Chapter IX
GROWTH OF SELF IN SUFISM

The self of the Sufi undergoes a qualitative change during his spiritual training. This change is an intensive transformation of his baser self towards healthy psyche. This change is called growth. The self of a Sufi grows towards maturation, termed as ‘balogh’ and \( tazkiya-i-nafs \) in Sufism.

Sufism is an ancient science of soul. In the modern terminology of the human sciences we do not use this word ‘soul’, instead we use self, mind, consciousness, etc. The present study is a psychological study, so we shall try to present the old wine of Sufism in the new bottle, that is, try to present Sufi theories about human nature in the modern terminology of philosophy and psychology. This can only be done if we adopt some hermeneutic to interpret the Sufi text. We shall try first of all to interpret the Sufi symbology. We shall base our further study upon this interpretation. We divide the present chapter into two sections. First, presentation and growth of self in the Persian literature and second, presentation and growth of self in the mystic literature of some important Sufis.

A. Presentation and Growth of Self in the Persian Literature -

Sufism is basically a science of soul. It is concerned with creating a self, which is unique in itself. In Sufi terminology it is called ‘work’. The Sufi works to make himself a better self. The Sufis believe:

\[ \text{‘Care for the soul is better than feeling care for one’s bread!’ (Rumi in the Diwan)} \]

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1 Divan-i Shams Tabriz, Kitab Bhavan, New Delhi, 1994, p. 169
Sufis use ‘tazkiya-nafs’ a term for the growth of self. According to Bint-al-Islam (1981), ‘tazkiya’ means to purify, to promote growth. This word is opposite to the word - دستحیل, dastahat, and means to suppress. We can say that ‘tazkiya’ means to purify, to grow and it can also be termed as ‘de-repression’.1 So tazkiya-i-nafs means growth of the self. This growth is the growth of man’s moral self in fact. Psychological growth and moral growth are included in the word ‘tazkiya’. The man is imbued with laudable qualities. The person grows in his ‘iman’ or faith. In the present research we are more concerned with the psycho-spiritual development of man’s consciousness.

To compare the ancient texts with the modern ones, calls forth some very intricate problems. The first problem is that of the language and second is the changed world-view of the modern man from the ancient ages. For example, in the present thesis we are comparing Sufism with Psychoanalysis and Transpersonal Psychology. There is a vide temporal gap between the former and the latter two. Then there is terminological differences Sufism adopts different terminology, and Psychology totally different one. In psychology and philosophy we can find many books written on the self and its growth but in Sufism not so. But it does not mean that the Sufis have not talked about self. They have their own vocabulary to express the psychological and philosophical experiences. Almost all of the great Sufis were, at the same time, prolific writers also. They wrote what they felt. Their experiences were esoteric, so they disguised their spiritual experiences in various forms of writings. Persian literature can never forget the contribution of the Sufis in the fields of poetry as well as prose. Had Rumi not left us with his ‘masnavi’, who would remember him? Similarly others. They made literature a vehicle to carry on their

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1 Nafs ka Tazkiya, Markazi Maktaba Islami, Delhi. 1981. p. 49
treasury of spiritual experiences in the guise of verse, metaphors, symbols and allegories. Fariduddin Attar’s masterpiece ‘the Mantiq ul-Tair’ (the conference of the Birds) is an allegory of the human self. We shall study this text shortly.

Some Sufis writers expressed their ideas through the prevalent folk tales, fables and stories. Positivistic language is not the only language in which the philosophical texts can be written. The ancient thinker had been expressing their philosophical ideas through other writing devices like allegories and the philosophical romances Ibn Tofail (died in 1185) the Spanish Islamic philosopher presented his philosophy in the form of a philosophical romance – Hayy ibn Yaqzan. In this work he has devoted the largest portion to the course of Hayy’s inner growth of spirit and intellect. Similarly Shaikh Suhrawardi Maqtul wrote a number of treatise in Persian, which are symbolic in nature and hides esoteric meanings. These treatise include: ‘Aql-i-Surkh (The Red Intellect). Awaz-i-par’i Jibra’il (the chant of the Wing of Gabriel). Safir-i Simurgh (the Song of the Griffin), Risala fi ‘l-miraj (Treatise on the Nocturnal Journey) etc. The Shaikh has presented his mystic ideas in these treatise.

Even the most famous tales like Rustum and Sohrab, Laila wa Majnu, Salman wa Absal, Sheerin wa Farhad etc. hide the deeper meanings worth of psychological values. Everybody is not capable enough to understand the deeper meanings of the Sufi literature, which has been misinterpreted as nothing but a sensual and petty romantic tales. In fact, it is not so. The Sufis talks in symbols and metaphors and various other figures of speech. It depends upon the reader’s spiritual level that responds to a particular Sufi text. Nizami Ganjvi (1191-1203) in his romance ‘Laila wa Majnu’ writes –
‘Do not think that I worship Laila; I worship Laila of Laila (means the Truth).

In fact, Majnu is ‘nafs natiqa’, the rational soul or the human self, who is separated from his Essence, that is Laila, and pining for unity. Majnu’s longing for Laila is self’s longing for growth and perfection. Self has been represented in the Sufi romances variously. Only a man of ‘sight’ can locate it. To make this point clear, we shall study two important texts from the Persian literature from the viewpoint of modern psychology.

1. Salman and Absal by Jami.
2. Mantiq ul Tair by Faridudin Attar.

1. SALMAN AND ABSAL OF JAMI

Nurul Din Abdul Rahman Jami was the most versatile writer of the Timurid period. He was born in the village of Jam in Khurasan in AD1414 (and died in 1492). That is why he is called ‘Jami’. It has been said that the Persians consider their seven greatest poets – Firdawsi for epic poetry, Nizami for romances, Rumi for mystical poetry, Saadi for his verses on ethical subjects, Hafiz for his lyrics and Jami for general excellence in all these forms.

Jami’s versatility was astonishing, for his prose works are as valuable as his poetry is good.

His prose works are:

a) Ashiatul Lama’at (Rays of the Flashes)
b) Lawaih (Flashes)
c) Baharistan (Abode of Spring).

d) The Shawahidun Nubuwwat (Evidence of Prophethood)

e) Lawwami (Gleams)

f) Naqdun Nusus etc.

In poetry in addition to three ‘diwans’ of lyrical poetry, many of which are after the style of Hafiz. Jami composed seven masnavi poems commonly grouped together called ‘Haft Awrang’ (the seven thrones). These are based on Nizami’s septet.

Jami’s ‘Haft Awrang’ comprises of the seven following poems:

1. Silsilatu ‘Ih – Dhahab (‘The chain of Gold)
2. Salman wa Absal.
3. Tuhaftul Ahrar (the Gift of the Noble).
5. Layla wa Majnun
7. Subhatul-Abrar (Rosery of the Pious).

Jami was the follower of the great Shaikh Ibn Arabi. His book ‘Lawaih’ is an exposition of Ibn Arabi’s mystic doctrine of the ‘Unity of Being’ (Wahdat-al-Wujud).

We shall devote ourselves here to one of the above texts of Jami-Salman and Absal. (Translated into English from Persian by Edward Fitzgerald). This text is rich with psychological and spiritual insights. It begins with the questions of self. In the very beginning lines, Jami raises questions of I and Thou. He states his basic query regarding self and identity with a story –

A Kurd perplexed by Fortune’s Frolics
Left his Desert For the City

Sees a City full of Noise and
Clamour, agitated People.

Hither, Thither, Back and Forward
Running, some intent or Travel,
Others home again returning,
Right to Left, and Left to Right,
Life – disquiet everywhere!

Kurd, when he beholds the Turmoil,
Creeps aside, and Travel – weary,
Fain would go to sleep; ‘But’, saith he
‘How shall I in all this Hubub
Know myself again on waking?’

So by way of Recognition
Ties a Pumpkin round his Foot,
And turns to sleep. A Knave that heard him
Crept behind, and Silly watching
Slips the Pumpkin off Sleeper’s
Ankle, ties it round his own
And so down to sleep beside him.

By and by the Kurd awaking
Looks directly for his Signal –
Sees it on another’s Ankle –
Cries aloud, 'Oh! Good-for-nothing
Rascal to perplex me so!
That by you I am bewilder’d,
If I – the Pumpkin why on you?
If you – then where am I, and who?

Above is the basic question of human epistemology – who am I? Jami had put this in a very expressive and suggestive way. Our phenomenal identity is formed with reference to some objective correlate. A shift in the correlate endangers our own sense of identity. Man always defines himself by virtue of his objects – possessions, status, social rank, wealth, and such things. But the Sufi does not define himself with such phenomenal objects. He tries to realize his non-phenomenal i.e. transcendental identity, which is a hard process requiring many arduous obligations on the part of the novice. The novice has to abandon all his vain and carnal desires. He has to de-identify himself from his body-self and realize his incorporeal sense of being. Jami tries to convey this idea through the allegory of the Salman and Absal. He tells us a tale. –

There was a Shah of Yunan (King of Rome). He had an advisor a sage. The sage was very wise. The King was very fortunate to have such a wise advisor. But he thought himself unfortunate for not having a son. Once the King expressed his sorrow to the sage. The King wanted a son. He asks the sage –

‘Is any Blessing better than a son?
Man’s prime Desire; by which his Name and He
Shall live beyond Himself, by whom his Eyes

1 This and the following translation of Salman and Absal are by Edward Fitzgerald, Rupa & Co. 1982 (Contained in ‘Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam’)

188
Shine living, and his Dust with Roses blows;
A foot for thee to stand on, he shall be
A Hand to stop thy falling; in his youth
Thou shall be Young, and in his Strength be strong;

(Tr. E. Fitzgerald)

The sage heard the King’s distress. He counseled him about the roots of the desire
of a son. He explains the King the truth about the woman. The King was overpowered
with the strong desire for a son, he contemplates help. He conjured up his spiritual power
and produced a child from the invisible world.

‘The sage his Satire ended; and the Shah
With Magic mighty Wisdom his pure Will
Leaguing, its Self-fulfillment wrought from Heaven.
And Lo! From Darkness came to Light a child,
Of carnal composition Unattaint –
A Rosebud blowing on the Royal Stem –
A Perfume from the Realm of Wisdom wafted;’

(Tr. E. Fitzgerald)

The child was named Salaman. They chose for him a nurse. Her name was Absal
and was around twenty years old. She started his look-after. The child had heavenly
beauty that charmed Absa: very much. She became fond of the growing boy.

Now the young boy Salaman too fell in love with Absal. Both of them were lost
into each other’s arms. They forgot the world. But the world did not forget them. The
King was very shocked to know this. The King called his young son and counseled him.
But the young lover was not in his senses. He declared, “I leave both worlds behind to follow her.” Next he was counseled by the wise sage to whom the young lover replied:

‘From which I originally am
How should I swerve? Whom put forth a sign
Beyond the power that is by Nature Mine?’

(Tr. Ibid)

The King and the wise sage failed to set Salman right. ‘Reproaches struck not Absal out of him.’ The result was Salaman’s elopement with Absal on a camel.

‘Absal and He together side by side
Rejoicing like the Lily and the Rose,
Together like the Body and the Soul.

What sweeter than your Mistress at your side
In such a Solitude, and –none to chide!’

(Tr. Ibid)

The King was totally grief struck in the absence of his son. He tried to trace the prince but all in vain. Finally he arranged a magic mirror, which could reflect the desired object. In the mirror he saw Salman and Absal lying side by side and looking into each other’s eyes. The King saw them and felt pity for them. He did not reproach them. But as the days passed on, the King saw Salman still lost in Absal. The crown and the throne waited for him. But Salaman’s love was still unsatisfied. Their sojourn of love seemed unended. Finally, the King lost his patience and he discharged his fire of Will upon Salaman. Salaman’s love became ineffective. He could not reach and touch Absal. But
after sometime again Mercy fell upon him. He recognized his father’s pull. He went to his father. His father again tried to wean him away from Absal. He reminded him of his responsibilities towards the Kingdom that was waiting for him.

It is a pity that love accepts no counseling. Salaman could not be separated from Absal. He and Absal decided to die together. They prepared a pyre and walked into the fire together. They were unaware that the King had instructed fire not to burn Salaman. The fire consumed Absal and left Salaman safe.

‘They sprang into the fire hand in hand,
The Shah who saw, in secret had ordered; and the flame,
Directed by his Self-fulfilling Will,
Devouring utterly Absal, passed by
Salaman harmless – the pure Gold returned
Entire, but all the baser metal burn’d,’

The next followed the sorrowful days of Salaman. His grief and anguish knew no bounds. He too thought himself dead after the death of Absal. He spent his days in mourning.

‘The Flame had left Thee living and me Dead,
Not living worse than Dead, deprived of Thee!’

The King could not see his son’s plight. He turned to the sage and beseeched help. He assured the King that if Salman heeded his words, he could –be saved. Then the sage counseled and Salaman heard and tried to revive his own heart. The sage’s counseling, this time reached Salman’s soul. The sage raised an image of Absal and set it before the inward eye of Salaman. When this image made Salaman’s soul peaceful, it perished
again. In place of Absal’s image in Salaman’s imagination, sage placed the image of the beautiful Zuhra (the planetary and Celestial Venus). She was the emblem of the perfect heavenly beauty.

‘Salaman listened and inclined – again
Repeated, inclination ever grew;
Until the sage beholding in his soul
The spirit quicken, so effectually
With Zuhra wrought, that she revealed herself
In her pure beauty to Salaman’s soul,
And washing Absal’s image from his Breast,
There reigned instead. Celestial Beauty seen,
He left the Earthly, and, one comes to know
Eternal Love, he let the Mortal go.’

In this way the sage turned Salaman’s phenomenal love (ishq majazi) into noumenal love (ishq haqiqi) with the help of the Divine Beauty. The King crowned the Salaman with the Golden Crown and set the Golden Throne beneath his feet and advised him to do his duties perfectly.

The above is the allegorical tale told by Jami in his ‘Salaman wa Absal.’ But the book does not end with the coronation of Salaman. Jami interprets himself the symbolism of his allegory. Let us hear him verbatim.

‘Under the outward firm of any story
An inner meaning lies – This story now
Completed, do thou of its mystery
Have thy Desire – No take of I and thou,
Though I and thou be its interprets,
What signifies the Shah? And what the Sage?
And what Salaman not of Woman bore?
And what Absal who drew him to Desire?
And what the Kingdom that waited him
When he had drawn his garment from her hand?
What means the fiery pile? And what the sea?
And what that heavenly Zuhra who at last
Clear’d Absal from the Mirror of his soul?
Learn part by part the Mystery from me;
All ear from head to foot and understanding be’

Then Jami answers his own questions with the help of TAWIL – a Sufistic hermeneutics of the texts in which the inner meanings are revealed.

‘The Incomparable creator, when this world
He did create, created first of all
The First intelligence (Aql-awwal) - First of a chain
Of Ten intelligences, of which the Last
Sole Agent is in this our Universe,
Active Intelligence (Aql-fa’al) so call’d; the one
Distributor of Evil and of Good,
Of Joy and Sorrow. Himself apart from Matter,
In Essence and in Energy – his Treasure
Subject to no such Talisman – He yet
Hath fashion’d all that is – Material Form,
And spiritual, sprung from Him – by Him
Directed all, and in his Bounty drown’d.
Therefore is He that Firman – issuing SHAH
To whom the world was subject. But Because
What He distributes to the Universe
Himself from still a Higher Power receives,
The Wise, and who comprehend aright,
Will recognize the Higher in THE SAGE.
His the PRIME SPIRIT that, spontaneously
Projected by the Tenth Intelligence
Was from no Womb of Matter reproduced
A special Essence called the SOUL – A CHILD
Fresh sprung from Heaven in Raiment undefiled
Of Sensual Taint, and therefore called Salaman.
And who ABSAL? – The Lust-adoring Body,
Slave to the Blood and Sense; and these united thus
By such a Tie God only can unloose,
BODY AND SOUL are lovers each of other
What is THE SEA ON WHICH He sail’d? – The Sea
Of Animal Desire – the Sensual Abyss
Under whose water lies a world of Being
Swept far from God in that submersion.
And wherefore was it ABSAL in the Isle
Deceived in her Delight, and that SALAMAN
Fell short of his Desire? – That was to show
How Passion tires and how with Time begins
The folding of the carpet of Desire
And what the turning of Salaman’s Heart
Back to THE SHAH, and looking to the Throne
Of Pomp and Glory? What but the Return
Of the Lost SOUL to its true Parentage
And back from Carnal Error Looking up
Repentant to its Intellectual Throne.
What is THE FIRE? – Ascetic Discipline,
That burns away the Animal Alloy
Till all the Dross of MATTER be consumed,
And the Essential Soul, its raiment clean
Of Mortal taint, be left. But for as much
As any Life-long Habit so consumed,
May well recur a Pang of what is lost,
Therefore THE SAGE set in Salaman’s Eyes
A Soothing Phantom of the Past, but still
Told of a Better Venus, till his Soul
She fill’d, and blotted out his mortal love
For what is Zuhra? – That Divine Perfector
Wherewith the soul inspired and all arrayed
In Intellectual Light is Royal blest,
And mounts THE THRONE, and –wears
THE CROWN and Reigns,
Lord of the Empire of Humanity.’

The above is Jami’s philosophical interpretation of his own text in which the King is the Active Intellect (aql faʿal) and the sage is the higher world from which aql faʿal gets instructions. Absal is the personification of the bodily lust. Salaman’s pull towards the King is Intellect’s reining in of the bodily passions. Fire is the hard practice of ‘riyazat’ in which the bodily lust is burnt and in which only the spirit that has shed the bodily pleasures, survives. Zuhra is the Perfect state, (kamalat-i-buland) of a man that is gained after purifying oneself of the carnal desires. Jami explains the growth of self in a very succinct way in his epilogue (quoted in the above verse). Zuhra is the symbol of the fully-grown or realized self or the transpersonal self, which is gained after a hard ascetic practice in which the novice cleans himself of his carnal self (nafs-i-ammarah) and achieves the state of Kamal – Perfection.

Jalal Sattari (1994)¹ in his brilliant study in Sufi Symbolism in the line of modern method of interpreting symbols, studies different texts of various authors who besides Jami wrote ‘Salaman and Absal’ like Ibn Sina and Ismail Rezi. Naseeruddin Tusi

¹ Jalal Sattari, Ramz Shanashi Irfani, Nashr-e Markaz, 1994 Tehran
And Fakhruddin Razi have interpreted Ibn Sina’s ‘Salaman wa Absal’ in the philosophical terminology as they themselves were great philosophers.

Sattari finds that there are differences in the accounts of the story in the different texts. According to him Jami’s interpretation is very limited and brief.

Sattari traces the roots of the above story in Rome (Sayyid Nafisi traces it in Indian tales). According to him this is a love story of Hermes. The story differs from Jami’s account at a few points. In Jami’s narrative Salaman and Absal walk into fire but in the original tale they walked into sea. The King instructs the sea to drown Absal and save Salman. After Absal’s death, Salman wants to kill himself, but the sage (Aqliqulus) counsels Salaman and tells him to go to solitude in a cave and meditate. After forty days the image of Absal will rise before him. This is possible only if Salaman fulfills three conditions: First, Salaman will not hide his state of soul from the sage any time. Second, Salaman will put on the clothes same as those worn by Absal. Third, Salaman will not desire any other woman except Absal for the whole life.

Salaman accepted these three conditions, the sage took him to the cave. The sage started his worshipping of Zuhra (Venus) there. Everyday the figure of Absal appeared there who sat near them. Salaman talked to her. On the fortieth day instead of Absal, a very beautiful figure appeared. She was Zuhra. Salaman forgot everything to see the glaring beauty of Zuhra. Zuhra’s beauty wiped off Absal’s picture from Salaman’s heart or we can say that through Salaman’s love, Absal became his eternal companion. Ibn Sina has adopted the above plot for his ‘Salaman and Absal’.

Imam Fakhruddin Razi says that it is possible that by Salaman may mean the Adam (of the Quran) and Absal may mean the perfect Man (insane-e-kamil). Adam may
mean the rational soul also and paradise means the levels of happiness (darjat-e-sa’adat).

As Adam was expelled out of the Paradise for eating the forbidden grain of wheat, rational soul also by paying attention to the lust is degraded to the carnal self.

Nasiruddin Tusi traces this story to some Arabic tales in which Salaman is represented by good and moral character and Absal by a lewd and adulteress nature. Jalal Sattari is not satisfied with Tusi’s interpretation of Ibn Sina’s text. Then he quotes Henry Corbin’s interpretation of Ibn Sina’s text.

Henry Corbin (1905-1978) was a French orientalist who has done a great service to the Sufism by editing as well as translating many important texts of Islamic mysticism and philosophy. He was a scholar of French, Arabic and Persian, perhaps a few more, languages. He edited Ibn Sina’s text of ‘Salaman and Absal’ with his commentary on it. His approach in the commentary is psychological. According to him the above tale cannot be interpreted commonly. It has secrets not applicable to all. Rather, it is for a few chosen ones only. This tale is a psychological tale of an arif’s heart.

According to Henry Corbin¹, whatever happens in the cave is not the happening in the external world; it is the happenings of a knower’s heart. It is not merely an allegory of body and soul and spiritual faculties, because everybody cannot be a knower. This is a happening in the ‘world of similitude’ (alame-misal). It is the development of a Sufi’s consciousness or self. According to Henry Corbin the secret of the tale lies in the death of Absal. Tusi, he says, missed to note this point. The death of Absal is not physical phenomenon. Salaman’s turning away from Absal also is not like the turning away of a lover from his beloved as we see in this world. In fact it means, the ardent love of

¹ Henry Corbin’s views are taken from the Persian work of Jalal Sattari, Ramz Sharasi Irfani’ op. cit. pp from 100 to 104
Salaman and Absal have transformed their nature. The love has changed first the sensuous beloved to the psychological beloved and then to the spiritual beloved in the form of the pure light. The earthly beloved (mashuq-khaki) has disappeared, and with the disappearance of the earthly beloved, the earthly love too disappeared. But the personality or identity of the beloved now has nestled in the very self of Salaman, represented by Salaman’s wearing of Absal’s clothes. *And the prince no longer wants his beloved because Salaman himself – is Absal.* And, further, his love is not for any other. Instead he has a perpetual vision of the form from the world of the similitude in his own heart. Now the Sâlik (the mystic) has died to his own self and reborn as a spirit or achieved ‘the second birth’. This spiritual rebirth is termed as the growth of the self.

**Jalal Sattari** quotes Ismail Rezi as another interpreter of the tale of Salaman and Absal.¹ According to Ismail Rezi the King is the Active Intellect (*aql fa’al*). The sage is the grace of the Active Intellect (*faiz aql-fa’al*). Salaman is the rational soul (*nafs-natiqa*) who without any physical union has been graced by the Active Intellect, and Absal is the animalistic body to which the rational soul inclines – Salaman’s love for Absal is the rational self’s attraction towards bodily pleasures. Fleeing of Salaman and Absal means involvement of man into the bodily pleasures which means increasing gap between man and God. But then a transformation begins when Salaman returns to the King. Salaman and Absal’s walking into sea (or fire according to Jami) and coming closer after Absal’s death all these are the process of purgation in the mystic way. Salaman’s survival means soul’s ‘*baqa*’ after the ‘*fana*’.

The Sufi symbolism is based on the belief that there are two worlds – spiritual and

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¹ Ibid, pages 112 to 115
Material or a World Sensual and a World Intelligential or a World Supernal and a World Inferior or visible and invisible worlds. Al Ghazali says, “This World Sensual is the point from which we ascend to the World Intelligential; and but for this connection between the two, and their reciprocal relationship, the way upward to the higher sphere would be barred.”¹

Al Ghazali says further defining the symbol, “Were there no relation between the two worlds (visible and invisible), no interconnection at all, then all upward progress would be inconceivable from one to the other. Therefore, the divine mercy gave to the World Visible a correspondence with the World of the Realm Supernal, and for this reason there is not a single thing in this world of sense that is not a symbol of something in yonder one. It may well happen that some one thing in this world may symbolize several things in the World of the Realm of Supernal, and equally well that some one thing in the latter may have several symbols in the World Visible. We call a thing typical or symbolic when it resembles and corresponds to its antitype under some aspect.”²

Thus, according to the Sufis everything in this Visible World has its archetype (or ayan sabita) in the world of similitude (or alam-e-misal) and a symbol connects these two worlds. So, if the Sufi texts are understood in this way, the secrets hidden behind them may be revealed to us in a better way. Thus, the King in the above tale symbolizes the aql-fa’al and the sage – the Grace and Salaman – the human soul and Absal – the bodily passions etc.

The above kind of symbolism can be seen in the romantic legends called ‘qissas’,
of the Punjab also. **Satinder Aulakh** (1992) writes, “The writers of these *qissas* have tried to interpret these happenings as the tales of union between human souls with the Universal Soul. With this effort, they confront the problem of impermanence of human existence opposed to the permanent nature of the Divine or the opposition between body and soul.”¹

Aulakh writes further –

“The writers of the *qissas* also try to transform these tales into the episodes of Divine Love. Waris Shah (a famous Punjabi *qissa* writer) in the end (of his romance) Hir-Ranjha, tells the readers that it is the story of love between human soul and the Divine. Hir is the soul and Ranjha is the lovesick human body. Bhagwan Singh, in Mirza and Sahiban, reverses the role by assigning the role of body to Sahiban, and that of mind to Mirza. All these characters in this romantic story go through a certain spiritual metamorphosis.”²

Aulakh (1992) in her semiotic study of the *qissa* Mirza-Sahiban has so tried to reveal the semiotic meaning of Mirza and Sahiban’s flight on horse like Salaman and Absal on camel. No interpreter of the Salaman and Absal has interpreted this flight. Mirza, the hero of Mirza and Sahiban rides the fast horse and elopes with Sahiban. Aulakh writes –

“The horse becomes a vehicle of their flight transforming the voluptuous nature of its existence into a mystic one. The act of love between lovers is consummated on their mental plane in the form of the fast ride together, on the back of the running horse.”³

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¹ Aulakh Satinder (1992). The Horse and the Ferocious River. Bhakha Sanjam, Panjabi University, Patiala Page 44
² Ibid page 44
³ Ibid page 70
Similarly Salman and Absal’s flight was also a flight into their land of fancy and imagination where they settled to stay for ever until the King exerts his spiritual power and shatters their dream land.

2. *MANTIQA T AIR* OF ATTAR

The books of which the Persian literature is proud of *Mantiq al-Tair* or ‘The Conference of the Birds’ is one of them. This is an allegory. The author of this book Faridud-Din Attar was a great Sufi. He was born (according to C. S. Nott) in AD 1120 near Nishapur in North-West Persia (the birth place of Omar Khayyam). The date of his death is uncertain but is given as about AD 1230 according to Nott. Helmut Ritter (1995) gives us the date as 1220 AD.

It is said that Attar had a deeper understanding of Sufi ideas than anyone of his time. His Sufi Master was the famous Shaikh Bukh-ud-udin. For thirty-nine years he traveled in many countries, studying in monasteries and collecting the writings of devout Sufis. He then returned to Nishapur where he lived for the remainder of his life. He had also spent many years of his youth in Meshed also.

It is said that Rumi was a growing youth when he with his father met Attar. Attar blessed him and gifted him one of his wonderful books – *Asrar Nameh* (the Book of Secrets). Later on Rumi wrote his magnum opus the *Masnavi* in the style of the *Asrar Nameh*. He feels himself indebted to Attar in writing mystical poetry. He praises Attar -

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\text{کطار روح لود و سنّاک پشتیم اد مان نیب سنّاک د کطار\text{}} \\
\text{And}
\]

\[
\text{سی راک لیک و قاره نظم تشنگ ریزد و نیب در خنن نفت خالم در خطارم}
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202
And also:

Shaikh Attar composed about two hundred thousand verses and many works in prose. Attar's most known works are –

1. Musibat Nameh (the Book of Suffering).
2. Ilahi Nameh (The Book of Divine).
3. Khusraw Nameh
4. Mukhtar Nameh
5. Pand Nameh
6. Diwan Ghazaliyat
7. Tazkiratul Aulia
8. Mantiq al Tair
9. Haylajnama

The Sufi masters have presented their transpersonal psychology in the garb of romantic allegories, the philosophical romances and fables. The Sufi masters have described the self and its growth in symbolic and metaphoric language of literature. The 'growth psychology' has been described in indirect ways like stories, parables etc. Some Sufi masters have described the growth of self directly also like the Ghazali brothers, Ibn
Arabi, Dara Shikoh and many others. The other Sufis like Attar describe the growth of self in allegorical literature ‘Mantiq al-Tair’ is one of such allegories.

The growth of self in ‘Mantiq al Tair’ has been described as a journey to search Simurgh, a symbol for the Transpersonal Self. The birds are metaphors of different kinds of selves involved in various seeking. Dr. Raza Arasteh says about the Mantiq –

“In his allegory, a flock of birds resembling a group of travelers passes through severe purifying stages of inner evolution before finally becoming one with the object of their search – God.”

So while studying the ‘Mantiq’ as a text in the growth of self, we have to decode the symbols and metaphors and translate their contents into the modern terminology. Only then we can compare or juxtapose the Sufi and the modern thought.

The ‘Mantiq al-Tair’ begins with the conference of birds. In the first part, the poet praises all the birds by telling the importance of each one. The second part begins with the gathering of the birds. All the birds of the world assemble together. They want to search their King. They begin to consider how to set out on their quest. The Hoopoe (hudhud) comes in the middle of the birds and tells them that he knows the abode of the King. The name of the King is – SIMURGH (a legendary bird) who lives in the mountain of Quaff. There are thousands of veils before Him of darkness and light. Nobody has seen Him. Whoever says anything about Him are all fancies and nothing. The road leading to Him is long and full of difficulties.

After hearing the Hoopoe the birds feel a longing to go for their King. But when they think how long and difficult the journey is, they hesitate and begin to excuse

themselves, to each one the Hoopoe points out his error. First of all the Nightingale comes and declares that the rose carries the secret of love. If she is separated from the rose she will surely die; the journey to the Simurgh will deplete her tender strength. The Hoopoe replies to her that she should not become the slave of a transitory love. Although the rose is fair her beauty is soon gone. He advises her to seek self-perfection.

Then comes the Parrot and says that he is seeking the fountain of life, not Simurgh. The Hoopoe tells her that the way is not preserve to oneself but to sacrifice one’s life for the sake of the Friend.

Next says the pretentious peacock that having sinned and been expelled from the paradise he desires only to return there and nothing more. The Hoopoe replies that he has selected the wrong object of desire. The palace of the King (Simurgh) is better than the peacock’s paradise. The truth dwells in the heart.

The duck shows his strong attachment with water and tells all that he performs the ablutions every hour and busy in prayer and has no desires for Simurgh. The Hoopoe says that water is good only for those who have a fair and clean face and stays clean and pure as the water.

Next approaches the Partridge (Kabak) and says that he is so busy in searching for jewels in the mountains that his heart burns from the pebbles that he has swallowed. The Hoopoe replies that he Partridge’s love of jewels has hardened his heart. He should seek the true jewel and not be content with a stone. The King Solomon because of his ring was hampered in his spiritual progress and came to the paradise of Eden five hundred years later than the other prophets.
The proudy Homa comes forward saying that whomever his shadow falls on becomes a King. He asks if a maker of Kings and a giver of thrones need to seek Simurgh. The Hoopoe replies him that he is a slave of pride. Though he enthrones Kings, he will lose their loyalty when misfortune strikes them.

Next comes the Hawk, like a soldier, and says that he is satisfied with his lot being on the King’s hand. He feels happy to be in the court of (the earthly) King. The Hoopoe replies that the hawk should not feel happy in the earthly King’s court because it is like fire to be avoided.

The Heron (butimar) says that he has passion for the sea and does not want to be separated from the sea. The Hoopoe replies that the sea is full of dangerous creatures. It is always changing and never stable. The sea lacks loyalty as many great ones have been swallowed up in its depth.

The owl (jugd) expresses himself by saying he is fond of ruined houses and there he takes delight. He resides there in the hope of gaining any hidden treasure. He does not want to leave his ruins and the hope for treasure to go after Simurgh. The Hoopoe replies him that the love of gold is a characteristic of infidels. He warns the owl that who is corrupted by the love of gold will on the day of resurrection have his face changed to resemble that of a mouse.

Then says the sparrow that he is too weak to search Simurgh. He wants to rest contented by seeking his Joseph in the well. If he finds him he will soar with him from the fish to the moon. The Hoopoe replied in anger that the sparrow’s apparent weakness hides a hundred signs of vanity and pride. He forbade him to compare himself with Joseph. The Hoopoe addresses all the birds, “All of you identify yourself with transitory
things. You are all shadows of the Simurgh. The different types of birds that are seen in
the world are thus only the shadow of the Simurgh. It is true that no eye is able to
contemplate and marvel at his beauty. But by his grace he has given us a mirror to reflect
himself, and this mirror is the heart. Look into your heart and there you will see his
image."

The above last lines show us the doctrine of Unity of Being or ‘Wahdat-al-wujud’, that is 'you are only shadow of the Simurgh not the Simurgh yourself'.

Then the Hoopoe tells them the story of Shaikh San’an. After pondering over the
story of Shaikh San’an the birds decide to abandon all their previous ways of life.

Finally the birds decide to set out for their journey. But when they see a long and
deserted never-ending road, they cry in fear. They again crowd together and ask the
Hoopoe for advice again. The Hoopoe sits on a high throne and replies each one. The
conference begins again. But this time the birds are ready to go ahead. They only need
psychological counseling to dispel their petty fears and doubts. This time each bird opens
his heart before the Hoopoe.

A bird asks the Hoopoe how he has achieved such an exalted spiritual state. The
Hoopoe replies that he has been graced by Solomon. Merely a sight of the King can raise
the status of the seeker.

Another bird says that he is very weak and will die at the first stage. The Hoopoe
replies that it is better to lose one’s life in the quest than to die miserably. So long as we
do not die to ourselves we shall never be free.

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1 From C.S. Nott’s translation.
Another bird says that she is full of faults so how she should go out on the road. How can a sinner approach the King? The Hoopoe replies that she should not be hopeless. She should pray for grace and favour after repentance.

Another bird says that he is of fickle mind, always changing and in mental conflicts. Sometimes he is sinful and sometimes pious, sometimes goaded by satanic impulses and sometimes by angelic. What should a person of such a mental state do? The Hoopoe replies that everyone is such in the beginning. If we had been guiltless from the beginning God would not have had to send his messengers and prophets. The Hoopoe advises that it is through obedience that the bird can attain felicity.

Another bird says he is tortured by his carnal self (nafs ammarah) and how he should save his soul. The Hoopoe replies that the carnal soul never dies whether it is youth or old age. He who makes himself master of this dog of the nafs will take in his nets the lion of the two worlds (Visible and invisible).

Another bird says that he is afflicted with devil’s promptings, which arouses his vanity and prevents him from seeking a guide. How he should escape the Satan. The Hoopoe replies that so long as the dog of desire runs with him the devil will not leave him.

Another bird says that he has much liking for gold and worldly, things, which blinds him to spiritual path. The Hoopoe replies that gold is nothing but an ordinary metal. We should not be impressed with the glitters of the worldly things. These worldly objects veil the Truth from our eyes.

Another bird says that he lives in a golden palace like a King. It is very difficult for him to abandon such a charming and beautiful spot. The Hoopoe reminds him that he
has to die one day. If there were no death, in that case, for the bird was right. Since death is sure so the palace is like a prison for him.

Another bird says that he is afflicted with his love for a beautiful damsel. Love has carried away his sense of reason. His heart is on fire with passion. It is not possible for him to leave her. What should he do?

The Hoopoe replies that he is attached to visible things. Sensual love is fleeting. True love is not for a body composed of flesh and bones. It is hidden. It should be sought in the invisible world.

Another bird says that he is afraid of death that he is so filled with the fear of death that his life will leave him soon he is on the road. The Hoopoe replies that whoever is born must also die. Life, be it long or short, is composed of a few breaths. Man is born to die only. There is no other remedy for death than to look death constantly in the face.

Another bird says that his heart is full of sorrows and sufferings. The Hoopoe replies that which is outward appearance is suffering can be a treasure for the seer. A hundred blessings will come to him if he makes effort on the path.

Another bird asks the Hoopoe what the result will be if he surrenders his will to the Hoopoe whom he accepts as his guide. The Hoopoe replies that obedience is a laudable quality. One hour of serving God in accordance with the true law is worth a lifetime of serving the world. He who submits to obedience on this path is delivered from deception and escapes many difficulties.

Another bird says that he wishes to be sincere in the spiritual way after he had spent all that he had. The Hoopoe replies that to travel this road, self-sincerity is necessary – and to be sincere with oneself is more the difficult than one think. He advises
the bird to set light to his faults, his resentments and his vanities. He should burn them
and not to flatter himself that he is more sincere than others. He who prides himself on
his sincerity should strive to see himself as he is.

Another bird says that though he appears to be weak, in reality he has a noble
ardour (himmat) and though he has little strength, he has a lofty ambition. The Hoopoe
replies that if he has but a little of this noble ambition, it will triumph even over the sun.
Aspiration is the wings and feathers of the bird of the soul.

Another bird says to the Hoopoe about his quality of being just. Hoopoe praises
him that he is imbued by God with the laudable quality of justice.

Another bird asks the Hoopoe if boldness (gustakhi) is permitted in approaching
the Majesty of the Simurgh. The Hoopoe replies that it is good to be bold if one has
intelligence of the secrets of God. If one is actuated by pure love a little —boldness is
permitted. He who is on the path of self-knowledge should know when to be bold.

Another bird claims that he has love for the Eternal Being. He has detached his
heart from everything else except the Simurgh. The Hoopoe chides him saying that he
should not boast about his love. Boasting may block his way. For his true felicity it is
necessary that the Simurgh will also love him.

Another bird claims that he has already acquired the required perfection by
painful austerities (riyazat). So it is difficult for him to go after the Simurgh.

The Hoopoe castigates him saying that pride and self-conceit has taken possession
of him. He suffers with egoism. His claims are imaginary. Satan has stolen his brain. He
should shun self-pride to begin his search.
Another bird asks what he has to do to be contented on this journey. The Hoopoe replies that as long as one lives one must be content to remember God and be on the watch against indiscreet talk.

Another bird asks what he ought to ask the Simurgh after reaching near to him. The Hoopoe replies that he should know what to ask, though the Simurgh himself is far better than anything he can wish.

Another bird asks what gifts should be taken for the King. The Hoopoe replies that he should not take anything except the ardour of love and the longing of the spirit.

Finally a bird asks the Hoopoe the length of the distance to be covered to reach the King Simurgh. The Hoopoe replies that they have seven valleys to cross and only after they have crossed them can they discover the Simurgh.

The Hoopoe replies that the first valley is the Valley of the Quest, the second the Valley of Love, the third is the Valley of Understanding, the fourth is the Valley of Independence and Detachment, the fifth of Pure Unity, the sixth is the Valley of Astonishment, and the seventh is the Valley of Poverty and Nothingness beyond which one can go no further.

Then the Hoopoe describes the above Valleys in detail one by one which we shall try to summarize as follows:

1. **THE VALLEY OF THE QUEST (Vadi-e-Talah):**

The Valley of the Quest is full of a hundred difficulties and trials. The seeker has to spend several years there and try hard to change his state. He has to give up everything that he possesses. He will be drunk with the longing and quest. In this valley the dogma, belief and unbelief all cease to exist.
2. THE VALLEY OF LOVE (Vadi-e-ishq)

To enter this valley a man must be a flaming fire. In this valley love is represented by fire, and reason by smoke. When love comes reason disappears. He who undertakes this journey should have a thousand hearts so that he can sacrifice at every moment. With love, good and evil cease to exist. In this valley if one possesses inner sight, many secrets would be manifested. The valley of love prepares the seeker for understanding. Agitation and distress plague the seeker until he reaches his object.

3. THE VALLEY OF UNDERSTANDING (Vadi-e-ma’arfat)

This valley has neither beginning nor end. The spiritual way reveals itself only in the degree to which the traveler has overcome his faults and weaknesses, his sleep and his inertia, and each will approach nearer to his aim according to his effort. Understanding can be arrived at variously – some have found the Mihrab, others the idol.

In this valley each traveler gains an understanding of the truth according to his own receptiveness. He realizes his potentiality. Although he is not pre-occupied with himself, he sees the whole of creation by insight into an atom. He always looks up at the face of his friend.

4. THE VALLEY OF INDEPENDENCE AND DETACHMENT (Vadi-e-istighna)

When the seeker gains understanding, he becomes detached and enters the fourth valley. Here he must become independent, materially and spiritually. He must rid himself of the desire to possess. In this state he feels that the world is negligible where nothing new or old has value. One can act or not act. But he must still ponder on the origin of existence.
5. **THE VALLEY OF UNITY (Vadi-e-Tauhid)**

In this valley everything is broken in pieces and then unified. Everything has lost its temporal and conventional meaning. One realizes that the evolution of the universe and growth have come from the same source. Plurality has sprung from unity. Although a man may see many things, they are all one. In this valley individual identity undergoes a drastic change. (We shall discuss this point afterwards). This unity is above numbers.

6. **THE VALLEY OF ASTONISHMENT AND BEWILDERMENT (Vadi-e-hairat)**

In this valley one is afflicted with sadness and depression. Sighs become swords and each breath a bitter sigh. But the one who has already achieved unity forgets all, including himself, he falls into the state of bewilderment. He knows nothing. He is unaware of himself. He is in love but without knowing with whom. His heart is both full and empty of love at the same time.

7. **THE VALLEY OF DEPRIVATION AND EFFACEMENT (Vadi-e-Faqr wa Fana)**

This valley is almost impossible to describe. This is a valley of forgetfulness, dumbness, deafness and distraction. In this state the ray of enlightenment dispels the shadows that surround the seeker. His personal existence is totally effaced in the sea of the Reality.

Having heard the Hoopoe's discourse the birds decide to set out on the long road. They travel for years over mountains and valleys. Of the thousands of birds almost all disappear. In the end only thirty birds reach the end of the journey. And even there they are bewildered, weary and dejected without feathers and wings. But now they were at the...
door of the Majesty that cannot be described, whose essence is incomprehensible – that Being who is beyond human reason and knowledge. The birds sit there in despair and wait. The door opens after a long wait and a chamberlain steps out. He talks to them and denies them any entry because the Simurgh has nothing to do with a group, which can only lament. But the birds burn with love and persist.

Finally, when they have passed this final test also, the door is opened for them. The veils are lifted. They became aware that the Simurgh was there with them. The sun of majesty sent forth his rays, and in the reflection of each other’s faces these thirty birds (Simurgh) of the outer world, contemplated the face of the Simurgh of the inner world. This so astonished them that they did not know if they were still themselves or if they had become the Simurgh. At last, in a state of contemplation, they realized that they were the Simurgh and that the Simurgh was the thirty birds. When they gazed at the Simurgh they saw that it was truly the Simurgh who was there, and when they turned their eyes towards themselves they saw that they themselves were the Simurgh. And perceiving both at once, themselves and Him, they realized that they and the Simurgh were one and the same being. This was a unique experience of self-transformation or self-discovery. The Simurgh tells them that the sun of His majesty is a mirror. He who sees himself therein sees his soul and his body and sees them completely. His essence is more than the thirty birds. Thereupon the birds at last lost themselves forever in the Simurgh.

The shadow was lost in the sun and that is all. After a hundred thousand generation the mortal birds surrendered to total effacement. They achieved subsistence or
baqa after effacement or fana. This process is beyond description, says Attar and ends his book.¹

Dr. Raza Arasteh comments on ‘the Mantiq’ as follows:

‘In Mantiq al Tair, Attar takes God as the object of desire and identification. He applies the ‘method of Presence’ (that is, the assumption that only God is present in every act) so that the seeker ultimately identifies himself with God. Instead of emphasizing that God made man in His image, he helps the seeker to create God in his own image as a mechanism of inner spiritual evolution (or growth).²

Fritz Meier (1954) in his study of Attar’s writings defines God as ‘the reflexive predicate of the absolute subject.’ He says, “God is a secret mode of man’s being (or self), and the mystic, in order to attain to Him, moves from a peripheral mode of being in which he is imprisoned in the temporal, back into himself, from a concretistic misunderstanding of himself to a truer self. The Supreme mode of being (or the Simurgh) is present in his innermost depths; he can enter into it through a movement to himself.”³

In ‘Mantiq al Tair’ we see that ‘God is man’s opposite only as long as man fails to destroy himself. Once he annihilates his self, the two become one. Attar’s concept of man is based on the ancient wisdom according to which man contains a divine self, into which he must work and live himself in order to be redeemed.’¹

‘Mantiq al Tair’ is a treatise on the Transpersonal or Growth Psychology. The contents of the Self have been personified as various birds. The opening part describes the obstacles to growth of self by the excuses of various birds. The excuses of the birds

¹ The above outline of the Mantiq al Tair has been adapted from C.S. Nott’s English Translation.
² Growth to Selfhood, page 31
are the psychological conditioning, the false habits, self-forgetfulness, a false sense of success and satisfaction, rigid role identifications and sense of pride. All these are termed as ‘nafs-i-ammarih’ in Sufism. Each bird symbolizes a ‘specific arrested growth’. Each bird represents certain kind of resistance to the spiritual growth. These birds trying to escape growth allegorize fixed habits, which held human possibilities in rigid bounds.

A person is arrested in his psychological and spiritual growth if he is strongly attached with any of the worldly object. The strongest attachment and the biggest impediment to this inner growth is man’s attachment with his false self. Our desires are our attachments. The nightingale (in the Mantiq) is attached to the charming but transitory flowers. The peacock is attached with lost paradise, which represents nothing but his fancies and fantasies. The duck is attached with his own self-image as a pious ablutionist. The duck belongs to the people of the exterior (ahl-i-zahir), huma is drunk with power and self-importance, the hawk is attached with his social status and tries to be near the powerful people.

Similarly heron represents base nature, the owl represents the desire to live alone in the hope of gaining some treasure, which will not be shared with anybody else. The sparrow represents effeminate and delicate nature that is afraid of hardships.

The birds in the second session of the conference again represents the various carnal desires, fears, whims, fickle mindedness, physical love, lust, attachment with gold or wealth, palaces, fear of death, fear of suffering, apparent honesty and sincerity, etc. These all are in fact the contents of our self especially the conventional self.

What does the Hoopoe represent? Hoopoe is the metaphor or symbol for the perfect man (insane-e-kamii) who is a guide or murshid. It is only under the guidance of a

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1 Ibid. p. 303
perfect guide that the baser nature of the *nafs-ammarah* is corrected and changed into *nafs-mutamainna* or the pacified soul. The transformation of the baser self into laudable self consists of various steps, which is called the spiritual growth. The Sufis have described their *Kashf* or visions of the transpersonal Self in their different ways. Attar has described the various levels of the spiritual growth in the form of Valleys.

Let us refer to one of the other works of Attar – ‘*Ilahi Nama*’, to make the point of the vision of the Transpersonal Self more clear. *Ilahi Nama* begins with the story of a King who has six sons. One day he gathers them and asks them to disclose their heart’s desire so that he may grant it. The sons one by one disclose their desires. We shall take here only the first son’s desire. The first son wishes to marry the daughter of the King of the fairies for he has heard of her dazzling beauty. He promises the King that if his desire were fulfilled he will not ask anything else to the day of his death; for who would strive after any perfection beyond the possession of such beauty? The King, instead of granting his wish, chides him for sensual desire, which can destroy a man’s being to the core. Then the King tells him a few stories to which the prince replies that without sexual desire the world and its order would cease. The King says that he is not against the sexual desire but since the prince has chosen this only so it needs correction. Sexual desire is not the ultimate purpose of existence. One must strive beyond it for the eternal intimacy, which culminates in the dissolution of one’s own soul in the beloved.

Then the King’s son asks why he is so passionately and strongly pulled towards this girl whom he has never seen. In reply to this question the King tells him a story. A young man falls in love with the princess of China and then he hears of a powerful Indian wise man with whom the emperor of China and his daughter are acquainted. The youth
pretends to be deaf and dumb and takes employment with the inaccessible wise man. In due course of time he secretly acquires all his wisdom. Once the Indian crown prince falls ill. The young man in treating him excels the old sage. The sage dies in grief and the young man is appointed in place of his master. Then in a secret box that his master never opened, the youth finds the “description of the beloved”. After that he became restless. He draws a circle, sits down in it, and recites spells until, at the end of forty days, the loved one appears. But when he sees her, he realizes that she is in his own heart.

At this he was astonished and spoke:

Why dist thou choose to dwell in my soul,
O thou who art fair as the moon?
And she who was fair as the moon, who
Illumined the heart, replied:
From the first day on I have been with thee.
I am thy soul (self), and thou are in search of thyself.
Why do thou not make thine intellect seeing?
If thou seest (correctly), thou thyself will be the whole world,
Thou will be the friend without and (the mistress) within.1

Firstly the young doctor could not understand that his soul may appear to him as beauty, since he has always conceived it as a snake, dog or pig. But the soul explains to him that it is ugly only as long as it is not purified and transformed from the state of “ammarah” to the state of “tranquilled soul”.

Then the King advises his son,

1 This whole account of 'Ilahinama' here is based on Fritz Meier's study. 'The spiritual Man in the Poet Attar.' Given in 'The Man and Transformation' Routlege & Kegan Paul, London. 1954.
Thus all within thyself, and thou are merely sluggish in seeking it.

The King continues:

Thou are thine own beloved. Return to thyself?

Go not forth! Return from the desert to thine home.

King's scolding is aimed at directing the son's ventures inward. 'The true beloved is not a being of flesh and blood, but a new kind of life that since his birth has been waiting to be lived by him, a being that he is not to possess but to become through an inner metamorphosis. The road to this being leads not into a new outward environment but to the state of 'pacified soul' which receives summons from God to return to him.'

The fairy princess, further writes Fritz Meier, 'is thus a mere phantom goal and, if not recognized as such, a concretistic misunderstanding of the true great beloved, the ANIMA PRINCI PALIS.'

What Attar means here and in other writings is that the Supreme or Transpersonal Self conceals and reveals Himself through various veils. It may be our own desires and self.

Fritz Meier in his small but succinct study of 'Ilahinama' draws our attention to an important aspect of the Sufistic concept of self. He says that Sufism exhorts man to shun egoism. This is also called "dying to oneself". In fact, man does not die literally but breaks off a certain relation to himself. The self that is to die is identical with the ego of which man should divest himself, but it is 'something other than the subject that is called away from it.'

According to Meier Sufistic concept of self involved a paradox – "man can live

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1 Ibid. pp 276-77
without himself'. He says that self-renunciation in a purely philosophical sense is impossible, so it becomes necessary to divide man into a mortal and an immortal being. Since a subject can never act upon itself, but only upon an object, which, being an object, must be different from the subject, even if it is expressed by means of a reflexive pronoun (i.e. myself, himself etc.), the self that is to die or be renounced can never be the same as the self that undertakes the act of destruction or renunciation, but must rather be regarded as a state of the latter, which it can either assume or relinquish. The self (or whatever else one wishes to call it) thus reveals itself to be a homonym for two basically different things, for a pseudo subject, which should properly be called a condition, and a subject, which permits man a survival transcending that condition.¹

The above ‘division of man into a two fold being’ explains the mystic’s practices for self-mastery and self-conquering.

Die to thyself and return again and again to thyself²

Thus, ‘man can become his own counterpart and attain to a perspective in which his misfortune appears to him a blessing’. This is what the Hoopoe means when he counsels the bird, whose heart was full of sorrow, by saying that which in outward appearance is suffering can be a treasure. (Same is said by Rumi in Masnavi-3)

Meir in his above mentioned study of Attar quotes from various poets that informs us the above mentioned paradoxical nature of the self as:

Thou wilt become a stayer if thou becomest a vanisher.

Thou becomes all, if thou remainest without thyself.

- Asrarnama Attar

I know not if thou art I or I am Thou.

¹ Ibid, page 300
² 2.20
I am extinguished in Thee, and lost in duality.

- Mantiq al Tair

Sink into cessation of being and strive for permanence!
Leave thyself and strive toward God!

- Khwaju Kirmani

Take thy hand from the cup and be drunk!
Be extinguished by nonbeing and so achieve being!

- Khwaju Kirmani

The nonbeing of those who have lost themselves is being.
The being of these whose heart is awake is drunkenness.

- Khwaju Kirmani

Leave the worship of wine and be drunk!
Leave being and gain being.

- Khwaju Kirmani (from Rawdat)

Thou must pass entirely beyond,
Increasing always in Thyself.

- Ilahinama

When thou are not, then thou art in reality.
When thou aimest at nothing then thou are estimable.

- Ilahinama

If thou diest to Thyself, thou becomest eternal.

- Haylajnama Attar (Tr. Meier)

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1 All the above translation from Khwaju Kirmani and ‘Ilahinama’ and others are from Meier’s study, as mentioned previously.
Extinguish me, that I may be Thou!

Haylajnama Attar (Tr. Meier)

The above paradox in fact hides underneath a subtle fermentation of the Sufi’s self in which the personal identity undergoes a sort of substantial change. In the valley of Unity in the *Mantiq* the personal identity is restructured.

When Attar says in the opening lines of the fifth Valley of Unity,

By ‘tafrid and tajrid’ he means ‘destructuring so as to restructure’ the personal identity. In this valley ‘everything is broken in pieces and then unified’. Besides metaphysical and cosmological and theological implication the concept ‘tauhid’ has its psychological implication also in which self’s relation with meta self is taken into account.

In the valley of Tauhid the seeker’s identity is under the process of change. His self is liberated from the ordinary false sense of social and the phenomenal self. His identity by the impact of his Beloved’s or the teacher’s identity undergoes a substantial change. In this state he wavers between ‘I’ and ‘Thou’. He is not able to differentiate between ‘I’ and ‘thou’ (The Truth).

Thus in the Valley of Tauhid the seeker says:

1 Jami in his *Lawaih* says, ‘Tauhid is to gather the (scattered) self into a unity.’
So, when duality disappears, unity is found.

In the valley of Wonder that follows immediately after the Valley of Unity the devotee transcends the dichotomies of I and thou. His puzzles regarding his identity are resolved in the valley of puzzlement. In this valley he has glimpses of his transcendental identity, that is, he is neither this nor that. Then he realizes that, in fact, his transcendental identity belongs neither to Muslims nor to heretics and again in wonder he probes this nameless essence of his true identity.

In the valley of Wonder or haircat the seeker delves deeper into his self and what he has achieved in the valley of Unity is left behind. His personal identity, which is in perpetual dissolution, that began in the unity of Tauhid, now it almost has dissolved totally and the seeker has a flickering and fleeting glimpse of the unconditioned self and utters in astonishment.

'I am in love, but with whom I do not know. I am neither a Muslim nor a heretic. My heart is at the same time both full and empty of love.'

Rumi also informs us of the same Transcendental Identity –
What is to be done, O Moslems? For I do not recognize myself.

I am neither Christian, nor Jew, nor Gabr, nor Moslem.

I am not of the East, nor of the West, nor of the land, nor of the sea;

I am not of Nature’s mint, nor of the circling heavens.

I am not of earth, nor of water, nor of air, nor of fire;

I am not of the empyrean, nor of the dust, nor of the existence, nor of entity.

I am not of India, nor of China, nor of Bulgaria, nor of Saqsim;

I am not of the Kingdom of Iraqin, nor of the country of Kherasan.

I am not of this world, nor of the next, nor of Paradise, nor of Hell,
I am not of Adam, nor of Eve, nor of Eden and Rizwan.

My place is the Placeless, my trace is Traceless;

'Tis neither body nor soul, for I belong to the soul of the Beloved.

I have put duality away; I have seen that the two worlds are one;

One I seek, one I know, one I see, one I call.

(Tr. R.A. Nicholson)

This ‘Jan-e-Jan’ (the Beloved) is what we call the ‘self of the self’ or the metaself or the ‘Transpersonal Self’.

When the seeker divests himself of his false, pretentious and hard ego and annihilates himself in the splendour of the beauty of the Beloved he achieves the final Selfhood. This is what happens in the last Valley of poverty and annihilation. (faqr and fana). This is the final station of his growth of true self. The self attains a final identity where his sense of ‘I’ is interchangeable with the ‘Meta-I’ symbolized by Simurgh.

When they saw the Simurgh, they realized that they were the Simurgh and that the Simurgh was the thirty birds. In astonishment they gazed at the Simurgh and turned their eyes towards themselves they saw that they themselves were the Simurgh. And
perceiving both at once, themselves and Him, they realized that they and the *Simurgh* were one and the same being. No one in the world has ever heard of anything to equal it. (Tr. C.S. Nott).

This is the final stage of self-realization in which the seeker ultimately realizes the Truth within himself. The difficulties or the way to the self-realization faced by the birds and the hardships are ‘Zuhd’ or ‘Riyazat’ allegorized. It is *riyazat* that has been picturised on the way to spiritual growth. In the final stage the devotee transcends everything, even the guide.

![Mantiq](image)

This is a stage of spiritual birth or the second birth –

![Mantiq](image)

This identity is a growth into ‘he-ness’ from ‘I-ness’ in which there is ‘you’ only not I. This is called spiritual rebirth. Dr. Reza Arasteh says, “In Near Eastern thought, Sufism (the art of rebirth) can be stated as ‘individuality in non-individuality’, that is, becoming a creative truth by passing from ‘I-ness’ to ‘he-ness’ to ‘one-ness’ (universality). In Khayyam’s description it is an overflowing of the state of being born without attributes. In classical Chinese philosophy this state is called *TAO* and is compared to the current of water that resistlessly moves towards its goal. Jung says – *Tao* is the fulfillment, wholeness of vocation performed, beginning and end and complete realization of the meaning of existence of innate things.”

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1 Arasteh, Reza (1975) Toward Final Personality Integration. John Wiley and Sons, New York, Page-1
What is SIMURGH? Simurgh is the Supreme Transpersonal Self. This is acme of the growth of the self of the salik. Attar is not the only one who has used the symbol of Simurgh. Many other Persian writers had also mentioned, the existence of Simurgh.

Firdausi in his ‘Shahnama’ wrote about Simurgh who helped Rustam to kill Asfandyar.

Shaikh Shihabuddin Suhrawardi Maqtul (1153-1191) wrote many symbolic and mystical narratives depicting the journey of the soul across the cosmos to its ultimate deliverance and illumination. In two of these works he has written about Simurgh also. These narratives are – Aql-i-Surkh (The Red Intellect or Archangel) and Safir-i Simurgh (The Song of the Simurgh or Griffin). In the ‘Safir-i-Simurgh’ he writes:

و هی نشتهای ما در د (سرغ) ست، و اف خود چون می‌ارد،
و مشروطست آتشان ای در مغرب از فنای ر، جهی از ی گرفتگی
از هی نارغ؛ هی از و آ بنر یاد از ار تیپی. جهی علم از صفر کرای
سرگ به دیوان استخاره کرد ما سازهای کیپ می از ار غنون
و نو آن (نیژک) در سری و سبیل، نو تیپ دالی بیان می‌کان

Our all signs are him and He Himself is signless, He lives in East but West is not empty of Him, all are involved in Him but He is uninvolved, all are full of Him but the reverse is not so, everything and every knowledge is derived from Him.

Since you have not seen the Night of Solomon.

How can you know the bird’s language?

Suhrawardi in his treatise the ‘Aql Surkh’ writes that the abode of the Simurgh is

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on the tree of repentance (*tauba*) which is on the mountain *Kaf*. In this treatise he also narrates how Rustam killed Asfandyar with the help of the *Simurgh* who brought up Zal under his protective wings, because Zal was born under the coverage of *Tauba*.

In fact besides Attar there had been a few more writers who have written fables of birds. Ibn Sina (980-1037), Ahmad Ghazali (d 1126), Muhammad Ghazali (1058 b) and Najmuddin Razi. Most of them named their works as ‘*Risalah al-Tair*’. Except Muhammad Ghazali other wrote their above-mentioned Risala in Persian. Scholars differ in the authenticity of Mohammad Ghazali’s *risala*. Some of them like Ahmad Mojahed (1997) who edited the Persian works of Ahmad Ghazali, are of the view that originally it was written by Ahmad Ghazali himself in Persian as well as Arabic. But Jalal Sattari (1994) opines that originally it was written by Mohammad Ghazali in Arabic and later on his brother Ahmad Ghazali translated it into Persian. Ahmad Mojahed says that Ahmad Ghazali was unlike his brother, a true mystic. So the authenticity goes in his favour. Dr. Hashmatullah Riyazi (1369 hijri) traces the story of the fable to the Panchtantra written in India, which was translated into Arabic and Persian under the name ‘*Kalila wa Dimna*’. All these authors have given the exalted position to the *Simurgh*.

**Jalal Sattari** (1994) studied the symbology of the Sufis. According to his analysis the *Simurgh* stands for the *Self* of man.

1. Simurgh ُک تصور صحیح انسان است

   He writes further –

2. Simurgh (سنوی) شاہ مرغان د رنگت د و عوران، مصدر عبانی است

   و جان جان جان جانان، تصور فرشته جبیرال و خیل فعال

   و روح القدس نیز ہے۔

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1 Jalal Sattari, op. cit. page 128
2 Ibid, p. 128
Simurgh represents the Self, the soul of the World (the Universal Soul), the Beloved, the Archangel Gibrail, Active Intellect (aqil fa’al) and the Holy Spirit.

He quotes Rozebahan Baql Shirazi (1128-1209) who is his ‘Abhar al Aashqin’ compares the Simurgh with human Psyche. According to Shaikh Rozebahan –

According to Jalal Sattari the Simurgh is the pivot of the world. The Simurgh represents a paradoxical state. It has two faces one towards human being and other towards the divine being. Through it man attains the divinity. We can say that Simurgh is the ideal Self for which every self (represented by various birds) longs for and aspires for, Attar was a great Sufi. He described the growth of the self and its stages of growth in the form of seven valleys. The other above mentioned authors have not mentioned any kind of such valleys. Attar’s Mantiq al Tair is far far comprehensive and a detailed work in the human spiritual growth. He has put his growth of self in a more concrete form in his another wonderful book – ‘the Musibatnama’ (the Book of Creative Suffering).

In ‘the Musibatnama’, Attar says concretely what he says allegorically in ‘the Mantiq’. ‘The Musibatnama’ describes a journey of soul through various stages. The soul or self has been personified as a seeker. The central character is a seeker who is awakened to the quest for the Reality. In the preliminary stage he knows nothing about oneself or the Truth. He is worried about where he belongs, who he is and what is his situation in life. His mental condition is akin to those of the birds in ‘the Mantiq’ before setting out for the journey.

1 Ibid, page 135
In the first stage the seeker turns to such phenomenon as water, the sun, the moon, wind, matter, soil and the like. All of these things describe their own helplessness and inadequacy and tell the seeker that are unable to help him towards his self-knowledge. In such a quest the seeker turns to his guide again and again who enlightens him of the real role of each of the above objects in life. His guide represents the real self within him.

At the second stage the seeker turns toward the prophets. He seeks an answer from Adam, Abraham, Moses, Christ and Mohammad. Adam expressed his inadequacy by saying that there are thousand of veils between him and the Reality. Abraham advised him to adopt obedience and hard work; Moses speaks of patience and Christ of purity. At last the seeker reaches to the prophet Mohammad.

The Prophet Mohammad advises him that the true way is into his own heart. He has to go through five stages – the senses, (hiss), imagination (khyal), reason (aql), heart (dil) and the soul (jaan). In this part of the book Attar very beautifully presents the theory of the growth of self through the five stages. When questioned, the senses reply that they are inadequate to guide the seeker because they can only perceive the world of many, not unity. Imagination explains that though it has entered the world of unity but this unity is a unity based on an illusion and it cannot give him any answer. Then the seekers turn to reason. The reason tells him that if any one praises the power of reason he is right, but if he considers the reason to be the entire answer then he is not right. Then the seeker requests the heart to guide him. But the heart replies that he himself derives his existence from the soul. The soul, when approached, scolds the seeker that after a lot of useless striving he has come to him. The soul says to him whatever the salik has been seeking is in fact, in his own self and that the salik himself has been a veil between him and the
Truth. He advises the seeker that he should jump into the sea of his own soul. Then the seeker jumps into the sea of the soul and achieves ‘fana’ which results into the seeker’s rebirth. The seeker now sees the reality of both the worlds into his own self. The ending of both the books – ‘the Musibatnama’ and ‘the Mantiq’ are the same, that is, the reality of oneself and the world (visible and invisible) and attaining to it is within one’s own self. So all the spiritual realization is, in fact, a homecoming. It is in Musibatnama that Attar at a certain place put forth the Sufi concept of man when he writes –

Несть врдм نطوفاک اوزاب دنیاک هست مدر مسرد قوس و دان پاک
 عشر بیان پر میند در دنیوع لندی آفر سهود
ارذو و می سنده ای منست فاک
تاشود ای منست فاک دان پاک

That is, man is not only a combination of the earth and water, or blood and flesh, his status is above than these, and the whole cosmos is within him, better to say, he himself is the cosmos. The way of this spiritual entity is towards the spirit or the soul. The man concerned here is not he who is born to die but the man who is the Divine Secret and the sacred soul. The painful longing (Talab) is the way to achieve the Divine Secret.

‘He (the man who meditates) wanders, until he exchanges the body for the spirit, letting his body attain to the spirit while still alive.’ (Tr. Fritz Meier)

Oh! We have come to a very sensitive and esoteric point of ‘exchanging the body for the spirit’. Fritz Meier quotes from the Asrarnama (of Attar).

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1 & 2 ‘Darya-i Jan’ by Hellmut Ritter, p. 27
Then they wandered from the body to the heart,
And from the heart on to the spirit and then to the court (of God)

Similarly he quotes from the Haylajnama (of Attar)

Here from the heart wanders on to the spirit
(And then) cast both, heart and spirit, into sheer nonbeing!

Commenting on the above line he says:

'Such passages refer primarily to the change in man’s position toward what he considers himself, from self, identification with his corporeal manifestation, he progresses to self-identification with God. But they refer at the same time to the increase in the faculty of sight until it passes beyond sensuous and corporeal, or passes through it, to the spirit at work behind it.'

He further quotes from the ‘Asrarnama’ in continuance of the above subtle point:

Whenever the self ceases to exist in thee,
The duality of spirit and body remains no long.
When spirit and body are quickly illumined,
The body quickly becomes spirit and the spirit body.
The body with its darkness is like the back of a mirror,
But the spirit is the bright side of the mirror.
If the back of the spirit be cleansed,
The two become one

\[..................\]

\[\text{Fritz Meier. Ibid, page 282}\]

\[\text{1} \]
Since now for Mohammad spirit was body and body spirit,
He ascended to heaven with one as well as the other

But as long as thou are confined in time and space,
Thou canst never see thy body in its spirituality.

The above was Attar’s doctrine of the growth of self and its ultimate transubstantiation. This process is very difficult to describe because it is based on total experiential level of the seeker. Our source is only the writings of the great masters.
B. GROWTH OF SELF ACCORDING TO SOME OTHER SUFIS

Jalaluddin Rumi (1207-1273)

He was known as Rumi and Maulana Rum also. He is considered the greatest mystical poet of Persia. He was born in Balkh. He belonged to a family that was highly respected and had produced a many jurists and divines. He was twelve years old when his father suddenly left Balkh with his family toward Westward journey. This migration was because of the Mongol hordes. They reached in Rum (Turkey) and settled there. He was married there. Then the family migrated to Konia where Rumi’s father Bahaul-Din Walad, died. Rumi began his training under his father’s former pupil Burhanul-Din Muhaqqiq of Tirmidh. Rumi was then of twenty-five years. After the death of his teacher, Rumi followed his mystical activities among people. In 1944 a wandering dervish, Shamsul-Din of Tabriz, arrived at Konia. Jalaluddin found in him the image of his Beloved that he had been seeking since long in his heart. Both of this great souls were lost pinto each other for about two years in seclusion. Rumi’s followers and the companions could not tolerate their strong bond. Shams Tabriz was forced to flee to Damsons. But Rumi’s son, Sultan Walad, brought him back. But soon he was again forced to leave Konia. This time Shams Tabriz vanished without leaving a trace behind.

The loss of Shams Tabriz was a great loss to Rumi. He convulsed and suffered much anguish caused by the separation of his Beloved friend. Later on he wrote his *Diwan-i Shams-i Tabriz* which he dedicated to the memory of his lost friend or his second self. In 1261, Husamul-Din, one of his pupils, requested Rumi to produce his greatest work *Masnavi*. *Masnavi* was written in six volumes. It is a masterpiece in the Sufi literature that deals with all of the Sufi themes. In fact this depicts the
journey (or growth) of the human soul towards its perfection. *Masnavi* is full of psychological truths besides other important literary, theological and mystical themes. Erich Fromm (1972) a famous psychoanalyst and a student of Freud wrote about Rumi.

"Rumi was not only a poet and a mystic and the founder of a religious order; he was also a man of profound insight into the nature of man. He discussed the nature of instincts, the power of reason over the instincts, the nature of the self, of consciousness, the unconscious and cosmic consciousness; he discussed the problem of freedom, of certainty, of authority. In all these areas, Rumi has a great deal to say which is important to those concerned with the nature of man."

We shall study here in brief Rumi’s views on self and its spiritual growth as depicted in his writings especially the *Masnavi*. We have already noted his comments on ‘*Aql*’ in the second chapter.

Rumi has not written his views on self and its growth like it is found in the books of a psychologist or a philosopher. Rumi was basically a mystic who made poetry his vehicle to convey his ideas. His ideas on self and its growth lies scattered in his writings. It is a separate project to systematize his views on self. Here we shall study in brief his views confining ourselves to the first, second and third volumes of his *Masnavi*.

Rumi follows the same Sufi terminology as the others have used. He uses the

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1 In his preface to Raza Arasteh’s work ‘Rumi, the Persian. The Sufi’ Routledge & Kegan Paul. 1972, p. ix
2 For the present study on Rumi the following books were consulted:  
The terms, *nafs, qalb or dil, ruh, rawan, jaan, sirr* etc. for the human self. He mentions, like others, the Cosmo-spiritual domains – *nasut, malakut, lahut* etc.

About the carnal soul (*nafs ammarah*) he says –

‘Your nafs is the mother of all idols: the material idd is a snake, but the spiritual idol is a dragon.

‘It’s easy to break an idol, very easy; To regard the self as easy to subdue is folly–, folly. O son, if you would know the form Of the self, read the description f Hell With its seven gates From the self at every moment issues An act of deceit; and pin each of Those deceits a hundred Pharaohs And their hosts are drowned.’ (Masnavi I, 772)

Rumi says that the carnal desires are, in fact, Hell (as in the above lines). The baser desires are so strong in their appetite that man cannot satisfy his desires.

‘This carnal self (*nafs*) is Hell, and Hell is a dragon (the fire of) which is not diminished by oceans (of water).

It would drink up the Seven Seas, and still be blazing of that consumer of all creatures would not become less.’ (Masnavi I, p. 76)
Rumi uses dragon, snake, python, ass and horse as metaphors for the carnal soul. The person without a spiritual training remains under the sway of his bodily desires. He is driven by these impulses. At a place he has used woman as a metaphor for the carnal self and advises us to do the opposite of her advice to disarm her (the carnal soul).

‘Know that your fleshly soul is woman and worse than woman, because woman is a part (of evil), but your fleshy soul is evil entire.

If you take counsel with your fleshy soul, oppose that vile one (in) whatsoever she may say.’ (Masnavi, II, p. 339)

But the real nature of man is not fleshy only. It is transpersonal –

\[ \text{Masnavi, II, p. 69} \]

According to Rumi our senses are under the control of Aql and Aql is under Ruh. The Aql is imprisoned. When Ruh removes the obstacles from its path, it gets freedom. Then Aql (intellect) controls the senses but are may become entangled in perplexing speculation. The power of the Ruh frees it from these chains. ‘The freed intellect is the aql-i ma 'ad (or aql fa'al)’

Rumi hints at the Transphysical human nature in the following lines -

\[ \text{Nicholson, Commentary on Book III, p. 49} \]

\[ \text{Page 279} \]
Rumi talks about the cosmic growth of self that when we sow something in the earth it becomes bread. It is eaten, assimilated and converted into sperm, produces the man endowed with spirit-vegetable, animal and intellectual respectively.

‘They cast a grain of wheat under earth, then from its earth they raised up ears of corn;

Once more they crushed it with the mill. Its value increased and it became soul-invigorating bread;

Again they crushed the bread under their teeth. It became the mind and spirit and understanding of one endowed with reason;

Again, when that spirit became lost in love, it became (as that which) rejoiceth the sowers after the sowing.’

(Masnavi, I, p. 172)

The above verse is interpreted by Nicholson as ‘The soul, as a mode of Divine Being undergoes a similar evolution: it orders that its inherent potentialities may be developed and exhibited, it descends into the world of matter, where from the lowest phases of soul-life it gradually rises to the highest and, having traversed the whole circle of existence and thus attained to the utmost perfection of which it is capable, give itself up to God and realizes its essential unity with Him”¹

For the spiritual growth the first thing is that man should not consider himself limited to the five physical senses only. Other than the physical senses there are spiritual senses also by the help of which the human self grows towards the transpersonal self.

¹ Commentary on Book I, p. 190
‘Thy bat-like senses are running towards the sunset; thy pearl-scattering senses are faring towards the sunrise.

The way of (physical) sense perception is the way of asses,

O rider: have shame, O thou that are jostling (vying) with asses!

Besides these five (physical) senses, there are five (spiritual) senses: those (latter) are like red gold, while these (physical) senses are like copper.

In the bazaar where they (the buyers) are expert, how should they buy the copper sense like (as though it were) the sense of gold?

The bodily sense is eating the food of darkness; the spiritual sense is feeling from a sun.

O thou that hast borne the baggage of thy senses to the Unseen, put forth thy hand, like Moses, from thy bosom.’

Masnavi II, p. 229

Further he continues to advise us to transcend the physical sense and to achieve our transcendental nature which is not conditioned by anything spatial or temporal.

‘O thou whose attributes are (those of) the Sun of Divine knowledge, while the sun in heaven is confined to a single attribute

Now thou becomest the Sun, and now the Sea, now the mountain of Qaf, and now the Anqa.

In thine essence then are neither this nor that, O thou that art greater than (all) imaginations and more than (all) more!

The spirit is associated (endowed) with knowledge and reason: what has the spirit to do with Arabic and Turkish?
If the animal sense could see the King (God), then the ox and ass would behold Allah.'

*Rumi* says in the above verse that besides animal sense man has another sense unconditioned by the desire of the body. We have to ourselves to become formless to achieve the Formless. The sensuous eye perceives the things of sense but is blend to “the light of God.” If it is guided by ‘the inner light’ it can go to the straight path.

How to achieve the state of ‘formlessness’? Rumi advises us

Pass on from the name and look at the attributes, in order that the attributes may show thee the way to the essence.

(Masnavi, II, p. 415)

According to Rumi the growth of self is not to a product of external conditionings (as the behaviorists claim) but it is endogenous. It is an innate development. It is a kind of substantial change brought about by the substantial motion (*harkat-i jauhari*).

‘My wings have grown out of my very essence. I do not stick two wings on with glue.’

(Masnavi II, p. 406)

The growth towards the spirit is very difficult because our self in the beginning is full of many arrested growths and obstacles. He warns us.

‘The being of Man is a jungle; be on your guard against this being, if you are of that (Divine) Breath.'
In our being there are thousands of wolves and hogs; (there is) goodly and ungodly and fair and foul.’

(Masnavi II, p. 294)

Our self remains scattered into various sub-selves and every sub self tries to develop itself. This makes us torn into many sides. Rumi hints at multiple I’s in our self.

‘At every moment a (different) species bursts up in the breast: now a devil, and now an angel, now wild beats’.

(Masnavi II, P. 299)

And

‘From that marvelous, jungle with which every lion is acquainted, there is a hidden way to the breasts which ensure (the spiritual) prey.’

(Masnavi, II, p. 294)

This hidden way is revealed by the Master (Murshid). The growth towards the Transcendental Self is not possible without the guidance of a teacher who has himself attained self-realization.

The murshid calms the demanding nafs ammarah –

‘(But) in thy hand, O thou with (love for) whom the soul of Moses is intoxicated, the dragon or serpent became (as) the rod (in the hand of Moses)’

It means under the presence of the saint the *nafs* is calmed and controlled like the serpent that was changed into a rod in the hands of Moses.

He (God) said: Grasp it and fear not. We will restore it to its former state.

(Quran XX 22)

Rumi advises us not to go on this path without a spiritual guide.

The *murshid* saint provides a psychological environment where the real self of the novice is born. Every birth entails pain, so this psychological birth is also painful. We are so much attached with our false self. Our illusions, our self-images and individual conception that we do not want to shed them. Our false self is woven around our self-attitudes and shedding a single attitude or conception fills us with anxiety. Our whole personality is shaken.

Under the guidance of the teacher the novice restructure his self. He begins seeing his true self within his own heart. His true self lies hidden behind his false self. This ‘looking within’ and shedding the false self is very painful. But out of this pain only his self grows. It is like giving birth to the child (true self) and the teacher is like the midwife who helps in this process of ‘rebirth’.

‘Pain will arise from such looking within, and the pain will bring him out from the veil (of self-conceit).

‘Until mothers are overtaken by the pains of childbirth, the child finds no way to born.
This (God-given) trust is in the heart, and the heart is pregnant (with it): these counsels (of the prophets and saints) are like the midwife.

The midwife may say that the woman has no pain; but pain is necessary, pain is makes) a way for the child (to be born).

(Masnavi II, p. 351)

After the birth of a child the task does not end. Then the child is attached with mother’s breast for milk. He is in the oral stage of psychoanalysis. He desires all the pleasures of feeling. The next step is to wean the child away. The child should leave his mother’s breast after some time for further growth and maturity. In the same way when the spiritual birth has taken place the self avoids all the pleasures. This is what Rumi says in the following verse –

\[
\text{حسیب حیات مامعی موقوف نظام فظم اندز از نگردید لکن از علم (III, 19)}
\]

Thus growth means weaking away from the sensual pleasures, which is a painful and gradual process in which the novice empties one’s mind of all the evil thoughts to welcome the divine inspiration.

\[
\text{حلق نفس از وسواس خالی شد و مان ی دوی احبابی شد و این این ی روزش اجباری شد}\\(III, 18)\\
\]

Rumi suggests us to kill our nafs to save our spirit. Sacrifice this nafs as prophet Ibrahim (khalil-Allah) sacrificed his son Ismail. This is true TAKBJIR.

معنی خلیل‌الله‌ایست ایسی اسی که چرا پیش تر ما تران شویم وقتی نسبت الله البر میلی با گویند نفستی فیکن و هم چال از فنا

وقتی نسبت الله البر میلی با گویند نفستی فیکن و هم چال از فنا

وقتی نسبت الله البر میلی با گویند نفستی فیکن و هم چال از فنا

وقتی نسبت الله البر میلی با گویند نفستی فیکن و هم چال از فنا

وقتی نسبت الله البر میلی با گویند نفستی فیکن و هم چال از فنا
Gradually the self outgrows the body and its nature ( ) and leaves the chain of cause and effect. To outgrow nature is transcending the causality and vice versa. The human self then achieves a state of acausality, that, it is not under the field of physical or bodily phenomenon when causality is the basic rule. Carl Jung, the Transpersonal Psychoanalyst calls this state of acausality as ‘synchronity’. Rumi says:

When the (spiritual) eye has become piercing, he (the owner) sees without causes.

You who are in (the bondage of) sense perception, pay your herd to causes!

He whose spirit is beyond (the world of) natural properties – to him belongs the position of power to rive (the chain of) causes.

But how to gather the scattered and split selves and integrate into a whole self (nafs mutmaina)? Rumi answers – through love. It is love that the purifies and integrates the divided selves.

Let us study hereunder a story told by Rumi in the Masnavi – I, which describes allegorically the growth of self resulted by the purification of the soul by love. Rumi like many others Sufi authors adopts the method of telling allegorical stories which in fact
have internal meanings behind. The Sufis have always veiled their messages with various literary devices. The story is as follows:

A certain King fell in love with a handmaiden (Kanizak) and bought her the brought her to his palace. He was very happy. But she fell ill soon. The King gathered the physicians and asked them to cure her sickness. The arrogant physicians tried their best to cure her sickness but the more remedies they applied, the more did the illness increase. The sick girl became thin as a hair. The King was most distressed and his eyes flowed with tears of blood like a river.

The King was very disappointed to see the powerlessness of the physicians. He ran to the mosque. He prayed there while weeping. He slept in the middle of weeping. He dreamed that an old man appeared. He said that the King’s prayers were granted. A stranger would come to meet him the next day. The King should trust him as the visitor would be a skilled physician.

Next day a physician (sage) appeared before the King. The King’s heart was soothed to see him. The King welcomed him with respect and love and narrated his problem. No sooner the physician (who in fact was a divine sage) saw the handmaiden, than he understood her ailment. He perceived that she was heart-sore. The disease was not in the body but in heart.
The sage interviewed the girl very gently in the solitude. He found out that the handmaiden was in love with a goldsmith at her town. The sage went to the King and told him the matter and advised him to summon the goldsmith who was in Samarcand. The King’s men brought the goldsmith. The king showered his bounties over him and wedded the handmaiden with the goldsmith. During six months the girl was wholly restored to health.

King prepared a potion (slow poison) for the goldsmith. He (the goldsmith) was given to drink it. Gradually the goldsmith began to dwindle before her. He became sick and lost his beauty. When he lost his beauty he lost his previous place in the maiden’s heart.

The sick goldsmith died soon afterwards.

The above story told by Rumi in fact hides many secrets in its concealed meanings. It is not only a simple story, but also a map of the Sufi methodology of tazkiya-i nafs and attainment of the final stage of the perfection. Nicholson (1937) quotes from a commentary on the Masnavi, which is given below –

“The King is the spirit (ruh) in Man, which loves the soul (nafs) and desires to purify her because by means of the (purified) soul many works of devotion are performed and much spiritual knowledge is acquired. But though she has a certain affinity with him, she is indisposed to exchange her own world for a better. This indisposition is symbolized by the illness that overtakes her and separates her from the King. Thereupon the intellect (aql), which is the vizier of the spirit intervenes in the guise of a physician
(tabib), but only succeeds in aggravating the soul’s malady. The spirit, perceiving that
intellectual remedies are of no avail, turns humbly to God, confesses its helplessness, and
prays for help. God sends His Beauty (Jamal), which appears to the spirit in the likeness
of a Saint (wali). (The saint is the heart in which the Divine Beauty is manifested), and
the spirit says to him, ‘thou art my beloved in reality, not the heart (dil) that claimed to be
able to heal itself’. Then the heart, in agreement with the spirit, gives the soul (nafs) in
marriage to her beloved, namely, sensual desire (hawa); but after a time the heart
gradually administers to Desire the potion of gnosis (irfan), so that it wastes away and
becomes hateful in the eyes of the soul and finally dies. Thus both the soul that –
commands to evil (nafs-i ammarah) attain to the blessedness of the soul at peace (nafs-i
mutmainnah)’

Thus, we see how brilliantly Rumi represents the inner happenings of human
psyche in the form of a simple allegorical tale.

At many places Rumi writes like a modern psychologist. Modern psychology
bases man’s personality on his habits or conditionings. It says that man is a product of his
habits or conditionings. Man’s responses to the environment are all learnt responses. He
has been conditioned to certain behaviours. Even his intellectual and emotional behavior
is the product of his habits. His emotions like anger, jealousy, joy etc. are all the products
of his certain habits to respond to certain situations. Rumi says exactly this in the
following verses –


1 Nicholson, Commentary on Book-I, page 15.
Rumi says that our bad habits become very strong with time and overpower us -

He advises us to remold our structure of habits in the beginning otherwise later on it will not be possible to get rid of them.

But he differs from the modern psychologist when he says that behind our external senses there is an invisible consciousness that controls them and develops the senses towards finer and finer subtleties leading towards ‘inspiration’ (wahi), which is the acme of the growth of self in spirituality. Let us hear him. Rumi describes this inner psycho-spiritual development very lucidly, logically and systematically. He begins the following description with the integration of the perceptual faculties that move together towards progress by enriching each other.

‘The five (spiritual) senses are linked with one another, because all these five have grown from one root.

The strength of one becomes the strength of the rest: each one becomes the cupbearer to the rest.

Seeing with the eye increases speech; speech increases penetration in the eye.

Penetration (of sight) becomes the (means of) awakening (stimulating) every sense, (so that) perception (of the spiritual) becomes familiar to (all) the senses.
When one sense (in the course of its) progress has loosed (its) bonds, all the rest of the senses become changed.

When one sense has perceived things that are not objects of sense perception that which is of the invisible world becomes apparent to all the senses.

(That) every sense of thine may become an apostle to the senses (of others) and lead all senses into that paradise.’

(Vol. II, p. 390)

Then Rumi describes that once the senses are divinized they adopt subtler and subtler forms (i.e. ranging from Taba, nafs, qalb, ruh, khafa, akhafa etc.) and finally receives inspiration (waqf).

‘The body is manifest, the spirit is concealed: the body is as the sleeve the spirit as the hand.

Again, the intellect is more concealed than spirit: (your mental) perception makes its way to (apprehends) the spirit sooner (than it apprehends the intellect).

The spirit (that partakes) of Divine inspiration is more concealed than the intellect, because it is (of) the Unseen: it belongs to that side.’

(Vol. II, p. 390)

The above were the grades of the subtleties achieved by our self during its growth (ascent) towards inspiration. This is the state which is called the state of wali or the Perfect Man. The ultimate result of the spiritual growth is THE PERFECT MAN. But this way is very difficult to cover. Rumi advises us time and again not to travel alone but with a true guide.
Rumi’s concept of the metaphysical growth of self is summarized succinctly in the following verse –

I died as mineral and became a plant,
I died as plant and rose to animal,
I died as animal and I was Man.
Why should I fear? When was I less by dying?
Yet once more I shall die as Man, to sour
With angels blest; but even from angelhood
I must pass on: all except God doth perish
When I have sacrificed my angel-soul,
I shall become what no mind e’er conceived.
Oh, let me not exist! For non-existence
Proclaims in organ tones.” To him we shall return.”

(Math III, verse 3901)

Rumi hints at the transpersonal growth of the human self time and again
‘From realm to realm man went, reaching his present reasoning, knowledgeable, robust state; forgetting earlier forms of intelligence.’

So, too shall he pass beyond the current form of perception? There are a thousand other forms of Mind.

But he has fallen asleep. He will say: ‘I had forgotten my fulfillment, ignorant that sleep and fancy were the cause of my sufferings.’
He says: ‘My sleeping experience do not matter.’

Come, leave such asses to their meadow.

Because of necessity, man acquires organs. So, necessitous one, increase your need.”

The last lines are noteworthy. Rumi says that man’s inner growth depends upon his intense longing to grow towards the higher self. The longing becomes the guide and pulls us upward leaving the baser self down.

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Mulla Sadra (1571b)

Mulla Sadra whose complete name was Sadr al-Din Muhammad Shirazi was born in Shiraz in about 979/1571. Since childhood he was very brilliant and was given the best possible education. According to Syyed Hossein Nasr Mulla Sadra’s life can be divided into three distinct periods: the period of childhood and schooling in Shiraz and Ispahan the period of asceticism near Qum and the period of teaching and writing. His life testifies that in order to be effective theoretical knowledge must be combined with spiritual realization.¹

Mulla Sadra created a new school of Hikmat. On the one hand, he put the intuitions of the Gnostics and especially of Ibn Arabi and his followers into a logical dress and on the other hand by drawing out the philosophical and metaphysical implications of the teachings of the Imams.

According to Syyed Hossein Nasr “The particular genius of Mulla Sadra was to synthesize and unify the three paths which lead to the Truth, viz. revelation, rational demonstration, and purification of the soul, which last in turn leads to illumination.”²

Mulla Sadra wrote many books in philosophy, mysticism and theosophy. We shall discuss here two of his principles for which he is famous.

1. Substantial Motion.

2. Unity of the knower and the known.

We shall relate these concepts to the growth of human self. In fact these two concepts, partakes the growth of self as we shall see.

¹ Seyed Hossein Nasr. Sadruddin Shirazi. in “The History of Muslim Philosophy (Ed) Sharif; p.938
² Ibid. p. 939


**Substantial Motion**

*(Harkat-i-Jauhari)*

The concept of motion or change has a long history of discussion in the history of philosophy. (Atomists believed in the displacement of atoms as the change or motion).¹

The important question in the motion is whether it is given from outside, or it is something adjacent to the moved or it is something other than the two. Mulla Sadra says it is something other than the above two conditions.

Motion is not something like particles given to the object from outside to make it moving. The relationship between the motion and the moved is not like as between two different bodies. The relation between the motion and the moved is the relation of a thing with the growth of itself from that very thing. It means the thing moves itself. It does not get motion from outside. The moved object derives motion from itself and does not borrow it from any other object.

The ‘substantial motion’ means the substance of the thing undergoes transformation. According to Mulla Sadra motion or change is not limited to quantity *(kam)*, quality *(kaif)* and place *(makan)* only. These are called accidents *(arz)*. The accidents require a substance for their subsistence. Any change in them is consequent upon the change in the substance. Dr. Abdul Karim Sarush interprets it as follows:

> از ایک رو چھول ایشید در پھو سی دارد و از دون الط مرن گن و کوامل خارجی تنشہ پ سی ایامگنی می تغییر میا جامعہ چھول سیبیش و پھورگن یا پانچه شدید در دون روہ شد یا

¹ Nihad Na-aram Jahan, Dr Abdul Karim Sarosh, *Kitab Khana Milli Iran*, 1378AH, p. 35.
The Peripatetic (the Aristotelians) and even Ibn sina who followed them denied 'substantial motion'. Mulla Sadra on the other hand based his philosophical edifice on this very principal. He considered the world to be like a river which is flowing continuously. The motion is the continuous regeneration and recreation of the world at every moment. It is not only the accidents but also the substance of the universe itself which partakes of motion and becoming. This is also called continuous recreation and rebirth.

Mulla Sadra’s concept of the substantial motion in fact is the other name of the concept ‘Fana-i-zat’. This is not only a passing away of the accidents and the attributes in a psychological sense, but it talks about a total change, a complete transformation of the basic substance. It is not limited to one species only but the whole world is in the substantial motion in which each and every particle undergoes change and gives way to the new thing. The each particle attains a new identity in each instant.

Syed Hossein Nasr explains Mulla Sadra’s substantial motion as:

'In addition, it is known that all beings in the universe are seeking perfection and are in the process of becoming and change in order to remove imperfections. Since divine manifestation never repeats itself, God creates new theophanies at every moment in order to remove imperfections and bring new perfections to things. The matter of each being, therefore, is continuously in the process of wearing a new dress, i.e. being wed to a new form, without, however, casting its older dress. It is only the rapidity of this change that
makes it imperceptible and guarantees the continuity and identification of a particular being through the stages of substantial motion.\footnote{A History of Muslim Philosophy. op. cit. p. 949}
Thus substantial motion is an inner transformation of things in which there is not simply a coming into being and a passing away but a process through which a new state of being is reached.

This view of continuous recreation of the world is shared by the Sufis. Rumi expresses it –

“Every moment the world is being renewed, and we
Unaware of its perpetual change.
Life is ever pouring in afresh, though in the body
It has the semblance of continuity.”

(Math. 1, 1142, Tr. Nicholson)

This concept of the substantial motion is the explanation of the ‘growth of the self’ in a mystic or a Sufi. No any other philosopher has systematized as well as propounded such a unique and wonderful philosophical principle to explain the mystic way of spiritual growth. The new comers when they first of all are acquainted with this concept of the ‘substantial motion’ which states that everything in this world is under change, a question arises in his mind. If everything is under going transformation every moment then what about our sense of identity? We feel ourselves having an unchanged identity Does the identity not change in the Trans formative actions of the substantial motion? Mulla Sadra replies that every existent has two aspects –

1. *Malkuti* aspect
2. *Mutghair* aspect
The ‘malkuti’ aspect does not undergo any change. It is in the realm which transcends the phenomenal world of change and degeneration. It is the second aspect, the ‘mutghair’ aspect, which is the world of the substantial motion. In its ‘ascent’ (١٠٠٠) Matter of everything and puts on a new dress without taking off the older one. Every new perfect state contains the previous perfect states. In this way the previous identity does not change but acquires a new perfected mode of being. This is what is called as growth.

The Unity Of The Knower And The Known Or The Intellect And The Intelligible (ittehad aqal wa maqul)

The unity of the knower and the known is another principle for which Mulla Sadra is known. The Aristotelians like Ibn Sina denied this principle. This principle, in fact, is the outcome of Mulla Sadra’s basic principle of the substantial motion Syyed Hossein Nasr explains this principle of Mulla Sadra as follows –

“Perception is for him (Mulla Sadra) a movement from potentiality to actuality and an elevation in the degree of being in which the perceiver or knower rises from his own level of existence to the level of existence of that which is perceived through the union between the knower and the known which characterizes all intellection.”

Dr. Abdul Karim Surosh writes “Sadruddin (Mulla Sadra) has a theory which is called ‘unity of the intellect, intellectual and the intelligible.’ Speaking in simpler terms this means ‘a man is what he knows’. Following this, it means that as the knowledge of man grows, his self also grows to that extent. It is not such that his self remains static but

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1 Ibid p. 953
2 Is?
its acts (aml) have grown above (proving a static substance), on the contrary his self also
has grown above at the same time. This growth of self is not in any sort of physical
quantity but in the sense of internal growth.”

Then he quotes Mulla Sadra ‘It is a weak-mindedness if somebody thinks that the
self essentially and substantially remains the same throughout life. In fact the self in the
beginning is nothing….it grows towards maturity and reaches the state of the active
intellect (aql fa’al).’

According to this principle not only the attributes but the substance of the self also
changes and grows.

**Professor Jalaluddin Ashtiyani** in his book on Mulla Sadra writes about the
union of the knower and the known –

‘Self or mind in its first stage is in the state of body and through substantial
transformation reaches the state of intellection or reasoning, and the intellectual forms
(Saur ilmiya) are the aggravated forms of this very substance of the mind, these are not
accidents added to the existence. Mind grows in perception from potentiality to actuality
and from imperfection to perfection. The (intellectual) forms that are added to the mind
(in fact) are the result of the substantial transformation. And this growth into the
(intellectual) forms is putting on a new dress on the precious dress, not first taking off the
previous dress to put on the now one. The relationship of the new actuality to the
previous actuality is like the more perfected state with the (previous) less perfected
state.”

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1 Nihad Na Aram Jahan, p.88
2 Asfar, the fourth journey, eighth chapter, first part.
3 Sharh-e Hal Va Ara-ye Falsafi-ye Mulla Sadra by Pr. Sayyed Jalaluddin Ashtiyani. The center of
Publication of the office of Islamic Propagation of the Islamic Seminary of Qum, 1398 AH, page 150
Mulla Sadra theorises that the self after passing through the substantial motion achieves a state of independence (*tajarrad*). The relationship of the human self (or mind) to the body is like that of a fruit to the tree. When the fruit ripes and falls, it has its own independent life. The self begins with sensation (*ahsas*) and grows to the union with the active intellect. The sensation grows into perception with the growth of the self. The perceptions are the growing of the self towards perfection. Then these perceptions grow into more subtle intellectual forms which go on acquiring still subtler forms and finally the knower unites with the known. The knower becomes the known. Professor Astiyani writes –

‘As stated earlier that the self in its first stage is in the state of body and after transformation reaches the state of being a self and becomes a state for intelligible forms and pure meanings and every form that enters (or rises) into the self, also enters into the compass of its existence and in the external existence gets united with the self and the self from the sphere of matter through the medium of acquisition of independence (*tajarrad*) rises to the intermediate world (*barzakh*) and then to the intelligible world. So the self (or mind) in the state of intellection and reasoning is totally identified with them and becomes them.”

The destination of the growth is *fana-fi-allah* (effacement in God) and *baqi-ba-allah* (subsistence with God).

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1 Ibid, page 174
Substantial Motion And The Growth Of Self

The Sufi thinkers and the other Islamic philosophers have agreed to the existence of a non-material substance in the material body of man. They called it the ‘nafs-natiqa’. Many question have been ensued on whether this non-material substance called nafs (or self) present in the body is related to body as a prisoner in the prison or like a bird in the cage or something else.

If we believe that the relationship between body and soul is like a bird in the cage, many questions arise in this context. Is the soul (or self) is imprisoned in the material body? If it is so, does it, then not prove that the soul too is material? When does this bird enter into the cage of the body? Is the foetus – before or after? Has a particular cage been made for a particular bird or any bird can be sent to any cage? Have all these birds been present before the bodies were created or were created simultaneously? The philosophers previous to Mulla Sadra have tried to answer these questions variously and in answering them they have arisen more new questions. Mulla Sadra answers all these questions with the help of his concept of the ‘substantial motion’.

According to Mulla Sadra soul is the product or by-product (mahsul) of the body. In this case, the relationship between body and soul is like between a tree and its fruit. But we must know that when it is said that soul is the by-product of the body, it does not mean the body is the cause and the soul its effect, or is based on or subsists by the body or is an attribute of the body like other attributes of the body. If we say so, we shall be supporting the materialists. According to a few materialists also the soul is a by-product of the body – epiphenomenalists being one of them. They say that soul or self or mind is nothing but only an epiphenomena of the body, it is only a complex bodily state.
Mulla Sadra does not mean this. According to him the soul is not related to body like a parasite and also it is not the effect of the body. Body for the soul is like the ‘ground’ which holds the ‘potentiality’. It is in the ground of the body where the soul is brought up. It is not that the body gives birth to the soul. The body merely gathers the conditions for the manifestation of the soul. The soul is a special existent which depends upon the body for its coming into existence but it is totally independent from it in being ‘eternal’.

Mulla Sadra is known by his famous principle.

"النفس جسمانية الإخروج و روحيَّة البقاء"

(alnafs jismaniyat al-huduth wa ruhaniyat al baqa) i.e. the soul is brought into being with the body but it has spiritual subsistence independent of the body.

According to Mulla Sadra, the soul at the beginning “is” the body which through inner growth and change passes through various stages and finally becomes completely free from matter and change. Syyed Hossein Nasr explains Mulla Sadra’s concept of the growth of self as follows –

‘The soul (nafs), according to Mulla Sadra, is a single reality which first appears as the body (jism) and then through substantial motion and an inner transformation becomes the vegetative soul, then the animal soul and finally the human soul. This development occurs from within the substance of the original body without there being any effusion from the heavenly souls or the active intellect. The substance of the human sperm is at first potentially a plant; then as it grows in the womb it becomes actually a plant and potentially an animal. At birth, it is actually an animal and potentially human, and finally at the adolescence it is actually human and potentially either an angel or a disciple of the devil. All of these stages lie hidden within the first substance or germ
which through substantial motion traverses the degrees of being until it becomes completely divorced from all matter and potentiality and enjoys immortality in the world of pure intelligences.¹

Dr. Abdul Karim Surush interprets this as –

'It is not that the soul steps down to meet the body, on the contrary it is the body that grows towards the soul. And this growing up of the body towards soul is not such that first of all the soul was created and then the soul were sitting somewhere to wait for the arrival of the body towards it. But the body itself undergoes renewal and transformation at every instant and goes on acquiring a new state of perfection after each transformation, and reaches such a state of perfection after which there is no further physical change but a spiritual change. In this way two realms physical and spiritual come to exist together.'²

According to this principle, we should not think that every person has a soul which lives with him for the whole life like a bird in a cage. On the other hand the soul (or the self) continues to grow throughout his life. The soul is structured gradually. It keeps on growing.

According to the theory of substantial motion the metaphysical aspect of human being has roots in the natural aspect of him.

Mulla Sadra was a prolific writer. He has left many works for us in theology, philosophy and mysticism. The most important work of Mulla Sadra is the Asfar al Arba 'ah. Asfar means journeys. This does not mean ordinary journeys but spiritual

¹ Ibid, p. 954
² Nihad Na-Aram Jahan p.76
journeys. The *Asfar* of Mulla Sadra is a text on the growth of the human soul in the initiatic realization (*suluk*). In it he has described four stages or journeys of the spiritual growth –

1. The journey of the creature or creation (khalq) towards the creator or the Truth (Haqq).
2. The journey in the Truth with the Truth.
3. The journey from the Truth to creation with the truth.
4. The journey with the Truth in the creation.

In the first stage the salik detaches him from everything. In this stage he removes and overcomes the different obstacles to his spiritual growth. He tries to remove every veil that hides the Truth from him. In this very stage he passes through the different stages of the human self. He begins from nafs and rises towards ‘qalb’, from ‘qalb’ to ‘ruh’ and from ‘ruh’ to the ‘maqsad aqsa’ (the final aim). In the first stage of the journey there are only these three stations of nafs, qalb and ruh, after which the self undergoes ‘fana’ in the Essence in which there are further stations like ‘khafi’, ‘akhfa’ etc which is the subject of the second journey.

Sometimes ‘aql’ is also taken as a station in the station of ‘ruh’. In this way there becomes seven spiritual stages – nafs, qalb, aql, ruh, sirr, khafa and akhafa. When the mystic (salik) effaces himself in the Truth, the first journey ends and his self is totally identified with the self (of the Truth). He enters into the state of *mahv* (intoxication) and he utters the ‘paradoxical sayings’ (*shatah*) many a times accused of ‘knfr’ in this state and it becomes necessary to draw a limit around him. When God’s grace continues, he outgrows his state of intoxication and enters into the state of sobriety (*sahv*). He realizes
‘rabubiyat’ here. He becomes a ‘divine wali’. But his spiritual growth does not come to an end. He still goes on achieving one after another states of perfection because the sea of the essence is bottomless, and the sky is unlimited. He realizes all the Divine Names except that which is kept secret for Himself by the Truth. His Wilayat (the state of being a wali or saint) reaches its zenith of perfection. His self, actions and attributes are effaced into the Essence, actions and the attributes of God (the Truth). After this it is through Him that he hears, through Him that he sees and with Him he walks. So ‘sirr’ is the effacement of his self, ‘khafa’ is the effacement of his attributes and actions and ‘akhafa’ is the effacement of this effacement (fana-i-fana). We can also say that ‘sirr’ is the effacement in the Essence (fana-dar-zat) and this is where the first journey ends and the second journey begins. ‘khafi’ is the effacement of ‘aluhiyat’ and ‘akhafa’ is the effacement of these two effacements. In this state the circle of the sainthood completes itself and the second journey ends and the third journey begins.

In the third journey the mystic has achieved the state of sobriety after outgrowing the state of intoxication. He is now in the subsistence with God (baqa ba allah). He has traveled through all the realms of nasut, malakut and jabarut and has experienced all the essential realities of these worlds. In the fourth journey the mystic becomes a rasul of God and returns to the world of creation and spreads the divine message among the people. He is now in a position to tell the people what they should do to realize God and how to keep oneself safe from those things that distract one from God. In this journey (which is now horizontal) he is with the Truth.¹

¹ This interpretation of the four journeys is based on the Persian Translation of the Asfar, the first Journey, Pages 16-17, Asfar, Tr. Muhammad Khwajui, The Maula Publications, Tehran (1378, AH)
The *Asfar* of Mulla Sadra is a unique text which equates the esoteric sciences with the philosophical sciences. He equates the spiritual growth of a mystic with the intellectual growth of the philosopher. According to Syyed Hossein Nasr, "This monumental work (the *Asfar*) is, therefore, an account of the stages of the journey of the gnostic, systematized in a logical dress."\(^1\)

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\(^1\) A History of Muslim Philosophy ed. M.M Sharif. p. 937
Mohammad Ghazali (1058 AD b)

The two brothers Mohammad Ghazali and Ahmad Ghazali are the two bright shining stars in the mystic Islam. Mohammad Ghazali also known as Imam Ghazali was a tremendous figure in Islam whose intellectual influence spread throughout the world. He is surnamed as ‘Islam’s convincing proof’ (hujjat al Islam) also. He is considered as one of the greatest and original thinkers.

Saeed Shaikh (1962) writes –

‘There have been many philosophers and scholars in Islam and other religions, but the peculiarity of al Ghazali is that his life and work are so intimately connected that it is difficult to separate one from the other.’

Many modern scholars admit that ‘we find al-Ghazali forestalling Descartes’s method of doubt, Hume’s skepticism, Kant’s criticism of pure reason, and the spiritual empiricism of some of the philosophers of religion of our own time.’

Imam Ghazali’s life even is an allegory of the growth of self. His full name was Abu Hamid Mohammad at Ghazali. He was born at Tus in Persia in 450 AH (1058 AD)

W. Montgomery Watt writes Al-Ghazali’s biography in brief as follows:

‘Abu Hamid Muhammad al Ghazali was born at Tus in Persia in 450 AH (1058 AD). His father died when he was quite young, but the guardian saw to it that this “lad o’ pairts” and his brother received a good education. After the young Ghazali has spent some years of study under the greatest theologian of the age, al-Juwayni, Imam al-

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2 Ibid. p. 111
Haramayn, his outstanding intellectual gifts were noted by Nizam al Mulk, the all powerful vizier of the Turkish Sultan who ruled the ‘Abbasid Caliphate of Baghdad, and he appointed him professor at the University he had founded in the capital. Thus at the age of thirty-three he had attained to one of the most distinguished positions in the academic world of his day.

‘Four years later, however, he had to meet a crisis; it had physical symptoms but it was primarily religious. He came to feel that the one thing that mattered was avoidance of Hell and attainment of Paradise, and he saw that his present way of life was too worldly to have any hope of eternal reward. After a severe inner struggle he left Baghdad to take up the life of a wandering ascetic. Though later he returned to the task of teaching, the change that occurred in him at this crisis was permanent. He was now a religious man, not just a worldly teacher of religious sciences. He died at Tus in 505 (1111).’¹

He has written a large number of books on *Fiqh*, theology, philosophy and Sufism. The best knowns are ‘*Ihya-ulum-al-din*’, ‘*Kimya-e-Sa’adat*’ and ‘*Minhaj-ul-abdin*’. He wrote in Arabic as well as in Persian. We shall refer here two books of his – *al-Munqidh min-ad-Qalal* (Deliverance from Error) and ‘*minhaj al abdin*’. The first one is an autobiographical text in which Ghazali has described his intellectual and spiritual developments. Interestingly his approach is very much similar to that of the Developmental Psychologists.

The Developmental Psychology deals with the physico-psychological development of a child towards adulthood. It describes the various developmental phases of a growing child age-wise. It explores the intellectual development corresponding to the ages of a maturing individual. But they confine themselves to the study of a closed sphere

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of psyche, which has no colour of mystic or spiritual dimension of mind. Al Ghazali supplements this lopsided view of human mind with mystic side. He writes in his ‘Deliverance of Errors’ –

‘You must know that the substance of man in his original condition was created in barrenness and simplicity without any information about the worlds of God most high. These worlds are many, not to be reckoned save by God most high Himself. As He said, ‘None knows the hosts of thy Lord save He’ (Q.74, 34). Man’s information about the world is by means of perception, and every perception of perceptible is created so that thereby man may have some acquaintance with a world (or sphere) from among existents. By ‘worlds (or spheres)’ we simply mean “classes of existents.”

‘The first thing created in man was the sense of touch, and by it he perceives certain classes of existents, such as heat and cold, moisture and dryness, smoothness and roughness. Touch is completely unable to apprehend colours and noises. These might be non-existent so far as concerns touch.

‘Next there is created in him the sense of sight, and by it he apprehends colours and shapes. This is the most extensive of worlds of sensible. Next hearing is implemented in him, so that he hears sounds of various kinds. After that taste is created in him, and so on until he has completed the world of sensible.

‘Next, when he is about seven years of old, there is created in him discernment (or the power of distinguishing – tamyiz or discrimination). This is a fresh stage in his development. He now apprehends more than the world of sensible; and none of these additional factors (sc. Relations, etc ) exists in the world of sense.

‘From this he ascends to another stage, and intellect (or reason or aql) is created in him. He apprehends things necessary, possible, impossible, things, which do not occur in the previous stages.

‘Beyond intellect there is yet another stage. In this another eye is opened, by which he beholds the unseen, what is to be in the future, and other things which are beyond the ken of the faculty of discernment and the objects of discernment are beyond the ken of sense. Moreover, just as the man at the stage of discernment would reject and disregard the objects of intellect were these to be presented to him, so some intellectuals reject and disregard the objects of prophetic revelation. That is sheer ignorance. They have no ground for their view except that this is a stage, which they have not reached and which for them does not exist; yet they suppose that it is non-existent in itself. When a man blind from birth, who has not learnt about colours and shapes by listening to people’s talk is told about these things for the first time, he does –not understand them nor admit their existence.

‘God most high, however, has favoured His creatures by giving them something analogous to the special faculty of prophecy, namely dreams. In the dream-state a man apprehends what is to be in the future, which is something of the unseen; he does so either explicitly or the clothed in a symbolic form where interpretation is disclosed.’\(^1\)

Al Ghazali in the above passages goes beyond the limited scope of the developmental psychologies, which talk of the development of the human faculties to the partial intellect only. These sciences keep mum on the more advanced or developed and the subtler human faculties like that of ability to receive prophetic revelations. Al

\(^1\) Ibid, page 63-64
Ghazali continues.

'Just as intellect is one of the stages of human development in which there is an 'eye' which sees the various types of intelligible objects, which are beyond the ken of the senses, so prophecy also is the description of a stage in which there is an eye endowed with light such that in that light the unseen and other supra-intellectual objects become visible.'

According to Al Ghazali, there is a way of apprehending the above matters, which are not apprehended by the intellect. They are apprehended only by immediate experience (dhawq) from the practice of the mystic way. The subtle faculties are made functioning only by certain mystic exercises. There are certain mental faculties, which develop in each of us involuntarily. Developmental Psychology talks about those only. These sciences talks about these faculties, which develop naturally in each of us in due course of time. On the other hand, Sufism talks about those faculties, which though are present potentially in each of us, yet there are only a few who after a hard life of practice are able to develop them.

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1 Ibid, page 65.
THE SEVEN VALLEYS OF AL GHAZALI

Al Ghazali in his writings has described growth of human self variously. In his mystical writings like Alchemy of Happiness, *Mishkat al Anwar* and *Minhaj al Abdeen* etc. he has given special attention to the spiritual growth of man. We shall discuss hereunder two of the above texts – *Minhaj al Abdeen*, (in Persian language)

In the *Minhaj al-Abdeen* (The Way of the Worshipper) Al Ghazali has described the growth of the self of a devout through the allegory of Seven Valleys. Syed Nawab Ali (1991) in his book ‘Some Moral and Religious Teachings of Imam Al Ghazali’ (Kitab Bhavan, New Delhi) has surmised these seven valleys. We shall base the following account on this book as well as on the Urdu translation by Maulana Md. Sayeed Ahmed Naqshbandi.¹

According to Al Ghazali worship is the fruit of knowledge, the benefit of life and the capital of virtuous. Worship is necessary for man but it is full of difficulties and hardships. But man has to remove these obstacles so as to realize the truth. Al Ghazali describes the following valleys.

1. **The Valley of Knowledge (Ilm)**

First of all the man should acquire the knowledge of the *shariat* because worship depends upon it. Man should know that the knowledge and worship which is based upon it are two such perfection for which all the thinkers, preachers, learned ones etc. have insisted in their words and writings. All the prophets and their books and the seven skies and earths and the creatures thereon all have been created for this purpose only.

¹ Published by Maktabs Thanvi Deoband, 1988
According to Al Ghazali, knowledge is more exalted than worship. He quotes a saying of the Prophet Mohammad.

‘The exaltedness of an alam is more than the worshipper as I am more exalted than of my people.’

But with knowledge, worship is must as knowledge without worship is of little use. Knowledge is like a tree and worship is like its fruit.

First of all man should acquire the knowledge of all those terms and conditions under which he has to do his worship. He must know what is according to the Shariat and what is not. He must know what are the obstacles in the way of worship and how to overcome them. He must know the inner meanings of the worship. He must know that unless his inner heart is clear his outer actions cannot be perfect. He must clean his heart of any sort of pride, jealousy, etc.

Knowledge should precede worship because with knowledge our heart acquires the fear of God. The person who has no ‘ma’arifat’ of God, has no fear of God, and, thus, he cannot worship Him adequately.

According to Ghazali three kinds of knowledge are obligatory for the worshipper.

1. The knowledge of ‘Tauhid’.
2. The knowledge of the secrets of the heart.
3. The knowledge of the ‘Shariat’.

By telling the importance of Ilm or knowledge, Al Ghazali warns us that knowledge does not mean hair-splitting analysis of one’s own beliefs and faith. Knowledge of Tauhid means that God is one and Mohammad (PBUH) is his prophet. Knowledge of the secrets of heart means knowing about these inner qualities that promotes worship and to
know about these obstacles of the heart that prevents spiritual growth and, thus, to remove these impediments and these above two are the parts of Shariat.

2. **The Valley of Repentance (Tauba)**

After crossing the Valley of Knowledge, the man prepares for worship, but his guilty conscience upbraids him. Thus, Al Ghazali says that before the person begins his worship, he must repent of his sins. He hears a voice, “Repent, repent! For thy Lord is Forgiving.” He now undergoes repentance and rising with joy marches ahead.

3. **The Valley of Stumbling Blocks (جحيم)**

A true worshipper has to face and remove many obstacles that he runs into while moving on the way to the worship. The main of the stumbling blocks are four –

a) The world and its temptations.

b) Mixing up with the people.

c) Satan.

d) The carnal self (nafs ammarah).

A worshipper should try to choose retired life. He should avoid mixing with all sorts of people. He should fight with his old enemy Satan and he should control his ‘nafs ammarah’ by the bridle of piety.

The above counter forces have to face four other psychological troubles –

i) Anxious care about man’s daily bread as a result of his retirement.

ii) Doubts and anxieties about his private affairs disturbing peace of his mind.
iii) Worries, hardships and indignities for want of social contact.
When man tries to be near God, Satan attacks him openly and secretly from all sides.

iv) Unpleasant happenings and unexpected sufferings as the outcome of his destiny.

4. The Valley of Tribulations (تَوْكُّل)

In this valley the worshipper continues stripping himself of the unwanted attributes and in place of them acquiring new attributes, which are the outcome of his worship.

First of all he gets rid of the tribulation (ārza) of the worries about sustenance. In this plight man protects himself by dependence on God in the matter of his sustenance. He acquires the attribute of Tawakkul. Tawakkul is a firm belief in God.

Then he learns to resign himself to the ‘qaza-i-ilahi’. Then he acquires the quality of having patience (sabr) in suffering. Patience is the name of controlling over anxieties over difficulties.

5. The Thundering Valley (الصاعِد)

Al Ghazali says that when the worshipper has got the knowledge of the way and also has overcome the difficulties of the way, it, then, becomes indispensable for the worshipper to acquire two characteristics – Fear and Hope. Fear of God and hope (raja) for good actions. Syed Nawab Ali explains this valley as –

‘Crossing the fearful valley of Tribulation man thinks that the passage will not be easy but to his amazement he finds that service is uninteresting, prayers are mechanical
and contemplation has no pleasure. He is indolent, melancholy and stupid. Puzzled and perplexed he now enters into the Thundering Valley. The lightning flash of Hope dazzles his sight and he falls down trembling when he hears the deafening sound of the thunder of Fear. His eyes brimming with tears imitate the clouds and his pure thoughts flash with the lightning. In a moment the mystery of Human Responsibility with its reward for good actions and punishment for wicked deeds was solved. Henceforth his worship will not be lip service and his daily work will not be drudgery. Soaring on high he will ply on the wings of Hope and Fear.

6. **The Abysmal Valley**

In this valley, the worshipper meets his ‘*nafs*’ in beautiful garbs. He realizes what he deemed his actions to be perfect, they were, in fact, motivated by the desire of winning the praise of others or were only the result of his vainglory. His *nafs* had been deceiving him by saying that he had become perfect in worship and virtues. He comes to understand the tricks of his *nafs*. With the advancement in knowledge and worship, the *nafs* too learns to play subtle tricks. It exerts its control unconsciously. The person’s behaviour is actuated by ‘*ujab*’ (self-beholding) and ‘*riya*’ (hypocrisy). The worshipper saves himself from these two subtle enemies and endeavours to attain the state of pure and unadulterated actions and reaches the final valley.

7. **The Valley of Hymns**

This is the valley of expressing gratitude and thankfulness to the Almighty who has helped him in this spiritual journey. Syed Nawab Ali writes about this valley as follows –

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1 Ibid, pages 138-139
‘This was the valley of Hymns where, mortal as he was, he tried his best to sing the songs of praise to the Immortal Being. The Invisible Hand of Divine Mercy then opened the door of the Garden of Love, he was ushered in with body and soul for both played their part directly and indirectly. Here ends the journey. The worshipper is now living among his fellow men like travelers but his heart lives in Him waiting to carry out the last order, O soul that are at peace! Return to thy Creator well pleased, well pleasing. Then enter My Servants and enter into My Paradise. (Quran LXXXIX al Fajr)’

The last station achieved by the self is the Tranquil Soul or the soul at peace or the \textit{nafs-i-mutmaina}.

\footnote{Ibid, page 140}
MAHMUD SHABISTARI (720/1320 d)

Those whom God loves die young. The few Sufis and the thinkers of Iran who received the divine light in their early youth and passed away soon from this world. We can name Shaikh Shihabuddin Suhrawardi Maqtul, Ain al Qaza Hamdani and Mahmud Shabistari.

Not much is known about the life of Saduddin Mahmud bin Abdulkarim bin Yahya Shabistari who was born in Shabistar and died there only in 720/1320. It is said that he was thirty-three years of age at that time. Mahmud Shabistari is chiefly known by his book ‘Gulshan-i-Raz’ (The Garden of Mystery). This is a poetical exposition of the chief doctrines of Sufism. This was written in response to certain questions about mysticism asked by one Amir Husaini from Khurasan. Mahmud Shabistari follows Ibn Arabi’s ‘Unit of Being’ in his writings. Besides the Gulshan-i-Raz he wrote a few more treatises like Haq-ul Yaqim, Sa’adat Nama etc.

The Gulshan-i-Raz discusses many fundamentals of Sufism but we shall confine ourselves to the study of human self and its growth as understood by Mahmud Shabistari.

Imdad Hussein of Qadiri writes –

‘The present work, ‘The Secret Garden’ of Shabistari can, if read from the point of view of psychology and current social problems, give valuable pointers to personal action. It also illustrates the expressions of eternal truths and exercises of various kinds within the culture of Central Asia in the middle Ages.’

1 In the introduction to The Secret Garden of Mahmud Shabistary. Eng. Tr. by Johnson Pasha, The Octagon Press, London. 1974, p. 17
'Gulshan-i-Raz' deals with about eighteen questions asked by another Sufi Amir Husaini. The questions are on various topics prominent of them are: -

1. What is true contemplation (tafakkar)?
2. What is true thinking (fikr)?
3. What is I or self?
4. What is to go on to inner voyage?
5. Who is a true pilgrim in the path of truth?
6. Who is the perfect man?
7. Who knows the secret of the unity?
8. What is the perfect wisdom?
9. What does ‘ana al-haqq’ mean?
10. How can union be attained?
11. What is Eternal and temporal?
12. What is meant by the symbolism of eye, lip, the lock, mole, dimple and the face (of the Beloved)?
13. What do the Sufis mean by wine, the cupbearer, the tavern etc.
14. What is the meaning of the ‘pious threat’ the ‘zannar’? etc.

If we start describing each and every question in detail the space will not permit us. We shall take up those points that are related to our present study only. Let us first take the third question on self. Mahmud Shabistari in answer to the question ‘what is self?’ has described the spiritual concept of man.

The question asked is –
Kindly tell me “what is the meaning of ‘I’ (or self) as well as the meaning of journey into oneself?” This is the basic question of philosophical, metaphysical and mystic enquiry. The learned men have been answering it according to their own level of understanding. Mahmud Shabistari’s answer to this basic question is very comprehensive. He replies –

Shaikh Shabistari says that ‘I’ is the Absolute in its relative form. I or self is the
determination (tayayyun) of the Absolute reality.

Lahiji interprets the above couplet that when we say I or you or he, in truth, is the
absolute reality in its determined form. Apparently we say I or you, but in fact there is no
duality in the Absolute Reality. It is the same Reality, which is sometime, manifests itself
as I and you and at other times it is beyond all these determinations.

Shabistari says further –

According to lahiji’s interpretation it means that by the words ‘I’ and ‘you’ which
mean the special determinations (تعمين عامي), according to the necessity have
become the accidents (عوارض) of the Absolute Essence. In the above lines the Absolute Existence is represented as a lamp and the world as the niche in which there is the lamp. The light comes out depending upon the opening of the niche. ‘I’ and ‘we’ are these openings. The multiplicity is because of these openings, otherwise the light has no multiplicity.

Mahmud Shabistari disagrees with the rational philosophers’ views of self. The philosophers mean the nafs-natiqa by the words I or self. Mahmud Shabistari criticizes their lopsided view of the self. He says –

تو گوئی لفظ حرمت در هر چیز
بسمه روح حس باشد اشتراست
پیوند رهی پیش نوای خود فرد را
نتی دانای ز نیرو فوش نش فرد را

In the above lines Shabistary addresses to the rationalists who consider the human self as nafs-natiqa. They say that this nafs-natiqa is the ruler of man. In fact, it is not so. The ruler is the one Absolute Essence which manifests itself as different determinations and particularizations according to the aptitude of the receptacle. Body and soul also are the parts of the Absolute Soul or Mind. This absolute Reality manifests Itself according to the attributes of perfection present in that thing. Everything conceals in itself the attributes of perfection (صفات کمال) in their weaker or stronger forms. Bodies and souls are one Essence in truth. These determinations which have weaker attributes of perfection are manifested as bodies and those that have more stronger attributes of

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1 Sharah Gulshan-I-Raz by Shamsal-Din Muhammad Lahiji. Zawad Publications. Tehran 1371 AH. Page 189. Lahiji’s Commentary contains eighteen questions and their answers. All the above couplets and the interpretations are from this book.
perfections are manifested as souls. And some have aptitudes for the illumination of names, some have for the illumination of attributes and some for the illumination of the Essence.¹

Reason is useless, according to Shabistari. In the above second couplet he scolds man who has been following his reason. Reason is limited to the sense perception only. It is unable to perceive the intelligible and intuitive worlds. He should know that his ‘Zaju’ is the spirit the Ruh, he should know that his ‘I’ or ‘self’, in fact, is this very Ruh or Spirit. According to the people of intuition (اصلی لشکر) ‘I’ or ‘self’ is the reality which encompasses the truth of everything and body and soul each of them are the manifestations of the other manifestations of the Reality.²

Shabistari continues in the process of answering the same question regarding the self –

In the above couplets Shabistari presents a concept of self, which transcends the domain of body and mind. He gives a transcendental concept of human identity. He, in fact, is concerned here more with the metaphysical and the transcendental aspect of the self than with its individual aspect. He is talking here of the cosmic Identity of the human self.

¹ Ibid, p. 190
² Ibid, p. 190
According to Shabistary human reality is a bridge between heaven and hell.

The Absolute Existence is heaven and the possible existence is hell. If a man follows the right path he is in heaven, if he follows the forbidden path he is in the hell.

Finally, Shabistari gives his own definition of human self –

Lahiji interprets these lines as ‘Since man according to the Reality, is the manifestation, mirror of the Essence and a collection of the (divine) names and the (divine) attributes, he according to his collectivity (جامعیت) is manifested in the stages of the ascent and the descent. You, who are a man, according to the social aspect, form, meaning and bodily as well as spiritual powers, are that wholeness who for the sake of growth towards ahdiyat (unit) and attaining effacement in God, has become a unity. This is the stage of sainthood (Wilayat). And you are a man who after achieving subsistence in God (baqa ba allah) has descended from the stage of unity (ahdiyat) to the levels of divine names and attributes and has become multiplicity and has manifested himself in the form of the worldly things and this is called ‘journey with God from God’ and is existing in the form of aluhiyat (divinity). You are multiplicity in unity and unity in multiplicity. From the level of multiplicity, through the journey in God, reaches the stage of unity and from the stage of unity, through the journey with God from God,
descends to the level of multiplicity and the circle of the Existence, descent and ascent, completes with you who ultimately becomes the Perfect Man.¹

Thus Shabistari’s conception of self is not a watertight compartment or an independent monad, rather it reaches out to the cosmic elements and incorporated them. He says –

Mahmud Shabistari was a follower of the concept of ‘Wahdat al wajud’ or Unity of Being. According to this principle man is essentially identical with his source, i.e. the Truth (Haq). In the following line he purports the identity between man and God. He writes in the Gulshan-e-Raz –

¹ Ibid p. 202
According to R.S. Bhatnagar, “Man occupies a central place in the system of creation. He is the mirror in which Godhead is reflected in the true form. His only mission is to realize his identity with God. Hence the existence of man is two fold i.e. his being in the descending order and then his existence in the ascending order. On the descending side he attains mental or sensuous faculties. His is at his lowest when he involves himself in animal instincts. Man’s ascending process towards Reality starts when he comes out of the veil of his empirical self or his ‘I-ness’. His consciousness of the pseudoself is an obstacle in the contemplation of Divine Qualities. Mahmud Shabistari thus laid stress on the mortification of the self.”

Mahmud Shabistari describes the different stages of growth of self in his answer to the fourth and the fifth questions.

He begins his reply with the following lines:

The first stage is ‘emerging pure from grosser self, as from the smoke the fire’.

Then he describes the psycho-spiritual development of man as follows –

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First of all the man is born as a body with potentiality to become a Perfect Man. Then as he increases by the soul he develops the power of reason and then he acquires the power of will. The world opens itself to him in childhood and the world’s temptations impress him. Gradually he rises from the perceptions of the particulars to the perceptions of the universals. His senses rise towards the compositeness of the power of memory, imagination, apprehension and the common sense and then to the intellect.

According to Mahmud Shabistary a man first of all acquires the faculties or instincts of anger or wrath (ghazab) and passions or lust (shahvat). From these the fundamental instincts originate avarice, envy and pride:

غصب شر انزور اپسيا و شحوتت
ده اریشان ناسیت سخت و فرص و خوتمت

A man is born with animal instincts when these instincts overpower him, he is worse than even brutes. But if God’s grace falls upon him, he is guided by the divine light onto the right path. He traverses the return journey called aruz or the ascent. By the divine grace he attains the road to the pure faith. He begins his mystic path with the first stage being Tauba or repentance. He cleans his heart of all the evil thoughts and passions. Then he attains submission to the Divine Will or the station of ‘raza’. Next he is released from the human knowledge, which he sinks into the Divine knowledge. Then he undergoes ‘annihilation or fana and attains, ultimately the perfect state of the Prophet Mohammad.¹

¹ Adapted from the pages 222-229. Sharah Gulshan-i-Raz, op. cit.
In Sufism the human self has an ideal of growing towards the soul of the Prophet Mohammad which in the terminology of Sufism is called Noor-i-Muhammadi or the Light of Mohammad. In this process of growth of this Metaself, human self passes through various metamorphoses and psychological rebirths which in the Sufi terms are called the process of ‘fana’ and ‘baqa’. Mahmud Shabistari says about this final stage of the spiritual growth as –

دستی به خستگی ر ب ناراج
در آن از پی احمد ب معرج

According to Lahiji’s interpretation Shabistari hints at ‘fana’ and ‘baqa’ in the above first and second lines respectively. ¹ The word ‘fana’ has many meanings and has been interpreted differently by different Sufis. Fana as physical death is only one of the various meanings of this word. We shall try hereunder to summarize the various meanings of ‘fana’.

¹ Ibid, pages 222-229
‘FANA’ AND THE VICISSITUDES OF THE GROWING SELF

Dr. Samad Muwwahad (1371 AH) in his brilliant introduction to ‘the Collected Works of Shaikh Mahmud Shabistari’ describes what ‘fana’ is. He quotes from Bayazid Bistami. Bistami says, “I came out from the shell as a snake comes out from its slough and then I saw that the lover, the beloved and the love are all one and who can become one in the realm of the unity, I went to God from God and they called to me in me – O me! Meaning thereby I reached the station of fana-fi-allah (effacement in God).”

Then he quotes from Fakhruddin Iraqi,

“When the lover wants to acquire love, the love first takes off all the dresses that he had been putting on in the previous stages and makes the lover wear the gown of its (the love’s) attributes. The lover when looks at himself he finds himself coloured in a different hue; he looks within himself he finds its semblance inside too and where ever he sees he finds the face of the Friend.”

Then he quotes Mulla Hussain Kashfi who says –

‘Fana means the effacement of consciousness of one’s petty self for the domination of the True Being on his inner being and then, the effacement of this effacement even which is called fana-i-fana. He who is drowned in water like oil or ghee in milk, if he thinks that he exists, in fact, he does not; and if he thinks he does not exist, he does exist. This is the introduction to fana. When he gets rid of himself and exists by virtue of the Friend, it does not mean that he becomes Her (the Friend) but it means that when he looks into the mirror, he finds Her, such as when an iron is heated it considers

\[1\] Majmua Asr Shaikh Mahmud Shabistarti, Kitabkhana Tahuri, Tehran. 1371 AH, Pages 28-29.
himself as the fire and the uttering of “I am the Truth” (Ana al Haq) is in this very state.’

Dr. Muwwahad further writes that *fana* means exchanging the human attributes with the Divine attributes and this is growing towards the absolute perfection. *Fana* is the result of trying and being attracted towards the beyond and being bound with Him. It is effacement of human will in the divine will, human nature in the Divine nature and the human qualities in the divine qualities. Then Dr. Muwwahid tells us about three kinds of ‘*fana*’ –

1) The first meaning is getting rid of passions or lusts or bodily desires and pleasures. It is the effacement of the bad character and carnal desires which are the sources of the animal desire. The finality of this *fana* is subsisting with good and beautiful nature or attributes. But a Sufi knows that this ‘*fana*’ is not the ultimate stage.

2) *Fana* in its second meaning means detaching one’s attention from everything except the Truth. This is the fruit of his long contemplation of the Divine names and attributes. In this stage the person still has retained a portion of self-consciousness. Though he has visions of the reality, yet he considers himself separate from the reality.

3) In its third meaning or it can be said that in its third stage, *fana* means that the Sufi now undergoes ‘*fana-i-fana*’ or effacement of the effacement in which he loses even the consciousness of the *fana*. The Truth possesses the Sufi’s heart completely and there remains nothing but the Truth.

Dr. Muwwahad concludes his discussion regarding *fana* with the following lines –
The perfection of man is that in him the elixir of love spreads and makes the lover to take after the beloved and the names and attributes of the Beloved manifest themselves in him. In this state the Sufi is called the Perfect Man who represents a totality of Divine names and attributes.¹

According to some authors ‘fana’ is considered as a psycho-spiritual growth termed as ‘the second-birth’ (tawallad sanawi). Dr. Sayyed Yahya Yathrebi (1374 AH) writes –

‘Fana is a rebirth in the same way as has been recorded in the hadith as the ‘second birth’. The existents in their upward journey in the ascent grow towards more and more perfection. In this process every state of perfection merges (fani) into the next state, meaning thereby the mineral state merges into the vegetative stage and the latter into the animal stage and the latter into the human stage. These stages do not get obliterated but merges into the next one to develop a more perfected state.’²

Considering ‘fana’ as a psychological growth of the inner states of man, Dr. Yathrebi describes a few stages of fana as follows –³

(1) The Effacement of the Will (Fana-i-Irada)

Dr. Yathrebi begins his discussion of fana by putting a few questions:

a) Does ‘fana-i-irada’ means effacement of the human will and remaining only the Divine will? Or

b) the human will unites with the Divine Will to become one Will? Or

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¹ Ibid. p. 29
³ Ibid. pages 463 to 482.
c) the human will adjusts or accords itself to the Divine Will in such a way that both of them maintain a separate identity?

Surrendering one’s own will in the Divine will is called ‘raza’ (satisfaction or contentment). It is to consider oneself as dead and to be directed and guided by the Divine Will. We cannot say here that the human will combining with the Divine will creates a third new Will. Dr. Yatherbi agrees with the third point and he says that the human will surrenders to the Divine Will in such a way that it preserves a sense of personal identity. Effacement of the personal will is based on the two foundations – Cognition and feelings.

a) **Cognition (or ilm)** – The novice comes to know that whatever happens in this world is all due to the Divine Will. His sense of cognition or intellect gets confirmed the validity of the Divine Will.

b) **Feelings (of Love)** – The effacement of the personal Will is the result of the love from the side of the salik. The lover merges his will into the will of the Beloved. This is ‘raza’.

(2) **Effacement of the Human Attributes (Fana-i-Sifat Bashri)**

This ‘effacement’ entails the transmutation of the human attributes **Dr. Yathrebi** quotes Dr. Zareenkub who says, -

“According to the Sufis, effacement is not the effacement of the essence (Zat) or the basic form, but it is the effacement of the human attributes. When the Sufis talk about the veils that hide the Truth, they mean by the veils these very human attributes, until the
'salik’ does not get rid of them, he cannot receive the divine illumination and cannot reach to the subsistence in God.”1

Dr. Zareenkub says further about the unity of God and man which is the result of this *fana* as—

“’The result of this *fana* is that the human will is effaced into the Divine Will, and nothing remains of his own self. The Sufis do not accept any other meaning of the unity between man and God, but this only.”2

Then Abu Nasr Sarraj is quoted who too supported the ‘effacement of the human attributes’—

‘I have heard a few people talking about who mean by *fana* the effacement of the humanity (*fana-i bashriyat*). They are mistaken as they confuse the term humanity (*bashriyat*) with the human body and they say that as the body becomes weaker, its humanity too wastes away and the man is named with the Divine attributes. This innocent group fails to realize that there is a difference between humanity and the ‘*akhlaq*’ of humanity. Humanity from the human cannot be wasted way as blackness from the black and whiteness from the white, but the ‘*akhlaq*’ of a man under the influence of the Light of the Truth, undergoes change and transformation, and these human attributes of man are different from his (substance) essence (\(\text{عين} \ Ain\)).”3

Hujwiri also supports the view of the effacement of the attributes. In his masterpiece work ‘The Kashf al Mahjub’ he discusses in detail the concepts of ‘*fana*’ and ‘*baqa*’ in chapter fourteen. He does not take *fana* as something in its absolute sense but

1 Ibid. page 432.
2 Ibid. p. 432.
3 Ibid. p. 432
he considers it a phenomenon relative to *baqa*. He writes,

‘But the subsistence and annihilation of a state (*hal*) denotes, for example, that when ignorance is annihilated knowledge is necessarily subsistent, and that when sin is annihilated piety is subsistent, and that when a man acquires knowledge of his piety, his forgetfulness (*ghaflat*) is annihilated by remembrance of God (*dhikr*), i.e. when anyone gains knowledge of God and becomes subsistent in knowledge of Him he is annihilated from (entirely loses) ignorance of Him, and when he is annihilated from forgetfulness he becomes subsistent in remembrance of Him, and this involves the discarding of blameworthy attributes and the substitution of praiseworthy attributes.’¹

Hujwiri criticizes those who supports the view of total annihilation –

‘Some wrongly imagine that annihilation signifies loss of essence and destruction of personality, and that subsistence indicates the subsistence of God in Man, both these notions are wrong.’²

He says further –

‘Our subsistence and annihilation (*baqa* and *fana*) are attributes of ourselves, and resemble each other in respect of their being our attributes. Annihilation is the annihilation of one attribute through the subsistence of another attribute. One may speak however, of an annihilation that is independent of annihilation; in that case annihilation means “annihilation of all remembrance of other”, and subsistence means “subsistence of the remembrance of God” (*baqa-yi dhikr-i haqq*). Whoever is annihilated from his own will subsists in the Will of God, because thy Will is perishable and the Will of God is everlasting; when thou standest by thine own Will thou standest by annihilation, but

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² Ibid. p. 243
when thou are absolutely controlled by the Will of God thou standest by subsistence.

Similarly, the power of fire transmutes to its own quality anything that falls into it, and surely the power of God’s Will is greater than that of fire; but fire affects only the quality of iron without changing its substance, for iron can never become fire.¹

The Sufis of this viewpoint say that in *fana* the self or substance or the essence of the mystic does not get destroyed Abu Nasr Sarraj (378 AH) says in his ‘*Kitabul Lama*’.

‘And the one who says that *fana* means the destruction of the self (*nafs*) is in the wrong and he has not understood the true meanings of the attributes of the humanity.’²

This is a very important question whether the self survives in *fana* or not. Dr. Yathrabi expresses his views on this topic as –

‘There is a group of Sufis that has a different view regarding *fana*. By the word ‘*baqa*’ they do not mean the subsistence of essence but the subsistence of the attributes, and by the word ‘*fana*’ they do not mean the annihilation of the essence but the annihilation of the attributes; because the desire (*murad*) of a thing is not that thing but it is its meaning (*maani*), when this meaning is present in that thing, it is meant the ‘*baqa*’ of that thing because the purpose (*maqsud*) is solved by that thing and when that meaning is lost we consider that thing as ‘*fani*’ as the purpose is lost. For example when a man gets old and weak he says, “I am not that who was previously”. He is the same person; only his attributes have changed. The annihilation of the possible in the necessary is abolishing of the impressions of the possible only not the destruction of the reality of that like the perception of the light of the simple perceptible in the light of the sun. Thus

¹ Ibid. p. 245
effacement of the impressions of the possible is effected on the self and the consciousness
of the mystic not on his body and humanity.

'Such effacement means the same thing as when a person grows older he leaves
behind the attributes of youth and acquires the attributes of being old. It is a
transmutation and new birth.'

Dr. Yathrebi quotes from Syyed Muhammad Hussain Hussaini Tehrani who
has very well discussed the above point very clearly.

'When the self undergoes “fana” in God, it does not mean that its substance has
been destroyed. His self does not leave him at any condition, Zaidness of Zaid and
Umarness of Umar are never destroyed and their identities do not get annihilated.

'If so happens, that the self and identity too are annihilated, then all these efforts,
hard work, mortifications are for what?'¹

'If (in fana) neither name remains nor any custom, neither 'me' nor 'we, to whom
do we address (invite in any religion)? To whom have the messengers and the prophets
invited for a faith? If the end result of setting perfection is 'not to exist', all the above
formalities lose their meanings.'

'All the perfections are related to the Essence of God, and people are called to
perfect themselves on the way to God. It means they have to efface themselves in the
Divine Essence. In this case Zaid is effaced not his Zaidness, his 'ain-sabita' is not
effaced and his reality also remains uneffaced, so that we can say that 'this Zaid' or 'this
identity' has reached his own perfection, and has been annihilated in the Divine
Essence.'²

¹ Falsafa-e Irfan, p. 457-8.
² Falsafa-i Irfan, p. 445-6
Dr. Raza Arasteh (1980) writes –

'In Diwan-e Shams, Rumi beautifully summarizes this point of view (of fana and baqa). “Unless you are first disintegrated, how can I reintegrate you?” Here disintegration refers to the passing away of the conventional self, reintegration means rebirth into man’s totality. Fana, the disintegration of obstacles, is removal of the small ‘i’, baqa is the ascendance of the real ‘I’. Instead of being related to a limited socio-intellectual consciousness, baqa is the process of becoming a totally conscious being. In a practical sense, baqa means cleansing one’s own consciousness of fictions, idols, and untruths, and purifying the heart of intense envy, jealousy, grief, and anger so that the spirit regains its original quality of becoming mirror like to reflect the reality within it. Fana in other words, means liberation from the phenomenal self, and baqa is the manifestation of natural life. Again, Rumi beautifully captures this mood: “Oh, happy is the man who was freed from himself and united with the existence of the living One.”

The other related concepts to fana are contraction (qabd) and expansion (bast), state (hal) and station (makam), union (jama) and separation (tafarqa), absence (ghatbat) and presence (huquzur), change (tahwin) and rest (tamkin) and unity (Tauhid). All these above expressions correspond to a particular state of the self in the ‘suluk’. For example, when the Sufi mortifies his self and faces his lower self the nafs and its blamable qualities, his heart feels contraction because he feels a sense of inadequacy in the path. Then he feels grief. This contraction of the heart or self in Sufi terminology is called ‘Qabd’. And when the veil of the ‘nafs’ is lifted, the heart feels liberation, happiness and expansion called ‘bast’. Shaikh Shahbuddin Suhrawardi in his ‘The Awarif ul Maarif’ writes –

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1. Growth to Selfhood op. cit. Page 51
‘The end of *qabd* is *hast*; the end of *hast* is *fana*, in *fana*, *qabd* and *hast* are impossible.’

Shaikh Hujwiri says -

‘*Qabd* denotes the contraction of the heart in the state of being veiled (*hijab*), and *bast* denotes the expansion of the heart in the state of revelation (*Kashf*)’.

Similarly when the growing self is in the process of change, such state is called ‘*Talwin*’. But when the self in quest finally reaches its destination it adopts the station of ‘*Tamkin*’.  

Hazrat Junaid interprets ‘*fana*’ in the context of ‘*tauhid*’. He describes the four stages of *Tauhid*. In the process the believer undergoes *fana*. But according to Hazrat Junaid after *fana*, the believer regains his identity and achieves baqa. This time his self is in a new mould. It is intoxicated no more but has gained sobriety. Ziaul Hasan Faruqi (1992) in his book on Hazrat Zanaid, quotes from one of his treatise –

‘God wants to solve a purpose through him who is annihilated in him, which he fulfills by sending him back to the world. He sends him in such a state that he remains in touch with His blessings. God gifts him with his individual attributes (which he had lost in *fana*) so that he may attract the people towards him.’

Ziaul Hassan Faruqi interprets the above lines as –

“When a true Sufi returns safely from the dangers of intoxication to the state of sobriety, we should not follow from this that in this new state he has left behind his previous spiritual experiences or he is separated from the nearness to God where he had .

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1 Growth to Selfhood, Ibid, p. 51.  
1 The Awarif w Maarif, Taj Company, New Dehi, 1984, p. 193  
3 Hazrat Junaid Baghdadi, Maktaba Jamia, 1992, p. 102
reached by virtue of his self mortification. In fact, it so happens that he treasures this spiritual experience in his new mould of self as a secret and it exudes from his speech and behaviour as a pure light and an aura of gnosis keeps him enveloped by dint of which the people are attracted towards him. In this new state he simultaneously exists in the state of \textit{fana} as well as the state of sobriety. This composite identity made up of ‘\textit{fana}’ and ‘\textit{baqa}’, ‘\textit{ghaiib}’ and ‘\textit{huzur}’ is the special gift to the men of God by Him. These people at the same moment are ‘present’ as well as ‘absent’.\footnote{Ibid. p. 102-3.}

This ‘return journey’ of the Sufi is what meant by Mahmud Shabistari’s couplet as quoted in the previous pages which is as follows –

\begin{center}
dehi bari hame estghi ma ra \hfill
\end{center}

This ‘return journey’ is also called ‘The journey with the Truth in the Creation’ as the fourth journey as studied in the section of Mulla Sadra. Thus, the self of the Sufi traverses a tedious and arduous path, faces many impediments, gains various experiences, loses itself in Truth and finally re-establishes itself in a composite form in which \textit{nasut} and \textit{malakut} embraces themselves creating a meta self in which the Beloved is prominent. This journey of self to oneself if possible only through the Beloved, meaning thereby the final identity of the mystic is constituted by the components of the Friend’s impressions. This is what \textit{Ain ul Qaza} says:

\begin{center}

1. Ibid.
2. \textit{Lawah Ain ul Qaza}

297

21
3. **Effacement of the Essence (Fana-i-Zat)**

Here essence means human essence or self. ‘Fana-i Zat’ means total passing away of the human essence. In the ‘fana-i-sifat’, a portion of the self retains itself but in *fana-i zat* there is total annihilation of the self. Dr. Yathrebi quotes from the Holy Quran in support of the above view.

‘Except the face of God everything else is annihilated’

*(Surat 28, ayat - 88)*

‘Whatever is in this world, will die’

*(Surat 55, ayat 36)*

‘Everything returns to God’

*(Surat 11, ayat 123)*

Dr. Yathrabi in addition to the above one gives the following arguments further –

a) If in the state of ‘effacement in the True Essence (Zat-i Haqq)’, determination and the man’s self with all its multiplicities (of desires) is preserved, it, then, means that the Truth has a place for multiplicity in it, which is not possible.

b) It has been made clear that Perfection and Existence are the attributes of God only but in the world of multiplicity everyone imagines to have attained perfection; but when in ‘fana’ the veils are uplifted and the reality of the Truth is revealed, all imagined and fictitious perfections are proved to be false and the Perfection and Existence of the True Essence is established.

c) The arc of the descent (qaus nazul) begins with the point that except God nothing has any reality and existence and the arc of the ascent (qaus aruj) is to
complete with that point only otherwise the circle will not be completed. \(La hu ila hu\).

d) According to the ‘principality of Existence’ (asalat wajud), after the passing away of the existence of the ‘salik’ in the existence of God, nothing else remains to which the concepts quiddity, (mahiyat) or self, or ‘ayan sabita; can be applied.

e) The stage of ‘fana’ is the stage of perception of the Essence of God. Since perception of the Essence of God for any other than God is not possible, we should, thus either say that in the state of ‘fana’ also perception of God is not attained or we should accept that in the state of ‘fana’, essence or the self of the salik does not survive.

f) The concept of ‘the substantial motion’ as propounded by Mulla Sadra also proves that the essence or the substance is annihilated totally in the process towards perfection. According to the theory of the substantial motion, as change in accidents (airaz) depends upon the change in the substance, similarly change in the attributes can not occur without any corresponding change in the essence.\(^1\)

R.A. Nicholson (1913) summarizes his views on ‘fana’. He begins with the effacement of the attributes to the effacement of the essence. *Fana* involves –

a) A moral transformation of the soul through the extinction of all its passions and desires. The passing away of evil qualities and of the evil actions, which they produce is said to be brought about by the continuance of the corresponding good

\(^1\) Falsafa-i Irfan; pp 447 to 464.
qualities and actions. This means that when ignorance, for example, passes away, knowledge remains, and that when a man ceases to forget God he necessarily continues to remember Him.

b) A mental abstraction or passing away of the mind from all objects of perception, thought, actions, and feelings through its concentration upon the thought of God. Here the thought of God signifies contemplation of the Divine attributes.

c) The cessation of all conscious thought. The highest stage of ‘fana’ is reached when even the consciousness of having attained ‘fana’ disappears. This is what Sufis call “the passing away of passing away” (fana al Fana). The mystic is now rapt in contemplation of the Divine essence.1

He writes further –

‘Often though not invariable, ‘fana’ is accompanied by loss of sensation. Sari al-Saqati, famous Sufi of the third century, expresses the opinion that if a man in this state were struck on the face with a sword he would not feel the blow. Abu’l-Khayr al Aqla had a gangrene in his foot. The physician declared that his foot must be amputated, but he would not allow this to be done. His disciples said, “Cut it off while he is praying, for at that time he is unconscious.” The physicians acted on their advice, and when Abu’l-khayr finished his prayers he found that his foot had been amputated.2

Dr. Yathrabi, continuing his discussions on ‘fana-i sifat’ and ‘fana-i zat’, says that broadly speaking ‘fana’ can be divided into two kinds -

2 Ibid. pp 61-62
‘(According to Syeed Mohammad Hussain Hussaini) man’s passing away into God is of two kinds – in its first kind the salik’s physical (or natural) life (Zindagi tabi’i) survives. In this ‘fana’ the determination (tayyayin) of Zaid which is also named as the ayan-sabita (archetypal idea) of Zaid, subsists. Muhiuddin Ibn Arabi also means this only when he talks of subsistence of the ayan-sabita of the salik in the above-mentioned stage of the ‘fana’.

‘The second kind of ‘fana’ is that in which the physical and the worldly life is finished and after passing through the stages of the ‘barzakh’ (the bridge) and the ‘qayamat’ (the day of the judgment), he subsists in fana in God. Such people have left their bodies, they have also passed beyond (the above mentioned) the day of the judgment and the bridge, they do not have any (visible) form and the self, they have passed through all the determinations and now will never take any ‘ayan-sabita’ second time - it is as the drop is changed into the ocean by losing itself into it. This second type is different from the other in which the (personal) identity and the ‘ayan-sabita’ remained subsisting.’

Supporting and to make clear the above points, Dr. Yathrabi says further –

‘We have two kinds of fana, one is fana before death called ‘istahalak’ (or annihilation) like effacement of the light of the stars in the light of the sun. In this case substance of the essence (ain-i-zat) remains but its ֲז (application) does not. This state is also called as subsistence after passing away or separation after union. The second fana is attained after death. This is like effacement of the waves in the ocean. In this fana there is a total effacement without subsistence after annihilation and separation after

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1 Falsafa-i Irfan, p. 480.
union. But this ‘fana’ is a course or route which is determined by the ‘ain-i sabita’ (the fixed archetype) and since these ‘fixed archetypes’ are eternal and immortal so their manifestations as well as their contradictions also will be present in the route or course. Perhaps this union with the ‘fixed archetypes’ may be the last stage of the above mentioned process, because (Jalaluddin) Ashtiyani in his preface to ‘Naqd al Nusus’ (Jami’s Sharah on Ibn Arabi) wrote “As the illuministic philosophers have clarified that there is a Lord of the species (rabb al naw) every (material) particular present in the phenomenal world and that particular individualities after achieving perfection get united with their ‘Lord of the species’ which is the reality of them and some of the individual (persons) like prophets and the saints after having union with their ‘Lord of the species’ get more promotion and attains the status in the Aql Fa’al (or The Active Intellect).”¹

‘According to Ibn Arabi,’ as Dr. Yathrabi writes, ‘the fixed archetypes are the target that guides the spiritual development, these maintain unity and the particularity or individualities (tasakhhus) of the existents in the different streaks of changes, transformations, fana and baqa, and are considered as the destination of the above process. These archetypes are the real copies which become the guiding base for a new determination after the previous one is effaced in such a way that finally the duplicate copies developing and growing in the process, reach near to the real copy.’²

¹ Ibid, pp 480-481
² Ibid. p. 481