
THE HEART OF
ISLAMIC
PHILOSOPHY

*The Quest for Self-Knowledge
in the Teachings of
Afdal al-Dīn Kāshānī*

WILLIAM C. CHITTICK

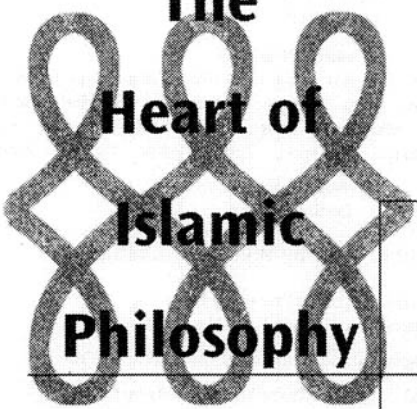
This book introduces the work of an important medieval Islamic philosopher who is little known outside the Persian world. Afḍal al-Dīn Kāshānī was a contemporary of a number of important Muslim thinkers, including Averroes and Ibn al-'Arabī. Among philosophers who wrote in Persian, he is set apart by the remarkable beauty and clarity of his prose. Kāshānī made a considered choice to write in Persian at a time when Arabic was the language of choice for philosophy. Avoiding Arabic technical terms, he did not, in fact, write for advanced students of philosophy but rather for beginners who might not have a good grasp of Arabic.

Kāshānī's writings offer especially clear and insightful expositions of various philosophical positions. This makes him an invaluable resource for those who would like to learn the basic principles and arguments of this philosophical tradition but do not have a strong background in philosophy and Islamic studies. As William Chittick notes, Kāshānī held the position that philosophy awakens people from forgetfulness and incites them to reach for the perfection of existence. Because ignorance of self is the cause of the soul's misery in the next life, he sought to make philosophy as accessible as possible to everyone.

This is the first book in English to present the main themes of the Islamic philosophical tradition in the words of a Muslim philosopher. Written in an accessible style, this volume will interest students and scholars of Islamic philosophy at all levels.

The Heart of Islamic Philosophy

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**FOR
SEYYED HOSSEIN NASR**

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Preface

I set out to write this book with two goals in mind—first, to introduce the major themes of Islamic philosophy to those unfamiliar with them, and second, to add Afḍal al-Dīn Kāshānī to the list of Muslim philosophers who can be read in English translation. I consider it appropriate to combine these two goals under one cover because Afḍal al-Dīn wrote with exceptional simplicity, clarity, and directness.

The book sprouted from seeds that were sown when I taught a graduate course at Stony Brook in the spring of 1997 called “Neoplatonic Themes in Islamic Thought.” The course was listed in the programs of both the Department of Comparative Literature and the Department of Philosophy, and it was designed to bring together students of religious literature and the history of philosophy. Only three of the dozen or so students attending the course had any knowledge of the Islamic languages. About half had some familiarity with Islamic thought, especially theoretical Sufism, and the other half had studied Greek and Western philosophy. For background reading I assigned Majid Fakhry’s *History of Islamic Philosophy* and suggested a variety of general studies on Islamic philosophy and monographs on individual authors.

The goal of the course was to read philosophical literature in English translation and to bring out the ways in which certain themes associated with Neoplatonism have been carried down through the centuries. We read works spanning a period of about eight hundred years, beginning with the so-called *Theology of Aristotle*, which is in fact portions of Plotinus’s *Enneads*, and then moving on to texts from Avicenna (Ibn Sīnā), Ghazālī, Suhrawardī, Afḍal al-Dīn Kāshānī, Ibn al-‘Arabī, and Mullā Sadrā. What I would have liked to have had available was an anthology of representative texts translated accurately and consistently and spanning the whole history of Islamic philosophy. But we had no choice but to read translations of disparate quality with no semblance of terminological consistency.

One of my goals was to illustrate how key philosophical themes could be traced by following the use of basic terms. In the Arabic texts themselves, it is easy to see how the same key words are at issue from the *Theology* down to Mullā Ṣadrā. But the available English translations offer little help toward this goal, because various translators have followed a great diversity of paths in rendering technical terms. The goals, methods, and skills of the translators are so diverse that it is often difficult to see in any more than a general way how specific issues recur and how the philosophers dealt with the same issues from various perspectives.

Lacking an appropriate anthology of philosophical texts, it would have been useful to have an introduction to Islamic philosophical thinking—rather than to the *history* of that thinking. Such an introduction would deal with central ideas in detail, present teachings in a way that would be faithful to the goals of the philosophers themselves, maintain consistency in choice of technical terminology, and be accessible both to those trained in Western philosophy and those versed in Islamic studies. But, to my knowledge, there is no such book.

While teaching the course, I assumed, as the students assumed, that Muslim philosophers were dealing with issues that are still very much alive, even though philosophical language and points of view may have changed radically over the centuries. I found that the students with philosophical training could immediately see that the texts were covering ground with which they were more or less familiar. But I had to spend an inordinate amount of time filling in background to illustrate how the particular approaches were deeply conditioned by presuppositions of the Islamic worldview. On the other side, students unacquainted with the Aristotelian terminology that is so central to both Western and Islamic philosophy had difficulty seeing how the issues were expressions of Islamic notions with which they were already familiar.

I finished the course thinking that I should find time to write one or two of the books that I had wished had been available. For several reasons that do not need to be detailed here, I ended up working on one and then another of the treatises of Afḍal al-Dīn Kāshānī. The more I read and studied these, the more I realized that an introduction to his thought could at the same time function as a primer in Islamic philosophy. Hence the present book. The anthology of philosophical texts will have to wait for another occasion.

This book is not intended to cover the same ground as the several introductions to and general studies of Islamic philosophy that are now available, because all of these focus on the history and development of ideas, typically with a view toward Greek and Western philosophy, and none of them allows the philosophers to engage in sustained arguments.¹ There are many specialist monographs, but these are difficult for anyone not already conversant with the history of Western philosophy, or familiar with the abstruse debates that went on in Islamic philosophy and theology, or acquainted with the Islamic intellectual tradition in general. No matter how useful the monographs may be for scholars and advanced students, they cannot be recommended to beginners. There are also a good number of translated texts, but again, few of them are accessible to those without thorough training in the history of philosophy.

My goal has been to write a book that will present Islamic philosophy as seriously engaged with basic intellectual issues and, at the same time, will be accessible

to relative beginners, including undergraduates. Moreover, it seems important to me, in this day and age, to present the philosophical texts in a way that allows us to see how they might be relevant not only to the other great wisdom traditions, but also to contemporary intellectual issues.² In two of the introductory chapters, I have tried to extend the basic issues of Islamic philosophy in ways that will help students see how this tradition speaks to diverse issues of continuing importance, not to mention the perennial quest for wisdom.

In brief, I wrote this book for those who want to know something about Islamic philosophy on its own terms, not simply as a chapter in the history of Western philosophy, nor as a curious bit of the past that is now concluded. I would like to suggest why this philosophy has always made sense to its practitioners and how they have seen it as a coherent worldview that explains not only the nature of things, but also the manner in which people should live their lives. I will make little reference to the history of ideas, but will rather be looking at Islamic philosophy as a living tradition in something of the way in which it has been perceived by its practitioners in later times, especially in Persia, where it has survived down to the present. In other words, I will be considering Islamic philosophy in terms of the “love of wisdom” that animates it, rather than simply its historical role. Without doubt, many historical studies of the Muslim philosophers are begging to be carried out, but greater attention also needs to be paid to the objectives of the philosophers and to the arguments and practices that were intended to achieve these objectives. Otherwise, Islamic philosophy remains a dead fish, rather than a tradition that continues to swim against the current.

In writing the book, I have tried to let Afḍal al-Dīn explain his teachings in his own terms. The earlier chapters prepare the ground for the presentation of the translated texts in the later chapters. Chapter 1 suggests something of Kāshānī’s significance in the Islamic philosophical tradition and provides what little details are known about his life, plus a list of his known writings. Chapter 2 situates Islamic philosophy within Islamic thought, moves on to the philosophical worldview in general, and then addresses some of the broad philosophical issues, drawing both from Kāshānī and a few of his predecessors. Recognizing that some readers will not be familiar with the usage of basic terminology, I devote chapter 3 to explaining some of the more important terms and illustrating how they are employed in the texts.

The translations are arranged in the next part of the book. I have ordered them roughly in terms of difficulty, beginning with the easiest and most direct of the works, with some allowance made for historical context.

Chapter 4 illustrates something of the philosophical and religious background as it appeared to Kāshānī by providing examples of his translations from the Greek philosophers and the full text of his abridgment of a work by Ghazālī. All these texts are especially simple and direct.

The texts in Chapter 5 focus more on praxis than on theory and are easier to understand, by and large, than the more rigorously argued works on theory. They include several of Bābā Afḍal’s essays, two lists of maxims, some of his poetry, and all of his letters.

Chapter 6, “Writings on Theory,” is the longest section of the book. It offers a few of Bābā Afḍal’s essays, four full-length treatises, selections from two other treatises, and a few poems.

Throughout the translations, Koranic citations are italicized, with sura and verse noted in brackets. Arabic and Persian words are transliterated according to the standard, modified *Encyclopaedia of Islam* system recognized by all scholars of Islamic languages. No allowance is made for the fact that Persians pronounce Arabic words differently from Arabs, such as “Afzal” instead of Afḍal. Those who know Persian will have no trouble recognizing the words and pronouncing them properly, and those who do not know Persian will mispronounce them even with a system closer to the way Persian is now pronounced.

Let me end by remarking on the dedication of this book to Seyyed Hossein Nasr. His efforts to introduce the riches of Islamic philosophy to the West are well known and need no recounting here, nor do they need my personal thanks. Rather, I am grateful to him because he was my first teacher in the Islamic philosophical tradition, and he was also the first person from whom I heard about Bābā Afḍal, for whom he has a special affection. Long before Nasr published the first full-length article introducing Bābā Afḍal to Western scholars, I had heard him speak admiringly about the beauty of Bābā Afḍal’s prose and the clarity with which he brings out the fundamental goals of the philosophical quest. I did not at that time, nor do I now, think that his affection had anything to do—or not much, at least—with the fact that Nasr’s own paternal ancestors hailed from Kāshān.

Finally, I wish to thank my colleague Peter Manchester, without whose constant encouragement I would never have undertaken to teach the philosophy course that eventually led to this book. He also took the trouble to read various parts of the manuscript and to make valuable suggestions. The chairman of the philosophy department, Edward Casey, has supported my work enthusiastically. Outside Stony Brook, Tony Tuft read the manuscript with care and made a number of useful criticisms and suggestions, for which I owe him a debt of gratitude. I am also grateful to David Burrell, who suggested that I look at Pierre Hadot’s writings, which indeed have helped me situate Islamic philosophy in a wider context.

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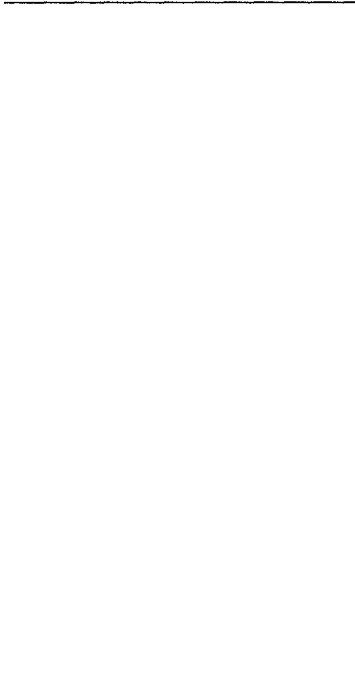
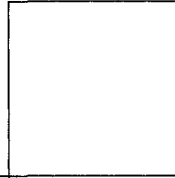
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Islamic Philosophy



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1

A Persian Philosopher

Practically nothing is known about the life of Afḍal al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Ḥasan Kāshānī. There has been some dispute over the date of his death, though 610AH/1213–14AD seems to be correct.¹ This makes him a contemporary of several important Muslim thinkers, including Suhrawardī al-Maqtūl (d. 587/1191), the founder of the School of Illumination; Averroes (d. 595/1198), the greatest of the Muslim Aristotelians and the best known in the West; and Ibn al-‘Arabī (d. 638/1240), the most widely influential of all speculative thinkers in the later tradition.

In Iran, Afḍal al-Dīn is commonly known as Bābā Afḍal, that is, “Papa Afḍal.” Seyyed Hossein Nasr thinks that this indicates his status as a practicing Sufi, since the title was commonly given to Sufi masters.² It is true that a number of well-known early Sufis were called by the title, including Bābā Kūhī of Shīrāz (fourth/tenth century), Bābā Ṭāhir ‘Uryān of Hamadān (fifth/eleventh century), and Bābā Rukn al-Dīn of Shīrāz (eighth/fourteenth century), but this in itself is not convincing evidence, since others who were not Sufis were also called by the title,³ and there is little evidence in Bābā Afḍal’s writings to indicate affiliation to Sufism in any of its well-known forms. I will return to the question of his relation to Sufism shortly.

Afḍal al-Dīn’s tomb is located in Marāq, a mountain village with an excellent summer climate located some forty kilometers northwest of Kāshān, in central Iran. The pyramidal dome on top of a mud-brick building, said to have been built in the Mongol period, is decorated with geometrically arranged colored tiles. The dome rises seven or eight meters above the flat roof, which itself stands about fifteen meters above the floor. When I visited the tomb in May of 1999, the two or three brick buildings that surround it were badly disintegrating. Scaffolding around the dome showed that repairs were being made on the central building. The locals said that government workers had come for two years, but they had not yet come

this year. They had repaired and reset the tiles on two of the dome's four faces, but the other two faces remained bare. Inside the sturdy tomb building, two old wooden frames delicately carved with Koranic verses are situated over the gravestones embedded in a newly tiled floor. The grave on the right side of the kibra belongs to Bābā Afḍal, and that on the left is attributed to the "king of Zanzibar" (*pādīshāh-i Zang*), who is said to have been a devoted disciple.

Afḍal al-Dīn must have been at least seventy when he died, because he speaks in one of his letters of having traveled the path in search of wisdom for sixty years (*Muṣannaḡāt* 698; *The Heart of Islamic Philosophy* [hereafter called HIP] 140).⁴ He was living in Marāq before his death; a notation at the end of one of his letters which was sent from Marāq tells us that its contents were his last words (*Muṣannaḡāt* 728; HIP 168). Although he died in Marāq, one cannot assume that he had always lived there, of course. Possibly he had moved from Kāshān to escape the distractions of the city and to occupy himself with philosophical reflection and teaching. This would help explain the attribution indicated by his name, Kāshānī. Even so, he may well have come to Kāshān from elsewhere in Persia.

Bābā Afḍal had children and other family members, to whom he refers in some of his letters and poetry. A hagiographical account found in an early history of Kāshān says that his two sons fell and were killed while climbing a mountain near Marāq.⁵ The only event in his life that is mentioned in the biographies is that he was imprisoned by the local governor on trumped-up charges of practicing sorcery (*sihr*). The main evidence for this is a poem that he wrote in prison (*Muṣannaḡāt* 731–32; HIP 142).

The biographies mention a family relationship with Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī (d. 672/1274), the great Shi'ite philosopher, theologian, astronomer, and vizier, whose commentary on Avicenna's *al-Ishārāt wa'l-tanbīhāt* was instrumental in reviving Peripatetic philosophy. It is also said that Ṭūsī and Bābā Afḍal exchanged quatrains, but if Bābā Afḍal's date of death is correct, this is impossible. The only thing that can be said for sure is that Ṭūsī mentions in his *Sayr wa sulūk* that, as a young man, he had studied various sciences, especially mathematics, with Kamāl al-Dīn Muḡammad Ḥāsib, a student of Bābā Afḍal.⁶ In addition, Ṭūsī refers to Bābā Afḍal's opinion on a point of logic in his commentary on *al-Ishārāt*.⁷

The editors of Bābā Afḍal's collected Persian works, Muḡtabā Mīnuwī and Yaḡyā Mahdawī, are of the opinion that he may have been an Ismā'īlī, but they offer no evidence for this assertion, and there is nothing in Bābā Afḍal's works to suggest that it is true.⁸ In one passage, he alludes to Sunnism as the best of paths (*Muṣannaḡāt* 297; HIP 219). Several quatrains praising 'Alī—the Prophet's cousin and son-in-law and the first Imam of the Shi'ites—may or may not be genuine; Sunnis share with Shi'ites the love for 'Alī. One quatrain that refers to the exclusive truth of Twelve-Imam Shi'ism (*Dīwān* 300) is certainly spurious.

Bābā Afḍal provides no signs of having read the works of any specific Islamic philosophers. With the exception of Aristotle and Hermes, he never mentions any philosophers by name. This is not to say that he appears as a thoroughly original thinker, simply that it is impossible to say in more than general terms which of the philosophers he may have studied and admired. The positions that Bābā Afḍal takes on issues are not unfamiliar, but it is difficult to classify him as belonging to a spe-

cific school of thought. The distinguished contemporary historian ‘Abbās Zaryāb goes so far as to say that Bābā Afḍal “follows a new road in the formulation of questions, method of argumentation, and the presentation of philosophical views, a road that distinguishes him from the earlier and later philosophers.”⁹ But the exact degree to which this road is actually “new” and unique to Bābā Afḍal awaits investigation.

Both Bābā Afḍal’s letters and the introductions to several of his works indicate that he had students. He sometimes refers to them as “religious brothers” (*barādarān-i dīnī*) and “true companions” (*yārān-i ḥaqīqī*). A “religious brother” is not simply a fellow Muslim, but rather someone who shares in the goals of religion as understood by Bābā Afḍal. Hence it is someone who has undertaken the quest for wisdom. Bābā Afḍal uses the term *brother* here much as it is used in earlier philosophical texts, such as the *Theology of Aristotle* or the epistles of the Ikhwān al-Ṣafā’, the “Brethren of Purity.” The latter not only call themselves “brethren,” but they also address their reader as “brother.”

“True companion” suggests even more clearly that these brothers are Bābā Afḍal’s special students if not his disciples. I take the Persian word *yār* as equivalent to Arabic *ṣāḥib*, which is one of the standard terms for “disciple” in Sufi texts, especially when an author is referring to his own followers. It is also, of course, the standard term for those who were present with the Prophet during his mission, and the Sufi use of the term imitates this original usage. For the Sufis, the shaykh or spiritual master represents the Prophet and stands in his place. Bābā Afḍal sometimes uses the term *yār* to refer to the Prophet’s companions (e.g., *Muṣannafāt* 322.7), and he also uses it in conjunction with the Arabic word *sālik* or “wayfarer” (e.g., *Muṣannafāt* 46.9, 682.15), which is the standard Sufi term for those who are striving on the path to perfection.

In short, Bābā Afḍal’s “brothers and companions” are those who have undertaken the quest for wisdom under his guidance. But this is not simply a matter of instruction in philosophical reasoning. Rather, philosophy for him is a way of life that involves training the soul and acquiring the virtues. This is especially clear in his letters, his poetry, and his two lists of philosophical maxims, all of which offer explicit directives on moral and spiritual practice. Only one of the lists of maxims is titled, but the title is significant: “The Testament of the Sages; or, Twenty-Eight Words of Counsel to the Brethren.” The untitled list also calls the “sages” to witness, because it begins with these words: “The sages have said that the seekers and acquirers of wisdom must know that. . . .”

Bābā Afḍal is certainly not wrong to think that counseling people to live a virtuous life is part and parcel of the philosophical tradition. As Pierre Hadot reminds us in talking about philosophy at the time of Plotinus, it was always deeply involved with spiritual training: “As preaching, philosophy becomes an exhortation to a life of virtue; here again, it is guided by centuries-old themes and backdrops. The philosopher was a professor and a spiritual guide, whose goal was not to set forth his vision of the universe, but to mold his disciples by means of spiritual exercises.”¹⁰

I assume that many of Bābā Afḍal’s companions did not have formal training in the Islamic sciences and were not at ease with philosophical Arabic. This assump-

tion is supported by the conclusion of *The Rungs of Perfection*, in which Bābā Afḍal explains how he came to write the book and translate it from Arabic into Persian. He says that his companion Muḥammad Dizwākūsh requested that he write a book explaining the road to perfection, so he wrote the book in Arabic. Then a second companion, Asʿad Nasāʿī, asked him to translate it into Persian so that its meaning would be clearer.

Bābā Afḍal mentions a few other names of students and contemporaries in his letters and also in his poetry, but we lack the careful historical investigations of someone like the late Mīnuwī, whose promise to write a study of Bābā Afḍal's life was unfulfilled, so no information is available as to who exactly these people might have been.

It perhaps needs to be stressed that Bābā Afḍal was not instructing his students in the "history of philosophy," which is a specifically modern discipline. Nor was he explicating the books of the illustrious masters of philosophy, such as Avicenna, or simply training his students in logical thought. Rather, he was trying to teach his students how to know themselves, and he considered philosophical reflection the best tool to achieve this goal, so long as the seeker has already attained a certain level of moral and ethical cultivation.

Nasr has written that Bābā Afḍal's philosophy is primarily an "autology," which is to say that it is an exposition of the nature of the human self.¹¹ But this should not be understood to mean that it is a cold and distanced philosophical analysis of the human soul. Rather, it is a warm and generous encouragement and incitement to his readers to come to know themselves. Bābā Afḍal was not offering, in other words, a systematic doctrine of the self but rather an explanation of how it is possible to achieve self-awareness. He wants to clarify how one can achieve self-knowledge through rational investigation. The goal of knowing one's self is to know the everlasting reality that is consciousness. For Bābā Afḍal, to know true consciousness is to be truly conscious, and to be so eternally.

Perhaps like most philosophers, Bābā Afḍal considered his own works to stand apart from those of his predecessors. In *The Rungs of Perfection* he mentions "our brothers who lived in former times," meaning the philosophers who had preceded him, and he points out that detailed demonstrations of his points are provided in their books. "But," he says, "we intend and aim for a meaning that cannot be found in their books" (HIP 252). This meaning is presumably the clarification of how to put philosophy to work in realizing one's own everlasting self. This is the knowledge that he refers to as his own acquisition in the introduction to *The Makings and Ornaments of Well-Provisioned Kings*:

Through His gentleness and guidance, the Real—high indeed and holy is He!—made my soul familiar with intelligence, which is the radiance of His being. Through my soul's familiarity and joining with intelligence, it was cleansed of the taint of bodily nature and it came to blaze with the radiance of intelligence. It became a mirror within which the beings of the cosmos—the root and the branch, the substance and the nonsubstance, the resting and the moving, the living and the dead, the talking and the nontalking—were shown and seen.

At the beginning of the seeing, the knowledges were a trace and a similitude of the beings of the world, and the world's beings were the root and the reality. In the second seeing, the world's beings were the trace and similitude, and the knowledges were the root and reality. (*Muṣannafāt* 83; HIP 178)

Bābā Afḍal makes an even more personal reference to his own philosophical quest in his letter to Majd al-Dīn the vizier:

The Knower of the hidden and the evident is aware and knows that for sixty years, this incapable servant has been crossing deserts and steeps and numbering the waystations in the darkneses of the self's life, seeking that fountain of the self's life through whose dampness all animals are alive. I finally reached the point of referring to it by the name "intelligence," and I saw that life was nothing but its trace and ray. When my mouth found the sweetness and taste of intelligence, I took up a station at that wellspring and became a resident there. To hope to leave this resting place is impossible. When the wanter and lover of life reaches the fountain of life, he will not seek separation, nor will he part from it. (*Muṣannafāt* 698–99; HIP 140–41)

Bābā Afḍal is probably referring to the special quality of his own writings in an earlier passage in this same letter to Majd al-Dīn, who had asked him how it is that beauty comes to appear in language. He answers that it has to do with "the trace of a life that cannot be found in all individuals," and that this life animates the meaning that the speaker puts into speech. "The speaker of living speech takes provision from intelligence. He stirs up meaning, adorns the speech with meaning and decorates it with truthfulness so that the listener, from tasting its meaning, may yearn for meaning's wellspring" (*Muṣannafāt* 694; HIP 138).

This, in a word, seems to be Bābā Afḍal's goal in his writings—to stir up yearning for the wellspring of meaning, which is the intelligence that lies at the heart of wisdom. He addresses his works both to his students and to any other qualified seekers who might happen to read them. Toward the beginning of *The Rungs of Perfection*, he explains that the book was written for the companions who are with him as well as for all those who find themselves worthy to understand. He has composed the book neither for those who have reached perfection, nor for those who have no thought of reaching it. Rather, he speaks to those who stand in the middle and would like to strive on the path. "If someone in the middle level who has this attribute is present, then our discussion is with him, and if he is absent, then our message is for him" (*Muṣannafāt* 8; HIP 246).

I said that Bābā Afḍal was writing for "qualified" seekers. Like the philosophers before him, he did not think it wise to offer philosophical teachings to just anyone. He warns people to avoid his books if they have not achieved a virtuous character, and he tells them not to pass the books on to those who are not prepared. In the conclusion to *The Book of Displays*, he tells his readers not to speak of the book's "wondrous discussions" and "heavy trust" except "to the knowing essence," the person who has achieved some awareness of the intelligence that is the goal: "Do not hold back from any requester as much as is suitable, and do not give to any taker

more than what is wanted and what must be" (HIP 243). In the conclusion to *The Book of the Everlasting* he writes, "This book is precious for the seekers of the road. They must look upon it with sharp-wittedness. Until they find self empty of caprice, folly, covetousness, and envy, they should not wander around these words. Any soul that has not been released from these illnesses will become more ill from this book" (*Muṣannafāt* 321; HIP 233).

Given Bābā Afḍal's statements about the nature of self-awareness and his assertions about the special characteristics of his own knowledge, we need to raise a question that has been much debated about certain philosophers, Avicenna in particular: Was he a mystic? The word "mystic" is so loaded with connotations, most of them inappropriate in the Islamic context, that I would rather not use it without thorough qualification. It may be more useful to pose the question first in the form, "Was he a Sufi?"

As noted, Nasr says that Bābā Afḍal was a Sufi, but if we are to accept his judgment as correct, we still need to address the problem of defining our terms. The exact nature of "Sufism" is much debated by historians, and any serious investigation of what the word implies would take us much too far afield. I would rather let readers draw their own conclusions based on their own definitions of terms.¹² This having been said, I am willing to offer my own opinion:

If we define the word *Sufism* in the broadest sense, then we might say that it denotes an engagement with Islamic teachings and practices such that the inner, spiritual dimension is seen to take priority over the external, legalistic dimension. If this is what we mean by Sufism, then we can say that Bābā Afḍal and most of the other philosophers along with him were "Sufis." However, as soon as we want to narrow the definition a bit and suggest that Sufism demands a certain formal affiliation with a spiritual guide (*murshid*) and a chain of transmission (*silsila*), or teachings of the sort that emphasize the central importance of the "unveiling" (*kashf*) of the mysteries and direct perception of the divine, then we simply have to say that there is little if any evidence that Bābā Afḍal was a "Sufi" in this sense. He may have been, but we have no documentation to support the claim.

No one can deny that Bābā Afḍal employs a good deal of terminology associated with Sufism, especially in his practical teachings, and I call attention to many of these instances in my notes. However, one needs to keep in mind that the sort of Sufi terminology he uses is derived from the Koran and the Hadith, and the terms are commonly discussed in standard Muslim sources of moral exhortation. If one wants a source for his usage, it is not necessary to look further than Ghazālī (d. 505/1111), whose monumental *Ḥiyā'* is full of such terminology. Nonetheless, Bābā Afḍal's explanation of the meanings of these terms is rooted in his own philosophical teachings. In contrast, Ghazālī's interpretations are thoroughly grounded in Koran, Hadith, and the sayings of the pious forebears. Moreover, there is nothing in Bābā Afḍal's corpus to compare with Avicenna's discussion of "the stations of the gnostics" (*maqāmāt al-ʿarīfīn*) in *al-Ishārāt wa'l-tanbīhāt*. There Avicenna makes thorough use of Sufi terminology to explain the nature of direct perception of God.¹³

Perhaps some would like to offer a few of Bābā Afḍal's quatrains as evidence for a Sufi affiliation, but there would be several problems with doing so. First, there is the matter of poetic license, especially in the quatrain, whose Sufi themes had al-

readily been established by Bābā Afdal's time. Second, among all the poetical genres, the quatrain is the most difficult to ascribe to a specific author with any certainty. And third, there is the problem of how to interpret the poems; surely we should interpret them in terms of the philosophical teachings, not vice versa. Nonetheless, I would be the last to deny to my Sufi friends the right to claim Bābā Afdal as one of their own on the basis of their own understanding of what he is saying.

As for the question of his being a "mystic," let me again suggest that this depends on definitions. The usual connotations of the word—such as fuzzy-mindedness and irrationality, or emotive devotionism, or intimate personal contact with God—certainly do not apply. There is simply too much logical precision in Bābā Afdal's writings and little reference to the experience of God's presence. However, it would not be inappropriate to think of Bābā Afdal as a "rationalistic mystic" in the sense that Philip Merlan says that this term can be applied to Aristotle and other ancient and medieval philosophers. Merlan writes as follows:

I use the term ["rationalistic mysticism"] to indicate that the god with whom we are united in ecstasy is not the God-above-thinking-and-being, but rather one who is thought-thinking-itself. In other words, anticipating later discussions, in Averroes and Ibn Bāḡḡa the *unio mystica* takes place with what Plotinus would call the second god. . . . In lieu of the cloud of unknowing, we have in rationalistic mysticism the flood of sheer light. In rationalistic mysticism we have absolute transparency, or, as we could also say, self-knowledge. In an ordinary act of knowledge the object of knowledge is something opaque which knowledge illuminates and makes visible. But in the ecstatic act of knowledge nothing opaque is left, because what is known is identical with what knows.¹⁴

Merlan's description here could have been written on the basis of a study of Bābā Afdal's works. The only incongruous term would be "second god," given the stern Islamic prohibition of *shirk* or "associating other gods with God." No philosopher would suggest that the Intellect with which union is achieved at the summit of the philosophical quest is a "god." Nonetheless, one can find echoes of the idea. In *Āwāz-i par-i Jibra'īl*, Suhrawardī says that the Prophet referred to God's "first light" and "greatest word"—that is, the First Intellect—when he said, "Were the face of the sun manifest, it would be worshiped instead of God."¹⁵

Teachings

Bābā Afdal wrote during a period when several figures were bridging the gaps between philosophy and Sufism. Avicenna (d. 428/1037) had shown some of the directions this movement could take in a few of his works; Ghazālī had employed philosophical terminology to express concepts derived from the unveiling (*kashf*) that may be experienced in the advanced stages of Sufi training;¹⁶ and the Sufi martyr 'Ayn al-Quḍāt Hamadānī (d. 525/1131) had shown a sophisticated mastery of philosophical theology in his Arabic works and deep insights into Sufi teachings in his Persian

writings. Among Bābā Afḍal's contemporaries, Suhrawardī followed many of Avicenna's leads and Ibn al-ʿArabī made full use of philosophical terminology to depict a universe transfigured by the presence of God.

For his own part, Bābā Afḍal employed the philosophical and logical terminology of the Neoplatonizing tradition and showed no obvious inclination to move in the new directions mapped out by others, nor to follow any of the schools of Sufism. Nonetheless, despite the philosophical and logical rigor of his works, most of them give off the fragrance of a special awareness and intuition, an unusual ability to taste the realities of wisdom. Perhaps his major predecessors were those philosophers, such as the Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ, who were interested in Hermes and the more spiritual side of the Greek legacy. Given the nature of the works of the Greek authors that Bābā Afḍal chose to translate into Persian, he may deserve the label "Hermetizing" given to him by Henry Corbin.¹⁷

Bābā Afḍal had no interest in many of the issues other philosophers addressed. For example, he does not consider God per se as a proper object of philosophical investigation, so he does not discuss the First as *wājib al-wujūd*, the "Necessary in existence," nor does he talk about the attributes that belong to the First, even though this sort of discussion had become commonplace since Avicenna. He sides with much of the Neoplatonic tradition in considering God himself beyond rational categories. He constantly discusses being or existence, the central topic of the philosophers, but he takes it to pertain only to the cosmos, which is to say that God is "beyond Being" (though he does not employ this expression or anything like it).¹⁸ He does not write about the ancillary sciences such as medicine, mathematics, and astronomy, which occupied a great deal of the attention of many of his colleagues. However, he does have a short essay on music, so he must have studied at least some of these sciences.

One can say that Bābā Afḍal is a philosopher who does not like to beat around the bush. He goes directly to the heart of the issue, and for him the issue is that voiced in the Delphic maxim, "Know thyself."¹⁹ His goal is to clarify the nature of the quest for wisdom that must animate all philosophy worthy of the name *philo-sophia*, and he holds that true wisdom remains inaccessible to those who do not know who they are. In his view, those who investigate and learn things that do not throw light on their own self-understanding are wasting their time.

For Bābā Afḍal, the basic philosophical question is "Who am I?" Or, in other terms, "What does it mean to be human?" His answer is that the true substance of a human self, or a human soul, is intelligence, and that the proper object of intelligence's scrutiny is itself. He uses here the Persian *khirad* and the Arabic *ʿaql* as synonyms. I translate them respectively as "intelligence" and "intellect." They designate the faculty of knowing that is unique to human beings. Intelligence is fully achieved only when the knower, the known object, and the knowledge are one. This achievement, for Bābā Afḍal, is *tawhīd*—which is normally translated as "asserting the unity of God," but which means literally "to assert oneness" or "to make one." No one can grasp the unity of God who is not himself one. When this oneness of self is achieved, the intellect that knows is identical with everything that it knows, and this one intellect is nothing other than the everlasting "radiance" (*furūgh*) of God.²⁰

In Bābā Afḍal's view, philosophy is the most direct means of achieving the true humanity that should be the goal of all those who consider themselves human. When

people meditate on the philosophical truths, they will be drawn to look into themselves and come to understand that they already possess everything that they seek. As he writes in the conclusion to *The Book of Displays*, “They will seek whatever they seek in self. Then they will have found it before seeking, and they will see it as having been given before wanting. No need and requirement will remain for any but self” (*Muṣannafāt* 241; HIP 242).

By classifying and clarifying the modes of knowing and the divisions of the existent things, philosophy awakens people from forgetfulness and incites them to reach for the perfection of understanding and existence. As Plato insisted, the philosopher is preparing himself for death, and he does so by undergoing a cognitive separation from the body before physical death. As Bābā Afḍal puts it, “The reality is that until the soul’s dissection is known, there will be no dissection—neither in the state of the combination of the body’s parts and the existence of life, nor after the disjoining of the members and the advent of death” (*Muṣannafāt* 701; HIP 154). Nothing causes the soul’s misery in the next world but ignorance of self.

This, in essence, is Bābā Afḍal’s philosophical position. Those familiar with the history of Islamic philosophy will see nothing strange about it, since it is arguably the same position that is expressed already in the translations of Neoplatonic works, in various works of Hermetic provenance, and in the discussions of soul and intellect among the Peripatetic philosophers such as Avicenna. There are of course many differences of detail and much discussion of the exact meaning of terms, but the general themes expounded by Bābā Afḍal are reflected in much of Islamic philosophy. However, this is not all there is to say about him. If it were, a short article would be sufficient. What is unusual and attractive is not his philosophical stance per se, but the manner in which he explicates it for those who are not trained in the technical language of the Islamic sciences. I hope to show that he offers especially clear and insightful expositions of various philosophical positions. This alone makes him an invaluable resource for those who would like to learn the basic principles and arguments of the philosophical tradition but who do not have a strong background in Greek and medieval philosophy in general or Islamic philosophy in particular.

Persian Philosophy

The simplicity and directness with which Bābā Afḍal expresses his philosophical teachings have much to do with the Persian language in which he chose to write. The very fact that he wrote mainly in Persian rather than Arabic makes him an exception. Although many of the famous philosophers—such as Avicenna, Suhrawardī, and Mullā Ṣadrā (d. 1050/1640)—also wrote Persian works, they composed their major works in Arabic, not least because that was the only way to achieve widespread recognition. The only other philosopher of note whose corpus is in Persian is the Ismā‘īlī Nāṣir Khusraw (d. ca. 464/1072).²¹

Paradoxically perhaps, the very fact that Bābā Afḍal wrote in Persian explains why he remained relatively unknown within the Persian philosophical tradition itself. In modern Iran, for example, he is more likely to be recognized as a poet than a philosopher. Only those conversant with the history of philosophy or with the

Persian prose classics know that he was also an important spokesman for the Greek wisdom tradition. This means that Persian speakers who learn their philosophy in the traditional fashion—in which the history of philosophy per se plays little or no role—often have never heard Bābā Afḍal's name, much less read any of his works.

Until recently it has been the general rule in all fields of learning that Persian scholars should write their most important works in the Arabic language, and some continue to follow this rule to the present day. The audience, after all, has not been only Persian speakers, but also Muslim scholars in general, whose native tongue could be anything from Berber to Chinese. Arabic's situation was analogous to that of Latin in medieval Christendom. However, unlike the local European languages during the Middle Ages, Persian, beginning in about the fourth/tenth century, had a rich literature, and many authors—especially poets—wrote only in Persian. Nonetheless, in the various fields of learning—Koran commentary, jurisprudence, Kalam (dogmatic theology), philosophy, mathematics—scholars preferred Arabic, precisely because it was Islam's universal language. They tended to write in Persian only when they wanted to explain their own fields to those who did not have the usual training of a Muslim intellectual.

I do not mean to ignore the extraordinary quality of a vast number of works in Persian, including many in the specialized fields of knowledge. I simply want to suggest that, by and large, serious scientific study was thought to be more appropriate in Arabic. Moreover, it is certainly true that the precision of Arabic grammar, in contrast to the looseness of Persian, makes Arabic preferable for careful definition of terms and complicated arguments—just as Persian is the more appropriate language for poetry (here, of course, I show the prejudice of all Persian speakers, who think, simply, that *pārsī shikar ast*, “Persian is sugar”).

Among philosophers then, what sets Bābā Afḍal apart is first that he wrote his works mainly in Persian. Among those who wrote in Persian, he is set apart by the remarkable beauty and clarity of his prose. Avicenna's Persian, for example, is often awkward and obscure, partly because he was one of the first to write philosophical prose in the language. Nāsir Khusraw wrote more clearly, but his works do not have the same sweetness and flow as Bābā Afḍal's writings. The only philosopher whose Persian might be preferred to that of Bābā Afḍal is Suhrawardī, but this is partly because he wrote “visionary recitals”—philosophical fantasy as it were—employing a great deal of imagery and mysterious allusions, which have a special charm. But Suhrawardī's prose seldom matches Bābā Afḍal's in achieving the harmonious marriage between attractive language and philosophical rigor.

Bābā Afḍal seems to have paid more attention to crafting his expressions than to using terminology current in intellectual circles. This is obvious in the contrast between the style of his formal treatises, written to set down his teachings in a systematic manner, and his letters, which are much more in keeping with the prose style of the day, because they use a higher percentage of words drawn from Arabic. In his formal treatises, Bābā Afḍal often uses everyday Persian words where it would have been normal to prefer the Arabic technical terms. Precisely because of his failure to use the standard terminology, students wishing to master philosophical learning must have found his works somewhat obscure, and certainly they saw him as a peripheral figure, because he did not follow the pattern of the great authorities.

Philosophy was considered the most comprehensive field of knowledge and the most difficult to acquire. Those who did want to learn it would already have studied the preliminary sciences before they dared to pick up a philosophical treatise. Most students of philosophy, already being scholars of some accomplishment, probably considered it a bit beneath their dignity to read philosophical works in Persian—though they would have delighted in reading Sa‘dī’s *Gulistān* or reciting the poetry of Niẓāmī or Ḥāfiẓ. This may explain why Mullā Ṣadrā took the trouble to translate Bābā Afḍal’s *Jāwidān-nāma* (“The Book of the Everlasting”) into Arabic, renaming it *Iksīr al-‘arīfīn* (“The Elixir of the Gnostics”). Once it was translated into Arabic, the text was more accessible to students and scholars, who were not accustomed to reading philosophy in their mother tongue.²²

Given that the vast majority of Islamic philosophical texts were written for advanced students or specialists, the idea that someone not trained in the basic sciences—such as grammar, logic, mathematics, and theology—should want to study philosophy would have been inconceivable to most philosophers. They would have told aspiring students (at the level, for example, of an outstanding American undergraduate) to go back and work on the basics—perhaps they would be ready to undertake the study of philosophy in five or ten years.

Not only were the philosophical texts written for trained minds, but they were also, by and large, not meant to be read without teachers. It was taken for granted that a text was read slowly and carefully with the guidance of an accomplished master, or at least along with a detailed written commentary. The definition of each technical term had to be known by heart, and every argument had to be understood and digested. The goal of reading a text was not so much to see what the author was saying as it was to pick up a habit of mind and to learn how to think, a painstaking skill built, among other things, on precise definitions and mastery of the varieties of proofs and syllogisms. It was not uncommon to spend a year or two reading a short philosophical text word by word, but, by the end of the course, the good student had mastered the text and was given permission (*ijāza*, French *license*) to teach it to others.

With all the preliminary studies that were considered necessary to prepare oneself to study philosophy, it is clear that the learned language of those preliminary studies would be the proper vehicle for philosophy itself. The fact that Bābā Afḍal wrote his major corpus in Persian could not have been accidental, but was rather based on a considered choice. Not only can we assume that he knew Arabic because any scholar had to, but we have examples of his Arabic prose, which demonstrate a complete mastery of the language. In at least two cases, he wrote an Arabic version of a work before he wrote the Persian. Thus it is necessary to ask ourselves why he stepped outside the normal practice.

The first reason Bābā Afḍal wrote in Persian would have been the nature of his audience. His students must have been native Persian speakers without much background in the sciences. But he also had an even more basic reason that comes out in his attentiveness to language and in the way that he writes. His style itself shows that he is employing words as tools to awaken a certain awareness in his readers and that he considers Persian the more appropriate tool for native Persian speakers. On occasion he refers to the advantages of Persian, as when he explains

in the *The Rungs of Perfection* why he translated the book from Arabic into Persian. There he says that, as he finished the translation of each chapter, "its meanings became more apparent and more unambiguous in the clothing of Persian speech" (HIP 271).

Bābā Afḍal's letters and many remarks scattered throughout his works indicate that he was writing for a group of highly motivated people, some of whom held important official positions. With some exceptions, his students did not have a good knowledge of Arabic. They had not gone through all the formal training ordinarily needed to study philosophy, but they had the intelligence, the desire, and enough learning to follow even relatively technical arguments when these were set down in clear Persian. Thus Bābā Afḍal was not writing for experts or advanced students, but rather for beginners. He wrote with the conscious effort to make his writings as clear as possible.

One can guess, on the basis of a comment that Bābā Afḍal makes at the end of his book on logic, that he felt that the majority of those already trained in the sciences were not worth addressing, because of the bad habits of mind that they would have picked up. His remark alludes to the fact that for him, as for many other philosophers, the quest for wisdom was primarily a spiritual discipline: "Suffering to efface the bad forms from such souls is much more difficult than guiding those who have not acquired anything at all" (*Muṣannaḡāt* 578–79; HIP 307).

I became especially sensitized to the issues that arise when philosophical terms are translated from one language into another during the many years that I spent on a recently completed project, *The Self-Disclosure of God: Principles of Ibn al-‘Arabī’s Cosmology*. As I explain in the introduction to that book, I struggled to overcome the barriers to understanding Ibn al-‘Arabī’s teachings that have been erected because of the excessive use of abstraction in learned discussions in English. One of Ibn al-‘Arabī’s major philosophical methods is to recapture the etymological sense of Koranic terminology. His intentions have largely been obscured by the attempts of Western scholars to render his ideas into English. Where Ibn al-‘Arabī is trying to bring the reader back to the original, concrete sense of the Arabic language, the translators and interpreters (myself included) most often have tried to find the right abstract terms from the Western philosophical and theological traditions. Given the choice between concrete English words of Anglo-Saxon derivation and abstract terms from Greek or Latin, scholars typically opt for the latter. Nonetheless, Ibn al-‘Arabī constantly calls his readers back to the original sense of the words, and the original sense is invariably concrete and imagistic, not abstract and rationalizing. In other words, simple, straightforward English does a better job of capturing the sense than the jargon of scholarship. One might say that Ibn al-‘Arabī wants to bring *myths* back to the center and to overcome the excessive stress of philosophers and theologians on *logos*. His insistence that imagination (*khayāl*) is the centerpiece and crux of all human understanding points in the same direction.

Scholars of Islamic philosophy have traveled a similar route, which is to say that they have usually chosen the abstract over the concrete, the Latin and Greek over the everyday English. There are many good reasons for doing this, not least the fact that Greek philosophy is the common denominator between Western and Islamic philosophy. A second excellent reason is the concern to respect the efforts of the

medieval translators who first made Islamic philosophy known in the West and who chose certain words (Latin, of course) to translate Arabic technical terms.

However laudable the scholarly efforts to translate and explain Islamic philosophy in European languages, they sometimes seem a bit misguided. Those who have studied Islamic philosophy in the original languages often find that the use of heavy-duty Latin and Greek tends to obscure points that seem abundantly clear in the original. I have frequently noticed that the only way to understand even well-translated texts is to look back at the Arabic, at which point the discussion usually makes sense, sometimes because the Arabic is not written in high-sounding abstractions, but rather in straightforward, concrete assertions.

Like Ibn al-ʿArabī, though perhaps for different reasons, Bābā Afḍal is especially concerned to bring out the concrete meaning of words. Ibn al-ʿArabī had no choice but to write everything he wrote in Arabic, but Bābā Afḍal had the advantage of working simultaneously with two very different languages, one Semitic and the other Indo-European. He was also completely aware of what happens when technical terms from one language are used in another.

As we all know, one of the first difficulties beginning students of philosophy face is the terminology that must be learned and understood, especially when the words have little resonance in the everyday language. The philosophical vocabulary that Persian speakers need to acquire is drawn largely from Arabic. Although many of the words are used in the colloquial language and in fields of learning other than philosophy, they tend to have a pedantic sound to them, somewhat like words of Latin and Greek derivation in English, and they are more abstract than words derived from Persian roots. Even though they may be more precise for purposes of scientific inquiry, their abstraction and precision removes them from the real world of concrete experience, where boundaries are always fuzzy. If a philosopher is striving to express reality itself, abstract precision may not be the best route.

One of the ways in which Bābā Afḍal overcomes the problem of technical terms is to provide equivalents or paraphrases in Persian. The advantage of Persian over Arabic is that readers will have a better sense of the concreteness of the idea and not be drawn into abstractions. They will, as it were, feel the meaning of the words in the gut, rather than having to stop and reflect about what the words mean and thereby being drawn away from the concrete, present meaning that is found at the depth of their embodied souls.²³

The abstractness of Arabic words used in Persian often has much to do with the fact that the derivation of the term is unclear. To give an example from English, we need to be told that “procrastination” means “to put something off,” unless we happen to know Latin, in which case we see immediately that it means *pro-cras-tinare*, literally, “to keep for tomorrow.” “Procrastination” is an abstraction, but “keeping something for tomorrow” is a concrete way of saying the same thing. So also, Persian speakers need to be told that the Arabic word *taswīf* means “procrastination.” But those conversant with classical Arabic will recognize that what it really means is “to say, ‘I will, I will.’” The original sense of the word is a concrete image or a specific exemplar of an idea, but gradually the image is lost and the idea becomes generalized in a way that often has little or nothing to do with the original image.

The very word *abstract* itself can give us some insight into the problems caused when Persian writers want to use Arabic terms in Persian, or when translators want to render Arabic philosophical terminology into modern English. The literal Latin sense of the term is “drawn away,” and it is used to refer to a concept that is drawn out and considered apart from particular, embodied instances. But already as part of its first current meaning, Webster’s gives “difficult to understand” and “ideal.” Note that in general usage, abstract is contrasted with concrete, and ideal is contrasted with real. When we refer to something as abstract, we are suggesting that it is not really of significance and importance, because it is subjective and far from real experience.

The word *abstract* is commonly used by scholars of Islamic philosophy to translate the Arabic word *mujarrad*, a term whose proper meaning needs to be understood if we are to grasp the goal of the philosophical quest. Literally, *mujarrad* means peeled, pared, and stripped. In various contexts it can also mean denuded, removed, divested, dispossessed, deprived, isolated, freed. I translate it in its technical, philosophical sense as “disengaged.” As Avicenna tells us, it is an attribute of the Necessary Being, which is God himself.²⁴ In other words, the Necessary Being is peeled, pared, denuded, divested, and stripped of everything other than itself, because its reality is totally independent of creation. Nonetheless, all of creation is utterly dependent on the Necessary Being, because the existence of everything in the universe is only “possible” (*mumkin*). That which is simply possible cannot exist unless the Necessary bestows reality upon it, but the Necessary in itself, or in its very Essence, remains untouched by and disengaged from the creative process.²⁵

If we were to say in modern English that God’s Essence is “abstract”—or even worse, an “abstraction”—we would be suggesting that it is a totally unreal and impalpable concoction of the mind. At best, we would understand that someone has sat down, meditated upon God, and abstracted his Essence from all the names, attributes, and descriptions that are given to God. But this is not what the texts are saying. They assert that the Essence is the only reality truly worthy of the name, and everything else is an “abstraction” in the modern sense, that is, something unreal, difficult to grasp, metaphorical, and even imaginary. As Ibn al-‘Arabī puts it, everything other than God is an image of God and a pointer to God, because only God—that is, God in his disengaged Essence—is reality *per se*.

As we will read in one of Bābā Afḡal’s essays, the whole philosophical enterprise aims at the “disengagement” of the soul. The soul must strip and denude itself of all attachment to and immersion in the things of the world, and it must lift itself up stage by stage until it joins with the divine spirit that gave birth to the universe, the “Agent Intellect” (*aql fa‘āl*) of the philosophers. Then the soul is no longer called “soul” but has taken on its truest identity and become an “intellect.” It enters the ranks of other disengaged realities, which the philosophers often call “disengaged spirits and intellects” and which they identify with what the religious tradition calls “angels.” The angels and spirits are “disengaged,” but they are not “abstract.” They have a “concrete” reality next to which everything perceived by the senses—the whole world of “generation and corruption”—appears ephemeral and empty. “You will see the mountains, that you supposed to be solid, passing by like clouds” (Koran 27:88).

As long as we understand a word like *mujarrad* to mean “abstract,” we will keep on thinking that the Muslim philosophers’ only goal was to theorize in much the modern manner. We will not be able to see that their goal was to achieve another sort of vision, a contemplative gaze that would actualize every potentiality of their souls and transform them into perfectly ethical and moral human beings, living in harmony with the nature of things and running their practical affairs in terms of the cardinal virtues—wisdom, continence, courage, and justice.

One of the many sins of translators is to ignore the intentions of authors and to correct their apparent misuses by using the standard English word for the term that the translator thinks the author must have meant, rather than the literal translation of what he did in fact say. A good example of this sort of practice, which is extremely common in philosophical texts, is provided by a recent translation of one of the works of Nāṣir Khusraw. This would have been a good opportunity to present in English the peculiarities of Persian philosophical prose by one of its first masters, but the translator makes no attempt to differentiate between words of Persian and Arabic origin. Instead, he presents the text as if Nāṣir Khusraw were employing the same terminology that we all know from the Arabic works. But in fact Nāṣir Khusraw is making many interesting modifications in the terminology by using Persian instead of Arabic. Remember here that, for the most part, he could have used the Arabic expressions if he had wanted to, because they were already part of the Persian language. But he chose not to, at least partly with the intention of drawing something from Persian that was not quite available in Arabic. The translator gives us no help, however, because in translating the Persian words he uses the standard English equivalents for the Arabic technical terms, even though Nāṣir Khusraw is often not using the standard Persian equivalents.

One example will have to suffice. Like the philosophers in general, Nāṣir Khusraw speaks of three basic sorts of soul, typically known as the vegetal, animal, and rational souls. When we hear this in English, we make the association with Aristotle and medieval philosophy and move on, not bothering to think about what the discussion implies. Using the Arabic expressions in Persian would have the same sort of effect on Persian readers: they would think that this is the standard Greek classification and move on. But Nāṣir Khusraw uses Persian words that do not carry the same connotations in Persian as the Arabic would. He calls the three souls the “growing” (*rūyanda*), the “eating” (*khwuranda*), and the “talking” (*gūyanda*) souls. Hearing this in Persian or English, we cannot so quickly file it away as the same old tripartite scheme, because the words are too close to home. Among other things, it is patently obvious that all of us grow, eat, and talk, so we cannot forget for a moment that the discussion pertains not only to the outside world, but also to our own selves.

Many other examples could be offered, but my point has been made. And let me stress that I do not mean to be critical, I simply want to say that the translator’s choice of English equivalents goes a long way toward uncovering or obscuring the intentions of the original author. If we insist on thinking that the philosophers were Greeks *manqué*, then we can happily ignore their odd oversights and go back to the Greek originals, which are “obviously” what they had in mind. But this is obvious only to us scholars, not to the authors. They did not know Greek, and they wanted to express real ideas in terms that their contemporaries could grapple with. What Aristotle

may have meant by *x*—which has now become *y* in Arabic and *z* in Persian—is for the most part irrelevant to them, though they always held Aristotle in the highest esteem as “the First Teacher.” What they wanted to do was to explain the nature of things to interested parties, not to recover the ideas of long-dead Greeks. They were happy to use the Aristotelian tools, but they could not have cared less if what they were trying to say did not coincide with what Aristotle was trying to say. Even Ibn Rushd (Averroes), who tried much harder than others to recover Aristotle’s real intentions, was simply using Aristotle as his own alter ego. This, after all, is what those who appropriate the traditions of the past do with them. They may indeed learn a great deal from the traditions, but, ultimately, when it comes to explaining what they have learned, it is precisely *what they have learned* that is being explained.

Throughout my translations of the texts I have strenuously tried to preserve the stylistic flavor of the original. Bābā Afḍal’s philosophy cannot be abstracted from his use of language. The very words he chooses have flavors that must be tasted to be appreciated. In one of his short essays, he distinguishes between two modes of knowing, one by way of intellect (*‘aql*) and the other by way of “taste” (*dhawq*). Intellect is the faculty that apprehends by means of logic and demonstration. As for taste, a word commonly used in Sufism, it designates the unmediated apprehension of the realities of things. More generally, *dhawq* is commonly attributed to “people of taste,” such as those who are discerning in their appreciation of poetry and music. For Bābā Afḍal *dhawq* is a mode of understanding that is deeper and more inclusive than rational knowledge; he may have in mind the well-known proverb, *man lam yadhuq lam yadrī*, “He who has not tasted has not known.” The whole text of the essay—or perhaps we should call it a “maxim”—is this: “The intelligibles [*ma‘qūlāt*] are frozen, but the tastables [*madhūqāt*] are warm. Everyone who possesses taste is the possessor of intellect, but not every possessor of intellect is a possessor of taste” (*Muṣannaḥāt* 625).

Bābā Afḍal himself was a possessor of taste, and part of what he was trying to do was to convey the taste and the living warmth of wisdom to his listeners. No doubt this taste is lost in translation, but an effort should be made to recapture it. One way I do this is to imitate the interplay of Persian and Arabic terminology by employing plain English words for Persian words and abstract, technical language for Arabic terms. Of course, it is not always possible to do this. For one thing, consistency is also important. I cannot criticize other scholars for losing the thread of the meaning that is sewn by terminological consistency if I lose it myself. At the same time, there are sometimes too many words in the standard Persian/Arabic vocabulary and not enough English words of the same sort of semantic range. For example, I have had special problems with Persian *jān*, which means life, spirit, soul. But there are already Arabic technical terms for these three English words and, for the first, a Persian equivalent. Hence I went to the Latinate *anima*, which at least lets us distinguish between *jān* and two important technical terms, *naḥs* (soul) and *rūḥ* (spirit), while allowing us to see the connection that Persian makes between *jān* and its derivative *jānwar*, “animal” (for which we also have Arabic *ḥayawān*).

By and large, then, I have translated Persian terms with ordinary English, and Arabic terms with more technical language, though there are a few exceptions to this rule. I have also imitated Persian constructions, even though on occasion this produces awkward English. For example, Bābā Afḍal sometimes uses the word

dānīsh-jū, which nowadays is employed to mean “university student.” It is the Persian translation of the Arabic *tālib al-‘ilm* or “searcher for knowledge.” I imitate the Persian construction by translating it as “knowledge-seeking.” It may be true that I could have avoided awkward expressions of this sort, but sometimes ease of reading has to give way to respect for an author’s intentions, and sometimes an unusual word is just what is needed to drive a point home.

Writings

Compared to most Muslim philosophers, Bābā Afḍal wrote little. All of his prose could easily fit into a volume of five hundred pages, and about half of it is translated here. His corpus can be broken down as follows: (i) six long works, one on logic and five setting out the major outlines of his teachings, (ii) five translations from Arabic of texts attributed to Greek philosophers, (iii) an abridgment of the first part of Ghazālī’s Persian work, *Kīmīyā-yi sa’ādāt* “The Alchemy of Felicity,” (iv) seven letters to disciples and friends, (v) thirty-some aphorisms, essays, and isolated chapters ranging in length from two sentences to several pages, and (vi) several hundred verses of Persian poetry, mainly quatrains. In what follows, I give brief descriptions of all known works, arranged into the six categories just mentioned. At the end I also mention doubtful and spurious works. Unless otherwise noted, all works are in Persian and have been published in the two-volume collection *Muṣannaḥāt-i Afḍal al-Dīn Marāqī Kāshānī* (referred to here as *Muṣannaḥāt*). Those translated in this volume are indicated by the annotation HIP followed by the page numbers.

Major Original Works

1. *Risāla-yi ‘ilm wa nuṭq* (*The Treatise on Knowledge and Rational Speech*) or *Minhāj-i mubīn* (*The Clarifying Method*) (*Muṣannaḥāt* 477–579; excerpts HIP 291–308). Written first in Arabic and then translated into Persian, this is Bābā Afḍal’s second longest work and shows the extreme importance that he attached to logical thinking in a strict Aristotelian sense. He explains that he wrote the work to clarify the two “excellencies” (*ḥunar*) that are specific to human beings—knowing and talking. In the section on knowing, which takes up one-quarter of the text and is translated here, he provides definitions of basic terminology necessary for philosophical discussions. The second and much longer part is an exposition of the science of logic. The first twenty-five chapters of the second part cover words, denotations, definitions, and propositions. The last chapter, on syllogisms, takes up more than a third of the book. Certain scholars have claimed that the original Arabic was attributed to Aristotle or was in fact by Avicenna, but no evidence has been offered to support this claim. The editors of the text are dubious about these ascriptions and mention as one contrary piece of evidence the fact that Bābā Afḍal differs from Avicenna on the definition of *qiyās khulf*, as pointed out already by Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī (*Muṣannaḥāt* 573–74). The editors quote enough passages from the original to show that the Persian text is much expanded (*Muṣannaḥāt* 680–82).

2. *Madārij al-kamāl (The Rungs of Perfection)* (*Muṣannafāt* 3–52; HIP 243–71). This is Bābā Afḍal’s most complete discussion of the unfolding and transformation of the soul. As already noted, he wrote it first in Arabic and then in Persian; the Arabic text is extant but has not been published. The book’s eight chapters, some of which have sections, are as follows: (1) On the human substance, showing the several levels of human existence, from nature to intellect. (2) On what distinguishes human beings from other creatures, particularly that they can strive to actualize all levels of existence, including the highest, which is self-knowledge. (3) On the degrees of human imperfection and perfection. (4) On the causes that aid human beings in reaching perfection. (5) On the blights and hindrances that prevent reaching perfection. (6) On the marks of human perfection. (7) On the path of attaining the causes that help in achieving perfection. (8) On the benefit of knowledge.
3. *Sāz wa pīrāya-yi shāhān-i purmāya (The Makings and Ornaments of Well-Provisioned Kings)* (*Muṣannafāt* 83–110; HIP 178–94). Hardly a typical “mirror for princes,” this treatise describes not only the perfect king but also the perfect soul. It is divided into an introduction, three talks, and a conclusion. *First talk*: On the sorts of kings in the created world, the highest being the intellect. *Second talk*: On the function of human beings as kings over creation. *Third talk*: On the role of kings in government. *Conclusion*: On the corruption of contemporary kings.
4. *Rahanjām-nāma (The Book of the Road’s End)* (*Muṣannafāt* 55–80; HIP 272–88). In three talks divided into a total of fourteen chapters, this work explains that self-knowledge is the road to human perfection. *First talk*: On knowing self, the divisions of existence, particular and universal existents, and the existence of self. *Second talk*: On knowledge and awareness. *Third talk*: On knowledge’s profit, on activity, and on the formal and final causes of the soul.
5. *Jāwidān-nāma (The Book of the Everlasting)* (*Muṣannafāt* 259–322; HIP 194–233). This relatively long work is Bābā Afḍal’s most specifically Islamic treatment of his favorite themes and the least rigorous of his long treatises in philosophical terms. He points out in the conclusion that his aim in the book has not been to prove and demonstrate, but to admonish and remind. The text offers a philosophical picture of the soul and the universe and cites Koranic verses in support. The general theme is the necessity of reading the “signs on the horizons and in the souls,” a Koranic expression that is commonly taken to refer to the macrocosm and the microcosm, that is, the universe and the human being. In his interpretations of the Koran, Bābā Afḍal offers good examples of *ta’wīl*, or “esoteric hermeneutics,” in which descriptions of the cosmos and of historico-mythic events are taken as descriptions of the soul and its progress toward perfection. Mīnuwī points out in the introduction to *Muṣannafāt* (vi) that this sort of hermeneutics was practiced by the Ismā‘īlīs, but this is no evidence that Bābā Afḍal himself was an Ismā‘īlī, given that it was also practiced by Sunnis of the stature of Ghazālī.²⁶

In four sections, for a total of thirty-five chapters, *The Book of the Everlasting* explains the different kinds of sciences, brings out the importance of self-knowledge, and elucidates the nature of the descent from God and the return to him. *First section*: On the division of the sciences. *Second section*: On self-knowledge and the necessity of knowing God, the next world, and the soul. *Third*

section: On the Origin; on space, time, motion, the kinds of origins and returns, and the relationship between the soul's faculties and the angels; and on the bodily and spiritual selves. *Fourth section*: On the Return, on meeting God in both the soul and the world by heeding the signs, and on the essence of otherworldly felicity.

6. *ʿArḍ-nāma (The Book of Displays) (Muṣannafāt 147–253; excerpts HIP 78, 86, 233–43)*. This is Bābā Afḍal's longest and most complete exposition of his philosophy, a summa that brings together major topics related to the perfection of the soul. It is divided into four "displays" arranged in an ascending order according to the four kinds of things in the universe: deeds or bodies, doers or souls, known things or concepts, and knowers or intellects. *First display*: Fifteen chapters dealing with bodily things and their divisions, the four elements, the joining of bodies, place, motion, time, the causes of motion, the diversity of bodily natures, the mixing of natures and qualities, and the appearance of minerals, plants, animals, and human bodies. *Second display*: Five chapters on activity, the source of motion, the origins of activity, and the existence of the soul. *Third display*: Seventeen chapters on knowledge, intellect, created things as the likenesses of known things, levels of awareness, the unity of knower and known, universal objects of knowledge, substances and accidents, and the Aristotelian categories. *Fourth display*: Seven chapters on the kinds of knowers, the reality of knowing, the beginning and end of the knower, and the knower's encompassing all things.

Translations from Arabic

Bābā Afḍal's translations are masterpieces of the art. He is both faithful to the original and extremely insightful in choosing appropriate Persian terminology. No doubt he picked these specific texts because of the similarity of their content to his own philosophical positions, and indeed the Persian seems slightly closer to his positions than the original Arabic. A study of these works from a terminological point of view could throw a good deal of light on how philosophical terms of the period were being understood in both Arabic and Persian.

7. *Yanbū ʿal-ḥayāt (The Fountain of Life) (Muṣannafāt 331–85; excerpts HIP 108–11)*. Although some of the Arabic manuscripts attribute this work to Plato or Aristotle, Bābā Afḍal's version attributes the text to Hermes, who is explicitly identified as the prophet Idris (Enoch). The text is known by several other names, including *Zajr al-naḥs* ("Urging on the Soul"), by which Bābā Afḍal refers to it in two of his letters. Latin and German translations of the Arabic were made in the nineteenth century, and an English translation was made from Latin.²⁷ The work takes the form of thirteen chapters, each containing a series of admonitions addressed to the soul. The things of this world are not to be blamed, only the soul's love for them. The goal of life is for the soul to bring the intellect into full actuality. The soul must love death, which is rebirth into the intelligible world. The intellect is the soul's father, teaching it ethical norms and correct activity. Everything that must be known is already present in the soul.

8. *Risāla-yi naḥs-i Aristūṭālīs* (*Aristotle's Treatise on the Soul*) (*Muṣannaḥāt* 389–458; excerpts HIP 106–7). This is a translation of one of several Arabic epitomes of Aristotle's *De anima*. The Arabic text is attributed to the well-known translator Ishāq ibn Ḥunayn.²⁸
9. *Risāla-yi tuffāḥa* (*The Treatise of the Apple*) (*Muṣannaḥāt* 113–44; excerpts HIP 102–6). This is the pseudo-Aristotelian *Liber de pomo*, well known in Latin and Hebrew. In contrast to those two versions, Bābā Afḍal's translation follows the Arabic text closely.²⁹ The work contains Aristotle's deathbed teachings to his students (who is described as holding an apple as he spoke). It deals with the nature of the soul, its purification, the necessity of possessing the virtues, and the indispensability of knowledge for practice to have any value.
10. *Mukhtaṣarī dar aḥwāl-i naḥs* (*An Epitome on the States of the Soul*) (*Muṣannaḥāt* 461–66). The treatise is ascribed to Aristotle. Consisting of seven short chapters, it describes the soul's attributes, such as purity, simplicity, everlastingness, and the ability to think.
11. "From among the 115 questions that Alexander asked from his master Aristotle" (HIP 102). This one-page text of eight questions and brief answers is presumably translated from an Arabic original.

Abridgment of Ghazālī's Alchemy of Felicity

12. *Chahār 'unwān-i kīmīyā-yi sa'ādat* (*The Four Headings of The Alchemy of Felicity*) (HIP 111–25). This work, not published in Bābā Afḍal's collected works,³⁰ is a skillful abridgment of the first part of Ghazālī's Persian classic *Kīmīyā-yi sa'ādat*. The "four headings" are knowledge of self, of God, of this world, and of the next world. Only the last paragraph of the work is Bābā Afḍal's independent contribution; it focuses on the central theme of his own works, the actualization of intelligence. The whole text, however, is perfectly consistent with Bābā Afḍal's teachings, even if his own writings employ a more rigorous philosophical style and do not rely as much on imagery and analogies.

Letters

13. Answer to a letter from Majd al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn 'Ubayd Allāh (*Muṣannaḥāt* 692–99; HIP 137–41). Majd al-Dīn was apparently a vizier who had requested that Bābā Afḍal write something about the art of composition. The letter is especially interesting because it illustrates Bābā Afḍal's views on the nature of language. This leads him to a discussion of the corruption of the times and the abuses of those who hold political power. His remarks on contemporary rulers agree with his conclusions in *The Makings and Ornaments of Well-Provisioned Kings*.
14. Letter of condolence to Tāj al-Dīn Muḥammad Nūshābādī (*Muṣannaḥāt* 706–709; HIP 143–45). Bābā Afḍal explains that grief arises not from the loss of a loved one, but from attachment to false hopes. He discusses the life of the soul

and quotes from Idris as reported by *Zajr al-nafs*; his translation of a short passage from this work differs considerably from the more polished translation of the same passage in *The Fountain of Life* (number 7), so he had not yet translated the work into Persian.

15. Answer to a letter from Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad Dizwākūsh (*Muṣannaḥāt* 681–91; HIP 147–53). As already noted, Dizwākūsh is mentioned at the end of *The Rungs of Perfection* as having inspired the writing of the treatise. This letter provides important clarifications of the recurrent theme that the intellect is the sheer actuality of knowing, or the unity of knower, knowledge, and known. It divides the wayfarers on the path to God into two broad categories. It insists on the necessity of following a spiritual guide and on the special nature of the training needed by the human soul as opposed to the vegetal and animal souls.
16. Answer to a letter from Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad Dizwākūsh (*Muṣannaḥāt* 700–706; HIP 153–57). In this letter Bābā Afḍal points out the spiritual benefit found in *The Rungs of Perfection* and then turns to the specific question of the felicity or wretchedness of the soul in the next world. He elaborates on his understanding of the intellect, rejecting current views on the nature of the soul. This is one of the few places in his works where he is explicitly critical of other theories.
17. Letter to Shams al-Dīn Ḍiyā' al-Islām (*Muṣannaḥāt* 710–12; HIP 157–59). This Shams al-Dīn may or may not be the same as the recipient of the previous two letters. The letter was sent along with a copy of *Zajr al-nafs* (number 7), presumably the original Arabic text, not the Persian translation. Much of the letter is polite formalities, and it refers somewhat unclearly to what seems to be a book that a third person, perhaps Shams al-Dīn's superior in his official position, had promised to send. The middle section encourages Shams al-Dīn to continue exerting himself in his quest for wisdom.
18. Letter to Shams al-Dīn Majd al-Islām (*Muṣannaḥāt* 713–17; HIP 159–61). In reply to a request to send anything new he has written, Bābā Afḍal remarks that he has been kept too busy by his companions and family to write anything, but that what he has already written is in any case sufficient. Bābā Afḍal then admonishes the recipient to keep up his discipline, since the worst disaster for a gifted person is laziness.

It seems likely that the same Shams al-Dīn is addressed in all four of these letters, since “Ḍiyā' al-Islām,” like “Majd al-Islām,” may simply be a polite honorific, not a part of the recipient's name. If the recipient is the same, the four letters offer insight into a master's personal concerns for one of his disciples. In the first two, Bābā Afḍal seems to think that Shams al-Dīn shows a great deal of promise, in the third there is a certain coolness, and in the fourth there is great concern that Shams al-Dīn may be slipping from the path.

19. Answers to questions posed by Muntakhab al-Dīn Harāskānī (*Muṣannaḥāt* 717–28; HIP 162–68). This is the last writing of Bābā Afḍal. It touches on points not dealt with elsewhere, including the influence of stars and planets on human affairs and the futility of discussing philosophy and theology with worldly people. Muntakhab al-Dīn mentions a session in which Bābā Afḍal had been making certain points, so he may have been one of his “companions.” He also mentions

reading Ghazālī's *Alchemy of Felicity* with some of his acquaintances, which suggests that the book was among those that Bābā Afḍal urged his students to read.

Essays

These works range in length from two lines to twelve pages; most are untitled, and most deal with subjects covered in Bābā Afḍal's longer works, but rarely in exactly the same terms. Most appear to be essays written to answer specific questions, while some, like the two collections of philosophical maxims, were probably among the first works that students were expected to copy. About the only subject that is covered in the essays and not touched upon elsewhere is music. I have arranged the works roughly in terms of length.

20. *Mabādi-yi mawjūdāt-i nafsānī* ("The Origins of the Soulsh Existents") (*Muṣannafāt* 585–97). This treatise on concepts deals in five chapters with (1) the two basic kinds of existent things, natural (*ṭabīʿī*) and soulsh³¹ (*nafsānī*), (2–4) some of the terminology related to the latter kind, including Aristotle's ten categories, and (5) the meaning of the most general of terms, which are *ḥaqīqat* (reality), *chīz* (thing), and *mawjūd* (existent).
21. *Imānī az buṭlān-i nafs dar panāh-i khīrad* ("Security from the Soul's Nullification in the Refuge of Intelligence") (*Muṣannafāt* 601–609; HIP 171–74). The treatise gives the gist of Bābā Afḍal's philosophical position: The soul's food is knowledge, but, in contrast to the body, the soul can never eat enough. All knowledge is useless unless put into the service of self-knowledge, which in turn depends upon discerning among the three constituent elements of the human being—body, soul, and intelligence. All things are found in intelligence, so nothing can oppose or destroy it.
22. A discussion of the differences and similarities between the meanings of the words *chīz* ("thing"), *hast* ("being"), and *mawjūd* ("existent") (*Muṣannafāt* 647–52). The discussion is similar to but longer than chapter five of work number 20, "The Origins of the Soulsh Existents."
23. A relatively lengthy discussion of the meaning of the term *human*, along with the definition of several terms employed in logic (*Muṣannafāt* 632–37; HIP 288–91), this essay provides one of Bābā Afḍal's most succinct statements of his philosophical position. It is especially interesting because of its unique style and as an illustration of how Bābā Afḍal's metaphysics and psychology are intimately linked with concepts discussed in logic.
24. *Ḥāl-i nufūs-i juzwī ba ʿd az fasād-i tanhā* ("The state of the particular souls after the corruption of the bodies") (*Muṣannafāt* 641–43; HIP 174–76). An explanation of how souls remain forever contemplating themselves.
25. *Dar bayān-i tanāhī-yi ajsād* ("On the explication of the finitude of bodies") (*Muṣannafāt* 627–31).
26. A "chapter" (*faṣl*) on "the demonstration of the level at which human beings gain certainty that they have become secure from annihilation" (*Muṣannafāt* 615–17; HIP 176–77).

27. *Waṣīyyat-i ḥukamā, yā bīst wa hasht kalima fī naṣīḥat al-ikhwān* ("The Testament of the Sages; Or, Twenty-Eight Words of Counsel to the Brethren") (*Muṣannafāt* 656–58; HIP 131–32). A collection of short sentences explaining how to live the life of wisdom.
28. More advice to seekers in the same style as the previous essay (*Muṣannafāt* 659–61; HIP 133–34).
29. Two chapters explaining that the soul does not undergo annihilation and that the way to deliverance is reflection and thought (*Muṣannafāt* 611–13; HIP 135–36).
30. A chapter explaining the meaning of the word *tawḥīd* on the practical and theoretical levels (*Muṣannafāt* 619–21; HIP 129–30).
31. *Fī taḥqīq al-dahr wa'l-zamān* ("On the verification of 'aeon' and 'time'") (*Muṣannafāt* 663–64). An explanation of the meaning of these two terms.
32. *Sukhanān-i madad-dihanda binish-i muḥaṣṣilān rā* ("Words giving help to the seeing of the obtainers") (*Muṣannafāt* 640–41; HIP 271–72). A short discussion of the knower, the known, and their relation with existence.
33. A chapter on "the science of music," discussing the rhythm of musical sounds (*Muṣannafāt* 653–54).
34. A chapter explaining the three basic levels of soul—plant, animal, and human (*Muṣannafāt* 622–23; HIP 177–78).
35. Answer to a question on the cause of the beings (*Muṣannafāt* 625–26).
36. An explanation of the relationship between "universals" and "particulars" (*Muṣannafāt* 639–40).
37. *Dar bayān-i ḥāl-i nafs-i darrāk ba'd az marg-i tan* ("On the explication of the perceiving soul's state after the body's death") (*Muṣannafāt* 646). This short essay coincides rather closely with a section from *The Book of the Everlasting* (*Muṣannafāt* 320; HIP 232).
38. A chapter explaining that the outcome of activities, not their appearance, determines whether they are good or evil (*Muṣannafāt* 614; HIP 128).
39. A chapter on self-awareness (*Muṣannafāt* 618; HIP 169–70).
40. A short explanation of universal existence (*Muṣannafāt* 624; HIP 174).
41. A paragraph explaining that intellect is not a substance (*Muṣannafāt* 638; HIP 170).
42. A short exposition of the degrees of the existent things, from body to intellect (*Muṣannafāt* 638; HIP 50–51).
43. A paragraph explaining the necessities for following the path to God (*Muṣannafāt* 644; HIP 56).
44. A division of people according to the theoretical and practical intellects (*Muṣannafāt* 644; HIP 63–64).
45. That meanings (*ma'nā*) are not abstractions, so reaching them is to reach realities that endure by themselves (*Muṣannafāt* 645; HIP 174).
46. A supplication addressed to God as the incomparable and unfathomable Ipseity (*Muṣannafāt* 652; HIP 146).
47. A proof that the talking soul is not the body (*Muṣannafāt* 665; HIP 83–84).
48. A "word of profit" explaining the necessity of struggle and disengagement (*Muṣannafāt* 655; HIP 128–29).

49. A short paragraph on the relation between the soul and the body (*Muṣannaḡāt* 662; HIP 84).
50. Three sentences epitomizing Bābā Afḡal's position on the soul's everlastingness (*Muṣannaḡāt* 631; HIP 174).
51. Two sentences explaining the difference between intellect and taste (*Muṣannaḡāt* 625; HIP 18).

Poetry

The quatrain is composed of two lines, each of which has two half-lines or hemistichs—the word “quatrain” (*rubāʿī*) referring to the four hemistichs. It has always been exceedingly popular among Persian speakers. In a culture where the ability to recite poetry on any occasion is taken for granted even among many of the illiterate, and where a poetical *bon môt* will make its reciter the winner of any debate—unless his opponent comes up with a better verse—the quatrain is the perfect form. It is easy to memorize, and it makes one clear point in its two short verses. Quatrains were constantly cited, and poets thought nothing of quoting someone else's quatrain to make their own points. Scholars of Persian literature speak of “floating quatrains,” meaning poems that float from *divan* to *divan*. Hence a poem found in a collection of ʿUmar Khayyām's quatrains will also be found in one or more other collections belonging to, for example, ʿAṡḡar, Rūmī, Awhḡad al-Dīn Kirmānī, and Bābā Afḡal, to mention a few of the genre's well-known authors.

52. Fifty years ago, Saʿīd Nafīsī published 483 quatrains ascribed to Bābā Afḡal in the first modern edition of his *diwan*. Mīnuwī and Mahdawī published about 200 quatrains in *Muṣannaḡāt* (674–76, 737–72), and more recently M. Faydī and others published an updated *diwan* listing 687 quatrains and rejecting another thirty-seven as definitely spurious.³² All these scholars refer to instances in which some of the quatrains have been ascribed to other authors, but none attempts a serious critical study. In addition to the quatrains, twelve *ghazals* and three *qasidas* are mentioned (*Dīwān* 242–59; cf. *Muṣannaḡāt* 731–36, 673).

The poems that I have translated are taken from the shortest and best of the modern editions, that in *Muṣannaḡāt*. Many of the quatrains found there would be unremarkable in any anthology of the genre, so I have tried to choose examples that reflect the specific philosophical concerns and language of Bābā Afḡal's prose works. Whether or not any given poem was actually written by him, however, remains an open question, because of the peculiar problems connected with the genre.

Works of Uncertain or Incorrect Ascription

- I. *Jāmiʿ al-ḡikma*. This treatise of fifty-five pages was published in Bābā Afḡal's name by M. T. Dānishpazhūh, who does not doubt the ascription found at the beginning of the only manuscript, which dates to about 754/1353.³³ In the

introduction, Dānīshpazhūh provides excerpts from a different recension of the same treatise, which he assumes is also by Bābā Afḍal, copied by one Abū Bakr ibn ‘Alī ibn Aḥmad Andarābī in the year 576/1181, when Bābā Afḍal would probably have been in his forties. The work employs the nineteen letters of the *basmala* (the formula, “In the name of God, the All-merciful, the Compassionate”) to outline the structure of the universe and the stages of human perfection. It uses a number of Ismā‘īlī technical terms, and it is also reminiscent of the writings of the Ikhwān al-Ṣafā’, especially the Persian abridgment of their treatises known as *Mujmal al-ḥikma*.³⁴ Neither the style nor the terminology shows any of the peculiarities of Bābā Afḍal’s writings, and I see nothing in the text that would suggest that he is in fact the author.

2. *Āyāt al-ṣan‘a fi’l-kashf ‘an maṭālib ilāhiyya sab‘a*. This is a four-page Arabic treatise that provides brief definitions of seven topics: ipseity, intellect, soul, substance and accident, matter and form, body, and simple essence.³⁵ One quarter of the text is an introduction, in which it becomes clear that an unnamed author is citing Bābā Afḍal’s words. The section on intellect summarizes Bābā Afḍal’s argument that the intellect is neither substance nor accident (cf. work number 41). The sections on soul and body both suggest the influence of Ibn al-‘Arabī’s school of thought, such as the mention of the term *al-insān al-kāmil*.
- 3–5. Included in Bābā Afḍal’s collected works (*Muṣannafāt* 666–72) are three short essays, two of which are explicitly said to represent questions posed by one Ṣafī ibn ‘Alī Bidgulī and answered by one Khwāja Zayn al-Dīn, and the third of which appears to be a continuation of the same correspondence. One or both of these individuals were presumably members of Bābā Afḍal’s circle.
6. *al-Mufīd li’l-mustafīd*. This was printed from the only complete manuscript. Portions of the work found in another manuscript attribute it to Ghazālī. Scholars have remarked that its style is not in keeping with Bābā Afḍal’s works.³⁶
7. *Sharḥ Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*. A commentary on Avicenna’s “Living, Son of Awake.” Although a manuscript attributes this to Bābā Afḍal, no evidence has been offered to support the ascription. Given Bābā Afḍal’s independence of mind, the ascription seems highly unlikely.
8. *‘Ilm-i wājib*. A short unpublished treatise rejecting the Peripatetic idea that God does not know particular things. There is no reason to attribute this work to Bābā Afḍal except that the sole manuscript is found with a number of his short works. Unlike his works, the style is totally Arabized, and the content is heavily theological.
9. *Sharḥ fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*. A commentary on the famous book by Ibn al-‘Arabī. Bābā Afḍal’s dates and concerns preclude the possibility that he could have written this work, which is ascribed to him in Sa‘īd Nafīsī’s early study on the basis of hearsay and is probably the commentary of Bābā Afḍal’s compatriot, ‘Abd al-Razzāq Kāshānī (d. 736/1335).

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2

The Worldview of Islamic Philosophy

Philosophy's relation to the Islamic tradition has often been debated in modern studies. A good number of the experts consider the relation tenuous, and others disagree. The difference of opinion has much to do with differing understandings of the key terms of the debate. No one seems to have doubted that at least some of the philosophers are in fact doing "philosophy" in the Greek tradition. The questions arise because of the label "Islamic" or "Muslim" and disagreements on the nature of Islam. Some scholars have held that philosophy and Islam have little to do with each other, and others maintain that philosophy plays an important and even essential role in the Islamic tradition. Typically, those who hold that Islam and philosophy are incompatible have a rather narrow definition of what constitutes Islamic belief and practice, while those who see no essential conflict define their terms much more broadly.

When considering this discussion, which comes up quickly in most general works on Islamic philosophy,¹ we need to remember that, by and large, the Western experts have been trained in the history of Greek and Western philosophy, not in Islamic thought, which means that they have understood philosophy's role largely in Western terms. They have also tended to have a modern preconception about the mutual hostility between religion and philosophy. For many modern scholars, after all, religion is beneath the dignity of the intellectual, whereas true philosophy represents a grand quest for truth on the part of those too enlightened to fall for religious dogma. Some of the well-known experts have told us that the philosophers had to hide their true beliefs in "esoteric" formulations and bow to the rhetorical needs of their times, because their teachings went against the grain of the religious tradition. In this view, it is irrelevant that, on the surface at least, most philosophers considered philosophy a legitimate way to understand and practice Islam and that they saw no contradiction

between Islamic faith and the philosophical quest. Such statements in the texts are considered window-dressing to fend off the criticisms of benighted dogmatists.

There is, of course, a great deal of evidence to show that philosophy was not compatible with the religious sentiments of a large body of Muslims, but there is also evidence that many of the philosophers considered themselves sincere followers of the Koran and the Prophet. Many of those who attacked philosophy, such as the enormously influential Ghazālī, were themselves highly sophisticated advocates of philosophical thinking. Their objection was not to the training of the mind that philosophers underwent, but to certain specific conclusions many philosophers reached, conclusions that they considered not only hostile to the teachings of Islam, but also unwarranted by the philosophical evidence.²

One needs to remember that the theologians and jurists who attacked the philosophers often attacked their theological and juridical opponents with the same vehemence. Islam's intellectual territory was always hotly contested by several schools of thought, and the philosophers appear less as a unique school than as one of the contending factions. As for the philosophers' need to toe the rhetorical line, this varied from time to time and place to place, but it was largely a matter of adhering to the political correctness of the day. My own sense of Islamic history is that at many times and places, indeed, in by far the majority of times and places, the philosophers could say and write anything they wanted, because no one really cared, given that the vast majority of people had no interest in such erudite issues. The situation then was not much different than the situation now; there was both a pressure not to question sacred cows publicly, and an abysmal ignorance on the part of most people about what the quest for wisdom might demand.

Philosophical Issues in the Islamic Tradition

To grasp why many Muslim intellectuals over the centuries have considered philosophy an integral part of the Islamic tradition, we need to have some understanding of what this tradition entails.³ Like other religions, Islam addresses three basic levels of human existence: practice, understanding, and virtue; or body, mind, and heart; or, to use the well-known Koranic triad, *islām* (submission), *īmān* (faith), and *iḥsān* (doing what is beautiful). These concerns are patently obvious to anyone who has studied the Koran or the Hadith (the sayings of the Prophet), and Muslims have always considered the "search for knowledge" that the Prophet made incumbent on the faithful to pertain to all three of these domains.

Islamic practice is rooted in the Sunnah or model of the Prophet, who demonstrated how the Koran could be applied to everyday life. Islamic understanding is rooted in investigating the objects of faith that are identified by the Koran—God, the angels, the scriptures, the prophets, the Last Day, and the "measuring out" (*qadar*) of good and evil. Islamic virtue is grounded in the attempt to find God present at all times and in all places, just as the Prophet found him present. Practice pertains to the domain of the body, understanding to the mind or "intelligence" or "intellect" or "reason" (*ʿaql*), and virtue to the heart (*qalb*), where one is able to experience the reality of God without any intermediary.

The domain of practice came to be institutionalized in the Sharia (Islamic law), whose experts, commonly called the “ulama” (*‘ulamā*)—the “knowers” or “scholars”—were trained in the science of jurisprudence (*fiqh*). The domain of understanding developed into three basic approaches to knowledge, which can be called “Kalam” (dogmatic theology), “theoretical Sufism,” and “philosophy” (*falsafa*). The domain of virtue, the most inward of these domains, stayed for the most part hidden, but nonetheless it took on the broadest variety of manifestations. To it belong personal piety, devotion to God, love, sincerity, “godwariness” (*taqwā*), and many other human qualities bound up with the interior life. The major institutional manifestation of this third domain is Sufism, but it also shows itself in many other realms of Islamic culture and civilization, including the general Muslim love for beauty (and therefore art on all levels, from clothing to music to architecture) and the extreme concern to observe the *adab* or “courtesy” of every situation.

The word *adab*, for which we have no adequate English equivalent, refers to proper and beautiful deportment and correct behavior, both physical and verbal. It denotes a broad domain that includes all the little courtesies and politenesses, observance of propriety and good manners, elegant handling of social situations, accomplishment in belles lettres and poetry recital, skill in calligraphy and music, care to observe one’s social and professional duties, and perfect harmony between outward behavior and inward attitude. I stress its importance because it plays a significant role in Bābā Aḩḩāl’s exposition of the nature of virtue and the quest for human perfection.⁴

The domain of submission and practice that is governed by the Sharia concerns every Muslim, because this domain defines a Muslim qua Muslim. The first and primary practice is the “witnessing” (Shahadah, from Arabic *shahāda*), the verbal attestation that there is no god but God and that Muḩammad is his messenger. The rest of Islamic practice and faith follows upon this, and many theologians have argued that uttering the Shahadah is the only thing really essential in being a Muslim.

The second domain, that of faith and understanding, addresses what it is that Muslims are bearing witness to. When they say, “There is no god but God,” what does this mean? Who or what is God? No one can have faith in God without a concept of “God,” though it is perfectly possible to observe the rules of the Sharia without faith—for reasons of social solidarity, prudence, or hypocrisy, for example.

The third domain, that of virtue and the interior life, pertains to deepening of practice and faith so that these permeate the soul and lead to the perception of God’s reality and presence in all things. Hence the Prophet’s famous definition of *iḩsān* (“doing what is beautiful”): “It is that you serve God as if you see Him, for if you do not see Him, He sees you.”

It should be obvious that anyone with a mind will not be willing to accept that “There is no god but God” without having a clear idea of what God is. The sentence must make sense. The three schools of thought that have addressed the issues of faith—Kalam, theoretical Sufism, and philosophy—were concerned to make sense of this and many other Koranic statements.

The objects of faith came to be discussed under three basic rubrics, known as the “three principles” of the religion—asserting unity (*tawḩīd*), prophecy (*nubuwwa*), and the “return” to God (*ma‘āḩ*). Muslim intellectuals who investigated and ex-

plained these issues can be classified more or less according to the point of view they adopted. The terms *Kalam*, *theoretical Sufism*, and *philosophy* simply indicate in a rough sort of way three basic perspectives. In earlier Islamic history, it is usually clear which perspective an author is advocating, but in later texts, the perspectives tend to be more and more mixed. Already in Ghazālī, we have a thinker who cannot be classified according to this scheme, because he writes works from each point of view, and he sometimes mixes the perspectives.

More than anything else, the three intellectual perspectives differ in their methodology and goals, not in their objects of investigation. All three schools of thought wanted to understand God, prophecy, and the return to God. But both the dogmatic theologians and the philosophers considered *ʿaql* (intellect, reason) as the primary means whereby one achieves this understanding. The theologians insisted that the Koran must be the first point of reference, and their goals were more or less “apologetic”; their stance was to defend the truth of the Koranic accounts. For their part, the philosophers did not consider it necessary to refer to the Koran, since, they maintained, intellect alone is sufficient to achieve the final goal, which, in short, is “wisdom,” or knowledge of things as they are combined with practice that accords with the knowledge. As for the Sufi thinkers, they considered the Koran the primary source of knowledge, but they held that rational investigation was not adequate to achieve a full understanding of the Koran, because such investigation could only be a purely human effort. People should rather devote themselves to God, who would personally undertake to teach the meaning of the Koran to his devotees if and when they reached sufficient worthiness to understand—according to God’s will and grace, not the devotees’ efforts. God’s own teaching was called by various names, such as “unveiling” (*kashf*), “true knowledge” or “gnosis” (*maʿrifa*), and “witnessing” (*mushāhada*).

The philosophers may not have agreed with the formulations and stances of the dogmatic theologians and the Sufis, but they did not disagree that the three principles of faith designate important issues that must be grasped if we are to make sense of the world and ourselves. They did not accept *tawhīd* simply on the basis of belief. Rather, they undertook to demonstrate the fundamental unity of reality using a variety of arguments. Discussion of *tawhīd* is bound up with the explication of how the world is related to the “First” (*al-awwal*) or the “Author” (*al-bāriʿ*)—Koranic divine names that are typical philosophical designations for God. Study of the world, then, or “cosmology,” becomes part of the quest to grasp *tawhīd*. So also, one must know who it is that knows and how it is that the knower can know, so “epistemology” is also an essential dimension of all philosophical investigation. Moreover, to prove anything at all one must have a set of guidelines for the rational process, and this is the role of “logic.”

Any reflective thinker must ask how it is humanly possible to know the First, which is typically understood to be an order of reality totally different from that of things. The religious tradition speaks of prophets, who are the necessary vehicles for providing knowledge of God’s reality and the guides to achieving the fulfillment of human life. For the theologians, faith in prophecy was a starting point for their position. But the philosophers considered the necessity of prophets a legitimate issue for debate, and the conclusions reached by some of them were harshly criticized by theologians and Sufis.

Whatever position the philosophers took on prophecy, they never avoided the issue. After all, the questions it raises are utterly essential to any conception of the validity and usefulness of knowledge: What is it that human beings should strive to know? Can they come to know what they should and must know on their own, or do they need to be instructed? If they need to be instructed, what is it that establishes the competence and authority of the teacher? Is it true that, in the acquisition of real knowledge, people must have recourse, directly or indirectly, to those designated human beings whom the religious tradition calls “prophets”? If it is true, why is it true? What are the special characteristics of prophetic knowledge that make it inaccessible to human intelligence functioning on its own?

Finally, the third principle of Islamic faith—the return to God—is even more basic to the philosophical quest. The philosophers often discuss it under the heading, “The Origin and the Return” (*al-mabda’ wa’l-ma’ād*), since talk of our return demands talk of our origin, that is, how we got here in the first place. While investigating human nature’s relation to the cosmos, the philosophers addressed all the issues connected with death and resurrection, a domain that is sometimes called the “compulsory return.” In doing so, they strove to understand how the world is connected to the First and how it undergoes various stages of unfolding—what we might call its “devolution” and subsequent “evolution.” In their view, the very nature of the Origin leads to a Return by a corresponding trajectory.

Ultimately, all the philosophical concerns hover around the issue that is sometimes called the “voluntary return.” People will be returning to the First Origin whether they want to or not. The philosophers held that people should strive to return by a route that allows for the full development of the potentialities of human nature. This alone could bring about the happiness and wholeness of the “self” or “soul” (*nafs*) in both this world and the next. They undertook voluminous investigations of the nature of the soul and related issues, such as self-knowledge, freedom of choice, and the achievement of human “perfection” (*kamāl*) or “completion” (*tamām*). For most of them, philosophy was the way to ensure a proper and congenial homecoming to the First. Here they commonly employed the Koranic term “felicity” (*sa’āda*), which is the standard expression in the Koran and Islamic texts in general for the happiness of paradise.

Historians of philosophy have sometimes obscured what was at issue in discussions of the voluntary return by translating the word *sa’āda* as “eudaemonia,” thereby suggesting that the concept was borrowed from the Greeks and would have been strange to ordinary Muslims. Certainly the arguments and the technical vocabulary of the philosophers would have been strange to ordinary Muslims, just as the analogous Christian arguments in the premodern world would have been strange to ordinary Christians, and just as contemporary philosophical discussions are strange to most people today. Nonetheless, the notion of an ultimate happiness that is contrasted with an ultimate misery or wretchedness is utterly basic to Islamic thinking, philosophical or not. It is precisely this that determines the urgency of both the religious and the philosophical quest, not social or political considerations. When “All is perishing but the face of God,” as the Koran puts it, the affairs of this world have little ultimate significance. The philosophers never forgot that philosophy is preparation for death. Certainly the affairs of this world need to be taken care of, but

always with full awareness of the body's disappearance and the soul's subsistence. Any rational person would want to act in keeping with his or her own ultimate good, which is to say that activity must focus on the important things, which are those that have a positive effect on the soul's becoming and its final destination.

Intimately connected with discussion of the soul's return is the domain of "ethics," *akhlāq* in Arabic. The Arabic word is the plural of *khuluq*, which can perhaps best be translated as "character" or, in the plural, "character traits." This word derives from the same root as *khalq*, which means "creation," and which, in the usual unvowelled Arabic script, is written exactly the same as *khuluq*. The very use of this word shows that "ethics" has to do with the soul's created nature. It follows that understanding the nature of proper behavior is inseparable from understanding the reality and purpose of creation. In other words, ethics is not simply a moral issue, but a cosmological and ontological one as well.

Islamic ethical teachings have much in common with the ethical teachings of other traditions, no doubt, but the philosophic (and also Sufi) rationale for these teachings reaches back to the underlying nature of reality itself. The praiseworthy character traits that must be achieved have nothing "conventional" or "artificial" about them—though practical instructions and legal rulings certainly do have an eye on convention—because these traits were not invented by human beings. Rather, they pertain to the nature of things. Here human freedom is the wild card, which means that character traits will be shaped by individual choices. It is these choices that the philosophers want to direct toward the *summum bonum*, which they often call the "Sheer Good" (*al-khayr al-mahḍ*)—a common philosophical name of God.

Quality and Quantity

For modern readers, the premodern mind is especially difficult to penetrate. This is largely because over the past two centuries, scientific thinking has become totally dominant, and along with it the idea that the only valid knowledge is that which comes by way of the empirical and experimental sciences. It has not been uncommon for contemporary scholars to hold that medieval metaphysics and logic may have something to teach us, but that medieval cosmology was an imaginative construction having no connection with scientific laws or the real world, and hence of little interest to us moderns. This helps explain why historians of Islamic thought have paid scant attention to cosmology and psychology, while they have devoted a great deal of energy to those aspects of the philosophical enterprise that possess what we recognize today as a "scientific" flavor, especially mathematics and astronomy.

If in the recent past the aims and goals of much of the scholarship in the history of Islamic philosophy have been determined by the truth claims of science, this does not mean that scholars now investigating the history of ideas necessarily accept the exclusive authority of the scientific worldview. This is not the place to enter into the ongoing debates about the epistemological status of empirical science, but it should be clear to anyone with some knowledge of the contemporary scene that the earlier belief in its inerrancy and exclusive possession of the truth has largely been aban-

done. However, the type of thinking that has been promulgated by “scientism”—that is, the belief that science alone can offer real and rational explanations for things—permeates most of the modern disciplines and filters down into the furthest reaches of education and popular culture. Even if many professional philosophers have long since seen through the claims of scientism, it remains a major stumbling block for modern readers who want to grasp the nature of premodern world views in general, and Islamic philosophy and cosmology in particular.⁵

Scientism is a stumbling block because it has established the opinions that determine the worldview of the vast majority of people. The idea that science alone offers true and reliable knowledge is so deeply entrenched in popular culture that it is difficult to dispute the conclusions of Rustom Roy, a distinguished physicist and a critic of the endemic scientism of modern culture. As he is fond of pointing out, science has now become our “theology” and technology our “religion,” and there are few people in the intellectual establishment who risk incurring the anathema that is pronounced on heretics.⁶

There are many ways to conceptualize the manner in which scientific thinking stands in the way of grasping the goals and purposes of the world’s wisdom traditions. One way that I have found especially useful is that outlined by the contemporary Sufi philosopher René Guénon in his prescient book, written in 1945, *The Reign of Quantity and the Signs of the Times*. A parallel understanding often surfaces in the well-known philosophical novel by Robert Pirsig, *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*. Both authors speak in detail about the contrast between “quality” and “quantity,” though their viewpoints are far from identical. In order to clarify the peculiarities of premodern thought that are omnipresent in Islamic thinking, it may be useful to investigate the relationship between these two concepts in Islamic terms.

Pure and absolute quality is the ultimate, unitary Reality that gives rise to all qualities and all quantity. It is, in short the unadulterated light of Being, or the Essence of God. This Absolute Quality can only be conceptualized in terms of specific, relative qualities, which are commonly called the “divine attributes,” or the “divine names.” Quantity is born from the fact that Absolute Quality in its utter undifferentiation can be understood in terms of many specific qualities, such as necessity, firstness, knowledge, will, power, and creativity. In religious terms, the one God has “ninety-nine” names, and these are the root of the quantity and multiplicity that appear in creation.

When the First gives rise to the universe, it does so in terms of its qualities. The universe itself is the place of plurality, differentiation, and dispersion. The more we study and analyze the universe, the more we see the multiplicity that allows us to discuss discrete and distinct things. By and large, the modern scientific disciplines have sought explanation on the quantitative side of things, and thus mathematics is the key discipline. The “quantitative side of things” is the appearance of things as discrete individuals that can be further subdivided and analyzed. The drive of modern physics to find the ultimate particles is a good example of this perspective taken to an extreme. In contrast, the “qualitative side of things” represents everything that allows phenomena to be conceptualized in terms of the qualities that derive from Pure Quality, especially the eminently human qualities such as awareness, compassion, wisdom, and justice.

Investigating the quantitative side of things is perfectly legitimate, of course, and the modern scientific disciplines illustrate how practical such investigation can be. It is illegitimate only to claim that this alone is real knowledge and that the elucidation of the qualitative side to reality tells us nothing of significance. This is precisely “scientism”—to hold that real knowledge comes from empirical science alone. This way of thinking, though attacked by many intellectual currents in the modern world, still permeates modern education, and it has left us with a legacy of an almost compulsory quantification. As a result, people tend to see the world around them and their own selves only in terms of discreteness and reification. They look at things, and they cannot see them as anything but things—never as signs or markers or pointers or symbols. From grade school they are taught to believe that things are real in themselves, and that this reality can be expressed only scientifically, which means mathematically and quantitatively. If some qualities, such as colors, can be expressed in numbers, they are real, but those qualities that cannot be expressed quantitatively—and most cannot—are unreal.

Given that the scientific worldview sees reality in quantitative terms, the further away from quantification we move, the less real our discussion appears. This means that the qualities and characteristics of our humanity that even today have a certain primacy—such as love, generosity, compassion, justice, and their opposites—are taken out of the realm of real things and placed on the side of the subjective and, ultimately, the indifferent. What is considered real is, on the one hand, what the scientists say is real, and on the other, raw power, which is the domination of quantity and accumulation over everything that pertains to the qualitative domain. The end result has been the dehumanization of the scientific and technological realms, not to mention those realms that are built on the scientism that purports to extend science into all human life. This is especially obvious in the modern academy, where the social sciences contend for respectability through quantification, and where so much of the theorizing in the humanities has been reduced to issues of political, social, and psychological power.

It is a basic perception of Islamic thinking that reality lies in “quality,” that is, at the opposite end of the scale from what can be grasped through quantitative investigation. The further we move from the domain of pure quantity and the more we ascend beyond the possibility of quantification in the direction of the One Quality, the more we are dealing with real issues. In other words, the more we turn away from the dispersion, multiplicity, and discreteness of the quantitative realm, the more we can focus on the coherence, unity, intelligibility, and inherent luminosity of the qualitative realm. As a result, we are moving in the direction of the first principle of Islamic thought, *tawhīd*, which is the assertion of reality’s unity. In discussing *tawhīd*, we are talking about how the realities that fill the universe are related to the One. In other words, to grasp *tawhīd* is to find the reverberations of the One both in the cosmos and in the soul, and these reverberations are seen precisely in the harmony, coherence, and pattern established by real qualities.

If the Islamic view of things understands reality to lie on the qualitative side of the scale, the scientific worldview sees reality as immersed in the quantitative domain. For the Islamic philosophers, this is to be entranced by the images and

obscurations and to be unaware that reality is to be sought in the intelligible luminosity of the One Real. As the outstanding historian of the Platonic tradition, A. H. Armstrong, writes,

Our consciousnesses are nowadays pretty firmly settled on the bottom of the lake, down among the broken lights and shadows and reflections. We cannot be as sure as the ancients of our ability to raise our heads above water into the light of the eternal. . . . One reason for this lack of confidence is that the brilliant and technically admirable developments of philosophical discourse in modern times have made it very much less likely than even Plotinus thought that the path of discursive reason will lead us to awareness of rather than disbelief in an objective eternal reality quite outside and independent of the dreams and images of the lake, or the *psychê*.⁷

The Islamic philosophical disciplines all focus on pulling things together, finding the grand patterns that unify, searching out the source of the broken lights and reflections, lifting the head above the water, and seeing the objective eternal reality outside the images it throws. The quest is to perceive the light of the Supreme Good that is reflected and refracted in the world. Real knowledge comes from grasping the relationships and connections that are established by the luminous rays of that God who is “the Light of the heavens and the earth” (Koran 24:35). The way to find these relationships and connections is to see multiplicity as coming forth from the eternal qualities, which are the realities rooted in the First Real (*al-ḥaqq al-awwal*). The goal is always to find a qualitative coherence with roots in unity. Quantification can play no more than a secondary role. Even in the ancillary sciences such as astronomy, where quantification is a necessary aid, the objective is to understand the coherence and unity of the grand celestial patterns that appear to the eye, not to analyze the things qua things.

Generally speaking, modern science has no use for any quality that cannot be quantified, which may help explain the contempt with which many hard-nosed scientists look upon the social and psychological sciences. They sense that quantification is being applied where it does not belong. It follows that the vast majority of the issues that were important to the Muslim philosophers in their attempt to grasp the reality of the natural world seem irrelevant to scientists and, with even more reason, to scientism. Since the modern *zeitgeist* is infused with scientific thinking, the philosophical arguments upon which cosmology was based seem subjective and imaginary, or strangely abstract and irrelevant to what is actually happening in the real world in which we live.

The Islamic philosophers would respond to the scientific objections by pointing out that the issue is an ancient one: how do we know what is real? What could ever lead us to think that quantification provides us with explications of the “real” world? Certainly, quantification has its uses, and modern technology is living proof of this. But are the uses to which quantification has been put the proper ends of human endeavor? Are they any proof that “reality” has been grasped? What, after all, is a human being? If we do not know what is real, if we do not know what it means

to be human, and if we do not know the purpose of life, how can we conclude that we are putting things to their proper use?

In one passage Bābā Afḍal explains why he has not entered into any detailed discussion of individual things. His rationale is simply that reality does not lie on the side of quantification, but rather in the direction of the universal principles and fundamental qualities. To focus on the individual things turns people away from the real issues that face them in their own becoming. Only by turning back toward the One Origin can they hope to achieve their true human status.

There was no reason to talk in more detail, with more and longer explanation, because tracking down and bringing forward the individuals of the particular world and the temporal and locational state of each keeps people distracted from universal existents and meanings. If there is assiduousness and constancy in reflecting upon this, the goers and lookers will become heedless of the final goal of going and looking. They will make the particular bodies and the states of the individuals the focus of their seeing and insight and envisage them as the settling place of their seeing. (*Muṣannaḥāt* 237; HIP 239)

For Bābā Afḍal specifically and Islamic philosophy generally, understanding the human situation and grasping the value of knowledge depends upon “the final goal of going and looking.” In contrast, the modern disciplines see the real issue to lie in “the particular bodies and the states of the individuals.” But if we do not know the final goal, how can we understand the bodies and states in any more than a contingent and arbitrary way? The final goal has to be stated before the appropriateness of activity can be judged. In most modern thought, the dilemma of needing a goal to make meaningful judgment yields the practical solution of asserting that all goals are individual and without ultimate meaning. The result is the omnipresent relativism that filters into every domain of thought and culture. In contrast, Islamic philosophy never lost sight of the fact that “absolute relativism” is a contradiction in terms. There always remains an absolute point of reference that allows for secondary and relative goals to be given their proper place. This absolute point of reference is the One Real, from which all things come forth.

Bābā Afḍal maintains that understanding the final goal of human endeavor depends on self-knowledge. But the self cannot be investigated in the quantitative terms of the modern disciplines. One might reply that various schools of psychology do investigate the self. However, the more they attempt to do so, the less their pretensions to be “scientific” are taken seriously in the academy. By and large, those who do dare to mention concerns such as “self-knowledge” are quickly relegated to the domain of pop psychology and New Age fluff. No one can deny that many contemporary thinkers have been deeply concerned that the modern perspective of “knowledge for control” or “instrumental rationality” has opened a yawning chasm that prevents appreciation of the premodern and traditional viewpoint, that of “knowledge for understanding” or “wisdom.” But this concern rarely filters down to the cultural and educational institutions that function to indoctrinate society into the current worldview.

Basic Qualities

The Muslim philosophers think that to speak about phenomena in quantitative terms is to put the cart before the horse. The patterns that we perceive everywhere demand unifying principles behind the patterns, and these in turn must be tied together by higher principles and ultimately by the supreme principle. On the level of principles, the only role for numbers is to illustrate the gradual unfolding and differentiation of qualities. Many of the philosophers showed great interest in the Pythagorean tradition precisely because of their appreciation for numbers as a means to express the underlying order and hierarchy of reality. In chapter 3 we will see a few examples of the utilization of numerical reasoning for these sorts of ends by the Ikhwān al-Ṣafā', and so also in Bābā Afḍal's *Book of the Everlasting*.

The foundational qualities or principles that are closest to absolute unity are the grand realities discussed in Islamic philosophical and theological thinking, though the language used to name these realities diverges widely according to the perspective. Kalam and theoretical Sufism speak of foundational qualities largely in terms of the divine attributes established by the Koran. Thus we have attributes such as mercy, compassion, knowledge, life, power, desire, speech, justice, forgiveness, vengeance, gentleness, severity, pardon, wrath, and so on, all of which are derived from Koranic names of God.

The early philosophers tried to avoid the religiously tinged language and preferred instead words and expressions that have a "rational" rather than a "revelational" sound to them. Nonetheless, many of their basic investigations of primary qualities employ terms that are also Koranic divine attributes. After all, the Koran is liberal in ascribing names to God, and the philosophers had no choice but to express themselves in the language that the Koran itself had fixed and established. Even when the philosophers chose designations for God not found in the Koran, there are few important Arabic roots that the Koran does not employ, and the use of any term derived from any of these roots has a resonance for those who have memorized and recited the book from childhood—and this includes most educated Muslims, and many of the uneducated.

To take an example of a philosophical discussion of foundational qualities, let us look at the third book of Avicenna's *Dānish-nāma-yi 'alā'ī*, which deals with the basic attributes of existence, that is, *ilāhiyyāt*, literally "the divine things," or, as it is often loosely translated, "metaphysics."⁸ After a general introduction on the concept and reality of "existence" and a review of basic terminology needed to discuss existent things—such as substance and accident, quality and quantity, universal and particular, one and many, priority and posteriority, cause and effect, finite and infinite, possible and necessary—Avicenna turns to the major topic of the work, which is the Necessary in Existence, that is, God. Then he proceeds to analyze seven attributes that must be ascribed to any reality whose existence is necessary: unity, eternity, knowledge, desire, power, wisdom, and generosity. Finally he directs his attention to the soul's felicity and to the qualities that are found in the cosmos. Notice that six of these seven attributes are explicitly attributed to God by the Koran and the seventh by the Hadith literature, even if most of the surrounding discus-

sion—the preliminary issues, the manner of discussing these attributes, and the subsequent psychological and cosmological issues—are shaped by the philosophical tradition, rooted in works based on Greek originals.⁹

Avicenna and other philosophers considered these divine qualities the most basic realities in the universe, because they are closest to what is necessary in existence, that is, the Origin of the cosmos, the First, the Author, or, in one word, God. The only knowledge that gives us true insight into the real nature of things is understanding how the qualities of the underlying Reality permeate the universe. The further we move from God's unity toward the world's multiplicity and quantity, the more dispersed, ephemeral, and unreal the qualities become. Talk of "evil" only comes into play at the level of dispersion and incoherence. It is not without significance that Avicenna ends the just-cited book with a four-page section called, "Making clear the cause of the deficiencies and evils that occur in what undergoes generation and corruption." His basic point is made in one short sentence: "The root of evil is not to be."¹⁰ And it should be obvious that "what undergoes generation and corruption"—that is, everything that appears and then disappears, no matter how long it may take—is precisely the object studied by all modern disciplines and, in Avicenna's terms, the least real of all domains and the most mixed with evil, because it is the furthest removed from the Necessary in Existence and the nearest to nonexistence.

The fact that philosophical discussion pertains to a qualitative domain is especially obvious in ethics. None of the human qualities discussed in Greek or Islamic ethics can be quantified. For some of the Greeks and many of the Muslims, virtues such as justice, courage, continence, and wisdom are among the foundational qualities of reality itself. They partake of the unity of the ultimate reality, and they can only be fully grasped and actualized to the extent that a human being conforms to the nature of things. But since ethical traits stand at the opposite extreme from the constantly changing, altering, decaying, and disappearing stuff of our own sense experience, they are totally averse to quantification. Hence, from a modern point of view, morality can never be "scientific," which is to say that ethics cannot be taken seriously. If the realists and experts are not concerned about ethics, why should anyone else be concerned?

Only the dissolution of societal equilibrium pushes the scientifically minded to recognize that morality has a certain useful role to play—it keeps the rabble in check. This acknowledgment goes back to a utilitarian, instrumental point of view. It does not seem to occur to modern ethicists, or even to those philosophers who still take ethics seriously, that the human qualities that are the basis of "ethical" activity are far more real and far more rooted in the underlying nature of things than any of the objects studied in the modern sciences, whether these be quarks or genes, because the objects studied by modern science simply throw light on how the scientists conceptualize the mechanisms of the realm of generation and corruption. The result of this undeniably useful and utilitarian conceptualization is the ever greater ability to manipulate the world for ends that always remain within the domain of generation and corruption itself. In contrast, ethics in the true sense of the term belongs to the realm of the divine attributes that never change, and the actualization of these attributes within the human soul serves to deliver the soul from the domain of generation and corruption into the qualitative realm that underlies all things.

In short, the Muslim philosophers have never been interested in things per se, and often they were not even talking about things in any sense that we would recognize, despite the fact that they employ words that appear to refer to things. In fact, they were talking about the qualities and characteristics that appear in things. As a result, qualities that are utterly unscientific and “unreal”—such as generosity—can enter into the heart of cosmology. This is why Avicenna, for example, can discuss love as a cosmological principle (in his well-known treatise, *Fī ḥaqīqat al-‘ishq*, “On the reality of love,” and elsewhere).¹¹

Ontology: Being and Finding

The Muslim philosophers often say that their subject matter is *wujūd*, that is, “existence” or “being.” Their approach differs from that of other scholars because it addresses existence per se, without regard to anything else. Every other discipline investigates things that exist in some mode or another. Other scholars simply assume that their objects of study exist, then investigate them as existing things. They do not ask what it means for things to exist, and they cannot ask this question inasmuch as they are specialists in their own disciplines. If they do ask the question, they have entered the realm of philosophical reflection. Thus zoologists study animals, and they are certainly interested in other sorts of existent things, such as minerals and plants, but it is no concern of theirs to understand what it means for these things to “exist.” As zoologists they cannot ask how these things partake of or manifest the qualities of existence per se, as represented most perfectly by the Necessary in Existence. Linguists study language, which has modes of existence in the mind, on the tongue, and on paper. They are interested in the interrelationship of these existential modalities, no doubt, but they do not and cannot, as linguists, address the ultimate rooting of language in existence itself.

In short, philosophy was considered the one science that could have an overview of all the sciences, because it studies the one thing that is presupposed by every other discipline. Nothing can be discussed and studied unless it exists—even nonexistence must have a mode of existence for it to be mentioned. Philosophy’s overarching scope helps to explain why so many of the medieval philosophers were polymaths. To know philosophy thoroughly they had to know everything, because everything exists in one mode or another.

The philosophers often classified the sciences by ranking them according to the object of their study. The “higher” the object of study, the more elevated and eminent the science. Hence biology is more eminent than mineralogy, because living things are higher than and include in themselves inanimate things. Theology, which investigates God as existent, is higher than psychology, which investigates the nature of the soul. From this perspective, philosophy is the highest of all sciences, because it investigates the underlying reality of absolutely everything, God included, and hence it gains an overview of everything that may or may not exist or that does in fact exist.

As pointed out earlier, Bābā Afḍal does not concern himself with investigating the Necessary in Existence or any of the divine attributes *in divinis*. In particular, he pays almost no attention to the aforementioned branch of philosophy known as

“divine things” (*ilāhiyyāt*) or the study of “Lordship” (*rubūbiyya*).¹² Hence he has nothing to say about the First in itself. He does not ascribe “existence” to God, thus sidestepping one of the most vital of philosophical issues throughout Islamic history: if God exists and the world exists, what exactly does this word *exist* mean?¹³

When Bābā Afdal does mention God outside the context of set Arabic phrases, he typically uses the Persian word *khudā* (“God”) or the Arabic *haqq* (“the Real”), and occasionally Persian *izad* (“God” with overtones of ancient Persia). In discussing existence and its levels, he situates God outside the scheme by referring to him as the “Essence” (*dhāt*), the “Ipseity” (*huwiyyat*), and the “Reality” (*ḥaqīqat*). “Existence” is then God’s effulgent light. Historians of philosophy would quickly insert here that his perspective is that of Neoplatonic emanationism. But even if we want to file him away in this specific cubbyhole, we can still ask how exactly he goes about explaining the nature of things. What is the logic of his “emanationism”? Does it help us make sense of the writings of other philosophers? More importantly, does it help us make sense of our own perception of the universe, either directly, or by way of the arguments that we need to offer if we want to prove him wrong? These questions deserve to be answered.

In discussing existence itself, Bābā Afdal uses two basic terms as synonyms—Arabic *wujūd* and Persian *hastī*. I translate them respectively as “existence” and “being,” partly to indicate that he is employing two different words, but also because *existence* and *being* in English have the same sort of linguistic relationship that *wujūd* and *hastī* have in Persian. Both *existence* and *wujūd* are loan words with philosophical and learned connotations, while *being* and *hastī* are gerunds derived from the basic “to be” verb of the language.¹⁴

In Arabic, the word *wujūd* gradually came to be the preferred technical term to discuss existence, although early on other terms such as *anniyya* (or *inniyya*), “that-it-is-ness,” and *huwiyya*, “he-ness” or “ipseity,” were also used. The literal meaning of the term *wujūd* is “finding” or “foundness.” It is a verbal noun from *wajada*, “it found.” The passive form, *wujīda*, “it was found,” is commonly used to mean, “it was there,” i.e., it existed. The word *wujūd* has maintained its literal sense in Arabic, and even in philosophical contexts it may have much more to do with finding than with existing.

The fact that the word *wujūd* rather than any other term came to be preferred for existence/being certainly has something to do with its literal meaning. The terms *anniyya* and *huwiyya* make no sense in everyday Arabic, because they are coined terms known only to scholars.¹⁵ *Wujūd* is used in everyday speech, and the verbal form is used more than a hundred times in the Koran. Everyone knows what it means, at least in the ordinary senses of the word. So, this term came to be employed at least partly because of its familiarity and commonplaceness—just as existing things are familiar and commonplace. Another reason is that it does not have the limiting quality of “that-it-is-ness” or “ipseity.” These terms do not allow existence to be anything more than “to be” or “to be there.” *Wujūd* suggests that there is more to existing than just being there. If a word can be applied to everything that exists, it should imply something of the richness of what existing can mean. Use of the word suggests that “to be”—divinely and also humanly—is not only to be there, but also “to find.” Just as the First Being finds all things, so also do humans find by their very being.

These reflections on the use of the term *wujūd* are not simply speculations on my part. They are borne out by a good deal of evidence. The piece of evidence most relevant here is the manner in which Bābā Afḍal explains the meaning of the term. Remember first that in his way of looking at things, existence pertains to the cosmos, that is, to everything other than God, not to God himself. The cosmos “is there” and everything within the cosmos is also there. But things in the cosmos are not all there in the same way. In order to illustrate that the word *wujūd* has different meanings depending on which sorts of things we apply it to, Bābā Afḍal points out that it has two basic senses—“to be” (*būdan*) and “to find” (*yāftan*). If we want to understand how the word applies to something, we need to situate the thing in relation to these two meanings.

Bābā Afḍal constantly employs the Persian verb *yāftan*, “to find.” On occasion he adds the intensifying prefix, *dar*, which gives the word the literal sense of something like “to find out,” but which I usually translate as “to grasp” and occasionally as “to perceive.” Sometimes he seems to be using the word *yāftan* as a synonym for Arabic *wujūd*, and sometimes for Arabic *idrāk*, which means to grasp, to overtake, and in technical contexts, “to perceive.” The connections between existence, finding, and perceiving are already clear in the word *wujūd*, which can mean any of these. It follows that when Bābā Afḍal talks about the “found” (*yāfta*), he means both the “existent” (*mawjūd*) and the “perceived” (*mudrak*). As for the “finder” (*yābanda*)—that which finds the object that is found—it must be something that exists, but there is more to its existence than simply existing, because it also finds. Thus, to say that something is “found” is simply to say that it is there, but when we speak of a “finder,” we know that the finder must be found before it can find.

Toward the beginning of *The Book of the Road's End*, Bābā Afḍal divides existence into these two levels—“to be” and “to find.” Then he subdivides the levels according to potentiality and actuality.

If we look at the world around us, we see that existent things can be ranked in degrees. “Potential being” is like a tree in a seed, or a table in a tree. “Actual being” is the tree itself, or the table itself. Being in these two senses can be observed everywhere, but it does not begin to exhaust what *wujūd* may imply. Hence we move on to *wujūd* as finding.

“Potential finding” belongs to the soul, which has the capacity to find, know, and be aware of the things and itself. “Actual finding” belongs to the intellect, which is the human soul that has turned its resources to the task of knowing self and others and has reached the fullness of its own selfhood. For such a soul, nothing exists but actualized finding. It has found self and, along with self, all objects of the self’s knowledge, which are the things of the universe. Thus self is aware of all things as present in self, and nothing escapes its purview.

The move from potential finding to actual finding entails an ascent to a higher level, just like the move from the potential being of a seed to the actual being of a tree. At the higher stage of finding, the soul is called “intellect.” This is the philosophers’ “Agent Intellect,” which they consider to be the furthest limit of human aspiration, the utter fulfillment of human felicity, and the final goal of creation. As Philip Merlan points out in discussing the beginning of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*, “Omniscience—this is the ultimate goal of man’s search.” He continues by remarking

that the tendency of modern readers to take such statements as hyperbole misses the seriousness and import of the ancient philosophical quest. "There is a kind of knowledge which is in some way all-comprehensive. God possesses it—man should try to acquire it. Only when he succeeds, his longing to know will be satisfied. Man desires and is able to divinize himself."¹⁶ Even the word *divinization* appears only slightly excessive in the Islamic context, since one can claim that it corresponds with Arabic *ta'alluh*, "being like unto Allah" or "deiformity," a word that is often used to explain the final goal of the philosophical quest. Mullā Şadrā's best known title is Şadr al-Muta'allihin, which can be translated as "the forefront of the divinized ones," or "the leader of the deiform."

Notice that in Bābā Afḍal's description of the levels of existence, finding is proof of being found, which is to say that awareness is proof of existence. If this sounds like Descartes's *cogito*, so do various other statements of the early Muslim philosophers.¹⁷ What is interesting, however, is not the similarity of the idea, but the conclusions that are drawn from the premise, the results that rise up from the philosophical perspective. Bābā Afḍal's basic conclusion is that knowing is being, truly to know oneself is truly to be, and truly to be is to be forever.

The picture of human nature that arises from this explanation of the word *wujūd* is this: Humans were given the potentiality to know themselves so that they might bring this potentiality into actuality. The final goal of human life is to make our potential knowing—which is already an actual existence—into an actual knowing, in which case we will know what always and actually is, and this is nothing but God's eternal radiance, a radiance that is precisely human intelligence. To know actual existence fully and totally is to be identical with actual existence fully and totally and to be fully aware and conscious of self. At this level one can speak of the "unification of the intellecter, the intelligible, and intellect." Once achieved, this being-*cum*-awareness can never be lost, which is to say that the actuality of existing and knowing will never return to potentiality, any more than a tree will shrink back to being a seed.

In a similar classification of existence found in *The Rungs of Perfection* (*Muṣannaḡāt* 21; HIP 252–53), Bābā Afḍal looks at things in terms of apparentness (*paydā'ī*) and concealedness (*pūshidagī*). He divides the things into four levels: possible (*mumkin*), existent or found (*mawjūd*), finder (*yābanda*), and the one who is aware of self through self (*ānka az khwud bi khwud āgah buwad*). The possible thing is hidden both from itself and from the world, as the animal is hidden in the egg, or the shirt in cloth. The existent thing is apparent to the finders, but not to itself, like every sort of inanimate object. The finders find the existent and apparent things, but they do not find the finder of the existent things. They are represented by all the degrees of soul, from plant, to animal, to human. Finally, the finder of self looks back and sees the self gazing upon self, thus achieving the unification of self and self's object. "This is the rank of the existence of the intellect."

In another classification, upon which Bābā Afḍal bases the structure of *The Book of Displays* (*Muṣannaḡāt* 153; HIP 238), he divides the found things into four basic sorts: deed (*karda*), doer (*kunanda*), known (*dānista*), and knower (*dānā*). The deeds are all things in the corporeal world, or the bodies of everything that has a body. The doers are the souls and spirits that animate the bodies and perform activities. The known things are the disengaged realities (*ḡaḡā'iq-i mujarrad*), that is, all things in-

asmuch as they exist eternally in knowledge without corporeal actuality, or everything known to intellect. Finally, the knower is the soul inasmuch as it is identical with intelligence. The fully actualized knower has achieved “joining” (*paywand*) or “conjunction” (*ittiṣāl*) with the First Intellect, which is both the origin and goal of all existence. As Merlan remarks in discussing conjunction as a philosophical issue from Aristotle onward, “The full *conjunctio* is the moment in which man becomes omniscient.”¹⁸

In his frequent discussions of the gradations of existence, Bābā Afḍal cites examples from the outside and inside worlds. The ascending qualities that we perceive when we compare minerals, plants, animals, and humans represent the external unfolding of the movement from the utter potentiality of matter (*mādda*) to the full actuality of the form (*sūra*) that is disengaged from matter. Each higher level contains in itself all lower levels. Plants have the qualities and perfections of minerals, plus specifically vegetal attributes such as growth. Animals have the mineral and plant qualities, plus specifically animal attributes, such as “appetite” (*shahwa*) and “wrath” (*ghaḍab*)—terms that were translated into Latin by the words that have given us “concupiscence” and “irascibility.” Each higher level perfects and completes the lower level, which is to say that each one actualizes a previous potential. The human soul or self is the actuality of all the animal perfections. It in turn may gradually be transformed until it becomes intellect, which is the full actuality of knowing, or the knower that knows all things in itself and, by knowing them, encompasses and possesses them as its own.

Psychology: Soul and Intellect

What is important for the Muslim philosophers is the qualities that appear in the things, not the things themselves. The qualities give each thing its own “specificity” (*khāṣṣiyya*), that is, the attributes and characteristics that set it apart from other things. Whether or not a thing is there, its specificity is always real, because the specificity is a unity of qualities that derive from the Necessary in Existence, the Eternal Real. One of the philosopher’s tasks is to know the thing’s reality (*ḥaqīqa*), that is, the thing as it is in itself, which is the unity of its individual specificities. Whether or not the thing that has these specificities exists in the external world is secondary to this discussion. In other words, first we establish a thing’s quiddity (*māhiyya*)—its “what-it-is-ness” or “whatness”—then we can ask about the status of its existence.

One can say that the philosophical concern with qualities and specificities, rather than with quantifiable things, means that the cosmological thinking of philosophers like Bābā Afḍal is not “scientific,” but rather logical, psychological, and epistemological. In other words, the philosophers focus not on things as found in the external, physical realm, but on the things as known. It is true that they constantly speak of “things” (*ashyā*), but this is because this is the least specific word that one can employ, and hence it can refer to anything and everything, including all the invisible and spiritual things that have no reality whatsoever in scientific thinking. The philosophers offer what appears to be a graphic description of the things of the universe, but this is much more “mythic” than “scientific,” because the described

things are not discrete objects, but rather—much like the “gods” in more primal worldviews—bundles of known qualities. The philosophers are not chiefly concerned with the sensory appearance of the universe, nor with its unfolding over time, but rather with the interrelation of attributes and specificities that can be perceived with the senses and situated in relation to other phenomena with the rational mind.

It follows that Islamic cosmology is not discussing the cosmos per se, but rather the human self and the nature of our awareness of what we call the “cosmos.” (To think, by the way, that Stephen Hawking and the other heroes of scientific cosmology are discussing anything but their own understanding is hardly a reflective move on our part.) The philosophers knew very well that any description of the cosmos goes back to the structure of the human psyche and thought. Bābā Afḍal for one reminds us repeatedly that what we understand of the world is nothing but our own understanding. Perception and finding are not situated “out there,” but “in here.” As he writes in one passage, “Nothing can be reached through the meaning of speech but the meaning of self” (*Muṣannafāt* 694; HIP 138).

Descriptions of the cosmos are descriptions of our own perception and understanding, not of the cosmos. If we find the “thing-in-itself,” which can be a more or less adequate translation of Arabic *ḥaqīqa* (“reality”) or *māhiyya* (“quiddity”), we are not finding it “out there,” but rather “in here.” If the reality that we find does in fact correspond with what is outside our awareness, this is precisely because the world out there and the world in here derive from common principles and common roots. By no means does this position lead to some form of solipsism or idealism in which the subject alone would be real, nor does it lead to Kantian agnosticism. The philosophers maintain that everything that exists in any manner whatsoever is real and knowable. The discussion has to do with the degrees and modalities of knowledge and reality.

The philosophers are searching for a knowledge of things that cannot be doubted, what Bābā Afḍal calls “certainty” (*yaqīn*). The only knowledge that truly allows for escape from doubts is knowledge without any intermediary—not even the intermediary of the soul, the imagination, or the senses. This sort of knowledge is located in intelligence alone, and every intermediary adds to the doubt and unreliability. As Bābā Afḍal puts it, “‘Certainty’ is *theōria*’s return from other than self and arrival at self. This is why certainty is not nullified, and certainty cannot be left behind. But before it reaches self, *theōria* is agitated and muddled. This is called ‘doubt’” (*Muṣannafāt* 237; HIP 239).

Practically everything we know we know through intermediaries, and the more the intermediaries, the less likely that the knowledge is true. If the senses qualify as “instruments,” all the more so do the paraphernalia of modern research (not to mention the paraphernalia of the modern media). By nature, the paraphernalia interfere with the perception and even the phenomena, and this was well enough known long before Heisenberg threw his monkey wrench into modern physics (though perhaps not by physicists). Some seek refuge from doubt and uncertainty in common acceptance and expert opinion, but the experts typically think that most of their own colleagues do not know what they are talking about, even if they try to maintain a unified front for the sake of professional standing. In short, the least reliable knowledge is knowledge by hearsay, and upon it we build our world. One

should not blame the philosophers for striving to reach beyond hearsay, opinion, instruments, and sense perception to seize on what can be known for sure.

The philosophers do not think that their investigations of the reality of the cosmos and the soul would be obscure to any rational, reflective person. From their perspective, we need no instrument other than a reflective soul and functioning senses to grasp the true nature of the cosmos and the self. The senses provide us with adequate input to allow us to trace our way back to the root of all things. The fact that most of the possible data actually escapes our senses is irrelevant to the issue—in any case, most of the data will always escape us, no matter what instruments we use and no matter how big our computers (even if we accept the hypothesis that data received through the added intermediary of instruments has the same status as data received through sense perception). The question is simply whether or not sense perception provides a sufficient basis upon which to begin the task of returning to the Root of all roots, the First of all firsts, the Author, the Real. The philosophers answer in the affirmative, as do all reflective Muslims—though, in contrast to some of the philosophers, the latter would insist that people also need the help of the divinely revealed books.

In short, the philosophers hold that everything necessary for attaining the final goal of human life is, in principle, given to every human being. If we want to understand the true nature of the cosmos, it is sufficient to have functioning senses, a rational mind, and the desire to understand. Then we can undertake the quest. The basic givens needed for the search are known to any thinking person. Introspection will lead anyone to see levels of perception and awareness within self, and these levels of awareness reflect the structure of the outside world.

Both the inside and the outside come from the same Origin, and both follow the same route in getting here. It is this that allows us to perceive and grasp what is outside ourselves. But it must be remembered that we ourselves will never be able to go “outside” ourselves. To criticize medieval cosmology because it fails to provide us with “objective” knowledge is a red herring. All knowledge pertains by definition to the subject, whether or not it is empirically verifiable in the sensory domain. Indeed, there is no way to translate “objective” and “subjective” back into the premodern Islamic languages (and probably not into any other premodern languages either).

The usual way of discussing the internal levels of the soul is to describe the differentiations among the things that we perceive in the outside world. The discussion depends upon a simple observation of things without any intermediary other than our own senses and cognitive faculties. It is clear to everyone that stones are different from flowers, and flowers different from turtles. We all know that these three belong to different realms of the outside world, realms that in Islamic thought are often called the “progeny” (*muwalladāt*)—the three kingdoms of minerals, plants, and animals. The fact that the exact dividing lines between the realms may be obscure was recognized and simply taken as a natural consequence of the fact that these are our own conceptualizations of the world. The world will not necessarily bend to our needs simply because we want to make sense of it, especially not in all the minute and evanescent details of the realm of generation and corruption. The three kingdoms are called “progeny” because they are born or “progenerated” (*tawallud*) from

the marriage of heaven and earth, which are the high domain and the low domain, or the spiritual realm and the bodily realm, or the invisible world and the visible world. The progeny are differentiated by the qualities that become manifest through the activity or lack of it that we are able to observe with our senses.

It is here that the discussion turns to the faculties or powers or internal characteristics of the progeny. Each domain has a set of invisible attributes that may or may not become fully actualized in any given individual. But the traces of the attributes and qualities are there to be witnessed. On the mineral level, the basic quality is “nature” (*ṭabīʿa*), which is an invisible power that keeps the inanimate things in their own specific attributes and characteristics, until they are acted upon by forces outside themselves. When inanimate things are acted upon by other things, such as plants and animals, they may then be assimilated into a higher power that allows for activity within the thing’s self (*nafs*). Nature may be called a power, but it is not a “self” in this sense, because inanimate things show no trace of awareness and finding.

Only in plants can we begin speaking of “self.” The term employed, *nafs*, is usually translated in philosophical texts as “soul,” but in Arabic the word is the reflexive pronoun, corresponding exactly with English *self*. Thus we have the plant, animal, and human selves, or souls. This soul is also called a “spirit” (*rūḥ*), that is, an invisible, life-giving force that allows things to move and function.¹⁹

In both plants and animals, we observe many characteristics in addition to those possessed by inanimate things. Each of these characteristics is called a *quwwa*, which is commonly translated in this context as “faculty” or “power,” but which I prefer to translate here as “potency.” A potency is a power or ability possessed by a *nafs*, a soul or self. It is the name given to a specific characteristic of a soul, and indeed, the soul itself is often called a potency, as is the intellect.

This word *quwwa* is one of the more difficult terms to deal with if we want to preserve consistency in translating philosophical texts. It is usually rendered in several ways according to its three basic senses—strength (or power), faculty, and potentiality. However, it is not at all clear that the authors of the texts saw any real differences among these meanings, even if the dictionaries and glossaries did specify them. Rather, the philosophers seem to have considered *quwwa* a single reality whose exact characteristics vary according to the situation. In the sense of “strength,” *quwwa* is a divine attribute, for God is the Strong (*al-qawī*), and it is also a human and animal attribute, in which case it is contrasted with “weakness” (*daʿf*). As “faculty,” *quwwa* is a power of the soul, whether the soul dwells at the plant, animal, or human level. Thus we have the faculties of growth, nourishment, reproduction, hearing, sight, smell, memory, reflection, intellect, and so on. As “potentiality,” *quwwa* is contrasted with “actuality,” and the philosophers—following the Aristotelian tradition—constantly discuss how things move from potentiality to actuality.

In previous works I have followed the usual practice of translating the term *quwwa* according to context, whether as strength, potentiality, or faculty. However, the more I study the philosophical writings, the more I am convinced that the clear demarcation among the English meanings is simply not present in the one Arabic term. The authors used a word that they thought had the same basic meaning in every context, though its implications and connotations might differ. In the present

book, I use the English word *potency* to translate *quwwa* for all three meanings. Although it is not common to say that smell and touch are the soul's "potencies" rather than its "faculties," the meaning is clear enough, especially with forewarning.

When used in place of faculty, the word *potency* has the advantage of suggesting something that is obvious in the original Arabic but not clear in the standard translation: Although the faculty is there, it is not necessarily being put to use, nor is it necessarily *actualized* in any real sense. We have the potency of sight, but our eyes may be closed, and in any case we do not actually see everything that we might possibly see. Moreover, each of us actualizes this potency in different degrees and different ways. An artist "sees" a tree in a far different way than a botanist. In short, every "faculty" is a potentiality whose degree of actuality can be investigated and discussed. The soul itself is a "potency" because it can be more than it is. If the intellect is also a potency, this is because all human beings have the faculty of intelligence to some degree, but this is not to say that they have come anywhere near to actualizing its full perfection.

I have also attempted to maintain a certain consistency in translating the word *fi ʔ*, the complement of *quwwa* in the sense of potentiality. Although *fi ʔ* contrasted with *quwwa* is normally translated as "actuality," and otherwise as "activity" or "act," I preserve it as "act" throughout. I make an exception to this rule for the phrase *bi-fi ʔ*, "actually," which is contrasted with *bi-quwwa*, "potentially." Thus, although it is usually said that things move from potentiality to actuality, in these texts one will read about movement from potency to act. With this translation, it will not be possible to forget that *fāʔil*, the active participle of *fi ʔ*, needs to be translated as "actor" or "active." The intensive form of this active participle, *faʕʕāl*, is normally translated, following the Latin, as "agent" or "active." To distinguish it from *fāʔil* ("active" or "actor"), I translate it as "agent" throughout. Nonetheless, "fully actual" often does a better job of getting across the sense of the Arabic. Thus *al-ʕaql al-faʕʕāl*, the Agent Intellect, can perhaps best be understood as the "fully actual intellect."

When people begin to employ their power of reflection (*fikr*) and thought (*andisha*) to investigate the world around them, they see that inanimate things have no *nafs*, which is to say that the qualities that they ascribe to inanimate things are there without the need for any internal power to bring them into view. On the plant level, a number of internal potencies and powers immediately make themselves apparent, the most obvious being growth and nourishment. If these powers are not present, the plant is withered and dead, which is to say that it has no more potencies than an inanimate thing. Animals have many more potencies, and human beings are distinguished from animals by potencies such as speech and rational thought that are not found in any of the other progeny.

Every higher level embraces all the qualities and potencies of the level or levels below it, and each is distinguished from the lower levels by what it adds to them. Thus all three progeny belong to the realm of "nature," which rules over their inanimate parts. Then plants add certain potencies to nature, animals more potencies, and human beings add specifically human powers to all these potencies.

Typically, the discussion of increasing levels of potency is carried out in terms of "soul" (*nafs*) or "spirit" (*rūh*). Thus we have the plant, animal, and human souls or spirits. Each level is described in terms of the potencies it carries. Each higher level

has the potencies of the lower levels. A plant has a vegetal soul, an animal has both vegetal and animal souls, and a human being has in addition the human soul. This is not to say that animals have two souls and human beings three in some quantitative, reifiable sense. It simply means that the animal soul has the potencies of the plant along with those of the animal, and the human soul possesses the potencies of the animal soul.

In ourselves, then, we find what we observe in the outside world. This is the gist of the famous correlation between “microcosm” or human being and “macrocosm” or universe. The argument is philosophical, and those who discuss it are asking their readers to reflect upon themselves and see within themselves every quality and potency that they discern outside themselves. If “heaven and earth are within you,” this should not be understood in some quantitative, concrete sense. The issue is rather the qualities and characteristics that we ascribe to heaven and earth. We can ascribe potencies and characteristics only because our intelligence embraces their reality, so they belong to us. Only intelligence can recognize intelligence, and by recognizing it, it can recognize everything that it embraces, which is all that is intelligible, that is, the whole of reality.

If the animals are within us, this is because we possess all the animal potencies and attributes, and therefore we know the animal qualities and can actualize them as our own—as when people act like dogs, pigs, snakes, or asses. It is precisely their potencies that animals actualize through their activity, and it is precisely these same animal potencies that human beings actualize through the acts that they share with animals, such as eating, drinking, and mating, or when they act like beasts instead of humans.

The human soul is defined by specific potencies not found in the other progeny. This soul is often called the “rational soul” (*nafs nāṭiqā*), a term that I prefer to translate, more in keeping with the sense of the Arabic, as “rationally speaking soul.” Bābā Afḍal and Avicenna, among others, render this expression into Persian as *nafs-i gūyā* or *nafs-i gūyanda*, “talking soul.” What gives the human soul this characteristic is its relation with intellect or intelligence, which allows for the articulation of awareness in speech.

The human soul is potential intellect, whereas the Agent Intellect is actualized intellect. This means that the human specificity—that which makes human beings human—can only be understood in terms of the human entelechy, or the perfection and completion that we are able to actualize through what lies within our own potency and possibility. We can put our soul to work toward its own proper aim and final goal and, if we do this successfully, we will become truly human by achieving awareness and knowledge of the principle of all awareness and knowledge, which is nothing but the enduring intellect, the eternal radiance of God.

Bābā Afḍal’s understanding of how the levels of existence are related to soul and intellect is epitomized in one of his short essays:

The “existent” is either aware or not. What is not aware is the rank of the body and the level of nature.

What is “aware” has either particular awareness, or universal awareness. What has particular, sensory awareness is the rank of nature and the level of

the soul. What has universal, intelligible awareness is the rank of the soul and the level of the intellect.

When the body reaches the level of nature, nature the level of soul, and soul the level of intellect, then the bodily, concealed existence disappears. It is joined to and appears with the spiritual, clear existence. *And peace be upon those who follow the guidance* [20:47]. (*Muṣannafāt* 638)

One of the domains where we have been totally conditioned to dismiss premodern ways of looking at things as “unscientific” is biology. Bābā Afḍal’s frequent references to the various levels of soul often touch on issues that would be discussed nowadays in botanical and zoological terms, especially when he talks about the characteristics of plants and animals. In reading such passages, we need to remember that the purpose is to point to various qualities and characteristics in the world around us that manifest the potencies of soul. These potencies are found in living things in different degrees, and they are present in all human beings, since the human soul brings together all the potencies of the lower realms. We should put on hold everything that we have learned from biology classes or the science pages of the *New York Times* and instead we should try to see the world in the qualitative terms in which it is being described to us.

In *The Book of the Everlasting*, Bābā Afḍal interprets many Koranic verses in terms of imagery drawn from the animal realm. In order to do so, he divides animals into four basic sorts. If I had been working from an Arabic text, I probably would have translated the Arabic terms as “human beings, beasts, birds, and reptiles,” and readers would understand these words according to modern scientific classifications of living things. However, Bābā Afḍal translates these words into Persian in a way that reminds us that he does not have in mind the classifications of the past two centuries or so, in which a tremendous quantification has taken place at the expense of our ability to see the animals as they used to be presented in myths and fables—as living beings with divine attributes. Thus Bābā Afḍal speaks of the four types of animals as humans, four-footed things (i.e., quadrupeds), flyers, and crawlers. These nonscientific, literal translations allow us to keep in mind that Bābā Afḍal and many other philosophers had no interest in differentiating sparrows from bats and dragonflies, or lizards from scorpions and centipedes. Rather, they are pointing to certain sorts of attributes and qualities that appear in certain living things, and the phylum or family to which the thing belongs makes no difference. The issue is first the qualities as found in the outside world, and then how these qualities are also found in human beings. They are asking what we can learn about ourselves by observing the world around us with the help of our innate intelligence.

Cosmology: Origin and Return

Bābā Afḍal discusses both psychology and ontology in terms of a progression of existence and awareness that culminates in the perfection of intelligence and being, which, in their full actualization, are identical. In each case, there is a clear unfolding from the lowest, inanimate level, to the highest, self-aware level, which is the

fully actualized intellect. Given that both the study of the soul and the study of existence focus on the ascent to actuality, we also need a discussion of how things came to exist in a state of potentiality in the first place. A preliminary, theological type of answer would say that God created things the way they are, so he put them there in the stage of potency.

The philosophers, however, were never satisfied with simple-minded catechisms. In their terms, one might say that the Necessary in Existence brings about the existence of the world of possible things because of what is demanded by its seven essential attributes: unity, eternity, knowledge, desire, power, wisdom, and generosity. However, things do not appear in their present form all at once, a point that is obvious to everyone. When the First puts them where they are, it does so gradually. In putting them there, it brings them from somewhere. Since at its level there is nothing other than the Necessary in Existence, they can have no other source than the Necessary itself.²⁰ The Necessary brought them into existence in stages, and there is a definite order and arrangement to these stages. Once the order has been established, it provides a broad outline of the route whereby things go back to where they came from.

As already noted, the discussion of coming and going is commonly named *al-mabda' wa'l-ma'ad*, "the Origin and the Return," a frequent title of chapters and books. It needs to be kept in mind that the second term, *ma'ad*, is the most common designation for the third principle of Islamic faith—the Return to God, or "eschatology" in a broad sense. As noted, the Return is investigated both inasmuch as it is compulsory for all human beings and inasmuch as it is voluntary.

In discussing the Return, the philosophers set out to demonstrate logically something that coincides with a basic human intuition. People know innately that they have "come up" and can go up further. An adult has come up from childhood, a child from the womb, and a knowing person from ignorance. People can assist their upward climb by their own efforts. They can climb up through their aptitudes and talents, and they can set their goals as high as their aspirations reach. All concepts of education, learning, improvement, progress, evolution, and directed development are based on this fundamental understanding that things can be changed in an "upward" direction. The idea is so central to human life that people rarely reflect upon it, but simply take it for granted. Muslims and followers of other traditions are no different. It is self-evident that there is, or there can be, an upward movement. In the Western monotheisms, among others, the upward orientation is established in terms of the celestial realms of the cosmos and in terms of paradise, the happy domain after death. Refusal to undertake the upward movement is correlated with the lower reaches of existence and with hell.

The philosophers address the upward, returning movement in terms of both ontology and psychology, but they discuss the downward, originating movement mainly in terms of cosmology. The question is this: Where did this world come from and how do we happen to be here? In answering the question, the philosophers elaborate upon an intuition that is as basic to premodern humanity as the perception of upward movement. This is that nothing can go up that has not come down in the first place. As Bābā Afḍal puts it in passing, "Whatever does not fall from heaven does not rise from earth" (*Muṣannafāt* 325; HIP 206).

We are now down. The proof is that we aspire to higher things, and we often achieve them. But if we are “down,” our aspiration must correspond to something within us that knows what it means to be “up.” True knowledge of upness presupposes real awareness of what upness is, and that in turn means that something of the up must have come down to us.

Mythic formulations of the upness that preceded our present condition are practically universal. The scientific notions of evolution and progress may be the only examples of myths that speak of the upward movement without acknowledging the primal descent. In the modern myths, we situate ourselves at the top and look back at the bottom. The alpha is one thing, far behind and below us, and we are the omega, or at least the current omega. In the premodern myths, people saw themselves as situated on a trajectory that began on high, with God or the gods. Then human beings came to be low, and now they are in the process of going back in the direction from which they came. The alpha and the omega are ultimately one.

Some versions of the modern myth suggest that the process has its own necessity—we have been forced up because of the impersonal laws of nature, and we will keep on going up as we evolve further. Most versions of the premodern myths offer no guarantee of an ascent, not at least in any meaningful future. If there is to be an ascent, people must strive to achieve it. We can as easily move further away from the Origin as we can move closer to it. We can be left in dispersion and multiplicity indefinitely, becoming as it were the last blades of grass that the bodhisattvas will deliver. Even versions of the premodern myths that speak of an inevitable return to the personal and loving God, as does the Islamic, insist that human beings must exert their own efforts if they are to return by a route that will leave them happy with the journey. If they are not ready for the climb, they will go back under constraint, and they will suffer because of the lack of congruity and harmony with what they meet on the way and at the destination. Bābā Aḩḩal explains suffering in the afterlife along these lines.

The underlying rationale for the premodern myths is the perception of invisible qualities in the self and behind the things that appear to the senses, that is, the understanding that there is more to existence than meets the eye—not simply quantitatively, but even more so qualitatively; not simply in terms of physical inaccessibility, but also in terms of spiritual distance. The myths acknowledge a realm of superior, luminous things that we can glimpse through the beauty and goodness that we find in ourselves and in the world. We have to reach up for it to have it, and those who reach with sincerity, love, and devotion achieve it more fully than those who go through the motions perfunctorily, not to speak of those who make no attempt. In short, the world is perceived as bathed in supernal qualities, and a whole and healthy human soul is understood as one that is drawn in the direction of those qualities, which are the source of all awareness and everything that is good, beautiful, desirable, and lovable.

The rationale for the modern myths seems to be the inability to see anything beyond quantity. All so-called qualities, if real in any way, are explained away in reductionist, quantitative terms. By indefinite division and analysis—by taking things back to genes or social conditioning or atomic particles—we can explain away all the echoes of the divine that were seen by “primitive” and “backward” peoples.

In our privileged position at the peak of the evolutionary upsurge, we alone finally understand the truth behind the cosmos, or we alone understand that the cosmos is absurd. Holy Mother Science has allowed us to see clearly that premodern cultures were laboring under primitive illusions and living in self-serving dreams, inventing myths to act as psychological crutches. We do not reflect on the psychological crutches provided to us by the myths of science and superiority.

To us as moderns it appears obvious that there is no “qualitative” difference between human beings and other life forms, because all so-called differences can be reduced to biological and evolutionary common denominators. But, since we all know that you cannot add rocks together and get plants, then heap plants one on top of another and get animals, we posit an impersonal divinity known as “Chance” that puts all these together through an omnipotence known as “Time” to yield at the peak of its creative powers our marvelous, all-knowing and all-reducing egos.

In short, perception of quality allows people to see things as diaphanous screens within which the gods are dancing, but inability to see anything but quantity breeds a sort of thinking that understands only in terms of accumulation or reduction to the least common denominator.

For Islamic thinking in general, knowing the qualitative domain toward which we are aspiring demands knowing the qualitative domain from which we have descended. Those who want to have beauty and love aspire to it because they have a sense of what it means, and that sense drinks from the same well as beauty itself. But in order to find the goal, one has to know the route by which knowledge of the goal and aspiration toward it have reached us in the first place. Bāb Afḍal explains this in one of his letters:

You must also know that searching out and exploring things and investigating the origin and return of the self do not arise from bodily individuals. If searching and yearning for the meanings and the road of reality arose from human individuals inasmuch as they are individuals, this wanting would be found in every particular individual, but such is not the case. This is because the wish to encompass both worlds is fitting for someone for whom it is possible to encompass them. But it is impossible for any particular individual in respect of individuality to encompass another individual, especially both worlds. Hence this wish does not arise from the individual. Rather, it arises from the soul that is radiant with the divine light. (*Muṣannaḥāt* 688; HIP 150–51)

The philosophers investigated the Origin in order to understand the Return, the two basic movements demanded by *tawhīd*. Asserting that the ultimate reality is one demands recognition that it is both first (*awwāl*) and last (*ākhir*), both alpha and omega. Everything comes from the Real and returns to it. In order to discover how we will return to the First, we need to discover how we came to be separated from the First. To do so, we need to grasp the true nature of our potencies, including the senses and intelligence. We also need to ask if the compulsory return that is driving us toward death is sufficient for the achievement of true humanity, or if—what seems much more likely if not self-evident—we need to employ our cognitive and practical powers to achieve that humanity, just as we employ them to achieve everything else that we achieve.

It is often forgotten that Islamic philosophy is not just theorizing or, let us say, premodern gropings at scientific questions—gropings that helped give rise to the scientific and objective approach to things that has been perfected in modern times. This evolutionary understanding of the role of Islamic thought in world history, popular in the nineteenth and much of the twentieth century, has largely been abandoned by specialists, but it still shapes the general perception of Islamic thinking in relation to the history of science and philosophy. Such an approach immediately assumes that the Muslim philosophers' own goals were naive and immature, which is to say that we moderns are intelligent, sophisticated, and superior.

Alternatively, scholars may employ the presupposition of philosophical and scientific progress to show that, in fact, the philosophers were moderns before their time, but they were forced to hide their enlightened awareness beneath the obfuscations of the religious majority. To think this way is again to pat oneself on the back, but, more important, it is to ignore the basic issues, which are philosophical. What were the philosophers trying to say? Did they or did they not assert *tawhīd*? Did they or did they not apply their philosophical approach to certain practical issues that have an immediate relevance to human becoming and to the achievement of an ultimate, otherworldly, felicity?

The claim is often made that the philosophical issues are determined by historical circumstances and must be investigated historically. But this claim is itself a philosophical position, and if it is true, then there are no exceptions, and the claim must be investigated historically. If we do not allow that it is possible to ask questions that transcend historical conditioning, we are stuck with an endless succession of motives and hidden agendas, with each new theory to be exposed in its own turn. Our hermeneutics of suspicion will show that philosophical thinking is nothing but historical determinism, historical determinism nothing but psychological conditioning, psychological conditioning nothing but economic stratification, economic stratification nothing but gender politics, gender politics nothing but sociobiology, and so on in an endless samsara of reductionism that knows no nirvana save tenure and promotion. What is certainly true is that whatever religious, historical, social, psychological, economic, biological, and physical necessities there may have been in premodern times, there are no fewer in modern times. Once we claim that people in former times were historically conditioned and therefore had nothing important to say, then we might as well give up talking.

If we come back to philosophical issues as they are posed in the texts, we see that the Muslim philosophers considered the study of the human soul indispensable in the quest for wisdom and that they looked for the roots of the soul in the First. They considered ethics an important science, because ethics is nothing if not the investigation of how the soul achieves balance within itself and harmony with the First in keeping with the manner in which it emerged from the First at the origin. The soul's appearance in the world is compulsory in the sense that none of us were asked if we wanted to come. Or, in the light of a certain Neoplatonic approach, human freedom was already manifest in the choice of the soul to come into this world. Whether or not we chose to come, we have come, and now we must go back to where we came from. We have sufficient freedom to make some choices, and that freedom must be put to good use if there is to be any possibility of achieving ultimate happiness.

According to the philosophers, human beings in their present situation are in the process of going up, which is to say that they are moving from the pure potency of the egg toward the pure actuality of the disengaged intellect. Because of the compulsory return that has brought them to adulthood, they have gathered together the stages of inanimate nature, the plant soul, and the animal soul, so they possess the potencies of all these stages. They now stand at the level of the human soul, so they have the freedom to direct their own ascent. No one is forcing them to make the choice to continue the upward movement. If they prefer to do so, they can stay where they are and go about actualizing the animal characteristics to a degree undreamed of by any non-human animal. If they want, they can try to fulfill their potencies of appetite and wrath—or, as the medievals would say, “concupiscence and irascibility,” and as we moderns would more likely say, “lust and ambition.” The world, after all, is a vast arena of beckoning opportunities.

Unquestionably, human beings possess the potency of intelligence. To deny this in any sort of meaningful way would be to contradict oneself. Given that people have the potency, they can employ it as they see fit. But this is not to say that their use of it is indifferent or that all will necessarily be for the good. Just as they need discipline and guidance to become pianists or basketball players, so also they need discipline and guidance to become fully intelligent, which is to say, fully human, since intelligence alone is their uniquely *human* characteristic. And the only way to become intelligent in the full sense of the term is to bring the soul’s potency into actuality, that is, to reach the stage of the intellect in act.

This is not to suggest that intelligence is the only human characteristic. Rather, it is the highest human trait and the pinnacle of human possibility, because—in Bābā Afḍal’s terms—the fullness of intelligence is identical with the fullness of being. It perhaps needs to be stressed, however, that the soul has two perfections, the theoretical and the practical, and both need to be actualized. Practical perfection demands the realization of ethical and moral being, or the actualization of all the virtues (*faḍā’il*). Neither theoretical nor practical perfection can be achieved totally in isolation. The final perfection of intelligence cannot be reached without perfecting all the soul’s aptitudes, and most of these are named by the names of the virtues—generosity, compassion, justice, forgiveness. Ethical activity and beautiful character traits are inseparable from striving for human status.

In order to move from potential intellect to actual intellect, people need to know what they are striving for. They must make the decision to undertake the quest. As Bābā Afḍal puts it in a short essay,

The wayfarers have three incontestable needs: One is an elevated aspiration, second a potent mind, and third an appropriate desire. If there is no high aspiration, they will not be able to see a station higher than they. If there is no capable mind, they will not dare to allow the high station to pass into the heart. If there is no appropriate desire, they will not be able to arrive at that which their high aspiration has caused to pass into their potent mind. Incontestably, these three have been designated. (*Muṣannafāt* 644)

For the religious tradition in general, knowledge of the final goal toward which people should aspire is provided by the Koran and the Hadith, and knowledge of the

praxis that allows the goal to be achieved is provided by the Sunnah and the Sharia, that is, the exemplary model established by the Prophet and the legal teachings that codify praxis into do's and don'ts. But for the philosophers, knowledge of the final goal and of the praxis necessary to achieve it require thought and self-reflection (*fikr, tafakkur*). To the extent that people put the potency of their own intelligence to work by coming to understand the nature of things, they will actualize this potency and gradually move from potential intellect to actual intellect.

Philosophical discussions of the Return focus on the two basic ways of going back to the First—the road that people will be compelled to follow and the road that they are free to follow if they choose to do so. Discussions of the Origin center on how they arrived at their starting place. If they can go up to intelligence, then they must have come down from intelligence. If they can go up to intelligence by ascending through the stages of soul, then they must have come down to this world by descending through the stages of soul. The Return is the mirror image of the Origin. In later texts, Origin and Return are often discussed as the two arcs of a circle, the “descending arc” (*qaws nuzūlī*) and the “ascending arc” (*qaws su'ūdī*). This discussion is basic to theoretical Sufism, though the terminology is often different from that found in philosophy and varies from school to school.

The descending route of the Origin is well known. The basic outline is the same as that already present in the Arabic Plotinus: intellect, soul, heavenly spheres, four elements. Bābā Afḍāl sticks to this simplest of schemes, though some of the philosophers had developed it into several degrees, as did Fārābī and Avicenna, who spoke not of one intellect and one soul, but of ten intellects and ten souls, corresponding to the nine spheres and the sublunary realm. Among Sufis, Ibn al-ʿArabī spoke of twenty-one stages from the First Intellect down to earth (that is, the lowest of the four elements), at which point, the movement turns back upward.²¹

One should not be thrown off track by the language of these discussions and think that, for example, the philosophers are reifying the concepts of intellect and soul, much as people today reify the concept of God; or that they are describing the planets and celestial spheres with anything like the concerns of modern astronomy. Discussion of intellect and soul has to do with what we can retrace in our own selves, and discussion of the spheres has to do with what we can discern with the naked eye. By studying the heavens, the philosophers want to know what we can learn about things that are “up” by looking in that direction. The upness of the physical domain is an analogue of the upness of the spiritual domain, which is to say that what is “up” in terms of our sense perception is a marker of realities that are “up” in respect to our intelligence and understanding. If we look up in the outside world, we see the planets and stars, and if we look up in the inside world, we see soul and intelligence. The key is looking, gazing, thinking, reflecting, pondering, meditating, contemplating.

The religious tradition provides an explicit reading of the heavens in terms of a spiritual ascent in the accounts of the Prophet's *mi'raj*, his climb up through the heavens and beyond to the presence of God. This mythic ascent is of primary importance for Islam's origins, given that it marks the fruition and fulfillment of the Koran's descent. The Koran came down so that those who take it to heart may go up. As the Prophet is said to have remarked, “The daily prayer [*ṣalāt*] is the *mi'raj* of the be-

liever," which is to say that Islamic praxis, of which the daily prayer is the central and most essential act, is the road by which one ascends back to the Origin. Avicenna wrote a treatise analyzing the *mi ʿrāj* as a philosophical journey, and Ibn al-ʿArabī has a long section in which he contrasts what, from his point of view, the philosophers achieve through the reflective *mi ʿrāj* and what the followers of the prophets achieve through the spiritual *mi ʿrāj*.²²

In the accounts of the *mi ʿrāj*, each of the seven planets that the Prophet visited can be understood as a sphere of spiritual influence populated by one or more prophets and hosts of angels. To reach God, the Prophet needed to pass through each of the spheres, thus actualizing the spiritual potency designated by each prophet and angel. Ultimately he reached God himself. In Bābā Afḍal's reading, the *mi ʿrāj* describes the way to perfection, and the final meeting with God represents the soul's coming to encompass all things, such that it no longer fits into any genus or species. In *The Rungs of Perfection* he writes as follows about the final stage of the philosophical journey:

It is self that is present with self. The self is the self's seen, seer, and seeing. Through this predominant seeing, it makes everything below self the same as self. . . . This is the utmost end and the final goal of all utmost ends and final goals. . . . The saying of the companion of the stations of the *mi ʿrāj*—upon whom be blessings and peace!—when he put behind him the degrees of the going and reached his final goal, coming near to the Origin of the existents, means this state: "I do not enumerate laudation of Thee; Thou art as Thou hast lauded Thyself." It is as if he wants to say, "It is not I who have known You that I might praise You. You are the knower, the recognizer, and the praiser of self as You should be recognized and praised." (*Musannafāt* 37–38; HIP 262–63)

In short, discussion of the heavens pertains to the investigation of the qualities and characteristics that are "higher" than we are in our corporeal—though not our intellectual—nature. Inasmuch as the heavens pertain to the Origin, they represent descending stages through which the self, in coming down from intellect and entering the womb, becomes more and more distinct from other selves and more and more immersed in multiplicity. Inasmuch as the heavens pertain to the Return, they represent stages that the self must pass through in order to actualize its potential, harmonize its diverse powers, unify its multiple aptitudes, and rejoin the intellect from which it arose.

The philosophers were able to read this sort of significance into what they saw of the celestial spheres because they were reflecting upon themselves. They saw that they themselves, beginning in the womb, had risen up from mineral, to plant, to animal, to human, and that they were now striving to rise up to the fullness of self-knowledge, the intellect that knows itself and all things. In their view, the way to achieve a truly useful knowledge of the celestial spheres—that is, useful in the quest to become human—is to investigate how the heavens display the qualities and characteristics of our intellectual nature. It is of course true that everything in the universe displays such qualities and characteristics; this is how Muslim thinkers understand the repeated Koranic reference to the "signs" (*āyāt*) in the heavens, the earth,

and the soul. But the heavens are higher on the scale, because they are up. They are closer to the unity and simplicity of the First, which is why some philosophers maintained that they are incorruptible, that is, that they do not pertain to the corporeal realm, the world of generation and corruption. Hence, to study the heavens is to study realities that bring together many other realities and embrace and encompass the evanescent world below. The heavens reflect much more directly than the sublunary realm the nature of the intelligent self, which is incorruptible and everlasting.

When reading historical surveys of Islamic philosophy, one is sometimes left with the impression that the (First) Intellect and the (Universal) Soul—that is, the initial stages of descent from the Origin—were concepts lifted from Neoplatonic sources without much reflection on the part of those who did the lifting. The two can appear as rather odd suppositions that have nothing to do with the real world, though it is understandable, we may be led to believe, that the unimaginative Muslims, relying as usual on the Greeks, should borrow this notion as an easy and ostensibly “rational” explanation for the origin of the universe. But there is no reason to think that these ideas were adopted without critical assimilation. Philosophy is nothing if not the sober consideration of what we can actually know, the sifting of supposition and opinion from real knowledge. It is a certain breed of historian that has seen philosophy as the unreflective reception of ideas from the past as if they were precious artifacts.

A similar point can be made about those who have read the Koranic accounts of paradise and hell as crude anthropomorphisms that appeal to the basest instincts of primitive bedouins. The fact that we ourselves may read the accounts this way says more about us than the ancient Arabs. Myth happens to be the richest and most direct manner of expressing the inexpressible, as all cultures recognize. Myth speaks of the first truths in a graphic, concrete language, without the constraints of philosophical, theological, or scientific abstractions. Precisely because of the richness and polymorphism of its imagery and symbolism, it provides an inexhaustible source of inspiration.

The only strange thing here is that many historians would like to imagine that the interpretations of the myths are nothing but afterthoughts, rationalizations that allow the more thoughtful members of society to make sense of the beliefs of the common folk. There is some truth in this idea, but to take it as the only explanation presupposes a progressive reading of history, a “from the bottom up” theory of development that is congenial to modern thinking and therefore plausible to us, but that makes no sense to the tradition.

Revelation is precisely knowledge that comes from the top down. The myths have come down, which explains why intelligence rises up to them with such alacrity and makes such sense of them—and why it cannot do without them, even if it must manufacture its own. The interpretations are already implicit in the myth, because the myth is closer to pure intelligence than are the explanations. This is part of what Fārābī was getting at in his discussions of the active imagination that is bestowed upon the prophets, allowing them to express the truths of the intellectual world in the garment of concrete language, accessible to all.²³

If we are to make any sense of the First Intellect and the Universal Soul as the dual progenitors of the cosmos, we have to reflect upon what the philosophers were

trying to say. We cannot reify these terms and talk about them as if they represent some sort of primitive “animism”—a notion that is itself the product of modern evolutionary thinking—that posits a few invisible forces beyond the visible universe marked by the spheres. The discussion is not just about what is “out there,” but also about what is “in here.”

As human beings, we know innately that all things have been born from the Universal Soul, because our own souls embrace nature along with the plant, animal, and human potencies. We know that the First Intellect is the all-embracing origin, because it is precisely our own intelligence that knows all this, arranges all this, becomes all this, and embraces all this. If our microcosmic intelligence is able to conceive of the whole world, it can do so only because it is already, at some level of itself, an intelligence that conceives of the whole universe. What goes up must have come down.

If we are able to conceive of the whole of existence and achieve a unity of vision by moving up through its levels, the world itself must have been conceived in a unity of vision before it came to be differentiated. Only a primary unity of realities can explain why the universe is such a seamless whole, so much like a grand, living organism. The arguments and proofs that are offered to make these points pertain precisely to our own experience of self-consciousness and our own awareness of the natural world.

A useful way to conceptualize the Origin and Return is to think of them as complementary movements demanded by *tawhīd*. The Origin is centrifugal, the Return centripetal. The presence of both movements keeps the universe in balance. Things move out from the First Real just as light appears from the sun, and they return to the One just as objects perceived by the senses pass by way of the mind into self-awareness.

In the First, multiplicity is unified by the intense brilliance of being and consciousness. By the time things appear on the elemental level, the light is obscured and the consciousness dimmed. In the First, all things are present as “realities,” “quiddities,” or “forms.” In the visible world, the immersion of the forms in matter conceals them from all but discerning eyes.

The centripetal movement is that of intelligence, which appears first as a dim reverberation in the soul and moves back toward its origin by reflecting upon the objects of its awareness. It gains in strength like a fire that gradually begins to blaze. In the movement toward the sheer consciousness of the center, the realities and forms found in the sensory world are loosened and disengaged from their matter, and slowly they come to be known by intelligence knowing itself. The movement is one of ever-increasing awareness and consciousness, until the knowing self finally knows itself as the only self that knows, the fully actualized intellect that is nothing but the First Intellect in respect of the Return.

Looking at things as discrete objects keeps intelligence involved in the centrifugal movement. The more people focus on differentiation, analysis, control, and manipulation, the more they forget the intelligible side to things and the more they become involved in the material realm. This is the general thrust of modern learning, and the net result is rapidly increasing dispersion in all fields of knowledge. The exponential rise of information and data, which would appear to Bābā Afḍal as the

last flickerings of the intelligible light as it becomes almost totally obscured, is perhaps best exemplified by the “information revolution” brought about by computers.

Looking at things as manifestations of hidden realities and as descents of intelligible forms ties things back to the centripetal movement of intelligence seeking its source. Wisdom is found in seeing the coherence of the whole, in which the centrifugal and centripetal movements are complementary. Ignorance is not knowing that everything plays a role in the cosmic drama and that the parts can only be understood in terms of the whole. To ignore the Center is to be overcome by the centrifugal movement and to dissipate one’s intelligence in the peripherals.

Hierarchy: The Ranks of Human Possibility

Given that the soul contains the possibility of actualizing all the realities known to intellect, given that intellect at root knows the whole of creation, and given that the soul has relative freedom of choice, it follows that the soul can become just about anything in the universe. In other words, human individuals can adopt as their own any of the qualities and characteristics created things display.

The full actualization of the soul’s potency is called “intellect,” and this is the entelechy of human beings, their perfection and their highest good. But in fact, few people actualize the full human potency, and the result is that almost no one becomes a true sage or what Bābā Afḍal sometimes calls a “complete human being” (*mardum-i tamām*).²⁴ He finds the key characteristic of human “completion” (*tamāmi*) or “perfection” (*kamāl*) to lie in bringing together all things of the universe in self-awareness and self-finding.

Human beings in all their diversity represent the broadest display of attributes and qualities that can be found in the universe—by which I mean the universe as we know it and actually find it through our senses, not the universe that we can speculate about or imagine to exist at the other end of all those light years (and even that is part of us, for we do the imagining). The manifold qualities and characteristics of this diverse humanness are often discussed under the heading of ethics, as already mentioned. They are also discussed in treatises on politics, which consider what might be the nature of a proper society and how it is possible to govern such a society appropriately. The philosophers often discuss proper social order on the analogy of the balanced human microcosm, which brings together all the parts of the world in a harmonious whole. In both the macrocosm and the microcosm, hierarchy reigns, and so also in society—even though none of the philosophers thought that the existing political structures were anything near the ideal. One important related discussion, with which Bābā Afḍal often occupies himself, is the division of human beings into types that play different roles in society according to the degree to which they actualize or fail to actualize the human potencies. By studying the nature of human activities, we can discern the various qualities that we carry in ourselves, and we can judge how we and others measure up to the ideal of human perfection and fully actualized intelligence.

Bābā Afḍal maintains, in short, that human beings can be divided in hierarchical terms. The peak of human perfection is achieved by those who join with the Agent

Intellect. The potency for intellectual actualization can itself be divided into two sorts, in keeping with its focus. An intellect that looks toward the First Real and engages in the reflective task of knowing itself is called a “theoretical intellect” (*‘aql nazārī*), and one that looks toward the activity, practice (*‘amal*), and work (*kār*) that we carry out in the world is called a “practical intellect” (*‘aql ‘amalī*).

“Theory” (*nazar*) should not be understood in any of its modern meanings. To forestall the natural tendency to read this word in contemporary terms, I translate the Arabic term as *theōria*, with the hope of reminding readers that the original Greek word meant to gaze and to look. English dictionaries do tell us that theory meant, archaically, “direct intellectual apprehension,” but even this is not adequate to convey what Bābā Afḍal and, I would maintain, the Muslim philosophers in general had in mind.²⁵

Bābā Afḍal clarifies his understanding of the word *nazar* by the way he translates it into Persian. The fact that he translates it is already significant, given that the word had been used in Persian from early times. In both Persian and Arabic, it means look, gaze, consideration, theory, speculation, contemplation. But in Persian there is something abstract about the term, if only because it has no Persian root and tends to be used in bookish contexts. Bābā Afḍal translates it as *bīnīsh* or “seeing,” which is the verbal noun from *dīdan*, the everyday Persian word meaning “to see.” This word has a down-to-earth concreteness that few loan words can have, because it refers to an act designated by the most commonplace of words. If *nazar* is attributed to the mind, a Persian speaker thinks of an abstraction, like we do when we think of “theory” in English. But if *bīnīsh* is attributed to the mind, a Persian speaker is forced to think of the mind as another kind of eye. When Bābā Afḍal translates the Arabic expression *‘aql nazārī* (“theoretical intellect”) as *khīrad-i bīnā* (“seeing intelligence”), the reader has a very different feel for what the philosophical enterprise is all about. It pertains to the real world of seeing, not the abstract world of theorizing, contemplating, speculating, and supposing.

Bābā Afḍal’s use of the term *seeing intelligence* should itself be enough to indicate that “theorizing” as it is understood today has little to do with what he is discussing. He stands squarely in the Neoplatonic tradition, where conceptual thought is a tool to open up an inner faculty of unhindered contemplation. But once the inner vision is achieved, thinking can only be a pale and imperfect reflection of the reality. As Armstrong explains, “We can only go beyond thought through thinking. But a psychic [i.e., soulish] life and world confined to or totally dominated by discursive reasoning would for Plotinus be as squeezed, cramped and confined as the life and world of Blake’s Urizen.”²⁶

For Bābā Afḍal, the theoretical intellect sees things as they are in themselves, because it has actualized the potency that it received from the First Intellect, which is the principle of the whole universe, embracing everything in its vision. At the highest stage, the seeing intelligence and the First Intellect have joined together and become one, for the ascending arc of the circle has come back to the point from which the descent began.

The seeing intelligence does not “think things out,” as theoreticians certainly do. It simply sees realities and quiddities as they are. According to Avicenna, the theoretical intellect sees with the light of the Agent Intellect just as the eye sees with

the light of the sun. He develops the analogy toward the end of his discussion of the soul in his major work, *al-Shifā'* ("The Healing"), and somewhat differently in the short summa, *al-Najāt* ("The Salvation").

The human soul may be a potential intellecter and then become an actual intellecter. Everything that emerges from potency into act emerges only through a cause that is in act and that makes it emerge. Hence there is a cause that makes our souls emerge from potency to act in regard to the intelligibles. Given that it is the cause for the bestowal of intellectual forms, it is nothing but an actual intellect that itself possesses the disengaged origins of the intellectual forms. Its relation to our souls is the same as the sun's relation to our eyes. Just as the sun is actually seen by essence and makes what is not actually seen come to be seen actually, so also is the state of this intellect in our souls.²⁷

This [Agent Intellect] is related to our souls, which are the potential intellect, and to the intelligibles, which are the potential intelligibles, just as the sun is related to our eyes, which are potentially seeing, and to colors, which are the potentially seen. When the [sun's] trace, which is the ray, reaches the potentially seen things, they become actually seen, and eyesight becomes actual seeing. In the same way, a potency is effused from this Agent Intellect upon the imagined things, which are potentially intelligible, so as to make them actually intelligible and to make the potential intellect an actual intellect. So also, the sun by its essence makes to see, and it is a cause of making the potential seer become an actual seer.²⁸

When Bābā Afḍal translates "practical intellect" into Persian, he calls it the "working intelligence" (*khirad-i kārgar*). It is the ability to do things in a rational and coherent manner by means of understanding the material with which one is working and the acts that one performs. It is actualized to different degrees by all those who perform any sort of rational activity, but the levels of its perfection begin to appear more clearly in artisans and craftsmen. More important for the Return, the practical intellect allows people to actualize beautiful character traits by acting correctly toward God and other human beings. "Ethics" is precisely the domain where people use their practical intellect to perform actions that aid in the full actualization of the soul.

In short, a primary classification of human beings can be made according to the distinction between theoretical and practical intellect, as will be seen in several passages from Bābā Afḍal's works. One of his short essays epitomizes the classification that he provides in *Rungs of Perfection* (3.3 and 3.4):

In the rank of the practical intellect, people are in two levels. First is the level of the folk of the professions, those proficient in artisanry, and the expert craftsmen and masters. Second is the level of the ascetics, the folk of worship, and those who yearn for the house of the afterworld.

In the same way, people in the rank of the theoretical intellect are in two levels. First is the level of the knowers of the mathematical sciences. They are a tribe who are not content with hearsay and who come out from the circle of

following authority. Second is the level of the remotest waystation and the utmost end of all seeking. This is the practice, character, and knowledge that belonged to the prophets—upon them be peace! (*Muṣannaḥāt* 644)

Notice that Bābā Afḍal subdivides each of the two groups according to whether people focus on things of the sensory world or on things of the intellective world. By “ascetics” (*zuhhād*) he certainly has in mind many of those whom historians commonly call “Sufis,” and indeed, the point has often been made that early Sufism stresses an ascetic tendency that was present in the Prophet and some of his followers. The term points to what I would call “practical Sufism” as opposed to “theoretical Sufism.” Practicing Muslims, whether or not they are formally affiliated with institutionalized Sufism, perform a whole host of religious activities, and the “ascetics” are those Muslims who do these activities especially well and skillfully, just as “craftsmen” are those who make things especially well and skillfully. Artisanal expertise has degrees that become manifest in the beauty of the work of art, and so also ascetic expertise has degrees that become manifest in the beauty of the soul and of outward acts.

On the theoretical level, Bābā Afḍal again divides people into two sorts. The first are those who focus on the “mathematical” (*riyāḍī*) sciences, which include arithmetic, geometry, and astronomy. These sciences were considered essential for philosophers as a preliminary “training” and “exercise” (*riyāḍa*) of the reflective faculty. The mathematical sciences focus on numbers, which have no presence per se in the world of the sensibles. Understanding the nature of numbers allows people to lift their gaze beyond the sensibles and begin grasping the intelligibles. The ultimate goal in these sciences was to help the soul disengage (*tajarrud*) itself from attachment to and dependence upon forms embedded in matter (*mādda*), that is, the objects found in the corporeal world. Then the soul will be ready for the real task, which is to understand the highest discipline—the knowledge of *tawḥīd* and the first things.

According to the just quoted passage, people who develop the seeing intelligence by studying the mathematical sciences are not satisfied with easy explanations and do not accept things as true because some cleric or expert has said they are true. They do not belong to the circle of those who “follow authority” (*taqlīd*). This term is often employed in a juridical sense, as when a Muslim believer follows the opinions of any of the schools of law (*madhhab*) or a legal expert (*muftī*, *mujtahid*), and this is considered necessary and praiseworthy. In this sense of the word, it is the opposite of *ijtihād*, the activity of a *mujtahid*. However, when the term is used as in this passage to refer to the second domain of religion, which is understanding and faith, it is the opposite of *taḥqīq*, “verification” or “realization.” For the proponents of the intellectual schools, especially theoretical Sufism and philosophy, the only real understanding is that which is gained through verification, and to follow authority in one’s understanding is to have no understanding at all. It is clearly to the circle of the “verifiers” that Bābā Afḍal is ascribing those who study the mathematical sciences.

Following authority, then, is accepting something as true on the basis of hearsay and simpleminded belief. Verification is to strive to understand for oneself. If verification sounds much like what modern-day scientists are supposed to do, this helps explain why this term is used nowadays in Persian to designate “(scientific) research.” But the “research” that Bābā Afḍal means here is a far cry from what most

people—including even the best of scientists outside their fields of expertise—do today or at any time, since in most things people simply follow the authority of the experts, or the zeitgeist, or the media, or their friends, or whoever it is that teaches them how and what to think. Nowadays, given the inordinate amount of factual data that informed individuals are supposed to assimilate, it is impossible not to follow authority in practically everything that we know—or rather, everything that we think we know. From the point of view of the proponents of *taḥqīq*, what we *actually* know is in effect nothing, because we know nothing whatsoever with absolute surety. As Bābā Afḍal points out at the end of his treatise on logic,

We find the vast majority of people admitting that they do not know any judgment with certainty. If you ask them about certainty, they will answer, “We find no certainty in self.” They can provide no example of a statement of certainty, except for a small group who have passed beyond some of the levels of possibility in certainty and arrived at preparedness. (*Muṣannaḥāt* 578; HIP 307)

The “small group” Bābā Afḍal has in mind seems to be those who achieve the stage of “mathematical knowledge,” but that is not the highest stage of the theoretical intellect, because those who achieve it do not thereby have the wherewithal to grasp *tawḥīd* and the nature of the soul in its ultimate becoming. Hence Bābā Afḍal places the type of knowledge achieved by the prophets at the highest level, and he clearly understands this to be the knowledge known by the fully actualized intellect. His position on the superiority of the prophets, by the way, is no different from that of many of the other philosophers. We will see Avicenna saying the same sort of thing.

Bābā Afḍal elaborates upon this brief discussion of the stages of human perfection in several works, most fully in *The Rungs of Perfection*. Given that only those at the highest stage have achieved full perfection, he explains the different sorts of partial perfections as well as the various sorts of imperfection. His basic terminology is related first to the levels of soul (vegetal, animal, human) and its diverse potencies, and second to ethics and character traits. Each praiseworthy character trait represents the actualization of one potency in equilibrium with others, and each blameworthy character trait represents the failure to actualize a potency, or a disharmony and disequilibrium among the potencies that have been actualized.

A clear and simple example of a division of human types based on ethical considerations is offered by Bābā Afḍal in *Four Headings from the Alchemy of Felicity*, his abridgment of Ghazālī’s work. Most of what Bābā Afḍal says in his own original compositions on the topic can be read as elaborations of Ghazālī’s position. However, this does not mean that he was necessarily inspired by Ghazālī, since many detailed versions of the discussion can be found in earlier texts. The Ikhwān al-Ṣafā’, for example, were especially fond of this type of reasoning.

An Anthropocosmic Vision

In concluding this chapter, let me again try to suggest what lies at the heart of the philosophical tradition that is epitomized by Bābā Afḍal. Certainly, the goal is to know

oneself in terms of the First Real, the Absolute Being that brought the universe into existence, and then to act in accordance with what this knowledge demands. This is precisely “wisdom,” which embraces the theoretical and practical sides of the human self. But what sets this vision apart from modern thought and puts it squarely at the center of a human project whose permutations can be seen in all the great premodern civilizations is the focus on what might best be called “anthropocosmism,” to use the evocative expression that Tu Weiming employs to describe the Confucian worldview.

The Islamic philosophical tradition can only understand human beings in terms of the unity of the human world and the natural world. There is no place in this tradition to drive a wedge between humans and the cosmos. In the final analysis the natural world is the externalization of the human substance, and the human soul is the internalization of the realm of nature. Human beings and the whole universe are intimately intertwined, facing each other like two mirrors. The quest for wisdom can only succeed if the natural world is recognized as equivalent to one’s own self, just as one must see the whole human race as the external manifestation of the potencies and possibilities of the human soul.

Islamic philosophy never developed and utilized all the “scientific” insights of its great masters that have so often been studied by Western historians of science. Many of these historians, and even more so the modern-day Muslims who have followed in their footsteps, have lamented the “decadence” that prevented Islam from pursuing the “progressive” course of the early philosopher-scientists. They all tell us that once the works of the Muslim scholars were translated into Latin, they were instrumental in the development of philosophy and science in the West, which in turn led to the Enlightenment and the scientific revolution. But the claim that the Muslims failed to capitalize on the insights of the early thinkers need not be taken as a shortcoming on their part. After all, this is simply to say that the Islamic intellectual tradition remained true to itself. It held and continued to hold that human beings and the world must never be driven apart, as they are by the Cartesian method, for example. There could be no justification for the objectification of the natural world, for considering it as an “object” without divinely ordained rights. For Muslim intellectuals down through the eighteenth century, the cosmos remained sacred and inseparable from the human self. Any transgression of the natural world would be a betrayal of human nature, and to “rape the earth” in the modern manner could only be a rape of the human soul and a surrender of any claim to human status.

The Enlightenment project of instrumental rationality depended for its success on the bifurcation of the human and the cosmic, for only then could the world be seen as a great collection of inanimate objects that humans were free to manipulate and control as they wish. The net result has been a whole culture that sees itself as alien to the natural realm and drives people to search ever more desperately for unspoiled nature. The existential angst of so many modern intellectuals, who find themselves beleaguered by a hostile universe, is utterly inconceivable in the Islamic intellectual tradition, for which the universe is nothing if not a nurturing womb.

It is not without significance that the philosophical tradition has been largely moribund in most of the Islamic world for at least the past century, just as theoretical Sufism—which developed a parallel anthropocosmic vision—is the least preva-

lent of the many forms of Sufism in modern times. In place of these traditions, Muslim intellectuals, who are now most commonly trained as doctors and engineers, have adopted modern ideologies. Those who have clung to their own traditions have for the most part specialized in Sharia (Islamic law), which has nothing to say about God, the cosmos, or the human soul. And a large number of those who have tried to revive an Islamic intellectual tradition that would not simply be a warmed-over Western ideology have done so by appealing to Kalam, which does indeed discuss the divine attributes, but which asserts a radical transcendence that precludes any sort of anthropocosmic vision. Hence Kalam leaves the door open to treat the universe as an object to be manipulated. It is intuitively recognized as the one theological methodology that can be interpreted such that it allows Muslims to abandon most of their intellectual tradition and adopt science and ideology in its place.

The vast majority of modern-day Muslim intellectuals, like most of their counterparts in the West, have considered science and technology absolutely desirable for the sake of human progress and happiness. No questions are raised about the utter alienation from the world and God that scientific thinking inevitably brings down upon a culture, the flattening of intellectual horizons that takes for granted a human-centeredness without God or a living cosmos. Few have seen that scientific thinking is largely responsible for the negation of any human possibility beyond the mundane in the name of an “inevitable” development—one that has no justification other than that it must be brought about because it can be brought about. It is hardly necessary to begin naming names, since the whole project of modern society, East and West, to the extent that it is called upon to justify itself, still clings to the prevailing myths of evolution and progress.

Fortunately, however, there is much to be hopeful about in the modern world, not least the fact that more and more people are recognizing that something important has been lost. The recognition of loss is the necessary precondition for gain.

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3

Basic Philosophical Notions

Like any discipline, Islamic philosophy has its own ways of saying things. Much of the terminology goes back to Greek origins, but as soon as words were translated into Arabic they took on lives of their own, so it is not always helpful to take the original Greek terms as the standards by which to judge how Muslim thinkers were employing and understanding Arabic words. Nonetheless, much of the philosophical vocabulary in this book represents the standard, modern English equivalents for Greek words whose descendants became established in medieval European philosophy. Hence, the philosophical meaning of the words will be found in any good dictionary. Much of this terminology is also used in everyday English, or has entered into the technical vocabulary of the modern scientific, social, and humanitarian disciplines. However, dictionary definitions and commonly accepted meanings are not likely to suffice for the more important words.

The purpose of this chapter is to review the meaning and usage of some of the basic philosophical terminology found in Bābā Afḍal's writings. Since a thorough analysis of his terminology would require a major book, my purpose here can only be to introduce readers gradually to certain words and to suggest something of their use in the philosophical tradition, with emphasis on Bābā Afḍal's own use. I will also draw examples from the *Theology of Aristotle* (i.e., the Arabic Plotinus), the treatises of the Ikhwān al-Ṣafā', and the writings of Avicenna.¹ All three represent watersheds in the history of Islamic philosophy, though much else of importance was written over the same period.

Philosophy

The philosophers referred to their discipline by two basic designations—the Greek loan word *falsafa* and the Arabic word *ḥikma*, normally translated as “wisdom.”

When the texts mention the Greek meaning of the word *falsafa*, they say it is “love for *ḥikma*.” *Ḥikma* is mentioned twenty times in the Koran, and the basic adjective derived from it, *ḥakīm* (“wise” or “sage”), ninety-seven times. Ninety-one of these mentions make *ḥakīm* a name of God, and the other six apply the word to the Koran itself. The Koran repeatedly says that it is God who teaches wisdom, thus providing a scriptural basis for the claim made in some philosophical texts that the original philosophers were divinely inspired. The Koran also considers the revealed books, such as the Torah, the Gospel, and itself, to be of the same order as wisdom. It mentions as specific recipients of divine wisdom the prophets, the folk of Abraham, David, Luqmān, Jesus, and Muḥammad. Among the verses that supporters of philosophy like to quote is “God gives wisdom to whomsoever He will, and whosoever has been given wisdom has been given much good” (2:269).

The fact that the philosophers often referred to their discipline as *ḥikma* shows already a concern to domesticate philosophy within the Islamic tradition. More importantly, it suggests a dimension to their endeavor that tends to be forgotten in the modern world and that is hardly present in the word *philosophy* as it is currently used in the academy. “Wisdom” is not just knowledge, not even an exalted knowledge of the truth itself. The word also denotes putting knowledge into practice in the appropriate way. *Ḥikma* is differentiated from knowledge by the activity that it demands, or the fact that it demands knowing how things truly are and then acting in a way that coincides exactly with how they are. In Islamic texts, it is understood to be closely allied with justice (*ʿadl*, *ʿadāla*), which is often defined as putting things where they belong and ensuring that everything has its proper place, the supreme virtue in philosophical ethics.

Bābā Afḍal himself does not use the word *falsafa* in his own compositions (as opposed to his translations), nor does he refer to his own position by any sort of label.² He does on occasion mention wisdom, and in his translation of *The Treatise of the Apple*, there is a relatively detailed discussion of both philosophy and wisdom (HIP 103–5). This passage can be taken to coincide more or less with Bābā Afḍal’s own understanding. In his translation of *De Anima*, he calls Aristotle “the knower from Greece” (*dānā-yi yūnān*), suggesting the intimate connection that he sees between true knowing and the wisdom that is philosophy.

Bābā Afḍal’s two lists of maxims addressed to seekers of wisdom give especially clear explications of his views on the purpose and goal of philosophy, employing the words *ḥikma* and *ḥakīm* (HIP 131, 133). These consist largely of practical instructions on how seekers should prepare themselves and make themselves worthy for receiving wisdom. For both the Greeks and the Muslims, philosophy was more a way of life than an intellectual exercise. To become a true philosopher, one needed to be “wise” in the deepest sense of the term, and this demanded appropriate activity in every domain. As Pierre Hadot puts it for the Greek tradition, “The philosopher . . . knows that the normal, natural state of men should be wisdom, for wisdom is nothing more than the vision of things as they are, the vision of the cosmos as it is in the light of reason, and wisdom is also nothing more than the mode of being and living that should correspond to this vision.”³

The mode of being and living that corresponds to the philosophical vision demands the acquisition of virtues (*faḍāʾil*) and praiseworthy character traits (*akhlāq-i*

ḥamīda). For Avicenna and others, the way to train oneself in virtue is to develop what is technically called *malaka* or “habitude.” The literal sense of the word is something possessed and owned. Habitudes are not exactly “habits” (*‘āda*). The latter term is more likely to be used negatively as a designation for ways of acting that have been adopted unthinkingly and have become deeply rooted in one’s nature, so that they keep on “returning” (*‘ād*). Although the word *habitudes* can be used for bad habits, it is more often used to denote modes of activity that have been adopted consciously to modify the inclinations of one’s lower nature and that have gradually become firmly rooted in one’s character. Good habitudes are developed by actively striving against one’s impulses and habits, by clinging to the intellective light that allows one to discern right from wrong, and by repeatedly doing what is right in everyday life. All of Islamic (and Greek) ethics focuses on training oneself in correct activity so that this becomes a habitude, or what we might call “second nature.”

Avicenna explains the importance of establishing good habitudes in a passage found both in his *Shifā* and his *Najāt*. He is discussing the soul’s otherworldly felicity (*sa‘āda*) after having explained why the theoretical intellect must be brought into conformity with the Agent Intellect. Beautiful and praiseworthy habitudes need to be developed by correct exercise of the practical intellect. People can do this by putting the animal potencies under the control of the intellective potency, or by acting according to the light of discernment that comes from the intellect within. Even if they have not actualized their intellect fully, they can work in the right direction by making their lower nature submit to the demands of wisdom. Praiseworthy habitudes are developed by giving the intellective potency charge of one’s life, but blameworthy habitudes become fixed in one’s character when one follows one’s lower nature. Through good habitudes, the practical intellect adheres to the right-seeing theoretical intellect and comes to dominate over activity. To the extent that people yield to the impulses of the animal soul, they fall away from wisdom and divine guidance.

I would also say that this true felicity will not become complete except by making the practical part of the soul wholesome. This has an introduction, though I seem to have mentioned it already. So, I say:

Character [*khuluq*] is a habitude through which certain acts issue forth from the soul easily and without prior deliberation. In the books on character traits [*akhlāq*, i.e., “ethics”], it has been commanded that we put into practice the “mean” between two opposite character traits, not that we should do the acts of the mean without obtaining the habitude of the mean, but by obtaining the mean. It seems that this habitude of the mean comes to exist both for the rationally speaking potency and for the animal potencies. As for the animal potencies, it comes to exist through obtaining the guise⁴ of yielding and being passive. For the rationally speaking potency, it occurs through obtaining the guise of seeking ascendancy.

In the same way, the habitude of excess and shortcoming exists both for the rationally speaking potency and for the animal potencies, but in the reverse of that relationship. It is known that the animal potencies demand excess and shortcoming. When the animal faculties are strong and they obtain the habitude of seeking ascendancy, a yielding guise is occasioned in the

rationally speaking soul. Once the trace of passivity becomes deeply rooted in the rationally speaking soul, this strengthens her attachment to the body and intensifies her turning toward it.

As for the habitude of the mean, what is desired from it is to remain aloof from every guise of acquiescence and to make the rationally speaking soul subsist in her innate temperament while at the same time endowing her with the guise of seeking ascendancy and aloofness. This is not opposed to her substance, nor will it make her incline toward the body—rather, away from it.⁵

When the Muslim philosophers discuss the word *falsafa* itself, they almost always point to the two dimensions of the philosophical quest—the theoretical and the practical.⁶ All of them hold that acquiring wisdom means not only coming to know things correctly, but also coming to do things rightly, properly, and appropriately. An early and influential description of philosophy was offered by the first of the great philosophers, al-Kindī (d. ca. 256/870), in his *al-Falsafat al-ūlā* (“The First Philosophy”). Note that he defines philosophy in terms of *ḥaqq*, which is a noun and an adjective that I usually translate as “real,” but which also means true, worthy, and appropriate; truth, worthiness, and appropriateness. It is a Koranic divine name that soon became a common synonym for God (*Allāh*) itself, being considered broader and more comprehensive in denotation than the divine names that designate attributes with a narrower scope, such as Knowing, Merciful, and First. Thus it has been used from earliest times to refer to God as that which is real, true, right, and appropriate—the Real, the Truth, the Right. But it is also used for everything other than God that reflects or participates in this quality of reality, truth, and rightness.

The highest of the human arts in waystation and the most eminent in level is the art of philosophy, whose definition is “the knowledge of things in their realities to the extent of human capacity.” This is because the philosophers’ purpose in their knowledge is to hit upon the Real and, in their practice, to practice according to the Real. It is not to act forever, because we will be held back from and cut off from acts when we reach the Real. . . .

The most eminent and highest philosophy is the level of the first philosophy, that is, the knowledge of the First Real, who is the cause of every real. This is why it is necessary for the complete, most eminent philosopher to be the man who encompasses this most eminent knowledge, for knowledge of the cause is more eminent than knowledge of the effect. This is because we know each known thing with complete knowledge only when we encompass the knowledge of its cause. . . . We named knowledge of the First Cause “the first philosophy” because all the rest of philosophy is included in its knowledge.⁷

In another treatise, “On the definitions and descriptions of things,” al-Kindī offers six more explanations handed down from the ancients for the meaning of the word *philosophy*. All of these are frequently discussed explicitly or implicitly in the philosophical texts. The first five are (1) “love of wisdom,” (2) “paying attention to death,” (3) “the art of arts, and the wisdom of wisdoms,” (4) “for the human to know himself,” and (5) “the knowledge of the endless, universal things and their ipseities, quiddities, and causes to the extent of human capacity.” The sixth is especially tell-

ing in the present context: "They also defined it in respect of its act, and they said, 'Philosophy is becoming similar to God's acts to the extent of human capacity.' They meant that the human should be perfect in virtue."⁸

The key word here is *tashabbuh*, which means to become *shabīh* or "similar." In Kalam, *tashbīh*, or "declaring God similar" to his creatures, is considered an error, and it is countered with *tanzīh*, declaring God to be incomparable with and aloof from his creation. Nonetheless, the Koran is full of verses that contradict God's aloofness by speaking of his nearness to and concern for creation in general and human beings in particular. One of the most commonly cited maxims to epitomize this side of the Koranic message is the Prophet's saying, echoing the Hebrew Bible, "God created Adam in His form," which means that human beings are in some way similar to God. In the light of these verses and sayings, there is nothing at all strange about describing the quest to achieve wisdom and to gain human perfection in terms of attributes and qualities that are rooted in the First Real.

The divine attributes and qualities that people must actualize if they are to be fully human are frequently identified with the "virtues" (*faḍā'il*, plural of *faḍīla*), which is a word full of Koranic resonance. The basic noun from the same root is *faḍl*, which means surplus, overflow, bounty, kindness, favor. The Koran speaks of God's *faḍl*—his bounty and blessings to his creatures—in about eighty verses. It also insists that God bestows bounty upon his creatures in different degrees (employing the word *tafḍīl*), both because of his predestination and grace and because of the worthiness people achieve through own efforts. Thus the "virtues" are the beautiful and excellent character traits both bestowed by God and earned by striving in the path of God. The implicit assertion of divine origin for the virtues is demanded by the Koranic context of the word itself.⁹

In discussions of the moral transformation that is the practical goal of philosophy, the philosophers sometimes use the term *ta'alluh* in the meaning of *tashabbuh bi Allāh* or "becoming similar to God." *Ta'alluh*, from the same root as Allah, means "being like God" or "conforming to God" or "deiformity." No doubt to prevent accusations of claiming that God's transcendence can be breached, the discussions of both *ta'alluh* and *tashabbuh* typically include the phrase *bi-qadr ṭāqat al-insān*, "to the extent of human capacity" or *bi-ḥasab ṭāqat al-bashar*, "in keeping with the capacity of mortal man."¹⁰

In their *Rasā'il*, the Ikhwān al-Ṣafā' frequently discuss the goals of philosophy in terms of acquiring similarity to God. Here are two of their many explanations of what philosophy implies:

The furthest purpose of philosophy is what has been said: "It is becoming similar to God in keeping with the capacity of mortal man," as we have explained in all our treatises. Its pillars are four traits: First, knowledge of the realities of the existents; second, firmly knotted belief in sound views; third, assuming as one's own the beautiful character traits and the praiseworthy tempers; and fourth, pure practices and beautiful acts. The purpose of these traits is refinement of the soul, advancement from the state of deficiency to completion, and emergence from the bounds of potency into act through manifestation. Thereby the soul gains subsistence, permanence,

and sempiternity in bliss along with the children of her own kind and the angels.¹¹

The purpose of all this is for human beings to gain the ability and readiness to become similar to their God and their Author, because they are His vicegerent in the earth, the inhabitant of His cosmos, the owner of what is within it, the driver of its animals, the nurturer of its plants, the extractor of its minerals, and the ruling controller and master of everything within it. Then they may govern it with judicious governings and rule it with lordly judiciousness as has been designated for them in the nomic testaments and the philosophic disciplines.¹² All this is so that through this solicitude, rule, and governing, the soul may become an angel among the angels in proximity to God. Thereby they will attain sempiternity in bliss, endlessly and forever.¹³

Worlds

One of the central ideas of Islamic thinking generally and Islamic philosophy specifically is that there is a plurality of worlds. Nowadays, if anyone speaks of worlds in the plural, we are likely to think in science fiction terms, which is to say that the plurality is horizontal and quantitative. Even the speculation about a diversity of worlds and dimensions that goes on in modern physics pictures “physical” worlds, since there can be no other domain studied by “physics.” In contrast, Muslim thinkers typically understand worlds in terms of a vertical hierarchy that quickly transcends any sort of physicality. This does not mean that Muslims have not imagined a plurality of horizontal worlds, but this is a secondary idea. It would not be unusual to understand the “eighteen thousand worlds” often mentioned in religious texts as physical worlds parallel in some ways to our own.

When the philosophers mention worlds in the plural, they have in mind the vertical structure of the cosmos. By speaking of a plurality of worlds, they mean to say that there are different domains of reality to which we can relate and that these domains should not be confused or conflated. To do so would lead to a flattened universe in the naturalistic and scientific manner. Although they generally speak of two basic worlds in keeping with the standard Koranic picture—the invisible, spiritual world and the visible, bodily world—this never leads to anything like a Cartesian dualism, in which the natural world would be profoundly divorced from awareness and consciousness.

The Arabic word for world, universe, or cosmos is *‘ālam*. It can denote all and everything other than the Creator, or any coherent domain within the all. Bābā Afḍal uses the term interchangeably with Persian *jahān*. In Koranic terms, the two basic worlds are “heaven” and “earth,” or “the absent” (*ghayb*) and “the witnessed” (*shahāda*). The later tradition employs a variety of other pairs to make the same distinction, such as high and low, subtle and dense, spiritual and bodily, intellectual and sensory, luminous and dark, sovereignty (*malakūt*) and kingdom (*mulk*).

What differentiates the two worlds is that the higher, spiritual world is closer to the First, which is to say that it partakes more completely of the qualities and characteristics of ultimate reality. If we look at the higher world from the point of

view of the trajectory from the Origin down to the earth, it precedes the lower world. The higher world is that of prior spirituality, luminosity, and intelligence. It gives rise to the lower world, that of posterior corporeality, darkness, and sense perception. From this point of view, everything in the bodily world and all that we perceive and experience through the senses and the lower cognitive faculties are dull images of a precedent reality. The higher, precedent world corresponds with the (First) Intellect and the (Universal) Soul. The lower world is that of nature, or everything perceived by the five senses. The *Theology* often explains reality's dulling descent in such terms. Typical is the following passage, though it does not explicitly mention worlds:

The intellect is before all the innovated things, then the soul, then nature. As much as things go downward, they become meaner and more specific, and as much as they go upward, they become more virtuous and more general. . . .

God is the cause of the intellect, the intellect the cause of the soul, the soul the cause of nature, and nature the cause of all the particular, engendered beings. However, although some things are the cause of others, God is the cause of each and every one of them.¹⁴

The celestial spheres or heavens along with their stars and planets are considered to have a sort of intermediary status, and often their domain is designated as a third world. Inasmuch as the celestial domain is visible, it pertains to the world of the senses, but inasmuch as it mirrors the supernal realities rather directly, it pertains to the intellective and soulish world. A basic model for philosophical discussion of the worlds is established by the *Theology*. The following passages are typical:

The sensory world is only a pointer to the intellective world and the intellective substances that are within it, or an explication of its great potencies, its noble virtues, and its good that bubbles up and boils over.¹⁵

All the sensory world is an image and an icon of that world. If this world is alive, then that first world is even more deserving to be alive. If this world is complete and perfect, then that first world is even more deserving to be complete and perfect. This is because it effuses life, potency, perfection, and permanence on this world.¹⁶

The sensory world and the intellective world are placed such that the one clings to the other. This is because the intellective world brings about the occurrence of the sensory world. The intellective world gives benefit to and effuses on the sensory world, and the sensory world takes benefit and receives the potency that comes to it from the intellective world.¹⁷

The governor of the intellective world is the First Light, the governor of the heavenly world is the intellective world, and the governor of the sensory world is the heavenly world. All these governances take replenishment from the First Governor, who replenishes them with governance and rule. As for the intellective world, it is governed by the First That-it-is,¹⁸ which is the First Innovator. The governor of the heavenly world is the intellective world.¹⁹

One of the important terms that enters this discussion is *fayḍ*, which I translate as “effusion.” Typically it is rendered as “emanation,” but this word immediately calls to mind Neoplatonic precedents that may not be relevant to the discussion. In the Arabic Plotinus, emanation may be a good translation of *fayḍ*, but the word has a concrete sense in Arabic that frequently predominates, and the connotations of the English word can quickly obscure what is at issue. The basic meaning of the Arabic verb is for water to overflow (from its banks or a vessel) or to gush (from a fountain) and hence for something to come forth, to become abundant, to spread around. The Koran uses the root nine times in ways that already show how broadly the term can be used. Thus it uses it to refer to the flowing forth of water, of tears, of speech, and of activity. The philosophical texts frequently use it to describe the relation between the higher and lower worlds. The Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ, for example, employ it to depict God’s giving rise to the intellect and by means of the intellect to everything below it.

“Intellect” is a name shared by two meanings. One is what the philosophers point to, that is, the first existent devised by the Author—majestic and exalted is He! This is a simple, spiritual substance that encompasses all things through a spiritual encompassment. The other meaning is what the majority of people point to. It is one of the potencies of the human soul, and its act is reflection, deliberation, rational speech, discernment, artisanries, and similar things. . . .

Know, my brother, that since the intellect we are mentioning is one of the potencies of the human soul, it is also one of the potencies of the universal soul. The universal soul is an effusion that was effused from the universal intellect, which is the first effusion that was effused from the Author.²⁰

All the existents are forms and discrete entities that the Author—exalted and majestic is He!—effused on the intellect, which is the first existent to which the Author was munificent and gave existence. It is a simple, spiritual substance within which are all the forms of the existent things, without being piled up and without mutual interference. It effuses these forms on the universal soul all at once and without time, just like the sun effuses its light on the air. The soul at one moment receives the forms, and at another effuses them on matter, just as the moon at one moment receives the sun’s light and at another effuses it on the air. Matter receives the forms one after another from the universal soul, gradually and through time, just as air receives the light of the moon at one moment and not another, in one direction and not in another. In the same way, the student receives one thing after another from the teacher.²¹

As we have already seen, the philosophers frequently refer to the lower world as that of “generation and corruption” (*kawn wa fasād*). The Arabic words are more evocative of the cosmological context than the English, however, since nowadays we are likely to think of “generation” in terms of descent from an ancestor or producing offspring and of “corruption” in moral terms. But this is not what is at issue in the Latin, nor in the Arabic. Both terms are neutral and ontological. They describe the nature of the world that we experience. All things are “generated,” which is to

say that they all come to be, and all things undergo “corruption,” which is to say that they die, decay, and disappear.

The two Arabic terms, *kawn* and *fasād*, play important roles in the Koran. *Kawn* itself, a gerund meaning “being” or “becoming,” is not used, but verbs derived from it are used hundreds of times. Especially important are the several verses in which the Koran says that God’s act, when he desires something, “is to say to it ‘Be!’ [*kun*], so it comes to be [*yakūn*].” This creative act is technically called *takwīn*, which means to make something come to be, or to “engender” it, that is, to bring it into the world of generation and corruption. Everything in the universe belongs to the world of engendering because everything in the universe came to be when God said “Be” to it.

The Koran employs derivatives of *fasād*’s root about fifty times. In Koranic Arabic, the word is the correlative not of *kawn* but of *ṣalāh*, which means properness, rightness, goodness, orderliness, wholesomeness. Both *ṣalāh* and *fasād* have strong moral connotations, but both also suggest an ontological status. “Wholesomeness” is for a thing to be as God created it to be, whereas corruption is for things to fall apart, especially as the result of human interference with the right order. For the Koran, the fact that the things of the world function harmoniously and do not fall apart is a proof of *tawhīd*. “Were there in [heaven and earth] gods other than God, the two would be corrupted” (21:22). Individual human wants and desires, cut off from divine guidance, bring about corruption, but God does not follow misguided human purposes. “Were the Real to follow their caprices, the heavens and earth would be corrupted” (23:71). When people adhere to the divine model, they bring about the wholesomeness of the individual and society, but if they fail to follow God’s guidance, they destroy the coherence, harmony, and order not only of society, but also of the natural world: “Corruption has appeared in the land and the sea because of what people’s hands have earned” (30:41).

In Arabic, then, to use the expression *kawn wa fasād*, “generation and corruption,” is to make a statement about the passing and decaying nature of the lower world. But it also implies that human wholesomeness, uprightness, and virtue have every role to play in keeping the world’s proper balance and equilibrium. In other words, for Muslim readers, praxis is already demanded by the use of these Koranic terms. It is not sufficient for aspiring philosophers to know that everything in the sensory world is born and dies and that the lower realm represents a pale reflection of the supernal realities. They must also know that their own activity should be designed to preserve the right balance of things in the world of generation and corruption. They must strive to perfect the theoretical intellect so as to take themselves back to the First Intellect, but they also must train the practical intellect in beautiful habits and virtues in order to preserve the wholesomeness of the lower world.

Bābā Afḍal mentions some of the terminology used to describe the two basic worlds and their interrelation in a short chapter of his *Book of Displays*. Notice his use of the word “innovation” (*ibdāʿ*), which is commonly employed by the philosophers to refer to God’s creative activity. There is an allusion to the Koranic divine name, “Innovator (*badīʿ*) of the heavens and the earth.” For many Muslim thinkers, “innovation” is God’s creation without intermediary, whereas “creation” (*khalq*) refers to his creation by means of a preexistent something. Thus one can say that God “innovated” the intellect, but he “created” everything else by means of the in-

tellec. In Bābā Afḍal's usage, the innovated things are spiritual and the created things are bodily.

The realm of the created things is called "the world of engendering," and the realm of the innovated things is called "the world of the beginningless." Also, the world of the created things is called "the world of nature," and the realm of the innovated things is called "the world of intelligence." Also, the world of generation is called "the particular world," and the world of innovation is called "the universal world."

All of these words have one meaning, and it is that there are two worlds. One is reality, the other image. The reality is the root, and the image the branch. The reality is the universal world, and the image the particular world. The existents of the particular world are the images of the existents of the universal world. The engendered things of the one endure by the innovated things of the other, and the particular individuals of this exist through the universal species of that.

Each of the existent things of the particular world has a measure and a size, but the existents of the universal world have no quantity and size. The existents of the world of generation are dead through self and living through other than self, but the existents of the world of innovation are living through self. The sensory awareness of this world—I mean the world of generation—is the image of the intellective awareness of that world. The bodily world is an image and a recounting of the spiritual world. (*Muṣannafāt* 191–92)

As these passages on worlds illustrate, the purpose of the discussion is to bring out the qualitative disparity between the levels. It is to focus seekers of wisdom on the primary reality so that they can deal with the secondary reality in the proper manner. The One, who stands beyond the worlds, is the source of all excellent qualities and beautiful characteristics, such as luminosity, knowledge, life, generosity, justice, and virtue. These are present in the higher world in an intense and concentrated manner, but they become refracted and diffused as they flow down through the intermediate realms to the domain of generation and corruption. In the lowest world, all things are changing and corrupting, yet everything good and positive has come down from the One and will return to it. Philosophers must use their theoretical and practical intellects to participate in the re-establishment and maintenance of this world's wholesomeness and the guidance of all things back to the unity of the Real. They must enter on the centripetal path to the Center in order to keep the centrifugal flow of things in proper check.

If we look at the two worlds in a static sort of way, we can see that they represent an ever-present distinction between the intellective, spiritual domain and the sensory, bodily domain. If we look at them in terms of the dynamism present in the cosmos, there is constant movement and change, all governed by a specific directionality. Thus the term *Origin* refers to a process that unfolds in both the spiritual and the corporeal worlds, but the directionality is that of the descending movement from intellect to nature, the centrifugal movement away from the Center. The term *Return* also refers to a process that occurs in both worlds, but the movement is now ascending from nature to intellect; it is the centripetal movement of unification and

harmonization. Avicenna gives a typical overview of the Origin and the Return in the following passage:

When existence begins from the First, everything that follows it remains forever lower in level than the First. Existence never ceases sinking down in degrees, the first of which is the degree of the spiritual, disengaged angels that are named “intellects.” Then are the levels of the spiritual angels that are named “souls,” and these are the active angels. Then are the levels of the heavenly orbs, some of which are more eminent than others, until the last of them is reached.

After these begins the existence of the matter that receives the forms of generation and corruption. First it puts on the forms of the elements, then it rises in degrees little by little. The first of existence within it is meaner and lower in level than what follows it.

Hence the least of what exists is matter, then the elements, then the inanimate compound things, then the plants, [then the animals]. The most excellent of these is the human, after whom are animals, then plants. The most excellent of people are those who perfect their soul as an intellect in act and gain the character traits that are the practical virtues. The most excellent of these are those who are prepared for the level of prophecy.²²

The highest level of existence is achieved by those who put all the soul's potency into act and thus join in some manner with the fully actual, Agent Intellect. Those who achieve this degree reach the preparedness (*isti 'ād*) that belonged to the prophets. This is not to say that they become prophets, though the philosophers were often accused of holding this position.²³ What Avicenna means here is that they achieve the same level of receptivity toward the divine reality and the same degree of similarity to God that the prophets possessed. The issue of whether or not God then chooses them out and appoints them as prophets is another discussion altogether.

In a well-known passage from the same two works, Avicenna describes what sort of vision of things is achieved by the perfected human being through conjunction with the Agent Intellect. Again he describes the gradations of the existent things, some ranked higher than others. He also refers to another common usage of the term *world*—the contrast between the “great world” or macrocosm, which is the whole universe, and the “small world” or microcosm, which is the human being.

The perfection specific to the rationally speaking soul is for her to become an intellectual world within which is represented the form of the all, the arrangement intelligible in the all, and the good that is effused upon the all, beginning from the Origin of the all and proceeding on to the unconditioned spiritual substances, then the spiritual [substances] connected in a certain way to bodies, then the high corporeal bodies along with their guises and potencies. Then [she continues on] like this until she fully achieves in herself the guise of all of existence. She turns into an intelligible world, parallel with all the existent world. She witnesses what is unconditioned comeliness, unconditioned good, and real, unconditioned beauty while she is unified with it, imprinted with its likeness and guise, strung upon its thread, and coming to be of its substance.²⁴

The Koran constantly refers to the fact that all things come from God and then return to him, and it frequently discusses the descent of things from heaven and their rising back to heaven. When it addresses the human situation, it takes the directionality of unfolding into account by speaking of “this world” and “the next world.” “This world” is where we are now, having been created by God. The Koranic expression is *al-dunyā*, meaning “the near” (i.e., the near life or the near abode). I translate it here as “this world” and the adjective that derives from it as “worldly.” The next world is where we go after death, either immediately upon death, or after the resurrection. Opinions differ as to where exactly the line should be drawn. The Koranic expression is *al-āk̄hira*, “the last (life or abode),” which I translate here as “afterworld.” In addition to these two terms, Bābā Afḍal commonly uses the Persian expressions “this world” (*īn jahān*) and “that world” (*ān jahān*), and from these he constructs the adjectives “this-worldly” (*īn-jahānī*) and “that-worldly” (*ān-jahānī*). Although he uses these terms as synonyms for the two Arabic expressions, he also uses them to refer to the two basic worlds that exist in the cosmos conceived in atemporal and spatial terms—the high world of intelligence and the low world of sense perception. Then “this world” is what we perceive with our senses, and “that world” is what we perceive through intelligence. In other words, the pairing of terms does not in itself differentiate between the atemporal and temporal pictures of the universe. If that is important to the discussion, it can be understood from the context.

Bodies and Spirits

There are few distinctions more basic to the texts than that between spirits and bodies, which are the things that inhabit the two worlds. The whole philosophical enterprise depends upon discerning the difference between high and low, heaven and earth, spirit and body. Bābā Afḍal repeatedly refers to this distinction as the most fundamental discernment that seekers of wisdom must make, and he considers the failure to make it the cause of the heedlessness, corruption, moral failing, and evil that fill the world. Unless one is able to see clearly the difference between spirit and body, high and low, intelligible and sensory, one will never be able to actualize one’s intelligence and know oneself. Unless one is striving to know oneself or has achieved the goal, one’s every endeavor will be wrongheaded, inane, and fruitless.

Body and spirit (or soul) are differentiated in terms of their attributes. One must avoid the common mistake of thinking of the two as discrete and distinct “things.” In modern times, people tend to think of the body as something material, concrete, and real, and the soul as another discrete “thing,” which is, however, impalpable, intangible, and unreal or illusory. This way of thinking is totally alien to the Islamic philosophical tradition. The philosophers do not think of the soul as an object, nor do they doubt the soul’s reality any more than they doubt the body’s reality, for these are two sides of the same experienced self. Readers of the philosophical texts should always keep in mind that body and soul are correlative terms, because they are understood and conceptualized in relation to each other. The body is a reality that is known only in terms of its qualities, and the spirit is a reality that knows itself precisely because its qualities can be differentiated from those of the body.

The Ikhwān al-Ṣafā' explain the basic difference between body and spirit in a qualitative language that finds echoes throughout the tradition:

The existent things are of two sorts—bodily and spiritual. The bodily is what is perceived by the senses, and the spiritual is what is perceived by the intellect and given form by reflective thought.

The bodily things are of three sorts: Some are the celestial orbs, some the natural pillars [i.e., the four elements], and some the engendered progeny [the three kingdoms].

The spiritual things are also of three sorts: One is the First Matter, which is a simple, passive, intelligible substance that is receptive to every form. The second is the soul, which is a simple, active, and knowing substance. The third is the intellect, which is a simple substance that perceives the realities of things.

As for the Author—majestic and exalted is He!—He is not described either as bodily or as spiritual. Rather, He is the cause of them all. In the same way, “one” is not described as even or odd. Rather, it is the cause of all the even and odd numbers.²⁵

In another treatise, the Ikhwān al-Ṣafā' explain the different sorts of qualities and attributes that pertain respectively to spirit and body and they show how this fundamental human duality (*mathnawīyya*) drives people in their daily activities. Notice how the Ikhwān use the philosophical and religious language almost seamlessly. This is typical of their approach, and it is a rhetorical technique used by quite a few of the philosophers, at least in some of their writings (compare Bābā Afḍal's *Book of the Everlasting*).

Know, my brother, that the attributes specific to the body alone are that the body is a corporeal, natural substance, possessing flavor, color, smell, heaviness, lightness, stillness, pliability, roughness, hardness, and softness. It comes to be engendered from the “four humors,” which are blood, phlegm, and the two biles [black and yellow]; it is progenerated from the nourishment that comes to be from the “four pillars,” which are fire, air, water, and earth. These possess the “four natures,” which are heat, cold, wetness, and dryness. The body undergoes corruption, alteration, and transformation, and it returns to the four pillars after “death,” which is the separation of the soul from the body and her abandonment of putting it to use.

The attributes specific to soul alone are that she is a spiritual, heavenly, luminous substance that is alive through her essence, knowing through potency, acting through nature, receptive to teachings, active in bodies while putting them to use, and completing the animal and vegetal bodies until a known moment [i.e., death]. Then she abandons the bodies and becomes separate from them. She returns to her element, her mine, and her origin, as she used to be, either with profit and joy, or with regret, sadness, and loss—just as God has said with His words, *As He originated you, so you shall return—a group He guided, and a group was right for misguidance* [7:29–30]. . . .

It has been clarified that most of the affairs of humans and the changing of their states are dual and opposite, because people are wholes put together

from two different substances—a corporeal body and a spiritual soul, as we already explained. Hence their acquisitions are also of two sorts—bodily, like the possessions and goods of this world; and spiritual, like knowledge and religion. This is because knowledge is an acquisition of the soul, just as possessions are acquisitions of the body. Through possessions human beings gain the ability to partake of the enjoyments of eating and drinking in this world's life; through knowledge they attain the path of the afterworld, and through religion they reach the afterworld. Through knowledge the soul is brightened, illumined, and made sound, just as through eating and drinking the body grows, increases, and is nurtured and fattened.

If this is the case, then sessions are also of two sorts. One is a session for eating and drinking, diversions and games, and bodily enjoyments. It partakes of the flesh of the earth's animals and of plants for the sake of the wholesomeness of the body, which undergoes transformation, corruption, and annihilation. The second is a session for knowledge, wisdom, and spiritual listening. It partakes of the enjoyment of the souls, whose substance does not pass away and whose happiness is not cut off in the afterworld's abode, just as God has said: *Therein is whatever the souls desire and whatever gives enjoyment to the eye, and you will be within it forever* [43:71].

Since the sessions are two, the askers are two. One of them asks for a need among the passing accidents of this world for the sake of the body's wholesomeness—to draw benefit to the body or to keep loss from it. The other asks about a question of knowledge for the wholesomeness of the soul's affair and her deliverance from the darkneses of ignorance, or to *become learned in religion* [9:122], to seek the path of the afterworld, to struggle to reach it, to flee from the fire of Gehenna, to be saved from the world of generation and corruption, to win arrival and ascent to the world of the spheres and the expanse of the heavens, to roam in the degrees of the Gardens, and to breathe of the *freshness and fragrance* mentioned in the Koran [56:89].²⁶

Some authors differentiate clearly between soul and spirit and describe the soul as an intermediary between spirit and body. For many of the later thinkers, the soul's playing field comes to be designated as a discrete third domain, the "world of imagination." Even those who do not speak of the soulish world as separate from the spiritual and bodily worlds often recognize it as an intermediate realm. The Koran, after all, repeatedly speaks of heaven, earth, and "what is between the two," and it was clear to everyone that our experience of self and other is neither purely heavenly nor purely earthly, neither wholly spiritual nor wholly bodily, but somewhere in between. In other worlds, human experience takes place in a world of "duality," to use the Ikhwān al-Ṣafā's term, and this duality is precisely a third realm, neither spiritual nor bodily, neither purely intelligible nor purely sensory.

To speak of an intermediary world is one way of saying that the world that enters into our awareness is a twilight realm where all supernal and infernal qualities mix. If we become confused and attribute bodily qualities to the spirit or spiritual qualities to the body, it is because our realm of experience is the meeting-place of the two, where all qualities intermingle. It is precisely because of this intermingling and confusion that one must pursue the quest to know oneself. The mixture of quali-

ties prevents direct access to any totally discrete realm “out there” that would be only body, because everything is mediated by our perception and understanding, which partake of the heavenly luminosity, the lucidity of awareness and discernment. These do not pertain to the bodily world per se, as is proven by stones and lumber, which have no awareness that we can perceive. The *Theology* often prefigures these later discussions by speaking of the soul as an intermediary between spirit and body.²⁷ For example:

Nature is of two sorts—intellective and sensory. When the soul was in the intellective world, she was more virtuous and more eminent. When she came to be in the lower world, she was meaner and lower because of the body in which she came to be. Although the soul is intellective and from the intellective world, she had to attain something from the sensory world and come to be in it, for her nature holds together because of the intellective world and the sensory world. Hence, one should not blame or censure the soul for leaving the intellective world and coming to be in this world, because she is placed between both worlds.

The soul came to be in this state because, though she is one of the eminent, divine substances, she is the last of those substances and the first of the natural, sensory substances. When she came to be the neighbor of the natural, sensory world, it was not necessary for her to hold back her virtues from it, nor to effuse them upon it. Then she effuses upon it her potencies and adorns it with the utmost adornment, but she may also attain something of its meanness. This will be so unless she is cautious and protects herself from being contaminated by anything of its base, blameworthy states.²⁸

When the souls were in their world before they fell to generation, they were sensate. However, their sense-perception was an intellective sense-perception. When they came into generation along with the bodies, they also came to sense-perception with a bodily sense-perception. Hence they are intermediary between the intellect and the bodies. They receive a potency from the intellect, and they effuse on the body the potency that came to them from the intellect. However, that potency in the body is another sort, that is, sense-perception. Sometimes the soul shuns sense-perception for intellect. Sometimes she subtilizes the bodily things until they come to be as though they were intellective, so that the intellect attains them; and sometimes she corporealizes the intellective things so that sense-perception attains them.²⁹

For his part, Bābā Afḍal typically speaks of three domains: the bodily, the soulish, and the intellective. He often distinguishes between body and soul (or spirit) in his treatises, and we will meet many arguments to prove the distinction. One of his short essays offers an argument not found in his other writings:

Whatever is body and bodily accepts no more than one impression. Were it to accept another impression, it would mix with that impression, and both would be nullified. But [the soul] accepts a thousand impressions on the spirit’s tablet without becoming mixed, such as the form of the heavens, the stars, and the other things that all are present to thought. In the same way, the states of

people and the attributes of human beings are all manifest in the inmost mind, but all these impressions are limpid. Thus it is known that the soul is an existent other than the body, from the World of the Absent. (*Musannafāt* 665)

Although it is necessary to distinguish between body and soul, it is also necessary to know that neither can achieve its own perfection without the other. Bābā Afḍal cannot be accused of denigrating the body. What he denigrates is human ignorance, which confuses the body's attributes with the spirit's attributes and takes the image of the intelligible world, embedded in matter, as the reality. Here Bābā Afḍal holds the same position as Plotinus. Hadot writes, "The essential point of this method therefore consists in making the soul discover that the 'self' is other than the body."³⁰ Armstrong's summary of Plotinus's view could as well apply to Bābā Afḍal: "What is wrong according to Plotinus in our commerce with images, what leads to a fall too deep, a culpable straying, a self-imposed exile, is to take the images too seriously, to become obsessed with them, to try to grasp at and cling to them, and so to become isolated and imprisoned in a petty world of bodily needs and desires."³¹

The essential discernment that philosophers must achieve is between the image and the reality, the root and the branch, the spirit and the body. One must know to which side the attributes and qualities belong and in which respect, and one must also know that body and soul are profoundly united. It is to the latter point that Bābā Afḍal refers in this brief essay:

Together the body and anima are complete and perfect, and they are not separate. The body and anima together are the body, and the anima and body together are the anima. When you see the body with the eye of reality, it is the anima, and when you see the anima with the eye of correlation, it is the body. Know that in all the sensibles, intelligibles, and contraries, it is the same. (*Musannafāt* 662)

Levels of Awareness

If the macrocosm can be pictured in terms of three levels—intelligence, the sensory domain, and everything in between—the same can be said for the microcosm. Here, however, the discussion is frequently posed in terms of three basic levels of awareness—intelligence, sense perception, and the intermediate level. Intelligence grasps disengaged meanings, or realities in themselves without any embodiment. The senses perceive things as embodied in the external realm. The intermediate level perceives things as both intelligible and sensory, or both spiritual and bodily. In later Sufism, this is the level of "imagination." Among the philosophers, it is commonly discussed in terms of five interior senses, of which imagination is one.

Sense perception occurs by the means of the perceptual organs. In Arabic, the word for "organ" is *āla*, which I translate here as "tool." The Arabic and Persian authors use this word both for bodily organs and for tools and instruments, like shovels and lancets. They also use it for the body itself when viewed in relation to the

soul, or for anything that the soul uses for its own ends. Thus a saying of the Prophet's son-in-law 'Alī tells us, "He uses the tool of religion to seek this world," and the commentators tell us that "the tool of religion" is knowledge. In Islamic terms, knowledge is the means whereby people grasp the guidance of the prophets, so its purpose is to light the way to the soul's felicity in the next world, not to occupy itself with the affairs of this world.

The medieval translators rendered *āla* into Latin according to context, choosing *membrum* when it meant a bodily member or organ and *instrumentum* when it meant tool. As Carl Mitchum has pointed out, the original Greek word, *organon*, could mean both "tool" and "hand," so our own concept of tool is not continuous with Aristotelian notions.³² The distinction that Avicenna and others seem to make in the Latin translations between organic and inorganic was probably introduced by the translators—though this hypothesis needs to be tested against the texts. If it is in fact true, then making the distinction can be understood as one of many small steps that led to the dissolution of a holistic and unitarian view of reality. What is certain is that for authors like Bābā Afḍal, *āla* has one meaning, whether it refers to a mechanical tool, an organ of the body, or a potency of the soul. In each case, the word designates not a "thing," but a qualitative relationship.³³

One of the first distinctions that can be drawn in investigating levels of awareness has to do with the tools that are employed to gain the awareness. Bābā Afḍal maintains that at the lowest level of existence, where there is no "self" but only "nature," body is the "tool" of nature, because nature is an invisible, spiritual realm that uses body for its own specific ends. So also at higher levels of existence, body is the tool of soul, whether it be the vegetal, animal, or human soul. The organs such as eye, ear, and nose are the tools of the potencies, such as eyesight, hearing, and smell; and the sensory potencies in turn are tools of the soul, as are internal powers like imagination. It follows that tools are intermediaries both in sense perception and in the internal awareness of things and images. The real significance of talking about tools comes to the fore when we realize that the soul has no tool for knowing itself. It can only know itself without intermediary. If it knows by means of a tool, its knowledge is indirect and it is knowing something else along with itself. To the extent that it achieves this self-knowledge without tools, it is called "intellect." As Bābā Afḍal remarks, "The finder without tools is the utmost end of the spiritual-beings, for the finder without tools finds self and other than self through self" (*Muṣannafāt* 40; HIP 264).

Bābā Afḍal sets down a basic scheme for analyzing the levels of human awareness in *The Book of Displays*, where he speaks of four levels. Intelligence and sense perception are the two extremes, corresponding to heaven and earth. Between them are found imagination (*khayāl*) and sense-intuition (*wahm, gumān*).³⁴ In brief, he tells us that intelligence perceives universals or disengaged realities directly and without tools, but the other three sorts of awareness perceive only particulars, which are embodied things. The senses perceive particulars in the external world, and imagination and sense-intuition perceive particulars in the self.

Of the four levels of awareness, sense-intuition, when distinguished from imagination (and often it is not), is the most difficult to understand in modern terms, and scholars have not agreed on what to call it in English.³⁵ Bābā Afḍal explains the two intermediate levels in these terms:

The second sort of human particular awareness [after sense-perception] is imagination. When anything appears to the senses, imagination also has awareness of it at the time of the presence of the sensible. When the thing becomes absent from sensation, humans can fancy and envisage with this potency that the absent thing is present, without alteration or deficiency. This is why they can find in imagination the sweetness of honey without the presence of honey in the tool of taste, and so also pleasant and unpleasant odors without the presence of musk and rotting things. [They can also find] the color of white and black and the shapes of sensory things when these do not stand before the tool of seeing; the sound of a lute and a lyre and the roar of a drum and thunder when these do not reach the tool of hearing; and the warmth of fire and the cold of water when these do not touch the body.

As for the third sort of human particular awareness, it is sense-intuition. Through this potency there is an awareness of a nonsensory state deriving from sensory things, such that the senses and imagination could not have become aware of it—whether in the presence of those things to sensation, or in the state of their absence. [Such states are] like animosity, truthfulness, hostility, and friendliness, which enter sense-intuition from certain sensory things. From it arise the fear and craving of the animal soul. In these three levels [of particular awareness], human individuals share with the individuals of other animals that are complete in creation. (*Muṣannaḥāt* 200)

In short, then, the levels of human awareness are four, corresponding in a rough sort of way with the three levels of the cosmos—heaven, earth, and what is between the two. Intellect perceives intelligible things without intermediary, the senses perceive sensory things, and the other two faculties perceive what is between the two. The purpose in differentiating among the levels is to know how we know what we know, to perceive the distinctions between the high things and the low things, and to grasp how the intellect is essentially disengaged from the soul, just as the soul is essentially separate from the body.

Complementarities

One of the keys to deciphering the meaning of a word in Islamic texts is to think about its opposite or contrary or complement. An Arabic proverb maintains that “Things become clear through their opposites,” and this principle is often put to use in Islamic thinking. The discussion of heaven and earth, or spirit and body, takes place precisely by clarifying each term in light of its opposite, which is to say that the attributes and qualities of the two sides are conceptualized in terms of their interrelationship. This is clear generally in a good deal of Koranic language and in much of the terminology that we have just reviewed, such as spirit and body, intellect and sense perception, Origin and Return, this world and the afterworld. As Sachiko Murata has illustrated copiously in her *Tao of Islam*, the texts of the Islamic wisdom tradition constantly discuss pairs of opposites in terms of their polarity and complementarity. The goal is always to show how the One becomes differentiated into the many; how the many are related to each other in terms of basic qualities

drawn from the One; and how all things eventually converge in the same One from which they emerged in the first place.

The philosophical texts often employ the terminology brought in from the Greek sources in similar ways. The underlying issue to which the terminology points is the relationship between unity and multiplicity, or between the One Real, which is the source of all things, and the things themselves, which are everything other than the Real. The moment we use our senses, employ our minds, or begin to speak, we are dealing with multiplicity. The moment God creates, he is creating manyness and plurality, even if his first creation is only one. The First Intellect may be a single reality, but it can never be one in exactly the same way that the Real is one, so multiplicity has entered the discussion, if only because we now have two—the Real and the Intellect.

Discussion of the pair *Origin and Return* focuses on the appearance of the many from the One and the return of the many to the One. This appearance and return can be observed both in the outside world that is mediated through the senses and the inside world to which the self has more direct access. Intelligence is the first thing within us to have been created—even if it is the last thing that we actualize—and like the First Intellect our intelligence is one. At the same time, intelligence embraces manyness through its ability to see many things, just as the First Intellect embraces manyness through its knowledge of all of creation and its giving rise to the soul and the other existent things. Our own one intelligence lies at the root of our soul, yet our soul is scattered and dispersed through our tendency to look toward the world in experiencing and acting. We live in the world and interact with other things, and our senses and animal potencies draw us into things. This replicates the creative process through which the many come forth from the One. As the *Theology* pointed out in a quoted passage, this entrance into multiplicity is the very nature of the soul. To say that the soul becomes immersed in the external world is no criticism. But to claim that such immersion is the soul's *summum bonum* is either ignorance or a misuse of intelligence. The soul's real goal is to actualize its possibilities and to reach permanent fulfillment, and it can only do so by knowing itself. Part of knowing itself is to understand how it came to be as it is.

In short, the purpose of philosophical learning is to turn the self back upon itself so that it may reflect upon how its perception, knowledge, and understanding have come to be and how they can be put to work for their own proper ends. If we stay at the level of the animal soul, we will remain immersed in the domain of generation and corruption, entranced by the senses, and unable to reflect upon who it is that is immersed. It is precisely our self-reflexivity that differentiates us from other things. However, true self-awareness is not an easy thing to come by, as the Muslim philosophers and the practitioners of contemplative disciplines all over the world are quick to remind us.

On the theoretical level, the philosophers attempt to achieve self-reflexivity by investigating the nature of knowing, and the nature of knowing is inseparably bound up with the nature of the self and the world. By analyzing the world and how it is put together, we are analyzing ourselves and how we are put together. By seeing how the world gradually moves from the One into indefinite multiplicity—through a “movement” that is atemporal and causal—we see how the self moves from intelligence into

the world by way of the human, animal, and vegetal potencies. By analyzing how minerals, plants, animals, and humans are organized in an ascending hierarchy of potencies, we grasp how our own selves contain all of reality in a manner that cannot be understood except through a gradual ascent into fully actualized intelligence.

This is the basic, underlying depiction of things: two hierarchies, one from the top down, the other from the bottom up. Standing at the top is the First, the Real, and at the bottom are the multiple things perceived by sense perception. Discussion of the Origin and the Return allows us to grasp how things arrive here from the One by the intermediary of the First Intellect's awareness, and how they go back to the One by the intermediary of human awareness. The centripetal movement rehearses the stages of the centrifugal movement. At the end of the cycle of Origin and Return, the fully aware human being stands at the summit of perfection, a summit that is nothing but conjunction with the Agent Intellect. And the Agent Intellect possesses a unity of knowing such that nothing stands outside its one knowledge.

In short, at the end of its ascending movement, the soul rejoins the starting point of its descending movement. By knowing all things in their roots, the fully actualized intellect reintegrates all things into the one from which they arose. All that truly comes to be known is identical with the knower. When the knower knows something through the thing's true intelligibility, then that thing has returned to the intellect from which it emerged before it descended into the world, even if it keeps its external form in the outside world. The thing is now really present to the aware self. The outside thing is a shadow and image of the intelligible reality that gave rise to it, whereas the knowing intellect is identical with the intelligible reality.

The Muslim philosophers discuss these movements and qualities in terms of a number of basic conceptual pairs inherited from the Greeks. They employ the borrowed terms to differentiate between the predominance of the One and the predominance of the many, or the side of spirit and the side of body, or the side of intelligence and the side of sense-perception. They use this terminology to establish a coherent division and classification and to allow for an understanding of how everything is ordered and arranged by the First Real. Once they describe the order and the distinctions that were introduced into the world by the Originator of the worlds, they themselves use the same divisions to organize and arrange their perceptions and activities and to direct themselves back to the One from which they came.

Whether we are dealing with the Koranic or the Aristotelian terminology, we need to keep in mind the purpose of the discussion. For Muslims, the standard Aristotelian dichotomies were ways of situating things in relation to the One, exactly like discussions of the two worlds, or of body and soul. All these pairs of terms apply to our own perception of the world. However, one side of each pair depicts what is closer to the One, and the other what is further away. Paying attention to the side that is closer allows us to grasp the coherence, order, arrangement, balance, and harmony that are present in the world and in things. Paying attention to the side that is further away allows us to account for difference, division, discreteness, incoherence, and imbalance, and ultimately for the appearance of evil and negativity. Looking at the two sides in terms of directionality, we can see two simultaneous movements that establish the equilibrium of existence—the centrifugal expansion into sensory multiplicity and the centripetal contraction into intelligible unity.

In what follows I will provide rough, working definitions of the basic philosophical pairs and then illustrate how they are used. Any attempt to offer precise and rigorous definitions would bog us down in details and perhaps prevent us from seeing that all these words function as tools to grasp the realities of things, not as realities worthy of investigation in themselves. My purpose is to suggest the rationale for employing these specific terms and to illustrate how they are used in furthering the purpose of the philosophical quest—finding the unity of all things and directing the soul toward its final goal and ultimate good. Acquaintance with the way the words are used will make it much easier to grasp the coherence of Bābā Afḍal’s arguments.³⁶

Common conceptual pairs taken over from Greek philosophy include “universal and particular,” “general and specific,” and “simple and compound.” In each case, one side pertains more to unity, the other more to multiplicity. The Arabic words for universal and particular are *kullī* and *juzʿī*. *Kullī* is an adjective derived from *kull*, which means whole, all, and every. *Kull* occurs well over three hundred times in the Koran, whereas its complement *juzʿ*, “part” or “portion”—from which *juzʿī* derives—occurs only three times. “Universal” is used to designate a concept that is understood as one by our minds but which we apply to many things. “Particular” designates a concept that is applied to something that is one both in knowledge and in the outside world. “Human being” is universal and “Socrates” is particular.

Since the universal pertains to the domain of known things—that is, the world of intelligence—and the particular to the domain of generation and corruption, the universal is permanent and real, while the particular is passing and relatively unreal. Bābā Afḍal frequently offers arguments on this basis, so it is important to have a clear idea of how he understands these terms. In one of his essays, he explains the meaning of “universal existence” in terms of the four levels of awareness:

The “universal existence” is the existence that is one thing inside the perceiving soul, but it can be in many things outside the soul. This is like the existence of the world’s states—the animals and the minerals—which are many. However, in the soulish obtainment [*ḥuṣūl*]—I mean the being—all are one.

There is no universal in the sensory, imagined, and the sense-intuited, because sense-intuited and imagined existents are diverse—like the existence of fear, which is not the existence of security; the existence of joy, which is not the existence of sadness; the existence of a designated individual like Zayd, which is not the existence of ‘Amr; the existence of blackness, which is not the existence of whiteness; the existence of enjoyable sounds, which is not the existence of offensive sounds; and so on with things that are smelled, tasted, and touched. Hence it is clear that [the universal existence] is nothing but the intelligible and the known. Peace. (*Muṣannafāt* 624)

“General” and “specific” are used in roughly the same way as universal and particular, though the emphasis is on comparing two unequal concepts. Thus bodiment is “general” for all bodies, while animality, plantness, and mineralness are more specific. Humanness is general for all human beings, but various attributes and qualities, such as quick-wittedness or speaking English, are specific to some human beings.

Something that is “simple” has no parts, whereas something that is “compound” has parts. Examples of simple things include the four elements: earth, water, air, and fire. Whether or not the four elements that we perceive in the world are pure is sometimes debated in the texts, and some authors maintain that nothing simple can be perceived by the senses, so the four things that we call by these names are in fact compound. In any case, the fact remains that the four elements can be discussed as simple substances having specific and distinct attributes, and that these attributes can be discerned in the makeup of the compound things—the minerals, plants, and animals. The celestial objects and “orbs” (*jirm*) are also commonly considered to be simple. Souls and spirits are simple, and simplest of all is the One, the First.

Form and Matter

One of the important Greek philosophical terms is *eidōs*, which is Plato’s designation for the “ideas” or eternal archetypes of which the things of this world are imperfect imitations. It is also Aristotle’s term for “form” in the important pairing, “form and matter.” This pairing can be one of the more difficult concepts to grasp for those unfamiliar with Greek or medieval philosophy, since these two everyday words have largely lost their ancient significance. When people speak of “matter” today, they are referring to the supposedly hard and real stuff from which the things around us are made. For moderns, “matter” is there, but for the Greeks and medievals, matter per se cannot be perceived or grasped in any way. Only form has attributes and qualities that allow us to perceive, grasp, and understand things.

From Aristotle onward there has been a good deal of discussion as to the exact status of the forms or ideas, and the Arabic texts reflect the fact that later Greek philosophy did not always differentiate between the Aristotelian and Platonic senses of the word. The Arabic word that the translators chose to render the term is *ṣūra*, and it is often difficult to see if it is being used more in the Aristotelian or Platonic sense. The issue is complicated by the Islamic meaning of the word. The Koran uses it in the plural in three verses to designate God’s creations. It also uses the verb *taṣwīr*, “forming” or “form-giving,” five times, always with God as subject. In two of these instances, it employs *form* and *forming* together in the sentence, “And He formed you, and He made your forms beautiful” (40:64, 64:3). The Koran also designates “Form-giver” (*muṣawwir*) as one of the divine names (59:24). As for the hadith literature, it is sufficient to remember the famous prophetic saying, echoing the Book of Genesis, “God created Adam in His form.”³⁷

In short, the term *ṣūra* was richly evocative for Muslims because of its significance in the religious texts, and it would have been impossible for them not to have the Koranic usage in mind while reading the philosophical writings. The use of form/idea as the correlative of matter certainly had Aristotelian, Platonic, and Neoplatonic precedents, but it also had a partial Koranic context, and this gave Muslims every reason to think of the forms more in Platonic terms than in the down-to-earth sense that modern interpreters of Aristotle usually give to them. In the Koranic worldview, all things are forms, and they were established as such by the Form-giver. Each of them must have some mode of permanent presence in the divine knowledge, because

God knows all things without any temporal restrictions: "Not a leaf falls, but He knows it" (Koran 6:59).

In the general philosophical understanding, each thing's form ties it to the side of unity, wholeness, and coherence though the luminosity of its own specific reality, present with the First Intellect. This reality can be perceived by intelligence and remains intelligible forever, whether or not the form is there to be observed, which is to say that Socrates is always Socrates whether he is alive or dead. His form, like the form of everything else, is a unique configuration of qualities that cannot be erased from reality, whether or not it happens to be embodied in the world of generation and corruption. It is the forms that inhabit the third realm of existence that Bābā Afḍal calls the "known things" in the *Book of Displays*.

By way of brief definition, one might say that "matter" is what takes on form, and "form" is what is apparent to the senses or the cognitive faculties. Hence the word *form* can refer to anything that is perceived or understood in any mode. Normally it is taken to refer to a set of qualities that appears as some discrete thing or image or concept at any level of awareness. In keeping with Bābā Afḍal's division of awareness into four levels, we can say that there are sensory forms, imaginal forms, sense-intuited forms, and intellective forms.

In respect of the fact that forms designate and differentiate the things, form is the principle of existential multiplicity. In other words, when the things descend from the One—or when the Form-giver gives form to the creatures—they appear as diverse and many because of the multiplicity of their forms, even if all have come from one source. In contrast, matter per se is a single, simple, undifferentiated, imperceptible reality. It has no form, so it has no quality, attribute, description, or designation, except for a certain impalpable presence in conjunction with form. Matter has nothing of its own, and whatever appears to our senses comes from the forms that have descended from the One. Indeed, for Plotinus, matter is an invisible mirror that displays the forms and can never be seen itself, because it is absolute nonexistence.³⁸ Thus matter allows the individual forms that are unified in the First Intellect to be differentiated, deployed, and perceived in the cosmos.

One way to understand matter is to think of it as the "quantity" that was discussed earlier as the opposite of quality, which is form. Quality is the intelligible side of things, and this intelligibility becomes more and more dispersed and scattered in keeping with the growing quantity of the things in which it is reflected. For example, the more we talk about "population statistics," the less we know about "humanity," whose qualities are found most intensely in outstanding individuals, those who dwell in proximity to the realm of pure quality, like prophets, avatars, buddhas, and sages.

Neither quality nor quantity can be discussed in isolation. But the more we stress quantity, the more we are stressing what Plotinus calls "absolute nonexistence." In contrast, the more we focus on quality, the more we are focusing on the First Real, the one Being-cum-Awareness that gives rise to all things.

In itself form is disengaged (*mujarrad*) from matter and present with the First Intellect. Form and matter combine to make things, but unformed matter does not exist in any palpable fashion. What is palpable is form, and what is ultimately real is form, because it has descended from the Form-giver, and because it represents real qualities

that derive from the First Real—qualities that can never be totally divorced from the Real.

Form alone is intelligible, and it is intelligible whether or not it is present in matter. Form can be perceived by intellect, imagination, and the sense faculties, but only intellect can see form without matter. It is able to disengage and detach forms from their embodiment. The whole goal of the philosophical quest can be described as *tajrīd*, or disengaging forms from the material realm. As Hadot writes about Plotinus, “The exercise consists therefore in turning consciousness away from the attention to and exclusive concern with the body in order to return it inward. . . . This coming to consciousness of the ‘self’ is already an ethical movement, it is already a purification that brings the soul back to its pristine purity, to the state of form disengaged from matter.”³⁹

Once form has been fully disengaged from matter, the intellect has actualized its own reality. It draws its vision from the Agent Intellect, which is eternally disengaged. Such an intellect is fully actual, which is to say that it is fully itself. This is the goal of the philosophical quest. At this point, all forms are actual in the knower, their actuality being identical with their intelligibility. The true knower is nothing but the intellect that is actually aware of itself, so the true object of knowledge is also the intellect. As Avicenna writes,

The thing that is intelligible through essence is intellect through essence, for the thing that is intelligible through essence is the form that is disengaged from matter—especially when it is disengaged through its own essence, not through anything else. This thing is also the intellect in act. Hence, this thing is endlessly intelligible in act through its essence and also intellect in act.⁴⁰

In trying to perceive and understand things, we are in fact trying to perceive and understand forms, because matter plays no role other than to put things within the reach of our senses and imagination. In other words, in trying to understand things, we are seeking to grasp their intelligibility, which is defined by their qualities, so we need to seek them out through intelligence, and we will find them truly only in intelligence itself, which by essence is both intellecter and intelligible. When we find the forms as they are, we find them independent of matter. We can conclude that by paying attention to form, which is the side of reality that has come down from the Form-giver, we are engaging in a voluntary Return. Through our own *theōria* and our own ability to see things disengaged from matter, we are going back to the One from which we arose.

In the First Intellect, there is an indefinite multiplicity of forms tied together by the unitary form of Intellect. These are then given external appearance through conjunction with matter by the initiative of the Innovator. In our own intellects, which can ultimately join with the Agent Intellect, we can find an indefinite multiplicity of forms that are unified by intellective consciousness, an awareness that is identical with everything that it knows, which is every form.

If each specific individual form has a unity that is its own identity and ipseity, there are also more general forms through which the intellect perceives forms in relation to other forms—such as species, genus, middle genus, and high genus (dis-

cussed in *The Clarifying Method*). Classification of forms in such terms aids the soul in the process of *tawhīd*, or taking the multiple things back to the One. In two essays, Bābā Afḍal makes it clear that *tawhīd* is strictly analogous to the process of disengaging the forms from their matter (HIP 128–30).

Although matter per se is impalpable and even nonexistent, the word is also employed in a relative sense that is closer to contemporary usage. From this standpoint, a form is found within a second form that plays the role of its matter. A shirt, for example is a form embodied in a specific matter, which is cloth, but cloth is a form relative to another matter, which is thread. Thread is then a form of cotton. One can keep on analyzing each precedent form as a matter until one reaches the Prime Matter, beyond which there is no matter. If we ask questions about Prime Matter, such as what it is and where it is, we find that it is no “thing” in any sense that would allow us to answer these questions. It is in this sense that matter might be called “pure quantity” or “nonexistence.” It has no qualities whatsoever, though it can make its presence felt through an infinite multiplicity of forms. We can only ask questions about qualities, and these become manifest in the forms.

The Ikhwān al-Ṣafā’ explain the relationship between form and matter in the following passage. Note that their purpose is to explain which parts of creation are closer to unity and which are further away. In other words, they are engaging in an exercise of *tawhīd*, or asserting the oneness of reality, or an exercise in *tajrīd*, disengaging the forms from their matter. In discussing “quantity” and “quality” toward the end of the passage, they have in view not exactly the contrast that has been mentioned several times already, but the more limited and specifically Aristotelian sense of the terms, in which they are two of the ten categories. More will be said about the categories shortly.

Know that the diversity of the existent things comes only through form, not matter. Thus we find many things whose substance is one and whose forms are diverse. This is like knives, swords, hatchets, saws, and all the tools, implements, and containers made from iron. The diversity of their names is because of the diversity of their forms, not because of the diversity of their substances, since all are one through iron. So also are door, chair, bench, ship, and everything made from wood, for their names are diverse only because their forms are diverse. As for their substance, which is wood, it is one. . . .

Know that there are four sorts of matter: the matter of artisanry, the matter of nature, the matter of the all, and Prime Matter.

The “matter of artisanry” is every body with which the artisan works and from which he makes his artifact, like wood for carpenters, iron for iron-workers, earth and water for builders, thread for weavers, and flour for bakers. . . . As for the shapes and imprints that he makes within them, these are the form. This is the meaning of matter and form in the artisanries.

“Natural matter” is the four elements. Thus, all the engendered things below the sphere of the moon—I mean the plants, animals, and minerals—are engendered from the elements and transmuted into them at corruption. As for the nature that enacts this, it is one of the potencies of the universal, celestial soul. We have explained how it acts upon matter in another treatise.

“The matter of the all” is unconditioned body,⁴¹ from which comes the entire cosmos. I mean the spheres, the stars, the pillars, and the engendered things altogether, for all these are bodies, and their diversity is in respect of diverse forms.

“Prime Matter” is a simple, intelligible substance not perceived by sensation. This is because it is the form of existence alone, which is the ipseity. When the ipseity receives quantity, it thereby becomes unconditioned body, and this is indicated by the fact that it has three dimensions, which are length, breadth, and depth. When it receives quality, which is shape, like roundness, triangularity, quadrangularity, and other shapes, it thereby becomes the specific body that is indicated, whatever shape it may be. Hence quality is like three, quantity like two, and ipseity like one. Just as three is posterior in existence to two, so quality is posterior in existence to quantity. And just as two is posterior in existence to one, so quantity is posterior in existence to ipseity. Ipseity is prior in existence to quantity, quality, and everything else, like the priority of one over two, three, and all the numbers.⁴²

The word *form* is commonly used in Islamic texts in another way that can be confusing if one is expecting the form/matter dichotomy. In this usage, form is contrasted with “meaning” (*maʿnā*). “Form” is then the outward aspect of something and “meaning” its inner, concealed reality. In other words, “form” indicates what is perceived, whereas “meaning” denotes the thing’s reality as hidden from sensation but accessible to intelligence. For many Sufis, the “meaning” is the thing’s reality as known to God. In this usage, meaning is the pure, disengaged form, while “form” is the meaning perceived as embodied or corporealized. Meaning is the inner reality, form the outer manifestation. Ghazālī employs form in this sense in *The Alchemy of Felicity*, as we will see in the *Four Headings* (HIP 116); Bābā Afḍal also uses it, as in his “Essay on Meanings” (HIP 174). From *maʿnā* is derived the adjective *maʿnawī*, which can be translated as “meaning-related.” This term is roughly equivalent to “intelligible” (*maʿqūl*). Both terms are contrasted with *maḥsūs*, or “sensible,” which denotes anything that can be perceived by the senses.⁴³

Substance and Accident

Substance and accident are the standard translations of *jawhar* and *ʿaraḍ*. The first is the arabized form of a Persian word (*gawhar*) meaning jewel, precious stone, pearl. In Persian poetry *gawhar* is commonly taken to mean “pearl” in contrast to shell, and Bābā Afḍal and others use this Persian word instead of its arabized form in philosophical contexts. In the typical poetical conceit, the pearl is what we are searching for, and the shell prevents us from finding it.

The original meaning of *jawhar* fits in nicely with the Koranic sense of the term *ʿaraḍ*, which was adopted to denote the “accident” that is the correlative of substance. The root of the word means to become wide and broad, to appear, to present, to display, to happen, to occur. The Koran uses the word six times, meaning by it the passing goals and impermanent acquisitions that keep people entranced and dis-

tracted in the world. Koran translators render it into English with such expressions as goods, chance goods, frail goods, chance profits, and lure.

Thus in Arabic, before we even consider the philosophical meaning of the terms, contrasting *jawhar* and *'araḍ* suggests a valuable jewel that is hidden from sight by ephemeral appearances and occurrences. And this indeed is the basic way in which the terms “substance and accident” were interpreted. For the philosophical tradition, a “substance” is the underlying reality of a thing, or its substratum, while “accidents” are the ever-changing attributes, qualities, events, occurrences, and states that cannot be ascribed to the substance per se. The accidents are “attributes” (*ṣifa*), and the substance is that to which the attributes are attributed, the “described object” (*mawṣūf*).

According to the Aristotelian classification, substance is a single thing, and the accidents that occur to substance can be divided into nine varieties. These ten are the famous “categories,” and they were discussed constantly in the Arabic philosophical texts. A typical list translates the ten from Greek into English as “substance, quantity, quality, relation, place, time, position, possession, action, and affection.” The Ikhwān al-Ṣafā’ dedicate one of their treatises, “On the Categories,” to explaining why the rational investigation of things leads to this sort of classification. As is usual for them, they find the numbers significant. After all, why did Aristotle enumerate nine accidents and not five, or eight, or ten? Certainly the number is somewhat arbitrary, as historians and philosophers have often pointed out. For the Ikhwān, it is because Aristotle wanted to show that the things of this world are founded upon one root and nine branches, just as number is founded upon the numeral one and the other digits.

The Ikhwān and many other Muslim mathematicians maintain that “one” is not a number, but the principle of number. It is utter simplicity, and the numerals represent the unfolding of its potencies. Naturally there are levels and degrees of unfolding, and the most basic degrees are represented by the digits, the tens, the hundreds, and the thousands. We will see Bābā Afḍal employing numerical reasoning based on this understanding in *The Book of the Everlasting*.

As the conclusion of this chapter, I quote the beginning of the Ikhwān’s treatise on the categories. Some of Bābā Afḍal’s own explanations of substance and the nine accidents can be found in his treatise on logic (HIP 298–306):

When the first sages looked upon the manifest things with the sight of their eyes and they witnessed the majestic things with their senses, they reflected upon all this with their intellects in their own nonmanifest meanings. They investigated the hidden affairs with their deliberations, and they perceived the realities of the existent things with their discernment. It became clear to them that the things are all dissimilar entities, ordered in existence just like the order of the numerals. They are connected and interlinked with each other in [that they derive] their subsistence and permanence from the First Cause, who is the Author—glory be to Him!—just as the numerals are connected and interlinked with each other [because they derive their subsistence] from the one that is before two, as we explained in the treatise “On number.”

When these things became clarified for the sages, as we mentioned, they labeled and named the prior things in existence “matter,” and they named the

posterior things in existence “form.” When it became clear to them that form is of two species—constitutive and completing (as we explained in the treatise “On generation and corruption”)—they named the constitutive forms “substances” and they named the completing forms “accidents.” When it became clear to them that the property of the constitutive forms is the property of “one,” they said that all the substances are one genus. In the same way, when it became clarified that the properties of the completing forms are diverse, they said that the accidents are diverse in genera and that they are nine genera, like the nine digits. Thus in the existent things, substance is like “one” in number, while the nine accidents are like the nine digits that are after one. Thus all the existents become ten genera, coinciding with the ten digits, and the accidents come to be ordered beneath each other like the order of the numerals and like the numerals’ connection in existence to the one that is before two.

As for the ten words that comprise the meanings of all the existents, they are *substance*, *how much* [quantity], *how* [quality], *attributed* [relation], *where* [place], *when* [time], *set-up* [position], *ownership* [possession], *it acts* [action], and *it is acted upon* [affection].

Know also, my brother, that each of these words is a name for a genus of existent things, that each genus is divided into a number of species, each species into other species, and so on constantly until the division finally reaches the individuals, as we will explain later.

Know, my brother, that when the sages looked on the existent things, first they saw the individuals, like Zayd, ‘Amr, and Khālid. Then they reflected upon all those past and bygone people whom they did not see. They came to know that the human form includes all of them, even if they are diverse in their attributes, such as tallness, shortness, blackness, whiteness, brownness, blue-eyedness, blue-black-eyedness, snub-nosedness, possessions, and similar attributes through which people are distinguished from each other. Then they said, “All of them are human,” so they named “human” a species, because it is a group of individuals who agree in forms and are diverse in accidents.

Then they saw other individuals, like Zayd’s donkey, ‘Amr’s she-ass, Khālid’s young donkey, and they knew that the form of donkey comprises all of them, so they also named it a species. Then they saw Zayd’s horse, ‘Amr’s stallion, and Khālid’s colt, and they knew that the form of horseness comprises all of them, so they also named it a species. So also should one gauge the other individuals among the animals—the cattle, the predators, the flyers, the water animals, the land creepers. Each group of them comprises one form that they named a “species.”

Then they reflected on all of them, and they knew that life’ [*ḥayāt*] comprises them all, so they named them “animals” [*ḥayawān*]. They labeled this the “genus” that comprises the groups of diverse forms, while they are its species.

Then they gazed upon other individuals, like plants, trees, and their species. They came to know that growth and nourishment comprise all of them, so they named them “growing.” They said that it is a genus, and that animals and plants are two of its species.

Then they saw other things like stones, water, fire, air, and stars, and they knew that all are bodies, so they named this a “genus.” They knew that body

qua body does not move, does not use intellect, does not sense, and does not know anything.

Then they found the body moving and being acted upon, while within it shapes, forms, imprints, and impressions come to be worked, so they knew that along with the body there is another substance that enacts the acts and traces in these bodies. They named it "spiritual." Then they brought all these together in one word and said "substance."

Hence "substance" became a genus, and the spiritual and bodily are two of its species. "Body" is a genus for the growing and inanimate beneath it, and they are two of its species. "Growing" is a genus for the animals and plants beneath it, and they are two of its species. "Animal" is a genus for what is beneath it—the people, the flyers that inhabit air, the swimmers that inhabit water, the walkers that inhabit land, and the crawlers that inhabit dirt. All these are species of "animal," and it is their genus. . . .

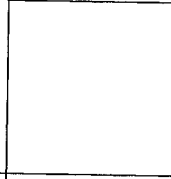
So, this is a brief word on the meanings of one of the ten categories, which is substance, and its divisions, species, and individuals. It has no strict definition [*ḥadd*], but its descriptive definition [*rasm*] is "that which endures by itself and is receptive to opposing accidents."

When they saw among the substances that there are what is called three cubits, four rotls, five measures, and the like, they combined all this and named it the genus of "how much," and all these are accidents in substance.

When they saw other things that are not substance and not called "how much," like whiteness, blackness, sweetness, bitterness, fragrance, and the like, they brought all of it together and named it the genus of "how." These accidents are attributes of substance, and it is described by them. They endure by it, and all of them are forms that complete it, as we explained in the treatise "On generation and corruption."⁴⁴

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**The
Writings of
Bābā Afdal**



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4

Background Texts

Aristotle

Aristotle as known to the Muslims would not be especially familiar to those acquainted with his depiction by most modern scholarship. He was recognized as the great master of rational thinking and the father of logic, but he also had a striking spiritual dimension to him. He was looked upon as a man of surpassing virtue, and several ethical treatises were attributed to him, some of them based on his own works, others derived more from the Greek commentatorial tradition. His *De anima*, again filtered through the commentatorial tradition, played a major role in the Muslim understanding of the soul's everlastingness. By far the strangest aspect of the Muslim depiction is that passages from the *Enneads* of Plotinus were translated into Arabic and ascribed to Aristotle under the name *Theology*. Although most Western scholarship has taken Plotinus and Aristotle to represent two sharply divergent ways of looking at things, the Islamic tradition conflated the two from early on. Among other things, this is a sign of the fact that for Muslim intellectuals, the sharp contrasts and conflicts that have been seen in the modern West between religion and science, mysticism and logic, and imagination and rational thinking, did not exist. Rather, by and large, to the extent that such contrasts were identified as different modes of thinking, they were recognized as complementary rather than contradictory.

Bābā Afḍal's Aristotle is a logician, but he is also a mentor for seekers of self-knowledge, a guide to virtuous activity, and a beacon on the path to the full actualization of intelligence. The three books and one excerpt that Bābā Afḍal translated into Persian from the Arabic Aristotelian corpus all present him as Bābā Afḍal's alter ego. The works are written in the same liquid prose, and the emphasis is on the same essential points: knowing one's self, fully actualizing the intellectual potency

that is present in the soul, and achieving the total range of good character traits and virtues. The first passage (work number 11) is a short, independent essay that is presented as a brief selection from a longer treatise in which Alexander poses 115 questions to his teacher. The next four passages are from *The Treatise of the Apple* (number 9) and the final two from *De Anima* (number 8).

Alexander's Questions to Aristotle

I said: Why are we the objective?

He said: Because we came last.

I said: If we came at the first of the work, why did we come again last?

He said: The first in thought is the last in practice.

I said: From whence is our mine?

He said: From whence we came.

I said: From whence did we come?

He said: From whence was the first of the work.

I said: How do we know from whence we came?

He said: When we learn knowledge, we go further forward.

I said: Is motion higher, or rest?

He said: In the spirits rest, in the bodies motion.

I said: Which is the resting spirit?

He said: That which is complete.

I said: What is thought?

He said: The anima's making a form. (*Muṣannaḡāt* 665)

From *The Treatise of the Apple*: On Philosophy

Kriton said: I much want to hear your speech and your making knowledge appear, O worthy teacher! But the physician ministering to you commanded me not to bring you to speak, for speaking will make you warm, and if warmth dominates over you, the cure will take long and give benefit later.

Aristotle said: I have put aside the opinion of the physician. Enough medicine for me is the scent of an apple. It will preserve my spirit long enough for me to give what is due to you in speech. My best hope from medicine is the strength to speak. Now come, and make me aware whether or not you have certainty about the virtue of wisdom.

They answered: We honored wisdom only because we knew its virtue over other things.

Aristotle said: Is its virtue in this world or in the afterworld?

They said: We do not deny wisdom's virtue. Inescapably, this brings us to affirm its virtue and benefit in the afterworld.

Aristotle said: Why then are you not happy with death? Are you not happy with a waystation from which the virtue and benefit of wisdom will reach you? Are you happy and content with a waystation from which loss will reach you? Surely for you

it would be fitting to look upon the death that is not admired by the common people as nothing but becoming separate from the mold.

They said: We consider it nothing else.

He said: Are you at all joyful with the knowledge that you have found, or not? Do you grieve at all from the knowledge that has passed you by, or not?

They said: Indeed yes.

He said: Through which do you collect knowledge—body or spirit? Through the body, which is the stuff of blindness, deafness, weakness, and ungainfulness as long as the spirit remains separate from it? Or through the spirit, through which humans are forever hearing, seeing, knowing, and talking as long as it is with them?

They said: Indeed, knowledge is found through the spirit's livingness and its lightness, and people are held back from it through the body's heaviness and roughness.

Aristotle said: Since it is then apparent that knowledge is the spirit's fruit, while the body's heaviness holds back from it; and that you become joyful through knowledge, while you grieve at being held back from it, inescapably you should choose the spirit's becoming separate from the body over the spirit's being with the body. It is better for the spirit to be separate from the body than to be with it. After all, do you not see that the body's wishes and enjoyments from wife, children, possessions, extra edibles and wearables, steeds and four-footed things, are harmful for seeking wisdom? Is it not that, when you put these enjoyments aside, you have put them aside for the sake of preserving intelligence and inclining to knowledge?

They said: Indeed it is so.

Then he said: Since you confess that the body's enjoyments through which it becomes strong destroy intelligence, inescapably the body, which accepts these enjoyments that harm intelligence, is even more harmful to intelligence.

They said: Inescapably, our view made us admit what is affirmed by your words, so we also had arrived at these words. But how do we act and what do we do so that we will be as brave as you toward death and so that we may hold back from life as you hold back?

Aristotle said: The seeker of knowledge may reach the objective most suitably by the speaker's striving not to say anything other than the truth and the listener's striving not to hear anything except the correct. Now, I will strive to speak the truth. You also strive to hear and accept the truth and the correct. Do you not know that the meaning of *philosophy* is "to love wisdom"? Is not the root and stuff of the spirit wisdom? Otherwise, the spirit would not be content with it. Otherwise, it would not rest in it. (*Muṣannafāt* 114–16)

From *The Treatise of the Apple*: On Wisdom

Diogenes said: Among the sages, we have found the most abstinent to be he whose view is most sharp-seeing. Now, tell us if truthfulness and falsehood rise up from clarity of view or not.

Aristotle said: The caprices are of different kinds, and the intelligences of various sorts.¹ Over and against each caprice is an intelligence that is best suited for animosity

toward that caprice. Appetite is not identical with ignorance in specificity; rather, each is identical with itself, even though they are the same in harming the philosopher and preventing him from reward. Nor is the potency and disposition that commands avoidance identical with or incompatible with the potency and disposition that nullifies ignorance and brings knowledge. Rather, between them are compatibility and incompatibility, like the compatibility and incompatibility of running water and frozen water—one is thin and subtle, one is rough and dense. In the same way, the opposite of subtle knowledge is subtle ignorance, and the opposite of great godwariness is great appetite.² Whenever the disposition of someone's abstinence is weak and the disposition of knowledge strong, his vision in seeing will be correct and his work in abstinence weak. When someone is the contrary of this, his work and vision will be the contrary.

Diogenes said: How can this speech be right? You said earlier that there is nothing but knowledge, ignorance, and the recompense of the two, and now you have established knowledge and unknowing, abstinence and appetite, and other things.

Aristotle said: Do you not see that running water and frozen water are near to each other? So also appetite is near to unknowing, and so also are the other branches. Since they come near to each other in practice, they are given one name.

Diogenes said: How may I know that unknowing is like appetite just as running water is like frozen water?

Aristotle said: Do you not see that both harm intelligence, just as running water and frozen water both cut off heat?

Diogenes said: This speech has passed. Now tell me what is the most suitable knowledge for which I should reach.

Aristotle said: Since searching for wisdom is the best work of this world, and its reward is the best reward of the afterworld, the most suitable knowledge for you to reach is wisdom.

Diogenes said: Is there a knowledge other than wisdom, or not?

Aristotle said: For the common creatures, the few portions of knowledge, clemency, rightness, generosity, faithfulness, and the other beautiful traits are wasted, for these have as much to do with wisdom as the form of an animal has to do with the similitude and tracing on a wall.

Diogenes said: Why have you called these traits "wasted" in the common people?

Aristotle said: Because the common people are unconscious of them.

Diogenes said: How so?

Aristotle said: Because the knower among the common people puts his knowledge to work so as to increase his weightiness; their clement man puts up with those who are suited for castigation; their right-seeker brings truthfulness to work where he admires it himself, even if it be an ugly deed; their bestower bestows upon the unworthy; their faithfulness lies in ruinous promises; and their listener listens to the futile. Therefore, these beautiful traits are wasted in them. These are not like the beautiful traits of the folk of knowledge, except inasmuch as a picture on the wall is like a living animal.

Diogenes said: What relation does this likeness have with the beautiful traits of the elect and the common people?

Aristotle said: Have you not come to know that knowledge is livingness and ignorance death?

Diogenes said: Indeed I have.

Aristotle said: The knowledge of the knower keeps his deeds alive, and the ignorance of the unknower makes his deeds die.

Diogenes said: Do these beautiful-doings of theirs surpass their ugly-doing in any way?

Aristotle said: Yes they do.

Diogenes said: How so?

Aristotle said: The good-doer among the common people resolves upon goodness and goes the way of error, but the bad-doer resolves upon badness and does it. Both are the same in the error, but one assuredly surpasses the other.

Diogenes said: Now I know in what respect their beautiful traits are wasted. Now show the virtue of wisdom, without which the deeds are gainless.

Aristotle said: Whenever someone sees beauty and sees ugliness, then leaves aside ugliness and comes to goodness, he has done what is compatible with wisdom. Whenever someone resolves on beauty and errs, or resolves upon badness and brings it forth, he has passed it by.

Diogenes said: This talk is all clear. Now show me to whom this work—that is, wisdom—first became clear.

Aristotle said: People's intelligences are far from being able to reach such a great work without being taught, just as their eyes are far from seeing without the brightness of a lamp.

Diogenes said: From whom did the sages learn this?

Aristotle said: For ages, the summoners and the messengers in the land's horizons had continually called the people to this work.³ The first to whom this knowledge arrived by revelation [*wahy*] in our land was Hermes.

Diogenes said: From whence did it come to Hermes?

Aristotle said: His spirit was taken to heaven, and it reached him from the Higher Plenum, who took it from the remembrance of the Wise. Through him it came to earth, and the knowers took it from him.

Diogenes said: How can I know that Hermes took this knowledge from the folk of heaven?

Aristotle said: If this knowledge is true [*haqq*], its arrival can be from above.

Diogenes said: Why?

Aristotle said: Do you not see that the above of each thing is better than its below? For the above and top of water is more limpid than the bottom, the high places of the earth are more pleasant and more unblemished than the low places, the best of the human bodily members is the head, and the purest part of the tree is the fruit. And so it is with everything. Hence the thing most worthy to have arrived from above is wisdom. The proof of this is that wisdom's substance and beauty prevail over everything and come higher. (*Muṣannaḥāt* 140–43)

From *The Treatise of the Apple*: On Right Activity

Aristotle said: Whatever increases the clarity of your seeing in your works increases your intelligence, and whatever conceals works from you decreases your intelligence.

Lysias said: What is it that gives clarity? What is it that brings concealment?

Aristotle said: Right-talking and everything like it are among the clarities, while doubt and everything like it are among the concealments.

Lysias said: I know the clarity of right-talking, and so also I know the concealment of doubt. But what is it that is "like" them?

Aristotle said: Right-working, which is justice, is like right-talking, while non-rightness, which is injustice, is like falsehood and doubt.

Lysias said: How are justice and truthfulness alike?

Aristotle said: Both are to put the work in its own placement.

Lysias said: In what are injustice and falsehood alike?

Aristotle said: Both are to throw the work outside its own placement.

Lysias said: Injustice and justice are done by someone who is an overseer of work and a judge, but I am asking you about all works.

Aristotle said: All humans are judges. Among them, some are specific judges, and some general judges. When someone's seeing in works slips, when his tongue speaks falsehood, and when he seizes hold of what does not belong to him, he is an injustice-worker and a falsifier. When someone's seeing reaches the things, when his tongue speaks the right, and when he is content with what belongs to him, he is a right-worker, a justice-doer, and a right-speaker. No work of humans is outside this measure that I have said. (*Muṣannaḡāt* 127–28)

From *The Treatise of the Apple: On Soul*

Then Simmias said: O forerunner of wisdom! Make us aware what is the first thing that is of use for seekers of wisdom.

Aristotle said: Since the spirit is wisdom's mine, the first knowledge that is of use to them is knowledge of the soul.

Simmias said: How should they seek it?

Aristotle said: Through the strength of self.

Simmias said: What is the strength of self?

Aristotle said: The strength through which you ask of self from me.

Simmias said: How can it be that something asks of self from another?

Aristotle said: Just as the ill person asks of self from the physician, and just as the blind man asks of his own color from those sitting around him.

Simmias said: How is the self blind to the self, when the root of seeing is self?

Aristotle said: When wisdom is hidden and concealed from the self, which is the soul, it is blind both to self and to others, just as the eye without a lamp's radiance is blind both to self and to others. (*Muṣannaḡāt* 122)

From *De anima: On Intellect*

He said: How does intellect know the form of the things? Does it know them through the matters of those forms, or does it know them such that the forms are far from the matters?

He answered: Intellect knows the forms of the things—that is, the shapes, flavors, and aromas—taken far and separate from the matter and dwelling place, because intellect is separate from matter. Hence its finding things is also intellective. It is as if intellect, in knowing the forms and the things' adornment and states, brings them out of their matter and dwelling place. It chooses them out from the midst of the accidents and the matters. . . .

Then he said: The talking soul is potentially everything, which is to say that the form of all things is within it. The argument for this is that the things are either intellective or sensory, and the soul has an intellective potency and a sensory potency. Without doubt, both the intellective forms and the sensory forms are in sense-intuition. Hence the soul knows both the intellective things and the sensory things. However, many of the forms in the soul may be potential, and many actual, because, before knowing, they are potential within it, and after knowing, they are actual. (*Muṣannafāt* 451–52)

From *De anima*: On the Unity of the Knower and the Known

The intellect knows the essence of self because this essence is intelligible. This is because, when it knows self, it is the knower and intellecter as well as the intelligible. For it has known self, and it has also known the knowing of self.

We say, “When the intellect knows something, it is like the thing that it knows,” but this does not make it imperative for us to say that when the intellect knows the sensibles, it is like the sensibles. This is because the sensible things are not sheer intellecter and intelligible, for intellect makes them intellective, and it makes them intelligible through the intermediary of sense-perception. In this respect, they are not like the intellect.

As for things that are sheerly intellective and without matter, there is no difference between them and the intellect. When it knows of them, it is like them.

Let us return and say: When intellect knows things without matter, it is like the intelligible, but when it knows material things, it is not like them. Hence it is intellecter, intellect, and intelligible together, in one sort and another sort—in the manner that we have described. (*Muṣannafāt* 446–47)

Hermes

A good deal of historical research has been put into tracking down the source of the many Hermetic writings found in Arabic. Suffice it to say here that Muslims identified Hermes with the prophet Idris, mentioned in the Koran, and this allowed them to claim that his wisdom was rooted in divine revelation. The passage just cited from *The Treatise of the Apple*, in which Hermes is looked upon as having received wisdom directly from God, is typical. Notice that it says, “His spirit was taken to heaven, and [wisdom] reached him from the Higher Plenum, who took it from the remembrance of the Wise.” This can be taken as a gloss on one of the two Koranic passages in which

Idris is mentioned: "Mention in the Book Idris; he was a truthful man, a prophet. We raised him up to a high place" (19:56). The "high place" can be the home of the angels, whom the Koran sometimes calls the "Higher Plenum." As for the "Wise," that is a Koranic name of God, and God's "remembrance" (*dhikr*) also means his "reminding" people of their covenant with him. The Koran uses the term in this sense as a synonym for "revelation" (*wahy*).

If it was Idris who first received wisdom from God, then the writings of Idris have a special revelatory quality about them, especially for seekers of wisdom. Hence the Hermetic text that Bābā Afḍal translated into Persian would have been read as divine instructions for the aspiring philosopher, though of course it would not be given the same reverence that is given to the Koran or the Hadith. Notice that throughout, Hermes addresses the "soul" or self, and the message is always that anyone aspiring to wisdom must come to know self and act in accordance with its dictates. This is the theory and praxis of the philosopher.

The first passage that follows describes the cosmos in terms of the descending arc of the Origin. It begins with the universe that we perceive through our senses, and then traces back the levels of descent by describing the qualities and characteristics that each manifests. Bābā Afḍal's own depiction of the Origin follows the same outline. The second passage illustrates how the seeker should meditate on the qualities observed in nature and apply them to the task of knowing self. The third reflects upon the notion of *tawḥīd* in terms of knowing self.

From *The Fountain of Life*: On the Levels of Existence

O soul, this orb of the earth is the heaviest of things, for it has sat below everything like dregs, and all things have come to the top of it. This is why this orb is in the extremity of density, weightiness, mixedness, shriveling, darkness, and deadness. After this orb is the orb of water, which is subtler, more limpid, more radiant, and nearer to life. After the orb of water is the orb of air, which is subtler than water. After the orb of air is the orb of fire, which is the subtlest of the four elements, more eminent and more radiant than all.

After it is the orb of the spheres, which is the limpidness and cream of everything below it and which is specified for virtue over the other orbs because of its subtlety, brightness, beautiful make-up, order, nearness to life, and neighborhood with the living, eminent, intelligent things. The sphere's shape is the best, the most complete, and the most correct of shapes, and that is its round shape. Everything below it also takes its shape, until the globe of the earth is reached.

After the orb of the sphere, which is the utmost end of the orbs, is the substance of the soul. It constantly gives motion to the spheres through organization and limpid, eminent lights. It is subtler than all the things that it encompasses, and it has reached all of them. This is because whatever the soul encompasses is body and corporeality, but the soul is not body; and nothing below the soul has life save through the soul. The soul is the owner of thought, want, and discernment. Whenever the soul joins with something, it shows its own meanings in the thing to the measure of

the potency of the thing's reception, so that the thing may come to life. Whenever the soul does not join with something, the thing has no reflection, desire, motion, or discernment. Whatever is without these is surely dead.

What encompasses the substance of the soul from beyond is intelligence. In truth it is more eminent, subtler, and higher in level than all beings. It is the first level below the horizon of the Ipseity and the Beginninglessness—blessed and high indeed is It! It takes in from It without intermediary, and it makes eminence, light, and life reach what is below it in level. It is the greatest translator and the nearest veil-keeper.

Think, O soul, upon this order! Be certain that this is the guise of the existents!
(*Muṣannaḥāt* 334–35)

From *The Fountain of Life: On Self-knowledge*

O soul, intellect is nothing but to find and see self. Any soul that has not found self is dead, and finding and seeing self is endless life. Seeking delight and enjoyment is endless death. So, do not choose disseveration from endless life over disseveration from endless death.

O soul, why is it that each natural substance without intelligence moves by nature toward the element and shelter specific to it? Is it not that the eminence and exaltation of each substance lies in returning to its substance and shelter? O soul, do you not see that whenever something of earth, like stones and other things, comes apart, it returns to the substance of earth, which is its root and shelter? If you take up a portion of earth and throw it up from the lowness of earth and let it be, at once it returns hurriedly to its own shelter and root. In the same way, we see that all the waters incline toward the larger substance so long as nothing holds them back, like the streams running toward the sea. So also is other than water, like fire, which keeps on going upward toward its own element.

So, things that have no intellect and discernment and whose motion is the motion of the unconscious have an inclination toward their own eminence, exaltation, and strength, and they tend away from seeking to be far from their own homeland. What then is it with you, O soul, given the intellect and discernment that you have, that you flee from the homeland and shelter of your own eminence and exaltation? You keep on loving farness from your own root and springhead, and you have freely chosen to linger in the house of alienation and to suffer abasement and lowness. For what? Is this your choice by nature, or by intellect? If it is by nature, then become like nature in acts and in returning to its own element. If you have chosen by intellect, how can intellect choose alienation over its own shelter and homeland, the dwelling place of meanness over the dwelling place of eminence, suffering lowness and abasement over comfort and exaltation?

Whoever remains in this level does not belong to the level of nature or natural things, nor to the rank of intellect and intelligibles. Whatever is not of these two levels is nothing and is not numbered among the existents. So look at these meanings in self, O soul, and return through intellect toward the highest eminence and the remotest dwelling place. (*Muṣannaḥāt* 348–49)

From The Fountain of Life: On Tawḥīd

O soul, whoever sows the tree of perseverance will pick the fruit of victory and become dominant. The most fortunate of the fortunate is he who aims for something and finds it.

Whoever plants the tree of restlessness and agitation will pick the fruit of deprivation. The most unfortunate of the unfortunate is he who aims for something and is held back from it.

O soul, in whatever you seek, be the comrade of perseverance, for perseverance is the most eminent of character traits and natures, because through it all good is collected and felicity is found. Let me show you several meanings:

Know that the souls are seeking, and they keep on seeking the good. "Perseverance" is that thing through whose assistance the seeker seeks. "Success-giving" is that meaning through whose help the good joins with the seeker. When the act of the searcher reaches the act of the search's object, joining and arrival become imperative, and the search's object is ascribed to the searcher.

I have shown you this meaning so that you may know that everything can be found through patience, and only through it can the good be found.

O soul, the bitterness of perseverance yields the sweetness of comfort, and the sweetness of agitation and hurry yield the bitterness of being tired.

O soul, collect perseverance and fixity in worshiping one God—majestic is His majesty and magnificent His affair! Then you will find that life's pleasantness and your comfort will be great. Avoid being vexed and annoyed, lest you remain outside the limit of oneness and your gods be many. When someone has many gods, it is imperative for him to worship many. His suffering and tiredness will become harsh and his griefs abundant. His soul will be scattered and he will perish in scatteredness.

O soul, weariness and annoyance are the comrade of beastly souls, and perseverance and fixity are the comrade of complete, human souls. Do not let weariness and annoyance take you beyond the bounds of perseverance. Then your gods will be many and you will become divided and ruined in worshiping them. Your light will die down, and your greatness, eminence, and rank will go. This is your death. Avoid it and keep aside from it!

O soul, you must become cognizant of the knowledge of your essence and the meanings and forms within it. Do not suppose that anything whose knowing is indispensable to you is outside your essence. Rather, all is with you and in you.

Do not become perplexed in seeking what is with you. There are many who have what they seek in self, but they have forgotten. They seek it outside of self and become perplexed. Then they remember that it is within them and not outside them.

So, know for certain that the known things whose being is everlasting and endless are assuredly not outside of you. What is outside of you is the thing that became separate from your turbidity and ponderousness in the first aeon, and that is the substance that accepts accidents and is the same as and flows with generation and corruption. Other than that, nothing is outside of you.

Seek all the endless known things in self. Do not go outside of self to your own turbidity and ponderousness, seeking the knowledge of what is in it, or else you will fall into the ocean of scatteredness. The states and the accidents will play with you,

like the ocean that plays with ships when it falls to moving and boiling. Then, through all this suffering and scatteredness, you will not collect any good from [the ocean], and no knowledge of it will stay with you.

So, become firm in the reality of this talk, and do not forget those things that are with you. Do not search for them elsewhere, for all the things that the soul must know are in the soul, and there is no otherness between them and the soul. This otherness and separation is in sense-perception, which belongs to the body and is the tool. (*Muṣannafāt* 373–75)

Ghazālī

Ghazālī is the author of about eighty books in several fields of knowledge, including philosophy, theology, jurisprudence, and Sufism. His Arabic *Iḥyā’ ‘ulūm al-dīn* (“Giving Life to the Sciences of the Religion”) is a detailed exposition, in forty sections, of the inner dimensions of Islamic praxis. Modern scholars have liked to credit it with making Sufism respectable in the community at large, though this is an enormous oversimplification. His *Kīmīyā-yi sa’ādat* or “Alchemy of Felicity” is a classic of Persian prose that offers a shortened version of the *Iḥyā’*’s arguments. Like Bābā Afḍal, Ghazālī takes great care to write straightforward Persian, appropriate for those not trained in the Islamic sciences. This may help explain why the *Alchemy*, unlike the *Iḥyā’*, has a long introduction, which takes up about ten percent of the text and is especially direct in asking readers to understand the relevance of the religious teachings for their lives. Parallel discussions are not found in the *Iḥyā’* until section 21, “On the explanation of the wonders of the heart.”⁴ It is this long introduction that Bābā Afḍal abridges in *Four Headings*. As for the main body of the *Alchemy*, it provides a detailed explanation of the four “pillars” of being a Muslim that are mentioned in the second paragraph. It is these that are discussed in the four volumes of the *Iḥyā’*, each in ten sections. Note that the “four headings” Ghazālī mentions are a summation of Islamic theory, while the “four pillars” explain the details of Islamic practice with attention to the spiritual life that must animate it for it to have authenticity and meaning.⁵

The Four Headings of *The Alchemy of Felicity*

Know that the book of humanness is completed in four headings. First Heading: That people know the reality of self. Second Heading: That they know the Real—high indeed is He! Third Heading: That they know the reality of this world. Fourth Heading: That they know the reality of the afterworld. In reality, these four knowledges are the headings of being a Muslim.

As for the pillars of being a Muslim, these also are four. Two pertain to the manifest and two to the nonmanifest. As for the two that pertain to the manifest, the first pillar is performing the commands of the Real, and this is called “worship.” The second pillar is guarding self in the movements and stillnesses of life, and this is called “interactions.”⁶ As for the two that pertain to the nonmanifest, one is keep-

ing the heart pure from unadmirable character traits, such as anger, miserliness, envy, arrogance, and conceit; these are called “perishment-bringers.” The second pillar is adorning the heart with admirable character traits, such as patience, gratitude, love, hope, and trust; these are called “salvation-bringers.”

In these four headings we will explain the four roots so as to be a help and aid for the searchers on the path of the afterworld.

The First Heading

Know that the key to true knowledge of God is true knowledge of the soul. This is why the Commander of the Faithful [‘Alī] said, “He who knows his soul knows his Lord.” God says, *We shall show them Our signs in the horizons and in their souls until it becomes clear to them that He is the Real* [41:53]. In short, nothing is closer to you than you. If you do not know self, how will you know others?

You indeed say, “I know myself,” but you are mistaken. This sort of knowledge is not fitting to be the key to knowledge of the Real, for the cattle know as much of self as you know of self. You know nothing more than the manifest head, face, hands, feet, flesh, and skin. And of your nonmanifest, you know this much: When you are hungry, you eat bread; when you are angry, you fall on others; when your appetite becomes strong, you make your objective the sexual act. All the cattle are equal to you in this meaning.

Hence you must search for your reality: What thing are you? Where have you come from? Where will you be going? For what work have you come to this waystation? Why have you been created? What is your felicity, and in what does it lie?

Among the few attributes that are in your manifest, some are the attributes of cattle, some the attributes of beasts, some the attributes of devils, and some the attributes of angels. To which of these do you belong? Which of them is your reality and substance such that the others are strangers and borrowed? If you do not know all of this, you cannot search for your own felicity, for each of these has a different nourishment and a different felicity.

The nourishment and felicity of cattle is eating, sleeping, and having sexual intercourse. If you are a cow, exert efforts to keep aright the work of the stomach and pudendum. The nourishment and felicity of rapacious animals is tearing, killing, and exercising anger; the nourishment and felicity of devils is stirring up evil, deceiving, and acting deviously. If you are one of them, keep yourself occupied with their work, so that you may reach your comfort and good fortune. The nourishment and felicity of angels is witnessing the divine beauty. If you are an angel in substance, exert efforts in your own root so that you may know the Divine Presence. Make yourself familiar with witnessing that beauty and free yourself from appetite and wrath. Search to know why the attributes of beasts and predators were created in you. Were they created so that they would make you a prisoner, take you in their own service, and put you under subjection and derision? Or, so that you would take them in subjection, making one a mount and the other a weapon? Then, for a while you can put them to work in this waystation so as to hunt the bird of your own felicity with their assistance. Once you catch it, you can put them under foot and turn toward

the residing place and resting place of your own felicity. This is the settling place that the elect have called the “Divine Presence” and the common people call “paradise.”

You should know all these meanings so that you may become aware of something of self. Whoever does not know these will remain veiled from the reality of religion.

Chapter {1}

If you want to know self, know that you have been created from two things: One the manifest mold, which is called the “body” and which can be seen with the manifest eye; the other the nonmanifest meaning, which is called the “soul,” is called the “heart,” and is called the “anima.” This can be known with the nonmanifest insight, but it cannot be seen with the manifest eye.

Your reality is this nonmanifest meaning, and all the rest are your subordinates, army, and soldiers. We call it by the name “heart.” When there is talk of the heart, we mean the reality that is called now “spirit,” now “soul”—not the piece of flesh that has been put in the breast. All the cattle and animals, dead and alive, have the latter, and it can be seen with the manifest eye. Whatever can be seen with this eye is of this world, which is called “the world of the witnessed.” But the heart’s reality is not of this world. It has come into the world as a stranger, while the manifest piece of flesh is its tool and mount. All the body’s members are its army, and it is the body’s king. The [divine] prescription and address is for it, and felicity and wretchedness belong to it. True knowledge of its reality and true knowledge of its attributes is the key to true knowledge of God.

So strive to know it, for it is a highly honored substance. It is of the genus of the angels’ substance. Its root mine and shelter is the Divine Presence. It came from there, and it will return there. It has come here for trading and farming.

Chapter {2}

Know that true knowledge of the reality of the heart will not be obtained before you recognize its being, before you recognize its reality, and before you recognize its army.

The explication of its being is manifest. Children of Adam have no doubt concerning their own being. But their being is not the mold that is shown as manifest, for the dead person has this same mold in place, but there is no anima. By this “heart” we mean the reality of the spirit. When this spirit is not there, the body is a corpse.

{Chapter 3}

As for the reality of the heart—what is it and what is its specific attribute? Only the self can reach this, when the preconditions of knowing it are obtained and when, because of limpidness and clarity, [the self] no longer pays attention to the enjoyments and states of this world.⁷ For the heart is from the World of Command, not the World of Creation.⁸ When something has no quantity, it does not accept division, which is to say that it has no portions and parts. Since it has no measure, it is not a body. Nor is it an accident, for accidents stand through bodies and substances,

but the heart does not stand through the body, nor does it live and move through it. The reality of knowing it will become complete after complete struggle in knowing the heart's army, soldiers, and assistants.

Chapter {4}

Know that the body is the heart's empire, and within this empire there are diverse armies. The heart was created for the afterworld, and its work is searching for felicity. Its felicity lies in recognizing the Real, and recognizing the Real—high indeed is He!—rises up from recognizing His artisanry. Knowing His artisanry in the manifest world comes to the heart by way of the senses. The senses endure through the mold. Hence, true knowledge and recognition is the heart's prey. The senses are its snare and the mold is its mount and the carrier of its snare.⁹ It is in this respect that the heart requires the mold.

The heart's mold is compounded of water, earth, fire, and wind. This is why it is weak and in danger of perishing from within because of hunger and thirst and from without because of fire and water and the intentions of enemies. Because of hunger and thirst, it requires food and drink. This is why it has two armies. One is manifest, like hand, foot, mouth, and teeth; the other is nonmanifest, like appetite for food.

For repelling the outside enemies, it has two armies. One is manifest, like hand, foot, and the other members; the other is nonmanifest, like greed and anger.

Since searching for nourishment and repelling enemies without perception is impossible, the heart requires the means of perception. Some are manifest, and these are five—eye, ear, nose, taste, and touch. Some are nonmanifest, and these also are five, and their waystation is the brain—the potency of imagination, the potency of reflection, the potency of memory, the potency of recall, and the potency of sense-intuition. Each of these potencies has a specific work, and if one of them should be defective, the heart's work will be defective in religion and this world.

All these manifest and nonmanifest armies are at the command of the heart. It is the commander and king of all. When it commands the tongue, it utters speech at once. So also, the hand works at the command of the heart, the foot walks at its command, the eye comes to see through it, and the ear comes to hear through it. So also do the inside potencies take their commands from it. Thus with this army it preserves the inside and outside of the body so that it may pick up its provisions, obtain its prey, make preparations for the afterworld, and scatter the seeds of its own felicity.

The obedience of the army of the heart is like the obedience of the angels to the Real—high indeed is He!—for they cannot oppose any command.¹⁰

Chapter {5}

We will set down a similitude for the heart, the body, and the work of the heart's soldiers and army. Know that the body is like a city. The hand, foot, and other members are like the craftsmen of the city. Appetite is like the tax agent, and wrath is like the policeman. The heart is the king of the city, and the intellect is the king's vizier. Surely the king requires all of these to set aright the empire's work.

However, appetite, who is the tax agent, is a mixer, a meddler, and a liar. Whatever intellect—the vizier—says, appetite sets out to oppose it. It wants to take in everything that is in the empire on the pretext of taxes. Wrath, which has the name of policemenhip, is ill-tempered. All it wants is killing and binding.

If the city's king does all his consultation with the vizier, if he keeps the lying agent chastened and does not listen to anything he says that opposes the vizier, and if he also keeps the policeman from going beyond his measure, the work of the empire will be well-organized. In the same way, if the heart brings appetite and wrath under the hand of the vizier, the work of the body's empire will be kept aright, and the road of felicity and arrival at the Divine Presence will be easy for it. But if it makes intellect the captive of appetite and wrath, the empire will go to ruin and the king will be ill-fortuned.

Chapter {6}

So, you should know that appetite and wrath were created for food, drink, and preserving the body. Both are servitors of the body, and food and drink are the body's fodder. The body was created to carry the senses, and the body is the servitor of the senses. The senses were created to spy for the intellect. They are to be its snare, so that through them it can grasp the wonders of the Creator's artisanry. Hence the senses are the servitors of the intellect. Intellect was created for the heart, so that it would be its candle and lamp and so that through its light, the heart's work would be completed. The heart was created for gazing on the beauty of the Lordship.

This empire and army were given to the heart so that it would sit like a king on the throne of the empire. It should make the Divine Presence its destination and kiblah. It should make the afterworld a homeland, this world a waystation, the body a mount, the members servants, and the intellect a vizier. It should keep the protection of possessions for appetite. It should give policemenhip to wrath. It should designate the senses for spying so that it may gather the world's reports. {It should make the potency of imagination a postmaster, so that the spies may gather all the reports to it}. It should make the potency of memory the keeper of the mailbag, so that it may preserve the reports that the postmaster takes in and, at the required moment, display them to the vizier, intellect.

The vizier, in accordance with the reports that he considers correct from all the environs of the empire, should prepare the work of the king's journey. If he sees that one of the soldiers, such as appetite or wrath, has become rebellious and has gone outside of obeying and taking commands from the king, he should occupy himself with governing its work. However, he should not intend to kill it, since the empire will not be set aright without the soldiers. Rather, he should strive to bring them back to their own limits so that they may be aides on the forthcoming journey of the king, not antagonists; so that they may be kind companions, not bandits. When he does this, he will be felicitous and become worthy of blessings and robes of honor. If his practice opposes this, he will be wretched and will have shown ingratitude for blessings; he will find castigation and punishment for that.

Chapter {7}

Know that within themselves, the children of Adam have a joining with each of these two mentioned armies. From each of the two, there appear for them character traits and attributes. Some of these character traits are bad and will take them to perishment. Some are good and will take them to felicity. Although these character traits are many, they come down to four genera—the character traits of beasts, the character traits of predators, the character traits of satans, and the character traits of angels.

This is because within them has been put a potency of appetite that does the work of beasts, such as being gluttonous in eating and sexual intercourse. Through the potency of anger that is within them, they do the work of dogs, wolves, and lions—like striking, killing, and falling upon the creatures with hand and tongue. Because of the deception, deviousness, scheming, mixing, and stirring up discord that have been put within them, they do the work of devils. And because the intellect is in them, they do the work of angels, such as loving knowledge and wholesomeness, avoiding ugly works, seeking wholesomeness among the creatures, keeping self too exalted and great for mean and vile works, being happy with true knowledge, and considering ignorance and unknowing shameful.

The children of Adam were made distinct by the light of intellect, which is among the traces of the lights of the angels. Through that light, they witness the light of Satan's deception and bind up the breach of his disquietening. They were commanded to keep the pig of avarice and appetite and the dog and wolf of wrath under intellect's hand so that these would obey only its command. If they do this, they will obtain good character traits and attributes, which are the seed of their felicity. If they oppose this and bind the belt of serving them, bad character traits and attributes will appear in them, and these are the seed of their wretchedness. If in sleep or wakefulness {their state is unveiled through images}, they will see that they have bound the belt of service to a dog or a devil. {If someone should make} a Muslim captive at an unbeliever's hand, it is obvious what sort of state he will have. Those who make an angel captive at the hand of a pig, a dog, or a devil are even uglier.

If you look with the eye of impartiality, you will see that most creatures are servants of the soul and caprice, and in reality this is their state.¹¹ They are like humans in the world of form, but, in the world of meaning—where secrets become evident and forms are subordinate to meanings—those who are dominated by appetite and greed appear in the form of pigs, and those who have rancor and envy in the form of wolves. This is why, when a wolf is seen in a dream, its interpretation is a wrongdoing man, and when a dog is seen, its interpretation is a defiled man, for dreams point to death inasmuch as people become far from this world because of sleep, and then the meaning is given.¹²

Chapter {8}

Now that you have come to know that these four commanders and champions are in your nonmanifest, wake up and watch over your movements and stillnesses. Of these four, in whose command are you?

Know that in reality, any movement that comes into existence within you will be written on the page of your essence and become your disposition and habit. If you obey the pig of appetite, from that movement will appear within you the attribute of shamelessness, defilement, avariciousness, flattery, meanness, envy, malicious joy, and so on. But if you subdue it through courtesy¹³ and keep it under the hand of intellect and the Sharia, within you will appear the dispositions of contentment, self-restraint, shame, rest, pious abstinence, lack of avidity, and holding yourself back.

If you obey the dog of wrath, within you will appear fearlessness, rashness, braggadocio, acting pridefully, counting others as vile and lightweight, and falling upon the creatures with antagonism and enmity. If you keep the dog subjected, in you will appear the disposition of forbearance, abstinence, pardon, fixity, courage, bravery, rest, and generosity.

If you obey the command of Satan, who makes bold and stirs up the dog and the pig, teaching them deception and deviousness, within you will appear the disposition of cheating, treachery, mixing, scheming, and trickery. But if you subdue him and give intellect ruling power over him, in you will appear cleverness, recognition, knowledge, wisdom, greatness, and chieftainship. These character traits will remain with you and become among the *subsistent, wholesome things* [18:46, 19:76] and be the seed of your felicity.

The movements and acts that rise up from bad character traits are called “disobedient acts” and “ugly traits.” What is born of good character traits is called “obedient acts” and “beautiful traits.”¹⁴ The movements and stillnesses of the child of Adam are not outside these two.

Chapter

Know that the substance of the heart is like a bright mirror, while bad character traits are like darkness, smoke, and rust that make the mirror so dark that it does not see the Presence of Lordship and remains veiled. Good character traits are like a light that polishes the rust of nature, the world, caprice, and folly from the heart. It is the heart that comes out at the resurrection, whether bright or dark, and none will be saved *except him who comes to God with an unblemished heart* [26:89].

At the beginning of creation, the heart of Adam's child is like a piece of iron that can be made into a mirror—if it is kept from blights and rust. Otherwise, all of it becomes so rusted that no mirror can come of it. Thus the Real says, *No indeed, but what they were earning has rusted upon their hearts* [83:14].

{Chapter 16}

The human heart's rust, which brings it loss, is its avariciousness for sensory enjoyments, its searching for pleasure and caprice, and its loving this sensory life. Felicity lies in knowing, and knowledge is life.

This is because everything's felicity lies in {that in which are its enjoyment and comfort. The enjoyment of each thing is what is demanded by its own nature. What is demanded by a thing's nature is} that for which it was created. Thus the enjoyment of appetite lies in pursuing pleasure through eating, sleeping, sexual inter-

course, and the like. The enjoyment of anger lies in taking revenge on enemies, the enjoyment of the eye in seeing beautiful forms, and the enjoyment of the ear in hearing agreeable voices and tunes.¹⁵

In the same way, the enjoyment of the heart lies in true knowledge of the reality of all works, for this is the specificity of the human heart. This is why the child of Adam is happy with everything he knows; he rejoices in it and boasts of it, even when it is something trifling, like chess, for example. If you say to someone who knows it, "Don't instruct me," it is difficult for him to have patience, for he has seen a marvelous game and wants to make it manifest out of boastfulness.

Now you have come to know that the heart's enjoyment lies in knowing and recognizing things. Therefore, the more eminent something is, the more enjoyment there is in knowing it. If someone is aware of some of a vizier's secrets, he becomes happy at that. Someone who is aware of some of the king's secrets is even happier.

No existent thing is more eminent than That through which is the eminence of all existent things. It is He who is king and sovereign over the kingdom in both worlds. All the marvels are traces of His artisanry. Hence no knowledge is more eminent and more enjoyable than the knowledge and recognition of Him, and no gazing is sweeter than gazing on the Presence of Lordship.

The Second Heading

{Chapter 1}. *On Knowing the Real—Glory Be to Him and High Indeed Is He!*

Know that it is well known that in the books of the past prophets it was said to the human: "Know your soul, you will know your Lord." In the same way, in the reports and traditions it is well known that "He who knows his soul knows his Lord." This saying signifies that the human soul is like a mirror, and anyone who looks upon it will see the Real. There are many who look upon the self and do not recognize the Real. Hence, the self must be known in the respect in which it is the mirror of true knowledge.

The explication of these words in a way that can easily be understood is as follows: The children of Adam come to know the Real's Essence from the essence of themselves. When they know self through being, they know that they had not yet come to be a few years before. They had no name and no mark. Thus does God remind in the Noble Koran: *Did there come upon the human a while of the aeon when he was not a thing remembered?* [76:1]. They also know that at first they were sperm-drops, and within them was no intellect, hearing, eyesight, hand, foot, or tongue. Now they have the degree of perfection, but they are not capable of creating a single hair. So, from the coming to be of the essence of themselves, the Real's Essence has come to be known.

When they look upon the wonders of their own body both in respect of the manifest and in respect of the nonmanifest, they see clearly the power of their own Creator. They know that the Complete in power creates from such vile water individuals with such beauty and perfection, full of marvels and wonders.

Then they look upon the attributes of their own creation—what wisdoms there are in the creation of each! These are the manifest members, such as hand, feet, eye,

tongue, and teeth, and the nonmanifest members such as liver, spleen, and so on. Then they come to know that their own Creator's knowledge is of the utmost perfection and encompasses all things. They know that nothing can be absent from such a Knower.

Chapter {2}. On Knowing the Declaration of the Real's Incomparability and Holiness—High Indeed Is He!

When they know the Real's attributes from their own attributes, then they know from their own declaration of incomparability [*tanzīh*] and assertion of holiness [*taqḍīs*] that the meaning of declaring the Author incomparable and holy is that He is hallowed and pure of all that enters sense-intuition and imagination. He is incomparable with having a place attributed to Him, even if no place is empty of His exercising activity.

The children of Adam see the pointer to this in their own anima. The anima's reality, which we have called the "heart," is incomparable with coming into sense-intuition and imagination. We said that it has no measure and quantity and does not accept division. It has no color and smell, and whatever has no color and smell can in no way enter into imagination, for what enters into imagination is a thing that has been seen, or whose likeness has been seen, by the eye, such as colors and shapes. These are under the rulership of the eye and imagination.

Sometimes it occurs to people's nature to ask, "How is this meaning?" or "What shape does it have? Is it small, is it large?" When these attributes have no way into something, the question of howness is nullified for it. If you look in yourself, you know that your reality, which is the locus of knowledge, does not accept division, and that measure, quantity, and quality have no way into it. When you have known yourself with this attribute, you will know that the Real—high indeed is He!—is more worthy of this declaration of incomparability and holiness. People are surprised that there should be an existent without "how much" and "how" and without howness, yet they themselves are like this, but they do not know themselves.

Another kind of declaring incomparability is that you do not ascribe Him to anything. In the same way, you cannot ascribe the anima to any member, saying that it is in the foot, or the head, or some other place. This is because all the members accept division, but it is absurd that what does not accept division should come down into what accepts division. And, although the anima is not ascribed to any member, no member is empty of its exercise of activity. Rather, all are under its exercise of activity and command. It is the king of all. So also, the world is under the activity exercised by the world's king, but He is incomparable with being ascribed to some specific place. All this knowledge becomes clear from the secret of, "God created Adam in His form."

Chapter {3}

The attribute of knowing the Real has become apparent, and it has come to be known that the key to knowing the Real comes from knowing self and the attributes of self. Next, one must know how it is that the Real has governance, rule, and command. Of what sort are His work of commanding the angels, the angels' obeying His com-

mand, His sending the commands from the heaven to the earth, the moving of the heavens and the stars, the binding of earth's work to heaven, and turning over the key of provisions to heaven? This is a great door to the knowledge of the Real, and it is called knowledge of the "acts." In the same way, the past speech was the explication of the knowledge of the "Essence" and the "attributes." The key to the knowledge of the acts is also knowledge of the soul.

So, first you must know yourself and your own act, such as writing, for example. If you want to write the characters *bism Allāh* ["in the name of God"] on paper, first a craving and a desire appears in you, and then a movement and stirring in your manifest heart, which is the well-known member. A subtle body moves from the heart to the brain. The physicians call this subtle body the "spirit." It is the carrier of the potencies of sensation and movement. This is another spirit, which belongs to all the beasts, but the spirit that we called "heart" does not belong to the beasts and never dies. It is the locus of the knowledge of the Real.

When this spirit reaches the brain, the form of *bism Allāh* is already depicted in the brain's first treasury, which is the place of the potency of imagination. The trace reaches the nerves from the brain, which join the brain to the fingertips like threads. Then the nerves move, so the fingertips also move. Then the form of *bism Allāh* appears on the paper in the form that it had in the treasury of imagination, with the assistance of the senses, especially the eye, which is required the most.

So, just as the first of this work was a craving that appeared in you, the first of all works is one of the attributes of the Real—desire. Just as the trace of this desire appeared in your heart, then it reaches the other places, so the first trace of the Real's desire appears in the Throne, then it reaches others.

Just as a subtle body takes this trace by way of the heart's vessels to the brain, and this body is called "spirit," so the Real has a subtle substance that takes the trace to the Throne, then takes it to the Footstool from the Throne.¹⁶ This substance is called "angel," it is called "spirit," and it is called "holy spirit."

Just as the heart's trace reaches the brain, and the brain is under the heart, so also the Real's trace reaches the Footstool, and the Footstool is under the Throne.

Just as the form of *bism Allāh*, which is called your "act" and which is the object of your desire, appears in the first treasury of the brain, while the act takes place in keeping with it, so also the form of everything in the cosmos appears in the Throne.

Just as the potency in the brain moves the nerves, the nerves move the fingers, and the fingers move the pen, so also the subtle substances to whom have been entrusted the Throne and the Footstool move the heavens, the earths, and the stars.

Just as the brain's potency moves the fingers because of the ties, sinews, and nerves, so also the subtle substances that are called "angels" move the four natures—that is, heat, wetness, cold, and dryness—by means of the stars and the ties of their rays to the lower world.

Just as the pen scatters the ink and brings it together so that the form of *bism Allāh* may appear, so this heat and cold moves the water, earth, and mothers of these compound things.¹⁷ Just as the paper receives the ink as it is scattered or combined upon it, so the wetness makes the compound things receptive to shape, and the dryness preserves the shape so that it may be kept and not let go.

Just as, when the pen completes its work, the form of *bism Allāh* appears with

the assistance of the eye {in accordance with the impression in the treasury of imagination}, so also, when heat and cold bring these compound things into movement with the assistance of the angels, the forms of the animals, plants, and other things appear in this world, in accordance with the forms that are in the Preserved Tablet.

So, give gratitude to that King who created you, gave you kingship, and bestowed upon you an empire that is a pointer to His own empire! From your heart He made a Throne. From the animal spirit, whose fountainhead is the heart, He made your Seraphiel.¹⁸ From the brain He made your Footstool. From the treasury of memory He made your Preserved Tablet and from the dome of the brain and the tools of sensation your heaven and stars. From the hand, pen, ink, and paper He subjected the natures to you.

He created you one, without “how” and without “why,” and He made you the king of all. Then He said to you, “Beware of yourself. Do not be heedless of your kingship, for then you will be heedless of your own Creator.” “Surely God created Adam in His form.” “So know your soul, O human, and you will know your Lord!”

The Third Heading

{Chapter 1}. On the Knowledge of This World

Know that this world is one of the waystations on the road of religion. It is a passageway for travelers to the Presence of the Real, an adorned bazaar put in the desert so that travelers may pick up their provisions. This world and the afterworld consist of two states. What is before death and is closer to us is called “this world,” and what is after death is called “afterworld.” The objective of this world is to provide for the afterworld, because Adam’s children were created simple and deficient at the beginning of creation. However, they are worthy of obtaining perfection, of making the Sovereignty’s form the impression of their own heart, and of being received by the Divine Presence so that they may be gazers on the beauty of that Presence.

They were created for this, but there can be no gazer until their heart’s eye is opened and they perceive that beauty. This is obtained through knowledge, and the key to knowledge of the Divinity’s beauty is knowledge of the wonders of the divine artisanry. The key to the knowledge of the divine artisanry is the human senses. But it is impossible for these senses to come to be except in the mold compounded of earth and water.

This is why Adam’s children fell to the world of earth and water—so that they might pick up these provisions and obtain knowledge of the Real with the key of knowing their own soul. As long as the senses are with them and do their spying, it is said that they are in this world. When the senses are put aside and they bid farewell to them, it is said that they have gone to the afterworld.

Chapter {2}

In this world, humans require two things. One is to protect the heart from the causes of perishment and to obtain its nourishment. The other is to protect the body from the perishment-bringers and to obtain its nourishment.

The nourishment of the heart is knowledge and love of the Real. The cause of its perishment is immersion in love for something other than the Real. The body must be made to attend to the heart, for the body will be annihilated, but the heart will subsist. The body for the heart is like a camel for a pilgrim on the road to the hajj. The pilgrim must have a camel, not the camel a pilgrim, even though incontestably the pilgrim must attend to the camel with fodder, water, and clothing until he reaches the Kaabah and is released from its trouble. However, he must attend to the camel in the measure of requirement. If he spends all his days in giving it fodder and attending to it, he will be held back from the caravan and perish. In the same way, if the child of Adam puts all his days into attending to the body so as to keep its food in place and keep the causes of perishment away from it, he will be held back from his own felicity.

In this world, the body's requirements are three things—edibles, wearables, and a place to sit so as to keep away cold, heat, and the causes of perishment. So, of this world, what the body of Adam's children incontestably must have is no more than this. Or rather, the roots of this world are indeed just this.

The nourishment of the heart is knowing and true knowledge. The more there is, the better. But the nourishment of the body is food, and if it exceeds its limit, it becomes a cause of perishing. The Real has entrusted Adam's children to appetite so that it will request food, a residing place, and clothing and so that their body, which is their mount, will not perish. But the creation of this appetite is such that it does not stay within its own limits, and it wants much. He created intellect to keep it within its limits and He sent the Sharia on the tongue of the prophets so as to make its limits apparent. However, He placed appetite there from the first of creation in infancy, and He created intellect later. So, appetite has taken a place from before and has gained overmastery and keeps on rebelling. Intellect and the Sharia's prescriptions came after it, so that appetite would not keep people totally occupied with searching out food, clothing, and a residing place, thereby making them forget self; and so that they will come to know why they must have food, clothing, and a residing place, and what these are for in this world, and they will not forget the heart's nourishment—provision for the afterworld.

The Fourth Heading

{Chapter 1}. On the Knowledge of the Afterworld

Know that none will know the reality of the afterworld until they know the reality of death, none will know the reality of death until they know the reality of life, and none will know the reality of life until they know the reality of the spirit. The true knowledge of the reality of the spirit is the true knowledge of the reality of their own soul, part of which was explained.

We said earlier that Adam's children are compounded of two roots, one the spirit and the other the mold. The spirit is like a rider and the mold like a mount. Because of the mold, the spirit in the afterworld has a state, a paradise, and a hell. It also has a state because of its own essence, without the mold's sharing in it. For the mold, it has a hell, a paradise, a felicity, and a wretchedness. We call the

heart's bliss and enjoyments that are without the intermediary of the mold the "spiritual paradise," and we say of the suffering and pain without the mold the "spiritual fire."

As for the paradise and hell that involve the mold, that indeed is manifest. What is obtained there is the paradise of the trees, rivers, houris, palaces, victuals, beverages, garments, and so on. What is obtained in hell is fire, snakes, scorpions, Zaqqūm, boiling water, and so on. The attribute of both of these is well known from the Koran and the prophetic reports. Everyone's understanding can grasp this, and we have explained its details in the book *Ihyā' 'ulūm al-dīn*.¹⁹

Here we point to the meaning of the spiritual paradise and hell because not everyone knows it. When God says, "I have prepared for My wholesome servants what no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, and what has never occurred to the heart of any mortal,"²⁰ this is the spiritual paradise. From inside the heart there is a window to the World of the Sovereignty, a window from which these meanings become evident so that no doubt remains for it. When this road is opened for people, a clear certainty appears for them concerning the afterworld's felicity and wretchedness, not by way of following authority and hearsay, but rather by way of insight and witnessing.

Physicians know that in this world the mold has a felicity and a wretchedness that are known as "health" and "sickness." These have causes such as medicine and abstinence, and like eating too much and inabstinence. In the same way, it becomes known through this witnessing that the heart—that is, the spirit—has a felicity and a wretchedness.

Worship and true knowledge are the medicine leading to felicity, and ignorance and disobedience are the poison leading to wretchedness. This knowledge is extremely exalted, and most of those known as "ulama" are heedless of it. Rather, they deny it. They take the road only as far as the paradise and hell of the mold. In knowledge of the afterworld, they recognize nothing but following authority and hearsay. In this book, we will make allusions such that those who are clever and whose nonmanifest is pure of the defilement of fanaticism and following authority will recover the road.²¹ Then the work of the afterworld will be fixed and unambiguous in their hearts. After all, most creatures' faith in the afterworld is weak and shaky.

Chapter {2}. *On the Reality of Death*

If you want to become aware of the reality of death, first you must know that the child of Adam has two spirits. One is of the same kind as the spirit of animals, and we name it the "animal spirit." The other is of the same kind as the spirit of the angels, and we name it the "human spirit."

The fountainhead of the animal spirit is the heart, which is the piece of flesh in the breast, on the left side. It is like a subtle vapor among the nonmanifest humors of the animal, and it has come to have a constitution in equilibrium. From the heart this spirit reaches all the members by means of the arteries. It is like a lamp in a room through which the room's walls become bright. The brightness of the lamp appears on the wall, and in the same way the potency of seeing, hearing, and all the senses appear in the manifest members.

This spirit is like the lamp's fire, the heart is like the wick, and nourishment is like the oil. If you take oil away from the lamp, the lamp dies. So also, if you take nourishment away from the body, the spirit's constitution is nullified and the animal dies.

If the wick eats much oil, it is destroyed. So also, the heart becomes such that over a long time it cannot receive nourishment.

If you place something on the lamp's wick, it falls apart, even if the oil and the wick remain in place. This is like an animal that has a great wound and dies, even though nourishment and the heart are in place.

The nullification of the constitution's equilibrium gives rise to the nullification of sensation and movement, and this is called "death." That which brings together the causes of the nullification of the constitution's equilibrium is called "the angel of death," and of him the creatures know nothing but the name. This is the death of animals.

The death of Adam's children is in another respect, for they have both this animal spirit and the other spirit that we called the "human spirit" and named the "heart." It was mentioned earlier. It is not of the same kind as the animal spirit, which wanted the humors and nourishment. Rather, it is far from bodily descriptions and does not accept division. Within it, true knowledge of the Real comes down. Just as the Real does not accept division and is one, so also the dwelling place of the true knowledge of that One is also one and does not accept division. Hence it does not come down into a body that accepts division.

The animal spirit is like the mount for the human spirit in one respect, and in another respect it is like a tool. When the constitution of the animal spirit is nullified, the mold dies, but the human spirit remains in its own place. However, it has come to have neither tool nor mount. The death of the mount and the destruction of the tool do not ruin and bring about the nonexistence of the rider, but rather, they take away his tool.

The spirit was given the tool so that it might hunt knowledge and love of the Real—glory be to Him and high indeed is He! If it has hunted this down, then the perishing of the tool is to its good, for it has been released from its load. This is why the Messenger said, "Death is a gift and an award for the believer."²² After all, the snare is for the sake of the prey. When they catch the prey, they number the snare's perishment as added booty. But if—refuge in God!—the tool is nullified before catching the prey, then regret and affliction will have no end. This pain and regret is the first chastisement of the grave—we seek refuge in God from it!

{Chapter 7}

This [chastisement of the grave] is of two sorts, bodily and spiritual. As for the bodily, everyone knows that. But no one knows the spiritual except those who have recognized self and know that, after death, the reality of the spirit subsists. When the senses are taken away from them, then also are taken wife, children, possessions, property, self, joinings, and everything that can be found with the senses. If these things were the objects of their passion and love, then they remain in the chastisement of disseveration. But if they were detached and wishing for death, they fall into com-

fort. The cause of the grave's chastisement is love for this world. For some it is more and for some less—in the measure of appetite for this world.

Chapter {12}. On the Spiritual Hell

In this there are three kinds of fire. One is the fire of disseveration from worldly appetites. Second is the fire of the abashment and embarrassment of disgrace. Third is the fire of remaining deprived from the beauty of the Divine Presence and losing hope for it. All three of these fires are in the anima and heart, not the body, but this fire is greater than that which reaches the mold. The Sharia explains and describes more of the bodily hell and paradise because all creatures can understand it.

{Chapter 15}

In short, it is incumbent to believe all this. All those in the world who are occupied with other than the provisions of the afterworld are extremely stupid. The cause of this heedlessness and failure to think is that their appetites for this world do not let them think about this. Otherwise, it is incumbent upon all, by the judgment of intellect, to beware of that great danger and to go after the road of security, so that, God willing, they will find safety.

The prey of the human soul is knowledge and true recognition, and no sharing by the body can fit into this. This is the attribute of your own essence. Whatever is sleeping, eating, and movement is the attribute of your tool, and that is shared with the body. But when the body is destroyed, all these attributes are nullified. Knowing and truly recognizing are the attributes of your own essence, without the sharing of the body. When the body is destroyed, neither you nor your knowledge and recognition, which are your attribute, are nullified. If there is no knowledge and recognition, then there is its opposite, which is ignorance and denial. This attribute will also remain with you, and it is the spirit's blindness and the seed of endless wretchedness. God grant you and us sanctuary from it, by His gentleness and mercy!

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5

Writings on Practice

Quatrains

Not knowing, you've given your life to the wind,
not heeding, you've taken death's day as easy.
You think you've the means for two hundred years more
and that time's not given a moment of rest. (158)¹

* * *

O Master, what have you yourself seen? Wait awhile.
What have you reached by this road? Wait awhile.
Of that draught that set the spheres spinning—
have you tasted a drop? Wait awhile. (34)

* * *

This world's an inn and we're the guests—
don't think we'll be staying for long.
In both worlds, God will remain, none else—
the rest of us are *everyone on the earth that is annihilated* [55:26]. (128)

* * *

Afḍal, don't let imagination delude you,
don't fly around lights like a moth.
You've gone far from God because you see self—
come near to self but not far from God. (102)

* * *

Under the turning spheres beware
 of attaching your love to anyone.
 Then in this hut of generation and corruption,
 you may soon be shown the way to be free. (124)

Essay on Practice

Acts of good and practices of piety can be known by the outcome. All practices that in the end pull the human to knowing and awareness, even if the vast majority of creatures see no good in the form of those practices and do not number them as beautiful traits, are among the beautiful traits. Every work-doing and practice that ends in unconsciousness and does not reach awareness, even if the vast majority of creatures number it among the practices of good, is not among the practices of good, even if it has the form of worship or something else. (*Muṣannaḥāt* 614)

Quatrains

Not for a moment have you done the commandments,
 but you want to be just like the Men of the past.
 You've not walked the road, so you haven't been shown—
 whenever you knock, they'll open the door. (150)

* * *

You've fastened claims to the tip of your tongue
 and not broken one of a thousand idols.
 You say, "I'm saved because I've voiced the Shahadah"—
 tomorrow you'll be hung over, because tonight you're drunk. (156)

* * *

His worship thinks the heart's in the breast
 and he has arrived, not having taken two steps.
 Knowledge, abstinence, renunciation, hope, search—
 they're the road, but he thinks they're the goal.² (152)

Essay on Disengagement and Struggle

The seed of existence is awareness, and its fruit is also awareness. In between, everything is rubbish and ill repute.

Existence becomes correct and capable through two things—through struggle and disengagement.³

Struggle is that [the seeker] persevere in affliction so that he may acquire fixity, and through fixity he can find that there is a subsistent existence. If he cannot persevere and be patient, his existence will be annihilated through the annihilation of perseverance.

Disengagement is that he separate things one by one from himself and see that none of them is his reality. Rather, if it belongs to him, it is other than he. Finally, he will have removed all the accidents and wraps and will have come to see. If something is left without any state and attribute, he will grasp that this thing is his own reality and essence, and all things endure and are fixed by it. Since nothing remains but this thing, he does not endure by anything else. That which does not endure by another endures by self, and its existence is from self. If something's existence is from self, annihilation is not allowable for it.

Hence, existence has become correct and necessary through these two states— one in respect of practice, which consists of struggle; the other in respect of knowledge, which consists of disengagement. And God is success-giver and helper! (*Muṣannafāt* 655)

Quatrains

Remembering majesty we went to the desert,
 we went to the soul from the bodily world.
 A lifetime in thought we sat night and day—
 we entered perplexed, we went out bewildered. (178)

* * *

O you who search to find the encounter
 another time beyond the heavens.
 God is with you, His great throne is your heart—
 If you don't find Him in self, where will you find Him? (148)

* * *

Gaze on the mirror of the Real's beauty,
 let soul and heart be aware of the Real.
 If you want heart and soul both to light up,
 pass by His lane at every dawn. (184)

Essay on *Tawhīd*

You should know that, when you translate the word *tawhīd* into the Persian language, it is “to make one” [*yakī kardan*]. It includes both those things that you compound through practice and artisanry, so that they become one through combination and compoundedness, and those things that become one through *theōria*.

In practice and artisanry, this is like compounding medicines and herbs, bringing them together, and mixing them so that they become one thing. The name of each is nullified, and one name is given to the compound—“theriaca” or some other concoction. So also are victuals, nourishments, garments, and so on.

In *theōria*, this is like making individuals one through the species, as, for example, the individual minerals, the individual growing things, and the individual animals, all of which you make one through their species. Thus gold, silver, copper,

and lead are the “mineral” substance in *theōria*; so also with plants and animals. In short, unless there are many things, they cannot be made one, and that which is one cannot be made one.

The *tawhīd* that has entered into the speech of the religion’s ulama is theoretical *tawhīd*, not practical *tawhīd*. Unless *theōria* has reached its utmost end, the companion of *theōria* is not called an “asserter of unity” [*muwahḥid*].

How they go about this is as follows: They make one and they see as one all the sensible individuals, of whatever species they may be, through the species of these individuals. They see the particular individuals—like Zayd, ‘Amr, and Bakr—who are many, as one through the human, which is their species. They see the sensory individuals of this horse and that horse, this camel and that camel, this four-footed thing and that four-footed thing, as one through the species of horse, the species of camel, and the species of four-footed thing. In the same way, they look upon the many species—such as humans, four-footed things, crawlers, and flyers—as one through the genus “animal” and “living.” They see the growing things as one through the animate body, they see the animate and the inanimate body as one through the compound body, they see the compound body and the simple body as one through unconditioned body, and they see body and soul as one in that they are substance. Then they recognize substance and nonsubstance—like the accidents—as one through the existent. When they reach this level, they exercise their *theōria* on *tawhīd*, for they see the many existents—without leaving aside any existent whatsoever—as one through the unconditioned existent [*mawjūd-i muṭlaq*], for all existents are one, and the existent for all is one.

Then one level remains, which is the utmost end of *tawhīd*. This level is that they do not recognize the knower of the unconditioned existent and the unconditioned existent itself as two things—that one of them should be knower and the other known. Rather, knower and known are one in the unconditioned existent. When they become established in this *theōria* and when this certainty has been witnessed, then the beginning and end of existence will have disappeared, and that which is without beginning and without end will remain. And God knows better, *and to Him the affair is returned, all of it* [II:123]. (*Muṣannafāt* 619–21)

Quatrains

Put to work this intellect come for work,
 let it put right this mixed-up business.
 Imagination has painted a house of idols in your heart—
 break the idols and make the house the Kaabah. (43)

* * *

I wandered the world seeking Jamshid’s cup,
 I sat for no day, I slept for no night.
 When my master described that cup to me,
 Jamshid’s world-showing cup was myself.⁴ (94)

* * *

You are a copy of God's own book,
 you are a mirror of the King's own beauty.
 Nothing of the world is outside of you.
 Seek what you want from yourself—it is you. (160)

The Testament of the Sages; Or, Twenty-Eight Words
 of Counsel to the Brethren

O seekers on the road of wisdom and runners on the path of felicity, you must be much in supplication⁵ in affairs of both this world and the afterworld, for the relation of supplication to the origins of sought things is like the relation of reflective thought to conclusions. Just as, after reflection, arriving at the conclusion is possible, so also, after supplication, arriving at the object of search is possible. This is why it has been said, "Supplication brings the origins into movement." In the same way someone said, "Lifting the voice in sincerity of intention unties the knot of the turning spheres."

In every state, make perseverance your watchword.

In all affairs trust in the side of the Real.⁶

Consider gratitude for God's blessing incumbent at every moment.

Be content with the precedent decree.⁷

Every morning and evening, take an accounting⁸ of your own soul. Tie yourself to making today better than yesterday, even if only through the slightest thing. Otherwise, you will become one of the losers in this world and the afterworld.

In difficult affairs, persevere like a man. Do not make it a habit to seek the body's comfort like women.

Give repose to the soul by abandoning affairs that have loss for you.

Moment by moment remember death.

Preserve the Sharia and the law so that they may preserve you.

Do not put off today's work for tomorrow, for each day that comes brings its own work.

To the extent that you can, cut your heart off from love for other than the Real.

Guard against reflective thoughts that pull you to the world of bodies. Otherwise, you will quickly find yourself at the vilest level.

Beware of speaking anything but truth. Otherwise, your soul will be tainted by the habitude of lying, and there will be no reliance whatsoever on your dreams and inspiration.

Wrong no one, or He who gives endurance to the cosmos will take revenge upon you.

Do not torment an ant, for just as the solicitude of Him who gives endurance to the cosmos has reached you, so it has reached it.

Speak after much meditation, because, if through speaking you become one of the wholesome, through silence you will become one of those given proximity.⁹

In all affairs, preserve the side of the Real.

Have an interaction with the Real such that no one is informed of it and, since the eyes of the World of Sovereignty are gazing upon you, consider it incumbent to revere the divine commandments.¹⁰

Guard against taking oaths, even if they be true.

You must act beautifully toward your father and mother.¹¹

Have a good opinion of the ulama.

Do not commit minor sins. Otherwise, you will soon find your own soul giving you permission to begin major sins, and that same desertedness that came upon Korah will come upon you.¹²

Be a possessor of resolve, for the resolve of Men brings the causes into movement.

Guard against cursing orphans and widows, or He who gives endurance to the cosmos will retaliate, for He does not allow the breaking of the broken.

At night for one hour or more throw yourself to the side of the Real—majestic and exalted is He!—for He will soon be delivering you from the narrows of nature.

Have a complete inclination toward ascetic discipline and purification of the soul.¹³

Cut off your *theōria* from sensory affairs absolutely, so that you may be informed of the divine mysteries and realities. The Folk of Realization agree that those who obtain the power to divest the body and dismiss the senses will be designated for the ascent to the World of Holiness and the World of Sovereignty, made felicitous through everlasting felicity, and given the portion and joy of the eternal enjoyments. May God provide for us and you—by the sanctity of the master of the prophets and the master of the saints, Muḥammad! God bless him and his household, the fine, the pure. (*Muṣannafāt* 656–58)

Quatrains

O sir, though the work not be to your liking
and the eternal address not be in your name,
live in joy and grieve not, for in this world's house,
greed is not happy even with kingship. (89)

* * *

If the heart is not freed of attachments,
the shell of existence will not fill with pearls.
How could intellect fill the head's cup?
An upside-down cup cannot be filled. (58)

* * *

Do you know why they beat the falcon's drum?
So the lost falcon will come back to the way.
Do you know why they sew shut the falcon's eyes?
So it will open its eyes to its own worth. (162)

* * *

The world of the soul is not what you think,
the road of union is not what you've followed.
The spring at which Khizr drank the water of life¹⁴
is found in your house, but you've blocked it up. (151)

* * *

You've fallen far from your mine,
 but look after all where you've fallen.
 You've lost God in the house of your self—
 that's why you've set out for God's House.¹⁵ (149)

* * *

If you find out from where you have come,
 and for what and for why [*charā*] you have come here,
 if you know your own root, then you'll go back—
 or like the beasts, you'll have come for the fodder [*charā*]. (41)

Advice to Seekers of Wisdom

The sages have said that the seekers and acquirers of wisdom must know that:

The complete felicity of religion is conditional upon noble character traits, like the complete tree [that is conditional] upon the fruit.

They must not hold their own soul higher and greater than the limit and measure of self, lest they be veiled from attaining the perfections.

If they fear the loss of something, they should not begin it.

They should seek the Real for His Essence.¹⁶

Whenever the correct way becomes ambiguous for them, they should consider which is nearer to the soul's caprice and keep away from that.

They should guard against obstinacy.

They should make truthfulness and truth the watchword of self.¹⁷

Since they are pure and rid of death and annihilation, they should not fear it. If they fear the state after death, they should set the work aright before death by wholesome practices. Then, without others, they should seek out self and the faults of self so that people will not know their faults better than they.

They should abandon whatever brings them loss in this world and the ultimate world, even if it includes their pride.

They should not sit and converse with anyone in other than that person's manner and path, for, if they speak of knowledge with the ignorant or of serious matters with the shameless, they have tormented their sitting companion and boonfellow.

When they find beautiful speech from others, they should not attribute it to self.

They should think highly of knowledge in their own soul.

They should number the world as contemptible in the *theōria* of their own aspiration.

They should not obligate their body more than their capability, and they should not waste endeavor on something whose finding is impossible.

In every state they should choose the truth so that they will be true-thinking and so that the dreams they see will not be among the "jumbled dreams."¹⁸

If they should obtain an objective by a road of error, afterwards they must not

diverge from the path of rectitude because, though safety may be achieved after error, it rarely happens.

If an affliction should descend upon them in the search, they should not be incapable of the means to repel it.

The best among the keys to affairs is truthfulness.

If something that you have not said comes into act from you, that is better than saying and doing, because, if acts are greater than words, this is among the noble qualities, but if acts are deficient in relation to words, that is shameful.

They must be high in aspiration and correct in resolution, for the child of Adam can win the victory of rest through high aspiration and correct resolve.

They should preserve the Sharia and the law so that these may preserve them.

They should have an interaction with the Real such that no one becomes informed of it.

Every day, for one hour or more, they should throw themselves to the side of the Real, for He will soon be delivering them from the narrows of nature.

They should have a complete inclination toward ascetic discipline and purification of the soul.

They should cut off their *theōria* from sensory affairs absolutely, so that they may be informed of the mysteries of the divine realities. The Folk of Realization agree that those who obtain the potency to divest the body and to dismiss the senses will be enabled to ascend to the World of Holiness and the World of Sovereignty. May God provide for us and you—by Muḥammad and his pure household! (*Muṣannafāt* 659–61)

Quatrains

Don't think that I fear that world,
that I fear dying and the soul's extraction.
Death is true, so why should I fear?
I fear that I have not lived well. (127)

* * *

O heart, seek help from none of the creatures,
seek shade from no naked branch.
Height's in contentment, lowness in greed—
take height from the self and seek for no lowness. (110)

* * *

Sew up your eyes so your heart may be eye,
see with that eye an alternate world.
If you rise beyond admiration of self,
your states will be admirable from head to foot. (2)

* * *

Seek not the top, be no more than any.
A bandage is soft, don't be a lancet.
If you want nothing bad to reach anyone,
be not bad-wanting, bad-teaching, bad-thinking. (171)

* * *

Small in your own gaze, then you're a man.
 Commanding your own soul, then you're a man.
 Kicking the fallen is not to be manly—
 take the hand of the fallen, then you're a man. (122)

* * *

Work no wrong at anyone's word,
 speak with virtue and torment none.
 Tomorrow you'll say, "Why do you blame me? He told me to do it."
 They won't accept that from you—be careful, don't do it. (180)

* * *

If the seed does not grow—you sowed it.
 If the cloth is not lovely—you wove it.
 If your foot sinks in mud don't complain—
 it is you that has mixed up the mud. (174)

Essay on Salvation

Know that the child of Adam strives so as to seek for salvation.¹⁹ Now, we should want to know what it is that Adam's child seeks salvation from. Is it some pain? Or something that is among the utmost ends of pain, such as perishment? But it is known that absolute annihilation is not painful, because it cannot be that nothing exist while there be an awareness of nonexistence. Hence, it is known that the fear is more of nonexistence in the state of existence. So, it is incontestable that we should explore whether or not this nonexistence can be repelled, and whether or not this existence can be made to subsist.

When *theōria* is used, the existence of bodiment is not nullified by the nonexistence of the body's states. However, this existence is not gainful for us, for the existence has no awareness. Hence we are searching for an existence within which there will be awareness and which will never be unconscious. This existence is nothing but intellectual existence, for being aware is one of the results of intellect.

Hence, searching to be aware is among the important things. The path to this is nearer and easier in respect of reflection. Reflection is possible through the soul's detachment, but it is not incumbent that the soul be detached from everything. Rather, it is more incumbent [for it to be detached] from that which opposes reflection.

It is not incumbent to guard against everything that opposes reflection—rather, [one should guard against] all the sensibles and bodily things, and all the states that are not empty of generation and corruption, such as seeking the enjoyments of sensory life and thinking about them and the path of finding them; or, in other words, pondering the comforts of sensory life. The soul must be detached and separate from such reflection.

Once the soul is detached from such reflections, incontestably it will reflect on things that oppose these reflections. After all, reflection is the soul's specificity, and the talking soul—that is, the human soul—can never be separate from reflection.

When it turns away from reflecting on diverse and altering things, then it is incontestably in self. When it is in self, it will find nothing without seeing help from selfhood. And God knows better.

Chapter

Now that it is known that arrival at this objective can be by means of reflection, incontestably we should take the path of repelling the blights of reflection. What is gainful in this respect is to undertake several practices that will help admirable character traits and avoid character traits opposed to them. This is constancy in the practices of good and the sayings of truthfulness.

By “practices of good” I mean that the person should not incline toward things demanded by appetite and wrath. If that inclination has potency on the inside, he should not let the wish come to be found. In the few states within which this gives birth to grief, pain, or contraction, he should persevere and be patient. He should not become hurried, and he should not want or seek any escape. Such blights cannot be repelled except with perseverance. Then the potency of steady perseverance will come to dominate in the soul, both in that which he wants and that which he does not want. Once this potency becomes consolidated, the traces of opposition will not remain. To the extent that he goes far from the world of opposition, he goes near the world of subsistence, which is the intellective [world]. When he arrives at this level, he will have obtained the degree of the Sovereignty. Let him endeavor until he finds, God willing. (*Muṣannaḥāt* 611–13)

Ghazal

For once turn back to self through intellect, O self!
 O man full of intelligence, what are you, how will you be?
 Are you a soul, a body? Of all these substances, which are you?
 Is your work to give of every work, or is it to do the taking?
 Are you a slinking snake, or no, a trotting mule?
 Are you self-aware like intellect, or unconscious like beasts?
 Without self you're nothing but snake and mule—
 even if your seven-part body has seven hundred.
 What do snake-charmers take from snakes but poison,
 and muleteers from mules but kicks?
 Your being is forever gazing on others—
 how is that worthy of you? Look for a moment at self!
 Your eyes see skin, and on the skin, hair and wool,
 then skin's hair and wool give rise to rope and felt.
 Yes, you can keep a basket in water,
 but you can't keep water in baskets.
 Yes, the body can stand through the soul,
 but the soul stands through intellect, not body.

See with the intellect, for your existence is seeing!

With these words, my soul is not ashamed before intelligence.

Every passing thing comes to subsist in your intellect—

why do you seek self's subsistence from other than intellect?

Your intellect has done all that you see before you—

the states coming to be and the doing of good and evil.

The sphere has taken precedence with a million revolutions—

look how all of that arrives with two leaps of thought! (*Muṣannaḡāt* 733)

Letter to Majd al-Dīn Muḡammad ibn
‘Ubayd Allāh

In the name of God, the All-merciful, the Compassionate. May the morning and evening sessions of the exalted companion, the chief, the great, the knowledgeable, the confirmed, the magnificent, the crown of the viziers, the chief of the chiefs, the refuge of the great ones and grandees, “the loftiness of the state and the religion” [Majd al-Dawla wa’l-Dīn], and the support of Islam and the Muslims be the gathering and resting place of beginningless bounties and endless felicity! May the veil of the world’s hidden secret be lifted from his face through proper *theōria* and blessed thought! May his heart be limpid and well-provided, his resolution working with faithfulness, and his body preserved and defended from the injury of sudden damage and unexpected blights—through the protection of God!²⁰

This sincere suppliant and well-wisher finds that despite my own inclinations, I have had less of a share than other helpers in serving you in the sensory domain. Nonetheless, when I judge by the firm foundation of truthfulness in love and the intensity of inner oneness as well as the lastingness of their bases, I am not regretful or bewildered to have been ill-provided in the outward form of service. This is especially so because I recognize in myself a root incapacity, a natural shunning, and a total aversion to undertaking the governing and ordering of the formal works and outward states that can be performed by movements and stillnesses, talking and doing. Serving kings, great ones, and chiefs as they find it admirable cannot be done save through words and deeds. When someone holds back from this and wants to have no portion of this performance of duties, it is designated for him to put his heart to work, and to bind his tongue and limbs in the prison of deprivation.

This suppliant has carefully avoided and guarded against seeking to occupy your moments with the study of correspondence and the prolixity of my drawn out words. However, your generosity has given me the boldness and courage—through the command that you gave—to write something that will comprise a few words appropriate and worthy for the introduction to speech and the origins of books, correspondences, and treatises. At that time, this suppliant did not well understand the purpose of your command. Then your own words made clear that the objective in this is not the usages and rules of treatises, for this has not been left unsaid and unwritten until now. Essayists and others among the learned have written books on this, both in Persian and Arabic, and the scribes of the past have done enough in

this important task. The purpose is rather [to clarify] a few words that it seems you happened to notice in a missive or a supplication that I had presented to you.

Since my good fortune has seen to it that, in searching for worthy words and decorated speech, your thoughts have issued this command, I have therefore found the courage to begin talking at length in the writing of this supplication. I have laid a foundation for speech such that, if its meanings are accepted and found useful, they will give profit and benefit that cannot be numbered.

Beautiful utterances are not created newly in the state of talking or writing, whether this happens in the Persian language or the Arabic language. After all, every listener, speaker, writer, and reader has passed those utterances over his tongue several times, or put them to pen, or heard them, or read them. If they were new and no ear had heard them, how could their meaning be understood?

So, speech is spoken by everyone, but from one person it appears as more beautiful, even though in sound, letters, and composition there is no great disparity. It follows that the beauty of the speech is the trace of a life that cannot be found in all individuals. The life comes from the meaning that the speaker puts into it, and the speaker of living speech takes provision from intelligence. He stirs up meaning, adorns the speech with meaning, and decorates it with truthfulness so that the listener, from tasting its meaning, may yearn for meaning's wellspring.

Truthful talking and beautiful doing are the fruit and produce of the human tree. At the beginning of growth, a tree takes help from rain's wetness, dew's dripping, and the wellspring's waterway. Eventually the stem becomes strong and the branches many, and the taproot pulls water from the depth of the earth. When it reaches this rank, it does not want help from the clouds, nor does it seek aid from the wellspring. So also is the shoot of humanness. Although in the beginning of their nurture, they collect the provision of excellence from outside—from instruction and pupilage, from seeing and hearing—unless they drive the taproot of existence into the root intelligence, the produce and fruit of talking and doing will stay without flavor and succulence. If they hold back from storing up and learning, they will yield no produce. At the time of the blossoms, they will dry up without ripening, and the tree of their life will have no fruit. Any life not placed in the balance against the weight of intelligence is not worthy for subsistence.

So—O springtime of the meadow of fortunate days and medallion in the gallery of leadership and greatness!—carefully assign *theōria* to the selfhood of self. What fits into talking other than the names of things? Whoever wants the meaning does not take a full portion from the name. Nothing can be reached through the meaning of speech but the meaning of self. The thirsty will not be quenched from saying the name *water* or mentioning its attributes, nor will the fire in their liver abate.

Praiseworthy excellencies and choice traits are the branches and leaves of the human tree. Lofty branches and abundant leaves come out of a strong stem and a deep-grounded taproot. If you want the tree of excellence to be tall, take the soul's taproot to intelligence and nurture it with the water of life. Then, whatever fruit of excellence you may want, you will find it easily on the long limbs—ripe and nurtured, without the grief of anticipation. The likeness of a *good word* is as a *good tree—its root is fixed and its branches are in heaven; it gives its fruit every while* [14:24–25].

Whenever you hear speech such that your soul is not elated from hearing it, and it does not sweetly meet your desire, you should recognize that the cause of this is that the spirit of meaning has vacated the mold of words. Although the form's composition has adorned the words with formal ornament, the listener's anima does not accept this and does not feel familiar with it, because a mold without spirit stirs up dread. You may make up a dead face with a rose's color, but it does not cling to the heart and stir up joy.

The fact that most people these days get along badly with each other is precisely because they are fed up with seeing each other's doing and talking. They show patience for awhile unhappily, but then they are unable to tolerate the situation because of suffering and witnessing acts and words that are dead and unavailing. Their weariness ends up in animosity and opposition. They leave the directing of their work to nature. In keeping with nature's abundance and paucity, weakness and intensity, they give to some people ruling authority and greatness, and some they subdue and treat as nothing. Those who have gone to the refuge of nonexistence stay hidden, and he who is left comes to the top for awhile. With the tongue of trickery he calls himself "commander" and "sultan."

The rule of unconscious nature in the world of delusion is this: Whoever is more dishonorable and fiercer is greater in the fancy and supposition of others. The custom of the world of wakefulness and awareness is that whoever is more striving and more knowledge-pursuing is more comely and more splendid in the view of the intelligent.

Now, O possessor of *theōria*, gaze on the two worlds and the work of the two houses—both the world of nature and unconsciousness, and the world of wakefulness and awareness. Choose the better, for the choice has been thrown before you and your view.²¹ If you want the state that the people have—the heedlessness and the meaningless depictions—then hold off for a while. But if you are not satisfied with this and do not find it admirable for yourself, incline a bit to that side. Seek distance from the sleep of heedlessness and the seeing of futile forms.

If you want to clarify the superiority of the one over the other, so that your choice will be correct and unambiguous, this is enough—unknowing and unconsciousness can be encompassed by intelligence and wakefulness, but intelligence and wakefulness cannot be reached by unknowing and unconsciousness. The intelligent, wakeful person is conscious both of self and of the heedless, unconscious person; but the unintelligent and heedless is unconscious and unaware both of self and of the intelligent, wakeful person. For the possessor of choice, this is enough of the virtue of the one over the other.

If you search for another mark, this also can be found. The wall of existence has breaches, which are alteration and disappearance. Moment by moment, the hope of its fall gets nearer, and one cannot lean upon it. But the architect did not leave the foundation of meaning's existence outside *theōria*, for that existence is *theōria* itself. *Theōria* does not stay separate from the possessor of *theōria*. Hence, to leave aside meaning's cushion and to choose out form's leaning-place is to flee from fixity and to cling to disappearance; it is to break off from subsistence and join with annihilation. Something compatible with these words has been versified in a few lines of a poetic fragment:

No value and worth remains for this world's life—
 be not baffled, take good care of the afterworld!
 Seek no residence or rest in the house of annihilation
 for this world's abode is not fit for residing.
 Subsistence is the world of intellect, annihilation that of the
 senses—
 What does it mean to want annihilation and not want subsistence?

O possessor of an honored placement! May the nurturing bounties of the Nurturer never be interrupted from your body, anima, lifebreath, and intelligence! May the body have health and a balanced constitution, the anima limpidness and cleansedness, the lifebreath true thinking and right seeking, and the intelligence the recognition, governance, and good order of doing and saying in utmost and furthest completeness and admirableness, with assuredness and fixity! May everything numbered as the blights of these traits be prevented and repelled through the beginningless solicitude! May He give to your near ones, your sitting companions, and your boonfellows, in their heart and aspiration, aversion to and disgust with saying ungainful and harmful words! May no underling who finds room through service to sit and speak with you praise you for an excellence that you do not have, or adorn you with a fault that he sees in the form of an excellence. Although at first the heart's happiness increases from these sorts of words, secondly that happiness gives birth to deficiency in the seeing of insight and to everlasting grief.

It is told that Farazdaq²² was present at the session of a great man, for whom he aimed to recite a poem. The man to be praised said to him as follows: "This versification of yours will either include mention of my blemishes, or it will include the publication of my praiseworthy qualities and achievements. If you have versified my faults and shortcomings, I will not let you disgrace me with those ugly things at the head of the gathering. If you want to enumerate my virtues in verse, I am more aware of my virtues than you. Go back out this door and seek another work!"

It is also recounted of a great man that he considered conviviality with enemies more gainful than companionship and sitting with friends. He said, "The friends have not seen my faults, and if they have seen them, they have kept them hidden, so such ugly things have stayed with us. But the enemies have made us aware of our faults and deficiencies, so we have washed ourselves of fault and ugliness through striving and struggle, and we have become pure."

My speech has drawn out. When the reins of talking's steed are given over to people, they are also given permission to talk at length. They will cut it short when they reach the waystation. I expect that such writing will be numbered as the utmost well-wishing. For, in my helplessness, these are the goods that I have. I have collected them and stored them up for myself. Whoever makes a gift of what he has collected and stored should not be penalized. Whoever approves for his lord and benefactor exactly what he approves for himself will not be held to have fallen short in performing the duty of service.

The Knower of the hidden and the evident is aware and knows that for sixty years, this incapable servant has been crossing deserts and steeps and numbering the waystations in the darknesses of the self's life, seeking that fountainhead of the self's

livingness through whose dampness all animals are alive.²³ I finally reached the point of expressing it by the name *intelligence*, and I saw that life is nothing but its trace and ray. When my mouth found the sweetness and taste of intelligence, I took up a station at that wellspring and became a resident there. To hope to leave this resting place is impossible. When the wanter and lover of livingness reaches the fountainhead of livingness, he will not seek separation, nor will he sever himself from it.

Cut off from You? With whom should I join?

To pass from You would be to laugh at myself.

Wakeful fortune came to my aid
and threw me straight to Your door.

There were locks on me,
but seeing You is the key to every lock.

I would not have found had I dug out a mine,
You I found since I dug out my soul.

How could I be conscious of self without You—
what am I, how am I, who am I?

I am aware of self now that I
have with You an endless joining.

I was thin and dead, and now
I have filled out neck and arm with soul.

Without You, why should I sew up body's sack
and which side should I bind up with soul?

Without You, I would not be happy with Jamshid's kingdom,
but with You, I am content with nothing.

I may become far from body and soul—
but far be it from me to be far from You!

May the night of your search be pregnant with the dawn of finding, the day of your awareness and wakefulness empty of the time of disappearance, the soul happy with intelligence, the heart free from every bond, and your conduct the foundation for noble character traits!

Peace be upon the folk of peace, and blessings be upon the seal of the prophets and his household, the noble! *God alone suffices us* [3:173], and a good helper is He. (*Muṣannaḥat* 692–99)

Quatrains

Wherever I look is turmoil,
the pain of torture, the blow of a stick.
To purify the world from each other,
they've made their beards into brooms. (39)

* * *

What comes to hand from learning [*faḍl*] but eating out heart?
A shame, Afḍal, that you can't eat your learning.

These days, dogs hold the crumbs in their hands—
 you can't eat bread from the hands of dogs. (56)

Petition

Soon reality's door will open to you,
 so pull aside fully from this world of metaphor.
 In this metaphorical world only those gain
 who go from beginning to end without loss.
 Since your work on that side is already sewn up,
 don't sew up this side with your hopes.
 This is the world of annihilation, that the world of subsistence—
 annihilation is bad, subsistence good, so reach for the good.
 To be unoccupied with possessions and status—that is great felicity.
 To be deluded by gold and power—that is long affliction.
 More wondrous still is why anyone flees from felicity—
 why do people always need more affliction?
 Since you have striven only to suffer, strive no more!
 Since you delight in a life already gone, delight no more!
 The bride of intellect will stay behind the veil forever
 if aspiration aims for needs and ties itself down with greed.
 Thanks and obligation be to the Real—high is He!—
 for He gave my soul passage to His own path.
 With a hundred generousities He made me secure from anger and greed,
 with a hundred exaltations He called me to Him from avarice and hate.
 In the road of certainty and intelligence, my pure mind
 has a thousand torch-bearers for ups and downs.
 Why do I require the colors and tricks of magic?
 God the exalted and majestic has placed miracles in my certainty.
 How could my aspiration come down to sorcery and spells?
 Why would a royal falcon hunt for locusts?
 Whoever has ascribed falsehood to me—
 I pardon him, whether he is a worker of corruption or a tale-bearer.
 The words and deeds of such creatures, though I've seen them
 a thousand times and will see them again, I soon forget.
 You, O praised of the days, support of the creed and kingdom,
 beauty of the reign and religion, glory of the time, the Ayaz²⁴—
 In justice, truth, bounty, and generosity,
 seek this servant's deliverance and attend to his business!
 I am not suited to guards and chains,
 nor is this stranger, who shares with me in this heartache.
 I have this heartache not from you—indeed, from your generosity
 I expect a hundred thousand blessings and joys.
 Think not that I request for my own sake,
 for I get along well with blows like this.

Rather I grieve for a house full of children. My ache for them
 brings the sound of their weeping to the ear of my soul.
 Like birds, their hearts wounded by my affliction,
 they fly with wings beating in their breasts.
 May the grief of their burning and weeping not cast
 the world of this resting empire into running and charging!
 Because of you is your name the heading of generosity's book!
 Because of you is your justice the embroidery on the robe of time!
 On the day of battle, your command is the lion's claw!
 At the time of attack, your spear is the boar's tusk!
 Your family was chosen by the sphere that gives birth to calamity!
 You've stolen the pearl in a world that plays sleight of hand!
 Though my work and your praise are long,
 neither metaphor nor concision fit your fame.
 Live pure and delivered from every evil like gold!
 May the enemy of your status always fall to the mouth of the pincers.
 May your envier's head be empty and dry like coriander,
 may your enemy's body be hidden by a hundred veils like onion.
 Jinn and mankind are prostrate before your high status,
 moon and sun perform their prayers to your high standing! (*Muṣannafāt* 731–32)

Quatrains

With You I gaze not on existence,
 I think not of ups nor of downs.
 I see and I worship in certainty,
 neither seeing nor worshipping self. (146)

* * *

With You I give soul to Adam,
 with Your light I brighten the world.
 Without You no strength remains
 to let out my breath as I want. (145)

* * *

O Lord, how pleasant it is to laugh without mouth,
 to see the creatures without owing eyes.
 Sit and journey—how good it is
 to travel the world without painful feet! (179)

Letter to Tāj al-Dīn Muḥammad Nūshābādi

May the help of the divine confirmation never be disjoined and interrupted from the
 work and thought of my lord, may his clear heart be well-provided with content-
 ment and patience in fortune and misfortune, may he accept admonition and learn
 lessons from the occurrences of the world of generation and transformation, and may

God—exalted and high is He!—show him the road and protect him in all states, by His favor and His munificence!

This suppliant sends his service and applause, and from within I share with you in the suffering and damage that has newly arrived because of the death of her who has entered the divine mercy.²⁵ May the going of the gone be the cause of release, and may her state be the model of wakefulness for those who remain! May our hearts be enabled to finish with futile heartache and useless grief and anguish!

Without doubt, a complete blow has struck my lord's heart through this grievous incident. However, if you have the occasion while suffering this blow to meditate carefully on what it is whereby the soul has in reality suffered the blow, the injury of suffering the blow will become less, both in this occurrence and in others. Then you will become aware that your heart's suffering has not come from another's going and change of state. Rather, you suffer because you had tied your hope to something that has not remained, and the hope has been broken. Hope was tied to the life of an individual for whom life would not remain, and the hope, like that individual's life, does not remain. Hence, you have suffered from the breaking of hope, not from the individual's life and death.

From this it is clear that the provision of every regret, sorrow, and pain comes from being tied to hope. If anyone cuts himself off from his own hope, no regret and sorrow will remain for him, for regret and sorrow are born from hope. Someone said,

Every child born in this dark pit
from the mother of days was named "sorrow."

To cut off hope is not that you cleave hope from one individual, work, or wish, for by this path, a new affliction will arrive at every moment. When you cut off from one individual, you will join with another. If you remove hope from one work, you will bind it to another. Rather, you must keep yourself far from hope—not that you should remove hope from others and then leave it in yourself. Hope's tree did not come from your seed, for hope is born from trickery and delusion, and trickery rises up from heedlessness and without-self-ness.²⁶ The heedlessness of without-self-ness arrives from ignorance, and ignorance of the soul is collected from love for the dark body.

My lord, if you want the dark body of the deceased, it is still there. If you want her alive, imagine that she is in one city or house, and you are in another. No trace or help reaches her life from your life, and no trace or help joins to your life from hers. She herself is completely alive, independent of you, and you are still alive, independent of her. Indeed, the joining with hope has been nullified, and all this grief comes from that.

In short, keep yourself firmly in place through correct thoughts in these calamities. After all, the artisanry of the passing days has thickened and frozen the bodily frame out of thin water, and it has fallen into motion and movement, so various sorts

of works and diverse sounds come from it. But how long will it remain and until when will it last?

In the chapters of *Zajr al-nafs*, Idris—upon him be peace—says, “O soul, you have a mount and ship in the ocean of generation and corruption upon which you lean, but it also is from this ocean’s water, and through artisanry it has become hard and frozen. Do not let it melt all at once and become water, so that you remain without mount on the boundless ocean and drown!”²⁷

These individuals and these bodies, which you have named “son, daughter, brother, and sister” are that same thin, altering, and corrupting water that has become thick and hard through artisanry, but hope has made them a nest and a house, and therein it has nurtured sorceries and madneses.

A water that turns to black leather through passing days
now you call “daughter,” now “son.”
It became a room, and fancy stored its luggage—
it became a pot, and hope cooked its madness.

Such is the foundation. So, it is clear that happiness at the coming and birth of animate things is not appropriate, and grief and heartache at their going and dying is not proper. There is a road to be passed and a way to be trod for the comers and goers. Those who find the heartache of the goers’ going console themselves with happiness at the comers’ coming. The heartache has no avail, and the happiness has no stability. You should recognize no life as more wasted than that which comes to an end in unavailing heartache and unstable happiness.

My talking has become long. May your heart full of pain not be taken also by the pain of weariness! All the brothers gather together in addressing you with best wishes, supplication, and applause. May the causes of felicity be facilitated, and the basis of wakefulness and clarity be made stable! May objectives be obtained, sufferings disappear, and hearts be clear and patient in occurrences and afflictions! God—high indeed is He!—is the Patron of response and repentance. And praise belongs to God, much praise indeed. (*Muṣannafāt* 706–709)

Quatrains

Suppose you subtract from your life by adding more gold—
a hundred treasures gained with bodily toil.
Suppose you then sit and stand on the treasure—
you’ll be snow in the desert for two or three days. (6)

* * *

If your kingdom be Egypt, Syria, and China,
and all the horizons be under your thumb,
enjoy, for my share and yours in the end
will be ten yards of shroud and two yards of earth. (175)

* * *

Suppose you run the world as you like, then what?

You read life's book to the end, then what?

You have your way for a hundred years—
then a hundred more. Then what? (183)

* * *

Afdal, you've seen that all you've seen is nothing.

You've run from horizon to horizon—nothing.

Whatever you've said and heard is nothing,
whatever you've hidden in corners is nothing. (104)

Supplication

O Lord, Your magnificence prevents recognition of You. All those who find the way back to Your Presence through the radiance of Your light, which is intelligence, fall by that light outside the darknesses of sense-intuition, imagination, sensation, body, and nature. At every instant, the things inviting them to love that Presence increase. But, until they lose the lamp of their own existence in the universal sun and become wholly it, two-ness will not disappear and recognition of the reality will not be obtained.

All creatures admit and confess—some through certainty, reality, and insight, and some through following authority—that the Real (high indeed is He beyond similarity and likeness!) is incomparable with howness and whyness and that He has no need for place and location; that there is nothing to be discussed concerning Being and Ipseity; and that nothing but the knowing heart is the falling-place for His Being's light. So, one should search out the state of the knowing heart—what substance is it that it should have found this felicity? Were there not this unification in beginningless eternity, it would not be able to receive the light and obtain true knowledge. Peace! (*Muṣannaḥāt* 652)

Quatrains

O pure Sufi seeking God,

He has no place, from whence do you seek Him?

If you do know Him, why do you seek Him?

If you don't know Him, whom are you seeking? (161)

* * *

O You whose pure Essence is rid of existence,

all spirits fall flat on the dirt at Your door.

Whatever has come into being by nonbeing's road
is a drop of dew on the face of a rose. (176)

* * *

My Idol has not shown her face—

all their talk is futile and vain.

When someone lauds her as she deserves,
 he's heard the account from somebody else. (157)

First Letter to Shams al-Dīn Dizwākūsh

May your exalted heart and eminent soul be prepared for and adorned with the divine *theōria* and the infinite lights; may your passing thoughts be far and cut off from bodily wishes that accept disappearance, and may they be linked to fixed, spiritual inspirations, and lasting, everlasting intelligibles; may your high aspiration and clear lifebreath be restricted to going on the straight avenue and the road of rectitude; may your intellecting soul fulfill its desires by finding the certainties; and may the rust of hesitation disappear completely from the face of the substance of the anima's mirror! May the Creator—high indeed is His grandeur!—be the help and aid in making these meanings actual in us and in you—by the right of Muḥammad and his household!²⁸

I have come with my old heartache and burning breast—may they increase!—so as to mention something of them. For you, dear friend, asked me for a chapter of this sort in your letter and you pointed to something about returning to the universal and root world, which is the substance's shelter and the native resting place. Until a trace of those meanings became manifest in your exalted heart, you could not have written that. Nothing could put you to showing such a want save the attractions of the Real.

Now, the intelligent person cannot doubt or hesitate concerning the fact that our lingering in this world and our residence in this station do not pertain to the root. If it did pertain to the root and the substance, it could never change from state to state. Moreover, from whence could it have reached us to search for another realm outside our own substantial and root station? How could we have hurried to that with all of self? Putting our own wishes and appetites behind, pulling our hands back from worldly enjoyments, and returning through thought toward the subtle meanings and the realities of things are all proof of intellect, of complete being, and of endless life.

Those who are returning are of many sorts, and in the returning they take after many paths. Each prepares and sets down the work of his own return and the provisions of the afterworld in the way that he recognizes as best.

If the wish to return to self and the world of self has risen in you, my friend, you should strive to return before the evening of youth reaches the dawn of old age and before the freshness and well-being of the body end in withering and wasting. You should not do as has been said—

When you attend to us after all those works,
 you come and make a game of love.

They say that an old and trembling man repented. When he went before his imam, the imam asked him, "What was your artisanry?"

He replied, "Playing the flute."

He said, "Go away, for if you could still put wind in your flute, you never would have repented."

How many truthful wayfarers, striving companions, and restless goers have girded up the waist of their honored souls on this road! They have pulled the precious body into lowliness and abasement and placed it in the midst of the flames. They have cleansed their individual, particular heart and liver with bloody tears on the face. They have kept the door of the self shut to the various sorts of joy. They have obtained the sapiential, philosophical sciences with difficult struggles and tremendous striving and suffering. They have turned the face of desire and want toward the world of the intellect and the universe of the meanings. They have placed rejection's hand on the breast of the world, the body, nature, and soul. But no aroma of reality's rose garden has reached their nose. They did not become aware and cognizant with certainty and plain-seeing of the state of the self as it is.

Those who wore down the earth under their feet
and traveled both worlds in search of Him—
Would that I knew if ever they came
to know this state as it really is.

This is because they fancied that the things are outside of self. They searched for the intelligibles, which are in the intellect, with the same mode and wont with which they sought for the sensibles, which are outside the senses. They did not know that there can be no tool and intermediary between the intellecter, the intellect, and the intelligible, such that an intellecter through intellect would grasp his own intelligible with the tool. However, between the sensate, the senses, and the sensibles, there must be tools and intermediaries, so that he who senses through sensation may grasp his own sensible.

Sensation cannot find its sensible whenever it wants, but intellect can look at its intelligible whenever it wants. This is because the intelligible is not separate from the intellect. It is permanently actual within it. One cannot conceive that the intelligible should be separate from it, for, were the intelligible far from it, it would not be the intellect. The intellect is there when the intelligible is with it. But sensation can become separate from the sensible, for the sensible is not within it forever.

Sometimes sensation is actual sensation, and sometimes potential. But in intellect, nothing is potential without being actual. The meaning of this is that, were something potential in the intellect, something other than intellect would make it actual in intellect. But "other than intellect" is unknowing and nonexistence. Knowing cannot be made actual in the intellect by unknowing. Hence nothing can be potential in the intellect; rather, all is actual.

Potential sensation and the potential sensible come into act together through intermediaries, for the sensible is not permanently within sensation. But the intelligible is within the intellect forever.

Sensation is not the root and foundation of the sensible and the intermediaries, but intellect is the root and foundation of the intelligible. When it is the intellecter of the intelligibles of self, it depicts every intelligible in a more general intelligible *within self*. When it is the intellecter of self—I mean that there is no intelligible above it through which it grasps self—then it finds all the intelligibles in self at once, because it is the intellecter, the intellect, and the intelligible. But sensation's states are

not like this. Although all sensibles are potentially in sensation, it cannot grasp them one by one until they reach it from outside through intermediaries.

Also, it is impossible for sensation to grasp several sensibles at once. This is because, as long as the sensible has not been depicted for sensation, it cannot grasp it, and as long as the sensible's form is not erased from sensation, it cannot accept any other sensible form. The meaning of this is that the sensible makes sensation into that which is acted upon from the outside through the intermediaries, and thereby the possessor of sensation becomes aware that the sensible has been depicted in sensation. But intellect can grasp several intelligibles at once, and when they are many, it becomes more powerful in finding them. Thus the body is an intelligible and the soul another intelligible. When they are together and become one thing, and when sensation and awareness appear in the body, the intellect grasps each of them with a correct finding through the general genus of that thing.

Those whose search and wayfaring in the road of the Real were in this manner saw again their own mistake and slip at each waystation. Again they renewed their repentance from the start, and they took after another path. But, as long as there remain joining with the body and the body's connections with the anima and its obstacles or with the particular things, it is impossible for the desired object to show its face as it must. The person who takes the body and its subordinates in one hand, and, with the other hand, searches for the anima and its enjoyments, who nurtures unlasting imaginings and corrupt objects of sense-intuition, is called "wishful." But "Religion does not pertain to wishfulness."²⁹

I said to the Friend with a tongue that I have,
 "My soul has risen in wish for your face."
 He said, "Step to the other side of wishes,
 for wishing won't put this work aright."

If this work and road could be facilitated by wishing, there would be few particular, human individuals from whom the traces of the intellective, everlasting meanings and realities were not manifest. This is because everyone inclines by nature toward cleverness and knowing, and they avoid and flee from death, unconsciousness, and ignorance. But, because of appetites and caprice, they come back actually toward endless death. They are able to put themselves to more trouble for the means of death and ignorance than for the preparation of livingness and knowing.

There are many classes of this sort, and each class has many individuals. All are like the ill, and enumerating them all would be impossible in this letter. Hence I will mention two classes from among the classes who have the name *wayfaring* by way of example. One is the highest and one the lowest.

The lowest tribe are like the ill whom a physician is treating in truthfulness and correctness. In some states, they perform the command of the physician, and in some they prefer not to follow his command. When imagination, the potency of sense-intuition, and the other potencies find this weakness in them, with the potency of taste they show them at every hour the morsels that were compatible with them in bodily health. The admonition of the physician, and love for the health whose enjoyment they have recognized, strive counter to that, so that perhaps they may not incline to it. It

may be that the latter dominates over imagination, so they do not circle round about that place of snares. Or it may be that wishes become dominant so that they kick away the physician's treatment. Long-reaching and lack of abstinence make them shortsighted, even though they recognize the enjoyments of health and know that the physician is more cognizant of their state than they. So, all at once the appetites and enjoyments of taste become dominant and bring them to the point where they leave aside the physician's command. They do not go after what will repel the illness. The high-substanced soul flees in fright from the little bit of unpleasantness that is the foundation of health and safety, and as much as people tell them this, it has no gain. The infirmity's replenishment arrives at every moment, and the provision of health is broken off instant by instant, until the work's outcome is perishment and ruin.

So also are the wayfarers whom appetites and enjoyments have cut off from the road. In itself each of the potencies goes after what is compatible and agreeable with it. Because of their domination, the intellective potency can give no help. This is just like servitors and retinue who all at once revolt against the king. They leave the king's commands and make him perish. Our place of refuge from this station is nothing but the divine protection.

The class of the highest level are those who are like the healthy in body. Whatever they eat is changed into the body's replenishment and the potency of health. In preserving their own health, they do not require the view of the physician. So, health remains for them, and no enjoyment or appetite can turn them away from their own state. They keep all the potencies and bodily enjoyments under the intellective potency. They do not allow any of these to dominate over another. When they move the body toward one of the edibles or other appetites, they move it by intellect's indication. With intellect's indication, they eliminate from self corrupt and lie-showing imaginings and dreadful or joy-increasing objects of sense-intuition. Their soul, with the help of the intellective potency, finds the fulfillment of its desires, such that the imaginal and sense-intuitive potencies become as if they had never been.

So, once this proportioning and equilibrium appear in the body's potencies, which are mutually incompatible, the divine lights will undoubtedly shine upon the soul. From their effusion, a world—or rather, both worlds—will become bright and apparent. *And the earth shall shine with the light of its Lord* [39:69] seems to be an expression of this state. For the soul sparkles through the intellect, the inside potencies scatter pearls from the soul, the body and the manifest potencies become worthy for and decorated with all the works that are wanted from them through the trace of that light, beauties find a place in the manifest and nonmanifest, uglinesses are totally effaced, and Iblis and his companions are hung on the gallows. May God—high indeed is He!—make you, my friend, and me in my weakness reach this station! May He protect and preserve from the drawing on of *We will draw them on little by little from whence they know not* [7:182]—through Muḥammad and his household!

You must also know that searching out and exploring things and investigating the origin and return of the self do not arise from bodily individuals. If searching and yearning for the meanings and the road of reality arose from human individuals inasmuch as they are individuals, this wanting would be found in every particular individual, but such is not the case. This is because the wish to encompass both

worlds is fitting for someone for whom it is possible to encompass them. But it is impossible for any particular individual in respect of individuality to encompass another individual, especially both worlds. Hence this wish does not arise from the individual. Rather, it arises from the soul that is radiant with the divine light.

The purpose of this admonishment is that, if you find searching in self, you should not suppose that this arises from the soul, or the body, or the soul that, before the radiance, had not accepted the primary things from the intellect. Rather, this searching arises from the light and radiance of the Bestower, Keeper, and Innovator of the things, because He is all things. Therefore, the search for all things arose.

Also, not every time a bit of searching appears can one give witness to its truthfulness.

If you set your heart on the journey [*sayr*], O friend,
 like garlic [*sīr*] you'll come out from skin all at once.
 Beware, don't circle round this fearful road
 if your thought is like an onion, skin upon skin!

This suppliant's purpose in the amount that I have pointed out is that you should avoid the stations³⁰ that are not praiseworthy. You should turn the face of searching totally toward the destination and objective of self. When you have made fast your resolution for the wayfaring, you will undoubtedly require to seize upon the saddle-straps of a possessor of good-fortune who has passed over these difficult stations and harsh steepes, who has measured the downs and ups of this road, and who has marked the waystations to the destination one by one a thousand times. This is because nothing of the created and engendered things requires nurturing³¹ more than the human, whether by way of the body or by way of the soul. If it is a plant, it can search for nourishment and the provision of growth by itself. So also, the animals of the wild live and grow, and their being is facilitated for a while.

If you want to nurture a plant so that it becomes better and more worthy to receive the traces of soul, you strive in preparing its body, the water, and the earth; in keeping its root soft and giving potency to other things; in keeping the crawling things away from it; and—for some—in cutting and grafting.

In the same way, if you want to nurture the other animals, you can do so by nourishments worthy and appropriate for them. If you want excellencies to appear from them, you train them and put their bodies to work so that what is potential within them may become actual. Thus they are kept deprived and made worthy for easy riding or running, so that they will run continuously and devotedly, and the quick-running and far-running soul within their body will be made manifest. Animals have the level of awareness and perception with the senses. Therefore their bodies are put to work so that the soul may make manifest its own traces because of the worthiness of the dwelling-place.

In nurturing humans, when one wants to make actual those things that are potential within them, one must oppose them and command them to pull aside from all the enjoyments of the senses and imagination. The meaning of this is as follows:

Once people become detached from the adornment, decoration, and refinement of the body, they must strive to purify their soul and make it limpid. They

must take the path of effacing the dispositions that over time have become consolidated in the soul.

At the level of the plant, nothing more than nurturing the body can be facilitated. In the animal, because of awareness, the body can be trained. In the human, because of the intellective radiance, after adorning the body, the soul is prepared for receiving the intellective traces so that the intellective forms may be shown within it.

There is a great difference between the nurturers of these two levels—I mean the plant and the animal—and the nurturer of the human soul. The nurturer of the plant nurtures the plant through the radiance of life, and the nurturer of the animal nurtures the animal through the radiance of perception and awareness. But the nurturer of the human soul must be a knower of self so as to be able to make the soul reach self. Thus the nurturer of the animal made manifest what was already within it and took nothing away. He nurtured it until it received a radiance of intellect and put one step forward from animality.

So strive—before the body's basis goes to ruin, the foundation of the wall of particular existence is demolished and effaced, the compoundedness and combinedness of the elements end up in dis severance, the mold is held back from receiving the dispositions of the soul, the qualities undergo change, *and the human will say on that day, "Whither to flee?"* [75:10]—to join with someone of such commiserating care. If you have no other handhold for this waystation than *The leg is intertwined with the leg* [75:29], strive so that you cleave totally from the body and its enjoyments—with the help of the Author and the aspiration of the friends.

Here there is fear because, when the wayfarer intends the wayfaring, there are bandits and thieves on the road. The "satans of jinn and men" and their subordinates will get together and pull the soul—which is the worst of the wayfarer's enemies—into assisting them.³² They will take this world as helper so as to show their wishes and lying beauty to him moment by moment. This is all for testing him, so that, once he finishes with the tests and truthfulness appears, he himself will be able to give witness to the truthfulness of searching, showing servanthood, and being tame before the self's command. *On the day when their truthfulness will profit the truthful* [5:119] seems to be this station, for the self can give witness to its own truthfulness and not be ashamed. But when people cling to the wishes of this world while searching for the afterworld, fancying that they are wayfarers, this is a sheer lie. Even if they do not know that it is a lie, at the moment when joining with the body is cut off, the lie will appear.

I have pulled this out too long. Let me end it with these two lines:

If you now set your heart on the journey,
don't seek increase of clothing and food.
The thorn that hopes have put in your foot—
dig it out quick with the needle of thought!

Whatever the rationally speaking soul has brought to the hand's door by means of the pen and the other intermediaries and depicted on this sheet of paper, may the Creator—majestic and exalted is He!—make into the provision of stirring up and drawing out acceptance of and arrival at the Real's road for worthy wayfarers and

prepared adorned ones. And may He not make it a noxiousness and argument against the reader and writer—by Muḥammad and his household, the pure, the renouncers! *God alone suffices us* [3:173], and a good helper is He! Peace. (*Muṣannafāt* 681–691)

Quatrains

No one will know from the surface
 how form and meaning came to be joined.
 All will see plainly the mysteries
 only when form is broken. (99)

* * *

O quintessence of the four pillars,
 listen to words from the spiritual world:
 You are devil, beast, angel, human—
 whatever you show, you are that. (136)

* * *

If you move ahead on the path of the search,
 you will come to command the nine-layered house.
 The first step is searching for Him,
 the last is to be yourself He. (165)

Second Letter to Shams al-Dīn Dizwākūsh

I received the words from the blessed pen of that quintessence of the best of the age, that first-fruit of the garden of intelligence, that light of the eyes of the lords of reality, Shams al-Dīn—God confirm him with His noble spirit and give to him of His magnificent bounty! Seeing those lines and understanding the purport of those words gave my eyes and my reflection a full provision of joy and hopefulness. My heart filled with thanks to God for what I saw plainly of the good qualities of your honored anima's state.

Whatever I may have fancied until now, you commanded and requested that I should write out the analysis of a few states, and I do not see that I can have any escape from that, so I have heard and accepted. Whatever may be in the power of the seeing and the explicating of someone like me will never be held back from someone like you.

In the treatise on “opening the eight doors,” which is named *The Rungs of Perfection*, all these objectives can be found—how it is that the wayfarers on the path of the afterworld should be; how they should avoid the blights of the wayfaring and the arrival; what allows them to be released from the snare of immediate enjoyments; how they can become familiar with the world of the meanings, which are the spirits, so that they may live endlessly through this familiarity and become aware of self; and also, what are the marks of deserving comfort and deserving chastisement. I have

shown these states in several sections of that treatise—one in the fourth opening, “On the causes that help to perfection”; in the fifth opening, “On the causes that come between the soul and her perfection”; in the sixth opening, “On the marks that signify perfection”; and in the seventh opening, “On the path of acquiring the helping causes.”³³ As for the investigation of the states of the souls when they become separate from the bodies, that can be found analyzed and detailed both in the discussions of *The Rungs* and in the Persian treatise that we call *The Book of the Road’s End*.

In short, becoming cognizant and informed of the soul’s states in felicity and wretchedness is connected to becoming cognizant and informed of the soul’s reality and its essence’s substance. This is because becoming informed of a thing’s attributes and states after becoming informed of the thing is easy. However, most of the human species who have the preparedness reach the described object by way of the descriptions. The soul’s descriptions, in keeping with its many traces and acts, appear as diverse. This diversity gives birth to bewilderment and wavering in reflective thought. This is because the traces of the soul in growing bodies are nourishment, growth, and progeneration; in animal frames they are sense-perception, imagining, and sense-intuiting, along with nourishment, growth, and progeneration; and in the human body, along with these acts and traces, appear artisanries and practices of which the other animals are incapable.

Despite the intensity of preparedness and the potency of astuteness and cleverness, most people cannot find self. They do not become informed of the soul’s reality as separate from the sensory and vegetal soul. They see the intellect as mixed with sensation and imagination, and they find the soul compounded with the body. Since they know for certain that the compoundedness and combinedness of the body ends up in differentiation and disseverance, they become perplexed about the soul’s work after the disseverance.

The reality is that until the soul’s dissection is known, there will be no dissection—neither in the state of the combination of the body’s parts and the existence of life, nor after the disjoining of the members and the advent of death. Once the difference between the soul’s substance and descriptions and the body’s substance and states is recognized, the soul comes to be dissectioned from the body, even if it is still restrained and brought together by the restraint of life and the combinedness of the parts.

This differentiation and discernment is difficult not because of utmost hiddenness, but because of utmost clarity. Everything that becomes clear for humans becomes clear from their soul, not from their body and frame. No matter how clear things can appear to be, the self is clearer than the things.

Also, another mistake that has become persistent and prolonged, thereby helping this hiddenness predominate, is that most of the ulama who have made people aware of the soul and its existence, and of the substantiality that is specific to it and that is the attribute through which it is distinct from the body, have shown it such that, although the soul is distinct and separate from the body through attributes, it is not separate from the body in existence so long as the human is alive. So, once the body’s life is nullified, the soul comes to be dissectioned.

This state should be known better than this, for, from this concept, it comes to be supposed that all human individuals are equal—he who has the theoretical po-

tency in perfection, he who has the practical potency, and he who has nothing other than the sense-intuition, imagination, and sensation that the other animals have—and that all of them have the human soul actually. [It is supposed] that these souls do not become disseverated from the body unless through the body's death. Then, after disseveration from the body, the same plurality and multiplicity of the individual bodies and their particular souls will stay established, and those souls will be many and conscious of each other.

But the state is not like this, for the intellecting soul has no joining with any of the bodies. As long as it has been and will be, it is disseverated. The souls that have a joining with the bodies are the potencies of the sensory and animal soul and the potencies of the growing soul.

Until the mutually opposed bodies become far from incompatibility and opposition, they do not have the state of being the locus for the practices of the growing soul. Until the growing soul reaches the final goal of perfection in its own specificity and work, it is not worthy to help the animal soul. Until the animal, sensory soul reaches the utmost end of limpidness and subtlety, it does not receive the radiance of intelligence. Once these souls and potencies stand straight in their own perfections, they become the intermediaries between the body and intelligence such that they take a share of what reaches them from intelligence to the body in the explicated order.

If it were possible for intelligence to have a connection with the body without these intermediaries and means, it would be fitting to find artisanries and intellectual practices in all inanimate bodies without the intermediary of the animal soul. So also, were a particular, individual body the locus of intellect, then intellectual practices, acts, and words would become manifest from it everlastingly, without diversity and disparity, lessness and moreness, or slackening and intensity, in one manner and in one mode—just like judgments of intellect and certainty, which never alter, become disparate, or come to be transferred.

We all see plainly that the frozen and inanimate bodies are in the utmost farness from artisanries and intellectual practices and words. No doubt must remain for us that the intellect's trace falls on the animal soul only when it is worthy to receive this trace. From the animal soul it crosses over into and permeates the body and its members. If the animal potency were not in the utmost end of perfection through limpidness and subtlety, it also would remain without portion and share of the shining of intelligence—so what of its body? Whenever reflective *theōria* is truly seeing and sharply penetrating, it enumerates the intellecting soul's descriptions and the attributes of the particular body and frame, it grasps their mutual correspondence and incompatibility, and it knows that the body cannot be sewn onto the intellect, and the living cannot be mixed with the dead. It is impossible for the endless essence to be compounded with size or with measure and dimensions. When there is something whose every part is dissimilar to and different from its every other part and whose parts have sections and partitions, it will not become intimate with that whose part is the whole and whose whole is the part.

Hence it becomes clear that the reception of disjoining and disseverance can belong only to what has mutually different parts. When something's part has the nature of the whole, it has no disjoining. Although what accepts disjoining becomes corrupted and changed in state, this does not make it imperative that the thing whose

substance is denuded and exempt from accepting disjoining and corruption should be transformable and corruptible. However, this mistake of reflection is what has entered the mind of the vast majority of people, or rather the ulama; no, rather those who are numbered as sages. Thus it is heard that every bodily individual in the human species is joined with a subsistent, specific, sempiternal, endless soul, which is called the “human soul,” the “talking soul,” and the “intellecting soul.” But this proposition is not necessarily truthful. It is not the case that, when it is right to ascribe someone’s body to the human body, it is also right and correct to ascribe his soul to the knowing soul. The completeness of the body is no mark of the completeness of the soul, nor is the health of the body and its members proof of the health and knowing of the soul, for the causes of the body’s perfection and the increase of its substance are one thing, and the causes of the soul’s perfection and the enduring of its substance are something else.

If someone without a knowing soul is called “possessor of soul,” this shows truthfulness—but this is the animal soul, not the human soul. The animal soul, after the nullification of its body, does not remain at work. But the soul that is intellecting—I mean “knowing” and “conscious of self”—remains at work after the extinction of the body, for its work is through self and its act through essence, not through tool. Indeed, as long as the soul is a potential knower, not actual, then when the body ceases to have life, the soul does not become an actual existent. It will have that very state that it had with the life of the body. If it was searching and wanting, then when the body is nullified, it will not arrive. If it had no search and yearning for perfection along with the body’s existence, then when the body is nullified, its anima will be like the soul of the beasts and the other animals. If, along with the body’s life, it was knower of self and actually an intellecter, then without the body it will keep on being actual, and no defect or deficiency will reach it. No, rather it will be more complete in witnessing the essence of self. Once it becomes separate from the animal soul, the heedlessness and veil that had reached it because of paying attention to the animal soul will also disappear.

However, the soul that is actually an intellecter is one, and there is no plurality and multiplicity within it. If it is posited that there are a hundred or more particular, human individuals, all of whom are called “knowing”—in the sense that each of them can be considered to have a complete portion of the intelligibles of certainty, not the imaginables and sense-intuited objects—these individuals are all one through intellect, no matter how many they may be. No diversity or difference can fit into that concerning which there is certainty.

Since no doubt remains for us that the intellect’s unity is not nullified by the existence of a multiplicity of individuals, incontestably it becomes imperative that the nullification of the individuals’ multiplicity does not necessitate the nullification of the intellect’s unity. The explication that the intellect is one even though the intellecters can be many is written in the treatise *The Rungs*.

The intellect has no essence dissimilar to its existence such that we might say, “The intellect is an existent.” Rather, the intellect is itself existence. Also, intellect’s existence is its knowing and awareness. This is not like the existence of human individuals, for the existence of human individuals is not the individuals’ knowing.

Rather, human individuals may exist without knowing, but intellect's existence is knowing itself.

In short, this state can be truly recognized through the limpidness of the animal soul. The path of acquiring limpidness has been shown in that treatise. You should strive to enter that path and restrict the self's aspiration to it. You should consider as superfluous the other practices and endeavors that the vast majority of the ulama and sages of our time number among the indispensable, important things—namely the acquisition of sensory and sense-intuitive virtues, for these are all blights that nullify the existence of knowing and awareness.

Since the human specificity is awareness and knowing, and the human is human through this specificity, whatever nullifies this has nullified the existence of the human. Whatever makes it deficient has made humanness deficient. Hence, avoiding these blights is the most important of important things before you. You should belong to this and never be heedless of it, for heedlessness is the opposite of awareness. You should immerse yourself in struggle during the hours of your day and night, so that you may stand straight in the road that extends from the beginningless to the endless. *Those who struggle in Us—We shall guide them in Our paths. Surely God is with the beautiful-doers* [29:69]. (*Muṣannafāt* 700–706)

Ghazal

Wild rose takes color from the rose of your face,
 musk begs for fragrance from the tips of your tresses.
 Heart-adorning cypress, boxwood bows to your stature!
 Talking moon, the sun is downcast at your face!
 In shame before your stature, the cypress stands in one place,
 in envy of your cheek, the moon runs from here to there.
 Your heart has not come to rest with faithful me—
 my heart takes its disposition from separation's grief.
 My words enter not your heart, for no talk
 ever took a fortress of iron and brass.
 The rose and narcissus of your face are sated with water,
 for love made my eyes flow with a hundred streams.
 O eyes, to be worthy of seeing her,
 keep washing yourself with a hundred waters.
 O heart, why become narrow? She sits in you.
 If you want to find her, seek her in your own blood! (*Muṣannafāt* 733–34)

Letter to Shams al-Dīn Ḍiyā' al-Islām

The Lord of Exaltation—high indeed is His grandeur and holy His names!—is aware of what is concealed in your servant's heart, inmost mind, and lifebreath, and in what manner I am wishing well and seeking virtue for the states, acts, and words of the

high assembly of Shams al-Din, the brilliance [*diyā'*] of Islam. Surely your clear heart and pure, blessed, inmost mind has no doubt that these words from this suppliant are not a petitioning or a formality, and what has brought me to mention and offer this state is not a particular purpose. The cause of seeking this unification can be nothing but an innate correspondence and a temperamental compatibility.

Until you departed in blessedness from these quarters, most of the times I was witnessing in my heart your great beauty and noble qualities. My heart had bound utmost hope in your theoretical and ethical good qualities and virtues, that they should come to be whatever they should be, and that they should increase in whatever they had been; that whatever might be the blights of your immediate and delayed felicities be changed by the causes of [divine] assistance and giving success.

The shortcoming that has occurred in my correspondence until now was because the heart's intention, aspiration, and desire did not arrive at moving the fingers and pens. At this time that I have told my hand and pen to go to work, when I look well, I see that this is useless, for the states that are there will not be explained and detailed with this small explication and weak movement of the fingers. Moreover, the bringer of this missive happened to come all at once, suddenly, and by chance. Thus this resolution appeared in me without thought, and I found no deferment for long talking and writing. The work went in the manner of these verses:

I'll make the story short—it was just too difficult
and the bringer of the letter was greatly in a rush.
Nor did I have the leisure to write—
my hand now on my head, now on my heart.

In short, this is what I want, and this is best—that the yearning toward arrival at the realities have no slackening. Rather, every day it should be increasing. To be content and satisfied with the husks and accidents of existence is not the work of men. If the shell is so sweet that you cannot pull yourself back from it, then the kernel is much sweeter. Strive, so that you may also taste the kernel!

So, the choice is yours. I mean, how long will the creatures of the world chew on dried date-leaves in the name of fresh dates? However, they have an excuse. Most of the climes and the folk of the regions have seen nothing of date trees but brooms and fans. Such trees will not grow and mature in the earth of cold regions. How can bodily things and earth-sitters be conscious of the taste of the talking anima and the holy spirit? How can the color-seeing eyes be aware of the artisanry and masterwork of the color-mixing soul? This brief letter cannot bear more words than this. It would be best if we turned the hand's correspondence over to the oral communication of the heart.

I extend regards and applause for favors and bounties to the lord Muhadhhib al-Dīn. It is his to cleanse the stains of trouble and give over once again to himself. I am expecting the *Risāla-yi jāmi'ā*³⁴ to be brought to me by the hand of a correct and trustworthy bringer. If it is not yet complete, my heart is not bound to it. The purpose is not to conclude it, for those words have no end that they could ever be concluded. *If the sea were ink for the words of my Lord, the sea would be spent before the words of my Lord are spent* [18:109]. The objective is no more than to see where eminent pens have fallen on such discussions. I saw to it that a copy of *Zajr al-nafs*

should reach your service. Your blessed *theōria* should not be empty of studying it most of the time.

May the foundations of both worlds' felicities be made easy and may the secrets of clear-heartedness be endless and sempiternal! Praise belongs to God, Lord of the worlds, and may blessings be upon the master of the envoys, Muḥammad, and all his household. (*Muṣannafāt* 710–12)

Quatrains

If you show Your bounty, I have no fear of the world,
 if You use Your force, I will perish at once.
 Each day I say a thousand times—"O pure Artist,
 I'm a handful of dust. What comes from a handful of dust?" (66)

* * *

O Lord, look with generosity on my wounded heart!
 O You who are wealthy, look at poor me!
 I know well that I don't deserve Your court.
 Don't look at me, look at Your own munificence! (72)

* * *

Grief for You makes every soul happy,
 unbelief for You gives freshness to faith.
 May the heart not find comfort from You for a breath
 should it seek the cure of pain for You. (5)

* * *

Not all the unaware are empty of Your love,
 not all without insight are empty of Your pain—
 As much as I look on the creatures of the world,
 I see no head empty of madness for You. (47)

Letter to Shams al-Dīn Majd al-Islām

The traces of applause have reached and keep on reaching this sincere suppliant from the side of the sublime, chiefly session, Shams al-Dīn, the loftiness [*majd*] of Islam—may he stay sublime! The same keeps on going back to him many times over from every direction, for no realm and shelter is more appropriate for applause than applause's mine and origin. This is because of the primary rule that everything goes back to its origin. Since applause comes from you, it also goes back to you, and it finds and fits into no dwelling-place more appropriate than you.

Although my heart is wholly in your service and has become unified with you whom it serves, the work of what is outside the heart—the tongue, the hand, and the other limbs—does not go in step with the heart. Therefore, the heart does not find separation for an instant, but the members find the opportunity for a message or letter after a period. It is the heaviness of bodies that keeps the bodies without share

and deprived of the potency of spirits. When the meanings, which are the spirits, aim to be combined together, they leave the bodies outside the door. But the blights and calamities of this world dominate over the bodies. Therefore, the composed bodies turn toward the parts' disseverance. Whatever has been composed and compounded is also receptive to disseverance and scatteredness, and its conjunction can be nullified. It follows that when the conjunction of things is the conjunction of neighborhood and oral communication, like the bodies of agreeable friends, their disseveration is even more to be expected.

Before everything else, this suppliant's heart is bound to the thought that occupied your sublime mind and correct resolve—to shun these passing existents and join with the everlasting, unaltering certainties. Is it still established as it was before, and are you making ready for this road? Or has the Iblis of imagination with its malicious gossip made your heart cold toward the journey and weakened its bond with that resolution and aim? That is the most fearful of what I fear for all my brothers—God protect you and give you refuge from doubt in the Real after certainty, through His favor and bounty!

You indicated that if some other words concerning the results of thought have been organized and combined, I should send it. But, given the sorts of companions that I have and the likes of the conversations that go on in which my time is immersed—both with the insiders, who are my heart's attachments and my children, and the outsiders, who are the congenial attachments—how could I have the leisure for such work? However, no words can be found better and more correct than what you already have. Every chapter is like alchemy. Although it is not a great deal in itself, when it is used and applied, it has much provision along with it. However, its precondition is that first you melt the things that will be helped by the alchemy. You must turn the parts away from their measure of frozenness and contraction and prepare them for receiving the alchemy's act.

So also are these words. Although they have not blackened much paper, if they find a receptive heart, they will turn it into a world within which this world will be lost and become nothing. However, melting in the fire of resolve will not become correct until darkness and contraction turn into dilation and expansion. Then the meanings of these words will find room in you, so the meaning will become the heart, and the heart the meaning.

Know well that every *theōria* and attentiveness that falls on one of this world's states that most mortals know as felicity, fortune, and luck, or that they recognize as wretchedness and adversity, is cold water poured on the fire of resolve. The crucible of the heart then becomes cold, and what is in the crucible stays frozen. The endeavor turns futile and the objective is forgotten.

He who is "astray" is not he who had nothing. Rather, the one astray is he who had and then lost. The suffering and regret of poverty for the unhaving and destitute man are not as much as for the moneyed man who has lost his sack of gold. As long as someone has not seen utmost loss through this state, this verse does not come down on him: *Our Lord, make not our hearts to swerve after Thou hast guided us!* [3:8]. This happens when he does not endeavor to increase and nurture whatever provision he has, so that his nature may mix with other provisions through long days, today, and tomorrow, and become just like them. Surely the following are

admonishments in this meaning: [*And had We willed, We would have raised him up thereby;*] but he inclined toward the earth [7:176]; and this: *They should not be like those who were given the Book aforetime, but the term was lengthened for them, so their hearts became hard* [57:16].

The worst blight for the possessors of preparedness is indolence of nature and the anticipation that, through passivity, the causes for obtaining the objective and object of search may come together, as if suddenly a satan will turn into an angel or an ignoramus into a sage. In this one cannot put aside effort and endeavor. It may be that without complete endeavor and seriousness a work will be achieved. However, it will be achieved only when no endeavor is spent on its opposite and incompatible.

This is like someone who prepares the makings and trappings of the hajj—the provisions, expenditures, payment for lodging, road-fare, footwear, and equipment for the route. Then he sits in anticipation until destiny puts the correct resolution and the full wanting into his heart and until the caravan for the road comes together. Only then does he turn toward the road. However, the precondition is that he not ruin the footwear, or give the makings and tools of the road to others, or put the clothing and bedclothes in the fire, or lose the silver for this work.

In the same way, if the preparedness, the wanting, and the yearning have no shortcoming, and if he is anticipating that the heavenly causes will make things easy so that this seeing, clarity, and informedness come to be as they should be, the precondition is that he not undertake anything that would nullify bright-heartedness or increase darkness and that he not make an exile of angelness and give lodging to satan. For such anticipation also nullifies the preparedness, destroys the tools, and makes the provisions and equipage of the road turn to nothing. This is absolute ruin and everlasting perishment. God protect you, us, and our other brothers in religion from this—through the expanse of His mercy and His munificence! Surely He is the patron of good things and the effuser of felicities. (*Muṣannaḥāt* 713–717)

Quatrains

The men of Your road all know Your secrets,
 the heads of the rest spin round Your compass.
 The seventy-two sects all do Your work—
 You're with all, and all search for You. (115)

* * *

O Entity of subsistence, is there any subsistence that You are not?
 O You with no place, is there any place where You are not?
 O You whose Essence is free of all directions,
 where are You after all? And where are You not? (69)

* * *

I put no love for You in the soul
 without first setting Your seal on my tongue.
 Until my heart kept aside from the world,
 I spoke not a word to it about You. (40)

* * *

Those who dwell in the Beloved's presence
 don't mention His name and rarely speak.
 But those who are windy like bagpipes
 stay far from Him, so they call Him aloud. (108)

* * *

The Men of Your road all know the meanings,
 then hidden they stay from near-sighted eyes.
 More wondrous still is that knowing the Real
 they believe and are then called "unbelievers." (79)

Letter to Muntakhab al-Dīn Harāskānī

He asked a few questions of him, each one of which he answered. Some of them were these:

Question [1]. This servant and suppliant for your good says: When Adam's child is born from his mother, they take the [astrological] ascendant, and with it they bring out an accounting of the being, the good and ill fortune, the suffering and comfort. Does this ascendant pertain to the bodily soul, or does it belong to the spirits?

Answer. Each body that appears on the earth from another body appears through the heavenly influence. The heaven and the planets are like the tools and instruments. Whatever planet may fall opposite a region influences it. This is like the sun, for every thing and place opposite to it is heated by it; the place's dampnesses alter, and animals appear from it. In the same way, every star has such a specificity and influence, and none of them is ineffectual and unworking.

The "ascendant" of animals and humans is that part of the spheres that has come up from the east at the moment of the thing's birth. Good and ill fortune are all in relation to the things that are born. Heaven, heavenly bodies, and planets have no inauspiciousness or auspiciousness. This is like a fire that cooks a pot or warms someone stricken by cold. It is good in relation to that. But when the fire falls upon house, clothing, or body and it burns, it is bad and an ill fortune in relation to those that are burned and made deficient.

The ascendant belongs to the bodily things, not the spiritual and soulish things. Through the soul, heaven's planets influence the bodies that are born. All bodies of the world move through the soul and are subjected to the soul. Hence the bodies influence bodies, not spirits. And God knows better.

What has led the goers to seek out how to find release from the good and ill fortune of the spheres and the destruction of the elements is precisely this—that they saw the body subjected to the spheres and the elements, without any path for flight or any aperture for going out that was apparent. Then those within whose substance the lamp of awareness was lit saw that they cannot go out of this bodily world in the body. They strove until they became all soul and intellect through knowing, not through form, and they left the bodily form back in this bodily world. They became aware through certainty that their substance is not the body, but rather the soul, which is the governor and the preserver of the bodies; and that intellect is the real-

ity and root of the soul. They endure by their own Lord and, through His effusion and help, they preserve the body and weave the bodies, while the body has no power over them, for whatever is the bodily world is all their slave. So, there must be this work if you are fleeing from good and ill fortune and the influence of the world.

Question [2]. If the ascendant belongs to the mount, then, when the mount is annihilated, no ascendant remains. If it belongs to the rider, the planets are still there. Does the subsistent spirit have good and ill fortune and suffering and comfort in Illiyyun or in Sijjin?³⁵ Please answer so that this servant may increase his supplications for your welfare.

Answer. When the many bodies of animals and humans are held back from life, their spirits do not stay many as they were, but they all become one. This is like the brightness of the sun that shines into the room from three or four windows. Those diverse rays appear large from one window and small from another, round from one window and square from another. When the windows are nullified, the rays all become one. In the same way, when the diverse spirits become separate from the diverse bodies, they are one. The wellspring of those spirits is human knowing, and that cannot be other than one. "Illiyyun" is the existence of the spirits in relation to their mine and root, through which there is knowing. "Sijjin" is their joining in relation to the bodies of generation, corruption, and the alteration of states. The correct is this—and God knows better.

Question [3]. Are the caprices of the satanic, beastly, and predatory soul created in the body or in the self of the individual? Or, rather, are they, like the spirit, something else within the soul? Please explicate with analysis.

Answer. These caprices belong to the soul, which makes them manifest in the body, for the body is the soul's artisanry, and the soul always wants to embroider and adorn what it has worked. When what it has worked reaches loss, then it wants nothing for it, and no caprice or wish remains. This is all that could be written, for a bit of illness appeared and a fever began, so excuse me.

If the beastly and predatory spirits were not within this human spirit, it never would have joined with the body. Relative to the human spirit, the predatory and beastly souls are bad, but in themselves they have nothing bad. In the same way, a king must have executioners, sweepers, donkey-drivers, and the like, and none of them is bad, unless the king should obey their command. Then the king is bad and deficient, because he is under the command of his own servant. In the same way, the beastly and predatory souls, as long as they are subjected to the human soul, are not bad. No beast or predator is bad. The human who is a beast in nature and a predator in disposition is bad.

Question [4]. What is it that is not admirable for sensation and the members, such that you forbid it?³⁶

Answer. What is not admirable for the members and senses is what brings loss to the possessor of the senses and members. The possessor of the body and senses receives loss from whatever nullifies his everlasting, true, and afterworldly life. Everlasting life will belong to the soul—which is the possessor of the body and sensation—when it is everlastingly aware and awake. This is nullified when it is heedless and unconscious, for the heedless does not have that of which he is heedless, but the aware does not remain separate from that of which he is aware.

Hence the soul that is heedless of self is “without self,” and this is its death. When it is aware of self, it is “with self,” and this is its everlasting life. So, whenever the senses and members enter a work that increases the heedlessness of the soul, they are striving in the soul’s perishment. And whenever their conduct and attribute increase the wakefulness and awareness of the soul, this is admirable.

Strive and become near to whatever you know to be better for self, and flee and seek farness from everything you recognize as bad for self. There is nothing more blessed than struggle. *Those who struggle in Us—We shall guide them in Our paths. Surely God is with the beautiful-doers* [29:69].

Question [5]. If it agrees with your opinion, please explain these verses and traditions that are written here. Please write most clearly, so that the reward of both worlds may be found.

If a reflective thinker should put down a pointer to recognizing self, is this going astray? I hope that you will write with analysis and clearly.

Answer. First, the questioner should know that this weak one will not begin offering any exegesis or interpretation of the Koran or the reports [from the Prophet], nor of the speech of any among the great children of Adam. This is because I consider giving an exegesis of speech that has not passed over my tongue but has been uttered by someone else as foolish. It is not likely that I could perform this duty. Would that I were able to do so for my own sayings! Nonetheless, I will write about what I have found in myself of the meaning of these divine words and the talking of the prophets and the aware. Perhaps some profit will reach the questioner from this.

First, the meaning of the verse, *We shall show them Our signs in the horizons and in their souls until it becomes clear to them that it is the Real* [41:53]. In my weakness, I know that every existent that can be grasped with the senses is a mark of the unconditioned existent. Whenever you come to know that heaven is existent, trees and plants are existent, animals are existent, the human is existent, and so also the mountains, water, earth, fire, and wind are all existent; that each of these is separate from the other existents, but all come under the “existent”; that none of them is incompatible with any other in existence, for if they were incompatible, one would be existent and the other nonexistent; so, all agree in existence; then [you will conclude that] each is a branch of the unconditioned existent, and the unconditioned existent is none of them. The branch is the mark of the root. The meaning of “sign” I consider to be “mark.”

Hence all the “horizons,” which are heaven and the elements, are all signs and marks of the unconditioned existent. So also, the knowing soul, which knows the signs, is an existent within which the reality of all these existents is contained. From knowing all and encompassing all, it finds no suffering. It also is a mark, more correct than all the others, of the unconditioned existent, for all the existents come under the encompassment of the unconditioned existent, but it does not become too narrow and its oneness is not nullified. Through this trait the soul is nearer than the other existents to the unconditioned existent.

It is fitting to consider in this same meaning the exegesis of “He who knows his soul knows his Lord,” and the exegesis of “Know your soul that you may know your Lord.” These words have no enigma, puzzle, or hiddenness. If they cannot be grasped,

this is not because of their fineness and difficulty. Rather, it arises from tainted and dark hearts.

Next is what you said and wrote about a reflective thinker who thinks upon self—whether or not this will draw him into going astray. The work you have is just this—to track down this knowledge. There is no occupation more important for you than this. You will go astray and will have lost the road when you go far from this thought and are kept distracted and heedless of it. As long as you are searching for this, you are striving in God's road. God is with you so long as that stirring and search is with you, and your search will show you the road. When this is real and when you find your object of search, then you will see that the object of search was the searcher.³⁷ May your painful heart increase in pain, so that perhaps you may reach the remedy!³⁸

Question [6]. *The Alchemy of Felicity* came to hand, in the meaning of knowing self. Ghazālī says that the spirit subsists, and I was saying that strongly and praising the author. But a group found fault with this and said all sorts of things about it, and the conversation continues. They want a proof that the spirit is subsistent. I could not say why, because I have not heard this meaning and I do not know it. But, when I saw the explanation, I considered it correct. I offered an answer on my own. I said that God says, *I breathed into him of My spirit* [15:29] concerning the creation of Adam. We have that very spirit, and there is no doubt that the spirit—exalted and majestic is it!—is subsistent. I do not know if this is the answer or not. Please explain.

Answer. The spirit is the radiance and ray of the Essence, and the Essence will never be without radiance. Therefore it is subsistent, but it is not subsistent through self; rather, through the Essence. The Essence is permanent and subsistent through self. Whoever knows the reality of subsistence recognizes subsistence through that subsistent spirit, not through the body that undergoes annihilation, nor through the spirit that undergoes annihilation, for what undergoes annihilation does not know subsistence.

The name of the subsistent spirit that has a relation with the Essence is “intelligence.” Certainties come through it, and through it can be known permanence, subsistence, and the endless. This is not the particular intelligence, whose trace can be found in human individuals and through which one can know more from less, up from down, and the like. This state can be found over a long period and through correct thought. It will not be established by consulting with the folk of the village, nor even the folk of the rulership.³⁹ Rather, all the folk of the seven climes are heedless of this state, and they have grown and been nurtured in heedlessness and unconsciousness.

Whoever sought a mark of this state pulled aside and chose farness from the creatures, becoming totally occupied with self until he found a whiff of this state. If you are resolved upon sciences such as these, keep silent, and seek the path that the wayfarers of the Real's road have traveled. Cleanse and make limpid this intellect that is mixed with the preoccupations of life, the counterfeit sciences, and the diverse wishes, until within it the forms of the realities appear as they are. The light of meaning's eye does not shine or increase from form's eye. Rather, the provision of seeing that is possessed by form's eye is a flame from the light of meaning's eye. May God—high indeed is He—give you success through His bounty and munificence!

Question [7]. Questions were being posed about the meaning of spirit. According to the opinion [that the spirit subsists], the infant child has the same spirit that receives commands and prohibitions, knows suffering and comfort, and with which there is questioning and response [on the Day of Resurrection]. So, since the spirit is with the child, he must be under the obligation of the Sharia. But there is consensus [among the ulama] that he is under no such obligation until he becomes an intellecter. Please provide an explication in this matter.

Answer. Human individuals are many, and the spirits are many—the motion-inducing spirit, the sensory spirit, the animal spirit, the human spirit, and the holy spirit. As long as the infant is in its mother's belly, it has nothing but the motion-inducing spirit and the vegetal spirit, through which nourishment and potency increase. When it becomes a milk-drinker, the sensory and animal spirit is with it. When it reaches manhood, then it may be the locus of the human spirit and an intellecter, in the sense of learning and recognizing the interactions and the artisanries. As for the holy spirit, through which the meanings of certainty can be seen, several generations may pass without its trace appearing in any individual. *Say: Are they equal—those who know and those who know not? Only the possessors of minds remember [39:9]*

Question [8]. One day, a discussion went on in your presence. I said, “Are not all humans given commandments [by God]?” You said, “No.” Then you said that everything returns back to the one God. However, there is the caterpillar's egg, its growth, the nourishment that it eats, and the cocoon that is the outcome. Then it comes out from the cocoon in another shape. Some become black and some yellow. I did not dare to ask in that assembly, but I thought that you made an analogy for the Uprising and Upstirring. Please explain the answer of “Not every child of Adam is given commandments” in this meaning so that, when I fall back into these thoughts, I will not be without a road, but may take the avenue of the Real.

Answer. All the prophets, the ulama, and the saints were stirred up for this state and the explication of this work. Because of each, a people and a tribe became seeing and found the road. Although some [of the people] were dark-hearted and unseeing, [the prophets, ulama, and saints] never entered into debates, for debating with the heedless and the prattlers increases nothing but your own heart's suffering and their obstinacy and quarreling. If someone finds a treasure of this world and brings this up to others, do you not see how much affliction he will suffer? Both he and they will remain without a share of it. In the same way, if you reach, or you want to reach, the that-worldly treasure, you cannot bring it up to others, or else both of you will lose. Make do with self and eat out your own liver. If you want healing for pain, seek it from a skillful physician, not from the idlers and the ignorant. In particular, mentioning the names of those in the past will have no profit save as an admonition.⁴⁰ *That is a community that has passed away. There awaits them what they have earned, and there awaits you what you have earned [2:134].*

Question [9]. In a book, one of the great ones analyzes the creed in knowing the Real—high indeed is He! In the end he says that He is knowable in this world, but He is known without how and why. In that world He is seeable, and He is seen without how and why. That sort of seeing is not of the same kind as this-worldly seeing.

A group of the common people do not accept this, and they do not consider the speaker of this talk a Muslim. Please explain.

Answer. If someone who has written all those tomes and has the potency of thought with which to show all those marks and explications is a straying falsifier, how could someone who is not aware by which route the mouthful that he swallows goes down and how it is that it becomes nourishment be aware of the Lord of the Sovereignty? In short, there are many prattlers and there always have been. If we want to enumerate their words, then the work of those who can see will be drawn out and they will be held back from the objective. *O you who have faith! Your burden is your own souls. He who goes astray will not harm you if you are guided. Unto God is the return of all of you, and He will tell you what you were doing* [5:105].

Question [10]. When one wants intelligence to have mastery over caprice, and caprice to be subdued, what practice must be done and upon which path must one continuously live?

Answer. "Caprice" is wishing for nonlasting works. When these become many, one after another, they keep the soul occupied so that it does not attend to seeking and seeing the lasting things. The lasting things cannot be reached save with the potency of intelligence. The greater the potency of intelligence, the weaker the potency of wishing for nonlasting things. Overmastery by caprice and wishes derives from the weakness of intelligence's potency, and from this the soul becomes ill.

The soul can be cured with the help of the intellect's potency, and intellect's potency increases from thinking about certainties. For example, a person should ask himself: If he strives to obtain the wishes that go back to the comfort and enjoyment of the body, will they remain with him forever, or is it likely that at some time they will be cut off from him? If he knows for certain that they will be with him forever, then he should strive to obtain them. If he comes to know for certain that it is likely that they will not be obtained, or that, if they are obtained, they will not last forever but will pass, at that moment he will relax his resolution in striving to obtain them. Through thoughts like this, the potency of intelligence increases and comes to predominate. Once intelligence predominates, the wishes of his body and its pleasures and desired things will become fewer and dominated over.

Question [11]. What is it that intelligence must keep the members and senses occupied with so as to reach endless felicity?

Answer. When the body's senses and members are kept occupied with works that are intellectually futile, unavailing, and profitless, this cuts the soul off from the intellect. The conjunction of intellect and soul will become correct once the senses are prohibited from searching out the unworking, altering, and corruptible sensibles; and once the members [are prohibited] from moving toward adding to possessions, obtaining imaginary and satanic status, and finding beastly enjoyments. Then sensation will not reach unsuitable sensibles, and the members will not move in unworthy work. Whenever you know something to be indispensable for the body at the moment, going after it is not unsuitable or unworthy. You should consider whatever passes beyond the moment's requirement as unsuitable and unworthy. Know that endeavoring in it is to waste the life of self.

These answers were the last words of the master. When he joined the neighborhood of the Real's mercy, they were sent from Maraḡ to Muntakhab al-Dīn Harāskānī,⁴¹ who was the questioner. (Muṣannafāt 717–28)

Quatrains

Love for You gave me life everlasting,
 madness for you took my head and my balance.
 Your goodness and bounty made my body like soul—
 Better than this is not found in practice's earth. (1)

* * *

I am not I—who would you say is the one that is I?
 I do not speak, but you ask me who's in my mouth.
 From head to foot there's nothing but shirt—
 ask who it is from him who wears me. (107)

* * *

I am the jewel whose mine is the universal intellect,
 my pillars are the two worlds that take far away.
 Existence, location, and all beyond them live through Him.
 I'm the soul of the world—the world's not my soul. (112)

* * *

The wheel of the spheres is my nine-layered cloak,
 the angel's essence the fruit of my nature.
 You've heard of the beginning-and-endless secret—
 it alludes to my old and new speech. (114)

* * *

Every work in the world is our craft,
 every lion with heart hides in our thicket.
 Don't pass us by, but see with certainty
 the more blooming and beautiful in our thought. (105)

6

Writings on Theory

Quatrains

Every impression that appears on the tablet of being
is the form of Him who made the impression.
When the old ocean sends up new waves,
they call them “waves” but in fact they’re the ocean. (103)

* * *

Whether you see kernel as all or shell as all,
don’t look crooked, for He is all.
You’ve no eye with which to see Him:
from your head to your feet—He is all.¹ (181)

Essay on Self-Awareness

Know that living bodies are not outside of two: Either life in them pertains to the root and is essential, or it is alien and accidental. It does not pertain to the root and is not essential, so it is alien and accidental. That thing whose life pertains to the root and is essential is not the body.

When something’s life pertains to the root and is essential, knowing is either an attribute that also pertains to the root and is essential, or it does not pertain to the root and is not essential, and the thing knows through others. Knowing does not pertain to the root and is not essential. Otherwise, whenever the name “living” correctly fell on something, it would be a knower. Hence the living thing knows through something else.

The thing that knows is either a knower through self or a knower through other than self. If it is not a knower through self, it is a knower through that which is a knower through self.

As for the thing that is a knower through self, it is the utmost end of all, and all existent things return to it. And God knows better. (*Muṣannafāt* 618)

Quatrains

Animals from plants, plants from the pillars,
the pillars the trace of the turning wheel's turns.
The wheel endures through soul, soul through intellect,
and intellect is the shining light of God's love. (59)

* * *

First among beings are intellect and soul,
then the nine spheres that turn in their tracks.
Pass these by and come to the pillars,
then minerals, then plants, then animals. (109)

* * *

If earth and heaven show their face,
plants and animals will come to be.
As long as wheel and stars all travel,
your coin is the world's own quintessence. (166)

* * *

I was born of nine fathers and four mothers,
I'm sad and happy from the seven, the two, and the three.
I've five roots and live in a house with six foundations.
How did I fall to the hands of this bunch?² (95)

* * *

Who will it be, aware in the senses and intelligence,
at ease from unbelief and religion, good and bad,
his work not like body and soul, not giving and taking,
intellect aware through him, self aware of self? (29)

Essay on Intellect

Know that no intellect is a substance, because, for a substance to be a substance is other than for it to be a knower. However, for an intellect to be an intellect is never other than for it to be a knower.

The meaning is this: The essence of every substance is other than its knowing, but nothing whose essence is other than its knowing is intellect. Therefore, no substance is intellect. Since no substance is intellect, no intellect is substance. (*Muṣannafāt* 638)

Essay: Security from the Soul's Nullification
in the Refuge of Intelligence

He is God—high indeed is He!

[This is] a talk that was requested for knowing, such that its reading would give the seeker cognizance of the self's reality and security from the nonbeing and nullification of the human soul at the nullification of the body's life.³

Thus says the speaker of these words, Afḍal al-Dīn Kāshānī, after praising the Creator:

Every indigent and ill-provided person who suffers from his indigence and ill-provision will be released from suffering when he comes to be provided and capable. One can have the hope of providedness and capability when the potency of seeking providedness predominates and when intention and aim fall upon the way to the objective.

For humans, collecting the provision of capability and unneedingness is more important than for all other animals, since, other than humans, nothing wants and seeks anything but provision for nurturing and arranging the body and its life. Although humans share with other animals in this want—for they want and store away the provision of nurturing and arranging the body—they also want and collect the provision of nurturing the anima, and this is the various sorts of knowledge.

No human individuals want not to know. In every state they choose knowing over not-knowing. So much more do they love to be knowers than nonknowers that, when they come to know something, they do not stop at that, but they also want to know more. They never become satiated with knowing. They may gather many known things, but they never suffer from this or become ill—as they do when they are held back from other knowledges. On the contrary, they become more capable and stronger when there is much provision. Moreover, when they become provided and capable through knowledge, they still see requirement and neediness.⁴

This contrasts with indigence and capability through the provisions of the body's nurturing, for the body becomes satiated and independent from its provisions when it finds the portion that is of use. After time passes, once again it becomes requiring and needy. If it puts much to use, that very provision of nurturing and life becomes the cause of illness, corruption, and perishment, so both the provision and he who is provided cease to work.

Hence it is clear that for the human, seeking knowledge, which is the provision of the anima's nurturing, is more important than seeking the provision of the body's nurturing, which is wanted objects. For, the body's life does not remain with it permanently, so it dies. Living does not accord with the body's nature. It is an alien state within it, and alien states do not last for things. But the anima's life does not become nullified, because life is the anima's nature. What is dead by nature comes to life through the anima, so how should what is alive by nature die?

We have now come to know that the provision of nurturing the anima is knowledge. There is much knowledge, because the things are many, and knowing one of them is not to know another, for knowing the earth is not to know the heaven. Enumerating the things one by one through knowledge of the things' beings and arriving at their reality is difficult.

However, these many knowledges have as root and provision one knowledge. If there is not that one knowledge, it may well be that many of these other knowledges—which are the branch of the one knowledge—will have come together in the knower's soul, but he will be like a house, and the knowledges like various sorts of wanted things placed within it. The house has no comfort and enjoyment from the wanted things, and the wanted things gain no adornment or eminence from the house.

When this knowledge is the soul's root, and when the other knowledges come together with it for the soul, then the soul's substance is like a living thing within which various sorts of edibles have come together, but it turns them away from their state and nature and brings them to life like itself. Through those edibles the body is strong, and the edibles reach life after death and after having been edibles. In the same way, when the human soul reaches knowledge of the root, it becomes a knower. Through knowing, all the many things that arise for it from knowledge of the root come to join with the knowing soul and become the soul's substance, arriving from knownness to knowing.

Hence, seeking the root knowledge is better than seeking the various sorts of knowledge, because, through the root knowledge, one can find unconditional capability and security. This knowledge is knowing self and being aware of self. The way to reach it is to think over, to enumerate for self, and to become aware that you have three things: A body, which has been embroidered and depicted from several diverse bodies, like bones, tendons, veins, flesh, and so on. Second, you have an anima through which your body is alive and without which it is dead. Third, you have an intelligence that knows both body and anima and recognizes each of them separately.

When thought reaches the knowing of all three of these, such that no doubt and mistake remain, once again you should think over and know that the body is not the anima, and the anima is not the intelligence. For the body is never held back from being a body, whether it be with the anima or without it. However, it is not continually alive; rather, it is alive through the anima. Hence the anima, through which the body is alive and without which it is dead, is not the body.

In the same way, intelligence is neither the body nor the anima. Were intelligence the body, all bodies would be intelligent, and were intelligence the anima, all animals would be intelligent. Hence it is correct that the knower of the anima and the body is neither the anima nor the body.

One must also know that intelligence is not in the body, since intelligence knows all things, and the body is among those things that intelligence knows in all their states and attributes. Whatever intelligence knows exists in intelligence. Hence the body and every state and attribute that the body has are in intelligence. Intelligence cannot be in those things that are in intelligence.

Also, were intelligence in the body, it would not become aware of what is not in the body or near the body. But intelligence can become aware of what is outside the body and far from the body.

Hence it is clear that intelligence is not in any sort of body. Everything through which the bodies are arranged, live, and last—such as the increasing and nourishment-giving potencies, the sensory potencies, the motion-inducing potency,

and the potency of imagination and sense-intuition—are all the radiance of the shining of intelligence. Every body and every member receives from that trace and radiance as much as it can take.

The joining of intelligence with everything other than intelligence is through intelligence's knowing it. By knowing it, it encompasses it, so the thing cannot remain outside of it. As for the states that the bodies have—such as largeness and smallness, length and width, roundness and squareness, heaviness and lightness, hardness and softness, warmth and cold—intelligence does not have any of these states, such that intelligence would be large, small, long, wide, round, heavy, light, hard, warm, or soft. Rather, these and their like, and those dwelling places in which these states can come to be, are all in intelligence, in respect of these things' being known to intelligence and intelligence's knowing these things.

Also, intelligence has no opposite or incompatible, for all the opposites and all the incompatible things are existent and brought together in intelligence. No opposite or incompatible becomes weak or nullified by its opposite or its incompatible within intelligence, and intelligence knows them all equally. It does not let an opposite be forgotten and stay unknown, while taking another as known and remembered. Rather, within it all are complete in their own being.

Intelligence is incompatible with nothing. When something has no opposite or incompatible, its existence will not be nullified, for everything that is destroyed and nullified is nullified and destroyed by the victory and domination of the incompatible. But the existence of intelligence is its awareness, wakefulness, and knowing from self and through self. Whatever has existence through self and from self will not be nullified or receive destruction and corruption.

When the disagreeing states destroy the body and it dies, intelligence finds no deficiency or defect, for intelligence knows continually the body's life, completeness, and arrangement and so also its death, deficiency, disharmony, and destruction. When intelligence knows something, that thing exists in intelligence, so the body's life and death are in intelligence. It does not become more alive from knowing the body's life, nor is it destroyed from knowing the body's death.

Hence it is clear that intelligence is subsistent, permanent, and complete. It does not become deficient, vanishing, and changing in state through the body's deficiency and vanishment or the changing of its states.

From this explication and clarification of intelligence's attribute and state—which are expressed and recounted in talking and writing—intelligence is shown. It is intelligence that gives awareness of this, for nothing other than intelligence and intellect can give consciousness of intelligence and intellect.

When humans become aware of intelligence's awareness, they know that intelligence has come to dominate over their mortalness. Their humanness all goes back to intelligence, while their mortalness has come to be dominated over, unworking, and unapparent.

Hence the path of release and security from perishment and ruin is for humans to seek refuge in intelligence and to enter under its guardianship. It is to keep the inclination and pull toward nonlasting states and the body's nonlasting enjoyments far from the nature of self. It is to be in the measure of intelligence during movement and stillness, sleep and wakefulness.

When humans preserve the traces of intelligence in all their own states—in going, conduct, saying, and doing—then intelligence will also preserve their all and will escort them until it takes them back—complete and adorned, without defect or deficiency—to the root place of homecoming and return, which is the fountainhead of the permanence and subsistence of the beginningless and the endless. *And God is trustee over what we say [28:28], and God suffices for a witness [4:79].* (*Muṣannaḥāt* 601–607)

Essay on the Universal

The particular individual has existence through the universal reality.

The knower of the meaning of this sentence is not the particular individual. Rather, the universal reality is the knower of this meaning and the one who judges that this talk is truthful. (*Muṣannaḥāt* 631)

Essay on Meanings

Know that the intelligible meanings endure by their own essences. It is not simply that they have a joining with the knower's soul. Rather, the knower has a joining with them. Were they attached to the knower's soul, no knower would be able to teach someone what he has come to know, and were he to teach it, his knowledge would be nullified. It would not be possible for anyone to reach the meaning and know it; but all this is possible and likely.

Hence, none of the meanings and mental things are joined with and endure by the knower's essence. Rather, the meanings are realities through their own essences. This is why they are called “meanings”—they are what is “wanted” from and “signified” by the words.⁵ In respect of the essences, they are realities, but in respect of having a relation with the souls, they are forms.

The “universal meaning” is general over all meanings, the “universal essence” is general over all essences, and the “universal reality” is general over all realities.

So, the meanings, essences, and realities are the meaning, essence, and reality of existence, and this is existence through self. The knower of this existence is none other than the universal meaning, essence, and reality. It knows through self, its existence is from its own existence, and its existence is its knowledge of self. (*Muṣannaḥāt* 645)

Essay: The State of the Particular Souls after the Corruption of the Bodies

The existent things are either universal or particular.

The soul either exercises activity in universal affairs with the whole of self, or it exercises activity wholly in particular affairs, or it sometimes exercises activity in universal affairs and sometimes exercises activity in particular affairs.

The first kind is called “actual knowing,” the second “potential knowing,” and the third “potential near to actual knowing.”

What exercises activity wholly in particular affairs cannot be found in the spiritual world, just as the knower of universal affairs with the whole of self does not exist in the corporeal world. This is because everything fits only into one of the divisions—the particular is nothing but sensible, and the universal is nothing but intelligible. The sensible is bodily, and the intelligible is soulish.

Indeed, what exercises activity in and knows affairs that are sometimes universal and sometimes particular is the Goer in Both Realms, the Pointer to the Two Worlds, the Mirror of Both Universes, the Written upon the Straight Path, the Scales of Justice, and the Book of the Judge.⁶

Now we say: According to another division, the existent either has awareness or it does not. That which does not have awareness is the bodily rank. It is divided into two: Either it is concealed from both self and other than self, and this is called the “possible.” Or it is concealed from self but clear to others, and this is called “bodily existence.”

As for what has awareness, either it has particular awareness or universal awareness. Particular awareness is the rank of nature, and universal awareness is the rank of intellect. Hence a soul that has particular awareness has remained in the rank of nature, and the soul that has universal awareness has joined with the intellect.

Particular awareness is joined with the tools and the senses and with the imagined and sense-intuited. Only the particular is aware of the particular, and the knower of universal affairs is only the universal, because the particular does not encompass the universal. Since the tools of sensory affairs are particular and since the particular is sensible, the knower of universal things is not a knower with tools, but rather with other than tools, and that is the universal.

It is not proper to be aware through a universal below self, for it cannot be encompassing. Hence one knows either through self, or through a universal above self that is knower of self and that finds and knows through self. That which finds through self and whose existence is from self and through self will never cease to be, become dark, or accept alteration. For, finding self through self is incontestable for self, just like the thing's being a thing for the thing. This finding is foreverness, continuity, and everlasting subsistence. This finder is the unconditioned knower, sheer existence, and the essence of the cosmos.

Thus it has become certain that the finder of the particulars is not a finder with self, but rather with the self's tools. When the tools fail to work and become dull, he is not a finder. Particular being and its finding become bright with tools, so when the tools are nullified, darkness is substituted for their brightness, and he falls from the small chastisement into the great chastisement. Then particular awareness is also nullified and he joins with castigation and endless hell—we seek refuge in God from that!

However, when a universal finds the universals, no disparity arises from the disappearance of the tools, for its finderness was not with tools that it should alter. Rather, it was with self. Indeed, as long as the compoundedness of the body remains because of the intellecting soul's joining with the animal soul, sometimes it is the

finder of particulars with the senses and the imagining and sense-intuiting potency, and sometimes the finder of universals with the selfhood of self.

When the body's constitution is nullified and the bodily tools and potencies are held back from their own work, the particular awareness also disappears and the sensory preoccupations do not remain. The finderness through self that is incontestable and essential to existence remains subsistent. This finding becomes perpetual and complete. He remains permanently in the witnessing of the essence of self, and from potency near to act, he reaches act. After this, no damage will join with him from any alteration, and he will not receive disappearance and corruption. *That is the Garden that We shall give as an inheritance to those of Our servants who are godwary* [19:63], *in a seat of truthfulness, with a powerful King* [54:55]. (*Muṣannafāt* 641–42)

Essay: The Demonstration of the Level at which Humans Gain Certainty that They Have Become Secure from Annihilation

We say: They become secure when they know that being is the universal existence. No universal can be sensible, imagined, or sense-intuited. It can be nothing but intellectual.

Since being is universal, and since the universal is intelligible, intellectual existence is only in the soul. It cannot be in a body. The soul's existence is the soul's knowledge of self, and this existence belongs to it from self. Whatever has existence from self is secure from annihilation.

The alteration and corruption of the particular existences has no loss for universal existence. This is because, when these particular existences, which are susceptible to transformation and alteration, undergo transformation within knowledge and in the knowing of them, no transformation appears in the knower.

Being fixed in this certainty can be disparate. It may be that after finding and knowing it, it is never forgotten. It may be that someone will require for it to be repeated several times until it becomes so consolidated that, if he begins sensory practices, or a state occurs such as sleep or illness, this certainty will not be nullified and forgotten and the soul will be occupied with self's selfhood, not with its states and tools, such as the senses and members. When he reaches this level, he is secure from annihilation and knows that he is secure.

Once he has reached this level, he is an incontestable existence, that is, his existence is essential. His knowing is the same as his existence through the selfhood of self, his powerfulness is the same as his knowledge of the things' existence, his life is that he knows that he knows self and knows the things. In this state, he is neither desiring nor averse. Rather, he perceives self and other than self. Once he has found this level, he is conjoined with everything that is known. By essence he is unified in himself.

Once the natural connection totally disappears and the senses and their tools are nullified, this witnessing becomes permanent, for what had kept him occupied does not remain, and no particular things reach him to keep him occupied. For the

elect, this certainty is granted to the soul in the state in which there are still sensory preoccupations and particular perceptions.

However, if in the state of life the soul is deprived of the perception of self and the perception of universal existence, it cannot have this level after the nullification of the compoundedness of the tools and members. The person will be exactly like someone who was unconscious and heedless in perceiving self before life's nullification. Or rather, he will be even more of a loser, because the sensory perceptions will also not remain, and he will be joined with endless hell. God protect us from it, and muster us with Muḥammad the chosen and the folk of his house, the good, in His Garden, through Muḥammad and his household, the fine, the pure! (*Muṣannafāt* 615–17)

Essay on the Soul's Subsistence

Know that all the souls—that is, vegetal souls, animal souls, and human souls—are separate from the bodies through an intellective separation. However, each has a separation of a sort.

The vegetal soul is separate from the vegetal body in that the vegetal soul induces motion in and increases the vegetal body, while the vegetal body is moved and increased by it. Through this state, separation becomes apparent and the existence of the vegetal soul becomes clear as an intellective existence, just as the existence of the body becomes clear as a sensory existence.

The animal soul is separate from the animal body in that the soul wants and is aware, but its body does not know and does not want. Through this attribute the animal soul is also separate from the vegetal soul. This discernment and separation is intellective and through the intellect, for the intellect makes the soul intelligible and spiritual, and its body sensible.

Although the soul's essence is intelligible, by essence it is not an intellecter. This is why people have judged that the animal soul is nullified and destroyed—because the body and its tools are destroyed and nullified. However, its essence and intelligibility are not nullified by the nullification of its tools. Rather, its working is nullified because of the nullifying of the tool of doing work. Were its essence to be nullified by the nullification of its body, then its intelligibility would be nullified, and the soul would never be known until a body came to be. But the soul is known and intelligible whether or not the body comes to be, because its existence is its knownness.

The intellecting soul has a higher rank in existence than the animal soul, because the existence of intellecting and knowing is higher than the existence of intelligibility and knownness. The existence of the intellecting soul is its knowing, not its knownness, and its knowing is its act. Through it, it separates the animal and vegetal soul from the animal and vegetal body, and in this act it does not require bodily tools. If it needed bodily tools to differentiate, separate, and know the animal and vegetal soul, it could not know them, for there can be no bodily intermediary between the knower and its known.

The act of the intellecting soul is without tool, so, when the bodily tool is nullified and destroyed, neither the self of the intellecting soul nor its act is nullified and destroyed.

Praise belongs to God, the praise of the thankful! And blessings be upon Muḥammad and all his household, the pure, and may they have much peace! (*Muṣannaḥāt* 622–23)

The Makings and Ornaments of Well-Provisioned Kings

We begin talking with the name of Him through whom all talking ends. We praise Him, for we came to recognize beauty through Him. We thank Him, for He has made us receptive to His caress. We rush to recognize His road, for in recognizing it, all rush becomes repose. We turn ourselves over to Him, for He oversees all. We seek refuge in Him from that which takes us far from Him, for we have seen Him closer to self than all things.

We send blessings and felicitations to the lifebreath of the past leaders, teachers, and road-showers—for everyone remaining and yet to arrive has come to know and see through the radiance of their seeing and knowing and has gained religion and customs through their customs—and to their companions, fellow travelers, and followers.

The writer of this book says: Through His gentleness and guidance, the Real—high indeed and holy is He!—made my soul familiar with intelligence, which is the radiance of His being. Through my soul's familiarity and joining with intelligence, it was cleansed of the taint of bodily nature and it came to blaze with the radiance of intelligence. It became a mirror within which the beings of the cosmos—the root and the branch, the substance and the nonsubstance, the resting and the moving, the living and the dead, the talking and the nontalking—were shown and seen.

At the beginning of the seeing, the knowledges were a trace and a similitude of the beings of the world, and the world's beings were the root and the reality. In the second seeing, the world's beings were the trace and similitude, and the knowledges were the root and reality.

Once showing became seeing, seeing knowledge, and knowledge certainty, I set out to differentiate and discern the beings and to choose some of them over others. I looked for the level of each of them in existence. I found that the substances of the universe are greater than the states, accidents, and attributes, for substances have their own being, but states and attributes have being through substances. Among substances, some are roots and solitaries,⁷ others branches, progeny, and compound things. I found that compound things are higher in level and virtue than simple things, since their specificity is their compoundedness, while they also have a share in the specificity of their own solitaries and roots.

Among the progeny and compound things, some are inanimate and some animal. I found the animal greater in level and measure than the inanimate, since the animal is not without a share of the specificities of the inanimate, while it is greater than it in possessing the specificity of the anima. Among the living substances, some are human and some nonhuman. I found the humans higher in level and virtue than the nonhumans, since they possess the specificities of all the living and dead substances, and on top of that the specificity of humanness. Among the humans, some

are leaders and commanders, some followers and obeyers. The commander is greater than the obeyer in level and virtue, since leaders and commanders possess the specificity of every human, but they are greater through the specificity of governing and overseeing things by command.

Among the evident specificities of humans, the specificity of talking is higher and better than others, since talking's specificity is to show the road toward the beings that are hidden from the senses in a short time and with little suffering. Among the sorts of talking, I found truthful talking and gainful speech choicer than false speech and ungainful talking. Among gainful talking, that which reaches the most eminent humans is more eminent than the gainful talking whose gain reaches the lowly. The most eminent humans are the leaders and kings.

Once I came to recognize these levels, I wanted to prepare a reminder composed of the best speech and the most gainful talking for the best class of humans, who are the leaders and kings, so I set out to write this concise book. I prepared a guidebook to all the noble character traits that would be useful for kings, so that they may keep it before their hearts and eyes and thereby make harmony stand up in their kingship. In it I chose concision and brevity, so that whenever they decide to know and see this book, they may read it to the end without weariness. Moreover, the objective of the speech is profit and benefit, not much talking.

With this book the seeker of benefit will reach his objective, since this book's speech has taken on the provision of beautiful meaning. I have named it *The Makings and Ornaments of Well-Provisioned Kings*. May both the speaker and the listener be given the success of talking truly and correctly and the felicity of listening well and putting to work—by the gentleness, solicitude, bounty, and guidance of the Lordship!

This book will be complete, with blessedness and propitiousness, in three talks and one closing section:

The First Talk. On the meaning of the name *king*, the mention of how many classes are the kings of the world's existents, and that the utmost end of kingship is through humans; and pointing out the proximity of the level of the human kingship—relative to the level of other kings—to the King of kings.

The Second Talk. On the explication of the work and kingship of humans, and enumerating the things they must have to be king over other humans.

The Third Talk. On the work-doers and deputies of kings and on mentioning them.

And one section to close the talking and the book.

The First Talk

On the meaning of "king"; mentioning the sorts of the kings of the existents of the universe; and showing the proximity of the level of the human kingship—compared with the level of other kings—to the King of kings

"King" [*pādshāh*] is an ancient name. In the ancient speech, *shāh* meant root and lord, while *pād* meant protecting and keeping. Thus it means the root and lord of protect-

ing and keeping. It is a name split off from the work and attribute of a man of great name, like the names *burning* for fire and *cutting* for sword, since protecting and keeping are the work and attribute of the protector, the doer, and the holder.

To protect something is to keep it far from its incompatible, since blight reaches a thing from its incompatible, either through nonbeing or deficiency. Through its compatible, a thing does not come not to be, nor does it become deficient. This situation is clear in the sensory existents, since no blight—whether through nonbeing or deficiency—reaches the subtle from the subtle, the dense from the dense, the warm from the warm, the cold from the cold, perfection from perfection, or motion from motion. Rather, each finds strength and greatness. The dense is the blight of the subtle, since it makes its subtlety not to be or decreases it, and in the same way the cold is the blight of the warm, deficiency of perfection, rest of motion, and death of life.

Whenever you compare two things, they will be compatible in one respect and incompatible in another. Take, for example, a moving substance and a resting substance, or a subtle substance and a dense substance. These are incompatible through motion and rest, subtlety and density, but they are compatible in that they are substances. It is the same with all other states, such as moreness and lessness.

A thing does not make a thing into a nonthing, since all things are compatible in that they are things, and the compatible is not the blight of the compatible. In the same way, a being does not make a being into a nonbeing, since being is not incompatible with being. Rather, if one of the states of an existent meets the incompatible state of another existent, and if the two incompatible states are equal in potency, each state will be made deficient by the other. If one of them is greater than the other, the greater will blight the small and make it just like itself. When the heat of fire is greater, it warms the coldness of water. So also are all incompatible states in relation to each other. Once it is clear that the incompatible is the blight of the incompatible and that each brings about the deficiency or nullification of the other's being, then it is clear that the compatible preserves the compatible's being and takes it from deficiency to completeness.

Given that the king is the preserver of the beings and the completer of the incomplete, and given that the incompatible will not preserve the incompatible, it is necessary that the king not be incompatible with anything over which he is king, and that none of them be incompatible with him.

The existents of the cosmos are two—one the root, the other the branch. Every root is the preserver of its own branch, and every branch comes to stand through its own root; through these two attributes, the existence of the cosmos's existents became two existences—to be the root and to be the branch.

When we look at being—not at the attribute of the root and branch of being—duality is nullified. There is nothing incompatible in being. Unconditioned being, which includes both the root's existence and the branch's existence, is the radiance of the Real's Ipseity—blessed and high indeed is It! It has no beginning, and its beginninglessness is referred to as “the beginningless.” It has no end, and its endlessness is called “the endless.” Its period, which is the measure of its being, is called by the name *aeon*.

Among the existents of the cosmos, the root is the solitaries of the cosmos, and the branch is the progeny and compound things of the cosmos.

The root is also of two sorts: Some of it is fixed and at rest in the state of its own being, and some of it is moving and changing from state to state. Fixity is a being that is all the same, while motion is a being that is compounded of being and nonbeing, since motion is for being and nonbeing to come one after another.

Motion is of two sorts: One is joined and uninterrupted motion. It is the heavenly substances' motion, joined in revolution. The period and measure of this motion is called "time." The second motion is determined and finite, since it begins at an origin and ends up at an utmost end, like the motion of elemental substances from one place to another place or from one state to another state.

The first division of being, which is fixity and rest, is the being of the substances of the cosmos. The second division of being, which is motion, is the being of some of the states of the substances and the nonbeing of other states, like the movement of warmth toward cold.

Some of the ancient ulama called unconditioned being, which is the radiance of the Ipseity, the "First Intellect," others the "Universal Intellect," and others the "First Nature."

The substances of the cosmos that are moving are the heavenly substances and the elemental substances. That which induces motion in the heavenly substances is called the "soul" by the ulama. They call the motion of the spheres "through yearning" and "through desire," not "natural." But they call the motion of the elemental substances, when it is toward the root place or state of these substances, "natural." If it is toward an alien place or state, they call it "coerced" or "constrained." The natural is like the movement of water from a high place to a low place, or the movement of warm water toward coldness. The coerced and constrained is like the movement of water from a low place upward or the movement of cold water toward warmth.

The number of the beings' solitaries and roots comes to an end with the elemental substances. The king of the elemental substances—which are water, earth, wind, and fire—is nature, which preserves the being of each in its own specificity. It is lower than the other kings in level.

The soul is king over nature. The elemental substances remain at rest and still by nature. When they move, their motion goes back finally to the motion of the heavenly substances, while the motion of the heavenly substances comes from the soul. The motion of the elements is finite, from a designated beginning to a designated end. In the spheres, the end of every motion is joined to the beginning of another motion.

The "nature" of the heavenly substances and bodies is called the "soul." The soul is king over the heavenly bodies and substances, and the soul is the vicegerent of the First Intellect, whereas the Intellect is king over the soul. The relation of Intellect's kingship to the soul is the same as the soul's to nature. The Ipseity of the Real—majestic and high is He!—is the innovator and holder of the Intellect.

As for the existents of the branch—which are the world's compound things and progeny—you should know that when one thing becomes many, this is called "disjoining," and when many things become one, this is called "compoundedness" and "coherence." Things come together and are compounded through mixing and joining with each other such that none of their substances can be found separate

from each other. The fact that the elemental substances become mixed is the trace of the heavenly movements.

The world's progeny and compound things are of four sorts: One derives from the mixing of the elemental substances and their joining together until they become one thing. This is named a "mineral substance," such as iron, zinc, lead, tin, gold, silver, ruby, amber, crystal, agate, and everything like this.

When the elemental substances are joined and become one with any of the spiritual, motion-inducing potencies, which are the potencies of the heavenly substances, this is called a "vegetal substance."

When the potency of yearning and desire—which is the trace and specificity of the soul—is joined and becomes one with these elemental substances and the movement-giving, vegetal substance, this is called an "animal."

When one of the traces of the First Intellect is joined and becomes one with all of these, this is called a "human." The existents are branches of these four groups.

The levels from the Intellect down to the elemental substances are numbered as the "origin" of existence. From the mineral constitution up to the human substance they are called the "return" of existence. The levels of kingship decrease through the four levels that are Intellect, soul, heaven, and elements. Thus the Intellect is higher in level than the soul, the soul is higher than heaven's body, and heaven is higher than the elements.

Again, the level compounded of the elements is greater than the level of the elements, since its matter takes a share from the specificity of each of them, and it is greater through the specificity of the intermixing. The level of the plant is higher than the mineral, since it possesses the potency of the mineral substance and also the potency of the motion of increase. The level of the animal is higher than the plant, since it is greater than it through wanting and yearning, which are the trace of the First Soul. The level of humans is greater than the animal level through talking and intelligence, which are the radiance of the First Intellect.

The kingship of God—high indeed and holy is He!—has no level, since "levels" arise in relation to the coming of beings from Him and their returning to Him. Thus a level appears for each existent through nearness and farness from Him. That which is nearer has a higher level of existence, and that which is farther has a lower level of being, like the existence of the altering and corruptible things.

In the Origin, no existent thing has the level of the First Intellect, and in the Return, no existent thing has the degree of the human. The eminence and height of the level of each arises from proximity to the Real—high indeed and holy is He!

The First Intellect is a vicegerent of God in sending forth being, which is the shining of His light, to the levels lower than it, as far as the fourth level, which is the elements. Humans are a vicegerent of God in taking in the being of the existents, level by level, until all arrive back at God. They take in the being of the elements through the mineral potency, and they take in the mineral being through the growing potency. They take in the being of the growing substance through the animal potency and sensory perception, and the animal being through the talking soul's potency of perception. Then they arrive back at God—high indeed is He!—with all these beings.

In the existents of the Origin, there is no potency of taking in, but there is a taking-in potency in the existents of the Return, as well as a potency of giving and

putting far from self. Hence they bring the suitable near to self with the taking-in potency, and they reject the unsuitable with the potency of giving and putting-far.

The work of the “attracting” and “expelling” [potencies] can be found in the vegetal substance, for the growing potency, through the attracting, seeks nourishment and the provision that nurtures the vegetal substance. It turns this over to the retentive [potency], and the retentive keeps it so that the digestive may make it worthy, by cooking it, for the vegetal substance. The digestive turns it over to the nourishing, and the nourishing joins it with the vegetal substance. That which is unsuitable for the vegetal substance it gives to the expelling potency to be put far away.

In animals, the potencies of appetite and wrath are like the attractive and expelling in plants. Through the potency of appetite, the animal seeks the compatible, and through the potency of anger, it puts the incompatible far away.

The sensory potencies were placed in humans, who are prepared for completeness, so that they may seek the sensibles through perception and bring them near to intelligence. Thereby the sensible may be imaginalized—just as the vegetal, attractive [potency] attracts the provision of nourishment. Then they turn it over to memory, which stands in place of the retentive [potency in plants]. Reflection works on what is in memory—like digestion in plants—so that it may become worthy of the human soul. The intellecting potency joins what is suitable and has reached the intelligible from the imaginalized to the substance of the human soul.

The Second Talk

Concerning the work of humans and their kingship, and mentioning the marks by which humans become king over other humans

It has come to be known that the provision that is put to use so that humans may be human is obtained from all the existents—the root and the branch, the solitary and the compound; from the Intellect to the earth, and from the earth to the talking soul. What each of the existents has found from its origin, it gives to humans, and humans take it all back to their place of homecoming and return.

Humans have a tool for taking in each thing. They receive bodies with the bodily potencies, and accidents with the sensory potency—colors with the seeing of the eye, sounds with the hearing of the ear, aromas with the potency of smell, flavors with the tasting of the tongue; cold and warmth, dryness and wetness, roughness and smoothness, hardness and softness, and so on with the sense of touch; compatibility and incompatibility, friendship and enmity, and dominating and being dominated over with the potency of sense-intuition; and reality and selfhood through the selfhood and awareness that they have from the joining with intelligence.

Along with the specificity of taking in existents, they also have the specificity of giving the intellect’s meanings to talking and doing. Thus through “practice” they write on the outside the intellective forms that they see depicted in themselves, and through “talking” they speak them and make them evident.

No one should be content with the human specificities of the bodily form and corporeal attributes, such as going on two feet, broad nails, and naked skin; or with

the combination of animal specificities, such as finding with sensation, fleeing, voicing, storing away, eating, and sleeping; or with the traits and specificities of devilness and satanity, such as pridefulness, stubbornness, disobedience, greed, avarice, and cowardice. It is not enough to have these specificities to be human. Just as the human body and frame remain deficient without the completeness of all the human specificities and outward guises that come together, so also the reality and meaning of humans will remain incomplete without the completeness of all the meaning-related and spiritual specificities.

Although human individuals, who are largely alike in the body's guise, are not without a share of joining with the body, they do not have a complete portion of joining with the root intelligence or of joining with the first soul. The most intelligent of the common people have a joining with the First Intellect such that they can be compared to the radiance of the Intellect just as the brightness of night can be compared to the light of the blazing sun.

The mark of reaching and joining with the first soul is that human desire should be compatible with the desire of the first soul and that they should want what is to come to be. The generation of the engendered things and the corruption of the corruptible things are put aright through their wanting.

The mark of reaching and joining with the radiance of the First Intellect is that certainties come to predominate. Although the vast majority of people are aware of knowledge and its howness only through following authority and recounting, there is certainty for individuals who have this joining. In knowing they become independent from the assistance of the senses and the instruction of anything other than intelligence.

One of the marks of the completeness of humans is the equilibrium of the animal potencies within them such that each is complete in its own specificity. It is not that one is there and another not, or that one is greater and the other deficient. For example, the appetitive potency may be manifest and dominant in someone, while wrath may be extremely weak and dominated over. But domination over these potencies is an excellence only when, through overmastery by intelligence, they are just like intelligence, and their work is at the command of intelligence—not that they be deficient in their own substance.

In relation to intelligence, the states of the animal potencies, habitudes, and character traits are like the situation of a king's agents. When the agents follow commands, the kingship is perfect, but when they are deficient in substance, this is like incapable agents, and it is a deficiency in kingship. When the potencies work according to the wish of nature, they are like appointees of a king who rebel against him and leave his command, while he is incapable against them. In the end, they will take kingship away from the king and bring loss down upon themselves and the king.

Also, each of the potencies connected to the growing [potency] should be in perfection—such as the attractive, retentive, digestive, nourishing, form-giving, progenerative, and expelling potencies—because animality is built on the growing potency. When the work of growth and the potencies that it puts to use are not complete in their specificities, then the animal will either not exist or be deficient. So also, unless the provision of movement and sensation becomes strong and consolidated,

humans will not come to exist, or they will be deficient, since to be human is built upon being an animal. All these are among the manifest specificities.

As for the hidden, meaning-related specificities, these are not like the sensory specificities, for, at the beginning of creation, the body obtains an actual share of each [of the sensory specificities]. In contrast, after the causes of sensation and animal movement reach perfection, the hidden meanings and the nonsensible specificities have still not come from potency to act. It may be that they do not come from potency to act, and life comes to an end.

It is difficult to find humans who are complete in form and meaning. Still harder to find and more precious is he who is himself complete and, in his completeness, has the level of making the incomplete complete like himself through overmastery and domination by his own completeness. He is like a fire which, through the specificity of its own completeness, has the level of making the thing that is not a fire into a fire through its domination and overmastery.

When the human specificity of intelligence comes from potency to act, then, through their own governing and overseeing, they will keep all their own animal, vegetal, and natural potencies in harmony—over and above everything that is complete in act and specificity through the root of its creation. This giving harmony to and governing the work of each potency found by intelligence is called “courtesy” and “good breeding,”⁸ as in the eating, sleeping, seeing, hearing, talking, and doing of the man of intelligence. When the ethical virtues such as generosity, munificence, truthfulness, and constancy are collected through the governing of intelligence, this is a mark of intelligence’s power and potency.

The knowledge through which each potency and each class may be overseen does not have a specific name. Rather, each governance that is specific to a species has a specific name. Thus, knowing how to govern the human growth potency is called “medicine,” while the governance of the growth potency of trees and plants is called the “science of agriculture.”

As for governing and bringing about the wholesomeness of the human’s animal soul in talking and doing, stillness and movement, seeing, hearing, tasting,⁹ smelling, and touch to the measure that is gainful; leaving aside to the extent of benefit; and holding back when harmful—some of this goes back to the specificities of a single individual. That of it which is connected to the governing of the livelihood and the intermixing of a group or a class is called “the science of the Sharia and politics” and “the science of good breeding.” Recognizing the noble and vile character traits as well as the path of reaching the noble and becoming purified from the vile is called “courtesy” and “good breeding.”

When individuals become complete in the specificity of humanness in both the manifest domain and meaning, marks of this will appear in them. The mark of meaning-related perfection will be seen by individuals who have found perfection, and no one else will be able to recognize it, unless the perfect should give awareness of it, since one of the marks of human completeness is seeing their own joinedness with unconditioned existence, which is the light of the Divinity. Inasmuch as each existent has found this [joinedness], being will be correct for it. Awareness of this conjunction is a mark that they themselves can see, while oth-

ers must come to know of it from them. Inescapably, this is a specificity that accompanies perfection.

After all, it is correct that the branch exists—that is, the progeny of the cosmos—will return to the origin of the cosmos. The road of returning is increasing the levels, and the utmost end of increasing the levels is at humans. Reaching the origin and root is from the human level.

Reaching bodily form comes only through the bodily mixing. Reaching the reality and meaning of self and the reality and meaning of all existents comes only through awareness. When there appears an awareness of the reality and meaning of unconditioned existence, which is the radiance of the Lordship, this is a mark of joinedness and arrival, since the knower has joined with the known and reached it. So, humans in reality are those who have obtained both the meaning-related and the formal specificities.

We have also said that if a sensible body is lacking one or more members, the sensible form will be deficient. If someone were to call it complete, no one would believe him. So also, if the meaning-related specificities, whose root and foundation are intelligence and what can be found through intelligence, are lacking, the specificity of humanness will not be there. If these specificities should exist potentially but not actually, the person is incomplete. The perfection of each thing is in act. Thus, it is not sufficient that the sperm-drop should be a potential human, without the body's completeness. As long as there is not a body depicted in the form and guise of a human body, it does not have perfection. When all the traits come together, to be human is made necessary, but when they remain at the level of preparedness, to be human is only possible.

Once humans are necessarily human, they are suitable to govern the overseeing of all the potencies below humanness—as has been said—through a governing that is Shari'ite, political, medical, and ethical. As much as they increase in their own level, they find worthiness to increase their own empire, for they become suitable for kingship not only over the animal and vegetal soul, but also over humans. Their level is related to complete humans as complete humans are related to incomplete humans; as incomplete humans are related to dumb beasts, predators, birds, and wild animals; as dumb beasts, predators, birds, and wild animals are related to trees and plants; as trees and plants are related to iron, zinc, and the other mineral substances; and as the compound substances are related to the elemental substances.

The noble qualities and courtesies of the king are greater in potency and existence than the noble qualities and courtesies of other than the king, because excellencies in others have potency inasmuch as the others are excellent, but the king is excellent and makes others excellent like himself.

Now that we have enumerated the specificities of human completeness, let us also mention some of the specificities of the king's completeness:

You should know that when a human individual comes to be prepared and ready—through divine confirmation and solicitude—for leadership and kingship over other human individuals, his yearning, wanting, and aim will be toward awareness, wakefulness, knowledge, and intelligence. Most of his sitting and rising, his talking and listening, will be with the intelligent and the folk of knowledge. When he finds joy and heart-renewal through knowledge, this will be greater than his joy

through other benefits and objects of search. When he looks toward overseeing sensory life, he will do this so that the worthiness and suitability for joining with intelligence may reach its own place and limit, not so that the work and state of sensory life may be organized and put right.

After all, no matter how much one strives to consolidate the basis of sensory life and seeks for the equilibrium and health of the [bodily] constitution, and no matter how much one gathers the causes of health, the end will be ruin and perishment. All the trouble that one takes will stay futile and fruitless, for life and awareness are alien and accidental to the body, while death and unconsciousness are natural and substantial. An alien state will not last, while the natural state will dominate. It is not easy to keep alive something that is naturally dying, or to preserve awareness in something blended of without-self-ness and unawareness. At the outcome, the thing will return to its own substance, so the striving will have been futile and wasted, the trouble fruitless. *Say: Shall We tell you who will be the greatest losers in their practices? Those whose endeavor goes astray in the present life, while they think they are doing beautiful works [18:103-104]. We shall advance upon what practice they have practiced and make it a scattered dust [25:23].*

So, the king's *theōria* will be upon governing and ordering the work of his own life and that of his subjects and upon organizing his and their livelihood so that the possibility of being intelligent will reach preparedness, and so that the preparedness will join with reality. Unless humans, in the means of life, are at repose from each other and from their own ill-thinking, they will not turn away from sensory works to the work of knowledge and intellect.

The human possibility of being intelligent reaches knowledge's preparedness through reflection and thought. So also, the organization of the work of those who have found this preparedness becomes the cause for the organization of the causes of those who are just arriving. In the human species, not only do those who are just arriving require the perfection of those who have fully found, but also children in the mothers' wombs and sperm-drops in the fathers' loins have all turned the face of existence toward human perfection, and they keep on seeking it through alteration and movement. Unless the growing soul is taken care of, worthiness for life will not gain a foundation, and unless sensory perception is put in order and harmony, there will be no intellectual perception. Hence the governing and ordering of sensory life is important because it is the road to reaching and joining with the last life.

When a king is suitable, he never begins a work without seeing its end. When a king's preparedness for perfection reaches reality, then his kingship becomes a reality.

Among the king's traits, one is that there is nothing that is incompatible with him, for the provision of destruction and nonlastingness lies in opposition and incompatibility. The natural things of the world alter in state because opposites dominate over opposites.

Among all the existents of the cosmos, none is nearer to the level of having no opposites than humans. This is not because of sensory and bodily specificities, but because of the intellect's specificity, for intellect has no opposite. The person of intellect knows all opposites and all things that are incompatible with each other, such as heat and cold, wetness and dryness, life and death, and movement and stillness.

Knowing a thing is for the known thing to come to be for the knower. Hence, knowing two opposites is for two opposites to come to be for the knower. If the knower had opposites, the opposite that was compatible with him would exist for him and be known, but its opposite would remain unknown. However, this is not the case, for the knower comes to know the two opposites and the two incompatibles. Their opposition and incompatibility are nullified within the knower, and the two exist together in his soul.

"Justice" is nothing but nullifying the incompatibility of two incompatibles. When the king's joining with intelligence is complete, he has no incompatible, and the incompatibility of all incompatible things is nullified through him. When one thinks about the requisites of having no opposites, it becomes apparent that once lack of opposition becomes correct for the king through intelligence, God's vicegerency has become his reality.

Another trait is capability and unneedingness, since poverty and need are incompleteness. Inescapably, the needy person is an employee. He seeks that which will nullify his need and his incompleteness, so that he may become unneeding and complete. Being an employee and being a king cannot be joined together. The unneeding and capable person is he who possesses everything that is fitting for him, but the needy person is he who sees everything that he considers fitting for himself as far from himself, so he strives to join with it. No human can find unneedingness unless intelligence dominates over all his qualities, because, other than intelligence, no existent thing—whether solitary or compound—remains without alteration. Through alteration each seeks its own completeness. But intelligence has perfection in self. Whatever befits intelligence belongs to it. If all things, root and branch, did not exist in intelligence, it would be impossible for the human to find and know all things through intelligence. He who has all things is unneeding and capable. Hence, the provision of unneedingness and capability—which are the specificity of kingship—is to be intelligent.

Another trait is clemency and forbearance. Clemency rises up from patience, and patience is to have capability over the appetitive and wrathful potencies. The agitation of the impatient derives from what the appetitive potency must have, or from what the wrathful potency must not have. When a human's soul is impatient because of seeing, hearing, or finding the incompatible, or because of not seeing, not hearing, or not finding the compatible, this is a sign of his having been defeated and dominated over by his own work-doers and helpers. He who is dominated and defeated by his own workers and helpers will not dominate and be king over others.

Another trait is humility. The king must not act pridefully. Pridefulness is to show stinginess and miserliness toward others through one's own level, and humility is to show liberality and generosity to those below oneself through one's own high level. The miserliness of a man prideful of his own rank and waystation is a mark that he is ill-provisioned with elevation, since his elevation cannot put up with expenditure. Humility is a mark that the humble person is well-provisioned with elevation and rank, since he can give a share of it to everyone lowly in provision. This is the attribute and state of having intelligence, for small and great arrive at knowing all the same. In knowing, intelligence does not accept the great and reject the small. Having intelligence is the provision of the humility of kings.

Another trait is courage. The king should not be afraid and fainthearted, since fright and fear arise from the domination of opposites, but he who has no opposite does not fear opposites.

People's fear of blights is of two sorts: Either they fear the sensory and bodily blights that may reach them and bring about deficiency or nullification in the perfection of life that they possess; or they fear a blight that will reach the meaning-related specificity and the potency of intelligence, thereby making its perfection deficient. Once intelligence dominates over people, they are at ease from this type of fear and fright, since fear is a specificity of sense-intuition. When they look with intelligence, people know that the being of intelligence dominates over and encompasses all beings, both the moving and the resting. Were this not the case, one could not know both. Since intelligence encompasses and dominates over the other existents, it is apparent that the object dominated over and encompassed neither nullifies nor brings about the deficiency of the existence of the dominator and encompasser. Hence there is no fear of meaning-related blight.

There is also bodily blight, which changes the body's senses and life. When people are intelligent, they know that the body cannot be protected from alteration. If it did not alter, it would not have the nourishing, attractive, digestive, or expelling potencies, since these potencies are with it for the sake of alteration. When something of the body is nullified through outside influence, these make a replacement and substitute reach it. If something were not continually eliminated from the body and if these potencies always pulled in its replenishment and nourishment from the outside, it would increase in the measure of the nourishment. Once it had found one thousand maunds of nourishment, it would weigh one thousand maunds, and when more, then more. Inasmuch as the body found nourishment and put it to work throughout its life—without it being separated from it by the expelling [potency]—its height, width, and depth would increase. So also, if it were possible to replace everything that was decreased from an animal's body with just as much nourishment, the animal's body would never be destroyed, unless blight came from the outside, such as killing or cutting. Thus, it is apparent that alteration and destruction belong to the root of the animal's body. Every alteration that you find in the world's engendered things and progeny has an origin and a termination. Just as perfection comes through increase at the origin of the existence of the altering things so also it comes to its end through decrease. The final goal and utmost end of decrease is nonbeing and nullification.

So, the intelligent know that it is impossible to change the natural disposition. They also know that fear is avoiding the incompatible, but the compositional existence of the body does not avoid disjoining and nonexistence. Rather, it inclines innately toward disjoining. Intelligence does not seek to avoid the destruction of the body, because the form of the body's destruction exists in intelligence, and the intelligent always know and see it. It is intelligence that judges that the body will be disjoined. How can intelligence seek to avoid its own judgment? Hence, fear belongs neither to the body nor to intelligence, but rather to sense-intuition and imagination. As long as surmise and imagination have overmastery, intelligence is weak and humanness deficient.

These several traits that we mentioned have many other traits under them. By reminding of these that we have mentioned, we wish to make clear that the root and

provision of all good things is intelligence. How could it not be? Nothing but intelligence is able to separate the good from the not-good. When intelligence comes to linger in the talking soul, good things become plentiful and ugly character traits turn into the beautiful. Hurry and impatience turn into cleverness and quick-wittedness; frozenness and indolence become clemency and gravity; rashness and recklessness become courage and strong-heartedness; roughness and punishing become bestowing courtesy and good breeding; extravagance turns into generosity, much talking into explication, faintheartedness into pardon, deceptiveness into intellect, and fear into caution. But when intelligence remains hidden and unworking, beautiful things turn into ugly things.

Since human completeness lies in intelligence, and since those who are beautiful through intelligence are beautiful, it is even more suitable that the king's completeness be found in intelligence, lest the unintelligent man rule over the intelligent. When a human is provided with intelligence, inescapably he is king over everyone who is less provided with intelligence than he. Then the Real's vicegerency is correct for him, since the precondition to be suited for God's vicegerency is to be aware of one's own Appointor. The kingship of any appointee who is unconscious of his own Appointor is counted the same as the kingship of the elemental substances and that of the growing, vegetal potency, since these are aware neither of themselves nor of their own commander and appointor.

The kingship of the unconscious is unlasting and passing, but the kingship of those who are aware through intelligence lasts and subsists. After all, the awareness of the intelligent person is certainty, and certainty subsists, lasts, and does not change. Thus, two times fifty yield one hundred, and ten times one hundred yield one thousand, and this never changes. Whether or not someone says these words, and whether or not there are humans, this judgment is never nullified. The lastingness of such known things is with intelligence, but no body is joined with intelligence, since the passing does not join with the lasting. The level of joining with intelligence belongs only to the lifebreath, and the lifebreath, through joining with intelligence, turns into intelligence and becomes subsistent through intelligence's subsistence. This situation is clear from the work of thought, which is never at rest from searching until it reaches certainty. Once it reaches certainty, the motion of searching turns into the rest of arrival.

The Third Talk

On the deputies of the king

Know that the work of a king is to nurture, and to nurture is to make those who are worthy of completeness reach completeness. This may be put right through two works. One is to bring everything that will aid and help those who are worthy for arrival at perfection near to them, and the other is to keep everything that will be the blight of their reaching perfection far from them.

It is known that the perfection of humans lies in intelligence. Hence, to nurture people is to keep intelligent people near to them and to choose for them those

works that will make them more worthy for arrival. As for those things that are the blight of reaching intelligence—like works that give rise to heedlessness and without-self-ness—these must be kept far from them.

However, first the king must be fully informed about the existence and nature of every class of folk in the kingdom, for humans, although they are near to each other in sensible form, are disparate in their worthiness to reach meaning-related perfection. Some have the preparedness to reach perfection, and some do not. Those who are not prepared are of two sorts:

One sort do not have the preparedness to achieve human perfection, but they do have the preparedness for some of the traits that are numbered among human perfections. Such are the congregation who have reached one field of knowledge, like architects, arithmeticians, astronomers, physicians, and scribes. Such also are the congregation who are excellent and clever in some of the work of craftsmen and who are worthy to be leaders and masters for other folk of the same artisanry.

The other tribe have not turned toward human perfection or any of the fields of the perfections. This company is also of two sorts: One company among them is the weak. The foundation of their constitution is poorly provided in creation and they have a creational deficiency in their perceptual potencies, or they are defective in both their perceptual and movement-giving potencies. Nonetheless, although they are far from every worthiness for any of the fields of the human perfections, no blight of theirs reaches those who are prepared and seeking.

Another company is a tribe who are far from the preparedness for perfection and, at the same time, blight those who are prepared. Although this company has many sorts, the name “folk of ignorance” is correct for all of them. Their work and conduct are incompatible with the preparedness for intelligence. They are, for example, the indolent nonworking and the futile-doers who, in addition to not-doing, bring together unbeneficial and damaging acts and the wasting of the lifespan and the moment, like tricksters and the folk of joking and ridicule; like the seekers of excessive sensory enjoyments, such as indulgers, wine-drinkers, fornicators, and other folk of depravity; and like murderers, villains, and thieves, the inclination of all of whom is toward the destruction of the means of life.

When the king becomes informed of all the classes, he will know how each class can be governed, even though the number of the classes may be many. Once all are restrained by intellect—not by the body—this is easy, for the scope of intelligence does not become narrow through bodily numbers. No matter how many humans there are, they are few relative to the other existents of the cosmos, and all the existents can be perceived together by intelligence.

The easiest path for governing and overseeing the people is for the king to think about himself, the states of his own body, and his own soulish potencies. He should look to see from what come the wholesomeness and corruption of each, from what come its perfection and deficiency, and which sort of knowledge can be used to nurture each.

He should take the health of his own constitution as the counterpart of his subjects who have sound constitutions. He should take his own medicinal governing to

preserve it and repel the causes of blight and corruption as the counterpart of the physicians among the subjects. He should take his own appetitive potencies as the counterpart of the enjoyment-worshippers and indulgers among the subjects; his own potency for indolence as the counterpart of the nonworking among the subjects; his own greed and avarice as the counterpart of the thieves, marauders, and looters among the subjects; his own wrath [as the counterpart] of the murderers and villains among the subjects; his own courage as that of the brave among the subjects; his own generosity and munificence as that of the provident among the subjects; and his own potency of good breeding—which oversees, governs, and brings about the wholesomeness of the character traits—as the counterpart of the ulama of the Sharia, the folk of godwariness, and the possessors of noble character traits among the subjects.

Governing and bringing about the wholesomeness of the folk of excess and destruction among the subjects is done through the leaders of the army. He keeps the kingdom of his own soul wholesome through knowledge of self, and so also he should keep the work of the kingdom's subjects wholesome through the knowers among the subjects. He should take the root of all acts of governing to be organizing those who have the preparedness for the knowledges of certainty so that they may reach perfection. He should keep all others well organized so that they may be their aides and help.

When the king begins to gauge his own governing of the subjects against his governing of himself, he will be secure from negligence and error. It will not be that someone will have a share of his governing while someone else will be deprived of it, for the king will be the most complete of humans. When self becomes cognizant of self, it is cognizant of the most complete human and capable of preserving him in his completeness. He who is cognizant of the complete is also cognizant of the deficient and is able to preserve him in his preparedness, since he who has reached completeness will never be less than the incomplete.

So also, when the potency of recognizing the levels is at work in the king, he will recognize from each individual subject the human perfections for which he is prepared. He will seek from each individual who is prepared for a perfection only that perfection for which he has the preparedness, so that thereby his searching will reach the objective and his governing not go to waste. If he sees someone worthy for craftsmanship, he will not ask him to direct the work of officers, nor will he hold back someone prepared for an eminent work in a mean work.

The king should order himself according to the governing and order of the First Nature, for the growing soul never does the work of the animal soul, the work of the expelling [potency] does not appear from the attractive, the work of the attractive does not come from the expelling, and wrath does not do the work of appetite. Then he will be the true leader of the existents in their going back to the Return, and the rightful vicegerent of his own Appointor and Commander in nurturing what is below him.

A Chapter in Concluding This Book

This book came to be written after I had thought for a time about kingship in relation to the work of a group of kings who are content with the name *kingship*. The more the specificity, excellence, and meaning of kingship was sought in them, the less it was

found. Rather, I saw the king as follows: His inclination to pursue appetite was greater than that of all the individual subjects, or most of them. The domination of his wrath over intelligence surpassed the domination of his subjects' wrath over their intelligence. His avarice and gluttony in collecting and setting aside nonlasting stores exceeded the avarice and gluttony of the subjects. Compared to the subjects, he was less conscious and more heedless of knowledge, noble character traits, and the root intelligence through which come the knowledges of certainty and the awareness of the outcome of affairs and the Return. All his striving and seriousness were toward satiating his greed and satisfying his anger. He saw that satiating greed lies in gathering passing possessions in whatever way they come forth more quickly, whether through plundering, asking through importunity, or taking by force when it was not there for the taking. He satisfied his anger by force against anyone he wanted, even if the person was not suitable for force or deserving of perishment.

I found that in the time of seclusion and leisure his business was excessive eating, gathering playthings, heedlessness, futile laughter, and unsuitable talking. I saw that these states and more that became manifest from kings were incompatible with the preconditions of leadership and the customs of universal rule. Or rather, the overmastery and domination by overmasters that come through falsehood, the inclination of nature, and the wishes of the appetitive and wrathful soul is more like overmastery by the other animals—like the lion, the panther, and other predators—and such a kingship ends up in endless ruin and perishment.

That is why I aimed to write this book, so that a few of the traits of the king might be mentioned therein. If, among the kings and leaders, there should be an individual who has been designated by the divine solicitude, whose anima and lifebreath have the mark of the radiance of intelligence, who by nature tends away from passing things toward lasting beings, and who recognizes that aid on the path of seeking the anima's deliverance is in the avoidance of joining with what accepts destruction—if he should read this book and stand firm in reading it, the path of the anima's release and the lifebreath's deliverance from fear and dread of annihilation will become clear for him. He will gain certainty that what has appeared to others as kingship and what they have fancied to be additional rank and level represents the utmost captivity and imprisonment. What the vast majority of people call "good fortune" and "prosperity" is in reality bad fortune and adversity. After all, what kings recognize as good fortune is plentiful soldiers, many weapons, flourishing treasuries, measureless arrays of raiments and ornaments, obedience of the subjects, the makings and means of elation and diversion, and the like. When the heart is taught by and becomes intimate with such things, it becomes bound to them. Every state which has the possibility of passing and to which the heart becomes bound turns into a cause of the heart's captivity and imprisonment, not its freedom and release.

If all these things that are fancied to be the means and marks of prosperity and good fortune—weapons, soldiers, mounts, gold, silver, jewels, tools, houses, fortresses, gardens, palaces—were bound to this one individual with chains and ropes, such that they could only be undone from him with difficulty, he would suffer the extremity of captivity and misfortune. Such a state would not be the good fortune of

the body. In the same way, when the anima becomes bound to such means with a chain and rope made from the substance of these means and the substance of the anima, this is called “love.” This is not a mark of the anima’s freedom and release, but a mark of its misery and bad fortune. When someone sees such ugly things as beautiful, I consider this a defect of seeing. But if a king should see without defect and blight, and the light of insight should be complete, and if this book becomes the companion of his insight, then he will have no needs in the two worlds.

Although this book is brief in form, it is complete in meaning. My purpose in making it brief was so that the reader not be kept back from studying it once every day. It is a precondition for him to have constancy in seeing it and reading it, because, when any disposition has become established in human nature over the years, or any disposition has not become established despite the passage of the years, a little seeing and reading will not remove the former, nor will it establish the latter. The exaltedness of this book will keep on increasing to the extent that the reader’s perception and understanding increase, God willing.

This book is now complete in splendor and fortune. Gratitude and thanksgiving be to intellect and lifebreath, and felicitations and applause be upon the lifebreath of the pure and the road-showers! *God alone suffices us—a good guardian is He!* [3:173]. *And praise belongs to God, Lord of the worlds* [37:182].

The Book of the Everlasting

In the name of God, the All-Merciful, the Compassionate

This is a book from us to the brethren, that their insides may be stirred to seek and recognize the end and origin of self, and that their hearts’ skirt may be seized by the wish to know their own state and work in this life, correctly and with certainty.

We carefully avoid talking at length in this book, for long talking and much writing make the listeners and readers impatient and hold them back from understanding and accepting the meaning. Nonetheless, although we have chosen to talk briefly, we will strive so as not to leave aside any indispensable point. We will mention clearly and succinctly what we have found during our short lifespan from the sayings and writings of the past knowledge-testers¹⁰ and in the books of the prophets, especially the Divine Book, which came down upon the seal of the messengers, Muḥammad—upon him be peace. [We will also mention] everything that we have reached by our own *theōria* through the divine confirmation and guidance and that agrees with the views of the great knowers and the Divine Book. Then the servants will not remain without a share of it, and the seeing of the arrived ones will not turn away from it. And with God is help and success!

We have divided this book into four sections:

Section One: On numbering the divisions of the sciences in a universal way, in five chapters.

Section Two: On recognizing self and its path, in ten chapters.

Section Three: On recognizing the beginning, in ten chapters.

Section Four: On recognizing the end, in ten chapters.

Section One: On Recognizing the Divisions of the Sciences

It is five chapters.

Chapter One

The sciences are divided into three kinds: One is worldly, another afterworldly, and one is the science of thought, which is intermediary between the two.

Worldly sciences are also divided into two: One is the science of talking, the other the science of doing. The afterworldly sciences will be mentioned in section Two.

Chapter Two

The science of talking is in two levels:

One is the general level, such as most people have in speaking. They learn it in unconsciousness and infancy from father, mother, and others.

The general talking is obtained in three levels. This is because the first thing that the infant learns by way of talking is showing the voice. When he is able to do this, various movements [i.e., vowels] appear in the voice so that letters may come to be. When it is easy for him to show the letters and movements in the voice, he learns to bring the letters together so that they become words, in whatever language it may be—Persian, Arabic, Syriac, or some other.

The second level, which we call the “specific level,” is that possessed by the arrived ones in talking. They know from what are the root and provision of speech, how far are the profit and benefit of speech, and from what potency it comes to be and in how many guises.

From recognizing speech’s root and provision, the science of music arises. From knowing the profit and benefit of talking the science of logic shows its face, and it is the scale of the knowledges. From the guise and form of the composition of talking and its movements and stillnesses, the science of language and grammar is born.

The knowers and folk of each of these sciences have prepared books. But, among all of these, the science of logic is like the mediator between the worldly sciences and the afterworldly sciences, because it has a way into all. All the sciences become clear through it. In Chapter Four, we will mention its profit and benefit.

Chapter Three. On the Divisions of the Science of Doing

Know that the science of doing is divided into four kinds:

One is that connected mostly with the movements of the body and its limbs, like the work of the craftsmen, such as goldsmiths, ironworkers, carpenters, and the like.

Second is like writing, scrivenry, the science of devices, and the artisanry of alchemy. Although the movement of the members and limbs is at work, most of this science is not connected to the members and limbs.

Third is connected with the wholesomeness of the work of people’s living together, like the science of politics and of the acts of worship, the science of interactions, marriage and divorce, manumission, and anything of this sort. This is called “Sharia.”

Fourth is recognizing the good dispositions and bad dispositions of people, and recognizing the way of acquiring good traits and avoiding bad traits. This is called “the science of good breeding.”¹¹

Chapter Four. On the Science of Thought

The science of thought is divided into four kinds. One is recognizing definitions and demonstrations. The profit of definitions is knowing and recognizing the reality of the thing, and the profit of demonstrations is knowing that two known things are joined or not joined with each other. Both of these are attached to the science of logic.

The second kind is the science of arithmetic and numbers and knowing their levels and the specificity of each number.

The third kind is the science of geometry and knowing the guise of the cosmos, the shape of the celestial sphere, the stars, and their movements; the largeness and smallness of each planet; the manner of the traveling of the stars and the revolution of the sphere; and recognizing the connection of these with the occurrences and states that happen on the earth. The science of divination and dream-interpretation is also of this kind.

The fourth is the science of nature and medicine and the recognition of the qualities of the elements and their intermixing, the progeneration of the compound things from them, and the differentiated details of the progeny, whether animal or inanimate; the motion of the things that move; and the cause and origin of the motions. Some of it is recognizing the state of the human body in terms of its nourishment, increase, and decrease; the profit of this is to keep the human growth potency in harmony. When this science is used in other than humans, it is called “the science of agriculture.” If the already-mentioned science of good breeding is not for humans, it is called “veterinary medicine” and “training.”

Chapter Five. On Recognizing the That-Worldly Knowledge

We have called these knowledges “worldly” because their profit and benefit arrive as long as humans are alive. After the anima’s disseveration and separation from the body, they are like a dream whose trace is remembered in wakefulness. Moreover, they can be found through much suffering and over a long time, and, once they are found, their profit is just that much. But the that-worldly knowledge can be found in a short period, and when it is found, its benefit does not come to an end through death and the body’s destruction. It is like something put aside that had come to hand in the days of without-self-ness and unconsciousness, and then the fruit is reaped in the days of awareness.

Just as the profit of the this-worldly sciences hardly reaches that world and has no work there, so also the afterworldly knowledges are unworking in this world, except a little. The that-worldly knowledge is knowing “the horizons and the souls,”¹² whose first profit is *tawhīd*. Then it is recognizing the self’s shelter and returning place after this life.

If you have nothing of the this-worldly knowledges and know nothing of them, you will not be called “ignorant,” and if you make mistakes in knowing them, you

will not be an unbeliever. But those who do not know the that-worldly knowledge, which is arriving at *tawhīd* and recognizing the self's return, are ignorant, and if they know it crookedly, they are unbelievers. And with God is success!

Section Two: On Recognizing Self

It is ten chapters.

Chapter One. On the Explication of the Disagreement of the Schools

There is no way around the disagreement among the schools and the religions in the human world. However, this disagreement appears from four roots. One is disagreement in the root of the science of *tawhīd*, like the disagreement of the Ineffectualists, the Deviators, and the Aeonists.¹³ This is the denial of unity and Lordship.

Second is the disagreement of those who have religions, like the disagreement of the Zoroastrian, the Jew, and the Christian. This disagreement arises from the denial and nonrecognition of the messenger.

Third is disagreement among the folk of the schools, like the Sunni, the Mu'tazilite, the Shi'ite, and the Kharijite. This arises from nonrecognition of the imam.¹⁴

Fourth is the disagreement among the folk of the doctrines, like the Sunni with the Sunni and the Mu'tazilite with the Mu'tazilite, and this is the denial of the congregation.

The disagreements on branches arise from disagreement on the root, *tawhīd*, because, as long as a thing's root is not recognized, its branch also cannot be recognized.

Disagreement on root and branch arises from the disagreement of the languages of the speakers, since each people have given a name according to what they themselves must have—the Arabs in the Arabic language and the Persians in their language—without speaking the name of that thing for one meaning, and without both the listener and the speaker finding the entity of that whose name they were saying.

The disagreements concerning the name that happen in aural perceptions do not happen concerning the thing's entity in eyesight's perceptibles. Hence, when we bring before the *theōria* of the seekers those things that they have lost from themselves through disagreeing names, all must be seen as the same. Even though anyone can call "water" by a name disagreeing with another, he cannot see it with the eye as disagreeing, unless it be an eye that is painful and altered.

Chapter Two. On the Explication of the Knowledge That Is Incumbent on the Human

The most needful and suitable knowledge for the human is two sorts of knowledge: One is the knowledge of the encounter with the Real and reaching certainty concerning His oneness. The second is the knowledge of the creation of the world and

the human. Whenever anyone has no share of these two knowledges, his seeing and finding of the world are like a sleeper who sees and finds various forms while dreaming. Even though he keeps on seeing and finding, he is unaware and unconscious of his own seeing and finding.

All the knowers and the prophets were stirred up for the work of stirring the creatures out of their without-self-ness and unconsciousness and reminding them where their own inescapable return will be. They are like a muezzin who, through the call to prayer, gives people awareness of the prayer and the time, so that they may do their ablutions and make themselves worthy for the prayer. Then they will stay in purity and cleanliness, so that, when they hear the beginning of the prayer, they can reach the prayer. In the same way, the prophets call the creatures to themselves day by day and stir the people to purity and cleanliness so that, at the commencement of the resurrection, which is the encounter with the Real, they will be able to reach the prayer of reality. Thus He says, *Company of jinn and mankind, did not messengers come to you from among you, narrating to you My signs, and warning you of the encounter of this your day?* [6:130]. He also says, *So taste, for that you forgot the encounter of this your day!* [32:14].

These books that the messengers have brought from God to the creatures are like treasure-books, with which one must hurry to search for the treasure. One must not remain forever reading the book, for these messages are all indicators to show the marks of the horizons and the souls, which have been depicted on the world's manifest and nonmanifest by the pen of inimitability. Those who read them will then reach seeing and the encounter with the reality, becoming correctly aware of the Real's unicity. They will know for what work they were created and where they will go back. Through knowing self they will find rest and gain certainty. Thus He says, *Surely in the heavens and the earth there are signs for those with faith; and in your creation and the beasts He scatters abroad, there are signs for a people having certainty; and in the diversity of the night and the day, and the provision that God sends down from the heaven, and therewith gives it life after its death, and the turning about of the winds, there are signs for people who have intelligence. These are the signs of God that We recite to you truly. So in which speech, after God and His signs, will they have faith?* [45:3–6].

Now, of these two divisions of knowledge that were said to be incumbent on the creatures, you must first look at the science of *tawhīd* so that from it you may reach plain-seeing and witnessing. Then, through the light of knowledge, you will be able to see *tawhīd* along with the creation of the world and humans in correctness and certainty.

Chapter Three. On the Explication of the Encounter with the Real—Majestic and Exalted Is He!

Know that arriving at God is not such that God—exalted and majestic is He!—is in one place rather than another place, so that people's eyesight does not reach Him because of the far distance; or such that at one moment He is, and at another He is not. Rather, no moment and no place is without God. It is never that this encounter

is not, but the creatures do not have the eyesight for and knowledge of the encounter. Thus He says, *And We are nearer to him than the jugular vein* [50:16]. In another place He says, *We are nearer to him than you, but you do not see* [56:85]. In the same way He says, *He knows what penetrates into the earth and what emerges from it, what comes down from heaven and what ascends into it, and He is with you wherever you are; and God sees what you are doing* [57:4]. In another place He says, *And not one of you can keep [Us] away from him* [69:47].

However, this encounter happens by way of hearing, seeing, and knowing, and each of these has two levels—one specific and one general. The general consists of the hearing through which people's speech is heard, the seeing through which people and their doing are seen, and the knowing through which the states of this world's manifest can be known. The specific is the hearing through which God's secret is heard, the seeing through which God's court and God's doing are seen, and the knowing through which the states of that world can be known.

Those who do not have the general hearing, seeing, and knowing are unaware of the states of this world and of humans. They remain veiled from seeing this world, even though they are near to humans and this world. In the same way, those who do not have the specific hearing, seeing, and knowing remain veiled from God and the states of that world, even though they are near to God and that world, like the folk of declaring ineffectuality, whose general hearing, eyesight, and hearts have given them no gain. Thus He says, *Neither their hearing, nor their eyesights, nor their hearts availed them anything, since they refused the signs of God* [46:26]. He also says, *They have hearts, but understand not with them; they have eyes, but see not with them; they have ears, but hear not with them. They are like the cattle; nay, they are further astray; those—they are the heedless* [7:179]. He also says, *Are they equal—those who know and those who know not? Only the possessors of minds remember* [39:9].

So, God is not veiled from anyone. However, no one reaches Him but those who are pure of caprice and folly, whose hearing and eyesight are opened through God's mercy, and whose hearts are expanded such that, through proximity to and conjunction with that world, they are forgiven for the disjoining and farness that happen in this world. The vast majority of creatures make the great mistake of remaining in the anticipation that the Real's forgiveness will reach them in that world. After all, those who have God's forgiveness have it already in this world. Those who find the specific hearing, eyesight, and heart from the Real in this world—such that they hear from God, read God's book, and reach the encounter with God—will receive the good tidings from God already in this world that they will have everlasting paradise and release from hell and from everlasting chastisement. Thus God says, *Surely God's friends—no fear is upon them, neither are they sad. Those who have faith and are godwary—for them is good tidings in the life of this world and the afterworld. There is no changing the words of God. This is the magnificent triumph* [10:62–64]. In another place, He says about the folk of ignorance, *Thou shalt not make the dead to hear, neither shalt thou make the deaf to hear the call when they turn about, retreating. Thou shalt not guide the blind out of their going astray, neither shalt thou make any to hear save those who have faith in Our signs, for they are the submitted* [27:80–81].

*Chapter Four. On Showing That Thing through Which
Can Be Found the Science of the Horizons and the Souls*

The levels of the Real's signs in the horizons and the souls are like a locked treasure-house that can be opened with the key that is the human world. There can be correct recognition of a thing only after recognition of self, because, among the created things, nothing has the perfection of humans. All are like parts, and humans are like the whole. All are subjected to humans, and their subjection to humans appears in two sorts. One is general and manifest, the other specific and nearer to the reality.

In respect of the manifest, He subjected the earth so that whatever seed they scatter therein will give back fruit and they may take various sorts of produce. What befits wearing they make into clothing, what befits spreading they spread, and what is worthy for the edibles of the beasts they give to them. In the same way, He subjected the water to them, so they take what they must have for drinking and eating. What they want to mix with other things they put to work. If they want, they aid it with dirt, and from that they make buildings and residing places. In the same way, He subjected the other animals to humans, so they put to work what is fit for work, they slaughter what is fit for edibles, and they sit upon what is fit for sitting. Thus He says, *Have they not seen how We created for them of what Our hands wrought cattle that they own? We have abased them to them, and some of them they ride and some they eat; and other benefits they have in them, and beverages. What, will they not be grateful?* [36:71–73].

In the same way, He subjected the air to them so that through breathing they may replenish their own life. They also exercise activity upon it, making it the matter of speech and talk. Easily and without suffering they drape it in any form that they want from among the forms and shapes of letters and the guises of the tunes.¹⁵ So also He subjected fire to them, so they keep on cooking the humors inside the body, and they put it to work outside in what they want. He made the heaven and the stars the guide and leader of human seeing, such that they can see whatever they want with their light. In the same way, He subjected the dry and the wet of the earth to them, so they travel and journey in whatever direction they want.

As for the subjection of these things in a more specific way, it is that humans can know whatever they want of all these things, and they can reach its reality and root through the soul. In reality, subjection is this—that they make something bodily into something soulish. They take it from the shelter and realm of their senses to the shelter and realm of their soul through knowing and grasping. They move it from destruction and annihilation to stability and subsistence, for the forms known in the soul are not destroyed and do not come to nothing, even though their sensible objects are nullified and annihilated. Thus it is known that no created thing has the nobility of the human, just as He says: *We have ennobled the children of Adam and carried them in the land and the sea, provided them with good things, and preferred them greatly over many of those We created* [17:70].

So also, the Real made the beasts, the flyers, and the crawlers appear in this world for nurturing humans. This world is like a kind mother for humans, and the plants and beasts are her breasts. Just as a mother eats the edibles that are not fitting for her infant and gives them to it through milk, the world also takes the earth,

wind, fire, and water that people cannot eat, turns them into plants and animals, and gives them to people. Thus the intelligent may become aware that the human is God's "arrived argument"¹⁶ whereby they can return to God and find the path of certainty. Thus He says, *Say: To God belongs the conclusive argument; for, had He willed, He would have guided you all* [6:149]. He also says, *That is Our argument that We gave to Abraham against his people. We raise in degrees whom We will* [6:83].

So also, the progeny of the world, which are the plants and the beasts, all undergo change. Thus plants become animals and animals become humans, but humans do not undergo change and transmutation into something else. Thereby they may become aware that the human world is the "lasting religion" toward which He has commanded them to turn their faces. Thus He says, *So set thy face to the religion, unswerving, in keeping with the innate disposition of God according to which He disposed the people. There is no changing God's creation. That is the enduring religion, but most people do not know* [30:30]. Thus, whoever turns his face toward the human world in the horizons and the souls will find the encounter with God.¹⁷

Also, God called humans by His own names, such as hearing, seeing, knowing, wise, exalted, noble, king, artisan, and actor. The prophets who came from God described God with attributes that humans find in themselves. Indeed, He says in the revealed Book, "We will show them Our signs and marks in the horizons and their souls, so that God's reality will become apparent to them." Thus He says, *We shall show them Our signs in the horizons and in their souls until it becomes clear to them that He is the Real. Suffices it not as to thy Lord that He is witness over everything?* [41:53]. He also says, "The signs of those who have certainty are in the earth and in your souls. Do you not see?" Thus He says, *In the earth are signs for those with certainty, and in your souls. What, do you not see?* [51:20–21].

Now, our purpose in explaining the height, completeness, and greatness that humans have found from the Real is to open, with the key of the human world, the door to the treasure-house of the sciences of God's signs and wisdom, so that the chosen and the intelligent may arrive back at God through the plainly seen signs and reach rulership,¹⁸ height, and greatness. Then, among humans, they will be like humans among the beasts. Among the sleeping and the heedless, they will be like the awake. And among the dead-hearted, they will be like the living who never die.

Chapter Five. On God's Argument against the Creatures

God's argument against the creatures is the human world itself, for the Real has written on humans everything of use for recognizing the Real and knowing both that world and this world. God wrote these forms of the horizons and the souls, for, with the inimitable¹⁹ script, He has written and depicted the clear evidence of plain-seeing that the possessors of the specific eyesight can read. Thus He says, *And each thing We have enumerated in a book* [78:29].

However, He made the human world a book more complete than the other books—the beasts, the flyers, and the crawlers—and thus, in the previous chapter, we made apparent the honor, eminence, completeness, uprightness, and conclusiveness of humans. This is the book concerning which He says, *And We have brought*

to them a book that *We have differentiated, upon knowledge, as a guidance and a mercy to a people who have faith* [7:52]. It is this very book and writing that speaks and gives awareness of the Writer, as He says, *This is Our book, that speaks against you with the truth* [45:29]. He told the Messenger to track something down—*And follow after what is revealed to you of thy Lord's book* [18:27]. The interpretation [ta'wil] of this is “the human.”²⁰ He also says, *And the book will be set in place, and thou wilt see the sinners fearful at what is in it. They will say, “Alas for us! How is it with this book, that it leaves nothing behind, small or great, but that it has enumerated it?” And they find present all that they have practiced* [18:49]. It is also this same book that suffices him who reads it for whatever is of use to him in both worlds, as He says: *And every human—We have fastened to him his bird of omen on his neck; and We shall bring forth for him, on the Day of Resurrection, a book he shall meet wide open. “Read thy book. Thy soul suffices thee this day as a reckoner against thee.” Whosoever is guided is guided only for his soul, and whosoever goes astray goes astray only against it* [17:13–15].

There are many mentions of the “book” in the Koran, but one should not fancy that God’s “book” and God’s “speech” are one, or that both should be sought by way of eyesight. Rather, God’s book can be found by way of eyesight—that is, the specific eyesight—and God’s speech can be found by way of hearing—that is, the specific hearing—but not by way of eyesight.

Chapter Six. On Recognizing Self

If anyone wants to read and know the writing that he has from God, he will come to know it when he looks into the human world to see and know its governor. The governor of the human world will be recognized when its commandees are recognized one by one. The commandees and command-takers of the human world appear as nine in number—hearing, eyesight, smell, taste, touch, reflection, memory, rational speech, and writing.²¹ Thus He says, *And We gave Moses nine signs* [17:101].

These nine signs are of two sorts. One of the two consists of the five senses, which are compelled command-takers, for they cannot show anything but what comes from outside. Hearing cannot hear the voice of song as the braying of an ass, eyesight cannot see white as black, smell cannot find an unpleasant aroma pleasant, taste cannot taste the bitter as sweet, and touch cannot feel the rough as smooth. Moreover, each is incapable of the work of the others, for hearing cannot do the work of eyesight, eyesight cannot do the work of smell, and so on with the rest of these compelled perceivers.

The other level of these command-takers is reflection, memory, rational speech, and writing. These are command-takers that choose freely for their governor, for they can show other than what is there. Thus reflection can think whatever it wants, memory can preserve whatever it wants, rational speech can say whatever it wants, and writing can write whatever it wants. Moreover, their acts are joined with each other. Whatever thought brings, it gives to memory. Memory [gives] to rational speech, and rational speech to writing. This is in contrast to the senses, for hearing does not give what it finds to eyesight, eyesight does not give what it brings to smell, smell does not give what it brings to taste, and taste does not give what it brings to touch.

The five senses are like appointees who bring reports, but they do not take back answers. Memory and reflection take reports and bring answers. Rational speech and writing do not take reports back to their own governor, but they bring answers from him. Thus reflection gives to memory, memory to rational speech, and rational speech to writing. Hearing listens to speech, but it does not know how to speak. Eyesight reads books, but it does not know how to write. The tongue speaks, but it does not know how to listen. Hence, the one who listens is dumb, the one who talks is deaf, and the one who writes is blind. In the same way, reflection does not listen, memory does not see, rational speech does not smell, and writing does not taste.

Since the one who takes the message is not aware of the answer's work, and the one who brings the answer has no awareness of the message, it becomes apparent that each of the mentioned nine signs of the sovereignty is incapable of the work of the others, as we made apparent. The intelligent have become aware that in the human world there is a sovereign owner, a wise and powerful governor, who is the commander and king over the whole world of self. These nine marks are his sovereignty, and, through governing, he does the work of all, for with some he receives and with some he conveys, by way of the power that he has from God.

Also, these senses that are incapable of each other's work admit their servanthood, for none of them is the possessor, and they have given witness to the oneness of their sovereign owner.

Also, hearing takes the report of listening to the place that eyesight takes the report of color. Eyesight takes the report of color to the place where smell takes the report of aroma. Smell takes the report of aroma to the place where taste takes the report of flavor. Taste takes the report of flavor to the place where touch takes the report of touching. Through these witnessings, the intelligent man becomes aware with certainty that the possessor of the small world is one, encompassing the whole world of self, and that all those in this world are its commandees, through compulsion and free choice. Its command appears in the commandees, without having to tell them or having to take trouble. Thus He says, *He has struck for you a similitude from your own souls. Do you have, in what your right hands own, associates in what We have provided you, so that you are equal in it—such that you fear them as you fear your own souls? So we differentiate the signs for a people who use intellect [30:28].*

Now, we have said that these two groups of command-takers are nine things belonging to the sovereignty of the perceiving soul. From these nine sovereignties of itself, the perceiving soul has a level and kingship from the kingdom of God's sovereignty, for, through its kingship over its world's sovereignty, it can know God's kingship.

It is these nine signs concerning which He said to Moses, "Put your hand in your nonmanifest so as to bring it out with nine signs, and show them to Pharaoh and his people." This is because the hand is the fifth from hearing to touch and the fourth from reflection to writing. It is the hand that can bring out these nine signs to perfection. Thus He says, *Insert thy hand into thy bosom and it will come forth white without evil in nine signs to Pharaoh and his people. They are an ungodly people. But when Our signs came to their eyesight, they said, "This is a clear sorcery." They refused them—though their souls were certain about them—wrongfully and seeking height. So behold how was the outcome of the corruption-doers! [27:12-14].*

*Chapter Seven. That the Human Is Another World
in the Form of This World*

The Real made the human world a copy of “this world,” that is, the form of the cosmos, and of “that world,” that is, the nonmanifest and reality of the cosmos. He arranged a mark of each of the signs of the kingship of His own unicity’s sovereignty in the human world in the correct and complete measure—the mark of the manifest in the manifest and the mark of the nonmanifest in the nonmanifest.

Now, the signs of the world’s manifest are heaven, fire, air, water, and earth. From the sphere and the four pillars, two things are progenerated—plants and animals. In the human world there are hearing, eyesight, smell, taste, and touch. From these five together, rational speech and writing are progenerated.

Were there no heaven in this world, plants would not grow from the earth. So also, were there no heaven of hearing in the human world, rational speech would not rise up from the door of taste, which is the earth of the human world. Thus, whoever is born deaf from his mother is mute and does not speak.

Were there no shining of the sun in this world, the form of animals would not appear from water. So also, were there no eyesight in the human world, writing would not appear from the door of touch, which is the hand.

Were there no air in this world, plants would not grow and animals would not stay alive. So also, were there no potency of smell in the human world, no speech would appear, for it arises from the potency of breathing; and there would be no writing, for writing arises from talking.

Thus, with this sparkling mirror, it becomes clear to the folk of *theōria* that in the world, plants come up from the earth through heaven’s potency, and the form of animals appears from water through the sun’s potency and shining. Both are nurtured by air’s potency. Were there no air, plants would not grow and animals would not live. In the human world, rational speech appears from the door of taste through hearing’s potency, and writing appears from the door of touch, which is the human world’s water, through eyesight’s potency. Both are nurtured by breathing’s potency from the door of smell.

Also, whatever appears in the human world—such as composing rational speech and giving form to writing with the help of hearing, eyesight, and smell—is not the work of taste and touch, nor the work of hearing, eyesight, and smell, for it is the work of the perceiving soul, which makes its own measured works appear in the five senses however it wants, without having to tell them or having to take trouble. From these words it is clear that whatever appears from earth and water—such as composing plants and giving form to animals with the aid of heaven, sunlight, and air—is not the work of earth and water, nor the work of heaven, sun, and air, for it is the work of God who, through His own determining and governing by means of the sphere and the four pillars, makes other things appear as He wants, without having to tell them or having to take trouble.

Now, through the two worlds’ manifest marks that we mentioned, anyone can see in the measure of the book of himself that he has from God the measure of the world’s book—the composing of plants and giving form to animals that appear from their Governor through the sphere and the pillars. Then he will find, in every direc-

tion that he looks and exercises *theôria*, one God, powerful, wise, and without opposite, like whom there is nothing. Thus He says, *To God belongs the east and the west—wherever you turn, there is the face of God* [2:115]. So also, whoever looks back through these seven signs of self at the seven signs of the world will find the “twice seven” that were given to Muḥammad—God’s blessings be upon him! Thus He says, *We have given you the seven doubled, and the magnificent Koran* [15:87].

So, if you see the totality of the human world’s manifest, you must affirm seeing in one respect and negate seeing in another respect—for, if you are asked what you have seen, you will say, “I saw his face,” or “I saw his hand,” or “his foot,” or “his back.” All this belongs to the human that you have seen, but you have not seen the human himself. In the same way, when you see the manifest of the world through God’s signs, in one respect you must affirm the encounter with God, and in another respect you must negate the seeing of God. For you have not seen God, because what you saw belonged to God. What you saw belongs to His sovereignty, but you did not see Him Himself.

Next, we come to the other signs, which are the nonmanifest of the world, through which the heart’s eye is opened. In reality, the encounter with God can be found from this—an encounter from which one can never turn away, and upon which one must permanently stand firm, in certainty and stillness, not in supposition and disquiet.

Chapter Eight. That the Human Book Is like a Signifier for What Is Signified in the Book of God—High Indeed Is He!

Know that when the human soul is transmuted from the state of deadness and the sleep of heedlessness to the state of wakefulness, which is the human world, the first awareness that appears for it is the science of number. The first numbers of which the soul becomes aware are the levels of the sovereignty of its own world. These levels are one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, and nine, in the measure of the number of its own sovereignty—hearing, eyesight, smell, taste, touch, reflection, memory, rational speech, and writing. From knowing this numbering, the names of the levels of number are progenerated in talking. However, talking appears with the aid of hearing, so letters, which derive from the guise of sound’s movements [i.e., vowels], come before all these names. The first letters are *alif* [*ā*], *wāw* [*ū*], and *yā*’ [*ī*]; for the movements are either upwards, which is *alif*; or downwards, which is *yā*’; or in the middle, which is *wāw*. Therefore, the name of the first level of number among the characters of the *abjad* letters²² is taken to be *alif* and the last level *yā*’, for *alif* is the name of one, and *yā*’ is the name of ten, in this order:

<i>alif</i>	<i>bā</i> ’	<i>jīm</i>	<i>dāl</i>	<i>hā</i> ’	<i>wāw</i>	<i>zā</i> ’	<i>ḥā</i> ’	<i>ṭā</i> ’	<i>yā</i> ’
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Then ten has nine levels:

<i>yā</i> ’	<i>kāf</i>	<i>lām</i>	<i>mīm</i>	<i>nūn</i>	<i>sīn</i>	‘ <i>ayn</i>	<i>fā</i> ’	<i>ṣād</i>
10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90

One hundred also has nine levels:

<i>qāf</i>	<i>rāʾ</i>	<i>shīn</i>	<i>tāʾ</i>	<i>thāʾ</i>	<i>khāʾ</i>	<i>dhāl</i>	<i>dād</i>	<i>zāʾ</i>
100	200	300	400	500	600	700	800	900

These names come to be in the voice through talking. Voice and letters may be received through the door of hearing, not the door of eyesight. When these letters are depicted from the door of touch, which is the hand, they are called “characters” and “script,” not “letters” and “sounds.”

Every community depicts the characters by way of its own convention. The Arabs [depict] the nine levels in this shape: *alif, bāʾ, jīm, dāl, hāʾ, wāw, zāʾ, ḥāʾ, ʿāʾ*; and the Indians in this shape: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9.

No created thing has the science of number except the human. So also is the science of the names, for talking of the name arises from knowing the named thing, and knowing the named thing arises from its coming to be. These nine signs of the sovereignty have not come together in any [other] created thing, and so also, no one has the knowledge of the names except the human. Thus He says, *And He taught Adam the names, all of them. Then He displayed them to the angels and He said, “Tell Me the names of these, if you are truthful.” They said, “Glory be to Thee, we have no knowledge save what Thou hast taught us”* [2:31–32].

Now, in number, one is the forerunner and imam of all the levels, which are ten, one hundred, and one thousand. However, the levels of one are nine, the levels of ten are up to ninety, and the levels of one hundred are likewise up to one thousand. But one thousand does not have levels. Rather, these same levels are repeated. This is why we said that one is the imam in front of the levels of the numerals. Until there is one, no level appears in number. In this same measure, reflection is the imam in front of all the sovereignty, since it is thought that judges among all the other potencies—that is, memory, rational speech, writing, and the five senses.

So, the congregation of the nine letters are depicted with the characters by the human hand, thereby designating the names of the levels of the human world’s sovereignty. Therein must be seen the congregation of the nine depicted letters of the world, which are heaven, the four pillars, humans, four-footed things, flyers, and crawlers. Then, through the signifying of human writing, one will see back to what is signified in the book written by God.

Now, let us go back to script, so that it may be known how it keeps on being written by the Real—majestic and exalted is He! We said before that the composition of talking that appears from the door of human taste falls from hearing, since whoever has no hearing has no talking. Through this same mirror it becomes apparent that the composition of plants in the earth falls from heaven. Whatever does not fall from heaven does not rise from earth. Thus He says, *In the earth are signs for those having certainty, and in your souls. What, do you not see? And in the heaven is your provision and what you are promised. So, by the Lord of the heaven and the earth, it is surely a truth, like your having rational speech* [51:20–23].

Also, whenever the composition of rational speech appears in the human world from the door of taste as a vicegerency for hearing, the hand receives it as a vicegerency for eyesight and depicts it in the four levels, just as we said about the

levels of number—*alif* [1], *yā'* [10], *qāf* [100], and *ghayn* [1000]—through various sorts of characters and diverse shapes. Thereby it becomes apparent that every composition of plants brought out by the pillar earth as a vicegerency for heaven is received by the pillar water as a vicegerency for sunlight and depicted in the form of the four animals in various sorts of animate things.

Also, every form of writing that comes into the human world from taste's door as a vicegerency for hearing and from touch's door as a vicegerency for eyesight is not the work of hearing and taste, nor the work of touch and eyesight, since it is the work of the perceiving soul. Through some of its commandees, the soul makes the composition of rational speech appear in the manifest, and through some of the commandees, it depicts it as it wants in the form of writing. Through this mirror, it becomes apparent that every composition of plants brought out by the pillar earth as a vicegerency for heaven, and everything in the form of animals depicted by the pillar water as a vicegerency for fire, is not the work of the heaven and the earth, nor the work of water and fire. It is the work of God, who has made the composition of plants appear in the manifest through some of His own sovereignty; and some of it He has depicted in the form of the animals, just as He wants and through His own determination and governance. Thus He says, *And from water has God created every beast. Some of them walk on their bellies, some of them walk on two legs, and some of them walk on four. God creates what He wills. Surely God is powerful over everything. We have sent down signs making clear, and God guides whomever He will to a straight path* [24:45-46].²³

Chapter Nine. On That World's Sovereignities, Which Are This World's Nonmanifest in the Measure of the Human World

Before this, we made apparent the sovereignty of the human world's manifest and the sovereignty of this world's manifest. But the complete reading of this book, which is written in the inimitable script, has still not appeared. We showed the human world's bodies along with this world's bodies such that they came to be seen with the head's eye. In the same way, we will make apparent for the heart's eye the faces of those souls and spirits that are the human world's nonmanifest along with the faces of those souls and spirits that are this world's nonmanifest.

Know that the horizon of the human world that can be seen with the head's eye is nine bodily signs—ear, eye, nose, mouth, hand, the character one, the character ten, the character one hundred, and the character one thousand. In the same measure are nine spiritual signs in the human nonmanifest that can be seen with the heart's eye—hearing, seeing, smelling, taste, touch, reflection in the measure of the character one, memory in the measure of the character ten, rational speech in the measure of the character one hundred, and writing in the measure of the character one thousand. Thus, every seeable manifest has a nonseeable nonmanifest.

So, it must be known that the manifest of this world that can be seen with the head's eye is nine bodily signs—heaven and the pillars fire, air, water, and earth; humans, four-footed things, crawlers, and flyers. In this same measure are nine spiritual signs that can be seen along with them with the heart's eye.

In the human world, every bodily sign is joined to a spiritual sign. The endurance and good of the world's bodily things come from the spiritual, like the endur-

ance and good of the manifest ear from nonmanifest hearing; the endurance and good of the manifest eye, nose, mouth, and hand from nonmanifest seeing, smelling, tasting, and touch. Were this joining with the spirits removed from the bodies, the members would remain dead and nonworking, and from them no excellence or good would come. In the same way, were the bodies of the sphere and the four pillars not joined with the that-worldly spirits, they would not last and could not show any good or excellence. God's command could not be brought forth in the manifest bodies.

In the human world, talking is composed for doing's form, since commands are given so that doing may take place. Thus we made apparent that, were there no rational speech, the form of diverse writings would not appear through the root that is the four letters.²⁴ In the same way, plants grow so as to give form to animals. Were there no growing potency beforehand, the four animals—the humans, the four-footed things, the flyers, and the crawlers—would not appear.

The perceiving soul weighs and measures with the scale of reflection and memory when it composes talking and writing, which it makes to appear in the manifest from the five senses. After all, the five senses are compelled in their work, and although they do the work, they do not know the measure of the work—how much must be done and how. So, if the hand were in one work and reflection in something else, the hand would make mistakes, and ruin would appear. In the same way, whenever God—exalted and majestic is He!—shows anything in this world through the sphere and the four pillars, He determines and measures it through the four souls that are the world's nonmanifest. One is the highest soul, who is named "Seraphiel." Second is the preserving soul, who is named "Michael." Third is the rationally speaking soul, who is named "Gabriel." Fourth is the writing soul, who is named "Azrael."²⁵ This is because the sphere and the pillars are compelled just like the senses. Although they do the work, they do not know the measure of the work to be done—how much must be done and how—just like the water that turns a mill. If the water had no determiner and governor to keep the measure, it would work ruin. Or, it is like fire, which keeps on cooking bread by the command of its governor, but when it has no governor, it burns.

In the same way, when God does work through the sphere and the pillars, He determines and measures the work through the four souls, which are the world's nonmanifest. In the human world, the marks of reflection and memory appear in the work through rational speech and writing. Their determination and governing become manifest through the five senses. Reflection's imamate over memory, rational speech, and writing in the nonmanifest is like the imamate of one over ten, one hundred, and one thousand. Memory in the nonmanifest is in the measure of ten in the manifest, rational speech in the nonmanifest is in the measure of one hundred in the manifest, and writing in the nonmanifest is in the measure of one thousand in the manifest. Thus every manifest has a nonmanifest, so that through this manifest, one can see back to the nonmanifest.

In the same way, in this world, the mark of the four souls—the reflective, remembering, rationally speaking, and writing—is apparent in the work. Through their governing appear plants and animals from the sphere and the pillars. The imamate of the reflective soul over the three souls is like the human imamate over

the other animals—the four-footed, the crawling, and the flying—in the manifest. For humans stand up before God through the body's manifest, like reflection in the nonmanifest. The four-footed things keep on bowing through the body's manifest, like memory in the nonmanifest. The flyers and crawlers stay in prostration through the body's manifest, like rational speech and writing in the nonmanifest before the Real. Thus He says, *None of us there is but has a known station. Surely we are those standing in rows, and surely we are the glorifiers* [37:164–66]. He also says, *There is nothing that does not glorify Him in praise, but you do not understand their glorification* [17:44].

Hence God arranged the world's manifest and nonmanifest and the human's manifest and nonmanifest in one measure, for the sake of mercy toward the creatures. Through reading these two books of God, they may find the way to the encounter with God. There is no book that shows the path to God better than these two books, that is, the large world and the human world, for both are written and depicted by Him. Thus He says, *Bring a book from God that gives better guidance than these two and follow it, if you speak truly* [28:49]. This is the same "guidance" about which He says, *If there comes to you from Me guidance, then whosoever follows My guidance—no fear is upon them, neither are they sad* [2:38]. He also says, *If there comes to you from Me guidance, then whosoever follows My guidance shall not go astray and shall not be wretched* [20:123].

Now, whether the sign that we have made apparent is manifest or nonmanifest, what it does is apparent, and its shelter and location are obvious. Such is eyesight, for if you do not pass the color of seen things before the eye, which is the shelter and location of seeing, it will not take you anywhere. So also is the work of the other senses.

Thus, it cannot be said that the soul perceiving these signs is in one place rather than another place. Nor can the soul be given one work rather than another work. It cannot be found in the heaven of hearing without being found in the earth of taste. It cannot be said to be in the highest, its head, without being in the lowest, the feet. It cannot be said to be in the nonmanifest, the spirits, without being in the manifest, the bodies. For, when it hears speech in the heaven of hearing it replies in the earth of taste. When it reads a letter with eyesight's light, it depicts the answer with the hand's door. It does not have to come and go from place to place. Rather, all those in its world, manifest and nonmanifest, last and work through it, and its command passes to them without its having to talk.

Thus it becomes clear that each of God's manifest and nonmanifest signs in this world—as we have made apparent—has both an apparent work and an obvious shelter and location. But there is no one work rather than another work that can be given to the Ipseity—majestic is It!—nor can one say that It is in one place rather than another. One cannot say that It is in the heaven and not in the earth, or that It is in the pillar fire and not in the pillar water. Just as It makes the heaven rain, so It makes the earth grow, heats through fire, and depicts through water. For It does not have to come and go from place to place. Rather, the world's manifest and nonmanifest last and work through It, for Its command passes to them without Its having to talk. Thus He says, *It is God who created seven heavens, and of the earth their like; between them the command descends, that you may*

know that God is powerful over everything and that God has encompassed everything in knowledge [65:12].

Chapter Ten. That the True "I" Cannot be Found through Anything of these Sovereignties

It has become clear from the past chapters that no work comes to be in either of the two manifest, bodily worlds without a nonmanifest, soulish joining. Thus, the manifest ear must be joined to the nonmanifest hearing, and the manifest mouth—in the fourth level from the ear—must be joined to the nonmanifest taste, so that speech may appear in the manifest from taste's door. Were there no hearing, reflection's determining and measuring could not make speech apparent from taste's door by way of the eye and seeing. In the same measure, were the manifest heaven not joined to the nonmanifest Location of Locations,²⁶ and were the manifest earth not joined to the rationally speaking soul, the highest soul could not compose animals from the pillar fire. So also is the form-giving of writing that appears from the hand's door through eyesight; were there no eyesight, hearing could not write anything.

Thus it becomes apparent that the Highest Soul, which is Seraphiel, is incapable of bringing forth plants, and the Location of Locations is incapable of depicting animals. Each bears witness against itself through servanthood and commandedness, and each has put the name of possession far from self. Rather, these are two imams, spiritual and bodily, compelled and freely choosing, incapable of each other's work, [standing] before God—high indeed is He! Between them and God there is no intermediary, and the commands of the Real—high indeed is He!—become apparent within them. By means of them plants and animals appear in this world's manifest.

In the world of humans, the tools of their manifest bodies are alive and sparkling through their nonmanifest spirits, and the nonmanifest spirits are alive and sparkling through the perceiving soul. Thus, we said before that, were hearing and seeing not joined with ear and eye, these would be dead and inanimate bodies. In the same way, were the soul not joined with hearing and seeing, these would be just like a body from which the anima has been cleaved, for no work and excellence would come from them. Thus, the perceiving soul is like the anima for the nonmanifest spirits, and the nonmanifest spirits are like the anima of the manifest bodies.

Inside its nonmanifest levels, the soul is like a "lamp" inside a "glass." The nonmanifest spirits are like a glass within a "niche." The bodies' manifest is like the niche. Thus, in one respect—not in reality, but metaphorically—the perceiving soul's lamp is bright through itself, and the niche of the bodily levels is bright from the glass. It is the perceiving soul that is the "blessed tree," neither from the "east" of the spirits, nor from the "west" of the bodies, for the perceiving soul does not become limited through the levels of its spirits and bodies. It does not come under its own sovereignty, which would then encompass it, because no part can encompass its own whole. Rather, the perceiving soul is "a light upon a light"—that is, upon the light of the spirits, which are the glass. Thus He says, *God is the light of the heavens and the earth; the likeness of His light is as a niche, wherein is a lamp—the lamp in a glass, the glass as it were a glittering star—kindled from a blessed tree, an olive that is neither eastern nor western, whose oil would well-nigh shine, even if no fire*

touched it; a light upon a light. God guides to His light whom He will; and God strikes similitudes for the people, and God has knowledge of everything [24:35].

According to this same similitude that God has struck—depicting it with His own inimitable script and making it binding on each of His servants through His generosity and munificence—one can become aware that the levels of the that-worldly spirits and souls are like the anima for the this-worldly bodies and, in another respect, they are like bodies, while the Ipseity—majestic is It!—is like their anima. Through It all are alive and sparkling, through It excellent and working. Were they to be cut off from the Real, they would be like the this-worldly bodies that become separate from the spirits—no work and no excellence would arise from them.

Thus also may one look back to the Reality's "lamp," which is bright through Itself, and through which everything is bright. The Ipseity is not the "eastern" of that world's spirits nor the "western" of the this-worldly bodies—just like a lamp, which is not from the glass's eastern nor the niche's western. For It does not come within the limits of Its own sovereignty, nor does It fit under the knowledge of Its own commandees, that they might encompass It. They do not grasp anything whatsoever of It. It is "a light," bright through Itself, "upon a light," which is the spirits that are bright through It, without howness and how-much-ness. It cannot be described, save with these attributes of Its sovereignty that we have brought out. Rather, all are alive through It, and through joining with It they are capable of the works and excellencies that appear from them.²⁷

Our objective in collating the two worlds and in gauging the human world's manifest against this world's manifest and the human world's nonmanifest against this world's spirits is for the folk of intelligence to find the way to oneness. If we do not bring the mirror before the eyes, you will not be able to see the face and you will not recognize it in any likeness. Inescapably, humans must be called to the encounter with God through the signs of the horizons and the souls so that they may not remain veiled.

Once the knowledge of the signs of the horizons and souls takes them to *tawhīd* and they become aware of oneness, then they must let go of the knowledge of the signs, lest they be associators.²⁸ This is like a mirror—if you do not bring it before the face, you will not be able to see the face. But if you do find the way to the face with the mirror and you fail to put the mirror out of your hand, you will affirm two visions and leave aside oneness. Hence, you must look at the signs so as to know, recognize, and be rid of deviation and declaring Him ineffectual. Once you know and recognize, you must put aside the signs and the marks so as not to be an associator. This is like a tablet upon which you write so as to learn wisdom. When you find knowledge and wisdom, you must erase the tablet, so that between the writing and the erasing, knowledge and wisdom may arise.

Once you find *tawhīd* through knowledge and wisdom, it will become apparent that no declaration of similarity²⁹ arose from your affirmation of the two worlds, because both are the artisanry of one Artisan. Indeed, there would be a declaration of similarity if you were to compare two things, one of which was not the copy of the other, but rather, each of which was a thing on its own, as when you compare two humans. However, when you compare the human with the cos-

mos, of which the human is the copy and the result, there is no twoness. So also, when you look at the Necessary and reach *tawhīd*, you cannot call any but God “living, hearing, and seeing.” You will have known, through plain-seeing and witnessing, that the whole of this world and that world is alive through the life of God, but God needs no life through which to live. So also, they are hearing and seeing through God’s hearing and eyesight, but God needs no hearing and eyesight through which to be hearing and seeing. This is like a dark room that is bright through the light of a candle. The candle needs no brightness through which to be bright. Rather, the candle is independent of brightness, but the house is in need of brightness. So also are the other potencies.

So, from this discussion it has come to be known that these manifest marks of the human world and the great world are all calling out from every direction that these signs and marks have a Possessor who is capable, unneeding, living, hearing, and seeing. Through His governing and measuring all come to be, and by His want and will they come to appear in presence from the nonapparent. Thus He says, *And listen for a day when the caller will call out from a near place; the day they hear the cry in truth—that is the day of the coming forth* [50:41–42]. So, whenever someone recognizes God through these attributes, this power, and this unneedingness, no matter how much he tries to make Him like something, he cannot do so. And with God is success.

Section Three: On Recognizing the Beginning of the Work

It is ten chapters.

Chapter One. On the Explication of the Beginning

Know that people seek two sorts of beginnings for things: One is the beginning of something that has conjoined dimension and measure, like a row, one extremity of which is taken as the beginning and the other extremity as the end. Something is called “beginning” in respect of the fact that perception starts from it at first; it is called “end” in respect of the fact that it reaches that far.

The second is the beginning of something that has a disjoined measure, like occurrences one after another, the earlier part and occurrence of which is called the “beginning” in time, and the last the “end.”

Because of seeking both these sorts, “beginning” and “end” enter reflective thought. For the most part, thought about this sort of beginning and end is not sound—unless it is confirmed by the light of divine inspiration—and no remedy is found in the search. This is because the human world is the world within which the Real enumerates the beings, and within it are called to account the root, the matter, and the substance of all things. Were this not so, people would never wish to know things and would not become happy through correct knowledge and certainty. In the earlier section [2.8], we indicated that the world with all its levels belongs to work, that there is no number in any of its levels, and that there cannot be number along with workerness. But the human world is the world of number and knowledge, not the world of doing work.

Human knowledge arises from the senses, which are only part of the human world, not the whole. Therefore, you can know a part of this world through a part of the self's world. For example, through the sense of seeing, you cannot perceive all colors at once, nor can you grasp all directions at once. Rather, first one is perceived, second another, and third a third. Everything grasped with the potency of sense-perception is preserved in the potency of memory. So, when you look by means of thought at the preserved perceptions and perceptibles, the science of numbering appears. Number is the size and measure of the whole that is known part by part.

So, in looking at the world, humans find parts encompassing other parts. Thus, they find air encompassing water and earth, they find heaven encompassing the pillars, and they find the last sphere encompassing the sphere of the fixed stars and the spheres of the running stars. They judge that the utmost end and size of the encompassing part is the "location" of the other part that is in its midst. Hence, in respect of imagination, they want to know what is the location of the last of all the parts.

So also, when they look at the progeny of the cosmos, they find that one is before another in time, and one is after. Thus, they find the father before the son in time, the sperm-drop before the clot, the clot before the flesh-lump, and so on. They judge that before the child, there were his father and mother, before humans there were other animals, before animals there were compound bodies, before compound bodies there were simple bodies, and there was this world before this world's progeny. They want to know what there was before this world in time.

Before explicating this state, we will mention two chapters, one "On location" and the other "On time," so that this hesitation and bewilderment may leave the folk of *theōria*. And with God is success.

Chapter Two. On Location

Know that when a body's manifest comes within another body's manifest such that none of its parts remain outside, the encompasser is called the "location" and the encompassed is called the "located." Both names occur for the parts of the cosmos, such as the spheres and the pillars.

When you gather all together—the encompasser and the encompassed, the location and the located—and you call them by one name, like "cosmos," no body remains that you could make into the location of the whole. If you leave a body outside, the name *cosmos* does not apply to all, rather to some, so this is not the whole. If it is not the whole, then these are the parts, and the whole itself has no being. Hence the parts also cannot have being, since the "parts" are the parts of the whole. If there is no whole, there are no parts. But we took the being of the parts as granted.

For example, someone may want to reach the end of number. If he starts with one and keeps on counting—one and two and one hundred and one thousand—he will never reach a numeral beyond which he cannot count. If you want to reach the utmost end of number, the way to do this is to seek out the headings, like one, ten, one hundred, and one thousand. Although there can be more after this, you call them all by one name, such as "number," so that all may come under this name and reach the utmost end, and your soul may encompass all.

In the same way, if you want to grasp the locations and located things of the cosmos, you should gather together all its headings, one extremity of which is "location" and the other the "located," and call both by one name, like "world" or "cosmos." Thus, once you know that the cosmos is the totality of location and located, you will know that outside the cosmos there is no location and nothing located, and your soul will have reached all.

Chapter Three. On Time

Know that "time" is a measure through which motion and turning are weighed and measured. If not for time, the quickness of movement could hardly be known from its nonquickness. When it is known that two things move from one place, that both face toward one thing, and that one of them arrives sooner and one later, from this it can be known that the time of the motion of the one was shorter, so it arrived sooner, and the time of the motion of the other was longer, so it arrived later.

There are several sorts of motion. There is a motion in size, like a small body that becomes large, or the large that becomes small. This kind of motion is called "increase and decrease." Another motion is in quality, like the subtle that becomes dense or the black that becomes white. This is called "transformation." It may be that motion is in placement and position, so that the low part of something that has many ordered parts becomes high and the high part low. This is called "turning." It may be that motion is in place, so that something far becomes near or something near becomes far. This is called "transferral." All these motions are called "alteration" [*taghayyur*], that is, "becoming other" [*ghayr shudan*]. All these motions have a size and a measure, and the name of this size and measure is "time."

If someone should also call the fact that water's body becomes air's body or some other substance "motion," there is no disagreement with him in the name, but its measure is not called by the name *time*, because being water and becoming not-water have no extension. This sort of being is called "generation," and the measure of generation is not called time, but rather "moment." The "now" and the "moment" are the edge and extremity of time, just as the point is the edge and extremity of the line. However, all the motions of which we spoke have an extension, and the yardstick of this extension is called "time."

Once this meaning is known, there is no doubt that time stands through motion. In the same way, motion does not come to be through itself. Rather, it comes to be through the moving thing. So also, the measure of a thing does not come to be through itself. Rather, its being is in something whose measure is "measure." Hence motion's measure, which comes to be through motion, and motion itself, which comes to be through the moving thing, cannot come to be before the cosmos, because there was no motion before the cosmos. Since there was no motion, there was no measure of motion.

Motion is of two sorts. One is "joined," like the motion of heaven. The other is "broken," like the motion of the pillars and the other things that are under heaven. Therefore, time is also of two sorts—a time that is joined because of the joinedness of the motion, like night, day, month, and year; and a time that is interrupted, like the time of the configuration and growth of the bodies of animals, plants, and the

like. The relation of time to the motion of the spheres is the relation of the human lifespan to the human body. It is impossible for there to be the human lifespan before the human body. So also, it is impossible for there to be time, which is the lifespan of this world, before this world.

Chapter Four. On the Explication of the Beginning and the End

Know that seeking the primacy and firstness of things is of two sorts. One is primacy and beforeness in time and moment, as was said. Such primacy is not true and correct, because true primacy is a primacy and beforeness through the selfhood of self. But the first primacy—that is, primacy through time—is not through self; rather, it is through another, and that other is time. If you do not bring time into the midst, there is no primacy.

The primacy and beforeness in the other sense is when a thing comes before another thing through the selfhood of self, not through something else. Thus the writer's essence comes before writing during the state in which he writes. Although both writer and writing are found together in time, no one doubts that the writing comes to be through the writer, not the writer through the writing. Anything that comes to be through something else is "after" it. This sort of primacy and beforeness is never nullified.

When the worthies and goers of *theōria* seek the beginning and firstness of the world's work, they must not seek firstness through time and moment, for that would bring disquiet. Rather, they must count time also as belonging to the world, and they must seek its beginning.

We said before that time comes to be along with alterations, for the period of the alteration is called "time." But the substances' being and the essences' lastingness have no time. Rather, the measure of the essences' lastingness is called "aeon," and the beginning of the substances' being is called "the beginningless"—in the sense that a substance's being a substance has no beginning. Its end is called "the endless"—in the sense that it does not have an end that would interrupt it. The cause for the substance to be a substance and that which makes this being last so that it will never be interrupted is called the "Ipseity"—majestic is It!

Hence, between the Real—high indeed is He!—and the soulish sovereignty, there are no intermediaries that might come to be, neither time nor anything else. Rather, the soulish sovereignty is the intermediary between the Real and the changing substances, so that the altering substances may come to be along with alteration and time.

Chapter Five. On the Origin of the Human

Know that, as we said before, the absent souls that are the sovereignty of this world are four: One is the highest soul, whose name is "Seraphiel" and whose work is to blow spirit into bodies and give lifebreath to them, so that they may be stirred up to search and move. The work of the second soul, who is called by the name "Michael," is to take daily bread to the seeker of daily bread. The work of the third soul, who is

called by the name “Gabriel,” is to convey the words of God and bring His message to the creatures. Then the work of the fourth soul, whose name is “Azrael,” is to take in the anima; taking in the anima is to separate the meaning from knowing’s form and to join it with the knower’s substance. This is the human soul.

By “human soul” we do not mean the particular potency through which these embodied individuals are talking and hearing. Rather, we mean the leader and imam of all, who is the true “father of mortal man”³⁰ and the fourth sovereignty of that world.

The waystation and rank of the human soul relative to the others is like the waystation and rank of the hand, which is separated in space from the tongue and the others; its specificity is like the hand’s specificity, which, in one respect, makes absent meanings appear in bodily form. Its work is not like the rest of the sovereignty, because the work of Seraphiel is giving spirit, which is meaning; the work of Michael is giving daily bread; the work of Gabriel is giving messages; and the work of the human soul is taking in spirit and receiving—not conveying and giving. This is because the specificity of the human soul is knowing things, and knowing things is to take in the anima from them, for the “anima” of each thing is its meaning, and the human soul takes in all meanings from the forms through perception.

As for the being of these angels, it may be known from this: Were Seraphiel not to set the anima in the forms by God’s command, no body would stir and search, nor would it move in keeping with desire. Were Michael not to be, no strength would come to any body from nourishment, and no potency of knowing would increase in any anima from knowledge. Were Gabriel not to be, no meaning would come to be known through talking. Were Azrael not to be, nothing would change from state to state, no sperm-drop would become an infant, no form would become intelligible through knowing, and no meaning could be separated from form through perception.

The likeness of the soul’s being depicted in the individuals is that of a meaning in a scribe’s soul, which is joined with the scribe along with other meanings. It falls from the heaven of the scribe’s reflection to the earth of the hand and paper. He depicts it in the form of writing with shapes and characters. So, when the being of the meaning is sought, the characters and shapes of the script lead the way to the being of the meaning.

In another respect, the soul becomes depicted in the human bodies like the seed that the farmer brings from his storehouse. He plants it and gives it water so that it will be destroyed and mix with the substance of alien places. Then he keeps on nurturing its growth potency. Whatever state and waystation is reached by the changing seed, an alien state appears from it. While it is in the earth, it firms up root and vein. When it comes up, it shows stem, branch, leaf, and blossom. So also, in every waystation, a state and occurrence appears over it until it arrives. The seed that had at first been destroyed and come to be without self, at the end arrived again at that earliest state with plentiful gains. All the growths that appeared from it in going, changing, and without-self-ness came not to be and disappeared. It was chosen and purified from the rubbish, leaves, and branches and taken back to the farmer.

In the same way, the Real wanted to show the human soul in bodily form in respect of the fact that it had a joining with the Real in its own shelter and was joined

to those other souls. When it was about to appear in the bodily form, it fell into destruction, corruption, without-self-ness, and unconsciousness. In every level at which it arrived, many births appeared from it. In six days six things appeared. On the first day [there appeared] the heaven and the stars—like the roots, leaves, and seeds—in the respect that they have a joining with the Real; on the second day, the pillar of fire in respect of its becoming mixed with the substance of the highest soul; on the third day the pillar of air; on the fourth day the pillar of earth; on the fifth day the pillar of water; and on the sixth day the progeneration of plants and animals.

The likeness of the soul when it reaches plants and animals is that of a sperm-drop arriving from the father's loins in the mother's womb. When the six days are completed, the marks of the soul appear in the [bodily] frame and mold of individuals, like the seed that arrives when fruit is given and that comes to rise up after having fallen. As long as the soul is in the alteration of the heaven and the pillars, it is like water in the father's loins, and when it reaches plants and animals, this is like arriving in the mother's womb, where it finds the strength to increase. Thus you may know that this cosmos, along with animals and plants, is all the soul's progeneration. All must be there so that the human soul may rise up, not so that the four pillars should come to be, nor that plants and animals should appear.

The knowing farmer does not scatter the seed in the soil so that the green plant should come up, nor so that the leaves, blossoms, wood, and branches should arrive. Rather, all these states are still the waystations of the destruction and corruption of the substance's state. The time of arrival is when it comes out of this alteration and without-self-ness, and the seed of wakefulness and wisdom comes to be as the tree's fruit. Thus He says, *They said, "Wilt Thou place therein one who will work corruption there and shed blood, while we glorify Thy praise and call Thee holy?" He said, "Surely I know what you know not" [2:30].* Adam's disobedience that has been spoken about is just this—that he fell into the levels of the soul's transmutation when he went far from his own shelter and fell away from the joining with the Real.

When he rose up in form from having fallen during the six days of which we spoke, through the help and intercession of the Real, and when the trace of the Real's joining appeared over him and once again he showed some of the signs of that world's sovereignty, this was the day of sitting on the throne of the sovereignty. Thus He says, *He created the heavens and the earth and what is between the two in six days. Then he³¹ sat upon the throne. You have no friend apart from Him, neither intercessor. What, will you not remember? [32:4].* This was also the time of the return and the acceptance of repentance after saying the word of the Real. Thus He says, *So Adam received from his Lord words, so He turned towards him; surely He is the Turning, the Compassionate [2:37].*

So, the folk of intelligence should know with certainty that the objective in creating and depicting the soul in bodily form was not that it should be tempted and tricked by the branches, the leaves, the fruit of growth and nourishment, the love of wrath and status, and the domination of envy, thereby preventing the seed of the self's selfhood from rising up. Rather, every portion of these progenerations is of use to someone. Some of it is of use to the beasts, which have been depicted in that form. Other portions of it—like love of status, wrath, and domination—are the work of

Satan's disquietening. The wood and timber of the members and bodily parts are fitting for taking trouble and working. As for that of it which is the perceiving "I," it arrives back at the Real with abundant gain by way of the heart and knowledge, just as was said in the earlier section.

*Chapter Six. On the Angels' Prostration to Adam—
Upon Him be Peace!*

The Real adorned the soul as a four-footed thing in the mark of the beast of the earth, so that it may speak with all the worldlings through its four feet according to their level and waystation from God.³² One foot is in the earth, and its name is *nature*. One foot is in the plants and its name is *growing*. One foot is in the beasts, and its name is *animal*. One foot is in humans, and its name is *the speaking intelligence*. The human is like a tongue delivering an address, for he speaks of all the worldlings while the congregation stays silent.

The foot in the earth is dead and without-self, that in the plants is asleep, that in the beasts is bewildered and seeking, and that in the humans is in the greatest rank, awake and talking. The human soul was turned downwards, and it rose up through these four feet.

The foot that is in the earth is dead in the earth. When it comes up, it comes up upside-down, for the plant's head is in the earth with its root. When the foot reaches beasts from plants, it reaches them hanging down. When it reaches the human, it appears in the marks of the standing-up at the resurrection, so that it may rise up for God's numbering.

Of the four feet that we said belong to the soul, three are like the "three dark-nesses"³³—the earth, the plants, and the beasts. These must be put aside so that the light of human wakefulness can be reached for the sake of the signs of the work's end, as will be mentioned in Section Four, God willing.

Thus has it become clear that the soul must have these four ranks so as to rise up in each level and rank. The angels that the Real has kept in each level come into the human world with their own levels, like the angels of movement in the moving things, and the angels of stillness in the still things. When humans come to recognize the selfhood of self and see back to the signs of the world's sovereignty from the signs of the self's sovereignty, they will know that these four absent souls, which are the nonmanifest of the world, are also subjected to humans.

Were the highest soul, who is called "Seraphiel" and is the reflecting soul, not subjected to humans, they could not think. Were the remembering soul, which is the Preserved Tablet and is called "Michael," not subjected to humans, no perceived and known thing would stay in memory. Were Gabriel, who is the talking soul, not subjected to humans, they could not bring known things into speech. Were Azrael, who is the writing soul, not subjected to them, the artisanries would not appear from them. Had the angels of motion and rest not prostrated themselves to them, humans would not be at rest and still, nor would they show motion and movement, for still things rest through the angel of stillness, and moving things move through the angel of movement.

Chapter Seven. On Iblis and the Devils

Know that everyone's Iblis is his own soul when it seeks the body's pleasures and wishes and goes the way of disquiet and pridefulness. However, he who first took the lead came to be called "Iblis."

The thought of the human soul while thinking is like a lamp that has the smoke of disquiet along with the light of inspiration, for these bodies and individuals were blended of disquiet and inspiration, as we said. When demoniness and pleasing self dominate in a body and when it is cut off from the congregation of the angels of inspiration, it acts mostly in scatteredness and the ruin of religion. It is like an earth that is cut off from the congregation of water, air, and fire, so its crops become dry. It makes the seeds you scatter there unworking, so they are ruined.

The likeness of the Folk of the Sunnah and Congregation is that of an earth that is joined to the congregation of water, air, and fire and that makes the fruits of the plants reach their place. Thus, from the stone of a date, a tree rises up fruitful and flourishing, such that it is a worthy shelter for the angels.

These bodies of the creatures that come up in the earth are like a sown earth that grows weeds along with sown seeds, for within them are both disquiet and inspiration. When someone leaves the body's earth to the weeds of nature, disquiet, and wishes, then demoniness dominates over him and inspiration becomes weak for him. It may happen that he rots, so he becomes veiled from God. But when someone keeps the body's earth pure of the blights of caprice's weeds and when he roots out every shoot of caprice that rises up, then inspiration dominates over him and disquiet becomes weak for him. He reaps the fruit of God's bliss in everlasting paradise and reaches the encounter with God. Thus He says, *Then as for him who was insolent and preferred this world's life, surely hell shall be the shelter. But as for him who feared the station of his Lord and forbade the soul its caprice, surely the Garden shall be the shelter* [79:37-41].

Everyone's devil is his body's caprice, for it rises up from it. Whenever someone keeps on seeking out his own devil, he himself is the devil, for the devil is blind, and he keeps on seeking out the devil from blindness.³⁴ He is like someone who does not know sleep from wakefulness. He keeps on seeking for sleep, but he himself is asleep, for the waking person recognizes both sleep and wakefulness. In the same way, whoever curses his own devil is also cursing self.

The "permission" that is said to have been given to Iblis is just this. For Iblis was not a creature standing there and having arrived, with a level such that he could speak to God.³⁵ Rather, the disquiet of the human soul, because of falling from its own shelter, said to God, "Give me leave until a known moment." This is like a plant that has a specificity in repelling illness. This specificity, on the basis of its preparedness, says by intimation to the physician, "I am worthy for such-and-such an act." God's "permission" is to leave this potency alone so that it may give out whatever it has through disquietening. The blind and the folk of doubt have all been stuck on this—had Iblis not found permission and deferral, the blind and the authority-followers of the religions would not have remained in blindness and authority following.

In the same way, when the angel's inspiration also increases as the counterpart of the devil's disquietening, the prophets, the ulama, and the saints find potency through this.

It has been said that Iblis can have no hand over God's servants. This is the fact that the prophets, the saints, and the ulama see the misfortune and weakness of the devil's deceit through the light of inspiration.

It has been said that, as the counterpart of the angel's inspiration, Iblis can disquiet all people at all moments. The meaning is just this: Iblis's disquietening is blended into all bodies as the counterpart of the angel's inspiration, for, as we said, along with the radiance of inspiration's light, the thinking of the human soul also gives off the dark smoke of disquiet.

The promise until a "known moment" given to Iblis, and the fact that he was made to share with people in their work, is like nurturing a tree for the sake of produce. When the tree produces, this produce and fruit is for the king's assembly, whereas the branches and wood are for the fire. In the same way, when the tree of the human soul produces its fruit, which is knowledge and wisdom, this arrives at the Presence of the King, but the Iblis of the body and the devils of the branches are given to the fire, for they themselves have brought forth that work. Thus He says, *Had thy Lord willed, He would have made people one community, but they never cease disagreeing, except those on whom thy Lord has mercy—and for that He created them. And the word of thy Lord will be completed: "I shall assuredly fill Gehenna with jinn and people all together"* [11:118–119].

In sum, if religion's tree is to yield fruit, the door to the knowledge of plain-seeing should be opened by way of seeing God's signs, for none can have any hand in nullifying these. Through reading God's book, they arrive at the "eye of certainty," which is wakefulness. They are released from Iblis's blindness and remain in God's refuge. Iblis's hand falls short of deceit and deception toward them. Thus He says, *When you recite the Koran, seek refuge in God from the accursed Satan; he has no authority over those who have faith and who trust in their Lord. His authority is only over those who take him for their friend and who associate others with Him* [16:98–100].

Chapter Eight. That Inspiration and Disquietening Are in Several Respects

The devil's disquietening and the angel's inspiration are in four respects: One is like the wish of the body, which pulls toward the left hand, as the counterpart of the knowledge of certainty, which calls toward the right hand.

The second is the form of the human world and the form of this world. This is like a hill between the devil's disquietening and the angel's inspiration. When you look on the scattered and dispersed signs in the world's horizons and souls in the way that the common people among the blind and the authority-followers look, then disquiet's hesitation rises up on the left hand of imagination and fancy. But when you look upon the unambiguous signs according to the composition of God's words, then fancy goes and certainty comes on the right hand of intelligence. Through the

clear evidence of the signs, the whole world is like God's angels, sent to show the road to the creatures, but the ambiguous signs are like the devils, which bring the blindness of imagination.³⁶

In the third respect are the deniers, the unbelievers, and the folk of declaring Him ineffectual, who adorn the crooked roads when they fall back on themselves—*When they go privately to their satans* [2:14]. They are the counterpart of the certainty and inspiration that can be found from the Real's summoners—the prophets and saints, who are like the angels in increasing certainty and giving inspiration.

In the fourth respect are the soulish angels from among God's congregation—as we said concerning the “absent souls,” which are the sovereignty of that world and which bring the secret of revelation to the prophets. There are also the spiritual devils, veiled from God, bound with the bonds of darkness and retribution. No damage reaches humans from them, because they are deaf and blind, bound by and occupied with their own chastisement.

From all this it has become clear that the root of losing the way and blindness rose up from Iblis, and the root of certainty and wakefulness from the angel. The name *Iblis* is like a tree, and the name *devil* like its branches. The name *angel* is like a tree, and the name *intelligence* like its branches. Thus you may know that the tree of the human is the “blessed tree,” in respect of yielding the fruit of God's knowledge and wisdom, which is not “eastern” such that it would not be in the west, nor “western” such that it would not be in the east. And the human's tree is also the “accursed tree,”³⁷ in respect of yielding the fruit of imagination, disquiet, and declaring ineffectuality, so that it may come under God's curse.

Chapter Nine. That Just as Benefit Arrives from the Angel's Inspiration, so also God's Saints Take Benefit from the Devil's Disquietening

God gives just as much benefit to the saints from the world's demons as from the angels, so that they may reap the fruit of God from both sides. For the world's demons are the unbelievers, who walk the paths of imagination through various sorts of crookedness. Were there no Aeonists, the saints would not seek the explication and demonstration of the temporal occurrence of the signs of the world. Were there no Ineffectualists, the unitarians would not search for the signs of *tawhīd* through affirming the argument against the Ineffectualists.

Whoever has no enemy does not search for a weapon to war against the enemy. He does not see the bonds of the enemies' devices, nor does he find the joy of the rout. It is by disagreeing with the demons that we have found the yardstick of speech and the scale of logic, through which one can become aware of certainty. For, if those enemies had not come before us to war against God's religion, we would not have been able to prepare weapons for repelling their deceit.

In another respect, the saints' benefit from the devils is that God has adorned the states of the this-worldlings—some through residing places and locations, others through beautiful raiments, delicious edibles, elation-inducing songs, heart-enticing forms, and the other passing states of diversion and heedlessness—such that they

become preoccupied with these in this world and totally heedless of the explication and demonstration of that world. They are afflicted with love for nonlasting embellishments and lose hope for the encounter with God. Hence, this state becomes a lesson for the pure and the chosen, so that they may preserve themselves from preoccupation. They see that preoccupation with this world is the fruit of heedlessness, and that it brings loss of hope for the encounter with the Real.³⁸

As for the cause of letting these devils adorn this world with diversion, games, and indecent works, some of it is what we said—so that whatever is in these souls may come out. Another is that, once people see this world as a paradise and become secure in it and once they fall into death, regret will be added to their regret. For, at the time of the anima's extraction, they die twice: Once is that the root anima is cleaved from them, and second is that they must put aside the anima of the this-worldly enjoyments and comforts.

In the same way, if there were no fault-seekers, God's saints would not become pure of faults. For it is the fault-seekers who recognize faults in others, since they look with enmity, but friends cannot recognize the faults of friends, because they look with friendship.

The tale of Iblis, whose root was from fire, also arose from the shelter of the human soul, just as we said.

*Chapter Ten. On the Profit of the Words
of this Section's Chapters*

Our purpose in these chapters was to explicate the beginning of the human soul's work and state. These past chapters were all so that the solitaries and roots of this explication may be seen. Then, when the universal discussion is heard, it will quickly be grasped. In the same way, if you want to teach people writing, first you show them each character of the letters separately. Then, when they reach the composing and compounding of letters, they will grasp it easily. If you want to teach the writing of joined words at the beginning of the work, this will be difficult and will not lead to the objective.

Now, whenever you seek the beginning of the work of humans, you must come to know that, although the beginning and the end are two things, each of them has many levels. Just as the work's beginning has many waystations and degrees, all of which are numbered as the "beginning," so also the work's final goal, although one thing, has levels and degrees that are all numbered as the "end." From the past chapters, the levels can be known one by one, but this will be difficult for you. Thus we have put forward this chapter by way of recounting the past chapters, thereby seeking the road's easiness for the seeker.

Now, it was known from the second and third sections that the human has two faces—one bodily, passing face, and one lasting, endless, soulish face that finds life from its own Nurturer. It is this face of which He talks in the Divine Book: *Everyone upon [the earth] is undergoing annihilation, and there subsists the face of thy Lord, Possessor of Majesty and Generous Giving* [55:26–27]. The bodily face lasts through this soulish face, and every good and excellence that appears from it comes from the

soulish face. If replenishment is cut off from it, the bodily face remains a corpse and nonworking. So, when you seek the beginning and origin of humans, you must seek out the origin and beginning of both substances.

As for the beginning of the human body, it is unconditioned body, which has no attribute save measure. Then comes compound body, which, other than measure and quantity, has many qualities, such as warmth and cold, smoothness and roughness. Thus, the sperm-drop is a body brought together from the solitary bodies; it has bodily measure and qualities such as color, aroma, heaviness, lightness, smoothness, and flowingness. The third level is a body that is vegetal, such that within it is the potency of taking nourishment—like the sperm-drop that becomes a flesh-lump in the womb. The fourth level is a body that is animal, in which appears the anima of sensation and freely chosen movement, like the infant. The fifth level is a body that is human, such that the marks of intelligence show themselves in its work-doing, like the body of adult men. All this is the beginning of the bodily “I.”

As for the beginning and origin of the soulish “I,” it is in the same measure. As long as the soul is joined with the solitary body, which has no attribute other than bodiment, it is called “nature.” When it is compounded with a body, it is called the “constitutional potency.” When it is along with a vegetal body—as we said concerning the sperm-drop, which is depicted in the animate form in the womb—it is called the “growing soul.” When it is along with the animal body, as we said concerning the infant, it is called the “animal soul.” When it is along with the human body, as we said concerning adults, it is called the “human soul.” When it is in work-doing and the reflective artisanries, it is called the “practical intellect” and the “writing soul.” When it is in *theōria* and knowing things, it is called the “reflective soul.” When it is in the preservation of the reflective form, it is called the “remembering soul.” When it is in making the meanings apparent, it is called the “talking” and “rationally speaking” soul. When it reaches the Real—high is He!—through recognition and knowledge, it is called the “holy spirit.”³⁹

The joinedness of these two substances—one the soul and the other the body—occurs because they are one in substance and essence. The disparity and difference come from the stirring up of attributes. This is because, if it is asked, “What is the body?”, the answer is that it is a substance. If it is asked, “What is the soul?”, the answer is the same—that it is a substance, and there is no difference. Then, if the specific attribute of each is asked about and it is said, “Which substance is the body?”, they become different. Thus you say, “The body is a motion-receiving substance and the soul is a motion-inducing substance; the soul is an active substance and the body is an acted-upon substance.”

Hence, in respect of substance and essence, the two are one. The difference in attributes does not cut off the essence from being an essence, nor does it turn it into a nonessence. Yes, it makes twoness appear within it, but at the last end, the twoness disappears, for the joining belongs to the root, and the difference and separation belong to the branch. The disparity of transmutation disappears, and, by way of knowing the substance, one arrives back in the soulish degrees, which are the world of knowing and recognizing the selfhood of self in reality and certainty, for the sake of the resurrection⁴⁰ at the last end.

Section Four: On Recognizing the End

It is ten chapters.

*Chapter One. That Knowing the End Is Bound up
with Knowing the Beginning*

Know that the human has no remedy against passing through these states and no escape from knowing the beginning and the end. This is the difficult knowledge, the counting out of the path of peril. All those who fall from this steep and do not grasp their own beginning and end will not rise up again, but all who pass over this steep will not again be overcome by dread. This is the kernel and the obtainment of all the sciences. It is this that is the poison of the unknowing and the bitterness of the anima's extraction for those who are soulishly ill between the right hand and the left hand.

We explained the beginning of the human's work in the past section. The science of the end is already bound up with the science of the beginning, since all those who are aware of where they have come from will be conscious of where they are going. But those who do not know where they have come from will not know where they are going.

This knowledge will become clear with two introductions. One is for it to be known that humans are undergoing transmutation and change, both in soul and in body. The second introduction is that whatever undergoes transmutation and change—becoming far from a level and waystation—inescapably faces toward another level and comes near to it. There is no doubt that, did the first state and level belong to their root, they would not have traveled from it, for the custom and method of God's work is such that He keeps each thing in the greatest of states and the highest of ranks, and He makes everything that can have a state better than what it has reach the better state.

As for the explication of the first introduction—that humans are in transmutation—this becomes clear when they look into their being and changing. They were sperm-drops and became infants. From infancy they arrived at youth and adulthood, from youth they arrived at maturity, and from maturity at old age and senility. Finally life itself is nullified and there remains a body without the anima. The body is also nullified and falls apart, but it does not remain in disjoining. It becomes the same sort as the earth or some other element, and the earth also keeps on changing through the changing of states. But, despite all these different states that come to it, the name and reality of *bodiment* does not disappear from it—not in that state when it is a sperm-drop, nor when it becomes a human or turns into earth. Thus it is clear that the human body dwells in change and transmutation and does not last in one place.

In the same way, the human soul is changing and passing from state to state. At one moment the soul was such that the only work that appeared from it was governing the body and increasing it. The second state that it had was sensation and awareness, because of which it is fitting to call it "hearing and seeing." In another state that appeared for it, its work was thinking, and in another state it was knowing. In all this changing of descriptions, the name *soul* did not leave it, for, just as, in ignorance, it was the soul with the attribute of ignorance, so also, in knowledge, it was the soul with the attribute of knowledge.

Once it becomes apparent through this mirror that humans are undergoing transmutation, then it can easily be known that whatever is in motion and change is going far away from something and coming close to something else. The state and thing away from which they move is called the “beginning,” and the state at which the motion arrives is called the “end.”

In seeking for the beginning and the end, one must not look at time—as we said in the past section. Rather, one must number time also as among the changing and passing things, and one must also seek out its beginning and end, as we made apparent. For the beginning of time’s being is from motion, and it does not find being through self. Just as its being is through motion’s being, so also its nonbeing is through motion’s nonbeing.

Chapter Two. On the Path of the End

The completeness of each work and each thing is for it to return back to its native, root state and to become pure of alien, noncompatible states. It cannot find this native state and root attribute except in its own shelter. The shelter of the soul is that world, which is the nonmanifest of the cosmos and the soulish world, as we said before. Until the soul reaches it, it will not find rest.

As long as the soul was soul, it was living, freely choosing, subtle, and capable, because of the joining and conjunction that it had with God. When it was transmuted into bodily things, its life became death, its free choice nature, its subtlety density, its power incapacity. This is like someone who becomes ill. His soul turns in the mark of the heaven’s turning, he becomes feverish and hot in the mark of fire, his members bloat in the mark of rising wind, the body becomes heavy in the mark of earth’s heaviness, and sweat begins to pour down in the mark of rain. When he arrives back at his earlier state, all these progenerations that we mention turn to nothing and are lost, as if they had never been.

In the same way, progenerations have risen up from the soul—as we said concerning the spheres and the pillars. When it arrives back at the earlier state, these alien progenerations all turn to nothing and are lost, as if they had never been. So also is the mark of the world’s natural things. In their own shelter they are like the living, but in the shelter of others they are changing in state. Such is water, which in its own shelter is brought together, heavy, and form-showing. But if it falls into the shelter of fire, its bringing together becomes dispersion, its heaviness lightness, and its limpidness turbidity. When it arrives back at its own shelter through rain, these alien states come to nothing. So also are the other pillars, and so also certain animals that fall into the shelter of others, like fish that fall into the shelter of humans, and humans that fall into the shelter of fish.

Chapter Three. That the Human Soul Has Become Captive and Bound through Joining with the Body

The likeness of the soul in the bodily form is a sheep that has been bound by three feet for slaughter, with one foot left loose. Thereby the soul may come to the human

world. For, in this bodily form, it is like someone bound back by the door of the body, the door of the potency of nourishment, and the door of sensation.

By the door of the body, its bond is that it is held back from movement and motion, unless it is moved by a potency outside its bodiment. In respect of eating and nourishing, it is also bound, because it cannot eat whatever it wants, only what is brought before it. Even if something is next to it, it can be held back by a cause outside of it, and the hands of outsiders may reach it. In respect of the senses it is like someone bound back because it cannot reach whatever it wants to grasp through sensation.

Thus it is clear that the soul is bound by these three feet, but it is loose through the foot of thought, because it can think whatever it wants, and in this respect it cannot be held back. Hence, one bond of the soul is let loose when it reaches movement from nature; two sorts of bonds are let loose when it reaches sensation from movement; and three bonds are let loose when it reaches humanness. In the same way, when, through the marks of the horizons and the souls, it reaches the encounter with God from the human cosmos, all its bonds are let loose. Then, it will become like thought, fulfilling its desires, for whatever it wants will come to be.⁴¹

The Real—high indeed is He!—has shown the soul's loosing and binding in the four animals so as to show the road to the end. From the four animals' form, their being bound, and their being let loose, one can see back to binding by chastisement's bonds and being let loose by reward. It will be known how the hell-beings are veiled from God and how the paradise-beings reach the encounter with God. Thus, among the four animals—humans, beasts, flyers, and crawlers—all have the mark of prisoners except humans, who have the mark of the let-loose. Each of these three animals has been made captive by three bonds: one is the bond of the eye's blindness toward seeing the signs and marks of the horizons and souls and reading God's book; hence they are in the darkness of prisoners. Another is the bond of the ear's deafness toward hearing the explication and demonstration of God's words; hence they are in prison like the tongueless. Third, they are in the bond of their soul's upside-downness, for they are hanging and suspended in the body, veiled from seeing the secret and the work of that world.

Three other bonds give witness to these three bonds. One is the tongue's being bound back from saying words, which gives witness to the ear's deafness. One is the hand's being bound back from writing, which gives witness to the eye's blindness. Third is the bond of the bodies' downwardness, which gives witness to the soul's upside-downness. For the tongue is like the ear's vicegerent, the writing hand like the eye's vicegerent, and the body like the soul's vicegerent. When the sword's sheath is crooked, you can know that the sword inside the sheath is crooked.

In another respect, He made these three animals in the form of what is written for the hell-beings. One is in the left hand's book, like the form of the four-footed things, for their hands are "left," that is, incapable of writing and showing the artisanries. Another is in what is written behind the back, like the form of the flyers, for their hands are behind their back. Third is in what is written for the prisoners of Sijjin, like the crawlers, who have the mark of what is written for the hell-beings—handless, footless, and incarcerated at the bottom of the body's earth. Fourth is what is written for the human, who has the mark of the right hand at the highest of the

Illiyun, which is the human's form—the “book depicted” that signifies his soul's nobility and its nearness to the Real in respect of knowledge and wakefulness. Thus He says, *No indeed; the book of the pious is in Illiyun, and what shall teach you what is Illiyun? A “book inscribed,” witnessed by those in proximity [83:18–21].*⁴²

A soul that is blind toward seeing God's signs, deaf toward hearing God's words, and unconscious of knowing the states of that world is, in reality, in the left hand's book, the book behind the back, and the book of Sijjin. For the animal that is blameworthy is not the beast in the form of a beast. Rather, the blameworthy animal is the beast in the form of a human. Thus He says, *We have created for Gehenna many of jinn and mankind; they have hearts with which they do not understand, they have eyes with which they do not see, they have ears with which they do not hear. They are like cattle; rather, they are further astray. Those—they are the heedless [7:179].*

Hence, although in terms of form humans have the most beautiful form, in respect of ignorance they have the ugliest meaning—except those who have come to see through God's signs and who have found security and rest through God. Thus He says, *Surely We created the human in the most beautiful stature, then We pushed him back to the lowest of the low, save those who have faith and practice wholesome deeds [95:4–6].* Every soul is a pawn to what it has gathered and collected, except those who come within what is written by the right hand, which is the form of the human world. Thus He says, *Every soul is a pledge for what it has earned, save the companions of the right hand [74:38–39].*

Chapter Four. On the Cords to Which the Soul Clings so as to Arise from its Falling into the Body

Earlier we made apparent the marks and signs of the horizons and the souls, which are God's book, for, through reading this book, the soul can rise up in God's name. Thus He says, *Read out in the name of thy Lord, who created [96:1].* However, reading this book is difficult for the common people among the creatures, since not everyone has the level of becoming aware of God through the selfhood of self. After all, the common people among the creatures who have come into this bodily form are like the waking who have gone to sleep and become preoccupied with various sorts of dreams, thus forgetting wakefulness. But the elect among them are like those who in sleep remember their wakefulness by way of the clear evidence of God's signs. Their state is as if they have a place on a hill between this world and that world, guiding the common people among the creatures to God's signs so as to call them back from the this-worldly dream to the that-worldly wakefulness. These elect are the prophets.

This is because for most creatures, the signs of the horizons and the souls that they find by way of eyesight are not sufficient without the name that they find by way of hearing in the [revelatory] sending-down [*tanzil*]. They are exactly like someone who sees something with the eye, knows it, but does not recognize its name. Because of not recognizing its name, the seeing also has no profit.

[Knowing] the name in the sending-down without the clear evidence of the form's signs is exactly like knowing the name of someone, but not recognizing him through seeing. Once he is seen by eye, it can be known that the thing whose form the eye sees is exactly the same as that whose name the ear hears. So, the clear evi-

dence of these signs was adorned with the traditions of the prophets of this sending-down so that the road would be wide for the common people among the creatures.

After all, two lives went away because the soul fell from its own shelter. One was the native seeing that is the soul's life, and the other was the life of the refreshment of God's words, just as there will be in the afterworld's life. The likeness here is that of a balance that has been broken and has also lost the straightness that it used to have. Thus the sent prophets have been a great help for most of the creatures, for through them they have become aware of God.

The elect's hearing of God's words can be by three routes. One is by the domination of the secret of "revelation" in respect of being joined with the Highest Soul. Another is "behind the veil" in respect of being joined with the Second Soul. The third is by sending-down and "sending messages" in respect of being joined with the Third Soul.⁴³ Thus He says, *It belongs not to any mortal that God should speak to him, except by revelation, or from behind a veil, or He should send a messenger, and he should reveal whatsoever He will* [42:51].

The doors from which one can find these words are the specific hearing, eye-sight, and hearts, concerning which we spoke earlier. This is why the route of awareness from God may be by these three paths—the levels of the souls above the human soul are no more than three. He adorned the mark of these three sending-downs for three communities—the folk of the Torah, the Gospel, and the Furqān. Despite all the prophets, He said that only these three levels of sending-down should be kept standing. Thus He says, *O Folk of the Book! You are not upon anything until you uphold the Torah and the Gospel, and what was sent down to you from your Lord* [5:68]. He also says, *Had they upheld the Torah and the Gospel, and what was sent down to them from their Lord, they would have eaten from what was above them—that is, from the good news of these three souls, which are above the human soul—and from what was beneath their feet* [5:66], that is, the mark of the science of nature and the three sorts of animals that are below the human in level. He also says, *a promise binding upon Him in the Torah, the Gospel, and the Koran* [9:111]. He also says, in the story of Jesus, *I am indeed the Messenger of God to you, confirming the Torah that is before me, and giving good news of a Messenger who shall come after me, whose name is Ahmad* [61:6], for Jesus was in the middle of these three sending-downs.

Thus it is known that among the cords to which the soul clings so as to rise up, one is God's sending the prophets, who take the creatures—by way of hearing so as to recognize the name—to the knowledge of the horizons and the souls, so that they may become aware of the work's reality.

Chapter Five. On the Explication of the World's Horizons

Know that God made heaven a veil between this world and that world. He adorned the four pillars—fire, air, water, and earth—with four marks of the year's turning. One is summer in the mark of fire, one is autumn in the mark of air, another is spring in the mark of water, and fourth is winter in the mark of earth. He made each of them like a king that takes turns at the door of God's veil year by year, since one is continually at the door.

In another respect, He made the earth like an imam to gather the congregation of the other pillars in its shelter. Through their assembly, the earth gains equilibrium and gives fruit. From outside the earth, sunlight has its head on the earth's house, like someone who circumambulates and prostrates himself for the sake of God in the mosque. In the same way, air and water are like two prostrators on the earth. He made the house of the earth reside in one place, for it must not go to the shelter of any other pillar, but the others come to visit the earth. So also are the stars, which throw rays on the earth in the mark of prostration; and the plants, which always have their heads in the earth. Thus He says, *The stars and the trees prostrate themselves* [55:6].

In short, He made the earth like a haven for the human, so that He might stir up the human from the earth through three inblowings.⁴⁴ Through one inblowing, the pillars are brought together, so mixture appears and gathering occurs. Through the second inblowing, things come into sensation and movement, bewildered by what they see and find with the senses, like someone stirred up from sleep. Through the third inblowing they come into the human world, and they rise up straight from the sleep of nature for God's enumeration. They display their past practices and make apparent the specificity and root of everything. The size and measure of the works appear.

After all this, one must know that the cosmos is a tree whose produce and fruit is the human, the human is a tree whose produce and fruit is the soul, the soul is a tree whose fruit is intelligence, and intelligence is a tree whose fruit is the encounter with God. Thus both worlds may be productive trees for God.

Chapter Six. On the Good and Bad Fortune of Humans

Our objective in these chapters is that the knowledge of plain-seeing should make it clear to those with *theōria* that human felicity can be in two respects: one is in respect of the form, the manifest, and the states that belong to the best form. The other is in respect of the self and the self's states, and this is the afterworld and the end in reality, for the end in reality is that which, when reached, is not passed beyond and does not change.

Although the state of the human form is the best of states—thus He says, *We indeed created the human in the most beautiful stature* [95:4]—it is also nonlasting and changing. But the reality of the last end is the other world, which is the soulish cosmos, for they do not pass from it. Those with good fortune are they whose bodily forms rise up from this world in the most complete and best form of practice, and so also in this world their soulish forms rise up in the most beautiful and best form of knowledge. Thus He says, *The afterworld shall be better for you than the first world* [93:4].

Without felicity or wretchedness, the soul is like a beast let go because it is fitting neither for reward nor for punishment. The provision of every felicity is knowledge and certainty, while the root of every wretchedness is doubt and ignorance. If the soul does not have finding and awareness, which are knowledge, it does not know that comfort is comfort, nor does it recognize that suffering is suffering. Thus comfort and suffering rise up from being aware of suffering and comfort.

Certainty and wisdom are the perfection of awareness. The simple soul without doubt or certainty is like clean paper. If it becomes depicted with knowledge and

wisdom, it is worthy to hold the king's secrets; it is a command from him that must be carried out. But if you depict that same paper with words of idleness⁴⁵ and pathlessness, it is worthy for nothing but burning.

So, the root of reward and punishment arises from knowledge and ignorance, for works have wages and rewards in two respects: one is this-worldly, like craftsmen, who work to find wages of dirhams and dinars to fulfill the body's desires in this world. The other is the that-worldly wage, like the work of worshiping with effort by the wage-earners of that world. Through it they want the wage of knowledge and certainty so as to fulfill the soul's desires in the soulish world.

It is the soul's wage that is the "good news,"⁴⁶ for good news is the anima's wage, and the anima's wage is God's words concerning the good tidings of His encounter, which gives refreshment in reality.

People become capable through the dirhams and dinars that they find; they are able to collect soldiers, they are able to give gifts and alms, and they are able to adorn assemblies so as to show hospitality. In the same way, the soul that reaches the wage of knowing explication and demonstration becomes capable. It finds a kingship through the soldiers of the learners, who are the soulish recipients of their daily bread. It is able to bestow gifts and alms on the soulish wanters. It is able to adorn assemblies from the that-worldly, unending table, which is God's words that are never cut off from the soul, no matter how much it spends. Thus He says, *If the sea were ink for the words of my Lord, the sea would be spent before the words of my Lord are spent, though We brought replenishment the like of it* [18:109].

With wanted objects, people no longer need to work through effort and for wages. In the same way, with the that-worldly wanted objects, which are the knowledge and certainty of that world, they have no need to work through effort and following authority. After all, worship comes from the need for the wage of certainty that they find. When the soul becomes capable through that, it has no more need, for there is no capability along with need. Thus He says, *And worship thy Lord until certainty comes to thee* [15:99].⁴⁷

As for the saying that if someone does something good, a wage will be written and a sin effaced, and he will be lifted up by one degree, this also is the wage of knowledge. For, the wage of the weighed and measured words that you grasp will be a knowledge that appears for you and a sin of ignorance and unknowing that is erased from you, and you will come up a degree higher from what you were. In this way it keeps on increasing.

Chapter Seven. On the Explication of Death

Death is the counterpart of life. It has been explained that life is of two sorts—one the life of bodily things, like motion and sensation; the other soulish life, like certainty and wisdom. Hence death is also of two sorts—one the death of bodily things, like the not-being of sensation and movement; and the other soulish death, like the not-being of certainty and wisdom.

Bodily life may be through subordination and following authority, like hair and nails, within which motion through wanting is not found, or else these would not be able to move by following the authority of the other members. In the same way, it may

be that the soulish life is not through self. Someone may acquire beautiful conduct or accept a truthful saying from a knower without having awareness of that through self.

Such life accepts transmutation, just as we said concerning the transmutation of the sperm-drop and the flesh-lump and the transmutation of the infant and the adult, which arrive from a life to a life, and, in every state, this is better than death. Whatever transmutation there may be and whatever life that arrives, it keeps on nullifying and abrogating the earlier life.

Hence the soulish life may also be abrogated and nullified, as when one authority-following disappears through another authority-following. This is like the earlier religions, for every prophet who was sent changed the religion of the past prophet and called the people to another religion.

The life of the authority-followers in the religions is like the life of the four-footed things in the body. In whatever state they may be, they love it more than death. As long as the prophets kept arriving one after another, they kept on leaving aside one anima and coming to life with another anima. When this reaches the final goal of the work and when the knowledge of plain-seeing appears, transmutation from one religion to another religion is nullified, and abrogation, which is the death of the authority-followers, disappears. Thus they say that at the resurrection, death will be brought and killed, for, in that soulish world, after the life of the knowledge of plain-seeing and certainty, death through ignorance will be no more.⁴⁸ The paradise-beings will become secure, because they need not die again.

This is exactly the meaning of [the saying that] the creed and religion of Islam will never be abrogated and, after Muḥammad—God bless him and his household!—no other prophet will come. After the knowledge of plain-seeing and certainty with which he was sent so as to show the road, there will be no other knowledge to nullify it. So also, in the life of the afterworld, there will be no alteration and transmutation. These transmutations pertain to this world, but the creed of Islam is like the afterworldly life after the standing-up of the resurrection, since it appears together with the resurrection. Thus Muḥammad—upon him be peace—said, “I and the Hour have been sent like these two.”⁴⁹ This is why he is called “the prophet of the last of time,” that is, the last of the time of the bodily things’ life, for the last of the bodily life is the first of the soulish life.

Chapter Eight. On the Forgiveness of God—High indeed Is He!

In every transmutation that the soul undergoes, God has given the good news of the forgiveness of sins along with the rulership of the that-worldly kingship. Thus He separated the human from the defilement of the father’s loins and the mother’s womb, and the sperm-drop’s sin was forgiven. In place of the blood from which it took strength, He gave it pure milk, through which it finds the potency for the equilibrium of the substance of infancy and compatibility with it. Again, when it reaches adulthood from infancy and firms up its members, it is forgiven for the weakness and incapability of infancy, and in place of milk it eats other foods. When it reaches intelligence and wakefulness after unintelligence and ignorance, it is forgiven for the sin of ignorance and unconsciousness, and in place of bodily nourishment it finds the various knowledges.

All this is so that it may come to know that the “angel of death” and the taker of the earth’s anima is the growing soul, which takes in the earth’s anima through God’s forgiveness, separates it from the earthy form that it has, and shows it in a more honored form. The taker of the plant’s anima is the animal soul. It brings the plant’s anima out from the vegetal dress through God’s forgiveness and clothes it in the robe of animality. It is forgiven for the deficiency and defilement of earth and nature. The taker of the animal’s anima is the human soul. It separates the animal’s anima from the form and frame of the animal through knowing, and shows it in a more lasting form. Whatever state and waystation may be reached through these transmutations that were numbered, there is no wish for the past state, for in adulthood humans do not wish to be infants, and in knowing they do not want unknowing.

So, let this state be the mirror before the eye of the intelligent and let them be aware of the good tidings of the Angel of Death. Let them look back at the nobility and exaltedness of death, and let them know that when the intelligent ones become separate from the body, they will never wish to return to their body.

Chapter Nine. Making Apparent the State of the Perceiving Soul after the Body’s Perishment

When you want to know the state of self after death and the body’s destruction, first you must know that a state will influence something and turn it away from its own being only after it has come to exist within it. But no state can come to exist in the soul unless in respect of the soul’s awareness of it and knowledge of it. Anything that the soul does not know does not exist within it. The soul knows the body’s death before it comes to be. Hence the body’s death has come to exist in the soul before it has come to be, but no harm has reached the soul from it. In the same way, when the body’s death appears, no harm will come to the soul from it, except in respect of the soul’s knowing it.

When any occurrence that will come to be is known before it happens, and the fact of its becoming known does no harm to the knower, then, once it comes to be, this also will not harm him.⁵⁰ In the same way, when the occurrence of the body’s annihilation is known before it comes to be and it does no harm to the soul, then, when it comes to be and the soul knows it, it does no harm to it. Hence, when death occurs, the perceiving soul has the same state that it had from knowing death before it happened. This is why the prophets stirred up the people to remember death and forbade them from forgetting death. Thereby, before its occurrence, they will have tested the selfhood of self by knowing the occurrence. They will gain certainty that the bodily things’ change of state does not change the root state in the substance’s reality and root, for no defect reaches the being of its essence through that.

Chapter Ten. Explaining the Interconnection of These Three Parts

The purpose of these words that we spoke in detail before, in sections Two and Three, is to make the work easy for the wayfarers on the road to the afterworld. Otherwise, the obtainment and profit of sections Three and Four are in the explication of the

beginning and the end. This can also be found in section Two, which is on the explanation of recognizing self, obtaining the knowledge of *tawhīd*, and encountering God; and which gives awareness of the abode of limpidness and the last world, which is the house of the afterworld. For, everyone who becomes aware of the state of that world will know that it is the end of humans.

Thus, if one becomes aware of the section on *tawhīd* in reality, one will have found the other two sections. However, since we are seeking the easiness of the road, what we brought in one section by way of summarizing, we showed again by way of detailed explanation in another. It would also be fitting to talk in even more detail, but there was no reason to talk at length. If no profit or benefit reaches someone from this brief work, talking at even more length would also not give him any gain.

This book is precious for the seekers of the road. They must look upon it with sharp-wittedness. Until they find self empty of caprice, folly, covetousness, and envy, they should not wander around these words. Any soul that has not been released from these illnesses will become more ill from this book. In the same way, if you give a pure and worthy edible to those sound in body and the ill, or to humans and non-humans, like wild animals and beasts; then what is eaten by those with sound constitutions will aid the health of their bodies, and what is eaten by the ill will increase their illness; what is eaten by humans turns into the human, and what is eaten by animals and beasts turns into animals and beasts.

We have mostly spoken our words in this book by way of reminding, not by way of argument and demonstration. This is because not all the searchers know the science of composing arguments or recognize its law. If a discussion is offered in the form of composing demonstrations and arguments, it is likely that the road will become darker for the goer. This is like someone who recites poetry correctly but does not have the science of prosody. If they want to clarify for him the correctness of poetry's meter through prosody, it is likely that he will find no profit in that. Rather, that is a different sort of instruction.

In short, may there be success-giving and mercy, for if [this book] completely falls into place and is grasped, no indispensable human knowledge will remain unknown. And with God is success!

The Book of the Everlasting is now complete, in victory and splendor. Thanks be to Him who depicts the body and keeps the anima through high wisdom and the power that is how-less and how-much-less! Felicitations be to our Prophet, sent with truth and stirred up with correctness, Muḥammad the chosen, and to his companions and followers!

The Beginning of *The Book of Displays*

In the name of God, the All-merciful, the Compassionate

In the name of God, the Keeper, the Knower

An Asking and a Prayer

O Master, by the greatness of Your munificence and the radiance of Your existence—through which the anima has come to seek and intelligence has come to

talk—confer upon my talking the ability to enumerate Your bounties, and through it make evident and apparent the various sorts of giving and bestowal. Thus, in recounting the kinds of Your caress and the sorts of knowing You, my talk may be a replenishment for the yearning of the yearners and a strength to stir up the wayfarers, the honored, the chosen, and the worthy for Your presence. Through Your own subsistent and fixed preservation and safeguarding, make my speech straight and perpetual, make it auspicious for the listeners, and join it with their animas and spirits—by Your bounty, O Possessor of magnificent bounty and immense favor!

*The Attribute of this Book's State, and Its Profit,
and Advice to the Searchers*

O runners on the path of sincerity and seekers of the wont of the elect! It is apparent and clear to you that the rank of the finder is higher than the rank of the nonfinder, and the benefit of the found is greater than the benefit of the not-found. The demonstration of the truthfulness of this saying is the animal's disposition and nature, for the animal's nature chooses to see over not to see and to hear over not to hear. This is because finding is a reminder of the world of livingness, wakefulness, and awareness, but not-finding is an acquisition from the world of deadness, heedlessness, and without-self-ness.

The benefit of finding is knowledge, and the profit of knowledge is foreverness and lastingness. The fruit of not-finding is without-self-ness and deadness, and the nature of deadness is the reception of alteration and destruction. Without-self-ness and heedlessness are more like nonbeing than being, so you should strive to purify the anima of the taint of heedlessness, without-self-ness, and unknowing. Then you may become separate from nonbeing and what is like nonbeing and you may become near to true being and unconditioned foreverness, so that you may join with it and become the same as it.

Look upon this propitious book with sharp-wittedness and wakefulness and read it sentence by sentence, subject by subject, and chapter by chapter, for it recounts the beginning and the end of the chosen and honored among the human species; the attribute of their state, cycles, and stages between beginning and end; and the mention of what they found at each change of state—the diverse profits, benefits, and knowledges, each of which is the adornment of a tribe and the equipment and stores of one of the classes and groups of humans. Through it that class brings itself to stand in one of the levels and ranks of existence, and it comes to number among humans through a meaning-related and spiritual specificity.

Whenever someone comes to know all the speech of this book, it will become clear that the knower of all is like the whole, and the knower of a variety and a chapter is like his part. He is the root, and the others are his boughs and branches. Through himself he knows all, and through his knowledge they know some.

This book, within which have been recounted and described the kinds of universal beings, has been uttered such that its truthfulness and correctness are not tainted by falsehood and disagreement. If any of its speech is doubted, this is not because of the weakness of the explication. Rather, it appears unknown and untrue because of the incapability and deficiency of the finder's potency.

Whenever the words want a witness for their correctness and truth and whenever they require a mark, they are not without witness and clear proof. Mere making claims is far from this book, since its words have two sorts: Either their truthfulness is apparent without proof, or their proof comes along with them.

I have called this book by the name *Displays*, and its words give awareness of the permanent and subsistent objects of knowledge, not the corruptible, changing, and transforming particulars. By these words we do not mean that we will not mention by name or remember the corruptible particulars and the temporal states that occur and pass by. Rather, we mean that we will not explicate and explain when and how the engendered things of this cosmos as well as the progeny and the not-yet-come occurrences come to be. This is done by the knowers of the rulings of the stars [*aḥkām-i nujūm*, i.e., astrology]. They say that when such and such a star reaches such and such a star—in conjunction, trine, sextile, opposition, or quartile—a state or an occurrence will happen in some clime of the earth, such as change of kingship, alteration of a sharia, an eclipse, or an earthquake. Likewise all the diviners give awareness of coming and coming-to-be works in future time. [We will not explain these things] because the likenesses of these existents cannot be enumerated. Moreover, from their enumeration, no meaning-related and fixed benefit or profit remains for the enumerator.

The meanings of the speech of this book have a more correct and more complete joining with the soul and substance of the knower than with other than the knower. This is because the human soul ranks among the universals of existence; it is not in the realm of the particulars. All things are within it and belong to it. For, existents are either particular, and these can be reached through the sensory and imaginal spirit; or universal, and these may be found with the light of awareness and the radiance of intelligence. The human soul is fit for this potency, since, whether it be the finding and sensory spirit, the moving and vegetal potency, or the nature of the bodily substance, all are the ray of the human soul's radiance.

In this book will be mentioned the attribute of the human soul and its potency of knowing and doing. Thereby will become apparent the kinds of the soul's sciences, which are obtained through the knowing potency, and the varieties of its practices and acts, which are connected to the practicing and agent potencies. Thus, when the wayfaring searchers read this book and when they find in themselves these virtues, plentiful bounties, and endless blessings, they will see themselves as the treasury of the existents' realities and as the provision of endless being, whose help will never be cut off and into which deficiency will never come.

May the help of success-giving arrive from the world of Lordship to the writer and the reader of these pages! May the blights of recognizing and knowing remain far away, may seeking stay perpetual, and may yearning's fire be inflamed!

*Words on the Precondition for Finding the Profit of this Book,
and Showing Forth Its Divisions*

Be aware and know—O worthies for awareness, wanters of knowing, and seekers of the light of knowledge!—that the seeker of anything will not reach the object of desire unless he seeks it from its mine and locus. He who wants water and searches for it from

the mine of sal ammoniac will never reach the object of desire. A cold-stricken man in need of the shine of fire and the shining of the sun who does not aim for fire and sun but turns toward running water and blowing wind will be nearer to perishment than to the object of desire. In the same way, the seeker and wantor of knowledge, wakefulness, and awareness will reach his desire only when he sets out for the dwelling-place and mine of knowledge, wakefulness, and awareness, not when he turns his face toward the realm of ignorance and the shelter of unconsciousness.

The dwelling-place of knowledge is the knower, and the mine of awareness is the aware. Whenever the distance between you and a knower and someone aware becomes shorter, you will have more hope of finding the objective from him. No knower and no one aware is closer to you than your own intelligent anima. If you aim toward knowing it and if you bring the face of your search toward it, you will soon win the object of desire. If the devil of fancy, having lost the road, should twist you from the anima's road and turn you from its wont, you will have prepared disappointment and arranged without-self-ness.

No blight is closer to the knowledge-seeker than gazing upon and inclining toward the body and its states and seeking knowledge through bodily tools. His loss by this state will reach such a limit that he will forget and lose self and fancy that the body is the self. He will know the knower and finder as body. He will judge that whatever is not the body and not in the body is not and cannot be. He will believe that the self is nothing but this embodied similitude and that knowledge and perceptions are all found in the body and endure by the body. When this imagining becomes consolidated and fixed in the human soul, the soul becomes just like the body in not-finding, unconsciousness, and without-self-ness. The worst state of the human's end is this state.

As for the best of his states, it is that he take the bodily existence as the lowest rank in existence. For, he should know that, relative to the body, the body's being is not separate from its nonbeing. The body is just as aware of being as of not being. In terms of enjoyment and pain, joy and heartache, existence is like nonexistence for bodies.

If a body is greater than another body in existence, this greatness is from a state and thing other than the body and higher than it in the rank of existence. Thus, living bodies are more eminent and honored than dead bodies, and their livingness does not arise from bodily existence, for, if it did arise from the body, whatever is a body would be alive. The living body is more eminent than the dead body because the living has the trace of awareness of and wakefulness toward the existence of self or other than self. But the dead body is unconscious and unaware of self and of other than self.

When this knowledge lingers and gains potency in humans—I mean knowing that livingness and wakefulness are not traces of the body and do not rise up from the body, because the living does not arise from the dead, and the aware and conscious are not born from the unconscious—and when they find the self aware and conscious, inescapably they seek that thing from which awareness and wakefulness are born. That seeking has no cause but the eminence and highness in existence of the level of the living and the awake, and the lowliness in the rank of existence of the without-self, the knowledgeable, and the dead.

In this predominating search, they reach various sorts of knowledge from exercising *theōria* toward the bodies and the states of the bodies—their stillness and movement, subtlety and density, lightness and heaviness, darkness and brightness, largeness and smallness, hardness and softness, smoothness and roughness. The awareness of humans and the encompassing of these bodies and states by their knowledge, and the bodies' unconsciousness of them and their states, are the clear proof and demonstration of the greatness and highness of the level of the knower over the unknowing and of the encompasser over the encompassed. This kind of knowledge is the “display” of the world of nature and the differentiation of the sensible things. Its reality and root appear from finding the tools of sensation in the human soul.

Once the classes of the bodies' movements, alterations, and states are enumerated and once the knowledge-seekers have finished with the kinds of bodies, which are the dwelling-place of these incompatible states, then, if their own seeking substance is not satisfied and content with this much knowledge, they will aim to know the causes of the various sorts of movements and the origins of the bodies. Do these moving bodies move by self or by other than self? If they accept motion from other than self, is the cause of each diverse motion and stirring a single cause or diverse causes? What is the attribute of the substance of these causes and origins? Are these the same attributes as those of the bodies, or are they the attributes of other things, such that their substance is not like the bodily substance and their states [not like] the body's? This knowledge is the display of the World of Sovereignty.

Human souls may win these plentiful knowledges while the search still dominates. They will have found inside and outside the world no existent other than [1] these bodies, [2] that which is the exerciser of activity and the doer in these bodies—in some through making them move and in some through giving them rest—and [3] that which finds and knows that thing and its states. Then they will come back to self, to the finderness and knowingness of self, to the various sorts of perceptions, some with tools and some without, to the classes of known things, and to the causes of these existents in knowledge. They will not rest until they become cognizant and informed of all. This knowledge is the display of the world of the endless and the world of Lordship. The utmost end, the completeness, and the end of the elect and chosen among humans is this level.

After this is the level of arrival at and encompassing the profit of the knowledges and the self's final goal and the return to the Origin of origins, the Cause of causes, the Occasion of the occasions, and the Reality of the realities. This knowledge is the final goal and objective of all the knowledges and encompasses all. It is the root, and all the knowledges are its branches. It is the seed of each and the produce and fruit of all. All the knowledges are under its encompassment, just as the knowledge of bloodletting, surgery, and ophthalmology are under the science of medicine; the knowledge of definitions and syllogisms under the science of logic; the knowledge of acts of worship, the knowledge of interactions, and the knowledge of penalties and indemnities under the knowledge of the Sharia; and the knowledge of arithmetic, the knowledge of logic, the knowledge of nature, and other knowledges under the knowledge of the Lordship.

The objective in enumerating the fields of science and pointing out the various classes of knowledge is to stir up the human soul from heedlessness and unconscious-

ness of the substance of self. Stirring it up is to make it reach the utmost end and perfection of existence, for existence has four ranks—deed, doer, known, and knower.

The deed is the lowest rank; it is the bodily world in its totality. The knower is the highest rank; it is the origin and utmost end of existence. The doer and the known are between these two ranks.

The bodies are the deed, the souls and spirits are the doer, the disengaged realities are the known—I mean, the realities of the doers, the realities of the deeds, and the realities of the knowledges. Intelligence is the knower. Complete humans are a totality of deed, known, doer, and knower. In them the deed joins with the known and the doer with the knower.

As long as all the classes of the deeds, which are the bodies, are not enumerated, the deed will not be known. As long as humans do not find all the kinds of their own body and all the doers of these kinds, and as long as they do not gaze back upon the doing and the deed, their doers will not join with their knowers.

Stirring up the human soul must be for the sake of the display of these four groups. Thereby all may become one through it, and all may become fixed and subsistent through its knowledge and encompassment. Then, together with all, it may join with the origin of self, by the guidance and bounty of God—high indeed is He!

Therefore it is imperative to give awareness that humans are the totality of these four. The traces of deed, doer, known, and knower can be found together in humans. This explication was mentioned in a book whose name is *The Rungs of Perfection*. From that speech it will become apparent that humans are the totality of these four sorts of existence.

Awareness of these four pillars of existence includes four displays:

The First Display. The display of the bodies, which have the rank to be acted upon and to receive doing.

The Second Display. The display of the doers and the workers in the bodies of the cosmos and the body of humans.

The Third Display. The display of the things known by humans and of their sorts.

The Fourth Display. The display of the knowers and the explication of the knower's quiddity and that-it-is-ness. (*Muṣannafāt* 147–53)

The Conclusion of *The Book of Displays*

The Seventh Door of Speech: On the State and Attribute of this Book

Speech about the meanings of these *Displays* has come to an end. I request the divine gentleness and the Lordship's bounty to make the reader of this book and the hearer of this speech worthy and fit for the gaze of solicitude and guidance, with a bountiful portion and a complete share—just as He has led the speaker of this speech and the writer of these pages to speak and to write them. He appointed His glory and gaze upon him so that at the moment of talking he would bring into speech, and at the moment of writing he would not leave aside from the pen, everything that would be a help and an aid toward the final goal of running and the utmost end of seeking for those who

yearn after the world of holiness and search for the resting place of deliverance. Thus the words reached a rank of clarity and ended up at a final goal such that, when the wayfarers on the way of the resurrection aim for the abode of limpidness and the world of subsistence from the waystation of corruption and annihilation, they will see these pages as the confidant, guide, and road-shower of self on the road of thought's going, and as the lamp of the seeing of the heart in the resting place of certainty.

Speech in the First Display and in the Second Display was not pursued as the first intention. Rather, the objective was the Third and Fourth Displays. However, inasmuch as humans are bodily and particular—even though they have a universal reality beyond the bodies—their reflection's *theōria* falls first on particular bodies, and the potency of exploration and investigation clings to particulars and individuals. Therefore, as much was said in the First Display as would give people contentment with the meanings, and some states of each division were enumerated. But there was no reason to talk in more detail, with more and longer explanation, because tracking down and bringing forward the individuals of the particular world and the temporal and locational state of each keeps people distracted from universal existents and meanings. If there is assiduity and constancy in reflecting upon this, the goers and lookers will become heedless of the final goal of going and looking. They will make the particular bodies and the states of the individuals the focus of their seeing and insight and envisage them as the settling place of their seeing.

For the worthies of *theōria*, the meanings and existents of this world are the stages and waystations on the way to the world of the beginningless and the lodging place of certainty. If the goer is to become fascinated at each stage by meadows, trees, sitting places, and wellsprings of water; and if he occupies himself with seeing the sites, the residing places, and the highs and lows of the caravansary, he will be heedless of the root destination. It may be that he will adopt the passageway's caravansary as his homeland, forget his shelter and his destination, and remain in strangeness.

For the knowledge-tester's *theōria*, the particular world is a passageway, not a resting place. I mean that his *theōria* does not stay upon it. Also, *theōria* turns toward it through the senses, and sense-perception is not complete *theōria*, because *theōria*'s object is then incomplete and unlasting in existence—either sensation is held back from the sensible, or the sensible from sensation.

The settling place and shelter of the knowledge-seeker is the world of the universal and the realm of certainty. "Certainty" is *theōria*'s return from other than self and arrival at self. This is why certainty is not nullified, and certainty cannot be left behind. But before it reaches self, *theōria* is agitated and muddled. This is called "doubt."

What is known in certainty is one through essence and many through accidents. The cause of its being one is the oneness and simplicity of the universal existent, and the cause of its manyness is the multiplicity of the particular existents and *theōria*'s attachment to them. *Theōria* becomes diverse and divided because of the diversity and dividedness of the particulars. This is like the diversity of the sun's shining and influence on the climes and sites of earth. Although the sun's shining has no diversity in clarity or warmth in respect of the fact that it is from the sun, when it shines upon diverse sites, the shining becomes diverse. Thus it is said that the sun's shining in the depth of a pit is not like the sun's shining on hills and mountains, and the

sun in Khuzestan is not like the sun in Bulgaria, even though there is no diversity in the sun and its shining and radiance. In the same way, the multiplicity and diversity of the known things does not arise from the knower and universal knowledge. Rather, the known things become diverse through the attachment of the universal *theōria* to the particular existents by way of sensation. Thus every known thing and every knowledge becomes separate from every other known thing and knowledge. They become many and each takes on another name.

Knowing things—whether many are known, or only one—is better and higher in level than not knowing, for the existence of the known is apparent and that of the unknown is unapparent and hidden. Nonetheless, these knowledges will be more gainful for the knower when he also knows the knowing, which is the clarity and apparentness of things, and when he knows that the clarity and apparentness of things is not in the things outside of self, because, whether or not he knows the things, decrease and increase do not come to them. Rather, knowing is the clarity and apparentness of things in the reality and essence of the knower.

Were the existents not within the substance and reality of the human such that they are neither hidden nor apparent, they could never be known and could never become clear. For the nonexistent and the non-thing does not become apparent to humans. And, if all were apparent, then too they would not become apparent and clear, for the apparent does not become apparent and the clear does not become clear. Also, the human would then know all things. Therefore, one alternative remains, that the things exist in the essence and substance of humans, but they are either apparent or hidden, or some are apparent and some hidden.

When humans know that all things, whether apparent or hidden, exist within them, then the rank of their existence is much higher than those who know the existent things as outside of self. This is because [for the latter] the cause and occasion of their existent things is they, but the cause and occasion of things existent separate from them is something else. They do not know the cause of this twoness. The measure that they do have of the outside things' clarity and apparentness will stay mixed with doubt and agitation. Their existence will be just this agitated awareness, far from certainty and not arrived at self.

In writing this book, we did not want the species-specific and particular realities to become clear to people, in the way that natural scientists have spoken about the natural sciences and written in their books. In the same way, the astronomers, mathematicians, physicians, imams of the sharias, and masters of the practical and theoretical artisanries have given explanations in their essays and books. To talk of this again would have been futile striving. Also, the benefit of those sciences is confined to individual humans, the organization of the works of their lives, and the wholesomeness of the states that they have together for the duration of life. When these individuals pass away, the profit and benefit of those sciences do not remain with them. Indeed, it is likely that the profit and benefit of those sciences will also not be able to bring about the wholesomeness and ordering of the work of the sensory life. There is many a human individual who has those sciences and who has no share of this work's harmony and order, and the profit of those sciences reaches neither his life nor anyone else's. And it may be that the work of someone's life will pass in harmony without those sciences.

Also, such sciences profit the universal knowledge only inasmuch as those prepared for *theōria* become bold and intimate with thought. Then, when they aim for the universals, their souls will not be frightened by witnessing the universal forms and they will not be deprived of arriving at the reality.

Although we have mentioned the names of some of these sciences and pointed to them, this was not so that the looker should keep himself occupied with being a pupil of them. Rather, our purpose was to confine the existent things to two divisions—universal and particular—the particular existent being this world and the progeny along with the deed and the doer; and the universal existent being the world of knowing along with the known and the knower. [Our purpose was also] to show each division's levels in existence in respect of perfection and deficiency as well as the human knowers' attachment to those existents through knowledge in respect of essence.

The hope in this explication was that knowledge-seeking humans would wake up and become aware of their own existence, subsistence, and sempiternity through certainty and plain-seeing, and of universal security from perishment, annihilation, alteration, disappearance, unconsciousness, and without-self-ness. For it became clear that knowledge is the knower's existence and pertains to his essence and reality. It is this existence that is general over all existents. So, all are among the divisions and branches of knowledge, for, through knowledge one can encompass all, but no one can encompass knowledge through any of the divisions of existence. This very existence is the first and the last of all existence, and it is absurd for it to have a first origin or a last termination. The knower is either this existent itself, or its springhead and cause, since, when someone knows something, that thing is either the self or something of the self. What is "self" is selfhood and to be a knower, for the knower is nothing but reality and self; and what is "of the self" is the species-specific and genus-specific realities, which are among its knowns.

Subsistence, permanence, sempiternity, and foreverness are all among the divisions of unconditioned existence. By knowing these, the knower encompasses all—I mean subsistence, permanence, and sempiternity. It is absurd for that which encompasses subsistence, permanence, and sempiternity to accept disappearance, annihilation, and deficiency. No, rather subsistence is subsistence through the knower, sempiternity is sempiternal through him, and permanence is permanence through him. The "aeon" is the duration and measure of foreverness, never-endingness, and everlastingness, and the duration of a thing stands through the thing. Hence the aeon, which is the duration of foreverness and everlastingness, stands through unconditioned existence, and unconditioned existence stands through the knower of unconditioned existence.

It is this that is the final goal and utmost end of all the sciences; knowledge is the perfection, final goal, and completion of humans; humans are the final goal and completion of life; life is the completion and perfection of the movement of bodies; movement is the perfection of being a body; bodiment is the perfection of reception and acceptance; reception and acceptance are the trace of actorness; actorness is the trace of yearning and desire; desire is the trace of knowing; knowing is the trace of the essence of the knower; and the knower's essence is the first and the last of being.

We have striven hard in this book to add to the explication of these meanings by employing well-known words and easy denotations. However, these states have

not remained unknown to the folk of insight because of darkness. It is not because of farness and difference from the seeker's essence that he cannot reach them. Rather, they cannot be sought because of the extremity of nearness to the essence. This is like colored things, which can be seen through distance between them and the eye, but when light is placed on the pupil, one cannot see. And it is like limpid air through which and in which dark bodies can be seen, but the air cannot be seen.

Also, when human insight is mixed with sense-perception, it finds the realities mixed with accidental things and cannot look back on the disengaged essence without the accidents such that the radiance of disengagement and the light of simplicity would dominate over the tainted and compound insight. This is like a painful eye that does not open in bright air until the cause of its weakness disappears and it gradually becomes accustomed to the light. So also is the state of the human's knowing and his *theōria* toward self and toward the beings of self as soon as *theōria* is no longer mixed with the incomplete potencies, such as sensation, sense-intuition, and imagination. *Theōria*'s illness comes from its being mixed with the tool. When it gradually becomes accustomed to solitariness through thinking upon and perceiving the realities without accidents and the accidents without loci, then *theōria* upon the essence and the self's essence and perceiving disengaged existents without accidents become easy for it.

That is why, in this book, we have not turned our attention to anything but known things and perceptibles or anything but science and knowledge—both that which is the final goal and the perfection of humans, and that which is below this. Whatever has been said to be separate from the human substance, and whatever people know to be other than self while self is other than it, we have mentioned by way of recounting, like the explanation of the state of heaven and other particular existents. Perhaps, when people think about this talk, their *theōria* will become established upon self. Whatever they seek they will seek in self. They will find that it was found before seeking, and they will see that it was given before wanting. No need and requirement will remain for any but self.

We have seen that whatever is of use and indispensable to humans is with them and in them. Its mine and fountainhead is the self. Whatever is outside them is similar to and an image of their soul's forms. All the roots and realities are with them. The images undergo alteration, nullification, and disappearance, but the realities and roots of these similitudes are conjoined and unified with the human substance. These are inserted and enfolded in their inmost mind by the stamp of the beginningless and the endless, and they cannot be taken away from them. Duration's prolongation and the aeon's lingering do not undo or break their binding and joining, erase their frame, or move the foundation of their stability.

Until the eye of insight opens, these words will not be believed. As long as the sleeper does not awaken and does not open his eyes, no matter how much they report to him in his bed that morning has come and no matter how much this reaches his ears, he will not listen and will not believe. He will fancy that it is night and incline toward sleep.

So you, O seer of forms and knower of substance's secret, talk not of these wondrous words and this warning and this heavy trust to anyone but the knowing essence. Take it only to the provision and treasury of existence. Among the individu-

als of existence, judge by intelligence's discernment between truth and correctness. Do not hold back from any requester as much as is suitable, and do not give to any taker more than what is wanted and what must be. For your Watcher is hearing and seeing, and the secret of existence is apparent and plain to Him. *God commands you that you convey trusts back to their owners; and that, when you judge among people, you judge with justice. Good is the admonition that God gives you. Surely God is the Hearing, the Seeing* [4:58].

Praise belongs to Him who is praiseworthy through His Essence, *and He is witness over everything* [34:47]. And blessings and peace be upon the chosen among the limpid and the prophets, the select among the pure and the godwary. Enough is God for everything. (*Muṣannaḥāt* 236–42)

The Rungs of Perfection

In the name of God, the Merciful, the All-Compassionate

In the name of that God other than whom there is no god, the beginning of all who has no beginning, the end of all who has no end, the obvious and outward above whom is none outward, the hidden and inward beneath whom is none inward. They worship Him—the worshipers on the path and without the path. They take their prayer to Him—the aware and unaware takers of prayer.

I thank Him and I praise Him to the extent of ability and the expanse of capacity, for He is suitable for laudation and fit for praise. From Him I ask for assistance in harmony of work and wholesomeness of state, though at first there was assistance from Him, then asking from me. In Him I seek refuge from scatteredness and disharmony, though at first there was His giving refuge, then my seeking refuge. I ask from Him that He give me as my daily bread of every good greater than that for which I hope, and that He turn away and repel from me every evil even more than what I fear and seek to avoid.

I send salutations to the head of the prophets and the saints, the leader of the limpid and the godwary, and to his household and clan and to the followers of his conduct and his Sharia.

Now then, the cause of this book was that a group of religious brothers and true companions requested advice from me within which the good of both houses would be implicit and the felicity of both engendered worlds would be contained; which would give birth to and increase the clarity and correctness of the listeners' insight and the thinkers' finderness. Here, with the help of God, I arrange the answer to this request, and with the auspiciousness of His name, I open the door of speech.

Brothers—may God be your protector and keeper against the blights that bring perishment and the hopes that trick!—listen and accept talk without falsehood and advice without trickery. It will give you awareness of what the Creator who makes things appear has sought and wanted through creating the bodies and making your anima and intelligence appear, and of what was the objective in creating the other created things. It will make you conscious that you were created for the final goal of all final goals and the utmost end of all utmost ends. Every created thing's final goal

has a more eminent and more honored final goal, except the final goal of your creation and nurturing, for that is the utmost end of every final goal and the end of every aim. It is the being that includes all beings, for neither the one nor the many, the less nor the more, perfection nor deficiency, nature nor free choice, the lasting nor the passing, is in any way outside of it. It has encompassed and surrounded all, and all are gathered together under its compass.

So, I remain astonished at the seekers of such a rank and those awakened by such consciousness—why are they heedless and how can they sleep? Far from you and your likes, brothers, that you should admire your deadness along with the power of living! That you should bring the face of seeking toward annihilation, while you are made ready for subsistence! So hurry and seek to go ahead of each other toward subsistence during this life, before annihilation goes ahead of you. Strive, and stand firm in the striving, before the day of striving enters the night of incapability. It may be that the Nurturer will give you the daily bread and bestow upon you the generous gift of release and the rank of the chosen with Himself—through boundless and endless bounty and giving.

The Beginning of Speech

Know and be certain, brothers, through the path that will be shown after these words, that each existent you find—whether compound or simple, sensory or imaginal—has a specific state through which it is separate from others and apparent. To the extent of the apparentness and hiddenness of this specificity, the finders ascribe the existent thing to completeness or deficiency. If it lies in the final goal of apparentness, they say concerning its rank of existence, “It stands at the peak of perfection,” and if it lies in the utmost end of hiddenness, they say, “It lies in the ditch of deficiency and the pit of lowliness.”

Between the two extremities—the extremity of completeness and perfection and the extremity of inadequacy and deficiency—there are marks and causes. Among these causes, everything nearer to the extremity of perfection than to the extremity of deficiency is called “virtues” and “causes of good fortune.” Everything nearer to the extremity of deficiency than to the extremity of perfection is called “vices,” “blights,” and “the causes of bad fortune.”

The “felicity” of a thing is for it to arrive at the perfection proper to it, and its “wretchedness” is for it to remain back and be cut off from this completeness and perfection. The marks of reaching for completeness and perfection are worthiness for that rank, both in what is given by nature and what is freely chosen. The mark of deficiency is lack of preparedness, and the mark of hopelessness is unworthiness and unsuitability.

You also, O brothers, are numbered among the existent things, so you also have a state and a specificity through which you are separate and distinct from other beings. This specificity has a rank and waystation in apparentness and concealedness. There are causes that help this specificity toward completeness, and there are blights that hold it back. There are marks of completeness, perfection, and felicity, and marks of inadequacy, deficiency, and wretchedness.

The mark of having hope for felicity is firm seeking, an overmastering wish, a predominant want, a love for the causes that help the specificity toward completeness, and the strength to be patient in the suffering of the search and to tolerate the heavy load of striving. All these traits and their like rise up from the correctness of the soul's substance, the nobility of its essence, and its greatness in eminence. The levels of worthiness and preparedness come to an end through becoming complete and finding perfection. Becoming complete and reaching the perfection of the specificity is for your soul to rise up from the sleep of without-self-ness and unconsciousness and to find self unneeding and subsistent.

As for the mark of inadequacy and deficiency, this is slackness in the search, the lack of yearning for perfection, enmity toward the causes that help toward completeness, and fleeing from the load of the search's hardship. The state of such a soul is like the state of someone ill who has no wish for nourishment, which is the provision of a sound body. He does not eat, and he does not run after it and seek it like someone who wishes for it. He does not strive to reach it, and he cannot tolerate the suffering of the search, since he has no awareness of need and requirement. Moment by moment he moves further from health, and the illness keeps on increasing until it ends in death and perishment.

So, brothers, it is incumbent on you to think about these words if you are truthful and upright. You must seek out the substance of self: Which existent is it? Among which division of the beings is it numbered? What is its specificity through which it is separate from other existent things? What are the levels of its perfection and deficiency? What is the cause that helps this specificity become complete? What is the cause that cuts it off and holds it back from that? What are the marks and markers of completeness and incompleteness? What sort is the path of obtaining the helping causes? Once the helping causes have been brought to hand and the markers have shown their faces, then look again at the profit and benefit of that final goal. Is it worth so much suffering or not? Does its repose make one forget the pain of pulling this load or not?

This book is eight doors of speech. I hope to open them for you with God's help—for He is the opener of every door, a Bestower and a Forgiver without how and how-much.

The Opening of the First Door
Which Is: The Human Substance and
Everything Found within It

In it are six chapters.

*Chapter One. On the Class of the Human Species to which this
Book's Words are Addressed*

First, before hearing these words and thinking about the meanings of these testaments, our brothers must know which of their tribes is being addressed and with which of the human levels the discussion is taking place. They should not fancy that

this discussion is with the majority of humans. When someone called “human” is suitable for this name, this is like the suitability of a date-tree’s fruit for the name *date* when it is ripe and has found perfection in shape, flavor, and color. Or, he may also be lower than this rank in suitability, like suitability for the name *date* by a half-ripe date that has not found a full share of the specificity of the date. Or, he may not be suited for the name *human*, like the unsuitability for the name *date* of that which begins to come out of the branch without having the shape, nature, and specificity of the date.

They also should not fancy that we are addressing certain designated humans, like a group of family members or a few acquaintances.

Furthermore, these words are not addressed to the complete human, who has all the virtues of the human specificity and has been given the felicity of the final goal of the final goals, for the human at this rank has no need for and is independent of being stirred by speech and being moved to rise up.

Nor is it addressed to him who does not have the wont and worthiness to become complete and who has stayed as a resident in the ditch of possibility. Rather, our talk is with the folk of the middle level.

In the middle level, the discussion is with the goer—not with those who are residents and lingerers, for the fire of their yearning for perfection has lost its shine and radiance, the seeing of their insight has become dim, indolence has curtailed their heart’s awareness and its yearning for perfection’s enjoyment, and love for bodily comforts and for the spice of beastly enjoyments has made them sit back from tolerating the load of striving and the toil of seeking. Rather, we talk to and want those among the folk of the middle who do not seek to reside in the stations of this waystation, who have no thought of lingering and seeking to rest in it, and who show no contentment and satisfaction with what has arrived. The closer they get in the wayfaring to the utmost end of perfection, the more they yearn and hurry. Their joy arrives from what helps their going and moving, their grief from what holds them back from it. If someone in the middle level who has this attribute is present, then our discussion is with him, and if he is absent, then our message is for him. Although both classes belong to the folk of the middle level and are numbered among them, there is a far distance between the two, for he who sleeps in the path is not numbered as a quickly passing goer.

Chapter Two. On Showing What We Mean by the Word Soul

By the word *soul* we mean the same as what we mean by the word *root*, the word *reality*, the word *essence*, and the word *self*. We say “root” for that from which comes being’s provision for everything below it. We say “reality” for that which is suited for being.⁵¹ We say “essence” for that thing to which the things belong, while it is their possessor and holder.

When we say “the soul of the human,” we mean by it the human root, reality, and essence through which the human is human. The human is not human through bodily shape and guise, nor through manifest color and surface, nor through the qualities of the manifest and nonmanifest members. Rather, the matter of the being of these things and their likes is the root through which the human is human.

Also, the human is not human because he has anima, sensation, and movement; upright stature, hairless skin, broad nails, and going on two feet; nor because he has want, hope, fear, sense-intuition, anger, and greed. The name *human* for such an animal is like the name *wheat* for the green plant that appears in the earth, having grown up from wheat, but without branches or ears. Such a plant is called “wheat” because it is something from which—if it reaches the perfection of which its species is capable, and if the damage of blight does not hold it back from that utmost end—something will appear that is called “wheat” in reality. In truth, what we were calling “wheat” before this was not in fact wheat, for when the wheat is separated from it, it is called by its other name, “straw.” Someone may call that green plant “wheat,” but when he thinks this over, he knows that it does not have the nature of wheat, nor the shape, nor the profit, nor the benefit and potency.

In the same way, the name *human* is given to this animal that is upright in stature, broad in nails, naked in skin, greedy and angry, and having hope, fear, and want. This is because such an animal—if the assistance of nurture is not cut off from it and if the injury of damage and blight does not come over it before it reaches the possible human limit—will show the trace of virtues and traits that are true, not sensory or imaginary. Such are correct thoughts, right seeing, knowledge of certainty, truthful talking, showing concealed knowledges, finding things where they are and just as they are, reaching that through which things can be found, and the like of these virtues among the character traits, practices, and artisanries.

Hence, anyone “human” in name from whom the trace of these traits is witnessed, plainly seen, and actual, or potential and nearly actual, is suitable and appropriate for this name. Anyone who has not reached this rank and for whom there can be no hope of his reaching it has the name *human* by borrowing and sharing.

Chapter Three. On Enumerating the Potencies of Humans, the Tools of their Potencies, and the Acts of their Potencies through those Tools

Know, O knowledge-seekers, that this human, some of whose attributes we enumerated, has a body. This body is brought together from many bodies that are incompatible in shape, nature, and qualities, like skin, flesh, fat, bones, veins, tendons, and so on; and members compounded from these bodies, like head, neck, two hands, back, belly, and two feet; and like internal members, such as brain, heart, stomach, liver, kidney, and spleen. The being of these bodies and members has become clear through the senses.

All bodies, in the respect that they are body—not in the respect that they are simple or compound, animate or inanimate, but rather in the respect that they are a substance made and measured in the three sizes, which are length, breadth, and thickness—have from the side of the bodies’ king an appointee for whom the body is the resting-place and the sleeping-place. This appointee does not become separate from the body, and it preserves the body in being a body. Thereby the bodily form, which is measure, is not erased from it by motion-inducing, putting together, and taking apart, such that it might become a nonbody. So also, it is the middleman between the body and the body’s workers in the body. The name of this trustee is

“nature” [*ṭabī‘at*], which is to say that it is “imprinted” [*munṭabī‘*] in the body and accompanies its substance in all the diverse states.

This is why we find that flesh and bones—with all their diversity in hardness and softness, wetness and dryness, smoothness and roughness, redness and whiteness, heaviness and lightness—agree in being bodies. In both of them the bodily form is the same, for it is not that one is a body, the other not a body.

If the Depicter of the body’s form with size and how-much-ness had not had nature preserve this form for the body, then, when another form came to the body, the bodily form would have been nullified and effaced and the body would not have remained in its bodiment. Take, for example, the form of roundness and squareness, thinness and thickness, lightness and heaviness, subtleness and denseness. When the body is depicted in one of these forms, it might be that this form would be erased from the body, and that the form of roundness or squareness would be nullified—were there not permanently an appointee and a watchman to preserve these forms. But, with the disappearance of these forms, the bodily form does not disappear, because the preserver of the body is permanent, since the body is a matter kneaded and placed in the hands of all bodily creatures—both the simple things, which are the heavenly bodies and the elemental bodies; and the compound things, which are the minerals, plants, and animals. Hence, nature is entrusted with preserving the how-much-ness and measure of the bodily substance.

Chapter Four. On the Nourishing Potency

Outside the potency of the body’s nature, the human body has another potency from its Nurturer and Upbringer for the nurturing and the governing of the causes of its subsistence for a while. This is because the human body is the passageway of passing blights and the alighting place of injurious occurrences. The elements’ opposite qualities unloosen the bond of the body’s compoundedness, and it has no path of escape or way of avoidance. Its coming forth and coming to be is in the battlefield and ambushade of the natures, which get along badly and strive against each other. If at one moment a state should occur that is right for its constitution, on its heels comes another state that is incompatible with its nature. Or, that very state that is compatible with its nature at one moment turns out to be incompatible at another time. Its being can have no security or firmness against destruction and transformation at the slightest incompatible state that comes over it.

Hence the Nurturer’s bestowal fortified the body’s existence with a potency that would replenish its existence and allow the causes of subsistence to get along with it for a while. Whenever fire, air, water, and earth steal and decrease something from its substance through combustion, absorption, moistening, and desiccation, this potency keeps on joining to it a substitute and replacement to the extent possible. The name of this potency is the “growth-inciting soul.” It has servitors, retinue, employees, and command-takers that are at work in all parts of the body, at the command of this supervising potency. These include the “attracting potency,” which pulls replenishment and provision from outside the growing body to its inside; the “retentive potency,” which keeps in the body what the attracting has brought; the “digestive potency,” which cooks what the retentive has brought and makes it wor-

thy for the body; the “discerning potency,” which separates that of the provision that is compatible with the body from what is not compatible; the “expelling potency,” which puts the noncompatible far from the body and drives it from the inside to the outside, and which turns the compatible over to the “nourishing potency.” The nourishing makes it just like the body and joins it to it. In the same way the “form-giving” and “progenerative” potencies are among the retinue, helpers, and command-takers of the growth-inciting soul, and it is their commander.

This potency does not have a tiedness and joinedness with the body like the first potency, which we called “nature.” Nature does not become separate from the body in any of the diverse states that come over the body. But, when the nature and constitution of the body reach disequilibrium after the state of the equilibrium of the diverse natures, the growth-inciting potency empties the body of its own work and work-doers and lets it be.

The human body shares the natural, bodily potency with all natural bodies, whether the simples or the compounds, and [it shares] the growth-inciting potency with all growing things. In the human body the dwelling-place and resting-place of the bodily nature is all the body’s parts, but in the human body the springhead of the workerness and the dwelling-place of the practices and acts of the growth-inciting soul and its potencies is a specific member that is called the “liver.” It scatters to each bodily part a share.

Chapter Five. On the Potency of Sensory Life and Movement through Desire

Outside the mentioned potencies, the human species has another potency, a root that it shares with all animals. Through it the animate thing is animate and alive. Its name is the “animal soul,” and it has two potencies—one the potency of yearning and wanting, the other the potency of awareness and finding.

The potency of yearning and wanting is the springhead of livingness and the fountainhead of animal life. The animate thing moves from it, and the animal spirit is born from it. Among the animate thing’s members, the storehouse of life and movement is the heart, from which the members find shares—each member a share.

The potency of awareness and finding is the origin and entranceway of sense-perception, imagination, and sense-intuition. Its dwelling-place and station is the brain.

The potency of yearning and desire has two helpers and command-takers. One is the appetitive, beastly potency, through which the animate thing wants compatible things and seeks appropriate nourishment. The second is the potency of wrath and the predatory nature, through which the animate thing removes and drives away the noncompatible. The growth-inciting soul along with all its retinue and servitors is under the command of the animate thing’s appetitive potency. In the animal’s body, the dwelling-place of rulership and the entranceway of the works of the growth-inciting soul is the liver, and from there it reaches the other members. The dwelling-place of the acts of the wrathful potency among the animal members is the heart.

As for the potency of awareness and finding, it is of two sorts: One sort is apparent in what is manifest from the animal’s body in the tools of sensation. One of these

is the awareness of seeing in the eye, another the awareness of hearing in the ear, third the awareness of smelling in the nose, fourth the awareness of tasting on the tongue, and fifth the awareness of touch on all the manifest skin.

The second sort is hidden and concealed in the nonmanifest of the animal's head. For example, when the animal soul is absent from the senses, imagination is aware of the forms that the soul is aware of through the senses. Or, the potency of memory is aware of the sensory forms such that, when the soul seeks them out within it, it finds them without the senses reaching them. So also sense-intuition is aware of the nonsensible states that are found from sensible things.

These finding potencies, inside and outside, are the soul's mirrors, within which the diverse forms of the existent things are shown. What is shown in the mirror of the senses is the flavors, aromas, various colors, shapes, and sounds of the bodies; their qualities, such as warmth and cold, wetness and dryness, roughness and smoothness, hardness and softness; and everything numbered of this sort when present to the potency and tool of sensation. Then these states and forms are imprinted and given form in the mirror of sensation, and the soul becomes conscious of the fact that the tool of sensation has been depicted with those forms.

Within the tool of sensation, the states of the things are given form and imprinted, but not that which is these states' dwelling-place. For, warmth, cold, roughness, and smoothness are shown in the sense of touch; it is not that these states can be existent within it. The sweetness of the sweet, the bitterness of the bitter, and the saltiness of the salty are shown in the sense of taste; it is not that sweetness, bitterness, and saltiness are its state. In the sense of smell the aroma of musk is shown, not musk itself. In the tool of seeing, shapes and colors are depicted, not the possessor of the shape and the color. In the tool of hearing, sound is shown, not that of which sound is the movement.

As for the potency of imagination, the same states that have been depicted in the senses are formed within it, but they can also be found through imagination without their presence to sensation, though the states are shown—not the possessor of the states. In memory, these same states that are imprinted and impressed in sensation and imagination stay preserved.

So also with sense-intuition—it does not show the reality. Rather, it shows a nonsensible state from the sensible state. For example, from the shape of the enemy that is sensed, it shows fear, which does not come into sensation. From the shape of a loved thing that enters the senses, craving and inclination are shown in sense-intuition. The potency of sense-intuition is closer and more joined than all the other potencies to the animal soul's command-giving. When it becomes strong in its substance, within it are shown states and occurrences that have not yet come to be before they come to be. The group of diviners become aware of hidden states and coming-to-be occurrences through the domination of sense-intuition. This potency has all the animal potencies under its command, and it is more eminent than all. After it is the potency of memory, then imagination, then the five senses. Also, the perceptive potencies have the movement-giving potencies as servitors and retinue. Among the animal potencies, the level of the wrathful potency is higher, then the appetitive.

The animal potencies that are the soul's servitors and retinue receive the trace first. From them it goes to the growing soul; from the growing soul, by the interme-

diary of its servitors and retinue, to the bodily nature; and by the intermediary of the body's nature, it appears in movement. For the soul can be joined with and obeyed by the body through these intermediaries.

Every potency is the mediator between the potency that is above it in level and the potency below it. Its relation to the potency above it is like [the relation of] the sun's shining and radiance to the sun, and to that below it like the relation of the sun's shining to the locus of the shining and the radiance. Radiance comes from the sun; then, by means of radiance, comes warmth, by means of warmth subtlety, and by means of subtlety buoyancy. In this order, every state appears.

So, the level of the soul and its relation with the potencies and each potency's tool and dwelling-place have this same state, in this order. Just as no warmth arises in air until radiance and brightness first come from the sun, so also the tool has no movement until want and yearning come forward from the animal soul. Unless there are finding and awareness before yearning and desire, there is no yearning and desire, for want and yearning can only come to be through something that has awareness. So also, unless there is yearning, no motion and movement will appear. Unless there is motion, no trace of the soul's life will become manifest in the body.

The soul is the commanding master, these potencies are its command-takers and helpers, and the body is its workshop and factory. The soul's substance is not like the body's substance, just as the master-worker is not like his work. The writer is not like the writing, the ringmaker not like the ring, and the tailor not like the sewn clothing, even though the work's form comes to be manifest from them in its dwelling-place.

Moreover, [the form] becomes manifest gradually and in order. The form of the ring does not appear all at once in gold. First there is the melting, then the bar, then the band, then the guise of the ring, then the form of the adornment and completeness. In the dwelling-place of artisanry, there is alteration and diversity of forms, but in the gold, there is no alteration or diversity, because the altering and diverse forms occur in what was worked.

Our brothers may fall into doubt over the truthfulness of this talk and not believe it. They may say, "If the workerness of the soul and the work-reception of the animal's body were clear to us, then we would have no doubt that the soul's substance is one thing and the body's substance something else and that they are not like each other. However, we are not certain that the movement of an animal's body does not arise from its body, because we always see and find the body and the motion together. If there is a motion-inducer other than the body, we have never found it, though we have found the body and the motion. If the body does have a motion-inducer, what is the cause of our not finding and not seeing it?"

We say: If the motion and change of states and forms—from state to state and from shape to shape—arose from the body, they would be the same in all bodies, just as these are the same in being bodies. The succession of forms and the diversity of states in inanimate things are not like those in the bodies of trees and plants, and, in the bodies of animals, they do not have the wont that they have in the bodies of growing things. Therefore, no doubt remains for the intelligent man that motion and change do not come from the body's essence, nor does the body have these from itself. Whatever a thing does not have from itself comes from other than itself. Hence

the body has this state from other than itself, and other than the body is not a body. We call that thing which is not a body and through which this state comes to the body by the name “soul.”

As for the fact that the senses do not see and find the working soul that induces motion in the body—even though we see the motion of the body, the forms that alternate over the body, and the body—this is because the senses can find the shapes, forms, measures, and colors of the body, but that which is not a body has no shape, form, or measure, nor any colors or bodily qualities. This is why the trace of life and livingness, which is the attribute of the soul’s essence in the body along with the several potencies put in order from the soul, cannot be shown with the body.

As for the explication of the existence of each of these potencies with proofs and arguments, and [the explication] of the howness of their acts with analysis and detailed explanation, our brothers who lived in former times undertook this and wrote it in books. But we intend and aim for a meaning that cannot be found in their books. We are full of hope in the Nurturer that He will make it easy for us to show this, and that He will give our brothers victory in finding and reaching it, and then, after finding, that He will protect it and preserve it for all—for it is He who is capable of that and who is aware and knowing of what is hidden inside the wanters.

Chapter Six. On Giving Awareness of the Human Soul and Its State, Specificity, and Level

O knowledge-seeking brothers, know that outside these souls and potencies the human has something more precious, more eminent in substance, and higher in the rank of existence than all. The sensory, animal soul, the growth-inciting soul, and the bodily nature along with all their servitors, retinue, and assistants carry out its commands and take its traces to others.

In the earlier discussion we indicated the thing that consists of the meaning of the name *human soul*, saying that it is the root and reality of the human through which the human is human. It is a divine light which is bright through self and through which other things are bright. Its state relative to human individuals is of two sorts: In one state it is said to be “potential,” and in another state it is said to be “actual.” The mark that it is potential is that the particular, human individual is aware of things through it but is unaware and heedless of it. The mark that it is actual is that he is aware of it.

“To be bright through self” is for it to be aware of self. This is its first specificity. “To make things bright” is for it to know and be aware of the things, and this is the second specificity, though it is the trace of the first specificity. Because of this specificity, it is fitting to say that it is potential, and because of the first specificity, it is said to be actual. However, when things become bright through it, the things are complete and actual through it. As long as it is not complete and actual, that which is incomplete and potential will not reach act and completeness from it.

In this explication, let us start once again talking about being bright through self and making other things bright. We say:

Existence has levels in respect of apparentness and concealedness. There is a level that is called “possibility,” and in this rank the thing is called “possible.” The pos-

sible thing's existence is concealed, like the human's existence in the sperm-drop and the clothing's existence in cotton. It is not said that the human is "existent" in the sperm-drop, nor the clothing in cotton. Rather, "possible" is said, because their existence is concealed. This is the lowest rank in existence.

Another rank is that which is more apparent than possibility, but to other than it, while it is concealed from self. The finders of such a thing call it "existent." However, that thing cannot itself say any name. This is the existence of the bodies and the bodily potencies and natures. Although their existence is shown to be separate from possibility, it is shown to other than the body, not to the body or to the body's potencies and natures.

Another level of existence is that which is aware of self through self, while knowledge and awareness belong to itself. No matter what its knowledge becomes joined with, that thing comes to belong to it. This rank of existence belongs to the intellect. The "intellecting soul" also consists of this existent. However, this is said when it is potential and when its marks appear in human individuals. When it joins with intelligence and becomes one with it, the name *soul* falls away from it and it is called "intellect."

Through what we said before—that [the human soul] is a divine light which is self-bright and through which things are bright—we meant exactly this. "Brightness" is for it to find self, and this is the perfection of existence. But those other two levels—I mean possibility and existence without awareness—are deficient existence.

Hence self's awareness, knowing, and finding are the intellect's existence, and the other existents are the things found by the intellect. The intellect is one—it is not many things that are all intellect. Rather, the intellect is the utmost end of existence's brightness as well as its origin and springhead.

This is why it may be said concerning some human individuals, each of which is said to be an "intellecter," that such-and-such an individual has the preparedness for the manifestation of intellect's trace, and that another is less than he in preparedness and worthiness. It is said that another has the final goal of perfection, and it is said that another has no worthiness and that no intellectual words can be had with him, because he will not be able to understand. If these sayings are correct, it is because the utmost end of the work of these individual souls is one in the seeing, but among them some are nearer to that utmost end and some further away.

Also, the intellect that is one is not a "one" that has portions and parts such that a portion would reach every intellecter. Nor is it transferred from one individual to another individual, lingering for a while in one individual and then going on to another. What can have parts and portions is that whose existence has measure, like bodies, but intellect is not a body and has no measure. Nor does it come down into the body so that it would be contaminated with the body's measure—like colors and other qualities. Nor does it work in the body through its own essence. Rather, it is a radiance that stands through its Endurance-giver—majestic is His majesty!—and from it have arisen radiances, one after another. Its first radiance makes the second stand, the second the third, the third the fourth. This is self's *theōria* of self, and self's being bright to self.

The intellecting soul has two potencies in human individuals. One is theoretical, and its name is "the theoretical intellect." Through it individuals are aware and knowing. The second is the practical potency, and its name is "the practical intellect." Through this potency human individuals do intellectual works, such as showing various sorts of artisanries in all the means of living, such as making edibles, wearables, and spreadables. This is why the practices and acts of humans, in overseeing their own lives, are not like the acts of the other animals.

The theoretical intellect is the commander of the practical intellect, and the practical intellect is the command-giver to the animal soul and all its subordinates in the order that was shown.

The existence of the actual, intellecting soul does not require a demonstration and argument through which to become apparent, because that which makes the intellecting soul's existence apparent is also the intellecting soul. Nothing other than the intellecting soul can make it clear, nor can it be made clear for another, for the profit of the demonstration and argument is to know self, but nothing other than self can know self, and this is the attribute of the intellecting soul and the intellect.

Of course, it may be that when the traces of the intellecting soul are potential in the human, not actual, the actually intellecting soul makes the potentially intellecting soul reach act. In other words, it makes it reach self through argument and demonstration. However, such traces reach act from potency in those human individuals whose preparedness has complete potency, who seek the self's perfection with firm striving and hasty aiming, and who are shown the form of perfection from time to time. Then, through demonstration and argument, they can easily be shown that the seeker is the same thing as what he is seeking and that the seeking keeps him heedless of finding.

As for those who are not in this rank, they are unlikely to be awakened through argument and demonstration such that they become cognizant of self. Rather, first one must strive to make them worthy, to have them put their thinking to work, and to mention to them talks of certainty such that reflecting upon them will become the disposition of their soul, as will be shown later in its own place—God willing.

In humans the human soul has no separation from the animal soul. So also, the fact that humans are human is not separate from the fact that they are animals. Their being animals is their being human, but, in the other animals, being animal is separate from being human. This is why the level of the animal soul in humans has passed beyond the level of the other animals, both in the potency of imaginal and sense-intuitive perception and in the potency of act and movement, for their acts are sapiential and their perception is intellectual.

This is why most intellecting humans know the species-specific, intellectual meanings in which the individuals of the species share, such as the humanness of human individuals, as well as the genus-specific meanings in which the species share, such as the animality of all the animal species. Nonetheless, they are heedless of the fact that they know. They are not conscious that the species is not the sensible individual, even though they judge and say that all the beasts, crawling things, and birds are one in being animals; and all the classes of humans, such as Arabs and Persians, Greeks and Indians, kings and subjects, are one in humanness.

They know and are aware of the intellectual, species- and genus-specific reality because the animal soul of humans is joined with and obeys the intellect. They are heedless of the species' disengagement and the unity of the species in the sensible individuals because the knowledge is not a specificity of being animals or of life, but rather, it is the specificity of intelligence. Intelligence in the animal is potential, while animality is actual, even if animality is the radiance of the intellect.

The meaning of "potential intellect" is that it knows and is aware, but it does not have awareness and does not know that it is aware and knowing, because it does not know through self. The meaning of "actual intellect" is that it knows and has awareness that it is aware and knows, because it knows through self. Whatever does not know through self fancies that the known thing is outside self, but that which knows through self does not know the known thing as separate from self.

In this respect, the findingness of humans is divided into two: One is through the bodily tool; inasmuch as they are animals so they surely do not know self, because there is no tool for knowing self. The other division is findingness through intelligence inasmuch as they are the servant of the intellect's command. In this respect, they have a portion of finding without the tool of sensation and imagination.

With whichever extremity their joining increases, the specificity of that extremity is more apparent within them. If they incline toward the body, their *theōria* and awareness are weak, and their animal practices and acts are potent. If the joining with intellect happens to be firmer, *theōria* and awareness dominate, and the animal practices and movements are dominated over.

The distance between *theōria* and practice is like the distance between the scribe's thought and the movement of his fingers at the time of writing. The forms of the meanings are in the scribe's soul, and through thought he looks back upon them one by one. From thought they come into memory, and imagination depicts them in the form of characters. He commands the potency of the animal spirit to bring the muscles of the fingers into motion by means of the nourishing potency, which governs and orders the work of all the bodies of the animals. The fingers move such that the characters of writing come into existence, and these are the images of the meanings and the forms. The level of the potency of *theōria* and knowing is related to the level of the potency of practice and workerness exactly like the relation shown in this example.

O brothers in the reality! Strive to understand the meanings of these words that have arrived from us to you, to preserve the understood meanings, and to mention them moment by moment after preserving. Then the found, preserved, and mentioned meanings may be present and witnessed permanently, for everything that we have addressed to you through these words is the attribute and state of your soul's substance. If you cannot understand it, then your essence and substance has been placed in a veil. If you understand and then forget, you have found self and then again lost it. You have become a nonseer after having been a seer. If you preserve it but do not mention it, you have not reaped the harvest of knowing it, and you have not eaten the fruit of striving to collect it.

All confidence and appeal for support is in the divine preservation from sin, which, after guidance, gives the avoidance of going astray and preserves—through His favor and bounty!

The Opening of the Second Door
 On the Explication of That through Which the
 Human Becomes Separate from the Nonhuman

It is one chapter.

Know—O you who are in your anima a wanter of knowledge and a buyer of intelligence—that you have recognized the reality of humans through which they are human, along with their potencies, their acts, the locus of their potencies' acts, and the appearance of the souls' trace from them; such as nourishing, increase, and sensation; awareness through imagination, sense-intuition, and the tools; and motion through wanting.

When they reach the limit of perfection in their own specificity, they have returned to the origin from whence their existence came. Their coming forth from the origin and their return to it are not through bodily movement or changing from place to place. Rather, this is a journey and movement that is spiritual and whose name is "reflection." The origins of their existence—both those that are nearer to them and those farther from them—are its stages and waystations. Some of these stages are bodily and some spiritual, but through reflection all can be passed by.

So, all seekers of perfection, once they set their heart on the journey, first pass the bodily waystations and stages by which they had passed at the beginning of the existence of their body. They look at what it is that is the matter of their body from which it has found growth and increase. When they seek well, they find nothing at first save the sperm-drop of father and mother and the nourishment that gradually came to be joined with it. When it is affirmed for them that their body appeared from this origin, to which reflection's *theōria* and journey arrived, they have passed one of the road's stages.

When they look at what thing was the origin and matter of the sperm-drop, they find nothing but the nourishment of father and mother. When they look at what was the matter of the nourishment's body, they find nothing but the vegetal or animal body. They cannot find any matter for the vegetal and animal bodies save the elemental bodies. They see that the matter of the elemental bodies is unconditioned body, which has no form other than the form of how-much-ness. When they seek the matter of unconditioned body with complete striving, they find something to which how-much-ness and measure belong and which was there first, so that afterwards measure might come to be within it. Once they have reached this rank through reflection's journey, they have crossed the desert of the bodies.

When they reach any stage, they do not see it with self and do not finish with it until they aim for another stage. Finally they put everything behind and reach the stage from which the body appeared. Then they can look back upon self without being mixed with the body, since they have reached a place and a thing that is not body, but from which body can come to be. Were they not a nonbody, they would not have reached that which is not body. They know that, before crossing these stages, they were, and they were also not the body. What was aware of the first waystation is the same as what is aware of the last waystation. Since this is not the body, their road, their going, and their journey are not bodily.

Then they attend to seeking the spiritual origin of self. Did it come to exist through the bodily sperm-drop, from the substance of nourishment, from the bodies of the elements, from unconditioned body, or from unconditioned body's matter? It quickly becomes clear to them that if something was dead, without movement, unconscious, and unaware, and it then came to be living, moving, and conscious through them, this cannot be the cause of their existence, which is living and motion-inducing through self and aware and conscious through self. After all, the living does not arise from the dead, and the aware is not born from the unconscious.

The living soul is more suited to be the origin and cause for the being of the dead body than the dead body is to be the origin and cause for the being of the living soul. This is because the being of the body becomes bright through soul and bright to soul. So, it is soul that makes the body's existence bright. When something becomes bright through the existence of something else, it is not the cause of the existence of that which makes its own existence bright and which is brighter than it. Nothing becomes apparent and bright through what is more concealed than it.

From the past discussion in the First Opening, it came to be known that the lowest rank of the levels of existence is possible existence. The meaning of the word *possibility* is "to be fit to be." The fact that this rank is lowest derives from its concealedness and nonappearance. Higher than this rank is bodily existence which, though concealed from the body, is apparent to other than the body, which is the soul. Higher and more eminent than this rank in brightness and apparentness is soulish and spiritual existence, since the body's existence becomes bright through it and for it. Higher than this is intellective existence, for the soul's existence becomes bright through the intellect. Intellective existence is higher, more eminent, and more lasting than all the levels. Intellective existence is awareness and knowledge, and soulish existence is bright through knowledge. Hence the soul exists through the intellect.

For the intellect to make the soul's existence bright is for it to make the soul reach knowing. In the same way, for the soul to make the body's existence bright is for the soul to make the body reach knownness from unknownness. This is the meaning of our words that the body's existence is bright from the soul and it is bright to the soul, but not to the body.

The body, having been concealed and unknown, comes to be bright and known through the soul. Therefore the soul precedes the body in brightness and knownness. And the soul is bright-making and knowing through the intellect, so the intellect precedes the soul in being bright-making and knowing. Hence the soul comes before the bodily matter and all the classes of the bodies, and the intellect is the origin of the soul. The soul is the origin of the material substance, and the material substance is the matter of the [unconditioned] body. The body is the matter of the elements, the elements the matter of the compound bodies, the compound body the matter of the growing body, the growing body the matter of the living body, and the living body the matter of the finding and talking body.

When you return by these levels and stages to the self's origin, which is intellect, you will have reached the self's place of return. Its soulish existence will have disappeared, for, when unknowing reaches knowing, unknowing is nullified. And once there is intellect, intellect is not broken off from its origin, for intellect is the radiance of the Essence, and the radiance is not cut off from the Radiant.

So, brother, know from these words that the specificity of the human's substance through which he is human is that thing through which he separates himself from the body and through which he separates the various kinds of existents from each other—spiritual and bodily, the motion-inducers and the moving, the living and the inanimate—by means of a spiritual and intellective separating. Hence, through his separating the things, he is separate from all things, through a spiritual, intellective, true separation.

These words are complete—through the divine confirmation and the infinite bounties.

The Opening of the Third Door
On the Explication of the Levels of the Human Specificity
between the Two Extremities of Deficiency and Perfection

It is four chapters.

Chapter One

Know, O honored brothers, that human individuals have become greater in eminence and nobility than other living individuals because they have everything that the others have—the excellencies and specificities, such as movement through desire and sensible, imaginal, and sense-intuitive finding—and, in addition to that, the human specificities. In the same way, all the individual animals and living things are higher than the growing things because they have the specificities of the growing things, but they are greater than they through the sensory and imaginal potencies and appetite.

In intellective *theōria*, the greatness and disparity to which attention is paid and which is counted in these bodily individuals is the greatness and disparity of the spirits through which their bodies last, not their body's largeness and smallness, its hardness and softness, its subtlety and density. They are greater than each other through the limpidness of the substance, the cleanliness of the root, and the subtlety of the essence. They are less than each other and more deficient through the obscurity of the substance, the taintedness of the root, and the density of the essence.

Each species of bodies has a spirit proper to it, through which that body is complete. The greatest spirits through limpidness, cleanliness, and subtlety are the spirits of human bodies, which undertake to oversee, govern, and order these bodies; next is the spirit of the bodies of other animals, then the spirit of vegetal bodies, then bodily nature. The most deficient of all the spirits is nature; it is darker, more tainted, and denser than all the rest.

The perfection of the bodies is the spirits, and the spirits' limpidness allows the bodies' perfection to be shown more brightly. Many spirits are subordinate to and take commands from the human body's spirit, and each of these is the perfection of the body to which it is connected. These include the sensory spirit, in which is shown the perfection of the tools of sensation along with the compatibility of what is compatible with the bodily tools as well as the incompatibility of what is incompatible

with them; the finding, inner potencies of the body; and the practical, intellectual potencies.

The animal spirit is lower than [the human spirit] in limpidness and fewer in spiritual servitors. The vegetal spirit is more deficient than both. In the body of each appear [the spirit's] perfection and deficiency.

Human bodies have a spirit that finds through the tools of sensation; a finding, inner spirit that is called "imagination" and "sense-intuition"; a wanting and seeking spirit; a spirit through which they go from place to place; and a spirit that takes the matter of nourishment to its own place. [The animal spirit is less than this].⁵² The spirit of the vegetal bodies have the work of moving nourishment through attraction and carrying it to the whole body. The natural, bodily spirit is at repose from and empty of all this—both from the finding spirits and the motion-inducing spirits—because nothing is shown to it, whether the compatible, that it should induce the body to move toward it, or the incompatible, that it should take the body far from it.

If the body is left alone with its own nature, which is its spirit, it does not move from place to place like the animals; it does not become large or small like the growing things; it does not go from quality to quality like the altering and transforming things, which change from state to state; and it does not move in its placement like the sphere—unless another state comes into it from other than the body, for the body's nature cannot strive against it. Inescapably it obeys the state so long as the state does not come to an end, as when this alien potency turns back away from it. This is like a stone resting in place by the property of its own nature. Then the potency of something outside of it reaches it and moves it from its place toward the air. Since the stone's nature cannot resist it, it obeys when the potency arrives. When it is cut off from it, the stone's nature goes to work, and it brings the stone back to its resting place.

Of all the spirits, nature is the most mixed with the body.

The growing spirit is more limpid than nature and a bit more separate from the body; it is always nurturing its own tool and mixing other bodies with it.

The animal spirit is more limpid than the vegetal; its body moves through it, finds what is compatible and noncompatible with itself, and becomes aware of it. It is not always occupied with overseeing and governing the body of the animal as is the growth-inciting soul, nor does the sensory spirit always work in the body as does the nourishing spirit and the growth-inciting spirit. Rather, it works because of desire and wanting, for the movement-giving, locational potency does not constantly take the animal from place to place. Rather, it induces movement at the moment of wanting and desire. In the same way, the perceiving senses do not continually see, hear, smell, taste, and touch, but only at certain moments, when the sensible comes before them.

The human spirit is more limpid than both and becomes aware of the compatible and incompatible that have not reached the body.

Each of these spirits becomes complete when every specificity and excellence that is fitting to be for it comes to be.

Now we will make apparent the levels of the deficiency of the human specificity—with the success-giving of the Nurturer.

Chapter Two. On How Many Sorts Are the Deficient Humans

You should be aware that human perfection is one final goal in which there can be no multiplicity in any respect. Otherwise, division into levels would be possible and the divisions could be numbered.

Every human who reaches this final goal is complete and perfect, and everyone below the final goal is deficient. However, those who are deficient have much diversity, for everyone deficient who strives toward perfection is praiseworthy, and everyone who stands firmly in deficiency or has a lower aim is unworthy and unadmirable.

The unpraiseworthy deficient ones have classes and divisions. Among them are those whose potencies—human, animal, and vegetal—are all weak. The potency of theoretical intellect has no trace of the seeing of insight, and the potency of practical intellect shows no beautiful work-doing. The potency of wrath and zeal does not make them hot at seeing and hearing anger-inducing movements and words, and the appetitive and beastly potency does not make them wish to gather up edibles, prepare clothes, and take a spouse. In specificity, such humans barely pass beyond the limit of the growing things.

It may happen that the potency of beastly appetite is stronger, such that most of their moments are spent in sleeping, eating, and preparing edibles. Such people are not much greater than the beasts in specificity. Or rather, they are greater, since beforehand they can think out and measure in self the means of the work.

Among humans are those whose potency of anger dominates over all the potencies, and their anger's fire blazes up at the slightest disturbance. Their work is striving and pulling; their talking stirs up dispute and name-calling; and their thought is about tormenting, injuring, and pestering. Such people are separate from predators and rapacious animals by the human form and in pondering the means of animosity and taking vengeance.

It may be that both animal potencies—the predatory and the beastly—give commands to the human potency and keep it subjected to their disposition and nature, such that they give birth to bad character traits and ugly practices. If it happens that the beastly, appetitive soul is more at work in such people, then from them will become manifest greed and avarice in attracting possessions and stores, gluttony in them, avidity for the things of others, miserliness in what they themselves have; and deceptiveness, treachery, flattery, and thievery. If the predatory soul is more potent, such people will be arrogant, searching for greatness, aggressive, vengeful, quarrelsome, pulling and striving, shameless, collecting enemies, and seeking destruction.

Such people—whose human potency is subjected and obedient to the predatory and beastly potencies—are numbered among the apparent satans and their name is "satans of men." Their souls are numbered among the "satans of jinn,"⁵³ that is, the nonapparent satans, through whom the apparent satans are working, taking support, and finding replenishment. Those who are driven away, the workers of destruction, those worthy of curses, those having lost the road, the insurrectionists, and the tyrants; and the rebels against the command of the Real, the path of rectitude, and the wont of certainty—all are of the community and army

of such satans. Their harm and injury arrive more at themselves and their co-workers than at others.

In fact, for those who are worthy of the highest level and seek the furthest waystation, it is gainful to witness the unbeautiful doing, the ugly character traits, the faulty conduct, the short-sightedness, and the meanness of such satans' substance, because their natures increase in aversion to, flight from, and avoidance of uglinesses; and their aim to journey to the place of return gains greater potency. Then it becomes easier to cut themselves off totally from the house of alteration and corruption and the waystation of disappearance and annihilation and to join with the fountain of everlasting subsistence. And how good is the abode of the godwary!

Chapter Three. On the Levels of the Admirable Deficient Ones

Listen, O hopeful listener! One can hope for the better from those human beings whose human specificity gives commands to and has mastery over the predatory and beastly specificities. In them the potencies lower than intelligence in level of existence do not in any respect turn away from intelligence and obeying its command. Rather, they work according to this potency's judgment and in the measure that it sets down. It encompasses all and puts all to work in bringing into appearance the traces of the beauties of intelligence. It keeps everything sparkling with its own light, limpid with its own limpidness, alive with its own spirit, and clean and polished from the rust of nature.

So, deficient human individuals of this sort are admirable, since their share of the intellecting soul is the potency of the practical intellect, and their potency of the working intelligence is obedient to the seeing intelligence. Their body moves by the intellect's command in manifesting its traces through practice and artisanry, so the work of human livelihood comes to be harmonious through these practices. The craftsmen and workers—such as building-workers, woodworkers, ironworkers, weavers, sewers, and so on—are all among the community and army of the practical intellect.

There is another class whose share is more complete, whose work is more eminent, and whose practice is more subtle than the folk of the former level. Their work is not restricted to moving the bodily tools in the practices. Rather, they put the intellect's traces to work in the character traits and the animal potencies, and with them they adorn and ornament the animal dispositions. They want to keep their own nature and potency clean, polished, and purified of those character traits that were enumerated in the past chapter as belonging to the unpraiseworthy deficient ones—that is, animosity, pridefulness, vengefulness, and obstinence; avarice, gluttony, avidity, and miserliness; deceptiveness, trickery, hypocrisy, scheming, knavery, and treachery; and the other dispositions to which are pledged the tribe of wrongdoers, the folk of ungodliness, the ungrateful, and the unbelievers. Such are the ascetics among humans and the worshipers, the folk of striving and going forward in the works of good and the paths of rectitude, the good-doers and the seekers of good breeding, and those who have a beautiful supposition about their own God and Nurturer and who, in all their states and practices, wish for proximity,

arrival, and homecoming at the Innovator of the spirits and the Creator of the bodies—great is His affair and exalted His authority!—and who do not shun this. Such humans are numbered among the pious and the best.

Among humans are those whose level of human specificity seeks higherness than the level of the folk of the potency of the practical intellect. After they possess the excellencies of the folk of this level, they enter into the class of the folk of the theoretical intellect's potency. They want the knowledge of certainty and correct seeing. They cannot be content with the things that they hear. Reflection and *theōria* dominate over the lower potencies, and they seek out and gather the varieties of the sciences whose names reach them. The knowers of the mathematical sciences—such as geometry, the science of the guise of the cosmos [astronomy], and the science of number—and of the logical sciences, the science of nature, and the divine science belong to this tribe. Through seeking and collecting these certainties, they want to be released from the bonds of the prison of generation, corruption, alteration, and disappearance. They are among the group of the elect and the chosen. After this level, there is a higher rank that will be mentioned in chapter 4, God willing.

*Chapter Four. On Mentioning the Remotest Level
Belonging to the Best and the Pious, in Practice,
Character, and Knowledge*

Listen and keep your wits, O you who are sharp-witted and awake from the sleep of without-self-ness and released from the bond of unknowing! Above these waystations, levels, and practical and theoretical stations, there is a rank and a level toward the utmost end of the existent things, an everlasting place of rest whose rank none reach, unless their spirit has come to blaze with the radiance of the holy spirit and the divine light, and their individual substance and particular essence has come to be lost in the overmastery and domination of the universal, divine light—just as the radiance of a weak lamp is lost in the sun, and the drop of the ocean's water is lost in the ocean. They become one with the sun and the ocean, and the state through which they appeared to be separate from the sun and the ocean does not remain for them. They are the sun and the ocean, and the sun and the ocean are they.

When a soul reaches this rank, no universal below it encompasses it—such as the universal meaning of “human” that encompasses the human individuals, or the universal meaning of “animal” that encompasses the animal individuals, or the universal meaning of “substance” that encompasses all the animal and inanimate bodies, or the meaning of “existence” that encompasses all the substances and accidents. Rather, this soul's reality does not fit into any genus or species. It is self that is present with self. The self is the self's seen, seer, and seeing. Through this predominant seeing, it makes everything below self the same as self. This is like fire, which makes everything it reaches into fire. This is the utmost end and final goal of all utmost ends and final goals.

As for the existence of this utmost end and final goal—if an argument and demonstration is sought for it, none can be shown. The wellspring of the clarity of demonstrations flows from this rank and is born from it—this rank is not born from argument and demonstration. This is because demonstrations are put together from truthful

propositions and premises, and the clarity of the truthfulness of a demonstration's premises derives from primary propositions. The primary proposition is compounded of an attribute and a described object. Every attribute and every described object is compounded of simple, species-specific, and genus-specific meanings and realities. The simple, genus-specific, and species-specific realities come to an end at the highest genus and the unconditioned existent. The unconditioned existent is the origin of all existents, and all are existent through it. Hence, seeking its existence through demonstration is to seek the radiance and shining of the sun with a lamp. All known things can be known through its knownness, and it is the known and the knower through self. It is existence, and before existence there is no existent through which existence may exist.

The saying of the companion of the stations of the *mi 'rāj*—upon whom be blessings and peace!—when he put behind him the degrees of the going and reached his final goal, coming near to the Origin of the existents, means this state: “I do not enumerate laudation of Thee; Thou art as Thou hast lauded Thyself.”⁵⁴ It is as if he wants to say, “It is not I who have known You that I might praise You. You are the knower, the recognizer, and the praiser of self as You should be recognized and praised.”

Hence, you should know that the nearness of the near ones to the unconditioned Real—high is His loftiness!—is in the measure of their recognition and knowing. Their reaching Him is His knowledge's encompassing their knowledge and their loss of recognition and knowledge in His knowledge. Thus they are essence through His Essence, hearers through His hearing, seers through His seeing, alive through His spirit, and desiring through His desire, without partial essence, attributes, and recognition—rather, recognizing the Whole through the Whole, knowing the Essence through the Essence, and seeing the Substance through the Substance.⁵⁵ *That is the great triumph* [9:72] and the immense bounty.

The Opening of the Fourth Door On the Explication of the Causes that Help the Human Specificity Reach Perfection

It is one chapter.

Brothers, if you go back over the past discussions in the chapters of the earlier Openings with hearing ears and finding wits, you will take provision from the profit and benefit of those discussions such that you will not require the discussions of the rest of the chapters. Through their marks you can reach what is hidden within them. However, I would rather consolidate the foundation of the objective that was laid with those discussions with the rest of the discussion and make its basis last everlastingly, for these discussions help and aid each other. So, listen well, O companions, and put to work, O sharp-witted ones, a discussion that is the guide of your reflection and the lamp of your road toward the complete nature and the perfection of the specificity!

Now we say: Nothing takes on potency except from its own suchlike and congenial, and nothing becomes weak save from its own opposite and incompatible. All the existents give witness to the truth of this saying, both the natural and the intelligible. Fire becomes strong and more capable in its work from fire, the wet increases from the wet, and the dry from the dry. The body becomes larger from

body, and the anima becomes subtler through anima. So also are all the rest of the existents. The intelligent never suppose that they should disagree with the truthfulness of these words.

So, look and think upon your substance—of which substance will it be at the time of perfection and to which division of the existents will it belong? Then you may come to know what it is that is its suchlike, its connatural, and its like from which it will become strong, so that you may obtain it.

From the past discussion it became clear to which division of the existents the human soul belongs—bodily or spiritual.

The bodily is that whose existence is through measure. The measure of its existence is length, breadth, and depth. Because of these three measures, the body can have six directions, each measure having two contrary directions—up and down, front and back, right and left. Bodies are simple and compound. For the simple, all the parts are alike, but for the compound, they are diverse. The simple is like the orb of the celestial-sphere and the elements, and the compound like the mineral, vegetal, and animal bodies.

The spiritual is [1] nature and [2] the soul. The soul is [2a] motion-inducer and [2b] finder. The finder is [2b1] with tools and [2b2] without tools. The finder without tools is the utmost end of the spiritual-beings, for the finder without tools finds self and other than self with self.

From this it can be known that whatever is not a finder with self does not find self, since one cannot find self with other than self. What is not a finder with self is not like the finder with self; the not-finder, with or without tool, is not like the finder without tool; nor is the spirit like the body, knowledge like ignorance, disappearance like fixity, death like life, and the dead like the living.

It is correct that a thing gains strength from its like and finds weakness from its incompatible. Hence, the finder does not increase in potency from the nonfinder. So, everything from which arises worthiness for perception, or perception itself, is the soul's aid and taker to perfection.

That which increases the preparedness and worthiness for perception is everything that holds back the soul, keeps it far, and preserves it from inclination toward things that accept destruction and seek disappearance. Thus it will not become tainted by and mixed with the nonlasting and passing perfections and enjoyments that can be found through the tools of sensation and the potency of imagination.

That which increases knowledge and awareness is the soul's looking at the lasting things through the selfhood of self without the tool of sensation and the intermediary of imagination and sense-intuition, and its seeking the knowledge of certainty without doubt. This looking and searching by the soul is for it to put in order and govern the food and nourishment that are worthy for it.

The nourishment-seeking bodies have endurance and potency through bodily nourishment. Until nourishment joins them and becomes like their substance, they remain without share of the nourishment's benefit. When it joins them and becomes one with them, then it will not be separated from them and cannot be taken back.

In the same way, the knowledge-seeking, awareness-searching soul has its endurance and potency from knowledge. Until the known thing joins with the soul's reality, potency, and substance and becomes like its substance, the soul has no share

of the profit and benefit of that knowledge. Once the known thing becomes one with the soul in intense conjunction, then it will not become separate from the soul and cannot be taken back. Such knowing is called “certainty,” and before it joins with the soul it is called “surmise.”

When the soul fancies things, this is like chewing and digesting nourishment by nourishment-seeking bodies. In chewing and digesting, the suitable and unsuitable are together, and then they become separate. The suitable joins with the substance of the nourishment-seeker, and the unsuitable is held back. So also in fancy, imagination, surmise, and sense-intuition, the realities and accidents are together. Then, through the potency of reflection and discernment, the reality is separated from the accidents. The reality becomes one with the reality of the knowledge-seeking soul, and the accidents are held back for awhile in surmise and imagination. Gradually, they come not to be and turn to nothing through forgetfulness and the soul’s not paying attention to them.

The companions and brothers must give themselves a share and provision from the hidden secrets that become evident in these words—for the sake of endless subsistence, everlasting nobility, and the boundless and never-ending kingdom.

The Opening of the Fifth Door

On the Blights and Causes that Cut the Soul off and
Cleave It from Its own Perfection and Final Goal

The causes of the soul’s being veiled and concealed from its completeness and perfection are those things that are incompatible with the soul’s substance and have no similarity or correspondence with it.

It is not hidden from the intelligent that the human soul and its attributes are not like the body’s substance and the body’s states. The attribute of the soul is to be a doer, and the attribute of the body is to be a deed, and being a deed is not like being a doer. The doerness of the doer does not become nullified by the intensity and domination of the doerness, but the receiver of the doing does become nullified by the domination and intensity of the doing. This is why the animal becomes tired from potent or much movement and ceases the movement.

Again, the existence of the body is through measure, and the soul has no measure or size.

Again, two incompatibles, two contraries, and two opposites can exist together in the soul, and from the one’s existence the other’s existence is not nullified or made deficient—such as movement and rest, life and death, white and black. From the existence and knowing of movement, the existence and knowing of rest are neither nullified nor weakened and made deficient, for the soul knows both together. So also are life and death, white and black, and the other contraries. But in the body, the existence of movement nullifies the existence of rest, and so also rest movement, and both cannot be found within it together in one state.

Again, it is the existents within the body that become altered, changing in state, and weaker or more potent. But what is existent within the soul never changes, and whenever the soul looks at the things known to self, it finds them the same as it found them at first; they do not become weak or destroyed.

Since it is clear that the body is not like the soul, and it is clear that a thing becomes strong through its own like, it is also clear that a thing becomes weak and bad in state from its own incompatible. Hence, the soul becomes weak and bad in state from mixing with the body.

The soul's mixing with the body is to appoint its seeing over the body and over nurturing the body's states, to become heedless of self and to attend to the body, to seek bodily enjoyments, and to be occupied with the alien, bodily life rather than with the essential life of self. This is the blight that obstructs the human soul from arrival at perfection, for the soul is held back from collecting the soulish food—which is knowledge—for its own nourishment because of collecting bodily nourishment for the sake of the body. Then the body gains potency through the nourishment—the food and the drink—that correspond with it. The soul is held back from the spiritual nourishment, which is knowledge and which corresponds with it, and it becomes weak. The body comes to be dominant and the soul dominated over. Its knowing becomes fancy, its life and awareness death and unconsciousness. Because of so much looking upon the body, it fancies the body as self. This is the worst state of the human soul.

The birth of this defect, the body's coming to dominate over the soul, and the soul's appointing *theōria* over the body derive from the connection and joining that the soul has with the body. Among all joinings, this joining is most like the worker's joining with the tool of workerness. Because of this connection, hesitation arises such that humans fancy self as body and body as self, and they forget their own substance.

If there should be an awareness of how the self is joined with the body, then it is easy to know that the body's food and edibles make the soul thin and weak. The soul does not become well through what makes the body well. In the same way, when a carpenter's adze becomes dull, it becomes well again with a file, but when the carpenter becomes dull and weak in work, he cannot be made sharp and strong with a file.

So, obtaining the body's perfection, gathering its provision, ornament, and decoration, and putting these in order are to gather the soul's blights. From gathering blights comes the perishment of the blight-gatherer. In the same way, to gather knowledge, science, and the soul's decoration does not give rise to the body's fitness, and it may be that the body will become thinner and more wasted.

The Opening of the Sixth Door On the Marks of Perfection

To recognize the marks of the human specificity's perfection will also be the cause for recognizing the marks of deficiency and the marks of preparedness. The profit of pointing to such marks is that remembering the marks will increase the prepared seeker's yearning for arrival at them, and he will strive well in refining character traits and purging and purifying the soul.

Now we say: The mark of complete humans is that all their potencies—whether the predatory, beastly, or vegetal potency—have the level of equilibrium between intensity and weakness, and all are subjected and obedient to intelligence. Each potency's specificity has turned into the traces of another intellect and has chosen an elevated rank. The wrathful potencies dwell in equilibrium between pridefulness and abjectness, faint-heartedness and recklessness, rebellion and subjection, and

vengefulness and indifference. In the same way, the appetitive potencies are between the craving of avarice and the aversion of not-wanting, between being bound back by miserliness and being let loose by extravagance.

Free of fear and hope, [complete humans] do not hang upon hope for what has not yet come to be, nor do they flee in fear from what has already come to be. They do not give to the unneeding through extravagance, nor take back from the needy through miserliness. They do not love excessively the passing beloved things, nor do they detest extremely the not-lasting disliked things. They do not get along badly with the good because of rebellion and self-reliance, nor are they content with the bad because of following authority and becoming accustomed. Their talking is pure of applause for the unworking and vain and of curses for the harmful and worthless. Their doing is restrained by the judgments of intelligence; and their going is restricted to the avenue of rectitude and straightness. They nourish the body with indispensable food and adorn the anima with the embellishment of intelligence and knowledge. They are the intimate and breath-sharer of those yearning for the world of the meanings, the guide and confidant of the path-goers, and the companion and comrade of the arrived ones. They are patient in trial and grateful in comfort, load-carriers in body and liberal and free in anima. They show the World of Sovereignty through disposition, and they mirror the World of Holiness in substance. They demonstrate and explicate the realities in talking, and they show the law and rule of the Sunnah and the Sharia in doing. Their command is without tormenting, their prohibition without denying. They are the absent present, the far near, the evident hidden, the lamp in darkness and obscurity, the clarification in bewilderment and bafflement.

Some of the marks and markers of the perfection of the perfect meanings that become manifest over human individuals in the like of these traits, virtues, and noble qualities will become clear for any individual seer. Even as numbering the individuals is difficult for the one who numbers, enumerating the virtues of humans who have found perfection is more difficult, for every virtue's provision, every beauty's wellspring, and every good's mine is the waystation, shelter, and returning place of which they have become worthy.

This level is the final goal of the final goals, the reality of the realities, the substance of the substances, the first of the firsts, and the origin of the origins. Happy are they among the companions and wayfarers who are adorned for such a level and worthy of such a nobility! In their character traits and practices appears the like of these traces and marks, and in their acts and sayings shows itself the radiance of such noble and beautiful qualities!

The Opening of the Seventh Door On Mentioning the Path of Obtaining the Helping Causes

May the understanding, cognition, insight, and guidance of the awake and sharp-witted advance and increase! You should know that the causes that help toward perfection are of two kinds: one kind of occasion and cause is preparedness and aptitude for perception and knowledge, and the other kind of occasion and cause is perception and knowledge.

The path to obtaining the causes of the preparedness for knowledge is to prohibit self from *theōria* toward and striving in acquiring and obtaining bodily and sensory perfections, embellishments, and adornments and the beastly and predatory enjoyments; to refine the soul and make the insight limpid from those states and traits that we mentioned among the levels of the unadmirable deficient ones; and to collect the noble qualities and virtues that we enumerated in the other Opening on the mention of the marks of human perfection, such that these dispositions become the soul's nature through habit and turn into the habitude of essence. The soul should reach a point in limpidness such that the forms of the known things can be seen within it naked and pure of accidents. Through such practices and endeavors one can become prepared for knowledge.

After the preparedness and aptitude for knowledge comes the path of acquiring and obtaining the causes of knowledge. This is to keep thought occupied with the primary known things and the practices of certainty, and with how these primary things and certainties are connected to what is not primary, such as intellective judgments born from the primary things, in whose truthfulness and truth no doubt occurs; and to seek out concerning every judgment that it considers truthful in thought why it is truthful, for whatever is not sought will not be found.

[The seekers] must keep far from every judgment concerning whose truthfulness and truth certainty cannot be reached through thought. They must avoid listening to those talks and recountings in which there is the possibility of lie, as well as mixing with the folk of poetry and those who seek speech's outward embellishment without watching over the meanings. They must not speak with the folk of dialectic, whose purpose is to defeat the opponent through talk, even if the talk is far from truthfulness.

They should also meditate upon the states of those things that they have witnessed from the beginning of their configuration and growing until the measure of lifespan that they have reached. They should shun meditating upon their howness and whyiness in the habitual way, without searching for their causes, such that the seen and the not-seen become one through not knowing them and their causes. For example, they should seek why, when there is a wall between the looker and what he wants to look at, he cannot see it, but when air is in the midst, he may see it. Then it may be that they will become aware of the reality of color and its specificity. For color is a state in the body such that, when the gaze reaches it, it cannot pass beyond it to see another. But since air does not have color, the potency of the gaze passes beyond it until it reaches the thing that has color.

In the same way, they should think upon why the seer sees with the eye something near to him in the magnitude that it has, but when that same thing is far from the seer, he sees it smaller, even though he has no doubt that the thing in the state of farness is just as it is in the state of nearness, while the eye is established in the same potency of seeing in both states.

In the same way, they should think upon and investigate why the movement of the heavy bodies that move upward becomes weaker as much as it increases, and why it becomes more potent little by little when it moves downwards.

In the same way, they should look and meditate upon the cause for each elemental body to have one sort of movement, either toward the center of the cosmos or

toward the circumference. Thus water and earth incline toward the center, and fire and air have an inclination toward the circumference, and each of these natural things sometimes moves upwards and sometimes downwards, sometimes toward the right and sometimes toward the left. Birds sometimes fly up and sometimes come down, sometimes go right and sometimes left. Thus they may become aware of the specificity of the natural potency and the soulish potency.

Keeping track of such things through thought is to collect the causes of knowledge.

Now that complete indication has been made of the soul's reality, the levels of the human soul's specificity between perfection and deficiency, the marks of perfection, the helping causes, the veiling blights, and the way of obtaining the helping causes, we will attend to the explication of the profit of science and the benefit of awareness and knowledge, so that the suffering of anticipation for the anticipators may thereby come to an end, God willing.

The Opening of the Eighth Door
 On Making Apparent the Profit and Benefit
 of Knowledge and that Thing the Comfort of Arrival
 at which Prevails over the Suffering of the Search and
 the Hardship of the Struggle

You have come to know, chosen companions and admirable brothers, that the specificity of humans is knowledge and recognition. Through this, they came to be distinct and apparent from the other animals. This specificity is either potential, as in the vast majority of human individuals, or actual, as in a small number of the folk of knowledge. The lowest level of this specificity is the level of its being potential, and the most raised-up station is being actual. An example of the level of potency is a suckling infant's being a scribe, and an example of the level of being actual is the writing person's being a scribe in the state of writing. Both potency and act have levels, since within potency are nearness to and farness from act.

The levels in which the human specificity is actual are several, and we have called these the "rungs of perfection." We titled this book *The Rungs of Perfection* because these levels and degrees have become apparent within it.

The lowest rank in actual knowledge is that someone is aware, in truthfulness and correctness, of the cosmos, the parts of the cosmos, its states, its potencies, and the progeny within it just as they are and according to what they are.

The second rank is that they know these things and are aware of their reality and that they also know and are aware of that thing through which one can be aware of these things.

The third rank is that outside the knowing and awareness of these two ranks, they also know what awareness and knowing are. It is to find the thing in self and to reach the things of self through self.

The fourth rank is that they have the third rank and are aware that knowledge is to find the thing through self as belonging to self. Along with this knowledge, they also know that the found in self is not a trace of anything save self. For example, what is found through the sense of eyesight, which is the color and guise of the thing, is not

the thing's reality. They should not suppose that what is found through self is of the same sort—that it is the trace, the guise, and the mark of the thing, but not the thing. Rather, they should know that what is found and known is the reality of the thing in the self, for, were the thing not found first, and then its trace, they could not have known that the trace is the trace of the thing, since they had not found the thing.

The fifth rank is that along with this knowledge and awareness, the awareness of the relation of universal awareness to particular awareness also yields awareness of what this relation is. They know that awareness is universal and general over all the sorts of awareness—sense-perception, imagining, and sense-intuiting. Sense-perception is sense-perception through awareness, but awareness that is not sense-perception is awareness. Awareness is indispensable in sense-perception and imagination, and sense-perception and imagination are possible for awareness. Hence, the relation of the universal to the particular is the relation of the root to its branch, for the particular is the bough and branch of the universal.

The sixth rank is that, along with such a rank in knowledge and awareness, they also know that the number of the universals is not infinite. Rather, the universals are ordered, one under the compass and generality of another, until they reach the utmost end through the universal of the universals, more general than which is no universal. The universal of the universals is the origin of all the other universals, the first of the known things, and the utmost end of all. Through being aware of it one can be aware of what is below it, and with it the levels of existence come to an end.

The seventh rank in knowledge, recognition, and awareness is awareness that the one aware of and knowing the universal of the universals is not a universal below it and less than it in generality and compass, nor is he one of the divisions, ramifications, and branches of the universal of universals, for the division and branch of something does not become general over and encompass that which encompasses it; in the same way, the reality of the human species does not belong totally to an individual or class of humans, for if humanness belonged to one specific class, no other class would be human. Rather, the knower of the universal of universals is nothing other than the universal of universals. He who is aware of it is not aware of something belonging to self, but rather, he is aware of self. Those aware of anything below the universal of universals are aware of something belonging to self and depicted within it, but the universal of universals is finder and found of self.

This is the perfection of all perfections and the final goal of all final goals. The perfection of the cosmos is through progeneration and branching, the perfection of the potency of progeneration and branching is in compounding the simples, the perfection of compounding and bringing together the simples is in transformation and alteration, the perfection of transformation and alteration is in the movement of increase, the perfection of the movement of increase is in life and sensation,⁵⁶ the perfection of life and sensation is in the potency for perception and intellection, the perfection of the potency for perception and intellection is in the act of perception and intellection, and the perfection of the act of perception and intellection is in the unification of the intellecter, the intellect, and the intellected. It is this that is complete being, perpetual joy, and subsistent enjoyment, for enjoyment is nothing but awareness of arrival at the compatible, and nothing is more compatible than com-

plete being, no completeness greater than encompassing all beings, and no enjoyment more lasting than awareness of the essence of complete being from self, for this is the fountain of everlasting subsistence and permanence.

So, O companions, brothers, and wakeful ones who have tightened your belt and stood ready for this work, turn the face of intention toward praise and thanksgiving for the caress of such a gift and for patience in the test of tribulation. *A good Protector, a good Helper!* [8:40], *There is no god but He* [2:163], *And to Him is the homecoming* [5:18], *And praise belongs to God, Lord of the worlds* [37:182]

The Rungs of Perfection is now complete, with auspicious state and favorable omen. The discussions of this book were first organized in the Arabic language. Among the companions, Muḥammad Dizwākūsh's love for the customs of the wayfarers requested it, and his desire was fulfilled, and through it his soul found rest and contentment. After that, among the going brothers and striving companions, As'ad Nasā'ī—who had a firm footing and a truthful resolve in traveling along with us, being compatible with us, and assisting us—made this Arabic book the intimate friend and boon companion of his anima. From inside him a message arrived at imagination's entreaty—"If you were to translate this Arabic book into Persian, the profit of the shine of its radiance would be increased for the potency of *theōria*." I saw that compliance to this request was incumbent, so I transferred it from the Arabic language into Persian words. As each Opening was completed, its meanings became more apparent and more unambiguous in the raiment of Persian speech. I recognized that this disparity in the level of explication, the unambiguousness of the state, and the waystation of these two was because of the requesting companions. The first to request was Muḥammad Dizwākūsh, who was wishing and asking for wayfaring, and the second was As'ad Nasā'ī, a serious wayfarer who was aiming for arrival. Even so, both books are lamps in the darkneses and polishers of obscurities. The Arabic book is the provision and springhead of praiseworthy qualities and virtues, the Persian compilation the meeting-place of felicities and good. Since the help of the divine bounty and success-giving arrives without cease, may Muḥammad be the comrade of the praiseworthy qualities [*maḥāmid*] of the former, and may As'ad be the sitting companion of the felicities [*sa'ādāt*] of the latter! *Surely God is . . . Clement, Compassionate* [57:9].

And to God belongs praise for that to which He has guided us. Surely He is our friend and our patron. This is completed, through God's help and His beautiful giving of success. And God's blessings be upon Muḥammad and his household, the good, the pure. Surely He is the patron who responds, *and surely He is powerful over everything* [22:6].⁵⁷

Essay: Words Giving Help to the Seeing of the Obtainers

The knower and aware of the world as it is—its moving and still, its motion-receiving and motion-inducing, its root and branch—can be aware of no third being outside the being of the world and the being of the self that is aware of it.

Every known is the effect of the knower, and every knower is the cause of the known. The existence of the cause comes before the existence of the effect.

The world's knownness is the existence of the effect for the world, and the knower's knowing is the existence of the cause for the knower. The existence of the knower comes before the existence of the known.

The world is one of the individual and particular existents, and the particular is the branch of the universal. The branch stands through the root. Hence the particular world stands through the universal world.

The particular known is potentially intelligible, and the potentially intelligible stands through the actually intelligible. Although the knower of the particular world is potentially an intellecter, he is actually an intelligible, and the world stands through him.

The potentially intelligible is particular, and the actually intelligible is universal. That which is aware of the particular is potentially intellecter and actually intelligible. That which is aware of the universal is actually intellect and intellecter.

The actually intelligible is the completing cause of the potentially intelligible. The actually intellecter is the completing cause of the potentially intellect.

Bodies are actually natural and potentially intelligible. Soul is actually intelligible and potentially intellecter. Intellect is actually intellecter and intelligible.

Bodies stand through nature, nature subsists through soul, soul is complete and aware through intellect, and intellect is complete and aware through the Owner and Holder of intellect.

The trace of intellect's Holder and Owner is intellect's completeness, the trace of intellect is the soul's yearning and wanting, the trace of soul is nature's livingness, and the trace of living nature is the body's motion.

And God knows better the right, and to Him is the return and the homecoming. (*Muṣannafāt* 640–41)

The Book of the Road's End

To God belongs praise—He who is worthy of praise, its patron, its utmost end, and its beginning—a praise that parallels His blessings and beneficence and makes manifest His generous giving and favor. And upon His prophet Muḥammad be prayers and peace, and upon his household and his noble companions.

Thus says the author of these words and the clarifier and stipulator of these meanings of the sciences:

A group of true companions and religious brothers requested that I write a book, the reading and the understanding of the meanings of which would allow them to become aware of three things: [1] the existence of self and the attributes of the existence of self. [2] They would become aware of what is the reality of awareness and knowledge. [3] They would become aware of the profit and benefit of awareness and knowledge.

I did not see myself without a share of the answers to these three questions, so I recognized that it was obligatory to render gratitude for this blessing. I saw that the best gratitude would be to give a share of this virtue to worthy wanters and suitable seekers. I made a covenant with myself that I would clarify these three chapters for the seekers through an explication that is proper for my own seeing and

knowledge and that fits within my potency and ability. For, the person most worthy for this knowledge is he who knows to ask of it. This is because this knowledge is the final goal of all knowledges and the quintessence of the animas that have found perfection. It is the sought and the objective of the saints and the provision of the nobility of the prophets.

Since this request was made in three levels—one lower, one higher, and one still higher than the two—I have divided this book into three talks:

The first talk: On giving awareness of the existence of the self and the attributes of the self's existence.

The second talk: On giving awareness of what knowledge and awareness are.

The third talk: On giving awareness of the profit and benefit of awareness and knowledge.

The First Talk

On Giving Awareness of Self, the Existence of Self, and the Attributes of the Self's Existence

It is ten doors of speech:

The first door: On how to give awareness of the existence of self

The second door: On how many divisions existence has

The third door: On dividing existence in another way

The fourth door: On the divisions of the particular existents

The fifth door: On the divisions of the universal existents

The sixth door: On the causes of the particular existents

The seventh door: On the occasions and causes of the universal existents

The eighth door: On the meaning of self and soul

The ninth door: On the being of the soul

The tenth door: On the attributes of the existence of self

The First Door. On How One Can Give Awareness of the Existence of Self

Making something clear is of two sorts. One sort is such that awareness is given of its reality through detailing its attributes. Thus, awareness of the reality of the animal is given by detailing its attributes, such as, a body with lifebreath, finding with sensation, and moving through want.

The other sort is that the thing should have divisions, and you enumerate the divisions so that the questioner will grasp the reality through the mention of the divisions, since it is the same in all the divisions. Thus, the divisions of animal are numbered—flyers, crawlers, and goers—so that the questioner becomes aware of the thing that is one in all three divisions, such as sensation and motion through desire.

However, giving awareness of "existence" cannot be through mentioning the detailed attributes of existence, because the meaning of the word *existence* is not compounded of many meanings—such as the meaning of "animal," which is compounded of the meaning of body, the meaning of anima, the meaning of finding with sensation, and the meaning of moving through want. Each of these meanings is one

of the attributes of the animal. Rather, existence has no parts from which it comes together, since the parts of the compound thing are before the compound thing, but there is nothing whose existence was before existence. Moreover, the parts of a thing are other than the thing, but there is nothing other than existence except nonexistence, and existence is not compounded of nonexistence. Therefore, one cannot give awareness of existence through detailing its attributes, but rather, through mentioning its divisions.

The difference between “attributes” and “divisions” is that the attribute of a thing may be more general than the thing, like measure, which is the attribute of weight. Every weight has measure, but not every measure is weight. The attribute may also be equal to the thing in generality, and it may be more specific. The equal is like “moving through desire,” since every animal moves through want, and everything that moves through want is an animal. The more specific is like “scribe,” which is more specific than animal. Every scribe is an animal, but not every animal is a scribe.

As for the divisions of the thing, they are not equal with the thing in generality, nor greater in generality. Rather, they are more specific than it. Thus the divisions of body are “animal” and “inanimate,” and both are more specific than body.

The Second Door of this Talk. On How Many are the Divisions of Existence

Existence has two divisions—one division is “being,” the other “finding.” The difference between being and finding is that there may be being without finding, like the being of the elemental and mineral bodies, which are without finding. But there is no finding without being.

Each of these two divisions is again divided into two—one potential being, the other actual being, then potential finding and actual finding.

Potential being is the lowest level in being. It is the existence of material things in the matter, such as the existence of the tree in the seed and the existence of the animal in the sperm-drop. Actual being without finding is like the existence of elemental bodies and others.

As for potential finding, it belongs to the soul. The meaning of the word *soul* and the meaning of *self* is one.

Actual finding belongs to the intellect. What is potential in the soul becomes actual through the intellect.

The matter of a body that is a potential body reaches act through bodily nature, like the animal’s sperm-drop that is potentially alive; if it comes to life actually, it becomes actual through the anima. For the body, nature is like the anima for the animal, and through it the body is a locus and receptacle for measure.

As for the potential finding that belongs to the soul, when it becomes actual, it becomes actual through intellect. The soul is a finder with intellect. Just as potential being is the meanest level in existence, so actual finding is the highest level of existence, because being is correct through finding. Whenever the being of any existent has no finding, its being and nonbeing are equal in relation to itself, even though, in relation to its finder, they are disparate.

The Third Door. On Dividing Existence in Another Way

Existence is divided in another way, though there is no great disagreement in meaning between this division and the former division. However, we will mention these words also so that this may be a cause of an increase in explication.

We say: Existence is divided into two—soulish and nonsoulish. “Soulish” is said in the case of knowing; the known thing is the soulish existent. The existent is either the “come-to-be” [*būda*], which was mentioned; or it is the “found” [*yāfta*], which is the soulish.

In another respect, the existent is either universal or particular. The existent in the meaning of come-to-be is only particular. The existent in the meaning of “found” is divided into two—the found with sensation and imagination, which is particular, and the found with the intellect, which is universal.

The universal can be both the attribute of the universal and the object described by the universal. The particular cannot be the attribute, or else it will not be the described object. The universal is the root of the particular, while the particular is among the divisions of the universal.

An example of the universal is the meaning “human,” and of the particular the individual humans, such as Zayd, Bakr, ‘Amr, and so on, for the root of Zayd and ‘Amr is the human. Humanness belongs to each of them equally; it is not more in one and less in another. One is not more human and another weaker in humanness.

The universal cannot be found with that with which the particular [is found]. The finder grasps the particulars with the potency of sensation and the potency of imagination, such as this human and that human, this color and that color, this flavor and that flavor. Then, through a light that is the radiance of the Universal Intelligence, he finds in self that a thing which is the attribute of many particulars is equal for all, such as the meaning of color. When the knower sees this color as white, that color as black, and the other color as green, then he knows and finds that, although the many colors are different from each other in some particular states, they are one in the meaning of color, which is universal and is the attribute of all colors.

The particular can be found with the particular tool, and the universal with the universal potency. The existence of the particular can be diverse and undergoing alteration, but the universal is far from alteration and corruption.

Let us now enumerate the divisions of the particular existents, and then we will mention the universal existents, for we have taken the two as the divisions of the existent. After that, we will also mention the occasion and cause of both existents, through the success-giving and guidance of the Success-giver and Road-shower—high indeed is His loftiness and holy are His names!

The Fourth Door of this Talk. On the Divisions of the Particular Existents

The particular existents are of two sorts—root and branch. The root is the cosmos, and the branch is its progeny. By the word *cosmos*, we mean those existents whose beginning is the remotest sphere and whose end is the orb of the earth, along with

all the states and potencies of this totality, including the spheres and stars and their mover, and the four elements and their natures.

As for the branch, it is the progeny of the cosmos, like the kinds and classes of minerals, the varieties of growing things including plants and trees, and the various sorts of animals, all of which can be found with sensation or imagination.

The difference between perception by the senses and perception by imagination—though the perceptibles of both are particular—is that with sensation, one can find a thing that is present, and its form is imprinted in sensation's tool. In other words, the form of the sensible is depicted in the substance of sensation's tool so that the possessor of the senses may become aware of its being depicted. Imagination perceives everything that is depicted in the senses when the sensible is present, but, when the thing becomes absent, imagination can be aware of it in its absence just as it was aware of it in its presence. The perception of imagination is "fancy" [*pindār*].

The specificity of the "individual" existent is that it has no multiplicity, whether in imagination⁵⁸ or in outside existence. Thus the individual *Zayd* cannot be many things. One cannot bring many things into the imagination, all of which will be the indicated *Zayd*.

Although the universal is one meaning and one reality in itself, outside of itself it may be many, all equal in that reality. Even if it is not many in outside existence, a multiplicity described by the one meaning can be brought into imagination. For example, by "sun" is not meant this sun that is a particular. Although it is one in individual existence, many suns all sharing the meaning of sun can be brought into imagination.

Now, this cosmos and every root and branch within it are all particular in existence, for one cannot bring into imagination many cosmoses nor are there in existence many cosmoses that are all *this* cosmos.

Every particular has existence through a universal, through which it comes to stand. Thus, every particular human and every particular animal that can be indicated is *that* human and *that* animal through the universal human and the universal animal in which all share. But the universal human is not human through the particular human, for if the particular individual should be nullified, the universal will not be nullified. In the same way, if the branches and progeny of the cosmos should be nullified, the cosmos, which is the root, will not be nullified. The relation of universal existents to particular existents is the same as the relation of roots to branches, for the existence of the branch is from the root.

The Fifth Door of this Talk. On the Divisions of the Universal Existents

The universal existents are not outside of two divisions: Either they are the supreme level, which does not belong to any universal's division, while all the universals are among its divisions; or they are not the level of the supreme side, though these also have divisions and branches.

The first division of universal that we mentioned is the meaning of *thing* and *existent*, for the meaning of thing and existent is not the branch and division of any other universal that is more general than thing and existent. Among the branches

and divisions of thing and existent are “substance” and “accident,” and we have mentioned the divisions of accidents and substances in the book *The Clarifying Method*. But the purpose of this book and this talk is that awareness be given of the existence of the self and the attributes of the self's existence. The divisions of the universal were mentioned because the perception of universal meanings is an attribute of the self's existence, and everything that is more universal and more general is closer to the self and brighter in perception.

The universal existents belong to the division of existence in the meaning of finding, not in the meaning of being without finding. Hence being without finding is particular and is found with sensation and imagination. Everything more universal is more found.

The divisions and branches of the universal come to an end with the particular, for an individual and a part does not accept dividing, neither in the form of sensory existence, nor in the imagining potency. By these words we do not mean that the individual existent that can be indicated does not have parts. Rather, we mean that it cannot be divided such that every division should be it—like “animal,” which is divided into human, beast, flyer, and crawler, and each division is animal. So also is “human,” which is divided into Zayd, ‘Amr, and Bakr, and each of these three is human; “color,” which is divided into black, white, red, and green, and each of these divisions is color. This is not like the sensory Zayd who has parts, like hand, foot, and head. Zayd's hand is not Zayd, nor is his head, nor his foot.

The beginning of the soulish existents, which are the perceptibles and knowns, is the meaning of “thing” and “existent.” The end of the perceptibles is the meaning of the sensible individual, and [the end of] the universals is either “genera,” “species,” “differentiae,” “specificities,” or “general accidents.” We have spoken of the meanings of these names in *The Clarifying Method*.

The Sixth Door of this Talk. On the Causes of the Particular Existents

Awareness was given before that the particular existents are divided into two—root and branch. The existence of the branch comes from the root, and the root in the particular existents is the celestial sphere and the elemental bodies. The branch of this root is the mineral, vegetal, and animal bodies.

Hence, the cosmos, which is the root, is one of the causes of the progeny, which are the branch. The cosmos and its progeny are compound, and everything compound must have several causes in existence according to its compoundedness.

Particular existents must have four causes in existence. One is matter, from which things can be compounded. One is form, through which they can come to be compounded. One is the actor, which does the compounding. And one is the final goal and the completeness, since the actor compounds for the sake of the final goal.

Since the cosmos and the existent things are compound, they must have matter, form, actor, and final goal. The existence of all four causes is clear. The lowest of the causes and occasions is the thing's matter. Higher than it is form, for the existence of matter reaches act through form. Higher than both is actor. And more emi-

ment by essence than all three is completeness and final goal, since the final goal makes the actor into an actor so that it may depict the form in the matter.

In the progeny, these causes are compound, because the branches have more parts of compoundedness than the roots. For example, the form of humans is compounded from the form of animals and plants and from bodily form. Their matter is also compounded from the matter of animals, plants, and bodies. The matter of the progeny's bodies is from the elemental bodies, and the matter of the elemental bodies is unconditioned body. The matter of [unconditioned] body is substance. Hence the matter of the cosmos is simple. And since the parts of its compoundedness have become fewer, a cause has also been subtracted. This is the material cause, for the first matter has no matter. So also, the first actor has no active cause, and the final goal and completeness has no final goal and completeness.

We indicated what the final goal of existence is before, when we mentioned the divisions of existence, which are being and finding. Being is either potential or actual, and so also, finding is either potential or actual. Just as potential being is the lowest level in existence, actual finding is the most eminent level in existence, for being becomes correct through finding. Hence, the final goal and completeness of existence is actual finding. Afterwards, this will become clearer.

The Seventh Door of this Talk. On the Occasions and Causes of Soulsh Existence, Which We Have Called "Finding"

It has come to be known that the known things and the perceptibles are of two sorts—universal and particular. The particular is that which is perceived with the potency of sensation and imagination. The universal is that which is perceived with intellect and essence.

Now we say: Perceptibles are of two sorts—either compound or simple. The particular perceptibles are compound only. Different things can be perceived with different means of perception. Thus colors and shapes are perceived with the sense of eyesight, sounds and letters are perceived with hearing, flavor is perceived with the sense of taste, aroma is perceived with smell, and other qualities—such as heat and cold, wetness and dryness, roughness and smoothness, softness and hardness—are perceived with the sense of touch.

The material cause of sensory perception is the tools of sensation. The formal cause is the sensory form, by which the tool of sensation becomes impressed and formed. The active cause is the sensory and animal soul. The completing and final cause is for the particular existent to become bright and correct. In other words, the "come-to-be" turns into the "found," and its bodily existence becomes soulsh.

As for the universal perceptibles, which we called "known things" and "intelligibles," they are of two sorts—simple and compound. The compound knowns have, in reality, no material cause, but rather something like a material cause. Inasmuch as the knowns are acquired from the sensibles, they are sensibles and imaginables. The active cause is the reflecting soul. The completing and final cause is for potential finding to become actual.

These knowns have no formal cause, because they themselves are forms belonging to the soul. That which is like the formal cause is their permanence and fixity.

The causes of the simple knowns are two—the active cause, which is the intellect that makes actual, and the completing cause, which is the conjunction of the known things with the knower. There is neither material nor formal cause, since the simple has neither matter nor form. This is because matter belongs to the compound things, not to the simple things, and also the utmost end of the simple forms is in the knower. When he knows his essence, all the causes become one. The actor, form, and matter of the known turn into the final goal.

The Eighth Door of this Talk. On the Meaning of Self

We use the word *soul* and the word *self* in one meaning. When we say that any of the existent things without perception—whether potentially or actually—is not among the possessors of soul, we mean that it has no self. When it is said about an ill person who swoons or becomes unconscious, “He went from himself,” or “He became without self,” this is said because he fails to perceive and have awareness.

The vegetal substance is called a “possessor of soul” because it has found the first level of life, which is the movement of configuration and growth. The movement of configuration and growth is life’s first level, and sensation and desire are the second level. Whatever has neither the life of movement nor the life of sensation is not called “possessor of soul,” because the soul’s first trace in the body is movement. If no trace appears, one cannot affirm that which leaves traces.

The “soul” of each thing is its root and reality, through which the thing is the thing. The growing soul is the root and reality of the vegetal substance, and through it the growing thing grows. The animal soul is the root and reality of the animal, and through it the animal is an animal, not through the bodily frame. The human is human through the human soul, not through the bodily form. When the traces of the soul become nonapparent and nullified in these bodies, the animality of the animal and the humanness of the human come not to be, even though the body keeps its own guise and shape. Thus, one cannot judge that the dead bodies of animals and humans have humanness or animality. So also is the vegetal body that has been cut off from the vegetal soul.

The Ninth Door of this Talk. On the Existence of the Soul

At the first stage of the work and the beginning of the search for knowledge, the human comes to know and find everything that cannot be found with the senses by way of inference from the sensible. In other words, he uses what he has found with the senses as an intermediary and he makes it show the road to the nonsensible. Thus, from finding motion with the senses, he finds the motion-inducer. From the sensible casket he knows the carpenter.

When he becomes more complete and nears the utmost end and perfection, he reaches the effect from the cause and the occasioned from the occasioner. From knowing the root, he grasps the branch. As long as he can recognize the root only by recognizing the branch, he is still a pupil and has the level of learning. When he knows the effects from the knowledge of the causes, he is the knower, not the pupil.

Now, knowing self, which is the soul, is in this respect. When he is heedless of self and finds other than self, he is a pupil and a searcher. Knowing the traces of self in a sensible individual shows him the road to knowledge of the soul's existence, by the path of which we are talking. When we want to affirm the existence of the growing soul from its traces that we find in trees and plants—like increase, leaves, blossoms, bearing produce, and arriving at seeds and fruit—we seek out with *theōria* whether this state that we have seen from them, which is the increase of the growing body, has risen up from the body inasmuch as it is the body, or from something other than the body. If the first sort—that it has risen up from its bodiment—is null and false, then the second sort is true and truthful—that it comes from something other than its bodiment. There is no other sort than these two—that motion is from it or from other than it.

The nullification of the first sort can be by this path: We think over the fact that if the motion, the increase, and the bringing forth of seeds and fruit were from the body of the tree and the plant, then, as long as that tree is a body, this state would be with it. But there is no doubt that this body will remain in its bodiment while this state will become separate from it. Thus we know that the motion and increase rise up from something other than the tree's body, and this growing body comes to grow through that thing. So, this is the root that incites its growth, for the existence of the growing thing is through the growth-inciter.

This path, which is to know the trace and, from knowing the trace, to know the trace-inducer, is called "inference" [*istidlāl*], that is, searching out the road-shower to and "evidence" [*dalīl*] for something.

By the same path by which we became aware of the existence of the growth-inciting soul, we can also become aware of the animal soul. The life that is sensation and movement through desire and that becomes manifest in the body of the animal is either a state essential to the body, or a trace of something that is other than the animal's body. If it were the state of the body, so long as its body had its own bodiment, the animal would be alive. But there is no doubt that the body is sometimes alive and sometimes dead, and the body has its own bodiment in both states. Hence, the life of the living body is from something other than its body, through which the animal is alive. So, it is this thing that is the root of the living thing, not the body.

By this same path, one can find awareness of the human soul by knowing the traces of the human soul. However, there is a difference between inferring the trace-inducer from the traces of the human soul and inferring the trace-inducer from the traces of the growing soul and the animal soul. This is because the traces of the growth-inciting soul and the animal soul become manifest only in bodies, but the traces of the human soul are in the animal soul, and they reach the body from the animal soul. Also, the seeker and pursuer of the animal soul and the growing soul is not the animal soul and the growing soul, but rather, the human soul, while the seeker and pursuer of the human soul is also the human soul. By knowing them through self's essence, he knows self's essence, so this appears more surprising. After all, when searching for other than self shows the road to self, this is truly a marvelous work. Its explanation will come in the Tenth Door, God willing—high indeed is He!

The Tenth Door of this Talk. On Giving Awareness of the Attribute of the Self's Existence

When many existents are made known, each comes with a specific name. The difference in names is because of the difference of specificities. The specificity of each thing is its reality. The meaning of "reality" is to be fit for being. For example, if a body is long, and it is known that the "long" is something with length, then the thing is self, but the length is not self. This is because first there must be the thing, which is the locus of length, so that length can be. Thus the thing is fit for being, not its length, and the length has being through the thing's being.

In the same way, the name *human* is given to humans because of the human specificity, and the human specificity is the human reality. So, what is "suitable for being" is the human soul. It is clear that humans are not human through the body, since the inanimate body can be established through shape, guise, and the conjunction of the parts and not be a human—just as we said about animals and growing things. Moreover, they are not human through the specificity of the growing soul or the animal soul. Otherwise, all animals would be human, for all animals have that specificity.

Hence, the reality and selfhood of the human through which the human is human is not the reality and selfhood of the plant and the animal. The springhead of knowing that reality is searching, and the springhead of searching to find that reality is the human soul. Hence the searcher is self, and the object of search is also self. To search for self is to go back to self, and to know self is to reach self.

There will be searching and asking when someone's existence is potential finding, for in one respect the object of search is, and in another respect it is not. One cannot search for that which is in every respect, nor can one search for that which is *not* in every respect.

Potential finding is called "desire," that is, one has found and one does not know that one has found. Actual finding is called "knowing," that is, one has found and one knows that one has found.

When the soul seeks self, it is potentially found and finder. When it finds self, it is actually finder and found. As long as it is knower of self potentially, it is the soul. But when it is knower and finder of self actually, it is not the soul. Rather, it is the "intellect," for, when the specificity turns into something else, the name also turns into something else.

The Second Talk. On Giving Awareness of what Awareness and Knowledge Are

This is one chapter.

Awareness and knowledge are finding things in self. Whatever is not cannot be found. It is possible for humans to know all things. Hence, if a human finds all things in self, and if what is not cannot be found, then all things are in self. Hence the human soul is general and encompasses all things, for they are within it.

Let us now recount how all things are in the human.

Know that we said before that the existents are either universal or particular. The universal is the root and reality of the particular, since the particular is among

the divisions, limbs, and branches of the universal. The branch and shoot endure by the root.

The universal is intelligible, and the particular is sensible or imaginable. This cosmos—of which one extremity is the remotest sphere and one extremity the center of the earth—and everything that belongs to it are particular.

The universal and particular share in reality, thingness, and existence, but the two are incompatible in universality and particularity. Take, for example, the human species and the human individual. In humanness, there is no difference and no twoness between them. But inasmuch as one of them is the species that is universal, intelligible, and the root, while the other is the individual that is sensible, particular, and the branch, they become two.

The cosmos, which belongs to the division of particular existents, is the celestial-sphere with all its layers and the elemental bodies and their progeny, which are the bodies compounded of the elements. Some of the things compounded of the elements are inanimate and some animate. Of those that have anima, some are sensate and some without the senses. Of those that are sensate, some are intelligent and some without intelligence.

When the human perceives the body of the cosmos, that is, the spheres and the solitary elements, while his body is one with the body of the cosmos in the reality of bodiment, then the bodiment that he has found is the come-to-be for him. When he knows the compound bodies, while his body is one with the compound bodies in combination and compoundedness, then the compound body that he has found is the come-to-be for him. When he finds the vegetal body in self, while, in respect of nourishment, growth, and progeneration, humans are one with all vegetal bodies, then what he has found is the come-to-be for him. When he knows the animals, while humans in respect of sensation and movement are animals, then what he has found is the come-to-be for him. And when the human knows the whole human species, while the finder is also the human, then he has found self, and the self that he has found is the come-to-be.

We said before that the come-to-be without finding has two levels. One is the potentially come-to-be, which is the existence of the body's matter. When it reaches act from the level of potency, it has an occasion and a cause that has made its potency reach act, and this is the higher level.

The body's matter, which is potential body, is actual body through nature. Nature is the lowest branch and shoot of the soulish branches and shoots. Since body's nature is one sort, all bodies are one in the meaning of bodiment and in receiving measure and dimensions. Since the form of the bodily in all bodies is one, and this one has no diversity of parts and is simple, the shape and guise of this simple body is a simple shape and guise, in which there is no diversity of surfaces and sides. This is the spherical shape, the measure of whose thickness, length, and breadth is equal in every direction. So, the first body takes the spherical guise and form, and it is the body of the cosmos. Hence, the body of the cosmos can have come to rest in this shape through the bodily nature.

Once the come-to-be is found, it is more complete. Through the nature of bodiment the body cannot reach the act of completeness, which is finding, from the

potency of receiving completeness, because perfection cannot be reached from deficiency unless through movement from potency to act, and the body's nature cannot be the cause of the body's movement. Hence the body moves through a motion-inducing potency, and the motion-inducing potency is another branch and shoot of the soul, more eminent than nature.

The first movement in the first body was a revolving movement, for a circular body can only move in a circle. This is called "turning." From the turning of the spherical body, which is the body of the cosmos, the center and circumference of the cosmos appear. The springhead of opposition in the cosmos's body is this movement, for when the circular body turns, a center is designated around which it turns. The center does not turn, but is still. Heat arises from movement, and cold from rest. Hence, the part that is nearer to the moving is warm, and that which is nearer to the still is cold. From heat lightness arises, and from cold heaviness. The heat of the cosmos is fire, and its cold earth. The part that is nearer to the earth is cold and heavy like the earth, but not to that limit; it is water. What is nearer to fire is warm and light like fire, but not like fire, and this is air. Water and air are between fire and earth.

Although these elements all agree in the bodily form, which is the reception of measures, each has another form outside the bodily form, and that form demands another nature. The plurality of the natures of these bodies is born from the celestial-sphere, for it is the trace of something else that is not bodily. The utmost end of the magnitude and measure of each element is at another element. What is between any two elements is not apart or empty, as between water and air, for the utmost end of one is joined with the beginning of the other.

By means of the revolving movement, the mover of the celestial orbs makes its trace reach the elemental bodies all the way to the center of the earth. That trace is the mixing together of their natures' forms so that the compound body comes into existence. Through compoundedness, the potency of the mutual opposition is broken. The first compoundedness is the existence of the minerals, which is the body's first level and waystation [in moving] from the existent in the sense of the "come-to-be" to the existent that is "found."

From there the body sets out until it reaches the level of vegetal compoundedness, in which the potency of seeking and movement appears from the self. For the body of the plant pulls other bodies toward its own body through attraction so that they may be like it and it may increase. It must always have those other bodies. This potency of attraction and seeking is another of the shoots, branches, and traces of the tree of the soul, in a level higher than the nature of the compoundedness and intermixing of the elements.

Another level of existence in the sense of "finding" is sensory finding, which belongs to the animal along with the potency of vegetal seeking. The tools of sensation are many, because the states of elemental bodies increase through compoundedness, and qualities become plentiful—such as colors, flavors, scents, guises, and shapes. Each of them has finding with a specific tool. Thus, the finding animal finds out each state and quality with a tool. It finds out colors with the tool of eyesight; it finds out sounds, guises, and letters with hearing, aromas with the sense of smell,

flavor with the sense of taste, and the other qualities with the sense of touch, so that all the states of the bodies may be found.

Once compoundedness in the compositional virtues and in the mixing and balance of the opposites increases, sensory finding turns intellectual, the sensible becomes the known, the plural existents come to be unified, and the altering, bodily existence and generation become the fixed, spiritual thing that is known.

The divisions of existence are bodies and spirits; and the divisions of the spirits are nature, the growing soul, the animal soul, and the human soul. Once the states, guises, and qualities of these substances are all found, the human soul, in finding whatever it finds of these existents, also finds self. This is such that—as we mentioned before—humans share in the reality of whatever of this found thing they find. Hence, when they find it, they also find self. When they grasp the come-to-be, the found, and the finder, and when the self is also the come-to-be, the found, and the finder, then they have found self. The profit of being aware of and knowing this is existence. In the next talk, this will be explained further, God willing—high indeed is He!

The Third Talk

On Giving Awareness of the Profit and Benefit of Awareness and Knowledge

It is three doors of speech.

The First Door. On What Profit Is

“Profit” is one of the causes. In the previous discussion it was indicated that the causes are four—matter, form, actor, and final goal. The most eminent cause is the final goal, since the other causes become causes through it, because the actor depicts matter with form for the sake of the final goal. Hence, that which causes the active, material, and formal causes to be causes is the final goal.

The final goal is before all the causes in essence and after them all in existence. In other words, existence has its utmost end in it. The four causes are in compositional and compounded existence. If the existent thing is not compound, there are no causes of compoundedness. The particular existent is compound only, so it must have all four causes.

It may be that the active cause is a compound particular that has another active cause, and that the particular matter has another matter. For example, the artisan who does goldsmithery, ironworking, or carpentry must also have an artisan and actor, a matter, and a form in order to be an existent. Or, take the matter of a house, which is bricks, clay, and mortar; bricks, clay, and mortar also have a matter.

In the same way, the final goal of a thing may have another final goal, like the simple, elemental body, which is for the sake of the compound body. The compound body is the final goal of the simple, elemental body.

Compoundedness is for the sake of the equilibrium of the natures, which are mutually opposed and do not get along. The equilibrium of the natures is for the sake of worthiness to receive the soulish, spiritual potency. Worthiness to accept the soulish potency is for the sake of knowledge and intelligence. Knowledge and intel-

ligence are for the sake of unconditioned existence. Unconditioned, general existence is for the sake of the Ipseity and Essence.

This order, harmony of occasions, and multiplicity of causes happens in the compound things. The utmost end of the causes is at the final goal, and the utmost end of the final goals is at the Essence, Ipseity, and Reality. By the word *profit* we mean the most eminent cause, which is the final goal and perfection.

Now we will indicate what "act" is and which, among these bodily and spiritual existents, is the "actor." Then we will explain the cause of completeness, perfection, and act, and that of the actor, God willing—high indeed is He!

The Second Door of this Talk. On Act and Doing

Doing is a state that becomes manifest little by little from a substance in a substance, such that no two states of this trace exist together. Rather, one comes not to be and the other finds being. For example, the substance fire makes the trace of warmth appear little by little in the substance water; and the vegetal soul makes manifest the trace of the vegetal body's increase little by little in the substance of the plant's body. In no period of that increase and the water's warmth do two states occur together. Rather, one state comes not to be and another occurs. This state is called "movement" and "alteration."

In this discussion, by the word *substance* we mean something whose existence does not require a dwelling-place that would be there before it so that it would come to exist within it. Rather, it is the dwelling-place of other things that cannot come to exist except in it—such as length, breadth, shape, color, heaviness, and lightness—since the likes of these states exist only in a dwelling-place.

Things are of two sorts—either dwelling-place or dweller. The dwelling-place is the substance, and it is one. Plurality and multiplicity are because of the states that dwell within it. The first states are nine things, and quantity is one of these states that dwell in the substance. In the book *The Clarifying Method*, we have enumerated all the states and shown how each has existence through priority and posteriority along with the divisions of each. One of them is act. Because of it, substance is another substance, for the active substance is one thing, and the acted-upon substance something else. Act is the state that keeps coming from the active substance and keeps reaching the acted upon substance, though the two are one in that they are substance.

Substance and what dwells within it share in what is understood from the word *existence*. However, they become disparate through priority and posteriority, since the dwelling-place exists before the dweller. The dwelling-place of act is called the "actor," and the dwelling-place of being acted upon the "acted upon." The substance through which acts come by essence is the soul, and its first act is movement. The substance that is the first thing acted upon is the body.

When it is said that bodies are "active" and that a trace becomes manifest from them in another body, this is not said on the basis of the reality, because bodies do not act by essence, but rather by accident. Thus the body of fire warms the body of water, and warmth is the act of the body of fire. However, this is not by essence, inasmuch as fire is a body, but rather by accident, inasmuch as fire has a specific potency

and nature—from among the potencies of the soul and beyond the form and nature of bodiment—that warms. Hence the body of fire is the doer of the warming through that potency.

Such doers are many, since each of the simple bodies and the compound bodies—the minerals, plants, animals, and their classes—has a doing that is attributed to its particular individuals. However, this is not by essence. Rather, the doing of each is through a potency that is one of the potencies and branches of soul. This is because the root of acts is movement-giving. We said before that movement does not come from the body and the bodily nature. So, it is better that what can come to be by the intermediary of movement not be from a body.

Hence, the first actor is soul. The meaning of “soul” is root and reality, and soul’s acts are of many sorts, because of the multiplicity of acted-upon things and bodies. We showed that the plurality and diversity of bodies arises from the revolving movement, which separated the center from the circumference through stillness and movement. Two became four, and the number of bodies became as many as can be numbered.

We said that the first actor is soul, and the first acted-upon thing is body. The first act is depicting matter with body’s form, which is conjunction and measure, so that body’s matter may become the matter of another body through body’s form. After bodily form come shape and guise, which pertain to “quality.” After this, unconditioned body becomes the matter of the diverse bodies, such that some of them receive the form of movement from soul, like the celestial orbs, and some the diverse qualities, like the elements. The elements become the matter of the compound bodies, the compound things the matter of growing bodies, and growing bodies the matter of animate bodies.

The meaning of this discussion is not that every compound thing becomes a plant, nor that all plants become animals, but rather that every matter, in keeping with the form’s worthiness, has a specific limit and utmost end beyond which it does not pass. A compound thing that has no more preparedness than for compoundedness and mixing does not pass beyond this limit and does not become a plant. What we mean is that body receives life only when it has first received the potency of growth; it receives human life, in the sense of the intellective potency, only when it has first received the sensory and animal potency. So also is the case with every other matter in relation to every form.

So, every matter belonging to the compound things has a simpler matter, and every accidental actor has an actor, until this reaches the matter of matters, which is the first matter, and the actor of actors, which is the first actor.

Act has a nature and a substance. Every state that does not belong to something’s root belongs to the root of something else. The actorship of soul is by nature, and its life is by essence. Its life is from its reality and root, which is intellect. Intellect is to soul as soul is to nature, and as nature is to body. Hence, soul has no matter and no actor; as for matter, this is because the first matter has existence from soul; and as for actor, this is because act is movement-giving, and soul is movement-giver. The vegetal forms that come to bodily matter are also from soul’s act and trace.

The first form in the bodies is the bodily form, within which it is possible to posit length, breadth, and depth. After the form of the body is the form of the body’s

shape—round or polygonal. After the form is movement—revolving or straight. After this is the form of intermixture and combination, which is generation and transformation. After this, movement increases or decreases, and this is in body's quantity. After this is animal movement. Hence all the material and active causes reach the utmost end at soul, and it has no material or active cause.

The Third Door. On the Formal and Final Occasion and Cause of Soul

Know that soul is a substance living by essence, doing by nature, and potentially knowing.

It is a substance because act exists through it and in it, and it is the dwelling-place of the act, but it is not within any dwelling-place; this is the state and attribute of a substance.

Its doerness by nature is obvious from the previous discussion, for actorness in it belongs to the root, but in other than it, it is accidental and alien.

The livingness is because all bodies are animate and living through it, but dead by their own nature.

It is potentially knowing because in knowing things it is kept distracted and heedless of self and knowing self. This is potential knowing—that it knows but does not know that it knows. It knows something and fancies that the known is something outside of self. It does not know that it is finding that thing in self.

In this respect, soul is not without deficiency, even though "existence" in the sense of fixity and obtainment is actual in soul, and "existence" in the sense of that which is intelligible and known is also actual in soul, for soul's substance is neither sensory and imaginal nor sense-intuitive, since sensation, imagination, and sense-intuition are each among the potencies of the human soul. Rather, soul's substance is intelligible.

The intelligible is of two sorts—either an intelligible that is not an intellecter, like the genera and species of the meanings known to soul; or an intelligible which, along with intelligibility, is also an intellecter and knower.

Soul is actually known, because soul's existence and substance came to be known through the aforementioned proofs; thus it came to be known actually. However, the knowing of soul is potential. When its potency reaches act, it is knower of self and known of self. This is the form of the intellect, by which soul has been depicted. Its potency ended up in act, and with this form, it is not soul. Just as body's matter was potentially body, and when the form of bodiment joined to it, it was body, not matter, so also soul is potentially knower, and knowing is the intellect. When soul reaches it, it is intellect, not soul.

The intellect has no cause other than the final cause, which is the possessor of intellect, because the final goal of self's knowing is to know and be aware of self through self. Knowing is universal, general existence. All the divisions of existence—substantial and accidental, bodily and spiritual, species-specific and individual, natural and soulish—come under its compass and generality. When it knows self through knowing, then it has reached self. Self is the final goal of final goals. This knowing is existence, subsistence, completeness, and perfection. This is the profit of awareness, and

the benefit of knowledge. Unaware, natural, particular, deficient, and corruptible existence turns into aware, intellective, universal, subsistent, complete, and endless existence.

Awareness of this level has been given by the discussion, so we end the talk. May we, our companions, and our brothers be kept occupied, for ever and ever, with gratitude for being given success to know and to give awareness of the known.

And praise belongs to God, Lord of the worlds [37:182]. And blessings be upon His prophet, Muhammad the chosen, the seal of the prophets and envoys, and upon his pure household and companions; and may He give abundant peace!

Essay on the Reality of the Human

The auspicious name of the First is the beginning of every speech. The speaker made it the provision, the ornament, and the embroidery of the talking. Then he said:⁵⁹

The human is. By the being of the human he means the humanness of the human, and by the humanness of the human the fact that the human is human. That the human is human is nothing but the human. So the speaker who says "The human is" has said, "The human is human." In this speech, he showed the quiddity.

Then he said: The human knows that he is human, he is aware that he is human, and it is clear to him that he is human. This knowledge, awareness, and clarity are the complete existence of the human, the clear existence of the human, the first intellect of the human, the essential existence of the human, the incontestable existence of the human, the universal existence of the human, the root existence of the human, and the simple existence of the human.

Then he said: The human wishes for knowledge, loves knowledge, strives for knowledge, and seeks for knowledge, and he knows that this is so. This wishing for knowledge, love for knowledge, striving for knowledge, and seeking for knowledge are the branch of the first knowledge of the human's soul and of his life and livingness.

Then he said: The human is a ponderer and a thinker, the human is a talker, and the human is a doer. This pondering, thinking, talking, and doing are the branch and bough of the soul of the human and its nature.

Then he said: The human is unconscious and unaware, the human is dying, the human is passing, and the human accepts destruction. This unconsciousness, dyingness, passingness, and acceptance of destruction belong to the individual human and are the branch and bough of his nature.

The individual human is the tool of his nature's doings, the nature of the human is the soul's worker, the soul of the human is the intellect's ray and trace, and the intellect of the human is the completeness and clarity of his existence.

Then he said: The individual human is the trace, similitude, and mark of the human. The human is not many, but the human's individuals are many. However, the many individuals are one through the human, for all are human. And the human is many through the individuals, for each of the individuals is human.

The human individuals are four classes: In one class, nothing of the human is more apparent than the body. Another class, along with the body, also has the

workerness of the human. From the third class the soul's traces give radiance—such as the love and search for knowledge, and the yearning for awareness and wakefulness. From the fourth class awareness, wakefulness, and seeing appear.

The first class are called the “bodily,” the second the “workers,” the third the “spirituals,” and the fourth the “clear ones, the intelligent, the divine ones.”

Each of the lower classes takes help from the class higher than itself. The bodily reach workerness through the workers, the workers become searchers for knowledge and knowledge-lovers through the knowledge-seekers, and the knowledge-seekers and yearners become knowing, clear, and knowers through the clear.

The body accepts work, nature works, the soul commands the work, and the intellect is the work-knower of existence's work.

Among these individuals, the classes of the divine ones and knowers and of the spirituals and knowledge-seekers are within the realm of the human's perfection. The knower is actually complete and the knowledge-seeker is potentially complete.

The actually complete is he who is complete through self and, from his completion, the one below him accepts completion from him. The potentially complete is he who is complete through what is above self. In other words, he is a knowledge-seeker who is deficient in knowing and who accepts knowledge from the knower until his deficiency ceases because of the domination of the completion and clarity of the knower in act. He becomes actually complete and clear, and the learner becomes the teacher.

It is the learner and teacher that have the work of existence, so it is suitable that it become clear and known how the knowledge-seeker takes knowledge from the knower. Now we say: The teacher is called “the actual knower” and the learner “the potential knower.” The actual knower gives knowledge, and the potential knower takes and accepts knowledge. In the actual knower, knowledge is apparent, which is to say that existence's clarity is clear for him. This is to say that he is aware, and he is aware of the self's being aware. But the knowledge of the potential knower is concealed, which is to say that he is aware but he is not aware of the self's awareness. Through the clarity and awareness of the knower he finds awareness of the self's awareness.

Just as the knower is actual and potential, so also the known is actual and potential. In knowness, the actually known is before the potentially known, just as the actual knower comes before the potential knower. Hence the many known things can have an order, one after another. Each known can be known through the known before it until the knower arrives at the first known, which is the known of self. This is the “simple” known, in respect of the fact that in it there is no otherness and diversity. It is also the “one” known, in respect of the fact that it is the origin of many knowns. It is the “incontestable” and “inescapable” known, in respect of the fact that it is impossible not to know it. It is the known “in essence,” for its essence is nothing but the known, and its unknowness is other than the essence. It is the known “actually,” because through it the self is clear and the concealed known comes to be clear and actual.

These states that were enumerated—potency and act, simplicity and non-simplicity, unity and multiplicity, incontestableness and contestableness, in essence and not in essence—all come to be known by knowing self. Knowing such things is

called “conceptual knowledge” and “first knowledge.” This is to know that each of the things is a thing.

Knowing that each of these knowns does or does not have a joining with another is called “knowledge by assent,” and this is the “second knowledge.” Unless the conceptual known is two or more, there will be no knowledge by assent.

Examples of conceptual knowledge are knowing body, knowing spirit, knowing earth, knowing air, knowing lightness, knowing heaviness, knowing darkness, and knowing brightness. Examples of knowledge by assent are knowing that air is light, earth is heavy, the sun is bright, and dirt is dark.

Now we start again and say: By the word *knowledge* we mean the apparentness of things in the self, by the word *knower* that which makes things appear in the self, by *known* the things made apparent in the self, by the word *ignorance* the nonapparentness of things in the self, by *nonknower* that which does not make things appear in the self, and by *unknown* that which is unapparent in the self.

These sayings are the explanation of the word *knowledge*, not the definition of knowledge, because knowledge cannot be defined. To define is to make something clear through something that is clearer and more apparent than the thing, and nothing is more apparent and clearer than knowledge such that knowledge might become apparent and clear through it.

The known is either one or many, and the many come after the one. Whenever someone does not have one known, he cannot have many knowns. Many knowns may be known separately from each other, like knowing heaven, fire, water, wind, earth, living, dead, and the like. Such things are called “solitary” knowns, that is, each thing known by its definition is separate from the others. They are also called “conceptual” knowns. “Conception” is for the solitary knowns to become known.

The other sort of many knowns is those that are known together, and knowledge by assent is part of this. “Assent” is to know the joinedness or nonjoinedness of two or more solitaires. This is like knowing that five is half of ten, or five is not half of seven.

The solitary, conceptual known may be “simple,” that is, its part and its allness can be considered the same. This is like knowing the meaning of the word *thing*, *howness*, and *how-much-ness*.

It may also be “compounded” from several known meanings that all come together and become another meaning. This is like the meaning of “knower,” “alive,” and “goer,” each of which is a separate meaning in knowledge, but, when they come together, this is the meaning of “human.” The meaning of the word *human* is compounded from all three knowns—alive, goer, and knower.

Whether the solitary meaning is simple or compound, it may be universal or it may be particular. The “universal” is a solitary known which can be found as one with the selfhood of self without tool, but which nonetheless can be found as many with the tool of sense-perception. This is like the word *existent*, which, although it is one known in the self, nonetheless can be found as many with the tool of sense-perception—like this existent and that existent. So also is the meaning of human, animal, angel, and devil.

As for the “particular,” just as it is one in the self, so also it can be found as one with the tool of sense-perception, like this human, this animal, this work, and this tool that can be pointed to by sense-perception.

When the solitary known is not simple, but rather several knowns come together and become another known, each of these knowns is called an “attribute” of the totality, and the totality is the “described object” of each. Sometimes these are called the “predicate” and the totality the “subject.” This is apparent in the past example: Alive, goer, and knower are together “human,” and human is the totality of the three. Each of these may be made an attribute of human, just as “alive” is an attribute of human and so also “goer” and “knower.” The attributes are the parts of the compound knowns.

This is complete, through God’s bounty—high indeed is He! (*Muṣannaḥāt* 632–37)

The Beginning of *The Clarifying Method*

In the name of God, the All-merciful, the Compassionate

Thanks and praise be to Him who is worthy to be praised and who is capable of and king over bestowing and forgiving, ample felicitations be upon the pure and the chosen, and arrival be upon the seekers through the finding of boundless being and endless coming to be!

Know, companions, that our wish in writing these words is the appearance of the twofold states and divisions of the excellencies that are specific to humans. One of these two excellencies is knowing, the other talking. Since by nature knowing comes before talking, it is more worthy that we talk first of knowledge and its divisions, then attend to mentioning the classes and sorts of speech.

The First Talk

On Knowing, the Known, and the Divisions and States of the Knowns

Chapter One. On the Words by Which Are Meant the Meanings That Are Called “Origins” in This Talk

The words that signify the meanings called “origins” are confined to this number: knowledge, ignorance, known, unknown, knower, ignorant, incontestable known, contestable known, incontestable unknown, contestable unknown, first known, not-first known, thought, one known, many knowns, simple known, compound known, known in essence, known in accident, actual known, potential known, solitary known, things known together, universal known, particular known, subject, predicate, conception, assent.

These things will not be known by knowing something more known than they, because they are the origins. In knowing, the origins are before what can be known through them. Through them the things can be known. However, when they are

forgotten in self and something contrary is remembered, or when a name or word is replaced by another name or word, then they may be found again in self.

Knowledge [*ʿilm*] is to know [*dānistan*], and to know is to be aware and to find in self.

Ignorance [*jahl*] is not to know, not to be aware, and not to find in self.

The known [*maʿlūm*] is the known [*dānista*], that is, the found and that of which there is awareness.

The unknown [*majhūl*] is the not known, that is, the not found and that of which there is no awareness.

The knower [*ʿālim*] is the knowing [*dānā*], that is, the aware and finder in self.

The ignorant is the not knowing, that is, the one without awareness and without finding in self.

The incontestable known is the known inescapably, that is, it is not fitting that it not be known.

The contestable known means that it is fitting for it to be known and to be found.

The incontestable unknown is the inescapably not known, that is, it is not fitting for it to be known.

The contestable unknown means that is fitting for it not to be known.

The first known means what is found before thought and search.

The not-first known means what is found through thought and search.

Thought [*andīsha*] is looking in self so as to seek and to find.

The one known is what is known at one time.

The many known things are those things known over many times.

The simple known is the all-alike known, that is, what is found in one respect.

The compound known is the not all-alike known, that is, what is fitting to be found in several respects.

The known in essence [*bi-dhāt*] is the known in self, that is, the thing whose being is knowing.

The known in accident is the known not through self, that is, what has a being other than the being that belongs to it through knowing.

The actual known is what is known in the work, that is, that of which there is awareness while there is also awareness of being aware of it.

The potential known is what can be known. It is something of which there is awareness, but there is no awareness of being aware of it.

The solitary [*mufrad*] known is what is known separately, without another.

The things known together are those things that are known together.

The universal known is what is one thing in the soul, while it may be many outside of it.

The particular known is what is only one, both inside and outside the soul.

The known by conception [*taṣawwur*] is the known concerning which one does not know its joinedness or nonjoinedness with something else.

The known by assent [*taṣdīq*] is the known thing concerning which one knows whether or not it is joined with another.

The subject [*mawḏūʿ*] is the known that is remembered first in self. Then what it is joined with or not joined with is remembered. This is called the "root" [*aṣl*], and it is also said to be the "subject."

The predicate [*maḥmūl*] is what is known from remembering another known because of its joinedness or nonjoinedness with it. This is called the “attribute” [*sifa*], and it is also said to be the “predicate.”

Chapter Two. On Dividing the Known Things through These States

Knowing is not outside of two divisions—either the first knowledge or the second knowledge.

The “first knowledge” is knowing a thing’s ipseity⁶⁰ and for it to be a thing, without knowing its being or nonbeing or any attribute or state within it. Such knowing is called “conception,” that is, depicting the known thing back in the self. It is also called “intellection” [*ta’aqul*], that is tying back [*bāz bastan*] the self by the known thing.⁶¹

The “second knowledge” is knowing whether or not two known things are joined together. Such knowing is called “assent” and “belief.”

No matter how many conceptual knows there may be, each is known separately from the others, like the meaning of heaven, earth, animal, tree, and stone. This is because finding them stands on their ipseity. But things known by assent are two or more together, since assent is to know whether or not two things are together. This is like the meaning of, “The earth is heavy,” or “The earth is not light.”

Conception is called the “first knowledge” because the ipseity and thingness of the thing is known first, then its joining with another or its farness from another.

The conceptual meaning is either universal or particular, and the universal is either simple or compound.

The “simple” [*basīṭ*] is what can be found in one respect, because it is all alike, like the meaning of “being” [*ḥastī*] and the meaning of “thing” [*chīz*].

The “compound” [*murakkab*] is what can be found in several respects, like the meaning of “human,” which can be known in two respects—in the respect that he is an animal and in the respect that he is talking.

The simple is before the compound, for the simple is the compound’s cause. It is known “in essence” because its ipseity, being, and knowing are one. It is known “incontestably,” for it cannot not be known.

The meaning of “particular” is not like the meaning of “universal,” which is divided into two—one simple and one compound—because the particular is only compound. Simplicity is only in the universals, but not in every universal.

Chapter Three. On the Explication of Subject and Predicate

When many meanings become one through compounding, and this one meaning becomes separate from other meanings, then it has many parts. Some of these parts are “pertaining to the root” [*aṣḥlī*], and by means of these parts the meaning’s ipseity stands. Some do not pertain to the root, but rather are the adornment of its being.

Thus “body,” “taking nourishment,” “growing,” “talking,” and “sensate” are the parts of the meaning of “human,” and through them stand the human’s ipseity and his being human. So also, “beautiful,” “pleasant in disposition,” and “upright in stature” are adornments and additions to the human ipseity, for a human is human, even if he is not beautiful or if he is bad in disposition.

Every part of the compound meaning, whether pertaining to the root or not pertaining to the root, is an attribute of the compound thing. The compound thing is their “described object” [*mawṣūf*], and the attribute shows something of the described object. It may be that the word *attribute* is replaced by “predicate,” and the word *described object* by “subject.” However, “predicate” is more worthy for those attributes that do not pertain to the root than for attributes that do pertain to the root.

Chapter Four. On the Prior Attribute, the Requisite Attribute, and the Subordinate Attribute

In knowing, no attribute is outside of three divisions in relation to the described object: In knowing it may be before the described object, and the described object is known from it; such an attribute is called “prior” [*mutaqaddim*]. Or, it is known along with the described object, and such an attribute is named “requisite” [*lāzim*]. Or, it is known after the described object, and such an attribute is called “subordinate” [*tābi*].

An example of the prior is the attribute “animal” for humans, an example of the requisite is the attribute “laughing by nature” for humans, and an example of the subordinate is the attribute “writer” for humans. This is because one knows “human” after knowing “animal,” [one knows it] along with knowing “laughing by nature,” and [one knows it] before knowing “writer.”

Chapter Five. On the More General, the Equal, and the More Specific Attribute

We take the meaning of “universal” [*kullī*] and “general” [*‘āmm*] to be one. The “more general” attribute is an attribute which, when you compare it with the described object, is more than it and reaches another as well. In other words, the other meaning is also described by the attribute.

“Equal” [*musāwī*] is for the attribute and the described object to be exactly the same. In other words, the attribute has nothing other than the described object, and the described object does not go beyond the attribute.

“More specific” [*akhaṣṣ*] is for the attribute not to have more than one described object, and the described object is greater than the attribute.

An example of a more general attribute is the attribute “body” for humans, which reaches humans and is greater, because it reaches others as well. An example of the equal is the attribute “worthy for knowledge,” which is the same as human, for no human is without this attribute, and this attribute does not belong to anything else. An example of an attribute more specific than the described object is the

attribute “writing” for humans, since nothing but humans has it, but not every human has it.

Chapter Six. On the Primary Attribute and the Nonprimary Attribute

The joining of the attribute to the described object is either “primary” [*awwalī*], which is to say that between it and the object there is no other attribute, or it is joined to the object because of joining with another attribute. An example of a primary attribute is “human” for Zayd. An example of a nonprimary attribute is “animal” for Zayd, for the attribute “animal” joins to Zayd because of joining with “human.”

Chapter Seven. On the Essential Attribute and the Accidental Attribute

When an attribute is such that the described object comes together from it and some other, the attribute is “essential” [*dhātī*], but when an attribute does not belong to the described object’s substance and joins with it from outside, it is “accidental” [*araḍī*]. An example of the essential is the attribute “shape” for the rectangle and the triangle. An example of the accidental is the length of a rectangle’s diagonal being greater than that of its side.

When the described object is universal, its attributes may be essential, or they may be accidental. When the described object is particular, all its attributes are essential.

The universal may be both the described object and the attribute.

The particular is only the described object. It will not be the attribute, whether of the universal or of the particular. As for the universal, this is because nothing is described by its own contradictory. As for the particular, this is because one particular, like Zayd, is not described by another particular, like ‘Amr.

Chapter Eight. On Genus, Species, Differentia, General Accident, and Specificity

When several universal meanings are described by one essential, primary attribute that is greater than they in generality, this attribute is called the “genus” [*jins*], and each of the described objects is called the “species” [*naw*].

When one universal meaning is described by one essential, primary attribute that is the same in generality, this is called the “differentia” [*faṣl*]. When several universal meanings are described by one nonessential attribute that is greater than those meanings in generality, this attribute is called the “general accident.” When one universal meaning is described by one nonessential attribute that is the same or less than that meaning, the attribute is named the “specificity” [*khāṣṣa*].⁶²

So, “genus” is an attribute that is essential and primary for several universal described objects, and “species” [is one that is so] for one universal described object

among all the described objects that share in one essential, primary attribute. "Differentia" is an attribute that is essential and primary for one described object. "General accident" is an attribute that is nonessential for several universal described objects. "Specificity" is an attribute that is nonessential for one universal described object which is the same or less than it in generality.

Chapter Nine. On High Genus, Low Genus, High Species, Low Species, Middle Genus, and Middle Species

It may be that there is an object described by an essential, genus-specific attribute, while the attribute also has a genus, and that the genus also has a genus, though this cannot be boundless. Every genus is more general than its species and nearer to simplicity. So also, its genus is simpler, and the parts of its compoundedness are fewer in number. Inescapably, the compound ends at the simple through decomposition, and the many at the one through diminishing.

At the level where generality and simplicity keep on increasing, the essential attributes keep on becoming fewer. Finally they end up at and reach a meaning more general than every meaning. It has no essential attribute and is called the "high genus."

The same is the case on the side of specificity. At every level where specificity increases, compoundedness increases and the number of the parts becomes more. Finally this reaches the particular individual that can be indicated, all of whose attributes are essential.

Now, the meaning that has no genus is called the "high genus," and each of the universals under it is called the "high species" and the "middle genus." Each genus of these species whose species then becomes a genus for some universals is numbered among the middle genera in relation to its own genera. Each genus whose species does not again become a genus is called the "low genus" and the "middle species." Every universal that has an individual more specific than it is called the "low species." These are the divisions of the primary, essential descriptions, that is, the genera, species, and differentiae.

As for "accidental attributes," these are the attributes that are not essential, and they are of two sorts: Either they are more general than the described object, and these are called "general accidents," or they are equal with or more specific than the described object in generality, and both these sorts are called "specificity."

Among the accidental attributes are those that are always with the described object, like the size and height of Zayd, which are always with him; and so also his color. Among them are those that are not always there, rather sometimes there and sometimes not. Some of these disappear quickly, like sitting and standing, and others disappear slowly, like youth and old age.

Chapter Ten. On the Mention of the General Meanings and on Which is the High Genus

When we perceive a human or nonhuman individual with the sense of eyesight, we know that the individual is a thing. We know that he is one, and we know that unity is something in him, but that he is not in a thing in the same way that unity is in

him. We know that he is large or small in measure. We know that he is white or black, beautiful or not beautiful. We know that each of his parts and members is in a direction in which the other parts and members are not, for the part that is in front of us is not the part that is not in front of us. We know that we found him in a place. We know that we found him in a time. We know that he has specific things, but that he is not specific to those things, like hand, foot, and potency. He is their owner, but they are not his owner. We know that in these states, he is compatible with or different from another. If he has an artisanry, we know that he is a doer, and that in which he worked is his deed.

Of all these knowns that we enumerated for him, one is his self, one his being, and one his unity [*wahdat*].

Some are in him. The largeness and smallness that are in him are his “measure” and “how-much-ness.” The beauty, ugliness, and color are his “howness.” The mode and order that his parts have together in relation to the direction of each is his “placement” and “position.” His allness’s reaching what is around his allness is his “whereness.” For him to be in the time when he is there is his “whenness.” What is in him in correlation with others, like brotherness and equality, is his “correlation.” The fact that he is the owner of what he has is his “ownership.” What keeps on coming newly from him to another is his “doing.” What keeps on coming newly from another to him is his “being acted upon” and “acceptingness.”

He and everything that is in him is particular and individual, for each of these meanings, both in soulish finding and in outside existence, can be nothing but one—this one thing, this much, like this, in this placement, in this place, at this time, with this correlation, this having and ownership, this doing, and this being acted upon are all particular.

In the same way, thing, coming to be, oneness, how-much-ness, howness, whereness, whenness, correlation, having, doing, and being acted upon are all universal. This is because, although each is one in the soul, they are many outside the soul, for the being that is occurrence and alteration is not the being that is fixity and rest. The unity that is particular is not the unity that is universal. The thing that is a human is not the thing that is a bird. The how-much-ness that is length is not the how-much-ness that is width. The howness that is wetness is not the howness that is warmth. The whereness that is above is not the whereness that is below. The whenness that is today is not the whenness that is yesterday. Having a hand is not having a foot. The correlation that is friendship and compatibility is not the correlation that is enmity and difference. The doing and act that is burning is not the doing and act that is freezing. The being acted upon that is to be burnt is not the being acted upon that is to be frozen.

The attribute which is shared by this and that in each of these things and which is one in both is the “universal.”

Chapter Eleven. On Which of These Meanings is More General and Which More Specific

Of all these meanings whose names we mentioned, some are more than others in universality and generality. The meaning of “thing” is general for all and is more

general than all. The generality of the meaning of “thing” for all is apparent—just as unity is a thing, so multiplicity is a thing. Just as that which is in a thing [i.e., an accident] is a thing, so also that which is not in a thing [i.e., a substance] is a thing. In the attribute of thing all are the same, and sameness is all with them in this attribute.

As for the greater generality of the meaning of “thing” over the others, this is apparent from the fact that thing is more general than “existent” [*mawjūd*], and existent is more general than the others. The generality of existent is greater because existence is more general than “the existent in a thing” [accident] and “the existent not in a thing” [substance].

As for the fact that the meaning of “thing” is greater than “existent,” this is because the meaning of thing is general over each of what is not worthy to be, what is worthy to be, and what must be—I mean that which has the worthiness to be, that which itself is, and that which does not have the worthiness to be and remains as not having come to be. The word that signifies the meaning of “thing” in each division is one. But the meaning of existence is the attribute of what is worthy to be and the attribute of what must be. It is not the attribute of what is unworthy to be.⁶³

Chapter Twelve. On the Divisions of Thing and Existent

The “thing” either is or is not. The meaning of this saying is not that the thing has no existence, for the thing does not become separate from existence—whether existence in the soul or existence outside the soul. Rather, by this “to be” we mean to be outside the soul. For the thing to be in the soul is incontestable, and it is not fitting that it not be.

Hence, the meaning of this saying is that inside and outside the soul it is “thing” without disparity. However, there is disparity in the existence outside the soul, for it is fitting that the thing be, and it is fitting that it not be.

As for “existent,” it has been divided in many ways:

In respect of disjoined, numerical quantity [*kamiyyat*], the existent is either one or more; and in respect of conjoined quantity it is either finite or boundless.

In respect of quality [*kayfiyyat*], either it has worthiness and possibility, or it has must-be-ness and inescapability.

In respect of correlation [*iḍāfat*], it is either cause and occasion, or not cause and occasion.

In respect of position [*waḍʿ*], it is either compound or not compound, that is, simple.

In respect of whereness [*ayn*], the existent is either in something or not in something.

In respect of whenness [*matā*], the existent is either permanent and everlasting or not everlasting.

In respect of ownership [*milk*], the existent either belongs to something or does not belong to something.

In respect of act [*fi ʿ*], the existent is either doing or not doing.

In respect of being acted upon [*infi ʿāl*], it is either done or not done.

Chapter Thirteen. On What We Mean by Each of These Divisions

“Being” and “thing” are apparent in self. If we want to make thing and being clearer, we cannot do so, because thing is clear in itself. Were it not clear through “thing,” then it would become clear through “not-thing,” but thing cannot be made clear through not-thing.

In the same way, the meaning of “being” is independent of explication, for knowing is one sort of being. This is because being is divided into two—either being in self, which is called “knowing,” or being outside of self. Whoever knows a thing does not doubt the being of that thing in his soul, since he knows the thing from its being.

As for “one,” it is an existent from which counting begins and at which it ends. There is one “in essence” and “not in essence.” The one “in essence” is the thing that is found all at once in one respect in the self, and it is not fitting that something be known of it and something remain unknown, such that it be found in two respects, like the compound meanings.

The one “not in essence” is one either in existence or not in existence.

What is one in existence is called “particular” [*juzwī*] and “individual” [*shakhṣī*]. These are one in both divisions of existence—both soulish existence, which is called “knowing,” and outside existence, which can be indicated through sense-perception.

What is one “not in existence” has many sorts. It may be many in number and one in species, like human individuals. It may be many in species but one in genus, like humans, beasts, flyers, and crawlers, which are one in “animal,” which is the genus of all. It may be one in quantity, and such unity is called “equality” [*musāwāt*]. It may be one in quality, and such unity is called “similarity” [*mushābahat*]. It may be one in correlation, and such unity is called “withness” [*maʿyyat*]. It may be one in substance, like the actor and the acted upon. It may be one through locus, like quantity and quality in the body. It may be one through universality and many through parts, like the number ten. It may be one in utmost end, like two lines that come to an end at one point.

In short, everything that is one through one specific thing may be many through something else. Thus the one in essence may be many in attributes, the one in genus may be many in species, and the one in quantity may be many in qualities.

Chapter Fourteen. On the Existent and Its Divisions

The existent is either incontestable or contestable. By “incontestable existent” we mean the thing that inescapably is. In other words, the strength of its being is such that one cannot find it not come to be in the self, like the thing’s being a thing.

The “contestable existent” is the thing whose not coming to be can be known, and this is the states of the thing, like the thing’s largeness and smallness, strength and weakness.

No existent is without these two divisions, that is, incontestableness and contestableness. Its incontestable existence is in respect of its being a thing, and its contestable existence is through a state within it.

As for the “finite existent,” that is the compound things, since finitude is the specificity of measure. The thing that has no quantity has no utmost end.

As for “cause” and “effect”: Whenever we come to know a thing’s being from another’s being, and we do not come to know the other’s being from the thing, then we call the other the “cause” and the thing the “effect.”

Causes have four divisions: One is the “material” [*māddī*] cause, and it is the thing from which something else comes to be, like wood that is the cause of a bench. One is the “formal” cause, like the bench’s form that is the cause of the bench. One is the “active” cause, like the carpenter that is the cause of the bench. And one is the “completing” cause, like the suitability for sitting on top that is the cause of the bench.

As for the “simple existent,” it is the thing whose being is not mixed with nonbeing. Such a thing is called “fixed” [*thābit*] and “at rest” [*ārāmīda*]. Such an existent is a substance, and it can also be found in some of the states of the substance.

As for the “compound existent” in respect of existence, it is that thing whose being is not without nonbeing. Such a thing is called “occurring” and “altering,” and such existence “occurrence” [*hudūth*] and “alteration” [*taghayyur*].

Chapter Fifteen. On the Existent in Something and the Existent Not in Something

You should know that one can say that something is in something else in three respects. One is for something to be in something else such that the thing in the other cannot be without the other, but the other can be without the thing. This is like blackness and whiteness in the black and the white, or longness and wideness in the long and the wide.

Second is that something should be in something else such that the thing can be without the other, and the other without the thing—like someone being in the house, for he may be without the house, and the house may be without him.

Third is that something should be in something else such that the second thing may be without the thing that it is in it, but the thing in it cannot be without it. This sort is then divided into two: One is like the parts of a thing that are in the whole of the thing, and the other is like bodies that are in alteration.

Of all these sorts that were enumerated, the first sort is the reality—that which is like blackness in the black thing. The thing that is in some other thing in reality is called an “accident,” and the thing in which there is the accident is called a “substance.”

Substance is a thing that is not in some other thing, and accident is a thing that is in some other thing. The substance is one, but the accidents are many: quantity, quality, correlation, position, whereness, whenness, possession, act, and being acted upon.

The multiplicity of substance is because of the accidents, not because of the substantiality. For example, the living substance, the dead substance, the active substance, the acted upon substance, the moving substance, and the resting substance—the substance is one in all these sorts.

The substance is one with all these accidents in the meaning of “thing.” The name “thing” falls on all of them in the same way without disparity. The name “existent” also falls on all, but not in the same way. Rather it falls on substance before,

and it falls on accident after, and likewise on some accidents before others. Hence “existent” is not the genus of all, and they are not the species of existent, but “thing” is the genus of all.

Chapter Sixteen. On the Prior and the Posterior

The prior is in several respects: One is prior in essence, like the priority of the black over blackness and the writer over writing.

Second is prior through existence, like the priority and beforeness of the cause over the effect.

Third is prior through nature, like one before two.

Fourth is prior through time, like father before son.

Fifth is prior through waystation, like knower before unknowing.

The meaning of “prior” that is general for all these sorts is that the prior is the thing from which knowing begins, and the “posterior” that at which knowing ends.

As for “ownership:” When something is special to one thing, but this one is not special to it, this is called “possession.” This one is called the “possessor” and the “owner,” and what is special to it is called the “owned object.” This is like a thing that has measure and a thing that has strength. Measure and strength are special to the thing that is the possessor of strength and measure, but the possessor of measure and strength is not special to the measure and the strength.

As for “act” and “being acted upon:” Whenever something gradually comes to be in something from something, the thing from which it comes to be is called “active,” and the thing in which it gradually comes to be is called “acted upon.” The thing that gradually comes to be, relative to the active is called “act,” and relative to the acted upon is called “being acted upon.” This is like the motion-inducer, from which motion gradually comes to be in the mover.

Chapter Seventeen. On Mentioning the Divisions of These Meanings

When something is, either first its being is found, then the being of another; or, first the other’s being is found, then its being. The first kind is called “substance,” the second kind “accident.”

The substance is either simple or compound. The “simple” substance is that thing to which no attribute can be given other than to be first and to be found first.

The substance that is “not simple” is something that can be known along with something whose being is after it. This has several divisions:

The substance may come to be known along with quantity, quality, and position. When the substance is known with these attributes, it is “body” [*jism*].

It may be known with act, and, when the substance has this attribute, it is called “nature” or “soul.”

It may be known along with being acted upon, and such a substance is called “matter.”

It may be known with all—that is, with quantity, quality, and position, and with nature, soul, and matter. Such a substance is called “animal.”

It may be known in essence without any of these states, and such a thing is called “intellect.”⁶⁴

Body is of two sorts—simple and compound. The “simple” body is that whose parts are all like each other, such as the body of water, the body of air, the body of fire, and the body of earth. The “compound” body is that whose parts are not like each other, such as the body of animals.

Nature is an “active” substance in respect of the fact that two contradictory acts do not come from it. The division of the natural substance is through the division of its acts. Nature’s acts become divided and diverse only because of the diversity and division of the states in which is the act’s being. Hence the act of the natural substance is first either making warm or making cold, second making subtle and light or making dense and heavy, and third inducing motion upwards or inducing motion downwards.

The division and diversity of the substance that is acted upon and accepting is through the division of the active substance. If the active is the natural substance, to be acted upon is to become warm or cold, to become subtle and light or dense and heavy, and to move upwards or downwards.

The matter of the natural substance and what accepts its act is the “bodily” substance. The doing of the natural substance is in quality and whereness.

As for the “soulish” substance, if all its doing is in the bodily substance by motion-inducing and alteration, this doing can be in quantity, quality, whereness, and situation. This sort of substance is called the “habitudinal” soul.⁶⁵ If its doing appears in the states of the bodily substance both by movement-inducing and by perception through tools, it is called the “sensory and animal” soul. If its doing does not appear in the states of the bodily substance, but rather its doing is that it makes things come to be in self through compounding and decomposing meanings and known things, this is called the “talking” soul.

As for accident, it has many divisions. Some of these also find existence in the thing from others, since some find being in the substance and some not in the substance, but rather in some other thing that had found being in the substance before it.

The first of the accidents that come to be in substance is “unity” and “oneness.” We mentioned the divisions of unity earlier. Unity in essence comes before unity not in essence, then unity in existence, then the others.

After unity is the accident that is the requisite of something by the intermediary of unity. This is specific to the fact that unity is an accident of the things, since the thing is the possessor of unity, but unity is not the possessor of the thing. This accident is called “ownership.”

As for the divisions of ownership: Ownership either pertains to the root and is essential, like the thing’s existence, which belongs to the thing; or it does not pertain to the root and is not primary, but rather belongs to the thing by the intermediary of existence—like the thing’s quantity, the thing’s quality, the thing’s act, and the like. Once unity and ownership find existence, the quantity of the thing appears, which is the twoness of number.

Quantity is of two sorts: One is “disjoined” [*munfaṣīl*], and it is called “number” [*shumār*]. It is called “disjoined” because no common limit can be found between

any two of its parts, as between two and three, or between three and four, or between four and five.

Numbers are of two sorts—odd and even. The other sorts may be known in the science of number.

The other division of quantity is called “conjoined” [*muttaṣīl*]. It is a measure in which, whenever you find two parts of it, there is a common limit between them. This is like the line, because, between every two parts that you find therein, there is a point at which both parts end. It is also like the surface, because whenever you find two parts in it, you find a line at which both parts end. And it is like depth, because whenever you find what is between two of its parts, you find a surface that both parts reach.

The part of the line is also a line, the part of the surface is also a surface, and the part of depth is also depth. It should not be supposed that the parts of the line, which is length, are points; that the parts of the surface, which is breadth, are lines; and the parts of depth, which is thickness, are surfaces.

Conjoined quantity accepts disjoined quantity, which is to say that there is a one within which multiplicity can be found through division and dividing. In the same way, conjoined quantity is potentially and possibly disjoined quantity. Thus, in itself five is a multiplicity and is one number, and so also are ten, twenty, and one hundred. Whenever you separate one from them or add one to them, the number becomes something else.

Length can be divided in one respect, breadth in two respects, and thickness in three respects.

Lines are of two sorts—straight and not straight. In the same way surfaces are either all the same and flat, or not flat and diverse. The divisions of each of these can be found in the science of geometry.

There are surfaces for which correlation is a requisite, though in a way it becomes separate. Thus, if you gauge one surface against another, they either encounter each other or do not. A surface that encounters another surface may cover all the other surface, and this is called an “encompassing surface.” The surface that encompasses the other surface is called “location” [*makān*].

There is quantity that is the requisite of substance, though it may be the requisite of one of the accidents of substance, like the accident of whenness.

The existence of some accidents is resting and fixed, and the existence of others is occurrence and change. Therefore, measure also becomes diverse and divided in keeping with the thing whose measure it is—either a fixed and resting measure, like the measure of whiteness and blackness in black and white bodies, or, it may be occurring, changing, and passing, like the measure of transmutations and alterations. This quantity is called “time” [*zamān*].

Time is among the sorts of conjoined measure. Whatever two parts of it that you find, a common limit is found cutting the two parts away from each other. Thus, between the past time and the coming time the differentiating factor is the “moment” [*waqt*] and “instant” [*ān*]. The measure of the existence of a substance—that is, a substance’s being a substance and things’ being things—is called “aeon” [*dahr*]. The measure of the existence of the passing states of the substance is called “time”—such

as becoming large, becoming small, becoming fat, becoming slim, becoming sweet, becoming sour, becoming far, and becoming near.

So, “quantity” is the state through which the thing’s being comes to be measured and weighed.

As for “quality,” it is the state through which the thing’s being comes to be depicted and given form. Quality may be in the substance [1] not in the respect that quantity is there, but rather in the respect that the substance is active. This may be [1a] a “natural” act, like [1a1] making warm and burning, and this sort of quality is called “potency” and “active habitude.” Or it may be like [1a2] warmth, cold, hardness, softness, smoothness, and roughness, of which one can become aware with touch; like pleasant, unpleasant, sharp, and soft aromas, of which one can have awareness with smell; or like sweetness and sourness, which can be found with tasting. Of these, all those that are fixed are called “guises” [*hay’āt*] and all those that are not fixed are called “states” [*aḥwāl*].

Or it may be [1b] a “soulish” act, like [1b1] seeing, hearing, eating, and smelling, and these are called “potency” and “soulish habitude;” like [1b2] bravery, faint-heartedness, liberality, and stinginess, which are called “soulish” guises and states; like [1b2] becoming warm and becoming cold, and such things are called “naturally” acted upon; and like [1b3] becoming ashamed and becoming fearful, and such things are called “soulishly” acted upon.

Quality may also be in the substance [2] in the respect that it has quantity, whether conjoined quantity, like triangular, quadrangular, and pentagonal shapes and things like this; or it belongs to disjoined quantity, like evenness and oddness. In short, in whatever thing it may be, it comes after the thing’s existence.

Correlation is the state of the substance in relation to another substance, and unless two things exist, correlation does not exist. Correlation is of two sorts. It may be of one sort in both things, like equality, for each is equal to the other; and like brotherness, for just as Zayd is ‘Amr’s brother, so ‘Amr is Zayd’s brother; and like compatibility and difference. Or there may be correlation in another respect for each, like fatherness and sonness, since the father is not the one who has the father, and the son is not the one who has the son; like lowness and highness; and like blacker and whiter, because whenever something is blacker relative to something else, the other is not blacker in relation to it.

Correlation has no existence in substance—for substance is not correlated with being a substance—but rather in a state of the substance, like larger and smaller, or like equal and similar, stronger and weaker, straighter and crooked, farther and nearer. Whatever state there may be in which there is correlation, it existed before the correlation.

Placement [*nihād*] and position [*wad’*] are the state of a substance that has many parts in order, each part in one of the directions of the whole. Placement is of two sorts. Either it pertains to the root and is natural, like the fact that the human’s head is toward heaven, the soles of his feet toward the earth, his hands toward right and left, and his back and breast toward the front and the back; or it does not pertain to the root and is not natural, like his head’s being toward the earth and the soles of his feet toward heaven. The existence of position is after the existence of shape, which is quality, and the existence of shape after quantity.

As for whereness, it is that a substance is in another substance such that the surface of one encompasses the surface of the other. This is called "location." Location may be primary and pertaining to the root, like air under fire and above water; or not pertaining to the root, like a stone's being in the air. Its specificity is that it does not accept sharing, so two things do not fit into one location. As for quantity, quality, and the others, they are not like this, since it is likely that two or more things have one measure, or one color, or one correlation, or one position. As for the existence of whereness, it is after the existence of position.

As for act, it is of two sorts, either natural or freely chosen. From a "natural" actor comes one sort of act, but not the contradictory of that act. This is like fire, from which nothing comes by nature save burning, and making cold does not come from it; by nature it goes upwards, and it is not fitting that it go downward. But it is not necessary that the act of a "freely choosing" actor be of one sort. Rather, it is likely that two acts that contradict each other come from one actor through free choice, like moving upwards and downwards.

Being acted upon is also divided in keeping with act. Being acted upon "naturally" is like becoming cold and becoming warm. Being acted upon "soulishly" is like becoming happy and becoming sad. The thing that keeps on becoming existent from the actor is called "movement," and movement is for the beings and nonbeings of the states of a thing to come one after another. This is like something that starts from whiteness and gradually becomes black, or keeps on moving from up to down, or adds to smallness and keeps on becoming large.

The existence of act and being acted upon is in quantity, quality, position, or whereness, but not in substance, since what is not a substance does not become substance through being acted upon, nor can it be made a substance through act. Hence the existence of act and being acted upon is after the existence of one of these four.

As for whenness, it is after act and being acted upon, because time is the how-much-ness of movement. Movement may have an origin and an utmost end, like straight movement in location from down to up, so that its origin is down and its utmost end up; or in quantity from smallness to largeness; or in quality from sourness to sweetness; or in position from sitting to standing. Then the existence of its time is from the origin to the utmost end.

If the movement is joined, like turning, then the time is also conjoined. Revolving movement may also be in position, like the motion of the celestial sphere. It may also be in other states, like the motion of the simple things toward combination and compoundedness, and the motion of the compound things toward decomposition, disseverance, and simplicity.

The specificity of whenness is that one specific time may belong to many things and all of them share in it, unlike quantity and quality. Although several things may be exactly the same in quantity, or in quality, position, and correlation, the quantity that is in Zayd is not the same in number as the quantity that is in 'Amr, and so also are quality and the others. But the time that is Zayd's lifespan is the same number that is 'Amr's lifespan within which is Zayd.

As for the explication of the fact that all these states are accidents, not substances, this state becomes clear from two things: One from the state of their existence, and second from substance's being a substance.

[This becomes clear] from the state of their existence because their existence is called back to something else and does not belong to them. Quantity does not belong to quantity, but rather to something that is other than quantity, and that is the possessor of the quantity. Also, the existence of the accidents can only be known as correlated and ascribed, but the substance may be known without calling it back to other than the substance.

[This state also becomes clear] from the substance's being a substance even if its quantity, quality, position, or some other accident becomes different.

We have now finished discussing these meanings. And God knows better. (*Muṣannafāt* 477–502)

The Conclusion of *The Clarifying Method*

Explicating Which of the Syllogisms is More Eminent and More Virtuous

Know that the knowledges, as we mentioned earlier, are either conceptual or by assent. The conceptual knowledges are solitary knowns, and assent is knowing the relation between solitary knowns through affirmation and negation.

The sayings that show the road toward conceptual knowledges are sometimes strict definitions [*ḥadd*] and sometimes descriptive definitions [*rasm*]. It may also be that they are like strict and descriptive definitions, but they are not. Earlier we showed from which matter the sayings that are called “definitions” can be brought together and in what guise and placement they must be.

The saying that shows the road toward knowledges by assent is called a “proposition.” Among the sayings that take the seeker to assent, the most eminent saying is the syllogism, and the most eminent syllogism is that which takes to assent with certainty. Such a syllogism is called a “demonstration.” What is less than it is called “dialectical,” less than that “rhetorical,” and less than that “poetical.” It may be that it is counterfeit, and this is called “sophistic” and “contentious.”

Just as the most eminent saying that takes toward conception is the true definition, so also the most eminent saying that takes toward assent with certainty is the demonstrative syllogism. This is a syllogism that is composed of truthful premises and propositions, which are the most eminent of sayings. The most eminent of truthful sayings is the saying whose truthfulness is incontestable. The most eminent saying of truthfulness is the universal, everlasting saying, that is, which is known actually.

Any saying whose truthfulness is incontestable is one of two. Either its truthfulness is clear in its own essence without the intermediary of another saying, and this is called “primary”; or its truthfulness becomes clear through another saying. So also, this second is either clear in itself, or it has become clear through a third; and so also, this third through a fourth. However, this will not remain without bound. Inescapably it will end with a saying that is clear in itself, and this saying is called “primary.” In other words, the intelligent person has it in himself without striving and thought. Its mark is that he does not remember the moment of know-

ing it, nor the moment of wanting and seeking it, nor the path of reaching it. Despite all this, he cannot make the self doubt it. The relation of the primary sayings to demonstrations is the relation of the high genera to the definitions.

The primaries either make one conscious of the thing's being, or they make one conscious of that for which the thing came to be, or of the being of a state for the thing. [The states are like] unity or multiplicity and completeness or deficiency in respect of quantity; simplicity and nonsimplicity in respect of quality; organization and order or nonorganization and nonorder in respect of position; difference or compatibility in respect of correlation; permanence or nonpermanence and priority or nonpriority in respect of whenness; influence or noninfluence in respect of act; and receiving influence or not receiving influence in respect of being acted upon.

The demonstrative syllogism ends up in such sayings. The name "primaries" is suitable for such sayings when one has awareness of them. That which has not yet come into memory has not actually been obtained in the soul. Rather, it exists in self through possibility. As long as the soul does not yet look upon it—that is, the soul does not yet know that it is known—the thing is not an intelligible, which is to say that it has not been depicted in self. The intelligible has no other being than the fact that it is intelligible. As long as it is not intelligible, it has not in itself found being.

This is why we find the vast majority of people admitting that they do not know any judgment with certainty. If you ask them about certainty, they will answer, "We find no certainty in self." They can provide no example of a saying of certainty, except for a small group who have passed beyond some of the levels of possibility in certainty and arrived at preparedness. This group is closer to error than the former group, which has not yet reached preparedness. This is why we have found that many of the folk of reflection have collected spoiled views and crooked beliefs through their own thoughts. What we find in the books of the folk of the tomes is further from truthfulness and certainty. This [criticism] is not made in relation to a group who are simple, without the habit and potency of reflection and *theōria*. Rather the like of those tomes and utterances is ascribed to a group who strive fully in reflection and have passed beyond the level of the common people in *theōria*. Suffering to efface the bad forms from such souls is much harder than guiding those who have not acquired anything at all.

In this discussion, the purpose is that the sayings primary in truthfulness only come to exist when awareness is had of them and they are looked upon. If a soul is far from and unconscious of them, within it the intelligible is not actual. When something is not actual, how can it make something else actual? If it were fitting for that which is known potentially to be the source of the knowledge of an unknown, then indeed no human would remain ignorant, and everyone would have certainty in everything. This is because the primaries are potential for everyone.

A demonstration becomes a real demonstration only when its possessor gains certainty as to its correctness and knows the clarity of its premises and that through which the demonstration comes together, or the manner in which its premises end up at the primaries. Someone like this knows the thing and he knows the attributes joined to the things. He knows the joinedness in its incontestability along with the thing, and he also knows what it is that is joined to the joined. This is so until he arrives at that requisite whose requisiteness is clear without intermediary. Finally,

everything comes to be known in reality and correctness according to the state that has come to be. This is the purpose of demonstrations and definitions.

What we have mentioned in these pages was meant for the looker and the seeker. Since this much explication has been facilitated with this concision and brevity, let us stop.

May the Keeper and Nurturer of the anima, the animal, the intelligence, and the intelligent make the worthy reach that of which they are worthy—through boundless gentleness and bounty and endless power and capability! (*Muṣannafāt* 576–79)

Notes

Preface

1. The most comprehensive of these surveys is that edited by S. H. Nasr and O. Leaman, *History of Islamic Philosophy* (London: Routledge, 1995). This is the first work to which one should refer for information and bibliography on any of the broader issues raised in the present work. See also Henry Corbin, *A History of Islamic Philosophy* (London: Kegan Paul International, 1993); Oliver Leaman, *An Introduction to Medieval Islamic Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985); Majid Fakhry, *A History of Islamic Philosophy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983); M. M. Sharif, ed., *A History of Muslim Philosophy* (Wiesbaden: Harrasowitz, 1963–66); W. M. Watt, *Islamic Philosophy and Theology* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1962); T. J. de Boer, *The History of Philosophy in Islam* (London: Luzac, 1903). As a general rule, the earlier the study, the more sweeping and unreliable the generalizations.

2. For one such attempt that can be especially helpful to those familiar with contemporary philosophy, see I. R. Netton, *Allāh Transcendent: Studies in the Structure and Semiotics of Islamic Philosophy, Theology and Cosmology* (London: Routledge, 1989).

1. A Persian Philosopher

1. For the best summary in Persian of what is known about Bābā Afḍal's life and work, see 'Abbās Zaryāb, "Bābā Afḍal," *Dānishnāma-yi jahān-i islām* (Tehran: Bunyād-i Dā'irat al-Ma'ārif-i Islāmī, 1369/1980), part B1, 31–39. On the date of his death, see Zaryāb, p. 31, and J. Rypka, "Bābā Afḍal," *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (new edition), 1:838–39.

2. "Afdal al-Din Kashani and the Philosophical World of Khwaja Nasir al-Din Tusi," in M. E. Marmura, ed., *Islamic Theology and Philosophy: Studies in Honor of George F.*

Hourani (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1983), 249–64 (quote from 251), reprinted in Nasr, *The Islamic Intellectual Tradition in Persia* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press, 1996), 189–206 (quote from 191).

3. The *Lughat-nāma* of Dihkhudā, an encyclopedic dictionary of the Persian language, lists about forty figures who have been well enough known by the title “Bābā” to merit being listed under it. Of these, nearly half are Sufis of no renown, about one-third political personalities, and the rest scholars and poets.

4. *Muṣannaḡāt* refers to the collected Persian works of Bābā Afḡal (described later), and HIP to this book.

5. Ḍarrābī, *Tārīkh-i Kāshān*, edited by Ī. Afshār (Tehran: 1341/1962), 43.

6. Zaryāb, “Bābā Afḡal,” 31–32.

7. *Ibid.* See, for example, Ibn Sinā, *al-Ishārāt wa'l-tanbīhāt*, with the commentary of Ṭūsī (Tehran: Maṭba'at al-Ḥaydarī, 1377/1957–58), 1:283 (part 8, commentary on *qiyās al-khulf*).

8. *Muṣannaḡāt*, vii. Zaryāb agrees that there is no evidence in Bābā Afḡal's works for Ismā'īlī affiliation and that his writings are “totally empty of the religious and sectarian terminology of the Ismā'īlīs” (“Bābā Afḡal,” 32).

9. Zaryāb, “Bābā Afḡal,” 32.

10. Pierre Hadot, *Plotinus or The Simplicity of Vision* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 18.

11. Nasr, “Afdal al-Din Kashani,” in Marmura, *Islamic Theology and Philosophy*, 260.

12. I have discussed various problems connected with the use of the terms “mysticism” and “Sufism” in my *Faith and Practice of Islam: Three Thirteenth Century Sufi Texts* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992), part 4.

13. This section of the book has been translated by Shams Inati in *Ibn Sina and Mysticism* (London: Kegan Paul International, 1996). However, Inati pays no attention to the Sufi background that infuses the text.

14. Philip Merlan, *Monopsychism, Mysticism, Metaconsciousness: Problems of the Soul in the Neoplatonist and Neoplatonic Tradition* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1963), 20–21.

15. *Majmū'a-yi āthār-i fārsī-yi Shaykh-i Ishrāq*, edited by S. H. Nasr (Tehran: Imperial Iranian Academy of Philosophy, 1977), 217–18.

16. See, for example, Ghazālī, *The Niche of Lights*, translated by David Buchman (Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 1998).

17. Henry Corbin, *Avicenna and the Visionary Recital* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1960), 13.

18. On occasion he does mention God's “being,” but only to say that we can know nothing about it.

19. For various forms this maxim takes in Greek philosophy and interpretations offered for it, and for the role that it has played in Islamic thought, particularly in the form of the saying “He who knows himself knows his Lord,” see Alexander Altmann, “The Delphic Maxim in Medieval Islam and Judaism,” in his *Studies in Religious Philosophy and Mysticism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1969), 1–40. Despite the detailed references that Altmann supplies to the Islamic sources, he barely touches on the diverse interpretations that the saying was given by a great variety of thinkers. Ibn al-'Arabī alone offers scores of interpretations. For a few examples, see my *Sufi Path of Knowledge: Ibn al-'Arabī's Metaphysics of Imagination* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989) and my *Self-Disclosure of God: Principles of Ibn al-'Arabī's Cosmol-*

ogy (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998), indexes of hadiths under “He who knows himself.”

20. The identity of knower and known plays a significant role in Aristotle, and its elaboration was especially important for those philosophers who wanted to show how the soul achieves immortality. For a brief review of problems raised by this identity and Avicenna’s solutions, see Lenn E. Goodman, *Avicenna* (London: Routledge, 1992), esp. 163–74.

21. None of the Persian writings of the major philosophers has been studied thoroughly in the West, though a few translations have been made. The most important work to be translated into English is the section on theological issues from Avicenna’s *Dānishnāma*, published by Parviz Morewedge as *The Metaphysica of Avicenna* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973). Other works include Naṣīr Khusraw’s *Gushāyish wa rahāyish*, translated as *Knowledge and Liberation* by F. M. Hunzai (London: I. B. Tauris, 1998); W. M. Thackston, *The Mystical and Visionary Treatises of Suhrawardī* (London: Octagon, 1982); and Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī, *Akhlāq-i Nāsirī*, translated by G. M. Wickens as *The Nasirean Ethics* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1964).

22. See my forthcoming edition and translation of the text (Provo: Brigham Young University Press). In my introduction I discuss why Mullā Ṣadrā rewrote the text in Arabic and how he modified it to fit his own perspective.

23. It may be objected that the goal of theoretical understanding is precisely to transcend the concrete and that philosophy demands abstraction and generalization. However, to hold this as a universal rule would be to miss the spiritual dimension of the philosophical quest in premodern times, especially in the Platonic tradition. A. H. Armstrong points us in the right direction: “Plotinus understands the Platonic World of Forms in terms of direct sense-awareness: he does not reduce it to the conceptual skeleton to which even the bodily world of our immediate experience here below has to be reduced to be managed in scientific discourses.” “Platonic Mirrors,” in *Hellenic and Christian Studies* (Hampshire: Variorum, 1990), 6:171.

24. Note, for example, the *Ilāhiyyāt of the Shifāʾ*, section 8.6; or *Ilāhiyyāt-i dānishnāma-yi ʿalāʾī* (Tehran: Dihkhudā, 1353/1974), 84.

25. Other translations have also been offered for *mujarrad*, such as “immaterial,” “incorporeal,” and “disembodied,” but all these take us in the same direction as “abstract.” Moreover, not everything that is immaterial or corporeal is disengaged. The soul is immaterial and incorporeal, but it is not disengaged from materiality and corporeality. It is precisely the soul’s immersion in, attachment to, and engagement with the body that need to be overcome. The fully actualized intellect of the philosopher is not “disembodied,” because this intellect is the soul under a new name, and the soul dwells in the body. The soul is “embodied” as long as the body is alive (and, according to Ibn al-ʿArabī and much of later philosophy, after the body is dead as well). However, the soul is not necessarily engaged with or attached to the body. The disengaged soul controls the body and at the same time is utterly free of it, just as God controls the world and at the same time transcends it absolutely. The gerund from which *mujarrad* derives, *tajrīd*, has sometimes been translated as “catharsis,” but *tajrīd* does not mean purification and cleansing. It makes no sense to speak of the divine Essence as having the attribute of catharsis.

26. For an example from his famous *Ihyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn*, see Chittick, “Eschatology,” in S. H. Nasr, ed., *Islamic Spirituality: Foundations* (New York: Crossroad, 1987), 398.

27. F. Sezgin, *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums* (Leiden: Brill, 1957–), 4:43–44. Its most recent edition is by ʿA. Badawī, *al-Aflātūniyyat al-muḥdatha ʿind al-ʿArab* (Cairo: Wikālat al-Maṭbūʿāt, 1977), 51–116. The English translation, from the Latin

translation by Bardenhewer (*Hermetis Trismegisti de castigatione animae libellus*, Bonn: 1873), is found in Walter Scott, *Hermetica: The Ancient Greek and Latin Writings Which Contain Religious or Philosophic Teachings Ascribed to Hermes Trismegistus* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924–36), 4:277–352.

28. F. E. Peters, *Aristoteles Arabus* (Leiden: Brill, 1968), 43. The Arabic text was published by A. Ahwānī in Ibn Rushd, *Talkhīṣ kitāb al-naḥs* (Cairo: 1950), 128–75. M. Saghīr Hasan maintains that Bābā Afḍal’s translation was based on a better Arabic text than the printed version (“Notes on the Edition of the Kitāb al-naḥs Ascribed to Ishāq ibn Ḥunayn,” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1956–57, 72).

29. Peters, *Aristoteles Arabus*, 65–66; on the sources of the Arabic text, see J. Kraemer, “Das arabische Original des Liber de pomo,” in *Studi Orientalistici in onore de Giorgio Levi della Vida* (Rome: Istituto per L’Oriente, 1956), 1:484–506. Bābā Afḍal’s text was edited and translated loosely into English, with rather too much stress on the importance of the classical heritage and not enough on the Islamic background, by D. S. Margoliouth (“The Book of the Apple, Ascribed to Aristotle,” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1892, 187–252).

30. It has an uncritical edition that was printed by Ḥ. Rabbānī as an addendum to Jāmī, *Ashī ‘at al-lama’āt* (Tehran: Kitābkhāna-yi ‘Ilmiyya-yi Ḥāmīdī, 1352/1973), 338–58. Rabbānī claims that the text cannot be by Bābā Afḍal because it is not sufficiently philosophical. But this judgment could have been made only on the basis of a superficial glance at Bābā Afḍal’s writings; in fact, Ghazālī’s philosophical concerns as expressed in the *Alchemy* are extremely close to those of Bābā Afḍal. Moreover, the last paragraph of the work, not found in Ghazālī’s original, is a perfect presentation of some of Bābā Afḍal’s basic teachings.

31. I have not seen the term “soulish” employed to translate *naḥsānī*, but at least it is not a neologism or an archaism. Webster’s defines it as “relating to, involving, or suggesting the soul,” and this is exactly what *naḥsānī* means. The usual “psychic” or “psychological” have too many inappropriate connotations, nor do they mean “pertaining to the soul,” even if that may be said to be the meaning of Greek *psychikos*.

32. Sa’īd Nafīsī, *Rubā’iyyāt-i Afḍal al-Dīn Kāshānī bi-ḍamīma-yi mukhtaṣarī dar aḥwāl wa āthār-i way* (Tehran: 1331/1952; reprinted 1363/1984). The new edition, *Dīwān-i Ḥakīm Afḍal al-Dīn Muḥammad Maraḡī Kāshānī*, is edited by M. Fayḍī, Ḥ. ‘Āṭifī, ‘A. Bihniyā, and ‘A. Sharīf (Kāshān: Idāra-yi Farhang wa Hunar, 1351/1972).

33. M. T. Dānishpazhūh, ed., *Jāmī ‘al-ḥikma* (Tehran: Bunyād-i Qur’ān, 1361/1982).

34. *Mujmal al-ḥikma*, edited by M. T. Dānishpazhūh and Īraj Afshār (Tehran: Pazhūhishgāh-i ‘Ulūm-i Insānī wa Muṭāla‘āt-i Farhangī, 1375/1996).

35. Printed by Muḥyī al-Dīn al-Kurdī in *Jāmī ‘al-badāyī* (Cairo: 1917), pp. 201–204; cf. Zaryāb, “Bābā Afḍal,” 39.

36. Zaryāb, “Bābā Afḍal,” 39.

2. The Worldview of Islamic Philosophy

1. Especially helpful here is the chapter “How to Read Islamic Philosophy” in Oliver Leaman’s, *Introduction to Medieval Islamic Philosophy*. See also Netton’s introduction to *Allāh Transcendent* and Morewedge’s introduction to *Essays in Islamic Philosophy, Theology, and Mysticism* (Oneonta: Department of Philosophy, 1995).

2. Ghazālī’s philosophical skill is completely apparent in his famous attack on the philosophers, which, as its translator remarks, “makes its case through closely argued

criticisms that are ultimately philosophical.” Al-Ghazālī, *The Incoherence of the Philosophers*, translated by Michael E. Marmura (Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 1997), xvi.

3. For a detailed discussion of the nature of the Islamic tradition and philosophy's role in it, see Sachiko Murata and William C. Chittick, *The Vision of Islam* (St. Paul: Paragon House, 1994), esp. chapter 6.

4. It has been suggested that the best term for what “education” implied in Islamic society is *taʿdīb*, “conveying courtesy,” since Islamic education involved not only the transferal of knowledge (*taʿlīm*), but also the inculcation of the proper and appropriate activity (*adab*) that true knowledge demands. The connotation of beauty in the term *adab* is implicit in the use of its derivative *adabiyyāt* to mean “literature.” The importance of beauty is also reflected in the central role that poetry played both in Islamic literature and in the training of the cultivated soul. It should be kept in mind too that Sufis went as far as to say *al-taṣawwuf kulluhu ʿādāb*—“Sufism, all of it, is acts of courtesy.” For a detailed investigation of the implications of *adab* for Bābā Afḍal's contemporary Ibn al-ʿArabī, see my *Sufi Path of Knowledge*, esp. 174–79.

5. Moreover, simply to reject scientism will not help if a coherent, alternative view of the universe cannot be offered in its stead, or, what is worse, if political ideology replaces scientific belief. Here it is worth considering the thesis of Christos C. Evangeliou, who argues cogently that the destiny of philosophy, once it fell into the hands of the non-Greeks, was to serve alien masters. He sums up his thesis in the first page of his study: “The acquired bad habits of European ‘philosophy,’ that is, its docile service of alien authorities, appear to have been transferred from medieval theology to modern scientific technology since the seventeenth century, and to Marxist political ideology since the nineteenth” (*The Hellenic Philosophy: Between Europe, Asia and Africa* [Binghamton: Institute of Global Cultural Studies, 1997], 1). In passing references, Evangeliou puts Islamic philosophy in the same category as medieval Christian philosophy, and there are many reasons for doing so. But a more nuanced approach would bring out the stark difference between the theological principles underlying the Christian and Islamic traditions, as well as the fact that Islam never had any authoritarian institution like the Church. The Christian doctrines of incarnation and the trinity raise all sorts of theological mysteries and conundrums that the Muslim philosophers did not have to deal with. Their only theological axiom was *tawḥīd*—the unity of reality—but neither they nor other reflective Muslims thought that this had anything to do with the mysterious, and they saw Plato and Aristotle as its firm supporters. For Islamic philosophy, *tawḥīd* is a principle that is self-evident to a healthy intelligence. The philosophers set out to demonstrate it not because it was unclear to them, but because a healthy intelligence is not the human norm. Moreover, the Muslim philosophers have hardly been “docile” toward the religious authorities, or else they would not have been the objects of repeated polemical attacks by the jurists and theologians over the centuries.

6. See for example Rustom Roy, “The Twilight of Science—Last of the ‘Gods’,” in *Futures* 29/6 (1997), 471–82.

7. Armstrong, *Hellenic and Christian Studies*, 6:178.

8. Morewedge's translation of this work as *The Metaphysica of Avicenna* has a useful discussion of the historical background.

9. Netton offers a different and less Koranic sounding list of ten important divine attributes in Avicenna's teachings (*Allāh Transcendent*, 155–62), but six of the ten are still Koranic divine names.

10. Avicenna, *Ilāhiyyāt-i dānishnāma-yi ʿalāʾī*, 164; Morewedge, *Metaphysica*, 108.

11. See Netton's chapter on Avicenna, "Ibn Sinā's Necessary and Beloved Deity," in *Allāh Transcendent*, esp. 175–76.

12. The term *Lordship* (*rubūbiyya*) designates the attribute of the Lord (*rabb*), a name that specifies God inasmuch as He nurtures, protects, and has authority over created things, which are His "servants" (*ʿabd*). The term was commonly used to specify the topic of philosophical texts concerned with theological issues. The Arabic translation of the *Theology of Aristotle* gives in its very title the expression *qawl ʿalā al-rubūbiyya*, "a talk about Lordship," as a gloss on the Greek loan word *uthūlūjiyā*, "theology." Historians of philosophy have translated *rubūbiyya* in various ways, such as "divinity" and "sovereignty."

13. It is not quite true to say that Bābā Afḍal does not ascribe existence to God, but he certainly does not ascribe it in a way that would allow for philosophical reflection upon what it means. Thus he says, for example, "There is nothing to be discussed concerning [His] Being and Ipseity" (*Muṣannaḥāt* 652; HIP 146).

14. The word *hastī* is a verbal noun that derives from the verb *hastan*, one of the forms of the "to be" verb in Persian. Like another form of the "to be" verb, the hypothetical *astan*, *hastan* is cognate with English "is." The third form of the "to be" verb, *būdan*, is cognate with English "be." *Hastī* is constructed from *hast*, which is both a verbal noun with more or less the same meaning as *hastī* and the third person singular form of the verb, meaning "he/she/it is." I underline the *is* in the sentence because of the strong connotation of "being there" in the *hastan* form of the "to be" verb, in contrast to the *astan* form, which is simply a copula. Thus *hast* is a complete sentence: "It is." But *ast* is incomplete: "It is . . .," and we want to know "what" it is. To complete the sentence, we need an adjective or a noun. In short, *hastī* or "being" is a verbal noun derived from *hast*, and it has the literal sense of "is-ness" or "to-be-ness" or "to-be-there-ness." Bābā Afḍal uses it as a synonym both for *wujūd*, "existence," and, especially in the plural, for *mawjūd*, "existent." He also uses the terms *hast* and *būd* (a gerund from the other form of the "to be" verb) in the same meaning as *hastī*.

15. As for *kawn* and its derivatives, it is limited by the fact that the Koranic context makes it pertain only to creation, not to God himself. For most thinkers, the word's limited connotations do not allow it to designate the concept of being per se.

16. Merlan, *Monopsychism*, 22.

17. Take, for example, the position of Avicenna, as explained by Fakhry, *History*, 161.

18. Merlan, *Monopsychism*, 22. Much of Merlan's book addresses theories and debates about the nature of conjunction. The issue comes up quickly in any investigation of the views of the Muslim philosophers. For a recent scholarly study that deals with it in some detail, see H. A. Davidson, *Alfarabi, Avicenna, and Averroes, on Intellect* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).

19. The Persian language complicates the issue, because we have three more terms that can be used more or less interchangeably with the two Arabic words. One is the already mentioned *jān* or "anima," which Bābā Afḍal uses as a rough synonym for *nafs*. Usually, however, *jān* refers to the *nafs* on the animal level or higher; thus *jānwar*, "having a *jān*," means "animal," as does the standard Arabic term, *ḥayawān*, which means more literally "living." The second Persian term is *rawān*, which Bābā Afḍal uses much less frequently than any of these other terms and which I translate as "lifebreath." The third and most commonly used term is *khwud*, which, like *nafs* in Arabic, is the basic reflexive pronoun, meaning "self." Thus, when Bābā Afḍal wants to explain what he means by *nafs* or "soul," he says it means *khwud*.

20. “Creation from nothing” is a theological axiom of sorts, but there is no agreement as to what it means, so it was dealt with in a variety of ways, some of them mutually contradictory. After all, there are three extremely important terms here begging to be defined—*creation*, *not*, and *thing*—all of which are central to theological and philosophical thinking. In *Allāh Transcendent*, Netton makes the Koranic “Creator paradigm” a basic issue in his study of philosophical positions, but he does not do justice to the theological problems raised by claiming that the Koranic God creates *ex nihilo*. What exactly does *ex nihilo* mean? What terminology did the Muslim theologians employ to express the idea? How do they agree and disagree among themselves?

21. For the schemes of the two philosophers, see Netton, *Allāh Transcendent*, 116, 165. For that of Ibn al-‘Arabī, see Chittick, *Self-Disclosure*, xxviii–xxxii.

22. For a study and translation of Avicenna’s treatise, see Peter Heath, *Allegory and Philosophy in Avicenna* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992). For some of Ibn al-‘Arabī’s discussions, see James Morris, “The Spiritual Ascension: Ibn ‘Arabī and the *Mi‘rāj*,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 107 (1987): 629–52; 108 (1988): 63–77. For a survey of some of the philosophical uses to which the *mi‘rāj* accounts were put, see Altmann, “The Ladder of Ascension,” in his *Studies*, 41–72.

23. See Davidson, *Alfarabi, Avicenna*, 58–63.

24. The expression is of course reminiscent of the term “perfect human being” (*al-insān al-kāmil*), made famous by Ibn al-‘Arabī, though there is no reason to suspect any direct historical link between the two concepts. On the religious side, the idea of achieving human perfection (using the term *kamāl*) goes back to the hadith literature, and the philosophers frequently discussed it.

25. Sometimes *naẓar* is translated as “contemplation,” and that may indeed suggest something closer to what the word implies. It is also translated as “speculation,” which would be good if the word still had its archaic meaning of “mental vision,” but not in its modern meanings of prolonged analysis and theorizing and its connotations of supposition and even fantasy.

26. Armstrong, *Hellenic and Christian Studies*, 6:164.

27. G. C. Anawati and Sa‘id Zayed, eds., *al-Shifā‘: al-Ṭabī‘iyyāt 6—al-Nafs* (Cairo: al-Hay‘at al-Miṣriyyat al-‘Āmma li’l-Kitāb, 1975), 208.

28. M. Ṣabrī al-Kurdī, ed., *al-Najāt*, (Cairo: Maṭba‘at al-Sa‘āda, 1938), 193.

3. Basic Philosophical Notions

1. For an overview of the Ikhwān al-Ṣafā‘, see I. R. Netton, *Muslim Neoplatonists* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1991). For the life and career of Avicenna, along with a sympathetic philosophical engagement with many of his important ideas, see L. E. Goodman, *Avicenna*. The histories of Islamic philosophy all discuss the *Theology*, and there is a fine translation by Geoffrey Lewis, which is found in Paul Henry and Hans-Rudolf Schwyzer, *Plotini Opera. Tomus II. Enneades IV–V* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, and Brussels: L’Édition Universelle, 1959). The translation is arranged according to the order of the Greek Plotinus, which is different from the Arabic version, and it is printed with a facing Greek text, making it especially valuable for classical scholars.

2. He does use the adjectival form, *falsafī*, in his first letter to Shams al-Dīn Dizwākūsh, where he pairs it with its synonym *hikamī* (“pertaining to wisdom,” which I translate here as “sapiential”). *Muṣannafāt* 682.19 (HIP 148).

3. Pierre Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995), 58. If we look at the Greek understanding of philosophy as a spiritual quest, which Hadot recaptures so well in this book, it is not at all difficult to understand why many Muslim intellectuals found philosophy perfectly congenial with their own religious tradition.

4. “Guise” translates *hay’a*, which the Arabic dictionaries define as a thing’s state (*hāl*), quality (*kayfiyya*), shape (*shakl*), and form (*ṣūra*). *Hay’at al-nujūm*, “the guise of the stars,” is a name for astronomy. *Tahyi’a*, the second form of the verb from the same root, means to put into shape, to fix up something’s states and qualities, to adjust, to prepare.

5. G. C. Anawati and Sa’id Zayed, eds., *al-Shifā’ al-Ilāhiyyāt*, (reprinted Tehran: Intishārāt-i Nāshir Khusraw, 1363/1984), 429–30; al-Kurdī, ed., *al-Najāt*, 296–97.

6. For an overview with references to the specialist monographs, see S. H. Nasr, “The Meaning and Concept of Philosophy in Islam,” in Nasr and Leaman, *History of Islamic Philosophy*, 21–26.

7. al-Kindī, *al-Falsafat al-ūlā*, in *Rasā’il al-Kindī al-falsafiyya*, edited by M. ‘A. Abū Rīda (Cairo: Dār al-Fikr al-‘Arabī, 1978), 25, 30–31. For a complete English translation of this work, with extensive notes on the Greek sources and parallels, see Alfred L. Ivry, *al-Kindī’s Metaphysics* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1974). Ivry’s translation of this passage is found on 55–56.

8. *Fī ḥudūd al-ashyā’ wa rusūmihā*, in Abū Rīda, ed., *Rasā’il al-Kindī al-falsafiyya*, 121–22. For the Greek sources of these sayings, see Ivry’s discussion in *al-Kindī’s Metaphysics*, 115–16.

9. This contrasts with the history of the term “virtue” itself, since Latin *virtus* (like Greek *aretē*) means strength or manliness, and thus it suggests that virtue is a human achievement. Christian thinking had to distinguish between “theological” and “natural” virtues, a distinction that seems almost superfluous in Islamic terms. “Nature,” after all, is itself God’s “bounty,” and all good comes from God and belongs fully to him; this is one of the meanings of the Koranic formula *al-ḥamdu li’llāh*, “The praise” for any bounty and any virtue “belongs to God.”

10. In Sufism, the quest for perfection is frequently discussed in terms of a maxim ascribed to the Prophet: “Assume the character [*takhalluq*] of God’s character traits [*akhlāq*].” Ibn al-‘Arabī considers this Sufi discussion of *takhalluq* to be the same as the philosophical discussion of *tashabbuh* (Chittick, *Sufi Path of Knowledge*, 283).

11. Ikhwān al-Ṣafā’, *Rasā’il* (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1957), 3:30.

12. “Nomic testaments” translates *al-waṣāyā al-nāmūsiyya*. The word *nāmūs*, from Greek *nomos*, often designates human law as opposed to revealed law. But the Ikhwān al-Ṣafā’ are using it here as a synonym for Sharia (*sharī’a*), that is, revealed law as given to the prophets. Evidence for this can be seen in the discussion surrounding the first of these two passages, in which the Ikhwān demonstrate that the prophetic teachings—for which they employ both *sharī’a* and *nāmūs*—lead to the same goal as philosophy. It may not be out of place to note here that proponents of the ecology movement have criticized the Judeo-Christian teaching that God gave human beings dominion over the earth, and in doing so they typically place Islam in the same category, with good reason. However, before the colonialist era, Muslims never applied this teaching to technological expansion. The theological and philosophical reasons for this are clearly expressed in this passage. The precondition for assuming God’s vicegerency (*khilāfa*) and exercising dominion over the earth is “judicious governing” on the basis of the “nomic testaments” and the “philosophic disciplines.” The anthropocosmic vision that results from such testaments and disciplines precludes technological rapacity, because it locates human vicegerency in the spiritual realm or the realm of the intellect, not in the manipulation of God’s handiwork.

13. *Ibid.*, 1:298.

14. *Theology*, Arabic text edited by ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Badawī in *Aflūṭīn ‘ind al-‘Arab* (Cairo: Dār al-Nahḍat al-‘Arabiyya, 1966), 50. In the already mentioned Lewis translation, this passage is found on p. 205 (passage III 38); all translations are my own.

15. *Theology*, 87; Lewis, 245 (VII 20).

16. *Theology*, 93; Lewis, 465 (VIII 11).

17. *Theology*, 56; Lewis, 375 (IV 3).

18. Badawī, the editor of the Arabic text, vocalizes this as *al-un*, considering it a transliteration of the Greek *ōn*, “to be” (from which we have “ontology”). It is conceivable that the Arabic translator did transliterate the word, but it is inconceivable that, without clear instructions, readers would have read it other than as it appears in Arabic, that is, *al-an* or *al-in*. From this word we have *anniyya* (or *inniyya*), about which a good deal has been written by historians of Islamic philosophy. The majority opinion holds that it derives from the conjunction *an/in*, which begins a clause to indicate “that” something is such and such. Thus *al-an* would mean something like “the assertion that a thing is,” and *anniyya* originally meant something like “that-it-is-ness.” In the early texts, *anniyya* is sometimes used to denote a thing’s quiddity, and sometimes its existence. After Avicenna made the distinction between existence and quiddity central to philosophical understanding, *anniyya* was usually used as a synonym for *wujūd*.

19. *Theology*, 120; Lewis, 407 (VIII 185–86).

20. Ikhwān al-Ṣafā’, *Rasā’il*, 3:232.

21. *Ibid.* 3:233–34.

22. Avicenna, *Shifā’: Ilāhiyyāt*, 435. The phrase in brackets is taken from the almost identical passage in *Najāṭ*, 299.

23. A good example of the type of statements that would lead unsympathetic readers to think that the philosophers considered themselves prophets is provided by Ibn Ṭufayl’s famous philosophical novel, first translated into English in 1710, which describes the ascent of the hero’s soul to intellectual perfection on a desert island without outside help. See Lenn Goodman, *Ibn Tufayl’s Hayy ibn Yaqzan*, 2d ed. (Los Angeles: Gee Tee Bee, 1983).

24. Avicenna, *Shifā’: Ilāhiyyāt*, 425–26; *Najāṭ*, 293.

25. Ikhwān al-Ṣafā’, *Rasā’il*, 3:237.

26. *Ibid.*, 1: 260–62.

27. Armstrong summarizes Plotinus’ position as follows: “We need to remember that *Psychē* [soul/*nafs*] in the Platonic tradition does not have a special world of her own. There is the intelligible world, which, after the sharp Aristotelian distinction between *Nous* [intellect/‘*aql*] and *Psychē* came to be generally accepted, was thought to be the special realm of the Divine Intellect, and there is the world perceived by the senses, and *Psychē* is the link between them. But she does not link them by possessing an intermediate realm of her own” (*Hellenic and Christian Studies*, 6:162).

28. *Theology*, 87–88; Lewis, 247 (VII 22–26).

29. *Theology*, 67–68; Lewis, 433 (V 15–16). The Badawī text is corrupt here, so I take help from Lewis’s translation, altering terms slightly to maintain consistency.

30. Hadot, *Plotinus*, 12.

31. Armstrong, *Hellenic and Christian Studies*, 6:178.

32. Carl Mitchum, “Homo Faber Absconditus: The Historical Birth, Death, and Virtual Resurrection of Tools,” typescript.

33. The etymology of the word *āla* suggests something of the unitarian way of thinking that often underlies the usage of words in Islamic texts. The word’s root is *a-w-l*, and the basic verb is *āl*, which means to return, to resort. The same root can be

considered as the source of the adjective *awwal*, meaning first, a favorite philosophical name of God. The sense of *awwal* would then be that to which everything goes back. The second-pattern verb from the same root, *ta`wil*, means to return something to something, to take it back, to make it go back to the first. In philosophical and religious texts, *ta`wil* means to interpret, and, more specifically, it means symbolic and analogic interpretation as opposed to literal exegesis, *tafsir*. From the same root we have the noun *āl*, which means family or nearest relations, because “recourse is had to them in all affairs.” The word can also mean body, person, and tent. *Āla* or “tool” is derived from *āl* or “family,” and grammatically it implies an individual instance of the *āl*. Hence *āla* implies a family or a whole of which the *āl* is a part. Besides meaning tool, instrument, implement, and the male organ, *āla* also means tent pole. I do not think it is going too far to say that the general Islamic picture of the soul and its relation to the intellect allows us to think of the intellect as paterfamilias, the soul as mother, and the bodily potencies, organs, and limbs as the “tools” or members of the family. On *āla*, see E. W. Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon* (Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society, 1984), 127–28. On intellect and soul as father and mother, see Sachiko Murata, *The Tao of Islam* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992), esp. 155, 167.

34. Bābā Afḍal uses Arabic *wahm* and Persian *gumān* interchangeably, so I translate them both as “sense-intuition.” In cases where he uses *gumān* in a nontechnical sense, I translate it as “supposition.”

35. Most commonly, scholars have used “estimation,” following the *estimatio* of the Latin translators. Parviz Morewedge has enumerated some of the problems connected with this and other translations, but his proposal that the term be rendered as “prehension” does not really help the reader understand what is at issue (“Epistemology: The Internal Sense of Prehension [*wahm*] in Islamic Philosophy,” in his *Essays in Islamic Philosophy*, 123–59). Murata’s “sensory intuition” helps bring out the intermediary status of *wahm* (*Tao of Islam*, esp. 351, n. 77).

36. All those interested in the exact details of how various Muslim thinkers adopted the philosophical concepts that had come from Greek thought, defined them in their own terms, and debated their meanings among themselves can refer to the specialist monographs. As noted, a good place to begin is always the general histories of Islamic philosophy mentioned in the first note of this book.

37. There is debate among the commentators as to the pronoun’s antecedent. Those who think it refers to God take it as a statement of the special status that God gave to human beings and sometimes as an assertion of divine immanence. Those who think it refers to Adam want to preserve God’s utter transcendence and avoid any suggestion that God could have a “form,” which is a creaturely attribute.

38. Armstrong, *Hellenic and Christian Studies*, 6:179.

39. Hadot, *Plotinus*, 12.

40. Avicenna, *Najāt*, 193.

41. “Unconditioned body” (*al-jism al-muṭlaq*) is bodiment per se, free of any form other than bodiment. It is simply body, not qualified by starness or horseness or stoneness. There is of course no such thing “out there,” that is, in the external world of the senses, but the intelligible world is something else. If we look at the whole universe in its indefinite spatial and temporal expansion, it can be considered a single body, unconditioned by any specific qualities, given that as a whole it is qualified by all possible bodily qualities. There is no “empty space,” for example, but simply various forms of bodiment. *Muṭlaq* is often translated as “absolute,” but “absolute body” does not make much sense. Nor does Bābā Afḍal mean by *wujūd-i muṭlaq* “absolute existence”—which would presumably be God’s own existence—the Necessary in Existence. Rather, he

means “unconditioned existence,” that is, all of existence as found throughout the universe on every level of the Origin and the Return. It is “unconditioned” because it assumes every possible form, so it cannot be considered to be existence only on this condition or that, or only qualified by some attributes rather than others.

42. Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ, *Rasāʾil* 2:6–7.

43. Rūmī’s *Mathnawī* is differentiated from other books of the same genre by being called *Mathnawī-yi maʿnawī*, the “Meaning-related Mathnawī.” In this sort of context, translators commonly translate the term as “spiritual,” but this loses a certain nuance of the original, since “spirits” are not necessarily identical with “meanings,” and *rūhānī* (“spiritual”) in Persian and Arabic has different connotations from *maʿnawī*.

44. *Rasāʾil*, 1:404–407.

4. Background Texts

1. Islamic texts commonly set up an opposition between “caprice” (*hawā*), which designates the wants and wishes of the individual soul, and “intellect,” which restrains and controls the soul. The Koran identifies caprice as a false god, and the later texts use it as a rough synonym for *shahwa*, “appetite.” Bābā Afḍal defines it in a philosophical context as “wishing for nonlasting works” (HIP 167). For the Sufi use of the term, see Chittick, *Faith and Practice*, 198–99.

2. In Koranic terms, “godwariness” (*taqwā*) is an all-embracing virtue that encapsulates everything praiseworthy in the soul. The basic implication of the term is that those who have it are extremely careful about everything they do by keeping God’s commands and prohibitions constantly in mind. The Koran says, “Surely the noblest of you in God’s eyes is the most godwary of you” (49:13). For further explanation, see Murata and Chittick, *Vision of Islam*, 282–85.

3. “Messengers” translates *rusul*, a Koranic term for prophet, as in the expression, “Muhammad is God’s messenger.” According to the Koran, “Every nation has a messenger” (10:47). The Koran also calls some of the prophets “summoners” (*dāʾī*)—from the word *daʾwa*, meaning “to call (to God)” —but this term came to be used primarily for preachers and missionaries. That the messengers had been busy “for ages” reflects the Islamic understanding that God sent prophets continually from the time of Adam down to Muhammad. The commonly accepted number of prophets, derived from the hadith literature, is 124,000.

4. For a few passages from this section of the *Iḥyāʾ*, see R. J. McCarthy, *Freedom and Fulfillment: An Annotated Translation of al-Ghazālī’s al-Murqīdh min al-Ḍalāl and other Relevant Works of al-Ghazālī* (Boston: Twayne, 1980), 363–82.

5. Curved brackets in this text indicate additions from the published text of Ghazālī’s work, *Kimīyā-yi saʿādāt*, edited by Ḥ. Khadīw-jam (Tehran: Jībī, 1354/1975). I add chapter numbers and headings where they have been dropped, and I also add a few short passages which are not found in the printed text of Bābā Afḍal’s abridgment, but which seem necessary for understanding the point.

6. In the *Iḥyāʾ*, Ghazālī calls the second pillar “habits” (*ʿādāt*) by which he means instructions relative to social custom and convention, in keeping with the letter of the Sharia. Thus he discusses there—as in the second section of the *Alchemy*—proper ways to engage in eating, marriage, trade, companionship, travel, listening to music, and advising others to pursue a right course of life. He uses the term *interaction* (*muʿāmala*) in a much broader sense. He says right at the beginning of the book that there are two types of religious knowledge, knowledge of unveiling (*mukāshafa*) and knowledge of

interaction. The first is concerned only with laying bare the known object, and the second addresses the object of knowledge as well as appropriate activity and practice. He explains that the *Iḥyā'* deals exclusively with the second sort of knowledge, and that this can be subdivided into two sorts, that which pertains to the outward realm and that which pertains to the inward realm. The outward realm is further subdivided into (1a) acts of worship (*ʾibādāt*) and (1b) habits. The inward realm is subdivided into (2a) praiseworthy character traits and (2b) blameworthy character traits, or “salvation-bringers” (*munjiyāt*) and “perishment-bringers” (*muhlikāt*). These then are the four parts of the *Iḥyā'*. However, a little later in the text (1.2) he describes “knowledge of interactions” as “the knowledge of the states of the heart,” both those states that are praiseworthy and those that are blameworthy. He explains in detail that it embraces knowledge of all beautiful and ugly character traits as well as how to eliminate the ugly and strengthen the beautiful. When Bābā Afḍal uses the term in his own writings, he seems to have this second, much narrower meaning in view.

7. Bābā Afḍal has altered Ghazālī's text significantly here. The original of this sentence says that the reality of the heart cannot be known, whereas this sentence says that it can be known, which is much more in keeping with Bābā Afḍal's own position. The rest of the chapter is either dropped or rewritten. For a complete translation of chapter 3, see Murata, *Tao of Islam*, 233–34.

8. Command and Creation are standard terms, especially in Sufi texts, for the two worlds—the spiritual and the corporeal. They are derived from the Koranic verse, “His are the Creation and the Command” (7:54).

9. In this sentence I follow the text of *Kīmiyā*, 18, since the slightly different text given in the edition of the *Four Headings* does not make sense.

10. The Koranic verse normally cited to prove that the angels cannot oppose God's command is this: “They disobey God not in what they are commanded and do what they are commanded” (66:6).

11. The word “soul” (*nafs*) here is used in the sense of the Koranic “soul that commands to evil” (12:53), which is the sense that it usually has in Sufi texts. It designates what Ghazālī is referring to as the dog, the pig, and the devil. In philosophical writings, the word is usually used in a positive sense. For an analysis of both its positive and negative senses within the context of Sufi theorizing, see Ibn al-ʿArabī's chapter on *nafs* from his *Futūḥāt al-makkiyya*, translated in Chittick, *Self-Disclosure*, 270–71. As noted earlier, “caprice” (*hawā*) is an important Koranic term, and it has much the same meaning as *nafs* in the negative sense.

12. Ghazālī, like many other thinkers, often employs the science of dream-interpretation (*taʾbīr al-manām*) to illuminate the nature of death. See Ghazālī, *The Remembrance of Death and the Afterlife*, translated by T. J. Winter (Cambridge, England: The Islamic Texts Society, 1989), 149–69.

13. The word is *adab*, and as remarked in chapter 2, it plays an important role in Bābā Afḍal's discussions of the training of the soul. Indeed, it is one of the most basic of terms in Islamic texts for what needs to be acquired to live up to human status.

14. Notice that Ghazālī employs the Koranic and Shari'ite terminology—obedience (*tāʾa*) and disobedience (*maʿṣiya*)—as well as the philosophical terminology.

15. This discussion is well known among the philosophers. Compare Avicenna: “You should know that every soulish faculty has its own specific enjoyment and good and its own specific torment and evil. For example, the enjoyment and good of appetite is that it gives rise to an agreeable sensory quality through the five senses. The enjoyment of wrath is mastery. The enjoyment of imagination is hope. The enjoyment of memory is remembering congenial things in the past. Torment in each case is the opposite of the correspond-

ing enjoyment. All these share in a certain manner in the fact that awareness of what is congenial and agreeable to them is the good and the enjoyment specific to each. What is in essence and reality congenial with each is gaining the perfection which, in relation to it, is a perfection in act" (*Najāt*, 291; cf. *Shifāʾ: Ilāhiyyāt*, 423–24).

16. The Throne (*ʿarsh*) and Footstool (*kursī*) are mentioned in the Koran. The first is where God "sits," and the second "encompasses the heavens and the earth." The terms are often used as cosmological symbols, and they are commonly identified with the starless heaven and the sphere of the fixed stars. The Preserved Tablet, mentioned later on in this passage, is where the Supreme Pen writes. The Tablet and Pen are often identified with the Universal Soul and the First Intellect.

17. The term *mothers* (*ummahāt*) is commonly used to designate the four elements—even though two of them have just been mentioned—in contrast to the "fathers" (*ābāʾ*), which are the heavens. The "compound things," which are the minerals, plants, and animals, are also called the "progeny" (*muwalladāt*), i.e., the children of the fathers and the mothers.

18. Seraphiel (*Isrāʾīl*) is the angel given charge of blowing the Trumpet on the Last Day. At the first blast, everyone in heaven and earth will swoon, and at the second blast, everyone will wake up and be made present for the Mustering (*ḥaṣhr*). Bābā Afḍal refers to the microcosmic function of Seraphiel and the other archangels in *The Book of the Everlasting*.

19. In the last of the forty chapters, translated by Winter as Ghazālī, *The Remembrance of Death*.

20. Besides paralleling the Bible (Isaiah 64:4, 1 Cor. 2:9) and a passage in the Gospel of Thomas, this is also a hadith found in the most authoritative sources. See William Graham, *Divine Word and Prophetic Word in Early Islam* (The Hague: Mouton, 1977), 117–19.

21. As noted earlier, "following authority" (*taqlīd*) can mean following the ulama in matters of the Sharia, in which case it is considered praiseworthy. But as Ghazālī makes clear here, it is not praiseworthy in matters of faith. As for "fanaticism" (*taʿaṣṣub*), Ghazālī means unreasoning and impassioned adherence to some idea. In a section of the "Four Headings" that Bābā Afḍal did not include in his abridgment, Ghazālī explains how such blind following of authority can act as a veil on the path to God: "The cause of the veil is that someone will learn the creed of the Sunnis and he will learn the proofs for that as they are uttered in dialectics and debate, then he will give his whole heart over to this and believe that there is no knowledge whatsoever beyond it. If something else enters his heart, he will say, 'This disagrees with what I have heard, and whatever disagrees with it is false.' It is impossible for someone like this ever to know the truth of affairs, for the belief learned by the common people is the mold of truth, not the truth itself. Complete knowledge is for the realities to be unveiled from the mold, like a kernel from the shell" (*Kīmīyā-yi saʿādāt*, 36–37).

22. Ghazālī gives the Persian translation here. More literally, the Arabic says, "The gift of the believer is death" (*tuḥfat al-muʾmin al-mawt*). Winter translates it as, "Death is a precious gift to the believer" (Ghazālī, *Remembrance of Death*, 9).

5. Writings on Practice

1. The numbering of the quatrains follows that found in *Muṣannafāt*, 727–72.

2. Given that these terms are frequently discussed in Sufi texts—in particular "abstinence" (*waraʿ*) and "renunciation" (*zuhd*)—this quatrain can be taken as a criticism of certain self-righteous Sufi types.

3. Disengagement (*tajrīd*) as a philosophical activity has already been discussed. *Mujāhada* or “struggle” is grammatically equivalent to and synonymous with *jihād*. The latter term, often misleadingly translated as “holy war,” can be applied to any struggle that is necessary to support or defend the community. The Prophet called the armed struggle the “lesser *jihād*” in contrast to the “greater *jihād*,” which is the personal struggle against the weakness, ignorance, and stubbornness of the soul. Early on in Islamic texts the term *mujāhada* became the preferred term with which to refer to the greater *jihād*. At the end of the essay, it becomes clear that Bābā Afḍal is taking these two well-known terms, “disengagement” and “struggle,” as designators for the two sides of philosophy, that is, theory and practice.

4. Jamshid, a mythic king of Persia, had a “world-displaying cup” that is frequently mentioned in Persian poetry. Compare these two verses of Ḥāfiẓ (rhyming in *-ā mī-kard*):

For years the heart sought Jamshid’s cup from us,
seeking from a stranger what was with itself.
The pearl outside the shell of generation and location
it sought from those lost on the ocean’s shore.

5. “Much in supplication” translates *bisyār-du ‘ā*, a Persian-Arabic compound not found in dictionaries. “Supplication” (*du‘ā*) is the standard term for petitionary prayer, as contrasted with other forms of prayer, such as the daily ritual prayer (*ṣalāt*) or the remembrance and invocation of God’s names (*dhikr*).

6. “Trust” (*tawakkul*) in God is an important Koranic and Sufi term.

7. *Qaḍā’-i sābiq* is a standard theological term for God’s ordainment; more loosely it means destiny, one’s lot, whatever happens.

8. The word here is *muḥāsaba*, which, along with *murāqaba* (“self-guarding,” a meditative technique variously described), has been a hallmark of Islamic spiritual practice from early times.

9. The “wholesome” (*ṣāliḥūn*) are those frequently mentioned in the Koran who do “wholesome deeds” (*ṣāliḥāt*). They are, as implied in chapter 3, the opposite of the “workers of corruption” (*muḥsūdūn*). “Those given proximity” (*muqarrabūn*) are also called, in Sura 56 of the Koran, the “foremost” (*sābiqūn*). The sura divides people into three groups, the Companions of the Right (who go to paradise and are the same as the wholesome), the Companions of the Left (who go to hell), and the Foremost.

10. The “divine commandments” are the injunctions of the Sharia. That you should not inform anyone of your good deeds is a common attitude in Sufism, and it is taken to its extreme by the so-called “Blameworthy” (*malāmatiyya*), who purposefully act in a way that will be condemned by the pietistic and self-righteous. The attitude is closely associated with *ihsān*, “acting beautifully” or “doing what is beautiful,” discussed in chapter 2. “Interaction” translates *mu‘āmala* (from the same root as *amal*, “practice”), and by it Bābā Afḍal means one’s interior doings with God. On this term, see note 6 of chapter 4.

11. “Acting beautifully” translates *ihsān*. *Ihsān* toward parents is commanded several times in Koranic verses, sometimes right after the command to *tawḥīd* (as in 2:82, 3:26, 6:151, 17:22, and 56:15).

12. The story of Korah is told in Koran 28:76–82 (the Biblical account is found in Numbers 16).

13. Both “ascetic discipline” (*riyāḍa*) and “purification of the soul” (*tazkiyat al-naḥs*) are typically associated with Sufi practices and much discussed by Ghazālī in the *Iḥyā’*.

The second expression derives from Koran 91:9, “Prosperous is whosoever purifies her [the soul].”

14. Khizr (or Khaḍir) and the water of life are a common trope in Persian poetry. The story of his finding it in the darkness at the end of the earth is told by the Koran commentators in their discussions of Koran 28:60–63. He is more famous, however, as the companion of Moses in Koran 28:65–82. This story is constantly retold by Sufi teachers to prove the exalted status of knowledge received directly from God and its superiority over the literal understanding of scripture.

15. “God’s House” is the Kaabah at Mecca. The poem might be taken as an indirect criticism of the hajj, one of Islam’s five pillars, but it should rather be read in the light of many similar sayings and poems found in Sufi writings. The intention is to awaken readers to the purpose of ritual activity, not to discourage them from performing it. Remember Babā Afḍal’s insistence in his words of advice that the seekers observe “God’s commandments,” one of which is to make the pilgrimage to God’s House.

16. The point is that they should seek God for God’s sake alone, not for the sake of anything else, such as gaining paradise or escaping hell. Single-minded attention to God is the devotional consequence of *tawhīd*. The theme is common among the Sufis, but it is also known to the philosophers. In the section on the “stations of the gnostics” from *al-Ishārāt wa’l-tanbīhāt*, Avicenna explains it as follows,

The gnostic does not desire the Real, the First, for anything other than He. He prefers nothing over true knowledge of Him. His worship is directed only to Him, because He is worthy of worship and because worship is a noble relation with Him, not because of want or fear. Were there to be these two, then the object of want or fear would be the motive, and within it would be the object of search. Then the Real would not be the final goal, but rather the means to some other thing less than the Real that would be the final goal and the object of search. Nonetheless, those who consider it allowable to make the Real a means partake of mercy in a certain respect. After all, they have not been given to taste the enjoyment of bliss in Him that they should seek to taste it. They are acquainted only with imperfect enjoyments, so they yearn for them and remain heedless of what lies beyond them.

Ibn Sīnā, *al-Ishārāt wa’l-tanbīhāt*, edited by S. Dunyā (Cairo: ʿĪsā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1937), 2:227.

17. “Truthfulness” translates Arabic *ṣīdq*, which is also commonly rendered as “sincerity.” “Truth” translates *rāstī*, a Persian equivalent. *Ṣīdq* is frequently discussed in Sufi texts and has more to do with virtue in the heart—being true to God—than the right-speaking of the tongue. Its opposite is *kidhb*, “falsehood” or “lying,” which again tends to be understood as a deep-rooted vice rather than simply a sin.

18. “Jumbled dreams” (*aḍghāth-i ahlām*) is a Koranic term (12:33, 21:5). In later texts, these are often contrasted with *ru’yā ṣādiqa*, “truthful dream-visions,” which are considered one of the signs of a wholesome soul.

19. *Najāt* or salvation is the standard term for deliverance from hell and reaching paradise. The Koran uses the verbal form of this word in about sixty verses in the general sense of saving people from danger or destruction, usually without suggesting that this salvation pertains to the next world. In the one instance in which the Koran uses the verbal noun *najāt* itself, the verse is referring to the next world, and this meaning becomes the technical sense of the term: “O my people, how is it with me, that I call you

to salvation, and you call me to the Fire?” (40:41). The most famous philosophical use of the word is the very title of Avicenna’s book *al-Najāt*.

20. Bābā Afḍal’s letters follow the normal conventions of the genre, which means that they begin and end with rather elaborate prayers for the well-being of the person to whom the letter is addressed, and they refer to both writer and recipient in the third person and often by way of complicated circumlocutions. In translating the formalistic portions of the letters, I have been somewhat less literal than usual, and I have usually changed the third person pronouns to first or second to avoid confusion.

21. I follow the emended reading suggested in the editor’s footnote.

22. Farazdaq was one of the greatest Arab poets (d. 110/828) and a panegyrist of the Umayyad caliphs.

23. Bābā Afḍal is alluding to Khizr’s search in the darkness for the water of life.

24. Ayaz was a famous and wise vizier of King Maḥmūd of Ghazna.

25. One of the manuscripts has the word *marḥūma* (“the one [feminine] who has entered the divine mercy”), suggesting that the person was a woman, so I have translated the pronouns accordingly. The fact that the masculine form is used in the other manuscripts does not suggest the contrary, because the gender rules of Arabic grammar are not normally observed in Persian, which has no gender. However, when a feminine form is used, it is usually done on purpose. Later on, the text talks in general about sons, daughters, brothers, and sisters, and the tone suggests a daughter. Nonetheless, neither wife nor any other relation is excluded as a possibility, and Bābā Afḍal may simply not have mentioned the exact relationship out of delicacy.

26. “Without-self-ness” translates *bī-khwudī*, which is the loss of true selfhood (*kwudī*). Bābā Afḍal uses the term more or less synonymously with heedlessness (*ghaflat*), ignorance (*jahl*), not-knowing (*nādānī*), unawareness (*nā-āgāhī*), and unconsciousness (*bī-khabarī*). As he writes in his letter to Muntakhab al-Dīn Harāskānī, “The soul that is heedless of self is ‘without self,’ and this is its death.” It is worth noting that in Sufism the same expression is often used in a positive sense. Thus Rūmī uses it to designate one of the highest goals on the path to God. In his works it represents a God-awareness achieved by the annihilation of the illusory self and the subsistence of the true self. In that context I translate it as “selflessness.”

27. In *The Fountain of Life*, Bābā Afḍal’s translation of *Zajr al-naḥs*, he renders this passage with more polish than what we have here, so he must have translated the work after he had written this letter. To the end of the passage, the text there reads as follows:

O soul, this mount of yours, which you have made your own residing place and upon which you lean in the ocean of nature and the world of generation, also comes from the ocean’s water, but it has been frozen by a marvelous practice. It is near to melting all at once, then becoming mixed with the ocean’s water. It will leave you on top of the water without mount. Your mount will be to swim—if you know it and have learned it. If you do not know it and have not acquired it, you will be in danger and near to perishment (*Muṣannaḥāt* 235).

Those familiar with Rūmī will be reminded of his tale of the boatman and the grammarian (*Mathnawī*, book 1, verses 2835–40).

28. As noted in chapter 1, it is likely that this and the next three letters are all addressed to the same Shams al-Dīn, and that the different additional names in the third and the fourth letters are simply honorifics appropriate to a man of high status. If this is so, it is easy to see in the four letters different stages of the personal relationship between teacher and student. In the first two, Bābā Afḍal is extremely pleased with this talented

young man, but in the second two, he is deeply concerned that Shams al-Dīn may have lost his drive to pursue the path. The fourth in particular gives a strong whiff of compassionate anguish.

29. This is a version of a hadith whose text is given by Suyūṭī as follows: “Faith does not pertain to wishfulness or self-adornment. Rather, it is what becomes established in the heart and is made truthful by practice.” *al-Jāmi‘ al-ṣaḡhīr*, in al-Munāwī, *Fayḍ al-qadīr fī sharḥ al-jāmi‘ al-ṣaḡhīr* (Beirut: Dār al-Ma‘rifā, 1972), 5:255.

30. Note here the use of the term *stations* (*maqāmāt*), which is usually associated with Sufism and rarely discussed by the earlier philosophers. In Sufi terms, it designates the ascending stages of permanent spiritual development and perfection that are achieved on the path to God. Bābā Afḍal, however, is using it more as a synonym for the philosophical term *habitude* (*malaka*) or *character trait* (*khuluq*), because he speaks of avoiding “blameworthy” stations. In an early usage of the term by a philosopher, Avicenna calls the penultimate chapter of his *Ishārāt* “On the stations of the gnostics” (*fī maqāmāt al-‘arīfīn*). Mullā Ṣadrā commonly uses the term in its Sufi sense.

31. I have been employing the word *nurture* to render the Persian word *parwarish*, but in this and the next paragraph, the author uses the Arabic equivalent, *tarbiyat*. In the paragraph after these two, he switches back to *parwarish*. *Tarbiyat* is given a variety of meanings in the Arabic and Persian dictionaries, including raising, rearing, breeding, instructing, educating, correcting, improving, developing. The term implies the whole range of training that must be imparted to something for it to actualize its full potential. Here Bābā Afḍal means by it the appropriate training of both body and soul, on whatever level these terms may be considered. The word’s connotations are strongly moral, and this helps explain why in modern Persian, the English word *education* is often rendered as *ta‘līm wa tarbiyat*, that is, “teaching and nurturing.”

32. The term *soul* here is being used much more in the Sufi sense—where it has a largely negative connotation—than in the philosophical sense that is more usual for Bābā Afḍal. He may have in mind here a well-known saying that is usually attributed to the Prophet: “Your worst enemy is the soul between your two sides.”

33. All these titles are given in Arabic. Apparently, *The Rungs* had not yet been translated into Persian at the time this letter was written.

34. This whole passage has ambiguities. The *Risāla-yi jāmi‘a* may be the well-known book of the same name by the Ikhwān al-Ṣafā’, or, perhaps it was an incomplete book by Bābā Afḍal. The remaining remarks suggest that he had lent it to be copied, and he is wondering why it has not yet been returned.

35. *Iliyyun* or “the high ones” and *Sijjin* (perhaps “the imprisoning”) are mentioned in the Koran (82:7–8, 18–19) in a context that makes them sound like a place in paradise and a place in hell; the commentators offer a variety of interpretations as to their exact meaning.

36. The editors were unable to decipher the text of this second clause, so I have simply guessed at its meaning on the basis of the answer.

37. In the context of Bābā Afḍal’s teaching, this means that only the intellect within us is adequate to the task of searching for itself and actualizing knowledge. Hence, when the goal is achieved, the knower finds that he himself is one with the object of knowledge, and that the object of knowledge is nothing but himself. This is precisely the “unification of the intellecter, the intellected, and the intellect.” Bābā Afḍal makes the same point elsewhere, as in *Rungs of Perfection* 1.6, where he writes that “the seeker is the same thing as what he is seeking and . . . the seeking keeps him heedless of finding.” The unity of seeker and sought is commonly discussed in Sufi texts, but there the more common terminology is “lover and beloved,” both of whom are seen to be ultimately

none other than God. See, for example, the remarks of Ibn al-‘Arabī and Niffarī on the paradox of seekers seeking for what they have in Chittick, *Sufism: A Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2000), 151–52.

38. Wishing that people may suffer is not unusual in the context of Sufi teachings (nor, for that matter, in Buddhist teachings). As Rūmī says, “Beware, do not sigh coldly in your indifference! Seek pain! Seek pain, pain, pain!” (*Mathnawī*, 6:3203; cited in Chittick, *Sufi Path of Love*, 208).

39. The word is *walāyat* (or *wilāyat*), which can mean government, authority, jurisdiction, or “sanctity,” that is, being a “saint” or a “friend” of God (*walī*). I translate it as “rulership” because in three of the five passages in which the word occurs in these texts, it seems to mean rulership rather than sanctity. Given the ironic tone of this passage, rulership seems more appropriate. But Bābā Afḍal may well mean those who are considered by the people to be saints, such as Sufi teachers. On the various meanings of the term, see Hermann Landolt, “Walāya,” *Encyclopedia of Religion* (New York: Macmillan, 1987), 14:216–22.

40. Bābā Afḍal is saying here that the only knowledge that is of any ultimate use is that which one knows for oneself, that is, by way of “verification” and “realization” (*tahqīq*), not that which has been learned by rote and is recited by way of “following authority” (*taqlīd*). It does no good to try to establish intellectual issues by calling the prophets or scriptures to witness. The prophets were sent simply to warn people that they need to wake up and understand things for themselves. Lest Bābā Afḍal be misunderstood, one needs to differentiate clearly between “commandments and prohibitions,” that is, the prescriptions of the Sharia, and knowledge of the realities, which is what philosophers are striving to achieve. These two sorts of knowledge pertain respectively to *islām* or submission to God and *īmān* or faith in God, the angels, the prophets, etc. (as discussed at the beginning of chapter 2). They also correspond to Ghazālī’s distinction between sciences of unveiling (*mukāshafa*) and sciences of interaction (*mu‘āmala*), mentioned in the first note on *Four Headings*. Bābā Afḍal is telling his students that they must know the realities for themselves, but he also tells them clearly in his exhortations that they must follow the commandments of God, i.e., the Sharia.

41. Harāskān, modern-day Harāzjān, is a village about 100 kilometers west of Kashan.

6. Writings on Theory

1. The expression “He is all” (*ūst hama*) is of course a version of the much debated phrase “All is He” (*hama ūst*). This was understood by Aḥmad Sirhindī (d. 1624) and others in India to designate the doctrinal position of *waḥdat al-wujūd* (the unity of existence), which they attributed to Ibn al-‘Arabī. The fact that Bābā Afḍal employs this expression here should not be taken as evidence either that he “believed in *waḥdat al-wujūd*” in the sense in which Sirhindī or some followers of Ibn ‘Arabī employed this term, or that the quatrain shows the influence of Ibn al-‘Arabī’s school of thought. The expression is already found 140 years before Bābā Afḍal in the Persian writings of ‘Abd Allāh Anṣārī (d. 481/1088), and it was popular in Sufi-style poetry, whether or not the poems were written by figures definitely known as Sufis.

2. The numbers refer to the nine heavens, the four elements, the seven planets, the two worlds, the three progeny, the five senses, and the six directions.

3. This treatise was edited on the basis of fewer manuscripts and has several minor textual problems. In a few places I have followed the alternative readings offered by the

editors rather than the text as printed, but the discrepancies are not serious enough to warrant individual citation.

4. The text has a negative before the verb, but this contradicts the meaning of the passage. In other words, on the basis of the printed text, one would have to translate the passage, “he no longer sees requirement and neediness.”

5. Bābā Afḍal is looking here at the literal sense of the Arabic word *ma'na* (“meaning”), a past participle that denotes what is intended or meant, or what is “wanted” (Persian *khwāsta*) by a person who uses a word.

6. These titles, mostly in Persian, resemble the Arabic titles given to the perfect human being in Sufi works. Compare the attributes Bābā Afḍal ascribes to the most perfect knower in *The Rungs of Perfection*, Door 6.

7. The “solitaries” (*mufradāt*) are bodies that are “simple” (*basīṭ*) and not compound, i.e., the four elements.

8. “Good breeding” translates Persian *farhang*, a word that is nowadays used as the equivalent for English “culture,” and which is also commonly used to mean “dictionary” and sometimes “education.” Steingass’s *Persian-English Dictionary* offers a long list of English equivalents, including greatness, excellence, gravity, and wisdom. The first meaning given by Mu’in’s Persian-Persian dictionary is Arabic *adab*, “courtesy,” whose importance was discussed in chapter 2. When Bābā Afḍal mentions *farhang* in the *The Book of the Everlasting* (HIP 196), Mullā Ṣadrā translates the term into Arabic as “the science of the [Sufi] path and religion.” In *The Treatise of the Apple*, Bābā Afḍal quotes Aristotle as saying, “The knower whose knowledge is most lasting is he who does not collect knowledge until after he has given good breeding to his soul and made his own disposition praiseworthy” (*Muṣannafāt* 120). In *The Fountain of Life*, he employs the word *farhang* to translate Arabic *irtiyād*, which is usually translated into English as “asceticism” (in Persian one uses the present participle to speak of *murtādān-i Hind*, “the ascetics of India,” meaning yogis and sannyasins). The word comes from the same root as *riyāḍa* (“exercise” or “ascetic discipline”), from which we have *riyādiyyāt*, “mathematics.” In the *Fountain*, Hermes explains that all things have a perfection toward which they move by means of the matter that is gradually added to them, whether this be nourishment that is eaten or knowledge that is learned. Then he cites the example of the human being: “When he first appears in this world, he is not worthy of any work for which he is nurtured. Then a matter comes that will take him to the waystation of learning, not knowing. When he finds complete good breeding in this waystation, a greater matter that is complete and completing joins with him, and it makes him knowing and recognizing. Then he becomes complete” (*Muṣannafāt* 339).

9. Reading *chashīdan* for *junbīdan*. Although no manuscript support is offered for this reading, it is demanded by the meaning and is supported by the fact that *ḥarakat*, which Bābā Afḍal uses interchangeably with *junbish*, has already been mentioned in the list.

10. *Dānish-āzmā’ān*, a word that is not attested in Dihkhudā’s *Lughat-nāma*. Bābā Afḍal seems to be employing this as a Persian equivalent for *muḥaqqiq*, an active participle from the verbal noun *taḥqīq*, which one can translate as “verification” or “realization.” As pointed out in chapter 2, in the philosophical context it means not accepting knowledge simply on the basis of authority (*taqlīd*), but rather searching out the truth with all the tools at one’s disposal—intelligence and logic in particular. Bābā Afḍal uses the expression *ahl al-taḥqīq*, the “folk of realization,” on two occasions in these texts (HIP 132 and 134), and the reference seems to be to these same “knowledge-testers.”

11. As noted earlier, “good breeding,” translates *farhang*. In his Arabic translation and revision of this passage, Mullā Ṣadrā follows the Persian text rather closely up to this

point, but then he translates *farhang* as “the science of the [Sufi] path [*ṭarīqa*] and religion [*ḍīn*]” and he describes it as “what pertains to acquiring beautiful character traits, acquiring habitudes and virtues, and avoiding odious habitudes and vile qualities” (*Iksīr al-‘arīfīn*, edited by Shigeru Kamada [Tokyo: Isuramugaku Kenkyushitsu, 1983], 7).

12. This expression, sometimes taken as an equivalent of “macrocosm and microcosm,” means the world outside the human being and the world inside, and, as will soon become clear, it is a major theme in the present treatise. It is derived from the Koranic verse, “We shall show them Our signs in the horizons and in their souls until it becomes clear to them that He is the Real” (41:53). Bābā Afḍal cites the verse later.

13. These well-known Arabic terms (respectively *mu‘aṭṭil*, *mulḥid*, and *dahrī*) designate three erroneous theological positions and are mainly used as emblems to designate theological wrongheadedness. The terms have no precise definitions, and there is not much agreement as to the historical schools to which they might be applied. The “Ineffectualists” claim that God is so transcendent that his attributes are meaningless and have no effect in the world; the “Deviators” have left the straight path; and the “Aeonists” believe that there is no divine origin for the world. The last term is derived from the Koranic verse, “They say: ‘There is nothing but our life in this world. We die, and we live, and nothing makes us perish save the aeon’” (45:24).

14. As is obvious from the title of this chapter, the author is using the term *madhhab* in a wider sense than “school of the Sharia,” which it often designates. Hence by “imam” he means the person who leads his followers in the interpretation of Islamic faith and practice, and the examples he gives are much more general than the terms usually understood as designating *madhhab*.

15. Compare his remarks in *The Clarifying Method*: “Talking has the specificity of coming into existence more easily and more quickly [than writing], since the matter of voice and letters easily assumes form. This matter is air, which moves through the potency of the voicer in keeping with the mover’s desire, in a specific shape. It is heard by the tool of hearing, and the hearing soul becomes aware from the arrival of the motion of air in the diverse shapes and guises—each shape being called a ‘letter’” (*Muṣannaḥāt* 402).

16. The word “arrived” (*rasīda*) is the literal Persian translation of the Arabic word in the Koran, *bāligh*, which has a number of senses, including mature or adult. However, when Bābā Afḍal speaks of the “arrived ones” using this same Persian word, he has in mind rather the Arabic term *wāṣil*, those who have reached the station of “arrival” (*wuṣūl*), often translated as “union.”

17. Bābā Afḍal’s interpretation of the Koranic verse does not transgress its literal sense, though this is not completely clear in the translation. He begins by referring to the notion that everything below humans on the scale of the ascent to God is preparatory and incomplete. Thus plants are assimilated into animals, and animals into human beings; but human beings can be assimilated into the divine (see section 3.9 of the treatise, and the verses of Rūmī cited in the note). Hence, plants and animals undergo change and transformation until assimilated into the human level, but the human form remains fixed, because it is precisely the form of the intellect that is God’s radiance. Although the Arabic word *ḍīn* or “religion” usually signifies the normative codification of beliefs and practices that is exemplified by Islam, it has a variety of other meanings, including obedience and submissiveness, law and statute, custom and habit. The cited verse offers the only Koranic mention of the well-known term *fiṭra*, the “innate disposition” according to which God created people. Bābā Afḍal is suggesting that the lasting and enduring *ḍīn*—the law and custom established by God—is the human substance itself. It is enduring because it never changes, and its unchangingness derives from its rootedness in intellect.

18. The word is *wilāyat/walāyat*, discussed in chapter 5, note 39. Perhaps “sanctity” is closer than “rulership” to what Bābā Afḍal has in mind here.

19. “Inimitable” translates *muʿjiz*, a word that is used to designate the miraculous literary style of the Koran.

20. By using the word *taʿwīl* here, Bābā Afḍal seems to be differentiating it from *tafsīr* (“exegesis”). As mentioned in chapter 1 (HIP 20), *taʿwīl* focuses on the interpretation of verses in terms of their microcosmic and soulful significance rather than their external, literal significance. One of the most famous works of the genre, *Taʿwīl al-qurʾān* by Bābā Afḍal’s compatriot ‘Abd al-Razzāq Kāshānī, interprets “book” in this Koranic verse to mean intellect.

21. I have been translating *kitāb* as “book,” but here and in much of the following discussion Bābā Afḍal is employing the word as a verbal noun equivalent to *kitāba*, which means “writing” and which he uses in place of *kitāb* a few times.

22. The expression *abjad* (cognate with English a–b–c–d) refers to the order of the alphabet employed for numerical purposes, as illustrated here and as distinguished from the normal, *alif-bāʾ* order. In the text, Bābā Afḍal uses the equivalent expression *hurūf-i jummāl*.

23. This chapter is found in only two of the manuscripts used by the editors, so they have printed it as an appendix at the end of the text. However, it adds important clarifications to points that are discussed in the next chapter, and the style shows it to be by the same hand. Mullā Šadrā’s Arabic translation of the text includes this chapter as chapter 8. In most manuscripts, chapters 9 and 10 in this second part are numbered 8 and 9, and chapter 10 is divided into two chapters. The division of chapter 10 and its title will be noted in their place.

24. Presumably the reference is to the four levels of letters and numbers discussed in the previous chapter: $a = 1$, $y = 10$, $q = 100$, and $gh = 1000$.

25. These are the four archangels, given charge respectively with blowing the Trumpet to usher in the resurrection, providing creatures with their daily bread, revealing scripture to the prophets, and taking souls at death. Bābā Afḍal refers to these well-known functions in section 2.4, but there he says that Seraphiel’s work is “to blow spirit into and give lifebreath to bodies, so that they may be stirred up to search and move.” The word “Trumpet” (*šūr*), which designates that into which Seraphiel blows, can also be read as the plural of *šūra* or “form,” and some of the early Koran commentators understood it in this sense. All ten Koranic mentions of the expression, “blowing into the *šūr*,” are in the passive voice, and all refer to events right before the resurrection. In his explanation of Seraphiel’s function in 2.4, Bābā Afḍal makes “setting the anima in the forms [*šūrat-hā*]” pertain to him. Since he is a universal spirit, forever doing the same work, he does his work not only at the resurrection, but at all times and places.

26. The “Location of Locations” is the furthest, starless sphere, within which all locations are situated. It is “nonmanifest” because invisible to us, in contrast to the “heaven,” which we see by looking up to the sky.

27. As noted earlier, most manuscripts do not have chapter 8 of this section. To make up the full ten chapters, they add this heading here: “Chapter Ten: On the Profit of the Knowledge of the Horizons and the Souls, Which is *Tawḥīd*.”

28. According to the Koran, “associating” (*shirk*) other gods with God is the only sin that is unforgivable.

29. As noted in chapter 3, “declaring God similar” (*tashbīh*) to something is considered a theological error.

30. This is the title of Adam.

31. Normally, the pronoun is read as referring to God, but Bābā Afḍal seems to be taking it to refer to Adam. This is far-fetched grammatically, but not especially extreme as a *ta'wīl*.

32. “Speech” is attributed to “a beast from the earth” (*dābbat min al-arḍ*) in Koran 27:82, and this is usually taken as a reference to an enormous beast that will appear as a sign of the Last Hour. Bābā Afḍal is interpreting it to be a reference to the signs manifest in the very forms of the beasts.

33. This is a reference to Koran 39:6, “He creates you in your mothers’ bellies, creation after creation, in three darknesses.”

34. Compare Rūmī: “The philosopher denies that there is a devil; at that instant, he becomes the devil’s toy. / If you have not seen the devil, look at yourself! No one not possessed would wrinkle his brow so darkly” (*Mathnawī*, I:2282–83).

35. This “permission” is a reference to the respite given Iblis by God after God had commanded him to leave his presence for not prostrating himself to Adam. Iblis says, “‘My Lord, respite me till the day they shall be raised.’ Said He, ‘Thou art among the ones that are respited until the day of the known moment.’ Said he, ‘Now, by Thy exaltation, I shall misguide them altogether, save those of Thy servants among them that are sincere’” (38:79–82; cf. 15:36–40). Bābā Afḍal’s interpretations here and in the rest of the chapter are of the type that raised the ire of the theologians. Among later philosophers, Mullā Ṣadrā is much more careful to preserve the literal sense of the verse while adding to it layers of inner meaning. It is not without significance that in his Arabic revision of this treatise, Ṣadrā drops everything in this chapter except the first two paragraphs.

36. The reference here is to a much-discussed verse that is considered one of the keys to Koran interpretation: “It is He who sent down upon you the Book, wherein are verses that are unambiguous, which are the Mother of the Book, and others ambiguous” (3:7).

37. The first of the two trees is mentioned in the already cited “light verse” (24:35), and the second in 17:60: “We made the vision that We showed thee only a trial for the people, and also the tree accursed in the Koran.”

38. There are allusions here to Koranic verses, such as 10:7: “Surely those who do not hope to encounter Ūs and are satisfied with the life of this world and are at rest in it . . . their refuge is the Fire.”

39. Readers familiar with Rūmī, who was born around the time of Bābā Afḍal’s death, will recognize here (as also in section 3.8 and elsewhere) his teachings concerning the stages through which the soul develops—teachings that have on occasion been taken to be a precursor of Darwinian evolution. As I pointed out in *The Sufi Path of Love* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1983), 72–76, Rūmī is simply reflecting the current wisdom of the time, though his depiction is much more graphic than that of the philosophers. These verses are probably the most famous examples: “I died from the mineral kingdom and became a plant; I died to vegetative nature and attained to animality. / I died to animality and became a man. So why should I fear? When did I ever become less through dying? / Next time I will die to human nature, so that I may spread my wings and lift up my head among the angels. . . . / Once again, I will be sacrificed from angelic nature and become that which does not enter the imagination” (*ibid.*, 79; from *Mathnawī*, 3:2901–2902, 2904).

40. Here for “resurrection” Bābā Afḍal uses the Persian *rāst-khīz*, literally “rising up straight” (from *rāst khīzīdan*), a word that is a translation of the standard Arabic term for resurrection, *qiyāma*, “rising up” or “standing.” More common variants of the Persian word are *rastā-khīz* and *rast-khīz*.

41. There is a Koranic reference here, specifically 41:31: “Therein you shall have all that your souls desire, all that you call for.” Ibn al-‘Arabi makes the same basic point that Bābā Afḍal makes here in great detail, mainly in terms of “imagination” (*khayāl*). See Chittick, *Imaginal Worlds* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993), Chapter 7.

42. On Illiyyun and Sijjin, see chapter 5, n. 35.

43. These three souls correspond to the angels Seraphiel, Michael, and Gabriel, who were explained in 2.9, 2.4, and 2.7. It is not completely clear which if any of those explanations apply in this case, however. In his translation of this passage, Mullā Ṣadrā interprets the three to refer to the intellective Sovereignty, sensory imaginalization, and the lowest, mortal, earthly Sovereignty. Others might simply call these three “spirit, soul, and body.” Bābā Afḍal now correlates them with heart, seeing, and hearing. Thus the heart is the seat of the spirit and intellect, seeing has access to the world of visionary images, and hearing receives messages recited by prophets and angels.

44. “Inblowing” (*naḥkh*) here refers to the rising of yeast, but it is also the Koranic term that designates God’s blowing of his own spirit into Adam’s clay (14:29, 28:72) and Seraphiel’s blowing the Trumpet. Hence Bābā Afḍal is using the imagery of the action of yeast to suggest how God’s blows the spirit into Adam gradually through the stages of creation. He may have in mind the hadith, “God fermented Adam’s clay in His two hands for forty days” (cf. Chittick, *Self-Disclosure*, 297, n. 21).

45. “Words of idleness” translates *sukhan-i ta’īl*. Usually the term *ta’īl* refers to the well-known heresy, translated elsewhere in these texts as “declaring (God’s) ineffectuality.” Here it is used in a nontechnical sense, as is made clear in Mullā Ṣadrā’s translation of the passage: “If the same scroll is imprinted with inane embellishments and with idle [*mu’attal*], base, and false or lying words. . . .”

46. There is an allusion here to a verse already quoted in section 2.2: “Those who have faith and are godwary—for them are good tidings in the life of this world and the afterworld” (10:63).

47. This passage might be understood to suggest that it is not necessary for those who actualize the intellect to observe the Shari’ite injunctions and perform the obligatory acts of worship. However, passages elsewhere, especially some of the exhortations and parts of the letters, make clear that Bābā Afḍal had the same opinion about obligatory ritual acts as most other Muslims. Mullā Ṣadrā’s translation of the passage avoids the ambiguity by making it refer specifically to supererogatory acts of worship, not incumbent acts. He translates, “Just as human beings can do without the weariness of earnings and the hardship of artisanries and professions through propertied wealth and current coinage, so also lordly knowers can do without the hardship of supererogatory deeds and supposed good works through true knowing. After all, knowledge is the final goal of every deed and movement and the fruit of every act of obedience and worship—and worship thy Lord until certainty comes to thee [15:99]. This is because what is obtained from all the acts of worship and obedience is that the heart’s mirror is made limpid from the wrappings of soulish turbidities, thereby becoming prepared to be imprinted with the form of the sought object. As for the final goal of the divine knowledges and the nondivine gnostic sciences of certainty, their obtainment is themselves” (*Iksīr al-‘arīfīn*, 137).

48. This is a reference to a hadith: “On the day of resurrection, death will be brought in the form of a salt-colored ram and slaughtered between the Garden and the Fire” (Bukhārī and other standard sources).

49. When the Prophet said this, he held up his hand with a small space between his thumb and forefinger (cited by Bukhārī, Muslim, and other sources).

50. The argument is weak unless one remembers that by “knower” Bābā Afḍal does not mean the animal soul, which has no knowledge and understanding except what

reaches it through the senses and imagination, but rather the intellect, which is aloof from all harm because it is eternal.

51. Bābā Afḍal is looking at the literal sense of the Arabic term *ḥaqīqa* or “reality,” which is a noun formed from the adjective *ḥaqīq*, which means suited, deserving, fit, entitled. Hence, *ḥaqīqa* literally means that which is worthy, deserving, and fit. The various connotations of the word are closely associated with its derivation from the word *ḥaqq*, meaning truth, realness, rightness, worthiness, appropriateness. Bābā Afḍal defines reality more or less the same way in *The Book of the Road’s End*, I.10 (HIP 281).

52. The editor adds this sentence in a footnote. It is found only in the Arabic original of the treatise, but it seems to be demanded by the meaning.

53. The reference is to Koran 6:112: “We have appointed to every prophet an enemy—satans of men and jinn.” The etymological meaning of the word *jinn* is to be hidden and concealed.

54. The hadith is found in most of the authoritative sources.

55. Notice how, in this passage, Bābā Afḍal is able to bring together a typical Sufi expression of this supreme state of knowledge with the philosophical concept of the Agent Intellect. A well-known hadith, frequently cited in Sufi texts, tells us that God says about his servant, “When I love him, I am his hearing through which he hears, his eyesight through which he sees, his hand through which he holds, and his foot through which he walks.” The philosophical view is epitomized in the passage from Avicenna quoted in chapter 3 in which he speaks about the soul achieving the disposition of all of existence and turning into “an intelligible world, parallel with all the existent cosmos.”

56. As noted earlier, “progeneration” (*tawallud*) designates the birth of the three kingdoms or “progeny” from the marriage of the heavens and the four elements, which are called the “fathers” and the “mothers.” The heavens are the spiritual domain, and the four elements are the corporeal domain conceived of in terms of its simplest constituents. The elements are “simple” because they have no parts. When they become compounded under the influence of the heavens, they give birth to the progeny. Thus, in this passage, “the movement of increase” refers to the basic attributes of plants, and “life and sensation” to the basic qualities of animals.

57. The last two paragraphs are not found in all the manuscripts and are printed separately from the main body of the text (*Muṣannaḥāt* 671–72).

58. “Imagination” here and in the next two paragraphs translates *wahm* (usually “sense-intuition” or “supposition”), whereas in the previous paragraph and elsewhere it translates *khayāl*. Apparently, Bābā Afḍal is using *wahm* here as *khayāl*’s synonym, as is often done both in technical texts and in common speech, in Arabic and in Persian.

59. Presumably the speaker is Bābā Afḍal himself.

60. Ipseity renders Arabic *huwiyya*, which means more literally, “he-ness” or “it-ness.” Note that Bābā Afḍal takes it as a synonym for the Persian phrase, “to be a thing” (*chīz būdan*), and that he contrasts these two terms with the thing’s being (*hastī*). Hence ipseity, or to be a thing, is a synonym for “quiddity” or “whatness” (*māhiyya*), which is contrasted with “existence.” (When the word is applied to God, it designates the divine Essence, or God in himself). Quiddity and existence become issues the moment we ask the two most basic questions about something, “What is it?” and “Is it?” First we ask what it is, and the answer gives us its whatness. Then we ask whether it is or not, and the answer gives us its existence or nonexistence. Thus the thingness of the thing and the existence of the thing are two different issues. In the West, this issue has usually been discussed as that of “essence and existence.”

61. The literal sense of the word *‘aql* is to tie and to bind, so the intellect is often explained as meaning that which ties the soul back from error, or from folly and caprice, or from ignorance. *Ta’uqqul* or “intellection” is the fifth-pattern verb from the same root and means employing the intellect, using the intellect in self.

62. *Khāṣṣa* (and also *khāṣṣiyya*), which I translate as “specificity,” are usually rendered as “proprium” and sometimes as “property.”

63. “What is not worthy to be” (*āncha nashāyad ka buwad*), “what is worthy to be” (*āncha shāyad ka buwad*), and “what must be” (*āncha bāyad ka buwad*) correspond to the triad made famous by Avicenna—the impossible (*mumtani*), the possible (*mumkin*), and the necessary (*wājib*). Bābā Afḍal throws light on the point he is making here in his essay “The Origins of the Soul-ish Existents” (*Muṣannafāt* 597):

After *thing*, the meaning of *existent* is the most general. The meaning of *existent* is more specific than *thing*. This is because, if we say that the things are not outside of three divisions—either their being is necessary, or their being is possible, or their being is absurd—this saying is true and this division is correct. There is no error within it, nor will there be. But, if we say that the existent is such that its existence is either necessary, or its existence is possible, or its existence is absurd, this saying is crooked. For once ‘existent’ is said, the division of ‘absurd’ is outside, for it cannot be that an existent’s existence be absurd. But the meaning of *thing* is not outside both divisions. Hence the meaning of *thing* is more general than the meaning of *existent* and the meaning of *reality*, and the meaning of *reality* is more general than the meaning of *substance* and *accident*.

64. Notice that, in contrast to the previous examples, Bābā Afḍal speaks here of “*thing*” rather than “*substance*.” This is probably because he does not consider intellect a substance, as seen in the “*Essay on Intellect*” (HIP 170).

65. By “*habitudinal soul*” Bābā Afḍal means the vegetal soul, the source of involuntary movement in living things. The word *malakī* or *habitudinal* (i.e., pertaining to habitude, *malaka*) is unusual. Although it is written and pronounced exactly the same as the word for “*angelic*,” and although “*angelic soul*” is a common expression in philosophical texts, Bābā Afḍal makes clear that this is not what he has in mind. In *The Book of Displays* (167–68) he explains that soul-ish movement has three sorts. One is revolving (*dawrī*) and pertains to the celestial spheres, the second is habitudinal and pertains to growing bodies and the vegetal soul, and the third is by free choice or desire (*ikhtiyārī, irādī*) and pertains to animal bodies and the animal soul.

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