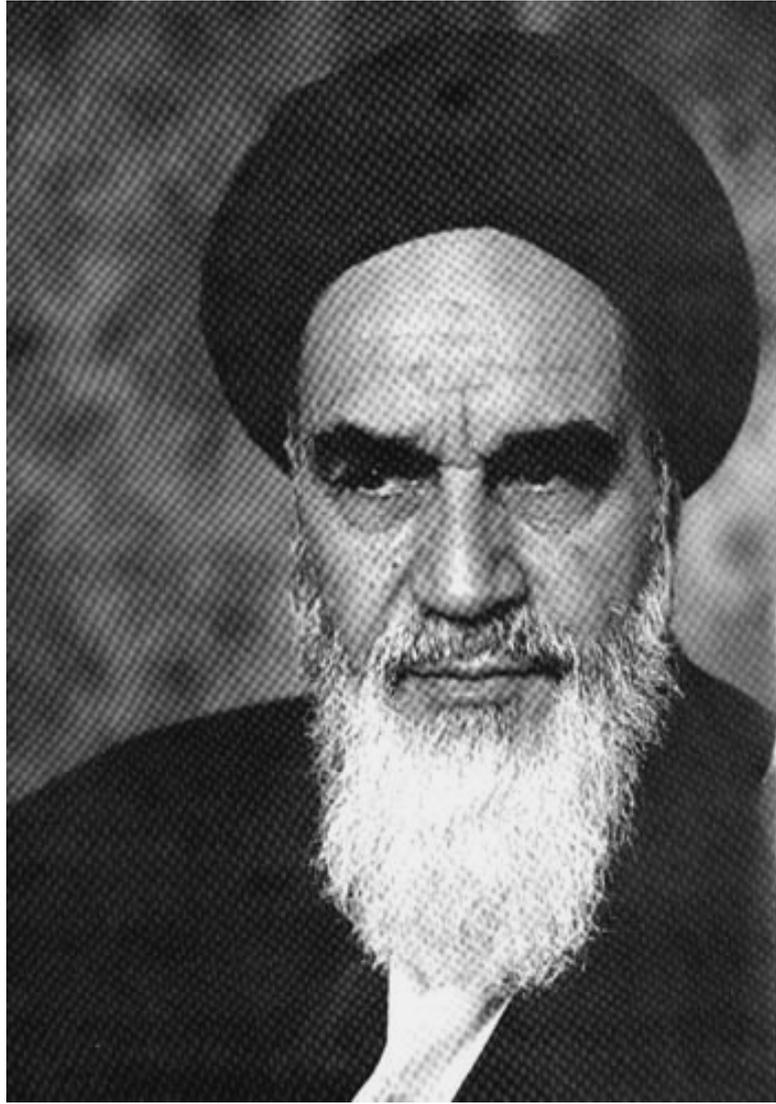




**IN THE NAME OF ALLAH,
THE ALL-BENEFICENT, THE ALL-MERCIFUL**



**The Lamp of Guidance
into
Vicegerency and Sanctity**

(Miṣbāḥ ul-Hidāyah ila'l-Khilāfah wa'l-Wilāyah)

**The Institute for Compilation and Publication of Imām
Khomeinī's Works
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Table of Contents

<i>Preface</i>	1
<i>The First Niche:</i> On some of the mysteries of Muhammad's vicegerency and 'Alī's sanctity in the presence of knowledge and a short description of the station of prophecy	5
A Lamp: The Unitary Unseen Ipseity is in a cloud and inward domains, unknown to any of the prophets or apostles	5
A Lamp: The Unseen Ipseity, in itself, neither considers the names and attributes nor does it manifest itself in any form or mirror	6
A Lamp: The unseen reality along with the attribute of inward domains or the name of the Inward is not opposed to the name of manifestation and the Manifest	7
A Lamp: The reconciliation between the doctrine of the difference of this unseen reality, in itself, from creation and the doctrine of the elimination of disparity and otherness between them	8
A Lamp: The theologians and pseudophilosophers falling into similarity and ineffectuality	8
A Lamp: The correct doctrine of Unity	9
A Lamp: The divine names and attributes in accordance with their cognitive multiplicities are not connected with the unseen station, or rather; connection comes to be by means of the holiest emanation	10

A Lamp: The manifestation and prominence of the names with the intermediary of an unseen divine vicegerent	10
A Lamp: The divine vicegerent has two faces	11
A Lamp: The first thing to emanate from the presence of the holiest emanation	11
A Lamp: The first thing to manifest itself from the loci of manifestation of the Greatest Name.....	11
A Lamp: A discussion about the manner of vicegerency	12
A Lamp: The manifestation of the greatest divine vicegerent in the mirrors of the names and its permeation therein	12
A Lamp: The multiplicity of the names is the first multiplicity in the abode of existence	13
A Lamp: Closeness to and distance from the holiest emanation are the criterion of unity and multiplicity in the names	13
A Lamp: The all-comprehensiveness of each one of the divine names; the argument for the denomination of each one of the divine names	14
A Lamp: Words and expressions are veils in relation to realities and meanings	15
A Lamp: The last holy verses of the <i>Sūrah al-Ḥashr</i> indicate the unification of the Divine Presence with the Unseen Domain of Ipseity and the unification of the Attributes and Names with the Unitary Essence	15
A Lamp: The Qāḍī Sa‘īd al-Qummī’s speech about the all-comprehensiveness of the Name of God.....	16
A Lamp: Lack of incoherence between the Qāḍī Sa‘īd al-Qummī’s speech and what has been stated by the author about the names	17
A Lamp: The divine names have two faces.....	18
A Lamp: The aspect of reconciliation between the <i>ḥadīths</i> and verses in respect to the negation and affirmation of the attributes ..	18
A Lamp: A criticism of the Qāḍī’s speech about the attributes and names of God	19
A Lamp: The Qadi’s speech about the reference of the attributes of the Essence to the negation of deficiencies and his proof thereof...	20
A Lamp: A criticism of the Qāḍī’s speech	21

A Lamp: On the clarification of the greatness of the rank of the divine vicegerency and the station of <i>withness</i>	23
A Lamp: Divine vicegerency is the spirit of the Muḥammadan vicegerency and the origin of vicegerency in all the worlds; the reality of the Night of Measuring Out in the words of the perfect gnostic Shāh-Ābādī	24
A Lamp: The manner of the connection of the divine vicegerency to the names and attributes	25
A Lamp: The face of the unseen presence is entified through the entifications of the names and attributes	25
A Lamp: The disappearance of the unseen reality into the names along with its manifestation therein	26
A Lamp: The intended meaning of the Cloud in the prophetic hadith	27
A Lamp: The immutable source-forms are the concomitants of the divine names and the entifications of His attributes	28
A Lamp: The immutable source-form of the perfect man is the first manifestation in the configuration of immutable source-forms	29
A Lamp: The vicegerency of the human immutable source-form over all the source-forms	29
A Lamp: The presence of the decree and measuring out	29
A Lamp: The source of <i>al-bidā'</i>	30
A Lamp: Measuring out in the words of the Commander of the Faithful	31
A Lamp: The relation between the immutable source-form of the perfect man and the rest of source-forms	33
A Lamp: The Qayṣarī's speech about the quiddities and their emanation from the Divine Essence	34
A Lamp: The emergence of the immutable source-forms through the second self-disclosure of the holiest emanation	34
A Lamp: The immutable source-form of the perfect man is God's greatest vicegerency, and he has a self-subsistent <i>withness</i> with every source-form	35

A Lamp: Warning about pursuing all that which is ambiguous of the words of the gnostics and friends of God without close examination or investigation.....	36
A Lamp: An undifferentiated allusion to the gnostics' intention of the principle of 'what is simple in reality' and the aspect of the designation of their terminology.....	36
A Lamp: The reality of sanctity	37
A Lamp: The reality of vicegerency and sanctity in the two stations of the unseen and manifestation.....	38
A Lamp: The distinction between spiritual globes and sensory globes in encompassment	38
A Lamp: The proof provided by al-Qāḍī Sa'īd al-Qummī for Aristotle's words that simple realities take on the shape of true circularity.....	39
A Lamp: An explanation of the absolute true prophecy.....	39
A Lamp: The difference in the levels of communication and teaching.....	40
A Lamp: An allusion to the gnostics' words that words are designated for the spirits of meanings and their realities	41
A Lamp: Self-Knowledge is a ladder to knowledge of the levels of communication and its realization in one's soul	42
A Lamp: The reality of communication in the world of the names	43
A Lamp: The names requirement to make manifest their essential perfection; the self-disclosure of God's Greatest Name over the names by means of the two names 'the Judge, the Just'	43
A Lamp: The prophet's task is to preserve the divine bounds in every configuration	44
A Lamp: A report of 'Abd ar-Razzāq al-Kāshānī's discussion about prophecy.....	45
A Lamp: A falsification of 'Abd ar-Razzāq's discussion and a verification of the real meaning of prophecy	45

The Second Niche: On some of the mysteries of vicegerency, sanctity and prophecy in the unseen configuration and the two

worlds of Command and Creation	47
The First Lamp: An allusion to some of the mysteries of the world of Command	47
A Light: The Essence is a source for the manifestation of worlds that accord with their entification of the names; the aspects of the unchangeability of the divine names.....	47
A Light: The effect of the agents is not in their essence, or rather, is attributable to the entifications of the names.....	48
A Light: The manifestation of the worlds of existence is due to the attachment of love to the witnessing of the essence.....	49
A Light: The absolute will and that which is expressed thereof are in accordance with the levels and stations	49
A Light: The two stations of unity and multiplicity in relation to the absolute will	50
A Light: The station of the unity of all-comprehensiveness and the cognitive self-disclosure in the configuration of manifestation	50
A Light: The perfect gnostic Shāh-Ābādī's discussion about the mystery of Moses apposing al-Khiḍr	51
A Light: The reality of the absolute will and the mystery of the verse of 'Light'	51
A Light: The words of the possessors of witnessing about the manifestation of the Real and the levels of existence and the aspect of reconciliation between them	52
A Light: His relation to His action is not as the relation of the rest of the agents to their actions	
A discussion about His manifestation and inwardness	55
A Light: The station of vicegerency is the station of bringing together all the divine realities and hidden names	57
A Light: The realities of the immutable source-forms are not an obstacle to the manifestation of the Essence, the Names and Attributes	59
A Light: Looking at the aspect of sanctification and incomparability is more appropriate for the wayfarer's state and remoter from thoughts.....	60

A Light: The mystery of the prophets and friends of God shrinking from performing miracles and charisms in contrast to the workers of talismen and black arts.....	62
A Light: An allusion to some realities that can be understood after understanding the reality of <i>essential</i> manifestation	63
A Light: The reality of prophecy in the unseen configuration.....	64
A Light: A reference to the first one who accepted the inward sanctity and the one with whom the affair concluded	64
A Light: A statement about the aspect of man bearing the Divine Trust and the meaning of his being unfair and senseless	65
A Light: The prophecy of the perfect man and the three stations of communication.....	66
A Light: The words of the metaphysician al-Qumshī'ī about the immutable source-forms and the aspect of the world's ascription to the Muhammadan immutable source-form	67
A Light: A criticism of the words of the metaphysician al-Qumshī'ī and a clarification of the sound view on this issue.....	68
The Second Lamp: On that which is unveiled of the mystery of vicegerency, prophecy and sanctity in the unseen configuration and the divine intellectual lights	70
A Flash: The proof for the fact that the intellectual reality is the first entification of the absolute will	70
A Flash: An allusion to the fact that the entification of the spirituality of the infallible persons is an intellectual entification and it does not belong to creation whatsoever; an explanation of the narration of <i>al-Kāfi</i> which indicates that God existed when there was nothing whatsoever and that He created Muḥammad and 'Alī from His light before anything else	73
A Flash: The difference between the metaphysicians and the gnostics as to the manner of emanation and the identification of the first to emanate from the Real.....	77
A Flash: The reconciliation between the words of the two groups	79
A Flash: A criticism of the words of the eminent scholar al-Qunawī about his expression of emanation	80

A Flash: The judgment of one who witnesses multiplicity without being veiled from unity and sees unity without being heedless of multiplicity.....	81
A Flash: That the intellectual reality is the aspect of the unity of the world and the world is the aspect of its multiplicity; a word of advice for one who desires to understand metaphysics.....	82
A Flash: The manner of the immaterial intellect's encompassment of the Kingdom and the Dominion	84
A Flash: The intellect's compliance with the command of the Compassionate to guide the inhabitants of the worlds and to come back to Him.....	85
A Flash: An allusion to some of the mysteries of the Imām al-Bāqir's <i>ḥadīth</i> on the intellect.....	86
A Flash: The meaning of the vicegerency of the universal intellect in the intellectual world	89
A Flash: A report of a ḥadīth on the beginning of the creation of the Apostle of God and the Imāms and their superiority to the angels	90
A Flash: An exposition of some of the phrases of the holy hadith; the meaning of his words: 'God has not created anything as superior as I'	90
A Flash: 'Alī's inquiry is meant to unveil realities to the rest of people; the mystery of making special mention of Gabriel; Imams' superiority to angels is real, not unreal; The level of 'Alī and the Imāms in relation to the Prophet; what is derived from his words, 'The angels are verily our servants and the servants of our friends'; the meaning of his words, 'Those who bear the Throne'; their being intermediaries between the Real and creation in accordance with the very existence	95
Principle: On their precedence in knowledge of their Lord	101
Principle: Unity has four pillars: praise, <i>tahlīl</i> , magnification and glorification.....	102
Principle: A clarification of the aspect of the order of the foregoing pillars	104

Principle: The angels' share in the three modes of Unity is not as the share of the perfect man	105
Conclusion:	105
The Third Lamp: On the mysteries of vicegerency, prophecy and sanctity in the outward configuration of creation, the mystery of the prophets' mission and their status in relation to our Prophet	106
A Sparkle: Divine names have encompassment and <i>encompassedness</i>	106
A Sparkle: The necessity of the existence of the vicegerent and the locus of manifestation for the Muḥammadan immutable source-form and the presence of the Greatest Name	106
A Sparkle: The reality of God's Greatest Name in its all-comprehensive and outward station and a clarification of the greater resurrection of the names, immutable source-forms and things....	107
A Sparkle: The Greatest Name in the outward configuration brings together the levels of the names and the realities of the source-forms; that all the prophets are vicegerents of our Prophet and their call is a call to him and to his prophecy	108
A Sparkle: The meaning of the words of the Commander of the Faithful, 'I was with prophets inwardly and with the Apostle of God outwardly'	109
A Sparkle: The external realities' request from the names to make manifest their source-forms and what happens thereafte	110
A Sparkle: Warning against discrediting the gnostics without fully understanding their goals	112
A Sparkle: What has been stated is in view of the attribution of effects to their causes	113
A Sparkle: The words of the metaphysician al-Qumshī about the verification of the four journeys.....	114
A Sparkle: The author's verification of the four journeys	115
A Sparkle: The difference of the prophets' levels in the four journeys.....	117
A Sparkle: The perfect friends of God's attainment of the four journeys.....	118

Conclusion and Recommendation: Warning against unveiling the mysteries to those not worthy of them and withholding them from other than the worthy 118

Transliteration Symbols

<u>Symbol</u>	<u>Transliteration</u>	<u>Symbol</u>	<u>Transliteration</u>
	'		a
	b		t
	th		j
	ḥ		kh
	d		dh
	r		z
	s		sh
	ṣ		ḍ
	ṭ		ḏ
	‘		gh
	f		q
	k		l
	m		n
	h		w
	y		ah
<u>Long Vowels</u>		<u>Short Vowels</u>	
	ā		a
	ū		u
	ī		i
Persian Letters			
<u>Symbol</u>	<u>Transliteration</u>	<u>Symbol</u>	<u>Transliteration</u>
	p		ch
	zh		g

Preface



In the Name of Allah, the All-beneficent, the All-merciful

Praise belongs to God, who is hidden in the veil of the Cloud¹ and is covered in the unseen domain of the attributes and the names; the Inward who is concealed by the exaltation of His majesty and the Manifest who is not veiled by the light of His beauty;² who is through the domination of His magnificence veiled from the hearts of (His) friends and through the manifestation of His brilliance manifests Himself in the mirrors of (His) vicegerents.

And blessings and peace be upon the origin of lights and the intimate of the mystery of mysteries, who is absorbed in the unseen domain of Ipseity and from whom all different entifications are obliterated; the source of the sources of the reality of vicegerency and the spirit of the spirits of the office of sanctity; who is covered in the veil of the exaltation of majesty and is leavened by the hands of majesty and beauty; the unveiler of the symbols of Unity—all of them—and the manifester of divine realities altogether; the most perfect and most glorious mirror; our Master, Abu'l-Qāsim Muḥammad, blessings be upon him and his Household, the suns rising from the sphere of the vicegerency of Aḥmad and the moons illuminating form the

horizon of the sanctity of ‘Alī, especially his vicegerent, who acts as a deputy for him in (the world of) the Kingdom and the Dominion; who is unified with his reality in the Presence of Invincibility and Divinity; the root of ‘the Good Tree’;³ the reality of ‘the Lote Tree of the Utmost Boundary’;⁴ ‘the higher companion’⁵ in the station of ‘or even nearer’;⁶ the teacher of spiritual beings and the supporter of prophets and apostles, ‘Alī, the Commander of the Faithful, upon whom be the blessings of God, His angels and His apostles—all of them.

Now then, thus says the one who is proud of being related to him who was sent forth to the humans and the jinn; the one who holds fast to the firmest handle⁷ of ‘the two weighty things’,⁸ Sayyid Rūhullāh, son of the assassinated scholar, Sayyid Muṣṭafā Mūsawī Khomeinī; who resides in Holy Qom—may God make better their state and set right their final return: I wish to unveil to you in this treatise, through the help of God, the sponsor of guidance in the beginning and in the end, a flash of the reality of Muḥammad’s vicegerency and a spark of the reality of ‘Alī’s sanctity, upon whom be beginningless and endless salutations, and the manner of their permeation in the worlds of the unseen and the visible as well as their penetration into the levels of descent and ascent. Also, we will refer to a glimpse of the station of prophecy in general, or rather, in symbols and allusions, and how it is permeated in the worlds—perpetual, everlasting, beginningless and endless—in two niches, including luminous lamps and bright lights. Then we will cast to you the reality of the tree from which our father Adam has been forbidden⁹ and the loci of its manifestations, by way of symbols, benefiting from the mines of inspiration and revelation and the loci of knowledge of the Lord the Majestic as well as the procedure for reconciliation between the traditions differing in their external appearance, owing to their agreement among the men of insights and the possessors of hearts and thoughts, in a luminous tree from which spiritual branches are ramified. We

will then present to you a mystical gift, which is the unveiling of the mystery about the two arcs of existence in the hierarchies of descent and ascent, in a Dominional circle, from which two existential arcs follow, to be divided into certain sectors.

It is appropriate to call it The Lamp of Guidance into Vicegerency and Sanctity. I hope that God gives me success, for He is the best helper and companion, just as I ask His pure friends for help in this world and the next. ✍

The First Niche

On that which is unveiled from some of the mysteries of Muḥammad's vicegerency and 'Alī's sanctity in the presence of knowledge along with a short description of the station of prophecy by way of symbols and allusions through the masters of knowledge from the select of the followers of the Household of infallibility and purity, upon whom be peace and blessings. In it are luminous lamps that refer to certain realities, from which knowledges of faith are understood.

A Lamp

Know, O migrant towards God on the leg of knowledge and certainty, may God provide you and us with death¹⁰ for the cause of this straight route and place us and you among the rightly-guided wayfarers—that the Unseen Ipseity of Unity (*al-huwiyyah al-ghaybiyyah al-aḥadiyyah*), the 'inaccessible phoenix' (*al-'anqā' al-mughrib*) hidden in the unseen domain of Ipseity (*ghayb al-huwiyyah*), and the reality lying concealed under the pavilions of light and the veils of darkness in the Cloud ('*amā*'), the inward domains, the unseen world, the hidden realms, has neither name nor description in the worlds of the Wise Reminder (the Holy Qur'an), nor does its holy reality have any trace in (the world of) the Kingdom and the Dominion, nor

does it have any characteristic either. It is a level from which the hopes of the gnostics have been cut off, by the pavilions of whose majesty the feet of the wayfarers slip and from the field of whose holiness the hearts of the perfect friends of God are veiled. It is neither known to any of the prophets and apostles, nor is it an object of worship to any of the worshippers and rightly-guided wayfarers, nor is it an object of desire to the possessors of knowledge and self-disclosure, such that the most eminent of all the creatures is reported to have said,

ما عرفناك حقّ معرفتك، وما عبدناك حقّ عبادتك.

We have not known You as You deserve to be known,
and we have not worshipped You, as You deserve to be worshipped.¹¹

And as it is said in Persian poetry,

عنقا شکار کس نشود دام بازگیر

کانجا همیشه باد به دست است دام را

None can ever hunt the phoenix, so take your net away
For whatever is caught therein is exposed to storms.¹²

The foregoing has been established in the means of perception of the possessors of hearts, such that they said,

إنّ العجز عن المعرفة غاية معرفة أهل المكاشفة.

Indeed, the incapacity for knowledge is the ultimate end
of the knowledge of the folk of unveiling.¹³

A Lamp

This unseen reality neither considers with subtlety or dominance nor turns with mercy or wrath towards the unseen and visible worlds, including the spiritual beings dwelling in the presence of the Dominion and the angels brought nigh residing

in the world of Invincibility. Rather, in its essence, without any intermediary, it never considers the names and the attributes, nor does it manifest itself in a form or a mirror. It is an unseen domain preserved from manifestation, covered and from whose face the veil of light is not unveiled. In light of this, it is the Absolute Inward and the Unseen (that is not a source of any derivative.)

A Lamp

The inward and unseen domains which we have ascribed to this hidden reality are neither opposed to manifestation (that is an attribute at the station of One-and-Allness (*al-wāḥidiyyah*) and the presence of all-comprehensiveness) nor to the Inward (that is one of the Divine Names and one the leaders of real names). For each one of the inward domains (that is one of the holy descriptions) and the Inward (that is one of the lordly names) has self-disclosure at that station, just as they are posterior to that presence. Rather the expression of such descriptions and designations is attributable to the narrow scope of clarification. For how can words and concepts reflect a reality which the hearts of the friends of God are deprived from turning towards?! Excellent is that which is said in poetry,

ألا إن ثوباً خيوط من نسج تسعة

وعشرين حرفاً من معاليه قاصر

Lo! A Garment sewn out of twenty-nine woven letters
Falls short of expressing its transcendent reality.¹⁴

Thus, the expression falls short, the speaker is dumb and the hearer deaf. As it is said in Persian poetry,

من گنگ خوابدیده و عالم تمام کر

من عاجزم زگفتن و خلق از شنیدنش

I am dumb having a dream and all the world deaf,

I am unable to express it and creation to hear.¹⁵

A Lamp

This unseen reality is not connected to the creatures and is different to them in reality. For there is not any point of affinity or agreement between it and them at all. If you then overhear, within the words of the perfect friends of God, the absence of connection or agreement and essential disparity, their words are taken to mean the foregoing. If you, however, overhear the doctrine of agreement and connection, or rather, the elimination of disparity and otherness, by the gnostics and the folk of unveiling, it is taken to mean other than the level of the Unseen Unity. We will verify it in its own lamp.

A Lamp

Take care not to slip into the dubieties of the possessors of scholastic theology and their corrupt fallacies as well as the sense-intuitions of the folk of formal philosophy and their stagnant lies. For their trade is not profitable in the market of certainty and their merchandise is poor in the field of the foremost. *دَرُّهُمْ فِي خَوْضِهِمْ يَلْعَبُونَ*.¹⁶ Leave them to play around in their impious gossip,¹⁶ and deny God's signs, revelations and names.¹⁷ They shall undergo the punishment of distance from certain reality and the fire of deprivation from living next door to those who are close to God. Therefore, you see that they may deny connection, express a judgement about the difference between existential realities and detach the Real from His creation. They have not understood that this leads to ineffectuality and inactivity with respect to the hand of the Lord, the Majestic.

عُنْتُ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَلَعْنُوا بِمَا قَالُوا

Tied up be their hands, and cursed be they for what they say!¹⁸

They may even maintain the doctrine of integration that leads to similarity, heedless of the reality of incomparability.

As for the divine gnostic and deiform wayfarer, he has two eyes: with his right eye he looks at connection and absorption, or rather, the negation of otherness and multiplicity, and with his left eye he looks at the absence of connection and absorption, or rather, the properties of multiplicity and gives everything its due, lest he should slip into Unity and join the group of the folk of catharsis.

A Lamp

There are numerous *ḥadīths* reported from the Household of Infallibility to corroborate what we have stated. An example is that which is reported in *al-Kāfī* on the authority of Imām Abū ‘Abdullāh, in reply to a written question posed by ‘Abd ar-Raḥīm ibn ‘Atīk al-Qaṣīr, thus

فاعلم - رحمك الله: أنّ المذهب الصحيح في التوحيد ما نزل به القرآن من صفات الله تعالى. فأنف عن الله تعالى البطلان والتشبيه، فلا نفي، ولا تشبيه، هو الله الثابت الموجود.

Know, may God have mercy upon you, that the correct doctrine of Unity is that which has been revealed in the Qur’an concerning the attributes of God, the Most High. Declare untrue nullity (butlan, the negation of divine attributes) and similarity in relation to God. Hence, there is neither nullity nor similarity. He is God, the self-subsisting (*ath-thābit*) and the Existent (*al-mawjūd*).¹⁹

As well, in *al-Kāfī*, it is reported from al-Ḥasan ibn Sa‘īd that he asked Abū Ja‘far al-Jawād thus, Is it permissible to describe God as a thing? To which he replied,

نعم، تخرجه من الحدّين: حدّ التعطيل وحدّ التشبيه.

Definitely, you deem Him above two limits: the limit of ineffectuality (*ta'īl*) and the limit of similarity (*tashbīh*).²⁰

A Lamp

Divine names and attributes are not connected to this unseen station either, in accordance with their cognitive multiplicities, nor can they procure emanation from its presence without any intermediary. So is the case with the Greatest Name of God, in accordance with either one of the two stations, whose inclusion of the names is as the inclusion of the whole in relation to the parts; and lastly there is the station of its manifestation in the mirrors of the attributes and names. For there is in between a veil of light whose essence is overpowered, whose haecceity disappears into the Unseen Ipseity, whose entification is nonexistent, and is described by no description. This is another station of the Greatest Name (*al-ism al-a'zam*) and the Major Veil (*al-ḥijāb al-akbar*). And this is the holiest emanation that is hallowed beyond the turbidities of multiplicity and manifestation, even though it is manifest in accordance with its first station, as will be explained, if God wills.

A Lamp

When it is unveiled to you that this unseen reality is too majestic to be attained by the hands of the waders, nor does any one procure from the precinct of its holiness, nor is any of the names or attributes, including their entifications, the intimate of its secret, nor has any of the foregoing been given permission to enter its arena, there must be, for the sake of the manifestation of the names and their prominence as well as the unveiling of the mysteries of their treasures, an unseen divine vicegerent to succeed it in manifestation in the names and reflect Its light in the mirrors, so that the gates of blessings may open up, the

fountainheads of boons may gush forth, the morning of beginninglessness may break, and the last may link with the first. So the order was issued, by an unseen tongue from the source of the unseen upon the major veil and the most luminous, holiest emanation (*al-fayḍ al-aqdas*), to manifest itself in the garments of the names and attributes and the drapery of entifications, so it obeyed His issue and abided by His judgement.

A Lamp

This divine vicegerent and holy reality that represents the source of manifestation must have an unseen face towards the Unseen Ipseity, through which it never becomes manifest at all. As well, it must have a face towards the world of the names and attributes, through which it discloses itself therein and becomes manifest in their mirrors in the all-comprehensive presence of One-and-Allness (*al-ḥaḍrah al-wāḥidiyyah al-jam‘iyyah*).

A Lamp

The first thing which emanates from the presence of the holiest emanation and the greatest vicegerent is the Presence of the Greatest Name, ie the Name²¹ ‘God’, in accordance with the station of Its entification, through its inclusion of all the names and attributes and its manifestation in all the loci of manifestation and signs. For the first entification for the inentifiable reality is (and brings together) all the entifications and manifestations. Moreover, none of the names and attributes is connected to this holiest emanation except through the intermediation of the Greatest Name, according to the well-ordered hierarchy, ie each in accordance with its own station.

A Lamp

The first thing that becomes manifest from the loci of manifestation of the Greatest Name is the station of Essential Compassionateness and Mercifulness. These are among the

names of beauty which include and dominate all the names. It is for this very reason that His mercy has preceded His wrath.²² Then follow the Names of Majesty in accordance with their stations.

A Lamp

This vicegerency is vicegerency in manifestation, emanation, entification through the names and qualification by the attributes of beauty and majesty. For all the entifications of the attributes and names are absorbed in the Presence on behalf of which It acts and all the haecceities disappear into the station of Its unseen domain, such that no one of them has any ruling property or any manifestation.

A Lamp

This divine vicegerency is manifest in all the mirrors of the names, reflects its light therein in accordance with the receptivity and preparedness of the mirror, permeates therein as the soul permeates in its potencies, and is entified by its own entifications as the non-conditioned (*lā bishart*) quiddity is entified with the mixed (*makhlūṭah* or *bi shart shay'*) quiddity. However, no one knows the manner of this permeation and penetration or the reality of this realization and descent excepting the elect of the perfect friends of God and the august gnostics, who witness the penetration of the absolute holy emanation and its extension upon the temples of quiddities through their spiritual witnessing and gnostical tasting. The ladder to such sorts of knowledge, or rather, all the realities for the gnostic wayfarer is knowledge of the soul. So it is your duty to attain this kind of knowledge, for it is the key to the keys and the lamp of the lamps, such that he who knows it knows his Lord.²³

A Lamp

The first multiplicity in the abode of existence is the multiplicity of the names and attributes in the presence of knowledge and the station of all-comprehensive One-and-Allness, through the manifestation of the divine vicegerent in the forms of the entifications of names, the garment of multiplicities, and the drapery of attributes. Moreover, this multiplicity is the source of the sources of every multiplicity that has come to be in the source-form and the origin of the origins of difference relating to the levels of existence in the two worlds.

A Lamp

The nearer the horizon of a name to the horizon of the holiest emanation is, the more perfect its unity is, the more intense and more independent the aspect of its unseen domain is, the less the aspects of its multiplicity and manifestation are and the farther from their horizon it is. Conversely, the farther from its presence and the station of its proximity, the more manifest multiplicity therein is and the more the aspects of manifestation are. It is thereof unveiled to the heart of every august gnostic and therewith every gnostic wayfarer knows that the Greatest Name that brings together all the names and attributes includes the multiplicities, and embraces the descriptions and entifications is closer to the horizon of unity. Moreover, this inclusion is, in a certain respect, too incomparable with any real multiplicity, or rather, its reality is unified with the holiest emanation and the station of the mixed unseen (*al-ghayb al-mashūb*). Their difference is nothing but through sheer consideration, as the will and the holy emanation differ to the First Entification (*al-ta'ayyun al-awwal*), which is expressed in the terminology of the metaphysicians as the First Intellect (*al-'aql al-awwal*).

A Lamp

Take care not to think from our statement, ‘the level of the Greatest Name ‘God’ is the closest of the Names to the world of holiness and the first of the loci of manifestation of the holiest emanation, considering its inclusion of all the names and attributes’, that the rest of the Divine Names do not bring together the realities of the names and are imperfect in terms of the substantial character of their essence. For this is the opinion of those who disbelieve²⁴ in the names of God and blaspheme them,²⁵ so they have been veiled from the lights of His noble face. Rather, the correct belief is to hold firmly that each of the Divine Names brings together all the names and includes all the realities. Why shouldn’t it be so since their essence is unified with the Holy Essence (*adh-dhāt al-muqaddasah*), and all is unified with all? As well, the identity of the attributes with the Essence and the attributes with one another implies what we have stated.

As for our statement that such and such a name falls under the names of majesty and such and such a name falls under the names of beauty, this is ‘The Compassionate, the Merciful’, and that is ‘the Dominant, the Compeller’, it is in consideration of the manifestation of each name in that which pertains to it and that its opposite is inward in it. Based on this, mercy is manifest in ‘the Merciful’ and wrath is inward therein, beauty is the manifestation of beauty and the inward aspect of majesty, while majesty is in contrast therewith. The ‘Manifest’ disappears into the ‘Inward’, the Inward is hidden in the ‘Manifest’, and so is the case with the ‘First’ in relation to the ‘Last’.

As for the Greatest Name ‘God’, the lord of the names and lords, however, it is characterized by neutrality and straightness and possesses the Supreme Isthmus (*al-barzakhiyyah al-kubrā*). Neither beauty dominates Its majesty, nor does majesty overcome Its beauty. Neither the Manifest dominates Its inward aspect, nor does the Inward dominate Its manifest aspect. It is the

manifest in the same inwardness and the inward in the same manifestation, the first in the same lastness and the last in the same firstness.²⁶ Know these words, for they are a great gate to knowledge.

A Lamp

Now rises the sun of the Real from its east and the essence of the reality from its horizon, namely such terms as ‘entification’, ‘includedness’, ‘encompassment’, ‘encompassedness’, are applied out of the limitedness of expression and incapacity of allusion. Take care, O spiritual brother, not to construe these terms and expressions into their common meanings and formal designations, so you may deny the names of God and keep away from the domain of His holiness and the station of His intimacy. For words and expressions are veils in relation to realities and meanings. The divine gnostic thus must penetrate and throw them off as well as look at the unseen realities with the light of the heart, even though the public may apparently stand in need of them. Likewise, outward senses are a ladder to the intellectual meanings and the luminous universal realities, such that the metaphysicians are reported to have stated thus,

من فقد حساً فقد علماً

He who lacks a sense lacks knowledge.²⁷

A Lamp

Look, O wayfarer towards the Path of the Real, at the holy verses at the end of the *Sūrah al-Ḥaṣhr* (59) and ponder on them with the eye of insight. The Blessed and the Most High says,

هو الله الذي لا إله إلا هو عالم الغيب والشهادة هو الرحمن الرحيم. هو الله الذي لا إله إلا هو الملك القدوس السلام المؤمن المهيمن العزيز الجبار المتكبر سبحان الله عما يشركون. هو الله الخالق البارئ المصور له الأسماء الحسنى يسبح له ما في السموات والأرض وهو العزيز الحكيم.

He is God-there is no god except Him-knower of the Unseen and the Visible, He is the Compassionate, the Merciful. He is God-there is no god except Him-the Sovereign, the All-holy, the Peace, the Securer, the Protector, the All-mighty, the All-compeller, the All-magnanimous. Glorified be God from any partners they may ascribe (to Him). He is God, the Creator, the Author, and the Former. To Him belong the Most Beautiful Names. Whatever there is in the heavens and the earth glorifies Him, and He is the All-mighty, the All-wise.²⁸

God, the All-exalted, the All-supreme has spoken the truth. See how He, Exalted be His rank, refers in the there holy verses to the unification of the Presence of Divinity with the unseen domain of Ipseity, in consideration of its disappearance into His Essence, and its absorption in His Haecceity. Then, He, Exalted be His rank, determines the unification of the attributes of beauty and majesty and the names of the Essence, the Attributes and the Acts according to the well-ordered hierarchy with the unitary Essence. In it is a fine reference to what we have stated to those who give ear with full intelligence.²⁹

A Lamp

In his *al-Bawāriq al-Malakūtiyyah* (The Dominional Twinkles), the perfect gnostic al-Qāḍī Saʿīd al-Qummī,³⁰ may God be pleased with him, states thus:

It is clear among the folk of perfect taste and trouble-free path that 'God' is a name that brings together the realities of all the Divine Names. However, I do not mean that other than It does not include the rest of the names. For there in no doubt among the folk of taste that every Divine Name includes all the Divine Names, since each name is depicted by all the depictions. However, there are here levels, one of which is the level of the

curators and subjects, the second the lords and chiefs, and the third the king and the sovereign. To The Name 'God' belongs this last level, and it is therefore singled out for all comprehensiveness.³¹

A Lamp

Do not imagine that there is incoherence between what has been stated by this revered gnostic and what we have expressed in some of the foregoing lamps. For we believe that some of the names dominate the others, with or without an intermediary, as explained earlier. As well, some of the names count as the 'lord' of spiritual realities, some the 'lord' of Dominional realities, and some others the 'lord' of the forms existing in (the world of) the Kingdom. He, may God sanctify his secret, also believes in what we have clarified, namely majesty is covered in the names of beauty, and beauty is hidden in the names of majesty. As for the specification with a certain name, it is in consideration of (its) manifestation, as done by Shaykh Muḥy ad-Dīn³² with respect to the Names of the Essence, the Attributes and the Acts.³³ There is also an allusion to it in, the prophetic hadith,

إِنَّ الْجَنَّةَ حَقَّتْ بِالْمَكَارِهِ، وَالنَّارَ حَقَّتْ بِالشَّهَوَاتِ

Indeed, the Garden is surrounded by detestable things,
while the Fire is surrounded by passions.³⁴

Our master and the master of the two worlds, the Commander of the Faithful, upon whom be peace and blessings, has also made fine indirect reference thereto in his words,

مَا رَأَيْتُ شَيْئاً إِلَّا وَرَأَيْتُ اللَّهَ قَبْلَهُ وَبَعْدَهُ وَمَعَهُ وَفِيهِ.

I have not seen anything without seeing God before it,
after it, with it³⁵ or within it.³⁶

For the locus of manifestation of everything in relation to the

Greatest Name 'God', notwithstanding each object of lordship has a specific name, is only due to the fact that every name implies and is hidden in all the names and realities.

A Lamp

When you know through certain knowledge free from dubieties and perfect understanding hallowed beyond ignorances that multiplicity in the Presence of One-and-Allness and the level of Divinity is a self-disclosure of the holiest emanation in the forms of the names and attributes and a reflection of Its light in their mirrors, know that these Divine Names have two faces. One face is towards themselves and their entifications, by which the properties of multiplicity and otherness become manifest; as well, they possess thereby concomitants in the presence of knowledge and an effect in the 'Command' and the 'Creation', as will be dealt with in detail, if God wills. And another face is towards the presence of the mixed unseen (*al-ghayb al-mashūb*) and the station of the holiest emanation that is annihilated in the Unitary Essence and absorbed in the unseen domain of Ipseity; they are thereby annihilated with respect to their essence, overwhelmed with respect to their haecceity under the magnificence of (Divine) Unity, and are not characterized by multiplicity with respect to their Ipseity and quiddity.

A Lamp

When you find traces of the mines of wisdom and the loci of knowledge negating the attributes from the presence of the Essence and the One in all respects, know that the intended meaning is their negation from the Unitary Unseen Ipseity (*al-huwiyyah al-ghaybiyyah al-aḥadiyyah*) with which the names and attributes are overwhelmed. However, when you see their affirmation in relation to It in the Wise Mighty Revelation of the All-exalted, the All-supreme and in the *ḥadīths* of the Infallible Imāms, upon whom be blessings, know that they are such in

accordance with manifestation through His holiest emanation in the Presence of One-and-Allness and the Station of Divine All-comprehensiveness (*al-jam'iyah al-ilāhiyyah*).

A Lamp

I am surprised that the aforementioned gnostic, notwithstanding his elevated rank and firm wayfaring, should be distracted from that station which is the object of attention of great gnostics, such that he negated the positive attributes (*as-ṣifāt ath-thubūtiyyah*) from the Real, Majestic be His rank, and judged that all the Attributes signify and refer to negative meanings. He, completely, kept away from the identity of the Attributes with the Essence. What is more surprising is the doctrine of equivocation (*al-ishtirāk al-lafẓī*) between the divine and creational names and the attributes that can be ascribed to the Real and the creatures. What is still more surprising is that which he assumed in the First Twinkle of *al-Bawāriq al-Malakūtiyyah*, namely whatever is described by a description has a form, for the description is the greatest limit of a thing in relation to meanings, and there is no encompassment more evident than that of the description in relation to the transcendent realities. He holds that the foregoing is the secret of the report,

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُوصَفُ.

Indeed, God is never described.³⁷

However, he himself, may God sanctify his secret, maintains in that treatise as you have heard in the foregoing lamps, that all the names include all the levels of the names; if the names represent all the realities, then they possess the station of absoluteness, as is the case with the Name 'God'; in light of this, their sources, ie the attributes, possess the station of absoluteness, too. I think that he held that view due to his failure to reconcile the reports in this connection, so he made an error.

This brief treatise, which is put together for the sake of other

than these discussions, cannot broach these great investigations in detail. It is our duty, therefore, to restrict ourselves to his speech about the identity of the attributes with the Essence, as there is much room for debate therein.

A Lamp

In the third volume of *Sharḥ Kitāb at-Tawḥīd* (An Exposition of the Book of Unity) by our Shaykh aṣ-Ṣadūq al-Qummī,³⁸ may God be pleased with him, a book notable, noble and unique in its kind, he, may God be pleased with him, in the discussion about the names of God, the Most High, and the difference between their meanings and the meanings of the creatures' names, said thus,

The second station is about the reference of these attributes, ie the attributes of the Essence, to the negation of their deficiencies. Let us mention, to that ultimate end, two proofs. The first proof is that we have stated that those concepts are, as we maintain, existential matters and they cannot be attributed to the Presence of Divine Unity, exalted be His rank. Based on this, what is with God, majestic be His majesty, of them—if they possess a meaning that is appropriate for the exaltation of His Majesty—are existential matters. Moreover, there is no doubt that they are attributes and that an attribute is that with which a thing possesses a state; everything with which a thing possesses a state would be, of necessity, other than that thing; and everything that is other than the First Source and is a positive matter is an effect of God.

He carried on with the proof and offered corrupt consequences based on the foregoing premises. Then, he, may his secret be sanctified, furnished another proof based on some of the premises of the foregoing proof. Then, he said:

What we have so far stated are rational proofs for the foregoing two topics, namely the equivocation of the attributes between the Creator and the creature, and the reference of the

attributes of the Essence to the negation of the deficiencies. As for the transmitted argument, it is extensively reported, or rather, it is almost as good as recurrently and widely reported, (through successive reliable narrators).³⁹

In the first station, namely the discussion about the establishment of equivocation between the attributes of the Creator and the creature, he furnished a proof that he described as ‘the best of the proofs’. Its basic premises are that the ‘essence’ is applied to that which makes a thing what it is and the ‘attribute’ is applied to that with which a thing possesses a state.

A Lamp

Verily, the foregoing lamps have lifted darkness from the face of your heart and taught you what you did not know, namely the identity of the Essence, the Attributes and the Names. You have also come to know that attributes are not states or accidents additional to it (i.e. the Essence), or rather, they are equivalent to their self-disclosure through their holiest emanation in the Presence of One-and-Allness and their manifestation in the garment of the names and the attributes; as well, the reality of the names in their inward essence is the absolute unseen reality. On closer examination one will come to know that which lies in the words of this revered gnostic, may God be pleased with him, namely his proof refers to a verbal debate and linguistic discussion which are the duty of the linguists and derivationists. The perfect gnostic has not anything to do therewith, nor does his nature revolve around it. For it is a veil from knowledge of God, just as it intercepts the way of wayfaring toward Him.

Moreover, this wayfaring gnostic returned to that from which he fled. One may argue thus, O gnostic Shaykh, may God place you in the highest degrees of bliss! You have yourself fled from univocity (*al-ishtirāk al-ma‘nawī*) between the Real and the creatures and made incomparability a shelter from similarity.

So what led you to hold that an attribute is that with which a thing possesses a state, in any homestead and with respect to any existent, for the simple reason that the attribute is such in creation, but not absolutely, or rather, in the world of matter and prime matter? Is this nothing but similarity which has been negated by the sound reports⁴⁰ of the Household of Infallibility and Immaculateness (the *Ahl al-Bayt*), upon whom be blessings, or rather, by the Mighty Book?⁴¹ You have fled thereof until you are caught in the negation of the attributes about which God, the Most High, says,

وَاللَّهُ الْأَسْمَاءَ الْحُسْنَىٰ فَادْعُوهُ بِهَا وَذُرُوا الَّذِينَ يَلْحَدُونَ فِي أَسْمَائِهِ سَيُجْزَوْنَ
مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ.

To God belong the Most Beautiful Names, so supplicate Him by them, and abandon those who blaspheme His names. Soon they shall be requited for what they used to do.⁴²

He, exalted by His rank, also says,

قُلْ ادْعُوا اللَّهَ أَوْ ادْعُوا الرَّحْمَنَ أَيَّمَا الَّذِي تَدْعُوا فَلَهُ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَىٰ
Say, 'Invoke "God" or invoke "the Compassionate". Whichever (of His Names) you may invoke, to Him belong the Most Beautiful Names'.⁴³

Do you claim that what the great metaphysicians and noble friends of God, may God be pleased with them, mean by the identity of the attributes with the Holy Essence is that they are, taken at face value, identical therewith?⁴⁴ Is the intention nothing but the fact that real existence along with the unity of its all-comprehensiveness (*ahadiyyat al-jam'*) can reconcile between dissimilar matters and bring together multiplicities through the all-comprehensive unique Ipseity that is incomparable with the turbidities of multiplicity? In light of this, the words issued from

the mouth of the deiform metaphysicians are meant to convey that great matter, the knowledge of which opens such divine teachings as ‘that whose reality is simple is all things’⁴⁵ through divine all-comprehensive unity. As well, the perfect gnostics have stressed that the Unitary Essence has disclosed Itself by the holiest emanation, which is the Great Vicegerent, in the Presence of One-and-Allness and manifested Itself in the garment of the attributes and names. There is no difference between the manifest and the locus of manifestation save in standpoint.

However, the discussion about these realities is out of the scope of this treatise, for it is put together to expound on other sorts of knowledge. So let us recur to our intention.

A Lamp

Know, O spiritual friend, may God give you success in attaining His pleasure and place you and us among those who witness His names and attributes, that this vicegerency is one of the greatest affairs of Divinity, one of the noblest stations of Lordship, the gate to the gates of manifestation and existence, the key to the keys of the unseen and the visible, and the station of ‘witness’ (*maqām al-‘indiyyah*), in which lie the treasures of the Unseen, which no one knows except Him.⁴⁶ Through It the names became manifest after they had been inward and the attributes came out after they had been hidden. This is the greatest veil by which every young and old is annihilated and by whose presence every rich and poor is absorbed. This is an endless space, above the Throne (*al-‘arsh*), in which there is neither vacuity nor plenum. These are the august glories of His face; were they to lift the veils of light and darkness, they would burn up everyone whose eyesight perceived it.⁴⁷ So glory be to God, how great is His worth, how splendid His station, how noble His face, and how lofty His sovereignty. He is the All-holy, the Glorified, the Lord of the heavens of the names and the earths of creation. Isn’t it strange how a bat wishes to praise the

sun of the rising suns, and (how) a chameleon desires to describe the bright overwhelming dawn?! How incapable are the pen and the words and how dull are the heart and the tongue!⁴⁸

قل لو كان البحر مداداً لكلمات ربّي لنفد البحر قبل أن تنفذ كلمات ربّي.
Say, 'If the sea were ink for the words of my Lord, the sea would be used up before the words of my Lord were exhausted.'⁴⁹

How should then be the case with the origin of the words and the source of the signs! For the oceans of existence and the pens of the world of the unseen and the visible fail to describe any of His self-disclosures. How splendid is His proof and how great His sovereignty!

A Lamp

This vicegerency is the spirit, lord, origin and source of Muḥammadan vicegerency. Therefrom grew the root of vicegerency in all the worlds, or rather, the root of vicegerency, the vicegerent and the one whom it represents. And this became manifest, to the greatest degree of manifestation, in the Presence of the Greatest Name 'God', the Lord of the absolute Muḥammadan reality, the origin of the divine universal realities. Based on this, it is the origin of vicegerency, and vicegerency is its manifestation, or rather, it is the outwardly manifest in this presence, because of the unification of that which is manifest and the locus of manifestation, as He has alluded to it with a fine allusion in the Divine Revelation, with His words,

إنا أنزلناه في ليلة القدر.
Indeed, We revealed it on the Night of Measuring out.⁵⁰

Our Shaykh and teacher in divine knowledge and teachings, the perfect gnostic, Mīrzā Muḥammad 'Alī Shāh-Ābādī

Işfahānī,⁵¹ may God make the days of his blessings last, in reply to my question about the manner of divine revelation, in the first meeting I was honoured with his presence, said, among other things, thus, The هاء (it) in His words, إنا أنزلناه في ليلة القدر (Indeed We revealed it on the Night of Measuring out) is an allusion to the unseen reality sent down in the Muḥammadan structure, which is the reality of ‘the Night of Measuring out’.

A Lamp

Following the foregoing lamps, which are illumined by divine lights and illuminate your heart, and the spiritual breath which instill (realities) into your inmost mind,⁵² you may come to know the manner of connection of this Greatest Vicegerency to the Most Beautiful Names and the Highest Attributes. Its connection with them is one of neediness and existence, just as their connection with it is one of self-disclosure and manifestation. For the absolute unseen reality has no manifestation in accordance with its reality. Thus, there must be, for the sake of its manifestation, a mirror in which its reflection is disclosed. The entifications of the attributes and the names are mirrors for the reflection of that great light and the locus of its manifestation.

A Lamp

Just as the forms reflected in sensory mirrors take on their shape such as circularity and straightness, assume their colour such as redness, yellowness, and the like, evidently vary in accordance with their opacity and purity, though these differences are not part of the possessor of the form, and are in accordance with the differences of the preparednesses of the mirrors, so too the face of the Unseen Presence and the Ipseity of the Cloud reflected in the mirrors of the names and attributes,

despite their inentification in their very essence due to their lack of manifestation in their essence, is entified through the entifications of the names and attributes, assumes their colour, discloses itself in them in proportion to their purity and manifests itself in them in accordance with their preparednesses. Based on this, it will be merciful with 'the Merciful', compassionate with 'the Compassionate', dominant with 'the Dominant', all-attentive with 'the All-attentive', and the like of (the attributes of) majesty and beauty.

A Lamp

Divine Names and Attributes in the Presence of One-and-Allness, even though they are a locus of manifestation of this unseen reality and divine vicegerency and makes it manifest, are veils of light⁵³ from their reality, each in accordance with its degree. In light of this, they are always veiled in the names and attributes and hidden under their coverings. They are witnessed in their very witnessing and manifest in their very manifestation, although they are hidden in them and with them, because the absolute is the inward of that which is qualified and is veiled by it. Similarly, even though sensory light makes surfaces manifest, it is not seen in their very essence. Just as the mirror, even though it makes manifest the images reflected in it, it is veiled by it, so too the mirrored image, even though it is a manifestation of the mirror, the mirror is hidden in it, just as it is not manifest in the place of its reflection, despite that the image is the mirror manifest therein. Likewise, even though the unseen reality is manifesting through the manifestation of the names itself, it disappears into them as the mirror disappears into the image. Based on this, the names and attributes are veils of light about which it is reported that

إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَبْعِينَ أَلْفَ حِجَابٍ مِنْ نُورٍ وَظِلْمَةٍ

Indeed, God has seventy thousand veils of light and darkness.⁵⁴

Here are mysteries for which there is no authorization to reveal.

A Lamp

From what we have recited to you in the foregoing lamps you can make a judgement about the view of the perfect gnostics on the verification of the reality of *al-'amā'*, the Cloud, reported in a prophetic hadith, when he was asked thus,

أَيْنَ كَانَ رَبَّنَا قَبْلَ أَنْ يَخْلُقَ الْخَلْقَ؟

Where was our Lord before He created the creatures?

To which he was reported to have replied thus,

كَانَ فِي عَمَاءٍ

He was in an '*amā'* (cloud).⁵⁵

The scholars had different opinions about its reality. It is said that it is the Presence of (Divine) Unity, because knowledge cannot relate to it, and it is in the veil of majesty. It is also said that it is (the station of) One-and-Allness and the Presence of the Names and Attributes. For *al-'amā'* is the thin cloud coming between the heavens and the earth, and this presence is an intermediary between the heavens of (Divine) Unity and the earth of multiplicity.⁵⁶

However, we say it seems that the reality of *al-'amā'* is the presence of the holiest emanation and the great vicegerent. For it is the reality of whose unseen station no one has knowledge, just as it possesses (the level of) intermediation between the Presence of the Unseen Unity and the non-manifest Ipseity and the Presence of One-and-Allness in which multiplicity occurs. We

have not interpreted it to mean the unseen reality only because the question is about the 'Lord', and this reality is never described by any description, as you come to know from what has been mentioned to you; nor is it to be interpreted to mean the Presence of One-and-Allness, for it is the station of the consideration of cognitive multiplicity.

In *Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb*, the eminent scholar al-Qunawī says,⁵⁷

Al-'amā' which the Prophet, upon whom and whose family be blessings, mentioned is the station of lordly revelation and the wellspring of the compassionate essential munificence (coming forth) from the unseen domain of Ipseity and the veil of the exaltation of haecceity. In this '*amā'*' is entified the level of the eternal unseen primary marriage that opens the presences of Divine Names through the beginningless attentiveness of the Essence.⁵⁸ Here ends his speech.

Even though it is open to careful study in some respects, it somehow corroborates what we have stated.

A Lamp

When the manifestation of the world of the names and attributes culminates and the multiplicity of the names occurs, through the manifestation of the holiest emanation in their garment, the gates of the forms of divine names open the presence of immutable source-forms in the configuration of knowledge and the concomitants of the names in the Presence of One-and-Allness. Thereupon every attribute will be entified by a certain form and every name will require a concomitant, in accordance with the station of its essence, such as subtlety and dominance, majesty and beauty, simplicity and compositeness, firstness and lastness, and manifestness and inwardness.

A Lamp

The first name which demanded that (affair) is the Greatest Name 'God', the lord of the immutable source-form of Muḥammad, the presence bringing together all the realities of the names, so it became manifest in the form of the immutable source-form of Muḥammad in the configuration of knowledge. Thereupon came to be a connection, namely the connection of the manifest to the locus of manifestation, the spirit to the frame, and the inward domains to manifestation. The immutable source-form of the perfect man is the first manifestation in the configuration of immutable source-forms and the key to the keys of all the divine treasures and the lordly hidden treasures by means of the Love of the Essence in the Presence of Divinity.

A Lamp

All the concomitants of the names become manifest in the presence of source-forms with the intermediary of the immutable source-form of man, just as their lords become manifest in the presence of the names with the intermediary of their lord, that is the Greatest Name 'God'. Based on this, this source-form has also vicegerency in relation to the entire source-forms, control over their levels and descent into their stations. It becomes manifest in their forms, permeates into their realities and descends into their waystations. Moreover, the manifestation of source-forms is subordinate to their manifestation, each in accordance with its station such as 'encompassment' and 'encompassedness', firstness and lastness. These stations are (only) known to the masters of witnessing and knowledge, just as they are too many to be enumerated by the books and scriptures.

A Lamp

This presence is the presence of divine decree (*al-qaḍā' al-ilāhī*) and lordly measure (*al-qadar ar-rubūbī*). In it dose every

possessor of a station pertains to its station and is every preparedness and receptivity estimated by way of the specific aspect of the holiest emanation along with the presence of source-forms. Accordingly, the manifestation of source-forms in the presence of knowledge is a measurement of the entified manifestation in the external configuration, just as manifestation in the source-form is actualized in accordance with the realization of its (appointed) times and conditions.

A Lamp

Now, you have the right to know, through God's permission and His good success-giving, the reality of the hadith reported in *al-Kāfi* by the master of traditionists, Thiqaṭ al-Islām, Muḥammad ibn Ya'qūb al-Kulaynī,⁵⁹ may God be pleased with him, in the chapter of *al-badā'* (modification) on the authority of Abū Baṣīr, who reported from Abū 'Abdullāh (Ja'far aṣ-Ṣādiq) upon whom be peace, that he said,

إنّ لله علمين: علم مكنون مخزون، لا يعلمه إلا هو، من ذلك يكون البداء،
وعلم علمه ملائكته ورسله وأنبيائه، فنحن نعلمه.

God possesses two kinds of knowledge. (First), knowledge that is hidden, guarded, about which no one except Him knows. From this knowledge originates *al-badā'*; (the second) is knowledge that He has taught to His angels, His apostles and His prophets, and which we know.⁶⁰

The friend of God has spoken the truth. The origin of *al-badā'* is the presence of source-forms which no one knows except Him. Acquaintance with the immutable source-forms that may occur to some friends of God such as the perfect man counts as part of lordly knowledge, but not the knowledge of the prophets and apostles. As it is reported in respect of knowledge about the Unseen, namely (God is the knower of the Unseen) and

He does not reveal His Unseen to anyone إلا من أرتضى من رسولٍ except to an apostle He approves of.⁶¹

In this connection, Abū Ja‘far (al-Bāqir), upon whom be peace, said,

والله، محمدٌ ممّن ارتضاه

By God, Muḥammad is one of those whom He approves of.⁶²

Even though *al-badā’* in accordance with the entified configuration lies in the Dominion, as verified by the eminent (Muslim) metaphysicians, its source is the presence of knowledge. Consequently, what is held by some eminent commentators⁶³ on *al-Kāfi*, namely the source of *al-badā’* is neither His knowledge nor the first creation, or rather, it originates in the second creation, as they claim that it necessitates ascribing ignorance to the knower absolutely, is out of narrowness of expression. However, there is no problem with the fact that *al-badā’* in the sense they mention originates in the second creation; but the source from which *al-badā’* arises is that which you have been informed of.

A Lamp

From these sorts of knowledge which are unveiled to your heart through acquaintance with the foregoing lamps does one of the mysteries of measurement become manifest. For people may have unfavourable opinions thereof, and everyone may hold infirm views thereupon. What is reported from the Household of Infallibility (the *Ahl al-Bayt*) has refuted what they have imagined and the *hadīths* of the Infallibles, upon whom be peace, have undone what they have spun. In *at-Tawḥīd*⁶⁴ by our Shaykh, the most truthful one of the Shi‘ite group, may God be pleased with him, on the authority of al-Aṣḥab ibn Nubātah, who heard that the Commander of the Faithful (‘Alī), upon

whom be peace, concerning measurement said thus,

ألا إنّ القدر سرّ من سرّ الله، وستر من ستر الله، وحرز من حرز الله، مرفوع في حجاب الله، مطوي عن خلق الله، مختوم بخاتم الله، سابق في علم الله، وضع الله العباد عن علمه، ورفعهم فوق شهاداتهم ومبلغ عقولهم؛ لأنهم لا ينالونه بحقيقة الربانيّة، ولا بقدرة الصمدانيّة، ولا بعظمة النورانيّة، ولا بعزّة الوجدانيّة؛ لأنّه بحر زاخر خالص لله تعالى، عمقه ما بين السماء والأرض، عرضه ما بين المشرق والمغرب، أسود كالليل الدامس، كثير الحيات والحيتان، يعلو مرّة ويسفل أخرى، في قعره شمس تضيء، لا ينبغي أن يطلع إليها إلا الله الواحد الفرد. فمن تطلع إليها فقد ضادّ الله عزّ وجلّ في حكمه، ونازعه في سلطانه، وكشف عن ستره وسرّه، وباء بغضب من الله، ومأواه جهنّم وبئس المصير.

Lo! Measuring out is one of the mysteries of God, one of the coverings of God, and one of the shelters of God. It is elevated in the veil of God, concealed from the creatures of God, sealed by the seal of God, and determined beforehand in God's knowledge. God has laid knowledge of it aside from (His) servants and lifted it beyond their testimonies and the scope of their intellects. For they cannot comprehend it with the reality of Lordship, the power of Impermeability, the greatness of luminosity and the mightiness of Unity. For it is a brimful ocean devoted to God the Most High; its depth is as vast as that which is between the heaven and the earth, its breadth is as vast as that which is between the east and the west, dark as a pitch-dark night, and plentiful of serpents and whales; it sometimes rises and sometimes turns downward. In its bottom is a shining sun, which is not proper for anyone to oversee except God, the One, and the Unique. So whoso oversees it, he will act contrary to God, the Mighty and Majestic, in relation to His judgement, will challenge Him for His sovereignty, will have unveiled His covering and

mystery, will have earned wrath from God, and his refuge will be hell, an evil destination.⁶⁵

The Friend of God has spoken the truth. By the life of the beloved, this hadith which has been issued from the mine of science and knowledge has mysteries, the tenth of whose tenth cannot be attained by the intellects of the possessors of gnosis, not to speak of our insignificant viewpoints and our weak ideas. Nonetheless, it really corroborates the reality of our point of view. And it suffices as a witness⁶⁶ and firm evidence for many of that which we have recited to you and will recite if God wills, and it suffices as a proof. So take lesson with the eye of insight. We have gone beyond the stage of the treatise; however, the speech of the beloved has drawn us to these words. Let my brothers (in faith) then excuse me. Now, let us recur to the intention.

A Lamp

Know that the relation of the immutable source-form of the perfect man to the rest of the source-forms in the presence of source-forms is as the relation of the Greatest Name 'God' in the Presence of One-and-Allness to the rest of the Names in both of its aspects, namely the aspect of its unseen domain, which is expressed as the 'holiest emanation' and the aspect of its manifestation, which is expressed as 'the Greatest Name God', 'the station of Divinity', 'the Presence of One-and-Allness', and '(the level of) all comprehensiveness'. Just as it, from its unseen aspect, never becomes manifest in any mirror nor is it entified by any entification, and it, from its other aspect, becomes manifest in all the levels of the names, the ray of its light is reflected in their mirrors, and the manifestation of the rest of the names is subordinate to its manifestation, so too the immutable source-form of the perfect man, from his undifferentiated all-comprehensive aspect ascribed to the presence of all-

comprehensiveness, never becomes manifest in the forms of source-forms. Accordingly, it is, from this aspect, unseen and, from his other aspect, manifest in the forms of source-forms, each in accordance with its preparedness, station and the purity or opacity of its mirror.

A Lamp

In his Introductions to his Commentary on *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*, al-Qayṣarī⁶⁷ thus said,

Quiddities are the universal forms of the names entified in the presence of knowledge with a primary entification. These forms emanate from the Divine Essence by the holiest emanation and the first self-disclosure by way of the Essential Love and the quest of the keys to the unseen which no one knows except Him in terms of their manifestation and their perfection. For divine emanation is divided into the ‘holiest emanation’ and the ‘holy’. Through the first do the immutable source-forms come to be along with their original preparednesses in knowledge. Through the second do those source-forms come to be in external reality along with their concomitants and subsequents. There is an allusion to it in the words of the (Greatest) Master, ‘The receptacle (*al-qābil*) comes from nothing other than His holiest emanation’.⁶⁸ Here ends his speech.

A Lamp

You have come to know in the foregoing lamps that the first self-disclosure through the holiest emanation is the manifestation of the Greatest Name ‘God’ in the presence of One-and-Allness before the source-forms would have any trace or sign. As for the immutable source-forms, they come to be through the second self-disclosure of the holiest emanation, that is self-disclosure through divinity in the presence of knowledge; moreover, the keys to the unseen which no one knows except Him⁶⁹ in that level are the names and attributes that come to be for the

presence of witness (*al-'indiyyah*). Based on this, the holiest emanation never discloses itself without any intermediary in the presence of source-forms, or rather, with the mediation of the Name 'God' Even though it is unified therewith, standpoints and respects, however, must be taken into account. As the masters of metaphysics say, But for considerations, wisdom would have been futile.

As to the Shaykh's words, 'The receptacle comes from nothing other than His holiest emanation'⁷⁰ it is in view of the fact that everything comes from Him, not that source-forms come to be by way of the first self-disclosure. However, the words of this commentator have a point of validity as well.

A Lamp

The immutable source-form of the perfect man, God's greatest vicegerent in manifestation, possesses the level of all-comprehensiveness (*al-jāmi'iyah*) and makes manifest the forms of the names in the configuration of knowledge. For as the Greatest Name brings together majesty and beauty, manifest and inward domains, it cannot be disclosed with its all-comprehensive station to any one of the source-forms, due to the narrowness and opacity of the mirror and the amplitude and purity of the face of the visible. Accordingly, there must be a mirror which befits the face of the visible and through which its light can be reflected therein in order for the world of divine decree to become manifest. Had it not been for the immutable source-form of Man, none of the immutable source-forms would have become manifest. And had it not been for its manifestation, none of the external source-forms would have become manifest, nor would the gates to divine mercy have been opened. In light of this, through the immutable source-form of Man is the first linked to the last and the last to the first. It is with all source-forms with a self-subsistent witness.⁷¹

A Lamp

Take care and take care, may God guard you in your beginning and your end, not to pursue that which is ambiguous⁷² of the words of the wayfaring gnostics and the statements of the perfect friends of God, for you may then think that there is, in the presence of the source-forms and the names, a multiplicity, an alteration, a distinction, a mirror and a visible thing, a thing, a reality, an impression of any source-form, or a trace of any name in the same way it is attributed to the contingent (*al-mumkin*). Glorified is He and High Exalted above what they say!⁷³ Indeed the pursuit of their ambiguous words without a verification of their subtle intentions and a close investigation into the reality of their highest goals through a friend of God who guides you to them leads one to go beyond the limits of Unity, which is the consolation for the eye of folk of knowledge and friends of God and to blaspheme God's names which are the focus of interest (the *Ka'bah*) of the hearts of the wayfarers and gnostics.

A Lamp

It is now my duty, by virtue of brotherhood of faith, to refer to their intention in general. Know that as the Divine Essence is completely perfect and absolutely simple, it is all things in a simple undifferentiated mode, incomparable with the totality of external, imaginal, sense-intuitive and intellective multiplicities. Hence, it is all things, but is not any of them at all.⁷⁴ This rule has been established in the books of the possessors of transcendent wisdom, proven by metaphysics, tastingly unveiled among the possessors of the hearts and the masters of knowledge, supported by the Qur'anic verses, and corroborated by the reported *hadīths*.

When the perfect gnostics witnessed it through tasting and found it through witnessing, they gave (special) terms to what they witnessed and laid down (certain) expressions for what they found in order to draw the learners' hearts to realm of the 'Wise

Reminder', awaken the heedless and arouse the sleepy, by virtue of their perfect compassion and mercy upon them. Otherwise, it is not possible to make manifest gnostic witnessings or intuitive tastings in their reality. The terms, words and expressions are a path to reality to the learners but are a veil within a veil to the perfect ones.

I advise you, O dearest brother, not to think ill of those Gnostics and metaphysicians, many of whom are true followers of 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib and his infallible sons, upon whom be peace, wayfarers towards their way and adherents of their sanctity. Take care not to tell lies about them or listen to that which is falsely said concerning them, lest you should fall from grace.

Furthermore, it is not possible to be well aware of the reality of their intentions as soon as you read their books without referring to the folk of their terminology, for every group has a language and every path has an expression. Had it not been for the fear of elaborateness and going beyond our original goal, I would have mentioned some of their words, by which you are convinced of what we have already stated and reassured of what we have recited to you. However, to elaborate is to go beyond the stage of the treatise. So let us recur to the intention under discussion.

A Lamp

This vicegerency (*al-khilāfah*) which you have heard of its station, rank and status is the reality of sanctity (*al-wilāyah*). For sanctity conveys proximity, dearness, right of disposal, lordship or representation. All of these expressions can be truly applied to this reality, and the rest of the levels are its shadow and shade. It is the 'lord' of the sanctity of 'Alī, which is unified with the reality of the Muḥammadan vicegerency in the configuration of 'Command' and 'Creation'⁷⁵ as will be explained if God wills.

A Lamp

The reality of vicegerency and sanctity in terms of their unseen station, which is not entified by any entification, is not described by any description, and does not become manifest in any mirror, has no spiritual guise at all. However, in terms of the station of their manifestation in the forms of the names and attributes and the reflection of their lights in the mirrors of entifications, they take on the shape of globes encompassing each other.

However, divine and spiritual globes are in contrast with sensory globes. As for sensory globes, their circumference encircles their centre. As to divine and spiritual globes, however, their centre encircles their circumference, or rather, their circumference is their centre itself in a certain respect. Further, the difference between divine and spiritual globes is that the first is solid, while the second is hollow in the manner of contingent hollowness. Even though divine globes are solid, their encompassment of circled divine globes and descending spiritual globes is more perfect.

A Lamp

Do not imagine that encompassment to those globes is as encompassment to sensory globes, namely some of them are inside the others and the surfaces of some of them are in contact with the surfaces of the others. For that is an erroneous impression and a false opinion. So come out of this prison, abandon the abode of sensation and sense-intuition, climb to the world of spiritualities, and free yourself from these graves whose residents are perished and whose dwellers are wrongdoers. As the poet says,

تو راز کنگره عرش می زنی صفیر
ندانمت که در این دامگه چه افتادست

They call you from the balconies of the throne,
And I wonder about what struck you that you remained in
the trap.⁷⁶

A Lamp

The teacher of the discipline and the metaphysician Aristotle⁷⁷ is reported to have stated that simple realities take on a true circular shape. The revered gnostic al-Qādī Sa'īd al-Qummī, may God be pleased with him, furnished the proof for it. In *al-Bawāriq al-Malakūtiyyah*, he thus said,

Simple realities, whether intellective or otherwise, require in their essence true circularity, in accordance with the amplitude of the degree and its narrowness, and each acts according to its mode. For their relationship to that which is below them and which they encircle does not differ according to the directions. Were they not circular, the relationship would differ. Yet, this contradicts the assumption. It is thus absurd.⁷⁸ Here ends his speech.

This is a ladder to the understanding of the realities of the Divine Names, even though there is a fixed difference between them, as we mentioned earlier. Further, what we have already stated is an instance to the masters of mysteries. Take care not to divulge its covering among the others.

A Lamp

(The task of) true absolute prophecy is to make manifest that which lies in the unseen domain of all that which is unseen in the Presence of One-and-Allness, in accordance with the preparednesses of the loci of manifestation, in accordance with true teaching and essential communication.⁷⁹ Hence, prophecy is equivalent to the station of the manifestation of vicegerency and sanctity, while they are the station of its inward domains.

A Lamp

Communication and teaching, in accordance with the configurations of existence and the stations of the unseen and the visible, have different levels. For every group has a (specific) language, and no apostle has ever been sent save with the language of his people.⁸⁰ Hence, they possess various levels shared by the reality of communication and teaching.

One level of them is that which relates to the residents of the prison of nature and the possessors of dark graves in the natural world. Another level of it is that which relates to the folk of mystery, namely spiritual existents and angles brought nigh, as will be, God willing, explained. In a tradition, we read,

سَبَّحْنَا فَسَبَّحَتِ الْمَلَائِكَةُ، هَلَّلْنَا فَهَلَّلَتِ الْمَلَائِكَةُ

We glorified (God), so the angles glorified, and we said, 'There is no god but God', and so the angels praised said, 'There is no god but God'.⁸¹

So is the case with the rest of the paragraphs of the tradition which will be mentioned, if God wills, in the Second Niche. An example of that would be (God's) teaching our father, Ādam, upon whom be peace. Another level thereof is that which relates to the absolute reality of the Presence of the Greatest Name, the lord of the perfect man. Another level is that which relates to the immutable source-forms and the presence of the immutable source-form of Muḥammad in particular. A higher level thereof is that which relates to the presence of the names in the Station of One-and-Allness and the all-comprehensive cognitive configuration singled out for the Presence of the Greatest Name 'God' in the station of Its manifestation. Beyond these levels, there is neither communication nor manifestation, or rather, inward and hidden domains.

A Lamp

Have you ever received information from the indirect allusions of the friends of God, upon whom be peace, and the words of the gnostics, may God be pleased with them, that words are coined for the spirits of meanings and their realities? Have you ever reflected on that? By my life, reflection thereupon is an extension of his words,

تفكر ساعة خير من عبادة سئتين سنة

An hour's contemplation is better than seventy years of worship.⁸²

It is the key to the keys of knowledge and the root of the roots of the understanding of Qur'anic mysteries. One of the fruits of that reflection is the unveiling of the reality of communication and teaching in the configurations and worlds. For teachings and communications, in the world of spiritualities and the world of the names and attributes are different from what is witnessed by us, the possessors of prisons and fetters, the residents of the Gehenna of nature and the folk of veil from the mysteries of existence.

Take out your soul, O writer, the non-combatant, the expelled, the outcast and the obstinate, of this dark prison, revive it (and keep it away) from that gloomy grave, and say, O restorer of those who are in the graves, O restorer on the Day of Resurrection, revive our hearts (and keep them) away from these bygone graves and transfer our vehicle from that unjust village, so that we may witness some of the lights of Your knowledge and our hearts may hear the tidings of your Prophet in the configuration of the heart, lest our share of his prophecy should be confined to the preservation of our blood and property through professing the word (of Unity) from our mouth, our share of his rulings jurisprudential sufficiency and formal conformance and our share of his Book excellent reading and

familiarity with the art of its recitation. In this case we will be among those about whom God said,

وعلى سمعهم وعلى أبصارهم غشاوة

(God has set a seal on their hearts) and their hearing, and there is a blindfold on their sight,⁸³ *في قلوبهم مرض* In their hearts is a disease.⁸⁴

And said,

وإنّ منهم لفريقاً يلوون ألسنتهم بالكتاب

There is indeed a group of them who twist their tongues to mimic the Book.⁸⁵

A Lamp

Have you ever read the book of your soul⁸⁶ and reflected on that great verse which God has made a ladder to the knowledge of Him, His names and His attributes?⁸⁷ So look at what you see of the communication of your unseen reality in your simple intellect through the simple undifferentiated presence and in your differentiated intellect through the differentiated presence as well as in the Dominion of your soul through the imaginal and Dominional self-disclosure. Then the commandment gradually descends by means of the angels of the earth to the world of the Kingdom. Or you may equally say, (it descends) through the manifestation of Your Invincibility (*al-jabarūt*) in the Dominion (*al-malakūt*), and the Dominion in the Kingdom (*al-mulk*), so it becomes manifest in sound and words in the outward configuration of the Kingdom. Do communication and manifestation in those configurations and stages and in these worlds and waystations follow a single manner and a unique path?

A Lamp

After this reading and that reflection, climb to the witnessing of the folk of gnosis and the waystation of the possessors of faith, namely know the reality of communication in the world of the names around which our present discussion revolves.

Know that communication (*al-inbā'*) in that presence is to make manifest the realities hidden in the Unseen Ipseity to the cut mirrors susceptible of the reflection of the unseen face therein, in accordance with their preparednesses, descending from the presence of the unseen with this holiest emanation. Based on this, the Greatest Name 'God', ie the station of the manifestation of the presence of the holiest emanation, the greatest vicegerent and the absolute friend of God, is the absolute prophet who speaks on behalf the names and attributes by way of the station of his essential speech in the Presence of One-and-Allness. However, the name of the 'prophet' is not applied to it, nor is any other name applied to God, the Most High, save the names stated by the *Sharī'ah*, for God's names are unchangeable.

A Lamp

Each one of the Divine Names in the Presence of One-and-Allness requires that its essential perfection hidden in it and in its designation be manifested absolutely, i.e. even though the requirements of all the names are veiled under its manifestation. Hence, beauty requires the manifestation of absolute beauty, dominance in relation to majesty and its disappearance therein. Majesty, in turn, requires the disappearance of beauty into its dominancy. The same is true of the rest of the Divine Names.

Moreover, divine judgement requires that there be justice in relation to the manifestation of each name, such that each becomes manifest in accordance with what is required by justice. In light of this, the Greatest Name 'God', the absolute sovereign over all the names, disclosed Itself through the two names 'the

Judge, the Just', and It treated each name with justice. Hence, the divine command was just, God's precedent for which there is no change⁸⁸ happened, the matter was completed, determined and concluded. This is the fair judgement and that is the conflict in the Higher Plenum (*al-mala' al-a'la*)⁸⁹ which came to pass by a number of the gnostics. It will be, if God wills, treated in its own place.

A Lamp

(Now) it becomes clear to you that the task of the Prophet in each one of the configurations and each one of the worlds is to preserve divine bounds and prevent any excess of the limits of moderation as well as restrain what nature requires, that is to set it free, but not absolutely. For absolute prevention counts as a violation of the stage of wisdom, a restraint in nature, and is counter to justice in judgement—which is counter to the most perfect order and (God's) proceeding precedent.

Based on this, the Prophet is the manifest in the two names of 'the Judge, the Just', in order to prevent release of nature and realize justice in judgement; as for his vicegerent, he is the locus of his manifestation and the locus of manifestation of his attributes. This is one of the meanings of his words as reported in *al-Kāfi*⁹⁰ and *at-Tawhīd*⁹¹

وأولي الأمر بالمعروف والعدل والإحسان

And those vested with authority through what is right,
justice and kindness.

That knows them through such and such. However, in *al-Kāfi*, it is thus narrated, *بالمعروف* though commanding what is right.

Here is not the place for the verification of the meaning of the hadith. The great masters,⁹² may God be pleased with them, have spoken at great length about it such that nothing can be

added to it.⁹³ We have also verified it in a graceful style, some of which can be understood from the luminous lamps as it has passed before you.

A Lamp

In the introductions to his commentary on Ibn al-Farīd's poem, Kamāl ad-Dīn 'Abd ar-Razzāq al-Kāshānī⁹⁴ thus said,

Nubuwwah (prophecy) signifies communication and *an-nabī* (prophet) is one who communicates God's Essence, His attributes, names, laws and intentions. The primary essential true communication belongs to the greatest spirit (*ar-rūḥ al-a'zam*) which God, the Most High, first sent to the universal soul (*an-nafs al-kulliyah*) and then to the particular souls (*an-nufūs al-juz'iyah*) secondly, in order to communicate to them, through its intellective tongue, the Unitary Essence, the beginningless attributes, the divine names, the eternal laws and the sensory intentions.⁹⁵ Here ends his speech.

A Lamp

This is their highest attainment of the meaning of prophecy, or rather, vicegerency and sanctity as well, as it is clear through reference to their writings and investigation into their compositions. However, thanks to God and His good success-giving, after your heart was illuminated by the luminous lamps and your secret was enlightened by the realities of faith, the reality of vicegerency and its companion was disclosed to the stage of your heart, so you fell in a spiritual unseen swoon; thereupon you were brought into life with endless sempiternal life. You may then say to this grand gnostic and folk of his kind: O wayfarer towards the path of knowledge! The prophecy which you describe as primary, essential and true is nothing but the shadow of prophecy in the presence of source-forms, which is the shadow of true genuine prophecy in the Presence of One-and-Allness, namely the Presence of the Greatest Name 'God',

sent forth to the names in the configuration of One-and-Allness, to communicate on behalf of the Unseen Unitary Presence through Its Divine Tongue and Essential Speech. The prophecy of our Prophet, upon whom and whose family be blessings, is inwardly the locus its of manifestation and, in accordance with its outward configuration, the locus of manifestation of the inward domains of his prophecy, as will be, God willing, discussed.

As for his words, ‘in order to communicate to them, through its intellective tongue, the Unitary Essence, etc.’, what is in general meant thereby can be applied to the true verification we have already alluded to in the veil of symbols, namely the connection of the unseen domain of Ipseity to everything, each in accordance with its specific mode, without any intermediary. However, to keep it hidden is more appropriate and to hold back from speaking about these realities is more brilliant. So let us close our eyes to it and enter upon the other stage, through God’s success-giving and His good confirmation. ✍

The Second Niche

On that which is cast to you of the mysteries of vicegerency and sanctity in the entified configuration and the two worlds of Command and Creation⁹⁶ in symbols, behind the veil, through the folk of the hearts, from the friends and masters of wayfaring and the possessors of tastes and intellects. In it there are divine lights rising from unseen lamps and alluding to lordly mysteries.

The First Lamp

On that which illuminates the heart of the whiffs of the world of Command from the breath of the Compassionate (*an-nafas ar-raḥmānī*)⁹⁷, according to the taste of one who has tasted the wine of guidance from the cup of sanctity and entered the city of science and knowledge from its gate⁹⁸ after asking permission from its lords. In it are lights that allude to mysteries.

A Light

Your heart has been illuminated by the lights rising from the First Niche, (so you come to know) that the Greatest Name ‘God’ is the unity of the gathering of the realities pertaining the names of majesty and beauty, subtlety and dominancy. There is no difference between it and the unseen station and the closer light (*an-nūr al-aqrab*) save in terms of manifestation and

inwardness, outwardness and hiddenness. It is all names through all-comprehensive unity and unitary simplicity, incomparable with multiplicity and too holy for any standpoint or consideration. As well, your spirit has been enlightened by the Dominional illuminations, (so you come to know) that the unseen Ipseity may never be manifest in any world, nor is its light reflected in any mirror, except from behind the veil.⁹⁹

Know then, if you are one of those who give ear with full intelligence¹⁰⁰ that the Essence along with one of the entifications of the names is the source of the manifestation of a world appropriate for that entification. Examples are its entification through the name 'the Compassionate' for the expansion of existence, through the name 'the Merciful' for the expansion of perfect existence, the name 'the All-knowing' for the manifestation of intellectual worlds, the name 'the Powerful' for the expansion of the worlds of the Dominion. As the name is the essence along with a specific entification which has become a source for the manifestation of a world or a reality, the names of God are unchangeable. For knowledge of that is Divine Knowledge that cannot be attained save by the possessors of divine inspiration and the 'lords' of revelation.

A Light

Rather we recur and say, any agent (*fā'il*) in any world can never be, in its essence, a source for any trace or manifestation in all the configurations among those who have sights. For His Essence, in its essence, lies in the veil of the attributes and the unseen domain of the names and faculties, so it never not becomes manifest except from behind the veil and its effects, namely the entifications of the names, but not in His Essence. What is behind it is a mystery for which there is no capacity to make manifest, and it is appropriate to lay it under its covers.

A Light

When Essential Love (*al-ḥubb adh-dhātī*) related to the witnessing of the Essence in the mirror of the attributes, It manifested the world of the attributes and disclosed Itself, through self-disclosure in the Presence of One-and-Allness, in an all-comprehensive mirror first, and in other mirrors thereafter, according to the hierarchy of their merits and the amplitude or narrowness of the mirror.

Afterwards, Love related to the witnessing of the Essence in the source-form and It disclosed Itself in the mirrors of creation from behind the veils of the names, so It made manifest the worlds according to their well-ordered hierarchy and It became manifest in the mirrors according to the regular symmetry in the greatest and most perfect mirror through the Greatest Name first and in the other mirrors thereafter, in accordance with their existential hierarchy, including the angles brought nigh and the untold multitudes (of angels) set in rank, down to the worlds of the Kingdom and the visible, etc.

A Light

The first thing to cause the morning of beginninglessness to break, to be disclosed to the last after the first and to penetrate the covers of mysteries is the absolute will (*al-mashī'ah al-muṭlaqah*) and the inentifiable manifestation (*aẓ-ẓuhūr ghayr al-muta'ayyin*). It is sometimes expressed as the holiest emanation, as it is too holy for contingency and its adjuncts, multiplicity and its consequences. Sometimes it is expressed as expansive existence (*al-wujūd al-munbasit*), due to its expansion in relation to the temples of the heavens of spirits and the earths of apparitions (*al-ashbāh*). And sometimes, it may be expressed as the Soul of the Compassionate,¹⁰¹ lordly blowing,¹⁰² 'the station of compassionateness and mercifulness', 'the station of self-subsistence', 'the Presence of the Cloud', 'the closer veil', 'the prime matter', 'the greatest isthmus', 'the station of coming

down', the station of or even nearer',¹⁰³ even though we hold that this station is something else, or rather, it is not a station at all, 'the station of Muḥammad', 'the station of 'Alī', each in accordance with what the poet alludes to, namely 'Our expressions are diverse...'¹⁰⁴ and other terms, expressions and allusions, in accordance with their levels and stations.

A Light

The absolute will has two stations: first, the station of no entification and unity, but not manifestation through unity; second, the station of multiplicity and entification in the form of Creation and Command. In its first station, it is connected to the presence of the unseen, ie the holiest emanation; it has no manifestation therein. In its second station, however, it is the manifestation of everything, or rather; it is all things, first and last, outwardly and inwardly.

A Light

As the presence of the will constitutes a manifestation for the presence of all-comprehensiveness, it brings together the entirety of the names and attributes through the unity of all-comprehensiveness. This is the station of cognitive self-disclosure in the configuration of manifestation and the source-form. Not (even) an atom's weight escapes His knowledge in the heavens and the earths.¹⁰⁵

Based on this, all the levels of existence represent the station of 'knowledge', 'power', 'will' and other names and attributes. Rather all the levels fall under the names of the Real. He is, along with His holiness, manifest in all things, and He is, along with His manifestation, too holy for all of them. Hence, the world is the 'council' of the presence of the Real while the existents are the attendants at His 'council'.

A Light

Our Shaykh, the perfect gnostic, Shāh-Ābādī, may God make his nice protection last for his disciples and spiritual pupils, said that, Moses opposing al-Khidr in the three cases,¹⁰⁶ even though he promised not to question thereabout, is meant to preserve the presence of the Real. For sins are a violation of the ‘council’ of the Real, and prophets, upon whom be peace, are required to preserve the presence. When Moses saw that al-Khidr had committed that which, in its outward appearance, contradicts the ‘council’ of the presence, he forgot what he promised to do and tended to preserve the presence. As for the prophet, al-Khidr, by virtue of the strong station of his sanctity and wayfaring, he used to see what Moses did not see. Hence, Moses would preserve the presence and al-Khidr was the one present. There is a clear difference between these two stations of which those firmly rooted in knowledge are aware.

A Light

Since the presence of absolute will is annihilated in the Unitary Essence, disappears into the presence of divinity and is absorbed under the brilliance of the light of Lordship, it has no property in itself, or rather, it has no selfness whatsoever. It is the manifestation of the Unitary Essence in the temples of contingents according to their merits and the demonstration of sempiternal beauty in the mirrors of existents according to their purity. In it is it given the appearance of contingency and clothed in the garment of phenomenal worlds, so it becomes manifest and hidden, comes into view and is kept out of sight, becomes immaterial and is given form, becomes one and multiple.

There is a perfectly subtle reference and a remarkably symbolic allusion thereto in God’s words,

الله نور السموات والأرض

God is the light of the heavens and the earth.¹⁰⁷

Look with full intelligence at its mystery and reflect on its mode of expression and its depth: how He clarifies the reality in such a subtle manner and such a sweet illustration that hard-hearted minds would not feel repelled by it and unsound dispositions would not find it repugnant. As well, it makes manifest to the folk of reality and knowledge and throws light to the possessors of hearts and pure spirits in the most perfect way. He says, 'He, the Most High, is the manifestation of the heavens and the earth', that is the world of the unseen and the visible, the spirits and the apparitions. He is, along with His perfect holiness, manifest in their mirrors, and their manifestation is His manifestation. Look to see how He compares His light to the lamp seen from behind the clear glass¹⁰⁸ on the carpet.

By my life, it includes symbols of realities which clarification falls short of expressing and the tongue goes dumb to explain. Moreover, this treatise is not put together for the sake of such sorts of knowledge. Hence, it is more appropriate to hold back from it and entrust the affair to its people.

A Light

Through the clarification which we have recited to you and by which we have lifted the veils from your insight you come to be able, thanks to God, the All-powerful, the Benefactor, to reconcile the words of the possessors of unveiling and intuitive knowledge and the masters of metaphysics and the path of demonstration.

These (words) are not at variance in reality, even though those who hold them differ in their paths. For wayfaring towards God is as many as human souls;¹⁰⁹ however, the ultimate destination is God, the Creator. Concerning the foregoing station, the first group said that He, exalted be His holiness, became manifest in the mirrors of entifications, the garments of creatures, the locus of self-disclosure of realities and the cradle

of tenuities, as in His words,

هو الذي في السماء إله وفي الأرض إله
And He it is who in the heavens is God, and in the earth
God.¹¹⁰

And the Prophet, upon whom and whose Household be peace and blessings, is reported to have said,

لو دئتم بحبل إلى الأرض السفلى لهبطتم على الله
If you were let down by a rope towards the lowest earth,
you would fall on God.¹¹¹

There is an allusion to it in Jonah's ascension, upon the Prophet, whose Household and whom be peace, in that it was inside the fish's belly,¹¹² just as the ascension of the Apostle of God was through his night journey¹¹³ to that which is higher than the Invincibility.

The other group said that the hierarchy of existents lying in the worlds of Command and Creation constitutes the levels of His action and the rungs of His Creation and Command. They maintain that He, exalted be His holiness, is incomparable with all the worlds and is too holy for descent into the assembly of the low. What does dust have to do with the Lord of the lords!¹¹⁴

However, you have come to know, through the confirmation of the Compassionate from the direction of the Soul of Mercy from the side of Yemen of Holiness,¹¹⁵ that the station of the absolute will and the presence of divinity, by virtue of its absorption in the Unitary Essence and its disappearance into the pure haecceity, have no property. In light of this, it is a relational meaning (*ma'nā ḥarfī*) attached to the exaltation of His holiness, exalted be He.

Let you now know that particular existents in every configuration became manifest and entified lights in every level came into view, absorbed in the presence of divinity. For that

which is qualified is the manifestation of the absolute, or rather, itself. As for the qualification, it is an unreal matter (based on conceptual consideration only), as it is said, 'Its specific entification is something unreal'.¹¹⁶ The universe is the entification of all things, so it is standpoint within standpoint and imagination within imagination among the free.¹¹⁷ As to existence, it has, considering its area and presence, no property in its essence. Based on this, the deiform metaphysician must let the entifications be absorbed in the Unitary Presence and he may not cast down his right eye and look with his left. Likewise, the witnessing gnostic must turn towards multiplicities and looks at entifications with his left eye.

In general, although the subtle meaning of their intention is a single matter and a unique goal, the dominance and authority of unity over the gnostic's heart veils him from multiplicity, so he may be drowned in Unity and be heedless of the worlds and the stations of multiplicity. Similarly, the dominance of multiplicity over the metaphysician's intellect prevents him from making manifest the reality and veils him from the attainment of perfect Unity and true disengagement (*tajrīd*). However, both of them are counter to justice through which the heavens of the seven human subtleties stood forth.¹¹⁸ Should you firmly possess a heart filled with Unity and attain steadfastness¹¹⁹ (*al-istiqāmah*) about which the Prophet, upon whom and whose Household be blessings, said, شَيْبَتْنِي سُوْرَةُ هُوْدِ The surah of Hud made me white-haired,¹²⁰ in the wake of (the revelation of) this holy verse, because of his community's deficiency and his sponsorship of them, then follow the veritable reality and the reality worthy of confirmation. That is the presence of the absolute absorbed in the Essence, which is the greatest shadow of God, His noblest closest veil, His primary manifestation and His most perfect light, is absorbed, in its reality, in the Unitary Presence and descends towards the lowest worlds and the desert of darknesses. It is the station of the divinity of the First Real in the highest

heavens and the lowest earths. It has no property by itself, or rather, it has no selfness. Hence, when you say that God, the Most High, is manifest in the phenomenal worlds and is clothed in the garment of source-forms, you speak the truth. And when you say that He, exalted be He, is too holy for the worlds, you speak the truth, too. So you have to strengthen this basis and assume that station, for it is part of useful knowledge in your beginning and your end.

A Light

It is appropriate to refer to the root of reality by way of penetrating the veil from the mouth of the possessors of theoretical wayfaring from the men of understanding. For their path is easy to employ among the folk of articulation, even though the path of the folk of God is closer to the right course, because they have abandoned and lifted the veil.

Therefore, we say: As the Real, exalted be His rank, is too holy for positions and directions, and is incomparable with time and temporal affairs, His relationship to His action is not the same as the relationship of all the other agents to their actions. For all the other agents, no matter which they are and where they are, are subjected to the qualification of quiddity and the captivation of entification. Hence, the station of an agent's quiddity and essence sets in place the difference to its effect and action. Non-necessary agents, in accordance with the station of their essence characterized by entification and quiddity, are intrinsically separated from their actions and effects and essentially detached from the locus of any effect. Nevertheless, these agents possess levels of luminosity and perfection and degrees of intensity and weakness. As the agents of the world of the Kingdom and nature are under the control of spatial dimensions and the authority of possible directions, are captivated by to the qualification of the prime matter and hylicities, and are restricted by the chains of matter and material

things as well as the hierarchies of time and movements, their effects are inherently detached from them with respect to position and intrinsically separated with respect to space. This is the highest level of detachment and separation, owing to the interweaving of their existents with nonexistents and their distance from the courtyard of the holiness of the Omniscient Sovereign. As for the existents of the world of the intellect, the station of disengagement, the locus of intimacy and the homestead of singularity, due to their incomparability with those husks and proximity to the world of light, or rather, their origin is light and light upon light, the disappearance of the modes of their contingency in the Unitary Necessary Being, and the compensation for the deficiency of their quiddities through the Sempiternal Being, and it is for this very reason that its receptacle is called the world of Invincibility out of compensation for deficiency and preclusion of its contingency, they are too holy for positions in relation to their receptive and are incomparable with the directions of the lower world. It is thus reported from the ancients that the world of the intellect is all in all such that there is neither obstructive veil between its parts nor are some of them assume a position in relation to the others. Nonetheless, the contingent black point reigns over their 'face' and the humiliation of intrinsic neediness dominates over their 'forelock'.

If the state of the world of the intellect in relation to essential contingency is such, then look to see the source of existence, which is incomparable with any entification, multiplicity or mode and is too holy for any quiddity or modes of otherness. He, the Most High, is manifest through the manifestation of things, not like the manifestation of corporeal substances through sensory lights, nor like the manifestation of a thing through another. And He is inward in them, not like the inwardness of a thing in another. Nevertheless, His manifestation thereby is more intense than the manifestation of all that which possesses a

manifestation, just as His inwardness therein is more perfect than the inwardness of all that which is veiled and covered. He, the Most High, is inwardness in the entity of manifestation and is manifest in the entity of inwardness. As our master and lord, the Riser, may God hasten his holy relief, declared in the writing coming out of him on the hand of the great Shaykh, Abū Ja‘far Muḥammad ibn ‘Uthmān ibn Sa‘īd,¹²¹ may God be pleased with him, thus,

يا باطناً في ظهوره وظاهراً في بطونه ومكنونه

O Inward in His manifestation and Manifest in His inwardness and hiddenness.¹²²

The friend of God, may my spirit be made his ransom, has spoken the truth. As well, in the first chapter of his *al-Futuhāt*, under the title ‘The Replies to al-Tirmidhī’s Questions’, Shaykh Muḥy ad-Dīn thus said,

As for that which knowledge by taste imparts, it is that the Real is manifest in so far as He is inward; inward in so far as He is manifest; first in so far as He is last; and last in so far as He is first.¹²³ Here ends his speech.

Therefore, this is the station of one who seeks the protection of Him, the Most High, from the incapability of perception, so it is said, ‘What is dust compared with the world of purity!’¹²⁴

A Light

Let us recur to the original intention, for the treatise is not put together to verify such discussions and elaborate on such ladders. Let my brothers forgive me for the rein of the pen going beyond choice.

Then we say: You may climb to the peak of reality in order to understand the mysteries of the folk of knowledge. So listen to what we recite to you, and know that this vicegerency is vicegerency in manifestation, too. For when the First, majestic

be His exaltation, willed that He manifest Himself in the macrocosm—to see Himself and the perfections of His Essence—in an all-comprehensive perfect mirror, He disclosed Himself through His Most Perfect Greatest Name, which possesses the station of the unity of all-comprehensiveness. Thereupon, the heavens of spirits and the earths of apparitions radiated from that self-disclosure. Based on this, all existential levels and the realities of descent and ascent are part of the entification of His self-disclosure through the Greatest Name. Hence, the station of vicegerency is a station which brings together all the divine realities and the stored hidden names. Since there is no veil in existence in relation to the Loving Lord, the veil comes only from entifications and limits. And since there is no entification in relation to the world of holiness, there will be no veil. So He manifested Himself to things through Himself. In accordance with its absoluteness, the earth and the heaven shined.

وأشرقت الأرض بنور ربّها

And the earth shines with the light of her Lord.¹²⁵

It is the absolute reality that brings together all the visible and known specific entifications and realities in the worlds. However, in relation to the world of multiplicity and creation, it is said,

وما أصابك من مصيبة فمّن نفسك

And whatever of ill befalls you, it is from yourself.¹²⁶

Hence, he who knows the reality of the absorption of expansive existence, the self-subsistent encompassment of the Necessary Essence, the absence of any relationship between It and creation, and Its incomparability with all entifications will come to know this essential manifestation and the self-

disclosure of the names and attributes. Moreover, as God disclosed Himself through the names and in the temples of contingents, there had been self-disclosure, without any association with the dirt of entifications of creation and without any interrelation to the residents of any world. So know and let not the matter appear doubtful to you.

A Light

Just as the world of immutable source-forms is not an obstacle to essential manifestation, even though what the order requires is that source-forms be manifest (for you have learnt that immutable source-forms have no existence in the presence of knowledge and have no phenomenal being save constancy), so too their realities are not an obstacle to the essential manifestation and the self-disclosure of the names and attributes. There is no obstructive veil between Him, glory be to Him, and His creatures, and He is manifest in the mirror of everything. As He, exalted be His rank, says,

هو الأول والآخر والظاهر والباطن

He is the First and the Last, the Manifest and the Inward.¹²⁷

He has referred by the word هو (He) to the unseen reality hidden in the presence of the names and attributes and said, the Unseen Reality that is too holy for the assumption of the names and attributes, not to speak of any association with the evanescent ephemeral phenomenal beings, is in its holy reality Manifest and Inward, First and Last. Hence, the whole manifestation belongs to Him and the whole inwardness belongs to Him, too. Nothing has manifestation nor does any reality have inwardness (save He), or rather, nothing possesses any reality whatsoever. As our lord and master, Abū ‘Abdullāh al-Ḥusayn, may my spirit be made his ransom, says in his prayer on the Day

of 'Arafah,

أ يكون لغيرك من الظهور ما ليس لك، حتى يكون هو المظهر لك؟ متى
غبت حتى تحتاج إلى دليل يدلّ عليك... الخ. صدق ولي الله.

Does other than You have manifestation any more than what You have, so it makes You manifest?! When were You absent, so You might stand in need of an argument to guide to You?¹²⁸ The friend of God has spoken the truth.

With this view the (following) words of the free must be considered: The world is imagination within imagination.¹²⁹ Another instance of that station is the words of the gnostic al-Shīrāzī, may his secret be hallowed,

مدعى خواست که آید به تماشاگه راز
دست غیب آمد و بر سینه نا محرم زد
A claimant wished to come and witness the mystery,
However, the hand of the unseen overtook him and
stroke his untrustworthy breast.¹³⁰

Let you be well aware of that which has been east to you lest the matter should be doubtful to you and your feet should slip.

A Light

However, the preservation of the station of servanthood (*al-'ubūdiyyah*) and manners (*al-adab*) requires more attention to the aspect of sanctification and incomparability, or rather; it is fitter for the state of the wayfarer and farther from incoming thoughts. Hence, whoever travels the route to knowledge or enters the city of reality with a leg firmly rooted in knowledge must, in all circumstances, declare incomparability and, in all stations, call holy and glorify. In light of this, sanctification and declaration of incomparability predominate the tongues of the

friends of God. When they, upon whom be peace, reach that station, they would speak out about it frankly, not through allusion or suggestion.

As for the station of similarity (*al-tashbīh*) and multiplicity, however, the perfect folk of divine inspiration and revelation would rarely declare it openly, or rather, when they reach it, they would allude to it in symbols and refuse to state it point-blank.

As regards the words of ecstasy (*al-shathiyyat*)¹³¹ expressed by some of the possessors of unveiling and wayfaring and ‘lords’ of spiritual exercise, they are due to the deficiency of their wayfaring and the subsistence of egoism in their secret thoughts or the innermost domain of their heart, so their souls disclose themselves through Pharaonic nature (or tyranny).

As for the wayfarers on the path of the revealed law, along with their rejection of egoism—all of it—their abandonment of servanthood to themselves altogether, their purity, and their inattention to the manifestation of power, authority and Pharaonic nature, they are in the highest degree of Unity and sanctification and the loftiest station of multiplicity. Multiplicity has not been a veil to them from Unity, nor has Unity been a veil from multiplicity, by virtue of their strong wayfaring, their pure souls, and their non-assumption of lordship, the rank of the Absolute Lord. Nevertheless, the prime matter of the world of contingency is disposed under the hands of the friend of God, such that he transforms it as he wishes. As well, they have received in this world a document from God the Mighty conveying that which the Apostle of God, upon whom and whose Household be blessings, is reported to have said, addressing the folk of the Garden,

من الحيّ القيوم الذي لا يموت إلى الحيّ القيوم الذي لا يموت. أما بعد،
فإبّي أقول للشيء: كن، فيكون، وقد جعلتك تقول للشيء: كن، فيكون
فقال(ص): فلا يقول أحد من أهل الجنة للشيء: كن، إلا ويكون.

From the Ever-Living, the Self-subsistent, who never dies to the ever-living, self-subsistent, who will never die: Now then, I say to a thing: 'Be!', and it is. I give to you to say to a thing: 'Be!' and it will be. He said, No one of the folk of the Garden say to a thing: 'Be!' except that it will be.¹³²

A Light

Under this station is classified the apostolic prophets and rightly guided friends of God shrinking from performing miracles and charismas which are rooted in the manifestation of lordship, power, authority and sanctity in the high and low worlds, except in such situations as the exigency requires. However, in such situations, they used to pray to God, turn their faces towards the Lord of lords by showing humility, submissiveness, servanthood and rejection of egoism, entrust the matter to its Author, and call upon its Maker and Originator, exalted be His power, to perform it. Notwithstanding that, lordship manifest in their hands, upon whom be peace, is the lordship of the Real, majestic and exalted be He, they shrink from manifesting them by their hands, too.

As for the workers of extraordinary feats such as talismans, black arts, magic, jugglery and (false) exercises which are rooted in the world of the jinn and faithless devils, ie the lowest Dominion which represents the dark shadow of the world of the Kingdom as opposed to the luminous shadow which represents the highest Dominion, the world of the angels, you see them still remaining in the station of the manifestation of their authority and disposal, due to excessive love of their egoism and an increasing yearning for their vicious souls. They are slaves to soul idols, followers of false gods and false deities, and heedless of the Lord of the worlds. Lo! Hell is all around the faithless.¹³³

A Light

If you climb to that high summit, scale with your spirit to the peak of this luminous reality, and come to know the reality of the essential manifestation as we have recited to you, you can understand some of the realities, just as some of the gates to symbols and fine points will be opened to you.

One of these realities is the mystery of the words of the earlier metaphysicians and preceding philosophers, namely the Author, majestic be His greatness, knows the particulars in a universal mode.¹³⁴ For the high aspect of every reality represents the limit of absoluteness, sheer actuality and utter universality. As for the visible individuations (*al-tashakkhuṣāt*) and known entifications, they fall under the low aspect of creation and are part of the world of dispersion (*al-farq*), not gatheredness (*al-jamʿ*).

Another reality is the mystery of measurement (*al-qadar*) in the entified configuration about which the intellects have been confused and on which philosophers have varied viewpoints. As for the cognitive measurement, however, you have learnt that it belongs to the world of source- forms.

Another reality is the mystery of the words of Porphyry,¹³⁵ one of the greatest metaphysicians and experts at God's knowledge, namely God's knowledge hinges upon His unification with the known.¹³⁶

Another reality is the reason for the validity of the opinion of the Assassinated Shaykh,¹³⁷ the foremost of Muslim Illuminationists in the field of God's knowledge. He holds that God's knowledge is essential and prior to the existence of all things, even though it is, in a certain respect, all things.¹³⁸

There are, however, other mysteries, but it would take too long to elaborate on them and delve into their verification.

A Light

In that lofty station (the task of) prophecy is to make manifest divine realities and lordly names and attributes in the entified configuration, according to the unseen true communication in the configuration of knowledge. It is in that station that everything has been given its due, by perfecting whatever possesses preparedness and bringing whatever possesses receptivity to its desired proper perfections. For the station of 'compassionateness', ie the station of the expansion of existence, and the station of 'mercifulness', i.e. the station of the expansion of perfect existence, are part of that station, just as it represents the unity of their all-comprehensiveness. For this reason, 'the Compassionate, the Merciful' are made appositives of the Name 'God' in His words,

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

In his *Futūḥāt*, Shaykh al-'Arabī said, The world has become manifest by 'In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful'.¹³⁹ It is, in turn, the apostle to the residents of the worlds of the unseen and the visible and the one who speaks truly on behalf of the station of all-comprehensiveness to the residents of the world of the Kingdom and the Dominion.

A Light

The first one who believes in this unseen apostle and real friend are the residents of the world of Invincibility, namely the luminous overwhelming lights and the high divine pens. These are the first (locus of the) manifestation of the expansion of existence and the extension of the shadow. As the Prophet, upon whom and whose Household be blessings, said,

«أول ما خلق الله نوري» أو «روحي»

The first thing God created is my light; or, as in another version, my spirit.¹⁴⁰

Then the hierarchy continues backwards from the high to the low and from ascent to descent, so it continues until it comes to the world of matter, material objects and the residents of the lowest earths, without any disobedience or disapproval. And this is one of the meanings of his words, upon whom and whose Household be peace and blessings,

أدم ومَن دونه تحت لوائي

Adam and whoever is below him are under my banner.¹⁴¹

As well, it is one of the meanings of the ‘offer’ of sanctity to all the existents.

As for the failure of some of them to accept it as is reported,¹⁴² it is due to the deficiency of receptivity and preparedness to receive perfection, not the absolute failure to receive it, even in the station of existence, or rather, in the station of its perfection. In other words, it is based on the capacity for receiving the station of ‘compassionateness’ and the incapacity for receiving the station of ‘mercifulness’. Otherwise, every existent, in proportion to the capacity of its existence and its receptivity, has accepted inward vicegerency and sanctity. They have penetrated all climes of the heavens and the earths,¹⁴³ as expressed by the holy *ḥadīths*.

A Light

Perhaps the Trust offered to the heavens, the earth and the mountains, but they shrank from bearing it, while man, the unfair and the senseless, assumed it¹⁴⁴ is this absolute station. For the heavens and the earths and all that is therein, including the universal spirits, are limited and qualified, and that which is

qualified tends not to admit of an absolute reality. On the other hand, the Trust is God's absolute shadow, and the shadow of the absolute is absolute; hence, whatever possesses entifications would shrink from assuming it. As for man, considering the station of unfairness, ie going beyond the entirety of bounds and transgressing the totality of entifications and (the station of) no station, referred to in His words, (as is said),

يا أهل يثرب لا مقام لكم

O folk of Yathrib! This is not a station for you.¹⁴⁵

And the station of senselessness, ie annihilation from annihilation, he can bear it. So he assumed it with its absolute reality when he arrived at the station of 'within two bows' length'.¹⁴⁶ Reflect upon His words, 'or even nearer' and switch off the lamp, for the morning broke.¹⁴⁷

A Light

Know, may God guide you on the right course, that this station, ie manifestation through the station of prophecy in the entified configuration and revelation of unseen realities and divine names according to the forms of names in the configuration of knowledge and immutable source-forms, represents the prophecy of the perfect man, namely the Muḥammadan reality in the second configuration, or rather, in the third presence, thanks to the unification of the manifest and the locus of manifestation, especially the most absolute, most perfect locus of manifestation that has neither entification nor selfness.

Based on this, the first station is communication through the all-comprehensive reality and the Greatest Name, the unity of the gathering of the names on behalf of the unseen of the unseen domains with respect to the presence of the names and in the station of One-and-Allness. The second station is communication

through the most perfect locus of manifestation and the greatest locus of self-disclosure, ie the human immutable source-form, on behalf of the all-comprehensive reality, i.e. the Greatest Name, or rather, on behalf of the unseen as well, due to the absence of any veil in relation to the forms of divine names, i.e. the immutable source-forms. As regards this our station, the third station under discussion, it is communication through the most perfect locus of manifestation in the entified configuration, ie the human reality in the world of Command, on behalf of the immutable source-form along with its cognitive reality, or rather, on behalf of the Greatest Name, or rather, on behalf of the station of the unseen, as you have learnt.

A Light

In his explanatory remarks on the introductions to the Commentary of *Fuṣūṣ al-Hikam*, the master of our masters Āqā Muḥammad Riḍā al-Qumshī¹⁴⁸ (may his secret be hallowed), after drawing an analogy between the immutable source-forms in the divine names and quiddity and existence and suggesting that just as the entification of existence and things is ascribed to quiddity, not to existence, for a thing affects by its entification, so too the entification of the names and the universe is ascribed to the immutable source-form of the perfect man, thus said,

Criticism and Summary: The immutable source-forms are the entifications of the divine names. The entification is the same as that which is entified in view of the source-form and something else in view of the intellect. As well, quiddity is the same as existence in external reality and something else in view of the intellect. Based on this, the immutable source-forms are the same as the divine names, just as the divine names are self-disclosures of the Name 'God' in one respect and its parts in another respect. Hence, the immutable source-forms are self-disclosures of human reality in one respect and its parts in another. For human reality is the same as that all-comprehensive

name, by virtue of the unification of the entification and that which is entified. In light of this, the immutable source-form of Aḥmad, that is human reality and Muḥammadan reality, is that which is disclosed in the form of names and source-forms in the world of names and immutable source-forms. The universe, which is other than God, is the form of names and the locus of their manifestation. It is, therefore, the form of human reality and the locus of its manifestation. For we have remarked that names and source-forms are self-disclosures of that reality in one respect and their parts in another. Similarly, theirs is the form of that reality and the locus of its manifestation. The Muḥammadan reality disclosed in the form of the world, just as the world—in its complete form—is its manifestation and its self-disclosure.

Then he, may his holy secret be hallowed, added,

If you say, ‘If the Name ‘God’ and the Muḥammadan immutable source-form are unified in view of the source-form, why is the universe attributed to that source-form and is not attributed to that name?’ I reply thus: The immutable source-form is the entification of that name, and a thing affects by its entification. Hence, that which is disclosed in (the worlds of) the Kingdom, the Dominion, the Invincibility and the Divinity is that reality through God’s permission and His vicegerency; and God is the Sovereign and the Clear Real. Here ends his speech, may his station be elevated among the spiritual existents.¹⁴⁹

A Light

You have come to know—through that which we have unveiled from your sight of the covering, so it is today piercing¹⁵⁰—that the constancy of the immutable source-forms in divine knowledge is, in a certain respect, like the constancy of the imperfect lights in the perfect light and the differentiated intellect in the undifferentiated simple intellect. As there is no veil in relation to source-forms and names, whatever is ascribed to the immutable source-form is ascribed to the Holy Essence

and divine names and attributes. Even though self-disclosures are in the garment of names, attributes and source-forms, they are essential.

In light of this, drawing analogous conclusions for quiddity and existence is false by virtue of distinction. As well, the property of that with which it is compared by analogy (*al-maqīs 'alayh*) is not as he suggested (may his secret be hallowed) among those who have insight and the possessors of taste and wayfaring. For the ascription of properties to quiddity is either in view of unity within multiplicity, that is notwithstanding existence is incomparable with (all) entifications, it is manifest therein and it is all things. Or, as is held by the possessors of 'formal' philosophy, it is in view of the fact that the world, ie natural universals (*al-kullīyyāt at-tabī'īyyah*), exists. However, according to the gnostical view, it is among the free, imagination within imagination.¹⁵¹

In general, if he means by his words, 'a thing affects by its entification' that it does not affect itself by itself, without any entification of the name and the attribute or in the drapery of source-forms, then it is right, as you have learnt its verification. However, it does not imply absence of ascription to that which is entified. Rather, the act is in reality ascribed to that which is entified, not the entification. If he means however, that entification is an agent, it has no validity at all. And if he means that it is an instrument for that which is entified, then in addition to its being counter to verification, it does not imply absence of ascription either.

The verification worthy of ascent is that which you have learnt within the (foregoing) divine lights, namely the Essence in the drapery of the entifications of names discloses Itself upon the immutable source-forms and in Its drapery discloses Itself upon the external source-forms. However, by virtue of the absence of the veil and purity of the mirror, self-disclosure is essential; He, exalted be He, has no partner in His divinity. This is one of the

meanings of the (following) hadith (reported in its purport, not in its literal sense) related by the Household of Infallibility (the *Ahl al-Bayt*), upon whom be peace, thus: True Unity (*tawhīd*) is to apply the name to the named, or else, the worship of the name (alone) is faithlessness and the worship of the name and the named is polytheism.¹⁵² The friend of God has spoken the truth.¹⁵³

Further, his speech is open to question from another angle, but it would take too long to elaborate on it. Now we conclude this 'lamp' and enter upon another area of discussion, with the assistance of the Omniscient Sovereign, and to Him do we turn for help in the beginning and the end.

The Second Lamp

On that, this is unveiled to you of the mystery of vicegerency, prophecy and sanctity in the unseen configuration and the divine intellective lights. In it are spiritual realities, rising from luminous flashes, by which you may advance by steps to human perfections.

A Flash

Know, may God guide you on the certain reality and make you join the spiritual existents, that the intellective reality established by firm rational proofs (as elaborated by the perfect philosophers, expressed symbolically by the earlier metaphysicians, alluded to by the divine books and heavenly scriptures, and from which the veil has been lifted by the reports of the Prophet and the friends of God) is the first entification of the presence of the absolute will whose station and status in relation to the unity of all-comprehensiveness you have already been acquainted.

A proof of it, besides that which has been expressed in the differentiated books of the masters of philosophy, is that which has been case into my innermost mind offhand upon my arrival

at this stage of the treatise. (So I say:) If an inentifiable reality, whatever it may be, turns to be entified by various entifications posterior to it, it will only be entified by that which is prior by rank and earlier by rank and essence or by that which is earlier in time, if it belongs to temporal matters. In general, an inentifiable and inconceivable reality can be entified and give form by a prior entification and an earlier form. Further, quiddity, wherever it may be, is prior to its adjuncts and accidents, including the Dominional relationships, their predeterminations, their physical adjuncts and their accidents. Similarly, the very predeterminations and relationship are prior to their other adjuncts. Based on this, reality is first give from by quiddity, then by other adjuncts, in accordance with their priority. When we extensively investigate and thoroughly inquire into the levels of existence and the world of ascent and descent, we will not see what is entified by quiddity alone (without its adjuncts), save the intellectual reality and nothing else. As for other existents, no matter to which world they belong, as they have a specific entification additional to the entification of quiddity, they must be posterior to it, while it is prior to them by aeonian priority. Also, the priority of the inentifiable reality to all that which is entified is priority by essence, or rather, beginningless proper priority.

Do not think that those adjuncts, namely relationships, Dominional predeterminations and engagement in matter and begin under the authority of time and gradation, are part of the adjuncts and accidents of existence, not quiddity, owing to their separability thereof upon reflection and intellectual exertion. For that is erroneous opinion and false imagination. For the essence of the Dominion is of the kind of relationship and predetermination, while the essence of the Kingdom is of the kind of captivation by matter and its adjuncts, such that they are inseparable in essence and in intellection, in external reality and in mental existence. It is for this reason that the soul (*an-nafs*) is

defined as ‘a primary perfection for an instrumental natural corporeal substance’ and that the science of the soul has come to fall under natural sciences.¹⁵⁴ The master of perfect gnostics, the greatest of grand philosophers and the leader of metaphysicians and deiform ones (Mullā Ṣadrā),¹⁵⁵ may God hallow his holy soul, has furnished the proof for the fact that the soulhood of the soul at the beginning of its configuration is not of the accidents posterior by its essence, whether it is inseparable or separable.¹⁵⁶ Similarly, the proof has been furnished for the captivity of the forms of the Kingdom by matter and its adjuncts in their essence. Were it not for fear of elaborateness, we would mention that which helps you attain reassurance and certainty. However, the treatise is not written to verify such discussions.

Do not imagine that the foregoing contradicts the deliverance of the forms of the Kingdom and the realities of the Dominion to the world of light. For that has also been established in our view, without any contradiction in terms. Reflect thereupon and you will find the truth. Further, this is in accordance with the arc of descent.

Through this clarification it is possible to furnish the proof for the (proper) order of existence and its symmetry in accordance with the arc of ascent, too. For the source of the formation of forms, ascension and turning from multiplicity to unity and from descent to ascent is the prime matter that never assumes any form in terms of essence nor can it ever be entified in terms of substance. Rather, it was entified by specific entifications in earlier times, so it took on the absolute corporeal form, then the elemental, the mineral until it enters the realm of spiritual existents, the last joins the first, and the matter returns to (the place) where it begins:

كما بدأكم تعودون

As He brought you into being, so will you return (unto Him)?¹⁵⁷

A Flash

The *ḥadīths* reported from the possessors of divine inspiration and revelation about the beginning of their creation, upon whom be peace, the clay of their spirits,¹⁵⁸ and the fact that the first of the creatures is the spirit of the Apostle of God and ‘Alī, upon whom and whose Household be blessings, or their spirits allude to the entification of their spirituality—i.e. the absolute will and the all-embracing mercy—with an intellectual entification. For the beginning of manifestation is their spirits, upon whom be peace, as is corroborated by the expression Creation therein. For the station of the will is not part of Creation at all. Rather, it is the Command referred to in His words,

ألا له الخلق والأمر

Look! All Creation and Command belong to Him,¹⁵⁹

Even though it may also be called Creation; As well, they have been reported to have said,

خلق الله الأشياء بالمشيئة والمشينة بنفسها

God created (all) things through His will, and (He created) the will through itself.¹⁶⁰

This holy hadith is one of the arguments for the fact that the absolute will is beyond all creational entifications, including the ‘intellect’ and what is below it.

We hereby mention a tradition indicative of the very intention we have already, thanks to God, furnished the proof of taste for it out of auspiciousness and blessing. In *al-Kāfī*, it was related by Aḥmad ibn ‘Alī ibn Muḥammad ibn ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar ibn ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib that Abū ‘Abdullāh, upon whom be peace, said,

إن الله كان إذ لا كان، فخلق الكان والمكان، وخلق الأنوار، وخلق نور الأنوار الذي نورته منه الأنوار، وأجرى فيه من نوره الذي نورته منه

الأنوار، وهو النور الذي خلق منه محمداً وعليّاً. فلم يزالا نورين أوليين؛ إذ لا شيء كوّن قبلهما. فلم يزالا يجريان طاهرين مطهرين في الأصلاب الطاهرة حتى افترقا في أطهر طاهرين: في عبدالله وأبي طالب. صدق ولي الله صلوات الله عليه.

Indeed God existed when there was nothing. Then He created being and place, and created lights as well as created the light of lights from which lights have been illuminated. And He allowed it to flow in His light from which lights have been illuminated, that is the light from which He created Muḥammad and ‘Alī. They continued to be the first two lights, since nothing was brought into being before them. They continued to flow, pure and immaculate, into pure loins until they divided apart in the purest of two pure (loins): in ‘Abdullāh and Abū Ṭālib.¹⁶¹

We are not at present occupied with the exposition of the holy *ḥadīth*. For I am too unqualified to carry out such an undertaking, just as it would take too long to elaborate on. However, we will refer to some of its fine points that are related to our intention.

So we say and it is God who bestows success:

His words, ‘كان إذ لا كان’, possibly refer to His precedence, exalted be His rank, in reality (and essence) over all existents, and ‘He is now as He was’ as al-Junayd al-Baghdādī¹⁶² said when he heard thus, ‘At the beginning was God, and there was none with Him’. In *at-Tawḥīd* by the most truthful one of the Shi‘ite group it is thus reported,

إن الله تبارك وتعالى كان لم يزل بلا زمان ولا مكان، وهو الآن كما كان
Indeed God, blessed and exalted be He, ever existed
without time or place, and He is now as He was.¹⁶³

His words, 'فخلق الكان والمكان' to his words, 'منه الأنوار', allude to the order of the principal levels of existence from the descending to the ascending. For 'being' and 'place' are equivalent to the created things, natural spatial things and earthly and celestial bodies, or whatever appears in the natural world and rises from the ocean of the dark prime matter, including the soul which belongs in its essence to the world of lights, but it rises from the realm of matter and becomes manifest in (the form of) descending existents.

The 'lights' represent the world of intellection in its entirety, or it along with the world of the soul, considering the root of their reality, that is the lights. The 'light of lights' is the expansive emanation and absolute being from which intellective realities, ascending and descending worlds, etc proceed. As for the specification of the creation of 'lights' with reference, even though all the levels of existence are part thereof, it is due to their proportion, or it is in view of the fact that the intellect is the beginning of the manifestation of the absolute will, or it is because the emergence of the creatures does not stand in need of reference after the emanation (*ṣudūr*) of lights thereof has been introduced. For as lights have been emanated from some thing, phenomenal beings have also been emanated thereof in accordance with the hierarchy of existence and the two arcs of descent and ascent.

As regards the pronoun 'it' in his words 'أجرى فيه' it either refers to 'being' and 'place', in which case it will make fine reference to the manifestation of His light in the heavens and the earth, as He, the Most High, said:

الله نور السموات والأرض

God is the Light of the heavens and the earths.¹⁶⁴

Or it refers to the 'lights', in an allusion to the fact that qualified matters, ie the lights, are the same as that which is

absolute, that is the light of lights.

As well, it possibly refers to the 'light of lights', in which case by the light of lights is meant the first immaterial intellect and by the lights the universal souls or they along with all the intellects save the First Intellect. Based on this, 'His light from which lights have been illuminated' is understood to mean the expansive emanation. This is (more) suitable to the expression from two angles. The first is the relation of creation to the light of lights. You have learnt time and again that it belongs to the world of Command not Creation, even though it may sometimes be annexed to it, as in the foregoing holy hadith. The second is the ascription of 'light' to His Essence, exalted be He, in his words, 'And He allowed it to flow in His light'. For it is an allusion to the unification of the manifest and the locus of manifestation. Further, notwithstanding it is possible to ascribe the light of the rest of lights to His Essence, exalted be He, in a certain respect, what is more appropriate is the foregoing.

Take care not to understand *أجرى* (lit. make flow) to mean what is commonly understood thereof, like the flow of sensory light into an illuminated body. Rather, what is meant is manifestation and self-subsistent encompassment. Also, 'light' must not be understood to mean sensory light.

As for his words *'وهو النور الذي خلق منه محمداً وعلياً'*, the intention is the light of lights, that is the expansive existence, which, as you have learnt, is the reality of Muḥammad and 'Alī. Their holy light has been created in the manner of unity and identification.

This is explicit in what we have stated. Reflect upon it, that mysteries may be opened to you.

As to his words, *'فلم يزال نورين أولين؛ إذ لا شيء كون قبلهما'*, they imply that their holy light which arises from His light is the immaterial intellect that is prior to the universe.

As for his words, *'فلم يزالا'*, they allude to its manifestation in the descending worlds, from the central part of the world of the

Invincibility to the interior of the world of the Higher Dominion; from its central part to the interior of the world of the Lower Dominion; from its central part to the interior of the world of the Kingdom. Then it became manifest in the quintessence of the worlds and their all-comprehensive ‘version’, namely Man who is the father of human beings; and it transferred from him until it divided apart in the purest of the two pure: ‘Abdullāh and Abū Tālib, upon whom be peace.

The underlying reason of the application of ‘the central part’ to every ascending world in relation to the descending world and ‘the interior’ to every descending world in relation to the ascending world is clear, not in need of detail.

A Flash

Have you been informed of the apparent difference of the words of deiform metaphysicians and earlier philosophers such as the guide of the technique and its teacher, the eminent scholars who follow him, along with the words of the grand gnostics and gnostic masters as to the manner of emanation (*aṣ-ṣudūr*) and the identification of the first entities emanating from the First Origin (*al-mabda’ al-awwal*)? In the tenth ‘maymar’ of his Uthulujīya, he said,

If one argues, ‘How should (different) things emanate from the simple ‘One’ (*al-wāḥid*), wherein there is neither duality nor multiplicity in any respects?’ we will answer thus, (That is) because It is a purely simple ‘One’, wherein there is nothing whatsoever. As It is purely one, all things ‘have gushed forth’ thereof. For since It possesses no Ipseity, Ipseity has ‘gushed forth’ from It. I say and state in brief. As it is not like anything, you see all things through It. However, even though all things have ‘gushed forth’ from It in particular, the first Ipseity, that is the Ipseity of the intellect, has first ‘gushed forth’ thereof, without any intermediary. Then all the ipseities of things in the higher world and in the lower world ‘gushed forth’ thereof by

means of the ipsiety of the intellect and the intellectual world. Here ends his speech.

Then he entered upon furnishing the proof for his issue, but there is no need to deal with it. Further, thereto refer the words of all eminent scholars such as the Chief of Muslim philosophers¹⁶⁵ in *al-Shifā'*¹⁶⁶ and in his other writings, the Assassinated Shaykh,¹⁶⁷ and other great masters of metaphysics and leaders of philosophy.

The second group, however, says that the first to emanate from God, the Most High, and come into being from the presence of all-comprehensiveness is the universal being (*al-wujūd al-āmm*) extensive over the temples of existents, referred to in His worlds:

وما أمرنا إلا واحدة
And our commandment is but one (word).¹⁶⁸

فأينما تولوا فثم وجه الله
And whithersoever you turn, there is the face of God!¹⁶⁹

Shaykh Ṣadr ad-Dīn al-Qunawī, the vicegerent of the great master Muḥy ad-Dīn, in his *Nuṣūṣ*, thus said,

In view of the unity of His being, nothing has emanated from the Real, gory be to Him, except 'one'. For it is impossible for one qua one to emanate and create that which is more than one. However, in our view, that 'one' is the universal being that is emanated upon the source-forms of the created things, including that which exists (now) and that which does not exist as it lies in God's prior knowledge. This being is common to the Higher Pen, which is the first of existents and is called the First Intellect, and the rest of existents, counter to what is held by folk of philosophical speculation.¹⁷⁰ Here ends his speech.

He expressed similar views in *Miftāḥ al-Ghayb wa'l-Wujūd*.¹⁷¹ In his *Istilāḥāt* Kamāl ad-Dīn 'Abd ar-Razzāq al-

Qāsānī thus stated,

Contemplative Self-disclosure is the manifestation of existence, which is called by the name 'Light'. It is the manifestation of the Real in the forms of His names in phenomenal beings, which are the loci of their manifestation. That manifestation is the breath of the Compassionate through which all come into existence.¹⁷² Here ends his speech.

A Flash

After we have done what is assigned to us by virtue of the gnostic and cognitive relationship and spiritual brotherhood, now is the time to lift the veil from their true intention such that there is no longer any disagreement and settlement of discord is achieved. For even though the stage of the gnostic lies beyond the intellect, it never contradicts the explicit intellect and the conclusive proof. Far be it from witnessing based on taste to contradict proof and rational proofs to be furnished counter to the witnessing of the gnostics.

Therefore we say: Know, O dearest brother, that as grand metaphysicians and great philosophers consider multiplicity and the preservation of the levels of existence, including the worlds of the unseen and the visible, the hierarchy of causes and effects, and ascending and descending worlds, they have every reason to hold the emanation of the immaterial intellect first, then the soul, to the last of the levels of multiplicities. For there is no multiplicity in the station of the absolute will, or rather, it is realized in the level subsequent to it, and these levels are its entifications.

Hence, due to the disappearance of the will into the Unitary Essence and its absorption in the Sempiternal Magnificence, it possesses no property, that it may be said it has emanated or has not.

As for the grand gnostics and emigrant friends of God, as they consider unity and absence of multiplicity, they have not

looked at the specific entifications of the world, its Kingdom and Dominion, its terrestrial realm and Invincibility. They maintain that the entifications of the absolute being, expressed as ‘quiddities’ and ‘worlds’ whatever they may be, are (mere) consideration and imagination. It is for this reason that it is said, ‘The world, in the view of the free, is imagination within imagination.’¹⁷³ The great master Muḥy ad-Dīn said, ‘The world is unseen, it has not become manifest at all; the Real, however, is manifest, He has not been hidden from sight at all’.¹⁷⁴ Here ends his speech. In light of this, what is in the abode of actuality and existence and the assembly of the unseen and the visible is but nothing the Real, outwardly and inwardly, first and last. As for that which lies beyond Him, it is (attributable to) the deceptions of sense-intuition and inventions of imagination.

A Flash

Rather we recur and say, the words of the eminent scholar al-Qunawī are valueless among the perfect gnostics, or rather, what he imagines to be of the words of the grand gnostics is false in their view and stagnant in the market of the folk of knowledge. For emanation must have that which causes to emanate and that which emanates and is founded on otherness and disparity. This contradicts the path of the possessors of gnosis and is incompatible with the taste of the masters of certainty. Therefore, you see them express it—when they express—by ‘manifestation’ and ‘self-disclosure’. Is there anything behind the Real, that emanation may be ascribed thereto? Rather, ‘He is the First and the Last, the Manifest and the Inward’. In his prayer for (the Day of) ‘*Arafah*, our master Abū ‘Abdullāh al-Ḥusayn, upon whom be peace and blessings, says, ‘Does other than You have manifestation any more than what You have?!’¹⁷⁵ The friend of God, could I but sacrifice my spirit for him, has spoken the truth. Hence, the world, considering the aspect of otherness, has never become manifest,

nor does the natural universal have an existence in the view of the folk of the Real; considering something else, it is (the locus of manifestation of) His name the 'Manifest'.

A Flash

The foregoing is the judgement (and station) of one who is overcome by the authority of unity, the Real has disclosed Himself by conquering the mount of whose egoism and crumbled it into fragments,¹⁷⁶ and for whom He manifests Himself through perfect unity and great sovereignty, as He discloses Himself on (the Day of) the Greater Resurrection. However, as for one who witnesses multiplicity without being veiled from unity, sees unity without being heedless of multiplicity, and gives everything its due, he is the locus of manifestation of the name 'the Judge, the Just', who never goes beyond the limit and is not tyrannical to the servant,¹⁷⁷ so he sometimes judges that multiplicity exists and sometimes that multiplicity is the manifestation of unity. As it is reported from the one who realized (the station of) the greatest isthmus, the one who stood in overwhelming need of His Lord, the one who climbed until he was within two bows' length or even nearer,¹⁷⁸ the chosen, the singled out and the elected, through one of the Imams thus,

لنا مع الله حالات هو هو، ونحن نحن، وهو نحن، ونحن هو.

We have with God states wherein He is He, we we, He we and we He.¹⁷⁹

The words of the folk of knowledge, especially the Greatest Master Muḥy ad-Dīn, are filled with principles of this kind, as in his words,

الحق خلق، والخلق حق، والحق حق، والخلق خلق.

The Real is the creature, the creature is real, the Real is real, and the creature is creature.¹⁸⁰

As well, in his *Fuṣūṣ*, he thus stated,

Whoever recognizes what we have related of the numbers, and that their negation is the same as their affirmation, knows that the Real (who is) too incomparable (with deficiencies) is the creature who anthropomorphizes, even though the creature is distinct from the Creator. So the matter is the Creator/creature and it is the creature/Creator.

He added,

The Real is the creature in this respect, so take lesson,
and He is a creature in that respect, so remember!
He who understands what I said, his insight never fails,
and none perceives it except the one who possesses sight
Bring together or break off, for the source is one,
and it is the manifold that neither spares nor leaves
anything.¹⁸¹

The discussion has gone beyond the stage of this treatise. So let us hold back and pay attention to the original intention.

A Flash

Know, may God guide you on His Invincibility and show to you by His subtlety the paths to His Dominion, that as this intellective reality, which you have perceived its rank, is entirely disengaged from space and spatial matters, too incomparable with the changes of time and temporal things, disappears (with respect to quiddity) into its haecceity, conquers (with respect to the light of its existence) the darkness of its quiddity, or rather, it is disengaged from its reality and selfness, it encompasses the worlds of the unseen and the visible in the same way the will embraces it and everything else and permeates into them in the

same way the reality permeates into the tenuity. Rather it is the reality of the worlds and they are its shadow; it is the spirit and the rest its potencies and corporeal substance. In general, it represents the aspect of the unity of the world, while the world the aspect of its multiplicity. Rather it is the world in the form of unity, while the world the intellect in the form of multiplicity.

In a collection of his books and treatises the perfect gnostic Shaykh, al-Qādī Sa‘īd al-Qummī, may God be pleased with him, said that ‘The soul is an intellect by accident and a soul in essence’.¹⁸² In his Exposition of *at-Tawhīd* by the most truthful one of the Shi‘ite group, may God be pleased with him, he thus stated, ‘The intellect obeys and submits, that is (in relation to) the divine command, so it takes on the form of the universal soul for the representation of matter’.¹⁸³ Here ends his speech.

Even though he, may his secret be hallowed, restricts that, ie the representation of the intellect, to the form of the soul alone, knowledge of the levels of existence and the Dominion of the unseen and the visible conveys that which we have stated, namely its assumption of the form of corporeal substance, too. This is what such earlier metaphysicians as Plato the divine¹⁸⁴ and the guide of the Peripatetics Aristotle in Uthulujiya meant by the fall of the soul to the lowest world,¹⁸⁵ even though proof establishes its occurrence and temporal origin from matter.

Further, what has been stated by that gnostic al-Qummī, may his secret be hallowed, is inferred from the words of the ancients such as this great philosopher. For in the first ‘*maymar*’ of his Uthulujiya, he stated that ‘The soul is just an intellect that has been represented by the form of yearning’. What corroborates that which we hold perfectly is his (following) words in that ‘*maymar*’ as well:

When it (the soul) yearned for wayfaring and for the manifestation of its feats, it moved from the first world at first, then to the second world, and then to the third world.

However, even though it moved and wayfared from its world until it got to the third world, the intellect never separated from it, and thereby did it perform various activities.¹⁸⁶ Here ends his speech.

Indeed, His holy words convey our aim and refer to our intention thoroughly, especially the tenth '*maymar*' relating to the chapter of rare uncommon words. Whoever wishes, let him refer to that holy book, however after a thorough investigation into their fine points and reference to its people, for there are people for every science. Take care not to refer to it or books of its kind with your egoism and selfishness. For it will not avail you whatsoever, or rather, it will increase you in nothing but confusion and error. Do you not consider that the Chief Shaykh Abū 'Alī ibn Sīnā (Avicenna) states,

I studied only very little of natural sciences, mathematics and medicine under the teacher. I undertook myself to solve them within a short period of time without strain and succeeded to work them out without exertions. As for metaphysics, I did not understand anything thereof except after spiritual exercises, resorting to the source of needs, and pleading by natural disposition to the granter of requests. Even (it happened that) in a single issue thereof I looked up forty times, but I understood nothing. Thereupon I despaired of solving that science, until it was unveiled to me through taking recourse to the Source of all and drawing down to the Author of littleness and abundance.¹⁸⁷

Rather, his slips in the field of the 'Higher Science' are more numerous as it appears when referring to his books. If this is the status of the Chief Shaykh, the great genius and the pre-eminent prodigy who had no equal in sharp-wittedness and great talent, how should then be the case with common people? This is a word of advice from me to my faithful brothers lest they should perish from whence they do not know.

A Flash

The immaterial intellect's encompassment in relation to that which is below it, including the Kingdom and the Dominion, is not as the encompassment of something sensory to something sensory, wherein encompassment pertains to a number of sides and limits, just as some of them only surround the other's surfaces external to the essence. As for its encompassment, however, it covers all the sides, such that it encompasses the interior of the object surrounded in the same way that it encompasses its exterior. For its encompassment is in the manner of permeation and penetration. It permeates the realities of the world, their essences and the kernel of realities and their haecceities. No atom in the sky or in the earth, including their substances and accidents, the essential and the separable, escapes its existential encompassment and suprasensory permeation. It is nearer to them than their jugular vein¹⁸⁸ and more pervasive into them than the spirits into the bodies. Rather, the presence of the world therewith is more intense and higher than their presence with themselves. All that is so because it is kept free of matter, which is the criterion of otherness and interdistance, just as quiddity, which is the source of disparity, is absorbed in and dissolved in it, nor does it possess any property whatsoever. Rather the ruling property belongs to existence, or rather, to absolute existence. As well, it is all-dominant over them and has authority over every haecceity and reality.

Referring to the foregoing existential encompassment and essential permeation, the teacher of the Peripatetics said that simple realities require, in their essence, complete true circularity; however, their circumference does not include the centre, as is the case with sensory circles. Rather intellectual circles are counter to sensory circles in terms of property.¹⁸⁹ We have alluded to a spark of the verification of this mystery in the First Niche. You may then refer.

A Flash

The perfect immaterial intellectual reality has authority over everything else, including intellectual realities, universal souls, Dominional particular souls, innovated things and human beings dwelling in the world of Kingdom. It leads them to the paths to guidance, uprightness and perfection, carries them away to their Most High Author and guides them on the courtyard of the Lord, the Possessor of Majesty. Were it not for it, God would not be worshipped, nor would His Unity be professed, nor obeyed, nor prostrated to.

Based on this, God sent the intellect to the residents of all the worlds in order to guide them on the straight path. Thereupon, He commanded it, 'Come forward' to those who are imprisoned in the darkneses of the worlds of Creation out of the world of your Command, and lead them to the abode of delight and a world wherein light suffuses light. It manifests itself in every reality to the extent of its preparedness, in obedience to the command of the Lord of servants. So it guided them on the world of mysteries and called them to the assembly of intimacy and the abode of stability. Following direction and guidance, He commanded it to come back with all the loci of its manifestation from this world to the ultimate goal and the 'highr companion';¹⁹⁰ He commanded it, come back, so it came back.¹⁹¹

Further, it is this reality that God, the Most High, has bestowed upon the troops in certain proper manifestations within the world of holiness in order to combat with the troops of Satan, overcome them,¹⁹² and lead creation to the party of the Compassionate.¹⁹³ As well, the realities of the divine world of the unseen have been entrusted to it that it may draw those who are worthy to the attraction (and rapture) of the Compassionate.¹⁹⁴

A Flash

If your insight has been opened through the principles cast to you and the matter has been unveiled to you within guidelines and sections, you can climb on the leg of knowledge to the peak of reality and come to know some of that which is expressed symbolically in a narration reported in *al-Kāfī* from our maser Abū Ja‘far al-Bāqir, upon whom be peace and blessings, in which he said,

لَمَّا خَلَقَ اللهُ تَعَالَى الْعَقْلَ اسْتَنْطَقَهُ، ثُمَّ قَالَ لَهُ: أَقْبِلْ، فَأَقْبَلَ، ثُمَّ قَالَ لَهُ: أَدْبِرْ، فَأَدْبَرَ. ثُمَّ قَالَ: وَعِزَّتِي وَجَلَالِي، مَا خَلَقْتُ خَلْقًا هُوَ أَحَبُّ إِلَيَّ مِنْكَ، وَلَا أَكْمَلْتُكَ إِلَّا فِيْمَنْ أَحَبَّ. أَمَا إِنِّي إِلَيْكَ أَمْرٌ، وَإِلَيْكَ أَنْهَى، وَإِلَيْكَ أَثِيبُ، وَإِلَيْكَ أُعَاقِبُ.

When God, the Most High, created the intellect, He gave it the faculty of reason and then commanded it, ‘Come forward’, so it came forward, then commanded it, ‘Come back’, so it came back. Then He said to it: ‘By My Might and Majesty, I have not created any thing as dear to Me as you, and I have bestowed you only upon one whom I love. Lo! It is you that I command, and you that I prohibit from things, and you that I reward and you that I punish.’¹⁹⁵

The friend of God has spoken the truth. Perfect eminent scholars, may God be pleased with them, have undertaken to explain it.¹⁹⁶ However, since they, may God hallow their souls, have not referred to a number of its mysteries, we will allude to them, notwithstanding incapability and lack of knowledge. Why shouldn’t it be so since their gifts can never be taken over save by their breasts, and one like me has no right to climb to this highest station and that most splendid, most brilliant waystation.

So we thus say: His words *استنطقه* means He made it endowed with the faculty of reason and perception through the very making of its essence. For knowledge and perception in the

higher sources (*al-mabadī' al- 'āliyah*), especially the intellect, the first of specific entifications, are identical with their essence. This is, in a certain respect, similar to His words,

وعلم آدم الأسماء كلها

And He taught Adam the names—all of them.¹⁹⁷

For 'teaching' in the foregoing station is through the deposition of the forms of the names and attributes in a differentiated mode and in the manner of the unity of all-comprehensiveness; so it does not suggest that He created him free from knowledge of the names, and then He taught them to him. For man is the locus of manifestation of the Greatest Name 'God' that brings together all the levels, names and attributes in the manner of the unity of all-comprehensiveness. As well, the intellect is the locus of manifestation of God's knowledge. Hence, it is 'knowing' on the level of its Ipseity and the kernel of its reality.

His words *أقبل* are a command by the presence of all-comprehensiveness to the first locus of manifestation to manifest itself on all the levels of entifications, including the world of Kingdom and Dominion. Hence, it penetrates all the worlds at its Author's command in order to manifest the perfections lying in the world of the names and attributes, spread good all over the levels of creation, guide them on the straight path¹⁹⁸ and lead them on the right route.

As for His words *أدبر*, they mean to go back from the world of undifferentiation to the presence of all-comprehensiveness, with all the loci of manifestation, to the name proper for your station and the station of the loci of your manifestation, either to the name the 'Compassionate', so it will be rewarded, or to the name the 'Avenger', so it will be punished. In light of this, the intellect manifest in the descending worlds is rewarded and punished, considering the unification of the manifest and the

locus of manifestation.

Further, the return of all things is actualized through the intellect, or rather, through its return. For phenomenal things and beings never return to the Real unless they get to the world of the intellect or they are annihilated therein, even though the return of all is through the perfect man whom the intellect constitutes the level of his intellect.

As for his words *ولا أكملت إلا فيمن أحب*, they refer to the manifestation of the intellect in the levels of existents in proportion to their preparedness as decreed in the presence of knowledge through self-love. Were it not for this love, no existent would become manifest, nor would any one attain perfection. For it is through passionate love that the heavens stood forth.¹⁹⁹

In his words, *إياك أمر وإياك أنهى وإياك أتيب وإياك أعاقب*, without the interposition of (the proposition) *الباء* (with), there is an obvious reference among the masters of taste to what we have stated, namely the intellect is the manifest and is the inward; it penetrates into the Kingdom and Dominion; it descends from its loftiest station to the lowest waystation without renunciation of its highest place and its most splendid, loftiest station. It is God who bestows success in the hereafter and this world.

A Flash

The right time has come for you to understand the meaning of the vicegerency of the universal intellect in the world of creation. For its vicegerency is a vicegerency in manifestation in phenomenal realities. Its prophecy is equivalent to the manifestation of the perfections of its transcendent origin as well as the revelation of the names and attributes from the presence of all-comprehensiveness, the possessor of majesty. Its sanctity is tantamount to the unrestricted right of disposal on all the levels of the unseen and the visible, in the same way that a human soul disposes freely over the parts of its body. Rather its right of

disposal is incomparable with its disposal. For as it is neither polluted with preparedness nor blended with nonexistence or deficiency, it is stronger in existence, creation, disposal and effusion. Hence, it is the manifest and the Real becomes thereby the Manifest, just as it is the inward and the Real becomes thereby the Inward.

Do not let yourself imagine from such expression that the manifestation and inward domains of the Real are subordinate to its manifestation and inwardness. For that is a corrupt erroneous impression and an (inconsequent) stagnant opinion in the market of certainty and knowledge. Rather the source of manifestation and revelation is the Real, or rather, there is neither manifestation nor existence save His, and blessed and exalted be He, while the world is imagination within imagination²⁰⁰ in the view of the free.

A Flash

What leads you to what we have stated precisely and thoroughly and guides you on the straight path with supreme excellence is that which is reported by the most truthful one of the (Shi'ite) group, may God be pleased with him, in *'Uyūn Akhbār al-Riḍā*, on his authority of our lord and master 'Alī ibn Mūsā ar-Riḍā, upon whom be thousands of salutations and praise, from his fathers that 'Alī ibn Abī Tālib, upon whom be peace, spoke as follows: The Apostle of God, upon whom and whose Household be blessings, said,

ما خلق الله خلقاً أفضل مني، ولا أكرم عليه مني. قال علي عليه السلام: فقلت: يا رسول الله، فأنت أفضل أم جبرئيل عليه السلام؟ فقال: يا علي، إن الله تبارك وتعالى فضل أنبيائه المرسلين على ملائكته المقربين، وفضلني على جميع النبيين والمرسلين. والفضل بعدي لك، يا علي، وللأئمة من بعدك. وإن الملائكة لخدامنا وخدام محبينا. يا علي، الذين يحملون العرش ومن حوله يسبحون بحمد ربهم ويستغفرون للذين آمنوا بولايتنا.

يا علي، لولا نحن ما خلق الله آدم عليه السلام ولا حواء ولا الجنة ولا النار، ولا السماء والأرض. فكيف لا نكون أفضل من الملائكة وقد سبقناهم إلى معرفة ربنا وتسيبته وتهليله وتقديسه؟ لأن أول ما خلق الله عز وجل أرواحنا، فأنطقها بتوحيده وتمجيده، ثم خلق الملائكة. فلما شاهدوا أرواحنا نوراً واحداً استعظمت أمرنا، فسبحنا؛ لتعلم الملائكة أنا خلق مخلوقون، وأنه منزّه عن صفاتنا، فسبحت الملائكة بتسيبنا ونزّهته عن صفاتنا. فلما شاهدوا عظم شأننا هللنا؛ لتعلم الملائكة أن لا إله إلا الله، وأنا عبيد، ولسنا بالآلهة يجب أن نعبد معه أو دونه، فقالوا: لا إله إلا الله. فلما شاهدوا كبر محلنا كبرنا؛ لتعلم الملائكة أن الله تعالى أكبر من أن يُنال عظم المحل إلا به. فلما شاهدوا ما جعله الله لنا من العزّ والقوة قلنا: لا حول ولا قوة إلا بالله؛ لتعلم الملائكة أن لا حول لنا ولا قوة إلا بالله. فلما شاهدوا ما أنعم الله به علينا وأوجبه لنا من فرض الطاعة، قلنا: الحمد لله؛ لتعلم الملائكة ما يحق لله تعالى ذكره علينا من الحمد على نعمه، فقالت الملائكة: الحمد لله. فينا اهدوا إلى معرفة توحيد الله عز وجل و تسيبته وتهليله وتمجيده وتمجيده.

ثم إن الله تبارك وتعالى خلق آدم عليه السلام فأودعنا صلبه، وأمر الملائكة بالسجود له؛ تعظيماً لنا وإكراماً. وكان سجودهم لله عز وجل عبودية، ولآدم إكراماً وطاعة؛ لكوننا في صلبه. فكيف لا نكون أفضل من الملائكة وقد سجدوا لآدم كلهم أجمعون؟

وإنه لما عرج بي إلى السماء أدن جبرئيل عليه السلام مني مثني، وأقام مني مثني، ثم قال لي: تقدّم يا محمد. فقلت له: يا جبرئيل، أتقدّم عليك؟ فقال: نعم، إن الله تبارك وتعالى فضّل أنبيائه على ملائكته أجمعين، وفضلك خاصة. قال: فتقدّمت، فصلّيت بهم، ولا فخر. فلما انتهيت إلى حجب النور قال لي جبرئيل: تقدّم يا محمد، وتخلّف عني. فقلت: يا جبرئيل، في مثل هذه الموضع تفارقني؟ فقال: يا محمد، إن انتهاء حدّي الذي وضعني الله عز وجل فيه إلى هذا المكان. فإن تجاوزته احترقت أجنحتي بتعدّي حدود ربّي جلّ جلاله. فزخّ بي في النور زخّة، فزخّ بي في النور زخّة، حتى انتهيت إلى ما شاء الله من علو ملكه. فنوديت: يا محمد، فقلت: لبيك يا ربّي وسعديك، تباركت وتعاليت. فنوديت: يا محمد، أنت عبدي، وأنا ربك، فإياي فأعبد، وعليّ فتوكّل؛ فإنك نوري في عبادي، ورسولي إلى خلقي، وحجّتي على بريّتي. لك ولمن تبعك خلقت جنّتي، ولمن خالفك خلقت ناري، ولأوصيائك أوجبت كرامتي، ولشيعتهم أوجبت ثوابي. فقلت: يا ربّي، ومن أوصيائي؟ فنوديت: يا محمد، أوصياؤك المكتوبون على ساق العرش. فنظرت وأنا بين يدي ربّي جلّ جلاله إلى ساق العرش، فرأيت

اثنى عشر نوراً ، في كل نور سطر أخضر، عليه اسم وصيٍّ من أوصيائي، أولهم علي بن أبي طالب، وآخرهم مهديٍّ أمّتي. فقلت: يا ربّ، هؤلاء أوصيائي بعدي، فتوديت: يا محمد، هؤلاء أوليائي وأحبائي وأصفائي وحججي بعدك على بريّتي. وهم أوصيائك وخلفاؤك وخير خلقي بعدك. وعزّتي وجلالي، لأظهرنّ بهم ديني، ولأعلننّ بهم كلمتي، ولأظهرنّ الأرض بأخرهم من أعدائي، ولأملكه مشارق الأرض ومغاربها، ولأسخرنّ له الرياح، ولأذلّلنّ له السحاب الصعاب، ولأرقبته في الأسباب، ولأنصرته بجندي، ولأمدته بملائكتي حتّى يعلن دعوتي ويجمع الخلق على توحيدِي. ثمّ لأديننّ ملكه، ولأداولنّ الأيام بين أوليائي إلى يوم القيامة.

God has not created anything as superior as I, nor has He created anything as noble to Him as I. ‘Alī, upon whom be peace, said, I said: O Apostle of God! Are you then better or Gabriel?

To which he replied, O ‘Alī! Indeed, God, blessed and exalted be He, has preferred His apostolic prophets to His angels brought nigh and has preferred me to all prophets and apostles; and superiority belongs -after me—to you, O ‘Alī, and to the Imams after you. And the angels are verily our servants and the servants of our friends. O ‘Alī! Those who bear the Throne and those around it hymn the praise of their Lord and ask forgiveness for those who believe in our sanctity.

O ‘Alī! But for us, God would not have created Adam nor Eve, nor Paradise or hell, nor the heaven or the earth. So why shouldn’t we be better than the angels since we have known our Lord ahead of them, glorified Him, said ‘There is no god but God’ and called Him holy (ahead of them)? For the first thing God, glorified and exalted be He, created is our spirits, then caused them to proclaim His Unity and extol His majesty. Then He created the angels. When they witnessed our spirits as a single light, they regarded our rank as great. So we glorified, that the angels may know that we are created creatures and that

He is too incomparable with our attributes. So the angels glorified by way of our glorification and declared that He is too incomparable with our attributes. When they witnessed the greatness of our status, we said, 'There is no god but God', that the angels may know that there is no god but God and that we are servants and we are not a deity to be worshipped along with or besides Him. So they said, 'There is no god but God'. When they witnessed the grandeur of our position, we magnified, that the angels may know that God-exalted be He—is so great that the grandeur of any place cannot be attained save through Him. When they witnessed the mightiness and power appointed to us by God, we said, 'There is power nor strength save in God', that the angels may know that we have neither power nor strength save in God. When they witnessed that which God bestowed upon us and the duty of obedience which he enjoined to us, we said, 'Praise belongs to God', that the angels may know the praise for blessings which is due to Him—exalted be His remembrance—upon us. So the angels said, 'Praise belongs to God'. Thus it is through us that they were guided on how to know the profession of God, glorified and exalted be He, glorify Him, say 'There is no god but God', praise Him and extol Him.

Thereafter, God, blessed and exalted be He, created Adam, 'deposited' us in his loins and commanded the angels to prostrate themselves before him in reverence and honour toward us. Their prostration was to God, glorified and exalted be He, out of servanthood and to Adam in honour and obedience, as we were in his loins. So why shouldn't we be better than the angels, since they prostrated themselves—all of them together—before Adam.

Further, when I was ascended to the heavens, Gabriel, upon whom be peace, said the first call to prayer twofold and said the second call to prayer twofold. Then he said to me, Go forward, O Muḥammad! So I said to him, O Gabriel! Shall I go forward ahead of you?' To which he replied, 'Yes. Indeed God, blessed and exalted be He, has preferred His prophets to His angels—all of them—and preferred you in particular. He said, 'I went forward and led them in prayer; I say this without boasting.

When I got as far as the veils of light, Gabriel said to me, 'Go forward, O Muḥammad', and he left me. Thereupon I said, 'O Gabriel! Do you depart from me in such a situation?' To which he replied, 'O Muḥammad! My limit that God—exalted and glorified be He—has specified to me ends up in this place. Should I go beyond it, my wings will be burnt for going beyond the bounds of my Lord—exalted be His majesty. He then pushed me into light and threw me into light until I came to that which God knows of His exalted kingdom. I was called, 'O Muḥammad!' to which I replied, 'Here I am, my Lord, at Your service and disposal. Blessed are You and high exalted.' Thereupon I was called, 'O Muḥammad! You are my servant and I am your Lord. So Me (alone) worship and in Me (alone) trust. For you are My light among My servants, My apostle to My creation, and My argument against My creatures. For you and for those who follow you have I created My Garden; for those who appose you have I created My fire, for your successors have I prescribed My honour; and for their partisans have I prescribed My reward.' I asked, 'O my Lord! Who are my successors?' I was called, 'O Muḥammad! Your successors are those who are inscribed on the trunk of the Throne.' So I looked, while I was in the presence of my Lord—exalted be His

majesty—at the trunk of the Throne and saw twelve lights, in each one of which there is a green line on which the name of a successor of mine is inscribed; the first of them is ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib and the last of them the Guide of my community. Thereupon I said, O My Lord! Are these my successors after me?’ So I was called, ‘O Muḥammad! These are My Saints, My friends, My chosen ones and My argument—after you—against my creatures. And they are your successors, your vicegerents and the best of My creatures after you. By My might and My majesty, I shall cause My religion to prevail through them, shall exalt My word through them, shall purify the earth from My enemies through their last one, shall make him sovereign over the easts of the earth and its wests, shall dispose the winds for his benefit, shall cause intractable clouds to yield to him, shall lead him up the routes (of the heavens), shall let him triumph through My hosts, shall support him through My angels until he proclaims My call and bring creation together into the profession of My Unity. Then I shall cause his kingdom to last and shall cause the days to succeed by turns between My saints until the Day of Resurrection. Here ends the holy hadith.²⁰¹

I have quoted it—all of it—even though we are firmly determined to boil the treatise down, for the sake of blessing, auspiciousness and further profit and insight. Here I am explaining a number of its paragraphs relating to our intention in short and in a few words. I hope for bestowal of success from the Real, the Free.

A Flash

Know, may God place you and us among (the virtuous members of) the ummah of the Apostle, the chosen, and make us

travel the path of the pious Shi‘ah, that the Prophet’s words—upon whom and whose Household be blessing—*ما خلق الله خلقاً*—*أفضل مني* are a reference to his superiority—upon whom and whose Household be blessing—in the station of his creational entification. For he is in the configuration of creation, the first of entifications and the closest of them to the Greatest Name, the Imām of the imams of the names and attributes. Otherwise, considering the station of his mightiest universal sanctity, his greatest isthmus and prime matter, expressed as (the station of) ‘he drew nigh and came down’,²⁰² ‘absolute expansive existence’ and ‘the permanent everlasting face’,²⁰³ wherein all existents and entifications are absorbed and into which all descriptions and qualities are dissolved, there is no relationship between him and anything else, by virtue of his self-subsistent encompassment of every light and shadow. Based on this, it makes no sense to speak of distinguishment and superiority, nor would firstness and lastness be conceivable. Rather he is the first in the very lastness, the last in the very firstness, manifest in his inward aspect, and hidden in his manifest aspect.²⁰⁴ As he said,

نحن السابقون الأولون

We are the foremost (and) the first.²⁰⁵

As for ‘Alī’s words *فأنت أفضل أم جبرئيل؟* know that this question and the like posed by our master, the Commander of the Faithful, the Imām of the folk of unveiling and certainty, upon whom be the blessings of the Lord of the worlds, is meant to unveil realities to all creatures. Otherwise, he—upon whom be peace and blessings—derives from the Apostle of God—upon whom and whose Household be blessings—realities of sciences and unseen mysteries through his intellective station and his unseen status before their arrival at the imaginary imaginal configuration, to say nothing of their descent to articulated and verbal guises. For ‘Alī’s status) is to him after the unification of

their light in accordance with absolute universal sanctity is as the intellective fine reality, or rather, the inner spiritual reality, to the divine rational soul. As well, all creatures are to him as the internal and external potencies are to it. For to the Apostle of God—upon whom and whose Household be blessings—belongs the unity of the gathering of the visible and unseen realities, just as he is the source of the sources of particular and universal levels. He is to his subject as the Greatest Name in the presence of all-comprehensiveness to all the other names and attributes. Rather he is the Greatest Name that encompasses all the other divine names in the configuration of Creation and Command. Just as emanation from the presence of all-comprehensiveness never gets to sheer details unless it passes intermediate stages nor does it get as far as all that which is low unless it passes all that which is high, that is the intermediary—as we have clarified its state in the foregoing ‘niche’ and explained its argument in the previous ‘lamps’—so too cognitive emanations and true (sorts of) knowledge that descend from the heaven of Ahmad’s mystery never, get to the earths of creation unless they pass the level of ‘Alī’s Cloud (*al-‘amā*’).²⁰⁶ It is for this very reason and the like that he—upon whom and whose Household be blessings—said,

أنا مدينة العلم و عليّ بابها

I am the city of knowledge and ‘Alī is its gate.²⁰⁷

What corroborates that which we have stated to you and testifies to that which we have recited (to you) is a prophetic text which says that he used to hear Gabriel’s words. It is also reported in a long narration in *al-Kāfī*, in the chapter of pledges (*al-‘uhūd*), that the Commander of the Faithful thus said,

والذي خلق الحبة وبرأ النسمة ، لقد سمعت جبرئيل يقول للنبي (ص):
يا محمد (ص)، عرفه أنه منتهك الحرمة

By Him who splits the seed and creates the soul! I have heard Gabriel say to the Prophet thus: Notify him that he will be sacrileged.²⁰⁸

Further, the question about his superiority over Gabriel is a question about his superiority over the residents of the world of Invincibility altogether. As for making special mention of him, it is either due to his great status in relation to all the other angels or due to the attentions turning to him in particular. In general, the object of the question does not pertain to Gabriel, and it is for this reason that he—upon whom and whose Household be blessings—replied with his superiority over all angels.

Let it be known that this excellence is not an unreal honorary excellent quality as is the case with a sovereign's excellence in relation to his subjects.

Rather it is a perfect existential true excellence, arising from his complete encompassment and his self-subsistent authority, as is the case with the encompassment of the presence of the Greatest Name 'God' in relation to all the other names and attributes. For the other names and attributes are (part of) its affairs, stages, loci of manifestation and lights. Just as the eminence of the Greatest Name 'God' that encompasses all the other names is not unreal or honorary (and in the same way that encompassing names, that is the prophet in every age, especially our Prophet—upon whom and whose Household be blessings, vary in relation to one another), so too the locus of lordship (marbub) of the names, that is the marbub of the Imām of the imams of the names and attributes, exercises complete mastery over all antecedent and subsequent nations. Rather, all prophecies are part of the affairs of his prophecy, for his prophecy constitutes a great circle that encompasses all circles, the universal and the particular, the large and the small.

As for his words, *والفضل بعدي لك وللأئمة من بعدك*, they are a reference to that which we have already stated, namely the

degree of his existence and the existence of all the other Imams in relation to the Prophet's is as good as the degree of the spirit to the human rational soul; the degree of all the other prophets and friends of God is to him is as the degree of all lower potencies is to his soul; the degree of all the other subjects is to him is as the degree of all lower particular potencies, the inner and the outer, is to his soul; each in accordance with their degrees and ranks. Further every excellence, perfection and eminence in the human kingdom is established in respect to the spiritual level. Thereof does emanation get to all the other potencies and degrees, or rather, all inner and outer potencies are the manifestation of the spirit's reality. It is for this very reason that 'Alī—upon whom be peace—is reported to have said,

كنت مع الأنبياء سراً ومع رسول الله جهرًا

I was with prophets in secret and with the Apostle of God in public.²⁰⁹

However, his witness in relation to all the other prophets—upon whom be peace—is a self-subsistent one and in relation to the Apostle of God—upon whom and whose Household be blessings—an interdependent one.

As for his words, وَإِنَّ الْمَلَائِكَةَ لَخَدَامُنَا وَخَدَامَ مَحَبِّينَا, they testify to what we have mentioned, namely the universe, along with all its parts and particulars, including fully knowing and fully acting, belongs to the perfect friend of God. Some of the angels are his fully knowing potencies, such as Gabriel and the like, and some of them his fully acting potencies, such as Azrael and the like as well as the governing earthly and heavenly angels. Also, angels render service to their friends through their disposal, as in the service rendered by human parts to one another through the soul's free disposal.

As for his words, والذين يحملون العرش... the Throne can be applied to more than one sense. However, it is here understood

to mean everything in existence or the encompassing body.

As regards its bearers, they are four angels, and these are the ‘lords’ of the four species, as reported in *al-I‘tiqādāt*²¹⁰ by aṣ-Ṣadūq—may God have mercy upon him. Hence, by the Throne is not meant the presence of knowledge, for the bearer of knowledge is the Prophet himself—upon whom and whose Household be blessings—and his affairs. As it is thus reported in *al-Kāfi* on the authority of Abū ‘Abdullāh,

حملة العرش—والعرش العلم—ثمانية: أربعة منا، وأربعة ممن شاء الله.
The bearers of the Throne—and the Throne is knowledge—are eight: four are among us and four among whomever God wills.²¹¹

In another narration, it is thus reported from al-Kāzīm—upon whom be peace:

إذا كان يوم القيامة كان حملة العرش ثمانية: أربعة من الأولين، نوح وإبراهيم وموسى وعيسى عليهم السلام، وأربعة من الآخرين: محمد و علي و الحسن والحسين عليهم السلام.

When the Day of Resurrection comes, the bearers of the Throne will be eight. Four are among the men of old, namely Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus—upon whom be peace—and four among the later folk, namely Muḥammad, ‘Alī, al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn—upon whom be peace.²¹²

As for his words, ... لولا نحن ما خلق الله آدم ... it is so because they are intermediaries between the Real and creation and connections between the presence of sheer unity and differentiated multiplicity.

This paragraph clarifies their mediation in accordance with the very existence (of things) and their being the locus of manifestation of ‘compassionate mercy’, which is the emanating

source (*mufīd*) of existence in the first place. Rather, in accordance with the station of sanctity, they are the very compassionate mercy, or rather, they are the Greatest Name to which ‘the Compassionate, the Merciful’ are subordinate. As well, the following paragraph (of the *ḥadīth*), namely his words, كيف لا نكون أفضل من الملائكة, clarifies their mediation in accordance with the perfect existence and their being the locus of manifestation of ‘merciful mercy’ by which perfect existence comes forth. Based on this, it is through them that the circle of existence is brought to perfection, the unseen and the visible become manifest and emanation on the level of descent and ascent flows. In his *Futūḥāt*, Shaykh Muḥy ad-Dīn says,

ظهر الوجود بيسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

Existence became manifest by ‘In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful’.²¹³

Hence, the whole circle of existence is at the disposal of these three names, in the manner of all-comprehensiveness in respect of the first name and undifferentiation in respect of the last two.

Furthermore, the purpose of quoting this holy *ḥadīth*—all of it—to is draw attention to the foregoing paragraph which clarifies their teaching the reality of servanthood and the path thereto to the angels in the unseen and intellectual configuration and to point out that this teaching is the reality of prophecy in the unseen configuration. We will refer to its paragraphs in general within principles in order to further explain the intention in spite of limited scope and mental discomfiture.

Principle: On their Precedence in Knowledge of their Lord

You have come to understand from that which we have recited to you that the world of the intellect is equivalent to knowing, living and luminous existents, without any intervention

between them and their perfections. Rather all that which can be ascribed to them by 'general contingency' is necessary for them. In this light, priority in knowledge of the Lord, glorification and tahlil is attributable to priority in existence. This is the 'aeonian priority' which fits that high elevated station, incomparable with time and space. In general, it is priority in causality and reality that is established in relation to the levels of existence and the realities of the unseen and the visible.

As for his words, *فأنطقها*, they mean He gave them the faculty of reason through the very making of their essence, with an intellective power free from any voice or utterance. As for 'then' in between, it is due to the priority of the essence over its perfections with substantial priority. From the foregoing sense of 'precedence' it becomes clear that they are intermediaries in the creation of angles in accordance with existence, just as they are intermediaries in accordance with the perfections of existence.

Principle

Know, may God guide you on the straight path,²¹⁴ that Unity has four pillars. Each of these pillars has three degrees, one of which is outward and two inward. As for the designation, it is subordinate to that which is manifest. So is the case with the divine names divisible into the threefold types, namely the names of the essence, the names of the attribute and the names of the act.

The first pillar is *التحميد* (praise of God). It is the station of the unity of acts, which is the outward degree thereof, just as in it is hidden the other two degrees of unity, namely the unity of the attribute and the unity of the essence. For praise of God is a station wherein all praises and laudation refer and belong to God the Most High,²¹⁵ be and no one else except Him—glorified and exalted be He—is worthy of praise. That (degree of thanksgiving) cannot be achieved unless good deeds, worthy works, gifts and favours—all of them—are attributed to God,

that is to say, a servant witnessing this station should see that gifts and favors in the form of differentiated multiplicity are a manifestation of the absolute bounty, that is the absolute will, that is the face of God²¹⁶ annihilated in the possessor of the face.

There is no beautiful nor beautiful agent in existence to be worthy of praise for its beauty or its action save the Absolute Beautiful. What emphasizes it is their words, 'There is no power nor strength save in God',²¹⁷ the station of the negation of any power or strength from other than Him and the affirmation of their specification with God the Beautiful, however it may be in the form of undifferentiation. Moreover, the inward domain of this degree of unity is the unity of the attributes and the essence in the view of the folk of symbols and allusions.

The second pillar is التهلل (saying, 'there is no god but God'). It is the station of the unity of the attributes and the dissolution of all perfections, that is to say, a servant (of God) should see every beauty, perfection, goodness and splendour as a manifestation of the beauty and perfection of the Real and a self-disclosure of His majesty. Further, tahlil fits that station as it implies negation of divinity from other than Him. Here divinity is divinity of attributes, not acts. As well, the other two degrees of unity are veiled among the masters of taste and hearts.

The third pillar is التكبير (magnification). It is the station of the unity of essence and the absorption of all haecceities. For it is reported that أنه أكبر من أن يوصف²¹⁸ 'He is too great to be described',²¹⁸ but not to be otherwise, because there is nothing there. As for the other two degrees of unity, they are almost as good as hidden in the view of the folk of good initiatives from among the free.

The fourth pillar is التسبيح (glorification). It is the station of incomparability with the three modes of unity. For they include multiplicity and mutability (*talwīn*), while it implies incomparability and steadfastness (*tamkīn*), just as thereby is Unity brought to perfection. In (the station of) the unity of acts

the wayfarer sees every action as a manifestation of His action. To declare God's incomparability is not to see anyone else's action at all. As for the unity of attributes, it is tantamount to the absorption of attributes and names in His names and attributes. To declare God's incomparability in this station is not to see any attribute or name in the abode of realization save His names and attributes. As for the unity of the essence, it is equivalent to the dissolution of essences into His Essence. To declare God's incomparability in this station is not to see any haecceity or Ipseity save the Unitary Ipseity. In one of the accounts and reports we thus read,

يا من هو ، يا من ليس إلا هو

O He who is He! O He—no one else exists save He!²¹⁹

As for preoccupation (tawaghghul) which (almost) counts as the end of all stations and modes of unity, it is not to see any act or attribute even by God, the Most High, to deny multiplicity absolutely and to witness utter unity and sheer Ipseity, which is manifest in the very inwardness and inward in the very manifestation.²²⁰ As well, the declaration of incomparability is integrated in the other two stations.

Principle

Know that the precedence of 'glorification' in the holy report over all the other pillars is indicative of its eminence and high status in relation to all the other ranks and levels, even though it fits the station and configuration of angels. As for the mediation of 'magnification' between 'tahlīl' and 'praise of God', it is because the centre in immaterial realities encompasses the circumference, in contrast to sensory circles, as stated earlier.

It also indicates that His Essence, exalted by His rank, is surrounded by attributes and names, and that the Essence cannot

be seen except from behind the veil of the names, attributes and properties. The emphasis on praise of God by (his words) ‘there is no power nor strength save in God’ is meant to indicate that multiplicity in relation to action is deeper in accordance with the wayfarers’ view.

Principle

Know that the angels’ share in the three modes of Unity and declaration of incomparability is not as the share of the perfect man on all stations, or rather, each of them has his known station²²¹ beyond which he never goes. Hence, teaching in that configuration is in accordance with their preparednesses of which the Noble Prophet is well aware, as he embraces everything.²²² For the order of the perfection of all worlds and configurations is according to the divine decree.

As the rest of the holy hadith is beyond the scope of our goal, we have held back from its exposition, even though it is worthy of a long explanation, study and elaboration. May God bestow success upon us to devote a treatise to its exposition.

Conclusion

These teachings, which happened in the configuration of the intellect of the Noble Prophet, and his immaculate good family—upon all of whom be peace—are the reality of prophecy and Imamate in the unseen world of Command, as you have earlier learnt its elaboration and detail. Now let us conclude our speech in this topic and let us turn the ‘reins’ of the pen toward another stage of speech, namely vicegerency, prophecy and sanctity in the outward configuration of creation. I ask God to bestow success upon me, for He is the best companion. May God bless and send peace upon the Trustworthy Apostle and his Household, the good, the pure.

The Third Lamp

On the mysteries of vicegerency, prophecy and sanctity in the outward configuration of creation, the mystery of the mission of prophets—upon whom be peace—and their status in relation to our Prophet—upon whom and whose Household be blessings—with which we conclude our speech. In it are luminous sparkles that allude to lordly mysteries.

A Sparkle

You may have come to understand the account and the matter has been unveiled to you by our clarifying to you that divine names have (the level of) ‘encompassment’, ‘encompassedness’, ‘mastery’ and ‘subordinateness’. A divine name may encompass the names of beauty (in particular) as in ‘the Compassionate’. Another divine name may encompass the names of majesty (alone) as in ‘the Sovereign’ and ‘the Dominant’. No divine name enjoys the level of absolute all-comprehensiveness and the unity of the gathering of dominant and subtle divine realities in the manner of all-comprehensiveness and simplicity save the name ‘God’, the lord of all divine realities and the key to the keys of unseen²²³ treasures. Hence, it is the sempiternal, endless, beginningless, greatest, perfect, encompassing name. All other names, including the principal ones, do not enjoy such encompassment, even though some of them encompass the others, less or more.

A Sparkle

As well, you have learnt from the words and passages we have recited to you that the manifestation of external source-forms is in accordance with the requirement of divine names, in conformity with the order of lordly knowledge and the presence of immutable source-forms. Hence, each one of the realities of divine names has a tenuity constituting the locus of their manifestation in the unseen world. The ruling property in respect of what is manifest and the locus of manifestation is equal in

divine precedent: As for that which is a locus of manifestation of 'the Compassionate', mercy is predominant therein, just as it encompasses all the beautiful and subtle loci of manifestation and has authority over them; as for that which is a locus of manifestation of 'the Sovereign' and 'the One', it is such in relation to the overpowering loci of manifestation. There must then be, by virtue of the inevitable divine decree and the providence of the Compassionate, a vicegerent that brings together all the lordly attributes and the realities of divine names in order to be a locus of manifestation of the Greatest Name 'God'.

In general, as all that which is in the universe is a sign of that which is in the unseen, the reality of the human immutable source-form, namely Muḥammad's immutable source-form, and the presence of the Greatest Name must have a locus of manifestation in the source-form to make manifest lordly rules and regulations and control external source-forms, just as the Greatest Name controls all the other names and the immutable source-form of the perfect man all the other source-forms. Based on this, he who enjoys this attribute, namely the essential divine attribute, is the vicegerent of this world, as it is such in external reality.

A Sparkle

The Greatest Name 'God' in its all-comprehensive station brings together all the levels of divine names in the manner of all-comprehensive unity and simple reality, is well aware of their realities through self-knowledge and the manner of the manifestation of their forms in the presence of knowledge and the entified phenomenal world as well as the manner of their absorption in and their dissolution into the Unitary Station of the Unseen, that is the reality of the greater resurrection of divine names. For just as the greater resurrection of external phenomenal worlds is through the disappearance of their light

and Ipseity into the brilliance of lordly light and the return of every locus of manifestation to that which makes it manifest and its annihilation therein, so too the greater resurrection of immutable source-forms and divine names is through their (reduction to) submission under the sun of the Unity of the Essence and the extinction of their lights before Its light through the perfect man in the external source-forms, the immutable source-form of Muḥammad in the immutable source-forms and the Divine Greatest Name in the divine names, as you will later be told about its verification if God wills, wherein we will clarify the arcs of descent and ascent, provided that God bestows success. Similarly, the Divine Greatest Name lying in the external configuration brings together all the levels of names and the realities of source-forms, sees things as they are²²⁴ through self-sight and sees the manner of their connection with divine names and their arrival at the gate of their ‘lords’, that is the reality of the greater resurrection in respect of external phenomenal things. This is, in reality, the day of the Muḥammad Night of Measurement,²²⁵ as its verification will be stated, if God wills.

A Sparkle

Just as encompassing names rule the names lying within their domain and overpower them, and the more comprehensive and encompassing a name is, the more extensive its rule is and the more numerous its subjects and so on and so forth until it gets to the Greatest Name ‘God’, which encompasses the names—all of them—beginninglessly and endlessly and whose rule does not pertain to a certain name or names, so too is the case with the loci of manifestation exactly. For the universe is a reflective trace of what lies in divine names and lordly knowledge.

The amplitude or narrowness of the domain of vicegerency and prophecy in the world of Kingdom varies in accordance with

the encompassment of names ruling their possessor and lawgiver and so on and so forth until it gets to the locus of manifestation of the Divine Greatest Comprehensive Name. This is the underlying reason for the difference of prophets—upon whom be peace and blessings—in vicegerency and prophecy. Based on this, the vicegerency of the Greatest Name is everlasting, permanent, encompassing, beginningless, endless and authoritative in relation to the rest of prophecies and vicegerencies. So is the case with the loci of manifestation. The cycle of the prophecies of prophets—upon whom be peace—is the cycle of his prophecy and vicegerency. Similarly, they are the loci of manifestation of his holy essence and their vicegerencies the loci of manifestation of his encompassing vicegerency. As for he—upon whom and whose be blessings—he is the vicegerent of God's Greatest Name, and all the other prophets are the vicegerent of other encompassed names.

Rather prophets—all of them—are his vicegerents, just as their call is, in reality, a call for him and for his prophecy. Hence, 'Ādam and those who are below him are under his banner.'²²⁶ From the beginning of the manifestation of Kingdom to its end and submission under the radiance of the light of the One, the Dominant is the cycle of his outward vicegerency in the world of Kingdom.

A Sparkle

From the clarification we have given to you and the explanation we have offered, you can understand the (following) words of the master of the professors of Unity, the exemplar of the gnostics, the Commander of the Faithful—upon whom and whose Household be blessings -:

كنت مع الأنبياء باطناً ومع رسول الله ظاهراً

I was with prophets inwardly and with the Apostle of God outwardly.²²⁷

For he—upon whom be blessings—is the possessor of the universal absolute sanctity. Sanctity is, in turn, the inward domain of vicegerency, and the universal absolute sanctity is the inward domain of divine vicegerency. Hence, considering the station of his universal sanctity, he is well aware of every soul as to what it earns and is with all things²²⁸ with a divine shadowish self-subsistent witness, as is the shadow of true divine self-subsistent witness. However, as sanctity manifests itself in prophets more, he made special mention of them.

A Sparkle

It is worth mentioning that which the perfect gnostic Shaykh al-Qaḍī Sa‘īd al-Qummī—may God be pleased with him—abridged from that which some of the folk of knowledge had set out in detail. In *al-Bawāriq al-Malakūtiyyah* he thus said:

He said, During their unseen state under the curtains of names, which are the intermediaries of witnessing, external realities asked those names with a question of needingness and said, Nonexistence has blinded us to recognizing one another and to knowing the right made incumbent to you against us. Were you to manifest our source-forms, you would favor us, we would be abler to fulfill your obligations and your authority would be established. Today you are rulers over us by force, without troops or preparations. That which we request from you is then more beneficial for you than for us.

When divine names heard the words of unseen realities, they looked at their essences, believed contingent beings and asked for the manifestation of their properties so that their source-forms may be distinct by their traces. For the ‘Ever-Creating’, ‘the Governor’ and the like looked at their essences and did not see that which is created or that which is governed or the like. Then these names came to the presence of the name ‘the Author’ and said to him, ‘It would be proper for you to produce these properties whose realities have been brought into fulfillment.

‘The Author’ said, That belongs (exclusively) to the name ‘the Powerful’, for I am under his care. So you may resort to him. Thereupon ‘the Powerful’ said, I am under the superintendence of the name ‘the Willing’: I never produce any of your source-forms save with specification. That can only be realized when He singles out and receives a command from His Lord, in which case my will relate to production. Then they took recourse to ‘the Willing’ and told him of the words of ‘the Powerful’. ‘The Willing’ said, ‘The Powerful’ has spoken the truth. However, I will see whether knowledge had gone forth beforehand from the name ‘the All-knowing’ as to the manifestation of your traces, so I may specify of your properties as God wishes, for I am at His command. Then they came to the name ‘the All-knowing’, so ‘the All-knowing’ said, Knowledge had gone forth beforehand as to your production; however, (the observance of) good manners is worthier. Here the matter is not dependent on sheer neediness, or rather; there must be a (prior) permission repeatedly. We—all of us—have a presence protecting us, which is the name ‘God’.

Then the names gathered before the Divine Presence, made mention of their account to Him and showed to Him that which their realities require. He said, it must be admitted that I am a name that brings together your realities, contains your levels and is indicative of the Holy Essence and the Unitary Presence. So stop, you and your companions until I submit your intentions before Him. Thereupon He said, O He who is He! O He—there is no He save He!²²⁹ The Higher Plenum²³⁰ have argued and the source-forms have said so and so. Thereupon He was called from His inner self to come out unto them and tell each one of the names of that which their realities require. The Name ‘God’ came out along with the name ‘the Speaker’ translating from Him the contingents and divine names. He mentioned to them that which the Named had commanded. Then ‘the All-knowing’ was attached to the manifestation of the first contingent, ‘the

Powerful' the manifestation of the second contingent, 'the Willing' the rest of source-forms. So turns and cycles came into existence.

The foregoing matter gave rise to dispute and controversy as is required by the names of beauty and majesty. The source-forms said, We are afraid that our order may be subject to ruin or some of us may overstep the bounds of others, so we enter the nonexistence in which we were withdrawn. So they took recourse once again to the names under a directive from the names 'the All-knowing' and 'the Governor'. They thus said, O names that have authority over us! Should you possess a known criterion and a drawn limit that is to have an Imām who puts us down and puts down your effects upon us, which will be more proper for us and you (alike). When they heard that, they resorted to the name 'the Governor', so the 'Governor' entered unto the Named and came out with the command of the Real unto the name 'the Lord'. He said to him, an order has been issued to the effect that you do what exigency requires as to the subsistence of the contingents. He said, I hear and obey! Two ministers started to assist him in his affairs, namely 'the Governor' and 'the Elaborator'. God Most High says,

يَدِيرُ الْأَمْرَ يَفْصَلُ الْآيَاتِ لِعَلَّكُمْ بَلْقَاءَ رَبِّكُمْ تَوْقِنُونَ

He governs the course (and) elaborates the signs that you may be certain of encountering with your Lord.²³¹

That is your Lord, who acts as the Imam. So look to see how masterful is God's speech and how perfect His handiwork.²³² Here ends his speech.²³³

A Sparkle

Through God's bestowal of success and His good confirmation, you may, after fully understanding what lies in this treatise which I do not think you have been informed of in other

than it, come to grasp that which that gnostic has expressed symbolically and interpret that which that unveiler summed up.

Take care and take care—may God guard you in your beginning and your end—not to construe such word in their apparent sense, without deeply penetrating into their bottom. Do not rush to discredit them without apprehending their goal, as some of those who ascribe themselves to knowledge get used to. For they have made the criterion for the invalidity of issues lack of their acquaintance with or lack of their understanding them. Therefore, you see them accuse those great men of any falsehood and backbite these unveilers with every slander, even though it is greater (in sinfulness, with God) than adultery,²³⁴ out of their fanaticism with the fanaticism of pagan Ignorance.²³⁵ May God protect us from the evil of Satan,²³⁶ who intercepts the path to the Compassionate.

A Sparkle

Know that what we have recited to you and by which we lifted the veil from its mystery is only in view of the attribution of effects to their causes and the reduction of the affairs of the loci of lordship to their lords. It is as stated by the gnostic master, ‘Abdullāh al-Anṣārī,²³⁷

همه از آخر کار می ترسند و من از اول

All are afraid of the end of the course of action, but I of the beginning.

And as al-Mawlawī (ar-Rūmī)²³⁸ alluded to in his *Mathnawī*,

دیده ای باید سبب سوراخ کن

There must be an eye powerful enough to penetrate into outward appearances.²³⁹

In general, this is in accordance with the taste of the unveiling gnostic who remembers the beginningless covenant²⁴⁰ and the first decree. Otherwise, considering the order of the

manifestation of divine realities in the good holy temples relating to the prophets and friends of God—upon whom be peace—there is another stage of speech to unveil the covering from the desired goal. So listen to the mysteries recited to you, should you be among the free.

A Sparkle

In his treatise on the verification of the ‘four journeys’, the perfect gnostic, master of our masters, Āqā Muḥammad Riḍā al-Qumshīrī—may God be pleased with him—has referred to that which can be summed up as follows:

Know that ‘journey’ is an act of going from one’s homestead to a specified destination by traversing the waystations. This journey is of two kinds: ‘formal’, which is self-evident, and supraformal. The supraformal journey is divided into four: The first is the journey from creation to the Real by lifting the veils of darkness and light lying between the wayfarer and his essence, accompanying him beginninglessly and endlessly. The principal veils are three: the soulish dark veils, the intellective luminous and the spiritual. That is to say the wayfarer has to progress from the three stations through the removal of these three veils. When the veils are lifted, the wayfarer witnesses the beauty of the Real, in which case he will be annihilated from his essence. This is the station of annihilation, which includes (the stages of) the secret, the hidden and the most hidden. Here ends up his first journey, wherein he becomes a true genuine existence. A state of extinction may occur to him, and words of ecstasy may be issued from him, so he is declared faithless. If divine providence overtakes him, extinction will disappear, so he may acknowledge servanthood after the assumption of lordship.

Upon the end of the first journey, he enters upon the second journey, the journey from the Real to the Real with the Real. It is with the Real because he has become a friend of God and his a true genuine existence. He starts to wayfarer from the Essence to

perfections until he knows (and assumes) the (divine) names—all of them²⁴¹—except that which He appropriates to Himself. So his sanctity will be perfect, and his essence, attributes and acts will be annihilated in the Essence, Attributes and Acts of the Real! Here annihilation from annihilation, that is the station of the ‘most hidden’, is realized. The cycle of sanctity is here brought into perfection, wherein the second journey is completed.

Then he enters upon the third journey, the journey from the Real to creation.

In this waystation the wayfarer advances further within the levels of acts, complete sobriety dawns on him, he subsists through God’s subsistence, travels in the worlds of the Invincibility, the Dominion and the terrestrial realm, and he attains a share of prophecy, but he has no access to the prophecy of lawgiving. Here ends the third journey.

There he enters upon the fourth journey, the journey from creation to creation through the Real. Here he witnesses the creatures, their properties and concomitants, recognizes their harm and benefit, knows the manner of their return to God and what drives them (to Him) and informs thereof and of what obstructs their progress, in which case he will be a prophet with a prophecy of lawgiving.²⁴² Here ends his speech in brief.

A Sparkle

In my view the first journey is from creation to the Real, that is qualified by lifting the veils (an aspect relating to creation) and seeing the beauty of the Real through His actual manifestation which is, in fact, the manifestation of the Essence in the levels of phenomenal worlds (an aspect relating to the Real) and, in other words, through the unveiling of the face of the Real to him. At the end of this journey he sees all creatures as the manifestation of the Real and His signs. Here ends up the first journey. Then he enters upon the second journey. It is the journey from the qualified Real to the absolute Real, wherein existential ipseities

are dissolved before him, creational entifications are completely absorbed, his greater resurrection stands forth through the manifestation of complete unity and the Real discloses Himself to him in the station of His One-and-Allness. At that time he will not see things at all, or rather, will be annihilated from his essence, attributes and acts.

Were any degree of egoism to remain in these two journeys, his satan dwelling between his two sides would manifest itself by lordship and ecstatic utterances would be issued from him. Words of ecstasy—all of them—proceed from the deficiency of the wayfarer and wayfaring and the continuance of egoism and egocentricity. It is for this very reason that from the viewpoint of the folk of wayfaring a wayfarer must refer to a teacher to guide him on the path of wayfaring, well aware of its methods, and never deviating from the path of divine-law exercises. For the paths to inward wayfaring are not confined to the number of human souls.²⁴³

Furthermore, if divine providence takes him under its wing—by divine providence is meant the station of the measuring out of preparednesses, as expressed by Shaykh al-‘Arabī thus: The receptacle comes from nothing than His holiest emanation²⁴⁴—it helps him to come to his senses, and he enters upon the third journey. It is the journey from the Real to the true and genuine creation with the Real, that is from the presence of All-comprehensive Unity to the presence of immutable source-forms. Thereupon the realities of things and their perfections will be unveiled to him along with the procedure for their gradual progress to the first station and their arrival at their original home. However, in this journey he has not been a lawgiving prophet, for he has not returned to creation in the entified configuration yet.

Then he enters upon the fourth journey. It is the journey from creation that is the Real, namely from the presence of immutable source-forms to creation, namely the external source-

forms, with the Real, namely through His true and genuine existence.

Here the wayfarer witnesses the beauty of the Real in all things, gains knowledge of their stations in the configuration of knowledge and is well aware of the path of their wayfaring towards the presence of source-forms and upward as well as the procedure for their arrival at their original home. In this journey, he codifies laws, makes the rulings: the outward, formal and the inward, supraformal, reports and communicates on behalf of God, His attributes, His names and His true teachings in proportion to the preparedness of creatures.

A Sparkle

Let it be known that every apostolic lawgiver must go through these four journeys, even though their ranks are different and their stations disparate. For some prophets and apostles are the loci of manifestation of, for example, the name 'the Compassionate'. Based on this, in the first journey he witnesses the names 'the Compassionate' as manifest in the world, while his second journey ends up with the absorption of things in the name 'the Compassionate'. Thereupon he returns with mercy and compassionate existence to the world, in which case the cycle of his prophecy will be limited. So is the case with the loci of manifestation of all the other names in accordance with their difference in relation to the presence of knowledge, so it continues until it comes to the locus of manifestation of the name 'God'. So he witnesses at the end of his first journey the Real with all His affairs in outward appearance, and he will not be distracted by a task from another. At the end of his second journey, he witnesses the absorption of all realities in the Divine All-comprehensive Name or rather, its absorption in sheer Unity too. Thereupon he returns to creation with a divine comprehensive existence. He has beginningless and endless prophecy and outward and inward vicegerency.

A Sparkle

Know that perfect friends of God may also experience these four journeys, including the fourth journey, as exercised by our master, the Commander of the Faithful and his infallible descendants—upon whom be peace. However, as the Prophet—upon whom and whose Household be blessings—is the possessor of the station of all-comprehensiveness, there has been no room for lawgiving by any one of the creatures following his death. In this light, this station (of lawgiving) belongs to the Apostle of God by principality (and essentially) and to his infallible vicegerents by subordination (and accidentally), or rather, they—all of them—possess a single spirituality.

Our master and teacher in divine knowledge the perfect gnostic, Shāh-Ābādī—may God make his protection last for his disciples—said: Had ‘Alī—upon whom be peace—come into existence before the Apostle of God—upon whom and whose Household be blessings—he would have proclaimed the divine law (the *Sharī‘ah*), as proclaimed by the Prophet, and he would have been a prophet, by virtue of their unification in spirituality and outward and supersensory stations.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Take care, O spiritual friend, and take care—may God help you in your beginning and your ends—not to unveil those mysteries to those not worthy of them, nor to withhold them from other than the worthy. For the discipline of the inward domain of the revealed law falls under divine precepts and lordly mysteries that must be covered from the hands and sights of strangers, since it is too deep to be attained by their clear and precise ideas.

Take care not to look at these pages carefully except after a thorough investigation into the words of the deiform ones from the stoics and a careful study of the sorts of knowledge under

those worthy of them from the great masters and noble gnostics. Otherwise, mere reference to such sorts of knowledge increases in nothing but ruin and produces nothing but loss.

Let us conclude our speech by extending praise to God, the Sovereign, the All-knowing and sending blessings and peace upon His prophets and great friends, especially their master and the most eminent, of them Muḥammad and his Household—upon all of whom be blessings.

Finished is the writing of this treatise by its poor indigent author who has no control over his own benefit or harm or death or life or resurrection²⁴⁵ on Sunday morning of the twenty-fifth of Shawwāl in the year 1349, according to the Muslim era reckoned from the Emigration of the Prophet—upon whom and whose Household be endless and beginningless blessings, peace and salutation. Praise belongs to God, first and last, outwardly and inwardly. ✍



Endnotes

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- ¹ Reference to a *ḥadīth*, frequently cited in *Ṣūfī* works, which runs as follows: *He (God) was in a cloud with air neither above nor below it.* See *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*, the Word of *Hūd*.
- ² Allusion to a prayer for the month of Rajab reported by the Twelfth Imām Mahdī (upon whom be peace): *O Inward in His manifestation and Manifest in His inwardness and hiddenness!*
- ³ Perhaps Imām Khomeinī has conflated two Qur’anic verses of close purport that is 13:29 and 23:20.
- ⁴ The Qur’an 53:14.
- ⁵ Reference to a *ḥadīth* in which the Prophet is reported to have replied to Gabriel thus: *Rather, the Highest Companion.*
- ⁶ Reference to the Qur’an 53:9.
- ⁷ Allusion to the Qur’an 2:256.
- ⁸ Allusion to the recurrently, successively and widely narrated *ḥadīth* known as *Ḥadīth ath-Thaqalayn*, the two precious things.
- ⁹ Allusion to the Qur’an 2:35 and 7:19-22.
- ¹⁰ Allusion to a well known *ḥadīth*, frequently cited in *Ṣūfī* works, which runs as follows: *Die before you Die.*
- ¹¹ *Mir’āt al-‘Uqūl*, Book of Faith and Disbelief, *ḥadīth* 6.
- ¹² *Ḥāfiẓ Dīvān*, lyric poem 6.
- ¹³ There are words of similar purport, as in the whispered prayer of the knowers by Imām Zayn al-‘Ābidīn (upon whom be peace), where he says: and Thou hast assigned to Thy creatures no way to know Thee save incapacity to know Thee (Chittick, *The Psalms of Islam*). You may also refer to Mullā Ṣadrā’s *al-Mabda’ wa’l-Ma’ād*, p. 38 and Ibn ‘Arabī’s *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyyah*, vol. 2, p. 255.
- ¹⁴ The verse is perhaps anonymous.
- ¹⁵ A verse attributed to Shams Tabrīzī.
- ¹⁶ The Qur’an 6:91.
- ¹⁷ Allusion to the Qur’an 40:63.
- ¹⁸ The Qur’an 5:64.
- ¹⁹ *Uṣūl al-Kāfi*, Book of Unity, vol. 1, p.100.
- ²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 82.

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- ²¹ (Author's Footnote in Original) The Name (*al-ism*) commences with *alif* and *lam* (i.e. the), whenever it appears, considering that the Name is God, so what follows it is a clarification thereof.
- ²² Reference to the principle expressed in the well known *ḥadīth*: *God's mercy precedes His wrath*.
- ²³ Reference to a well known *ḥadīth* that runs: *He who knows himself knows his Lord*. It is also reported from Imām 'Alī (upon whom be peace).
- ²⁴ Allusion to the Qur'an 38:27.
- ²⁵ Allusion to the Qur'an 7:180.
- ²⁶ See no. 2, above.
- ²⁷ *Al-Asfār al-Arb'ah*, vol. 8, p. 327.
- ²⁸ The Qur'an 59:22-24.
- ²⁹ The Qur'an 50:37.
- ³⁰ Al-Qummī, Muḥammad ibn Sa'īd, known as Qaḍī Sa'īd, is a celebrated Shi'i scholar. He studied under al-Fayḍ al-Kāshānī, 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Kāshānī and Rajab 'Alī al-Tabrīzī. He acted as a judge in Qum, so he was known as Qāḍī. His most important writings are: *Asrār aṣ-Ṣalāt*, *Sharḥ Tawḥīd aṣ-Ṣadūq* and *al-Bawāriq al-Malakūtiyyah*; and he also wrote notes to *Uthūlujiyyah* and *al-Ishārāt*.
- ³¹ *Majmū'at ar-Rasā'il*, *Risālah al-Bawāriq al-Malakūtiyyah* (in manuscript).
- ³² Ibn 'Arabī Muḥy ad-Dīn, known as al-Shaykh al-Akbār (the Greatest Master) was one of the greatest Sufis of Islam. He was certainly the most prolific of all *Ṣūfī* writers. Of his *Ṣūfī* works, the most important are: *Al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyyah* (The Meccan Revelations) and *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam* (The Bezels of Wisdom). He divides the branches of knowledge into three classes: a) those which may be attained through reason; b) the knowledge attained through states; c) and knowledge of mysteries.
- ³³ *Al-Futūḥāt*, vol. 2, pp. 302-3.
- ³⁴ The *ḥadīth* is reported from Imām 'Alī (upon whom be peace) on his authority of the Prophet.

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- ³⁵ [Author's Footnote in Original] Some of the great masters—may God be pleased with him—has attributed this *ḥadīth* to our Master Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq (upon whom be peace), as I have seen in some of his treatises.
- ³⁶ *ʿIm al-Yaqīn*, vol. 1, p. 49. However, in *al-Tajalliyyāt al-Ilahiyyah* it is attributed to a lot of the gnostics.
- ³⁷ In *Uṣūl al-Kāfi*, vol. 1, p. 103, al-Fuḍayl ibn Yasār said: I heard Abdullāh saying, Surely God is never described. How should He be described when He has said in His Book, And they measure not God with His true measure (6: 91). So He is never described by a measure without being greater than it.
- ³⁸ Ibn Bābawayh, known as aṣ-Ṣadūq, is universally regarded as one of the foremost Shi'i doctors and traditionists. He was born as the result of a prayful request to the Hidden Imām. He was pre-eminent in knowledge, memory, justice, intelligence and reliability. His most important extant books are: 1) *Man lā Yaḥḍuruh al-Faqīh*, one of the 'four books'; 2) *Risālah al-I'tiqādāt*; 3) *Ikmal ad-Dīn*; 4) *Kitāb at-Tawḥīd*.
- ³⁹ *Sharḥ at-Tawḥīd*, vol. 3, p. 6.
- ⁴⁰ See *al-Kāfi*, vol. 1, p. 82 and *at-Tawḥīd*, p. 31.
- ⁴¹ As in His words, *Nothing is as His likeness* (42:11).
- ⁴² The Qur'an 7:180.
- ⁴³ The Qur'an 17:110.
- ⁴⁴ [Author's Footnote in Original] In the thirty—second prayer from the *Psalms of Muhammad's Household* (upon whom be peace) we read: *Attributes go astray in Thee, descriptions fall apart below Thee. Consider, O the needy, the subtlety of clarification: How he has affirmed the attributes and remarked on their absorption in the Essence of Unity, which is the final goal of the investigation of the possessors of metaphysics and the utmost degree of the witnessing of the masters of gnosis. In their words (upon whom be peace) are allusions and symbols that the fine points of wisdom do not reach a tenth out of its tenths, nor does the witnessing of the masters of aspirations arrive at a mustard seed of it.*
- ⁴⁵ *Al-Asfār al-Arba'ah*, vol. 6, p. 110.

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- ⁴⁶ Reference to the Qur'an 6:59.
- ⁴⁷ Reference to a *ḥadīth* often quoted in Sunni sources: God has seventy—or seventy thousand—veils of light and darkness; were they to be removed, the glories of His face would incinerate everything perceived by the creatures' eyes. Shi'ite sources add several parallel *ḥadīths* from the Prophet and the Imams (see *Bihār al-Anwār*, vol. 5, pp. 39-47).
- ⁴⁸ Perhaps an allusion to the Psalms of Islam, prayers 16 and 17 as well as the whispered prayers of the utterly poor and the knowers.
- ⁴⁹ The Qur'an 18:109.
- ⁵⁰ The Qur'an 97:1.
- ⁵¹ Al-Shāh-Ābādī, Mīrzā Muḥammad 'Alī, is a noted Shi'i jurisprudent and mystic. He studied under al-Ākhūnd al-Khurāsānī, Mīrzā Muḥammad Taqī al-Shīrāzī and Mīrzā Hāshim al-Ishkevarī. Imām Khomeinī had attended his lessons on Islamic mysticism and ethics for six years. Among his notable works are: *Shadharāt al-Ma'ārif*, *al-Insān wa'l-Fiṭrah* and *Manāzil as-Sālikīn*; and he has also notes to *Kifāyāt al-Uṣūl*.
- ⁵² Allusion to a *ḥadīth* frequently cited in Sunni sources: *The Faithful Spirit inspired into my mind...* (See al-Qayṣarī's *Sharḥ Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*, ch. 10.)
- ⁵³ See no. 47, above.
- ⁵⁴ See no. 47, above.
- ⁵⁵ See 'Awālī al-La'ālī', vol. 1, p. 54 and *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*, the Word of *Hūd*.
- ⁵⁶ See *Miṣbāḥ al-Uns*, p. 74.
- ⁵⁷ Al-Qunawī, Ṣadr ad-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Ishāq, is Ibn 'Arabī's most eminent disciple. His essential point is that only the perfect man manifests all divine names in perfect balance, thereby standing at the center point of the circle of existence and not coming under the influence of any specific attributes. Every other created thing manifests specific names of God and is dominated by either oneness or manyness. His most important works are: *Miftāḥ al-Ghayb wa'l-Wujūd*, *Tafsīr al-Fātiḥah*, *al-Fukūk*, *al-Nafāḥūt al-Ilāhiyyah* and *al-Nuṣūṣ*.

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- ⁵⁸ *Miftāḥ al-Ghayb wa'l-Wujūd*, p. 77.
- ⁵⁹ Al-Kulaynī, Muḥammad ibn Ya‘qūb ibn Ishāq ar-Rāzī, known as *Thiqat al-Islām*, is one of the well known Imami scholars and traditionalists. His *al-Kāfi*, which is considered one of the four canonical collections of traditions on which Imami *fiqh* is to be based and often as the most authoritative among them, is divided into the *uṣūl*, dealing mainly with theology, prophecy and Imamate; the *furū‘* dealing with jurisprudence, and a final volume containing miscellaneous traditions of most edifying character.
- ⁶⁰ *Uṣūl al-Kāfi*, vol. 1, p. 147.
- ⁶¹ The Qur’an 72:27.
- ⁶² *Uṣūl al-Kāfi*, vol. 1, p. 256.
- ⁶³ See *al-Wāfi*, vol. 1, p. 113.
- ⁶⁴ [Author’s Footnote in Original] In that eminent book it is also narrated by ‘Alī ibn Mūsā ar-Riḍā (upon whom be peace) that the Apostle of God (upon whom and whose Household be blessings and peace) said: *God, Exalted and Glorified be He, measured out the measures and governed the course of action two thousand years before Adam (or, as in another version, the world)*. However, this treatise is not set down to verify that. Success-giving may help to devote a treatise thereto, if God wills.
- ⁶⁵ *At-Tawḥīd*, p. 376.
- ⁶⁶ Allusion to the Qur’an 4:79.
- ⁶⁷ Al-Qayṣarī, Dāwūd ibn Maḥmūd, is one of the most celebrated Muslim gnostics. He wrote an exposition on *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*, with a highly widely-known, useful and valuable *Introduction*.
- ⁶⁸ Al-Qayṣarī’s *Introduction to Fusus*, ch. 3.
- ⁶⁹ Reference to the Qur’an 6:9.
- ⁷⁰ *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*, the Word of Ādam.
- ⁷¹ Allusion to the Qur’an 57:4.
- ⁷² Allusion to the Qur’an 3:7.
- ⁷³ Reference to the Qur’an 17:43.
- ⁷⁴ For more on the principle of ‘what is simple in reality’, see *al-Aṣfār*, vol. 2, p. 368, vol. 3, p. 40, vol. 6, p. 100, etc.
- ⁷⁵ Reference to the Qur’an 7:54.

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- ⁷⁶ *Ḥāfiẓ Dīvān*, lyric poem 94.
- ⁷⁷ Aristotle (384-322 B.C.) is a preeminent Greek philosopher. Chiefly influenced by his association with Plato, he also makes wide use of the pre-Socratics. In 335 he founded his philosophical school in the lyceum. The site's colonnaded walk conferred on Aristotle and his group the name 'the Peripatetics'. He appreciates the evidential value of observation and believes that long-received and well-entrenched opinion is likely to contain at least part of the truth.
- ⁷⁸ *Majmū'āt ar-Rasā'il* (in manuscript), p. 294.
- ⁷⁹ Perhaps an allusion to the Qur'an 2:33, 2:151, etc.
- ⁸⁰ Reference to the Qur'an 14:4.
- ⁸¹ *Al-Muḥajjah al-Bayḍā'*, vol. 8, p. 193.
- ⁸² The Qur'an 2:7.
- ⁸³ The Qur'an 2:10.
- ⁸⁴ The Qur'an 3:78.
- ⁸⁵ Allusion to the Qur'an 17:14.
- ⁸⁶ Allusion to the *ḥadīth* cited above, no. 23.
- ⁸⁷ Reference to the Qur'an 35:43.
- ⁸⁸ Reference to the Qur'an 37:8.
- ⁸⁹ *Uṣūl al-Kāfi*, vol. 1, p. 85.
- ⁹⁰ *At-Tawḥīd*, p. 285.
- ⁹¹ Imām Khomeinī has explained this *ḥadīth* in his *Forty Ḥadīths*, *ḥadīth* 37. As well, Mulla Ṣadra in his *Sharḥ Uṣūl al-Kāfi*, p. 232 and al-Majlisi in *Mir'āt al-'Uqūl*, vol. 1, p. 294 and *Biḥār al-Anwār*, vol. 3, p. 274, among others, have undertaken to give an exposition thereof.
- ⁹² [Author's Footnote in Original] The *ḥadīth* is reported in *al-Kāfi* from Abdullāh where he said, The Commander of the Faithful said: Know God through God, the Apostle through apostleship and those in authority through commanding what is right, justice and kindness. In *at-Tawḥīd*, it is thus narrated; however, it does not make mention of the word 'command'. A number of masters such as aṣ-Ṣadūq, al-Kulaynī, Ṣadr al-Muta'llihīn, al-Muḥaddith al-Kāshānī, al-Qaḍī Sa'īd al-Qummī, among others, have undertaken to explain it.

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- ⁹³ Al-Kāshānī, ‘Abd al-Razzāq, known as Kamāl ad-Dīn, is a celebrated *Šūfī* author. He was a *Šūfī* of the school of Ibn ‘Arabī, though with touches of independence, and he gave much labour to defence and exposition of his master. He was the author of a large number of works, such as *Iṣṭilāḥāt aṣ-Šūfīyyah*, *Ta’wīl al-Qur’ān*, *Sharḥ Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*, *Sharḥ Manāzil as-Sā’irīn*, etc.
- ⁹⁴ Glosses to the Exposition of Ibn al-Farīd’s *Divān*, p. 23.
- ⁹⁵ Reference to the Qur’an 7:54.
- ⁹⁶ Allusion to an oft-repeated *ḥadīth* in Sunni sources: I find the breath of the Compassionate (or your Lord) coming from the direction of Yemen (Musnad Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, vol. 2, p. 541.)
- ⁹⁷ Allusion to the well known *ḥadīth*: I am the city of knowledge, and ‘Alī is its gate.
- ⁹⁸ Allusion to the Qur’an 42:51.
- ⁹⁹ The Qur’an 50:31.
- ¹⁰⁰ Reference to the prayer for the month of Rajab where Imām Mahdī (upon whom be peace) says, Bless... Thy angels brought nigh, and the untold multitudes (of angels) set in ranks and encircling (the Throne).
- ¹⁰¹ See no. 96, above.
- ¹⁰² Allusion to the Qur’an 15:28-29 and 38:71-72.
- ¹⁰³ Reference to the Qur’an 53:8.
- ¹⁰⁴ Reference to the Qur’an 53:9.
- ¹⁰⁵ The verse, whose composer is anonymous, runs as follows: Our expressions are diverse, but your beauty single and each refers to that beauty.
- ¹⁰⁶ Reference to the Qur’an 34:3.
- ¹⁰⁷ Reference to the narrative of Moses and al-Khiḍr as recounted in the Qur’an 18:64-82.
- ¹⁰⁸ The Qur’an 24:35.
- ¹⁰⁹ Reference to the Qur’an 24:35.
- ¹¹⁰ Reference to an oft-repeated *ḥadīth* in *Šūfī* texts: There are as many paths to God as there are human souls (see *Sharḥ Gulshan-e Rāz*, p. 153 and al-Qayṣarī’s *Introduction to Fuṣūṣ*, ch. 12.)
- ¹¹¹ The Qur’an 43:84.

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- ¹¹² *‘Ilm al-Yaqīn*, vol. 1, p. 54 and *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*, the Word of Noah.
- ¹¹³ Refer to the Qur’an 37:142-145 and 68:48-50.
- ¹¹⁴ *‘Ilm al-Yaqīn*, vol. 1, p. 520.
- ¹¹⁵ See *Mirṣād al-‘Ibād*, p. 28, *Kalimāt Maknūnah*, p. 12, *Sharḥ-e Gulshan-e Rāz*, p. 746, 759 and *Asrār al-Ḥikam*, p. 23.
- ¹¹⁶ See no. 96, above.
- ¹¹⁷ See *Sharḥ-e Gulshan-e Rāz*, p. 746.
- ¹¹⁸ See *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*, the Word of Joseph.
- ¹¹⁹ Allusion to the prophetic *ḥadīth*: Thorough justice did the heavens and the earth stand forth.
- ¹²⁰ Allusion to the Qur’an 11:112.
- ¹²¹ See *‘Ilm al-Yaqīn*, vol. 2, p. 971, *Majma‘ al-Bayān* on his interpretation of 11:112, and *al-Kashshaf*, vol. 2, p. 432. [Author’s footnote in original] As well, his words in the Prayer for the Opening (*al-iftitāḥ*) upon praying for our *Master*, the *Riser* (could I but sacrifice my spirit for him): *‘Establish for him his religion which You have approved for him, and give him in exchange safety after his fear, wherein he serves You, ascribing nothing as partner unto You’* are understood to imply that. For servants are the leaves of the tree of sanctity, and leaves are the tree’s adornment. Based on this, the saint stands sponsor for educating the servants. It is for this reason that their abandonment and their worship are ascribed to him, upon whom be God’s blessings. Be kind and subtle, and you will find it clearly.
- ¹²² Al-‘Umarī, Muḥammad ibn ‘Uthmān ibn Sa‘īd, is the second of the representatives of Imām Mahdī (upon whom be peace) during his lesser occultation. He undertook to manage the affairs of the Shi‘ah in the name of the Hidden Imām for forty years.
- ¹²³ See no. 2, above.
- ¹²⁴ *Al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyyah*, vol. 2, p. 40.
- ¹²⁵ See *Sharḥ-e Gulshan-e Rāz*, p. 729.
- ¹²⁶ The Qur’an 39:69.
- ¹²⁷ The Qur’an 4:79.
- ¹²⁸ The Qur’an 57:3.
- ¹²⁹ *Iqbāl al-A‘māl*, the Acts of the Day of *‘Arafah*.

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- ¹³⁰ See no. 118, above.
- ¹³¹ Shams ad-Dīn Ḥāfiẓ al-Shīrāzī was a Persian mystic and poet. He was born sometime between the years 1310 and 1337 in Shīrāz, Medieval Persia. John Payne, who has translated the *Ḥāfiẓ Dīvān*, regards Ḥāfiẓ as the greatest poet of the world. His lyrical poems, known as *ghazals*, are noted for their beauty and bring to fruition the love, mysticism, and early *Sūfi* themes that had long pervaded Persian poetry. Though Ḥāfiẓ's poetry is influenced by his Islamic faith, he is widely respected by Hindus, Christians and others. See *Ḥāfiẓ Dīvān*, lyric poem 196.
- ¹³² *Shathīyyāt* is a technical term in Sufism meaning ecstatic expressions, commonly used for mystical sayings that are frequently outrageous in character. Al-Sarraj applied the term to such utterances as Abu Yazid al-Bistami's '*Glory be to me, how great is my status*' and al-Hallāj's '*I am the Real*'.
- ¹³³ *ʿIlm al-Yaqīn*, vol. 2, p. 1061.
- ¹³⁴ The Qur'an 9: 49.
- ¹³⁵ *Al-Asfār al-Arba'ah*, vol. 6, pp. 181-182.
- ¹³⁶ Porphyry is a Greek Neoplatonist philosopher, second to Plotinus in influence. Though not noted for original thought, he dedicated himself to explicating Aristotle's logic and defending Plotinus's version of Neoplatonism. His *Isagoge* purports to give an elementary exposition of Aristotle's *Categories*.
- ¹³⁷ *Al-Asfār al-Arba'ah*, vol. 6, pp. 181-182.
- ¹³⁸ Al-Suhrawardī, Shahāb ad-Dīn Yaḥyā ibn Ḥabash, well known Persian innovative philosopher-scientist, is the founder of an independent non-Aristotelian philosophical school named 'the Philosophy of Illumination' (*Hikmat al-Ishrāq*), which is also the eponymous title of his most widely-known text. He is thus commonly referred to as 'the Master of Illumination' (*Shaykh al-Ishrāq*).
- ¹³⁹ *Sharḥ-e Hikmāt-e al-Ishrāq*, pp. 358-367.
- ¹⁴⁰ *Al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyyah*, vol. 2, p. 133.
- ¹⁴¹ *Bihār al-Anwār*, vol. 15, p. 24.
- ¹⁴² *Ibid.*, vol. 16, p. 402.

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- ¹⁴³ Refer to *Biḥār al-Anwār*, vol. 27, p. 280-281 and vol. 25, p. 17.
- ¹⁴⁴ Allusion to the Qur'an 55:33.
- ¹⁴⁵ Reference to the Qur'an 33:72.
- ¹⁴⁶ The Qur'an 33:17.
- ¹⁴⁷ Reference to the Qur'an 53:9.
- ¹⁴⁸ The Qur'an 53: 9.
- ¹⁴⁹ Allusion to what is reported from Imām 'Alī (upon whom be peace) in his speech to Kumayl. See *Kalimat Maknunah*, p. 32.
- ¹⁵⁰ Al-Qumshī'ī, Muḥammad Riḍā, is one of the well known teachers of Islamic mysticism and philosophy. He used to teach the books of the Peripatetics, the Illuminationists and Mullā Ṣadrā, with an exceptional mastery indicative of his accuracy and broad-mindedness. He was unique during his lifetime in understanding the fine points of gnosticism. His most important books are *Risalat Al-Asfār al-Arba'ah*, *Notes to Tamhīd al-Qawā'id* and *Notes to Sharḥ al-Qayṣarī 'alā'l-Fuṣūṣ*.
- ¹⁵¹ See *Hāshiyah 'alā Sharḥ al-Qayṣarī 'alā'l-Fuṣūṣ*.
- ¹⁵² Allusion to the Qur'an 50:22.
- ¹⁵³ See no. 118, above.
- ¹⁵⁴ Refer to *Uṣūl al-Kāfi*, vol. 1, p. 114.
- ¹⁵⁵ [Author's footnote in original] Another meaning thereof is that an independent regard for the names without looking into the named is disbelief, for the true deity is covered by the names. As well, an independent regard for them when looking into the deity is polytheism. However, to render a name a mirror to the worship of the Essence is (the doctrine of) Unity. It has still another more accurate meaning.
- ¹⁵⁶ [Author's footnote in original] In the first chapter of the sixth technique of *Physics*, the Shaykh said, The name 'soul' applies to it not out of its substance, or rather, in view of the fact that it governs bodies and is gauged thereby. Therefore, the body is taken in its definition, as, say, building is taken in the definition of the builder, even though it is not taken in his definition inasmuch as he is a human being. For this reason, a regard for soul became part of physics, for looking into the soul inasmuch as it is a soul in

tantamount to looking into it inasmuch as it has to do with matter and motion.

¹⁵⁷ Ṣadr ad-Dīn al-Shīrāzī, known as Mulla Ṣadrā, is the leading Iranian Shi'ī philosopher of the Ṣafawid period. His philosophical system, although highly original, owes a debt to earlier schools of thought, particularly theology, Avicennan metaphysics, Ibn 'Arabī, Sufism, the Ishrāqī philosophy of Shahāb ad-Dīn al-Suhrawardī and the School of Iṣfahān. To these he adds several original doctrines, notably: a) the principiality of existence as against quiddity; b) the unification of intellect and intelligibles; c) and the movement of all beings in their substances as well as in their qualities (*al-ḥarakah al-jawhariyyah*).

¹⁵⁸ *Al-Asfār al-Arba'ah*, vol. 8, p. 12.

¹⁵⁹ The Qur'an 7:29.

¹⁶⁰ See *Baṣā'ir ad-Darajāt*, vol. 1, p. 39, *Kamāl ad-Dīn*, p. 254, and *Ma'ānī al-Akhhbār*, p. 108.

¹⁶¹ The Qur'an 7:54.

¹⁶² Refer to *Uṣūl al-Kāfi*, vol. 1, p. 110.

¹⁶³ *Uṣūl al-Kāfi*, vol. 1, p. 441.

¹⁶⁴ Al-Junayd al-Baghdādī, originally from Nahaw, received from the gnostics the title Sayyid aṭ-Ṭā'ifāh (the Lord of the Group). He is deemed one of the moderate gnostics. The kind of ecstatic utterances issued from others were never heard from his lips. He did not even put on the usual clothes of the Sufis, but dressed as scholars and jurists did. He used to say, If I thought clothes were of importance I would make an outfit of molten iron, for the call of truth is that there is no significance in the cloak, importance lies in the (inward) glow.

¹⁶⁵ *At-Tawhīd*, p. 179.

¹⁶⁶ The Qur'an 24: 35.

¹⁶⁷ *Uthlujiyah*, p. 293.

¹⁶⁸ Ibn Sīnā, Abū 'Alī al-Ḥusayn ibn 'Abdullāh, known in the West as Avicenna, follows the encyclopedic conception of the sciences traditional since the time of the Greek Sages in uniting philosophy with the study of nature and in seeing the perfection of man as lying

in both knowledge and action. He was also as illustrious a physician as he was a philosopher. In accordance with Islam he believes in God as the Creator. He attempts to integrate dogma with his philosophical formulation. He contributed also to the advancement of all the sciences accessible in his day: natural history, physics, chemistry, astronomy, mathematics, music. Economics and politics benefited from his experience as a statesman. Moral and religious questions, Qur'anic exegesis, statements on Şūfī doctrines and behaviour are also among his interests.

¹⁶⁹ *Al-Shifā', al-Ilāhiyyāt*, p. 402.

¹⁷⁰ *Sharḥ Hikmat al-Ishrāq*, p. 342.

¹⁷¹ The Qur'an 54:50.

¹⁷² The Qur'an 2:115.

¹⁷³ *Risālat an-Niṣūṣ*, p. 74.

¹⁷⁴ *Miftāḥ al-Ghayb wa'l-Wujūd*, p. 69.

¹⁷⁵ *Iṣṭilāḥāt aṣ-Şūfiyyah*, p. 118.

¹⁷⁶ See no. 118, above.

¹⁷⁷ As reported in *Jāmi' al-Asrār*, p. 163 and *al-Muqaddamāt min Naṣṣ an-Nuṣūṣ*, pp. 361, 419 and 447.

¹⁷⁸ The Qur'an 57: 3.

¹⁷⁹ See no. 129, above.

¹⁸⁰ Allusion to the Qur'an 89:21.

¹⁸¹ Allusion to the Qur'an 3:182.

¹⁸² Reference to the Qur'an 53:9.

¹⁸³ See *Kalimāt Maknūnah*, p. 101.

¹⁸⁴ See *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*, the Word of Idrīs.

¹⁸⁵ See *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*, the Word of Idrīs.

¹⁸⁶ *Majmū'at ar-Rasā'il* (in manuscript), p. 295.

¹⁸⁷ I have not found the proof text of the quotation in the printed versions of the book.

¹⁸⁸ Plato is a preeminent Greek philosopher whose chief contribution consists in his conception of the observable world as an imperfect image of a realm of unobservable and unchanging 'Forms', and his conception of the best life as one centered on the love of these divine objects.

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- ¹⁸⁹ *Uthulujiyah*, p. 237.
- ¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 169.
- ¹⁹¹ Refer to *Sarguzasht-r Ibn Sīnā*, p. 3.
- ¹⁹² Reference to the Qur'an 50:16.
- ¹⁹³ See no. 78, above.
- ¹⁹⁴ See no. 5, above.
- ¹⁹⁵ Reference to a well known report in Shi'i sources. See *Uṣūl al-Kāfi*, vol. 1, p. 10.
- ¹⁹⁶ Allusion to a report cited in *Uṣūl al-Kāfi*, vol. 2, p. 20.
- ¹⁹⁷ Allusion to the Qur'an 58:22.
- ¹⁹⁸ Allusion to an oft-repeated ḥadīth in Ṣūfī texts: *A single attraction of God is parallel to the worship of all men and jinn.*
- ¹⁹⁹ *Uṣūl al-Kāfi*, vol. 1, p. 10.
- ²⁰⁰ See *al-Wāfi*, vol. 1, pp. 51-56, *Mir'āt al-'Uqūl*, vol. 1, pp. 25-31, etc.
- ²⁰¹ The Qur'an 2:31.
- ²⁰² Allusion to the Qur'an 1:6.
- ²⁰³ There are words of similar purport, as in Mullā Ṣadrā's 'But for passion, there would not be heaven nor earth, land or sea'. Refer to *Three Treatises*, p. 129.
- ²⁰⁴ See no. 118, above.
- ²⁰⁵ *Uyūn al-Akhhbār ar-Riḍā*, vol. 1, p. 204.
- ²⁰⁶ Reference to the Qur'an 53:8.
- ²⁰⁷ Allusion to the Qur'an 55:27.
- ²⁰⁸ Allusion to the Qur'an 57:3.
- ²⁰⁹ See *Bihār al-Anwār*, vol. 15, p. 15.
- ²¹⁰ See no. 2, above.
- ²¹¹ *Al-Murāja'at*, p. 171.
- ²¹² *Uṣūl al-Kāfi*, vol. 1, p. 282.
- ²¹³ See *Kalimāt Maknūnah*, p. 167.
- ²¹⁴ *Al-I'tiqādāt*, p. 74.
- ²¹⁵ *Uṣūl al-Kāfi*, vol. 1, p. 132.
- ²¹⁶ *Mir'āt al-'Uqūl*, vol. 2, p. 80.
- ²¹⁷ See *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyyah*, vol. 1, p. 102.
- ²¹⁸ See no. 202, above.

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- ²¹⁹ Perhaps there is an allusion here to the *Psalms of Islam*, the prayer for praise and laudation of God (1) and the prayer for confessing shortcomings in giving thanks (37).
- ²²⁰ See no. 207, above.
- ²²¹ That is: *There is no power nor strength save in God*.
- ²²² *Uṣūl al-Kāfi*, vol. 1, p. 117.
- ²²³ See *at-Tawhīd*, p. 89.
- ²²⁴ See no. 2, above.
- ²²⁵ Allusion to the Qur'an 37:164.
- ²²⁶ Allusion to the Qur'an 65:12.
- ²²⁷ Allusion to the Qur'an 6:59.
- ²²⁸ Allusion to a *ḥadīth* frequently cited in *Ṣūfi* sources: *O God, show us things as they are!*
- ²²⁹ Reference to the Qur'an 97:1-3.
- ²³⁰ See *Sharḥ Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*, p. 96.
- ²³¹ See no. 213, above.
- ²³² Allusion to the Qur'an 13:33.
- ²³³ Allusion to the Qur'an 57:4.
- ²³⁴ Allusion to the Qur'an 37:8.
- ²³⁵ The Qur'an 13:2.
- ²³⁶ Allusion to the Qur'an 27:88.
- ²³⁷ *Majmū'at ar-Rasā'il* (in manuscript), p. 307.
- ²³⁸ Allusion to a *ḥadīth* narrated by Abū Dharr: Backbiting is graver (in sinfulness) than adultery. *Wasā'il ash-Shī'ah*, vol. 8, *ḥadīth* 18312.
- ²³⁹ Allusion to the Qur'an 48:26.
- ²⁴⁰ Allusion to the Qur'an 16:98.
- ²⁴¹ Al-Anṣārī, Abū Ismā'īl 'Abdullāh ibn Muḥammad, is an eminent *Ṣūfi* master. His biographers are unanimous in praising his piety, the breadth of his knowledge in all branches of the religious sciences and the indomitable fervour of his devotion to the Qur'an and the Sunnah. His *Manāzil as-Sā'irīn* is a valuable spiritual guide, impressed by its originality, its conciseness and its masterly psychological analyses.
- ²⁴² Jalāl ad-Dīn Muḥammad Rūmī, known to the English-speaking world simply as Rūmī, was a 13th century Persian poet, Islamic

theologian. The general theme of his thoughts, like that of the other mystic and *Ṣūfī* poets of the Persian literature, is essentially about the concept of Unity and union with his beloved (the primal root) from whom he has been cut and fallen aloof, and his longing and desire for reunity. Rūmī's philosophical outlook which was put into Persian poetry has significantly influenced universal culture.

²⁴³ *Mathnawī*, Book 5, 1552.

²⁴⁴ Allusion to the Qur'an 7:172.

²⁴⁵ Allusion to the Qur'an 2:31.