: 361. Cf. Sabzawārī, *Sharḥ al-asmāʾ al-ḥusnā* (Tehran: Manshūrāt-i Maktabat Baṣīratī, 1989), 518-19.

[540]. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz, *Sharḥ-i Ṣadrā* (Deoband), 9, cited in Akbar Thubūt, *Fīlsūf-i Shīrāzī dar Hind,* 149. On Shāh ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz b. Shāh Walī Allāh, see Saiyid Athar Abbas Rizvi, *Shāh ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz: Puritanism, Sectarian Polemics and Jihād* (Canberra: Maʿrifat, 1982), 103-73; Khān, *Barr-i ṣaghīr,* 47; al-Lakhnawī, *Nuzha,* 7:297ff.

This is because all of these [bodies], including [the animal spirit], which is subtler than the first, belong to this world; hence they are susceptible to change and will eventually perish. So, these bodies will not have resurrection (*ḥashr*). What we are discussing here pertains to the body of the afterlife, which will be resurrected along the soul (*nafs*). This [body] is entwined with the soul, and subsists with the latter's (i.e. the soul) subsistence (*baqāʾ*).[541]

Apart from *Sharḥ al-hidāya* commentaries, some Indian scholars also engage with or respond to Ṣadra in their other works. Muḥibb Allāh Bihārī (d. 1119/1707), the author of the famous *Sullam al-ʿulūm* on which more than hundred commentaries have been written, mentions Ṣadrā in relation to some topic in Logic (*manṭiq*).[542] Bihārī's commentator, Qāḍī Mubārak Gūpāmawī, who was known to Shāh Walī Allāh, had a great respect for Ṣadrā's mentor Mīr Dāmād. According to ʿAbd al-Ḥayy b. ʿAbd al-Ḥalīm Lakhnawī (d. 1304/1886), Qāḍī Mubārak was a follower of Mīr Dāmād throughout his life.[543] This is partly evidenced in his commentary on the *Sullam*, which incorporates elements from Dāmād's *Ufuq al-mubīn* concerning God's knowledge of particulars. Qāḍī Mubārak reserves such glorious titles for Mīr Dāmād as *al-sayyid al-Bāqir*, and *al-muʿallim al-awwal li-l-ḥikma al-yamāniyya*.[544] He also refers to Ṣadrā's *Asfār* in the commentary, e.g., "This is what Mīr Dāmad verified in some of his writings and his student followed suit in his *Asfār*."[545] The commentary of Qāḍī Mubārak on the *Sullam* along with his self-commentary (entitled *al-Munhiyāt*) contains discussions on logic and epistemology that one also finds in Ṣadrā's various works. Among some of the notable topics one can mention the famous distinction between presential and representational knowledge,[546] self-knowledge, knowledge of God, and, most of all, Ṣadrā's famous doctrine of the identity of the intellect and what is intellected (*ittiḥad al-ʿāqil wa-l-maʿqūl*). The following text shows Qāḍī Mubārak's views concerning the doctrine of the identity of the intellect and what is intellected:

> So inevitably, He manifests Himself in His Essence, so He is the intellect, the intellecter and what is intellected [all at once]… a thing which is sanctified from matter, when exists

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[541] ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz, *Tuḥfa-yi Ithnā ʿAshariyya*, 239, cited in Akbar Thubūt, *Fīlsūf-i Shīrāzī dar Hind,* 163-64.

[542] Qāḍī Mubārak, *Kitāb Sullam al-ʿulūm wa-ḥāshiyatihi al-mashhūrah bi-l-Qāḍī maʿa munhiyātihi* (Kazan: al-Maṭbaʿah al-Malakīyah, 1887), 281, cited in Akbar Thubūt, *Fīlsūf-i Shīrāzī dar Hind,* 10. The *Sullam* was a culmination of engagements with such concerns that had exercised earlier logicians writing in the Islamic tradition. What distinguishes it from earlier textbooks is that paradoxes that emerge from the possibility of a broader range of conceptualized subject terms are a characteristic feature of the work. For further notes on the *Sullam,* see Asad Q. Ahmed, "The *Sullam al-ʿulūm* of Muḥibb Allāh al-Bihārī," in *The Oxford Handbook of Islamic Philosophy,* ed. Khaled El-Rouayheb and Sabine Schmidtke (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 488-508.

[543] ʿAbd al-Ḥayy Lakhnawī, *Miṣbāḥ al-Dijī*, 224-25, cited in Akbar Thubūt, *Fīlsūf-i Shīrāzī dar Hind,* 50.

[544] See Qāḍī Mubārak, *Kitāb Sullam al-ʿulūm,* 2, 25, 54, 83, 93-4, 100, 104-05, 125-26, 134, 157. Cf. Akbar Thubūt, *Fīlsūf-i Shīrāzī dar Hind,* 50.

[545] Qāḍī Mubārak, *Kitāb Sullam al-ʿulūm*, 214, cited in Akbar Thubūt, *Fīlsūf-i Shīrāzī dar Hind*, 52.

[546] However, it should be noted that unlike Ṣadrā, Qāḍī Mubārak places the *ḥudūrī-ḥuṣūlī* distinction under the category of 'knowledge by means of essence (*al-ʿilm bi-kunhihi*), which itself is a counterpart of 'knowledge of essence' (*al-ʿilm bi-l-kunh*). As Ahmed rightly notes, the distinction between *bi-l-kunh* and *bi-kunhihi* is specific to the Indian philosophical and logical traditions, since in other contexts these two expressions appearto have the same meaning. The distinction between *bi-l-kunh* and *bi-kunhihi* is introduced in the discussion of human ability to know God. Mubārak asserts that both knowledge of God's Essence and knowledge by means of His Essence are unattainable for humans. However, such a distinction, in turn, leads to the aporia of how knowledge of extramental entities is possible at all, which generated a great deal of discussion in the subsequent tradition. For a sophisticated treatment of this issue, see Ahmed, "Post-Classical Philosophical Commentaries," 328-29.

by itself is the intellect, the intellecter and what is intellected (*fa-l-shayʾ al-muqaddas ʿan al-mādda, idhā kāna mawjūdan bi-nafsihi kāna ʿaqlan wa-ʿāqilan wa-maʿqūlan*).[547]

Apart from Qāḍī Mubārak, there were others who either dealt with Ṣadrā [e.g. ʿAbd al-Ḥayy or Barakāt Aḥmad Ṭūkī (d. 1347/1929)] or take into account his *Sharḥ al-hidāya* while discussing topics in natural philosophy (*ṭabīʿiyyāt*) such as motion or space [e.g. Faḍl-i Ḥaqq al-Khayrābādī (d. 1277/1861)].[548] One significant but understudied early twentieth century work that draws on Ṣadrā's works is Barakāt Aḥmad's massive *al-Ḥujja al-bāzigha*.[549] A contemporary of Iqbal, Barakāt Aḥmad studied *Sharḥ al-hidāya* with ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq al-Khayrābādī (d. 1318/1900), and in turn, taught this work along with Ṣadrā's *Asfār*.[550] In his magnum opus *al-Ḥujja al-bāzigha*, Barakāt Aḥmad explains various Ṣadrian doctrines from Ṣadrā's *Asfār*, commentary of the *Shifāʾ*, *Sharḥ al-hidāya*, and his glosses on *Sharḥ Ḥikmat al-ishrāq* of Quṭb al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī (d. 710/1311).[551] He often acts as an adjudicator between Ṣadrā and his opponents such as Aqā Ḥusayn Khwānsārī (d. 1099/1688), Baḥr al-ʿUlūm and ʿAbd al-Haqq Khayrābādī (d. 1318/1900).[552] Although he follows Khwānsārī in referring to Ṣadrā as 'al-fāḍil al-Ṣadr al-Shīrāzī,'or 'al-fāḍil Ṣadr al-afāḍil,' at times he uses abrasive language to express his disagreement with Ṣadrā.[553] In any event, he also chooses to defend Ṣadrā regarding the latter's theory of substantial motion against other philosophers by affirming motion in substance. For example, he says, "In contrast to what others have said, there is motion in substance (*jawhar*)."[554]

Regarding Ṣadrā's influence in India, Akbar Thubūt's informative study lists seventy independent and more than twenty indirect commentaries and glosses on *Sharḥ al-hidāya*.[555] He also provides manuscript sources for most of these commentaries and glosses.[556] On the whole, given the state of current research, I would like to make a few brief comments about the penetration of Ṣadrā's philosophy among Indian scholars. First of all, I think that one needs to be careful in using the word 'influence,' since it can be notoriously vague in some contexts. For instance, if one claims that Ṣadrā was influential in India, does it mean he was as influential as, for instance, Ibn ʿArabī? That is to say the question of 'influence' is a relative one. Moreover, if one claims that Ṣadrā was influential in India, does this also mean his writings had a 'positive'

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[547] Qāḍī Mubārak, *Kitāb Sullam al-ʿulūm*, 8.

[548] See e.g. Asad Ahmed and Jon McGinnis, "Faḍl-i Ḥaqq Khayrābādī's (d. 1861), *al-Hadiyya al-saʿīdiyya*," in Khaled El-Rouayheb and Sabine Schmidtke (eds.), *Oxford Handbook of Islamic Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 546.

[549] See Barakāt Aḥmad, *al-Ḥujja al-bāzigha fī sharḥ al-Ḥikma al-bāligha* (Decan: 'Uthmān Baryasī, 1916). See also *idem.*, *Imām al-kalām fī taḥqīq ḥaqīqat al-ajsām* (Kanpur: al-Maṭbaʿ al-Anẓāmī, 1333); *Itqān al-ʿirfān fī taḥqīq māhiyat al-zamān* (Lucknow: Shāhī Pirīs, 1337).

[550] Khān, *Barr-i ṣaghīr*, 67-9.

[551] Barakāt Aḥmad, *al-Ḥujjah al-bāzigha*, 15-31, 34-8, 42-6, 59-63, 87-91, 96-100, 192-95, 250-53.

[552] Barakāt Aḥmad, *al-Ḥujjah al-bāzigha*, 18, 20, 97, 250. On Khwānsārī's opposition to Ṣadrian philosophy that seems to have had an influence in India, see Moazzen, *Formation of a Religious Landscape,* 141-144, 222.

[553] Barakāt Aḥmad, *al-Ḥujjah al-bāzigha*, 18, 20, 97, 322.

[554] Barakāt Aḥmad, *al-Ḥujjah al-bāzigha*, 287.

[555] Akbar Thubūt, *Fīlsūf-i Shīrāzī dar Hind,* 4. Some of the notable commentators of Ṣadrā are as follows: Ḥamdallāh b. Shākir allāh as-Sandīlwī (d. 1160/1747), Muḥammad Amjad b. Faydallāh al-Ṣiddīqī al-Qannūwjī (ca. 1112/1718), Muḥammad Ḥasan b. Ghulām Muṣṭafā al-Sihālawī, Sayyid Dildār ʿAlī Naqwī Naṣīrābādī (d. 1235/1820), ʿImād al-Dīn al-Uthmānī al-Labkanī (ca. 13th/19th), Turāb alʿ-Alı b. Shajāʿat ʿAlī al-Lakhnawī (d. 1281/1864), Muḥammad Aʿlam b. al-Sandīlwī, Muḥammad ʿAẓmat Kifāyatallāh al-Fārūqī Gūpamawī and ʿAbd al-Haqq al-Khayrābādī.

[556] Akbar Thubūt, *Fīlsūf-i Shīrāzī dar Hind, passim*.

influence on Indian scholars? This is crucial to note because if the influence of a philosopher is mostly 'negative,' it might simply be that his ideas did not gain much traction among the groups concerned, which in turn might suggest that others who engaged him did so mostly to refute his ideas or curb his influence in which case it may not properly be called 'influence.' To be precise, the purpose of this study is not to determine Ṣadrā's overall influence in India (positive or negative), since this would require a project of its own. But since one of my aims is to gauge how or whether at all Ṣadrā's philosophy played a role in Walī Allāh, Thānavī or Iqbāl's thought, especially since there is much in secondary scholarship that tends to inflate Ṣadrā's influence, it is necessary to say a few words concerning how one should understand his 'alleged influence' in India. So, to come back to the issue of 'influence' being relative, it may be useful to compare Ṣadrā with Ibn ʿArabī, since we know much more about the latter's reception in India.[557] All the evidence so far suggests that Ibn ʿArabī was far more influential than Ṣadrā in India, so much so that even scholars who are usually cast as philosophers/theologians such as Baḥr al-ʿUlūm, explicitly acknowledge their debt to Ibn ʿArabī, whereas in the case of Ṣadrā it is usually in the context of a specific philosophical debate that such scholars would feel obliged to respond (see above).[558] Moreover, in contrast to Ibn ʿArabī whose influence was usually 'positive,'[559] Mullā Ṣadrā's thought had generated a mixed result. Nonetheless, the fact that some of the influential Indian philosophers such as Muḥibb Allāh Bihārī, Qāḍī Mubārak, Muḥammad Ḥasan al-Sihālawī (d. 1199 or 1209/1784 or 1794), Baḥr al-ʿUlūm, Shāh ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz and ʿAbd al-Ḥayy Lakhnawī mentioned or discussed him in various capacities shows that Ṣadrā's name was well-known, along with his mentor Mīr Dāmād. Moreover, Ṣadrā's main works such as the *Asfār*, the *Shawāhid*, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*, commentary on the *Shifāʾ* and many other treatises were available in various Indian libraries including but not limited to Rampur Raza Library, Khudābakhsh Library (Bankipore), Asiatic Society (Kolkata) Calcutta Madrasa Collection, Mawlānā Āzād Library Aligarh, and Dār al-ʿUlūm Deoband Library.[560]

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[557] See e.g. William Chittick, "Notes on Ibn al-ʿArabī's Influence in India," *Muslim World* 82 (1992): 18-41; "Waḥdat al-Wujūd in India," *Ishraq: Islamic Philosophy Yearbook* 3 (2012): 29-40; Saiyid Athar Abbas Rizvi, *A History of Sufism in India* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1978-1983) (2 vols.); Alexander Knysh, *Ibn 'Arabī in the Later Islamic Tradition: the Making of a Polemical Image in Medieval Islam* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999); 271-78; Gregory Lipton, "Muḥibb Allāh Ilāhābādī: South Asian Heir to Ibn ʿArabī," *Journal of the Muhyiddin Ibn ʿArabi Society* 45 (2009): 89-119, Muhammad Faruque, "Sufism *contra* Shariah? Shāh Walī Allāh's Metaphysics of *Waḥdat al-Wujūd*," *Brill Journal of Sufi Studies* 5.1 (2016): 27-57; Eternity made Temporal: Ashraf ʿAlī Thānavī on Colonial Modernity and Practices of the Self (forthcoming); Shankar Nair, "Muḥibb Allāh Ilāhābādī on Ontology: Debates over the Nature of Being," in Jonardon Ganeri (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Indian Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 657-92.

[558] Thomas W. Dahnhardt, "The Doctrine of the Unicity of Existence in the Light of an Eighteenth Century Indian Ṣūfī Treatise: The *Waḥdat al-Wujūd* by Baḥr al-ʿUlūm ʿAbd al-ʿAlī Ansārī al-Lakhnawī," *Oriente Moderno* 92.2 (2012): 323-360.

[559] On Sirhindī's views on *waḥdat al-wujūd*, see Yohanan Friedmann, *Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi: An Outline of His Thought and a Study of His Image in the Eyes of Posterity* (Montreal: McGill University Press, 1971), 59-67; Aḥmad Sirhindī, *Maktūbāt Imām Rabbānī,* in *Revealed Grace: The Juristic Sufism of Ahmad Sirhindi, trans.* Arthur Buehler (Louisville: Fons Vitae, 2011), 106 and 125. It is true that more recent scholarship on Shaykh Aḥmad Sirhindī appears to have tackled such views as evidenced in Arthur Buehler, "Ahmad Sirhindi: A 21st-century Update," *Der Islam* 86 (2009): 122–141 and David Damrel, "The 'Naqshbandi Reaction' Reconsidered," in *Beyond Turk and Hindu*, edited by David Gilmartin and Bruce Lawrence (Florida: University Press of Florida, 2000), 176-198.

[560] See e.g. Muḥammad Ẓafīr al-Dīn, *Taʿāruf- makhṭūṭāt Kitābkhāna-yi Dār al-ʿUlūm Deoband* (Deoband: Dār al-ʿUlūm Deoband, 1973), 2:138.

Given our analysis above, it is perhaps not a great surprise that Shāh Walī Allāh does not mention Ṣadrā in his works, although he must have been familiar with his name.[561] However, there may be a number of reasons for this. First, although Walī Allāh was thoroughly familiar with the technical vocabulary of the philosophers and the physicians (see below), whose terminologies he employs throughout his oeuvre, he refrained from identifying himself as a philosopher or a theologian, as he primarily saw himself as a Sufi metaphysician and did not shy away from expressing where his intellectual and spiritual sympathies lie.[562] Moreover, he hardly mentions any philosopher by name; instead he uses the generic '*falāsifa*' or '*ḥukamāʾ*' when referring to the philosophers. Furthermore, he is at times highly critical of the philosophers, and this might explain in part why his son, who was influenced by him, also engages in a polemic against Ṣadrā. Even so, as we shall soon see, there are a number of issues where Walī Allāh seems to be drawing from Ṣadrā or at least one can say that their views on those issues, viz., self-knowledge, presential knowledge, the perfect human, and ultimate selfhood are similar and comparable. In any case, before I set out to analyze Walī Allāh's theory of selfhood systematically, it would be helpful to provide a brief survey his intellectual context.

Intellectual Context

In his *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, the late philosopher Muhammad Iqbal writes of Shāḥ Walī Allāh of Delhi as "the first Muslim who felt the urge of a new spirit in him" in the great task of rethinking "the whole system of Islam without completely breaking with the past."[563] Whether or not Walī Allāh was indeed the first intellectual to have felt the urge of a new spirit on the cusp of colonial modernity in the 18th century India, there is no denying that he was a wide-ranging thinker who dealt with some of the major intellectual dimensions of Islam.[564] As a prolific writer, he composed over fifty works (including five collections of letters and epistles) ranging from Sufi metaphysics, philosophical theology, *fiqh*, *Uṣūl al-fiqh*, *ʿilm al-ḥadīth*, philosophy of self to biographical treatises, in which he sought to create a synthetic paradigm for the purposes of rejuvenating the Islamic tradition of his day.[565] The intellectual contribution of this major intellectual is relatively well-known in the West,[566] although in the Subcontinent itself, there is no lacuna of books written on his thought in Urdū, Hindī, Bengali, and other

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[561] See Table 3.1.

[562] See e.g. Walī Allāh, *Alṭāf al-quds*, 133.

[563] Muhammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam,* edited and annotated by M. Saeed Sheikh (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013), 78.

[564] For Walī Allāh's autobiography, see Shāh Walī Allāh, *Anfas al-ʿārifīn (al-juzʾ al-laṭīf fī tarjamat al-ʿabd al-ḍaʿīf)*; M. Hidayat Husain, "The Persian Autobiography of Shāh Walīullāh bin ʿAbd al-Raḥīm al-Dihlavī," *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* 14 (1912): 161-76. On his life, see ʿAbd al-Ḥayy, *Nuzha*, vi, 398-415; Sayyid Athar ʿAbbas Rizvi, *Shāh Walī Allāh and His Times* (Canberra: Maʿarifat, 1980), 203-28; Ghulam Hussain Jalbani, *Life of Shah Waliyullah* (Lahore: Ashraf, 1978); J. M. S. Baljon, *Religion and Thought of Shāh Walī Allāh Dihlavi, (*Leiden: Brill. 1986), 1-14; Marcia K. Hermansen, *The Conclusive Argument from God* (translation of *Ḥujjat Allāh al-bāligha)* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), xxiii-xxxvi; id., *Shāh Walī Allāh's Treatises on Islamic Law* (Louisville: Fons Vitae, 2010), xxii-xxxiii.

[565] On Walī Allāh's revivalist project, see e.g., Jonathan A. C. Brown, *Misquoting Muhammad: The Challenge and Choices of Interpreting the Prophet's Legacy* (London: Oneworld Publications, 2014), *passim*; Abulhasan Ali Nadvi, *Saviours of Islamic spirit*, vol. IV, *Hakim-ul-islam Shah Waliullah* (Lucknow: Academy of Islamic Research & Publications, 2004), 91-114.

[566] Apart from Rizvi, *Shāh Walī Allāh and His Times, op. cit.*, and Baljon, *Religion and Thought op. cit.,* there is no other 'scholarly' monograph devoted to Walī Allāh in English. This is rather surprising in that Walī Allāh's oeuvre contains no dearth of ideas, especially in areas of Sufi metaphysics and philosophical theology.

Indian languages.[567] He is long held as an important precursor to Islamic reformist movements such as Jama°āt-i Islāmī and The Muslim Brotherhood.[568]

Given Walī Allāh's socio-political influence among Islamic political movements or the Deobandīs, it is unsurprising that hundreds of books would be written on his social and political ideas, especially since the colonial experience left Indian Muslims with an 'identity crisis.'[569] Thus many nativist Muslim historians often view the past in terms of contemporary social and political concerns, and tend to focus on issues that have a broad popular appeal, while systematically ignoring ideas that may have been more central to the actual writings of the author in question. That is why when one investigates the actual texts of the author in question and the specific socio-intellectual context of her day, one encounters a very different picture. This is more or less the case with Walī Allāh, the bulk of whose oeuvre is devoted to explicating abstruse philosophical issues such as *waḥdat al-wujūd* (the oneness of being),[570] the nature of the self,[571] the five divine presences (*al-ḥaḍarāt al-ilāhiyyat al-khams*),[572] and so forth. And, even in works such as *Ḥujjat-Allāh al-bāligha* that deal primarily with social/juridical issues, one often finds the metaphysical perspective penetrating into the complexities of communal life.[573]

Shāh Walī Allāh lived in troubled times. The Mughal Empire, which had ruled India for nearly two centuries and created one of the wealthiest and stable regions in the world, was already on the wane by the time he appeared on the scene. The long and powerful reign (nearly five decades) of the emperor Aurangzeb (d. 1119/1707) came to an end when Walī Allāh was only a boy of four. In the next sixty years, ten different Mughal rulers exchanged the throne. Walī Allāh's father, Shāh °Abd al-Raḥīm, a Naqshbandī Sufi *shaykh*,[574] was commissioned by the emperor to compile legal rulings for the mammoth collection of fatwas known as *Fatāwā °Alamgīrī*. In his writings, Walī Allāh seemed to be very concerned about the social, moral, and political predicaments of his day. He thought the vitality of Muslim religious and intellectual life

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[567] The following book edited by Chaghatai provides an overview of Walī Allāh's reception in some of these languages: M. Ikram Chaghatai (ed.), *Shah Waliullah (1703 - 1762): His Religious and Political Thought* (Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publications, 2005), *passim*.

[568] For more information, see Sayyid Abū al-A°lā Mawdūdī (founder of Jamaat-e Islami), *Tajdīd wa iḥyā-yi dīn* (Lahore: Islamic Publisher Ltd., 1999); 89ff. Aziz Ahmad, "Political and Religious Ideas of Shāh Walī Allāh of Delhi," *The Muslim World* 52 (1962): 22-30.

[569] On the historiography of Islam in India and the problem of 'identity,' see Carl Ernst, *Eternal Garden: Mysticism, History, and Politics at a South Asian Sufi Center* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992), 18-22; William C. Chittick, *In Search of the Lost Heart: Explorations in Islamic Thought*, Mohammed Rustom et al. (eds.), (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2012), 153-54.

[570] See, *inter alia*, Walī Allāh, *al-Tafhīmāt al-ilāhiyya*, 2:135, 143, 246, 249, 261-71; *al-Budūr al-bāzigha*, 4-9; *Lamaḥāt* (Sindh: Shāh Walī Allāh Academy, n.d.), 1-9; *Saṭa°āt* (Sindh: Shāh Walī Allāh Academy, 1964), 2-14; *al-Khayr al-Kathīr* (Cairo: Maktaba al-Qāhira, 1974), 55-61.

[571] Walī Allāh, *al-Tafhīmāt al-ilāhiyya*, 1:191, 212; 2:159, 257; *Lamaḥāt*, 60-70.

[572] Walī Allāh, *Hama°at* (Sindh: Shāh Walī Allāh Academy, 1964), 22-23; William Chittick, "The Five Divine Presences: From al-Qunawi to al-Qaysari," *The Muslim World* 72 (1982): 107-28.

[573] Walī Allāh, *Ḥujjat Allāh al-Bāligha,* trans. Hermansen, 37-48, 53-56, 287-98. Although the *Ḥujjat* primarily is a socio-juridical work, it contains discussions of °alām al-mithāl (the imaginal world), emanation, spirit (*rūh*), and the nature of death that deserve scholarly investigation. It is significant that in this book, which is meant to engage a broad spectrum of intellectuals, Walī Allāh goes on to show that some of these Sufi ideas such the notion of "the imaginal world" can be traced back to the *aḥādīth* of the Prophet. On Walī Allāh's notion of 'the imaginal world,' see Fuad Naeem, "The Imaginal World (°Ālam al-Mithāl) in the Philosophy of Shāh Walī Allāh al-Dihlawī," *Islamic Studies,* 44.3 (2005): 363-390.

[574] Walī Allāh, *Ḥujjat Allāh al-Bāligha,* trans. Hermansen, xxiv; Rizvi, *Shāh Walī Allāh*, ch. 4; Walī Allāh, *Anfās*, 202ff; *al-Tafhīmāt al-ilāhiyya*, 1:15-16.

was under attack.[575] So for example, in the preface of his magnum opus *Ḥujjat-Allāh al-bāligha,* he laments the intellectual impoverishment of his day:

> It discouraged me that I am in an age of ignorance, prejudice, and following the passions, in which every person has a high opinion of his ruinous opinions; for being contemporary is the basis of disagreement, and whoever writes makes himself a target.[576]

According to Walī Allāh, the *fuqahāʾ* (jurists) of his day were immersed in *taqlīd* (imitation of authority), and the *qādis*[577] of his time became embroiled in hypocritical practices.[578] Moreover, the *ʿulamāʾ*'s attitude toward *fiqh* ossified in the imitation of one or the other school of law, e.g. *ḥanafī* or *mālikī*. Added to this was the uncritical adherence to the infallibility of one's ancestors, which people took seriously.[579] Although himself a Sufi *shaykh,*[580] Walī Allāh was critical of the popular practices of many Sufis and Sufi orders. He was against the popular practice of visiting Sufi shrines, and made scathing remarks about those Sufis who, instead of taking guidance from the Qurʾān and the Sunna, focused on ostentatious ruptures and worldly poetry.[581] Although scholars generally associate Walī Allāh with other reform-minded, conservative thinkers such as Ibn Taymiyya, Ibn Qayyūm al-Jawziyya (d. 751/1350), and Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb (d. 1206/1792), his was a project that essentially promoted philosophical Sufism (see below).[582] Rudolph Peters, for instance, asserts that Walī Allāh's legal treatises are even more conservative at times than the comparable but later works of al-Shawkānī (d. 1247/1832) and al-Sanūsī (d. 1275/1859).[583] However, this conclusion is unwarranted since much of Walī Allāh's writings show his penchant for mystical cosmologies/visions that would rather scandalize the likes of Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb, who was more of a puritanical spirit.[584] Moreover, during his sojourn in the Holy Cities (i.e. Mecca and Medina), Walī Allāh had numerous mystical visions in which his questions were answered and he was instructed to carry out a mission.[585] It appears that these same mystical visions also influenced his legal opinions/doctrines such as *ijtihād* and legal pluralism.[586] At any rate, since in this chapter I am concerned with Walī Allāh's conception of the self, let me now turn my attention to it.

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[575] Walī Allāh, *Ḥujjat,* 7-10; Rizvi, *Shāh Walī Allāh,* 289ff.

[576] Walī Allāh, *Ḥujjat Allāh al-Bāligha,* trans. Hermansen, 8.

[577] *qāḍī*: a Muslim judge who judges according to Islamic Law.

[578] Cf. Mullā Ṣadrā, ch. 2, 41-42.

[579] Hermansen, *Shāh Walī Allāh's Treatises on Islamic law,* xxviii-xxxii and 127ff.; Rizvi, *Shāh Walī Allāh,* 245-49.

[580] See e.g. Walī Allāh, *Fuyūd al-ḥaramayn* (Karachi: Muḥammad Saʿīd, n.d.), 127, 228-238, 297-98; *al-Tafhīmāt al-ilāhiyya* 2:59,112, 136-137, 145, 150, 160.

[581] Rizvi, *Shāh Walī Allāh,* 313-14. Cf. Mullā Ṣadrā on this, ch. 3, 5-10.

[582] For a historical study on the intellectual background of the major 18th century reformers, see Basheer M. Nafi, "Taṣawwuf and Reform in Pre-Modern Islamic Culture: In Search of Ibrāhīm al-Kūrānī," *Die Welt des Islams* 42.3, Arabic Literature and Islamic Scholarship in the 17th/18th Century: Topics and Biographies (2002): 307-355.

[583] It is rather surprising that Peters characterizes Walī Allāh's legal thought as 'fundamentalist.' Although Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb and Walī Allāh seem to share certain intellectual genealogy, the vast differences in their approach to Islam have been made clear by various scholars. See e.g. Hamid Algar, *Wahhabism: A Critical Essay* (Oneonta: Islamic Publications International, 2002), *passim.* As for Peters' study on Walī Allāh, see Rudolph Peters, "Idjtihād and Taqlīd in 18th and 19th Century Islam," *Die Welt des Islams,* New Series, 20.3/4 (1980): 131-145. Hamid Algar, *Wahhabism: A Critical Essay,* 30ff.

[584] See for instance, Walī Allāh, *al-Tafhīmāt al-ilāhiyya,* 1:191, 212; 2:159, 257; *Lamaḥāt,* 60-70.

[585] Hermansen, *Shāh Walī Allāh's Treatises,* xxvi.

[586] Hermansen, *Shāh Walī Allāh's Treatises,* xxvi. Walī Allāh's writings show that he was an unabashed supporter of *ijtihād,* and rejects the view that "the gate of ijtihad" was ever closed. However, he draws a careful distinction

A Note on the Texts Used

A word needs to be said concerning the texts I will be using in my analysis of Walī Allāh's theory of the self. The main texts that I will be using in my analysis are *Alṭāf al-quds fī maʿrifat laṭāʾif al-nafs* (written in Persian), *al-Tafhīmāt al-ilāhiyya* and *al-Budūr al-bāzigha*. In addition, I will be drawing upon other texts such as *Ḥujjat Allāh al-bāligha*, *al-Khayr al-kathīr*, *Saṭaʿāt*, *Lamaḥāt* etc. My purpose is to provide a comprehensive account of the self in Walī Allāh's various writings. However, it should be noted that among these treatises some e.g. *Alṭāf al-quds* belong to what we might call Walī Allāh's middle period (i.e. 1735-45), while others e.g. *al-Tafhīmāt al-ilāhiyya* and *al-Budūr al-bāzigha* are late works, or, in the case of the *Tafhīmāt*, a late compilation (with revision) of earlier treatises.[587] So, I take into account the developments in Walī Allāh's theory of selfhood that one observes between his middle and late period. The advantage of reading Walī Allāh's earlier and later works simultaneously allows me to be cognizant of the developments that one observes in his writings. However, this does not mean one would encounter two radically different pictures of the self between *Alṭāf al-quds* and the *Tafhīmāt*. So it remains the case that *Alṭāf al-quds* is Walī Allāh's most sustained and most sophisticated treatment of selfhood among his corpus. Hence a considerable portion of our analysis is based on this treatise. However, we frequently refer to other works either to compare or point out revision concerning a particular issue.

Overcoming the Terminological Confusion

In the last chapter, we observed that for Mullā Ṣadrā, the self is both a 'spectrum' and an 'aspirational' concept. This means as a spectrum concept, the self consists of multiple degrees and dimensions, namely the bio-physiological, socio-cultural and ethico-metaphysical dimensions. And as we recall from ch. 1, the self as 'spectrum' is a given state of affairs that is found in every individual self regardless of their efforts.[588] However, for Mullā Ṣadrā, that is only half the story, since for him to be a self means to *aspire* to realize the ideal human state as exemplified by the perfect human, whence idea of 'sculpting the self.' As we shall soon see, such a basic picture of the self as being a combination of spectrum and aspiration pervades the writings of Shāh Walī Allāh as well. But whereas for Ṣadrā (and philosophers in general) the word *nafs* captures the idea of the self in a systematic manner, such is hardly the case with Walī Allāh and the Sufis, whose musings on a given topic are often characterized by shifting perspectives.[589] So it is necessary to settle the terminological debate over the word 'self' in Walī Allāh's works at the outset.

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between "absolute independent ijtihād" and "absolute affiliated ijtihād." In Walī Allāh's view, although ijtihād at the level of the founders of the schools is no longer possible, jurists can and should perform ijtihād in order to respond to new challenges and situation. Concerning the issue of pluralism, it can be asserted that Walī Allāh advocates legal pluralism, which seeks to ease the situation of the general public. Unlike many conservative jurists, Walī Allāh affirms that the layperson should have the right to cross the boundary of her school, if it makes things easier for her or if it involves the right of another person. He thinks the diversity of legal rulings is meant to facilitate the life of people, not to restrict it.

[587] For an extensive chronology of Walī Allāh's works, see Baljon, *Religion and Thought of Shāh Walī Allāh Dihlavi,* 10-14 and Walī Allāh, *al-Tafhīmāt al-ilāhiyya,* 1:15-38.
[588] See ch. 1, 15ff.
[589] A prime example of this is Ibn ʿArabī, whose mystical exposition is known for its shifting perspectives, see Chittick, *Sufi Path of Knowledge*, ix-xx; *Self-Disclosure of God*, ixff. However, as Giovanni Martini points out in his recent study on Simnānī's mysticism, one has to be careful before dismissing the character of such thought as

To begin with, Walī Allāh uses a dizzying number of Arabic and Persian terms to explicate the nature and various aspects of the self, viz., *nafs, rūḥ, nafs nāṭiqa, anāniyya, khūd, dhāt, nafs bahīma, nafs muṭmaʾinna, nafs ᶜammāra, nafs kullī, nafs insānī, nafs shahwānī, nafs sabᶜī, nafs ādamī, rūh ḥaywānī, rūḥ ᶜilwī, rūḥ malakūtī, qalb, ᶜaql, sirr, khafī, akhfā, ḥajar-i baḥt, nūr quds, anāniyya khāṣṣ, anāniyya kubrā, anāniyya muṭlaq, ṭabīᶜat-i bashar,* and *ḥaqīqat-i insān.* But it should be pointed out that most of the abovementioned terms denote aspects of the self rather than the self itself. Among the 'lead' terms for self, the most notable candidates are *nafs, rūḥ, nafs nāṭiqa, anāniyya,*[590] and *khūd,*[591] for which textual evidence will soon be

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being irrational. It may be that an unsystematic usage of *nafs* and *rūḥ* would reveal something profound about the nature of the self, which, as Ṣadrā has pointed out, is elusive and multidimensional. Martini uses the example of 'body' and the terms such as '*badan*' and '*shabḥ*' that are used by Simnānī to describe it as a case in point. According to Martini, the use of different words and terms to refer to the same concept should not be considered a sign of inconsistency, nor should it be explained as a stylistic exigency. This is because each time the topics are approached with and illustrated by slightly different points of view in order to enrich and the deepen the reader's understanding of them, so that the reader is obliged, each time, to re-engage with the text. Moreover, he says that "When reading a Sufi treatise one should in fact never lose sight of the fact that the addressee was an initiate to the path, and that the reading was primary as a supportive device for him to grasp spiritual concepts." Thus looking at the same issue and continuously switching the terminology is one of the main devices to reach this goal, and therefore it should be counted as one of the main characterizing features of Sufi literature *tout court*. This is a crucial point, given that it definitively distinguishes Sufi prose from the philosophical one, which, on the contrary, is constantly and by definition in quest of a coherent and systematic articulation. This statement remains also true for those Sufi authors who adopt a more technical language, which saw the use of numerous philosophical vocabularies. In Martini's view, the use of different words and terms to refer to the same object is inextricably linked with the issue of symbolism and the role played by the semantic field of these very same words that are made stronger and easier by the traditional root-oriented structure of Arabic grammar and dictionaries. In fact, any technically speaking 'false-synonym' word used in the treatment automatically singles out not only its homographs and homoradicals, but also, the primary meaning of the root itself. For instance, the more common word for 'body' is *badan*. This word derives from the verb *badana* meaning 'to be/become fat and corpulent.' The noun *budn* then means 'fatness' and 'compactness,' while *badan* is, technically speaking, the 'body without the head, arms and legs,' that is, the trunk, torso (in contrast to *jasad*), while the Qur'an (10:92) uses the word with the meaning 'body without soul' (see, Lane, Arabic-English Lexicon, with the root '*b-d-n*'). All of this put together, returns to the idea of the body as being a plentiful, inert, insentient, compact, spherical mass: no soul, nor head, arms and legs; fatness and compactness. Now consider what happens when we begin to use the word *shabḥ* to refer to the body. The verb *shabuḥa* means, 'said of a man, He was, or became, broad in the fore arms, or long therein' (Lane, Arabic-English Lexicon, 4:1495). Lane reports from the classical dictionaries the following example: '*shabaḥa-hu*, […] He extended, stretched, or stretched out, it, or him […] between two stakes inserted and fixed in the ground […] when he was beaten, or crucified, […] or like him who is crucified.' This time, when looking at the concept of the body, this is seen in a slightly different way, so that *other aspects of the same object are highlighted*. Now the body is no longer armless, but on the contrary, the accent is precisely on the presence and maximum extension of the forearms, so the body looks more like a cross than a sphere. But there is more to it: the question is made conceptually even more interesting by another element. That is, the word *shabḥ* does not only signify 'body,' but even more precisely the 'bodily or corporeal form or figure or substance, of a man or some other thing or object, which one sees from a distance, […], a man or some other creature, appears to one.' Thus, one may see that using different terms to refer to the same object can be a great advantage sometimes. See Giovanni Maria Martini, *ᶜAlāʾ al-Dawla al-Simnānī between Spiritual Authority and Political Power a Persion Lord and Intellectual in the Heart of the Ilkhanate* (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 415-16.

[590] The following is an example where the term *anāniyya* is used: "Either the individual selfhood (*anāniyyat-i khāṣṣ*) subsists in the absolute selfhood (*anāniyyat-i muṭlaqa*) or [the gnostic regards] the individual selfhood as the absolute selfhood, or else, he might become oblivious to his individual selfhood (*anāniyyat-i khāṣṣ*), neither affirming nor denying it." Walī Allāh, *Alṭāf al-quds*, 123.

[591] An example '*khūd*' as a self term: "This means the individual should be arduous in fighting against his self (*tā ādamī khūd bar khūd jūsh zanad*), and should dislike himself and be the judge of his own self (*khūd bar khūd ḥākim bāshad*)." Walī Allāh, *Alṭāf al-quds*, 79. Also, "If the angelic soul dominates, the wayfarer will lose himself in the

provided. My goal in this section is to show that the common connotations of these terms belong to the same 'spectrum' and 'aspiration' concept understood as 'self.' To recall, the general definition of the self in this study signifies "the sense of being an 'I' that involves self-awareness and self-knowledge." That is to say, the basic sense of the self for the authors concerned in this study implies *self-knowledge*, *first-person subjectivity*, and *agency*. With this framework in place, let me now examine how Walī Allāh employs various terms to define the self.

One of Walī Allāh's most frequently used terms for 'self' is '*nafs*.' For instance, the word '*nafs*' is used in the definition of self in the following text:

> There are still more forms (*ṣuwar*) that are specific to individuals (*afrād*) only. These are called selves (*al-nufūs*), which are the origins of the individual [human's] specific characteristics and by which Zayd is Zayd, Amr is Amr, you are you and I am I (*wa anā anā*), just like the human form (*al-ṣura al-insāniyya*) makes human a human, and the animal form (*al-ṣūra al-ḥaywāniyya*) makes animal an animal.[592]

So, the term *nafs* denotes 'forms' (*ṣuwar*) that individuate each person by their specific characteristics and make them distinct entities, e.g. Zayd, Amr, I or you. That is to say, *nafs* or self is that which makes 'me' or 'you' a specific 'me' or 'you.' Moreover, in this case, the term has a 'neutral' sense, devoid of any moral or ethical connotation, which will be commented on Iqbāl as well (see ch. 6). For now I will not discuss the Aristotelian overtone of this definition, since my purpose is simply to pick out and clarify Walī Allāh's lead terms for the self. In another context, Walī Allāh uses the expression 'the rational soul' (*al-nafs al-nāṭiqa*) as a synonym of *nafs* to refer to the individuating form (*al-ṣūra al-shakhṣiyya*) by which every human acquires his individuality:

> Know that the rational soul (*al-nafs al-nāṭiqa*) is the individuating form (*al-ṣūra al-shakhṣiyya*) by which every human acquires his individuality (*fardiyya*).[593]

That is, Shāh Walī Allāh adopts the Avicennan term for self, i.e. 'the rational soul' and uses it interchangeably with *nafs*.[594] Further evidence of its interchangeability can be gleaned from the passage below, where both terms have been used to refer to the same reality:

> Similarly, there is a self (*nafs*) governing the human order (*niẓām-i insān*), which gives rise to such attributes in man as a universal outlook (*rāhī kullī*) and the five *laṭāʾif*,[595] with all their ramifications. This is known as the rational soul (*nafs-i nāṭiqa*).[596]

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holy spirit, and pass through an annihilation of himself into subsistence, and to his self again (*bāz khūd rā biyāvarad*). This is the prophetic inheritance (*wirāthat-i nubuwwat*)." Walī Allāh, *Alṭāf al-quds*, 37.

[592] Shāh Walī Allāh, *al-Budūr al-bāzigha,* edited by Şaghīr Ḥasan al-Maʿṣūmī (Hyderabad, Sindh: Shāh Walī Allāh Academy, 1970), 15.

[593] Walī Allāh, *al-Budūr al-bāzigha*, 38.

[594] For Avicenna, the rational soul has different connotations. Generally speaking, in the Avicennan paradigm the rational part of the self has two faces: one that looks downwards to the body and the sensitive part of the soul, and another looking upwards. See Avicenna, *De anima* I.5 (94.8–14); *Kitāb al-najāt*, 6.2.4, trans. Rahman, 33. See also, Gutas, "Avicenna: The Metaphysics of the Rational Soul," 419ff.

[595] For a full exposition of the *laṭāʾif*, see section IV.

[596] Walī Allāh, *Alṭāf al-quds*, 26-7.

So the above text clearly establishes both *'nafs'* and *'nafs-i nāṭiqa'* as the two 'self' terms. To further corroborate whether they can indeed be used as 'self' terms, Walī Allāh, in much agreement with Ṣadrā and the philosophers, refers to features such as self-knowledge, first-person subjectivity, incorporeality, and agency. Here are some examples:[597]

> The perception of incorporeal things (*umūr-i mujarrad*) belongs exclusively to the rational soul (*nafs-i nāṭiqa*), and not to the imagination and estimation… What characterizes the rational soul (*nafs-i nāṭiqa*) is that it is free of material attributes (*ṣifat-i ān barāʾat ast az lawāḥiq-i mādda*).[598]
> When we disembody ourselves (*idhā tajarradnā*) to our inner self (*wijdāninā*), we come to know that our substance (*jawharinā*) is made of intellectual existence (*wujūdan ʿaqliyyan*). Moreover, we know that it is always awake and possessing presential knowledge (*ʿilman ḥuḍūran*) of itself, just as it knows the rational soul through itself (*al-nafs al-nuṭqiyya bi-nafsihā*).[599]

Not unlike Ṣadrā, Walī Allāh also uses the concept of 'presential knowledge' (*al-ʿilm al-ḥuḍūrī*) to explain how the self or the rational soul knows itself without any intermediary.[600] It is also important to note that Walī Allāh is aware of how these terms are used by the philosophers, as he notes their Aristotelian background:

> The faculties of the rational soul (*nafs-i nāṭiqa*) have been divided into three categories by the philosophers: natural faculties (*quwā-yi ṭabīʿiyya*), animal faculties (*quwā-yi ḥaywāniyya*) and perceptual faculties (*quwā-yi idrākiyya*). These have been located respectively in the liver, the physical heart and the brain.[601]

However, he tweaks the Aristotelian conception of the rational soul by adopting the Neoplatonic notion of the hypostasis of 'the Soul,' which is further transformed via Sufism as 'the universal soul' (*nafs-i kullī*). Here is how he conceives of the rational soul's relation to the universal soul:

> [T]he rational soul, which is a bubble (*ḥabbāb*) in the ocean of the universal soul, or an image formed from its wax (*mithālī ast az shamʿ-i nafs-i kulliyya*), or it is an individual within the universal (*fardī ast az kullī*), or it is a part (*ḥiṣṣa*) of Reality (*ḥaqīqat*) from a certain aspect. Each of these analogies is valid.[602]

If Walī Allāh had restricted himself to using only *nafs* and *nafs-i nāṭiqa* while constructing his theory of the self, matters would have been both consistent and uncontroversial.

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[597] I will analyze the content of these texts in later sections.

[598] Walī Allāh, *Alṭāf al-quds*, 133.

[599] Walī Allāh, *al-Tafhīmāt al-ilāhiyya,* 1:225.

[600] See ch. 2, 52-54.

[601] Walī Allāh, *Alṭāf al-quds*, 39.

[602] Walī Allāh, *Alṭāf al-quds*, 113. Walī Allāh further clarifies this relationship: "Every soul has its own particular matter (*har nafsī rā mādda-yī hast khāṣṣ*), which manifests the universal soul according to the preparedness (*istiʿdād*) of its matter. Thus, for each distinct matter the universal soul appears in a particular manner. Once such a matter is purified by the grace of the universal soul, it is able to receive a soul (*nafs*) of its own. In the same way, when through a fresh emanation (*fayḍ*) it is further purified, it inevitably becomes capable of receiving a soul which is subtler, purer and more intelligent than the first." Walī Allāh, *Alṭāf al-quds*, 114.

However, he introduces another malleable term, namely 'rūḥ' to talk about the self. Since in Walī Allāh's usage, the term 'rūḥ' is sometimes used to mean 'spirit' and sometimes as a synonym of *nafs*, we will need textual evidence to see its contrasting connotations. The texts below show how *nafs* and *rūḥ* can be synonymous insofar as they both mean 'the principle of life:'

> Sometimes the word *nafs* is used to mean the principle of life (*mabdaʾ-i ḥayāt*). In this sense it is synonymous with the *rūḥ* (*bi-īn maʿnā murādif-i rūḥ bāshad*)…[603]
> By *rūḥ* is meant that which when it is associated with the body (*jasad*) is the source of the latter's life, while when divorced from it is the cause of its death (*sabab-i mawt*).[604]

However, *rūḥ* can also mean 'fine air' (*nasīm-i ṭayyib*) that percolates through the body or the angelic spirit (*rūḥ-i malakūt*) in which case it will not be synonymous with *nafs*. But before expanding on this, one should also note that *nafs* for Walī Allāh also means 'the lower self' that satisfies the carnal desires, or one of the five *laṭāʾif*[605] that constitutes the rational soul.[606] Moreover, to further complicate the matter, there are other terms such as *qalb*, *ʿaql* etc., each of which have their particular meaning and are related to the self.[607] Interestingly, Walī Allāh himself acknowledges the cloudiness surrounding all these terms and sets out to clarify each of them one by one. He begins by stating that there is a lot of loose talk in Sufi discourse concerning this issue (*darīn maqam az tasāmuḥ dar taʿbīrāt-i ṣūfiyya khilalī padīd āmadih ast*).[608] At any rate, it is instructive to note that the inconsistent use of these terms, viz., *nafs*, *qalb*, *rūḥ* and *ʿaql* in Sufi parlance was observed by al-Ghazālī nearly seven hundred years before Walī Allāh when the former was writing his *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn*, with which Walī Allāh was intimately familiar. Before elaborating on Walī Allāh's demystification of these terms, we would like to quote al-Ghazālī on this. Al-Ghazālī writes:

> But few of the leading scholars have a comprehensive knowledge of these terms (i.e., *nafs, rūḥ, qalb* and *ʿaql*) and their different meanings… Most of the mistakes regarding them originate in ignorance of the meaning of these names, and of the way in which they are applied to different objects… One of these is the term 'heart' (*qalb*), and it is used with two meanings. One of them is the cone-shaped organ of flesh that is located at the left side of the chest. It is a particular sort of flesh within which there is a cavity, and in this cavity there is black blood that is the source and seat of the spirit (*rūḥ*)… Whenever we use the term heart in this book, we do not mean this sort of heart… The second meaning of the heart is a spiritual lordly *laṭīfa* (*laṭīfa rabbāniyya rūḥāniyya*), which is connected with the physical heart. This *laṭīfa* is the real essence of human. This heart is the part of human that perceives, knows and experiences; it is addressed, punished, rebuked, and held responsible, and it has some connection with the physical heart…

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[603] Walī Allāh, *Alṭāf al-quds*, 73-4.
[604] Walī Allāh, *Alṭāf al-quds*, 23.
[605] The five *laṭāʾif* are *nafs, qalb, ʿaql, sirr* and *rūḥ*. It should be noted, however, that in his early treatise *al-Qawl al-jamīl*, Walī Allāh lists six *laṭāʾif*, the sixth one being 'anā,' which he would refine later. See Walī Allāh, *al-Qawl al-jamīl* (Bombay: ʿAlī Bhai Sharf ʿAlī and Company. n.d.), 105. For a detailed investigation of the *laṭāʾif*, see pp. 155.
[606] Walī Allāh, *Alṭāf al-quds*, 24.
[607] For a detailed explanation, see pp. 133ff.
[608] Walī Allāh, *Alṭāf al-quds*, 74.

Whenever we use the term heart in this book, we mean by it this *laṭīfa*… The second term is spirit (*rūḥ*), and it is also used with two meanings relevant to our purpose. One of these meanings refers to a 'subtle body' (*jism laṭīf*) whose source is the cavity of the physical heart, and which spreads by means of the pulsative arteries to all the other parts of the body… Whenever physicians use the term spirit (*rūḥ*) they have in mind this meaning, which is a subtle vapor (*bukhār laṭīf*) produced by the heat of the heart… The second meaning of [*rūḥ*] is that *laṭīfa* in human which knows and perceives, which we have already explained in one of the meanings of the heart. It is the meaning intended by God, the Exalted, in His statement, "Say: the spirit is my Lord's affair" (17:85)… The third term *nafs* (soul/self), partakes of many meanings, two of which pertain to our purpose. By one is denoted that meaning which includes both the faculty of anger (*ghaḍab*) and of appetence (*shahwa*) in human, which we will explain later. This meaning is prevalent among the Sufis (*ahl al-taṣawwuf*), for they mean by *nafs* that principle in human which includes his blameworthy characters (*ṣifāṭ madhmūma*)… The second meaning is that *laṭīfa* which we have mentioned, which is the real human nature (*ḥaqīqat al-insān*). It is essence of human and his self (*hiya nafs al-insān wa-dhātuhu*). But it is described by different descriptions according to its different states… But the *nafs* according to the second definition is praiseworthy, for it is human's very self or his essence and real nature, which knows God, the Exalted, and all other knowable things. The fourth term, which is intellect (*ᶜaql*), also partakes of various meanings that we have mentioned in the *Book of Knowledge*. Of these, two are relevant to our purpose. Intellect may be used with the force of knowledge of real nature of things, and is thus an expression for the quality of knowledge whose seat is the heart. Second, intellect may be used to denote that which perceives knowledge, or the heart in the sense of the *laṭīfa*… So intellect may be used as meaning the quality of the knower, and it may be used to mean the seat of perception, the mind which perceives. So it is now made clear that to you that there exist the following meanings of these terms: the corporeal heart, the corporeal spirit, the appetitive soul and noetics (*al-ᶜulūm*). These are four meanings that are denoted by four terms. There is also a fifth meaning, which pertains to the abovementioned *laṭīfa* in human that knows and perceives, and all four of these names are successively applied to it.[609] There are then five meanings and four terms, and each term is used with two meanings.[610]

Little remains to be said after such a lucid account. As we shall soon see, Walī Allāh draws significantly from al-Ghazālī's *Iḥyāʾ* regarding the meanings of the four abovementioned terms, but at the same time, unlike al-Ghazālī, he provides a consistent empirical basis for the theory of selfhood through an account of the *nasama* (*pneuma*) and the *laṭāʾif* (see section 4). In any event,

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[609] Although this subtle tenuous substance is connected with and used by the rest of the body as well, yet this connection is by means of the heart, which is why its primary connection is with the heart. Therefore, the Sufi Sahl al-Tustarī has likened the heart to the throne and the breast to the seat. For fundamental texts concerning the nature and function of the 'heart' in Sufi psychology, see Sachiko Murata, *The Tao of Islam: A Sourcebook of Gender Relationships in Islamic Thought* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992), ch. 10. For the 'heart' in Ibn ᶜArabī's thought in general, see James Morris, *The Reflective Heart: Discovering Spiritual Intelligence in Ibn ᶜArabī's Meccan Illuminations* (Louisville: Fons Vitae, 2005), 131–40.

[610] Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyāʾ ᶜulūm al-dīn,* edited by Muḥammad Ḥusayn (Cairo: al-Maktabat al-Thaqāfī, 1937), 8: 1343-46; modified trans. taken from Walter James Skellie, *Kitāb sharḥ ᶜajāʾib al-qalb* = The Marvels of the Heart: Book 21 of the *Iḥyāʾ ᶜulūm al-dīn*, the Revival of the Religious Sciences (Louisville, KY: Fons Vitae, 2010), 5-10.

after acknowledging that words such as *nafs* and *rūḥ* are used in a variety of different ways, Walī Allāh goes on to explain that sometimes the *nafs* is used to mean the principle of life (*mabdaʾ-i ḥayāt*), in which case it is synonymous with the *rūḥ*, as noted earlier. But Walī Allāh also maintains that sometimes people use the word "*nafs* to refer to (base) human nature (*ṭabīʿat-i bashariyya*), with its need for food and drink, while on other occasions, the self denotes the appetitive self (*nafs-i shahwānī*)…"[611] Moreover, he goes on to suggest that *nafs* is the sum total of all the vices (*radhāʾil*) that result from one's carnal desires when they rule the heart and the intellect and enslave both of them.[612] So, we can see that Walī Allāh fully agrees with al-Ghazālī regarding the first meaning of *nafs*, which is "the principle in human that includes his blameworthy characters (*ṣifāṭ madhmūma*)" such as appetence and anger. Henceforth, we shall translate *nafs* as 'the lower self' whenever it is used in relation to base desires. However, as we have noted earlier, for Walī Allāh, *nafs* can also have a plain sense in which it does not have any associated moral or ethical bearings. In such a case, it will simply be translated as 'self,' which, for both Ghazālī and Walī Allāh, refers to 'the reality of human nature.' Similarly, Walī Allāh states that people use the word *rūḥ* (spirit) to mean the principle of life (*mabdaʾ-i ḥayāt*), and also, the fine air (*nasīm-i ṭayyib*) which percolates throughout the body.[613] And at other times they use it to refer to the angelic spirit (*rūḥ-i malakūt*), which was created thousands of years before the creation of human.[614] But he informs the reader that he is using the word *rūḥ* to mean "the heart (*qalb*) after it has abandoned its base instincts (*aḥkām-i suflāniyya*), and when its kinship with the angelic and rational souls (*rūḥ-i malakūt wa-nafs-i nāṭiqa*) becomes predominant."[615] However, unfortunately, as we will have numerous occasions to observe, he does not always follow his own advice, and often uses *rūḥ* synonymously with *nafs* to mean 'self' (i.e. the second meaning of *nafs*).

Since Walī Allāh's self is based on a robust theory of the five microcosmic *laṭāʾif*, viz., *nafs, rūḥ, qalb, ʿaql,* and *sirr*, and other macrocosmic *laṭāʾif* such as *khāfī* and *akhfā*, it would be useful to lay out how he defines these terms before moving on to the core of his theory of the self. Taking leads from al-Ghazālī's *Iḥyāʾ*, he notes that when people mention the heart (*qalb*), they sometimes refer to the cone-shaped lump of flesh, while at other times they intend to convey the idea of a mental faculty (*laṭīfa-yi darrāka*), synonymous with the intellect (*ʿaql*). Again, much like al-Ghazālī, he defines *qalb* to mean "the spirits of the heart (*arwāḥ-i qalbiyya*) that possess such mental attributes (*ṣifāt-i nafsāniyya*) as anger and shame (*ḥayā*)."[616] Next, Walī Allāh mentions that the word intellect (*ʿaql*) sometimes refers to knowing (*dānistan*) or the faculty which gives rise to knowing. In this sense, intellect becomes merely an accidental corporeal property (*ʿaraḍī*), and not a self-subsistent substance (*jawhar qāʿim bi-nafsihi*). Elsewhere, he observes that people use the term *ʿaql* to mean the substance of the self (*jawhar-i rūḥ*), since some of its functions include understanding (*baʿḍ afʿāl-i ū kih idrāk ast*).[617] Then he goes on to assert that intellect for him denotes "the perceptive faculty which imagines and verifies (*quwā-yi idrākiyya kih taṣawwur wa-taṣdīq namāyad*), so that the heart (*qalb*) and the lower self (*nafs*) may follow its lead, and a coordinating function may arise in the constitution

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[611] Walī Allāh, *Alṭāf al-quds*, 73-4.

[612] Walī Allāh, *Alṭāf al-quds*, 74.

[613] Walī Allāh, *Alṭāf al-quds*, 75. Cf. Walī Allāh, *Ḥujjat Allāh al-bāligha*, 1:38, which also says the *rūḥ* is the source of life in the animal, which is alive due to a breathing of the *rūḥ* into it and dies when it is separated from it.

[614] Walī Allāh, *Alṭāf al-quds*, 75.

[615] Walī Allāh, *Alṭāf al-quds*, 75.

[616] Walī Allāh, *Alṭāf al-quds*, 74.

[617] Walī Allāh, *Alṭāf al-quds*, 74.

of the perceptive faculty (*quwwat-i darrāka*) to which the heart and the lower self (*nafs*) lend their support."[618] He further affirms that "these three *laṭāʿif* (i.e. *nafs, qalb*, and *ʿaql*) permeate the whole body, although the heart is located in the physical heart, the self (*nafs*) in the liver, and the intellect in the brain."[619] Likewise, the word *sirr*, as Walī Allāh explains, indicates concealment. But he quickly follows up by saying that each one of the *laṭāʾif* is concealed, which is why people sometimes refer to the intellect (*ʿaql*) and sometimes to the spirit (*rūḥ*) as *sirr*.[620] According to Walī Allāh, however, "*sirr* is the intellect (*ʿaql*) after it has given up earthly inclinations and is governed by the impulses of the sublime world (*aḥkām-i ʿilwī bar ū ghālib āyad*), thereby attaining vision of the supreme manifestation (*tajalli-yi aʿẓam*)."[621] Finally, the word *rūḥ*, when used as one of the *laṭāʾif*, means the higher aspect of the heart (*qalb*), when it is purified of its passional elements.[622] The theory of the *laṭāʾif* will be explored in detail in section IV, but it would be useful to remember that, although both *rūḥ* and *sirr* have a physical locus, they are incorporeal:

> It has been established that the *laṭīfa* of the *rūḥ* transcends the body, i.e. incorporeal (*laṭīfa-yi rūḥ az jasad bartar ast*) but its locus is the physical heart. Similarly, the *sirr* is incorporeal but its locus is the brain.[623]

The Presence of the Self from the First Person

Self-Knowledge and First-Person Subjectivity

From the previous section we learned that *nafs, nafs-i nāṭiqa* and *rūḥ* (when used synonymously with *nafs*) are Walī Allāh's primary 'self' terms. Walī Allāh further asserts that "the perception of incorporeal things (*umūr-i mujarrad*) belongs exclusively to the self or the rational soul (*nafs-i nāṭiqa*), not to the imagination and estimation, and what characterizes the rational soul is that it is free of material attributes (*ṣifat-i ān barāʾat ast az lawāḥiq-i mādda*)."[624] Furthermore, Walī Allāh's theory of the self depends on a complex notion of *pneuma* (*nasama*)[625] or breath like subtle body, which underlies all the different corporeal and incorporeal *laṭāʾif* or what we might call 'subtle fields of consciousness' (see section IV for a full explanation). But a systematic foray into such an account of the self must first address the epistemological question, how might one know that the self is composed of subtle, incorporeal fields of consciousness or the *laṭāʾif*, or, how might one perceive such incorporeal phenomena, which constitute one's inner reality? But such an inquiry already presupposes 'self-consciousness' or a subject that experiences itself as an 'I,' so one might be wondering if Walī Allāh has an account of 'first-person subjectivity' comparable to Mullā Ṣadrā and the philosophers. Fortunately, in his late work *al-Tafhīmāt al-Ilāhiyya*, Walī Allāh comes up with a series of reflections on 'first-person subjectivity' through the distinction of presential and representational knowledge. While Walī Allāh draws on the writings of philosophers to explain self-knowledge and the basic structure of self-consciousness,

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[618] Walī Allāh, *Alṭāf al-quds*, 74.
[619] Walī Allāh, *Alṭāf al-quds*, 74-5.
[620] Walī Allāh, *Alṭāf al-quds*, 75.
[621] Walī Allāh, *Alṭāf al-quds*, 75.
[622] Walī Allāh, *Alṭāf al-quds*, 75-6.
[623] Walī Allāh, *Alṭāf al-quds*, 75-6.
[624] Walī Allāh, *Alṭāf al-quds*, 133.
[625] Lit., breath which is a mixture of air and fire.

he also presents an original synthesis that links presential knowledge to the Sufi cosmological doctrine of 'deployed existence' (*al-wujūd al-munbasiṭ*).[626] In what follows, I will analyze texts that deal with presential knowledge and self-consciousness. Walī Allāh writes:

> "Presential knowledge (*al-ᶜilm al-ḥuḍūrī*) is that which leads [one] to the Necessary (*al-wājib*) and His Attributes, whereas representational knowledge (*al-ᶜilm al-ḥuṣūlī*) cannot arrive at this forbidden territory (*al-buqᶜa al-manyiᶜa*)) except by means of reasoning (*istidlāl*)."

Following Suhrawardī, Mullā Ṣadrā and fellow Indian philosophers, Walī Allāh distinguishes between presential and representational knowledge, although it must be noted that the general character of his philosophical writings lacks the refined systematicity and rigor of the philosophers. Regardless, Walī Allāh's main point is that since representational knowledge makes do with 'form' (*ṣūra*) rather than 'presence' (*ḥuḍūr*), it can only provide a form of the Necessary, even though this form may be identical with Its reality.[627] A few lines later, he connects self-knowledge with knowledge of God by saying "whoever knows his self through presential knowledge, knows his Lord through this knowledge (*man ᶜalima nafsahu bi-l-ᶜilm al-ḥuḍūrī faqad ᶜalima rabbahu fī dhālik al-ᶜilm*), and this is the distinguishing mark between the knower and the ignorant."[628] But what is the nature of this 'self-knowledge' or self-consciousness (as it involves a reflective stance toward one's 'I') in Walī Allāh? The following passage sheds some light on this:

> When we disembody ourselves (*idhā tajarradnā*) to our inner self (*wijdāninā*), we come to know that our substance (*jawharinā*) is made of intellectual existence (*wujūdan ᶜaqliyyan*). Moreover, we come know to that it is always awake and has presential knowledge (*ᶜilman ḥuḍūran*) of itself, which is similar to its knowing the rational soul through itself (*al-nafs al-nuṭqiyya bi-nafsihā*).[629]

Several things can be noted from the above. First, Walī Allāh comes tantalizingly close to Avicenna, Suhrawardī and Mullā Ṣadrā by mentioning the word '*tajarrud*' in its verbal form, since, if we recall the thought experiment of 'the hanging human,'[630] we would see that the general idea there is to conceive of a disembodied state that would enable the subject or the subject of experience to realize the immateriality of her 'self' or 'I.' There is still some controversy as to whether or not the 'immateriality' of 'the hanging human' experiment leads to a 'substance-based' notion of the self.[631] It is to be noted that Walī Allāh, unlike al-Rāzī, leans

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[626] The term *al-wujūd al-munbasiṭ* is also called *al-nafas al-raḥmān* (the Breadth of the all-Compassionate) in the Ibn ᶜArabian cosmology. It is the reality through which the entire cosmos including the angels, the heavens and all other entities is manifested. See Faruque, *Sufism contra Shariah*, 49-51.

[627] For a contrasting perspective by other Indian philosophers, see Ahmed, "Post-Classical Philosophical Commentaries/Glosses," 325ff.

[628] Walī Allāh, *al-Tafhīmāt al-ilāhiyya,* 2:46-7.

[629] Walī Allāh, *al-Tafhīmāt al-ilāhiyya,* 1:225.

[630] In the 'hanging human' experiment, it is assumed that if a man were to come into being in an adult condition but floating in space so that he could not affirm the existence of his body, he could still be certain of his existence as a soul. See Avicenna, *De anima* I.1 (36.49–37.68); V.7 (162.51–163.64).

[631] See Kaukua, *Self-Awareness in Islamic Philosophy*, 114-23. Against the Avicennan argument of inferring the self's substancehood from its immateriality, Abū al-Barakāt (d. 560/1165) claims that the connection between the 'I'

toward a 'substance-based' view. Yet Walī Allāh also makes the claim that through such an act of disembodiment (*tajarrud*), one comes to know that one's substance or essence is made of intellectual existence (*wujūdan ᶜaqliyyan*), which might be an explanatory term for 'immateriality' (see below). Next, he asserts that the self in such a state is 'present' to itself and is always awake, which is reminiscent of Suhrawardī's insight that the self's 'presence' (*ḥuḍūr*) to itself is never-interrupting.[632] Finally, he makes his most important claim, which is that the self's knowledge of itself through presential knowledge is similar to how it knows the rational soul (another term for 'self' as we demonstrated in section I) 'through itself' (*bi-nafsihā*). This means the self's knowledge of itself through self-presence does not involve an intermediary, i.e., self-knowledge in this case is 'direct.' This is because knowing the self through another (e.g. a concept or a medium such as a mirror) is assuredly different from knowing itself 'through itself.' In what seems to be his longest rumination concerning self-knowledge, consciousness and first-person subjectivity, Walī Allāh elaborates as follows:

> Now you are capable of understanding the transcendent matter (*amr munazza*). I have perceived it with an authentic *dhawq* (*bi-dhawq-i ṣādiq idrāk kardah-am*) and am surprised that you would deny it. Surely the reason for this is that you are trying to comprehend God through representational knowledge (*ᶜilm-i ḥuṣūlī*), which is impossible since you can only know Him through presential knowledge (*ᶜilm-i ḥuḍūrī*). The least you should know is that presential knowledge is pure consciousness (*shuᶜūr-i maḥḍ*), which is bereft of any relationality. And it is not possible to arrive at this [knowledge] by means of a second order knowledge (*ᶜilm al-ᶜilm*) (i.e. representational knowledge). Representational knowledge fails to obtain [pure consciousness], as it consists of a subject (*mawḍūᶜ*) and a predicate (*maḥmūl*) connected via a judgment (*ḥukm*). Your way around this [issue] would be to recognize true presential knowledge and empty your heart from the engendered form (*naqsh-i kawniyya*), which lies at the heart of representation knowledge. This would enable you to grasp your 'I,' (*anā ra bi-fahmīd*) and realize where it is going and what lies at its origin (*aṣl*). After you have performed such an act you can then apply representational knowledge to the Real (*ḥaqq*). We do not doubt that at that time representational knowledge would obtain its objective. All in all, you are capable of directing your attention (*tawajjuh*) to something devoid of time and space (*mujarrad az zamān u makān*) about which there is little doubt but you are still mistaken and confused regarding it. But it is not possible that through representational knowledge you can direct your attention to the immaterial (*mujarrad*). It is only when you have pure knowledge (*ᶜilm-i ṣirf*) you know for sure that the Real, glory be to Him, is utterly immaterial at its utmost degree and is not contained by time and space. However, despite God's being immaterial, it can be said of Him that your rational soul (*nafs-i nāṭiqa*) has the capacity to perceive Him, since it can perceive immaterial things (*mujarradāt*),

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as incorporeal substance and the 'I' one is constantly aware of is not self-evident. That is, the phenomenon of self-awareness that Avicenna appeals to, although uncontroversial in itself, does not have sufficient purchase power in regard to the question about the proper category and correct metaphysical classification of the self. In other words, no person in the street will feel compelled to commit either to the hylomorphic theory of the soul as the enmattered form of the body or to the dualist notion of the self as an independent entity that acts by means of the body but that, in itself, is immaterial. According to Abū al-Barakāt, the self's immateriality does not prove anything about its being a material or immaterial substance or a body or an accident in the body.

[632] See ch. 2, 44-49.

although not by way of sense perception, imagination or estimation (*nah bar sabīl-i iḥsās wa takhayyul wa tawahhum*).[633]

If we piece together all the quoted texts so far (including the one above), the overall picture that emerges from them is the following. One can only know God through presential knowledge, since representational knowledge involves a form and relationality, whereas God is beyond any relationality. But one cannot have true knowledge of the 'I' either based on representational knowledge, since it inevitably involves the engendered form (*naqsh-i kawniyya*), which becomes a barrier or an intermediary between the 'I' as presence and the 'I' as a form/concept. That is the reason Walī Allāh equates presential knowledge with pure consciousness (*shuʿūr-i maḥḍ*), which is bereft of any relationality, or the subject-object dichotomy. After that he asks the reader to recognize presential knowledge and empty the self from the engendered form (*naqsh-i kawniyya*), which then would enable her to grasp her 'I' and its origin (*aṣl*). The end result of this exercise would be not only unalloyed self-knowledge through self-presence, but also knowledge of the divine; hence his statement that I cited earlier: "Whoever knows his self through presential knowledge, knows his Lord through this knowledge (*man ʿalima nafsahu bi-l-ʿilm al-ḥuḍūrī faqad ʿalima rabbahu fī dhālik al-ʿilm*)." Recalling the statement "whoever knows his self knows his Lord" from Mullā Ṣadrā, one can see that Walī Allāh transforms and reinterprets it by his innovative use of the idea of 'presence.' More to the point, Walī Allāh shows his penchant for synthesizing ideas across different intellectual traditions, as he seamlessly situates the philosophical concept of 'presential knowledge' in the service of Sufi cosmology of being (*wujūd*) and manifestation (*tajallī/ẓuhūr*). Walī Allāh writes:

> In the terminology of the folk, the witnessing of 'deployed light' (*mushāhida al-nūr al-munbasiṭ*) on the temples of existents is called arcane (*al-khafī*). And the light that descends on the self (*al-nafs*) like the light of Moses is called super arcane (*al-akhfā*). And presential knowledge which we expressed as 'I' is the particular manifestation that the universal soul manifests on it (i.e. 'I'), and it is called the self (*wa-l-ʿilm al-ḥuḍūrī alladhī ʿabbarnā ʿanhu bi-anā wa-huwa al-burza al-khāṣṣa allatī barazahā al-nafs al-kullī summiya bi-l-nafs*).[634]

The term '*al-nūr al-munbasiṭ*' is another technical expression for deployed existence or '*al-wujūd al-munbasiṭ*.'[635] Although Sufis in the tradition of Ibn ʿArabī use the expression '*al-wujūd al-munbasiṭ*' in the context of ontology, Walī Allāh relates this to the self via another innovative move, which is ascribing the reality of '*al-wujūd al-munbasiṭ*' to the universal soul.[636] This allows Walī Allāh to claim that what everyone conceives of as his or her 'I' is a particular

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[633] Walī Allāh, *al-Tafhīmāt al-ilāhiyya,* 2:113-14. Cf. Walī Allāh, *al-Khayr al-Kathīr*, 55-57.
[634] Walī Allāh, *al-Tafhīmāt al-ilāhiyya,* 1:235.
[635] Walī Allāh, *al-Tafhīmāt al-ilāhiyya,* 1:251.
[636] In *Alṭāf al-quds*, Walī Allāh explicitly identifies the universal soul with deployed existence, e.g. "There are others who have passed beyond the universal soul and understood the Pure Self (*dhāt-i baḥt*) as the First of the First (*awwal al-awāʾil*), and the universal soul as the first emanation (*ṣādir-i awwal*) and deployed being (*wujūd munbasiṭ*) upon the temples of existents," while in the *Tafhīmāt* he says: "*Raḥamūt* is deployed existence (*al-wujūd al-munbasiṭ*), which is capable receiving all different forms that exist. It is also one of the names of God." See Walī Allāh, *Alṭāf al-quds*, 155; *al-Tafhīmāt al-ilāhiyya,* 1:251.

manifestation of the universal soul to a given self.[637] In the following text, he further suggests that the distinguishing mark of one's humanness is her 'immateriality,' the origin of which lies in the realm of Mercy (*al-raḥamūt*), which again is another term for '*al-wujūd al-munbasiṭ*,' now considered from the aspect of its Mercy (incidentally, Ibn ᶜArabī uses '*al-wujūd al-munbasiṭ*' and '*nafas al-raḥmān*' interchangeably). Walī Allāh says:

> Just as that which distinguishes the reality of animals from plants are not colors, shapes or shades, that which distinguishes this human from that human are not colors and other things, as has been mentioned. Rather all of this [distinction] follows from another reality which is immaterial (*mujarrada*), and the origin (*aṣl*) of this is the realm of Mercy (*al-raḥamūt*). But the realm of Mercy has several degrees of descent (*tanazzulāt kathīra*), all of which are its conditionings and determinations. It is from the realm of Mercy that presential knowledge emanates, which is called the 'I' [or 'self'] (*wa min al-raḥamūt yanshaʾ al-ᶜilm al-ḥuḍūrī alladhī huwa anā*). When human directs his attention to this *laṭīfa*, his presential knowledge is purified (*tajarrada lahu al-ᶜilm al-ḥuḍūrī*) and he becomes aware of his 'I' (*tayaqqaẓa bi-anā*). Then he comes to know that his subsistence is submerged in the abode of the Real (*fī taqarrur al-ḥaqq*), and he finds 'deployed light' pervades the temples of everything (*fa-wajada nūran munbasiṭan ᶜalā al-hayākil kullihā*).[638]

That is, the realm of Mercy descends and manifests in degrees, and the ontological origin of the phenomenal 'I' that each individual experiences and whose essence is 'presence' is nothing other than this realm of Mercy or deployed existence (*al-wujūd al-munbasiṭ*). The mystical turn of this phenomenological analysis comes full circles when Walī Allāh avers that (see below) the goal of the gnostic (*ᶜārif*) is to reach the apogee of the Divine Self (*dhāt-i ilahī*) by travelling through the *laṭāʾif*, so that at the moment of mystical realization when the divine takes the place of the human self, one comes to see the entire cosmos within oneself through presential knowledge:

> The perfection of gnostic (*kamāl-i ᶜārif*) surpasses the station of the philosopher's stone (*ḥajar-i baḥt*) at which point the universal soul takes the place of his body and the Pure Self (*dhāt-i baḥt*) his self (*nafs*). Then, through presential knowledge (*ᶜilm-i ḥuḍūrī*) he sees the whole cosmos within himself (*hama ᶜālam rā dar khūd bīnad*)…[639]

The Epistemological Hurdle

After accounting for first-person subjectivity in terms of presential knowledge, Walī Allāh goes on to address some of the difficulties associated with perceiving the immaterial self, which is constituted by the *laṭāʾif*. Walī Allāh seems to be aware of the worries of the empiricist for whom anything beyond the reach of the external senses is cognitively inaccessible. In a series of texts below, Walī Allāh examines the nature of our perception through the senses (both external and internal) and the intellect. He writes:

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[637] This does not mean phenomenology of the first-person experience is overshadowed by metaphysical anthropology. Rather, he is referring to the 'origin' of all first-person experiences.

[638] Walī Allāh, *al-Tafhīmāt al-ilāhiyya,* 1:233.

[639] Walī Allāh, *Alṭāf al-quds*, 126. This, however, does not negate individual identity, as he affirms: "Now presential knowledge belongs fundamentally to the Pure of Essence, so he regards his particular selfhood as something distinct like other forms of selfhood." Walī Allāh, *Alṭāf al-quds*, 126.

The external senses (*ḥiss-i ẓāhir*) of hearing and seeing etc. have their own particular perceptions, such as colors, shapes, sizes and sounds. If one uses these external senses to perceive anything other than their own objects of perception, one will not understand anything at all. On the contrary, [it will appear as though] nothing else exists apart from the senses. For instance, if one used vision (*baṣar*) in order to perceive hunger (*jūʿ*), anger (*ghaḍab*) or shame (*khijālat*), one would take these things to be totally non-existent (*maʿdūm-i maḥḍ*), and would not be able to gather anything about them. Indeed, one hastens to establish a proof for their non-existence, and say that anything existing (*shayʾ-i mawjūd*) must be red or green etc., and since these things (i.e. immaterial entities) are not of this kind (*īn chīz-hā az īn qabīl nīstand*), they cannot exist. Thus by thinking in terms of the coincidence of contradictories (*ijtimāʿ-i naqīḍayn*) and the negation of contradictories (*rafʿ-i naqīḍayn*), one would be further removed from the realm of really existing things.[640]

That is to say, our immediate grasp of reality is by means of the external senses. For example, in order to perceive that the clock in front of me is ticking, I must employ my senses such as seeing, hearing etc. to grasp its size, shape and sound. Of course, that is only part of the story, since a fuller account of such perception must also involve the use of the internal senses and the higher faculty of the intellect.[641] But for now let us bracket the part that is related to the intellect and the internal senses. Then Walī Allāh is right to assert that each of the senses has a particular function to perform, and that one will not gain anything if one employs e.g. ears to smell something. Moreover, phenomena such as shame or anger require the use of more than one faculty, which again proves that there must be designated faculties to perceive these phenomena, since we cannot understand shame using vision. But what if I am color-blind? Will it be fair to say that just because I cannot perceive certain colors, therefore these colors do not exist at all? Evidently, that mode of reasoning would be unacceptable. By invoking such an analogy Walī Allāh wants to establish that there might be incorporeal phenomena that are beyond the purview of the senses, but one cannot deny their existence based on what one can perceive through the senses. He also takes on those who use the logical axiom of 'the coincidence of contradictories' to deny that anything immaterial exists. To wit, if 'the coincidence of contradictories' holds then one cannot say that both 'the red apple exists' and 'the red apple does not exist' are true at the same time and in the same place. Similarly, 'the negation of contradictories' follows from 'the coincidence of contradictories,' because it cannot be the case that both 'the red apple exists' and 'the red apple does not exist' are false at the same time and in the same place. That means one of them has to be affirmed. Now extending the analogy of the above logical axioms, the empiricist may argue that if something exists it must be perceivable by the senses, but since immaterial objects are not perceived, they cannot exist. According to Walī Allāh, such reasoning is unacceptable. He

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[640] Walī Allāh, *Alṭāf al-quds*, 139.

[641] The "internal senses" (La. *sensus interiores*) are a collection of mental faculties which ancient philosophers located in the brain, and to which they assigned the various functions which were associated with the imagination *phantasia*) and the common sense (*koine-aisthesis; La. sensus communis*) throughout Aristotle's *De anima* and *Parva naturalia*. In general, the internal senses refer to the post-sensationary faculties that operate without bodily organs. See Muhammad Faruque, "The Internal Senses in Galen, Plotinus and Nemesius: the Beginning of an Idea," *Ancient Philosophy* 10.2 (2016): 120-21. For an alternative definition of the internal senses (based on first-order and second order perceptions), see Thomas K. Johansen, "In Defense of Inner Sense: Aristotle on Perceiving that One Sees," *Proceedings of the Boston Area Colloquium in Ancient Philosophy* 7 (2006): 235-285.

further elaborates on this by noting that the inner senses (*ḥiss-i bāṭin*) such as the imagination, estimation and volition (*mutaṣarrifa*) also have their own perceptibles. He argues that if these faculties were used to perceive anything other than their own objects of perception, they will be in a state of bewilderment (*mutaḥayyar shawad*) and their properties will be misconstrued. Still he imagines someone coming up with a proof to establish the non-existence (*ᶜadamiyyat*) of those other things. For example, one might say that if the immaterial existed (*mujarrad agar mawjūd būd*), but is not contained in three-dimensional space (*dar hīch jahat az jahāt-i-sitta nabūd*), then this amounts to a coincidence of contradictories (*ijtimāᶜ-i naqīḍayn*), since existing and non-existing in three-dimensional space is self-contradictory. Walī Allāh rejects such arguments by claiming that intelligent people (*ᶜuqalāʾ*), however, know that this is a sophistry (*mughālaṭa*), emanating from judging the invisible (*ghāʾib*) on the basis of the visible (*shāhid*) and confusing the familiar with the unfamiliar.[642]

To convince the reader further, he goes on to examine the nature and limitation of the intellect, which enables one's perception of the intelligible. Walī Allāh writes:

> The intellect is the tongue of the Spirit (*rūḥ*) and its control extends to whatever is similar in subtlety like the Spirit. How true is the saying that states that an entity cannot perceive other than itself or what is like itself… It lies within the scope of the intellect to comprehend the relation of unity and distinctiveness between the external world and the particular entities it comprises, and also between the material (*mutaḥayyiz*) and the immaterial (*mujarrad*). For instance, when the intellect sees individual humans, horses or donkeys, it can perceive the features shared by the individuals of each of these species (*nawᶜ*). From this it can progress further and determine the specific form (*ṣūrat-i nawᶜiyya*) of each species. What permits it to arrive at this understanding is, on the one hand, the differences (*taghāyurāt*) among entities such as color, shape, size and sound etc., and on the other, their underlying unity (*ittiḥād*). But when multiplicity (*taᶜaddud*) is cast aside and the unity within unity should be perceived (*waḥdat dar waḥdat bāyad idrāk kard*), the intellect becomes helpless. For example, it is the function of the intellect to discern forms (*ṣūrat-hā*) from the perceptible (*umūr-i maḥsūsa*), the essence (*ᶜayn*) of which is not in the external world, but is rather the source from which the form is extracted. Then by a process of analysis and combination (*taḥlīl wa-tarkīb*), it calls to mind a variety of distinct qualities. For instance, when it observes the sky it conceives the concept 'above,' when it looks at the earth, it abstracts the notion 'below,' and when it sees Zayd with his father, it derives the quiddity (*māhiyyat*) of 'son.'[643]

What Walī Allāh seems to be belaboring above is that the intellect has a certain range of perceptions within which it can freely move and act. But once the intellect is called to move beyond its perceptive capacity, it becomes bewildered and perplexed. Then it tends to seek ways to prove the non-existence of those things it cannot normally perceive. So for instance, the intellect has the power to form second-order concepts such as genus or species, even though they do not have extra-mental correspondence like the first-order concepts. According to Walī Allāh, the intellect does this by noting the differences among entities such as shapes, size or color and their underlying unity. That is to say, when the intellect observes different animals such as tigers, lions, and humans, it ascertains 'animality' as being the feature by which they are all united,

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[642] Walī Allāh, *Alṭāf al-quds*, 139-40.
[643] Walī Allāh, *Alṭāf al-quds*, 142-3.

while among species it further picks out 'rationality' as being the feature by which humans are distinguished from everyone else. Yet both genus (*jins*) and specific difference (*faṣl*) are features that are not directly found in the external world. From another angle, it can be said that the intellect observes an individual human being; then by a process of analysis and combination it forms the concept of a universal human form. After closely scrutinizing individual species of humans, donkeys, camels and cats, it reduces them to an animal form. Then a further scrutiny of animals and plants leads the intellect to have a conception of organic life. All this is rather uncontroversially Aristotelian. But, as the passage below suggests, Walī Allāh's main point seems to be that the intellect is a faculty that grasps both primary and secondary intelligibles, but there are still supra-sensible realities that escape its gaze and that it can only grasp, as it were, from behind the veil:

> In short, we may describe the intellect (*ʿaql*) as a faculty which contains the primary and the secondary intelligibles (*maʿqūlāt-i awwalī wa thāniyya*). It is here that the teachings and proofs (*burhān*) of the Shariah belong. The intellect can comprehend certain realities directly, while certain others only behind a veil (*pas-i parda*).[644]

In other words, the teachings of the Shariah pertain to what is rationally perceivable and conceivable, i.e. within the reach of a normally functioning intellect. However, the whole of all these arguments is to argue for the existence of incorporeal *laṭāʾif*, which form the basis of Walī Allāh's concept of the self. As a seasoned jurist, Walī Allāh does not fail to address the issue of what one should make of the *laṭāʾif* from the perspective of the Shariah, which I will discuss in a moment. But let us first complete the discussion on the epistemological hurdle of the *laṭāʾif*. In the passage above, Walī Allāh does seem to grant that what normally escapes the attention of the intellect (i.e. immaterial entities) can still be comprehend by it, but only from behind the veil. That is, since the intellect is the 'tongue of the Spirit' and has a higher function known as *sirr*, it is capable of perceiving the immaterial. But in Walī Allāh's view, it would be much more apropos to describe such a faculty or perception as '*dhawq*,' rather than intellect, since that would be unconventional.[645] Indeed, the word '*dhawq*' which is used to describe 'experiential or direct knowing,' has a long pedigree in Sufi epistemology going back to al-Ghazālī and others.[646]

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[644] Walī Allāh, *Alṭāf al-quds*, 145.

[645] Walī Allāh, *Alṭāf al-quds*, 145.

[646] *Dhawq* is the verbal noun *(maṣdar)* of the verb *dhāqa* (*dhawāq* and *madhāq* also occur, but very rarely), meaning 'to taste' literally and figuratively. In Sufism, 'taste' is a noetic term that implies experiential knowedge as opposed to mere theoretical reflection. In accordance with Qurʾanic usage, it refers to the direct experience of the states of being, thus taking its place in the technical vocabulary of Sufism. The various meanings and definitions of *dhawq* can be found in the encyclopaedias of Sufi knowledge—succinctly in the *Jāmiʿ al-uṣūl* ('Collection of principles') by the Naqshabandī Aḥmad Ḍiyāʾ al-Dīn Kumushkhānlī (or Gümüshhanevī) (d. 1893), or, more developed, in the work by the contemporary Iraqi Qādirī, Muḥammad al-Kasnazān al-Ḥusaynī, *Mawsūʿat al-Kasnazān fīmā iṣṭalaḥa ʿalayhi ahl al-taṣawwuf wa l-ʿirfān*, 8:419–30). Dictionaries dedicated to the technical lexicon of the Islamic sciences deal with *dhawq* both from the medico-philosophical and Sufi points of view. The Persian theologian al-Sharīf al-Jurjānī (d. 816/1413) defines *dhawq* as the physical sense and the "light of knowledge that God projects through his theophany into the hearts of his saints and through which they distinguish what is true from what is false, without the use of books or anything else" (al-Jurjānī, 57). Muḥammad b. ʿAlī al-Tahānawī, the author of *Kashshāf iṣṭilāḥāt al-funūn*, also develops the sense of *dhawq* in line with al-Sharīf al-Jurjānī. On a spiritual level, *dhawq* is, for Tahānawī, above all a beverage that intoxicates those in love with God (al-Tahānawī, 2:320–1). See Denis Gril, "*Dhawq*," in: Encyclopaedia of Islam, THREE, Edited by: Kate Fleet, Gudrun Krämer, Denis Matringe, John Nawas, Everett Rowson. Consulted online on 10 May 2018

Before supplying the texts that expound on Walī Allāh's own treatment of the epistemic role 'dhawq' in relation to the laṭāʾif, let me cite from al-Ghazālī's *al-Munqidh min al-ḍalāl* that provides a graphic account of *dhawq*. Describing his journey and conversion to Sufism, al-Ghazālī narrates:

> The aim of their (i.e. Sufis) knowledge is to lop off the obstacles present in the self and to rid oneself of its reprehensible habits and vicious qualities in order to attain thereby a heart empty of all save God and adorned with the constant invocation (*dhikr*) of God. Theory was easier for me than practice. Therefore I began to learn their lore from the perusal of their books… As a result, I came to know the core of their theoretical aims and I learned all that could be learned of their way by study and hearing. Then it became clear to me that their most distinctive characteristic is something that can be attained, not by study, but rather by *dhawq* and the state of ecstasy and the exchange of qualities. How great a difference there is between your knowing the definitions and causes and conditions of health and satiety and your being healthy and sated! And how great a difference there is between your knowing the definition of drunkenness—viz. that it is a term denoting a state resulting from the predominance of vapors which rise from the stomach to the centers of thought—and your actually being drunk!... I knew with certainty that the Sufis were masters of states (*ḥāl*), not purveyors of words, and that I had learned all I could by way of theory. There remained, then, only what was attainable, not by hearing and study, but by *dhawq* or experiential knowing and actually engaging in the way.[647]

That is, *dhawq* or experiential knowing refers to a mode of perception in which one has unmediated knowledge of things, which is captured well by al-Ghazālī's example of the definition of 'drunkeness' and being 'drunk.' With this background in place, let us now quote Walī Allāh, as he writes of *dhawq*:

> If anyone uses the word intellect instead of the word '*dhawq*,' his speech will not accord with convention, but there is no harm in it. According to us, the word '*dhawq*' is used to describe perceptions (*idrākāt*) in which there is no room for abstraction of intelligible (*intizāʿ-i maʿqūlāt*) or teachings and proofs of the Shariah. Such perception is in fact 'the presence of a thing by itself, for itself, in itself and from itself' (*bi-ḥuḍūr-i shayʾ bi-dhātihi li-dhātihi fī dhātihi min dhātihi*). It comes into existence with whatever forms the surface of these various bubbles (*ḥabāb*) produce and attaches itself externally to the first

http://dx.doi.org.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/10.1163/1573-3912_ei3_COM_26001; Muḥammad b. ʿAlī al-Tahānawī, *Kashshāf iṣṭilāḥāt al-funūn*, ed. Luṭfī ʿAbd al-Badīʿ, (Cairo 1963–77), 2:320–1; ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Qāshānī, *Iṣṭilāḥāt al-Ṣūfiyya*, edited by Muḥammad Kamāl Ibrāhīm Jaʿfar, (Qom: Intishārāt-i Bīdār 1990), 162; al-Jurjānī, *Kitāb al-Taʿrīfāt,* 57; ʿAlī al-Hujwīrī, *Kashf al-maḥjūb*, 114; al-Qushayrī, *al-Risāilat al-Qushayriyya* 155; ʿUmar al-Suhrawardī, *ʿAwārif al-maʿārif*, ed. ʿAbd al-Ḥalīm Maḥmūd and Maḥmūd b. al-Sharīf (Cairo: Dār al-Maʿārif, 1993), 264ff; Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge,* 3, 44, 70, 86, 153, 158, 168, 220; Todd, *The Sufi Doctrine of Man,* 107-33. From an altogether different viewpoint, see Bourdieu's analysis of aesthetic use of 'taste' in everyday bourgeois life in contemporary France. Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: a Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, tr. Richard Nice (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984), 7, 99, 174-175, 247, 466, 474;.
[647] Al-Ghazālī, *al-Munqidh min al-ḍalāl*, edited by Jamīl Ṣalībā and Kāmil ʿIyād (Beirut: Dār al-Andalus, 1967), 100-02, trans. with modification, Richard Joseph McCarthy, *Deliverance from Error: An Annotated Translation of al-Munqidh min al Dalāl and other relevant works of al-Ghazālī* (Louisville, KY: Fons Vitae, 1999), 77-78.

part which emerges from them. Thus when the visible qualities (*ṣifāt-i shāhid*) appear, and one searches for the invisible qualities, they no longer exist.[648]

In the above Walī Allāh attempts to forge a connection between *dhawq* and presence. So making use of the example of 'drunkenness' from al-Ghazālī, one may say that when one is drunk one has a direct knowledge of one's intoxicated state and the 'presence' of intoxication is inseparable from the perceiving subject at that time. That is, when one is drunk, one does not first 'think' or 'conceptualize' whether or not one is drunk or what the definition of 'drunkenness' is, since one has a direct experience or presence of being drunk and what it feels like. Moreover, unlike an acquired concept of 'drunkenness' which remains in the mind, the 'state of drunkenness' conceived as 'presence' is a like a 'bubble' that evaporates as soon as one comes to one's senses. With the epistemology of *dhawq* in the background, Walī Allāh goes on to affirm how the invisible *laṭāʾif* should be perceived. He says:

> It should be known that whereas the actions of the limbs and organs are manifest, clear and perceptible, *the states of the nafs, qalb, rūḥ and sirr are concealed* (*hamchinānkih aʿmāl-i jawāriḥ ẓāhir wa rawshan wa maḥsūs ast, wa aḥwāl-i nafs wa qalb wa rūḥ wa sirr kāmin*). The former belong to the physical world (*ālam-i shahādat*) and the latter to the invisible (*ghayb*). By the same token, whatever the visible *laṭāʾif* manifest is clear, while whatever the invisible *laṭāʾif* manifest is latent and concealed that cannot be perceived either theoretically (*ʿaqlan*) or emotionally (*wijdānan*). In order to perceive [their effects], there is a subtle and delicate [faculty], which the Sufis called *dhawq* or experiential knowing.[649]

He then goes on to criticize why many people (*jamʿ*) fall into error regarding the immaterial entities, i.e. *laṭāʾif*. According to Walī Allāh, people are only familiar with what can be grasped by the intellect and emotion, hence they do not entertain the thought of something which is comprehended by means of a finer sense (*ḥāssa-yi bārik*). But he also notes that some people can in fact comprehend these higher realities, and yet they choose to deny them. The reason, he opines, is that the aspirations of the majority have sunk so low that they can only appreciate sensual pleasures (*himmat-i jamʿ dar ghāyat-i pastī uftāda bāshad bi-juz ladhdhat-i maḥsūs na-shināsad*). If something transcends the senses, they deny its existence.[650] After such criticism, he recommends the following solution:

> The remedy for this mental malady (*marḍ-i nafsānī*) is, first, to find out about this sensory faculty (*ḥāssah-yi har chīzī bāyad dānast*) and recognize the scope and quality of this type of comprehension (*qadr wa-ṣifat-i ān idrāk bāyad shinākht*). After that habitual attachment to familiar things should be cut off, and one should cultivate the habit of acquiring this subtle form of comprehension (*mudrak-i bārik*). The intuitive faculty (*ḥāssah-yi wijdāniyyat*) is an imaginative power (*quwwat-i wāhima*),[651] which is not the

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[648] Walī Allāh, *Alṭāf al-quds*, 146.
[649] Walī Allāh, *Alṭāf al-quds*, 132.
[650] Walī Allāh, *Alṭāf al-quds*, 132-33.
[651] This is most likely referring to the cosmological power of the imagination that Ibn ʿArabī made so famous. In Ibn ʿArabī's cosmology, imagination (*khayāl*) implies inherent ambiguity, hence it escapes 'either or' categorization. On whatever level it is considered, it is always an isthmus or inter-worldlike between two other realities (*barzakh*). Five

faculty of the imagination (*khayāl*) of the inner senses, and the characteristic of this form of comprehension is that it is devoid of any connection with shape and magnitude (*ᶜadam-i iqtirān bi-shakl wa-miqdār*).[652]

Anticipating that talk of *dhawq* and *laṭāᵓif* may not sit well with the exoteric-minded jurists, Walī Allāh acknowledges that there are those for whom anything other than the course laid down by the outward form of the Shariah (*ẓāhir-i sharᶜ*) is undesirable. Thus, in their view, Walī Allāh notes, "to mention the knowledge of the *laṭāᵓif* is some kind of heresy (*zandaqa*)."[653]

   That is to say, a common objection voiced by the exoteric-minded jurists is that if knowledge of the *laṭāᵓif* or immaterial entities were so important, why did the Prophet never mention anything about them? Walī Allāh responds by arguing that "the lawgiver (i.e. the Prophet Muhammad) intends to conceal these secrets and maintain silence regarding them (*kitam-i īn asrār ast wa tan zadan az ān*), so that whoever is capable will understand (*har kih mustaᶜidd-i ān bāshad*), and whoever is not capable will remain in his natural way of thinking and will thus be saved from compound ignorance (*jahl-i murakkab*)."[654] He then provides his reasons for disclosing such secrets about the *laṭāᵓif*:

   [T]he cup has fallen from the roof and it has become impossible nowadays to conceal these things any longer (*chūn ṭasht az bām uftād wa kitam-i ān dar īn bārah zamān mutaᶜassir shud*), so a divine impulse (*dāᶜiya-yi ilāhiyya*) has stimulated an inclination in my heart to rectify the correct meaning of these things.[655]

However, it is important to note that Walī Allāh does not intend to suggest that one should only concern oneself with the realization of the *laṭāᵓif*, and consequently withdraw from the world altogether. On the contrary, even though one finds detailed rulings of the Shariah regarding every aspect of Muslim life, it does not mean there is no higher reality that transcends the purview of the Shariah. Walī Allāh writes:

   Some people say that the fundamental purpose (*aṣl-i maṭlūb*) is total annihilation in the realm of divinity (*lāhūt*) and complete withdrawal from the world of particularization (*insilākh az ᶜālam-i taᶜayyun*)—in short the requirement of the *laṭāᵓif*… The close attention shown to matters of life-style (*maᶜāsh*), and the establishment of bodily acts of

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general meanings of the imagination can be discerned in Ibn Arabi: 1) the cosmos, i.e., existence itself, 2) the illusory nature of the world or life is also called imagination, 3) the *imaginal world* which is the intermediate world between the two fundamental created worlds, the spiritual and corporeal worlds, 4) The human self or soul itself, which acts as an intermediary between the luminous and immaterial divine spirit and the dark and dense body, and finally, 5) the faculty of the soul in humans. On the one hand, imagination 'spiritualizes' corporeal things that are perceived by the senses and stores them in memory. On the other hand, it 'corporealizes' the spiritual things known in the heart by giving them shape and form. It stores 'sensible' images and perceptions, and manipulates them, i.e. combine or separate those images. It is different from the word 'imaginary,' which means things that we imagine in our mind. The word 'imaginal' does not mean idle imaginations; rather it pertains to the world of imagination or the imaginal world that is ontologically above the physical world. See Chittick, *Sufi Path of Knowledge*, 14-16, 116-117, 100, 113, 115-124, 169, 204, 267, 338-339, 38; *idem.*, *Imaginal Worlds: Ibn al-'Arabī and the Problem of Religious Diversity* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 70-88.

[652] Walī Allāh, *Alṭāf al-quds*, 133.
[653] Walī Allāh, *Alṭāf al-quds*, 135.
[654] Walī Allāh, *Alṭāf al-quds*, 137-8.
[655] Walī Allāh, *Alṭāf al-quds*, 138.

devotion (*iqāmat-i ṭāʿāt-i badaniyya*) have been introduced in the Shariah because not everyone is able to fulfil the fundamental purpose (*haman kas ān āṣl rā namī-tawānad bi-jā āvard*). However, it does not follow that just because "one cannot comprehend the whole thing one has to give it up *in toto* (*mā lā yudriku kullahu lā yatruku kullahu*).[656]

As for his own views, Walī Allāh affirms that "the desired objective with regard to the form of the human species is nothing other than the purification of the limbs and organs through one's actions, and purification of the *laṭāʾif* through of mystical states (*ḥāl*) and stages (*maqām*).[657] However, he warns the reader at the same time by mentioning that "the writings and books of the Sufis (*ṣūfiyya*) may be a wonderful alchemy (*kīmiyā-yī ast ʿajīb*) for the elite (*khawāṣṣ*), but for the masses they can be a deadly poison (*samma-yi qātil*).'[658] However, before moving on to unpack the nature of the *laṭāʾif*, let us chart their genealogy through history.

The Body as Text: Deciphering the Self through Subtle Bodies

Graeco-Islamic-Indian Background

As I mentioned earlier, Wali Allah presents an original concept of the self that shows threads of influences from Stoicism, Neoplatonism, Graeco-Islamic-Indian medical tradition, and Sufism. Central to Walī Allāh's exposition of the self are the concepts of '*pneuma*' (*nasama*), subtle fields of consciousness (*laṭāʾif*), and self-knowledge through first-person subjectivity. Also, it seems fair to assert that Walī Allāh is unique in synthesizing a conception of the self that is based on the physiology of the humoral theory of '*pneuma*' (*nasama*) and the *laṭāʾif*.[659] To embark on such a notion of selfhood, he draws on the Galenic tradition on the one hand, and the Sufi (especially, the Naqshbandīs) and the philosophical traditions on the other. However, his conception of the *laṭāʾif* also resembles yogic *cakra* system. So in this section my task would be to trace Walī Allāh's particular formulation of the pneumatic self going back all the way to the Stoics.

In Stoic cosmology, everything that exists is corporeal—including God and soul.[660] *Pneuma* (breath which is hot air or mixture of air and fire) is the central explanatory principle of both Stoic physics and Stoic psychology.[661] In contrast to the atomists, the Stoics put

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[656] Walī Allāh, *Alṭāf al-quds*, 134-5.

[657] Walī Allāh, *Alṭāf al-quds*, 135.

[658] Walī Allāh, *Alṭāf al-quds*, 137-8.

[659] This, however, does not mean other Sufis or philosophers before him had failed to see the connection, in varying degrees, between the humors and the *laṭāʾif*. In his recent book, Zargar documents how Sufi ethics of the human self often assumes a 'humoral substructure.' For an excellent treatment of this, see Zargar, *The Polished Mirror*, 19-20, 37-8, 40, 67-71, 264.

[660] The Stoics adopts what we might call a 'vitalist' understanding of nature, which is permeated by two principles: an active one (identified with reason and God, referred to as the Logos) and a passive one (substance, matter). The active principle is un-generated and indestructible, while the passive one—which is identified with the four classical elements of water, fire, earth and air—is destroyed and recreated at every, eternally recurring, cosmic conflagration, a staple of Stoic cosmology. The content of the first few paragraphs is based on: Massimo Pigliucci, *Stoicism*, available at https://www.iep.utm.edu/stoicism/; Scott Rubarth, *Stoic Philosophy of Mind*, available at http://www.iep.utm.edu/stoicmind/; Hendrik Lorenz, *Ancient Theories of Soul*, available at https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/ancient-soul/#5.2. John Sellars, *Stoicism* (London and NY: Routledge, 2014); *idem.*, (ed.), *The Routledge Handbook of the Stoic Tradition* (London and NY: Routledge, 2016).

[661] *Pneuma* is the vehicle of divine intelligence, although it only imparts intelligence to specific portions of matter where it is most pervasive. See, Philo, *Allegories of the laws* 2.22-3 [H. von Amim, *Stoicorum veterum fragmenta*

forward a continuum theory which denies the existence of void in the cosmos. The cosmos is seen as a single continuum pervaded by *pneuma*.[662] The physicalism underlying Stoic psychology implies that active substances (e.g. God) could pervade passive substances (e.g. matter). Hence the soul or *pneuma*, which is a body, is able to pervade the body. However, it is noteworthy that the soul does not pervade the body like the water in a sponge, that is, by occupying interstitial spaces; rather, the soul or *pneuma* occupies the exact same space as the passive matter, i.e., both substances are mutually coextended (*antiparektasis*). The soul pervades the body just as heat pervades the iron rod, occupying the same space but being qualitatively distinct. But it is also crucial to note that *pneuma* can be of different kinds, as Galen says in the following:

> There are two kinds of innate *pneuma*, the physical kind and the psychic kind. Some people [i.e. the Stoics] also posit a third, the tenor kind. The [pneuma] which sustains stones is of the tenor kind,[663] the one which nurtures animals and plants is physical, and the psychic *pneuma* is that which, in animate beings, makes animals capable of sensation and of moving in every way.[664]

The two terms associated with *pneuma* and its nature are 'blend' and 'pervade,' which, as we shall soon see, will be adopted by Walī Allāh in his account of *nasama* (*pneuma*) through the Galenic intervention[665] which itself is mediated through the Islamic medical tradition.[666]

(Leipzig, 1903-5) = *SVF* 2.458 part] and Diogenes Laertius 7.138-9 (including *SVF* 2.634), in A. A. Long and David Sedley (eds.), *The Hellenistic Philosophers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 1: 284; Nemesius, *On the Nature of Man*, trans. R. W. Sharples and P. J. van der Eijk (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press), 6, 100-01, 12, 117.

[662] *Pneuma* or 'breath' pervades the whole universe. Since in Stoic physics, only bodies can act upon bodies, the causal efficacy of *pneuma* was taken to require its presence throughout all substance or matter. See Long and Sedley, *Hellenistic Philosophers,* 292. See also, Alexander, *On mixture* 216, 14-218,6 *(SVF* 2.473) in Long and Sedley, *Hellenistic Philosophers*, 1: 282.

[663] The 'tenor' (*hexis*) of something is its constitutive *pneuma*, e.g. the hardness of iron or the whiteness of silver. 'Tenor' thus constitutes the defining characteristics of classes of things whose members admit of specific variations, e.g. if two wines differ in their sweetness, or two dogs in their size or responsiveness to training, these are not differences of 'tenor.' See Long and Sedley, *Hellenistic Philosophers*, 1: 282.

[664] Galen, *Medical introduction* 14.726, 7—11 (*SVF* 2.716, part), trans., in Long and Sedley, *The Hellenistic Philosophers*, 1: 282. Long and Sedley rendered *pneuma* as 'breath,' which is changed to *pneuma* following the Greek original. For the Greek original, see A. A. Long and David Sedley (eds.), *The Hellenistic Philosophers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 2: 284. The notion of 'psychic *pneuma*' was first developed in Hellenistic medicine by Erasistratus, and then in Stoic psychological theory which was further systematized by Galen. *Pneuma* is believed to flow through the nerves and to mediate sensory and motor signals between the sense-organs and the brain. For an extensive discussion of '*pneuma*,' see Julius Rocca, "From doubt to certainty. Aspects of the conceptualisation and interpretation of Galen's natural *pneuma*," in M. Horstmanshoff, H. King, and C. Zittel (eds.), *Blood, Sweat and Tears. The Changing Concepts of Physiology from Antiquity into Early Modern Europe* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 629-659.

[665] According to Galen, chyle or digested food is brought to the liver, where it is processed into an impure blood, imbued with the first form of *pneuma* innate to all things, the natural spirits. This concoction then passes into the veins, which are believed to leave from the liver. This blood, along with its associated natural spirits, goes via the arteries issuing from the heart to the brain, in particular, the fine net of arteries at the base of the brain, the reta mirabile. In the brain, the blood is further refined and charged with the final and highest form of *pneuma*, the animal spirits. So, each organ has a role to play, the liver, heart and brain in particular: the liver in transforming the chyle into impure blood and imbuing it with the first form of *pneuma*, the natural *pneuma*; the heart, in further purifying the blood and charging it with the second form of *pneuma*, the vital spirits, and the brain which works up the highest form of *pneuma*, the animal spirits. For more information, see M. Horstmanshoff, H. King, and C. Zittel

According to the Stoics, *pneuma* is constituted by 'total blending' (*crasis*) of air and fire. *Pneuma* blends with the inert elements, earth and water,[667] which means that any portion of it, irrespective of size, is characterized by hot and cold. This complex motion was described as 'tension' or 'tensile movement.' It calls to mind the idea of elasticity expressed by the verb *teinein,* 'to stretch.' The special character of this motion is its simultaneous activity in opposite directions, outwards and inwards, whereby one should understand fire and air to be pulling, as it were, against each other in the blend which they constitute.[668]

At any rate, the body of an animal (human or non-human) contains *pneuma* of all the three kinds, with the lowest kind responsible for the cohesion and character of parts like teeth and bones, physical *pneuma* in charge of metabolism, growth etc., and finally soul (*psuche*) accounting for distinctively mental or intellectual functions, such as perception, assent, and impulses.[669] As Aetius[670] writes:

> The Stoics say that the commanding-faculty (*hêgemonikon*) is the soul's highest part, which produces representations (*phantasiai*), assents, perceptions and impulses (*hormê*). They also call it the reasoning faculty. From the commanding-faculty there are seven parts of the soul which grow out and stretch out into the body like the tentacles of an octopus. Five of these are the senses, sight, smell, hearing, taste and touch. Sight is *pneuma* which extends from the commanding-faculty to the eyes, hearing is *pneuma* which extends from commanding-faculty to the ears… Of the remainder, one is called seed, and this is breath extending from the commanding-faculty to the genitals. The

(eds.), *Blood, Sweat and Tears. The Changing Concepts of Physiology from Antiquity into Early Modern Europe* (Leiden: Brill, 2012); Michael Boylan, "Galen: On Blood, the Pulse, and the Arteries," *Journal of the History of Biology* 40.2 (2007): 207-230; C. E. Quin, "The Soul and the *Pneuma* in the Function of the Nervous System after Galen," *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine* 87.7 (1994): 393-5. In addition, see Galen, *Galen on the Natural Faculties*, translated by A. J. Brock (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1916); *Galen on the Usefulness of the Parts of the Body*, trans. M. Tallmadge May (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1968).

[666] For a survey of this, see Peter Adamson and P. Pormann, *Philosophy and Medicine in the Formative Period of Islam*, Warburg Institute Colloquia, vol. 31, (Warburg Institute, London, 2017), 1-33, 104-69; Peter E. Pormann and Emilie Savage-Smith, *Medieval Islamic Medicine* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), 10-22, 166-69; Peter Pormann (ed.), *Islamic Medical and Scientific Tradition, Critical Concepts in Islamic Studies*, 4 vols (London, NY: Routledge, 2011) *passim*; Ahmad M. Al-Dubayan, Galen: "*Über die Anatomie der Nerven. Originalschrift und alexandrinisches Kompendium in arabischer Überlieferung*" (Berlin : K. Schwarz, 2000).

[667] Long and Sedley, *Hellenistic Philosophers*, 1: 292.

[668] Long and Sedley, *Hellenistic Philosophers*, 1: 288. Tensional motion (*tonikê kinesis*) seems to be the motion of the *pneuma* in a body that simultaneously moves from the center to the surface and from the surface back to the center. Passive elements (earth and water) and dense bodies have a low degree of tensional activity, while active elements (fire and air) and the soul were seen to possess a high level of tensional motion. See Long and Sedley, *Hellenistic Philosophers*, 1: 288.

[669] A. A. Long, (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Early Greek Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 564, for discussion and references. Also, as *pneuma*, the soul is characterized by its tensile motion with important bearing on a person's moral condition. For more details on this, see Stobaeus, 2.86, 17-87,6 (*SVF* 3.169, part); Plutarch, *On Stoic self-contradictions* 1037F (*SVF* 3.175, part); Plutarch, *On Stoic self-contradictions* 1057A (*SVF 3.177,* part) and Sextus Empiricus, *Against the professors* 8.275-6 (*SVF* 2.223, part).

[670] Greek doxographer (ca. AD 100). His text has been conjecturally reconstructed out of later doxographical material, transmitted under the names of Plutarch, Stobaeus and others, by H. Diels. *Doxographi Graeci* (Berlin 1879).

other,.. which they also call utterance, is *pneuma* extending from the commanding-faculty to the pharynx, tongue and appropriate organs.[671]

That is to say, the soul (*psuche*), which is constituted by *pneuma*,[672] pervades the whole of the body through all of its eight parts, which contains the five external senses and some of the internal senses such as *phantasia*.[673] As we shall see, Walī Allāh also holds that once *nasama* reaches the brain, it is divided into ten parts of the external and the internal senses. I will flesh out some of the major differences between the Stoics and Walī Allāh in a moment, as the latter also incorporates the *laṭāʾif* theory from Sufism into his conception of *nasama*.

The origin of the idea of the *laṭāʾif* in Sufi literature goes back to al-Junayd (d. 297/910), who first conceived of them in the human body,[674] and al-Junayd's contemporaries such as Sahl al-Tustarī (d. 283/896), ʿAmr b. Uthmān al-Makkī (d. 297/909), and al-Ḥallāj (d. 309/922).[675] Abū ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī (d. 412/1021), al-Ghazālī and ʿUmar al-Suhrawardī (d. 632/1234 further refined and expanded the concept of the *laṭāʾif*.[676] From these brief descriptions

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[671] Aetius 4.21.1-4 (*SVF* 2.836, part), trans., in Long and Sedley, *Hellenistic Philosophers*, 1: 315-6. Cf. Galen, *On the Doctrines of Hippocrates and Plato*, trans. P. de Lacy (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1980), in (*SVF* 2.841, part).

[672] See Calcidius 220 (*SVF* 2.879, part); Plutarch, *On Stoic self-contradictions* 1053D (*SVF* 2.806, part). For the texts reporting the soul's nature as *pneuma* and the proof of its corporeality, see Long and Sedley, *Hellenistic Philosophers*, 1: 315-22. On the nature of the Stoic soul, see A. A. Long, "Stoic Psychology," in K. Algra, J. Barnes, J. Mansfeld & M. Schofield (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Hellenistic Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 560-84; "Soul and Body in Stoicism," *Phronesis* 27 (1982): 34-57; Julia Annas, *Hellenistic Philosophy of Mind* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 37-120; Sellars, *Stoicism*, 81-106; *idem.*, *The Art of Living: The Stoics on the Nature and Function of Philosophy* (London : Duckworth, 200), ch. 5.

[673] It is interesting to note that in a recent translation of Aristotle's *De Anima*, Reeve argues that *pneuma* "brings life and soul into the right sort of body" (p. xxiii). However, it is hard to see such a role for *pneuma* in Aristotle's *DA*. Aristotle's main discussions of *pneuma* occur in his biological works, treatises that are more focused on the body and on material factors relevant to life. Even if *pneuma* plays an important role in Aristotle's account of certain biological activities, it does not play a significant role in Aristotle's theory of the soul as such, the subject of the *DA*. In his introduction, Reeve takes *pneuma* to be the common factor that makes a variety of media (air, water etc.) transparent (p. xxii), which would make it important for a variety of phenomena Aristotle discusses in connection with perception (in *DA* II 7 and elsewhere). But Reeve provides little textual evidence for thinking that the 'certain nature' (418b8) that makes things transparent should be identified with *pneuma*. On Reeve's view, *pneuma* is a special sort of stuff whose qualities make things alive: 'the vitalizing factor,' (p. xxiii) as he calls it. This theory seems to make *pneuma* the real formal and efficient cause of life, since it produces life and soul in the body. It undermines the idea that the soul, a formal principle, is what primarily explains life. On this interpretation, Aristotle would not too far away from the Stoic materialist theory of soul, where *pneuma*, as we have shown, plays the crucial role. See C.D.C. Reeve (tr., ed.), Aristotle, *De Anima*, (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2017).

[674] The Shādhilīs, whose spiritual anatomy consists of seven *laṭāʾif*, also consider al-Junayd in the spiritual lineage. See Arthur Buehler, *Sufi Heirs of the Prophet: The Indian Naqshbandiyya and the Rise of the Mediating Sufi Shaykh* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1998), 106.

[675] Al-Tustarī mentions a *laṭīf* giving life to the dense natural self and another *laṭīf* associated with the spiritual self. The latter *laṭīf* is from invocation (*dhikr*). See Bowering, *The Mystical Vision*, 244-45. Al-Makkī conceived of the *laṭāʾif* to be like veils wrapped in one another, e.g. the *nafs* in qalb, *qalb* in *rūḥ*, and *rūḥ* in *sirr*, which would be removed successively as one approaches God. See Louis Massignon, *La Passion de Ḥusayn Ibn Manṣūr Ḥallāj*, 3:24; trans. Herbert Mason, *The Passion of Al-Ḥallāj: Mystic and Martyr of Islam*, 3:17. Al-Ḥallāj has Prophet Muḥammad in the Ascension (*miʿrāj*) leaving one subtle covering (*laṭīfa*) of his soul for each heaven he passed through. See ibid., 1: 54, n13. These latter interpretations would conceive of the *laṭāʾif* as subtle bodies or sheaths. Cf. Buehler, *Sufi Heirs of the Prophet,* 105-08.

[676] Sulamī discusses (in ascending order) *nafs, qalb, sirr* and *rūḥ*. See Roger Deladrière, "Les premiers Malāmatiyya: les gardiens du secret," in N. Clayer, A. Popovic et T. Zarcone éd., *Mélamis-Bayramis, Études sur trois mouvements mystiques musulmans* (Istanbul: Isis, 1998), 1-14 We will treat al-Ghazālī's views on the *laṭāʾif*

the idea of the *laṭīfa* began in the ninth century as a generic subtle entity before being defined functionally as a subtle body.[677] Two centuries later *laṭīfa* became a more localized subtle entity associated with the body. The major conceptual development of the *laṭāʾif*, however, grows out of a central Asian Sufi order, the Kubrawiyya, whose founding figure, Najm al-Dīn Kubrā (d. 618/1221), analyzed the inner morphology of the human body in terms of three subtle entities: the heart (*qalb*), spirit (*rūḥ*) and secret (*sirr*).[678] Najm al-Dīn Rāzī (d. 654/1256), who was a disciple of Najm al-Dīn Kubrā, came up with a five-fold structure by adding two other subtle entities: the intellect (*ʿaql*) and the arcanum (*khafī*).[679] As a transmitter of the Central Asian Kubrawī tradition, ʿAlā al-Dawla Simnānī (d. 736/1336) elaborated upon Rāzī's pentad of inner perceptual fields to seven-fold arrangement by adding the physical frame (*qālab*) and the super-arcanum (*akhfā*).[680] Equipped with this schema, Simnānī established correspondences between these seven *laṭāʾif* and seven colors, seven prophets, seven levels of the cosmos.[681] Muḥammad Pārsā (d. 822/1420), a successor of Bahā al-Dīn Naqshband whom Walī Allāh mentions in his *Alṭāf al-quds*,[682] defined the *laṭāʾif* in exactly the same order and with the same corresponding prophets as Simnānī had done.[683] The Indian Naqshbandī-Mujaddidīs then created their own synthesis of the seven-fold nature of the inner human being.[684] By the latter half of the eighteenth century two things were certain. First, the position and colors of the *laṭāʾif* were already in the process of being standardized, and, second, the overall Mujaddidī version of the human spiritual morphology had become firmly established.[685] This meant that each of the seven *laṭāʾif*, which

later in the section, since Walī Allāh draws on him extensively. Al-Suhrawardī also mentions the *laṭāʾif* of *qalb, rūḥ, sirr,* and *nafs* in his *ʿAwārif al-maʿārif*, 443-57.

[677] Cf. Marcia Hermansen, "Shah Wali Allah's Theory of the Subtle Spiritual Centers (*Laṭāʾif*): A Sufi Theory of Personhood and Self-Transformation," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* (1988): 1-3. For an overview of the 'subtle body' (*jism laṭīf*) in early *kalām* literature, see ch. 2, 75-77.

[678] Najm al-Dīn Kubrā, *Die Fawāʾiḥ al-jamāl wa-fawātiḥ al-jalāl des Najm al-Dīn Kubrā* (Wiesbaden: F. Steiner, 1957), 168-74.

[679] Najm al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Mirṣād al-ʿibād*, ed. Muḥammad Amīn Riyāḥī (Tehran: Shirkat-i Intishārāt-i ʿIlmī va Farhangī, 1987), 116-117. Heart, spirit, intellect, secret and the arcanum can all be deduced from the Qurʾan. As for the secret (*sirr*), different definitons of it can be found in early Sufi literature. Abū Naṣr al-Sarrāj (d. 378/988) describes it as "that which is inaccessible to the enticements of the soul; that which God has caused to remain hidden and of which He alone has awareness," *Kitāb al-Lumaʿ*, 226, cited in Najm al-Dīn Rāzī, *The Path of God's Bondsmen from Origin to Return: A Sufi Compendium*, trans. H. Algar (Delmar: Caravan Books, 1982), 135. For Al-Qushayrī's views on the secret, see Ch. 2, 18-19. According to Rāzī, the secret is a *laṭīfa* between the heart and the spirit (*rūḥ*). It is the source of the mysteries of spirituality. As for the arcanum, it is a *laṭīfa* between the spirit and the divine presence; it is the locus of for the descent of the lights. The arcanum is more hidden than the secret in that it is more subtle, more precious, more exalted, more noble and closer to the divine presence than the secret. See Rāzī, *The Path of God's Bondsmen*, 134-35n9. On the *laṭīfa*, 'sirr,' see Shigeru Kamada, "A Study of the Term *Sirr* (Secret) in Sufi Laṭāʾif Theories," *Orient* 19 (1983): 7-28.

[680] Henry Corbin, *En Islam Iranien: aspects spirituels et philosphiques* (Paris: Gallimard, 1971-72), 3:275-355.

[681] See Jamal Elias, *The Throne Carrier of God: the Life and Thought of ʿAlāʾ ad-Dawla as-Simnānī* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), 80-99 and Henry Corbin, *L'homme de lumière dans le Soufism iranien* (Paris: Éditions Présence, 1971), 132-54.

[682] Walī Allāh, *Alṭāf al-quds,* 77.

[683] Muḥammad Pārsā, *Tuḥfat al-sālikīn: taḥqīqāt Khwāja Muḥammad Pārsa*, 377.

[684] Bāqībillāh discusses the seven *laṭāʾif* from *qālab* to *akhfā*, suggesting that the seven-*laṭīfa* scheme described by Sirhindī and standardized in the nineteenth century might not have originated with him. See Bāqībillāh, *Kulliyāt-i Bāqībillāh*, 111. Faqīr Allāh Shikārpūrī (d. 1195/1781), in the spiritual lineage of Ādam Banūrī, describes various six-*laṭīfa* system. See Faqīr Allāh, *Quṭb al-irshād*, 565-66 and his *Futuḥāt al-ghaybiyya*, 171-72. However, there is no mention of *qālab*. Cf. Muḥammad Dhawqī, *Sirr-i dilbarān* (Karachi: Maḥfil-i Dhawqiya, 1969), 298-99.

[685] Faqīr Allāh, *Quṭb al-irshād*, 565, and Ghulām ʿAlī Shāh, *Maqāmāt-i maẓharī*, 522-25.

are receptors for divine energy (*fuyūḍ*) that comes from more subtle cosmic realms, not only coincides with the human microcosm, but also corresponds to a prophet, a colored light, and (except for the *nafs* and *qālab*) a specific cosmic emanation.[686] But this was not a completely standardized system, in India at least, until the nineteenth century by which time each *laṭīfa* had become associated with a definite part of the body, and in Sufi training, the *laṭāʾif* were conceptualized as subtle entities.[687] In the Naqshbandī-Mujaddidī order the schema of the *laṭāʾif* is a heuristic device for the initiate to develop a subtle body or a subtle field with which she can travel in the non-physical realms. This is very much linked to Simnānī's concept of the acquired body (*al-badan al-muktasab*).[688] Simnānī describes the acquired body composed of light as that which comes into being by partaking in divine energies (*fuyūḍ*), just as the Naqshbandī *laṭāʾif* are developed by receiving divine energy (*fayḍ*).[689]

Before investigating Walī Allāh's own version of the *laṭāʾif*, it would be necessary to say a few words about the correspondence or similarity between the *laṭāʾif* and Indian notions of channel (*nāḍī*) and wheel (*cakra*), with which Walī Allāh might have been familiar through his brother Shāh Ahl Allāh (d. 1190/1776) [more on this below].[690] As scholars have pointed out, the Hindu Yoga equivalent of the *laṭāʾif* is seven *cakras* located at the base of the spinal column, sacral plexas, navel, heart, throat, between the eyebrows, and the crown of the head.[691] The subtle body in the Indian contexts consists of a visualized internal structure to the human body, comprising channels (*nāḍīs*) and wheels (*cakras*), through which flow a substance (*prāṇa*, *bodhicitta* etc.) that is closely related to breathing, the mind (*citta*) and sexual energy (*vīrya*). A critical question for the connection between mind and body is how one understands the substance that is flowing through the *nāḍī*. In Indian thought, this is seen primarily as a form of *prāṇa* or breath. *Prāṇa* covers a considerably wider territory than the English terms 'breathing' or

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[686] Henry Corbin, *L'homme de lumière dans le Soufism iranien*, 132-42.

[687] Arthur Buehler, *Sufi Heirs of the Prophet*, 109-10.

[688] Henry Corbin, *En Islam Iranien*, 3: 279; Elias, Throne Carrier, 81.

[689] Simnānī, *Khitām al-misk*, 73, cited in Arthur Buehler, *Sufi Heirs of the Prophet*, 112.

[690] Woodroffe notes that in his *Risāla-yi ḥaqq-nāma*, Dārā Shikūh provides a description of the three *cakra* like centres: 'spherical heart' (*dil-i mudawwar*); the 'cedar heart' (*dil-i sanūbarī*), and the lily heart (*dil-i nīlufarī*). According to Woodroffe, the Naqshbandīs are said to have devised or adapted some of their system of meditative practices from the Indian Yogis. See John Woodroffe, *The Serpent Power* (NY: Dover, 1974), 2-3, 248. On the multifaceted relationship between Sufi conception of the self and Yoga psychology, see Mario Kozah, *The Birth of Indology as an Islamic Science: Al-Bīrūnī's Treatise on Yoga Psychology* (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 151-88).

[691] See Mircea Eliade, *Yoga: Immortality and Freedom*, translated by Willard R. Trask (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), 241-42 and Gavin Flood, *The Tantric Body: The Secret Tradition of Hindu Religion* (NY: I.B. Tauris, 2006), 157. Scholars have pointed out the parallels between the Indian theory of three humors and Greek humoral pathology employing four humors; between the Chinese idea of *qi* and and Greek *pneuma*, or between the Persian idea of a fire of life and Greek 'innate heat' (*emphuton thermon*), an energy source powering the vital functions of the body. See Peter E. Pormann and Emilie Savage-Smith, *Medieval Islamic Medicine* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), 22-23. It should be noted that the Chinese version of the *cakra* physiology involves many channels (*mai*) through which energy (*qi*) flows. In China, the practices related to *qi* are generally associated with the Daoist tradition, and are essentially part of processes aimed at physical and spiritual transformation. In general, both Indian and Chinese practices require directing, refining and purifying the *prāna* or *qi*, a process that is both spiritual and physiological. See Geoffrey Samuel, Subtle-Body Processes: Towards a Non-Reductionist Understanding, in Geoffrey Samuel and Jay Johnston (eds.), *Religion and the Subtle Body in Asia and the West* (London, NY: Routledge, 2013), 250.

'respiration,' with, for instance, five internal forms of *prāṇa* classically associated with mind and with emotion, including sexual energy (*vīrya*).[692]

As noted earler, subtle body concepts in the tantric traditions such as Shaivism and Buddhist tantrism are practical more than theoretical.[693] The aim is not for the most part simply to understand but to use, primarily, though not only, for the purpose of spiritual transformation. Thus Buddhist Tantric understandings of the circulation of *prāṇa* through the *nāḍī* and *cakra* of the subtle body are linked to a series of meditative exercises aimed at working with the flows through the *nāḍīs* and *cakras*.[694]

Finally, let us draw the connection between Graeco-Islamic medicine and Walī Allāh's writings. Although research on the history of Islamic medicine (similar to Islamic philosophy) in India is at its early stage, a recent monograph on the topic by Fabrizio Speziale argues convincingly that Sufis played a crucial role in the development and transmission of Greek/Galenic and Islamic medicine in Muslim India. In Speziale's survey, Sufis are shown to have studied and transmitted Galenic medicine; the medicine of the Prophet (*al-ṭibb al-nabawī*) and the Shia Imams; theories and practices related to the occult sciences (*al-ᶜulūm al-gharība*), alchemy, and medical knowledge (*āyurveda*) coming from India.[695] Arguing against those who claim a decline of Graeco-Islamic medicine after the thirteenth century due to the influence of Sufism which was allegedly opposed to scientific medicine, Speziale shows that Sufis not only did not object to scientific thought, they also made a significant contribution to the transmission of medical science in India. In a further study, Speziale documents the link between Sufism and Galenic medicine that was established among the early generations of Indian Sufis and physicians. Speziale underscores the important role played by the Sufis in the process of

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[692] Geoffrey Samuel and Jay Johnston (eds.), *Religion and the Subtle Body in Asia and the West*, 5. Cf. Neil D. Theise, "Beyond Cell Doctrine: Complexity Theory Informs Alternate Models of the Body for Cross-Cultural Dialogue," *Ann. N.Y. Acad. Sci.* 1172 (2009): 263–269. Theise argues that one may imagine alternate models of the body such as a fluid model in which biological cells do not exist or a model wherein cells are described as overlapping fields of molecular organization in space and time. Thus subtle bodies may represent precise, though somewhat poetically expressed representations of the body at different levels of scale.

[693] Tantra or Tantrism can be many things to many people, but in general it refers to a body of beliefs and practices that seek to channel the divine energy that grounds the universe, in creative and liberating ways. As David White correctly describes, Tantra aims to realize a metaphysical journey. In such a system, the subtle body becomes the stage for the return of the Absolute from existence to essence through the descent and ascent of the *kundalinī* or serpent power. In Tantric philosophy, the Absolute or Brahman emanates intothe manifest universe and human bodies as a means to enjoying Its boundless possibilities. The return, however, to unity and wholeness is, for those human manifestations of this emanatory dynamic, anything but natural, requiring as it does a forceful *(haṭha)* reversal *(ulaṭā)* of what are, in mortal creatures, irreversible tendencies such as aging, disease, and death. Thus, while it is the case that the process of return is, from a divine or absolute standpoint, internal to the process of emanation, it is nevertheless an arduous task for the individual who would attempt to realize such through his own subtle body. See David G. White, *The Alchemical Body: Siddha Traditions in Medieval India* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 4, 207, 223, 263, 273. For an authoritative study that covers a wide geographical and temporal scope of Tantra by examining thirty-six texts from China, India, Japan, Nepal, and Tibet, ranging from the seventh century to the present day, and representing the full range of Tantric experience—Buddhist, Hindu, Jain, and Islamic, see David G. White (ed.), *Tantra in Practice* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 3-40, 285-98. For an analysis of Tantric yoga vis-à-vis modern empirical science, see Joseph S. Alter, *Yoga in Modern India: the Body between Science and Philosophy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 41-43.

[694] Geoffrey Samuel and Jay Johnston (eds.), *Religion and the Subtle Body in Asia and the West*, 6.

[695] Fabrizio Speziale, *Soufisme, Religion et médecine en Islam indien* (Paris: Karthala, 2010), ch 3. He also debunks the 'decline theories' by arguing that such theories are based on essentialist oppositions such as science/religion, philosopher/Sufi, Galenic medicine/Prophetic medicine, which are strongly influenced by positivist assumptions and find no correspondence in the Indian Muslim world.

adaptation of the Graeco-Islamic medicine in India and their role in sustaining the relationship and the process of cross-pollination between Indo-Muslim and *āyurvedic* pharmacopoeias.[696]

Judged from the preliminary survey works and bio-bibliographical sources, it seems a large number of medical treatises have been composed in India, especially during the Mughal period (1526-1857).[697] A notable feature of many of these works is that they seem to combine insights from different intellectual tradition such philosophy, medicine and Sufism. The seventeenth century scholar Nūr al-Dīn Shīrāzī's mammoth *ʿIlājāt-i Dārāshukuhī* is representative of this trend, which also incorporates Indian medical knowledge.[698] He also wrote a treatise entitled *Marātib al-wujūd* on the famous doctrine of *waḥdat al-wujūd* (the oneness of being). Since we are interested in possible influence on Walī Allāh's account of pneumatic self, one can mention Abū al-Fatḥ Khayrī and his *Dār al-shifāʾ-i Awrang-shāhī,* Mīr Muḥammad Akbar (d. 1134/1722) and his *Mufarriḥ al-qulūb* and *Ṭibb Nabawī,* ʿAlawī Khān Shīrāzī (d. 1162/1749) and his *Jāmiʿ al-jawāmiʿ-i Muḥammadshāhī,* Shāh Kalīm Allāh (d. 1141/1729) (a Chīshtī Sufi master) and his *al-Fuṣūl al-ilāqiya,* and above all, his brother, Shāh Ahl Allāh (d. 1190/1776) who translated *Muʿjiz al-Qānūn* of Ibn al-Nafīs, which Walī Allāh had studied.[699] In his study, Speziale also notes many physicians of Delhi who studied medicine at Madrasa-yi

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[696] From the Moghul epoch until the revival of *yūnānī* medicine that took place during the British Raj, it is evident that a large number of *ḥukamāʾ* were either Sufis or had Sufi affiliation. See Fabrizio Speziale, "The Relation between Galenic Medicine and Sufism in India during the Delhi and Deccan Sultanates," *East and West* 53.1/4 (2003): 149-78. See also the name of the famous *Sufi-ḥukamāʾ* mentioned in the biographies concerning Moghul and Colonial epochs, such as the corresponding volumes of the cited *Nuzhat al-khawāṭir* of ʿAbd al-Ḥayy and *Tadhkira-yi aṭibbā-i ʿahd-i ʿUthmānī* by Ḥakīm Shifāʾ, the latter being a work which gives a detailed description of the practitioners of *yūnānī* medicine in Deccan during the beginning of the 20th century.

[697] See Fabrizio Speziale and Carl W. Ernst (eds.), *Perso-Indica. An Analytical Survey of Persian Works on Indian Learned Traditions*, available at http://www.perso-indica.net/section/medicine. In a series of articles, Speziale discusses the production of Persian and Urdu texts on Indian sciences in early-modern and modern India, by focusing on the works composed in the field of medicine, zoology and alchemy. He examines the main grounds, trends and works that characterized this movement of studies, which had already emerged during the sultanate period and endured until the Colonial epoch. This can be considered as one of the major movements of scientific studies dealing with a pre-Islamic tradition that took place in the Muslim world. Several of these works were produced for Muslim nobles. However, the writing of these treatises, especially the medical ones, was to a large extent stimulated by practical reasons, such as identify drugs in the local pharmacopoeia. Studying Indian pharmacopoeia became a way to adapt Muslim physicians' practice to local conditions. Moreover, scientific texts in Persian and later on in Urdu were composed by Hindu scholars. During the Colonial epoch, Persian works on Indian sciences and English translations from Persian were made for and by the British; works on the subject appeared in Urdu as well. See Fabrizio Speziale, "Les traités persans sur les sciences indiennes : médecine, zoologie, alchimie," in Denis Hermann and Fabrizio Speziale (eds.), *Muslim Cultures in the Indo-Iranian World during the Early-Modern and Modern Periods* (Berlin, Institut Français de Recherche en Iran (Bibliothèque iranienne, 69)-Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 2010), 403-447; Fabrizio Speziale, "Indo-Muslim Physicians," *Encyclopædia Iranica*, XXXIII, available online at http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/india-xxxiii-indo-muslim-physicians; T. Siddiqi, "The Khwājgān Family of Theologians and Physicians," *Studies in History of Medicine* 6/1 (1982): 1-36; Anna Vanzan, "Physicians and ʿUlamāʾ, Unānī Medicine and Islamic Revival in British India," *Hamdard Medicus* 38/3 (1995): 5-13.

[698] Fabrizio Speziale, "Nur-al-Din Moḥammad ʿAbd-Allāh Shīrāzī," *Encyclopædia Iranica*, XXXIII, available online at http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/sirazi-nur-al-din-mohammad-abd-allah.

[699] See Fabrizio Speziale, "Indo-Muslim Physicians," *Encyclopædia Iranica*, XXXIII, available online at http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/india-xxxiii-indo-muslim-physicians; *idem.*, *Culture persane et médecine ayurvédique en Asie du Sud* (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 184-206. On Walī Allāh's study of medicine, see Husain, "The Persian Autobiography of Shāh Walīullāh," 165. On Ibn al-Nafīs, see Fancy, *Science and Religion in Mamluk Egypt,* chs 2 and 4.

Raḥīmiyya.[700] More importantly, Walī Allāh's brother, Shāh Ahl Allah also wrote *Takmila-yi hindī*, a text on Indian medicine, that attempts to account for the difference between Indian and Graeco-Islamic humoral theory (i.e. *tridosa* vis-à-vis *khilṭ*).[701]

Deciphering the Self through Subtle Bodies

With the above historical backdrop in place, let me now turn to the treatment of the *laṭāʾif* in Walī Allāh scholarship. First, it should be noted that although aspects of Walī Allāh's psychology (i.e. the *laṭāʾif*) have been analyzed, his theory of selfhood has never received any sustained scholarly treatment. This is despite the fact that the self has been central to his overall metaphysics. In particular, existing scholarship has ignored Walī Allāh's conception of self-knowledge and first-person subjectivity, which the latter analyzes through 'presential knowledge' (*al-ʿilm al-ḥuḍūrī*), showing his debt to the Islamic philosophers. One reason why scholars generally have neglected selfhood in Walī Allāh's thought is that the self is often taken to be synonymous with the concept of 'soul' or as a constellation of various *laṭāʾif*, rather than as a multi-dimensional entity. Both Baljon's and Hermansen's treatment of Walī Allāh's psychology suffer from such a conceptual stumbling-block.[702]

In his rather dated study on Walī Allāh's religious thought, Baljon mistakenly suggests that the *laṭāʾif* are composed of *pneuma* (*nasama*), rational soul (*nafs nāṭiqa*), and celestial spirit (*rūḥ-i samawī*).[703] He also leaves it unexplained how the *laṭāʾif* and *nasama* are symbiotically connected. In addition, his study suffers from a number of translation errors.[704] Nevertheless, Baljon correctly identifies that the *laṭāʾif* represent the inner progress of the wayfarer (*sālik*) from the outermost plane of his self to its inmost core.[705] Hermansen improves on Baljon's study of Walī Allāh's theory of the *laṭāʾif* by providing a better historical context and a conceptual frame to understand them as a sort of 'subtle body.'[706] She correctly explains that although some

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[700] Speziale, *Culture persane et médecine*, 195ff.

[701] In a recent study, Speziale explores the interactions between Ayurveda and Persian medical culture in South Asia. He documents the translation movement of Ayurvedic sources into Persian, which took place from the 14th century onwards. The image of Ayurvedic culture emerging from Persian texts provides a new insight into the history of Ayurveda under Muslim political hegemony in South Asia. Persian treatises apply new categories to the analysis of translated materials and transform the way Ayurvedic knowledge is presented. At the same time, Speziale deals with the symmetric phenomenon of Persanization of the Hindu physicians who, through the learning of Persian language, appropriated medical knowledge of Muslim culture. See Fabrizio Speziale, *Culture persane et médecine*, 38-100. One can also note the increasing importance of *vata/bād* (air) in Persian medical texts around this time. Shāh Ahl Allāh e.g. attempts to clarify the question of the ambivalence of *bād* in the Indian doctrine, explaining that the humor of medicine does not correspond to the element air and that the qualities of *bād* may vary from its original temperament because of the interactions with other principles. See, Fabrizio Speziale, "The Persian Translation of the *tridoṣa:* Lexical Analogies and Conceptual Incongruities," *Asiatische Studien* 68.3(2014): 783-796, at 789.

[702] J.M.S. Baljon, *Religion and Thought of Shāh Walī Allāh Dihlavi* (Leiden: Brill. 1986) and Hermansen, *Shāh Walī Allāh's Theory of the Subtle Spiritual Centers*, 1-25.

[703] Baljon, *Religion and Thought,* 64-66.

[704] Baljon, *Religion and Thought,* 68, 71, 73-74. For instance, he renders *ḥusn al-ẓann* as 'think well of God,' which should be 'having a positive opinion of somebody/something;' *kashf* as 'mystical revelation,' which should be unveiling; *tajallī* as 'radiance,' which should be 'manifestation/self-disclosure;' *warāʿ* as 'abstemiousness,' which should be 'hightened piety;' and so on.

[705] *Religion and Thought of Shāh Walī Allāh Dihlavi.* Leiden: E. J. Brill. 1986), 67.

[706] Hermansen, *Shāh Walī Allāh's Theory of the Subtle Spiritual Centers*, 2. Shah Wall Allah goes further than his predecessors in presenting sacred history as the realization or even expansion of potentials inherent in the *laṭāʾif*. In this he correlates the development of *laṭāʾif* with phases of progress in human spiritual history. In his *Tafhīmāt*, Walī

of the *laṭāʾif* have names corresponding to body parts or faculties or are sometimes described as being located in specific areas of the body (liver, heart, or brain), they are not to be understood as identical with the organs located there. Rather, the *laṭāʾif* should be understood as local manifestations of identically named parts of a higher realm of the cosmological universe that stands vertically above the physical world.[707] I also agree with her translation of the term *nasama* as *pneuma*, since it refers to the spirit formed from the most subtle humors, and is related to the term '*pneuma*' in the Greek medical tradition. Moreover, she agrees with Baljon in describing the *laṭāʾif* as a paradigm for facilitating the wayfarer's spiritual progress from the physical realm to the higher immaterial realms.[708] Despite these merits, her study is compromised by a number of serious shortcomings. To begin with, her account of Walī Allāh's description of the *laṭāʾif* is largely interpreted through the Mujaddidī paradigm, which has its own elaborate theory of the *laṭāʾif*.[709] As a result, she asserts that the function of *nasama* or *pneuma* is limited to the lowest set of the *laṭāʾif*, namely *nafs*.[710] As will be seen, this is contradicted by the textual evidence I have presented in this study.[711] One reason why the proper relation between *nasama* and the *laṭāʾif* is not well understood in her study is that like Baljon, her analysis fails to account for the development of these concepts from Walī Allāh's middle-period treatise *Alṭāf al-quds* to his late works such as *al-Budūr al-bāzigha*. More importantly, her argument that through an account of *nasama* as a subtle body Walī Allāh was able to reconcile theological conception of the spirit (*rūḥ*) as something material and created in time with the philosophical notion that considered it an immaterial, eternal, spiritual soul, is unfortunately incorrect.[712] This is because Walī Allāh

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Allāh offers a novel suggestion concerning the *laṭāʾif* by explaining that they have a macrocosmic historical manifestation. So, the development of the *laṭāʾif* began with Adam when there were three *laṭāʾif*: the heart (*qalb*), the intellect (*ʿaql*) and the *nafs*. In Prophet Muḥammad's time, the higher *laṭāʾif* of the spirit (*rūḥ*) and secret (*sirr*) were awakened in the ideal human form. At the time of Ibn ʿArabī the potential of the arcanum was available to the human species. Finally, Walī Allāh was chosen by God to reveal two additional *laṭāʾif*, namely the philosopher's stone (*ḥajar-i baḥt*) and selfhood (*anāniyya*). See Hermansen, *Shāh Walī Allāh's Theory of the Subtle Spiritual Centers*, 24. The *ḥajar-i baḥt* was also mentioned by Ibn ʿArabī as an essential point in the heart emanating a marvelous and perplexing light. See H. S. Nyberg, *Kleinere Schriften des Ibn al-ʿArabī*, 216-17, cited in Hermansen, *Shāh Walī Allāh's Theory of the Subtle Spiritual Centers*, 15.

[707] Hermansen, *Shāh Walī Allāh's Theory of the Subtle Spiritual Centers*, 2. So far *laṭīfa* has been variously translated as 'subtlety,' 'tenuous body,' 'subtle point,' 'subtle essence,' 'subtle field,' 'subtle substance,' 'subtle entity,' 'subtle organ,' and 'subtle spiritual center.' For a critical evaluation of some of these translations, see Buehler, *Sufi Heirs of the Prophet,* 103. The term *laṭīfa* is derived from the Arabic word *laṭīf* meaning 'gentle,' 'sensitive,' or 'subtle.' In Sufi literature, the word *laṭīfa* refers to a nonphysical component of the person which can be awakened through spiritual practices. The expression *laṭīfa* may originate in the concept of a subtle body (*jism laṭīf*), which is not Qurʾanic but seems to have arisen in the third Islamic century. The Sufi concept of *laṭīfa* became increasingly refined and complex and was used to explain psychological and spiritual progress of the spiritual aspirant toward annihilation (*fanāʾ*) or subsistence (*baqāʾ*) in the Divine Essence. See Hermansen, "Shāh Walī Allāh's Theory of the Subtle Spiritual Centers," 1-2.

[708] Hermansen, "Shāh Walī Allāh's Theory of the Subtle Spiritual Centers," 6.

[709] Buehler, *Sufi Heirs of the Prophet,* 105-30.

[710] Hermansen, Shāh Walī Allāh's Theory of the Subtle Spiritual Centers, 11.

[711] See pp. 155ff.

[712] Hermansen says: "By explaining the spirit in this three-tiered way, Shah Wall Allah is able to reconcile traditional theological opinions with the concepts of the philosophers influenced by Hellenistic thought concerning the spirit (*rūḥ*). The orthodox position was generally that it was material and created in time, while the philosophers identified it with an immaterial, eternal, spiritual soul. In his description of the three levels, the lowest level of spirit, the Pneuma, fulfills the role of the created spirit while aspects of the rational soul and the heavenly spirit accord with the philosophers' concepts." See Hermansen, "Shāh Walī Allāh's Theory of the Subtle Spiritual Centers," 10-11.

154

proves the immateriality of the self through first-person experiences, as I explained earlier.[713] Moreover, philosophers consider the self (*nafs*) to be immaterial, while their views on the spirit (*rūḥ*) are variegated.[714] Furthermore, unlike Hermansen's account, Walī Allāh in fact claims that *pneuma* acts as a mediator between the immaterial soul and the material body.[715]

In any event, Walī Allāh's own conception of the *laṭāʾif* presumes that they can only be known through *dhawq*, and not through the senses.[716] Moreover, in his view, the knowledge of the *laṭāʾif* (*ʿilm-i laṭāʾif*) or subtle fields of consciousness is a great scale of balance (*mīzānī ast ʿaẓīm*) that God has bestowed on later day Sufis (*mutaʾakhkhirān-i ṣūfiyya*). So, the better one is acquainted with the subtle fields of consciousness, the better one is able to purify them.[717] To illustrate the difference between someone who possesses the knowledge of the *laṭāʾif* and those people who may have devoted their whole life to Sufism without ever gaining this knowledge, Walī Allāh likens the former to the physician (*ṭabīb*) who is skilled in the diagnosis of various types of illnesses, who knows their causes (*asbāb*), symptoms (*ʿalāmāt*), methods of their treatment (*muʿālajāt*), and all the rules which ancient physicians developed through long, protracted experience (*tajruba-hāyi bisiyār*), and the latter to someone who is like an unqualified physician who can merely prescribe some medicine on the strength of his own defective experience and incomplete understanding. He further adds that whoever is acquainted with the *laṭāʾif* is like a leader (*rahbar*) who has spent a lifetime wandering in the wilderness and has learnt each hill and dale, each path across it, whether it be well-worn or as yet untrodden.[718] After mentioning that the exposition of the true nature and properties of the *laṭāʾif* depends in turn on an understanding of the true nature of the self (*ḥaqīqat-i rūḥ*),[719] he expresses hesitation as to whether or not he should really talk about them.[720] But as was mentioned in the previous section, he eventually decides to disclose the secrets of the *laṭāʾif* due to the particular circumstances of his day. Moreover, according to Walī Allāh, "the science of the *laṭāʾif* is based on the [question of the real nature of the self], so a real necessity arises, and, as is well known, necessity can render lawful that which would otherwise be unlawful (*al-ḍarūra tabīḥ al-maḥdhūrāt*)."[721]

With this prelude, the next question one should ask is what exactly is Walī Allāh's conception of the *laṭāʾif*? In a word, the answer would be '*nasama*' or *pneuma*. But this only begs the further question, what is *pneuma* in Walī Allāh's theory of self? Again, one can answer it with a word: the rational soul, which is the self. However, to unpack all this step by step, let me first begin with the following quote:

> What I find in my self (*mā wajadtuhu fī dhātī*) regarding human nature, its eyes, hands and feet is that the human being is not an [entity] that comes into existence all at once (*anna al-insān laysa bi-mawjūd marrat wāḥida*). Rather in him lie many dimensions (*bal fīhi ṭabaqāt kathīra*) and levels, and each of these levels has an appointed time from its inception until its end. Whoever looks at only his particular level and does not consider

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[713] See pp. 133-37.

[714] See ch. 2, 59-76.

[715] See p. 156-63.

[716] See pp. 138-43.

[717] Walī Allāh, *Alṭāf al-quds,* 14-15.

[718] Walī Allāh, *Alṭāf al-quds*, 15.

[719] Inconsistent use of *rūḥ* but it means 'self' here.

[720] Walī Allāh, *Alṭāf al-quds*, 22.

[721] Walī Allāh, *Alṭāf al-quds*, 23.

other levels thinks human knowledge is confined to this. Thus the visible level (*al-ṭabaqa al-ẓāhira*) or dimension is the body (*al-badan*), which is the lowest dimension… It is followed by the level of *laṭīfa* called pneuma… The human in reality is this pneuma (*fa-l-insān fi-l-ḥaqīqa huwa hādhihi al-nasama*), while his body is like an envelope above that protects him. When the body is severed [at death], the pneuma endures with its states, and attaches itself to the moral qualities (*al-akhlāq*) and the externa and internal senses (*al-iḥsās al-ẓāhir wa-l-bāṭin*).[722]

In this very important passage, Walī Allāh outlines the framework of his theory of the self in relation to the *laṭāʾif*. Resembling Ṣadrā before him (and Thānavī and Iqbal afterward), he assert that the self is a *multi-dimensional* reality, having many levels, each having an appointed time from its beginning until its end. This is further stressed by his statement that "the human being is not an [entity] that comes into existence all at once (*anna al-insān laysa bi-mawjūd marrat wāḥida*)," implying that there is a *developmental* aspect to the reality of the self, which can be compared to the Ṣadrian notion of 'motion in substance.' Moreover, the lowest dimension of human nature is the body, which is followed by the dimension or level of *pneuma* that underlies the human self. For Walī Allāh, *pneuma*, much like the Stoics, survives death of the body with all the the external and internal senses (*al-iḥsās al-ẓāhir wa-l-bāṭin*). But this still leaves the question of the nature of '*pneuma*' as such. We are told that it is something other than the visible body, but does it mean it is completely immaterial or something between the material and the immaterial? Moreover, what is the precise relationship between this pneuma and the self (or the rational soul), which for Walī Allāh is decidedly immaterial, as we've seen in section III? The text below seeks to provide a response to these inquiries:

Know that the rational soul (*al-nafs al-nāṭiqa*) is the individuating form (*al-ṣūra al-shakhṣiyya*) by every human acquires his individuality. This [individuality] of each person depends on a subtle body (*jism laṭīf*) produced from the vapor (*bukhār*) of the humors (*al-akhlāṭ*). This is because the nature of the forms is to be dependent on suitable matter (*al-hayūlā al-munāsaba*) possessing a prepared configuration (*al-hayʾa al-mustaʿidda*) that will be conferred on it. Since the self (*al-nafs*) is the most subtle, most pure and most solid of all the forms, it cannot but be dependent on a body which is the most subtle of all the bodies (*alṭaf al-ajsām*) maturing at the finest degree of subtlety and equilibrium (*iʿtidāl*)… We will call this subtle body (*jism laṭīf*) pneuma (*nasama*), which pervades (*al-sārī*) the dense body (*al-badan al-kathīf*) in order to manifest the perfections of the self (*kamālāt al-nafs*) in it.[723]

In this crucial text, one can see how the synthesis of Graeco-Arabic-Indian medical tradition, Platonizing Aristotelianism and Stoicism comes into play in Walī Allāh's theory of the self. So the rational soul is the individuating form (*al-ṣūra al-shakhṣiyya*) by which every human

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[722] Walī Allāh, *al-Tafhīmāt al-ilāhiyya,* 1:229. The multidimensionality of the self is affirmed in *al-Khayr al-Kathīr* as well: "Know that the self (*al-nafs*) has various modes of being (*nashʾāt*) and, each one of these modes has a particular name. If the self clothes itself with imagination (*al-khayāl*), estimation (*al-wahm*) and perception (*al-idrāk*), then it is named *nasama* and the nafs according to the common usage (*iṣṭilāḥ al-qawm*). If it is considered free from matter (*tajarradahu*), along with spiritual training, it is called *nafs* in the terminology of the philosophers (*iṣṭilāḥ al-falsafa*) and *rūḥ* according to common usage." Walī Allāh, *al-Khayr al-Kathīr*, 61.
[723] Walī Allāh, *al-Budūr al-bāzigha*, 38. Cf. Walī Allāh, *Ḥujjat Allāh al-bāligha*, 1:65, which states that *pneuma* pervade the entire body as a substratum.

156

acquires his individuality or his specific I-ness.[724] This is more or less standard Aristotelianism. However, Walī Allāh goes on to note that the individuality or the I-ness of every human in turn depends on a on a subtle body (*jism laṭīf*) produced from the vapor (*bukhār*) of the humors (*al-akhlāṭ*).[725] And this is a complex synthesis of Stoicism and Galenic tradition, with some notable differences. In the next step, Walī Allāh argues that the self, unlike Stoicism or Galenism, being immaterial and the most subtle of all the forms, cannot but be dependent on a *body* which is also the most subtle of all the bodies (*alṭaf al-ajsām*) maturing at the finest degree of subtlety and equilibrium (*iʿtidāl*). And Walī Allāh calls this 'subtle body' *nasama* or *pneuma*, which is an intermediary between the self (immaterial) and the body (material), and whose function is to manifest the perfections of the self in the body. The reader would recall that in the Ṣadrian context, this intermediary between the self and the body was 'the animal spirit' (*al-rūḥ al-ḥaywānī*).[726] Furthermore, from al-Ghazālī's long text quoted earlier, we witnessed that "the second meaning of the heart (*qalb*) is a spiritual lordly *laṭīfa* (*laṭīfa rabbāniyya rūḥāniyya*), which is connected with the physical heart." And al-Ghazālī affirms that this *laṭīfa* is "the real essence of human and the heart (*qalb*) is the part of human that perceives, knows and experiences."[727] But Ghazālī does not provide any details of the 'physical constitution' of the *laṭīfa*, which is responsible for knowledge and perception, even though he does insinuate that the *laṭīfa* of the heart rules all the parts of the body. Al-Ghazālī says:

> Know that the seat of knowledge (*ʿilm*) is the heart, by which I mean the *laṭīfa* that rules all the parts of the body and is obeyed and served by all its members. In its relationship to the real nature of known objects (*maʿlūmāt*), it is like a mirror in its relationship to the forms (*ṣuwar*) of changing appearances… The knower is an expression for the heart in which there exists the image of the specific natures of things. Knowledge is an expression for the representation of the image in the mirror. Even as the act of grasping, for example, requires that which grasps, such as the hand, and that which is grasped, such as the sword in the hand, which is called the act of grasping, so also the coming of the image of the known object into the heart is called knowledge.[728]

Shāh Walī Allāh retains part of al-Ghazālī's model by incorporating the heart (*qalb*) as one of the *laṭāʾif*, as opposed to making it 'the' *laṭīfa*. However, what's more important in Walī Allāh's theory is that he fills the 'physiological' gaps of the *laṭāʾif* theory through a original synthesis of Stoic-Galenic-Islamic traditions, which, as far as I am aware, is original with him. In a further

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[724] Cf. Aristotle, *De Anima*, 412a27. Galen Strawson discusses the phenomenology or experience of having or being a self. He argues that it is legitimate to say that there is such a thing as the self as distinct from the human being. At the same time he raises doubts about how long selves can be supposed to last, insofar as they are distinct from human beings. He deals with the puzzles arising from the first-person pronoun 'I' and its relation to self-reference and self-knowledge. See Galen Strawson, *The Subject of Experience* (Oxford, NY: Oxford University Press, 2017), 1-10.

[725] In the *Ḥujjat*, Walī Allāh notes that there is a subtle vapor (*bukhār laṭīf*) in the body, which is produced in the heart from a quintessence of the humors (*khulāṣat al-akhlāṭ*). It carries the faculties of perception, movement, and the distribution of food according to the dictates of medicine. The various states of this vapor, whether fine or thick or pure or turbid has a particular effect on the faculties and the functions that proceed from these faculties. Walī Allāh, *Ḥujjat Allāh al-bāligha*, 1: 38.

[726] See ch. 2, 77-78.

[727] See pp. 131-32.

[728] Al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn*, 8: 1360, trans. Skellie, modified, *The Marvels of the Heart*, 35.

passage from his late work *al-Budūr al-bāzigha,* Walī Allāh expands the bio-physiology of *pneuma* and its relationship with the self:

> Pneuma (*nasama*), which is united with the self (*nafs*), is a subtle body (*badan laṭīf*) that pervades the dense body (*al-badan al-kathīf*) and bears the faculties and functions (*al-quwā wa-l-afᶜāl*). When food reaches the stomach where it is cooked, it generates the pneuma which, as a subtle vaporous body,[729] travels to the liver, where it is cooked for a second time. The cooked [stuff] is then divided into the four humors (*arbaᶜa akhlāṭ*).[730] A subtle body emitted from the blood is then drawn to the heart, where it is collected in a cavity (*tajwīf*) and is transformed into a subtle air (*hawāʾ laṭīf*). This air is collected in another cavity, from where a portion of it ascends to the brain (*al-dimāgh*) where it is divided into ten parts, five of which are for the external senses (*al-ẓāhir*), i.e., the faculties of sight, hearing, smell and taste etc., while the remaining five are for the internal senses (*al-bāṭin*) such as the *sensus communis* (*al-ḥiss al-mushtarak*), the imagination (*al-khayāl*), estimation (*al-wahm*), and memory (*al-ḥāfiẓa*) and perception (*al-mudraka*).[731]

Unlike the Stoics, the pneuma, for Walī Allāh, is not the self as such; rather it is the *corporal basis* (i.e. matter) of the immaterial self (i.e. form).[732] Nevertheless, to a large extent like the

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[729] Cf. Walī Allāh, *al-Khayr al-Kathīr*, 56, where he says *nasama* is a subtle, imperseptible body.

[730] Cf. Walī Allāh, *al-Khayr al-Kathīr,* 47, where he states that *nasama* is created from four humors and is a covering on the immaterial self (*nafs mujarrada*).

[731] Walī Allāh, *al-Budūr al-bāzigha*, 39. It would be instructive, at this stage, to delineate the epistemic justification (why distinct faculties are necessary to explain internal perception) of the internal senses, since doing so will clarify its broader context. One of the better formulations of the notion of the internal senses can be found in the works of Avicenna, hence I will briefly touch upon his account of them. Avicenna invokes three epistemological principles in order to deduce the number of internal senses: 1) each distinct type of sensible object requires a distinct faculty in order to be perceived. The post-sensationary objects of cognition include two such distinct types of objects, the forms of the common sensibles (Ar. *ṣuwar al-maḥsūsāt*) and the 'inherent meaning' of those sensibles (Ar. *maᶜānī al-maḥsūsāt*); 2) since passivity and activity are mutually exclusive, active and passive relations to an object require two respective faculties; 3) receptive and retentive faculties are distinguished because of different material qualities required in their respective organs. Thus the same faculty cannot both receive and retain a sensible object, which means there must two different faculties. The application of the above criteria, according to Avicenna, yields a system of five faculties: common sense (Ar. *al-ḥiss al-mushtarak*): reception of forms, receptive imagination (Ar. *khayāl*) or the formative faculty: retention of forms, estimation (Ar. *wahm*): reception of meanings, memory (*dhikr*) or the retentive faculty: retention of meanings active imagination (Ar. *al-quwwa al-mutakhayyila*) or cogitation (Ar. *fikr*): separation and combination of forms and meanings. See Avicenna, *al-Shifāʾ: Fī al-nafs* I.5, 43-45 in Fazlur Rahman (ed.), Avicenna's *De anima* (Arabic text). Being the Psychological Part of *Kitāb al-Shifāʾ* (London: Oxford University Press: 1959). It is to be noted that Avicenna, like his ancient counterparts such as Galen, located the internal senses in different parts of the brain: the common sense and receptive imagination in the front part of the brain; the active imagination and estimation in the middle part, and memory in the rear part of the brain. See Muhammad Faruque, "The Internal Senses in Galen, Plotinus and Nemesius: the Beginning of an Idea," 130-34.

[732] Also, supported by texts such as: "The cause of their differentiation is the fact that the rational soul, which has penetrated (*ḥulūl*) the airy pneuma (*nasama-yi hawāʾiyya*) and the natural souls (*arwāḥ-i ṭabīᶜiyya*), at one and the same time is constituted by them. These souls (*arwāḥ*) have different locations, constitutions and faculties." Walī Allāh, *Alṭāf al-quds*, 40. Moreover, in the *Ḥujjat*, Walī Allāh makes the argument that *pneuma* is the essential matter (*mādda bi-l-dhāt*) of the self. This is because every form needs matter wherein it may inhere (*kull ṣūra lā budd lahā min mādda taqūm bihā*), and it must be only that matter which is suitable for it. The self does not discard matter once it dies. The rational soul possesses an essential matter (*mādda bi-l-dhāt*), which is *nasama*, and an accidental matter (*mādda bi-l-ᶜaraḍ*), which is its earthly body (*al-jism al-arḍī*). According to Walī Allāh, when the self dies, it remains lodged in the matter of the *pneuma*. See Walī Allāh, *Ḥujjat Allāh al-bāligha*, 1:66.

Stoic, Walī Allāh's *nasama* contains all the faculties of perception. To clarify further the nature of *pneuma* (*nasama*), Walī Allāh states that it has three branches.[733] According to his classification pneuma, the first branch corresponds to what is called *nafs* in the language of the Sufis (*fī kalām al-ṣūfiyya*), which is like an aperture through which Satan inspires it to incline toward evil (*sharr*), wickedness (*khabth*) and bestiality (*waḥsha*). He further notes that the same term, i.e. *nafs*, is called *al-nafs al-shahwiyya* (the appetitive self) by the philosophers (*al-falāsifa*). The second branch is called *qalb* in the language of the Sufis, while it is called *al-nafs al-sabʿiyya* (animalistic self) by the philosophers. Similarly, the third branch of *pneuma* is known as *ʿaql* (intellect), which is the same in both Sufis and philosophers' terminology. Walī Allāh then goes on to claim that all of these branches of *nasama*, i.e. the *laṭāʾif*, are accepted by the Sufis and, philosophers and the folk of the transmitted sciences:

> These are the three *laṭāʾif* in all humans which are affirmed by the philosophers, folk of the transmitted sciences and the folk of inner intuition [i.e. the Sufis] (*fa-hādhihi thalāth laṭāʾif fī kull insān ittafaqa ʿalā ithbātihā al-falāsifa wa-ahl al-naql wa-ahl al-wijdān*).[734]

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[733] Walī Allāh, *al-Tafhīmāt al-ilāhiyya,* 1: 229-31.
[734] Walī Allāh, *al-Tafhīmāt al-ilāhiyya,* 1: 232.

Fig. 3.1 The Branches of *Nasama*
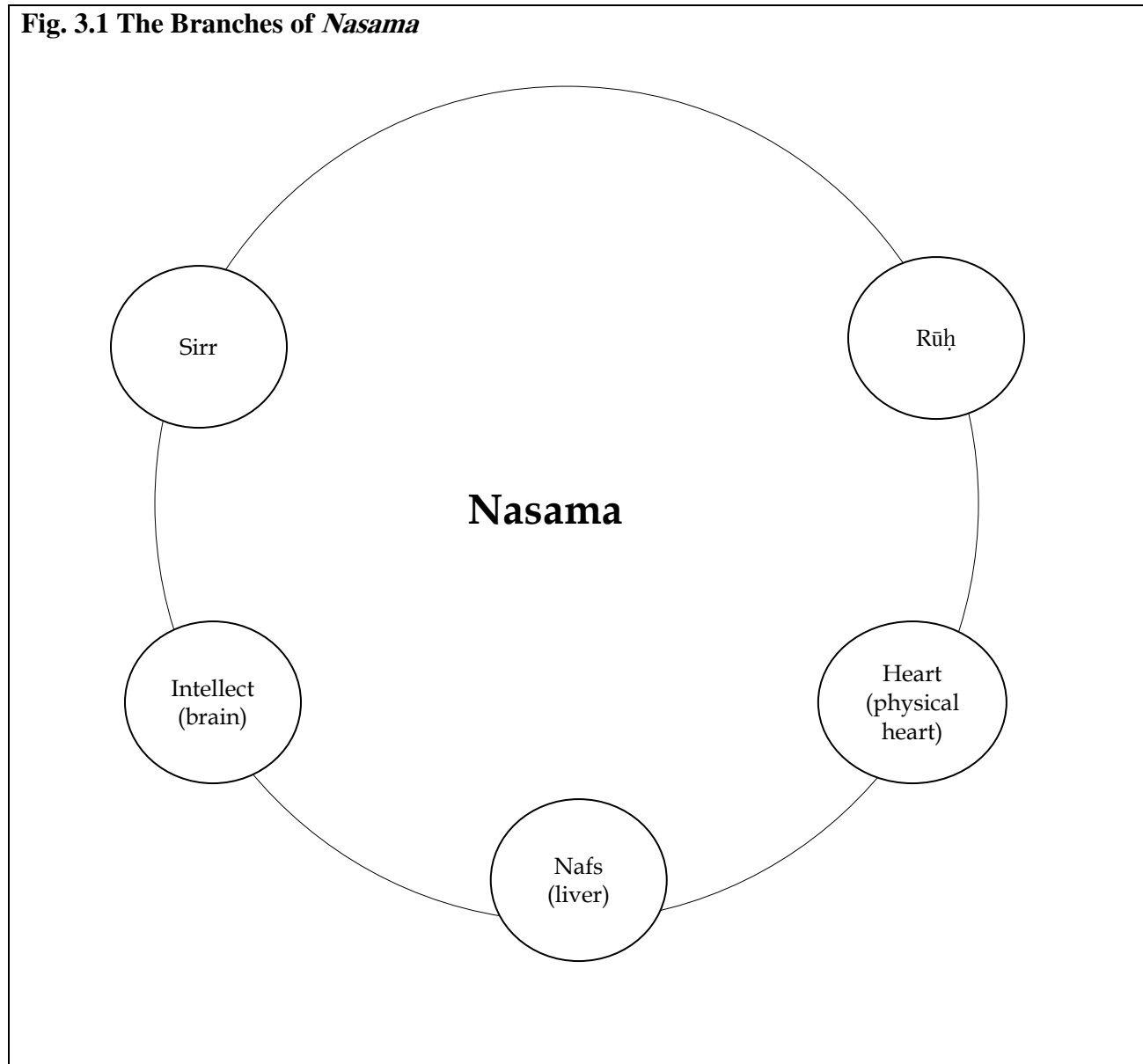
After affirming the three *laṭāʾif* in humans, Walī Allāh appeals to the phenomenological evidence concerning their existence. He argues that when someone looks at a beautiful woman (*imraʾa ḥusnāʾ*) and there arises in his mind no fear of humiliation and torment on the Day of Judgement, then that person is said to be the possessor of the *laṭīfa* called *nafs*, i.e., his temperament is dominated by *nafs*. Next, if the person controls his 'gaze' because he is afraid of public humiliation but still fancies the woman when alone, then he is the possessor of *qalb*. Finally, if the person turns his gaze away from the woman because he fears humiliation and torment on the Day of Judgement, then he is the possessor of *ᶜaql*.[735] Additionally, as was mentioned, *ᶜaql* and *qalb* has further branches which are called *sirr* and *rūḥ* respectively.[736]

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[735] Walī Allāh, *al-Tafhīmāt al-ilāhiyya,* 1: 231.
[736] Walī Allāh, *al-Tafhīmāt al-ilāhiyya,* 1: 232.

Also, it is to be noted that people vary in their constitution (*mizāj*) and develop their *laṭāʾif* accordingly.[737]

At this point, it would be pertinent to show the contrast between this developed model of the *laṭāʾif* and the early model, which is found in Walī Allāh's middle-period work *Alṭāf al-quds*. In *Alṭāf al-quds,* Walī Allāh uses a slightly different scheme to elucidate the basic structure of the self. Also, one observes that he struggles to find the right vocabulary to express the relationship between the self and the *laṭāʾif*. First, he states that the self (*rūḥ*) is composed of three parts (*az sih juzʾ ast*): *nasama* or the airy soul (*rūḥ-i hawāʾī*), the rational soul (*nafs-i nāṭiqa*) and the angelic spirit (*rūḥ-i malakūt*). However, his bio-physiological description of the *nasama* there differs slightly from the account given in his late works such as the *Budūr* and the *Tafhīmāt* in terms of its refinement:

> First, there is the fine air (*nasīm-i ṭayyib*) arising from the subtle vapors (*bukhār-i laṭīf*) of the various elements in digested food. It possesses the capacity for nutrition (*taghdhiyya*), growth (*tanmiyya*) and sense perception (*idrāk*). This is called pneuma (*nasama*), the natural soul (*rūḥ-i ṭabʿī*) or the airy body (*badan-i hawāʾī*). It permeates flesh and bones like the fire in charcoal or the perfume in a rose. It is by virtue of the airy soul (*rūḥ-i hawāʾī*) that the soul is connected with the body. Just as the body tastes death when severed from the soul, the latter suffers a similar death-like pain (*maqāsāt*) when separated from the body. The original source of this subtle vapor lies in the heart, brain and liver. It arises from the boiling of the blood in the heart which is confirmed by the method and observation of the physicians. That is, when they observe blood turning thick or thin, pure or impure, and increasing or decreasing.[738]

As one can see, terms such as *rūḥ-i hawāʾī or badan-i hawāʾī* do not occur in the late works. Instead, we have more refined terms such as subtle air *(hawāʾ laṭīf)* that are heuristically more useful, since the word 'rūḥ' has so many overlapping meanings with the word 'nafs.' More importantly, *pneuma* (*nasama*) is a not one of the parts of the self, as the late works make it plain, rather it is its physical basis. This becomes clearer as we move on to his explanation of the second branch of the self in this early model, namely the rational soul. Concerning the rational soul, Walī Allāh gives the analogy of a date-stone (*nawāt*) and its biological life-cycles (e.g. growth and disintegration) to make the point that if a single date-stone can control its own independent growth, alongside the fact that every tree has its own distinct order (*niẓām*), then reason is compelled to acknowledge the existence of a self (*nafs*) possessing the requisite faculties (*quwā*) in humans, which is called the rational soul (*nafs-i nāṭiqa*).[739] Similarly, the third part is the angelic spirit (*rūḥ-i malakūt*), whose distinctive property is that it remains in the presence of the holy spirit (*rūḥ al-qudus*), which is anchored in the heavenly fold (*ḥaẓīrat al-quds*). The angelic spirit maintains this link at all times (*ittiṣāl paydā mi-kunad*), and is firmly established in the highest assembly (*malaʾ al-aʿlā*), where it is able to converse with the angels according to its preparedness (*istiʿdād*).[740] Now one can see why there are certain inconsistencies in this particular schema. On the one hand, if we conceive of *rūḥ* as spirit, instead of self, which consists of three parts, we run into a mereological fallacy, since the third part of the *rūḥ* is

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[737] Walī Allāh, *al-Tafhīmāt al-ilāhiyya,* 1: 232.

[738] Walī Allāh, *Alṭāf al-quds*, 24.

[739] Walī Allāh, *Alṭāf al-quds*, 25-6.

[740] Walī Allāh, *Alṭāf al-quds*, 31.

definitely a sort of spirit, namely 'the angelic spirit.' So 'spirit' cannot itself be another 'spirit,' especially since we are not talking about 'spirit' and its various kinds such as the natural spirit (*rūḥ-i ṭabīʿī*) and the animal spirit (*rūḥ-i ḥaywānī*). This is because the second part of this '*rūḥ*' is not called '*rūḥ-i nāṭiqa*,' instead of '*nafs-i nāṭiqa*.' Moreover, in numerous other contexts, *nafs-i nāṭiqa* is described as a substance and a non-physical entity that can only be understood as 'self' (not its part), as I have shown in the preceding sections. Therefore, terminological inconsistencies remain in the early model, whether one understands the '*rūḥ*' to be 'spirit' or 'self.' However, one can perhaps hope to reconcile this early model with the more matured model (Fig. 3), by a charitable hermeneutical move (see below).

After giving a basic structure of the self (i.e. *rūḥ*), Walī Allāh goes on to discuss the functions and attributes of various parts of the self (*rūḥ*). He acknowledges that every part of the self (*rūḥ*) has its own separate properties. Moreover, each combination of parts has further distinct properties of their own. More significantly, he notes that the airy soul (i.e. *pneuma*) has affinity with the lower soul (*nafs*),[741] while the rational soul with the heart (*qalb*) and the angelic spirit with the intellect (*ʿaql*).[742] Thus we come back three main *laṭāʾif*, which comprises the self whose bodily basis is *nasama*. And there is good textual evidence to support this interpretation, since Walī Allāh maintains that the five *laṭāʾif* (i.e. including *sirr* and *rūḥ*) are generated from a combination of *pneuma*, the rational soul and the angelic spirit, thereby suggesting here the rational soul and the angelic spirit can be understood in the sense of a *laṭīfa* as well.[743] Moreover, in keeping with late works, he attributes various external and internal senses such as the common sense, the imagination, memory etc. to *pneuma*.[744]

Fig. 3.2 Early Model of the Self

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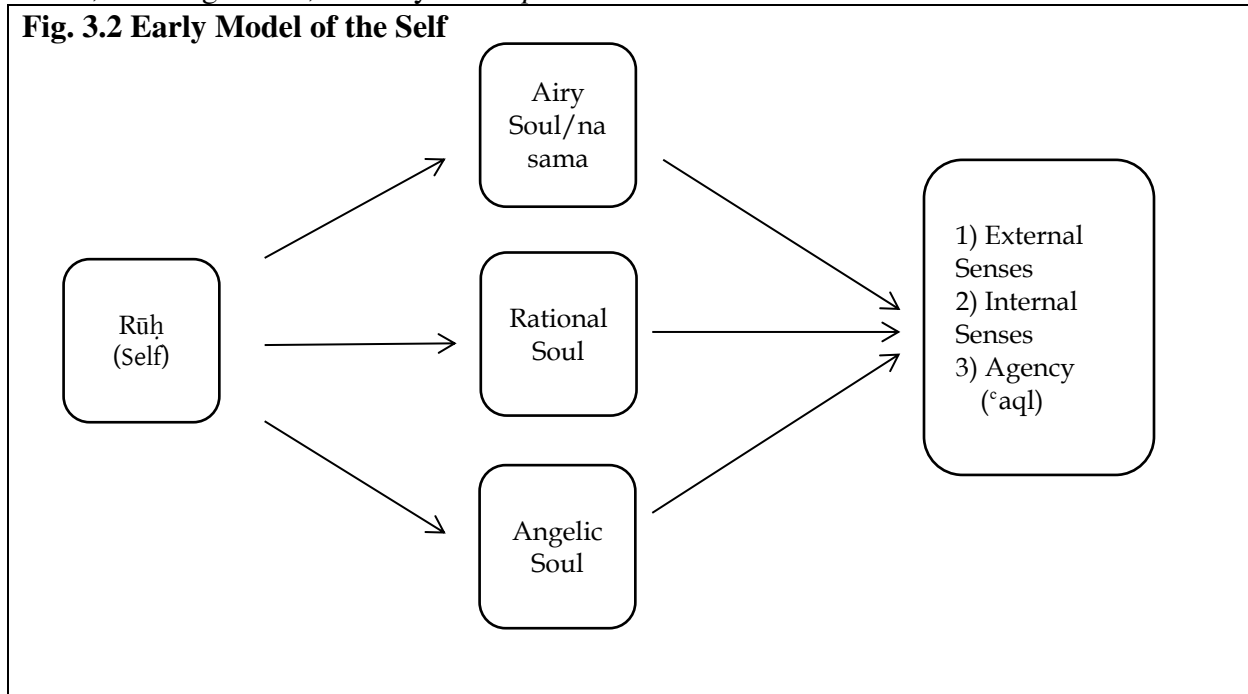
[741] I.e with the appetitive soul (*nafs-i shahwī*), which is an aspect of the lower soul.
[742] Walī Allāh, *Alṭāf al-quds*, 34-5.
[743] Walī Allāh, *Alṭāf al-quds*, 34.
[744] Walī Allāh, *Alṭāf al-quds*, 34. Airy soul (*nafs-i hawāʾī*) or *nasama* contains three parts: *nafs*, *qalb* and *ʿaql*. See Walī Allāh, *Alṭāf al-quds*, 35.

To give a better sense of the *laṭāʾif*, and why it makes more sense to conceive of them as 'subtle fields of consciousness,' let us consider how Walī Allāh describes their 'functions.' In his account, the *laṭīfa* of the *nafs* is characterized by its ability to form the intention to carry out a particular action, entertain feelings of love and hatred, look after the carnal desires (*iqtiḍā-i shahwāt*) and pursue whatever is pleasurable (*ladhdhāt*). In addition, it has to maintain the constitution of the body in accordance with the latter's requirements, and has to discharge what the body naturally has to discharge. Furthermore, basic bodily needs such as hunger and thirst, fatigue and pain, and sexual urge that are necessary for the continuation of life are all connected with the lower self (*nafs*).[745] Next, the *laṭīfa* of the *qalb* has to do with emotions such as showing courage or cowardice (*jubn*), anger (*ghaḍab*), shame (*khijālat*), fear (*khawf*), courage (*jurʾat*), generosity (*sakhāwat*), avarice (*shuḥḥ*), love (*ḥubb*), and hatred (*bughḍ*). Walī Allāh illustrates this by arguing that everyone knows, without failing, why he dislikes a particular thing (*har ādamī lā muḥāla mī-shināsad kih chigūnah chīzī rā makrūh mī-dārad*), why his heart burns with a desire to repel it, why his spirits (*arwāḥ*) seem almost on the point of leaving his body, and why his veins dilate and his skin turns red. Similarly, in times of fear, he knows why his heart trembles, making his spirits recede into his body, and why his face becomes pale and his mouth goes dry.[746] That is to say, the natural sensations and feelings that one goes through due to the stirring of his emotions and passions, are to be attributed to the *laṭīfa* of the heart. We shall have more to say about the self and its emotions in a moment, as Walī Allāh treats emotions of the self at length by linking it with what I call 'spiritual emotion' (*wajd*). But for now let us complete the discussion on the properties of the *laṭāʾif*. According to Walī Allāh, the functions of the *laṭīfa* of the intellect (*ʿaql*) are comprehension (*fahm*), knowledge (*maʿrifat*) and the capacity to make decisions. Moreover, the intellect has the feature of recollecting things of the past (*yād dāshtan-i chīzī kih gudhasht*) and making plans for the future (*tadbīr kardan-i kār-i āyandah*).[747]

The above description systematically attributes both agency-related capacities such as the ability to make decisions and perceptual capacities such as the ability to experience various emotions and make judgements about their moral content to the self, which is difficult to imagine without some form of 'consciousness' in the background. To wit, it is not possible to attribute 'agency-related' actions or states to human beings, while not admitting some sort of consciousness. That is the reason I find it most suitable to render the *laṭāʾif* as 'subtle fields of consciousness.' They are 'subtle' because they have a subtle bodily basis, while it is more plausible to think of them as 'fields' rather than 'points,' since they "pervade the whole body" and interpenetrate each other. However, as Walī Allāh stresses frequently, although there are 'seven' such subtle fields of consciousness (see section V), it does not entail that there are 'seven selves' sitting behind them.[748] This is why the idea of the 'multi-dimensionality' of the self, explicitly asserted by Walī Allāh and others, can be so crucial in delineating a theory of the self. Walī Allāh writes:

> Each of us individually experiences all of these realities (*har ādamī bar khūd hamīsha īn maʿānī rā tajruba mī-kunad*). In one sense, these three categories (i.e. the *laṭāʾif*) are separate from each other, while in another sense they are united together.[749]

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[745] Walī Allāh, *Alṭāf al-quds*, 38-9.
[746] Walī Allāh, *Alṭāf al-quds*, 39-40.
[747] Walī Allāh, *Alṭāf al-quds*, 40.
[748] See e.g. Walī Allāh, *Alṭāf al-quds*, 35-6, and 146.
[749] Walī Allāh, *Alṭāf al-quds*, 40.

We have already discussed the cause of their differentiation; the cause of their unity (*wajh-i ittiḥād*) lies in the fact that, although the rational soul directs these various faculties and functions (*shaʿb*), it is itself fundamentally a single entity (*yakī ast*), and fundamentally, its constitution (*mizāj*) is one.[750]

That is to say, *the self is one at the level of its substance-hood, or as an immaterial entity, but multiple at the level of its functions, states and actions*. For this reason, a spectrum model of selfhood containing multiple dimensions can be heuristically helpful, as it offers "a way of reading the *apparently disconnected* reflections on the self in a *coherent* and *unified* way." For instance, the following passage sketches the bio-physiological dimension of the self:

> As regards base (human) nature (*al-ṭabīʿa*), whose reality is defined by the physical drive (*iqtiḍāʾ al-badan*), it is always after things like food, drink, sexual intercourse (*al-jimāʾ*), and so on. The lower self (*nafs*) submits to the orders [of the body], harbors a secret love for those cravings and forgets the primordial nature (*fiṭra*) upon which it is created. Man is overcome by base nature when he is hungry or thirsty, or has an urge for sexual intercourse or an ardent wish for a particular food, drink or woman. He is forced and rushes toward them. And no custom (*rasm*) or the Shariah can prevent him.[751]

In short, in Walī Allāh's writings (and in Sufism in general), the bio-physiological self is concerned with bodily needs such as food, drink and sexual urge. It is also the 'lower' self because it gives in to the demands and cravings of the body and forgets one's primordial nature (i.e. the true self) upon which it is created. So when one is dominated by the bio-physiological self, not even the Shariah nor can any custom prevent one's downfall. But let us elaborate more on what Walī Allāh means by 'custom,' since this brings us back to 'the socio-cultural dimension' of the self, or the social processes that shapes one's identity. As Walī Allāh explains:

> Customs (*rusūm*) are conventions established (*al-waḍʿ al-maʾlūf*) by people. They refer to dress, manner of speaking, food and marriage. Religion deals with such conventions. The lower self (*al-nafs*) attaches itself to these conventions to such an extent that if it is alone with itself it would be only favorably disposed toward them. A man who is under the influence of customs (*al-rajul al-ghālib ʿalayhi al-rasm*) often bypasses the [impulses] of the base nature because of customs. He may need food because of hunger or he may feel an urge for sexual intercourse because of lust. However, customs prevent him from satisfying his [animal desires]. In this way customs [often] trump over base nature (*al-ṭabīʿa*).[752]

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[750] Walī Allāh, *Alṭāf al-quds*, 41.

[751] Walī Allāh, *al-Budūr al-bāzigha*, 152.

[752] Walī Allāh, *al-Budūr al-bāzigha*, 153. Walī Allāh also broaches the malleability of natural character traits, arguing that factors such as diet, aging, disease, and environment influence our natural character prior to the time at which moral habituation properly begins. For an interesting parallel in Aristotle, see Mariska Leunissen, *From Natural Character to Moral Virtue in Aristotle*, Oxford University Press, 2017), 42-54, 105-30. He further comments on the malleability of the socio-cultural self by saying habits (*al-ʿādāt*) and familiar conventions (*al-maʾlūfāt*) often cause one to associates oneself with a thing, and when the attitudes and shapes associated with that thing become consolidated in the tablet of one's self, one's thought is molded by them. See Walī Allāh, *Ḥujjat Allāh al-bāligha*, 1: 55.

That is to say, although the self is endowed with consciousness and a sense of agency, it can be positively or negatively molded by the environment through adopting various socio-cultural conventions such as manners, speech, food and dress, and other ways of being. In Walī Allāh's view, if the custom happens to be good, it must be followed with sincerity, since in that case it can trump over one's base nature, but if it is corrupted it must be abandoned, and a new beginning should be made with a good custom.[753]

Walī Allāh also describes how a given self may undergo various developments in the course its life. In the beginning the self agrees with animals in almost all their basic needs, as it is veiled by its base nature (*al-ṭabīʿa*). Next, when it progresses from there to the stage of possessing an intellect (*aql*), the first activity that the intellect undertakes concerns the necessities of customs and seeing what his ancestors and peers follow. Accordingly, it will either succeed in proper use of the intellect or be prevented by moral distractions, or else, will continuously be under the sway of customs. But when the development of the intellect is perfected and it is able to reflect on the nature of its existence, or is able to acquire knowledge through imitation (*taqlīd*) or understand from discussions concerning Revelation that we have such and such a Lord, he will believe in God. At that time the self may still be confronted by veils of ignorance (*ḥijāb al-jahl*) and false knowledge. But if it is able free itself from all these veils, it will abide by its primordial nature (*fiṭra*) upon which God has created His servants.[754] As we shall see in section V, such a theory of self inevitably leads to an ethics whereby one seeks to transform and transcend one's lower self so as to attain a higher state of being. As Walī Allāh says:

> The remedy of a false conception of God is to purify the mind (*al-dhihn*) by constantly invoking God (*bi-tikrār dhikr Allāh*), reciting the Qur'an, listening to religious sermons and meditating (*tafakkur*) on the signs of God, all of which make the self (*al-nafs*) ascend to and acquire a disposition of the world of the divine essence (*al-lāhūt*).[755]

Wajd or a Theory of Spiritual Emotion

A distinctive mark of Walī Allāh's complex notion of the self, unlike that of Ṣadrā and others, is that it pays a great deal of attention to psychological factors, mental states and emotions that are bound up with the self. In fact, Walī Allāh recasts the standard mystical concepts of state (*ḥāl*) and stations (*maqāmāt*) and ordinary emotions such as fear through the concept of *wajd* or spiritual emotion. However, since theories of selfhood rarely treat emotions as a frame through which the 'emotional life' of the self can be understood, let me first set the context by providing an account of emotion in the Graeco-Islamic-Western tradition.

Recent literature on the philosophy of mind shows a surge in 'emotion' research in various disciplines. For instance, anthropology and evolutionary psychology have explored which emotions and which facial expressions of emotion, are basic universals among human beings, and shared with non-human animals; developmental psychologists have engaged with the emotions in young children, and with the emotions in our sense of self and in various kinds of psychopathological behavior; and neuroscientists have investigated the neural correlates of

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[753] Walī Allāh, *al-Budūr al-bāzigha*, 154.
[754] Walī Allāh, *al-Budūr al-bāzigha*, 154.
[755] Walī Allāh, *al-Budūr al-bāzigha*, 154.

emotion in humans and other animals.[756] Moreover, with a change in the landscape of philosophical ethics that was once dominated by Kantian deontological and utilitarian ethics, which allowed little space for the emotions, the revival of virtue-ethics accompanied by a return to Aristotelianism, the importance of emotion in ethics began to be properly appreciated.[757]

However, before addressing how modern philosophers analyze emotion, let me fist survey early discussions on emotions that can be traced back to Plato and Aristotle.[758] In their writings, Plato and Aristotle point to the compositional intricacy of emotions, which involves body and mind, cognition and desire, perception and feeling.[759] This means the complexity of emotional phenomena resists any simplistic categorization. Emotions, after all, are states that we *feel*; at the same time, emotionally is how we often *think*. Plato and Aristotle thus stress the interconnections, within the emotions, of body and soul, and of perception, imagination, feeling, and thinking, that were later adopted by Avicenna and others. Moreover, Aristotle provides a physiological account of emotions which gained traction in the Galenic tradition that would eventually reach Walī Allāh. In Aristotle's scheme, virtues and emotions interconstitute each other, which are largely the result of our physiology that rests on the material composition of blood. That is to say, moral habituation of virtues involves training our emotions, which are psychophysical states (or processes), that in turn involves both a psychological component and a physiological component. For instance, acquiring patience or good temper (the virtues associated with anger) involves doing and feeling certain things and the relevant accompanying physiological processes, especially the heating and cooling of the blood.[760] As noted by Aristotle scholar David Charles, an emotion is a psychophysical state (or process) that is 'inseparable in definition into two separate components', a purely formal or psychological one and a purely

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[756] See Peter Goldie (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Emotion* (Oxford, NY: Oxford University Press, 2010), 1-3; Charles Darwin, *The Expression of Emotion in Man and Animals* (London: Harper Collins, 1872/1998), 1-26, 198-221, 278-309; Paul Ekman, Universals and Cultural Differences in Facial Expressions of Emotion, in J. Cole, ed. *Nebraska Symposium on Motivation* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1971), 207-83; P. Harris, *Children and Emotion: The Development of Psychological Understanding* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989), 51-80; R. J. Blair, D. Mitchell & K. Blair, *The Psychopath: Emotion and the Brain* (Malden: Blackwell, 2005), 7-12, 39-40; J. LeDoux, *The Emotional Brain* (London: Orion Books, 1998), 267ff.; Peter Singer, "Ethics and Intuitions," *The Journal of Ethics* 9 (2005): 331–52.

[757] G. E. M. Anscombe, "Modern Moral Philosophy," *Philosophy* 33 (1958): 1–19.

[758] Ancient philosophy shows high-level debates on emotions in which theoretical analysis is wedded to philosophy as a way of life.The Greeks had no word equivalent to our Latinate 'emotion'. The term they commonly use in its place, *pathos*, had the most general meaning '*that which happens* to a person or thing' It came commonly to be applied to experiences to which a person is subject, and also lasting states manifested in such experiences, or initiated or alterable by them. Hence it became the term standardly applied to emotions, occurrent or dispositional, and other mental states. See A. W. Price, "Emotions in Plato and Aristotle," in Peter Goldie (ed.), The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Emotion (Oxford, NY: Oxford University Press, 2010), 121.

[759] See Gabriela R. Carone, "*Akrasia* and the Structure of the Passions in Plato's *Timaeus*," in C. Bobonich and P. Destrée (eds.), *Akrasia in Greek Philosophy* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 101–18; W. Fortenbaugh, *Aristotle on Emotion* (London: Duckworth, 2002); Paul Nieuwenburg, "Emotion and Perception in Aristotle's *Rhetoric*," *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 80 (2002): 86–100; Martha Nussbaum, *The Therapy of Desire: Theory and Practice in Hellenistic Ethics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), *passim*.

[760] Mariska Leunissen, *From Natural Character to Moral Virtue in Aristotle*, 9-31.

physical one.[761] A recent study on Aristotle's ethics offers the following definition of anger as an example: 'a boiling-of-the-blood-type-desire-for-revenge-after-pain-felt-at-a-supposed-slight'.[762]

After Plato and Aristotle, Augustine (354–430) offers an extended inquiry into the nature of emotions in his late work *The City of God*, where his chief target is the Stoic theory of the emotions.[763] Like the Platonists, he maintains that there is an emotional level in the human self that corresponds to Plato's appetitive and spirited parts of the soul.[764] Operating as he does in a theistic framework, Augustine also suggests that emotions belong to the present condition of human beings after the Fall that are bound up with moral implications. This is because after the Fall humans' emotional dispositions are changed and they suffer from exaggerated carnal suggestions, which they should continuously repel.[765]

Following Augustine and the Aristotelian-Platonic tradition, most medieval thinkers conceive of emotions as cognitively penetrable and somatic, which mean emotions are influenced by and oscillate with changes in thought and belief, and that they are also related to their physiological underpinnings.[766] But since research on medieval Islamic philosophers and Sufis' conception of emotions is exceedingly scant, one can only suggest some general comments with reference to key primary sources at this stage. First of all, one should look for a theory of emotion in not only standard philosophical treatises such as Avicenna's *Kitāb al-nafs* of *al-Shifāʾ*, but also in medical works such as the first book of Avicenna's *al-Qānūn fī-l-ṭibb* (The Canon of Medicine), Ḥunayn b. Isḥāq's *al-Masāʾil fī-l-ṭībb li-l-mutaʿallimīn,* Rāzī's *Kitab al-Hawi fi al-tibb, al-Majūsī Kitāb Kāmil al-sināʾat al-ṭibbiya,* and Ibn al-Nafīs' *Kitāb al-Mūjaz fī-l-ṭibb* to name but a few. Secondly, just as most detailed twelfth-century Latin treatments of the emotions are found in theological and spiritual treatises influenced by the monastic tradition of Christian spirituality,[767] Arabic-Islamic theories of emotion were also found in mystical works such as Walī Allāh's *Alṭāf al-quds*, in addition to medical works composed by the Sufis. In general, emotions were explored from the point of view of the behavioral changes which they produced. The detailed analyses of the causal connections between the faculties of the soul, the localization of these faculties in different parts of the brain, and the emotional effects of the systems of humors (*akhlāṭ*) and spirits (*arwāḥ*), were all crucial in a theory of emotion. In

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[761] David Charles, "Desire in Action: Aristotle's Move," in M. Pakaluk and G. Pearson (eds.) *Moral Psychology and Human Action in Aristotle* (Oxford University Press, 2011), 83, quoted by Leunissen, *From Natural Character to Moral Virtue in Aristotle*, 108n12; see also David Charles, "Aristotle's Psychological Theory," *Proceedings of the Boston Area Colloquium of Ancient Philosophy* 24 (2008):1-49.

[762] Mariska Leunissen, *From Natural Character to Moral Virtue in Aristotle*, 105 n15. This definition draws not only on Charles' work on *De Anima* (cited above), but also on Jamie Dow's work on the *Rhetoric*. See Jamie Dow, "Aristotle's Theory of the Emotions: Emotions as Pleasures and Pains," in M. Pakaluk and G. Pearson (eds.) *Moral Psychology and Human Action in Aristotle* (Oxford University Press, 2011), 47-74.

[763] Augustine, *The City of God against the Pagans,* trans. R.W. Dyson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 9.4–5 and 14. See also, *idem.*, *De civitate Dei*, ed. B. Dombart and A. Kalb (Turnhout: Brepols, 1955).

[764] Augustine, *City of God,* 14.5.

[765] Simon Knuuttila, *Emotions in Ancient and Medieval Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 157.

[766] Since the Greek term *pathos* and the Latin term *passio* do not usually suggest extreme emotions as the word 'passion' nowadays might do, one may use the terms 'passion' and 'emotion' interchangeably without intending any important difference in meaning. Also, many of the emotional phenomena to which past philosophers refer are similar to those we are familiar with, though this does not hold of all emotions. Moreover, the variability of emotions between cultures is associated with various practices. So for instance, some of the emotions dealt with by the Desert Fathers are not common in our days, nor are the practices in which they were embedded; but many descriptions of particular emotions in ancient or medieval philosophers do not differ from those described by contemporary writers. For more on this, see Knuuttila, *Emotions in Ancient and Medieval Philosophy*, 3.

[767] Knuuttila, *Emotions in Ancient and Medieval Philosophy*, 177.

Avicenna's works, emotions were acts of the moving power of the sensitive soul, preceded by various cognitive acts and accompanied by bodily affections and behavioral changes.[768] But it should be noted that even though Avicenna was interested in spiritual emotions, they did not have the same central status in his theory that they enjoyed in Sufi literature. Nonetheless, Avicenna's faculty psychology and his conception of emotions provided the foundation for the subsequent tradition.

As noted by Knuuttila, an important doctrinal innovation in the Avicennan paradigm was the new taxonomy in which emotions were classified into contrary pairs of the concupiscible power and the irascible power, traces of which can be found in Plato. Following Aristotle's compositional intricacy, Avicenna also asserts that the emotions of the soul such as distress, fear, joy and anger, are also called the emotions of the spirit (*rūḥ*), since they are accompanied by cardiac and spiritual changes.[769] However, unlike Aristotle, Avicenna's self is an immaterial substance, hence it functions through a material medium, and its acts are influenced by the qualities of the spirits and, more indirectly, of the humors.

Before delving into Walī Allāh's theory of *wajd*, which is multifaceted, I would also go over some contemporary conceptions of emotion, as these discussions will provide a better theoretical context for my own investigation. In an original study on 'Emotions in Heidegger and Sartre,' Anthony Hatzimoysis argues that the essential insight of the phenomenologists is to place emphasis on the role of emotion in our engagement with the world—their world-directedness, attaching less importance to the subjective experience of emotion.[770] So for instance, Heidegger holds that affective states are inextricably connected with our cognition and perception, which implies that unless we attend to the world in an appropriate affective state—with the right 'attunement'—we will not grasp the world as it really is. As is well known, Heidegger's main concern in his magnum opus *Sein und Zeit* is the meaning of being.[771] Among

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[768] Avicenna, *al-Shifāʾ: Fī al-nafs*, in Fazlur Rahman (ed.), Avicenna's *De anima* (Arabic text). See also Debora L. Black, "Imagination and Estimation: Arabic Paradigms and Western Transformations," *Topoi,* 19 (2000) 59–75; "Estimation (*wahm*) in Avicenna: The Logical and Psychological Dimensions," *Dialogue* 32 (1993): 219–258; D. N. Hasse, "Avicenna on Abstraction," in R. Wisnovsky (ed.), *Aspects of Avicenna* (Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2001), 39-72.

[769] Avicenna's views of the emotions of the sensitive soul show similarities to Aristotle's compositional theory. Emotions have cognitive causes, and they involve feelings, behavioural suggestions, and bodily affections. See e.g. Avicenna, *De Anima* I.3, IV.4, V.1; cf. Knuuttila, *Emotions in Ancient and Medieval Philosophy*, 222-224.

[770] Anthony Hatzimoysis, "Emotions in Heidegger and Sartre," in Peter Goldie (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Emotion* (Oxford, NY: Oxford University Press, 2010), 215-235. It is to be noted that the common modern German terms for emotion, *Gefühl* and *Affekt*, are hardly used by Heidegger. Instead, in *Being and Time* we read mostly about *Stimmung*, a term often translated as 'mood'. It might be thought that this is not a real issue; it simply indicates that, when it comes to the details of his account, Heidegger's concern is not with emotion proper but with moods. However, this reasonable suggestion does not offer an easy way out of our interpretative difficulties. Consider, for a start, the fact that when Heidegger attempts to illustrate his view of moods, he discusses *fear*, which has always been taken as a paradigmatic case of *emotion*. It would not help either to think that, for Heidegger, the traditional taxonomy of affective states has got it wrong, and that fear is a mood and not an emotion, since Heidegger attributes to fear precisely those characteristics (specificity of intentional target, limited duration of relevant experience, explicit concern about our well-being in view of an identifiable threat), which mark fear not as a mood but as an emotion. See Hatzimoysis, "Emotions in Heidegger and Sartre," 217. This methodological point, along with what we learned from the ancient and medieval use of the terms related to emotion will provide important clues as to why it is possible to conceptualize '*wajd*' as spiritual emotion, since what is at stake is not about finding a word that corresponds to 'emotion' in English. Rather, one has to see what concepts are being expressed through a given term (see below).

[771] On Heidegger's meaning of being and its analogue in Islamic philosophy, see Muhammad Faruque, "Mullā Ṣadrā and Heidegger on the Meaning of Metaphysics," *Philosophy East and West* 67.3 (2017): 629-650.

the various notions he employs for characterizing *Dasein*'s coming to the truth of being, Heidegger emphasizes the phenomenon of 'disclosure' (*Erschlossenheit*) which meets the following desiderata: (a) it discloses the *Da* of *Dasein*, the fact of its *being‑in‑the world*; (b) it discloses entities encountered *within‑the‑world*; (c) (a) and (b) are achieved simultaneously, in equal measure, and with no metaphysical priority, i.e., 'equiprimordially'; (d) the disclosure is not deliberately brought about, it is not the outcome of voluntary effort, but it is something that 'befalls' *Dasein*; (e) it is a disclosure that should be sharply contrasted with any kind of cognition or observation, including 'theoretical intuition', 'perceptual understanding', 'beholding', 'looking at', 'staring', 'reflecting', 'cognizing', and 'knowing'.[772] In Heidegger's view, the awareness enabled by 'affective experience' meets all of the above desiderata. He illustrates his case by pointing to the emotion of fear: "fearing about something, as being afraid in the face of something, always discloses equiprimordially entities within-the-world and being-in—the former as threatening and the latter as threatened.[773]

From a different vantage point, philosopher Robert Solomon approaches emotions as the 'meaning of life.' Solomon argues that emotions are a precondition for the intelligibility of all our goal-directed activities. If no actual or possible states of affairs were ever judged by us to be preferable to any other, we would have no grounds for action. Without emotions, therefore, we would lose motivation to strive for anything worthwhile or meaningful. Solomon says:

> I suggest that emotions are the meaning of life. It is because we are moved, because we feel, that life has a meaning. The passionate life, not the dispassionate life of pure reason, is the meaningful life (The passionate life of reason is the passionate life in disguise)… Our passions constitute our life.[774]

As Solomon puts it, we do not experience a neutral, objective reality but live in a 'surreality' of purpose, value and significance.[775] Xviii: However, Solomon leaves it unclear as to which emotions one should cultivate in order to have a fulfilling life, since not all emotions are considered to be good, e.g. greed, hatred, anger etc. The discussion on the relation between emotion and the meaning of life, alongside the cultivation of certain desirable emotions smoothly segues into Walī Allāh's idiosyncratic conception of emotions as *wajd*, which literally means 'ecstasy,' in particular spiritual ecstasy. But as we shall see in a moment, it makes more sense to think of *wajd* as spiritual emotion (or passion), since Walī Allāh's formulation of *wajd* not only incorporates spiritual states, but also everyday emotions such as anger and love. The following passage delineates Walī Allāh's conception of *wajd*:

> The term spiritual emotion (*wajd*) is used to describe the preoccupation of the heart (*mashgūli-yi dil*) with various states (*aḥwāl*) such as shame, grief, repentance, aversion of the world, etc. And it is implicit in this notion that bodily organs are likewise controlled

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[772] Sections 28, 29, and 30 abound with Heidegger's warnings against the confusion of *Befindlichkeit* or *Stimmungen* with any kind of cognitive or perceptual awareness. See Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit* (Tubingen: Niemeyer, 1967), 134, 136.

[773] As Heidegger often says, "Fear is a mode of *Befindlichkeit*," see *idem., Sein und Zeit,* 141.

[774] Robert Solomon, *The Passions: Emotions and the Meaning of Life* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1993), ix-xiv.

[775] Solomon, *Passions: Emotions and the Meaning of Life,* 18. For more details, see Matthew Ratcliffe, "The Phenomenology of Mood and the Meaning of Life," in Peter Goldie (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Emotion* (Oxford, NY: Oxford University Press, 2010), 350-70; Peter Goldie, *The Emotions: A Philosophical Exploration* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), 50ff.

by such preoccupations. When through continuous worshipping both this capacity and that of sincerity are created in man, and the spirits (*arwāḥ*) of the heart are somewhat reduced in stature, then the various states which ensue may be attributed to God. Because one's attention is turned towards God and because of the diminished stature of the spirits (*arwāḥ*) of the heart, it becomes more difficult to ward off these states; and the bodily organs become more passive. As a result fainting and other deranged actions are observed. This or that particular transport of spiritual emotion (*wajd*) represents a state (*ḥāl*); while the capacity for such transports, which is permanently fixed in the individual, represents a stage (*maqām*).[776]

So, *wajd* describes states of the heart, and we know that for Walī Allāh the heart is one of the *laṭāʾif* to which emotions such as showing courage or cowardice (*jubn*), anger (*ghaḍab*), shame (*khijālat*), fear (*khawf*), courage (*jurʾat*), generosity (*sakhāwat*), avarice (*shuḥḥ*), love (*ḥubb*), and hatred (*bughḍ*) are attributed. However, as in Aristotle and Avicenna, *wajd* is characterized by its compositional intricacy that involves both a psychological and a physiological component. However, unlike Aristotle and many contemporary theorists, *wajd* also includes heightened spiritual states that are aroused through spiritual exercises such as the invocation (*dhikr*). In Walī Allāh's account, such spiritual states can be caused by intense attention (*tawajjuh*) to the divine in which bodily organs are overpowered resulting in fainting and other deranged actions. However, in other places Walī Allāh talks about common emotion such as anger that is objectual in the sense that it involves a definite object and cognitive judgements about it. Walī Allāh writes:

> When a man flies into anger (*ghaḍab*), his intellect will realize upon reflection that his anger was roused only on account of his having perceived the harm caused by the object of his anger or because of having been delighted that revenge could be taken. Likewise, blood will not come into one's face or skin and make it red, nor will hot breath issue from one's mouth, unless a sequence of physical actions is initiated in nature (*ṭabīʿa*). He also will realize that anger may come about from one word having one source, and that those physical actions may be initiated simply after one explosion. But how many times it is observed that a man with a large brain and liver but a weak heart is unable to show anger?[777]

Once again, the reader would notice the Aristotelian underpinning of Walī Allāh's theory of emotion that involves a psychophysical account. However, it is important to note that in Walī Allāh's account, emotions are understood in the context of meanings they generate in the spiritual life. Here a spiritual emotion is a function of the heart and its purpose is to transform the heart by subduing the lower self (*nafs*). Walī Allāh says:

> The real nature of spiritual emotion (*wajd*) is to effect a transformation in the heart so that it is transformed in all respects, and its control over the bodily members is destroyed. Sometimes this spiritual passion may take the form of swooning (*ṣaʿq*) or unconsciousness (*bīhūshī*), sometimes tearing one's clothes or making other [involuntary] movements. At times it appears as weeping and grieving (*ḥuzn*), or as a complete hatred

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[776] Walī Allāh, *Alṭāf al-quds*, 91.
[777] Walī Allāh, *al-Budūr al-bāzigha*, 39.

of everything except the Real (*ḥaqq*) and being drawn towards Him… Spiritual emotion is a function of the heart (*qalb*) and the lower self's being subjugated by it. Afterwards, wakefulness follows implying both vigilance (*hūshiyārī*) and awareness (*khabardārī*).[778]

Next, Walī Allāh also notes the cognitive aspect of emotions that involves intentionality. For him emotions can be affective states that occur when e.g. certain sayings impress the heart, making the impression last for a long time. This happens because the heart is also ruled by the perceptive faculty (*quwwat-i darrāka*). It may happen that a person sees the world's vicissitudes and suddenly recoils from himself and desists from sin. Or it may be that he hears the sermon of a preacher at an opportune moment and his heart suddenly turns towards him. Or perhaps through company with the folk of God (*ṣuḥbat-i ahl Allāh*) he may slowly become inclined to the straight path. According to Walī Allāh, all of these intentional states involve *wajd*.[779] As with Augustine, Walī Allāh's theory of *wajd* is also tinged with moral implications. So the emotional life of the self is controlled by eating little (*qillat-i ṭaʿām*), sleeping little (*qillat-i manām*), speaking little (*qillat-i kalām*), and associating little with people (*qillat-i ṣuḥbat maʿa l-anām*). Unlike contemporary theorists such as Solomon, Walī Allāh is explicit in taking control of negative motions such as restlessness (*qalaq*) and self-entanglement consisted of self-doubt (*khūd bar khūd pīchīdan*). He thinks controlling negative emotions is like whipping and goading a restless horse into submission.[780] In all, for Walī Allāh emotions involve both the soul and the body, and are loaded with moral and spiritual content. In his view, although the self is characterized by an emotional life, not all the emotions are good. Also, emotions are intimately related to the *laṭīfa* of the heart that can be desirable if accompanied by the reasoning faculty and if they lead to overcoming the lower self.

Trading Divine and Human Subjectivity

Traveling within the *Laṭāʾif*

It was mentioned that the self is both a spectrum and an aspirational concept. That is, part of the self is given (i.e. the bio-physiological dimension) but part of it exists only as a potential that one aspires to achieve. In Walī Allāh's scheme of things, the nature of the self is consisted of the subtle fields of consciousness (*laṭāʾif*) that one must purify in order to reach the ultimate selfhood (*anāniyya kubrā*). In view of the fact that the subtle fields of consciousness are hierarchically structured and they form the matrix of one's given subjectivity, it would be helpful to use the metaphor of 'travelling' or journeying within these fields, as they lead to the ultimate destination of the self, which is identity with the divine as we shall see in in the next section.

In his *Alṭāf al-quds*, Walī Allāh suggests that in Sufi terminology (*dar iṣṭilāḥ-i ṣūfiyya*), the purification of the lower self, the heart and the intellect (*tahdhīb-i nafs, qalb wa-ʿaql*) is known as the way (*ṭarīqat*), while that of the spirit and the secret (*tahdhīb-i rūḥ wa- sirr*) is termed gnosis (*maʿrifat*).[781] That is to say, what is known as *ṭarīqat* or the practice of the Sufi way in common Sufi parlance is nothing other than purifying all the *laṭāʾif* of the self. As Walī Allāh explains:

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[778] Walī Allāh, *Alṭāf al-quds*, 80.
[779] Walī Allāh, *Alṭāf al-quds*, 79-80.
[780] Walī Allāh, *Alṭāf al-quds*, 82-3.
[781] Walī Allāh, *Alṭāf al-quds*, 73.

The whole point of engaging oneself in spiritual activities and exercises is that every *laṭīfa* should be cultivated (*parwarish*) and that due consideration should be given to every stage.[782]

Also, Walī Allāh claims that the real nature and the effects of these *laṭāʾif* are unfamiliar to most minds, and most people do not benefit from being informed of them (*istimāʿ-i ānhā muntafiʿ namī-tawānad bud*). Nonetheless, there are two types of people who might benefit from hearing about these things. The first is someone who has already come close to perfecting them completely, and who has acquired the preparedness to purify them. If such a person turns his attention to this present discussion, the conception (*taṣawwur*) of the forms of these things will be the correct one, and it will open the door to success. The second type is someone who has been blessed with a general knowledge of the *laṭāʾif*, but lacks the capacity to understand them in detail. If such a person reads this discussion, Walī Allāh says, his general knowledge will be transformed into a detailed one.[783] Moreover, Walī Allāh notes that since there are so many variations in the types of human selves (*nufūs-i banī ādam*), the means of purification for each of them will also differ, thereby making its scope enormous.[784]

However, one may wonder why is there a need to purify one's self or the *laṭāʾif* that comprise it? To answer this Walī Allāh argues that without such purification, one would not be able to know the real nature of the self and how this differs from what we ordinarily perceive, think, and treat the self to be. For instance, since the *laṭīfa* of the *nafs* or the lower self seeks to fulfil its carnal desires, it is prevented from seeing its higher nature:

Since the essential nature of the lower self (*nafs*) is to realize the satisfaction of its appetitive qualities (*shahwāt*), it is necessary that it should be purified through repentance (*tawba*) and renunciation (*zuhd*). Since the essential nature of the lower self is guided by its fickle-mindedness (*ṭaysh*) and impetuousness in pursuit of its desires, its remedy then inevitably lies in its taking stock of the beastly self (*nafs-i sabʿiyya*). This means the individual should be arduous in fighting against his lower self (*tā ādamī khūd bar khūd jūsh zanad*), and should dislike himself and be the judge of his own self (*khūd bar khūd ḥakam bāshad*). And as has been observed on numerous occasions, a man begins to rebuke himself, takes himself to task and expresses his regret and shame. All of this manifests domination of the beastly self (*nafs-i sabʿī*) over the appetitive self (*nafs-i shahwī*).[785]

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[782] Walī Allāh, *Alṭāf al-quds*, 87. In his Walī Allāh's view, when the wayfarer is released from the influence of the lower self (*nafs*), he should focus his attention to the other *laṭāʾif*, namely *qalb* and *ʿaql*. At this point, his heart becomes his spirit (*rūḥ*) and his intellect becomes his *sirr*. See Walī Allāh, *Alṭāf al-quds,* 35. Moreover, when the seeker has completed the purification of the self, the heart and the intellect, and has gained the benefits accruing from this, the next requirement is the purification yet again of the self, but this time in conjunction with the spirit and the secret faculty. Walī Allāh, *Alṭāf al-quds,* 98.

[783] Walī Allāh, *Alṭāf al-quds*, 112.

[784] Walī Allāh, *Alṭāf al-quds*, 47.

[785] Walī Allāh, *Alṭāf al-quds*, 79. Cf. According to Walī Allāh, the lower self is moved by sexual desire and lust, and when it is overcome by them, its nature is worse than that of an animal. See Walī Allāh, *Ḥujjat Allāh al-bāligha*, 1: 136. Cf. Walī Allāh, *Ḥujjat Allāh al-bāligha*, 1:109, where the lower self is likened to a veil that conceals the true nature of the self.

That is, the *nafs* (i.e. lower self) is that undesirable part of the self that needs to be overcome. This is because the lower self is always craving the satisfaction of its base desires for such things as sensuality (*shahwāt*) or superiority (*ghalaba*) and dominance over one's peers (*istīlāʾ bar abnāʾ-i jins*). Walī Allāh also maintains that at times the individual tries to restrain his lower self (*shakhṣ nafs rā bāz mī-dārad*) and opposes it, with the result that a fierce conflict arises within him. At that time, a great deal of bitterness is experienced, but when the dust settles and agitation (*shūr*) ceases, a wonderful light (*nūr-i ʿajīb*) descends from the Spirit (*rūḥ*) and envelops the wayfarer both inwardly and outwardly.[786] Since the subtle fields of consciousness also manifest various emotions, as discussed in the previous section, Walī Allāh broaches the heart (*qalb*) that plays a crucial role in the purification of the self:

> The heart rules over the bodily organs, by virtue of its love modify their patterns of behavior (*bi-ḥasab-i muḥabbat-i khūd ādāb-i jawāriḥ wa-kayfiyat-i aʿḍāʾ ro mī-gardānad*). When this quality becomes innate in the heart and is maintained for a long time in close association with continuous worshipping, then a stage is created between these two attributes… As a result, [the disciple's] bodily organs become submissive (*khāshiʿ*), and he begins to show courtesy and deference in speech and treat all those who are related to the Beloved (*maḥbūb*) as his own respected friends.[787]

Walī Allāh asserts that it is the characteristic of the heart (i.e. the faculty in charge of emotions) to subjugate the appetitive self (*nafs-i shahwānī*) and ignore its frivolity and greed, and keep it under firm control. The effect of this aspect of purification is called patience (*ṣabr*). A further characteristic of the heart is to conform to the intellect and to heed and accept its command. The effect of this aspect of purification is termed surrender to providence (*tawakkul*). Yet another of its characteristic is loyalty to friends (*wafā bih dūstān*) and close adherence to their beliefs and opinions. The effect of this aspect of purification is called piety (*taqwā*) and love and holy ritual. One final characteristic of the heart is that, in comparison with the ultimate objective, everything else appears rather secondary. And because of its inclination towards the real, the heart suppresses any impulse of anger, avarice (*shuḥḥ*), love of dignity or extravagant hopes. The effect of this aspect of purification of the self is called generosity (*samāḥat*).[788] After describing how the heart can suppress, subdue and transform the lower self, Walī Allāh goes on to suggest that if the *laṭīfa* of the intellect dominates over both the lower self and the heart, then even more praiseworthy qualities (*ṣifāt-i maḥmūda*) will result. Drawing on the Qurʾanic terminology, Walī Allāh affirms that the self in this condition is called the tranquil self (*nafs-i muṭmaʾinna*).[789] For instance, when a man comes to realize through his intellect that his happiness (*saʿādat*) lies in performing good actions (*aʿmāl-i birr*), while bad actions (*aʿmāl-i athamm*) will only bring him misery (*shiqāwat*), then his lower self no longer goes against or objects to the command of the

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[786] Walī Allāh, *Alṭāf al-quds*, 108-09.

[787] Walī Allāh, *Alṭāf al-quds*, 90.

[788] Walī Allāh, *Alṭāf al-quds*, 83.

[789] In the *Ḥujjat*, Walī Allāh, describes the way one obtains ultimate happiness, which takes place when one is able to overcome one's animalistic nature. In his view, this can be attained by turning complete attention to what lies beyond the invincible realm (*jabarūt*). This state brings about a pleasure which is different from familiar pleasures. When this happens the person no longer mixes with other people, nor desires what others desire, nor fears what others fear, since he is in a remote place and is far removed from ordinary folks. Walī Allāh states that this is the happiness realized by the transcendent philosophers (*mutaʾallihūn min al-ḥukamāʾ*) and the ecstatic Sufis (*majdhūbūn*). Walī Allāh, *Ḥujjat Allāh al-bāligha*, 1: 100.

intellect; and his heart, too, begins to show love (*maḥabbat*) and spiritual longing (*shawq*) for what reason requires. It often happens that a man of abundant intellect thinks of some desirable worldly or religious objective (*maṣlaḥat-i dīniyya wa-dunyawiyya*). Then, however much his heart may dislike certain aspects of it, and even though sweet pleasures (*ladhdhat-i ʿajīb*) may meanwhile be slipping through his hands, still his heart and the lower self do not disobey his intellect.[790]

Even though it may appear as if the heart and the intellect can control the appetitive self and curb its blameworthy characters, there are times when the lower or the appetitive self fights back strongly, making the self experiences its 'dark nights'[791] when everything appears blank or there is a complete black-out:

> It may so happen that the lower self (*nafs*) has now forgotten its own needs—its appetitive and beastly desires (*marghūbāt-i shahwiyya wa-sabʿiyya*). However way you may search, you will no longer find in the lower self (*nafs*) any image of the beloved (*ṣūrat-i maʿshūq*), or any delight in sexual pleasures (*ladhdhat-i jimāʿ*); and however much you probe, you will not find in it any sign of love of rank or honor or greed for wealth. And yet a black pall of smoke (*dūd-i siyāh*) rises up from the lower self (nafs), which obliterates the face of both the spirit (*rūḥ*) and the secret (*sirr*); a fog (*ghubār*) is stirred up which sullies these two mirrors, a bitterness (*talkhī*) proceeds from the lower self, which spoils the sweet taste (*shīr u shikar*) of the spirit and the *sirr*. No matter how meticulously he may search for the origin of that fogginess, he cannot understand what it is; however much he uses his intellect, he is unable to fathom where it is coming from (*kārī namī-kunad kih az kujā ast*). But the discerning gnostic (*ʿārif-i nāfidh*) realizes that all of this is the work of the lower self (*nafs*), whose viciousness never ends, and that there is no way one can escape its ruses.[792]

Despite such 'dark nights of the soul,' the higher, discerning part of the self recognizes that all of these are ruses by the lower self, which can be transformed and freed from its own inherent constitution by means of ascetic exercises (*riyāḍāt*).[793] Among many such spiritual exercises Walī Allāh mentions self-examination (*muḥāsiba-yi nafs*), which is attending to the self moment by moment and remaining constantly aware of its state (*yaʿnī har zamānī waqif-i ḥāl-i khūd bāshad*) to see whether its time is being elapsed in negligence (*ghaflat*) and sin, or it is spent in acts of devotion (*ṭāʿat*). If the desired objective is achieved, Walī Allāh continues, we should thank God, and think hard of ways to continue this trend and enhance this practice. But if it is the reverse, we should repent.[794] After mentioning 'self-examination,' Walī Allāh elucidates four cardinal virtues that the self (*nafs*) should cultivate in order to purify itself from the temptations of the lower self. The first of these cardinal virtues is purity (*ṭahārat*) through which the self is related to angels, while the second is humility (*khuḍūʿ*) through which the self acquires an affinity with the highest assembly (*malaʾ al-aʿlā*). The third is generosity (*samāḥat*), by means of which the self obliterates stains left by base human nature such as animal-like behavior (*afʿāl-*

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[790] Walī Allāh, *Alṭāf al-quds*, 43-4. Cf. Walī Allāh, *Ḥujjat Allāh al-bāligha*, 1: 44, where he says the ʿaql must dominate the *qalb* and the *qalb* must dominate the *nafs*.

[791] Cf. John of the Cross, *The Dark Night of the Soul* (London: Baronius Press, 2015), 110ff.

[792] Walī Allāh, *Alṭāf al-quds*, 99-100.

[793] Walī Allāh, *Alṭāf al-quds*, 39.

[794] Walī Allāh, *Alṭāf al-quds*, 81-2.

i sabʿiyya) and lust (*shahwiyya*). The fourth is justice (ʿ*adālat*) through which the self may appear pleasing in the sight of highest assembly (*malaʾ al-aʿlā*), may gain favor with it and receive its mercy and blessings.[795]

Finally, Walī Allāh recommends a host of Sufi spiritual practices, some of which are associated with the Naqshbandī order. Among these practices, he suggests invocation (*dhikr*), beating one's chest, breath-control (*ḥabs-i nafas*),[796] the secret lesson (*sabq-i bāṭinī*) which is a legacy of the Masters of the Naqshbandi school, listening to spiritual music (*samāʿ*) and contemplating aesthetically pleasing patterns (*naqshhā-yi shawq-angīz*).[797] In Walī Allāh's view, all of these spiritual exercises excite longing in the heart and bring it to life. Moreover, the observance of purity at all times (*dawām-i ṭahārat*), the serene light of Qurʾanic recitation, Sufi *wird* and the cultivation (*parwarish*) of the Uwaysi relationship with the spirits of the saints, all provide nourishment for the self (*nafs*). In the same way, he continues, contemplating attributes of God and meditating on His names (*fikr-i tadabbur-i asmāʾ*) transport the intellect to the seat of splendor. Finally, in order to awaken higher *laṭāʾif* such as *sirr*, one should practice 'pure remembrance,' which is the Naqshbandī practice of soundlessly and wordlessly remembering God (*yād dāsht-i ṣirf, bī-ṣawt wa-ḥarf kih maʿmūl-i naqshbandiyya ast*).[798]

The End of Selfhood

So far we have learned that the there are five subtle fields of consciousness (*laṭāʾif*) that comprise the individual self, and that one can journey through them—in the sense of discovering them within oneself—in order to reach ultimate selfhood (*anāniyya kubrā*). The next question then becomes what is the nature of ultimate selfhood and how does one attain it? Moreover, how does such a transformed state of the self look like? Is the individual self dissolved in such a state and become God, or there still is some form of individuality that is retained? Moreover, what is the Shariah viewpoint of such transcendent states? In other words, where does 'normative Islam' stand in all this? Let us, then, proceed to answer all these questions in sequence, and in doing so, bring Walī Allāh's conception of the self to a culmination.

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[795] Walī Allāh, *Alṭāf al-quds*, 52-3.

[796] See ch. 4, 195-201.

[797] See also, Walī Allāh, *Ḥujjat Allāh al-bāligha*, 1: 104-05, for a detailed treatment of the Sufi virtues that are essential to purification.

[798] Walī Allāh, *Alṭāf al-quds*, 108. Continuous worshipping (*dawām-i ʿubūdiyyat*) falls into two categories. The first category is concerned with the limbs and organs of the body and the tongue. This entails spending one's life is prayer and reading the Qurʾan with one's thoughts collected and one's heart in attendance. Walī Allāh asserts that this is one of the fundamental principles of Sufism, which has been explained in such books as Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī's *Qūt al-qulūb*, al-Ghazālī's *Iḥyā ulūm al-Dīn*, Jilānī's *Ghaniyyat al-ṭālibīn* and Suhrawardī's *Awārif al-maʿārif*. The second category is connected with the heart and the intellect. Here the heart is occupied with the love of the Beloved and close attachment to the Beloved. The intellect is occupied with remembrance and awareness while 'suspending breath' (*ḥabs-i nafas*). See Walī Allāh, *Alṭāf al-quds*, 86-7.

Fig. 3.3 The *Laṭāʾif* and Selfhood (based on Walī Allāh's own diagram)[799]

The Divine Self

Ultimate Selfhood

The Philosopher's Stone

Macrocosmic Laṭāʾif

Arcanum

The Light of the Holy

Super Arcanum

The Junction of the Self

Sirr

Rūḥ

Microcosmic Laṭāʾif

Intellect

Heart

Qālab

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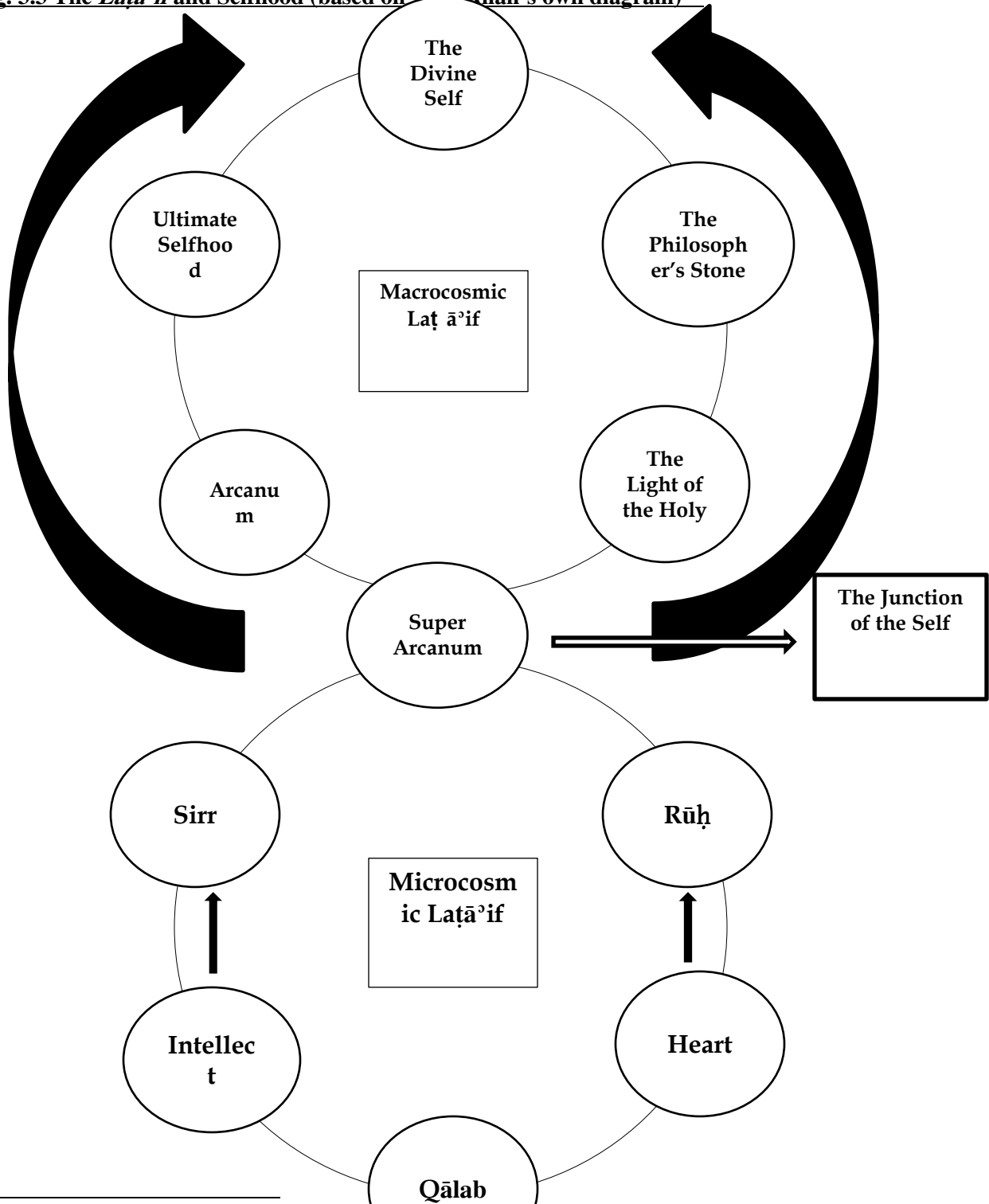
[799] Based on Walī Allāh's own diagram with s⟨...⟩, see *idem*., *al-Tafhīmāt al-ilāhiyya,* 1: 244. In his own commentary on this diagram, Walī Allāh exp⟨...⟩ons the rational soul (*al-nafs al-nāṭiqa*) or the self as the junction between the microcosmic and the macrocosmic *laṭāʾif*. He states that the rational soul has four frames of reference (*anẓār*), two of which are branched into *rūḥ* and *sirr* below it, while two of them are branched into *khafī* and *nūr al-quds* above it. But the rational soul itself is stationed at the junction of *akhfā* (super arcanum) [*wa kāna al-nafs al-nāṭiqa innamā hiya fī mawḍiʿ al-akhfā*]. See Walī Allāh, *al-Tafhīmāt al-ilāhiyya,* 1: 244.

176

Being an authority on legal matters (i.e. matters pertaining to the Shariah), in addition to being a Sufi, Walī Allāh seems mindful of the fact that many of his abstruse reflections on the nature of ultimate selfhood might appear unsettling to the uninitiated or the ordinary believer. Thus he begins by asserting that the purpose of the Shariah is to deliver the self from the punishment of the grave and the Day of Judgment, rather than enabling it to attain the mystical states of annihilation and subsistence:

> If you want to understand the true nature of the Shariah, then know that human beings are trapped in the grip of the evil-inciting self (i.e. the lower self)… And the remedy of this situation is provided in view of the entire species (i.e. humanity as a whole), hence it (i.e. the remedy) pertains the species as a whole, and not to the specific potential that an individual [self] possesses. So the final purpose of this (i.e. the Shariah) is to save the [individual] from being devastated in the world, alongside the punishment of the grave and the Day of Judgment. Its purpose is not to enable [the self] to attain the station of annihilation and permanence for each of the *laṭāʾif*, nor the rank of absolute permanence and perfect settlement (*ḥaqīqat-i sharīʿat agar khwāhī kih bi-fahmī, bi-dān kih banī ādam dar qayd-i nafs-i ammāra giriftār shudah būdand… wa iltifāt darīn ʿalāj bi-ṣūrat-i nawʿiyya wa-khwāṣṣ-i kulliyya-yi ān nawʿ ast, nah bi-istiʿdādāt-i khāṣṣa bar juzwi-yi fardī, wa ʿillat-i ghāyat-i ān ikhlāṣ az tazālum dar dunyā mubtalā shudan bi-ʿadhāb-i qabr wa rūz-i ḥashr ast, nah wuṣul-i fanāʾ wa-baqāʾ-yi har laṭīfa wa ḥuṣūl-i martaba-yi baqāʾ-i muṭlaq wa-tamkīn-i tāmm).*[800]

After mentioning the above, Walī Allāh adds that "whoever thinks otherwise has not understood the Prophet's aims (*maqāṣid*), beneficial strategies (*maṣāliḥ*), commands (*awāmir*) and prohibitions (*nawāhī*)." That is to say, the commands and prohibitions of the Shariah are sufficient to save the self from the punishment of hell or enjoy the blessedness of paradise. But these commands and prohibitions of the Shariah are 'generic' in the sense that they do not take into account 'individual potentials' (*istiʿdādāt-i fardī*) that contain the possibilities of realizing higher states of being through *fanāʾ* and *baqāʾ* or what I would call 'self-less states.' That is to say, the text above makes it clear that for Walī Allāh, the self has modes of being above and beyond the ordinary teachings of the Shariah, and, as we shall soon see, he goes to great lengths to elucidate the higher states of the self, some of which might appear rather antinomian from the outward Shariah perspective. It is also important to note that these passages where Walī Allāh expounds the higher reality of the self would challenge the existing scholarship, which seeks to present an uncontested, reform-minded image of Shāh Walī Allāh.

In any event, in Walī Allāh's metaphysical anthropology, the nature of the self is bound up with its ontological source, i.e. the universal soul. But the universal soul itself is conceived as the subjective pole of one of the modes of Being, namely deployed existence (*al-wujūd al-munbasiṭ*),[801] which in turn is identified with the Realm of Mercy (*raḥamūt*).[802] But one needs to clarify what deployed existence is, and how it relates to both the universal soul and the

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[800] Walī Allāh, *Alṭāf al-quds*, 48-9.
[801] See pp. 137ff.
[802] "The realm of Mercy has several degrees of descent (*tanazzulāt kathīra*), all of which are its conditionings and determinations. It is from the realm of Mercy that presential knowledge emanates, which is called the 'I' [or 'self'] (*wa min al-raḥamūt yanshaʾ al-ʿilm al-ḥuḍūrī alladhī huwa anā*)." See pp. 137-38.

individual self. As far as his ontology is concerned, Walī Allāh's views on *wujūd* and its modalities are largely in line with that of the school of Ibn ʿArabī, although he attributes 'subjectivity' to *wujūd* by conceiving 'deployed existence' as the universal soul. In the Akbarian ontology[803], the whole of reality is conceived in terms of *wujūd* because the latter embraces everything by definition, i.e. if anything exists, it cannot be devoid of being. Moreover, the Akbarian ontology describes the interrelationship of God and the cosmos, which can be multifaceted given the complexities characterizing it. What's more, in this ontology, 'real' *wujūd* belongs only to God whereas contingent beings possess only 'borrowed' *wujūd*.[804] According to Walī Allāh, Sufis who valorize such ontology, often called the ontology of *waḥdat al-wujūd*, are those who liken everything other than God (*mā siwallāh*) to be made of different forms but of the same substance.[805] We find Walī Allāh using the trope of 'wax' in lieu of '*wujūd*' in order to suggest that all contingent realities are particular determinations of the one "*Wujūd*," and they share Its "being" just as different forms shaped by wax share the same wax. But Wujūd Itself or Absolute Being (*al-wujūd al-muṭlaq*), manifests Itself so that the cosmos can come into being. And the first determination (*al-taʿayyun al-awwal*) of Absolute Being is called deployed existence (*al-wujūd al-munbasiṭ*) through which the entire cosmos including the angels, the heavens and all other entities is manifested.[806] According to Walī Allāh, Sufis thus do not negate the multiplicity of the cosmos. When Sufis say that the world is identical with God, they have in mind deployed existence (*al-wujūd al-munbasiṭ*), which is *posterior* to Absolute Being and which, moreover, subsists by it.[807] In short, there are levels of being (*marātib al-wujūd*) starting

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[803] I.e. the ontology of the School of Ibn ʿArabī. See Faruque, "Sufism *contra* Shariah," 42ff.

[804] Walī Allāh explains it thus: "It is from this perspective that Sufis say the world is identical with the Real. They do not wish to negate the particular existents that descend from Being to the multi-layered hierarchy of [reality]. Rather they wish to use the meaning of descent and manifestation (*tanazzul wa ẓuhūr*) intelligibly, saying Zayd and ʿAmr are similar in one respect, their species being one, but different in another. They say man and horse are one from the aspect of its animality (*ḥaywāniyya*), and also, courage and lion and are one insofar as the attribute of courage is present in both of them. Similarly, the Sufis say that the world is identical with the Real, by which they mean the [reality] of the world is identical with deployed existence. However, deployed existence, in turn, subsists in the True One (*al-ḥaqq al-awwal*). Thus they do not negate the distinction completely." Walī Allāh, *al-Tafhīmāt al-ilāhiyya*, 2: 275.

[805] Walī Allāh, *al-Tafhīmāt al-ilāhiyya*, 263, 267, 273-74. In other words, contingent beings do not possess any 'being' of their own. Their *wujūd*, in this metaphysics, is always sustained by the *wujūd* of the Real Being (*al-wujūd al-ḥaqq*). Cf. Dāwūd al-Qayṣarī (d. 1350/751), a major figure in the school of Ibn ʿArabī, says the following regarding the ontology of *waḥdat al-wujūd*: "In reality, everything other than God is like waves in a turbulent ocean. Little doubt do we have in that even though the wave is an accident subsisting in water, and is other than it [in one respect], it is not different from water with respect to its *wujūd* and reality." Dāwūd al-Qayṣarī, *Rasā'il-i Qayṣarī* (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Anjuman-i Islāmī-i Ḥikmat wa Falsafa-yi Iran, 2002), 12-13.

[806] See Faruque, "Sufism *contra* Shariah," 48-50.

[807] One of the controversies related to *waḥdat al-wujūd* is its supposed claim of assuming equal status for both the Absolute and the relative, i.e. the cosmos; whence the famous expression—all is He (*hama ūst*). The Sufi Zayn al-Dīn Khwāfī (d. 1435) had staunchly upheld the position "all is from Him" as a counter to *waḥdat al-wujūd*. This formula is also found in Khwāja ʿAbd Allāh Anṣarī, *Intimate Conversations* (*Munājāt*), trans. W. M. Thackston (New York: Paulist Press, 1978), 215; see also Annmarie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1975), 147, 274, 283, 362, 376. However, as has been mentioned, sophisticated theologians such as Walī Allāh hardly allow for the similarity (*tashbīh*) of God, without also asserting His transcendence. Shāh Walī Allāh attempts several arguments in order to suggest Sufis do not deny the multiplicity of the world (as their detractors claim) while upholding *waḥdat al-wujūd* because for them the world 'exists' only in relation to nonexistence, but not in relation to True Existence (*wujūd ḥaqīqī*): "The saying of the Sufis does not imply that contingent realities are unreal and [pure] relationalities (*iḍāfāt*) that are the concomitants (*lāḥiqa*) of Being (*wujūd*), since we say: the Sufis say that the fire is other than the sky, and these [i.e. the sky and the fire] are

from the pinnacle of the first determination (*al-taʿayyun al-awwal*) to the lowest degree of existence. What is important to note is that the light of *wujūd* is manifested at every stage in the hierarchy of reality in such a way that everything is encompassed by it. The following passage sheds light on the relationship between Absolute Being, deployed existence and contingent beings:

> I say: the verification of existential unity (*taḥqīq al-tawḥīd al-wujūdī*) consists in asserting that there is nothing in external reality and the affair itself except One Reality which is Being (*annahu laysa fi-l-khārij wa-nafs al-amr illā ḥaqīqa wāḥida huwa al-wujūd*), from the aspect of its being subsistent in reality and not with its verbal root meaning (*lā bi-l-maʿnā al-maṣdarī*). And that all other existents subsist through it as accidents (*aʿrāḍ*), just as the forms of waves subsists in the ocean or accidents inhere in their substratum (*maḥall*). So according to the unitarian Sufis (*al-ṣūfiyya al-muwaḥḥidīn*), the deepest core of existence-hood (*kunh mawjūdiyyatihā*) is merged into the reality of being (*ḥaqīqat al-wujūd*), and all the realities are accidents of being (*wa-l-ḥaqāʾiq kulluhā ʿawāriḍ al-wujūd*)… These accidental realities of Being are not independent beings (*laysat umūran mustaqilla*), rather they are innumerable aspects of Being (*wujūd*) and its determinations (*iʿtibārāt*), which means that when Being self-discloses by itself for itself (*al-wujūd idhā tajallā bi-nafsihi li-nafsihi*), several entities possessing receptivity (*qābiliyya*) appear. That is to say, it is possible to clothe some of these receptive containers with the properties of [Being's self-disclosure]. Thus a particular clothing of this receptivity is called human while another horse.[808]

Following Ibn ʿArabī, Walī Allāh describes all such 'accidental' realities, which are countless determinations of Being as immutable noetic entities (*al-aʿyān al-ʿilmiyya*) that never smell the fragrance of existence (*mā shammat rāʾiḥat al-wujūd*).[809] He goes on to assert that since Being (*al-wujūd*) is clothed by Its properties and effects, the whole cosmos can be called an assembled accident (*aʿrāḍ mujtamiʿa*). He ends the quote by saying such ontology is the result of the experiential knowledge of the Sufis (*dhawq al-ṣūfiyya*) and their inner witnessing, which is a true *dhawq*.[810]

At any rate, coming now back to the relationship between 'deployed existence,' the universal soul and the individual self, one may say that the universal soul represents the subjective aspect of deployed existence, as the following text explains:

> The universal soul has faculties (*quwā*) that contain the forms (*ṣūra*) of everything that potentially exists, even before they are actually brought into existence. This is like the

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other than air. [Similarly], man is other than a horse, and if Being encompasses everything, they would inevitably not want the meaning of relationalities to vie with this difference that is the source of disagreement concerning its properties. This meaning brings out the fact that multiplicity is real (*al-kathra ḥaqīqa*) and unity is perspectival (*al-waḥda iʿtibāriyya*). When we do not mean by the reality of multiplicity except other than the distinction found in the ruling properties (*aḥkām*), difference in effects, and transformation of realities that are the specific existents (*al-wujūdāt al-khāṣṣa*), [then] the differences in the principles of being (*aṣl al-wujūd*) and non-being (*ʿadam*) refer back to the unique deployed existence (*al-wujūd al-wāḥid al-munbasiṭ*) that [encompasses] the structures of existents *in toto.*" Walī Allāh, *al-Tafhīmāt al-ilāhiyya,* 2:275.

[808] Walī Allāh, *al-Tafhīmāt al-ilāhiyya,* 1:249-50.

[809] Walī Allāh, *al-Tafhīmāt al-ilāhiyya,* 1:251.

[810] Walī Allāh, *al-Tafhīmāt al-ilāhiyya,* 1:251.

human capacity to visualize a desired action (*kār-i maṭlūb*) in the self (*nafs*) before that action is made manifest in external reality. For instance, the square which exists in the self (*nafs*) is the same as the one which appears in the external world. Likewise, it can be said that the concealed form (*ṣūra maknūna*) which lies dormant in the faculties of the universal soul is precisely the same form which now appears in the external world. In short, since God wanted to bring into existence the human species (*nawᶜ-i insān*) long before the actual creation of humanity, He created the undifferentiated form (*ṣūrat-i ijmāliyya*) of the human species within the faculties of the universal soul.[811]

Just as the the 'wax metaphor' mentioned earlier signifies the 'objective' aspect of the Akbarian ontology by suggesting that all contingent realities are particular determinations of the one '*Wujūd*' and they share Its 'being' just as different forms shaped by wax share the same wax, the faculties of the universal soul that contain the forms (*ṣūra*) of everything that potentially exists signify the 'subjective' aspect of this ontology. Hence Walī Allāh claims that all these forms have an independent existence (*wujūd mustaqill*) in one sense, while in another sense they all partake of existence solely by virtue of that undifferentiated form (*ṣūrat-i ijmāliyya*), which exists in the universal soul.[812] To clarify further, Walī Allāh avers that the various elemental, vegetal, animal and cosmic souls in the universe are all like the constituent organs and members of the universal soul. Moreover, in his view, the hidden and manifest processes of creation with multifarious forms and states can all be attributed to the universal soul.[813] Referring more particularly to the human self, Walī Allāh asserts that "the universal soul is the true reality of the rational soul (*pas ḥaqīqat-i nafs-i nāṭiqa hamīn nafs-i kulliyya ast*)."[814] Moreover, every self in general (*har nafsī kih hast*) is merely a bubble on the ocean of the universal soul (*ḥabābī ast az daryā-yi nafs-i kulliyya*).[815]

On the next level concerning the self's journey, Walī Allāh mentions that the goal of "the rational soul (*nafs-i nāṭiqa*) in relation to its origin (*aṣl*) is to be melted in the universal soul, which enables it to receive the impulse (*dāᶜiya*) of the ultimate selfhood (*anāniyya kubrā*)."[816] I shall explain the attributes of ultimate selfhood in a moment, but it is crucial to note that for Walī Allāh, the ultimate destination of the self is not the universal soul, even though the above citation seems to suggest it. So he sets out to narrate that there is a state in which a divine impulse (*dāᶜiya-yi ilāhiyya*) is transmitted, either from the supreme manifestation (*tajallī-yi aᶜẓam*) or from the universal soul, or from a place where there is no differentiation whatsoever into supreme manifestation and universal soul—"a place where all is oneness in oneness, simplicity in simplicity (*waḥdat dar waḥdat wa bisāṭat dar bisāṭat*)."[817] This divine impulse (*dāᶜiya-yi ilāhiyya*) pours down from one of these sublime regions, attaches itself to the individual selfhood

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[811] Walī Allāh, *Alṭāf al-quds*, 28. The following expresses Walī Allāh's Platonic sympathies even more explicitly: "The truth about the human form (*ṣūrat-i insān*) is that in its essence it is not a universal (*kullī*), rather it is a distinct individual in the prime matter of the world of ideas (*fardī ast mushakhkhaṣ dar hayūlā-yi ᶜālam-i mithāl*). However, that individual is formed in such a way that it does not refuse to correspond to whatever is placed in front of it (*bā har insānī kih barābar kunī az muṭābiqat-i ū abā na-kunad*). From this point of view, we may call it universal human (*insān-i kullī*)." Walī Allāh, *Alṭāf al-quds*, 117.
[812] Walī Allāh, *Alṭāf al-quds*, 29.
[813] Walī Allāh, *Alṭāf al-quds*, 27.
[814] Walī Allāh, *Alṭāf al-quds*, 27-8.
[815] Walī Allāh, *Alṭāf al-quds*, 26-7.
[816] Walī Allāh, *Alṭāf al-quds*, 34.
[817] Walī Allāh, *Alṭāf al-quds*, 129.

(*anāniyyat-i khāṣṣ*) and mingles with the substance (*jawhar*) of this bubble.[818] In referring to the place which is beyond the degree of the universal soul and which is characterized by its utter simplicity, Walī Allāh has in mind the Divine Self, which he sometimes calls the Pure Self (*dhāt-i baḥt*) or the First of the First (*awwal al-awāʾil*):

> There are others who have passed beyond the universal soul and understood the Pure Self (*dhāt-i baḥt*) as the First of the First (*awwal al-awāʾil*), and the universal soul as the first emanation (*ṣādir-i awwal*) and deployed being (*wujūd munbasiṭ*) upon the temples of existents.[819]

One question that might arise in this context is how is the perfect human, which is usually conceived as the highest realizable self, related to the universal soul? The following text throws light on such concerns:

> The perfect human (*insān-i kāmil*) is a distinct species (*nawʿ-i ʿalāḥida*) among the various kinds of humans, just as human is a distinct species (*nawʿ-i ʿalāḥida*) within its own genus. Just as human is deemed superior to animals by virtue of his universal outlook (*kullī wa-tafṣīl*), so too is the perfect human vis-à-vis other humans by virtue of the development of his/her (*laṭāʾif*), which is realized when the universal soul manifests itself in his/her particular selfhood (*anāniyyat-i khāṣṣ*) and made the latter an subservient to its will. The perfect human has many such characteristics, a full account of which would take too long to accomplish. In short, the perfect human is the nearest of all the individuals selves to the universal soul (*bi-l-jumla, insān-i kāmil aqrab-i nufūs-i juzʾiyya ast bi-nafs-i kulliyya*).[820]

Unlike other figures explored in this study, in Walī Allāh's philosophy of self, the expression 'perfect human' does not make much appearance, although he seems to have accepted its general function, as the above passage points out. Nonetheless, Walī Allāh's innovative vocabularies such as '*anāniyya kubrā*' or '*anāniyya muṭlaq*' do seem to capture the essential features of the perfect human as the highest attainable self. One innovative move in Walī Allāh's account of the perfect human, however, is that the self attains the degree of the perfect human through the development of its *laṭāʾif* or the subtle fields of consciousness. This brings us back to Fig. 3, in which Walī Allāh illustrates how the self progresses from the microcosmic *laṭāʾif* such as *nafs*, *qalb* and *ʿaql* to the macrocosmic *laṭāʾif*. Now the crucial point to note is that there are two ways one may reach absolute selfhood (*anāniyya muṭlaq*): 1) the path of ultimate sainthood (*al-wilāya al-kubrā*) and 2) the path of prophetic inheritance (*al-wirātha al-nubuwwa*) [indicated by the black pointed arcs in the diagram]. However, as Walī Allāh underlines, "whatever the path may be, prophetic inheritance or ultimate sainthood, it makes little difference," since what matters is the destination.[821]

It was argued in the previous section that for Walī Allāh, a mere descriptive model of the functions of the subtle fields of consciousness cannot yield much benefit, unless one embarks on a spiritual journey in order to actualize or realize these subtle fields within one's self. That is

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[818] Walī Allāh, *Alṭāf al-quds*, 129.
[819] Walī Allāh, *Alṭāf al-quds*, 155.
[820] Walī Allāh, *Alṭāf al-quds*, 116.
[821] Walī Allāh, *Alṭāf al-quds*, 123-4. Cf. the black arcs in Fig. 3.1.

why Walī Allāh dwelled upon the ethico-metaphysical dimension of the self at length, whose implication was 'sculpting the *laṭā'if*' through spiritual exercises. It is important to note, however, that the ultimate stages of selfhood cannot be attained by simply following a set of moral or spiritual prescriptions, although one can make much progress by having recourse to them. In Walī Allāh's scheme of things, the attainment of higher modes of selfhood is contingent upon the realization of *fanā'* and *baqā'*, in addition to having a spiritual ethics. Although *fanā'* and *baqā'* are well-known Sufi terms, they gave rise to much confusion that has persisted until modern times, as we shall see when we will deal with Iqbāl (see ch. 6). Since Iqbāl interprets (or misinterprets) the concept of *fanā'* as a 'loss of individuality' or 'negation of selfhood,' it would be appropriate to decode this term in Sufi authors themselves and see how they explain it. As Zargar cogently elucidates, annihilation of the self (*fanā' al-nafs*), annihilation in God (*fanā' fi-l-llāh*) or simply, annihilation is a specific, technical term in Sufism, which does not mean a general sense of losing one's attributes of selfhood that Zargar aptly calls 'self-loss.'[822] According to Zargar, self-loss might be applied to all the ways in which one loses one's own traits and sense of self in approaching God through His attributes, annihilation signals a completion of this process. This means it can be not only a stage in the Sufi path, but also a matter of perception or a realization. Complementary to annihilation, as Zargar explain, is the phenomenon of 'subsistence' (*baqā'*) through God. It is crucial to note that annihilation is always accompanied by some form of subsistence.[823] Through subsistence, the annihilated self engages with creation, living among others, and interacting with them. He or she does so through acquired divine attributes that have replaced or transformed his/her blameworthy attributes.[824] It is thus problematic to think annihilation implies a 'negation of selfhood.' But before making further comments let us wait until we take up this topic again in ch. 6.

At any rate, much like Ṣadrā, Walī Allāh would also agree with the general description of annihilation provide above. Nevertheless, Walī Allāh explicates *fanā'* and *baqā'* in terms of the *laṭā'if*, which is consistent with his theory of the self.[825] For instance, Walī Allāh maintains that the annihilation of spiritual existence (*fanā'-i wujūd-i rūḥānī*) and the permanence of divinity (*baqā'-i wujūd-i lāhūt*) are terms which refer to the subjugating force of the Real (*ghalaba kardan-i ḥaqq*) over the created being, and the power which the concealed *laṭā'if* exerts over all the other *laṭā'if*—or simply, over the faculty of the sacred light together with the pure intellect (*ʿaql-i ṣirf*).[826] In the text below, he further elaborates:

> For every subtle field of consciousness (*laṭīfa*) there is annihilation (*fanā'*) and subsistence (*baqā'*). But the meaning of annihilation and subsistence in this context is not what is imagined by the masses, which is that you become non-existent or you shed the cloth of your self (*nafs*) and acquire a new cloth for it. Rather, the meanings of annihilation and subsistence is related to that which overcomes and that which is overcome. When something of this *laṭīfa* (i.e. *raḥamūt*) overcomes human, he is

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[822] Zargar, *The Polished Mirror*, 243.

[823] Zargar, *Polished Mirror*, 243.

[824] Zargar, *Polished Mirror*, 243.

[825] However, at other times, he explains *fanā'* in noetic terms. For instance in *al-Khayr al-Kathīr*, Walī Allāh holds that *fanā'* means to have a gnosis (*ʿirfān*) of God that He is the origin of every existing being, and that all things are due to return to Him. Moreover, *fanā'* implies that nothing will remain but the exclusive One, and everything is perishable in the face of His Majesty. In Walī Allāh's view, when this knowledge becomes an existential reality, the self is dyed with the dye of God. See Walī Allāh, *al-Khayr al-Kathīr*, 62.

[826] Walī Allāh, *Alṭāf al-quds*, 127.

overcome by it, and there appears in him characteristics which make them say "the man is annihilated in such and such a thing or subsisted by it." There are different types of annihilation and subsistence. Whenever a human being progresses from one *laṭīfa* to the next, he is annihilated by the first *laṭīfa* and subsisted by the second *laṭīfa*. Sometimes it is also said that he is he is annihilated by *laṭīfa* X and subsisted by the *laṭīfa* Y.[827]

It is evident from the above that annihilation is not supposed to be understood in the sense of becoming a non-existent thing (i.e. negation of selfhood) or shedding off clothes every now and then.[828] Rather, it is the power of the Realm of Mercy (*raḥamūt*) or the universal soul that overcomes the individual self through its attributes. Moreover, according to Walī Allāh, there are different types of annihilation, which make it a complex phenomenon that cannot be reduced to simple 'either/or' category. In his view, *fanāʾ* can be of two types:[829]

1) *fanāʾ al-wujūd al-ẓulmānī* and *baqāʾ al-wujūd al-rūḥānī*
2) *fanāʾ al-wujūd al-rūḥānī* and *baqāʾ al-wujūd al-ilāhī*

Referring to the first category, Walī Allāh explains that when humans are steeped in acts that do not show any attention the divine, it is called 'annihilation of the dark existence' (*fanāʾ al-wujūd al-ẓulmānī*), which is followed by 'subsistence through spiritual existence' (*baqāʾ al-wujūd al-rūḥānī*) in which they submit their will and their acts and states are transformed through invocation of God (*dhikr Allāh*). As for the second type of annihilation and subsistence, Walī Allāh says that it occurs when the manifest *laṭāʾif* are overcome by concealed *laṭāʾif*. That is to say, the self is able to progress from the microcosmic *laṭāʾif* to the macrocosmic *laṭāʾif*, as shown in Fig. 3. As was mentioned earlier, one can reach the pinnacle of selfhood through two distinct ways. First, one should note that the rational soul or the self is the 'junction' (*mawḍiʿ*) between the microcosmic and the macrocosmic *laṭāʾif*. This junction is also identified with the subtle field *akhfā*, as in Fig. 3 From the junction of *akhfā* or the rational soul (which is yet to realize its macrocosmic states), the self can either reach the Pure Self via the *laṭāʾif* of the arcanum (*khafī*) and ultimate selfhood (*al-anāniyya al-kubrā*), or it can traverse the *laṭāʾif* of the light of the holy (*nūr al-quds*) and the philosopher's stone (*ḥajar-i baḥt*)[830] to reach Divinity, and become annihilated in and subsisted through It.

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[827] Walī Allāh, *al-Tafhīmāt al-ilāhiyya,* 1: 241.

[828] Simnānī argues against *fanāʾ* as negation of individuality due to the ethical consequences of nihilism. For Simnānī *fanāʾ* in the sense of union with and dissolution in God has nihilistic implications. This is because such dissolution implies the negation of human existence in this life and a consequent removal of responsibility for human action. Contrary to such nihilistic end, Simnānī considers the human being as the crown of all creation. Being the only creature which combines within itself celestial and terrestrial forces in perfect equilibrium, it is the sole creation capable of possessing divine knowledge. Thus for Simnānī, the highest achievement of the self relates to its eternal subsistence (*baqāʾ*) in God. See Elias, *Throne Carrier of God*, 98-99.

[829] Walī Allāh, *al-Tafhīmāt al-ilāhiyya,* 1: 242-3.

[830] The expression the philosopher's stone (*ḥajar-i baḥt*) (lit. pure stone), is also found in Ibn ʿArabī's work. In an unpublished letter, Walī Allāh makes his source explicit by recounting that in the works of Ibn ʿArabī the named—'philosopher's stone'—is applied to this *laṭīfa* because of its marvelous and perplexing nature. Originally, the *ḥajar-i baḥt* indicated a mysterious substance which used to be presented as a gift to princes and nobles. It could not be classified as vegetable, mineral, and so on, and this *laṭīfa* similarly possesses amazing properties. Ibn ʿArabī, in his treatise *al-Tadbīrāt*, discusses the philosopher's stone as one of the human 'stones' (*aḥjār*), using stone in the sense of 'jewel,' jewels (*jawāhir*) being a term used by other Sufis to refer to the *laṭāʾif*. See Nyberg, *Kleinere Schriften*, 221.

A related issue that emerges from the journey through the *laṭāʾif* and degrees of annihilation that marks every way-station of the *laṭāʾif* is what we stated at the beginning of this section, namely how does the world look like in such transformed states of the self? Is the individual self dissolved in such a state and becomes God, or the state of individuality is still retained? Since Muḥammad Iqbāl grapples with these issues a great deal and provides his unique but controversial account, it would be worth our while to see how Walī Allāh addresses them. To begin with, Walī offers the following suggestion that the degree of ultimate selfhood (*al-anāniyya al-kubrā*) is one in which the consciousness of the self 'pervades all existents' (*al-munbasiṭa fī jamīᶜ al-mawjūdāt*). Then in a manner which is strikingly similar to Mullā Ṣadrā, he asserts that in such transcendent states, the self is transmuted into cosmic consciousness of a sort in that it is able to see the entire cosmos within itself:

> When the coarseness of earthly existence (*al-ghalīẓ al-arḍī*) in the gnostic (*ᶜārif*) is replaced by the highest assembly (*al-malaʾ al-aᶜlā*), his identity such as being the son of so and so and possessing a body of so so disappears. Then he becomes one of the divine names, and his organs and limbs become the vehicle of the Real (*jāriḥa min jawāriḥ al-ḥaqq*) and the heart of his I-ness or selfhood (*wa-l-qalb anāniyyatihi*) is transmuted into divine selfhood (*anāniyyat al-ḥaqq*) and his knows the entire cosmos while knowing himself.[831]

Important in the text above is the reference to first-person subjectivity, which means the self still retains its 'I-ness,' even though the ontological awareness of such an 'I' is vastly expanded. This implies that the self does not lose the attribute of subjectivity or agency, even through its 'I' is radically transformed. The passage below further illuminates the state of the ultimate self:

> The guiding feature of the ultimate selfhood (*al-anāniyya al-kubrā*) is that through the manifestation (*ẓuhūr*) of its self-subsistence (*qayyūmiyyatihi*) it sees the entire cosmos within itself and that it [the cosmos] subsists through it. And it takes the form of angel with an angel, stone with a stone and tree with a tree, and so on.[832]

[831] Walī Allāh, *al-Tafhīmāt al-ilāhiyya,* 1: 248. Cf. Ṣadrā: "Everything that humans see or experience in this world, or what's more, when they journey to the next world, they only see it within their self (*fī dhātihi*)… And they do not see anything that is not already within themselves or the world around them (*lā yarā shayʾan khārijan ᶜan dhātihi wa-ᶜan ᶜālamihi*), but then their self encompasses the world within it. The particularity of the human self (*al-nafs al-insāniyya*) lies in that it reaches a point when everything that exists becomes a part of it, and its powers permeate the entirety of existence. Then its reason of existence realizes its goal." Mullā Ṣadrā, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb,* 945.

[832] Walī Allāh, *al-Tafhīmāt al-ilāhiyya,* 1: 243. These kinds of passages have a remarkable parallel with Indian Tantric traditions such as Kashmiri Shaivism. For instance, in his *Tantrāloka* Abhinavagupta (c. 950–1016 AD), the great exponent of Kashmiri Shaivism, defines *aham* or 'I' as absolute subjectivity, which, as 'reflexive awareness,' is omnipresent in the non-duality of Shiva and Shakti, that is, the supreme and cosmic emission within which all is contained' Abhinavagupta writes in his *Tantrāloka*: "The flowing forth [of the cosmos] whose nature is energy begins with the incomparable *a* and ends with *ha*. Condensing the whole universe, it is then reabsorbed in the supreme. This entire universe abides within energy and she in the highest absolute. This is truly an enveloping by the omnipresent one. In this way, the enveloping of energy [is described] in the revelation of the *Trīshikā*. The universe shines there within consciousness and on account of consciousness. These three factors combine and unite in pairs to form the one, supreme form of Bhairava, whose nature is the 'I'." The cosmos emerges from the 'I' and returns to it, although this separation and return can never be outside of that consciousness. The three elements of the word *aham* combine to form the totality of the cosmos. The cosmos is within the absolute subject, as the word *aham* contains the first and last letters and, by implication, all between them from *a* to *ha*. The three combinations of *a* and *ha*, *ha* and *m*, and *m* and *a* create a continuous flow of sound, with *aham* becoming *maha*, the former being the

184

Continuing on in the same context of the realization of ultimate selfhood, Walī Allāh also broaches 'self-knowledge' that acts as the ground of such expanded awareness. As he writes:

> When the wayfarer (*al-sālik*) reaches it [i.e. ultimate selfhood], his self (*nafsahu*) comes to know all of the cosmos (*jāmiᶜ al-ᶜālam*), and that he is the first of the assembly (*jamᶜiyya*).[833]

Or from the vantage point of the self's attaining of 'immateriality:'

> When the gnostic attains the immateriality (*tajarrud*) of the rational soul (*al-nafs al-nāṭiqa*), he thereby knows the entirety of the cosmos (*ᶜarafa jamīᶜ al-ᶜālam*) as the rational soul itself.[834]

In all, in Walī Allāh's view, the reality of human (*ḥaqīqat-i insān*) is vastly increased (*taᶜaddud paydā mī-shawad*) by the diversity of these relationships among the *laṭāʾif*.[835] The texts cited make it plain that such a state of the self is unlike anything one experience in one's daily life. But the question that still remained unanswered is whether or not the individual self becomes God. The passage below answers this by first asserting that there is a level of selfhood beyond the degree of the universal soul or deployed existence:

> Either the individual selfhood (*anāniyyat-i khāṣṣ*) subsists through the absolute selfhood (*anāniyyat-i muṭlaq*) or [the gnostic regards] the individual selfhood as the absolute selfhood, or else, he becomes oblivious to his individual selfhood (*anāniyyat-i khāṣṣ*), neither affirming nor denying it. He neither puts absolute selfhood in place of his individual selfhood nor does he recall it as a separate entity. In the terminology of the folk of wayfaring, this is called the self-disclosure of the Self (*tajallī-yi dhāt*). The ultimate vision of the gnostic in this state is the universal soul (*nafs-i kulliyya*). From there he ascends (*ṣuᶜūd mī-kunad*) to the Pure Self (*dhāt-i baḥt*) and gains something from It (*chīzī az ān bi-dastash āyad*) but does not know how to describe it (*nadānad kih barā-yi ān chih ᶜibārat gūyad*)… or how to express that which lies beyond the beyond (*warāʾ al-warāʾ*).[836]

Before commenting on this crucial passage, let me also quote the text, in which Walī Allāh explains the nature of the Divine Essence or, to use his own term, the Pure Self *(dhāt-i baḥt)*:

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expansion of the cosmos, the latter being its contraction: both expansion from *a* and contraction into *anusvara*, the *m.* or *bindu*, are mediated through the energy of *ha*. The word *aham* is therefore treated as a *mantra*; indeed it is regarded as the force of all other mantras and the power that animates all living beings. According to the commentator Jayaratha, this *aham (*which is also the 'I' of every human being) is unitary consciousness, the supreme beyond everything, the place where all rests, the light of knowledge, knower, and object of knowledge. Cited and explained in Gavin Flood, *The Tantric Body*, 147-48.

[833] Walī Allāh, *al-Tafhīmāt al-ilāhiyya,* 1: 236.
[834] Walī Allāh, *al-Tafhīmāt al-ilāhiyya,* 1: 237.
[835] Walī Allāh, *Alṭāf al-quds*, 125.
[836] Walī Allāh, *Alṭāf al-quds*, 123.

The distinctive feature of the Pure Self (*dhāt-i baḥt*) is that on the one hand it remains engrossed in the simplitude of Its Self-Identity (*bi-ṣirāfat-i huwiyyat-i khūd*), while, on the other, despite its simplitude (*baḥtiyyat*), it descends (*tanazzul farmāyad*) or projects outward. However, in the course of Its descent it loses none of its simplitude—unlike other things the simplitude of which opposes such a descent. Or, it could be said that when the gnostic turns his gaze upon himself (*naẓar-i khūd bi-khūd uftad*), and plunges deep into the contemplation of the ultimate source of his origin (*aṣl-i uṣūl-i khūdash khawḍ namāyad*), then the utmost limit of his vision is that essential shining point (*muntahī-yi naẓarash nuqṭa-yi shaʿshaʿāniyya-yi dhātiyya būd*). He conceives of this point as the center of his own self (*dar miyān-i rūḥ-i way ast*) whereas it dwells, it its unalloyed simplitude (*bisāṭat-i khūd*), in an eminent place.[837]

Since these two passages represent the culmination of Walī Allāh's theory of selfhood, let me expand on them in relation to what has been discussed so far. Walī Allāh calls attention to the fact that the individual selfhood (*anāniyyat-i khāṣṣ*) of every self is subsisted through the absolute selfhood (*anāniyya muṭlaq*) of God. In other words, in Walī Allāh's multi-dimensional theory of selfhood, God, Who is also conceived as having a self, stands at the apex. But to attribute 'selfhood' to God is to attribute subjectivity to Him because the language of *wujūd* (being) does not automatically imply subjectivity. At any rate, as Walī Allāh maintains elsewhere, the first emanation of the Divine Self is deployed existence or the universal soul. So when the self reaches the station of the universal soul, it either regards its individual selfhood (*anāniyyat-i khāṣṣ*) as absolute selfhood, or it becomes oblivious to its individual selfhood, neither affirming nor denying it. In other words, the self, at that level, is both 'I' and not 'I.' However, the degree of the universal soul is still not the quintessence of Divine Reality, which is Pure Selfhood. Now the Pure Selfhood of divinity is a state of utter simplitude (*baḥtiyyat-i maḥḍ*) that is devoid of any duality. In other words, it is a state of absolute oneness. In contrast to many Sufis and theologians who argue that the human self can never attain the Pure Self of God because of Its utter transcendence, Walī Allāh asserts that when the gnostic turns its gaze upon himself, and plunges deep into the contemplation of his ultimate origin, he comes to recognize the immanent divinity within himself, which is like a shining point that resides at the center of his own self. It is noteworthy that Walī Allāh chooses the metaphor of 'point,' which is a mathematical abstraction having no one-to-one correspondence in external reality. That is to say, to describe such a reality or the experience of it, which is ineffable or lies beyond the beyond (*warāʾ al-warāʾ*), one reaches the bounds of language.[838] The passage, nonetheless, does not fail to underscore that that the very heart of Divine Self lies at the deepest core one's self, which is beyond words, yet accessible through annihilation (*fanāʾ*). But does this experience of the Divine Self as one's deepest core make one God? It seems, for Walī Allāh, the answer is in the negative:

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[837] Walī Allāh, *Alṭāf al-quds*, 119.

[838] As Walī Allāh says: "From the Pure Self he attains something, which is beyond desctiction and interpretation. If it is called witnessing, it is really not witnessing, or if it is called union, it is really beyond the category of union. It is like a dream that one soon forgets. However, he knows for certain that 'It' is something (i.e. Its existence is affirmed), althought Its nature cannot be explained in words." (*Chīzī az dhāt-i baḥt bi-dast āyad kih az ān taʿbīr natawān kard. Agar mushāhida gūyad ān khūd mushāhida nīst wa agar wuṣūl nāmad ān rā khūd az maqūla-yi wuṣūl natawān guft, khwābī ast farāmūsh. Īnqadr mī-dānad kih chīzī hast wa sharḥ-i ān natawān kard*). See Walī Allāh, *Alṭāf al-quds*, 122.

The inner intuition (*al-wijdān*) explicitly affirms that the servant remains the servant when he progresses [toward God] and the Lord remains the Lord when He descends (*al-ṣarīḥ yaḥkum bi-anna al-ᶜabd ᶜabd wa-in taraqqā, wa-l-rabb rabb wa-in tanazzala*), and the servant can never take on either the attributes of necessity (*wujūb*) or the attributes emanating from it. He does not know the unseen except which is imprinted on the tablet of his breast (*fī lawḥ ṣadrihi*).[839]

That is, the individual self remains an individual despite the realization of its identity with the Divine Self. The best way to account for this paradoxical situation, where one simultaneously affirms and denies any point of contact with the divine, would be to use the heuristic of 'identity and difference.' That is, although the identity of every individual 'I' is clear and distinct and can be affirmed through presential knowledge, the identity of the same 'I' can be 'ambiguous' at the point of its contact with the divine 'I,' for at that level, the 'I' is also the 'not I.' It can be simultaneously affirmed and negated. It is thus a situation of 'identity and difference,' which, as Walī Allāh admits, only arouses bewilderment (*ḥayra*). For this reason, he says that "there is no point in saying more than this. All in all, we should better be advised to take a step back from this abyss (*waraṭa*)."[840] But since as scholars, we have to carry on our hermeneutical task, I would say that for Walī Allāh, the 'end' (in the sense of termination) of selfhood is the end of individual selfhood, but at the same time, the 'end' (in the sense of *telos*) to which it aspires, as it opens unto the realm of meta-individual selfhood.

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[839] Walī Allāh, *al-Tafhīmāt al-ilāhiyya,* 1: 245.
[840] Walī Allāh, *Alṭāf al-quds*, 132.

Fig. 3.4 Shāh Walī Allāh's Model of the Self

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                    ┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
                    │  Absolute Selfhood = Divine Self     │
                    └─────────────────────────────────────┘
  ┌──────────────┐            ↓        ↑
  │ The Supreme  │──────────►
  │Self-Disclosure│           ↓        ↑
  └──────────────┘   ┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
                    │  Universal Soul/ *Wujūd Munbasiṭ*    │
                    └─────────────────────────────────────┘
                                      ↑
                    ┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
                    │  Macrocosmic *Laṭāʾif*               │
                    └─────────────────────────────────────┘
                                      ↑

                         ╭───────────────────╮
                         │  **Core of the Self =** │
                         │  **Self-Consciousness** │
                         │  **through Self-**      │
                         │  **Presence**           │
                         ╰───────────────────╯

                                      ↓
                    ┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
                    │  *Nasama* :: Microcosmic *Laṭāʾif*   │
                    └─────────────────────────────────────┘
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Sirr	ᶜAql	Nafs	Qalb	Rūḥ
	Perception/Agency/Discernment	Desire/Appetitive Self	Emotions/Passions	
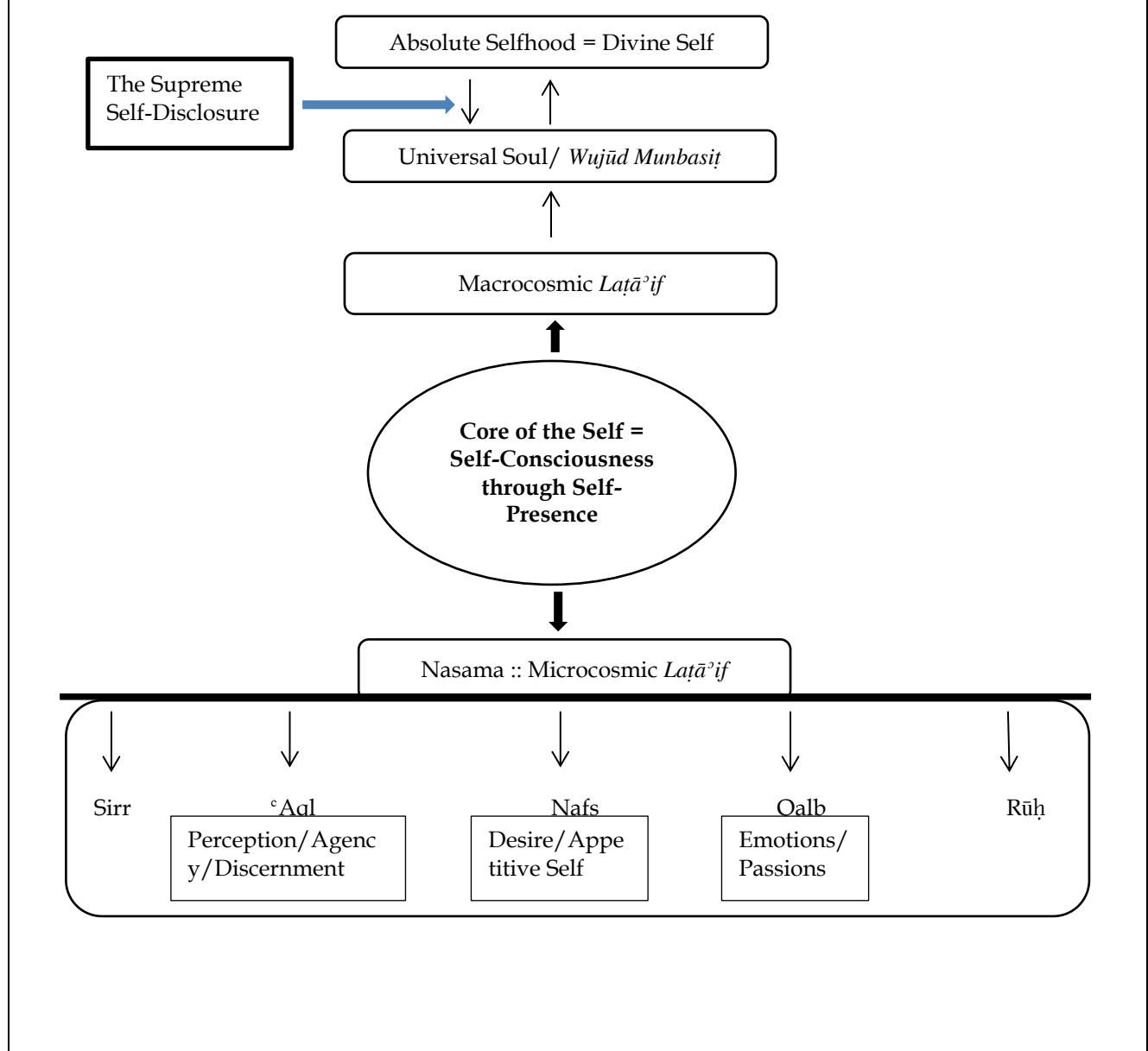
Summary

This chapter has explored Shāh Walī Allāh's conception of the self from multiple vantage points. Since previous scholarship has barely touched on Walī Allāh's theory of the self, much has been neglected in the process concerning self-knowledge, first-person subjectivity, agency and emotions that have been investigated in this chapter in order to reconstruct selfhood and subjectivity in Walī Allāh's thought. In the end, the feature that stands out in Walī Allāh's philosophy of self is his penchant for developing 'original systhesis.' It was mentioned earlier that Walī Allāh draws on panoply of sources ranging over Stoicism, Islamic Neoplatonism, Graeco-Islamic-Indian medical tradition, and Sufism. However, the idea of the self found in

188

some of these intellectual currents stands opposed to one another. For instance, the Stoic self (i.e. *pneuma*) is a material entity, which is antithetical to the Avicennan self because of its immateriality. So Walī Allāh argues that the self, being immaterial and the most subtle of all the forms, cannot but be dependent on a *body* which is also the most subtle of all the bodies (*alṭaf al-ajsām*) maturing at the finest degree of subtlety and equilibrium. Walī Allāh calls this 'subtle body' *nasama* or *pneuma*, which is an intermediary between the self (immaterial) and the body (material). In this way he was able to resolve the tension between the material *nasama* (*pneuma*) and the immaterial self by reinterpreting Aristotelian hylomorphism, so that *pneuma* becomes the 'matter' for the 'form' of the immaterial self.[841] What's more, by making skillful use of medical knowledge, Walī Allāh was able to synthesize a conception of the self that is based on the physiology of the humoral theory of *pneuma*. Thus, unlike his Sufi predecessors such as al-Ghazālī, he was able to fill the 'physiological' gaps of the *laṭāʾif* theory through a novel synthesis of the Galenic-Islamic medical tradition by mooring the *laṭāʾif* on a physiological base.

At any rate, the many novelties in Walī Allāh's account of selfhood should not cause us to think that he was driven by a 'reformist ideology' while constructing such a notion of the self. According to Hermansen, Walī Allāh's theory of *laṭāʾif* evokes "a mood of reform and heightened individual responsibility."[842] In my reading of Walī Allāh this is far from being true. In fact, Walī Allāh's extensive borrowing from his predecessors and endorsing of their key ideas such as *fanāʾ and baqāʾ, ῑlm al-ḥuḍūrī, laṭāʾif, al-nafs al-nāṭiqa, al-nafs al-kullī, tajallī, waḥdat al-wujūd, al-wujūd al-munbasiṭ* etc. show that he had little motivation to 'reform' conceptions of selfhood in Sufism.[843] If being 'original' and 'creative' are considered to be synonymous with being 'reform-minded,' then names such as al-Ghazālī, Ibn ʿArabī and Mullā Ṣadrā should count first among the foremost reformers of Islam. So a better way to characterize Walī Allāh's thought would be to say that he was a creative thinker, much like Ṣadrā before him, who was able to synthesize elements from different traditions in an original manner. As we shall see in ch. 6, the attribute of 'reform-mindedness' can be rightly applied to Iqbāl's writings, since they represent a paradigm shift vis-à-vis the tradition before him.

In the end, it would be fair to claim that Walī Allāh presents a complex, multi-dimensional understanding of the self that cannot be pinned down to a set of fixed, unchanging features. This means, unlike previous scholarship, one should not just analyze the self in terms of the *laṭāʾif,* even though they may be an important part of it. As Fig. 4 summarizes, the center of Walī Allāh's self is defined by self-consciousness, which is known *directly* through 'self-presence.' That is to say, the self, on this account, is present to itself, hence known *directly* (i.e. not as an object). After this one may point to its 'spectrum' features (the arrow pointing below) that include 'decision making power' or agency and various cognitive and emotional capacities. Yet the potential of the self involving consciousness can manifest 'aspirational' ideals when it undergoes a spiritual journey within the macrocosmic *laṭāʾif*, which are but the self's higher states of consciousness. And, as was explained, at the end of this inward journey lies the Self of the Divine, which is, paradoxically, nothing other than the individual self that initiated the journey from an individual standpoint. It is at that level, through the mystical states of *fanāʾ* and *baqāʾ*, that the identity of the self becomes apophatic, in that it simultaneously becomes the 'I' and the 'not-I,' defying any 'either/or' categories. Thus one may say that the end of selfhood is also its beginning.

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[841] See pp. 157-58. This also enables him to resolve the mind-body dualism.

[842] Hermansen, "Shāh Walī Allāh's Theory of the Subtle Spiritual Centers," 24.

[843] As we shall see, the same cannot be said of Iqbāl's conception of the self. See ch. 4.

Chapter Four: Iqbāl: Individuality and the Affirmation of the Ordinary Self

> The self is the root of all existence. (Iqbāl)[844]

Introduction

This chapter aims to provide a thorough investigation of Muḥammad Iqbāl's philosophy of the self in light of his encounter with the Islamic intellectual tradition. The chapter achieves this in two parts. In the first part, I proffer an account of Iqbāl's contemporary, Ashraf ʿAlī Thānavī's notion of selfhood against the backdrop of the early twentieth century socio-religious identity of the subcontinental Muslims. The chapter begins with the socio-religious context of the late colonial period in order to situate both Thānavī's and Iqbāl's respective accounts of the self within the matrix of 'Muslim identity' in India. I also analyze Thānavī's exposition of the doctrine of 'the perfect human' (*al-insān al-kāmil*) that plays a crucial role in Iqbāl's philosophy of the self. Since Iqbāl's writings show both continuity and discontinuity with the classical Muslim thought, the elucidation of Thānavī's views on the self that are largely consistent with the classical paradigm would help us better appreciate the novelties in Iqbāl's own conception of the self. In the second part, I begin by drawing attention to the problems in existing Iqbāl scholarship, following which I sketch Iqbāl's own rationale for reconstructing religious subjectivity, which revolves around his notion of the self. Next I turn to Iqbāl's own scholarship on Islamic thought, showing how he reads or misreads classical texts that in turn informs or misinforms his rethinking of the self. This is very significant because Iqbāl himself claims to have derived the ingredients of his conception of the self from classical Sufism. After discussing Iqbāl's intellectual context at length, I begin to analyze his conception of the self by first explaining the epistemological framework that is based on the Bergsonian distinction of thought (or intelligence) and intuition. Like his Muslim predecessors Iqbāl too focuses on the self from the first-person perspective, and underscores the irreducibility of its first-person character. However, unlike some of his Muslim predecessors he explains primal self-knowledge on the basis of intuition and introspection rather than on pre-reflective consciousness. Thereafter I analyze Iqbāl's arguments for the unity of consciousness that illuminates the inner structure of the self. Afterward, I explore Iqbāl's particular brand of 'individualism' that is linked to his explication of the socio-cultural dimension of the self. Finally, I analyze Iqbāl's explication of the self's moral development leading to the degree of the perfect human, and highlight his differences with his Sufi contemporaries such as Thānavī and predecessors such as Shabistarī regarding this crucial doctrine. All in all, my analysis and interpretation of Iqbāl's account of the self challenges current readings of Iqbāl as a heroic reformer of Islam by showing how Iqbāl misreads the Islamic intellectual tradition and its later developments, and systematically misconstrues various classical doctrines to advance his own project of reconstructing Islam in the face of colonial modernity.

Socio-Religious Context

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[844] Muḥammad Iqbāl, "An Exposition of the Self," in *Discourses of Iqbāl*, compiled and edited by Shahid H. Razzaqi (Lahore: Ghulām ʿAlī, 1979), 197.

The focus of this section, Ashraf ʿAlī Thānavī, known as the 'sage of the community' (*ḥakīm al-umma*), was a leading Sufi theologian who wrote widely on several different topics ranging from Sufi metaphysics, gender, and mystical psychology to the modern condition, reform and legal discourse, through which he sought to make various facets of the Islamic tradition relevant and appealing to the intellectual life of the subcontinental Muslims in the onslaught of colonialism.[845] A brief elucidation of Thānavī's views on the self against the backdrop of the early twentieth century socio-religious identity of the subcontinental Muslims is important in several respects. First, even though Thānavī was a contemporary of Iqbāl, the broad contour of these two thinkers' approach to and account of the self and subjectivity cannot be more contrasting. Both Thānavī and Iqbāl were familiar with each other's thought. In one of his letters, Iqbāl mentions Thānavī's name explicitly by saying he has read the latter's massive 25-volume commentary on Rūmī's *Masnavī* and admired it greatly.[846] By the late 1920s, Thānavī was generally considered to be the leading voice within the ranks of Deobandī ʿulamāʾ, while Iqbāl was at the time already an influential public intellectual.[847] When Iqbāl delivered a series of lectures in the late 1920s that later became famous as the book *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, he was lamenting the traditional legal scholars' failure to reinterpret the law in order to meet people's actual needs. Iqbāl was very much troubled by the plight of the contemporary Muslim women who had chosen apostasy in order to escape unwanted marriages, as the following quote demonstrates: "In the Punjab, as everybody knows, there have been cases in which Muslim women wishing to get rid of undesirable husbands have been driven to apostasy."[848] Thānavī heard Iqbāl's complaint and sought to provide a response on behalf of the ʿulamāʾ. As Zaman notes, "Thānavī took the lead in responding to this crisis."[849] He thus attempted a legal solution to the plight of Muslim women by publishing a long *fatwa* entitled *The Successful Stratagem for*

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[845] The most extensive treatment of Thānavī's biography (in Urdu) can be found in Azīz al-Ḥasan, *Ashraf al-sawanih* (Thāna Bhavan: Maktaba-yi taʾlifāt-i Ashrafiyya, 1984). For an English biography, see Muhammad Qasim Zaman, *Ashraf 'Ali Thanawi: Islam in Modern South Asia* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2008). For a brief description of Thānavī's works regarding modern thought, see Fuad S. Naeem, "A Traditional Islamic Response to the Rise of Modernism," in *Islam, Fundamentalism, and the Betrayal of Tradition* (Bloomington: World Wisdom Books, 2004) 79–116; and for Thānavī's revivalist project, *idem*, "Sufism and Revivalism in South Asia: Mawlānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānavī of Deoband and Mawlānā Aḥmad Razā Khān of Bareilly and their paradigms of Islamic Revivalism," *The Muslim World* 99 (3) 435–451, 2009. On Thānavī's notion of agency in relation to Muslim women in his famous *Bihishti Zevar*, see Usman Y. Ansari, "The Pious Self is a Jewel in Itself Agency and Tradition in the Production of Shariatic Modernity," *South Asia Research* 30.3 (2010): 275-298. On Thānavī's views on gender, see Barbara Metcalf, *Perfecting Women: Maulana Ashraf 'Ali Thanawi's* Bihishti Zewar: *A Partial Translation with Commentary* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 1-38. For a general treatment of Thānavī's thought in relation to the Deobandi ʿulamāʾ, see Barbara Metcalf, *Islamic Revival in British India: Deoband 1860–1900* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), 203-210. For more socio-cultural contexts on Thānavī's thought, see Muhammad Qasim Zaman, *The "Ulama" in Contemporary Islam: Custodians of Change* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002) 21-36; Dietrich Reetz, "The Deoband Universe: What Makes a Transcultural and Transnational Educational Movement of Islam?," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, 27(1) (2007): 139–59; and Sayyid Maḥbūb Rizvī, *History of the Dar Al-Ulum, Deoband* (Deoband: Idāra-yi Ihteman: 1980).

[846] Muḥammad Iqbāl, *Maqālāt-i Iqbāl*, edited by Sayyad ʿAbdulvāḥid Maʿīnī (Lahore: Shekẖ Muḥammad Ashraf, 1963), 180.

[847] For more on this, see Ali Mian, *Surviving Modernity: Ashraf ʿAlī Thānvī (1863-1943) and the Making of Muslim Orthodoxy in Colonial India* (Unpublished Dissertation: Duke University, 2015), 236-38.

[848] Muḥammad Iqbāl, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought,* 134.

[849] Muhammad Q. Zaman, *Modern Islamic Thought in a Radical Age: Religious Authority and Internal Criticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 87.

the Helpless Wife (*al-Ḥīla al-nājiza li-l-ḥalīla al-ʿājizah*).[850] Second, both Iqbāl and Thānavī were avid readers of Persian Sufi poetry, especially the *Dīwān* of Ḥāfiz of Shīrāz (d. 1389) and the *Masnavī* of Rūmī.[851] Yet their interpretation and appreciation of these poets were very different. Thānavī took it upon himself to revive the mystical spirit of the love-poetry of Ḥāfiz and Rūmī in Urdu, while Iqbāl, at times, was critical of Ḥāfiz, blaming him as one of the reasons for the withering of the intellectual vibrancy that was once the hallmark of the so-called Islamic golden age.[852] Third, both Iqbāl and Thānavī sought to respond to various challenges of colonial modernity including the epistemological threat posed by modern science though a combination of their knowledge and expertise in both Islamic and Western thought.[853] Thānavī was well-versed in traditional Islamic sciences (both the rational and the transmitted sciences), while his knowledge of modern science or Western thought was superficial.[854] In contrast, Iqbāl was an erudite scholar of modern European thought, while his familiarity with the Islamic intellectual tradition was rather limited. It is thus no surprise that their treatment of and responses to various socio-intellectual issues were reflective of their respective backgrounds, which is not inconsequential, as will be seen in the second half of this chapter. For instance, while Thānavī very much affirms and defends Sufi metaphysical doctrines such as 'the perfect human' (*al-insān al-kāmil*) and 'annihilation of the self' (*fanāʾ al-nafs*), Iqbāl modifies such doctrines to advance

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[850] For more information, see Ali Mian, *Surviving Modernity*, 237.

[851] Thānavī wrote commentaries on both the *Masnavī* of Rūmī and the *Dīwān* of Ḥāfiz. In addition, nearly most of his works contain quotations from these poets, in addition to other famous Persian poets such as ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Jāmī (d. 1492) and Saʿdī (d. 1291). See *idem.*, *Kalīd-i Masnavī* (24 vols.) (Multan: Idāra-yi Taʾlīfāt-i Ashrafiyya, n.d.) and *ʿIrfān-i Ḥāfiz: Ḥāfiẓ-i Shīrāzī ke mashhūr wa maqbūl Fārsī Dīvān ke ashʿār kī ṣūfīyāna wa ʿārifāna Urdu sharḥ* (Karachi: Nafīs Academy, 1976).

[852] See for instance, the following poem in Iqbāl's *Asrār*:

> Beware of Hafiz the drinker
> His cup is full of the poison of death. . . .
> There is nothing in his market except wine
> With two cups his turban has been spoiled.
> He is a Muslim but his belief is girdled with the unbeliever's belt
> His faith is fractured by the beloved's eyelashes.
> He gives weakness the name of strength
> His musical instrument leads the nation astray. . . .
> The sound of his music betokens decline
> The voice he hears from on high is the Gabriel of decline.

Muḥammad Iqbāl, *Masnavī-yi asrār-i khūdī* (Lahore: Union Steam Press, n.d. [1915]), 66– 72, translated by Qasim Zaman, based on Abu Sayeed Nur-ud-Din, "Attitude towards Sufism," in Hafeez Malik, ed., *Iqbal: Poet Philosopher of Pakistan* ([sic] (New York: Columbia University Press, 1971), 287– 300, at 294; in Zaman, *Islam in Pakistan*, 198. When the poem was first published in 1915, these lines caused a great deal of commotion in influential circles, which forced the author to omit them from later editions of the Asrār.

[853] On the relation between colonialism and the epistemological threat it poses, see Bernard S. Cohn, *Colonialism and Its Forms of Knowledge: The British in India* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 3-15.

[854] Thānavī was a Sufi master with a good grounding in philosophy (*falsafa*), theology (*kalām*) and the metaphysics of the School of Ibn ʿArabī. Although most of his works are meant for the general public, he has a number of technical treatises in theology and Sufi metaphysics. See e.g., his highly sophisticated discussion of the 'great chain of being' (*marātib al-wujūd*) in the treatise *Mulakhkhaṣ al-anwār wa-l-tajallī* in *al-Takashshuf ʿan muhimmāt al-taṣawwuf* (Multan: Idāra-yi Taʾlīfāt-i Ashrafiyya, 2006), 82ff. He was also very familiar with the rationalist sciences of the Farangī Mahāll. His discussion of the 'animal spirit' (*al-rūḥ al-ḥaywānī*) doctrine in *al-Futūḥ fīmā yataʿallaq bi-l-rūḥ* also shows that he was familiar with Mullā Ṣadrā's *Sharḥ al-hidāya*, although he does not quote him by name. See *idem.*, *al-Futūḥ* in *al-Takashshuf ʿan muhimmāt*, 99ff. For Thānavī's treatment of modern thought, see below.

his own vision of Muslim selfhood.[855] Finally, it may be noted that all of these differences in their outlook found their way into their respective theories of the self. Thānavī stresses the metaphysical core of his mystical selfhood through the doctrine of 'the perfect human,' while Iqbāl downplays the significance of such a metaphysical core by highlighting the self's socio-cultural dimension.[856]

Muslim Identity in Colonial India

Before we proceed to investigate Thānavī's theory of the self, it would be necessary to situate it in the broader matrix of 'Muslim identity' that was in crisis in colonial India. Thānavī's importance lies not only in his reputation as an ʿālim (religious scholar) or a Sufi, but also in his role in shaping and consolidating the Deobandī movement itself (see the following paragraphs). As a protagonist of the early Deobandīs, he did much to reinforce Deobandī aspirations to Sufi piety, connecting it to earlier recognized Sufi figures.[857] Thānavī's lasting influence also spread through his followers many of whom became the leading ʿulamāʾ (religious scholars) of their day.[858]

To help contextualize Thānavī's and Iqbāl's thought and address their particular response to the challenges of their age, we need to take into account the approaches of various revivalist/reformist movements that emerged in the aftermath of the 1857 Mutiny.[859] At the outset, it should be noted that colonial rulers already made (before the Mutiny) important structural changes in educational and legal systems that had a direct bearing on the crisis of religious authority and identity formation. For instance, they substituted Persian with English in 1835-37 as the medium of instruction in educational institutions. Also, in their attempt to codify the Shariah, they abolished the flexibility that existed within the classical Islamic legal system. Thus when they altered the Islamic legal system with the Anglo-Muhammadan law, numerous Muftis and qāḍīs became unemployed.[860] Moreover, Muslims were seen as regressive and resistant to modernity and civilization after the debacle of 1857. The image of Muslim backwardness was publicized through books such as Hunter's *The Indian Musulmans*.[861]

In light of the above factors, it was hardly surprising that communal identity or what constitutes 'true Muslimness' became a hotly-debated issue in the latter half of the 1800. As the

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[855] See pp. 254ff.

[856] See pp. 246-53.

[857] Muhammad Q. Zaman, *Ashraf ʿAli Thanawi,* 10. Among other influential Deobandīs, one should also count Mawlānā Ḥusayn Aḥmad Madanī, who was known for his anti-British stance and for his advocacy of Indian Muslim nationalism. A documentation of his views can be found in a 1939 pamphlet entitled *Muttaḥidah qawmiyat awr Islam* (United Nationalism and Islam), in which he advanced the notion of a pluralistic Indian society and argued that Muslims could, without sacrificing their identity or interests, thrive within it. For more information on this, see Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr, *Mawdudi and the Making of Islamic Revivalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 32ff.

[858] For more details on this, see Zaman, *Ashraf 'Ali Thanawi,* 29-31, 105.

[859] On revivalist/reformist movements, see Jamal Malik, *Islamische Gelehrtenkultur*, *passim*, but esp. 211ff. This study is also very useful in documenting the history of another major educational movement, namely Nadwat al-ʿUlamāʾ.

[860] On the consequences of the Anglo-Muhammadan law, see Muhammad Serajuddin Alamgir, *Sharīʿa Law and Society: Tradition and Change in South Asia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002). See also Asaf A. A. Fyzee, *Outlines of Muḥammadan Law* (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), that summarizes the substance of 'Muḥammadan law' as it developed in British India.

[861] William Hunter, *The Indian Musulmans: Are They Bound In Conscience To Rebel Against The Queen?* (London: Trübner and Company, 1871), *passim*.

studies of Metcalf (on the Deoband movement), Lelyveld (on the Aligarh movement), Sanyal (on the Barelwī movement), Minault (on the Khilafat movement) and others amply demonstrate, it was at this time that movements such as the Deoband, Aligarh, Nadwat al-ᶜUlamāʾ, Ahl-i Sunnat and Ahl-i Ḥadīth appeared on the scene to respond to the question of Muslimness or what makes one's identity truly 'Islamic.'[862] This is because each of these groups realized that religious or moral authority is no longer obvious now, and that the house of Islam was facing trouble on all fronts, and so, it is imperative to safeguard religion and community by defining clear elements and boundaries of identity-making. On the whole, these movements were trying to answer the "what went wrong" question after the British had brought colonialism to India. Hence, a common rhetorical tactic was to invoke the (perceived) "golden age" of classical Islam when things were in order and the Islamic rule prevailed, while with time centuries old, 'un-Islamic' elements piled up, as a result of which Islamic identity and selfhood had been compromised.[863]

Notwithstanding their various approaches and strategies, all the aforementioned groups were in agreement that Islam was in crisis, and that the Muslim community needed a new direction. Thus the Ṭarīqat-i Muḥammadiyya of Sayyid Aḥmad Barelwī embraced the extreme path of fighting the British in which they were unsuccessful.[864] The Ahl-i Sunnat led by Aḥmad Riḍā Khān Barelwī thought the main issue at stake was devotion to the Prophet Muhammad and the following of his wont (sunna),[865] while Ahl-i Ḥadīth called for a radical reform and radical ijtihād.[866] The Ahl-i Ḥadīth sought to return to the salaf of the earlier Islamic tradition and preached an ideology of abolishing all the established Sunni legal schools (madhāhib). Moreover, their opposition to all forms of Sufism and Dargāh related practices set them apart from the Deobandīs and the Ahl-i Sunnat, both of whom embraced a version of Sufism.

The Deobandīs, in contrast to the other groups, took it upon themselves to preserve traditional Islamic education and uphold religious authority of the ᶜulamāʾ much in the manner of the Madrasa-yi Raḥīmiyya of the Shāh Walī Allāh family.[867] They wanted to fill the lacuna created by the British when they put an end to the Muslim legal system that used to be the primary source of religio-social authority. The new legal system resulted in a dearth of qāḍīs. Moreover, the rulings of the ᶜulamāʾ were no longer enforced in governmental courts. Nonetheless the ᶜulamāʾ had some say when it came to Muslim family law, e.g., marriage

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[862] See the classic monographs on these various movements: Metcalf, *Islamic Revival in British India*; David Lelyveld, *Aligarh's First Generation: Muslim Solidarity in British India* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); Malik, *Islamische Gelehrtenkultur;* Usha Sanyal, *Devotional Islam and Politics in British India*(Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996); Gail Minault, *The Khilafat Movement: Religious Symbolism and Political Mobilization in India* (NY: Columbia University Press, 1982); and Christian Troll, *Sayyid Ahmad Khan: A Reinterpretation of Muslim Theology* (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1978).

[863] See e.g., Sanyal, *Devotional Islam, passim.*

[864] On Sayyid Ahmad Barelwī and his ideology, see Marc Gaborieau, *Le mahdi incompris: Sayyid Ahmad Barelwî (1786-1831) et le millénarisme en Inde* (Paris: CNRS éditions, 2010) and Qeyamuddin Ahmad, *The Wahabi movement in India* (Calcutta: Firma K. L. Mukhopadhyay, 1966).

[865] Sanyal, *Devotional Islam,* 49ff.

[866] On the meaning and interpretation of *ijtihād*, see Intisar Rabb, *"Ijtihād," in The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Islamic World. Oxford Islamic Studies Online,* http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t236/e0354; Bernard G. Weiss, "Interpretation in Islamic Law: The Theory of Ijtihād," *The American Journal of Comparative Law* 26.2 (1978): 209-210; Mohammad Hashim Kamali, *Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence* (Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society, 1991), 468-71. An interesting approach to the study of *ijtihād* is that of Aaron Zysow, *The Economy of Certainty: An Introduction to the Typology of Islamic Legal Theory* (Atlanta: Lockwood Press, 2013) 259ff.

[867] Metcalf, *Islamic Revival in British India,* 138-90, and 235-263.

(*nikāḥ*) and divorce (*ṭalāq*).[868] Overall, the Deobandīs aimed to preserve the purity of tradition in the face of challenging circumstances. In opposition to the Deobandīs, Sayyid Aḥmad Khān thought Muslims need to catch up with the Hindus and the wider world in their pursuit of modern science.[869] It was his idea that Muslims, being politically ineffective in the aftermath of the Mutiny, need to cooperate with the British and make use of their language, i.e. English in order to reestablish their dominance in India. Although himself a promoter of a certain brand of modernist Islam, the Aligarh movement of Sayyid Aḥmad Khān was widely castigated by other Muslims in general and the Deobandīs in particular.

Coming now to Thānavī's particular Deobandī reaction to the challenges facing the subcontinental Muslims, the first thing one should note is that he employs the phrase 'the new age' (*al-ᶜaṣr al-jadīd*) to describe the changing circumstances of his day.[870] In his view, the characteristic feature of this new age is 'newly arisen doubts' concerning various tenets of religion. Thānavī's numerous books on Islam, gender, jurisprudence and mysticism make it plain that he considered himself or the *ᶜulamāʾ* like him as the guardian or the defender of religion.[871] He felt obliged to respond to the challenges that he saw were emanating from certain quarters. In his main treatise on the subject *The Valuable Counsels Regarding the Newly-Arisen Misgivings (al-Intibāhāt al-mufīda ᶜan al-ishtibāhāt al-jadīda),* he tells us that in light of the new scientific findings, some people demand that the doctrinal beliefs of Islam and its practices be modified in such a way that they will be brought to agreement with the worldview of modern science.[872] Moreover, he identifies some of these misgivings and principles as emanating from modern science and the European West. The rest of the book is a detailed refutation of these misgivings, which he reckons threaten the foundation of religion. Elsewhere, he also criticizes blind submission to 'customs' and superstitions of the bygone eras as being the mark of his time, i.e. the new age.[873] Furthermore, Thānavī alludes to the wide-ranging upheaval that has disrupted centuries old, normative Muslim praxis in the wake of British colonialism. He attributes this upheaval to the weakening of Muslim religiosity on the one hand and the invasion of anti-religious colonial modernity, introduced by the British and adopted by Western-educated

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[868] See Fareeha Khan, *Traditionalist Approaches to Sharī'ah Reform: Mawlana Ashraf 'Ali Thānawi's Fatwa on Women's Right to Divorce* (Unpublished Dissertation: The University of Michigan, 2008), 22-41.

[869] Lelyveld, *Aligarh's First Generation,* 71-100 and 106-122.

[870] See for example, the title of one of his books: *al-Qaṣad al-mashīd li-l-ᶜaṣr al-jadīd* (*Lofty Intentions for the New Era*).

[871] For more information see, Metcalf, *Perfecting Women,* 1-18; Naeem, *A Traditional Islamic Response to the Rise of Modernism*, 94ff.; Zaman, *Ashraf "Ali Thanawi,* 39-44 and 65-68.

[872] Thānavī, *al-Intibāhāt al-mufīda ᶜan al-ishtibāhāt al-jadīda* (Deoband: Maktabah-yi Nashrulqurʾān, n.d.)*,*1-3. It is highly significant that the aforementioned treatise is based on Thānavī's lectures given at the M.A.O. College (i.e. the historical Aligarh Muslim University, which was a bastion of modern education/science) when he was invited there in 1908 by a group of Aligarh students. Thānavī tells us in the *Preface* that the students showed great eagerness in his lectures, which ultimately propelled him to turn them into a book. But he is quick to note that the topics treated in it should serve as a preliminary to a more advanced treatment of the subject, and he hopes that someone will take up that responsibility in the future. English translation of the *Intibāhāt* can be found in *Islam, the Whole Truth,* trans. by Muhammad Hasan Askari and Karrar Husain (Multan: Idaratalifat-e-Ashrafia, 2003). The book, interspersed with Arabic and Persian technical vocabulary, was originally composed in Urdu. The translation, unfortunately, is tainted by numerous errors ranging from mis-rendering of the terms to incorrect usage of English. Moreover, the translators seemed to add an "ideological" flavor whenever the arguments took on a polemical turn. For the ease of reference I will make use of this translation with modification while quoting directly from the original.

[873] Ibid., *preface*.

Muslims on the other.[874] So it is clear that for Thānavī, the notion of 'the new age' is inextricably linked to the colonial experience and misfortunes of the present. It can scarcely be doubted that colonialism brought about changes not only in political and social life of Muslims living in South Asia, but also caused major shifts in epistemological paradigms including new ways of envisioning history, hermeneutics, authority, knowledge, scripture, and the human self, among others.[875] Thus for Thānavī, the new age represents all the aforementioned changes that seem to threaten his religious heritage.[876]

Practices of the Self

I will now move on to analyze Thānavī's general notion of the self, with particular reference to the concept of 'the perfect human.' Unlike Mullā Ṣadrā or Walī Allāh, Thānavī does not have a treatise systematically devoted to expounding the nature of the self. Nonetheless, Thānavī's massive corpus is full of ruminations on 'what it means to be a self,' whose journey culminates in the reality of 'the perfect human.' Also, due to the complexity of Thānavī's stance on the self, it is necessary to lay bare the framework within which I will analyze the notion.

In his *The Ascetic Self: Subjectivity, Memory, and Tradition*, Gavin Flood studies 'the ascetic self' in Christianity, Buddhism and Hinduism, and puts forth the thesis that the ascetic self is performed based on the memory of the tradition to which it belongs. For Flood, "asceticism is always set within, or in some cases in reaction to, a religious tradition, within a shared memory that both looks back to an origin and looks forward to a future goal."[877] However, such an asceticism or spirituality, Flood continues, is only possible within a metaphysical or cosmological framework, and in traditions where the cosmological vision is lost, asceticism as performance becomes a purely internalized performance.[878] Flood also asserts that the ascetic self performs asceticism through tradition-specific, bodily regimes or habits and in obedience to ascetic discipline. Through an act of will the ascetic self takes on the forms prescribed for it by tradition and generates long-term patterns of behavior, intended, ironically, to subvert that will. These cultural habits are the hallmarks of asceticism that can be understood as 'bodily performance.' The ascetic conforms to the discipline set forth in the tradition, but also appropriates it by shaping her psycho-somatic complex into particular religio-cultural forms over time.[879] Furthermore, for Flood, asceticism is not merely a set of practices but an inner attitude of

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[874] Naeem, *Sufism and Revivalism*, 443.

[875] Sherali Tarin, "Narratives of Emancipation in Modern Islam: Temporality, Hermeneutics, and Sovereignty," *Islamic Studies* 52.1 (2013): 5–28 at 5-6. For the notion of "epistemological colonialism", see Bernard S. Cohn, *Colonialism and Its Forms of Knowledge: The British in India* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), 3-15.

[876] As noted by Thānavī's biographers, the former wrote hundreds of treatises covering practically all the different issues from mysticism to Islamic law. For instance, Thānavī's massive *Bawādir al-nawādir,* which deals with a set of social, legal, mystical, theological and philosophical issues based on the questions that were posed to him, still awaits a scholarly investigation, see *Bawādir al-naaādir* (Lahore: Shaykh Ghulām ᶜAlī, 1962) 94, 109, 129, 131, 165, 177, 454-64. Another important work devoted to showing the scriptural foundation of Sufi practices such as *dhikr* or doctrines such as *fanāʾ* and *baqāʾ* is *Ḥaqīqat al-ṭarīqa min al-sunnat al-anīqa* (c. 1909), published as part of *al-Takashshuf ᶜan muhimmat al-taṣawwuf*, 491–722. In addition, Thānavī wrote a number of treatises concerning social and legal issues, see e.g. *al-Maṣāliḥ al-ᶜaqliyya li-l-aḥkām al-naqliyya* (Lahore: Kutub khana-yi Jāmilī, 1964) and *Imdād al-fatāwa*, ed. Muḥammad Shāfiᶜ (Deoband: Idara-yi ta'lifat-i awliya, 1974).

[877] Flood, *Ascetic Self*, 2.

[878] Flood, *Ascetic Self*, 2.

[879] Flood, *Ascetic Self*, 5-6.

detachment, an intention or act of will that, like all other intentions, results in actions that bear fruits.[880]

While I would not characterize Thānavī's self as an 'ascetic self,' since it is also colored by the love-mysticism of Ḥāfiz and Rūmī, I would nonetheless endorse Flood's central claim and assert that the performance of Thānavī's mystical self is possible only within the cosmological worldview of Sufism.[881] Generally speaking, Thānavī's 'self' grew out of Sufi ideas on selfhood, but he also introduces new concerns and interests of his own. As will soon be made clear, for the Sufis the general intuition seems to be that selfhood is an on-going and ever-changing manifestation of the divine names (*al-asmāᶜ al-ilāhī*), and the full actualization of this reality is seen as demanding a disciplined body, mind, and heart.**[882]** The primary impetus behind such a conception, as Sviri points out, seems to have come from the Qur'anic notion of the self (*al-nafs*) that describes its progressive states through such terms as *al-nafs al-ammāra, al-nafs al-lawwāma, al-nafs al-mulhima and al-nafs al-muṭmaʾinna,* which eventually prompted the Sufis to develop a paradigm for the transformation of the lower, carnal self by means of various spiritual exercises such as self-discipline, self-examination and the invocation (*dhikr*).[883]

Given the above background, it is pertinent to inquire now how Thānavī uses the word 'self' in his writings. This should be answered by first having recourse to chapter two, where it was shown that Mullā Ṣadrā uses the term *nafs* (self) in at least three distinct senses: 1) in reference to the body or various parts of the body, 2) in reference to the essence or reality of human nature, and 3) in reference to the 'aspiration' of becoming the perfect human. Thus *nafs* in reference to the body (*badan*) would take the translation 'soul,' while if its use does not involve any reference to the body, the translation would be 'self.' Moreover, *nafs* in the third sense, i.e., 'human becoming,' should also be translated as 'self,' since the Aristotelian definition of the soul (*psuche*) as the "first actuality of an organic natural body that has life potentially"[884] is ill-equipped to describe various 'spiritual states' of the Sufis that involve subjective experience. The point of all this is to say that for Thānavī the word *nafs* and its equivalent in Persian and Urdu such as *khūd* or *khwīshtan* would thus refer to the 'self' in the second and third sense in the Ṣadrian framework. Moreover, the term *nafs* is also signified by the first-personal pronoun 'I' (*man* in Persian), as in the following verse from the *Dīwān* of Ḥāfiz, on which Thānavī comments:

> I do not know who is there within my worn-out heart;
> For while I am silent, it makes all sorts of commotion.[885]

The verse expresses a dual identity about the referent 'I.' It suggests a reflexive stance through which the 'I' ponders over its true identity. That is to say, the 'I' itself is split into two different 'Is,' one of which is silent, while the other is making noise outside. The silent 'I' symbolizes the

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[880] Flood, *Ascetic Self*, 14.

[881] More specifically, the cosmological doctrine of 'the perfect human.'

[882] See Chittick, "Reason, Intellect, and Consciousness in Islamic Thought," 11.

[883] Sviri, *The Self and its Transformation in Sufism*, 197ff. See also, Henry Corbin, *The Man of Light in Iranian Sufism*, trans. Nancy Pearson (NY: Omega, 1994), 66ff; and Kukkonen, *Sources of the Self in the Arabic Tradition*, 37–60.

[884] Aristotle, *De Anima*, 412b5. Cf. *idem.*, *Metaphysics*, 1017b, 1035b.

[885] Ḥāfiz, *Divan of Hafez,* 32-33, trans. Reza Saberi, modified.

inner self, while the noisy 'I' signifies the outer self.[886] In any event, what is important to note for our purposes is that the referent of the 'I' in this verse could not have been something other than the 'self,' even though we do not know what the nature of this self is.[887] Nonetheless, such a verse does not fail to ask the question "who or what is the 'I,'" the answer to which determines the nature of the self. Rūmī furnishes us with a further example:

> All day long I only have this thought and all through night I ponder the question of why am I ignorant of the states of my own heart? Where have I come from, and what meaning does my existence have? Where am I going, which is not toward the destination of my own country?[888]

Sufi works are replete with such passages, both in poetry and prose that posit the self as an 'I' with a unique existential situation.[889] This is different from being a 'person' (*shakhṣ*) because the word 'person,' as we mentioned earlier, can be taken to mean someone who owns psychological states and actions, along with various bodily characteristics.[890] In all, for Thānavī, the primary sense of the self refers to 'the reality of human nature,' although it is important to note that this 'reality' is best understood in terms of a spectrum.[891] This is because for Thānavī (see below) *nafs* also signifies inward dimensions or states of the self such as the evil-inciting (*nafs-i ammāra*) or the tranquil self (*nafs-i muṭmaʾinna*), that are only actualized through the path of spiritual development. Hence, the question of 'what is the self' is inseparable from 'what one should make of one's self,' implying a link between the 'reality' of the self and its 'becoming.' For this reason, the bulk of Thānavī's writings on the self (*nafs*) are about the spiritual ethics of the self in the following form: "one ought to perform X, Y and Z spiritual exercises about one's *nafs*."[892] So, for instance, in his exegetical work *Ashraf al-tafāsīr* (written in Urdu), Thānavī states that the self (*nafs*) is characterized by two fundamentally opposing characteristics, namely the tendency to incite evil (*al-ʿammāra bi-l-sūʾ*) and stimulate good (*al-ʿammāra bi-l-khayr*).[893] That is, both goodness and evil are innate to the human self (*nafs-i insānī*). However, according to Thānavī, evil dominates over human nature (except for the prophets and the saints) because of its indulgence in bodily pleasure, which is the source of all negative personality traits such as

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[886] See Thānavī, *ʿIrfān-i Ḥāfiz,* 85; and Abū al-Ḥasan Khātamī Lāhurī, *Sharh-i ʿirfāni-yi ghazal-ha-yi Ḥāfiz,* ed. by Bahā al-Dīn Khurramshāhī et al. Tehran: Nashr-i Qaṭrah, 1995, 1:264ff.

[887] On the translation of 'self' as 'anā' in Arabic, see Giuseppe Scattolin, "The Realization of the 'Self' in Islamic Mysticism: 'Umar Ibn al-Farid [576/1181-632/1235]," *La Critica Sociologica,* 119 1996:1-20.

[888] Rūmī, *Kulliyāt-i Shams-i Tabrīzī,* ed. Badīʿ al-Zamān-i Furūzānfar (Tehran: Amīr Kabīr, 1977), 766.

[889] Here is an example of Thānavī's own usage:
While the lower self (or, the ego) (*khūdī*) remained God was not discovered,
I became non-existent when God was found.
Were you even anything at all but a man of lament?
All of this was the grace and generosity of Imdād [Ḥājjī Imdād Allāh]. See ʿAzīz al-Ḥasan, *Ashraf al-sawāniḥ,* 1: 188.

[890] Sorabji, *Self: Ancient and Modern,* 21. Yaḥyā b. ʿAdī (d. 974), who is said to have become al-Fārābī's student, also distinguishes between person and the self. According to ʿAdī, humans in their true being is called the rational self (*al-nafs al-ʿāqila*), which is a single thing (*shayʾ wāḥid*), whereas they are many in persons (*al-ashkhāṣ*), see *idem., The Reformation of Morals,* 107.

[891] This is also supported by Walī Allāh's analysis of the word *nafs.* According to Walī Allāh, *nafs* has three connotations: 1) human nature, 2) lower self, and 3) principle of life. See *Walī Allāh, Alṭāf al-quds,* 73-74.

[892] See e.g., Thānavī, *al-Takashshuf,* 45-80; *Bawādir al-nawādir* (Lahore: Shaykh Ghulām ʿAlī, 1962) 94-177.

[893] Thānavī, *Ashraf al-tafāsīr,* edited by Muḥammad Taqī ʿUthmānī (Multan: Idāra-yi Taʾlīfāt-i Ashrafiyya, 2003), 2: 325.

greed, pride, arrogance and envy. [894] So the lower self, which is governed by the senses and follow their desires, must be disciplined in order to recover the tranquility of the higher self. Thānavī quotes Rūmī's *Masnavī* in order to affirm that the 'tranquil state' of the self which the Qur'an mentions (i.e., *nafs-i muṭmaʾinna*), is the primordial state of the human self (*nafs-i insānī*), which is sought by everyone, even though they are chased by the cravings of the lower self.[895] This means the lower self needs to go through a process of purification or catharsis in order to recover its pristine nature. After this brief foray into the mechanics of the word *nafs*, we can now move on to discuss Thānavī's mystical self by drawing on his commentary on *Dīwān-i Ḥāfiẓ* entitled *ʿIrfān-i Ḥāfiẓ* and other works.

Although Thānavī sometimes draws on the writings of classical Sufis such as al-Qushayrī and al-Ghazālī, the broad contour of his selfhood is molded by the cosmological doctrines of Ibn ʿArabī and the love-poetry of Rūmī and Ḥāfiẓ.[896] Since Thānavī draws extensively on Ḥāfiz's *Dīwān* to provide substance to his theory of the self, it would be apropos to outline the latter's notion of the self at the beginning. In one of his famous poems, the Persian poet, Ḥāfiz casts light on the tension between the lower and the higher self or, in my terminology, between 'the empirical' and 'the transcendent self.' Ḥāfiz says:

> For years my heart sought the goblet of Jamshīd (*jām-i jam*) from me
> That which it already possessed (*ānchih az khūd dāsht*) it sought from others
> [This self is] the pearl that is outside of the shell of time and space
> It searched its true reality from those who were lost on the seashore.
> Last night, I took my problem to the Magian Pīr (*pīr-i mugān*)[897]
> Who could solve problems by his powerful [spiritual] insight
> I saw him joyful and happy with a goblet of wine in his hand
> And while he looked at the mirror in hundred different ways,
> I asked, "O sage, When was this cup world-viewing goblet (*jām-i jahānbīn*) given to you?"
> He said, "On that day, when He created the azure dome [of heaven]."
> He said, "That friend (i.e. Hallāj) who honored the top of the gallows,"
> His fault was that he laid bare the secrets [of the self]
> I said to him, "What is the chain-like tress of idols for?"
> He replied, "Ḥāfiz complains of his frenzied heart (*dil-i shaydā*)."[898]

At first blush, the content of the poem may seem disparate, but as some interpreters have argued, there is an underlying unity at work here.[899] The poem, in brief, brings together correspondences between the metacosm (God), the macrocosm (the cosmos) and the microcosm (the human self)

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[894] Thānavī, *Ashraf al-tafāsīr*, 2: 325-27.

[895] Thānavī, *Ashraf al-tafāsīr,* 4: 295-97. The verse of Rūmī which he cites from the *Masnavī* is the following: "Anyone one who has remained far from his roots, seeks a return (to the) time of his union," (trans. Nicholson).

[896] Thānavī also wrote a defense of Ibn ʿArabī's mystical philosophy, especially the latter's notion of sainthood (*walāya*) based mostly on ʿAbd al-Wahhāb al-Shaʿrānī's (d. 1565) ruminations on the subject, see *al-Tanbīh al-tarabī fi tanzīh Ibn al-ʿArabī* (Thana Bhawan: Ashraf al-matabiʿ, 1927), *passim*.

[897] '*Magian Pīr*' symbolizes the person of the Sufi master.

[898] Ḥāfiz, *The Divan*, 166, (trans. modified).

[899] This is cogently argued in Michael C. Hillmann, *Unity in the Ghazals of Hafez* (Minneapolis: Bibliotheca Islamica, 1976), 39-46. It should however be noted that for the Sufi commentators of Ḥāfiz, an underlying unity is always assumed.

by the symbolism of the "goblet of wine" (the macrocosm) which corresponds to the 'heart' of the spiritual seeker (the microcosm), which again, after self-realization, corresponds to the Divine Throne in the metacosm.[900] Another way of explaining the symbolism would be to say that just as when one looks into a cup full of liquid one sees one's own face or the face of someone else, one sees the face of one's *true self* or the divine when looking at one's own heart, if it is full of divine wine, i.e. divine love. The goblet of Jamshīd is a mythical cup into which the ancient Persian king Jamshid could look and see any place in the world. So the goblet of Jamshid symbolizes the realized, transcendent self into which one can look and find everything that is out there in the cosmos.[901] According to Abū al-Ḥasan Lāhurī's massive commentary on the *Dīwān*, which had most likely influenced Thānavī, the *jām-i jam* (symbolizing here the transcendent self) cannot be discovered through the effort of the empirical self, whose sole essence is reason.[902] Thus one needs the help of a spiritual guide who can unlock the mystery of the true self by showing one 'the path of love.'

In his commentary on *ʿIrfān-i Ḥāfiz*, Thānavī maintains that the meaning of 'the cupbearer' (*sāqī*) in the first verse implies the real beloved (*maḥbūb-i ḥaqīqī*), which can either be God or the spiritual guide.[903] The goblet of wine (*kaʾs*) in the same place denotes love-induced attraction (*jadhb-i ʿishq*).[904] That is, the verse states, "*O my beloved, make me intoxicated with thy love*".[905] He then goes on to suggest that 'ʿishq' in the second hemistich implies the path of love (*rāh-i ʿishq*), i.e. spiritual wayfaring (*sulūk*) in Sufism.[906] Thānavī explains that the spiritual path may appear easy at first because its difficulties are not foreseen. However, as the novice traveler progresses upon the path she encounters different challenges. The couplet as a whole makes the point that wayfaring without attraction is not enough to attain union at the end of the journey. Thānavī continues his commentary of the first few couplets by saying that spiritual wayfaring involves attaining different stations (the *maqāmāt* in Sufism), i.e., the inner virtues that one must acquire, which are the foundation of the extrinsic virtues such as fulfilling the tenets of the Shariah.[907] However, according to Thānavī, when it comes to acquiring the inner virtues one's *own* effort is not sufficient. One also needs heavenly grace to achieve such a goal. Thus spiritual life is often characterized by divine attraction (*jadhb*), which is a mysterious emanation and divine grace (*fayḍ-i ghaybī wa ʿināyat-i ḥaqq*) from Heaven.[908] As the initiate treads the tortuous alleyways of the spiritual path, the alchemy of the divine attraction

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[900] See Abū al-Ḥasan Lāhurī, *Sharh-i ʿirfāni-yi ghazal-ha-yi Ḥāfiz*, 2:1276ff. Needless to say, this is not the only interpretation of this *ghazal*. On the symbolism of '*jām-i jam*,' see Thānavī, *ʿIrfān-i Ḥāfiz,* 220, 223.

[901] See e.g., Hillmann, *Unity in the Ghazals of Hafez*, 43-45.

[902] The 'empirical self' is symbolized in the poem as '*bīgānih*' (stranger/the other) and '*gum-shudihgān-i lab-i daryā*' (lost on the sea shore) respectively. See Lāhurī, *Sharh-i ʿirfāni-yi ghazal-ha-yi Ḥāfiz*, 2:1276-78.

[903] Thānavī, *ʿIrfān-i Ḥāfiz,* 9ff.

[904] On the symbolism of 'love' and 'wine,' see also Dāwūd al-Qayṣarī's commentary on ʿUmar Ibn al-Fāriḍ's famous poem *al-Khamrīya*, in Th. Emil Homerin, *The Wine of Love and Life* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 12-13 and 40-41. According to Qayṣarī, 'wine' in mystical poetry refers to the wine of gnosis.

[905] Thānavī, *ʿIrfān-i Ḥāfiz,* 9. The first couple of the *Diwān* reads:

O *Sāqī* fill the cup and pass it around,

For Love seemed easy, but then fell trouble. (Ḥāfiz, *The Divan*, 1). Cf., A. J. Arberry, *Fifty Poems of Ḥāfiz* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974), 81.

[906] Thānavī, *ʿIrfān-i Ḥāfiz*, 9.

[907] Thānavī, *ʿIrfān-i Ḥāfiz*, 10.

[908] Thānavī, *ʿIrfān-i Ḥāfiz*, 10.

becomes intense in her, which ultimately dissolves the lower self and this is also called union with God (*wuṣūl ila Allāh*).[909]

As hinted earlier, Thānavī devotes several treatises to elucidate the practices of the self. For example, in his *Bawādir al-nawādir*, he explains extensively the inner architecture of 'thought patterns' that often prevents the initiate from reaching their ultimate spiritual goal. He identifies various features of the inner life such as perpetual soliloquy, sub-vocal thinking, indecision etc. as great impediments to the fulfillment of spiritual selfhood.[910] In order to combat such obstacles on the spiritual path, Thānavī develops several strategies. The purpose of these strategies is to develop 'techniques of attention,' which plays a pivotal role in the most important of all the spiritual practices, i.e., *dhikr* during the retreat (*khalwa*). In his capacity as a spiritual master Thānavī observes that the neophyte on the spiritual path has the most difficulty in developing concentration. Thānavī relates that in most Sufi orders the disciple is given a specific formula of *dhikr* to repeat as a spiritual practice. However, while engaged in this practice, the neophyte may have to give up many other virtuous acts, like supererogatory prayers, listening to sermons etc. Anticipating that some exoteric scholars would be critical of such practices, Thānavī explains that the reason behind such a practice is that in the beginning, the neophyte's internal state is subordinate to her external state. Over a period of time, however, the opposite will come about, so that the external state will be subordinate to the neophyte's internal state. Therefore, Thānavī argues, if the neophyte, at the beginning of her spiritual journey, occupies herself with several different practices, it will be nearly impossible for her to achieve the mental and spiritual attention that is a *sine qua non* in all spiritual disciplines.[911]

Thānavī draws on the rich legacy of Indian Sufism, especially the Chishtī and the Naqshbandī orders to elaborate on the techniques of attention. Prior to Thānavī, Indian Sufis had developed very sophisticated methods of practicing meditation (*fikr*) and invocation (*dhikr*). For instance, in his *Kashkūl-i Kalīmī* (*Kalīmī's Alms Bowl*), Kalīm Allāh Shāhjahānabādī (d. 1729) of the Kalīmī order (which has its roots in the Chīshtī tradition) lays out twelve rules that should followed when one performs *fikr* or *dhikr*.[912] Kalīm Allāh recommends that one should sit cross-legged as in the Muslim canonical prayer. One should place both hands on the knees. One should fill the atmosphere with incense. The place of meditation should be a dark room. One should wear clean clothes while meditating or invoking, and keep one's eyes and ear openings closed. One should visualize one's spiritual guide. One should be absolutely truthful and sincere in what one is doing, so that one is not affected by hypocrisy. One should chose formulae that express God's unity. And finally, one should pay close attention to the meaning of the invocatory formula in order to dispel any vain or sub-vocal thoughts that might distract one's concentration.[913] Kalīm Allāh also describes two breath-control techniques that are used during meditation. The first technique, known as 'suspension of breath' (*ḥabs-i nafas*), is used to kill off stray thoughts and wandering of the mind, while the second technique, known as 'restraining of breath' (*ḥashr-i nafas*), refers to taking breaths shorter than the normal so as to regulate heat in

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[909] Thānavī, *ʿIrfān-i Ḥāfiz*, 10.
[910] Thānavī, *Bawādir al-nawādir,* 94, 109, 129, 131, 165, 177, 454-64.
[911] Thānavī, *Haqīqat al-tarīqa,* 464-65.
[912] Kalīm Allāh Shāhjahānabādī, "*Kashkūl-i Kalīmī*," translated by Scott Kugle in *Sufi Meditation and Contemplation: Timeless Wisdom from Mughal India* (NY: Omega, 2012), 40-41.
[913] Kalīm Allāh, *Kashkūl-i Kalīmī*, 41-42

the body.[914] Kalīm Allāh then goes on to delineate the minutiae of this process that involves making use of various organs of the body, which need not concern us here.[915]

As noted earlier, the aim of such exercises is to develop attention, which is a key component in meditation and invocation. Thānavī asserts that the purpose of various spiritual disciplines practised by the Sufis is to enhance the powers of concentration and develop one-pointed focus on a single object.[916] He explains that through such techniques Sufi masters aim to instill a certain presence of mind or oneness of concentration which, once it has become one's second nature, will greatly facilitate one's attention to the sole object of meditation, which is God. Thānavī is also aware that to achieve such a state of one-pointed focus on one's spiritual practices, one requires a great deal of effort and spiritual will because the mind is usually cluttered with disparate thoughts that are difficult to dissolve.[917] He devotes pages to talk about the negative effects of distracting thoughts (khawāṭīr), which stifle the mind during the course of dhikr, and destroy the neophyte's concentration.[918] These distractions are believed to have come from devil and are called whisperings (waswās). In order to calm the mind and control distractions, Sufi masters also ask their disciples to take long periods of seclusion known as retreat or khalwa, in which they are supposed to engage in the dhikr for the entire period. The purpose of such practices is to attain the paradisal state of mind, called the tranquil self (nafs-i muṭmaʾinna) as described in the Qurʾan. Following Ḥāfiz, Thānavī asserts that the highest paradise can be found in the retreat of the Sufis or the dervishes. In such a state of mind, Thānavī claims, one experiences nothing less than divine peace. Thānavī quotes the following poem from Diwān-i Ḥāfiz:

> The highest garden of heaven is the retreat (khalwa) of the dervishes (darwishān ast).
> The substance of wealth lies in the service of the dervishes…
> That which turns the black heart into gold by its radiance,
> Is an alchemy (kīmiyā) that is found in the spiritual company (ṣuḥbat) of the dervishes.
> That in front of which the Sun submits its crown of pride,
> Is the pride that comes from the grandeur of the dervishes.
> The wealth which is not in danger of decline,
> Without exaggeration, is the wealth of the dervishes.
> The kings are the direction to which people turn in their needs, but

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[914] Kalīm Allāh, Kashkūl-i Kalīmī, 41-42. These techniques resemble yogic practices. On the relation between Sufism and Yoga in the Indian context, see Carl Ernst, "Situating Sufism and Yoga." Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, Series 3, 15:1 (2005): 15-43; "Muslim Interpreters of Yoga," in Yoga: The Art of Transformation, edited by Debra Diamond. Smithsonian Books, 2013; "Accounts of Yogis in Arabic and Persian Historical and Travel Texts," Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam, vol. 33 (2008): 409-426; "Two Versions of a Persian Text on Yoga and Cosmology, Attributed to Shaykh Muʿīn al-Dīn Chīshtī," Elixir 2 (2006): 69-76.

[915] Kalīm Allāh, Kashkūl-i Kalīmī, 45-47. Ḥabs-i nafas is a popular method among the Chishtī, Kubrawī, and Qādirī Sufi orders.

[916] Thānavī, Ḥaqīqat al-tarīqa, 535.

[917] Thānavī, Ḥaqīqat al-tarīqa, 455-56.

[918] Thānavī, Ḥaqīqat al-tarīqa, 444ff. Cf., al-Ghazālī, On Disciplining the Soul & On Breaking the Two Desires: Books XXII and XXIII of The Revival of the Religious sciences = Kitāb riyāḍat al-nafs, & Kitāb kasr al-shahwatayn: Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn, trans. by T. J. Winter (Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society, 1995), LXVII.

From pre-eternity (*azal*) to post-eternity (*abad*) is the opportunity of the dervishes.
The goal that kings seek in their prayers is manifested
In the mirror of the countenance of the dervishes.
Ḥāfiz, be courteous here, for sovereignty and kingdom are
All due to servitude and the presence of the dervishes.[919]

In his commentary, Thānavī notes that the highest paradise is to be found in the retreat of the Sufis (i.e., the dervishes).[920] This is because the retreat opens up the possibility of attaining the mystical state of *fanāʾ* (annihilation), which is the summit of spiritual journey.[921] Approving Ḥāfiz, Thānavī holds that the spiritual path entails service, servitude and spiritual company of the dervishes, all of which can transform the black heart (i.e. the self which is full of desires and concupiscence) into gold (i.e. the tranquil self which is permeated by peace and serenity).[922]

The Perfect Human as the Fullness of the Self

The previous section described the practices of the self that Thānavī recommends for the seekers of Sufi path. What is important to note, however, is that these practices are meant to lead the initiate toward the highest degree of perfection, identified with the reality of 'the perfect human.' Hence, it would be pertinent to discuss Thānavī's conception of the self insofar as it is represented by 'the perfect human' (*al-insān al-kāmil*). The doctrine of 'the perfect human,' *inter alia*, seeks to explain human's metaphysical origin, the question of what it is to be human in relation to God and His manifestation (e.g. nature), and human's existential return or spiritual ascent to God. The concept of 'the perfect human,' which Massignon termed as "the privilege myth of Islam," is perhaps the most widely known Sufi doctrine, along with the 'the unity of being' (*waḥdat al-wujūd*).[923] It is thus necessary to analyze the concept in depth, since Ṣadrā's and Walī Allāh's discussion of it in chapter two and three does not flesh out its full significance. Moreover, it was already noted how the notion of 'the perfect human' plays an important role in Iqbāl's construction of the self.

Thānavī starts off his exposition of the perfect human by explaining human nature through the microcosm/macrocosm analogy,[924] although the doctrine of 'the perfect human'

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[919] Ḥāfiz, *The Divan*, 62-63, trans. modified.

[920] Thānavī, *ʿIrfān-i Ḥāfiz*, 88-89.

[921] On the relation between *fanāʾ* and *khalwa*, see Thānavī, *ʿIrfān-i Ḥāfiz*, 197, 203, and 231. For a classic treatment of *khalwa* in Sufism, see Najm al-Dīn Kubrā's *Risāla fī-l-khalwa* translated by Gerhard Böwering. *Idem*., "Kubrā's Treatise on Spiritual Retreat, *Risāla fī-l-khalwa*," *al-Abhath* 54 (2006): 7–34.

[922] Thānavī, *ʿIrfān-i Ḥāfiz*, 89-90.

[923] Louis Massignon, "L'homme parfait en Islam et son originalité eschatologique," *EJ* 15 (1947): 287-313.

[924] My analysis is primarily based on Thānavī's Urdu (cum Arabic) commentary on Ibn ʿArabī's famous *Fuṣūs al-ḥikam*. It is here that Thānavī lays out his conception of the self as the perfect human. In the *Preface* he mentions that someone had made him promise to write a commentary on the *Fuṣūs*, and in order to fulfil that promise he had undertaken the task, see Thānavī, *Khuṣūṣ al-kalim fī ḥall Fuṣūs al-ḥikam* (Lahore: Nazir Sons Publishers, 1978), 2-3. Thānavī's commentary is an addition to the long line of the *Fuṣūs* commentaries that had been composed over the centuries all the way from the Islamic heartlands to China and Malay islands. However, it is probably one of the first commentaries in Urdu, although famous Sufi philosophers such as Muḥibb Allāh Allahabadi (d. 1648) and many others have written commentaries on the *Fuṣūs* in both Arabic and Persian. But Thānavī often quotes the Ottoman Ṣofiyawī Bālī Effendī (d. 1553) and the Persian ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Jāmī (d. 1492) more than any other figure in his own commentary. As for the Urdu commentaries on the *Fuṣūs*, Mehr ʿAlī Shāh (d. 1937), an influential Sufi, delivered daily lectures on the *Fuṣūs*, which were published as *Maqālāt al-mardiyya* (date unknown). It is to be

bears resemblance to the ancient idea of 'microcosm,' it is much more encompassing and variegated than the latter.[925] Then he goes on to affirm the Sufi idea that the perfect human is the locus of manifestation of the Supreme Name of God (i.e. Allah), in virtue of which h/she is capable of reflecting all of God's names and qualities in a unified manner. Thānavī writes:

> Adam is like a spirit for the entire cosmos, while the angels are like the various faculties (*quwā*) of the form of the cosmos, which is called macrocosm (*insān-i kabīr*) in the language of the Sufis. So the angels are like the faculties of sense and spirit, which humans have in their constitution.[926]

In accordance with the general interpretive framework established by the School of Ibn ʿArabī, Adam or the perfect human prototype is the synthesis of both macrocosmic (pertaining to the universe) and microcosmic (pertaining to the human being) realities in that only he is made on the image of the all-encompassing name (*ism jāmiʿ*) of God, Allah.[927] Thus the universe as a whole reflects all the divine names and attributes of Divinity (or the name Allah which encapsulates all other names) through countless number of species and entities, but each entity or thing reflects only a particular mode of a given divine name. In other words, a particular entity like quartz crystal may reflect its perfection only through a particular given name of God, which is the cause of manifestation of the former. In like manner, angels are similar to the various faculties of human, which bear their own 'conditional' perfection in that each sense-faculty may be perfect in terms of its particular function, e.g. sight when it comes to seeing, and can know a particular aspect of reality perfectly. So the underlying argument is that angels, although perfect in what each of them is supposed to perform, are not capable of knowing the Divine in all of Its illimitable aspects because the angels, much like the cosmos, manifest only some particular combination of divine names and attributes. But it should be noted that humans qua humans are the locus of the "Name" in *potency*, while the perfect human is the only one who reflects it *in actu*:

> The cosmos (*ʿālam*) is the locus of manifestation (*maẓhar*) of the Divine names, while the human being is the locus of manifestation of the all-comprehensive name (*ism jāmiʿ*), i.e. Allah.[928]

That is to say, the human is the synthesis of the manifestation of all the divine names and attributes found in the cosmos. Whatever is found in the former is also found in the latter.

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noted that Seyyed Mubārik Alī was perhaps the first to translate the *Fuṣūṣ* into Urdu, which was published as *Kunūz asrār al-qidam* (Kanpur: 1894).

[925] Masataka Takeshita seems to equate the reality of the perfect human with that of microcosm, which I think is incorrect because the former encompasses all levels of reality, and not just microcosm, see Masataka Takeshita, *Ibn ʿArabī's Theory of the Perfect Man and It's Place in the History of Islamic Thought* (Tokyo: Institute for the Study of Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa, 1987), 170ff. Cf. ch. 3, 62ff.

[926] Thānavī, *Khuṣūṣ al-kalim*, 15. Cf. Ibn ʿArabī, *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, (ed.) A.E. Afifi (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-ʿArabī, 1966), 49-50; Dāwūd al-Qayṣarī, *Maṭlaʿ khuṣūṣ al-kalim fī maʿānī Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam (Sharḥ Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam)* (Tehran: Intishārāt-i ʿilmī wa farhangī, 1998), 326-30.

[927] See Qayṣarī, *Sharḥ Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, 329-33.

[928] Thānavī, *Khuṣūṣ al-kalim,* 10. This point is also explained from viewpoint of the Muḥammadan Reality (*ḥaqīqa muḥammadiyya*) by the 14th century mystic Maḥmūd Shabistarī, see Shabistarī, *Gulshan-i rāz*, (ed.) Parvīz ʿAbbāsī (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Ilhām, 2002), 33-34.

However, it is crucial to note that whereas in the cosmos God manifests His names and qualities in a differentiated manner (*tafṣīl*), i.e. each entity can be distinguished from one another in terms of a given divine attribute, in the case of humans His manifestation takes on the form of a non-differentiated, unified object, i.e. the "mode" of existence of the divine names and qualities in human cannot ordinarily be distinguished as in case of the cosmos. Thānavī thus says:

> The forms of the divine names (i.e. entities that exist in the cosmos) remained distinct from one another, but they all become manifested in the human state. Entities that exist are the manifestation of the Real, which is why they are called divine forms. The human state is capable of attaining the degree of all-comprehensiveness.[929]

The central argument thus is that humans are capable of *knowing* God in a comprehensive manner because they have the potential to embrace the all-encompassing reality of the Supreme Name of God (Allah), which encompasses all other names.[930]

According to the well-known Sufi doctrine, the perfect human is the ultimate goal of God's creation or manifestation.[931] In response to the question "why did God create the world", Sufis assert that God brought the cosmos into being for the sake of the perfect human. Thānavī states:

> The True One (*al-ḥaqq*) wanted to witness the all-encompassing, perfection of His Essence in a comprehensive being (*wujūd-i jāmiᶜ*), which is the reason why Adam was created with all-inclusive attributes.[932]

God brings into existence a comprehensive being, identified here as the perfect human so that He may see His own perfection in the mirror of the former.[933] Thus Adam was created in the *form* of the name Allah in contrast to the angels and all other beings, who, as mentioned earlier, are created upon particular forms of a given divine name. Now it may be asked at this point that why did God, whose Essence already contained infinite perfection (*kamāl*), wish to see Himself in the mirror of another being? Did not God already "see" His perfection before the creation of the perfect? As Thānavī writes:

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[929] Thānavī, *Khuṣūṣ al-kalim*, 20. On the all-comprehensive nature of the perfect human embodied in the human self, see ᶜAbd al-Raḥmān Jāmī, *Naqd al-nuṣūṣ fī sharḥ Naqsh al-fuṣūṣ*, edited by W. Chittick (Tehran: Imperial Iranian Academy of Philosophy, 1977), 61-64.

[930] Thānavī, *Khuṣūṣ al-kalim*, 20-21; cf. Ibn ᶜArabī, *al-Insān al-kāmil,* 7-11.

[931] See Qayṣarī, *Sharḥ Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, 328-31. According to Qayṣarī, God (referring to the Divine Essence) was a "hidden treasure" (*kanzan makhfiyyan*), who loved to be known which is the reason He brought the cosmos into being. But the final cause (*ᶜilla ghāya*) of the cosmos is the perfect human through whom God is known in a comprehensive manner, since the former contains all the perfections. On the *ḥadīth* of the "hidden treasure" and Ibn ᶜArabī's explanation of it, see Claude Addas, *Ibn ᶜArabī: The Voyage of No Return* (Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society, 2010), 91-92. See also, Mu'ayyid al-Dīn al-Jandī, *Sharḥ Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, (ed.) S. J. Āshtiyānī (Mashhad: Dānishgāh-i Mashhad, 1982), 157ff.

[932] Thānavī, *Khuṣūṣ al-kalim*, 10-11.

[933] It is to be noted that even though the 'tense' of the sentence suggests that this "divine wish" is a "temporal" event, in reality this should be taken to mean an "atemporal" act transcending time. Thus Thānavī asserts that humans are eternal as long as their noetic existence (*wujūd-i ᶜilmī*) is considered, which is also known as the fixed entities (*aᶜyān-i thābita*). And at this level, all things are pre-eternal (*azalī*), but since humans possess preeminence as compared to all other beings, this should be reflected at the level of [noetic existence too], see Thānavī, *Khuṣūṣ al-kalim,* 18.

Question arises as to whether or not before the existence of this all-comprehensive locus of manifestation [i.e. the perfect human], the Real witnessed His Essence or His Names, so that He would need the former for the witnessing.[934]

Thānavī then offers the following response to this very salient question:

A thing's witnessing of its own essence in itself through itself is not the same as witnessing its essence through another, which will be like a mirror for it. That is to say, to see the essence through the mediation of something is not the same as seeing it without one. The effects and properties (*āthar wa aḥkām*) of these two contrasting witnesses differ in nature.[935]

That is to say, even though God did witness Himself (i.e. His names and qualities) before the creation of the perfect human, this witnessing was through His own Essence, and not through an external form. For the act of seeing oneself in oneself is *different* from the act of seeing oneself in another being, which would be like a mirror to the former. In the case of the former, i.e. seeing oneself in oneself, the witnessing takes place without any intermediary (*wāsiṭa*), whereas in the case of the latter the act of seeing materialized through an "intermediary", which is the reality of the perfect human.[936] Moreover, although this act of vision is still within the Essence in the sense that nothing can be outside of God, yet it is an outward projection of the Divine Self manifested in external reality. Thus the perfect human is the very mirror in which the Divine Essence manifests Itself. In Thānavī's own words:

If before the existentiation (*ījād*), the locus of manifestation, both in respect of the Essence and manifestation, were already present in the Real, then why would He bring it into existence again? The answer is that the aforementioned locus of manifestation had been present as an object of divine knowledge, while now it has been brought into being in external reality. And the difference between the two is manifest.[937]

Furthermore, when the Divine Self (i.e. God's Essence) knows Itself through Itself, the mode of Its self-knowledge is undifferentiated (*ijmāl*), whereas when It knows Itself through the mirror of the perfect human, Its knowledge of Itself becomes differentiated whereby all the names and qualities are distinctly reflected. Thānavī further expands on the question posed earlier and asserts that "divine infinitude" which is the very nature of the Essence requires the latter to manifest different possibilities contained within It.[938]

Seen from another point of view, when God created the cosmos it was like an unpolished mirror and lacked a spirit. And as the forms of the divine names and qualities reflected in the cosmos could not be seen clearly on an account of the latter's being an unpolished mirror, God created the perfect human, who is the very polishing (*ᶜayn-i jalāʾ*) of this mirror and the spirit of

[934] Thānavī, *Khuṣūṣ al-kalim*, 11.
[935] Thānavī, *Khuṣūṣ al-kalim*, 11.
[936] Thānavī, *Khuṣūṣ al-kalim*, 11.
[937] Thānavī, *Khuṣūṣ al-kalim*, 12.
[938] Thānavī, *Khuṣūṣ al-kalim*, 11-12. Since the Divine Essence is infinite, it must contain the possibility of manifestation.

this form (*wa rūḥ tilka l-ṣūrā*), since h/she completes its perfection.[939] It is also the exigency of the Divine command (*amr-i ilahī*) that if a locus (*maḥall*) is created it is bound to accept the Divine spirit in it. So, the cosmos, for the perfection of its manifestation, needed an order/entity (*amr*), which is the perfect human.[940]

The doctrine of the perfect human comprises three principal modalities, namely individual, cosmic and meta-cosmic.[941] The individual self, since created upon the form of the name Allah, contains the perfection of all the divine names and attributes *in potentia*. But seldom does one attain to the exalted station of the perfect human, with the exception of the prophets and the great saints. As for the cosmic dimension, every individual self is also the mirror of the macrocosm, since it reflects the realities of the cosmos. Finally, as a meta-cosmic reality, every self by virtue of the fact that it is a potential perfect human encompasses all the different levels of reality from the Divine Essence to the terrestrial realm.[942] The metacosmic function of the *al-insān al-kāmil* is an answer to the philosophical conundrum of how the many can proceed from the one—that it is an all-comprehensive, pre-existential, uncreated, yet not eternal, reality out of which all things in creation unfold. God issues His creative command "be!" (*kun*), and what comes to be through the act of existentiation is the reality of the perfect human that subsumes all other realities. It is thus the greatest sign of God, in that it encapsulates all things in a pre-created/non-eternal, quasi incomprehensible ontological in-betweenness—like the first rays of the sun that are neither ray nor sun, and from which all of the sun's light radiates. It is the form of God from which both microcosm and the macrocosm take their forms. It also explains why microcosm and macrocosm are related, since they take their respective forms from the perfect human.[943] Thus the perfect human even transcends the cosmos in that it can arrive at the threshold of the highest level of reality, i.e. the Divine Self. Thānavī writes:

> Divine comprehensiveness pertains to the lot of humans only, and the nature of such comprehensiveness is unfathomable through rational reflection. Thus mystical unveiling (*kashf*) is required to understand [such a truth]… This comprehensive being (*mawjūd-i jāmiᶜ*) is called human (*insān*) or the vicegerent (*khalīfa*). It is named human in virtue of its "comprehensive state" (*nashʾa-yi ᶜāmm*). That is, all the divine realities (*ḥaqāʾiq-i*

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[939] Thānavī, *Khuṣūṣ al-kalim*, 13. On the "mirror symbolism" and its semantic analysis, see Michael Sells, *Mystical Languages of Unsaying* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 63-89; idem, "Ibn 'Arabi's Polished Mirror: Perspective Shift and Meaning Event," *Studia Islamica* 66 (1988): 121-149.

[940] Thānavī, *Khuṣūṣ al-kalim*, 13.

[941] Izutsu thinks that the perfect human comprises two modalities rather three, as I mentioned above. He leaves out the meta-cosmic dimension of the perfect human. This may be due to his restricting the reality of the perfect human below the Divine Essence, which however is not the position embraced by Thānavī or by most of the commentators of Ibn ᶜArabī. On Izutsu's explanation of this issue, see Izutsu, *Sufism and Taoism*, 247ff.

[942] The multiple levels of reality can be summarized in five or six principal states, which the Sufi metaphysicians call the "five divine presences" (*al-ḥaḍarāt al-ilāhiyyat al-khams*). These states of being (or presence) encapsulate the entire reality as envisaged in Sufi metaphysics. The different "presences" signify the manner in which the Divine Essence becomes determined at various levels of manifestation. Generally speaking, they are as follows: *hāhūt* (Divine Self), *lāhūt* (Divine Names and Qualities), *jabarūt* (the archangelic world), *malakūt* (the imaginal world), *mulk* (the physical world) and/or the level of the perfect human. It should be noted that other terminologies such as *dhāt*, *aḥadiyya*, *wāḥidiyya* etc. may also be used to account for the various Divine Presences. This doctrine is expressed with a slight variation by practically all the important members of the School of Ibn ᶜArabī. For a detailed historical analysis of this doctrine, see William Chittick, "The Five Divine Presences: From al-Qūnawī to al-Qayṣarī," *The Muslim World* 72 (1982), 107-128.

[943] The word '*insān*' in the phrase '*al-insān al-kāmil*' could be misleading at times, as it tends to evoke a 'superman image', whereas it reality far transcends the function of the terrestrial human.

ilāhiyya) belong to the particularity of the human state (*nashʾa-yi insāniyya*). Also, [since the human state] has a relationship with all other realities, it is named human… It is through him that the Real (God) sees His creation.[944]

For Thānavī, it is clear that such "comprehensiveness" of the perfect human as attributed to the human self can only be gleaned through mystical unveiling (*kashf*), and not through any form of rational analysis. He also gives reasons why humans are called human, which, according to him, is due to their possessing the 'comprehensive state' (*nashʾa-yi ʿāmm*).[945] This 'comprehensive state' contains all the divine realities as they are manifested in the cosmos. And it is through such a 'comprehensive state' that humans can relate themselves to all other beings in the cosmos. Moreover, Thānavī also alludes to the teleological significance of the perfect human, and that is that it is through him/her that God looks at His creation. Before we explain fully what this means, it would be helpful to elaborate why humans are called 'vicegerent' (*khalīfa*):

> He is called a vicegerent because he is supposed to act as the custodian of the rest of creation, just like the king who guards his treasures. God's attribute of the guardian of creation is bequeathed to human so that he would safeguard nature (lit. cosmos). The world (*dunyā*) should remain guarded as long as the perfect human exists.[946]

Thus Thānavī maintains that humans have the function of stewardship in relation to nature (i.e. the rest of creation other than God). Humans are God's vicegerent on earth because they are charged with the guardianship of the cosmos, suggesting that it is their duty to safeguard the order of nature and maintain balance in the cosmos.[947] It is *as though* the human being is supposed to play the role of God as King on earth in the absence of the latter. This is so because a vicegerent must possess the attributes of the one she represents, otherwise she is an imperfect vicegerent. That is why Thānavī asserts that the world should remain guarded as long as there are perfect humans in it.[948] Needless to say, such an assertion of the stewardship of nature makes sense if only one takes into account the human self's cosmic dimension as one of the modalities of the perfect human.

As stated earlier, the perfect human is the final cause or the *telos* of God's creation. It is through him/her that the meaning of the creation of the cosmos is fulfilled, since h/she becomes "the eye" with which God sees His creation.[949] As such, the full significance of the doctrine of the perfect human becomes more apparent when it is anchored within the spiritual economy of

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[944] Thānavī, *Khuṣūṣ al-kalim*, 17.

[945] Thānavī, *Khuṣūṣ al-kalim*, 17.

[946] Thānavī, *Khuṣūṣ al-kalim*, 19. Thānavī also mentions the tradition found in the *Muslim* that states "The Hour will not come so long as there are persons on earth saying: Allah, Allah…." According to Ibn ʿArabī, the purpose of this particular invocation is to make the presence (*istiḥḍār*) of the Named, i.e. Divine Reality concrete on earth. Thus, if no one is present to continue such a practice, the reason for the world's subsistence will come to an end. For Ibn ʿArabī's commentary on this *ḥadīth*, see Tayeb Chourief, *Spiritual Teachings of the Prophet* (Louisville, KY: Fons Vitae, 2011), 300-01.

[947] Thānavī, *Khuṣūṣ al-kalim*, 19. Unfortunately, Thānavī does not elaborate much on the notion the 'stewardship of nature,' which is a very relevant topic is in today's world due to the environmental crisis. For a rich documentation of Islamic environmentalism, see Richard C. Foltz (eds.), *Islam and Ecology: A Bestowed Trust* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press), ch. 1. However, Thānavī does have a treatise on 'animal ethics,' see Thānavī, *Irshād al-hāʾim fī ḥuqūq al-bahāʾim* (Delhi: Kutub Khāna Ashrafiyya, 1925).

[948] Thānavī, *Khuṣūṣ al-kalim*, 19.

[949] Thānavī, *Khuṣūṣ al-kalim*, 17.

Sufism. It is also in this context that the relationship between the individual self and the perfect human becomes all the more transparent. That is to say, from the vantage point of ordinary human experience, the cosmic and meta-cosmic dimensions of the perfect human may appear to be a farfetched ideal devoid of any practical significance. But that is precisely what Sufi masters such as Thānavī would deny because for them the spiritual philosophy of Sufism makes perfect sense when we understand the importance of the doctrine of the perfect human in spiritual life.[950] To wit, the goal of every spiritual traveler (*sālik*) is to transcend her lower self (*nafs*) through the mystical experience of annihilation (*fanāʾ*) so that when in the cases of the few such a culminating moment does occur, the Divine Self is able to reflect Its image in the polished mirror of the self, now empty of its individual content.[951] It is precisely at that moment that the individual self becomes the 'eye' with which the Divine sees His creation, i.e., when the individual self is transcended by the Divine Self. That is the reason Thānavī devotes pages to explicate the modalities of spiritual life leading to the culminating experience of '*fanāʾ*.'[952]

According to Sufis, the spiritual goal of *fanāʾ* is to cast off all such accidentalities, paving thereby the way for the realization of the cosmic and meta-cosmic dimensions of the individual self associated with the perfect human. So, it is plain that the perfect human is not to be confused with the 'individuality' of any particular human; rather it refers to the trans-historic and trans-generic reality lying at the center of the human state that can be actualized in different degrees by following a spiritual path.[953]

It is noteworthy that while many other contemporary thinkers such as Iqbāl sought to reconstruct or reform the traditional understanding of selfhood, Thānavī reasserted the mystico-metaphysical doctrine of the perfect human, which encapsulates the notion of the self in his mystical theology through its individual, cosmic and meta-cosmic dimensions. Also, Iqbāl's writings, unlike that of Thānavī's, show a thorough-going engagement with modern science and philosophy, bringing out their implications for the Muslim self.[954]

Situating Iqbāl and Iqbāl Studies

There are several notable difficulties when it comes to Iqbāl scholarship that seems to impede a serious academic study of his philosophical doctrines. In terms of scholarly attitude, there are two principal, interrelated approaches that one may identify in Iqbāl studies—'the adulatory approach' and 'the nativist approach'— both of which are equally problematic. As regards 'the adulatory approach,' the problem, as hinted in chapter 1, lies in overstating the novelty and brilliance of Iqbāl's thought (probably because it sounds modern and revolutionary), while 'the nativist approach' starts from the premise that Iqbāl's ideas must be defended and justified

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[950] For more information, see Muhammad Ajmal*, Muslim Contributions to Psychotherapy and Other Essays* (Islamabad: National Institute of Psychology, Quaid-i-Azam University, 1986), 44-45.

[951] I.e., the individuality of the ego-consciousness is transcended by a higher mode of consciousness. Mullā Ṣadrā brings out this point nicely in one of his Qurʾanic commentaries, see his *Tafsīr surāṭ al-jumuʿa*, 290, and ch. 3, 65ff.

[952] See section 5.4 of this chapter.

[953] This point is also brought out by Izutsu in his study of 'the perfect human' in the School of Ibn ʿArabī, see his *Sufism and Taoism*, 218-262.

[954] See for instance, *Muhammad Iqbal, The Reconstruction, passim*; *Stray Reflections: a Note-book of Allama Iqbal*. Edited by Dr. Javid Iqbal (Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publications, 2014); Soulaymane Diagne, *Islam et société ouverte, la fidélité et le mouvement dans la pensée de Muhammad Iqbal*. Paris: Maisonneuve & Larose, 2001 and Iqbal S. Sevea, *The Political Philosophy of Muhammad Iqbal* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014). For more details, see pp. 211ff.

against those whom he criticized because of his political importance in shaping the Muslim identity in the subcontinent. To give the reader a concrete sense of what I am talking about, let me provide a cluster of various scholarly pronouncements about Iqbāl's significance and intellectual contribution. In his survey of modern Muslim thought, Sir H. A. R. Gibb, one of the most famous orientalist scholars of Islam, concludes that "One looks in vain for any systematic analysis of new currents of thought in the Muslim world…the outstanding exception is... Sir Muhammad Iqbal [sic], who… faces outright the question of reformulating the basic ideas of Muslim theology."[955] Similarly, another equally respectable scholar of religion and Islam, W. C. Smith, asserts that "Although Iqbāl was no theologian, he wrought the most important and the most necessary revolution of modern times. For he made God immanent, not transcendent. For Islam, this is rank heresy; but for today it is the only salvation."[956] Fazlur Rahman, the great scholar of Islam from the Subcontinent, goes further and wrote: "The only philosopher of modern Islam is Sir Muhammad Iqbāl (d. 1938) who… seriously attempted to formulate a new metaphysics with due regards to the philosophical traditions of Islam."[957] But the Iqbāl scholar Riffat Hassan surpasses them all by claiming that in her judgement, Iqbāl "is the most outstanding poet-philosopher of the world of Islam, and probably of the world in general, since the death of his *murshid* (spiritual guide) Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi (b. 1207) in 1273 [sic].[958] In a similar vein, other scholars such as Ebrahim Moosa opine that Iqbāl "was fully aware of how Muslim mystics, philosophers, and the pious in every age forged a notion of the self," as "he frequently referred to al-Ghazali, Ibn Rushd (Averroes), Rumi, Kant, Hegel, and Nietzsche [sic]…"[959] It appears as though matters are relatively straightforward from Moosa's standpoint. That is, in order to show that one has in-depth knowledge of a given tradition, all one has to do is quote various authors copiously. Although this might sound patently simplistic and one-sided in the context of critical academic scholarship, it does seem to have gained much currency in 'nativist' scholarship—especially works on Iqbāl that come out from the subcontinent—in which Iqbāl's authority on the Islamic tradition is accepted without question and he is given the merits of being an outstanding scholar of Islamic intellectual thought.[960] In particular, both western and

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[955] Hamilton A. R. Gibb, *Modern Trends in Islam* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1947), ix-x.

[956] W. C. Smith, *Modern Islam in India: A Social Analysis* (Delhi: Usha, 1985), 122.

[957] Rahman, "Iqbāl and Modern Muslim Thought," 43.

[958] Riffat Hassan, "Introduction," in Chad Hillier and B. Koshul (eds.), *Muhammad Iqbal: Essays on the Reconstruction of Religious Thought* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015), 1. Also, Sheila McDonough: "There is nothing in the Muslim or the Western tradition that can quite be compared to Iqbāl's poetic enterprise." *Idem.*, *The Authority of the Past: A Study of Three Muslim Modernists* (Chambersburgh, PA: American Academy of Religion, 1970), 17.

[959] Ebrahim Moosa, "The Human Person in Iqbāl's Thought," in Chad Hillier and B. Koshul (eds.), *Muhammad Iqbal: Essays on the Reconstruction of Religious Thought*, 17. Ebrahim Moosa is not alone in passing such judgments. For similar opinions, see also Muntasir Mir, *Iqbāl: Makers of Islamic Civilization* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2006), 142-46; "Muhammad Iqbāl (d. 1938): The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam," in *Oxford Handbook of Islamic Philosophy*, edited by Khalid El-Rouayheb and Sabine Schmidtke (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 608-627, and the introduction by Saeed Sheikh, in Iqbāl, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought*, xxxiiff.

[960] An example of the nativist approach is Muḥammad Rafī al-Dīn's mammoth *Ḥikmat-i Iqbāl* in which he says: "After years of Iqbal's study, I came to the conclusion that his concepts are scientifically and rationally quite spontaneous, forceful, correct and irrefutable…In other words, my conclusion was that Iqbāl's philosophy, like all other different main philosophies of the world, is potentially a complete and continuous philosophy of man and universe the distinguishing feature of which is that its concepts are intellectually and logically ordered and organized which makes it effective and convincing…" Muḥammad Rafī al-Dīn, *Ḥikmat-i Iqbāl: Kalām-i Iqbāl kī rawshanī mayn Iqbāl kī falsafa-yi khūdī kī mufaṣṣal awr munaẓẓam tashrīḥ* (Lahore: ʿIlmī Kutub Khāna, 1968), 1-2; translated by S. D. Mahmud, *The Philosophy of Iqbāl*, (Lahore: Iqbal Academy, 2016), 15-16.

indigenous scholars of Iqbāl have rarely take the trouble to 'assess' his thought vis-à-vis his Muslim predecessors, with whose thought, they claim, he was 'so familiar.' This is all the more important in light of Iqbāl's characteristic inflated remarks on various aspects of Islamic intellectual thought, of which examples will soon be provided. Time and again the Iqbālian corpus shows that he misconstrues various metaphysical concepts by reading Western ideas into Islamic thought, and consequently, fails to see the latter (i.e. the Islamic tradition) on its own terms. In fact, Iqbāl himself admits that most of his "life has been spent in the study of European philosophy and that viewpoint has become" his "second nature." So "consciously or unconsciously" he studies "the realities and truths of Islam from the same point of view," which he has "experienced… many a time…"[961] Regardless of the explanations one might bring for the above statement, the fact remains that Iqbāl's writings are studded with analyses that only seem to confirm his confession (see below for evidence). More importantly, such a statement calls for an overall reassessment of Iqbāl's thought vis-à-vis the tradition to which he belongs.

I hope it has become clear why it would be problematic to accept Iqbāl's various claims about the Islamic tradition without a healthy dose of caution and skepticism. However, my goal in this chapter is not to paint Iqbāl's thought in negative light; rather my objective is to critically assess Iqbāl's ideas against the backdrop of his Muslim predecessors and contemporaries such as Ṣadrā, Walī Allāh and Thānavī, in order to better understand and evaluate his novel conception of selfhood and subjectivity. Moreover, such a reassessment would throw critical light on Iqbāl's reformist project of 'reconstructing' the entire gamut of Islamic thought and, in particular, on his theory of the self—the *axis mundi* of his philosophy. It is however imperative that such an undertaking be accomplished in several sequential steps. That is to say, one must first pave the ground for a comprehensive analysis of the self by elucidating Iqbāl's intellectual context and his method of engaging his Muslim predecessors. Accordingly, I will first provide a sketch of Iqbāl's life and education, and then shed light on his rationale for 'rethinking' the self in Islam.

By all accounts Muḥammad Iqbāl was a revolutionary intellectual in the history of Islamic thought.[962] Coming at a crucial juncture of history in colonial India, Iqbāl, who was at once a poet, philosopher, social commentator and part-time politician, wrote on a wide array of topics ranging from intellectual history and economics to science, philosophy of religion and public policy.[963] Iqbāl, whose ancestry traces back to a Brahmin lineage, was born in 1294/1877 to a devout Sufi family,[964] and received his early education and tutelage under Sayyid Mīr Ḥasan

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[961] Muḥammad Iqbāl, *Shikwa wa jawāb-i shikwa* (Complaint and Answer): *Iqbāl's Dialogue with Allah*, trans. by Khushwant Singh (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1981), 8.

[962] The information concerning Iqbāl's biography is based on the following sources: Iqbal Singh, *The Ardent Pilgrim: An Introduction to the Life and Work of Muḥammad Iqbāl* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997), 5-66; Annemerie Schimmel *Gabriel's Wings: A Study into the Religious Ideas of Sir Muḥammad Iqbāl* (Lahore: Iqbal Academy Pakistan, 1989), 1-87; Iqbal S. Sevea, *The Political Philosophy of Muḥammad Iqbāl* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 1-35. For the chronology of Iqbāl's works, see Khurram Shafique, *Iqbāl: An Illustrated Biography* (Lahore, Iqbal Academy, 2006), 203-208. For a detailed record of works on Iqbāl's life and thought as well as his translations into various eastern and western languages see Rafi'ud-Din Hashmi, *Kitābiyat-i Iqbāl* (Lahore: Iqbal Academy, 1977).

[963] Iqbāl's influence on the Islamic world has been substantial. This can be partially gauged from a recent six-hundred page book in Arabic on his philosophy by Ḥasan Ḥanafī—perhaps the leading Arab thinker on Islam and modernity. See Ḥasan Ḥanafī, *Muḥammad Iqbāl: Faylasūf al-dhātīyah* (Beirut: Dār al-Madār al-Islāmī, 2009). See also, Muhammad El-Muhammady, "Iqbāl and the Malay World," *Intellectual Discourse* 10.2 (2002): 155-169; Mir, *Iqbāl,* 142-47.

[964] The following account narrated by Iqbāl to his close friend Atiya Begum whom he met in London illustrates the nature of Iqbāl's mystical family background: "Seeking knowledge was inherent in the family, and for this purpose

(d. 1347/1929) in Sialkot in present-day Pakistan.[965] Mīr Ḥasan, along with Ḍagh (d. 1323/1905), Shiblī Nuᶜmānī (d. 1332/1914), and Thomas Arnold (d. 1930) were Iqbāl's early mentors who cultivated in him an interest in philosophy, Persian and Urdū poetry, and a keen sense of history and the Islamic past. After obtaining an MA in philosophy in 1899 from the well-known Government College of Lahore, Iqbāl taught history, philosophy, and economics at a college in Lahore for a while, before travelling to Europe where he would eventually study philosophy at Cambridge University under the prominent idealist philosopher, J. M. E. McTaggart. In three years Iqbāl completed his higher studies and graduated from Cambridge University with a BA, qualified at the bar from London's famous Lincoln's Inn, and earned a doctorate in Arabic (Philology)[966] from Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München in Germany. At Cambridge, Iqbāl also benefitted from the lectures and research companionship of the famous scholars of Sufism and Persian literature E. G. Browne and R. A. Nicholson. Iqbāl was knighted by the British Crown in 1922 for his literary accomplishments, and visited Europe twice more in 1931 and 1932, when he met a number of significant personalities such as the evolutionist philosopher of life, Henry Bergson, French scholar of al-Ḥallāj, Louis Massignon and the Spanish scholar of Ibn ᶜArabī, Miguel A. Palacios, and also delivered a lecture at the fifty-fourth session of the Aristotelian Society in London.[967]

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his father had spent several months in seclusion under the guidance of a saint and all that was known to him was imparted to his young son, Iqbal [sic], not quite equipped for the responsibility of receiving higher knowledge… He also related an incident which occurred when he was eleven. In the dead of night while asleep, he Iqbal [sic], was disturbed by some noise and saw his mother going down the steps… Iqbal approached her and saw his father sitting in the open space with a halo-like light surrounding him, and as he tried to reach him his mother stopped him, and with a little persuasion sent him back to bed. Early in the morning when Iqbal awoke his first impulse was to run to his father and inquire what he was doing in the dead of night… Iqbal heard his father say, 'A caravan from Kabul that was approaching the city is in great trouble… This caravan has been travelling with an ailing person whose condition has become serious which prevents their journey further, so I must go immediately to render necessary assistance.' Thereafter his father gathered some substance, and set out in their direction… As they approached the caravan the father got in touch with the leader of the group and asked to be taken to the sick person. This so surprised the man that out of awe they escorted him without inquiring as to how he knew about the illness. When they came into the presence of the ailing man, Iqbal's father found his condition very serious as the horrible disease he was suffering from had eaten up portions of his limbs, and the body seemed to be slowly destroyed by the disease. He got some stuff in the shape of ashes, and smeared the affected parts with it. Having finished all that he had to do, he assured the party that the patient would live and be healed of his ailment, but that only God had the power to replace the lost limbs. It did not seem as if they believed their benefactor and Iqbal was himself sceptical about it, but the next twenty-four hours saw improvement in the stricken man's condition… A substantial fee was offered and refused, and so they came away. Some days later the caravan reached the town and the ailing man was found cured of his trouble. This incident Iqbal related to me a few days after I met him in Europe—where I had gone to acquire the higher aspects of some branches of knowledge." She also relates that "One can understand him [Iqbal] better in the light of these facts and can follow many ideas that may appear obscure [sic]." Atiya Begum, *Iqbal*, edited by Rauf Parekh (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 4-5. Indeed Iqbāl never completely rejected the cognitive value of mystical experience, although he was critical of Sufism. See Iqbāl, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought*, 17-19, 150.

[965] On *Sayyid Mīr Ḥasan,* see Sayyid Maḥmūd Ḥusayn, *Shams al-ᶜulamāʾ Mawlavī Sayyid Mīr Ḥasan: ḥayāt u afkār* (Lahore: Iqbal Academy, 2007), 10ff.;

[966] Although Iqbāl applied for a PhD in philosophy, he was not granted one, see Shafique, *Iqbāl: An Illustrated Biography*, 44.

[967] This lecture, entitled "Is Religion Possible," forms the seventh chapter of the Reconstruction. The lecture was published in the said *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* XXXIII (1933): 47-64, as well as in *The Muslim Revival* (Lahore), I/iv (1932): 329-49.

The Crisis of Modern Subjectivity

As we saw with Thānavī in the first part of this chapter, Iqbāl's context was also shaped by the forces of colonial modernity, especially the struggle for self-definition that had occupied the minds of subcontinental Muslims. Since I have already discussed how various Muslim groups were trying to define 'Muslimness' at the time, in this section I will focus on Iqbāl's own attitude toward the changing circumstances of his time that will explain his motivation for a new articulation of the self. Broadly speaking, Iqbāl aimed to instill self-confidence in the Muslim mind under the colonial rule. He felt that Muslim self-confidence was severely undermined by both colonial rule and centuries of intellectual inactivity.[968] The medicine that he prescribed to cure the souls of Muslims is a novel concept of selfhood based on self-affirmation and dynamism.

In the beginning of this chapter, I noted how Thānavī described the upheavals of his time as a 'new age' (ʿaṣr-i jadīd).[969] In the case of Iqbāl, who was well-versed in the Hegelian tradition, he uses the term 'modernity' to speak of the crisis that Muslims and others need to be aware of. For instance, in the *Reconstruction*, he articulates the global nature of 'modern crisis:'

> Surely the present moment is one of great crisis in the history of modern culture. The modern world stands in need of biological renewal. And religion, which in its higher manifestations is neither dogma, nor priesthood, nor ritual, can alone ethically prepare the modern man for the burden of the great responsibility which the advancement of modern science necessarily involves, and restore to him that attitude of faith which makes him capable of winning a personality here and retaining it hereafter. It is only by rising to a fresh vision of his origin and future, his whence and whither, that man will eventually triumph over a society motivated by an inhuman competition, and a civilization which has lost its spiritual unity by its inner conflict of religious and political values.[970]

In this text, we are told that modern humanity faces a crisis because of the progress in modern science, which challenges the conventional understanding and interpretation of religion. This situation is exacerbated by unrestrained economic completion and the conflict of 'church and

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[968] As will be seen, Iqbāl's assessment of the Islamic intellectual tradition was based on the problematic (and now-proven untenable) Orientalist thesis that the Islamic philosophical tradition ceased to be of relevance after the famous attack of al-Ghazālī on the philosophers in the eleventh century.

[969] See pp. 192-95.

[970] Iqbāl, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought*, 149. In a long and important reflection entitled "Response to questions raised by Pandit J. L. Nehru," Iqbāl returns to the notion of an appeal to modernity which for him is the internal movement of a society even if it is also in order to respond to the pressure of modern ideas. It is thus that he considers, on the one hand, the personal history of modernist intellectuals in the Islamic world, like al-Afghānī and Sayyid Aḥmad Khān, on the other, the transformations in Turkey. Just as, he declares, we cannot say that these intellectuals were Westernized when they were in the first place the product of the old traditional school, we also— and he is responding directly to a statement of Nehru's—cannot say that the modernization process in Turkey meant that this country had ceased to be Muslim. Whether it is a matter of the necessity of also having a materialist perspective on the world, or other questions such as the use of Turkish language written in Roman characters or the abolition of the caliphate with the separation of Church and State, there is nothing in these, Iqbāl says, that cannot be referred, ultimately, to an internal principle of movement, to the *ijtihād* of an Islamic country. See Souleymane Bachir Diagne, *Islam and Open Society: Fidelity and Movement in the Philosophy of Muḥammad Iqbā*, translated by Melissa McMahon (Dakar: CODESRIA, 2010), 40-42. Cf. *Speeches and Statements of Iqbāl,* 111-12, 130-134.

state' or the separation of religion and politics. In the same passage, Iqbāl also notes that neither the technique of Sufism, nor nationalism, nor Marxist atheism can cure the ills of a despairing humanity. In Iqbāl's view, the remedy to this desperate situation lies in offering a 'fresh' articulation of one's origin and return, i.e. religious metaphysics. At any rate, since Iqbāl's attitude to modernity is complex, and since much of the motivation of articulating new conception of selfhood results from this *attitude*, we need to look at what he considers as threats of modernity. Iqbāl writes:

> Thus, wholly overshadowed by the results of his intellectual activity, the modern man has ceased to live soulfully, i.e. from within. In the domain of thought he is living in open conflict with himself; and in the domain of economic and political life he is living in open conflict with others. He finds himself unable to control his ruthless egoism and his infinite gold-hunger which is gradually killing all higher striving in him and bringing him nothing but life-weariness… In the wake of his systematic materialism has at last come that paralysis of energy which Huxley apprehended and deplored. The condition of things in the East is no better. The technique of medieval mysticism by which religious life, in its higher manifestations, developed itself both in the East and in the West has now practically failed… No wonder then that the modern Muslim in Turkey, Egypt, and Persia is led to seek fresh sources of energy in the creation of new loyalties, such as patriotism and nationalism which Nietzsche described as "sickness and unreason", and "the strongest force against culture."[971]

No doubt, in the above Iqbāl paints a very dark picture of the modern world in which the modern human has lost her sense of higher metaphysical purpose.[972] It is important to note that according

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[971] Cf. Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*: *With a Prelude in German Rhymes and an Appendix of Songs* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), book V, where Nietzsche denounces "nationalism and race-hatred (as) a scabies of the heart and blood poisoning." See also his *The Twilight of the Idols* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1964), Ch. viii, where he considers nationalism to be "the strongest force against culture."
The following poem also expresses Iqbāl's criticism of the modern human:
Love disappeared; mind stung him like a snake;
He did not learn how to put the intellect (*ᶜaql*) under vision's (*naẓar*) will.
He tracks the orbits of the stars, yet cannot
navigate through his own thoughts (*afkār*).
Entangled in the labyrinth (*pīch*) of his philosophy (*ḥikmat*)
He cannot discern good from evil;
Absorbed so deeply in the investigation of the sun's rays,
He cannot bring daylight to life's dark night (*shab-i tārīk*).
Muḥammad Iqbāl, *Ḍarb-i kalīm*, in *Kulliyāt-i Iqbāl Urdū* (Lahore: Iqbal Academy, 1994), 564, trans. Syed Akbar Shah, modified, in *The Rod of Moses* (Lahore: Iqbal Academy, 1983), 40.
[972] There is a vast literature concerning 'modernity,' which itself is a contested category, but some of the major studies that may be of relevance to our present concern include, *inter alia*, Jürgen Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourses of Modernity: Twelve Lectures,* (trans.) F. Lawrence (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1987); Anthony Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990); Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993); Fredric Jameson, *A Singular Modernity: Essay on the Ontology of the Present* (London and New York: Verso, 2002); R. W. Hefner, "Multiple Modernities: Christianity, Islam, and Hinduism in a Globalizing Age," *Annual Review of Anthropology,* 27 (1998): 83–104. Charles Taylor, "Two Theories of Modernity," *The International Scope* 3.5 (2001): 1-9; Bruce Lawrence, "Modernity" in *Key Themes for the Study of Islam*, (ed.) Jamal J. Elias (Oxford: Oneworld, 2010) 245-262; Enrique Dussel, "Beyond Eurocentrism: The World-System and the Limits of Modernity", in Fredric Jameson and Masao Miyoshi (eds.), *The Cultures of Globalization* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1998), 3-31.

to Iqbāl, such a bleak picture of modernity has led modern Muslims to seek ideological inspiration in 'nationalism,' which he rejects *in toto*.[973] Moreover, Iqbāl thinks that the condition of modernity has caused the Muslim youth to be "disappointed of a purely religious method of spiritual renewal which alone brings us into touch with the everlasting fountain of life and power by expanding our thought and emotion."[974] Thus, "the modern man with his philosophies of criticism and scientific specialism finds himself in a strange predicament," and "his Naturalism has given him an unprecedented control over the forces of Nature, but has robbed him of faith in his own future."[975] At this point it would be helpful to note that Iqbāl is not trying to articulate a 'theory' of modernity.[976] Rather, he is expressing what Foucault calls 'an attitude of modernity' that is also shared by other modernist Muslims such as Iqbāl's predecessor Sayyid Aḥmad Khān and Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī.[977] In general, these modernist thinkers share the observation that

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[973] "The essential difference," Iqbāl maintains, "between the Muslim Community and other Communities of the world consists in our peculiar conception of nationality. It is not the unity of language or country or the identity of economic interest that constitutes the basic principle of our nationality. It is because we all believe in a certain view of the universe, and participate in the same historical tradition that we are members of the society founded by the Prophet of Islam. Islam abhors all material limitations, and bases its nationality on a purely abstract idea, objectified in a potentially expansive group of concrete personalities." Iqbāl, *Speeches, Writings and Statements*, 121; Cf. Sevea, *Political Philosophy of Muhammad Iqbal,* 126ff. See also Faisal Devji's recent reflections on Iqbāl's political thought vis-à-vis nationalism and liberalism, *idem.*, Illiberal Islam, in Faisal Devji and Zaheer Kazmi (eds.), *Islam after Liberalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 65-90.

[974] Iqbāl, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought*, 148-49.

[975] Iqbāl, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought*, 147.

[976] It is to be noted that the word 'modern,' which has a long history, in its Latin form *modernus* was used for the first time in the late 5th century in order to flesh out the 'Christian present' from the 'Roman past.' With varying degree, the word appears intermittently to refer to an epoch that, although relates the present to the past of antiquity, emphasizes a "transition from the old to the new." However, in the wake of the French Enlightenment, the word 'modern' came to characterize a belief in the infinite progress of knowledge and in the gradual amelioration of social and moral betterment with the passage of time. According to Habermas, the 19th century romantic modernism simply makes an abstract opposition between tradition (conceived as the past) and the present. In any event, the dominant understanding of modernity, as Habermas stresses, that has gained ascendency since the 19th century is the idea of the 'newness of the age.' Jürgen Habermas, Modernity versus Postmodernity, *New German Critique* 22 (1981): 3-14 at 9. The 18th century Enlightenment project of modernity consisted of developing objective science, universal morality and law, and autonomous art, according to its inner logic. Habermas, *Modernity*, 3-4.

[977] Concerning al-Afghānī, Iqbāl says the following: "The man, however, who fully realized the importance and immensity of the task, and whose deep insight into the inner meaning of the history of Muslim thought and life, combined with a broad vision engendered by his wide experience of men and manners, would have made him a living link between the past and the future, was Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī. If his indefatigable but divided energy could have devoted itself entirely to Islam as a system of human belief and conduct, the world of Islam, intellectually speaking, would have been on a much more solid ground today." Iqbāl, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought*, 78. Cf. Farzin Vahdat, *Islamic Ethos and the Specter of Modernity* (London: Anthem Press, 2015), in which he attempts to account for modernity in the Muslim world and analyzes the discourse of prominent Muslim thinkers and political leaders such as Iqbāl, Abū al-Aʿlā Mawdūdī, Sayyid Quṭb, and Mohammed Arkoun, among others. Ali Zaidi also investigates a number of prominent Muslim thinkers and their close engagement and reconciliation between religious faith and social experience. See Ali Zaidi, *Islam, Modernity, and the Human Sciences* (NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011). For a thematic study of various topics concerning modernity, see Muhammad Khalid Masud et al. (eds.), *Islam and Modernity Key Issues and Debates* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009). For an excellent study on the notion of an Islamic modernity, see Samira Haj, *Reconfiguring Islamic Tradition: Reform, Rationality and Modernity* (Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2008). For some general literature on Islamic modernists, see Nikki Keddie, *An Islamic Response to Imperialism: Political and Religious Writings of Sayyid Jamal al-Din al-Afghani* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968); John O. Voll, "Renewal and Reformation in the Mid-Twentieth Century: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi and Religion in the

Islamic societies have stagnated after the classical period as a result of juridical petrification or the "closing of the gate of *ijtihād*,"[978] and dogmatic rigidity regarding theological doctrines.[979] Moreover, modernist intellectuals also share what Paul Ricoeur termed 'hermeneutic of suspicion' toward pre-modern texts and authorities.[980] Thus, it would be more appropriate to talk about an 'attitude of modernity' rather than asking what 'modernity' means or if it exists at all.

In his important essay "What is Enlightenment?" Michel Foucault explains the phrase 'attitude of modernity' "as a mode of relating to contemporary reality; a voluntary choice made by certain people; in the end, a way of thinking and feeling; a way, too, of acting and behaving that at one and the same time marks a relation of belonging and presents itself as a task."[981] Foucault likens this to the Greek idea of *ethos*. Drawing on Baudelaire, Foucault continues in describing 'attitude of modernity' in terms of a "consciousness of the discontinuity of time: a break with tradition, a feeling of novelty, of vertigo in the face of the passing moment."[982]

As noted before, Iqbāl's 'attitude of modernity' is complex and marked by internal tensions and contradictions. On the one hand, he admires modern science, but on the other he is critical of its 'naturalism.'[983] Likewise, although he thinks the techniques and metaphysics of

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1950s," *The Muslim World* 89.3/4 (1999): 245-259; Ana B. Soage, "Ḥasan al-Bannā and Sayyid Quṭb: Continuity or Rupture?" *The Muslim World* 99.2 (2009): 294-311.

[978] As with many contemporary discourses on Islam, the issue of the 'closing' of the gate of *ijtihād* is marred by ambiguities of all sorts. Coupled with this is the fact that most studies on the topic do not distinguish sufficiently between the various 'categories' of *ijtihād* before passing a pronouncement on the closing or validity of *ijtihād*. Thus these studies/discussions suffer from a category mistake. The situation is made worse by unconventional definition of *ijtihād* that has been promulgated by Islamic reformists and revivalists such as Muhammad Iqbāl, who defines it as "the principle of movement in Islam" which is also shared by other like-minded thinkers. Now ijtihād in legal parlance generally implies engaging directly with the sources of Islamic law without being delimited by legal precedent. As such, it is unclear how what significance *ijtihād* would have had for a philosopher, logician, astronomer, mystic, and so on. On the other hand, such an unconventional understanding of *ijtihād* reinforces the Orientalist view that Islamic intellectual thought was marked by stagnation in the post-classical period, and that *taqlīd* was the order of the day. For a wide-ranging critique of this debate, see the excellent recent study by El-Rouayheb, *Islamic Intellectual History in the Seventeenth Century*, 173ff. and 357-58. On the misgivings concerning the closing of the gate of the *ijtihād*, see the influential studies by Wael B. Hallaq, "Was the Gate of Ijtihad Closed?" *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 16:1 (1984): 3-41; "On the Origins of the Controversy about the Existence of Mujtahids and the Gate of Ijtihad," *Studia Islamica* 63 (1986): 129-141. For an earlier orientalist assessment on the topic, see W. M. Watt, "The Closing of the Door of Ijtihād," *Orientalia Hispanica*, I (Leiden: Brill, 1974), 675-678; and Joseph Schacht, *An Introduction to Islamic Law* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), 70-71.

[979] For more information on this, see Bachir, *Islam and Open Society*, 51-53.

[980] On this particular expression, see Alison Scott-Baumann, *Ricœur and the Hermeneutics of Suspicion* (London, New York: Continuum, 2009), 1-30.

[981] Michel Foucault, "What is Enlightenment?" in P. Rabinow (ed.), *The Foucault Reader* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), 32-50, at 38.

[982] Foucault, "What is Enlightenment?," 38. From another vantage point, the Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor puts forth two different theories of modernity. According to Taylor, 'modernity' in Western culture can be understood as *cultural* or *acultural*. Cultural modernity sees the difference between the present and the past as being applicable across different civilizations, each with their own culture. On the contrary, acultural modernity is premised on the notion that the change from earlier centuries to today involves the demise of a 'traditional' society and the rise of the 'modern.' Another understanding of modernity worth noting is the one argued by literary theorist Fredric Jameson, for whom it is a 'narrative category,' and not a philosophical concept. For Jameson, modernity represents the paradoxical idea of both a break from the past as well as its own emergence as a 'well-defined period' (i.e. becoming a tradition unto itself) over time. As we shall see, modernity as a 'narrative category' would be helpful in some respects while describing the circumstantial conditions in which Iqbāl and his generation were active. Charles Taylor, *Two Theories of Modernity*, 1; Fredric Jameson, *Singular Modernity*, 31.

[983] On Iqbāl's remarks on naturalism, see his *Reconstruction of Religious Thought*, 147.

Sufism have failed to provide any viable alternative to the crisis of modern subjectivity, he goes on to defend the cognitive value of 'mystical experience.'[984] Likewise, he calls upon the ʿulamāʾ to be open to *ijtihād* and modern education on the one hand, but does not hesitate to label them 'modern' in the sense of being influenced by the West, if he cannot come to an agreement with them, as is shown by his famous debate with al-Madānī over Muslim politics.[985] Above all, Iqbāl does not accept a concept of modernity that foresees a complete break with the past or rejection of the tradition as a whole. As he says:

> The task before the modern Muslim is, therefore, immense. He has to rethink the whole system of Islam without completely breaking with the past. Perhaps the first Muslim who felt the urge of a new spirit in him was Shāh Walī Allāh of Delhi…[986] The only course open to us is to approach modern knowledge with a respectful but independent attitude and to appreciate the teachings of Islam in the light of that knowledge, even though we may be led to differ from those who have gone before us.[987]

The above text would be crucial while navigating through Iqbāl's reformulation of the self. Although, we have seen nothing in Walī Allāh that would convince us to believe that he felt "the urge of a new spirit," Iqbāl conveniently aligns himself with Walī Allāh in a manner that would be unfamiliar to him. Unlike Walī Allāh, Iqbāl proposes that the teachings of Islam be understood and interpreted "in light of modern knowledge"—a feature that he shares with other modernists.[988] I will come back to the issue of reconciling 'modern science' with traditional

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[984] See e.g. Iqbāl, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought*, 17-19, 150.

[985] From Iqbāl's vantage point, al-Madānī was the very prototype of the ʿulamāʾ who did not understand modern ideas, in this case, nationalism, and were thus providing uniformed counsel to their followers. Rather surprisingly though, Iqbāl responds to al-Madānī by comparing the latter's position to that of the Aḥmadīs, against whom the Deobandīs had been lashing out for many years. Adopting the modern ideology of nationalism was tantamount to admitting, Iqbāl says, that Islam was imperfect and needed something new, much like the Aḥmadīs thought that Islam had needed a new prophet. It is to be noted modernists like Iqbāl have often castigated the ʿulamāʾ for failing to change with the times. So Iqbāl's upbraiding of al-Madānī and his likes for being too willing to change is rather ironic. See Muhammad Q. Zaman, *Islam in Pakistan: A History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018), 38; cf. Sevea, *Political Philosophy of Muḥammad Iqbāl*, 133-55.

[986] According to Richard Khuri, the Indian sub-continent has been the place of emergence, for the modern era, of this kind of attitude. Richard Khuri thus points out that it is after Shāh Walī Allāh Islamic intellectuals learned to make the distinction between the eternal principles of the Quran and the specific injunctions derived from these. See Richard K. Khuri, *Freedom, Modernity and Islam: Toward a Creative Synthesis* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1998), 337. However, my study of Walī Allāh's selfhood shows exactly the opposite, see ch. 3.

[987] Iqbāl, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought*, 78. One wonders if such a statement (i.e. interpreting Islam in light of modern knowledge) is self-contradictory because Iqbāl castigates Islamic philosophers for interpreting the Qur'an in light of the then 'scientific knowledge,' i.e. Greek philosophy: "Not realizing that the spirit of the Qur'an was essentially anti-classical, and putting full confidence in Greek thinkers, their first impulse was to understand the Qur'an in the light of Greek philosophy. In view of the concrete spirit of the Qur'an, and the speculative nature of Greek philosophy which enjoyed theory and was neglectful of fact, this attempt was foredoomed to failure. And it is what follows their failure that brings out the real spirit of the culture of Islam, and lays the foundation of modern culture in some of its most important aspects." Iqbāl, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought*, 102-3.

[988] Majid Fakhry expresses his frustration over the role that science holds in Islamic modernist thought. In particular reference to Iqbāl because of his universality of spirit as well as erudition of Western thought, Fakhry denounces what he considers to be the mistake of the modernists in general: "By joining the Islamic or Quranic conception of man and the world to the current stage of scientific development, as Iqbal did particularly, the modernists make a … very dangerous mistake, since they subordinate the religious truth of Islam to the doubtful truth of a scientific phase. And if the history of scientific progress teaches us anything, it is the ephemeral nature of such scientific phases,

teachings, since this will be one of our hermeneutical tools to uncover Iqbāl's theory of the self that shows his attempt to reconcile the best of the both worlds (i.e. traditional understanding and the needs of the modern age), thereby generating further controversies. In any event, the Iqbāl that wants to preserve some form of continuity with the past, also maintains that "We must criticize our values, perhaps transvaluate them; and if necessary, create new worths; since the immortality of a people, as Nietzsche has so happily put, depends upon the incessant creation of worths."[989] This is because although "things certainly bear the stamp of divine manufacturing, their meaning is through and through human."[990] Yet strikingly, his views on women or their education does not differ much from the author of *Bihishtī Zīwar*, i.e. Thānavī:

> I must, however, frankly admit that I am not an advocate of absolute equality between man and woman. It appears that Nature has allotted different functions to them, and a right performance of these functions is equally indispensable for the health and prosperity of the human family. The so called 'emancipation of the western woman' necessitated by western individualism and the peculiar economic situation produced by an unhealthy competition, is an experiment, in my opinion, likely to fail, not without doing incalculable harm, and creating extremely intricate social problems. Nor is the higher education of women likely to lead to any desirable consequences, in so far, at least, as the birth rate of a community is concerned. Experience has already shown that the economic emancipation of women in the west has not, as was expected, materially extended the production of wealth.[991]

Still, Iqbāl was not totally against women's education. Like Thānavī, he advocates a sound religious education for women that would include general knowledge of Muslim history, domestic economy, and hygiene. In his view, this will enable them to give a degree of intellectual companionship to their husband, and to successfully perform the duties of motherhood, which is the principal function of a woman. Moreover, according to Iqbāl, the woman is the principal depository of the religious idea, which is why in the interests of a continuous national life, they must be given education.[992]

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whether they are associated with the venerable names of Aristotle or Ptolemy or with the modern pioneers such as Newton, Eddington or Einstein." Majid Fakhry, *A History of Islamic Philosophy* (New York: Columbia University Pres, 1983), 355.

[989] Muḥammad Iqbāl, *Speeches, Writings and Statements of Iqbāl*, edited by Latif Ahmad Sherwani (Lahore: Iqbal Academy, 1955), 121.

[990] Iqbāl, *Speeches, Writings and Statements of Iqbāl*, 121.

[991] Iqbāl, *Speeches, Writings and Statements*, 133-34.

[992] Iqbāl, *Speeches, Writings and Statements*, 135. However, concerning Muslim education, his views differs from Deobandīs like Thānavī, as he says, "You know that the ethical training of the masses of our community is principally in the hands of a very inefficient class of Moulavies [sic] or public preachers the range of whose knowledge of Muslim History and Literature is extremely limited. A modern public teacher of morality and religion must be familiar with the great truths of History, Economics and Sociology besides being thoroughly conversant with the literature and thought of his own community. Such public teachers are the great need of the time. The Nadwa, the Aligarh College, the theological Seminary of Deoband, and other institutions of a similar type, working independently of one another, cannot meet this pressing demand. All these scattered educational forces should be organized into a central institution of a large purpose which may afford opportunities not only for the development of special abilities, but may also create the necessary type of culture for the modern Indian Muslim. A purely western ideal of education will be dangerous to the life of our community if it is to continue in an essentially Muslim community." Iqbāl, *Speeches, Writings and Statements*, 133.

One cannot fully understand Iqbāl's project of reimagining the self in Islam, without dealing with his views on modern science. When reading Iqbāl's works one gets the impression that he was fascinated with the latest theoretical advances of modern science. His article entitled "Self in the Light of Relativity" bears first-hand witness to this. Basing himself on a popular interpretation of Einstein's theory of Relativity, Iqbāl claims that Einstein's mathematical view of the universe completes the process of purification started by Hume, and, true to the spirit of Hume's criticism, banishes the concept of force altogether.[993] Moreover, according to Iqbāl, although physicists generally ignore metaphysics, Einstein's theory compels them to accept the fact that the knower is intimately related to the object known, and that the act of knowledge is a constitutive element in the objective reality.[994] In other words, given the results of Relativity, scientific realism about the external words, i.e. a world standing on its own independently of experiences, must be rejected. This is rather a surprising claim—one that would be hard to accept from Einstein's own viewpoint, as he clearly asserts realism and takes it as axiomatic when it comes to doing science.[995] Ironically, what Iqbāl says about Relativity actually confirms the famous double-slit experiment in Quantum mechanics and its implications regarding the intertwining relationship between the observer and the observed, which vexed Einstein until the very end of his life. In any event, Iqbāl's enthusiasm about Relativity did not stop him from asserting that in view of the principle of relativity, there must be some self to whom the world ceases to exist as a confronting 'other,' since the object confronting the subject is relative. Needless to say, such an inference is based on a rather simplistic, popular conception of Relativity. This is not the place to elaborate on Einstein's complex theory of Relativity, since that would take us too far afield. However, very briefly, it must be pointed out that Iqbāl makes no mention of the distinction between special and general relativity. More importantly, any understanding of general relativity—which is at stake here—must be based on Einstein's field equations and the 'differential geometry' (i.e. tensor calculus) used in them.[996] Moreover, one

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[993] Iqbāl, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought*, 156. Cf. Bertrand Russell, "Relativity: Philosophical Consequences," Section: 'Force and Gravitation', *Encyclopaedia Britannica,* XIX, 99.

[994] Muḥammad Iqbāl, "Self in the Light of Relativity," in *Discourses of Iqbāl*, compiled and edited by Shahid H. Razzaqi (Lahore: Ghulām ᶜAlī, 1979), 178.

[995] On Einstein's assumption of realism or a spatial separatability of an independent world, see Albert Einstein, "On the Method of Theoretical Physics," *Philosophy of Science* 1.2 (1934): 163-169 at 167, in which he says, "Our experience up to date justifies us in feeling sure that in Nature is actualized the ideal of mathematical simplicity. It is my conviction that pure mathematical construction enables us to discover the concepts and the laws connecting them which give us the key to the understanding of the phenomena of Nature." See also, Einstein, "Physik und Realität," *Journal of The Franklin Institute* 221 (1936): 313–347; Albert Einstein, Boris Podolsky and Nathan Rosen, "Can Quantum-Mechanical Description of Physical Reality Be Considered Complete?" *Physical Review* 47 (1935): 777–780. It is highly interesting to note that Iqbāl's contemporary, the Bengali poet Tagore met Einstein in 1930 and had a long dialogue with him about the nature of reality. Einstein took the stance adopted by scientists, namely that reality is something independent of the mind and the human factor. Tagore, drawing on Indian philosophy, argued for a 'relational' world, in which the subject is never separate from the object. See A. Einstein and R. Tagore, *Living Age* 340 (1931): 262; Partha Ghose, *Einstein, Tagore and the Nature of Reality* (London, NY: Routledge, 2016), Chs. 1 and 5; David L. Gosling, *Science and the Indian tradition: When Einstein Met Tagore* (London, NY: Routledge, 2007), 130-50.

[996] For an accessible introductory book on 'differential geometry,' see W. M. Boothby, *An Introduction to Differentiable Manifolds and Riemannian Geometry* (NY: Academic Press, 1986). Also, an understanding of general relativity would be incomplete without some knowledge of special relativity. For a classic introduction, see W. Rindler, *Introduction to Special Relativity* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1991). As for general relativity, see B. F. Schutz, *A First Course in General Relativity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), R. M. Wald, *General Relativity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984); Richrad Feynman et al., *The Feynman Lectures on*

must take into account Riemannian concept of space as a 'manifold'[997] that rejects the material structure of space as being 'globally flat' (as in Euclidean geometry) or independent of 'matter-configuration,' while explaining general relativity, since the idea of manifolds provides us with the crucial insight that the only thing that defines a space is the 'metric tensor'—the bedrock of Einstein's field equations. However, Iqbāl's analysis of 'self in the light of relativity' sidesteps all such technical details in considering the theory, and instead bases itself on 'vulgar beliefs,'[998] which is the reason he mistakenly construes a link between such a physical theory that takes no account of consciousness and the self, which is a self-conscious entity.[999] Given the results of relativity, Iqbāl continues, the self must be non-spatial, non-temporal and Absolute, to whom what is external to us must cease to exist as external. Without such an assumption objective reality cannot be relative to the spatial and temporal self. Iqbāls goes on to suggest that from the standpoint of the Absolute Self, the universe does not confront Him as His other. Rather it is only a passing phase of His consciousness, a fleeting moment of His infinite life. Iqbāl then offers a religious interpretation of Einstein's saying "the universe is finite but boundless" by arguing that universe's finitude shows that it is a passing phase of God's extensively infinite consciousness, while its boundlessness shows that the creative power of God is intensively infinite.[1000] After that Iqbāl rhetorically poses:

> But is the human self also a phase of God's consciousness, or something more substantial than a mere idea? The nature of the self is such that it is self-centered and exclusive. Are, then, the Absolute Self and the human self to related to each other that they mutually exclude each other?[1001]

In response, he goes on to state that the realization of the self does not occur by merely permitting the external world to throw its varied impressions on one's mind, and then watching what becomes of it. Rather, the self realizes itself as one of the greatest energies of nature by molding the stimuli it receives from it and by performing actions that enable it to unite with God without losing its own identity. Thus through being active the self is conjoined to God's consciousness.[1002] In light of the above analysis, it may be fairly claimed that one notices a

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Gravitation (Boulder: Westview Press, 2002). It should be noted that Feynman's approach focuses on the curvature of space rather than the curvature of spacetime. Cf. also, K. S. Thorne et al., *Gravitation* (NY: W. H. Freeman, 1973).

[997] A 'manifold' is a conglomeration of local spaces, each of which may be mapped by a flat or Cartesian coordinate map, without allowing for a global Euclidean structure as a whole, except in the limited case of Euclidean space itself. On the concept of 'manifold,' see Riemann's famous 'Habilitation' dissertation delivered in 1854 that paved the way for theories of hyperspace and of relativity: Bernhard Riemann, *On the Hypotheses Which Lie at the Bases of Geometry*, trans. William K. Clifford (Cham: Springer, 2016), 30-41; originally published as: Bernhard Riemann, *ber die Hypothesen, welche der Geometrie zu Grunde liegen* (Aus dem Nachla des Verfassers mitgetheilt durch R. Dedekind), Abh. Ges. Gtt., Math. Kl. 13 (1868), 133–152. For helpful explanations on this, see John Mccleary, *Geometry from a Differentiable Viewpoint* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 269-78.

[998] Iqbāl's own expression in the *Reconstruction*, 114.

[999] It should however be noted that Iqbāl had a keen interest in mathematics, which is evinced by the two long letters (preserved in Allama Iqbāl Museum, Lahore) of purely mathematical nature written to him by a certain Faḍl Ḥamīd on 19 July 1928 and 27 July 1935. For more information on this, see n21 in Iqbāl, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought,* 190.

[1000] Iqbāl, "Self in the Light of Relativity," 178-9.

[1001] Iqbāl, "Self in the Light of Relativity," 178.

[1002] Iqbāl, "Self in the Light of Relativity," 181-82.

certain 'over-enthusiasm' on Iqbāl's part to engage the latest scientific theories as soon as they make their appearance in Europe. Perhaps one might attribute this to some kind of colonial inferiority complex. However, Iqbāl also goes to great lengths to criticize European culture. In many of his poems, he urges fellow Muslims not to be seduced by Western culture and its accompanied pomp. For example, in the *Jāwīd-nāma*, we read:[1003]

> Imitation of the West seduces the East from itself (*sharq rā az khūd burd taqlīd-i gharb*);
> these people have need to criticize the West.
> The power of the West (*quwwat-i maghrib*) comes not from lute and rebeck,
> not from the dancing of unveiled girls (*raqṣ-i dukhtarān-i bī-ḥijāb*),
> not from the magic of tulip-cheeked enchantresses (*lālah-rūst*),
> not from naked legs (*ᶜuryān-i sāq*) and bobbed hair (*qaṭᶜ-i mū*);
> its strength springs not from irreligion (*lā-dīnī*),
> its glory derives not from the Latin script.
> The power of the West comes from science and technology (*ᶜilm u fann*),
> and with that selfsame flame its lamp is bright.
> Wisdom (*ḥikmat*) derives not from the cut and trim of clothes (*jāma*);
> the turban is no impediment to science and technology.
> For science and technology (*ᶜilm u fann*), elegant young sprig,
> brains are necessary, not European clothes (*malbūs-i farhang*);
> on this road only keen sight is required,
> what is needed is not this or that kind of hat.
> If you have a nimble intellect, that is sufficient;
> if you have a perceptive nature (*ṭabᶜ-i darākī*), that is sufficient.[1004]

Perhaps one may still argue that Iqbāl admired the science of the West while rejecting its 'materialistic' culture, and his many ruminations on time and space, theory of evolution etc. are an attempt to show to the Muslim how one might carry out the process of reconstructing 'the whole system of Islam' in light of modern science. However, it is well-known that Iqbāl acknowledges his intellectual debt to such European thinkers as Hegel, Nietzsche, Goethe, and Wordsworth, all of whom made their contribution to European culture.[1005] Yet, this does not stop him from repudiating European culture in the strongest terms, which appears inconsistent and one-sided:

> Do you know what European culture is (*chīst farhang-i tahdhīb*)?
> In its world are two hundred paradises of color (*ṣad firdaws rang*);
> its dazzling shows have burned down abodes,
> consumed with fire branch, leaf and nest.

[1003] See also, Iqbāl, *Kullīyāt-i Iqbāl Fārsī,* 652, 653, 666, 668, 740, 767, 878, and 948.

[1004] Muḥammad Iqbāl, *Jāwīd-nāma*, in *Kulliyāt-i Iqbāl Farsī* (Lahore: Ghulām ᶜAlī, 1973), 766, translated by A. J. Arberry, modified, in *Jāvid-nāma* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1966), 129.

[1005] In his *Stray Reflections*, Iqbāl notes: "I confess I owe a great deal to Hegel, Goethe, Mirza Ghalib, Mirza Abdul Qadir Bedil and Wordsworth [sic]. The first two led me into the 'inside' of things; the third and fourth taught me how to remain oriental in spirit and expression after having assimilated foreign ideals of poetry, and the last saved me from atheism in my student days." Muḥammad Iqbāl, *Stray Reflections: The Private Notebook of Muḥammad Iqbāl*, edited by Javid Iqbal (Lahore: Iqbal Academy, 2008), 53. Concerning Iqbāl's admiration of Nietzsche, see Atiya Begum, *Iqbāl*, 5 and 35.

Its exterior is shining and captivating
but its heart is weak (*dil ḍaᶜīf ast*), a slave to the gaze;
the eye beholds, the heart staggers within
and falls headlong before this idol-temple (*but-khāna*).[1006]

Moreover,

The desire of the Europeans (*farhang*) is to make
Perpetual feast out of the world;
Oh a vain desire, Oh a vain desire (*tamannā-yi khām*)![1007]

The State of Iqbāl Scholarship on the Self

Earlier I pointed out the 'adulatory' character of Iqbāl scholarship. Since in this study my focus is directed on Iqbāl's concept of the self, I will briefly discuss some of the salient features of previous scholarship. Given Iqbāl's constant emphasis on the self, it is unsurprising that most of the studies featuring Iqbāl devote some attention to this concept, although there is no monograph dealing with the self as far as Western scholarship is concerned. The adulatory approach that characterizes Iqbāl scholarship in general is also reflected in studies that deal with the self. In her recent reflections on Iqbāl's selfhood, Riffat Hassan claims that the former's philosophy of *khūdī* is his greatest contribution to world thought.[1008] On a more balanced note, however, she explains that this concept of the self was developed in a particular historical context, wherein the most burning questions that confronted Indian Muslims had to do with politics, and the philosophy of *khūdī* was Iqbāl's intellectual response to the political and cultural realities of his time, colonial modernity.[1009] Hassan further argues that Iqbāl's notion of the self is closely associated with a core Qur'anic conception of humanity that asserts that it is made in the best of molds hence has the potential to rise to be God's *khalīfa* (vicegerent) on earth, but it can also sink to become the 'lowest of the low.'[1010] In Hassan's estimation, Iqbāl's *khūdī* is strengthened and weakened by the cultivation of positive and negative character traits respectively.[1011] I will point out some of problems of such an interpretation, but before doing so, let me further review a few more studies from the sample of Iqbāl scholarship on the self. In his study on Iqbāl's notion of selfhood entitled "The Human Person in Iqbāl's Thought," Ebrahim Moosa, an otherwise notable scholar of Islam, recasts Iqbāl's *khūdī* in terms of personhood. Without providing any due explanation, Moosa simply asserts that Iqbāl's famous *khūdī* or the self would be discussed in today's lexicon under the rubric of personhood, the human person, or the human condition.[1012] Consisting mainly of assertive rather than constructive statements, Moosa's article reinterprets Iqbāl's self in light

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[1006] Iqbāl, *Jāwīd-nāma*, in *Kulliyāt-i Iqbāl Farsī*, 767, translated by Arberry, modified, 130.

[1007] Muḥammad Iqbāl, *Bāl-i Jibrīl*, in *Kulliyāt-i Iqbāl Urdū* (Lahore: Ghulām ᶜAlī, 1973), 354.

[1008] Riffat Hassan, "Introduction," 3.

[1009] Riffat Hassan, "Introduction," 3. See also her useful book on Iqbāl, *idem.*, *An Iqbal Primer: An Introduction to Iqbal's Philosophy* (Lahore: Aziz, 1979).

[1010] Q. 95: 4–5: "Surely We created human of the best stature. Then We reduced him to the lowest of the low."

[1011] Riffat Hassan, "Introduction," 3. Hassan further notes: "But as he grappled with the particular issues that confronted the Muslim community of India during the final, and most difficult, phase of its struggle for freedom from alien domination—whether of the British or of the Hindus—Iqbal developed a philosophical vision that was not bound to any land or time [sic]."

[1012] Ebrahim Moosa, "The Human Person in Iqbāl's Thought," 12.

of various foreign categories. Moosa reads Iqbāl in light of the Polish philosopher Leszek Kołakowski, and holds that Iqbāl's self can be described as a 'non-empirical unconditioned reality.'[1013] More importantly, Moosa argues that human agency in Iqbāl is cast in the image of the superman of history, which he problematically identifies with the concept of the perfect human (*al-insān al-kāmil*). In Moosa's view, the perfect human is a being that relies on intuition, which is the essence of both instinct and reason. Making use of 'post-modern' categories Moosa now reinterprets Iqbāl' perfect human as an intuition-enabled being who is capable of a certain kind of transgressive behavior and questioning established norms that could pave the way to both realize the potential of the human person in our age and to make the human comprehensible in relation to tradition.[1014] Sulaymane Diagne's study on Iqbāl's conception of the self is informative in bringing out the influence of Bergson on Iqbāl, as they both consider Humean and Kantian responses concerning the question "what unifies the multiplicity of the representations I call 'mine?'" a false problem, since it starts with what is considered a *datum:* a quantitative multiplicity of states external to one another. Instead, both Bergson and Iqbāl argue that the self is known 'intuitively,' when we reach beyond the 'datum,' before the fragmentation of multiplicity, and place ourselves in the given reality of the self.[1015] However, Diagne fails to note the Sufi metaphysician Shabistarī's (d. 740/1340) influence on Iqbāl on this issue, which is ignored by other scholars as well.[1016] Moreover, according to Diagne, the core of Iqbāl's selfhood is defined by 'unity of life' as opposed to 'unity of consciousness,' which, however, is incorrect, since Iqbāl upholds 'unity of consciousness' in his *Reconstruction*.[1017] Furthermore, in Diagne's view, Iqbāl's conception of the self is faithful to the Qur'anic view of human nature, which also upholds 'immortality through the movement of life.'[1018] In a further deliberation, Diagne claims that Iqbāl's articulation of selfhood is in line with Sufism, since Sufism, in an active sense, refers to the 'knowledge of the ultimate nature of things,' which is "an active, vital process, the end of which is not contemplation but being."[1019] It is to be noted that no textual evidence is provided for such open-ended claims based on a Bergsonian reading of both Iqbāl and Sufism.[1020]

It is evident from the foregoing that Iqbāl scholarship is hardly able to free itself from the fetters of the 'adulatory approach.' Moreover, although Iqbāl's self has been discussed widely, it is rarely analyzed in terms of 'self-knowledge' and 'first-person subjectivity.' Also, in the absence of a 'multi-dimensional, spectrum model of the self, different studies end up exploring different aspects of selfhood in Iqbāl, without tying all of them together in a coherent fashion. In analyzing Iqbāl's conception of the self, scholars did very little to engage the classical sources, hence it is difficult to separate their 'normative' claims from the factual ones. So for

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[1013] Ebrahim Moosa, "Human Person in Iqbāl's Thought," 14. Cf. Leszek Kołakowski, *The Presence of Myth*, trans. Adam Czerniawski (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 2.

[1014] Ebrahim Moosa, "Human Person in Iqbāl's Thought," 25-6.

[1015] Sulaymane Diagne, "Achieving Humanity: Convergence between Henri Bergson and Muhammad Iqbal," in Chad Hillier and B. Koshul (eds.), *Muhammad Iqbal: Essays on the Reconstruction of Religious Thought*, 36-8.

[1016] See pp. 64-72 of this chapter.

[1017] Diagne, "Achieving Humanity," 36. Iqbāl, Reconstruction, 83. See also, section III.

[1018] Diagne, *Islam et société ouverte*, 20-40.

[1019] Diagne, "Achieving Humanity," 40.

[1020] Diagne also notes that the goal of the ego is to become an 'accomplished human,' which he equates with the Sufi doctrine of the perfect human. Moreover, despite tons of evidence of intellectual dynamism in the post-classical period, Diagne reiterates the now untenable view that Islamic philosophy came to a halt in the thirteenth century, saying that Iqbāl's project of 'reconstruction' offers a way-out of this petrification. See Diagne, "Achieving Humanity," 40 and 45.

instance, if, as both Hassan and Diagne claim above, Iqbāl's self affirms the Qur'anic view of human nature, how does one square this with numerous alternative perspectives in the classical tradition that equally base themselves on the Qur'an (some of which have been already analyzed in this study) and yet seem to contradict Iqbāl's Bergsonian interpretation of the self? Moreover, statements concerning the perfect human as a 'superhuman' (Moosa) or an 'accomplished human being' (Diagne) are simply not supported by textual sources, and yet affirmed in light of Iqbāl's reconstruction of the self. Perhaps the most problematic aspect of Iqbāl scholarship is its 'blind faith' in Iqbāl's own understanding, mastery and interpretation of the classical doctrines such as the perfect human (*al-insān al-kāmil*), the unity of being (*waḥdat al-wujūd*), annihilation of the self (*fanāʾ al-nafs*), *ijtihād* etc. In particular, one never seems to question if Iqbāl is misreading or misconstruing a large body of classical teachings in order to advance a particular ideological vision. In addition, scholarship in Iqbāl studies have neglected to mention Iqbāl's well-known Indian contemporaries such as K. C. Bhattacharyya (1875–1949) and A. C. Mukerji's (1888–1968), who were also writing treatises on the self in English, while engaging German and British idealism.[1021] Iqbāl's notion of the self bears some notable similarities to these philosophers with whose writings he must have been familiar. In his highly sophisticated *The Subject as Freedom* (1923), Bhattacharyya engages with Western philosophy and in particular, with Kant from the standpoint of Advaita Vedānta on the nature of the self and the possibility of self-knowledge. For instance, Bhattacharyya writes:

> Self- knowledge is denied by Kant: the self cannot be known but can only be thought through the objective categories—unity, substantiality etc., there being no intuition of it.[1022]

Speaking on the possibility of self-knowledge through self-intuition, Bhattacharyya writes:

> The realization of what a speaker means by the word I is the hearer's awareness of a possible introspection. Such awareness is as much knowledge as actual introspection. The speaker calls himself I and may be understood by the hearer as you. As thus understood, the introspective self is individual, not an individual being—for introspection is not a subjective being like feeling—but the function of addressing another self… To the understanding self, however, although he understands the speaker's self- knowing because he is himself self-knowing, his understanding of the other I is primary while his own self- knowing is accidental and secondary. The speaker knows himself in implicitly revealing to the hearer and the hearer knows the speaker in implicitly knowing himself…

[1021] The public figures who were most directly influential on academic philosophy were Aurobindo Ghosh, Swami Vivekananda, Mohandas Gandhi, Rabindranath Tagore, and Dayanand Saraswati. Ghosh and Vivekananda in particular were influential in the revival of Vedānta thought, and in particular the idealist Advaita Vedānta school. They promulgated a distinctly modern version of this doctrine, in which idealism and realism are not seen as antitheses, but rather enjoy a creative tension. This tension animated new religious movements, gave a spiritual dimension to the political struggle for national identity and independence, and at the same time placed Vedānta and the question of how to read idealism in a modern context at center stage of academic philosophical thought. See Jay Garfield and Nalini Bhushan, "Anakul Chandra Mukerji: The Modern Subject," in J. Ganeri, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Indian Philosophy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 750-51.

[1022] K. C. Bhattacharyya, "The Subject as Freedom," in *Studies in Philosophy*, edited by Gopinath Bhattacharyya (Calcutta: Progressive Publishers, 1958), 31. Cf. Jay Garfield, "Solving Kant's Problem: KC Bhattcharyya's Epistemology on Self-Knowledge," in J. Tuske (ed.), *Indian Epistemology* (London: Routledge, 2017), 355-377.

There are thus two cases—self-intuition with other-intuition implicit in it and other-intuition with self- intuition implicit in it. Both are actual knowledge implying the use other than the thinking use of a word like *I*, which is like a pointing gesture at once self-evidencing and self-evident. My self-consciousness is not the understanding of the meaning of the word: the word only reveals it to another.[1023]

Mukerji also authored two substantial monographs on the self entitled *The Nature of Self* (1933) and *Self, Thought and Reality* (1938) respectively. The universities of colonial India boasted a large number of prominent academic philosophers. The rich academic life of philosophy was set in a larger context defined in part by the agendas of important public intellectuals who contributed to setting the philosophical discourse that framed and problematized much of Indian philosophical discourse. For instance, the famous Bengali poet Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941), despite not being a philosopher in the technical sense of the term, was selected as the first president of the Indian Philosophical Congress. His presidential address, 'Pathway to Mukti,'[1024] set the course for academic Indian philosophy in the next quarter century, insisting on the synthesis of philosophical analysis with aesthetic sensibility in the context of Indian religio-philosophical traditions.[1025] In his *The Nature of Self*, Mukerji aims for a *svaprakāśa* (self-revelatory or self-illumination) theory of the self, according to which self-knowledge comes about through pure, unmediated consciousness of the self. Arguing against introspection-view of self-knowledge, Mukerji writes:

> Neither inference nor introspection is capable of proving the reality of the conscious self, for the simple reason that the self is not a thing in the democracy of things. What introspection can guarantee is the reality of pleasure and pain, desire and aversion, because they are objects; but the self as foundational consciousness, as the universal logical implicate of all known things, cannot be grasped as an object. That for which my entire world has a meaning, that in the light of which my universe shines, cannot be objectified and perceived in the same way in which the cow or the tree is perceived. Self-consciousness is not, therefore, the consciousness of the self as an object given in introspection; and Hume as well as his Indian predecessors, the Buddhists, failed to find it in the flux of mental states, because they wanted to know it as a definite type of object among other objects.[1026]

[1023] Bhattacharyya, "Subject as Freedom," 84. (emphasis in the original).
[1024] Rabindranath Tagore, "Pathway to Mukti" (1925), reprinted in N. Bhushan and J. Garfield (eds.), *Indian Philosophy in English from Renaissance to Independence* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 151– 164.
[1025] Garfield and Bhushan, "Anukul Chandra Mukerji," 751. It is also important to note that Mukerji, like other academic philosophers in India at this time, was writing in English. And English had a dual character: it was both the international language of philosophy and so the vehicle for interaction in the world philosophical scene, but also the language of a colonizing power, and so politically suspect.
[1026] A. C. Mukerji, *The Nature of Self* (Allahabad: The Indian Press, 1938), 247– 248. It would certainly be an unwarranted assumption to hold that the self comes to existence only when there is 'I'-consciousness. On the contrary, both common sense and logic demand that the self must exist first, in order that it may become self-conscious by the knowledge of objects with which it contrasts itself. In other words, the 'I'-consciousness, or *Ichheit*, presupposes an original conscious principle. See Mukerji, *Nature of Self,* 317. Mukerji's own position seems to be that subjectivity is immediately self-revealing not in introspection, but rather in the pre-reflective awareness of the fact that one is the subject of one's objective experience. It is the impossibility of denying this fact and the distinctive awareness of it that preclude skepticism about the self, and hence skepticism in general; but it can never be reduced to any other kind of knowledge. See Garfield and Bhushan, "Anukul Chandra Mukerji," 762.

Mukerji reads *svaprakāśa* as a kind of immediate self-knowledge in which there is no distinction between subject and object. He also asserts that there is nothing mystical, irrational, or even essentially *Indian* about this notion, pointing out that versions of it are adopted by British idealists such as Green, Caird and others. Unlike Bhattacharyya and Mukerji, Tagore was more concerned with the development of Indian national identity, although ruminations on the self is not lacking in his oeuvre. Like Iqbāl, his treatise on nationalism discusses the specific challenges faced by India in developing a national self-consciousness, and the need for that consciousness to be grounded in Indian religio-cultural sensibilities. It is noteworthy that upon hearing of Iqbāl's death, Tagore made the following remark: "The death of Sir Muhammad Iqbal [sic] creates a void in our literature that, like a mortal wound, will take a very long time to heal. India, whose place today in the world is too narrow, can ill afford to miss a poet whose poetry had such universal value."[1027]

Iqbāl as Intellectual Historian

It was pointed out earlier that Iqbāl scholars take for granted Iqbāl's knowledge of the classical intellectual tradition. When his famous *Asrār-i khūdī* was translated into English in 1920, it received mixed reception both in India and abroad. Critics of the *Asrār* accused Iqbāl of adopting the German philosopher Nietzsche's theory of the *Übermensch* to express his concept of the perfect human.[1028] In a letter to Nicholson, Iqbāl claims that "the philosophy of the *Asrār* is a direct development out of the experience and speculation of old Muslim Sufis and thinkers."[1029] Yet the substantiation of this claim rests on thin air. In what follows, it will be shown that Iqbāl, contrary to his own claim, never mastered the requisite philological and philosophical skills (*à la* Ṣadrā, Walī Allāh and Thānavī) to critically engage the Islamic intellectual tradition (*falsafa, kalām, ʿirfān etc.*) that might have enabled him to develop a philosophy of self out of it. What we have instead is a conception of the self that would appear highly problematic when viewed from the perspective of classical philosophers such as Ṣadrā or Walī Allāh.[1030]

To make a better sense of the above claim I will now analyze works that portray Iqbāl as an 'intellectual historian.' Iqbāl's 1900 treatise "The Doctrine of Absolute Unity as Expounded by ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Jīlī" is a classic instance of Muslim inferiority complex in the face of Orientalism. This is evidenced at the very beginning of the treatise, where Iqbāl concedes the inferiority of the Muslim mind by stating, "We admit the superiority of the Hindu in point of philosophical acumen, yet this admission need not lead us to ignore the intellectual independence

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[1027] Rachel F. McDermott et al. (eds.), *Sources of Indian Tradition* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014), 320.

[1028] For a detailed analysis of Nietzsche's influence on Iqbāl, see pp. 72ff. The perfection of the *Übermensch* is attained through overcoming the human, as Nietzsche says in his *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, "I teach to you the *Übermensch*, the human is something that shall be overcome." Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus spoke Zarathustra,* trans. Graham Parkes (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 11. This means the *Übermensch* emerges from our going beyond the human perspective and transcending the anthropocentric worldview. For Nietzsche's exposition of the *Übermensch,* see his *Thus Spoke Zarathustra,* 11-16, 18, 21, 31, 33, 45, 49, 54, 57, 62, 67, 123, 171, 184, 193, and 250-51.

[1029] Iqbāl, "In Defense of the Self," in *Discourses of Iqbāl*, 196.

[1030] This would be the topic of the remaining sections.

of Muslim thinkers."[1031] Then he attempts to justify why Islam 'failed' to produce great Indian philosophers like Kapila and Shankara by saying "the post-Islamic history of the Arabs was a long series of glorious military exploits, which compelled them to adopt a mode of life leaving but little time for gentler conquests in the great field of science and philosophy."[1032] So "they did not, and could not, produce men like Kapila and Sankaracharya, but they zealously rebuilt… Their originality does not appear at once because the unscientific condition of the age led them to write in the spirit of expositors other than that of independent thinkers."[1033] Needless to say, none of these statements bear any mark of truth. As for the actual treatise of al-Jīlī, i.e. *al-Insān al-kāmil*, Iqbāl begins by explaining the meaning of the word *dhāṭ* or Essence (or Self). In what appears to be a paraphrase of the first few lines of the first chapter, Iqbāl tells us that according to Jīlī, "the Essence, pure and simple… is the thing to which names and attributes are given, whether it is existent or non-existent like *ᶜanqāᵓ*." Referring to Jīlī, Iqbāl states that "the existent is for two species:"

(1) The Existent is Absolute or Pure Existence—Pure Being—God.
(2) The existence joined with non-existence——the Creation-Nature.

When we consult the original, it becomes clear that Iqbāl's account is mired by several errors. To help the reader navigate through the actual passage, let me reproduce it here from the original Arabic. Jīlī says:

> Know that the Absolute Essence (*muṭlaq al-dhāt*) is an entity to which are ascribed names and attributes (*al-asmāᵓ wa-l-ṣifāt*) that are identical to the Essence as opposed to Its existence (*wujūd*). So anything to which names and attributes are ascribed is called an essence (*dhāt*)—regardless of whether that essence is existent or non-existent like Gryphon (*ᶜanqāᵓ*). And existent can of two kinds: 1) Pure Existent (*mawjūd maḥḍ*) which is the Essence of Divinity (dhāt al-bārī), the transcendent and 2) existent which is contaminated with non-existence, which is the essence of created things (*dhāt al-makhlūqāt*).[1034]

So it was clear that Iqbāl conflated the concept of Divine Essence (referred to here as *muṭlaq al-dhāt/dhāt al-bārī*) with ordinary essence—the latter being, according to al-Jīlī, more like a substance in that properties (i.e. names and attributes) can be attributed to it. Iqbāl then goes on to assert that for al-Jīlī, "the Essence of God or Pure Thought cannot be understood; no words can express it, for it is beyond all relation, and knowledge is relation."[1035] This is also a gross simplification of a very complicated text. This is not the proper place to expound al-Jīlī's celebrated doctrine of the perfect human, but a few hints may be offered.[1036] First of all, al-Jīlī

[1031] Muḥammad Iqbāl, "The Doctrine of Absolute Unity as Expounded by ᶜAbd al-Karīm al-Jīlī," *Indian Antiquary* (1900), 237-46; reappeared in *Discourses of Iqbāl*, compiled and edited by Shahid H. Razzaqi (Lahore: Ghulām ᶜAlī, 1979), 117.
[1032] "The Doctrine of Absolute Unity," 117.
[1033] Muḥammad Iqbāl, "The Doctrine of Absolute Unity," 117-18.
[1034] Al-Jīlī, *al-Insān al-Kāmil*, 1:37.
[1035] Iqbāl, "The Doctrine of Absolute Unity," 119-20.
[1036] On al-Jīlī and his *al-insān al-kāmil*, see ᶜAbd al-Karīm al-Jīlī, *De l'homme universel,* translated by Titus Burckhardt (Paris: Devry-livres, 1975), introduction; Schimmel, *Mystical Dimension of Islam,* 279ff.; George Anawati, "La doctrine de l'homme parfait selon ᶜAbd al-Karīm al-Jīlī," *MIDEO* 22 (1995): 57-72; Suᶜād al-Ḥakīm,

never uses the word 'Pure Thought' in the text. Such a Hegelian category would be utterly foreign to his thinking. Second, what al-Jīlī seems to be affirming about the nature of the Divine Essence is that it cannot be perceived in the manner of ordinary objects that inevitably involves a perceiver or a subject (*mudrik*) and a perceived or an object (*mudrak*). However, this does not imply that the Essence cannot be known in any other way. In the sixtieth chapter, al-Jīlī affirms the perfect human's knowledge of the Essence, which is not unlike what Ṣadrā has to say regarding the same issue as we saw in chapter two.[1037] In any event, rather than reading the text carefully and make an effort to decode it on its own terms, Iqbāl opts for the short-cut and reads Jīlī in light of Hegel. Here is an example, among numerous others:

> In order to understand this passage we should bear in mind the three stages of development of Pure Being, enumerated by the author in his chapter on the Illumination of the Essence. There he propounds that the Absolute Existence or Pure Being, when it leaves its absoluteness, undergoes three stages: (1) Oneness, (2) He-ness, and (3) I-ness. In the first stage there is absence of all attributes and relations, yet it is called one, and therefore oneness marks one step away from the absoluteness. In the second stage Pure Being is yet free from all manifestation, while the third stage I-ness is nothing but an external manifestation of the He-ness or, as Hegel would say, it is the self-diremption of God. This third stage is the sphere of the name Allah; here the darkness of Pure Being is illuminated, nature comes to the front, the Absolute Being has become conscious.[1038]

Several philological errors can be noted above. The word '*tajallī*'—a fundamental concept in Sufism—is incorrectly rendered as 'illumination,' thereby losing its conceptual significance. Another related word, namely '*majlā*' is incorrectly translated as 'stage,' thereby giving it a Hegelian look, which is far from what al-Jīlī intended. Also, important terms such as '*aḥadiyya*,' '*huwiyya*,' and '*anniyya*' are erroneously deciphered as 'oneness,' 'he-ness,' and 'I-ness.' Moreover, the word 'self-diremption' has no basis in the text, nor the expression 'the darkness of Pure Being' has any meaning in the text concerned. Furthermore, Iqbāl uses the term 'god-man' to describe the perfect human, which is a misreading of the Islamic concept in light of another tradition (i.e. Christianity).[1039]

Toward the end, Iqbāl, quite characteristically, claims that "while summing up his Doctrine of the Perfect Man," al-Jīlī "has anticipated many of the chief doctrines of modern German philosophy and particularly Hegelianism," and "yet he is not a systematic thinker at all. He perceives the truth, but being unequipped with the instrumentality of a sound philosophical method, he cannot advance positive proofs for his position, or rather cannot present his views in a systematic unity."[1040] Thus, "his book is a confused jumble of metaphysics, religion, mysticism and ethics, very often excluding all likelihood of analysis."[1041] One wonders, however, whose exposition should be considered a 'confused jumble' in the end! At any rate, critics might argue that this is young Iqbāl on display, so it is understandable that one will move on and improve

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Ibdāʿ al-kitāba wa-kitābat al-ibdāʿ: ʿayn ʿalā al-ʿAynīyah-sharḥ muʿāṣir li-ʿAynīyat al-Imām al-Ṣūfī ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Jīlī (Beirut: Dār al-Burāq, 2004), 1-20.
[1037] See ch. 2, 98ff.
[1038] Iqbāl, "The Doctrine of Absolute Unity," 121.
[1039] Iqbāl, "The Doctrine of Absolute Unity," 119.
[1040] Iqbāl, "The Doctrine of Absolute Unity," 138.
[1041] Iqbāl, "The Doctrine of Absolute Unity," 138.

one's given skills.[1042] However, such is hardly the case. As I will analyze a couple of other specimens from the Iqbālian corpus that spans over a period of thirty four years, it will be observed that Iqbāl's habit of reading 'Jīlī in light of Hegel,' 'Bedil in light of Bergson,' or 'ᶜIrāqī in light of Einstein' never quite disappeared.

In his short treatise "Bedil in the Light of Bergson," (written in 1916) Iqbāl takes on Sufi metaphysics and attacks some of its central doctrines.[1043] Regarding the important concept of *fanāʾ* or annihilation, Iqbāl erroneously claims that "the word means self-negation or absorption in the Universal self of God." Throughout his writings Iqbāl argues against such a conception of *fanāʾ* as 'self-negation,' which he equates with 'inaction' and uses it as a foil to advance his theory of the self, which is characterized by 'dynamism,' 'life' and 'activity.'[1044] It is however ironic that one would search in vain for such a conception of *fanāʾ* in great Sufi authors. As I have discussed extensively in both chapters two and three, the word '*fanaʾ*' does not mean a general sense of losing one's attributes of selfhood at all. In fact, words such as 'negation' or absorption' are hardly found in discussions concerning *fanāʾ*. Thus there is little doubt that Iqbāl's understanding of this crucial Sufi doctrine is based on folk Sufism (i.e. Sufism based on popular piety).

Moreover, without availing himself of careful consideration of the source-texts, Iqbāl goes on to make high-flown claims such as "The idea of annihilation is indeed the vice of all Persian Sufism… which has, for centuries been prevalent in the entire Muslim world, and working as one of the principal factors of its decay."[1045] According to Iqbāl, Persian Sufism has "soaked up the energies of the best Muslims in every age, and has imperceptibly undermined the foundations of a revelational system of law which it regards as a mere device to meet the emergencies of communal life."[1046] Iqbāl also identifies 'pantheism' as the chief characteristic of Persian Sufism, and yet, it somehow escaped his attention that the greatest of exponent of this supposed pantheism is an Arab, i.e. Ibn ᶜArabī. To give more spin to the paradox, some of the people Iqbāl admires, namely Bīdil and Walī Allāh are included among the followers of Ibn ᶜArabī, whom they never saw as a pantheist. Recent scholarship has pointed to the complexity of

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[1042] Iqbāl actually reiterates his conclusions about al-Jīlī in his *Development of Metaphysics*, stating that the latter anticipates German Idealism. Muḥammad Iqbāl, *The Development of Metaphysics in Persia* (London: Luzac, 1908), 127-31.

[1043] It is well- known that Iqbāl's poetry is suffused with images, motifs, and ideas drawn from Sufism and that the great mystical poet Rūmī is, arguably, one of the strongest influences on his thought. Iqbāl's philosophical writings in English also reveal significant critical engagement with the medieval Sufi tradition. Unlike many other modernists, who have tended to see the intellectual history of Islam as marked by a thoroughgoing decline at least since the twelfth or the thirteenth century CE, Iqbāl took a slightly more nuanced view. He admired what he called 'devotional Sufism,' while denounced 'Persian Sufism,' which he equated with free speculation and life-denial. From a purely historical point of view, this account is highly questionable, although it allowed Iqbāl to advance his particular version of the self. Cf. Zaman, *Islam in Pakistan*, 196, with which my account disagrees in certain respects.

[1044] As Iqbāl further says: "The history of man is a stern reality and the glory of human personality consists not in gradual self-evaporation but self-fortification by continual purification and assimilation. If God, as Bedil seems to teach is essentially life and movement, then it is not through an intuitive slumber, but through life and movement alone that we can approach Him. If, in any sense He has chosen to dwell within us and our personality is but a veil that hides Him from us, our duty lies not in demolishing the tiny dwelling He has chosen, but to manifest His glory through it by polishing its clay walls through action and turning them into transparent mirrors." Muḥammad Iqbāl, *Bedil in the Light of Bergson*, edited by Tehsin Firaqi (Lahore: Iqbal Academy, 2000), 23. Iqbāl would hold on to such a view of *fanāʾ* until the end, as documented in this chapter.

[1045] Iqbāl, *Bedil in the Light of Bergson*, 23.

[1046] Iqbāl, *Bedil in the Light of Bergson*, 23.

Ibn ᶜArabī's doctrines and addressed the misunderstanding of pantheism in relation to his thought, so I will not belabor myself on this issue.[1047] But it is noteworthy that there is no evidence of Iqbāl's close engagement with Ibn ᶜArabī's major works such as the *Futūḥāt* or the *Fuṣūṣ*, as we have seen in the case of Thānavī in Ch. 5. Thus once again, Iqbāl was basing himself on 'vulgar beliefs' regarding Sufism and yet aiming himself at abstruse metaphysical doctrines. A concrete instance of Iqbāl's inability to understand Sufi metaphysics is evidenced below, while he tries to interpret Bīdil:

> "*In the ocean of the Absolute Being*", says the poet, *"mountains and deserts form one continuous flow, it is our thirsty understanding, that builds mirages in it".* The thirsty alone are subject to the optical illusion of a mirage, since the presence of a crying practical interest i.e. satisfaction of the desire for drink, determines the character of their perception and makes the dry desert sand assume the appearance of sheet of water. I think, however, that Bedil has failed properly to express the idea that the form and quality of our knowledge is determined by the practical 'interests of life.[1048]

Not being familiar with Ibn ᶜArabī's particular metaphysics, Iqbāl provides a naïve, literal interpretation of this verse. As was explained, in Ibn ᶜArabī's metaphysics the whole universe is conceived as a 'divine imagination,' as a result of which the human imagination or human life is conceived as 'imagination within imagination' or a 'dream within a dream.'[1049] For this reason, the construction of reality by our understanding is nothing more than a mirage, whereas the absolute reality of God transcends such categories.

In the last part of the treatise, Iqbāl attacks the Sufi doctrine of God's self-disclosure (*tajallī*) and descent (*tanazzul*). In Iqbāl's view, such a doctrine of descent degrades God and bring us back to the old hypothesis of the follower of the Persian prophet-philosopher Mani, who held that the creation of the world was due to the Absolute light obscuring or darkening a portion of itself. Iqbāl then rhetorically asks the Sufis: "Why should God obscure His own light or descend into matter? To manifest His power and glory? Self-manifestation by self-degradation! Strange way of looking at Him whom the Sufis are never tired of calling the Beloved!... Ethically speaking the Sufi view of 'Descent' may serve as a basis for Epicureanism as well as Asceticism."[1050]

Iqbāl's penchant for misreading and misconstruing a large chunk of classical doctrines is not just limited to Sufi metaphysics.[1051] Time and again, one observes how Iqbāl reads the latest

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[1047] See e.g. Mohammed Rustom, "Is Ibn al-ᶜArabī's Ontology Pantheistic?" *Journal of Islamic Philosophy* 2 (2006): 53–67; James Morris, "Ibn 'Arabī and His Interpreters. Part II: Influences and Interpretations," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* (1986): 106:4, 733–734; William Chittick, "Rūmī' and Waḥdat al-wujūd," in *The Heritage of Rūmī*, ed. A. Banani (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 70–71; *Sufi Path of Knowledge*, 1-30. On how Ibn ᶜArabī's doctrines have been integrated into the teachings and practices of various Sufi orders, see Michel Chodkiewicz's "The Diffusion of Ibn ᶜArabī's Doctrine," *Journal of the Muhyiddin Ibn ᶜArabi Society* (1991) 9:36–57 and *An Ocean Without Shore*, trans. David Streight (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1993), 1–33.

[1048] Iqbāl, *Bedil in the Light of Bergson*, 15.

[1049] On the notion of 'dream within a dream,' see Oludamini Ogunnaike, "Inception and Ibn ᶜArabī," *Journal of Religion & Film* 17.2/10 (2013): 11-44.

[1050] Iqbāl, *Bedil in the Light of Bergson*, 24-25.

[1051] Like his work on al-Jīlī and Bīdil, Iqbāl's *Development of Metaphysics* is mired by all sorts of philological inconsistencies and philosophical misreading. Moreover, it seems eighty to ninety percent of it is based on the work of other scholars—either Islamic or Western—such as T. J. Boar, D. B. MacDonald, Shiblī Nuᶜmānī, Shahrastānī

scientific ideas such as 'evolution' or space-time into the works of various thinkers in the tradition. For example, according to Iqbāl, one can find the idea of 'evolution' in the work of the Islamic philosopher Ibn Miskawayh.[1052] In Iqbāl's reading of Ibn Miskawayh one finds the latter discussing various stages of evolution. So plant-life at the lowest stage of evolution does not need any seed for its birth and growth, nor does it perpetuate its species by means of the seed. This kind of plant-life differs from minerals only in some little power of movement which grows in higher forms, and reveals itself further in that the plant spreads out its branches, and perpetuates its species by means of the seed. However, plant-life needs better soil and climate for their growth at a higher stage of evolution. The last stage of development is reached in vine and date-palm which stand, as it were, on the threshold of animal life. The early stage of animal life is characterized by the sense of touch, which is developed first before other senses, and then appears the sense of sight. The animal life reaches its perfection in the horse among quadrupeds and the falcon among birds, and finally arrives at the frontier of humanity in the ape which is just a degree below man in the scale of evolution. In Iqbāl's exposition of Ibn Miskawayh, "further evolution brings physiological changes with a growing power of discrimination and spirituality until humanity passes from barbarism to civilization."[1053]

It does not take very long to realize that similar his understanding of Einstein's relativity, Iqbāl's ruminations on evolution is based on 'vulgar beliefs' rather than on a solid grasp of the theory itself.[1054] Readers familiar with the theory of evolution will recall that Darwinian evolution occurs through the mechanism of 'natural selection,' which is contingent upon the factors of variation in traits, differential reproduction, and heredity.[1055] It is to be noted that other mechanisms of evolution such as mutation, migration, and genetic drift were discovered

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etc. Moreover, his use of categories such as Aryan, Semite, monism, pantheism etc. is highly problematic from a sound scholarly point of view. Iqbāl attributes the label pantheism to even al-Ghazālī and Suhrawardī. Moreover, he erroneously identifies Suhrawardī's philosophy as a school of Sufism. In terms of citation, it was clear that he did not have the original Suhrawardian corpus at his disposal. He was rather basing himself on Zāhid al-Harawī's *Sharḥ al-anwāriyya*, which is a commentary on Suhrawardī's relatively small treatise *Hayākil al-nūr*. Moreover, his translation of al-Ghazālī's *al-Munqidh* is full of errors; so is his conclusion that al-Ghazālī's *Iḥyāʾ* is very similar to Descartes' *Discours de la méthode*. Moreover, his interpretation of Mullā Ṣadrā's famous doctrine of the identity of the intellect and what is intellected as 'monism' is incorrect. So, is his conclusion that Ṣadrā anticipates Bābism. Again, it is evident that he barely consulted the original sources. The other errors are too many to count here. See Muḥammad Iqbāl, *The Development of Metaphysics in Persia* (London: Luzac, 1908), 59, 60, 65, 68, 91, 94, 114, 120-1, 135-36, and 143-45. Although Iqbāl himself denounces parts of this work later in life, one does see resurfacing of some of its conclusions such as pantheism in relation to Sufism or Magianism in relation to Persian culture in later works such as the *Reconstruction*. On Iqbāl's own reservation about the work, see B. A. Dar, *Anwār-i Iqbāl* (Lahore: Iqbāl Academy, 1977), 20. For some perceptive remarks on Iqbāl's relation to Sufism and Ibn ʿArabī, see Muhammad S. Umar, "Contours of Ambivalence. Iqbāl and Ibn ʿArabī: Historical. Perspective (in three parts)," *Iqbal Review* 35.3 (1994): 46-62.

[1052] Cf. Khwaja Abdul Hamid, *Ibn Maskawaih [sic]: A Study of His al-Fauz al-asghar* (Lahore: Shaikh Muhammad Ashraf, 1946), 78-83. See also Iqbāl, *Development of Metaphysics in Persia*, 29, where an account of Ibn Miskawayh's theory of evolution is given based on Shiblī Nuʿmānī's *Tārīkh-i ʿilm-i kalām* (Tehran: Asāṭīr, 2007), 135ff.

[1053] Iqbāl, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought*, 107.

[1054] Iqbāl was most probably influenced by such popularizers of Darwinism as Thomas H. Huxley, Alfred R. Wallace and Herbert Spencer. On these figures, see Timothy Shanahan, *The Evolution of Darwinism: Selection, Adaptation, and Progress in Evolutionary Biology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 105-113, 190-218.

[1055] On 'natural selection' and other mechanisms of evolution, see Charles Darwin, *On the Origin of Species* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1859), Ch. 4, and Douglas J. Futuyma and Mark Kirkpatrick, *Evolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), chs. 3-5.

gradually at a much later period. So even if one grants that Ibn Miskawayh is talking about evolution—which he is not, for mere 'talk of development of species' does not make it into a theory evolution, since the issue the mechanisms of evolution such as 'natural selection' is missing in all this. Similarly, Iqbāl mistakenly claims that the Sufi thinkers Fakhr al-Dīn al-ʿIrāqī's and Muḥammad Pārsā's religious psychology brings us much nearer to our modern ways of looking at the problem of space and time. In Iqbāl's opinion, certain verses of the Qurʾan explain the existence of some kind of space in relation to God.[1056] Thus there are three kinds of space—the space of material bodies, the space of immaterial beings, and the space of God.[1057] As with time and space, Iqbāl touches on theories of motion in Islamic theology and tries to show how they anticipate modern quantum mechanical understanding of motion, as in Planck's concept of energy quanta.[1058] In short, Iqbāl's effort to read the tradition in light of the latest trends can be seen as an attempt to reassert Muslim self-confidence in the face of Eurocentrism. Ironically, instead debunking Eurocentrism or colonialist supremacy, it perpetuates it because these kinds of maneuverings only go on to show that the significance of the Islamic intellectual tradition lies in paving the course for the rise of modern science as its *telos*.

Intuition of the Self through First-Person Experience

Notwithstanding Iqbāl's enthusiasm for discussing cutting-edge scientific theories, the centrality of the self in Iqbāl's philosophy is undeniable. Writing in Persian, Urdu and English, Iqbāl uses a number of terms to talk about the self, including the word 'self' itself since he also wrote in English. Although one might think that his primary term for self is '*khūdī*,' it is not the only term he uses in discussing the self. Moreover, he is aware of the existence of other terms such as *nafs, anā, shakhṣ*, and *anāniyyat* that have been employed to render the English word 'self.' Not unlike Walī Allāh and others, Iqbāl provides reasons for choosing the word *khūdī* over the others.[1059]

"The word '*khūdī*' was chosen with great difficulty and most reluctantly," Iqbāl informs the reader, because "from a literary point of view it has many shortcomings and ethically it is generally used in a bad sense both in Urdu and Persian." Moreover, in his view, "the other words for the metaphysical fact of the 'I' are equally inconvenient, e.g. *anā, shakhṣ, nafs,* and *anāniyyat*." So "what is needed," Iqbāl asserts, "is a colorless word for self, ego, having no ethical significance." But since "there is no such word in either Urdu or Persian"— the word '*man*' (I) in Persian being equally inappropriate—"I thought that the word '*khūdī*' was the most suitable."[1060] Iqbāl then claims that there is some evidence in the Persian language of the use of

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[1056] Q. 58:7: Dost thou not see that God knoweth all that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth? Three persons speak not privately together, but He is their fourth; nor five, but He is their sixth; nor fewer nor more, but wherever they be He is with them. 50: 16: Ye shall not be employed in affairs, nor shall ye read a text out of the Qurʾan, nor shall ye do any work, but We will be witness over you when you are engaged therein; and the weight of an atom on earth or in heaven escapeth not thy Lord; and nor is there aught We created man, and we know what his soul whispereth to him, and we are closer to him than his neck-vein. Iqbāl, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought*, 107-08.

[1057] The Sufi poet named here as well as in Lectures V and VII of the *Reconstruction* as Fakhr al-Dīn ʿIrāqī was, in reality, Tāj al-Dīn Maḥmūd b. Khudādād Ashnawī (d. ca. 619/1222). Cf. Ashnawī's treatise: *Ghāyat al-imkān fi maʿrifat al-zamān wa-l-makān,* edited by Nadhr Sābirī (Campbellpur, 1981).

[1058] Iqbāl, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought*, 55-6. Nonetheless, not all of Iqbāl's speculations about Islamic philosophy were wrong. He hits the mark when he suggests that Suhrawardī and Ibn Taymiyya undertook a systematic refutation of Greek Logic. See Iqbāl, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought*, 10.

[1059] However, when Iqbāl writes in English, the problem of translation does not arise.

[1060] Iqbāl, "An Exposition of the Self," 201-02.

the word '*khūdī*' in the simple sense of self, i.e. to say the colorless fact of the 'I.' So the 'metaphysical' use of the term '*khūdī*' expresses an "indescribable feeling of 'I,' which forms the basis of the uniqueness of each individual."[1061] In Iqbāl's usage, then, *khūdī* does not convey any ethical significance for those who cannot get rid of its ethical significance.[1062] It is thus clear that Iqbāl understands the term '*nafs*' differently from his predecessors such as Ṣadrā, Walī Allāh and Thānavī.

Nonetheless, *khūdī*, in Iqbāl's philosophy, also has an 'ethical' connotation, as opposed to its 'metaphysical' usage. Iqbāl himself categorically states this by saying, "Ethically, the word '*khūdī*' means (as used by me) self-reliance, self-respect, self-confidence, self-preservation; even self-assertion when such a thing is necessary, in the interests of life and the power to stick to the cause of truth, justice, duty etc. even in the face of death."[1063] For Iqbāl, such usage of *khūdī* is ethical "because it helps in the integration of the forces of the Ego, thus hardening it, as against the forces of disintegration and dissolution."[1064] In all, Iqbāl makes it clear that *khūdī* has both metaphysical and ethical connotations, and it does not mean the egotistical self full of pride. However, it should be noted that an earlier definition of *khūdī* included the terms '*anā*' and '*man*' as its synonyms, as in the first edition of the *Asrār* in which Iqbāl asks the following: "What is this luminous center of the unity of intuition or mental awareness which intensifies human thoughts and feelings, this mysterious thing which is the repository of the diversified and unlimited potentialities of human nature, this '*khūdī*' or '*anā*' or '*man*' which is practically known but essentially hidden, which is the maker of appearances, yet cannot bear to be seen itself?... From the viewpoint of ethics, the way of life of individuals and actions depends on the answer to this question."[1065] There is much evidence to suggest that Iqbāl uses the words '*khūdī*' and 'I' interchangeably (i.e. *man* and *anā*) in the post-Asrār period.[1066]

At any rate, the next question that should be asked now is how one should translate the word '*khūdī*' in English. Fortunately, since our author himself was thoroughly proficient in English and knew other European languages such as German, in addition to his knowledge of modern Western thought and how the term 'self' has been used therein, we would do well to follow his own lead on this matter, since he also expresses himself in English with this term. In his English writings, especially in the *Reconstruction* Iqbāl makes it abundantly clear that he is thinking of '*khūdī*' in terms of the English word 'self,' although he also uses the word 'ego' synonymously with the self.[1067] Moreover, as we have seen above, Iqbāl himself translates the word '*khūdī*' as 'self' and 'ego,' and there are plenty of other instances where he does the same. As a rule, there is little room for doubting whether or not '*khūdī*' should be translated as anything other than 'self' in English, because the moment one thinks it is not a transparent translation of 'self' one assumes that one *already* knows what the word (and the concept) 'self' *should* imply in English. As was made clear in Ch. 1, such an assumption would be self-defeating for a study on the self, since selfhood is a highly complex concept with multiple aspects, levels and depths, and one whose development has occurred gradually over centuries at the hands of many different thinkers—East and West. So the debate is not about the translation, rather it is about 'conceptual'

[1061] Iqbāl, "An Exposition of the Self," 201-02.
[1062] Iqbāl, "An Exposition of the Self," 201-02.
[1063] Iqbāl, "An Exposition of the Self," 203.
[1064] Iqbāl, "An Exposition of the Self," 203.
[1065] Cited in Riffat Hassan, "Iqbāl's '*Khūdī*'-Its Meaning and Strengthening Factors," *Iqbāl*, 23.3, (1976): 1-26, at 1.
[1066] See pp. 231ff.
[1067] Iqbāl, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought*, *passim*.

connotations that the word has, which might vary from author to author. In addition, Iqbāl also renders the word '*nafs*' as both self and soul (depending on the context), and this is in line with our soul-self distinction that was explained in Ch.1 in that the soul, as a third-person concept, refers to the cognitive capacities in human and is mostly used in relation to the body, while the self, as a first-person concept, refers to first-person experiences involving consciousness and agency.[1068]

With this background in place, we can now begin to explore Iqbāl's articulation of the self. We must first begin by outlining the epistemological framework or the range of human experiences that makes the analysis of the self possible. Placing himself squarely against Kantian epistemology that assumes that all experience other than the normal level of experience is impossible, Iqbāl argues that in view of the more recent developments in science, such as the nature of matter as 'bottled-up light waves,' the idea of the universe as an act of thought, finiteness of space and time, and Heisenberg's uncertainty principle, the case for metaphysical knowledge does not appear to be as far-fetched as Kant would have us to believe.[1069] It is noteworthy that in his *Kritik*, Kant argues that while we can think the transcendental subject— and necessarily must think it as a condition of the possibility of knowledge itself—we cannot know the subject, or self as it is. This is because human cognition requires 'sensible intuition,' and the forms of intuition are spatiotemporal (i.e. space and time and forms of intuition), and because the self lies outside of space and time as their transcendental condition, Kant is led to believe the self (as subject) also lies outside of the domain of experience. As such, the self cannot be the object of any judgment. Nonetheless, in Kant's view, it must be possible for the 'I think' to accompany every representation, and so we must conceive of the self as a thinking subject expressing an indeterminate perception that signifies "something real that is given."[1070]

Taking clues from Bergson whose philosophy can be seen as an attempt to overcome Kant because it eliminates the possibility of absolute knowledge, Iqbāl, *pace* Kant who denies 'intellectual intuition,' argues that 'thought' and 'intuition' spring up from the same source and complement each other.[1071] For Iqbāl, as for Bergson, thought or intelligence grasps reality bit by

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[1068] For instance, '*nafs*' as 'self:' "Indeed the Qur'an regards both *anfus* (self) and *āfāq* (world) as sources of knowledge." Iqbāl, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought*, 101. For '*nafs*' as 'soul,' see Iqbāl, *Development of Metaphysics*, 11, 31, 32, 35.

[1069] Iqbāl, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought*, 144. Iqbāl rejects Kant's famous verdict that says that 'the thing-in-itself' (*das Ding an sich*) is inaccessible to our experience because his epistemology makes room for mystical subjectivity, as in the following: "The mystic state is a moment of intimate association with a Unique Other Self, transcending, encompassing, and momentarily suppressing the private personality of the subject of experience. Considering its content the mystic state is highly objective and cannot be regarded as a mere retirement into the mists of pure subjectivity." Iqbāl, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought*, 15. Also, "The idea, however, does not mean that mystic experience… has now ceased to exist as a vital fact. Indeed the Qur'an regards both *Anfus* (self) and *Āfāq* (world) as sources of knowledge. God reveals His signs in inner as well as outer experience, and it is the duty of man to judge the knowledge yielding capacity of all aspects of experience." Iqbāl, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought*, 101.

[1070] See Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, footnote (a) B422, B153-4. Cf. ch. 1, 23.

[1071] Although largely neglected today, Henri Bergson (1859–1941) was one of the most famous and influential French philosophers in his own time. He is one of the very few philosophers who also won the Nobel Prize and had public debates with such famous scientists as Einstein. Einstein considered Bergson's theory of time to be a putative, psychological notion, irreconcilable with the quantitative realities of physics, while Bergson argued that time should not be understood exclusively through the lens of science, criticizing Einstein's theory of time for being a metaphysics grafted onto science, one that ignored the intuitive aspects of time. It is somewhat ironic, as Canales' recent book rightly points out, that while in the early decades of the twentieth century, Bergson's fame, prestige, and influence far surpassed that of Einstein, the latter is the most famous scientist in today's world. See Jimena Canales,

bit, "traversing the whole by slowly specifying and closing up the various regions of the whole," while intuition grasps it in its wholeness and all at once. Moreover, while thought fixes its gaze on the temporal aspect of reality, intuition focuses on the eternal. However, both are in need of each other, since they both seek visions of the same reality which reveals itself to them in accordance with their function in life.[1072]

Having established the distinction between thought (analytic faculty) and intuition, Iqbāl proceeds to affirm the impossibility of denying the reality of the self. Drawing on Bradley this time, Iqbāl asserts that it is one thing to say that the self is illusory or unreal, as Bradley does, but quite another to hold that it simply does not exist:

> In the history of modern thought it is Bradley who furnishes the best evidence for the impossibility of denying reality to the ego. In his *Ethical Studies* he assumes the reality of the self;[1073] in his *Logic* he takes it only as a working hypothesis. It is in his *Appearance and Reality* that he subjects the ego to a searching examination. Indeed, his two chapters on the meaning and reality of the self may be regarded as a kind of modern *Upanishad* on the unreality of the *Jivatman*.[1074] According to him, the test of reality is freedom from contradiction and since his criticism discovers the finite center of experience to be infected with irreconcilable oppositions of change and permanence, unity and diversity, the ego is a mere illusion. Whatever may be our view of the self– feeling, self-identity, soul, will– it can be examined only by the canons of thought which in its nature is relational, and all "relations involve contradictions." Yet, in spite of the fact that his ruthless logic has shown the ego to be a mass of confusion, Bradley has to admit that the

The Physicist and the Philosopher: Einstein, Bergson, and the Debate that Changed Our Understanding of Time (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2016), 3-14. Bergson's cult-like fame decreased after the Second World War, even though such French philosophers as Merleau-Ponty, Sartre, and Lévinas explicitly acknowledged his influence on their thought. However, with Gilles Deleuze's book *Bergsonism* (1966) one observes a renewed interest in Bergsonism. See also some of the more recent publications that mark this renewed interest: Keith Ansell-Pearson, *Bergson: Thinking Beyond the Human Condition* (London: Bloomsbury, 2018); Christiane Baka Okpobé, *Élan vital et mystique dans la pensée d'Henri Bergson* (Strasbourg: Presses universitaires de Strasbourg, 2016).

[1072] Iqbāl, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought*, 2. For Bergson, the function of the intellect (or intelligence) is to divide and analyze things according to perspectives taken. Comprehensive analytic knowledge then consists in reconstruction or re-composition of a thing by means of synthesizing the perspectives. This synthesis, while helps us gain certain form of understanding, never gives us the thing itself; it only gives us a general idea of things. However, intuition reverses the normal working order of intelligence, which is interested in analysis. Unlike the intellect, intuition consists in entering into the thing, rather than going around it from the outside. This 'entering into the thing' is attained by placing ourselves within its undivided mobility and reaching it through an intuition of duration, and it gives us absolute knowledge. At the very beginning of his *Introduction to Metaphysics*, Bergson presents intellect and intuition as "two profoundly different ways of knowing a thing." He writes: There "[A]re two profoundly different ways of knowing a thing. The first implies that we move round the object; the second that we enter into it. The first depends on the point of view at which we are placed and on the symbols by which we express ourselves. The second neither depends on a point of view nor relies on any symbol. The first kind of knowledge may be said to stop at the relative; the second, in those cases where it is possible, to attain the absolute." Henri Bergson, *An Introduction to Metaphysics,* tr. T. E. Hulme (London, NY: Putnam's Sons, 1903), 1; Cf. also Bergson, *The Creative Mind* (*La Pensée et le mouvant),* tr. Mabelle L. Andison (New York: The Citadel Press, 1992), 175–76, 185; *Matter and Memory*, tr. N.M. Paul and W.S. Palmer (New York: Zone Books, 1994), 184–85; *Creative Evolution*, tr. Arthur Mitchell, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 114, 153, 230.

[1073] Iqbāl uses 'self' and 'ego' interchangeably.

[1074] As opposed to *Atman*—the Divine Self.

self must be "in some sense real," "in some sense an indubitable fact."[1075] We may easily grant that the ego, in its finitude, is imperfect as a unity of life.[1076]

Since British Idealists are concerned with the 'fundamental' nature of reality, as opposed to its conventional understanding, their metaphysics can be largely be construed as a dialectic of appearance and reality, at the center of which lies the self.[1077] At heart, in so far as the philosophy is idealistic, selfhood constitutes the model for reality itself. One sees it in the writings of some of the central figures of British Idealism. So for instance, Bradley asserts that it is impossible to abstract out the element of our experiencing them from the things which we experience, while Ferrier forcefully argues that no object is ever given except along with a subject.[1078] Similarly, Green deduces a 'working mind' from the relational structure of the world that is known.[1079] However, even though the self might stand as the ground for reality, it does not automatically imply that its deeper mode of being is the same as what is encountered in everyday life. This is because while experience is foundational, appearances can be deceptive. Thus one can see a distinction between the true nature of the self and its illusory appearance. For Idealists, the true self lies behind the conventional self we ordinarily take ourselves to be. Moreover, the notion of the true self, Idealists argue, enables us to understand what it means to speak of value or goodness, for genuine and final value may be understood as that which would satisfy our true or ideal self. As we shall see in section V, there is much that Iqbāl appropriates from the Idealists, alongside influences from Hegel, Nietzsche and Bergson, when it comes to the self's freedom, immortality and road to perfection, but in the text above his main concern is to show that despite's the self's finitude and imperfect nature, its reality, as 'unity of life,' cannot be denied. In an article entitled "McTaggart's Philosophy," Iqbāl contends that notwithstanding talk of the self's being an illusion, there has to be a 'subject of illusion,' to which all the tensions and contradictions of the self must be attributed, thereby affirming its reality:[1080]

[1075] Cf. F. H. Bradley, *Appearance and Reality: A Metaphysical Essay* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1930), 89.

[1076] Iqbāl, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought*, 78. Cf. Bradley, *Ethical Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1927), 80ff.; *Appearance and Reality,* 90-103.

[1077] Like the philosophy of Bergson, British Idealism too is a largely forgotten affair in today's academic philosophy, and it is not difficult to see why. In contrast to today's analytic focus on philosophy, Idealism is marked by its high moral and metaphysical tone that was deeply influenced by the philosophies of Hegel and Kant. From the 1870s onwards it began to appear in Britain and rose rapidly to dominance with a new spirit in philosophy quite unlike either the empiricist or common-sense systems which had hitherto dominated. While it was never characterized by anything like a single dogmatic creed, its various champions—who included such figures as T.H. Green (1836–1882), Edward Caird (1835–1908), F.H. Bradley (1846–1924), Bernard Bosanquet (1848–1923), Henry Jones (1852–1922), D.G. Ritchie (1853–1903), R.B. Haldane (1856–1928), J.M.E. McTaggart (1866–1925) and R.G. Collingwood (1889–1943)—held views that were recognizably similar. Although it continued as a discernible strand of philosophical tradition well into the twentieth century, the ascendancy of British Idealism lasted only until about 1900, at which point more empiricist forms of philosophy forcefully reasserted themselves. Recent years, however, have seen a renewed interest in this forgotten and disparaged tradition. For more discussions, see W. J. Mander and Stamatoula Panagakou (eds.), *British Idealism and the Concept of the Self* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016); 1-10; David Boucher and A. Vincent, *British Idealism: A Guide for the Perplexed* (London: Continuum, 2012); W. J. Mander, *British Idealism: A History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

[1078] Mander and Panagakou, *British Idealism and the Concept of the Self*, 4.

[1079] Mander and Panagakou, *British Idealism and the Concept of the Self,* 4.

[1080] A number of Western thinkers have claimed that the self is an illusion. Dennett e.g. says the following: "Are there entities, either *in* our brains, or *over and above* our brains, that control our bodies, think our thoughts, make our decisions? Of course not! Such an idea is either empirical idiocy (James' 'pontifical neuron') or metaphysical

If you say that the 'I' is a mere illusion— (*aghar gūᵓī kih 'man' wahm u gumān ast*)
An appearance (*namūd*) among other appearances—
Then tell me who is the subject of this illusion? (*dārā-yi gumān kīst*)
Look within and discover.
The world is visible,
Yet its existence needs proof!
Not even the intellect (*fikr*) of an-angel can comprehend it!
The 'I' is invisible (*khūdī pinhān*) and needs no proof!
Think awhile and see thine own secret!
The 'I' (*khūdī*) is Truth; it is no illusion.
When it ripens, it becomes eternal!
Lovers, even though separated from the Beloved, live in blissful union!
It is possible to give wings to a mere spark,
And to make it flutter ever and forever!
The Eternity of God (*dawām-i ḥaqq*) is elemental and not the reward of his action!
That eternity is superior, which a borrowed soul
Wins for herself by love's frenzy (*shawad az ᶜishq u mastī pāydārī*).
The being of mountains and deserts and cities is nothing,
The universe is mortal, the ego immortal and nothing else matters (*jahān fānī, khūdī bāqī, digar hīch*).[1081]

The above poem is Iqbāl's own translation from his Persian work *Gulshan-i rāz-i jadīd*, which is a response to Shabistarī's famous work *Gulshan-i rāz* that deals with the question of the self and self-inquiry. The main argument of the poem seems to be that the 'I' or the self is not an 'illusion' in the sense of having no existence of its own. In contrast to the external world which is visible and perceived by the senses, the self is invisible and needs no proof for its existence,

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claptrap (Ryle's 'ghost in the machine')." See Daniel Dennett, *Consciousness Explained* (London: Penguin Books, 1991), 413; cf. Gilbert Ryle, *The Concept of Mind* (London and New York: Routledge, 2009), 5-43. Flanagan thinks that it is a mistake to suppose that there an 'I' that stands behind all conscious experience and constitutes the essence of the self. The mind's 'I' that is supposed to stand for our conscious control, actions, and all agency related functions is an illusion. Owen Flanagan, *Consciousness Reconsidered* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1992), 177-78. Similarly, for Churchland the self is a quaint holdover of 'folk psychology,' while for Crick it is merely a 'pack of neurons.' See Paul Churchland, *The Engine of Reason*, *the Seat of the Soul* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1996), 322 and Francis Crick, *The Astonishing Hypothesis* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1995), 3, respectively. However, other scholars strongly disagree with such views and affirm the reality of the self. Like Iqbāl, Cesarz thinks no matter how one tries to explain the self away as a "mere story we tell ourselves," (Dennett) it still involves a 'storyteller' to tell the story—thereby proving the reality of the self. Otherwise, the story becomes the storyteller; a self-caused story about itself, an epiphenomenal demigod, a situation which ignores the *asymmetry* between storyteller and story. If the story includes anything more, it will include chapters on body and its neurophysiology. And if one insists, according to Cesarz, that body generates the storyteller, then all we have is an expansion of the tale wherein the body is a character in the story that produces a storyteller that tells the story, which is circular. Gary Cesarz, "Renovating McTaggart's Substantial Self," in *The Concept of the Self in British Idealism*, 264. For more arguments, see Stewart Goetz and Charles Taliaferro, *A Brief History of the Soul* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 182ff.; David Lund, *The Conscious self: The Immaterial Center of Subjective States* (Amherst: Humanity Books, 2005), 36-50.

[1081] Muḥammad Iqbāl, "McTaggart's Philosophy," in *Discourses of Iqbāl*, 209-10. This is Iqbāl's own translation from *The New Garden of Mystery*, i.e. *Gulshan-i rāz-i jadīd*. See *idem.*, *Kullīyāt-i Iqbāl Fārsī*, 562-63. The last verse is from another poem.

since it is perceived when one turns one's gaze within. Moreover, the self is immortal, even though its immorality needs to be attained through a ceaseless struggle by overcoming its imperfections.[1082] In the context of the present discussion, the important point to consider is that for Iqbāl 'self-knowledge,' i.e. how does the self ascertain itself, is obtained *intuitively*,[1083] which he sometimes calls 'inner reflection' as well.[1084] In Iqbāl's scheme of things, there is no concept of 'presence' (*ḥuḍūr*) or self-illumination (*svaprakāśa*) when it comes to self-knowledge. More importantly, Iqbāl's affirmation of self-knowledge through 'intuition' or 'inner reflection' puts him at odds with Ṣadrā, who argues at length about the impossibility of self-knowledge through reflection or introspection. Recalling briefly from chapter two, Ṣadrā's argument was that any phenomenal states or mental events that the self ascribes to itself already presupposes an underlying awareness of the self, which means one cannot have self-knowledge on the basis of introspection and attending to one's self. The argument can be restated in the following propositional form:[1085]

1. When I attend to my self, I am performing an act of 'introspection' on my self.
2. This already implies an objectivation of the self, which can be called the 'introspected self.'
3. Let this 'introspected self' be Θ and the 'self' doing the introspection be Φ (the true self).
4. Now, in order to have self-knowledge there must be a complete identity between Φ and Θ.
5. But how might one ascertain this identity?
6. Should I try to ascertain it through a further introspection? If I do this, I will then have Θ1, and then the challenge would be to affirm the identity between Θ1 and Φ. But then in order to affirm this identity, I will need to carry out yet a further act of introspection, and *ad infinitum*.
7. So, the only way to avoid this vicious circle would be to assert that I am already acquainted with my self in some *a priori, non-objectifying* fashion, which is existentially identical with the very being of the reality of my self. In other words, I know my self directly through my consciousness that is the very nature of the self because the essence of my self at its most basic level is this very consciousness.

It is noteworthy that even though both Bergson and Iqbāl reject Kantian denial of direct self-knowledge, their notion of 'intuition' has to somehow assume self-knowledge. Regarding the intuition of the self, Iqbāl quotes from Bergson's *L'Évolution créatrice*, and explains the following:

What do I find when I fix my gaze on my own conscious experience? In the words of Bergson: "I pass from state to state. I am warm or cold. I am merry or sad, I work or I do nothing, I look at what is around me or I think of something else. Sensations, feelings, volitions, ideas– such are the changes into which my existence is divided and which color

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[1082] Iqbāl, "McTaggart's Philosophy," 209.
[1083] I.e. in the Bergsonian sense of intuition.
[1084] For instance: "It is obvious that we know our own self and Nature by inner reflection and sense-perception respectively." Iqbāl, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought*, 15.
[1085] See ch. 2, 48-58.

it in turns. I change then, without ceasing." Thus, there is nothing static in my inner life; all is a constant mobility, an unceasing flux of states, a perpetual flow in which there is no halt or resting place. Constant change, however, is unthinkable without time. On the analogy of our inner experience, then, conscious existence means life in time. A keener insight into the nature of conscious experience, however, reveals that the self in its inner life moves from the center outwards.[1086]

While one can debate what one really experiences when one fixes one's gaze on one's consciousness, from Ṣadrā's viewpoint this already *assumes* the identity between the 'self' which is gazing introspectively and the 'self' whose states are being experienced, so the vicious circle or the infinite regress was not avoided. When Iqbāl says "my perception of things that confront me is superficial and external; but my perception of my own self is internal, intimate, and profound," it seems to escape his mind that there is a gap between one's act of perception and the object which is perceived that simply cannot be assumed.[1087] In any event, drawing again on Bergson's distinction between the superficial and the fundamental self,[1088] Iqbāl asserts that a phenomenological analysis of our conscious experience reveals that we have a deeper self, namely the appreciative self, in addition to a more mundane, social self, known as the efficient self:

> A deeper analysis of conscious experience reveals to us what I have called the appreciative side of the self. With our absorption in the external order of things, necessitated by our present situation, it is extremely difficult to catch a glimpse of the appreciative self. In our constant pursuit after external things we weave a kind of veil round the appreciative self which thus becomes completely alien to us. It is only in the moments of profound meditation, when the efficient self is in abeyance, that we sink into our deeper self and reach the inner center of experience. In the life-process of this deeper ego the states of consciousness melt into each other.[1089]

That is, a deeper look into the nature of conscious experience reveals that the self in its inner life moves from the center toward the periphery, which can be described as appreciative and efficient self respectively. The efficient self, Iqbāl maintains, is the practical self of everyday life in its dealing with the external order of things which determine our passing states of consciousness and

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[1086] Iqbāl, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought*, 37-8. Cf. Bergson, *L'Évolution créatrice* (Paris: Félix Alcan, 1908), 1

[1087] It is however interesting to note that while explaining Avicenna and Suhrawardī's philosophy, Iqbāl shows awareness of the 'unmediated' character of consciousness, as in the following: "Moreover, the fact that the soul is immediately self-conscious—conscious of itself through itself conclusively shows that in its essence the soul is quite independent of any physical accompaniment." Iqbāl, *Development of Metaphysics*, 35. And, "The Abstract Light knows itself through itself, and does not stand in need of a non-ego to reveal its own existence to itself. Consciousness or self-knowledge, therefore, is the very essence of Abstract light, as distinguished from the negation of light." Iqbāl, *Development of Metaphysics*, 101. Matters would turn out to be quite different, had Iqbāl chosen to engage Islamic philosophy in a serious manner. It is because of these kinds of passages that made the Iranian philosopher Dīnānī surmise that Iqbāl's *khūdī* was influenced by Suhrawardī's philosophy, although there is no direct evidence to verify this. See Ghulām Ḥusayn Ibrāhīmī Dīnānī, *Shuʿāʿ-i andīsha u shuhūd dar falsafa-yi Suhrawardī* (Tehran: Ḥikmat, 1996), 534.

[1088] Henri Bergson, *Time and Free Will: An Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness*, tr. by F.L. Pogson (Montana: Kessinger Publishing Company, 1910), 127-8.

[1089] Iqbāl, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought*, 38.

stamp on these states their own spatial feature of mutual isolation. The self here lives outside itself, as it were, and while retaining its unity as a whole, it discloses itself as nothing more than a series of specific states. The time in which the efficient self lives is, therefore, the time which we conceive as long and short. But time so regarded is not true time, since existence in serial time is spurious existence. However, in our profound meditative experiences, we come across another dimension of the self that is perceived as a synthetic unity, in which various states of consciousness melt into one another to give a sense of the whole.

Unity of Self and Consciousness

After stating that the self or one's 'I' is the indubitable fact of experience that cannot be denied, Iqbāl turns his attention to explicating its nature through the method of intuition. Even though he does not address the issue of how the 'I' as subject is related to the 'I' as object, which is crucial in any discussion of self-knowledge or self-identity, Iqbāl points out that an important characteristic of the self is its essential privacy which reveals the uniqueness of every ego. Iqbāl says:

> [M]y desire for a certain thing is essentially mine. Its satisfaction means my private enjoyment. If all mankind happen to desire the same thing, the satisfaction of their desire will not mean the satisfaction of my desire when I do not get the thing desired. The dentist may sympathize with my toothache, but cannot experience the feeling of my toothache. My pleasures, pains, and desires are exclusively mine, forming a part and parcel of my private ego alone. My feelings, hates and loves, judgements and resolutions, are exclusively mine. God Himself cannot feel, judge, and choose for me when more than one course of action is open to me.[1090]

This passage reveals an original insight regarding the first-person irreducibility of the self. Recalling our 'first-person' vs. 'third-person' distinction of conscious experience (see ch. 1), it is not difficult to see where Iqbāl is going with all this. If I desire something its fulfilment will be my own private enjoyment. From a third-person view, the rest of humanity may observe that I am reaping the benefit of satisfying a particular desire and the scientists may analyze all the relevant stimuli causing my 'private enjoyment' and pin down all the corresponding neural activities, but none of these would be sufficient to capture the first-person character of my experience which is irreducible through its 'what-it-is-likeness' and 'for-me-onlyness.'[1091] This is true of every mental event that is experienced from the first-person perspective. Hence Iqbāl underlines some of obvious examples such as toothache and feelings of love and hate that are irreducible vis-à-vis the third-person standpoint because of their 'mineness' or 'for-me-onlyness.' One may also interpret this text as an argument for what is known as the 'privilege access' to the self,[1092] which has generated much controversy in recent philosophy, as it clashes

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[1090] Iqbāl, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought*, 79-80.
[1091] Cf. ch. 2, 43-48. It also reveals the uniqueness of every ego.
[1092] Iqbāl himself uses the word 'privilege' in relation to this phenomenon. See Iqbāl, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought*, 37.

with the forms of externalism about mental content championed by Putnam, Burge and others.[1093]

After stating his case for the 'privilege access' to the self, Iqbāl advances the view that the nature of the self is constituted by consciousness, which has three subdivisions. He articulates the view in his masterwork, *Jāwīd-nāma*:

> Whether you be alive, or dead, or dying—
> for this seek witness from three witnesses.
> The first witness (*shāhid-i awwal*) is self-consciousness (*shuᶜūr-i khwīshtan*),
> to behold oneself in one's own light;
> the second witness is the consciousness of another (*shuᶜūr-i dīgarī*),
> to behold oneself in another's light;
> the third witness is the consciousness of God's Self (*shuᶜūr-i dhāt-i ḥaqq*),
> to behold oneself in the light of God's Self (*khwīsh rā dīdan bih nūr-i dhāt-i ḥaqq*).
> If you remain fast before this light,
> count yourself living and abiding as God!
> Life is to attain one's own station (*bih maqām-i khūd resīdan*),
> life is to see the Divine Self (*dhāt*) without a veil;
> the true man of faith (*mard-i muᵓmin*) will not make do with Attributes—
> the Prophet was not content save with the Divine Self.[1094]

That is to say, the first witness of the self is self-consciousness (*shuᶜūr-i khwīshtan*), which is ascertained when one turns one's gazes upon oneself or see oneself in one's light. The next modality of consciousness has to do with consciousness of another being (*shuᶜūr-i dīgarī*), which is established when we become conscious of the other. In our foray into Mullā Ṣadrā's concept of the self, we saw that he used the phenomenon of 'shame' (*khijāla*) to demonstrate what we called 'intersubjective' consciousness. In his *Reconstruction*, Iqbāl throws some light on how one might affirm intersubjective consciousness. Iqbāl argues that the only ground of our knowledge of a conscious being before us is the physical movements similar to our own from which we can infer the presence of another conscious being. He further expands on the notion of

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[1093] For some philosophers the idea of the 'privilege access' to the self is not philosophy but part of the ordinary folk notion of the mental, enshrined in literature and drama, that makes us believe that each of us stands in a special relationship, denied to others, to our own mental lives so that a significant range of our mental states and attributes are directly available to us and only indirectly available to others. This special relationship is supposed to embrace each of sensation, mood, emotion, belief, desire, fear, intention, action (what I am doing), memory (what I am remembering), perception (what I am seeing), thought (what I am thinking), imagination, and meaning. For various kinds of debates surrounding this issue, see Sanford Goldberg (ed.), *Externalism, Self-knowledge and Skepticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 2015); Hilary Putnam, "The Meaning of "Meaning,"" *Minnesota Studies in the Philosophy of Science* 7 (1975): 131-193; Tyler Burge, "Individualism and the Mental," Midwest Studies in Philosophy 4 (1979): 73–121; reprinted in *Burge, Foundations of Mind: Philosophical Essays*, Volume 2 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007) 100-150; Paul Snowdon, "How to Think about Phenomenal Self-Knowledge," in A. Coliva, ed., The Self and Self-knowledge (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 243-262; John McDowell, "Intentionality and Interiority in Wittgenstein," in K. Puhl, ed., *Meaning Scepticism*, Berlin and New York: de Gruyter, 1991), 148-169; Michael McKinsey, "Anti-Individualism and Privileged Access," *Analysis* 51 (1991): 9-16; Quassim Cassam, *Self-Knowledge for Humans* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 50ff. Cf. also, Noam Chomsky, *Language and Mind* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), chs. 1-3, for innate self-knowledge through the possession of 'universal grammar.'

[1094] Iqbāl, *Jāwīd-nāma*, in *Kulliyāt-i Iqbāl Farsī*, 607, translated by Arberry, modified, 29-30.

intersubjective consciousness by suggesting that we can be sure of other conscious beings because they respond to our signals and thus constantly supply the necessary supplement to our own disparate thoughts.[1095] So far Iqbāl is in agreement with Ṣadrā about the modalities of reflective and intersubjective consciousness, although their arguments for deducing them are different. However, whereas Ṣadrā talks about 'pre-reflective consciousness' that for him is the precondition of self-knowledge, Iqbāl mentions 'consciousness of the divine' as the third mode of consciousness, which is affirmed when the self becomes conscious of the Divine Self. He further maintains that the purpose of life is to see the Divine Self without a veil, in contrast to Ṣadrā et al. for whom the same goal is attained when one undergoes the experience of *fanāʾ* and *baqāʾ*, since for them the Divine Self cannot be perceived as an object or a Thou.

One related issue that might be raised in the context of Iqbāl's discussion of the modalities of consciousness is the nature and essence of 'consciousness itself.' This is significant since Iqbāl criticizes William James' famous notion of consciousness as 'a stream of thought,' as it is unable to account for the unity of self and consciousness, which is foundational in linking disparate perceptions.[1096] Let us then begin by examining Iqbāl's articulation of consciousness. Iqbāl writes:

> Consciousness may be imagined as a deflection from life. Its function is to provide a luminous point in order to enlighten the forward rush of life.[1097] It is a case of tension, a state of self concentration, by means of which life manages to shut out all memories and associations which have no bearing on a present action. It has no well-defined fringes; it shrinks and expands as the occasion demands. To describe it as an epiphenomenon of the processes of matter is to deny it as an independent activity, and to deny it as an independent activity is to deny the validity of all knowledge which is only a systematized expression of consciousness. Thus consciousness is a variety of the purely spiritual principle of life which is not a substance, but an organizing principle, a specific mode of behavior essentially different to the behavior of an externally worked machine.[1098]

The above explains Iqbāl's notion of consciousness as an organizing principle which is not a substance.[1099] However, one may observe certain inconsistencies in Iqbāl's account. On the one

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[1095] Iqbāl, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought*, 15.

[1096] James points out that all people unhesitatingly believe that they feel themselves thinking and they distinguish the mental state as an inward activity from all the objects with which it may cognitively deal. He thus takes it axiomatic that some form of cogitation is indubitable. As for consciousness as 'stream of thought' he says the following: "Let the case be what it may in others, I am as confident as I am of anything that, in myself, the stream of thinking (which I recognize emphatically as a phenomenon) is only a careless name for what, when scrutinized, reveals itself to consist chiefly of the stream of my breathing. The 'I think' which Kant said must be able to accompany all my objects, is the 'I breathe' which actually does accompany them. There are other internal facts besides breathing (intracephalic muscular adjustments, etc., of which I have said a word in my larger Psychology), and these increase the assets of 'consciousness,' so far as the latter is subject to immediate perception; but breath, which was ever the original of 'spirit,' breath moving outwards, between the glottis and the nostrils, is, I am persuaded, the essence out of which philosophers have constructed the entity known to them as consciousness. That entity is fictitious, while thoughts in the concrete are fully real." William James, "Does Consciousness Exist?" *The Journal of Philosophy, Psychology and Scientific Methods* 1.18 (1904): 477-91, at 491; Cf. *Principles of Psychology*, I.ix, 237-248.

[1097] This part is adopted from Bergson. See his *Creative Evolution*, 189ff.

[1098] Iqbāl, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought*, 33.

[1099] As noted in previous chapters, many Islamic philosophers contend that consciousness is not reducible to the spectrum of experiential qualities that characterize sense-differentiated objects of experience, sensory qualities,

hand, he affirms that consciousness is a 'spiritual principle of life,' whose function must be to organize disparate elements of the mind in order to bestow upon them some kind of order, since Iqbāl also states that it is an 'organizing principle,' while on the other, he asserts that consciousness is a 'deflection from life.' Moreover, if consciousness is a specific mode of behavior, e.g. an attitude of astonishment, it is difficult to see how it can also act as an 'organizing principle' which must, in some sense, be distinct from a mode of behavior; otherwise, why should consciousness, as a specific behavior, be different from other kinds of behavior or mental phenomena? Notwithstanding these inconsistencies, Iqbāl makes it clear that consciousness cannot be regarded as an epiphenomenon of matter, and is distinct from the working of a machine, i.e. artificial intelligence. For Iqbāl, understanding the true nature of consciousness is vital, as it illuminates the nature of the self. So Iqbāl now turns to James' conception of consciousness as 'a stream of thought,' which is a conscious flow of changes with a felt continuity. In Iqbāl's view, James comes up with a kind of inclusive principle to explain our conscious experiences, which are somehow interlinked to form a flow of mental life. On this view, the nature of the self comprises the feelings of personal life, in which every pulse of thought, present or perishing, is an indivisible unity which knows and recollects. So the self is the principle that appropriates the passing of pulses—present and future. According to Iqbāl, such a description of the mental life is ingenious; but it fails to unravel the true nature of consciousness. Iqbāl then argues that "consciousness is something single, presupposed in all mental life, and not bits of consciousness, mutually reporting to one another."[1100] This is because James' interpretation of consciousness, Iqbāl says, entirely ignores the relatively permanent element in experience. In James account, Iqbāl continues, "There is no continuity of being between the passing thoughts. When one of these is present, the other has totally disappeared." As such, the passing thought, which is irrevocably lost, cannot be known and appropriated by the present thought, and so on. Iqbāl then elucidates a subtle point by saying his criticism does not imply that the "ego is over and above the mutually penetrating multiplicity we call experience," for this would lead to a positing of the ego that stands outside experience and watches over all thoughts and mental events, which is absurd. Iqbāl writes:

> The life of the ego is a kind of tension caused by the ego invading the environment and the environment invading the ego. The ego does not stand outside this arena of mutual invasion. It is present in it as directive energy and is formed and disciplined by its own experience.[1101] The Qur'an is clear on this directive function of the ego: "And they ask thee of the soul. Say: the soul proceeded from my Lord's *Amr* [Command]: but of knowledge, only a little to you is given" (Q. 17: 85).[1102]

So for Iqbāl, the ego or the self is already enmeshed in conscious experience, and does not stand outside experience because experience itself can be considered 'the self at work' in its act of

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emotions, mood, memory or the imagination. Rather, a correct understanding of consciousness should treat it as a qualitative, multifaceted phenomenon that is explicable in terms of various mental states. Although in this paradigm, consciousness is the defining feature of human subjectivity, it does not mean it is a sort of 'witness-self' over and above each and every mental activity. Rather, for these philosophers, the most basic form of consciousness is *non-egological*, i.e., one in which there is no distinct sense of the self as an 'I.' See ch. 2, 48ff.

[1100] Iqbāl, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought*, 81-2.
[1101] Iqbāl, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought*, 82.
[1102] Iqbāl, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought*, 82.

perceiving, judging, and willing.[1103] Up to this point, Iqbāl's analysis is philosophically rigorous, but things begin to look somewhat opaque and controversial when his interpretation of the aforementioned verse suggests that the essential nature of the self is directive, as it proceeds from the directive energy[1104] of God. Iqbāl further claims that the personal pronoun used in the expression '*rabbi*' (my Lord) is meant to suggest that "the soul must be taken as something individual and specific, with all the variations in the range, balance, and effectiveness of its unity."[1105] Citing another verse, "Every man acteth after his own manner: but your Lord well knoweth who is best guided in the path" (Q. 17: 84), Iqbāl concludes that the real personality of the self is not a thing; rather it is "a series of acts, mutually referring to one another, and held together by the unity of a directive purpose."[1106] It is hard to see how one can get from a discussion on the nature of consciousness to the nature of the self as something individual "held together by the unity of a directive purpose" through an imaginative use of *taᶜwīl*, without a proper hermeneutical method.[1107]

At any rate, next, Iqbāl sets out to demonstrate the self's unity by deploying the following interrelated arguments:

> The ego reveals itself as a unity of what we call mental states. Mental states do not exist in mutual isolation. They mean and involve one another. They exist as phases of a complex whole, called mind. The organic unity, however, of these interrelated states or, let us say, events is a special kind of unity. It fundamentally differs from the unity of a material thing; for the parts of a material thing can exist in mutual isolation. Mental unity is absolutely unique. We cannot say that one of my beliefs is situated on the right or left of my other belief. Nor is it possible to say that my appreciation of the beauty of the Tāj varies with my distance from Agra.[1108]

Iqbāl reinforces the above argument by pointing out that when we think about the conclusion of a certain syllogism, all of its premises must be believed in by one and the same mind. This is because if one believes in the proposition "all men are mortal", and another mind believes in the proposition "Socrates is a man", no inference would be possible. That is to say, the inference is

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[1103] Cf. Zahavi, *Self and Other*, 3-40.

[1104] Iqbāl's translation of *amr*.

[1105] Iqbāl, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought*, 82. The 'soul' is used synonymously with 'self' in this context. This is an instance of inconsistent use, which is also noted in Walī Allāh, see Ch. 4.

[1106] Iqbāl, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought*, 82.

[1107] On *taʾwīl*, see *The Oxford Dictionary of Islam*, available at http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t125/e2358?_hi=0&_pos=7998 (accessed on Jun 06, 2018). For some classical treatments of Qur'anic hermeneutics, see Al-Ghazālī, *Qānūn al-taʾwīl*, edited by Bījū (Damascus, 1992), 15; Frank Griffel, Al-Ghazālī at His Most Rationalist: The Universal Rule for Allegorically Interpreting Revelation *(al-Qānūn al-kullī fī l-taʾwīl),* in: *Islam and Rationality. The Impact of al-Ghazālī. Papers Collected on His 900th Anniversary, vol. 1,* edited by Georges Tamer (Leiden: Brill, 2015)*;* Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Asās al-taqdīs*, edited by Aḥmad Ḥijāzī (Beirut: Dār al-Jil, 1993), 193-94; Ibn Taymiyya, *Darʾ al-taᶜāruḍ al-ᶜaql wa-l-naql*, ed. M. R. Sālim (Riyadh: Jāmiᶜat al-Imām Muḥammad b. Saᶜūd al-Islamiyya, 1981), 4ff.

[1108] Iqbāl, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought*, 79. Moreover, "The unity of the appreciative ego," Iqbāl continues, "is like the unity of the germ in which the experiences of its individual ancestors exist, not as a plurality, but as a unity in which every experience permeates the whole. There is no numerical distinctness of states in the totality of the ego, the multiplicity of whose elements is, unlike that of the efficient self, wholly qualitative." Iqbāl, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought*, 38.

only possible if both the major and minor premises are believed in by one and the same mind.[1109] Similarly, according to Iqbāl, our conscious experience must show 'unity of consciousness,' since our mental states are related as numerous distinct qualities to the self, which remains unchanged during the flux of its qualities. Moreover, Iqbāl argues that one's recognition of another person is only possible if one's self continues to be the same self between the original perception and the present act of memory.[1110]

After discussing 'unity of consciousness' Iqbāl characteristically claims that despite its importance as the center of human personality, "the unity of human consciousness… never really became a point of interest in the history of Muslim thought."[1111] This judgment is rather unfortunate, which is contradicted by historical facts, as we have seen Mullā Ṣadrā dealing with 'unity of consciousness' in Ch. 3. Iqbāl then goes on to make a barrage of simplistic, unsubstantiated claims about the history of Islamic intellectual thought. He opines that the theologians' discussion on the self was rather limited as they regarded it "as a finer kind of matter or a mere accident which dies with the body and is re-created on the Day of Judgement," while "the philosophers of Islam received inspiration from Greek thought."[1112] In the case of other schools, Iqbāl continues, "it must be remembered that the expansion of Islam brought within its fold peoples belonging to different creed-communities, such as Nestorians, Jews, Zoroastrians, whose intellectual outlook had been formed by the concepts of a culture which is… on the whole Magian in its origin and development."[1113] In Iqbāl's estimation, this culture is centered on a "dualistic soul-picture which we find more or less reflected in the theological thought of Islam."[1114] Iqbāl further claims, incorrectly though, that for the school of theology, "of which Ghazālī is the chief exponent, the ego is a simple, indivisible, and immutable soul-substance, entirely different from the group of our mental states and unaffected by the passage of time," and that "the interest of this school… was not so much psychological as metaphysical."[1115] He then goes on to cite Kant's 'paralogisms of pure reason' in order to downplay the soul's 'substantiality' and 'indivisibility.' Needless to say, such a Manichean and biased reading of the history of Islamic philosophy only bolsters what I have been trying to say concerning Iqbāl's incompetence as an intellectual historian (it will not do to argue that as a philosopher, Iqbāl is entitled to unrestrained remarks about history) and his ignorance about developments in post-Avicennan philosophy.

[1109] Iqbāl, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought*, 79-80.

[1110] Such arguments for personal identity in relation to memory would problematic from a contemporary viewpoint. For various contemporary perspectives, see Raymond Martin and J. Barresi, *Personal Identity* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003), *passim*, and Bernard Williams, *Problems of the Self* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), Chs. 1-2.

[1111] Iqbāl, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought*, 77.

[1112] He says no more about the philosophers. Iqbāl, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought*, 77.

[1113] On Magianism in Islam, see Iqbāl, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought*, 77, 114-15, and 124; *Development of Metaphysics*, 4, 99, 147-48; *Kulliyāt-i Iqbāl Farsī*, 209, 264, 386, 415, 470, 484, 511, 561, 823.

[1114] Iqbāl, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought*, 77. Iqbāl only spares 'devotional Sufism' (as opposed to philosophical Sufism) from his lashing critique. Although in the *Development of Metaphysics*, he ascribes pantheism to al-Ḥallāj's Sufism, in the *Reconstruction* he changes his mind and says that the latter's "I am the Real" represents the pinnacle of Sufi thought. This is on account of Massignon's research on al-Ḥallāj, which convinced Iqbāl that al-Ḥallāj's famous statement could not have meant to deny the transcendence of God. This again shows Iqbāl's reliance on secondary scholarship for his sweeping conclusions on the history of Islamic thought.

[1115] Iqbāl, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought*, 80.

In any case, Iqbāl anachronistically ascribes Cartesian dualism of mind and body to Islamic theology and philosophy, and subsequently proceeds to reject it.[1116] In his view, mind and body become one in action. "When I take up a book from my table, Iqbāl reasons," "my act is single and indivisible. It is impossible to draw a line of cleavage between the share of the body and that of the mind in this act. Somehow they must belong to the same system… The system of experiences we call soul or ego is also a system of acts." However, this does not mean there is no distinction between soul and body.[1117] According to Iqbāl, the ego is characterized by its spontaneity, while the body is accumulated action or habit of the soul.[1118] The body, Iqbāl claims, is inseparable from the soul because it is a permanent element of consciousness which, appears from the outside as something stable.[1119] In his poetry too, Iqbāl returns to the issue of soul-body dualism, and expands on his position as narrated above:

> You who say that the body is the soul's vehicle (*maḥmal-i jān ast tan*),
> consider the soul's secret (*sirr-i jān*); tangle not with the body.
> It (i.e. the body) is not a vehicle (*maḥmal*), it is a state of the soul;
> to call it its vehicle is a confusion of terms.
> What is the soul (*jān*)? Rapture, joy, burning and anguish,
> delight in mastering the revolving sphere.
> What is the body (*tan*)? Habit of color and scent (*bā rang u bū khū kardan ast*),
> habit of dwelling in the world's dimensions…
> This body is not the associate of the soul (*īn badan bā jān-i mā anbāz nīst*);
> a handful of earth is no impediment to flight.'[1120]

Also,

> I will tell you a subtle mystery, my son:
> the body is all clay (*tan hama khāk ast*), the soul (*jān*) a precious pearl.
> The body (*jism*) must be melted for the sake of the soul (*jān*),
> the pure must be distinguished from the clay.
> If you cut off a part of the body from the body (*tan az tan*),
> that slice of the body will be lost to you;

[1116] Iqbāl also explicitly mentions Descartes in this regard, whose view on mind-body dualism, alongside that of Leibniz he rejects. Iqbāl, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought*, 83.

[1117] Yet Iqbāl defines matter as "a colony of egos of a low order out of which emerges the ego of a higher order, when their association and interaction reach a certain degree of coordination." This means for Iqbāl, matter is not purely physical in the sense of possessing a materiality, which is "incapable of evolving the creative synthesis we call life and mind." Iqbāl, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought*, 84-5. Such a view of matter brings him very close to Russellian neutral monism in which the distinction between the mental and the physical fades away. For an updated version of Russellian monism, see Galen Strawson, "Realistic Monism: Why Physicalism Entails Panpsychism," *Journal of Consciousness Studies* 13.10/11 (2006): 3–31; "Mind and Being. The Primacy of Panpsychism," in *Panpsychism: Contemporary Perspectives*, edited by Godehard Brüntrup and Ludwig Jaskolla (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 161–208.

[1118] It is interesting to note that even though Iqbāl was aware of the animal spirit doctrine (*al-rūḥ al-ḥaywānī*) which acts as an intermediary between body and soul in Ṣadrā's psychology, he does not mention it here. However, in his *Development of Metaphysics* he says the following: "But the soul cannot transmit the directly received light to the dark solid body which, considering its attributes, stands on the opposite pole of being. In order to be related to each other, they require a medium between them, something standing midway between light and darkness. This medium is the animal soul a hot, fine, transparent vapor which has its principal seat in the left cavity of the heart, but also circulates in all parts of the body." Iqbāl, *Development of Metaphysics*, 109.

[1119] Iqbāl, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought*, 83-4.

[1120] Iqbāl, *Jāwīd-nāma*, in *Kulliyāt-i Iqbāl Farsī*, 612, translated by Arberry, modified, 33.

but the soul which is drunk with vision—
if you give it away, it will return to you.
The soul's substance (*jawhar*) resembles nothing else;
it is in bonds, and yet not in bonds;
if you watch over it, it dies in the body,
and if you scatter it, it illuminates the gathering.
What, noble sir (*mard-i rād*), is the soul 'drunk with vision'? (*jān jilwih-yi mast*)
What does it mean to 'give the soul away'?
To give away the soul is to surrender it to God, (*bih ḥaqq pardākhtan*)
it means melting the mountain with the soul's flame (*sūz-i jān*).
'Drunk with vision' means discovering one's self (*khwīshtan rā daryāftan*),
shining like a star in the night-season:
not to discover one's self is not to exist (*khwīsh rā nā-yāftan, nābūdan ast*),
to discover is to bestow the self on the self (*khūd rā bih khūd bakhshūdan ast*).[1121]

Individualism and Multi-Dimensionality of the Self

Like Mullā Ṣadrā and Walī Allāh, Iqbāl presents a complex philosophy of the self, one that is characterized by degrees, dimensions and modes of various kinds. But in contrast to his Muslim predecessors, Iqbāl forcefully affirms the 'individuality' and 'uniqueness' of every self, although it should be noted that Ṣadrā et al. are not necessarily opposed to some form of 'individuality' either. Iqbāl writes:

> The Qur'an in its simple, forceful manner emphasizes the individuality and uniqueness of man, and has, I think, a definite view of his destiny as a unity of life.1 It is in consequence of this view of man as a unique individuality which makes it impossible for one individual to bear the burden of another,2 and entitles him only to what is due to his own personal effort3.[1122]

Iqbāl goes one step further and claims that all life is individual, there being no such thing as universal life. In Iqbāl's view, even "God himself is an individual: He is the most unique individual."[1123] In advancing his unique version of 'individualism,'[1124] Iqbāl was responding to both British Idealism and 'pantheistic Sufism,' both of which, in his opinion, take absorption in universal life as their final goal:

[1121] Iqbāl, *Jāwīd-nāma*, in *Kulliyāt-i Iqbāl Farsī*, 751, translated by Arberry, modified, 119-20.
Cf. So long as the heart (*dil*) is free, the body (*tan*) is free,
    else, the body is a straw in the path of the wind.
    Like the body, the heart too is bound by laws—
    the heart dies of hatred, lives of faith.
Iqbāl, *Jāwīd-nāma*, in *Kulliyāt-i Iqbāl Farsī*, 766, translated by Arberry, modified, 129.
[1122] Iqbāl, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought*, 76.
[1123] Iqbāl, *Asrār-i khūdī*, translated by Nicholson, xxvii. Similarly, Iqbāl also defines 'life' as the highest form of individual. Iqbāl, *Asrār-i khūdī*, translated by Nicholson, xix.
[1124] Individualism can mean many things. In this context, it is understood in two different ways: 1) as a political doctrine associated with liberalism that emphasizes the autonomy, importance, and freedom of the individual in relation to society and state; and 2) as emphasizing individual uniqueness (*Einzigkeit*) and self-realization. I will come back to this issue in the concluding part of this study.

Obviously this view of man and the universe is opposed to that of the English Neo-Hegelians as well as to all forms of pantheistic Sufism which regard absorption in a universal life or soul as the final aim and salvation of man. The moral and religious ideal of man is not self-negation but self-affirmation, and he attains to this ideal by becoming more and more individual, more and more unique. The Prophet said, '*Takhallaqū bi-akhlāq Allāh*,' 'Create in your selves the attributes of God.' Thus man becomes unique by becoming more and more like the most unique Individual.[1125]

A few points may be noted in the above text from the *Asrār*. What Iqbāl calls 'pantheistic Sufism' (or Persian Sufism elsewhere) is actually folk Sufism, as noted earlier, that has very little to do with the likes of Walī Allāh, Thānavī or others. Next, as we pointed out earlier, Iqbāl mistakenly conceives *fanāʾ* as 'self-negation,' against which he proposes 'self-affirmation.' The self should try to become ever more individual and unique by emulating the attributes of the most unique Individual Being there is, i.e., God. In this way, Iqbāl departs significantly from Ṣadrā et al. by ascribing 'individuality' to God.

Yet in another context Iqbāl's position comes much closer to both Idealist and Sufi view of the self, when he submits that the self or 'I am' possesses a higher and a lower dimension. There Iqbāl says that the 'I am' is insignificant when it is characterized by attributes such as *juhūl* (ignorance), *ẓulūm* (darkness), *ʿajūl* (impatience), *futūr* (lukewarmness), and *ḍaʿīf* (weak), as in the Qur'an, but it is the best of all forms (*aḥsan al-taqwīm*) when it is the bearer of Divine trust. Moreover, the self is capable of both spiritual success and moral corruption. It has also the power of assuming the attributes of God, thus attaining vicegerency of God on earth.[1126] Furthermore, in Iqbāl's scheme of things, the true person not only absorbs the material world by mastering it, but also absorbs God Himself into his self by assimilating divine attributes.[1127] In the *Asrār*, Iqbāl lays out this journey of the self and suggests that it has to go through three successive stages in order to reach perfection:[1128]

(1) Obedience (*iṭāʿat*) to the Shariah
(2) Self-control (*ḍabṭ-i nafs*)
(3) Divine vicegerency (*niyābat-i ḥaqq*)

Concerning obedience (*iṭāʿat*), Iqbāl writes:

By obedience (*farmānpazīrī*) the man of no worth is made worthy;
By disobedience (*ṭighyān*) his fire is turned to ashes.
Whoso would master the sun and the Pleiades,
Let him make himself a prisoner of law (*āʾīn*)!

[1125] Iqbāl, *Asrār-i khūdī*, translated by Nicholson, xxviii-xix.
[1126] Iqbāl, "An Exposition of the Self," 198.
[1127] Iqbāl, *Asrār-i khūdī*, translated by Nicholson, xx.
[1128] Iqbāl, *Asrār-i khūdī*, translated by Nicholson, xxvii. Iqbāl also mentions 'love' that strengthens the self: "The ego is fortified by love. This word is used in a very wide sense and means the desire to assimilate, to absorb. Its highest form is the creation of values and ideals and the endeavor to realize them. Love individualizes the lover as well as the beloved. The effort to realize the most unique individuality individualizes the seeker and implies the individuality of the sought, for nothing else would satisfy the nature of the seeker." Iqbāl, *Asrār-i khūdī*, translated by Nicholson, xxv-xxvi. The Nietzschean connection is examined in pp. 76-79.

The air becomes fragrant when it is imprisoned in the flower-bud;
The perfume becomes musk when it is confined in the -navel of the muskdeer.
The star (*akhtar*) moves towards its goal
With head bowed in surrender to a law.
The grass springs up in obedience to the law of growth:
When it abandons that, it is trodden underfoot.
To burn unceasingly is the law of the tulip.
And so the blood leaps in its veins
Drops of water become a sea by the law of union,
And grains of sand become a Sahara.
Since the inner reality of everything is fortified by law (*bāṭin-i har shayʾ z āʾīn qawī*),
Why dost thou neglect this source of strength?
O thou that art freed from the old custom (*dastūr-i qadīm*),
Adorn thy feet once more with the same fine silver chain!
Do not complain of the hardness of the law,
Do not transgress the decrees of Muṣṭafa[1129] (*ḥudūd-i muṣṭafa*)![1130]

As for the importance of self-control (*ḍabṭ-i nafs*), Iqbāl says the following:

Thy self (*nafs*) cares only for itself, like the camel:
It is self-centered (*khūd-parast*), self-governed (*khūd-sawar*), and self-willed.
Be a man (*mard shaw*), get its halter into thine hand,
That thou mayst become a pearl albeit thou art a potter's vessel.
He that does not command (*farmān*) himself
Becomes a receiver of commands from others…

That is, Iqbāl urges his readers to take control of their self and be self-sufficient, and not self-centered. In addition, in the poem below he delineates the virtues of practicing the 'five pillars,' i.e. the profession of faith, prayer, fasting, almsgiving and annual pilgrimage to Mecca, of Islam sincerely:

So long as thou hold'st the staff of "There is no god but He,"
Thou wilt break every spell (*ṭilism*) of fear.
One to whom God is as the soul (*jān*) in his body (*tanash*),
His neck is not bowed before vanity.
Fear finds no way into his bosom,
heart is afraid of none but Allah.
Whoso dwells in the place of placeless (*iqlīm-i la-ābād*)
Is freed from the bonds of wife and child.
He withdraws his gaze from all except God
And lays the knife to the throat of his son.
Though single, he is like a host in onset:
Life is cheaper in his eyes than wind.

[1129] i.e. the Prophet Muḥammad.
[1130] Iqbāl, *Asrār-i khūdī*, in *Kulliyāt-i Iqbāl Farsī*, 40-41, translated by Nicholson, modified, in *The Secret of the Self*, 74.

249

The profession of "no god but God" is the pearl within prayer:
The Muslim's heart deems prayer a lesser pilgrimage (*ḥajj-i aṣghar*)…
Fasting makes an assault upon hunger and thirst.
And breaches the citadel of sensuality.
The pilgrimage enlightens the primordial nature (*fiṭrat*) of the believer:
It teaches separation from one's home and destroys attachment to one's native land;…
Almsgiving causes love of riches to pass away
And makes equality familiar;
It fortifies the heart with righteousness,
It increases wealth and diminishes fondness for wealth.
All this is a means of strengthening thee:
Thou art impregnable, if thy Islam be strong.[1131]

In the third and final stage of the self's (*khūdī*) development, Iqbāl introduces the concept of divine vicegerency (*niyābat-i ḥaqq*), which is then used to recast the Sufi doctrine of the perfect human.[1132] As the following poem shows, in Iqbāl's reconstruction of the doctrine of the perfect human, some of its traditional elements were retained, some were passed over in silence, while other new ideas were introduced. Like his contemporary Thānavī, who also wrote on the nature of the perfect human based on his commentary on Ibn ʿArabī's *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam* (cf. Ch. 5), Iqbāl too holds that the perfect human is the *telos* of creation and God's true vicegerent on earth. Moreover, the perfect human is the locus of manifestation (*maẓhar*) of the all-comprehensive name (*ism jāmiʿ*) of God, which is Allah. In Iqbāl's rendering of this crucial aspect of the doctrine, the word used is '*ẓill*' rather than '*maẓhar*' to describe how the perfect human embodies the greatest name of God, as in the verse, "His being is the shadow of the Greatest Name (*hastī-yi ū ẓill-i ism-i aʿẓam ast*)." However, unlike Thānavī, Iqbāl does not explain how the perfect human is able to reflect all the countless divine names and attributes in his/her being. Similarly, in Iqbāl's account of the doctrine, the microcosm-macrocosm analogy, the interrelationships of the individual, cosmic and meta-cosmic dimensions of the perfect human, its attribute of possessing the comprehensive state (*nashʾa-yi ʿāmm*), and its ability to know God through higher noetic states are passed over in silence. As Iqbāl writes:

If thou canst rule thy camel, thou wilt rule the world
And wear on thine head the crown of Solomon.
Thou wilt be the glory of the world whilst the world lasts,
And thou wilt reign in the kingdom incorruptible.
'Tis sweet to be God's vicegerent in the world (*nāyib-i ḥaqq dar jahān būdan khūsh ast*)
And exercise sway over the elements (*ʿanaṣur*).
God's vicegerent (*nāyib-i ḥaqq*) is as the soul of the universe (*jān-i ʿālam*),
His being is the shadow of the Greatest Name (*hastī-yi ū ẓill-i ism-i aʿẓam ast*).
He knows the mysteries of part and whole (*juzʾ u kull*),
He executes the command of Allah in the world.
When he pitches his tent in the vast world,

[1131] Iqbāl, *Asrār-i khūdī*, in *Kulliyāt-i Iqbāl Farsī*, 42-43, translated by Nicholson, modified, in *The Secrets of the Self*, 75-78.

[1132] Other terms used for the perfect human are *mard-i muʾmin, mard-i ḥaqq,* and *mard-i tamām*. See Iqbāl, *Kulliyāt-i Iqbāl Farsī*, 53, 627, 638, 664-5, 745, 773, 779, 792, 809, 810, 819, 867, 870.

He rolls up this ancient carpet (*bisāṭ-i kuhna*).
His primordial nature abounds with life and desires to manifest itself:
He will bring another world into existence.
A hundred worlds like this world of parts and wholes
Spring up, like roses, from the seed of his imagination…
To the human race he brings both a glad message and a warning,
He comes both as a soldier and as a marshal and prince.
He is the claimant of, "God taught Adam the names of all things,"
He is the secret of, "Glory to Him that transported His servant by night."
His white hand is strengthened by the staff,
His knowledge is twined with the power of a perfect human (*insān-i kāmil*).[1133]

As for the new elements, we will have an occasion to revisit the doctrine in the next section and discuss Iqbāl's rejoinder to critics regarding the Nietzschean elements in it. But for now I will continue with the *Asrār* and quote the rest of the poem to show some of Iqbāl's innovative moves in his recasting of the perfect human. Iqbāl continues:

He gives a new explanation of life (*zindagī rā mī-kunad tafsīr-i nū*),
A new interpretation of this dream.
His hidden life is being life's mystery (*rāz-i ḥayāt*),
The unheard music of Life's harp (*sāz-i ḥayāt*).
Nature travels in blood for generations
To compose the harmony of his inner self…
Our eyes are bright with tomorrow's dawn.
Appear, O rider of Destiny!
Appear, O light of the dark realm of Change!
Illumine the scene of existence,
Dwell in the blackness of our eyes!
Silence the noise of the nations (*aqwām*)!...[1134]
Bring once more days of peace (*ṣulḥ*) to the world,
Give a message of peace to them that seek battle!...
If thou wouldst annihilation (*fanāʾ*), become free of self (*z khūd āzād shaw*);
If thou wouldst subsistence (*baqāʾ*), become full of self (*bih khūd ābād shaw*)!
What is death? To become oblivious to self (*az khūdī ghāfil shudan*).
Why imagine that it is the parting of soul and body (*jān u tan*)?
Shape yourself through self (*dar khūdī ṣūrat kun*), like Joseph!
Advance from captivity to empire!
Think of self (*khūdī*) and be a man of action (*mard-i kār*)!
Be a man of God (*mard-i ḥaqq*), bear mysteries within![1135]

[1133] Iqbāl, *Asrār-i khūdī*, in *Kulliyāt-i Iqbāl Farsī*, 44-45, translated by Nicholson, modified, in *The Secrets of the Self*, 79-81.

[1134] Iqbāl, *Asrār-i khūdī*, in *Kulliyāt-i Iqbāl Farsī*, 45-46, translated by Nicholson, modified, in *The Secrets of the Self*, 82-84.

[1135] Iqbāl, *Asrār-i khūdī*, in *Kulliyāt-i Iqbāl Farsī*, 53, translated by Nicholson, modified in *The Secrets of the Self*, 98-99.

The idea of the perfect human's giving new explanations and interpretations of life is certainly something one would not encounter in the traditional accounts of the doctrine. So would be the case with the perfect human being a harbinger of 'world peace' and a mediator of national conflicts. Above all, Iqbāl also links the doctrine to dynamism and being a man of action (*mard-i kār*), which are the distinct features of his concept of the self.

It is to be noted that in discussing the self's development through the three stages, Iqbāl stresses that the moral and religious ideal of human is not self-negation but self-affirmation, and the ideal selfhood, i.e. the ideal of the perfect human she aspires to realize consists in "becoming more and more individual, more and more unique."[1136] Yet, it is vital to note that the self cannot realize this unique individuality on its own, whence arises the necessity of community, which is the focus of Iqbāl's *Rumūz-i bī-khūdī*. In the *Rumūz*, Iqbāl aims to show that only in an ideal Islamic community can individuals hope to attain his or her unique individuality. As Arberry rightly notes, "[T]he Iqbālian conception of selfhood, if developed in isolation from society, ends in unmitigated egoism and anarchy... Only as a member of this community that the individual, by the twin principles of conflict and concord, is able to express himself fully and ideally."[1137] Iqbāl thus reins in on his individualism by limiting the individual's unrestrained freedom, and by emphasizing the ideal symbiosis that must exist between the individual and the community for the sake of the former's self-realization. In the *Reconstruction*, Iqbāl neatly explains the nature of this symbiosis:

> The truth is that the causal chain wherein we try to find a place for the ego is itself an artificial construction of the ego for its own purposes. The ego is called upon to live in a complex environment, and he cannot maintain his life in it without reducing it to a system which would give him some kind of assurance as to the behavior of things around him. The view of his environment as a system of cause and effect is thus an indispensable instrument of the ego, and not a final expression of the nature of Reality. Indeed in interpreting Nature in this way the ego understands and masters its environment, and thereby acquires and amplifies its freedom.[1138]

In other places, Iqbāl casts further light on the interpenetrating relationship between what I have been calling the socio-cultural and ethico-metaphysical dimension of the self. Unlike Ṣadrā et al., Iqbāl devotes pages to explicating the socio-cultural dimension of the self that forms a crucial part of his overall philosophy of the self. At a basic level, Iqbāl seems to agree with Ṣadrā et al. that the socio-religious context influences the experience and destiny of the self, as the above text shows. But their views soon part ways when Iqbāl, quoting recent biological research, argues that "the individual as such is a mere abstraction, a convenient expression for the facility of social reference, and a passing moment in the life of the group to which he happens to belong." This is because "his thoughts, his aspirations, his ways of life, his entire mental and physical outfit, the very number of days which he lives, are all determined by the needs of the community of whose collective life he is only a partial expression."[1139] Moreover, "the individual," Iqbāl continues, "is nothing more than an unconscious performance of a particular

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[1136] See p. 248.
[1137] A. J. Arberry, in Muḥammad Iqbāl, *Rumūz-i bī-khūdī = The Mysteries of Selflessness,* translated, Arthur J. Arberry (London: J. Murray, 1953), xi.
[1138] Iqbāl, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought*, 86.
[1139] Iqbāl, *Speeches, Writings and Statements*, 119.

function which social economy has allotted to him."[1140] Interestingly, such views on the socio-cultural dimension of the self bring Iqbāl very close to post-colonialist authors such as Homi Bhabha, who as we noted, conceives of the self in terms of endless 'performance.' Iqbāl's assertion that "the individual as such is a mere abstraction," also seems to rhyme well with Bhabha's contention that the self has no *a priori* identity, since selfhood or 'the act of self' begins by imitating the 'other.'[1141]

At any rate, it is evident that Iqbāl attributes 'selfhood' to both the individual and society to bring out the interpenetrating relationship between the socio-cultural and the ethico-metaphysical self.[1142] In what follows, I will throw more light on this relationship by citing his poems from the *Rumūz*. In Iqbāl's own words:

> The link that binds the individual
> To the society (*jamāʿat*) a mercy is;
> His truest self in the community (*az millat ast*)
> Alone achieves perfection. Wherefore be
> So far as in thee lies in close rapport
> With thy society, and luster bring
> To the wide intercourse of free-born men (*aḥrār*).
> Keep for thy talisman these words he spoke
> That was the best of mortals (*khayr al-bashar*): "Satan holds
> His furthest distance from those who live in a society."
> The individual a mirror holds
> To the community, and they to him (*fard u qawm āyinah-yi yakdīgarānd*);…
> And the community is organized
> As by comprising many such as he (*millat az afrād mī-yābad niẓām*).
> He who has not drunk
> The water of the community's zamzam (*harkih āb az zamzam-i millat nakhūrad*),
> The flames of minstrelsy within his lute grow cold, and die. [1143]

After affirming the organic link between the individual and society, Iqbāl goes on to narrate how the community, in which the individual self grows, contributes to the latter's self-disciplining:

[1140] Iqbāl, *Speeches, Writings and Statements*, 119.

[1141] See ch. 2, 98-99.

[1142] Cf. Iqbāl, *Speeches, Writings and Statements*, 120. For various uses of the term 'self' in relation to its socio-cultural dimension, see more examples: "Every Muslim nation must sink into her own deeper self." Iqbāl, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought*, 126. "Turks have estranged themselves from their selfhood (*khūdī*)." Iqbāl, *Jāwīd-nāma*, in *Kulliyāt-i Iqbāl Farsī*, 732, translated by Arberry, in the *Jāvid-nāma,* 108. "The Turks have departed from their own selves (*turk az khūd raftih*)," drunk with Europe, having quaffed honeyed poison from the hand of Europe (*az dast-i farhang*)." Iqbāl, *Jāwīd-nāma*, in *Kulliyāt-i Iqbāl Farsī*, 767, translated by Arberry, in the *Jāvid-nāma,* 129-30. In *Ḍarb-i kalīm,* Iqbāl writes:
> If nation's self (*khūdī*) grows too much weak
> By chains of bondage and much meek,
> It need not hear the Persian strains,
> For these will only add to pains.

Iqbāl, *Ḍarb-i kalīm*, in *Kulliyāt-i Iqbāl Urdū*, 589.

[1143] Iqbāl, *Rumūz-i bī-khūdī*, in *Kulliyāt-i Iqbāl Farsī*, 85-86, translated by Arberry, modified, in *The Mysteries of Selflessness,* 5-6.

The individual, alone, is heedless of high objectives (*maqāṣid*);
His strength is apt to dissipate itself;
The community only makes him intimate
With discipline, teach him to be as soft
And tractable as is the gentle breeze,
Set him in earth like a well-rooted oak,
Close-fetter him, to make him truly free (*āzādash kunad*).
When he is prisoner to the chain of dogmas (*āyīn*)
His deer, by nature wild and uncontrolled,
Yields in captivity the precious musk.[1144]

Concerning how the community can help the self grow virtues, Iqbāl writes:

While pride of self pulls its own way, humility is not born;
Pull pride together, and humility
Comes into being. The self negates itself
In the midst of society (*dar jamāʿat khūdshikan gardad khūdī*), that it maybe
No more a petal, but a rosary.[1145]

Just as the individual is in need of an ideal community for its growth, the community too needs the contribution of its individuals to help develop a strong sense of self-identity. Iqbāl illustrates this by invoking the metaphor of the infant, as it learns to develop its sense of 'I-ness:'

O thou of gaze intent, hast thou not seen
An infant, unaware of its own self (*khūd bī-khabar*),
So unaware of what is far, what near
That it aspires to rein the very moon?
To all a stranger, mother-worshipping,
Drunken with weeping and with milk and sleep,
His ear cannot distinguish *la* from *mi (zīr u bam)*,
His music's the mere jangling of a chain.
Simple and virgin are his thoughts as yet,
Pure as a pearl his speech; to search and search
His thinking's fabric, as on his lips
Spring ever Why and When and How and Where;…
At the last his eyes fall upon himself;
His little hand clutched to his breast, he cries 'I!' (*bar sīna mī-gūyad kih 'man'*)
So his memory maketh him aware
Of his own self (*khūd shināsāyash kunad*), and keeps secure the bond
Linking tomorrow with his yesterday;
Upon this golden thread his days are strung
Like jewels on a necklace, one by one.

[1144] Iqbāl, *Rumūz-i bī-khūdī*, in *Kulliyāt-i Iqbāl Farsī*, 85-86, translated by Arberry, modified, in *The Mysteries of Selflessness,* 6.
[1145] Iqbāl, *Rumūz-i bī-khūdī*, in *Kulliyāt-i Iqbāl Farsī*, 86-7, translated by Arberry, modified, in *The Mysteries of Selflessness,* 6-7.

Though, every breath, ever diminishes,
Ever augments his flesh, "I am the same
As I have ever been *('man' hamānastam kih būdam)*," his heart affirms.
This newborn 'I' the inception is of life *(īn man-i nūzāda āghāz-i ḥayāt)*,
This the true song of life's awaking lutes.[1146]

Following that he draws an analogy between the child and the newborn community to explain how the community develops its sense of self through its individuals:

Like to a child is a community
Newborn *(millat-i nūzāda mithl-i ṭiflak ast)*, an infant in its mother's arms;
All unaware of self *(az khwīshtan-i nā-āgahī)*; a jewel stained
By the road's dust; unbound to its to-day
Is its tomorrow, fettered not its feet
By the successive links of night and day.
It is the pupil lodged in Being's eye *(chashm-i hastī)*,
Other beholding, lost unto itself;
A hundred knots are in its cord to loose
Ere it can reach the end of selfhood's thread (tār-i khūdī)
But when with energy it falls upon
The world's great labors, stable then becomes
This new consciousness *(shuᶜūr-i tāza)*; it raises up
A thousand images, and casts them down;
So it createth its own history.
Yet, when the individual *(fard)* has snapped
The bond that joins his days, as when a comb
Sheddeth its teeth, so his perception is.[1147]

Self, Freedom and Immortality

What does multi-dimensionality of the self amount to? Does the self have a metaphysical core beyond its many appearances and dimensions? What then is the real nature of the self and how and why does this differ from what we ordinarily perceive, think, and treat the self to be? In the final section of this chapter, I will examine Iqbāl's account of the true nature of the 'I,' its final destiny, and its relation to the notion of the perfect human. There is no better place to address this question than having recourse to his understudied commentary on Shabistarī's *Gulshan-i rāz*. Among Sufi metaphysicians, Shabistarī stands out for his extensive treatment of self and subjectivity, whose well-known *Gulshān-i rāz* contains a wealth of meditations on self-inquiry and the reality of human nature. The treatise itself can be divided into a series of inquiries pertaining to the nature of reality and self-realization, among which a chapter is particularly devoted to the question of what is the reality of the 'I' or what the 'I' means. At the beginning of

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[1146] Iqbāl, *Rumūz-i bī-khūdī*, in *Kulliyāt-i Iqbāl Farsī,* 145-48, translated by Arberry, modified, in *The Mysteries of Selflessness,* 59-60.

[1147] Iqbāl, *Rumūz-i bī-khūdī*, in *Kulliyāt-i Iqbāl Farsī*, 145-48, translated by Arberry, modified, in *The Mysteries of Selflessness,* 59-62.

his *Gulshan-i rāz-i jadīd*, Iqbāl himself explains the reason for composing a commentary Shabistarī's *Gulshan-i rāz*:

> I am delineating my thought in a different style,
> while responding to the book of Maḥmūd [Shabistarī].
> Since the days of the Shaikh (i.e. Shabistarī) until our own time,
> No man has given the sparks of fire to our life.[1148]

The fifth inquiry of *Gulshan-i rāz* directly addresses the question "Who am I," as in the following:

> Who am I? Inform me what the 'I' means (*kih bāsham man, marā az man khabar kun*).
> What is the meaning of "travel into yourself?"[1149]

In his commentary, Iqbāl then responds as follows:

> The Self (*khūdī*) is the amulet (*taᶜwīdh*) for the safeguarding of the universe.
> The first ray of Its essence is life.
> Life emerges from its sweet dream (*khwāb-i khūsh*),
> Its inner core which is one becomes many (*darūnash chūn yakī bisiyār gardad*)…
> Its inner core is a shoreless sea,
> The heart of every drop is a turbulent wave.
> which has no desire to be patient.
> Its manifestation is through individuals (*afrād*).
> Life is fire and selves are like its sparks;
> Like stars they are (both) stationary and moving.
> Without going outside, it recognizes others;
> Whilst in the midst of company, it is in solitude.
> Observe its self-entanglement (*bih khūd pīchīdan*),
> What develops out of the trodden earth.
> It is constantly engaged in an internal conflict with itself,
> Its war with itself gives to things a system and a purpose…
> The earthly garb is a veil over the self (*khūdī*),
> Its appearance is like the rising of the sun.
> In the innermost heart of ours is its sun,
> Our dust is illuminated through its substance (*jawhar*).[1150]

That is, the Self, identified with God, is the guardian of the universe. Its inner core, which is a shoreless sea, becomes many through the manifestation of multiplicity of individuals (*afrād*). Also, the first determination of the Self's inner core is 'life' (*ḥayāt*). Selves are distinguished from one another through their participation in 'life.' Moreover, the earthly garb, i.e. the body, of the self is a veil over its true nature. The self is psychologically characterized by inner turmoil that eventually gives rise to meaning in its life. Iqbāl further continues:

[1148] Iqbāl, *Gulshan-i rāz-i jadīd*, in *Kullīyāt-i Iqbāl Fārsī*, 537, trans. Ahmad Dar, significantly modified.

[1149] Iqbāl, *Gulshan-i rāz-i jadīd*, in *Kullīyāt-i Iqbāl Fārsī*, 552, trans. Ahmad Dar, significantly modified.

[1150] Iqbāl, *Gulshan-i rāz-i jadīd*, in *Kullīyāt-i Iqbāl Fārsī*, 552-3, trans. Ahmad Dar, significantly modified.

You ask to be informed about the 'I,'
and the meaning of "travel into yourself" (*andar khūd safar kun*).
I related to you about the body-soul relationship (*rabṭ-i jān u tan*)
Travel into yourself and see the reality of the 'I.'
"Travelling into the self" means being born without father and mother,
To conquer the Pleiades from the edge of the roof;
To hold eternity with a single stroke of inconstant breath,
To see without the rays of the sun;
To overcome every sign of hope and fear,
To sunder the sea like Moses,
To break this spell of ocean and land,
To split the moon with a finger.
To return from the placeless place (*lā-makān*),
Which is within one's heart, with the world in his hand.[1151]

In section 3, we have already clarified Iqbāl's take on the body-soul relationship, which is anti-Cartesian in spirit because for him, the body is accumulated actions of the soul. As for the phrase "travelling into the self," it implies conquering the universe through scientific knowledge so that one would be able to study the stars from the edge of the roof. It also means overcoming psychological weaknesses such as fear.

In any event, as we compare Iqbāl's commentary vis-à-vis Shabistarī's original text, we observe the marked contrast in their exposition of the true nature of the 'I.' For instance, in his *Gulshan-i rāz* Shabistarī says:

Who am I? Tell me what the 'I' means?
What is the meaning of "travel into yourself" (*andar khūd safar kun*)?
Again you question me, saying, "What am I" (*man chīst*)
Inform me as to what 'I' means.

When Absolute Being (*hast-i muṭlaq*) has to be indicated
They use the word 'I' to express it.
When Reality (*ḥaqīqat*) is conditioned into myriads of phenomena
You express it by the word 'I,'
'I' and 'you' are the accidents of Being (*wujūd*).
The networks of the niches of the lamp of the Necessary Being.
Know bodies and spirits (*arwāḥ*) are all the One Light,
Now shining from mirrors, now from torches.
You say the word 'I' in every connection
Indicates the soul of man;
But as you have made theoretical analysis (*khirad*) your guide,
You do not know your self from one of your parts (*z juzwi khwīsh khūd ra*),
Go, O master, and know yourself well (*nīk bi-shinās*),
But don't mistake swelling for the fullness of health.

[1151] Iqbāl, *Gulshan-i rāz-i jadīd*, in *Kullīyāt-i Iqbāl Fārsī*, 553, trans. Ahmad Dar, significantly modified.

'I' and 'you' are higher than body and soul (*jān u tan*),
For both body and soul are parts of 'I.'
The word 'I' is not limited to human (*na insān ast makhṣūṣ*),
So that you should say it means only the soul (*jān*).
Travel the path that raises you above time and space,
Leave this world and be yourself a world for yourself…
When this veil of [of identity] is lifted from you
The laws of religion (*ḥukm-i madhhab*) and its sects will disappear.
All the rules of the Sharia (*ḥukm-i sharīᶜat*) are because of your 'I,'
Since the latter is tied to body and soul (*jān u tan*).
When this 'I' of yours does not remain in between,
What place have the Ka'ba, synagogue or monastery?...[1152]

In order to properly situate Shabistarī's thought, one has to take into account the general Akbarian (i.e. pertaining to the School of Ibn ᶜArabī) metaphysical worldview that informs his theory of the self. According to this perspective, reality is polarized into the realm of true and illusory existence. That is to say, everything that is other than God (*mā siwa l-llāh*), does not, strictly speaking, possess any exisetnce (*wujūd*) of its own. Although things appear to exist in the external world, their *wujūd* depends on God's own *wujūd*. Hence things other than God 'exist' only in a limited sense, while God or Absolute Being (*al-wujūd al-muṭlaq*) possesses true being. Now while the followers of Ibn ᶜArabī tend to base their ontology on the objective pole of *wujūd*, Shabistarī, on the contrary, is one of the very few thinkers who flips the objective side of *wujūd* and recasts it through its subjective pole as represented by the divine Selfhood. That is the very reason he stresses that various indexicals such as 'I' or 'you' are nothing but determinations (*taᶜayyunāt*) of Absolute Being, Who alone can be represented by the 'I.' This immediately raises the question to what does the 'I' truly refer? In contrast to those views that identify the 'I' with mere 'rationality' (*nuṭq*) or the body-mind complex or the material composite (*jumla*), i.e. the body and its attendant accidents (*aᶜrāḍ*), Shabistarī argues that the 'I' is something higher than the body, soul or intellect, and is not limited to the human subjectivity either. That is to say, even entities other than humans possess 'I' or their particular forms of consciousness and subjectivity. This is because just as there is only one True Being in the order of reality (all others beings being Its determinations), there is only one Self or 'I' that self-determines Itself into myriads of beings as a result of Its infinitude.[1153] In his famous *Mafātīḥ al-iᶜjāz fī sharḥ Gulshan rāz,* Shabistarī's commentator Lāhījī brings out this point well:

When Absolute Reality (*ḥaqīqat-i muṭlaqa*), which is Absolute Being (*wujūd-i muṭlaq*), relativizes Itself by self-determination (*taᶜayyun*), It leaves its absoluteness (*iṭlāq*), and manifests Itself from its hiddenness. You then name It 'I' (man), i.e. the conditioned

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[1152] Maḥmūd Shabistarī, *Gulshan-i rāz*, ed. by Parvīz ᶜAbbāsī (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Ilhām, 2002), 58. One also finds echoes of the last bit of what Shabistarī says in Bābā Afḍal, see e.g. *Muṣannafāt-i Afḍal al-Dīn Muḥammad Maraqī Kāshānī*, 754:

    I wandered the world seeking Jamshid's cup,
    I sat for no day, I slept for no night.
    When my master described that cup to me,
    Jamshid's world-showing cup was myself.

[1153] Shabistarī's famous commentator, Lāhījī expounds all these points in great depth, see Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā Lāhījī, *Mafātīḥ al-iᶜjāz fī sharḥ Gulshan rāz*, edited by Maḥmūdī Bakhtiyārī (Tehran: ᶜIlm, 1998), 232-234.

reality (*ḥaqīqat-i muqayyada*). In essence, the 'I' is nothing other than this Absolute Reality, which has self-determined Itself, and all the pronouns 'I,' 'you,' 'he' only designate Him… There is no possibility of duality in the divine unity (*dūʾī rā aṣlan dar maqam-i tawḥīd rāh nīst*).[1154]

Lāhījī takes care to explain that he does not mean the conventional self with which people identify themselves is divine. Rather, one finds one's true self in the Divine when one transcends the phenomenal 'I' through spiritual exercises. For this reason, he goes on to say that the seeker must make a spiritual journey (*sayr-i maʿnawī*) beyond the spatio-temporal (*kawn u makān*) realm. Then she is able to transcend the plane of multiplicity and determinations (*katharāt u taʿayyunāt*) and attains the plane of the Absolute (*maqām-i muṭlaq*) through annihilation of corporeal existence (*fanā-yi jismānī*). When she reaches Divinity in this way she is able to see the entire universe (*hama-yi ʿālam*) and everything in it as parts of herself (*jamīʿ-i ashyāʾ ajzā-yi ū-and*) and realizes that there exists nothing outside of one's 'I' (*hīch chīz ghayr-i man nīst*).[1155]

However, it is crucial to note that although other entities also possess their unique subjectivity, only humans are capable of reflecting the full possibility of the divine 'I.' It is thus not accidental that after this chapter Shabistarī expounds on the doctrine of the perfect human (*al-insān al-kāmil*),[1156] which according to him is the highest mode of selfhood that can be attained by following a spiritual path. The exhortation "travel into/within yourself" in the poem signifies the spiritual journey that a wayfarer is supposed to undertake in order to realize the 'true self' and cast aside her conventional 'empirical self.'[1157] In any event, apart from their exhortation to 'look inside' in order to discover the self, there is no similarity between Iqbāl's and Shabistarī's exposition of the true nature of the 'I.' Unlike Shabistarī or Lāhījī, Iqbāl asserts that the pronouns 'I' or 'He' bear witness to our immortality, while real life consists in having a communal life. (Iqbāl makes no reference to 'spiritual life' or 'spiritual journey'):

> What is the reality of 'I' and 'He?' It is a divine mystery!
> 'I' and 'He' are a witness to our immortality.
> The hidden and the apparent are illumined by the Divine Self (*dhāt*).
> To live in the midst of a community is real life.[1158]

Since the issue of the true nature of the 'I' is related to the doctrine of the perfect human, I will continue to explore Iqbāl's commentary on the *Gulshan-i rāz,* whose seventh inquiry deals with this issue:[1159]

> Of what sort is this traveler, who is the wayfarer?
> Of whom shall I say that he is the perfect human (*mard-i tamām*)?[1160]

[1154] Lāhījī, *Mafātīḥ*, 233.

[1155] Lāhījī, *Mafātīḥ,* 238-39.

[1156] He also uses the term '*mard-i tamām*' (complete man) to denote this reality.

[1157] On the distinction between 'true self' and 'empirical self,' see Ch. 2, 11.

[1158] Iqbāl, *Gulshan-i rāz-i jadīd*, in *Kullīyāt-i Iqbāl Fārsī*, 550, trans. Ahmad Dar, significantly modified.

[1159] This is also a good way to engage Iqbāl vis-à-vis the Islamic tradition, since the former claims that his concept of the self is based on classical Sufi teachings.

[1160] Iqbāl, *Gulshan-i rāz-i jadīd*, in *Kullīyāt-i Iqbāl Fārsī*, 558, trans. Ahmad Dar, significantly modified. Shabistarī generally uses the expression '*mard-i tamām*' instead of '*insān-i kāmil*,' although the latter use is also found in his writings. See Shabistarī, *Gulshan-i rāz,* 20.

Iqbāl responds:

> If you direct your eyes towards your heart,
> You will find your destination within your self.
> To travel while being present to oneself is
> to travel from one's self to one's self (*safar az khūd bih khūd kardan*)…
> Don't seek the end of the journey, for there is no end;
> If you ever reach the end, you will lose your soul (*jān*)…[1161]
> Do not allow yourself to be guided by the
> *faqīh*, *shaykh*, and *mullā*,
> Like fish, do not walk about careless of the hook…[1162]
> It is not up to us to merge into the ocean of His being.
> If you catch hold of Him, it is not annihilation (*fanāʾ*).
> It is impossible for the Divine Self (*khūdī*) to be contained by the self (*khūdī andar khūdī gunjad muḥal ast*),
> The self's perfection is to be itself.[1163]

In other words, the reality of the self is to be found within. However, unlike Shabistarī and the Sufis, Iqbāl foresees no 'end' for the self's journey into itself. What's more, in Iqbāl's view, one does not need a spiritual master (*shaykh*), a jurist or a Mullah to undertake this journey. Most of all, the end of the journey does not imply annihilation of the self, since the human self cannot contain the Divine. This is explained further in the next inquiry, which deals with al-Ḥallāj's famous utterance, "I am the Real" (*anā al-ḥaqq*):

> What is the significance of the saying, "I am the Real" (*anā al-ḥaqq*) imply?
> What do you say? Is this a great riddle or mere nonsense?[1164]

In his response, Iqbāl writes:

> Once again I am going to clarify the mystery of "I am the Real" (*anā al-ḥaqq*),
> unfolding a secret before India and Iran.
> The Magi said to his disciples in the monastery,
> Whoever says the 'I' lives in an illusion…[1165]
> Our existence and appearance are God's imagination.
> The station of over and under, including all the dimensions is a dream (*khwāb*).
> Rest and motion, desire and search are all dreams!
> Wakeful heart and wise intellect, a dream,
> Thought and conjecture, certainty and belief, a dream;
> Your wakeful eye (*chashm-i bīdārī*) is nothing other than a dream,
> Your speech and action are all but a dream!…[1166]

[1161] Iqbāl, *Gulshan-i rāz-i jadīd*, in *Kullīyāt-i Iqbāl Fārsī*, 558, trans. Ahmad Dar, significantly modified.
[1162] Iqbāl, *Gulshan-i rāz-i jadīd*, in *Kullīyāt-i Iqbāl Fārsī*, 559, trans. Ahmad Dar, significantly modified.
[1163] Iqbāl, *Gulshan-i rāz-i jadīd*, in *Kullīyāt-i Iqbāl Fārsī*, 551, trans. Ahmad Dar, significantly modified.
[1164] Iqbāl, *Gulshan-i rāz-i jadīd*, in *Kullīyāt-i Iqbāl Fārsī*, 561, trans. Ahmad Dar, significantly modified.
[1165] Iqbāl, *Gulshan-i rāz-i jadīd*, in *Kullīyāt-i Iqbāl Fārsī*, 561, trans. Ahmad Dar, significantly modified.

The world of color and smell (*jahān-i rang-i bū*) lacks real existence,
Earth and sky, mountain and palace are not real.
It can be said that all these act as a veil
Over the countenance of the Indescribable (i.e. God).[1167]

Although Shabistarī's own response to the above inquiry substantially differs from Iqbāl, the above couplets seem to express the unreality and illusory nature of material existence, which is somewhat surprising, since for Iqbāl the worldview of anything like *waḥdat al-wujūd* (unity of being) would be an anathema. However, Iqbāl further holds that the true nature of the self lies beyond the physical world of senses:

But the self (*khūdī*) does not belong to the universe of color and smell;
Our senses do not intervene between us and it.
Eyesight has no access to its sacred precincts,
You can perceive the 'self' without eyesight (*kunī khūd rā tamāshā bī-nigāhī*).[1168]

Yet, unlike Shabistarī who affirms the significance of Ḥallāj's "I am the Real" by saying anyone whose phenomenal self is transcended by the divine Self will utter Ḥallāj's "I am the Real," Iqbāl urges the reader to affirm the self, while uttering the same statement:

Do not talk of Shankara and Manṣūr any longer,
Find God through finding your own self (*bih rāh- khwīshtan jūy*)
Be lost in the sea of your self to discover the reality of the Self (*taḥqīq-i khūdī shaw*),
Say "I am the Real" (*anā al-ḥaqq*) and affirm the self (*khūdi*).[1169]

Iqbāl and Shabistarī are in agreement that the individual cannot become God nor God the individual, and yet while for Iqbāl there is no contradiction in affirming both 'I am' and "I am God," for Shabistarī that would be inadmissible. For Shabistarī, there was never a separation between God and the self to begin with; rather it is due to God's self-determination (*taᶜayyun*) that there appears to be a separation:

Self-determination is the reason why Being appears to be separated
God has not become the servant, nor the servant the Lord.

So while for Shabistarī and the Sufis the mystical experience of *fanāʾ* and *baqāʾ* removes the illusion of the 'I' as a distinct, separate entity, for Iqbāl the pinnacle of being an 'I' lies in 'self-affirmation:'

The ideal of Islamic mysticism according to my understanding is not the extinction of the 'I.' The *fanāʾ* in the Islamic mysticism means not extinction but complete surrender of the human ego to the Divine Ego. The ideal of Islamic mysticism is a stage beyond the

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[1166] Iqbāl, *Gulshan-i rāz-i jadīd*, in *Kullīyāt-i Iqbāl Fārsī*, 561-62, trans. Ahmad Dar, significantly modified.
[1167] Iqbāl, *Gulshan-i rāz-i jadīd*, in *Kullīyāt-i Iqbāl Fārsī*, 562, trans. Ahmad Dar, significantly modified.
[1168] Iqbāl, *Gulshan-i rāz-i jadīd*, in *Kullīyāt-i Iqbāl Fārsī*, 562, trans. Ahmad Dar, significantly modified.
[1169] Iqbāl, *Gulshan-i rāz-i jadīd*, in *Kullīyāt-i Iqbāl Fārsī*, 562-63.

stage of *fanā᾽*, i.e. *baqā᾽*, which, from my point of view, is the highest stage of self-affirmation.[1170]

All of this is highly significant, in light of Iqbāl's claim that "the philosophy of the *Asrār* (i.e. the self) is a direct development out of the experience and speculation of old Muslim Sufis and thinkers." Yet a close analysis of Iqbāl's philosophy of the self only reveals its divergence from classical Sufism. Very early on after the publication of *Asrār-i khūdī*, critics accuse Iqbāl of incorporating Nietzschean themes into his exposition of the self and the perfect human, which Iqbāl vehemently denied. Nonetheless, some aspects of Iqbāl's self and the perfect human do seem to show the Nietzschean influence. Moreover, even though Iqbāl at times chastises Nietzsche for his materialism, one does not fail to notice his admiration and sympathy for the German philosopher throughout his career. In his *Jāwīd-nāma*, which is a late work, Iqbāl likens Nietzsche to al-Ḥallāj and reserves a respectable place for him in the intermediate heaven:

> My eyes had beheld a hundred six-day worlds
> and at last the borders of this universe (*ḥadd-i īn kā᾽ināt*) appeared;
> each world had a different moon, a different Pleiades (*parvīn*),
> a different manner and mode of existence…[1171]
> On the frontiers of this world of quality and quantity (*chūn u chand*)
> dwelt a man with a voice full of agony,
> his vision keener than an eagle's,
> his mien witness to a heart afire;
> every moment his inward glow increased.
> On his lips was a verse he chanted a hundred times:
> 'No Gabriel, no Paradise, no houri, no God,
> only a handful of dust consumed by a yearning soul (*jān-i ārizūmand*).'
> I said to Rumi, 'Who is this sage?' (*īn farzāna kīst*)
> He answered: 'This is the German genius
> whose place is between these two worlds (*dar miyān-i īn dū ᶜālam*);
> his reed-pipe contains an ancient melody.
> This Ḥallāj without gallows and rope
> has spoken anew those ancient words;
> his words are fearless, his thoughts sublime,
> the Westerners (*gharbiyān*) are struck asunder by the sword of his speech.
> His colleagues have not comprehended his ecstasy (*jadhba*)
> and have reckoned the ecstatic mad.[1172]

[1170] Iqbāl, "An Exposition of the Self," 202.

[1171] Iqbāl, *Jāwīd-nāma*, in *Kulliyāt-i Iqbāl Farsī*, 739, translated by Arberry, modified, in *Jāvid-nāma*, 111.

[1172] Iqbāl, *Jāwīd-nāma*, in *Kulliyāt-i Iqbāl Farsī*, 739-40. translated by Arberry, modified, in *Jāvid-nāma*, 111-12.
Again in his *Darb-i kalīm:*
> The European ecstatic (*majdhūb-i farangī*) by guile and skill
> New lease of life to nation (*waṭan*) gave:
> The path for the birth of the Guide (*mahdī*)
> By valour great he strove to pave.

Iqbāl, *Ḍarb-i kalīm*, in *Kulliyāt-i Iqbāl Urdū,* 521, trans. Syed Akbar Shah, modified, in *The Rod of Moses*, 34.

In his *Stray Reflections*, Iqbāl laments that Nietzsche, whom he calls 'the great prophet of aristocracy,' was universally condemned in Europe because only a few were able to realize the meaning of his 'madness,' i.e., his critique of modernity.[1173] Similarly Iqbāl approvingly quotes Nietzsche on the topic of immortality to suggest that the immortality of a people depends upon their incessant creation of worths.[1174] In the *Reconstruction*, Iqbāl calls Nietzsche a visionary genius and says that the latter received some kind of 'divine imperative' to carry out his mission. But in the same breath, Iqbāl also criticizes Nietzsche for his spiritual failure. "Instead of looking for a spiritual rule which would develop the Divine even in a plebeian and thus open up before him an infinite future," Iqbāl complains, "Nietzsche was driven to seek the realization of his vision in such schemes as aristocratic radicalism."[1175]

In any case, when critics pointed out the resemblance between Iqbāl's concept of the perfect human and Nietzsche *Übermensch*, Iqbāl retorted by saying that "the conception of the Superman in Nietzsche is purely materialistic, which is "the same as the idea of the Overman in Emmerson." More intriguingly, Iqbāl surmises that Nietzsche might have borrowed the concept from the literature of Islam and then tainted it by his materialism.[1176] Moreover, Iqbāl's articulation of the three stages of the growth of the self appears suspiciously similar to Nietzsche's 'three metamorphoses'[1177] or the three stages of progress toward the *Übermensch* in his *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. But Iqbāl says that these similarities are superficial since, Nietzsche does not believe in the spiritual fact of the self and its will to power.[1178] Moreover, Iqbāl argues that the perfection of the perfect human in Islam consists in realizing the eternal Now, which one does not find in Nietzsche.[1179] Also, Iqbāl rightly suggests that Nietzsche's *Übermensch* is a biological product, whereas the Islamic perfect human is the product of moral and spiritual

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[1173] Iqbāl, *Stray Reflections*, 46.

[1174] Iqbāl, *Stray Reflections*, 79.

[1175] Iqbāl says that Nietzsche needed a master to guide him, but he could not find one. He cites the following from one of Nietzsche's letters to his sister: "I confront alone an immense problem: it is as if I am lost in a forest, a primeval one. I need help. I need disciples: I need a master. It would be so sweet to obey… Why do I not find among the living men who see higher than I do and have to look down on me?" Iqbāl, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought*, 154. Cf. Daniel Halévy, *La vie de Frédéric Nietzsche* (Paris: Calmann, 1900), 314.

[1176] Iqbāl, "An Exposition of the Self," 200. He further denies any connection with Nietzsche: "I wrote on the Sufi doctrine of the Perfect Man more than twenty years ago—long before I had read or heard anything of Nietzsche." Iqbāl, "In Defense of the Self," in *Discourses of Iqbāl*, 190.

[1177] Iqbāl explains the 'three metamorphoses' himself. According to him, the first metamorphosis of life is camel, which is a symbol of load bearing strength. The second is lion, which symbolizes the strength to kill without pity, for pity is a vice and not virtue in Nietzsche. The third metamorphosis is child, which is the Superman passing beyond good and evil like the child and becoming a law unto himself. In Iqbāl's view, this is materialism turning the human ego into a monster, which, according to Nietzsche's idea of immortality, has repeated itself and will repeat itself an infinite number of times. For Iqbāl, Nietzsche's error lies in that he failed to distinguish clock time from real time. Iqbāl further claims that Nietzsche never grappled with the problem of time and accepted it without criticism, for his conception of time is circular. See Iqbāl, "An Exposition of the Self," 200. For Nietzsche's explanations of the 'three metamorphoses,' see Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra,* 23-24; cf. *Beyond Good and Evil,* translated by Walter Kaufmann (New York: Random House, 1966). And for a Nietzschean view of time and becoming, see Robin Small, *Time and Becoming in Nietzsche's Thought* (London: Continuum, 2011), Chs. 6-7.

[1178] Iqbāl, "An Exposition of the Self," 198-99. However, Iqbāl could not explain why his theory of the self also has exactly 'three' stages, as opposed to four or five. He rightly notes that for Nietzsche, the 'I' is a fiction. According to him, Nietzsche followed Kant's lead in the *Kritik's* conclusion that God, immortality and freedom are more of a fiction, though useful for practical purposes. Against this he reiterates Bergsonian intuition of the self, saying from the viewpoint of inner experience, the 'I' is an indubitable fact (cf. Bradley), which stares at us in spite of our intellectual analysis of it. Iqbāl, "An Exposition of the Self," 199.

[1179] Iqbāl, "An Exposition of the Self," 200.

forces such as virtue, justice, duty, and love.[1180] In addition, Iqbāl denies that his coal-diamond analogy in the *Asrār* has anything to do with Nietzsche, since unlike the latter he does not mean callousness or pitilessness when he says, "Be as hard as the diamond."[1181]

Despite all that Iqbāl can say in his defense, there is no denying that his conception of the perfect human as the highest mode of self-development shows influences from both Nietzsche and Darwin (see below). Even though Iqbāl claims that he adopted the doctrine from the Sufis, his exposition of the perfect human bears only superficial resemblance to the original Sufi doctrine. Iqbāl significantly modifies the doctrine of the perfect human when he asserts that it represents the "completest ego, the goal of humanity, and the acme of life both in mind and body" in whom "the discord of our mental life becomes a harmony."[1182] Moreover, according to Iqbāl, the perfect human is the last fruit of the tree of humanity, who justifies "all the trials of a painful evolution" because he is to come at the end. Iqbāl's evolutionist interpretation of the perfect human becomes evident in the following:

> The more we advance in evolution, the nearer we get to him. In approaching him we are raising ourselves in the scale of life. The development of humanity both in mind and body is a condition precedent to his birth. For the present he is a mere ideal; but the evolution of humanity is tending towards the production of an ideal race of more or less unique individuals who will become his fitting parents. Thus the kingdom of God on earth means the democracy of more or less unique individuals, presided over by the most unique individual possible on this earth.[1183]

Needless to say, such an interpretation of the perfect human would hardly make sense to the likes of Shabistarī, Ṣadrā, Walī Allāh and Thānavī for whom the doctrine is primarily understood in its spiritual and metaphysical context. Iqbāl's idiosyncratic understanding of the perfect human becomes even more apparent when one analyses his views on the self's freedom and

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[1180] Iqbāl, "An Exposition of the Self," 200-01. However, the Nietzschean influence is clearly traceable in his doctrine, as in the following: "You must give up all those modes of activity which have a tendency to dissolve personality, e.g. humility, contentment, slavish obedience, modes of human action which have been erroneously dignified by the name of virtue. On the other hand, high ambition, generosity, charity and a just pride in our traditions and power fortify the sense of personality." Iqbāl, *Stray Reflections*, 29.

[1181] Iqbāl, "An Exposition of the Self," 202. Cf.:
   "O perceptive friend!," said the diamond,
   "Dark earth, when hardened, becomes in dignity as a bezel.
   Having been at strife with its environment,
   It is ripened by the struggle and grows hard like a stone.
   'Tis this ripeness (*pukhtagī*) that has endowed my form with light
   And filled my bosom with radiance (jilwa).
   Because thy being is immature (*wujūd-i khām*), thou hast become abased;
   Because thy body is soft, thou art burnt.
   Be void of fear, grief, and anxiety;
   Be hard as a stone, be a diamond (*almās bāsh*)!"
Iqbāl, *Asrār-i khūdī*, in *Kulliyāt-i Iqbāl Farsī*, 56-7, translated by Nicholson, in *The Secrets of the Self*, 105-06. Cf. Schimmel, *Gabriel's Wings*, 316ff.

[1182] Iqbāl mentions Nietzsche in this regard, saying he had a glimpse of the concept. Iqbāl, *Asrār-i khūdī*, translated by Nicholson, xxviii-xxix.

[1183] Iqbāl, *Asrār-i khūdī*, translated by Nicholson, xxvii-xxviii.

immortality. According to Iqbāl, the end of the self's journey is not freedom from the limitations of individuality; it is, rather, a more precise definition of it.[1184] As Iqbāl says:

> Whatever may be the final fate of man it does not mean the loss of individuality. The Qur'an does not contemplate complete liberation from finitude as the highest state of human bliss… It is with the irreplaceable singleness of his individuality that the finite ego will approach the infinite ego to see for himself the consequences of his past action and to judge the possibilities of his future.[1185]

Iqbāl then goes on to add that 'pantheistic Sufism' cannot accept such a view, because this would imply the mutual exclusion of the Infinite and the finite self, which contravenes God's infinitude. Iqbāl responds by arguing that such difficulties rest on a misunderstanding of the true nature of the Infinite. In his view, true infinity does not mean infinite extension which cannot be conceived without embracing all available finite extensions. Rather, its nature consists in intensity and not extensity; hence the moment we hold our attention on intensity, we begin to see that the finite ego must be distinct, though not isolated, from the Infinite.[1186] Moreover, Iqbāl maintains that it is highly unlikely that "a being whose evolution has taken millions of years should be thrown away as a thing of no use." Rather, "it is only as an ever-growing ego," Iqbāl says, "that he can belong to the meaning of the universe."[1187] Now there is little evidence to suggest that Sufi metaphysicians (whom Iqbāl calls pantheists) considered God's infinitude extensively in spatial form. For instance, Mullā Ṣadrā's expression 'ʿidda, mudda wa shidda' (numericality, duration, intensity), in relation to mā lā yatanāhī bimā lā yatanāhī (Infinite by virtue of Its own infinity), i.e. God is well known.[1188] As for the loss of individuality, it is clear from the writings of Shabistarī and others discussed in this study that for them, there is no 'individuality' to begin with because as Lāhījī explained "there is no possibility of duality in the divine unity" (dūʾī rā aṣlan dar maqam-i tawḥīd rāh nīst). That is, all conceptions of 'individuality' separate from the Divine are ultimately illusory, arising due to God's self-determination.

In any case, Iqbāl goes on to explain that life offers an opportunity for self-growth, and "death is the first test of the synthetic activity of the ego." In Iqbāl's view, acts are not to be considered pleasure-giving or pain-giving, since acts can only be either ego-sustaining or ego dissolving. To wit, it is the deed that prepares the self for dissolution, or disciplines it for a future career. As such, "personal immortality, Iqbāl asserts, "is not ours as of right; it is to be achieved by personal effort."[1189] Iqbāl never fails to underscore 'action' or dynamism that helps the self grow toward its immortality.[1190] And he stresses that the climax of this dynamism is reached when the self is able to retain full self-possession, even when it is in direct contact with God, the all-embracing Self. For him, such a climax represents "the ideal of perfect manhood in

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[1184] Iqbāl, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought*, 156-7.
[1185] Iqbāl, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought*, 93.
[1186] Iqbāl, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought*, 56.
[1187] He then quotes the verses from Q. 91: 7-10: "By the soul and He Who hath balanced it, and hath shown to it the ways of wickedness and piety, blessed is he who hath made it grow and undone is he who hath corrupted it." Iqbāl, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought*, 95.
[1188] Mullā Ṣadrā, *al-Shawāhid*, 135.
[1189] Iqbāl, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought*, 95.
[1190] Iqbāl, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought*, 95.

Islam."[1191] Along the way, Iqbāl also derides Plato and the Sufis for being 'inactive' and for preferring 'death' to 'life.' Iqbāl says:

> Plato, the foremost sage and hermit,
> Was one of that ancient flock of sheep (*az gurūh-i gūsfandān-i qadīm*).
> His Pegasus (*rakhsh*) went astray in the darkness of idealism (*ẓulmat-i maʿqūl*),
> And dropped its hoof amidst the rocks of actuality.
> He was so fascinated by the immaterial (*nā-maḥsūs*)
> That he made hand, eye, and ear of no account.
> "To die," said he, "is the acme of life: (*sar-i zindagī dar murdan ast*)
> The candle is glorified by being put out."
> He dominates our imagination (*takhayyul*),
> His cup (*jām*) sends us to sleep and takes the sensible world away from us.
> He is a sheep in man's clothing (*gūsfandī dar libās-i ādam ast*),
> The soul of the Sufi (*jān-i ṣufī*) bows to his authority (*ḥukm*).
> He soared with his intellect (*ʿaql*) to the highest heaven
> And called the world of phenomena a myth (*ʿālam-i asbāb rā afsāna khwūnd*).[1192]

Iqbāl further sheds light on his criticism of Plato by saying it is directed against those philosophical systems that hold up death rather than life as their ideal.[1193] Such a Nietzschean interpretation of Plato ignores the fact that the latter also composed several dialogues to discuss ethics, society and politics that are directly relevant to practical life.[1194] In any case, the Iqbālian self attains freedom and immortality by proclaiming 'yes' to life and by actively pursuing deeds that make it ever stronger. In Iqbāl's estimation, the self is partly free, and partly determined, and reaches fuller freedom by approaching the Individual, who is most free, i.e. God.[1195] He affirms the self's freedom and its ability to steer its own course of action against all sorts of philosophies that he thinks restrict or deny its freedom. He criticizes Averroes for failing to provide an ethical notion of immortality.[1196] Similarly, he claims that Muslim theologians failed to reconcile human

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[1191] Iqbāl then states the Prophet's vision of the Ultimate Ego: "His eye turned not aside, nor did it wander," (Q. 53: 17). Iqbāl, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought*, 94.

[1192] Iqbāl, *Asrār-i khūdī*, in *Kulliyāt-i Iqbāl Farsī*, 32-33, translated by Nicholson, in *The Secrets of the Self*, 56-57.

[1193] Iqbāl, *Asrār-i khūdī*, translated by Nicholson, xxi-xxii. This, again, is a gross simplification of the Platonic worldview. Even though Plato does talk about philosophy being "the practice of dying," [Cf. *Phaedo* (64a3-4)], it is not to be misunderstood as some kind of otherworldly mysticism. For an understating of 'philosophy as the practice of dying," see Michael Pakaluk, "Degrees of Separation in the '*Phaedo*,'" *Phronesis* 48 (2003): 89-115; R. Weiss, "The Right Exchange: *Phaedo* 69a6-c3," *Ancient Philosophy* 7 (1987): 57-66. On Plato's rational mysticism, see Michael LaFargue, *Rational Spirituality and Divine Virtue in Plato: A Modern Interpretation and Philosophical Defense of Platonism* (Albany: SUNY, 2017), ch. 1.

[1194] See e.g. *The Republic*, *Laws* etc.

[1195] Iqbāl, *Asrār-i khūdī*, translated by Nicholson, xxi.

[1196] Iqbāl's criticism of Averroes does not do full justice to the complexity of the latter's doctrine of the material intellect and immortality. For Averroes, the material intellect is one and eternal for all humans, whose division can only occur within material forms. Thus it is the human body that divides and individualizes the material intellect. For excellent analyses on this issue, see Richard Taylor, "Averroes' Philosophical Conception of Separate Intellect and God," in *La lumière de l'intellect: La pensée scientifique et philosophique d'Averrès dans son temps,* edited by Ahmad Hasnawi (Leuven: Peeters 2011), 391-404; "Intellect as Intrinsic Formal Cause in the Soul according to Aquinas and Averroes," in *The Afterlife of the Platonic Soul. Reflections on Platonic Psychology in the Monotheistic Religions*, Maha El-Kaisy Friemut and John M. Dillon, eds. (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 187-220; "Averroes on the Ontology of the Human Soul," *Muslim World* 102 (2012): 580-596.

freedom with divine foreknowledge, hence they were determinists.[1197] He also criticizes mechanistic conception of human action in psychology that reduces ego-activity to a succession of thoughts and ideas, ultimately resolvable to units of sensations. Against all these views, Iqbāl argues that the essential feature of a purposeful act is its vision of a future situation that is not subject to physiological explanations.[1198] For Iqbāl, the final act of the self is not an intellectual act. It is rather a vital act which deepens the entire self, and whets its will with the assurance that the world is not something to be merely seen or known through concepts, but something to be made and re-made by continuous action.[1199]

Summary

Like Mullā Ṣadrā and Walī Allāh, the self, for Iqbāl, is a labyrinth that is manifestly a multidimensional entity. Fortunately, toward the end of his life, Iqbāl composed a famous poem that seems to summarize his conception of the self. This poem entitled "*Khūdī kā sirr*," which was published in 1936, says the following:[1200]

> The secret of the self is hidden,
> In words: "No god but God" (*khūdī kā sirr-i nahān lā ilāha illā Allah*).
> The self is just a dull-edged sword,
> "No god but God," the whetstone (*fisān lā ilāha illā Allāh*).
> An Abraham of the age is sought
> to break the idols of this hall…
> A bargain you have struck for goods
> of life that smacks conceit.
> Yet everything is fraught with fraud and deceit,
> save the call "No god but God."
> The riches and wealth of the world, and
> ties and attachment are but idols (*aṣnām*).
> Save "No god but God" the rest is illusion.
> The intellect has worn the belt (*zunnār*)[1201] of time and space (*zamān u makān*);
> but only "No god but God" is real: neither time nor space…
> Even though many idols are still concealed in their sleeves,
> I have been asked to raise the call "no god but God."[1202]

This poem is remarkable for more than one reason. One can read it in light of Lāhījī, Shabistarī et al. in which case it would imply that the reality of the self is to be found in the divine unity

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[1197] Iqbāl, *Stray Reflections*, 159. This is only true of some theological schools. For some analyses on freewill and determinism in Islam, see Maria de Cillis, *Free Will and Predestination in Islamic Thought: Theoretical Compromises in the Works of Avicenna, al-Ghāzālī and Ibn ʿArabī* (London, New York: Routledge, 2014), 5-30.

[1198] Iqbāl, *Reconstruction*, 85-6.

[1199] Iqbāl, *Reconstruction*, 157.

[1200] The popularity of this poem can be seen from its musical composition (watched by more than a million viewers) that features some of the well-known singers of Pakistan. See the YouTube video "Kalam e Iqbal Khudi ka sare Nihan by Shafqat Amanat Ali, Sanam Marvi" at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vIIK8pj-AX8&t=312s

[1201] A belt worn around the waist by the followers of certain religions.

[1202] Iqbāl, *Ḍarb-i kalīm*, in *Kulliyāt-i Iqbāl Urdū*, 477.

expressed by the first *shahāda* (testimony of faith) of Islam, i.e. "there is no god but God.[1203] That is to say, the reality of the self is not to be found in the conventional, empirical 'I' that is ordinarily thought to be the essence of one's identity. Rather, the secret of the 'I' is to be encountered in the 'non-I' (i.e. God) that simultaneously constitutes the reality of the 'I.' In short, all conceptions of 'individuality' separate from Divine Reality would be ultimately illusory, arising due to God's self-manifestation, as Lāhījī explained, and with which Ṣadrā, Walī Allāh and Thānavī would be in agreement. But does this mean Iqbāl changed his mind toward the end of his life? In light of what we have studied throughout his writings, the answer, I think, is 'no,' even though Iqbāl claimed that "the philosophy of the *Asrār* (i.e. the self) is a direct development out of the experience and speculation of old Muslim Sufis and thinkers." Even though in terms of general outlines one can detect certain similarities between Iqbāl and his Sufi predecessors when it comes to their distinction between the higher and lower self, pious rejection of worldliness and emphasis on the immortality of the self, their worldviews remain significantly different in terms of the true nature of the self and of Ultimate Reality. The Iqbālian self stands out for its emphasis on immanence, individuality, dynamism, activity, life and self-affirmation, so much so that Iqbāl conceives of God as the most Individual Ego. In Iqbāl's view, regardless of the self's development and spiritual progress, it always retains its individuality and egohood in its encounter with God. There is no place for a non-dual conception of the self and the Divine in Iqbāl's thought. That is why Iqbāl says that the ultimate goal of the self is to see God as an Ego and as an Other. However, in asserting such a view of the self, Iqbāl does not address the question of how it might be possible for human vision to encompass and comprehend the Infinite, especially in light of the Qur'an (6:103), that states, "Vision comprehendeth Him not, but He comprehendeth (all) vision. He is the Subtle, the Aware."

Classical Sufis were aware of this verse, which is the reason al-Jīlī and others categorically avers that one cannot perceive the Divine Essence. That is, the 'I' as a 'subject' cannot perceive the Ultimate Reality as an 'object.'[1204] However, God can nevertheless manifest, they maintain, His infinite nature in the heart (i.e. the deepest core of the self) of His believing servants when it is completely polished and purified so that it can reflect all the countless divine names and attributes—and this for them is represented by the doctrine of the perfect human. As I have shown extensively, Iqbāl seems to be unaware of the complexity of much of such classical thought.

> *The tale of love is something which no tongue may utter*
> *O Sāqī, hand me the wine and make this discourse short.*[1205]

[1203] The Indian Sufi Khwāja Khurd (d. 1009/1601), who was the son of Sirhindī's master Bāqī Billāh (d. 1011/1603), explains the *shahāda* as the consummation of spiritual realization that makes one see that ultimately, 'I and thou' are illusory categories that prevent the wayfarer from beholding the absolute truth. In other words, when the illusion of duality disappears the one who declares the divine unity is none other than the one whose *tawḥīd* is being declared: "*Tawḥīd* is the attribute of the One, not of the I or the you. As long as I and you remain, there is association, not *tawḥīd*." Khwāja Khurd further explains this in reference to ʿAṭṭār's *Manṭiq al-ṭayr*, and reflects on the nature of spiritual journey and the true "identity" of the wayfarer: "Thirty birds (*sī murgh*) set out looking for the Sīmurgh. When they reached the way station (*maqām*), they saw that they were the Sīmurgh (*Griffin*)." See Khwāja Khurd, *Nūr-i waḥdat*, 161, 167; trans. Chittick in *In Search of the Lost Heart*, op. cit. Cf. *Farīd al-Dīn ʿAṭṭār, Manṭiq al-ṭayr,* (ed.) M.J. Mashkūr (Tehran, 1337 Sh.), 260ff.
[1204] Cf. ch. 2, 100ff.
[1205] Ḥāfiz, *The Divan of Hafez,* 98.

Chapter Five: Conclusion (I and I: Why the 'I' Matters)

> What do I fear? Myself? There's none else by.
> Richard loves Richard; that is, I and I.
> Is there a murderer here? No. Yes, I am.
> Then fly! What, from myself? Great reason why:
> Lest I revenge. What, myself upon myself?
> Alack, I love myself. Wherefore? For any good
> That I myself have done unto myself?
> O, no! Alas, I rather hate myself
> For hateful deeds committed by myself.
> I am a villain. Yet I lie. I am not.
> Fool, of thyself speak well. Fool, do not flatter.[1206]

This study explored three paradigmatic theories of self and subjectivity in the thought of three important Muslim thinkers, namely Mullā Ṣadrā, Walī Allāh, and Muḥammad Iqbāl. Alongside detailed analyses of each of these thinkers' views on selfhood, my study also situated their insights within the wider constellation of related discussions in late modern and contemporary thought, engaging the seminal theoretical insights on the self by thinkers such as William James, Jean-Paul Sartre, Foucault and Richard Sorabji. This allowed me to theoretically frame my textual inquiry within a tri-partite model of selfhood, incorporating bio-physiological, socio-cultural, and ethico-metaphysical modes of discourse and meaning-construction. In what follows, I will address the wider implications of the findings of my investigation.

Despite the textual evidence of complex notions of self and subjectivity in the authors discussed in this study, some scholars such as Farzin Vahdat contend that there is no conception of self or subjectivity in pre-modern Islamic thought. This is because the notion of selfhood or subjectivity, for these scholars, is a distinctly modern phenomenon. As Vahdat writes:

> [T]he notion of human subjectivity is the pivotal concept in the phenomenon we associate with modern times… It refers to the idea of human empowerment and agency. Modernity begins, from this point of view, when a critical mass of society abandons the life of passivity and acquires a sense of assertiveness, vigor, volition, resolve and action. In a nutshell, modern people are not passive and possess agency and power.[1207]

That is to say, for Vahdat, subjectivity is defined in terms of agency and empowerment of the self. Moreover, it is contrasted with passivity that should be abandoned in favor of a sense of assertiveness, volition, vigor and action. Vahdat's verdict is clear: it is only with modern people that we see the appearance of subjectivity, whereas pre-moderns did not have subjectivity because they were passive and lacked agency. It is to be noted such an understanding of subjectivity and its ascription to modern society is fairly widespread among many other scholars, so it would be worthwhile to unpack and explain what 'agency' means for these scholars and why they believe that pre-modern societies did not have any notion of subjectivity.

[1206] William Shakespeare, *Richard III*, edited by John D. Wilson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 5.3, 131-32.
[1207] Vahdat, *Islamic Ethos*, x-xi.

In his book *Subjectivity*, Donald Hall expounds the notion of agency, which for him entails responsibility in personal action, aesthetic creation, inter-personal norms and social valuations.[1208] Hall also concurs with Vahdat in that pre-modern societies did not have a conception of subjectivity because of their conviction in a transcendent paradigm of preordained order that excluded any notion of free agency.[1209] According to Hall, as modern people, we are widely led to believe "that we have the freedom and ability to create and re-create our 'selves' at will, if we *have* the will."[1210] And in his book *The Horizontal Society*, legal theorist and social historian Lawrence M. Friedman explains why and how moderns have come to develop such a notion of selfhood. In his view, we live in an age "in which old forms and traditions seem to be breaking down—forms and traditions that trapped the individual in a cage of ascription; that fixed human beings in definite social roles, pinned them to a given position in the world, no matter how they might wriggle and fight."[1211] That is to say, we are witnessing a gradual shift from a 'vertical' (hierarchical, inflexible) to a more 'horizontal' (negotiable, agency driven) mode of defining our relationships to each other, one in which we are responsible for making something of ourselves. To shed more light on the human condition in medieval times, Gary Day notes that in the Middle Ages society was divided into three principal estates: 1) the clergy, whose function was with prayer and spiritual well-being of the masses; 2) the warriors, who defended the land and the people with their arms; and 3) the laborers who supported the other two classes. Moreover, it was believed that these divisions within a society were predetermined and that one's birth and given social rank determined one's destiny.[1212]

To be sure, scholars such as Hall do admit that human beings have always pondered the question "who am I?," and yet the degree to which the pondering 'I' is perceived as having any specific role in, or responsibility for creating its own 'selfhood' has changed dramatically over time. According to another scholar, namely Stephen Greenblatt, although one can find a few instances of a notion of the self that is mediated through 'self-consciousness' among the philosophical elite of the classical world, Christianity eclipsed such inquiries by discouraging human's power to shape their identity.[1213] However, even during the classical era, Hall and Greenblatt maintain, we find no real equivalent of the emphasis on self-creation that arises during the Renaissance and expands dramatically during later centuries. Basing himself on Charles Taylor's seminal study on the self in Western civilization, Hall mentions Plato as a notable case in point. According to Hall's reading of Taylor's assessment of selfhood in Plato, what makes life a worthwhile pursuit for humans is the understanding that human nature consists of a rational paradigm. Humanity is part of the large cosmic order, in which everything strives to reach its perfection and hence fulfills its nature. As agents, striving for ethical excellence, humans thus participate in the same rational order which they can also contemplate and admire.[1214] In Hall's interpretation of the Platonic *Weltanschauung*, we only act ethically when

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[1208] Hall, *Subjectivity* (London: Routledge, 2004), 5.

[1209] No less a figure than Heidegger also denies that there is any notion of subjectivity before Descartes. For the falsity of such a claim, see Libera, "When did the Modern Subject Emerge?," 181ff.

[1210] Hall, *Subjectivity*, 1.

[1211] Friedman, *The Horizontal Society* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), vii–viii.

[1212] Gary Day, *Class* (London: Routledge, 2001), 19.

[1213] Hall, *Subjectivity*, 7-8.

[1214] Taylor, *Sources of the Self*, 125. While Taylor's reading of Plato is sound, it is incomplete in many aspects. A better study of the self in Plato is Gerson, *Knowing Persons: A Study in Plato*, 1-30.

we act in fulfillment of our preordained purpose, which must be in concert with our duty to our society and its subunits.[1215]

Thus, if we follow Vahdat's and Hall's reasoning to its logical conclusion, it would imply that selves in premodern contexts were rather analogous to cars in an assembly line—wholly passive having a predetermined prototype which they strive to duplicate. This is because premodern selves did not have a sense of agency and self-empowerment. And they could not break the norm because that would be seen as threatening the stability of the divine order; hence they had to conform to a preexisting order. Moreover, unlike their modern counterparts, premodern selves did not question their identity and social placement, and were docile and submissive to God's will. Furthermore, they lacked any conception of self-consciousness or self-knowledge that would imply agency related functions.

In contrast, modern notion of selfhood, according to these scholars, is marked by the awareness that the self is not something divinely formed and statically placed; it is rather changeable, constructible and cultivatable through one's own creative agency.[1216] Moreover, modern selves assume agency and responsibility for their own life and ask not only 'who they are' but also to what extent they have both the capacity and the ability to become something different.[1217]

If the above account of premodern society and its lack of subjectivity holds, then much of what we investigated and found in the previous chapters would not bear any substantial import, apart from the curious case of Muḥammad Iqbāl, who belongs to the modern period, and whose account of the self matches the above modern description. However, one ought to ask whether or not the aforementioned view will hold up to critical scrutiny when it comes to Mullā Ṣadrā, Shāh Walī Allāh and others, whose musings on the self we discussed at length. For instance, in our analysis of Mullā Ṣadrā, we have seen him articulating a three-fold distinction between pre-reflective, reflective and intersubjective consciousness. Such an understanding of consciousness evidently entails 'reflexivity' in a given theory of the self, which means one cannot be an owner of agentive actions, if one did not possess some form of reflexivity that would make one aware that one is indeed the agent of one's own action. In addition, both Mullā Ṣadrā and Walī Allāh argue that consciousness (in its most primitive form) is the defining feature of human subjectivity, without which it would be impossible to account for any mental actions. This is because, as Ṣadrā argues, any phenomenal states or mental events that the self ascribes to itself already presupposes an underlying consciousness. For this reason, Ṣadrā says that even instinctive actions such as quickly withdrawing from something too hot or too cold bear witness to an underlying awareness of the self which is identical with one's 'I-ness.' That is why it would

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[1215] Hall, *Subjectivity*, 8.

[1216] Hall, *Subjectivity*, 17. However, it must be pointed out that not all modern conceptions of the self rest on a robust sense of 'agency.' In Lacan for instance, the self is the result of a linguistic system; it occupies the place of a gap in the other. Moreover, contemporary social constructionists such as Althusser and Foucault argue that the self is both given to us historically and culturally, and also that it is refashioned through various external factors, although this does not mean the self has complete control over itself. Furthermore, post-modern authors such as Deleuze and Guattari explicitly reject self-sufficient agency that can qualify as intentional. Judith Butler also points out the challenge of theorizing agency when one recognizes the power of interpellation. Thus, it appears that in some modern theories of the self, agency and self-creation are overrated. See Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia, translated by Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 457-8; Judith Butler, The Psychic Life of Power: Theories in Subjection. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 15-17. For different conceptions of the modern self, see ch. 1,

[1217] Hall, *Subjectivity*, 5.

be wrong to argue for the existence of the self on the basis of any general actions (*al-fiᶜl al-muṭlaq*) such as attending, thinking, believing, or even doubting because they are not self-subsisting phenomena, hence presuppose an underlying subject to which they occur. It is thus hard to believe how all of this can be inferred without assuming some form of active agency on one's part.

Likewise, while explaining various functions of the intellect, both Ṣadrā and Walī Allāh point to its features such as 'decision making power' and other cognitive and emotional capacities that are inextricably linked to the notion of agency. In short, there is hardly anything in these thinkers' conception of selfhood that might lead one to conclude that they downplay agency related functions such as personal action, aesthetic creation, inter-personal norms and social valuations. Above all, there is no textual ground for saying Ṣadrā et al. constructed a notion of selfhood that asserted or espoused 'passivity.' Similarly, the question of whether or not traditional societies were passive should be settled on the basis of empirical evidence. It is instructive to note that in the wake of Peter van der Veer's works on tradition and modernity in India and China, it would be difficult to accept a view that draws a sharp line between these opposing categories.[1218] At any rate, in light of what we know of the intellectual history of the Safavid-Mughal era (and this is still in the making), it would be a huge understatement to claim that these premodern societies were 'passive.' Since the focus of this study is not selfhood in Medieval Europe, I would try to limit myself to Islamic thinkers and their contexts, although these discussions are interrelated, since many scholars or intellectuals working on modern Islam often succumb to subtle forms of Hegelian eurocentrism (and the linear progress of history) and end up back-projecting European history onto other civilizations.[1219] As we saw in chapter four, Iqbal himself fell prey to this. It is to be noted that recent scholarship has done much to discredit the Whiggish view of the premodern era in light of new evidence that brings out the complexity of the Middle Ages beyond simplistic conceptions of hierarchical, deterministic and immobile social orders.[1220] As for conception of selfhood and subjectivity in medieval and ancient times in both East and West, one can mention numerous works by such authors as Anthony Long, Lloyd Gerson, Pauliina Remes, Phillip Cary, Charles Stang, Alain de Libera, Therese Cory, Jonardon Ganeri, Gavin Flood, Jay Garfield, Mark Siderits, and Jari Kaukua (and many others). It is, therefore, somewhat puzzling that some scholars still insist on maintaining Eurocentric biases

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[1218] See Peter van der Veer, *Imperial Encounters: Religion and Modernity in India and Britain* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2001); *The Modern Spirit of Asia: The Spiritual and the Secular in China and India* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2014).

[1219] On Hegel's eurocentrism, see *idem.*, *The Philosophy of History*, trans. J. Sibree (Kitchener, Ont.: Batoche, 2001), 156-93.

[1220] The German medieval historian Fried attributes such cultural prejudices to great Enlightenment thinkers such as Immanuel Kant. For more information, see Johannes Fried, *The Middle Ages*, trans. Peter Lewis (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015), 505ff. As for Islamic Middle Ages one can point to many studies. See e.g. Finbarr Flood's path-breaking study on dynamic patterns of mutual engagement between Hindus and Muslims across the Indian 'contact zone' from as early as the ninth century that suggests not pre-formed, monolithic and impermeable religious or proto-national identities but mutually implicated, relational ones. As Flood puts it, his presentation of the material culture stresses 'relations' over 'essences' and 'routes' over 'roots.' One of the chief ways in which the book effects this relational reading is by stressing that the interactions between 'self' and 'other' were rarely conducted by agents whose identities were not already fractured along ethnic, regional and political lines, such that social relations had the effect of reconfiguring selves along new contours, both in relation to self and other. Finbarr B. Flood, *Objects of Translation: Material Culture and Medieval 'Hindu-Muslim' Encounter* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2009), 61-88, 261-68. See also Paul Hamilton, *Historicism* (London: Routledge, 1996), against a neat and linear historical trajectory of progress and expansion.

and assert that premodern authors did not have a notion of subjectivity. But I must make it clear that the real debate is not whether or not there is no self in pre-modern times, rather one should perhaps talk about 'what kind' of selfhood one finds in pre-modern times, since, like our own age, in pre-modern era too one finds widely varying notions of selfhood (some without any notion of self-consciousness). Moreover, one should also note that the categories of 'modern' and 'pre-modern' are much more fluid than they are usually thought and deployed.

Coming now to Plato's emphasis on rationality and conforming to a preexisting order, one must note that it is only half the story as far as his conception of the self is concerned. As Gerson rightly points out, Platonic selfhood is best understood in terms of a distinction between human and person.[1221] The human, which is a composite of body and soul, is an embodied endowment, or what is given to us regardless of our efforts, but person, by contrast is our achievement, the philosophical project of becoming a proper person or a self.[1222] In Plato's paradigm, to be human is to recognize that one's endowed humanity is a composite and an image of the eternal forms, from which two things follow: 1) the practice of isolating the soul from the body and unifying its distinct nature 2) the practice of having that isolated and unified soul strive to achieve identity with its ideal or eternal archetype. For Plato, as Gerson puts it: "embodied persons are the only sorts of images that can reflectively recognize their own relatively inferior states as images and strives to transforms themselves into their own ideal."[1223] So these accounts evidently involve self-consciousness, freedom and self-creation. In other words, the practice of achieving identity with one's eternal archetype requires one to ask not just "who one is" in an endowed state, but also to have the capacity and the ability to become something different from one's inferior states as an image. And this is precisely what Hall considers the hallmark of modern self (according to his criteria), that the self is not statically placed; it is rather changeable and cultivatable through one's own creative agency.

However, Hall might contend that to be a modern self is not just to make use of one's agency; rather one also has to be a nonconformist who would dare breaking the norms.[1224] Perhaps certain understanding of modern subjectivity also includes features such as expressing anguish, irrationality over rationality, meaninglessness of life etc. In a word, one thinks of the existentialism of Camus and Sartre as the paradigmatic model of modern subjectivity. If one argues along these lines, then one might possibly assert that there is no subjectivity in the premodern world, since whatever most premodern philosophers might say about the self, it involves a commitment to a transcendent order, rationality, God, religion, and so on. However, it is not difficult to see that these are rather metaphysical issues that are not directly relevant in a philosophy of self, at least not in the first-person accounts of it. As Galen Strawson has shown, the question of the self is primarily phenomenological, and only secondarily metaphysical.[1225] Indeed, long before Strawson, Ṣadrā, Walī Allāh and others have argued for the self's existence on the basis of first-person experiences, as I have shown in this study. It would be hardly plausible to argue otherwise and say that they believed in the self as a hypothetical entity whose

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[1221] Gerson, *Knowing Persons: A Study in Plato*, 1-7.

[1222] Gerson, *Knowing Persons: A Study in Plato*, 4-6.

[1223] Gerson, *Knowing Persons: A Study in Plato*, 4.

[1224] Hall thus points to the case of Joan of Arc by saying that today we love her because she seems so modern, brave, and individualistic, whereas the Inquisition reviled her because she represented a manifestation of aberrant agency outside of tradition. Hall, *Subjectivity*, 14.

[1225] See ch. 1, 19. This is not to say that the views of Mullā Ṣadrā et al. are fully commensurate with those of Strawson when it comes to their respective theories of the self, since for the former the self is set in a metaphysico-moral context as well.

existence is postulated in a god-of-the-gaps fashion to account for human experiences that cannot yet be explained in empirically verifiable terms. As Ṣadrā et al. argued, any mental states that one ascribes to oneself already presuppose an underlying awareness of the self. In other words, any perceptual acts, e.g. reflection already presuppose a prior acquaintance of the self with itself. This is because the 'I' cannot be absent from itself because its reality is ever-present to itself through the uninterrupted self-awareness that is indistinguishable from its 'mineness.' In my assessment, phenomenological arguments of these sorts involving '*self-consciousness*' should be construed as the primary criteria for adjudicating a conception of subjectivity because of the irreducibility of first-person experiences. One may recall the importance of the distinction between the first-person versus third-person standpoint in this regard. Thus the weakness of making a third-person concept such as 'agency' the basis of subjectivity becomes clear when the matter is seen from the perspective of neuroscience or from those who deny the reality of selfhood altogether. This is because for these latter groups the self is nothing more than 'a pack of neurons' or a 'center of narrative gravity' or simply a 'grammatical error,' i.e., a non-existent category.

In light of these arguments it is not very difficult to see that Mullā Ṣadrā, Walī Allāh and others made original contribution to our understanding of the self by putting the first-person perspective at the center of their conception of the self. Moreover, Mullā Ṣadrā's notion of selfhood highlights the importance of pre-reflective, primal awareness that makes self-knowledge possible. Furthermore, such first-person accounts of the self have important implications for the neuroscientific perspective on the self-brain relationship, or what Buddhist philosopher Alan Wallace calls 'the idolization of the brain.' In his *Contemplative Science*, Wallace observes that for many neuroscientists the brain influences the self, but not vice-versa. In his view, fixing on the brain as an absolute in the self-brain relationship puts it in the role of an idol.[1226] In fact, this is a common stance embraced by numerous neuroscientists, which I have had occasion to explain as well in my analysis of Damasio and others.[1227] For instance, the neuroscientist Daniel Wagner writes the following: "It seems to each of us that we have conscious will. It seems we have selves. It seems we have minds. It seems we are agents. It seems we cause what we do. Although it is sobering and ultimately accurate to call all this an illusion, it is a mistake to conclude that the illusory is trivial."[1228] As Wallace notes, the implication of such a viewpoint is that the human self and identity are reduced to the brain, which is regarded as the ultimate source of all happiness and sorrow. It is thus natural to think psychopharmaceutical drugs as means of happiness and relief for suffering. The rise of happiness pills perhaps attests to the influence of such a viewpoint. More philosophically, however, such an eliminativist conception of the self might lead to the disappearance of moral responsibility, for as Wallace argues, if we were truly automatons programmed by our brains and genes, we should not be held accountable for our behavior, leading to a dissolution of punishment and reward.[1229] Against such reductionism that reduces the self to a set of cognitive functions or identifies it exclusively with various brain-states, the authors investigated in this study point to the connection between human ethical agency and moral responsibility that is inextricably related to

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[1226] B. Alan Wallace, *Contemplative Science: Where Buddhism and Neuroscience Converge* (NY: Columbia University Press, 2007), 152.
[1227] See ch. 1, 24-26.
[1228] Daniel M. Wagner, *The Illusion of Conscious Will* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2018), 324.
[1229] Wallace, *Contemplative Science,* 152.

self-knowledge and the overcoming of a variety of moral and spiritual obstacles which impede the process of self-understanding and self-discovery.[1230]

This brings me back to the question of assenting to a 'preordained order and prototype,' as mentioned by Hall in relation to premodern thinkers' notion of the self. Unlike the Platonic paradigm in which predetermination does not hold, it appears at first blush that this might be true of Islamic philosophy, especially if we juxtapose the doctrine of the perfect human (*al-insān al-kāmil*) with fixed entities (*al-aᶜyān al-thābita*). It would then imply that there is a 'meta-self' out there somewhere in the Platonic heaven, which predetermines every self's course of action. However, such an interpretation would be fallacious because there are as many fixed entities as there are human beings—one for each individual. But more importantly, the fixed entities are forms of divine names, whereas the perfect human is the sum total of all these names that are infinite. Thus the perfect human is neither a fixed entity nor anything like a Platonic form that can be somewhat bounded. To wit, positing a doctrine like the perfect human as the highest mode of selfhood does not prevent Ṣadrā et al. from constructing a self that weaves its destiny through its own actions. This is because for Ṣadrā et al. (Iqbāl included) the self is both a 'spectrum' and an 'aspirational' concept, as I have argued in previous chapters. In other words, while addressing "what is the nature of the self," Ṣadrā et al. also ask "what it means to be a self" (or, what kind of self one should be), so that one may come to ponder the meaning of one's personal existence. Thus as a spectrum reality, the self consists of multiple degrees and dimensions, namely the bio-physiological, socio-cultural and ethico-metaphysical dimensions, while as an aspirational entity, it aspires to realize the ideal human state as exemplified by the perfect human, whence the ethical idea of 'sculpting the self.'[1231]

One implication of seeing the self as an 'aspirational' entity is that selfhood is to be conceived in dynamic terms that consist of an inner journey from a one given point to another. Although all of the authors discussed in this study agree on the ethico-spiritual nature of this journey, whose vehicles are one's moral and spiritual actions, they differ on the nature of these vehicles (i.e. the nature of moral and spiritual actions) and where they will land the self. As an example, for Mullā Ṣadrā the self's higher dimensions are attained by pursuing a philosophico-spiritual life that gradually enables the self to peel off its layers of materiality, which impedes self-perfection. This systematic pursuit of a philosophico-spiritual life entails, among other things, detachment from the world, acquiring intrinsic virtues, and meditative and invocatory practices such as invocation (*dhikr*). Shāh Walī Allāh would agree with most of the practices of the self that Ṣadrā recommends, with the exception that he would not count pursuing philosophy as part of the process of self-discovery. But like Ṣadrā, Walī Allāh also regards the self as immaterial or a non-physical particular. Also, drawing on a host of traditions such as Stoicism, Islamic Neoplatonism and Graeco-Islamic-Indian medical tradition, he develops an original argument, according to which the self, being the most subtle of all the forms, cannot but be dependent on a body which is also the most subtle of all the bodies (*alṭaf al-ajsām*) maturing at the finest degree of subtlety and equilibrium. Walī Allāh calls this 'subtle body' *nasama* or *pneuma*, which is an intermediary between the self (immaterial) and the body (material). In this way he is able to resolve the tension between the material *nasama* (*pneuma*) and the immaterial self by reinterpreting Aristotelian hylomorphism, so that *pneuma* becomes the 'matter' for the 'form' of the immaterial self. As for the self's final destination, both Ṣadrā and Walī Allāh affirm

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[1230] Knowledge of the self consists in improving our cognitive faculties so that we reliably perceive clearly and distinctly what does in fact promote our self-perfection and, consequently, act in accordance with this perception.

[1231] However, we must stress that these two poles of the self are thoroughly intertwined.

that it reaches destination when it discovers its true identity with the Divine Reality. It is at that level, through the mystical states of *fanāʾ* and *baqāʾ*, that the identity of the self becomes apophatic, in that it simultaneously becomes the 'I' and the 'not-I,' defying any 'either/or' categories.

Appearing at the cusp of colonial modernity, Iqbāl's develops a new model of selfhood by attempting to forge some kind of middle ground between Islamic sources on the self and the views of Western thinkers such as Bergson, Nietzsche, James and others. Even though Iqbāl maintains that the self is immortal and its highest goal is to meet God, he differs significantly from Ṣadrā et al. by emphasizing the self's immanence, individuality, dynamism, activity, life and self-affirmation. In Iqbāl's scheme of things, regardless of the self's development and spiritual progress, it always retains its individuality and egohood when it encounters God. There is no place for a non-dual conception of the self and the Divine in Iqbāl's thought. That is why Iqbāl says that the ultimate goal of the self is to see God as an Ego and as an Other.

In the main, it can be stated that the Muslim philosophers whom we explored in this study reveal themselves to be fundamentally concerned in their own unique ways with the problem of the human condition in general. Their manner of addressing this central issue from their differing perspectives devolves on the cultivation of what can be called an authentic notion of the self and personal selfhood. However, it is crucial to note that this notion of the self is different from that of liberal individualism, in that the self of these Muslim thinkers including Iqbāl is not 'morally neutral.' That is to say, although the liberal self can come in different stripes, they all share the commitment that moral outlooks are, or should be, the product of individual choice, in which the individual is characterized in such morally neutral terms as autonomous, unique, and free.[1232] In the case of Islamic thinkers the given, conventional self is conceived in morally loaded descriptions such as a bundle of desires, negative emotions and tendencies that need to be overcome through one's effort in order to reach the desired transcendent mode of being. In other words, for Islamic thinkers, as for Shakespeare, there is not just the 'I,' there is rather 'I and I,' one of which must be disciplined and overcome.[1233] Moreover, the atomistic conception of the liberal self as an entity that is 'self-sufficient outside of society' is also at odds with the thinkers discussed in this study, for whom the self is a religious being that has to fulfill social obligations as part of its spiritual development.[1234] As for Iqbāl who emphasizes the self's uniqueness and individuality, it should be noted that it is different from the 'deep individualism' of liberalism that Tocqueville aptly described as 'isolated and confined to little circles.'[1235] As noted before, the Iqbālian self attains self-realization only as a member of an ideal community, which limits the individual's unrestrained freedom. However, this does not mean the self of the Muslim philosophers should be described in 'communitarian' terms, following the communitarian critics of liberal individualism such as Alasdair MacIntyre,

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[1232] See e.g. Alisa L. Carse, "The Liberal Individual: A Metaphysical or Moral Embarrassment?," *Noûs*, 28.2 (1994): 184-209 and Paul Fairfield, *Moral Selfhood in the Liberal Tradition: The Politics of Individuality* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 80-98, 166-83.

[1233] Cf. Hannah Arendt, "Thinking and Moral Considerations: A Lecture," *Social Research* 38.3 (1971): 417-446.

[1234] See Charles Taylor, "Atomism," in *Philosophy and the Human Sciences: Philosophical Papers 2* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 187-210.

[1235] See Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, edited by Eduardo Nolla; translated by James T. Schleifer (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2012), II.2. Cf. Robert N. Bellah et al., *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), ch. 6. Cf. Ralph W. Emerson, who celebrates 'individualism' in his famous essay entitled "*Self-Reliance.*" See Emerson, *Self-Reliance and Other Essays* (New York: Dover, 1993).

Charles Taylor, Michael Walzer and Michael Sandel.[1236] Communitarian proponents of the self reject the liberal conception of the individual self that impinges its will on the world by arguing that individuals are embodied agents in the world. In their view, moral and political judgment depend on the language of reasons and the interpretive framework within which selves view their world, hence it will make little sense to consider the moral outlook of the individual outside the interpretive dimensions of human beliefs, practices, and institutions.[1237] While this account of the self that comes into being through social interactions would rhyme well with Iqbāl's exposition of the self's socio-cultural dimension, other thinkers such as Ṣadrā and Walī Allāh are largely silent on such a topic, apart from a few brief comments on custom and culture.[1238]

At any rate, although the self of the Muslim philosophers is neither individualistic nor communitarian, it should not be called 'impersonal' either, which is completely detached from the world and busy pursuing its self-enclosed spiritual life on some isolated island. Rather, the self explored in this study is best characterized as 'anthropocentric' and deeply personal but at the same time transcends 'individuality' in moments of mystical experience when it attains an ineffable identity with the Divine Reality. However, such an account must be treated with some caution, since as Muslim thinkers began to encounter what is conventionally called 'modernity,' we observe both continuity and discontinuity with respect to their conceptions of the self, the prime example being Iqbāl whose reconstruction of the self introduces novelties of its own. Still, it would be a mistake to think that everyone followed Iqbāl's footsteps. We have seen how Iqbāl's contemporary Thānavī chose to retain the traditional paradigm.[1239] More contemporary thinkers such as Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ṭabāṭabāʾī (d. 1981) and Mahdī Ḥāʾirī Yazdī (d. 1999) would follow suit, while expanding on and sometimes adding further nuances to the traditional notion of the self, as developed in the School of Mullā Ṣadrā.[1240] But there were others such as Sayyid Quṭb (d. 1966) and Mohammed Arkoun (d. 2010) who would receive inspiration from

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[1236] Modern-day communitarianism is said to have begun as a response to Rawls' conception of the liberal self in relation to his famous 'the Original Position.' See John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1971), 7ff. For general information on communitarianism, see Daniel Bell, "Communitarianism," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2016 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2016/entries/communitarianism/>. John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1971),

[1237] See Charles Taylor, *Philosophy and the Human Sciences*, pt. I; Alasdair MacIntyre, *Against the Self-Images of the Age* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1978), chs.18–22; *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988), ch.1. But it should be noted that some liberals do recognize the point that vast areas of our lives are governed by unchosen habits and routines, that the deliberate, effortful, choosing subject mode may be the exception rather than the rule. They emphasize, however, that the main justification for a liberal politics concerned primarily with securing the conditions for individuals to lead autonomous lives rests on the possibility and desirability of normative self-determination. See Gerald Doppelt, "Is Rawls Kantian Liberalism Coherent and Defensible?," *Ethics*, 99.4 (1989): 815–851.

[1238] Conversely, thinkers in the liberal and communitarian traditions often take for granted first-person accounts of the self. The social embeddedness of the self was expounded in great detail by sociologists such as Mead and Simmel at the turn of the twentieth century. See, Mead, *Mind, Self and Society*, 135-226. See also Georg Simmel, *On Individuality and Social forms; Selected Writings*, edited by Donald N. Levine (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), 217-48, who explores and theorize the relationship between the subjective experience of the individual and objective culture of various social forms.

[1239] See ch. 4, 202-207.

[1240] See e.g. Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ṭabāṭabāʾī, *Kernel of the Kernel: Concerning the Wayfaring and Spiritual Journey of the People of Intellect* [*Risāla-yi Lubb al-lubāb dar sayr wa sulūk-i ulu-l-albāb*], translated by Mohammad Faghfoory (Albany: SUNY, 2003), ch. 2, and Mahdī Ḥāʾirī Yazdī, *Haram-i hastī: taḥlīlī az mabādī-i hastī shināsī-i taṭbīqi* (Tehran: Intishārāt-I Ḥikmat, 2005), 283-325. See also his, *Safar-i nafs: taqrīrāt-i ustād duktur Mahdī Ḥāʾirī Yazdī ʿAbd Allāh Naṣrī* (Tehran: Naqsh-i Jahān, 2002), 87ff.

Iqbāl, and develop their own theories of selfhood. In one of his later works, Quṭb for instance, praises Iqbāl's concept of *khūdī* as a time-honored idea that Muslims needed in order to cope with the challenges of the modern world. He also approves of Iqbāl criticism of the mystical concept of annihilation (*fanāʾ*) as being the cause of Muslim passivity.[1241] And in his well-known *The Unthought in Contemporary Islamic Thought,* Arkoun invokes the doctrine of the perfect human (*al-insān al-kāmil*) as the ideal person, whose full realization is a desideratum that has yet to come about due to kinship solidarities interfering with the autonomy of the individual in the Islamic world.[1242]

As a final point, this study adds further evidence of intellectual dynamism to the growing body of recent literature that debunks the myth of decline in the post-classical Islamic world. It also shows that a distinct mark of post-classical dynamism is the cross-pollination of ideas and influences across various intellectual disciplines such as theology, philosophy and philosophical Sufism.[1243] However, it would still take many more studies before one could confidently chart the intellectual trajectory of post-classical Islamic thought in various Islamic lands. It is thus hoped that the present study will serve as a useful point of reference for further research on self and subjectivity in Islam, especially in relation to Indian thinkers such as Baḥr al-ʿUlūm, Faḍl-i Ḥaqq Khayrābādī and Barakāt Aḥmad.

[1241] Sayyid Quṭb, *The Islamic Concept and its Characteristics* (Oak Brook: American Trust Publications, 1991), 13-16; cf. *al-ʿAdālah al-ijtimāʿīyah fi-l-Islām* (Beirut: Dār al-Shurūq, 1975), 32-43.

[1242] Mohammed Arkoun, *The Unthought in Contemporary Islamic Thought* (London: Saqi in association with The Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2002), 263-265.

[1243] On the encounter between Sufism and philosophy in the post-classical period, see William Chittick, "Mysticism versus Philosophy in Earlier Islamic History: The Al-Ṭūsī, Al-Qūnawī Correspondence," *Religious Studies* 17.1 (1981): 87-104; and Gudrun Schubert, *Annaherungen: der Mystisch-Philosophische Briefwechsel zwischen Sadr ud-Din-i Qunawi and Nasir ud-Din-i Tusi* (Beirut and Stuttgart, Franz Steiner Verlag, 1995), introduction.

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