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### IBN 'ARABI'S COGNITIVE THEORY\*

Ibn 'Arabi's cognitive theory does not represent a separate tractate of his work that would not be essentially related to everything calm in his work. Every segment of Ibn 'Arabi's thought is, in fact, organically coalesced with the complete content and every idea that runs in the semantic depths of his text. From the other side, it is not about the cognitive theory in the abstract sense of the word, with no essential influence to the life reality. On the contrary, Ibn 'Arabi's epistemology denotes the very centre of the whole spiritual existence and physical perseverance that goes on all levels of the Essence. It does not mark the theoretical conquest of spiritual stages, but, simultaneously, the most literal realisation of every form of the reached cognition. Ibn 'Arabi's epistemology leads every spiritual traveller (*Sālik*) into the very essence of Divine wisdom (*al-Ma'rifa* or *al-Ḥikma al-Ilāhiyya*). The wisdom does not only sanctify our spirit, but also effectuates our whole being, and by the strength of the eternal Divine Life (the *imitatio Prophetarum* way) brings it into the co-existence with God. Because, the spiritual traveller in his spiritual ascent towards the life-giving wisdom is not open to that wisdom with his intimacy, his soul, heart and mind, but also with his other physical senses, with the very depth and width of his being. Finally, the wisdom onto which Ibn 'Arabi's cognitive theory is focused seeks the whole human involvement, the complete uncovering of the human person, because it is the matter of the wisdom that engrosses and imbues all human psychophysical dimensions. In order to reach the well of eternal Divine wisdom, the spiritual traveller needs to remove the *dark* veil that covers the transparent clarity of the spirit, the veil that Ibn 'Arabi usually refers to as the *little* or *voluntary dying* (*al-Mawt al-Iḥtiyāriyy*) or sanctified dying.<sup>1</sup> It is reflected in an unbroken transfer from one spiritual stage of wisdom into another, because the advancement in the Divine wisdom includes implicitly a persistent spiritual growth of *Sālik*. That growth, according to Ibn 'Arabi, cannot be stopped in any moment, but it has to constantly follow the rhythm of indefinite self-declaration and self-realisation of the Divine essence in the world. Therefore, the sanctified dying includes implicitly a constant liberation from the lower spiritual cognition stage and an ascent to a higher spiritual stage, which can be clearly told from the etymology

\* See: "Ibn 'Arabijeva spoznajna teorija". In: *POF* 42-43/1992-93, Sarajevo, 1995, pp. 103-118.

<sup>1</sup> Ibn 'Arabī, *Al-Futūḥāt al-Makiyya*, II, Al-Qāhira, 1293 H., p. 187.

of the term *wisdom* or *gnosis* that the philosopher from Andalus uses in the sense of the term *Ma'rifa*. This term, namely, in its own semantic bottom absorbs the meaning of the verb *'araḥa* meaning an ascent to the climax. Hence, the gerund *Ma'rifa* which was derived from this verb, denotes one of the three quintessential dimensions of the Divine wisdom, besides the dimension of Love (*al-Maḥabba*) that drives *Sālik* towards the Loved One (*Maḥbūb*) and the dimension of inner Anxiety (*al-Maḥāfa*) which is felt by the traveller in his intimacy due to the direct Divine Presence or the presence of the Divine in the heart as *sacrosanct principle*.<sup>2</sup> Even though Islamic theology confronts the term *Ma'rifa* (Wisdom or Gnosis) with the term *'Ilm* (Cognition, knowledge), Ibn 'Arabi does not question the universal meaning to the latter, because it is used to denote one of the Divine properties of wisdom. However, he prefers using the former, i.e. *Ma'rifa*, since that term, unlike Love and Anxiety which are used to denote the state of spirit, denotes far more than plain state of mind. It, namely, denotes, in accordance to Ibn 'Arabi's epistemology, a realisation of the existential identification of the person who became cognisant of or the Gnostic (*'Ārif*). That person is a spiritual traveller towards the well of the Divine Wisdom (*Sālik*), with the object of cognition that is nothing else but the Divine Reality itself. So to the philosopher from Andalus, the true Gnostic, who denotes the final arrival (of *Sālik*) to the well of the Divine Wisdom, in its final spiritual realisation denotes a person who directly stands before the *Face of God*. In this spiritual stage 'Ārif is a true mirror in which the *Face of God* is reflected in the light of absolute perfection. The Divine Wisdom, eternal and inexhaustible, in its absolute, indefinite and perfect fullness represents, on the level of *Above-Essence* or the *Absolute Absolute*, only one of the principle, heavenly profiles of the Face of God. In its highest spiritual stage it is undisputed, out-of-person like or unpersonal and nameless as the very Divine Essence itself, with which is in total natural harmony. But it does not mean that wisdom (*Hikma*), accounted for by Ibn 'Arabi's epistemology, is nameless and unpersonal on its every existential level. On the contrary, in the immeasurable horizons of *Revelation* it has very recognisable images and completely understandable names as the very divine Essence itself that is self-revealed in the multitude of emerging and disappearing hypostatic forms of the perceptive world. The most suitable evidences for the above-mentioned statement are possible to be found in, almost every segment of the comprehensive content of the fundamental Ibn 'Arabi's work *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*. The twenty-seven forms of the divine *Logos*, thoroughly considered by the philosopher from Andalus in that work, simultaneously express twenty-seven images and as many names of the eternal divine wisdom. Each of these names represent a separate nuance of the rainbow colours that pour out from the pure Light which is a synonym for the eternal divine Wisdom (*al-Ḥikma al-Lāduniyya*). Each colour, in re-

<sup>2</sup> T. Burckhardt, *Introduction aux doctrines ésotériques de l'Islam*, Paris, 1985, pp. 40-46; See: F. Scuhon, *Perspectives spirituelles et Faits humanis*, Paris, 1953.

lation to the pure Light, represents different spiritual steps which *Salik* walks up to the well of eternal wisdom. From the other side, each rainbow colour in the light of Revelation represents a veil of *Sālik's* path, that is, ranging from the non-transparent darkness of ignorance, which inarticulately condenses all nuances of the Light, to transparent and colourless purity of the heavenly Light. The tradition mentions seventy thousands veils of light and darkness, that is, as many of their nuances which divide *Sālik* from 'Ārif, the principle and Revelation, the Image and its Reflection in the Mirror (The Perfect Human), the Light and Shadow, the First and Last, the Visible and Invisible, etc. The name of the eternal wisdom in the revealed world is not only conditioned by its heavenly predetermination, but it is as equally conditioned by its recipient's spiritual stage or *Sālik*. It is him who makes real in himself, by a gradual veil revealing certain considerations of a permanent professed wisdom of the divine Image. Spiritual stages of the professed divine wisdom in the world are organised in accordance with the mentioned spiritual hierarchy of God's messengers and saints, who represent symbols *par excellence* of historically personalised meanings and respective considerations of the universal divine wisdom. Therefore, according to the mentioned spiritual hierarchy, the absolute divine wisdom emerges as transcendental in one aspect, as enlightening in another, and merciful, sacred, sole, powerful, non-breathing wisdom<sup>3</sup> in the third. Those are its heavenly names, whereas Ibn 'Arabi also mentions its earthly, specific, historical, personal names attributed after a person, a historical messenger character in which it is placed and personalised. As the colour of the Light is the colour of the plane it is broken up on, so the name of the divine wisdom, from a historical perspective, is conditioned by the name and content of the historical character in which a certain consideration of the divine wisdom is soothed and professed. There, that is the wisdom onto which Ibn 'Arabi's epistemology is focused.

But, before we engage in a more delicate analysis of Ibn 'Arabi's epistemology, that is, its inner structure, it is necessary to bear in mind a fact which can have a substantial purposefulness at the authentic comprehension, not of this segment only, but of the complete way of thinking of the Andalus philosopher.

Many analysts of Ibn 'Arabi's thoughts, especially the one presented in his spiritual epistemology tractate, prefer addressing to his epistemology or his cognitive theory as mere theosophy. The term itself is not questionable in interrelation with Ibn 'Arabi's way of thinking as a whole, but in interrelation with his cognitive theory in particular, especially if one bears in mind the fact that it is not a matter of theosophy as a sort of a modern pseudo-religion. Because, Ibn 'Arabi's theosophical epistemology denotes, first of all, a mystic teaching or a method of thinking which charges itself with a task of cognition and description of the mysterious way of God. Also, it needs to embed

<sup>3</sup> Ibn 'Arabī, *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*, al-Qāhira, 1309. H. Each of the twenty-seven chapters of his work confirms that theory by itself.

into man a strong belief in his own capability of absorbing of the Divine with unique contemplation intensity. It establishes a sort of divine emanation with which God sobers up a spiritual traveller and with the power of divine mercy brings him into mysterious depths within divine life which mysterious moving is substantially reflected within the unbroken divine self-revelation in the world *per modum creationis*. Accordingly, Ibn 'Arabi's epistemology is in its one consideration significantly set up as *Sophia perennis* (*Al-Ḥikma al-Lāduniyya*) which questions, establishes and defines ontological principles of the divine Wisdom, and in another consideration it is thoroughly set up in as *Religio perennis*, which, with a method of persistent initiation within the secret of the divine life, tries to make serious and efficient within historical everyday life all truths of the highest metaphysical order and all eternal patterns of the inexhaustible divine wisdom (*Sapientia perennis*). In this way his epistemology achieves two important purposes. From one side, it secures, on a purely sapiential level, a permanent spiritual interaction of the Divine and human and vice versa, thus interpreting utterly transcendent principles into recognisable forms of everyday human language and practice. From the other side, it secures, on a purely existential level, a permanent existential binding and interaction or interpretation of the professed divine order into the principal one, the historical into metahistorical one, the profane into the holy one, *Religio perennis* into *Sophia perennis*.<sup>4</sup>

The sources of Ibn 'Arabi's epistemology are of divine and human nature, which can be best seen from the very cognitive shapes from which the spiritual cloth of his cognitive theory is woven. Firstly, one should mention the revealed holy text of the divine Message (Qur'an), the God-inspired, competent and point-directing text of words (Hadith) and by divine will standardised life action (*Sunna*) of the messengers of Islam (a.s.). Then, the live experience of the *Messenger's Friends* (*Ashāb*) and first four rulers (*Ḥulafā' ar-Rašidīn*), the sacred and just life of great Sufi characters and holy persons from the spiritual history of Islam (*al-Awliyā'*); the historical and cultural-civilisation achievement that assume a complete and authentic continuity of earthly tradition in its constitutive (*Traditia Constitutiva*) as well as in its interpretative (*Traditia Interpretativa*) genius, not thinking of the earthly experience in its transcendent unity, but also of the dissected historical multitude of traditional forms of the eternal divine Wisdom. Finally, along with the above-mentioned sources one should also include an everyday experience practice of the living community of the faithful ones (*Umma*), all human psycho-physical senses, with a particular stress on human intimacy, as well as the living personal mystical experience of the Andalus philosopher whose personal genius was an unbrokenly exposed to the influence of various forms of divine and human experience. It should also be mentioned that the heavenly and metahistorical sources are primary sources of Ibn 'Arabi's epistemology, whereas the human or historical ones are secondary cognition

<sup>4</sup> F. Schuon, *Racines de la condition humaine*, Paris, 1990, p. 133-151.

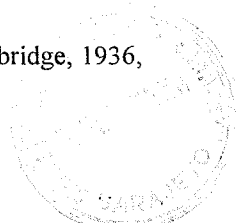
sources.<sup>5</sup> But, the both are sufficiently embraced by unique rules and methods of Ibn 'Arabi's spiritual hermetism (*Ta'wīl*) which starts to screen every fact of faith from a historical experience standpoint and utterly surface language form standpoint, with permanent aspiration towards the deepest penetrations to the mysterious, inner-holy, metahistorical and metalanguage. Because, its hermetism actually wants to have all the levels of the Essence, as well as its considerations, both principal and professed, returned to its sources and beginnings, which the name *Ta'wīl* means by itself.

The primary and secondary characteristics of the sources of Ibn 'Arabi's epistemology are not established solely on the basis of imperative and contingent forms of cognition,<sup>6</sup> that is, established on the basis of cognition that constitutes certain stages of the total Truth and the one that interprets them according to the settled rules of language and human belief. But, the above-mentioned characteristics of the sources can also be established according to the mathematical pattern of the divine vertical and horizontal or the metaphysical vertical and historical horizontal. The content of Ibn 'Arabi's works, namely, proves that some cognition of the Andalus philosopher are conditioned by so called *historical* sources or sources belonging to the epistemological horizontal, which is unquestionably vivid by the perfectly integrated symphony of great ideas which have outcome from the spirit of its predecessors, especially those mentioned as respected names in the Islamic esoteric tradition. However, the true spiritual root and real domiciliary status of Ibn 'Arabi's cognition is placed almost on the top of the epistemological, or even better divine vertical. He personally mentions that he, in his deepest cognition and contemplative launchings, falls under a spiritual influence and light outburst of the divine inspiration that comes from above. But, since he himself sets up the unbreakable hierarchy of the cognition spiritual stages, it is to expect that, even though there is just one inspiration, the professed forms the divine inspiration should be different in the sense of different gifts of the divine mercy whose dimensions of self-announcement are infinite. Accordingly, as we are later going to find out about different forms of cognition explained by Ibn 'Arabi, so, right now, we are to find out about different forms of inspiration under which influence the most profound works of the Andalus philosopher. He, namely, mostly mentions four forms of the divine inspiration whose influence affected his spiritual genius and which actual fruits, in the form of an abundant mystical experience, are felt by his deepest intimacy. He experienced them equally in dream and reality.

The highest and most direct form of inspiration is the one referred to by Ibn 'Arabi as the term of the living, direct, inner-divine non-breathing inspiration (*Waḥy*). The noun *Waḥy*, within itself, importantly calms down the meaning of the life-giving breath, life-giving power (*Ḥayy*). The human mind

<sup>5</sup> S. H. Nasr, *Tri muslimanska mudraca*, Sarajevo, 1990, pp. 144-145.

<sup>6</sup> A. 'Affīfī, *The Mystical philosophy of Muhji-d-Din Ibn 'Arabi*, Cambridge, 1936, pp. 104-105.



or spirit (*Rūh*)<sup>7</sup> is directly exposed to by the direct spiritual radiation of this form of the divine inspiration. Using this form of inspiration the pure divine Essence is announced, and the truths conveyed in this manner are universal and utterly supernatural. Their heirs are the messengers of God and the greatest ones among the divine *Awliyā*. This sort of inspiration affected Ibn 'Arabi's spirit in the occasion of vision of the divine Throne, when the very well of the divine Message was manifested to him, along with all spiritual poles of its. The second form of inspiration is the one referred to by Ibn 'Arabi as revelation or curtain raising (*Kašf*). This form of revelation is directed towards the heart (*Qalb*), and the principal divine hyposthesis, that is, the divine name Allah as a transcendent synthesis of all divine names and attributes or the Face of the Merciful One (*Wağh al-Raḥmān*) as a principal synthesis of the divine Self and divine Essence. This way of inspiration reveals those divine truths which are, in the principle divine order, characterised by essential and unknown possibilities of the divine Self, whereas in the professed and historical order revealed as a supernatural divine Unpersonality in the sense of different traditional and religious forms of the divine Word.<sup>8</sup> Ibn 'Arabi was almost constantly under the spiritual influence of this form of the divine inspiration. This form of inspiration does not offer the divine Wisdom in a form of abstract ideas, but in the form of pictorial symbols and recognisable light images.<sup>9</sup> All forms of inspiration, according to Ibn 'Arabi, happen in principle of self-announcement of the Universal Soul to a individual rational soul which is nothing else but a individual consideration of the former. Unlike the first two forms of inspiration, the third and fourth do not come directly from the perspective of the Universal Soul (*an-Nafs al-Kulliyya*), but they come from a individual or personal rational soul perspective, but on an impulse, which, principally, but still directly comes from above. Thus, *Ilhām* (Inspiration), as the third form of the divine inspiration, acts mostly in the form of the true vision. This sort of inspiration does not announce metaphorical images and meaningful symbols, as in the first two cases, but announces certain realities which correspond to those visible in reality. It is completely vivid that this form of inspiration substantially occupies the human soul, and reveals cognitive stages innate to it, those that it alone can accept by the power of its natural spiritual readiness (*Isti'dād*).

The fourth form of the divine inspiration is a typically Sufi one. It is principally derived from the depth of the human *rational soul*, even though it, in Ibn 'Arabi's case, as a result of a far too strong and luxurious contemplation in which all spiritual recipients of a human person take part. Thus, one could say that sort of inspiration performs its spiritual pouring out onto human intimacy as such. There, roughly, lies the reason why the Andalus philosopher when referring to this form of the divine inspiration uses the term *al-Wārid*,

<sup>7</sup> Ibn 'Arabī, *Al-Futūḥāt al-Makiyya*, I, pp. 38-39.

<sup>8</sup> Ibn 'Arabī, *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*, pp. 245-246.

<sup>9</sup> Ibn 'Arabī, *Māhiyyāt al-Qalb*, II, fol. 45.

that is, a sort of inner spiritual maturing, a surprise intuitive glimmer, which can, even, be caused by the power of certain spiritual acts: prayer, invocation, contemplative yearning for his own pre-existence,<sup>10</sup> etc. Ibn 'Arabi distinguishes four aspect of such inspiration: the divine rule inspiration (*Rabbāniyy*), the angel inspiration or inspiration derived from the centre of the Universal Mind (*Malakiyy*), the inspiration of the soul (*Nafsiyy*), and finally, the satanical inspiration (*Šayṭāniyy*).<sup>11</sup> The cognition that outcome from the last aspect of inspiration is a pure illusion.

As stressed before, Ibn 'Arabi divides all forms of cognition in those which are necessary and those are not. He, sometimes, divides them not only by their inner nature, but also by the way they are conceived, thus, he says that some of them are conceived supernaturally. All cognition conceived on the basis of the six senses, (since the Andalus philosopher considers mind as a sense), he considers natural cognition. Supernatural cognition come either by the strength of various forms of the direct inspiration from *the above*, or in a manner of noneveryday spiritual techniques and by the strength of deep intuitive stimuli begotten by the dissected spiritual genius of the Gnostic ('*Ārif*). As such sorts of cognition Ibn 'Arabi considers clairvoyance, telepathy, hypnosis and a special form of cognition referred to as the esoteric or intuitive wisdom.<sup>12</sup>

As the necessary cognition Ibn 'Arabi considers judgement or truths true *by themselves*, and they can be of perceptual or intellectual nature, i.e., the former ones must include implicitly mind influence into the object of cognition, whereas the latter ones include implicitly such influence, that is, they include implicitly the inner *self-consideration*. That especially applies to truths or judgements of purely mathematical or formalological nature. Finally, this sort of cognition also includes intuitive or secret, esoteric truths and judgements whose self-undoubtedness is directly visible.

As contingent, thus, unnecessary cognition and truths, the Andalus philosopher considers such cognition conceived by an opinion and sense. Such truths true by themselves, by their inner nature, such truths or cognition are completely congruent with the reality they apply to, and which make their real content, whereas speculations, which can just partially suit reality, or even, be wrong and baseless, are considered by Ibn 'Arabi as pure illusions. Even though cognition can be different, says Ibn 'Arabi, essentially they are one, because they are based on the same spiritual root. Ibn 'Arabi recognises that spiritual root in the micro and macrocosmic sagacity, since he thinks that

<sup>10</sup> T. Burckhardt, *Introduction aux doctrines ésotériques de l'Islam*, pp. 50-51.

<sup>11</sup> Ibn 'Arabī, *Futūḥāt...*, I, pp. 281-284; *Futūḥāt*, II, pp. 77-78; Cpf. Gunayd, *Enseignement spirituel*, Paris, 1983, pp. 74-79; A. H. 'Abdel Qader, *The Life of Al-Gunayd, Personality and Writings*, London, 1962, pp. 58-62; 'Umar Suhrawardī, '*Awārif al-Ma'ārif*, al-Qāhira, (-), chap. LVII, p. 221; O. Yahya, *Histoire et classification*, I, Damask, 1968, p. 162.

<sup>12</sup> Ibn 'Arabī, *Futūḥāt...*, I, pp. 278-279.

diates from the pure divine Essence, completely overcomes and imbues him.<sup>22</sup> Such spiritual overlapping does not happen only on the cognitive level, but as equally on the existential one. The state of the direct spiritual maturing (*Maqām al-Šuhūd*) and the state of existence (*Maqām al-Wuğūd*) of the spiritual traveller are momentarily equated with the spiritual perspective of the divine wisdom that is poured out in light beams onto his spirit. According to the Andalus philosopher, that is the state of the perfect mystic, and the wisdom that he accepts in that moment, is eternal and inexhaustible, because it is gained directly *from* and *through* God. Therefore Ibn 'Arabi calls the spiritual traveller (*Sālik*) of that spiritual level as a Gnostic who has become serious with the wisdom from and through God (*'Arif bi-llāh*). It is about the authentic knowledge, completely corresponding with the wisdom of the divine Reality and most directly related to that Reality.<sup>23</sup>

The esoteric knowledge is, by its nature, sacred and it can not go astray. The only way to conceive it is the direct mystical experience, and none other exists. It has to be experienced with the whole of its being, and the arrival to its well is always individual, never collective. What is more, it is untransferable to another person, because it is related to the deepest inner experience and delight (*dawq*). Explaining the direct feeling and sensation of such a spiritual state to a person who has not survived it, is equal to the effort of describing a rose-garden with the most beautiful and diverse flower colours and nuances to a blind person. Equally, the one whose eye of the heart contemplates the image of the divine contemplation, or the one whose heart is not blind can only see all the beauty of the divine Face, that is, to quote the famous Qur'an metaphor about those who truly see and those who are spiritually blinded.

By the power of the esoteric knowledge the mystic witnesses the transcendent and immanent consideration of the divine Reality at all time. He is in opportunity to see how, in the whole luxury of the divine self-professing (*Tağalliyāt*), the One appears as the Multitude, and how, particularly in that act, the One differs from the Multitude.<sup>24</sup>

The example of the spiritual growing to the stage of the cognition which Ibn 'Arabi calls the direct or esoteric cognition, the Andalus philosopher has most delicately explained through the mystical analysis of Muhammad's (a.s.) spiritual ascent through the seven heavenly spheres known under the title of *Mi'rāğ* or *Layla al-Mi'rāğ* (The Night of The Ascent).<sup>25</sup> By doing such an analysis, Ibn 'Arabi, alongside with it, does a comparison between such a spiritual growing of *Sālik* who bears a living faith, the faith Islam, which the Andalus philosopher considers the only one corresponding to the very divine

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Ibn 'Arabī, *Futūḥāt...*, II, p. 393; *Fuṣūṣ*, pp. 47, 198.

<sup>24</sup> Ibn 'Arabī, *Fuṣūṣ*, p. 357.

<sup>25</sup> Ibn 'Arabī, *Futūḥāt...*, II, pp. 359-374; cfp. Nader al-'Azmā, *al-Mi'rāğ wa ar-Ramzas-Sūfiyy*, Bayrūt, 1982, entirely.



nature, and the spiritual growth whose becoming serious is tried by a philosopher who relies on his mind. The final result of such comparison is reflected in the fact that the spiritual traveller (*Sālik*), a religious person, ends its voyage in the transcendent and eternal domiciliary status of the Universal truth as such, that is, *The truth over the truths* (*Ḥaqīqa al-Ḥaqāiq*), whereas the philosopher falls into scepticism and delirium, thus admitting the total shallowness of the spiritual effort and wishing, after all, to follow the path of the real Sufi who is the true *Sālik*.

United in the same spiritual Path (*Ṭarīq*), the philosopher and the *Sufi* move from one heavenly sphere to another, and in each sphere they conceive certain knowledge. But, even though they follow the same Path, the conceived in it is fundamentally different, because the philosopher, according to Ibn 'Arabi, receives the cognition from the forms of the heavenly spheres, whereas the *Ṣūfī* receives his knowledge from the very realities of the mentioned spheres. That is the reason why the knowledge of the former is profane, and the knowledge of the latter is sacred and utterly true. The reason to it lies in the fact that the latter, by accepting his knowledge from the very spheres of the realities of the heavenly spheres, actually receives the wisdom from the messengers of God to whom it was given earlier, because those messengers are the inner realities of the heavenly spheres.

While meeting certain messengers inside of every heavenly sphere, the two mentioned spiritual travellers actually also meet with various dimensions of the divine Logos in its metahistorical archetype, and thus, meet various spiritual considerations of the very *divine Face*, as well as visible and invisible forms of the phenomenal world. At the same time, Ibn 'Arabi tries to make his chosen characters of the philosopher and the *Sufi* see in the faces of the messengers of God different heavenly-earthly forms of the eternal divine wisdom or Gnosis (*Ma'rifa*), in the sense that it appears in one stage as the Universal Religion (*Mūsā*), in another as the principal hypostasis of the eternal divine Beauty (*Yūsuf*). In the third stage, as the metacosmic and cosmic hierarchy of the cause-and-effect line embodied in the string of infinite divine teophanies and epiphanies with the universal divine Representative (*Ādam*) in its beginning. In the fourth one there is the principle of Life (*'Isā*), and as a contrast of the two existential considerations: the one that is eternal and unchangeable and the other that is changeable and ephemeral (*Idrīs*) etc.

Even though the two mentioned travellers follow the same path and aspire to the same goal, the final outcome of their voyage, after all, witnesses about the diversity of their paths and the diversity of their materialised goals. Whereas the philosopher, while following the pure forms of the heavenly spheres conceives just subsequent, outer causes of everything occurring in the world, the *Sufi*, while following the pure realities of the heavenly spheres, he observes with his spiritual eyesight *The Cause of all Causes*, whose fundamental active power circulates in every lower cause. From the other side, the path of the philosopher can not, in any way, procure the knowledge of God's transcendence, since the borders of this world make the space of his spiritual materi-

alisation, so that his cognitive power is not capable of leaving the borders of the natural world and pushing off to the infinite spaces of the supernatural. However, the Sufi, as an heir of the living faith, by the power of the direct temptation (*Dawq*) manages to get to the bottom of every consideration of the divine Reality, in its every principle and professed order (*Tanzih- Tašbih*). He manages it, simply, because he follows the path of the pure realities, and only that path manages to put him into that spiritual perspective from God observes himself, in his transcendent aloneness and his immanent indentedness within the eternal *milieu* of eternal names and attributes. It means that the Sufi does not only manages to materialise the supernatural-natural correspondence of his own and divine point of view, but by the power of the direct cognition, also manages to materialise the essential unity with the Reality, whose unity implicitly includes both the sapiential and the existential dimension of the Sufi. Unlike him, the philosopher is deprived of everything above-mentioned. However, the end of the spiritual voyage and growing for the Sufi does not stop with the seventh heavenly sphere, and as for the philosopher, it, certainly, does. He is not able to go any further. However, the Sufi, after first seven heavenly spheres, which he travelled following the example of the Messenger of Islam (a.s.), (whose *night ascent* represents a paradigm of every progress at the direct divine wisdom), enters following spiritual spheres of purely mystical nature inside of which he meets some esoteric and mystical characters, who belong to the very end of the cycle of earthly existence, though from the dawn of heritage undeniable heavenly nature. The following spiritual walk of his happens in the form of the direct observing, not just in the abstract cognition, and such a walk in the direct observing procures the deepest dimension of wisdom. The wisdom brings the Sufi into a spiritual sapiential and existential state that he becomes released of everything human in him, leaving him with nothing but his own pure divine archetype, the one that the divine wisdom itself has contained in the sense of its eternal and still unprofessed content. Simply said, it is the matter of a complete spiritual immersion into the light of *the divine Face*, and that state the Andalus philosopher calls *Fanā (Disappearance)*. However, after the definite disappearance in the Absolute, a re-establishment of the spiritual personality of the Sufi takes place, but the then appearing of his happens in light forms and reminds of a sudden appearance of a character in the mirror, the character which doubles its appearance, then with a geometrical progression it multiplies itself in the multitude of profiles, shapes and perspectives. That is the way how the divine Reality, which in that case symbolises the very Mirror, in its infinite and perfect transcendent unity and absoluteness, creates the illusion of a spiritual *theatre* inside of which the divine Essence in the multitude of different light forms appears. But, such a multitude is a pure illusion, as the professed multitude of the divine Essence in the world is a pure illusion to Ibn ‘Arabi. The reality of the One and illusoriness of the multitude is best shown in the image contained in the story of the heavenly dames dressed in seventy beautiful dresses, which are, at the same time, so

transparent that is possible to see an easy swinging of the bone marrow resembling *liquid and light honey*.<sup>26</sup>

*Fanā* or the complete immersion in the light of the *divine Face* represents the highest stage of the spiritual progress in wisdom. Such a spiritual progress, Ibn 'Arabi describes as the curtain-of-the-Light and *Darkness*-raising, which is a traditional metaphor for cosmic stages behind which the *divine Face* hides, and inside of which the luxury of his light is professed. The curtains are equally unfolded on the macrocosmic and microcosmic stages of the Essence. Some of the last ones that *Sālik* or *the Sūfī* needs to raise in their final *face-to-face-with-God* meeting are placed in the human person. By overcoming his own ego, *the Sūfī* definitely takes off the cape of human nature (*Nāsūt*) and remains in the pure theomorphic existence (*Lāhut*). The whole process ends in the spiritual spaces of the heart, which, according to the tradition, are not only the *Throne of God*, but also the *Home of God*, that is, the *Sūfī's* heart, in the state of *Fana*, as the centre of God in the cosmos completely corresponds with the *Centre of God* in *Metacosmos*, and, so, it becomes a metacosmic, macrocosmic and microcosmic subject-matter of all theophanic and epiphanic unveiling and veiling of the *divine Face*.<sup>27</sup> Just there, all sapiential charge of the divine vertical ends.

"The first unveiling happens in the state of self-immersion (*Fanā*) in the Absolute. In that state, the man who observes and the object of observation are nothing else but the very Absolute. That is called *Uniting* (*Ġam'*). The other unveiling represents perpetuation (*Baqā*) after the self-immersion. The forms of the created world in that spiritual state form their own appearance; they appear to each other inside the very Absolute. That is the way the (divine) Reality here plays the role of a mirror for (the looking over of) the creatures. The reality (of the mirror) is also represented by the Absolute, and the forms (that appear in it) are the creatures. Inside of such an experience, the creatures meet each other, even though they are different".<sup>28</sup>

"Some of us (meaning the people of perfection) are cognisant that this (supreme) wisdom about us (that is, in relation to the appearing multitude) happens solely inside of the Absolute. However, some of us (that is, mystics who are not so perfect) are not cognisant (of) the true nature of (such) a presence (that is, the ontological stage that opens inside of *Baqā* – the experience) inside of which the said wisdom is related to us (that is, related to the appearing multitude), happens through to us. In God I seek refuge from my own ignorance."<sup>29</sup>

Even though Ibn 'Arabi, determinedly and unconditionally, tries to calm down the effects of his epistemology in Sufi perspective and bring down everything to the personal experienced mystical experience (*Dawq*), one should

<sup>26</sup> F. Schuon, *Le Soufisme voile et quintessence*, Paris, 1980, p. 17.

<sup>27</sup> Ibn 'Arabī, *Futūḥāt...*, I, p. 281; *Fuṣūṣ...*, p. 220.

<sup>28</sup> Ibn 'Arabī, *Fuṣūṣ...*, pp. 74-75.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, p. 74.

admit that his epistemology, by its deepest nature, is in a far greater extent an expression of the theosophical philosophy and philosophical theosophy, and far less it expresses things one would call pure mysticism. The truth is, that in his epistemology, as in other disciplines of his system, anyway, an unstressed influence of extended imaginative conscience is noticeable, but his argumentation is of fundamentally philosophical nature, besides everything and because he, despite a frequently repeated saying that the progress in wisdom must be felt in one's own way, and never described, persistently describes and theorises about the matter that should be a personal and direct mystical experience. From the other side, he doggedly uses the saying in proving that he is a mystic or saint, and the biggest corner stones of his mystical philosophy he adopts from his predecessors who by their vocation are either philosophers or theologians. There are numerous places in his opinion which can prove it, such as, for example, the questions regarding the theory of substances and attributes, the theory developed by the followers of Ash'ari's theological opinion, the questions about intelligible archetypes of the things fundamentally derived from Plato's theory of *ideas*, the questions about metaphysical categories of the necessary and contingent, the real and relative, the questions about predetermination and free will, etc.<sup>30</sup> Accordingly, the Andalus philosopher forms his own *system* of philosophical and theological questions, forgetting that the mystical experience can not be placed into the system, especially not a philosophical or theological one, because mysticism is by its fundamental nature is not that, that is, mysticism is not a cognitive, primarily or solely an existential act. But, none of the above-mentioned statements is at any moment directed against the Andalus philosopher, nor do any of them try to reduce his originality in thinking. On the contrary, his, tentatively said, system of mystical philosophy is so luxurious, authentic and unrepeatable, that all the mentioned judgements are almost negligible before it. Even though he, according to some opinions, was a victim of his own imagination in his thinking, his dreaming genius and an unbelievable power of creative imagination were so thundering that after him, almost no-one dared to, more determinedly or in a new way, speak and consider the questions his thought have imposed and provided with his own content-related seal and spiritual aroma.

#### IBN 'ARABIJEVA SPOZNAJNA TEORIJA

##### SAŽETAK

Tekst pod gornjim naslovom razmatra bitne odlike Ibn 'Arabijeve epistemologije, s posebnim naglaskom na njen mistični obzir. Sadržaj njegove epistemologije izlagan je sukladno zahtjevima metafizičke preferencije spoznajnih

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, pp. 300-301.

vrela i spoznajne stupnjevitosti koju duhovni putnik ima ustrajno prevladavati u svom napredovanju ka Istini. Svoju spoznajnu teoriju Ibn 'Arabi u prvome redu utemeljuje na novim vrelima spoznaje koja izmiču epistemološkom polju povijesne horizontale, ali ne zanemaruje i ona potonja vrela spoznaje iz čije perspektive se izvija i onaj uzlazno-spoznajni rast ljudskoga genija, koji posvemašnje lice Istine nastoji motriti i iz perspektive povijesne horizontale. To će reći da Ibn 'Arabi, kod osvajanja Istine, s podjednakom nadom se otvara metakozmičkoj Milosti i kozmopovijesnom Umu.

Pošto je definirao temeljna vrela Ibn 'Arabijeve epistemologije, autor je pristupio razvrstavanju osnovnih oblika spoznaje, što ih duhovni putnik (*Sâlik*) osvaja u uzlazno-spoznajnom poretku, krećući se od znanja uzetog iz svijeta (*al-'Ilm*), preko teozofske mudrosti koja jest svojevrsna *Sophia divina* ili *Sophia perennis* (*al-Ḥikma al-Lâduniyya*), smirujući se u čistoj mudrosti božanskoga Duha, koja predstavlja fundamentalnu slavu, živu *Gnosu* božanske Biti (*al-Ma'rifa*). Sa svakim novim duhovnim stadijem duhovni putnik (*Sâlik*) zadobiva novi profil svog duhovnog lica, koji se podudara sa unutarnjom naravi osvojenog spoznajnog oblika.

Potom slijedi iznošenje duhovnog obrasca iz kojeg se razabire unutarnja fizionomija one putanje, uzlazno-spiralne spoznajne putanje koju *Sâlik* ima preći u egzistencijalnom rasponu vlastitoga duha od stupnja *'Âlima* do duhovnog stupnja *'Arifa*. Rečeni duhovni obrazac Ibn 'Arabi je prepoznao u instituciji poslaničkoga *Mir'râğa* – noćnog putovanja Poslanika islama (a.s.) vertikalom božanskoga Duha, kojemu je filozof iz Andalusa priskrbio i jednu eminentno filozofsku dimenziju i duhovnog putnika ili saputnika u liku nekog filozofa. Ibn 'Arabijeva *Epistemologia spiritualis*, kao sapijencijalni i egzistencijalni čin odjedared, svoju epistemološku i bivstvovodavnu žest smiruje u prozirnoj svjetlosti vječnih načela božanskog Povrh-Bitka, koji označava vječni smiraj *Sâlik*-ove duše i neprolaznu nebesku domovinu njegova srca.

## IBN 'ARABI'S COGNITIVE THEORY

### SUMMARY

The text entitled as above analyses essential distinctions of Ibn 'Arabi's epistemology with a particular emphasis on its mystic consideration. The essence of his epistemology was put forward in accordance with the rules of metaphysical preference for the sources of cognition and cognitive process that a spiritual traveller has to go through on his way towards the Truth. Ibn 'Arabi bases his theory of cognition first of all on those sources of cognition that elude the epistemological field at a historical level, but he does not neglect the latest sources of cognition either, from whose perspective derived is that ascending-cognitive evolution of human genius that tries to observe the whole Truth in the perspective of the historical level too. This means that Ibn 'Arabi,

when perceiving the Truth, exposes himself equally to metacosmic Grace and cosmohistorical Wisdom.

After defining the essential sources of Ibn 'Arabi's epistemology, the author classified the basic patterns of cognition that the spiritual traveller (*Sâlik*) reaches in an ascending-cognitive order, starting from the knowledge taken from the world (*al-'Ilm*), via theosophical wisdom which is specifically *Sophia divina* or *Sophia perennis* (*al-Ḥikma al-Lāduniyya*), finding peace in the pure wisdom of the *Divine Spirit*, which is (the wisdom) fundamental glory, living gnosis of the *Divine Essence* (*al-Ma'rifa*). With each new spiritual phase, the spiritual traveller (*Sâlik*) acquires a new profile of his spiritual feature that is identical to the internal nature of the acquired cognitive form.

Then follows a presentation of the spiritual pattern which reflects the internal physiognomy of that path, the ascending-spiral cognitive path that *Sâlik* is to walk in the existential span of his own spirit from *Sâlik* to '*Arif*. In the institution of the *Messenger's Mi'râğ* – the night of ascent of the Messenger of Islam (a.s.) up the vertical of the *Divine Spirit*, to which a philosopher of Andalusia adds one eminently philosophic dimension, 'Arabi recognized a spiritual traveller or companion in the figure of a philosopher. Ibn 'Arabi's *Epistemologia spiritualis*, as both a sapiential and an existential act in one, appeases its epistemological and existential power in the transparent light of eternal principles of the Divine Super-Being, which is the eternal peace of *Sâlik's* soul and the eternal celestial home of its heart.