Sufism and the Perfect Human

Studying the history of the notion of the ‘Perfect Human’ (*al-insān al-kāmil*), this book investigates a key idea in the history of Sufism. First discussed by Ibn ‘Arabī and later treated in greater depth by al-Jīlī, the idea left its mark on later Islamic mystical, metaphysical, and political thought, from North Africa to Southeast Asia, up until modern times.

The research tells the story of the development of that idea from Ibn ‘Arabī to al-Jīlī and beyond. It does so through a thematic study, based on close reading of primary sources in Arabic and Persian, of the key elements of the idea, including the idea that the Perfect Human is a locus of divine manifestation (*maẓhar*), the concept of the ‘Pole’ (*quṭb*) and the ‘Muhammadan Reality’ (*al-ḥaqīqah al-Muḥammadiyyah*), and the identity of the Perfect Human. By setting the work of al-Jīlī against the background of earlier Ibn ‘Arabian treatments of the idea, it demonstrates that al-Jīlī took the idea of the Perfect Human in several new directions, with major consequences for how the Prophet Muhammad – the archetypal Perfect Human – was viewed in later Islamic thought.

Introducing readers to the key Sufi idea of the Perfect Human (*al-insān al-kāmil*), this volume will be of interest to scholars and students interested in Sufism, Islam, religion and philosophy.

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Introduction

The idea of the ‘Perfect Human’ (*al-insān al-kāmil*) is one of the most important ideas in the history of Sufism. Indeed, given the centrality of Sufism within Islamic thought and piety, particularly prior to modern times, it can be deemed a significant idea in the history of Islam as a whole. General works on the history and culture of Islam and the Arabs often make at least passing reference to the idea. Most often, they connect the idea to the names of two medieval Sufi thinkers, namely, the extremely influential – and often controversial – Andalusian Sufi metaphysical thinker Ibn ‘Arabī (d. c. 1240), and his later interpreter, ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Jīlī (d. 1408). Thus Albert Hourani informs the reader of his popular *History of the Arab Peoples* (1991), “The idea of the ‘Perfect Man’ (*al-insan al-kamil*) put forward by Ibn ‘Arabi was carried further by one of his followers, al-Jili (d. c. 1428).”¹ A more recent and also influential work, the late Shahab Ahmed’s *What is Islam? The Importance of Being Islamic* (2016), similarly describes al-Jīlī as “the elaborator from Muḥyi al-Dīn Ibn ‘Arabī (1165–1240), possibly the most influential Sufi in history, of the transfiguring Sufi concept of the ‘Perfect Human’ (*al-insān al-kāmil*)”.²

These scholars are not wrong to draw attention to the idea of the Perfect Human as a significant one in the history of Sufi thought. Nor are they mistaken to suggest that its origins, as a Sufi technical term and concept, lie in the works of Ibn ‘Arabī, or that Ibn ‘Arabī’s treatment of the idea was taken on and developed by al-Jīlī. Nevertheless, while Ibn ‘Arabī’s idea of the Perfect Human has been treated in several modern studies, little attention has in fact been given to the precise nature and specific qualities of al-Jīlī’s treatment of the idea. As such, we have little idea of the *history* of the idea of the Perfect Human in the two centuries between Ibn ‘Arabī and al-Jīlī, or of the exact nature of the latter’s ‘development’ of this Ibn ‘Arabian idea. The distinctive elements of al-Jīlī’s idea of the Perfect Human, in other words, have largely been overlooked or forgotten, and his thought has instead been blurred into a common Ibn ‘Arabian or ‘Akbarian’ tradition.³ It is the goal of this book, then, to unravel the distinctive qualities of al-Jīlī’s treatment of the idea of the Perfect Human, and of his thought more generally, and in so doing to tell the history of the idea of the Perfect Human.

‘Abd al-Karīm al-Jīlī can justifiably be regarded as one of the most important Sufi theorists of the medieval Islamic intellectual tradition. His major work,

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al-Insān al-kāmil fī ma'rifat al-awākhir wa-al-awā'il (*The Perfect Human in the Knowledge of the Last and First Things*),⁴ is a key text in the Sufi metaphysical tradition associated with Ibn 'Arabī, probably the most important Sufi thinker of any age. Written in Yemen at the beginning of the fifteenth century, al-Jīlī's *magnum opus* has been read by Sufis from West Africa and the Maghreb to Southeast Asia, passing through the Arabic, Persian, and Turkish speaking regions, up to modern times. Yet, despite this historical significance, both al-Jīlī and his key text are little known today, either in the West or the Muslim world. In the case of the latter, this is perhaps due in part to a general waning in the popularity and acceptability of Sufism, particularly of the more theoretical, metaphysical kind represented by *al-Insān al-kāmil* and Ibn 'Arabī's works more generally. As for the modern West, our ignorance of al-Jīlī is a consequence both of a general lack of awareness of the medieval Islamic intellectual and religious traditions, and of an absence of translations (particularly into English) and scholarly studies of al-Jīlī's work. Relatively little progress has been made in this regard since R.A. Nicholson's pioneering 1921 descriptive overview of *al-Insān al-kāmil*,⁵ and Titus Burckhardt's 1952 French translation of extracts from the first half of the book.⁶

To attempt to fill this gap, the present book offers the first extended study in English of *al-Insān al-kāmil*; indeed, I believe it is the first monograph treatment of al-Jīlī's thought in any European language. Specifically, this book focuses on al-Jīlī's treatment of the idea for which he became famous and which gives his major work its title: the Perfect Human. According to one of the leading Arab scholars of the Ibn 'Arabī intellectual tradition, al-Jīlī is "*the specialist (ṣāhib al-ikhtisāṣ), in the history of Islamic mysticism, on this topic*".⁷ That the idea is indeed the central focus of al-Jīlī's writing is indicated not only by the title of his most important work,⁸ but also by his statement in chapter 60 of that work, which is specifically devoted to the idea of the Perfect Human: "This chapter is the basis (*'umdah*) of the [other] chapters of this book; indeed, the whole book, from beginning to end, is a commentary (*sharḥ*) on this chapter."⁹ In light of this, as well as the aforementioned neglect of the distinctive features of al-Jīlī's treatment of the idea, it makes sense to focus this, one of the very first book-length studies of al-Jīlī's thought, on his treatment of the idea of the Perfect Human.¹⁰

My discussion of al-Jīlī's treatment of the idea of the Perfect Man is thematic, meaning that I break down the idea into its constituent parts, presenting and analysing the key passages from *al-Insān al-kāmil* in which he treats those different elements of the idea. Moreover, I set al-Jīlī's treatment of these different key elements of the idea of the Perfect Human within the context of:

- 1 his broader Sufi metaphysics, which I set out at the beginning of the book, based on my reading of *al-Insān al-kāmil* as a whole;
- 2 earlier treatments of the various key aspects of the idea by the leading representatives of the Ibn 'Arabī tradition, beginning with Ibn 'Arabī himself and passing through the various representatives of what I call the Qūnawī tradition, i.e. the intellectual chain of transmission issuing from Ibn 'Arabī's son-in-law, leading student and successor (*khalīfah*), Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī (d. 1274).¹¹

I cite passages from the major texts of this tradition, beginning with Ibn ‘Arabī’s two great works, the massive and encyclopaedic *al-Futūḥāt al-makkiyyah* (*The Meccan Revelations*) and the more concentrated and concise and more purely metaphysical *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam* (*The Gemstones of Wisdom*), and passing through the key works of the Qūnawī tradition, including, to take only the books cited most often here, al-Qūnawī’s own major works, *Miftāḥ ḡhayb al-jam‘ wa-al-wujūd* (*The Key to the Unseen Realm of Synthesis and Existence*) and *I’jāz al-bayān fī tafsīr umm al-Qur’ān* (*The Inimitability of Expression in the Exegesis of the Mother of the Qur’an*), al-Qūnawī’s student Sa’d al-Dīn al-Farghānī’s (d. 1300) Ibn ‘Arabian commentary on Ibn al-Fāriḍ’s famous *Tā’iyyah* poem, and the commentaries on the *Fuṣūṣ* by ‘Abd al-Razzāq al-Qāshānī (d. 1329) and his student Dāwūd al-Qayṣarī (d. 1350/1351). Since these texts are not very widely known or accessible, I quote directly from them, generally allowing them to speak for themselves.

This contextualisation allows us to build up a picture not only of how al-Jīlī conceived of the idea of the Perfect Human, but also of what makes his conception both similar to and distinct from other treatments of the idea. As we shall see, while al-Jīlī certainly was an adherent of the Ibn ‘Arabian tradition, there is much that is distinctive about his idea of the Perfect Human. In this way, the book seeks to problematise the tendency to view the idea of the Perfect Human as a perennially fixed idea, and the Ibn ‘Arabian Sufi metaphysical tradition – and Sufi thought itself – more broadly as a homogeneous and unchanging world-view. This book is therefore written from the standpoint of the history of ideas, rather than from within that Sufi metaphysical tradition or as part of an attempt to uncover perennial truths located in Sufi texts.¹²

The term ‘Perfect Human’ is an arresting one, and one which raises a number of important questions. In the following pages, for instance, we shall consider what makes the Perfect Human ‘perfect’. This will involve considering the Perfect Human’s metaphysical status as well as his or her human nature and powers within this world. After introducing al-Jīlī’s life and times and his general Sufi metaphysics in Chapters 1 and 2, our focus in Chapter 3 will be on the idea of the Perfect Human as a ‘synthetic being’, that is, as someone who is both a locus of divine manifestation, on the one hand, and a microcosm of the cosmos, on the other. The implications of these ideas for the Perfect Human’s this-worldly nature will also be explored, through a focused discussion of the miracles and sinlessness of the Perfect Human in al-Jīlī’s thought. Chapter 4 will explore the important concept, closely related to the idea of the Perfect Human, of the ‘Pole’ of existence. And following that, in Chapter 5 we will consider another important and closely connected Ibn ‘Arabian concept, namely, the idea of the ‘Muhammadan Reality’. We shall also consider the related question of *who* this Perfect Human is, or was, from al-Jīlī’s and his predecessors’ point of view, the subject of Chapter 6. I hope that by structuring the discussion in this way, I will be able to draw out both the key elements of al-Jīlī’s treatment of the idea and what is distinctive about his treatment.

To anticipate my conclusions, we shall see that al-Jīlī goes further than his Ibn ‘Arabian predecessors in laying emphasis on the divine aspect of the Perfect

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Human; that he was more explicit than his predecessors in identifying the one true Perfect Human with the Prophet Muhammad; and that, much more than the earlier thinkers in the Ibn ‘Arabian tradition, he put the idea of the Perfect Human at the very centre of his Sufi metaphysics. In the conclusion, finally, I shall briefly consider both the possible reasons for these distinctive elements of al-Jīlī’s treatment of the idea of the Perfect Human, and the impact that his conception had on later Sufi thought. The present book therefore serves not only as a comprehensive introduction to the Ibn ‘Arabian idea of the Perfect Human, but also makes a contribution to our understanding of the historical development of this key idea, from Ibn ‘Arabī to al-Jīlī and beyond. In this way, it seeks to make a novel contribution to the study of Ibn ‘Arabian Sufism and the history of Islamic thought more generally.

Notes

- 1 A. Hourani, *A History of the Arab Peoples*, intr. M. Ruthven (London: Faber & Faber, 2013), 177.
- 2 S. Ahmed, *What is Islam? The Importance of Being Islamic* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2016), 21. See also *ibid.*, 79.
- 3 I prefer to use the term Ibn ‘Arabian, rather than the more common ‘Akbarian’, so as to avoid any impression that my analysis comes from within that tradition; that is, that I recognise Ibn ‘Arabī as ‘The Greatest Master’ (*al-shaykh al-akbar*). As I explain below, my interest in Ibn ‘Arabī and al-Jīlī is as a historian of ideas.
- 4 Al-Jīlī, *al-Insān al-kāmil fī ma’rifat al-awākhir wa-al-awā’il*, ed. Š. ‘Uwayḍah (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘ilmiyyah, 1997). In the absence of a critical edition of *al-Insān al-kāmil*, I use the 1997 Beirut edition because it seems to me the easiest both to access and to navigate.
- 5 R.A. Nicholson, *Studies in Islamic Mysticism* (Richmond, UK: Curzon Press, 1921), 77–142.
- 6 *De l’homme universel: extraits du livre al-Insān al-kāmil*, tr. T. Burckhardt (Paris: Dervy-livres, 1956). This translation was in turn translated into English by Angela Culme-Seymour of the Beshara School (a contemporary ‘New Religious Movement’ that takes Ibn ‘Arabī as its guide) in 1983. For translations of al-Jīlī’s more minor works into European languages, see: *Das Buch der vierzig Stufen, nach einer Bagdader Handschrift hrsg.*, tr. E. Bannerth (Vienna: R.M. Rohre, 1956); *Die Risāla arba’īn mawāṭin des ‘Abdalkarīm al-Ġīlī*, tr. D. Mann (Doctoral thesis, Saarbrücken, 1970); *Göttliche Vollkommenheit und die Stellung des Menschen: die Sichtweise ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Ġīlīs auf der Grundlage des “Šarḥ muškilāt al-futūḥāt al-makkīya”*, tr. Angelika Al-Massri (Stuttgart: Deutsche Morganländische Gesellschaft, 1998); *Un commentaire esoterique de la formule inaugurale du Coran: Les Mystères Cryptographiques de “Bismi-llāhi-r-Rahmāni-r-Rahīm: Al-Kahf wa-r-Raḥīm fī Sharḥ Bismi-llāhi-r-Rahmāni-r-Rahīm*, tr. J. Clément-François (Paris: Editions AlBouraq, 2002); *I Nomi divini e il Profeta alla luce del sufismo* (Al-Kamālāt al-ilāhiyyah fī al-ṣifāt al-Muhammadiyyah), tr. C. Marzullo (Turin: Il leone verde, 2015).
- 7 Al-Jīlī, *Ibdā’ al-kitābah wa-kitābat al-‘ibdā’* (‘ayn ‘alā al-‘ayniyyah: *sharḥ mu’āšir li-‘ayniyyat al-imām al-ṣūfī ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Jīlī*) [= *al-Nādirāt al-‘ayniyyah*], ed. S. al-Ḥakīm (Beirut: Dār al-Burāq, 2004), 5.
- 8 See also the titles of some of his lost works, e.g. *al-Mamlakah al-rabbāniyyah fī al-nash’ah al-insāniyyah* (*The Lordly Kingdom in the Human Organism*), *Insān ‘ayn al-wujūd wa-wujūd ‘ayn al-insān al-mawjūd* (*The Human is the Source of Existence and Existence is the Source of the Human Being*). See also al-Jīlī’s statement in

- al-Kamālāt al-‘ilāhiyyah* that the human being is “the goal of existence” (*al-maqṣūd min al-wujūd*), quoted in al-S. Tarjumān, *Nazariyyat waḥdat al-wujūd bayn Ibn ‘Arabī wa-al-Jīlī* (Beirut: Manshūrāt Maktabat Khaz’al, 2002), 546.
- 9 Al-Jīlī, *al-Insān*, 207.
 - 10 The best treatment of the idea of the Perfect Human as it appears in the writings of Ibn ‘Arabī is M. Takeshita, *Ibn ‘Arabī’s Theory of the Perfect Human and Its Place in the History of Islamic Thought* (Doctoral thesis, University of Chicago, 1987). Takeshita, however, while focusing on the roots of the idea in earlier Islamic thought, does not discuss the development of the idea in the later Ibn ‘Arabian tradition.
 - 11 For a succinct overview of the Qūnawī tradition, see W. Chittick, *Encyclopaedia Iranica* (online edition), s.v. “EBN AL-‘ARABĪ, MOḤYĪ-al-DĪN Abū ‘Abd-Allāh Moḥammad Ṭā’ī Ḥātemī.
 - 12 The history of ideas approach that I am following was pioneered by Arthur Lovejoy (d. 1962). See esp. A. Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being: A Study of the History of an Idea* (Cambridge, MA; London: Harvard University Press, 2001).

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ghurabā' al-sharq),¹¹⁴ or expressing the nature of the divine essence through the story of “the bird of holiness (*ṭayr al-quḍs*)”,¹¹⁵ or explaining the reason for religious difference through the story of how Adam’s descendants split apart (*ifta-raqat*) after his death.¹¹⁶ All of these features, along with his aforementioned use of the Qur’an and hadith, can be seen to a greater or lesser degree in his treatment of the Perfect Human.

Notes

- 1 See Nicholson, *Studies*, 81; A. Knysh, *Ibn ‘Arabi in the Later Islamic Tradition: The Making of a Polemical Image in Medieval Islam* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1999), 248; R. Atlagh, *Contribution à l’étude de la pensée mystique d’Ibn ‘Arabī et son école à travers l’oeuvre de ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Jīlī* (Doctoral thesis, École pratique des hautes études, 2000), 16–17. (My thanks to Claudio Marzullo for helping me to get access to Atlagh’s thesis.) Thus, while his master al-Jabartī appears in the biographical dictionaries compiled by Ibn Hajar al-‘Asqalānī (d. 1449), al-Sharjī al-Zabīdī (d. 1488), and al-Sakhāwī (d. 1497), these works make no mention of al-Jīlī.
- 2 See al-Jīlī, *Ibdā’*, 10.
- 3 See al-Jīlī, *al-Manāẓir al-ilāhiyyah*, ed. N. al-Ghunaymī (Cairo: Dār al-Manār, 1987), 12–14; Y. Ziedan, *al-Fikr al-ṣūfī ‘ind ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Jīlī* (Cairo: Dār al-Amīn, 1998), 26–27; al-Ḥakīm in al-Jīlī, *Ibdā’*, 10. This is also the date given by I. Goldziher, *ET*¹, s.v., “Abd al-Karīm al-Djīlī”; Nicholson, *Studies*, 81; H. Ritter, *EF*², s.v. “Abd al-Karīm al-Djīlī”; al-Tarjumān, *Naẓariyyat*, 541–542; C. Brockelmann, *Geschichte der Arabischen Litteratur*, in two volumes (Leiden: Brill, 1943–1949), 205, however, puts his birth in 777/1375/1376.
- 4 Goldziher, *ET*¹, “Abd al-Karīm al-Djīlī”; Ziedan, *al-Fikr*, 29; al-Tarjumān, *Naẓariyyat*, 541–542. This view seems to be based on a comment made by al-Jīlī in *Qāb al-qawsayn* that he is “Baghdadi in origin” (*Baghdādī aṣlan*). See Nicholson, *Studies*, 81; al-Jīlī, *al-Manāẓir*, 11; al-Jīlī, *Ibdā’*, 12. As Marzullo notes, however, *aṣl* refers generically to family “origin”, and not necessarily to birthplace. See al-Jīlī, *I Nomi*, 7.
- 5 Al-Ghunaymī, in al-Jīlī, *al-Manāẓir*, 12; al-Ḥakīm, in al-Jīlī, *Ibdā’*, 12. This view is based on a report related by the Yemeni historian al-Khazrajī (d. 1409) in his *Ṭirāz a’-māl al-zamān* about a Sufi who lived and died in Abyāt Ḥusayn called Ibrāhīm al-Jīlī, whom al-Ghunaymī takes to be al-Jīlī’s father. Al-Jīlī’s father, however, seems to have died in Aden. See Atlagh, *Contribution*, 21.
- 6 See Atlagh, *Contribution*, 20–21. Atlagh’s view is based on a poem that appears in a colophon of a manuscript of al-Jīlī’s *Ghunyat arbāb al-samā’* in the British Library. ‘Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī (d. 1731), author of a commentary on *al-Nādirāt al-‘ayniyyah* and the last chapter of *al-Insān al-kāmil*, also believed al-Jīlī to have been born in India. See Y. Ziedan, *‘Abd al-Karīm al-Jīlī: faylasūf al-ṣūfiyyah* (Cairo: al-Hay’ah al-Miṣriyyah ‘āmmah li-l-kitāb, 1988), 15.
- 7 Nicholson, *Studies*, 81, following Goldziher, *ET*¹, s.v. “‘Abd al-Karīm al-Djīlī”.
- 8 Al-Ghunaymī, in al-Jīlī, *al-Manāẓir*, 18.
- 9 Ritter, *EF*², s.v. “‘Abd al-Karīm al-Djīlī”. Ritter’s source seems to be Brockelmann, *Geschichte*, 2:205–206.
- 10 Knysh, *Ibn ‘Arabi*, 429.

- 11 Ziedan, *al-Fikr*, 26; al-Hakīm, in al-Jīlī, *Ibdā'*, 17; al-Tarjumān, *Nazarīyyat*, 573–575. This view is based on a comment of the anti-Ibn 'Arabī Yemeni historian Abd al-Rahmān Ibn al-Ahdal (d. 1481).
- 12 V. Hoffman, "Annihilation in the Messenger of God: The Development of a Sufi Practice", *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 31, no. 3 (1999), 351–369; Atlagh, *Contribution*, 20–21.
- 13 Journeys between Calicut and Aden, primarily for the purposes of trade, were common in this period, as noted for instance by Ibn Baṭṭūṭah. See Ibn Baṭṭūṭah, *The Travels of Ibn Battuta, A.D. 1325–1354*, in five volumes, tr. H.A.R. Gibb (Cambridge: Hakluyt Society from the University Press, 1958–2000), 2:372.
- 14 Atlagh, *Contribution*, 20–21.
- 15 See Atlagh, *Contribution*, 21–24; al-Jīlī, *Ibdā'*, 13–16; Ziedan, 'Abd al-Karīm, 15–21; Ziedan, *al-Fikr*, 29–30; al-Jīlī, *al-Insān*, 189. These are merely the places (apart from Zabid) and dates that al-Jīlī mentions in his writings, and we should not rule out the possibility that he travelled elsewhere or spent longer in the places that he mentions.
- 16 See M. Dols, *The Black Death in the Middle East* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1977), 212. For the destructive effect of the Black Death on the region, see Ibn Khaldūn, *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History*, in three volumes, tr. F. Rosenthal (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1958) [hereafter "Ibn Khaldūn, *The Muqaddimah*"], 1:64.
- 17 G. Lane, *Early Mongol Rule in Thirteenth Century Iran: A Persian Renaissance* (London: Routledge Curzon, 2003), 9.
- 18 See R.E. Dunn, *The Adventures of Ibn Battuta* (London; Sydney: Croom Helm, 1986), 192.
- 19 See M. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization*, in three volumes (Chicago, IL; London: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 2:371.
- 20 See *ibid.*, 2:201–254.
- 21 See J.S. Trimingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 233–241.
- 22 See M. Chodkiewicz, *An Ocean Without a Shore: Ibn 'Arabī, the Book, and the Law*, tr. D. Streight (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press), 1–18.
- 23 See Knysh, *Ibn 'Arabī*; A. Akasoy, "What is Philosophical Sufism?" *In the Age of Averroes: Arabic Philosophy in the Sixth/Twelfth Century*, ed. P. Adamson (London; Turin: Warburg Institute, 2011), 229–249.
- 24 See Hodgson, *Venture*, 2:250–252; J. Brown, *Misquoting Muhammad: The Challenge and Choices of Interpreting the Prophet's Legacy* (London: Oneworld Academic, 2015), 227–228.
- 25 See M. Katz, *The Birth of the Prophet Muhammad: Devotional Piety in Sunni Islam* (London: Routledge, 2007). See also M. Chodkiewicz, *Seal of Saints: Prophethood and Sainthood in the Doctrine of Ibn 'Arabī*, tr. L. Sherrard (Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society, 1999), 67: "During the age of Ibn 'Arabī, on the initiative of the Ayyubids or, rather, of the Sūfīs who inspired them, the Prophet's *mawlid*, or birthday, began to be celebrated on a regular basis."
- 26 See A. Schimmel, *And Muhammad is His Messenger: Veneration of the Prophet in Islamic Piety* (Chapel Hill, NC; London: University of North Carolina Press, 1985), 177–215.
- 27 See B. Shoshan, *Popular Culture in Medieval Cairo* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 23–39.

- 28 For al-Jazūlī and his *Dalā'il al-khayrāt*, see V. Cornell, *Realm of the Saint: Power and Authority in Moroccan Sufism* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1998), 155–195, 211–213.
- 29 See J. Katz, *Dreams, Sufism, and Sainthood: The Visionary Career of Muhammad al-Zawāwī* (Leiden: Brill, 1996).
- 30 On this idea, see U. Rubin, “Pre-Existence and Light: Aspects of the Concept of Nur Muhammad”. *Israel Oriental Studies* 5 (1975), 62–119; Rubin, *EP*, s.v. “Nūr Muhammadī.”
- 31 See Rubin, *EP*, s.v. “Nūr Muhammadī”; Knysh, *Ibn 'Arabi*, 192–193.
- 32 From a different perspective, the exaltation of the Prophet can also be seen in the emergence for the first time in the fourteenth century of treatises on blasphemy against the Prophet Muhammad, such as Ibn Taymiyyah's (d. 1328) *al-Ṣārim al-maslūl 'alā shātīm al-rasūl* (*The Sword Unsheathed Against Whoever Insults the Messenger*) and Tāqī al-Dīn al-Subkī's (d. 1355), *al-Sayf al-maslūl 'alā man sabba al-rasūl* (*The Sword Unsheathed Against Whoever Blasphemes Against the Messenger*). See C. Sahner, *Christian Martyrs under Islam: Religious Violence and the Making of the Muslim World* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2018), 124–125.
- 33 Thus, for instance, Dāwūd al-Qayṣarī's widely read *Muqaddimah* (introduction) to his commentary on the *Fuṣūṣ* begins with a treatment not of God or the divine essence but of “existence” (*al-wujūd*) as such.
- 34 See J. Morris, “Ibn 'Arabī and His Interpreters”, *Journal of the American Oriental Society* (Michigan) 106, no. 3 (1986), 539–564, 106, no. 4 (1986), 733–756, 107, no. 1 (1987), 101–120; Akasoy, “What is Philosophical Sufism?”, 242–249; R. Todd, *The Sufi Doctrine of Man: Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī's Metaphysical Anthropology* (Leiden: Brill, 2014); A. Shaker, *Thinking in the Language of Reality: Ṣadr al-Dīn Qūnawī (1207–74 CE) and the Mystical Philosophy of Reason* (USA: XLibris, 2015); C. Dagli, *Ibn al-'Arabī and Islamic Intellectual Culture: From Mysticism to Philosophy* (London: Routledge, 2016). On the storytelling of the *Fuṣūṣ*, see R. Nettler, *Sufi Metaphysics and Qur'ānic Prophets: Ibn 'Arabī's Thought and Method in the Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam* (Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society, 2003), 13–16. Ibn 'Arabī's discussion of the letters of the alphabet comes in chapter 2 of the *Futūḥāt*, and his discussion of the pillars of Islam in chapters 67–72. It is notable that al-Jīlī does in fact take forward these other aspects of Ibn 'Arabī's thought, in addition to him being influenced by the more metaphysically minded Sufi thought of al-Qūnawī and his followers.
- 35 Ahmed, *What is Islam?*, 31. It is significant that Ahmed explicitly identifies al-Jīlī as being part of this Sufi-philosophical amalgam. See *ibid.*, 94–95.
- 36 See Hodgson, *Venture*, 2:323–325.
- 37 See A. Dhanani, “*Al-Mawāqif fī 'ilm al-kalām* by 'Aḏūd al-Dīn al-Ījī (d. 1355), and Its Commentaries”, *The Oxford Handbook of Islamic Philosophy*, ed. K. El-Rouayheb and S. Schmidtke (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), pp. 375–396; M. Mahdi, *Ibn Khaldūn's Philosophy of History: A Study in the Philosophic Foundation of the Science of Culture* (London: G. Allen & Unwin, 1957), 31–33. Ibn Khaldūn's statement can be found in Ibn Khaldūn, *The Muqaddimah*, 3:52; Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddimah*, in three volumes, ed. 'A. Wāfī (Cairo: Dār Nahdat Miṣr li-al-nashr, 2014) [hereafter “Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddimah*”], 976–977.
- 38 See É. Vallet, *L'Arabie marchande: État et commerce sous les sultans Rasulides du Yémen (626–858/1229–1454)* (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 2010). For the development of Aden as a trading hub in the centuries prior to the arrival of the Rasulids, see R.E. Margariti, *Aden & the Indian Ocean Trade: 150 Years in the Life*

- of a Medieval Arabian Port (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2007).
- 39 According to the *Encyclopaedia of Yemen*, there were approximately 240 mosques and madrasas in Zabid in the first half of the fourteenth century. See A.J. 'Afīf, *al-Mawsū'ah al-yamaniyyah*, in four volumes (Sanaa: Mu'assassat al-'Afīf al-thaqāfiyyah, 2003), 2:1445.
- 40 G.R. Smith, *EP*, s.v. "Tihāma".
- 41 For the Rasulids, see G.R. Smith, *EP*, s.v. "Rasulids"; J. Chelhod (ed.), *L'Arabie du sud: histoire et civilisation*, in three volumes (Paris: Maisonneuve et Larose, 1984), 2:40–47.
- 42 In this regard, al-Sharjī al-Zabīdī tells us in his biographical dictionary of Yemeni Sufis, *Ṭabaqāt al-khawāṣṣ*, that al-Jabartī "was without rival among the *shaykhs* of Yemen with regard to the numbers of followers (*attibā'*) and companions (*aṣḥāb*) that he had from among the kings (*al-mulūk*), governors (*al-wulāh*) and scholars (*al-'ulamā'*)". Al-Zabīdī, *Ṭabaqāt al-khawāṣṣ, ahl al-ṣidq wa-al-ikhhlāṣ* (Sana'a; Beirut: al-Dār al-Yamaniyyah li-al-nashr wa-al-tawzī', 1986), 101.
- 43 Quoted in Vallet, *L'Arabie marchande*, 388.
- 44 For Sufism in Rasulid Yemen, see A. al-Hibshī, *al-Ṣūfiyyah wa-al-fuqahā' fī al-Yaman* (Sanaa: Tawzī' maktabat al-jīl al-jadīd, 1976), *passim*, esp. 95–167; Knysh, *Ibn 'Arabi*, 225–269.
- 45 In a similar vein, al-Qūnawī and his students were enabled to develop the ideas of Ibn 'Arabī by "the generally favourable attitude of the Seljuq sultans [of Rūm] towards Sufism". Todd, *Sufi Doctrine*, 6.
- 46 See Knysh, *Ibn 'Arabi*, 242, 376, note 106; M. Chodkiewicz, "Le process posthume d'Ibn 'Arabī", *Islamic Mysticism Contested*, ed. F. de Jong and B. Radtke (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 93–123, 114–123.
- 47 Knysh, *Ibn 'Arabi*, 252–254; al-Hibshī, *al-Ṣūfiyyah*, 99.
- 48 Knysh, *Ibn 'Arabi*, 256–257. See also al-Hibshī, *al-Ṣūfiyyah*, 100.
- 49 See e.g. Knysh, *Ibn 'Arabi*, 237, 243, 248, 249, 251, 259; al-Jīlī, *al-Manāẓir*, 33.
- 50 Ibn al-Ahdal, *Kashf al-ghīṭā' 'an ḥaqā'iq al-tawḥīd wa-'aqā'id al-muwahḥidīn wa-dhikr al-a'imma al-ash'ariyyīn wa-man khālafahum min al-mubtadi'īn wa-bayān ḥāl Ibn 'Arabī wa-attibā'ihī al-māriqīn* (*Removing the Veil from the Truths of Monotheism and the Doctrines of the Monotheists, and Remembering the Imams of the Ash'arites and Those Innovators who Opposed Them, and Clarifying the Condition of Ibn 'Arabī and His Renegade Followers*) (Tunis: Aḥmad Bakīr Maḥmūd, 1964), 214. Similarly, he accuses Ibn 'Arabī himself of "not keeping to the limits of the Muhammadan Law (*lam yataqayyid bi-qayd al-sharī'ah al-Muhammadiyyah*)". Ibid., 182.
- 51 Al-Jīlī, *al-Insān*, 5, 52, 149, 215, 203, 229, 255.
- 52 See *ibid.*, 211.
- 53 Ibn al-Ahdal, *Kashf*, 214.
- 54 The term "Sufi metaphysics" is applied by Ron Netter to the thought of Ibn 'Arabī. See Netter, *Sufi Metaphysics*, 3–5. It is also used by Muhammad Iqbal, including with respect to al-Jīlī, for which see M. Iqbal, *The Development of Metaphysics in Persia: A Contribution to the History of Muslim Philosophy* (London: Luzac & Co., 1908), 112ff. Ziedan calls al-Jīlī "the philosopher of the Sufis" (*faylasūf al-ṣūfiyyah*) and "the Sufi philosopher" (*al-ṣūfi faylasūf*) (see Ziedan, 'Abd al-Karīm, esp. 5–7), terms, I think, which might lead to an exaggerated view of the influence of *falsafah* upon al-Jīlī.
- 55 Al-Jīlī also tells us that he was initiated into the Chishtiyyah while on pilgrimage in Mecca in 799 AH [=1397]. See Atlagh, *Contribution*, 23.

- 56 See e.g. Al-Jīlī, *al-Insān*, 210.
- 57 See *ibid.*, 204–205; al-Jīlī, *al-Manāẓir*, 168–169.
- 58 Owing to the similarity in their names, some, notably Ḥājji Khalīfah [=Kātib Čelebī] (d. 1657), have thought al-Jīlī to be a lineal descendant of ‘Abd al-Qādir. While Ziedan and al-Ḥakīm reject this (see Ziedan, *al-Fikr*, 38; al-Ḥakīm in al-Jīlī, *Ibdā’*, 11), Atlagh has found a manuscript of *al-Kahf wa-al-raqīm* in which al-Jīlī is referred to as “‘Abd al-Karīm b. sibṭ al-shaykh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jilānī”. Nevertheless, Atlagh also notes that al-Jīlī usually refers to ‘Abd al-Qādir as “our shaykh”, without mentioning that he is related by blood. See Altagh, *Contribution*, 10, 20–21; Marzullo in al-Jīlī, *I Nomi*, 8.
- 59 See al-Jīlī, *al-Manāẓir*, 31.
- 60 It should be noted that there is considerable debate in modern philosophy and religious studies on the definition of “mystical experience” and the defining features of such experiences. For an overview of those debates, see J. Gellman, *The Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*, s.v. “Mysticism”.
- 61 See e.g. al-Jīlī, *al-Insān*, 11, 39, 65, 68, 69, 71–72, 79–80, 100, 125, 193, 210. Ibn ‘Arabī uses the same terms to denote his own experiences. See S. al-Ḥakīm, *al-Mu‘jam al-ṣūfī: al-ḥikmah fī ḥudūd al-kalimah* (Dandarah li-al-ṭabā‘ah wa-al-nashr, 1981), 492–495, 662–665, 863–870.
- 62 Al-Jīlī, *al-Insān*, 79–80.
- 63 *Ibid.*, 65. Compare Ibn ‘Arabī’s claims that both the *Futūḥāt* and *Fuṣūṣ* were products of divine inspiration or revelation (*fath*, *ilhām*, *ilqā’*, *tanzīl*), quoted in Nettler, *Sufi Metaphysics*, 5–6; Chodkiewicz, *Seal*, 225; N.H. Abū Zayd, *Hākadhā takallama Ibn ‘Arabī* (Casablanca; Beirut: Dār al-Thaqāfī al-‘Arabī, 2006), 99–102. Similar claims are also made by al-Qūnawī and al-Qayṣarī. See Todd, *Sufi Doctrine*, 32–33; A. Zildžić, *Friend and Foe: The Early Ottoman Reception of Ibn ‘Arabī* (Doctoral thesis, University of California, Berkeley, 2012), 62.
- 64 See al-Jīlī, *al-Insān*, 11: “God opened up (*fataḥa*) knowledge of the Book and Sunnah to me.” *Ibid.*, 125: “And I have brought together (*jama‘atuh*) in these pages all that the Torah contains, according to what God unveiled to us about that (‘*alā ḥasb mā kashaḥa lanā Allāh ‘an dhālik*).”
- 65 See *ibid.*, 121. This connection between the knowledge obtained via mystical experience and the knowledge obtained via prophecy underlies the close connection between *walāyah* and *nubuwwah*, on which see Chapter 2 below.
- 66 Al-Jīlī, *al-Insān*, 232. As many scholars have pointed out, the Prophet’s *mi‘rāj* functioned as a paradigm for Sufi conceptions of their own mystical experiences. See M. Sells (ed. and tr.) *Early Islamic Mysticism: Sufi, Qur’an, Mi‘raj, Poetic and Theological Writings* (New York: Paulist Press, 1996), 47, and the references in S. Taji-Farouki, *Beshara and Ibn ‘Arabī: A Movement of Sufi Spirituality in the Modern World* (Oxford: Anqa, 2007), 340, note 49. Thus Ibn ‘Arabī also claims to have undergone his own *mi‘rāj*. See J. Morris, “The Spiritual Ascension: Ibn ‘Arabī and the Mi‘raj”, *Journal of the American Oriental Society* (Michigan) 107, no. 4 (1987), 629–652, 108, no. 1 (1988), 63–77.
- 67 See M. Ebstein, *Mysticism and Philosophy in al-Andalus: Ibn Masarra, Ibn al-‘Arabī and the Ismaili Tradition* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 21–27, who identifies five different mystical types within medieval Islamic thought.
- 68 For Sufi approaches to the Qur’an, see A. Knysh, *Encyclopaedia of the Qur’ān*, s.v. “Sufism and the Qur’ān”; K.Z. Sands, *Ṣūfī Commentaries on the Qur’ān In Classical Islam* (London: Routledge, 2006).
- 69 Al-Jīlī, *al-Insān*, 11. See also *ibid.*, 79–80:

So understand what I have indicated to you in these expressions – indeed, in the whole of this book of mine, since most of the issues of this book have no precedent, except for what has been [referred to] in technical language, for there is no way to talk about a form of knowledge except in the technical language of its practitioners.

Hājji Khalīfah describes *al-Insān al-kāmil* as “a book on the technical language of the Sufis (*iṣṭilāḥ al-ṣūfiyyah*)”. Hājji Khalīfah, *Kashf al-ẓunūn ‘an asāmi al-kutub wa-al-funūn*, in seven volumes, ed. G. Flugel (Leipzig: Oriental Translation Fund for Great Britain and Ireland, 1835–1858), 1:459.

70 See al-Jīlī, *al-Insān*, 11, 79–80.

71 See e.g. *ibid.*, 65–67.

72 See e.g. *ibid.*, 65.

73 See e.g. *ibid.*, 267.

74 See e.g. *ibid.*, 39, 67, 68, 205, 266.

75 In this regard, it should be noted that, alongside the works of Ibn ‘Arabī and his interpreters, al-Jabartī also taught the classical Sufi manuals, such as the *Risālah* of al-Qushayrī (d. 1072) and ‘*Awārif al-ma‘ārif*’ of Abū Ḥafs ‘Umar al-Suhrawardī (d. 1234). See Knysh, *Ibn ‘Arabi*, 242–243. Notice should also be made of the fact that the Ibn ‘Arabian Sufis wrote commentaries on certain classical manuals: for instance, al-Qāshānī’s commentary on ‘Abd Allāh Anṣārī’s *Manāzil al-sā‘irīn*.

76 See P. van Inwagen and M. Sullivan, *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, s.v. “Metaphysics”. Thus Ibn Sīnā defines metaphysics or “the divine science” (*al-‘ilm al-ilāhī*) as the investigation of “the existent *qua* existent” (*al-mawjūd bi-mā huwa mawjūd*). Quoted in Dhanani, “*Al-Mawāqif*”, 376. See also A.M. Goichon, *Lexique de la langue philosophique d’Ibn Sīnā (Avicenne)* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1938), 282: “The first philosophy (*al-falsafah al-ūlā*), the subject of which is the absolute existent (*al-mawjūd al-muṭlaq*) *qua* absolute existent.”

77 See Chapter 2 below.

78 See e.g. Al-Jīlī, *al-Insān*, 81, 86, 89, 128. According to H. Corbin, *History of Islamic Philosophy*, tr. L. Sherrard and P. Sherrard (London: Kegan Paul, 1993), 30, the title *imām* “in many cases means the head of a school”.

79 See e.g. al-Jīlī, *Sharḥ mushkilāt al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyyah*, ed. Y. Ziedan (Cairo: Dār al-Amīn, 1999), 126, 127. The title ‘*al-Shaykh al-akbar*’ (The Greatest Shaykh), which is often mentioned in modern studies on Ibn ‘Arabī, only seems to have come into use in the Ottoman period. See S. Hirtenstein, “Names and Titles of Ibn [al-]‘Arabī”, *Journal of the Muhyiddin Ibn ‘Arabi Society* 41 (2007), 109–129, 124–128.

80 Al-Jīlī is credited with commentaries on (chapter 559 of) *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyyah*, *Risālat al-Anwār*, and *Kitāb al-Tajalliyāt*, though Chodkiewicz has called into question the authorship of the last commentary. See M. Chodkiewicz, “The Vision of God according to Ibn ‘Arabī”, *Prayer and Contemplation*, a special issue of the *Journal of the Muhyiddin Ibn ‘Arabi Society* 14 (1993), 53–67, 60.

81 See al-Jīlī, *Ibdā‘*, 13–14.

82 We do not know al-Jīlī’s *madhhab* for sure. According to I. al-Baghdādī, *Hidāyat al-‘arifin: asmā’ al-mu‘allifin wa-āthār al-muṣannafin*, in two volumes (Istanbul: Wikālat al-Ma‘ārif, 1951–1955), 610, he was a Ḥanbalī. However, if as Atlagh suggests, al-Jīlī was originally from Calicut, we might suppose he was a Shāfi‘ī, Shāfi‘ism being the dominant *madhhab* in the Malabar coastal region (as it was in southern Yemen, which al-Jīlī made his home).

- 83 See al-Jīlī, *al-Insān*, 6–7.
- 84 Ibid., 11. See also the lines of verse to this same effect in *ibid.*, 177.
- 85 See e.g. al-Sarrāj, *Kitāb al-Luma' fī al-taṣawwuf*, ed. R.A. Nicholson (Leiden: Brill, 1914), 5; 'A.H. 'Abdel-Kader, *The Life, Personality and Writings of Al-Junayd* (Selangor, Malaysia: Islamic Book Trust, 2013), 3; A. Karamustafa, *Sufism: The Formative Period* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2007), 40, 71, 89, 103; Abū Zayd, *Hākadhā*, 251.
- 86 See Nettler, *Sufi Metaphysics*, 12–13. The writings of al-Qūnawī (and his followers) are probably less Qur'an centred than both those of Ibn 'Arabī and al-Jīlī. See Todd, *Sufi Doctrine*, 50–51.
- 87 See al-Jīlī, *al-Insān*, 210.
- 88 See al-Jīlī, *Ibdā'*, 25.
- 89 See Atlagh, *Contribution*, 20.
- 90 For this work, see R. Atlagh, "LE POINT ET LA LIGNE: Explication de la Basmala par la science des lettres chez 'Abd al-Karīm al-Ġīlī (m. 826 h.)," *Bulletin d'études orientales* 44, SCIENCES OCCULTES ET ISLAM (1992), 161–190; N. Lo Polito, *'Abd al-Karīm al-Jīlī: Tawhīd, Transcendence, and Immanence* (Doctoral thesis, University of Birmingham 2010), 138–270.
- 91 See al-Jīlī, *Ibdā'*, 24.
- 92 On which, see al-Jīlī, *Ibdā'*, 25, 37–43; Atlagh, *Contribution*, 99–103. A critical edition of the *Ghunya* is being prepared by Claudio Marzullo for a doctorate at the University of Naples.
- 93 Al-Jīlī, *Al-Kamālāt al-ilāhiyyah fī al-ṣifāt al-Muhammadiyah*, ed. and tr. S. 'Abd al-Fattāh (Cairo: 'Ālam al-fikr, 1997); Al-Jīlī, *I Nomi*. See also Atlagh, *Contribution*, 93–98.
- 94 See Y. Nabhānī, *Jawāhir al-biḥār fī faḍā'il al-nabī al-mukhtār*, in four volumes, ed. M. al-Ḍannāwī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'ilmiyyah, 1998), 1:1494–1520; C. Addas, "'At the Distance of Two Bows' Length or even Closer": The Figure of the Prophet in the Work of 'Abd al-Karīm al-Jīlī", *Journal of the Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi Society* 45 (2009), 65–88, 46 (2009), 1–26. Atlagh, *Contribution*, 104–110. This is the tenth part of al-Jīlī's huge work in 40 parts, *al-Nāmūs al-a'zam wa-al-qāmūs al-aqdam fī ma'rifat qadr al-nabī*, the majority of which is lost.
- 95 For this work, see al-Jīlī, *Göttliche Vollkommenheit*; Atlagh, *Contribution*, 152–161; F. Morrissey, "An Introduction to 'Abd al-Karīm al-Jīlī's Commentary on the *Futūḥāt*", *Maghreb Review* 41, no. 4 (2016), pp. 499–526.
- 96 Al-Jīlī, *Marātib al-wujūd wa-ḥaqīqat kull mawjūd* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Qāhirah, 1999). See also Atlagh, *Contribution*, 142–151.
- 97 For the most complete list of al-Jīlī's works, see Atlagh, *Contribution*, 26–27.
- 98 See Morris, "Ibn 'Arabī", 3:108; Atlagh, *Contribution*, 16, 78–83; al-Jīlī, *Ibdā'*, 24–28.
- 99 See Ziedan, *'Abd al-Karīm*, 66; al-Jīlī, *Ibdā'*, 23–24.
- 100 See M. Woodward, *Java, Indonesia, and Islam* (New York: Springer, 2010), 174. For the influence of al-Jīlī on Southeast Asian Sufi thought, a topic which still needs further elucidation, see A.H. Johns, "Malay Sufism: As Illustrated in an Anonymous Collection of 17th Century Tracts", *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 30, no. 2 (1957), 3–99, 101–111; P. Riddell, *Islam and the Malay-Indonesian World* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001), 75, 105, 113, 115, 123, 137, 223, 319.
- 101 See al-Jīlī, *Ibdā'*, 24.

- 102 See Lo Polito, 'Abd al-Karīm, 42.
- 103 See M. Burhānpūrī, *The Gift Addressed to the Spirit of the Prophet*, ed. and tr. A.H. Johns (Canberra: Australian National University, 1965), 53.
- 104 See e.g. al-Tahānawī, *Kashshāf iṣṭilāḥāt al-funūn*, ed. L. 'Abd al-Badī', 'A. Ḥusayn, and A. Khulī (Cairo: al-Mu'assasah al-Miṣriyah al-'āmmah li-lta'līf wa-al-tarjamah wa-al-ṭibā'ah wa-al-nashr, 1963), 270–271, 816, 1270, 1311–1312, 1746.
- 105 For this controversy, see S. Akkach, 'Abd al-Ghani al-Nabulusi: *Islam and the Enlightenment* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2007), 107–108. For al-Qushashī, see A.H. Johns, *EP*, s.v. "Al-Ḳushashī". For al-Nābulusī, see Akkach, 'Abd al-Ghani'; E. Sirriyeh, *Sufi Visionary of Ottoman Damascus: 'Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī, 1641–1731* (London: Routledge, 2005).
- 106 See I. Weismann, "God and the Perfect Human in the Experience of 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jazā'irī", *Journal of the Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi Society* 30 (2001), 55–72, 67–68. For 'Abd al-Qādir, see J. McDougall, *EP*, s.v. "'Abd al-Qādir, Amīr"; T. Woerner-Powell, *Another Road to Damascus: An Integrative Approach to 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā'irī (1808–1883)* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2017).
- 107 Trimingham, *Sufi Orders*, 161.
- 108 See al-Jazā'irī, *al-Mawāqif al-rūḥiyyah wa-al-fuyūḍāt al-subūḥiyyah*, in two volumes, ed. 'A. al-Kayyālī (Beirut: Dār al-kutub al-'ilmiyyah, 2004), 2:289; Weismann, "God and the Perfect Human", 66–68. For the profusion of claims to *walāyah* in late medieval and early modern Sufism, see also Trimingham, *Sufi Orders*, 162–165.
- 109 See A. Moin, *The Millennial Sovereign: Sacred Kingship and Sainthood in Islam* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012); İ. Binbaş, *Intellectual Networks in Timurid Iran: Sharaf al-Dīn 'Alī Yazdī and the Islamic Republic of Letters* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), esp. 253–258, 273–274; H. Yilmaz, *Caliphate Redefined: The Mystical Turn in Ottoman Political Thought* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2018), esp. 200–217; C. Markiewicz, *Crisis of Kingship in Late Medieval Islam: Persian Emigrés and the Making of Ottoman Sovereignty* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), esp. 240–284; Ahmed, *What is Islam?*, 474–475. It should be noted that the notions of the Pole and the Viceregent of God had had political connotations from their first appearance in post-Qur'anic Islamic literature. See P. Crone and M. Hinds, *God's Caliph: Religious Authority in the First Centuries of Islam* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), esp. 24–42; N. Jamil, "Caliph and Qutb. Poetry as a Source for Interpreting the Transformation of the Byzantine Cross on Steps on Umayyad Coinage", *Bayt al-Maqdis, Jerusalem and Early Islam*. Oxford Studies in Islamic Art 9, part two, ed. J. Johns (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 11–57. The late medieval and early modern political conceptions of these ideas, however, were mediated through Sufi conceptions such as those found in Ibn 'Arabian literature.
- 110 Atlagh, however, does not believe this twofold division to be original to the text. See Atlagh *Contribution*, 65.
- 111 Claudio Marzullo divides the two large sections into four subsections: (1) the key concepts of Sufi metaphysics; (2) the manifestation of the divine word (in the scriptures); (3) cosmology; and (4) the Perfect Human, astronomical symbolism, and other religions. See al-Jīlī, *I Nomi*, 16–17.
- 112 Thus, for instance, al-Jīlī understands the revelation of the scriptures (the Qur'an, Torah, Psalms, and Gospel) as expressions of the manifestation of different levels of God's existence. See esp. al-Jīlī, *al-Insān*, 127.

113 See Todd, *Sufi Doctrine*, 49.

114 See al-Jīlī, *al-Insān*, 13ff.

115 See *ibid.*, 26ff.

116 See *ibid.*, 254.

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by al-Qūnawī and his followers, such as the distinction between ‘unqualified oneness’ (*al-aḥadiyyah*) and ‘qualified oneness’ (*al-wāḥidiyyah*) (a distinction made particularly explicit by al-Farghānī),¹¹⁴ or the identification of the level of ‘divinity’ (*al-ulūhiyyah*) as the locus of manifestation of the divine names and attributes (as in al-Qāshānī’s scheme).¹¹⁵

All this being said, al-Jīlī’s scheme is also different from and more elaborate than those of the earlier thinkers – as one would expect, given that he identifies 40 rather than just five or six levels. For instance, while al-Qūnawī and his followers, with the notable exception of al-Qāshānī, tend to consider the simple divine essence as being above the levels – a view that al-Jīlī does refer to in the *Marātib*¹¹⁶ – al-Jīlī incorporates the imperceptible essence into his scheme. This willingness to think of the divine essence as more closely connected to the rest of existence foreshadows an important point that we shall consider in depth later in this book, namely, al-Jīlī’s apparent identification of the divine essence with the Muhammadan Reality.

Another important element of al-Jīlī’s elaboration of the earlier scheme is his integration of different frames of reference into a single scheme. Where al-Qūnawī and his followers put forward a scheme largely using the key Sufi metaphysical vocabulary of Ibn ‘Arabī, adding a few key terms from the lexica of *falsafah* and *kalām* (e.g. *ta‘ayyun*, *tashkīk*),¹¹⁷ al-Jīlī integrates in a more complete way terms and concepts from Ibn ‘Arabian Sufi metaphysics (e.g. absolute existence, unqualified and qualified oneness, the Perfect Human), philosophy (e.g. the primordial substance, the first and active intellect, the universal soul), the Qur’an (e.g. the throne, the footstool, the preserved tablet), and the sciences (e.g. the planets, the orbits, the elements, the humours, minerals, plants). It might therefore be said that al-Jīlī’s conception of the levels of existence, being a comprehensive overview of all phenomena known to him, is less narrowly metaphysical and abstract than the schemes of al-Qūnawī and his followers.

Finally, al-Jīlī’s development of the idea of the levels of existence may also be connected to the significance that he places on the idea of the Perfect Human. In identifying 40 levels that are synthesised within man, there is perhaps more of an emphasis in his scheme on the idea of man as a microcosm, an idea alluded to on several occasions in *Marātib al-wujūd* (e.g. in his discussion of the seven heavens, the orbits, and the Perfect Human himself), and which, as we shall see, is a key element of the idea of the Perfect Human. Certainly, his conception of the levels of existence reflects his stance vis-à-vis the earlier Ibn ‘Arabian tradition more generally: while his overall perspective on reality is in agreement with theirs, nevertheless he elaborates upon the ideas found in the earlier tradition, ‘correcting’ them where he thinks it necessary. This feature of his thought comes out most clearly in his treatment of the idea of the Perfect Human, the main focus of his work, to which we shall now turn.

Notes

1 Compare Nicholson, *Studies*, 125.

2 Plotinus refers in *Enneads* V.I.6 to

the question repeatedly discussed, even by the ancient philosophers, how from the One, if It is such as we say It is, a multiplicity or a duality or a number come into existence. Why did It not remain by Itself? How did so great a multitude flow from It as that which we see to exist in beings but think it right to refer back to the One?

A.H. Armstrong (tr.), *Plotinus*, 69.

- 3 While al-Jīlī, as we shall see, uses both theological and philosophical vocabulary, it is the former that dominates. Thus in the introduction to the book he states that the thing sought for (*al-maṭlūb*) is the Real, i.e. God (*al-ḥaqq*) (and not 'the One'). See al-Jīlī, *al-Insān*, 11.
- 4 For the centrality of the problem of the one and the many to Ibn 'Arabī's thought, see Nettler, *Sufi Metaphysics*, 7–11, and to al-Qūnawī's, see Todd, *Sufi Doctrine*, 56.
- 5 The Neoplatonic background to al-Jīlī's thought can be seen in his use of certain technical terms – e.g. the first intellect (*al-'aql al-awwal*), the universal intellect (*al-'aql al-kullī*), the universal spirit (*al-naḥs al-kullī/al-kullīyyah*) (see esp. al-Jīlī, *al-Insān*, 145–149; al-Jīlī, *Marātib*, 27–29), in his conception of different worlds; in his conception of man as a microcosm (on both of which see the discussion in this chapter); in his occasional references to the defilement of the body and the lower world in contrast to the purity of the spirit and the afterlife (see e.g. al-Jīlī, *al-Insān*, 152, 195, 200–201); and in the high esteem in which he holds Plato (see *ibid.*, 188–189). This loose affiliation to the Neoplatonic tradition is largely a consequence of his adoption of the Sufi metaphysical perspective of Ibn 'Arabī, for whose Neoplatonic connections see F. Rosenthal, "Ibn 'Arabī between 'Philosophy' and 'Mysticism': 'Sūfism and Philosophy are Neighbors and Visit Each Other': *fa-inna al-taṣawwuf wa-t-taḥaṣṣuf yatajāwarāni wa-yatazāwarāni*", *Oriens* 31 (1988), 1–35, 5; Ebstein, *Mysticism and Philosophy*.
- 6 Cf. Nicholson, *Studies*, 125.
- 7 See Ibn 'Arabī, *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, ed. Abū al-'Alā 'Afīfī (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-'Arabī, 1946), 49. *Tajallī* is not identical to the concept of emanation in the sense that the manifestation of the divine existence does not occur through a fixed series of hypostases (the One, the Intellect, the Soul, etc.), as in the classic Neoplatonic doctrine of Plotinus, or a chain of ten cosmic intellects, as in the view of the philosopher al-Fārābī (d. 950/951) and his followers. See T. Izutsu, *Sufism & Taoism: A Comparative Study of Key Philosophical Concepts* (Berkeley, CA; London: University of California Press, 1984), 43–44; I.R. Netton, *Allāh Transcendent: Studies in the Structure and Semiotics of Islamic Philosophy, Theology and Cosmology* (London: Routledge, 1989), 269–280; S.M.N. al-Attas, *The Mysticism of Ḥamzah Faṣṣūrī* (Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1970), 72–73; Todd, *Sufi Doctrine*, 56–57. Furthermore, al-Jīlī also stresses that the divine act of giving existence (*al-tijād*) is an act of free volition (*al-ikhtiyār*) on God's part, in contrast to the purer emanationist position that the effusion of the divine being is a necessary matter. See al-Jīlī, *al-Insān*, 86.
- 8 See Izutsu, *Sufism & Taoism*, 152.
- 9 Al-Jīlī, *al-Insān*, 51.
- 10 *Ibid.*, 52.
- 11 *Ibid.*, 54.
- 12 *Ibid.*, 67.
- 13 *Ibid.*, 79.
- 14 *Ibid.*, 95.
- 15 *Ibid.*, 97.

- 16 Ibid., 104.
- 17 Ibid., 266, or as he also puts it: "There is no existence for anything but God (*lā wujūd li-shay' illā Allāh*)."
- 18 Ibid., 132.
- 19 Ibid., 142.
- 20 Ibid., 143.
- 21 Ibid., 178.
- 22 Certain scholars have described the thought of Ibn 'Arabī and his followers – including al-Jīlī – as pantheistic or monistic, while Ibn 'Arabī and his interpreters are above all associated with the idea of "the unity of existence" (*waḥdat al-wujūd*). See e.g. Nicholson, *Studies*, 140–141; Abū al-'Alā al-'Afīfī, *The Mystical Philosophy of Muḥyid Dīn Ibnul 'Arabī* (Cambridge: University Press, 1939), xi; Rosenthal, "Ibn 'Arabī", 6; Knysh, *Ibn 'Arabī*, 281, note 28. I generally avoid using these terms, since although Ibn 'Arabians like al-Jīlī believe God to be manifest in the entirety of existence, nevertheless this does not mean, as we shall see presently, that God and creation are identical, i.e. that "All is God".
- 23 See e.g. al-Jīlī, *al-Insān*, 5, 22, 52, 103, 104, 142; see also al-Jīlī, *Sharḥ*, 115. For Ibn 'Arabī's use of the same term, see e.g. Ibn 'Arabī, *Les illuminations de la Mecque* = *The Meccan Illuminations* = *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya*, ed. and tr. W. Chittick and M. Chodkiewicz (Paris: Sindbad, 1988), 106.
- 24 See e.g. al-Jīlī, *al-Insān*, 51, 177.
- 25 See e.g. *ibid.*, 5, 130.
- 26 See e.g. *ibid.*, 150–151; cf. Ibn 'Arabī, *Fuṣūṣ*, 68–69.
- 27 See e.g. al-Jīlī, *al-Insān*, 31, 51.
- 28 See e.g. *ibid.*, 66, 142; cf. Ibn 'Arabī, *Fuṣūṣ*, 68.
- 29 See e.g. al-Jīlī, *al-Insān*, 61; see also al-Jīlī, *Sharḥ*, 115.
- 30 See e.g. al-Jīlī, *al-Insān*, 59.
- 31 See e.g. *ibid.*, 18, 23; see also al-Jīlī, *Sharḥ*, 115; cf. Ibn 'Arabī, *Fuṣūṣ*, 69.
- 32 See e.g. al-Jīlī, *al-Insān*, 88. For this idea in Ibn 'Arabī and Andalusian Neoplatonism, see Ebstein, *Mysticism and Philosophy*, 33–76.
- 33 See e.g. al-Jīlī, *al-Insān*, 97.
- 34 See e.g. *ibid.*, 93.
- 35 Mindful of the criticisms often made of Sufis, al-Jīlī also insists that the relationship between God and creation is not defined by "indwelling" (*ḥulūl*), "direct contact" (*mumāssah*), or "union" (*ittiḥād*). See e.g. *ibid.*, 5, 52, 149, 215, 203, 255.
- 36 Ibid., 72.
- 37 Ibid., 94.
- 38 Ibid., 51.
- 39 Ibid., 60.
- 40 See *ibid.*, 60–61.
- 41 See Izutsu, *Sufism & Taoism*, 48–67; Ahmed, *What is Islam*, 90. For al-Jīlī's development of this Ibn 'Arabian idea in his commentary on the *Futūḥāt*, see Morrissey, "An Introduction". For his exposition of the same idea in his poem *al-Nādirāt al-'ayniyyah*, see al-Jīlī, *Ibdā'*, 48.
- 42 See al-Jīlī, *al-Insān*, 68. On this concept in Ibn 'Arabī's thought, see Nettler, *Sufi Metaphysics*, 9–11; al-Ḥakīm, *al-Mu'jam*, 1133.
- 43 See al-Jīlī, *al-Insān*, 99. This is one of the traditional 'most beautiful names' of God, being derived from the Qur'an (see e.g. Q 2:263, 2:267, 6:133).

44 *Al-Jīlī's life and thought*

- 44 See al-Jīlī, *al-Insān*, 87, 108. This is a Qur'anic idea: see Q 35:15 – "O people! You are in need of (*al-fuqarā' ilā*) God, but God is the Self-Sufficient (*al-ghanīy*), the Praise-worthy." For Ibn 'Arabī's expression of the same idea, see Ibn 'Arabī, *Fuṣūṣ*, 105–106.
- 45 See al-Jīlī, *al-Insān*, 51, 90.
- 46 See *ibid.*, 88.
- 47 See e.g. *ibid.*, 100, 108.
- 48 See *ibid.*, 42. For Ibn Sīnā's key distinction between necessity and possibility/contingency, the crux of his proof for the existence of God, see the useful summary and analysis in L. Goodman, *Avicenna* (London; New York: Routledge, 1992), 61–83.
- 49 See Nicholson, *Studies*, 152; W. Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge: Ibn al-'Arabī's Metaphysics of Imagination* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1989), 4. See also Ibn 'Arabī, *Fuṣūṣ*, 106.
- 50 For the classic discussion of this idea in Western thought, see Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being*.
- 51 Chittick, *Sufi Path of Knowledge*, 4.
- 52 See W. Chittick, "The Five Divine Presences: from al-Qūnawī to al-Qaysarī", *Muslim World* 72, vol. 2 (1982), 107–128. For the more systematic approach of al-Qūnawī and his followers, see W. Chittick, "The Last Will and Testament of Ibn 'Arabī's Foremost Disciple, Sadr al-Dīn Qunawī", *Sophia Perennis* 4, no. 1 (1978), 43–58, 44; W. Chittick, "The Central Point: Qūnawī's Role in the School of Ibn 'Arabī", *Journal of the Mu'yiddin Ibn 'Arabī Society* 35 (2004), 25–45, 26. For a slight corrective to Chittick's remarks, see Todd, *Sufi Doctrine*, 49.
- 53 Al-Qūnawī's student Sa'īd al-Dīn al-Farghānī, for example, specifies six *ḥaḍrat*. See Chittick, "Five Divine Presences", 116–120.
- 54 For the significance of this term and concept in the Sufi metaphysics of the Qūnawī tradition, see Dagli, *Ibn al-'Arabī*, 60–62, 75–80, 106–117. Though al-Jīlī does use the term occasionally (e.g. in his discussion of the fourth level of existence in *Marātib al-wujūd*), it does not appear to be so central a concept within his Sufi metaphysics as it is in the Qūnawī tradition.
- 55 See Chittick, "Five Divine Presences", 125, note 9.
- 56 The following is based largely on *ibid.*, *passim*. See also Izutsu, *Sufism & Taoism*, 11.
- 57 See al-Farghānī, *Muntahā al-madārik fī sharḥ Tā'īyyat Ibn al-Fāriḍ*, ed. A. al-Kayyālī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'ilmiyyah, 2007), 1:21: "Unity (*al-waḥdah*) has two primary, original aspects, one of them [is defined by] the complete falling away of perspectives on it (*suqūṭ al-i'tibārat 'an-hā bi-al-kulliyyah*). In this aspect, the essence is called and 'unqualified one' (*aḥadan*)."
- 58 See *ibid.*, 18.
- 59 However, in one of his lexica of Sufi technical terms, al-Qāshānī identifies *ḥaḍrat al-aḥadiyyah* with "the manifestation of the essence alone to itself" (*tajallī al-dhāt waḥdihā li-dhātihā*), implying that the essence at the level of *al-aḥadiyyah* is distinct from the utterly unmanifest and unqualified simple essence. See al-Qāshānī, *Mu'jam iṣṭilāḥāt al-ṣūfiyyah*, ed. 'A. Shāhīn (Cairo: Dār al-Manār, 1992), 173. This reflects how the use of technical terms by Ibn 'Arabī and his interpreters is marked by a certain fluidity.
- 60 See al-Farghānī, *Muntahā al-madārik*, 1:21: "The other aspect [of divine unity] is the affirmation of infinite perspectives within it (*thubūt al-i'tibārat al-ghayr al-mutanāhiyyah la-hā*) ... The essence in this aspect is called a 'qualified one' (*wāḥidan*)."

- 61 See Chittick, "Five Divine Presences", 122–123; Izutsu, *Sufism & Taoism*, 11–20.
- 62 See Knysh, *Ibn 'Arabi*, 242–243.
- 63 See e.g. al-Jīlī, *al-Insān*, 123, 155, 214; al-Jīlī, *Sharḥ*, 128; al-Jīlī, *Marātib*, 19, 20, 22, 25.
- 64 Chittick, *Sufi Path of Knowledge*, 14.
- 65 Chittick, "Five Divine Presences", 109; Todd, *Sufi Doctrine*, 32.
- 66 Chittick, "Five Divine Presences", 109.
- 67 For the impact of Avicennian philosophy on the thought of al-Qūnawī and al-Qāshānī in particular, see Morris, "Ibn 'Arabi", 2:751–756. Morris sees al-Jīlī's thought as being grounded more "in his own spiritual insight and experience" than in *falsafah*. See *ibid.*, 3:108.
- 68 See e.g. al-Jīlī, *al-Insān*, 61.
- 69 See e.g. *ibid.*, 69, 214–215.
- 70 See Chittick, "Five Divine Presences", 115.
- 71 This accords with the view of Morris, "Ibn 'Arabi", 3:108, note 92. It should also be noted that al-Jīlī states in the introduction to *Marātib al-wujūd* that within the 40 levels there are innumerable more particular levels. In this sense the 40 levels are the "mothers of the levels" (*ummuhāt al-marātib*). See al-Jīlī, *Marātib*, 15.
- 72 See al-Bosnawī, *Kitāb al-qirā al-rūḥī al-mamdūd li-al-aḍyāf al-wāridīn min marātib al-wujūd*, ed. 'A. Qārtāl (Bursa, no publisher listed, 1996), esp. 3, 6, 13, 16, 20, 29, 47, 49, 56, for the direct references to al-Jīlī's *Marātib al-wujūd*.
- 73 On the dating of the work, see Ziedan, *'Abd al-Karīm*, 70. Al-Jīlī also identifies the existence of 40 levels in his first work, *al-Kahf wa-al-raqīm fī sharḥ bism Allāh al-raḥmān al-raḥīm* (see Atlagh, "LE POINT", 177), to which he directs the reader of *al-Insān al-kāmil* who wishes to learn more about the 40 levels (see al-Jīlī, *al-Insān*, 219). This indicates the consistency of al-Jīlī's general metaphysical outlook over the course of his life.
- 74 Al-Jīlī, *Marātib*, 15–16.
- 75 *Ibid.*, 17–18.
- 76 *Ibid.*, 18–19.
- 77 *Ibid.*, 19.
- 78 *Ibid.*, 19–20.
- 79 *Ibid.*, 20.
- 80 *Ibid.*, 22.
- 81 *Ibid.*, 22–24.
- 82 *Ibid.*, 25.
- 83 *Ibid.*
- 84 *Ibid.*, 25–26.
- 85 *Ibid.*, 26.
- 86 *Ibid.*, 27–28.
- 87 *Ibid.*, 28–29.
- 88 *Ibid.*, 29.
- 89 *Ibid.*, 30.
- 90 *Ibid.*, 30–31.
- 91 *Ibid.*, 31.
- 92 *Ibid.*, 33.
- 93 *Ibid.*, 34.
- 94 *Ibid.*, 35.
- 95 *Ibid.*, 36.

- 96 Ibid., 42.
- 97 Ibid., 43.
- 98 Ibid., 44.
- 99 Ibid.
- 100 Ibid., 44–45.
- 101 Ibid., 45.
- 102 Ibid.
- 103 Ibid., 45–46.
- 104 Ibid., 46.
- 105 Ibid.
- 106 Ibid., 46–47.
- 107 Ibid., 47.
- 108 Ibid., 47–48.
- 109 Ibid., 49.
- 110 Ibid., 49–50.
- 111 Ibid., 50.
- 112 Ibid., 51–53.
- 113 Ibid., 53–54.
- 114 See *ibid.*, 17–18.
- 115 See *ibid.*, 19.
- 116 See *ibid.*, 16.
- 117 See Todd, *Sufi Doctrine*, 46; Dagli, *Ibn al-‘Arabī*, 60–67.

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(*al-imām al-bāṭin*) to be infallible (*ma'ṣūm*), but not of the 'Apparent' [Imam]],¹¹⁹ in the context of an attack on the Shi'i conception of the Imamate. As is typical of his approach, in *al-Insān al-kāmil* al-Jīlī both makes this Ibn 'Arabian idea more explicit and introduces new elements into the discussion. The effect of this is that he presents us with an unambiguous conception of the Perfect Human as a sinless individual within a sinful world.

Notes

- 1 See G. Böwering and Y. Casewit, *A Qur'an Commentary by Ibn Barrajān of Seville* (d. 536/1141): *Īdāh al-ḥikma bi-aḥkām al-'ibra* (Wisdom Deciphered, the Unseen Discovered) (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 40–43; Y. Casewit, *The Mystics of al-Andalus: Ibn Barrajān and Islamic Thought in the Twelfth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 172ff. Ibn Barrajān's notion of the Universal Servant may have been derived from the Brethren of Purity. See S.H. Nasr, *An Introduction to Islamic Cosmological Doctrines* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1993), 68.
- 2 Y. Ibn 'Adī, *Tahdhīb al-akhlāq*, ed. S. al-Yasū'ī (Silsilat Rawā'i' al-turāth al-'arabī al-masīhī, n.d.), 128–138; Y. Ibn 'Adī, *The Reformation of Morals*, ed. and tr. S. Griffith (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 2002), xxxviii–xli, 92–99.
- 3 M. Maimonides, *The Guide of the Perplexed*, in two volumes (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1963), tr. S. Pines, 1:49 [I 21].
- 4 Thus according to Yaḥyā, the complete humans are those with perfect morals (*akhlāq*), meaning that, in true Aristotelian fashion, they cultivate moderation (*al-i'tidāl*) and avoid extremes (*al-ifrāṭ*). The way to achieve such perfection is "theoretical contemplation of the true [namely, Aristotelian] sciences and sitting with people of knowledge (*al-naẓar fī al-'ulūm al-ḥaqīqīyyah wa-mujālasat ahl al-'ilm*)". Ibn 'Adī, *Tahdhīb al-akhlāq*, 128–130; Ibn 'Adī, *Reformation of Morals*, 94–95. As for Maimonides, his conception of human perfection has been the subject of much scholarly disagreement. Menachem Kellner has, I think, quite convincingly argued that Maimonides thought that intellectual perfection must be followed (at least for Jews) by "halakhic perfection", that is, the imitation of God's actions through the perfect fulfilment of His commandments (*mitsvōt*). See M. Kellner, *Maimonides on Human Perfection* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1990). The views of both Ibn 'Adī and Maimonides are rooted in the thought of al-Fārābī (d. 950/951), who "would consider neither the pure philosopher like Plotinus nor the man of action alone as perfect specimens of the human race but only the man who is both". R. Walzer, "Al-Fārābī's Theory of Prophecy and Divination", *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 77, no. 1 (1957), 142–148, 147.
- 5 G. Böwering, *Encyclopaedia Iranica* (online edition), s.v. "ENSĀN-E KĀMEL"; J. Nūrbakhsh, *Farhang-i Nūrbakhsh (iṣṭilāḥāt-i taṣawwuf)*, in eight volumes (Tehran: Chāpkhāneh-yi Marvī, 1371 SH [=1992/1993]), 6:76, 138. (I am grateful to Ufuk Öztürk for lending me his copy of this work.)
- 6 For a comprehensive treatment of this chapter of the *Fuṣūṣ*, see Nettler, *Sufi Metaphysics*, 17–24.
- 7 Ibn 'Arabī, *Fuṣūṣ*, 48–49.
- 8 This image recalls David's request in Psalm 17:8: "Keep me as the apple (*ke-īshōn*) of Your eye." See also Deut. 32:10, Prov. 7:2. The Hebrew word *īshōn* means 'pupil' and is the diminutive of *īsh*, the Hebrew word for 'man', thus denoting 'the

- little man of the eye'. See L. Köhler, W. Baumgartner, M.E.J. Richardson, and J.J. Stamm, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, in five volumes (Leiden: Brill, 1994–2000), 1:44.
- 9 Ibn 'Arabī, *Fuṣūṣ*, 50.
 - 10 See *ibid.*.
 - 11 *Ibid.*
 - 12 *Ibid.*, 199. See also Takeshita, *Ibn 'Arabī's Theory*, 66.
 - 13 This hadith and its variants appear in M. Bukhārī, *Le recueil des traditions mahométanes*, in four volumes, ed. L. Krehl (Leiden: Brill, 1862), 4:165–166; A.H. Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, 18 volumes in 9, ed. M. 'Abd al-Bāqī (Beirut: Dār al-kutub al-'ilmiyyah, 1995), 17:147 (no. 2841). For the different variants of the hadith and their chains of transmission, as well as a discussion of early theological debates concerning the report, see C. Melchert, "God Created Adam in His Image", *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 13, no. 1 (2011), 113–124. For short discussions of its interpretation in Islamic theology, see M.J. Kister, "Ādam: A Study of Some Legends in *Tafsīr* and *Ḥadīṭ* Literature", *Israel Oriental Studies* 13 (1993), 113–174, 137–138; Takeshita, *Ibn 'Arabī's Theory*, 15–17. For Ibn 'Arabī and his interpreters' use of this hadith, see e.g. Ibn 'Arabī, *Fuṣūṣ*, 199, 216; Ibn 'Arabī, *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyyah*, in four volumes (Egypt: Dār al-Kutub al-'arabiyyah al-kubrā, 1329 AH [=1911]), 1:680, 2:4, 2:391; al-Qāshānī, *Sharḥ 'alā Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam* (Egypt: al-Maṭba'ah al-Yamaniyyah, n.d.), 11.
 - 14 This was recognised by certain Muslim commentators. See Kister, "Ādam", 138; J. van Ess, *Theology and Society in the Second and Third Centuries of the Hijra*, in four volumes, tr. G. Goldbloom (Leiden; Boston, MA: Brill, 2017), 4:421.
 - 15 For the different ways in which the *homo imago dei* motif has been interpreted in Jewish and Christian theology, see A. Altmann, "Homo Imago Dei in Jewish and Christian Theology", *Journal of Religion* 48, no. 3 (1968), 235–259.
 - 16 For these, see *ibid.*, 240–246.
 - 17 The *homo imago dei* motif was also controversial in Jewish thought. See e.g. Maimonides, *Guide*, 1:21 [1:1], where he warns against interpreting Gen. 1:26 as an indication of the corporeality of God – a warning that is one of the main themes of the *Guide*.
 - 18 See al-Hallāj, *Kitāb al-Ṭawāsīn*, ed. and tr. L. Massignon (Paris: Librairie Paul Geuthner, 1913), 129, note 2; Kister, "Ādam", 138; van Ess, *Theology and Society*, 4:427–428. For an example of such an interpretation, see A. Baydāwī and M. Iṣfahānī (comm.), *Nature, Man and God in Medieval Islam*, in two volumes, ed. and tr. E.E. Calverley and J.W. Pollock (Leiden: Brill, 2001–2002), 2:756, note 28. Attempts to explain away the apparent anthropomorphic content of the hadith are also found in early Imami Shi'i literature. See M.A. Amir-Moezzi, *The Spirituality of Shi'i Islam: Beliefs and Practices* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2011), 119, note 45.
 - 19 See Nicholson, *Studies*, 80; al-Ghazālī, *Mishkāṭ al-anwār*, ed. A. 'Afifī (Cairo: al-Dār al-Qawmiyyah li-al-ṭibā'ah wa-al-nashr, 1964), 71. Al-Ghazālī prefers the reading that God created Adam "according to the form of the All-Merciful ('*alā ṣūrat al-raḥmān*)".
 - 20 See Takeshita, *Ibn 'Arabī's Theory*, 67, quoting the *Futūḥāt*: "All the Divine Names are bound to him [man = Adam] without one single exception. Thus, Adam came out in the image of the Name *Allāh*, because this name comprises all the Divine Names." See also W. Chittick, "The Chapter Headings of the *Fuṣūṣ*", *Journal of the Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi Society* 2 (1984), 41–94, 49.
 - 21 For earlier treatments of Ibn 'Arabī's idea of the microcosm, see Afifī, *Mystical Philosophy*, 82; Izutsu, *Sufism & Taoism*, 218–246; Takeshita, *Ibn 'Arabī's Theory*,

- 100–108; Chittick, *Sufi Path of Knowledge*, 16–17; N.H. Abū Zayd, *Falsafat al-ta'wīl: dirāsah fī ta'wīl al-Qur'ān 'ind Muḥyī al-dīn Ibn 'Arabī* (Beirut: Dār al-Tanwīr, 1983), 157–175; Abū Zayd, *Hākadhā*, 231–234; Ebstein, *Mysticism and Philosophy*, 170–171, 198–200.
- 22 R. Allers, “MICROCOSMUS: From Anaximandros to Paracelsus”, *Traditio* 2 (1944), 319–407, 321. Allers' article, the classic study of the history of the idea of the microcosm, identifies and discusses six different formulations of the idea in Western philosophical literature.
- 23 See M. Hodgson, *The Order of the Assassins: The Struggle of the Early Nizārī Ismāīlīs against the Islamic World* ('s-Gravenhage: Mouton & Co., 1955), 10; 'Afīfī, *Mystical Philosophy*, 188; Nasr, *Islamic Cosmological Doctrines*, 66–74; Takeshita, *Ibn 'Arabī's Theory*, 74–92; Todd, *Sufi Doctrine*, 3–5, 33; Ebstein, *Mysticism and Philosophy*, 169, 189–198; E. Krinis, “The Philosophical and Theosophical Interpretations of the Microcosm-Macrocosm Analogy in *Ikhwān aṣ-Ṣafā'* and Jewish Medieval Writings”, *L'Ésoterisme Shi'ite: ses racines et ses prolongements*, ed. M. Amir-Moezzi, M. De Cillis, D. De Smet and O. Mir-Kasimov (Turnhout: Brepols, 2016), 395–409.
- 24 See Takeshita, *Ibn 'Arabī's Theory*, 92; al-Ghazālī, *Kitāb-i Kīmīyā-yi sa'ādat*, ed. A. Ārām (Tehran: Chapkhānah-yi Markazī, 1954), 34–35; al-Ghazālī, *Mishkāt al-anwār*, 71.
- 25 Al-Ghazālī, *Mishkāt al-anwār*, 71.
- 26 Ibn 'Arabī, *Fuṣūṣ*, 49.
- 27 Ibid., 49.
- 28 Ibid., 50.
- 29 Ibn 'Arabī, *Futūḥāt*, 1:216. See also Takeshita, *Ibn 'Arabī's Theory*, 101.
- 30 Ibn 'Arabī, *Fuṣūṣ*, 49.
- 31 Ibid., 48. See also Izutsu, *Sufism & Taoism*, 208; Nettler, *Sufi Metaphysics*, 18, 21.
- 32 Ibn 'Arabī, *Fuṣūṣ*, 55.
- 33 Ibn 'Arabī, *Futūḥāt*, 2:464; Takeshita, *Ibn 'Arabī's Theory*, 110.
- 34 Ibn 'Arabī had himself already made this point, drawing an analogy with the letters. See Ibn 'Arabī, *Futūḥāt*, 2:396: “The human being encompasses all of the levels through his level, just as the letter wāw encompasses all of the other letters.”
- 35 Al-Qūnawī, *Miftāḥ ḡhayb al-jam' wa-al-wujūd*, ed. A. al-Kayyālī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'ilmiyyah, 2010), 82.
- 36 Al-Qayṣarī, *Sharḥ-i muqaddamah-'i Qayṣarī bar Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam-i Muḥyī al-Dīn 'Arabī*, ed. J. Āshtiyānī (Mashhad: Kitābforūshī-yi bāstān, 1350 SH [=1966]), 273.
- 37 See al-Qūnawī, *I'jāz al-bayān fī tafsīr umm al-Qur'ān*, ed. J. Āshtiyānī (Qom: Mu'assasah-yi Būstān-i Kitāb-i Qom, 1380 SH/1423 AH [=2002]), 10: “and [the Real] made the Perfect Human – who is the microcosm with respect to his form – a mediating book (*kitāban wasaṭan*) that synthesises the plane of the names and the plane of the named”.
- 38 Ibn 'Arabī, for instance, uses the term “little Qur'an” (*Qur'ān ṣaghīr*) to denote the Perfect Human, and in one instance even identifies himself with the Qur'an and the ‘seven oft-repeated verses’ (*al-sab' al-mathānī*), i.e. the *Fātiḥah*. See al-Ḥakīm, *al-Mu'jam*, 908; Abū Zayd, *Hākadhā*, 48–49.
- 39 See e.g. al-Qāshānī, *Sharḥ*, 266; al-Qāshānī, *Mu'jam*, 11: “Man is a summary (*mukhtaṣar*) of the divine presence.”
- 40 S. Bashier, *Ibn al-'Arabī's Barzakh: The Concept of the Limit and the Relationship between God and the World* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2004), 7. See also Chittick, *Sufi Path of Knowledge*, 117–118; al-Ḥakīm, *al-Mu'jam*, 191–196.

- 41 Quoted in Jāmī, *Sharḥ al-Jāmī 'alá Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, ed. A al-Kayyālī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'ilmiyyah, 2004), 57; Tahānawī, *Kashshāf*, 281. See also Todd, *Sufi Doctrine*, 95–98; al-Qūnawī, *I'jāz*, 113; Chittick, "Chapter Headings", 49–50.
- 42 Farghānī, *Muntahā al-madārik*, 36. See also *ibid.*, 84–86, 95–96, 99.
- 43 Al-Qāshānī, *Sharḥ*, 11. See also *ibid.*, 268:

He [Muhammad] is this "most-perfect" through [his] synthesising (*jāmi'*) of unqualified oneness (*al-aḥadiyyah*), evenness (*shaf'iyyah*), and oddness (*al-watriyyah*), i.e. the qualified oneness (*al-wāḥidiyyah*) that is the essence, the attribute, and the name. In their technical terminology it is called the greatest reality of realities (*ḥaqīqat al-ḥaqā'iq al-kubrā*) and the synthetic isthmus (*al-barzakh al-jāmi'*) and the real Adam and the one source.

- 44 For this term, see al-Ḥakīm, *al-Mu'jam*, 276; al-Tahānawī, *Kashshāf*, 1474; Chodkiewicz, *Seal*, 70.
- 45 Al-Qayṣarī, *Sharḥ-i muqaddamah*, 475.
- 46 See e.g. al-Zarkashī, *al-Burhān fī 'ulūm al-Qur'ān*, in four volumes (Cairo: Dār al-Turāth, 1984), 2:181–182.
- 47 Al-Jīlī, *Marātib*, 53–54.
- 48 Al-Jīlī, *al-Insān*, 212.
- 49 See also *ibid.*, 228–252, where, in the chapter on the seven heavens, al-Jīlī maps out the correspondences between the seven heavens, the seven planets, the seven names of the divine self, the seven greatest angels, the seven greatest prophets, and the seven faculties in man.
- 50 See e.g. Takeshita, *Ibn 'Arabī's Theory*, 89, 93, 99; Ebstein, *Mysticism and Philosophy*, 189–198.
- 51 See Ebstein, *Mysticism and Philosophy*, 198–199.
- 52 See Takeshita, *Ibn 'Arabī's Theory*, 89–90.
- 53 Al-Jīlī, *al-Insān*, 212.
- 54 For a full list of the names of the essence, see *ibid.*, 96.
- 55 *Ibid.*, 213.
- 56 *Ibid.*
- 57 The concept of the *walīy*, pl. *awliyā'* – a term sometimes translated as 'saint', goes back to the Qur'an: "The friends of God (*awliyā' Allāh*) have no fear, nor are they sorrowful" (Q 10:292). The manuals of classical Sufism contain discussions on the meaning of the term. Thus al-Qushayrī, for instance, explains that the term
- has two meanings: one of them has a passive sense, he [namely, the *walīy*] being the one who is entrusted (*yatawallā*) with God's command ... The other has strongly active sense, he being the one who undertakes (*yatawallā*) the worship of God and obedience to Him (*'ibādat Allāh wa-ṭā'atahu*), such that his worship is continuous, without any disobedience intervening. And both of these two descriptions are necessary for the Friend of God to be a Friend of God.
- Al-Qushayrī, *al-Risālah al-Qushayriyyah*, ed. K. al-Manṣūr (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'ilmiyyah, 2001), 292. For other definitions of the *walīy* in classical Sufi literature, see Nūrbakhsh, *Farhang*, 6:66–68. The concept is extremely prevalent in the writings of Ibn 'Arabī, who as we shall see elevates the Friend of God to the status of 'general prophet'.
- 58 See al-Jīlī, *al-Insān*, 77–78.
- 59 *Ibid.*, 116–117. See also a very similar passage in *al-Kamālāt*, 231.

- 60 Compare his statement to the definition of Sufism attributed to the Baghdadi Sufi of the classical period Abū Bakr al-Shiblī: “It is the annihilation of the humanity (*fanā-i nāsūtī*) and the appearance of divinity (*zuhūr-i lāhūtī*).” Quoted in F. ‘Aṭṭār, *Tadhkirat al-awliyā’*, ed. M. Isti’lāmī (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Zawār, 1392 SH [=2013]), 551. Note as well the statement of the Baghdadi Sufi, and friend of al-Hallāj, Ibn ‘Aṭā’ (d. 921/922) to the effect that remembrance of God (*dhikr*) will lead to the “effacement of humanness” (*izāl al-bashariyyah*), cited in al-Sarrāj, *Kitāb al-Luma’*, 219. In this regard, al-Jīlī’s position seems to correspond more to the ideas found among the so-called ‘intoxicated’ Sufis of the classical period than to the Sufi metaphysics of the Ibn ‘Arabian tradition. The prevalence of such ideas is indicated by the fact that al-Sarrāj devotes a short chapter of his manual to ‘Mentioning those who have erred with regard to the passing away of humanness’ (*fanā’ al-bashariyyah*). See *ibid.*, 427. According to Christopher Melchert, it seems as if al-Sarrāj “believes in the experience [of the passing away of humanness, or ‘human nature’] but wants mystics not to describe it in language obnoxious to the ascetical-minded orthodox, jealous of divine transcendence”. C. Melchert, “Origins and Early Sufism”, *Cambridge Companion to Sufism*, ed. L. Ridgeon (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 1–23, 21.
- 61 Cf. al-Ghazālī, *Kīmīyā-yi sa’ādāt*, 25: “This [perfect primordial nature (*fiṭrah*)] is not specific to the Prophet, since the Prophet is also a human being (*ādāmī*): ‘Say: “I am a human like you” (Q 41:6).’” And see also, in a modern context, the statement of the current Grand Mufti of Egypt Ali Gomaa:
- It is ... impermissible to negate the Messenger of God’s humanity [s], because this would conflict with the Qur’an’s words, *Say: I am but a human being like you who receives revelation* [41:6]. The safe approach is to affirm all that God has affirmed concerning the Messenger of God [s], such as him being light as well as being human, without going into details and debate.
- A. Gomaa, *Responding From the Tradition: One Hundred Contemporary Fatwas by the Grand Mufti of Egypt*, tr. N. Friedlander and T. Elgawhary (Louisville, KY: Fons Vitae, 2011), 145.
- 62 Qayṣarī, *Sharḥ-i muqaddamah*, 475.
- 63 *Ibid.*
- 64 See e.g. al-Qāshānī, *Sharḥ*, 275: “[Muhammad] synthesised Real-ness (*al-ḥaqqiyyah*) and createdness (*al-khalqīyyah*), and necessity (*al-wujūb*) and contingency (*al-imkān*), but the category of createdness and contingency was what dominated over him (*al-ghālib ‘alayhī*).”
- 65 For this philosophical conception, see F. Rahman, *Prophecy in Islam: Philosophy and Orthodoxy* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1958). For Ibn Khaldūn’s adherence to something close to this view, see Mahdī, *Ibn Khaldūn’s*, 88–91, esp. 88, note 3: “There is probably no more decisive indication of Ibn Khaldūn’s *philosophic* interpretation of the phenomena of prophecy than his identification of the ‘angels’ with the ‘pure intellects’.”
- 66 Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddimah*, 1:413.
- 67 *Ibid.*, 1:415. See also Ibn Khaldūn, *The Muqaddimah*, 3:199.
- 68 Al-Hallāj, *Kitāb al-Ṭawāsīn*, 14. Cf. Ibn ‘Arabī’s aforementioned phrase *huwa lā huwa*.
- 69 M. Iqbal, “The Doctrine of Absolute Unity as Expounded by Abdul Karim Jilani”, *Speeches, Writings and Statements of Iqbal*, in two volumes, ed. Ahmad Shirwani (Lahore: Iqbal Academy Pakistan, 2015), 1:95.
- 70 See I. Goldziher, *Introduction to Islamic Theology and Law*, tr. A. and R. Hamori, with introduction and notes by B. Lewis (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981), 113.

- 71 Al-Jīlī, *al-Insān*, 126.
- 72 See al-Ḥakīm, *al-Mu'jam*, 876–878, 909–911; al-Tahānawī, *Kashshāf*, 1327–1330; Chodkiewicz, *Seal*, 89–98.
- 73 See al-Jīlī, *al-Insān*, 210.
- 74 For Ibn 'Arabī's association of *taṣarruf* with *karāmah*, see al-Ḥakīm, *al-Mu'jam*, 694. It should be noted that in Islamic literature, the term *karāmāt* is normally used for the miracles of the *awliyā'*, in contrast to *mu'jizāt*, the miracles of the prophets. See L. Gardet, *EP*, s.v. "Karāma"; Hujwīrī, *Kashf al-maḥjūb: The Oldest Persian Treatise on Sūfism*, tr. R.A. Nicholson. Leiden: Brill, 1911), 218–235; al-Ghazālī, *Kīmīyā-yi sa'ādāt*, 25; Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddimah*, 1:408–409.
- 75 See al-Jīlī, *Sharḥ*, 152–153.
- 76 I have not been able to find the statement that al-Jīlī here attributes to al-Shiblī in any of the Sufi hagiographies or collections of ecstatic utterances (*shataḥāt*), such as Farīd al-dīn 'Aṭṭār's *Tadhkirat al-awliyā'* or the *Sharḥ-i shaṭṭhiyyāt* of Rūzbihān Baqlī (d. 1209). Nevertheless, the statement is in keeping with the general tenor of the Sufi tradition's view of al-Shiblī as an ecstatic mystic prone to openly revealing the mystery of the manifestation of God in man (and in this case, in himself). For al-Shiblī, see F. Sobieroj, *EP*, s.v. "al-S_h iblī", and the passage from 'Aṭṭār quoted below.
- 77 This is a reference to chapter eight of the *Futūḥāt*, "On the knowledge of the Earth which was created from what remained of the leaven of Adam's clay, and which is the Earth of True Reality, mentioning the strange things and marvels it contains". See H. Corbin, *Spiritual Body and Celestial Earth: From Mazdean Iran to Shī'ite Iran*, tr. N Pearson (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1977), 135–143.
- 78 See al-Jīlī, *al-Insān*, 72.
- 79 See van Ess, *Theology and Society*, 4:408.
- 80 Note, therefore, its similarity to the prayer of 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī: "Not an atom moves but by His permission." Quoted in C. Padwick, *Muslim Devotions* (Oxford: Oneworld, 1996), 249.
- 81 Al-Jīlī, *al-Insān*, 215.
- 82 For the hadith, see Bukhārī, *Le recueil*, 4:231. For Ibn 'Arabī's use of this *ḥadīth qudsī*, see W.A. Graham, *Divine Word and Prophetic Word in Early Islam: A Reconsideration of the Sources, With Special Reference to the Divine Saying or Hadīth qudsī* (The Hague: Mouton, 1977), 173–174; Chittick, *Sufi Path of Knowledge*, 176, 325–330; Ibn 'Arabī, *Fuṣūṣ*, 110. For use of this hadith in Sufism more generally, see Graham, *Divine Word*, 173; A. Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1975), 43; al-Ghazālī, *Mishkāt al-anwār*, 61–62.
- 83 See also al-Jīlī, *al-Insān*, 269, 278, where he makes an explicit connection between this *ḥadīth qudsī*, the seven attributes of the divine self, and the Perfect Human's miraculous powers.
- 84 Ibid., 152.
- 85 See ibid., 120, where al-Jīlī mentions Jesus' performance of these miracles.
- 86 For the Gospel accounts, see Mark 6:45–53, Matthew 14:22–34, John 6:15–21. For the appearance of this story in medieval Islamic literature, see T. Khalidī, *The Muslim Jesus: Sayings and Stories in Islamic Literature* (Cambridge, MA; London: Harvard University Press, 2001), 111.
- 87 Compare Ibn 'Arabī, *Fuṣūṣ*, 143, where he notes that other humans than Jesus, such as the famous Sufi Abū Yazīd al-Bisṭāmī, possessed the capacity to revive the dead by breathing the divine spirit into them.

- 88 Al-Jīlī, *al-Insān*, 196–197. Cf. Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddimah*, 1:409.
- 89 Al-Jīlī, *al-Insān*, 195.
- 90 Although the Qur'an contains several scattered references to the Fall of Adam and Eve, it is often said that there is no doctrine of original sin in Islam. See A.H. Johns, *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān*, s.v. "Fall of Man". Nevertheless, al-Jīlī does appear to be describing something very like a doctrine of original sin here. There was some precedent for this in the writings of the Andalusian Sufis Ibn Barraġān and Ibn Qasī (d. 1151). See Casewit, *Mystics of al-Andalus*, 253–254; M. Ebstein, "Was Ibn Qasī a Ṣūfī?" *Studia Islamica* 110 (2015), 196–232, 215–217.
- 91 Al-Jīlī, *al-Insān*, 200.
- 92 Ibid., 195.
- 93 Ibid.
- 94 Ibid., 200.
- 95 It should be noted that in chapter 63 of *al-Insān al-kāmil* al-Jīlī identifies as the 'philosophers' (*al-falāsifah*) as the group (*tā'ifah*) that worships the planets. See *ibid.*, 207.
- 96 Ibid., 200–201.
- 97 Ibid., 201.
- 98 Ibid., 201–202.
- 99 Ibid., 202.
- 100 Ibid.
- 101 Ibid., 202–203.
- 102 Ibid., 203.
- 103 Ibid., 205.
- 104 On this point see al-'Afīfī, *Mystical Philosophy*, 158; Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, 273; Nettler, *Sufi Metaphysics*, 11–13; Ahmed, *What is Islam?*, 29–30.
- 105 Thus Shahab Ahmed, for instance, cites the famous Persian Sufi poetic phrase "All is He" (*hamēh ūst*) in his description of Ibn 'Arabī's Sufi metaphysical worldview. See Ahmed, *What is Islam?*, 28. See also the examples cited above from Nicholson, 'Afīfī, Rosenthal, and Knysht.
- 106 See e.g. al-'Afīfī, *Mystical Philosophy*, 158.
- 107 See e.g. B. Radtke and J. O'Kane, *The Concept of Sainthood in Early Islamic Mysticism: Two Works by al-Hakīm al-Tirmidhī* (Richmond, UK: Curzon Press, 1996), 45ff., 255 s.v. *nafs*; Hujwīrī, *Kashf al-mahjūb*, 196–207; al-Qushayrī, *al-Risālah*, 123; al-Ghazālī, *Al-Ghazālī on Disciplining the Soul & On Breaking the Two Desires: Books XXII and XIII of the Revival of the Religious Sciences* (Iḥyā' 'ulūm al-dīn), tr. T. Winter (Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society, 2016).
- 108 Ibn 'Arabī, *Futūḥāt*, 1:157–158.
- 109 Ibid., 3:143.
- 110 See W. Chittick, *The Self-Disclosure of God: Principles of Ibn al-'Arabī's Cosmology* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1998), 270.
- 111 Ibn 'Arabī, *Futūḥāt*, 2:568.
- 112 Al-Qushayrī, *al-Risālah*, 123.
- 113 Al-Jīlī, *al-Insān*, 196. See also *ibid.*, 192.
- 114 See N. Taleb, *Antifragile: How to Live in a World We Don't Understand* (London: Allen Lane, 2012). Taleb defines the antifragile as that which is neither fragile nor robust, but rather "gains from disorder".
- 115 Al-Jīlī, *al-Insān*, 205.
- 116 Ibid., 151–152.

- 117 See e.g. Q 3:14, 7:81, 27:55, 52:22, 56:21, 77:42. Ibn 'Arabī, it should be noted, connects the term *bashar* with man's "animality" (*ḥayawāniyyah*), a term that likewise connotes sinful behaviour. See Izutsu, *Sufism & Taoism*, 183.
- 118 See W. Madelung, *EP*², s.v. "'Iṣmah"; Goldziher, *Introduction*, 186–187; S. Schmidtke, *The Theology of al-'Allāma al-Ḥillī* (d. 726/1325) (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 1991), 142–147. It should also be noted that, according to the classical Sufi conception of *walāyah*, the Friends of God were believed to be "preserved" (*maḥzūr*) from sin, a lower category of infallibility than 'iṣmah, yet a form of infallibility all the same. See al-Qushayrī, *al-Risālah*, 292.
- 119 Ibn 'Arabī, *Futūḥāt*, 3:183. See also Afīfī, *Mystical Philosophy*, 75.

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We can therefore summarise al-Jīlī's position on the identity of the Pole in the following way: Muhammad, both as the Muhammadan Reality and as Muhammad the Messenger of God, is the one true Pole, from the beginning until the end of time. However, the station of Pole is also attained by at least some of the other prophets and the pre- and post-Muhammadan 'Friends of God'. These Friends of God, however, seem to be Poles only in a lesser sense, that is, as reflections or embodiments of Muhammad, the one true Pole. This leads us directly on to the idea of the Muhammadan Reality, to which we shall now turn our attention.

Notes

- 1 See Hujwīrī, *Kashf al-mahjūb*, 438, s.v. "*Qutb*"; Ziedan, *al-Fikr*, 160–163; Ebstein, *Mysticism and Philosophy*, 130; 'A. al-Jīlānī, *Dīwān Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī*, ed. Y. Ziedan (Beirut: Dār al-Jīl, n.d.), s.v. "*al-qutb*".
- 2 See Jamil, "Caliph and Qutb"; N. Jamil, *Ethics and Poetry in Sixth Century Arabia* (Trumpington, UK: E.J.W. Gibb Memorial Trust, 2018), 332.
- 3 See al-Ḥakīm, *al-Mu'jam*, 909.
- 4 For Ibn 'Arabī's conception of the 'Unique Ones' and 'Ones Brought Near', see Takeshita, *Ibn 'Arabī's Theory*, 128–131; Chodkiewicz, *Seal*, 111–115.
- 5 See Chodkiewicz, *Seal*, 58, 91–99.
- 6 Ibn 'Arabī, *Futūḥāt*, 2:573, quoted in al-Ḥakīm, *al-Mu'jam*, 912. See also Ibn 'Arabī, *Futūḥāt*, 3:136–137; al-Ḥakīm, *al-Mu'jam*, 913.
- 7 Ibn 'Arabī, *Kitāb Manzil al-qutb wa-maqāmihi wa-ḥālīhi*, 2, in *Rasā'il Ibn 'Arabī*, vol. 2 (Hyderabad: Maṭba'at Jam'iyyat Dā'irat al-ma'ārif al-'uthmaniyyah, 1367 AH [=1948]), no page numbers.
- 8 See al-Ḥakīm, *al-Mu'jam*, 914, note 1, where she notes that Ibn 'Arabī does not explicitly identify the Pole with the Perfect Human.
- 9 Ibn 'Arabī, *Fuṣūṣ*, 49–50.
- 10 See Nettler, *Sufi Metaphysics*, 154–175; Izutsu, *Sufism & Taoism*, 116–140.
- 11 Ibn 'Arabī, *Futūḥāt*, 2:5; al-Ḥakīm, *al-Mu'jam*, 912. For the full passage in which this statement occurs, see Chodkiewicz, *Seal*, 93.
- 12 Al-Qāshānī, *Mu'jam*, 162. See also Tahānawī, *Kashshāf*, 1327–1330.
- 13 Ibn 'Arabī, *Futūḥāt*, 2:5; al-Ḥakīm, *al-Mu'jam*, 912.
- 14 Ibn 'Arabī, *Fuṣūṣ*, 50.
- 15 Quoted in Nūrbakhsh, *Farhang*, 6:5.
- 16 Hujwīrī, *Kashf al-mahjūb*, 214; Nūrbakhsh, *Farhang*, 6:6.
- 17 Ibn 'Arabī, *Futūḥāt*, 2:6; cf. Chodkiewicz, *Seal*, 94–95.
- 18 Ibn 'Arabī, *Futūḥāt*, 2:555; al-Ḥakīm, *al-Mu'jam*, 912.
- 19 Similarly, the thirteenth century Persian Sufi thinker 'Azīz-i Nasafī, who drew upon Ibn 'Arabī among others in his conception of the Perfect Human, stressed the point that there is only one Perfect Human or Pole in the world at any one time. See L. Ridgeon, *Azīz Nasafī* (Richmond, UK: Curzon, 1998), 176–177.
- 20 Ibn 'Arabī, *Futūḥāt*, 2:6. See also Chodkiewicz, *Seal*, 94.
- 21 For an exegesis of this passage, see S. Hirtenstein, "The Healer of Wounds: Interpreting Human Existence in the Light of Alchemy and Ascension", Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabī Society Oxford Symposium 2018, 19 May 2018, www.ibnarabisociety.org/podcasts/archives/1807/hirtenstein.mp3.
- 22 Ibn 'Arabī, *Futūḥāt*, 1:151; al-Sha'rānī, *al-Kibrīt al-aḥmar fī bayān 'ulūm al-shaykh al-akbar*, ed. A 'Umar (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'ilmiyyah, 1998), 12; Chodkiewicz, *Seal*, 94; G. Lipton, *Rethinking Ibn 'Arabī* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 78–79.

- 23 Al-Ḥakīm, *al-Mu'jam*, 915.
- 24 Ibn 'Arabī, *Futūḥāt*, 2:5; al-Ḥakīm, *al-Mu'jam*, 911.
- 25 See Ibn 'Arabī, *Futūḥāt*, 2:7; Chodkiewicz, *Seal*, 94. See also Ebstein, *Mysticism and Philosophy*, 135; Lipton, *Rethinking*, 78.
- 26 The 'Pegs' (*awṭād*) are the highest members of the cosmic hierarchy, and are four in number. See al-Ḥakīm, *al-Mu'jam*, 517. Ibn 'Arabī indicates here that Jesus and Elijah are the 'two Imams' and Khidr the fourth 'Peg'. See Ibn 'Arabī, *Futūḥāt*, 2:7; Chodkiewicz, *Seal*, 94.
- 27 Ibn 'Arabī, *Futūḥāt*, 2:7.
- 28 Ibid., 3:182.
- 29 See *ibid.*, 2:8; Chodkiewicz, *Seal*, 95.
- 30 See G. Vermes, *The Resurrection* (London: Penguin, 2008), 32–34; J. Reeves and A. Reed, *Enoch from Antiquity to the Middle Ages*, vol. 1: *Sources from Judaism, Christianity and Islam* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 1–2, 210–253.
- 31 See e.g. al-Tha'labī, *Arā'is al-majālis fī qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*, or, "Lives of the prophets", tr. W.M. Brinner (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 83–85; Reeves and Reed, *Enoch*, 216–217, 225–228. The motif is cited by the Persian Sufi 'Azīz-i Nasafī in his discussion of the 'spiritual death' of the Friends of God. See Ridgeon, *'Azīz Nasafī*, 181. Similarly, Rūzbihān Baqlī, another important Persian Sufi thinker, lists Idrīs among the four special individuals (the others being Khidr, Elijah, and Jesus) who were "carried off alive from death". See *ibid.*, 202, note 68.
- 32 Jamil, *Ethics and Poetry*, 332–334.
- 33 Ibn 'Arabī, *Fuṣūṣ*, 75.
- 34 Ibid.
- 35 Note that whereas in the *Futūḥāt* Ibn 'Arabī appears to draw a distinction between Idrīs and Elijah/Ilyās, in the *Fuṣūṣ* he explicitly identifies them. See *ibid.*, 181: "Ilyās is Idrīs, who was a prophet before Noah."
- 36 Ibid., 181. Cf. 2 Kings 11, where a horse-drawn chariot of fire appears to the prophet Elijah, who is carried up to heaven in a whirlwind.
- 37 For the connection between Idrīs and Hermes and their occult associations, see F.E. Peters, "Hermes and Harran: The Roots of Arabic-Islamic Occultism", *Magic and Divination in Early Islam*, ed. E. Savage-Smith (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), 55–86, esp. 59–60.
- 38 See R. Nettler, "Ibn 'Arabī's Gloss on the Prophet Yunus: Sufism and the Continuity of a Common Religious Culture", *The Religion of the Other: Essays in Honour of Mohamed Talbi*, ed. M. Ben-Madani (London: Maghreb Publications, 2013), 53–60.
- 39 Ibn 'Arabī, *Futūḥāt*, 1:151, quoted in Chodkiewicz, *Seal*, 94; Lipton, *Rethinking*, 78–79. See also Ibn 'Arabī, *Kitāb Manzil al-quṭb*, in *Rasā'il*, 2:6: "The most perfect (*akmal*) of the Poles is the Muhammadan."
- 40 Al-Qayṣarī, *Sharḥ-i muqaddamah*, 490.
- 41 See *ibid.*, 491.
- 42 Ibid., 457.
- 43 Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddimah*, 3:997. For an alternative translation (and notes on the Sufi thinkers referred to in this passage), see Ibn Khaldūn, *The Muqaddimah*, 92–93.
- 44 See e.g. Afīfī, *Mystical Philosophy*, 75, 90; H. Corbin, *Alone with the Alone: Creative Imagination in the Sūfism of Ibn 'Arabī*, tr. R. Manheim (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998), 45; Takeshita, *Ibn 'Arabī's Theory*, 168–169; Ebstein, *Mysticism and Philosophy*, 155, note 98.
- 45 The key conceptual and semantic building blocks of both the Sufi metaphysical idea of *walāyah* or Perfect Human and the Shī'ī doctrine of the Imamate are already discernible in the Umayyad conception of the caliphate. See Crone and Hinds, *God's Caliph*, 24–42. Jamil, "Caliph and Qutb", has shown how the key elements of this conception have their origins in pre-Islamic Arabian ideas.
- 46 M. Hodgson, "How Did the Early Shī'a Become Sectarian?" *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 75, no. 1 (1955), 1–13, 2. A similar argument been made by Valerie

Hoffman, who proposes that the centrality of the Prophet and his family within modern Egyptian Sufism (perhaps under the influence of Ibn ‘Arabian ideas) is possible evidence in support of Hodgson’s statement. See V. Hoffman, “Devotion to the Prophet and His Family in Egyptian Sufism”, *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 24, no. 4 (1992), 615–637, 615.

47 Al-Jīlī, *al-Insān*, 210.

48 Ibid.

49 It is clear that al-Jīlī did identify the Pole with the Muhammadan Reality. For instance, he tells us in chapter 51 that “the angel called the spirit” (*al-malak al-musammā bi-al-rūḥ*) is both synonymous with the Muhammadan Reality and with “the Pole of the orbits of created beings” (*qutb aflāk al-makhlūqāt*). Ziedan, *al-Fikr*, 31; Knysh, *Ibn ‘Arabi*, 251.

50 See al-Jīlī, *al-Insān*, 204–205. See also Ziedan, *al-Fikr*, 31; Knysh, *Ibn ‘Arabi*, 251.

51 Al-Jīlī, *al-Insān*, 188–189.

52 Ibid., 260; A. Tafazzolī and B. Hourcade, *Encyclopaedia Iranica* (online edition), s.v. “Damavand”.

53 See Rosenthal, “Ibn ‘Arabī”, 15.

54 See Ibn ‘Arabī, *Futūḥāt*, 1:151, where, immediately preceding his aforementioned account of his vision of 25 mysterious figures, he refers to “the perfected Poles (*aqṭāb...al-mukammalīn*) in other communities than ours, who preceded us in time”.

55 Al-Jīlī, *al-Insān*, 128. See also *ibid.*, 126:

Nevertheless, each one of the unique ones (*afrād*) and the poles (*aqṭāb*) [other than David and Solomon] possesses mastery (*al-taṣarruf*) over the whole of the existential kingdom (*al-mamlakah al-wujūdiyyah*), and each of them knows what trembles (*ikhtalaja*) day and night, besides the languages of the birds.

56 Ibid., 236.

57 Takeshita, *Ibn ‘Arabī’s Theory*, 114.

58 See al-Jīlī, *al-Insān*, 194.

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Notes

- 1 Hourani, *History of the Arab Peoples*, 177.
- 2 See Rubin, "Pre-Existence and Light".
- 3 For the synonymy of these three terms in Ibn 'Arabī's thought, see al-Ḥakīm, *al-Mu'jam*, 347–349.
- 4 See Karamustafa, *Sufism*, 42–47. These mystics may themselves have drawn upon Shī'i ideas. See *ibid.*, 52, note 18; M.A. Amir-Moezzi, *The Divine Guide in Early Shi'ism: The Sources of Esotericism in Islam*, tr. D. Streight (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1994), 29–60.
- 5 See Takeshita, *Ibn 'Arabī's Theory*, 164–169; Chodkiewicz, *Seal*, 27–32, 53–54, 65, 116–118; B. Abrahamov, *Ibn al-'Arabī and the Sufis* (Oxford: Anqa Publishing, 2014), 53–62, 85–90. Note also the appearance of this idea in the *tafsīr* attributed to the sixth Shī'i Imām Ja'far al-Šādiq (d. 765), quoted in Chodkiewicz, *Seal*, 65.
- 6 Quoted in Karamustafa, *Sufism*, 42.
- 7 See *ibid.*
- 8 See 'Afīfī, *Mystical Philosophy*, 75.
- 9 See e.g. Ibn 'Arabī, *Fuṣūṣ*, 214; Ibn 'Arabī, *Futūḥāt*, 3:141–142; 'Afīfī, *Mystical Philosophy*, 73; Izutsu, *Sufism & Taoism*, 236; Chodkiewicz, *Seal*, 50.
- 10 See e.g. al-Farghānī, *Muntahā al-madārik*, 29; Izutsu, *Sufism & Taoism*, 237; Chodkiewicz, *Seal*, 63. According to Jonathan Brown, the authenticity of this hadith was rejected by medieval hadith collectors, "even those ... known for their laxity. Belief in [their] truth persisted, however, especially among Sufi scholars", Brown, *Misquoting*, 228.
- 11 See Chodkiewicz, *Seal*, 68, note 28.
- 12 See 'Afīfī, *Mystical Philosophy*, 68; Izutsu, *Sufism & Taoism*, 237–238; Ebstein, *Mysticism and Philosophy*, 155, 206. Ebstein highlights the affinity of this notion with the Ismaili Neoplatonic conception of the First Intellect, for which see also M. Hodgson, *The Secret Order of Assassins: The Struggle of the Early Nizārī Ismā'ilīs Against the Islamic World* (The Hague: Mouton & Co., 1955), 16–17.
- 13 Ibn 'Arabī, *Futūḥāt*, 1:119; Chodkiewicz, *Seal*, 94; al-Ḥakīm, *al-Mu'jam*, 348–349.
- 14 See 'Afīfī, *Mystical Philosophy*, 72–74. The idea that the prophets (and Friends of God) draw upon the light of Muhammad is also found in *Khal' al-na'layn* of the Algarvian mystic and rebel leader Ibn Qasī, a work on which Ibn 'Arabī wrote a commentary. See Ebstein, "Was Ibn Qasī a Šūfī?" 219.
- 15 Ibn 'Arabī, *Fuṣūṣ*, 63–64. See also *ibid.*, 62:

This knowledge (*ilm*) is only for the Seal of Messengers (*khātim al-rusul*) and the Seal of the Friends of God (*khātim al-awliyā'*), and none of the prophets and messengers knows it, except from the lamp (*mishkāṭ*) of the Messenger who is the Seal.

Ibn 'Arabī, *Kitāb Manzil al-quṭb*, in *Rasā'il*, 2:6: "Every [Pole] is in the lamp (*mishkāṭ*) of Muhammad – Peace be upon him – who is that which encompasses everything (*al-amr al-jāmi' li-al-kull*)."

- 16 Chittick, "Chapter Headings", 86.
- 17 Al-Farghānī, *Muntahā al-madārik*, 29.
- 18 Al-Qāshānī, *Sharḥ*, 266. For an alternative translation, see Izutsu, *Sufism & Taoism*, 237. See similarly al-Qayṣarī, *Sharḥ-i muqaddamah*, 457: "the Muhammadan Reality is the form of the all-comprehensive divine name (*ṣūrat al-ism al-jāmi' al-ilāhī*) and its lord, and from it [occurs] [His] emanation (*ḥayḍ*) and extension (*al-istimdād*) over all the other names"; Jāmī, *Sharḥ*, 57.
- 19 For this verse from Ibn al-Fāriḍ's *Tā'īyyah*, see Chodkiewicz, *Seal*, 67.
- 20 'Irāqī, *Lama'āt*, in *Kulliyāt-i Fakhruddīn-i 'Irāqī*, ed. S. Nafīsī (Tehran: Kitābkhāna-yi Sanā'ī, 1338 SH [=1956/1957]), 375.
- 21 Al-Farghānī, *Muntahā al-madārik*, 39–40.

- 22 Al-Qaysarī, *Sharḥ-i muqaddamah*, 490.
- 23 See Nicholson, *Studies*, 87, 104ff.; A. Jeffrey, “Ibn ‘Arabī’s *Shajarat al-kawn*”, *Studia Islamica* 10 (1959), 43–77, 11 (1960), 113–160 (note that the attribution of this text to Ibn ‘Arabī appears to be mistaken); ‘Afīfī, *Mystical Philosophy*, 66–101; Izutsu, *Sufism & Taoism*, 236–238; Chodkiewicz, *Seal*, 64. There is also a parallel with the presentation of Wisdom in the Book of Proverbs: “The Lord brought me forth as the first of his works, before his deeds of old; I was formed long ages ago, at the very beginning, when the world came to be” (Prov. 8:22–31) Indeed, “Philo had interpreted the pre-existence Wisdom spoken of in apocalyptic and rabbinic sources as the equivalent of the Logos”, Altmann, “*Homo Imago Dei*”, 245.
- 24 C. Lévy, *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, s.v. “Philo of Alexandria”.
- 25 See also 1 Cor. 8:6, where Paul writes, “and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live”. Cf. Altmann, “*Homo Imago Dei*”, 245–246. According to Martin Goodman, Paul “casts Christ’s pre-existence, before incarnation as Jesus, in a role similar to Wisdom in earlier Jewish texts or the Logos in Philo”. M. Goodman, *A History of Judaism* (London: Allen Lane, 2018), 193.
- 26 Lévy, “Philo of Alexandria”. See also Jeffrey, “Ibn ‘Arabī’s *Shajarat al-kawn*”, 46. Cf. Goodman, *History of Judaism*, 175: “Sometimes Philo identified the Logos with the mind of God. At other times, the Logos was reckoned ‘midway between man and God’.”
- 27 This title can be explained by the fact that the Qur’anic exegetes gloss “the Trustworthy Spirit” (*al-rūḥ al-amīn*) of the Qur’an (see Q 26:193) with the Angel Gabriel.
- 28 Al-Jīlī, *al-Insān*, 152–153.
- 29 For the pre-Islamic antecedents of this image and its association with the *qutb*, see Jamil, “Caliph and *Qutb*”, 18–19, 30; Jamil, *Ethics and Poetry*, 332. For Ibn ‘Arabī’s use of the term, see Ibn ‘Arabī, *Fuṣūṣ*, 75, cited in Ebstein, *Mysticism and Philosophy*, 135.
- 30 Ebstein, *Mysticism and Philosophy*, 57–60.
- 31 See also al-Jīlī, *al-Insān*, 166: “It is the First Intellect connected to Muhammad from which God created Gabriel – Peace be upon him – in pre-eternity. So Muhammad was the father of Gabriel and the origin of the whole world.”
- 32 See also *ibid.*, 146:
- The Pen is the First Intellect, and they are both faces of the Muhammadan Tablet (*al-lawḥ al-Muhammadi*). He – peace and blessings be upon him – said, “The first thing that God created was the spirit of your prophet, O Jābir.” So the Highest Pen, the First Intellect, and the Muhammadan Spirit (*al-rūḥ al-Muhammadi*) are an expression of a single essence (*jawhar fard*), which, in connection to creation is called the Highest Pen, in connection to creation’s request [for existence] is called the First Intellect, and in its being added to the Perfect Human is called a Muhammadan Spirit.
- The hadith that al-Jīlī cites here – which had earlier been cited in this context by Ibn ‘Arabī and his interpreters – was widely believed to be a forgery by hadith scholars. See Gomaa, *Responding*, 147.
- 33 See Afīfī, *Mystical Philosophy*, 66–67; al-Ḥakīm, *al-Mu’jam*, 813, for full lists of names that Ibn ‘Arabī uses as synonyms for the Muhammadan Reality. For al-Qūnawī’s and al-Farghānī’s use of these terms as synonyms, see Todd, *Sufi Doctrine*, 65, 67.
- 34 See Afīfī, *Mystical Philosophy*, 75, note 4, 177; Chodkiewicz, *Seal*, 69, note 20; Böwering and Casewit, *A Qur’an Commentary by Ibn Barrajān*, 42–43.
- 35 Ibn ‘Arabī, *Futūḥāt*, 2:391; Ebstein, *Mysticism and Philosophy*, 55. See also Ibn ‘Arabī, *Futūḥāt*, 2:396; al-Ḥakīm, *al-Mu’jam*, 162.
- 36 See Ibn ‘Arabī, *Fuṣūṣ*, 48.

- 37 Thus Tahānawī's entrance on "*al-dhāt*", for instance, is almost entirely devoted to the divine essence. See Tahānawī, *Kashshāf*, 816–818.
- 38 See al-Jīlī, *al-Insān*, 206. For the distinction between *al-wujūd al-muṭlaq* and *al-wujūd al-muqayyad/al-mumkin* in the Sufi metaphysics of Ibn 'Arabī and his interpreters, see al-Ḥakīm, *al-Mu'jam*, 1133.
- 39 See Tahānawī, *Kashshāf*, 816–817, for the dominant Ash'arī view that "His essence – May He be exalted – is distinguished from all other essences."
- 40 See *ibid.*, 685.
- 41 See e.g. al-Jīlī, *al-Insān*, 173, where al-Jīlī identifies Muhammad with the Mother of the Book (*umm al-kitāb*), which, according to his Sufi metaphysical conception of the scriptures, is "an expression of the quiddity of the true nature of the essence" (*māhiyat kunh al-dhāt*), i.e. of the hidden divine essence itself; Lo Polito, '*Abd al-Karīm*', 159/208, for the passage in *al-Kahf wa-al-raqīm* where al-Jīlī recounts his vision that the Prophet was both qualified by the attributes of the divine self and was "the unseen essence itself" ('*ayn al-dhāt al-ghā'ib*').
- 42 See, for instance, his definition of *al-'aql al-awwal* in chapter 53:

The First Intellect [the edition I am using mistakenly reads '*al-fi'l al-awwal*' here] is a light of divine knowledge (*nūr 'ilm ilāhī*) which appeared in the first of His created, entifying descents (*awwal tanazzulātihi al-ta'yīniyyah al-khalqīyyah*), or if you wish you could say that it is the first specification of the divine comprehensiveness (*awwal tafṣīl al-ijmāl al-ilāhī*).

(Al-Jīlī, *al-Insān*, 164)

See also al-Jīlī, *al-Kamālāt*, 325: "And He called him [namely, Muhammad] the First Intellect, because he was the first thing that was 'intellected'."

- 43 Al-Jīlī, *al-Insān*, 210–211.
- 44 'Aṭṭār, *Tadhkirat al-awliyā*, 536. For the whole entry on al-Shiblī, see *ibid.*, 536–557.
- 45 *Ibid.*, 647.
- 46 See al-Jīlī, *al-Insān*, 126.
- 47 Al-Zabīdī, *Ṭabaqāt*, 101.
- 48 These individuals, it should be noted, are 'viceregents' in the sense of being what al-Jīlī calls in the aforementioned passage from the chapter on the Psalms "the greater viceregents" (*al-khulafā' al-kubrā*), that is, viceregents not in the political sense of 'caliphs', but rather the elite 'Friends of God' – i.e. the Poles and the 'Unique Ones'. See al-Jīlī, *al-Insān*, 126.
- 49 See also *ibid.*, 265, where al-Jīlī both refers to the Perfect Ones as "viceregents of Muhammad" (*khulafā' Muḥammad*) and to how they "deputise for Muhammad" (*nāba 'an Muḥammad*).
- 50 Ibn 'Arabī, it should be noted, encourages the reader of the *Futūḥāt* to try to "see the Real in the Muhammadan form (*al-ṣūrah al-muḥammadiyyah*), through the Muhammadan vision (*al-ru'yah al-muḥammadiyyah*), rather than [to] see Him in your form", Ibn 'Arabī, *Futūḥāt*, 4:433; Ḥakīm, *al-Mu'jam*, 500.
- 51 Al-Jīlī, *al-Insān*, 157. See also *ibid.*, 260, where, having alluded to the esoteric "mysteries" (*asrār*), "wisdom" (*ḥikmah*), and "allusions" (*ishārāt*) contained in Jewish rituals, he declares,

We are afraid that many of the ignorant (*al-juhhāl*) will be seduced (*yaghtarrū*) by this and so leave their religion (*fa-yakhrijū 'an dīnīhim*) due to their lack of knowledge of its mysteries. So let us desist from revealing the mysteries of the forms of worship of the People of the Book (*iḥār asrār ta'abbudāt ahl al-kitāb*).

- 52 See e.g. al-Qūnawī, *I'jāz*, 11:

At this station [namely, the station of Muhammad] there are mysteries (*asrār*) that have been covered up (*sutirat*) by affirmation and denial, and which have been

affirmed [only] at their level, out of fear of revealing them (*izhārihā*) at an improper time, and prior to the [reader's] attainment of their level. Had it been permissible to divulge them (*ifshā'uhā*), they would have been revealed to you, and their signs would have been recited to you, but this is the mystery of His statement: "to make clear to people what has been sent down to them", (Q 16:44) and He did not say, "what has been sent down to you", nor "all that has been sent down upon you", and [it is the mystery of] other divine allusive sayings and pieces of wisdom: that He forbade (*mana'a*) the direct disclosure (*al-taṣrīḥ*) of what was there. So it is necessary to take into account the divine indication (*al-tanbīh al-ilāhī*), and to stop at that.

- 53 See G. Hourani (tr.), *Averroes: On the Harmony of Religion and Philosophy* (Cambridge: Gibb Memorial Trust, 2012), 32–36, 114, note 191; Hodgson, *Venture*, 2:325; Brown, *Misquoting*, 222–223; Ahmed, *What is Islam?*, 167–168, 368–372.
- 54 Al-Jīlī, *al-Insān*, 211.
- 55 Al-Shahrastānī, *Book of Religious and Philosophical Sects: part 2, Containing the Account of Philosophical Sects*, ed. W. Cureton (London: Society for the Publication of Oriental Texts, 1842), 133.
- 56 In a similar context in his *Qāb al-qawsayn*, al-Jīlī likewise makes a reference to the associated concept of *futuwwah*, 'chivalry'. See Hoffman, "Annihilation in the Messenger", 358. For Ibn 'Arabī's conception of *adab*, see D. Gril, "Adab and Revelation, or, One of the Foundations of the Hermeneutics of Ibn 'Arabī", in *Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi: A Commemorative Volume*, ed. S. Hirtenstein and M. Tiernan (Shaftsbury, UK: Element for the Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi Society, 1993), 228–263.
- 57 This conclusion, it should be noted, is in keeping with Valerie Hoffman's finding that al-Jīlī's writings – particularly his *Qāb al-qawsayn* and *al-Kamālāt al-ilāhiyyah* – constitute an early instance of the appearance of the Sufi idea of 'annihilation in the Messenger' (*al-fanā' fī al-rasūl*), an idea which essentially denotes the mystic becoming a locus of manifestation for the Muhammadan Reality, and which subsequently became an important feature of early modern Sufism. See Hoffman, "Annihilation in the Messenger".
- 58 Al-Jīlī, *al-Insān*, 26 (my emphasis).

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(*tābi'*) [of his]. So the category of legislative prophethood (*nubuwwat al-tashrī'*) was cut off after him, and Muhammad was the Seal of Prophets, because he brought perfection, which no one else brought.⁸²

Whatever the exalted metaphysical status and spiritual powers of the 'Perfect Ones', then, for al-Jīlī there is only one true Perfect Human, and that is the Prophet Muhammad. At the very end of *al-Insān al-kāmil*, he brings this all together, leaving us in no doubt that Muhammad is the most perfect of the Perfect Humans and, in fact, a quasi-divine being:

The means (*wasīlah*) [of attaining 'realisation' (*al-taḥaqquq*)] of all of the prophets and Friends of God is Muhammad – May God bless him and grant him peace. So the means is the station of proximity (*maqām al-qurbah*) itself. And the first of its stations is the station of friendship (*maqām al-khillah*), and the end of the station of the Friend (*maqām al-khalīl*) [namely, Abraham] is the beginning of the station of the Beloved (*maqām al-ḥabīb*) [namely, Muhammad], for the essential Beloved (*al-ḥabīb al-dhātī*) is an expression of unitive loving desire (*al-ta'ashshuq al-itṭihādī*), so each of the two lovers (*al-muta'ashshiqayn*) [namely, Muhammad and God] appears in the form of the other, and each stands in the station of the other ... It was to this that He – Glory be to Him and may He be exalted – referred in His majestic Book, when He said to Muhammad – May God bless him and grant him peace: "Those who pledge allegiance to you [namely, Muhammad] only pledge allegiance to God", (Q 48:10) whereby He stood Muhammad in His own station (*aqāma Muḥammad maqām nafsīhi*), and when He said: "Whoever obeys the Messenger has obeyed God." (Q 4:80) Subsequently Muhammad spoke openly to Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī when he saw him in his sleep and said to him: "O Messenger of God, forgive me, for loving God (*maḥabbat Allāh*) has distracted me (*shaghalatnī*) from loving you (*maḥabbatika*).” And he [namely, Muhammad] said to him: "O blessed one, loving God is loving me (*maḥabbat Allāh maḥabbatī*).” For just as Muhammad – May God bless him and grant him peace – was a viceregent (*khalīfah*) of God, so too was God here a deputy (*nā'iban*) of Muhammad, and a deputy is a viceregent, and a viceregent is a deputy. So this one was that one and that one was this one (*dhāka huwa hādha wa-hādha huwa dhāka*). Due to this, Muhammad – May God bless him and grant him peace – was made unique (*tafarrada*) in his perfection, so he sealed (*khatama*) the perfections and the divine stations in his inner nature, and his sealing of the station of messengership in his outer nature testifies to that.⁸³

Notes

- 1 See Takeshita, *Ibn 'Arabī's Theory*, 50.
- 2 Ibn 'Arabī, *Futūḥāt*, 2:391. See also Chittick, *Sufi Path of Knowledge*, 276.
- 3 See Nettler, *Sufi Metaphysics*, 18.

- 4 Jāmī, *Naqd al-nuṣūṣ fī sharḥ naqsh al-Fuṣūṣ*, ed. A al-Kayyālī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘ilmiyyah, n.d.), 70; W. Chittick, “Ibn ‘Arabī’s Own Summary of the *Fuṣūṣ*: ‘The Imprint of the Bezels of Wisdom’”, *Sophia Perennis* 1, no. 2 (1975), 88–128, 94.
- 5 Cf. Maimonides, *Guide*, 1:40 [I 14]: “The equivocality of the word *Adam*. It is the name of *Adam the first man* ... It is also the term designating the species.”
- 6 Quoted in Chittick, “Chapter Headings”, 49.
- 7 Al-Qāshānī, *Sharḥ*, 8.
- 8 Al-Qaysarī, *Sharḥ*, 268.
- 9 See C. Addas, *Quest for the Red Sulphur: The Life of Ibn ‘Arabī*, tr. P. Kingsley (Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society, 1993), 87–88; S. Shaikh, *Sufi Narratives of Intimacy: Ibn ‘Arabī, Gender, and Sexuality* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2012), 99–102.
- 10 Ibn ‘Arabī, *Futūḥāt*, 3:89; Chodkiewicz, *Seal*, 98; Addas, *Quest*, 87; al-Ḥakīm, *al-Mu‘jam*, 143. For a modern Islamic feminist reading of this and similar passages, see S. Shaikh, “In Search of *al-Insān*: Sufism, Islamic Law, and Gender”, *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 77 (2009), no. 4, 781–822, 806–809.
- 11 See al-Ḥakīm, *al-Mu‘jam*, 189–191; Chodkiewicz, *Seal*, 103–104; Ridgeon, “*Azīz Nasaḥ*”, 188–190. Ebstein, *Mysticism and Philosophy*, 134; Hujwārī had also earlier identified 40 *abdāl*. See Nūrbakhsh, *Farhang*, 6:6. It should however be noted that, elsewhere in his writings, Ibn ‘Arabī identifies seven *abdāl*. See e.g. Ibn ‘Arabī, *Futūḥāt*, 1:160, 2:7. In identifying seven, he was following, among others, al-Ḥakīm Tirmidhī. See Radtke and O’Kane, *The Concept of Sainthood*, 109–110.
- 12 Ibn ‘Arabī, *Futūḥāt*, 2:9.
- 13 Ibid., 1:679.
- 14 Ibn ‘Arabī, *Fuṣūṣ*, 217.
- 15 See ibid.; Ibn ‘Arabī, *Futūḥāt*, 1:679, 3:87; al-Ḥakīm, *al-Mu‘jam*, 144–145.
- 16 Al-Qāshānī, *Sharḥ*, 267–268. For a later expression of a similar idea, see also al-Nābulusī, *Sharḥ jawāhir al-nuṣūṣ fī ḥall kalimāt al-Fuṣūṣ*, two volumes in one (Egypt: Maṭba‘at al-Zamān, 1887–1905), 315: “The Perfect Human was created from the Real – May He be exalted – and the woman (*al-mar’ah*) was created from the Perfect Human. So the Real loved the Perfect Human and the Perfect Human loved the woman.”
- 17 Ibn ‘Arabī, *Futūḥāt*, 1:679.
- 18 Ibn ‘Arabī, *Futūḥāt*, 3:87. This notion that women are lesser than men in religion and intellect is found in a hadith recorded in Bukhārī. See R. Cornell, “Sufi Women’s Spirituality: A Theology of Servitude”, *Voices of Islam*, volume 1: *Voices of Tradition*, ed. V. Cornell (Westport, CT; London: Praeger, 2007), 167–174, 171.
- 19 This being said, I personally know of no instance in which Ibn ‘Arabī or his leading interpreters use the term ‘*al-insān al-kāmil*’ of a woman.
- 20 Ahmed, *What is Islam?*, 79.
- 21 Quoted in Todd, *Sufi Doctrine*, 58.
- 22 See Chittick, *Sufi Path of Knowledge*, 91–94; Izutsu, *Sufism & Taoism*, 33–35.
- 23 Q 17:20: “We bestow those gifts of your Lord on all, there is no gift of your Lord that is prohibited [to anyone].”
- 24 Ibn ‘Arabī, *Futūḥāt*, 1:287; Chittick, *Sufi Path of Knowledge*, 91–92.
- 25 Connected to this, Ibn ‘Arabī and his interpreters often refer to a three-tiered hierarchy among human beings. Thus Ibn ‘Arabī writes, for instance, of the difference between the creeds of the masses (‘*aqīdat al-‘awāmm*’), of the elect of the people of God (*khawāṣṣ ahl Allāh*), and of the “quintessence of the elect” (*khulāṣat al-khawāṣṣ*), for which see Abū Zayd, *Hākadhā*, 105–106. See also G. Schubert (ed.), *Al-Murāsālāt bayn Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī wa-Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī* (Beirut: Dār al-Nashr, 1995), 16, for a three-tiered scheme set out by al-Qūnawī.
- 26 See e.g. Ibn ‘Arabī, *Futūḥāt*, 2:396, and the passages quoted in Takeshita, *Ibn ‘Arabī’s Theory*, 109–112. Interestingly, the concept of the ‘animal human’ does not appear to be an important one in the Qūnawī tradition. Thus al-Qāshānī, for instance,

- does not include the term *al-insān al-ḥayawān* in his lexicon of Sufi metaphysical technical terms, nor does he discuss the term in his commentary on the passage of the *Fuṣūṣ* in which the term appears. See al-Qāshānī, *Sharḥ*, 253.
- 27 Ibn 'Arabī, *Futūḥāt*, 3:437; al-Ḥakīm, *al-Mu'jam*, 156.
 - 28 Ibn 'Arabī, *Futūḥāt*, 3:296; al-Ḥakīm, *al-Mu'jam*, 156–157; Takeshita, *Ibn 'Arabī's Theory*, 110–111; Ebstein, *Mysticism and Philosophy*, 187.
 - 29 See Ibn 'Arabī, *Fuṣūṣ*, 168, quoted in Takeshita, *Ibn 'Arabī's Theory*, 113.
 - 30 Ibn 'Arabī, *Fuṣūṣ*, 199. See also Takeshita, *Ibn 'Arabī's Theory*, 112.
 - 31 See Ibn 'Arabī, *Fuṣūṣ*, 57–58 and *passim*. For the meaning of *ḥikmah* in Ibn 'Arabī's writings, see Rosenthal, "Ibn 'Arabī", 13–14.
 - 32 See Izutsu, *Sufism & Taoism*, 236.
 - 33 Al-Qāshānī, *Sharḥ*, 8.
 - 34 *Ibid.*, 242.
 - 35 *Ibid.*, 266.
 - 36 *Ibid.*
 - 37 Frank Griffel has suggested that Ibn 'Arabī's idea of prophecy has roots in the Avicennian philosophical conception of prophecy as an intense form of intellectual attainment, which, like Ibn 'Arabī's conception, served to reduce the gap between prophets and other human beings. F. Griffel, "Muslim Philosophers' Rationalist Explanation of Muhammad's Prophecy", *The Cambridge Companion to Muhammad*, ed. J.E. Brockopp (New York; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 158–179, 178.
 - 38 For Ibn 'Arabī's distinction between the two types of prophethood, see Ibn 'Arabī, *Fuṣūṣ*, 62–64, 131; Takeshita, *Ibn 'Arabī's Theory*, 118–131; al-Ḥakīm, *al-Mu'jam*, 1038–1053; Chodkiewicz, *Seal*, 50–51, 114–115; Y. Friedman, *Prophecy Continuous: Aspects of Aḥmadī Religious Thought and Its Medieval Background* (Berkeley, CA; London: University of California Press, 1989), 71–76; Nettler, *Sufi Metaphysics*, 142–145; Abū Zayd, *Hākadhā*, 60–72.
 - 39 Ibn 'Arabī, *Futūḥāt*, 2:3.
 - 40 Schubert, *al-Murāsālāt*, 16.
 - 41 *Ibid.*, 21.
 - 42 Al-Qayṣarī, *Sharḥ*, 491.
 - 43 For this claim and the concept of the 'Seal of Sainthood', see Chodkiewicz, *Seal*, 128–146; Addas, *Quest*, 77–81; al-Ḥakīm, *al-Mu'jam*, 378–382; Lipton, *Rethinking*, 46–47.
 - 44 See e.g. al-Qāshānī, *Sharḥ*, 2, where he describes Ibn 'Arabī as "the perfected, perfect *shaykh*" (*al-shaykh al-kāmil al-mukammal*). Similarly, al-Qūnawī's student al-Jandī refers to his teacher as "the Perfect Man of his age, the Pole of the Poles of the time and the *khalifah* of the Seal of Muhammadan Sanctity (Ibn 'Arabī)". Quoted in Chittick, "Last Will and Testament", 45.
 - 45 Izutsu, *Sufism & Taoism*, 236. See also Afīfī, *Mystical Philosophy*, 72: "Each prophet in the *Fuṣūṣ* is called a 'logos' but not the Logos – the latter term being preserve for the 'head' of the hierarchy – i.e. Mohammed." For the Ibn 'Arabian conception of the logos, see Chapter 2 of this book.
 - 46 Al-Ghazālī, *Kīmīyā-yi sa'ādat*, 28. The three qualities are: (1) that to the prophet is unveiled (*kashf shavad*) in wakefulness (*bīdārī*) that which is unveiled to the common people in sleep; (2) that while the souls of the common people only affect their own bodies, the soul of the prophet affects the bodies of others; (3) that the prophet gets to know forms of knowledge (*'ulūm*) that the common people learn through instruction through his inner reality (*bāṭin-i khwīsh*).
 - 47 Ibn 'Arabī, *Futūḥāt*, 1:151; Chodkiewicz, *Seal*, 94.
 - 48 See esp. in this regard Ibn 'Arabī, *Futūḥāt*, 3:142, where Ibn 'Arabī refers to how the Muhammadan Reality "extends to every Perfect Human".
 - 49 Quoted in Chittick, "Chapter Headings", 86. See also al-Qāshānī, *Sharḥ*, 267: "The Greatest Name is only with our Prophet Muhammad – May God bless him and grant him peace – and not with any of the other prophets."

- 50 Ibn 'Arabī, *Fuṣūṣ*, 110.
 51 Ibid., 214.
 52 Ibn 'Arabī, *Futūḥāt*, 4:433; al-Ḥakīm, *al-Mu'jam*, 500. See also the passages from the *Futūḥāt* quoted in al-Ḥakīm, *al-Mu'jam*, 278: "He [namely, Muhammad] is the most complete synthesis (*al-majmū' al-tāmm*) and the most perfect exemplar (*al-barnāmaj al-akmal*)", and Hoffman, "Annihilation in the Messenger", 353, where he similarly informs us that "the manifestation of the Real in the mirror of Muhammad is the most perfect, most balanced, and most beautiful manifestation, because of his mirror's particular qualities".
 53 Al-Farghānī, *Muntahā al-madārik*, 41.
 54 Al-Qāshānī, *Mu'jam*, 162.
 55 Al-Qāshānī, *Sharḥ*, 267.
 56 See Lipton, *Rethinking*, 77.
 57 See Ibn 'Arabī, *Futūḥāt*, 3:142.
 58 See esp. *ibid.*, 3:141–146 (ch. 337). For "the keys to the unseen" and related concepts in Ibn 'Arabī's thought, see Ḥakīm, *al-Mu'jam*, 863–870. For "the all-comprehensive words" motif, see Ḥakīm, *al-Mu'jam*, 274–276; Chittick, *Sufi Path of Knowledge*, 239; Lipton, *Rethinking*, 39–40. Ibn 'Arabī explains that Muhammad being given "the all-comprehensive words" means that, while Adam was taught the names of all things (see Q 2:31), Muhammad was taught the *meanings* (*musammiyyāt*, *ma'ānī*) of those names. See Ibn 'Arabī, *Fuṣūṣ*, 214; al-Sha'rānī, *al-Kibrīt*, 10.
 59 Al-Jīlī, *al-Insān*, 207.
 60 Quoted in Goichon, *Lexique*, 219. Cf. Maimonides, *Guide*, 1:113 (I 51): "For every notion superadded to an essence is an adjunct to it and does not perfect its essence, and this is the meaning of accident."
 61 Cf. Maimonides, *Guide*, 1:73 (I 34):
 For man is not granted his ultimate perfection [*kamālahu al-akhīr*] at the outset; for perfection exists in him only potentially [*bi-al-quwwah*], and in his beginnings he lacks this act ... Nor is it necessarily obligatory in the case of every individual who is endowed with some thing in potency, that this thing should become actual [*yakhruj dhālik ilā al-fi'*].
 62 See also al-Jīlī, *al-Insān*, 78, where he explains that the Perfect Human is the individual "in whom [the divine] life (*al-ḥayāt*) appears in its complete form (*'alā ṣūratihā al-tāmmah*)", whereas the individual "in whom life appears, but in a form that is not complete", is called 'the perfect animal human' (*al-insān al-kāmil al-ḥayayānī*). This, of course, evokes Ibn 'Arabī's distinction between the Perfect Human and the animal human.
 63 In his *al-Kamālāt al-ilāhiyyah*, meanwhile, al-Jīlī explains the ability of some individuals and not others to manifest perfection in terms of the Ibn 'Arabian (and Avicennian) concept of 'preparedness' (*isti'dād*). See al-Jīlī, *al-Kamālāt*, 332. See also chapter four of *Qāb al-qawsayn*, on 'The distinctiveness of his [namely, Muhammad's] receptivity from the receptivity of every other existent'.
 64 Al-Jīlī, *al-Insān*, 207–208.
 65 See al-Jīlī, *al-Kamālāt*, esp. 64–314.
 66 Ibid., 325.
 67 Quoted in Nabhānī, *Jawāhir*, 1:1496. See also *ibid.*, 1:1499, and the quotation from the same work in Hoffman, "Annihilation in the Messenger", 356: "God the Exalted has set apart Muhammad, God's blessings and peace be upon him, for the greatest and most perfect divine manifestations which no other capacity can accept in this world or the next."
 68 Ibid., 262–263.
 69 Al-Jīlī, *al-Kamālāt*, 325.
 70 Al-Jīlī expresses this same idea from a somewhat different perspective in *Qāb al-qawsayn*, where he declares that the only way to reach God is through Muhammad. See Nabhānī, *Jawāhir*, 1:1498; Hoffman, "Annihilation in the Messenger", 356.

- 71 The term *al-furqān* usually denotes another name for the Qur'an. See e.g. Q 25:01, 2:185.
- 72 Al-Jīlī, *al-Insān*, 127.
- 73 See F. Morrissey, 'Abd al-Karīm al-Jīlī's Sufi Metaphysical Treatment of the Scriptures in 'al-Insān al-kāmil' (Doctoral thesis, University of Oxford, 2018).
- 74 Al-Jīlī, *al-Insān*, 125.
- 75 It should be noted, however, that, other than his emphasis on the superiority of Muhammad, al-Jīlī never sets out this hierarchy in explicit terms. Furthermore, the hierarchy of prophets is also complicated by the fact that, in the course of his description of his mystical ascension in chapter 61, al-Jīlī places Moses in the sixth heaven (as in traditional accounts of the Prophet's *mi'rāj*), and Jesus and David in the fourth heaven. See *ibid.*, 237–238.
- 76 *Ibid.*, 265–266.
- 77 *Ibid.*, 91.
- 78 *Ibid.*, 265.
- 79 *Ibid.*, 265.
- 80 It should here be noted that, as we saw above, prior to the age of the historical Muhammad non-Muslims such as Plato were able to become perfect Friends of God, in al-Jīlī's view.
- 81 See al-Jīlī, *Sharḥ*, 83. See also *ibid.*, 66, where he describes Ibn 'Arabī as 'The Greatest Friend of God' (*al-walīy al-akbar*), 'The Most Splendid and Most Magnificent Pole' (*al-quṭb al-a'zam al-aḥkhar*), 'The Locus of Appearance of the [Divine] Attribute of Knowledge' (*maḥzar al-ṣifāh al-'ilmiyyah*), 'The Locus of Manifestation of [God's] Essential and Governing Perfections' (*majlā al-kamālāt al-'ayniyyah wa-al-ḥukmiyyah*), 'The Tongue of Reality' (*lisān al-ḥaqīqah*), and 'The Master of the Path' (*ustādh al-tarīqah*).
- 82 Al-Jīlī, *al-Insān*, 119–120.
- 83 *Ibid.*, 279.

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wa-al-ḥadrāt),⁸⁶ Ibn Khaldūn bases his presentation of Ibn ‘Arabian Sufi metaphysics on al-Farghānī’s commentary on Ibn al-Fāriḍ’s *Tā’iyyah*, a text that Ibn Khaldūn probably knew through his friend Ibn al-Khaṭīb’s (d. 1374) book on Sufism, *Rawḍat al-ta’rīf bi-al-ḥubb al-sharīf*.⁸⁷ Though, as we have seen, Ibn Khaldūn does briefly discuss the Ibn ‘Arabian concept of the Pole (*al-quṭb*), and associates the Poles with those whom he calls “the Perfect Ones (*al-kummal*) among the Muhammadans (*al-muḥammadiyyīn*)/among the people of the Muhammadan religious community (*ahl al-millat al-muḥammadiyyah*)”,⁸⁸ nevertheless he makes no mention of the term *al-insān al-kāmil*. The reason for this, I think, is that Ibn Khaldūn was writing just prior to al-Jīlī,⁸⁹ using as his source an Ibn ‘Arabian thinker – al-Farghānī – who did not put nearly so great an emphasis on the idea of the Perfect Human as al-Jīlī did. It was only after al-Jīlī that the idea of the Perfect Human came to be seen as an integral part of the Ibn ‘Arabian Sufi metaphysical worldview. In both the significance that he accords to the idea and in the content of his idea of the Perfect Human, then, al-Jīlī marks a new stage in the history of Sufi thought.

Notes

- 1 Hodgson, “How Did the Early Shī’a”, 2. A similar argument has been made by Valerie Hoffman, who proposes that the centrality of the Prophet and his family within modern Egyptian Sufism (perhaps under the influence of Ibn ‘Arabian ideas) is possible evidence in support of Hodgson’s statement. See Hoffman, “Devotion to the Prophet”, 615.
- 2 Hodgson, *Venture*, 2:462.
- 3 See in this regard the hadiths of the Imams quoted in Amir-Moezzi, *Divine Guide*, 45–46; Amir-Moezzi, *Spirituality*, 105, 112. And on the Imami Shī’i view of the Imam more generally, see Amir-Moezzi, *Spirituality*, 103–306.
- 4 In this regard, it should be noted that the Yemen-based Zaydī branch of Shī’ism does not view the Imam in such exalted metaphysical terms as the Twelver or Ismaili Shī’ah, and was, moreover, actively hostile to Ibn ‘Arabian Sufism. See E. Kohlberg, “Some Zaydī Views on the Companions of the Prophet”, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 39, no. 1 (1976), pp. 91–98, 91; al-Hibshī, *al-Ṣūfiyyah*, 53–66; W. Madelung, “Zaydi Attitudes to Sufism”, *Islamic Mysticism Contested*, ed. F. de Jong and B. Radtke (Leiden: Brill, 1999), pp. 124–144. In connection to al-Jīlī’s Yemeni environment, therefore, a more profitable line of research might be to investigate parallels between al-Jīlī’s idea of the Perfect Human and the conception of the Imam found in the literature produced by the Ṭayyibī Ismailis of Yemen. For Ṭayyibī Ismaili thought, see F. Daftary, *The Ismailis: Their History and Doctrines* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 269–275; T. Mayer and W. Madelung (ed. and tr.), *Avicenna’s Allegory on the Soul: An Ismaili Interpretation* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2015).
- 5 Thus Shī’i thinkers such as Ḥaydar Āmulī (d. after 1385), his student Ibn Abī Jumhūr al-Aḥsā’ī (d. 1495/1496), and Mullā Ṣadrā (d. 1640), Muḥsin Fayḍ Kāshānī (d. 1680), and Quṭb al-Dīn Ashkiwārī (d. c. 1680) attempted to integrate Ibn ‘Arabian Sufi metaphysical ideas into their Shī’ī worldview, including by identifying the Perfect Humans with the Shī’ī Imams. See Amir-Moezzi, *Spirituality*, 107–113; S. Kamada, “*Walāya* in Fayḍ Kāshānī”, *Reason and Inspiration in Islam: Theology, Philosophy, and Mysticism in Muslim Thought*, ed. T. Lawson (London: I.B. Tauris, 2005), 455–468; M. Terrier, “*Le Maḥbūb al-qulūb* de Quṭb al-Dīn Ashkevarī: Une œuvre méconnue

dans l'histoire de l'histoire de la sagesse en islam", *Journal Asiatique* 298, no. 2 (2010), 345–387.

- 6 Nūrbakhsh's thought and the movement that he inspired, it should be noted, were part of a broader trend in Persian Islam in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, which saw the emergence of several mystical-messianic movements with political programmes, which adopted and reworked ideas found in earlier esoteric or 'extremist' (*ghulāt*) Shī'ism and in Sūfism. Among such movements were the Sarbadārs, the Ḥurūfīs, the Nuqtavīs, and, most famously and successfully, the Safavids. See B.S. Amoretti, "Religion in the Timurid and Safavid Periods", *The Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. 6, ed. P. Jackson and L. Lockhart (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 610–655.
- 7 S. Bashir, *Messianic Hopes and Mystical Visions: The Nūrbakhshīya between Medieval and Modern Islam* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2003), 98.
- 8 Quoted in *ibid.*, 98–99.
- 9 See *ibid.*, 97–102.
- 10 See *ibid.*, 97–98.
- 11 In using this term, I am borrowing an image used by Sarah Stroumsa in the different context of medieval Andalusian *falsafah*, to describe the mutual influence of Jewish and Muslim philosophers upon one another. See S. Stroumsa, "Thinkers of 'This Peninsula': Toward an Integrative Approach to the Study of Philosophy in al-Andalus", *Beyond Religious Borders: Interaction and Intellectual Exchange in the Medieval Islamic World*, ed. D.M. Freidenreich and M. Goldstein (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 44–53.
- 12 Hodgson, *Venture*, 2:451.
- 13 See al-Jīlī, *al-Insān*, 119.
- 14 See *ibid.*, 118–120.
- 15 See *ibid.*, 129.
- 16 See *ibid.*, 130.
- 17 Indeed, on numerous occasions in the chapters on the scriptures his Ibn 'Arabian Sufi metaphysics leads him to offer a more benevolent interpretation of the doctrines of the Jews and Christians than that found in mainstream Islamic thought. See e.g. *ibid.*, 130:

They [namely, the Christians] are not among the obstinate (*mu'ānidīn*), nor are they among those who have no master (*mawlā*), because it is the unbelievers (*al-kāfirīn*) who have no master. For they are, in reality ('*alā al-ḥaqīqah*), in the right (*muḥiqqūn*), because God – May He be exalted – is the reality of Jesus (*ḥaqīqat 'Īsā*), and the reality of his mother (*ḥaqīqat ummihi*), and the reality of the Holy Spirit (*ḥaqīqat al-rūḥ al-quds*), indeed, the reality of everything (*ḥaqīqat kull shay'*).

- 18 'Abd al-Qādir in fact seems to have claimed these titles for himself. See al-Jīlānī, *Dīwān*, 163–164:

I am a shaykh, a righteous one, a Friend of God (*anā shaykh wa-ṣāliḥ wa-walīy*)/I am the Pole and a model for mankind (*anā quṭb wa-quḍwah li-al-anām*)/I am 'Abd al-Qādir, may my Time be glad/and my ancestor is Muṣṭafā [namely, Muhammad], the mediator of mankind.

Certainly, his later followers viewed him as the Pole of his age. Thus the famous lexicographer al-Fayrūzābādī, for instance, who, it will be remembered, was in Yemen at the same time as al-Jīlī, wrote a book titled *Rawdat al-nāzīr fī manāqib al-ghawth 'Abd al-Qādir*. See Y. Ziedan, *Duwwāmāt al-taḍayyun* (Cairo: Dār al-Shurūq, 2013), 281. See also al-Tahānawī, *Kashshāf*, 1329.

- 19 It should be noted that the attribution of these discourses to 'Abd al-Qādir has been called into question. See W. Braune, *EP*, s.v. "'Abd al-Qādir al-Djīlānī". What

- matters for our purposes, however, is that by al-Jīlī's time, "the 'Abd al-Kādir of legend" (in Braune's words), that is, the exponent of these Sufi ideas, was long established, and it was this legendary figure, therefore, that al-Jīlī would have thought of as the 'real' 'Abd al-Qādir.
- 20 Al-Jīlānī, *Dīwān*, 206–216. See also Ziedan, *Duwwāmāt*, 279.
 - 21 It should be noted, however, that Ibn 'Arabī engaged with the figure of 'Abd al-Qādir, whom he held "in high esteem", naming him as one of the Poles, 'The Imam of his Age' (*imām al-ʿaṣr*), 'The Leader of his Time' (*sayyid waqtihi*), a Friend of God, and one of the spiritual elite whom he calls *al-malāmiyyah* (the People of Blame). See Abrahamov, *Ibn al-ʿArabī*, 152. In light of this, it is possible that al-Jīlī's view of 'Abd al-Qādir was mediated through Ibn 'Arabī. Indeed, at one point in *al-Insān al-kāmil* he quotes 'Abd al-Qādir but cites a passage from Ibn 'Arabī's *Futūḥāt* as his textual source. See al-Jīlī, *al-Insān*, 128.
 - 22 Al-Jīlī, *al-Insān*, 210.
 - 23 *Ibid.*, 207.
 - 24 Annemarie Schimmel is therefore correct – though probably does not go far enough – when she says that "Jīlī ... did his utmost to systematize the thoughts of Ibn 'Arabī, though at certain points he differed from him", Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, 281.
 - 25 An excellent first step in rectifying this is K. El-Rouayheb, *Islamic Intellectual History in the Seventeenth Century: Scholarly Currents in the Ottoman Empire and the Maghreb* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), esp. part III.
 - 26 Padwick, *Muslim Devotions*, 138. See also *ibid.*, 254–257, for prayers on "the pre-creation mystery of Muhammad".
 - 27 See Hoffman, "Annihilation in the Messenger"; Addas, "'At the distance'". See also O. Ogunnaike, "Annihilation in the Messenger Revisited: Clarifications on a Contemporary Sufi Practice and its Precedents", *Journal of Islamic and Muslim Studies* 1, no. 2 (2016), 13–34. For advocates of the Neo-Sufism thesis, the eighteenth century witnessed the quest for mystical annihilation in God (*fanā' fī Allāh*) being replaced by the quest for mystical annihilation in the Messenger (*fanā' fī al-rasūl*), as well as the rejection of Ibn 'Arabian ideas. For more on this issue, see R.S. O'Fahey and B. Radtke, "Neo-Sufism Reconsidered", *Der Islam* 70 (1993), 52–87.
 - 28 Perhaps with this in mind, Hodgson describes al-Jīlī as "the most effective popularizer of Ibn-al-'Arabī's solutions", Hodgson, *Venture*, 2:462.
 - 29 See Moin, *Millennial Sovereign*; Binbaş, *Intellectual Networks*; Yilmaz, *Caliphate Redefined*; Markiewicz, *Crisis of Kingship*.
 - 30 It should be noted in this regard that Azfar Moin, the pioneering scholar in this area, does not look at the transmission of ideas through texts (as I do), preferring to concentrate on material culture and ritual practice.
 - 31 For al-Bosnawī's life and thought, see R. Hafizović, "A Bosnian Commentator on the *Fusus al-hikam*", *Journal of the Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi Society* 47 (2010), 87–107. As Noel Malcolm writes,

Most of the literary works of the Bosnian Muslims [during the Ottoman period] were written in Turkish, Arabic, or Persian. There are obvious reasons for this: some were writing in forms where the language was an inseparable part of the genre, such as the elaborate courtly poetry of the Persian tradition; some were dealing with subjects, such as philosophy, where an entire technical vocabulary was present in Arabic but lacking Serbo-Croat; and of course many were writing for readers outside of the Slav lands.

N. Malcolm, *Bosnia: A Short History* (London: Pan Books, 2002), 102. Both the second and third points apply to al-Bosnawī, whom Malcolm includes in his list of eight or nine "major writers" of Ottoman Bosnia, an indication of al-Bosnawī's significance within the intellectual history of the Bosnian nation.

- 32 C. Brockelmann, *History of the Arabic Written Tradition*, tr. J. Lameer (Leiden; Boston, MA: Brill, 2018), Supplement 2:294, tells us of the existence of a manuscript of this versified work in Mosul.
- 33 Al-Bosnawī, *Kitāb al-Qirā al-rūhī*, 6. See also *ibid.*, 3.
- 34 *Ibid.*, 2–3.
- 35 See R. Sellheim, *EP*, s.v. “al-Tahānawī”.
- 36 See e.g. al-Tahānawī, *Kashshāf*, 270–271, 281, 816, 1270, 1311–1312, 1746.
- 37 *Ibid.*, 281.
- 38 Al-Tahānawī in fact does not cite from the *Fukūk* directly, but rather from a passage quoted in ‘Abd al-Rahmān Jāmī’s commentary on the *Fuṣūṣ*.
- 39 On the *Mawāqif*, see Woerner-Powell, *Another Road*, 159ff.
- 40 See Weismann, “God and the Perfect Human”, 66–68.
- 41 Al-Jazā’irī, *al-Mawāqif*, 2:289, 1:228.
- 42 See Woerner-Powell, *Another Road*, 167.
- 43 See *ibid.*, 163, 196, 203.
- 44 See Weisman, “God and the Perfect Man”, 64.
- 45 See Woerner-Powell, *Another Road*, 163–164.
- 46 Al-Jazā’irī, *al-Mawāqif*, 1:58.
- 47 *Ibid.*, 1:59.
- 48 Ibn ‘Arabī also cites this hadith in the *Futūḥāt*. See Chittick, *Sufi Path of Knowledge*, 241.
- 49 See al-Jīlī, *al-Insān*, 128.
- 50 For the significance of Ibn Jamīl to the Ibn ‘Arabian Sufis of Yemen, see Knysh, *Ibn ‘Arabi*, 236; Ziedan, *‘Abd al-Karīm*, 47; Ziedan, *al-Fikr*, 45–46; al-Jīlī, *Ibdā’*, 36.
- 51 Al-Jazā’irī, *al-Mawāqif*, 1:59.
- 52 See Trimmingham, *Sufi Orders*, 126; J. van Ess, “Libanesische Miszellen: 6: *Die Yaṣruṭiyya*”, *Die Welt des Islams* 16, no. 1 (1975), 101–103; A. Bötcher, *EP*, s.v. “Yashruṭiyya”.
- 53 Weisman, “God and the Perfect Man”, 70.
- 54 On Fāṭimah al-Yashruṭiyyah, see L. Cadavid, “Fatima al-Yashruṭiyya: The Life and Practice of a Sufi Woman and Teacher”, *Voices of Islam*, volume 1: *Voices of Tradition*, ed. V. Cornell (Westport, CT; London: Praeger, 2007), 175–200.
- 55 This term is translated by van Ess as “hiersein” – “being here”.
- 56 Quoted in van Ess, “Libanesische Miszellen”, 46–47.
- 57 See *ibid.*, 47.
- 58 *Ibid.*, 48.
- 59 See Iqbal, “The Doctrine”. For a recent attempt to explain this article in light of Iqbal’s involvement in contemporary philosophical debates, see F. Yilmaz, “Overcoming Nihilism Through Sufism: An Analysis of Iqbal’s Article on ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Jīlī”, *Journal of Islamic Studies* 41 (2018), 1–29.
- 60 See Iqbal, *Development of Metaphysics*, 116–133.
- 61 See M. Iqbal, *The Secrets of the Self (Asrār-i khudī): A Philosophical Poem*, tr. R.A. Nicholson (London: Macmillan and Co. Limited, 1920), xii–xiv, xviii; F. Rahman, “Iqbal and Mysticism”, *Iqbal as a Thinker*, ed. M.R. Siddiqi (Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1944), 206–230; M. Siddiqi, “A Historical Study of Iqbal’s Views of Sufism”, *Islamic Studies* 5, no. 4 (1966), 411–427; A. Nur-ud-Din, “Attitude toward Sufism”, *Iqbal: Poet-Philosopher of Pakistan*, ed. M. Hafeez (New York; London: Columbia University Press, 1971), 288–300; A. Schimmel, “Mystic Impact of Hallaj”, *Iqbal: Poet-Philosopher of Pakistan*, 310–324; M. Nazir-Ali, *The Influence of Maulānā Jalāluddīn Rūmī on the Theology of ‘Allāma Iqbāl* (Doctoral thesis, University of Oxford, 1974); Hodgson, *Venture*, 3:347–349; M. Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, intr. J. Majeed (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2012), 119; M. Iqbal, *Taking Issue & Allah’s Answer*, tr. M. Dalvi (New Delhi: Penguin Books, 2012), xxi–xxii, 85; M.Q. Zaman, *Islam in Pakistan: A History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2018), 196–197.

- 62 Zaman, *Islam in Pakistan*, 197.
- 63 Iqbal, "The Doctrine," 78.
- 64 Iqbal, it should be noted, was heavily critical of Plato and his pernicious influence on 'pantheistic' Sufism. See Iqbal, *Secrets of the Self*, xxii–xxiii, 56–59; Nur-ud-Din, "Attitude", 292–294.
- 65 Iqbal, "The Doctrine", 96–97.
- 66 Ibid., 82.
- 67 Ibid., 97. According to Fazlur Rahman, Iqbal's study of *al-Insān al-kāmil* demonstrates "his bearings towards this aspect of esoteric philosophy. Iqbal's early works show very slight traces of this influence, which was to bear its most remarkable fruit much later in his poetic career." Rahman, "Iqbal and Mysticism", 229.
- 68 In the preface to Nicholson's English translation, there is a note here that reads: "Kor. ch. 23, v. 14: 'Blessed is God, the best of those who create.'"
- 69 Iqbal, *Secrets of the Self*, xviii–xix.
- 70 Cf. Hodgson, *Venture*, 3:350.
- 71 See Chittick, *Sufi Path of Knowledge*, 22, 283–284; W. Chittick, *Imaginal Worlds: Ibn al-ʿArabī and the Problem of Religious Diversity* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1994), 23, 36, 45. Already Goldziher had recognised the importance of this motif as the "*summum bonum*" of Sufi thought. See Goldziher, *Introduction*, 21–22, note 23. It was also the subject of a long discussion by al-Ghazālī in his book on the 99 most beautiful names of God. See W. Chittick, "Worship", *The Cambridge Companion to Classical Islamic Theology*, ed. T. Winter (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 218–236, 222.
- 72 Al-Qāshānī, *Muʿjam*, 174.
- 73 Al-Jīlī, *al-Insān*, 156.
- 74 Cf. Marshall Hodgson's description of Iqbal's concept of *khudī* in *Venture*, 3:348: "The destiny to which each finite individual, each human being, was called was to be more and more like God: more and more uniquely individual, and therefore more and more creative."
- 75 Al-Jīlī, *al-Insān*, 126.
- 76 Ibid., 152. See also ibid., 72.
- 77 M. Iqbal, *Kullīyyāt-i Ashʿār-i Fārsī-yi Iqbāl-i Lāhūrī*, ed. M. Darwīsh (Tehran: Sāzmān-i Intishārāt-i Jāv īdān, 1366 SH [= 1987/1988], 112–114; Iqbal, *Secrets of the Self*, xxvii–xxviii, 78–84.
- 78 Cf. Hodgson, *Venture*, 3:350: "As for the Ṣūfīs, so for Iqbāl, Muḥammad was the prototype, in his universality and rationality, of the ultimate perfect man."
- 79 Iqbal, *Kullīyyāt-i Ashʿār-i Fārsī*, 196. For an alternative translation, see M. Iqbal, *The Mysteries of Selflessness: A Philosophical Poem*, tr. A.J. Arberry (London: J. Murray, 1953), 79.
- 80 Rahman, "Iqbal and Mysticism", 229.
- 81 Iqbal, *Kullīyyāt-i Ashʿār-i Fārsī*, 398–399. For an alternative English translation, see M. Iqbal, *Javidname: Translated from the Persian with Introduction and Notes*, tr. A.J. Arberry (London: Allen & Unwin, 1966), 99.
- 82 Al-Jīlī, *al-Kamālāt*, 67.
- 83 See Izutsu, *Sufism & Taoism*, 96, 256, 259; Chittick, *Sufi Path of Knowledge*, 113–114, 176, 211, 380.
- 84 Rahman, "Iqbal and Mysticism", 230.
- 85 On these works, see now F. Morrissey and R. Nettler, "Ibn Khaldūn on Sufism: A Story of Truth vs. Falsehood in Three Parts", *Maghreb Review* 44, no. 4 (2019).
- 86 Ibn Khaldūn, *Shifāʾ al-sāʾil wa-tahdhīb al-masāʾil*, ed. M. al-Ḥāfīz (Damascus: Dār al-Fikr, 1996), 107.
- 87 See Knysh, *Ibn ʿArabī*, 192.
- 88 Ibn Khaldūn, *Shifāʾ*, 109; Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddimah*, 3:995.

- 89 Ibn Khaldūn wrote the *Shifā'* between 1372 and 1374, and completed the first draft of the *Muqaddimah* in 1377, more than two decades before al-Jīlī wrote *al-Insān al-kāmil*. For the dating of the *Shifā'*, see Ibn Khaldūn, *Ibn Khaldūn on Sufism: Remedy for the Questioner in Search of Answers (Shifā' al-Sā'il li-Tahdhīb al-Masā'il)*, tr. Y. Özer (Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society, 2017), xxvii–xxviii. For the *Muqaddimah*, see Ibn Khaldūn, *The Muqaddimah*, 1:liiii.

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