

MUJADDID'S FINAL ONTOLOGY

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ABSTRACT

“To me, nothing [of the Necessary domain] is related to entification or entified things (*ta'ayyuni va muta'ayyuni*). What entification is there that makes the nonentified thing (*la-ta'ayyuni*) [that is God] into an entified thing (*muta'ayyuni*) [a created thing]? Such talk comes from the “taste” (*dhawq*) of Ibn al-‘Arabi and his followers [who were having intoxicated sufi mystic experiences] (may Allah sanctify their secrets). If such a talk has occurred in my writings then it should also be considered as a saying [that has come from an intoxicated sufi experience].”

The final ontology of the Great Mujaddid Ahmad Sirhindi is based on the Mujaddid's final *maktub* or epistle on the nature of existence that he wrote in the very last days of his life. It describes a science of existence that may be called the “seven-descent system” that is compared and contrasted with Ibn ‘Arabi's five-descent or *tanaẓẓulat-i khamisa* system.

All the other articles and books that I have reviewed so far describe sciences that the Mujaddid repudiated later on. At first, the Mujaddid experienced the same knowledge that Ibn ‘Arabi had experienced— the five descent system of *wabdatu 'l-wujud*. Then he ascended to higher stations and experienced a science where the creation is a shadow of God. This *shadowism* or *ẓilliyat* is what people usually consider to be the Mujaddid's final proposition. However, the Mujaddid progressed still further in his sufi journey and experienced a new science that is radically different than *ẓilliyat* but at the same time draws much closer to the Ibn ‘Arabi system while still being quite different from it. I have named it the “seven-descent system”.

On its surface, this seven-descent system differs from Ibn ‘Arabi's on three points. First, the additional two descents occur initially— before the five descents of Ibn ‘Arabi. Second, the Mujaddid proposes that God created existence in His second descent whereas Ibn ‘Arabi has proposed that God is existence Himself. Third, the Mujaddid proposes that all the descents are contingent, created and newly originated whereas Ibn ‘Arabi proposes that the first two descents take place in the mind of God and are thus on the level of God and eternal. Someone may call these differences minor. However, in

its implication, the Mujaddid's system is radically different from Ibn 'Arabi's; the Ibn 'Arabi system proposes *ittihad* or unificationism while the Mujaddidi system proposes dualism. In the Ibn 'Arabi system, the essences or realities of contingent things are divine as they exist in the mind of God. In contrast, all descents take place at the contingent level in the Mujaddidi system and the essences are contingent. Secondly, Ibn 'Arabi proposes that God is identical to existence and so the existence of contingent things is divine. In contrast, the Mujaddid proposes that God exists by His person (*dhat*) and all existence of the contingent things is created and contingent. Therefore, the contingent things are divine in the Ibn 'Arabi system with respect to both their existence and essence while in the Mujaddidi system, they are all contingent.

Many people may ask here, "Didn't the Mujaddid propose *wahdatu 'l-shubud* in opposition to Ibn 'Arabi's *wahdatu 'l-wujud*?" The answer is that the context of the theory of *wahdatu 'l-shubud* is different— it is not at all a theory of ontology; instead it is a theory of sufi aspirants' subjective unveiling (*kashf*). What are being described in this article are the Mujaddid's theories of ontology.

Now let's go through the *maktub*, analyze it and learn from this great master. This is an annotated translation of *maktub* no. 3.122 i.e. *Maktubat-i Imam-i Rabbani*, Volume III, *maktub* 122, written to Mawlana Hasan Dihlawi on the Muhammadan reality, Ibn 'Arabi and the nature of existence, edited by Nur Ahmad Amritsari (pp.127-134):

The Muhammadan Reality

In the name of Allah the All-Merciful and the Compassionate. All praise is for Allah and peace towards His chosen servants. *Bismi'Llahi 'l-Rahmani 'l-Rahim! Alhamdulillah wa salamu 'ala 'ibadibi 'llazina 'stafa!*

The Muhammadan reality is the most exalted of the creation.

The Muhammadan reality (*haqiqat-i Muhammadi*) (may the most excellent salutation and the most complete peace be on it— *'alaihi min al-salawatu afdalha wa min al-taslimatu akmalha*) is the first manifestation (*zubur*). It is the reality of all realities (*haqiqat al-haqaiq*)— all other realities are like its shadows (*kal-zilal*), be it the reality of the honorable prophets or be it the reality of the magnificent angels (*salam*). It is the prototype of all realities (*asl-i haqaiq*). The Prophet (*salam*) said, *In the beginning, what Allah created*

was my light! Anwalu ma khalafa 'Llahu nuri! [Hadith: Suyuti]. He (salam) also said, *Allah created me from His light and the believers from my light. Khuliqtu min nuri 'Llahi wa 'l-mu'minuna min nuri.* [Hadith: Abdul Haqq Dihlawi, quoted in *Madarij al-Nubuwa*]. Therefore, necessarily, that [Muhammadan] reality is the intermediate (*wast*) in-between all other realities and *Haqq*.

And none may find what he seeks without the intermediation of [the Muhammadan reality (salam)]. Because he [Prophet Muhammad] is the prophet of the prophets and his arrival was a mercy to the worlds (salam). It is for this reason that the major (*ulu 'l-'azam*) prophets— although they were prophets themselves (*ba-wujud-i asalat*)— desired to become his followers and hoped to be included in his community (salam), as the Prophet (salam) has narrated it [in the Hadith].

The word *haqiqat* has been consistently translated as “reality”. Now *haqiqat* may have several meanings according to the context. However, in this maktub, *haqiqat* usually refers to the ‘essence’ or ‘quiddity’ of a thing. In the context of God, *haqiqat* means the true nature or true identity of God, which the Great Mujaddid is teaching us.

The Exclusive Possession of the Muhammadan Community

Only the members of the Muhammadan community may realize the exalted perfection of reaching the Muhammadan reality and unifying with it.

Question: What perfection is there that depends on being his [Prophet Muhammad’s] follower? And what [perfection is that,] which the prophets could not attain although they possessed the treasure of prophethood?

Answer: That perfection is “arrival” and unification (*wusul va ittihad*) with that reality of the realities, [which is the Muhammadan reality]. And [you may reach it and unify with it] only if you are [Prophet Muhammad’s] follower and heir (*tab'iyyat va wirathat*). Actually, [reaching and unifying with it] depends on divine bounty (*fadl*). And [possessing] that [divine bounty] is the lot of those members of his [the Muhammadan] community who are the “elite of the elite” (*akhs-i kbwas*). And until one becomes a member of his [Muhammadan] community, one cannot attain that treasure [of reaching and unifying with the Muhammadan reality]. And the veil of intermediation [between the gnostic and the Muhammadan reality] will remain— that [veil may be eliminated only] by

unifying (*ittihad*) [with the Muhammadan reality and to accomplish that, the gnostic must be a member of the Muhammadan community]. It is due to this reason that God has said [addressing to the Muslims], *You are the best of all religious communities! Kuntum khayra ummatin!* (3:110)

He [Prophet Muhammad] is superior (*afdal*) to each one of the other honorable prophets and each one of the magnificent angels. Likewise, he is also superior to all of them added together. It is just as the prototype is superior than every one of its shadows even if that shadow [is a super-shadow] which contains thousands of shadows [super-imposed on one another]. Whatever energy (*fiyd*) that shadow attains from God is through the intermediation (*bi-tuwasti va tufail-i*) of that [prototype, which is the Muhammadan reality]. I have explained in my own writings that the point above (*nuqta-i fawqa*) is superior to (*fadl*) all the points below (*bar nuqtaha-i tabta*) that are like the shadows of [the point above.] The point above is like the prototype [itself] and all the points below are like the shadows [of that prototype]. And for the gnostic, if he crosses that point above, it would be a far more triumphant achievement than if he would cross all the points below.

Are the Elite Followers of Prophet Muhammad Superior to the Prophets?

The prophets are still superior to the elite of the elite of the Muhammadan community, even those who have reached and unified with the Muhammadan reality.

Question: Does this clarification prove that the elite (*khawas*) of this [Muhammadan] community [who have realized “arrival” and conjunction (*wusul va ittisal*), with the Muhammadan reality] are superior (*fadl*) to the prophets?

Answer: Nothing of the sort is established. It is only established that the elite (*khawas*) of this community has a share in that treasure, [which is “arrival” and conjunction with the Muhammadan reality] while the [other] prophets do not [have that share. Still, the other prophets are indeed superior as they] are adorned and made superior (*ikhtisas*) by numerous other perfections [apart from the “arrival” and conjunction with the Muhammadan reality]. [It is an accepted Muslim belief that] even for the elite of the elite of this [Muhammadan] community who attains the

maximum progress, his head does not reach the feet of the lowliest prophet. So where is the possibility of equality or superiority [of the elect of the Muhammadan community to or over the other prophets]?

God has said, *Verily Our word has placed our servants the prophets before [others]; (wa laqad sabaqat kalimatuna li-'ibadina 'l-mursalin)* (37:171). And if an individual among the followers (*ummat*??), as an “uninvited servant” and as a follower accompanying his own prophet (*tufail va tab'iyat*), reaches a station above a prophet then he reaches there as a servant and a follower. Everyone knows that a servant will have no other relationship with the peers of his master except servanthood. All the time, the servant will be a *tufayli*, an uninvited servant accompanying his master who is the honored guest.

The Muhammadan Reality is Love

The Mujaddid's final unveiling was that the Muhammadan reality is love.

After traveling through the levels of the shadows (*ti maratib-i z'ilal*), what was unveiled to me finally is this: The Muhammadan reality that is the reality of all realities is the entification and the manifestation of “love” (*ta'ayyun va z'ubur-i hubbi*). [That love] is the origin of the manifestations and the source of the act of creation of created things (*mabda'I z'uburat va mansha'I k'halq-i makhlukat*). A well-known “sacred Hadith” [a Hadith where God speaks in the first person] says, *I was a hidden treasure. Then I desired “knowing (u'rafa)”. So I created the creation for “knowing”. Kuntu kanz'am makhf'iyān. Fa-abbabtu an u'rafa. Fa-khalaqtu 'l-khalqa li-u'rafa* [Hadith: origin unknown]. [This Hadith proves that] the first thing that appeared from that hidden place is ‘love’ (*hubb*). It [that divine love] is the cause of the creation of created things (*k'halq-i khala'iq*). If this ‘love’ were not there, [the created things] would not have been brought into existence (*ijad*). Instead, the cosmos would have been firmly fixed and entrenched (*rasikh va mustaqarr*) within nonexistence. The mystery of the ‘sacred Hadith’, *without you, I would not have created the heavens (Law laka lama khalaqtu 'l-aflak)* [Hadith: origin unknown], indeed lies here. And the reality of the ‘sacred Hadith’, *Without you, I would not have manifested my lordliness. Law laka lama aẓhartu 'l-rububiyyata* [Hadith: origin unknown] should be sought here.

The First Entification: Love

The Mujaddid’s final inspired knowledge is that the first entification is the “entification into love” (*ta’ayyun-i hubbi*), which is the Muhammadan reality and this idea differs with the idea of Ibn ‘Arabi, for whom the first entification is the entification into undifferentiated ideas. Even the Mujaddid had a different unveiling before. At that time, he used to believe that the first entification was the “entification into existence” (*ta’ayyun-i wujudi*). However, as the Mujaddid progressed in his path towards God-realization, he realized truer knowledge.

Question: Ibn al-‘Arabi, the author of the *Futubat-i Makkiya*, has said that the first entification (*ta’ayyun-i awwal*), which is the Muhammadan reality, is the entification into undifferentiated ideas (lit., *badrat-i ijmal-i ‘ilm*). [In contrast, previously] in your own writings, you had said that the first entification is the “entification into existence” (*ta’ayyun-i wujudi*). And you had decided that its center, which is its part that is the most noble and the first in time (*asbraf va asbaq*) is the Muhammadan reality. And you had pointed at the entification into undifferentiated ideas (lit., *ta’ayyun-i badrat-i ijmal*) as the shadow of this entification into existence (*ta’ayyun-i wujudi*). [Now, you have reversed yourself and] you have written here that the first entification is the entification into love and that is the Muhammadan reality. Could you please rationalize these mutually contradictory claims?

Note: These terms all mean the entification into undifferentiated ideas and have been translated as such. They are: *badrat-i ijmal-i ‘ilm* and *ta’ayyun-i badrat-i ijmal*.

The Descents: A Comparison		
Ibn ‘Arabi: Five Descents	Mujaddid’s earlier view: Six Descents	Mujaddid’s final view: Seven Descents
The first entification: entification into undifferentiated ideas (<i>ta’ayyun-i ‘ilm-i</i>	The first entification: entification into existence (<i>ta’ayyun-i wujudi</i>). Muhammadan reality: It is the center of the first entification which is its part	The first entification: entification into love (<i>ta’ayyun-i hubbi</i>) and that is the Muhammadan reality. The second

<p><i>jumali</i>).</p> <p>The second entification: entification into differentiated ideas and that is the Muhammadan reality.</p>	<p>that is the most noble and the first in time (<i>ashraf va asbaq</i>).</p> <p>The second entification: entification into undifferentiated ideas (<i>ta'ayyun-i 'ilm-i jumali</i>).</p>	<p>entification: entification into existence (<i>ta'ayyun-i wujudi</i>).</p> <p>The third entification: entification into undifferentiated ideas (<i>ta'ayyun-i 'ilm-i jumali</i>).</p>
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Answer: Many times, the shadow of a thing shows itself as the prototype of that thing and attracts the wayfarer to it. Therefore, those two entifications are the first entifications which appear to the gnostic during the time of ascent as the prototype entification (*ba-asl-i ta'ayyun*), which [truly] is the entification into love (*ta'ayyun-i hubbi*).

Those “two entifications” refer to what Ibn ‘Arabi and the Mujaddid had mistakenly identified as the first entification.

Firstly, Ibn ‘Arabi identified the entification into undifferentiated ideas as the first entification. And the Mujaddid initially concurred with him.

Secondly, the Mujaddid, after he had a measure of spiritual ascent, reached a level higher than Ibn ‘Arabi and there he saw that the first entification is the entification into existence (*ta'ayyun-i wujudi*). And its center, which is its part that is the most noble and the first in time (*ashraf va asbaq*), is the Muhammadan reality. And what Ibn ‘Arabi had identified as entification into undifferentiated ideas (lit., *ta'ayyun-i hadrat-i ijmal*) is the shadow of this entification into existence (*ta'ayyun-i wujudi*).

The last unveiling of the Mujaddid revealed that both he and Ibn ‘Arabi had been wrong both times. That entification into undifferentiated ideas was actually the shadow which presented itself as the prototype entification. And the true prototype entification or the very first entification is the entification into love, *ta'ayyun-i hubbi*.

The Second Entification: Existence

The Mujaddid clarifies that the entification into existence is the second entification.

Question: How can you say that the entification into existence (*ta'ayyun-i wujud*) is the shadow of the entification into love (*ta'ayyun-i hubbi*)? When existence comes before love and love is a branch of existence?

Answer: I have proven in my own writings that *Haqq* exists by His own person [i.e. He exists by Himself], not [that He exists] by [His attribute of] existence. Likewise, the “eight [essential] attributes” exist by the person of the Necessary, not by [His attribute of] existence. It is because both *wujud*, existence, and *wajib*, necessity, do not at all have an opportunity (*gunja'ish*) [to exist] there on that level [of non-entification] as they both are merely “crossings-over” (*i'tibarat*).

Note: The “crossings-over” (*i'tibarat*) are fine ideas in the mind of God crossing over from nonexistence to existence. And those crossings-over, *i'tibarat*, emerged later during the first entification, *ta'ayyun-i awal*. The Mujaddid explained elsewhere in the *Maktubat* and also in his monograph *Ma'arif-i Ladunniya* that the first ideas that were entified were the crossings-over or *i'tibarat*. The modes (*shan*, pl. *shu'un*) were entified on the next level. And the attributes, which have actual external existence, appeared on the next level of entification after that.

The Mujaddid expounds that the crossing-over of love is the first creation. And the second is the crossing-over of existence. And these two first creations led to the creation of the cosmos.

To bring the cosmos into existence (*ijad*), the crossing-over that has been made first is love (*i'tibar-i hubb*). [What has been made] the next is the crossing-over of existence (*i'tibar-i wujud*), which is the preamble to bringing [the cosmos] into existence.

Refuting Ibn 'Arabi, the Mujaddid proposes that God does not need to create the cosmos.

Without these two crossing-overs, the crossing-over of love and the crossing-over of wujud, the Person does not need (*istighna'*) the cosmos or to bring the cosmos into existence. As the Koran says, *Verily Allah does not need the cosmos. Inna 'Llaha laghaniyyun 'ani 'l-'alamiyana.* (2:96)

Ibn 'Arabi proposed that God needs to create the cosmos to actualize Himself. The Mujaddid refutes him. God first created the crossing-overs of

love and existence. That led Him to create the creation. God does not at all need to create the cosmos.

The Rest of the Entifications: Same as Ibn ‘Arabi

The Mujaddid proposes that the third entification is the entification into undifferentiated ideas. According to Ibn ‘Arabi, this was the first entification. However, the Mujaddid final unveilings show that undifferentiated ideas come after love and existence.

You may not observe any attribute there [on those levels i.e. the levels of entifications into love, existence and undifferentiated ideas] as the attributes have not yet been entified [on those levels. The attributes are entified only at the next level that is the level of entification into differentiated ideas.]

[Even then] this “entification into undifferentiated ideas (*ta’ayyun-i ‘ilm-i jumali*)”— you may call it the “shadow” of those two [previous] entifications [that are the entification into love and the entification into existence]— if you:

1. Consider those two entifications as “crossings-over” (*i’tibar*) of the person of God.
2. And consider this entification [i.e. the entification into undifferentiated ideas, *ta’ayyun-i ‘ilm-i jumali*] as an attribute. [And we know that an attribute] is a shadow (*zill*) of the person of God.

The Mujaddid has always accepted the Ibn ‘Arabi entification scheme— from the entification into undifferentiated ideas upto the entification into bodies. So they follow.

Descents: Ibn ‘Arabi versus the Mujaddid

The first difference between the Ibn Arab scheme and the Mujaddidi scheme on the descents (*tanazzulat*) or entifications (*ta’ayyinat*) is that the Mujaddid adds two more entifications to the top. They are love and existence.

The Entifications: Ibn ‘Arabi versus the Mujaddid	
Ibn ‘Arabi’s Five Descents	Mujaddid’s Seven Descents

Sequene	Entifications	Sequenc	Entifications
		1	Love (<i>hubb</i>)
		2	Existence (<i>wujud</i>)
1	Undifferentiated ideas	3	Undifferentiated ideas (<i>'ilm-i jumali</i>)
2	Differentiated ideas	4	Differentiated ideas (<i>'ilm-i tafsihi</i>)
3	Spirits	5	Spirits (<i>ruh</i>)
4	Images	6	Images (<i>mithal</i>)
5	Bodies	7	Bodies (<i>jasad</i>)

The second difference is on the nature of existence. According to Ibn 'Arabi, God is existence Himself. In contrast, the Mujaddid says that existence is a creation of God. And the crossing-over of existence is the second creation, right after the crossing-over of love.

The third difference is on the nature of the two entifications into ideas. According to Ibn 'Arabi, these two entifications– the entification into undifferentiated ideas and the entification into differentiated ideas– take place in the mind of God and so those ideas are divine. In contrast, according to the Mujaddid, those two entifications are created, contingent and newly originated.

The Descents: Ibn 'Arabi versus the Mujaddid			
		Ibn 'Arabi	the Mujaddid
1	The number of descents (<i>tanaẓẓulat</i>)	Five descents	Seven descents, with two descents added on top– “love” is the first descent and “existence” is

			the second; the five Ibn ‘Arabi descents follow.
2	God versus existence	God is existence Himself.	Existence is God’s creation and He created it in the second descent.
3	The level with respect to Necessity and contingency	The first two descents (undifferentiated ideas and differentiated ideas) take place in the mind of God and so are on the level of the Necessary and eternal (<i>wujubi va qadim</i>), and the other three are contingent and newly originated (<i>mumkin va hadith</i>).	All descents are contingent, created and newly originated (<i>mumkin, makhlūq va qadim</i>).

Prophet Muhammad and Prophet Abraham: Their Intimate Inter-relationship

The Mujaddid now teaches us on the intimate inter-relationship between the Prophet Abraham and Prophet Muhammad.

You should know that when you “keenly” (*be-daqqat*) observe the first entification or the entification into love, by divine grace, you may learn that the center (*markaz*) of that [first] entification is love or the Muhammadan reality.

And the circumference of that entification is like a circle in the form of an image (*surat-i mithal*). And that circumference is like the shadow of that very center, and it is called friendship (*khullat*) or the Abrahamic reality. Therefore, love is the prototype. And friendship is indeed [love’s] reflection.

This center and this circumference together form a circle, and it is the first entification. The part [of the circle] which is the most noble and the first in time (*ashraf va asbaq*) is the center and it is love.

In the gaze of unveiling (*nazar-i kashfi*), it [the center of that circle] appears to be the entification into love. Through reasoning, [you may reach the same conclusion because] that part [center of the circle] is the prototype and that part predominates.

[With respect to the circumference, we know] that the circumference of that circle is like the shadow of its center and the [circumference] grows out of that center. [With respect to the center, we also know] that the center is [the circle's] prototype and its source (*mansba*). [Therefore, we may conclude that] the circumference may be considered the second entification [in some way].

However, the gaze of unveiling (*nazar-i kashfi*) does not show two entifications. Instead, it is one single entification that comprises love and friendship (*hubb va kbullat*). And [that single all-including entification] is the center and the circumference of a single circle. In the gaze of unveiling, the second entification is the entification into existence (*ta'ayyun-i wujudi*) and that is like the shadow of the first entification as it has been described earlier. So the center is the prototype of the circumference (*asl-i muhit*). Then to attain the objective [of reaching the prototype], the circumference must employ the intermediation of the center. The [center] is the prototype and the undifferentiation (*asl va ijmal*) of the circle. Therefore, one may reach the destination (*wusul be-matlub*) only by the path that is via the center (*az rab-i markaʔ*).

This should clarify that the beloved of Allah [Prophet Muhammad] and the friend of Allah [Prophet Abraham], they are both inter-related and unified (*munasabat va ittihad*). Here the shadow employs the prototype as the intermediary to reach its destination (*wusul-i zill-i matlub*). Then it follows that Hazrat the friend of Allah [Prophet Abraham] would request the intermediation of Hazrat the beloved of Allah [Prophet Muhammad] and would desire to enter his community— as it has been narrated in the Hadith.

Prophet Muhammad and the Abrahamic Community

We know that Prophet Muhammad is ranked higher than Prophet Abraham. However, according to the *salawat* that we recite in *salat*-prayers, God has asked our prophet to follow Prophet Abraham. And in that *salawat* that God taught him, our prophet has been seeking blessings from God “according to the measure that God has blessed Abraham.” Why?

Question: When their inter-relationship is like this [that Prophet Muhammad is in a far more exalted rank than Prophet Abraham] then why was the beloved of Allah [Prophet Muhammad] instructed to follow the Abrahamic community? What is its meaning? And in *salawat* [during Prayer] the Prophet had been supplicating, “according to the measure that you have given peace and blessings to Abraham”. Why?

Answer: The reality of a thing [here the Muhammadan reality], the more exalted it is and closer it is to God who is incomparable, the grosser is the locus of manifestation of that reality in the world of the elements [here the human form of the Prophet Muhammad. And that reality, here the Muhammadan reality] is also more enwrapped (*mutalabbisi*) in the qualities of human nature (*bashariyat*). Therefore, it is difficult for this locus of manifestation [Prophet Muhammad when he lives in his physical form] to ascend (*'uruj*) to that [Muhammadan] reality.

In the initial segment of our journey, first we make ascent (*'uruj*) upwards. For the Muhammadan seeker of God, he ascends upwards to the Muhammadan reality at first. The Muhammadan reality is the closest to God and the most exalted after Him. Since we know that more exalted is the reality, grosser is its worldly form. And since the Muhammadan reality is the most exalted, the human form of the Prophet is the form that is most enwrapped in human nature. Consequently, the distance between his reality and his human form is the greatest— greater than any other prophet. And consequently, it is most difficult for him to ascend to his own reality.

The Abrahamic community is a wide boulevard (*shah-i rah*) for “arriving” on the Abrahamic reality. And that [Abrahamic reality] lies next to the Muhammadan reality, as it has been said before. And Hazrat Abraham has already reached there [that Abrahamic reality, travelling] through that [Abrahamic] path. Therefore, [Hazrat Muhammad] has been instructed to

reach the reality of the realities [the Muhammadan reality], by following that [Abrahamic] community [or by travelling on that Abrahmic path].

Therefore, to make his ascent easier, Allah instructed Prophet Muhammad to follow the Abrahamic community. Since that way, he could easily reach the Abrahamic reality first and then could move over to the Muhammadan reality, which lies next to it.

Why has the Prophet asked us to recite the Abrahamic benediction (*salawat-i ibrabimi*) in our prayers (*salat*).

In *salawat* during salat-prayer, that master (*sarwar*) [Hazrat Muhammad] has suggested to us to pray for divine blessings in accordance to the measure that God has blessed Abraham but [he instructed us to do so] only after he had attained the treasure of “arriving” on the [Muhammadan] reality (*busul-i dawlat-i wusul-i haqiqat*).

Prophet Muhammad had suggested us to pray that way so that we can also traverse on the Abrahamic path, reach the Abrahamic reality and then move over easily to the Muhammadan reality. It is so because if we try to reach the Muhammadan reality directly, it would be harder than us employing the intermediation of the Abrahamic reality.

Also, Prophet Muhammad following Prophet Abraham– that does not have to mean that our prophet is inferior to Prophet Abraham.

On the other hand, we can also say that if a superior person is instructed to follow an inferior person, then in this instruction to follow, he does not have to have a shortcoming. Just as Allah has instructed the Prophet (salam) [referring to the companions], *Consult with them in matters. Wa shawirhum fi l-amri* (3:159) Along with the order to consult with the companions comes the order to follow them. Or else what is the benefit of consultation?

The Reality of Abu Bakr and the Reality of Israphel

The Mujaddid explains the realities of Hazrat Abu Bakr and Hazrat Israphel.

The reality of Hazrat [Abu Bakr] the champion of truth is the divine name that is his lord (*rabb*). That is his origin of entification (*mabda'-i ta'ayyun*).

And that is directly (*bi-tawassut*) the shadow of the Muhammadan reality (*zill-i haqiqat-i Muhammadi*) with nothing else in between.

[The reality of Hazrat Abu Bakr is the direct shadow. And as such, it is the direct] follower and heir of [the Muhammadan reality with nothing else in between. As a result,] whatever that is there in that [Muhammadan] reality, all of it is in that [direct] shadow [which is the reality of Hazrat Abu Bakr].

It is for this reason that [Abu Bakr] is the most perfect (*akmal*) and most excellent (*afdal*) heir (*warith*) in this [Muhammadan] community. The Prophet (salam) said, *Whatever Allah had poured into my breast, I poured that all into the breast of Abu Bakr. Ma sabba 'Llahu shay'an fi sadri illa wa qad sayabtuhu fi sadri Abi Bakr-in.* [Hadith: origin unknown]

Also it has been revealed that the reality of Israphel is that same Muhammadan reality. However, they do not have a prototype-shadow inter-relationship as [in the case of the inter-relationship between the reality of Hazrat Abu Bakr and the Muhammadan reality]. There the reality of Hazrat [Abu Bakr] the champion of truth is the shadow of that [Muhammadan] reality. In contrast, in this case, both [the Muhammadan reality and the reality of Israphel] are prototypes and none of them is the other's shadow. However, there are differences between their universals and particulars (*kulliyat va juz'iyyat*).

That master [Prophet Muhammad] is the absolute leader (*kull*). That is why that reality [which is the leader] has been named in his name [as the Muhammadan reality]. The realities of all the other angels have grown out of that reality of Israphel.

Gnostic's Progression Above his Own Reality

The Mujaddid discusses if a gnostic may progress above his own reality.

Question: The gnostic's own essence or reality is the divine name that is the lord of that gnostic. [Having ascended there in his ascent,] may the gnostic then progress above it?

Answer: The journey towards Allah (*sayr ila 'Llah*) is completed (*tamami*) when [the gnostic] "arrives on" (*wusul*) [his own] reality after travelling

(*tayy*) through the levels of wayfaring (*suluk*). [And it is completed] in two manners.

First Manner

The first manner is “arrival” (*wusul*) [not onto the actual divine name or reality, but instead] onto a shadow among the shadows of that name while that shadow is [falsely] displaying itself as the reality. [And that reality is] displaying itself as the [actual] reality in [the gnostic’s] own locus of manifestation in the divine [names] (*dar mazahib-i wujubiyah-i kbod*). [As a result,] it [falsely] appears that it [that “shadow” of that divine name] is the reality itself.

Such confusion appears in many places on this road— it is a treacherous valley for the wayfarer (*salik*). Only by the sheer grace of God, the wayfarer may be rescued from this valley. [Still, it is certain that] one may progress above this shadow that looks like reality (*zill-i haqiqat noma*)— actually it does happen.

Second Manner

[The second manner is] if he “arrives on” (*wusul*) [that reality which is not merely a shadow but prototypically is] his own reality. In that case, he may not progress beyond it without the intermediation and emulation (*bi-tufail va tab’iyat*) of someone else [whose reality is on a higher level] since that reality is the highest point (*nihayat*) [to which] his own preparedness (*isti’dad*) [would allow him to go]. However, if through someone else’s intermediation, he is brought to someone else’s reality (that is above his own reality) then he may progress [above his own reality to that higher reality].

It is said that this journey is a “journey by force” (*sayr-i qasri*) where one [progresses not by his own power but by employing someone else’s power. And he] progresses to a point that is beyond what is natural for him or for which he is prepared (*tab’i va isti’dadi*).

(A small part from this has already been narrated in the preceding section, in the clarification of arriving on the Muhammadan reality.)

Progress above the Muhammadan Reality

Now the Mujaddid confirms that none may progress above the Muhammadan reality, which is the apogee of perfection.

Question: The Muhammadan reality is the reality of realities (*haqiqat al-haqa>iq*). No reality from the realities of contingent things (*haqiqat-i mumkinat*) is above the Muhammadan reality. Then how can one progress above it? However, you have written in your writings that, “progress above the Muhammadan reality has been attained.” What do you mean by that?

Answer: No! None may [progress above the Muhammadan reality] because the level of *la-ta'ayyun*, non-entification lies above it. No entified thing (*muta'ayyan*) may “arrive” [on that level of non-entification] and be annexed to it (*wusul va ilbaqq*).

[Now some people like Ibn ‘Arabi do claim that the gnostic may indeed progress above the Muhammadan reality and reach the level of non-entification, and they rationalize it by] saying that their “arrival” and annexation (*wusul va ilbaqq*) [to the level of non-entification] are “without how” (*bi-takayyuf*). [However, speaking that way is] not speaking correctly (*mujarrad-i tafannuh*) [as it is meaningless talk]. They find peace from [such meaningless talk] because they are yet to realize a correct understanding of that inter-relationship [between the Necessary who is non-entified and the contingent things which are entified]. However, when Ibn ‘Arabi and his followers would understand it correctly, they would realize that they definitely cannot “arrive on” or annex [to that level of non-entification, *la-ta'ayyun*].

Some people, possibly including Ibn ‘Arabi and his school, claimed that a gnostic may indeed progress above the Muhammadan reality. And he may reach and annex to the level of non-entification. However, they rationalize it by saying that the nature of such “arrival” and annexation is “without how”. The Mujaddid comments that those people are misguided and talk nonsense.

When I had written, “progress above the Muhammadan reality has been attained,” what I meant by that reality was [actually] the shadow of that reality.” [What I should have said is that progress above the shadow of Muhammadan reality has been attained.] And it [what I meant by the term

“Muhammadan reality” there, at the lower level of my sufi enlightenment, actually] meant the entification into undifferentiated ideas [lit., *ijmal-i hadrat-i ‘ilm*] or oneness-crossing-over (*wahdat*), [which in the Mujaddidi scheme is the third entification while the Muhammadan reality is the first entification.] At that time, I confused the shadow [of the Muhammadan reality, which in this case was the entification into undifferentiated ideas] with the prototype. When I was freed from all the shadows by sheer divine grace [and reached a higher level of knowledge], I learned that one may not progress above the “reality of the realities” (*haqiqatu ‘l-haqa’iq*). Even that, it is absolutely impossible because if one raises his feet and steps out, he leaves the contingent domain and drives his feet into the Necessary domain, and that is impossible both by the intellect and by the laws of nature. (*‘aqli va shar‘i*)

Question: This verification demonstrates that [Hazrat Muhammad] the “seal of the messengers” did not progress above the Muhammadan reality. Is it true?

Answer: That Hazrat [Prophet Muhammad] had a highly exalted and glorified rank. Still he was always a contingent thing. And he would never leave the contingent domain or would realize union (*paywast*) with the Necessary— that would have meant that he would transform himself into God (*ulubhiyat*). However, Allah Almighty is beyond having a peer and a partner.

What the Christians say of their prophet

Do not say that [of my prophet!]

(*Da’ ma adda’at-hu ‘l-nasarafi nabibim*).

Realization of the Muhammadan Reality: the Difference between the Prophet and his Elite Followers

This section refers to what happens when a Muslim Sufi traverses the loftiest stations in his ascent (*‘uruq*). In his journey, the Sufi advances to higher and higher stations. A few of these Sufis ascend to the highest station and reach and unify with the Muhammadan reality, which is reserved for the followers of Prophet Muhammad. Even the prophets may not reach that Muhammadan reality as they are not members of the Muhammadan

community. Does that mean that those God-realized Muslims are higher than even the prophets?

Question: From the preceding verification, it is clear that other [Muslims] (as accompanied servants and heirs of their master Muhammad) may also reach the reality of the realities. And may establish some kind of annexation and unification (*ilbaqii va ittihadii*) with that [Muhammadan reality] and then share its elite perfections. And [the elite of the elite in the Muhammadan community annex and unify with] it [the Muhammadan reality] so well that the veil [between them and the Muhammadan reality] is lifted and the inter-mediation is eliminated and [instead they receive the good directly from the Muhammadan reality. And as a result] they reach the highest level of perfection.

If it is so then what is the difference between the [elite] followers [of Prophet Muhammad, who reach that ultimate level of perfection] and the leader [who is their master Muhammad himself], or between the honored guest (*ashli*) and the accompanied servant (*tufayli*) in this perfection? And what is the superiority of the leader and the honored guest over the follower and accompanied servant?

Answer: Others who reach and annex to (*wusul va ilbaqq*) that [Muhammadan] reality do so in the manner that a servant joins his master or the accompanied servant reaches the honored guest. Even if he who reaches is the elite of the elite— those are few— or he is a prophet (salam), even then he is still an accompanied servant (*tufayli*) who eats [the master's] leftovers. How can he be equal to the master? And before the master, what grandeur and greatness can he have?

Note: The Prophets may not reach the Muhammadan reality as they are not followers of the Prophet Muhammad. Here, the Mujaddid brought the example of the prophets only to illustrate his reasoning.

An “accompanied servant” sits with the master— who is the guest— and eats with the master, still he is an “accompanied servant.” If that servant arrives at magnificent mansions along with the master, eats the left-overs of sumptuous meals made for the master or receives respect; still then he receives them due to the greatness of the master and the exaltedness of following him. It is said that the master obtains more respect because the

servants accompany him, although he already has respect accorded to him.

Leader and Follower Being Peers

[Question:] Listen! The Prophet said, He who establishes a good tradition (Sunna), he will receive its wage and the wages of all who will practice that, *Man sanna sunnatan hasanatan fa-lahu ajruha wa ajru man 'amila-biha* [Hadith: Muslim]. Therefore, more followers does the leader have on the beautiful path that he has instituted, more compensation does he receive. So how can the leader and the follower be peers? What equality can you think for them?

[Answer:] Listen! Listen! A group of people may be on a single station and they may share the same treasure. Still, they will be treated differently but none will know about the other. In paradise, the pious wives of the Prophet will live with him in the same location. They will eat the same food and drink the same drinks. However, they will not be treated the same way as the Prophet. Nor would they have the same enjoyment (*iltidhadhi*) and mastery that he has (*salam*). Although they will share everything with the Prophet, the bounties (*afdaliyat*) that they will receive will not be the same as the bounties that the Prophet will receive.

If they would share everything with the Prophet then they would also be superior to everyone else, like the Prophet is. Here the term “superiority” (*afdaliyat*) refers to the amount of rewards before Allah.

All Entifications are Contingent

The Mujaddid explains that all these entifications, including this entification into love, are contingent. His opinion contradicts Ibn ‘Arabi, who had proposed that the first and the second entifications are on the level of the Necessary.

Question: This entification into love— i.e. the first entification or the Muhammadan reality (*salam*)— is it contingent or is it Necessary (*mumkin ya wajib*)? Is it newly originated or is it eternal (*hadith ya qadim*)? Ibn al-‘Arabi, who wrote the *Fusus*, called the first entification [by both these additional names] Muhammadan reality and oneness-crossing-over, *wahdat*. Likewise, he called the second entification one-and-allness, *wahidiyyat*. He established the fixed entities (*a’yan-i thabita*)— or the

essences or realities of the contingent things (*baqa'iq-i mumkinat*)— on that level [of one-and-allness]. He called both of these entifications “entifications of the Necessary (*ta'ayyun-i wujubi*)” and considers them to be eternal (*qadim*). And he considers the three other descents or entifications— the spiritual (*rubi*), the imaginal (*mithali*) and the bodily (*jasadi*)— to be contingent entifications (*ta'ayyun-i imkani*). What are your comments on this matter?

Ibn 'Arabi: Nature of Entifications	
Level of descent or entification	Nature of entification
<i>wahdat, wahidiyat</i>	Entifications of the Necessary (<i>ta'ayyun-i wujubi</i>), eternal (<i>qadim</i>)
Entifications into spirits, entification into images, entification into bodies	Contingent entifications (<i>ta'ayyun-i imkani</i>), created, newly originated

Answer: To me, nothing [of the Necessary domain] is related to entification or entified things (*ta'ayyuni va muta'ayyuni*). What entification is there that makes the nonentified thing (*la-ta'ayyuni*) [that is God] into an entified thing (*muta'ayyuni*) [a created thing]? Such talk comes from the “taste” (*dhawq*) of Ibn al-’Arabi and his followers [who were having intoxicated sufi mystic experiences] (may Allah sanctify their secrets). If such a talk has occurred in my writings then it should also be considered as a saying [that has come from an intoxicated sufi experience].

The Mujaddid now comments on the first two entifications of the Ibn ‘Arabi system. Ibn ‘Arabi calls them entifications of the Necessary, *ta'ayyun-i wujubi*. They are *wahdat*, oneness-crossing-over, which is the first entification and *wahidiyyat*, one-and-allness, which is the second entification. While Ibn ‘Arabi considers them entifications of the Necessary and eternal, the Mujaddid considers them to be contingent entifications which are created and newly-originated.

At all times, we should know that that those [two] entifications are [actually] contingent entifications (*ta'ayyun-i imkani*). And they are created and newly originated (*makhlūq va hadith*). The Prophet said, *In the beginning, what Allah created was my light. Annwalu ma khalāqa ‘Llabu nuri!* [Hadith:

Suyuti]. In other Hadith reports, the time of the creation of that light is also given e.g. *Two thousand years before the creation of the heavens. Qabla khalqa l-samawati b'alfi 'am!* [Hadith: origin unknown]. And all that is created and was previously within nonexistence is contingent and newly originated. The [Muhammadan] reality is the reality which is in the forefront of all the realities. When that is created and contingent (*makbluq va mumkin*) then all other realities are also created, contingent and newly originated (*makbluq, mumkin, hadith*).

The Mujaddid now contrasts his idea with Ibn 'Arabi who believes that the Muhammadan reality is in the mind of God (i.e. on the Necessary level) and eternal.

The Muhammadan reality (also called the realities of the contingent things or the fixed entities): how does the Shaykh (may his secrets be sanctified) rule it to be the Necessary and consider it to be eternal (*wujub, qadim*)? It goes against the saying of the Prophet (salam). Every subdivision of a contingent thing is contingent. Both in its form and in its essence (*sura, haqiqat*), it is contingent. How will the entification of the Necessary (*ta'ayyun-i wujubi*) become the essence of the contingent thing (*haqiqat-i mumkin*)? The essence of the contingent things should also be contingent. Contingent things do not have any mutuality or relationship (*ishtaraki va intisabi*) with the Necessary, except that the contingent things are a creation of the Necessary and the Necessary is their creator.

Entifications with their Levels: Ibn 'Arabi versus the Mujaddid					
Ibn 'Arabi			Mujaddid		
S e q u - e n c e	Name	Level	Seque- nce	Name	Leve l

			1	<p>Love, <i>hubb</i>, the center is Muhammadan reality and the circumference of that reality is friendship, <i>kbulla</i>.</p> <p>Love is entified when the crossing-over of love crosses over from non-entification into entification.</p>	Contingent
			2	<p>Existence; and existence is entified when the crossing-over of existence crosses over from non-entification into entification.</p>	Contingent

1	<p>Undifferentiated ideas, Muhammadan reality, oneness-crossing-over or <i>wahdat</i>, all the crossing-overs (<i>i'tibarat</i>) are entified on this level, crossing over from non-entification into entification .</p>	<p>Necessary, because they are contents in the mind of God, an inseparable part of His attribute of knowledge. And to Ibn 'Arabi, all divine attributes (including the real attributes that include knowledge) have no existence apart from the person of God. So these ideas are inseparable parts of God.</p>	3	<p>Undifferentiated ideas, the rest of the crossings-over (<i>i'tibarat</i>) are the entified crossing over from non-entification into entification.</p>	<p>Contingent</p>
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2	Differentiated ideas, one-and-allness or <i>wahidiyat</i> .	Necessary	4	Differentiated ideas	Contingent
3	Spirits	Contingent	5	Spirits	Contingent
4	Images	Contingent	6	Images	Contingent
5	Bodies	Contingent	7	Bodies	Contingent

Levels of the Five Entifications: Ibn ‘Arabi versus the Mujaddid			
Level of Entification	Name of the Entification	Ibn ‘Arabi	Mujaddid
1	Entification into undifferentiated ideas (<i>ta’ayyun-i ‘ilm-i jumali</i>) or oneness-crossing-over (<i>wabdat</i>)	Necessary level, <i>wajubi</i>	Contingent level, <i>imkani</i>
2	Entification into differentiated ideas (<i>ta’ayyun-i tafsil-i ‘ilm</i>) or one-and-allness (<i>wahidiyat</i>)		
3	Entification into spirits (<i>ta’ayyun-i rubi</i>)	Contingent level, <i>imkani</i>	

4	Entification into images (<i>ta'ayyun-i mithali</i>)		
5	Entification into bodies (<i>ta'ayyun-i jasadi</i>)		

Ibn 'Arabi's Error in Confusing the Necessary and the Contingent

The Mujaddid politely rebukes Ibn 'Arabi for confusing the Necessary and the contingent things.

The Shaykh [Ibn 'Arabi] has not made any distinction between the Necessary and the contingent things, and he himself has said that there is no distinction between them. [Now if he continues in that same line of reasoning and] if he says that the Necessary is contingent and the contingent things are Necessary then he should have no fear. If God excuses him then it is His extreme generosity and forgiveness!

Our Lord! Do not condemn us if we forget or err! *Rabbana! La-tu'akhibizna in nasina aw akhta'na!* (2:286).

Mujaddid's Final Ontology: Dualism as 'abdiyat

Now the Great Mujaddid comments on his final ontological theory which is *'abdiyat*. Now this maktub was written right at the end of his life and so it denotes his final views. These ontological theories were derived not from his study of the Koran and Hadith but instead from his experiential Sufi knowledge. Initially, he had the same experience as Ibn 'Arabi and was a follower of the *wahdatu 'l-wujud* doctrine. However, his experiential knowledge evolved further and then he proposed a new doctrine called *zilliyat*, which says the cosmos is the "shadow" (*zill*) of God. It should be noted that this *zilliyat* or shadowism is not the final "inspired science" of the Mujaddid as he did not remain confined to this station.

Instead the Mujaddid even progressed further in his wayfaring, finally reaching the sublime station of *'abdiyat* or slavism, which no sufi before him had reached. There he realized that *zilliyat* is not the final station, there is another station beyond. He found there that nothing is worthy enough to be the shadow of the Creator. Instead, everything is the "slave" of God. And

finally, he realized that God is beyond all that can be imagined. And man is only an insignificant slave of God. This is *'abdiyyat*, or “slavism”.

Now a disciple of the Mujaddid asked him to clarify his stance on *zilliyat*.

Question: In your own writings [that you wrote before explaining your ontology of shadowism or *zilliyat*,] you [the Mujaddid] had established a prototype-shadow inter-relationship between the Necessary and the contingent things. And you had said that contingent things are the shadow (*zill*) of the Necessary. And you had also written that the Necessary, since it is the prototype [of the shadow that is their essence] (*bi-'itibar-i asalat*), is the essence or reality (*haqiqat*) of contingent things. And contingent things are His shadow. And you had revealed an entire science (*ma'rifat*) [called *zilliyat*] based on that premise. If the Shaykh [Ibn 'Arabi] said that the Necessary is the reality of contingent things in this line, why can't he [say so?] Why should he still be censured?

Note: Previously, at an earlier level of enlightenment, the Mujaddid had proposed the ontological doctrine of *zilliyat*. There he had proposed that the contingent things are shadows of the Necessary. With respect to existence, the contingent things had shadow existence. And with respect to quiddities, their quiddities were a nonexistence onto which a ray from the divine attributes has fallen. Therefore, both with respect to their existence and their quiddities, contingent things were shadows of God.²⁵⁵ When people talk about the buzzword *wahdatu l-shubud*, it is often *zilliyat* to which they refer.

In answer, the Mujaddid says that all the sufi sciences that say the creation is the shadow of God or in some other way related to God are false sciences originating from intoxication, *sukr*. Those false sciences include even *zilliyat*, which the Mujaddid had experienced and propagated before.

Answer: This kind of science that establishes an inter-relationship between the Necessary and the contingent things has no proof in the Sharia. All that science is a science originating from intoxication (*sukriyya*). It [the proposition of Ibn 'Arabi that the Necessary is the reality of the contingent things or the earlier proposition of the Mujaddid that the contingent things are the shadows of the Necessary, *zilliyat*] is from their

²⁵⁵ These ideas are described in detail in *maktab* 2.1

inability [inability of Ibn ‘Arabi and his followers, and even the Mujaddid in both of his earlier states of *wabdatu ‘l-wujud* and *zilliyat*] to reach the reality of that inter-relationship [between the Necessary and contingent things].

What powers do contingent things possess?

That they could be shadows of the Necessary?

Mumkin cheb bud

Ke zill-i majib ba shod

The Mujaddid explains why God may not have a shadow. It’s because He is truly incomparable, far above having the attribute of “possessing a shadow.” He argues: “When Prophet Muhammad did not have a shadow, how can his God have a shadow?”

Why will the Necessary have a shadow? When a shadow is the false (*manhum*) engendering (*tuliyad*) of things similar [to the original, in this case the original being God.] Also it [the shadow] brings the news that there is a defect– the prototype lacks perfect subtleness. When Muhammad the prophet of Allah did not have a shadow due to the subtleness of his body, how can the God of Muhammad have a shadow?

(Note: According to some traditions, Prophet Muhammad, upon whom may there be peace, did not have a shadow.)

The Mujaddid describes the ultimate reality of God vis-à-vis the creation. And that is transcendence, incomp’Arability or beyondness. God and His eight real attributes are what really exist from eternity. Everything else came into being later on:

The person of God exists in the outside by His person (*bi ‘l-dhat*) with independence (*istiqlal*) and with the eight [real] attributes– that is the reality (*haqiqat*) of God. Except for that, all that [exists] there has come to existence [later in created time, and] He brought them into existence (*ijad*). And [therefore, all that God brought into existence later] are contingent things, created things and newly originated things (*mumkin, makbluq va hadith*).

Previously, in his verification of *zilliyat*, the Mujaddid proposed that all the attributes exist in the outside with shadow existence. Now the Sunni creed says that all the divine attributes are inseparable part of the Person as they are “neither He nor other than He, *la hua wa la ghayrubu*”, and so it seems that the Mujaddid’s opinion contradicts the Sunni creed. However, there is really no such contradiction. The Mujaddid argues, “How can you separate the prototype from its shadow?” And since you can’t, the shadow of God is indeed “neither He nor other than He.”

However, it seems that he is radically changing his ideas and proposing that only the eight real attributes have external existence and are eternal (*qadim*), and the rest of the attributes have an existence that has no relationship with divine existence, and they are created by God in time i.e. newly-originated (*hadith*). This may be considered a modification of the Ibn ‘Arabi idea that no attribute exists externally and instead all are merely relationships that God has with the cosmos. However, I can say that with certainty only after further study, after I have analyzed his other *maktubs* on the nature of the attributes.

The Mujaddid now repudiates *zilliyat*, shadowism that he experienced and taught earlier:

The shadow of the Creator (*kbaliq*) Himself is not in any created thing. And except for the relationship of being created by God (*makbluqiyyat*), nothing has any other relationship with its Creator. However, there are such relationships as described in the Shariah [e.g. slavehood, needyness etc.].

So why did God give the Mujaddid the experience of *zilliyat*, when it was not the experience of the ultimate truth? Was there a benefit in it? The Mujaddid feels that perhaps there was a benefit– it led him step-by-step to the ultimate truth.

Knowing the cosmos as a shadow helps the wayfarer (*salik*) on this road in many ways. It drags him to the prototype [that is God].

Finally, the Mujaddid experiences the knowledge of the highest level–*‘abdiyyat* where he realizes that God is truly transcendent:

And when through the perfection (*kamal*) in divine grace (*‘inayat*), he travels through waystations that take him through the shadows (*manazil-i*

ẓilāl) and finally he arrives at the prototype (*asl*) [at what seems to be God], then through sheer divine bounty (*fadl*), he realizes that even this prototype [what seems to be God] has the same property (*ḥukm*) of the shadow and is not worthy (*shayan*) of being the “object that is being sought” (*matlub*) [which is God] as it is branded (*muttasim*) by the mark (*daḡb*) of contingency

Yes! There is no final knowledge about God because He’s beyond the range of human cognition. He is unknowable.

And the “object that is being sought” (*matlub*) [God] is beyond the range of perception, “arrival” and conjunction. (*idrak va wasl va ittisal*).

Our Lord! Give us mercy (*rahma*) from You and dispose of our affair for us in the right way! *Rabbana! Atina milladunka rahmatan wa hayyu’lana min amrina rashadan* (18:10).