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Hum. 260 H: The Western Esoteric Traditions

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Between Something and Nothing
and
Finding Everything:
Shared Beliefs in Western Esoteric Traditions and Sufi Poetry

“Can you see me? Are you near me?
And I long to know you’re real
And I long for you to be a part of me”
-The Ocean Blue

Being caught *between something and nothing* is a common perception of the human experience. We view ourselves as separate from other things both living and inanimate. We exist in a binary mode either at odds with another element or caught between two poles – always separate, always opposed and distinct- and for that reason we are caught like insects or fossils in amber, our bodies, minds and spirits suspended in colorful bubbles seemingly separate from all other elements in the universe. [A very sufi-like metaphor](#)

It is this dualistic mode of thought, the *I* that is differentiated from the *other*, that causes an individualized existence which focuses on past and future while overlooking the present, that perceives the material opposed to the immaterial and which considers purpose and meaning to exist externally and is meant to then be internalized. This limited mode of thought, perception and existence focuses only on the *one*, me, myself and I, and creates an *other*, it and them, that essentially places an individual perpetually

caught in a state of being that is in between. Wolfgang Iser, in his theoretical application of phenomenology to the act of reading, insightfully states, “The between is itself nothing” (Iser 165). Therein lies the dilemma of humanity. Our binary mode of thought and perception creates a limited existence that separates us from others and places us in a perpetual state of being *between*, which leaves us, ultimately, with nothing. It is this perception of oneself as a separate Self that incites a yearning in us to connect with others, for we are blind to the notion that we are not separate but one in the same, connected, interwoven and unified. [Dilemma of existentialism...and also of the Gnostic before gnosis and the call by te good God](#)

This dualistic existence is exemplified perfectly in all the myriad forms of art that humanity has created. Traditionally an art piece, be it visual, sculptural, textual, musical or architectural, is perceived as separate and apart from the audience and, as such, is meant to then impart knowledge, communicate a viewpoint or concept, or express emotion and hopefully be a vessel of beauty and truth. The experience of the art is then defined as occurring between two separate entities that remain separate and distinct and the purpose of this occurrence is the transference of thoughts, concepts, emotions, beauty and truth from the art (and artist) to the audience. Take, for example, a common outing at a museum or art gallery. People meander slowly, as if lost, through the public space that holds all of the creative greatness of humanity throughout the ages. Wandering about, somewhat aimlessly, a person is lost in thought (perhaps in life) and yearns for direction and needs guidance, always wanting a pure connection with an art piece and, via the art piece, its creator. [And just when we connect, we need to move along](#)

The theory and application of phenomenology is useful in understanding this process and how we perceive dualistically only to have epiphanies, moments of clarity that destroy this binary mindset and existence. “Phenomenology is the study of essences; and according to it all, all problems amount to finding definitions of essences: the essence of perception, or the essence of consciousness... but phenomenology is also a philosophy which puts essences back into existence... It is a transcendental philosophy” (Merleau-Ponty vii). Phenomenology works within the binary mindset to reveal a unified existence that supersedes our limited world and cosmic view. Phenomenology analyzes and explains how, at times, we move from our dualistic experience of the world and cosmos and break through to a realization of the unifying nature of all life that is all too easily overlooked. These moments help us transcend, if only momentarily, ourselves.

Phenomenology can be applied to any art form. Wolfgang Iser uses the phenomenological theory to understand the act of reading, or what occurs in the moment that a text and reader connect:

Central to the reading of every literary work is the interaction between its structure and its recipient...the literary work has two poles, which we might call the artistic and the aesthetic: the artistic pole is the author’s text and the aesthetic is the realization accomplished by the reader... the actualization is clearly the result of an interaction between the two (Iser 20-21).

Here we have both the dualism that is the foundation of the common view of being and the moment where the dualism breaks down to reveal unity that occurs as the text (art piece) and reader interact. It is this moment of unity that creates meaning in the text, for

the reader and of that moment. The realization occurs only through the interaction between text and reader, which connects them, thus unifying them as one. “[one] cannot find the words to express the experience; instead he finds that this experience begins to change his life” (Iser 7). The life changing experience occurs because the reader transcends the mundane and limited dualism that has become ingrained in his mind. This transcendental moment is transformational and enlightening, for what is revealed is the Self in relation to the *other*. *Gnosis not with a divine but another, which in momentarily the same thing?* One learns of himself via the text that which was previously hidden in the subconscious and intuitive realms of the heart and spirit. One may learn a multitude of oneself as a person in the phenomenological process, but the ultimate lesson is the lesson of unity- that beyond the material plane and binary mindset lies unity between all elements in the cosmos (in this example between text and reader) and, thus, infinity, of which that individual is part of within and without.

Let us return to the example of an outing at a museum or art gallery. Upon reflection the visit to the museum or gallery is the physical expression of the viewer searching for a connection that facilitates an enlightenment that manifests itself in a higher form of self-awareness. Look at any individual standing before a painting or sculpture. What you see is a person standing in silence, most likely looking up, almost as in reverence, as if the individual is in the midst of a sacred act. There you have a man, woman or child standing, searching, alone and separate from the art piece, conventionally considered to be a source of insight and universal truth and a tangible example of the powerful act of creation. What we are searching for is ourselves, knowledge of ourselves not as separate beings but connected and part of a whole, the same whole from which the

artist and the art originated. [yes](#) This constant searching is an intuitive act revealing the truth that we are not separate entities caught in globules of amber, for it is only our minds that perceive our selves and our universe in this manner. Intuitively, our hearts and spirits know this is false and search for signs indicating the opposite- that we are not suspended separately in colorful globes of resin caught between something and nothing, but rather that we are all seamlessly interwoven and unified. It is for us to bypass our mind and the logic it utilizes to make sense of existence by limiting us to a state in which we are separate and opposed. Instead, we must embrace the yearning that emanates from our hearts and spirits from which intuition whispers to us that we and the universe is so much bigger than *I*, so much so that the universe is *we*, an *infinite us*.

This realization of an unfathomable unity binding all in the cosmos is a common element of many, if not all, Western esoteric traditions. [As contrasted with mainstream religions' dualisms](#) This common ground of various belief systems is found in Hermeticism, Neoplatonism, Gnosticism, Kabala and Theosophy in the Western traditions and is referred to as the “perennial philosophy.” This is the view that all religions, theologies and even philosophies are founded on the same essential belief that All is One and the One is All (which is often paired with the hermetic phrase “As above, so below”). The link between these Western traditions can also be extended to Eastern mysticism and philosophy, specifically in the mystical Islamic tradition of Sufism.

The three major world religions with Judeo-Christian origins (Judaism, Christianity and Islam) all have been the root of mystical traditions- Kabala, Gnosticism and Sufism. These mystical schools of thought share the view that there is a divine mystery that most people, the uninitiated and unenlightened, are blind to. This mystery

can only be learned through personal life experience that results in knowledge of the divine nature of oneself, of the world, and of all creation, which leads to a comprehension and intimate knowledge of the divine source of all-God. This knowledge is referred to as gnosis, for Gnostics, or *erfan*, for Sufis. “Like the Greek term *gnosis*, *erfan*, refers to a heightened level of knowing in which one is able to intuit ultimate reality... *erfan* is a nonintellectual, nonrational knowing” (Aslan 215). This knowing that flows from personal life experiences creates a state of being in which an individual knows instead of thinks or rationalizes. This state of being, and the gnosis or *erfan* that is at the heart of it, removes the illusion of the material world and the binary mode of thought that it engenders in one’s consciousness. Instead one sees clearly the unity of all within ultimate reality. This is the fountainhead of the shared “perennial philosophy” between these mystical traditions and from this fountainhead flows multiple themes, motifs and concepts (such as the divine mystery and lost knowledge, the concept of correspondence, the divine spark within creation, the emanations of God and the important role of sound and music in mystical and esoteric thought) that are shared between not only these three mystical traditions but most of the Western esoteric traditions. This philosophy and the many themes and concepts it disseminates can be found in humanity’s own act of creation- art, music and literature. Sufi poetry, specifically, is pregnant with the “perennial philosophy” and its many themes and ideas that may be found in all esoteric and mystical cosmic views. It is through the poetry of Sufi masters, such as Hafiz and Rumi, where this commonality between Western esotericism and Eastern mysticism is most evident.

The oldest of the Western esoteric belief systems comes from the ancient land of Egypt in the form of Hermeticism. The authoritative figure of this esoteric tradition is Hermes Trismegistus. It is not known whether Hermes was an actual historical figure, but Hermes, “the thrice great one,” has attained mythic status as the author of the *Corpus Hermeticum* and originator of hermetic thought that tells us that “Nous, or mind, existed before the creation” (Lachman 30) of the universe, Nous being the source of All, or God. Hermes then states that the entire macrocosm and the microcosm that is humanity contains an element of the divine source. This is the mystery that eludes most people- the knowledge of the divine essence of all creation. “Hermes tells us, ‘This is the end, the Supreme Good, for those who have had higher knowledge: to become God’” (Lachman 33). Other Western esoteric traditions also propose the same view. Neoplatonism builds upon Plato’s dualistic view of the universe that contains both the material world of the senses (that is unreliable as a source of truth for it is constantly in flux) and the immaterial world of Ideas and Forms, which is the source of all truth and reality (Lavine 26). And Neo-Platonism’s emanations function as a unifier od 2 worlds Gnosticism views the material universe not only as a false reality, but also as a prison for humanity’s divine essence for “each spirit entity is a pure spark or atom of divine consciousness and is of the same essence as God” (Hoeller 11). Thus, the material world is an illusion that blinds us to our own divinity and, in doing so, imprisons us in a limited, material, and false state of existence.but it is the spark of the divine which can ascend to the good God, making existence whole

What all of these belief systems emphasize is that humanity has lost the knowledge of the true Self as being divine. This ignorance of the Self then obscures

knowledge of the universe and of God. Humanity lives in the darkness of ignorance, a lesson clearly articulated by Plato's *Allegory of the Cave* in which men are chained within a cave and fooled to believe that shadows upon a wall are truth (Lavine 28). These esoteric traditions attempt to guide an individual towards the light of the sun (symbolic of truth and the source of all-the One, God) that resides outside of our cave. The references to a divine essence that originates from the source of all creation and the ignorance of one's true Self and of a reality that transcends the material, false universe which limits and imprisons us can be found in various guises in Sufi poetry.

One of the greatest Sufi master poets is Shams al-Din Muhammad Shirazi, whose pen name is Hafiz, meaning "memorizer" and was given to him as an individual who had memorized the Koran (Longman 393). Hafiz is the most beloved Persian poet who lived at the same time as the great English writer Geoffrey Chaucer and one hundred years after the Sufi master poet Rumi. Hafiz is recognized for taking the traditional Arabic form of love poetry known as *ghazal* and adapting it to suit his mystical Sufi beliefs. His poetry "is rooted in the beautiful human need for companionship and in the soul's innate desire to surrender all experience- except Light" (Ladinsky 2). Hafiz utilizes the common motifs of love, lust, drunkenness, sensuality, obsession, and longing of Arabic ghazals but applies them to his loving relationship with God, for whom he has many names, such as Father, Mother, the Infinite, Sweet Uncle, Generous Merchant, Problem Giver, Problem Solver, Friend, Beloved, Ocean, Sky, Sun, Moon, Love and many other titles and terms of endearment (Ladinsky 4). In Hafiz's unique brand of love poems you find a multitude of esoteric elements in his words and imagery weaving together mystical concepts from both Western and Eastern cosmic views.

In Hafiz's poem "I Have Learned So Much" he directly addresses the various belief systems that share a common enlightened knowledge of the Self, the universe and God:

I
Have
Learned
So much from God
That I can no longer
Call
Myself

A Christian, a Hindu, a Muslim,
A Buddhist, a Jew.

The Truth has shared so much of Itself
With me

...
Love has
Befriended Hafiz so completely
It has turned to ash
And freed
Me

Here in this verse is a clear indication that all faiths share one Truth and one God. One religion or belief system is not any truer than another; no one faith can argue that it alone is the vessel that contains Truth. Rather, all faiths, at their core and most pure, share the same universal Truths. This knowledge is obscured by culture and the limited, ignorant binary mindset of the material existence, but enlightened people, such as Hafiz, see beyond the material, beyond the dichotomy of I and them and understand that all faiths, all creatures, all creation is not only connected but one in the same and it is Love that binds and infuses everything, Love being God. This pure, simple, all-encompassing Truth is knowledge that is forgotten by all at some point and remains hidden to all but the initiated. It is gnosis, erfán, and it is the force that liberates those who know.

One of the eldest Sufi poets is called “Jelaluddin Balkhi” by both Persians and Afghans. He is now known by the world as Rumi, meaning “from Roman Anatolia,” which is a name he acquired once his family left his homeland of Afghanistan and emigrated to Konya, Turkey to flee invading Mongol armies (Barks ix). Rumi uses his love poetry to expound his Sufi point of view and to also create “a bridge between religions and cultures... His presence and poetry was, and is, inclusive, allied with the impulse to praise and recognize every being and every moment as sacred” (Barks xvii). It is this inclusiveness that echoes the notion of the “perennial philosophy” found in Western esoteric traditions, as well as the fundamentally shared view of the Creator and creation as one in the same and essentially divine. At the heart of Rumi’s art is the pure divine essence that runs through and connects all elements of creation with the Source and is present in all things and in every moment.

This all-encompassing mindset is clearly found in his poem titled “Melting Snow.” In this poem Rumi recounts how he and his friends meet and run in the street attempting to understand and connect with the immensity of nature where God resides only to find that God not only is present in nature but in all aspects of creation, including humanity:

Lo, I am with you always means when you look for God,
 God is in the look of your eyes,
 In the thought of looking, nearer to you than yourself,
 Or things that have happened to you
 There’s no need to go outside.

Be melting snow (Barks?)

Here in his verse Rumi clearly expresses that God is within and without. One must merely acknowledge the divinity that lies within all things and within one self; once

acknowledged it can then be experienced and, therefore, known (erfan) in the present moment that is Being. Just as snow is divine in being melting snow so is a person divine in being present and self aware in the moment. To know God simply know and be yourself.

Sufi poetry builds upon the esoteric notion that “One is All, All is One” by exploring the Hermetic dictum “As above, so below.” This dictum encapsulates the concept of correspondence that is not only found in Hermeticism, but in other esoteric traditions such as Kabbala and Gnosticism. Correspondence concerns patterns and similarities “between a higher divine reality, the universe, the earthly realm, and human beings” (Goodrick-Clarke 15). What exists in the celestial realms also exists in the material universe; the macrocosm is also found in the microcosm. Take the following excerpt from Hafiz’s poem “Only One Rule.” He writes:

The sky
Is a suspended blue ocean.
The stars are the fish that swim.

The planets are the white whales I sometimes
Hitch a ride
On. ([Ladinsky?](#))

On one level Hafiz is using metaphor to describe seemingly dissimilar elements to change the reader’s experience of this world; however, by doing so, Hafiz is not just providing a figurative and poetic interpretation of the world, but he is also expressing the similarities between the heavens and the earth that literally articulates the rule of correspondences. Note that he does not use similes because doing so would state that the sky is *like* the ocean, stars are *like* fish, planets are *like* whales. That would not support

the belief “As above, so below.” No, Hafiz explicitly states that the sky *is* the ocean, the stars *are* the fish, and that the planets *are* the whales; the macrocosm *is* the microcosm.

Rumi also touches upon this topic in his poem “Where are We?” He writes:

What is the body? The shadow of a shadow
Of your love, that somehow contains
The entire universe. [Perfect quote after Hafiz](#)

Here Rumi expounds upon the idea that the microcosm not only reflects the macrocosm but actually contains it. A lover’s body is filled with love and love is what the universe consists of, which flows from the purest source of love-God.

If all creation is connected and flows directly from God, as esotericists and mystics believe, then all creation is divine (as stated above). Gnosis, and erfān, provides “the irrefutable insight that ‘the individual is fundamentally no different than the Supreme’” (Lachman 24). Therefore, all elements and beings in the universe contain a “divine spark” that originated in the creator and remains within everything created. Not only is humanity divine, but our very existence is imbued with an animating force. It is this force, this spark, this remnant of God, the Creator, that provides us with the potential for greatness in ourselves in the form of creative, productive acts that are motivated by love. Hafiz expresses this notion of the divine essence residing within an individual in his lovely poem “When I want to Kiss God:”

When
No one is looking

I swallow deserts and clouds
And chew on mountains knowing
They are sweet
Bones!

When no one is looking and I want

To Kiss
God

I just lift my own hand

To

My

Mouth.

Here the ghazal is a love poem that focuses on the sensual act of consuming the essence of nature and in doing so the knowledge of nature's divinity is realized, which leads Hafiz to then seek union with God. The poet uses the intimacy of a kiss to represent the intimate relationship formed after one attains *erfan*, comprehension of creation, one's true essence and intimate communion with God, which is achieved in this poem by kissing oneself! For God resides within and, as esoteric and mystical beliefs dictate, we are God.

Although Hafiz is known for taking ghazal, love poetry, and developing it and its common motifs to explore Sufism, he is also known for his humor in addressing the sacred knowledge and experience of the Sufi master. In a poem titled "The Sun in Drag" Hafiz accomplishes what he did in the previous love poem, revealing the "divine spark" that lies within everyone and everything, but he does so in a witty and humorous fashion (some may go so far as to say blasphemous, but isn't blasphemy often humorous? And isn't humor a receptacle of truth?). In this poem he uses the term "Sun" as a term for God and explores the common esoteric theme of hidden truth, in this case the "divine spark" within, which is also echoed in the use of the term "Sun" as a spark elicits imagery of brilliant light and fire:

You are the Sun in drag.

You are God hiding from yourself.
Remove all the “mine”-that is the veil.
Why ever worry about
Anything?
Listen to what your friend Hafiz
Knows for certain:
The appearance of this world
Is a Magi’s brilliant trick, though its affairs are
Nothing into nothing.
You are a divine elephant with amnesia
Trying to live in an ant
Hole. 😊
Sweetheart, O sweetheart
You are God in
Drag!

Hafiz deftly utilizes the image of a cross dresser to express a pair of ideas. First, Hafiz addresses the issue of blindness that is due to ignorance of one’s self and divine nature. Not being aware of one’s essence is akin to hiding oneself behind a veil or costume that not only covers one’s body but also alters an individual’s appearance. The “divine spark” is being hidden by the person’s lack of self-awareness and then misrepresented because the spark is obscured and not allowed to be expressed or demonstrated in its pure form. Secondly, and most brilliantly on Hafiz’s part, he uses the image of a person in drag to represent the glory of God and one’s “divine spark” that, in turn, makes one God. Are

not people in drag the most ebullient, confident, vivid and luminous beings? Their persona in drag is not hiding who they are, but rather the outfit is amplifying who they are in a joyous fashion (the sun is the greatest drag queen of all). So we, in our ignorance, place our divinity in the shadows and hidden beneath a veil but once we become self-aware the pure beauty of our “divine spark” shines and shouts out, loud and proud, “I am God in Drag!” I wonder if there is anything like this in the West? Can’t think of anything..

Both Hafiz and Rumi write ghazals, or love poetry, but between the two it can be argued that Hafiz is the comic and Rumi is the true romantic for what characterizes Rumi’s poetry is not just intimations of physical love, but the focus on romantic love. Take, for example, this short poem:

The minute I heard my first love story
I started looking for you, not knowing
How blind that was.

Lovers don’t finally meet somewhere
They’re in each other all along.

Rumi also touches upon the notion of the “divine spark” within in this poem in the form of romantic love between lovers (and love between a person and God) but he adds the esoteric layer of emanations in his poetry. Good thought

In the Jewish mystical tradition, Kabala, the notion of the emanations of God that originate with the Creator and reach out to all elements, creatures and beings in the cosmos is central to its doctrine. Kabalists use an image of a tree, known as the “tree of life,” that contains ten sephiroth. The sephiroth are viewed as “powers of God arranged in specific structure” (Goodrick-Clarke 43). The tree of life has also been described as a

“tree of emanation.” These powers of God are arranged so as to act as guides for the initiated in their journey towards enlightenment and back to the source of Creation, or God. There are many pathways provided by the tree of emanation (22 to be exact) for the initiate to take for every person’s journey is unique and singular. The issue of emanation is important because it reinforces the belief that God remains a part of everything and the source of creation, be it an animating energy or love, emanates from God and flows out and through the universe. Rumi touches upon emanation in his poem “A Community of the Spirit.” He writes, “Flow down and down in always/ widening rings of being.” The imagery is clear. God flows out and through everything and everyone, always reaching out in a widening embrace to call to and bring back his children. It is due to love that God created and it is through love that we will hear the Creator’s call and be awakened to our true nature so that we may then return to the source of all things-Love.

One final element of Western esotericism can be found prominently in Sufi poetry. It is the role of pure sound and music that mystics discuss when alluding to being called by the One and awakened to the reality of the universe and our existence that we have been oblivious to, for the uninitiated are somnambulists- sleepwalking through a false material world that is merely a dream. Rumi beautifully writes:

The breeze at dawn has secrets to tell you.
 Don’t go back to sleep.
 You must ask for what you really want.
 Don’t go back to sleep.
 People are going back and forth across the doorsill
 Where the two worlds touch.
 The door is round and open.
 Don’t go back to sleep.

[rather like Gurdjieff..and Buddhism..awakening by any means available](#)

For both Western esotericists and Eastern mystics, like Sufis, ignorance is an all too common mode of being for people. We must awaken and heed the call to recognize ourselves as divine beings so that we may choose to return to the One, the All that we are from, are part of but yet separated from.

This awakening is often described as being accompanied by music and pure sound. In his poem “Perfection” Hafiz depicts this awakening:

I hear the voice
Of every creature and plant,
Every world and sun and galaxy-
Singing the Beloved’s Name!

Sound, pure sound, is both immaterial and material simultaneously. This is true of every plant, animal, human, world, star and galaxy. It is true that all of creation consists of both the material and immaterial simultaneously. Sound is formless but also becomes tangible in vibrations. Sound disperses from one source and emanates in ever widening and far reaching waves of sound. Pure sound is God. I guess waves of sound and also water are emanations of God

The notion that music is an inherent component of the cosmos is neither new nor unique. Hermeticists viewed music as an integral part of an individual’s attainment of gnosis and incorporated music into their rituals. “The ecstasy of the voyage (here referring to the Hermetic process of reaching the 8th sphere and attaining gnosis) was... often given voice through hymns of praise” (Lachman 94). These hymns of praise reflected the view that gnosis could not possibly be articulated properly via spoken language, as language is founded upon reason and logic, modes of thought and

expression that are limited and, thus, unfit for use in relating the ineffable experience of gnosis.

The ancient Greeks also placed great importance on the role of sound in the fabric of the universe. The philosopher Pythagoras, according to legend, realized after hearing the sounds of hammers in a forge that tones can be expressed in numerical values and geometrical measures which led him to discover, through the use of stringed instruments, the connection between vibration and pitch (Roob 84). His discovery was followed by the theory of the music of the spheres. “The ancient philosophers assumed that the world consisted of a perfect harmony, namely, from the earth to the starry heavens is a perfect octave (A Kircher *Musurgia universalis*). The seven steps of the octave were seen as containing the world, for it is the number seven that links the divine trinity to the quaternity of the elements” (Roob 88). Once again, pure sound is shown to be a primary element of creation.

Sound not only is a component of creation but it is the paradigm of the universe and the original act of creation. “The preparatory stage of all things is audible, and when finished they are visible. In other words, from the world of sound there came the world of forms” (Khan 27). First there is pure sound, formless and immaterial, just as it was at the beginning, before time. Then there is the act of creation in which the formless takes shape and becomes visible as when pure sound becomes music. Various sacred texts make this exact assertion. “The Vedanta speaks of *Nada Brahma*, the Sound-God, the sound that is God, of which all things are made... The Qur’an says: ‘*Kun fa-yakun*- when God said, “Be”, it became’. Before the world was, all was in sound, God was sound, we are made of sound... Although it has been dimmed by manifestation, your thought, your

mind, is made of sound” (Khan 24). Even the Judeo-Christian text affirms this view: “And God said, Let there be light; and there was light” (Genesis 1:3). Most people point to light as being the first manifestation of the created universe, but they overlook that God first spoke. It is the pure sound of God from which the created universe emerged.

Sounds before words, and West seems to emphasize words

This is precisely why the theme of sound and music and the multiple images of musical instruments are found widely throughout Sufi poetry. The Sufi musician and teacher Hazrat Inayat Khan insightfully states, “it [music] touches the deepest part of man’s being... the beauty of music is that it is the source of creation and the means of absorbing it... by music the world was created, and it is again through music that the world is withdrawn into the source that has created it” (Khan 5). So sound is God and the human voice or a musical instrument played by a musician is a form of allowing one’s divinity to be expressed so that one may reconnect with God through the purity of sound. Hafiz writes:

I am
A hole in a flute
That the Christ’s breath moves through-
Listen to this
Music.

Here the breath of Christ (God) is immaterial pure sound that goes through Hafiz, a man, and becomes tangible notes of music. It is a simple but clear, poetic and mystical statement. And also Rumi’s Song of the Reed

It is appropriate that poetry is the medium that conveys such a fundamental element of Western esotericism and Eastern mysticism. It brings together the seemingly contrasting cultures while also reinforcing the basic creeds of these belief systems- All is

One and the One is All and As above, so below. Poetry also combines the basic elements of creation- the ineffable and the tangible. Poetry is a verbal art but one that is rooted in sound and music. The poets of antiquity memorized verses and sang them to those with open ears and welcoming hearts. Poetry as a medium of art, then, contains both the immaterial aspect of sound and the material incarnation of sound in music and language, the immaterial made concrete. It is a human endeavor that replicates the original act of creation yes and therein lies humanity's greatness and nature's beauty. Our inherent divinity within may be obscured, imprisoned, even forgotten and lost to our consciousness but *it* is always there.

Our divine spark never dissipates, which is precisely why we find ourselves always yearning for something more and what it is may not always be clear to us, yet we yearn and it is our longing that causes us to search and seek answers and understanding of ourselves and others in the hope of possibly making a connection. Essentially we yearn and search for unity. "The mirror inside me shows.../ I can't say what, but I can't not know!" (Rumi from "The Shape of my Tongue") We do know, we are just not always conscious of it. So what is one to do when you yearn for that which cannot be articulated? You create. Is that not what God did and does? We are divine so we create as well. The poet's (Hafiz) words sing:

Art is, at last, the knowledge of
Where we are standing-
Where we are standing
In this Wonderland

Where we stand alludes to Being and erfän. Art is creation and in creating we express our divinity and become God. So when the American band The Ocean Blue italicssings:

Can you see me? Are you near me?

And I long to know you're real
 And I long for you to be a part of me
 (taken from the song "Between Something and Nothing")

The band is questioning, and their yearning leads to creating. It is in creating that our questions are answered and our yearning is quenched because it becomes self evident that which we search for has been within us all along. We are not *between something and nothing*. However, feeling as if we are leads us to seek something more than this mundane isolated material existence. In the end being *between nothing and something* leads us to an awareness of ourselves, an understanding of others and creation, and then an intimate knowledge of God, which is finding *everything*.

Can't add much to this...can we put it up in Humanitas? There is a periodical called Pomegranate you might see this to.
Could you add the citation at end of the quotes..and send me a clean copy for Humanitas? We'll retire a paper and post this.
Such a wonderful essay. Thank you.

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