

The Nietzschean Verification of the Missing God and Steps to a Completest Self

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This paper aims to present Friedrich Nietzsche's critique of Christianity as a Western example that reconfirms the necessity for man's inner development up to the stage of the Completest Self (nafs-i safiyya). With the advent of Christianity and the resultant triumph of its "morality of slave" (1886, sec. 260), the "death of God" (1882) becomes the "fundamental event of Western history" and its "intrinsic law" so far (Heidegger 1977, 67). The central question is how the West shall return the lost God, and so answer adequately to the drive of the eternal return? Nietzsche's answer is expressed within the concepts of the "death before death," the "man of Greek tragedy," the "nomad" ("traveler"), and the "overman," while this paper identifies their essence in the teachings of Sufism. The "death before death" declared by Prophet Muhammad (s), the Sufi exercise Stop, the background of Sufi teaching, and the seven stages of nafs, including the Completest Self, are juxtaposed to the concepts of the German philosopher. It results that according to Nietzsche, what the West should bring from the state of absence to the state of presence is the summarizing truth of Sufism.

Keywords: "Death of God," Nihilism, "Death before Death," Sufism, Overman, Completest Self.

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1. Introduction

In this paper, I do not take any particular interpretation of Nietzsche's thought. Instead, I focus on Nietzsche himself, and my task is to bring attention to his statement that God is absent. The "death of God" is the verification of the missing God, and it implies an urge for His return through man's self-surpassing for the sake of self-completeness. It is precisely this necessity that instigates Nietzschean critique of Christianity—a theme that incites the subsequent critiques of his thought and many different (mis)understandings of his idea.

Somehow neglected not only in regard to the work of Nietzsche, the deep knowledge of Sufism offers a concise reading of his key concepts. It would not be illogical to wonder if many prominent examples of Western schools of art (of theater for example), philosophical thought (including Nietzschean thought), literature, scientific theories, and so forth had never known of the existence of the Sufi authors and hence omitted the citation of this source within their works. However, my aim is not to detect the sources of the art of "productive distortion," as Nietzsche (1990) defines the "reception properly understood" (p. 166). What I argue is that the work of Nietzsche needs a Sufi commentary, as is also necessary in regard to several theories and practices that I will touch on briefly while examining the central topic. So, by offering a careful consideration of Nietzsche's goal, I hope to contribute to the debates about his relevance to the principle of the *new valuation of life*, namely the overcoming of nihilism and the necessity of God's presence.

In what follows, I will inspect his examination of the loss of God. In section 2, I explain what Nietzsche identifies as causes of nihilism. My attempt to investigate nihilism deconstructs his thought about the genesis that furnished the Christian "morality of slave." In this section, I also give introductory elements of Sufism within his ideas. In section 3, I suggest the parallels between his conceptualization of the post-Christian man and the pathways to the inner development of the Sufi masters. My aim is not to make any special pronouncements about where Nietzsche fits in the extent of the deep knowledge of Sufism. It is a hard task to form a coherent outsider view of Sufism in one paper,

and it would have been much easier if I had chosen one aspect of Nietzsche's "return of God" and approached it as one segment of Sufism. But in that case I would have prevented at least an effort to reach the inner truth of both Sufism and Nietzsche's thought. In section 4, I conclude the paper with several other parallels between Sufism and thoughts of Nietzsche.

2. "The Death of God" and the Causes of Nihilism

"The death of God" is the fundamental principle of nihilism; namely, a psychological state (Nietzsche 1968, sec. 12) wherein "the highest values devalue themselves. The aim is lacking; 'why?' finds no answer" (sec. I.2). In the opinion of Gillespie (1995), "[n]ihilism, according to Nietzsche, is a consequence of the fact that God and all eternal truths and standards become unbelievable" (xi). This consequence is important, and it is also important to stress that Nietzsche's meaning of nihilism does not refer to a simple negation of the metaphysical realities. Nor is his nihilism the mere atheism of an atheist. In place of this, I would suggest that Nietzsche's nihilism encloses an "engineering" of theism and atheism, resulting in a synthetic motivational force that lacks the identity of both these concepts. Thus, nihilism is the "altered" directive force beneath each Western cultural schema that shapes man's course of action and thought, wherein both theism and atheism have been "genetically modified." Man of the West may trust God and go to church, but he cannot escape either nihilism or the "death of God," since the grounds of everything existing have been reset in terms of both of these intermingled concepts. Trust in God becomes irreducible to a set of judgments and behavioral dispositions once the "genome engineering" abolishes the higher values and this world becomes a mere tool. So, the believing man in the era of the "death of God" is surprisingly out of this world. This idea is comprised within the old saint of Zarathustra's prologue: "Zarathustra ... said to his heart: 'Could it be possible?! This old saint in the forest has not yet heard of it, that God is dead!'" (Nietzsche 1891, part 2).

God for Nietzsche is *the belief*, the ground and the safe-guarder of all order (ethical, societal, cognitional, philosophical, scientific, and so forth) necessary for the survival of everything: “What is *belief*? How does it originate? Every belief is a considering-something-true” (1968, sec. 15). But when “God is dead” and “every considering-something-true ... is necessarily false” (sec. 15), man's survival depends upon his own power. It is man himself who defines his own existence once man abolishes God's existence. The *truth* depends on what *man* can do, and he can do nothing, something, or everything. Since *man's performing* is the axis by which to evaluate the truth, God is unimportant. It is precisely this primacy of man's (cyber) *performing* (in the sense of the etymology of this word: old Fr. *parfournir* “encircling,” “finishing up”) where the “death of God” seems to be most obviously perceived. Yet paradoxically, this *is* the “age of consummate meaninglessness” that fulfills the essence of the modernity (Heidegger 1991, 174).

Nihilism is “passive” when it designs man's acceptance of the nothingness of all values, his blocking, and pessimism: “Pessimism is a preliminary form of nihilism” (Nietzsche 1968, sec. I.9). “Nihilism as decline and recession of the power of the spirit: ... *passive nihilism*” (sec. I.22) is the emptiness of a man who is exhausted by his incapability to interpret the world. This is the “last man” who has embraced the meaninglessness, left without any force to pose higher values. But nihilism is “active” when it is “a sign of increased power of the spirit” (sec. I.22). This “active nihilism” is the very proof of the ontological link between everything existing and the will to power, an endless yearning to release its strength: “*This world is the will to power—and nothing besides!* And you yourselves are also this will to power—and nothing beside” (sec. 550). The will to power of the active nihilism establishes *new* values. By establishing *new* values, the *old* values are *surpassed*. It is from here that Nietzsche's “nihilism as the ‘inner logic’ of Western history” (Heidegger 1977, 67) becomes an affirmation of the world and a fundamental legality.

At this point, the Nietzschean “death of God” becomes explainable in terms of the archetype of “death and resurrection” as described at the

archetypal theory of C. G. Jung (1958)—the theory itself originating from Sufi master Ibn al-‘Arabi (as cited in Landau 1959, 40 et seq.). In Jung's view, “the death of God (or his disappearance)” (1995, 58) is a recurrent “symbol,” found in many civilizations from antiquity to nowadays. This recurrence refers to the vast presence of a typical spiritual state: the loss of the highest value giving life and meaning, and the need for its renewal (58). Jung is uncertain about the laws upon which one or the other aspect (death/resurrection) within this sole archetype appears, yet he states, “I only know—and here I am expressing what countless other people know—that the present time is the time of God's death and disappearance” (58). In Christianity, the motive of death and resurrection is posed as central. It is represented with the death and resurrection of Jesus, and it expresses, in the words of Nietzsche, an ontological data of the will to power. Same as the explanation of the recurrent myth according to Jung, the man-God (Jesus Christ), after the death, is “not to be found where his body was laid. ‘Body’ means the outward, visible form, the erstwhile but ephemeral setting of the highest value” (58-59). Also, according to the myth, Christ rises again in a “miraculous manner” (58-59). So, God as the highest value dies, but he is resurrected as transformed: on the cross, the Christian God “ceases to appear as a Jew” (Deleuze 2002, 153). The crucified Christ becomes the legislator of the New Testament.

It is precisely the issue of the Old/New Testament which replaced the life-affirming virtues with the annihilating compensatory forms—including the pathos of distance, the ideology of suffering, the inward turn of self-mastery, the principle of *ressentiment*, and so forth—thus transforming Christianity into “the greatest misfortune of humanity” so far (Nietzsche 1895, sec. 51). “[E]very respect for the Old Testament!” states Nietzsche (2007, sec. 3.22); “I find in it great man, heroic landscape, and something of utmost rarity on the earth, the incomparable naivety of the strong heart; even more, I find a people” (sec. 3.22). But, “in the New Testament ... I find nothing but petty sectarian groupings ... and [it] is neither Jewish nor Hellenistic” (sec. 3.22). In *Will to Power* (1968), Nietzsche writes: “[I]t is in one

particular interpretation, the Christian-moral one [i.e., the “morality of slave”], that nihilism is rooted” (sec. 1). Master morality, as contrasted to the slave morality, emphasizes strength and excellence; it is life-like; and it is the foundation upon which the great civilizations were built (2007, 174-81). Through the inversion of values, that which is not in nature’s essence has become “natural.” The *Antichrist* (1895) offers a summary of the genesis of this “inversion”: “The whole of Judaism appears in Christianity as the art of concocting holy lies, and there, after many centuries of earnest Jewish training and hard practice of Jewish technic, the business comes to the stage of mastery” (sec. 44). The central figure appearing in the New Testament that gave birth to the distortion was Paul: “Paul was the greatest of all apostles of revenge” (sec. 45). Yet, insists Nietzsche, “without the Roman Caesars and Roman society, the insanity of Christianity would never had come to rule” (1968, sec. 874). So, the Christian stories of miracle and divine incarnation growing out of the resentful perception of life that the weak (“slave morality,” “Chandala morality,” 1895, sec. 45) had created turned into tools to measure reality. The Christian God became (a logical conclusion) deduced by non-empirical argumentation. The rational path towards God's cognition ended up with the consciousness about the impossibility of that cognition. In the terminology of Sufism, this impeded the loss of “basic trust” as a non-conceptual confidence in the goodness of the universe (Almaas 1998, 21-32). Yet fortunately, it rested conserved at the Sufi symbol of *enneagram*, designed to maintain in visible form certain eternal truths believed by the Sufis to summarize the human soul in its search of completeness. In the words of I. Shah, “According to the Sufis, the main counterbalance to the power of formalized Christianity was the continued experience of the real tradition of which it is a distortion” (1979, 50).

As a result, “[a] time has come, when we have to pay for having been Christians for two thousand years: we are losing the center of gravity by virtue of which we lived; we are lost for a while” (1968, sec. 30). Man is lost “for a while,” stresses Nietzsche, and this confirms that his critique of Christianity should be understood as an introduction to an

agenda which tells what should man of West do in order to overpass the actual decadent state.

3. Nietzsche's Quest for the Return of God: Quest for Sufism

What has happened, at bottom? The feeling of valuelessness was reached with the realization that the overall character of existence may not be interpreted by means of the concept of 'aim', the concept of 'unity', or the concept of 'truth' ... Briefly: the categories 'aim', 'unity', 'being' which we used to protect some value into the world—we pull out again, so the world looks valueless.

—Nietzsche (1968, sec. 12)

The central question is how to restore the categories of aim, unity, and being. Nietzsche's answer is given through three symbols of the post-Christian man: 'man of Greek tragedy,' "nomad" ("traveler"; "wanderer"), and "overman." They include the force of affirmation, consciousness on diversity, and freedom. These are the main principles that an individual should incorporate, so that understanding come to him. The "three man" of Nietzsche return us back to the very core of the deep knowledge of Sufism.

3.1. The *Pain* and the "Death before Death": Nietzsche *Vis-A-Vis* Prophet Muhammad (s)

The man of Athenian tragic drama is full of pain: "It is the heroic spirits who say 'Yes' to themselves in the midst of tragic cruelty: they hard enough to experience suffering as a pleasure" (1968, sec. 852). This pain has nothing to do with pessimistic pain, because the "[p]rofound suffering makes you noble, it separates" (2002, sec. 270). As Deleuze points out, "Nietzsche notes that the *Birth of Tragedy* remains silent about Christianity, it has not *identified* tragedy. And it is Christianity which is neither Apollonian nor Dionysian" (2002, 14). The ontological pain of Dionysus, immanent to everything existing, stands at the opposite corner of the pain of Christ. The difference consists in different

interpretations of pain. The pain of Christianity accuses life, “testifies against it,” and “makes life something that must be justified” (15). The pain of Dionysus considers life as holy, and so his life justifies the suffering (15). The man of the ancient Greek theater points up the difference between the ceasing of an individual's life, on the one hand, and the eternal return, on the other hand, while Christianity turned “the death bed into a bed of agony” (Nietzsche 2003, sec. 80). And, the eternal recurrence, rejected by the slave morality, is the very secret of the power of life; as Zarathustra spoke: “[T]his secret spoke Life herself to me. ‘Behold’, said she, ‘I am that which must ever surpass itself’” (1891, sec. 34).

I argue that Nietzsche's life-affirming pain, extracted from the ancient Greek theater, can be identified in the Sufi exercise(s) Stop, Pause of Time, Freezing of Movement, and Pause of Time and Pause of Space that the dervish must carry on in order to attain higher states of his being. (The exercises themselves are associated to the concepts of *period* and *moment* of Sufi teaching—they themselves associated with a momentary cognition.) While working with his disciples, the Sufi teacher in a certain moment suddenly calls dervishes for a complete suspending (freezing) of all their physical action: “Stop!” The freezing of movement causes a bodily pain. The pain caused by freezing of movement is considered necessary “to leave the consciousness open to the receipt of special mental developments whose power is drained by muscular movement” (Shah 1979, 126). The exercise Freezing of Movement stops temporarily the ordinary associative processes; the exercise Pause of Time and Pause of Space enables the operation of constructive “time” to take place (313-14). In sum, the Sufi exercise Stop, which makes explicit precisely the necessity of the kind of pain identified by Nietzsche, has been traditionally passed down by the Sufi master Attar (126). It is for the reasons of this pain and its subsequent effects that this exercise constitutes the most famous “technique of actor's inner-development” of the Western 20th century schools of theater (Hoxha 2002; 2009), even though the source of Sufism has never been quoted by them (2009, 127). The exercise Stop is a pillar of

Barba's theater anthropology, the exercise Stop and Go in Meyerhold's theater, the exercise Life in Pause in Stanislavski's System, and the exercise pause in Time in Vaktganov's theater (127-28).

The man of Athenian tragic drama “dies” to be “born again,” because the affirmation of life must go through death (1891, sec. 21). The “death before death” is a condition to freedom (sec. 21), as it is for the Sufi, who believes that by practicing alternate detachment and identification with life he becomes free. To die voluntary in battle and sacrifice a great soul is the best, says Nietzsche (sec. 21), and one should “die at the right time” (sec. 21).¹ It is the way al-Ghazali relates how he battled with his Commanding Self (as cited in Shah 1979, 170). All the more, I hold, this Nietzschean “voluntary death in a battle” is precisely the meaning of Greatest Jihad; namely, the “individuation process” in the terminology of Jung (Hoxha 2001). All life is struggle, says the Sufi, but a struggle must be a coherent one, because Sufism, even though natural, is also a part of higher human development, and conscious development at that (Shah 1979, 59). Similarly, Nietzsche insists that the “struggle of the man” should not be left to a chance, the proof of which is his work. To sum up, in the context of pain and struggle implying the individuation process, the concept of “death before death” gets its general sense.

Namely, Nietzsche's statement that man must “die before he dies” or that he must be “born again” in his present life was declared by Prophet Muhammad (s): “Die before you die!” The “death before death” (or the death and rebirth while alive) denotes the death of ego within both the message of Prophet Muhammad (s) and the saying of Nietzsche. For the purpose of the “death” of one's own ego (in one's own struggle to become Sufi), “death” is a technical term that marks the grades of initiation, a series of psychological and other exercises (including the

1. “Die at the right time: so teaches Zarathustra. The consummating death I show to you, which becomes a stimulus and promise to the living. ... Thus should one learn to die (emphasis added). ... Thus to die is best; next best, however, is to die in battle, and sacrifice a great soul. ... My death ... the voluntary death which comes to me because I want it (1891, sec. 21).

exercise Stop) that the dervish has to experience. According to Shah (1979, 59), the three “deaths” are the *white death*, the *green death*, and the *Black Death* (421). They include three outstanding factors: abstinence and control of physical functions, independence from material things, and emotional liberation through exercises such as Playing a Part in order to observe reactions of others (421).

The three deaths involve specific enterprises carried out in human society, leading to these spiritual experiences marked by them and the successive transformations which result from them (Shah 1979, 421). The Sufi continues his action in society, as should do the Nietzsche's “overman,” after he experiences the meaning of being-a-nomad.

3.2. Nietzsche's “Nomad” (“Traveler”; “Wanderer”): The Background of Practical Teaching of Sufis

There is *only* a perspective seeing; *only* a perspective “knowing,” and the *more* affects we allow to speak about one thing, the *more* eyes, different eyes we can use to observe one thing, the more complete will our “concept” of these thing, our “objectivity” be.
—Nietzsche (2007, III. 12)

A man, never having seen water, is thrown blindfolded into it, and feels it. When the bandage is removed, he knows what it is. Until then he only knew it by its effect.
—Rumi, *Fihī ma fih*

Ultimately, the Seeker becomes transformed into a Finder.
—Persian proverb

In *The Wanderer* (1880), Nietzsche tells about the new meaning of life of a man who becomes a “nomad” (the term itself used in sec. 211): “ [H]e certainly wants to observe and keep his eyes open to whatever actually happens in the world; therefore he cannot attach his heart too firmly to anything individual; he must have in himself something wandering that takes pleasure in change and transitoriness” (sec. 638).

The “traveler” is conscious that each truth is a point of view limited by certain circumstances of a given will to power, so he is aware about the endless (un)truths. It is for this reason that “facts do not exist, only interpretations” (1968, sec. 481); or, even, that “[t]here is no truth” (sec. 616). Heidegger explains that “his saying that there is ‘no truth’ means something more essential, namely that truth cannot be what is initially and properly decisive” (1977, 66). But why it is so and why this statement does not eradicate the truth come visible if commented with the words of Rumi, when he takes a saying of Prophet Muhammad (s) and says: “The worst of the sages is the visitor of princes; the best of princes is the visitor of sages” (Rumi 2002) and explains that “the inner meaning of ‘visiting’ depends upon the quality of the visitor and the visited” (Shah 1979, 52). It is the issue of the *perspective* from which the “visiting” is viewed, and hence “[i]t’s through ambiguity that the truth is protected from appropriation by the unqualified” (Jaspers 1997, 19). It is from this complexity that Saadi says: “I fear that you will not reach Mecca, O Nomad! For the road which you are following leads to Turkestan” (Shah 1971, 357). So, Nietzsche denies that any mental act can be separated from their many features, and he “believes that behavior consists of long, complicated events with neither obvious beginnings nor clear ends” (Nehamans 1985, 77). I suggest that what these “unobvious beginnings and ends” of the German philosopher tend to communicate are comprised within the chapter 112 of the Quran (*al-Ikhlās*); viz., Allah as the final objectivity: “He begets not, nor is He begotten. And absolutely nothing is like Him!” Thus, they confirm that Nietzsche’s “true” world must be independent not only of our capacities but also of our interests or standards of rational acceptability (Clark 1990, 11). Next, “[a]ll being is for Nietzsche,” states Heidegger, “a Becoming. Such Becoming, however has the character of action and the activity of willing” (1991, 213). He insists that the will is essentially dependent on evaluation (Nietzsche 1998, sec. 260), and that all elements are inextricably connected with one another (2002, sec. 19). The “nomad” is conscious that he should *surpass* his own fragmented perspective (“path”) through the “death” of his ego-delusions, for the

virtue, his “dearest Self,” to be returned to him (1891, sec. 27). As it is for the Sufis, who “teach that there is only one underlying truth within everything that is called religion” (Shah 1979, 55). In sum, the “nomad” comprises the perspectivism, which, for its turn, “rules out assumption that there must be higher perspective” (Clark 1990, 144). As such, Nietzsche's perspectivism *is* the meaning of the Sufi story of the *elephant in the dark*: the truth derived by our senses is fragmented, because it includes one part of the actual reality, while other parts remain excluded. The Truth is undefinable for Nietzsche, as is Sufism itself (Nicholson, 1914, 25)—the Sufis themselves “appearing in historical times mainly within the pale of Islam” (Shah 1979, 55).

In what follows, I suggest that the “nomad” is an angle to view the very essence of Sufism, which is “both a teaching and a part of organic evolution” (Shah 1979, 45). Nietzsche's perspectivism *is* also the Sufi claim according to which the whole cannot be studied by means of the parts, and the fact that a thing cannot study all of itself simultaneously; as Sufi master Pir-i Do-Sara states, “Can you imagine a mind observing the whole of itself—if it were all engaged in observation, what it would be observing? Observation of self is necessary while there is a self as distinct from the non-self part” (verses 9951-9957, as cited in Shah, 1979, 55). Or, “[t]he pathways into Sufi thinking are, it is traditionally said, almost as varied as numbers of Sufis in existence” (39). But even Sufi writings are not just literary, philosophical, or technical. Sufi writings are a variety of many sources—similar to Nietzsche's discourse, which is “changeable, different, and nonlinear” (Blanchot 1949, 278-90); that is, a discourse that overcomes the epistemology (science) through its passage into the discourse of art (Cox 1999, 65). This (coincidence) can be perceived as a concrete in-world manifestation of the fact that “[t]he essential unity of all religious faith is not agreed on throughout the world, say the Sufis, because most of the believers are not all aware as to what *religion* itself essentially *is*. It does not have to be what it is generally assumed to be” (Shah 1979, 65). Expressed in words of Jalaluddin Rumi (2002): opposite things work together, even though nominally opposed.

Nietzsche's "nomad" ("traveler") is the very dervish-hood as well; that is a certain condition or phase of being a Sufi. In this context, Nietzsche's "traveler" is aware that he is in search of, and in progress towards, his final harmony and integration with all creation. As the dervish who, in his struggle to become Sufi, learns the principles of truth from the deep knowledge of Sufism, the post-Christian "nomad," in his struggle to become "overman," learns Nietzsche's *truth* that is comprised in Einstein's relativity theory,¹ which was discussed almost one thousand years before Einstein in Hujiwiri's technical literature (*Kashf al-mahjub*) about the identity of time and space in applied Sufi experience (as cited in Shah 1979, 38).

3.3. Nietzsche's Overman: The Complete Sufi

I teach you the overman. Man is something to be surpassed. What have you done to surpass him? All beings thus far have created something beyond themselves.

—Nietzsche (1891, Prologue, 3)

Sufis believe that, expressed in one way, humanity is evolving to a certain destiny. We are all taking part in that evolution. Organs come into being as a result of the need for specific organs

—Rumi (as cited in Shah 1979, 34)²

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1. In discussing mechanism in physics, Nietzsche gives a characterization of things in general: "A quantum of force is designated by the effect it produces and that which it resists" (1968, sec. 634).
 2. Shah continues: "The human being's organism is producing a new complex of organs in response to such a need. In this age of the transcending of time and space, the complex of organs is concerned with the transcending of time and space. What ordinary people regard as sporadic and occasional bursts of telepathic or prophetic power are seen by the Sufi as nothing less than the first stirrings of these same organs. The difference between all evolution up to date and the present need for evolution is that for the past ten thousand years or so we have been given the possibility of a conscious evolution. So essential is this more rarefied evolution that our future depends upon it" (1979, 61).

Nietzsche's overman is a necessity imposed by the situation where the man actually is, and he is also all a man can be. He "is" and "shall be the meaning of the world" (1891, sec. 3). He is "faithful to the world" (sec. 3), and this world should "some day become the overman's" (sec. 4). Overman is the evolutionary nature of human effort, who accepts the eternal return of the same, the will of the whole that justifies each existence. This aspect of human nature, true both in the individual and the group, is described by Jalaluddin Rumi as follows: "I died as inert matter and became plant. And as a plant I died and became animal. I died as an animal, and became a man. So why should I fear losing my 'human' character? I shall die as a man, to rise in 'angelic' form" (Rumi 2001, III, Story XVII).

The overman is strong enough to stand the consequences of the openness to the will to power and to affect history indefinitely, which is not the case with the Christian man. Thus, the overman implies the "tragic hero" and the "nomad" ("traveler"), and he also overpasses nihilism. In what follows, Nietzsche's overman is an in-formed (put-in-form) "alchemy of happiness" of master al-Ghazali: in order to develop higher faculties, the conscious must be transmuted, rather than suppressed or distorted. When this transmutation within the overman takes place, follows the state in which "[t]rue devotion is for itself: not to desire heaven nor to fear hell," as Rabia al-Adawia stresses (Shah 1968, 47.). Or, as Nietzsche says, "My formula for human greatness is *amor fati*: that one wants nothing to be different, not in the future, not in the past, not for all eternity. Not only to endure what is necessary, still less to conceal it ..., but to *love* it" (2004, 39. ii par. 10). This can be made precise by Jalaluddin Rumi's analogy of human love as a reflection of the real truth, which is not love as an end in itself, nor a human love as the ultimate possibility in the potential of the human being. As Rumi affirms: "Wherever you are, whatever your condition is, always try to be a lover" (Shah 1971, 357).

Hence, the overman is the new way of feeling, thinking, and evaluating (Deleuze 2002, 163). He is the state of man's self-completeness, wherein ego-delusions are surpassed. He *is* the process

of human development that in Sufi teaching takes place through seven stages of preparation, each making possible a further enrichment of the being under the guidance of a practiced teacher named also as “seven men.”¹ The seven-fold Sufi process would be metaphorically confirmed by Nietzsche while talking about overman as follows: “[A] nation is a detour of nature to arrive to six or seven great men” (2002, sec. 126).

Ultimately, in Sufi terminology Nietzsche's overman is the Complete Man or Complete Sufi: *nafs-i-safiyya wa kamila* (the purified and complete *nafs*). He can be also called a Master of Time: “master of starting and stopping, who modifies cognition.” The sage Shibli calls this individual “the one who escaped from being under the sway of *hal*, the rapturous but generalized joy” (Shah 1979, 314). In both cases (of the Complete Man and the overman) the “death before death,” the death of ego, is a condition leading toward Jungian process of individuation—a process of self-transforming for the sake of self-completeness. The individuation process is realistically comprised within Complete Sufi and Nietzsche's idea of overman, and it/this is symbolically expressed within the archetypal symbol of Jesus.

The overman is the knowledge of the essential Self. As Sufis emphasize: “He who knows his essential self, knows his God” (as cited in Shah 1979, 314). The knowledge of the essential self is the first step toward the real knowledge of religion. The real knowledge of religion, not the devalued religion, is the very essence of Nietzsche's agenda for the Completest Self.

1. The seven degrees in the transmutation of the individual's consciousness, the technical term of which is *nafs*, are as follows:

1. *nafs-i ammara* (the commanding *nafs*)
2. *nafs-i lawwama* (the accusing *nafs*)
3. *nafs-i mulhama* (the inspired *nafs*)
4. *nafs-i mutma'inna* (the serene *nafs*)
5. *nafs-i radiya* (the fulfilled *nafs*)
6. *nafs-i mardiyya* (the fulfilling *nafs*)
7. *nafs-i safiyya wa kamila* (the purified and complete *nafs*) (Shah 1979, 445).

4. Conclusion

Numberless waves, lapping and momentarily reflecting the sun—all
from the same sea.

—Master Halki

The Sufi commentary on Nietzsche's work is important, because what he requires is precisely Sufism: the transformation of the mind from its “acquired incoherence into an instrument whereby human dignity and destiny may be carried a step further” (Shah 1979, 58). This commentary is important, also because the ineffable Sufism grasps (and overcomes) all the variety his works. The overman of the German philosopher is mentioned briefly in his work, and this proves that the moral values he attains are not his goal *per se*, but rather a by-product of his inner development—as it is, the inner evolution and the psychological integration of the Sufi master a reflection of his being. For Nietzsche, the capacity of man's development is within himself, as it is for Sufi thought and action. When this evolution is attained consciously—in the case of Sufis, through Sufi method and experience—it gives rise to an objective knowledge about the problems of humanity. This objective knowledge, which is essential, allows the disclosure of the root of the problems. Thus, the correction in the direction of the *love* of the Christian man, in terms of Sufism and appropriately with Nietzschean thought, would be: “You must improve yourself on a higher level if you are to be able to help other people” (Shah 1998, 118).

There are several other parallels that can be drawn between Sufism and Nietzschean thought. Several examples suggest themselves: “presence” and “absence” of God in Nietzsche's thought *vis-a-vis* “presence” and “absence” (*shuhud* and *ghayba*) in Sufi teaching; the approach which Sufis call “problem-solving by non-linear thinking” (Shah 1982, 13); the way in which Nietzsche examines the *birth of tragedy* and the “the way to study the lives of former sages” (13), whereby the comparison between different dimensions of knowledge is

extracted; the acquirement of objectivity; “observing basic motivation” at Sufis (13) *vis-a-vis* the “will to power” of Nietzsche; “illustration of the inward state”; “knowledge distinguished from opinion”; employment of “why analogies”; “being ‘useful in reality, not in appearance’”; allegorical speech; “making effective use of negative characteristics”; “the creating of an air of mystery”; “anger”; “courting criticism and reactions to it” (Shah 1982, 13); and so forth.

The presupposition that the elements of Sufism have always been present in their entirety within the human mind entails the concept of synergy of the rigorous sciences, as is the concept of *al-tawhid* (Hoxha 2002). It is most likely that the oneness of God is the essence of Nietzsche's “eternal return,” for it seems that the sentence of the *sage* in the Sufi story about the absence/presence of the Master of Khorasan could equally speak for Nietzsche: “I am the only remaining of that same master of yours! Only one in a thousand people want to learn. ... The rest of them ... long ago decided that our late Master was insufficient to their needs” (Shah 1992, 62). It is Nietzsche's life as “background of his thought” (Kauffman 1974, 21-71)—his Sufi-like battle with his commanding self.

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