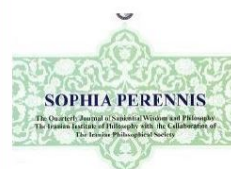




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Research Article



The Unfolding of Beauty: The Concepts of Mercy, Covering, and Adornment in Ibn ‘Arabī Thought

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the relationship between beauty, mercy, covering, and adornment in the thought of Ibn ‘Arabī. It argues that beauty is not merely an aesthetic category but an ontological principle grounded in the divine names. Since the divine names are relations (al-nisab) and dependencies (al-idāfāt), they make possible the relationship between the Real and the servant as well as different degrees of manifestation and beauty. From the perspective of the Real, beauty is intrinsically related to mercy, which “encompasses everything,” including beauty and ugliness, good and evil, faith and disbelief. From the perspective of the servant, this relationship becomes manifest through covering (sitr), veiling (hijab), and adornment (al-zīna). The study suggests that beauty and ugliness are not absolute opposites but exist in a dynamic relation in which each may function as the covering or disclosure of the other.

Keywords: Ibn ‘Arabī, Beauty, Mercy, Adornment, Covering

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Extended Abstract

This study examines the relationship between beauty, mercy, covering (*satr*), and adornment (*al-zīna*) in the thought of Ibn ‘Arabī. The central argument of the study is that beauty is not merely an aesthetic category but an ontological principle that makes possible the relationship between the Real and the human being. In this context, beauty is considered both as an attribute from the perspective of the Real and as a relation (*nisba*) from the perspective of the servant. From the aspect of the Real, beauty appears as an ontological reality related to the manifestations of the divine names; from the aspect of the servant, it emerges as the possibility of establishing a relationship with the Real.

The article first focuses on the distinction between Essence (*al-dhāt*) and divinity (*al-ulūhiyya*). While the Essence is understood as the domain of absolute transcendence beyond all relations, divinity becomes knowable through the divine names. For this reason, the divine names are treated as the ontological ground of the relationship between the Real and the human being. Ibn ‘Arabī’s definition of the divine names as relations and dependencies (*al-iḍāfāt*) makes possible both the gradation of manifestation and the graded structure of beauty. The fact that the divine names are gathered under the attributes of majesty (*jalāl*) and beauty (*jamāl*) demonstrates that beauty does not merely signify harmony or pleasantness, but is also connected to power, manifestation, and all-encompassingness.

The second part of the study examines the relationship between beauty and mercy, particularly through the Qur’anic verse “My mercy encompasses everything”. (7:156) According to Ibn ‘Arabī, mercy encompasses not only goodness, beauty, and truth, but also evil, ugliness, error, and disbelief. However, this all-encompassing character does not imply the legitimization of evil. On the contrary, mercy constitutes both the ontological ground of creation (*ijād*) and the possibility of servitude. At this point, the study emphasizes the essential connection between beauty, creation, and mercy. Through Ibn ‘Arabī’s interpretation of the hadith “Allah is beautiful and loves beauty,” the article argues that the world was created in the image of divine beauty and therefore the whole of existence should be understood as a manifestation of mercy. Nevertheless, the article also raises the question of how ugliness, evil, and deprivation are experienced within human existence. Drawing on Ibn ‘Arabī’s interpretation of the polytheists’ question “What is *al-Raḥmān*?”, it argues that even what appears as deprivation may itself be a concealed form of mercy.

The third part of the article investigates how beauty and mercy are experienced from the perspective of the servant through the concepts of covering, veiling (*hijāb*), and adornment. In Ibn ‘Arabī’s thought, covering is not merely something that conceals reality; rather, it is one of the modes through which reality becomes manifest. For this reason, there is not an opposition but a dynamic relationship between covering and manifestation. Particularly in relation to the divine name *al-Ghaḥḥār*, covering becomes associated with forgiveness and mercy. By discussing the relationship between the concepts of *hijāb*, *libās*, and *satr*, the article explores that existence itself possesses a structure that is both covering and covered. The world is both a veil over its own reality and the locus of divine manifestation. Thus, the veil is understood not as the opposite of truth, but as the condition for its manifestation.



Adornment constitutes one of the central concepts of the article. Through Ibn 'Arabī's interpretation of the verse "We have sent down clothing to cover your nakedness and as adornment", (7:26) adornment is approached both as the mode of appearance of beauty and as a form of covering. Adornment is closely related to the servant's acts and to the concept of repentance (*tawba*). Particularly in relation to the verse "the one whose evil deed has been adorned for him...", (35:8) the article argues that evil does not possess an absolute essence but is experienced within a specific form of covering and appearance. Accordingly, goodness and evil, beauty and ugliness, are not mutually exclusive absolute categories, but relational structures that cover and disclose one another. Ibn 'Arabī's emphasis on the concept of transformation (*tabdīl*) becomes especially significant at this point. The transformation of evil into good becomes possible only through the dynamic relationship between beauty, mercy, and covering. In conclusion, the study argues that in Ibn 'Arabī's thought beauty must be understood together with mercy and that both become manifest in human experience through covering and adornment. Beauty and mercy are modes of manifestation that render the human being powerless and reveal *iftiqār* (*ontological poverty*); servitude itself becomes possible precisely through this condition of poverty. Beauty, therefore, is not merely an aesthetic issue, but an ontological principle that establishes the relationship between being, manifestation, mercy, and servitude.

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Introduction

Beauty carries meanings that unify the conceptual network necessary to understand Ibn ‘Arabī’s thought¹. In his thought, beauty is not merely an aesthetic quality but an ontological principle that governs the manifestation of the Real in the world. Beauty has two dimensions: one as an attribute (*sifa*) belonging to the Real (*al-Haqq*), and the other as a relation (*nisba*) pertaining to the servant (*‘abd*). Insofar as beauty expresses the nature of the Real, it appears as an attribute; insofar as it makes possible the servant’s relation to the beauty of the Real, it appears as a relation.

The relationship between the Real and the servant takes different forms according to the manifestations of beauty and mercy. Yet these manifestations do not occur through pure disclosure alone. In Ibn ‘Arabī’s thought, what is revealed may appear precisely through forms of covering (*satr*), veiling (*hijāb*), and adornment (*al-zīna*). Covering is therefore not simply the opposite of manifestation but may itself become one of its modes. This raises the question: How is the relationship between beauty and mercy revealed in the realm of human experience?

To answer this question, this study follows a conceptual line that connects beauty, mercy, covering, and adornment (*al-zīna*). The aim is to illustrate that beauty in its aspect of the Real is closely tied to mercy and elucidate how this mercy and beauty are revealed in the realm of human experience.

First, the study argues that the fact that the divine names are relations (*al-nisab*) and dependencies (*al-idāfāt*) makes possible the gradation of beauty. Since divine names function as relational determinations, they make possible different levels of manifestation, and therefore different degrees of beauty. For this reason, the subject is approached from two angles: that of the Real and that of the servant. Secondly, the study examines the relationship between beauty and mercy through Ibn ‘Arabī’s interpretation of the verse “My mercy encompasses everything” (7:156). Finally, it discusses how mercy and beauty from the aspect of the Real become manifest in human experience through adornment functioning as a form of covering. Adornment, as an element of beauty, possesses not only a revealing aspect but also a concealing one, especially when considered in relation to the divine name *al-Ghaffār*.

This study suggests that mercy and beauty concerning the Real are intrinsically connected to the concept of covering in human experience. By following the conceptual pattern of beauty, mercy, manifestation, and covering, the study argues that in Ibn ‘Arabī’s thought ugliness (*al-qubh*) does not possess an essential reality in itself but emerges in relation to the perspective and experience of the servant. Accordingly, beauty and ugliness, as well as goodness (*al-hasan*) and evil (*al-sayyi‘a*), are not mutually exclusive opposites. Rather, they exist in a dynamic relation in which each may become the covering or disclosure of the other.

1. Divine Names and Relationships

Divine names serve a key role in explaining the relationship between the Real and human beings in Ibn ‘Arabī’s thought, since they relate both to the Real and to human beings. To comprehend these aspects, it is first necessary to distinguish between the Essence (*al-dhāt*) and divinity (*al-ulūhiyya*). The Essence is absolutely incomparable and therefore beyond all relations. Therefore, the Essence cannot be described through relations, whereas divinity becomes knowable through the network of divine names (Ibn ‘Arabī, 1999, IV:312). Divinity consists of relationships and dependencies that pertain to non-existence. Ibn ‘Arabī defines the divine names as relationships (*al-nisab*) and dependencies (*al-idāfāt*) that return to a single reality and are therefore non-existent determinations (*umūr ‘adamiyya*) (Ibn ‘Arabī, 1999, I:69- I:249).

1. Two Arabic terms commonly used to denote beauty are *jamāl* and *ḥusn*. *Ghāzī* Ibn Muhammed mentions, based on the Holy Quran, that these two words are synonyms, but still, *jamāl* is related to singularity and *ḥusn* to plurality (Ibn Talal, 2010, p. 358). Also, it is mentioned that these terms are sometimes synonyms, but in religious terminology, *Jamāl* has no opposite. It has a correlative relationship with *Jalāl* (Chittick & Murata, 1994, p. 221).



The divine names become manifest through the divine command (*amr*), expressed in the word “Be!” (*kun*) and presupposes a specific relationship between the servant and his Lord. This relationship makes possible different degrees of manifestation. The divine names make possible the relationship between the Real and the servant. However, these names are gathered under the attributes of majesty (*jalāl*) and beauty (*jamāl*). While some of the divine names contain the qualities of gentleness and grace (*lutf*) associated with beauty, others contain qualities of overpoweringness and severity (*qahr*) associated with majesty (Ibn 'Arabī, 1999, III:198).

Since the divine names belong essentially to the Real but appear in human beings according to their capacities (*isti'dād*), beauty may be considered from two perspectives: from the aspect of the Real and from that of the servant. The gradation of manifestation also implies a gradation in the servant's modes of relating to beauty. Therefore, although beauty is one and uniform, it becomes manifest and experienced differently according to the relational capacities of the servant. We will first examine how beauty is related to mercy from the perspective of the Real.

2. The Aspect of the Real: Beauty and Mercy

As mentioned earlier, divine names have degrees among themselves; that is, the names differ in hierarchical importance from one another. The names of *Allah* and *al-Rahmān* have precedence over other names. The servant cannot realize (*tahaqquq*) or embody (*tahalluq*) the name *Allah*, as it encompasses other divine names and levels (Ibn 'Arabī, 1998, p.26). The name *al-Rahmān* belongs to the same category as the name *Allah*; only the Real can be described with it, but not the servant (Ibn 'Arabī, 1998, p.34). Ibn 'Arabī states that sometimes the name of *al-Rahmān* comes before the name of *Allah*, but the mercy in this context is the mercy of creation (*rahmat al-ijād*), which means general mercy (*al-rahma al-ūmma*). The verse “My mercy encompasses everything” (7:156) points out the general mercy (Ibn 'Arabī, 1998, pp.36-37). Ibn 'Arabī says in the “Solomon Chapter” of *Fuṣūṣ al-Hikam* that the same verse concerns the mercy of giving (*rahmat al-imtinān*). The word “everything” in the verse also includes the divine names and relationships, accordingly. Ibn 'Arabī further states that Allah bestows existence upon these relations through us and that the servant is the result of the mercy of giving (Ibn 'Arabī, 1946, pp.152-153)¹. Accordingly, mercy has an essential relationship with both creation (*ijād*) and the divine names. The fact that creation is based on mercy and that the servant is the result of mercy also reveals the ontological meaning of beauty.

While explaining the hadith “Allah is beautiful (*jamīl*) and loves beauty (*jamāl*)” in *Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya* in the chapter concerning the level of beauty, which is itself the manifestation of the name *al-Jamīl*, Ibn 'Arabī uses the words *ibdā'* and *ijād*, both of which refer to creation. He states that Allah created (*ijād*) the world in a unique way (*ibdā'*), beautiful and perfect. The word *ijād* is attributed both to beauty and all-encompassingness. God created the world in the image of His beauty (*ṣūrat jamālihi*) and in the image of the All-Merciful (*ṣūrat al-Rahmān*) (Ibn 'Arabī, 1999, IV:178).

God is beautiful, and the world is also beautiful because it was created in His image. Since the divine names become manifest in the world, the beauty of God can be perceived in the beauty of the cosmos (Ibn 'Arabī, 1999, VII:395). Consequently, the world serves as a reflection of the manifestation of *al-Rahmān*. The divine names that form the basis of the relationship between God and servant are the most beautiful (*al-husna*). This reveals a foundation concerning the Real on which we can establish a direct link between mercy and beauty, both from the context of creation and the most beautiful nature of the divine names.

The first question to be asked at this point is how the manifestations, which differ based on mercy and beauty, are subject to human experience. Thus, we pose the question: What are the implications for human experience when creation and manifestation are rooted in mercy and beauty? For example, does the beauty of the world manifest itself in the experience of every human being? One of the interesting points is that Ibn 'Arabī states in his interpretation of the

1. English translation: Ibn al-'Arabī. (1980). *The Bezels of Wisdom* (R. W. J. Austin, Trans.). Paulist Press, p. 190.



verses¹ that unbelievers deny the name of *al-Rahmān*, not the name of Allah. When the polytheists were told to “worship Allah” they did not ask, “Who is Allah?”. On the contrary, they claimed that idols “bring them nearer to Allah” as an excuse for worshipping idols. As for *al-Rahmān*, they asked, “What is *al-Rahmān*?” and denied that name (Ibn ‘Arabī, 1998, pp.34-35). A question immediately arises here: Why is the name *Allah* accepted and the name *al-Rahmān* denied? Ibn ‘Arabī explains this issue in *Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya* by saying that divinity, which is the level of the name Allah, has a broader scope because it includes both disease and well-being. Both exist in the world, and no one can deny them. The name *al-Rahmān* can be witnessed only by those who are bestowed with faith, while those who lack it are unaware of their deprivation. The link between cover and beauty becomes visible at this point because what appears as deprivation may itself be a concealed form of mercy.

The polytheists asked the question “What is *al-Rahmān*?” when they heard it in *Bismillah*, as above-mentioned. The reason they ask the question is because they cannot understand how disease—for example, ugliness or evil—in the world is related to mercy. Indeed, the main question is: “How does mercy encompass everything? How can those who are shown mercy and those who are deprived of it be included in the scope of mercy?” We need to pay attention to the fact that these questions are not only for deniers or polytheists but are valid for everyone, depending on the addressee and level (*martaba*) of the servant. Since the grace and manifestation of *al-Rahmān* occur by the servant’s ability (*isti’dād*), it is essential to explore how beauty and mercy are revealed in the human experience.

In the next section, we suggest that the relationship between beauty and mercy, in terms of the servant aspect, could be understood through the concept of cover (*satr*) within the context of the name of *al-Ghaffār*. We move the issue further and ask the following questions: What is the relation between cover (*satr*) and beauty, based on mercy, in terms of its servant aspect? We should seek the answer in the concepts of adornment (*al-zīna*), which are closely related to beauty, mercy, and cover and which constitute the point where these concepts intersect. Firstly, we need to clarify the concept of cover.

3. The Aspect of Servant: Beauty, Adorn and Cover

There are two words that can be associated with cover (*satr*): veil (*ḥijāb*) and clothing (*libās*)². Ibn ‘Arabī defines *satr* at one point as “everything that covers (*satr*) from what enriches you” (Ibn ‘Arabī, 1999, III: 196)³. Covering may signify forgiveness and mercy (Ibn ‘Arabī, 1999, IV: 273), but it may also prevent one from seeing that from which things are manifested, namely the Real. The latter is expressed by the concept of a veil (*ḥijāb*). The veil is “the covering of that which is sought from your entity” (Ibn ‘Arabī, 1999, III:193)⁴. We can consider *satr* as a broader concept than the veil, encompassing “everything” that covers. Clothing, which is another covering, can have positive or negative meanings depending on the quality of the clothing being worn. For instance, beautiful clothing signifies adornment with divine attributes, while heedless clothing conveys the opposite meaning. Therefore, we can examine the issue through the words of both veil and clothing, both of which serve as coverings and demonstrate their connection to beauty and adornment.

In *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam* Ibn ‘Arabī highlights in the opening chapter:

“The cosmos (*‘ālam*) consists of that which is gross and that which is subtle and is therefore,

1. The verse in question is following: “We only worship them that they may bring us nearer to Allah in position” (39:3)

2. William Chittick translates *satr* using terms such as “curtaining” and “concealment.” In this study, however, the terms “cover” and “concealment” are preferred, since “cover” preserves the dual sense of both veiling and manifesting. He also translates *ḥijāb* as “veil” (Chittick, 1989, pp. 65, 105, 176, 313).

3. The Arabic text is as follows: كل ما سترك عن ما يغنيك. See also another definition of *satr* is “وهو ما سترك عما يغنيك” (Ibn ‘Arabī, 1999, IV:273).

4. ما ستر مطلوبك عن عينك.



in both aspects, the veil its [own] true self (*'ayn al-ḥijāb 'ala nafsihī*). For the cosmos does not perceive the Reality as he perceives himself, nor can it not be veiled, knowing itself to be distinct from its Creator and dependent on Him” (Ibn 'Arabī, 1946, pp.54-55).

He stresses that the world itself is its own veil. Ibn 'Arabī indicates in *Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya* that the servants are veiled from their Lord, that God has seventy veils of darkness and light, and that God Himself is a veil (*'ayn al-ḥujūb*). The veil is hidden; that is, the veil itself is also veiled. Accordingly, “being behind the veil” has been explained and elaborated in many different contexts and layers. However, by stating, “We are closer to him than his jugular vein” (50:16), it is stated that both closeness and distance are also veils (Ibn 'Arabī, 1999, III: 238, 239, 240). Therefore, the veil is a form of covering related to the manifestation of Real and reality (*ḥaqīqa*) and seeing Him. In fact, in Ibn 'Arabī thought, reality is that which is unveiled by a veil and concealed by a veil, as in the Sufi tradition (Gemuhluoğlu, 2019, p.228). When it comes to the manifestation of Real and reality, there must be a cover. The name *al-Ghaḥfār* which means “the one who covers (*satr*) and forgives”, is key understanding this issue.

Ibn 'Arabī explains the servant's connection with this name as “you need him to cover you with a protective veil that preserves you from eternal misery” (Ibn 'Arabī, 1998, p.59). In *Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya* he mentions that all qualities (*umūr*) cover one another. He explains the issue on three levels. The first level is that the divine names serve as covers for one another. For instance, the name *al-Zāḥir* is a cover for *al-Bāḥin*. This implies that what is manifest both outward and inward can be a cover, meaning that the revelation of something can be its cover, and its cover can be its revelation. The second level is that the heart, which is the locus of the manifestation of the divine forms, becomes a cover. The third level is for the phonetic names themselves serve as a covers. Ibn 'Arabī concludes that even if a cover may be evidence of something, what we need to understand is that all existence functions as a cover (*satr*), that which is covered (*mastūr*) and that which covers (*sātir*). And he continued: “We, on the other hand, are those imperfections (*'ayb*) that have been covered” (Ibn 'Arabī, 1999, VII:315). According to Ibn 'Arabī, since we are the ones covered (*mastūr*), the cover (*satr*) can only be seen (*mashhūd*) by us because the cover is *barzakh* between the two covered entities (Ibn 'Arabī, 1999, VII: 315)¹.

Indeed, when the Prophet was asked, “Have you ever seen your Lord (*al-Rabb*)?” he replied, “He is light; how could I see Him?”. Ibn 'Arabī says that what is meant here is not the impossibility of seeing God. He can be seen in another locus where He is not manifested as light. He continues: “He is both the seen (*mur'ī*) and the one covered (*mastūr*). Therefore, there must be a covering (*satr*)” (Ibn 'Arabī, 1999, VII: 316). By this, he is expressing that one of the essential aspects of human experience is covering. At this point, we need to apply the concept of adornment, which we will relate to the connection between covering and beauty.

In the preface to the *Kashf al-M'ana*, Ibn 'Arabī interprets the verse “We have provided clothing (*libās*) for you to cover your nakedness and as an adornment (*rīsh*)” (7:26). He states that the word *rīsh* in the verse means *al-zīna* and it means to cover (*satr*) for the servant (Ibn 'Arabī, 1998, pp.20-21). He clarifies the matter in the chapter on repentance (*tawba*). This shows that both concepts are related to *'amal*, which means the practice of the servant. *Tawba* means turning (*rujū'*) and it is closely related to cover (*satr*). Indeed, covering may turn into revealing, and revealing may turn into covering. This implies a connection between covering and revealing, or adornment, and the transformation of good into evil and evil into good.

Ibn 'Arabī opens the definition of repentance, which includes elements such as “abandoning the state of wrongdoing in the present moment”, “feeling regret for what has passed” and “deciding not to return what one has turned away from”. He discusses various perspectives on

1. The covering itself functions as a **barzakh**, and the witnessing of the cover (*mashhūd*) is connected to *iḥsān*, which may be understood as acting beautifully or perceiving beauty. *Iḥsān* also implies recognizing that one is veiled. The one who truly sees becomes aware of the covering itself. On the concept of **barzakh** and its philosophical significance (Chittick, 1989, p.14).



this matter (Ibn ‘Arabī, 1999, III: 209). The element “feeling regret for what had passed” is important in relation to adornment, which also carries the meaning of covering. He says that the perspective of “regretting the past is related to forgetting to ascribe the action to the doer” is a “great shining light”. Its veil is revealed in this verse: “...one to whom the evil of his deed has been adorned (*zuyyina*), so he considers it good” (35:8). The verse contains three elements: evil deeds, their adornment, and the perception of goodness. The adornment of deeds should ultimately be ascribed to Allah because the beauty of something implies it originates from the actions of Allah. However, this reality appears differently according to the servant’s awareness. From the perspective of the servant, adornment can be of three types: the adornment of Satan, the adornment of worldly life, and the adornment granted by God (Ibn ‘Arabī, 1999, III: 210). At this point, we can ask who is the one who adorns and how this can be determined.

Ibn ‘Arabī states that the verb “has been adorned” in the verse is in the passive form, and the servant cannot know who adorns his deeds. However, God says, “Guides whom He wills” (35:8) and tells the Prophet not to grieve about his *ummah*. This shows that mercy ultimately will manifest for everyone. For this reason, ugliness does not constitute the ultimate reality of the act but appears as a transient form from the perspective of the servant, whereas beauty, belonging to the Real, is essential and permanent. From the perspective of the servant, goodness and evil, as well as beauty and ugliness, do not appear as absolute opposites but rather become visible in intertwined forms. He explains that the relationship between goodness **and evil** and transformation (*tabdīl*) are only possible in this way (Ibn ‘Arabī, 1999, III: 211).

We can also follow the relationship between adornment, cover, and beauty through the interpretation of the same verse in the chapter of the presence of *Jamal* in *Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya*. In the same way, he says that the servant does not see his bad deed as beautiful but rather sees the adornment that embellishes the deed as something beautiful. When he sees the ugliness of his deed on the day of judgment, he will ask, “Where is the adornment that once made me love it?” Allah answers, “My servant speaks the truth” and transforms the evil deed into a good one (Ibn ‘Arabī, 1999, VII: 396). Every covering, whether good or bad, ultimately returns to the All-Merciful. The manifestation of mercy in the experience of the servant is occurs through covering, and beauty is associated with it. Indeed, the essence of a bad deed lies in its potential to turn toward the good. Repentance becomes possible only through divine grace, as Allah turns towards the servant and transforms him (*tabdīl*). If goodness and evil, beauty and ugliness were conceived as strict opposites, turning and transformation would not be possible. This would be contrary to mercy. Turning and transformation therefore become possible only through the relationship between covering, mercy, and beauty.

Conclusion

The distinction between Essence and divinity makes it possible to consider the divine names as relationships and dependencies, and it is precisely the relational nature of the divine names that renders the relationship between the Real and the human being possible. From the perspective of the Real, beauty, as an attribute belonging to the Real, is related to mercy. Mercy encompasses “everything”: the goodness and evil, beauty and ugliness manifested in the servant’s acts; moreover, right and wrong, faith and disbelief are also included within it. At this point, it should be noted that the all-encompassing nature of mercy does not mean justifying or encouraging the bad, the ugly, the wrong, denial, or, in *fiqh* terminology, sin. On the contrary, servitude, which is the fundamental quality of the human being, becomes possible only through the manifestation of all-encompassing mercy, because beauty and mercy render the human being powerless, and powerlessness, or poverty (*iftiqār*), constitutes the essential quality of servitude.

The aspect of beauty from the perspective of the servant exhibits a certain fluidity that can be traced through the concept of covering. Indeed, beauty and ugliness, goodness and evil, as they appear in the deeds of the servant, are revealed in one covering and concealed by another. This dynamic is directly related to beauty and mercy. Adornment is an element of beauty that functions as a covering in one sense, and all coverings that are put on and taken off ultimately return to mercy. Consequently, beauty and ugliness, or goodness and evil, cannot be conceived as strict opposites; rather, these concepts function as coverings for one another and include one another.



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