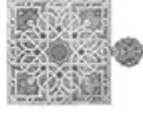


THE  
MUHYIDDIN IBN ARABI  
SOCIETY



© Muḥyiddīn Ibn ‘Arabī Society / the Author, 2019

# A Selection of Texts on the Theme of Praise from some Gnostic Works by Ibn al-‘Arabī

Gerald Elmore



**M**s. Ayasofya 4817 is one of several dozen splendid manuscript

collections of Ibn al-‘Arabī’s *rasā’il* to be found in Istanbul (and elsewhere) which merit the immediate attention of scholars in a position to prepare brief, serviceable descriptions for the use of fellow workers in the field of Sufi studies. [1] Copied by one Muhammad b. Muhammad al-Shirwani [2] – in Konya in 649 / 1251, around eleven years after the death of Ibn al-‘Arabī, it may well have been produced under the auspices of the Master’s chief disciple, Sadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī (d. 672 / 1274), since the cover-page features an inscription which appears to be in the latter’s distinctive handwriting: [3]

The contents of the manuscript in its present form include the following works of Ibn al-‘Arabī. [4]

1. *K. al-‘Abādilah* (r. g. 2), pp. 1–121. Signed by the copyist and dated the tenth of Ramadan, 649/27 Nov., 1251. [5]
2. *K. al-Shawāhid* (r. g. 689), pp. 122–37. Signed and dated *Laylat al-Qadr* of Ramadan, 649/14 Dec., 1251.
3. *K. Tāj al-tarājim fī ishārāt al-‘ilm wa-latā’if al-fahm* (r. g. 737), pp. 138–87. Signed and dated in Konya on the fifth of Sha’ban, 649/23 Oct., 1251. [6]
4. *Fi Ma’rifat al-asmā’ al-husna* (being Chapter 558 of the *Futūhāt al-makkiyah*), pp. 188–492. [7]

Each of these texts is already available in a printed edition, although that of the *K. al-‘Abādilah* (Cairo, 1969) is quite unreliable. [8] The *Shawāhid* and the *Tāj al-tarājim* may both be found in the valuable Hyderabad edition of *Ms. Asifiyah* 376 (1948), though Osman Yahia fails to note this of the former (perhaps since it appears under the variant title, *K. al-Shāhid*), and the final piece, on the gnosis of the Excellent Names [of God], is contained, of course, in the 1911, Cairo edition of the *Futūhāt*. [9] We will consider the nature of these particular writings and their interrelations in a moment, but first let us return briefly to *Ms. Ayasofya 4817* itself as a whole.

The codex is somewhat different from many other collections in that the four tractates comprising it are neither very brief nor, in their style of composition and contents, unrelated. Each text is divided into numerous separately-titled chapters, and, in the case of the first three, these sections are further

subdivided into many discrete, more or less abstruse *gnomae* and conundrums, counsels, instructions, intimations, quotations, and allusions, ranging from the apophthegmatic to the discursive. In many instances the subject-matter of these various divisions corresponds closely from treatise to treatise – sometimes, as we will have occasion to note, reflecting an identical undertext. At least in the case of the *‘Abādilah*, the *Shawāhid*, and the *Tarājim*, however, the salient quality of these writings remains their elusive inscrutability. Because of the suggestive rubrics subsuming the apparently discontinuous parts, the reader is put in a mind to search for threads of meaning uniting the scattered gems of insight, rather as a traveller on a stormy night might grope to follow a mountain path when it is briefly illuminated by sporadic flashes of lightning. [10]

My criterion for the selection of passages excerpted here is, in fact, based on the assumption that underlying themes or leitmotifs correlate portions of each of the four writings represented. Hence, when faced with the necessity of finding material on the topic of praise (*hamd*), [11] it occurred to me that *Ms. Ayasofya 4817* would be a good place to look.

Indeed, apart from any value that the present selection of texts might have in representing Ibn al-‘Arabī’s teachings on praise, it will demonstrate one viable method by which the enormous body of the Akbarian oeuvre may be tapped for resources, at the very least furnishing an organizing principle for presentation of partial translations. This may be particularly expedient in the case of such writings as those we are now considering, the fragmentary or atomistic nature of which will pose special challenges to their future translators.

The *K. al-‘Abādilah* is a lengthy collection of highly recondite sayings, or oracles, conceived as pronounced by one or another of ninety-six Sufi personages, each named *‘Abd al-Lāh* (hence the title, an irregular plural first applied to the four eminent Companions of that name mentioned in the Prophet’s biography), [12] and most of them further denominated as heirs of prophets (including such names as Samuel, Daniel, Elisha, Jirjis, Jābir, Ma’tūq, Mawhūb, Kāmil, and Shākir, etc.) and other servants of particular Divine Names (e.g. *‘Abd al-Hamīd* in the passage translated below). [13] In his preamble Ibn al-‘Arabī explains further that the saintly *‘Abd al-Lāh* in each case functions as the comprehensive ‘interpreter’ (*tarjumān*) of the other two prophetic personae added to his name, the ‘all-inclusive son’ (*ibn jāmi*), as it were, of a more ‘restricted father’ (*ab muqayyad*) – ‘for the correlation between fatherhood and sonship is common to the situation of sainthood, apostleship, and prophethood,’ he adds. [14] On the basis of a casual remark reportedly made in the book, [15] it would appear that it was composed in Damascus – that is, probably relatively late in the author’s career, at a time when he may have been contemplating the problem of the true interrelationship between *walāyah*, *nubūwah*, and *risālah*, a crucial issue which would receive its final resolution and definitive statement in the *Fusūs al-hikam*.

The relation between the next two books, the *Shawāhid* and the *Tarājim*, is quite interesting and calls for a closer examination from someone prepared to undertake the critical edition of both texts. [16] Many of the topics highlighted in the one (e.g. *sarf*, *‘ināyah*, *qaddā*, *qudrah*, *mirnnah*, *‘ibādah*, etc.) are also treated in the other, and, moreover, it is evident that one of the texts serves as a basis for its sister. As far as I know, no one has yet conjectured on the date or provenance of either treatise, but a thorough analysis of both texts would undoubtedly make evident which one was produced first. Once that determination has been made, speculation on the development of doctrines will be warranted. At this stage, indications are that the longer work, the *Tarājim*, may actually be the older. [17] Be that as it may, the two texts make

an interesting commentary on each other, although, unfortunately for our present purposes, the *Shawāhid* does not actually take up the subject of hamd.

Following the *K. al-Shawāhid*, on p. 137 of the manuscript, a quote from Ibn al-‘Arabī’s *K. al-Isfār ‘an natā’ij al-asfār* [18] is inscribed, possibly by the original copyist, which I will give here for its inherent interest:

I have heard from a group of the People of our Way that they can learn by heart (*yahfuzūna*) the Qur’ān or some verses thereof without being taught by a teacher (*mu’allim*) in the normal manner. Rather, [such a one] will find / experience it [the Qur’ān] in his heart, the Arabic written in the copies of the physical text of Scripture being articulated in his [own] language, even though it be non-Arabic (*a’jami*)! We have related from Abu Yazid al-Bistami that Abu Musa l-Dabīlī [19] said of him that he did not die before he had learned the Qur’ān by heart (*istazhara*) without any ordinary instruction.

The final tract contained in *Ayasofya 4817* is the very long, antepenultimate Chapter DLVIII of the *Futūhāt*, [20] which is styled an ‘Exposition (*sharh*) of the [Divine] Names’ in the colophon reproduced above. It consists of one-hundred sub-chapters devoted to the ‘presences’ (*hadarāt* = dignitates) of the ninety-nine canonical names of God, plus a concluding summa which represents the whole in cumulo. As one of the Divine names, *al-Hamīd*, provides Ibn al-‘Arabī with the natural occasion for a general discourse on the subject of praise, it would seem well to begin our reading with this text, which is certainly the most expository of those represented here. In the remainder of this article, all that is not enclosed in brackets comprises an unabridged translation of passages taken from the four works of Ibn al-‘Arabī making up *Ms. Ayasofya 4817*.

\* \* \* \* \*

[The sixty-eighth section of Chapter 558 of the *Meccan Revelations* is devoted to ‘the Praiseworthy’ (*al-Hamīd*), and the corollary ‘presence of praise’ (*hadrat al-hamd*). It opens the second half of Volume IV of the Cairo, 1911 edition of the *Futūhāt*:] [21]

### The Presence of Praise (*Hadrat Al-Hamd*) [22]

Thou art the Praiseworthy – a Name passive to our praising,  
and also active: Therefore, art Thou truly Praise-deserving

And One Who praises. [23] Hence, when we give to Him obeisance,  
He is the One Present for us; the heart, His place of presence,

Sans quality and quantity, and no comparison,  
as He cannot be circumscribed by any definition.

But, verily, I worship Him through myself – not through Him;  
for God deserves worship, and I, by God, do worship Him!

Truly, I know Him: If I to Him make some comparison,  
I do so, loosed or bound, [24] in accord with law and reason.

The adherent of [this Presence of Praise] is called ‘the Servant of the Praiseworthy’ (*‘Abd al-Hamīd*). [25] [Now the latter Name of God is in the grammatical form of] *fa’īl*, so that it embraces [the sense of] the active noun / adjective in its conventional indication as well as the passive noun / adjective, [26] for He is [both] the One Who Praises and the One praised (*al-Hamīd wa-l-Mahmūd*), to Whom all of the ultimate ends of commendation [27] return.

Muhammad [that is, 'he who is highly praised'] (May God bless and keep him!) has in his hand the Banner of Praise (*liwa' al-hamd*). [28] For to Adam (Upon whom be peace!) belongs the knowledge of the Names, [29] and to Muhammad (May God bless and keep him!) the knowledge of Commendation through Them ('ilm al-thana' bi-ha) [30] and the pronouncement of the Praiseworthy Station (*al-talaffuz bi-l-maqām al-mahmūd*). [31] Because of [his attainment of] the Praiseworthy Station, at the Resurrection [Muhammad] will be given action in accordance with knowledge (*al-'amal bi-l-'ilm*), [32] [that] not being granted to anyone other than him in that place, for [Muhammad] has lordship (*al-siyādah*). Thus,

Adam proclaimed: 'Everyone but him is beneath my banner.' [33] And [Muhammad] has no banner but [the one of] Praise, that being the returning of all the ultimate ends of commendation to God, as in His saying, 'Praise belongs to God' (*al-hamdu li-l-Lāh*) [34] and to no other! [For] in the [whole] world there is positively no expression (*lafz*) that does not give some evidence of commendation – I mean a fair commendation – although the source to which it is attributed is [only] God. [35]

For it must be that the commender commend either God or else another than God. But if he praises God, he praises One who is pre-eminently deserving of Praise (*ahl al-hamd*), while if he praise another than God, then he only praises him for those praiseworthy characteristics (*nu'ūt al-mahāmid*) which are in him, such characteristics [simply] being those which God has freely bestowed upon him and in the possession of which He brought him into existence, either in his inherent nature (*jibillatu-hu*) or in his cultivated character (*takhalluqu-hu*). [In either case, these characteristics] will be acquired by him (*muktasabah la-hu*), and, in any event, they are from God.

The Real (*al-Haqq*) is a Mine of every good and beautiful thing. Hence, the ultimate issue of the commendation of a created thing for those praiseworthy qualities reverts to One Who originated them – that being God – for there is none [truly] praiseworthy except God. And there is no expression having any blameworthy aspect (*madhmūm*) except it have [also] one which is praiseworthy. [36] Insofar as it is praiseworthy, it reverts to God; but inasmuch as it is blameworthy, no valuation of it [can be made], because the foundation of blameworthiness (*mustanad al-dhamm*) is non-existent, so that it fails to meet with anything related [to it], and, hence, it disappears, leaving [only] praise for Him to Whom it belongs. Thus, to this specific expression no aspect will remain except that of praise after the Unveiling [of Truth] (*al-kashf*), the aspect of blameworthiness vanishing – that is, it becomes manifest regarding it that there is no [abiding] aspect of blameworthiness. [37]

On the very day that I was recording the present [chapter on the] Presence [of Praise] in this book I was informed by our companion, Sayf al-Din, the son of the [late Ayyubid] prince, 'Aziz [38] (May God have mercy on him!), that he saw the Governor of the province [39] beating a man severely. He [Sayf al-Din] was standing amongst a group of people, and in his mind he was expressing contempt for the Governor because of his beating that person, [such that] he became abstracted from himself. And he beheld the Governor [in a vision, perceiving] his likeness (*mithlu-hu*) as a person in the crowd looking upon the man being beaten, just as the crowd was seeing him, and [in the vision] the commissioner of the beating was not the Governor. Then [lo and behold, the Governor actually] forgave [the man in reality] and, comforting him, he went on his way.

The occasion of this story was [that] Governor's having treated [Sayf al-Din] wrongfully in a matter of law. So I advised him: 'Bring him before the Sultan.' [40] But he said to me: 'The Governor is of no account.' Then he told me what he had seen, and, thus, was the matter in regard to himself [Sayf al-Din]. For

this is a person who had in the [state of] Veiling [from the Truth] (*al-hijāb*) attributed injustice to the Governor, but when God removed the obstruction from his sight, the existence of that [quality in the Governor] ceased to be as injustice in his view, and it arose as his forgiveness of the oppressor. [41] [His evaluation] turned to praise and the commendation of goodness, and ‘the courtyard of him who had been censured became free [of blame].’ [42]

But the ultimate ends of commendation return to God (To Him be Glory and Greatness!). Do you not see Him Who says: ‘O people, you are [all] in need of God (*al-fuqara’ ila’ l-Lāh*) [43] and, truly, He is ‘in need’ of a ‘blameworthy’ and a ‘praiseworthy’, coming under [all of] that which is called by the Name of God (*musamma l-Lāh*) [44]. Then He declared: And God is the One Who is Free of all want (*al-Ghani*) [45] – the One Who does not have any need – ‘the Praiseworthy (*al-Hamīd*)’ [46] – that is, He to Whom [all of] the ultimate ends of commendation from the praiser and the one praised (*al-hamīd wa-l-mahmūd*) return. If He be ‘blameworthy’ in a certain relation, He is praiseworthy in a more potent relation having validity concerning Him. [47]

‘The “Praise be to God” (*al-hamdu li-l-Lāh*) will fill the Scales,’ [48] because everything that is in the Scales is the Commendation of God and Praise for God. Nothing fills the Scales except for Praise [of God]: Glorification (*al-tasbih*) is Praise, and so, too, are the pronouncements that ‘There is no God but God’ (*al-tahlīl*), that ‘God is the Greatest’ (*al-takbīr*), that He is All-Glorious (*al-tamjīd*), All-Powerful (*al-ta’zīm*), Most-Worthy of Honor (*al-tawqīr*), and Most-Venerable (*al-ta’zīz*), and all such [superlative perfections] are Praise. Thus, the ‘Praise be to God’ is the [most] general [expression], than which there is no more general, and everything (that might be) mentioned is but a part of it, like a man’s bodily members, while Praise is like the man in his entirety.

Now, thus, is Praise made clear to you,  
that blame be not a veil to you;

And the Secret has appeared to you,  
by silence unconcealed! [49]

The Presence [of Praise] comprises three modes as to completeness and perfection (*al-tamām wa-l-kamāl*). One of [these modes] is the most complete, and that is the ‘Praise of the Praising One’ (*hamd al-hāmid*) Himself. [50] [This mode] carries a certain degree of likelihood, but that perfection [above-mentioned] does not accrue to it, since it is dependent on the context of the existential condition (*qarīnat hal*) [of the person reciting the scripture?] and upon a knowledge which the Praising One has sanctioned concerning the Praise with which He has praised Himself. [51] And, in truth, one who gives a description might describe [52] himself in terms which are not really in accordance with him. [53] The same is true when another than he praises him. [This second mode of Praise] also carries [only] a certain degree of likelihood until that [mere potentiality] is opened up [to reveal the whole Truth], for it falls short of the [highest] degree of clarity and realization (*darajāt al-ibānah wa-l-tahqīq*).

The third [mode of] Praise is the ‘praise of Praise’ (*hamd al-hamd*) [itself]. [54] Of the forms of praise (*al-mahamid*) there is none more true than [this mode], [55] for, indeed, it is the Essence of the execution of the Attribute [of Praise] (‘*ayn qiyām al-sifah bi-hi*’), as there is nothing (truly) praised except One [thus] praised by Praise – not One who praises Himself nor One praised by another. If the Essence of the attribute is the Essence of the one attributing (*al-wāsif*) [and] the Essence of the one attributed to (*al-mawsūf*), then Praise is the Essence of the One Who praises and the One Who is praised – and [These are] none other than God, for He is the Essence of His Praise (‘*ayn*



hamdi-hi), regardless of whether that Praise is referred to Him or to another. [56]

There is naught but God. So praise, and speak with no deception;  
and do not think of Praise as an existence or creation,  
But contemplate Praise of the Real in every expression;  
forsooth, in every act of praise to Him is elevation.  
Whoe'er attains this Knowledge attains a [high] Position  
provided by his Lord, the 'Confirmed Accommodation'. [57]  
[So] hasten to this Station in [the zeal of] resolution  
with the angelic 'Noble Racers' [58] unto His Laudation.  
It must be that in His Creation thy Lord make partition:  
one must be most pious and another a great villain.  
[The Knowledge] [59] came in Scripture's text, a written composition,  
one Night most holy: Contemplate that true Articulation!  
For, verily, the Book of God gives lucid expression  
to that which the Compassionate set down in His Creation;  
And plain Knowledge was clarified for him of comprehension,  
whether you will to go down or rise up [to Salvation]!

Praise be to God, the Giver of benefits, the Bestower of favours (*al-Mun'im al-Mufdil*)! And praise be to God in every situation, for He acts [both] generally and particularly (*'amma wa-khassa*). 'God ever speaks the Truth, and He guides on the Way! [60]

\* \* \* \* \*

I. [In Ibn al-'Arabi's the *K. al-'Abādilah*, or 'Book of 'Abd al-Lāhs', the thirty-ninth of 96 chapters is devoted to a wali servant of God who functions as an heir and executant oracle (*tarjumān*) of a *nabi* symbolically named 'Muhammad' and a *rasūl* called 'Abd al-Hamīd (the 'servant of the Praise-worthy'). [61] By virtue of the latter orientation, the *tarjumān*'s cryptic enunciations may be interpreted as adverting to Ibn al-'Arabi's doctrine of praise, of which we have an exposition in the preceding text from the *Futūhāt*. It is the very tenuousness of the logical connection between these pronouncements and their putative significance vis-a-vis the various Divine 'presences' (or *hadarāt* – in this case, that of praise) which lends this peculiar gnomic genre its dynamic power as a teaching device:] [62]

#### *'Abd Allah B. Muhammad B. 'Abd al-Hamīd*

Said [the Servant of God]: The Sufi is the child of his moment (*ibn waqti-hi*), and the Man [of God] (*al-rajul*) is one whom no existence (*kawn*) can embrace. [63]

He said [also]: The Man [of God] is one who passes by the moments, they do not pass by him. He is one who passes judgement, not one upon whom judgement is passed; he is a knower, not one who is known.

He said: The Man [of God] is not one who, [even] if he should pray all alone in a waterless desert, would depart from his prayer and innumerable thousands of angels would depart with him; rather, the Man [of God] is one who departs from his prayer and he departs, so that no one accompanies him. [64]

He said: The Man [of God] is one who oscillates in his Gnosis between sadness and joy, in his affirmation of Divine Unity between intimacy and estrangement, in his Worship between pure [i.e. non-dualistic] devotion [of God, to God] (*ikhlas*) and associative [i.e. dualistic] devotion (of the worshipper to God) (*shirk*), [65] in his social Conduct between good manners and indecency, in his Fear [of God] between union and separation, [66] in his

Perception between those impressions which he acquires as his own and that which is graciously bestowed by God, [67] in his Patience between (the experience of) ease and affliction, in his Thankfulness between [awareness of God's] benefaction and retribution, in his Contentment between effort and [resignation to] fate, in his Love [68] between sincerity and deceit, in his Prayer between desire and fear, and in his Faith between negation and affirmation. [69]

He said: Verily, among the Servants of God is one whose eyes are opened and they behold nothing but God: and his hearing [is opened], and he hears nothing but the Speech of God; and his tongue [is loosed], and he speaks only [the word of] God; but despite this, the Man [of God] is not capable of doing all of that [by himself], for, indeed, those are [only] the results of [his engaging in] the Supererogatory Acts (*natā'ij al-zawā'id*). [70]

He said: He whose Supererogatory Action (*nāfilatu-hu*) is genuine has become perfect.

He said: Gnosis and happiness do not ever come together in anyone as long as he is in the World, while Gnosis and sorrow do not ever come together in anyone in the After-life. [71]

He said: As long as the spiritual Man is in this World he is on the verge of danger [72] – if only it would reach whatever [degree] it might reach – because it is the Abode of Deception and Alteration (*dār al-makr wa-l-tabdil*), [73] and rejoicing therein is blameworthy on account of the lack of realization of its [actual] causes from all aspects. [74] But when we have proceeded to the Abode of Distinction and Rectification (*dār al-tamyīz wa-l-takhlīs*), [75] and [when] the two assemblies have presented themselves and the two companies been distinguished, [76] and [when] he who became established [77] became established in [God's] Grace and Mercy – then [and only then] is happiness confirmed for him. The Servant here shall [indeed] be granted [God's] Mercy and Grace, [78] [but] he is prevented from taking pleasure in them by that which yet remains unknown as to the undertaking to meet all of their claims, so that one is not free to enjoy [God's favours] because of the heart's preoccupation with performing [all of] their requirements. But there [in the After-life] it is not so. So how can the Gnostic be gladdened by Gnosis here [in this World] when the affair is as we have described?

And he said: The Men of God do not have any spiritual aspiration (*himmah*) or concern; [79] nor [do they have] intent (*niyah*), or will (*irādah*) or resolution ('*azm*). [80]

And [finally] he said: The one whose worship is 'associative' [sc. dualistic] (*al-mushrik* [lit., 'the polytheist']) is commanded to worship God with pure [non-dualistic] devotion (*mukhlisan*), but the one whose Worship is not so [is commanded] simply to worship Him.

\* \* \* \* \*

III. [The following suite of enigmatic dicta comprise the twenty-ninth of 69 chapters from Ibn al-'Arabi's *Tāj al-tarājim* (The Crown of the Rubrics), [81] entitled 'The Praise of the [Divine] King'. Here the leitmotif of multiplicity and fragmentation healed by the unifying power of Divine Mercy (reflected in man's patient receptivity to Reality) pervades each of the separate passages. The connection (if any) with our topic of praise is so exceedingly subtle, however, that it can only be teased out with reference to another Akbarian text taken from the fifth chapter of the *Futūhāt*, which I have translated in the companion-article to this, cited earlier. [82] In the meantime, at least, the reader may prefer to doubt that there is any connection at all.] [83]



## The Praise of the [Divine] King (*Hamd Al-Malik*) [84]

### A Subtle Allusion [85]

There is no station which combines two Mercies following upon two Mercies [86] except for this Station [of the Praise of the King] [87] and the Station of the All-comprehensive Majesty {*maqām al-‘azamah al-jāmi’ah*). The Mercy of Summarization (*rahmat al-ijmāl*) has precedence, [88] and the Mercy of Particularization (*rahmat al-tafsīl*) is consequent. [89] A notice of this Station occurs in the Qur’ān, for first is the *Basmalah* in the Opening *Sūrah*, then comes the mention of [the Divine Names] the Merciful and the Compassionate (*al-Rahmān al-Rahīm*) [following the *Hamdalah*] [90] and after the *Basmalah* in [Sūrah XLI, sometimes called] *Hā’ – Mīm al-Sajdah* [also] comes the mention of the Merciful and the Compassionate. [91]

Something which is similar to that occurs [in the *Basmalah* itself,] ‘In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate’: ‘The Merciful has made known the Qur’ān,’ [92] that which descends (*al-nuzūl*) into the Hearts of His faithful servants which suffice to contain Him. [93] For [the Merciful, as well as the Qur’ān] is a Descending from Him to Him [sc. to the Heart of His servant which contains Him]. [94] So understand! and contemplate, O Traveller, [95] the Sign-posts which the Real raises up for you in accordance with [the nature of] your path to Him, and traverse [your way], Sign-post by Signpost, until you arrive [at Him]! [96]

### A Subtle Allusion

Most of the general ranks of Sufis imagine that the Real does not call forth from them anything but their Subtle-spirits (*latā’ifu-hum*), for they do not realize the value of the Outer components (*al-zawāhir*). [97] They are preoccupied with sanctifying the exalted Subtle-spirits (*al-latā’if al-‘ulwiyah*) [98] by means of intellectual cognitions, [99] but the Real is quite different from what they believe Him to be, because He calls them in their entirety (*bi-kulliyati-him*), [100] while [in the event] the manner of calling differs with the difference of the one called, for the one who is called through sight is not called through hearing, and the one who is called by such a means is not called by such another, but he who answers [the call] in a single [manner only], apart from others [101] – his answer (*ijābatu-hu*) is not accepted.

Say the Men of this Station: [102] ‘There is nothing but grave sin (*kabīrah*) [in such a conditioned response].’ Verily, the cause of offense thereby is one, and there is no way to disobey the command. But the breach of inviolability is a grave sin, though the punishment be lightened and [even] eliminated. [103]

### Spiritual Counsel [104]

O Traveller, there is not a part of you except it is knowing [and] endowed with speech (*‘ālim nātiq*). So do not let the captivation of your hearing conceal its speech from you, and do not say: ‘On a day when I will be by myself . . .’ You shall not be by yourself, but, rather, you will be in a multiplicity of yourself ‘on a Day when their tongues and their hands and their feet shall testify against them,’ [105] and they cry out to their skins: ‘Why do you testify against us?’ [106]

### A Subtle Allusion

You have not been inspired as to the Knowledge of the [bodily members] being animated (*‘ilm al-ikhtilāj*) unless you know that they [the bodily members] have articulation (*al-nutq*) even though you cannot sense it. [107]

Be with each one in accordance with his nature, [and] he will be with you.  
[108]

\* \* \* \* \*

V. [Ibn al-‘Arabī explains at the beginning of his *K. al-Shawāhid*]: ‘This is a book containing the Divine Knowledges and Lordly Instructions which the Witnessings of the Real (*Shawāhid al-Haqq*) [109] produce in the heart in the language of

Wisdom and Judgement. These Witnessings are what continue in the heart of the servant after [his] disengaging from the station of sense-perception, rapture overtaking [the heart] in the case of the Gnostics, so that the Colloquy [of the Real] oscillates among them between their [sensual] existence and their [supersensual] existence.’ [110]

[In this book the Shaykh has not written on praise specifically, but he did address the related subject of ‘worship’ (*‘ibādah*) – related because, like praise, worship is of two sorts: the ordinary, dualistic worship (involving the ‘distance’ of separation between servant and Lord) of the exoteric lip-servers of God; and the monistic worship of the true Sufis, partakers of God, in which Lordship is one with Servanthood.] [111]

### The Witness Of Worship (*Shahid al-‘Ibadah*) [112]

Said the Witness (*al-Shāhid*) [relating to Worship]: To you there is recollection and supplication (*al-dhikr wa-l-du‘a*) [113] and to the Real there is Recollection and Supplication. For when you recollect Him, He recollects you; and when you call to Him, ‘O Lord!’ – He calls to you, ‘O Servant!’ And when you say: ‘Grant to me. . .!’ – He says to you: ‘Loan to Me...!’ [114]

Said [the Witness]: Supplication is worship, recollection is Lordship (*al-siyādah*). For he who supplicates Him arrives at Him and enters unto Him, but he who recollects Him is [already there] with Him (*‘inda-hu*). [115]  
Supplication is a call (*nidā*’), and calling is a remoteness.

He said: Your self (*nafsu-ka*) [116] has a right (*haqq*) over you; so supplicate the Real (*al-Haqq*) for Paradise on behalf of your self. And recollect [the Real] to [your self], [117] for Recollection belongs to God [Himself] and Supplication to that which is with God.

He said: Were it not for those who have gone astray (*al-sharidun*), the Real would not have sent the Caller (*al-munadi*) [118] keeping the ways for them, that they might return to Him.

He said: (There is) one who strays from Light to darkness [119] and one who ‘strays’ from darkness to Light, and one who ‘strays’ from light to Light and one who strays from darkness to darkness. ‘And to God belongs a People (*qawm*) who behold Him in everything,’ [120] so that they do not stray from thing to thing at all.

[To put these final paragraphs in the familiar context of Christian teaching: When the pagan woman of Canaan besought Jesus to heal her sick daughter, he at first shunned her, saying ‘I am not sent except to the lost sheep of Israel.’ ‘Then she came and worshipped him, saying, “Lord, help me.” But he answered: “It is not right to take the childrens’ bread and cast it to dogs.” And she said: “Truth, Lord, yet the dogs eat of the crumbs that fall from their masters’ table.” Then Jesus answered her: “O woman, great is your faith. May it be as you will.” And her daughter was healed from that moment.’ [121]

Similarly, the prophetic 'Caller' has only the duty to summon from a distance – 'from darkness to Light' (as in the case of the pagan Arabs who answered the call to Islam), and 'from light to Light' (as the Christians and Jews who acknowledged the new dispensation); while those who reject the Call, whether People of the Book or pagan Arabs, are thereby cast into darkness. But the true Saints, 'who behold God in everything,' are like the Canaanite woman who understood by faith that no more than a taste of the Real is needed to recall that All is Real.]

The colophon of *Ms. Ayasofya 4817*, listing the works of Ibn al-ʿArabī originally contained in the manuscript (photocopy courtesy of the Sulemaniye Library, Istanbul).

Gerald Elmore, *Journal of the Muhyiddin Ibn Arabi Society*, Volume XXIII, 1998.

[1] I would like to express my gratitude to the Süleymaniye Library in Istanbul for permission to reproduce the colophon printed on page 59.

[2] Or, perhaps, al-Sharawāni. I know nothing of him other than that he was a careful and diligent copyist, writing in a clear *Naskhi* style, partially unpointed. The entire manuscript, even in its present, reduced form, is nearly five hundred pages long (with 17 to 19 lines per page).

[3] Compare this script with the sample of al-Qūnawī's handwriting in Figure 3 of my article, 'Sadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī's Study-list of Books by Ibn al-'Arabī', in the *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, 56:3 (July, 1997), p. 170 (in particular compare the word *al-'Abādilah*, in both inscriptions). The register of contents in the note evidently represents an earlier binding of the codex, since the *Hilyat al-abdāl* and *Istilāhāt al-sūfiyah* are listed between the third and fourth titles of the present arrangement as outlined below. Also, the *khutbah* and opening poem of the *Futūhāt al-makkiyah* originally closed the collection.

[4] R. g. numbers refer to the répertoire général of Osman Yahia's *Histoire et classification de l'oeuvre d'Ibn 'Arabī*, Damascus, 1964.

[5] It may be noted that the political situation in central Anatolia was quite unstable at this time. In 649/1251 the former Saljuqid kingdom came under the effective control of the Mongols.

[6] In the margin of the last page is a note indicating that the Shaykh (= Sadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī?) had approved the reading of the manuscript thus far.

[7] Not signed or dated (the last folio is missing).

[8] Based on two manuscripts found in the Egyptian Dār al-Kutub and Azhar libraries, it contains many interpolations which were probably originally marginal glosses by a commentator. The editor, 'Abd al-Qādir Ahmad 'Atā, was a student of mahmūd Qasim, author of a series of monographs on aspects of Ibn al-'Arabī's teachings published in Cairo in the 1960s and 1970s. Pablo Beneito and Su'ād al-Hakim are currently working on a critical edition of the *'Abādilah*.

[9] *Fut.*, IV, 196-326.

[10] Cf. Q.2: 19-20.

[11] For the paper, '*Hamd al-Hamd: The Paradox of Praise in Ibn al-'Arabī's Doctrine of Oneness*', which was read at the fourteenth annual symposium of the Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabī Society at Oxford, in 1997, and is included in the *Praise* special issue (Oxford, 1997, pp. 59-93). It goes without saying that the sampling of texts which I offer here is surely not exhaustive of the subject of praise as treated in Ibn al-'Arabī's entire body of works, nor even in the *Futūhāt* alone.

[12] See Yahia, *Histoire et classification*, p. 140.

[13] There are several notable exceptions to this general scheme.

[14] *K. al-'Abādilah*, p. 39. This is an allusion to Ibn al-'Arabī's paradigm of *walāyah-nubūwah-risālah*, in which the former comprehends the latter, more restricted categories (see R. W. J. Austin, trans., *The Bezels of Wisdom*, New York, 1980, pp. 165-71, et al.).

[15] See the editor's preface, p. 36.

[16] Or simply an analytic comparison (a good thesis topic).

[17] While the *Shawāhid* precedes the *Tarājim* in *Ayasofya* 4817, this order is reversed in several other manuscripts, including the very precious Mss. *Yusuf Aga* 4868 and *Carullah* 986. Moreover, the *Tarājim* is listed two titles before the *Shawāhid* in Ibn al-‘Arabī’s *ijazah li-l-Malik al-Muzaffar* (see ‘A. R. Badawi, ‘Autobiografia de Ibn ‘Arabī’, in *Al-Andalus*, 20, 1955, 123, nos. 51 and 53). Whereas both ‘Awwad and ‘Afifi have the *Tarājim* immediately after the ‘*Abādilah* in their printed editions of the *Fihrist*, the fact is that none of the best manuscript sources of the latter appear to mention either the *Tarājim* or the *Shawāhid* at all.

[18] R.g. 307. This work is also contained in the Hyderabad edition of the *Rasā’il*, and has recently been critically edited and translated by Denis Gril (*Le Dévoilement des effets du voyage*, Combas, 1994).

[19] Or al-Dubayli.

[20] It takes up nearly a quarter of the fourth volume (see n. 9).

[21] *Fut.*, IV, 286–7.

[22] The metre of the opening poem is *al-Basit*.

[23] Literally, these lines read: Thou art the *Hamīd*, a name to be understood [both] as passive (*maf’ūl*) by virtue of our being one who praises [= *li-kawni-nā hāmīdan*]/and as active (*fa’il*). Therefore, Thou art One Who is praised (*Mahmūd*) / and One Who praises (*Hāmīd*).’ The entire poem makes use of such grammatical word-play, which is less awkward in the original Arabic but hardly more felicitous. Most of the verse functioning as topical preludes or overtures to the divisions of the *Futūhāt* is purely didactic, no more and no less.

[24] That is, absolutely and contingently.

[25] Cf. the selection from the *K. al-‘Abādilah*, translated below.

26 Technically, this is quite true of the form, *fa’il* (e.g. as in *shahid*), which may be active in meaning (as *Rahīm*, *basīr*, *jalīl*, etc.) or passive (as *majid*, *qatīl*, *walīd*, etc.). In the case of *hamīd*, however, the active sense is not commonly attested.

[27] ‘*Awāqib al-thanā*’. In my translation I have arbitrarily distinguished between ‘praise’ (*hamd*) and ‘commendation’ (*thanā*). While ‘commendation’ may seem rather too insipid, it is the case that Ibn al-‘Arabī understands *thanā*’ to be a more general term than *hamd*.

[28] Cf. al-Tirmidhī, *Manāqib*, 1; Ibn Mājah, *Zuhd*, 37; Ibn Hanbal, *Al-Musnad*, Vol. I, pp. 281, 295, and Vol. II, p. 144; and al-Dārimī, *Muqaddimah*, 8.

[29] That is, the names of all creatures, according to the common understanding of Q. 2: 31, but here Ibn al-‘Arabī obviously has in mind the Sufi interpretation that the reference is to the names (= attributes) of God.

[30] Not praise of Them (‘*alay-hā*’), but by means of Them, through Their agency (*bi-hā*). This is perhaps the ‘action in accordance with knowledge’ mentioned in the next sentence.

[31] Cf. Q. 17: 79. In ‘Abd al-Razzāq al-Qāshānī’s *Tafsīr* (wrongly ascribed to Ibn al-‘Arabī in the Beirut, 1981 edn.), the Qur’ānic *maqām mahmūd* is glossed as ‘the station of the Seal of sainthood (*maqām khatm al-walāyah*) with the appearance of the Mahdī’ (Vol. I, p. 728). It is not clear precisely what Ibn al-‘Arabī means to signify here by *talaffuz* (‘pronouncement, enunciation,

articulation', etc.). Perhaps the idea is something akin to the Prophet's praise of the Lord with 'a new song' in the passage quoted in 'Hamd al-hamd: The Paradox of Praise in Ibn al-'Arabī's Doctrine of Oneness', *Praise*, p. 67 (at n. 25).

[32] In al-Dārimi's section on *al-'amal bi-l-'ilm* in the introduction to his *Sunan*, 1970 edn., pp. 79–80 seq., the following *hadith qudsī* is related: 'God said (Be He exalted!): "It is not all of the speech of the Wiseman (*kalām al-hakim*) that I will accept, but, rather, I receive his intention and his inclination (*hammu-hu wa-hawā-hu*); and if these are in obedience to Me, then I make his silence to be praise of Me and reverence (*hamd li wa-waqār*), even though he speak not.'"

[33] See al-Tirmidhī, *Manāqib*, 1; and Ibn Hanbal, *Musnad*, Vol. I, pp.281, 295.

[34] These are actually the first words of the Qur'ān (following the formulaic *basmalah*), in which they frequently recur.

[35] The same point is made again below. Every declaration of meaning implies some positive valuation, though the ultimate attribution may apply only to the ideal, or absolute. For example, the condemnation of injustice in one's enemy or in the government or society implies the recognition of justice on a higher plane, ultimately applicable to God. Similarly, commendation of the beauty of one's beloved or children can only truly be attributed to their Creator (or, rather, their Beholder, the Divine Self).

[36] Even as nothing is truly good except God, so nothing is purely evil.

[37] Here we have the standard theodicy of Neoplatonists such as Plotinus and Augustine, for whom God is pure Goodness and evil is simply the privation thereof.

[38] This is presumably the son of al-Malik al-'Adil I, al-'Aziz, the prince of Banyas, who died outside Damascus in 630 /1233 (see Abu Shamah, *Tarājim rijāl al-qarnayn al-sādis wa-l-sābi'*, Beirut, 1974, p. 161). Ibn al-'Arabī wrote a poem eulogizing him on the occasion of his death (see the 1855 Bulaq edn. of the *Diwān*, p. 238).

[39] *Wāli al-balad*. The latter might signify little more than a township.

[40] Ibn al-'Arabī was living in Damascus at the time of writing this passage, so probably the ruler referred to here is al-Malik al-Ashraf Muzaffar al-Dīn (626–35 /1229–37), to whom he granted an honorary *ijāzah* for all of his writings (see Yahia, r. g. 269).

[41] Ibn al-'Arabī offers this anecdote as an illustration of how blameworthiness gives way to praiseworthiness. Note that, the way the story is presented, it is Sayf al-Dīn's (the beholder's) perception of reality that is changed in the vision, leading to the consequent behaviour modification. This is about as gnostic as ethics can become.

[42] Waste and ordure were often thrown in the courtyard (*sāhah* = '*adhirah*) of private homes, so that the proverb, 'Verily, he is clear in respect of the courtyard,' came to signify one who was free of the taint of blame.

[43] This is the first part of Q.35:15, the second clause of which is quoted below.

[44] As the most comprehensive name of God, all of creation can be regarded as the manifestation of the name, *al-Lāh*. In this sense, God could be said to be 'in need' of the full complement of His creation. Also, Ibn al-'Arabī often makes the point that the positively virtuous (e.g. the praiseworthy, the one



praised) logically requires its antithesis (the blameworthy; the one who praises) in order to be what it is.

[45] It is interesting to compare Q. 35:15-16 and 47: 38 in the context of this discussion. In both cases, creation's poverty and need (*iftiqār*) of God is indicated in its absolute contingency and dependence on the One Who is free of all want (= the necessary Being).

[46] This is the remainder of Q. 35:15, begun above. The Divine name, *al-Ghani*, is frequently paired with *al-Hamīd* in the Scripture (e.g. see Q. 22:64).

[47] Perhaps the idea is that God can be said to have the quality of blameworthiness in the sense that, as the Praiseworthy, our understanding of Him is dependent on that complement. As Ibn al-ʿArabī has explained above, however, this negative quality later falls away with the removal of the veil of ignorance.

[48] *Tamlāʾu l-mizāna* (see Muslim, *Tahārah*, 1; and al-Tirmidhī, *Duʿaʾ*, 85; *et al.*). The tradition continues: 'And the "Glory be to God" and the "Praise be to God" fill up all that is between the heavens and the earth.' The original purport of the first clause, of course, was that the *hamdalah* will weigh heavily against innumerable shortcomings on the Day of Judgement. Ibn al-ʿArabī, however, here interprets the phrase ontologically.

[49] The metre is the antispast, al-Hajaz.

[50] As when God praises Himself in the Scripture. ʿAli b. Muhammad al-Jurjānī calls this *al-hamd al-qawli* in his *Taʾrifāt* (s.v.).

[51] Following *Ms. Ayasofya 4817*, p. 397, which has *hamida* for the last verb instead of *hadda*, as in the 1911 edn. (the second reading is also quite tenable, however). The point seems to be that not only is God's praise of Himself in the Scripture objectively defined in terms of the total context of the revealed law, its interpretation is also subjectively conditioned on the receiving end by man's limited capacity to understand.

[52] The verb, *wasafa*, also means 'to praise'.

[53] As when God describes Himself analogically as having anthropomorphic members or human feelings.

[54] Ibn al-ʿArabī begins his *K. al-ʿAbādilah* with the benediction: *Al-hamdu li-l-Lāhi bi-hamdi l-hamdi, fa-inna-hu awfa, wa-la-hu l-maqāmu l-akhlasu l-asfa*. The latter expression probably refers to the *maqām mahmūd* of Q17: 79. On the notion of the *hamd al-hamd*, see the article cited in n. 31.

[55] Despite what was said above about the first mode of praise being 'the most complete', it is clear that the third mode, the *hamd al-hamd*, is the most perfect in Ibn al-ʿArabī's doctrine, which I would attempt to explicate in the following manner: Inasmuch as God is the only true Object of praise, His praise of Himself in the Scripture may be termed the objective *hamd al-Mahmūd*, whereas praise of Him by another is 'subjective', the *hamd al-Hāmid*. The first mode would obviously be superior to the second, but both have the inherent defect of being dualistic, with a separation of subject and Object of praise (since the first mode is reflexive), and the space of separation inevitably allows for opportunities of distortion. The only perfect mode of praise is that wherein there is no polarity of subject-object and the act of praise is immediate and inerrable. Ultimately, I think, Ibn al-ʿArabī's doctrine of praise leads to a restatement of Abu Yazid al-Bistami's *Subhān-ī* (Glory be to Me!) and al-Hallaj's *Anā l-Haqq* (I am the Real), as I have argued in the article cited at the end of n. 31.

[56] The metre of the following poem is *al-Tawil*.

[57] *Al-munzal al-sidq* (or *al-sadq*). This is an allusion to the *maq'ad sidq* (sure abode) of Q. 54; 55.

[58] *Al-sābiqāt al-ghurr* (cf. Q. 79:4).

[59] That is, the knowledge mentioned in the third verse.

[60] Q. 33: 4. This is a verse with which Ibn al-‘Arabī frequently closes chapters in his writings. The implication is clearly that God ‘ever speaks the Truth’ through him, as well.

[61] The printed edition of the K. *al-‘Abādilah* (Cairo, 1969) also has the fifty-first section named after an ‘*Abd al-Hamīd*, but this is a misreading for ‘*Abd al-Majid*. (Some of the servant-names do occur more than once, however, and many of the prophet-names are repeated.)

[62] The translation is based on Ms. *Ayasofya 4817*, pp. 52–3. The printed edition of the ‘*Abādilah* (hereafter, C) contains a number of interpolations, which I will give in the footnotes. The present passage can be found on pp. 125–7 of C.

[63] *Lā yatabannā-hu* : ‘cannot adopt him as a son’. This I take to be a caveat lector that the Sufi servant of God, the ‘universal [= infinite] son’ (*ibn jāmi*) of a particular ‘definitized father’ (*ab muqayyad*), will not be patronized by the normative exoteric interpretation of the Prophet’s message.

[64] This sentence is garbled in C. It was not considered appropriate to leave a mosque in the company of others, as though one’s prayer had not been with God alone. Again, this image continues the theme of the preceding two maxims, showing the man of God as the child of Him alone.

[65] *Shirk*, of course, is the standard theological term for ‘polytheism, idolatry’, the association of a partner (*sharik*) with God, and, as such, Ibn al-‘Arabī’s use of the term here to denote the worship of God by the (separate) worshipper is quite provocative, to say the least. See also the last paragraph of this section.

[66] *Jam’ wa-farq*. The Sufi fears (maintains due respect for) God both in his state of union with and separation from Him.

[67] Both terms, *kasb* and *minnah*, denote acquisitions from God, but the first is specifically conceived as having been bestowed indirectly, through ‘natural causative’ agents, allowing for some degree of subjectivity and, hence, moral liability.

[68] C has *hayatu-hu* (his life) instead of *hubbu-hu*.

[69] The twelve *maqāmāt* listed here are: *ma’rifah*, *tawhid*, ‘*ibādah*, *mu’āmalah*, *khawf*, *mushāhadah*, *sabr*, *shukr*, *ridā*, *hubb*, *du’ā*, and *imān*. The point of this passage, in which the full range of participation, positive and negative, in the various stations is attributed in general to the Sufi, is simply to indicate that such conditional moral gradations have no defining value for the spiritual individual who is the fulfilment of his deepest essence at any given moment and who has no interest in the lateral relations of the past and future.

[70] This refers to the well-known *hadith qudsī* : ‘My Servant does not cease coming closer to Me through the Supererogatory Acts (*al-nawāfil*) until I love him. And if I love him, then t become his hearing, . . . his seeing, . . . etc.’ (see al-Bukhārī, *Riqqā*, 38).

[71] C adds: 'But were it not for God's commandment that man be burdened [with moral liability] (*al-takfif*), gnosis and happiness would occur [together] in the world.'

[72] C adds: 'Because the Divine-legal command addresses him in terms of the acceptance of the legal burden (*al-taklīf*), which is action in every condition.'

[73] C adds: '... even if he be happy, because decorum (*al-adab*) would prevent him.'

[74] In such a morally incomprehensible world, made up of shades of grey, mirth is mere folly (cf. *Eccl.*, 7:4).

[75] That is, the Other-world, where the essentially good and evil are distinguished and the external conditions of both are rectified in accordance with justice.

[76] These are the two parties of the blessed and the damned on the Day of Judgement.

[77] The verb here is *insabagha*, which apparently has the sense of *tasabbagha* (see Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon*, s.v.). *Sibghah* : 'dye, tint, colouring; religion'.

[78] C has omitted the last clause, and has otherwise garbled the whole sentence.

[79] C has *himmatu mawlā-hum* (? 'the aspiration of their Lord') instead of *himmah wa-la hamm*.

[80] C adds: '... nor anxiety (*hājis*), nor purpose (*qasd*); – regarding 'anxiety' there is a difference of view.'

[81] A *tarjamah* is an introduction or rubric which can be taken to summarize the contents of an ensuing composition or compilation. Here the best rendering might be something like 'The Epitome of Epitomes'.

[82] See n. 31. The passage – which is from *Fut.*, II, 190-1, Yahia edn., Cairo, 1972 – is translated on pp. 88-9 of the article.

[83] The following translation is based on Ayasofya 4817, pp. 164-5, but the reader may consult the printed text in the 1948 Hyderabad *Rasā'il* (*risālah* 18, pp. 22-3). Also, I have availed myself of a commentary on the *Tarājim* ascribed to 'All b. Muhammad al-Hijāzi (fl. tenth / sixteenth century), found in Ms. Hacı Mahmūd Ef. 2347, pp. 194-8 (hereafter, H).

[84] H reads *al-malak* (the angel) instead of *al-malik*, and so it may well be, though he adduces no reason for that attractive option. I understand *al-Malik* here to denote God, the *Rabb al-'alamin* of Q. 1: 2.

[85] *Latifah* is defined by Ibn al-'Arabī in his *Istilāhāt al-sūfiyah* as 'any allusion/indication of tenuous meaning that glimmers in the understanding but is not contained in the literal expression' (see *Rasā'il*, *risālah* 29, p. 8).

[86] H glosses the first two mercies as those of creation and grace, and the subsequent two as those of 'universal, absolute Deity' and 'particularizing, relative Lordship'.

[87] H has, rather: 'That is, the Station of the Praise of the Angel.'

[88] H glosses the 'Mercy of Summarization' as the beginning of the Scripture – that is, the *hamdalah* (the saying, *al-hamdu li-l-Lāh*, 'Praise be to

God!').

[89] H understands this to be the remainder of the second verse of the Qur'ān, following the *hamdalah*, as well as the third verse: 'The Merciful, the Compassionate'.

[90] That is, the *hamdalah* of the second verse of the *Fatihah* is preceded by *al-Rahmān al-Rahīm* (in the *basmalah*) of the first verse, and followed by the same names in the third verse.

[91] *Hā' – Mīm al-Sajdah* is a variant title of *Sūrah* 41 of the Qur'ān (usually denominated *Fusilat*). It is said to be so called on account of the cognate verb, *tasjudu* (occurring in v. 37), which is preceded by the mysterious letters of the first verse, apparently added to distinguish it from the title of *Sūrah* 32. The point is that, following the *basmalah* in which the names, *al-Rahmān al-Rahīm*, are invoked, the first verse, *Ha' – Mīm*, immediately precedes a second mention of the same two names in v. 3, just as happens in the case of the *Fatihah*. Note, also, that *hā'* and *mīm* are the first and second letters of the word, *hamd* (praise), which is the first expression of the mediating verse in the *Fatihah*. By coincidence, the other two letters which make up the written name of Muhammad (*M-H-M-D*), *mim* and *dāl*, can be adduced from the letters given in the first verse of the other *Sūrah* entitled *Al-Sajdah*, *alif – ndash; lām – mim*, if the *alif* (= 1) and the *lām* (= 3, by the *Ayq-Bakr* system of numerology) are replaced by a *dāl* (= 4). Hence, Muhammad, as the first in submission to God, is the true mediator between the two Mercies above and below, and the middle (fifth) pillar of a cosmic pyramid-tabernacle.

[92] Q.55: 1-2.

[93] I take this as an allusion to the putative hadith qudsī : 'My earth contains Me not (*mā wasi'a-ni*), nor My heaven, but the Heart of My faithful servant contains Me' (regarding which, see S. al-Hakim, *Al-Mu'jam al-sūfi*, Beirut, 1981, pp. 1265-6) – in which case the hearts contain (*wasi'at*) God, the Merciful (not simply the Qur'ān), and in the next sentence it would be the Merciful Himself Who is the 'Descending' (*nuzūl*) to the heart of the servant.

[94] The idea is, I think, that even as the 'Station of the Praise of the King' mediates between the two Mercies, so the Merciful, in His relation to the Revelation, mediates, in a way, between God and the faithful servant (whose heart contains God).

[95] H: 'Who proceeds through the stations spiritually, not cognitively (*bi-hāli-hi, lā bi-'ilmi-hi*).'

[96] Only the printed edition (Hyderabad, 1948) adds *ilay-hi* (at Him).

[97] H glosses these as those aspects of man's nature 'which are charged with activity and undertaking burden, and which are the causes of perfection and honour.'

[98] H specifies: purifying the subtle-spirits 'of the filthiness of nature and the darkness of existence.'

[99] *Al-ma'ārif al-fikriyah*. H glosses these: 'their essence is the imagination of the intelligible forms, and their structure and figure are on the tablet of the imagination (*lawh al-khayāl*), [inscribed] by the pens of the rational faculty.'

[100] That is, through all of their external and internal senses, according to H.

[101] H: That is, in his internal apart from his external being, or else his external apart from his internal being.'

[102] H supposes that this is 'the station of the answer/ response [to the call]' (*maqām al-ijābah*), but I think that the reference, again, is to the *maqām of the hamd al-malik*, alluded to in the first line of the preceding *latifah*. Thus, the present station mediates between the inner and outer aspects of man's being, just as it was earlier described as combining two sets of double mercies.

[103] Could the allusion here be to the 'original sin' of Adam (so called by Christians), conceived as the fragmentation of the whole man, corresponding to the sin of shirk, which, similarly, is tantamount to fragmenting Deity? If so, see what Ibn al-ʿArabī has to say on the uniting of two mercies before and after Adam's punishment and the consequent elimination of the latter in *Praise*, pp. 88–9.

[104] *Ishārah*. Here the *ishārāt* generally indicate practical prescriptions, whereas the *latāʾif* (subtle allusions) are more simply descriptive of spiritual verities.

[105] Q. 24:24.

[106] Q. 41:21 (cf. also, v. 20). This and the next verse continue: '[Their skins replied:] "God, Who gives speech to all things, has given speech to us. . . . You did not conceal yourselves lest your ears and your eyes and your skins might [one day] testify against you, but you thought that God would not know much of what you do."' Man's failure to realize consciousness in his own members reflects his ignorance of God's all-pervading praise in the universe.

[107] Cf. Q. 17:44: 'The seven heavens and the earth and all that is therein glorify Him, and there is nothing that does not hymn His praise, but you do not understand their glorification [of Him]...'

[108] The same harmonious awareness of the microcosm within one, of which Ibn al-ʿArabī has been speaking, can also be applied externally to the world at large: as within, so without.

[109] *Shawāhid* (witnessings) are quotations used as evidential examples, often of lexicological usages, or proof-texts of doctrine. I have opted for the translation, 'witnessing' (instead of 'attestation' or 'testimonial') for the singular (*shāhid*), in order to avail myself of the cognate expression, 'witness', since in the text the term is personalized and made the speaker of the several maxims.

[110] See *Rasā'il*, *risālah* 17, p. 1. Compare to this Ibn al-ʿArabī's remarks concerning the 'languages of the *al-fahwāniyah* (Divine address heard face to face in the intermediary world)' in the preface to the *ʿAbādilah* (p. 39).

[111] The following translation is based on *Ayasofya* 4817, p. 132 (cf. *Rasā'il*, pp. 13–14). This is the eighteenth of 27 chapters in the *K. al-Shawāhid*.

[112] The printed edition lacks the word, *shāhid*, in the chapter headings.

[113] *Dhikr*, the ritual practice of mentioning / recollecting the names of God, is a kind of open-ended 'meditation', or concentration, on the one hand; and *duʿāʾ* is in the more goal-oriented notion of 'prayer' familiar to Westerners, on the other.

[114] Cf. Q. 73: 20 et al. The corresponding version of this passage in the *Tāj tarājim* (in *Rasā'il*, *risālah* 18, pp.52–3) adds: 'So choose recollection or supplication. Supplication is [as in] His saying: "Fulfil your covenant with Me, and I will fulfil My covenant with you" (Q. 2: 40), while recollection is His saying: "Recollect Me and I will recollect you" (Q. 2: 152).'

[115] In the *Tarājim* Ibn al-‘Arabi interjects an *hadith qudsī* at this point: ‘I am present with him (*jalisu-hu*) who mentions Me’ (see *Al-Mu’jam al-sūfi*, p. 1263).

[116] *Nafs* is ‘self’ here (rather than ‘soul’) since, in the next clause, it is indicated with the masculine pronoun.

[117] Instead of this, the *Tarājim* has: ‘Your self / soul has a right over you, and your intellect (‘*aqlu-ka*) has a right over you. So recollect the Real to your intellect, and supplicate Him on behalf of your self / soul for Paradise...’

[118] That is, the Prophet Muhammad (d . Matt., 9: 13 and 18: 11 *et al.*).

[119] The *Tarājim* has: The one who has gone astray is a fugitive from the light to the darkness,’ and lacks all of what follows here. (This might suggest that the *Shawāhid* represents the later of the two versions.)

[120] This, I suspect, is part of a Sufi tradition which I have not been able to trace (but cf. the saying of the servant of the Praiseworthy quoted on p. 76, above, and the *hadith qudsī* cited in n. 70).

[121] Maff., 15:24-8.