



QAYSARI'S MUQADDIMAH

to his Sharh Fusus al-Hikam



1985

SCRIPTABLE

Chapel Hill, North Carolina USA

Qaysari's *Muqaddimah* to his *Sharh Fusus al-Hikam*

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MUHYÍ AD-DIN IBN AL-'ARABI (d. 638 LH/1240 CE), one of the most influential figures of Islamic mysticism, is also recognized as the greatest spiritual master. His influence in the development of Sufism is largely due to the articulation of mystical concepts and insights, and the elaboration of complex spiritual disciplines often only alluded to by the Quran and *hadith*. Aside from his profound intellectual achievements, however, the honorific title of "the greatest master" (*al-Shaykh al-Akbar*) is on account of his unparalleled spiritual station, which has been ascertained through the accounts of various Sufi masters throughout history, having been confirmed on the basis of their own gnostic perception. One of Ibn Arabi's most influential works is the *Fusus al-Hikam*, which he reports to have received by the Prophet Muhammad through a vision. For this reason, as well as the fact that it is considered the quintessence of his thought, it is the subject of over one hundred commentaries. He expounds in it various mystical doctrines as epitomized by a series of prophets beginning with Adam and ending with Muhammad.

Among the numerous commentaries on the *Fusus al-Hikam*, the most famous are eminent works by Mu'ayyid al-Din Jandi (d. 700/1300), Abd al-Razzáq Kashani (d. 730/1330), Abd al-Rahman Jami, and Sadr al-Din Qunawl (d. 673/1274), whose commentary on the *Fusus* is not exhaustive, although he is considered to be the greatest expositor of Ibn Arabi's works and the foremost of his students, and Sharaf al-Din Dawud al-Qaysari (d. 751/1350).

In order to explore the teachings of Ibn Arabi, it is worthwhile to begin by examining the prolegomena to *Matla' Khusus al-Kilam fi Ma'ani Fusus al-Hikam*, Dawud Qaysari's commentary on *Fusus al-Hikam*. Although his commentary on the *Fusus* represents the third in a direct line going back to Ibn Arabi through Kashani, Jandi, and Qunawi, it has been considered one of the most popular due to its thoroughness and accessibility, frequently synthesizing the ideas of his predecessors. The prolegomena, commonly known simply as the *Muqaddimah*, although part of a larger work, which is the commentary on the *Fusus*, stands on its own as an independent work and has been the subject of careful study. Moreover, since the *Fusus* is a synopsis of Ibn Arabi's doctrine, which he expands in the *Futuh al-Makkiyyah*, Qaysari's *Muqaddimah* can be read as a summary of the *Fusus* itself. Qaysari writes in a separate introduction to the *Fusus* that without comprehending all of the essential topics of gnosis, it is not possible to understand the original text of the *Fusus*. It is in light of this approach that he wrote the *Muqaddimah*, which contains what he considers to be the fundamental issues in

Shaykh Dawud al-Qaysari

Sharaf al-Din Dawud al-Qaysari was born in the central Anatolian town of Kaysari (Qaysariyyah), around 660/1260 and died in 751/1350. He was a disciple of Abd al-Razzaq Kashani (d. 736/1335) in Kashan, with whom he studied the *Fusus al-hikam*, and who was at the same time his spiritual preceptor in the *tariqah*. Although there is no entry on Qaysari in Abd al-Rahman Jami's hagiography *Nafahat al-Uns*, Zayn al-Din

Muhammad 'Abd al-Rauf al-Munawi (d. 1031/1621) mentions him in his *Irgham Awliya' Shaytan bi Dhikr Manaqib Awliya al-Rahman* as follows:

[Dawud al-Qaysari was] the scholar given to religious devotion, the ascetic Sufi (*al-'Alim al-'Abid*) who used to partake in spiritual struggle (*al-Zahid al-Sufial-Mujahid*). He studied the religious sciences in his hometown and then went to Egypt and studied the three religious sciences with the scholars versed in them. He studied intensely and became accomplished in the intellectual sciences (*wa bara'a fil-Funun al-'Aqliyyah*). Then he occupied himself with Sufism; excelling in and mastering it and devoting himself to writing about it. He commented upon the *Fusus* and attached an introduction to it in which he finely explains the principles of Sufism. Sultan Orkhan bin 'Uthman [Orhan Gazi] built a religious school for him in the town of Iznik, which was the first one built in the Ottoman Empire. He died in the eight century LH.

Qaysari's *Introduction* to his commentary on the *Fusus* is of particular importance in the study of Sufism both because of his clear and lucid style as well as his mastery of the ideas of Ibn Arabi. Ashtiyani writes in his introduction, "We have compared Qaysari's commentary with those of other commentators, and found Qaysari's to be the best in many respects, even if Kashani's is more profound." Similarly, just as it can be said that Qunawi's style of exposition of Ibn Arabi's ideas was more organized and clear than that of the master himself, given the abstruse nature of Ibn Arabi's voluminous writings, Qaysari's commentary is erudite, yet accessible. Furthermore, Ashtiyani maintains that the *Muqaddimah* is the best of Qaysari's writings. For this reason, Qaysari's commentary and introduction has become an instructional text studied in the seminaries as well as in private circles.

Numerous scholars attest to Qaysari's mastery of Ibn Arabi's doctrine and consider him to be a great scholar of this science. This is on account of both his ability to communicate philosophical and mystical doctrines as well as the fact that he was himself an accomplished gnostic, which may be considered one of the most important qualifications for the exposition of a mystical treatise. In the opening paragraph of the *Muqaddimah*, Qaysari acknowledges to be the recipient of gnostic visions, where he says,

Allah gave me success in both worlds when He unveiled for me the lights of His secrets, lifted the curtain from the vision of my heart, aided me with Divine Assurance and the communication of His Symbols and granted everlasting success by the bestowal of His treasures. A group of brethren were busy in attaining perfection, seeking the secrets of the Possessor of Majesty and Beauty when he [Kashani] began the exposition of the *Fusus al-Hikam*...

Qaysari relates that he studied the *Fusus* with Kashani with others among his students when he became the object of Divine Assistance. He mentions,

I was singled out among my companions to have received knowledge and acquire meanings without prior reflection and learning.

Since gnosis is fundamentally a practical discipline, and the gnostic's foremost concern is spiritual wayfaring, it can be said that it appears as a theoretical science only

as an elaboration of the visionary experience and as a mode of communication to others. Though not to discount the important function of theoretical gnosis in establishing the correct understanding of theological principles, it can be argued that these principles are derived for the most part from gnostic perception, and not discursive reasoning, even if they appear in the form of philosophical arguments. Qaysari's exposition simply brings to light the experience of the gnostics in the language of the philosophers. It is an attempt to reconcile their experiences in the terminology and world-view of the philosophers—given that philosophy is the closest science to mysticism—and is not an attempt to arrive at the truth solely by means of the intellect. For this reason, it is necessary to establish Qaysari, first and foremost as a gnostic, and secondarily as an original thinker or philosopher in order to lend credence to his exposition of the *Fusus*. Were it not for his stature as an accomplished gnostic, it would not have been possible to present a credible commentary on a text whose very source is gnosis.

Outline of the *Muqaddimah*

The *Muqaddimah* is divided into twelve sections, each addressing an important topic in the field of Sufism. A brief outline of the original text is as follows:

The first chapter, as Qaysari mentions, furnishes philosophical proofs for Divine Unity and other issues readily found in works of theology and philosophy. This is mainly to establish the philosophical foundations of divine unity according to the Sufis and to bring to light some differences from the other schools.

The second chapter comprises of a discussion of the divisions of the names and attributes including positive and privative, the names of Majesty and Beauty, the Keys of the Unseen and the difference between the names of the Essence, attributes and acts. Furthermore, concepts relating to the divine names, their engendering, the universal and particular, their dominion, governance, and their relationship with other names will be discussed.

The third chapter contains an exposition of the Immutable Archetypes and other divine realities such as contingent quiddities that are manifestations of the divine names. This chapter investigates the appearance of various levels of manifestation and the presence of the divine Essence in everything. A commentary will include a discussion of God's knowledge and its relation to the created world...

The tenth chapter discusses the Supreme Spirit, which is none other than the reality of man. Qaysari also discusses the various levels of man's spiritual constitution.

The eleventh chapter discusses how the spirit returns on the Day of Resurrection through the governing effect of some divine names over others.

The twelfth chapter discusses the reality of prophethood and Spiritual Guardianship (*wilaya*). Qaysari expounds on these two concepts from the point of view of the gnostics, which is an expression of the dominion of the divine names and their governance. The difference between prophet, messenger and saint is addressed.

Selections from the *Fusus al-Hikam* of *ash-Shaykh al-Akbar* Embedded with the Commentary of al-Qaysari

TRANSLATED *by* MUKHTAR HUSAYN ALI

The *Bezels of Wisdom* (*Fusus al-Hikam*), the work that is perhaps the most influential masterpiece of the venerated Qutb, Sidi Muhyiddin Ibn Arabi al-'Hatimi, known throughout the Islamic world simply as the "Greatest Master" (*ash-Shaykh al-Akbar*), which he states was received from the blessed hand of the Prophet in a dream in 1229 CE. The *Fusus* contains twenty-seven chapters, each related to a particular wisdom as exemplified by one of the prophets whose stories are told in the Glorious Quran: for example, the Wisdom of Divinity in the word of Adam (who was created in the divine image, and thus, just as Allah is the Name which includes all the Names, is the prototype who includes all humanity); or the Wisdom of Elevation in the word of Jesus (describing the elevated reality of Jesus, born of the water of Gabriel and the water of Mary, as spirit and son of spirit). These twenty-seven prophets represent the different modalities of human spirituality, facets displaying the jewels of divine wisdom, the full meaning of which is understood through the jurisdiction and collective wisdom of Sidna Muhammad, the Seal of Prophets (peace and blessing be upon him). This book has had a perennial appeal, giving rise to at least one hundred commentaries over several centuries and in several languages, and these constitute a whole history of Islamic mystical thought in themselves.

Ch.1 Being and That is the Real

Fusus al-Hikam (Pearls of Wisdom)

Know, that Being qua Being is neither external existence nor mental, since each one is a type of existence. Being itself is not subject to condition nor is it restricted by either absoluteness or restriction. It is neither a universal nor a particular, nor categorized by generality or particularity. It is one, but not with a oneness superadded to its Essence, nor is it multiple, since each one of these, accompanies Being, in accordance with its respective degrees and stations, indicated by the verse, "Raiser of Ranks, possessor of the Throne." Being, therefore, becomes absolute, limited, universal, particular, general, specific, unitary or multiple, without experiencing any change in its Essence and reality.

Being is not a substance, for a substance exists externally without a locus, nor is it a quiddity, which were it to exist would also be in a locus. It is not like specific substances, which need being and its concomitants for its realization. Nor is it an accident, since an accident is defined as that which exists in a locus, or a quiddity, which were it to exist would be in a locus. Being does not exist in the sense that it has a being superadded to it which would necessitate its restriction to a locus. Being is not conceived mentally or externally, rather, its existence is essential and established by itself and not by something differentiated from it. Additionally, if it were an accident, it would subsist in a locus that essentially precedes it in existence, and would result in the existence of a thing prior to itself. Moreover, the existence of both [substance and accident] is superadded to them, whereas, it is not possible for Being to be superadded to itself, since the definition of both is derived from it, given that Being is more general than and separate from either [substance or accident].

Being is not a mental construct, as posited by the misguided, because of the realization of its Essence without a thinker conceiving it, above and beyond their concepts, rational or otherwise, as mentioned by the Prophet (peace and blessing be upon him) "Allah was, and there was nothing else with Him." A reality that can be conceived—"conditioned by association"—rationally and conceptually does not necessitate its being "unconditioned by anything" as well. Therefore, it is not an existential mental attribute such as necessity or contingency, for the Necessary and the contingent, respectively. It is the most universal of all things because of its universal prevalence and embracing of quiddities, even to the extent that it presents the ideas of absolute non-being and relative non-being when contemplated in the mind. The mind determines the difference between the two, namely the impossibility of one of them, and the possibility of the other. Since that for which existence is possible, its nonexistence is also possible... and other such propositions.

Being is more manifest with respect to its realization and its identity such that is said that it is self-evident, although it is more hidden than everything else with respect to its quiddity and reality. The one who is the most knowledgeable in creation, spoke the truth

when he said in his supplication, "We have not known You with a full knowledge of Your reality." Nothing either in the mind or in external existence is realized except through Being, for it encompasses all things by its Essence and all are things are sustained by it. Were it not for Being, there would be nothing in existence, either in the external world or in the mind. Thus, Being sustains all things, rather is identical with all things. It is Being that self-discloses in its different degrees, and manifests through their forms and realities, either noetically or in external reality; [Being] is called the "quiddity," (*al-mahiya*) or the Immutable Archetypes (*ai-a'yan al-thabita*), as will be discussed in chapter three, God willing. There is nothing intermediate between Being and non-being, just as there is absolutely nothing intermediate between an existent thing and anon-existent thing.

Quiddity, however, is intermediate between its specific existence and non-existence. Something that is purely conceptual does not have realization in actuality (*nafs a\-'amrf*) and the present discussion concerns that which has realization. Being has neither contrary nor like. Since, contrary and like are two existents that are either opposed to each other or are equal to each other. Being, on the other hand, is different from all realities, because the existence of their opposite and the realization of their like is utterly separate from it. This is indicated by the verse, "Nothing is like unto Him."¹⁹ Being qua Being is one; therefore, another existence cannot be realized facing it.

Through Being contraries are realized and likes are sustained. Indeed, it is Being that manifests itself in the form of contraries and other forms, necessitating the joining of both sides of a contradiction. Since each side [of the contradiction] negates the other, the difference between the two sides is only conceptual. However, in Being all aspects are united since manifestation and hiddenness and all contrary existential qualities are annihilated in Being itself, so there is no distinction except conceptually. Privative attributes despite their belonging to non-being also pertain to Being from one point of view. Each of the differing aspects—with respect to their mental existence—is the identical with all others, and since both [contraries] are joined in Being itself they are joined in mental existence as well. Since, were it not for the existence of both [in Being] they would not have been able to join. The inability of both to join in external existence—which is one type of absolute Being—does not negate their joining in Being qua Being.

[Being qua Being] does not accept division and partition, essentially, in the mind or in external reality, for it is simple. It, therefore, does not have genus, differentium, or definition. It does not accept intensification or decline in its Essence, since both are conceivable only with respect to either static [accidents] such as blackness and whiteness, each of which adheres in a separate location, or non-static [accidents], which are oriented in a certain direction such as increase and decrease in the case of motion, and non-increase and decrease, intensity, and weakness. Each of these pairs adheres to Being in accordance with its manifestation and its hiddenness in some of its degrees, just as occurs with static essences such as bodies, or non-static essences such as motion and time.

Being is absolute good and everything that is good is from it, by means of it, and subsists through its essence and for its essence since it is not in need of anything outside itself for its realization, for it is subsistent and established by itself and establishes all others. It has no beginning, otherwise it would be in need of an existing cause for its coming into being, for it would be contingent. It has no end, otherwise it would be subject to non-being and be described by its opposite, or it would undergo inversion. Being is pre-eternal and everlasting, the First, the Last, the Manifest and the Hidden, because all that is manifest in the Visible or hidden in the Unseen returns to it.

Being is omniscient with respect to all things because of its encompassing of all things by its Essence. The acquisition of knowledge by [any other] knower takes place through a given means. Thus, being is more entitled to having knowledge, rather all perfections are necessary for it and all attributes are established by it, such as life, knowledge, will, power, hearing, vision, etc, for it is the Living, the Knower, the One who wills, the Powerful, the Hearing, the Seeing, by its own Essence not by means of anything else. It attaches all things with their perfections, rather it manifests through its epiphanies and its transformation in various forms representing those perfections. Thus, it becomes subject to essences²¹ since they are specific existents subsumed in the degree of Singularity (*martabat al-ahadiyya*) and manifest on the degree of Unity (*martabat al-wahidiyya*).

Being is a unitary reality possessing no multiplicity. Multiplicity of its manifestations and forms does not violate the oneness of its Essence. Entification [of its manifestation] and distinction does not take place by an entification superadded to its Essence, since there is nothing in existence in contrast to it for it to share with it in one thing and distinct from it in another. That is not incompatible with its manifestation in specific degrees, rather it is the origin of all entification of the names and attributes and their manifestation in the [divine] knowledge and external world.

It possesses a oneness that is not in opposition to multiplicity rather, it is the origin of the oneness that is in contrast to it [multiplicity]. Its oneness is identical with its Singular Essence and the Unity of the names that contrasts with multiplicity—which is the shadow of that original oneness of the Essence—and is also identical with it from one perspective, as we will explain, God willing. Being is pure light, since all things are perceived through it. It is manifest by itself and through it things are made manifest. Being is the light of the unseen heavens, the spirits, the earth of bodies and forms, because all of these are realized and exist through it. It is the source of all spiritual and corporeal lights.

The reality of Being is unknown to other than it. It cannot be expressed as the cosmos (*kawn*), or occurrence (*husul*), or realization (*tahaqquq*), or subsistence (*thubut*), if the verbal noun is intended, since all of these would then be necessarily accidental. If, however, what is meant by these terms is the same as what is meant by the word "being," then there is no dispute, in the same way that the people of Allah have used the word the cosmos (*kawn*) to mean existence of the world. In that case, Being would not be any of these, whether they are substances or accidents, as just mentioned, nor can its reality be

known, even though it is knowable with respect to its ipseity. Verbal definition must take into account general usage of the term in order to provide cognitive worth. "Being" (*wujud*) is more current than the cosmos but other than it, necessarily.

General being (*wujud al-amm al-munbasit*) which extends over the Immutable Archetypes in the [divine] knowledge is a shadow of it, qualified by generality. Similarly mental existence and external existence are shadows of that shadow [immutable Archetypes] because of the compounding of limitations, referred to by the verse, "Have you not seen how your Lord has extended the shadow, and if He had willed, He would have made it stationary?" (Al-Furqan: 45). He is the Necessary Being, the Truth, the Glorified, the Most High, subsisting in Himself, giving subsistence to others, described by the divine names, qualified by the attributes of Lordship, called upon by the prophets and saints, the Guide of His creatures to Himself, the Summoner of His manifestations through His prophets to the source of His collectivity (*'aynjam jami'ih*) and the Degree of Divinity (*martabat al-uluhiya*).

He has indicated through their tongues, "He is through His ipseity with everything, and by His reality with every living thing." He has also indicated that He is identical with all things, by saying, "He is the First, the Last, the Manifest, the Hidden, and He is aware of all things." His being identical with all things is by manifesting Himself in the raiment of the divine names, both in the [divine] knowledge and the external world. His being other than them is by His hiddenness in His Essence, His superiority by His attributes from that which brings about deficiency and dishonor, His transcendence from limitation and specification, and His being sanctified from the mark of origination and creation.

His engendering of things and becoming hidden in them—while manifesting Himself in them and His annihilation of them at the Greater Resurrection—is His manifestation in His oneness, His overwhelming them through removal of their entification and their marks, and making them dispersed, as in His words, "To whom does sovereignty belong today? To Allah, the One, the Subduer," (Ghafir: 16) and "Everything is perishing, except His face." (al-Qisas: 88) In the Lesser Resurrection, things are transformed from the Visible world to the Unseen realm or from one form to another in the same world.

Quiddities are the forms of His perfections and the manifestations of His names and attributes. They first appear in [His] knowledge, then in actuality because of His love for manifesting His signs, and raising His banners and flags. Multiplicity is due to forms, whereas He possesses real unity and everlasting perfections. He perceives the realities of things in the way that He perceives the reality His own Essence, but not by some other faculty such as the First Intellect, etc., since these realities are the same as His Essence in reality, even if they are other than Him by way of entification. Others do not perceive Him, as mentioned in the verse, "Vision does not perceive Him, but He perceives all vision," (al-An'am: 103) and "They cannot comprehend Him in their knowledge," (Taha: 110) and "They do not regard Allah with the regard due Him," (al-An'am: 91) and "Allah warns you to beware of Him, and Allah is most kind to His servants." (al-Imran: 30) He has apprised His servants of this as a kindness and mercy lest they waste their lives in

that which is impossible to obtain. Therefore, if it has become clear for you that Being is the Real, then you would understand His saying, "He is with you wherever you may be," and "We are nearer to him [the dying man] than you are, though you do not perceive," (al-Waqi'ah: 85) and "And in your selves, do you not then perceive?" (al-Dhariat: 21) and "It is He, who is God in the Heavens and God on the earth," (al-Zukhruf: 84) and "Allah is the light of the Heavens and the Earth," (al-Nur: 35) and "And Allah encompasses everything," (Fussilat: 54) and, "I will be his hearing and his seeing," (Hadith Qudsi) and the mystery in [the Prophet's (peace and blessing be upon him)] statement "If you were to extend a rope [to the lowest level of the earth] it would reach Allah," (Tirmidhi) and similar enigmatic statements pointing towards oneness (*tawhid*) in the language of allusions.

Remark for the People of Intuition in the Language of the Speculative Thinkers

Being is necessary in itself, for if it were contingent, then it would require an engendering cause, resulting in a thing preceding itself. It cannot be said that a contingent thing does not require a cause because it is non-existent in our presence, given that it is conceptual. For we do not accept that a concept does not require a cause, since it cannot be realized in the mind except through the perceiver, and this is the cause. Furthermore, the perceiver is not realized in the external world except through existence, since if existence is totally removed from him, then the result would be absolute non-being. If [the perceiver] were conceptual, then everything in existence would be conceptual since quiddities—which are separated from existence—are concepts; the falsity of this claim is obvious. The realization of a thing by itself does not remove it from being something real. Since the nature of Being qua Being is obtained through the specific necessary existence in the external world, it is necessary for this nature to exist within it, but without an existence superadded to it. Thus, if it were contingent, it would have needed a

Another Remark

Being is neither substance nor accident, as mentioned previously. Everything that is contingent is either substance or accident. Therefore, Being is not contingent, but defined to be necessary. Furthermore, Being does not possess a reality superadded to itself, otherwise it would be like other beings in their of being; this is an infinite regress. Everything that fits this description is the Necessary in itself because of the impossibility of removing the essence of a thing from itself. It may be said that necessity is a relation occurring accidentally on a thing, when considering its external existence, so that which does not have existence externally superadded to itself, is not characterized by necessity. The reply would be that necessity occurs as an accident for a thing that is other than Being, from the aspect of its existence. However, if that thing is Being itself, then necessity is pertains to its essence and not other than it, since necessity requires absolute otherness not just in [external] reality, just as knowledge necessitates otherness between the knower and the thing known, sometimes conceptually when the thing is perceived in itself, and sometimes as [external] reality, when it is perceived by something else.

Furthermore, everything that is other than Being is in need of it with respect to its existence and realization. Being qua Being is not in need of anything, rather, it is independent from everything for its existence, and everything that is needless from others for its existence is the Necessary. Thus, Being is necessary in itself.

It may be said that Being qua Being is a natural universal (*kulli Tabi'i*), and every natural universal acquires existence only through one of its individuals, then Being qua Being would not be necessary since it would require an individual to be realized. The reply is that if what is meant by the greater premise is the natural contingent entities then this is acceptable. However, this does not yield the above conclusion, since it is the condition of contingent beings to enter and leave existence, but the nature of Being does not allow that, as we have seen. If however, what is meant by the greater premise is something more general, then the greater premise is false, and one should meditate on His statement, "There is nothing like Him..."

Indeed, we do not admit that the natural universal is dependent upon a type of existence occurring for it [externally], contingent or necessary. Since if this were true, then it would result in a tautology, whether or not the accidental brings about type (*munawwi'*) or is individuating. This is because the accident is not realized without its object. If the object depended on the accident for its realization, it would result in a vicious circle.

The truth of the matter is that every natural universal, for its realization in the Visible world, requires its individuating determinants that are effused from its engenderer. For its manifestation in the world of meaning (*'alam al-maani*) as that which brings out its type, it requires its universal individuating determinants, not for the realization in itself.

Everything that is made a type or is individuated is subsequent to its nature as genus and type (*tabiat al-jinsiya wa al-naiyya*) and that which is subsequent cannot be a cause for the realization of that which is prior. Rather the converse is true, and that which makes the nature a nature is naturally more suitable than both to make the nature a type or individual, in addition to what occurs to them by the individuating determinants. All modes of existential individuation return to Being itself so it follows that the reality of Being does not need anything—for its existence in the external—other than it. In reality, there is nothing in existence except Being.

Another Remark

Every contingent being is receptive of non-being. Nothing of Absolute Being is receptive of non-being. Therefore, Being is necessary in itself. It cannot be said that the existence of a contingent being is subject to non-being. For we say that the existence of the contingent consist of its occurrence in the external world and its manifestations therein; further it is one of the accidents of real Being, returning to Being—in one aspect—insofar as relativity is removed from [real Being], and not identical with it.

The recipient must exist simultaneously with the thing it receives, but Being cannot exist simultaneously with non-being. Therefore, the recipient [for Being] is through quiddity not its existence, thereof. It cannot be said: If you accept that non-being cannot attach to Being that is agreed, but why is it not possible for Being to cease itself and be terminated? The reply is: non-being is not a thing so as to attach to either quiddity or Being. When we say that quiddity accepts non-being, it means that quiddity is capable of having existence removed from it. This cannot apply to Being, since it would entail transmutation of Being into non-being.

The possibility of its cessation, therefore, is necessitated from its essence, but Being necessitates itself by its Essence, necessarily, as mentioned, and the essence of a single thing cannot necessitate both itself and the possibility of its own non-existence. Thus, its existence cannot cease.

In reality, the contingent does not cease to exist, rather, it disappears and enters the Unseen, from which it had emerged. One who is veiled maintains that it ceases to exist. Imagining the existence of the contingent to cease arises from the supposition that Being has individuals, such as external individuals as in the case of human beings. This is not the case, since Being is a single reality that possesses no multiplicity, while its individuations are conceived only in their relation to quiddities. These relations are conceptual and are not existent in themselves so as to cease and go out of existence. Rather what ceases is the relation of individuations to quiddities. Its cessation does not necessitate the cessation or negation of Being, otherwise it would entail the transformation of the reality of Being into the reality of non-Being, since cessation of essential Being is necessarily non-being, which is clearly inadmissible.

Note

If there are no real individuals distinct from the reality of Being, [Being] is not a general accident for them. If Being were a general accident, it would be either a substance or accident. However, it has been established that Being is neither substance nor accident.

Being qua Being is predicated for relative existents, because of the truth of the statement, "This existence is existence." Anything that is predicated for something else must have between it and its subject an aspect of unity and an aspect of distinction. In this case, the aspect of unity between the subject and predicate (in the above statement) is none other than Being, and the aspect of distinction is "*this*"-ness (*hadhiya*). So it is clear that Being qua Being is identical with the relative existents in reality, otherwise they would not have existence, necessarily. One who opposes this conclusion goes against the dictates of his own reason, unless he uses the same term "being" for them [contingent existents] and for Being qua Being with different denotations, which is also patently false.

It is said that Being does not apply to its individuals uniformly, for it applies to the existence of a cause and an effect through being prior and posterior, and to the existence of a substance and an accident through primacy or its lack thereof, and the existence of

static and non-static through intensity or weakness; rather it applies to them through gradation. Whatever is applied through gradation can be neither identical with the quiddity of a thing nor a part of it.

If what is meant [by gradation] is priority or posteriority, primacy or lack thereof, intensity or weakness when applied to Being qua Being, this is inadmissible since these are all relative qualities that are conceivable only in relation to one another. Application of gradation is from the aspect of universality and generality, but Being qua Being is neither general nor specific.

If what is meant [by gradation] is that they are joined to Being in relation to quiddities, this is correct, but it does not entail gradation in Being as it is since the aspect of the loci of accidentals is different from the aspect of Being.

This is precisely the view of the people of Allah, since they hold that as Being descends in the degrees of existence, it becomes manifest in the enclosures of contingency, and the multiplicity of intermediaries—its hiddenness intensifies, its manifestation and perfections weaken. Likewise, as its intermediaries decrease, its light is intensified, its manifestation strengthened, and its perfections and attributes appear. Therefore, to apply "Being" to a relatively strong manifestation is preferable to applying it to a relatively weak manifestation.

In affirmation of this you should know that Being has manifestations in the noetic realm, just as it has manifestations in the external world. Among them are general affairs and universals that do not have existence except in the noetic realm. The ascription of Being to individuals related to quiddities through gradation is in light of noetic manifestation. For that reason it is said that [gradation] is conceptual (*i'tibari*), and Being qua Being cannot be described by [individuals] through gradation, but only as a rationally predicated universal.

This meaning does not negate its being identical with the quiddity of its individuals, that is, from the aspect of its natural universal, just as the natural, "animal" is only part of the individual [animal], and not the subject of predication. However, from the aspect of its application—unconditionally—it is a genus that accepts predication and from the aspect of its being applied to species of a type subsumed under that natural universal, it is a general accident. The same is true for everything that is described by gradation through its individuals.

The disparity in the individual instances of Being is not in Being itself, rather it is in the manifestation of its properties, such as the agency and receptivity in cause and effect; and in its subsisting by itself in a substance, and does subsisting by itself in an accident; and in the intensity of manifestation in the static essence, and its weakness in the non-static essence. Likewise, the disparity in human beings is not a disparity in the humanness itself, but in the manifestation of its properties in them. Were there some escape for Being from being identical with the realities of individuals, there would have been an

escape for humanness from being identical with the reality of its individuals. The disparity found within human beings is not comparable to the disparity found in other creatures. For this reason, some attain a higher level and a more sublime station than the angels, while others acquire the lowest degree, and a more wretched state than the animals, as mentioned in the Quran, "They are like cattle, rather more astray," and,

"We have created man in the best form, then We brought him down to the lowest of the low." For that reason, "The unbeliever will say, "I wish I were dust." What has been mentioned at this juncture suffices for the people of perspicacity and whose inner vision has been illuminated by Allah, and for those who have understood the foregoing, who have deepened their gaze in it, and are not disabled by the doubts of their delusive imagination and false objections. And Allah is the Helper and upon Him we rely.

Remark Concerning Some the Universal Stations and some Terminology of the Group

The reality of Being, if considered under the condition of nothing accompanying it, is called the Degree of Singularity (*al-ahadiya*) by the Group, wherein all the attributes and names are effaced, and it is also called the Collectivity of the Collectivity (*jam al-jam*), the Reality of Realities (*haqiqat al-haqaiq*), and the "Cloud" (*al-'ama*). If it is considered as "conditioned by something" it is either conditioned by all of its concomitants, whether universal or particular, which are called the names and attributes, then it is the Degree of Divinity (*al-uluhiya*), called by the Group, the Unity (*al-wahidiyya*) and the Station of Collectivity (*maqam al-jam*). This degree, insofar as it conveys the manifestations of the names—which are the archetypes and realities—to the perfections appropriate to their potentialities in the external world, is called the Degree of Lordship. If it is considered as "not conditioned by something" and "not conditioned by nothing," it is called the "Ipseity permeating all existents."

If it is conditioned by the permanence of noetic forms in it, it is the degree of the name the Absolute Hidden, the First, the Knowledgeable, and the Lord of the Immutable Archetypes. If it is conditioned by the universals of all things only, it is the degree of the name, the Compassionate (*al-Rahman*), the Lord of the First Intellect (*rabb al-'aql al-awwal*), which is also called the Tablet of Destiny (*lawh al-qadha'*), the Mother of the Book (*um d-kitab*), and the Highest Pen (*al-qalam al-'ala*). If it is conditioned by universals in them as permanent particulars, without any veil from their universals, it is the level of the name, the Merciful (*ar-Rahim*), the Lord of Universal Soul (*d-nafs al-kulliya*), also called the Tablet of Decree (*lawh al-qadr*), the Guarded Tablet (*al-lawh al-mahfuz*), and the Manifest Book (*al-hadith al-mubin*).

If it is conditioned by the specific forms as being mutable particulars, it is the degree of the name the Effacer (*al-Ma'hi*), the Establisher (*al-muthabbit*), the Giver of Death (*al-Mumit*), the Life-giver (*al-Mu'hyi*), the Lord of the Soul Impressed on the Universal Body (*rabb al-nafs al-muntaba'a fi al-jism al-kulli*), and the Tablet of Obliteration and Establishment (*kitab al-mahw wa d-ithbat*). If it is conditioned by receiving types, spiritual and corporeal, it is the level of the name the Receiver, the Lord of Universal

Prime Matter, referred to as the Inscribed Book (*kitab al-manshur*), and the Outstretched Parchment (*riqq al-manshur*). If it is conditioned by the ability to affect, it is the degree of the name the Active, also called the Originator (*al-mujid*), the Creator (*al-khdliq*), and the Lord of the Universal Nature (*rabb al-tabia cd-kulliyya*).

If it is conditioned by immaterial spiritual forms, it is called the degree of the name, the All-knowing (*al-'alim*), the Separator (*al-mufasssil*), the Arranger (*al-mudabbir*), and the Lord of the Rational Intellects and Souls (*rabb al 'uqul wa al-nufus d-natiqa*). That which the philosophers refer to as the Immaterial Intellect (*al-'aql-al mujarrad*) is the Spirit in the view of the people of Allah. That is why it is said that the First Intellect is the Spirit of Sanctity (*ruh al-qudus*). What the former refer to as the Immaterial Rational Soul, the latter call the Heart, since universals are specified in it and witnessed individually therein. What the former refer to as the Soul, they refer to as the Impressed Animal Soul.

If conditioned by Unseen material forms, it is the degree of the name the "Fashioner," the Lord of the Absolute and Relative Imaginal Realm. If conditioned by material form in the external world, it is the level of the name, the Absolute "Manifest", and the Lord of the Dominion (*mulk*).

The degree of the Perfect Man consists of the collectivity of all divine and existential realms, from the universal and particular intellects and souls, and the degrees of nature to the final existential descent. It is also called the "Degree of the Cloud," for it corresponds to the Degree of Divinity such that there is no difference between the two except that the first possess Lordship and the second receptivity thereto. For that reason he stands as the vicegerent of Allah. If you have grasped this, then you will have realized the difference between the degrees of divinity, lordship, and existence.

A certain scholar has made the Degree of Divinity identical with the First Intellect, due to the inclusiveness of the name the Compassionate (*al-Rahman*) of all other names, just as the name Allah is all-inclusive of them. Although this is true in one aspect, the very fact that the name Beneficent is subsumed under the name Allah calls for a distinction between the two degrees. Were there no difference between them, [Compassionate] would not have followed the name Allah, in "In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful." So understand!

Remark

It has been mentioned that all perfection that adheres to things through Being, essentially belongs to Being, for it is the Living, the Eternal, the all-Knowing, the One who wills, the Able by Essence. No attribute is superadded to the Essence, for there would arise the need—for it to bring forth those perfections—for another life, knowledge, power and will, since it is not possible to bring them forth except what it already possesses.

If you know this, then you will know what is meant by, "His attributes are identical with His Essence." A glimmer of its reality will appear to you, its meaning will be seen to be

what has been mentioned and not what the mind conjectures in saying that the life, knowledge, and power that emanate from Him and are concomitant with Him, are identical with His Essence. Although this is true from one perspective, from another perspective, Being at the Degree of Singularity (*al-ahadiya*), negates all entification. There remains neither attribute, nor possessor of attributes, nor name, nor named, but only the Essence. However, at the Degree of Unity (*al-wdhidiya*), which is the level of the names and attributes, there are attributes, possessor of attributes, names and the named; it is the Degree of Divinity (*al-uluhiya*).

The meaning of our saying, "His existence is identical with His Essence," is that He exists through Himself and not through the endowment of existence from Himself, so that existence is identical with His Essence—so too, His attributes of life, knowledge and power, and all the positive attributes are united, in the same way that the attribute and the possessor of the attribute are united in the first level [Singularity].

The mind perceives [attributes] as being distinct, just as it separates mentally the attribute and the possessor of the attribute, although in actual existence they are one. The mind perceives knowledge as being distinct from power and will just as [it perceives] a distinction between genus and differentium. However, in existence there is nothing other than the unitary Essence, just as in the external world [genus and differentium] combine in single thing, which is type. For this reason, Amir al-Muminin (Sidna Ali) said, "The perfection of sincerity is the negation of attributes describing Him."

In the second level [Unity], knowledge is distinct from power and power is distinct from will. In this way, attributes become multiple, and through this multiplicity, the names and their manifestations become multiple. The divine realities are distinguished from one another so that knowledge, life and power, and other attributes each refer to both the Essence and its permanent reality. There is distinction among the attributes because of their shared connotation (*ishtirak lafa*), because these realities are from one perspective accidents because they are either purely relative attributes, essential attributes, attributes possessing relation, or substances from another perspective, in the case of immaterial beings, since their knowledge of their essences is one with their essences, from one aspect. Therefore, life, power, and will and the [unitary] Essence are exalted above being either substance or accident.

The meaning of this becomes clear for one to whom appears the pervasiveness of the divine Ipseity in all substances, with which these attributes are identical and from the fact that these realities are specific existents, and that the unitary Essence is absolute Being; that which is limited is the absolute with the addition of entification. This also results from the manifestations of the Essence. Applying [the attributes] to them and to the Essence is by way of using shared meaning (*ishtirak al-mdnawi*) through gradation (*al-tashklk*), while applying it to individuals of a single type (*nau*), such as a priori knowledge for example, is by way of applying the term uniformly (*al-tawatu'*).

These realities are neither substances nor accidents at times, given that they are necessary and pre-eternal, at other times, contingent substances occurring in time; and at other times they are accidents attached to substances. Whoever perceives the reality of what has been described, and grasps the various perspectives, is extricated from doubts and misgivings. And Allah is the Guide.

Qaysari's Commentary on Fusus al-Hikam

Matla' Khusus al-Kilam fi Ma'ani Fusus al-Hikam

INTRODUCTION

Qaysari begins the *Muqaddima* with a discussion of Being. Given that the subject of Being is all-inclusive and lays out the foundation of every other science, any work that aims to outline the principles of mysticism must include a thorough investigation of the nature of Being. Furthermore, by opening the work with the subject of Being, Qaysari elucidates the fundamental issues concerning the Unity of God, His attributes, and His relation to the world, in order to repudiate many of the accusations leveled against the Sufis. Since many have misunderstood the sayings of the gnostics because of their lack of understanding of the existential world-view of Sufism, they have consequently failed to grasp complex ideas such as divine manifestations, unity within multiplicity, or attainment to God. Indeed, without understanding the very nature of Being, it is not possible to probe into secondary matters in mysticism such as the existence of the soul and its perfection, God's immanence and transcendence, and the existence of the hereafter. Finally, as mentioned in the introduction, this science discusses the manifestation of the divine names, the methodology of wayfaring of the people of God, their practices, discipline, and the outcome of their efforts, and the result of their actions. Thus, understanding God and His attributes is a prerequisite for understanding the method of wayfaring and its corollaries.

BEING, AND THAT IT IS THE REAL

The gnostic uses the term the Real (*al-haqq*) to refer to God, Almighty and is synonymous with the term Being. There are numerous meanings of the term *al-haqq*, that include truth, reality, fact, rightness, to be established, and necessary. It is also one of the epithets of God, referring to the fact that He is the sole reality, the truth, the established, the necessary, the opposite of falsehood, and whose existence and reality are proved to be true.⁹² It also refers to absolute Being, the divine Essence, or that through which all things are known, so that the gnostic who obtains awareness of God, distinguishes that which is real and that which is false and illusory in existence. The Prophet (peace and blessing be upon him) was asked from which thing did he come to know God, to which he replied, "I came to know things *through* God," that is, he came to know God through God, and not through contingent existence, since contingent things are known through their opposites and since God does not have an opposite, He cannot be known

Furthermore, what is real is in opposition to what is illusory, and what is true is in opposition to falsehood, which is, in a sense, illusory as well. God is real, established and the Necessary Being, and not the object of imagination, a mental construct, or an illusion.

For this reason, the gnostics have used the term *al-haqq* to prevent any attribution of contingency to the Necessary Being, who is the sole reality. Furthermore, since *al-haqq*, refers to Being, when the gnostic discovers Being, he discovers God. In the terminology of the gnostics, God, the Real, (*al-haqq*), and Being refer to one and the same reality.

PRIVATIVE PROPERTIES OF BEING

Being qua Being is neither external existence nor mental, since both these types of existence are manifestations of non-delimited Being. External existence is in contrast to mental existence, although in another sense, it is a general category that includes mental existence, which is a type of external existence. Mental existence is a type of external existence that occurs in the mind of a perceiver. It is different from external existence in the specific sense since it does not possess the effects of the latter. For example, a person may conceive of the concept of fire without experiencing some of the effects of fire such as heat.

Being itself is not subject to condition nor is it restricted by either absoluteness or restriction. This is because absoluteness is itself a condition and is in contrast to limitedness. Each is a type of condition and cannot be posited for Being *qua* Being. In this regard, Imam Ali says:

The foremost [stage] in religion is knowledge of Him, and the perfection of knowledge of Him is attesting to Him, and the perfection of attesting to Him is affirming His oneness, and the perfection of affirming His oneness is positing transcendence for Him, and the perfection of positing transcendence for Him is negating attributes for Him—for every attribute indicates that it is other than the attributed, and that the attributed is other than the attribute. Thus, whoever ascribes an attribute to God, the Glorified, has associated Him [with another], and whoever associates Him [with another], has regarded Him as two, and whoever regards Him as two has divided Him, and whoever divides Him has misunderstood Him; and whoever misunderstands Him has indicated Him; and who indicates Him has posited limitations for Him; and who posits limitations for Him has numbered Him; and whoever asks 'what is He in?' considered Him contained, and whoever asks 'what is His on?' deems Him isolated.

Here Imam Ali is referring to absolute Being or the divine Essence, which is beyond the limitation of attributes and conditions. In fact, it can be said that Being transcends existence, in that existence is a manifestation of Being, whereas, Being precedes its own manifestation and is not dependent on it. This is not to say, however, that God does not possess attributes, since it is clearly stated in the Quran, "To Him belong the most Beautiful names," rather the names and attributes are not superadded to His Essence,

since His Essence in its entirety is knowledge, power, life, and not distinct and separate from the attributes.

It is neither universal nor particular. Attributes such as universality or particularity cannot be applied to Being qua being but only to its manifestations in various planes of existence. Only when Being is manifested through the agency of the divine names, does it become external, mental, universal or particular, unitary or multiple, in accordance with the respective plane of manifestation. Being is independent of all manifestations whereas the divine names necessitate their loci in order to become manifest. Were it not for the things upon which divine power could be exercised, the attribute of power would be meaningless, and likewise every other attribute which is in need of a locus of manifestation. Essential Being, however, has neither attachment, nor entification, nor name alluding to it, "There was Allah, and there was nothing else with Him." As for the name "Allah," it sometimes refers to the collectivity of the divine names and not the Essence itself, yet sometimes refers to the unknowable Essence. The name "Allah" is derived from the Arabic root *alif*, *lam* and *ha*, whose most basic meaning is 'to be perplexed,' from *aliha*. The word takes on the meaning of the passive participle, *ma'luh*, which means 'that about which the minds are perplexed.' Thus, when "Allah" refers to the unknowable Essence, then "None knows God but God." If, however, it refers to the collectivity of the names, its knowledge raises the question of whether knowledge of the first entification is possible, which will be discussed further in subsequent sections.

Being is not a substance, for a substance exists externally without a locus, nor is it a quiddity, which were it to exist would also be in a locus. Substance is a quiddity that exists in the external world without a locus, while accident is a quiddity that exists only in a locus. An example of a substance is a body since it does not need anything but itself to subsist, whereas color is an example of an accident since a color exists in the external world insofar as it inheres in a body. Although substances exist in the external world independent of loci, they are in need of Being to subsist. Being is superadded to substance and accident while nothing is superadded to it for its existence. It exists in and of itself and is the source of all other existents. Furthermore, as mentioned in the works of philosophy, quiddity is defined as essence, limit, or receptacle for existence. A thing's existence is additional to its quiddity and answers the question, "What is it?" What is understood by existence is different from what is understood by quiddity, such that the mind divests the notion of "whatness" from its existence. Predication occurs in the mind after having extrapolated the concept of a thing from its actual existence. Likewise, negating its existence does not negate the concept in the mind.

Therefore, the philosophers mention that there are, in fact, two things in the external world, the existence of a thing, which is its actual existence, and the quiddity of a thing, which is a mental construct extrapolated from its actual existence. What is real is its existence while its quiddity is the defining limit of that thing. For example, a tree is what it is because of the existential limits of "tree-ness." It is, therefore, not a mountain, nor an ocean, since the defining limits of the latter are not included in the quiddity of "tree-ness." It is important to note that what is real is existence and not quiddity, since the

defining limit of a thing is the negative predication of a thing, that is, what it is *not*. Because the mind is accustomed to perceiving realities through quiddities, it supposes that the quiddity of a tree exists externally when contemplating the statement, "The tree exists." In fact, what is real is the existence of a thing whose quiddity is "tree-ness." This view is a reiteration of the Peripatetic view of the fundamentality of existence, which is echoed in the school of Ibn Arabi, although Ibn Arabi further says that all multiplicity is a manifestation of Being and possesses no real independent existence. Ashtiyani asserts this in his commentary citing the *Shark al-hidaya* of Mulla Sadra:

The Sufis, among the monotheists, are of the view that there is nothing in existence except the Real Being and the world is only the self-disclosure, manifestation and entification of Being. They see nothing in existence except God and His manifestations, and they do not view the manifestations as an independent reality.

Substance and accident are quiddities that exist because of Being whereas Being exists in itself and is not due to something external or superadded to it. Furthermore, Being *qua* being is not limited by anything and therefore possesses neither quiddity nor definition.

SUBSTANCE AND ACCIDENT IN THE VIEW OF THE Gnostics

In the view of the gnostics, Substance is none other than the reality of Being. Since Being *qua* Being is neither Substance nor accident, as mentioned previously, the term "substance" is used differently by the gnostics from the philosophers. Substance is the shadow of the Essence, also called extended Being (*al-wujud al-munbasit*), the First Engenderer (*al-sadir al-awwal*), the Outstretched Parchment, the Muhammadan Light, or, as Qaysari writes in his commentary on the *Fusus*, "If the Breath of the All-merciful is realized externally and entitled, it is called Substance." Qaysari writes in the fourth chapter of the *Muqaddima* that substance is that which is antecedent and accidents are that which is subsequent. Thus, all entities, which are the words of God, originate from the Breath of the All-merciful. The former are subsequent and are accidents, and the latter is antecedent and is Substance.

The gnostics use the terms "substance" and "accident" to explain multiplicity originating from unity in the degree of Being that is considered the first level of the contingent realm. This is because the divine names and the Immutable Archetypes are not considered part of the contingent realm, whereas substance and accident are considered contingent. From another perspective, however, the gnostics do not maintain that substance is created since the first entity in creation is the Intellect, which is lower in the Arc of Descent than Substance. In the degree of Substance there is a greater degree of individuation and entification and the formation of types. The relationships between the divine names, such as their engendering, combining, and governance, which will be mentioned in the following chapter, are applied to the reality of substances as well. This is based on the premise that there is no disjunction between the descending degrees of creation; rather realities emerge as an emanation from a single source that manifests

Qaysari's systematic elaboration of the ontology of mysticism is more clearly understood by observing the way in which he shows multiplicity emerging from unity in each successive chapter. For example, the first chapter is concerned with the issues related to Being qua Being and the absoluteness of the Essence. The second chapter is an elaboration of the divine names, which is the first degree of multiplicity originating directly from the Essence yet is identical with the Essence. The third chapter discusses the divine knowledge which are the forms of the divine names. The fourth chapter contemplates Being as it relates more directly to the contingent realm, which is the origination of multiplicity of the contingent entities. In the degrees prior to this, the notion of createdness is not applied; rather effusion and emanation are more appropriate to describe the realities of the Immutable Archetypes and the divine names. The degree that is associated with substances and accidents is below the degree of the Immutable Archetypes and the divine names.

* * *

Being is not a mental construct (i'tibari), as mentioned earlier, since anything that exists in the mind by way of mental existence is dependent on the mind of the thinker. This would imply that either the mind precedes Being or is the cause of it. A mental construct is any concept that does not have an extension in the external world. For example, concepts such as possession or leadership are abstract notions that are based on the relations between objects that do have extension in the external world. "Leadership" is an abstract idea that is applied to someone who fulfills certain functions of governance for a group. Likewise, possession, in and of itself, does not exist externally, but is assigned to someone who has a special relation with an object. Being is not an abstract mental construct because it has extension in the external world. In fact, both mental and external things are due to Being and therefore can neither precede Being nor be the cause of it.

Mental attributes are either primary intelligibles (*ma'qulat al-awwaliya*) or secondary intelligibles (*maqulat al-thanawiya*). Primary intelligibles are propositions that the mind assesses through its immediate association with the external world. When the blackness of coal is observed in the external world, the attribute of "blackness" is applied to the external existence of the coal and is performed immediately through sensory perception. Secondary intelligibles are propositions that require the operation of the rational faculty and do not have external extension. The concepts "necessary" and "contingent" are of this type since the rational faculty must be exercised and one cannot rely solely on sense perception. Universals such as "human," "genus," or "differentium" are descriptions of primary intelligibles but are ascertained through ratiocination. Furthermore, philosophical secondary intelligibles are those that describe external objects such as "paternity," and logical secondary intelligibles are those whose referent is not external, but conceptual, such as genus or species.

POSITIVE PROPERTIES OF BEING

It is the most universal of all things. The reality of Being with respect to its manifestation and self-disclosure, its embracing of quiddities and pervasiveness in creation is more general than every existent thing. The pervasiveness of Being even gives rise to the concept of non-being, which, although has no external referent, exists in the mind. What has external existence is the concept in the mind, not actual non-being. Absolute non-being is singular, and its contrary is Being. Relative non-being may be multiple since it is the non-existence of a contingent being such as Zayd, etc. Or it may be the non-existence of the sight when speaking of a blind man. Relative non-being is different from conditioned non-being, conditioned by time for example.

Being is more manifest with respect to its realization. Being is self-evident and more manifest than anything else with respect to its realization while at the same time hidden with respect to its Essence and Quiddity. This is because things are known through their quiddities and distinctions while Being is without distinction and its "quiddity"¹⁰⁷ is without limit, condition, or distinction. However, since all things subsist through Being, Being is not hidden, while at the same time since quiddities are by their nature limited and contingent, nothing in existence can point to the reality of Being itself. For this reason, the Prophet (peace and blessing be upon him) said, "We have not known You as You have deserved to be known," that is, one cannot know the reality of Absolute Being without himself possessing absoluteness, which is impossible. However, this does not preclude the possibility of the knowledge of God through contemplating His signs, as it says in the Quran, "We will show them Our signs in themselves and on the horizons so it becomes clear that He is the Truth." What is not possible however, is knowledge of the Essence of God, either through the prism of existence or through God Himself, since "None knows God but God."

Being sustains all things, rather is identical with all things. This occurs through the divine effusion on the various planes of existence, which is none other than the manifestation of Being. The divine effusion is divided into two types, the Most Holy Effusion (*al-fayd al-aqdas*) and the Holy Effusion (*al-fayd al-muqaddas*). The Most Holy Effusion is the source of the divine names, which emanate directly from the divine Essence, whereas the Holy Effusion is the source of the Immutable Archetypes (*al-a'yan al-thabita*), which emanate from the divine names.

THE IMMUTABLE ARCHETYPES

The manifestation of Being occurs initially through the Most Holy Effusion bringing forth the divine names, then through the Holy Effusion bringing forth the Immutable Archetypes, which are the pre-existent realities in the divine knowledge. These realities are called "Archetypes" whereas the realities of the entities are called quiddities. They are called "Immutable" because they exist in the divine knowledge and do not undergo mutability and transformation. This is because His knowledge is identical with His Essence and mutability in His knowledge would imply mutability in His Essence.

The external worlds arise from these Archetypes and are divided into the Noetic realm (*alam al-'aql*), the Imaginal realm (*alam al-mithal*), and the material realm (*alam al-madda*), according to one classification.

Since Being is manifested in each of these realms, it is not distinct from any one of them, rather it is identical with them. This identity is in accordance with the existential capacity of the recipient and not in accordance with the absoluteness of the Essence. Since the Essence is the station of absoluteness, alluded to in the hadith "God was and there was nothing else with Him," the Essence is behind an impenetrable veil, which is independent even from its own manifestation. However, manifestation occurs in a succession of descent from the degree of Singularity (*al-martabat al-ahadiya*) to the lowest form of primordial matter (*al-hayula al-ula*).

The Immutable Archetypes are either universals or particulars and are considered noetic forms of the divine names. However, they remain in the realm of the unseen—for they are governed by the name, the Hidden and the First—and do not partake in existence; they remain in the state of sheer potentiality. Entities in the external world are their manifestations and are consequently governed by the names, the Last and the Manifest. The philosophers call the universals among them quiddities and the particulars

The Immutable Archetypes have not appeared in external existence. For this reason, they cannot be considered as being created or formed, just as ideas in the mind or the imagination of a person are not considered real until they appear in the external world. This is also the reason why the philosophers call the Immutable Archetypes quiddities, since quiddity possesses neither existence nor non-existence. Quiddities are conceptual and not real, in the same way that Immutable Archetypes are "concepts" in the divine knowledge and do not possess real existence. If they did possess real existence, then even the impossible contingents would be considered real, which is an obvious contradiction. What is meant by "real" is that which exhibits effects in the external world.

As mentioned, quiddities do not have real existence in the external world but they do possess noetic existence. They possess real existence on the plane of divine knowledge since God's knowledge is identical with His Essence. The gnostics have preferred to name the objects of divine knowledge as the Immutable Archetypes instead of quiddities because the latter are only realized through existence while the former are ontological realities that are identical with the reality of Being. That which exists in the external world is quiddity and existence. The former is conceptual and extrapolated, and the latter is real and possesses effects. However, the Immutable Archetypes cannot be without existence given that divine knowledge is not separate from the Essence, and all that exists is none other than Being and its manifestations. This leads to an important distinction between external existence and noetic existence on the plane of divine knowledge, namely, that quiddities do not have real existence in the external world except when existence is superadded to them, whereas on the plane of divine knowledge, quiddity and existence are united. This is because in the higher degrees of being

degree of simplicity and ontological comprehensiveness and a lesser degree of multiplicity.

The ontological status of the Immutable Archetypes is superior to that of the quiddities that are contemplated in the mind, for it is possible to conceive of a thing without witnessing its realization in the external world. However, since the Immutable Archetypes are noetic realities and have real existence on the plane of divine knowledge they are not without their effects in the worlds, namely, the world of spirits, the Imaginal Realm, and the external world. Just as the divine attributes exist on the divine plane of Unity and have real existence that affect every subordinate degree of Being, the Immutable Archetypes possess a form of existence in every subordinate degree of Being appropriate for that degree. Quiddities in the mind of a perceiver are considered mental existence and are the weakest form of existence, since its effects are limited to the mind and do not extend to the external world. If those concepts find realization in the external world, it is Being that produces those effects and not the quiddities themselves.

Since the divine names are realities that do not possess form in and of themselves, it is only through the divine self-disclosure on the plane of the knowledge that they possess form. Yet, since they are noetic in nature, "form" is applied only metaphorically because God's knowledge is identical with the Essence. Therefore, "entification" is more appropriate for the Immutable Archetypes and "form" is more appropriate for external entities. Just as the divine names are considered divine perfections on the plane of the divine Unity, the Immutable Archetypes are divine perfections on the plane of divine knowledge.

As mentioned earlier, Being self-discloses in descending degrees of perfection, each degree possessing a greater degree of multiplicity. The Immutable Archetypes are the first degree of multiplicity since the "multiplicity" of the divine names is only the distinction of their realities and they remain on the plane of Unity. Qaysari writes in the third chapter of the *Muqaddima*, "These forms emanate from the divine Essence by the Most-Holy Effusion and initial self-disclosure, by means of divine love and the petition by the Keys of the Unseen."

As Qaysari mentions in the fourth chapter, the Immutable Archetypes can be viewed as an isthmus between the divine names and the external entities. If viewed from the perspective that they are forms of the realities of the divine names, they are bodies for spirits. If viewed from the perspective that they are noetic forms for external entities, they are spirits for bodies. This is because there is no distinct separation in the degrees of being, as in the words of the Quran, "You will not see in the creation of the All-Merciful any incongruity. Look again, do you see any rift?" Being is a continuum emanating from a single source, in the same way that the sun's rays emanate from the sun, and the difference between the source and its emanation, the giver and recipient, differ only in aspect. Each degree of existence in relation with the degree above it is colored by multiplicity and unified in relation to the degree below it. Furthermore, that which is ontologically higher in existence possesses greater activity and unity, and governance.

This is why the gnostics say that the Immutable Archetypes possess receptivity for the effusion that emanates from the divine names, called the Most Holy Effusion, and the external entities possess receptivity for the effusion pouring forth from the Immutable Archetypes, as mentioned by Ibn Arabi in the first chapter of the *Fusus*, "The recipient is only due to the Most Holy Effusion." However, activity and receptivity exist both between the degrees of existence as well as within a specific degree. Some of the divine names are active in relation to others, such as the Mothers of the Names and the Universal Names in relation to the Daughters of the Names and Particular Names.

The degree of Singularity is the degree of Being in which all multiplicity is effaced, even the multiplicity of the divine names. It is the first entification of Being where the names are in collectivity and comprehensiveness. Unity is the degree of being which embraces the names but in respect of their infinite ontological potentialities. It includes all the modes of being but in potential. Since the Essence does not possess any entification, it is only at the degree of Unity that the Immutable Archetypes come into being, embracing the myriad objects of creation.

* * *

Being at the degree of the Essence and ipseity is unknown to everything but itself It can neither be known nor defined and is the Absolute Unseen. Even the term Being or existence is used in a metaphorical way since Being is in fact, above existence. Its reality is hidden behind the veil of inaccessibility, such that even the names and attributes cannot be spoken of. Whatever can be known of it is due to one of its manifestations, and the aspect of similarity (*tashbih*), while the unknowability of its Essence is due to the aspect of its transcendence (*tanzih*).

There is nothing intermediate between Being and non-being, just as there is no intermediate between an existent thing and a non-existent thing. However, the philosophers have said that quiddities occupy an intermediate position between the two in the sense that the definition of quiddity does not presuppose either the existence or non-existence of a thing. The concept of a tree does not necessitate its existence nor does it necessitate its non-existence. It is simply a mental construct that is indifferent to both being and non-being. In fact, what exists is the concept in the form of mental existence; the existence of a concept in the mind is not the thing itself. What exists in external reality is only Being, not quiddities in and of themselves. Contraries and likes and the multiplicity that arises from them are quiddities that are realized in external reality through Being, which is unitary.

Through Being contraries are realized and likes sustained. It is unitary without distinction and differentiation. What is observed in the external world by way of contraries is the manifestation of Being in accordance with the existential capacity of the recipient. Manifestation of "whiteness" is other than the manifestation of "blackness" from the point of view of quiddity. Both, however, are manifestations of Being, and the limitation is due to the limitation of material existence.

Since material existence is the lowest realm and that farthest removed from divine unity and is at the utmost extremity of multiplicity, it is the incapacity of this realm that does not allow for contraries to exist simultaneously. Material bodies do not possess the capability to have more than one form impressed upon them at any one time, unlike spiritual and non-material substances that may possess contrary qualities at one time. The immaterial soul, for example, may possess contrary properties because it is not limited to the confines of matter. As existence approaches the higher realms, it sheds multiplicity and partakes further in unity, thus becoming more comprehensive and less differentiated. A similar relation exists between the Singularity and Unity where the latter is a unity that opposes multiplicity and is the shadow of the former. The former, however, is a unity that is not in contrast with any multiplicity.

Although Being is unitary and without differentiation with respect to the Essence, there is gradation in existence with respect to its manifestations. Every realm of existence that is closer to the Essence through the first entification, that is, the station of Singularity, subsumes all that is below it. Every higher ontological realm is more comprehensive, simple, luminous, and governs that which is below it. That is why multiplicity is an attribute of the lower dimensions of existence while it is used with reservation when speaking of the names and attributes because of their proximity to and union with the Essence.

Often the metaphor of the sun is used to describe this relation between unity within multiplicity. From one perspective, the rays of the sun are distinct from the sun in that they display individual properties, while from another perspective they are none other than the sun. Were it not for the gentleness and subtlety of the sun's rays, life would not have been possible, while at the same time everything perishes at the rays' source. The closer one is to the sun, the greater the intensity of the rays and the lesser the differentiation, so that at a certain point the distinction between the rays and the sun itself disintegrates. In a similar way, the realms of existence are in one sense distinct realities making possible the existence of the creatures in each respective realm, yet at the same time they are not separate and independent of Being itself. Both perspectives must be borne in mind if one is to understand the contradictory relation between unity and multiplicity. In describing this relation Imam Ali says, "He is in all things but not contained within them, He is outside of all things but not isolated from them."

Privative attributes despite their belonging to non-being also pertain to Being. Negative propositions that indicate that which cannot be predicated about Being are in reality taken from positive predications of Being, for the meaning behind negating contingency for Being is in fact positing the necessity of existence for it.

[Being qua Being] does not accept division and partition. Being is simple and not composed of parts. It is not composed of parts in the external world such as matter and form, since matter and form are both types of Being. If Being were composed of something that requires it for its own existence, Being would precede itself since the composite parts of Being would precede Being itself. Furthermore, Being is not

composed of quantity since quantity is an accidental quality of bodies, which also necessitates Being for its existence. Being is not composed of mental attributes such as genus and differentium since both are by definition limitations of existence and require Being for their realization. Since Being pervades all things it has neither limit nor definition and thus cannot be composed of genus and differentium.

Such definitions are used in discursive reasoning and are based on the apparent properties of things. This type of knowledge is acquired knowledge (*'ilm husuli*) and does not give certainty. The gnostics do not rely on this knowledge since it does not pertain to the essence of things and their transcendental source, giving preference to immediate knowledge (*'ilm huduri*), which is acquired through immediate spiritual vision. Defining "man" through its quiddity as a "rational animal" does not indicate the reality of the human being, which can only be known through spiritual insight and unveiling. Just as Rumi says,

*The world's forms are foam upon the Sea.
If you are a man of purity, pass beyond the foam.*

Contingent existence has form and limit while Being cannot be limited by form. Thus, Being is simple and not composed of parts on which it might depend for its subsistence.

DIVISION OF THE CONTINGENT

The contingent is divided into the possible contingent and impossible contingent. The latter is further subdivided into those contingents that may be conceived rationally but do not possess realization in the worlds because of their impossibility and those that do not possess realization in the external world because they are eternally hidden in the Absolute Unseen; they are the names referred to by the Prophet as the "Reserved Names" (*al-asma al-musta'thara*) whose knowledge is reserved only for God. The first type of contingent is one that is hypothetical and has no reality either in the mind or in external existence, such as the supposition of the joining of a contradiction. For example, it is impossible to conceive that a thing can simultaneously exist and not exist at the same time and place. What is conceived is the hypothetical proposition of its existence and not the thing itself. That is, it has no referent either in the mind or in external reality and is subsumed under the category of absolute non-being. It may be asked, if one can conceive of "the joining of a contradiction in the mind, how can it be considered absolute non-being, while it has mental existence? It may be replied that what exists in the mind is the hypothetical concept of the "joining of a contradiction" and not the thing itself, since by definition the thing is impossible to conceive.

As for the impossible contingent entities that exist in the Absolute Unseen, they are impossible because they can never appear in the manifest realm. Impossibility is ascribed to them even though they exist in the divine knowledge, because their essences seek the Hidden and flee from the Manifest. Their particular forms are noetic divine realities on the plane of divine knowledge. There is no possible contingent entity that does not seek

its manifestation in the external realms and does not receive it. If some entities were to receive existence over others, it would undermine the reality of God's magnanimity, which by its very nature gives all things its due, namely existence. Or it would result in the inclination of a quiddity towards non-existence, while its reality necessitates existence.

Another division of the contingent entities is that of substance and accident. Substantial entities are either simple immaterial entities, such as spirits, intellects, and souls, or simple material such as elements or compound; such as concepts in the mind which consists of genus and differentium, or things that exist both in the mind and external world.

It does not accept intensification or decline in its Essence. Being qua Being does not undergo intensity and weakness in its Essence because these are applied only to accidents such as "blackness" and "whiteness" that exist in a specific locus. There is no gradation in the reality of Being; rather gradation originates at various levels of existence given that it is the source of multiplicity. The gnostics such as Sadr al-Din al-Qunawi", Ibn Turka, and 'Abd al-Razzaq al-Kashani have negated the idea of gradation in the essential reality of Being, since this would undermine the foundation of essential oneness of Being. This view is based on the grounds that positing gradation in existence does not violate the oneness of Essential Being since Being pervades all things and is not separate from it either from the point of view of its Essence or names. In the same way that Essential Being embraces the myriad quiddities without undergoing any change or distinction in its Essence, gradation in existence is not superadded to the Essence. It is both one with the Essence insofar as the Essence embraces everything, and distinct from it insofar as nothing encompasses it.

Being is absolute good and everything that is good is from it. Every good that appears in existence is from it and subsists through it. Goodness in this sense is ontological and not ethical, that is, existence is a form of good and non-being a form of evil. This definition of good extends in the ethical dimension as well such that every good action is in fact a spiritual reality that the soul acquires increasing its ontological perfection thereby. Likewise, every evil deed is the deficiency of the soul in acquiring the appropriate ontological perfection. In the philosophic sense evil is non-being or the soul's inability to reach a particular perfection, while goodness is the soul's acquisition of it.

It has no beginning...It has no end. Being qua Being is neither preceded nor followed by non-being, and it exists neither through a cause nor is it transformed into non-being. Transformation of Being into non-being is impossible, because the very definition of Being is the negation of non-being. Being cannot remain itself and at the same time transform into non-being. In a similar fashion, the number "one" cannot undergo transformation into the number "two," while still maintaining the definition of oneness. Being is the Hidden, the Manifest, the First and the Last. When Being self-discloses, it becomes manifest, while still remaining hidden. In other words, all realities emanate from

Being becoming manifest from the hiddenness of their Immutable Archetypes, and return to the Hidden after their allotted period in the world expires.

Being is omniscient with respect to all things. Every attribute including life, knowledge and power not only originates from Being, is sustained by Being, but is also at one with Being. That is, every attribute in existence is in reality a divine attribute and name. Since all things originate from Being, Being is more entitled to be qualified by the attributes than the contingent beings. Being bestows these attributes on the creatures in accordance with their ontological receptivity. Therefore, when a creature has the ability to see or hear it is through the divine name of the Hearing and Seeing that it acquires the ability to do so, and it becomes the locus of manifestation of these names. If man has the capacity to know and see, how can it be that Being is not all-knowing and all-seeing?

How can it be that knowledge, power, and will, be attributed to man and not be attributed to God, upon whom creation is essentially dependent? In fact, no creature possesses any perfection except that it is a perfection of Being in the form of manifestation.

The forms of contingent realities follow their essences, which are quiddities annihilated on the level of Singularity but manifest on the level of Unity. In another sense, however, the essences also depend on contingent things so that they may be realized through them. Ibn Arabi writes, "The gnostic sees that causes are also caused by their effects, because the cause remains in a state of non-being without the realization of its effect."¹⁹ In this way there is a mutual necessitation between cause and effect. Another example is that of the student and teacher. In one aspect the student follows the teacher by attending to his instructions, yet on the other hand the teacher follows the student in instructing the student in accordance with his needs and in accordance with his capacity. Likewise, the lower planes of existence depend on and follow the higher planes while at the same time the higher planes require and therefore need the lower planes in order to become manifest.

As for essences being obliterated at the station of Singularity, this is due to the fact that it is the plane on which there is neither form nor trace of anything, even the divine names. The objects of existence first appear at the station of Unity in the form of the divine names and then descend stage after stage throughout the various realms of existence.

Being is a unitary reality possessing no multiplicity. Multiplicity arises through the manifestation of Being which is unitary on the level of the Essence but multiple with respect to the forms of its manifestation. The Quran alludes to this in the verse, "Every day He is upon some task," (al-Rahman: 29) that is, every moment He manifests Himself through the perpetual engendering of creation. This is what the gnostics call entification (*ta'ayyun*), or the manifestation of Being in a certain aspect qualified by the ontological receptivity of the receiver by virtue of its essence. It was mentioned previously that the station of Singularity does not allow for any form or trace. This does not imply that existence is in a state of absolute non-being; rather, it has no entification at this station. That is, all realities are in a state of collectivity such that it might be said that they are

encompassed and absorbed by Absolute Being and no longer have any individual existence.

It possesses a oneness that is not in opposition to multiplicity. Being is one despite the multiplicity of its manifestation. In the same way that visible light appears unified yet the diffraction of its rays through a prism brings forth the multiple colors from which it is composed, the multiplicity of Being manifests itself in the prism of existence. This is why the gnostic sees God in everything, or from another perspective sees nothing but God. Imam Ali said, "I did not see anything except that I saw Allah with it, before and after it." Therefore, these manifestations are not superadded to Being, rather originate from Being and are one with it. In the same way that a single person may be both father and son, Being is qualified by multiple designations all of which refer to the same entity.

There are however, different types of unity referred to by the gnostics. The first type is true unity, also referred to as general unity or absolute unity. This type of unity does not allow for any multiplicity or duality whatsoever, either conceptually or in reality. This is what the gnostics refer to as Being qua Being, and it permeates all levels of creation. The second type of unity is the unity of the names or relative unity, and it is the origin of all multiplicity. Multiplicity here is the multiplicity of the names, not of contingent existence, since the names are one with the divine Essence, but individual with respect to their own essences. Therefore, the unity of divine names is due to their unification with the Essence but subordinate to the absolute unity such that it is the shadow of its unity. The oneness of absolute unity is not superadded to its Essence, unlike the names whose unity is colored with the multiplicity of their individuation. Another type of unity is numerical unity that is in contrast to duality and multiplicity, since the number one is conceived in relation to the number two, three and so on.

Being is pure light since all things are perceived through it It is manifest in and of itself and through its luminosity everything else is made manifest. It illuminates the heavens of the unseen and the spirits, that is, the immaterial and noetic realms. These realms are luminous by their essences although their light is a ray of the pure divine light. The earth of material bodies refers to corporeal existence, which is the earth in relation to the unseen world. It is the source of all spiritual and corporeal light, which consists of the gnostic sciences and sensory objects, respectively.

The reality of Being is unknown to other than it. None knows the reality of Being but Being itself. Being is neither the cosmos (*kawn*), nor occurrence (*thubut*), nor realization (*tahaqquq*), since it is more general and comprehensive than each. Each is an expression of Being's entification not Being qua Being. Although the knowledge of Being is self-evident, the reality of the essence of Being cannot be known. It is a self-evident reality whose innermost aspect is hidden. The following passage explains the reason for Being's unknowability:

"God's invisibility is due to the severity of His manifestation, and His remoteness is because of His extreme proximity. If an entity's manifestation were to be more evident

than knowledge, notion, and knower, and if it were to be nearer than the thing is to itself, such intense manifestation necessarily creates invisibility and such extreme proximity creates distance."

General Being (al-wujud al-am al-munbasit) which extends over the *Immutable Archetypes* is a shadow of the essential reality of Being, since it is the origination of entification through the auspices of the Most Holy Effusion (*al-fayd al-aqdas*). It is also referred to as the Holy Effusion (*al-fayd al-muqaddas*), or the Breath of the All-merciful (*al-nafas al-rahmani*), which emanates from the Most Holy Effusion. It is also the first entification arising from the station of Singularity, which is the inner aspect of the Holy Effusion. Both mental and external existence are a shadow of the *Immutable Archetypes*, which are in turn a shadow of the divine knowledge, which is a shadow of essential Being emanating from the Holy Effusion. Each successive entification is a shadow of the preceding in the terminology of the gnostics, and a degree farther removed from the presence of essential Being. Or in other words, the first entification, which is the degree of Singularity, is the degree in which particulars are in collectivity, whereas the Unity is the degree in which collectivity is in the form of particulars.

As for its being called the Breath of the All-merciful, this is due to the fact that the breath symbolizes a state of collectivity through which words and meanings are engendered. Just as in man, words are brought into the external world from the domain of the intellect through the breath, the objects of creation and all divine perfections, which are the words of God, are made manifest and brought into the external worlds from the plane of divine knowledge through the breath of the All-merciful. "Thus, breath is a vapor, relieves constriction in the breast, and is the vehicle for words; in the same way the Breath of the All-merciful is a Cloud, relieves the constriction of the *Immutable entities* (or the divine names)—which desire to see the outward manifestation of their properties—and is the vehicle for God's own words, which are the creatures." Ibn Arabi writes:

God described Himself as having a Breath. This is His emergence from the Unseen and the manifestation of the letters as the Visible. The letters are containers for meanings, while the meanings are the spirits of the letters. The Breath of the breather is none other than the non-manifest of the breather. The breath becomes manifest as the entities of letters and words. It does not become manifest through anything superadded to the non-manifest, so it is identical with the non-manifest.

The Quran itself alludes to this idea in the verse, "Though all the trees in the earth were pens, and the sea—seven seas after it to replenish it—were ink, yet would the words of God not be spent." Furthermore, the created process is described in the Quran as, "Our only speech to a thing, when We desire it, is to say to it 'Be!' and it is."

Therefore, *General Being* is the second entification in which the particulars of the *Immutable Archetypes* are brought forth. From one perspective it is the outer aspect of the degree of Singularity and the inner aspect of the *Immutable Archetypes*, in the same way that the breath in the human being is the isthmus between ideas and words.

He has indicated through their tongues, "He is through His ipseity with everything, and by His reality with every living thing." The prophets and saints whose ultimate purpose was to instruct mankind in divine unity have made the proofs of the oneness of God evident. However, it is God that guides in order to make manifest His attribute of the Guide, just as the attribute of the Light is manifested through the sun. Were it not for the prophets' call to the oneness of His Being and the station of divinity, people would set their gaze on transient existence and be enveloped in multiplicity.

But since His ipseity is with everything, only those whose hearts are alive know that He is identical with existence by way of manifestation, in the raiment of the divine names and attributes but hidden with respect to His essence. Therefore, He is exalted above every limitation and blemish of createdness, since every created thing is limited in the aspect of temporality and occurrence. He becomes manifest through His engendering of things while still remaining hidden in them, as mentioned by Imam Ali, "He is in everything but not by being contained within them and separate from all things but not by being isolated from them."

His engendering of things and becoming hidden in them—while manifesting Himself in them and His annihilation of them at the Greater Resurrection—is His manifestation in His oneness. His annihilation of all things during the Greater Resurrection is in fact, the return of the manifestation of His oneness, through the effacement of all multiplicity. This is because the Greater Resurrection is the return to the station of collectivity after the annihilation of multiplicity of contingent existence. In the Lesser Resurrection, which occurs immediately after physical death, it is the transformation of entities from their corporeal form to their spiritual forms hidden within them. There is another type of resurrection called the Intermediate Resurrection that occurs by the will of the wayfarer once he has died the death of the lower self. God's manifestation also takes place in the transformation of forms in a single world.

Know that the Rising, as we have indicated, is behind the veils of the (physical) heavens and earth. Its relation to this world is like that of man (as an embryo) to the womb, of the bird to the egg: As long as the structure of outer appearance is not broken, the states of the inner reality cannot be revealed. For the Unseen (world) and the manifest one cannot be combined in a single place. So the "hour" (of the greater Rising) only occurs *when the earth is shaken with its shaking (99:1) and the heaven is split apart (82:1).*

The Greater Resurrection is the reversal of the governance of the names, the Manifest and the Hidden. All that is hidden in the external world, such as the realities of the soul, the inner meanings of acts performed by people, and intentions, will become manifest in the Greater Resurrection. Thus, the forms of paradise, hellfire and the Resurrection will become apparent after the cessation of this world because the dominion of the name, the Hidden, will encompass the dominion of the name, the Manifest.

The proofs of the Greater Resurrection, paradise, and hell are numerous, in both the Quran and hadith. Just as there is an external manifestation of these realities they exist in

the spiritual realms as well, that is, on the plane of the spirit, heart and soul. In these realms, paradise corresponds to adorning the heart with moral virtues and praiseworthy qualities, while hell corresponds to immersion in base desires. Just as paradise and hell have manifestations and concomitants in each plane of existence, the resurrection (the Hour) has manifestation on each of the five divine planes.

Each type is considered the Minor or Intermediate Resurrection, which is followed by a particular kind of death, namely a spiritual transference called voluntary death.

THE MACROCOSMIC GREATER RESURRECTION

There are two aspects of the Resurrection. The first concerns the macrocosm, such as the cosmic realities, the annihilation of the worlds, the rolling up of the heavens and the manifestation of some names over others, their governance and their terms. The second aspect is that which concerns the microcosm, or what is known as the Greater Resurrection of the spirit.

The Greater Resurrection in the macrocosm is the manifestation of the names the Inward and the Last, as well as the names, the Just, the One, and the Subduer, the Life-giver and the One who brings death. Although the Quran uses the term "afterlife" (*al-akhira*), to denote its posteriority, some of the gnostics believe that the Resurrection is not temporally posterior to the present world. Just as the Prophet (peace and blessing be upon him) states, "Whoever dies, his Resurrection has already begun," that is, when the spirit has separated from its elemental body, the inward realities of Paradise and Hell are immediately perceptible to the spirit as there no longer remains any veil between it and those realities. Likewise in the hadith, "By Him who holds the soul of Muhammad in his hand, indeed paradise and hell is closer to each one of you than your shoelaces."

Similarly, what the soul experiences by way of pleasure and pain in the intermediate state of the grave (*barzakh*), is due to the ontological unity of those realities in the spirit. This is alluded to in the Prophetic saying, "The grave is either one of the gardens of Paradise or one of the pits of Hell." Likewise the following Quranic verses illustrate this, "Rivalry [and vainglory] distracted you until you visited the graves. No indeed! Soon you will know! Again, no indeed! Soon you will know! No indeed! Were you to know with certain knowledge, you would surely see Hell. Again, you will surely see it with the eye of certainty." (al-Takathur: 1-7) The above verses and hadith indicate that those who have arrived at the station of the intermediate realm already perceive the realities of either Paradise or Hell with the eye of certainty. In relation to this type of perception Mulla Sadra writes:

In reality all that man conceives or perceives—whether through intellection or sensation, and whether in this world or in the other world—are not things separate from his essence and from his ipseity...Therefore, in the state of (bodily) death, there is nothing to prevent the soul from perceiving all that it perceives and senses, without any association with external material or with any bodily organ separate from the world of the souls and its

own reality...None of the things that a man sees and directly witnesses in the other world—whether they be the blessings of Paradise, such as the *houris*, palaces, gardens, trees, and streams, or the opposite sorts of punishment that are in Hell—are outside the essence of the soul and separate from the soul's being...

Therefore, from one perspective Paradise and Hell are immediately perceptible for one whose inward vision is not obscured by veils or has already passed beyond the material realm into the intermediate realm (*barzakh*).

However, in another sense, the Resurrection will occur after the annihilation of all contingent existence, including the angels, as referred to in the verse, "Everything shall perish, except His face," that is, everything will be subsumed under the dominion of the Degree of Singularity, which is the effacement of all multiplicity, even the multiplicity of the names and attributes. Since the Resurrection is the return of all things to their origin, even the names will return to their origin, which is the Degree of Singularity of the Essence.

The Resurrection will occur on the basis of the governing properties of the names, the Hidden, the One, the Eternal, the Needless, the Mighty, the Returner, the Lifegiver, and other names necessitated by the mode of existence which is characterized by eternity, subsistence, reward and punishment, and sovereignty.

Qaysari points out that those who have only rational knowledge and have not witnessed through spiritual unveiling, doubt the realities of the Resurrection and of paradise and hell, their concomitant events and mode of existence, and the states of the soul in the afterlife. This is because these realities and other spiritual matters are beyond the comprehension of ordinary intellects and certainty in them is only possible through unveiling. Otherwise, one must have faith in the statements and descriptions of the prophets.

THE MICROCOSMIC GREATER RESURRECTION

In the macrocosm the Greater Resurrection is the cessation of the manifestations of contingency and the arrival of the manifestations that are particular to the Essence. Just as the multiplicity of the phenomenal world is annihilated in the wake of Essential unity in the macrocosm, there is a Greater Resurrection in the microcosm, which is the spiritual plane of the human being. It is the last station of development and movement in the Arc of Descent (*qaus al-nuzuli*) for human beings, whereas all other entities have a defined ontological position in their respective realms. The Microcosmic Greater Resurrection is the station of annihilation in the Real and subsistence in Him, with respect to human essence, attributes and acts, each corresponding to the divine Essence, attributes and acts.

In the same way that the individuation of the drops of water is annihilated when they return to the ocean, the individuation of createdness and the aspect of servitude are annihilated in the aspect of Lordship. Alternatively, certain human attributes are replaced

by divine attributes, whereby God becomes the eyes and ears of the wayfarer and as a result, his activity in the world is none other than divine activity. Sayyid Haydar

Amuli discusses gnostic annihilation, which is the Greater Resurrection of the spirit:

[Annihilation] is the unveiling of the divine Essence and its Being from the veils of Beauty and Majesty, and the veil of seeing otherness is completely lifted, whereby one sees nothing other than Him. Rather, one sees a single Essence self-disclosing in the loci of infinite names.

This is similar to the statement of Junayd, "There is naught in existence except God." At this point, the wayfarer reaches Unity of the Essence and rises for the Greater Resurrection of the spirit. This is because the Resurrection in the macrocosm is an expression of the verse, "To whom does sovereignty belong today? To Allah, the One the Subduer!" Since the microcosm is a mirror for the macrocosm, in the spiritual Resurrection sovereignty must also belong to Allah, the One, the Subduer. Therefore, the governance of the name, the One, must pervade the microcosm and all otherness must be annihilated by the name, the Subduer.

In the microcosm there are three resurrections pertaining to form. The first occurs through natural death which removes the veil of the corporeal body, the second is remaining in the intermediary world (*barzakh*) and experiencing the pleasures or torments pertaining to that world, and the third is the Day of Judgment itself. There are also three resurrections in the microcosm pertaining to meaning.

This degree of annihilation is not simply noetic; it is existential. The reality of annihilation and attaining unity with the divine Essence can be known only by one who experiences it. It can be said that true annihilation of the wayfarer in divine unity is comparable to the multiplicity of drops of water unifying with the ocean, or rays of light from both the sun and stars entering a house. In these examples multiplicity is dissolved in unity, which is something real, and not conceptual. If one observes unity within multiplicity in dense bodies, how is it not possible for one to attain unity with the All-encompassing, the Subtle, who is present in every realm of being?

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Quiddities are the forms of His perfections and the manifestation of His names and attributes. Quiddities, in the terminology of the gnostics, are the Immutable Archetypes and are the forms of His perfections because they are the manifestation of the divine names and attributes. They arise initially in the divine knowledge, then in the external world because of His essential love of self-disclosure. This is in accordance with the Hadith Qudsi, "I was a hidden treasure and I loved to be known so I created creation so that I may become known."

He perceives the realities of things in the same way that He perceives His own Essence. He does not perceive them through any intermediary such as the First Intellect, and so on.

This is because Being is unitary and pervades all multiplicity such that it is both unitary and multiple, hidden and manifest. It is multiple in view of its manifestation but unitary by virtue of its Essence and reality. However, the objects of creation do not perceive its reality because of the limitation of their own ontological horizon. This is why it can be said that God pervades all existence but everything is not God, in the same way that a mirror reflects the sun but is not the sun itself. The mirror emits light but not by its own essence, but through the property of reflection. Contingent existence, therefore, is one with Being by virtue of manifestation, but is other than it, since nothing encompasses Being; Being, however, is all-encompassing.

This relationship between Being and creation reflects the transcendence and immanence duality that is essential in the theological and mystical world-view of Islam. Transcendence indicates that the essential reality of Being is unattainable and unknowable, while immanence indicates that God can be known through His manifestation, since what He manifests is none other than Him. This idea is affirmed in a statement by one of the Shi'ite Imams, "There is nothing between the Creator and the created," as well as a hadith from the Prophet (peace and blessing be upon him), "If you were to extend a rope [to the lowest level of the earth] it would reach Allah,"

NECESSITY, CONTINGENCY, AND IMPOSSIBILITY

Remark for the People of Intuition in the Language of the Philosophers

Being is necessary in itself, for if it were contingent, then it would require an engendering cause, resulting in a thing preceding itself. That is, Being exists by the necessity that is found in its own essence and not by an external cause. Since a thing can either be necessary in itself, necessary by something else, contingent, or impossible, Being is necessary in itself in that it does not require a cause to be realized. The claim that contingent entities also do not need a cause since they are not realized in the external world but are mental constructs is negated, because if it were the case that contingent things also do not require a cause, then Being could be considered a type of contingent entity that does not require a cause. However, since the premise that contingent things do not require a cause is false, as demonstrated by Qaysari, the conclusion, that Being is contingent, is also false. The proof, as Qaysari demonstrates, is that contingent things, because they are quiddities, require a cause either in the external world, or in the mind of the perceiver.

Another Remark

Being is neither substance nor accident, as mentioned previously. Being is not contingent because it is neither substance nor accident and every contingent thing is either substance or accident. Necessity is intrinsic to Being but occurs accidentally with respect to

quiddities that are themselves in need of Being for their realization in the external world. The distinction between the necessity with respect to contingent existence and that which is intrinsic to Being is only a mental construct, in the same way that knowledge, the knower, and the known are distinct in the mind, but are in reality united. This is because everything other than Being is in need of Being for its realization, whereas Being is independently realized due to its own nature.

It may be said that Being qua Being is a natural universal (kulli Taabi'i) and every natural universal acquires existence only through one of its individual, then Being qua Being would not be necessary since it would require an individual to be realized. If Being qua Being is a natural universal, which is only realized in the external world by means of its individuals, then Being would also need to be realized through individuation, and therefore, cannot be necessary. The natural universal possesses universality in the mind and is capable of corresponding to a multiplicity of things such as "human," which possesses universality in the mind and corresponds to referents in the external world. Genus is also a universal but does not have a referent in the external world, and is therefore not a "natural" universal, unlike "human."

However, the nature of Being is not like the nature of quiddities since it needs nothing other than itself for its realization, while at the same time, according to the hadith, "There was Allah, and there was nothing else with Him." That is, all realization is the manifestation of Being, while at the same time, Being is independent of manifestation and is not dependent on it.

Another Remark

Every contingent being is receptive of non-being. Nothing of Absolute Being is receptive of non-being. When entities leave existence in the external world it is not because Being is affected with non-being; rather they return to the Unseen through the name, the Hidden. When non-existence is applied to contingent entities it is the removal of state of existence from its quiddity. That is why it is not permissible to say, "contingent existence is capable of accepting non-being," except metaphorically. Non-being does not possess "thingness" (shay'iyya) such that it would be imposed upon quiddity; it is more accurate to say that existence is removed from quiddity. Furthermore, existence of a quiddity cannot accept non-being since this would render Being into non-being, which is impossible, since a thing cannot simultaneously be itself and its contrary.

THE ONENESS OF BEING

Since Being is a single reality that appears in different forms in accordance with the degree of its manifestation, it is never affected by non-being, despite the multiplicity and transformation of its manifestation. Its individuation through quiddities is the shadow of its Essence, which does not permit any deficiency whatsoever, let alone non-being, which is its contrary. One who does not see the oneness of Being, and is absorbed in the multiplicity of its manifestation, reckons that entities enter and leave existence, while in

actuality non-being is a metaphor for the transfer of Being from one state to another. That is, either a thing never having received existence remains in the divine knowledge, or it acquires existence in the external world, which is the final plane of Being's manifestation. Individual entities are associated with Being through an illuminative relation (*al-iddfa al-ishrdqiyya*), in the terminology of the gnostics. This relation is a mental construct and not individuation in the absolute sense because Being qua Being is singular and does not possess multiplicity. When an entity ceases to exist in the external world, the relationship between its existence and its quiddity is severed; it is not the transformation of its existence into non-existence.

GRADATION IN BEING

Note

Entities do not possess an independent reality separate from the reality of Being. A group of Peripatetic philosophers hold a similar view, positing that Being is a universal concept applied to entities that are each independent existential realities. However, the gnostics maintain that Being does not possess existential individuation independent of its own reality, nor does its individuation possess intensity or weakness in gradation; rather individuation is on the plane of quiddities.

The gnostics refute gradation in the essential reality of Being. Gradation is divided into various types. The first type, which is the Peripatetic view, is general gradation in which entities are all independent existential realities and similarity between two things is not in the same aspect. The second type of gradation is more specific and posits that Being is a graded reality differing in weakness and intensity in the same way that light is a single reality whose aspect of distinction is the same aspect of similarity, namely, the quality of light. That is, both weak and strong light share in the quality of luminosity, while at the same time differing in that very quality. The gnostics posit a more specific definition of gradation, namely, Being is a single reality that differs in the intensity and weakness of manifestation, since gradation implies distinction within independent degrees of Being. Since Being is a single reality, it is not possible to speak of independent degrees of its essential reality; rather distinction and differentiation are due to its manifestation in various forms. The gnostic, therefore, does not accept the terms individuations, extensions (*masadiq*), or degrees of Being in the same sense as the philosophers. They hold that the terms are valid only when referring to the manifestations of Being.

It is said that Being does not apply to its individuals uniformly. It is not the case that Being is predicated of its object uniformly in the same way "human" is predicated of Zayd and 'Amr uniformly. Since it is not predicated of its objects uniformly, it is predicated through gradation. Whatever cannot be predicated uniformly cannot be identical to or part of its quiddity. It must be accidental and not essential to its quiddity. However, since priority and posteriority, strength and weakness, are relative accidents that are realized only in relation to each other, they are related to Being through their association with quiddities. Thus, since Being does not possess individuations as

independent realities, it cannot be a general accident for them, otherwise it would be substance in the case of substances or accident in the case of accidents.

Every predication must agree with its subject in some aspect and differ with it in another. It is not possible to predicate a stone for human in "a human is a stone," since there is no aspect of similarity between the quiddity of human and the quiddity of stone, whereas when it is said, "Zayd is standing," the predication of standing can hold true for Zayd, while at the same time the predication is meaningful since the meaning of standing differs in the meaning of Zayd. Thus, when it is said, "this thing exists," the aspect of similarity between the thing and its existence is existence itself, and the aspect of distinction is the quiddity of the object.

In short, gradation and distinction in Being arise from the manifestations of Being and the pervasiveness of the reality of Being, not within the essential nature of Being. The closer the manifestation is to the degree of Singularity, the more complete its manifestation. This gradation occurs on the plane of quiddities or the Immutable Archetypes. Ashtiyani clarifies this point in the following passage:

Being with respect to its descending degrees of manifestation on the plane of contingency, and the multiplicity of its self-disclosure, becomes farther and farther removed from the station of Absoluteness, and is therefore described as intense or weak. The greater the intermediaries of contingency, the more hidden the essential reality of Being becomes, and the weaker the manifestation of its absoluteness.

In affirmation of this you should know that Being has manifestations in the noetic realm, just as it has manifestations in the external world. The manifestations of Being both in the external world and noetic realm are identical with their loci of manifestation. The external world is not a vessel for Being's manifestations, rather it is identical with the external world, in the same way that the breath of a person is identical with his speech in the external world. It is not the case that words are individuations or extensions of the breath since words are engendered simultaneously with the breath and by the breath. It is for this reason that gradation is considered a mental construct while in actuality Being is a single reality. In a similar fashion, the existence of a single object in the external world can be described as possessing matter and form, both of which are mental constructs denoting a single reality externally. This, however, should not lead to the conclusion that multiplicity in existence is a mental construct or imaginary. Multiplicity of contingent existence is real since it emanates from Being itself. An example of this principle is illustrated in the human being, in that a single person possesses a manifest aspect and a hidden aspect. The manifest aspect contains mineral, vegetal, and animal aspects, while the hidden aspect possesses various degrees of the soul, such as the imagination, the rational soul, the spirit, and other immaterial aspects. Each and every aspect of the human being refers to a single individual, whose various aspects do not negate its unity.

As for the disparity found in separate individuals, it does not lie in the quiddity of humanness, but in the manifestation of each particular individual. Therefore, just as it is

not possible for unitary Being to be removed from the multiplicity of its individuals, it is not possible for the quiddity of human to be removed from its individuals despite the disparity of individuals with respect to their specific attributes.

The disparity in the individual instances of Being is not in Being itself The disparity found in individual humans is not like the disparity found in other creatures since the domain of the human being is more extensive than that of the other creatures. For this reason it is said that in the hereafter each person will be resurrected as a unique type (*naw'*) whose genus is human, whereas in this world, every individual is of the same type, that is, human, whose genus is animal and differentium is rational. This is because the other creatures do not diverge from their essential type since each animal acts in accordance with its instinctual nature and the properties of its type, whereas, human beings possess a nature that encompasses both angelic and bestial qualities and the free will needed to shape the ultimate outcome of their nature. The comprehensiveness of the human soul is such that humans are human insofar as their outer form is concerned, but as for their inner meaning and the reality of the soul, there is gradation in the level of humanness that each individual possesses. Some may appear human, but inwardly the entire domain of the soul is of a bestial nature, while another's soul is adorned with angelic qualities.

THE UNIVERSAL DEGREES

Remark Concerning the Universal Degrees and Some Terminology of the Group

The Universal Degrees of Being are the most important levels of manifestation in the view of the gnostics. The term "universal" denotes the extensive scope of these degrees and does not refer to a conceptual construct in logic.

Being, with respect to the Essence, independent of the names and attributes, is known as the Degree of Singularity (*al-ahadiyya*). It is the degree in which the names and attributes assume a state of collectivity without distinction and differentiation. This degree is the source of effusion of the Immutable Archetypes, the objects of divine knowledge. Similarly, in this station the Immutable Archetypes are not distinct realities but remain hidden and latent like a seed containing all the potentialities of the tree, as yet in the form of collectivity. Furthermore, it is the first entification of the unknowable Essence, above which there is no station, referred to as the Collectivity of the Collectivity (*jam al-jam*). Thus, the station of Singularity is not qualified by anything, even the names and attributes or the station referred to by the Quran as, "Independent of the worlds".

Another term for this station is the Cloud (*al-'ama*), because it is a veil and isthmus between the unknowable Essence and the multiplicity of the names and attributes, in the same way that a cloud is a veil and an isthmus between the earth and the sky.

Being, in view of the names and attributes, is called the Degree of Unity (*al-wahidiyya*), the Station of Collectivity (*maqam al-jam*), or the Degree of Divinity (*al-uluhiyya*). If

this degree is viewed in light of bringing things to their completion and perfection, it is called the Station of Lordship (*al-rububiyya*), since the name *al-rabb* involves the aspect of nurturing and sustaining. In relation to the station of Singularity it is a manifest degree

The form of the Intellect's acceptance from God was a self-disclosure of the All-merciful out of love between the Self-disclosurer and that to which He disclosed himself.

THE FIRST INTELLECT

The First Intellect is the first form in existence, mentioned in the hadith literature as the first creation, "The first thing that God created was the Intellect." It possesses the perfections and potentialities of all things by virtue of its proximity to the source of perfection. As Imam Sadiq states, "God created the intellect and it was the first creation from the spiritual beings, proceeding from His light from the right side of the divine throne."

The First Intellect and the Universal Soul are the forms of the Mother Book and the Immutable Archetypes. Whatever exists in the Universal Soul exists in the First Intellect, but as particulars. It is for this reason that the Universal Soul is called the Manifest Book, since that which is undifferentiated remains hidden, and becomes manifest only through individuation and differentiation. The form of the Universal body is the form of the Universal Soul and is more closely connected with temporal existence. It is for this reason that it is called the Book of Effacement and Establishment (*al-mahw wa al-ithbat*) since objects contained within it are not fixed because of the mutable nature of the temporal world. Furthermore, this book is connected to individual forms and their states rather than to universals, since universals are fixed.

The First Intellect is also called the Muhammadan Light, referred to by the hadith, "The first thing that God created was my light," because it is the first creation emanating from the divine names. It is also called the World of Invincibility (*jabarut*) due to its intensity and strength. The First Intellect is also called the Highest Pen because it possesses two aspects, an aspect of receptivity from God and an aspect of activity in creation. Qunawi writes, "When God turned the attentiveness of His desire [toward creating the cosmos], this gave rise within the World of Writing and Inscription to a single ontological result that carried the unseen manyness of the relationships. God named it a "pen" and an "intellect." Likewise, Ibn Arabi describes this dual nature of the Intellect in the following:

This reality is an "intellect" in respect of the face turned toward its Lord, a face that receives from Him bestowal and replenishment. The Intellect is the first entitled existent thing that intellectually perceives its own self along with everything that is distinguished from itself. It also perceives everything through which it becomes distinguished from other, in contrast to those who precede it in level, the "enraptured ones."

God called it a "pen" in respect of its face turned toward the engendered world, so it exercises effect upon this world and replenishes it. Moreover, the Pen carries the unseen undifferentiated manyness that is deposited in its essence so that it may differentiate it in that which becomes manifest from it, whether through a level or some other way.

* * *

As for the level of permanent particulars, it is called Universal Soul, or the Tablet of Decree (*lawh al-qadr*) or the station of the name of the Merciful (*al-rahim*), which is specific divine mercy. This degree is a reflection of the previous degree except that it is in the form of particulars. It is called the Manifest Book (*al-kitab al-mubin*) since the universals of the Mother of the Book become evident because of their appearing as particulars. It is called the Guarded Tablet (*al-lawh al-mahfudh*) since it refers to the immutable aspect of particulars. Kashani writes:

There are four tablets: The tablet of precedent decree (*qada*) towers beyond obliteration and affirmation. It is the First Intellect.

The tablet of Measure (*qadar*) is the Universal Rational soul, within which the Universal things of the First Tablet become differentiated and attached to their secondary causes. It is named the Guarded Tablet.

The tablet of the particular, heavenly souls is a tablet on which is inscribed everything in this world along with its shape, condition, and measure. This tablet is called the "heaven of this world." It is like the imagination of the cosmos, just as the first [tablet] is like its spirit, and the second [tablet] is like its heart.

Then there is the tablet of matter, which receives forms of the visible world. And God knows best.

If it is conditioned by the specific forms as being mutable particulars, it is the degree of the name the Effacer (al-ma'hi), the Establisher (al-muthabbit), the Giver of Death (al-mumit), the Life-giver (al-muhyi), since these names govern the external world. Specific forms of mutable particulars refer to the natural world, since universal forms are particularized, are engendered and effaced, and undergo change and transformation. Thus, it is called the realm of Generation and Corruption (al-kawn wa-al fasad) and the Tablet of Obliteration and Establishment (kitab d-makwwa al-ithbat). Particulars are mutable in this realm unlike the previous realm in which particulars are established and permanent.

The natural universal is mentioned in Qaysari's commentary on the Bezel of Tsa in the *Fusus* as follows: "Nature in the view of the gnostics refers to the spiritual meaning pervading all existence, whether it is intellect, soul, immaterial, or corporeal, although for the philosophers it refers to the power pervading all bodies."

If it is conditioned by receiving types, spiritual and corporeal, it is the level of the name the Receiver. Universal Prime Matter is that which possesses pure receptivity of forms. Likewise, both the Inscribed Book and the Outstretched Parchment refer to receptivity, whereas the names, the Originator and the Creator, refer to activity. Immaterial spiritual forms are related to the rational intellects and souls since the latter are immaterial and possess the capacity of acquiring knowledge. These divine names are associated

each descending realm of Being. Each realm of Being is governed by the divine names appropriate for it and this degree of Being is the degree of the All-Knowing.

That which the philosophers refer to as the Immaterial Intellect (al-'aql-al-mujarrad) is the Spirit in the view of the people of Allah The spirit and heart are the microcosmic realities of the human being that correspond to the macrocosmic realities of the Supreme Spirit, the Spirit of Sanctity, or the First Intellect, respectively. The following sections discuss the concepts of the macrocosm and microcosm followed by a detailed discussion of the microcosmic spirit, heart and intellect.

THE MACROCOSM AND THE MICROCOSM

One of the concepts Ibn Arabi expounds is the Great Man (*al-insan al-kabir*). This is in conjunction with the Small Man (*al-insan al-saghir*), the Great World (*al-alam al-kabir*), and the Small World (*al-'alam al-saghir*). The terms have multiple designations, each referring to the same essence but from different perspectives. The term Great Man often denotes the cosmos, which in essence refers to the reality of the form of man. Sometimes, however, it refers to man himself since man is the manifestation of the Supreme Name "Allah" and there is no greater entity in the realm of being. In this sense, the Small Man refers to the cosmos since the existence of the cosmos is a manifestation of the Supreme Spirit through its descent through the levels of being. Since the Supreme Spirit is the reality of the Muhammadan light as referred to by the hadith, "The first thing that God created was my light," all levels of existence are the particulars of that light. The same correspondence can be applied to the Great and Small Cosmos. However, Qaysari employs the term Great Man to mean the macrocosm when defining the terms the First Intellect, the Supreme Pen, and the Universal Soul in order to contrast it with the microcosm which contains the Secret, the Arcane, the spirit, heart, etc., all of which are realities of the human spiritual landscape. In the tenth chapter of the *Muqaddima* he writes:

Just as there are manifestations of the divine names from the First Intellect, the Supreme Pen, the Light, the Universal Soul, the Guarded Tablet, and others we have alluded to, to indicate that reality of man is manifest by these realities in the macrocosm, there are manifestations of the divine names in the microcosm, according to the levels designated by the Folk of Allah (ura/a), and they are the Secret, the Arcane, the Spirit, the Heart, the Word, and ra —with a *damma* on the ra —the *fu'ad*, the Breast, the Intellect, and the Soul.

Qaysari here draws a parallel between manifestations of the divine names in the macrocosm and manifestations in the microcosm, each reality in the macrocosm having a corresponding reality in the microcosm. Furthermore, it may be said that both the macrocosm and microcosm are essentially one reality that differ only with respect to their being governed by the names, the Manifest and the Hidden. Both modes of Being are in essence the manifestation of the Supreme Name, "Allah", which refers to the cosmos as the Great Man and the human being as the Small Man. Since the Supreme Name "Allah"

refers to all of the divine names before their differentiation, it can also be said that this name encompasses the realities of all things in the state of collectivity, while every other name besides it has governance only over that which defines it.

THE MICROCOSMIC SPIRIT, HEART, AND INTELLECT

Both the macrocosm and the microcosm are manifestations of the Supreme Spirit, which is the manifestation of the divine Essence, and the reality of the human spirit. Just as the macrocosm contains the First Intellect, which is the first creation in existence, the Highest Pen, the Universal Intellect and Soul, the microcosm, or the human dimension, possesses various degrees of manifestation, called the spirit, heart, intellect, and soul, etc. Qaysari describes these correspondences in the tenth chapter of the *Muqaddima*:

As you have come to know, the human reality has manifestations in the world in the form of particulars, know that there are also manifestations in the human world in the form of collectivity. The first of its manifestations in it is the form of immaterial spirit corresponding to the form of the Intellect. Then, it is the form of the heart corresponding to the form the Universal Soul. Then, it is the form of the animal soul corresponding to the Universal Nature (*al-tabia al-kulliyya*) and the Impressed Celestial Soul (*al-nafs al-muntabia al-falakiyya*), etc. Then, it is the subtle ethereal spirit known as the "animal spirit" by the physicians, corresponding to the Universal Primordial Matter (*huyala*). Then, it is the form of blood corresponding to the form of the Universal Body. Then, it is the form of the limbs corresponding to the Body of the Great World. It is from these descending degrees of manifestation on the human plane that there occurs a correspondence between the two replicas (*nuskhatayn*).

Although various terms are used to describe the inner landscape of the human being, it should not be imagined that the various manifestations of the Supreme Spirit are discrete entities like physical organs. Rather, it is a single immaterial reality that can be described from various perspectives, in accordance with the descending degrees of manifestation in the microcosm. Qaysari defines the various terms used to describe the microcosmic Supreme Spirit in greater detail in the following:

As for its being called the secret, it is because none perceive its lights except the possessors of hearts and those firm in knowledge. It is called the hidden because of the hiddenness of its reality from the gnostics and others. It is called the spirit because of its lordship over the body, being the source of material life and the wellspring of effusion in the powers of the soul. It is called the heart because of its fluctuating from the side which faces the Lord, receiving illumination thereby, and the side which faces the animal soul, so that it emanates what it has received from its source, according to its capacity. It is called the word because of its appearing in the breath of the All-Merciful, in the same way that a word appears in the breath of the human being. It is called the inner heart due to its being affected from its source, since *al-fa'd* means "injury" and "affected," literally. It is called the breast because it faces the body and is the source of its light, managing it. It is called the *ru* because of the fear and trepidation of the overpowering aspect of its

origin, the divine name, the Subduer (*al-Qahhar*), since the etymology of the word *rou* indicates fear. It is called the intellect because of its discerning its essence and engenderer, and for its limitation and specific particularization, and its specifying and registering that which it perceives, and determining the objects of its cognition. It is called the soul because of its attachment to the body and its governance of it. It is called the "vegetal soul," in reference to the appearance of vegetal activity by its custodians on the vegetal plane and called the "animal soul" in reference to animal actions appearing on the animal plane.

The term spirit is often used in contrast to body and symbolizes the fundamental conceptual duality of the cosmos. Everything other than the material realm is in some form spiritual (*wham*). That is, the term has wide application relating to everything that is connected to divinity. It has appeared in various contexts in both the Quran and hadith in reference to the divine spirit, the command of God, and the human spirit. Because of the central position of the spirit in Islamic thought, this section of the commentary examines the various terms that are used in describing the degrees of the human spirit.

THE SPIRIT

The lexical root of *rah* in the Arabic signifies breath, wind, or as the ancient natural philosophers maintained, "a subtle vaporous substance, which is the principle of vitality and of sensation and of voluntary motion, or the vital principle in man, or the breath that man breathes, and which pervades the whole body." This definition of spirit, however, refers only the physical reality of man, while the spirit, insofar as it is an immaterial luminous substance, is divested from matter and independent of it. The Quran describes the spirit as a command of God. Commentators of the Quran explain this usage of the word "command" (*amr*) to mean the World of Command, which is a luminous world that originates from the engendering command "Be!"

The Quran refers to the Worlds of Creation and Command in the verses, "To Him belong the Creation and the Command; Glory be to the Lord of the worlds," (al-'Araf: 54) and "His only command when He wants a thing is to say to it 'Be!' and it is." (Yasin: 82) The former verse indicates that there is a distinction between the Command and the Creation and that they are independent worlds. The latter verse indicates that the command of God is instantaneous and without intermediary. As a consequence, the World of Command is ontologically higher in the Arc of Descent since the higher the realm, the greater the simplicity, luminosity, and proximity to the Essential divine unity. Furthermore, the Quran mentions that the spirit is from the Command of God, or the World of Command. It is therefore, a unified substance that is not divisible into parts, nor susceptible to measure and quantity. In this regard, Najm al-Din al-Razi (573/1177-654/1256), a prominent gnostic and a contemporary of Ibn Arabi writes:

Know that the human spirit belongs to the World of Command and is set apart by a proximity to God that no other creature enjoys, as was explained in preceding chapters.

The world of Command consists of a world which is subject to neither amount, quantity nor measure, by contrast with the world of Creation, which is subject to these. The name of Command was given to the world of spirits because it came in to being upon the command "Be!" with neither temporal delay nor material intermediary. The World of Creation also came into being upon the command "Be!", but through the intermediary of matter and the extension of days—"He created the heaven and the earth in six days" (Araf: 54).

...The spirit is itself the matter from which the world of spirits is derived, and the world of spirits is the origin of the world of Dominion, and the world of Dominion is the source of the world of Kingship. The world of Kingship subsists, in its entirety, by the world of Dominion; the world of Dominion subsists by the world of spirits; the world of spirits subsists by the human spirit; and the human spirit subsists by God's attribute of self-subsisting. "Glorified be He in Whose hand is the Dominion of all things and to Whom ye shall be returned."

The Supreme Spirit is the reality of human spirit, the manifestation of the divine Essence, and the locus of all of the divine names. Since there is no intermediary between it and the Command of God "Be!" it is the most proximate creation to the divine Essence. Furthermore, its reality is the reality of the Spirit of God since God refers to it as belonging to His spirit, "And when I have fashioned him and breathed into him of My spirit..." It should be noted that the Supreme Spirit is neither identical with the Essence nor a part of it, as elucidated in the verse by the use of the word "of," in "... of My Spirit." This is because the reality of the Essence transcends all existence and nothing can be likened to it. Furthermore, it cannot be a part of it since, as explained earlier, the spirit is not subject to quantity, measure and division. It is, therefore, the first entification in existence emanating from the divine Essence, possessing all the perfections of the Essence in the form of the names and attributes. In the terminology of the gnostics, it is the first manifestation of all realities on the plane of the Unity, also referred to as the First Intellect, the Muhammadan Reality, or the Muhammadan Light, and the Pen, as mentioned in various hadith, "The first thing that God created was my light," and "The first thing that God created was the Intellect," and "The first thing that God created was my spirit." These terms refer to the reality of the spirit in the macrocosm, where it exists without the body before its descent into the phenomenal world. In the microcosm, however, the spirit attaches itself to the body and needs it to acquire spiritual perfections that are specific to the phenomenal world, namely, knowledge of the particulars, and to reap the benefits from actions that the body carries out in the visible world, as Rumi says:

*The spirit cannot function without the body,
and the body without the spirit is withered and cold.
Your body is manifest and your spirit hidden:
These two put all the business of the world in order.
God made the body the locus of manifestation for the spirit.*

After its attachment to the body in the microcosm, it is called the spirit, the heart, the intellect, and the rational soul. That is, it is called the spirit in light of the totality of divine names and attributes that it encompasses in the state of collectivity. When it acquires knowledge from the perceptible world it is called the heart, since it fluctuates between its spiritual essence and the phenomenal world and acquires knowledge of its particulars.

In the following verses of the Quran the relationship between the body and spirit is further elucidated:

"When your Lord said to your angels, 'I am going to create a man from clay. So when I have proportioned him and breathed into him of My spirit then fall down in prostration before him. Thereat the angels prostrated, all of them together except Iblis, He acted arrogantly and he was one of the faithless. He said, O' Iblis! What keeps you from prostrating before that which I have created with My two hands? Are you arrogant, or are you one of the exalted ones?' He said, I am better than him, You created me from fire and You created him from clay."

Since the angels are each a manifestation of one of the divine names, the command of prostration was to place each of them under the governance of the Supreme Spirit of the Perfect Human, who is the manifestation of the Supreme Name "Allah." As mentioned earlier, the name "Allah" is all-inclusive of the divine names and attributes. Rumi explains:

*That is why the angels prostrated themselves before
Adam: his spirit was greater than their existence.
After all, it would not have been proper
to command a superior being to prostrate himself to an inferior one.
How could God's Justice and Kindness allow a rose to prostrate to a thorn?*

Since the form of Adam was created from clay, and his spirit from the divine attributes of Beauty and Majesty, referred to by "My two hands," the reality of Adam encompasses both the corporeal and the spiritual dimension, or the manifest and the hidden. Clay is in opposition to spirit since the former is at the extremity of corporeality and the latter is at the extremity of immateriality. The divine duality of "My two hands," is at work both with respect to the body's relation to the spirit as well as the divine attributes of Beauty and Majesty that pertain to the degree of the spirit.

The command to prostrate was given to the angels as well as Iblis even though he was of the Jinn and not an angel. It is because of his activity and station that he was counted among them and was therefore, included in the command to prostrate. However, given that Iblis is of the Jinn, he was not able to comprehend the exalted station of the Supreme Spirit because the macrocosmic reality of Iblis is the Universal Imagination (*al-wahm al-kulli*), which cannot comprehend universals but only particulars.

This is clarified in the following statement:

This immaterial substance is the Intellect of the Great World which has been expressed by some as the first human and is other than Adam; rather, the spirit of Adam is a manifestation of it. In opposition to this luminous reality is another reality, the Universal Imagination (*al-wahm al-kulli*) in the absolute human, which inclines to evil and corruption by the impulse of its primordial nature and natural disposition and summons to error and devising. It is identical with the reality of the Iblis of Iblisess and the Greatest Satan of which all the rest of the Iblisess and Satans are a manifestation.

Therefore, Iblis was only able to see the outward form of Adam, which is a particular, and not the all-inclusive universality of his spirit. Rather than admitting to his inherent inability to comprehend the spiritual reality of Adam, he contended with God stating that Adam's creation was from clay and that fire is superior to clay. Rumi discusses further the above passage of the Quran pointing out the inherent inability of Iblis to see beyond the form of Adam:

*Of Adam, who was peerless and unequalled, the eye of Iblis saw naught but clay.
When the angels prostrated themselves to him, Adam said to that one who saw only
outward, "Simpleton! Do you consider it proper that I be but a tiny body?"
Iblis saw things separately: He thought that we are apart from God.
Do not gaze upon Adam's water and clay, like Iblis:
Behold a hundred thousand rose gardens behind that clay!
With both eyes, see the beginning and the end!
Beware! Be not one-eyed, like the accursed Iblis!
Close your Iblis-like eye for a moment.
After all, how long will you gaze upon form? How long? How long?*

THE HEART

Of the various aspects of the spirit, perhaps no other aspect has greater significance from the point of view of the Quran and hadith than the heart. This is because the heart is the center of man's consciousness, his innermost reality and the organ of spiritual vision through which God is known. Drawing on Quran and hadith Najm al-Din al-Razi describes the heart's significance in the spiritual landscape of man:

Know that the relationship of the heart to the body is like that of God's Throne to the world. In the same way that the Throne is the plane of manifestation for the repose of the attribute of compassion in the macrocosm, so too the heart is the place of manifestation for the repose of the attribute of spirituality in the microcosm... The heart, however, has a property and nobility that the Throne does not possess, for the heart is aware of receiving the effusion of the grace of the spirit, while the Throne has no such awareness.

The root meaning of the term *qalb* (heart) is to overturn, to return, to go back and forth, to fluctuate and to undergo transformation. As its name suggests, the heart has two

aspects, one that faces the spirit and one that faces the corporeal body. The aspect that faces the body is called the soul and the aspect that faces the spirit is called the intellect. That which the heart acquires from the spirit are universals and that which it acquires from the soul and its faculties are particulars. Thus, the heart straddles two dimensions, as Najm al-Din al-Razi further describes:

Similarly, one face of the human heart is turned to the world of spirituality, and the other face to the world of the bodily frame. It is for this reason that the heart is called *qalb*, for it contains within itself two worlds, corporeal and spiritual, and constantly turns from one to the other. All sustaining grace received from the spirit is distributed by the heart.

The heart stands between the spiritual world of the spirit and the corporeal world of the body, also described by 'Abd al-Razzaq Kashani:

The heart is a luminous, disengaged substance halfway between the spirit and the soul. It is that through which true humanity is realized. The philosophers refer to it as the rational soul. The spirit is the inward dimension, and the animal soul is its mount and its outward dimension, halfway between it and the body. Thus, the Quran [24:35] compares the heart to a glass and a shining star, while it compares the spirit to a lamp. The tree is the soul, the niche is the body. The heart is the intermediate reality in existence and in levels of descents, like the Guarded Tablet in the cosmos. The glass is an allusion to the heart that is illumined by the spirit and illuminates everything around it by shining light upon them.

There are numerous verses in the Quran that indicate the centrality of the heart in the human being. The heart is the locus of good and evil, right and wrong, knowledge and ignorance, and both people of faith and unbelievers have hearts. It is the center of the human personality and the place where man meets God. There is both a cognitive and moral dimension, as mentioned in the hadith, "God does not look at your bodies or your forms, but He looks at your hearts," that is, it is the abode of piety and faith. Quranic virtues such as sincerity, piety, peace, love and repentance are located in the heart. Both spiritual cognition and moral rectitude arise from the purification of the heart. When the heart is oriented toward the mundane world and entangled in bodily pleasures, it turns its face away from the domain of the spirit and is subject to spiritual illnesses, as indicated by the verse, "In their hearts is a sickness," (al-Baqara: 10) and "It is not the eyes that are blind, but blind are the hearts within the breasts," (al-Hajj: 45) and "What, have they no hearts to use intelligence or eyes to see with?" (A'raf: 179) When, on the contrary it orients itself towards the spirit's luminosity it becomes the locus of all the divine attributes that it receives from the spirit.

Since the heart is both a recipient of the divine effusion and the origin of all acts in visible world, purification of the heart is the essence of the spiritual path and the means by which one attains perfection. The Prophet (peace and blessing be upon him) said, "There is in the body of the son of Adam a piece of flesh which, if it be sound, causes the rest of the body to be sound; and if it be corrupt, causes the rest of the body to be

corrupt." Likewise, Rumi writes, "When you look carefully, you see that all good qualities dwell in the heart. All these disgraceful qualities derive from water and clay."

The heart is the place where God reveals Himself to human beings. His presence is felt in the heart since it is the organ of spiritual vision, understanding and remembrance and in the words of the Hadith Qudsi, "Neither My heaven nor My earth embraces Me, but the heart of My servant with faith does embrace Me." It might be asked why the spirit has not been singled out to embrace divinity rather than the heart? After all, the Supreme Spirit is the manifestation of all the divine attributes. The reason is that the heart encompasses both the spiritual and the corporeal, the hidden and the manifest, and possesses knowledge of both universals and particulars. The divine attributes in the spirit are in the form of collectivity, whereas the heart embraces both collectivity and differentiation. Through its interaction with the visible world, it acquires knowledge of particulars while at the same time it receives effusion from the spirit.

Thus, God ennobled that entity which possesses complete ontological receptivity of the divine as the essence of man; it was mentioned previously that man is the mirror of God and creation. In order to describe the heart's ability to reflect the images cast on it, Najm al-Din al-Kubra (d. 618/1221) uses a similar analogy:

Know that the subtle reality which is the heart fluctuates from state to state, like water that takes on the color of its container." The heart is subtle and accepts the reflection of thoughts and meanings that circle around it. Hence the color of the thing that faces the subtle reality takes form within it, just as forms are reflected in a mirror or in pure water.

Some of the gnostics have described in detail the spiritual landscape of the human being, citing the Verse of Light in the Quran:

The similitude of His light is a niche in which there is a lamp. The lamp is in a glass. The glass, is as it were, a shining star, lit by the blessed olive tree, neither from the east nor West, whose oil would almost glow forth if itself though no fire touched it. Light upon Light! Allah guides to His light whom He wills.

The following section paraphrases 'Abd al-Razzaq Kashani's commentary on this verse describes these interrelationships. The first layer, which is considered the outermost aspect of the human being is the body (*jism*), which is corporeal, dark and dense. This is analogous to the "lamp-niche" which is dark and has no light of itself. The spirit is the lamp which illuminates out of its very essence, as fire intrinsically radiates light. The glass is the heart, since it draws luminosity from the lamp and is like a bright star in its radiance and high position. Moreover, the glass can transmit the essential luminosity of the lamp only if it is clean and translucent. Otherwise, an opaque glass would only limit the lamp's essential luminosity since the glass covers the lamp. The blessed olive tree is the soul, as Kashani explains, for the soul has faculties and is the source of great benefit just as branches and fruits give benefit. Thus, the spirit is the source of divine perfections found within the very essence of man; the heart, the locus of receptivity of the spirits

essential goodness, the soul, the heart's mount, and the body, the mount for the soul. Here Kashani gives a positive view of the soul, although many authors have disparaged the soul as being the source of the bestial properties found in man. In Kashani's view, it is the essential receptivity of the soul governed by the spirit's divine nature that is taken into consideration. Thus, the spirit's luminosity and essential goodness percolates to each level of one's inner being, casting out all darkness and bestial attributes.

THE INTELLECT

The word in Arabic for intellect is *'aql*. The lexical meaning of *'aql* is to tie, fetter or bind, which also indicates its function, that is to tether ideas in the mind through limiting and defining them. The intellect gains access to universals and particulars through the process of a "complete definition" (*al-hadd al-tamm*), using the genus (*jins*) and differentium (*fasl*) such as the definition of man given by the logicians and philosophers, "a rational animal."

The terms intellect, spirit, and heart are used interchangeably, all of which refer to man's inward reality but differ only in aspect. Some of these complex correspondences are summarized in the following verses of Rumi:

*Sense perception is in bondage to the intellect, oh friend!
And know too that the intellect is in bondage to the
spirit.*

*The body is outward, the spirit hidden; the body is like the sleeve, the spirit the hand.
Then the intellect is more hidden than spirit: the senses perceive the spirit more
quickly.*

*The spirit of prophetic revelation is beyond the intellect;
coming from the Unseen, it belongs to that side.
What is the spirit? One-half of a leaf from the garden of Thy Beauty.
What is the heart? A single blossom from Thy provisions of plenty.
Without doubt the intellects and hearts derive from the divine Throne,
but they live veiled from the Throne's light.
Then the army of the human individual came from the world of the
spirit; the intellect, the vizier; the heart, the king.*

The intellect is the faculty of understanding, cognition and rationality. It differs from the heart in that the heart is the organ of vision, faith, piety and moral attributes, whereas the intellect is the abode of thought and perception. The intellect seeks the good, the outcomes of affairs, and discerns between right and wrong. The intellect is the bearer of knowledge after reflecting on concepts and acquiring new sciences.

However, in many hadith, the term "intellect" is used synonymously with the Supreme Spirit. As mentioned earlier, these terms are interchangeable and point towards a single reality but they differ in degree and aspect. Thus, it cannot be said conclusively that the function of a particular aspect is this or that since their usage in the hadith and Sufi

literature is often ambiguous. For this reason, many Sufi authors have put forward various schema, sometimes a five-fold and sometimes a seven-fold, often including terms such as the Kernel (*lubb*), the Grain (*habbat al-qalb*), the Core (*suwayda*), and the Pericardium (*shaghaf*).

* * *

The degree of the Perfect Man consists of the collectivity of all divine and existential realms. The Perfect Human (*al-insan al-kamil*), or the Complete Human, is one of the central concepts in the school of Ibn Arabi. Its importance cannot be understated especially since Qaysari devotes many chapters in the *Muqaddima* expanding on various aspects of the human spiritual landscape. In fact, one may view the *Muqaddima* as focusing on two primary themes, divinity and man. The following section discusses the concept of the Perfect Human in relation to the other planes of Being.

THE FIVE DIVINE PRESENCES

In conjunction with the above division there is another set of terms that describe the fundamental degrees of Being. The gnostics use the term "presence" (*hadra*) to describe these degrees and to indicate that God is present in all the worlds. Although there are as many "presences" as there are manifestations, the gnostics have summarized the most fundamental divisions of the levels of Being as the five Divine Presences (*al-hadarat al-ilahiyya*). Chittick writes, "The Divine Presence is that "location" where Allah is to be found, or where we can affirm that what we find is He. It includes the Essence of Allah, which is God in Himself without regard to His creatures; the attributes of Allah, also called His names, which are the relationships that can be discerned between the Essence and everything other than He; and the acts, which are all the creatures in the cosmos along with everything that appears from them. Hence, the Divine Presence designates God on the one hand and the cosmos, inasmuch as it can be said to be the locus of His activity, on the other."

The first presence is the Absolute Unseen. In contrast to this station is the absolute visible (*al-shahada d-mutlaqa*), which is the external world and is also called *mulk* or *nasut*. It is the last realm in the Arc of Descent, which is the final, and most outward manifestation of the Essence. Every world in relation to the Absolute Unseen is considered an external world. However, in relation to each other, the World of Universal Intellects and Souls (*'alam al-'uqal wa al-nufus al-kulliya*) is the relative unseen and the Imaginal World (*al-alam al-mithal*) is the relative visible. The Imaginal World is the shadow of the noetic realm and encompasses the absolute visible world. The visible world is the realm of multiplicity and differentiation. The first presence is also known as the presence of Immutable Archetypes; the second as the world of spirits, given that they are immaterial intellects; the third as the Imaginal World; the fourth as the material world; and the fifth, which is the comprehensive world encompassing the previous four, as the reality of the Perfect Human (*d-insan d-kamil*). Furthermore, each presence is a shadow of the previous realm, such that each successive higher realm encompasses the one below it.

Human encompasses all the realms and is the shadow of the name Allah, which represents all the divine names in totality.

These five presences are also considered the books of God, and differ from the words of God since the books represent stationary degrees in existence while words (*kalimat*) refer to the manifestations within those degrees that arise immediately from the divine command. That is, the books of God represent degrees of created reality, while the words of God arise from the divine breath or "exhalation" which results in the immediate engendering of things. The term "books" emphasizes the created order of things, and the way in which God's command exists in the form of individuation and separation, while the "words of God" emphasize God's independence from the need of intermediaries for the subsistence of the world, which is an expression of God's engendering command, "Be!" One final distinction between the two is that "books" refer to the world in an individuated and differentiated state and "words" refer to the world in the state of being collective and undifferentiated.

The World of Dominion (*malakut*) is a manifestation of the World of Invincibility (*jabarut*), also called the world of spirits or the Muhammadan Spirit, which is the differentiated form of the Muhammadan Light, as the hadith mentions: "God spoke a word; He said to it, 'Be light!' then He spoke a word, and said to it, 'Be Spirit!' and He combined the spirit with the light."

The World of Dominion is the realm occupied by the spiritual beings such as the angels and spirits. The lower degree of this realm is the Imaginal World because of the existence of forms in it, while its higher degree possesses the characteristics of the World of Invincibility and is totally devoid of any constriction by the sensory world and world of forms. This is why there are different classes of angels, some possessing form and not others. Furthermore, the sensory world is a manifestation of the World of Dominion. Each successive realm is a shadow of the former but since it is more distant from the Essence, the manifestation of the divine attributes in that realm is also weaker.

The fifth divine presence, as mentioned, is that of the Perfect Human (*al-insan al-kamil*), which is the comprehensive book containing the entirety of existence, and is therefore the microcosm of the Great World. Thus, within man there exists a corresponding division of the divine presences that exist in the macrocosm. The microcosm is the mirror of the macrocosm, or in the terminology of the gnostics, the human is the Small Man and the world is the Great Man, while at the same time, the human is the Small World and the world is the Great World. Another formula for this relation is that the human is the Great World, and the world is the Small World since only man is the direct and complete reflection of God, whereas the cosmos is subservient to God's vicegerent, and therefore subordinate in worth.

Just as there are levels of manifestation, also known as the divine presences, there are also levels of human existence. The Perfect Human is none other than the reflection of the divine names in all levels of his being. The outermost aspect, which is referred to as

the "lowest of the low" in the Quran, is the physical body. As one moves deeper inward, the aspects of the self become more subtle, immaterial, luminous, comprehensive, noble, and ultimately are a perfect reflection of the divine attributes. It is only when the inward journey is undertaken, that one actualize the divine names in one's being, since there are some names that are manifested only on the level of the spirit, or the hidden (*khafi*). In fact, the greater one's distance from immaterial spiritual realities the weaker the manifestation of any given name.

That is why in practical gnosticism the Perfect Human traverses all the realms of Being so that he reaches the plane of Singularity, which is the plane that encompasses all the divine names in collectivity. Just as the spirit represents the collectivity of all realities, or the Mother of the Book (*umm al-kitab*), and the heart represents the realities in the form of separation or the Manifest Book (*kitab al-mubin*), so too the Perfect Human actualizes the divine names associated with each plane of existence, whether it is in state of collectivity or separation.

Sadr al-Din Qunawi, the greatest expositor of Ibn Arabi's works, writes in *Kitab al-fuluk*, a commentary on Ibn Arab's *Fusus al-Hikam*,

Just as the Divine Presence, referred to by the name Allah, comprises all the specific Attributes, their particular properties, and their inter-relationships, so that there is no intermediary between the Essence and the Attributes, likewise, from the point of view of man's reality and his station, there is no intermediary between man and God. His reality is such that he is the comprehensive isthmus (*al-barzakhiyya d-jami'a*) between the properties of necessity and possibility since he encompasses both.

Man's inward reality is identical with the Divine Reality since the "Perfect Human is the locus of manifestation of the Comprehensive Name Allah and he has a share in the glory of his Master; thus he becomes sanctified." While, other entities in creation manifest some attribute or another, man assumes the unique position of manifesting all the Names. Qunawi writes: "All beings are determined by the properties of the Names they manifest, each taking on a specific relationship and existential position."

THE VICEGERENCY OF MAN

In the opening chapter of the *Fusus*, Ibn Arabi describes the unique and noble position of man as the vicegerent of God and the complete manifestation of the divine names. One finds this idea clearly stated in the Quran where God says, "I am going to make a vicegerent on earth" (al-Baqara: 30), "And when I have breathed into him of My Spirit," (Sad: 82) and "What prevented you from prostrating to whom I have created with My own two hands?" (Sad: 75) The Quran is explicit in many instances regarding the superiority of man due to the specific designation of vicegerency and God's endowing him with the knowledge of all the names, as in the verse, "God taught Adam the names, all of them" (al-Baqara: 31). Furthermore, many gnostics have relied upon the hadith, "God created Adam in His own form," as evidence for man's extreme proximity to the

divine being as well as being an explication of the true nature of man. In a hadith related by Imam Sadiq (peace and blessing be upon him) from Imam Ali, we find a clear and explicit statement concerning the form of man:

The form of man is the greatest proof of God in creation. It is the book that He wrote by His own hand, the edifice that He constructed by His wisdom, and the totality of the forms of the worlds. It is the summation of the Guarded Tablet, the witness of all that is absent, the argument against every denier, the straight path to every good, and the bridge spanning paradise and hell.

Imam Ali's statement clearly indicates that the form of man is the totality of the forms of the worlds. However, his statement also conveys that were it not for man being created in the form of God, he would not have served as the greatest proof of God, since God does not need contingent beings to prove His existence. Thus, Imam Husayn says in the supplication of *Arafa*, "How can a thing which is dependent upon You for its own existence prove Your existence? When have you been absent that You should require a proof, and when have You been distant such that effects should lead to You? Blind is the eye that does not see You!" It is only through the reflection of the divine being in Man that he serves as the greatest proof of Him, since a proof is an indicator and a sign for some greater reality with which it is associated. Just as "world" in Arabic, *al-alarn*, which is derived from the word, sign, or token, as in *'alama*, serves as a sign and proof for His existence and acts as a mirror for the divine attributes, the existence of man is the greatest proof of His existence through his mirroring of the divine attributes in their totality.

From the Quranic point of view, God taught man all the names, a reality which was comprehended by neither Iblis nor the angels. Since man's reflection is of the Supreme Name Allah, which is reserved for the Essence, without entification, the station of vicegerency is reserved for one whose existential capacity possesses all the divine names. Were there to exist a being in creation whose reality man did not encompass, it would not have been appropriate for Adam to hold the station of vicegerency, since the vicegerent possesses governance and dominion over his subjects. It would be possible, then, for that being to possess a degree of superiority in that aspect which was lacking in man, and therefore, nullify his vicegerency in that particular aspect. But since God taught man all the names, not even the angels were able to object to God's designation of Adam. Although each angel wished to object to God's preference of Adam, they were unable to relate the names as God commanded them, since each had been limited by the aspect of their own individual essences and consequently blinded by their own ontological limits. Ibn Arabi writes:

Thus no one was entitled to be the vicegerent except the Perfect Man, for God created his outward form out of all the realities and forms of the world, and his inward form on the model of His own form. Nothing, in the world possesses the comprehensiveness that is possessed by the vicegerent. In fact, he has obtained (his vicegerency) only because of his incomprehensiveness.

Divine effusion (*al-fayd al-uluhi*) descends through the divine command "Be!" generating the different levels of existence without causal intermediaries. The descending command emanating from the "Non-delimited Effusion of the Essence (*mutlaq al-fayd al-dhati*) creates the First Intellect, also called the Pen, then the Tablet, then the Throne, then the Chair, then the Heavens, one after another, then the elements, then the 'three progeny, minerals, plants, and animals, and finally man, who is colored by all that which passed before him."

THE MUHAMMADAN REALITY

Divine manifestation occurs in two grand movements known as the Arc of Ascent and the Arc of Descent. The former describes the movement of manifestation and the latter describes the movement of the Return, alluded to in the verse, "To Him we belong and to Him we shall return" (al-Baqara: 156). Since these two movements are carried out in both the macrocosm and the microcosm, it can be said that the entirety of existence is circular. The universe enters into existence from the degree of Singularity to the point of greatest differentiation of primordial matter and then returns to oneness through the human being's spiritual ascent. Qunawi states, "The governing properties of existence, realities and the degrees of created things are circular, and the movements of noetic, sensible and other universals and their concomitants are also circular." Ibn Arabi states further:

There is no divine name that is not between two divine names, for the divine affair is circular. That is why God's affair in the things is infinite, for a circle has no first and no last, except by way of supposition... The affair occurs [with an inclination towards circularity] because things proceed from God and return to Him. From Him it begins and to Him it goes back... This does not happen in a linear shape, or it would never go back to Him, but it does go back. Hence there is no escape from circularity in both the suprasensory and sensory domains.

The existential circle is, more specifically, a process through which man originates from the state of Non-delimited Effusion of the Essence (*mutlaq al-fayd al-dhati*) to the physical form of a human. Man's external existence is the final stage in creation succeeding the plants, animals and minerals; it is the furthest point from the divine Unity and is characterized by extreme multiplicity. It is however, his inner reality that remains divine and thus allows man to journey from existential lowness characterized by multiplicity and composition towards All-Comprehensive Unity (*ahadiyat al-jam'a*). In *al-Fukuk*, Qunawi writes,

If man reaches the highest stage of his wayfaring and unites with the Souls and Intellects, and traverses them in their essential states until he reaches the station of "isthmus" (*barzakhiya*), which is his original station after departing from the utmost extreme of multiplicity and its forms, he will also reach the Unity of this multiplicity, then the *barzakhi* state...So the one who reaches his original nature, is the one whom 'We created in the best form (al-Tin: 4), and one who does not is the one whom 'We brought down to

the lowest of the low (al-Tin: 5), for being distant, due to his multiplicity, from his original station of Divine Oneness.

The first point on this circle is known as the singularity of the Muhammadan Reality, also referred to as the Muhammadan Light, and the First Intellect. Ashtiyani mentions that the Essence, with respect to its attribute of real singularity necessitates an entification, sometimes referred to by the people [gnostics] as the first entification and sometimes referred to as the Muhammadan reality. Ibn Arabi explains this further in the final chapter in the *Fusus* saying,

His is the wisdom of singularity because he is the most perfect existent of this human species, which is why the matter begins with him and ends with him, for he was a prophet while Adam was between clay and water. Then, in his elemental form he became the Seal of the Prophets.

Qaysari writes in his commentary on the *Fusus*,

It is the wisdom of singularity because of his singularity in the degree of divine comprehensiveness, above which is nothing except the degree of the Singular Essence. This is because it is the locus of the name Allah, which is the greatest, all-comprehensive name amongst all the names and attributes.

The Muhammadan reality is the first point in existence, engendered by the Most Holy Effusion from the divine degree of Singularity. It is, therefore, the locus of the name "Allah," the all-comprehensive name. Qaysari further explains in his commentary:

The first that came about by the Most Holy Effusion from amongst the entities was his Immutable Archetype and the first thing that came to exist through the Holy Effusion in its outward aspect from amongst the existent things was his sanctified spirit, just as he said, "The first thing that God created was my light." So he came about through the Singular Essence, the degree of divinity and his Immutable Archetype which was the first singularity.

There is a divine conflict in the external entities since each name is veiled from the other by the name, the Manifest, and requires another name to arbitrate between the entities. The conflict is resolved by the manifestation of the name, the Just, which guides each entity to its perfection and protects it from transgressing on each other. The just arbitrator is the real prophet and the eternal pole of existence that guides and brings all things to their ontological perfection. It is the Muhammadan Reality, who is the true prophet and the lord of the hidden and manifest realms.

Just as each prophet functions as the just arbitrator who guides a nation in a manner appropriate for that time, the Muhammadan Reality is the hidden prophet who guides each individual prophet in his own spiritual development. For this reason the Prophet (peace and blessing be upon him) stated, "I was a prophet while Adam was

water and clay," that is, between spirit and body, or noetic form in the Immutable Archetypes and elemental form.

As for the Muhammadan prophethood in the visible realm, which is the manifestation of the Muhammadan Reality and the Supreme Spirit, it is for the sake of guidance and instruction of the creatures, enabling them to attain their individual perfection in accordance with their existential capacities.

In the terminology of the gnostics, both the Perfect Human and the Muhammadan Reality are the complete manifestation of the all-comprehensive name "Allah." Both represent the totality of the divine attributes and perfections through which the rest of creation is endowed with existence. In one sense the terms are synonymous, both referring to the complete mirror of the divine Being. However, in another sense, the terms describe different aspects of the reality of man. Ibn Arabi points out this difference in '*Anqa' Maghrib*: "The spirit attributed to God [in verse 32:8, where it is said that God breathed 'His Spirit' into Adam] is the Muhammadan reality." He continues: "The Muhammadan Reality arises out of the Light of Absolute Plenitude (*min al-anwar al-samadiyya*) in the dwelling of Singularity." "The Muhammadan Reality was endowed with existence, and then out of it He drew the Universe."

The difference between the concepts of the Perfect Human and the Muhammadan Reality is in priority and posteriority, respectively. The former describes man in terms of his primordality and the latter describes man in terms of his finality. In other words, the Perfect Human refers to man's origin and potential, while the Muhammadan Reality refers to the actuality of the Perfect Human. The Prophet is the realization of "God created Adam in His form," and the ontological reality of the Perfect Human.

LORDSHIP OF THE *MUHAMMADAN REALITY*

It was mentioned earlier in this chapter that the divine names and attributes have governing properties and manifestations in all the realms. Each name has a dominion and period in which it is efficacious. When its period expires, it becomes subsumed under the governance of another name whose dominion is greater. As for the name "Allah," since it is the Supreme Name, its governance does not expire and it exerts an effect in all realms and in every period. Since the Muhammadan Reality is the manifestation of the name Allah, its governance also extends in every realm and in every period, and thus possesses lordship over every manifestation. Just as the name Allah acts as lord (*rabb*) over the rest of the divine names, the Muhammadan Reality acts as lord over the forms of the worlds. The term "lord" refers to the divine name of the Essence that possesses a relationship with creation. The relationship of lordship includes ownership, possession, leadership, bestowal, nurturing, management of affairs and bringing things to their perfection. It is applied to the Muhammadan Reality since its lordship is a shadow of the Lordship of the Essence and its lordship permeates all of existence.

The divine effusion issues forth from the degree of Singularity and extends initially to the Muhammadan Reality, in the terminology of the gnostics, and the First Intellect. All subsequent effusion is from the Muhammadan Reality which possesses absolute lordship over creation. This is on account of its ontological comprehensiveness, since that which is ontologically higher in creation has the responsibility of nurturing that which is lower. Similarly, that which is ontologically lower in creation is subservient to that which is higher in the same way that the mineral kingdom is subservient to the vegetal, the vegetal kingdom is subservient to the animal, and the animal kingdom is subservient to man. But since man is the vicegerent of God, he is ontologically higher than all the kingdoms, including the angels and the Jinn. Within the species of man, the prophets are ontologically higher than the rest of humanity and are commissioned to guide humanity to perfection. Among the prophets, the "possessors of might" (*ulu al-'azm*) are ontologically higher than the rest, and Muhammad (peace and blessing be upon him) is the leader and guide of them all, and therefore, possesses absolute lordship. Qaysari writes that lordship is conceived only with respect to giving everything its due and fulfilling the needs of every creature and requires complete agency and ability. It is for this reason that the Muhammadan Reality must actualize every divine attribute in every realm of existence.

The station of absolute lordship of the Muhammadan Reality is further clarified in Sayyid Haydar Amuli's discussion of the relationship between the prophethood of Muhammad (peace and blessing be upon him) and the rest of the prophets:

Every prophet from Adam to Muhammad (peace and blessing be upon him) is a manifestation of the prophethood of the Supreme Spirit, for its prophethood is essential and eternal and the prophethood of [its] manifestations is accidental and interrupted, except for the prophethood of Muhammad (peace and blessing be upon him), for it is eternal and uninterrupted. This is because its reality is the reality of the Supreme Spirit and its form is the form in which it manifests this reality. The rest of the prophets are the manifestations [of the Supreme Spirit] with respect to some of the names and attributes, whereby it self-discloses in each locus of manifestation some of the attributes and names, but it self-discloses in the Muhammadan manifestation its essence with respect to all of its attributes; and prophethood is sealed with him. Thus, the Prophet preceded all the prophets with respect to [his] reality and follows them with respect to [his] form, as he said, "We are the last, the first."

Qaysari mentions in his *Muqaddima* that this lordship relates to the aspect of the Muhammadan Reality and not to the aspect of the Prophet's humanness, since in the latter the Prophet is a servant of God. Therefore, his reality possesses two aspects, the aspect of divinity and that of servitude. The latter is the aspect of contingency, his descent into the phenomenal world and the appearance of his reality in the manifest realm. Those characteristic actions he performed in the manifest world also have spiritual significance, such as weeping because of his separation from the Real, or his heart's constriction when dealing with the hypocrites. Therefore, his descent into the phenomenal world is his

perfection just as his return to his original station. He is the comprehensive isthmus between the phenomenal and spiritual worlds.

THE MUHAMMADAN VICEGERENCY

As mentioned previously, the Perfect Human is the vicegerent of God who is the epiphany of all the divine names, as mentioned in the verse, "And We taught Adam all the names." As for the Muhammadan vicegerency, it is necessitated by God for all times because of the need for a vicegerent in both the hidden and manifest realms. Since the vicegerent is one who exercises delegated power on behalf of a Sovereign, he must possess all that the Sovereign Himself possesses, and he becomes, therefore, the pole around which existence revolves. Although each prophet is a vicegerent of God whose vicegerency and governance is in accordance with the manifestation of some of the divine names to the exclusion of others, they are each limited by a specific ontological horizon. Some are manifest prophets such as Ibrahim (peace and blessing be upon him) and some are hidden saints such as Khidr during the time of the manifest prophethood of Musa (peace and blessing be upon him). Khidr was governed by the name the Hidden and Musa by the name the Manifest. The Muhammadan Vicegerency, however, is present in both Musa and Khidr since it governs both Hidden and Manifest realms. Furthermore, its reality is the Supreme Spirit and it is the locus of manifestation of all the divine

Thus, when it is said in the Quran, "We do not differentiate between any of the messengers" (al-Baqara: 285), means that each messenger is a manifestation of the Supreme Spirit, which is a single all-encompassing reality. Just as every divine name is ontologically one with every other name, the prophets are ontologically united with the Supreme Spirit. However, just as the names differ with respect to their governing properties, periods, and degrees of inclusiveness, the prophets differ in degree in accordance with the governing properties of the names and the mode of their manifestation in each prophet, as indicated by the Quran, "These are the apostles, some of whom We gave an advantage over others" (al-Baqara: 253). This is why the scripture and code of laws of previous messengers was abrogated whereas the Quran and the Islamic Law shall remain in effect until the end of time.

Thus, the circle of prophethood begins with the Muhammadan Reality that is present with each prophet in every period and ends with the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessing be upon him) himself. The former is the hidden Muhammadan prophethood and the latter is the manifest Muhammadan prophethood. After the circle of prophethood is complete, there only remains spiritual guardianship (*al-wilaya*) or sainthood, which also must terminate before the Greater Resurrection.

SPIRITUAL GUARDIANSHIP (*WILAYAH*)

The guardianship that follows prophethood is an extension of the guardianship that is contained within prophethood. Indeed, it is the inner aspect and the reality of prophethood.

Lexically, *wilayah*, derived from the Arabic root letters *waw*, *lam*, and *ya*, means to be near, close, to follow, to border, to have a relationship from two sides, and to befriend. Other derivatives include *mutawali*, which means something that follows something else, as in a chain, or events following each other. The word *tali* is used in contrast with *muqaddam*, which links two events that follow each other. The word *wali*, is in the form of *fat* but denotes the active participle (*fail*); it means one who possesses authority over something else and manages it, or one who displays love and support, that is, one who is a caretaker of another by virtue of the love that exists for the other. Thus, the basic lexical meaning of the root and its derivatives indicates that the spiritual guardianship possesses a relationship with something else in succession, in the way that a father exerts guardianship over a child, a believer exerts guardianship over another, or in the way God possesses guardianship over the believers. God exerts *wilayah* over the believers in three aspects, by guiding them, by demonstrating His proofs through the prophets and revealed scriptures, by supporting them against their enemies and establishing His religion, and by rewarding them for their righteous actions.

As for the technical usage of the word *wilayah* with the *kasra* on the *waw*, it means authority, and *walayah* with the *fathah* on the *waw* means love or friendship.²⁴³ Thus, the former is connected to guardianship, in the sense of protection, management of affairs, and authority and superiority. *Wilayah* is the chain of authority extending from God's own authority, as mentioned in the Quran, "Originator of the heavens and earth, You are my *wali* in the world and the hereafter." Furthermore, this authority extends to the Prophet (peace and blessing be upon him): "Indeed, your *wali* is Allah, and the Messenger, and those who are the 'possessors of authority.'" This is the same authority that was given to Imam Ali on the Day of Ghadir when the Prophet said, "Do I not hold greater authority over you than your own souls? Then, whosoever considered me his master (*mawla*), 'Ali is his master." When the Prophet (peace and blessing be upon him) reminds the people of his own authority before delegating that authority to Imam Ali, he emphasizes the interconnectedness of the station of *wilayah*. The authority that the Prophet possesses directly from God, as mentioned in the Quran, is the very same authority he confers to his successor. Some commentators on the ḥadīth of Ghadir have claimed that the meaning of *waif* in "Whosoever considers me his *mawla*, 'Ali is his *mawla*," is of love or friendship, and not authority. However, Muntaziri writes,

The *wilayah* the prophet established for 'Ali is the very same *wilayah* he possessed himself, which is of authority, as mentioned in the verse. It is for this reason he began his speech proclaiming three times "Do I not hold greater authority (*awla*) over you than your own souls??" The apparent usage of the word *mawla* is the same in both sentences.

Although the meaning of *wilayah* includes friendship and love, the Shi'ite theologians base their view of Imamate on the above interpretation of *wilayah*, which is an important cornerstone in the elaboration of Shi'ism.

WILAYAH IN THE TERMINOLOGY OF THE GNOSTICS

As mentioned in the Quran, *Wall* is one of the divine names, and in the terminology of the gnostics, "It is a universal reality of the divine Essence, the source of manifestation and the origin of entification. Indeed, it describes the Essence and is the source for the entification of the divine names and attributes. And Allah is the *Wali and Praiseworthy*." Ibn Arabi elaborates this definition as follows:

Know that *wilaya* is the sphere which encompasses all other spheres, and for this reason it has no end in time.... On the other hand, legislative prophethood (*nubuwwa*) and the mission of the messengers (*risala*) do have an end which they have reached in the person of Muhammad, since after him there is neither any other prophet—meaning a prophet who brings a revealed Law or submits himself to a previously revealed Law—nor any other legislating messenger.

Qaysari mentions that there are two types of *wilaya*, the general and the specific. General *wilaya* is obtained by the believers and is commensurate with one's level of faith. Those whose states of unveiling correspond to reality have the highest faith, whereas those whose faith is based on rational deduction and proofs have an intermediate level, and those whose faith is based on imitation of the veracious are at the lowest level. Nonetheless, God says in the Quran, "Allah is the *wall of* the believers; He takes them out of the darkness into light."

The second type of *wilaya* is specific to the wayfarers who have arrived at the station of subsistence after their annihilation in the Real. The annihilation that precedes the station of subsistence is the removal of the attributes of contingency and does not refer to absolute non-being. Subsistence after annihilation is through the existential acquisition of divine attributes, as in the hadith, "Adorn yourselves with the divine attributes." As mentioned earlier, this annihilation is not only noetic but existential as well, since there is an actual transformation in the visible aspect of the wayfarer due to the overpowering effect of his spirit. Qaysari illustrates this point with the analogy of a piece of coal that is adjacent to a fire. Initially coal is different from fire in all of its properties. However, its inherent receptivity for acquiring the properties of fire in addition to proximity to the fire itself brings about a complete transformation of the outer form of the coal. Were it not for the aspect of inherent similarity between the essence of the coal and the essence of the fire, it would not have been able to transform itself completely. Similarly, the wayfarer possesses an aspect of separation and an aspect of unity between himself and God. It is when he orients himself completely to the divine presence, thereby gaining proximity to the Real, that he acquires the properties of divinity and sheds the properties of contingency. Thus, the aspect of separation and individuation no longer remains.

Qaysari writes that annihilation of the absolute wall" is because of the orientation to the Real due to essential love. Mulla Hadi Sabzawari also expresses a parallel notion in *Sha'h al-asma* describing the two types of wayfarers. Just as there are two types of *wilaya*, there are two types of wayfaring, that which is initiated by the Beloved, and that

which is initiated by the lovers. The first type is one in which the wayfarer attains God such that he arrives without effort, struggle, discipline, piety, or guidance of a master. It is sheer divine providence and essential primordial guidance alluded to by the Quran in the verse, "Those to whom there has gone beforehand the best reward from Us" (Anbiya': 101). The second type of wayfaring is that in which attainment of God is based on personal effort, struggle, discipline, abstention, piety, and the guidance of a master, alluded to by the verse, "As for those who strive in Us, We shall surely guide them in Our ways" (Ankabut: 69). As for the first category of wayfarers, it consists of the lovers among the prophets, saints and their followers who are distinguished by their primordial truthfulness and complete sincerity. Their attainment of God is without effort and cause; rather it is the result of complete divine bestowal, succor and the Essential Will before the creation of the world and everything within it, as referred to by the verse, "Their Lord will give them to drink, a pure drink." Imam Ali further describes those saints in his statement:

Verily God Almighty has a wine for His friends (*awliya*), so that when they drink it, they become intoxicated; when they become intoxicated, they delight; when they delight, they melt away; when they melt away, they become pure; when they become pure, they seek; when they seek, they find; when they find, they attain; when they attain they unite, so when they unite, there remains no difference between them and their Beloved."

The first type of wayfarers are the prophets and divinely appointed saints (*awliya'*), who possess a primordial nearness to God based on their essential ontological capacity, and who are the individuations of the absolute *wilaya* of God. In Shi'ism, the divinely appointed saints are the twelve Imams who possess infallibility and are the inheritors of the absolute *wilaya* of the Prophet (peace and blessing be upon him). This is because absolute *wilaya* is the inner aspect and the reality of prophethood which extends through these individuals until it reaches the Twelfth Imam, the Master of the Age. *Wilaya* is more comprehensive than prophethood since it includes both prophets and saints and is a manifestation of the divine name *al-Wali*.

Ch.2 The Divine Names

Know that the Real, the Glorified and the Exalted, in accordance with the verse, "Every day He performs a task," (al-Rahman: 29) possesses manifestations and epiphanies at the degrees of divinity and He possesses, according to those manifestations and degrees, names and attributes. The attributes are either affirmative or privative. The former can be further divided into essential attributes that do not possess relation, such as life, necessity, and subsistence—according to one of its two meanings— or pure relatives, such as the first (*al-awwal*) and the last (*al-akhir*), and relative, such as lordship (*al-rububiya*), knowledge (*al-'ilm*), and will (*al-irdda*). The latter consist of needlessness (*al-ghant*), holy (*al-quddus*), and sanctified (*al-subbuh*).

Each has a type of existence, whether it be affirmative or privative since existence is in opposition to non-existence but is non-existence from another aspect. It is none other than the manifestations of the Essence in accordance with the degrees that are encompassed by the Degree of Divinity (*al-martabat al-uluhiya*), described in the language of revelation (*shar'a*) as the "Cloud" (*al-'ama*). It is the first multiplicity occurring in existence and an isthmus between the plane of Singularity of the Essence (*al-hadrat al-ahadiyya al-dhdtiyya*) and the manifestations in creation. This is because the Essence necessitates of itself, according to the degrees of divinity and lordship, various contrasting attributes such as gentleness and severity, mercy and wrath, satisfaction and displeasure, and others, collectively called the attributes of Beauty and Majesty (*al-jalaliyya wa al-jamdliyya*).

For every name that is connected to gentleness is a name of Beauty, while every name that is connected to severity is a name of Majesty. For every [aspect of] beauty there is [one of] majesty such as the awe resulting from divine beauty, since it is an expression of bewilderment of the intellect and its incapacity therein. Likewise, for every [aspect of] majesty there is [one of] beauty, which is the gentleness concealed in divine severity, as mentioned in the verse, "And there is life for you in retribution, O possessors of intellect" (al-Baqara: 179). Likewise, Amir al-Mu'minin says, "Glory be to the One who expands His mercy for His friends in the severity of His trial, and who intensifies His tribulation for his enemies in the expanse of His mercy." From this becomes clear the hidden meaning of Amir al-Mu'minin's, "Paradise is surrounded by trials and the fire is surrounded by lower desires," indicating that there is an isthmus between two contrasting attributes.

The Essence together with a specific attribute and under the aspect of its particular epiphanies is called a "name". "Merciful" is the Essence possessing [the attribute] of mercy, likewise "Severe", is the Essence possessing [the attribute] of severity. These verbal names are the names of the names. Thus, the meaning of "the name is identical with the Named" is made clear.

It may be said that the name applies to an attribute since the Essence is shared among all of the names, and multiplicity in it is due to the multiplicity of the attributes. That

multiplicity exists from the point of view of the degrees of the unseen which are the Keys of the Unseen, (al-'An'am: 6) i.e., the noetic meanings in the unseen of [the divine] Being, the Exalted, through which epiphanies of the Real are realized. They are not individual existents nor do they enter existence at all. Rather, what enter existence are the names which are entified by existence of the Real at those degrees. For they exist as noetic and are non-existent in and of themselves. They have influence on and dominion over that which does not exist in and of itself, mentioned by the Shaykh (may God be pleased with him) in the first *Fass*, as will be explained forthcoming, God willing. From one point of view, multiplicity goes back to the knowledge of the Essence (*al-'ilm al-dhdti*), since His knowledge thereof, through Himself and for Himself, determined the knowledge of the perfections of the Essence at the degree of Singularity. Then, the divine love necessitated the manifestation of the Essence by each of them individually, possessing entification in the plane of His knowledge, and finally in external existence, resulting in multiplicity therein.

The attributes can be divided into those that have complete and absolute inclusiveness, and those that do not possess such inclusiveness, even if they are inclusive of most things. The first category consists of the "Mothers of the Attributes," called the "Seven Imams," and they are: Life, Knowledge, Will, Power, Hearing, Vision, and Speech. His hearing consists of the epiphany of His knowledge connected to the reality of [His] essential speech in the station of total collectivity (*jam al-jam*) and of [His] archetypal speech in the station of collectivity (*al-jam*) and separation (*al-tafsH*), both inwardly and outwardly, and not by way of witnessing (*shuhud*). His seeing consists of the manifestation of His knowledge and its connection to realities by way of witnessing. His speech consists of the manifestation resulting from the connection [thereto] of His will and power so as to reveal what is in the unseen and engender it. He, the Exalted, says, "His only command, when He wills a thing, is to say to it, 'Be!' and it is" (Yasin: 82).

Although these attributes are the origins of all other attributes, still, some presuppose others for their realization. Knowledge presupposes life, and power presupposes both, as does will. Likewise, the other three presuppose the aforementioned four. The names are divided—by another classification—into four names, also called the Mothers. They are the First and the Last, and the Manifest and the Hidden, subsumed under the comprehensive name, Allah, and the Merciful. Allah says, "Say, call upon Allah, or call upon the Merciful, whichever you call upon, to Him belong the Most Beautiful Names" (al-Isra:110). That is, the Most Beautiful Names are subsumed under the dominion of these two.

Every name possesses its manifestation [both] in pre-eternity (*azal*) and in post-eternity (*abadi*). Pre-eternity is through name the First and post-eternity is through the name the Last. The manifestation of each is through the name the Manifest, and their hiddenness is through the name the Hidden. The names connected to engendering and originating are subsumed under the name the First, while the names connected with causing to return and retribution are subsumed under the Last. That which is connected with the

and hiddenness is under the dominion of the Manifest and Hidden, respectively. Things cannot be devoid of these four, the First, the Last, the Manifest and the Hidden.

The names are divided by another classification, as names of the Essence, names of the attributes, and names of the acts, although all the names are names of the Essence. However, in light of the manifestation of the Essence in them, they are called the names of the Essence; in light of the manifestation of the attributes in them, they are called the names of the attributes; and in light of the manifestation of the acts in them, they are called names of the acts. Most, however, combine both perspectives or all three, since in them is that which indicates the Essence; that which indicates an attribute from another perspective; and that which contains an act from a third perspective. Such is the case with [the name], the Lord, (*al-rabb*), for it signifies "established" for the Essence, "sovereign" for the attribute, and "one who sets aright" for the act.

The names of the Essence are: Allah, the Lord (*al-rabb*), the King (*al-malik*), the Holy (*al-quddus*), the Peace (*al-salam*), the Faithful (*al-mumin*), the Guardian (*d-muhaymin*), the Almighty (*d-'aziz*), the Compeller (*al-jabbar*), the Proud (*al-mutakabbir*), the Exalted (*al-ali*), the Magnificent (*al-'adhim*), the Manifest (*ad-dhahir*), the Hidden (*al-batin*), the First (*al-awwal*), the Last (*al-akhir*), the Great (*al-kabir*), the Majestic (*al-jalil*), the Glorious (*al-majid*), the Truth (*al-haqq*), the Evident (*al-mubin*), He who has no wants (*al-wajid*), the Honorable (*al-majid*), the Eternal (*as-samad*), the Supreme (*al-mutaali*), the Sufficient (*al-ghani*), the Light (*d-nur*), the Inheritor (*al-warith*), the Possessor of Majesty (*dhu al-jalal*), the Guardian (*al-raaqib*).

The names of the attributes are: the Living (*al-hayy*), the Grateful (*al-shakur*), the Subduer (*al-qahhar*), the Overcomer (*al-qahir*), the Omnipotent (*d-muqtadir*), the Strong (*al-qawi*), the Able (*al-qadir*), the Merciful (*al-rahman*), the Beneficent (*al-rahim*), the Generous (*al-karim*), the Forgiver (*al-ghaffar*), the Coverer of Sins (*al-ghafur*), the Loving (*d-wadud*), the Compassionate (*al-rauf*), the Forbearing (*al-halim*), the Patient (*as-sabur*), the Kind (*al-birr*), the Most Knowledgeable (*al-alim*), the Aware (*al-khabir*), the Encompasser (*al-muhsi*), the Wise (*al-hakim*), the Witness (*al-shahid*), the All-Hearing (*al-samia*), the All-Seeing (*al-basir*).

The names of the acts are: The Originator (*al-mubdi*), the Trustee (*al-wakil*), the Resurrector (*al-ba'ith*), the Responder (*al-mujib*), the All-encompassing (*al-waasi'*), the Sufficient (*al-hasib*), the Powerful (*al-muqit*), the Protector (*al-hafidh*), the Creator (*al-khaliq*), the Maker (*al-bari*), the Fashioner (*al-musawwir*), the Bestower (*al-wahhab*), the Provider (*al-razzdaq*), the Opener (*al-fattah*), the Constrictor (*al-qabid*), the Expander (*al-basit*), the Subduer (*al-khafid*), the Exalter (*al-rafi'a*), the Bestower of Honor (*al-muizz*), the Abaser (*al-mudhill*), the Arbitrator (*al-hakam*), the Just (*al-'adl*), the Subtle (*al-'adl*), the Returner (*al-mu'id*), the Giver of Life (*al-muhyi*), the Giver of Death (*al-mumit*), the Governor (*al-wali*), the Acceptor of Repentance (*al-tawwab*), the Avenger (*al-muntaqim*), the Equitable (*al-muqsit*), the Gatherer (*d-jami'a*), the Enricher (*al-mughni*), the Inhibitor (*al-mani'a*), the Harmful (*ad-darr*), the Beneficial (*al-nafi'a*), the Guide (*al-hadi*), the Originator (*al-badi'a*), the Dispenser of Right Conduct (*al-rashid*).

Thus, the Shaykh has enumerated the names in his book, *Insha d-Dawair*, which I have related without modification or alteration in order to gain blessing and felicity from his sanctified words.

Among the names are those that are the Keys of the Unseen, which none knows except Him, and those among the poles and the perfected ones to whom He has manifested with the ipseity of the Essence, as mentioned in the verse, "Knower of the Unseen, He does not disclose His Unseen to anyone, except an apostle He approves of [for that purpose]." (al-Jinn: 26-27) The Prophet (peace and blessing be upon him) also referred to it in his supplication, "Or the names which You have reserved in the knowledge of Your Unseen."

All are subsumed under the name the First and the Hidden in one aspect; they are the origins of the names that are [in turn] the origins of the Immutable Archetypes, and are not connected to the contingent realms, as we will expound, God willing. The Shaykh has mentioned in the *Futuh al-Makkiyyah*, "As for the names outside the scope of creation and relation, they are known only to Him since they do not have a locus in the contingent realm."

Among the names are those that are the Keys of the Visible, that is, the external, since they may be applied to and intended for the sensible, outward existence only. What is meant by it, however, may be more general, as He says, "Knower of the Unseen and Visible," (al-'An'am: 73) All of them are subsumed under the names the Last and the Manifest from yet another perspective. The Most Beautiful Names are the Mothers of all of the names.

Know that between two contrary names exists a name that possesses both aspects, born out of both of them, standing as an isthmus between them, just as out of two contrary qualities there arises a quality which possesses an aspect of each, born from both. Similarly, the combining of names engenders others, whether they are contrary or not, ad infinitum. Each of them possesses a locus of manifestation in existence both as it pertains to the divine knowledge and externally.

Remark

Know that the names of acts are subdivided in accordance with their governing properties. There are those whose properties exert governance eternally and whose effects are infinite, pre-eternally and post-eternally, such as the names governing the holy spirits, the angelic souls, and everything which, although originated (*mubdaat*), is not governed by time (*zaman*), even if it is governed by eternal time (*ad-dahr*).

There are those whose properties exert governance eternally though they fail to do so pre-eternally, such as the names governing the Hereafter, for they are everlasting in accordance with the verses that indicate their eternity and the perpetuity of their

governance. They are not pre-eternal with respect to their manifestation since their appearance occurs only upon the termination of the worldly plane.

There are those whose properties do not exert governance either pre-eternally or post-eternally, such as the names governing everything subsumed under time and on the worldly plane, since it is neither pre-eternal nor post-eternal with respect to its manifestation, even though its outcome is eternal in the hereafter.

Those, whose governing properties are severed, are either severed absolutely and enter the governance of the divine Absolute Unseen, as in the case of the worldly dimension, or are concealed and hidden under the governance of another name whose scope is more comprehensive in the manifestation of its governance. This is because the names have terms of governance according to their manifestations and the manifestations of their properties, which is the basis for the orbits of the seven planets— whose term lasts for a thousand years each—and for the religious Laws (*sharai*). Since, every Law has a name and endures as long as that name endures, continues as long as its governance continues and is abrogated upon its waning. It is the same for the epiphanies of the attributes, since whenever a given attribute among them is manifested, the governance of another is concealed beneath it.

Each one of the divisions of the names necessitates a locus of manifestation, through which its properties are manifested; these are entities (*al-a'ayan*). If they [entities] are capable of manifesting the properties of all the names, such as the human individuals, they are at every moment a locus for the manifestation of one of their aspects, but if they are not capable of manifesting all the names, they are specific to one name or another, such as the individual angels.

The continuation of the names and their cessation thereof in the external world and in the hereafter is due to the continuation and cessation of the governance of their names, respectively. So understand! Thus, if you deepen your gaze and grasp what has been mentioned in this remark, great secrets will be revealed to you, and Allah is the Guide.

Another Remark

Know that all things in external existence are subsumed under the name the Manifest according to their external existence, and the Real is, with respect to His manifestations, identical with the Manifest.

Just as He is identical with the Hidden, with respect to His hiddenness, and just as the Immutable Archetypes in His knowledge are His names, with respect to the Hidden, and the external entities are manifestations of those archetypes, similarly, the nature of entities in the external world are His names with respect to the manifest and the individual entities are their manifestations. Therefore, every external reality, whether it is a genus or type, is one of the Mother of the Names, given that their universality encompasses the particular individuals. In fact, every individual is a name from among

the particular names, since an individual is identical with the reality [of a name] in addition to accidentals particular to it. This is due to the unity of the Manifest and the locus of manifestation in the external world.

As for their being separate conceptually, this is because the individuals are loci of manifestation of external realities in the same way that they are manifestations of the Immutable Archetypes, which are, in turn, manifestations of the names and attributes. So understand!

Another Remark

Some of the earlier philosophers said, "His knowledge of His Essence is identical with His Essence, and His knowledge of contingent entities consists of the existence of the First Intellect together with forms subsisting within it," in order to escape certain untenable implications. This is partially admissible by the monotheists who have knowledge of transcendent divine wisdom, but not absolutely so, nor is it in accord with their principles. This is because, it [the First Intellect] has been originated by the Essence whereas the reality of His knowledge is pre-eternal since He is identical with it. How can it [His knowledge] be identical to it [First Intellect]?

Furthermore, the First Intellect is contingent, originated, preceded by essential non-existence, and known by God, since whatever is not known cannot be endowed with existence. Knowledge of it necessarily precedes its coming into being. Therefore, it is other than Him, and its quiddity is necessarily other than the reality of [His] knowledge.

This is because [His] knowledge can be necessary by essence such as His knowledge of His Essence by His Essence, or it can be an attribute relative to the Essence or a relative entirely [to the thing known], without any change in its quiddity. So, if be said that His knowledge of His Essence is other than His knowledge of the objects [of His knowledge], and that this is what is called the First Intellect, my reply is that the reality of knowledge is one and the distinction among its instances is conceptual since their difference arises out of its objects to which it refers. This however does not undermine singularity of its reality. God knows things in the same way that He knows His Essence, and not by another means.

[Knowledge] being a relative attribute or a pure relative in certain forms precludes it from being identical with the First Intellect because the former is an accident and the latter is a substance. Its [First Intellect] being a substance, as mentioned earlier, is solely due to its permeation by the divine ipseity, which is in contravention [to the view the philosophers]; thus, it is not possible for [knowledge] to be a substance. Moreover, just as He is the knower of all things, He is also able. Were the [First Intellect] to consist of His knowledge to the exclusion of His power, it would entail preponderance without a preponderator, rather the converse is more appropriate, since, according to them His power encompasses all things beyond it, to the exclusion of His knowledge. Furthermore, saying that the First Intellect is identical with His knowledge negates the divine favor

preceding all things. Similarly, the First Intellect does not consist of its being present with Him since presence is a quality for one who is present, which is the First Intellect, whereas His knowledge is an attribute for Him, and it [the First Intellect] is other than Him.

In addition, the presence [of the First Intellect] is subsequent to both the Essence and His knowledge because the knowledge with all of its perfections essentially precedes all existent things. Therefore, His knowledge cannot be explained as "presence."

In addition, it necessitates that [were this knowledge to consist of presence] the Essence would need that which is other than itself and arises from it for its most sublime attribute [knowledge], thereby making Him unaware of specifics and their states as particulars. He is exalted far beyond this limitation.

However, it might be said by the accomplished gnostic that [First Intellect] is identical with His knowledge, in that He is aware of the realities of all things, as well as universal meanings in summary and concise form, and that the locus of manifestation is identical with the Manifest so that it is the Real, and the First Intellect is His name, the All-knowing, as mentioned in an earlier remark, this is because its quiddity is the divine ipseity individuated in a specific entification called the "Intellect" at the outset.

However this is the case not only of the First Intellect, but also of the Universal Soul for its encompassing both universals and specifics. In fact, from this perspective every knower might be called All-knowing, and not solely the First Intellect. The philosopher does not recognize this since according to him, the First Intellect and other entities is distinct from God both in quiddity and existence, and an effect among His effects, so as to make Him needy of other than Himself for His most sublime attribute.

The truth of the matter that is self evident for every fair-minded person is that He who originated everything and brought forth its existence from non-being, whether it is from temporal or non temporal non-being, knows these things by their realities and concomitant forms, noetic and external, before bringing them into existence, otherwise it would not have been possible to endow them with existence as such. Thus, his knowledge of them is other than things.

Asserting the impossibility of His Essence and His knowledge—which is identical with His Essence—as the locus for instances of multiplicity is correct, if they are other than Him, as held by those who are veiled from the Real. However, if they are identical with Him from the aspect of Being and reality, and other than Him from the aspect of entification and limitation, then it would not follow [that the Essence becomes the locus for multiplicity].

In reality, there is neither a locus nor that which occupies a locus; rather there is but one thing, appearing in the form of a locus at times, and something occupying it at others. The "domain of factuality" (*nafs al-amr*) is the Essential knowledge encompassing the

forms of all things, universal and particular, large and small, in collectivity and specificity, actual or noetic, "Not an atom's weight escapes your Lord, in the earth or in the sky" (Yunus: 61).

If it be said that knowledge is subsequent to the object of knowledge, which is the divine Essence and its perfections, how then can that be the domain of factuality? The reply is: The relative attributes possess two aspects, an aspect of non-separatedness from the Essence and as aspect of separatedness. In the first aspect, knowledge, will, power, and other attributes which are subject to relativity are not subsequent to the objects of knowledge, will and power, since they are identical with the Essence for which there is no multiplicity. In the second aspect, knowledge follows its object, just as will and power follow their objects.

Knowledge has another aspect, which is the occurrence of the forms of things within it. This does not mean that, "it is subsequent to them in actuality", rather that "the forms of things occur within it and consist of it." Its being subsequent can be expressed as [when one says], "The matter is in essence such and such," that is, the reality which is connected to knowledge, and is not other than the essence in and of itself.

Some of the gnostics were correct in placing the First Intellect as the "domain of factuality," because it is a locus of manifestation of the divine knowledge due to its encompassing of universals which include its particulars, and also because its knowledge corresponds with Allah's knowledge. In this respect the Universal Soul, referred to as the Guarded Tablet, is also considered the "domain of factuality."

None knows the reality of knowledge or its mode of connection with its objects except Allah. The claim that it is self-evident arises from the failure to distinguish between the shadow and the one casting it, since forms of knowledge possessed by created things are shadows, just as their modes of existence. Occurrence of it is indeed self-evident but the self-evidence of knowledge through the occurrence of a thing does not necessitate knowledge of its essence and quiddity should also be self-evident. And Allah is most knowledgeable of realities.

Qaysari's Commentary on *Fusus al-Hikam*

Know that the Real the Glorified and the Exalted, in accordance with the verse, "Every day He performs a task" (al-Rahman: 29), possesses manifestations and epiphanies at the degrees of divinity and He possesses, according to those manifestations and degrees, names and attributes. God discloses Himself in the divine degrees in the form of names and attributes. These attributes are initially divided into positive or privative attributes, the former denoting positive predications of the divine being such as, "God is Eternal," and the latter denoting negative predications such as, "God is Needless." As for the first category, the attributes are either essential or relative. Essential attributes are those that do not presuppose a relation either to each other or to contingent existence and are necessary for God, such as life, necessity and subsistence.

Pure relative attributes are those that take into consideration their opposites, such as the First and the Last, and the Manifest and the Hidden. Each attribute presupposes the existence of its opposite and is not conceived in relation to any object. Relative attributes are those that presuppose an object, such as the Knower, which is conceived in relation to objects of knowledge. These attributes relate also to contingent existence since God is known as the Creator only when creation takes place, whereas, life is essential to His Being and is conceived independently.

Each has a type of existence, whether it be affirmative or privative. Privative attributes that indicate transcendence are those that assume a negative relation to a quality that cannot be ascribed to God. Since poverty cannot be ascribed to God, He is needless and independent. In this sense, both positive and privative attributes are in reality positive since Being is the opposite of non-being, and every negative attribute is in fact an attribute that indicates transcendence. As mentioned in the hadith above, "God Almighty created the names..." or to use the terms of the gnostics, He manifested them in various modes of existence, collectively or individually. Their manifestation is the first multiplicity in existence that emanates directly from the plane of the Singularity.

*For every name that is connected to gentleness is a name of Beauty, while every name that is connected to severity is a name of Majesty. One of the most important divisions of the names, especially for the wayfarers, is the division into the names of beauty (*jamal*) and those of majesty (*jalal*). The names of beauty represent God's mercy, kindness, intimacy, proximity, and immanence. The names of majesty represent awe, majesty, distance, severity, and transcendence.*

THE NAMES OF BEAUTY AND MAJESTY

Multiplicity arises from the intrinsic necessity of each divine name to become manifest in creation. That is, every name seeks to manifest the properties, governance and period of efficacy that are intrinsic to its reality. This multiplicity of relationships creates conflict in the cosmos because some names have contrary properties, for some are names of Beauty and some are names of Majesty. Ibn Arabi explains this in the following passage:

The properties of the divine names, in respect of being names, are diverse. What do Avenger, Terrible in Punishment and Overpowering have in common with Compassionate, Forgiving, and Gentle? For Avenger demands the occurrence of vengeance in its object, while Compassionate demands the removal of vengeance from the same object... So he who looks at the divine names will maintain that there is a divine conflict. That is why God said to His Prophet, "Dispute (*jadal*) with them in the most beautiful way (*ahsan*) (al-Nahl: 25). God commanded him to dispute in the manner demanded by the divine names, that is in the way that is "most beautiful."

Based on the following dictum the wayfarer understands his relationship with God as well as the realities of creation, and he sees that there is a divine duality at work: "For every [aspect of] beauty there is [one of] majesty such as the awe resulting from divine beauty, since it is an expression of bewilderment of the intellect and its incapacity therein, and for every [aspect of] majesty there is [one of] beauty, which is the gentleness concealed in divine severity." These attributes can be expressed in the most basic terms as the duality of transcendence and immanence. On the one hand he finds that God is absolutely unknowable, as expressed in the Quran, "There is nothing like Him" (Shura: 11), while at the same time he finds that "Wherever you look, there is the face of God" (al-Baqara: 115).

This duality is both polar in nature and mutually inclusive of its opposite. The very creation of man is an expression of names of beauty and majesty. From one perspective the spirit represents intimacy, proximity and nearness to God, through which the attributes of beauty are known, while the body represents distance, through which the attributes of majesty are known.

For example, the hardship of performing religious obligations (*taklif*) for the believer is a manifestation of the names of majesty, while the inner states, intimacy, and stations one achieves through them are the manifestation of the names of beauty. In the same way, the unbeliever experiences worldly pleasure, comfort and security in this realm, while inwardly he is distant from God, and the object of His wrath, which is the manifestation of the names of majesty. This is similar to a physician who prescribes medicine to cure his patient. Outwardly, the bitterness of the medicine is an expression of severity. Inwardly, however, the cure is an expression of mercy and compassion. Conversely, if the patient eats in contravention to the prescription of his physician, outwardly he experiences pleasure, whereas inwardly he causes harm to himself and experiences the severity and consequences of his negligence. In this way, every aspect of beauty possesses an aspect of majesty, and every aspect of majesty possesses an aspect of beauty.

The following passage in Hujayri's *Kashf al-Mahjub* discusses the relationship of the two states of intimacy and awe that the wayfarer experiences:

Intimacy and awe are two states experienced by the dervishes who travel on the path to the Real. They are as follows: When the Real discloses Himself to the heart of the servant

through the witness of majesty, his share in that is awe. When He discloses Himself to the servant's heart through the witness of beauty, his share in that is intimacy.

The body and spirit also possess this very inverse relationship, which is particularly important for the spiritual aspirant. Rumi refers to this duality in the following poem,

*To the bodily frames, He spoke of Lordship. To the spirits, He spoke of love.
0 frames, I am God! 0 hearts I am the lover!
0 frames, you belong to Me! 0 hearts, I belong to you!
0 frames, toil! For that is what Lordship requires from servant hood. 0 hearts, rejoice!
Have joy in Me and sing my remembrance.
For this is what is demanded by unqualified
love. 0 frames, stay within the realities of
struggle!
0 hearts, stay within the gardens of witnessing!
0 frames, occupy yourselves with ascetic discipline!*

The human being then is the collectivity of the attributes of beauty and majesty, both ontologically and from the perspective of individual spiritual development. From the perspective of man's relationship to God, the spirit experiences nearness and intimacy to God, while the bodily frames undergo hardship and toil, the former being a manifestation of the names of beauty and the latter being a manifestation of the names of majesty. However, from the perspective of man's relation to himself, the spirit is the manifestation of the names of transcendence and majesty, while the body is the manifestation of the names of immanence and beauty, since the spirit is the transcendent aspect of man's beingwhile man is most familiar with his bodily nature.

Thus, the wayfarer cannot neglect the aspect of his bodily nature, because of the manifestation of some names related to the visible world, but he must subject his lower nature to the governance of his spiritual, divine nature. In this way, each name will be given its due and there will be no injustice in the human kingdom, just as there is no imbalance in the manifestation of the names in creation.

The Essence together with a specific attribute and under the aspect of its particular epiphanies is called a "name". Since the Essence is undifferentiated and singular, multiplicity arises in the degree of the names. In light of this distinction, each name is a reality in itself but is not ontologically separate from the Essence, since each name is none other than the manifestation of the Essence. Therefore, when one conceives of a name, one must conceive both the attribute and the Essence, because in reality, they are one and the same. The name and the Named refer to a single reality.

It may be said that the name applies to an attribute since the Essence is shared among all of the names, and multiplicity in it is due to the multiplicity of the attributes. The Keys of the Unseen (*mafatih al-ghayb*) are specific forms in the presence of the divine knowledge while the Unseen is the level of the undifferentiated Essence that precedes specific forms.

In other words, the Keys of the Unseen are noetic realities that do not possess realization in the external world, although their effects are present. In the same way that knowledge does not exist in the external world except by way of mental existence, its effects nonetheless are observed in the external world.

From one point of view, multiplicity goes back to the knowledge of the Essence. The essential knowledge of Himself engendered the knowledge of the perfections of His Essence at the degree of Singularity (martabat al-ahadiyya). After the realization of the knowledge of His perfections, the manifestation of the attributes of the Essence with respect to their individuation and entification was necessitated by the divine love. This manifestation is the first level of multiplicity emanating from the presence of the divine knowledge and is called degree of Unity (martabat al-wahidiyya), which in turn is the source of all multiplicity thereafter.

GOVERNANCE OF THE NAMES

The attributes can be divided into those that have complete and absolute inclusiveness, and those that do not possess such inclusiveness. The divine names are divided in accordance with the comprehensiveness and inclusiveness of their individual properties and consequently of their effects in existence. This is what is known as the governance of the names (hukumat al-asma). All things in existence are subsumed under the governing properties of the names. For example, every living thing is under the dominion of the name, the Living, and every cognizant being is under the governance of the name, the Knower. In addition, the names possess a degree, rank, scope, and inclusiveness that are particular to each. Ibn Arabi mentions this in the Futuhat,

You should know that every divine name has a level not possessed by any other. And every form in the cosmos has a level not possessed by any other. So the levels are infinite, and they are the "degrees." Some degrees have been uplifted, and some degrees have been uplifted even more, whether they are divine or engendered, for the engendered levels are [in fact] divine. The divine names that are attributed to the Real have various levels in attribution. Some of them depend on others, some of them supervise others, and some have more inclusive connection to the cosmos and more effects within it than others. The whole cosmos is the loci of manifestation of these divine names.

THE MOTHERS OF THE NAMES

The attributes can be divided into those that have complete and absolute inclusiveness, and those that do not possess such inclusiveness, even if they are inclusive of most things. The Mothers of the Names or the Seven Imams (leaders) are those that possess the greatest scope and inclusiveness. That is, their influence permeates all of creation including the other names that are subsumed under their governance. It is for this reason that these attributes are the foundation of all other attributes, for they are conditional for the realization of other attributes. Ibn Arabi clarifies this point in the following passage:

We know that the degree of the Alive (*al-hayy*) is the most tremendous degree among the names, since it is the precondition for the existence of the names. We also know that the knowledge of the Knowing (*al-'alim*) is more inclusive in connection and more tremendous in compass (*ihata*) than the Powerful (*al-qadir*) and the Desiring (*al-murid*) since names like these have less inclusive connections than the Knowing. They are like gatekeepers (*sadana*) for the Knowing.

After enumerating the Mothers of the Attributes, Qaysari briefly defines the attributes of Hearing, Vision, and Speech. This is because the gnostic understanding of these names differs from that which is found in standard works of theology. The theologian defines the attribute of Hearing as God's knowledge of all things audible, Vision as God's knowledge of all things visible and Speech as God's ability to produce speech, whereas in the view of the gnostic all the names and attributes are epiphanies of the Essence and are identical with the Essence. God hears, sees and speaks both at the level of the Essence and at every other descending degree in existence. The attribute of hearing is the mode of His knowledge of His Essential Speech, that is, He hears His speech at the degree of the Essence. It may also be said that He hears the petition of the divine names to become manifest and to bring them forth from of the station of total collectivity to the station of differentiation, or it can be said that the divine hearing is the ontological receptivity of all things to hear the engendering command "Be!" which is none other than the epiphany of His knowledge in the station of separation.

When speech refers to the divine speech at the degree of the Essence, it is called Essential Speech. It is the mode of His engendering things, just as His words are the objects of creation, as mentioned in the previous chapter.

The names are divided—by another classification— into four names, also called the Mothers. They are the First and the Last, and the Manifest and the Hidden. Since these are all-inclusive names all other names are under their governance. Generally speaking, though, the names that are associated with engendering and creation are subsumed under the name the First, while the names associated with the return and recompense are under the governance of the name, the Last. Similarly, every name that is connected with the external world is subsumed under the name the Manifest, while every name associated with the unseen is under the governance of the name the Hidden. Therefore, the external world and all its concomitants are manifestations of the names the First and the Manifest, while the next world, given that it has yet to unfold, is governed by the names the Last and the Hidden. However, with the commencement of the hereafter, that which was under the dominion of the name the Manifest, such as the external world, falls under the governance of the name the Hidden, since it will no longer exist, and the hidden forms and inward realities of this world will become manifest.

NAMES OF THE ESSENCE, ATTRIBUTES, AND ACTS

The names are divided by another classification, as names of the Essence, names of the attributes, and names of the acts. Although, in some sense all are names of the Essence,

those that are particular to the Essence and are necessary for it, such as the Needless and the Eternal, are called the names of the Essence, while those whose aspect is more prominent as attributes and which are shared with creation are called the names of the attributes, such as the Powerful and the Knower, while those through which divine acts ensue are the names of the acts. However, most names fall in two categories or in all three, such as the names the Living (*al-hayy*), and the Knowledgeable (*al-alim*).

Among the names are those that are the Keys of the Unseen, which none knows except Him. The names can also be divided into the Keys of the Unseen, whose knowledge is only with God, or with those to whom the divine ipseity is disclosed, such as the perfected poles, and the Keys of the Perceptible, which are the names governing the external world. The former are subsumed under the names the First and the Hidden, and are the origin of the Immutable Archetypes, and the latter subsumed under the names the Last and the Manifest.

ENGENDERING OF THE NAMES

Know that between two contrary names exists a name that possesses both aspects, born out of both of them, standing as an isthmus between them. Among the properties of the divine names, as mentioned by the gnostics, are the combining of contrary names and the existence of other names that stand between them. These intermediate names are isthmuses that possess some of the properties of each name, in the same way that a child possess the qualities of both parents, but still possesses an individual nature in its own right. Furthermore, these names combine with each other to engender other names because the divine relationships are infinite. It should be noted that names are engendered both from contrary names and from names that are not contrary to each other, since God's self-disclosure is perpetual and infinite and the names and attributes can combine in an infinite number of ways. Thus, these engendered names, which are also the particular names, are infinite, while the universal names are limited.

These secondary names combine with other names and engender other names, ad infinitum, since the divine manifestation is eternal, according to the verse, "Every day He performs a task" (al-Rahman: 29). This is also affirmed in the verse, "Say, Though all the trees in the earth were pens, and the sea—seven seas after it to replenish it—were ink, yet would the words of God not be spent" (al-Kahf: 109). Therefore, the loci of manifestation of these names are also endless since every world is a mirror of the world from which it originates. Furthermore, one locus may manifest various names in the same way that a person at times may manifest the attribute of mercy and at other times the attribute of vengeance.

THE GOVERNING PROPERTIES OF THE NAMES

Remark

Know that the names of acts are subdivided in accordance with their governing properties. Everything in existence is under the governance of the divine names. The names the dominion of which extends in the phenomenal world are the names of the acts. Each class of contingent existence displays individual properties in accordance with the names for which it is a manifestation. Since eternal time (*dahr*) is a vessel for immaterial beings and time (*zaman*) is a vessel for material beings, the former is governed by the names the dominion of which extends to pre-eternity, and the latter is governed by the names the dominion of which is neither pre-eternal nor post-eternal, for the material world is both created in time and ephemeral. The hereafter is governed by the names the dominion of which extends post-eternally but not pre-eternally since it follows the term of the worldly plane. Furthermore, while the names of the material world have efficacy, they are also governed by the name, the Manifest, and the hereafter is under the dominion of the name, the Hidden. However, during the resurrection, the material world will be subsumed under the dominion of the name, the Hidden and the hereafter will become manifest.

Thus, each of the divine names of acts has a period or epoch in which its governance is efficacious, since the cosmos is in constant flux. Those things in existence that cease to exist recede, in fact, into the Absolute Unseen. Since non-being cannot be predicated of Being, nothing that has existence can cease absolutely; rather things are brought into the external world through the auspices of the name, the Manifest and removed from it through the name, the Hidden. Furthermore, their terms and conditions are determined through the names that actualize their essential nature in the divine knowledge. It is for this reason that throughout history, divine laws were efficacious only for a certain period and then abrogated by the appearance of another set of laws. Even the prophets who brought those laws were themselves governed by some names and not others, which does not contradict the fact that they were the vicegerents of God and the possessors of all the divine names. In the same way that that a king distributes his bounty in accordance with the needs of the time, the divine names manifest themselves in accordance with their governing properties and also in proportion to the existential capacity of their loci.

Another Remark

Know that all things in external existence are subsumed under the name the Manifest according to their external existence, and the Real is, with respect to His manifestations, identical with the Manifest. Previously it was mentioned that the entities in external existence are the loci of manifestation of the divine names and attributes. In this section Qaysari asserts that the entities are in fact the names themselves because of the unity between the names and the named. Although the former view is not in contravention of the gnostic understanding, Qaysari wishes to clarify the relationship between the entities and the names, but stating that the loci of manifestation are not ontologically separate

from the realities of the names. This view rejects the notion that external realities are the individuals and external referents of the names in the same way that humans are the external referents (*masadiq*) of the quiddity of "humanness." It cannot be said that individual humans are the manifestations of humanness, since quiddity is a conceptual construct and applies to its individuals conceptually. The divine names, however, are ontological realities that are united with their individuals through manifestation, in the same way that the sun is united with its rays through emanation. From this perspective, the external realities are the names themselves from the perspective that they are identical with the name, the Manifest.

ON THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

Another Remark

Some of the earlier philosophers said, "His knowledge of His Essence is identical with His Essence, and His knowledge of contingent entities consists of the existence of the First Intellect together with forms subsisting within it," in order to escape certain untenable implications. In this section, Qaysari discusses the subject of God's knowledge in relation to the contingent entities. God's knowledge has two aspects, one that refers to His knowledge of Himself and one that refers to His knowledge of creation. The former was discussed in the section of the previous chapter on the Immutable Archetypes. It can be said that there is general agreement among the theologians, philosophers and gnostics that the God's knowledge of Himself is His intrinsic to His Essence. As for the latter, there is disagreement among the three groups just mentioned concerning the view that His knowledge of particulars is identical to forms subsisting in the First Intellect. The philosophers have held this view to escape certain untenable implications, namely that His knowledge of particulars leads to multiplicity in the Essence since His knowledge is identical with His Essence. Qaysari refutes this position saying that the First Intellect is itself contingent, originated and preceded by essential non-existence, itself an object of God's knowledge, and therefore other than the reality of His knowledge.

The gnostics hold the view of philosophers to be partially admissible since it is possible to say that His knowledge is identical with the First Intellect insofar as His knowledge pervades all creation. This is tantamount to saying that His knowledge "descends" to the degree of the First Intellect. However, it is inadmissible since the divine knowledge is a singular graded reality that has three aspects, whereas the First Intellect neither possesses these aspects nor is a graded reality. The first aspect is to conceive His knowledge as being necessary by essence such as His knowledge of His Essence; the second is to conceive it as an attribute relative to the Essence, such as the name, the Knower; and the third is to conceive it as an attribute relative to an object, such as His knowledge of the contingent. These are, however, conceptual divisions while the reality of the divine knowledge is singular despite these divisions, and God knows the contingent as He knows His Essence. These distinctions do not apply to the First Intellect and are not contained in the quiddity of the First Intellect.

The First Intellect is considered "substance" in the view of the gnostics. As mentioned in the previous chapter, substance is the shadow of the Essence, also called Extended Being (*al-wujud al-munbasit*), the First Engenderer (*al-sddir al-awwal*), the Outstretched Parchment (*al-riqq al-manshur*), the Muhammadan Light (*al-nur al-Muhammadi*), or as Qaysari writes in his commentary on the *Fusus*, "If the Breath of the All-merciful is realized externally and entitled, it is called substance." God's knowledge is neither substance nor accident since it is identical with the Essence and therefore not identical with the First Intellect. Furthermore, the philosophers claim that substance and accident are predicated of knowledge, not of intellect. Therefore, claiming that the divine knowledge is identical with the First Intellect does not accord with their principles.

If it is said that the First Intellect is identical with His knowledge, it would entail that it is also identical with His power, for God has power over all things. Based on this, it would be more appropriate to say that the First Intellect is identical with His power. However, the philosophers maintain that God has power over all things, including particulars, whereas His knowledge encompasses particulars only by way of the First Intellect. The reply is that just as He has power over particulars through His Essence, He also knows them through His Essence, not by means of the First Intellect.

It cannot be said the First Intellect—and consequently His knowledge—is "present" before Him since that which is "present" is other than Him, whereas His knowledge is an essential attribute for His Essence and not other than Him. As previously mentioned, the First Intellect is contingent and originated, whereas the divine knowledge is intrinsic to the Essence. Therefore, His knowledge precedes the First Intellect and is the source for its origination. Furthermore, the Essence would be in need of the very thing that arises from itself, namely the attribute of knowledge.

If, however, it be said that His knowledge is identical with the First Intellect in the same way that the divine ipseity permeates all existence, then His knowledge must be identical with the First Intellect, the Universal Soul, and every other descending degree of Being. This is in correlation with the gnostic view of emanation that every entity is a divine name and every divine name is identical with every other name. By contrast, the philosopher maintains that the First Intellect and other entities are effects of God and distinct from Him. The gnostic sees the pervasiveness of the oneness of Being, especially with respect to the sublime attributes of the Essence, and views multiplicity as the self-disclosure of Being insofar as the locus of self-disclosure is identical to the One who self-discloses. For this reason the divine knowledge is all-encompassing and "Not an atom's weight escapes your Lord, in the earth or in the sky" (Yunus: 61).

The "domain of factuality" (*nafs al-'amr*) is the plane where the occurrence of a thing is realized. For concepts, it is the mind, and for things that exert external effects, it is the external world. Here, it refers to the Essential knowledge since it is the plane that encompasses the occurrence of all things, universal or particular, actual or noetic.

The distinction between knowledge, knower, and the object of knowledge is only conceptual. That is why it can be said that at times knowledge is sometimes subsequent to the objects of knowledge and at other times not; that is, it is conceived only in relation to its object. The divine knowledge is on the one hand independent of its objects because knowledge of the Essence precedes them, and is not dependent on contingent existence; and on the other hand it is conceived in relation to the objects of creation.

When it is said that the "domain of factuality" is the First Intellect, it is the plane on which the manifestation of the divine knowledge—which encompasses all things—occurs. This presupposes the gnostic position that the First Intellect, the locus of divine knowledge, is not separate from the reality of Being.

THE DIVINE NAMES AND THE PERFECT HUMAN

The divine names are the essential perfections of Being. They arise from divine effusion at the degree of Singularity but remain in a state of collectivity becoming distinct realities only at the degree of Unity. These names are the source of the infinite objects of existence given that each subsequent reality is a locus of manifestation of some divine name or another. The human being, however, is the comprehensive locus of all the divine names, the manifestation of the name "Allah," and the vicegerent of God in the worlds. Qaysari in the tenth chapter of the *Muqaddima* describes the relation between God, man and the cosmos in the following section:

If you know this then you will know that the realities of the world in both knowledge and actuality are manifestations of the reality of man, which is the manifestation of the Supreme Name, Allah. Thus, the spirits of the world are the particulars of the Supreme Human Spirit, whether they are among the heavenly spirits elemental, or animal. The forms [of these realities] as well as their concomitants are the forms of the human reality and its concomitants. It is for this reason the particularized world is called "the Great Human" by the people of Allah, due to the manifestation of the human reality and its concomitants in it. Because of his comprehensiveness and manifestation of the totality divine secrets in him exclusively, he deserved to be the [sole] vicegerent of God among creation.

For that reason, it is said that the Perfect Human must pervade all of creation in the same way the Real pervades all of creation. That occurs in the third journey which is from the Real to the creation by the Real, in which his perfections are completed. By this journey one obtains the truth of certainty (*haqq al-yaqin*) whereby it becomes clear that Last is identical to the First, as well as the secret of, "He is the First and the Last, the Hidden and the Manifest, and the Knower of all things" (al-Hadid: 3).

DIVISION OF THE IMAGINAL WORLDS

The Imaginal World (*alam al-mithal*) is a spiritual world that is divested from the corporeal world with respect to matter, but not with respect to form. That is, it resembles

the corporeal world by virtue of being perceptible by the inner senses and its objects possess dimension and form. It is however, immaterial and of a luminous substance and therefore not perceptible by the outer senses. For this reason, it is called an isthmus (*barzakh*) between the corporeal world and the noetic realm, which does not possess any trace of corporeality such as dimension and form. An isthmus is an intermediate reality that possesses properties of both things it joins without being subsumed by either one of them. As mentioned by Ibn Arabi:

A *barzakh* is something that separates (*fasil*) two other things while never going to one side (*mutatarrif*), as, for example a line that separates a shadow from sunlight... Though sense perception might be incapable of separating the two things, the rational faculty judges that there is a barrier (*hajiz*) between them which separates them. The *barzakh* is something that separates a known from an unknown, an existent from a non-existent, a negated from an affirmed, an intelligible from a non-intelligible.

It is called the Imaginal World because it the first representation and appearance of the objects in the divine knowledge as form, since the root meaning of *mithal* is to resemble, imitate, and appear in the likeness of. This representation is called the Disconnected Imaginal World (*alam al-mithal al-munfasil*), since it is a reflection of the Immutable Archetypes in the Great World, and exists independently of the human soul. The Connected Imaginal World (*alam al-mithal al-muttasil*) is connected to the Small World, which is the human soul. Every reality in the Great World has a form in the Absolute Imaginal World because each realm is a reflection of the previous level of Being, which is a reflection of the Immutable Archetypes. In other words, the corporeal realm is a shadow of the Imaginal World, which is a shadow of the noetic realm.

The imagination, then, is one of the modes of perception in man, and one of the windows to the unseen dimension. In regard to this Ibn Arabi writes, "This is why the Presence of Imagination is the vastest of presences: it combines the two worlds, the World of the Unseen and the World of the Visible." Furthermore, one of its primary functions is described by Ibn Arabi as follows: "Part of the reality of imagination is that it embodies and gives form to that which is not a body or a form, for imagination perceives only in this manner. Hence it is a sensation that is non-manifest and bound between the intelligible and sensory."

In *al-Hikmat al-'arshiya* Mulla Sadra, writes that the soul's imaginal power is a substance that is essentially separate from the body, The Imaginal power in man—by which I mean the imaginal level of his soul—is a substance whose being is actually and essentially separate from this sensible body and tangible frame, as has already been mentioned. This power remains despite the decline and failure of this (bodily) frame.

Just as man possesses outer faculties of perception through which he acquires knowledge of the external world and interacts with it, he also possesses inner senses, which are considered by the gnostics as the real senses of perception. This is because the external world is a shadow of the unseen dimensions and lesser in strength and efficacy. The inner

senses not only subsist directly by the spirit, they also do not depend on external organs for their activity. One of the initial stages of wayfaring, after having purified both external and internal organs, is to perceive inward realities by entering the Disconnected Imaginal World through one's faculty of imagination. One who perceives the meanings of spiritual forms in his imagination has done so by the light cast by the Disconnected Imaginal realm.

Everything in existence possesses an inward and outward form. When the wayfarer sees an object in external existence, whether it is an inanimate object, human or animal, he must perceive its inward reality and extrapolate its spiritual significance. This is what is known as reading the "signs in the self and on the horizons." Since each realm is a book of God, and the objects of existence are the speech of God, the wayfarer interacts with the world only in order to engage in the divine communication. The gnostic sees nothing in existence as happening by chance; rather, all occurrences have a spiritual significance and are part of God's perpetual self-disclosure. Ibn Arabi discusses the relationship between the manifest and non-manifest dimensions in the following passage:

God placed within each thing—and the soul of man is one of the things—a manifest dimension and a non-manifest dimension. Through the manifest dimension, man perceives things which are called "entities" and through the non-manifest dimension, he perceives things which are called "knowledge." God is the Manifest and Non-manifest, so through Him perception takes place. When God discloses Himself, either out of gratuitous kindness or in answering a request, He discloses Himself to the manifest dimension of the soul, and perception takes through sensation in a form within the *barzakh* of imaginalization.

Although imagination is one of the faculties of the human soul, not everyone is able to comprehend the spiritual meanings that they encounter either in their wakefulness or their dreams. Ibn Arabi writes, "The common people do not know imagination or enter into it, except when they dream and their sensory faculties return to it. The elite see it in wakefulness through their power of realizing it.

One can realize spiritual meanings only after the inner vision is purged of obfuscations that occur because of the soul's preoccupation with the body. This causes a certain disengagement of the soul (*tajarrud al-nafs*) and is the source of perspicacity through faith. In addition, one may also see spiritual meanings in dreams, because the soul's connection to the Imaginal World is closer in dreams and in dream-like states (*nu'as*) than in wakefulness." The only reason God placed sleep in the animate world was so that everyone might witness the Presence of the Imagination and know that there is another world similar to the sensory world."

PERSPICACITY THROUGH FAITH (*FIRASAH*)

One of the ways of reading the outer books of God is through perspicacity through faith (*al-firasa al-imaniyya*). Ibn Arabi defines it as the following:

Perspicacity through faith is a divine light which God gives to the person of faith in the eye of his insight just like the light which belongs to the eye of sight. When a person has this perspicacity, its mark is like the light of the sun through which sensory objects appear to sight.

The word *firasa* is derived from *tafarrus*, which means ascertainment or circumspection (*tathabbut*) or observation (*nadhar*). It is said, "He saw (*tafarassa*) in him virtue when he observed him carefully with penetrating vision." When a person observes something carefully, he is able to ascertain the existential reality of that thing and to realize the purpose of its being, whether it is a person, a plant, or an inanimate object. We are referring to *firasa* in the general sense, but the intent is both the *firasa* of the soul (*anfusiya*) or *firasa* of the "horizons" (*afaqiya*). *Firasa* in the meaning of *nadhar* is ascertaining the inner reality of a thing through its outer reality. This is because the inner and outer aspects of a thing are essentially one and the same. One who has dominion (*hukm*) over the inner aspect can perceive the outer and one who has dominion over the outer aspect can observe the inner. This is the case with saints such as Khidr whose dominion is the inner aspect and spiritual guardianship (*wilaya*) but who can see the outer aspects of things. They conduct themselves with the outer world in concordance with both their inner and outer aspects. One who has the power of *firasa* sees with the Light of God and is a manifestation of the names of God, the Light (*al-nur*). When the reality of this name is manifested in such a person, he is able to see the reality of all things. Hence, the Prophetic saying, "Safeguard yourselves from the believer's *firasa*, for he sees with the light of God." He sees not only with physical eyes, but also with, eyes that are empowered by his inner vision, and both are in unity.

Some of the possessors of perspicacity have reached a point where, upon seeing a person's footprint in the ground—though the person himself is not present—they are able to say that he is a felicitous person or a wretched person. This is similar to what is done by a tracker who follows footprints. The man of perspicacity says, for example, "The owner of this footprint was white and blind in one eye." Then he describes his character, as if he sees him, including various accidental matters connected to his character. He sees all this without seeing the person.

DREAMS

One of the important Islamic sciences necessary for the wayfarer to acquire is dream interpretation. As mentioned previously, *firdsa* is a type of vision that is derived from the Unseen and witnessed by the light of God. The dream, however, is witnessing a reality in the Imaginal World through the faculty of imagination; it may or may not possess meaning. While the vision is seen behind the veil of the imagination, either in sleep, wakefulness or a state between the two, the dream is seen only when the bodily senses have ceased to function in sleep. In regard to this, Ibn Arabi writes:

Dreams have a place, a locus, and a state... Sleep is of two kinds, one is transferal within which there is a certain amount of rest, or the reaching of individual desire, or an increase

of weariness. The second kind is only rest... As for the sleep which is transferal, that is the kind within which there are dreams. The instruments [of the soul] are transferred from the manifest side (*dhahir*) of sense perception to its non-manifest side (*batin*) in order to see what has become established in the Treasury of Imagination—to which the senses have lifted up what they have acquired from sensory objects—and what has been formed by the form-giving faculty which is one of the assistants of the Treasury.

Najm al-Din al-Razi describes two general categories of dreams in the following section:

The dream is that which occurs when the senses have ceased to function, the imagination has begun to operate, and a certain object becomes visible to the one overcome by sleep. There are two kinds of dream: the first is the confused dream, that which is perceived by the soul through the instrumentality of the imagination, and is derived from the temptations of Satan and the whisperings of the soul. These are infused in the dreamer by Satan and the soul; the imagination forms a suitable image of them and conveys that image to the gaze of the soul. Such confused and disorderly dreams are not liable to interpretation; one must seek refuge in God from them and not relate them to anyone. The second kind of dream is the good dream known as "sound," which the prophet defined as one of the forty-six parts of prophethood... The sound dream is of three kinds. Whatever is in the first kind has no need of explanation or interpretation: it comes to pass exactly as seen... The second kind of sound dream is that in which part needs interpretation and part comes true exactly... The third kind of sound dream is that which needs interpretation in its entirety, like the dream of the king ("I see seven fat ears of

Likewise, Qaysari writes in the *Muqaddima*,

Witnessing of forms sometimes occurs during wakefulness, and sometimes during sleep, and just as sleep is divided into confused dreams and other types, likewise, whatever is seen in wakefulness is divided into true occurrences in the real world, and true imaginings—which have no reality—and are satanic. Satan may confound them making them [appear] as real, in order to misguide the observer. For that reason, the wayfarer needs a guide who guides him and saves him from ruin.

Thus, dream interpretation is one of the modes of acquiring knowledge in mysticism relating directly to the soul's relation with the Imaginal World. Because of the vast scope of this World, it has occurred for both prophets as well as initiate wayfarers.

THE POSTHUMOUS *BARZAKH*

What has been mentioned above relates to the Imaginal World as it pertains to the Arc of Descent. As for the Arc of Ascent, which is man's migration and return to God, man enters the Imaginal World after death and before the Day of Judgment. This stage is known as the *barzakh* as well, and the gnostics refer to them as having separate realities despite their having similar properties. Many gnostics, notably Mulla Sadra, have written

extensively on the eschatological consequences of actions as well as the stages following physical death and the occurrences of that realm.

One aspect that relates to the *barzakh* is that of the corporealization of the soul's actions (*tajassum al-a'mal*) after death. During the period of one's life every action performed by an individual possesses an inward form and reality. Whatever takes place on the material plane will have a corresponding reality in every other realm. Every action will leave its imprint on the soul acquiring a secondary fundamental nature such that the form of the soul will continue to change in accordance with the beauty or ugliness of one's deeds. When the soul completes its term in the material world, shedding the body and transferring to its first destination, the *barzakh*, it becomes manifest in its final form, which is the sum total of its acquisitions on the earthly plane.

Imam Jaafar al-Sadiq declares, "Men will be raised up in accordance with the form of their actions,"—or in another version, "according to the form of their intentions." Since the Imaginal World possesses only form and not matter, what is hidden in the cloak of the body becomes apparent as Mulla Sadra explains in the following passage:

It is in these forms that they will be resurrected and rise up at the Awakening; that is, in another mode of being than this (physical) one. In this world, therefore, man stands between becoming an angel, a devil, a brute, or a predatory beast. If knowledge and reverence predominate in him, he will become an angel. Or if he is given over to hypocrisy, cunning, and compounded ignorance, then he will be a rebellious devil. If he surrenders to the effects of sensuous appetite, he will become a brute beast, and if overcome by the effects of irascibility and aggressiveness then he will be a predatory animal. Thus, according to the habits and states of character which predominate in a man's soul, so will he rise up in a corresponding form on the Day of Rising.

Likewise in the *barzakh*, the soul remains, in accordance with its acquired form, either in a state of bliss or in a state of suffering, as mentioned by the hadith, "The grave is either one of the gardens of Paradise or one of the pits of Hell." This is because the acquired forms of the soul are ontologically unified with it, insofar as what the soul experiences in the grave is its own reality. Moreover, since the Imaginal world is vast and not limited to the individual imaginal power in man, the soul is accompanied by either an angelic or a satanic host and is able to witness countless realities of the corresponding world. Mulla Sadra explains:

Above all you must not believe that what man sees after his death of the horrors of the grave and the various states of the Resurrection, are merely imagined things, without any being in concrete reality... Rather, the things (experienced in) the Rising and the states of the other world are more powerful in their being and more intensely real and actual than these forms existing in (earthly) matter, which are objects (generated from the elements) by means of motion and earthly time.

Those souls that have acquired a luminous transcendent essence incline toward the higher angelic realms because of their greater ontological receptivity and resemblance.

Since visionary experience is the essence of practical mysticism, the Imaginal World is the first destination in the Unseen for the wayfarer, joining the properties of the spirit and body together. The initiate wayfarer, after carrying out certain austerities, may begin to see more clearly spiritual meanings in dreams and create a certain taste for higher spiritual pleasures, those that are divested of form. Furthermore, because there is an intimate relationship between the inner powers of the soul and the body, these dreams and visions result from outward states and indicate certain realities of the external world. Since, the correctness of visions depends on the correctness of actions the spiritual wayfarer can assess his progress by understanding the significance of his dreams and visions. Qaysari explains this in the *Muqaddima*:

The reasons for the correctness [of visions] can sometimes be traced to the soul, or the body and sometimes both. As for the reasons stemming from the soul, they consist of the following: complete attention to God, habituating oneself to speaking the truth, one's inclination to the spiritual noetic realm, purification from faults, turning away from bodily preoccupations and adorning it with praiseworthy attributes, since these render the soul luminous and strengthen it. The extent to which the soul is luminous and strong, it is able to divest itself from the sensory realm and remove the darkness, which is the cause for the lack of vision. Likewise, the relationship between it [soul] and the immaterial spirits strengthens since it acquires their characteristics, so that there is an effusion of those [spiritual] realities causing an attraction by the spirits resulting in complete .

UNVEILING AND WITNESSING

One of the most important subjects in mysticism is related to epistemology, the theory or science that investigates the origin, nature, methods, and limits of knowledge. As mentioned in the preceding chapter, man possesses both outer and inner faculties of perception. It is through the latter that the gnostic perceives the inner realities of things and their spiritual significance. Since wayfaring is the inward journey of the soul from the self to the Real, it is necessary for the wayfarer to understand his spiritual experiences and visions, in accordance with the directive of the Prophet, "He who knows his soul knows his Lord."

This mode of perception is called unveiling and witnessing, and is of primary concern for the wayfarer. It may be said that unveiling is the essence of mysticism since wayfaring is through gnosis and not through discursive reasoning, since the exercise of reason is either for the elaboration of mystical experience for others, or for evaluating experience in light of the Quran and hadith. In addition, rational knowledge is a preparatory stage for the acquisition of transcendental knowledge, since the knowledge of universals prepares the soul to receive the realities it represents, as mentioned by Guenon, "Theoretical knowledge, which is only indirect and in some sense symbolic, is merely a preparation, though indispensable, for true knowledge." In fact, acquired knowledge (*Ilm iktisabi*)

really a shadow of true knowledge, or *marifa*. There is value in it only insofar as it provides a roadmap for spiritual progress. However, since all knowledge is derived from God's knowledge, rational sciences and even the mundane ones that relate to this world are to some degree useful and can be acquired through unveiling.

Ibn Arabi clarifies further the distinction between rational knowledge and knowledge obtained by witnessing as follows:

The sciences are of three levels.

[The first] is the science of reason...

The second is the science of states (ahwal) which cannot be reached except through tasting...

*The third knowledge is the science of the mysteries (asrar).
It is the knowledge which is "beyond the stage of reason."*

...The knower of this last kind - the science of mysteries - knows and exhausts all sciences...So there is no knowledge more noble than this all-encompassing knowledge, which comprises all objects of knowledge...

Sound knowledge is only that which God throws into the heart of the knower. It is a divine light for which God singles out any of His servants whom He will, whether angel, messenger, prophet, friend, or person of faith." And, "He who has no unveiling has no knowledge (*man la kashflah la 'ilm lah.*)"

LEVELS OF UNVEILING

The modes of acquiring transcendental knowledge in mysticism relate to the levels of unveiling (*kashf*) and witnessing (*shuhud*). Although the terms are often used synonymously Ibn Arabi makes a distinction between them:

"Witnessing" is [the witnessing of creation in the Real, which is] to see the things by the proofs of declaring His Unity (*tawhid*). It is also [the witnessing of the Real in creation, which is] to see the real within things. It is also the [witnessing of the Real without creation, which is] to see the reality of certainty (*yaqin*) without any doubt. Witnessing follows unveiling, or it may be said that it is followed by unveiling.

Acquiring transcendental knowledge is largely connected to the level of disengagement of the soul from the body. The greater the attachment to corporeal nature, the thicker the veils separating one's inner being from the higher realms of existence. This initial attachment is what the gnostics refer to as the veils of darkness. When the veils of darkness, which are the veils of sins relating to actions and states, are lifted through the process of purification of the different levels of man's being, the heart is then

through its connection with the divine hosts; this is what is known as inspiration (*ilham*). If however, the heart is obscured through sins, inner and outer, either one remains on the level of beasts, or one is inspired by the lower spiritual realm occupied by the satans and Jinn. In order for the wayfarer to acquire any type of spiritual insight or awareness, he must remove the different veils that obscure his inner vision.

Sadr al-Din Qunawi mentions this in the following passage:

Thus, gaining a clear, direct, intuitive perception (*basira*) of the truth in its entirety requires, besides divine grace, which is the main factor, the disabling of all outer and inner faculties and a cleansing of the mind of all knowledge and belief. One must empty one's mind and soul from everything except the true goal and then turn wholeheartedly and with one's entire mind and soul toward God. The seeker must then unify his mind, purify his will and purpose, and rid his self of all worldly attachments, imitated and borrowed virtues, and superficial and illusory limitations in their various forms. By constantly meditating upon and nourishing such an inner, spiritual state, and by guarding against the least wavering and wandering, and through perseverance and steadfastness, he can create correspondence and harmony between his soul and the invisible sacred realm that is the source of all perfection and divine manifestation.

Unveiling in the terminology of the gnostics refers to the opening of the inner perceptual faculties to some divine reality or manifestation. If the divine manifestation takes into consideration its source, it is called epiphany or manifestation, but if it is in reference to the perceiver, insofar as it is a visionary experience for the gnostic, it is called unveiling or witnessing. That is, unveiling answers the epistemological question of how the gnostic realizes divine self-disclosure, whereas the former is in reference to the ontological underpinnings of Being and its manifestation. Najm al-Din al-Razi defines unveiling as follows:

Know that the true sense of unveiling is the emergence of something from the veil in such manner that the one to whom it is unveiled perceives it, whereas he had not perceived it before. Thus, God said, "We have removed from thee thy covering." That is, "We have removed the veil from in front of your gaze so that what you did not see previously is now uncovered to your gaze."

Al-Razi elaborates on this definition in more technical terms:

The veil consists of those obstacles that prevent the sight of the bondsman from attaining the beauty of the Glorious Presence. These obstacles are constituted by all the different realms of this world and the hereafter, which according to one tradition number eighteen thousand, according to another seventy thousand, and according to yet another three hundred and sixty thousand. Seventy thousand is most suitable since it conforms to an authentic tradition: 'God has seventy thousand veils of light and darkness.' These seventy thousand realms exist in man's own nature; he has an eye corresponding to each realm by means of which he beholds it, insofar as it is unveiled to him.

It can be gleaned from the hadith that there are in fact two types of veils: veils of darkness and veils of light. The former relates to the obscurity that occurs because of the soul's immersion in corporeal nature, whereas the latter are the veils of the names and attributes, which are encountered at the higher stages of wayfaring. The journey of the wayfarer culminates in his removal of these veils and he reaches The Fountainhead of Magnificence mentioned by Imam Ali in his supplication:

"My Lord, grant me perfect separation [from everything] but You. Illuminate the vision of our hearts by the luminosity of gazing upon you, so that the heart's vision pierces the veils of light and reaches the Fountainhead of Magnificence and our spirits become attached to the Splendor of Your Sanctity."

THE VARIETIES OF UNVEILING

In the *Muqaddima*, Qaysari systematically enumerates the varieties of unveiling as they occur in ascending degrees of immateriality. That is, when the initiate wayfarer experiences unveiling, his visions are not divested completely of form, as these are remnants of his attachment to the material realm. These visions occur on the plane of the Imaginal World since the correspondence between the outer senses and inner senses remains intact on this plane. In the same way that a person may see a face or hear a voice in a dream, the initiate wayfarer may experience unveiling corresponding to the five outer senses that have their counterpart in the Imaginal World. Qaysari gives examples of this sort of unveiling that occurred even for the Prophet (peace and blessing be upon him), except that they possessed spiritual significance in the case of the Prophet (peace and blessing be upon him). One may experience unveiling on the level of the outer senses as well, such as knowing an inner reality through palpation, such as the instance when the Prophet heard the invocation of the stones in his hand, or through olfaction, just the Prophet saying, "I smell the breath of the All-Merciful from the direction of Yemen," or through vision, such as the Prophet seeing the angel Jibrail in the form of a human. It may be in the form of audition, such as the ringing of a bell or the humming of a bee, etc. These are unveilings that are related to the physical senses. They may or may not correspond to some spiritual meaning. This is why some individuals may experience unveiling of form even if it relates to worldly matters. However, the gnostics do not value this sort of unveiling because it does not lead to the Real, rather they categorize it as divine deception and or as originating from satanic inspiration.

Unveiling at the level of the Imaginal World is an intermediary stage in which forms are represented indicating some spiritual meaning or other. Since the Imaginal World is an isthmus between the higher realm of the intellect and the lower corporeal world, these types of unveilings occur frequently in dreams or in a half-sleep state. In fact, it is often the starting point for wayfarers since it is the most accessible hidden realm, which may bethe source of vast transcendental knowledge in itself.

These different types of unveiling occur in accordance with one's existential capacity and preparedness as well as the level of the soul's disengagement from the body. In this

regard, there are unveilings that are connected to the Imaginal World which possess form, and may possess meaning, while there are those that are connected to the intellect, which do not possess form but possess meaning.

As for those that correspond to meaning without form, they consist of knowing intellectual or spiritual matters immediately without the use of intellection and drawing conclusions from premises. It is the intellect's connection with the Absolute Imaginal World which is divested of form. The lowest form of this is *hads*, or intuition.

Some of the gnostics in their wayfaring reach as far as the First Intellect and the Mother Book, or the Universal Soul and the Manifest Book, and they witness all that they encompass such as the Tablet and the Pen, the High Spirits, and the Book of Obliteration and Establishment, the Chair, Throne, and the seven heavens. The highest form is the unveiling of Immutable Archetypes.

As mentioned earlier, each realm, Kingdom, Dominion, Invincibility, and Divinity encompasses that which is below it, and that which is below it is a shadow of the previous realm. Thus, Kingdom is the shadow of Dominion, Dominion is the shadow of Invincibility which, in turn, is the shadow of Divinity, such that the divine attributes are expressed in each realm, either hidden or manifest. Unveiling that occurs at each of these degrees possesses spiritual significance for the wayfarer, each corresponding to a different level in his inner being.

Unveilings can also be categorized in accordance with the epiphany of the divine names to which they refer. Hearing a reality from the Unseen is the epiphany of the name the All-Hearing, just as knowing a reality is an epiphany of the name the All-Knowing. Some of these unveilings may be divested of form, including those obtained from the epiphanies of the name, the Most Knowledgeable, but others may possess form such as those obtained from the name, the Fashioner (*al-musawwir*). In fact, this categorization is particularly important in the journey through the divine names. One may refer to Ibn 'Arabfs book *Kashf al-mand*, which describes the stages of realization (*tahaqquq*), attachment (*tdalluq*), and acquisition (*takhalluq*) of the divine names, each being accompanied by witnessing the manifestations of each name.

It is important to note that in practical mysticism, unveiling does not merely accompany spiritual discipline; to a certain extent it is an end in itself. This is because gnosis is ontological realization of the spirit and the actual return of the spirit to the Real in the Arc of Ascent. Although unveiling is related to epistemology, it is precisely through "becoming" that the soul obtains true knowledge. Unveiling is both the means of spiritual advancement and its reality. However, the gnostics emphasize that one must pass beyond the veils of darkness and light and ultimately reach annihilation in the Real, which consists of paying no attention to even the highest degree of witnessing. There are, however, benefits for the wayfarer in seeing visions, as mentioned in the following passage by al-Razi:

The disclosure of visions to the gaze of the wayfarer has three benefits. The first is that through them he is made aware of his own states, whether excess or deficiency; motion, pause or interval; ecstasy, eagerness, or languor; delay or advancement. He is also informed of the stages and stations of the path, of degrees of ascent and descent, of elevation and depression, and of the true and the false.

The second benefit of visions is that, deriving from the heart, the spirit, and the angelic realm, they yield a certain taste. The soul gains from them such libation and nourishment, such joyous taste and ardor, that it annuls intimacy with creation, with all to which instinctual nature is accustomed, and with sensory delights and corporeal pleasures, and instead forms acquaintance with the unseen and the spiritual world, with subtle essences and inner meanings, with mysteries and realities. The third benefit is that it is only by virtue of vision deriving from the unseen that certain stations of the Path may be transcended.

Unveiling, therefore, allows one to access the higher realm directly without mediation, therefore, the fewer the intermediaries, the greater the accuracy of one's visions. This, however, does not negate the importance of understanding each world in its own right. Since each world is itself a book of God, reading the signs (*ayat*) in one book will invariably lead one to comprehend another book. At the same time, when one experiences unveiling in the higher realms, one understands all that it encompasses, since what is understood by way of collectivity (*jam*) is also understood by way of differentiation (*tafsil*).

DEGREES OF UNVEILING IN THE HUMAN HEART

Unveiling occurs at each degree of the human heart because the origin of unveiling is the human heart itself. After the sensory form of unveiling, one may experience unveiling in the outermost aspect of the heart, which is called the breast (*sadr*). If an angelic host inspires it, it is called inspiration (*ilham*), or if Satan or Jinn inspire it, it is called insinuation (*waswas*). However, it is more correct to say that inspiration occurs in the heart and insinuation occurs in the breast since Satan has access only to the plane of the breast, as in the verse, "From the evil of the whisperer who whispers in the breasts of men," whereas the heart is the locus of divine inspiration.

This knowledge occurs in the form of apparent meanings of unseen realities and is not accompanied with witnessing (*shuhud*). If it is accompanied by witnessing unseen realities themselves, it is called witnessing of the heart. It sometimes happens that the purity of the heart attains perfection, the veils become transparent, and the meaning of the verse, "We shall show them Our signs upon the horizons and in their own souls" is made apparent. If man looks into himself, he sees only God; and indeed, if he looks into all beings, wherever he looks he sees only God.

Unveiling at the degree of the spirit is higher than that of the heart, as al-Razi explains: When the light of God casts its reflection on the light of the spirit, man's witnessing of

God becomes mingled with the taste of God's witnessing of Himself...When the spirit becomes entirely pure and is cleansed of all corporeal contamination, infinite worlds are unveiled and the circle of pre- and post-eternity becomes visible to the eye.

There are also levels of unveiling associated with the heart, which relate to meanings and correspond to the heart's faculty of vision, hearing, and other senses, such as God's saying, "Blind are the hearts within the breasts." Here the light cast by the spirits luminosity informs the heart of spiritual realities in the form of differentiation, since the heart is associated with the Universal Soul. Higher than the heart is its inner aspect, which is called the *fu'ad*, where God says, "The *fu'ad* did not lie what it saw."³²⁸ It is also said that unveiling at the level of the spirit is connected to the divine names directly, since the realm of the spirit is related to the First Intellect, and the Mother Book (*umm al-kitab*), both of which represent the realities of all things in a state of collectively. Realities in the higher realms are in a state of greater simplicity and are acquired through an unveiling that is often instantaneous and effortless. Whatever one expresses by way of words and descriptions is simply an elaboration through concepts. For example, if one were to describe an object to a blind man, the more concepts he brings, the more complex his description becomes, since for every concept one has to bring forth a new definition. If, however, the blind man were given vision for a moment, neither word nor description would be necessary, and he would be able to witness the object directly without the mediation of concepts.

Ch. 3 The Immutable Archetypes and a remark concerning the Manifestations of the Names

Know that the divine names possess noetic forms (*suwar mdqula*) in the divine knowledge, since He knows by His Essence for His Essence, and His names and attributes and those noetic forms—being that they are identical with the Essence, self-disclosing by a specific entification and specified relation—are called the Immutable Archetypes, whether they are universal or particular, in the terminology of the people of Allah. Their universals are called quiddities and their realities and particulars are called ipseities by the philosophers.

Quiddities are the universal forms of the names in the presence of the divine knowledge in their initial entification. These forms emanate from the divine Essence by the Most-Holy Effusion and the initial self-disclosure, by means of the love intrinsic to it and the petition of the Keys of the Unseen (*mafatih al-ghayb*)—which none knows except Him—for their manifestation and perfection. The divine effusion is divided into the Most-Holy Effusion and the Holy Effusion. Through the former, the Immutable Entities and their essential potentialities in the divine knowledge come into being. Through the latter, those entities appear in the external world with their concomitants and associations. In this regard the Shaykh has mentioned, "The recipient is only due to the Most-Holy Effusion." The initial petitioning [of names] is founded on the names the First and the Hidden, then by means of those two, the Last and the Manifest, since Firstness and the Hiddenness is established for the noetic existence, and Lastness and Manifestness is reserved for actual existence and things that do not have a noetic existence cannot come into being in the external world.

The entities are divided into two kinds, in accordance with the possibility or impossibility of their existence. The first is the possible beings and the second are the impossible beings, which are further subdivided into two kinds. The first are those that depend on mental hypothesis such as God's having a partner and the combining of contraries and contradictions in a specific instance and particular place, etc. These are imaginary matters produced by the intellect polluted by the imagination. The divine knowledge has awareness of this type by virtue of His knowledge of the intellect, the imagination and their concomitants such as imagining that which has no real existence in the external world and their supposition thereof, and not by way of its possessing an essence and nominal forms. Otherwise, it would result in the actual existence of a partner for God.

The Shaykh writes in the seventy-third chapter of the *Futuhât al-Makkiya*, while mentioning the saints who forbid indecency, "There is absolutely no partner for Him in existence. Rather, it is a word subsumed under the category of absolute non-being. Therefore, cognizance of existential divine unity negates it, and that is why it is called, "Forbidding indecent speech and oppression."

The second is not limited to supposition, rather, it established in the real world, existing in the divine knowledge, and inseparable from the divine Essence because it is the form of the unseen names specific to the hidden as opposed to the manifest. This is because the hidden has an aspect that coincides with the manifest and an aspect that does not. The contingent beings are related to the first and the impossible beings are related to the second. These are the names he mentioned in the *Futuhat* as, "As for the names which are outside of creation and relation, none knows them except Him, since they have noconnection with the world at all."

The Prophet (peace and blessing be upon him) mentioned these names by saying, "And [by the names] You have reserved in the knowledge of Your unseen." Since these names by their essences solicit the Unseen fleeing the manifest, they have no existence in the external world. So the forms of these names only have noetic existence, and cannot be described as having external existence. The rationalists have no understanding of this category, since the intellect has no share in it. Awareness of this type of reality is gained only through the lamp-niche of prophecy, sainthood and faith in them.

The impossible entities are divine realities in whose nature it is to remain non-manifest in the external world, just as it is in the nature of the possible entities to become manifest. Every reality the existence of which is possible, even if from one perspective-its being established in the plane of the [divine] knowledge pre-eternally and post-eternally—it has not smelled the fragrance of existence, from the perspective of its external loci of manifestation does indeed exist in the external world. Nothing among them remains in the divine knowledge in such a way that it does not come into being. This is because all of them seek individual existence by the tongue of their [existential] dispositions. Had the Bestower, the Magnanimous not endowed them with existence He would cease to be the Magnanimous, and if He engendered some and not others despite each seeking individual existence, it would result in the exercise of an arbitrary preference.

Its individuals, given that they depend on their times which Allah knows and in which they occur, appear from the unseen to the visible, appearing without interruption until the cessation of the worldly plane. Likewise, [they appear] in the hereafter as mentioned in the sound hadith, "If the believer wishes for a son in paradise, its gestation, birth and acquiring teeth will happen the moment he wishes for it." Allah says, "You will receive in [paradise] whatever your souls' desire and whatever you ask for, descended from the Forgiving and Merciful" (Fussilat: 31-32).

The possible entities can be divided into the substantial entities and the accidental entities. The substantial entities are all followed and the accidental entities follow. The substantial entities are divided into simple spiritual [entities], such as intellects, immaterial souls, and the simple material [entities], such as the elements; or compound [entities] in the mind and not the external world, such as substantial quiddities composed of genus and differentium, and compound [entities] in both the mind and the external world, such as the three kingdoms of nature.

Each of the substantial and accidental entities can be further divided into entities of genus—high, middle and low. Each of them is further divided into types, kinds and individuals, so "Glory be to Him," (Yasin: 83) "Your Lord is not oblivious to even an atom's weight from the heavens and the earth," (Yunus: 61) "And He is the Hearing, Knowing" (al-Anfal: 115).

Thus, the world of [immutable] Archetypes is the manifestation of the names the absolute First, and the absolute Hidden, whereas the world of spirits is the manifestation of the name the relative Hidden and the relative Manifest, while the world of the visible is the manifestation of the absolute Manifest and the Last, from one aspect, and the hereafter is the manifestation of the of the absolute Last.

The manifestation of the name Allah, inclusive of these four names, is the Perfect Man who governs all the worlds. The Imaginal Realm is the manifestation born out of the combining of the Manifest and the Hidden, and is an isthmus between both of them.

The high genera (*al-ajnas al-aliya*) are the manifestations of the Mothers of the Names which include the four names, the middle genera and the manifestations of the names subordinate to them and the low genera are the manifestations of the names still further subordinate in comprehensiveness and degree.

Similarly, the real types (*al-anwa al-haqiqiyya*) are manifestations of the names that are under the dominion of the relative types (*al-anwa d-idhafiyya*); if they are simple, each is a manifestation of a specific name, but if they are compound, each is a manifestation of a name derived from the combination of multiple names.

Their individuals are manifestations from the subtleties of the names which are derived from the combination of certain names with each other, and from these combinations, there arise infinite names, and likewise, infinite manifestations. It becomes clear from this the secret in the statement, "Say, '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 another like it for replenishment'" (al-Kahf: 109), since His words are the entities of the realities of all things, and the perfections of the shared names which share their loci, as opposed to the names specific for a thing, since their perfections are specific.

It is necessary to know that everything that exists in the external world and has numerous attributes is a manifestation of each of them, even if at each instant there is different attribute manifested from it, thereby becoming the loci of manifestation of that attribute at that moment. In the same way a human is at one time the locus of manifestation of mercy and at other times vengeance, with respect to manifesting both attributes in him. If he manifests a specific attribute or numerous attributes perpetually, he becomes the perpetual locus of their manifestation accordingly.

Thus, the intellects and immaterial souls, given the fact that they are aware of their origin and what emanates from them, are manifestations of the divine knowledge, and divine

books. The Throne is the manifestation of the Merciful (*al-rahman*) and its equilibrium, the Footstool is the manifestation of the Beneficent (*al-rahim*) and the seventh sphere is the manifestation of the Provider (*al-razzaq*), the sixth of the Most-knowlegeable (*al-'alim*), the fifth of the Subduer (*al-qahhar*), the fourth of the Light (*d-nur*), and Life-giver (*d-muhyi*), the third of the Fashioner (*al-musawwir*), the second of the Engenderer (*d-ban*), and the first of the Creator (*d-khliq*).

This is in accordance with the spiritual quality governing the celestial spheres referred to by each name. However much you deepen your gaze into creation, its properties are revealed to you and you will realize that they are manifestations of them. And success is with Allah.

Remark

The Immutable Archetypes, being that they are noetic forms, cannot be described as being formed (*maj'ula*), since they are non-existent in the external world, whereas whatever has form has existence. In the same way that noetic forms in the mind and in the imagination cannot be described as being formed as long as they do not exist in the external world. If this were the case, the impossible entities would also be formed since they are noetic forms as well.

Formation is in relation to its existing in the external world, which is none other than being engendered in the external world, since quiddities are made quiddities in the [external world]. In this sense, it is more appropriate to say that formation of quiddities is attached to knowledge, which refers to a terminological difference, that is, it cannot be said, "Quiddities do not emanate and are not invented in the divine knowledge, otherwise, they would not be originated by the origination of the Essence." This is because quiddities are not invented in the way mental forms are invented in our minds when we wish to manifest something that previously did not exist. This would imply a temporal delay in existence of noetic entities from Allah, whereas His knowledge of His Essence by means of His Essence necessitates the entities, without any delay in existence. With one and the same knowledge of His Essence he knows those entities not by another form of knowledge, as some have surmised, who have claimed that His knowledge of the world is identical with the First Intellect.

Another Remark

Know that Immutable Archetypes can be viewed from two aspects, from the aspect that they are the forms of the divine names, and the aspect that they are the realities of external entities. From the first aspect, they are as bodies for spirits, and from the second aspect, as spirits for bodies. The divine names also can be viewed from two aspects, the aspect of multiplicity, and the aspect of the unity of the Essence described by them, as stated previously. From the aspect of multiplicity they are in need of effusion from the divine presence encompassing them and receptacle for that effusion, such as the world. From the aspect of the unity of the Essence which is described by attributes, they are the

lords of their forms and bestow effusion upon them. It is through the Most-Holy Effusion, which is the self-disclosure of the Essence with respect to its initial and hidden aspect, that the effusion reaches the Immutable Archetypes from the Essence, indefinitely. Then, through the Holy Effusion, which is the self-disclosure of the Essence with respect to its last and manifest aspect, and according to the receptivity and capacity of the Immutable Archetypes, the effusion reaches the external entities from the divine

Every Archetype is a genus of what is subsumed under it, in one sense, acting as an intermediary for conferring the effusion on what is below it and ending at individual instances. This is similar to the immaterial intellects and souls which act as intermediaries for that which is below them in the world of Generation and Corruption (*al-kawn wa al-fasad*). However, in another sense, the effusion reaches all existent things through the particular aspect it has with Allah, without intermediary. Given the fact that the Archetypes are the spirits of outward realities and possess an aspect of [both] servitude and lordship, they receive divine effusion in the former aspect and nurture its forms in the latter. The divine names are the Keys of the Unseen in an absolute sense, while the contingent entities are the Keys of the Visible.

Since the Archetypes as well as the names unceasingly receive divine effusion in accordance to their degrees of receptivity, the Shaykh has attributed effusion absolutely for the comprehensive divine presence and receptivity to the Archetypes, even though the Archetypes, from the aspect of lordship, bestow effusion on their forms subsumed under them. Thus, it should not be imagined that the Archetypes have only receptivity and that the names have only activity. The divine names are also sub-divided into those that exert effect and those which receive it; some are active absolutely and some are passive absolutely. And Allah knows best.

Guidance for the Observers

The quiddities are all specific noetic existents. The fact they do not exist in the external world and are separated from outward existence implies that there is an intermediary between the existent and the non-existent, as held by the Mu'tazilites. Our saying, "A thing is either established in the external world, or it is not," is self-evident. That which exists in the external world necessarily exists, and that which is not is nonexistent. If this is the case, then its subsistence (*thubût*) is in the noetic realm and whatever forms exist in the noetic realm are effusions from the Real. The effusion of a thing from something other than itself is preceded by the Real's knowledge of it. Thus, it subsists in the knowledge of God, for His knowledge is its existence since it is [one with] the Essence. If it were the case that quiddities were not existential realities in the divine knowledge, the divine Essence would be locus of multiplicity, contrary to the reality of the Essence, which is impossible.

When it is said, "We conceive of quiddity while being unaware of its existence," it is only in relation to external existence, for if we became unaware of its mental existence, there would not remain anything in the mind at all. If, however, we were to accept

of its mental existence, while remaining mindful of quiddity, it also does not necessitate that it should be absolutely other than existence; because it is admissible that quiddity is a specific kind of existence, which is superadded to it in the mind, this being its presence in the mind, in the same way that it is superadded to it in the external world, this being its presence in the external world. Being unaware of the [concept] of its existence in the mind does not affect its real existence in it. Existence may be superadded to itself, given its multiplicity, as in the case of general existence being superadded to specific existences.

The truth of the matter is what was mentioned earlier, that is, Being manifests through attributes, each manifestation becoming entified and distinguished from another by certain of its attributes. Each reality becomes a reality of the divine names, and the form of those realities in the divine knowledge is called quiddity, or Immutable Archetype. It is also correct to consider *that* reality as quiddity, for this quiddity has external existence in the realm of spirits, which consists of its occurrence there; an existence in the imaginal realm, which is its manifestation in corporeal form; an existence in the sensory realm, which consists of its realization there; and an existence in our minds, which is its occurrence there. Thus, it can be said that existence is "occurrence and presence."

Quiddities and their concomitants appear according to the manifestation of Being and its perfections in its loci of manifestation, sometimes in the mind, and sometimes in the external world. That manifestation is either strong or weak depending on its proximity to the divine, the paucity or multitude of intermediaries, and the purity of receptivity or lack thereof. Thus, for some of those loci, every perfection pertaining to it is manifested, while for others it is not.

The forms of quiddities in our mind are shadows of the noetic forms which occur in us as a reflection of their sublime origins, or the manifestation of the light of Being in us, according to our share in that [divine] presence. For this reason, it is difficult to obtain knowledge of the realities of things, in and of themselves, except for one whose heart is illuminated by the light of God and the veil between him and pure Being is lifted. Consequently, he perceives those noetic forms through God as they truly are. However, he is veiled from them to the extent of his ego, thereby bringing about a distinction between God's knowledge of them and the knowledge of the perfected gnostic. Thus, the ultimate aim of the gnostics is to confess to inability and inadequacy and the knowledge that everything returns to Him, since He is the Most knowledgeable, the Aware. If you have understood something of what preceded, then you will have gained some wisdom. "Whomever is given wisdom, he has been given a great good (al-Baqara: 269).

Closing

With respect to their entification of non-being and their distinction from Absolute Being, the Archetypes return to non-being, even though with respect to their reality and existential entifications, they are identical with Being. Thus, if you hear the gnostics say, "Creation itself is non-being, and Being in its entirety is Allah's," then accept it, for what

they say relates to this aspect. Just as Amir al-Muminin' (A) said, "The secret of the prophets and messengers, peace be upon them all, is in the hadith of Kumayl (may Allah be pleased with him), "Awakening to the known is with effacement of the imagined." There are many such expressions in the statements of the gnostics.

Their statement, "The Immutable Archetypes are in non-being," or "exist in non-being," does not mean that non-being is a receptacle for them, since non-being is absolute nothingness. Rather, what is meant is that while they exist in the presence of the divine knowledge, they are clothed in non-existence in the external world, and qualified by it. It is as if they were established in their external non-existence, then God clothed them in a garment of outward existence, whereby they become existent. And Allah

Ch. 4 Substance and Accident According to the People of *Allah*

If you deepen your gaze at the realities of things you will find that some are antecedent, surrounded by accidents, and some are subsequent and attached. The antecedents are substances and the subsequent are accidents and both are joined together by existence since it manifests itself in the form of each.

[All] substances are united with Substantial, as such, which is a single reality, and it is the manifestation of the divine Essence, from the perspective of its universally sustaining nature and reality, in the same way that accidents are manifestations of the names that are subordinate to the Essence. Do you not see that the divine Essence remains veiled by the names? Likewise, substances remained enveloped in accidents. Just as the Essence adds an attribute, or a name, whether universal or particular, similarly, Substance, as such, through the addition of a universal meaning becomes a specific substance and a manifestation of a specific name from among the Universal Names; rather it is identical with it. Through the addition of a specific meaning becomes a partial substance such as an individual.

Just as the combining of universal names engenders other names, the combining of simple substances engenders other substances composed of them. Just as some names encompass other names, some substances encompass others. Just as the Mothers of the Names are finite, the genera of substances and their types are finite. Just as the branches of the names are infinite, the entities are likewise infinite.

This reality [Substance] in the terminology of the people of Allah, is called the Breath of the All-Merciful (*al-nafas al-rahmani*), and the Universal Primordial Substance (*hayula al-kulliya*), and that which becomes entitled and enters existence is called the divine words (*al-kalimaat al-ilahiya*).

If this reality is viewed with respect to its genus, which is related to the types subsumed under it, then it is called the natural genus (*tabi'a jinsiya*). If it is viewed with respect to species, through which a type becomes a type, it is called the natural differentium (*tabi'a fasliya*), since it is a part of it, in addition to a specific attribute carried over to the type, insofar as it is what it is, and not something else. If it is viewed with respect to its shares occurring equally in its individuals, or within a type, uniformly, it is called the natural type (*tabi'a naw'iya*). The genus, differentium and type are secondary intelligibles related to them.

The essence of Substance is identical with simple and compound substances, for it is the reality of realities descended from the Unseen world of the Essence to the visible sensible world, and manifests in each realm to the extent of what is appropriate for that world.

*A reality which manifests its power in the
world And makes appear these worlds as veils
Disguised from the eyes of the worlds, yet
Known by the hearts of the gnostics and the learned (udaba)
Creation are but veils for its countenance
And all affairs are for it a face-veil
Its veiling by the cosmos is of no surprise
Rather, what is astonishing is its being one with it*

Its union with universal or particular meanings is none other than its manifestation in it and self-disclosure through it, sometimes in its universal degrees and sometimes in its particular degrees. [Substance] is a singular essence with respect to itself, but multiple with respect to its manifestations in its attributes, which with respect to their realities are concomitant with that essence, although with respect to their manifestation they depend on equilibrium, which it possesses in actuality.

Whatever is in individualization in actuality or in potential, at a given time or permanently, from among the concomitants and attributes, is present in them in unseen form. Since everything that becomes manifest, before its manifestation, exists within it in potentiality otherwise it could not be manifested.

Substance has neither genus, nor differentium, nor definition, since that which is mentioned by way of definition is a description, and not a true definition.

Since there are divine self-disclosures manifesting numerous attributes according to the verse, "Everyday He is upon some task," (al-Rahman: 29) the accidents become multiple and infinite, even though the Maternal names among them are finite. This point alerts you to the fact that the attributes with respect to their entification in the presence of the names, have realities distinct from one another, although they return to a single reality shared between them from another perspective, just as their loci of manifestation are distinct realities from one another, despite sharing accidentality. This is because everything in existence is evidence and a sign for that which is in the Unseen.

Remark using the language of the Speculative Thinkers

Know that the contingent entities are limited to being substances and accidents. Substance, as such, is identical with substances in the external world, and distinction among them is through the accidentals attached to each. This is because all substances share their nature as substances and are distinguished from one another by that which is not shared. These distinguishing qualities are outside of their nature as substances are consequently accidents.

It cannot be said, why is it not permissible for Substance, as such, to be a general accident for substances? This is because the general accident only differentiates its individual loci in the intellect and not in the external world, whereas in the external

with its individual. Otherwise, the general accident cannot be imposed on them as it truly is, and this is the desired conclusion. Furthermore, if their nature as substances were a general accident outside of the substances in the external world, substantial realities would not be substances in and of themselves, insofar as they are the loci of accidentals; since by definition, accidentals cannot be the loci of attachment.

Furthermore, if this nature were to exist by means of an existence other than that of its separate instances, it would resemble accidents, which would not allow congruent (*muwataat*) predication of its instances, and the non-existence of the nature as substance would not necessitate the non-existence of its individual instance because of its being external to it. However, the non-existence of a manifest accompanying attribute does not necessitate the non-existence of its locus, rather, it is only an indication of it, as mentioned in the first chapter.

If the nature as substance did not exist as such, the individual instances of substances would be different from it in the external world, because of the non-existence of the nature of substance itself; this is impossible. If, however, the individual instance exists through the same existence as the substances, it is identical with it in the external world, and this is the desired conclusion. In addition, if the substance is not identical to the particularities to which it could be correctly attributed in the external world, it would be either included in it entirely, resulting in the compounding of quiddities of substance, ad infinitum, if the differentium were a substance. This is because substance partakes in the differentium, and its inclusion in it necessitates that no substance is simple. Or, it is a compound quiddity composed of substance and accident whereby the differentium is an accident. In this case, the Substantial quiddity would partake of accidentality. Or, it is included in some to the exclusion of others, necessitating that certain of its loci in and of itself—irrespective of its accidentals—is not a substance. Or, it is completely outside of being a substance, resulting in a greater impossibility than the previous case, which was mentioned earlier. So it is identical to its individuals in the external world and the distinction between them is through specific accidents, for it is not permissible that the distinguisher be itself or one of its individuals.

It cannot be said that if entities of substances differed only with respect to their accidentals, they would not differ in their essences as well, but would be shared in the way that individual humans share a single reality [humanness]. We respond that all substances share the reality of substantiality, just as the individuals of a type (*naw'a*) share the reality of the type. The distinction between their essences follows their acquiring their essences since a type does not become a type except by universal accidentals attached to the reality of the substance, just as an individual does not become an individual except by particular accidentals attached to the reality of the type.

Do you not see that when speech is associated with an animal it is called a human, and when neighing is associated with it, it is called a horse, and when braying is associated with it, it is called a donkey. Each quality is an accidental. Thus, if one wishes to predicate congruently, he must use a derivation, so as to say, "A human is a speaking

animal," and a "horse is a neighing animal." Speech is predicated through its derivation since "speech" is predicated congruently. That which possesses speech, meaning speaker, is identical with the animal which is in the existence of man, even if [animal] is more general than man. For this reason, [speech] is predicated of [animal] insofar as it is what it is; there is nothing other than animality and speech.

Therefore, it is known that the conceptual compound is only between the nature of animality and the nature of speech and nothing else. The former is shared and the latter is not. This does not necessitate in the composition of substance to be of substance and accident, because that which has speech is the substance and not the compound, such as an individual.

The difference between concepts of type and concepts of individual is that the former is the joining of a universal to a universal so that it does not remove it from its universality. The latter is the joining of a particular with a universal, which removes the latter from its universality.

The general accident is that which includes two or more realities, and the property (*khassa*) is that which is distinguished by single reality. The former is like walking or sensing and the latter is like speech or laughter. That which possesses ambulation is called "walker" through the general accident, and that which engages in laughter is called "laughter" through the property, according to the speculative thinkers. They are identical with animal and human in external existence and not something superadded and external to either of them, even though conceptually they are more general than both. Therefore, that which is a general accident in relation to types is a differentium generating type in relation to the genus under which these types are subsumed, and that which is a property is a differentium for the type.

Predicating speech for human by a congruent predication precludes one from saying, "Something that speaks is another quiddity which is predicated for human because their existence is united." This is because the predication of a quiddity for something that is distinct from it is impossible.

Unity of existence does not enter [predication], since predication is for quiddity not existence. Were this permissible, it would be permissible to predicate the parts of the quiddity as well—compounded from existing parts—for it when it exists as single existent, the existence of the compound.

It should not be imagined that the principle of speech, which is the rational soul, does pertain to the animal [itself], so that [speech] attaches to it and an animal becomes a human through it; even though it is not appropriate for being the differentium because it is an independent existent in the external world. Rather this principle is with everything, even the inanimate objects as well, since everything has a share in the realms of Dominion (*malakut*) and Invincibility (*jabarut*).

That which affirms this comes from the wellspring of prophethood, the who witnesses objects by their realities—peace be upon him—such as the speaking of animals and inanimate objects with him, and God says, "There is nothing except that it extols His praise, but you do not understand their glorification" (*al-Isra: 33*). The manifestation of speech for each is in accordance with the divine custom and norm, which depends on equilibrium in the human constitution. As for the perfected ones this is not the case because of their being aware of the hidden aspects of things and perceiving their speech.

What the later scholars said, "The meaning of *“nutq”* is perceiving universals and not speech," in contravention to common usage, does not assist them. This is because [their premise] is that the rational [soul] is only posited for humans, but they do not have proof for it nor do they have any awareness that the animals do not perceive universals; the ignorance of a thing does not negate its existence, and deepening one's gaze on what remarkable things they exhibit requires that they perceive universals. Furthermore, it is not possible to perceive the particular without its universal, since the particular is the universal with individuation. And Allah is the Guide.

Another Remark

Just as the accident by its essence, seeks the locus in which it subsists, which is the substance, likewise the substance by its essence seeks the accident to manifest through it, rather it is the cause for the existence of the accident and its seeking it. This results in an inseparable relationship between them. Each of them is divided—by a type of division—into that which is substance and accident in the intellect and that which is substance and accident in the external world.

The former are the Immutable Archetypes of substance and accident which exist on the plane of divine knowledge, the genera and differentia predicated congruently for specific types. The latter are substances and accidents in the external world, for that reason substance is defined as a quiddity which does not inhere in something else, or an existent that does not have a locus, and accident is in the contrary. Combination of two substances or more of the first type does not negate the predication for its subject such as animal and speech, which are predicated of human.

NECESSITY, CONTINGENCY, AND IMPOSSIBILITY

Since the Shaykh—may God be pleased with him—has mentioned in his book necessity in itself and necessity by something else, contingency and the contingent, and impossibility, we have explained these three relations in the following way. We say: Necessity, contingency and impossibility, in that they are pure rational relations, have no realization in the entities in the way accidents are realized in their external loci. They do not have existence except in the minds because they are states that follow upon the unseen essences which are permanent on the plane of knowledge. They are viewed with respect to their existences in the external world, such as contingency for the contingent and impossibility for the impossible, or with respect to their being identical with that

essence, such as necessity for Being qua Being. For, He is necessary by His Essence and His necessity is not because of external superadded existence.

Thus, necessity is the inevitable self-necessitation intrinsic to the essence and its realization in the external world. Impossibility is the inevitable self-necessitation of non-existence in the external world. Contingency is the absence of self-necessitation of either existence or non-existence. Both contingency and impossibility are privative attributes in that they predicate negatively of their subjects external existence, whereas, necessity is a positive attribute. Furthermore, it cannot be said that the impossible things have no essence, and therefore cannot necessitate anything, because, as mentioned previously, there are two types, a type hypothesized by the mind but has no essence and one which is [existentially] established, or are rather divine names.

It was mentioned in the chapter of the Immutable Archetypes that necessity encompasses all external and noetic entities since a thing whose existence is not necessitated does not come into being, either in the external world, or in the mind. Thus, necessity can be subdivided into necessity in itself, and necessity by something else.

Know that this division is only with respect to the distinction between lordship and servitude. However with respect to absolute oneness, there is no *necessity by something else*, but only *by the Essence*. Everything that is necessary by something else is contingent by essence, and contingency has also encompassed it. The reason for its being described by contingency is to distinguish it. Were it not for this distinction, existence would be equivalent to His essential necessity.

Since the origin of these three relations is the plane of knowledge, some of the great scholars have maintained that the plane of contingency is the same as the plane of knowledge.

Even if these rational discussions that have been mentioned in this chapter as well as the previous chapters contravene with the apparent teachings of speculative philosophy, they are in fact its spirit from the lights of the prophetic presences, who are knowledgeable of the degrees of existence and their concomitants. For that reason, the people of Allah have not abstained from disclosing them, despite the rejection of their ideas by the pseudo-philosophers and their imitators. And Allah is the Truth and guides to the path.

CONCLUSION: CONCERNING ENTIFICATION

Know that entification is that which distinguishes a thing from something else, such that it does not share it with another thing. It may be identical with the essence such as the entification of Necessary Being which distinguishes it by means of its Essence from other than it, and the entification of the Immutable Archetypes in knowledge, for they are also identical with their essences, since Being with a specific attribute on the plane of knowledge becomes Essence and an Immutable Archetype. It may be something additional to essence pertaining to it alone which distinguishes it from others, in the same

way as a writer is distinguished from an illiterate in the attribute of writing. It may result from an attribute not pertaining to it, such as an illiterate who is distinguished from a writer insofar as he cannot write. The former includes considering the presence of an attribute while not considering the lack of another attribute, such as Zayd's ability to write without considering his lack of ability for tailoring, or considering the presence of an attribute while at the same time considering his lack of another attribute.

Entification that is addition to essence may be either existentially positive or negative, or may be a compound of positive and negative. One type may encompass all other types because a human, for example, distinguished in essence from a horse, and by the presence of an existential attribute—in one of his manifestations—is distinguished externally through another existential attribute, such as merciful Zayd and oppressive 'Amr. That which is apparent by means of an existential attribute is distinguished from that which is apparent from a non-existential attribute, like the most-knowledgable and the utterly ignorant. Likewise* a writer who is not a tailor is distinguished from a tailor who is not a writer by a existential attribute in addition to the non-existence of another attribute, and vice-versa.

Entifications additional [to essence] are all concomitants of Being, just as non-existential attributes differing from one another are distinct from the aspect of its mental existence of the perceiver, or from the aspect of its properties. Therefore, it cannot be said that were distinction between entities only due to their entification, they would not differ with respect to their essences; rather, their essences are shared in the same way that individual human beings share a unified reality. We say that essences become essences only by noetic entification, whereas, before entification, they are none other than the divine Essence, which is absolute being, as mentioned by the prophet (peace and blessing be upon him), "Allah was, and there was nothing else with Him."

Therefore it is established that the distinction of entities by their essences is first and foremost, due to the entification which makes essences essences, in the same way that individuals are individuated by specific qualities, not that they have essences that are distinct in essence and attributes. And Allah knows best.

Ch. 5 Exposition of the Universal Worlds and the Five Divine Planes

The word *'alam* (world) being derived from the word *'alama*, lexically signifies "that through which something is known," and technically signifies, "everything other than Allah." This is because what is known through it is Allah, with respect to His names and attributes, since through each individual in the world a name among the divine names is known, because it is locus of manifestation of a specific name among them.

Through real substances and types the Universal Names (*al-asma al-kulliyah*) are known, even through animals considered contemptible by laymen such as the fly, the mosquito, and the flea, *etc.*—are known names for which they are a manifestation.

The First Intellect is a universal world because of its encompassing universal realities of existence and their forms by way of collectivity; the name, the Merciful (*al-Rahman*) is known through it.

The Universal Soul is also a universal world because of its encompassing the particulars of whatever is encompassed by the First Intellect by way of differentiation; the name, the Beneficent (*d-Rahim*) is known through it.

The Perfect Human (*al-insan al-kamil*) is a universal world because he unifies them all by way of collectivity with respect to his spirit and by way of differentiation with respect to his heart. Through him the name, Allah is known, which encompasses all the names.

If every individual in existence is a sign for a divine name, and every name being encompassed by the Essence which includes its names, also includes them, then each individual in existence is also a world through which all the names are known. Therefore the worlds are infinite, from this perspective. However, since the divine universal planes are five, there are also five universal worlds, inclusive of everything other than them.

The first universal plane is the plane of the Absolute Unseen, and its world is the world of Immutable Archetypes in the plane of the [divine] knowledge. In contrast to it is the plane of the Absolute Visible (*al-shahdda*), and its world is the Kingdom (*al-mulk*).

The relative Unseen plane can be divided into that which is closer to the Absolute Unseen, its world is the world of the spirits of Invincibility (*al-jabarut*) and Dominion (*al-malakut*), that is, the world of immaterial intellects and souls; and that which is closer to the Visible which is the Imaginal Realm (*al-mithal*).

The relative Unseen is divided into the two categories because spirits have imaginal forms corresponding to the Absolute Visible world, and a noetic immaterial form corresponding to the Absolute Unseen.

The fifth [plane] is the totality of the four previous planes, and its world is the world of the human being who is the collectivity of all the worlds and whatever they contain.

The world of Kingdom (*al-mulk*) is a manifestation of the Dominion (*al-malakut*), which is the Absolute Imaginal Realm, which in turn is a manifestation of the world of the Invincibility (*al-jabarut*), that is, the realm of immaterial beings, and it is a manifestation of the Immutable Archetypes, which is a manifestation of the world of divine names and the plane of Unity, which is a manifestation of the plane of the Singularity.

Remark

You must know that these worlds, their universals and particulars are all divine books, for their encompassing His Complete Words (*kalimat al-tammam*) since the First Intellect and the Universal Soul—both forms of the Mother Book, which is the plane of [divine] Knowledge—are both divine books.

It may be said, that that First Intellect is the "Mother Book" for its encompassing things by way of collectivity, and the Universal Soul is the "Manifest Book" for their appearing there as particulars, and the "Book of Effacement and Establishment" (*mahw wa al-ithbat*) is the plane of the Soul impressed upon the Universal Body, with respect to its association with engendered things.

This book of Effacement and Establishment occurs for individual forms that are in it, with respect to their concomitant states arising from their essences because of their essential receptivity, their appearance conditioned by the configuration of celestial spheres which prepare the essences to clothe themselves in those forms together with their states from the divine emanation of the Name, the Director (*al-mudabbir*), the Effacer (*al-mahi*), the Establisher (*al-muthabbit*), the Accomplisher of what He wills (*al-fa'aal li ma yasha*), etc.

The Perfect Human is a book comprehending the aforementioned books because he is the replica of the Great World, as mentioned by the divine gnostic Ali ibn Abi Talib (al-Qayrawani),

*Your illness is from you but you do not feel
it Your cure is from you but you do not see it
Do you suppose that you are a small particle
While contained within you is the Great World
You are the Manifest Book whose
Letters bring forth the hidden*

The *Shaykh* writes—may God be pleased with him:

*I am the Qur'an and the seven verses
The spirit of the spirit, not the spirit of
vessels My heart resides near the object of my
vision*

Thus, from the aspect of his spirit and intellect he is the noetic book, called the "Mother of the Book," from the aspect of his heart, he is the "Book of the Guarded Tablet," and from the aspect of his soul, he is the book of "Effacement and Establishment," for these are noble pages, elevated and pure, that none shall touch it nor perceive its secrets and its meanings save those purified from the veils of darkness.

The books that have been mentioned are the essential divine books. As for their branches, they are all that is in existence, consisting of the intellect, the soul, the spiritual and bodily powers, and others, for they are among the things in which properties of existents are inscribed, either entirely or in part, whether in collectivity or in differentiation. The least thereof is the inscription of laws deriving from those books. And Allah knows best.

Another Remark

You must know that the relation of the First Intellect to the Great World and its realities is identical with the relation of the human spirit to the body and its powers, and that the Universal Soul is the heart of the Great World just as the Rational [soul] is the heart of man. For that reason, the world is called the "Great Human."

It should not be imagined that the forms that the First Intellect contains in collectivity, and the Universal Soul contains in differentiation, are other than its realities, such that forms separated from their realities emanate from Allah, the Glorified, to each of those two. Rather, effusion of those forms in both consists of the engendering of those realities in them. All realities that exist in the external world are like shadows of those forms, since they are the ones that appear in the external world by way of manifesting themselves in them [First Intellect and Universal Soul] first and they [intellect and Soul] attain the knowledge of them [external forms] by means of the forms themselves that are emanated to them and not by forms extracted from the external world. Those realities are identical with the reality of the First Intellect; rather they are identical with each world with respect to absolute Being, even if—from the perspective of their entification and state of being known—they are different. For we have mentioned that all realities return to absolute Being with respect to essence, and each of them is identical with the other with respect to Being, even though they are distinct with respect to entification.

Furthermore, [the First Intellect] is the first form appearing in the external world on the divine plane. We have mentioned that the realities of the names at this degree are from one perspective identical with it and are from another perspective distinct from it; such is also the case for its manifestation. The unity of realities in it [First Intellect] is the same

as the unity of all of the children of Adam in Adam before their entification, even though with respect to their identities they are disparate at their manifestation. In fact, it [First Intellect] is the true Adam, confirmed by his saying, "The first thing that Allah created was my light."

The distinction by quiddities is like the distinction by identities, for both express that by means of which a thing is what it is. The difference the two is that quiddity is used for universals and identity is used for particulars.

'It cannot be said that the children of Adam are unified in relation to type (*naw'a*) because quiddities differ by their essences and cannot be united. Further we have mentioned that quiddities are specific noetic existences that are entitled as discrete universals but are united in Being qua Being.

Distinction in the mind between the knower and the known does not negate unity in Being, just as rays of the sun during the day or on a moon-lit night are existentially one, even though the mind judges the light of the sun or the moon to be other than the light of the star. The essential unity of the things known by knowledge and the knower is only the unity of attributes, names and entities in the Real, and nothing else.

Such is the case for the forms acquired in every world, whether they are extrapolated or not, for they are not divested from their realities, because just as they exist in the external world they exist in the noetic, the imaginal and the mental worlds. Acquiring the form of a thing—divested from its reality—does not result in knowledge of it necessarily, since the form is other than it, according to the [philosophers].

Man, for his being the replica of the Great World, contains all the realities in it, and they are identical with him, in one respect, for the reasons mentioned above. Nothing veils him from them except the elemental plane. Thus, to the extent that veils are removed realities are manifested in him, so that his state concerning the objects of his knowledge is like that of the First Intellect.

In actuality, his knowledge is also active with respect to his station [spirit] and passive from another perspective. In fact, it is more fitting to describe him as having active knowledge than the First Intellect because he is the vicegerent and governs all of the worlds.

The truth of this statement and of what has been mentioned previously will only be revealed for one whose active reality appears for him and the oneness of being manifests for him in the levels of witnessing. Since Allah's knowledge is identical with His Essence as well as the objects of his knowledge, distinction is due only to His particular manifestations.

and Allah Knows Best...

