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# IBN AL-‘ARABĪ’S CONCEPT OF DREAMS

*Megawati Moris<sup>1</sup>*

## **Abstract**

*As a universally experienced phenomenon which transcends time, place and people the dream has perplexed humankind over the ages. Much thought and research have gone into discovering its nature and causes, the role it plays in societies as well as interpreting its content. The same preoccupation with it can be said to be found among Muslims who view it as a rich source of knowledge. The article looks at one of the greatest Muslim sages Ibn al-‘Arabī’s contribution to understanding the dream (ru’yā) which he conceived as an imaginal (mithāl; khayāl) reality manifested in both the objective and subjective realms of existence (wujūd) and hence has an intermediate (barzakh) nature. His conception of dreams is thus grounded in metaphysics. It is based on the Qur’ān and Ḥadīth as veritable sources and is considered to be one of the most profound ever expounded on the subject. It contrasts with the modern Western perspective which focuses on the psychological, sociological and historical aspects of the phenomenon. It brings into question the weakening power of the human faculty of imagination (khayāl) in the modern era as a source of knowledge of the metaphysical and spiritual realms, represented by symbols and images (amthāl) in the cosmos, the world of Images (ālam al-mithāl) and the human soul. Hence, the science of the interpretation of dreams (ta’bīr) is significant in revealing the meanings of the nature of existence and reality.*

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**Keywords:** Dream (*ru'yā*), Ibn al-'Arabī's metaphysics of imagination (*khayāl*), World of Images (*ālam al-mithāl*), Intermediate Realm (*barzakh*), Interpretation of dreams (*ta'bīr*)

## 1.0 Introduction

Dream is a universal phenomenon since it is an experience common to all human beings. The universality of this phenomenon together with its ambiguous nature have intrigued and baffled human beings throughout the ages. Hence, a lot of interest and considerable amount of study and investigation by some of the greatest minds have gone towards increasing human knowledge on this subject, such as the meaning and nature of dreams and their causes. The significance and function of dreams in human life and thought cannot be emphasized enough. Dreams played a very important role in ancient and medieval civilizations and they continue to have an important function in many societies of the modern world.

In the ancient civilizations of Babylon and Egypt for example, the people believed that dreams originated from a supernatural intelligence, either good or evil. They also believed that the events which the soul goes through during sleep – which they regard as a second life – have a bearing on the future life of the dreamer. Only the wise among them could divine or foretell the future based on the visions seen in sleep.<sup>2</sup> Aristotle who was considered to be the greatest authority on dreams of ancient Greece said that dreams arise from natural causes. It is the result of the affection of the heart as the central seat of representations by the residual movements of the waking activities of the senses during the sleeping state.<sup>3</sup> These residual movements are also present in the waking state but they are unperceived because of the violent movements and noise the senses produce. During sleep the dreamer is more sensitive to small organic

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<sup>2</sup> "Dreams" in *Encyclopedia of Occultism and Parapsychology*, ed. J. Gordon Melton, 5th ed., vol. 1 (Detroit: Gale Group Inc., 2001), 449.

<sup>3</sup> Carl Alfred Meier, "The Dream in Ancient Greece" in *The Dream and Human Societies* ed., G. E. von Grunebaum and R. Callois, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966), 305.

disturbances. Thus, a doctor can predict illness, recovery or death from such dreams.<sup>4</sup>

In the modern West, due to the contributions of renowned psychologists Sigmund Freud (d. 1939) and Carl Jung (d. 1961), dreams are widely accepted as psychic products which provide the key to the human unconscious. Freud postulated that dreams possess the function of repressed wish fulfillment while for Jung, they are compensation for neglected thoughts and inclinations of conscious life. Thus, in their theories of dreams, dream analysis is important for therapy since it is an invaluable tool for uncovering the origins of the patients' symptoms.<sup>5</sup> It is evident that even in laboratory studies where dream contents are observed and evaluated objectively in real-time using magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) patterns, there are many aspects of the dream which are still unknown. However, what scientists have discovered is that almost everyone dreams during sleep every night for a total of about two hours whether they can remember it or not upon waking up. The most clearly recalled dreams are those that occur during rapid eye movement (REM) sleep. People also dream during non-rapid eye movement (non-REM) sleep but those dreams are usually remembered less often and have a more common content.<sup>6</sup>

In the Islamic civilisation, the importance and ubiquity of dreams are well-known. The importance of dreams in the announcement of great events in Prophet Muḥammad's life such as the receiving of divine revelation (*wahy*) and nocturnal ascent (*mi'rāj*) as well as his practice of dream interpretation are evident in his biography<sup>7</sup> and the chapters dedicated to "interpretation" and "dream visions" (*ru'yā*) in the Ḥadīth collections.<sup>8</sup> The wealth of oneirocriticism or the art of dream interpretation literature available,

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<sup>4</sup> Meier, "The Dream," 305.

<sup>5</sup> C. S. Hall, "Dreams" in *Encyclopedia of Psychology*, ed. Raymond J. Corsini, vol. 1 (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1984), 388-89.

<sup>6</sup> Kendra Cherry, "Why do we Dream?" accessed on April 10, <https://www.verywellmind.com/why-do-we-dream-top-dream-theories-2795931>

<sup>7</sup> Toufy Fahd, "The Dream in Medieval Islamic Society" in *Dream and Human Societies*, 356.

<sup>8</sup> Nile Green, "The Religious and Cultural Roles of Dreams and Visions in Islam," *Journal of Royal Asiatic Society* 13, no.3 (November 2003), 289.

especially during the ‘Abbasid Caliphate,<sup>9</sup> and the heights it reached in the Arab-Muslim civilisation are proofs of the importance conceded to dreams by the early Muslims.<sup>10</sup>

To the Muslims, the cognitive power of dreams does not pose an epistemological problem. According to them, the cognitive significance of dreams is well established and explained by the Qur’ān and Ḥadīth.<sup>11</sup> In the Qur’ān for example, the Prophet Joseph (Yūsuf) was given knowledge of dreams and was addressed by God with the words: “Thus your Lord will prefer you and teach you the interpretation of events.”<sup>12</sup> The following two Ḥadīth guarantee the cognitive power of dreams: “Nothing is left of prophecy except the bearers of good tidings (heralding visions), they are true good dreams which a man sees or which are shown to him in sleep;”<sup>13</sup> and “A good dream (that comes true) of a righteous man is one of forty-six parts of prophecy.”<sup>14</sup>

Since the reality of the objective significance of dreams is guaranteed by the two most authoritative sources of Islam, the Muslims were mostly concerned with the classification of dreams and the methodology of dream interpretation.<sup>15</sup> However, the Muslim Peripatetic (*mashshā’ī*) philosophers, for example al-Kindī (d.973) and Ibn Sīnā (d.1037) were among the first to have written on

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<sup>9</sup> Oneirocriticism - from the Greek *oneiros* (dream) - as a literary genre experienced rapid development during the ‘Abbasid period. Prior to this period, for example during the Umayyad period, only scattered dream interpretations were chronicled and found. However, names of interpreters who have remained famous and some of whose interpretations have been preserved like Sa‘id b. al-Musayyab and Ibn Sirīn (d.728) attest to the existence of this literary genre before the ‘Abbasid era and its already rich tradition. See T. Fahd, “The Dream in Medieval Islamic Society,” 357-58.

<sup>10</sup> Fahd, “The Dream in Medieval Islamic Society,” 351-58.

<sup>11</sup> G. E. von Grunebaum, “The Cultural Function of the Dream as Illustrated by Classical Islam” in *Dream and Human Societies*, 6-7.

<sup>12</sup> The Qur’ān, *Sūrah Yūsuf* 12:6.

<sup>13</sup> *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, Book 87 (Interpretation of Dreams):119*, accessed April 6, 2020, <http://hadithcollection.com/download-sahih-bukhari.html?start=80>.

<sup>14</sup> *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, Book 87 (Interpretation of Dreams):112*, accessed April 6, 2020, <http://hadithcollection.com/download-sahih-bukhari.html?start=80>.

<sup>15</sup> Von Grunebaum, “Cultural Function of the Dream,” 7.



the substance or the causes of dreams.<sup>16</sup> In the works of later Muslim scholars, for example al-Ghazzālī (d.1111), Shihāb al-Dīn al-Suhrawardī (d.1191) and Ibn al-‘Arabī (d.1240), the subject of dreams was discussed in relation to their expositions on imagination and the Realm of Images (*al-mithāl*).<sup>17</sup>

In this paper, I will present the great Muslim thinker and Sufi, Ibn al-‘Arabī’s concept of dreams. I will examine his views on this multi-faceted phenomenon, i.e., its nature and causes and the function or role it plays in human life and thought.

## 2.0 Framework of Ibn al-‘Arabī’s Concept of Dreams

Abu Bakr Muhammad ibn al-‘Arabī was born in Murcia in Andalusia in 560 A.H./1165 A.D. He was given the honorific titles of Muḥyi al-Dīn (The Reviver of Religion) and al-Shaykh al-Akbar (The Greatest Master) by his followers and disciples. These well-deserved titles were given to Ibn al-‘Arabī’ on account of his vast contribution to Islamic thought and his pervasive influence on the spiritual and intellectual life of the community for the past seven hundred years. He is considered the greatest expositor of Sufi doctrines and his numerous works constitute until today the main resource material for the understanding of Sufism in general and Sufi metaphysics in particular.

Ibn al-‘Arabī’s works on metaphysics cannot be understood without first grasping the importance he places on imagination (*khayāl*) and his conception of it in turn, cannot be understood in isolation of and apart from his metaphysical framework.<sup>18</sup> Thus, his exposition on dreams which he considers to be the most common human experience of the nature of imaginal things can only be understood within his metaphysics. When examining Ibn al-‘Arabī’s

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<sup>16</sup> Mohd. ‘Abdul Mu‘id Khan, “A Unique Treatise on the Interpretation of Dreams by Ibn Sīnā” in *Avicenna Commemoration Volume*, (Calcutta: Iran Society, 1956), 258-59.

<sup>17</sup> Fazlur Rahman, “Dream, Imagination and ‘Ālam al-Mithāl,” *Islamic Studies* 3, (June 1964), 169-174. See also Nile Green, “Religious and Cultural Roles of Dreams,” 296.

<sup>18</sup> William Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge*, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989), x.

ideas an important point to remember is that they are always grounded in the Qurʾān and Ḥadīth. Scholars, who have studied his writings, consider his works to be commentaries of the Holy Book.<sup>19</sup>

### 3.0 Ibn al-ʿArabī’s Concept of Imagination (*Khayāl*)

#### 3.1 *Barzakh: Intermediate and Ambiguous*

For Ibn al-ʿArabī, the term *khayāl* (imagination) represents a reality or presence (*hadra*) which is manifested in three different loci or levels within the cosmos. However, before enumerating and elucidating the three levels in which imagination are manifested, it is important to take note that for Ibn al-ʿArabī, an imaginal (not imaginary)<sup>20</sup> reality is one which dwells in an intermediate domain between two other realities and which possesses the attributes of both sides. In fact, he says “there is nothing in existence but *barzakhs*, since a *barzakh* is the arrangement of one thing between two other things...., and existence has no edges (*ṭaraf*).”<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, everything has its own ontological niche between two other niches within the ontological hierarchy called the cosmos.<sup>22</sup>

A common example of an imaginal reality is a mirror image. The image acts as a bridge or “isthmus” (*barzakh*) between the reflected object and the mirror. The image is both the same as the mirror and different from it, or looking from a reverse perspective, it is neither identical with the object nor with the mirror. Hence, the most specific characteristic of an imaginal reality or things within the domain of imagination are their intermediary and ambiguous status. They never correspond to one or the other of the two sides that define them. They are always somewhere in between. As Ibn al-ʿArabī says,

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<sup>19</sup> Chittick, *Sufi Path of Knowledge*, xv.

<sup>20</sup> It was Henry Corbin who introduced the word “imaginal” from his term *mundus imaginis* for the imaginal world (*ʿālam al-mithāl*). He stated, “We must avoid here at all costs the word ‘imaginary’ which to us indicates something unreal, a qualification that presupposes the total degradation of the imaginative perception”. See his “Visionary Dream in Islamic Spirituality” in *Dream and Human Societies*, 406.

<sup>21</sup> From Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkīyya*, (Būlāq, 1329/1911, III 156. 27) quoted in Chittick, *Sufi Path of Knowledge*, 14.

<sup>22</sup> Chittick, *Sufi Path of Knowledge*.

“(They are) neither existent nor non-existent, neither known nor unknown, neither affirmed nor denied.”<sup>23</sup>

### 3.2 *Khayāl and Mithāl*

The root *kh.y.l* from which the term *khayāl* is derived is employed once in the Qur’ān (*Sūrah Ṭaha* 20:66) denoting the meaning of “was made to imagine.”<sup>24</sup> In the verse, Prophet Moses “was made to imagine” by the magic (*sahr*) of the sorcerers that their ropes and staffs were moving.<sup>25</sup> Ibn al-Arabī also uses the term *mithāl* (image) interchangeably for imagination but he does not use it to refer to the faculty called imagination.<sup>26</sup> The root meaning of *mithāl* is “to resemble,” “to appear in the likeness of.”<sup>27</sup> This root is used more frequently in the Qur’ān and *Ḥadīth* than *kh.y.l.* For example, the term *mathal* (similitude) and the expression, God’s “striking of similitudes” (*darb al-amthāl*), i.e., His explanation of things by means of imagery and symbolism are used repeatedly in the Qur’ān. However, the most significant use of the root – of which the meaning is most relevant in this context – is its single appearance in the form of *tamaththul* in the Qur’ān (*Sūrah Maryam* 19:17). In this verse, the archangel Gabriel appeared i.e., to become imaginalised to Mary at the annunciation as a man without fault.<sup>28</sup> In the *Ḥadīth*, the Prophet also often uses this term *tamaththul* and its synonym *tamthīl*. For example, in one *ḥadīth* he says “Satan cannot become imaginalised (*tamaththul*) in my image (*mithl*) or in my form.”<sup>29</sup>

### 3.3 *Levels of Imagination (Khayāl)*

The three levels within the cosmos in which the properties of imagination can be found are:

<sup>23</sup> From *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkīyya* (I 304. 16) quoted in Chittick, *Sufi Path of Knowledge*, 118.

<sup>24</sup> Chittick, *Sufi Path of Knowledge*, 116.

<sup>25</sup> Chittick, *Sufi Path of Knowledge*.

<sup>26</sup> Chittick, *Sufi Path of Knowledge*, 117.

<sup>27</sup> Chittick, *Sufi Path of Knowledge*.

<sup>28</sup> Chittick, *Sufi Path of Knowledge*.

<sup>29</sup> *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, Book 87 (Interpretation of Dreams):123* accessed April 9, 2020, <http://hadithcollection.com/download-sahih-bukhari.html?start=80>. translated from Chittick, *Sufi Path of Knowledge*.

1. In the cosmos or universe (*al-‘ālam*) which is the greatest of all intermediate realities. Here, existence (*wujūd*) is identical to imagination and Ibn al-‘Arabī calls it *al-khayāl al-muṭlaq* (non-delimited Imagination) or the dream of God. He considers the cosmos an imagination because it is intermediate between absolute *wujūd* or Being (*al-wujūd al-muṭlaq*), which is God alone, and absolute nothingness (*al-‘adam al-muṭlaq*).<sup>30</sup> The universe is also defined as “everything other than God” (*mā siwā Allāh*) but to Ibn al-‘Arabī it is not “other” (*ghayr*) in all respects because it is God’s self-disclosure (*tajallī*) of Himself within this locus. Through the cosmos God shows His characteristics and properties, i.e., the ninety-nine Names of God and the immutable entities (*al-a‘yān al-thābita*)<sup>31</sup> so that we may “see” and know Him. Thus, in this respect, the cosmos is identical with God because everything that is found in it represents Him or names Him. However, it is also “other than God” because it does not encompass God’s Essence (*dhāt*) which is unknowable and transcends entities absolutely. Ibn al-‘Arabī describes this unique intermediate status of the cosmos by the statement “He/not He” (*huwa lā huwa*).<sup>32</sup>
2. In the macrocosm, there is an intermediate world between the spiritual (*rūḥānī*) and corporeal (*jismānī*) worlds. Ibn al-‘Arabī refers to this intermediate world of imagination as *al-khayāl al-munfaṣil* (discontiguous imagination) since it exists independently of the viewing subject. This intermediate world which is actually made up of many worlds but collectively called “World of Imagination” (*‘ālam al-mithāl*), combines qualities of spirit and body. For example, the inhabitants of the world of Spirits (*‘ālam al-arwah*) who are the angels are made of light and the inhabitants of the world of bodies (*‘ālam al-ajsām*) which are comprised of the three kingdoms<sup>33</sup> are made of clay. In between

<sup>30</sup> William Chittick, *Imaginal Worlds: Ibn Al-‘Arabī and the Problem of religious Diversity*, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 27.

<sup>31</sup> The “thing in itself” is called the “reality” (*ḥaqīqa*) or “immutable entity” of the thing and these immutable entities remain forever fixed in God’s Knowledge, Chittick, *Imaginal Worlds*, 17.

<sup>32</sup> Chittick, *Imaginal Worlds*, 24-25.

<sup>33</sup> The three kingdoms are the mineral, plant and animal kingdoms.

these two worlds lives the *jinn* who is made of fire which is a bridge (*barzakh*) between light and clay. The qualities of fire are both luminous like light and dense like clay. Ibn al-‘Arabī finds a proof for the existence of this macrocosmic World of Imagination in the correspondence between the microcosm and macrocosm. The invisible World of Spirit and the visible World of Bodies correspond to the spirit and body in the human being.<sup>34</sup>

3. In the microcosm where the human soul (*nafs*) dwells in the intermediate realm between spirit (*rūh*) and body (*jism*) it is considered an imaginal reality. The spirit is a simple, non-compound reality. It is the dimension of the human being which has the potential for perfection, which is to manifest fully all the Divine Attributes. Hence, it is inherently luminous, alive, knowing, aware, powerful etc. At the other extreme, the body which is comprised of multiple parts is a dimension lacking in these spiritual qualities. Thus, it is dark, dense, ignorant and unconscious. In between these two dimensions lies the human soul. The soul represents a unique mixture of the two sets of extreme qualities. It is neither pure light nor pure darkness and it possesses every Divine Attribute to a certain degree. Therefore, the soul has a potential of ascent towards unity, integration and perfection if the spiritual dimension is stronger or more dominant. In contrast, if the soul’s corporeal side is more dominant the soul will descend towards multiplicity, darkness and dispersion.<sup>35</sup> The soul’s imaginal nature helps explain its affinity to the *jinn*, particularly Satan.<sup>36</sup>

The specific human faculty (*quwwa*) of imagination is also referred to as *khayāl* (imagination) by Ibn al-‘Arabī. This faculty is considered as one of the several faculties of the soul together with reason, reflection and memory. This level of imagination both in the sense of the human soul and its specific faculty is referred to by Ibn al-‘Arabī as *al-khayāl al-muttaṣil* (contiguous imagination). They are contiguous since they are connected to the viewing subject. Thus,

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<sup>34</sup> Chittick, *Imaginal Worlds*, 26.

<sup>35</sup> Chittick, *Imaginal Worlds*, 25-26.

<sup>36</sup> Chittick, *Imaginal Worlds*, 71.

contiguous imagination disappears with the disappearance of the imaginer.<sup>37</sup>

### 3.4 *The Activity of Imagination*

The characteristic activity of imagination, according to Ibn al-‘Arabī, is to embody (*tajsīd*) that which is disembodied (*mujarrad*) and to spiritualize (*tarawḥun*) that which is corporeal (*jismānī*).<sup>38</sup> The intermediate status of imagination means everything that leaves the World of the Unseen for the Visible World, or the Visible World for the World of the Unseen must first be imaginalized. For example, the angels appear to human beings in an imaginal form and likewise, the visions of spiritual things experienced by the saints occur in the imaginal world. The common people experience the reality of imagination most clearly and directly in dreams (*ru’yā*).<sup>39</sup> For Ibn al-‘Arabī says, “God placed dreams in the animate world (*al-‘ālam al-ḥayawānī*) so that all men might witness the World of Imagination and know that there exists another world similar to the sensory world.”<sup>40</sup>

Therefore, according to Ibn al-‘Arabī, dreaming is a function of imagination and it is by means of the faculty of imagination that dreams occur. This faculty combines sensory (*ḥissī, maḥsūs*) things<sup>41</sup> (corporeal entities) and consciousness (spiritual entities) together. It does this in two ways: one, by giving spiritual entities which are supra-sensory realities, the attributes of corporeal things, i.e., by giving them shapes (*tashakkul*) and forms (*ṣuwar*). This process is called the corporealisation of spiritual things (*tajassud al-arwaḥ*) and

<sup>37</sup> Chittick, *Sufi Path of Knowledge*, 116-17.

<sup>38</sup> William Chittick, “Death and the World of Imagination in Ibn al-‘Arabī’s Eschatology,” *Muslim World* (January 1988): 54.

<sup>39</sup> Chittick, “World of Imagination.”

<sup>40</sup> From Ibn al-‘Arabī *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkīyya* (III 198. 23) quoted in Chittick, “World of Imagination,” 54.

<sup>41</sup> According to Ibn al-‘Arabī, there are three levels of known things (*ma’lūmāt*). They are: (i) meanings (*ma’ānī*) disengaged (*mujarrad*) from substrata. The characteristics of meanings is that rational faculties perceive them through proofs or a priori (*bi ṭarīq al-badāya*); (ii) sensory (*ḥissī*) things whose characteristic is to be perceived by the senses and (iii) imaginal (*khayālī*) those whose characteristics is to be perceived by the rational faculty or by the senses. They are meanings that assume shape (*tashakkul*) in sensory forms. See Chittick, *Sufi Path of Knowledge*, 115.

two, by spiritualising corporeal entities (*tarawḥun al-ajsām*) that are perceived by the five senses and storing them in memory.<sup>42</sup>

#### 4.0 The Nature of Dreams (*Ru’yā*)

For Ibn al-‘Arabī, dreaming is imagination in sleep and dreaming forms the most complete and general kind of imagination since it is experienced by the gnostics (*‘arīfīn*) and the common people alike.<sup>43</sup> In the same vein, he states that “As for the (spiritual) states of absence (*ghaybah*), annihilation (*fanā’*), obliteration (*maḥw*) and the like, the common people do not experience them in respect of the divine things (*al-ilāhiyyāt*).”<sup>44</sup> Ibn al-‘Arabī states that it is not impossible that God should teach a person knowledge (*ta’rīf*)<sup>45</sup> through “heralding visions” (*mubashshirāt*). According to him, heralding visions are “dream visions” (*ru’yā*) seen by a Muslim or seen for him. They are a truth and a revelation.”<sup>46</sup> The Prophet (peace be upon him) also defines heralding visions as sound dreams (*al-ru’yā al-ṣāliha*) and he says that “they are one of the parts of prophecy.”<sup>47</sup> Ibn al-‘Arabī also uses the term “incident” (*wāqi’a*) to describe this true dream vision in imagination and thus, considers it to be synonymous in meaning with heralding vision and the “beginning of divine revelation.” The latter term is derived from a *ḥadīth* related from ‘Aishah: “The first thing through which revelation began for the Messenger of God was veridical or sound dreams (*al-ru’ya al-ṣāliha* or *al-ṣādiqa*) during sleep. He never saw a

<sup>42</sup> Chittick, *Imaginal Worlds*, 72.

<sup>43</sup> Chittick, *Sufi Path of Knowledge*, 116.

<sup>44</sup> From *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkīyya* (II 379. 3) quoted in Chittick, *Sufi Path of Knowledge*, 116.

<sup>45</sup> Ibn al-‘Arabī firmly states, this God given knowledge to the gnostics is not prophecy because prophethood ended with Prophet Muḥammad. He says they are not given rulings or a Law—for the *Shari’ah* has been established—but “sciences” and “reports.” For a more in-depth explanation refer to Chittick, *Sufi Path of Knowledge*, 251, 261-262.

<sup>46</sup> From *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkīyya* (III 38. 23) quoted in Chittick, *Sufi Path of Knowledge*, 262.

From *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkīyya* (III 38. 23) quoted in Chittick, *Sufi Path of Knowledge*, 262.

om/tirmidhi/34

dream without it coming true like the breaking of dawn.”<sup>48</sup> Ibn al-‘Arabī added however, that the prophets and gnostics differ from the common people because they perceive the God-given knowledge during wakefulness while the latter group only during sleep.<sup>49</sup>

There are also the non-veridical dreams or those which do not bring knowledge from God. These ordinary dreams are merely associations of ideas and images derived from events in the daily lives of the dreamer connecting themselves with certain objects of his desire.<sup>50</sup> Ibn al-‘Arabī explains that the forms and things perceived in such dreams of an individual are just the states (*aḥwāl*) of the dreamer himself or herself. The individual’s consciousness assumes the mode of multiplicity to display its multiple facets. Every dream image combines the multiplicity of the external world and the unity of the individual subject and each is an isthmus (*barzakh*) between the darkness of the bodily world and the luminosity of the spirit.<sup>51</sup> The explanation of dreams and the dream world corresponds to Ibn al-‘Arabī’s explanation of the cosmos as God’s dream:

Verification (*taḥqīq*) shows that the forms of the cosmos which belong to the Real (*al-Ḥaqq*) in respect to the Name the “Nonmanifest” are the forms of a dream to the Dreamer. The interpretation of the dream is that those forms are His states and nothing else. In the same way, the forms of a dream are the states of the dreamer and nothing else. Hence He sees only Himself.<sup>52</sup>

Ibn al-‘Arabī says, in dreams “meanings are transformed from their state of disengagement from material substrata (*mawādd*) into the clothing of material substrata.”<sup>53</sup> He gives proof of the connection

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<sup>48</sup> *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, Interpretation of Dreams (ta‘ābir)* Book 87:111, accessed April 9, 2020, <http://hadithcollection.com/download-sahih-bukhari.html?start=80>

<sup>49</sup> Chittick, *Sufi Path of Knowledge*, 251.

<sup>50</sup> A. E. Afifi, *The Mystical Philosophy of Muhyiddin Ibnul-‘Arabi*, (Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1979), 131-35.

<sup>51</sup> Chittick, *Imaginal Worlds*, 54.

<sup>52</sup> From *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkīyya* (II 380. 4) quoted in Chittick, *Sufi Path of Knowledge*, 120.

<sup>53</sup> From *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkīyya* (II 379. 24) quoted in Chittick, “World of Imagination,” 54.



between dreams and disengaged meanings with references from the verse of the Qur’ān which tells of Prophet Joseph’s ability to interpret dreams<sup>54</sup> and the following Ḥadīth which demonstrates Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ) exercising this power:

In a dream I was given a cup of milk, so I drank it until I saw that even my fingertips were quenched. Then I gave the rest to ‘Umar. The Prophet was asked “how do you interpret it oh Messenger of God? He replied, “Knowledge.”<sup>55</sup>

Although the faculty of imagination is powerful since it can bring things of opposite nature together, it also has limitations. This characteristic of the faculty which is both powerful and limited or “vast and narrow” reflects the reality of imagination which is “both/and” or “neither/nor.” Imagination does not have the ability to receive anything from the spiritual or sensory realms except as a form. This means that the faculty cannot receive disengaged meanings from material substratum or cannot receive meanings of things as they are in themselves, disengaged from forms. This unique feature of the faculty explains why it perceives knowledge in the form of milk, honey, wine or pearl; Islam as a dome or a pillar; the Qur’ān in the form of butter or honey and God in the form of a human being or light.<sup>56</sup>

## 5.0 The Causes of Dreams

Ibn al-‘Arabī states, “Dreams have a place, a locus and a state. Their state is sleep (*nawm*)...”<sup>57</sup> Sleep is considered to produce ease (*rāḥa*) to human beings because their senses no longer have to work with the

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<sup>54</sup> The Qur’ān 12:44, 100.

<sup>55</sup> *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, Interpretation of Dreams (ta’ābir)* Book 87:154, accessed April 9, 2020, <http://hadithcollection.com/download-sahih-bukhari.html?start=80>

<sup>56</sup> Chittick, “World of Imagination,” 59. These examples are drawn from ḥadīths found in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*. For details see Chittick, *Sufi Path of Knowledge*, 397, note no. 14.

<sup>57</sup> From *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkīyya* (II 378. 24) quoted in Chittick, *Sufi Path of Knowledge*, 120.

absence of manifest sensory things. At night the human soul is overcome by weariness (*ta'ab*) after the activity or “motion” it goes through during the waking state. Ibn al-‘Arabī also says sleep is of two kinds. The first kind is the transferal (*intiḳāl*) sleep. In this kind of sleep only a certain amount of rest is achieved since the weariness of the soul is not necessarily reduced. It is in this type of sleep that dreams take place. Ibn al-‘Arabī states, “I call this state a transferal [sleep] since meanings are transferred from their disengagement (*tajrīd*) from substrata into a state of being clothed in substrata...”<sup>58</sup> The second kind of sleep consists of only rest, i.e., “pure and correct sleep.” This sleep is the one referred to in the Qur’ān<sup>59</sup> where God appointed night to be its time and for the body to rest from the weariness of the day earning a livelihood.<sup>60</sup>

What causes dreams? When humans are awake, Ibn al-‘Arabī explains, their five senses perceive a multitude of objects in the outside world. These perceptions of the sensory objects are “spiritualised” and stored in the soul’s storehouse of Treasury of Imagination (*khizānat al-khayāl*). These objects are “spiritualised” simply by the human act of perceiving them. Thus, these objects once they are perceived and stored in memory are no longer in corporeal form but are of a spiritualised nature. On the other hand, spiritual things or meanings known in the heart are “corporealised” or given form by the form-giving faculty (*al-quwwat al-muṣawwira*) of the soul. Thus, the Treasury of Imagination is full of images derived from both the Visible World of material objects and the Invisible World of meanings or intelligibles. Each image is a combination of attributes derived from both worlds. It is both subtle and dense, luminous and dark, clear and murky at the same time. Dreams occur when the human soul looks into what has been stored in the treasury to gain knowledge of its contents.<sup>61</sup> Ibn Al-Arabī describes the dream process as follows:

The instruments (of the soul) are transferred from the

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<sup>58</sup> From *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkīyya* (II 379. 24) quoted in Chittick, *Sufi Path of Knowledge*, 120.

<sup>59</sup> The Qur’ān, *Sūrat al-Nabā’* 78: 9-11; and *Sūrat al-Furqān* 25:47.

<sup>60</sup> Chittick, *Sufi Path of Knowledge*, 120.

<sup>61</sup> See Chittick, *Imaginal Worlds*, 72, 84, and Chittick, *Sufi Path of Knowledge*, 120.

manifest side (*ẓāhir*) of sense perception to its nonmanifest side (*bāṭin*) in order to see what has been established in the Treasury of Imagination (*khizānat al-khayāl*) ... thus the rational soul to which God has given ownership of the city (of the human being) looks upon what has been placed in its Treasury as is the habit of Kings who enter into their treasuries when they are alone to gain knowledge of what is in them.<sup>62</sup>

The storing of images and dreaming will always take place in human beings since they are endowed with the organs (*jawāriḥ*) and the sensory faculties to undertake these activities. However, Ibn Al-Arabī distinguishes between perfect treasuries and imperfect treasuries. Perfect treasuries are attained when a person possesses all the sense organs to perceive things. On the other hand, imperfect treasuries are attained when a person is deficient in any of the sense organs. For example, in the blind person, the forms of colours are not transferred into the treasury of imagination and in the case of the deaf, the form of sounds and verbal letters are not transferred into his treasury.<sup>63</sup>

Ibn al-‘Arabī maintains that everything human beings perceive in dreams is derived from what the imagination has apprehended through the senses in the waking state. He also says that the contents of dreams are of two types: first, the form of the thing was perceived in the sensory realm and second, the parts of the form were perceived in the sensory realm.<sup>64</sup>

Dreaming or the experience of perceiving imaginalised objects (*mutakhayyalāt*) can take place during the waking state. But it is called “unveiling” (*kashf*) and the person perceiving the image is called the “unveiler” (*mukāshif*). The images or visions seen during the waking state can be divided and categorised based on the “eye” that perceives them. Ibn al-‘Arabī distinguishes between the “eye of sense perception” which sees during wakefulness and “the eye of imagination” which is able to see during sleep and wakefulness. According to him, the use of which “eye” also determines the

<sup>62</sup> From *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkīyya* (II 378. 24) quoted in Chittick, *Sufi Path of Knowledge*, 120.

<sup>63</sup> Chittick, *Sufi Path of Knowledge*, 120.

<sup>64</sup> Chittick, *Imaginal Worlds*, 182, note no.1.

“cosmic” location of the vision during the waking state. If the vision is perceived by “the eye of sense perception” then the vision would be located at the macrocosmic level of the imaginal world i.e., discontinuous imagination. If on the other hand, the vision is perceived by “the eye of imagination” it would be located at the microcosmic level or the contiguous level of the soul.<sup>65</sup>

## 6.0 The Function and Significance of Dreams

### 6.1 The Epistemological Function of Dreams

For Ibn al-‘Arabī, dreams have an epistemological function because it is through dreams that humans can know the existence of the imaginal world and to discover its unique property of bringing together opposites (*al-jam‘ bayn al-aḍḍād*). This is because dreams like all other imaginal things possess the unique characteristics of being intermediate and ambiguous. In dreams, a person perceives corporeal things which are not corporeal but which possess corporeal forms. These things that he sees do not dwell in the world of corporeal bodies but in the imaginal world which is in the soul. Furthermore, in dreams, by means of the faculty of imagination, meanings (*ma‘anī*) and sensory forms (*ṣuwar maḥsūsa*) which normally are contradictory and mutually exclusive are brought together.<sup>66</sup> Imagination’s property of combining opposites has led Ibn al-‘Arabī to say that it manifests the divine Name “The Strong” (*al-Qawī*). Ibn al-‘Arabī says:

Hence nothing has truly gained possession of the (Divine) form except imagination. And this is something that no one can deny since he finds imagination in himself and he sees it in his dreams. Hence, he sees the impossible existence as existent.<sup>67</sup>

### 6.2 Knowledge of the Nature of Existence

The faculty of imagination, which makes dreams possible, provides

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<sup>65</sup> Chittick, *Imaginal Worlds*, 88-89.

<sup>66</sup> Chittick, *Sufi Path of Knowledge*, 115.

<sup>67</sup> From *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkīyya* (IV 325. 2) quoted in Chittick, *Sufi Path of Knowledge*, 116.

the clearest access for human beings to know the nature of existence i.e., “everything other than God” (*mā siwā Allāh*).<sup>68</sup> The characteristics of dreams are similar with those of existence itself. Dreams and existence differ only in terms of their cosmic level: dreams occur at the microcosmic level of the human soul while existence takes place at the level of the cosmos itself. Similarly, if the dream image is a (*barzakh*) between meanings and sensory forms which dwell in the human soul which itself is a *barzakh* between the human spirit and body, existence is a *barzakh* between Being and nothingness. Just as dreams are ambiguous and difficult to describe because the nature of the image is both intelligible and sensory, spiritual and corporeal, the same holds true for the nature of existence. Hence, existence is both visible and invisible, known and unknown, multiple and one, “He/not he” (*huwa lā huwa*). To describe this ambiguous situation, Ibn al-‘Arabī gives the example of the person who perceived his form in a mirror. In one respect, he knows for certain that he has perceived his form and in another respect, he knows that he has not perceived his form.<sup>69</sup> As God said in the Qur’ān, “You did not throw when you threw”.<sup>70</sup> Thus, for Ibn al-‘Arabī, all of existence is imagination and only God is the real (*al-Ḥaqq*).

Dreams are given by God to humans, Ibn al-‘Arabī asserts, in order for them to discover the mystery of cosmic ambiguity and the constant transmutation (*tahawwul*) of existence. According to him, it is in this world of dreams that new creation is clearly witnessed since it is in dreams that a person perceives forms which are continually being created and constantly being transformed. Just as forms of a dream when interpreted are the states of the dreamer, correspondingly the forms of the cosmos are the states or self-disclosures of God.<sup>71</sup> Ibn al-‘Arabī elucidates this as follows:

The reality of imagination is continual change in every state and manifestation in every form. There is no existence that does not accept change except God and

<sup>68</sup> Chittick, *Sufi Path of Knowledge*, 113.

<sup>69</sup> Chittick, *Sufi Path of Knowledge*, 113 and 118.

<sup>70</sup> The Qur’ān, *Sūrat al-Anfāl* 8:17. See Chittick, *Sufi Path of Knowledge*, 118.

<sup>71</sup> Chittick, *Sufi Path of Knowledge*, 118-9.

there is nothing in verified Being (*al-wujūd al-muḥaqqaq*) except God...<sup>72</sup>

... Through the speed of the transmutation of the imaginal form, He calls the attention of intelligent dreamers to the fact that in the sensory world of fixed engendered (*kawnī*) existence there are transmutations at every instant, even though the eyes and the senses do not perceive them except in speech and movement.<sup>73</sup>

## 7.0 Dream Interpretation: Symbols and Interpretation

Dreams need interpretation (*ta'bīr*) if we are to derive knowledge from them. Dream interpretation requires that one goes beyond the images or symbols to arrive at their real meaning. The word *ta'bīr* is derived from *'b.r.* which signifies “crossing over”, thus, “to traverse”, “to pass”. The interpreter (*mu'abbir*) is one who “crosses over” from the sensory form of the dream to the meaning which has taken on a form.<sup>74</sup> Ibn al-'Arabī explains the process of dream interpretation as follows:

Reporting (*ikhbār*) about things is called “expression” (*ibāra*) and interpreting dreams is called “interpretation” (*ta'bīr*). This is because the expresser/interpreter “crosses over” (*ubūr*) by means of what he says. In other words, by means of his words he passes (*jawāz*) from the presence (*ḥadra*) of his own self to the self of the listener. Hence, he transfers his words from imagination to imagination since the listener imagines to the extent of his understanding. Imagination may or may not coincide (*taṭābuq*) with imagination, that is, the imagination of the speaker with that of the listener. If it coincides, this is called his “understanding”

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<sup>72</sup> From *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkīyya* (II 313. 12) quoted in Chittick, *Sufi Path of Knowledge*, 118.

<sup>73</sup> From *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkīyya* (III 198. 23) quoted in Chittick, *Sufi Path of Knowledge*, 119.

<sup>74</sup> Chittick, *Sufi Path of Knowledge*, 119.

(*fahm*); if it does not coincide, he has not understood...<sup>75</sup>

Dream interpretation has always been considered by Muslims as an important science. The Qur’ān mentions it as a prophetic science and from the Ḥadīth we know that the Prophet (ﷺ) used to practice it. In fact, there is a Ḥadīth which states that the Prophet (ﷺ) used to say to his Companions, “If any of you has seen a dream, let him tell it to me and I will interpret it for him.”<sup>76</sup> Ibn al-‘Arabī postulates that in order for human beings to understand their dreams upon waking up, they need them to be interpreted and likewise, at the level of existence, only upon death do they “wake up” to the cosmic dream of God and find the interpretation of this dream. He quotes the following Ḥadīth to support his notion of the symbolic nature of existence: “Men are asleep but when they die they wake up.”<sup>77</sup> However, he says that the prophets and the gnostics are able to know through faith and “unveiling” (*kashf*) that in the state of ordinary wakefulness they are dreaming and the situation in which they are dwelling is but a dream.<sup>78</sup> This means that the prophets and gnostics know that everything they perceive in their daily lives are merely symbols which point to something that lies beyond them which is the Real or absolute Reality (*al-Ḥaqq*). Thus, whatever they experience is for them a form manifesting an aspect of divine Existence or a symbol representing an aspect of divine Reality.<sup>79</sup>

Ibn al-‘Arabī says that a prophet who perceives symbols in the phenomenal world which itself in truth is a dream is similar to a man who is dreaming in a dream: “The whole of his life is nothing but a dream within a dream.”<sup>80</sup> The majority of people however, live attached to the lowest level of Being, that of sensible and corporeal

<sup>75</sup> From *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkīyya* (III 454. 1) quoted in Chittick, *Sufi Path of Knowledge*, 119.

<sup>76</sup> Dārimī, *Ru’yā* 13; Ahmad II 146, as quoted in Chittick, *Sufi Path of Knowledge*, 396 note no.10.

<sup>77</sup> This ḥadīth is not found in the standard collections although it is frequently cited by Ibn Al-‘Arabī and other Sufīs.

<sup>78</sup> Chittick, *Sufi Path of Knowledge*, 120.

<sup>79</sup> Toshihiko Izutsu, *Sufism and Taoism*, (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten Publishers, 1981), 12.

<sup>80</sup> From Ibn al-‘Arabī, *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam* trans. R. W. J. Austin, (Lahore: Suhail Academy, 1988) quoted in Izutsu, *Sufism and Taoism*, 9.

things and to them, this is the only real world since it is tangible and perceivable through the senses. These people never think of going beyond the veil of phenomenal world and recognizing its symbolic structure. It does not occur to them to interpret the forms of the things around them therefore, inadvertently they are asleep.<sup>81</sup>

Ibn al-‘Arabī in the footsteps of al-Ghazzālī, suggests that imagination and the world of dreams provide the key to understanding eschatological data. Only imagination can provide the means to grasp the meaning of the reports in the Qur’ān and Ḥadīth on life after death which are comprised of logically impossible events. This is because imagination is able to combine opposites and contradictions.<sup>82</sup> The Qur’ān establishes a clear relationship between sleep and death as demonstrated for example in *Sūrat al-Zumar* 39:42<sup>83</sup> and the Prophet (ﷺ) called sleep “the brother of death.” In addition, many of the Ḥadīth that describe after-death experience explicitly state the embodiment of works and of meanings. For example, the Ḥadīth mentions that good deeds will appear as lovely people and evil deeds as ugly old hags and evil works will turn into dogs or pigs.<sup>84</sup> Such traditional data support the suggestion that the perceptions that occur during dreams are similar to those of the dead.<sup>85</sup>

All the experiences of the grave as described in the Ḥadīth literature take place while the human spirit is connected to the imaginal body in the isthmus (*barzakh*), i.e., the period between death and resurrection.<sup>86</sup> Ibn al-‘Arabī says the form that may be seen by the saints when they leave their corporeal bodies at death are for example, works, knowledge, angels, a Divine Name related to

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<sup>81</sup> Izutsu, *Sufism and Taoism*, 12.

<sup>82</sup> Chittick, *Sufi Path of Knowledge*, 121.

<sup>83</sup> “It is God that takes the souls (of men) at death; and those that died not (He takes) during their sleep: Those on whom He has passed the decree of Death, He keeps back (from returning to life), but the rest He sends (to their bodies) for a term appointed. Verily in this are Signs for those who reflect.”

<sup>84</sup> Chittick, “World of Imagination,” 60.

<sup>85</sup> Chittick, “World of Imagination.”

<sup>86</sup> This period is clearly established in the *Ḥadīth* literature and the Qur’ān commentators say it is the object of reference in the verse *Sūrat al-mu’minūn* 23:100. See Chittick, “World of Imagination,” 60.



God’s Acts, a Name of the Attributes etc. and they appear in images that provide a foretaste of Paradise. He also states that each of the categories of form—twelve of them—represents an experience of meanings since in the isthmus “meanings become embodied and manifested in shapes and sizes, so they take upon forms.”<sup>87</sup>

## 8.0 Conclusion

From Ibn al-‘Arabī’s point of view, dreams provide humankind with the means to attain knowledge of the imaginal world. According to him, this imaginal realm has both a subjective and an objective dimension, the fact that human beings dream indicates that there must be a faculty they possess which allows them to dream. This is the subjective aspect of imagination. Ibn al-‘Arabī also says that these dream images are not merely hallucinations of the subject but they have an imaginal existence either at the microcosmic or macrocosmic level which allows them to “exist” as “subtle bodies,” i.e., things that possess both corporeal and spiritual characteristics. This aspect of dreams constitutes the objective dimension which provides imagination with an ontological status.

From the above discussion, it is evident that for Ibn al-‘Arabī, knowledge of imagination and its functions enables human beings to attain knowledge of the true nature of things and also contributes in a very important and profoundly significant way to our understanding of some of the fundamental teachings of religion. There are many important aspects of religion which cannot be explained by rational thought because they defy or transcend the laws of logic and the experiential categories of the spatio-temporal order such as that pertaining to the World of Spirits, eschatological events and the human posthumous states. According to Ibn al-‘Arabī, by the powers of imagination, aspects of religious teachings which transcend the limitations of rational thought and experiential categories of space and time, can be understood and their full meanings and implications become known. This is due to the fact that by its very nature, imagination which is intermediate between the spiritual and corporeal

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<sup>87</sup> From *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkīyya* (II 295. 30) quoted in Chittick, “World of Imagination,” 61.

domains possesses the unique ability to combine characteristics of both dimensions.

Furthermore, Ibn al-‘Arabī also maintains that it is only through imagination or unveiling (*kashf*) that man can perceive and know of the meanings behind God’s self-disclosure.<sup>88</sup> God cannot be compared to anything in creation since it results from God’s Act, manifests Him or His Names and Attributes. On one hand, God is incomparable to his creation and on the other, creation reflects or manifests God. In order to know God, man must possess knowledge of both His incomparability (*tanzīh*) relation to creation, as well as His similarity (*tashbīh*) to it. Reason can only know what God is not or His Incomparability (*tanzīh*). Imagination however, has the power to grasp God’s similarity (*tashbīh*). Therefore, in order to attain knowledge of God, man must not only know God through his reason (*‘aql*) but also through his imagination.<sup>89</sup>

The insistence of the West to rely only on sense perceptions and rational explanations as modes of acquiring knowledge of the nature of things and reality has paralyzed or atrophied the powers of imagination, if not diminished it altogether.<sup>90</sup> The universal phenomenon of dreams cannot be explained solely from the psychological, sociological and historical aspects as it has so often been done in the West since dreams do possess a metaphysical dimension which cannot simply be disregarded. In this respect, the works of Muslims thinkers such as Ibn al-‘Arabī on the metaphysical dimension and basis of dreams provide invaluable material for our understanding of the universally fascinating phenomenon of dreams and its relation to the power of human imagination and the intermediate World of Images.

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<sup>88</sup> Chittick, *Sufi Path of Knowledge*, 113.

<sup>89</sup> Chittick, *Imaginal Worlds*, 72.

<sup>90</sup> Henry Corbin, “Visionary Dream in Islamic Spirituality,” 408.

## TRANSLITERATION TABLE

### CONSONANTS

Ar=Arabic, Pr=Persian, OT=Ottoman Turkish, Ur=Urdu

Ar	Pr	OT	UR	Ar	Pr	OT	UR	Ar	Pr	OT	UR	
ء	ء	ء	ء	ز	z	z	z	گ	—	g	g	g
ب	b	b	b	ژ	—	—	ʀ	ل	l	l	l	l
پ	—	p	p	ژ	—	zh	j	م	m	m	m	m
ت	t	t	t	س	s	s	s	ن	n	n	n	n
ث	—	—	ṭ	ش	sh	sh	ş	ه	h	h	h <sup>1</sup>	h <sup>1</sup>
ث	th	th	th	ص	ş	ş	ş	و	w	v/u	v	v/u
ج	j	j	c	ض	ḏ	ḏ	ḏ	ی	y	y	y	y
چ	—	ch	çh	ط	ṭ	ṭ	ṭ	ة	-ah	—	—	-a <sup>2</sup>
ح	ḥ	ḥ	ḥ	ظ	ẓ	ẓ	ẓ	ال	al <sup>3</sup>	—	—	—
خ	kh	kh	kh	ع	‘	‘	‘	—	—	—	—	—
د	d	d	d	غ	gh	gh	ğh	—	—	—	—	—
ڈ	—	—	d	ف	f	f	f	—	—	—	—	—
ذ	dh	dh	dh	ق	q	q	k	—	—	—	—	—
ر	r	r	r	ك	k	k/g	k/ñ	—	—	—	—	—

<sup>1</sup> – when not final

<sup>2</sup> – at in construct state

<sup>3</sup> – (article) al - or l-

### VOWELS

	Arabic and Persian	Urdu	Ottoman Turkish
Long	ا	ā	ā
	آ	Ā	—
	و	ū	ū
	ي	ī	ī
Doubled	ي	iy (final form ī)	iy (final form ī)
	و	uww (final form ū)	uvv
	و	uvv (for Persian)	uvv
Diphthongs	و	au or aw	ev
	ی	ai or ay	ey
Short	ا	a	a or e
	ا	u	u or ū
	ا	i	o or ö
	ا	i	i

### URDU ASPIRATED SOUNDS

For aspirated sounds not used in Arabic, Persian, and Turkish add h after the letter and underline both the letters e.g. جھ jh گھ gh

For Ottoman Turkish, modern Turkish orthography may be used.

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