

# The Treatise on Unity

## (extract)

Ibn Al Arabi

Praise belongs to God, before whose Oneness there is no before, unless the before is He and after whose Singularity there is no after, unless the after is He!

He was, and there was not with Him any before, nor after, nor above, nor below, nor closeness, nor distance, nor how, nor where, nor when, nor time, nor moment, nor period, nor duration, nor manifested existence, nor place. "And He is now as He was". He is the One without oneness, the Singular without singularity. He is not composed of name and named: for His Name is He and His named is He and there is no name or named other than Him. He is the First without firstness and the Last without lastness. He is the Apparent without appearance and the Hidden without hiddenness. I mean that He is the very being of the letters of the Name 'the First' and the Name 'the Last', of the Name 'the Hidden' and the Name 'the Apparent'. There is no First nor Last, Apparent nor Hidden except Him, without the letters (which form these names) becoming Him or His becoming these letters.

Understand this so as not to fall into the error of those who believe in incarnation: because He is not in anything and no thing is in Him whether entering in or coming out. It is in this way that you should know Him and not through (theoretical) knowledge, reason, understanding or conjecture, nor with the eye nor the external senses, nor even with interior sight or perception. No one sees Him, except Himself; no one reaches Him, except Himself; and no one knows Him except Himself. He knows Himself through Himself and He sees Himself by means of Himself. No one but He sees Him. His very Oneness is His veil since nothing veils Him other than He; His own Being veils Him. His Oneness is concealed by His Oneness without any condition.

No one other than He sees Him. No sent prophet, nor perfect saint nor angel brought close knows Him. His prophet is He; His Messenger is He; His message is He and His word is He. He sent Himself, through Himself, from Himself to Himself; there is no intermediary or means other than He. There is no difference between the Sender, that which is sent and the one to whom it is sent. The very existence of the letters of the prophetic message is His existence. There is no other who could cease to be, or have a name or be named.

Because of this, the Prophet (may God bless him and give him peace) said, "He who knows himself, knows his Lord". He also said, "I knew my Lord through my Lord". What the Prophet meant by this, is that you are not you but you are He and there is no you; and it is not that He enters into you or comes out of you, or that you enter into Him or come out of Him. He did not mean that you have being and you are qualified by this or that attribute. What he meant was that you never were and that you never will be, whether through yourself, or through Him, or in Him or with Him. You have neither ceased to be nor are you existent. You are Him and He is you, without any of these

imperfections. If you know your existence in this way, then you know God; and if not, then not!

...When the secret of an atom is discovered, the secret of all created things is discovered, whether they are apparent or hidden, and you stop seeing the two worlds as other than God – although the two worlds, their names and what they name do not exist, or rather, their names and what they designate, and their very existence are Him, without any doubt. You do not see God as having ever created anything but as being “every day in a different configuration”, which sometimes reveals Him and sometimes conceals Him, without any condition: since “He is the First and the Last, the Apparent and the Hidden and He has Knowledge of everything”. He manifests Himself by His Oneness and hides Himself by His Singularity. He is the First in His Essence and His Self-subsistence and the Last in His Everlastingness. He is the very being of the Name ‘the First’ and the Name ‘the Last’, of the Name ‘the Apparent’ and the Name ‘the Hidden’. He is His own Name and (what is) named. Just as His existence is necessary, the non-existence of what is other than Him is necessary. In fact, what you think is other than Him is not other than Him. Other than Him is Him; His transcendence does not permit that other than Him is really other than Him: other than Him is Him without there being any otherness, whether this is with Him, or in Him, in the interior or the exterior.

IBN' ARABI