





The
Openings
Revealed
in
Makkah

Books 3 & 4

Shaykh al-Akbar
Muḥyiddīn ibn al-ʿArabī



Translated by
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Based on the critical edition of
ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz Sulṭān al-Manṣūb

NEW YORK • PIR PRESS

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2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

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ISBN: 978-1-945083-43-3

Translation of al-Futūḥāt al-Makkīyah, critical
edition by ‘Abd al-‘Azīz Sulṭān al-Manṣūb,
published by the Majlis al-a‘alā lil-thaqāfah, El
Gabalaya Street, Opera House, El Gezira, Cairo

Printed in South Korea

*Frontispiece: Medallion of Nūr al-Dīn al-Jarrāḥī; see
translation at end of the volume.*

This world is a bridge of planks over a great river,
and you are traversing, then departing.



Acknowledgments

I am grateful to Pir Press for publishing Volume 2 (Books 3 & 4) of the Futūḥāt Project. Ruadhan Hayes and I continue to work closely together; myriads of changes and corrections have been implemented and together we have examined a host of issues. These issues helped me to gain a deeper understanding of lines of poems, unusual words, and particular nuggets. The results have been serendipitous, with clarity in these areas spreading over entire passages.

Opening, and key, insights have arisen from *dars* (study) sessions monthly in New Mexico organized by Michele Atman (Baqi Teslima); in Crestone with Kate Steichen (Hamida Nur) and Kathleen Ochs (Haqiqa); and in Germany with presentations organized by Anja Maria Engelsing and Klaus Koblitzeck. Events in July 2019 in Berlin and Munich set the Futūḥāt Project in the context of the Nur Ashki Jerrahi order, with the presence of the two teachers of this order, Shaykha Fariha Fatima (New York City) and Shaykha Amina Teslima (Mexico City).

My thanks also go to the Muhyiddin Ibn Arabi Society for a grant to help with this project and for the opportunity to present this work at the annual symposium in Oxford (October 2019).

I am especially grateful to Faris Abdel-Hadi and Shaykha Fariha, for their continued support and encouragement of this project, and to my wife Ely, without whom none of this would be possible. Thank you!

*Muḥarram 1441
September 2019*

Introduction

With Books 3 and 4 we are still in the *maʿrifah* section of this great work, presented with knowings and tastings of what we must recognize (i.e. have *maʿrifah* of). The structure of these two books - that is, of the icons etched in lights in the first, *maʿrifah*, portion of the body of the Youth in Book 1 - is centered on Chapter 22. Here, we are introduced to the *manzil* (alighting place). The *manāzil* (pl.) will reemerge with the fourth portion of the body of the Youth, the fourth section of The Openings Revealed in Makkah. The 114 chapters will correspond to the *suwar* (sg. *sūrah*) of the *Qurʾān*, which Ibn al-ʿArabī wants us to see afresh. Indeed, to this translator these chapters read like maps, with their discoverer pointing out features - verses and topics - along the way. The chapters are concluded with lists of such features, such as (from Chapter 326) ‘There is a knowing of the difference between the first thought (impression) and the second’, and ‘There is a knowing of affiliation - meaning, the affiliation of the branches to the roots - and who joins as a branch without a root, and what God’s rule is for him, from a path of *kashf*.’

The way Ibn al-ʿArabī has us comprehend these alighting places is through *ummahāt* (where *umm* is mother; so, mother-lodes). There are nineteen steps, but this is not all; there are four more kinds associated with mother-lodes, and onward; and ‘the multiplicity is uncountable’. While the uncountable multiplicity is a counsel to us to see afresh, not reducing complexity to a number, perceiving structure in The Openings is a way to gain insight and understanding. The reader may consider whether or how the nineteen steps described in Chapter 22 can be found in subsequent chapters: the first step involves the Pivots (*aqṭāb*, sg. *qutb*) around whom the universe revolves, and the second step, symbols, arises in Chapter 26.

Ibn al-ʿArabī presents in Chapter 22 a structure which corresponds to the *Qurʾān* in the following way: first, the *Qurʾān* is a *jamʿ*, a collection - we can use the metaphor of an atlas, a collection of maps; second, the *suwar* of the *Qurʾān* are not chapters but fenced-in areas, much like the terrain a map encloses; third, in these areas there are signs and verses (*āyāt*).

Muḥammad ﷺ is the living Qur'ān. The first to recognize this was Khadījah, whom he acknowledged as the first to recognize that he was receiving Divine words, 'when everyone else was denying me'. And there is the story of 'Āishah - Mother of the Faithful, who for decades was the teacher of Islam - related by two nervous seekers of knowledge, tongue-tied, who finally asked, 'What was the character of the Prophet?' They were abashed at her response: 'My sons, have you not read the Qur'ān? *Indeed, you have tremendous character* (al-qalam 68:4). His character was the Qur'ān.' Hence the epithet of the Qur'ān and of the Prophet is 'azīm (tremendous).

The reader may find these two books of Volume 2 more accessible than the intricate Preface (*muqaddimah*) and Chapter 2 of Volume 1. A *muqaddimah* presents a thinker's philosophy within the context of existing philosophies and ideas. Ibn al-'Arabī's *muqaddimah* is highly dense, with a single sentence - about subject and predicate, for example - holding deep wells of insight. In a sense, the entire 10,000-page work could be linked and inserted into the *muqaddimah*. And with Chapter 2, it may be heartening to consider that the ocean of sciences about the letters may have put his audience also in a daze, given that what Ibn al-'Arabī sees in a single letter is unprecedented. But here in Volume 2 Ibn al-'Arabī, as are always his intent and effort, provides us relatively easier access to the insights he saw etched in the Youth. We gain a clear picture of the intellect, with Ibn al-'Arabī's stories of those with 'hidden intellects'. Ever transparent and honest, Ibn al-'Arabī takes us through his own education from a supposed madman, in Chapter 44. This may be a good chapter to start with, as it conveys intelligence apart from the intellect - an intellect which in 21st century societies often dominates our perceptive faculties and clouds our experience of Divine Presence.

The image accompanying the epigraph in Volume 1 was the *yā man hū* (O the One who is *hu*) in mirror calligraphy, which suggests the shape (and six bodily sections) of the Youth of Chapter 1. In this volume, the image is a metaphor for the bridge of this world. We see the two sisters on the bridge, supporting each other, arm in arm, with a figure, their father perhaps, on the point of leaving the bridge. Anyone who recognizes where they are, Ibn al-'Arabī

explains, will not build a palace or permanent structure; one will instead tread lightly and honor and learn from this world. Anyone who recognizes where they are will see that we are in a caravan, moving from place to place; and so our efforts are focused on how we travel and support arm in arm our fellows, because we are not destined to be here permanently - nor is this bridge so destined. Later, in Chapter 126 (Book 14), Ibn al-'Arabī speaks of this world as our mother.

'How strange we are! We have not halted to learn the obedience God commanded us; and we are not harmonious with - nor have we rendered fully her due - what we see of the virtues of this mother and her leaning to us with affection and love. The Prophet ﷺ said, "This world is a blessed conveyor of the faithful; on her, goodness reaches full maturity, and by her they are rescued from bad." Thus, he described her as being concerned about her children, reminding them of wrongdoings and having them flee with her from ills - and making seem beautiful to them and stirring a desire in them for the good. She travels along with them, and she bears them from a place of badness (non-being) to a place of goodness (eternal life); and this is because of the intensity of her watchfulness over what God sends down in her - the Divine commands called Laws. Thus, she loves that her children establish these Laws, for their felicity. So this one has described her with the most beautiful of qualities, and he has considered her to be a location for all good things. Therefore, it is appropriate for the people of *murāqabah* (careful watch, self-awareness, and self-examination; the *raqīb* is the woman who has lost her children and cares vigilantly for her sister's children) that their commencement into the entrance of this world be for acquiring this quality - and so they will study carefully the states of their mother. You see, infants open their eyes only to their mother - they do not look at another. Thus, they love her instinctively, and they lean toward her more than they lean toward their father, because they know only the one who cherishes them; and it is appropriate that they emulate her behaviors.'



Conventions, Fonts, and Letters

Since the dragoman has to convey meaning to an audience different from that sitting around the master as he dictated the 10,000 pages of the *Futūḥāt al-Makkīyah*, parentheses are used in this translation to provide context (like this). More extended context and explanations are provided in block commentary rather than in footnotes, and this commentary may easily be skipped over if the reader wishes. The descriptive titles of chapters (e.g. Chapter 17's 'The Shift') are from the translator. The remainder is Ibn al-'Arabī's unique voice, with dashes used to mark his parenthetical interjections and to provide punctuation that will serve readers in English. The 'arab language is gendered, and listening to rather than simply scanning the text reveals meanings that Ibn al-'Arabī's audience - 'auditing' in a group rather than reading alone - will have understood; many passages are simply unintelligible without hearing the genders, especially with the *ḥurūf* (as in *hu Allāh*) and other naming devices for the Divine (*ilāhī*, also feminine). For Ibn al-'Arabī, the third person masculine singular applies to men and women - even the person menstruating will be referred to by the pronoun 'he'. The word *rijāl* (Men) does not mean just biological men; Ibn al-'Arabī was asked why he sometimes used the word 'persons' instead of 'men' to describe a set of special beings, and he replied, 'Because they may be women.' In classical Arabic, a woman may be described as a stallion (with the word made grammatically feminine, *faḥlat*); and 'Ā'ishah was known as a *raḥlat* (someone manly) in reasoning. In Chapter 23, Ibn al-'Arabī connects the Pivots to the feminine roles (assigned by society) of brides presented on their wedding day and of high-status women.

Also, Ibn al-'Arabī tells us that he goes against the convention of the grammarians by giving gendered pronouns to animals and inanimate objects alike, because there is nothing inanimate: everything is living, articulate, and intelligent - in order to celebrate the glory of God. I have followed English conventions often, but there are many instances where I will break these conventions: the soul is a she, not an it; the horse is a he or a she; and the Earth is a she - as are the sisters Jannat (the Garden) and Jahannam (the Fire). When clarity is required, I add an *m* or an *f*.

Arabic words, with a few exceptions, are transliterated and easily recognizable in their own special font (e.g. *ḥurwīyah*). Most transliterated words have standard academic diacritics; some are given slanted diacritics in the hope that they will become familiar to readers and no longer be ‘foreign’ words. In the case of certain sentences, the text provides the Arabic first, followed by a parenthetical translation - especially when the Arabic words are ones that have been absorbed over the centuries into Muslim languages.

Until recently, manuscripts were written with black and red ink. In this book, honorifics are printed in red. Most of these are provided as calligraphic medallions, serving both to honor the Prophet or other special people, as is done in words in the *Futūḥāt*, and to remind the reader of the beauty of the pages to be found in Arabic manuscripts. There are many descriptions of the value of calling for these blessings on the three great categories of human being: messengers, prophets, and friends of God - the blessings of God, and peace, be upon them!

For the Messenger of God ﷺ or ﷺ. For a prophet ﷺ. For a friend ﷺ.



Arabic Letters and Their Numerical Values

Name	Letter	Naskh	Zapfino	Number
alif	a	ا	/	1
bā'	b	ب	ب	2
tā'	t	ت	ت	400
thā'	th	ث	ث	500
jīm	j	ج	ج	3
hā'	h	ح	ح	8
khā'	kh	خ	خ	600
dāl	d	د	د	4
dhāl	dh	ذ	ذ	700
rā'	r	ر	ر	200
zā'	z	ز	ز	7
sīn	s	س	س	60,300
shīn	sh	ش	ش	300,1000
ṣād	ṣ	ص	ص	90,70
ḍād	ḍ	ض	ض	800,90
ṭā'	ṭ	ط	ط	9
ẓā'	ẓ	ظ	ظ	900,80
ʿayn	ʿ	ع	ع	70
ghayn	gh	غ	غ	1000,900
fā'	f	ف	ف	80
qāf	q	ق	ق	100
kāf	k	ك	ك	20
lām	l	ل	ل	30
mīm	m	م	م	40
nūn	n	ن	ن	50
hā'	h	ه	ه	5
wāw	w, u	و	و	6
yā'	y, i	ي	ي	10

*Red numbers are
'according to the
people of the light',
and the Ikhwān
al-Safā'*

CONTENTS

Acknowledgments vii
Introduction ix

•BOOK 3•

Chapter 17
The Shift 1

Chapter 18
The Mutahajjidīn 15

Chapter 19
Knowings Decreased/Increased 23

Chapter 20
Jesus-Based Knowing 33

Chapter 21
Three Knowings 43

Chapter 22
An Alighting Place 53

Contents

Chapter 23

The Pivots 93

Chapter 24

Existence-Based Knowledge 101

Chapter 25

The Peg 115

Chapter 26

Pivots of Symbols 129

Chapter 27

Come Connect 143

Chapter 28

Do You Not See How? 153

Chapter 29

Ahl al-bayt 163

Chapter 30

The Company of Rider Pivots 177

Chapter 31

The Company of Riders 193

Chapter 32

Overseeing Pivots 211

Chapter 33

Pivots of Purposers 223

Chapter 34

Verified by the Breaths 241

Chapter 35

A Manzil of the Breaths 259

Contents

Chapter 36

The Jesus-Based 279

Chapter 37

Jesus-Based Pivots 297

Chapter 38

Beholds but Does Not Obtain 307

Chapter 39

Friend Exiled 317

Chapter 40

Neighboring 329

•BOOK 4•

Chapter 41

People of the Night 347

Chapter 42

Chivalry 365

Chapter 43

Extreme Asceticism 381

Chapter 44

The Bahālīl 395

Chapter 45

Returns after Arrival 407

Chapter 46

A Little Knowledge 419

Chapter 47

The Lower Alighting Places 427

Contents

Chapter 48

Motive 451

Chapter 49

A Breath of al-Rahmān 469

Chapter 50

Confusion and Inability 487

Chapter 51

People of Wara' 499

Chapter 52

Fleeing 509

Chapter 53

Aspirants 521

Chapter 54

Signs 529

Chapter 55

Incoming Thoughts 543

Chapter 56

Investigation 555

Chapter 57

Inspiration 565

Chapter 58

Mustadallīn 575

Chapter 59

The Time Period 589

Chapter 60

Elements 599

Contents

Chapter 61

Jahannam 617

Chapter 62

Levels of the Fire 633

Chapter 63

The Barzakh 645

Chapter 64

The Day of Arising 661

Appendices

Verses 699

Glossary 705

Physical Descriptions 717

◆ Book 3 ◆

CHAPTER 17

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

By the name Allāh,
the Supremely Compassionate,
the Gently Kind

The Shift

On maʿrifah of the transfer of cosmic sciences,
and fragments of the Divine sciences, the replen-
ishers, the originals

Knowings of existence shift, passing from one state to another;

but a knowing of the Face: there is no fear of absence.

*Only the Face of
your Lord will
continue on • al-
Raḥmān 55:27*

We confirm and we negate the knowings, all together,
and we traverse their high mountain road
time after time.

Divine! How can anyone know You who is other than You?

And (also) Your like, who is abundantly
blessed, or exalted over all?

Divine! How can anyone know You who is other than You?

And is there another who could be Your like?

Whoever seeks the path, with no indication from
the Divine, has sought the impossible.

Divine! How do they love You, being loving hearts?
What do they hope for - unification and
connection?

Divine! How does anyone recognize You except You?
And is there anything other than You? No, and
not no!

With 'recognize' in this verse, from 'arafa, as in 'I am a treasure,
concealed, but I love to be recognized,' Ibn al-'Arabī is speaking of
the hu who is 1 in the many.

Divine! How do they see You - with eyes?
You are not illumined light or shadows.

Divine! I do not see myself, other than You;
and how do I see the impossible, or the astray?

Divine! You are You; and indeed I am I,
in order to seek from Your Being the gift of
being,

Because there is poverty standing established in me,
basic to my existence,
born from Your richness, this is a changing
state.

He brought me out to make me appear to *hu*,
and no one but *hu* sees me; so I am an āla.

For āla, Lane cites, 'a mirage like water between the sky and the earth (in appearance) raising figures seen from a distance, and making them to quiver'. As described in Chapter 72, with the moving ember (also the flip-book and films), all that is seen is the light - the ember is never seen. So Light *exalted* is visible and creation is invisible. 'We' are the flickering, quivering entities that are moving so quickly (with the New creation) that we are invisible. We are invisible to all but God, and therefore we can see only God.

cf. *al-nūr* 24:39 Whoever chases the mirage, wanting water,
sees a spring of life there, cool water.

The critical editor 'Abd al-'Azīz Maṣṣūb (referred to hereafter with the honorific Sidi) notes that the x-ed out word in manuscript Q was *al-wujūd* (being, what is found) and below the line it is corrected to 'life'.

I am the new existence of which nothing is my like,
and the One whose likeness I am accepts
likenesses.

This is one of the most wondrous things!
Look! Perhaps you will see His likeness
transforming.

There is not in the cosmos anything but a single, prime
Being,

all too transcendent to be withstood, or handed over.

When the command comes to *Be!*, no entity withstands its becoming, and no entity can maintain (hand over) its being from one moment to the next.

إِلْهَام

Learn, may God assist you, that everything in the world is something changing and shifting from moment to moment; so the world of time period during every time period is shifting, and the world of the breaths during every breath, and the world of *tajallī* during every *tajallī*. The motive of this is His word: *Every day He is upon a radiant brilliance.*

tajallī (pl. *tajalliyāt*):
a Divine vision, the
brilliant radiance of
Being

al-Raḥmān 55:29

And this is supported by His word, *We shall finish with (and attend exclusively to) you, you weighty ones.* Human beings find in themselves different kinds of thoughts coming into their hearts while they are moving or still; but every fluctuation happening in the upper or lower world is based on a Divine turning-to-face with a specific *tajallī* to this entity (*ʿayn*); thus, your leaning for support on that *tajallī* will be commensurate with what its truth provides you.

al-Raḥmān 55:31.
The weighty ones
are the jinn and the
humans.

For the terms below: in *Lisān al-ʿarab*, ‘God mukawwinu the thing in extracting it from non-existence to *wujūd*.’ Thus *kawn* is something that is new, and newly created. The universe is *kawn*, and *kawnīyah* is ‘related to the newly created universe’. The plural *akwān* means ‘things newly created’. The plural of *maʿrifah* is *maʿārif*.

Learn that existence-based (*kawnīyah*) *maʿārif* include: knowings derived from existent things (deduced from how they function) where their objects of knowings are themselves existent things; knowings derived from existent things where their objects of knowings are correlates - and the correlates are not themselves existent things; knowings derived from existent things where

Zayd is ‘correlated’
to his father ‘Amr,
so *Zayd* ‘son of’
‘Amr is a correlate.

their objects of knowings are the *dhāt* of the True (e.g. *By the Cherisher of the heavens and the Earth, indeed it is the True, as it is that you are endowed with speech* • *al-dhāriyāt* 51:23); knowings derived from the True where their objects of knowings are existent things; and knowings derived from correlates where their objects of knowing are existent things. These, all of them, are called existence-based knowings - and they shift and pass with their objects of knowings during their states (from one to another).

The format of their shifting is a changing: human beings seek an initial *maʿrifah* of one of the existent things, or they derive from one of the existent things evidence for that which they seek. When they achieve what they were seeking, there shines on them a face of the True in there in that existent thing, while that face was not actually what they were seeking. These seekers then remain with it and abandon their initial aspirations. The knowledge they were seeking shifts to what that face provided them.

The 'face' of anything is its truth, and its truth is what differentiates it from everything else. Each pulsing fluctuation, each thought coming in, is something new (*kawn*). The imagery is that of the mirage story cited above.

Among the people this happens to is someone who recognizes this process, and among them are those whose state is this and yet they do not recognize what was shifted away from nor what was shifted to - so that some of the people of the path err and say, 'When you see a man standing in one state for forty days, then know that he is a poseur.'

*murāʾ: someone
doing something to
be seen doing it*

How strange! Do the realities let a single thing persist even for two breaths, or two time periods in one state not shifting to another? If so, the Divine would be idled, inactive in its regard!

An illustration: place three coins on a table; move all three together once, and a second time. Now move only two. For the last iteration, one coin is independent of you. And it is impossible that creation be independent of the Divine, who is the only Independent (*al-ghani*). This is unimaginable, unless this 'arif did not know what was meant by shifting-transference, since transference is to similars.

And as Ibn al-Arabī explains, the New creation occurring every quantum time period (*zaman fard*) is like the previous creation but never exactly the same.

Everything transfers with the breaths, from one thing to its like. He may have been confused about the form, because the state of the individual above did not change from the first state - as he assumes. It is as one says, 'So-and-so continues to this day to walk around, not sitting.' There is no doubt that 'walking' is a very large number of movements, each movement not exactly the next movement; rather, each moment is like the next. Your knowledge passes with its passing. When someone says, 'His state has not changed' - how many states have actually changed with him!

Section

As for the shifting of Divine knowings, it is the 'loosening' which was argued for by Abū'l-Mu'ālī Imām al-Ḥaramayn and the 'connections' that were argued for by Muḥammad bin 'Umar bin al-Khaṭīb al-Rāzī.

See *al-Burhān fī uṣūl al-fiqh* by al-Juwaynī Abū al-Mu'ālī, and *K. al-Mubāḥath al-mashriqīyah* by al-Rāzī. Ibn al-'Arabī discusses the issue later (Chapter 404), when he says that 'the difficulty is removed for this issue - according to us (the people of *kashf* - revelatory disclosure - and *wujūd* and Divine dictation) - that knowledge is a correlation between the knower and the known things; and there is then nothing but a *dhāt* of the True, and she is exactly His *wujūd* - and His Being has no commencement and no ending'. Then, 'there is nothing but the True; and some of it enters into *wujūd*, and ends, due to its entrance into being; and some of it does not enter into *wujūd*, so it is not described by termination'.

As for the people of firm footing among the people on our path, they do not speak here of shifting, because the things are (with the True) visible, known; they are entities and states with the forms they come in to and from, when their entities are created - and so on infinitely. Therefore, there does not newly arise a 'connection', as with the school of Ibn al-Khaṭīb, nor a 'loosening', as with the school of Imām al-Ḥaramayn - God be pleased with all of them. The sound intellectual proof provides what we argue for; and this is what the people of God discuss, and we are in agreement with them about it - provided (as it is) from *kashf*, from a place which is back beyond the limit of the brain. So the whole is confirmed, and each faculty (even the intellect) is provided for accordingly.

In the sense of the Independent not needing to have entities created; it is the entities who needed to be found.

When God made the entities to exist, He made them exist for their own sakes, not for Him; and they are in their states in different sites and durations. One thing after another is stripped off the core entities and their states, on to infinity, consecutively and successively.

This is part of his description of the fixed entities (a'yān al-thābitah) which are the 'thing' cited in, 'Indeed, Our word to a thing, when We desire it, We but say to it *Be!* and it is' • al-nahl 16:40.

al-qamar 54:50 The command in relation to God is 1, just as He said, *Our command is only 1, like the blink of the eye.* Multiplicity is just in the countable numbers. This idea reached me during a sudden moment, and I was not disordered by it. The idea of multiplicity is 1, according to me - nothing becoming unseen or disappearing. And so it is seen by anyone who tastes this.

The key verse al-Rahmān 55:29 has the shā'n singular, not plural. The word 'day', as Ibn al-'Arabī will explain elsewhere, includes the 'smallest time quantum' (the zaman fard). So there is only, ever, 1 thing happening. Compare this with atemporal descriptions of physics - for example, in Julian Barbour (1999) *The End of Time: The Next Revolution in Physics*.

Allegorically, the entities found are like a single individual who has different states. If you are this individual, images are formed for each state you have; every individual is this way. A veil is placed between you and these images. You are given a *kashf* removing their veils - and you are one of the sum-total of images there. Thus, you perceive the sum-total of what is there in these layering images formed upon a lifting of the veil by means of a single view. The True does not turn the single view away from the layered images in that space of the single view; instead, He removes their veiling and clothes them with their *wujūd*, and they see themselves with the *wujūd* they are in forever.

About the perspective of the True in His timeless knowledge, there is no time past or future; rather, the matters - all of them - are known to Him in their strata according to the number of forms they have there.

For example, picture a single, atemporal sketch illustrating the stages (levels) of a plant's life, each layer superimposed one after the other. The images formed one on top of the other make layers, or

strata. The Divine view is of all of the layers as a single whole; the creature's view is this state-layer or that state-layer.

Their strata are not described by finitude or confinement, and they have no limit at which they would halt. This is the way the True perceives the cosmos and the sum-total of the enabled beings, during their state of non-existence and their state of being. A great variety of states occurs to these enabled beings - in their imagination, not in their knowledge. (They can imagine a great variety of states but they cannot know them.) They are provided the benefit of knowledge upon their *kashf* disclosing what they had not had before, because of a transference they had not had before. Verify this for yourself, as it is an issue quite hidden and obscure, connected to the secret of predestination; only a few of our friends have discovered it.

As for the connection of our knowledge to God, it is in two categories: a *ma'rifah* of the Divine *dhāt*, based on vision and seeing in a dream - but it is a vision with no encompassing (because nothing encompasses God); and a *ma'rifah* that He is a god, based on two matters, or one of the two: the one is gift-based, and the other is examination and using evidence. This is the *ma'rifah* that is acquired. As for knowledge with regard to His being 'free to choose' - in fact, choice is incompatible with a 'singleness of predestined will'. Its relation to the True, if He is described with it, is instead in regard to what He is able to do, not in regard to what the True does by right. He said, *But the word will come out rightfully by Me*; and He said, *Is the one (for whom) the word of punishment is rightfully his (equal to one who eschews evil?)*; and He said, *The word does not change with Me*. And how exquisitely this verse is completed! *And I do not oppress My creatures*. Here He alerts us to the secret of predestination; and by means of predestination there is the final word belonging to God with regard to His creation. This is the predestination which is appropriate to the Divine Side (and He will act only by what is right, not according to what He could have done). The predestination which refers to the people is, *Had We wanted, We would have brought every soul to her guidance* - 'but We did not so wish'. (*But the word will come out rightfully by Me*) is a verse-connecting emendation, because the enabled being is receptive to guidance and misguidance; it is our truth. We are a

al-sajdah 32:13

al-zumar 39:19

qāf 50:29

qāf 50:29

al-sajdah 32:13

place of dividing - one to the Fire, one to the Garden - and division comes to the enabled being. But in reality God has only a single situation in the enabled being, and that situation is foreknown to God: it is the ultimate state of the enabled being.



Issue: The intelligible manifestation of the invention, having no template ever seen: how can there really be an invention of something when there never ceases to be a vision before Him of that thing already known? The matter is as we settled it, with regard to God's knowledge of things, in a book titled *al-Ma'rifah bi'llāh* (Recognizing God).

A 'possessive' is God's x; then, the relation of a father to a son, for example, is abstract, a 'non-thing'. e.g. the Divine adjectival names *Life, Desiring*

Issue: The Divine names are relations and possessives referring to an *ʿayn wāḥdat* (a single entity). If there were no real multiplicity by means of the existence of entities - as someone presumes who does not have knowledge of God (among some of the philosophers) - and if the adjectival attributes were additional entities and He would be God only by means of them, Divinity would be a cause of their effect; then it could only be that they would be a god themselves. But the thing cannot be a cause of itself, or it would not be. God is not a cause of an effect that is not He Himself, because the cause is prior to the effect in the step-level, so that would require the god to depend - given that he is a cause - on additional entities which are the cause for Him; and that is impossible. Then consider that the caused thing does not have two causes, and these additional entities are many, and He would not be God except by means of these many; therefore, it is false that the names and the adjectives could be additional entities on top of His *dhāt* - God is too exalted beyond what the wrong-thinking people say! *He is Elevated, Great.*

al-isrā' 17:43

Issue: The image in the mirror is a *jasad barzakhī*, An imaginal body on a bounded null surface, a body which is in the *barzakh*, the *Jabarūt*; a body or figure in your dream is a *jasad*, while the organic body is a *jism*.
like the figure which the sleeper sees when the dream figure

matches the external figure. (The first is a virtual figure; the latter is the figure seen while awake, outside the dream.) It is this way for the person dying and for someone given *kashf*. (The person dying, or in the grave, sees figures approaching from the imaginal realm - the *Jabarūt* - and someone whose eyes have been unveiled sees the 'bulk' of the iceberg.) The image form in the mirror is the most veracious thing the *barzakh* provides of images, if the mirror has a special shape and a particular size. If the mirror is not this way, she is not veracious in everything she reflects; instead, she will be true only for some things.

Learn that as the mirrored shapes (concave, convex) differ, so the virtual images differ. If the viewing perspective were through the reflecting ray toward the reflected images - that is, on the surface of the polished body, as some of them believe - the viewer would perceive them as they are on the polished body. What enlarged their sizes, and what made them small? The answer is: the mirror. As for us, we see in the small polished body the large image form reflected to be actually small. And similarly, we see the large polished body enlarging the image form *f* in the eye of the viewer, and it may take her out beyond her limit and similarly give the image more width, length, and waviness.

Since the surface dimensions of the flat mirror have no effect on the image size, we should probably take Ibn al-'Arabi's descriptions here to be 'the small-ing' mirror and the 'enlarging' mirror. In Chapter 177, Ibn al-'Arabi speaks about the waviness of the water (used as a mirror) making the image wavy; in Chapter 350 he speaks of the images becoming turbulent as a result of the turbulence (or wavy deformity) of the polished bodies.

Therefore, it is not the reflecting rays focused on the surface of the mirror that provide that distortion; so it is impossible for us to argue anything but that the polished body is one of the things that convey image forms of the *barzakh* as virtual images in the seen world. This is why the sight does not connect to them except by means of the senses, because the imagination cannot grasp anything that does not first have a sensory image form, or is something collected together from parts of things that are sensory - the image-making faculty collecting them together into a composite. The image-making faculty provides an image form which does not

A unicorn seen in a dream, for example, is something composed of sensory parts, even if the unicorn as a whole is not something the senses see in this world.

have any sensory existence at all, but parts of what are collected together are sensory for this viewer - no question.

Issue: The most complete configuration to appear among the created beings is the human being, according to most people, because the complete human being (*insān*) was found 'in the spit and image' - but not the animus-human being. (This 'animal'-human being has only an animated nature, without the higher functions of the true *insān*, the complete human being.) The image is what has perfect completeness. But having this image does not make us the 'best', in God's view, because humanity is the most complete in aggregate. If they argue: 'God says, *The creation of the heavens and the Earth is greater than the creation of the people, but* *ghāfir 40:57* *most people do not know*; and it is well known that He does not mean "greater" in size but rather greater in signification' - We say to them, 'You are right.' But there is one who argues, 'They are "greater" than humanity in the spiritual regard.' No, the meaning and signification of the heavens and the Earth (with regard to what each one of the two points to concerning the mode of signification isolated from the special arrangement their two bodies have) is greater in the meaning dimension than the mass of the human, not each individual human. This is why there originates from the movements of the heavens and the Earth entities reproduced and created. The human with regard to his physical mass is one of the reproduced beings. This does not originate from the human. The nature of the (four) elements is part of this reproduction. This is why the two are greater than the creation of the human, as the two are to him like two parents; he is part of the 'command that is sent down between heaven and the Earth'. But we have actually been considering the perfectly complete human being (the *insān al-kāmil*), so we are arguing that he is more complete. As for the question whether he is more excellent according to God, that is up to God - exalted is He, One Alone. Indeed, the created being does not know what is in the Heart of the Creator; only someone who is told by Him does.

Issue: The True does not have a fixed identity-attribute except *wāḥdat* (one, single). It is impossible that there be with Him two,

and three, and so on; if there were, His *dhāt* would be composed of two things, or three, or four - and composition involving Him is impossible. Therefore, a fixed attribute that is additional over the *wāḥdat* is impossible.

Issue: As adjectival attributes are relational and possessives, and the 'relation' is a non-thing, and there is not at all anything but a single *dhāt*, from every perspective - this is why it is possible for the creatures to be objects of Divine kindness at the ultimate end of the affair; and they will not experience an eternal absence of kindness with no end - as indeed there is no one to force Him to be other than mercifully kind. The names (such as Compeller) and the adjectives (such as Wrathful) are not entities necessarily having authority over Him with the things; so there is no one to prevent an all-encompassing kindness for everyone. And especially when there is a report that 'My Kindness outstrips My Wrath.' Therefore, when Wrath comes to an end before Kindness, the determining rule becomes hers. It is as we have argued. This is why He said, *If God had so willed, He would have guided the people, all together.* The determining property of this volition (*had He willed*) belongs in this world, based on being tasked.

See earlier sidenote on possessives, this chapter.

Thus, those who are guided to fulfill the obligations tasked to them are the people God willed to be guided in this world; for everyone else, in the next world, the determining property will be where My Kindness outstrips My Wrath.

As for the next world, the determining property is connected to His word, *He does as He wishes*. Who is able to prove that He will wish to give only eternal punishment to the people of Fire, and only so? Or to a single one out of the entire universe, so that the rule of the names Punisher and Tester and Avenger and the like would be true? The name Tester, and its like, is relational and possessive; it is not a concrete thing. How could something substantive be under the ruling power of something that is not existent, not concrete? Everything said in His word *If He wishes* and *If it were Our wish* is said on account of this basis, and 'He' (the basic name 'He' of *He does as He wishes*) is universal.

al-baqarah 2:253

al-baqarah 2:20

al-isra' 17:86

There is no other text at all to refer to which touches on the possibility of eternal punishment such as there exists with us for

arguing for eternal happiness; so there remains only the possible, the open, for Him to do as He wishes - and

hu *anna-hu raḥmānuḥ dunyā wa'l-ākhirat*
'hu is Raḥmān, Supremely Compassionate,
 in this world and the next.'

And when you understand what we are hinting at, your resistance will be lessened - and will even disappear altogether.

Issue: Absolute 'He is allowed to' attributed to God is bad manners toward God. The intent of absolute 'He is allowed to' is achieved instead with the word 'possible'. This is more appropriate, as the Law does not mention 'allowed', and the idea does not occur to the intellect - so understand. And this amount is enough, because Divine knowledge is too vast to be penetrated deeply.

al-aḥzāb 33:4

And God speaks the true, and *hu* is the guide to the way.

وَاللَّهُ يَقُولُ الْحَقَّ وَهُوَ يَهْدِي السَّبِيلَ

