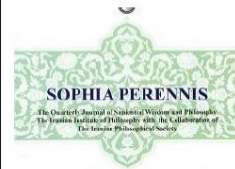




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Research Article



The Reciprocity of 'Influence' and the Five Presences: Jāmī's Golden Chain and Ibn al-ʿArabī's Bezels of Wisdom

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ABSTRACT

This article investigates how ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Jāmī (d. 898/1492), conceptualizes the principles of influence (taʿthīr) and receptivity (taʿaththur) in *Silsilat al-Dhahab* through the lens of Ibn al-ʿArabī's (d.638/1240) *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam* and the doctrine of the Five Presences. Through an intertextual, ontological, and phenomenological approach, the study argues that Jāmī's reception of Akbarian thought is not limited to doctrinal transmission, but constitutes a sustained reflection on the ways in which beings act upon, receive from, and are transformed by one another across the spiritual, imaginal, and corporeal realms. By examining Jāmī's poetic treatment alongside Ibn al-ʿArabī's metaphysical exposition, the article demonstrates that influence functions not merely as an ontological principle, but also as an ethical and spiritual framework for the cultivation and refinement of the soul.

Keywords: Silsilat al-Dhahab, Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam, taʿthīr, taʿaththur, Five Presences.

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Extended Abstract

Background and Central Inquiry

This article examines the reciprocal logic of “influence” (*ta'thīr*) and “influenced” (*ta'aththur*) in 'Abd al-Raḥmān Jāmī's (d. 898/1492), *Silsilat al-Dhahab*, the opening *mathnawī* of the *Haft Awrang*, in light of Ibn al-'Arabī's (d.638/1240) *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam* and the later Akbarian doctrine of the Five Presences (*al-ḥaḍarāt al-khams*). While modern scholarship has frequently emphasized the general impact of Ibn al-'Arabī upon Jāmī's metaphysics, poetry, and defense of *waḥdat al-wujūd* in the Timurid milieu, this study focuses more narrowly on the operative structure of influence as an ontological, anthropological, and ethical principle. It argues that Jāmī's reception of Akbarian thought is not limited to doctrinal transmission or poetic praise of *al-Shaykh al-Akbar* but involves a sustained meditation on the ways in which beings act upon, receive from, and become transformed by one another across the visible and invisible orders of existence.

Methodological Framework

Methodologically, the article is grounded in intertextual analysis, insofar as it reads Jāmī's poetic elaboration of influence alongside Ibn al-'Arabī's doctrinal exposition in the *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*. This intertextual approach is further supplemented by phenomenological and ontological modes of inquiry: phenomenological, in its attention to the lived and experiential dimensions of receptivity, perception, companionship, and spiritual transformation; and ontological, in its concern with the metaphysical status of influence across the hierarchies of being. By bringing these approaches together, the article seeks to identify not only conceptual continuities between Ibn al-'Arabī and Jāmī, but also the interpretive transformations through which Jāmī renders Akbarian metaphysics into a poetic anthropology of the soul.

Jāmī's Akbarian Context and the Five Presences

The article first situates Jāmī within the intellectual and spiritual environment of fifteenth-century Herat, where Naqshbandī sobriety, Timurid courtly patronage, and debates over the unity of being shaped the reception of Ibn al-'Arabī's teachings. Jāmī emerges as a decisive mediator of Akbarian doctrine, defending Ibn al-'Arabī's legacy in prose commentaries such as *Naqd al-Nuṣūṣ fī Sharḥ Naqsh al-Fuṣūṣ* and his commentary on the *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*, while also rendering Akbarian teachings into Persian poetic form. Against this background, the study turns to the Five Presences as a conceptual framework through which the hierarchy of influence may be understood. In the Second Entification, or *wāḥidiyyah*, the Divine Names exercise influence upon the immutable entities (*al-a'yān al-thābitah*), which receive their determinations from the Names. This polarity of active and receptive, giver and receiver, is then reflected throughout the subsequent realms: the intelligible, imaginal, and material orders. Yet the article emphasizes that such relations possess only relative efficacy, since, according to the Akbarian vision, God alone is the ultimate source of influence. This claim allows Jāmī to preserve both ontological hierarchy and divine unity without collapsing the created order into autonomous causality.

Imaginal Mediation and the Receptivity of the Soul

A central portion of the study concerns the Imaginal Realm (*'ālam al-mithāl*) as the intermediary between the spiritual and corporeal domains. Drawing upon Jāmī's



verses in *Silsilat al-Dhahab*, the article shows how imagination functions as a faculty of reception: it receives forms descending from the intelligible world while also preserving impressions rising from the sensory and material world. This reciprocal movement gives the soul a critical role in mediating between unseen realities and embodied experience. The human being, as microcosm and vicegerent, contains all presences within himself and is therefore uniquely capable of both receiving divine effusion and exerting influence upon the created order. In Jāmī's poetic anthropology, the Perfect Man (*al-insān al-kāmil*) is the consummate locus of this reciprocity. Having actualized the Divine Names and Attributes within himself, he becomes, by divine permission, an efficacious presence in the cosmos and the final cause of creation. The study thus reads Jāmī's account of human perfection as inseparable from cosmological mediation, spiritual receptivity, and ethical responsibility.

Corporeal Constitution, Spiritual Receptivity, and the Ethical and Social Dimensions of Influence

The article then extends this ontological account into the domain of anthropology and spiritual discipline. Through Ibn al-'Arabī's discussion of the conception of Jesus in the fifteenth chapter of the *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*, together with Jāmī's interpretive comments, the study examines how spiritual realities affect corporeal constitution (*mizāj*), and how the recipient's preparedness determines the form and degree of reception. Mary's psychic state, Gabriel's imaginal mediation, and Jesus's exceptional constitution demonstrate the intimate relation between body, soul, temperament, and spiritual receptivity. Jāmī further develops this principle socially and ethically by warning that companionship, environment, sensory intake, and collective worship all impress themselves upon the soul. Righteous companions and the presence of the Perfect Man may elevate a community, whereas corrupted souls may transmit deficiency. In this respect, *ta'thīr* becomes a bridge between metaphysics and moral practice, linking cosmic order to the everyday regulation of perception, association, and conduct.

Conclusion: Influence as a Principle of Spiritual Vigilance

By reading *Silsilat al-Dhahab* alongside Ibn al-'Arabī's *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam* and the Akbarian doctrine of the Five Presences, this article argues that "influence" is not merely a metaphysical abstraction, but a practical principle for the cultivation and protection of the soul. Jāmī presents the soul as a receptive field whose growth or corruption depends upon what is allowed to enter it, whether through imagination, companionship, environment, or embodied perception. The study therefore concludes that Jāmī's Akbarian anthropology offers a model for rethinking spiritual vigilance in the modern world, where the Sacred is increasingly obscured by material dispersion and sensory excess. From this perspective, the body and soul are not separate or competing entities, but an integrated unity whose refinement is essential to the pursuit of human felicity and perfection.

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Introduction

An eminent commentator on Ibn al-'Arabī's works is the fifteenth-century Persian polymath Nūr ad-Dīn 'Abd al-Raḥmān Jāmī (d. 898/1492), who emerges as a pivotal figure within the intellectual and mystical landscape of his time. Recognized as a defender of the Akbarian doctrine within scholarly debates in Iraq and in his residence of Herat, Jāmī's reverence for Ibn al-'Arabī is palpable in both his poetry and prose. Jāmī commenced his educational pursuits at a young age in his hometown of Jām in Khurāsān. His exceptional aptitude for the religious sciences prompted his father, Nizām al-Dīn Aḥmad, to relocate the family to the cultural capital of the period, Herat, in order to accelerate Jāmī's studies. Within only a few years, Jāmī was recognized as an erudite scholar and successfully completed his training under acclaimed teachers in both Samarqand and Herat. He mastered a wide range of disciplines, including Islamic theology, Qur'ānic exegesis, ḥadīth, Arabic grammar and literature, astronomy, mathematics, and music.

Jāmī's early exposure to the mystical tradition likewise occurred at a young age, when he received the blessing of a major *Sufī shaykh*, *Khawāja Muḥammad Pārsā* (d. 822/1420). His formal initiation took place in the middle period of his life, when he joined the *Naqshbandīyyah* order. The sufism prevalent in this period was characterized by its close alignment with theology and religious creed, as exemplified in the preaching method of Jāmī's master, 'Ubayd-allāh Aḥrār (d. 895/1490).¹ In contrast to certain strands of *Khurāsānī Sufism* that emphasized ecstatic intoxication, the sufism of Jāmī's time leaned toward sobriety and a sustained focus on religious doctrine. Within Timurid scholarly circles, moreover, a polemical current developed around the doctrine of the unity of being. While followers of *Zayn al-Dīn Khwāfī* (d. 838/1435) rejected it, those aligned with the school of *Sayyid Qāsim Anwār* (d. 837/1434) embraced it.² During the apex of the Timurid dynasty—years that coincide with the most consequential period of Jāmī's life—an intellectual shift occurred toward broader acceptance of Ibn al-'Arabī's teachings. Alongside his Naqshbandī companions, Jāmī played a vital role in transmitting Akbarian teachings across diverse sectors of society, to such an extent that its widespread acknowledgment even entered the Timurid courts.³

Jāmī's significant contribution to the reception of Ibn al-'Arabī in the Herat Timurid court is especially evident in his poetic compositions, which praise *Shaykh al-Akbar*⁴ and elucidate his doctrines—most notably those pertaining to the Unity of Being (*waḥdat al-wujūd*), the Perfect Man (*insān al-kāmil*), and the Five Presences (*ḥaḍarāt al-khams*). As a devoted follower, Jāmī's commitment to *Ibn al-'Arabī's* teachings was so profound that he actively engaged in public debates, forcefully challenging misconceptions and steadfastly reaffirming Ibn al-'Arabī's rightful position. Jāmī's most noteworthy works aligned with the Akbarian school include his *Asha'at al-Lama'at* (a commentary on *'Irāqī's Divine Flashes*), his commentary on Ibn al-Fārid's *Tā'iyyah*, *Lawā'iḥ*, *Sharḥ al-Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*, *Naqd al-Nuṣūṣ fī sharḥ Naqsh al-Fuṣūṣ*, and his heptad *mathnawī* entitled *Haft Awrang*.

A considerable body of scholarship has addressed the influence of Akbarian doctrine on Jāmī's writings; however, for the purposes of this study, I undertake a focused examination of the principles of "influence" (*ta'thūr*) and "influenced" (*ta'athur*) in Jāmī's work in light of *Shaykh al-Akbar's* teachings. Due to the limitations of the present study, only the first book of

1. Najīb Māyil Haravī, *Jāmī* (Tarḥ-i Naw, 1999), 22.

2. Māyil Haravī, *Jāmī*, 29.

3. *Ibid*, 30.

4. «پیر توحید شیخ محیی الدین، آفتاب سپهر کشف و یقین» Nūr ad-Dīn 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Aḥmad Jāmī, *Mathnawī-i Haft Awrang*, vol. 1, ed. Aṣghar Jānfidā et al., with A'lā Khān Afṣahzād (Markaz-i Muṭāla'āt-i Īrānī : Daftar-i Nashr-i Mīrāth-i Maktūb, 1997), Bk 2: Line 4485.



Jāmī's Haft Awrang, entitled *Silsilat al-Dhahab*, will be analyzed, in addition to selected sections of his commentaries on both the *Naqsh al-Fuṣūṣ* and the *Fuṣūṣ al-Hikam*. I will examine the multifaceted relationship between “influence” and “influenced” through ontological, anthropological, and societal lenses. The definition of “influence” varies in each mode of existence, or as *Ibn al-'Arabī* puts it, across the different ‘presences’. Nevertheless, what may be stated in universal terms is that at each level of existence or presence, there is an actor (the influencer) and a receiver (the influenced). Within this relation, one role is active (construed in traditional symbolic terms as masculine), whereas the other is receptive (construed as feminine). This ever-occurrent cycle of ‘cause’ and ‘effect’ is not only vital for understanding Ibn al-'Arabī's mystical ontological vision, but also essential for grasping the reciprocal relationship between man, the world, and God. The concept of ‘influence’ is particularly necessary in the context of the modern world, in which the Sacred has been substantially marginalized. In order to fulfill the created role of the man—described as existing “in His Image”¹—Shaykh al-Akbar and his followers, including Jāmī, argue that we must safeguard our spiritual and material intakes so as to remain receptive to the Divine. Thus, by considering the notion of spiritual and material ‘influence’, Jāmī follows Ibn al-'Arabī's vision in portraying the aforementioned principle's pertinence to the assertion of man's lofty stature on earth.

Ontology: The Five Presences

The Five Presences constitute a well-established concept in Akbarian ontology. It should be noted, however, that it was not until al-Qunawī (d. 673/1274) and al-Faraghānī (d. 699/1300) that this doctrine was systematically classified into individual presences.² The Five Presences, as conventionally formulated, comprise: 1) the First and Second Entification; 2) the Realm of the Intellect; 3) the Realm of the Imaginal; 4) the Realm of the Material; and 5) the Perfect Man.³ The notion of ‘influence’ is witnessed with particular clarity in the Second Entification, or *wahīdīyah*. Jāmī notes in his *Naqd al-Nuṣūṣ* that at this level of existence, there are “influential acts,” which are also referred to as divinity (*ulūhīyah*).⁴ He elaborates that the Second Entification is the origin and source of both the very nature of influence and the condition of being influenced. Al-wahīdīyah is understood as a gradation of existence that encompasses the Divine Names (*asmā'*) and the immutable entities (*a'yān al-thābitah*). As the Names exercise their power of influence, the immutable entities function as their recipients; the Names are active, whereas the entities are passive. A similar pattern may be observed across the subsequent realms or gradations of existence. For instance, the immutable entities exert influence over the Realm of the Intellect, while the Realm of the Intellect is, in turn, influential with respect to the Imaginal Realm. Where one acts, the other receives. In essence, every atom is a participant in this ongoing affair of giving and receiving. Yet, this is merely through a relative lens. Ultimately, God alone is the true influencer, as it is said that “no being is influential other than God.”⁵ In this view, and one consonant with Ibn al-'Arabī's unity of being, the Divine is the source of all causality and influence, and the sole truly active agent. Jāmī illustrates this unity in his poetry:

1. «خَلَقَ اللَّهُ آدَمَ عَلَى صُورَتِهِ»

Muḥammad ibn Ismā'īl al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī, Kitāb al-Istidhān, Bāb Bad'i al-Salām*, no.6227, and Muḥammad Bin Ali Ibn Bābawayh, *Al-Tawhid Ṣadūq* (Jamā'ah al-Mudarisin Fi al-Hawza al-'Ilmiyyah Bī Qum, 152.

2. William Chittick, “The Five Divine Presences: From A-Qunawi to Al-Qaysari,” *The Muslim World* 72 (1982): 107.

3. For further reading, refer to Jāmī's introduction in his *Naqd al-Nuṣūṣ Fi Sharḥ Naqsh Al-Fuṣūṣ*.

4. Nūr ad-Dīn 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Aḥmad Jāmī, *Naqd Al-Nuṣūṣ Fi Sharḥ Naqsh Al-Fuṣūṣ*, ed. Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī and William Chittick (Mu'asisah Pajuhishī Hikmat wa Falsafah Irān, 2003), 39.

5. لا موثر في الوجود الا الله

For further study, refer to, Ghulām Ḥusayn Ibrāhīmī-Dīnānī, *Ghawā'id Kulī Falsafī Dar Falsafah-i Islāmī* (Pazhūhishgāh-i 'Ulūm-i Insānī va Muṭāla'āt-i Farhangī, 2001).



«وز پی آن حقایق مذکور، آمد از موطن بطون به ظهور
گر چه بودند باطن اندر ذات، ظاهر ذات بود چون مرآت
عکس باطن نمود در ظاهر، گشت امکان وجوب را ساتر
واجب از عکس صورت باطن، منصیغ شد به صبیغ هر ممکن
متعدد به پیش چشم شهود، بود واحد به ذات لیک نمود»¹

“From the mentioned truths²,
the inner abodes were manifested.
Though concealed within the Essence,
Like a mirror, it was revealed.
The interior forms appeared as exterior,
Contingency’s guise veiled Necessity.³
The interior images of the Necessary,
were adorned in each contingent’s color.
Appearing numerous to the observing gaze,
Yet one in Essence, myriad in display.”

Elsewhere Jāmī alludes to the ḥadīth of the “Hidden Treasure”⁴ and writes,

«چیسست آن گنج، گنج ذات خدا، وان جواهر، جواهر اسما
بود اسما نهفته اندر ذات، شد عیان از ظهور موجودات
داشت اسما جمال پنهانی، لیکن از رتبه‌های امکانی
شد ز یک جلوه آن جمال نهان، ظاهر اندر مظاهر امکان
هر جمال و کمال فرخنده، که بود در جهان پراکنده

1. Nūr al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Jāmī, in *Mathnawī-i Haft Awrang*, ed. Murtaẓā Mudarris Gīlānī (Kitābfurūshī Sa’ādī, 1972), 70.

2. In its preceding verses, Jāmī references the second entification, which in this case are the “mentioned truths”.

3. Jāmī employs philosophical terminology in this poem, invoking necessity (wājib) or the Necessary Being (wājib al-wujūd) and contingency (imkān) or contingent being (mumkin al-wujūd). In Islamic philosophy, the Divine is understood as the ultimate Necessity, whose existence depends on nothing beyond itself. All other beings, by contrast, are regarded as contingent, insofar as their existence is dependent upon another.

4. «كنت كنزاً مخفياً فأحببت أن أعرف فخلقت الخلق لكي أعرف.» "I was a Hidden Treasure and loved to be known. Therefore, I created the Creation that I might be known."



پرتو آن کمال دان و جمال، بهر تفصیل رتبه اجمال
 صفت علم را ببین مثلاً، جلوه گر در مجالی علما
 علم حق ست کامدست پدید، لیکن اندر مراتب تقیید^۱

“What is that treasure? The treasure of God’s own Essence.
 And those jewels? The jewels of the Names.
 The Names lay hidden in the Essence,
 then shone forth in the manifestation of creation.
 The Names possessed a secret Beauty,
 yet through the ranks of contingency,
 that hidden Beauty, in a single gleam,
 appeared in the mirrors of possibility.
 Every blessed beauty, every radiant perfection
 scattered throughout the world—
 know it as a ray of that Beauty and Perfection,
 unfolded in detail from the gathered whole.²
 Behold, for example, the attribute of Knowledge,
 Manifested in the display of the savant.
 It is the Knowledge of the Real made manifest,
 yet clothed in degrees of limitation.”

In explicating the Unity of Being, Jāmī offers the Divine Attribute of “knowledge” (*ilm*) as an illustrative example. Referring to a Qur’ānic verse, he states that the human slate is, in reality, unwritten, and that it is the Divine who inscribes upon it any and all forms of knowledge. He further maintains that the knowledge granted to scholars is, in essence, nothing other than Divine Knowledge, albeit delimited within the conditions of the material world. This illustration may be extended to any of the Divine Names or Attributes, and thus serves as corroboration for the earlier claim that God alone is the exclusive exerciser of influence.

In Qur’ānic vocabulary, the world is comprised of the ‘seen’ (*shahādah*) and the ‘unseen’ (*ghayb*). Within the framework of the Five Presences, the unseen may be identified with the first two entifications, whereas the seen encompasses the remaining subsequent realms. In different terminology, the two initial entifications—constituting the first presence—are characterized as ‘real’ or ‘divine’ (*haqqī*), whereas the remaining realms are regarded as ‘created’ (*khalqī*). It is crucial to recognize, however, that influence may emanate from any mode of existence to another. Accordingly, there are circumstances in which individuals are influenced by the unseen, while in other instances influence originates in the seen. The principal intermediary between man and the unseen is the Third Presence, or the Imaginal Realm. Within this realm, the soul (*nafs*) not only receives from the divine realms but also absorbs imprints from the material world. It therefore becomes imperative for the soul to remain attentive to its daily sensory inputs, while simultaneously engaging in purification (*tazkīyah*), so as to render itself receptive to the inflow from the wellsprings of the Divine. Jāmī explains,

«وانچه باشد حواس ازان قاصر، هست بر اهل کشف بس ظاهر

1. Nūr al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Rahmān Jāmī, *Mathnawī-i Haft Awrang*, ed. Murtażā Mudarris Gilānī (Kitābforūshī Sa’dī, 1972), 69.

2. Referring to the first entification that does not hold any type of differentiation.



موطنش عالم مثال بود، آلت سمع آن خیال بود

گردد از سمع باطن آن مفهوم، سمع ظاهر بود ازان محروم¹

“What lies beyond the reach of the senses
is wholly clear to the folk of unveiling.
Its dwelling is the imaginal realm,
and imagination is the ear by which it is heard.
That meaning is grasped through inward hearing;
the outward ear is deprived of it.”

The poem's opening line maintains a direct connection to the preceding discussion of the seen and the unseen. Jāmī explains that although what is deemed unseen to the outward senses remains imperceptible externally, it is nonetheless manifest to those endowed with inner vision. He further notes that the faculty corresponding to the imaginal realm (*mundus imaginalis*) is the imagination. In this state, the ear becomes an active conduit for the soul's imaginative activity, thereby underscoring the importance of vigilant attention to one's sensory intake. It is also essential to recognize that the contiguous imagination (*khayāl muttaṣil*) enables reception from the material domain—for example, through audition—whereas the discontinuous imagination (*khayāl munfaṣil*) is implicated in receiving from the intelligible realm. Jāmī elaborates,

«هر چه آید فروز عالم جان، قالبی باشدش در آن میدان

وانچه بالا رود ز عالم گل، صورتی یابد اندر آن منزل²»

“All that descends from the spirit's domain,
Bears a mold in its respective terrain.
That which ascends from the earthy clay,
Adopts a form in the realm it displays.”

It should be noted that Ibn al-'Arabī refers to the imaginal realm as the heart (*qalb*)³, a designation that reflects its isthmus-like (*barzakhī*) character. It is through the very existence of the imaginal that the material order is able to sustain a relation with the spiritual. Whatever descends to the soul possesses both form and origin in the realm, or 'presence', that precedes it, while whatever occurs in the lower world likewise impresses a corresponding form upon the imaginal. The importance of the human being within this reciprocal cycle of influence derives from his status as the “vicegerent on earth” (*khalīfatallāh*)⁴. Created in the image of the Divine, man encompasses within himself all presences or modes of existence. It is through this inherent affinity (*sinkh*) between the material and the spiritual that man possesses the capacity both to exert influence and to be influenced across diverse planes. Jāmī explains,

1. Jāmī, *Mathnawī-i Haft Awrang*, 56–57.

2. Ibid.

3. Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn al-'Arabī, *Al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyyah* (Dār Ṣādir, 1968), 313.

4. *Qur'ān* 6:165.

“He is the One Who has placed you as successors on earth and elevated some of you in rank over others, so He may test you with what He has given you. Surely your Lord is swift in punishment, but He is certainly All-Forgiving, Most Merciful.”



«آدمی چیست برزخی جامع، صورت خلق و حق در او واقع
 نسخه مجمل است و مضمونش، ذات حق و صفات بیچونش
 متصل با دقایق جبروت، مشتمل بر حقایق ملکوت
 باطنش در محیط وحدت غرق، ظاهرش خشک لب به ساحل فرق
 یک صفت نیست از صفات خدا، که نه در ذات او بود پیدا
 هم علیم است و هم سمیع و بصیر، متکلم مرید و حی و قدیر
 همچنین از حقایق عالم، همه چیزی بود در او مدغم
 خواهی افلاک و خواهی ارکان گیر. خواه کان یا نبات و حیوان گیر
 صورت نیک و بد نوشته در او، سیرت دیو و دد سرشته در او
 گرنه مرآت وجه باقی بود، از چه رو شد فرشته را مسجود
 بود عکس جمال حضرت پاک، اگر ابلیس پی نبرد چه باک
 هر چه در گنج کنت کنز نهان، بود، در وی خدا نمود عیان
 خلق را در ظهور پیدایی، هستی اوست علت غایی
 زانکه عرفان بود سبب آن را، و اوست مظهر کمال عرفان را»¹

“What is man? An all-embracing isthmus,
 where creation and the Real are both made present.
 A comprehensive book—and its inner meaning:
 God’s Essence and His inimitable Attributes.
 Joined to the subtleties of the Realm of Power ²,
 containing the realities of the Angelic Dominion.
 Inwardly drowned in the ocean of Unity,
 outwardly parched on the shore of separation.
 Not one Attribute of God exists,
 that doesn’t show its trace in him.
 He mirrors the Knower, the Hearer, and the Seer—
 the Speaker, the Willer, the Ever-Living, the All-Powerful.
 And likewise, the realities of the world,
 all of them are enfolded in him.
 From celestial spheres to elements,
 from mineral and plant to every living creature.
 The script of good and ill is written in him,

1. Jāmī, *Mathnawī-i Haft Awrang*, 68.

2. In sufi cosmology there are five realms named respectively: *nāsūt*, *malakūt*, *jabarūt*, *lāhūt*, *hāhūt*.



the temper of demon and beast is kneaded into him.
If he were not the mirror of the Abiding Face,
why would the angels bow in prostration?¹
He is the reflection of the Pure Presence's beauty,
if Iblīs did not grasp it, what matter?
Whatever lay hidden in "I was a Hidden Treasure",
God made manifest in him, unveiled to sight.
In creation's coming-into-appearance,
his very being is the final cause.
for gnosis is the reason for that unveiling,
and he is the locus where gnosis reaches perfection."²

As noted above, the sole influencer is the Divine; nevertheless, the Perfect Man—having actualized all that has been bestowed upon him—assumes an analogous role in this context, albeit only by God's permission (*idhn-Allāh*). The Perfect Man bears the totality of the Divine Names and Attributes, and thus the universe falls under his possession and influence.² Jāmī illustrates this claim by emphasizing that man was the ultimate purpose of creation, and that the entirety of the cosmos was manifested for his sake alone.

«آخرین نقطه عین اول شد، به وی این دایره مکمل شد،
مصحفی گشت جامع آیات، هستی اش غایت همه غایات».³

"Through him the circle closes, whole,
the last point meets the first.
A scripture holding all the signs⁴,
his being the end toward which all ends aspire."

As the imaginal plane serves as a bridge between the material and the spiritual, the Perfect Man functions as the intermediary between Divine Reality and creation. Through the Perfect Man, the operation of the 'acting agent', or the efficacious 'influence of the Names', is actualized. It is therefore unsurprising that Jāmī likens one who has attained such a lofty station to the philosopher's stone or the *sīmurgh*⁵, —both rare realities, concealed from the public eye. He states,

«همچنین هر که از زمین و بال، نکشیدست سر باوج کمال»

1. *Qur'ān* 2:34. "And 'remember' when We said to the angels, "Prostrate before Adam,"¹ so they all did—but not Iblīs,² who refused and acted arrogantly,³ becoming unfaithful."

2. *Qur'ān*, 45:13. "And He has subjected to you whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth - all from Him. Indeed in that are signs for a people who give thought."

3. Jāmī, *Mathnawī-i Haft Awrang*, 70–71.

4. One must note that *muṣḥaf* also is a reference often made to the *Qur'ān*. In this case, a beautiful imagery is provided of the *Qur'ān* and its *āyāt*, or verse. This can also imply the allusion that the Perfect Man is one who is a 'walking Qur'ān'.

5. A legendary bird in Persian mythology which can also be translated as phoenix.



چون گیاه فتاده بر خاک است، نام مردم برونه ز ادراکست
 مگر از تاب علم و آب عمل، همه احوال او شود مبدل
 گردد ازوی صفات نقصان گم، چون گیاه که میشود گندم
 شود اندر خدای همواره، چون غذا محو در غذا خواره
 بر بنی نوع خود شود فایق، آنکه این اسم را بود لایق
 لیک گر بازجویی آن انسان، که بود فعل و سیرتش این سان
 یابیش زیر گنبد دولاب، همچو سیمرغ و کیما نایاب»^۱

“Likewise, whoever—though sprung from earth and given wings,
 has not lifted his head to the summit of perfection.
 Lies like a plant fallen flat upon the dust:
 “man” is his name, yet not by right of understanding².
 Unless, by the sun-heat of knowledge and the water of deeds,
 all his states are wholly transformed.
 Till every mark of deficiency is lost in him,
 as a wild green stalk is changed into wheat.
 Then he abides in God unceasingly,
 as food is effaced within the one who eats.
 He rises above his own kind³,
 the one who is truly worthy of this name.
 But if you go in search of such a human,
 whose acts and inward way are truly so.
 You’ll find him under the wheeling dome of heaven,
 as rare as the Sīmurgh, as scarce as alchemy’s elixir.”

On the one hand, Jāmī repeatedly emphasizes the necessity of recognizing the human being’s worth and significance; on the other, he draws attention to the metaphor he employs for the soul’s spiritual growth and ascent. He maintains that it is through the integration of knowledge (*ilm*) and action (*amal*) that one may truly attain the lofty station of perfection. As the human being refines the soul through knowledge, he thereby actualizes the latent divine characteristics within his own nature. One who has thus actualized his constitution both receives from the Divine and acts for the Divine. Accordingly, building upon the preceding discussion of the Five Presences and their interrelationship in terms of influence, at the Fifth Presence, the

1. Jāmī, *Mathnawī-i Haft Awrang*, 74–75.

2. In this hemistich, Jāmī writes that when one falls to the ground like an unhealthy plant, one is not recognized or named for one’s cognitive abilities. In Islamic philosophy, man is defined as *hayawān al-nāṭiq*, an animal endowed with speech. That which distinguishes man from other creatures is one’s cognition and ultimately one’s encompassment of knowledge, and particularly those relating to the religious sciences.

3. *Banī Ādam*, or the children of Adam is a widespread term in the *Qur’ān* in reference to the logical definition (*now*) of man.



Perfect Man becomes—by divine leave—the influencer of the entire created world (*khalq*).

Anthropology: Man and his Environment

Achieving the station of viceregency entails a practical prescription grounded in an understanding of one's constitution or temperament (*mizāj*). As noted in the section on imagination, the faculties serve as points of entry to the soul. In ancient medicine, the subtle body—composed of the four elements—gives rise to four constitutions¹, each of which shapes the manner in which the soul receives, responds, and acts. One of the aims of the religious law is to establish and preserve a stable, balanced temperament and harmony of humors. Since every action leaves an effect, it is held that with each unlawful or sinful act the soul becomes tarnished. Yet the roots of the humors are traced back to one's conception. The question of spiritual influence upon the material plane becomes especially evident in the fifteenth chapter of the *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*, where Ibn al-'Arabī discusses the nature of Jesus's conception. Ibn al-'Arabī states that Jesus was conceived through the "water" of Mary and the "moisture" of the imagined breath of Gabriel.² Gabriel's imaginal mediation thus contributed to Jesus's spiritual constitution, endowing him with the capacity to restore life to the deceased. Jāmī comments on this chapter by cautioning that one must not misconstrue the aptitude and purity of the Holy Spirit, for it is timeless and placeless. Accordingly, the spirit's influence upon a given entity corresponds to that entity's temperament: it is the recipient's constitution that determines its disposition toward receiving the formless.³ Commentators on the *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam* thus emphasize that if there is deficiency, the fault lies not in the spirit's endowment, but in the latent condition of the recipient. For instance, "Had he blown [his spirit] into her at that moment, Jesus would have turned out too surely for any to bear, because of his mother's state. When he said to her, I am only a messenger of your Lord, come to give you a pure boy, her anxiety subsided and she relaxed. It was at that moment that he blew Jesus into her."⁴ In this case, Mary's distress would have influenced, and been transmitted to, her child, thereby depicting the reciprocal relationship between body, psyche, and soul. Jāmī explicitly notes that the mother's state, and that of the parents more generally, has a direct impact upon the child's psyche and physique.

Jāmī proceeds to examine the reciprocal influences of souls and the ways in which such influences may cultivate or corrupt one's temperament, and thereby affect one's state and capacity to receive divine succor. In numerous poems, he reiterates the importance of choosing righteous companions, likening a deceitful friend to a snake, in close resonance with the Qur'ānic image, "the day the wrongdoer will bite his hands."⁵ Jāmī counsels his audience to be attentive to their environment and companionship, for each soul, relative to its latent potential for viceregency, possesses the ability to influence another. In one poem, he addresses participants in congregational prayer, asserting that if even one person among those present in

1. The four constitutions are hot, cold, moist, and dry. The equilibrium of the individual's elemental combination results in that individual's constitution or temperament. As elemental balance maintains an individual's health, temperament can also result in the suffering or beneficence of an individual. In Avicennian medicine, the temperament composes the humors (*akhlāt*) which characterizes an individual's physical, mental, and social state. The humors are named: blood, phlegm, yellow bile, and black bile. However, it should be noted that *mizāj* is usually in reference to the humors in such discourse.

2. Nūr al-Dīn 'Abd al-Rahmān Jāmī, *Sharḥ Al-Jāmī 'alā Fuṣūṣ Al-Ḥikam* (Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyah, 2004), 329.

3. Jāmī, *Naqd Al-Nuṣūṣ Fī Sharḥ Naqsh Al-Fuṣūṣ*, 216.

4. Ibn al-'Arabī and R. W. J. Austin, *The Bezels of Wisdom*, The Classics of Western Spirituality (Paulist Press, 1980), 175.

5. *Qur'ān*, 25:27.



the mosque is a Perfect Man, he will affect every soul in attendance. Indeed, Jāmī argues that this is precisely the significance of communal prayer. He says,

«یک نماز از همه شود حاصل، که به میزان دین بود کامل
کامل ار نبود آن بود بی شک، که بود بیش فضلش از هر یک
اثر آن به همگان برسد، چون اثرهای فیض جان به جسد
همه زان فیض زندگی یابند، ذوق آداب بندگی یابند
شود از همدلی و همکاری، ذوق هر یک به دیگران ساری
پیش روشن دلان نیک خصال، هست روشن سرایت احوال»¹

“From all, one prayer is rendered whole,
and on religion’s balance deemed most perfect.²
Though others fall short of fullness, without doubt,
it is that one³ whose grace overflows them all.
His influence reaches every soul,
as spirit’s streaming bounty quickens flesh.
By that same grace they find new life,
and taste the courtesies of servanthood.
Through heart-concord and shared endeavor,
each one’s savor passes into the next.
And to clear-eyed hearts of noble nature,
the contagion of states is bright and evident.”

Although influence may be fruitful and constructive, it can also assume negative and deleterious forms. For instance, ‘Ubayd-allāh Aḥrār remarks in one of his letters that even a single individual in a spiritually deprived state can affect the collective condition of those around him, even while seated afar.⁴ Aḥrār therefore counsels his disciples to avoid such individuals—a principle that Jāmī likewise follows. Elsewhere, in the *Silsilat al-Dhahab*, Jāmī narrates a story from Sa‘d al-Dīn Kāshgharī (d. 860/1456), his primary initiator into the Naqshbandīyyah order,

«گفت ناقل که این حدیث بلند، در من انکار گونه‌ای افکند
زید را طبع منحرف گردد، چون به تب عمر و متصف گردد
می‌زند بر دماغ بکر بخار، چون ز خالد برد صداع قرار
بود با من رفیق خبازی، در خلا و ملا هم آوازی
آتش انداخت در تنور سحر، شعله آن زد از درونم سر

1. Jāmī, *Mathnawī-i Haft Awrang*, 163.

2. There are numerous narrations and prophetic sayings on the importance and superiority of communal prayer.

3. The Perfect Man.

4. ‘Ubayd-allāh Aḥrār, *Ahwāl Wa Sukhanān Khwaja ‘Ubayd-Allāh Aḥrār* (Markaz Nashr Dānishgāhī, 2001), 276.



چون دهان تنور او آتش، از دهانم زبانه می زد خوش
آتش او چو شعله زد از من، سخن پیر شد مرا روشن
که تواند که حالت دگری، کند اندر کس دگر اثری¹

“The transmitter said: “This long discourse,
cast in me a contrary turn.
Zayd’s temperament turns awry,
when he is marked with ‘Amr’s fever.
A vapor strikes Bakr’s brain,
when Khālīd’s headache comes to rest.
I had a baker for a friend,
in solitude and in the crowd, we were of one accord.
At dawn he fed the oven fire,
its flame rose up from within my own chest.
When the mouth of his oven was all flame,
from my own mouth a bright tongue leapt out, delighted.
When his fire thus flared through me,
the Elder’s saying became clear.
that one man’s state can work an effect,
and leave its trace—within another.”

Jāmī’s incorporation of such tales highlights the significance he accords to this theme. In the final verse, he reminds his audience that what ought to be retained above all is the recognition that every being possesses the capacity to influence another.

Conclusion

In view of the Five Presences, the ever-present principle of ‘influence’ and ‘influenced’ may be depicted in a multilayered fashion. Yet what is most important for the contemporary individual is to recognize the necessity of observing one’s intakes—whether spiritual or material—in order to maintain a fertile ground for growth and ascension. Jāmī portrays the soul as a garden and advises that one must attend carefully to the seeds that are planted within it. If the soul is tarnished through one’s environment, companions, and sensual intakes, one ultimately impedes the manifold effusions of divinity.

Thus, at an ontological level, one must grasp the power and influence of the Divine Names across the modes of existence. One must also remain attentive to the descent of Divine Beneficence and cultivate receptivity to its bestowal. At an anthropological level, one must recognize the vital role of the Perfect Man on earth. In order to benefit from such viceregency, one must engage in constant reflection upon one’s environment and interactions so as to ensure that the soul remains aligned with its destined state. On a societal level, it is vital to sustain relationships with companions who uplift the spirit, and to remain seekers in the quest to discover one’s true worth and purpose.

In summary, the profound influence of Ibn al-‘Arabī on ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Jāmī emerges as a rich tapestry woven from intellectual, spiritual, and poetic threads. Jāmī’s steadfast commitment to defending and disseminating Akbarian doctrine—particularly within the Herat Timurid court—underscores the enduring impact of Ibn al-‘Arabī’s teachings on Jāmī’s intellectual

1. Jāmī, *Mathnawī-i Haft Awrang*, 163–64.



pursuits. Through both poetry and prose, Jāmī not only extols Shaykh al-Akbar’s virtues but also engages the intricacies of his doctrines, especially the principle of ‘influence’ and ‘being influenced’. The close analysis of this relationship, as reflected in Jāmī’s *Silsilat al-Dhahab* and *Naqd al-Nusūs*, yields a nuanced account of the interconnectedness between the two figures. Ibn al-‘Arabī’s legacy, vividly refracted through Jāmī’s writings, extends beyond the confines of their respective eras, leaving an indelible mark on Islamic mysticism and intellectual discourse. As Jāmī navigates the domains of ontology and anthropology, the enduring echo of Ibn al-‘Arabī’s influence continues to resonate, emphasizing the lasting relevance of their spiritual dialogue and its impact on the trajectory of Islamic thought. Additionally, the timeless and vital lessons embedded in such works merit careful consideration. The question of influence is not an archaic topic devoid of value in contemporary times; rather, it may be even more urgent and crucial as an object of sustained contemplation.

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