

## Sacred History and the Inner Life

### Opening/Introduction

We begin in the name of the divine, God, Allah, most merciful and compassionate

I like to present some themes of this unit that I am teaching, inspired by Pir Zia's teaching on creation

Let's start with the idea of Big history concept, **IMAGE #1** "Big History"

Here for educators—is presented the idea of reaching beyond human history or even pre-history to the origination of the cosmos

So we have been reminded in this seminar of the myths that have been—including themes such as the masculine /feminine, yin/ and yang, androgyny

We also reviewed the transition from hunters and gatherers to agriculturalists, and from the shamans to the axial age

**IMAGE #2** (Divine feminine, androgynous, the animal kingdom)

But in terms of the inner or sacred history of the worlds /our reach in this gathering stretches even beyond to the process of origination and I will present two main themes today

- 1) the process of creation
- 2) the World of Images 'alam al-mithāl

I'd like to Read a quote from Hazrat Inayat Khan

The life of the universe in all its workings is entirely dependent upon the law of tone and rhythm. The pure consciousness has, so to speak, gradually limited itself more and more by entering into the external

vehicles, such as the mind and the body, in order to be conscious of something; for the joy of everything is experienced when it is tried.

The first state of manifestation of the consciousness is of a collective nature, in other words a **universal spirit**, not individual.

*There is a saying of a dervish, "God slept in the mineral kingdom, dreamed in the vegetable kingdom, awakened in the animal kingdom, and realized Himself in the human race."*<sup>1</sup>

Therefore the ultimate aim of the eternal Consciousness in undertaking a journey to the plane of mortality [The Adam story--upcoming] is to realize its eternal being. [The Hidden Treasure—already referred to by Pir Zia]

“Manifestation” and the Phenomenon of the soul

What Sufism offers, and Pir Zia mentioned Ibn Arabi, Rumi, and Shah Wali Allah as among our guides to sacred history—is a spiritual humanism, an appreciation of the individual purpose as part of a cosmic adventure of disclosure.

Rumi poem of the flute

And the Inayatiyya teachings of HI Khan “the message in our time” remind of a saying of an academic scholar of comparative religion—W Cantwell Smith

It sometimes goes unnoticed in the West, that most Westerners have long since traded in their soul for a self, a considerably more individualistic and mundane, indeed isolate and self-centered concept; and in recent decades even that seem to be giving way to an identity, rather-except that no one seems to have an identity: it would appear to be something that we are all supposedly in search of.<sup>2</sup> Wilfred Cantwell Smith

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<sup>1</sup> Masnavi 3901 I died to the mineral state and became a plant; I died to the vegetable state and reached animality; I died to the animal state and became a man; then what should I

<sup>2</sup> Wilfred Cantwell Smith and John Burbridge, *Modern Culture from a Comparative Perspective* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1997), 96.

Followed by elaboration on the Soul, self, and identity

On the soul mention the levels of the nafs—mineral, physical, vegetal, animal—the struggle within multiplicity—from conflict towards balance

On the self—tell the walnut story—to illustrate the perspectives of ego psychology (shoring up the outer shell) as the purpose of the nut vs. planting the walnut

Al-Ghalazi and the levels of the nut—from shell (shari'a), to kernel (tariqa), to the essence (haqqiqa)

## **Images and Myths of Creation**

Multiple images of creation in the Qur'an

1) Day of alast (Am I not your Lord)—ruz -e azal—day or moment of pre-eternity

Divine breath—spirit into Adam—recognition and remembrance, gathering of the souls

Certainty

What will be the mystery hidden behind the accomplishment of all desire in the next world to the earth-plane? Will power, with optimism. It is the conviction called *Yaqin* by the Sufis, that will be the guiding light on the path of the soul in the spiritual world. (HIK)

Witness-shuhud—we have witnessed to become the divine witness in manifestation.

And its fourth step is its conscious experience of life from the depth to its utmost height, which is called Shuhud, and this fulfills the purpose of all manifestation.

**Practice:**

**To celebrate the joy of our companionship I propose a practice**

Imagine that primordial gathering

Divine breath as spirit-- inhale and exhale

### **Some Aspects of Creation according to Sufis**

2. Creation out of nothing-- *ibda*- God 's command when he intends a thing is only to say: "be and it becomes"

"*kun fa yakun*"

from *azal* to *abad* pre-eternity to post-eternity—sacred history is both unfolding, manifesting between the two points and prefigured, remembered

2. 'amr—the divine command/*khalq*—ongoing material and causes—

the new creation— *khalq jadid*

"every day He is in a new state or mode" *kulla yaum huwa fi sha'n*

#### **Practice**

Ya Khaliq 33x 11 fikr

3. *tadalli*—the drawing near of divine guidance--prophetic

### **Verses from the Qur'an Sura 53**

By the star as it falls

Your companion has not lost his way nor is he deluded

He does not speak out of desire

This is a revelation

Taught to him by one of great power and strength that stretched out over

While on the furthest horizon

**Then it drew near and came down**

Two bows lengths or nearer

Both first revelation and the Night Journey—motif of decent—*nuzul*—and ascent

thumma danā fa tadallā  
fa kāna qāb-i qawsain au adna

Then it descended and drew near,  
until it was two bows lengths away or even nearer --the angel, the spirit of guidance

## **Part II The Intermediate Plane—‘alam al-mithal (the World of Images), barzakh, creative imagination**

Images, symbols myths

As a way of remembering, awakening and returning

Consciously or unconsciously, dreams, deep meditations

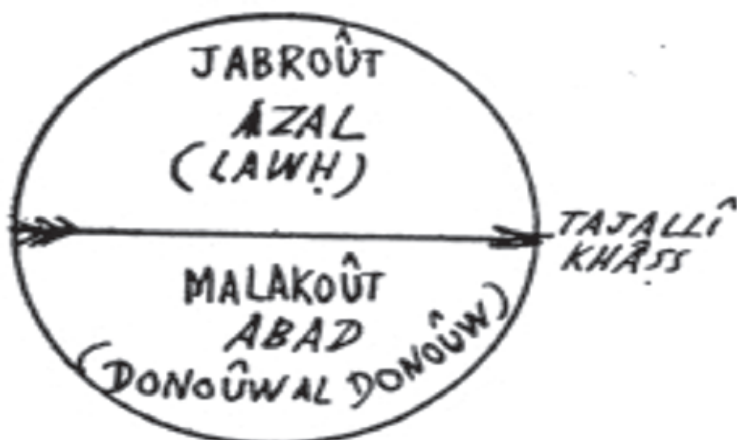
Creative Imagination—Ibn ‘Arabi—concentration—importance of the heart

### **‘Alam al-Mithal**

barzakh

Two bows length, that dynamic of the manifest and unmanifest, the eternal and the historical

**IMAGE #3** (history, the intermediate state, and the completed human being)—the two bows –  
the line between ‘amr and khalq



BAQLÎ (shatbiyât)  
(publ. ap Taw. p 84-86)

Sufi Teachings about the Prophetic Ideal (The Perfected Being—*insan al-kamil*)—and the line between the embodied world and the higher planes

Quote from the *Gayan* of Hazrat Inayat Khan

**Hail to my exile from the Garden of Eden to the earth! If I had not fallen, I should not have had the opportunity of probing the depths of life. p. 71**

Reference to Adam but also the entire human condition

### **Final Practice**

Reading from *Physicians of the Heart* on the meaning of *ya hayyu ya qayyum*

**Ya hayyo ya qayyum O Ever-Living O Self-Sustaining**

**Prayer Khatm**