



"The Paraclete will come (15:26; 16:7, 8, 13) as Jesus has come into the world (5:43; 16:28; 18:37) ... The Paraclete will take the things of Christ (*the things that are mine, ek tou emou*) and declare them (16:14-15). Bishop Fison describes the humility of the Spirit, 'the true Holy Spirit of God does not advertise Herself: She effaces Herself and advertises Jesus.' ... It is by the outgoing activity of the Spirit that the divine life communicates itself in and to the creation. The Spirit is God-in-relations. The Paraclete is the divine self-expression which *will be and abide with you, and be in you* (14:16-17). The Spirit's work is described in terms of utterance: *teach you, didasko* (14:26); *remind you, hypomimnesko* (15:26), *testify, martyro* (15:26), *prove wrong, elancho* (16:8), *guide into truth, hodego* (16:13) *speak, laleo* (16:13, twice), *declare, anangello* (16:13, 14, 15). The johannine terms describe verbal actions which intend a response in others who will *receive (lambano)*, *see (theoreo)*, or *know (ginosko)* the Spirit. Such speech-terms link the Spirit with the divine Word. The Spirit's initiatives imply God's personal engagement with humanity. The Spirit comes to be with others; the teaching Spirit implies a community of learners; forgetful persons need a prompter to remind them; one testifies expecting heed to be paid; one speaks and declares in order to be heard. The articulate Spirit is the correlative of the listening, Spirit informed community. The final Paraclete passage closes with a threefold repetition of the verb *she will declare (anangello)*, 16:13-15. The Spirit will *declare the things that are to come* (v. 13), and she will *declare* what is Christ's (vv. 14, 15). The things of Christ are a message that must be heralded." (Stevick 2011, 292-4)

# HOLY SPIRIT APOKALYPSIS

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## THE CENTRALITY OF THE DIVINE FEMININE IN SUFISM\*

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This paper examines the concept of the Divine Feminine from the Sufi tradition (and its roots) with questions regarding the Sufi definition of the Divine Feminine, the various techniques used to experience it, the nature of the experiences, and the ultimate intentions of the Islamic mystics known for engaging in such practices. Through an investigation involving examinations of Sufi teachings that the female body is the locus of continuous theophany of the Divine in human beings, explorations of the cult of Prophet Muhammad's daughter Fatima, comparisons of Tantric philosophical tendencies shared by both the ancient Dravidian world and Islam, analyses of songs chanted by a Sufi Order from Cairo, visionary experiences of mystics from various traditions, and Islamic techniques of sacred sex as revealed in Hadith and Sufi erotic poetry, it has been gathered that Allah is, as defined by numerous Sufis, the feminine form of the ultimate reality.

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The Eternal Feminine  
Draws us heavenward.  
—Goethe



The world-famous Islamic Sufi poet **Mevlana Jalaluddin Rumi** (1207 - 1273) writes: "Woman is the radiance of God; she is not your beloved. She is the Creator—you could say that she is not created."<sup>[1]</sup> This paper calls attention to an unexpected and little explored fact of immense significance in Islam: at the center of Islam abides the Divine Feminine.

Before the Prophet of Islam, Muhammad, brought the religion of Islam to Arabia, the Arabs were a polytheistic people. Hindu merchants frequently passed

through Makkah, a major trading hub. Ancient Indian Vedic texts refer to Makkah as a place where *Alla* The Mother Goddess was worshiped. In Sanskrit, Alla means "mother." This name was connected to the Hindu Goddess *Ila*. She was the consort of the Hindu God *Siva* in his form known as *Il*, and this form of *Siva* was known and worshiped in pre-Islamic Makkah. A great deal of cultural and spiritual interchange took place between the merchants of Makkah and India.

According to some scholars however, the ancient Arabs believed that Allah (the greatest God) had entrusted the discharge of the various functions of the universe to different (lesser) gods and goddesses.

People would therefore turn to these gods and goddesses to invoke their blessings in all sorts of undertakings.<sup>[2]</sup> The ancient Arabs prayed to these lesser gods and goddesses to intercede before Allah and to pass their desires on to Allah. As part of their religious practices, they visited Makkah. In Makkah was a large cube-like building known as the Ka'ba. This temple contained three hundred sixty idols. Those who were visiting the great city of Makkah as pilgrims would circumambulate the Ka'ba as part of their religious rites.<sup>[3]</sup> The pre-Islamic Arabs had a custom of performing a sevenfold circumambulation of the Ka'ba completely naked. Men performed this in the daytime and women at night.



The door of the Ka'ba is in the northeastern wall. On the outside, in the corner east of the door and 1.5 meters above the ground, the famous "Black Stone" (*Hajar Al-Aswad*) is found. This Black Stone is now in pieces, three large parts, and smaller fragments, which are tied together with a silver band. The eminently feminine *yon*i<sup>[4]</sup> form of the Black Stone's setting is remarkable. There are several theories on the origin of the Black Stone: a meteor, lava, or basalt. Its color is reddish black, with some red and yellow particles. Its original diameter is

estimated to have been 30 cm. The identity of the Black Stone with the Great Goddess and with the moon is recognized by the Hulama - the rationalist school of Islam.<sup>[5]</sup>

Inside the Ka'ba there were fresco paintings including those of Abraham and the "Virgin Mary" with the baby Jesus.<sup>[6]</sup> When Muhammad retook Makkah he began a program of removing the pagan influences from the Ka'ba, the most holy of Muslim sites. He removed many frescoes and images that he considered inauspicious but he specifically left on the walls a fresco of the "Virgin Mary" and her child. The *Qur'an* obligates every believer to make a pilgrimage to Makkah at least once in his or her lifetime, if finances permit.<sup>[7]</sup> Since the time of Muhammad, during the *Tawaf* (circumambulation of the Ka'ba)<sup>[8]</sup> pilgrims kiss or touch the black stone as they make circuit around the Ka'ba.

Ben-Jochannan who has studied the polytheistic religions of the Arabian peninsula points out that before Muhammad, Makkah was a holy site to the worshipers of El'Ka'ba (a goddess). Her worshipers knelt at her symbol, a jet black stone.<sup>[9]</sup> This jet-black stone was probably a meteorite, and the *Hajar Al-Aswad* was once known as the 'Old Woman'.<sup>[10]</sup> Popular tradition relates how Abraham, when he founded the Ka'ba, bought the land from an old woman to which it belonged. She however consented to part with it only on the condition that she and her descendents should have the key of the place in their keeping.<sup>[11]</sup> Today the stone is served by men called *Beni Shaybah* (the Sons of the Old Woman).

The crescent moon goddess (and virgin warrior Goddess of the morning star), Al-Uzza, was known to the pre-Islamic Arabs as "the Mighty." Some scholars believe that in very ancient times, it was she who was



considered enshrined in the black stone of Makkah, where she was served by priestesses. Her sacred grove of acacia trees once stood just south of Makkah, at Nakla. The Acacia tree was sacred to the Arabs who made the idol of Al-Uzza from its wood.<sup>[12]</sup>

Stones, similar to the black stone of the Ka'ba, were worshipped by Arabs in most parts and by the Semitic races generally. The Kabyles of Kabylia in Northern Algeria say their first Great Mother goddess was turned to stone. Other names of the goddess are Kububa, Kuba, Kube and the Latin Cybele.<sup>[13]</sup> Other scholars say that this meteorite was brought to Makkah by the Sabeans or the Ethiopians and state that the goddess who dwelt in the sacred black stone was given the title *Shayba* (see *Beni Shaybah* - the Sons of the Old Woman, above) who represented the Moon in its threefold existence - waxing, (maiden), full (pregnant mother) and waning (old wise woman).<sup>[14]</sup> Although the word *Ka'ba* itself means 'cube', it is very close to the word *ku'b* meaning 'woman's breast'.<sup>[15]</sup>

Sufism cherishes the esoteric secret of woman, even though Sufism is the esoteric aspect of a seemingly patriarchal religion. Muslims pray five times a day facing the city of Makkah. Inside every Mosque is a niche, or recess, called the *Mihrab* - a vertical rectangle curved at the top that points toward the direction of Makkah. The Sufis know the *Mihrab* to be a visual symbol of an abstract concept: the transcendent vagina of the female aspect of divinity. In Sufism, woman is the ultimate secret, for woman is the soul. Toshihiko Izutsu writes, "The wife of Adam was feminine, but the first soul from which Adam was born was also feminine."<sup>[16]</sup>

The Divine Feminine has always been present in Islam. This may be surprising to many people who see Islam as a patriarchal religion. Maybe the reason for this misconception is the very nature of the feminine in Islam. The Divine Feminine in Islam manifests metaphysically and in the inner expression of the religion. The Divine Feminine is not so much a secret within Islam as She is the compassionate Heart of Islam that enables us to know Divinity. Her centrality demonstrates her necessary and life-giving role in Islam.

Sufism, or as some would define it "mystical Islam" has always honored the Divine Feminine. Of course, Allah has both masculine and feminine qualities, but to the Sufi, Allah has always been the Beloved and the Sufi has always been the Lover. The *Qur'an*, referring to the final Day, perhaps divulges a portion of this teaching: "And there is manifest to them of God what they had not expected to see."<sup>[17]</sup>

Islam is aniconic. In other words, images, effigies, or idols of Allah are not allowed, although verbal depiction abounds. There was a question long debated in Islam: can we see Allah? The Prophet said in a *hadith*,

"In Paradise the faithful will see Allah with the clarity with which you see the moon on the fourteenth night (the full moon)."

Theologians debated what this could mean, but the Sufis have held that you can see Allah even in this world, through the "eye of the heart." The famous Sufi martyr al-Hallaj said in a poem, "*a'aytu rabbi bi-'ayni qalbi*" (I saw my Lord with the eye of my heart). Relevant to the focus of this paper is that Sufis have always described this theophanic experience as the vision of a woman, the female figure as the object of *ru'yah* (vision of Allah).

There was a great Sufi Saint who was born in 1165 C.E. Besides Shi'a Muslims, numberless Sunni Ulemas called him "The Greatest Sheikh" (al-Shaykh al-Akbar).<sup>[18]</sup> His name was Muyiddin ibn al-'Arabi. He said, "To know woman is to know oneself," and "Whoso knoweth his self, knoweth his Lord." Ibn al-'Arabi wrote a collection of poems entitled *The Tarjuman al-ashwaq*. These are love poems that he composed after meeting the learned and beautiful Persian woman Nizam in Makkah. The poems are filled with images pointing to the Divine Feminine. His book *Fusus al-hikam*<sup>[19]</sup>, in the last chapter, relates that man's supreme witnessing of Allah is in the form of the woman during the act of sexual union. He writes, "The contemplation of Allah in woman is the highest form of contemplation possible: As the Divine Reality is inaccessible in respect of the Essence, and there is contemplation only in a substance, the contemplation of God in women is the most intense and the most perfect; and the union which is the most intense (in the sensible order, which serves as support for this contemplation) is the conjugal act." Allah as the Beloved in Sufi literature, the *ma'shuq*, is always depicted with female iconography.

A popular new book, *The Da Vinci Code*<sup>[20]</sup>, a thriller by Dan Brown, tells the story of a Harvard professor summoned to the Louvre Museum after a murder there to examine cryptic symbols relating to da Vinci's work. During the course of his investigation, he uncovers an ancient secret: the claim that Mary Magdalene represents the Divine Feminine, and that she and Jesus had a sexual relationship. While the book is a work of fiction, it does represent the force of the Divine Feminine to unveil Herself in the midst of religious traditions that have become altered through cultural accretions into anti-sexual, anti-pleasure and anti-feminine belief structures. There is also the worthy of note nonfiction work *The Woman With the Alabaster Jar: Mary Magdalen and the Holy Grail*<sup>[21]</sup> which presents the idea that Mary Magdalen was actually married to Jesus Christ and the Holy Grail is not a cup or chalice at all but Mary's womb as she carried the "bloodline" of Jesus to Egypt and then to Europe. The author, Margaret Starbird<sup>[22]</sup>, advances her theory by analyzing art of the dark ages and the "understood" meaning behind it. Starbird does an excellent job of researching European history, heraldry, the rituals of Freemasonry, medieval art, symbolism, psychology, mythology, religion, and the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures to discover that the meaning of the Holy Grail could be the lost bride of Jesus and the female child she carried within her.

Starbird's theological beliefs were profoundly shaken when she read *Holy Blood, Holy Grail*<sup>[23]</sup>, a book that dared to suggest that Jesus



Christ was married to Mary Magdalen and that their descendants carried on his holy bloodline in Western Europe. Shocked by such heresy, this Roman Catholic scholar set out to refute it, but instead found new and compelling evidence for the existence of the bride of Jesus. The roles of Muhammad's daughter Fatima and Mary are similar. The true line of the Prophet 'Isa; (Jesus) and his real teaching passing through Mary and into Europe mirrors the true line of the Imams (who propagated the real teachings of the Prophet Muhammad) who issued from the womb of Fatima. Fatima is regarded by some Sufis and theologians as the first spiritual head (*qutb*) of the Sufi fellowship.<sup>[24]</sup>

Among the Ghulat<sup>[25]</sup> there is much respect paid to the Divine Feminine. In the Ghulat group the Ahl-i-Haqq ("The People of Truth"), the Divine Feminine appears as the *Khatun-i Qiyamat* ([Lady of Resurrection](#)) who also is manifested as the mysterious angel Razbar (also Ramzbar or Remzebar). The writer, Frederic Macler, claims that the name Razbar is of Arabic origin and means "secret of the creator."<sup>[26]</sup> The term *qiyama* literally means, "rising" of the dead, and allegorically, it implies an idea denoting the rising to the next spiritual stage, and *qiyamat-i qubra* (great resurrection) means an attainment of the highest degree when a man becomes free from the ties of external laws, whom he shackles and transfigures into spiritual substance, which rejoins its divine sources.<sup>[27]</sup> "The King of the World was sitting on the water with His four associate angels (*chahar malak-i muqarrab*) when they suddenly saw the Pure Substance of Hadrat-i Razbar, the *Khatun-i Qiyamat* (Lady of the Resurrection). She brought out from the sea a round loaf of bread (*kulucha*), and offered it to the King of the World. By His order they formed a devotional assembly (*jam*), distributed the bread, offered prayers and exclaimed 'Hu!' Then the earth and the skies became fixed, the skies being that *kulucha*."<sup>[28]</sup>

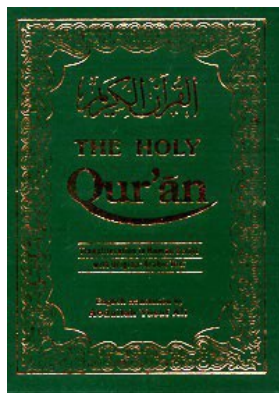
Another rendition of the emergence of the Lady of the Resurrection is as follows: "After this the Holder of the World and Creator of Man looked upon 'Azra'il with the eye of benefaction, and 'Azra'il became split into two parts, one exactly like the other, and from between these parts a drop of light emerged in the form of a loaf of *kulucha* bread. The Creator then said, "I appoint that person (*surat*) who became separated from 'Azra'il to be the Lady of the Resurrection (*Khatun-i Qiyamat*), who will on the Resurrection Day be the helper of human beings."<sup>[29]</sup>

The followers of Yarsanism, also known as the Yarisan, Aliullahi, Ali-Ilahi (i.e., "those who deify 'Ali"), Alihaq, Ahl-i Haqq ("The People of Truth") or Ahl-i Haq ("The People of the Spirit") (*Hak* or *Haqq*), are concentrated in southern Kurdistan in both Iran and Iraq. In each epoch there is a female avatar of the Universal Spirit, a reflection of the higher status of women in the Kurdish culture and tradition.<sup>[30]</sup>

What do those who study mystical Islam claim is the hidden meaning regarding the existence of the sexes in creation? These researchers perceive that the biological and psychological differences between the sexes are only hints of a more momentous significance hidden within the divinity Itself. Of course, Sufism does not argue against the Oneness of Allah. The quintessence of Allah transcends duality, yet the Ultimate Reality manifests qualities in creation that are dualistic.

In Kabbalah (a Jewish mystical tradition)<sup>[31]</sup>, just below the first Sphere (*sefirah*) of divine emanation known as Keter (meaning "crown", "summit" or "pinnacle"), lie the two roots of masculine and feminine, known as Hokhmah and *Binah*. Although they are not masculine and feminine, Hokhmah and Binah are the archetypes of the masculine and feminine. Binah is the Kabbalistic feminine symbol for 'Understanding', a prelude to wisdom." "Binah, the Great Mother, sometimes also called Marah, the Great Sea, is, of course, The Mother of All Living. She is the archetypal womb through which life comes into manifestation."<sup>[32]</sup> The "female" principle within God is personified and called by the name: Shekhinah (literally "dwelling"), a term familiar from classical Rabbinical literature. In the Kabbalah, however, the Shekhinah is not only included as a distinctive principle within the inner divine life, but this distinctive principle is explicitly, and quite graphically, described as female."<sup>[33]</sup>

The Divine Masculine and the Divine Feminine express two very distinct aspects of Allah. First, that Allah is Supreme is the principle of masculinity, and that Allah is Infinite is the principle of femininity.<sup>[34]</sup>



In the *Qur'an*, Allah reveals Himself by giving Himself ninety-nine names. These names are divided up by Islamic Ulama into the names of Majesty (*jala*) and the names of Beauty (*jamal*). The names of Majesty call to mind images of the stern and strict "father", while the names of Beauty call to mind images of a gentle and loving "mother." Allah did not exhaust Himself in creating the world; hence Allah still exists along with creation. Allah, in creating the world, is indicative of masculine qualities, such as achievement, strength, dynamism, severity, and rulership. Yet, Allah is also infinite compared to the finite world. This inconceivably extended aspect of Allah is the aspect of Allah that the Sufi often refers to in ecstatic poetry in the feminine gender. That is why Ibn al-'Arabi says Allah can be referred to as both Huwa (He) and Hiya (She). One of the drawbacks of the English language is that we do not give gender to nouns. Arabic, like the Romance languages, expresses words with gender. Many of the essential words regarding Allah are in the feminine gender in Arabic.<sup>[35]</sup>

In this paper, the author will analyze three of these words: the first is *al-Hakim*, the Wise; Wisdom is *hikmah*. In Arabic to say, for example, "Wisdom is precious," you could repeat the feminine pronoun: *al-hikmah hiya thaminah*, literally "Wisdom, she is precious." It is stated by some Sufi Sheikhs (Masters) that Sufism originally was named *Sophia*, which connects Sufism with the Christian Gnostic tradition, in which Wisdom is personified as a woman, the divine Sophia. The physical mother of Jesus was an external image of manifestation of the Virgin Sophia, the word "Sophia" stemming from *Sophos* (wisdom). The Gnostics, whose language was Greek, identified the Holy Spirit with Sophia, Wisdom; and Wisdom was considered female. The Virgin was closely associated by the early church with Wisdom, of the cathedral church at Constantinople, while the ascension of the Virgin Mary refers to the passing of Wisdom

into Immortality. The litany of the Blessed Virgin contains the prayer, "Seat of Wisdom, pray for us."

Julian of Norwich (1343-1420?), English religious writer, an anchoress, or hermit, called Jesus Christ, the second Person of the Roman Catholic "Holy Trinity", our Mother in Wisdom, and our Mother of Mercy or Compassion.<sup>[36]</sup> The latter title with the words "mercy" and "compassion" returns us to a subtle interpretation of the phrase *Bismillah ir-Rahman ir-Rahim*, often translated as "In the name of Allah the most Beneficent the most Merciful", but with the added gnosis that God can appear to a human being as the Divine Feminine and that the Divine Feminine is not confined to Christian or Islamic mystical intuitive apprehension of spiritual truths. St. Peter Chrysologos presented the Virgin as the seven-pillared temple which Wisdom had built for herself.<sup>[37]</sup> The aforementioned philosopher and Sufi, ibn al-Arabi, saw a young girl in Makkah surround by light and realized that, for him, she was an incarnation of the divine Sophia.<sup>[38]</sup>



Mary was born of an angelic annunciation; Fatima (the daughter of the Prophet Muhammad) was considered to come from the level of angels. She is considered by many Muslims as divine in origin and several variations of a major *hadith* describe how she was conceived on the night of *Mi'raj* (ascension). On this night **Gabriel took Muhammad to Jerusalem and then to Heaven**. While up in Heaven, he was offered some heavenly fruit, the seed of which was responsible for her conception, after the Prophet's return on the same night and making love to his beloved wife Khadija.

Fatima tul Zehra (Fatima the Radiant, Fatima the Brightest Star, Fatima-Star of Venus, Fatima-The Evening Star), the daughter of the Prophet, is the secret in Sufism. She is the *Hujjat* of 'Ali. In other words, she establishes the esoteric sense of his knowledge and guides those who attain to it. Through her perfume, we breathe paradise. Though she was his daughter, the Prophet Muhammad called her *Um Abi'ha* (mother of her father). What mystery was the Prophet hinting at by this statement? While Fatima Zehra was Muhammad's daughter, the *Rasulallah* (Prophet of God—Muhammad) understood that his gnosis was bestowed upon him from the Divine Feminine.

Fatima Fatir as representative of Allah's *Jamal*, saves humankind from Allah's *Jalal*. Esoterically, if it were not for Fatima (Mercy), Allah would never have sent Muhammad (Peace be upon him) and the Qur'an to humanity. The night is the exemplification of our sovereign Fatima, especially the "Night of Destiny" (*laylat al-Qadr*). Lady Fatima was chosen from all women to be The Mother source of Muhammad's lineage, the core of the generation of Muhammad. Through her, the progeny of the Prophet multiplies—through a woman.<sup>[39]</sup> The process of giving birth to the spirit is the feminine principle. That to which has been

given birth is the masculine. "This is why, in spiritual transformation and rebirth, only the masculine principle can be born, for the feminine principle is the process itself. Once birth is given to the spirit, this principle remains as Fatima, the Creative Feminine, the Daughter of the Prophet, in a state of potentiality within the spirit reborn."<sup>[40]</sup> Shi'as revere the person of Fatima, for she is the mother of the line of inspired Imams who embodied the divine truth for their generation. As such, Fatima is directly associated with Sophia, the divine wisdom, which gives birth to all knowledge of God. She has thus become another symbolic equivalent of the Great Mother. Lady Fatima (as) has various names near Allah (Exalted Be His Name), they are:

Fatima (Aleiha Assalam)

Siddiqah (the honest)

Al-Mubarakah (the blessed one)

Al-Tahirah (the pure)

Az-Zakiyah (the chaste)

Ar-Radhiatul Mardhiah (she who is gratified and who shall be satisfied)

Al-Mardiyyah (the one pleasing to Allah )

Al-Muhaddathah (a person other than a Prophet, which the angels speak to)

Az-Zahraa (the splendid)

Fatima was given the title of "Az-Zahraa" which means "the Resplendent One." That was because of her beaming face, which seemed to radiate light. However, others, who must keep their beliefs prudently concealed, know the Prophet Muhammad's daughter as "Fatima Fatir." In Her own sacred words She utters the truth, "There is no God beside me, neither in divinity nor humanity, neither in the Heavens nor on earth, outside of me, who am Fatima - Creator."

It is said by some Sufis that there is another great secret regarding Fatima. These Sufis say that she was a Prophet from the time of her father's death until the time of her death. After the Prophet's death, Fatima lived seventy-five days. During this time the Archangel Gabriel came to her and consoled her by telling her what her father was doing in the spiritual worlds, what his status was, and what would come about in the Islamic community after her death. Imam 'Ali wrote down what Fatima dictated to him. Her words were collected into what is known as the *Mushaf*. *Mushaf* refers to a collection of sahifa, which is singular for "page." The literal meaning of *Mushaf* is "The manuscript bound between two boards." In the early days of Islam, people used to write on leather and other materials. They either rolled the writings, what we know as a "scroll" in English, or kept the separable sheets and bound them together, in what could be called a *Mushaf*, a book in today's terms. Of course, the above narration requires more research and exegesis."... Fatima's book, I don't claim that it is *Qu'ran*, rather it contains what makes people need us and makes us in need of no one," stated Imam Sadiq.<sup>[41]</sup> According to the traditions of the Ahlul Bayt, Fatima's *Mushaf* is not a *Qu'ran*, but most definitely a revelation by Allah, to the Mistress of Women and Daughter of the Master of Prophets, just as He chose to make revelations to Moses' mother.

Sufis are taught to be aware of coincidences. They say that coincidences



are merely "Allah's orders", or "no coincidence, only Providence." Hagia Sophia (Greek, "Holy Wisdom") was the cathedral of Constantinople (today's Istanbul, Turkey).

The second word the author will consider, in this paper, is accounted the second most important name of Allah, and that is al-Rahman, the All-Merciful. The first *ayat* (verse) of Al-Fatiha (the most important chapter in the *Qu'ran*) firmly establishes that the two names Al-Rahman and Al-Rahim refer to Allah, the Supreme Power, and to Allah exclusively. The two names' etymology stems from the same root: RAHM, which can mean "Womb" or "place of origin." There is a *hadith qudsi* that specifically addresses that: Allah says, "I am al-Rahman. I created the womb and I derived its name from My name. I will be connected to whoever stays connected to it, and I will be cut off from whoever stays cut off from it."

Sister W.H.<sup>[42]</sup> believes that most translators, in translating these words, do not take into consideration the context in which Allah refers to Himself as Rahman or Rahim. Surah Maryam (19) is the Sura in which the name Al-Rahman is mentioned most frequently (sixteen times). In *ayat* 18 of this Sura, Maryam asks for protection from Al-Rahman against one whom she perceives as a man entering her private chambers, but who in fact is the Archangel Jibreel (Gabriel). Sister W.H. holds that Maryam is asking for protection from the Most Powerful, the Almighty, not mercy from "the Beneficent" as Rahman is often translated. Sister W.H. continues by stating that Maryam declares this asking for protection from Al-Rahman to the "Intruder" in order also to frighten the "Intruder," for which situation the appellation "the Merciful" or "the Most Gracious" would hardly instill fear, and hence also be unsuitable. In every instance of the usage of the name Al-Rahman in the *Qu'ran*, in the opinion of sister W.H., the only appropriate interpretation is expressed in the name The Almighty. Yet, as Cecilia Twinch perceives in her article *The Beauty of Oneness witnessed in the emptiness of the heart*<sup>[43]</sup>, "in this state of not knowing what the reality of the situation was, she turned to God with all her being, saying, 'I take refuge in the Merciful (Rahman) from you.' 'Consequently,' Ibn 'Arabi says, 'she was overwhelmed with a perfect state of the Divine Presence.'"<sup>[44]</sup>

Nevertheless, Sister W.H. recounts another example of the Almighty power of Al-Rahman, we have the description in Sura *Taha*, verse 5, that culminates when "Al-Rahman is established on the throne." Thus the Holy *Qu'ran* says, *Inna Rabba-kumulla-hullazi khalaqas-samawati wal-'rza fi sitati 'yamin sumas-tawa 'lal 'rsh*: "Your Guardian- Lord is Allah, Who created the heavens and the earth in six days, and is firmly established on the Throne."<sup>[45]</sup> This is the perfect image of power and authority, the assumption of full authority over everything.

Whatever sister W.H.'s interpretation, the concept of mercy is still relevant in this context. Note translations of the *Towrah* (Torah) of Moosa (Moses) use the word "Mercy-seat"; could this not be a translation of the name Al-Rahman as "Mercy" and *Al-aarsh* (throne) as "seat"? Bear in mind that these two names, Al-Rahman, Al-Rahim are part of the most ancient, profound and universal revelation of the Divine in the opinion of the Jewish people and the Muslims. Yet, is this concept of the "Mercy-

seat" limited to the Jewish people and the Muslims? No. The Egyptian Goddess *Isis* is one of the goddesses that has stood the test of time. Isis is the Greek form of more ancient names (Aset or Eset), and the name Isis is represented in hieroglyphics with a picture of a "throne." The throne represented the Feminine power of the Goddess, and the King when he ascends the throne, is actually drawing power from the throne upon which he sits. Halmasuit is the Hittite throne goddess that represents divine legitimization of earthy rulership.

An Doctuir, Ant-Athair Sean O Duinn, Department of Irish Mythology University of Limerick, gave a most interesting presentation on the personification of the Land as the Goddess as well as the place of the sacred well in Irish Mythology and early Irish Christianity. He explained that to the pre-Christian Irish, water was the source of all life. Eire, after whom the country was named, was the superior Goddess of water and fertility, the island of Ireland being the body of the goddess. The Irish language has no word for the coronation of a king. This is because Irish kings were not crowned; they were married to the goddess in a ceremony called *An Bainais* — the wedding. In the Bainais, the king received the land as his wife and the fruits of the land and all the wealth of an agricultural society came under his paternity as issued from the marriage.<sup>[46]</sup>

*Surah* 109 in the *Qu'ran*, al-Kawthar, gives an especially revealing look into the Prophet's feminine soul. It was revealed because his enemies had been taunting him that he had no sons, only daughters, while they had been given sons to perpetuate their patriarchal ways. Allah revealed this message of consolation to the Prophet: "We have given thee al-Kawthar ... surely the one who hates thee will be cut off (from progeny)." What is al-Kawthar? Al-Kawthar is a sacred pool of life-giving water in Paradise—a profoundly feminine symbol. The name of Kawthar is derived from the same root as *kathir* 'abundance', a quality of the supernal Infinite, the Divine Feminine. Allah established that Allah's feminine nature has primacy over Allah's masculine nature when Allah says in the *hadith qudsi*<sup>[47]</sup> "My mercy precedes My wrath" (*rahmati sabaqat ghadabi*). The Prophet also said, "Your body has its rights over you."

Eric Ackroyd, author of *A Dictionary of Dream Symbols: With an Introduction to Dream Psychology*<sup>[48]</sup> writes about water, "It is a feminine symbol, representing either your own femininity (whether you are a male or female), or your mother." In addition, the Ka'ba stood by a sacred spring, the Zemzem, whose sacred waters are drunk by all good Muslims.<sup>[49]</sup> The *Hajira* or "sudden departure" although applied to the events following 622 C.E. bears the same name as Hajira (Hagar), who discovered the spring of Zemzem flowing by Ishmael's foot when searching for water for him after the "sudden departure" of Ibrahim.

Therefore, we see the Divine Feminine, as the Source of Life, being expressed first by the means that humans may understand the Divine Feminine, in other words, Wisdom, being a feminine word, second, by the two most holy names of Allah: al-Rahman and al-Rahim which express in a universal way (spanning cultures as varied as Egyptian, Hittite and Celtic) that the Source of Life is the Divine Feminine.

However, the Divine Feminine does not always manifest in ways that most people think of as traditional, in other words: nurturing, embracing, caring, and so forth. She has a martial aspect too, and so it is not surprising that Al-Rahman wields power and can appropriately be called The Almighty. Pakistani-American artist Shahzia Sikander has explored the spiritual meaning of the Feminine in South Asia through her female images that blend veiled Muslim women and goddesses like Kali or Durga<sup>[50]</sup> in the same figure. By depicting the Divine Feminine in her art, she says, "I am interested in the multidimensions of the female identity. The goddess could be a figure of power. It refers to empowerment definitely. And yet there is a certain sort of dark side to it too..."<sup>[51]</sup>

Now the author will consider the third name, and perhaps the most outstanding of all: al-Dhat. This word, in Arabic, is also feminine. Allah is Beyond the Beyond, higher than any action, manner or condition, and any thought that any being may have.<sup>[52]</sup> This transcendence of all qualities denotes the Divine Feminine. The renowned Sufi master Najm al-Din Kubra wrote of the Dhat as the "Mother of the divine attributes." On this *makam* or "level of existence", femininity corresponds to interiority and masculinity to manifestation. The ancient Celtic Druids would perform a strange rite after two people married. The Druid would go into the house in which the marriage was consummated and reappear dressed in the bride's gown. He would do this to demonstrate the balance between the masculine and feminine aspects within himself.<sup>[53]</sup> The Druids were ancient Celtic priests, shamans and philosophers as described in *Neo-Shamanists and Pagans Today P3: From N. Pennick to Celtic/Northern Literature*.<sup>[54]</sup>

*Druid-Shaman-Priest: Metaphors of Celtic Paganism* by Leslie Jones further delves into the connection between the Druid and the Shaman. <sup>[55]</sup> "A Shaman is a man or woman who is able, at will, to enter into a non-ordinary state of consciousness in order to make contact with the spirit world on behalf of members of his or her community."<sup>[56]</sup> "The distinctive feature of family shamanism was participation by nearly all members of the family in ritual activities. At the same time, peoples of northeastern Siberia had shamans who played the main role in rituals. They included transvestite male and female shamans. During religious ceremonies (*kamlaniye*), such male shamans dressed in women's clothes and female shamans dressed in men's clothes. Transvestite men and women shamans were regarded as the most powerful."<sup>[57]</sup> Ibn al-'Arabi divulged, "I sometimes employ the feminine pronoun in addressing Allah, keeping in view the Essence." The perfection of the human state, *al-insan al-kamil*, means the perfection of both the masculine and feminine qualities together, and is symbolized by the marriage of Imam 'Ali (the nephew and brother-in-law of Muhammad) and Fatima (the daughter of Muhammad).

Love stories abound in all cultures: Romeo and Juliet, Orpheus and Eurydice, Tristan and Isolde, and in the Middle East, we find the stories of Yusuf and Zuleika, and Majnun and Layla. The story of Majnun and Layla was (and still is) widely known throughout the Islamic world. However, in the hands of Persian Sufi poets, the story became transformed into a symbol of the love of a human being for Allah. In Sufism, questing for Allah is similar to the European Grail quest in which

the Knight quests for a Chalice (the cup being a symbol of the female sexual organ). Layla, in Arabic, comes from the word *layl* meaning "night." The association of the Divine Feminine with Darkness and the Night is ubiquitous.

The Sumela Monastery, in Trabzon on the shore of the Black Sea, is an important site for the Divine Feminine in Christianity, and provides a connection with the concept of the Islamic Layla. "Sumela" is derived from the Greek words meaning "dark stone." Water drips down from a dark rock near the monastery. "Dark stone" has been a very ancient symbol of the Divine Feminine going back to pagan times, as has been posited in this paper with regard to the black stone of the Ka'ba.<sup>[58]</sup>

"These days, one of the most powerful archetypes being revived in feminist religion is Lilith, archetype of the 'dark' inner feminine. For ages this goddess had been cast aside and denigrated by patriarchal religion as a demoness, but now she is being looked at with renewed interest. To anyone following Lilith's career, it would be interesting to learn how she already had been rehabilitated centuries ago in Islamic Sufi guise. She is known to Muslims as Layla — of Layla and Majnun fame. Both names come from the same ancient Semitic root meaning 'night'. The old Akkadian form of her name was Lilitu, from the root L-Y-L, with the feminine ending in - t; it took the form Lilith in Hebrew.

The Arabic name Layla is from the same root with a feminine ending often used in Arabic girls' names."<sup>[59]</sup>

The blackness of night is an essential quality of the Divine Feminine. The "black cloak" of Muhammad is very famous. The Sufis sing about *kali kamaliya vala* (the one wrapped in the black blanket) in their *qawwalis* (spiritual songs). Muhammad's prayer rug was also black, as was the first flag of Islam.

Majnun went crazy because of his love for Layla. He went out of his mind. The goal of the Sufi is called *fana* or "annihilation", in which the Sufi literally goes out of his or her socially conditioned mind. *Manjun* means someone not in an ordinary state of mind. To quote the Diwan of Shaykh Ahmad al-'Alawi: "I drew near to Layla's dwelling, when I heard her call. O would that sweet voice never fall silent! She favored me, drew me toward her, and took me into her precinct; then with words most intimate addressed me. She sat by me, then came closer, and raised the garment that veiled her from my gaze; she took me out of myself, amazed me with her beauty ... She changed me and transfigured me, marked me with her special seal, pressed me to her, granted me a unique station and named me with her name."

In the nighttime, all that is visible during the day vanishes into the darkness. Boundaries fade away at night. Forms are no longer visible. This apparent lack of manifestation that takes place during the night is directly connected to the unmanifested aspect of the Divine Nature, Allah as Unmanifest. "Aba'ad," is a very well known song from the Persian Gulf region. The full-length song is twenty and a half minutes in length. Many dancers and musicians in the United States know this song as "Layla, Layla" because about fourteen minutes into the song the lyrics sing



"Layla" many times over and over again. The Saudi Arabian vocalist who made this song popular was Mohammed Abdou. "Layla, Layla, Layla, Allah, Allah, Layla", go the lyrics, intertwining the name Layla with the name Allah.

At the top of (or beyond) the Kabbalistic Tree of Life is found three mysterious "veils of negative existence (unmanifestation)." These veils contain and conceal the unmanifest aspects of the entire Tree of Life. The veils are traditionally not illustrated on the Tree of Life. When they are, they are drawn as three semi-circles above Keter. The most remote veil is *Ain*, which represents absolute negative existence. Complete darkness is a symbol of this state. The seed grows in the darkness of the earth and the fetus develops in the darkness of the womb. Each Sheikh has a woman that develops him into a Sheikh. Therefore, in this seemingly patriarchal mystery tradition (Sufism), we see that woman is the Hidden Initiatrix, the Shadow Guide, the Blackness that births the Light. "Da tariki, tariqat"- "In the darkness, the Path," is a Sufic maxim. The void has been described as a dark cave, a shadowy *mihrab*, the Concealed or Secret Radiance, the Black Stone of the Ka'ba, Ghayb *ul-Ghaib* (Mystery of Mysteries), Amma (Darkness), and returning to the Womb of Fatima ('Alaiha Assalam) The Mother.

The Prophet Muhammad pronounced an utterance of supreme compassion and love for the feminine when he was returning from a battle with his Companions. They came upon a group of women and children. One woman had lost her child and was going around looking for him, her breasts flowing with milk. When she found her child, she joyfully put him to her breast and nursed him. The Prophet asked his Companions, "Do you think that this woman could throw her son in the fire?" They answered "No." He then said, "Allah is more merciful to His servants than this woman to her son."<sup>[60]</sup> Jalal al-Din Rumi, in an amazing passage of the Masnavi on the Return to Allah, made reference to the story of the infant Moses and addressed Allah directly as "Mother":

"On Resurrection Day, the sun and moon are released from service:  
and the eye beholds the Source of their radiance,  
then it discerns the permanent possession from the loan,  
and this passing caravan from the abiding home.  
If for a while a wet nurse is needed,  
Mother, return us to your breast.  
I don't want a nurse; my Mother is more fair.  
I am like Moses whose nurse and Mother were the same."<sup>[61]</sup>

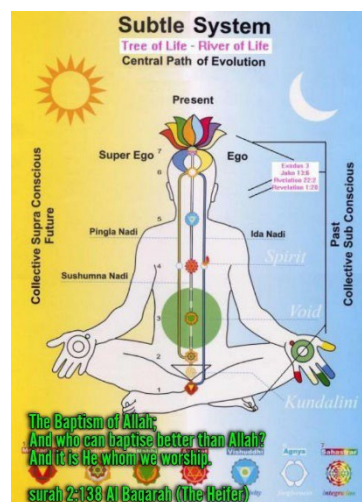
Nick Herbert, a renowned physicist, states, "Science has succeeded (perhaps too well) in taming Nature; now it's time to learn how to woo Her, seeing Her not as a collection of dead parts but approaching Nature as the very Body of the Beloved."<sup>[62]</sup>

In Islam, there is not the same condemnation of the body as is found in many of the major Christian sects. Spirit is often depicted in Christianity as "male" and the body as "female." The body is not an obstacle in Islam, but rather it is a means to attain enlightenment. Sexual pleasure is not shunned in Islam, but rather incorporated into daily life. To begin with, the body itself is given great significance in Islam when one takes into

account the bodily postures that are a necessary and essential part of the compulsory five times a day, prayer. During *salat* (Islamic prayers) the body is metamorphosed into a manifestation of the sacred. These bodily postures are very similar to the bodily postures one observes in Hindu Hatha Yoga, which is a branch of Tantric Yoga. Islam's unitary, holistic view of the body and spirit is evident in the alchemical saying of the Shi'ite Imams, "*arwahuna ajsaduna wa-ajasaduna arwahuna*" (our spirits are our bodies and our bodies are our spirits).

One of the primary goals of the Sufi is to reawaken the body to an awareness of it being an expression of the divine. The body is not basically sinful (as in the Roman Catholic Church's conception of Original Sin) in Islam, rather the body is the seat of the highest reality created by Allah in the whole universe. To understand the Divine Feminine in Sufism, it is helpful to understand a few basics of Tantra Yoga.

Therefore, the author asks the reader's indulgence as he briefly explores Tantra Yoga. The author believes the reader will be richly rewarded for his or her patience. The basic tenet of Tantrism is that matter, and therefore the body, is also a manifestation of Sakti power, that is, the power emanating from the feminine aspect of Divine Reality. In the domain of the spiritual life, the same term Sakti signifies the celestial energy that allows one to enter into contact with the Divinity. Hence, the body must not be opposed or despised. Tantra has been one of the most neglected branches of Indian spiritual studies despite the considerable number of texts devoted to this practice, which dates back to the 5th-9th century C.E. Tantra itself means, "to weave, to expand, and to spread", and according to Tantric masters, the fabric of life can provide true and ever-lasting fulfillment only when all the threads are woven according to the pattern designated by nature.<sup>[63]</sup> Sex, being a part of nature, then is considered part of the fabric of life. The physical, spiritual and mental cannot be separated. To the Tantrics, the body is a form of consciousness, but this consciousness is veiled.



There is a form of Tantra, entitled "Kundalini Tantra." This is the Yoga of sexual intercourse. In the classical literature of hatha yoga *Kundalini* literally means coiling, like a snake. *Kundalini* can be understood as an immanent and latent liberating power, or as potentiality of liberation. This power lies in wait (is coiled) at the base of the spine of the average person. It is useful to think of *Kundalini* energy as the very foundation of our consciousness so that when *Kundalini* moves through our bodies our consciousness necessarily changes with it. *Kundalini* Tantra is engaged in precisely

for the reason of freeing up this energy that is waiting at the base of the spine, and allowing it to flow freely up the spine. In yogic anatomy the *sushumna* is the central channel and conduit for the *Kundalini* energy that runs along our spine and up to the crown of our head, the

summit of liberation (*brahmarandhra*). Along this channel are placed seven additional channel networks called *chakras*. These *chakras* are associated with major aspects of our anatomy - for example our throat, heart, solar plexus, and in turn these aspects of our anatomy are related to aspects of our human nature.



What ties Tantra to Sufism is contained in the symbolism of Prophet Muhammad's nighttime ascent to Heaven. The Prophet ascended on al-Buraq, a riding beast with the head of a woman, through the seven heavens to the Throne of God. *Hadith* relates that the Prophet's bed was still warm when he returned from the *Mi'raj*. On this night, the

Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) reached within "*two bows' length*" of Allah. Fakhruddin 'Iraqi explains: "Imagine lover and Beloved as a single circle divided by a line into two bow-shaped arcs. This line but seems to exist, yet does not, and if it will be erased at the moment of the Meeting, the circle will appear again as one - as in fact it really is. This then is the secret of *Two Bows' Length*."<sup>[64]</sup> The secret Sufic explanation of the fact that the Prophet's bed was still warm, is that Muhammad (Peace be upon him) was making this journey while having sexual intercourse with his wife Khadijah.

Additionally, it is possible that Muhammad's nighttime ascent to Heaven, *al-Mi'raj*, was mediated by an hallucinogenic plant. Baqir Majlisi reports, "It is related from the Prophet that over each leaf and seed of the *isfand* plant an angel is appointed so that through its bark and roots and branches grief and sorcery are set aside."<sup>[65]</sup> There is an Iranian folk-song about *isfand*.

"Our Prophet selected it,  
'Ali planted it, Fatima collected it  
For Husayn and Hasan.  
All who are born on Saturday,  
On Sunday, or on Monday,  
On Tuesday, or on Wednesday,  
On Thursday, or on Friday;  
Underground, on the ground;  
Black-eyed, blue-eyed, crow-eyed, ewe-eyed;  
All who have looked, all who have not;  
Neighbor on left, neighbor on right;  
Before the face, behind the back;  
May the eye of the envious and of envy crack!"<sup>[66]</sup>

*The Book of Plants* by Abu Hanifa al-Dinawari (circa about 895 C.E.) states that harmel is discernible in two forms. One has leaves like the Egyptian willow and white fragrant flowers like those of jasmine. Sesame oil and Moringa seed oil become fragrant with this blossom. Its seed is a long capsule like that of Cassia. The other is called in Persian, *isfand*,

and its capsule is round. Harmel contains the psychoactive compounds (harmine, harmaline, and tetrahydroharmine).<sup>[67]</sup>

In most ancient hunter-gatherer societies, women balanced the males supply of game with their collected harvest from the surrounding wilderness. Women therefore became the first to learn the secrets of plants, and plant propagation. This knowledge led to the development of agriculture, and the evolution from the animal totems of the hunter-gatherers to images of the Great Mother, who with proper worship produced her abundant harvest in the same way that women produced children. In various Mystery Cults, traditional ingestion of hallucinogenic plants allowed members the option of seeking a personal relationship with deity.



Interpretation of the *Qu'ran* in the light of Sahaja Yoga was the topic of the first international conference of the Islamic

Study Group in the city of Lucknow. **Various Muslim scholars from around the globe dwelt on the divine powers of [Nirmala Devi](#), who it is claimed rediscovered the magic of Sahaja Yoga.** The members discussed the benefits of this form and how Muslims could benefit from it. Speaking on this occasion, Mr. Husain Top, a renowned Sufi saint from Turkey, said the seven heavens mentioned by the prophet were in fact seven "chakras" of consciousness. "God sees through man and he hears through man," the Sufi saint said. Mr. Top explained how in the final stage of consciousness man is enveloped by the will of God and in this state he attains union with the Almighty and finds peace. <sup>[68]</sup> The human beloved becomes a witness (*shahed*), a Theophany of the Real.<sup>[69]</sup> Ibn Tamiya had remarked a practice that reflected the last of these views, noting that a mystic might kiss his or her beloved and say to him or her, "Thou art God."<sup>[70]</sup> Abdelwalah Bouhdiba describes the mystical approach to sexuality in Sufism, "The body of a woman, therefore, is a microcosm of the masterly work of God. To lose oneself in it is to find oneself in God. To run over it is to continue the great book of Allah."<sup>[71]</sup>

An eighteenth-century Gujarati text of the Satpanth Nizari Isma'ilis tells of a renowned Isma'ili and Sufi master imparting Tantric spiritual instruction to a Nath Siddha Jogi master. It includes both Islamic and Tantric terms, and demonstrates the intersection of these two traditions. A portion of this document has been published with a study by Dominique Sila Khan as "Conversation between Guru Hasan Kabiruddin and Jogi Kanipha: Tantra Revisited by the Isma'ili Preachers."<sup>[72]</sup>

Sometimes when the Divine Feminine is realized in all Her Splendor, She so transforms her devotees that their forms of worship are transformed also. Hence Islamic and Sufi groups arise that are considered heretical to mainstream Islamic and Sufi belief structures through attention and study of the feminine aspects of divinity. The concept that Allah is the



feminine form of the Ultimate Reality is the inner secret of the most esoteric mysteries of Islam. Ibn 'al-'Arabi pronounced: "True divinity is female, and Makkah is the womb of the Earth." Because he said the godhead was feminine, they accused Ibn al-'Arabi of blasphemy. Allah commanded reverence for womankind in the *Qu'ran*.<sup>[73]</sup> "Pay ye heed to Allah on whose bounty ye depend, and pay ye heed to womankind!"<sup>[74]</sup> Prophet Muhammad said that woman is the greatest treasure in the world. One of Sufism's first saints, Rabi'ah, is held with equal reverence as any male saint. In Chapter 9 of the *Qu'ran*, At-Taubah, it is written: "Then Allah did send down His Sakinah (calmness, tranquility and reassurance, etc.) on the Messenger (Muhammad), and on the believers, and sent down forces (angels) ..." Then in Sura 48 we find: "It is He who sent down the Sakinah into the hearts of the believers, that they might add faith to their faith."

The *Sakinah* in Islam is a manifestation of the Divine Feminine, very similar to the *Shekinah* in the Hebrew tradition. Prophecies of the return of the *Shekinah*, which had left the Temple and city of Jerusalem in the days of Ezekiel, are repeated in Zechariah. The word is also used to describe the mystical *Shekinah* presence in the tabernacle. *Shekinah* in Hebrew is a feminine noun; it is interesting that Isaiah refers to the *Shekinah* using feminine pronouns.<sup>[75]</sup>

In Arabic, *Barakah* means blessing or Divine Grace. It is a feminine Arabic name. *Barakah* also carries the meaning of "soul power", the "blessing", "irradiation of sanctity", or the "protective energy", all of which constitute so many images of the celestial Femininity.

Some contemporary feminists have condemned Muslim men for forcing Muslim women to wear the veil. First, it must be made clear that the veil is a patriarchal cultural accretion that is not a rule of Islam. However, the veiling of women, suggests mystery and sacralization. The Prophet said of himself: "The Law (*shari'ah*) is what I say; the Path (*Tariqah*) is what I do; and Knowledge (*Haqiqah*) is what I am." The Law carries with it connotations of masculine action, while Knowledge carries with it a sense of feminine intuition. One can truly experience the Divine Feminine only through this Knowledge. Prophet Muhammad also said "Three things from your world have been made beloved to me: women, and perfume, and prayer the comfort of my eyes." The great Shaykh Tosun Bayrak al-Jerrahi al-Halveti in his article "True Love"<sup>[76]</sup> writes, "The Prophet of Allah, when he tells of the things he was made to love, puts woman above man. He uses the word *thalath*, feminine three, not *thalathah*, masculine three, and yet in the same sentence there is the word *tib* — perfume, which is masculine. In Arabic grammar when it is said, for example, 'Fatima and Zayd came,' the verb is in the masculine form. Thus the Prophet has purposefully and ungrammatically given precedence to the female over the male. In addition to the first loved one being feminine, third loved one, *salat*, is also (grammatically) feminine. The pattern is repeated thus: *Dhat* (Essence) is feminine; Adam is masculine; Eve is feminine. It is the concept of trinity: man (masculine) is between two feminines. They are linked: Essence to man; man to woman; woman to Essence."

Unfortunately, much of the sexual revelations of the Saints of Sufism

have been repressed. We are only now becoming aware of the great extent of these teachings. The Muslim Mullah and scholar, Imam Suyuti, wrote at least nine known works on erotic techniques. Suyuti is considered one of latter day Islam's greatest exoteric scholars. Most of his peers also wrote one or two works on the subject, some were quite prolific.<sup>[77]</sup> Ibn al-'Arabi also wrote a book of erotic poetry titled *Tarjuman al-ashwaq* (The Interpreter of Desires) which has meaning on both the erotic level and the spiritual level at once. Ruzbihan Baqli, a great Sufi saint, wrote, "He poured me the wines of proximity; it was as though I was in that place like a bride in the presence of God. What took place after that cannot enter into expression. He graced me in a form that I cannot tell to any of God's creatures, and he was unveiled and there manifested from him the lights of his beautiful attributes."<sup>[78]</sup> Sufis have had to be very careful in their mystical descriptions of their encounters with the Divine Feminine, as Sufis have been tortured and martyred for their sayings and writings which offend the traditional patriarchal view of Islam.

Pagla Kanai, a Bengali Muslim poet in the nineteenth century, identified Fatima as "Mother Tara" or "Mother Tarini" And prayed to her in this passage that blends Islam and Saktism:

"O mother, Pagla Kanai, who is of no consequence cries for you with every breath;  
please cast a little shadow of your feet on me;  
O Mother, take me to your feet.  
O Mother Tara, the redeemer of the world,  
O Mother Tarini, you shall appear as the savior of Muslims when Israfil will blow his horn,  
when everything will be reduced to water,  
and when your father's community will sink into water without a boat."<sup>[79]</sup>

Pagla Kanai also compared Fatima to the goddess Kali and considered her more virtuous:

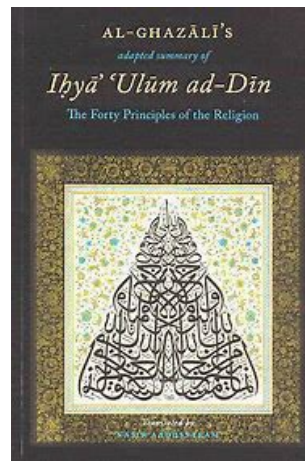
"Mother Kali is virtuous indeed—  
she stood on her husband's chest!  
Did my gracious mother (Fatima) ever trample Ali?"<sup>[80]</sup>

The Prophet Muhammad never advocated celibacy. According to a *hadith*, "marriage is half the religion"; and in some Sufi orders, a student of Sufism cannot be considered for initiation until he or she is married. To know the Absolute, one must experience the primordial totality of the soul. Therefore, sexual union provides the Sufi with a glimpse of this Totality or Unity. The Prophet of Islam taught that when husband and wife look in each other's eyes with love, their sins are forgiven. When they hold hands, good deeds are recorded for them. When they make love, they are surrounded by praying angels. One statement of the Prophet is that: "In the sexual act of each of you there is a sadaqa."<sup>[81]</sup> The Prophet also stated, "Three things are counted inadequacies in a man. Firstly, meeting someone he would like to get to know, and taking leave of him before learning his name and his family. Secondly, rebuffing the generosity that another shows to him. And thirdly, going to his wife and having intercourse with her before talking to

her and gaining her intimacy, (and) satisfying his need from her before she has satisfied her need from him.”

In other words, the Prophet stated that a proper Muslim man understands that the woman takes priority before the man in reaching orgasm. This statement of Muhammad is a clear indication that Islam (as was taught and practiced during Muhammad's life) regarded women in the marriage bed as equal, if not superior, to men.

The Sufi and Exoteric legalist scholar, Imam Abu Hamid al-Ghazali (d. 505/1111), stated that, “Sex should begin with gentle words and kissing.” The scholar of both outward exoteric studies, and inward studies, Imam al-Zabidi adds, in his commentary on al-Ghazali: “This should include not only the cheeks and lips; and then he should caress the breasts and nipples, and every part of her body.”



Regarding foreplay, Muhammad stated, “Not one of you should fall upon his wife like an animal; but let there first be a messenger between you.” “And what is that messenger?” they asked; and he replied, “Kisses and words.” In his Magnum Opus Encyclopedia of the Islamic Religious Sciences, the *Ihya Ulum al-Din*, Imam Abu Hamid al-Ghazali stated, “When he has come to his orgasm (injal), he should wait for his wife until she comes to her orgasm likewise; for her climax may well come slowly. If he arouses her desire, and then sits back from her, this will hurt her, and any disparity in their orgasms will certainly produce a sense of

estrangement. A simultaneous orgasm will be the most delightful for her, especially since her husband will be distracted by his own orgasm from her, and she will not therefore be afflicted by shyness.”<sup>[82]</sup> This book, the *Ihya Ulum al-Din* has been for over a thousand or so years the most popular work on the Islamic religious sciences, indeed it is a bestseller now in the Muslim world, and its sub-books have popular English translations even to-day.

Female-oriented religions are directly connected with birth and the body, nurturing, fecundity, nonviolence, wholeness, spirals, circles and the Underworld. Perhaps this is the profound insight that the Prophet Muhammad had when he said, “Paradise is found at the feet of The Mother.” The secret Sufi understanding of this *hadith* is that the Arabic word for foot is the same word for the female pubic bone, suggesting that illumination can be found through sexual intercourse between two married Sufis in the station of Haqq. The great Sufi Sheikh, Ibn 'Arabi, “practiced ... the exaltation of sexual intercourse as a supreme method of realization,”<sup>[83]</sup> and transmitted his direct knowledge from Allah to fourteen women, eight of whom received this transmission in dreams.<sup>[84]</sup>

Christianity, through contact with Sufism, has awakened to the Divine Feminine, in the form of chivalry or courtly love, characterized by the cult of the “Lady” and by a no less particular devotion for the Virgin. The poetry of spiritualized Eros was passed along through the courtly love

songs of the *troubadours* and the deliberately veiled symbolism of the alchemists. Patriarchal Christianity in the early Middle Ages condemned women as inferior and the cause of sin, and enforced the most repressive rules ever. It was only when the benign influence of Islam and Sufism began to make itself felt in Europe that Christendom began to ease up on its misogyny. The High Middle Ages of Europe arose from contact with Islamic civilization. Queen Eleanor of Aquitaine (1122-1204) was a key figure in this (and according to Idries Shah she was descended from Prophet Muhammad). At her Court of Love at Poitiers, she was a great patroness of the arts and encouraged the *troubadours* who sang of courtly love, that is, spiritualized Eros, which came from Sufism. She promoted the idea that real men loved and honored women, rather than fighting feudal wars or becoming monks.

After this, Western civilization began to soften toward women, and the veneration of Mary came to the forefront. However, "sacred sex" had to remain underground in Christianity and could only be detected in the veiled, symbolic language of the poets and the alchemists. The French troubadour Peire Vidal (d. 1205?) said in one of his poems: "I think I see God when I look on my lady nude." He was put on trial and nearly burned at the stake. Sufis have often had to practice the art of *taqiya* (or concealment). That is, they practice the customs and religious practices of the people amongst whom they are living, in order not to be martyred by the prevailing traditionalists. The same became true for those who were privy to the arts of sacred sex during the Middle Ages. Many alchemical texts are actually manuals of coital practices to achieve Divine Awareness through sexual ecstasy. Books like the *Perfumed Garden*<sup>[85]</sup> were considered marginal in the Islamic world, the better-known corpus of sexual and erotic literature on its spiritual and worldly significance is, in general, un-translated.

An ongoing debate regarding the derivation of the name Allah is being waged among oriental scholars. To conclude this article, the author presents a sampling of the various claims asserted about the origin of the name "Allah" And the relation of these assertions to the Divine Feminine.

1.) Among the *Qu'ranic* references to its 7th Century pagan milieu may be found mention of three goddesses, called daughters of Allah: Al-Lat, Al-'Uzza and Manat; these are also known from earlier inscriptions in northern Arabia. Al-Lat (the Goddess) may have had a role subordinate to that of El (Ilah), as "daughter" rather than consort.<sup>[86]</sup>

2.) The gods mentioned in the *Qu'ran* are all female deities: Al-Lat, al-Uzza and Manat, which represented the Sun, the planet Venus, and Fortune, respectively; at Makkah they were regarded as the daughters of Allah. As Allah meant "the god", so Al-Lat means "the goddess."<sup>[87]</sup>

3.) 'Ali-ilah; the god; the supreme; the all-powerful; all-knowing; and totally unknowable; the predeterminer of everyone's life destiny; chief of the gods; the special deity of the Quraysh; having three daughters: Al-Uzzah (Venus), Manah (Destiny) and Alat; having the idol temple at Makkah under his name (House of Allah); the mate of Alat, the goddess



of fate.<sup>[88]</sup>

4.) The Quraysh tribe into which Muhammad was born was particularly devoted to Allah, the moon god, and especially to Allah's three daughters who were viewed as intercessors between the people and Allah ... The worship of the three goddesses, Al-Lat, Al-Uzza, and Manat, played a significant role in the worship at the Ka'ba in Makkah. The first two daughters of Allah had names that were feminine forms of Allah.<sup>[89]</sup>

5.) Allah, the moon god was married to the sun goddess. Together they produce the three goddess (the daughters of Allah), Al-Lat, Al-Uzza and Manat. All of these 'gods' were viewed as being the top of the pantheon of Arab deities.<sup>[90]</sup>

6.) The shrine of the sacred stone in Makkah, formerly dedicated to the pre-Islamic Triple Goddess Manat, Al-Lat (Allah), and Al-Uzza, the 'Old Woman' was worshipped by Muhammad's tribesmen the Koreshites. The stone was also called *Kubaba*, *Kuba*, or *Kube*, and has been linked with the name of Cybele (Kybela), the Great Mother of the Gods. The stone bore the emblem of the yoni, like the Black Stone worshipped by votaries of Artemis.....priests of the Ka'ba are still known as Sons of the Old Woman.<sup>[91]</sup>

7.) Lane's Arabic-English Lexicon (which is based on classical Arabic dictionaries), says under the word Allah, while citing many linguistic authorities: "Allah.... is a proper name applied to the Being Who exists necessarily, by Himself, comprising all the attributes of perfection, a proper name denoting the true god.... the al being inseparable from it, not derived.. " Thus according to Lane's Arabic-English Lexicon, Allah is thus a proper name, not derived from anything, and the Al is inseparable from it. The word *al-ilah* (the god) is a different word.<sup>[92]</sup>

8.) In Lane's Arabic-English Lexicon the words *ilah* (god) and Allah occur under the root A-L-H, but the word Al-lat is given under an entirely different root L-T. Therefore, "Al-lat" is not the feminine form of the word Allah (for in that case it would occur under the same root as for "Allah"), but is derived from a completely different root with a totally different meaning.<sup>[93]</sup>

9.) Allat, according to recent study of the complicated inspirational evidence, is believed to have been introduced into Arabia from Syria, and to have been the moon goddess of North Arabia. If this is the correct interpretation of her character, she corresponded to the moon deity of South Arabia, Almaqah, 'Vadd, 'Amm, or Sin as he was called, the difference being only the oppositeness of gender. Mount Sinai (the name being an Arabic feminine form of Sin) would then have been one of the centers of the worship of this northern moon goddess. Similarly, al-'Uzza is supposed to have come from Sinai, and to have been the goddess of the planet Venus. As the moon and the evening star are associated in the heavens, so too were Allat and al-'Uzza together in religious belief, and so too are the crescent and star conjoined on the flags of Arab countries today.<sup>[94]</sup>

10.) The ancient Greek historian Herodotos in the first volume of his

historic work "Histories Apodexis", line 131-132, refers to the religion of the Persians. He writes, "They sacrifice to the sun and the moon and the earth and the fire and the water and the winds. Only to those they sacrifice of old. In addition they learnt to sacrifice to Urania<sup>[95]</sup>, too. They learnt it from the Assyrians and the Arabs. The Assyrians call Aphrodite Mylitta<sup>[96]</sup>, the Arabs Alilat..."<sup>[97]</sup>

11.) It seems unlikely that the name Allah comes from *al-ilaah* "the God", but rather from the Aramaic/Syriac *alaha*, meaning "God" or "the God." The final "a" in the name *Alaha* was originally the definite article "the" and is regularly dropped when Syriac words and names are borrowed into Arabic. Middle-eastern Christianity used *Alah* and *Alaha* frequently, and it would have often been heard. However, in the Aramaic/Syriac language there are two different "a" vowels, one rather like the "a" in English "hat" and the other more like the vowel in "ought." In the case of *Alah*, the first vowel was like "hat" and the second like "ought." Arabic does not have a vowel like the one in "ought", but it seems to have borrowed this vowel along with the word *Alah*. Those scholars who know *Qu'ranic* Arabic, know that the second vowel in *alla* is unique; it occurs only in that one word in Arabic. Scholars believe that Jesus spoke mostly Aramaic, although sometimes he spoke Hebrew and he might have spoken Greek on some occasions. If Jesus spoke Aramaic, then he referred to God using basically the same word that is used in Arabic.<sup>[98]</sup>

12.) The word "Allah", as a lot of other words, especially words of the religious sphere, was imported from the Syriac (Aramaic) language: "Alaha"- with three long a-vowels -, is the Aramaic word for the (Christian) unique God. The last (long) "a" characterizes the *status absolutus* in the Aramaic language and was duly omitted by the Arabs like case endings in the Arabic vernacular, whereas the understanding of the first syllable of "Alaha" as an article was a common misunderstanding like for instance in *Al-Iskandar* from Greek *Alexandros* etc. The doubling of the "L" is irrelevant, since the doubling sign is a very late invention of Arabic orthography, centuries after Muhammad.<sup>[99]</sup>

It is noteworthy that during the Zikrullahs of the Chadhiliyya Sufi Order, the dervishes chant the name of Allah in 4/4 (four quarter) time with three distinct vocalizations on beats one, two and three, with a rest on the fourth beat. On beat number one, they chant the first "A" of Allah. On beat number two, they chant "llah" of Allah. And on beat number three, they distinctly chant another "A" (pronouncing it exactly as the "a" chanted on the first beat). They repeat this throughout their Zikruallah, sometimes only vocalizing three staccato quarter notes in 4/4 (four quarter) time. This trinity of sounds mimics the trinity of man (masculine) between two feminines observed by Shaykh Tosun Bayrak al-Jerrahi al-Halveti in his article "True Love" as discussed earlier in this paper. Since the Chadhiliyya Sufi Order is centered in Cairo, it is not beyond the realm of conjecture that they obtained the Aramaic word for God from the Coptic Christians in the area.<sup>[100]</sup>

The Divine Feminine, while hidden and mysteriously woven throughout Sufism, nevertheless will not be denied, but will reveal Herself to those worthy of the knowledge. Is the Divine Feminine an aspect of Allah, the

form by which Allah unveils Allah to human beings, the Ultimate Reality of Allah, the Dark Unmanifest cosmic womb from which Ya Nur (The Light) bursts forth?

Her nature is as fluid as the dominion of water, which is a symbol of the Divine Feminine. "It has a voice and can be silent, murmur gently when tranquil or range and roar when it is tempestuous. Water has many powers. It has the ability to refresh men and animals and to restore new life to dried out vegetation. It can heal and purify and also has the capacity to destroy. Water symbolizes the original fountain of life, which precedes all form and all creation. Many myths and legends are based on a concept of there being a primeval ocean or watery abyss that was the source of all life. In the Hebrew view of creation it is said that 'the Spirit of God moved on the face of the Waters' and that 'the waters of the Torah' are the life- giving waters of the sacred law. In the *Qu'ran* it is said, 'From the water we made every living thing'."<sup>[101]</sup>

In the Dao-de jing of Lao-zi, the author writes, "The gateway of the mysterious female is called the root of Heaven and Earth. Though constantly flowing, it seems always to be present."<sup>[102]</sup>

The waters flowing, from this gateway of the Divine Feminine, stream throughout Sufi thought and practice.

#### THE CENTRALITY OF THE DIVINE FEMININE IN SUFISM

<http://home.earthlink.net/~drmljg/id8.html>

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\* I would like to express my gratitude to an individual who prefers to be known only by his initials "P.K." for his fearless, dedicated and extensive exploration of the subject of the Divine Feminine.

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<http://www.geocities.com/CollegePark/Classroom/9912/ancientabyssinia.html>
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- [23] For those who feel that many of the assumptions drawn by the authors of Holy Blood, Holy Grail have been since disproved and believe the authors' sources are questionable, The Messianic Legacy also by Baigent explains more fully the information used to deduce the premises put forward in Holy Blood, Holy Grail. It is based on other published works by scholars and authorities on the interpretations of the Dead Sea Scrolls.
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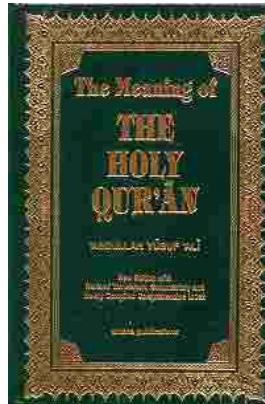
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[102] "Passages on Feminine Power" from the Dao-de jing of Lao-zi, Trans. Randall Nadeau, Trinity University,



Concerning what are they disputing?

Concerning the [Great News](#). [5889]

About which they cannot agree.

Verily, they shall soon (come to) know!

Verily, verily they shall soon (come to) know!

surah 78:1-5 *Al Naba'* (The Great News)

**"5889. Great News: usually understood to mean the News or Message of the Resurrection."**

Abdullah Yusuf Ali, *The Holy Qur'n*, Amana Corporation, 1989.

**"I have such respect for so many of them (Muslims). I wish they could accept that this is not *Jihad* time anymore but *Qiyamah* Time, the Resurrection Time, the Blossom Time. Are they going to miss it?"**

***Khatun-i Qiyamat* ([Lady of Resurrection](#))**

[HOMEPAGE](#)

THE MAHADEVI [APOKALYPSIS](#)

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