Chapter III

The Origin and Development of the Concept of Perfect Man in Sufism

The basic source of the Concept of Perfect Man in Sufism is *The Holy Quran* which has assimilated the best from every religion including the ancient Egyptian religion and the *Upanisads*. That is why Islam is the most ancient as well as the most modern religion of the world. If this theorem of Geometry is correct (as of course it is) that the circle ends from where it had started then it has to be accepted that the real source of Islam is rooted in far-off periods, both dark and bright, -- when in the whole Universe there was an all-pervading spirit with various names - Isis or Aditi - the Absolute Being, i.e. the Mother Goddess (or Female God).

Nicholson says in one of his commentaries of Rumi's verse:

"Heaven derives its light from the Divine Attributes which illumine the spirit of the Perfect Man. According to Sufis man is not a mere epitome of the Universe, on the contrary he is its origin since it was brought into existence for his sake and essentially the Perfect Man is the spirit of Divine Revelation through whom the purpose of creation is fulfilled".1

1. R.A. Nicholson, *Rumi: Poet and Mystic* (George Allen and
All the prophets were inspired by the Light of Mohammad who, (speaking as the Logos) is said to have declared that he was a prophet when Adam was clay. Mohammad, the last of the Prophet in time is first of them in eternity.

Rumi, the greatest Persian Mystic poet, says in his

_Mathnawi:_

\[ \text{نَظَّارِش} \\
\text{بَيْنَهَا، رَأَيْتُ شَأْنَهَا} \\
\text{بَيْنَ شَأْنِي، بِمَآ كَانَتُ أَنْتَهَا إِمَّا} \\
\text{فِي هَذِهِ نَحْوَةُ نَادِرَة} \\
\text{رَأَيْتُ أَنْزُلَانَا} \]

(شَهِيْدٌ منِّي)

Therefore while in form thou art the microcosm

in reality thou art the macrocosm.

That is to say... "If seemingly I am born of Adam, yet in truth I am the ancestor of every ancestor".

Therefore father Adam was really born of me

the tree was born of the fruit.

The idea which is first comes last into actuality,

in particular the idea that is eternal.²

("Man the Microcosm")

(i) Concept of Self or Perfect Being in Ancient Egyptian

Religion and Christianity.

"I am whatever there was and will be and no mortal man could unveil me."

These words of the Absolute Being have been quoted by Plutarch in his treatise.

Rumi says in his Mathnawi:

O good friend thou art not a single "thou":
    thou art the sky and the deep sea.
Thy mighty infinite "thou" is the ocean
    wherein myriads of "thou" are sunken.

(-- Rumi).

Rumi is pointing out towards the same Absolute Being, to One who had been Many and still One. Robert Graves feels that the religious theme of the old Mother Goddess and the theme of the Almighty God are fundamentally irreconcilable.

The cult of Mother Goddess Isis, having originated in Egypt became universal. It was one of the chief antagonists of Christianity. Isis, the ocean of wisdom, was the wife and sister of Osiris and mother of Horus. Osiris was brutally slain by his brother Set. After long searchings Isis recovers parts of her husband's body. This myth possessed a solar significance on those who reflected upon religion.

The name of Isis signifies 'seat' or 'throne'. She was a deity of the heavens who restored Osiris, the Sun and also gave birth to Horus, the Sun, who took vengeance on Set and won back his father's throne. This myth was symbolic of
warfare between good and evil. It also symbolised human destiny and the rebirth of man. Its significance was spiritual - the immortality of soul and the universal motherhood of Isis. Due to all these traits the Isis-cult became the greatest cult of Egyptian religion. The healing and soothing power made her universal Mother who was all-inclusive possessing virtues of all other goddesses. Slowly and gradually this cult was blended in Christianity as Isis herself was identified with the Virgin Mary and Horus with Christ. The goddess of love and maternity and her son became Madona and the child. Mary was discovered by people and became identified with Great Goddess, St. Patrick, a Celtic Christian, was the discoverer. Elizabeth G. Davis writes:

"Christ's greatest rival throughout the Roman Empire was the Great Goddess, the Goddess of many names yet only one personality."

Robert Graves is of opinion that the ancient races were goddess-worshippers regarding the Female Principle as the primary one. Elizabeth Davis, after having quoted Gide's remark "Can the Eternal One Be Female?," writes:

"It is always Virgin Mary who is seen in Visions never God, never the Holy Ghost and very rarely Jesus... Who can say that she is not the materialization of a real Blessed Lady?, the Great Goddess herself, the multitudinously named

White Goddess" herself, relic of a matriarchal civilization, who knows the harbinger of its return?.

Hence the words of the Absolute Being:

"I am whatever there was and will be and no mortal man could unveil me".

Abdullah Yousuf Ali, a very authentic translator and commentator of *The Holy Quran*, is of opinion that the religious history of Egypt from the most ancient times to the present day is most interesting. He mentions the Egyptian religion and its steps towards Islam. His gradual perception of monotheism in Egyptian religion and its relation to Christianity and Islam is appreciable. He says Moses came to direct his people to One who had been many but still one. He feels that Jesus was not a chauvinist. There are to be found within the manuscript of *New Testament* which exists in the Library of Vatican in Rome, some texts referring to otherwise inaccessible words of Jesus:

"For I tell you truly, from one mother proceeds all that lives upon the earth. Therefore who kills, kills his brother and from him will the Earthly mother turn away".

Philosophers and mystics since ages have been scared of expressing their views concerning the female Principle, i.e. the Unity of Being (Wahdatul Wujud دعست الوجود) as it was considered to be Atheism ("Kufr" or "ilhad" كفر، إلحاد). Later on in the history of the Unity of Being there were

born Plotinus, Spinoza, Lessing, Goethe, Fitche, Schelling, Arabi, Jili, Rumi etc. Later on there emerged Sri Aurobindo, Iqbal and Virginia Woolf. The Perfect Man of these mystics and thinkers imbibed the attributes of the Great Goddess especially the Universal Love.

(ii) Concept of Perfect Being in Hindu Mysticism

Dr. Radhakrishnan says:

"The Vedic Indians were sufficiently logical to realize that the attributes of creation and rulership of the world could be granted only to one being. We have such a being in Praja Pati, the Lord of creatures, Vishwa - Karma, the world-maker. Thus the logic of religious faith asserts itself in favour of monotheism. This tendency is supported by the conception of rta or order. The universe is an ordered whole. If the endless variety of the world suggests numerous deities, the unity of the world suggests a unitary conception of the Deity."

This concept of unity in diversity of The Upanisads is the main derivative of the Sufi concept of One and Many or the Multiplicity of Self. According to Radhakrishnan creation moves upwards, towards the Divine. The sources of the theory of Creative evolution are also The Upanisads.

The Reader's Companion To World Literature says:

5. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan: The Principal Upanishads, London, George Allen & Unwin Ltd. 1953, p. 34.
The contribution of The Upanisads to Hindu philosophy is the new emphasis on Brahma as the Supreme creating God, a conception that approaches monotheism ... With Brahma is equated the concept of Atman, the Universal Self, which is the source of all life. By devotion to the Self, (or spirit, or Absolute, or God within us) which is our real being, by meditation, by renunciation of all worldly desire, one may ultimately achieve union and identification with Brahma.

Sidney Spencer in his book on mysticism says:

"The word Upanishad means secret teaching. The religion of The Upanisads is inward and spiritual. "An invisible and subtle essence is the spirit of the whole Universe. That is reality; that is the truth; that art thou"., says Uddalaka to his son. In these words there is conveyed to us the essential secret of The Upanisads - the inner knowledge of divine reality, with which man himself in his deeper being is one -- man lifted into union with the Infinite. As the Chandogya Upanishad puts it elsewhere - 'This is my Self within the heart, greater than the earth, ... greater than the sky ---- greater than all worlds ---- This is Brahma. ( III : 14 : 3-4 ).".

According to Spencer The Upanisads characteristically teach a doctrine of pantheism which in the proper sense is

the doctrine that God is identical with the Universe in space and time. He is described as both being and non-being. Atman is described as 'intelligence', as consciousness (as light, [चेतना ]), as bliss. The supreme spirit is an ocean of pure consciousness, boundless and Infinite. He identifies Himself with all. Spencer writes:

"In the very Upanishad where the divine transcendence is expressed most unmistakably, we find the most apparently Pantheistic statements. 'Man art Thou and woman, boy and maiden, the aged tottering on a staff (IV. 3).'

In the Chandogya creation is described as a process of transformation resting on desire. 'In the beginning there was one without a second ... That Being thought Would that I were many; I will create!' (VI : 2 :1-3) ... 'as from a fire aflame thousands of sparks come forth, even so from the Creator an infinity of beings have life and to Him return again (II :1:1) ... ". He becomes the many of the visible universe.

The way of release from rebirth is the way of God-realization. Stress is laid on getting rid of evil - doing and achieving such qualities as uprightness, charity, liberality, mercy, non-violence. Evil has its roots in ignorance, avidya (अबिद्या) or lack of spiritual knowledge. Knowledge which brings deliverance is mystical knowledge of

Brahma (ब्रह्म), the vision brings the fullness of joy. Here are a few truths of the scriptures as quoted by Walter Stace in his book The Teachings of the mystics:

"O Brahma Supreme!
Formless art thou, and yet
Thou bringest forth many forms;
Thou bringest them forth, and then
Withdraws them to thyself.
Fill us with thoughts of Thee!

Thou art the fire,
Thou art the sun,
Thou art the air,
Thou art the moon
Thou art the starry firmament,
Thou art Brahma Supreme:
Thou art the waters,- thou,
The creator of all!
Thou art woman, thou art man,
Thou art the Youth, thou art the maiden,
Thou art the old man tottering with his Staff;
Thou facest everywhere.
...
Changeless thou art,
Supreme, pure!
In thee dwell the gods.
The source of all scriptures thou art;
Thou art God of all gods

Invisible is thy form!^{10}

Concept of Perfect Man in Sri Aurobindo

Mystical consciousness is the same everywhere. There are great affinities between the earliest Hindu mysticism as represented in The Upanisads and that presented by Sri Aurobindo who is a direct spiritual descendant of those seers. He bases his chapters on The Upanisads. Educated at Cambridge, well-acquainted with Latin, Greek, French, and English he became the Professor of English at Baroda College. He worked for Indian Independence and later on abandoned politics and retired from the world devoting himself to the practice of Yoga. The Life Divine is complete expression of his thought in which his style is exquisite. He writes:

At the gates of the Transcendent stands that mere and perfect spirit described in The Upanisads, luminous, pure, sustaining the world... without flaw of duality, without scar of division, unique, identical, free from all appearance of relation and multiplicity the pure Self of the Advaitins, the transcendent Silence. And the mind when it passes those gates suddenly .... receives a sense of the

unreality of the world and the sole reality of silence which is one of the most powerful and convincing experiences of which the human mind is capable.\(^{11}\)

According to Aurobindo, in order to understand Reality full justice is to be done in dealing with Matter—the descending movement of the divine. The unknown God, according to him is not really unknowable. He can be known through intuition. Spirit and matter are ultimately one. Having faith in Einstein's theory of Relativity he thinks that Matter or force is not altogether devoid of consciousness which resides in material objects.

Aurobindo is of opinion that the one Absolute Reality has been termed as Brahma in Vedic literature. This Brahma is Silent yet manifests itself in Activity. Man can be free and at the same time involved in the life-activities of the world. Time, according to him is Real. God has a personality, is a Self, an individual.

The metaphysics of Sri Aurovindo is a kind of evolutionism (reminding us of Rumi and Bergson). Its terms, from lower to higher are: matter, life, mind, supermind (the mystical mind). According to him even matter, as *The Upanisads* and *The Holy Quran* insisted, is the Universal Soul or Brahman [ब्रह्म].

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The Development of the Concept of Perfect Man in Sufism

A great influence on the development of Sufi theology was that of Neo-Platonic philosophy. Under this influence God's relation to Universe is conceived in terms of essence - God, the Absolute Being, which is the essence of all things. From this standpoint the principle of Divine Unity, fundamental to Islam was reinterpreted. *The Holy Quran* says that there is no God but Him. The Sufis came to believe that God alone has real Being, i.e. Al-Haqq- Real. It means that only God is self-existent. The world emanates from Him as sunbeams proceed from the sun. The real Light is God Himself. Spencer is of opinion that the Sufis generally accepted Neo-Platonic teachings without admitting the belief in transmigration of souls. Light has been considered to be the archetypal symbol for knowledge and illumination.

Plotinus

Sufis generally accepted Neo-Platonic teaching but (it is a very essential point to be noted while we talk about Virginia Woolf, our main subject of study) English scholarship has neglected Plotinus who was for the West the source of Sufi doctrine of Logos. Virginia Woolf had been acquainted with Plotinus through Coleridge's bold ideas on the Logos. Coleridge had made his first acquaintance with philosophy of mysticism in the writings of the Neo-Platonists, Boehme and other Christian mystics. G. R. Mead
in his preface to the *Select Works of Plotinus* (translated by Thomas Taylor), writes that English scholarship has totally neglected Plotinus.

Plotinus, (A.D.205) born in Egypt, came into contact with Ammonius Saccas in Alexandria. His time was one of great strain - intellectual as well as spiritual. The nations had lost their independence, the popular religions their power. There was a longing among men after a satisfying form of spiritual being, a fellowship embracing all people, a form of faith which could pacify the soul.

Such was the state of affairs in the days of Plotinus as well as when Mead wrote the Preface of the *Select Works of Plotinus* (1914 before the World war I). Worse is the state of affairs now-a-days at the end of 20th century. Mead observes a similarity between the general unrest and search for a new ideal that was characteristic of that period of "brilliant intellectual development and the uncertainty and eager curiosity of the public mind in the closing years of the 19th century".\(^{12}\)

In his enlightening preface Mead throws light on the growing popularity of Sanskrit language which has led to a science of comparative religion. The conflict between science and religion, Mead feels, has produced a generation that yearns and searches for a reconciliation of East and West. There is now a general inclination towards

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spirituality, a modified mysticism as many social problems need to be solved—slavery of over-competition, anarchy, despotism, fascism, patriarchy etc. hence the idea of a universal religion. Such was the state of affairs when Plotinus arose who added a pure mysticism of his own to Aristotelian and Platonic philosophies. He wrote against Gnostics who were Christians with a feeling of rivalry with the great Eastern religious system.

Plotinus was intimately acquainted with various religions especially the Persian and Indian scriptures. There is found in him the method of stern dialectics on the one hand, a rational and practiced mysticism on the other reminding the best phase of the Yoga systems of ancient India - The Samadhi [समाधि] of the Yoga art of the Indian mystics, the ecstasy. Plotinus ended his life in the way that yogins in the East are said to pass out of the body blending into the All-Self.

Mead is of opinion that Plotinus was most pleasing of all philosophers. He had opinions about the problems of his day and presented solution for them. His whole system revolves round the idea of threefold principles or Trinity and of pure intuition. Mead feels that Plotinus' system "bears a remarkable similarity to Indian system of macrocosm and microcosm, of Jivatman with the Paramatman".13

Thus there is one Reality or the Real (Haqq), the one, the All-Self of The Upanisads, i.e. Brahman. The Many are

13. Select Works of Plotinus: p. XX.
immanent in the One and the One in Many (Nous and being) are one, both individual and universal. The Absolute is inexpressible according to Plotinus. In the words of the Upanishad the mind falls back from it, unable to reach it. By the thought of universal Mind World soul is brought into being.

Mead quotes the words of Plotinus in his Preface:

"Intelligence (Universal Mind) is primal Reality united to real Being. This resembles the Sach - Chid Anandam (Being, Thought, Bliss) of Vedantins. By always thinking it produces all things (the Logos idea), it is the sum total of Infinite life (Enneads VI, VII, 16)."

Then Mead passes to the World-soul, the Hiranaya Garbha (germ or shining sphere) of The Upanisads. The 'nous' is indivisible. The soul of the World is the offspring of Intelligence which is creative, a reflected light, External Nature produces human soul with a tendency to elevation and debasement. It is here that Mead finds the system of Plotinus to be weak (in spite of Plotinu's love for the beauties of Nature). He says that according to Plotinus Matter is the dark principle; it is evil while the Vedantins pair the root of Matter (Prakriti, प्रकृति maya) with the Universal Mind and make it dignified. It is by the removal of this primal veil that the secret of Self is revealed.

On the other hand Sidney Spencer feels that Plotinus does not wish to suggest that the physical world in itself

14. Select Works of Plotinus: p, XXI.
is evil to be deplored. According to Plotinus the world of
sense is full of beauty filling us with veneration for its
creator and convincing us of its origin in the Divine. We
must accept the Whole. But at the same time he thinks that
evils are rooted in the principle of matter which negates
while body dominates the soul. He had innocence and genuine
simplicity of manners. Several women vehemently admired
him due to his humane attitudes. An ideal man according to
him possesses civic virtues (prudence, fortitude,
temperance, justice). His soul frees itself from the
bondage of matter. He leads a life of purification. His
doctrine of mystical purification was "Cut away everything".

Plotinus, says Porphyry, naturally possessed something
greater than the rest of mankind. A certain Egyptian
priest, who at that time was at Rome being desirous to
exhibit his wisdom, persuaded Plotinus to attend him for
 beholding his invocations; his familiar daemon. The
invocation was performed in temple of Isis.

Instead of a daemon a God approached. The priest
exclaimed with astonishment, " Happy Plotinus who has a God
for a daemon". This delightful vision was momentary. The
divine eye of his soul was perpetually elevated to this
guardian deity.

This vision of God in the temple of Isis is somehow
related with Plotinus' doctrine of the Logos which is to be
found in Ibn'al Arabi etc. Spencer feels that Plotinus
doctrine "has exercised a great influence on the whole development of mysticism in Christianity and Islam".¹⁵

Plotinus' is the Middle Platonism taught by Plutarch according to which between the Absolute Reality and the world there were a series of intermediaries. The Logos idea is the product of primary Intelligence. The Logos is the eternal life manifested in the world and this Divine Light is the light of men that enlightens every man. Jesus is presented in John as the incarnation of the Logos, - the word or thought of God.

The Sufi doctrine of Logos assumed by us to have been expounded by Arabi and Jili or Plotinus was rooted in the ancient Egyptian religion as well as The Upanisads - the Hindu scriptures translated in Persian by Dara Shikoh with the title Sirr-e-Akbar [Sirr-e-Akbar] as he had found affinities between them and The Holy Quran. Their essence being the same. Thus the history of sufism is as old as The Upanisads and the ancient Egyptian religion as they aimed at synthesizing humanity.

Concept of Perfect Man in Ibn 'I Arabi:

The doctrine of Logos and the Perfect Man, an interesting phase of Sufi teaching, was developed by Arabi and Ibn Farid of Cairo. This conception, feels Spencer, goes back to Hallaj or even further. Man is conceived as

¹⁵ Sidney Spencer: Mysticism in World Religion, p. 159.
the first emanation from the Absolute who reflects all the Divine attributes and who is the archetype of the Universe. The Perfect Man (Logos) is the mediator of the inspiration and Divine grace. The most striking feature of this concept is its identification with the person of Mohammad. The doctrine of the Pre-existence of Mohammad arose at an early date (conceived as celestial light, a spark of consciousness which "took up its abode in Adam and in the whole succession of prophets"). Mystics are united with Mohammad. According to Attar, if a Muslim enjoys the Vision of God, it comes through the light of the spirit of Mohammad. The Logos gathers up in his own being the Divine Ideas in the pattern of which the world was created. It is the pre-eminence of man that he was made in the image of the Universal archetype (the warm and the fiery breath which is an immediate gift of God, a part of the Divine Soul, not separated from its source. Radhakrishnan, in his introduction to The Principal Upanisads writes:

Hiranaya - garbha answers to the Logos, the word of Western thought. For Plato the Logos was the archetypal idea. Philo speaks of the Divine Logos as the first-born son, archetypal man, image of God through whom the world was created. Logos, the Reason, the word was in the beginning and the word became flesh. Greek term Logos means both Reason and the Word. Word is active expression of

character. Vac. is Brahman, Vac, Word. Wisdom is treated in The Vedas as the all knowing. The Logos is regarded as personal like Hiranaya - garbha. The light was the light of men. The Logos became flesh'.

Spencer says:

Thanks largely to the works of Arabi, Mohammad himself came to be regarded as the Logos and the Perfect Man in whom God and man are one. Mystics therefore came to enter into a direct personal communion with Mohammad - to identify themselves with him. Such an experience would plainly be impossible if Mohammad were a mere idea in the mind of God and not a living personality.

God works through the Logos who is himself God if not the Godhead. Plotinus believed that on certain rare occasions the human soul may transcend even the realm of spirit and enter into communion with the one.

Dr. Radhakrishnan says:

This distinction which became established in The Upanishad has its parallels in other historical developments cp. the three bodies of the Buddha, Dharmakaya or the Absolute Reality, Sambhogakaya, the personal God or the Logos and Nirmanakaya or the historical embodiment of the Logos in a material body born into the world at a given moment of time. The Sufis regard Al-Haq as the Absolute

17. The Principal Upanisads, tr. Dr. Radhakrishnan: p. 61-62.
Reality, the abyss of the godhead, Allah as the personal Lord, Mohammad, the Prophet as the historical embodiment.19

Due to Arabi's influence Mohammad himself came to be regarded as Logos and the Perfect Man in whom God and Man are one. Referring to Arabi's book, the Bezels of Wisdom, Nicholson writes:

...its subject - matter coincides to a large extent with that of Insan - e - Kamil (The Perfect Man) of Jili, while both writers are not only inspired by the same mystical philosophy but use similar methods in order to develop their ideas.20

Then Nicholson shows the "magnitude" of Jili's debt to his predecessor:

Fusus purports to be a treatise on the nature of God as manifested through prophecy... Since God does not reveal Himself completely except in man, the first chapter treats Adam as the microcosm, the Perfect Man, the Absolute mirror of Divinity.21

The Absolute self which had left its Absoluteness returns into the Perfect Man and without Perfect Man it would not have been possible. For Ibn-al-Arabi, as for all Sufis, Mohammad represents the Perfect Man. He speaks of the eternal Mohammad who is identified with all the prophets including Jesus. This oneness, in its origin, has been called by them 'haqiqat-e-Mahammadia' [ حقيقة محمدية ], the

19. The Principal Upanisads, tr. Dr. Radhakrishnan p. 38.  
Reality of Mohammad (the Primary Intelligence). The derivative of the name Mohammad is 'hamd [ω农作物]' - praise. Therefore Mohammad means "The Praised One". He has a name in every age which is appropriate to the guise in which he appears in that age. The incarnation of this reality among all peoples has been explained by Al-Jili in his book *Insan-e-Kamil (The Perfect Man)*. He shows the multiplicity of an individual. The multiplicity of being is overlooked by ordinary people while they deal with Sufi material.

Idries Shah says:

Those who have identified this attitude with the Logos doctrine of Plotinus are, according to the Sufis ascribing a historical connection to a situation which has objective reality. The Sufis did not copy the Logos doctrine, though the idea of Logos and the Reality of Mohammad have a common source.22

That common source has already been discussed in the second chapter. The scholars were confused by Arabi as he was a conformist in religion while abstruse in inner life. He believed that there was continuous progression between formal religion of any kind and the inner understanding of that religion leading to a personal enlightenment. Naturally the theologians could not accept this doctrine being dependent on reasoning power and devoid of intuitive ability. Arabi was a threat to formal society. He aroused

love and sympathy for himself being intuitive and enlightened. People had no courage to support him though they admired him. He was condemned and defamed as a heretic. Actually his sublime words were too advanced for their understanding. Still he was called the "most eminent sage of the age".

According to Ibn-al-Arabi the sight of God in woman is the most perfect of all. God, he says, is never to be seen in an immaterial form. Love poetry can reflect a complete and coherent experience of divinity. Dante was deeply inspired by Arabi's work *Bezels of Wisdom*, hence his *Divine Comedy*. Some of Arabi's works had been written in trance.

Arabi's *Interpreter of Desires* aroused great opposition which has been regarded as the product of the most advanced development of human consciousness possible to man. Its imagery fits in with orthodox Islamic religion. Human beauty, he realized, was connected with divine beauty. That the real truth may be expressed in various ways simultaneously, could not be accepted by the traditionalists. Arabi's followers have referred to his use of myths and legends to express the truths concealed within them. Still the ordinary mind is incapable of perceiving the beautiful woman and divinity at the same time. Arabi refers to inner reality again and again accepting all formalism. In one of his poems he says that his heart is capable of every form: A cloister for the monk, a fane for idols, the Votary's Kaaba, the tables of Torah, the Quran.
Love is the creed he holds. This is indeed the Universal Love which has been applauded by great sages and sufis. According to Arabi "In the Beautific Vision God manifests Himself to the elect in general epiphany which assumes various forms corresponding to the mental conception of God formed by the faithful on earth. The vision impregnates the elect with Divine Light. The Divine Light pervades the beings of the elect and radiates from them, reflected as if by mirrors, on everything around them. The spiritual enjoyment produced by the contemplation of this reflection is even greater than that of the Beautific Vision itself". 23

Arabi feels that there is no existence except God. He is and there is with Him no before or after, ...nor union nor division. He is now as He was, He is the One without oneness. He is the very existence of the First and the very existence of the Last, and the very existence of the Outward and the very existence of the Inward. ...By Himself He sees Himself and by Himself He knows Himself. His veil, that is, phenomenal existence, is but the concealment... He is Creator as well as created... He is as He was then. The existence of the beggar is His existence and the existence of the sick is His existence ... when the secret of one atom of the atoms is clear, the secret of all created things is

23. Quoted by Miguel Asin in Islam and the Divine Comedy, London, John Murray (Pub.) Ltd., 1926. This quotation was extracted by Stace for inclusion in The Teachings of Mystics, p. 212-213. This quotation was extracted from Asin's book by the author of The Teachings of Mystics, i.e. W. T., P. 212-213.
clear. According to Arabi when the mystery of realising that the mystic is one with the Divine is revealed to you, you will understand that you are no other than God and that you have continued and will continue ... without when and without times. Then you will see all your actions to be His actions and all your attributes to be His attributes. There is nothing except His Face, then whether-soever you turn, there is the face of God ... He knows himself, sees His whole existence to be the Divine existence, but does not realise that any change has taken place in His own nature or qualities. For when you know yourself, your "I-ness" vanishes and you know that you and God are one and the same.

The archetypal theory of Jung did not originate with Professor Jung but was produced by Sheikh Mohiuddin Ibn'l Arabi as noted by Professor R. London in *The Philosophy of Ibn Arabi*. (New York, Macmillan, 1959, p. 40 et. seq.) Jung admitted that Western psycho-analysis is only that of a beginner compared to that of the East. In *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*, Jung writes:

> Psycho-analysis itself and the lines of thought which it gives rise - surely a distinctly Western development - are only a beginners' attempt compared to what is an immemorial art in the East.24

Thus we come to the conclusion that the Sufi doctrine of Logos, of the archetypal man is rooted in the very far-
off periods—in ancient Egypt and *The Upanisads* (which are heavenly books, first among the Scriptures—Islam being the most ancient religion (in spite of being most modern one). Among the Oriental Sufis, Arabi was the first to reproduce the Sufi doctrine of Logos.

**Al - Jili**

The very phrase, 'Concept of Perfect Man' was, for the first time, used by Al-Jili as a title of his book *Al-Insan-e-Kamil* (The Perfect Man). Nicholson seems to feel that it was first used by Arabi by whom Jili was inspired. Jili considers the Perfect man as the spirit whence all things have their origin. According to him the mind of the Perfect Man is androgynous. This very idea creates a close relationship between him and Virginia Woolf, the subject of this thesis. Jili will be discussed in detail in chapter IV in connection with Virginia Woolf. Nicholson writes:

> *Jili identifies the First Intelligence, as the first treasurer of Divine knowledge, with Gabriel the trusted spirit (al-ruh-ul-Amin),—the first objective analysis of Divine synthesis with the pen (al-Qalam) which transmits the particulars contained as a whole in God's consciousness to the Guarded Tablets (al-ruh-ul Mahfooz, 'Lauh').*  

The literal meaning of the word 'origin' is mother. Jili's whole system is based on the idea of motherhood and so also is that of Virginia Woolf. According to Virginia as

well in the "chambers of the mind and heart of the woman ... were tablets bearing sacred inscription, which, if one could spell them out, would teach one everything, they would never be made public". The "tablets bearing sacred inscriptions" has definite parallels with the "Guarded Tablets" [Lauh-e-Mahfuz ] referred by Jili and Rumi, hence the affinity between the thought of Virginia and Jili. Virginia woolf, here, is concerned with non-being, with silence. Her deep sympathy with 'silenced' and oppressed women reminds us of the profound sympathy of Jesus and Prophet Mohammad for oppressed woman-kind. Her perfect identification with silenced women is indicative of her androgynous vision, of her harmonious personality otherwise most women are male-chauvinistic having no genuine sympathy for their own kind. She synthesised, either consciously or unconsciously, the great Mother Isis, Goddess Mary and the Logos, the spirit of Prophet Mohammad.

The Perfect Man of Jili is capable of saving the society by utilising all his potentials. Prophet Mohammad, according to Jili, is Perfect Man (insan-e-Kamil) to be imitated and followed. Jili believes that, after Mohammad, whoever tries to imitate him may attain the status of Perfect Man. Whatever Iqbal has written about Jili is very significant reflecting, on the one hand, Jili's influence on Iqbal, and on the other enabling us to comprehend Jili's Perfect Man who emerges with a prophetic grandeur.

Vehemently accepting the sacred Self or personality of Prophet Mohammad as a lighthouse, Jili interprets his own thought. His Perfect Man is mard-e-momin. There are certain common traits between Jili's and Iqbal's Perfect Man (and so also of Virginia Woolf's Perfect Man), i.e. life, knowledge, fearlessness, determination, love of mankind and beauty of Nature, grandeur, magnitude (Jalal) etc. According to them the emergence of Perfect Man is necessary for the continuity of life and Nature. They agree that the Absolute Self, who had left her Absoluteness comes back within the Perfect Man. This task would have been utterly impossible without Perfect Man.

**Concept of Perfect Man in Baba Fariduddin Attar.**

Spencer writes:

"Attar says that if a Muslim enjoys the Vision of God' it comes through the light of the spirit of Mohammad. It is in the power of the Prophet to bestow on his community a portion of that which he enjoys".  

Spencer fully agrees with those who have described the teachings of Arabi and his followers as Pantheism. Previously he had quoted Attar's words 'The world visible and the world invisible are only Himself'.

Spencer is of opinion that there is no such absolute identification of God and the world as Pantheism properly

27. Sidney Spencer: *Mysticism in World Religion*; p. 314

implies. Though all-pervading He still remains in His eternal being and above and beyond the flux of Nature. The doctrine of the Logos and the Perfect Man developed by Arabi and Ibu Farid had a great influence on Attar as well. This doctrine has identification with the person of Mohammad. The pre-existent form of Mohammad was the thing created by God. The spirit of Mohammad is considered to be the creative principle -- the source of inspiration. The mystics desire to unite with him. Attar says about Universal Love that in it "thou" and "I" do not exist as self passes away in the Beloved. His *Conference of The Birds* [مَايَلَ النَّفْسُ] is an elaborate allegory All the birds of the world soar high towards the abode of the Simurgh. The birds at last found themselves for ever in the Simurgh after having passed through seven valleys (Valley of Quest, Valley of Love etc.).

Al-Ghazali

In his *Mizan-e-Amal* Ghazali states courageously that the Perfect man has three frameworks of beliefs:

(i) That of his surroundings.

(ii) That which he conveys to students in accordance with their capacity for understanding.

(iii) That which he understands from inner experience.

Ghazali's *Mishkat-ul-Anwar* (Niche of Light) is both a commentary on the famous Light Verse of the Quran and a
rendering of its significance. He thinks that in order to develop higher faculties self pride must be overcome, consciousness must be transmuted rather than distorted. In his opinion a learned man cannot understand the experience of an enlightened saint. The *Revival* by him contains his concept of Universal Love. According to him the Perfect man transcends animal limitations and becomes capable of walking on the sea and fly through the air.

Rumi

The Qutb revolves round himself, while round him revolve all the spheres of Heaven.28

("The Perfect Man")

The term Qutb as used here is suggestive of the Perfect Man. The Qutb is the 'mudabbir' (Statesman) of the world. In his book, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, Iqbal has quoted a few couplets of Rumi and then has translated them. I cannot help quoting his English paraphrase of those couplets in which Rumi presents the mystic search for the Absolute Reality:

"The Sufi stalks the game like a hunter: he sees the musk-deer's track and follows the foot-prints. For some while the track of the deer is the proper clue for him, but

afterwards it is the musk gland of the deer that is his guide."\(^29\)

According to Iqbal the theory of evolution has brought despair and anxiety instead of hope and enthusiasm for life to the modern world. He says:

"The reason is to be found in the unwarranted modern assumption that man's present structure, mental as well as physiological, is the last word in biological evolution, and that death, regarded as biological event, has no constructive meaning. The world of today needs a Rumi to create an attitude of hope, and to kindle the fire of enthusiasm for life."\(^30\)

Then Iqbal presents his own translation of some of Rumi's couplets: (Before which I would like to quote the Persian version):

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{آهو اول إل احتميل نحو} & \\
\text{سالم النبشراني فورلر} & \\
\text{لأكمش حال سباقه تبع باز} & \\
\text{خادم مير وقنت به فاضي} & \\
\text{مرسومين خور من دانشبردين} & \\
\text{يشفد آل فانسنوك دخين} & \\
\text{نا شير أكرو عاقل رباوند} & \\
\text{كذا در محش دران شليختن} & \\
\end{align*}
\]

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\(^29\) Dr. Mohd. Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religions Thought in Islam*, p. 92.

\(^30\) Dr. Mohd. Iqbal, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, p. 121.
First man appeared in the class of inorganic things.
Next he passed therefrom into that of plants.
For years he lived as one of the plants
Remembering nought of his inorganic state so different:
And when he passed from the vegetative to the animal state,
He had no remembrance of his State as a plant,
Except the inclination he felt to the world of plants.
Especially at the time of spring and sweet flowers;
Like the inclination of infants towards their mothers;
Which know not the cause of their inclination
to the breast.
Again the great Creator, as you know
Drew man out of the animal into the human state
Thus man passed from one order of nature to another,
Till he became wise and knowing and strong
as he is now.
Of his first souls he has now no remembrance,
And he will be again changed from his present soul.31

(Math. IV, 3637)

Theory of Creative Evolution, the base of the concept of Perfect Man, was neither propounded by Rumi nor by Bergson but by Ibn'\'l Arabi who had derived it from The Holy Quran. No doubt that Rumi and then Bergson presented it in a clearer and definite form. Rumi, who has been called an

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innovator in the world of mysticism presented fresh interpretations of life and the Universe. He interpreted the creation of Adam and the destiny of Adam in a fresh manner and saved man from annihilation. He solved the problem of death with theory of Creative Evolution. His Perfect Man is not cunning but has faith in knowledge and Universal Love (ishq). He is deadly against deception. His Perfect Man has firm faith, consistent action and Universal Love. According to him love of God and his beloved Prophet leads to love of humanity. Rumi's quest is for such a man who is the builder of his own destiny. Both Rumi and Iqbal have given fresh interpretation of the word destiny. Action is prayer for them.

Rumi's Perfect Man transcends Time and Space. He "ascends the Throne in a moment"32 while the "ascetic needs a month for one day's journey".33 Love according to him has "five hundred wings".34 He lives in union with the Logos and therefore may claim to be the archetype and animating principle of the Universe.35

33. Ibid., p. 102.
34. Ibid., p. 102.
35. R.A. Nicholson, Rumi: Poet and Mystic, p. 148 (from the footnotes by Nicholson.)