

The Human Nature: Divinity of Man in IBN Arabi's and Shankara's Perspectives

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Arabi's school of thought and Shankara's worldview have much in common. One of issue on which the two thinkers agreed is the divine nature of the human being. This paper compares the approach of the two figures in the issue through discussing and explaining the unity of Being/Reality and the identity of One Being/Reality and human nature. The concept of imago Dei in Ibn Arabi's works and the concept of Self in Vedanta will be debated. In contrast to Shankara, for Ibn Arabi, the human self is considered as a reality and it has the stronger elements when the human being actualizes the divine attributes, especially knowledge.

Key words: *The human nature, the Self, image of God, the unity of Being.*

*Whoever knows 'I am Brahman' becomes this all.¹
Whoever knows himself knows his Lord.²*

Introduction

One of the most fundamental questions that humanity has ever asked is "Who I Am?" Greek thinkers such as Socrates, Plato and Aristotle declared that man is a rational, a social, and a political animal. Old Testament (Gen, 2011, 1:26) and New Testament (Corinthians, 2018, 11:7) emphasized that man has been created in the image of God. Therefore, he has the divine nature. In Islamic thought, the scholars refer to Qur'an in which God said, "When I have fashioned him (in due proportion) and breathed into him of My spirit, fall ye down in obeisance unto

¹ Roebuck, V. (2004) *Upanishad*. UK: Penguin Classics.

² Ibn 'Arabi, 1911, III, 72

him" (The Quran, 38:72). Thus, they consider the nature of human being as a divine entity since God breathed into him of His spirit.

One of the Muslim mystics who highlighted the divine nature of the human being is Ibn Arabi. Mentioning the hadith 'God has created man in His image', he has expressed and interpreted this hadith in his various books (Ibn Arabi, 1911; Hajaj, 2006). Ibn Arabi interpreted the image (form in Islamic tradition) of God through the especial characteristics of the human being such as knowledge and free will.

For Hindu thinkers' man is potentially the Spirit (Atma brahma ca); for them life is not a mere biological process but it is invested with great significance (Chalmers & Irving, 1965). As Chalmers and Irving (1965) mentioned, the living religion of the Hindus is the Vedanta philosophy which is a general name for the groups of philosophical systems seeking the systematization of the message of the Upanishads in a consistent manner.

This paper deals with two thinkers Ibn Arabi and Shankara regarding the nature of the human being. This paper provides an explanation of these questions by discussing at least, two perspectives in the vocabularies of two thinkers: (1) non-dual Reality and Its relationship with the nature of the human being and (2) the divine nature of the human being. The former is discussed through the theory of unity of being or unity of existence (wahdat al-wujūd) on the side of Ibn Arabi, and the Brahman in Shankara's idea. The latter is debated through the imago Dei from Ibn Arabi's thought and Atman from Shankara's perspective. Since there are many terms regarding the nature of human being in Islamic tradition and Hindu philosophy, I provide a brief explanation about the terms which I use in this paper.

The concept of spirit, soul, heart, and self

Aristotle applied 'potentiality' and 'fulfillment' for explanation of physical notions; then, he applied the model for his psychology. Therefore, he used 'soul' as the first entelechy of the live organs (Clark, 2001). For Aristotle, soul is the form of a living thing (Hamlyn, 2002). In fact, the term 'soul' originated from Greek thought and then entered into the Islamic texts (Iqbāl, 1934). Influenced by Greek philosophers, Muslim philosophers translated the term nafs as soul. In Persian, the term 'nafs' is translated to self (khud).

Ibn Arabi used the term 'soul' and 'spirit' as synonyms (Ibn Arabi's, 1911). In some of his books, he said that the truth of the human being is his heart (Ibn Arabi's, 1911) and the heart is the place of God and it has the form of God (Ibn Arabi's, 1911). Following Chittick (1994), I use the 'human self' referring to Ibn Arabi's perspective regarding the nature of human being. On the other hand, some interpreters of Upanishads and Vedanta used terms 'self' and 'soul' as

synonyms (Deussen, 1906). Therefore, I use term 'self' referring to the nature of human being from Shankar's perspective as well.

Why is it yet important to discuss the human nature?

Our era is the era of transformation of the many conceptions such as consciousness, the meaning of life, values, personal responsibility, spirituality, and suffering. While the traditional thought emphasized the metaphysical origin of the human being, modern thought reduced it to the reason and intelligence. Modernity extolled the human reason while postmodern showed its relativity. Frankl (1970) wrote that reductionism which is the production of modernism reduced the phenomenon of human being to his parts. He added that the reductionism undermined the comprehensive meaning of the humanity and changed the symbol of humanity to some meaningless signs. Postmodern paradigm came to debunk the ideas of modernism and traditionalism. Then, for postmodern paradigm, there is no self (soul) outside the endless contingencies of history, context and culture. There is no unitary self or soul within postmodern theories. Our positions, consciousness and beliefs are all multiple, subjective and analysable (Donner, 2010). The critiques of postmodern theories led to lose the unifying narrative of our world and our self and to reduce the knowledge and experience to the subjective realm. New paradigm aims to reintegrate the self with the discoveries of science through reconceptualizing of the self who suffered from the alienation of modernity and fragmentation of postmodern. The problem of postmodernism is the fragmentation of meaning and the loss of a narrative that connects us to the world and to each other. This leads to the emptiness of the self. Searching the meaning of the human self, new circles of western scholars are interested in the eastern culture specially mysticism. Some famous people such as Capra in biology, and John Polkinghorne in Physics are just a few examples. Louis Hoffman in toward a sustainable myth of self, says "we need a myth of self. Myth here is not something that is false, but rather something that cannot be proven true" (Hoffman et al., 2008). Diversity and tolerance are acknowledged, but yet the problem is to integrate diversity in a holistic way. The cultural relativism suffered from a discontinuous narrative which cannot explain an integrated self.

The only one Reality: Ibn Arabi's and Shankara's agreement of the unity of Reality

In this part, two theories of two thinkers are going to be examined alongside one another: Ibn Arabi's theory of the unity of being, and Shankara's non-dual Reality. Ibn Arabi and Shankara, both developed a monistic paradigm finding relationship between the single Reality and the world including the human being. Neither of the two seems willing to consider a room for reality save the Absolute Reality.

The most fundamental cornerstone of Ibn 'Arabi's school is the theory of unity of being. He said, "there is no existence save God ...there is no being but Allah"(Ibn Arabi, 1972, p. 85).

The existence just belongs to God and every other thing is His manifestation. Then, the only Being has some levels. Ibn Arabi mentioned three levels of Being. In Fuses, Ibn 'Arabi propounded three levels of unity: unity of Essence (Aḥadiyya) which is the absolute without any constraint, unity of divinity (ulūhiyya) which is the level of knowledge of divine names and attributes, and unity of lordship (Rubūbiyya) which is the unity of the actions (Af'āl) and every existent is a manifestation of one of the divine names (Ibn Arabi, 1946). It means all things return to God or God includes all things. William Chittick believed that Ibn Arabi typically called God wujūd which is usually translated as 'being' or 'existence' (Chittick, 2005). Therefore, being or existence for Ibn Arabi belongs to God (Ibn Arabi, 1911); he usually used the Real (Ḥaqq) referring to God. Ibn Arabi used the term Al-'ays 'ays (الأيس) to refer to existence which he called the Real (Ibn Arabi, 1911). Then, he mentioned that creatures, which were attributed to the non- existence (أليس) in the past and will be attributed to that in the future and are attributed to existence (الأيس) in the present time, are essentially non-existence (Ibn Arabi, 1911). For Ibn Arabi and in Arabic terminology, the term wujūd (existence or being) means presence, awareness and finding (Ibn Arabi, 1911).

The finding has two sided: the finder (knower here) and the known. Based on this terminology, 'God is Existence' means God is present, and God is aware. The question is that what God is aware of, and whom God is present to. For Ibn Arabi, the answer is God; God is present for Himself, and He is aware of Himself, and He finds Himself. From here, Ibn Arabi offered some levels (Martabah) of divinity: the divine Essence, and the divine names and attributes. The divine Essence finds the divine names and It is aware of them. This classification also helps Ibn Arabi connect the creatures to God. There is no explanation, definition, and expression of God in the divine Essence (Aḥadiyya); it is the level of Absoluteness which is hidden forever from all creatures.

The level of divine names and attributes is the root of all creatures and cosmos (Ibn Arabi, 1946). In the beginning of the Fuṣūṣ, Ibn 'Arabi discussed that God wanted to see Himself through other not through His Essence. Therefore, he created the universe which includes all His names, but the universe manifests all the names separately (Ibid). The universe is not out of God. For understanding the issue, we need to understand another theory in Ibn Arabi's thought, namely the immutable entities (al-'a'yān al-thābitah). Immutable entities are in the stage of the manifestation of the Essence in Himself and for Himself; in this stage, the knowledge of all things, which was hidden in the divine Essence, is revealed to the Essence. In other words, when the divine Essence sees (=knows=manifests Himself through Himself) Himself, the divine names and attributes are disclosed before God since they were hidden in the level of Absoluteness (Ibn Arabi, 1946). Now, they are clear and distinctive before God although they do not know each other yet; to know each other and to be distinctive they need to be actualized in the concrete world. Then, they come to the objective world and leave their permanence (thubūt). In a meaningful way, the universe is an illusion within an illusion (khayāl

fī khayāl) (Addas, 1993). God actualizes them one after another up till infinite. This consequence is not meaningful in relation to God because it is a united event for Him. God never changes the form of the immutable entities, but He existentiates them and they experience themselves as what they were for the first time till eternity (Ibn Arabi, 1972, p. 85).

Ibn Arabi's system of thought is based on the oneness of Being and a quantity of His manifestation. Therefore, the universe which is His manifestation in the objective world has been in His knowledge from the eternity. The immutable entities are considered as the divine names regarding their relationship with God and they are potential entities in the knowledge of God concerning the creatures. Shankara, likewise, developed his system of thought based on three propositions: 1) the Brahman is the only Reality, 2) Atman is the same as Brahman, and 3) empirical world is unreal and illusory (Buch, 1921). From Shankara's point of view, the Only truth is Brahman, and the world is an illusion. "Now this subtle principle, all this phenomenal universe has that for its essence; that is the only Reality, that is the only Self. that thou art, O śvetaketu" (Roebuck, 2004). This ultimate Reality cannot be expressed by any word nor perceived by any concept (Saraswati, 1957). Shankara used 'only Self' to refer to ultimate Reality; this Self has no distinctive feature. The key concept of Brahman is derived from brh meaning to grow or to bloom. This is connected with development. This can be a symbol that stands for the magical potency to achieve one's highest destiny (Masih, 1982). Based on the other interpretation, Shankara derived the word Brahman from the root brathi which refers to eternity or purity (Lang, 2011). Shankara used the term 'non-dualism' to refer to the Brahman and Atman since he wanted to reject any distinction between Brahman and Atman. From his idea, the concept of nirvana (salvation) is connected to the concept of bondage; he mentioned that nirvana means to unite with ultimate Reality or Brahman. Therefore, the only doctrine of Upanishads, according to Shankara, is the doctrine of unity (Ibid).

The ultimate Reality can be perceived through two different standpoints: absolute and relative; from the standpoint of absolute, the ultimate Reality is considered as the undifferentiated unity which let be known without any quality. On the other hand, from the relative standpoint, the ultimate Reality manifests itself through conditioned knowledge (Brück, 1991). In the next part of this paper, I will explain about the exact meaning of the relative standpoint of the ultimate Reality. According to Shankara, Upanishads speak of Brahman in different levels; on the higher level, Brahman is described in the negative way (like negative attributes which Ibn Arabi used to describe the Real). The higher level is about the Pure Self (ātman) which is devoid of all attributes, and it is indefinable. This level is called the ultimate Reality. The lower level (aparam Brahman) includes attributes and it is called Ívara (God). This God is the efficient cause of the universe and things in the material world (Sankaranarayanan, 1995).



Brahman is the absolute Reality and other things are unreal and illusion. Then, Shankara explained the meaning of the term 'illusion'; other things are unreal from the standpoint of the Absolute, however, in the external world and for our life, the things and individual souls are real. If individual souls want to leave their limitation and transcend their soul and perceive their identity which is united with Brahman, they must lose all senses of plurality (Sinha, 1938). Then, Shankara explicated that we cannot describe Brahman and we cannot say what It is but we can say It is not anything; based on this interpretation, knowing Brahman is easier since the meaning of It is not comprehensible for us (Sankaranarayanan, 1995). Shankara referred to three features of Brahman, sat (existence), cit (consciousness), and ānanda (bliss) (Rukmani, 1991). In fact, Brahman essentially includes these features.

Shankara introduced another concept to solve the problem. He used the concept of Maya which is Absolute with qualities. Maya includes the concepts of covering and illusion. Maya covers the real nature of Brahman. It develops a kind of limitation to Absolute and it covers Its infinity. Maya is neither sat (existence) nor asat (non-existence) but it is anirvacanīya (as real or as unreal). In other words, it cannot be described as real or as unreal. Maya covers Brahman and discloses the universe (Ibid). For explaining the relationship of the universe and Brahman, Shankara justified that the effect (the universe) is not the result of the change in Brahman, however, Brahman Itself was manifested in the form of the universe. Brahman is immutable, therefore, for manifesting as the universe, it has not changed but It disclose Itself in the form of the universe. Nevertheless, based on the other theory in Shankara's perspective, Ajativāda (the no-creation theory), there is no creation; the universe is timeless and eternal (Ibid). This theory is other explanation of the Absolute Reality or Supreme Being which is immutable and eternal.

The Supreme Being was alone without any second, then Pure Consciousness developed a desire to cognize. Because there was nothing but He Himself. So he could only cognize Himself. He made Himself the object of His own cognition. The Supreme Self, the Pure Consciousness looked at Himself as Himself and had become the I-consciousness. From this arose magic power (māyāśakti), the root of all differentiations and duality and from that arose many embodied selves with mutual differences. He desired to become many but in fact there was nothing different from Him (Sankaranarayanan, 1995).

The divine nature of the human being: Ibn Arabi's and Shankara's perspectives on divinity of man

In the Old Testament, the priority of human beings has been emphasized; all creatures have been created for man and God magnified him over all creatures (Gen 1: 26, p. 28-30). Mentioning the goal of creation, the holy Book introduced man as the image of God (Gen 1:26-27). In Judeo-Christian tradition, this statement of the holy Book is called imago Dei. In Islamic

tradition, for the first time, Ghazzālī reported hadith from Shiblī, one of the early Sufis who discussed the divine form and explained that Adam was created while he had the divine names although the Essence of God has been hidden forever (Ghazzālī, n.d.). Ibn ‘Arabi was one of the mystics who discussed and formulated the theory in his books.

In Islamic thought, God is the origin of everything, including man, although human being has a special position among all creatures. The Qur’ān says “we have honoured the sons of Adam; provided them with transport on land and sea given them for sustenance things good and pure; and conferred on them special favours, above a great part of our creation” (The Quran, 17:70). And in another place: “when I have fashioned him (in due proportion) and breathed into him of my spirit, fall ye down in obeisance unto him” (The Qur’ān, 15:29).

Ibn Arabi in *Fūtuḥāt* mentioned three levels of the manifestation: outer (*zāhir*), inner (*bāṭin*) and the intermediate (*barzakh*) that is the human being who possesses two aspects; the inner form and the outer form (Ibn Arabi, 1911, II). In *Fuṣūṣ*, he explained that because of these two forms, the human being has the real form of God. The form of God, for Ibn Arabi, is a reality which is the actual mode in the perfect man. He introduced the perfect man as an actual prototype of the image of God (in contrast to Christ in Christianity). The real differentia of man is to be in the divine form (Ibn Arabi, 1911, III). God manifests Himself in two aspects, outer and inner, and since man has two aspects, he can disclose the inner and the outer manifestations. Hence, he has the inner divine form and outer divine form (Ibn Arabi, 1911, II) and as a result, he has the real form of God (Ibn Arabi, 1946). The real form must have the features received from God. Ibn Arabi applied some theories to explain the divine nature of the human being. One of them is the immutable entities according to which the root of all things including the human being is in the divine Essence. Then, the things and the human being became to this world without any change in their immutable entities (Ibn Arabi, 1946). The other theory which Ibn Arabi used to describe the nature of human being is the divine names. God taught Adam divine names which include realities related to the creation of the universe. Divine names also include the realities related to the creation of angels. Hence, the human being knows the realities of angels while angels do not know the realities of themselves (Ibn Arabi, 1911, III). Ibn Arabi explained that God gave Adam deposits from angels (Ibid); then, he explained the deposits. Deposits are the realities related to the creation of angels. God ordered Adam to inform angels about the names which God taught him. Adam informed them of the realities that God put in him when He created him by His two hands. After Adam taught angels, they prostrated him because he taught them what God put into Adam, the knowledge (Ibn Arabi, 1911, II).

And [Allah] taught Adam the entire of the divine names which were directed to creation of all existents and also [Allah taught] the names which are directed to the creation of angles while the angels did not know them... then, [Allah] ordered Adam

to inform the angels of their names which we presented to them, so Adam informed the angels about the their names which angels were the manifestations of those names (Ibn Arabi, 1911, I, p. 71)

In chapter 4 of *Futūḥāt*, the divine names are introduced as realities (ḥaqāiq) or Platonic Ideas which are contingents worshipping the Lord (Elmore, 2011). Cosmic or created objects are the self-manifestations of the creational names. The number of divine names and attributes are infinitive, however, Ibn Arabi in some of his books mentioned some numbers such as 99. Nevertheless, he highlighted some names as the mother (Umahāt) of all names; "the mothers of all names are The Alive (Al-Ḥayy), The Knower (Al-Ālīm), The Purposer (Al-Murīd), The Almighty or Omnipotent (Al-Qādir), The Speaker (Al-Qā'il), The Bounteous (Al-Javād), and The Equitable (Al-Muqṣīṭ) which are necessary for creation of the universe" (Ibn Arabi, 1911, II, p. 100). Hence, human being can know God, the universe, and himself through self-knowledge; because of that, Ibn 'Arabi insisted that man has to know himself to know God (Ibn Arabi, 1972, p. 85, XIV).

Ibn 'Arabi, in *Fuṣūṣ*, portrayed an image of the relationship between man and God as a mutual internal dialogue. This relationship is related to the concept of the mirror in the first level. God wanted to see Himself through another thing (Ibn Arabi, 1946). When God decided to create a being who integrates all of His names and attributes, He created Adam (Ibid). To explain Ibn 'Arabi's description of the relationship between man and God, the other concept in his thought should be mentioned, the Lord-servant relationship. Ibn 'Arabi explained the concept of the Lord (Rabb) in his texts. There is a Lord for every servant (Ibn Arabi, 1911, I, 2) and God is the Lord of the entire universe. While the servant has the fundamental role to actualize the Lord, he requested for the Lord, and the Lord is fundamental for existence of the servant (as a contingent) (Ibid). Ibn 'Arabi concluded that all this process comes from a kind of especial divinity He has. This divinity is related to being the Lord, who essentially and existentially demands the servant while the Absolute Lord essentially is rich and needs nothing (Ibn Arabi, 1911, III). Two meanings of the concept of the lord in Ibn 'Arabi's texts can be recognized; sometimes he used the term 'Lord' referring to the Absolute Being, for example, God is the Lord of the entire of the universe and all the universe is His servant (marbūb) (Ibn Arabi, 1911, I), and sometimes, he utilized the term 'Lord' as a relative word which refers to the lord of every person (Ibn Arabi, 1911, III).

Without the concept of servant, there is no conception of the Lord, and the servant cannot exist without his Lord. Thus, the servant exists permanently because the Lord exists forever (Ibn Arabi, 1946). The name (Lord) is in Essence of God, and it is not separate from the Essence. Therefore, it is God and when it appears in the servant, it means God appears in him. Then, Ibn 'Arabi utilized a metaphor for a description of the mutual relationship between the Lord and the servant:

I venerate my Lord and He venerates me, I understand Him so I am evident for Him, and I help Him, because of that He created me and He is known through me (Ibn Arabi, 1946, p. 91-92).

This reciprocal relationship is the highest connection between man and God in Ibn 'Arabi's paradigm of thought.

In fact, our real nature is divine, pure, complete and eternally free. Our real self, Atman is Brahman (Rukmani, 1991). The term Atman often is used as a synonym of Brahman, it is used to refer to the principle of individual self (Harshananda, 2000). Atman is the principle of life in person. It is derived from 'av' meaning to blow and 'an' meaning to breathe. Thus, it means breath of life (Lang, 2011).

Atman is the reality of all of the human being but the reality of individual selves (souls) which live in the empirical world is identified through other theory, adjuncts (upādhis). The other term is jīva which is identical with Brahman and could be translated to the living beings. Based on the Vedanta's text, jīva refers to the pure consciousness in the internal organ or in the intellect (Harshananda, 2000). Jīva or individual self is the manifestation of Atman or great Self (Sankaranarayanan, 1995). The individual self (jīva) in Shankara's perspective is an eternal and beginningless, and it cannot be described. Since there is no creation in Shankara's thought, one cannot speak about creation of jīva in the absolute sense because ultimately everything is Brahman whose nature is immutable and eternal. The reality of individual self, its eternity and its beginningless originate from its identification with Brahman (Ibid). The multitude of self is related only to the level of the empirical world; it also is connected with a proceeding evolution that happens in the sphere of avidyā and which endowed the self with individuality.

According to Shankara, jīva is conscious by its nature, thus consciousness is an independent and eternal reality which is self-evident. All objects are manifested via the consciousness but it does not itself need any other entity to its own manifestation. As a result, it is understood as self-luminous and immutable (Sinha, 1938). Shankara asked "In what does the pre-eminence of man consist?" (Rangaswami, 2012, 4:1.5). He himself answered "It lies in his free-will and knowledge" (Ibid).

The challenge of individuality is problematic for Shankara, therefore, he made distinction between individuality and personality. Man as a finite individual has a limited intelligence and such a nature cannot be described as the personality of man. Personality is spiritual nature. The spiritual experience enables the human being to shed the limitations. In such way, man is encouraged to have life of selfless altruism. From Hindu mind, one life is too short for man to overcome the illusion which we are completely separate entities (Ibid).

Discussion

Belonging to two mystical paradigm, both Ibn Arabi and Shankara, under the influences of the Eastern climate and environment have shown an enormous fascination for abstract and mystical speculation about human nature. In fact, the efforts of two thinkers aimed to answer the question 'how can man indeed rest peacefully, contentedly in any state?' Although as Aristotle mentioned philosophy begins in wonder asking questions of 'who am I' and 'whence came this world' and so on, the Eastern philosophy did not turn to philosophical speculation merely to satisfy the metaphysical challenging of asking the why of things but it tries to peep 'behind the veil'. Both, thinkers do not present a collection of order, systematic coherence, consistency and wholeness in their perspectives. Although Ibn Arabi was influenced by Western philosophy especially Platonic tradition, his thought did not accept a systematic order; he sometimes is compared with deconstructionist such as Derrida in our era (Almond, 2004).

In monistic paradigm of Ibn Arabi/Shanaka, it is explicated that the being or the existence is one. Brahman is covered by the power of Maya. Shankara and Ibn Arabi followed the method by which one proceeds from the whole to the parts not the empirical one of rising from the parts to the whole. The reality of the whole, the unity and eternity of Absolute/Real are taken for granted. In Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upanishads is said that "He who inhabits all beings but is within them, whom no being knows, whose body is all beings, and who controls all beings from within is the Internal Ruler, your own immortal self" (Roebuck, 2004). Ibn Arabi used the doctrine of transcendence or incomparability (*tanzīh*) and immanence or resemblance (*tashbīh*) to refer to Godhead and divinity. Transcendence (*tanzīh*) indicates the fact that God transcends any attribute or quality possessed by His creatures. On the other hand, *tashbīh* or immanence means to be similar or comparable. It indicates that a certain similarity can be found between God and creation (Chittick, 1989). Ibn Arabi explained that just someone who takes both (transcendence and immanence) about God is right (Ibn Arabi, 1946). In this sense, God is everything and He is none of them. For example, when it is said that God sees or hears it means He sees or hears in every existent that sees and hears since He manifested Himself in every phenomenon (‘Afīfī, 1939). This pantheistic idea of Ibn Arabi is a combination of Islamic thought and Neo-Platonism in which there is a substance, as a base of all things on the one hand, and countless attributes on the other hand.

According to Ibn Arabi, the human being is the microcosm (‘Ālam al- Aṣghar).

When Allah – glory be to Him – willed that the source of His most Beautiful Names – which are beyond enumeration- be seen or you can equally say that He willed His source to be seen, He willed that they be seen in a microcosmic being which contained the entire matter, endowed with existence, and through which His secret was manifested to Him. For how a thing sees itself through itself is not the

same as how it sees itself in something else which acts as a mirror for it, hence, He manifests Himself to Himself in a form which is provided by the place in which He is seen. Without the existence of this place, He would not appear and He would not be manifested to Himself (Ibn Arabi, 1946, p. 48-49).

Based on the macrocosm-microcosm, man is a species and has the perfect existence because he is in the image of God, thus, he is the complete abstract of the universe or the spirit of the universe, and he is the microcosm. The macrocosm is the universe.

Neither Ibn 'Arabī nor Shankara seem to be doubtful about the nature of Maya/Creator (khāliq) and the power of Maya/Creation to hide the Brahman/Real. Creation/the power of Maya covers the essence of Brahman/Real and manifests It in the form of universe.

By His own nature, the Self is whatever He sees. There is nothing else here but the Self. Whether appearing as the seen or perceiving as the seer, nothing else exists besides the Self....You may break a lump of raw sugar into a million pieces, still there is nothing but sugar. Likewise, the unity of the Self is not lost, even though He fills the whole universe (Abhayananda, 2002, p. 146).

Its limited form or jīva, in Shankara's thought, is the product of science while Ibn Arabi considered it as the appearance of Lord (Rabb) in one or more divine names. In Fuṣūṣ, Ibn 'Arabī explained that every being manifests one or more divine names and finally the perfect man actualizes the entire names, Ibn Arabi justified that the relationship between the divine names and someone who discloses them is a reciprocal relationship introducing Lord-servant relationship.

From Shankara's point of view, the Self is identical with Brahman, but in avidyā when the Self appears in the individual self, it loses Its unity with Brahman; in this level, according to Shankara, the manifested Self (jīva) just is similar to Brahman, or it is just a reflected image of Brahman. This Self in the individual is limited by body, mind, intellect, and senses organs (Lang, 2011).

Both Shankara and Ibn Arabi emphasized that usually the human beings especially ordinary people are not aware of their divine nature. Hence, the average man is totally unaware of his potential nature in his life (Chalmers & Irving, 1965). Ibn Arabi mentioned that animal man/average man does not know himself and his divine nature (Ibn Arabi, 1911, III).

In Ibn Arabi, we find a tendency of encounter, as a reciprocal relationship, between man (the perfect man) and God. Of course, he believed that such an encounter wouldn't be between animal man and God. In this level, the perfect man who includes the divine names and attributes

such as knowledge, free will, power, and so on, will be able to experience a face-to-face existing before the Conscious Being/ the Real.

Ibn 'Arabi as a Muslim mystic is influenced by three traditions; he followed the Platonic theory of the self as a metaphysical and nonmaterial entity, and he somewhat was influenced by Judeo-Christian tradition (Dobie, 2010) and finally as a Muslim scholar, he was fully committed to the Qur'ānic doctrines of human self. Based on these origins, he believed that man has been created in divine form and human self is not but the manifestation of the divine form or *ṣūra* in the human being. Being in the form of God in the perfect mode (the perfect man), for Ibn Arabi, indicated the formlessness of self, and formlessness of self is due to connection to inarticulable presence.

The experience of personal mutual relationship with God needs mutual perceptive interaction. God-man relationship, in Ibn 'Arabi's point of view, is considered as the deepest need of both man and God; this is the need of being known and being knower. Man, who is conscious and can encounter and interact with God, only deserved to fulfil God's need. The humanity of man will develop through this relationship, and Divinity of God is manifested through interaction with other (man) who is conscious of himself and of this relationship. In this context, man is not only an active agent, but he is also a free existent who worships and helps God manifest Himself.

Shankara, unlike Ibn Arabi, seems to be a quietist; not only does Shankara consider Atman as a static entity but also *jīva*. According to Shankara, the difference between the individual self and the Supreme Self is due to the presence of limiting adjuncts such as body; there is actually no difference (Bhajananda, 2010). In fact, in Shankara's worldview, we find that he speaks about one Reality, the unreal world and the identity of *jīva* with Brahman, and the individual self which is non-different from Brahman (Nakamura, 1983). Nevertheless, Shankara paid attention to morality to reach the highest truth. He makes it abundantly clear that without virtue, liberating knowledge cannot be realized. Shankara emphasized that the pre-existing knowledge of the self helps the self to know his reality through Scripture. The Scripture and consciousness of the self, shed light upon the nature of the self (Shah-Kazemi, 2006).

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