

Preliminary Remarks on Explicating the Implicit via Experiential Words: “I climbed to the Branches of a Plum Tree” and Related Problems Arising in Sufi Language*

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Abstract

The starting point of this paper is to solve a conceptual problem of the Sufi language. The analysis of related exemplary Sufi concepts by the approach which E.T. Gendlin offers will be undertaken. This basic implementation will lead us to explain the meaning of a conceptually controversial poem of Yunus Emre, and the reasons of differentiation of its meaning. To utilize the experiential perspective of Gendlin will not only recommend a solution to the conceptual problem, but also will lead to a fruitful research programme which provides us to take up the affairs in an integrity of parts of their processes.

Key Words: Gendlin, implicit, language, experiencing, meaning, Sufism, shatahat, Yunus Emre, process philosophy.

1. Introductory Remarks

The starting point of this paper is to solve a conceptual problem related to the Sufi language. In the following pages, we will try to introduce some aspects of a quite new type of postmodern philosophy and the traditional Sufi concepts to each other, and to the reader. This interrelation, like all interrelations, will provide us new, important implications, and we will be able to mention roughly some of them. First, we will introduce a clear and important conceptual problem in Islamic literature, which the scholarly work does not seem to be aware of. In order to solve the problem, we will develop a Gendlinese approach. The implementation of Gendlin’s philosophical approach to our problem will lead us to such a vivid situation that at the end, we will find ourselves at the edge of a new inquiry. (In expense of being boring, the references are held abundant, to point to those new dimensions for more scrutiny, and due to the respect to the previous scholars.) The aim of the paper will change and update itself

* We dedicate to all kinds of drunkenness’ via all drunks (especially mummy, grand aunt, sakiyy and shakiyy); to *Hiyel Nezareti* -TUBITAK- which keeps us further sober and constipated; and to the folk song which gave on us up and left alone seeking symbols for a better metaphor.

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throughout the lines, and we will cheerfully observe that it will turn out to an instance of what itself suggests.

2. Shatahat (Ecstatic Utterances)

Shatahat, namely, “ecstatic utterances”¹ of Sufis, are thought to be one of the most important problems of Islamic Mysticism. Shatahat lied in the center of almost all the discussions of Sufism.² Shath (singular of “shatahat”), is an Arabic originated word, which has been used to meet different meanings like “to flood”, “to be carried away”, “to tremble”, “to shock”, “to joke”, etc.³ (Kurnaz and Tatçı, p.9) Bayezid-i Bistami (d.c.261/878)’s “*Subhani ma a’zame şani: Glory upon me, I exalt myself from all deficiencies*” and Halladj-ı Mansur (d.c.309/922)’s “*Ene’l-Hakk: I am the Truth*” are known as the most famous examples of shatahat. (Cebecioğlu, p.7)

Turkish Literature is also full of distinguished examples of such kind of sayings. As a matter of fact, we may observe that almost all of the early Turkish-Moslem Mystics (which are roughly—and rather falsely—gathered under the umbrella concept *heterodox dervishes*) uttered such ecstatic words.⁴ As we shortly mentioned, shatahat are not peculiar to our culture. The examples of these kind of words may be found in every moslem place and realm, especially in the Persian culture.⁵ Shatahat did not settle for a literary kind of a culture, social class or group. As an important aspect of popular folk Islam, they have been appropriated, loved, and interrelated with other dimensions of the culture, and carried up to day by the folk. They were made the cultures own. The footprints of such utterances may be found in all aspects of our culture; in folk tales, idioms, proverbs, lullabies, folk songs, *devriyyes*, *tekerlemes*,⁶ riddles, etc., in very many different cultural elements.⁷ The time and space perception of the writer of this paper is mostly shaped by the folk tales starting with those intricate sayings, as well.

3. I climbed to the Branches of a Plum Tree—to “Put the Veil on the Face of Sense”

As we shortly mentioned, shatahat, meanly, ecstatic sayings are widely known in Islamic world and in our culture. Besides, when one talks about shatahat, generally, Yunus Emre’s famous lines come to ones mind:

I climbed to the branches of a plum tree,

And I helped myself to the grapes up there.

The owner of the orchard scolded me:

"What are you devouring my walnuts for?" (Halman, pp. ii)⁸

This odd poem of Yunus has gained a very important place in the Turkish-Moslem literature. Lots of *nazires*⁹ have written and lots of *sherhs*¹⁰ have been done to it.¹¹ In his recent publication¹², Prof. Yakıt collects all the previous sherhs, and adds to them his own sherh.¹³ Nevermore, an accent of Yakıt reveals an important conceptual problem, from which this study will take on. He states that the poem of Yunus, which is known as the paradigm example of ecstatic words, is not an ecstatic saying at all.

[Yunus Emre's] "I climbed to the branches of a plum tree" is held in the literature as a shath. In our opinion, this phrase is quite false. Because, in the case of shath, the subject is unconscious, his/her expressions are totally meaningless words. All the interpretations and explanations provide no clarification to them. They are totally inconsistent and invalid expressions. ... To name the poem of Yunus as a shath will be inaccurate. Yunus is obviously aware of what he expresses. The symbols are selected very picky and carefully... Hence, we in this study use the phrase "symbolic poem", rather than "shath". (Yakıt, p.22)

For Yakıt, shath is a totally unintelligible type of saying. Shatahat are just nonsense. Whereas, "I climbed to the branches of a plum tree" is defended to have a certain logical structure; a meaning which is hidden behind a clever symbolism. Behind the veil of seemingly absurd words lies a clear meaning.¹⁴ These words of Yunus are "meaningful expression of a philosophical thought", rather than expressing a psychological state. (Kurnaz and Tatçı, p.35) In the literature, there is a convention that "I climbed to the branches of a plum tree" is a symbolic poem, rather than a shath.

4. Problems: Which Meaning? What is "Shath" Really?

We arrive at a controversial situation. To state that the poem has a certain logical structure and one meaning, on the other hand, to collect six very different sherhs (moreover, to add an own sherh to those which are done) seems to be quite contradictory.¹⁵ We observe a problematic situation: Besides being discussed many times by various scholars and mystics, the literary type and meaning of Yunus' famous poem seems to be left controversial. Is the poem a shath? If not, what is the meaning of the poem? There are lots of sherhs; if there is a meaning of the poem, which sherh is the accurate one?

These unanswered questions lead us to turn back and elaborate that problematic concept, "shath", which has been laying in the center of the debates of Sufism. What is shath exactly?

In this study, we will answer these questions by following the methodology of E.T Gendlin, whose philosophy, in our opinion, will provide crucially new dimensions to our problem.¹⁶

5. Gendlin, an Introduction to His Philosophy, and Experiential Concepts¹⁷

E.T Gendlin's philosophy, is heavily influenced by the process philosophy (besides phenomenology, Wittgenstein and Heidegger). According to this view, the best way of understanding the natural existence may be in terms of *processes* rather than *things*. In this sense, "body and environment imply each other in that they are part of one interaction process, one organization." (APM, p.2) In the traditional western philosophy, there is a bias in favor of things or substances in the metaphysical perspective, lasting from Aristotle. Alternatively¹⁸ to this tradition, process philosophy takes the processes, occurrences and events as ontological category, rather than physical things. The emphasis is given to verbs, rather than nouns.

Gendlin describes the Freudian particularism and Jung's uncertain holism as "ancient styles of thinking". In *On the New Epistemology*, he gives modern science and ecology as the examples of individualism and holism respectively. (ONE¹⁹) His alternative to both is a "first-person science". (PFI) In this "...interactional model, everything is understood as process, not things, not atoms, not units, not entities. Those can be derived from interaction process. First there is interaction." (MCE)

As an ongoing whole of processes—a non-stop interaction with the world, the *body*²⁰ is a *knowing*. "The human body is ... a concrete mass in process." (ECM, pp.24-25) It is not only a socio-cultural, but also an epistemological whole. This position sounds very odd in terms of the traditional cartesian philosophy. "*Body knows*", (MCE) as an ongoing process which functions in all our experiencings. All the things, like "subject", "object", "time", "place", "meaning", etc., are derived by Gendlin from the ongoing process web, as they found themselves along, in and within it.²¹ "Interaction first." (APM, p.22) Important problems of philosophy and science arise from ignoring the primacy of the more biological aspect of the livings. This is the body; the permanent interaction which functions in all our experiences, even we are aware of it or not. "The primacy of perception leads to a traditional problem. ... If one begins with perception, then interaction seems to consist of two individual percepts. The percept is a kind of dividing screen." (POB) To make a division is not a mistake. The mistake lies in taking this division as a starting point. "Body does not first exist and only then interact. Rather, its growth and life-processes consist of environmental interaction. ... Interaction is surely prior to the having of presented perceptual data." (POB)

In this sense, alternative to the “first, there was logos” of the traditional philosophy and to the “first, there was praxis” of marxist philosophy, Gendlin states “first, there was bios”. The process, the interaction between the body and the environment is his *arche*.

In the old model,²² which he criticizes, “you never get anything new with that model. ...You can't get anything new because everything has to come from these shared meanings.” (MCE) Gendlin finds the roots of the continual determinism of science and philosophy in the misinterpretation of Plato and Aristotle. Scholars dealt with the concepts of Aristotle and Plato, and ignored their method in producing those concepts. Aristotle “...took care of our need for stable concepts. Yes, we must think on the edge, like Socrates. We need to think beyond any concepts and beyond the usual phrases. But we also need concepts and theory.” (IP) This stable concepts model of Aristotle is accurate, we need stable concepts for practical reasons; but moreover, there is also no concept to which we can not turn back and not interrogate, as Plato did. The model continuing from Aristotle is not unique. Every concept is rooted from the more biological and fundamental experiencing. We are not the slaves, rather masters of them. If they do not seem accurately referring to the meaning we feel; or if they become “alien” to us, we may change them, or add new ones to them as we please. For example; love, anger, sadness, lust, etc., in fact do not really exist; they are only labels we stick on felt meanings. Those are changeable and differently *fillable* concepts.

The concepts which refer to experiencing play a vital role in the new model (APM is an exemplary attempt of this new modelling) which Gendlin proposes, because, as we mentioned, the body is included to (is a part of, a product of) the whole process. Our interaction with our body is preconceptual, and besides concept-creating. Our body, as a permanent interrelation with the environment is a footprint of this intricate processing. You may read the past (and present) from the body, as it functions in all experiencings.

Animals bodies are complex interactions with their environments. From one ancient bone one can reconstruct not only the whole animal, but from its body also the kind of environment in which it lived. From the kind of feet it had one can infer the kind of ground on which it moved. From its stomach cavity one can know what it fed on and chased. The body even as a dead structure still contains all that implicit information about its environment. When alive, its bodily life-process is much more implicit information. And this bodily sentience implies and generates the animal's next move. (POB)

There is a permanent implying-occurring interrelation between the body and the environment. (APM, p.10) “A body lives its relationships, it IS interaction. There is only one ongoing interaction, not one body here and an environment there... A body is not connected to its

environment only through the five senses... The body inhales the environment... It IS the environment.” (MCE)

In various places, Gendlin’s philosophy is called as “the philosophy of implicit”. Gendlin emphasizes the ongoing whole of processes, which we may call “life”, as preconceptual. Besides this preconceptuality, we need stable concepts (symbols) for practical reasons: To share, to make science, etc. This conceptualizing is never perfect; always there remains something felt, that does not included in the concept; what does not *wear* concepts. What Gendlin calls as the “implicit”, the “intricacy”, the “felt meaning” is basically this preconceptual; concept-creating, biological phenomenon. Gendlin’s philosophy is the trial of explicating this intricacy²³, which functions in our production of concepts:

Besides the logical dimension and the operational dimension of knowledge, there is also a directly felt, experiential dimension. *Meaning* is not only *about things* and it is not only a certain *logical* structure, but it also involves *felt* experiencing. ...There is also a powerful *felt* dimension of experience that is prelogical, ... functions importantly in what we think, what we perceive, and how we behave. (ECM, p.1)

The meaning of a symbol is hidden (embedded, *implicit*) in the experiencing, and exactly the opposite is also true.²⁴ That is due to that symbols and meaning both function in the same process, and hence imply each other. Meaning is implicit in the experiencing, it is not something which exists separately. Similarly, all the experiencings are meaningful. “...Experiential side always exceeds the concepts.” (ECM, p.xi) “Concepts contradict each other, but experiences do not. You can have all the experiences which these contradictory concepts can locate for you.” (MCE) Hence, we can not express the implicit intricacy through the commonplace, non-experiential concepts.

...when you use somebody's theory, you will find that WHAT YOU'RE REFERRING TO TURNS OUT TO BE MUCH MORE INTRICATE than the theory. ... That what you've got is more intricate and more interesting. ... Any concept is a bad map for where you're really living. ... What's a good map? There aren't any because the territory is not just one flat territory; it lends itself to many maps and responds to them, but always with AN INTRICACY THAT EXCEEDS MAPS. The specific things that you find, they're much more intricate, not only more intricate than Freud's concept, they're MORE INTRICATE THAN OUR PUBLIC LANGUAGE HAS AS YET. (MCE)

New concepts which refer to the felt meaning are vital. “None of the old concepts handle really anything. That's why things are so poor.” (MCE)

You know something, you feel that you know,²⁵ but you can not explicitly articulate and say it. “The reason you couldn’t is because you tried to explain it in the units and concepts that we have in the public language.” (MCE) Gendlin’s philosophy is a search for

how to explicate the implicit intricacy accurately. “Focusing is just that uncomfortable bodily sense that's complex and you don't know what it is yet.” (MCE)

There are a plenty of implications and applications of what Gendlin brings to philosophy. However, let us now remain with this emphasis of him on concepts: As we are ongoing interactions, our bodies are more than concepts which are just inadequate symbols of felt meaning. We need “concepts [which] *refer to* experience, and concepts [which] are *formed from* experience.” (ECM, p.xxvii)

We need to build concepts which directly refer to our experiencing. This is the crucial point both for Gendlin and us, as those concepts will play a key role in our problem.

6. The First Meeting: Sufi Language and Experiential Concepts

As Gendlin's suggestion to produce experiential concepts²⁶ is necessary for all cultures—as it is valid for the human species—, we propose to combine such an attitude with our problematic. Such a meeting, like all meetings, can make sense and may provide us new dimensions to discuss (and hopefully present a solution to) our problem.

When we want to start to build the concepts which Gendlin proposes, things get interesting: We observe that such concepts already exist in Islamic Mysticism, which renders our job easier.

Sufism (or Islamic Mysticism²⁷) is defined mostly based on personal experience. It can not be comprehended by theoretical means, one must experience it. One of the very many metaphors may shortly narrate what we aim to tell: If one wants to swim, has to enter into the sea. Standing at the seaside and talking about the sea is not enough for the Sufi; from an outer point of view, comprehension remains always imperfect. Experiencing is the fundamental aspect of Sufism. The emphasis on experience is from the very definition (maybe, as the unique aspect of all different definitions) of Sufism very obvious.

Starting from the second century of Islam, the conceptualization and systematization of Sufi language took on. The rising names in this process were Ibn Arabi, Ruzbihan Baqli, Ebu Hamid Al-Ghazzali and Hucwiri, who wrote the first and well-known Sufi lexicons. We see that they all “...are unanimous in agreeing that the real source of their terminology is mystical experience...” (Ernst 1992, p.187) From their very birth, the concepts of Sufism were produced in such a way that they would refer to the experiencing of the mystics. In this respect, they differ from their contemporaries; philosophers, jurists, theologians and other lexicographers. (Ernst 1992, p.181) For example, looking at Baqli's famous *Sherh-al Shatahat*, we may see that “every cypher [ramz] is connected to a station [maqam], every

indication is the description of a state [hal], an every expression is the discovery [kasf] of an unveiling.” (Ernst 1992, p.189) In grammatical categories, the experiential nature becomes especially clear. Even the terms for “word” and “name” have reference to the mystical experience.

The nature of Sufi language is a very interesting phenomenon, which has to be studied further. However, to keep the discussion within the limits of the purpose of this paper, we will focus on two concepts from this mystical language to clarify our problem. Two very old and dichotomic concept which may be found in many Sufi lexicons: *Sekr* and *sahv* (*drunkenness* and *soberness*).

7. On “Sekr” and “Sahv”

“Ali Hujwiri's (d.c.467/1074) *Kashf al-mahjub* ... is largely responsible for the widespread use of the drunken-sober typology.” (Mojaddedi, p.1) *Sekr* and *sahv*, as two incompatible *states*²⁸ (*ahval*), which are exploited to refer to the experiencing of the Sufi in his life-process (*seyr-u süluk*). In the state of *sekr* (drunkenness), Sufi becomes unconscious due to the mystic state that s/he experiences. “Drunkenness (*sekr*) is a case of becoming spiritually unconscious to the world in an abiding stupor, without this affecting one's human or sensual qualities.” (Mojaddedi, p.2) As by the mystic experience conscious becomes lost, the mystic does not know what s/he says. *Sahv* is just the opposite state. The Sufi in *sahv* is the one who has “digested” the mystical experience in her/his conscious; and is ready for further states. In other words, s/he did not become drunk with one glass of wine, and may go ahead in her/his revealings further.

The relationship between *sekr* and *sahv* has been discussed many times in the Sufi history.²⁹ We will not touch on this. What is important for us is that *sekr* and *sahv* are two concepts that Gendlin seeks for, as they directly refer to experiencing.

Drunkenness, besides causing silence, may lead the Sufi to speak. (Emiroğlu, p.234) Nevertheless, as the one who speaks in that state is unconscious, s/he is excused³⁰ of her/his utterances. *Shatahat* are accepted as the outputs of such a state.

Sober Sufi does not get on better with words. However, as s/he is in a conscious state, there is a conceptual consistency and a logical structure in her/his expressions. Her/his words are either in daily language or understandable, logical symbolisms.³¹

Sekr and *sahv* provide us a point of view, from which we may look at the utterances of Sufis as containing the experiencing of them. According to this dichotomic conceptualization, drunken Sufi is claimed to be experiencing a transcendent state, in which s/he takes

everything into brackets. So, her/his words come from a prelogical stage that they can not be comprehended by anyone, whereas sober Sufi's utterances will come from a logical stage.

8. Yunus, Where Are You?

Now we are arriving to a resolution of the climax by putting things together. As Gendlin states, meaning is not free from experiencing, and the opposite also holds. Not only words, every symbolization³² carries the footprints of an experiencing, of the processes which lie behind it. The experiencing of the verbalizer functions in the meaning of her/his words. We may think of the concepts "drunkenness" and "soberness" in this sense. The meaning of the words of the Sufi changes according to the state which Sufi is experiencing; according to the functioning of soberness or drunkenness. So we reach to the answer of the question "is 'I climbed to the branches of a plum tree'?", which is again a question: *Where is Yunus? In which state is Yunus?* The meaning of "I climbed to the branches of a plum tree" may be derived from the answer of these questions, from the very experiencing of him. We may reach to the meaning of his poem, which is implicit in his very state. His state and words *imply* each other as functioning in the same process.

The experiential concepts of classical Sufi typology provide us guidance: If Yunus is in *sekr*, "I climbed to the branches of a plum tree" is a *shath*; if he is in *sahv*, it is a symbolic poem and has a logical structure. The ones who defend that Yunus' poem is not a *shath*, implicitly, and probably unintentionally, assume that he is in *sahv*.

We come on an at least philosophically interesting point, where we see that to determine a saying to be a *shath* or not, we need concepts which refer to the experiencing. As a matter of fact, we now reveal that "shath" itself is one of these concepts. Let us explicate this last sentence further.

9. Shath; Its Own Experientiality, the Web of Sufi Language

The differences which were seemingly contradictory are about to become interestingly meaningful. Let us take different definitions of *shatahat*:

Kurnaz and Tatçı: *Shatahat* are sayings which Sufis express in the *station of unity* [*maqam of cem*]...

Ibn Khaldun: Words that occur in many Sufis, and which are thought to be meaningless *in an outer point of view* [*zahiren*]...

Zati Suleyman: Words of some glorious Sufis, that are said when their body is illuminated with the divine light of *felt experience* [*yakîn*]... (Kurnaz and Tatçı, pp.7-9)

The definitions may be increased in number. The important point is that all the definitions are primarily referring to experiencing over the italicized words, *maqam of cem, zahiren, yakîn*.³³ “The essence of mystical language is, again, the mystical experience, which the word attempts to convey; this is above all true of the controversial ‘ecstatic expressions’ (*shath*) of Sufism, which burst all conventional bounds in their intensity.” (Ernst 1992, p.191) As we now notice in the following way, *shath* is not only derived from such experiential words; it is also one of such concepts:

Once you succeed to make a word or two work this way [i.e. by referring to experience], all the next ones you think of acquire THAT, which you are thinking and tracking. Each next thing that comes by you can say, for example, art. Oh, now we can talk about art like that. It's a creativity on the cellular level, but once created, art is real and about the world, because on the cellular level the body is an interaction with the world. Oh, and now “religion” means THAT. It's concepts are doubtful like all concepts, but on the cellular level the body is an interaction with the whole universe. Oh now “language” is like this. The words come in us from the body as an interaction in the situation. The cellular level produces phrases that are the next step of what we want to say, or how we want to change the situation so we can live further. Oh now “communication” is like this. The other person can create a new meaning in us because we ARE interaction. Oh now “friendship” means that. Oh now “authenticity” means that. Your one new thing can and will inform every next topic that comes by and every next word that comes by, if you want. (MCE)

In a model which is build on experiential concepts, every concept is inherently linked to each others.³⁴ “... New and better theory and linked concepts can come only after we first think from out of experiencing. The early stages of such thinking cannot yet have such linked concepts. And when we have built them, we must employ them with both logic and experiencing.” (IP)

Likely, the concepts of Sufism call each other, and one may derive one concept from the other one.³⁵ Our thesis is that all concepts in Sufism are interrelated in such a fundamental way; there is no concept which does not refer to an experiencing or work free from experiencing.³⁶ All Sufi concepts are inherently linked.³⁷

Gendlin asserts that “...it has seemed, recently, that there is no language in which to discuss what is more than language.” (POB) He thinks that his project is a *new* one in producing concepts from experience. In this sense, we oppose Gendlin with his own help and defend that the Sufi language³⁸ is also such a project.

10. More on Sober’s Words by Gendlin: “Relevance” and “Comprehension”

In the eighth part, we left “I climbed to the branches of a plum tree” in a resolution which could possible through the process concepts we introduced. As Yunus is thought to be

in a state of soberness, his poem was held as a symbolic one. The state of Yunus was taken as “given” by the scholars in deciding the kinds of his words. However, one problem survives: To defend that there is one meaning concerning the poem retains being puzzling, because there are half a dozen explanations for its meaning. Which of them is the true one? Which sherh is accurate?

It is rightly defended by the scholars that the meaning of Yunus’ poem has to be evaluated in its context.³⁹ So, as for every interpreter, the context will change because every sharih (*interpreter*) looks from a different point of view. That is the defence for that why there different sherhs do exist. However, it also becomes impossible to argue the accuracy of one of them, as it becomes purely relative. The situation for the meaning of the poem is still gloomy.

Meaning is space dependent, it changes when the space changes. A meaningless *movement* in the behavioral space, turns to a meaningful *gesture* in the symbolic space. (For example, a handwave which is nonsense for a foreigner, may symbolize aggressive or friendly meanings for a person from the same culture.) Gendlin names this totality of spaces as *context*. “Almost all the meaningful symbols require the presence, in a person, of many, many *relevant* meanings or experiences.” (ECM, p.128) As this “understanding the context”, which Gendlin calls “relevance”, is not the same for everyone, the differentiation of meaning will also be natural. The predecessor processes function in the current process, and they form a context. The one who is more relevant to me, will understand something different than what a non-relevant gets from my gesture. So, “the same symbolization ... may have quite different meanings, and quite different degrees of meaning. ... The experienced and inexperienced person will have, for a given set of words, quite different understandings.”⁴⁰ (ECM, p.130) It may be one reason of why there are different sherhs. Gendlin’s view explains also an important reason for why Sufi language is hermetic.

Besides “relevance”, Gendlin defines a second interrelationship between meaning and symbol (say, concept), which is very important: “Comprehension.”⁴¹ “To invent a metaphor to express a prior felt meaning is ‘comprehension.’” (ECM, p.117) In comprehension, the symbol and meaning work in an unparallel (in a new meaning-creating) way. By this function, the felt meaning (or the new meaning, the implicit intricacy; you may call as you wish) and symbols which already have a meaning come together, and thus a new meaning in an “old” symbol is given birth.⁴² Moreover, this symbol from now on refers directly to that implicit intricacy; the implicit is explicated by this process. The felt intricacy crosses with an old symbol, and create a new meaning.

One important aspect of comprehension is that it

is a process in which the product somehow includes or *comprehends* the original felt meaning, but is not any longer identical with it. The term comprehension, then, reminds us that in order to understand (“comprehend”) we must encompass (“comprehend”) the original felt meaning, by means of many of many more meanings. (ECM, p.121)

Comprehension, by *comprehending*, by the very process, changes the meaning. Hence, “...it is possible to ‘comprehend’ a given felt meaning in *many* ways ... and in each way, although some what differently, the experience will be accurately symbolized.” (ECM, p.121) By comprehension, there occur many accurate possible accurate symbolizations.

To explicate the new meaning by already meaningful symbols is what different kinds of art does. The meaning of those products, such as a painting of Van Gogh, a composition of Dede Efendi, a poem of Khayyam will differ, even for the composer her/himself.

The existence of different sherhs by different sharihs, different meaning givings to Yunus’ poem is in this respect very *meaningful*. Like in very many works of art, Yunus is using known, old symbols; “plum”, “grape”, “orchard”, “walnuts”, etc. Nevertheless, he is expressing (explicating, directly referring to) a new experiencing, felt meaning, which is new, “...perhaps new in the history of the world.”⁴³ (CD, p.2)

The felt meaning, which is explicated by the comprehension of Yunus, is carried forward to the sharih. It implied (awakened) there new and different felt senses, and will imply (lead to) new and different occurrences. To assign a meaning, which is also an occurrence, will be different. As the difference in the interpretation lies outside of the concepts, many possible accurate symbolizations become possible by comprehension to the felt meaning. It is like interpreting a square as two triangles, as four triangles, two rectangles, they are all true at the same time. (ECM, p.122) We may conclude that all sherhs are exactly accurate!⁴⁴ Comprehension is such a productive function; it is always open to the “new”, even though comprehensive formulations are already finished. (ECM, p.124) We may stop here by saying that “I climbed to the branches of a plum tree” will go ahead to be filled with new meanings.⁴⁵

11. Words of the Drunken: Ontological Fundamentals

As we tenuously touched, Gendlin’s approach provided opportunity for us to observe new dimensions of symbolic works, one of which was supposedly Yunus’ poem—our starting point. Besides, when we investigate shatahat, there are also new implications of Gendlin’s perspective.

For Sufis, one can not assign meaning to the words of the drunken. Shatahat are perceived as paradigm examples of such expressions, as we studied. The main reason why one can not assign meaning to these words are not only words themselves, but also the states of the verbalizers, the experiencings of them. Their experiencing were presupposed to render to share meaning impossible. Sufi, when in ecstasy (sekr, drunkenness) is referring to an experiencing directly. For mystics, one is in such a state that her/his words remain to be in a “private language” stage, if they can climb to such a stage. (This given stage is said to be such a state in which the “private” is also taken into brackets, which is at least needed for a private language.)

Gendlin, rather proposes that all the experiencings may be referred directly, symbolized and explicated.⁴⁶ Even if this explicating occurs firstly with seemingly meaningless symbols, with some effort and focusing, it may be expressed. What is expressed, may be then better and better, further conceptualized, *baked*. Gendlin’s philosophy is at any rate the seeking for ways of this baking, which is called “focusing” or “thinking at the edge”-“no woch wörter fehlen”.

Here, concerning the meaning of shatahat, we observe two clearly opposite view on the meaning and explication. In our opinion, this contrast is rooted from a very fundamental ontological difference, of which we have to mention in a few sentences.

In Sufi ontology, the Absolute surrounds the whole world, the inside and outside. And of course the words... The Absolute exceeds words, like it exceeds anything. The literature of Sufism overflows with the complaint from the inadequacy of words with respect to Absolute and also the mystic experiencing.⁴⁷ In the Sufi ontology, the essence does not change, but the cover changes; cover is temporary. (Meaning may be thought as essence, and concepts as cover.) What we at most may expect from the concepts may only to show the meaning, not refer to it.⁴⁸ The unsharably personal experience will remain private, or merely pre-private⁴⁹ due to the very nature of the experiencing. Any proposition in such a state is a useless attempt to limit the “limitless experiencing” with words. To sum up, there is no access to anyone to the meaning of the words of the drunken Sufi, because the referent is in a higher ontological category than language and its instruments. (Kılıç, p.1)

In Gendlin’s side, situation differs as one may expect. Implicit intricacy, which is symbolized by concepts to be explicated, is not something mystical. Rather, implicit is only preconceptual and biological; it exists in all human species, and can be explicated. Gendlin’s implicit knows language, as we learned the words within the body process. We may grasp this, that it seeks for and selects concepts to be explicated accurately.⁵⁰

Due to this ontological difference, in Gendlin, the direct reference does not remain in the private language level. To produce a concept in an experiential way requires effort, but may be articulated and conceptualized. Conceptualizing is surely not perfect, but it provides a sharable meaning level.

This point is important for our problem. Sufism offers to remain silent in almost all situations, as silence is a basic principle and method of bringing up. Moreover, as shatahat are defended to come from a very personal state, they can not be assigned meaning. However, Gendlin offers to try to explicate every experiencing, although explicating is not imperfect. If a felt meaning is tried to be explicated—for what the mystic selects to remain silent—through true and felt concepts, we can see the commons in the human species; at the same time the differences between different contexts, i.e., cultures. And rather being frustrated, we will celebrate these differences, as we can be nourished from these differences. The last opening out we will touch is this importance of explicating the felt meaning by means of the experiential concepts.

12. “Celebrating the Differences”

Behind the concepts, we see that we are a species processing similar experiencings. We are always in an interaction with our culture; we effect it, we are effected by it, we are it. Nevertheless, we also continuously exceed our culture, as changing and producing it. We are ongoingly producing meaning. “Humans are NOT WITHOUT culture, but this doesn't mean we are DERIVATIVE from it. Our situations (experience, practice, interaction) far exceed culture, history, and language.” (APR) The traditional philosophy is rather determinist.⁵¹ It supposes that all the meaning comes from the shared ones and dismisses that we are producing the meaning.⁵² However, we exceed culture, language, and other determinants. We interact with them unceasingly. If they are not adequate, we may fill the products of this interrelation, symbols, as we wish, or simply make up new ones. They are supposedly our chains, but in fact our most valuable properties.

Philosophers of many sorts hold that anything will fall into old categories by being said. This might be true when one uses only common phrases, but in the case of fresh phrasing it is quite false. ... Rather than “falling into” the constraints of the said, we find that the effects of the said can open ways of living and saying still further. (TAE, p.3)

Accurate explicating opens ways of further experiences. If one has more symbols for the experienced tastes, emotions, etc., s/he can sharpen them further and further.

This commentation has very many implications, but we must content with mentioning to a crucial aspect of it with respect to our study. That is what particularly some scholars studying on Islamic Studies are underlining for a while: To understand the Sufi language offers a solution to what is called “Orientalism”, i.e., explaining the “other” by ones own concepts. “Deformations ... occur when philosophical propositions and theological doctrines are seperated from the experiences to which they were originally tied. The vocabulary of Sufism is one kind of source that can help us avoid this error.” (Ernst 1992, p.195) Scholars widely defend this claim, but it has hardly had a well-defined foundation.

Cultural particularism perceives being effected from different cultures as “unculturization”, because different cultures supposedly have to contradict with each other. Rather, Gendlin suggests that, by producing concepts which do refer to our felt meaning, cultural particularism will turn into a universalism. From the crossing of two cultures, very different colors arise which do not exist in neither of them. That is, to meet (cross, introduce) different cultures with our own, means a great enrichment.

In the level of language, we may think as such (this example will be particularly interesting for one who studies statistical modelling): When I say “she is a rose”, I express and reveal lots of the similarities and besides, lots of differences between two concepts “she” and “rose”. An infinite chain of similarities and differences... If I further say “she is a rose and a sparrow”, the determinants increase in number, but nevertheless, the meaning gets richer; now there exist more similarities and differences. Namely, as much as the determinants increase in number, on the contrary of numerical models, the degree of freedom increases.⁵³ (CD pp.8-9, OCC) Cultures surround us with many determinants. However, as we *exceed* them; as we are more than the determinants, the determinants may turn to new possible variants of crossing with new cultures.⁵⁴ To meet with a different culture will give rise to such an enrichment.

A very similar emphasis was done in the famous philosophical article of Nagel, where body-mind problem was discussed. He claimed that, for a scientist, who wants to understand *what it likes to be a bat*, it may be useful to hang him/her upside down in a dark cave, close his/her eyes and imagine that s/he has a sonar rather than eyes. However, that is all what s/he can. This experience may say only what it is like to be a bat for a human, not what is it like to be a bat for a bat. The crucial point is here: Nagel does not come to a result which concludes that the experience of the scientist useless. It is rather very important that it brings a completely different point of view to the bat-situation. As “objectivity” requires an independent position from all subjective points, what the scientist says about being a bat is a

step to the objective picture of bat-situation. For any situation, the subjective experiences of very different point of views will lead to a comprehensive and objective point of view; a view from infinite point of views. On rainbow, for example, every ordinary person may say almost the same thing; the different *perspective* on rainbow will come from the one who takes a more radical point of view which is for no other one accessible; for instance, from a blind man. So we reach to our slogan: *Rainbow has to be asked from the blind*. Gendlin's cultural crossing leads us to such a comprehensive perspective on affairs, say, cultures. We will observe differences, but they will not lead us to make exclude differences as being false. Rather, both will be different dimensions of the *responsive order* of the universe.⁵⁵ If we, from different cultures, produce concepts referring to our own felt meaning, through crossing them we may observe our differences and similarities of experiencing behind those differences of concepts.

There lies the key role of Sufi language. It is a web of bridge-concepts. As it consists of those concepts that Gendlin suggest, provides an open door of Muslim World to other cultures—and more importantly, to itself.

That human nature can be articulated, but only in terms that come from letting words work in that very kind of nature... If we can speak of what is not fixed-formed but can be **carried forward**, we can say how great is that which is shared-- far greater than the differences. Then **we** can celebrate **our** differences.⁵⁶ (OCC)

The fatal error what a western scientist may fall is to try to look to the east in an eastern way, or like a martian. There will no crossing occur, if not only misunderstandings. We have enough examples from Orientalism. The opposite may also be observed; by eastern method of making western philosophy. As much as east tries to make western philosophy in an western way, there can nothing more than imitation occur. "Imported" concepts do not wake meaning unless they are felt. Rather, "...when the culture-forms and conceptual distinctions break, we find **more** precise meaning and order, not less." (OCC)

Researchers, rather, have to look from the point of view which by their culture is given to them, which shaped them and which was shaped by them. They have to look *as they are*, and inquire in understanding the experiencing of the other culture⁵⁷. This is only possible with experiential concepts; with concepts which do refer to one's own experiencing, Gendlin proposes a first-person science. A scientist has to let the concepts of other culture be felt by her/him. This is possible by such bridge-concepts. "Bridge-terms are patterns... We need such terms in all the social sciences and in cognitive science." (CD, p.2) "Crossing creates something in the others that is new to them and to us. That is why we like to hear their reactions." (CD, p.11)

What Kyoto School did and succeeded was this task. We suggest to do the same from our culture: We have to build our concepts which are felt by us, and let them interact with different philosophical traditions and manners of living.⁵⁸ We have to produce our own concepts, rather than using the “imported” ones, which do not refer to any sense of us. Today, we even can not think in our language, or make philosophy.⁵⁹ We are not using concepts in a way that we can feel them. Rather, concepts are alien and we do not access to how they are filled and produced.

We may produce our own concepts, from our own culture, and rather than contenting with this, have to interact with different traditions. “We can understand individuals in another culture when they are willing to interact and speak from their experiencing.” (APR) By this way, we will observe our differences and similarities with other cultures. If something of “us” will be explicated, it must be from our culture. What we will see is a universal base,⁶⁰ which takes its roots only from being a member of the same species, from living similar processes. We talk about a model in which we may celebrate our differences.

13. “Conclusion and Beginning”

We have to stop here, look back and summarize what we did up to now.

We firstly defined a problematic in Sufi language. Starting from the poem of Yunus, we observed that the concept of shatahat was a blurred one, the position of Yunus’ poem (either a shath or a symbolic poem) seemed unfounded, and its real meaning was unknown when it was supposed to be a symbolic poem and to have a logical structure. The researchers provided many different meanings, held one of them as true, but could not distinguish the accurate one from the others. It was clear a confusion.

We tried to look at the problem in the way Gendlin proposed. By his meaning-experiencing analysis, we could say that the experiencing of Yunus and the concepts he used in the poem both functioned in the explication process. To reach this, we had to introduce two concepts, *sekr* and *sahv*, which were two dichotomic symbols that referred to the experiencing. We revealed that meaning and symbols could be derived from each other, when the symbolization directly referred to experience. We reached that shatahat, and all concepts of Sufi language were experiential, they were inherent *relatives*.

This basic implementation led us to explain the meaning of the poem, and the reasons of differentiation of the meaning, where the situation was contradictory. We revealed that to conclude that Yunus’ poem is a symbolic poem, the state of him has to be taken as a given variable. We also saw where the meaning of what Sufis held to be inaccessible, was an

ontological difference of the referent for Gendlin. So, we had deeper understanding both in symbolic poems and shatahat by only sekr and sahv.⁶¹

We, in the last part, introduced some implications when we look at Sufi language in Gendlin's perspective. The main point intended to be made was the importance of Sufi language in science and intercultural understandings. Gendlin puts the process concepts into the center of a first-person science, and cultural crossing. Due to its experiential nature, Sufi language is proposed to contribute to both: In social science, as an accurate and wider point of view to generating knowledge; in intercultural stage, as the way to understand other cultures without falling into false paradigm models.

A valuable implication for us was an offer of philosophizing; keeping ours, and crossing with the others. Traditional alternatives of this perspective led to suboptimal situations; to an imitational (imported, alien) philosophy, to the mistakes of Orientalism, Nazism or "inbreeding". We rather tried to show the possibilities of a Kyoto example from our own culture, a crossing of cultures. Crossing is a way of keeping the individuals as they are, and interrelating in such a way that leads to new dimensions which were absent in both. As we realized later, this study itself, was such an inquiry; an instance of its own suggestion.

Via foot- and endnotes, we often tried to show points for further researchs, which explicitated themselves throughout the study.⁶² One of these points was to elaborate Sufi language in this perspective further, which did not reveal itself to us until reaching to this last part.

¹ Translated to English by famous scholar William Chittick as “unruly utterances”, alternatively.

² For example, “ulama ... seized upon such sayings to prove that the Sufis were blasphemers and unbelievers.” (Murata, p.78)

³ During centuries, the negative meaning the word possesses transformed into positive ones.

⁴ The first hand sources, although being few in number compared to other periods of Turkish-Moslem History, provide us enough evidence. We easily may find such ecstatic words in the treatises (risalat) of Barak Baba, Yunus Emre, Kaygusuz Abdal, Hacı Bayram, Eşrefoğlu Rumi, Aşık Paşazade, etc. For a good collection, See Kurnaz and Tatçı.

⁵ Institutionalization of Sufism started in the second century of Islam, by different schools. Sufism in Anatolia may be said to be mostly influenced by the Horasan School. We will not touch on the impacts Horasanese Sufism in the Turkish Islam and culture, as they may be even today observed easily. Very briefly, shatahat’s being *carried forward* to Turkish-Moslem culture is thought to occur over Horasan and Iran. Turkish pre-Islamic beliefs’ footprints may be also easily observed. See Ernst 1984, Gölpınarlı 1962.

⁶ “Tekerleme” is a playful formulation in cultural narratives. “Devriyye” is a formulation, which is thought to express reincarnative ideas.

⁷ These various effects are deeply studied by Boratav. For one of the most comprehensive scrutinies on this interrelatedness of cultural elements, see Zaman Zaman İçinde.

⁸ Full text of the famous poem is translated by Halman, as follows:

*I climbed to the branches of a plum tree,
And I helped myself to the grapes up there.
The owner of the orchard scolded me:
"What are you devouring my walnuts for?"*

*He made me into a thief—that was wrong:
So, in turn, I hurled slanders at him too—
And the peddler asked when he came along:
"You were to marry my daughter, weren't you?"*

*I dumped sun-baked mud into the cauldron
And boiled it together with the North Wind.
"What on earth could this thing be?" asked someone;
Dipping the grapes I put them in his hand.*

*To the weaver at the loom, I gave thread
Which he chose not to wind into a ball;
To get the fabric orders out, he sped—
Those who want can now come and get it all.*

*I snatched one of the wings of a sparrow
And loaded it on to forty ox-carts.
Even forty spans failed to pull it, though;
So the sparrow wing got stuck in these parts.*

*A fly caught an eagle, lifted it high—
And smack onto the ground, a thumping thrust.
What I tell you is the truth, not a lie:
With my own eyes I saw the rising dust.*

*I had a wrestling match with a cripple--
With no hands, he grappled me by my legs;
I struggled, but couldn't make a ripple.
He burnt me inside out, down to my dregs.*

*From the mythic mountain that girds the world
Down came on the road a rock aimed at me;
I was nearly struck by the stone they hurled;
It might have turned my face topsy-turvy.*

The fish, it turns out, climbed the poplar tree

*To gobble the pickles of tar up there.
The stork gave birth to a baby donkey;
You better get the meaning, don't just stare.*

*To the blind, I gave signals with my hand;
Whatever I whispered, the deaf man heard.
The dumb broke into speech, called me out and
Repeated with me every single word.*

*I held an ox tight, with all my power,
I strangled it, threw it on the ground, loose;
Then the owner of the ox rushed over,
Saying, "That neck you just broke, that's my goose!"*

*I got stuck again, couldn't get away;
Just didn't know what to do--how could I?
Then another peddler popped up to say,
"Why is it that you have plucked out my eye?"*

*I came upon a turtle on the way--
I had an eyeless serpent for comrade.
"I'll ask you where you're heading, if I may?"
"We hope to reach Caesarea," they said.*

*These are the words that Yunus had to say,
His resembles no other utterance;
To keep it out of the hypocrites' way
He has put the veil on the face of sense. (Halman, pp. ii-iii)*

⁹ A "nazire" to a work reminds that work to ones mind; it is written in a clear but metaphorical (that means, *felt*) relation with that work.

¹⁰ Plural of "sherh". "Sherh" is an extensive commentation done to a work, aiming to make the work understood *better*.

¹¹ Most famous nazires are Kaygusuz Abdal's and Aşık Paşazade's. The known sherhs are done by Şeyhzade Muslihiddin, Niyazi-i Mısri, Ismail Hakkı Bursevi, Ali Nakşbendi Nevrekani. For a collection of all these enjoyable works, see Vol.V of Tatçı, see also Kurnaz and Tatçı, p.81.

¹² Yakıt, İsmail (2002), *Yûnus Emre'de Sembolizm: Çıktım Erik Dalına*. (Kültür Bakanlığı, Ankara)

¹³ In the research we made for this paper, we found two more recent sherhs (by Ahmet Kabaklı and Turgut Çapan) and a conceptual analysis (by Cebecioğlu) of the poem. Even today, "I climbed to the branches of a plum tree" is still being studied with a great excitement, and again and again interpreted differently. This work is not an exception in this sense.

¹⁴ This point was underlined before by the great scholar Gölpınarlı in his two important books (1962 and 1985).

¹⁵ We will show that there is in fact no contradiction; but the author is seemingly not aware of his own inconsistency.

¹⁶ The issue is mostly discussed by the scholars from particular disciplines: Religion and literature. Historians supposedly are not interested in the issue; mostly due to that they can not derive any historical evidence from such seemingly nonsense words of suspicious persons. Also a philosophical attitude seems to be unfortunately absent. As we will discuss in the last two parts, not only an interdisciplinary inquiry and corroborative work, but also an interculturally differentiated perspective which is missing has vital importance.

¹⁷ Of course, we have to underline that to abstract any philosophical position in such a short inquiry may turn out misleading and/or confusing. When this position is Gendlin's, things get more difficult, because his philosophy is quite new in many aspects and has a great realm of application, as we will try to reveal, avoiding falling into reductionism. In this study, we will be able to touch roughly to some relevant dimensions of his philosophy for our problematic. For more on his philosophy, one may visit his webpage, where almost all of his works and different materials may be found: http://www.focusing.org/gendlin_articles.html

¹⁸ This alternative metaphysical position is thought to be founded by Heraclitus.

¹⁹ Gendlin's works are huge in number, but respectively small in volume. That is why there is no page number in our references; he does not use page numbers except a few of his works. Most of his works are comparatively short (3p – 30 p) and analytic writings.

²⁰ **“The body” is not only what is inside the skin-envelope.** (APM, p.26) “The body is **in** the environment but the environment is also **in** the body, and **is** the body.” (APM, p.5)

²¹ We may shortly analyse to the creation of the crucial ones: Object, subject and time and space:

“The body is the new process which does continue.” (APM, p.18) The object and subject imply each other as functioning in the same process. The footprints imply both the soil and the foot. The subject–object distinction is an arbitrary one, it changes through processes. In suckling, an infant and its mother are just one subject. If a process, in the web of processes somehow stops, its implying is carried forward until it is in a way satisfied. One of the most problematic concepts of philosophy, “object” occurs in such a way. Objects are objects as long as they are absent. (APM, p.15)

“Implying has (makes, brings, is...) time, but not only the linear merely positional time. ... **The relation between occurring and implying** generates time, rather than saying that life process go on in time.” (APM, p.9) “Now” is a new whole, in which past functions. This functioning of past does not have to be linear in our current experiencing. (APM, p.33) The retroactive time is not necessarily linear. (MCE) His model brings a perception of time, which will “not reduce ongoing eventing to the completed, objectified, world-wide system of linear positional time.” (APR)

As an other example, space is produced through the process. *The way is created as one walks on it.* (See APM, Chapter IV.)

Likely, Gendlin shows that philosophically deep and problematic concepts like “meaning”, “symbol”, “recognition” may be derived by the process perspective. This derivation becomes possible by his experiential concepts (like “felt meaning”, “carrying forward”, “IOFI”, “evev”, “FUCY”, “sbs”, “FLIP”, etc.), on which we will not focus. We rather will concentrate to the derivation of meaning, which is vital for this study.

²² By the usage of “old model”, Gendlin points not only to the determinist Newtonian paradigm, but also to the traditional readings of Aristotle and Plato. World is taken as Laplacian, relations are held to have a determinist structure. Formal logic is the paradigm specimen of this old model, where something new never occurs. p and q, as two atoms get into reaction by, say, a conjunction, $P \wedge Q$. After the reaction, they retain to be “p” and “q”. The mass is conserved all the time. Rather, we defend that every interaction produces something new, you and I are not the same since we have met and interacted. (APM, p.30) The world is more intricate than the old model assumes. As well, we will see in the next parts that this intricacy is not an arbitrary one. Rather, the world has an order, “a responsive order”, which verifies different models for the same empirical problem.

²³ “Focusing” is a famous and best-seller book, which is intended to show ways to find out this intricacy. The book is addressing to everyone, and opens a door for a self therapy. (See F.) Nevertheless, we have to underline that focusing does not offer a personal “salvation”, as we permanently affect and are affected by the other. In suckling, an infant and its mother are just one subject. (See endnote 21.) Subject’s and the body’s limits depends. The subject is an integral process which is not independent from its environment. Hence we have to be careful in not confusing Gendlin with stoicians. Nor, what he suggests is not a salvation, only some *more* explication of the puzzle. “TAE [thinking at the edge] has a *social* purpose. We build our inter-human world further. ... We need to build new social patterns and new patterns of thought and science. This will be a mutual product no single person can create.” (TAE, p.5) Gendlin’s project is possible through corroborative interaction.

²⁴ Gendlin’s claim for experience–meaning interrelation would be supposedly opposite of Wittgenstein’s philosophy. Rather, Gendlin generally finds hints for that Wittgenstein strengthens his arguments, which seems at first odd. One of the major philosophers Gendlin mostly discusses is Wittgenstein. (See WH.) His reading of Wittgenstein very extraordinary compared to the literature. Comp. Bouveresse, Jacques (2007). Wittgenstein on “Experiencing Meaning”. (In Daniele Moyal-Sharrock (Ed.), *Perspicuous Presentations* (pp. 75-94). Palgrave Macmillan.)

²⁵ To remember, to be on the tip of one’s tongue are cases of this kind. An old paradox of epistemology (paradox of Gorgias) is also solved by this way: “It is impossible to inquire into anything, because either you know what you are inquiring into, then there is no inquiry. Or you do not know it, then how can you know what you are asking about?” (RO) We *know* what we can not remember, we *know* what we have to know, but we have no concept to explicate. The answer, or the remembrance is a finding, letting, welcoming the accurate concepts for this felt implicit intricacy. (Socrates’ claim was that learning was just remembering. A very exciting example on learning and a discussion of this claim, see IP.)

²⁶ In MBP, Gendlin calls these concepts as “process concepts”. Following him, we are using both, and also “bridge-concepts” and “felt concepts” interchangeably. (All four usages directly refer to the same felt intricacy. That is why we may easily use different words to represent it. One may reveal that throughout this work, we use such different words for the same felt meaning. All different conceptualizations represent it accurately!)

²⁷ “Sufism is commonly referred to as mysticism, the mysticism of Islam, but is it mysticism and what is its relation to Islam? It is not right to call all Sufism mysticism, although the mystical experience constitutes one important aspect of Sufism.” (Heck, p.148) The point that all Sufis are not mystics was made by various scholars. We share the view, and

do not presuppose that the unique mystic way in Islam is Sufism, although Sufism is defined over infinite over infinite paths, passengers and hence, definitions. (Nicholson, p.27) However, for convenience, like many other works in the literature, we use two terms “Islamic Mysticism” and “Sufism” interchangeably in this paper.

²⁸ The word “state” (hal) is not used by Sufi’s alike in daily language. Rather, “state” refers to the given stage of the Sufi. Her/his state is given to her/him by God as a gift, it is not acquired by the self effort of her/him, a state does not depend on self effort. (Ateş, p.155) The reason why the concept is used in a distorted way will become clear in the next two parts, and in the endnote 36.

²⁹ “Which one is the higher state?” has been the main discussion. Drunkenness and soberness found their symbol in two famous Sufi leaders; Abu Yezid al-Bistami and Al-Junayd, respectively. For an orderly summary of the discussion concerning this dichotomic conceptualization, see Mojaddedi.

³⁰ Besides, there are also well-known counter examples, like Halladj and Mes’ud Bakk, some of whom are known today as Sufi martyrs.

³¹ Nevertheless, their language is hermetic, it is closed to the outer. This fact is due to many reasons to which we can not touch in this study. However, Gendline’s point of view, will explain one of the main reasons of this obscurity in part ten. (Prof. Emiroğlu’s “Sufi ve Dil” is dedicated to this problem, in the example of Rumi. See Emiroğlu.)

³² Any gesture, word, artistic formulation, thing; a person, a city, a painting, a folk song etc., may be used as a symbol of a meaning. (ECM, p.131) As meaning is created by experiencing, not only words, but many aspects of experiencing may symbolize the felt meaning.

³³ We will not explain the meaning of those words here. If we begin to such an inquiry, they will *call* other words which refer to experience, and we will observe us in a *spider web*. That is the hallmark of any experiential language.

We have to underline that we are not in a tautological situation. If you are angry, from your situation (outlook, body, state, etc.) I may derive hints for how you will behave, what you may say, do, etc. Further, if one says that you are speaking in a very bad way, shouting, swearing, etc., I may derive that you are angry! And that is also not a tautology, rather, a derivation of an aspect of a process from another aspect of the same process. The aspects of the same process *imply* each other. They *function in* the same process. Shathiyat and sekr, symbolism and sahv are in such a relationship.

³⁴ The reason is a inherent kinship from bios, which is called by Gendlin as *eveving* (everything-by-everything). Besides avoiding such technical details, we content with, and can not help but italicizing Gendlin’s own experiential concepts in this study.

³⁵ We may exploit the comparison of the French “Declaration of Rights” and American “Declaration of Independence”, of which Gendlin mentions in two places (MCE, IP). French declaration enumerates the duties and rights one by one, by concepts which are tried to be objective. In Jefferson’s declaration, concepts are stated in such a way that all of the concepts “freedom”, “democracy”, “duty”, etc., imply each other logically, that the way to derive new ones from them is open. We defend that the language of Islamic Mysticism is a model of second type.

³⁶ We realize that the supposedly objective concepts of ordinary language are used by Sufis in a distorted way. This distortion is also in favor of experiencing. “Vakt” (time), “hal” (state), “kabz” (constipation) are examples of such concepts, which strengthen our argument. Even the supposedly objective symbols are used in Sufi language in an experiential way.

In today’s daily Turkish exist lots of idioms and proverbs rooted from Sufi language. Today, they are widely used in a very different way. For an attempt of comparative analysis which includes both the words and the experiential side of how they were produced, see Gölpınarlı 1977.

³⁷ Elif Bilgin (Şafak), in her unpublished thesis (1996), when examining the heterodox Islam, brings a radical expansion, and undertakes to explain it by the concept “rhizome”, which is endorsed by Deleuze and Guattari (1987).

Subtract the unique from the multiplicity to be constituted; write at n-1 dimensions. A system of this kind could be called ‘rhizome’. ... Unlike trees or their roots, the rhizome connects any points to any other point. The rhizome is reducible to neither to the one nor the multiple. It has neither beginning nor end, but always a middle from which it grows and which it overflows. (Deleuze and Guattari, p.21)

The rhizomatic approach’s appropriateness with Gendlin’s everything-by-everything is very attractive in the way that the concepts in both approaches are derivable from and linked with the others. Şafak acutely shows that rhizome is not only very helpful in explaining the heterodox practice, but also is an indicative concept for the cardinal differentiations between the orthodox and heterodox mentality. (See Şafak, Ch3.1, pp.112-159) That is a very important implication, which (unfortunately) exceeds the volume of this study, and surely needs to be studied further for a better understanding of what is called “heterodox Islam”.

³⁸ We avoid to talk about the “mystical language” as a whole, as such a generalization requires competent scrutiny in different religious studies. As being not well-informed in other mystical movements, we restrict our thesis with the Sufi language. On the other hand, we strongly feel that we may make the same observation in many different mystical languages. There are works which handle the languages of all those different mystics as a whole (see e.g. Sells); that is why we came through with such an intuition. Of course, the hypothesis has to be deeply studied to be verified. A verification will reveal some commonalities in different mystical traditions and by this way, may contribute to the comparative studies.

³⁹ This analysis of meaning in Islamic philosophy takes its roots from the old discussions of the right of interpreting Qur’an. For a short summary on meaning in Islam, see Leaman, with the expansion provided by experiential concepts.

⁴⁰ As one may notice, what Gendlin proposes as “relevance” is very similar to the traditional argument. It does not differ from the above context dependence argument of Sufis. (This was one of the reasons why Sufi language is closed to the outer.) In this sense, it seems that Gendlin’s assertion is not something new. We seemingly are already “relevant” to what he says, but this is not the case. In the last two parts, we will find out that his functions do not lead to arbitrariness, whereas of traditional argument leads to a mere relativism.

⁴¹ The possible functions between the felt meaning and symbols which Gendlin introduces are the ones which are one-to-one (parallel) and which are creative (nonparallel) relationships. (For detail, see ECM Ch3, pp.90-137. Their number can be increased, new functions are also possible.) In this study, we roughly mention of only two of them, “relevance” and “comprehension”. They are the ones which are particularly considerable for this study, but are not collectively exhaustive. Moreover, it is possible that more than one function interrelate at the same time. Our’s is a mere basic model with two concepts and two function. Concepts we selected (“sekr” and “sahv”) are dichotomic, collectively exhaustive and mutually exclusive ones. They are selected in a way that they can not function at the same time. More intricate models are possible and can provide better understanding. We try to build an introductory model in this study.

⁴² Gendlin’s exploitation of “metaphor” and “comprehension” may lead to confusion when we think in daily language rather than his context. Gendlin understands from “metaphor”, a function between the old symbol and an old meaning. Rather, comprehension involves the new experiencing. Both are unparallel functions, i.e., a new meaning is produced by both processes, but direct reference to the implicit is only in comprehension, “... Where metaphor is an evening, a focaling, a crossing.” (APM, p.51) By comprehension, moreover, “...meaning -which is implicit- becomes explicit.” (ECM, p.126)

⁴³ To explicate a new felt meaning by new symbols (to invent a new symbol and *fill* it with the felt meaning) is also possible. “New phrasing is possible because language is always implicit in human experiencing and deeply inherent in what experiencing is. Far from reducing and limiting what one implicitly lives and wants to say, a fresh statement is physically a further development of what one senses and means to say.” (TAE, p.5)

We may observe this kind of expressions especially in the early mystics, which are known as “heterodox dervishes” in the literature. For an interesting example of such expressions, see the treatise of Barak Baba, in Özmen Vol.I, also in Gölpınarlı 1962. In Özmen, a particular lexicon is added for the treatise of Barak Baba. In the lexicon, interestingly and dramatically, for the meaning of the utterances “ulam ulam” and “lonbay lonb” is “muhmelat” (meaningless) written! (Özmen, p.435) Comp. Gölpınarlı 1962.

⁴⁴ This conclusion must not lead us to thinking that *there is no real Yunus*. We only claim that what people say on Yunus’ poem will vary; that is inherent to Yunus’ way of expressing his experiencing. When someone would say his own interpretation to Yunus, his own felt meaning would also be change; now, the felt meaning of mine would also function in his felt meaning. Comprehension “...creates something in the others that is new to them and to us. That is why we like to hear their reactions.” (CD, p.11) In this study, we build a very basic model, in which only comprehension or relevance functions. (See endnote 41.)

The concepts we chose, sekr and sahv are dichotomic, and they do not cross, or function together. This nature of those concepts provided us convenience, but it has not to hold necessarily. We also did not introduce any other concept from Sufi language, again for convenience. A better and more comprehensive model may be built. Our model remained in harmony with traditional arguments of Sufis, but a deeper inquiry will create very important differences. For example, Sufis hold Halladj’s “Ene’l-Hakk” as a shath. We do not agree with this claim, if shath is defined as merely nonsense expressions. However, a deeper model which includes more concepts (like *maqam*, *unity*, etc.) and more functions (DR, metaphor, comprehension, circumslocution) has to be built to access to the meaning of Ene’l-Hakk. This complex task exceeds the scope of this introductory work.

⁴⁵ Gendlin’s project attracts attention in many ways. For example: “There was always a conflicting variety of ‘ultimate’ definitions of truth and goodness. The great error today is to assume that something is lost by this recognition. (ECM, p.xvi)” When we start to exploit concepts referring to our experiencing, we will observe that most (not all!) of them are rather accurate. We will elaborate this point in the twelfth part, especially in relation with *Orientalism*.

⁴⁶ He suggest as well to explicate the implicit for a wealthier experiencing, as we will see in part twelve.

⁴⁷ There is no need to give any example that there is almost no Sufi who does not complain of the deficiency of words to express their feelings. Still, we suppose that the most famous example is Rumi's:

Those who are raw that condition of the ripe do not know...
Because of this I must make my speech short... and now go!

⁴⁸ Orthodox Islamic ontology, on the contrary, is closed to mature to the Absolute. In Sufism, this path is open, but besides, paths are unsharably personal and numerically infinite. Hence, words of Sufi will remain helpless in expressing experiencing.

⁴⁹ Sufi in sekr is expected to repent (tawba) when becoming sober; s/he does not know what her/himself uttered.

⁵⁰ "The gesture says **that**. Many good lines offer themselves; ... but do not say --**that**. That seems to lack words, but no. It knows the language, since it understands --and rejects --these lines that came. So it is not pre-verbal; rather, it knows what must be said." (CD, p.1)

⁵¹ We have referred to this discussion when introducing Gendlin, see part five.

⁵² "People are silenced!" (TAE, p.3) This "silence" points to being unaware of ones own meaning productive capacity. We are producing meaning in *every second*. (We are also producing this "every second". See endnote 21.)

⁵³

... Computers cannot recognize metaphors. But metaphors do not lack order! We may understand a metaphor **exactly**, yet find ourselves at a loss to convey it in logical terms. The sense it makes is **more precise**. ... it **crosses** them in a way that makes more meaning than either had before. It is easy to state many similarities. We can also find many differences to say what the metaphor does not mean. But we cannot easily state the crossing which is the metaphor. We must let the experienced crossing continue to function as such. (RO)

⁵⁴ What can cross? The answer is positive, if the question is whether cultures can cross. "Crossing opens any kind of **what**; it **shapes-and-is-shaped-by** what crosses with it. The universal human nature is the **can cross**. Crossing is a finely precise process." (OCC)

⁵⁵ The world is a complex whole. It is more complex (verwickelter) than our concepts and instruments via which we try to discover it. The world answers (responds) to the tests and instruments of science in an intricate way; contradictory theories may be verified by the empirical test, as the empirical exceeds their instruments:

Whatever we study responds also to other theories and procedures, but with different new precision. ... It cannot be how one system renders it. ... Whatever we study is very orderly indeed, but this cannot be the kind of order that conceptual systems have, since it can respond precisely to mutually exclusive systems. ... The responsive order responds with "stable" referents, but different ones to different approaches. ... Alternative approaches develop separate **webs** of precise findings. ... Theories can contradict each other, but findings cannot. (RO)

Thus, the picture may accurately formulated through different methods.

⁵⁶ For the application of the model in psychology, see Gendlin's "Celebrations and Problems of Humanistic Psychology".

⁵⁷ Gendlin's proposed "first-person science" works in this way. The individual is not lost in dead particulars; but also we do not fall into a blurred holism where individual is, again, absent.

⁵⁸ "We are each inherently dialogue -- living in interaction with others, and also with more of ourselves than we can command. In dialogue more emerges from us than we had 'in us.'" (APR)

⁵⁹ The traditional cartesian habit made us dismiss the felt aspect of philosophy. What a philosophy student acquires from his teacher is not only information, which may be found in any book. What is transferred from the teacher to the student is a whole, a body of knowledge. It may be acquired only by experiencing, "...only taught from teacher to student, and [is] not written." (MBP, p.116) Knowledge exceeds information. (Please remember the endnote 53: Logically produced machines can not recognize metaphors, but metaphors are rather logical. That means, to understand a metaphor has a felt dimension.) The roots of Gendlin's position may also be found in Aristotle's three-pillar epistemology: Theoria, praxis and poiesis. Traditional habit reduces knowledge to the first of them. Knowledge has a felt, "tacit" dimension, which is transferred from master to disciple preconceptually. (Comp. Polanyi, Chapter II.) Books do not provide such an experiencing.

One of the separating aspects of Sufi language was its esotericism. Hucwiri declares that the purpose behind its setting up "...is twofold: one is better instruction and simplification of intricacies to approximate the understanding of the aspirant, and the other is concealing the secret from those who are not worthy of that knowledge." (Ernst 1992, p.184) Sufi language is designed both "...to show and hide." (Ernst 1992, p.185) We observe the awareness of this felt-

dimension in Sufi language. The language is used in a way that it is open to carrying forward of the felt meaning from the master to the novice (nevninyaz).

⁶⁰ “The bridge-concepts I propose will help produce more and more of those logical formulations which seem to work alone and can become machines. But such concepts also constitute an increased understanding of our natural understanding.” (CD, p.5)

⁶¹ Let alone sekr and sahy, there are lots of concepts like them in Sufi language. Most of them have also not a dichotomic structure. That welcomes a great variety of crossing possibilities. Remembering the “she-rose” metaphor, estimate the different aspects of experience which may explicate themselves in such a language.

⁶² Needless to say, we underline that we did not try to mysticise Gendlin, nor universalize Sufism. We only introduced these different perspectives to each other, in a way that they preserved themselves and gave birth to new dimensions. We only touched to the dimensions which revealed themselves in our problematic “I climbed to the branches of a plum tree”, i.e. in Sufi language.

Abbreviations for Some Works of E.T. Gendlin

- APM : A Process Model
- APR : After Postmodernism: A Report
- CAP : Celebrations and Problems of Humanistic Psychology
- CD : Crossing and Dipping: Some Terms for Approaching the Interface Between Natural Understanding and Logical Formulation
- ECM : Experiencing and the Creation of Meaning
- F : Focusing
- IP : Introduction to Philosophy
- MBP : The “Mind”/”Body” Problem and First-Person Process: Three Types of Concepts
- MCE : Making Concepts From Experience
- OCC : On Cultural Crossing
- ONE : On the New Epistemology
- PFI : Proposal for an International Group for a First Person Science
- POB : The Primacy of the Body, Not the Primacy of Perception: How the Body Knows the Situation and Philosophy
- RO : The Responsive Order: A New Empiricism
- TAE : Introduction to Thinking At the Edge
- WH : What Happens When Wittgenstein Asks “What Happens When ...?”

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