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AL-FARGHĀNĪ'S COMMENTARY  
ON IBN AL-FĀRĪD'S MYSTICAL POEM  
AL-TĀ'IYYAT AL-KUBRĀ

by

Giuseppe SCATTOLIN

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### Premise.

In a previous article <sup>1</sup> I have presented the results of my study on Ibn al-Fāriḍ's poem *al-Tāʿīyyat al-Kubrā* on the basis of a semantic analysis of its language. Such analysis has showed that there is a difference between Ibn al-Fāriḍ's language, experiential and poetic, and Ibn ʿArabī's language, theoretical and philosophical.

With the present article I intend to begin the study of some of the most important commentaries on Ibn al-Fāriḍ's poem, most of them have been produced by Ibn ʿArabī's Sufi school. It seems to me important to point out the way their thoughts have been introduced in their explanation of Ibn al-Fāriḍ's poem and have shaped the common understanding of Ibn al-Fāriḍ in the Islamic world. Among them a special importance has always been recognized to al-Farghānī's commentary.

Al-Farghānī is, in fact, an important witness of the way Ibn al-Fāriḍ's poem has been adopted and explained by Ibn ʿArabī's school. <sup>2</sup> Al-Farghānī took his explanation directly from his master Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī (d.673/1274), who was Ibn ʿArabī's foremost disciple and successor. Another of al-Farghānī's companions at al-Qūnawī's school, ʿAfīf al-Dīn al-Tilmisānī (d.690/1291), also wrote a commentary on Ibn al-Fāriḍ's poem. After him, one should mention some classical commentaries as that of ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Kāshānī (d.730/1330), Sharaf al-Dīn Dāwūd al-Qayṣarī (d.751/1350) and ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī (d.1143/1730). All of them have been outstanding masters of Ibn ʿArabī's school and commentators of his works, they have also tried to explain Ibn al-Fāriḍ's poem in the light of Ibn ʿArabī's thought.

Al-Farghānī's commentary on Ibn al-Fāriḍ's *Tā'īyya* stands at the beginning of this chain of commentators. It has always been very much appreciated both in Arabic and Persian Sufi literature to the point of being considered a classical reference for Ibn 'Arabī's Sufism. Ibn Khaldūn (d.808/1406), in his famous *muqaddima* (the Introduction to his historical work) mentions al-Farghānī as an outstanding example of that monistic Sufi thought which he condemns as being absurd, going from "obscurity to more obscurity" (*bi-l-aghmad fa-l-aghmad*)<sup>3</sup>. On the contrary, 'Abd al-Raḥmān Jāmī (d.898/1492), a Persian Sufi and historian, praises al-Farghānī's commentary: "Nobody has ever explained the science of Reality with such accuracy and logic as he [al-Farghānī] did in his Introduction (*dībāja*) to Ibn al-Fāriḍ's poem *al-Tā'īyya*"<sup>4</sup>. Modern scholars too have appreciated al-Farghānī's work. A contemporary Persian scholar, S.J. Ashtiānī says that al-Farghānī's commentary "...has no equal in the exposition of the Sufi sciences and that many Sufis, in ancient and recent times have benefited especially from its Introduction (*muqaddima*)"<sup>5</sup>. Al-Farghānī is also praised by W.Chittick, a contemporary American Sufi scholar, as one who: "...wrote some of the clearest and most detailed early expositions of his and Ibn 'Arabī's ideas"<sup>6</sup>.

In spite of this large consensus of Ibn 'Arabī's school in understanding Ibn al-Fāriḍ's poems one cannot avoid questioning the validity of such interpretation. Does al-Farghānī, and with him Ibn 'Arabī's school, really convey the original meaning of Ibn al-Fāriḍ's poem or does he force his own thoughts, basically Ibn 'Arabī's Sufi vision, into Ibn al-Fāriḍ's verses? How are we to grasp the original meaning of Ibn al-Fāriḍ's poem beyond al-Farghānī's own interpretation, largely adopted by later commentators? This question has become central in the debate on Ibn al-Fāriḍ's poems and no convincing answer has been given both by Ibn 'Arabī's followers or opponents. Trying to find an answer to this questioning has been the aim of my previous study through the semantic analysis of the poem.

In the same framework, the first aim of the present article is to outline al-Farghānī's methodology in his commentary of Ibn al-Fāriḍ's poem. After some biographical notes on al-Farghānī, I shall give an essential summary of his famous Introduction (*muqaddima*)<sup>7</sup>, highlighting its most important concepts and terms which are a constant reference in his subsequent commentary. I shall conclude with an assessment of al-Farghānī's methodology and a comparison with my previous semantic study of the poem.

## A. AL-FARGHĀNĪ'S LIFE AND WORK

From the available historical sources we can gather some essential data about al-Farghānī's life and work<sup>8</sup>.

### 1. His name and birth.

Al-Farghānī's complete name is: Sa'īd al-Dīn (title, *laqab*) Abū 'Uthmān (son related name, *kunya*) Muḥammad (proper name, *ism 'alam*) Ibn Aḥmad (father related name, *nasab*) al-Kāsānī al-Farghānī (relational names of place, *nisba*). In many sources, however, he is simply referred to as Sa'īd al-Dīn or al-Farghānī or both<sup>9</sup>. The surest date of al-Farghānī's death, as reported by the earliest sources, is the month of dhū l-Ḥijja 699/August 1300<sup>10</sup>. Al-Dhahabī says that al-Farghānī was about seventy years old when he died, so his birth should be fixed around 629/1231. His birth place is surely the town of Kāsān in the valley of Farghānah, from which he derived his *nisba* "al-Farghānī al-Kāsānī" by which he has become universally known<sup>11</sup>. By contrast, there is no sure information about the whereabouts of his death<sup>12</sup>. Besides, al-Farghānī himself in his Commentary<sup>13</sup> mentions that in 665/1267 he was in Mecca, probably on pilgrimage.

### 2. Al-Farghānī's life and work.

Al-Farghānī's life can be divided in two main periods.<sup>14</sup>

In the first period, in his homeland, al-Farghānī entered quite young the *Subrawardiyya* Sufi order, one of the earliest and most famous in the Islamic world<sup>15</sup>. This order was founded by two prominent Sufi masters (*shaykhs*) of the same family: Shihāb al-Dīn Abū Ḥafṣ 'Umar al-Suhrawardī (d.632/1234), a contemporary of Ibn al-Fāriḍ and author of an important Sufi manual "The Gifts of the Divine Sciences" (*'Awārif al-mā'ārif*)<sup>16</sup>. Abū Ḥafṣ was initiated into Sufi life by his uncle Abū Najīb 'Abd al-Qādir al-Suhrawardī (d.563/1168), also author of one of the first manuals on Sufi life "The Manners of the Novices" (*Ādāb al-murīdīn*)<sup>17</sup>. 'Abd al-Qādir was a disciple of Aḥmad al-Ghazzālī (d.520/1126), the younger brother of the great theologian and also an influential figure in Sufism Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazzālī (d. 505/1111). The

*Subrawardiyya* is considered one of the most orthodox schools of Sufism. Al-Farghānī entered the *Subrawardiyya* order at the hand of one of 'Umar al-Suhrawardī's disciples, Najīb al-Dīn 'Alī Buzghush Shīrāzī (d.678/1279-80), a famous Sufi master (*shaykh*) of Shīrāz (Persia). From him al-Farghānī had his first Sufi initiation and took both the cloak of discipleship (*kbirqat irāda*) and the practice of invocation of the Divine Names (*talqīn al-dhikr*), which according to a common Sufi practice must be taken from only one master (*shaykh*)<sup>18</sup>. Later al-Farghānī became himself a Sufi master (*shaykh*) of a Sufi convent called "The Mill" (*al-tāhūn*), whose whereabouts are not explained.<sup>19</sup>

In a later period of his life (no sure date is given, but probably in a mature age), al-Farghānī with the permission of his first master entered the companionship and service (*ṣubba wa-khidma*) of a famous Sufi of his time, Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī<sup>20</sup>, who was the foremost disciple and successor of the great Sufi master Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn 'Arabī (d.638/1240) and had founded in Konya, in Anatolia (the present Turkey), a flourishing centre of Sufism that attracted many scholars from all over the Islamic world. From al-Qūnawī al-Farghānī received as he says: "...spiritual direction and guidance and borrowed inward and outward virtues and discipline as well as the sciences of the Law, the Way and Truth"<sup>21</sup>. This merging of orthodox Sufism (the *Subrawardiyya*) and Ibn 'Arabī's esoteric Sufism is not uncommon in Islamic Sufism. According to the Sufi vision, in fact, religious Law (*sharī'a*) has always a double aspect, outward (*ẓāhir*) and inward (*bāṭin*).

This second period was very momentous for al-Farghānī, because he was introduced, as he says, to the "sciences of Reality" (*'ulūm al-ḥaqīqa*), that is into Ibn 'Arabī's esoteric Sufism and listened to al-Qūnawī's commentary on Ibn al-Fāriḍ's *al-Tā'yyat al-Kubrā*. It is reported, in fact, that al-Qūnawī used to close his lectures by giving a verse of Ibn al-Fāriḍ's *Tā'yya* and urging his disciples to learn it by heart.<sup>22</sup> These lessons were for al-Farghānī the starting point for his most important work through which he gained renown all over the Islamic world, that is his Commentary (*sharḥ*) on Ibn al-Fāriḍ's *Tā'yya*<sup>23</sup>. Al-Farghānī wrote his Commentary first in Persian under the title: "*Mashbāriq al-darārī al-zuhar fī kashf ḥaqā'iq naẓm al-durar*", which translates: "*The Rising Places of the Radiant Stars in the Unveiling the Realities of the Knitted Pearls*"<sup>24</sup>. Later, al-Farghānī reedited his work in Arabic with the title: "*Muntahā al-madārik wa-muntahā lubb-i kull-i kāmīl-in wa-'ārif-in wa-salik-in*"<sup>25</sup>, which translates: "*The Utmost Realities Accessible to the Intellects and the Understandings of Any Perfect, Knowing and Ascetic Sufi*". The Arabic version, compared with the Persian one, is not only: "...more detailed and more comprehensive", as

Ashtiyānī says, but a new composition, about one third longer than the Persian<sup>26</sup>. Al-Farghānī's Introduction (*muqaddima*) to his Commentary enjoyed special consideration since Ibn Khaldūn and Jāmī's time to the present day. The Arabic version is to be considered the more complete expression of al-Farghānī's Sufi vision. For this reason, I have relied particularly on the Arabic text in the present research. Surely, a comparative study of the two texts would show whether and to what extent there has been some development or expansion of al-Farghānī's own Sufi thought from the Persian to the Arabic version.<sup>27</sup> It seems to me from the historical evidence that the Persian version should contain more of al-Qūnawī's explanations, since he himself read it and approved it. The Arabic text, on the other hand, should reflect more of al-Farghānī's mature and original thought. My present research will focus on the understanding of the arabic text because of its historical importance, being the first of a long series of commentaries on Ibn al-Fāriḍ's mystical poem *al-Tā'īyyat al-Kubrā*.

## B. AL-FARGHĀNĪ'S INTRODUCTION.

### 1. The Transcendent Mystery and its Manifestations.<sup>28</sup>

#### a. The Transcendent Mystery (*al-ghayb*).<sup>29</sup>

In the first part of his Introduction al-Farghānī focuses his exposition on the transcendent Mystery (*al-ghayb*) of the Divine Essence (*al-ḍāt*), its self-manifestations (*tajallīyyāt*), its names (*asmā'*) and attributes (*ṣifāt*)<sup>30</sup>. Al-Farghānī's reflection starts by quoting a well known hadith, classified in Islami literature among the so called "divine hadiths" (*ḥadīth qudsī*)<sup>31</sup>:

"I was a hidden treasure, I loved to be known, so I created the world in order to become known".<sup>32</sup>

This hadith has always had an important place in Sufi reflection, particularly in that of Ibn 'Arabī's school. In this hadith they saw clearly expressed the main traits of their thought, say a summary of their whole vision. Al-Farghānī explains it as follows:

1. The "hidden treasure" designates the unseen, Divine Mystery in its absolute, transcendent hiddenness (*kbafā'*) and self-sufficiency (*ghinā*).

2. "I loved", means that love (*ḥubb*) is the original force and the eternal impulse that drives the Divine Mystery out of hiddenness (*kbafā'*) towards its

self-disclosure or self-manifestation (*tajallī*, *ẓubūr*). Out of love the non-manifest, unseen became manifest and visible: therefore, love is the ultimate cause of creation.

3 "To be known", means that the true knowledge (*mā'rifa*) of the Mystery can be reached only through the self-manifestation of the same Mystery. Consequently, true knowledge is only Sufi knowledge, that is a knowledge of God through God himself.

4. "I created the world", means that the created world (*ḵbalq*) is the display of the Hidden Treasure. As such, the created world has no independent being and meaning outside its relation to God: it is absolutely dependent on God's continuous creative act.

Al-Farghānī explains the hadith saying:

"By the hidden treasure (*al-kanz al-ḵbāfī*) in this divine hadith is meant the unfathomable Mystery (*ḵunh al-ghayb*) and the absolute transcendence of the Essence (*itlāq al-dhāt al-aqdas*) and the inward, eternal ipseity (*bātin al-huwiyya al-aẓaliyya*)".<sup>33</sup>

Along with the traditional Sufi teaching, al-Farghānī likes to focus his reflexion on God as the absolute, transcendent Mystery that nobody can perceive or comprehend. Faced with such inscrutable Reality, the human mind can only avow its radical limit and inability (*'ajz*) to approach it in any way. This awareness is the starting point of his Sufi reflection, as he says:

"Know that the unfathomable, transcendent Essence (*ḵunh al-dhāt al-aqdas*) and the Mystery of ipseity (*ghayb al-huwiyya*), its absoluteness (*itlāq*) and eternity (*aẓaliyya*), in which is included his everlastingness (*abadiyya*), basically can not be seen, nor understood or comprehended from the point of view of a determination (*ta'ayyun*) and it is absolutely not in the capacity of any determined being (*muta'ayyan*) (to express it), except by a negative statement (*ḵukm salbī*)..."<sup>34</sup>

The same truth is also unambiguously expressed in al-Farghānī's view by the verse of the Koran: "You comprehend nothing of His science, except for what He wants (you to know)" (K 2,255). This verse with the previous hadith have always been beloved references in Sufi reflection.<sup>35</sup>

In al-Farghānī's text some specific terms are used to designate the transcendent Reality of God, terms that must be highlighted, since they constantly recur throughout his Commentary<sup>36</sup>. The Divine Reality is designated as:

the Mystery (*al-ghayb*). This term is sometimes emphasized as *ghayb al-ghayb* (the Mystery of the Mystery) to express its absoluteness and its transcendence. It has Koranic origins and has become a central term in Sufi meditation.



the Essence (*al-dhāt*). This term is related to Islamic theological disputes around the Divine Essence and its names and attributes. In al-Farghānī's view the Divine Essence is thought of as being in itself beyond any possible qualification: it will remain for ever the unknowable, unapproachable Divine Essence. It is used as synonym of of the Divine Mystery.

Ipseity (*al-huwiyya*). This term is derived from the Arabic pronoun of the third person "he" (*huwa*), called in Arabic grammar *ḍamīr al-ghāyib* (the pronoun of the absent). In the Koran the pronoun "he" (*huwa*) is very often used in absolute form to indicate God, because He is always the Absent that can never be directly indicated. Therefore, the derived noun *huwiyya* designates the Divine Ipseity or Essence that is beyond any kind of designation and it is also used as synonym of the Divine Mystery. Al-Farghānī points out the subtle linguistic play between the noun Mystery (*ghayb*) and the pronoun "he" (*huwa*), called in Arabic *ḍamīr al-ghāyib* (active participle of the verbal noun *ghayb*).

These designations of the Divine Mystery are further qualified by some modifiers to emphasize its transcendent, inscrutable aspect, such as:

Unfathomness (*kuhb*), term that indicates a depth that cannot be fathomed.

The Divine Mystery in fact is the unfathomable Reality, beyond the reach and measure of any kind of comprehension.

Absolute (*itlāq*), term that means the absence of any limit and condition. The Divine Mystery is the absolute, undelimited and unconditioned Reality.

Most Holy (*aqdas*), term that indicates the highest degree of holiness as separation from created beings. The Divine Mystery is the Most Holy Reality, because it is transcendent, unapproachable, separated and above everything.

In addition, these names and qualifications are frequently and intentionally interchanged to make clear that no definition or verbal expression is an adequate description of that transcendent and absolute Mystery. Consequently, these terms should never be understood as real definitions of the Divine Mystery, but as mere indications of a Reality that transcends all comprehension and expression.

b. The First Manifestation of the Mystery (*al-tajallī al-awwāl*): its aspects, cause and names.<sup>37</sup>

b-1. Oneness (*wahda*), Absolute-Unity (*al-aḥadiyya*) and Related-Unity (*al-wāḥidiyya*).

Al-Farghānī continues his Introduction with a long and detailed description of the manifestations of the Mystery at all levels. The unfathomable Mystery manifests itself through a number of aspects, called self-manifestations (*tajalliyyāt*) or self-determinations (*ta'ayyunāt*). First, the Divine Mystery manifests itself in its transcendent and absolute Oneness (*waḥda*). This Oneness, however, is not to be thought of as a static identity, but rather as a dynamic and dialectical process. Oneness is the principle of self-identity of the Mystery and, at the same time, the source of its countless, possible manifestations. Oneness must, therefore, be considered under two basic aspects.

The first is called the Absolute-Unity (*al-aḥadiyya*).

This designation is derived from the Koranic qualification of God as *aḥad* (One). Al-Farghānī means by the term *aḥadiyya* the transcendent and absolute God's Oneness, that implies no relation to any kind of multiplicity or determination. This aspect is called the Absolute-Unity (*al-aḥadiyya*) and is related only to the absolute Mystery (*ghayb*) and, therefore al-Farghānī says, it takes the Mystery's color, which is the color of darkness (*zulma*) that no eye can pierce or violate.

The second is called the Related-Unity (*al-wāḥidiyya*).

This designation too has been derived from another Koranic qualification of God as *wāḥid* (One). Moreover, al-Farghānī remarks that some Sufis would consider the two names of God's unity, *aḥad* (One) and *wāḥid* (One), so strictly correlated in Koranic texts as to form one composite Name, fully expressing the absolute Oneness of God as *al-wāḥid al-aḥad*<sup>38</sup>. Notwithstanding such close similarity, the two terms have in al-Farghānī's language two basic different connotations. The Related-Unity (*al-wāḥidiyya*) denotes the Oneness not in its absoluteness as Absolute-Unity (*al-aḥadiyya*), but as related to multiplicity, that is to the infinite, possible aspects deriving from it. Therefore, al-Farghānī says, the Related-Unity (*al-wāḥidiyya*) is the origin of multiplicity, as number one is the beginning of all numbers which are essentially multiples of number one.

Al-Farghānī explains the relationship between the Absolute-Unity (*aḥadiyya*) and Related-Unity (*wāḥidiyya*) saying:

“Know that the first aspect (*ītibār*) and determination (*ta'ayyun*) that becomes present from the Mystery (*ghayb*) is this Oneness (*waḥda*) from which have derived the Absolute-Unity (*aḥadiyya*) and the Related-Unity (*wāḥidiyya*). This first determination is the permanent Isthmus (*barzakb*)

unifying both aspects [*wāḥidiyya* — *aḥadiyya*], as it is the case in the reality of love (*maḥabba*), from which both the lover-aspect (*muḥibbiyya*) and the beloved-aspect (*maḥbūbiyya*) are derived. In the same way [Oneness (*waḥda*)] is the permanent, unifying link between the two aspects [the Absolute-Unity (*aḥadiyya*) and the Related-Unity (*wāḥidiyya*): this link upholds them both and bring them to unity”.<sup>39</sup>

In spite of their common origin, the two aspects of Unity have different connotations:

“The Oneness (*waḥda*) from which the Exclusive and Inclusive Unity (*aḥadiyya*, *wāḥidiyya*) are derived is the same Essence (*dhāt*) and not an attribute (*ṣifa*) or a quality (*naʿt*) added to it. This Oneness, however, can be considered under two basic points of view. The first consists in dropping any consideration of aspects (*ʿtibārāt*) from it (Oneness). Considered from this point of view, the Essence is called One (*aḥad*) and it is related to the inwardness (*buṭūn*), the absoluteness (*iṭlāq*) and the eternity (*aẓliyya*) of the Essence and so the name One (*aḥad*) means properly negation (*salb*) rather than positive affirmation (*thubūt wa-tjāb*) of aspects. The second point of view is the affirmation (*thubūt*) of the infinite number of aspects that are included (*mundaraja*) in the first level (*awwal rutba*) of the Essence but are realized in their determinations (*taʿayyunāt*) and differentiations (*tafṣīl*) in the second level (*thānī rutba*)”<sup>40</sup>.

In al-Farghānī’s thought the Mystery reveals itself, as if coming out of its eternal hiddenness and darkness, first of all in its transcendent and absolute Oneness (*waḥda*). This manifestation appears as an interior and dynamic process, compared by al-Farghānī to the double relationship of love in which the two aspects of lover and beloved are united and included in one another. In the same way, the absolute Oneness (*waḥda*) necessarily includes in itself a double relationship (*nisba*) or aspect (*iʿtibār*). First, the Absolute-Unity (*aḥadiyya*), in which Oneness (*waḥda*) is related only to the original absolute Mystery and is qualified by eternity without beginning (*aẓaliyya*). Second, the Related-Unity (*wāḥidiyya*) in which Oneness (*waḥda*) is related to the infinite number of possible aspects that can originate from it and is qualified by eternity without end, everlastingness (*abadiyya*).<sup>41</sup>

Besides, we remark that both aspects of Oneness (*waḥda*), namely its Absolute-Unity (*aḥadiyya*) and Related-Unity (*wāḥidiyya*), are qualified as being all-comprehensive (*jāmiʿ*) or as having the characteristic of all-comprehensiveness (*jamʿiyya*), because these two aspects include in them-

selves all the subsequent manifestations of the Essence. For this reason al-Farghānī compares Oneness (*waḥda*) to a seed which, though one and simple, contains in itself the subsequent tree and fruits<sup>42</sup>.

Because of the strict correlation between Oneness (*waḥda*) and the deriving multiplicity (*kathra*), al-Farghānī says that in Oneness there is always a subtle trace (*athar kbāfī*) of multiplicity and, correspondingly, in multiplicity there is always a pervasive and permeating presence (*sirāya*) of Oneness. Moreover both aspects of Unity are so correlated that to any qualification of the Absolute-Unity (*aḥadiyya*) corresponds a qualification of the Related-Unity (*wāḥidiyya*) as shown in the following diagram.

***aḥadiyya******wāḥidiyya***

(their qualifications as adjectives and nouns)

- |   |  |                        |                   |
|---|--|------------------------|-------------------|
| a. <i>jāmi'</i> :   | all-comprehensive  | a. <i>muta'ayyin</i> : | determined        |
| <i>jam'</i> :   | all-comprehensiveness  | <i>ta'ayyun</i> :      | determination     |
| b. <i>bāṭin</i> :   | inward   | b. <i>zābir</i> :      | outward           |
|   | non-manifest   |                        | manifest          |
| <i>buṭūn</i> :  | inwardness   | <i>zubbūr</i> :        | outwardness       |
|   | non-manifestation  |                        | manifestation     |
| c. <i>mujmal</i> :  | total  | c. <i>mufaṣṣal</i> :   | particularized    |
|   | undifferentiated   |                        | differentiated    |
| <i>ijmāl</i> :  | totality   | <i>tafṣīl</i> :        | particularization |
|   | undifferentiation  |                        | differentiation   |
| d. <i>mundaraj</i> :  | inclusive  | d. <i>mumayyaz</i> :   | distinct          |
|   | implicit   |                        | explicit          |
| <i>indirāj</i> :  | inclusiveness  | <i>tamyīz</i> :        | distinction       |
|   | implicitness,  |                        | explicitness      |
| e. other denominations are specific of the <i>wāḥidiyya</i> : |  |                        |                   |
| – <i>bi-ḥukm al-ghayriyya wa-l-mughāyara</i> :                | under the rule or order of otherness ( <i>ghayriyya</i> ) and differentiation ( <i>mughāyara</i> ).  |                        |                   |
| – <i>bi-ḥukm al-maḥall</i> :                                  | under the rule or order of the locus or place in which the aspects are received and manifested. The place ( <i>maḥall</i> ) has a necessary influence on what it contains, as a Sufī saying states: "The color of the vessel is that of its content" <sup>43</sup> . |                        |                   |

One must note that these qualifications of the two aspects of Unity, are used throughout the Introduction in a broad meaning. They become constant

relationships that link the enfolding process of manifestation at all levels. This means that what is comprehensive, general, inclusive in one level will appear determined, specific, particular in the following, which, in turn, will appear general and comprehensive when related to the next level. <sup>44</sup>

b-2. Love (*maḥabba*), the cause of manifestation of the Mystery.<sup>45</sup>

Al-Farghānī underlines that the absolute Mystery or Essence is, in itself, by definition, absolutely self-sufficient and as such has no need to manifest itself. Consequently, one cannot strictly say that there is a “necessity” for manifestation. In fact, in the Koran, God is said to be “The independent (or self-sufficient, *ghanī*) of the worlds” (Koran 3, 97). The Essence is described as being, before any manifestation, in balance between two possibilities: it can either continue in its state of hiddenness (*ḵhafāʾ*) and non-manifestation (*lā-ẓuhūr*), which is in itself more intrinsic and natural to its character, or go forth in a movement of self-disclosure (*tajallī*) and manifestation (*ẓuhūr*). What was then the factor or cause that broke that balance and pushed or drove the Essence from the state of hiddenness to that of manifestation? In al-Farghānī’s view two factors have moved the Essence toward self-manifestation.

1. The “Inner Speech” (*al-ḥadīth maʿa nafsi-ha*).

The Essence is described as being from eternity in an inner dialogue within itself (*mutaḥadditha maʿa nafsi-hā fī nafsi-hā*). Although al-Farghānī does not explain this thought at length, he does recognize that in the Essence there is the presence of an “Inner Speech or Word” (*ḥadīth*), which is an interior movement from which the process of manifestation originates.

2. The “Original Love” (*al-maḥabba al-aṣliyya*).

More powerful than speech was love, the original love (*al-maḥabba al-aṣliyya*), which, flowing from the unfathomable depths of the Essence, drove it toward its self-manifestation or, as al-Farghānī says, broke the balance (*tarjīb*) and made the Essence’s inclination toward manifestation prevail over its intrinsic inclination toward non-manifestation. This concept is explained at length throughout al-Farghānī’s Introduction. He also makes continuous reference to the quoted hadith “*ḵuntū ḵanzʿan*”, where it is said: “I loved to be known.” (*aḥbabtu ʿan uʿrafʾa*). This original love is described as the power that upholds the First Manifestation and drives it toward its full realization, that is the full manifestation of its possible aspects. In a well known hadith God says: “My mercy precedes my anger”. By mercy, al-Farghānī explains, the hadith means the desire of

the Divine Essence to be manifested and by anger its restraint from it. In God the desire to become manifest prevailed on the restraint from it and so the process of self-manifestation set forth:

“The influence of Speech (*ḥadīth*) and Love (*maḥabba*) and the essential inclination (*al-mayl al-dātī*) made the order of manifestation (*ḥukm al-ḡubūr*) prevail over the order of non-manifestation (*lā-ḡubūr*), because of the antecedence (of mercy over anger). Consequently, the transcendent Essence (*al-dāt al-aqdas*) manifested itself to itself (*tajallā*), because it was driven by this influence and this prevalence and this antecedence. In this way, it [the Essence] became manifest (*ḡabara*) to itself in itself in the first determination (*al-ta'ayyun al-awwal*) or in the first receptivity (*al-qābiliyyat al-ūlā*), i.e. the Essence perceived (*wajada*, lit.«found») itself in this First Self-disclosure (*tajallī*) and Manifestation (*ḡubūr*)”.<sup>46</sup>

In addition, this essential love, that comes from the depths of the Mystery, is the impulse and the drive towards the completion of the process of manifestation (*kaṃāl al-ḡubūr*). Consequently, all the following stages of manifestation will come about as effects of that original love. This process is compared by al-Farghānī with the flowing of the breath (*nafas*) in the act of breathing. Different sounds and words are formed as articulations of the same breath. In a similar way, all aspects (*i'tibārāt*) and qualities (*sifāt*), that will appear as distinct (*mutamayyaza*) and differentiated (*mutaghāyara*) in the second level are already present, still non distinct and non-differentiated, in this first level.

This creative breath, by which everything comes to existence, has been called the “breath of the Most-Merciful” (*nafas al-raḥmān*), exhaled from the original love (*al-maḥabba al-aṣliyya*) and the essential mercy (*al-raḥma al-dhāfiyya*) of the Essence, that is the transcendent Mystery.

### b-3. The Designations of the First Manifestation (*al-tajallī al-awwal*).

Al-Farghānī designates the First Manifestation of the Mystery by many names that become technical terms in his vocabulary and constantly recur throughout his commentary. Some of these designations are just synonyms:

- the First Manifestation (*al-tajallī al-awwal*)
- the First Determination (*al-ta'ayyun al-awwal*)
- the First Level: (*al-rutbat* or *al-martabat al-ūlā*)
- the First Consideration or Aspect: (*al-i'tibār al-awwal*)
- the Level of Absolute-Unity: (*martabat al-aḥadiyya*)

Some other terms, have a special Sufi significance, especially when they are contrasted to the correlated terms of the Second Manifestation:.<sup>47</sup>

1. The Reality of Realities (*ḥaqīqat al-ḥaqā'iq*).

The First Manifestation is the Reality of Realities, because it is the most universal and inward aspect of all realities, Divine or created. It includes everything, it is present in and permeates (*sirāya*) every other reality which is but its partial manifestation or aspect.

2. The First and Supreme Isthmus (*al-barzakḥ al-awwal wa-al-akbar*).

Isthmus is by definition a link that, at the same time, joins and separates two realities. In the process of manifestation every degree is mediated by a link that unites it to and separates it from the next one. Consequently, there are as many isthmuses as are the degrees of manifestation. However, only the First Manifestation is called the "The supreme all-comprehensive Isthmus of all other isthmuses and their original foundation" (*al-barzakḥ al-akbar al-jāmi' li-jamī' al-barāzikh wa-aṣlu-hā*)<sup>48</sup>. It is called all-comprehensive "isthmus", because it contains implicitly what will be manifested explicitly in the following stages. Consequently, the First Manifestation is the universal mediator between the Mystery and all its manifestations.

3. The Station of the Nearest (*maqām adnā*).

This designation has been taken by Sufis from a verse of the Koran (K 53,9), in which the revelation is described as coming near to Muḥammad to "the distance of the two extremes of the bow" (*qāb qawsayni*) "or nearer" (*aw adnā*). For Sufis these two expressions came to indicate the two highest degrees of nearness to God. In al-Farghānī's vision the station of the 'nearest' (*aw adnā*) is the highest point that can be reached in vicinity to the Divine Essence. This lofty stage can only be attributed to Muḥammad, who alone reached this highest point of nearness, that is the level of the Absolute-Unity (*aḥadiyya*) of the First Manifestation. All other prophets and saints can reach only the station of "the distance of the two extremes of the bow" (*qāb qawsayni*), which is the level of the Related-Unity (*wāḥidiyya*) of the Second Manifestation, in which multiplicity becomes explicit.

4. The Eternal Reality of Muḥammad (*al-ḥaqīqat al-aḥmadiyya al-thābita*).

Al-Farghānī explains this designation saying that the Prophet Muḥammad was characterized by the utmost degree of justice (*'adāla*) and balance (*i'tidāl*). He was not dominated by a particular Divine Name, but he was the mediating point (*nuqta wastīyya*) among all the Names. For that reason the reality of Muḥammad is the supreme Isthmus (*al-barzakḥ al-akbar*) and

his light (*nūr*) is the very First Manifestation, as a hadith says: "The first thing God created was my Light"<sup>49</sup>. This light that existed from eternity in the Divine Essence became visibly manifested in the most pious (*taqī*) and pure (*naqī*) heart (*qalb*) of the Prophet Muḥammad, who is, therefore, the visible image (*ṣūra*) of the First Manifestation and its eternal light. Because of his preeminence, only the Prophet Muḥammad, enjoys the station of the nearest, the absolute vicinity to the Divine Essence, that is the level of the Absolute-Unity (*aḥadiyya*).

Having established the distinction of the two fundamental aspects of manifestation, al-Farghānī applies this principle to some general qualities of it: its perfection (*kamāl*), its science (*'ilm*) and its existence (*wujūd*). These qualities have a different connotation whether they are considered at the level of Absolute-Unity (*aḥadiyya*) or at that of Related-Unity (*wāḥidiyya*).

#### 1. Perfection (*kamāl*).

The First Manifestation, Oneness (*wahda*) is described under the aspect of perfection (*kamāl*), which is the supreme Divine quality of the Essence<sup>50</sup>. When this perfection is considered related to the Absolute-Unity (*aḥadiyya*), it is called perfection of the Essence (*al-kamāl al-dhāt-ī*). In it everything must be perfectly one, being included (*mujmal*) in the Essence and one (*wahdānī*) with it. Al-Farghānī says that: "...everything is one and the same Essence (*'ayn wāḥida*) in relation to the vision (*shuhūd*) of the Real in its absolute Oneness (*al-ḥaqq al-wāḥid al-aḥad*)"<sup>51</sup>. This absolute perfection of the Essence in its Absolute-Unity is said to be "without relationship to anything" (*bilā shart shay'*). However, as al-Farghānī specifies, even at this stage of absolute perfection of unity a "subtle trace" (*athar khāfī*) of multiplicity is present, in the same way as branches and fruits are present in the seed of the palm tree.

When this perfection is considered related to the level of the Related-Unity (*wāḥidiyya*), it is called perfection of the Names (*al-kamāl al-asmā'ī*) In it all the infinite possibilities of manifestations of the Essence become distinct and explicit, because it is:

"...the manifestation (*ṣubūr*) of the Essence to itself from the point of view of its universality (*kullīyya*) and its all-comprehensiveness (*jam'iyya*), its contents (*shu'ūn*), its aspects (*i'tibārāt*) and the loci of its manifestations (*maẓābir*), as differentiated and specified (*mufaṣṣāl*); and in global and undifferentiated (*mujmal*) way after having been differentiated and specified (*tafṣīl*)"<sup>52</sup>.



Therefore, this perfection of the Names tells explicit relationship to something (*bi-shart sha'y*), not only to 'something', al-Farghānī remarks, but to 'many things'. In fact, at this level the Essence is displayed in all its aspects (*i'tibārāt*), distinctions (*tamayyuzāt*), determinations (*ta'ayyunāt*), specifications (*tafāṣīl*), names (*asmā'*) and attributes (*ṣifāt*), universal (*kullīyya*) and particular (*juṣ'īyya*), throughout all the levels of the created universe (*marātib al-kawn*). The differentiation of all these aspects comes about because of 'the rule of the locus' (*ḥukm al-maḥall*), in which a given degree of manifestation takes place and is situated.

### 2 The Divine Knowledge (*'ilm*).

At the First Level of Manifestation, knowledge means the knowledge which the Essence has of itself in its Absolute-Unity (*aḥadiyya*). At this level, the knower and the known are one and the same, because it is: "the manifestation of the Essence to itself with the inclusiveness of its aspects in it and their realization. [This knowledge] is related to only one known (*ma'lūm wāḥid*) and has only one object: in it He knew only Himself"<sup>53</sup> However, even at this level multiplicity is somehow present, included and implicit (*mundaraj*): in this "only One known" there is a 'real oneness' (*waḥda ḥaqīqīyya*) with a 'relative multiplicity' (*kathra nisbiyya*).

At the Second Level of manifestation, that of Related-Unity (*wāḥidiyya*), knowledge becomes knowledge the Essence has of all its possibilities and particularizations. Consequently, knowledge at the level of means: "...the manifestation of the Essence to itself in its contents (*shu'ūn*) with the loci of manifestation of those contents: these are called its qualifications (*ṣifāt*) and its realities (*ḥaqā'iq*)"<sup>54</sup> At this level, there is a real multiplicity (*kathra ḥaqīqīyya*) and a relative oneness (*waḥda nisbiyya*), because in it the objects of knowledge are many, not only one as at the previous level. These objects or specific aspects of the Essence that become explicit in the Second Manifestation are summarized in the seven basic Divine attributes: Life (*ḥayāt*), Science (*'ilm*), Desire (*irāda*), Power (*qudra*), Speech (*kalām, qawl*), Generosity (*jūd*), Justice (*'adl, qist*). From these qualities derive the correspondent Divine Names: Living (*ḥayy*), Knowing (*'ālim*), Desiring (*murīd*), Powerful (*qādir*). Generous (*jawād*), Just (*'ādil, muqsit*).

### 3 Existence (*wujūd*)<sup>55</sup>.

At the First Level of Manifestation or Absolute-Unity (*aḥadiyya*) the Essence finds or perceives only itself in its Oneness without multiplicity At this level *wujūd* is:

"...the finding perception (*wijdān*) of the Essence of itself in itself, in which all aspects of the Related-Unity (*wāḥidiyya*) are included. This perception (*wijdān*) is a total, undifferentiated (*mujmal*) act in which are included (*mundaraj*) its specifications and differentiations (*tafsīl*) and which by its nature refuses multiplicity (*kathra*), differentiation (*mughāyara*), otherness (*ghayriyya*) and distinction (*tamayyuz*)".<sup>56</sup>

At the Second Level of Manifestation or Related-Unity (*wāḥidiyya*) *wujūd* becomes the finding perception of all the determinations of the Essence, implicit in the First Level. Here, however, *wujūd* can be considered under two different aspects:

The first aspect is the perception as manifested to the Real (*ḥaqq*), that is the Essence's perception of its determinations before any exterior manifestation of them in the created world. At this level the Divine Names are manifest and since they are manifestations of the same Essence, the Divine Names are essentially one and have the same content, the same Essence. Nonetheless, they differ from one another, inasmuch as each one of them designates the same Essence, but according to a specific determination or aspect of it, expressed in a particular designation or name, as al-Farghānī explains:

"... In fact, each Divine Name is the outward manifestation (*ẓāhir*) of Being (*wujūd*) which is the same Essence (*'ayn al-dhāt*), but viewed from a particular determination (*ta'ayyun*) and delimitation (*taqayyud*), in relation to a specific meaning (*ma'nā*) or quality (*sifa*), as for example the Divine Name of Living (*ḥayy*) [which comes from "Life" (*ḥayāt*) and is a particular determination of the Essence]".<sup>57</sup>

The second aspect of *wujūd* is the perception of the manifestations of the Divine Names in the created world (*khalq*), which is qualified by the "visible, manifested existence" (*al-wujūd al-'iyānī*) and it is further differentiated into several degrees and levels of existents, which are called the levels of the universe (*marātib al-kawn*). At this level:

"[These different levels] are: the levels of spirits (*arwāḥ*), that of images-archetypes (*miṭāl*) and that of sense perception (*ḥiss*). All these determinations of the existence (*wujūd*) are called created universe or world (*khalq*)".<sup>58</sup>

In the created world perception is linked with the specific level of each created being. Each created being is determined and limited in such a way that it can directly perceive (*yajidu*) only the beings of its own level: e.g. the spirits directly perceive the spirits, the images-archetypes perceive the images-archetypes, the corporal bodies perceive the corporal bodies. These beings exist only by the creative act (*ijād — khalq*) by which: "... the Creator

(*ḵhāliq*) and the Giver of existence (*mūjid*) — be He exalted and praised — gives to the worldly realities (*ḥaqā'iq kawniyya*) their faculty of perception (*wijdān*) with its own correspondent determination (*ta'ayyun*)".<sup>59</sup>

c. The Second Manifestation of the Mystery (*al-tajallī al-thānī*): its aspects and names.

The two levels of manifestation, namely that of Absolute-Unity (*al-aḥadiyya*) and that of Related-Unity (*al-wāḥidiyya*), which both derive from transcendent Oneness (*wahda*) of the Essence, are so intimately correlated that it is impossible to describe one without reference to the other. What is hidden and implicit in the first level becomes manifest and explicit in the second level. This is the rule (*ḥukm*) that links them together, as already said. However, a more specific description of the Second Manifestation is necessary.

c-1. The designations of the Second Manifestation.<sup>60</sup>

The designations of the Second Manifestation, mentioned in al-Farghānī's Introduction, can be divided into two general groups.

1. A first group contains the general designations that are correlated and opposite to the corresponding designations of the First Manifestation:
  - the Second Manifestation: (*al-tajallī al-thānī*)
  - the Second Determination: (*al-ta'ayyun al-thānī*)
  - the Second Level: (*al-martabat, al-rutbat al-thānya*)
  - the Level of the Related-Unity: (*martabat al-wāḥidiyya*).
2. A second group contains specific designations that are related to particular Sufi or philosophical conceptions, such as:
  - a. The level of Divinity (*martabat al-ulūḥa*), because at this level the name God (*Allāh*) is manifested.
  - b. The world of meanings or ideas (*'ālam al-ma'ānī*), because at this level the ideas and meanings of all realities, both general and particular, are present in the Divine knowledge. For this reason it is also called the presence of the eternal knowledge (*ḥaḍrat al-'ilm al-aẓalī*) and the level of the possible beings (*martabat al-imkān*), because from eternity all possible beings are present in the Divine knowledge, before being manifested in actual existence.

- c. The presence of the Cloud (*'amā*) (*al-ḥaḍrat al-'amā'iyya*), because the Second Manifestation as the linking isthmus (*barzakḥ*) between Oneness and multiplicity.
- d. The perfect Human Reality (*al-ḥaqīqat al-insāniyya al-kamāliyya*), because the Second Manifestation is the perfect realization of human essence, which is conceived as the most universal and all comprehensive reality including and encompassing all other realities.
- e. The station of "the distance of the two extremes of the bow" (*qāb qawsaynī*), because the Second Manifestation is the station of saints inferior to the station of the "Nearest" (*aw adnā*) proper to Muḥammad.

c-2: The Divine Names (*al-asmā' al-ilāhiyya*).<sup>61</sup>

At the level of the Second Manifestation multiplicity becomes manifest in all its aspects in two basic orders: the uncreated order of the Divine Names (*al-kathra al-asmā'iyya*), and the created order of the created entities of the universe (*al-a'yān al-kawniyya*). Al-Farghānī dedicates many pages to the description and classification of the multiplicity of the Divine Names. The Divine Names are ordered in a hierarchy that goes from the most general to the most specific. The main group of Divine Names, mentioned by al-Farghānī, are:

1. God (*allāh*) and the All-Merciful (*al-raḥmān*).

These two Names are the first to be manifested out of the transcendent Essence at the Level of the Related-Unity (*wāḥidiyya*), called for this reason the level of Divinity (*martabat al-ulūḥa*). They are the most comprehensive of all the Divine Names and stand in reciprocal relation as the inward aspect (*bāṭin, allāh*) to outward aspect (*ẓāhir, raḥmān*). God (*allāh*), being the most comprehensive of all Names cannot be known directly, but only through its own manifestation in the act of creation, which is brought about by "the breath of the All-Merciful (*nafas al-raḥmān*)". Therefore, the All-Merciful (*al-raḥmān*), as the outward manifestation of the name of God, is called "the outward of the very essence of the name of God (*allāh*)"<sup>62</sup>.

2. The Negative Names (*asmā' salbiyya*).<sup>63</sup>

These names deny that in God there can be any kind of similarity with created qualities (*tashbīḥ*) and stress God's transcendence or incomparability (*tanẓīḥ*) with respect to creation. In fact, they are strictly related to the Absolute-Unity of the Essence (*al-aḥadiyya al-dhātiyya*) and, therefore, they are called the names of the Essence (*asmā' al-dhāt, al-asmā' al-dhātiyya*).

They are also called “the keys of the Mystery” (*mafātīḥ al-ghayb*),<sup>64</sup> as if they were the keys that protect the transcendence and inaccessibility of the Divine Essence. These seven negative Names are:

- *al-aḥalī*: the Beginningless, Eternal; God is without beginning.
- *al-ghanī*: the Independent, the Self-sufficient; God is not in need of anything outside Himself.
- *al-fard*: the Singular, Unparalleled; nothing is like God
- *al-witr*: the Solitary, Unaccompanied; nobody can be God’s companion
- *al-quddūs*: the All-holy; no defect can be found in God
- *al-salām*: the Peaceful; there is no conflict or struggle of qualities in God
- *al-subbūḥ*: the most Exalted and Glorified; God is beyond any description or qualification, as indicated in the expression: “Be He exalted” (*subḥāna*).

The so far mentioned Names denote, by their negative connotation, the Essence in its transcendence and inaccessibility. Other Divine Names express some positive determinations (*taʿayyunāt*) of the Essence.

### 3. The affirmative Names (*al-asmāʾ al-thubūtiyya*).

These names are related to the Related-Unity (*wāḥidiyya*), source of all determinations and multiplicity. Al-Farghānī, drawing from previous Sufi tradition, gives a classification of a large number of Divine Names. Among them must be mentioned:

The Seven Fundamental Names (*al-asmāʾ al-aṣliyya al-sabʿa*).<sup>65</sup>

These Names are derived from “the seven, most general and fundamental realities present in God” (*al-ḥaqāʾiq al-sabʿat al-kulliyyat al-aṣliyya*) and each name corresponds to one of these realities, as follows:

- 1 Life (*al-ḥayāt*), from which the Living (*al-ḥayy*).
- 2 Will (*al-irāda*), from which the Willing (*al-murīd*).
- 3 Knowledge (*al-ilm*), from which the Knower (*al-ʿālim*).
- 4 Speech (*al-qawl*, *al-kalām*), from which the Speaker (*al-qāʾil*, *al-mutakal-lim*).
- 5 Power (*al-qudra*), from which the All-powerful (*al-qādir*).
- 6 Generosity (*al-jūd*), from which the Generous (*al-jawād*).
- 7 Justice (*al-iqsāt*, *al-ʿadl*), from which the Just (*al-muqsiṭ*, *al-ʿādil*).

These names are also called the “Seven Leaders or Chiefs” (*al-aʾimmat al-sabʿa*) because all the other Names are derived from them, especially the ninety nine Names (*al-asmāʾ al-tisʿa wa-l-tisʿūn*), common to Islamic piety. Beside these, other categories of Names are mentioned but not clearly explained by al-Farghānī.

At the end of his classification of Names, al-Farghānī stresses again the essential unity of the multiplicity of Divine Names. In fact, all these innumerable Names are summarized in and encompassed by the Muḥammadan Reality, which is called the presence of the Cloud (*al-ḥaḍrat al-'amā'iyya*), because it joins Divine and created realities, and Reality of Realities (*ḥaqīqat al-ḥaqā'iq*), because it encompasses all other realities:

“[These Names are].. differentiations and specifications (*tafṣīl*) of the universal and all-comprehensive Reality of Muḥammad (*al-ḥaqīqat al-kullīyya al-muḥammadīyya al-shāmila*), called also the Reality of realities (*ḥaqīqat al-ḥaqā'iq*) that is pervasively present (*sāriya*) in each Name as the total is (present) in its part. This is the first, supreme, eternal and fundamental isthmus (*al-barzakḥ al-awwal al-aḳbar al-aqdam al-aṣlī*)”<sup>66</sup>.

d. The Levels of the Universe (*marātib al-ḳawn*).<sup>67</sup>

After the elucidation of the First and Second Manifestation, al-Farghānī dedicates the second and third part of his Introduction to the description of the created beings. The first part can be considered al-Farghānī's ontology, the following parts can be regarded as his angelology, cosmology and anthropology, which are quite similar to Ibn 'Arabī's vision<sup>68</sup>. Up to this point, I have given a detailed description of the first two levels of manifestation, because they are the most original side of al-Farghānī's thought. In the following, I will focus on al-Farghānī's anthropology, giving only a very brief idea of his angelology and cosmology.

The sum of created beings constitutes the created world (*ḳhalq*) or universe (*ḳawn*), which is the created level of the Second Manifestation and reflects its uncreated level, the Divine Names. The created being is qualified as having an existence (*wujūd*) which is derived from (*mufāḍ*) and related to (*muḍāf*) the Divine Names. In fact, all created beings come into existence through the creative word “be” (*ḳun*), as mentioned in the Koran.(K 16, 40). It must be noted that the word “be” (*ḳun*) in Arabic is the imperative form derived from the same root as the verbal noun universe (*ḳawn*). These two terms are linguistically and semantically strictly correlated. Therefore, all created beings at all levels are effects (*āthār*) and manifestations (*maẓāhir*) of the Divine Names. Consequently, all created levels are also arranged in a hierarchy so that lower levels are manifestation and unfolding of higher levels.

The created world (*ḳhalq*) or universe (*ḳawn*) is composed of three general levels in which all created beings are grouped. These three levels are: the level of Spirits (*martabat al-arwāḥ*), which is invisible, the level of Corporeal Bodies

(*martabat al-ajsām*), which is visible, and the level of Images-Archetypes (*martabat al-mithāl*), which lies between the two.

d-1. The Level of Spirits (*martabat al-arwāḥ*).<sup>69</sup>

The level of Spirits (*martabat al-arwāḥ*) is invisible and is called also the world of Dominion (*‘ālam al-malakūt*) and the presence of Invincibility (*ḥaḍrat al-jabarūt*). At this level many realities are found, such as the Angels (*malā’ika*) or Spirits (*arwāḥ*), after which this level takes its name. Spirits are charged with special functions in the government universe.

The level of Spirits also has an internal structure that reflects the process of unfolding from unity (*waḥda*) and comprehensiveness (*ijmāl*) to multiplicity (*kaṭhra*) and specification (*tafṣīl*). The aspect of unity is the lofty Pen (*al-qalam al-alā*), called also the first Intellect (*al-‘aql al-awwal*) or the universal Spirit (*al-rūḥ al-kullī*). The aspect of multiplicity is called the preserved Tablet (*al-lawḥ al-mahfūz*), called also the universal Soul (*al-nafs al-kullīyya*). On the whole, al-Farghānī’s angelology is almost identical to that of Ibn ‘Arabī.

The dominant Spirits or Angels (*al-arwāḥ* or *al-malā’ika al-muḥaymana*) are the four pillars (*arkān*) of the Tablet and manifest the seven general Divine Attributes in the following order:

- *Isfirā’īl* reflects the qualities of Life and Justice.
- *Jibrīl* reflects the qualities of science and Speech.
- *Mikḥā’īl* reflects the qualities of Will and Generosity.
- *‘Izrā’īl* reflects the quality of Power.

d-2. The Level of Images (*martabat al-mithāl*) and the Level of Corporeal Bodies (*martabat al-ajsām*)<sup>70</sup>.

Under the world of Spirits come two other worlds: the Level of Corporeal Bodies (*martabat al-ajsām*), perceived by the sense Perception (*ḥiss*), and the world of Images or Archetypes (*‘ālam al-mithāl*), which lies intermediate between the worlds of Spirits and corporeal Bodies. The description of these two worlds constitutes al-Farghānī’s cosmology. Out of this complicated cosmology which is crowned by the appearance of human being, we shall mention only some traits. These two worlds too, being manifestations of the Divine Names, are arranged in a similar hierarchical order.

1. The Dust (*al-habā’*) is first and basic element, common to both worlds, Images and Bodies, and corresponds to the philosophical concept of the prime matter (*materia prima*), which is thought to be the fundamental

element of the whole universe<sup>71</sup>. The Dust comes from the Tablet, when this manifests itself in a lower level and it is defined as the universal capability of all forms, simple and composite. When this universal element, the Dust, is considered in composition with its four basic, dynamic principles (heat, cold, humidity, dryness), it becomes manifest as nature (*al-ṭabī'a*), which is the generative principle of all beings, in the world of Images (*'ālam al-mithāl*) and the world Sense perception (*'ālam al-ḥiss*). Because of its universality, Nature also is called all-comprehensive isthmus (*barzakḥ jāmi'*).

2. The world of Images or of the subtle beings (*'ālam al-mithāl*) is the level of beings that are not composite of parts and are not divisible. Two main elements are mentioned in this level: one reflects its unity and the other its multiplicity.

The first element is called the Throne (*al-'arsh*), which is the form that comprehends all forms of the composite visible world and fixes the general dimensions of time and space. The Throne is particularly related to the name of the Most-Merciful (*al-Raḥmān*), because this name has the dominion over the Universe. In fact, a Koranic verse reads: "The All-Merciful sat upon the Throne" (K 20,5): that means that He took possession of the whole Universe.

The second element is the Footstool (*al-kursī*), which is the particularization of the content of the Throne. The Footstool is thought of as the place on which God places his two feet, which represent the two opposite aspects of God's mercy: grace and wrath, command (*amr*) and prohibition (*nahī*) together. In fact, God's Names are arranged in two opposite series: one series of Names reflects God's beauty (*jamāl*), as the Expander (*al-bāsiṭ*), the Vivifier (*muhyi*); the other series reflects God's majesty (*jalāl*), as the Contractor (*al-qābid*), as the Slayer (*mumīt*). Consequently, every created being is a manifestation of one of the Names of God subjected to their law of opposites: it can manifest either a Name of beauty (*jamāl*) or of majesty (*jalāl*). The Footstool reflects the world of Spirits in the form of subtle, non-divisible Images (*mithāl*) and, therefore, is the linking point (*barzakḥ*) between the spiritual and the corporeal world.

3. The Level of corporeal bodies (*martabat al-aḥsām*), called also the world of sense perception (*'ālam al-ḥiss*) or the visible world (*'ālam al-shahāda*), emerges from the Footstool and is the receptivity of all forms which are composed by divisible elements (*'unṣūriyya murakkaba*)<sup>72</sup>. The first order of the corporeal bodies are the seven celestial spheres (*aflāk*), related to the



Seven Divine Names. Under the celestial spheres are the four elements of nature (*arkān al-ṭabīʿa*): fire, air, water and earth. From these elements originate the three orders of generated beings (*al-muwalladāt*): minerals, plants and animals. Each order is in fact a special composition (*mizāj*) of the same four elements.

In al-Farghānī's cosmology, also in this respect very similar to that of Ibn ʿArabī, there is a strict correlation between the order of the Divine Names and the elements of the universe, visible or invisible. In this way a impressive vision of the unity and cohesion of Being at all levels is achieved, as shown in the following pattern:

Divine Names	Spirits	Dust	Nature
Life	<i>Isfrāʿīl</i>	Heat	Fire
Knowledge	<i>Jibrīl</i>	Cold	Air
Will	<i>Mikāʿīl</i>	Humidity	Water
Power	<i>ʿIzrāʿīl</i>	Dryness	Earth

## 2. Adam and the Human Reality (*al-ḥaqīqat al-insāniyya*), Muḥammad and the Muḥammadan Reality (*al-ḥaqīqat al-muḥammadiyya*).<sup>73</sup>

### a. Human Reality (*al-ḥaqīqat al-insāniyya*).

Al-Farghānī concludes the description of the created world mentioning the formation of the human being in Adam, the prototype of humankind (*al-insān*), called also human reality (*al-ḥaqīqat al-insāniyya*) or human constitution (*al-maẓāj al-insānī*). Human being has a special place in the created universe because, though last in the order of manifestation, it is the first in order of intention and the goal of all creation. In fact, because of its composite constitution (*maẓāj murakkab*), human being is all-comprehensive (*jāmiʿ*) of all orders of Being, it is a summary of all previous levels of manifestation. Humans possess some characteristics that are unique in respect with all other beings. These characteristics can be summarized in the following.

#### a-1. Image of God (*ṣūrat Allāb*).

“God created Adam in his own image”, says a hadith, often quoted by

Sufis, echoing a well-known biblical theme. In al-Farghānī's thought, this hadith means that Adam is the image of the Second Manifestation (*al-tajallī al-thānī*), also called the visible manifestation of the breath of the All-Merciful (*al-tajallī al-naḥāsi al-rahmānī al-ḡāhīrī*). For this reason he is comprehensive (*jāmi'*) of all Divine Names (*asmā'*) and Qualities (*ṣifāt*), in their interior and exterior manifestations. Adam is the visible image (*sūra maḥsūsa*) in which has been breathed the Divine Spirit (*rūḥ ilāhī manṣūkb*) without intermediate (*bilā waṣāṭa*)<sup>74</sup> and for this reason created and uncreated aspects are united in him in a sublime balance.

a-2. Vice-gerent of God (*khalīfat Allāh*).

Along with another Koranic and Sufi tradition, al-Farghānī extols the position of the human being above all other orders of being. The Koranic revelation calls Adam the vice-gerent of God (*khalīfa*) (K 2, 30) and attributes to him the knowledge of all the Names (K 2,31). In al-Farghānī's view these two qualifications mean that the human being is all-comprehensive (*jāmi'*) of all the Divine Names and Perfections (*jamī' al-asmā' wa-l-kamālāt*). In him two images merge: the image of God (*sūrat al-ḥaqq*) and the image of the cosmos (*sūrat al-khalq*). Because of his composition, human being is characterized by the qualities of all-comprehensiveness (*jam'iyya*), universality (*kulliyya*) and perfection (*kamāl*)<sup>75</sup>. These characteristics raise the human being not only to a higher rank than any being of the visible universe, but also far above the angels. These are, in fact, limited to a definite order of being, the spiritual one, human being is a synthesis of all Divine qualities. For this reason the angels were ordered to prostrate before Adam (K 2,30-34ss.). All of them obeyed, recognizing the superior status of Adam, except Iblīs who rebelled against God's order<sup>76</sup>. In fact, only to Adam, the prototype of human being, could God attribute the highest degree of relationship with himself, as al-Farghānī says commenting this Koranic verse:

"...by this perfect receptivity (*qābiliyya*) I made him my vice-gerent (*khalīfa*), in My perfect knowledge of Myself and in My perfect vision of Myself by himself in himself and in all things; in My love for Myself (*maḥabbat-ī dhāt-ī*), both absolute and conditioned, and in the manifestation of Myself to Myself (*ḡubūr-ī li-naḥs-ī*) in the perfection of My Essence and Names, both in general and in particular"<sup>77</sup>.

A human being is a mirror that reflects the perfection of the Divine reality and its names to the point that another hadith says: "Whoever

knows himself, knows his Lord". This hadith points to the hidden sublimity of the human reality which is present in every human being. However, above all ranks of beings, human and not, the reality of the prophet Muḥammad, called the Muḥammadan Reality (*al-ḥaqīqat al-muḥammadiyya*) has a special and unique place. This is a central concept of al-Farghānī's Sufi vision which is repeated time and again throughout his Introduction and commentary.

b. The Muḥammadan Reality (*al-ḥaqīqat al-muḥammadiyya*), the highest degree of human perfection.<sup>78</sup>

Human reality finds its fullest expression and its highest realization in the Muḥammadan Reality (*al-ḥaqīqat al-muḥammadiyya*). Human reality, as present in Adam, is said to be the image of the Second Manifestation, while present in Muḥammad, becomes the image of the Mystery in its First inward Self-manifestation, called the first isthmus (*barzakb*) that encompasses (*jāmi'*) the Related-Unity (*wāḥidiyya*) and the Absolute-Unity of the Essence (*aḥadiyya dhātīyya*). Consequently, the relationship between Adam, and in him all other human beings, and Muḥammad corresponds to the relationship between the Second and the First Manifestation. Al-Farghānī explains:

"Adam was in his reality comprehensive (*jami'*) of all [Divine] Names and qualities, Divine and created realities that are included in the Second Manifestation or isthmus. Muḥammad, on the other hand, was in his reality and image comprehensive (*jāmi'*) of the Keys [of the Mystery] (*mafātīḥ* [*al-ghayb*]) and of the absolute One (*al-wāḥid al-aḥad*), which are included in the First Isthmus. He has a real, unified all-comprehensiveness (*al-jam'iyya al-ḥaqīqiyya al-aḥadiyya*), in which there is no prevalence of one order [of qualities] over another"<sup>79</sup>.

To sum up, while Adam, and every perfect saint, is the image of the second level of manifestation, that of the Related-Unity (*al-wāḥidiyya*), Muḥammad is the image of the first level of manifestation, that of the Absolute-Unity (*al-aḥadiyya*). For this reason Muḥammad's rank is far above any being: after the supreme Mystery itself, he is the highest one in the whole Being.

c. The Perfection of Self-vision (*kamāl al-istijlā'*).<sup>80</sup>

It is in human reality that the return (*rujū'*, *marja'*) of the process of manifestation takes place: a return from multiplicity to unity, from a

decendant movement (*nuzūl*) to an ascendant movement (*'urūj*). In fact, the transcendent Mystery, not only manifests itself in the process of self-manifestation or self-disclosure (*ṣubḥūr, tajallī, jalā*), but returns to itself, at the end of the process, in an act of self-vision or self-realization (*istijlā'*), in which all its manifestations are unified. This act of self-vision, which takes place after the deployment of the multiplicity of all the possible aspects of the Essence, reaches its highest perfection in the human being and, specifically, in the Muḥammadan Reality. In humans the circle of being is concluded: multiplicity and unity are not longer seen as opposite states, but as inclusive of each other. In al-Farghānī's view, this act of self-vision (*istijlā'*) is meant in the Koranic verse: "Unto Him every thing will return" (K 11, 123). This process of return goes through the same stages of the process of manifestation so that to each level or degree of manifestation (*jalā*) corresponds a level or degree of self-vision or self-realization (*istijlā'*). In particular, the process of return reflects the two main levels of manifestation, that is the Absolute-Unity (*aḥadiyya*) of the First Manifestation (*al-tajallī al-awwal*) and the Related-Unity (*al-wāḥidiyya*) of the Second Manifestation (*al-tajallī al-thānī*).

c-1. At the level of the First Manifestation (*al-tajallī al-awwal*), which is also called the Perfection of the Essence (*al-kamāl al-dātī*), self-vision (*istijlā'*) is the realization of the Absolute-Unity (*aḥadiyya*). Al-Farghānī says:

"The perfection of the Essence implies also the perfect self-vision (*istijlā'*) of the transcendent and absolute one Essence (*al-dhāt al-aqads al-wāḥid al-aḥad*), that is its self-manifestation to itself through the Absolute-Unity (*aḥadiyya*), which is comprehensive (*jam'iyya*) of all forms and aspects of its Related-Unity (*wāḥidiyya*), and the return of them all to Himself, because of His own word: "Unto Him every thing will be returned" (K 11, 123)<sup>81</sup>.

The vision of the all-comprehensive unity (*al-aḥadiyya al-jam'iyya*) of the Essence (*dhāt*) can be realized only through the form of a human being (*maṣḥar insānī*) who enjoys the highest degree of balance (*'adāla*) and proportion (*sawā'iyya*). Such a degree of perfection has been actualized exclusively in the most perfect constitution (*maṣḥāf*) of Muḥammad whose pure and pious heart encompassed the Real. Because of his eminent perfection, Muḥammad is called the perfect vicegerent (*al-khalīfa al-kāmīl*), the Reality of Realities (*ḥaqīqa al-ḥaqā'iq*), the first isthmus (*al-barṣakh al-awwal*), the First Manifestation (*al-tajallī al-awwal*), the inwardness of Being (*bāṭin al-wujūd*), the eternal Light of Muḥammad (*al-nūr al-*

*aḥmadī*)<sup>82</sup>. Muḥammad's birth is extolled as the most important cosmic and historical event. At last, after the descent through all the levels of Being, the First Manifestation finally became manifest in the most propitious time and in the most perfect and balanced human constitution (*al-maẓāj al-a'dal*), as al-Farghānī says:

"It was the time for the self-vision (*istijlā'*) of the First Manifestation (*al-tajallī al-awwal*), which is the absolute One (*al-wāḥid al-aḥad*) and possesses the all-comprehensive unity (*al-aḥadiyya al-jam'iyya*) of the two orders of Oneness (*waḥda*), namely the Related (*waḥidiyya*) and the Absolute (*aḥadiyya*) Unity, [it was time] to become manifest through the determination (*ta'ayyun*) of the constitution (*maẓāj*) of a unified (*waḥdānī*) human element (*'unṣūr insānī*) who will be the locus of manifestation (*maẓhar*) of the first isthmus (*al-barzakhiyya al-ūlā*), but in a visible form (*maẓhar ṣūri*), and through the determination of a heart (*qalb*) (made) out of that same constitution, pure and pious, so that it will be a spiritual form (*ṣūra ma'nāwiyya*) of the isthmus".<sup>83</sup>

Moreover, because of his perfect balance, Muḥammad also received the supreme scale (*al-mīzān*) of every reality, which is the Koran (*al-Qur'ān*): the most perfect (*akmalī*), all-comprehensive (*jam'ī*) and universal (*kullī*) word (*qawl*). This Divine Word is manifested in three general forms: the first is the universe, called the Book of [God's] Acts (*al-kitāb al-fi'lī*); the second is the written text of the Koran, the book of knowledge and wisdom, called the Book of Words (*al-kitāb al-qawlī*); the third is the visible form of Muḥammad (*al-maẓhar al-aḥmadī*), which is the most unified and all-comprehensive form (*al-maẓhar al-aḥadī al-jām'ī*) to the point that as his wife 'Ā'isha could say: "His behaviour was the Koran".<sup>84</sup>

- c-2. At the level of the Second Manifestation (*al-tajallī al-thānī*) the self-vision (*al-istijlā'*) is the realization of the level of the Related-Unity (*waḥidiyya*), which is also called the Perfection of Names (*al-kamāl al-asmā'ī*), because it encompasses the multiplicity of the Divine Names and qualities.

Self-vision at this level means the reunification of all aspects of differentiation in a vision that is unified after the display of differentiation. This Self-vision only takes place in the human reality or form, as al-Farghānī says:

"[Self-vision]...is the manifestation of the Second Manifestation (*al-tajallī al-thānī*) to itself but through the human form, its heart, hearing and

sight, in a vision (*shubūd*) that is differentiated (*mufaṣṣal*) in its comprehensiveness and comprehensive (*mujmal*) in its differentiation"<sup>85</sup>.

By this self-vision all the created effects (*āthār*) are brought back to their source and cause, the Divine Names. These, then, are unified in the seven fundamental Names. In the end of the process, the Second Manifestation, also returns to its origin and source: the First Manifestation. This process of return happens in the human form because of its unique characteristics of comprehensiveness (*jam'iyya*) and inclusiveness (*ishtimāliyya*) of all the of Divine Qualities.

Historically this process has been realized in the missions of prophets (*anbiyā'*), messengers (*rusul*) and saints (*awliyā'*), which are the highest degrees of human perfection after the Muḥammadan Reality. Here al-Farghānī introduces a classical topic of Sufism, that of the hierarchy of saints or friends (of God) (*awliyā'*) and the difference between prophecy (*nubuwwa*) and friendship (*walāya*). Saints are manifestations of Divine Names, consequently they are arranged in a similar hierachical order. Before Muḥammad a saint could be either a messenger (*rasūl*), if he had a Divine law (*shar'*) to enforce, or prophet (*nabī*), if he had no Divine law to enforce. However, after Muḥammad there will be no new prophet or messenger, according to a basic doctrine of Islam. Consequently, the saint-friends (*awliyā'*) are now taking their sainthood from the heritage of Muḥammad (*al-irṭh al-muḥammadī*) and are also arranged in a hierachical order as vicegerents (*khulafā'*) and poles (*aqṭāb*) of the community of Muḥammad (*al-umma al-muḥammadiyya*)<sup>86</sup>. They are the guides (*shuyūkh*) that lead the faithful to the way of perfection.

In al-Farghānī's Sufi vision there is a clear and basic distinction between Muḥammad and the rest of the prophets and saints. Because of his particular constitution, only Muḥammad enjoyed the highest level of the all-comprehensive unity (*al-aḥadiyya al-jam'iyya*), which is the level of the perfect self-vision of the First Manifestation (*ḥamāl istijlā' al-tajallī al-awwal*)<sup>87</sup>. On the other hand, all others, saints and prophets, can reach only the level of self-vision of the Second Manifestation (*istijlā' al-tajallī al-thānī*), which is called the station of friendship (*walāya*) or proximity (*qurb*).

In the end, al-Farghānī touches upon the reality of the "Seal of Friendship" (*ḥātām al-walāya*)<sup>88</sup>, a concept that had a very important place in Sufism, especially in Ibn 'Arabī. The "Seal of the Friendship" is a saint who encompasses all forms of friendship or sainthood. Moreover,

through the 'Seal' all beings will reach their final return to God, because in him the Muhammadan heritage will be fully realized. Al-Farghānī, however, does not say who this Seal of Friendship is and does not attribute to himself this title, as Ibn 'Arabī did and other Sufis before and after him.

d. The Six Universal Levels (*al-marātib al-kullīyya*): an outline of al-Farghānī's vision of Reality.

Up to now, we have been expounding in detail the complicated text of al-Farghānī's Introduction. A synthesis is needed to have a clearer pattern of his Sufi vision. Luckily, al-Farghānī himself provides a summary of his general vision of Reality in two dense pages of his Introduction<sup>89</sup>. He says that Reality is divided in six orders or levels, called the universal levels (*al-marātib al-kullīyya*), presences (*ḥaḍarāt*) or worlds (*'awālim*). These levels represent different aspects of manifestation of the one transcendent Essence, therefore they are also called places (*maḥāll*) or loci of manifestation (*majālī-maḥābir*). The six levels are arranged in three basic orders: two levels are considered as pertaining to the uncreated Real (*ḥaqq*); three levels are found considered as proper to the created world (*khalq*); the sixth level is the one that encompasses all the other levels: this is the Perfect Man (*insān kāmil*). This vision can be outlined in the following pattern:

The Transcendent Mystery (*al-ghayb*) or Essence (*dhāt*) manifests itself:

- a. at the real, eternal, uncreated Level (*al-ḥaqq*) in two orders:
  - 1-. Absolute-Unity (*al-aḥadiyya*).
  - 2-. Related-Unity (*al-wāḥidiyya*), in which the Divine Names are included.
- b. at the created level (*al-khalq*), still part of the Related-Unity (*al-wāḥidiyya*), in three orders:
  - 3-. The Level of Spirits (*martabat al-arwāḥ*).
  - 4-. The Level of Images-Archetypes (*martabat al-mithāl*).
  - 5-. The Level of Corporeal Bodies (*martabat al-ajsām*).
- c. in a all-comprehensive level (*al-jāmi'*) that summarizes the whole process of manifestation:
  - 6-. The Level of the Perfect Man (*martabat al-insān al-kāmil*).

These six levels unfold from the Essence in the following way:

1. At the beginning of the process there is the unveiled and unseen

transcendent Mystery or Essence, signified by the hadith: "In the Beginning there was God and nothing with him".

2. This Mystery manifests itself its Oneness which includes the Level of the Absolute-Unity (*al-aḥadiyya*) of the First Manifestation (*al-tajallī al-awwal*), which excludes any kind of multiplicity, and the Level of the Related-Unity (*al-wāḥidiyya*) of the Second Manifestation (*al-tajallī al-thānī*), in which the multiplicity of Divine Names are manifested and present in the Divine, eternal knowledge.
3. Three levels follow which constitute the created universe (*ḵawn*):
  - a. The level of the non-composite, simple beings (*martabat al-mawjūdāt al-basīṭa*), which is the Level of the Spirits (*martabat al-arwāḥ*).
  - b. The level of the composite beings (*martabat al-mawjūdāt al-murakkaba*), which is distinct in two other levels according to whether their beings are divisible in parts or not:
    - The level of the subtle beings (*al-mawjūdāt al-laṭīfa*), so called because they cannot be divided; this is the level of the Images-Archetypes (*martabat al-mithāl*).
    - The level of the dense beings (*al-mawjūdāt al-ḵathīfa*), so called because they can be divided into parts. This level is called: the level of Sense Perception (*martabat al-ḥiss*) or the world of the Visible (*‘ālam al-shahāda*) or the level of the corporeal Bodies (*marṭabat al-ajsām*).
4. In the end, there is a sixth level, all-comprehensive (*jāmi‘*) of the five previous levels and synthesis of uncreated and created levels. This is the level of the Perfect Man which encompasses all realities (*jāmi‘ li-l-jamī‘*) and is the perfect mirror of the transcendent Mystery. The reality of the Perfect Man is realized in two basic degrees: Adam, that is the human being in general, and the Muḥammadan Reality, which alone reaches the highest degree of unity.

e. Al-Farghānī and Ibn ‘Arabī’s school.

After the description al-Farghānī’s Sufi thought, a brief comparison must be done with his two great masters: Ibn ‘Arabī and Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī, Ibn ‘Arabī’s most prominent disciple and al-Farghānī’s direct master. Though a the substantial similarity is found between their Sufi vision and terminology, there are some interesting aspects of dissimilarity which probably are fruit of al-Farghānī’s own original thinking.



e-1. Al-Farghānī and Ibn ʿArabī.

First of all al-Farghānī is indebted to Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn ʿArabī, the great spiritual master (*al-shaykh al-akbar*) of Sufi esoterism<sup>90</sup>. Some points of similarity between them are: in both one finds the centrality of the hadith “*kuntu kanz<sup>an</sup> makhfīyy<sup>an</sup>..*”, the basic order of manifestation, the classification of the Divine Names<sup>91</sup>, the three levels of the cosmos (*marātib al-kawn*) of Spirits (*arwāḥ*), of Images-Archetypes (*mithāl*) and Corporeal Bodies (*ajsād*)<sup>92</sup>, the idea of the Perfect Man (*al-insān al-kāmil*) and the concept of the Muḥammadan Reality (*al-ḥaqīqat al-muḥammadiyya*).<sup>93</sup>

Dissimilarities between al-Farghānī and Ibn ʿArabī can be found in the following points:

- i. The concepts of Absolute-Unity (*al-aḥadiyya*) and Related-Unity (*al-waḥdāniyya*)<sup>94</sup>. Al-Farghānī is credited to have provided a clearer description of the Second Manifestation of the Essence, Related-Unity, fixing its name as *wāḥidiyya*, rather than *waḥdāniyya*, as Ibn ʿArabī calls it. Al-Farghānī’s terminology is more consistent throughout his commentary.<sup>95</sup>
- ii. *Al-fayḍ* (Effusion).<sup>96</sup>

The process of manifestation of the Essence is consistently called by Ibn ʿArabī Effusion (*fayḍ*). Ibn ʿArabī speaks of two levels of effusion. The first is the Most Holy Effusion (*al-fayḍ al-aqdas*) or the unseen Theophany (*al-tajallī al-ghaybī*), which occurs inwardly, in the Divine science, where the Divine Names are manifested and the ideas of all possible entities are present from eternity. The second is called the Holy Effusion (*al-fayḍ al-muqaddas*) or the Visible Effusion (*al-fayḍ al-shahādī*), which occurs outwardly, at the different levels of existence of created beings (*mawjūdāt*).

We remark that the same ideas are present in al-Farghānī’s thought, but the very term effusion (*fayḍ*) does not play any important role in his vocabulary, it is almost absent from his text. Throughout his exposition, instead of effusion (*fayḍ*) al-Farghānī prefers the use of the terms self-disclosure or manifestation (*tajallī*, *ẓuhūr*), also used by Ibn ʿArabī. In addition, the adjectives most holy (*aqdas*) and holy (*muqaddas*) appear in al-Farghānī only as attributes of the Essence-Mystery (*dhāt-ghayb*) not as qualifiers of its manifestations.

- iii. Imagination (*al-khayāl*).

In Ibn ʿArabī’s Sufī vision the faculty of imagination (*al-khayāl*) plays the very important function as the great isthmus (*barzakḥ*) linking different levels of Reality, as it is abundantly explained by Chittick<sup>97</sup>. In particular

imagination (*ḵhayāl*) has the specific function of linking the spiritual with corporeal world. On the contrary, in al-Farghānī's thought the very term imagination (*ḵhayal*) is hardly mentioned in the whole Introduction and commentary.

iv. *Al-barzakb* (the Isthmus)

The concept of isthmus (*barzakb*) in Ibn 'Arabī's vision has a broad function, including many realities<sup>98</sup>. Al-Farghānī reserves this term for specific realities: the First and Second Manifestation, called the first and second isthmus (*al-bazrakbiyya al-ūlā wa-l-thāniya*), the all-comprehensive reality of the Perfect Man (*al-insān al-kāmil*) and the Muḥammadan reality (*al-ḥaqīqat al-muḥammadiyya*), called also the all-comprehensive isthmus (*al-barzakb al-jāmi'*).

c-2. Al-Farghānī and al-Qūnawī.

Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī, Ibn 'Arabī's most prominent disciple and outstanding leader of a Sufī school, is accredited to have reshaped Ibn 'Arabī's ontology in a more systematic way<sup>99</sup>. As already reported, al-Qūnawī has been the direct inspirer of al-Farghānī's commentary. This fact can account for the close similarity of their Sufi vision<sup>100</sup>. However, some differences on some points seem to exist between the two Sufis.<sup>101</sup>

i. The Related-Unity (*al-wāḥidiyya*).

Al-Farghānī went further than al-Qūnawī in defining the name and functions of the Related-Unity (*al-wāḥidiyya*), which is the Second Manifestation of the Essence. This level is distinct from the Absolute-Unity (*aḥadiyya*), although both are included in the First Level of Manifestation, the Oneness (*wahda*).<sup>102</sup>

ii. Al-Qūnawī's Five Presences (*al-ḥaḍarāt al-ḵams*).

Al-Qūnawī summarized the whole realm of the manifestations of the Essence in the pattern of "Five Divine Presences" (*ḥaḍarāt*), levels (*marātib*) or worlds (*'awālim*)<sup>103</sup>, number adopted by many of his followers<sup>104</sup>. Al-Qūnawī's five presences are:

- i. The Divine knowledge (*al-'ilm*).
- ii. The world of the Spirits (*arwāḥ*).
- iii. The world of the Images-Archetypes (*mithāl*).
- iv. The world of the corporeal Bodies (*aḵṣād*).
- v. The Perfect Man (*al-insān al-kāmil*)<sup>105</sup>.

As shown above, al-Farghānī provides a more articulated pattern of the Presences and fixes their number at six, instead of five.

In conclusion, it seems that Ibn ʿArabī's thought has not been conveyed by his disciples in a fixed and close system, but in an quite open pattern of thought that underwent a number of reshaping, first of all by his most outstanding disciple. al-Qūnawī.

### 3. The return (*al-rujūʿ*) to the Essence through the different levels of self-disclosures (*tajalliyyāt*).<sup>106</sup>

#### a. The journey (*sulūk*) of return.

In the last part of his Introduction (*muqaddima*) al-Farghānī describes the path of return (*rujūʿ*) of human being, and in it of the whole created universe, to its Origin. He begins with the general remark that human constitution (*mazāj insānī*), being a result of such a long process of manifestation and the outcome of so many and different factors, is always in a fragile balance. In humans, the forces of the animal and vegetative nature can obscure the spiritual spirit (*rūḥ rūḥānī*) and the unified heart (*qalb waḥdānī*), with the exception of such elected characters as Muḥammad and the saints. Because of his constitutional weakness human being is always in need of radical self-reform (*islāḥ al-nafs*), to be achieved through strenuous struggles (*mujāhadāt*) and strict discipline (*riyādāt*). In this path of reform the human person becomes a spiritual traveller (*sālik*) in need of both a law (*sharʿ*) that shows the path and direction of an experienced guide, who has reached the Truth (*shaykh muḥaqqiq*). This guide will be like a doctor (*ṭabīb*) who will cure (*ʿilāj*) him from all his spiritual diseases and weaknesses<sup>107</sup>. In describing this process of reform al-Farghānī expounds the traditional Sufi teaching on the spiritual journey (*sulūk*) to perfection. This journey goes through a fixed set of spiritual stations (*maqāmāt*) and states (*aḥwāl*).

The process of return<sup>108</sup> begins with the awakening of the soul brought about by an enlightenment coming from the natural light (*nūr fiṭrī*) present in the soul in spite of all the darkness of its spiritual decay and from hearing (*samāʿ*) the call of the Real through his messengers. Then the soul becomes attracted once again to the Real and desires to free itself from its state of slavery. It is taken by a feeling of sorrow and decides to enter the path of conversion (*tawba*). Al-Farghānī outlines the whole process of the spiritual journey as a progress through three fundamental stages, already fixed by Sufi tradition<sup>109</sup>. These stages are the station of Islam (*maqām al-islām*), based on the observance of the law; the station of faith (*maqām al-īmān*), based on the

practice of asceticism (*ḡuḥd*); the station of perfect goodness (*maqām al-iḥsān*), based on a vision leading to the very essence of the *tawḥīd* (*al-mushābada al-jāziba ilā 'ayn al-tawḥīd*).

b. A return through four stages of Self-disclosures (*tajallīyyāt*).<sup>110</sup>

The journey of return to the Real must go through the reverse of the process of manifestation. Manifestation is as a movement of descent (*nuḡūl*) from One to multiplicity. The return, likewise, must be a movement of ascent (*su'ūd*, *'urūj*) from multiplicity to One. In the description of this process of return, al-Farghānī introduces some new concepts and terms, correspondent to those used in the first part of his exposition, and which constantly recur in his commentary. Four stages of self-disclosures (*tajallīyyāt*) are identified in the movement of return<sup>111</sup>.

b-1. The Outward Self-disclosure (*al-tajallī al-ḡābirī*).

This self-disclosure happens at the level of the created beings, which are the effects (*āthār*) of the Divine Names and present themselves to the soul (*nafs*) one after the other in different images (*ṣuwar*). Each image, being particular and distinct, becomes a veil (*ḥijāb*) that hinders the vision of other images. Then, the spiritual traveller (*sālik*) lives in a continuously changing state, called by Sufis, the station of change or inconsistency (*maqām talwīn*). This state lasts until the traveller, in a flash of intuition, realizes the unity of all manifest beings and discovers the all-comprehensiveness of the Divine Name of the Outward (*al-ḡābir*), in which all beings are included as loci of its manifestation (*maḡābir*). At this point, the traveller overcomes the state of inconsistency and reaches the state of stability (*tamkīn*). Now his vision is fixed in the One who acts in all things, that is the contemplation of the unified Divine action of God (*mushābada fi'l Allāh al-waḥdānī*), which encompasses and permeates everything. In al-Farghānī's thought, however, this is only the first stage of stability (*tamkīn*), the highest stage will be reached further on. Now the love of the traveller, which in the state of inconsistency was scattered after many images and loci of beauty (*maḡābir al-ḥusn*), finds its unity in the contemplation of everything in the unity of the Divine creative act. The spiritual lover also realizes that God is the only real Beloved (*al-maḥbūb al-ḥaqīqī*) in every image of beauty that captures his love. In al-Farghānī's view this stage is the starting point of Ibn al-Fāriḍ's poem. In fact, at the beginning of his *Tā'īyya*, Ibn al-Fāriḍ describes the face of his

Beloved as a cup (*ka's*) from which he drinks the wine of love. Al-Farghānī interprets the cup as the locus of manifestation of the Divine beauty (*maẓhar al-ḥusn*) and the wine as the Divine love (*qawhā al-maḥabba*), is poured out into the heart of the traveller through the contemplation of the one Divine act displayed in multitude of beings, which are its visible manifestations.

b-2. The Inward Self-Disclosure (*al-tajallī al-bāṭinī*).

This self-disclosure is also called the Presence of the Divine knowledge, because in it all beings are present in their knowable images (*ṣuwar 'ilmīyya*) and in their universal names (*al-asmā' al-kulliyya*). The Divine Names are the source of the true knowledge of things and are all unified in the Name of Inward (*bāṭin*). In the Divine knowledge all the Sciences of the unseen (*al-'ulūm al-ghaybiyya*) and the Divine secrets (*al-asrār al-ilāhiyya*) are included. In this way the multiplicity of the exterior world is brought to unity and the traveller passes from the state of inconsistency to the state of stability (*tamkīn*) in the unity of the Divine names. Nonetheless, the traveller continues to live in a conflict, because the two aspects of reality, the outward and the inward, are seen as contradictory and each aspect is a veil for the other, as well as each Divine name is a veil for other Names. True stability can be only reached in a superior synthesis.

b-3. The All-comprehensive Self-disclosure (*al-tajallī al-jam'ī*).

This Self-disclosure is called the Presence of the perfect All-comprehensiveness (*ḥaḍra jam' al-jam'*) and “the distance of the two extremes of the bow” (*qāb al-qawsaynī*). At this level the limit (*taqayyud*) and the opposition (*diddīyya*) of the two previous orders, outward and inward (*ẓāhirī* and *baṭinī*), are overcome, one is no longer a veil for the other. The outward and inward aspects are now unified and brought back to their original unity, that is the Related-Unity (*al-wāḥidiyya*) of the second determination and isthmus (*al-ta'ayyun al-thānī wa-l-barzakbiyya al-thānya*). Only a perfect (*ka'mil*), all-comprehensive (*shāmīl al-jam'iyya*) heart (*qalb*), which has reached the utmost degree of ‘annihilation’ or passing away from self (*fanā'*), can reach this stage of unity. At this point annihilation becomes “annihilation from the awareness of annihilation” (*fanā' 'an shubūd al-fanā'*), in which the traveller does not keep any trace of self-awareness. Now he also reaches the utmost degree of stability which is called stability in inconsistency (*al-tamkīn fī-l-talwīn*), because there is no

more opposition between the unity of the inward and the multiplicity of the outward aspect of reality. In the presence of the perfect all-comprehensiveness (*ḥaḍra jam' al-jam'*) the synthesis (*jam'*) of the opposite aspects of being is realized as al-Farghānī says:

"... the end comes back to the beginning to accomplish the circle (*dā'ira*) of manifestation so that it must be evident to all as knowledge (*'ilm*), vision (*'ayn*) and absolute certainty (*ḥaqq, wa-ḥaqqīqa*) that everything (*al-amr*) belongs to God. From him it has its beginning and unto him it finds its end: "Everything in fact will go back to him" (K 11,123). He is the First and the Last, the Outward and the Inward, the Knower of everything".<sup>112</sup>

This stage corresponds of the Second Manifestation (*al-tajallī al-thānī*) or of the Related-Unity (*wāḥdiyya*) in the movement of descent. Prophets and saints can arrive to it in their way of return. But, above this stage lies the highest perfection of unity reserved only to Muḥammad.

b-4. The Level of the All-comprehensive Unity (*martabat al-aḥadiyya al-jam'iyya*).

This level is also called the perfect, all-comprehensive Self-disclosure of the Essence (*al-tajallī al-dhātī al-jam'ī al-kamālī*) or the awareness of all-comprehensiveness (*ṣaḥw al-jam'*) and corresponds to the level of Absolute-Unity (*aḥadiyya*) of the First Manifestation (*al-tajallī al-awwal*). It is also designated as the Muḥammadan Station (*al-maqām al-muḥammadī*), because it is exclusive to the prophet Muḥammad, and the station of the "Nearest" (*aw adnā*), because it is the nearest level to the absolute Mystery. In it the two movements of Manifestation (*tajallī-jalā'*) and Self-vision (*istijalā'*) reach their utmost degree of realization. Beyond this level lies only the unfathomable abyss of the transcendent Essence, the absolute Mystery. This supreme stage of unity is realized only in the most perfect human being, when:

"...was born the pious, pure, most unified (*aḥadī*) all-comprehensive (*jam'ī*) heart of Muḥammad (*qalb aḥmadī*), which is the image of the very First Original Isthmus (*ṣūra al-barzakhiyya al-ūlā al-aṣliyya*) and in it is manifested the very First Manifestation (*al-tajallī al-awwal*) which is the All-comprehensive Unity (*al-aḥadiyya al-jam'iyya*) of all Names: general and particular, original and derived, of the Essence and of its Qualities".

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These are the supreme qualifications of the Muḥammad Reality, which continuously recur throughout al-Farghānī's commentary.

#### 4. The stages of the *Tā'iyya*.<sup>114</sup>

At the end of his Introduction (*muqaddima*) al-Farghānī gives a synthesis of the main stages of the spiritual journey which, in his view, are described in Ibn al-Fāriḍ's *Tā'iyya*. Although al-Farghānī is not explicit in this instance, it can be argued from his explanations that these stages correspond to the four Self-disclosures, previously described. Al-Farghānī finds these four stages in one of the most important hadiths in the Sufi tradition, the so-called "*ḥadīth kuntu samī'a-hu*"<sup>115</sup>.

a. The stage of Love (*al-maḥabba*).

A great part of Ibn al-Fāriḍ's poem is a description of love in all its stages (*aṭwār*). This is the first spiritual stage of the traveller (*sālik*) who realizes the first part of the hadith: "My servant draws near to me through nothing I love more than that which I made obligatory to him. My servant never ceases drawing near to me through supererogatory works until I love him (*aḥbab-tu*)..". This stage corresponds to the outward Self-disclosure (*al-tajallī al-ḡābirī*).<sup>116</sup>

b. The stage of Unity (*al-tawḥīd*).

At this stage unity between the servant and his Lord is realized, as the same hadith says: "...then, when I love him, I am his hearing (*kun-tu samā'a-hu*) through which he hears etc.". This stage corresponds to the first stage of the inward Self-disclosure (*al-tajallī al-bāṭinī*).

c. The stage of the True Knowledge (*al-ma'rifa*).

This knowledge is the knowledge realized by the Lord Himself by which the servant knows, after his complete annihilation, as the same hadith says: "... by Me he hears, by Me he sees and thinks". This stage can correspond to the second stage of the inward Self-disclosure (*al-tajallī al-bāṭinī*).

d. The stage of Perfect Realization (*al-kamāl wa-l-taḥqīq*).

At this stage all contradictions are overcome in unity, because this stage has the characteristic of the all-comprehensiveness (*jam'*) of all levels. This stage is proper to the perfect (*kummal*) saints and vicegerents (*awliyā' wa-ḥulafā'*). It corresponds to the all-comprehensive Self-disclosure (*al-tajallī al-jam'ī*).

e. The Muḥammadan Presence (*al-ḥadrat al-muḥammadiyya*)

This is the highest and the most perfect stage (*martabat al-akmaliyya*) of return to unity, that is the Absolute-Unity, beyond which there is only the

absolute Mystery of the Essence. It is exclusive of Prophet Muḥammad and nobody else can reach it and is qualified as the level of the All-comprehensive Unity (*martabat al-aḥadiyyat al-jam'īyya*).

In the end, al-Farghānī gives a general idea of Ibn al-Fāriḍ's Sufi state in composing his poem:

"...but he [Ibn al-Fāriḍ] has described those stages in general in a language (*lisān*) derived from the station of Muḥammad (*maqām muḥammadī*), which permeates (*sirāya*) by the All-comprehensiveness of his Unity (*aḥadiyya jam'īyyati-hi*), every order and every being (*marātib wa-ashiyā'*)".<sup>117</sup>

In al-Farghānī's view Ibn al-Fāriḍ's language was "speaking on behalf.." (*ḥikāya 'an*) and "translation of.." (*tarjumāniyya*) the station of Muḥammad (*maqām muḥammadī*). This statement implies that Ibn al-Fāriḍ was only translating into words the experience of the highest level of spiritual realization which, as al-Farghānī has repeated many times, is exclusive to the Prophet Muḥammad. However, here a problem arises: did Ibn al-Fāriḍ also have such an experience and reach such a state? Did he identify himself with that Reality? Otherwise, how could he speak about something of which he had no experience? Did such an experience lead to the union with the supreme Reality and how? All these problems should be faced in the comparative study of al-Farghānī's commentary.

In conclusion, al-Farghānī's Introduction has been praised not only as a clear summary of his own Sufi thought, but as the methodological premise of his commentary. In fact, in it are found the basic concepts and terms al-Farghānī uses in interpreting Ibn al-Fāriḍ's poem. For this reason I have given an extensive and detailed account of it.

## C. AL-FARGHĀNĪ'S COMMENTARY (*SHARḤ*).

### 1. Something about al-Farghānī's Commentary.

After the Introduction, al-Farghānī begins his large commentary which extends over 489 pages: vol.I p.107-358, vol.II p.1-238. Al-Farghānī does not mention the source of the poems's text which shows to be substantially identical to the most recent critical edition published by 'A. M. 'Abd al-Khāliq in Cairo, 1984<sup>118</sup>. This fact witnesses a remarkably faithfulness in the transmission of Ibn al-Fāriḍ's poems. Yet, both al-Farghānī and 'Abd al-Khāliq depend on 'Alī's *sibḥ* Ibn al-Fāriḍ's recension<sup>119</sup>. However, both



ignore an older recension, recently published by A.J.Arberry<sup>120</sup>. The text of the poem is clearly printed, but the verses' numeration is somewhat erratic: numbers are missing or repeated, so that, in the end, the last verse is numbered v.768 instead of v.761, the actual number of the poem's verses. Al-Farghānī provides a remarkable explanation of every verse, first on a linguistic, then on a Sufi level. Sometimes he extends the explanation of some topics into further elucidations. He does not explicitly mention the sources of his thought, but they can be guessed from names occurring here and there. Around forty Sufis are mentioned, among them a special place have al-Farghānī's masters, always mentioned with distinguished titles:

Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad Ibn Ishāq al-Qūnawī is called "Our master (*sayyidu-nā*), the perfect leader, who has realized Reality (*muḥaqqiq*)" (vol.I, v.69, p.174; vol.II, v.556, p.104; vol.II, v.614, p.137).

Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn 'Arabī is called "The most perfect spiritual guide (*al-shaykh al-kāmil al-mukammal al-akmal*)" (vol.I, v.69, p.174; vol. I, v.191, p.253; vol.II, v.501, p.219).

Muḥammad Ibn al-Sakandānī al-Baghdādī is called "Our spiritual guide and master (*shaykh-nā wa-sayyidu-nā*)" (vol.I, v.189, p.152).

Najīb al-Dīn 'Alī Ibn Buzghush al-Shīrāzī is called "My spiritual guide and model (*shaykh-ī wa-quḍwat-ī*)" (vol.I, v.240, p.28; vol.II, v.560, p.109).

Shihāb al-Dīn 'Umar al-Suhrawardī is called "The head of all spiritual guides, the *Junayd* of his time (*shaykh al-shuyūkh, Junayd waqti-hī*)" (vol.II, v.598, p.130 and v.723, p.202).

## 2. Al-Farghānī's partition of the *Tā'iyya*.

Although al-Farghānī does not provide from the beginning a clear outline of the *Tā'iyya*, from the titles of some sections, one can have a general picture of his partition. This is based on the four journeys (*safrā/āsfār*) of the spiritual traveller, which correspond to the four self-disclosures (*tajalliyyāt*) of the process of return.

The 1st Part: vv.1-285, vol.I, pp 107-299. Al-Farghānī does not clearly state that the first three journeys are described in this verses, yet in v. 286 he explicitly says that there the fourth journey begins.

The 2nd Part: v..286 vol.I pp 299 to v.761, vol.II pp. 238, that is all the rest of the *Tā'iyya* is in al-Farghānī's view a description of the fourth journey under different aspects:

- a. in vv.286-333, vol.I pp. 299-334, the poet describes the aspects of unity and knowledge.
- b. in vv.334-387, vol.I pp.334-353, the poet describes the aspects of all-pervasive love.
- c. in vv.388-761, vol.I pp.353-357 to vol.II p.238, the poet describes the aspects of manifestations (*tajallīyyāt*): unity (*tawhīd*), the Divine qualities of Beauty (*jamāl*), Majesty (*jalāl*) and Perfection (*kamāl*), and knowledge (*mā'rifa*).

Al-Farghānī's division of the poem seems quite artificial and based on a prefixed vision without inquiring first about the internal logic of the poem. Nonetheless, al-Farghānī's commentary provides a lot of useful insights into his Sufi vision and the cultural world of Ibn al-Fāriḍ's time. In our linguistic analysis of the poem we have fixed a different partition<sup>121</sup>.

### 3. Al-Farghānī's method in interpreting the *Tā'yya*.

Al-Farghānī's Sufi vision can be summarized in three basic patterns, into which he has arranged the two basic movements of the unfathomable Mystery: a movement from Oneness to multiplicity, called manifestation (*ḡubūr, tajallī*) of the Essence, and a movement from multiplicity to Oneness, called return (*rujū'*) or self-vision (*istijlā'*). These three patterns, which recur throughout his commentary, are:

- a. The six levels of manifestation.
- b. The description of God as Essence (*al-dāt*), attributes (*ṣifāt*) and acts (*aḥwāl*).
- c. The four stages of self-disclosures (*tajallīyyāt*).

### 4. A Comparison between Ibn al-Fāriḍ's Text and al-Farghānī's Commentary.

As a general remark, one can show that in Ibn al-Fāriḍ's text there is very little of all the complicated ontological, cosmological and anthropological Sufi vision and elaborated terminology, expounded at length and in detail in al-Farghānī's Introduction. Ibn al-Fāriḍ's pattern of thought is simpler and clearly based on a lived experience rather than on a theoretical speculation, though he does not ignore a number of Sufi technical terms.

Ibn al-Fāriḍ explicitly mentions only three basic stages of his mystical travel:

1. the stage of division (called *al-farq*), in which he experiences the separation from his Beloved.

2. the stage of absolute unity (called *al-ittihād*)<sup>122</sup> with his Beloved that ends in self-identity, expressed in the words “I am My-self” (*anā iyyā-ya*).
3. the stage of universal union of everything in his “self” (*anā*) (called *al-jamʿ*). He does ignore the complicated subdivisions of this stage.

In particular, the important technical expression “The Level of the All-comprehensive Unity (*martabat al-aḥadiyya al-jamʿiyya*)”, the highest stage of unity reached only by Muḥammad, which is a key term, continuously repeated in al-Farghānī’s commentary, never recurs in Ibn al-Fāriḍ’s technical Sufi vocabulary. The nearest notion to this concept is the so called Muḥammadan Light (*al-nūr al-muḥammadi*), with which Ibn al-Fāriḍ clearly identifies himself. This notion is parallel to the known concepts of the ‘Perfect Man’ (*al-insān al-kāmil*) and the ‘Muḥammadan Reality’ (*al-ḥaqīqat al-muḥammadiyya*), mentioned by al-Farghānī. I showed that Ibn al-Fāriḍ indicates this reality only by the designations of *al-qutb* (the Pole) in vv. 500-1, and *mufīd al-jamʿ* (the bestower of union) in v. 751 (which corresponds to *mufīd al-asrār*, i.e. the bestower of spiritual powers, explicitly said of Muḥammad in v. 625) and I pointed out that Ibn al-Fāriḍ clearly identifies himself with this supreme Reality<sup>123</sup>, concluding that no definitions or explanations are provided for these names. It seems that Ibn al-Fāriḍ takes for granted that they are familiar to the Sufi circles he is addressing. In fact, the term ‘pole’ (*qutb*) has a long history before Ibn al-Fāriḍ. Since the time of al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī (3rd/9th c.) it had already come to designate the highest degree of sainthood (*walāya*), which was thought to have its source in what was then designated as the “Muḥammadan Reality” (*al-ḥaqīqat al-muḥammadiyya*), that is the “Islamic Logos”, the eternal principle and goal of the whole creation and the perfect manifestation of the Divine qualities<sup>124</sup>. Under every aspect, Ibn al-Fāriḍ’s poem seems far away from the complicated terminology of al-Farghānī’s Introduction.

From the semantic analysis of the poem it is quite evident that the experience of *anā* (I, myself) is the center and the ultimate stage of Ibn al-Fāriḍ’s Sufi experience. His travel is a process of going of his *anā* (I, myself), from the state of separation (*farq*) and limitation, to a new awareness of unity-identity (*ittihād*), then into the universal, all-comprehensive union (*jamʿ*). This is the basic pattern of Ibn al-Fāriḍ’s mystical experience. It should be remembered, however, that Ibn al-Fāriḍ has matured his experience in a Sufi context in which the idea of this universal union had already been developed in the central idea of the Perfect Man (*al-insān al-kāmil*), though he himself

does not use such expression. I have stated that the core of Ibn al-Fāriḍ's mystical experience is to be found first of all in his personal and deep assimilation of the concept of the Perfect Man. Through such realization he came to the full awareness of having attained his most profound aspiration, the source of all mystical experience, that is the union with the Absolute. Having gone through all the stages of love which leads the Sufi to the complete annihilation of his personal qualities (*fanā'*) in order to reach the permanence in the qualities of the Beloved (*baqā'*), the poet grows to a new awareness. He finds that his empirical *anā*, which at the beginning of his path was still living in the stage of multiplicity and duality, has passed away in a pure transparency of the true, unique *anā*: the absolute One. At this stage, he experiences this absolute *anā* as the unique center of all qualities and movements in the whole universe. In this absolute *anā* the poet has completely merged to the point that there are no traces left of his previous, empirical *anā*. Now, in a new transparent and transcendent awareness he realizes that whatever he says or does is done by that One and absolute Subject, the only Center of all, the only One who can say, in Reality, *anā*. Having attained the Source of everything, he finds everything and that everything is in him, from him and to him.<sup>125</sup>

Such personal transformation seems to us the center of Ibn al-Fāriḍ's mystical experience. The way al-Farghānī reads his complicated philosophical world in the poetical terms of Ibn al-Fāriḍ appears quite artificial and, in many instances, misleading. I have already pointed out the different meanings that some terms, such as *wujūd* (existence), *rūḥ* (spirit), *nafs* (soul), *dhāt* (essence), have in Ibn al-Fāriḍ's verses and Ibn 'Arabī's philosophy.

However, despite these differences between the visions and experiences of the two Sufis, deep similarities must also be acknowledged and may have facilitated the approach of Ibn 'Arabī's school to Ibn al-Fāriḍ's poems. Both experiences are rooted in a common Sufi background, heritage of the previous century centered on the concept of the Perfect Man. Concluding my research, I could say that the notion of Perfect Man (*al-insān al-kāmil*) had the deepest influence in shaping Ibn al-Fāriḍ's own mystical vision. This notion had already found full development in the Sufi literature by the 6th-7th/12th-13th centuries and had in Ibn 'Arabī's philosophy its most systematic exposition. The "Perfect Man", the ultimate goal of the Sufi path, was thought of as the perfect image of God, the mirror of his Divine qualities, the supreme synthesis of the Divine Essence and its manifestations, the comprehensive union of the opposites, the source, exemplar and goal of all creation.

In the analysis of the qualities of *anā* in the stage of *jamʿ*, we have found many traits common to this notion of the Perfect Man, but, at the same time, we have underlined the difference between Ibn al-Fāriḍ's vocabulary and that of Ibn ʿArabī. Consequently, one cannot consider, as many have done in the past, Ibn al-Fāriḍ as an actual disciple of Ibn ʿArabī. It seems more likely that both Sufis might have drawn independently from a common background of ideas, already well developed by their time. Each of them, however, has edited these ideas in accordance with his own personal experience and taste. While Ibn ʿArabī and his school have developed them in a systematic and philosophical thought, Ibn al-Fāriḍ has expressed them in a more experiential and poetic way. A direct dependence of Ibn al-Fāriḍ on Ibn ʿArabī seems improbable not only on historic grounds, as already stated by some modern scholars, but also due to linguistical evidence, as my study intends to prove. In this way, we can account for both the similarities and dissimilarities between the two Sufis, doing justice to the peculiarities of each of them".<sup>126</sup>

### Conclusion.

My exposition of al-Farghānī's commentary calls for some general remarks and questions in order to put it in a wider frame of thought.

1. At the level of al-Farghānī's text, I hope to have achieved my first purpose, that is to offer a faithful exposition of his thought. I have tried to summarize the essential points of a text that has been famous for its obscurity. Al-Farghānī's commentary is well-known as a difficult text to understand and interpret. It is full of involutions, repetitions. Terms are introduced without clear definitions and the same thoughts are repeated many times under different terms and patterns without a clear relationship. One has the impression that such a text was written in the form of notes for an oral teaching rather than in that of complete written exposition. For this reason one finds that al-Farghānī's text has been praised as being at the same time one of the clearest exposition of Ibn ʿArabī's thought and one of the most obscure texts. I also tried to point out the originality of his thought compared with that of his masters.
2. On the Sufi level there is the question about the standing of such Sufi thought in Islamic tradition, especially with regard to the question of monism (*waḥdat al-wujūd*), that expressly recurs in al-Farghānī's text<sup>127</sup>. Based on the concept of manifestation and self-disclosure (*ẓubūr, tajallī*),

this kind of Sufism seems to lead to a brand of spiritual monism, in which the distinction between the Divine and the created worlds seems to be obliterated: in the end there is only One Existent, although variegated in different aspects. Is this kind of Sufism a logical consequence of the radical and exclusive Islamic monotheism, as many Sufis think? What about the authenticity of some special hadiths on which such Sufi thought has been built? Are there any clear historical proofs that they go back to Muḥammad, considered by Sufis the true source of their esoterism, or must they be considered expressions of foreign influences on the Islamic thought? Such questions have received different answers that do not seem satisfactory and definitive. They need more scientific exploration on many levels.

3. On the level of comparative religions, this type of Sufism offers many topics of research. Similarities between such Sufi monistic tendency and many patterns of Eastern thought have been pointed out by many authors. For a Japanese scholar, Izutsu Toshihiko, such Sufi thought represents: "...an archetype of philosophical thought which has been expressed in different ways by the great philosophers of Eastern tradition"<sup>128</sup>. One could also question, at a deeper level, why such types of Sufism seem to lead inevitably to a kind of impersonal mysticism, in which human person becomes just a wave on the surface of a limitless ocean and God is thought of just as the Eternal Law (similar to the Eastern *Tao*) of the endless and necessary flow of manifestations of the immutable transcendent Essence. The whole process of manifestation seems to end up as the "manifestation of the 'One and the same' to itself" and the old philosophical question about the "One and the many" remains all the more the unsolved, crucial aporia. On this basis, one could consider Ibn 'Arabī's vision a kind of 'demythologization' of Islamic thought, since philosophical concepts are adopted in it as the true meaning and interpretation of revealed words and symbols. Similar trends of thinking are quite common to many religious and philosophical traditions in the East as well in the West. A true and open dialogue between these different mystical experiences and visions, a dialogue that would point out their similarities and dissimilarities, their historical relationships and their own originality, would be but very enlightening and fruitful for all. In this way, mysticism will not appear a far fetched curiosity, but a very important attempt of the most fine thinkers of humankind to find an answer to the endless human quest for meaning and life.

1. Giuseppe Scattolin, "L'expérience mystique de Ibn al-Fāriḍ à travers son poème al-Tā'iyyat al-Kubrā", in *MIDEO* 19 (1989) pp. 203-223; this article is a summary of my research: *L'esperienza mistica di Ibn al-Fāriḍ attraverso il suo poema al-Tā'iyyat al-Kubrā — Un'analisi semantica del poema.*, PISAI, Roma, 1987, 3 vols. (not published yet).
2. William Chittick, "Ibn 'Arabī and his School", in *Islamic Spirituality*, vol.II (*Manifestations*), World Spirituality: An Encyclopaedic History of the Religious Quest n. 20, Crossroad, New York, 1991, pp. 49-79.
3. Abū Zaid 'Abd al-Raḥmān Ibn Muḥammad Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima Ibn Khaldūn, (wa-hiya al-juz' al-awwal min tāriḫ Ibn Khaldūn al-musammā kitāb al-'ibar wa-dīwān al-mubtada' wa-l-khabar fī tāriḫ al-'arab wa-l-barbar wa-man 'āṣara-hum min dhāwī al-sha'ni al-akbar)*, ed. by Khalīl Shaḥḥāda, Dār al-Fikr, Beyrouth, 1408/1988: *al-bāb 6, al-faṣl 17: Fī 'ilm al-taṣawwuf*, pp. 611-24; al-Farghānī: pp. 617-9; also *Muqaddima li-kitāb al-'ibar, Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī*, Beyrouth, 1975: al-Farghānī, pp. 470-1; cf. translation and study of Franz Rosenthal, *The Muqaddima. An introduction to History*, Bollingen Series XLIII, Pantheon Books, New York, 1958, 3 vols.: al-Farghānī, vol 3, ch. 6, Section 16, pp. 87-8. A modern Egyptian scholar, M. Muṣṭafā Ḥilmī, too complains about the obscurity of al-Farghānī's text, "its barbarism" (*a'jamiyya*), that has turned the text into a piece of hermetic language, in which it is almost impossible to get a clear meaning from words that seem to have been piled up together without any clear connection, Muḥammad Muṣṭafā Ḥilmī, *Ibn al-Fāriḍ wa-l-ḥubb al-ilāhī*, Dār al-Ma'ārif, Cairo, 1st ed. 1374/1945, pp.62-5 2nd ed. 1971, pp. 97-100.
4. Nūr al-Dīn 'Abd al-Raḥmān Jāmī, *Nafḥāt al-uns min ḥadarāt al-quds*, ed. Mahdī Tawḥīdī Pūr, Ketāb Furūshī Maḥmūdī, Teheran, 1337/1958: al-Farghānī pp. 559-62.
5. *Mashāriq al-darārī. Sharḥ Tā'iyya Ibn al-Fāriḍ; ta'līf Sa'īd al-Dīn Ṣa'īd Farghānī*, translated and commented by Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Ashtiyānī, Anjuman-i Islāmī-yi Ḥikmat wa-Falsafa-yi Irān, Rashīd Ed., Mashhad, 1398/1978, 811 pp: Introduction pp. 127-30.
6. W.Chittick, "The Five Presences: from al-Qūnawī to al-Qayṣarī", in *The Muslim World* 72/2 (1982), p.108
7. In the historical sources al-Farghānī's Introduction is called sometimes *dībāja*, term which literally means 'ornament' and was often used to indicate the introduction to literary works.
8. The most important sources of al-Farghānī's life are: first, his own mention in his Persian and Arabic commentaries: *Mashāriq*, pp. 6-5. 77-78; and *Muntahā al-madārik*, Maktab al-Ṣanā'ī, [Istanbul], 1293/1876, vol. 1 p. 4, vol. 2 p. 237; and in his *Manābij al-'ibād ilā al-ma'ād*, ms. Aya Sofya 2373 in the Süleymaniye Library, Istanbul: autobiographical notes about his Sufi initiation in *qā'idab 3, bāb 2, faṣl 2*. 'Alī *siḥb* Ibn al-Fāriḍ (d. 735/1335), *Dībāja al-dīwān*, ed. by 'Abd al-Khālīq Maḥmūd 'Abd al-Khālīq, *Dīwān Ibn al-Fāriḍ*, Dār al-Ma'ārif, Cairo, 1984, pp. 27-28. 'Alī mentions Shams al-Dīn al-Īkī's story about Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī's explanations of the *Tā'iyya* and al-Farghānī's composition of his commentary. Shams al-Dīn Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad Ibn 'Uthmān al-Dhahabī (d.748/1348), *Al-'ibar fī khabar man ghabar*, ed. Muḥammad al-Sa'īd Basyūnī Zagh'lūl, Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, Beyrouth, 1985/1405, 4 vols: al-Farghānī. vol. 3, p. 399, a brief account of al-Farghānī's life. Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima* pp. 470-1. Nūr al-Dīn 'Abd al-Raḥmān Jāmī (d.898/1492), *Nafḥāt al-uns* pp. 559-562; Jāmī's notes

are taken from al-Farghānī's own *Manābij* and at p. 542. Jāmī repeats 'Alī *sibt* Ibn al-Fāriq's account of Īkī's story of al-Qūnawī's explanations of the *Tā'īyya* and al-Farghānī's commentary.

Hājji Khalīfā Muṣṭafā 'Abd Allāh, Kāteb Čelebī (d.1067/1657), *Kashf al-ẓunūn 'an asāmī al-kutub wa-l-ḥunūn*, Wikālat al-Ma'ārif, Istanbul, 1362-4/1943-5, 2 vols.: *Manābij*. vol.2 pp. 1847, *Madārik* *ibid.* p.1858; transl. by G. Flügel (1802-70), *Lexicon bibliographicum et encyclopaedicum*, Leipzig, 1835-58, 7 vols.

Ibn al-'Imād Abū l-Falāh 'Abd l-Hayy Ibn Aḥmad al-Hanbalī (d.1089/1679), *Shadharāt al-dhabab fī akhbār man dhabab*, Maktabat al-Quds, Cairo, 1351/1932, 6 vols.: al-Farghānī vol. 2 p. 448, repeats al-Dhababī's account.

Carl Brockelmann, *Geschichte der arabischen Literatur* (GAL): GAL 1, Weimar, 1898, 2 vols.; GAL S (Supplement), Leiden, 1937-42, 3 vols.; GAL 2, Leiden, 1943-49, 2 vols.; al-Farghānī, Gal S, vol.1, n.40b, p.812; cf. Ibn al-Fāriq, Gal 1, vol.1, p. 262; Gal S, vol.1, pp.462-5; Gal 2, vol. 1, pp. 305-7.

'Umar Riḍā Kaḥḥāla, *Mu'jam al-mu'allifīn wa-tarājim muṣannifī l-kutub al-'arabiyya*, Maṭba'at al-Taraqī, Dimashq, 1378/1959, 15 vols: al-Farghānī, vol.4 p. 212, vol.5 p. 307-310.

9. Brockelmann and Kaḥḥāla give Abū 'Uthmān Sa'ad Ibn 'Abd Allāh al-Farghānī, which seems incorrect.
10. Cf. al-Dhababī, *Al-'ibar*, vol. 3, p. 399.; the date is usually reported as 699/1299, Kaḥḥāla has 700/1301; both seem incorrect.
11. For some information about Farghānah cf. Le Strange, Guy (1854-1933), *The Lands of the Eastern Caliphate: Mesopotamia, Persia and Central Asia from the Moslem Conquest to the time of Taymur*, Cambridge University Press Frank Cass, 1966 (1st.ed.1905): Farghānah, ch. 31, pp. 476-480; Barthold W.- [Spuler B.], "Al-Farghānah", in EI 2, vol.II 791-93; id., *An historical geography of Iran*, transl. by Svat Soucek, introd. by C.E.Bosworth, Princeton Univ.Press, Princeton (NJ), 1984. Farghānah is a populated valley in Eastern Iran along the river Sir Daryā (known also in antiquity as Jaxartes and called by the Arabs Sayḥūn). The province capital of Farghānah valley is Shāsh (Ilshāsh in the text of al-Dhababī), which lies north of the town of Būkhāra and Samarqand. Not far East of Shāsh lies the smaller town of Kāsān, from which al-Farghānī derived his second nisba "al-Kāsānī". This Kāsān must not be confused with Kāshān, which lies in central Iran, in a region known as al-Jubail, between Isfahān and Qūm, which was also an important Islamic center. After the early Islamic conquest, Farghānah valley became an significant cultural center. Many important scholars are known as "al-Farghānī": two historians and one astronomer are mentioned in EI 2, II pp. 793; 2 politicians, 6 Sufis are mentioned by Louis Massignon, *La passion de Husayn Ibn Mansūr Hallāj*, Gallimard, Paris, (1st ed. 1922) rev. ed. 1975, 4 vols.: vol.4 p. 167.
12. L. Pouzet, based on the account of al-Dhababī's *Ibar*, fixes the place of al-Farghānī's death in Damascus; cf. Louis Pouzet, *Damas au VIIIe/XIIIe siècle. Vie et structure religieuse d'une métropole islamique*, Recherches Nouvelle Série: A. Langue Arabe et Pensée Islamique tome XV, Dar al-Machreq, Beyrouth, p. 219. This fact would be in agreement with another Pouzet's remark that many disciples of Ibn 'Arabī were buried in Damascus, near the tomb of their master in order to have part to his blessing (*baraka*), Pouzet mentions Badr al-Dīn Ḥasan Ibn Hūd (d.699/1300), Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī (d. 673/1274), who wished to be buried near his master Ibn 'Arabī, and 'Afif al-Dīn Sulaymān al-Tilmisānī (d.690/1291), and Muḥammad al-Īkī al-Fārisī (d. 697/1298), *ibid.* pp. 217-20, 234-35.
13. *Madārik* vol. II p.130.



14. These two periods are mentioned in an autobiographical note al-Farghānī wrote in his book *Manābij* and reported in Jāmī's account, *Nafḥāt* pp. 559-62; it is partly translated by W. Chittick, "The Last Will and Testament of Ibn 'Arabī's Foremost Disciple and Some Notes on its Author", in *Sophia Perennis*, 4/1 (1978) 45-6, and by Richard Gramlich, *Die Schiitischen Derwischorden Persiens*, Abhandlungen für die Kunde des Morgenlandes XXXVI Band, Franz Steiner Verlag, Wiesbaden, 1965-1981, 3 vols: vol.2 *Glaube und Lehre*, 1976, pp. 390-1.
15. About the *Subrawardiyya* Sufi order see: R. Gramlich, *Derwischorden*, Erster Teil: Affiliationen, Wiesbaden, 1965, pp. 1-8; id., *Die Gaben der Erkenntnisse des 'Umar as-Subrawardī ('Awārif al-ma'ārif)*, übersetzt. und eingeleitet von Richard Gramlich, Freiburger Islamstudien Band 6, Franz Steiner Verlag, Wiesbaden, 1978: Einleitung pp 1-7; Annemarie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 1975: "The two Suhrawardī and their importance", pp. 244-46; Sayyid Athar Abbas Rizvi, "The Suhrawardiyyah", in *Islamic Spirituality*, vol.2 (Manifestations), pp. 241-5; EI 1 (fr.) II, pp. 530-1.
16. R. Gramlich's translation, *Die Gaben der Erkenntnisse* note 15.
17. Study and critical edition: Abū Najīb 'Abd al-Qāhir Ibn 'Abd Allāh al-Suhrawardī, *Kitāb ādāb al-murīdīn*, ed. Menahem Milson, Institute of Asian and African Studies, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Jerusalem, 1978.
18. This rule is stated in *Manābij*, *qā'ida 3, bāb 2, faṣl 2*, as quoted by Chittick, "The last will" p. 46 and Gramlich, *Derwischorden Persiens*, vol. 2, pp. 390-91; it is reported in Jāmī, *Nafḥāt* pp. 559-62; cf. also Louis Gardet, "Dhikr" in EI 2, II 223-6; J-L.Michon, "Khirka", in EI 2, IV pp. 17-8.
19. al-Dhahabī, *Al-'ibar*, vol. 3, p. 399.
20. This trip is probably to be related to a general movement toward the West that happened in the 7th/13th c. under the pressure of the onslaughting Mongol invasion; Baghdad was conquered in 656/1258.
21. *Manābij*, *qā'ida 3, bāb 2, faṣl 2*, quoted by Chittick, "The last will" p. 46.
22. cf.note 8.
23. In a passage reported by al-Farghānī in *Mashāriq al-darārī* pp. 6-5 and pp.77-78, al-Qūnawī himself explains the story of the Commentary. Al-Qūnawī says that he went to Egypt a first time in 630/1233, when Ibn al-Fāriḍ was still alive, but he could not meet him. Then he returned to Egypt a second time in 640/1243. This time al-Qūnawī met a number of Sufis and agreed with them to write a commentary of Ibn al-Fāriḍ's *Tā'īyya*, which was highly praised by everybody. On al-Qūnawī's advise, al-Farghānī wrote his commentary in Persian and presented it to his master who approved and blessed the work. This seems to be the story of al-Farghānī's Persian commentary.
24. The complete title is given in *Mashāriq*, text p. 13.
25. *Muntahā al-madārik*, Maktab al-Ṣanā'ī, [Istanbul], 1293/1876. This is the only existing printed edition. It consists of two volumes of 596 pp.: vol.1. pp.1-358., of wich 107 pp. are the Introduction (*Muqaddima*); vol.2 pp.1-238. As it is said in the colophon, this edition is based on a copy written in Ramaḍān 730/1330 (that is around thirty years after al-Farghānī's death) in Egypt by a certain *shaykh* Shams al-Dīn Aḥmad Ibn Ya'qūb al-Zabī with the help of a scribe Aḥmad 'Umar 'Alī al-Māzandarānī. The *shaykh* says that

this is the second copy he wrote from a manuscript edited and approved by al-Farghānī himself. The printed edition was done by a certain Muḥammad Shukrī Ūfī in 1293/1876 in Maktab al-Sanā'ī. The place is not evident from the text: A.J. Arberry says «in the East *The Poem of the Way*, London, 1952, p. 7, F.Rosenthal and W. Chittick put it in Istanbul. The title is given in *Madārik* p. 5.

26. *Mashāriq* p.134. W.Chittick, *Spectrums of Islamic Thought. Sa'īd al-Dīn Farghānī on the Implication of Oneness and Manyness*, p. 6-7 (not published yet). It seems that it was through the Arabic version in particular that al-Farghānī gained renown throughout the Islamic world.
27. The reshaping of the Arabic version is evident if we consider the titles of the four parts of both commentaries:  
The Persian titles are (*Mashāriq*, p. 13):  
1. First Part: The Qualities (*ṣifāt*) and the different aspects of Science (*'ilm*), the Vision (*shuhūd*) and the Perception-Existence (*wujūd*), and the rule of the beginning and the order of precedence. 2. Second Part: On the outgoing (*sudūr*) and determination (*ta'ayyun*) of the World of Spirits (*arwāḥ*), the manifestation and realization of the World of Images (*mithāl*), which in Sufi language is called the Imagination (*khayāl*). 3. Third Part: The order and levels of the World of Corporeal Bodies (*ajsām*) and the creation of Adam. 4. Fourth Part: Explanation of the formation (*nash'a*), stages (*aṭwār*) and states (*aḥwāl*) of man till his coming to his perfection (*kamāl*).  
The corresponding Arabic titles are (*Madārik*, p.5.):  
1. First Part: The Essence (*dhāt*), the determination (*ta'ayyun*) of its names (*asma'*) and attributes (*ṣifāt*), the secondary Names derived from them. 2. Second Part: The Level of Spirits (*marṭaba al-arwāḥ*), the World of the Realm (*'ālam al-malakūt*), and their realization in the Presence of the Power (*ḥaḍrat al-jabarūt*). 3. Third Part: The World of Images (*'ālam al-mithāl*) and the Level of Corporeal Bodies (*marṭabat al-ajsām*) till the formation of Adam. 4. Fourth Part: The levels (*marātib*) of Man, his stages (*aṭwār*) and states (*aḥwāl*) in the way of his returning (*marja'*) to his origin and its goal (*ma'āl*).
28. *Madārik* pp.5-45.
29. *Madārik* pp.5-6.
30. Al-Farghānī quite often uses the theological terms Essence (*dhāt*) and its determinations (*ta'ayyunāt*). However, it seems that his reflection is better described as a reflection on the unfathomable Divine Mystery and its manifestations, which is a basic topic of all Sufi thought and experience.
31. In these hadiths God is introduced as the speaker, while in others (called *nabawī*) the speaker is the Prophet Muhammad.
32. The Arabic text, as quoted by al-Farghānī, sounds: "Kuntu kanz-an makhfiyy-an, fa-abbabtu 'an u'rafā, fa-khalaqtu l-khalqa li-u'rafā", *Madārik* p. 5.
33. *Madārik* p. 5.
34. *Madārik* p. 6.
35. It must be remarked that Sufi language is a blending of religious (derived from the Revealed Book) and philosophical (derived from many sources) language, as it can be seen clearly in Ibn 'Arabī's thought. Religious language, however, should to be considered prevalent, because it is the primary source of their Sufi experience.

36. For the translation of technical terms I have referred to W.Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge. Ibn 'Arabī's Metaphysics of Imagination*, State University of New York Press, Albany, 1989, xxii-478 pp., cf. Index of names pp. 441-478. In many instances, however, I will part with my on translation.
37. *Madārik* pp. 7-45.
38. *Madārik* p. 8.
39. *Madārik* p. 9.
40. *Madārik* p. 7.
41. For this reason I prefer to translate them as Absolute and Related-Unity instead of Exclusive and Inclusive-Unity as Chittick does.
42. This particular usage of these terms (*jāmi'* — *jam'iyya*) in al-Farghānī's vocabulary will be of particular value for a comparison with Ibn-Fāriḍ's usage in his poem. In my study I pointed out the importance of the term *jam'* in Ibn-Fāriḍ's poem.
43. *Madārik* p. 14.
44. This pattern of thought is very similar to the Neoplatonic conception of emanation. In Neoplatonism too the One manifests itself through a process of emanations in which what is hidden and unfolded in the One becomes manifest and enfolded in the Many. Neoplatonism had a large influence on Islamic thought in general and on Ibn 'Arabī's thought in particular, which has been the main source of al-Farghānī's Sufi vision.
45. *Madārik* pp. 10-11; 16-17; 45-46.
46. *Madārik* p. 10.
47. *Madārik* pp. 12-13.
48. *Madārik* p. 13.
49. *Madārik* p. 13.
50. *Madārik* pp. 13-14.
51. *Madārik* p. 14.
52. *Madārik* p. 14
53. *Madārik* p. 15.
54. *Madārik* p. 15.
55. The root (*W J D*) has in Arabic many connotations, ranging from an original one "to find, to come across something"; to a second one "to feel and perceive the presence of something", and to a third one "to be found, to exist", which conveys the general philosophical idea of "being", "existence". In Sufi texts the two first meanings, conveying the actual experience, are usually prevalent. In the present text those three meanings are all present I have translated the term *wujūd* and its derivatives mostly as "finding perception of something", though the meaning of "existence" is always included. Adopting only one meaning can lead to a misunderstanding of the text. Consequently, translation must comply with the changing stress of the terms in their context.
56. *Madārik* p. 15.

57. *Madārik* p. 15.
58. *Madārik* p. 15.
59. *Madārik* pp. 15-16.
60. *Madārik* pp. 16-18.
61. *Madārik* pp. 18-19; 25-45.
62. *Madārik* p. 18.
63. *Madārik* pp. 18-19; 26-27.
64. *Madārik* pp. 18-19, 26.
65. *Madārik* pp. 19-23; 29-35.
66. *Madārik* p. 22.
67. *Madārik* pp. 45-72.
68. For a comparison between the two Sufis we will refer to the synthesis of Ibn 'Arabī's thought given by William C. Chittick, one of the few scholars who have attempted such a difficult task in particular, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge*, in particular pp. 125-143; id., "Ibn 'Arabī and his School", in particular pp. 72-79.
69. *Madārik* pp. 45-54.
70. *Madārik* pp. 54-66.
71. *Madārik* pp. 54-59.
72. *Madārik* pp. 59-65.
73. *Madārik* pp. 66-86.
74. *Madārik* p. 67.
75. *Madārik* pp. 68-69.
76. *Madārik* pp. 69-70.
77. *Madārik* p. 71.
78. *Madārik* pp. 71-72.
79. *Madārik* p. 67.
80. *Madārik* pp. 72-78.
81. *Madārik* p. 72.
82. *Madārik* pp. 75-77.
83. *Madārik* p. 78.
84. *Madārik* pp. 79-80.
85. *Madārik* p. 75.
86. *Madārik* pp. 81-82; 84-87; 90.
87. *Madārik* pp. 83; 90.
88. *Madārik* p. 86.
89. *Madārik* pp. 24-25.

90. cf. note 69 plus id., "The Five Presences", pp.109-116; id., "Introduction" in Fakhrudin 'Iraqi, *Divine Flashes*, translated and introduced by William C.Chittick and Peter Lamborn Wilson, The Classics of Western Spirituality, Paulist Press, 1982, pp. 3-32.
91. id., "Ibn 'Arabī" pp. 57-60; *The Sufi Path* pp. 18-19; 33-52; 59-76.
92. id., "Ibn 'Arabī" pp. 59-62; *The Sufi Path* pp. 12-16; 125-143.
93. id., "Ibn 'Arabī" pp. 65-68; *The Sufi Path* pp. 16-18; 26-30.
94. id., "Ibn 'Arabī" pp. 60-65.
95. id., "The Five Presences", pp.109-116; id., "Introduction" to *Divine Flashes* pp. 3-32.
96. id. "Ibn 'Arabī" pp. 60-65.
97. id. "Ibn 'Arabī" pp. 61-62; *The Sufi Path* pp. 12-16; 112-124.
98. id. "Ibn 'Arabī" pp. 61-62; *The Sufi Path* pp. 12-16; 125-143.
99. id., "Šadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī on the Oneness of Being" in *International Philosophical Quaterly* 21 (1981) 171-184; id., "Ibn 'Arabī" pp. 54-57.
100. cf. note 23.
101. We refer also in this case to the synthesis of al-Qūnawī given by Chittick in the above quoted works.
102. Chittick remarks: "The whole discussion of the First and Second Entifications, the various names by which each may be called, and the distinction between the two in the views of different Sufis is exceedingly complex. Qūnawī himself does not discuss these points systematically in his works, but he does allude to them", "Introduction" to *Divine Flashes* p.30 n.15.
103. Id. "Introduction" to *Divine Flashes* p. 31, n. 31
104. id., "Šadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī on the Oneness of Being" pp.173-175; id., "Introduction" to *Divine Flashes* pp. 12-17; id., "The Five Divine Presences" pp. 112-118.
105. id., "Introduction" to *Divine Flashes* p. 17.
106. *Madārik* pp. 87-107.
107. *Madārik* pp. 87-90.
108. *Madārik* pp. 92-93.
109. *Madārik*. 93-100. The three stages are taken from the hadith Jibrīl, in which the meaning of *islām*, *īmān* and *iḥsān* are explained.
110. To highlight the particular usage of the term *tajallīyyāt* in this context I translate it with 'self-disclosure', not with the general term 'manifestation'.
111. *Madārik* pp. 95-105.
112. *Madārik* pp. 104.
113. *Madārik* pp. 104.
114. *Madārik* pp. 105-107.
115. "My servant draws near to Me through nothing I love more than that which I have made obligatory for him....Then, when I love him I am his hearing, through which he hears.", cf. W.Chittick, *The Sufi Path* p. 325.

116. In the same context, however, al-Farghānī distinguishes the three degrees of *maḥabba*: at the level of acts (*fi'liyya*), of qualities (*sifātiyya*) and of the Essence (*dhātiyya*). These three degrees correspond to the four self-disclosures.
117. *Madārik* pp. 107.
118. 'Abd al-Khāliq Maḥmūd 'Abd al-Khāliq, *Dīwān Ibn al-Fāriḍ*, Dār al-Ma'ārif, Cairo, 1984.
119. 'Alī's *sibḥ* Ibn al-Fāriḍ made this recension a hundred years after his grandfather's death, around 735/1335, and it is the source of the most common editions of the *dīwān*.
120. Arthur John Arberry (1905-1973), *The Mystical Poems of Ibn al-Fāriḍ*, edited in transcription, E. Walker, London, 1952, 128 p.
121. G. Scattolin, *L'esperienza mistica*, vo.1. pp.55-163.
122. Note that this term, which is one of the basic technical terms of the *Tā'īyya*, never appear as such in al-Farghānī's vocabulary.
123. G. Scattolin, *L'esperienza mistica*, vol 2, pp. 407-424.
124. G. Scattolin, *L'esperienza mistica*, vol 2, pp. 449-463.
125. G. Scattolin, *L'esperienza mistica*, vol 2, pp. 564-581.
126. G. Scattolin, *L'esperienza mistica*, vol 2, pp. 539-560.
127. *Madārik* pp. 101-102.
128. cf. Toshihiko Izutsu, *Unité de l'existence et création perpétuelle en mystique islamique*, tr. fr., Les Deux Océans, Paris, 1980, p. 51; id., *A Comparative Study of the Key Philosophical Concepts in Sufism and Taoism*, Keio Institute, Tokyo, 1966-7. 2 voll.; also Helmut Ritter, *Das Meer der Seele*, Brill, Leiden, 1955, part. pp.601-11.