

Corbin: Excerpts: The Creative Imagination of Ibn Arabi:

In his book on Arabi, Corbin makes lucid two especially important ideas for philosophic astrology:

A "The God Created in the Faiths"

Corbin discusses the view of theophany and the presence of God in us epiphanized in the heart of each individual aspirant -- "the God created in the Faiths." Each being is an epiphany of the Divine, each being is an "instance" of God. As such, each being is invested with a divine ray or mark of intelligence, called a divine Name. This name is at once the Lord of our inner being, and the form of our beloved. This presence is recognized in the heart, and by the heart, when the heart is awakened. Thus "faith" is the aptitude of the heart, invested by God to receive God in a certain modality.

"the Divine Being is epiphanized in the heart of every faithful believer in accordance with the aptitude of his heart, or in other words, it always takes a Form corresponding to the exigence and receptivity constituting this aptitude." P. 196

In opening our heart, the gnostics cease to impose their own images, conditioning and judgments on the incoming inspirations. Instead, "the gnostic's heart is colored in every instant by the color, that is, the modality of the form in which the Divine Being is epiphanized to him." This means we are open and receptive to the influx, and also that the influx is in a modality which resonates with our heart, the flavor of the Divine Name by which we are named. Arabi calls the unique window to the divine available to the heart of the mystic Gnostic "the God who is in a faith."

"The god who is in a faith is the God whose form the heart contains, who discloses Himself to the heart in such a way that the heart recognizes him. Thus the eye sees only the god of the faith." Since the form in which he discloses Himself in a faith is the form of that faith, the theophany takes the dimension of the receptacle that receives it, the receptacle in which he discloses Himself. The faith reveals the measure of the heart's capacity. This is why there are many different faiths. To each believer, the Divine Being is he who is disclosed to him in the form of his faith." 197

There is a paradox here. We, the non-agnostics, receive things only according to the conditioned mind, through our filters and presuppositions. The Gnostic heart is open, ready, passive to the Divine. And yet, Corbin says: "it is true to speak of an aptitude or capacity of the gnostic's heart, for it is in this heart and there alone that the "god created in the faiths" shows His truth." Corbin states the paradox like this: "the revelation or knowledge he has of god is the same as that which God has of him and the gnostic's heart is predisposed to the reception of all forms of theophany..." 196 He makes the distinction more clear further on:

"this vision is no longer given him in the form of this or that faith prescribed and imposed by a religious or social collectivity. What is disclosed to the Gnostic is the form in which he himself is known to Him who evoked his being. .. whose knowledge of him has the same form as his knowledge of it." 198

As a further dimension of this opening of the heart to the Divine, we find the fulfillment of the longing to unite with the beloved. The Gnostic will "understand his unity of essence... with the divine totality... the form of the particular faiths cease to be veils... and become manifestations in which God is

contemplated.” And in this way “is confirmed the paradoxical depth of the bond between the Lord and his fedele.” Finally, he finds that “the God created in the faiths... is one of the forms of the Divine Imagination revealing himself to Himself...”

... the cosmos may be annihilated or disintegrate completely but the creative idea of it will still live on in the World-Mind. More, in the same way a man's body may die and disintegrate, but the creative idea of him will still remain in the World-Mind as his Soul. It will not die. It's his real Self, his perfect Self. It is the true Idea of him which is forever calling to be realized. It is the unmanifest image of God in which man is made and which he has yet to bring into manifestation in his everyday consciousness. 26.4.63

B: *Imagination is the magical intermediary between Divine and Human.*

The central theme of the book-- notion of Imagination as the “magical intermediary” between human and divine: intelligence, not phantasy. It is the “liminal place” where we stand in both horizontal dimension and vertical dimension.

p. 179-180. The notion of the imagination, magical intermediary between thought and being, incarnation of thought in image and presence of the image in being, is a conception of the utmost importance..... We wish to stress on the one hand the notion of the imagination as the magical production of an image, the very type and model of magical action, or of all action as such, but especially of creative action; and on the other hand, the notion of the image as a body (a magical body, a mental body) in which are incarnated the thought and will of the soul. ... The notion that the Imagination has a noetic value, that it is an organ of knowledge because it "creates" being, is not readily compatible with our habits.

182: We encounter the idea that the Godhead possesses the power of Imagination, and that by imagining the universe God created it; that God drew this universe from within Itself, from the eternal virtualities and potencies of Its own being; that there exists between the universe of pure spirit and the sensible world an intermediate world which is the idea of "Idea Images" as the Sufis put it, the world of "supersensory sensibility" of the subtle magical body, "the world in which spirits are materialized ad bodies spiritualized"; ... that in it the Imagination produces effects so real that they can "mold" the imagining subject, and that the Imagination "casts" man in the form (the mental body) that he has imagined. ... for man's Active Imagination is merely the organ of the absolute theophanic Imagination.

188: That is why man's Active imagination cannot be a vain fiction, since it is this same theophanic Imagination which, in and by the human being, continues to reveal what it showed itself by first imagining it. This imagination can be termed "illusory" only when it becomes opaque and loses its transparency. But when it is true to the divine reality it reveals, it liberates, provided that we recognize the function with which Ibn 'Arabi endowed it and which it alone can perform; namely, the function of effecting a coincidentia oppositorum.

219 Ibn 'Arabi distinguishes an imagination conjoined to the imagining subject and inseparable from him and a self-subsisting imagination dissociable from the subject. In the first case we must distinguish between the imaginations that are premeditated or provoked by a conscious process of the mind, and those which present themselves to the mind spontaneously like dreams (or daydreams). The specific character of this conjoined Imagination is its inseparability from the imagining subject, with whom it lives and dies. The Imagination separable from the subject, on the other hand, has an autonomous and subsisting reality sui generis on the plane of the intermediary world, the world of Idea-Images.