

# Kanz al-Walad

Authored by:

Ibrahim bin al-Husayn al-Hamidi

Edited by:

Mustafa Ghālib

Published by:

Dār al-Andalus li al-Nashr (Dar al-Andalus Publishing), Beirut

1391 AH – 1971 CE

## Introduction

It is well known that the Isma‘ili doctrines cannot be studied or examined on the assumption that they represent a single, unified creed. Their beliefs evolved according to different periods and contexts, so their doctrines varied and their ideas and interpretations diverged until it became difficult to define or confine them within one framework.

The book which we now add to the collection of works and research concerning the Bāṭinī (esoteric) movements in Islam — *Kanz al-Walad* — is among the precious treasures of the Tayyibi Isma‘ili sect. It represents a clear picture of what is called *as-sirr an-naḥṣī* (the psychological or spiritual secret) in its essence, and thus it provides an important and scientific image worthy of research and study.

Indeed, *Kanz al-Walad* is one of the rare secret Isma‘ili manuscripts known to exist. It deals with the sacred hierarchy of the esoteric ranks, the spiritual limits, and the profound philosophical concept of *‘ilm al-ḥaqīqa* (the knowledge of truth) — that is, the sacred science of the inner reality (*‘ilm al-bāṭin*). This knowledge has long been held in great esteem among the Isma‘ili *da‘wah*, encompassing the Tayyibi doctrines and the secrets of divine unity (*asrār at-tawḥīd*).

The author of this book traced a systematic outline of the Tayyibi Isma‘ili worldview — a structure that remains alive today among the Bohra community and their branches in Sulaymani and Dawoodi forms. The missionary (*dā‘ī*) Idrīs ‘Imād ad-Dīn (d. 872 AH / 1468 CE) described this work as belonging to the distinguished and profound writings of Isma‘ili thought.

Thus, *Kanz al-Walad* holds great intellectual value, both in terms of its content and its contribution to the understanding of the inner Isma‘ili teachings.

Reference:

‘Uyūn al-Akhbār, by al-Qāḍī Idrīs ‘Imād ad-Dīn, vol. 7, p. 210

The author mentioned for the first time in the history of Isma‘ili thought the philosophical letters of the *Ikhwān al-Ṣafā’* (“The Brethren of Purity”) and the Epistle of the University, relying in his writing on the opinions of al-Fāḍil, the author of *al-Risālah al-Jāmi‘ah* and its interpretations. Therefore, we notice that the Tayyibi *da‘wah* scholars in Yemen later followed the approach of al-Ḥamīdī in studying these epistles and their sources, as reflected in the second part of this book.

Before discussing the details of this work, it is necessary to highlight that this book offers a clear and distinctive picture of the Tayyibi Isma‘ili movement in Yemen. The author was one of the *du‘āt* (missionaries) of this sect, and the book is one of the secret esoteric works possessed by that community. It provides the reader with an authentic understanding of this sect, which played an important role in the religious and political history of Yemen. The scholars of the Tayyibi *da‘wah* had a major contribution in transmitting intellectual, philosophical, and theological traditions, as well as preserving what was left by earlier

Isma‘ili philosophers and missionaries during the Fatimid era and the first phase of the da‘wah al-sitr (the period of concealment).

## The Isma‘ili Schism

The views of historians and their accounts differed concerning the division and fragmentation that occurred among the Fatimid Isma‘ilis after the death of the Fatimid caliph Imām al-Mustanşir bi’llāh, which took place on the eighth of Dhū al-Ḥijjah in the year 487 AH. After his death, confusion spread for about three years, during which time no one among the imams’ descendants in Egypt was appointed as his successor.

The situation worsened during the Fatimid era, as the da‘wah reached a state of crisis, and its influence spread throughout most of the Arab lands under the leadership of great scholars and philosophers.

The cause of this schism, according to reports, was that Imām al-Mustanşir bi’llāh had designated his elder son, Nizār, as his successor and heir to the caliphate. Nizār’s reign began in the year 480 AH, but—according to other accounts—he was opposed and replaced.

When al-Mustanşir became ill and felt his death approaching, he began preparing to transfer allegiance (*bay‘ah*) to his son Nizār. However, the vizier al-Afḍal ibn Badr al-Jamālī al-Armanī, who held immense power and influence throughout the country, seized the opportunity. He acted decisively until Imām al-Mustanşir passed away before the *bay‘ah* (oath of allegiance) to Nizār could be completed.

Al-Afḍal exploited this chance and created confusion between Nizār’s legitimate claim to the caliphate and imamate and his own political ambitions. He convened a meeting of emirs, senior officials of the state, and loyalists, especially those who benefited from the existing Fatimid regime. They feared losing their privileges and wealth and being held accountable for their actions if the rightful heir assumed power.

Thus, they followed al-Afḍal’s directives, who, under the pretext of “protecting order and stability,” ignored the binding legitimacy of the original *nass* (designation). They pledged allegiance to another of al-Mustanşir’s sons, Aḥmad, known as al-Musta‘lī bi’llāh, while Nizār was still a child.

It is said that Nizār, realizing what had happened, rebelled against al-Afḍal. The conflict between them grew intense until Nizār was captured and imprisoned. Al-Afḍal later ordered his execution, burying him alive — and with him, the rightful claim to the Fatimid caliphate.

Because of this, the Isma‘ili community split into two factions:

- The **first faction** claimed that the *nass* (designation) had been correctly given to Nizār, and they became known as the **Nizārīs**.
- The **second faction** accepted al-Musta‘lī as the rightful successor and became known as the **Musta‘līs**.

The latter faction continued to support al-Musta‘lī bi’llāh and his descendants, while rejecting the legitimacy of Nizār and his line.

This schism marked a decisive turning point in the history of Isma‘ilism.

Historical sources refer to the reasons for Nizār’s exclusion from the caliphate, stating:

Al-Afḍal once entered the palace riding through the Golden Gate, while Nizār was outside. Nizār sent the eunuch Dimlīs shouting to him:

“Come down, O Armenian! Do not ride through this gate, for I will soon enter it myself, if God wills, as Caliph!”

Al-Afḍal was enraged by this, and he harbored resentment toward Nizār. He feared that if Nizār were to become caliph, he would dismiss him from the vizierate and perhaps take his life. Thus, he hastened to secure his position and transferred allegiance to Nizār’s younger brother, al-Musta‘lī.

It is believed that one of the deeper reasons behind this event was Al-Afḍal’s desire to consolidate his own power. The Fatimid judiciary had become largely loyal to the Isma‘ili madhhab in a formal sense, but the true faith in the doctrine had weakened among many — except for a few sincere scholars and devoted missionaries (du‘āt) who remained steadfast in their loyalty to the cause.

There is no doubt that Nizār’s legitimate right to succession had been seized by force. He therefore fled to Alexandria with his loyal supporter Aḥmad ibn ‘Abd Allāh ibn Majāl al-Kabīr and a group of scholars and missionaries. The people of Alexandria and its governor, the judge Jalāl al-Dīn ibn Faṣīḥ Allāh, gave him the bay‘ah (oath of allegiance) as caliph and declared their support. Letters were sent throughout the regions of the Maghrib (North Africa) and the East announcing the bay‘ah of Nizār and calling people to recognize him as the rightful imam.

When al-Afḍal heard of this, he set out to fight Nizār and his forces. Battles took place near the head of the Nile, and eventually al-Afḍal marched toward Cairo. After months of conflict, Nizār’s supporters weakened, and he was forced to retreat to Alexandria. Al-Afḍal pursued him there, laying siege to the city.

The siege lasted for some time, and much blood was shed on both sides. In the end, Alexandria was taken. Al-Afḍal captured its governor, the judge Jalāl al-Dīn, and a number of Nizār’s missionaries and commanders of the da‘wah.

It is said that Nizār was captured and imprisoned in a cellar where a wall was built around him until he died.

In another account, it is mentioned that he was taken to Cairo and executed there. In the year 488 AH, Ibn Maṣāl al-Kabīr was reportedly able to escape during the siege and fled by sea to the lands of the Maghrib (North Africa).

However, the historical Isma‘ili Nizārī texts that have survived in Iran and Syria do not confirm these claims asserting that Imām Nizār had escaped with his followers. It is more likely that the siege of Alexandria was so severe that Ibn Maṣāl al-Kabīr secretly left the city, accompanied by five loyal Isma‘ili missionaries (dā‘īs) who reached Alexandria from the Maghrib before the morning.

This is also consistent with what was mentioned by the Moroccan Isma‘ili scholar Shaykh Abū al-Ḥasan ibn al-Ṣabbāḥ. When the siege of Alexandria intensified, al-Afḍal’s forces pursued the remaining loyalists of Nizār. Ibn Maṣāl fled, carrying with him the secret of the Imamate and the legitimate line of succession of our lord, Imām Nizār — peace be upon him. He concealed himself in secrecy and eventually traveled toward Persia, where he settled for some months in hiding before sending word to al-Ḥasan ibn al-Ṣabbāḥ, informing him that the Imamate of Nizār continued through his offspring.

Al-Ṣabbāḥ then began spreading this message among the Isma‘ili du‘āt (missionaries) and the faithful followers, who established a new base for the continuation of the Nizārī da‘wah (mission).

We, however, when examining these mixed historical accounts, must take the balanced view of critical scholarship — that every claim must be evaluated with evidence and reason. If this narrative and others like it were found in authenticated Syrian manuscripts, they could be considered supporting evidence against the dominant narrative that Nizār was executed in Cairo.

The conflicting reports about Nizār’s death in Cairo may stem from later political motives. Some Isma‘ili writers of the Nizārī line claimed the continuity of the Imamate through Nizār’s descendants who appeared later in Alamut (Persia). If this report is true, it would explain the later emergence of the Nizārī Imamate in Persia.

Yet, if Nizār was indeed killed in Cairo along with his sons, then his spiritual succession must have continued in secret — as the Nizārīs believe — with the Imam’s door remaining symbolically open before his true followers, while the opposing sect denied this claim, asserting that the Imamate had ended with Nizār.

Sources:

Ibn al-Ma‘kārim, Kitāb al-Akḥbār wa al-Āthār, vol. 6, p. 113.

Tārīkh al-Da‘wah al-Ismā‘īliyyah by Muṣṭafā Ghālib, p. 255.

They were from the descendants of Ḥasan ibn al-Ṣabbāḥ or his followers, or perhaps other groups, but all such claims and reports were later reinforced by al-Afḍal’s policies, who deliberately sought to distance the Isma‘ilis loyal to Nizār from positions of influence when he consolidated power in Cairo and the Ālūt stronghold.

Nevertheless, the matter remained complex. Al-Afḍal succeeded in restoring stability to Egypt and reinforcing the authority of the Muslim Caliphate.

As al-Maqrīzī records, the Caliph was still a child, leaving political and administrative affairs entirely in the hands of his uncle, al-Afdal. However, his rule was marked by extravagance and indulgence in worldly pleasures. During his tenure, the Crusades began; the Crusaders advanced along the coastal regions of Syria and continued their campaign until they entered Jerusalem.

When al-Afdal learned of this, he marched against them with twenty thousand horsemen from Egypt. The two armies clashed in a fierce battle in which many soldiers from Egypt perished. Al-Afdal was forced to retreat to Ascalon (‘Asqalān), and from there he returned to Cairo, where his authority began to decline as rebellion and unrest spread.

The army seized control from the majority of his loyal officers, and soon he could no longer maintain discipline among the ranks. However, in the year 493 AH, al-Afdal managed to reorganize his forces and led a large army under the command of Sa‘d al-Dawlah al-Tawābī.

He launched a renewed campaign against the Crusaders in Ascalon, resulting in continuous warfare. Sa‘d al-Dawlah was eventually killed, and the state’s power weakened as al-Afdal’s forces retreated to Cairo. Meanwhile, the Crusaders took advantage of the chaos, expanding their control and seizing many coastal cities in the Levant and Jerusalem, where they established their own kingdoms and principalities.

After the death of al-Mustansir, al-Afdal seated the caliph’s son on the throne by decree of divine judgment on the ninth of Šafar, 495 AH. The new caliph was five years old and bore the title “al-Āmir bi-Aḥkām Allāh.”

Al-Afdal became the de facto ruler, holding the reins of authority over the entire state. However, his fortunes turned against him when conspiracies arose; he was assassinated while on his way to the palace. On the day of Eid al-Fitr in the year 515 AH, the vizierate was assumed by al-Ma‘mun al-Bata’ihi, who took complete control of power, because al-Amir was stripped of willpower and lacked strength, much given to indulgence and amusement. Some of the Isma‘ili dais (missionaries) from the eastern lands grew fearful of his excesses and sought to remove him. The bridge leading to Rawda Island was closed in the year 524 AH.

As al-Amir had no heir to succeed him in the caliphate, his position became precarious. The governor of Yemen, ‘Abd al-Majid ibn al-Mustansir, regarded himself as the rightful Imam according to the Isma‘ili doctrine, and began calling himself “Imam al-Imamah.” However, the Musta‘li Isma‘ilis, especially those in Yemen, claimed that al-Amir had a wife who was pregnant, and that when al-Amir was killed, she gave birth to a boy whom they named “al-Tayyib.” On this basis, the Tayyibi Isma‘ili branch arose.

It is said that one of their supporters in Cairo managed to conceal the child and send letters to Yemen, to the queen al-Hurra, informing her of what had happened. She took upon herself the guardianship of the child and leadership of the future da‘wah (mission). She was henceforth called “al-Sayyida al-Hurra,” and from her lineage came the continuation of the Tayyibi Isma‘ili Imamate.

Many legends and tales surround this story; however, reason and reality cannot accept them except as myths wrapped in exaggerations and conjecture.

The Tayyibi Isma‘ili texts in Yemen unanimously agree that the hidden Imam al-Tayyib was born in Egypt before his father’s death, on the night following the fourth of Rabi‘ al-Akhir, in the year 524 AH, and that he was named al-Tayyib. His kunya (honorific) was Abu al-Qasim. Records of the birth were made, and announcements of the newborn’s birth and designation as Imam were written. Among these records is a note written by Queen al-Hurra al-Tayyibiyyah, which states:

“In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. Praise be to Allah, Lord of the worlds. This is the birth record of the newborn and the declaration of his Imamate, the noble child, son of ‘Abd Allah and his heir apparent al-Amir al-Mu‘minin, to the Lady, the Queen, al-Zahirah, al-Radiyyah, may Allah guard her by His power and will.”

The lady of her age, sovereign of the kings of Yemen, the pillar of Islam, the purest of the Imams, the treasure of religion, the support of the believers, the refuge of the faithful, the protector of the rightly guided, the deputy of the Commander of the Faithful, and the trustee of his loyal followers — may God preserve her, strengthen her rule, and grant her the best of success and prosperity.

Peace be upon you. The Commander of the Faithful, servant of your Lord — there is no god but He — sends you his greetings, asking God to bless Muhammad, the Seal of the Prophets and the Master of the Messengers, and his pure family and the rightly guided Imams.

As for what follows: Indeed, the Commander of the Faithful possesses treasures that none but he knows. They are boundless and infinite, hidden from all comprehension, like clouds full of heavenly rain that never cease. Among them is a precious cloud from which blessings pour — for she is like the radiant sun, her light never extinguished, her perfection unblemished.

Now it has reached him that she has been blessed with the birth of a son, born in joy and health, radiant and pure — this occurred on the night following the fourth of the month of Rabi‘ al-Akhir in the year 524 AH. The child was named “al-Tayyib” and given the honorific “Abu al-Qasim.” The Commander of the Faithful rejoiced greatly at this and expressed gratitude to God for the perfection of His blessing.

He ordered that this joyous event be recorded in the royal registers of the Fatimid Caliphate, in recognition of its virtues and excellence. From the lineage of prophecy a pure branch has sprung, from which light and splendor have spread. The Commander of the Faithful rejoiced with immense joy and prayed for the increase of grace, splendor, and happiness.

He commanded that congratulations be sent to the Queen — may God grant her majesty, exalt her rank, and extend her glory — for this noble child, radiant in nature and blessed in lineage. He prayed that God would preserve him under the protection of the Imamate, link him to the line of his pure ancestors, make him a refuge for the rightly guided, a joy for the warriors (mujahidin), and a source of pride and delight for the chosen ones.

...for the devout worshippers, and a minister to those who fear (God), and a source of joy for the believers; may he attain in this world the happiness that exalts his status and raises his name, and may the days pass in prosperity and peace. May the Commander of the Faithful be blessed with the lofty rank that none may reach, and the honored position above all others.

This glad news brings with it immense honor and great pride — spreading her fame and name far and wide. May those among the saints and the faithful who hear of it share in its joy and rejoice in their portion of it. May the glad tidings reach even those far away, bringing them closeness and joy, and establishing the bond of happiness.

May the sweet fragrance of this blessed newborn fill the world with beauty and splendor. Thus, I offer my congratulations, if God wills, and peace be upon you and the mercy of God. Praise be to God alone, and may God's blessings and peace be upon our master Muhammad, His Messenger, and upon his pure family.

Written by the humble servant and agent of the Commander of the Faithful, Sayyid Muhammad ibn Sharif, may God honor him and extend his life until the Day of Resurrection.

The Tayyibi Isma'ili sources state that the Fatimid caliph al-Amir sent these congratulations to Queen al-Hurra al-Sharifah (Lady al-Malikah al-Hurrah al-Sharifah), through Muhammad ibn Haydara, who carried the message along with gifts. They say that when the Sharif delivered the official letters and gifts to the Queen, she was moved to tears upon realizing that al-Amir had been martyred, may God have mercy on him.

Later, the Tayyibi Isma'ili writer Idris 'Imad al-Din records in his 'Uyūn al-Akḥbār that: "Al-Amir was killed by a group of conspirators from the Batiniyya (Assassins). Then, the vizier Abu 'Ali Ahmad ibn al-Afdal, who was of the Sunni persuasion, appeared to have established the da'wah (mission) for the Imam al-Qa'im al-Muntazar, the Awaited Mahdi, God's proof over the worlds, in the end of times."

Ibn al-Athir, *al-Kāmil fī al-Tārīkh*, vol. 10, p. 178 – "The Crusaders and the Fatimid Movement in Yemen," p. 118. And *al-Ṣulayḥiyyūn*, p. 182.

The affairs of the state were taken over, and Ibn Madyan, the master of the vizierate, was captured and executed. It is said that among the leading dā'īs (missionaries) were Ibn Madyan, Ibn Rashdan, al-'Azizi, and Nisan. They fled to Yemen and later returned, where Ibn Madyan was killed before his daughter's husband, the qadi Abu 'Ali, established him in his position.

He was ordered to send forth the Imam al-Tayyib secretly from among the descendants of the vizier Ibn al-Afdal. Qadi Abu 'Ali, the son-in-law of Ibn Madyan, concealed the Imam al-Tayyib and traveled with him. Then, Ibn Madyan's son-in-law, Qadi Ibn Yasar, took over the mission of al-Tayyib in Egypt and appointed al-Amir's son, under the guardianship of the Tayyibi lineage. The matter of al-Amir was entrusted to Qadi Abu 'Ali, the son-in-law of Ibn Madyan, who safeguarded his trust and hid the birth of al-Tayyib.

Only a few of the faithful knew of this secret. Yet the mystery of the Tayyibi doctrine continued to live among the followers and believers in the Imam al-Tayyib Abu al-Qasim — may God bless him — in every time and place.

This is the summary of the Tayyibi historical narratives and their accounts. Some of the sects of the Musta‘li Isma‘ili branch accepted it, while others — particularly the Nizari Isma‘ilis — remained silent regarding this issue and refused to acknowledge it. They denied the claim that al-Amir had a son named al-Tayyib, believing instead that after al-Amir’s death the vizier ‘Abd al-Majid (al-Hafiz li-Din Allah) was rightfully appointed as Imam and caliph.

Hence, this was the origin of the division between the Tayyibi and Nizari branches of the Isma‘ili faith. The Tayyibis maintained that al-Amir had a hidden son, al-Tayyib, whose birth was kept secret, while the Nizaris denied this and asserted that no such child existed.

As a result, the Fatimid line in Egypt continued under al-Hafiz ‘Abd al-Majid, who officially succeeded al-Amir. As for al-Amir’s wife, who was said to be pregnant at the time of his assassination, reports indicate that she did give birth.

However, it remains impossible to verify this conclusively or to distinguish the truth from legend, as the accounts are intertwined with myth and exaggeration. This ambiguity has left the matter unresolved and has raised doubts about the reliability of the Tayyibi narratives concerning this crucial point.

‘Uyūn al-Akhhār by Idris ‘Imad al-Din, vol. 6, p. 240

Were it not for the record we discovered — the one that al-Amir sent before his death to the palace of the Queen al-Hurra al-Sulayhiyya in Yemen — which mentioned the birth of al-Tayyib, we would not have any confirmation of this story. It is found in the Book of the History of Yemen by the contemporary historian ‘Imārah ibn ‘Alī al-Hakami (515–569 AH).

‘Imārah affirms that during that period, al-Tayyib was neither known nor mentioned among the living, and that nothing was heard about his birth or existence. ‘Imārah himself was among the well-known jurists and scholars of Yemen who were aware of events in Egypt and Yemen during the rule of al-Hafiz li-Din Allah. His words are generally trustworthy, and what he wrote about this matter, its timing, and circumstances carries weight, especially since he lived in the same period when the Tayyibi sect in Yemen was beginning to establish itself.

The new Tayyibi branch, which descended from the original Musta‘li Isma‘ili line, gained followers who were fearless and unshaken by their rivals. Yet despite all this, doubt continues to cloud our understanding of the reason behind the concealment of Imam al-Tayyib, and whether he was actually taken to Yemen. Did al-Hurra al-Sulayhiyya truly see him?

Who can confirm that she saw him with her own eyes and that she received him personally? Logic and reason challenge this notion. Even if we assumed that the dā‘īs in Cairo concealed the truth about the matter, they surely would have spoken of it later, had it been genuine.

Was the Imam al-Tayyib indeed hidden by the vizier Ibn al-Afdal? Did he remain concealed forever, or had he already perished, leaving behind only a legend that became deeply rooted in Fatimid tradition?

We know for certain that the Isma‘ili doctrine, with its strict system of concealment (sitr), secrecy, and esoteric hierarchy, could easily have developed such an account beyond all limits. Thus, the belief in the concealment (sitr) of Imam al-Tayyib and his descendants persisted from that time onward without interruption.

This gave rise to the Tayyibi branch, which adhered to the original Musta‘li Isma‘ili principles and continued the hidden da‘wah (mission) in secrecy. Whatever the circumstances behind this myth and its evolution, they ultimately led to the division of the Musta‘li Isma‘ili community into two factions:

The first faction claimed the existence of al-Tayyib and transferred the seat of the Isma‘ili leadership to Yemen, making it their spiritual center and establishing full independence from the Fatimid caliphate in Egypt.

The second faction recognized the imamate of the governor ‘Abd al-Majid (al-Hafiz li-Din Allah), who became caliph in Cairo and was acknowledged in Egypt as the legitimate ruler.

Reference:

al-Mustashriqūn (The Orientalists), vol. 1, pp. 187–188.

## The Ismaili Movement in Yemen

History remains largely silent about when exactly the Ismaili movement began in Yemen, and who was the first to call to it in that land. We cannot determine this with certainty due to the scarcity and ambiguity of the available sources. The earliest indication of the Ismaili presence in Yemen remains uncertain, for as is well known, the Ismaili da‘wah (missionary movement) began in secrecy under a highly disciplined system of concealment (taqiyyah). As narrated from Imam Ja‘far al-Šādiq: “Taqiyyah is my faith and the faith of my forefathers. There is no faith for the one who does not practice taqiyyah.”

And he also said: “Our matter is a secret within a secret, and the secret of something hidden.” This indicates that the early Ismaili missionaries were extremely cautious and would conceal their summons under the veil of secrecy and discretion.

The early propagators (du‘āt) of the Ismaili call were among the most faithful in safeguarding the secret of their mission, concealing it even from their closest associates who were not fully initiated. For that reason, we cannot establish clear links between the early figures and the da‘wah. The historical silence surrounding this period stems from this policy of secrecy. Moreover, early historical accounts are vague regarding these matters, and Ismaili sources themselves—owing to the nature of their secretive organization—often omitted or disguised the details of their origins.

The researcher, therefore, faces a great challenge when studying this obscure stage of Ismaili history.

However, the missionary (dā‘ī) Ja‘far ibn Manšūr al-Yaman records in his book *Asrār al-Nuṭaqā’* that Imam Muḥammad ibn Ismā‘īl ibn Ja‘far al-Šādiq (145–193 AH) was the first of the hidden (mastūrīn) Imams. He resided in Medina and dispatched his missionaries (du‘āt) to various parts of the Islamic world.

Among those sent was his emissary to Yemen and the surrounding islands, who was tasked with establishing the Ismaili da‘wah in those regions and spreading the teachings of the Imamate there.

The Imam (Muḥammad ibn Ismā‘īl) sent his missionaries (du‘āt) to various regions and islands to establish the da‘wah (missionary movement) in his name. Thus, the da‘wah spread across the earth, and the command (amr) of the Imam reached many lands. His missionaries traveled to distant regions in secrecy, under the guise of trade and pilgrimage, to conceal their true purpose.

This is what the Ismaili historian Dā‘ī al-Akbar (the Great Missionary) referred to when he mentioned that some of the earliest Ismaili missionaries came from Yemen. It is therefore natural to assume that Imam Muḥammad ibn Ismā‘īl sent missionaries to Yemen as he did to North Africa, where his emissaries reached regions such as the Maghrib and even the western islands.

These emissaries were experienced travelers and traders who spread the message of the da‘wah discreetly and cautiously, maintaining the utmost secrecy and adherence to the system of taqiyyah (religious concealment).

It can reasonably be said that a considerable number of Yemenis came into contact with these Ismaili missionaries during the annual pilgrimage (ḥajj), as large groups of Yemenis regularly traveled to Mecca each year. This provided a natural means for the Ismailis to introduce their ideas to Yemen and win converts.

The Ismaili da‘wah appears to have used this annual pilgrimage as an effective channel for spreading its mission among pilgrims returning from the holy lands.

A later Ismaili source, *Khaṭṭūṭ Ismā‘īliyah Sūriyah*, written by the Syrian Ismaili scholar Sūri ibn al-Qāḍī al-Kabīr ibn Maymūn ibn Qidāḥ (d. 270 AH / 190 CE), mentions that one of the

earliest Ismaili missionaries to Yemen was Aḥmad ibn ‘Abd Allāh ibn Maymūn al-Qaddāh, the son of the great Ismaili scholar and philosopher ‘Abd Allāh ibn Maymūn al-Qaddāh. It is said that Aḥmad ibn ‘Abd Allāh ibn Maymūn traveled secretly to Yemen to establish contact with local followers and to consolidate the mission there. Reports indicate that the Imam entrusted him with the leadership of the da‘wah in Yemen, making him the first known Ismaili missionary in the region.

After his father’s death, Aḥmad inherited his position and rank as the chief missionary (ḥujjat al-imām)—a title denoting the highest representative of the hidden Imams.

According to Ismaili sources, Aḥmad ibn ‘Abd Allāh ibn Maymūn was a man of great learning, eloquence, and wisdom. He was described as “the luminous proof (ḥujjah) of God, of majestic presence and profound insight.” His name and achievements were celebrated among later generations of Ismailis.

Indeed, the proof of the Imamate (ḥujjat al-imām), al-Ḥusayn ibn ‘Abd Allāh — that is, Aḥmad ibn ‘Abd Allāh ibn Maymūn al-Qaddāh — was the one who sent the missionary al-Ḥusayn al-Ahwāzī to Bahrain, and he took the pledges and covenants from ‘Alī ibn al-Faḍl al-Jinī and al-Ḥusayn ibn Faraj ibn Ḥawshab (Maṣṣūr al-Yaman), and sent them both on the first Ismā‘īlī mission to Yemen.

Ibn Ḥawshab related to us how he transformed from the Twelver doctrine to that of the Ismā‘īlīs, saying:

“While I was one day reflecting, I suddenly recalled the saying attributed to al-Bāqir ‘Alī ibn Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī ibn Mūsā al-Kāzīm in the year 252 AH, during the time of concealment (sitr). Forty years later, in the year 294 AH, I went out on a journey. As I was reading Sūrat al-Kahf, I came upon an elderly shaykh of remarkable appearance, before whom sat a young servant. I greeted him and sat beside him.

He said, ‘Who are you?’ I replied, ‘A seeker of truth.’ He said, ‘Have you read Sūrat al-Kahf?’ I replied, ‘Yes.’ He said, ‘Have you understood it?’ I replied, ‘I am striving to.’ He said, ‘Then observe! Have you seen the story of the Prophet Mūsā with al-Khiḍr?’ I replied, ‘Yes, indeed.’ He said, ‘So understand, for you are being shown as Mūsā was shown before the wisdom of al-Khiḍr.’ Then he fell silent.”

Ibn Ḥawshab continued: “After that, I left the place thinking deeply until I found myself again returning to the same spot, but the shaykh was gone. I then saw the young man who had been with him. I approached him and asked about the shaykh, but he did not answer. Instead, he handed me a written scroll, and in it were the pledges and covenants (‘uhūd wa mawāthīq) of the Ismā‘īlī Imām.

I read it, and within my soul there came certainty and faith. I understood then that the shaykh had been testing me — testing the strength of my belief in the Twelver doctrine and the depth of my conviction. Thus, I came to perceive the grandeur and wisdom of the Ismā‘īlī way, its truth and its clarity.

So I accepted the call (da‘wah), took the pledge of allegiance (bay‘ah), and returned to my people to convey what I had received and to prepare for the great mission to Yemen.”

Footnotes

In al-Uṣūl, p. 296

Iftitāḥ al-da‘wah, manuscript ‘Uṭārid, folio 3

When he (Ibn Ḥawshab) saw him, he answered his request and was admitted to him the next day, to the master of affairs who was managing the mission of the da‘wah on behalf of the Imām al-Ḥusayn ibn ‘Abd Allāh. The Imām took him into his confidence and loyalty, and bound him with solemn pledges and covenants for the service of the House of the Prophet (Āl al-Bayt) and for the path of the Imāmate.

The Imām would often sit with him privately, honoring and bringing him near, and would hint to him about the forthcoming command and the nearing of the appointed time.

Ibn Ḥawshab relates that one day, while he was sitting among the du‘āt (missionaries), the Imām called out to him, saying: “O Abā al-Qāsim! The House is exalted, the pillars are exalted, religion is exalted, and wisdom is exalted. By God, this religion shall not arise nor its command appear except from people of Yemen.”

So Ibn Ḥawshab said: “O my master, is there any sign of this in the Book of God?” He replied: “Yes. Be patient, O Abā al-Qāsim! For soon a man shall come to us from Yemen bringing light and guidance.” Ibn Ḥawshab said: “I swore by God that I would never cease seeking him until I find him.”

From all these reports, it may be deduced that the Ismā‘īlī mission (da‘wah) had its first seeds planted in Yemen by the emissaries (‘Uyun al-da‘wah) whom the Imām had dispatched to the eastern lands, among them (Manṣūr al-Yaman). After some years, and upon the return of Aḥmad ibn ‘Abd Allāh ibn Maymūn al-Qaddāh, who had earlier gone into hiding, the Imām entrusted to him the leadership of the da‘wah, appointing him as the ḥujjah (chief proof). After a long concealment, and upon the appearance of several uprisings, the Imām al-Ismā‘īlī found in ‘Abd Allāh ibn Maymūn al-Qaddāh an individual worthy of trust and intellect, so he handed him the full authority of leadership and instruction.

From what Ibn Ḥawshab narrated to us, it becomes clear that after that test and appointment, the Ismā‘īlī Imām became assured of his knowledge of the doctrine and his mastery of jurisprudence, and therefore relied upon him.

Later, the Imām al-Ismā‘īlī noticed that Ibn al-Faḍl had received reports from Yemen. Indeed, Ibn al-Faḍl informed the Imām that the situation in Yemen was ripe and favorable for the mission.

He had reached Makkah during the pilgrimage season of the year 267 AH, where he met Ibn Ḥawshab (his companion in the da‘wah). The Imām then ordered Ibn Ḥawshab to accompany Ibn al-Faḍl to Yemen to establish the base of the da‘wah there.

Ibn Ḥawshab said to Ibn al-Faḍl: “By God, the opportunity in Yemen is promising, and by God, the path there is open, though we may encounter trials and hardships.”

Footnote (from the image)

‘Uyūn al-Akḥbār of al-Qāḍī al-Nu‘mān, edited by Idrīs ‘Āmir al-Dīn, vol. 1, p. 40

They were among those of weak understanding and little knowledge of the Sharī‘ah of the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him).

The Imām said angrily to Ibn al-Faḍl: “Indeed, this man whom you have brought with you possesses vast knowledge — see how you may benefit from his companionship.”

Then the Imām (peace be upon him) said: “May Allāh grant you success and guide you to what is right. Do not oppose him in what he sees fit, for he knows more than you. If you disagree with him, you shall not be rightly guided.”

Then he turned to Ibn Ḥawshab and said: “O Abā al-Qāsim! This is the man we have long awaited. Be firm in the mission entrusted to you among the people of Yemen.”

The Imām then handed Abū al-Qāsim a sealed command containing instructions, saying: “Go to ‘Adan La‘ah (a mountain region in Yemen) and settle there. From that base, the command of our da‘wah will manifest, and from it our rule shall spread. There, you will gather wealth and men. Enjoin fasting, prayer, and purification. Show the outward law but conceal the inner truth. Say: ‘Everything has an outward and an inward meaning.’ And whatever opposition you meet, be patient, for the one who acts upon knowledge will be guided to the right time.” Ibn al-Faḍl said: “He (the Imām) was close in covenant to Allāh, and I observed the Imām as he whispered something secret to Ibn Ḥawshab, as though entrusting him with a hidden matter concerning our affairs.”

Then the Imām said to them both: “Be united in your mission, for the cause of God will not succeed except through your combined effort. Whoever among you falls short in this Sharī‘ah shall not be victorious.”

Then, after preparing all necessities for this sacred mission, they set out from al-Kūfah toward al-Qādisiyyah, at the end of the year 267 AH.

Ibn Ḥawshab says: “When I departed, I left behind my family and loved ones with heavy heart, and set out towards the land of the West (Yemen). When I had left al-Qādisiyyah, I heard a hidden caller saying:”

‘O traveler through the night, proclaim the good news of success, for your journey is under the light of the crescent moon.’

Footnote (from the image)

Futūḥ al-‘Ushrāf of Qāḍī al-Nu‘mān, manuscript copy, vol. 1, pp. 10–12; and Da‘ā’im al-Islām by Qāḍī al-Nu‘mān, ed. Idrīs ‘Āmir al-Dīn, p. 65.

I was deeply moved when I heard that voice, and I preserved it within my heart.

It is related that when the pilgrims from Yemen arrived in Makkah, Ibn al-Faḍl and his companion performed the rites of Ḥajj, and afterward began their journey. They continued traveling until they reached Jeddah, during the first months of the year 268 AH (during the caliphate of al-Mu‘tamid).

At that time, Jeddah was considered a port of al-Madīnah, situated on the coast of the Red Sea. From there, the two missionaries (dā‘īs) — Ibn Ḥawshab and Ibn al-Faḍl — agreed that each of them would proceed separately: one to travel into the lands of Yemen to explore its regions.

Abū al-Qāsim (Ibn Ḥawshab) made his way toward ‘Adan La‘ah, because the Imām al-Ḥusayn ibn ‘Abd Allāh had advised him, saying: “Go there, for I see it as a blessed land for your mission.”

Ibn al-Faḍl, meanwhile, traveled by the trade route used by some merchants of Madīnah descended from Nabī Mūsā (peace be upon him), until he also reached ‘Adan La‘ah.

There, he met some of the faithful who had been contacted earlier by the missionary Aḥmad ibn ‘Abd Allāh ibn Ḥusayn, who had been actively spreading the da‘wah. But soon after, Aḥmad was captured and imprisoned, where he died not long afterward.

At that point, Abū al-Qāsim assumed his role and his daughter married into the local community, becoming the link through which the symbols of the da‘wah were transmitted there.

As for ‘Alī ibn al-Faḍl, he journeyed deeper into the lands of Yemen, reaching al-Jibālah and nearby regions. Both of them followed the same method in spreading the Ismā‘īlī da‘wah — in secret, with great caution and patience.

They adopted a lifestyle marked by asceticism, humility, fasting, prayer, and purification, exactly as they had been instructed by Imām al-Ḥusayn ibn ‘Abd Allāh. Outwardly, they appeared as Sunni scholars devoted to piety, enjoining good and forbidding evil, and they gained the respect of many people in Yemen.

Gradually, they attracted followers from all regions and tribes, who admired their conduct and sincerity. This missionary movement continued until about the year 270 AH, when their call began to manifest openly. Within two years, each of them had gathered around him a large group of dedicated followers who displayed complete devotion and obedience.

Eventually, both established strong organizational networks — each group collected funds to finance their da‘wah, strengthen their positions, and defend themselves against opposition.

Footnote (from the image)

Futūḥ al-‘Ushrāf of Qāḍī al-Nu‘mān, manuscript copy, folio 13.

His followers and supporters were devoted and sincere. Zakāt (alms) became the firm channel through which wealth flowed to sustain the religious mission. Abū al-Qāsim (Ibn Ḥawshab) directed his followers to collect it from all regions, appointing among them trustworthy agents who would oversee the collection and distribution of funds according to the principles of Sharī‘ah and the teachings of the Ismā‘īlī Imām.

Through such organization, Ibn Ḥawshab's movement grew stronger and more structured, transforming gradually into a state-like organization that laid the foundation for the emergence of an Ismā'īlī polity. Over time, this development led to the establishment of a genuine Ismā'īlī state that extended over vast areas of al-Jazīrah (Yemen) — until 'Alī ibn al-Faḍl, his companion, took control of the greater part of Yemen and established his sovereignty there.

When news of these victories reached the Imām (in the hidden line of descent), he rejoiced greatly, praising the efforts of the missionaries who had carried out his da'wah with patience and sacrifice. The Imām reportedly said about Ibn Ḥawshab: "This is the first fruit of your blessed efforts, and the blessing of your endeavors."

A poet praised this victory with the following verses: "God has granted you gifts none before you attained; Many sought them, but only you received them. From Him and through Him all paths lead to you — By God, no distance can separate you from His grace."

These remarkable triumphs of Ibn Ḥawshab — may God have mercy upon him — can be compared to the early victories of the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself, when his da'wah began to manifest openly after years of concealment.

Our chroniclers say that the Imām al-Ḥusayn ibn 'Abd Allāh called Ibn Ḥawshab "the helper (naṣīr) of Yemen," likening his role to that of a divine supporter, as his da'wah was accompanied by divine favor and visible success.

Later, Shaykh Maṣṣūr of Yemen, in his book *Kashf al-Ghummah 'an Awliyā' al-Ni'mah*, wrote that God "revealed the hidden truth through the efforts of Ibn Ḥawshab" and that "his light uncovered the darkness of ignorance."

Thus, Ibn Ḥawshab succeeded — through his wisdom and strategy — in transforming his movement from a purely religious mission into a political and spiritual foundation for what would later become the Ismā'īlī state in Yemen.

He established in those lands a great school for training missionaries (du'āt), preparing them to spread the da'wah far beyond Yemen to reach every corner of the world.

However, his state did not endure for long after his death; soon after his passing, Yemen once again descended into internal strife and conflict among its various tribes and factions.

Footnote (from the image)

Ghāyat al-Mawālīd (fols. 48–49); Futūḥ al-Da'wah, folio 18; and 'Uyūn al-Akḥbār, vol. 5, p. 38.

Through his devotion and loyalty to the Ismā'īlī Imām, Ibn Ḥawshab's mission endured and continued to flourish. Matters proceeded in this way until the year 439 AH, when the missionary (dā'ī) 'Alī ibn Muḥammad al-Ṣulayḥī inherited leadership of the da'wah after the passing of Shaykh Sulaymān ibn 'Abd Allāh al-Zawāhī, who had assumed the position following Ibn Ḥawshab's death.

However, internal divisions arose among his descendants, splitting into rival factions. Among them were those from the tribes of Ḥamdān who gathered around 'Alī ibn Muḥammad al-Ṣulayḥī, pledging to support and assist him in reviving the da'wah. Together they strove, fought, and gave their lives for the cause.

They were steadfast men of courage and vision, and through their determination and his wise leadership, 'Alī al-Ṣulayḥī was able to strengthen the Ismā'īlī mission. Gradually, from small gatherings, he established an organized and disciplined movement.

He began to fortify his position, taking control of Ḥiṣn Masār in Jabal Ḥarāz, which became his secure headquarters. From there, people from all corners of Yemen began to rally around him in great numbers.

By the year 455 AH, his forces had become powerful enough to seize control of most of Yemen. He succeeded in uniting its territories, cities, and strongholds, establishing a government based on justice and order.

He made Ṣan‘ā’ his capital and, for the first time in many generations, brought together the regions of Tihāmah, Ḥaḍramawt, and al-Jund under one authority. He organized the state’s political system and administration, bringing stability and justice to the land.

The Khutbah (Friday sermon) was proclaimed in the name of the Fāṭimid Imām al-Mustanṣir Billāh, and coins were minted bearing his name — a clear declaration of allegiance to the Fāṭimid Caliphate in Cairo.

‘Alī al-Ṣulayhī’s wife, the noble lady Asmā’ bint Shihāb, was instrumental in the consolidation of power, playing a vital role in the political affairs of the state and in the establishment of justice across Yemen.

The Imām al-Mustanṣir Billāh sent her letters of commendation and expressed great satisfaction at her loyalty and devotion to the Fāṭimid mission.

He conferred upon ‘Alī al-Ṣulayhī a number of prestigious titles, among them: “The Noble Prince,” “The Crown of the State,” “The Sword of the Imām,” “The Manifest of Religion,” “The System of the Believers,” “The Chosen of the State and Its Noble One,” “The Supporter of Religion,” “The Ornament of the State,” “The Possessor of the Two Swords,” “The Defender of the State and Its People,” and “The Distinguished of the Virtuous.”

Sijillāt wa-Rasā’il al-Imām al-Mustanṣir Billāh, Letter no. 3, p. 34; and al-Ṣulayhiyyūn wa’l-Ḥarakah al-Fāṭimiyyah fī al-Yaman, al-Miṣrī, p. 63.

‘Alī al-Ṣulayhī’s devotion to the Imām al-Mustanṣir Billāh grew ever stronger, and his steadfast adherence to the goals of religion was unmatched. The Imām granted him permission to travel to Cairo, the radiant seat of the Caliphate, in order to meet him personally. Likewise, the Imām permitted him to perform the obligatory pilgrimage (ḥajj) — that he might purify himself from the impurities of the world, and devote himself to the pursuit of divine knowledge, patience, and righteousness.

The Imām urged him to combat corruption, establish justice, uphold truth, and walk upon the path of fairness, cleansing it from those who deviated or transgressed. Al-Mustanṣir Billāh accepted his request and sent him a royal sijill (edict) later, in the month of Rabī‘ al-Awwal, 459 AH.

In it, the Imām advised the dā‘ī to pursue the struggle (jihād) in the near future, to prepare himself with the necessary strength, and to strive to spread righteousness and internal reform to the fullest extent possible. He also instructed him to avoid sedition, to guard himself and the people from the trials of discord, and to seek the pleasure of God.

The Imām wrote: “If the opportunity for pilgrimage is opened to you, then proceed. But if you cannot find the means to it, then wait until the path becomes clear.”

He continued: “If the situation becomes difficult, then know that God will open for you a way in the place He has decreed. And if the signs of war appear, avoid them, for it is not your purpose now — rather, your goal is guidance, unity, and peace.”

At the conclusion of the sijill, the Imām counseled al-Ṣulayhī to prepare for his journey to Cairo at a later time, once the roads were made safe and the route cleared of danger.

Before the edict reached him, al-Ṣulayhī had already set out for the pilgrimage, leaving his son Aḥmad in charge of Ṣan‘ā’ and entrusting him with the governance of the realm.

He commanded him to rule with justice, maintain the noble conduct of leadership, and to depend upon God in his striving and administration, working always to uphold the divine law (Sharī‘ah), to maintain the institutions of faith, to remain steadfast in obedience, and to avoid negligence or excess.

He departed from Ṣan‘ā’ on Monday, the 6th of Dhū al-Qa‘dah, 459 AH, and when his caravan reached the village of Umm Dhumaym, S‘īd al-Aḥwal and a group of rebels ambushed him unexpectedly.

They launched a violent attack against his entourage, and after a fierce battle, the struggle continued...

Footnotes (as in image)

‘Uyūn al-Akḥbār, vol. 6, p. 90.

al-Ṣulayḥiyyūn wa’l-Ḥarakah al-Fāṭimiyyah fī al-Yaman, p. 97, 98

A few days after the assassination of King ‘Alī al-Ṣulayḥī, unrest spread, and his son Aḥmad al-Mukarram assumed authority over the kingdom in his stead. Though still young, he took charge of governing the land. After fierce battles that lasted for some time, he was able to defeat the rebellious tribes, lift the siege from Ṣan‘ā’, and reclaim order.

His victories were so decisive that they restored stability to all the material foundations of the state, ensuring the continuation of its institutions. He ruled the kingdom with wisdom and patience, qualities that made him worthy of the trust placed in him by both the Fāṭimid Caliph al-Mustanṣir Billāh and the Imām al-Ismā‘īlī.

God blessed him with these triumphs and honored him further through his marriage to the noble lady Arwā al-Ṣulayḥiyyah, who was known for her remarkable intelligence, penetrating insight, and noble character — qualities that reflected the beauty and majesty bestowed upon her by God.

Toward the final years of King al-Mukarram’s life, he fell gravely ill and was taken to Dhī Jibla, where his condition worsened. Realizing that his end was near, he appointed Asma’ bint Shihāb, his mother, to oversee the affairs of the state. Asma’ bint Shihāb governed with wisdom and humility until her death in Jumādā al-Awwal, 477 AH, after which the leadership was assumed by Queen Arwā al-Ḥurra, the wife of al-Mukarram.

At first, some of the Yemeni emirs and notables hesitated to pledge allegiance to a woman, but the noble lady al-Ḥurra quickly proved her firm understanding of religion and governance. She corresponded with Imām al-Mustanṣir Billāh, informing him of her husband’s death and her assumption of power.

The Imām approved her leadership and honored her by conferring upon her the title “al-Sayyidah al-Ḥurra” (the Noble Lady). He entrusted her with the responsibility of supervising religious and political affairs, urging her to continue the mission of her late husband, ‘Alī al-Ṣulayḥī, in upholding the dā‘wah (missionary call) and maintaining loyalty to the Fāṭimid Imamate.

At the same time, al-Sayyidah al-Ḥurra Arwā requested that her son ‘Abd al-Mustanṣir ‘Alī ibn al-Mukarram, who was still a child, be appointed as the nominal ruler, while she herself would act as regent.

The Imām al-Mustanṣir Billāh approved her request and instructed Ḍiyā’ al-Dīn Abā al-Ḥasan Jawhar al-Mustanṣirī to send her a robe of honor. He reaffirmed her in her post, praising her devotion, faith, and commitment to the cause of the Ismā‘īlī dā‘wah.

From that time onward, the noble lady Arwā became the central authority of the Sulayḥid state in Yemen. She was known for her loyalty, intelligence, and extraordinary administrative capability.

Under her rule, the Ismā‘īlī mission flourished once again, spreading through Yemen and its surrounding regions under the leadership of the great dā‘ī al-Ismā‘īlī, al-Shaykh Idrīs ‘Imād al-Dīn — may God sanctify his soul and elevate his rank.

Footnote (as in image):

\* Ibn al-Mujāwir, al-Futūḥāt al-Yamaniyyah, under the biography of al-Sayyidah Arwā.

After the death of her husband and the arrival of the decree of al-Imām al-Mustanṣir Billāh, the noble lady al-Ḥurra al-Malikah Arwā received a letter from the Commander of the Faithful, al-Mustanṣir Billāh, confirming her appointment and entrusting her with the guardianship of ‘Abd al-Mustanṣir ‘Alī ibn al-Mukarram Aḥmad.

The Imām further commanded that all official communications and correspondences should henceforth be addressed to her, as she was appointed to administer the dā‘wah’s affairs and manage the state’s matters.

The letter from the Commander of the Faithful included the following directive: “Indeed, the Commander of the Faithful has seen your sincerity and righteousness, and he honors you with his trust and appointment to this high rank, granting you authority over the affairs of the believers.”

He also instructed that al-Amīr Abū al-Ḥasan Jawhar al-Mustanṣirī should act as her assistant, overseeing the implementation of her orders in the various regions of Yemen. Through this decree, the Imām empowered her with full command over the religious, legal, and political systems of Yemen, granting her ease and success in all undertakings, as well as spiritual elevation and permanence in her noble position — until she was ultimately honored with wearing the robes of the Imamate as a sign of divine distinction and esteem.

Thus, al-Sayyidah al-Ḥurra continued to rule after the death of her husband with remarkable political insight and administrative wisdom. She displayed an extraordinary ability to manage state affairs, maintain internal unity, and oversee the *Ismāʿīlī daʿwah* with steadfast dedication.

She remained ever loyal to the Fāṭimid Caliphate, demonstrating the utmost care in implementing its commands and spreading its mission in Yemen. Her governance reflected her deep understanding of *Ismāʿīlī* jurisprudence and her capacity to appoint and guide the *dāʿīs* (missionaries) across the distant regions of Yemen.

The official records sent from al-Imām al-Mustanṣir Billāh to Queen Arwā express his great admiration for her sincerity, wisdom, and political acumen.

When the *Ismāʿīlī* historian al-Muʿayyad al-Dīn Idrīs ʿImād al-Dīn later spoke of her, he wrote: “The noble Queen al-Ḥurra excelled in the knowledge of *taʾwīl* (esoteric interpretation) and *taʾlīm* (spiritual instruction), and she was well-versed in the *ḥadīth* traditions transmitted from the Imāms and the Messenger of God (peace be upon them all). The *dāʿīs* of Yemen used to seek her guidance and act under her supervision.”

Footnotes (from the original text):

ʿUyūn al-Akḥbār, vol. 2, pp. 122–130; and al-Sulayḥiyyūn, p. 148.

Sijill no. 14, from al-Sijillāt al-Mustanṣiriyyah (The Mustanṣirī Decrees), al-Sulayḥiyyūn, p. 148.

Her reputation for modesty, wisdom, and virtue spread far and wide, and the Lady al-Ḥurra Arwā became distinguished for her piety, righteousness, strength, and expansive experience, as well as for her keen understanding of human affairs. These qualities enabled her to manage the governance of her realm despite the difficult circumstances surrounding her.

It appears that the Imām al-Mustanṣir Billāh recognized her abilities, honoring her above many of the learned and distinguished men of her time — including senior figures among the *dāʿīs* (missionaries). She was granted a status equal to the *Maqāmāt al-Ḥujjah* (Ranks of the Chief Proofs), as she deserved the utmost esteem and distinction over the eminent scholars of her day.

The Imām al-Mustanṣir, perceiving her dedication and sincerity in serving the *daʿwah*, issued decrees in her honor, raising her authority and appointing her as the supreme head of the *daʿwah*’s hierarchy, extending her influence “to the very limits of the *Ḥujjahs*.”

Despite her long and faithful service, her husband ʿAbd al-Mustanṣir suffered from prolonged illness and eventually passed away. After his death, a dispute arose between the *dāʿī* Sabaʾ ibn Aḥmad al-Muzaffar — who sought to consolidate control over Yemen and proposed marriage to the Lady al-Ḥurra.

Lady Arwā, however, showed no desire for such a union, as she recognized the political ambitions behind it. Indeed, many among the local rulers and nobles favored the match for the sake of stability, fearing renewed strife between rival factions of the *Ṣulayḥid* elite and *Ismāʿīlī* missionaries.

Lady Arwā, however, declared firmly that she would not marry without the command of the Imām al-Mustanşir Billāh himself. The dā'ī Saba' sent a message to Cairo expressing his proposal, hoping for the Imām's approval.

But the Imām al-Mustanşir, fully aware of Saba's ambition, decisively refused the proposal, forbidding the marriage outright. He emphasized the need for unity among the Ismā'īlīs and cautioned against any political motives that might divide the da'wah or weaken its foundation.

When the letter of the Imām's decree arrived, Lady Arwā rejoiced. She sent a written acknowledgment affirming her absolute obedience and devotion to the Imām, and thus the matter was settled.

Through this incident, the Lady al-Ḥurra secured her independence and authority in governing Yemen's affairs. Her political acumen, loyalty, and administrative wisdom ensured the continuation of the Fatimid da'wah and the stability of her dominion — remaining faithful to the Imām al-Mustanşir until his death.

'Uyūn al-Akḥbār, vol. 3, pp. 207–213; al-Sulayḥiyyūn, pp. 142–144; A'lām al-Ismā'īliyyah, p. 144., al-Sulayḥiyyūn, p. 157 and thereafter.

When the Imām al-Mustanşir Billāh passed away in the year 478 AH, the Ismā'īlī community was divided between Nizārī and Musta'īlī factions. The Lady al-Ḥurra Arwā bint Aḥmad al-Ṣulayḥī firmly aligned herself with the Musta'īlī cause, declaring allegiance to al-Imām al-Musta'īlī bi'llāh and refusing to recognize Nizār ibn al-Mustanşir. She remained steadfast in her loyalty to the newly appointed Imām, defending the Musta'īlī da'wah in Yemen and preventing any infiltration of Nizārī influence for a long time.

Lady al-Ḥurra continued her tireless efforts to spread the Ismā'īlī da'wah in Yemen, maintaining her authority and dedication until the death of al-Imām al-Āmir bi-Aḥkām Allāh, the successor to al-Musta'īlī. Upon the assassination of al-Imām al-Āmir, the guardianship (imāmah) passed to al-Imām al-Ṭayyib, the young son of the late Imām, who was declared in occultation (satr).

Despite the emergence of political confusion, Lady al-Ḥurra upheld her commitment to the Ṭayyibī cause, refusing to acknowledge 'Abd al-Majīd, who claimed regency over the community. She firmly declared that he had no right to the Imamate, and she proclaimed her allegiance to al-Imām al-Ṭayyib, maintaining the Fatimid da'wah in Yemen with remarkable resolve and devotion.

She appointed dā'ī al-maṣṭūr (the concealed missionary) to manage the affairs of the hidden Imām and continued organizing the structure of the Ṭayyibī da'wah with wisdom and precision. Lady al-Ḥurra remained active until her death in 532 AH, after which the leadership of the da'wah passed to her close disciples.

Her passing marked a turning point in Ismā'īlī history, as the Fatimid influence in Yemen declined, while the Ṭayyibī da'wah evolved into a distinct and independent movement. Over time, the da'wah's focus shifted from purely political activity to a more spiritual and scholarly mission. Many of its followers migrated to India, particularly to the region of Gujarat, where communities embraced the Ṭayyibī teachings and established enduring centers of faith.

By the 10th century AH, the Ṭayyibī da'wah had split into two main branches: The Dā'ūdī Bohra, and The Sulaymānī Bohra. This division arose over the question of who held the rightful rank of the absolute dā'ī al-muṭlaq after the death of Dā'ī Dā'ūd ibn Qutub Shāh and Dā'ī Sulaymān ibn Ḥasan. The Dā'ūdī branch traced its line through Dā'ī Dā'ūd Burhān al-Dīn, while the Sulaymānī branch traced theirs through Dā'ī Sulaymān ibn Ḥasan, who refused to recognize Dā'ūd's appointment.

By the year 997 AH (1589 CE), this schism had become permanent. The Sulaymānī headquarters was established in Najrān (southern Arabia), while the Dā'ūdī headquarters took

root in India, where their followers—known today as the Bohras—continue to maintain their distinct religious and cultural traditions. Thus ended the direct political legacy of Lady al-Ḥurra Arwā, yet her influence endured through the continuity of the Tayyibī da‘wah, which she had so firmly established in Yemen.

## Ibrāhīm ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Ḥāmīdī

When Sayyida al-Ḥurra Arwā al-Ṣulayḥiyya foresaw her passing, her insight and wisdom guided her to ensure the continuity of the Tayyibī Ismāʿīlī daʿwah. She realized that the daʿwah must be completely independent from the Sulayḥid dynasty, so that its spiritual mission could endure in the absence of worldly authority.

She therefore convened a great council of Yemeni rulers, scholars, and dāʿīs, to select the one most deserving to bear the responsibility of leading the daʿwah. The assembly unanimously agreed on al-Dāʿī Zoʿeb ibn Mūsā al-Waʿrāwī al-Ḥamdānī (520–536 AH), appointing him as the first Dāʿī al-Muṭlaq — the absolute leader of the Tayyibī daʿwah — entrusting to him both the religious and organizational leadership of the community.

According to al-Dāʿī Idrīs ʿImād al-Dīn,

“A large gathering took place ... attended by the leading notables of Yemen, including Qāḍī al-Quḍāt Yaḥyā ibn Mālīk, and others among the scholars and preachers. They unanimously agreed that al-Dāʿī Zoʿeb ibn Mūsā was the most deserving of this position due to his knowledge, virtue, and steadfastness. They therefore entrusted him with the leadership of the daʿwah.”<sup>1</sup>

After the passing of Zoʿeb ibn Mūsā, the leadership of the daʿwah passed to Ibrāhīm ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Ḥāmīdī, who continued the work of organizing and strengthening the daʿwah in Yemen.

When the noble Sayyida al-Ḥurra Arwā al-Ṣulayḥiyya wished to appoint a successor for the daʿwah’s supreme leadership, she consulted the prominent dāʿīs, judges, and governors, seeking a man of knowledge and integrity to uphold the mission after her. The choice fell upon Ibrāhīm ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Ḥāmīdī, known for his learning, piety, and eloquence. He was entrusted with the guidance of the daʿwah, to preserve its unity and fulfill its covenant with the concealed Imām al-Ṭayyib Abī al-Qāsim.

Among the dignitaries present was Qāḍī al-Quḍāt Yaḥyā ibn Mālīk, the foremost judge of Yemen, who declared on behalf of the assembly:

“We acknowledge and affirm that the dāʿī Ibrāhīm ibn al-Ḥusayn is the most worthy to succeed the noble lady, the Queen Sayyida al-Ḥurra, and to serve as the representative (ḥujjah) of the Imām. He is the guardian of her covenant, and the one to continue her blessed mission with sincerity and wisdom.”

And so, with her death, the authority of the daʿwah passed fully into the hands of the dāʿīs, beginning with Zoʿeb ibn Mūsā and Ibrāhīm ibn al-Ḥusayn, whose succession ensured the preservation of the Tayyibī mission through the generations that followed.

<sup>1</sup> ʿUyūn al-Akhbār, vol. 5, p. 140; al-Sulaymānī, p. 182.

After the end of the Ṣulayḥid dynasty with the death of Sayyida al-Ḥurra, the leadership of the Tayyibī Ismāʿīlī daʿwah became firmly established as an independent religious institution. At its head stood al-Dāʿī Zoʿeb ibn Mūsā, who organized its activities and hierarchy according to the principles laid down by the Imām and his predecessors.

Naturally, al-Dāʿī Zoʿeb appointed several dāʿīs to assist him in his work. Among the most prominent was Ibrāhīm ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn Abī al-Suʿūd al-Ḥāmīdī, who later succeeded him. Ibrāhīm was one of the senior scholars of the daʿwah, and among those who had been educated under the guidance of Sayyida al-Ḥurra herself in the traditions of the Ismāʿīlī Tayyibī school in Yemen.

When al-Dāʿī Zoʿeb ibn Mūsā passed away, the leadership was transferred to al-Dāʿī Ibrāhīm ibn al-Ḥusayn, who became the second Dāʿī al-Muṭlaq, holding absolute authority on behalf of the concealed Imām al-Ṭayyib. He managed the affairs of the daʿwah in Yemen and extended its influence to the surrounding regions.

He appointed al-Shaykh ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn Jaʿfar al-Anf al-Sharīf al-Yamānī as his trusted deputy (māʾdhūn) and moved the headquarters of the daʿwah from Ḥarāz to Ṣanʿāʾ, making it the new center of Tayyibī learning and administration. He actively promoted the study of religious sciences, the transmission of Ismāʿīlī texts, and the training of new dāʿīs. Under his guidance, the daʿwah schools flourished in Yemen, India, and other lands.

In praise of his scholarly and spiritual leadership, the poet al-Ḥārithī wrote:

“O Ḥasan! You opened the path of knowledge,

And revived the hearts long weary with ignorance.

You dwelt in the highest abode with joy and light,

And built for the daʿwah in Ṣanʿāʾ a foundation of purity and wisdom.”

The Yemeni Ismāʿīlī historian records that Ibrāhīm ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Ḥāmīdī left behind several scholarly works on the philosophy of the Ismāʿīlī daʿwah, its symbolic exegesis (taʾwīl), and its principles of theology and cosmology. Among his most important works is the book titled:

“Kitāb al-Mabānī” (“The Book of Foundations”).

<sup>1</sup> al-Sulaymānī, pp. 271–277.

He (Ibrāhīm ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Ḥāmīdī) authored several important works, among them:

Kitāb al-Ibtidāʾ waʾl-Intihāʾ (“The Book of the Beginning and the End”),

Kitāb Tis‘ wa-Tis‘īn Mas‘alah fī’l-Ittifāqāt (“Ninety-Nine Questions on Doctrinal Agreements”),

Kitāb al-Rasā’il al-Sharīfah fī’l-Ma‘ānī al-Laṭīfah (“The Noble Epistles on Subtle Meanings”), and

Kitāb Kanz al-Walad, a work of profound theological and esoteric significance.<sup>1</sup>

A collection of his writings, lectures, and letters was later compiled in a volume known as “Kitāb al-Tarbiyyah”,<sup>2</sup> containing many treatises and essays on Ismā‘īlī Gnostic philosophy.

During his era, the Tayyibī Ismā‘īlī da‘wah in Yemen faced severe persecution. The Ayyubid dynasty, having taken control of Ṣan‘ā’, launched violent campaigns against the local Ismā‘īlī communities. Despite this, the da‘wah managed to survive and reorganize itself, spreading once again through the regions of Harāz, Yufur, Mawāhib, and Yarīm, as well as Ṣan‘ā’ and the nearby territories. The faithful among the Yemeni tribes, particularly the Banū Ḥamdān, continued to protect the dā‘īs and preserved the teachings amidst the threats of persecution and sectarian hostility.

In spite of these hardships, al-Dā‘ī Ibrāhīm ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Ḥāmīdī continued his intellectual and missionary activity with great devotion, maintaining the vitality of the Tayyibī movement until his death in Sha‘bān, 557 A.H. (1162 CE) in Ṣan‘ā’.

## Kanz al-Walad

There is no doubt that the author of Kanz al-Walad possessed a profound mastery of Ismā‘īlī theology and law. The book’s depth and systematic arrangement indicate its author’s elevated rank within the da‘wah hierarchy—likely commissioned by the Nā‘ib al-Imām al-Ghā‘ib (the representative of the Hidden Imām).

Its chapters reveal the author’s deep understanding of esoteric doctrine (ta’wīl), jurisprudence, and cosmology. It also suggests that he had access to the central archives of the da‘wah in Yemen, where the dā‘īs preserved their sacred texts and coded correspondence in utmost secrecy.

<sup>1</sup> Refer to: al-Mufīd fī Ādāb al-Ismā‘īliyyah, p. 54; A’lām al-Ismā‘īliyyah, p. 87.

<sup>2</sup> This work is cited in the Indian editions of Kitāb al-Tarbiyyah by the dā‘ī Muḥammad ibn Ṭāhir, of which a manuscript copy exists in our collection.

Al-Ḥāmīdī’s work also holds an esteemed position among the Tayyibī Ismā‘īlīs, as it contains subtle and precise expositions on the philosophy of the da‘wah, its gnostic (‘irfānī) aspects, and the science of esoteric truths (‘ilm al-ḥaqā’iq al-bāṭiniyyah), alongside intricate discussions on spiritual and religious hierarchies (al-marātib al-rūḥiyyah wa’l-dīniyyah).

The book *Kanz al-Walad* is attributed to al-Ḥāmīdī, as it mentions in several passages the coming forth of al-Qā'im al-Muntaẓar (the Awaited Mahdī). This is evident from the text itself, which reads:

“...and he who appears at the end of time assumes the station of the soul (nafs) and manifests in the form of its image; the seven divine spiritual ranks revolve around him...”

Thus, *Kanz al-Walad* revolves around the seven divine and spiritual ranks (al-marātib al-sab‘ah al-rabbāniyyah al-‘ilmiyyah al-rūḥāniyyah), which correspond to those presented by the Prophets, Legatees, and Imāms, peace be upon them all.

Therefore, *Kanz al-Walad* symbolizes the treasury of the awaited Qā'im, who, according to Ismā'īlī doctrine, will appear at the completion of the seven known cycles (adwār sab‘ah) of Ismā'īlī history.

Al-Ḥāmīdī divided his *Kanz* into fourteen chapters, adopting an elegant and structured method similar to that found in the earlier works of the dā'īs. The opening chapters address theological and metaphysical issues, while the later ones concern spiritual practice, testimony (shahādah), and divine unity (tawḥīd), gradually moving towards more esoteric reflections.

The first section of the book deals with the causes that impel a dā'ī to compose such a work and with the necessity of divine unity (tawḥīd). He explains that true tawḥīd cannot be attained by analogy (tashbīh) nor by negation (ta'ṭīl), but only through comprehension of the First Originator (al-Mubdi' al-Awwal).

The second section discusses the Second Emanation (al-Munba'ith al-Thānī), describing how it proceeds from the First Originator. He praises the First Originator and elaborates on His attributes in detail, citing various opinions from early Ismā'īlī thinkers, philosophers, and sages.

As for the third section, it revolves around the relationship between the two Emanations—the First and the Second (al-Mubdi' al-Awwal wa'l-Munba'ith al-Thānī) and their interdependence. The second proceeds necessarily from the first and attains perfection only through it. Hence, the Second Emanation is perfect in itself but remains dependent upon the First for the completion of its essence.

The First Emanation, being the source, grants the Second all the attributes of completion, unity, and limitation of scope. Al-Ḥāmīdī concludes this portion by referring to the Primordial Intellect (al-‘Aql al-Awwal) and the First Rational Principles (al-‘uqūl al-sab‘ah al-bāṭiniyyah), forming the metaphysical framework of Ismā'īlī cosmology.

The existence of the seven Imāms in the spiritual order of religion represents a continuous chain—each succeeding the other in divine knowledge and revelation.

In the fourth chapter, the author discusses the First and Second Emanations (al-Munba'ith al-Awwal wa'l-Munba'ith al-Thānī) and the doctrine of the Qā'im bi'l-Fi'l (the active, manifest cause). Here, the author aligns his exposition with the opinions of the Ismā'īlī philosophers

and their metaphysical system, emphasizing that the First Emanation necessarily exists through the First Intellect, as it is a veil (ḥijāb) of divine existence.

Its reality is grounded in the realm of the Intellects (al-‘uqūl), which arise through multiplicity—each intellect deriving from the preceding one. Thus, every rank among the Intellects corresponds to its own degree in existence, and the order of emanation follows from the First Intellect, which precedes all others both in rank and being.

The author then transitions to the fifth chapter, discussing the Second Emanation as it arises through divine power and by the necessity of causation. He argues that this Second Emanation must necessarily proceed from the First, as the latter’s perfection generates its counterpart.

However, the Second Emanation remains imperfect unless joined to and completed by the First. Hence, the First Emanation is the cause, and the Second is the effect; the perfection of the latter is contingent upon the power of the former.

The essence of the Second Emanation reflects the First, mirroring it in form and image, yet remaining subordinate in rank. The author notes that this ontological relationship forms the basis of the Ismā‘īlī cosmological hierarchy, explaining that every emanated being derives its existence from a preceding, more perfect cause.

Moving to the sixth chapter, the author expands upon the theory of matter and form within the Ismā‘īlī framework. He describes how form (ṣūrah) emanates from a subtle spiritual source and how it becomes the vessel (qābilah fā‘ilah) through which divine activity manifests. The ḥamīdī (al-Ḥāmīdī) expounds on this mechanism as the process through which divine influence takes tangible shape in creation.

In the seventh chapter, he discusses the appearance of the three elements (al-mawālīd al-thalāthah)—the minerals, plants, and animals—explaining that their formation occurs without direct union or intermediate combination, but rather through the interaction of five elemental forces (al-arkān al-khamsah). Through this interaction, the flower of life (al-zahrat al-ḥayāh) emerges within five thousand years, indicating the gradual unfolding of creation’s spiritual and material dimensions.

In the eighth chapter, the author addresses the appearance of the human being (zuhūr al-shakhs al-basharī), tracing the descent of the rational soul (al-nafs al-nāṭiqah) from the higher spiritual world into the corporeal form, and then transitions to the ninth chapter, wherein he discusses the doctrine of the Perfect Man (al-insān al-kāmil) and his role as the mirror of divine manifestation

The emergence of the Perfect Human (al-shakhs al-fāḍil) occurs below the line of equilibrium, as a distinct manifestation participating in the cosmic interactions of matter and eternity. This manifestation symbolizes the hierarchical ranks of the Ismā‘īlī da‘wa and its religious ideals, reflecting a spiritual and metaphysical system whose sanctified hierarchy reveals a deep, mystical structure based on complete mastery of the esoteric sciences.

Al-Ḥamīdī, in the tenth chapter, discusses ascent and elevation to the spiritual world, explaining the method of transcendence beyond material limits, especially the ascent of the purified soul to a luminous form. He notes that the degrees of religious progress correspond to the spiritual ranks of those who attain divine knowledge, each level reflecting its counterpart in the heavenly hierarchy.

In the eleventh chapter, al-Ḥamīdī explains the knowledge of the upper and lower boundaries (al-ḥudūd al-‘ulwiyya wa’l-sufliyya) and the necessity of imitation and following—that is, obedience to those whose ranks require imitation, namely the spiritual heirs (the Imāms, hujjahs, and du‘āt). These are the ones capable of transmitting the spiritual soul from the realm of potentiality to the boundary of actuality (ḥadd al-fi‘l).

In the twelfth chapter, the author describes the ascent from the reward and recompense to the eternal bliss of the celestial realm, where souls attain everlasting felicity.

In the thirteenth chapter, al-Ḥamīdī describes the manner of the connection between the initiated disciple (al-mustafīd) and the initiating teacher (al-mufīd), explaining how the disciple ascends by means of his master and through him connects to the chain of truth (ṣilsilat al-ḥaqq). He supports his view with the opinions of prominent Ismā‘īlī du‘āt and philosophers, and ends the book with a discourse on the reality and degrees of divine torment, drawing upon Ismā‘īlī philosophical terminology, Qur’ānic verses, Prophetic ḥadīths, and sayings of the Imāms from the Ahl al-Bayt.

#### Authentication of the Book:

We relied, in the verification (taḥqīq) of this book, on three manuscript copies:

The first manuscript, distinguished by its clarity and completeness, was kindly provided to us by Shaykh Ḥayy al-Dīn Ja‘far from the city of Miṣyān, and we have identified it by certain marginal notes. (ج) — This copy was written on fine Baghdadi paper, slightly thick, with red ink for headings and margins.

This manuscript consists of two volumes:

- The first volume comprises 264 pages, each measuring 16 × 24 cm, with 18 lines per page.
- The second volume contains 250 pages, of the same dimensions (16 × 24 cm), and likewise 18 lines per page.

At the end of the first volume, it is written: “The first book of Kanz al-Walad has ended, followed by the second book, which concludes with a prayer for the poor and sinful servant — the great sinner and humble one who seeks God’s forgiveness — the servant of the noble household of Muḥammad, ‘Alī, and their pure descendants, peace be upon them all.”

Then follows a supplication: “May God prolong the life of the concealed age and its eras, and hasten the time when the light of the veil shall be lifted. May He grant intercession on the Day of Resurrection and Manifestation.”

The colophon further adds “This completion took place on a Sunday morning, on the 27th of Rajab, under the guardianship of our master, the noble Shaykh Aḥmad ibn Maṣṣūr al-Muṣaffī, residing beneath Mount al-A‘rāf. May God protect him and our brothers who safeguard the true knowledge.”

It is noted that the order of the titles of the chapters in the author’s introduction differs slightly from what appears in the text itself — particularly the fourth chapter, which extends its discussion into the themes of the third and fifth.

At the end of the second volume, the following phrase appears: “The transcription of this copy was completed on the night of the first Friday of Rajab al-Mukarram, by its scribe and owner — a servant of every believer who performs the prayers and peace. The completion took place at the time of the dawn prayer in the year 1207 AH.”

It also contains a note: “May blessings be upon the owner of the copy, the noble Shaykh ‘Alī ibn Ḥabīb al-Dīn Jādir, may God exalt him.”

When asked about how he came into possession of this manuscript, the Shaykh replied that he inherited it from his father, though the exact date of its entry into the family collection is unknown.

As for the second copy, marked with the letter (ط), it is the photographed edition.

Our friends at the University of Tehran informed us — after negotiations and correspondence lasting more than a year — that, through the kind mediation of the brothers, we were finally able to obtain this copy personally.

This copy, marked with the symbol (ط), is in two volumes:

The first volume contains 335 pages, with 13 lines per page and about 10 words per line.

The second volume has 215 pages, each containing 18 lines, closely resembling the original in size (24×18 cm).

At the end of the second volume, the following is written: “The completion of this copy took place on Tuesday, in the month of Muḥarram of the year 1353 A.H. (1934 CE), by its owner, the poor sinner, Shaykh Ādam ibn Shaykh Muḥammad ibn Shaykh Aḥmad Muḥammad al-Sūrūrī, may God forgive his sins, on the red paper bound with golden ink, invoking blessings upon the Prophet Muḥammad and his pure family.”

This statement is followed by another note: “The book ‘Kanz al-Walad’ was copied by the most humble slave of God, the servant in need of His mercy, Muḥammad ibn al-Mājid Mullā

Sultān ibn al-Marḥūm Sharīf Mullā ibn Sultān Mullā Ḥasan ‘Alī al-Minṭurī, in the month of Sha‘bān, year 1320 A.H. (1902 CE). May God forgive his sins and those of his parents.”

It also mentions that this photographed copy once belonged to the Isma‘ili Society in Bombay, though we do not know how or when it arrived at the Law Faculty Library of the University of Tehran, where it was given the number 3000.

By comparing this copy (ط) with copy (ج), we found that the latter contained some errors and omissions. Although (ج) appears slightly older, the order of chapters in (ط) more closely follows the author’s intended arrangement, particularly concerning the fourth and fifth chapters. The editor notes that copy (ج) misplaced certain sections of the text, inserting content belonging to the third chapter and mixing in some parts of the ninth and tenth chapters.

The eighth chapter, too, had some corrupted passages. Furthermore, the scribe omitted illustrations that the author had originally drawn to clarify specific concepts, leaving behind blank spaces or dots in their place.

As for the third copy, marked (ع), it is a photographed copy discovered in a private library. While examining several manuscripts in the Isma‘ili Center in Beirut, we were able to identify this version. Unfortunately, it could not be fully utilized, as some pages were missing or faint.

Nevertheless, this copy (ع) is valuable because it was transcribed in 555 A.H. (1160 CE) on the margins of al-Majālis al-Mu‘ayyadiyya and Jāmi‘ al-Ḥaqā’iq, in neat handwriting.

Since the third copy was incomplete, we based our final edition primarily on the photographed version, correcting it by cross-referencing with the other copies where necessary.

In editing, we followed a careful pagination system, assigning each image a number in the upper and lower margins corresponding to the manuscript.

We also noted that the author occasionally transferred text from the margins into the main body. In the photographic version, marginal notes were numbered 97–189, though some reverted to marginal writing halfway through.

We also observed several illustrations with numbering ranging from 1222 to 1227, corresponding to images referred to by the author.

At the end of copy (ع), the scribe wrote:

“This transcription was completed on Tuesday, the 4th of Jumādā al-Awwal, year 1348 A.H. (1929 CE). May God protect the copyist, for He is the Best Guardian and the Most Merciful.”

I beseech the Most Merciful, and I ask forgiveness from God, and I repent and rely upon Him, entrusting all my affairs to Him.

This precious trust, this noble manuscript, is a hidden treasure that should only be handled by one who is worthy of it.

My Master, Lord of the Secrets, if You will it, unite my efforts and grant success by Your generous face. You are the Knower of mysteries and the Guardian of all ranks and degrees. Let this effort not be lost to haste, but make it a step toward the eternal reward of Your boundless grace.

The three manuscripts we obtained of Kanz al-Walad reveal valuable insights into the intellectual and spiritual teachings of the early Ismaʿili tradition. From them, we derived critical edition, aiming to preserve the theological heritage found in this rare text.

We hope that this edition will serve as a reliable reference for researchers in Islamic studies, particularly those interested in Ismaʿili philosophy, symbols, and esoteric doctrines—explaining the metaphysical meanings of effort, energy, and divine creation.

We also noted certain textual and linguistic errors in the margins, though these do not affect the overall integrity of the work.

At the conclusion of this study, I must express my deep gratitude to Dr. Muḥammad Taqī Dānish, Director of the University of Tehran Library, for granting us access to the photographic copies of the manuscripts. May God reward him abundantly.

We also extend sincere thanks to the German Oriental Institute (Deutsches Morgenländisches Institut) in Beirut, which decided to publish this text among its scholarly series.

I acknowledge with gratitude Dr. Albert Deiberich, head of Islamic Publications; Dr. Fritz Steinat, the previous director; and Dr. Iṣṭafān Fīlā, the current director, for their efforts and support. May God bless them all.

Beirut, June 3, 1970, Mustafa Ghalib

## In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

### *In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful*

*And with Him is success.*

All praise belongs to Allah — the Light of lights, the Disposer of affairs, the Ordainer of destinies, the Controller of time and ages, and the Knower of all that is hidden within hearts and chests.

He is not derived from anything, nor was anything derived from Him.

He neither originated from a source, nor was He created from something.

Nothing stands upon Him, and nothing is added unto Him.

There is nothing like Him, and He resembles nothing.

Exalted is He! He is the First without beginning and the Last without end, the One beyond all enumeration.

He is the Originator of existence, the Giver of being, the Creator of limits and boundaries, the Witness of the seen and the unseen — transcendent beyond the attributes of created beings, pure from the imaginations of thought and the perceptions of sight.

Eyes do not perceive Him, nor do thoughts encompass Him.

He is sanctified above names and descriptions, exalted beyond all that can be perceived by sense or intellect.

He is free from the attributes of creation and above any likeness to those in the heavens or the earth.

Glorified be He!

His Majesty is eternal, His Kingdom mighty, and His Sovereignty inviolable.

There is none equal to Him nor any partner beside Him.

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### Footnotes (Page 1)

1. *Innovation* (الإبداع) — creation of something without precedent, time, or instrument.
2. *Invention* (الاختراع) — creation from a pre-existing model or example.
3. *First of Numbers* (أول الأعداد) — “the One,” from whom all multiplicity originates.
4. *Origin of Existence* (مبدأ الوجود) — the First Cause, from whom all things derive being.

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I bear witness that there is no god but Allah —

A testimony springing from one who knows His transcendence,

Who declares His Oneness sincerely,

And negates from Him all forms of likeness, limitation, and measure.

He has neither a before nor an after,

He is beyond proximity and distance.

He is known through the perfection of His creation and the greatness of His wisdom.

His decree is eternal, and His power absolute.

He has established the balance of justice in the testimony of divine unity,

Confirmed the truth of His promise and warning,

And made His Oneness the foundation of all beginnings in the world of creation and command.

And I bear witness that Muḥammad — His servant and Messenger, the trustworthy one —

Is the best of creation and the most honored of beings,

The possessor of radiant miracles and manifest signs.

Through him, Allah guided the people from darkness to light,  
And by his hand, the system of the heavens and earth was perfected.  
He distinguished truth from falsehood,  
Separated the followers of guidance from those of ignorance,  
And conveyed the Word of Sincerity (*Kalimat al-Ikhlāṣ*) —  
Through which were established three pure and luminous proofs:  
The One who is the Origin of all existence and blessings,  
The Creator of all good,  
And the source of all bounty and grace.  
May Allah bless him and his pure family —  
The roots of virtue and the branches of perfection,  
Those who were chosen and purified,  
The people of the cloak and the light of guidance.  
And may Allah bless the Commander of the Faithful, ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib —  
The standard-bearer of the righteous, the destroyer of the idolaters,  
The upholder of truth and the foundation of the Imamate.

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### Footnotes (Page 2)

1. *Tawḥīd* (توحيد) — the pure affirmation of divine unity, free from anthropomorphic limits.
2. *Imamate* — the continuation of divine guidance through the Prophet’s pure descendants.
3. *Ahl al-Kisā’* — “The People of the Cloak,” purified in Qur’an 33:33.

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He (Allah) strengthened Islam through him (the Prophet ﷺ) and granted victory by his hands.  
Allah exalted his banner and elevated his remembrance,  
Perfected through him the religion,  
And by his light, extinguished the flames of disbelief and hypocrisy.  
Through him, the Almighty revived the path of the believers,  
Destroyed the gatherings of the deniers,  
And made manifest the truth among both the earlier and later generations.  
May Allah’s blessings be upon him and upon his pure progeny —  
The radiant family, the noble lineage of purity,  
The lamps of guidance and piety,  
The leaders of the righteous and the inheritors of divine knowledge.  
And upon the master of the age and the time —  
The Imam of purity and benevolence,  
The Commander of the Faithful, Abū al-Qāsim — may Allah’s peace be upon him,  
The Imam who was granted the greatest portion of virtue and excellence.

After this:

Verily Allah has commanded with justice and excellence,  
And with the giving of goodness to those near,  
And has forbidden immorality and oppression.  
Indeed, justice is not achieved except through the command of Allah,  
And goodness is only perfected by His generosity.  
The existence of the world is by His sustaining power,  
And the life of the world is through His will.

He brings forth existence from non-existence,  
And leads the seeker from the void into being,  
Enlightening the hearts with the light of guidance.

*“The best of deeds are those that revive the signs of faith,  
and the most virtuous acts are to uphold the paths of guidance,  
and to adhere to the way of the rightly guided.”*

Thus, the people of virtue are known by their obedience,  
Their steadfastness upon the truth,  
Their patience in hardship,  
And their discipline in the service of their Lord.

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### Footnotes (Page 3)

1. *Imām al-Ṭayyib Abū al-Qāsim* — the hidden Imam of the Ṭayyibī Isma‘īlī line.
2. *The period of concealment (satr)* — the era of hidden guidance through deputies.
3. *The Wise One (al-ḥakīm)* — Imām Aḥmad al-Ḥamīd al-Dīn, known for sayings on spiritual knowledge.

Their hearts are illuminated by the lights of divine knowledge,  
Their certainty strengthened by the essence of *tawḥīd* —  
The pure affirmation of the Oneness of Allah, exalted and sublime.  
They glorify Him with the tongues of truth, And sanctify Him in the depths of their spirits.  
They know with certainty that there is no deity but Allah —None like unto Him,  
None who can resist His will or surpass His decree.

There is no salvation except through His mercy, No intercession except by His permission,  
No escape from His command, And no deliverance except by obedience to His guidance.

He is the One who grants understanding to the seekers of knowledge, Who inspires the hearts  
of the truthful,  
And opens the eyes of those who reflect. None reaches true knowledge of Him except those  
whom He chooses,  
For He is the Source of holiness and purity, And none attains His gnosis except the purified  
ones.

*“There is nothing like unto Him, and He is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing.”* (Qur’an 42:11)

*“No vision can grasp Him, but His grasp is over all vision.”* (Qur’an 6:103)

*“Allah encompasses everything in knowledge.”* (Qur’an 65:12)

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

*“Seek knowledge, for seeking knowledge is a duty upon every Muslim.”*

*“Whoever is granted wisdom has indeed been granted abundant good.”*

*“The scholar’s ink is more precious than the martyr’s blood.”*

Indeed, knowledge is the zakāt of the intellect and the adornment of the soul.  
When knowledge is manifested, it benefits creation by Allah’s mercy.  
And the Prophet ﷺ said:

*“When a person conceals what he knows of truth, it is as though he buried himself in  
ignorance.”*

Therefore, it is incumbent upon the believer to apply his knowledge in the right place,  
For knowledge that is not acted upon will testify against its bearer.

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## Footnotes (Page 4)

1. *Doctrinal Summary*: Allah is One — beyond body, form, or limitation.
2. *He is not confined by space or time, nor perceived by senses or intellect.*
3. *He transcends what words can express or thought can conceive.*
4. “*Glorified be Allah, the Lord of all worlds.*”

Know—may **Allāh (God)** guide you—that **Allāh** has prepared for every **sālik** (سالك — **spiritual traveler**) upon the path and every **mālik** (مالك — **seeker of divine sovereignty**) four ranks (*marātib*, مراتب) of elevation, strength, and establishment. Each rank supports the one above it, and every **sābi‘** (سابع — **seventh**) stage is greater, higher, and more complete than the one before it.

We are now in the age of the **sab‘at al-shuhadā’** (سبعة الشهداء — **seven witnesses**), whose signs (*malāḥim āyātihim*, ملاحم آياتهم — **prophetic portents**) appear in their symbols and indications, recorded within their foundations (*asāsihim*, أساسهم).

These signs are described through **barakāt** (بركات — **blessings**), **ni‘am** (نعم — **bounties**), and **khibrāt** (خبرات — **experiences**), which manifest through the appearance of **‘ulūm** (علوم — **sciences**), **mu‘jizāt** (معجزات — **miracles**), and the radiance of **nūr** (نور — **divine light**).

The trees yield fruit, their flowers bloom with **khudra** (خضرة — **greenness, vitality**) and brightness, until the fruits are perfected. Then shall appear **al-Qā’im** (القائم — **‘alayhi as-salām**) (عليه السلام — the Riser, the Awaited One, may peace be upon him) with the most perfect order and the finest system.

But alas! the hearts of the heedless are steeped in **kufr** (كفر — **disbelief**), **nifāq** (نفاق — **hypocrisy**), **‘adāwah** (عداوة — **enmity**), and **shaqā’** (شقاء — **misery**)—while the weak servant remains in **‘ubūdiyyah** (عبودية — **servitude**), poor and lowly.

The humble servant seeks from his **Mawlā** (مولى — **Master or Lord**) strength and assistance, praying that all creation might witness the mercy of **Allāh** and His compassion.

He (God) is the One to whom all **asmā’ al-nūrāniyyah** (أسماء النورانية — **luminous divine names**) and **ṣifāt al-rūḥāniyyah** (صفات الروحانية — **spiritual attributes**) lead.

He is the **Rabb al-‘Aṣr** (ربّ العصر — **Lord of the Age**), the **Wali al-faḍl wal-iḥsān** (ولي الفضل والإحسان — **Guardian of grace and benevolence**), the One who confirms obedience and worship, removes hardship and affliction, supports the needy in their purposes and needs, and none intercedes except by His permission.

He reveals (*yuzhir*, يظهر) what He wills, forgives whom He pleases, and punishes whom He wills — for He is capable of all things (*qādir ‘alā kull shay’*, قادر على كل شيء).

In His words lie the marvels of divine wisdom (*ḥikam maknūnah*, حكم مكنونة) and the subtleties of sacred knowledge (*daqā’iq al-‘ulūm*, دقائق العلوم).

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## Footnotes / Annotations

1. **Al-A'imma** (الأئمة): The Imams appear in seven cycles (*adwār sab'ah*, أدوار سبعة); the seventh is the **khātim** (خاتم — seal or completion) of the cycles.
2. The “small cycle” (*ad-dawr aṣ-ṣaghīr*, الدور الصغير) refers to the shorter epoch between each speaking Prophet (*nāṭiq*, ناطق), during which **asās** (أساس — the foundation) continues the divine message. The seventh cycle is the final one in which the line of divine guidance concludes.
3. **Khuḍra** (خضرة): Symbolic of spiritual flourishing, renewal, and life.
4. **Ghaflah** (غفلة): Heedlessness or forgetfulness of divine truth.
5. It is said that there are **nine ranks** (*tasa' marātib*, تسع مراتب): the first being the **Nabī al-Mablagh al-Awwal** (النبي المبلغ الأول — first conveying Prophet), followed by **al-Malik** (المالك — the King), **al-Quddūs** (القدوس — the Holy One), and others, each with their distinct **asmā'** (أسماء — names) and **maqāmāt** (مقامات — stations).

The **faithful servant** ('*abd al-mu'min*, عبد المؤمن), in the narrow field of limited lands, strives earnestly—seeking thereby divine reward (*thawāb*, ثواب) and salvation on the Day of Return.

Even if that humble servant is among the weakest of believers in strength, and the least of them in knowledge and deeds, he still says—as Allāh, Exalted is He, has declared:

"**Wa fawqa kulli dhī 'ilmin 'alīm**" (وَفَوْقَ كُلِّ ذِي عِلْمٍ عَلِيمٌ)

“Above everyone endowed with knowledge is the All-Knowing.” (Qur'an 12:76)

And there is no **ḥawl** (حول — might) nor **quwwah** (قوة — power) except through Allāh **al-'Alīm al-'Azīm** (الله العظيم — God, the All-Knowing, the Mighty).

He is my **Walī** (ولي — Protector), my **Nāṣir** (ناصر — Helper), and my **Mu'in** (معين — Supporter).

By Him I find refuge, and to Him I return.

Wherever I stumble (*ma jitthu fthi min ṣawāb aw khaṭā'*, ما جئت فيه من صواب أو خطأ) — whatever rightness or mistake there is in me — comes only from His will.

If I succeed, it is by His **luṭf** (لطف — divine subtle grace) and **barakah** (بركة — blessing) and His guidance (*ta'yīdih*, تأييده).

If I err or forget, that is from the deficiency of my form and my hearing, or the weakness of my sight and perception.

So I seek forgiveness for that, for I am not **ma'sūm** (معصوم — infallible) from error and illusion (*zall wa ḍalāl*, زلل و ضلال), and there is no salvation for me except through His causes (*asbābih*, أسبابه).

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And Allāh, Exalted is He, has said:

"**Inna Allāha lā yaghfiru an yushraka bih**" (إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَغْفِرُ أَنْ يُشْرَكَ بِهِ)

“Indeed, Allāh does not forgive that partners be associated with Him.” (Qur'an 4:48)

For He, Exalted is His Majesty, **encompasses all things** (*al-muḥīṭ bi-sirrī wa biṣīrī*, المحيط **بسرِّي وبصري**) — the Knower of my inner secret and my outward sight. He is the One who transcends all limitation (*muṭṭali‘ alā makūn ‘aqīqī*, مطَّلَع على مكنون عقيقي), the Ever-Praised (*maḥmūd*, محمود), the Singular (*wāḥid*, واحد), the Unique (*fard*, فرد), and the Self-Sufficient (*ṣamad*, صمد).

I do not worship any being but Him; no form, no sign, no image—nothing hidden or apparent.

I glorify only **Him** who manifests (*yaẓhar*, يظهر) and conceals (*yastur*, يستر), and no one shares with Him in His creation (*khalq*, خلق) or His dominion (*mulk*, ملك).

His praise (*ḥamd*, حمد) belongs solely to Him, and His kingdom (*mulkuḥ*, ملكه) stems from His own bounty (*jūdih*, جوده). None of His servants possesses independence from Him—whether a king or a slave. He grants His favors (*ni‘am*, نعم) to whomever He wills among His people, and He bestows ‘**ilm** (علم — **knowledge**) and **ḥikmah** (حكمة — **wisdom**) in His lands.

He gives from the inheritance (*irth*, إرث) to whom He wills, and plants in the souls (*nufūs*, نفوس) whatever He pleases, and none can exceed His limit (*ḥadd*, حد) nor surpass His command (*amr*, أمر).

Thus, no one can deliver salvation except the one whom He saves, from the **rubbiyyah aṭ-ṭabī‘iyyah az-ẓulmaniyyah** (الربوبية الطبيعية الظلمانية — **dominion of the dark natural self**)

to the ascent (*ṣu‘ūd*, صعود) of **arwāḥ rūḥāniyyah** (أرواح روحانية — **spiritual souls**) and the **masākin qudsiyyah** (مساكن قدسية — **sanctified abodes**).

As He, Exalted is He, has said:

**"Kamā bada’nā awwala khalqin nu‘īduhu wa’dan ‘alaynā innā kunnā fā‘ilīn"**

(كَمَا بَدَأْنَا أَوَّلَ خَلْقٍ نُعِيدُهُ وَعِدْنَا إِنَّا كُنَّا فَاعِلِينَ)

“As We began the first creation, We shall repeat it—a promise binding upon Us; indeed, We shall fulfill it.” (Qur’an 21:104)

## Key Notes & Theological Terms

1. **‘Abd** (عبد) – Servant; denotes humility before God, foundational in Islamic esoteric ethics.
2. **Walī** (ولي) – Friend, protector, or saint; a key term in Sufi and Isma‘ili theology.
3. **Luṭf** (لطف) – Divine subtle grace that enables right guidance without compulsion.
4. **Ma‘ṣūm** (معصوم) – Infallible; in Shi‘i doctrine, refers to those divinely protected from sin.
5. **Rubbiyyah Ṭabī‘iyyah Ẓulmaniyyah** (الربوبية الطبيعية الظلمانية) – “Lordship of the dark natural self”; symbolic of the egoic or material nature from which the soul seeks deliverance.
6. **Masākin Qudsiyyah** (مساكن قدسية) – “Holy dwellings”; refers to celestial abodes of purity and divine proximity.

I have composed *Kitāb Kanz al-Walad* and arranged it into fortified chapters (*abwāb muḥṣanah*), and set forth its sections (*nuṣūṣ*) in four parts and twelve chapters, by the help of Allāh, the Guide to what is correct.

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**Chapter One (al-bāb al-awwal):**

On the affirmation of *tawḥīd* without *tashbīh* or *taʿtīl*.

**Chapter Two (al-bāb ath-thānī):**

On the doctrine of *al-iblāgh*, which is the first *mabdaʿ*.

**Chapter Three (al-bāb ath-thālith):**

On the two *mabdaʿayn* — the first and its counterpart — and their relation to one another.

**Chapter Four (al-bāb ar-rābiʿ):**

On the first *mabʿath* as the source of action — and what that action signifies.

**Chapter Five (al-bāb al-khāmis):**

On the second *mabʿath* arising through *al-fatrah*, and the cause thereof.

**Chapter Six (al-bāb as-sādis):**

On the *mithāl* and the *ṣūrah*, and what exists within them, and the reason for their concealment and manifestation.

**Chapter Seven (al-bāb as-sābiʿ):**

On the appearance of the three *mawālīd* — mineral, plant, and animal.

**Chapter Eight (al-bāb ath-thāmin):**

On the manifestation of the human form first, and how every generation follows after the passing of the previous.

**Chapter Nine (al-bāb at-tāsiʿ):**

On the emergence of the *shakhṣ al-fāḍil* beneath the line of equilibrium (*khaṭṭ al-iʿtidāl*).

**Chapter Ten (al-bāb al-ʿāshir):**

On *irtifāʿ* and *ṣuʿūd* to the abode of return (*dār al-maʿād*), if Allāh wills.

**Chapter Eleven (al-bāb al-ḥādī ʿashar):**

On knowledge of the upper and lower limits (*ḥudūd ʿulwiyyah wa suflīyyah*).

**Chapter Twelve (al-bāb ath-thānī ʿashar):**

On *thawāb* and ascension through degrees to *al-jannah ad-dāʾimah* and *ad-darajāt al-ʿāliyyah*, if Allāh wills.

**Chapter Thirteen (al-bāb ath-thālith ʿashar):**

On the connection (*ittiṣāl*) of the receiver (*mustafīd*) with the giver (*mufīd*), and his union with Him.

## **Chapter Fourteen (al-bāb ar-rābi‘ ‘ashar):**

On *al-‘adhāb* — its reality (*ḥaqīqah*) and the manner of our return (*nushū’*) to Allāh from it.

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### **Notes (from the marginal text):**

1. *Kanz al-Walad*: a treasure of sciences and gnoses.
2. On the meaning of *maḥdūd*: see discussion in Chapter Eleven.

## Chapter One: On the Discourse Concerning Tawḥīd (Divine Unity)

Speaking on *tawḥīd* is among the defined matters, for it is the first of what Allah, exalted is He, has made obligatory upon His servants, as He said: “And I did not create the jinn and mankind except that they may worship Me.” (Qur’ān 51:56)

The purpose of *‘ibādāt* (acts of worship) is His *tawḥīd* (affirmation of oneness), *ta‘zīm* (glorification), and *taqdīs* (sanctification). As the Wise (al-Ḥakīm) has said: Since Allah is greater than all things, knowledge (*ma‘rifah*) of Him is among the greatest of knowledges.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ was asked about the *ma‘rifah* of Allah, and he said: “The craftsmanship of every craftsman depends upon his knowledge of what he crafts, and the act upon its doer. Therefore, it is obligatory upon every knower (*‘ālim*) to know the rule of *naẓar* (contemplation) as opposed to *taqlīd* (blind imitation), and it is blameworthy for every *‘ārīf* (gnostic) not to know that existence (*wujūd*) refutes doubt (*shakk*) and suspicion (*raybah*), while nonexistence (*‘adam*) establishes distance (*bu‘d*) and perplexity (*hayrah*). Thus, existence is that which is affirmed by the heart and contemplation. Whoever travels the path of *tawḥīd* by way of *naẓar* has indeed been rightly guided.”

### Footnotes

1. *Regarding the discourse on tawḥīd*: it is to speak of Divine Unity without restriction (*taqyīd*) or negation (*ta‘īl*).
2. Qur’ān 51:56.
3. It is noteworthy that the Ismā‘īlī scholars frequently employ the term “al-Ḥakīm (the Wise)” in their writings without indicating its specific author or intended figure. The expression was authenticated during the era of one of the concealed Imāms (*al-imām al-mastūr*), interpreted as referring to the period of the hidden Imām (189–265 A.H.), the author of *Rijāl Ikhwān al-Ṣafā’*.
4. By “every *‘ārīf* (knower),” he refers to those whose souls have been unveiled by the Holy Spirit, revealing the essence of the soul and its luminous, spiritual realities.
5. He intends thereby distancing oneself from *taqlīd* (imitation) and from those who follow imitators, as well as from those confined to merely formal or external religiosity.

Whoever follows the path of *tawḥīd* according to the rule of the heart (*qalb*) and contemplation (*naẓar*), indeed knows and acts.

The knower of realities (*‘ilm al-ashyā’*) said: “We observed and learned; what we contemplated, we verified by what we knew.” Thus, the final end of the prophets (*anbiyā’*) and the masters of purity (*aṣfiyā’*) is that the craftsman knows his craft. And the Wise (*al-Ḥakīm*) described the prophets and the masters of purity saying: “He (the Prophet) — peace be upon him and his family — clarified things by His wisdom, and the scholar is one who acts according to his knowledge.”

And His proofs (*hujaj*) — peace be upon them — are those who manifest the signs of *tawḥīd* in every age. His pure friends (*abrār aṭḥār*) uphold its pillars and illuminate its meanings. In every era there has been among them one rightly guided (*rashīd*) and one unifier (*muwāhhid*).

As our Master al-Qāḍī al-A‘ẓam narrates from our Master al-Bāqir (‘a): “Indeed, Allah places in every age a remnant of the people of knowledge who call others by the grace bestowed upon them, who see by the light of Allah when others are blind. They speak truth when others fall silent. Whoever is deprived of their guidance perishes, and whoever follows them is saved — for their traces are the finest among humankind.”

The Companion of the *Ṭalabiyyīn* (seekers) said: “How many of Allah’s servants utter words that cause them to descend into the lowest depths of Hell! It is they who are deprived of Allah’s grace and are held back from the degrees of knowledge.”

And it is narrated that Ibn Ziyād once asked the Commander of the Faithful, ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (‘a), about *tawḥīd* expressed solely by the tongue.

He replied: “Whoever answers about *tawḥīd* through verbal expression alone is a heretic (*mulḥid*). Whoever points toward Him imagines Him limited. Whoever speaks of Him in terms of comparison is ignorant. Whoever remains silent concerning Him out of neglect is heedless. Whoever thinks that he has comprehended Him by thought has missed Him entirely. All that you distinguish through your imagination has its origin in created forms; thus, the One you imagine is a creation of your own making.”

And he said: “The inability to comprehend comprehension is comprehension itself. The search for His essence is a form of association (*ishrāk*). To attempt to unveil His mystery leads one into the shadows of blindness. To reach Him through *naẓar* (rational reflection) alone is impossible.”

It is also narrated that a man asked the Commander of the Faithful (‘a): “Have you seen your Lord?”

He replied: “Yes — I do not worship what I do not see.”

The man asked, “How do you see Him?”

He said: “The eyes cannot perceive Him through direct vision, yet the heart perceives Him through the realities of *īmān* (faith). He is near to all things, but not in physical contact; distant, but not separated. Manifest without being seen, subtle without being hidden; He is perceived, yet without sensory description. Merciful, yet without emotion; majestic, yet without form. The faces turn toward Him in awe, and the hearts are humbled in reverence before His greatness.”

#### Footnotes

1. Meaning: one who attains realization (*ḥāṣil*) is one who remains constant and firm; the intended meaning is not the Imām himself, but that the one who has attained realization possesses within him both the soul (*naḥs*) and the spirit (*rūḥ*).
2. Refers to Imām Muḥammad al-Bāqir ibn ‘Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (‘a).
3. The author of *Risālat Kayfiyyat al-Ṭalab* intends by this the means of escaping the deceptions of *shayṭān* for those devoted to spiritual pursuit. See al-Mu‘ayyad fī al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī, *Majmū‘ Rasā’il*, Cairo edition, 382 A.H., and the Persian translation of *Irshādāt al-Rashīd*.
4. The sayings attributed to the Imāms from the family of ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (‘a) form the foundation of the Ismā‘īlī doctrine of Divine Oneness.

5. Meaning: “I was, and nothing was with Me.” The intent is not that Allah was alone in a temporal sense, but that He was unique in essence and beyond any association.
6. *Mizān* manuscript, folio T.
7. *Bil-ḥiss* — i.e., by sensory perception.

Sayyidunā al-Muʾayyad fīʾl-Dīn (qaddasa Allāhu rūḥah) said in one of his sermons: “O Allah, O You who have exalted us by the truth of what Your *Hakīm* (Wise One) spoke in remembrance of You and in the words of Your creation: ‘*And they did not value Allah as He should be valued*’ (Q. 6:91), we ask You for the aid of the one who stands in the rank of servitude (‘*ubūdiyyah*). For to mention You otherwise is deficiency, and whoever mentions You without acknowledging his incapacity does so under the rule of compulsion (*iḍṭirār*). Therefore, repentance (*istighfār*) is the intercessor for the sinner.”

It thus becomes clear that these truthful expressions come from those sincere and pure tongues whose speech is refined by the light of the unseen (*ghayb*). Indeed, the unseen of Allah—exalted is He—is such that His Majesty (*jalāluh*) cannot be called by any of the Names, nor described by what He is invoked with. Yet it is through the mediation of the Names that He may be called upon, as He said: “And to Allah belong the most beautiful Names (*al-asmāʾ al-ḥusnā*), so call upon Him by them.” (Q. 7:180)

Thus, by our knowledge we have understood that His *tawḥīd* lies in the negation of limitation (*ḥadd*) and the affirmation of transcendence (*tanzīh*). Whoever imposes limitation upon Him has restricted Him; whoever negates limitation from Him has purified Him.

Amīr al-Muʾminīn (‘alayhi’s-salām) said: “The beginning of religion is knowledge (*maʾrifah*) of Allah; the perfection of knowledge is affirmation of His oneness (*tawḥīd*); the perfection of *tawḥīd* is negation of attributes (*ṣifāt*) from Him. For every attribute and the one described are two, and everything that admits duality implies composition (*tarkīb*). Whoever attributes to Him has likened Him; whoever likens Him has made Him composite; whoever makes Him composite has divided Him; and whoever divides Him is ignorant of Him.”

He also said: “Speech about that which is beyond comprehension is ignorance, and disputation concerning that which intellect (‘*aql*) cannot grasp is error.”

The author of *al-Rasāʾil* (may Allah’s blessings be upon him) said: “It is obligatory to declare the Creator (*al-Bārī*) transcendent (*tanzīh*) from whatever the soul or the intellect might conceive. For if intellect or soul can imagine His form or measure His creation, then they have limited Him. Allah—exalted is He—cannot be comprehended by intellect, nor imagined by the soul. His majesty (*jalālahu*) and grandeur (‘*aẓamatuhu*) transcend every conception, and His power (*qudratuhu*) encompasses all. How then could the created mind find a path to describing that which lies beyond the capacity of all creation?”

#### Footnotes

1. **al-Muʾayyad fīʾl-Dīn al-Shīrāzī (d. 470 AH / 1078 CE)** — a leading Fāṭimid dāʿī, poet, and theologian. Originally from Shīrāz, he served the Fāṭimid Imāms al-Zāhir and al-Mustansir bi’llāh in Cairo, where he led the Dār al-ʿIlm and composed the *Majālis al-Muʾayyadiyyah*. His writings form a foundational corpus of Ismāʿīlī theology and *daʿwah* literature.
2. Qurʾān 6:91.
3. Qurʾān 7:180.

4. In *Ismā'īlī tawḥīd*, transcendence (*tanzīh*) entails the absolute negation of all attributes from the Divine Essence. Attributes pertain only to divine action (*af'āl*), never to the Essence itself, which is beyond conception, description, or relation.
5. The “negation of limitation” (*salb al-ḥadd*) refers to rejecting any finitude, direction, or composition that would compromise the unity of the *Dhāt* (Essence).
6. The saying of 'Alī ('a) is recorded in *Nahj al-Balāghah*, Sermon 1 (“The First Sermon”), and forms a key theological basis for the *Ismā'īlī* doctrine of transcendence.
7. The *Rasā'il* cited refers to *Rasā'il Ikhwān al-Ṣafā'*, the encyclopaedic philosophical work of the 4th/10th century, frequently quoted in Fatimid literature.

**Our master, al-Mu'ayyad fī'l-Dīn al-Shīrāzī** — may Allah exalt his sanctity — said in one of his sermons and assemblies: “I bear witness that there is no god but Allah (*lā ilāha illā Allāh*), the One sanctified beyond all *tathniyah* (duality). Whoever seeks the truth of *tawḥīd* (Divine Unity) by the path of mere reasoning will err; whoever journeys toward Him through *wahm* (imagination) will lose the way; and whoever attempts to comprehend Him through 'aql (intellect) alone will return defeated and bewildered.”

He also said in another place: “Glory be to the One (*Subḥānahu*) from whom thoughts recoil and notions scatter. He is exalted beyond *kufr* (disbelief) and misguidance.

O Allah! How can anything be said concerning One who cannot be conceived in thought, imagined by imagination, or comprehended by reflection?

Whoever thinks of Him limits Him; whoever limits Him misrepresents Him; whoever misrepresents Him denies His reality.

He is beyond *taṣrīf* (change), beyond the illusion of movement and stillness, of time and direction, of negation and affirmation.”

He further said: “Praise be to Allah who transcends the reach of intellects that attempt to grasp Him through reflection. His *ḥaqīqah* (reality) is the *Mubdi' al-Khāliq al-Bāri' al-Maṣūr* — the Originator, the Creator, the Fashioner — exalted beyond the attributes of the created, the limited, or the confined.”

And he said: “Praise be to Allah who cannot be perceived by sight, nor encompassed by thought. He transcends association with ideas, uncontained by the succession of recollections, and unbounded by 'adam (non-existence) or *ḥadd* (measure).

Glory be to Him — no name encompasses Him, no attribute defines Him.

He is not indicated by gesture nor pointed to by direction.

He is not described by *ḥaythiyyah* (place) nor encompassed by *kayfiyyah* (modality).

It is not said that He is 'below' or 'above', for He is the *Mubdi' al-Ḥayy al-Qādir al-Ālim al-Kāmil al-Fā'il* — the Originator, the Living, the Powerful, the Knowing, the Perfect, the Doer.

And it is not said that He possesses an *essence* (*dhāt*) bearing attributes, for every such essence is itself bound by those attributes.”

He continued: “He has no *jism* (body), nor 'araḍ (accident), nor *naḥs* (soul) or its qualities. It is not said that He is *jawhar* (substance), for the substance is divided into body and non-body, and He is neither.

It is not said that He is 'araḍ, for the accident requires a locus.

It is not said that He is 'illah (cause), for causation implies dependence, and He is *qadīm*

(pre-eternal), beyond dependence.

His existence itself is the testimony of His *huwīyyah* (Being).”

Then said **al-Ḥakīm Ḥamīd al-Dīn**: “Existents are divided into three classes:

- that which comes into being through *ibdāʿ* (origination),
- that which comes into being through *inbiʿāth* (emanation),
- and that which comes into being through *iḥdāth* (generation).

The first has no medium — it arises solely by the will of the *Mubdiʿ* (Originator).

The second has a medium — it proceeds through the continuity of *zamān* (time).

The third is bound by *ḥudūth* (temporal occurrence).

The first proceeds from no cause;  
the second, from a cause of motion;  
and the third, from a cause of composition.”

He continued: “He — exalted be He — is beyond *makān* (place) and *zamān* (time), for He is *al-Ḥayy* (the Living), *al-Qādir* (the Powerful), *al-Qadīm* (the Pre-eternal).

There is no ‘before’ or ‘after’ for Him.

He is the *Mawjūd al-Awwal* (the First Existent).

It is not said of Him that He is ‘a thing’, for that would liken Him to *ashyāʾ* (things).

He is sanctified beyond likeness.

Whoever says, ‘I know Him only by knowing that He is,’ has spoken truth — for that is the knowledge of His existence without modality.”

#### Notes

1. In Ismāʿīlī *ʿirfān* (gnosis), *nafs* (soul) is distinct from the *nafs kullīyyah* (Universal Soul). The human *nafs* reflects the higher *nafs* through which the *ʿaql* (intellect) perceives emanations of divine forms.
2. The cosmological division of *ibdāʿ*, *inbiʿāth*, and *iḥdāth* appears also in *Rasāʾil al-Ḥikmah* of Ḥamīd al-Dīn al-Kirmānī, showing continuity of metaphysical doctrine within Fatimid thought.
3. The compiler of *Kanz al-Walad* here preserves the teachings of both **al-Muʿayyad fī l-Dīn al-Shīrāzī** and **Ḥamīd al-Dīn al-Kirmānī**, linking early Fatimid *daʿwah* cosmology with later Yemeni Ismāʿīlī doctrine.

Whoever says that the acts of worship ( *ʿibādāt* ) are merely to please and gratify [God], has indeed imposed upon Him the attributes of emotions, satisfaction, and change. For acceptance (*riḍā*) after displeasure (*sakḥāʾ*) implies transformation, and such transformation is impossible for the Creator (*al-Bārī*). Acts of worship, therefore, return upon those who perform them, not upon the Creator. The Sublime (*al-Badīʿ al-Ḥaqq*) has indicated this in His saying: “Whoever does good, it is for himself; and whoever does evil, it is against himself.” (Qurʾan 41:46)

Thus, obedience benefits the obedient one, and disobedience harms the sinner. These are signs of rational discourse, for *al-Badīʿ* resembles nothing. If He resembled anything, He would share its nature and be confined by its limits — but He is exalted far above that. Indeed, our intellects ( *ʿuqūl* ) fail to comprehend His essence; how then could we encompass His greatness?

Amīr al-Mu'minīn (‘*alayhi al-salām*) said in *al-Durra al-Yatīma*: “The evidence of His existence is His signs; the proof of His oneness (*tawhīd*) is His creation; His singularity is manifested through His workmanship. He is the Manifest (*ẓāhir*) without appearance, and the Hidden (*bāṭin*) without concealment. He is connected with all things without nearness, and apart from them without distance. He is not described by a state, nor confined by a limit, nor does He change through time.”

He further said: “He is beyond being perceived by the senses (*hawāss*), and the intellect (‘*aql*) cannot encompass Him. He is above the estimations of imaginations, and the understandings of understanders. He is the One who thinks upon none, and none can think upon Him — for He is beyond all ranks (*rutab*) and degrees.”

And our master, Sayyid Ḥamīd al-Dīn said: “He is the One who is far above likeness and resemblance; there is nothing comparable to Him. His sovereignty is everlasting and His existence without beginning. His grandeur surpasses all comprehension, and His majesty exceeds all imagining.”

#### Footnotes and Marginal Notes (combined):

1. Qur'an 41:46 — The verse cited by al-Mu'ayyad fī'l-Dīn al-Shīrāzī.
2. *al-Durra al-Yatīma* — A work attributed to Imām ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (‘*alayhi al-salām*).
3. *Ẓāhir* (manifest) and *bāṭin* (hidden) — used here to indicate the simultaneous transcendence (*tanzīh*) and immanence (*taqarrub*) of the Creator.
4. The term *rutab* (ranks) and *marātib* (degrees) refer to metaphysical levels of existence. God is above all ranks, beyond containment or comparison.
5. Sayyid Ḥamīd al-Dīn is one of the early dā'īs of the Fatimid da‘wa, whose words are cited here to emphasize *tanzīh* — God's incomparability and transcendence.

The *nihāyat al-marātib* (ultimate degree) lies in *jalāl* (majesty), ‘*azama* (greatness), *kibriyā'* (magnificence), *qudra* (power), and *bahā'* (splendor). Regarding this, the intellect becomes incapable of comprehension, for Allāh — exalted is He — is ‘*aẓīm kabīr* (Most Great and Mighty). He is not encompassed by limitation, for there is none comparable to Him (*lā dīdd lahu wa lā mithl*). Glory be to Him — there is nothing like unto Him (*laysa ka-mithlihi shay'*).

**Al-Shaykh Ḥamīd al-Dīn al-Sijistānī** said in *Ithbāt al-Nubuwwāt*: “Subḥān al-Mu‘dīl (Glory be to the Equilibrator) — transcendent beyond perception through attributes, beyond the comprehension of *ṭabā'ī'* (natures), untouched by the laws of substitution, unaltered by transformation, and unaffected by the imaginings of dreamers. He is unseen by the senses (*hawāss*), untouched (*lā yums*), beyond all measure (*qiyās*), not perceived by the sighted nor grasped by the eyes. He is beyond the tongue's description, beyond likeness or comparison. He is *munazzah* (transcendent) beyond all opposition and beyond similitude (*lā mithl lahu*). He is *al-Laṭīf al-Khabīr* (the Subtle, the All-Aware).”

The *Mu‘dīl* is transcendent beyond all confinement; He is not encompassed by any of the attributes belonging to limited beings (*dhawāt al-mahdūdīn*). The *awhām al-awhām* (subtlest imaginations) cannot attain knowledge of His *ḥaqīqa* (reality). The intellects are bewildered (*ḥā'ira*) when attempting to perceive the grandeur of His ‘*azama* (greatness).

The *dalāla* (indication) of His majesty is reflected in His ordering of the *marātib* (ranks), in His elevation of what is exalted (*marfū*), and His abasement of what is low (*mawḍū*)

[Footnotes]

1. *Nihāyat al-marātib* — the supreme spiritual and ontological rank that transcends all material and spatial limits, for the Exalted (*ta'ālā*) is beyond form, grasp, or containment; He cannot be comprehended by the *'aql* (intellect), expressed in *lafẓ* (word), or imagined in *taṣawwūr* (concept).
2. **Ḥamīd al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn 'Abdallāh al-Sijistānī** (حميد الدين السيجستاني) — one of the great *ḥukamā'* of the Ismaili *da'wa*, active in the 4th century AH. Among his celebrated works is *Ithbāt al-Nubuwwāt* (Proof of Prophecies), from which this passage is taken.
3. The expression *nihāyat al-marātib* appears in *Ithbāt al-Nubuwwāt* (p. 140) and *Kitāb al-Yanābī'* (p. 232) with the same meaning, referring to the exalted transcendence (*tanzīh*) of God beyond comprehension or likeness.

When his companion agrees with him, it becomes evident that what exists (*al-mawjūd*) has no partner. After that, if he affirms that there is another “One” (*wāḥid*), or another “Knowing” (*'ālim*), or another “Powerful” (*qādir*), or another “Living” (*ḥayy*), then that is invalid — for that would mean there are two beings possessing existence and power. Rather, the meaning is that He — exalted is He — is the Doer (*fā'il*), the Knowing (*'ālim*), the Powerful (*qādir*), and the Living (*ḥayy*) in and by His very Essence (*dhāt*), not through anything external to it.

Just as one says, “The Sultan is in this city,” meaning the Sultan is present therein — not that “being in the city” is an added attribute to him. Similarly, when it is said “He is Knowing and Powerful,” these are not attributes existing apart from Him; rather, He knows Himself by Himself, and He is Powerful by Himself, not by another.

Thus, He becomes Knowing by His own knowledge (*'ilmihī*), Powerful by His own power (*qudratihī*), and Living by His own life (*ḥayātihī*). All of this is attributed to Him and occurs by His command (*amrihī*). Therefore, it is proper to say: “This occurs by the command of Allah, exalted is He.”

And it is said elsewhere: “Praise be to Allah, who transcends any comparison or likeness.”

When the human intellect (*'aql*) turns to the search for His Essence (*dhātihi*), it becomes perplexed — for the realities of divine attributes (*ṣifāt ilāhiyya*) cannot be encompassed by thought. The seeker (*sālik*), when he strives to comprehend what is beyond perception, only grows more aware of his incapacity (*'ajz*). Indeed, realizing one's incapacity to comprehend Him is itself comprehension (*'ilm*).

Thus, the seeker's limbs grow weak, his efforts are exhausted, and his intellect concedes defeat. His only purpose becomes to seek nearness (*qurb*) and deliverance (*khalāṣ*) through Him, and to bear witness to His Oneness in truth. Then he says: “Praise be to Allah, who cannot be described, nor compared, nor encompassed.”

And I testify truly that He is as He has declared Himself to be. I seek His help and protection, and I say: “There is no power nor strength except through Allah, the Most High, the Most Great.”

1. **He means:** that the indication (*dalālah*) applies only to what is possible to indicate; it cannot encompass that which transcends speech and letters — for words merely point toward meaning. The speech (*kalām*) of the Absolute (*al-mabda'*) is not composed of sound or letters, for its purpose is to awaken understanding of what is beyond comprehension.  
(This refers to *kalām al-mabda'* — divine communication that conveys meaning without sound or letters.)
2. **He said elsewhere:** that this subject concerns the **veil of hearing** — meaning, one must abstain from the distractions of audible and sensory phenomena when seeking spiritual truths.
3. **That is,** the true striving (*jihād*) is the struggle to know the hidden realities of meanings (*ḥaqā'iq ma'nawīyya*), the subtle inward realities (*asrār*), the divine measures (*qudrah ilāhiyya*), and the eternal works and actions.

**He means** that the purpose of the call (*da'wah*) is to awaken and instruct; the means of its delivery — word, gesture, or sign — serve only to raise the soul to the knowledge of Truth (*ma'rifat al-ḥaqq*). When the seeker reaches a certain point of contemplation, he realizes that the **Divinity** (*ilāhiyyah*) is not something perceived by intellect (*'aql*) or sensed by the soul (*nafs*), nor can it be judged by imagination (*wahm*) or sensory perception (*ḥiss*). Rather, human nature (*ṭab' al-insān*) is compelled to confess and admit this truth, until it declares with certainty: “Indeed, Allah — there is no god but He, and there is no one worthy of worship besides Him.”

And our master al-Mu'ayyad (*'alayhi al-salām*) said in the **Dīwān of Religion**:

“Praise be to Allah, who transcends likeness (*tashbīh*),  
and before whose majesty all comprehension fails,  
and before whose greatness all intellects fall short.”

And our master, the world's teacher, peace be upon him, said:

“I bear witness that there is no god but Allah alone, without partner;  
the One who is exalted above all things,  
above similarity (*tashābuh*), composition (*iltihām*), partners (*a'dād*),  
offspring (*awlād*), and opposition (*aḍḍād*).  
He is transcendent above measure and limit,  
exalted beyond estimation and description,  
the One whose essence no thought can contain,  
and whose grandeur no understanding can encompass.”

His majesty (*jalālah*) is beyond description, and His perfection (*kamāl*) is beyond measure. None can comprehend Him in His Essence (*dhāt*), nor attain His Reality (*ḥaqīqah*). No intellect (*'aql*) can conceive of Him, for He transcends the reach of mind and sense alike.

Thus, the human being (*insān*) may know that God exists, but cannot comprehend the manner of His existence — for such comprehension would imply *ḥadd* (limitation). There is no way to reach knowledge of His *dhāt*, except through His signs (*āyāt*), and by reflection upon His creation (*āthār*).

Hence, whoever imagines that he can comprehend Him in totality (*kulliyyah*) only proves his own incapacity, for true comprehension belongs only to Him who encompasses all things.

Glory (*subhānahu*) and majesty (*ta'ālā*) be to Him above what the wrongdoers (*ẓālimūn*) attribute to Him, a greatness beyond all measure.

And our master **Ḥamīd al-Dīn** (al-Sijistānī, raḥimahu Allāh) said:

“Indeed, the First Origin (*al-mabda' al-awwal*) is the complete, perfect Cause (*al-ibdā' al-tām al-kāmil*), encompassing all of His creation by His command (*amr*) and His authority (*wilāyah*).

His existence is not perceived by intellect, nor encompassed by knowledge.

Glory be to Him — neither imagination reaches Him, nor thought can grasp Him.

At the moment of emanation (*intiḏāb*), nothing can act without His command, nor can anything persist without His sustaining.

He is the **Beginning of all beginnings** (*bidāyah al-bidāyāt*), and the **End of all ends** (*niḥāyah al-nihāyāt*) — encompassing all things, in perfection and entirety.”

Footnotes

1. **That is**, as previously mentioned — the Divinity (*ilāhiyyah*) cannot be apprehended by the intellect, for comprehension of the Essence (*dhāt*) is impossible.
2. **He means** that despite the multiplicity of descriptions and forms perceived by us, the purpose is not the descriptions themselves but rather the knowledge of the intended Reality (*ma'rifat al-maqṣūd*), namely, the One who originates all — whether called *al-Mabda'* (the Originator) or *al-Dā'ī* (the Summoner).

When His Essence (*dhātuh*) endures in Its own Essence and existence, it cannot be apprehended except through a conception of that very Essence. Thus, if one attempts to imagine it apart from itself, it reverts to the intellect (*'aql*) that perceives — yet this perception is impossible, for such perception implies limitation (*taḥdīd*), and limitation contradicts the reality of *ibdā'* (origination without precedent).

For if the *mubdī'* (Originator) were something existing apart from His Essence, then He would be composed of Essence and attribute — and anything composed (*murakkab*) cannot be truly self-subsistent (*qayyūm*). There is no path to encompassing Him by observation or mental grasp (*iḥāṭah*), for He transcends all direction (*jīha*) and measure (*miqdār*).

Thus, whoever aspires to perceive Him, desires what cannot be attained; whoever seeks to comprehend Him, becomes bewildered. The one longing (*mushtāq*) for realization becomes like one dazzled by the sun's radiance — his sight fails from its intensity. So it is with the intellect (*'aql*): when it seeks to behold what lies beyond its capacity, it grows incapable and exhausted.

The intellect cannot grasp Him by reasoning or by reflection upon His existence, for His Being (*wujūd*) is beyond the range of perception (*idrāk*) and comprehension (*tafaqquh*). Rather, He is known through what He discloses of Himself to His servants, by signs (*āyāt*) and proofs (*dalā'il*), and through what reason can bear of that disclosure.

Therefore, He — exalted be He — remains forever beyond the grasp of intellects and the reach of comprehension, for He is the **Transcendent** (*al-'Alī*), the **All-Knowing** (*al-'Ālim*), and the **Ever-Subtle** (*al-Laṭīf*), who cannot be enclosed within a concept nor measured by a limit.

Glory be to Him — exalted is He beyond what the ignorant imagine or the conceited describe.

1. **Because salvation (*khalāṣ*) and true knowledge (*maʿrifah*)** cannot be attained except through the spiritual and inner aspect (*al-jihah al-bāṭiniyyah*), and this is through purification of the soul (*nafs*) and refinement of the heart (*qalb*). One's nearness to the Divine (*taqarrub ilā Allāh*) is realized through guidance of the intellect by the inner light (*nūr bāṭin*), and detachment from worldly attachments and bodily veils.
2. **He means** that the intellect (ʿ*aql*) is limited in its perception to material forms (*ajsām*) and temporal matters. It perceives only what belongs to the world of change and corruption (ʿ*ālam al-kawn wa-l-fasād*). The first *mabdaʿ* (Principle) is free from matter and time, exalted above all movement or rest, for movement and rest belong only to created bodies.  
The *mubdiʿ* (Originator) exists beyond all spatial and temporal relation; His *ibdāʿ* (creative act) proceeds eternally (*dāʿim*) and perpetually (*mustamir*). His knowledge (ʿ*ilm*) of what emanates from Him is not preceded by ignorance, nor does His will (*irādah*) change with time.
3. **Meaning**, the intellect's conception of the Divine is never complete; the closer it draws, the more it perceives its own incapacity. This incapacity is itself the sign of transcendence (*tanzīh*).
4. **There is no path to perceiving Him** through sensory experience or analogy (*tamthīl*), for His Reality transcends all forms and likenesses.

True perception (*idrāk*) occurs only when the perceiver (*mudrik*) is oriented toward the object of perception (*al-maṭlūb*), possessing awareness of it and directed toward it. But as for what lies beyond this, perception fails — for the intellect (ʿ*aql*) becomes incapable (ʿ*ājiz*) and the soul (*nafs*) becomes bewildered (*taḥayyur*).

This incapacity (ʿ*ajz*) is like the weakness of the eye before the sun: it is not due to the eye's deficiency, but rather because of the sun's overwhelming brilliance. Likewise, the intellect is incapable of perceiving the Divine Essence (*dhāt al-ḥaqq*) not due to imperfection within itself, but because the majesty of what it seeks (*jalāl al-maṭlūb*) surpasses all comprehension. Thus, the intellect turns away, humbled and dimmed, its faculties spent — it retreats defeated (*khasīrah*).

And it is said elsewhere:

“Allah — exalted and glorified — is transcendent (*mutakabbir*) beyond all resemblance (*tashābuh*) and all attributes that the intellect or the senses may ascribe to Him.

There is no likeness to Him in essence or in meaning.

He transcends every comparison drawn by expression or thought.

The sacredness (*quds*) of His Reality is exalted above all attributes.”

The intellects, having failed to comprehend Him, confess their incapacity and acknowledge His transcendence. Their striving and journeys lead not to comprehension, but to reverence and surrender. And the wise declare, as the Qurʾān says: “Exalted is He above what the wrongdoers attribute to Him — a Great Exaltation.”

And it is also said: “If the Creator (*al-bāriʿ*) had been graspable, He would not be God — for what is comprehended is contained, and the contained is limited. The One (*al-Wāḥid*) cannot

be enclosed by measure, nor can the Eternal (*al-Qadīm*) be comprehended by the temporal (*ḥādīth*).”

Therefore, the highest intellect (*al-‘aql al-a‘lā*) cannot encompass Him, nor can the loftiest rank of knowledge (*‘ilm*) comprehend Him. His majesty (*jalāl*) and perfection (*kamāl*) are beyond all conception. Every statement about Him ends in silence, every intellect stands bewildered beneath the weight of incapacity.

“Glory be to Him — there is no god but He.”

And it is related that someone once asked his master: “All creation agrees that Allah, exalted be He, is One (*muwaḥḥad*). But how can this Oneness be understood — from the aspect of the Doer (*fā‘il*) or the acted upon (*maf‘ūl*)?”

He replied: “Allah Most High transcends being the act of the doers. Rather, He is the Cause (*‘illah*) and the Origin (*mabda’*), and to Him all acts return.”

Footnotes (Page 21)

1. **Meaning**, as mentioned before, perception (*idrāk*) occurs only when the object of perception lies within the domain of human comprehension — but since the Divine Essence lies beyond all measure, perception of it is impossible.
2. **That is**, it is the incapacity of all *‘uqūl* (intellects), not just individuals — for all created intellects share in the limitation of finite comprehension, and all fail before the infinite.
3. **He refers here** to some of the *ta’wīlī* (esoteric) interpreters, who are among the ranks of the believers endowed with faith and spiritual preparedness (*isti’dād*) through divine knowledge (*‘ilm bāṭin*).

The Prophet ﷺ said regarding this matter, indicating the meaning of true unity (*tawḥīd*): “Indeed, Allah is One (*wāḥid*), and the believer also affirms His Oneness.”

This means that Allah is One, having existed as the One before all multiplicity — the origin (*mabda’*) of numbers, the source (*aṣl*) of unity and individuality. Thus, His being the One who acts (*fā‘il*) in bringing the existent (*mawjūd*) into being precedes every beginning and every cause (*mabda’*).

It is therefore established that He is One, the Origin and the Beginning of all things, for He has neither a beginning nor an origin from anything else.

As for the unity of the believer, it lies in the knowledge of that One who is Perfect (*kāmil*), who alone possesses true existence (*wujūd*) and causality (*‘illiyyah*). His Oneness has no likeness and no equal; His essence is unique, His rank exalted, and His knowledge encompasses all. From Him proceeds the world of unity and individuality — the realm of creation (*‘ālam al-khalq*) and command (*‘ālam al-amr*).

He, the Sublime Originator (*al-badī’*), has distinguished and separated all things from Himself by His creative power (*ibdā’*), sanctifying them through His command, and elevating them above mere resemblance. To Him belong all the Names and Attributes, and to Him point all signs (*ishārāt*).

The learned scholar (*‘ālim*) has said regarding this reality: “The knowledge of divine unity is the limit of understanding and recognition — it belongs only to the One who has attained the knowledge of the True Originator. For the limit of His attribute and recognition is the

beginning of all existence from Him. And the Originator transcends the attributes and surpasses the signs — and all are incapable of defining or describing Him. Even the gesture toward Him is itself a kind of incapacity, equal to acknowledging another existent beside Him.”

Footnotes (Page 22)

1. Because *tawḥīd* is pure of all forms of conjunction or composition; the union of the created with the Creator is impossible in every sense. Were there another existence beside His, it would have required a cause distinct from Him — but since all that exists comes from Him, there can be no second alongside the One.
2. Some read “‘*ālīm*” here as referring to the spiritual sage (‘*ārīf*), not merely a scholar of discourse, indicating the *gnostic* perception of unity.
3. That is, He transcends all attributes (*ṣifāt*) that signify limitation or relativity — for the divine Essence cannot be grasped through qualities that imply relation, comparison, or measure.
4. The word *yata ‘āla* (“He is exalted”) emphasizes transcendence beyond all nearness or distance, all likeness or difference.

The first step toward knowledge of His Majesty (*jalālah*) is to affirm that the Originator (*al-badī’*), the Creator of truth (*al-ḥaqq ta ‘ālā*), exists. This affirmation does not apply to Him as a *quality* (*ṣifah*) added to His Essence, for there is nothing contrary or opposite to Him — exalted is He above all that.

When one declares His Oneness (*tawḥīd*), saying “*Lā ilāha illā Allāh*” (“There is no god but Allah”), this is the truest knowledge of *tawḥīd* — the way out from *ta ‘īl* (negation of divine attributes) and *tashbīh* (anthropomorphic comparison). Every statement of *tawḥīd* that departs from this balance falls into one of these two errors — either negation (*ta ‘īl*) or assimilation (*tashbīh*). May Allah protect us from both by His mercy.

The Shaykh also said: “Know that among the degrees (*marātib*) of *tawḥīd*, the truest and purest form is the affirmation of the One (*al-wāḥid*) who is free from limitation (*ḥadd*) and measure (*miqdār*). He is beyond all boundaries, and none of the dualities mentioned by the people of discourse apply to Him.”

Thus, He transcends the attributes of creation (*ṣifāt al-khalq*), for such affirmations would involve speech, condition, or restriction. The true knowledge of His Names belongs to those who have been granted *connection* (*ittiṣāl*) with His Lordship (*rubūbiyyah*); whoever has known Him as One, has known Him through Him — and whoever is veiled from Him, remains in ignorance, not guided by light nor graced with favor.

Sayyidnā al-Mu’ayyad said: “Praise belongs to Allah, the One (*al-Aḥad*) who is complete in His perfection (*kāmil*), and whose Essence (*dhāt*) admits no partner. He is the One whose every action is purposeful (*fā ‘il*), and every effect returns to Him as its cause (‘*illah*). He neither depends on anything nor stands upon anything — He alone sustains all and is sustained by none. His unity is beyond isolation or multiplicity.”

Another scholar said: “I testify that there is no god but Allah, the One who brought existence (*wujūd*) into being, beyond likeness and measure, pure of all comparison, singular in His manifestation, and distinct from all resemblance.”

And another said: “I testify that there is no god but Allah — the One to whom gesture cannot reach, nor thought encompass.”

Footnotes (Page 23)

1. *Tanzīh* — declaring His transcendence above all limitation, division, and composition.
2. Meaning: the recognition of finitude and numerical distinctions that exist only in the realm of creation; these do not apply to the *ibdāʿ* (creative origination) of the Real (*al-ḥaqq*).
3. The *ibdāʿ* (origination) of the Creator is unlike any created act, for His act does not arise from prior absence nor from latent potentiality. His act is eternal in relation to His Essence, and there exists no independent identity apart from Him — only what He manifests from His own Essence.

There is no entry into the true knowledge (*maʿrifah*) of *tawḥīd* unless one is guided to it, for the people of confusion (*ahl al-tarīkh*) engage in *tashbīh* (anthropomorphic comparison) and *taʿtīl* (negation).

And it is said in supplication: “O Allah, purify us from the stain of limitation (*ḥaddūd*), and elevate us beyond mention of contingent existence (*mawjūd*). Conceal us within Your existence (*wujūd*), and manifest to us from what appears of the signs of Your unity (*tawḥīd*).”

It is also said in some of the *āthār* (reports): “The first group of those whom our Lord, exalted is He, will reveal Himself to are those who have purified their inner selves and freed themselves from every limitation. Glorified and exalted is He.”

And it is said elsewhere: “They are the ends of all created beings (*nihāyāt kull min khalq Allāh*), the utmost perfection of intellect and peace. To them belongs the return of those who stray, and by them the earth is purified when corruption spreads.”

And he said in one of his sermons (*khuṭbah*): “I bear witness that there is no god but Allah, the One whose unity admits no boundary (*ḥadd*), and whose *tawḥīd* allows for no division. Whoever departs from this affirmation departs from His book of purity. Whoever equates Him with creation has replaced knowledge with distortion. Praise be to Allah who, in every age, establishes guides (*hādiyūn*) to invite towards religion and call to His proof. So whoever is guided by them finds security, and whoever disputes them has been tried. The One without limit is Allah’s true felicity.”

Footnotes (Page 24)

1. The marked words appear within two parallel lines — a scribal convention for emphasis.
2. Refers to the “people of error” (*ahl al-ḍalāl*) — those who attribute corporeality to God or deny His attributes entirely, both being extremes of *tashbīh* and *taʿtīl*.
3. Refers to the *Āl al-Bayt* — the Prophet’s purified household (*ʿitrah*), those cleansed by God from all defilement, as in:

**“Indeed Allah only desires to remove impurity from you, O People of the House, and to purify you completely.” (Qurʾān 33:33)**

4. *Ḥadd maḥdūd* — the Isma‘ili doctrine distinguishes between a **spiritual hierarchy** (*ḥadd rūḥānī*) and a **corporeal hierarchy** (*ḥadd jismānī*). The former pertains to prophetic and imamic ranks, the latter to religious offices within the community. Together they express divine order through *ibdā‘* (origination) and *inbi‘āth* (emanation).

And he said again: The Creator of beings (*bāri’ al-barāyā*) in pre-eternity (*fī al-qidam*) originated them through His essence, just as the ruling over creation proceeds from His ruling over Himself. The manifest aspect (*ẓāhir*) confirms His proof upon them, while the hidden aspect (*bāṭin*) is that which is not attained by perception, nor grasped by imagination or intellect. He established in the world the one who indicates towards Him — the Prophet (*nabī*) or the Imām — as a mirror reflects an image.

Everyone who looks towards Him does so according to his own capacity and disposition — just as those who gaze into a mirror each see their own reflection. Thus, they are confined within their limits of comprehension, unable to perceive the reality (*ḥaqīqah*) of His essence, nor to grasp Him by the strength of their intellects.

And truly, whoever does not recognize the One who brought him into being (*man ansha’ahu min al-‘adam ilā al-wujūd*) cannot know existence itself, nor understand the knowledge of limitation (*ma’rifat al-ḥudūd*). Hence, denial and rejection follow for such a one.

And it is narrated from our master, Imām Ja‘far al-Šādiq (peace be upon him), that he heard a man say, “Allāhu Akbar.”

He asked, “From what are you saying He is greater? From everything?”

The man replied, “Yes.”

The Imām said: “If you mean that He is greater than everything, then you have limited Him. But Allah is Greater — far beyond description (*lā yūṣaf*), beyond being defined by forms (*lā yan‘at bi’l-ashbāḥ*), beyond being known through spirits (*lā yuqran bi’l-arwāḥ*), beyond measure (*lā bil-maḥdūd*), and beyond imagination. He is not confined that He may be comprehended, nor absent that He may be sought. Thought cannot encompass Him, nor vision grasp Him, nor the heart imagine His likeness.

Whoever seeks Him through comparison (*tashbīh*), denies His *tawḥīd*; whoever conceives Him by analogy, veils Him with attributes of deficiency; whoever limits Him by duality, associates Him with *aḍḍād* (opposites) and *andād* (equals). He transcends corruption, contradiction, and all that the servants are incapable of.”

Footnotes (Page 25)

1. Meaning: *He created them through His essence without intermediary or condition.*
2. The *bāṭinī* interpretation indicates that the self (*nafs*) is perfected through divine power (*qudrah*), and this perfection occurs through the *fa’l* (action) that God initiates — not by imitation or reasoning alone. This follows the Isma‘ili principle that all true knowledge (*‘ilm*) flows only through divine guidance (*imāmah*).
3. Imām Ja‘far al-Šādiq (d. 148 AH / 765 CE), the sixth Imām, is cited here from *Uṣūl al-Kāfī* (I, 83–84), where this narration appears with slight variations.
4. The phrase *Allāhu Akbar* is explained esoterically (*ta’wīl*) as: “Allah is greater than to be comprehended by any measure or comparison.”

These passages illustrate that the Exalted and Most High (*al-‘Alī al-A‘lā*) transcends description through His creations, and is beyond the attributes (*ṣifāt*) ascribed to His beings. And as for the Names that are expressed through His acts, they do not indicate constancy (*thabāt*) in *tawhīd*, glorification, or exaltation except within the knowledge of His limits (*bi-ma‘rifat ḥudūdih*).<sup>1</sup>

It is related from our master **Ḥamīd al-Dīn al-Kirmānī**, may God sanctify his secret, in the last section of his book *Rāḥat al-‘Aql*, that he concluded it with these words: “What is the truth of humility and the pure meaning of submission?

It is that the true felicity (*sa‘ādah*) of the soul lies in receiving instruction (*ta‘līm*) from the aid of the Messengers — such as our Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him and his progeny), and the Imāms from his purified descendants — for they are the ranks of divine guidance and knowledge. And its [the soul’s] felicity cannot be completed except by receiving what they impart and learning from them.

If you know and believe in His *tawhīd*, then you must affirm that the reality attached to Him — exalted is He — among all existents has no image, no form, no quality, and no condition by which the intellects may grasp or encircle Him.

For to imagine Him is to err, and to attempt comprehension of Him is delusion. He is beyond all conceptualization and imagination. Whoever thinks about His essence falls into limitation; whoever reflects upon His creation, magnifies and glorifies Him.

When the reports (in *akhbār*) reach us about Him, we understand them only in the sense that He is subtle in His wisdom and profound in His knowledge.”

Footnotes (Page 26)

1. *Al-burūz wa-al-khifā’* — the “manifestation and concealment” refer to the two states of divine relation to creation: manifest in His acts, concealed in His essence.
2. *Al-mursalīn* — the Prophets.
3. *Al-rāshidīn* — the rightly guided Imāms.
4. The *ṭalab al-sa‘ādah* (“seeking felicity”) is achieved through the pursuit of divine knowledge; when the soul transitions from the realm of potentiality (*‘ālam al-quwwah*) to the realm of actuality (*‘ālam al-fi‘l*), it attains eternal life (*ḥayāh bāqiyah*).
5. “*Al-isti‘ānah*” (seeking aid) here implies that felicity is incomplete without reliance upon divine guidance through the Prophet and the Imām.
6. “*Al-iḥāṭah*” (comprehension) — the intellect is incapable of encircling the divine essence because He precedes all existents; all things depend upon Him in their being, not He upon them. Thus, the created cannot encompass the Creator, for the encompassed presupposes existence within a boundary, and He, exalted is He, is beyond all bounds.

And that which may occur to one’s imagination (*taṣawwur*) when reporting about God Most High, as if resembling what exists in created things — that is a mere assumption (*takhayyul*) pertaining to that which exists within beings composed of divisible realities (*al-mawjūdāt allatī fī khilqat ‘adadīyah*).

For example, grammatical expressions (*al-i 'rāb*) that have no independent existence but are merely symbols in speech — whether it be the letter *alif*, *wāw*, or *yā'*.

Thus, the “beginning” (*al-badāyah*) of the word is among the phenomena of language and its composition. Sometimes its arrangement occurs truly and sometimes metaphorically.

Hence, this is a **symbol** (*ramz*), and the one who knows its meaning possesses knowledge of the *uṣūl* (principles) by which the realities of things (*ḥaqā'iq al-ashyā'*) are understood.

Whoever aims through it to draw near to God with subtle reflection (*ta'ammul*) and contemplation (*tadabbur*) will perceive that it is not a report about the divine essence, but about what is within creation — about forms composed of divisible existents (*khilqat 'adadiyyah*).

The “letters,” in this context, are not linguistic sounds but symbolic representations. The primary ones among them are **three** — *alif*, *wāw*, and *yā'*.

He (the author) said:

“We have explained this in detail, and the explication of the divine Names and Attributes does not fall under limits (*ḥudūd*).

And if one speaks of the ‘letters’ in linguistic terms, then the greatest of them are three, according to the view of our noble predecessors (*aslāf kirām*):

the *alif*, which symbolizes the One who is the First Emanator (*al-mubdi 'al-awwal*); the *wāw*, corresponding in numerical value to six; and the *yā'*, corresponding to one.”

Thus, the *alif* indicates divine unity (*waḥdāniyyah*), the *wāw* symbolizes wisdom (*ḥikmah*) and the subtle emergence of esoteric realities (*luṭf al-sharā'i 'wa-mustanbiṭātihā*), and the *yā'* marks the conclusion of numbers (*intiha' al-'adad*).

It is also the final letter in the alphabet, and through it one supplicates, saying:

“Yā Allāh! Yā Raḥmān! Yā Raḥīm!”

— and it thus indicates the **Qā'im** (the One who arises, the final Imām), through whom intercession (*tawassul*) to God is sought.

Footnotes (Page 27)

1. That is, one who imagines the divine essence in terms of physical attributes (*ṣifāt al-jismiyyah*) falls into error. The author refutes anthropomorphism (*tashbīh*) and affirms that divine *tawḥīd* is known only by negation of likeness (*tanzīh*) and transcendence beyond limitation.
2. *Amīr al-Mu'minīn* — the Commander of the Faithful, 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib ('alayhi al-salām). The author indicates that the *yā'* (the final letter) symbolizes the eschatological role of the Qā'im from his lineage, through whom divine mercy manifests.

The **Nāṭiq al-sābi'** (the seventh Speaker) — the final of the *ḥudūd* (spiritual ranks) — takes the place of the **First Rank** (*al-maqām al-awwal*).

He is like the *bā'* in the structure of the word, whose value is ten, as compared to the *alif*, which is one.

Likewise, the Names that correspond to the *ḥudūd* possess honor (*sharaf*), majesty (*jalāl*), greatness (*‘aẓamah*), and radiance (*bahā’*).

They have particular distinctions and hierarchical relationships; therefore, know what each represents in its own kind, generally.

If you understand this—God willing—you will know the meaning of the *ḥudūd* and how to connect the *maḥdūd* (the defined, or the believer) to the *maḥdūd bih* (that by which he is defined).

Then, remain steadfast upon the true Imām (*al-imām al-ḥaqq*) in every time, for from him emanate the lights of understanding (*anwār al-ma’rifah*).

Our master **al-Mu’ayyad** (Qāḍī al-Nu’mān or al-Mu’ayyad fī al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī) said:

“Action (*‘amal*) without knowledge (*‘ilm*), O my brother, is futile; and knowledge without action is incomplete in form.

Through the combination of both, degrees (*darajāt*) are attained and the ultimate perfection (*ghāyat al-thabāt*) is reached.”

Indeed, this is the meaning of the verse of God Most High: **“Indeed, those who believe and perform righteous deeds — for them are Gardens of Firdaws as a dwelling place, abiding therein forever; they will never seek to leave them.”**

(Qur’an 18:107–108)

Here, “righteous deeds” (*‘amal ṣāliḥ*) are interpreted as **wilāyah of the Imāms** (devotion and obedience to the rightful Imāms),

and “abiding therein” refers to **eternal guidance** within their command.

Thus, all obligatory acts (*farā’id*) and recommended devotions (*mustaḥabbāt*) are not accepted except through *wilāyah*, for obedience to the Messenger ﷺ is the **obligation of God** upon His servants, as in His saying: **“Obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those vested with authority among you.”** (Qur’an 4:59)

Therefore, **obedience to God** is realized through obedience to His Messenger and the Imāms, and this obedience is incumbent upon every Muslim and believer.

Footnotes (Page 28)

1. The **Qā’im** (the Resurrector) is the last of the Imāms from the progeny of Muḥammad ﷺ.

He manifests in the form of a luminous spiritual image (*ṣūrah nūrāniyyah qā’imah*), and he is the **Nāṭiq al-sābi’**, the possessor of the Great Qiyāmah (*Ṣāhib al-Qiyāmah al-Kubrā*).

His role is linked with that of Ḥusayn (‘alayhi al-salām), whose mission (*dawr*) is revelation and uncovering of hidden realities (*kashf al-sirr*).

Through him, the cycles (*adwār*) of divine command are completed.

2. The **Ismā’īlī uṣūl and aḥkām** teach that one cannot know God except through recognition of the limits (*ḥudūd*) by which He is manifested — the *ḥudūd al-dīn* are the path to His knowledge.

3. “Action without knowledge” may refer either to physical religious acts performed blindly (*‘ibādah ṣāhiriyyah*), or to spiritual striving (*‘ibādah rūḥāniyyah*) devoid of comprehension. The true believer must ascend from mere ritual to spiritual understanding.

4. Qur'an 18:107–108 — “Indeed, those who believe and do righteous deeds...”
5. Qur'an 4:59 — “Obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those vested with authority among you.”

Obedience (*tā'ah*) to Allah, His Messenger, and those vested with authority (*ūlī al-amr*) — these are three obligatory obediences (*tā'āt mufradāt*), each of which is independent and not interchangeable. If even one of them is abandoned, the rest are rendered void.

Indeed, true *tawhīd* (Divine Unity) of God, exalted is He, can only be attained through **recognition of His ḥudūd** (spiritual ranks). They are the noblest of His creation, perfected in their substance (*ṣinfahā*), complete in their nature, and pure in their action.

The Prophet ﷺ said: “That substance was increased in nobility, greatness, and honor.”

So they are the **quintessence of creation**, exalted above all others, and through them *tawhīd* is perfected, for they manifest the Divine Essence (*al-dhāt al-ilāhiyyah*) for those who are distant from the Absolute Origin (*al-mabda' al-ba'īd*). We recognize through them, as far as our human capacity allows, His will and command, for without them, one's belief would lack insight and truth.

Yet, if a person imagines that he can perceive God directly, he falls into the **error of the short-sighted** (*ṣuwwar qāṣirah*), whose understanding is limited to defective intellects, the perished minds of those afflicted with doubt, atheism (*ilhād*), and heresy.

Such people resemble the **polytheists** (*mushrikūn*) of old, of whom God says:

**“Most of them do not believe in Allah except while associating others with Him.”**  
(Qur'an 12:106)

Thus, they are **unbelievers**, though they claim belief — for they say “We believe in God,” yet imagine Him as a *mushābah* (corporeal being) or a *mushakkil* (form), and so they become **heretics** (*mulḥidūn*) and **deniers** (*jāhidūn*). They fall under three categories:

**The first group:** a sect of philosophers (*falāsifah*) who claim that the **First Intellect** (*al-ʿaql al-awwal*) is the true cause of existence, saying that the First Cause (*al-sabab al-awwal*) has no Creator, nor does He Himself create, except through the effect of His own essence. Thus they make Him the source of creation indirectly, denying the Primordial Creator (*al-mubdi' al-ḥaqq*).

They deny the chain of *ḥudūd* and reject the intermediaries (*wasā'it*), thus cutting off the hierarchy of being. But in truth, the **First Intellect** is only the first of creation, and within it resides the trace (*athar*) of its Creator.

It is the **reflected intellect** (*‘aql mawlūd*),  
by which all creatures discern truth from falsehood,  
and right from error (*al-khaṭā’ wa al-ṣawāb*).

Footnotes (Page 29)

1. ﷺ — Peace be upon him and his Family.
2. Qur’an 12:106 — “*Most of them do not believe in Allah except while associating others with Him.*”
3. The **Ismā‘īlī understanding** holds that the *Mubdi’ al-Awwal* (First Originator) cannot be directly described as the *Sābi’* (Seventh Emanation), for He transcends the ranks of *hudūd*.  
The First *ḥadd* is the **‘Aql Awwal (First Intellect)**, which receives divine light from the *Mubdi’*, and transmits it to the *Nafs al-Kulliyyah* (Universal Soul).  
Thus the emanative order descends from light to light.
4. The philosophers claimed that the **‘Aql Awwal** is the first cause, but the Ismā‘īlī teaching refutes this, affirming that it is **a created light**, emanating from the Divine Command (*amr*), and serving as the *ḥadd al-awwal* (first boundary) from which the rest of creation proceeds.

Between good and evil (*al-khayr wa al-sharr*), benefit and harm (*al-naḥḥ wa al-ḍarar*), the Creator, exalted is He (*al-Bārī’ subḥānahu wa ta‘ālā*), has ordained that there should always exist a causal relationship (*‘illah li-shay’in*).

Likewise, the **First Intellect** (*al-‘aql al-awwal*), whose essence is that of life and animation (*dhāt al-ḥayawān wa al-nabāt*), is itself an effect (*athar*) of the **Primordial Originator** (*al-Mubdi’ al-Awwal*). It is also the **principle of all existents** (*aṣl al-mawjūdāt*), their first and their last, their unifier and their differentiator, their cause and their outcome.

All the **attributes** (*ṣifāt*) and **relations** (*idāfāt*) are inseparably bound to it, for it is both **the first of things** and **the living reality** (*al-ḥayāh*) whose essence contains within it all that comes into being. Hence, everything that appears after it is but a reflection of it.

It is at once **an agent** (*‘āmil*) in itself, and **a patient** (*ma‘mūl fīhi*) through another. Thus, it is the first in one sense and the second in another, for what was first becomes last in one respect, and what is last becomes first in another.

This dynamic, continuous interplay of cause and effect is the **mark of servitude** (*‘ubūdiyyah*) and the **flow of the effect from the described into the description** (*sarayān tābi’ihi min al-mawṣūf*).

We are now clarifying the **realities** (*ḥaqā'iq*) that unfold from this discussion: those who fail to perceive these principles fall into confusion and error.

They are veiled by **temperament and passion** (*al-ṭabī'ah wa al-maṭbū'īyyah*), and deluded by their own imaginations, believing that they have attained comprehension — but they have not.

God Most High says: **“Do not associate anything with Allah, for indeed, associating partners with Allah is a great injustice.”**  
(*Qur'an* 31:13)

and He says: **“Whoever associates partners with Allah — indeed, Allah has forbidden Paradise for him.”**  
(*Qur'an* 5:72)

Thus, those who ascribe partners to Him — whether by attributing intermediaries as equals or by denying the hierarchy of *ḥudūd* — have fallen into error, even if they name Him with their tongues.

The **second category** of such people are those who imagine that belief is limited to the **literal form of religion** (*ẓāhir al-sharī'ah*) only, and who reject the inner reality (*bāṭin*) that unites all forms of faith.

Among them are some who even believe that the **sun** (*al-shams*) is the supreme principle of divinity, claiming that it governs life by its light — but they are heedless of the One who created the sun and placed light within it.

### Footnotes (Page 30)

1. *Aṣl al-mawjūdāt* (The Principle of Existence):  
The *'aql al-awwal* (First Intellect) is called so because from it emanated the celestial spheres (*al-aflāk*), their motions, and their centers.  
From these emerged the composite bodies and their forms.
2. Because **existence** (*wujūd*) and **duration** (*istimrār*) stem from this first cause, for all created things end with the First Imām, who is the **seal of cycles** (*khātim al-adwār*) and the **completion of return** (*tammām al-sayr*).
3. *al-ḥayāh* (Life) is called so because it is the **essence of existence** (*'ayn al-wujūd*) and the **basis of all forms**.
4. The *tābi'* (follower) refers to the secondary emanation (*athar thānī*), for when causality continues in sequence, each effect becomes a new cause.
5. *Qur'an* 23:17 and 48:8 — both referenced regarding divine order and cosmic hierarchy.
6. *Qur'an* 5:72 — “Whoever associates partners with Allah, indeed Allah has forbidden Paradise for him.”

7. In Qur'an 31:13, the word “*shirk*” is emphasized by repetition (*tawkid bi al-i'lan*).

The *Jirmāniyyah* (Materialist Philosophers) and those like them — their belief is that the universe (*al-kull wa al-jumlah*) is eternal and self-subsisting. They did not discern with insight (*baṣīrah*) the weakness of their argument, for their understanding is limited to what the **senses** (*al-ḥawāss*) can perceive and to what the **imagination** (*al-khayāl*) can picture.

They claim that the sun is a **suspended sphere** (*kura mu'allaqah musakhkharah*), fixed by a determined orbit, as God Almighty said: “**And the sun and the moon are in measured orbits.**” (*Qur'an* 55:5)

and He said: “**And the moon — We have determined for it phases, until it returns like the old, withered palm stalk.**” (*Qur'an* 36:39)

and: “**And the sun runs to a fixed resting place; that is the decree of the Mighty, the Knowing.**” (*Qur'an* 36:38)

These celestial bodies move in a **horizontal motion** (*ḥarakah 'arḍiyyah*), never deviating from their course — rising and setting, waxing and waning, descending and ascending.

Some of these **celestial orbs** (*al-ajrām al-samāwiyyah*) are luminous (*mutalāmi'ah*), radiant and bright, while others are opaque (*mutaghayyimah*), dark and obscure. From them are drawn the **terrestrial effects** (*al-athār al-'ulwiyyah*), which influence earthly life and the temporal order.

The Materialists (*al-Ilyāhiyyūn*) believed these spheres to be **eternal and uncreated** (*qadīmah ghayr muḥdathah*), and thus denied the **Primordial Cause** (*al-'illah al-ūlā*).

The third group among the *falāsifah* (philosophers) are those who ascribe divinity to **the nature of the world** (*tabī'at al-'ālam*) itself. They do not distinguish between **the Creator** (*al-Bārī' subḥānahu wa ta'ālā*) and **the created** (*al-makhlūq*).

They claim that existence is eternal and self-renewing (*azalī mustamir*), and that the **souls of men** (*nufūs al-bashar*) are also from that eternal essence.

They are ignorant of the truth of humanity's spiritual composition, and have not grasped the inner meanings of divine creation. Thus, they became like beasts grazing in the wilderness of matter, consumed by base appetites and passions.

They eat and drink as the beasts do, their bodies perishing and decaying, and they are afflicted with grief, sorrow, pain, fear, disease, and the endless turning of time.

All of these are **attributes of deficiency** (*ṣifāt al-naqṣ*),  
born from the limitations of **corporeal existence** (*al-jismiyyah*),  
which lies beneath the **sphere of divinity** (*‘atfat al-ulūhiyyah*).

We will, God willing, clarify in the following chapters (*al-abwāb al-ātiyah*)  
the **true meanings** of these Qur’anic verses  
which the *falāsifah* misunderstood in their literal readings,  
and show that their interpretations are flawed,  
while the divine wisdom behind them is **majestic, exalted, and real** (*‘aẓīmah jalīlah ‘ind Allāh subḥānahu ‘ilmiyyah ḥaqīqiyyah*).

All success is by Allah’s guidance, His grace, and His mercy —  
He is the bestower of understanding and the guide to what is right (*wa Allāhu subḥānahu al-muwaffiq li-l-ṣawāb bi-‘awnihi wa barakatihī wa raḥmatihī in shā’ Allāh ta‘ālā*).

Footnotes (Page 31)

1. Qur’an 55:5 — “The sun and the moon move in precise calculation.”
2. Qur’an 39:5 / 31:29 — “He wraps the night over the day and the day over the night.”
3. Qur’an 36:38 — “The sun runs to its appointed resting place; that is the decree of the Mighty, the Knowing.”
4. Qur’an 41:11 — “Then He directed Himself to the heaven when it was smoke and said to it and to the earth, ‘Come, willingly or unwillingly.’”

## Chapter Two: On Origination (*al-Ibdāʿ*), which is the First Principle (*al-Mabdaʿ al-Awwal*)

from the standpoint of its nobility, its act, its oneness (*waḥdāniyya*), its simplicity (*basāṭa*), the manifestation of its existence (*wujūd*), its perfection (*kamāl*), its eternity (*azaliyya*), its majesty (*jalāl*), its knowledge (*ʿilm*), its might (*ʿizza*), its intellect (*ʿaql*), its steadfastness (*thabāt*), its greatness (*ʿaẓama*), its sublimity (*kibriyāʿ*), its power (*qudra*), its life (*ḥayāt*), and its singularity (*infirād*) in all its attributes.

The discussion concerning *al-ibdāʿ*, which is *al-mabdaʿ al-awwal*, pertains to its nobility (*sharaf*), its act (*fiʿl*), its oneness (*waḥdāniyya*), its simplicity (*basāṭa*), the manifestation of its existence (*wujūd*), its perfection (*kamāl*), its eternity (*azaliyya*), its majesty (*jalāl*), its knowledge (*ʿilm*), its might (*ʿizza*), its intellect (*ʿaql*), its constancy (*thabāt*), its greatness (*ʿaẓama*), its sublimity (*kibriyāʿ*), its power (*qudra*), its life (*ḥayāt*), and its singularity (*infirād*) encompassing all its attributes.

Know—may God Most High grant you goodness and make you among its people—that this chapter, after the establishment of the unity (*tawḥīd*) of the Exalted, is among the most noble of all the chapters mentioned. Within it are contained mysteries that have traversed the supreme boundaries (*al-ḥudūd al-ʿulyā*) not by explicit disclosure, for the *mabdaʿ al-awwal* is that by which are known the principles (*uṣūl*), the branches (*furūʿ*), the divisions (*fuṣūl*), the causes (*ʿilal*), and the effects (*maʿlūlāt*), and the intermediaries between these; so that the knowledge of modalities (*kayfiyyāt*) and quantities (*kamiyyāt*) may not fall into the hands of the ignorant and heedless, who are distant from the intimacy of the revelation (*al-nabaʿ*) and estranged from companionship (*al-uns*).

For this is the hidden knowledge (*al-ʿilm al-maknūn*), concealed (*al-maṣṭūr*) from the protected (*al-maṣūn*), and nothing of it is disclosed except through inspiration (*waḥy*)—from a tongue to an ear.

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### Footnotes:

1. *From the standpoint of (min ḥaythu)*: meaning, the discussion here begins with the consideration of the First Origination (*al-ibdāʿ al-awwal*) and its relation to the Ismāʿīlī conception.
2. *In the first origination was the beginning of the Ismāʿīlī affirmation*—that is, the first point where the Ismāʿīlī doctrine begins in explaining the process of *tawḥīd* (divine unity), *tajrīd* (abstraction), and *tanzīh* (transcendence). Through it are known the realities of the *ḥudūd al-arbaʿa* (four principles), and the hierarchies of the origins, branches, causes, and effects.
3. *That is, it is not possible*—according to the author—to attain the reality of this knowledge except through the Ismāʿīlī method of demonstration and the chain of *ḥaqīqa* (esoteric truth). Whoever strives by other means, such as rational speculation or physical inquiry, will not arrive at it, because this knowledge is unveiled only through the path of divine inspiration and the light of *al-ʿilm al-ilāhī* (divine knowledge).

After the reaffirmation of the binding covenants (*ʿuhūd muʿakkada*) and the renewal of the steadfast pledges (*mawāthiq mushaddada*), and after the trials that elevate the *najāwā*

(intimate communions), the *zakāt* (purifications), the *sharāwī* (ritual ordinances), the *fiṭr* (acts of completion), and the *ṣadaqāt* (offerings),[1]

You have been entrusted with safeguarding the totality of the *ḥikam* (wisdoms) that have been expounded before you, and with bearing the burden of the *amāna* (trust), which is the Covenant of God and His Custody — the same trust borne by the angels brought near (*muqarrabīn*), the prophets (*anbiyāʾ*), the messengers (*rusul*), the pure legatees (*awṣiyāʾ ṭāhirūn*), the imams among the chosen (*aʾimma al-muntaḡabīn*), and the noble *ḥudūd* (spiritual hierarchs).

You have thus been chosen for the utmost preservation of the *amāna*, and guided toward sincerity in it; may God render your form pure, your insight radiant, and your perception luminous. God is your Guardian and Protector.

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We return now to what has been written:

The communities of the revealed laws (*ahl al-sharāʾiʾ*) differ among the ancients and the later sects. They have diverged in these questions and contradicted one another.

Among them are those who say: “Indeed, the *ibdāʾ* (origination) of the First Intellect (*al-ʿaql al-awwal*) and the emanation of the Universal Soul (*al-naḥs al-kulliyya*) did not occur without a cause (‘*illa*),” and that the Soul came forth from the light (*nūr*) of the Intellect, and that its existence was through manifestation (*ẓuhūr*).

They claim the emergence of the Universal Soul occurred through expansion (*inbisāṭ*), opening (*fath*), and imagination (*khayāl*), then through extension (*tūl*) and form (*ṣūra*), and then through multiplicity (*takāthur*) by spirit (*rūḥ*), imagination, elements (*ṭabāʾiʾ*), and subsequent generations (*mawālīd mutaʾakhhira*).

These are the people of restricted interpretation (*ahl al-taʾwīl al-makhaṣṣa*).

Among them are also the philosophers (*falāsifa*), and others from the people of the outward laws (*ahl al-sharāʾiʾ al-ẓāhira*), who claim that creation occurred through the *qalam* (Pen), the *rūḥ* (Spirit), *Isrāfīl*, *Mikāʾīl*, and *Jibrāʾīl* — and this, due to their limitation in knowledge.

And among the people of doctrine (*ahl al-maqāla*) are those who hold that **origination (*ibdāʾ*)** was a transgression (*khaṭiʾa*), and that a sin befell certain of the spiritual beings (‘*ālam al-rūḥānī*), such as the distinguished person (*ash-shakhṣ al-fāḍil*), the “Master of the Messages” (*ṣāḥib ar-risālāt*), who turned his face away from God — and that this error caused **the descent (*hubūṭ*) and exposure (*takashshuf*)**. [3]

A sect among them — the *mukhaṭṭiʾa* (those who ascribe error) — maintains this view; while another sect, the *mukashshifa* (those of revelation), says that **this unveiling came about through the deficiency of the soul from the rank of intellect**, and through the distance between **the *mabdaʾ* (first origin) and the form of the soul and the intellect**. [2]

They dispute over this matter, each taking his stand upon what has reached him from the outward people (*ahl az-ẓawāhir*), asserting that God created Adam from clay as He stated in the Revelation, that none was created with him, and that He then created his spouse from his

essence, and that they gave birth to males and females, and their offspring multiplied by marriage and procreation.

They further argued concerning **God's power** (*qudrat Allāh ta'ālā*), saying: "Indeed, God is incapable ( *'ājiz*) of creating another being like man," thus limiting His creative power to a single kind of human form. This opinion they took as proof, yet their belief fell into contradiction — for they attributed to God the will to create, but denied Him the capacity to do what He willed.

Thus, by their claim, the Creator became restricted by what He had created — they magnified falsehood and diminished truth, and turned away from the right path.

To them applies His saying (Exalted is He):

**"Indeed, you have come forth one by one (wa laqad ji' tumūnā furādā)"** (Q 6:94),

and His saying:

**"You were created of dust (min ṭīn)"** (Q 6:2),

and His saying:

**"He created you and made you pairs (zawjān)"** (Q 78:8).

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#### Footnotes

##### [1]

The *Ismā'īlī* scholars discuss the alleged "deficiency of the soul" (*nuqṣān an-nafs*) from the rank of intellect (*martabat al-'aql*). Every being in their cosmology follows a distinct spiritual path; the soul's "deficiency" symbolizes its movement away from the *'aql al-awwal* (First Intellect) and its attempt to return through *'ilm* (knowledge) and *ṭā'a* (obedience). The error (*khaṭī'a*) here represents a metaphysical separation, not a moral sin.

##### [2]

*al-mabda' al-awwal* = the First Origin or First Principle (*al-'aql al-awwal*).

*ṣūra* = form, i.e., the image or manifestation of the intellect in the lower realm.

This distinction between the *mabda'*, *nafs*, and *'aql* mirrors Neoplatonic-Ismā'īlī emanation theory.

##### [3]

The expression *ash-shakhṣ al-fāḍil ṣāhib ar-risālāt* ("the noble person, the possessor of the messages") likely refers to a symbolic spiritual archetype, not to a historical prophet. His "turning away" (*nufūr wajhihī 'an Allāh*) represents metaphysical decline or distance, followed by *hubūt* (descent) into matter and *takashshuf* (manifestation or exposure).

**"You do not know anything."** (Q 2:31) [1]

And His saying (Exalted is He):

**"And We taught you that which you did not know."** (Q 4:113) [2]

And His saying (Exalted is He):

**"We shall teach you, and you shall not forget."** (Q 87:6) [3]

And His saying:

**"He (the Messenger) was taught by one mighty in power."** (Q 53:5) [4]

And His saying:

**“The Trustworthy Spirit descended with it upon your heart, that you may be of the warners.”** (Q 26:193-194) [5]

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Thus, the *Rasūl al-fāḍil* (the noble Messenger) was taught as a learner, and he had a teacher. Between him and his teacher there was a difference, and between him and his follower there was a separation.

From which perspective, then, can those blind of heart (*ahl al-‘amā*) or the ignorant have an excuse for neglecting knowledge and instruction, and for abandoning the obligation to learn and to teach, since the Messenger himself was a learner and a teacher?

And how can they reject his saying:

**“Indeed, I am leaving among you two weighty trusts (thaqalayn): the Book of God and my progeny, the People of my House.”** [6]

For truly, these two — the Book and the progeny — are the twin sources of *‘ilm khabīr* (the expert knowledge); they will never separate until they return to me at the ḥawḍ (the sacred basin).

Thus, he refuted by this saying the claims of the priests (*kahana*), and censured the assertions of the Christian theologians (*baṭāriqa an-naṣārā*).

The people of allegorical exegesis (*ahl at-ta’wīl*) only depart from the apparent meaning (*ahl aẓ-ẓāhir*) when they possess a true inner understanding — and that, indeed, they inherited from the *ahl al-bayt*.

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#### Footnotes

[1] Q 2:31 – “*And He taught Adam the names, all of them. Then He presented them to the angels and said: Inform Me of the names of these, if you are truthful.*”

The author cites the clause *lā ta’lamūna shay’ā* to emphasize the necessity of instruction even for prophets and angels.

[2] Q 4:113 – “*And He taught you that which you did not know; and the favor of God upon you is ever great.*”

[3] Q 87:6 – “*We shall make you recite, and you shall not forget.*”

[4] Q 53:5 – “*Taught him by one mighty in power (shadīd al-quwā).*”

[5] Q 26:193-194 – “*The Trustworthy Spirit descended with it upon your heart, that you may be of the warners.*”

[6] Refers to the ḥadīth of *ath-Thaqalayn* (“Two Weighty Things”), transmitted in multiple sources, including Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (2408) and Tirmidhī (3786):

“*I am leaving among you two weighty things: the Book of God and my progeny (‘itratī), the People of my House. They shall never separate until they return to me at the ḥawḍ.*”

This ḥadīth, foundational in Shī'ī-Ismā'īlī thought, establishes the dual axis of revelation (*waḥy*) and lineage (*nasab*) as co-carriers of divine knowledge.

And likewise, the people of the *mashāyiq* (metaphysical insight) distinguish between the knowledge of the *mabda' al-awwal al-rūḥānī* (the First Spiritual Principle) and the knowledge of those of the *ta'wīl* who have become heedless among the *ahl al-zāhir* (the people of the outward), in what they interpret concerning the *mubdi' al-awwal* (the First Emanator) and His Unity.

They consider it a form of *'ajz* (incapacity) to affirm that the power of God — exalted is He — could produce an *ibdā'* that was not from anything.

So what prevents His power from bringing into existence that which He wills to re-create? Hence, there is no difference between the limited intellects (*'uqūl qāṣirah*) and the baseless arguments (*al-adilla al-bāṭilah*) in this denial.

Because, in their speech, they fall short of the knowledge of the *ṣādiq* (the Truthful), and their insight falters when faced with the realities (*al-ḥaqā'iq*).

Have they not considered the saying of those who affirm the *'aql al-qā'im bi-l-fi'l* (the intellect subsisting in act)?

And that every name applied to an existent has a meaning corresponding to the act in which it subsists?

So what, then, is the act through which this existence is named?

Our master Ḥamīd al-Dīn al-Kirmānī (may God be pleased with him) said:

“The Intellect (*'aql*) is of two relations (*nisbatān*): one higher and one lower.

The higher relation (*nisbah al-ashraf*) is its connection to its *mubdi'* (its Emanator); and the lower relation (*nisbah al-adwan*) is its connection to itself.

Hence, from these two relations arise two existents:

one subsisting by *quwwah* (potentiality) from the lower relation, and one subsisting by *fi'l* (actuality) from the higher relation.” [1]

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Therefore, when this second existent subsists by *quwwah*, it must have been preceded by another existent that subsists by *fi'l* — so that the *mubdi' al-awwal* (the First Emanator) would bring forth intellects of pure simplicity (*'uqūl basīṭah mujarradah*).

One of these is related to the *mabda' al-awwal* (the First Origin), and one is derived from it.

And that is the meaning of his (al-Kirmānī's) statement:

“Indeed, the existent from the First Intellect consists of two:

one of them more noble (*ashraf*) than the other,

and the nobler knows the *waṣī al-qā'im bi-l-fi'l* (the appointed successor subsisting in act).” [2]

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## Footnotes

[1] Ḥamīd al-Dīn al-Kirmānī, *Rāḥat al-'Aql*, on the metaphysical duality of the Intellect: the higher relation (*nisbah al-ashraf*) indicating its dependence upon the *mubdi'*, and the lower relation (*nisbah al-adwan*) indicating its self-referential being. From these arise the *'aql bi-l-fi'l* (Intellect in act) and the *'aql bi-l-quwwah* (Intellect in potential).

[2] This refers to the doctrine of **dual emanation**: that from the *‘aql al-awwal* (First Intellect) emanate both a **spiritual entity** (in act) and a **potential intellect**, analogous to the relationship between *nabī* (Prophet) and *waṣī* (Successor). The *ashraf* (nobler) intellect symbolizes prophetic illumination, while the *adwan* (lower) symbolizes derived, interpretive knowledge.

The *qā’im* (the one who arises) gathers together all that those before him have brought forth, and whoever reaches the end of his cycle completes what was begun by his predecessors, serving as a helper (*ṣā’id*) to the *asās* (the foundation).[1]

Each of them stands by the text revealed to his predecessor, serving as a helper to the foundation that came before him.

Each one among them is a pillar (*rukn*) from among the *arkān al-dīn* (pillars of the religion) and the *da’ā’im al-Islām* (supports of Islam), through whom the *nāṭiq* (speaking prophet) manifests the revealed *ḥukm* (judgment) and the hidden *ma’ārif* (gnoses).

All of these are based upon the principle that the existent arises from the *‘aql al-awwal* (First Intellect) and the *mabda’ al-awwal* (First Principle), as intellects (*‘uqūl*) produced successively (*mutanāshi’ah*).

Each of them proceeds from the other: one helping the *munba’ith al-awwal* (the first emanated), and one illuminated by the light that shines from the *munba’ith al-awwal*.

Thus, in every era, there exists a shining light corresponding to the First Emanation, distinct only in *ṣūrah* (form) and *ṭabī’ah* (constitution).

Therefore, it is necessary to affirm in this chapter that every intellect (*‘aql*) from among these emanated intellects (*‘uqūl munba’ithah*) proceeds in succession — one after another — returning ultimately to the *munba’ith al-awwal* (the First Emanated Intellect).

Then he (the author) said in the Book:

“A second distinction follows this division, for this *faṣl* (section) would otherwise remain incomplete if it were not to include a meaning confirming its counterpart, so that each of them becomes perfected by the other.”

Thus it becomes clear that each of these two emanations has its own proper *ḥaqīqah* (reality), and that the *‘aql al-ḥadd al-sharīf* (the intellect of the noble boundary) does not speak except by a meaning that indicates its Lord.

This is his saying, exalted is He:

**“And He directs it toward His light (wa dawār al-ibdā’ ilā al-ithbāt).”**

The *dawār al-ibdā’* (sphere of origination) and the cycle of affirmation contain no material admixture (*lā ‘āliq fihā min al-māddah*); for they transcend matter, which merely receives form and is shaped thereby, while its image is only the *ṣūrah* it reflects.[2]

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## Footnotes

[1] *al-asās* — the spiritual foundation corresponding to the *waṣī* (legatee) or *imām* who succeeds the *nāṭiq*. Each *qā’im* who appears after fulfills and completes the *asās*’s hidden function, as the *asās* is the root (*aṣl*) of esoteric interpretation (*ta’wīl*).

[2] *al-wahy* (revelation) or *al-asās* (foundation): Each corresponds to the connection of intellect (‘*aql*) and soul (*naḥs*) within the spiritual hierarchy. The *nāṭiq* and *asās* are the archetypes of knowledge — one by outward revelation, the other by inward interpretation.

[3] The *asās* signifies the Imām succeeding the *nāṭiq*; he is the foundation of the following *dawr* (cycle) and root of the succeeding law. Thus, the earlier foundation is the basis of the later one, as each era’s law depends upon its *asās*.

[4] When the *asās* of one *dawr* (cycle) reaches its completion, his successors appear in the *ṣafnah al-nubuwwah* (ark of prophecy) and the *silsilat al-dīn* (chain of religion), renewing its form and order. When the *asās* passes, the *imāmah* (leadership) and *ḥudūd* (hierarchical ranks) follow his *naṣṣ* (designation).

[5] *al-mawād* (matters): These are “spiritual essences” (*jawāhir rūḥāniyyah*) which receive divine *ṣūrah* (form). The *ṣūrah* is higher in rank than the *māddah* (matter), for *māddah* is passive while *ṣūrah* is formative — as the intellect is to form what matter is to substance.

The ‘*uqūl al-mujarradah al-nūrāniyyah al-muḥṣanah* (immaculate luminous intellects) possess no corporeality (*lā jism*), no spatial locus (*lā makān*), nor do they require temporal succession (*lā yaḥtāj ilā zamān*).[1]

They are not bound by substance (‘*uṣbah*), nor restrained by matter (*māddah*), for their act (*fi ‘l*) is free from obstruction.

If there were no barrier impeding it, the existence of that which proceeds from it would occur all at once — not in succession — like the simultaneous emergence of light from the sun, or the illumination of a dark house by a single lamp, both without temporal separation.

So too are the natural movements (*ḥarakāt ṭabī‘iyyah*) of celestial forms, whose ranks are ordered in accordance with the order of time (*zamān*), each bringing into existence (*tukhriju ilā al-wujūd*) that which its cause produces, like fire producing its heat and light.

And in all such examples — whether minute or great — there is nothing that proceeds except by its cause and with its instrument.

Thus it is with the *ibdā‘* (origination) of the First, whose act (*fi ‘l*) proceeds from itself — complete in actuality (*bi-l-quwwah wa-l-fi ‘l*) — not by composition or division.

Hence there must exist a distinction between the *mubdi‘ al-awwal* (First Emanator) and the *munba‘ith al-awwal* (First Emanated): the former by His essence (*dhātihi*), the latter by His act (*fi ‘lihī*).

So it becomes clear that time (*zamān*) does not intervene between them, for each is eternally linked — the *mubdi‘* by creative intent (*irādah*), the *munba‘ith* by emanation (*ṣudūr*).

Were time to intercede, there would be succession (*ta‘āqub*), and succession implies imperfection.

Thus the act of *ibdā‘* is timeless, and the existence of the emanated (*munba‘ath*) is simultaneous with the existence of the *mubdi‘*.

If such were not the case, the act would be deficient — for an act that depends upon temporal succession is an act within *ḥaraka* (motion), and *ibdā‘* transcends *ḥaraka*.

Therefore, each section (*faṣl*) completes and perfects the one before it, as we have said earlier, for each *faṣl* conveys a meaning (*ma‘nā*), and meaning generates its like, by His command and will.

Otherwise, it would not be a divine *kitāb* (book), nor would *naṣr Allāh wajhahu* (may God exalt His countenance) have structured it so that every *faṣl* contains a key (‘*uṣr*) unlocking its

benefit.

Indeed, God — exalted is He — has made it obligatory in these two *faṣls* that the existence of the world of *ibdāʿ* (origination) be joined together (*maʿan*), for in them is the unity of *ʿālam al-ibdāʿ*.

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## Footnotes

[1] i.e., their forms are *mujarradah nūrāniyyah muḥṣanah* (immaterial, luminous, and pure). They are complete in themselves, without body or form, and have no need of temporal duration (*zamān*).

[2] *ḥarakāt*: plural of *ḥarakah* — natural motions or celestial rotations.

[3] *ṣafāʾah*: purity or clarity of substance, often used metaphorically for untainted simplicity in emanation (cf. philosophical usage in *Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ*).

We now clarify the truth of that — the essence (*ḥaqīqah*) of the first *faṣl*.

The reality of the *ʿālam al-ibdāʿ* (world of origination) is that its existence appeared in a single emergence (*dafʿatan wāḥidatan*) from the *Mubdiʿ al-Ḥaqq Taʿālā*, not from any pre-existing matter (*lā min shayʾ*), [1] for there was no substrate upon which it depended, nor any instrument by which it was fashioned, nor any locus (*makān*) in which it resided, nor any temporal duration (*zamān*) in which it unfolded.

That which proceeds from it is not preceded by time, nor succeeded by anything else, nor accompanied by anything other than itself — for it is unique, without peer or parallel.

There was nothing like it, nor anything comparable to it, nor any exemplar (*mithāl*) that could be known or conceived.

It has no increase or diminution, no change or transformation.

Its existence was absolute — all together (*kulluhu bi-lā taʿaqqub*) — as indicated by the sages, who compared it to the manifestation of light from the encompassing horizon (*ʿurf al-ākāf waʾl-anwār*), which appears without motion (*lā ḥarakah*), without time, without preceding will or subsequent intention, and without gradation in power or capacity.

It is not subject to limitation (*taqdīr*), nor to division or measurement (*taqyīd*).

It was one and the same, not differing in degree — for it neither adds nor lessens, but remains equal in every respect.

That is the manifestation of perfect balance and justice (*ʿadl*), and the culmination of divine wisdom (*ḥikmah*).

Its emanation (*ishrāq*) and manifestation (*zuhūr*) were like the radiance of the sun that illumines all at once — or as *Ḥamīd al-Dīn* said, “like the shining of the pomegranate and the almond from the same branch,” each appearing together in a single *dafʿah wāḥidah* (instantaneous act), without succession or precedence of one over the other.

And the distinguished *ṣāḥib al-risālah* (Imām al-Muʾayyad) said:

“Verily, when God — exalted be He — decreed the command of creation for us, He originated it in a single *dafʿah wāḥidah*, by His power (*biʾl-qudrah*) and will.”

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## Footnotes

[1] The *ishrāq* (illumination) here refers to the divine command (*amr ilāhī*) that emanated from God without any pre-existent matter or instrument.

It is similar to the word *kun* (“Be!”), which denotes instantaneous origination encompassing both the command and its fulfillment — as in *idhā qaḍā amran fa-innamā yaqūlu lahu kun fa-yakūn* (Qur’ān 2:117).

The reference to *al-mabda’ wa’l-ma’ād* indicates the totality of emanation from the *nāṭiq* (Prophet) and the *asās* (Foundation).

[2] *Lā fī zamān* — because time itself is an attribute of the physical realm (*‘ālam al-ṭabī‘ah*). It is impossible for the origination (*ibdā’*) of immaterial existence (*wujūd mujarrad*) to depend on temporal sequence, since the *ibdā’* act occurs instantaneously without duration or transition.

[3] *Mushārib wa-makānāt* — equal and simultaneous manifestations. This expression indicates the metaphysical uniformity of emanation: all intellects were brought into being equally, not by gradation but by divine equality (*musāwah ilāhiyyah*).

[4] Cf. *Rasā’il Ikhwān al-Ṣafā’*, section “al-rābi‘ah fī al-‘aql wa’l-ma‘qūl”, “The Fourth Epistle, concerning the Intellect (al-‘aql) and the Intelligible (al-ma‘qūl).”, which likewise describes the emanation of the Intellect (*‘aql*) from the First Principle as an instantaneous act without motion or sequence.

And by gradual progression (*bi’l-tadrīj*), things attain their complete and perfect ends, reaching thereby the supreme perfection (*al-kamāl al-aḥḍad*) and the ultimate matter (*al-amr al-akmal*). This is the truth—that the existence of this world came to be only through that universal existence which attained perfection in the highest degree of equality (*fī darajat al-tasāwī*).

And there is no god but He, the One to whose Unity (*tawḥīdihī*) none can reach except by means of His guidance and light.

The people of insight (*ahl al-tawḥīd*) differ in their modes of expression concerning Him—some resort to analogies (*tashbīh*) and others to abstraction (*ta’fīl*).

And it has been said in supplication:

“O God, make us among those who know the cause of the limited through the sign of the unlimited,  
and who see in every existent the mark of Your being and the light of Your Unity.”

And it was said in some of his poems on this:

“They are the first ones through whom our Lord manifested Himself—  
exalted is He above all likeness or form.”

And in another place:

“They are the ends of all who were created for Him,  
and the ultimate purposes (*ghāyāt*) of His creation—  
even the revolving heavens obey them,  
until the earth itself submits to their bodies.”

And it was said in one of his sermons:

“I bear witness that there is no god but He,  
the One who brings to perfection the life, knowledge, and power that He originated,  
and who joined together in them all forms and likenesses (*al-ashkāl wa’l-amthāl*)—

such that none of the second perfections (*al-kamāl al-thānī*) in action could come to be except through them.”

And we have already clarified that this division is by way of depiction (*taṣwīr*) in how existence proceeds in gradation from the First Perfection in potentiality (*bi'l-quwwah*), then its manifestation from the one that appeared from Him, which is the Second Perfection in actuality (*bi'l-fi'l*).

The truth of that is that when God—exalted is He—wills, the *murād* (the object of His will) comes into being through His knowledge and certainty (*bi-baṣīratihi wa-yaqīnihi*).

Thus, none enters among those whom the All-Merciful (*al-Raḥmān*) has distinguished, except one whose capacity is perfected in knowledge and whose strength is tested in the creative act (*al-'ibdā' al-jismānī*).

For none among created beings possesses knowledge without action, nor form without spirit, and in the corporeal creation there is nothing to indicate the Creative Power except through the Perfected Ones (*al-kāmilūn*).

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#### Footnotes Translation:

1. *The Perfected One* (*al-qā'im bi'l-qadrah*) is the one who distinguishes himself through perfection in action, and he is the complete one (*al-kāmil*) by way of receiving divine emanation (*al-fayḍ*).
2. *These symbolic expressions* are placed in parentheses in the text — they indicate the mystical gradations (*al-marātib al-rūḥāniyyah al-ilāhiyyah*) leading the seeker (*tālib*) to divine recognition (*al-ta'ayyud*).
3. *He means* that the World of the Perfected (*'ālam al-kamāl*) becomes fully actualized through emanation (*bi'l-fi'l*), and that the *kāmil* serves as the intermediary of divine effusion to those below him.

And that is because the human being is born—each one of them—as an infant, ignorant, knowing nothing.

None among them is granted excellence except by what God bestows upon him, as He says:

“And God brought you forth from the wombs of your mothers, knowing nothing.”

— *Sūrat al-Naḥl* (16:78)

And His saying, exalted is He:

“And He taught you what you knew not.”

— *Sūrat al-Baqarah* (2:239)

And His saying, exalted is He:

“Do not conceal what you do not know.”

— *Sūrat al-Baqarah* (2:283)

Thus, this world was balanced and proportioned (*mutakāfian mutasāwiyan*) through the path of justice (*'adl*) and power (*qudrah*); both the First and the Second Perfections share equally in life, knowledge, and ability.

And this imagery (*ṣūrah*) is given only as an illustration.  
For this depiction (*taṣwīr*)—though approximate—was intended to aid understanding of *‘ilm al-ibdā’* (the Science of Origination),  
and to remind that the *aṣl* (principle) from which knowledge branches out is the same one from which emanation originates.

As our master, the Qā’im (upon him be peace), said:

“The knowledge of origination (*ma’rifat al-ibdā’*) is the knowledge of the beginning (*ibtidā’*),  
and the knowledge of the end (*intiḥā’*) is the knowledge of return (*ilayh*).  
These two—knowledge and understanding—are inseparable, and the beginning cannot exist without the foundation (*asās*) being correct.”

And that the world of *ibdā’* (origination) whose manifestation was simultaneous (*ma’an*) in a single act of emanation,  
neither preceded nor followed the other,  
but they were equal, balanced, and similar in the manifestation of life, justice, and power—  
without preference, variance, or division.

For if there had been any deficiency in power,  
or incapacity in will,  
or slowness in movement—  
then it would have indicated weakness in what He originated.

And everything that issues from one who possesses ability and might,  
emerges through the single channel of effusion (*al-fayḍ*),  
by which the Wise have described Him, saying:

“From Him proceed all those whose being is unified in their essential oneness,  
and whose existence, gathered together in every aspect, does not admit division.  
When they moved by His command, their movement was one,  
arising from His Essence and returning to His Essence—a single motion of remembrance (*ḥarakah dhikriyyah*).”

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#### Footnotes Translation

1. *Sūrat al-Nahl* (16:78) — “And God brought you forth from the wombs of your mothers, knowing nothing.”
2. Everything enclosed within parentheses ( ) has been omitted in the manuscript.
3. He means by *al-Imām al-Qā’im*, the Fatimid Imām under the order of Allāh (‘Ammar Allāh, d. 234 AH), the Caliph in the Maghrib.
4. By *al-bad’ wa’l-‘awd* (the beginning and the return).

And there is a distinction (*tamayyuz*) and a difference in that the *‘ālam rūḥānī nūr kāmīl* — the perfect spiritual world — was complete within its own essence (*dhātihī*),  
and its manifestations (*ḡuhūruhum*) appeared together in a unified mode of being (*kayfiyyat wujūduhum*).

Thus, it became perfected through His remembrance (*dhikr*), and established in His presence that the entire *‘ālam* (cosmos) is originated (*mubda‘an*) by Him, and that He, exalted is He, is the One who brought it into being (*awjadahu*), by His power (*qudratihi*) and wisdom (*ḥikmatihī*).

He is not encompassed by perception, nor compared to His creation, nor is there anything that resembles His craftsmanship.

And whoever claims comprehension of His knowledge or His existence — apart from what He has made known — is ignorant of what He has originated.

There is no origin without Him who is the Source of Divinity (*‘illah al-ulūhiyyah*), and He, the Exalted, the Sublime (*al-mut‘ālī subḥānahu*), is the Truth (*al-Ḥaqq*) who has no likeness, nor equal, nor counterpart, nor form.

He has proclaimed this through His testimony (*shahādah*), and made it manifest explicitly in His saying:

**“Shahida Allāhu annahu lā ilāha illā Huwa, wal-malā’ikatu wa-ulū al-‘ilm qā’iman bil-qisṭ.”**

— “God bears witness that there is no god but He, and (so do) the angels and those endowed with knowledge — upholding justice.”

— *Sūrat Āl ‘Imrān* (3:18)

Thus, we testify to His Divinity (*ulūhiyyah*), His Power (*qudrah*), and His Wisdom (*ḥikmah*).

And the distinguished scholar, the author of *al-Rasā’il al-Jāmi‘ah*, said:

“The Eternal One (*al-wāḥid al-qadīm*) is described by eternality and singularity.

He is indicated by existence itself (*al-mawjūd al-mashār ilayh bil-wujūd*).

He is the Originator (*mubdi‘*) of every existent, and by His effusion (*fayḍihī*) comes the emanation of the *‘aql al-maḥdūd* (the delimited intellect).

For the First Intellect (*al-‘aql al-awwal*) is the first manifestation (*ẓuhūr awwal*),

and from it arises the Second (*thānī*),

and it is said: ‘There is no god but He’ — He alone is the One worthy of worship.”

Therefore, the word of unity (*kalimat al-tawḥīd*) is itself the proof of *tawḥīd*.

Hence the *aṣl mu‘tamad* (established principle) in every revealed *Sharī‘ah* and *Dīn* is that the First Intellect (*al-‘aql al-awwal*) negates all resemblance (*tashbīh*) from His own essence.

Thus it is said:

“Lā ilāha illā Huwa” — He is One in His origination (*mubdi‘uh wāḥid*), One in His intellect (*‘aqluh wāḥid*).

Meaning: the affirmation of the single unity (*al-waḥdah al-muḥadddah*).

For connection to the Creator (*ittiṣāl al-tābi‘ bil-mutābi‘*) neither ceases nor declines, but remains forever without separation.

Hence His saying:

**“Mā sha’a’tum illā an yashā’a Allāh — You do not will except that God wills.”**

— *Sūrat al-Insān* (76:30)

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## Footnotes Translation

1. “In His essence” — omitted in some manuscripts (noted in marginal variants).
2. Quoted from *al-Rasā'il al-Jāmi'ah* of al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān, al-waraqah 118 (the version preserved in our Cairo collection contains slight differences).
3. “Because He is the First Intellect and the First Emanation.”
4. *Sūrat al-Insān* (76:30).

Thus has it been transmitted from **Imām al-Ṣādiq (Ja'far ibn Muḥammad)** — may peace be upon him — that he said:

“Praise be to God, the Originator (*mubdi'*) of truth, its supporter and helper,  
the Manifestor of creation by His power (*qudratihi*) and His governance (*tadbīrihi*),  
the Dispenser of provisions by His determination (*taqdīrihi*),  
the Invalidator of falsehood by His justice (*'adlihi*).  
He sets the celestial orbits in motion by His decree,  
causes the rivers to flow by His command,  
and makes the night and day alternate by His will.  
He is the guide of the prophets by His proofs,  
and the One worshipped by all His servants — those whom He has made know Him and  
worship Him —  
a worship that is unbroken, neither detached nor divided.”

And he said further:

“They are incapable of knowing Him except by what He has made known of Himself,  
and He veiled Himself (*iḥtajaba*) from them by the grandeur of His Majesty (*'aẓamat jalālih*).

He indicated Himself through Himself,  
and made His Essence (*dhātuhu*) known by His lordship (*rubūbiyyatihi*),  
for no sense can perceive Him, no mind can grasp Him,  
no imagination can encompass Him,  
and no associate shares in His dominion (*mamlakah*).”

Indeed, before any creation,  
He was — and there was none besides Him —  
without similitude (*tashbīh*),  
for He originated what He willed (*abda'a mā arādahu*),  
and manifested it by His power (*qudratihi*).

He brought forth the *'ibdā'* (origination) as a pure act of unity (*bi-l-waḥdāniyyah*),  
and the effusion of the First Act (*faḡḡ al-fi'l al-awwāl*) came from His own Essence,  
so that, were the Prophet not established (*law lā thabata al-nabī thubūtan yaqīnīyyan*),  
the proof of *ulūhiyyah* (divinity) would not have been made known.

Hence, the appearance of the Prophet — peace be upon him — was the cause of the  
manifestation of *al-ulūhiyyah* in the world of creation,  
and the *mubtadi'* (the Originator) made the order of emanation (*tartīb al-musabba'*) in  
correspondence to the hierarchy of His power (*qudratihi*).

Thus, the *'ibdā'* (origination) was complete and perfectly ordered according to the ranks of  
wisdom (*marātib al-ḥikmah*).

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## Footnotes Translation

1. **Ja'far ibn Manṣūr al-Yaman** — one of the great Ismā'īlī scholars and authors of foundational works in *ta'wīl* (esoteric exegesis) and *'ilm al-ḥaqīqah* (the science of truth).  
He lived in Yemen and died around **270 AH / 883 CE**, during the time of the *Dā'ir* Abū 'Abd Allāh al-Shī'ī, and was contemporary with the Imām al-Qā'im bi-Amr Allāh in the Maghrib (r. 280–334 AH).
2. The quoted text here comes from his *Kitāb al-'Ālim wa-l-Ghulām*, as well as *al-Rasā'il al-Jāmi'ah* and *al-Ta'wīlāt al-Najmiyyah*.  
Variants exist in some manuscripts — a few phrases are omitted or reordered.
3. The Ismā'īlī doctrine of *al-ibdā'* leads to the affirmation of *al-tawḥīd* (“there is no god but God”),  
because the emergence of *al-'aql al-awwal* (the First Intellect) and *al-naḥs al-kullīyyah* (the Universal Soul) demonstrate the unity of the Divine Will and the hierarchy of emanations (*marātib al-ṣudūr*).
4. See also *Sūrat al-Anbiyā'* (21:22) — “If there were in them gods other than God, both would have been corrupted.”

He — exalted and transcendent be His power (*tabārakat qudratuhu*) — created creation from nonexistence (*'adam*),  
and there is none like Him.  
His power (*qudrah*) was magnified,  
and His greatness (*'aẓamah*) was exalted.

None may reach His veil (*ḥijābihi*),  
none may comprehend His secret (*sirr*),  
none may attain His gate (*bābihi*),  
nor perceive His causes (*asbābihi*),  
for all is from Him and returns to Him.

Hence, **His veil is the First Originator** (*al-mubdi' al-awwal*),  
and His gate is the Second Completion (*al-nihāyah al-thāniyah*)  
in the world of *dīn* (faith) —  
and its proofs (*du'ātuhu al-ḥujaj*) exist in every age and time.

These are the **four proofs** (*al-barāhīn al-arba'ah*):

1. **The first** among them is *Ḥamīd al-Dīn* — may God sanctify his spirit.
2. **The second** is *Tanzīl al-Mu'ayyad bi'l-Shīrāzī*.
3. **The third** is *al-Shakhṣ al-Fāḍil Ṣāhib al-Rasā'il* (Ja'far ibn Manṣūr al-Yaman).
4. **And the fourth** is *al-Dā'ir al-Mu'ayyad fī al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī* — may God support them all and unite their ranks.

And as *Ja'far ibn Manṣūr al-Yaman* has said — may God aid him by His victory and exalt their ranks:

“You have testified that the Majestic God — exalted is His greatness — is the One beyond *al-ḥadd al-jalīl* (the magnificent limit).

There is no annihilation in *al-ibdāʿ* (origination),

and *al-ibdāʿ* testifies to *al-ulūhiyyah* (Divinity).

This is the essence of *aṣl al-tawḥīd* (the principle of unity),

and the reality of *al-tajrīd* (abstraction),

and the meaning of *al-tanzīh* (transcendence).

Its foundation lies in glorification (*tasbīḥ*) and sanctification (*taqdīs*),

and it is the act (*fiʿl*) that indicates His worship in truth (*ʿibādah ḥaqqan*).”

And he said — peace be upon him —

“He described Himself by His attributes (*ṣifātihi*),

and singled Himself out by His qualities (*awṣāfihi*).

He is the Second Perfection (*al-kamāl al-thānī*),

symbolized by *Ḥamīd al-Dīn* —

the unity (*waḥdah*) of His Essence with His act (*bi-dhātihi wa-fiʿlihi*),

the Perfect Oneness (*al-aḥadiyyah al-tāmah*),

the One Uncomposed (*al-fard al-bisīṭ*),

appearing in *al-kamālayn* (the two perfections) —

that of being (*wujūd*) and of completeness (*kamāl*).

He was the Thinker (*al-mufakkir*) by Himself,

by His names and attributes,

and the Manifest (*al-munbathiq*) through them.”

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#### Footnotes Translation

1. The author refers here to **four textual proofs** he has drawn from the Ismāʿīlī corpus.
  2. All Ismāʿīlī philosophers affirm that in all aspects of metaphysical existence (*al-ṣuwar al-muʿaqqalah*), the doctrine of *al-ibdāʿ* (Origination) entails the negation of *ḥulūl* (immanence) and *ittiḥād* (union).  
God neither enters into the originated things nor do they subsist in Him; He is exalted beyond *ḥadd al-mubdiʿ* (the limit of the Originator).
  3. In some manuscripts, an additional three lines appear:  
“*Al-mubdiʿ al-awwal* is the perfection of the First Intellect (*kamāl al-ʿaql al-awwal*),  
and *al-kamāl al-thānī* is His act and manifestation.  
His majesty, glory, and power have no decline nor diminution.”
  4. This quotation is drawn from the book *Risālat al-ʿAql wa-l-Maʿqūl* by **Ḥamīd al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn ʿAbd Allāh al-Kirmānī**,  
edited by Muṣṭafā Ghālib (Beirut: Dār al-Andalus, 1961), vol. 2, p. 141.
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Exalted be He in majesty and sublimity (*al-ʿaẓamah waʾl-jalāl*).

Since His act proceeds from His own Essence (*dhātihi*),

and not from any cause outside Himself,

it is established that this act is from Him,

through Him,  
and for Him — glorified be He.

It is not defined by *qāḍiyyat al-‘adl* (the law of justice)  
nor by *wujūb al-ḥikmah* (the necessity of wisdom).  
There is no precedent of knowledge (‘ilm) before it,  
nor any prior act (‘amal sābiq),  
nor any deserving of recompense (*istihqāq al-jawr*).

When His act appeared —  
that act which none among created beings (*abnā’ jinsihi*) preceded —  
it shone forth as the *ishrāq nūrihi* (radiance of His light)  
and the manifestation (*ẓuhūr*) of His beauty.  
It arose by His will (*irādahihi*),  
and His joy (*surūrihi*) was revealed in it.

Thus, the doctrine of *al-īmāmah al-ilāhiyyah* teaches  
that it arose from the place (*ḥaythu*) of His origination (*ibdā’ ihi*),  
and the purity of His creation (*tahārat ṣun’ ihi*).  
It is therefore necessary that it be named *al-sanī al-muṭlaq* (the Pure Sublime),  
and that it merit the title *al-aḥadiyyah al-waḥdāniyyah* (Absolute Oneness).

He is called by *al-awwaliyyah* (Firstness),  
and He is entitled by *al-kalimah* (the Word),  
for it was by *al-kalimah* that He brought forth *al-ikhlāṣ* (pure devotion),  
and no other name can be joined with it.

It was therefore necessary that this Word have the **Name of Command** (*ism al-amr*).  
Then, all worship of His creation proceeds through it,  
for it was by this that He initiated the First Act (*al-fi’l al-awwal*).

Hence, it is necessary that He possess a **living soul** (*naḥs ḥayyah*),  
and that His power (*qudrah*) and will (*irādah*) exist within His own Essence (*dhātihi*).  
He is the Sight (*al-naẓar*), the Measure (*al-qadr*),  
and the Thought (*al-fikr*) by which all forms are brought forth.

He is truly named **Deserving of Favor and Grace** (*mustahaqq al-faḍl wa’l-‘aṭā’*),  
and He is called **the Living** (*al-ḥayy*),  
for His existence is by His own subsistence (*mawjūdān bi-naḥsihi*).  
He is called **the Perfect** (*al-kāmil*),  
and **Complete in His Completeness** (*tāmmān bi-kamālih*),  
for He is the Life of Knowledge (*ḥayāt al-‘ilm*),  
the Speech of Wisdom (*kalām al-ḥikmah*),  
and the Essence of Understanding (‘āqilan mu‘aqqalan).

He comprehends all intellect (‘ilm kulluh),  
and His act proceeds from an eternal idea (*fikrah sābiqah*)  
toward whatever He has willed and determined.  
And by His act, all that is known (*ma’lūm*) and all that is done (*ma’mūl*) proceed from Him.

1. The bracketed words (inside double parentheses) were inserted from different manuscript sources.
2. The Ismā'īlīs hold that the **First Word** (*al-kalimah al-ūlā*) is the origin of *al-ibdā'* *al-sābiq* (the primordial origination), which appeared by the Divine command (*al-amr*). It is the **first determination** (*ta'yīn awwal*), yet it was not created in time (*lam yaḥduth bi-zamān*).
3. *Yaqūl: bi-amrih j.t.* — meaning: “by His command.”
4. The “Word (*al-kalimah*)” here signifies the First Intellect (*al-'aql al-awwal*) which proceeds directly from the Divine command (*al-amr ilāhī*), not from composition (*tarkīb*) or union (*sharākah*). The Ismā'īlī texts often identify it with *Ṣāhib al-Takwīn* (the Lord of Genesis), or *al-Sākin fī al-ṭibāq wa'l-ajrām* (the One dwelling in the spheres and bodies).
5. *al-awwal*: referring to the First Intellect (*al-'aql al-awwal*).
6. *bi-yuzlik*: read here as *yaqūl lahu bi-yajraṭ* — “He declares it to proceed by His command.”

Thus, He deserved the **Name of Life** (*ism al-ḥayāh*) — for He is *al-ḥayy wa'l-ḥayāh* (the Living and the Life), the **first will** (*al-irādah al-ūlā*) through which the attributes (*al-aṣfāt*) and names (*al-asmā'*) were brought into being, and by which the ranks were established and fixed (*waqafat waḥuṣirat*). Through it, honor (*sharaf*) was attained and nobility was perfected, and upon it all things revolved and by it all were ordered.

Thus, the reality (*ḥaqīqah*) of His act subsists by it, and the existence (*qiyām*) of all things depends upon it. The worthiness (*istiḥqāq*) of all beings derives from it, for everything that exists, exists by a reason (*sabab*) and by the worthiness of its existence (*istiḥqāq wujūdihi*). Had it not been for this, *al-fā'idah* (benefit) would be lost, and *al-wujūd* (existence) would vanish.

As for *al-Mubdi'*,  
He entered into no incapacity (*'ajz*) —  
for there was never a time when He was not.  
Therefore, *al-ibdā'* deserved to be named an act that proceeds *from nothing* (*lā min shay'*),  
neither by instruction (*ta'līm*) nor by reflection (*tafaḥḥum*),  
but solely *from His own Essence* (*min dhātihi bi-dhātihi*).

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As our master **Sayyid al-Mu'ayyad** explained in one of his sermons:  
“The One Who is settled (*al-sākin*) upon His Throne  
is established in perfection (*al-kamāl*),  
and the moving complete (*al-mutharrik al-mutamām*)  
praises Him with gratitude (*shukran li-mā waṣala ilayh min mubdi'ihī min al-in'ām*).  
He praises Him for carrying the possibility of the worlds (*muqīn al-akwān*),  
which emerge by necessity from time and place (*iḍṭirārah taṣḍur min al-zamān wa'l-makān*)

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a burden imposed by the incapacity (‘*ajz*) of servitude (‘*ubūdiyyah*) to encompass His movement and power.”

Thus he indicated that **movement of the “Body”** (*ḥarakah al-jism*) signifies **the praise of the corporeal** (*al-ḥamd al-jismānī*), from which emerged the *munba‘ith al-thānī al-qā’im bi’l-quwwah* (the Second Emanation standing by power), which through its own constitution generated time and space (*ikhtara ‘al-zamān wa’l-makān*) as God, exalted is He, willed it to be in His decree.

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**Ḥamīd al-Dīn** (may God be pleased with him) said:  
“He is *Dhū Nisbatayn* (the Possessor of Two Relations): one by which His existence is ascribed to His Essence (*bi-iḍāfatihī ilā dhātihī*), and the other by which His effects are ascribed to Him (*bi-iḍāfatihī ilā dhātihī*).”  
He did not elaborate further on this meaning here.

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#### Footnotes Translation

1. By *al-ḥayāh* (Life) is meant *al-zāhir wa’l-bāṭin*, i.e., **activity and knowledge**.
2. The bracketed words were inserted between parentheses in some manuscripts.
3. *Badi‘ahu wa-dakhala ‘alayhi al-‘ajz* — i.e., “His origination was never affected by incapacity”; this phrase appears in a variant reading.
4. *Dhū Nisbatayn* — i.e., “the One possessing two relations.”
5. The phrase “*wa-huwa dhū nisbatayn*” appears in multiple manuscripts with slight variations.
6. *Al-Mu‘ayyad bi’llāh* refers to **al-Sayyid al-Mu‘ayyad fī al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī**, a major theologian of the Fāṭimid period, preacher at the court of *al-Mustaṣfir bi’llāh* (d. 487/1094).  
His *Khutab al-Mu‘ayyad* are often cited in Ismā‘īlī works to explain cosmological doctrines of *al-ibdā‘* and *al-inbi‘āth*.

And it was necessary that two relations (*nisbatān*) be found in Him, for the reason of the two *musabbibayn* (that which each causes). This is not ascribed to any external proof or evidence, but to His perpetual worthiness (*istiḥqāq dā‘im*), by which God — exalted be His Name — honored Him and magnified Him for what He had deserved from a prior bounty.

As for the meaning of the other *nisbah* of the two, it is His glorification (*tasbīḥ*), sanctification (*taqḍīs*), and exaltation (*ta‘jīb*) of Him — exalted is He.  
This *mutanazzih* (transcendent) one glorifies His Creator,

and the addition (*idāfah*) ascribed to Him in this case is the **scientific and practical worship** (*al-‘ibādah al-‘ilmiyyah wa’l-‘amaliyyah*). For knowledge of what was witnessed from the worthiness of his Originator (*mubdi’ihī*) and the testimony (*shahādah*) given by that witness is the very root of **tawḥīd** and **‘ibādah**.

As the Exalted said:

*“Except those who bear witness to the truth, and they know.”* (Qur’ān 43:86)

and He said:

*“And those who strive hard for Us — We shall surely guide them to Our paths.”* (29:69)

and He said:

*“And the foremost — the foremost — they are those brought near.”* (56:10–11)

This then is the **most noble of the two relations** (*al-nisbah al-ashraf*), belonging to the First Emanation (*al-mubdi’ al-awwal*), specified by divinity (*al-ilāhiyyah*), and known through the confirmation of the world (*ta’yīd al-‘ālam*) and its ordering (*takwīnuhu wa-taṣwīruhu*).

God — exalted and glorified — mentioned this in His noble Book by uniting four Names that indicate His greatness.

He said:

*“He is Allah, the Creator (al-Khāliq), the Originator (al-Bāri’), the Fashioner (al-Muṣawwir);*

*to Him belong the Most Beautiful Names.”* (Qur’ān 59:24)

As for the other relation, which is the addition (*idāfah*) to His Essence (*dhātihi*), that is what I have already mentioned earlier: for when He mentioned His *mubda’*, He testified concerning what He had witnessed of Him, and continued in praise of His Lord — glorifying, sanctifying, exalting, rejoicing, and being filled with joy (*farḥan wa-surūran*), majesty (*wajlan*), and awe (*‘aẓīmah*).

For what He attained from His own Essence was from His own Essence — and what was from His Essence was by the eye of His perfection (*‘ayn kamālīhi*) and His fulfillment (*tamāmīhi*).

Thus He found within Himself divine support (*ta’yīd*), blessing (*barakah*), and light (*nūr*) through His own act, and in this His wonder (*‘ajab*) increased, and his rapture (*tarab*) intensified at what God had bestowed upon Him.

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## Footnotes

1. The text “*wa awjaba an yūjada ‘anhu ithnān*” occurs identically in **Kitāb Rasā’il al-‘Amal lil-Kirmanī** and *al-Risālah al-Durriyyah fī ‘Ilm al-Tawḥīd*.
2. Variant in some manuscripts: “*bi-sabab mā bayna al-nisbatayn.*”

3. Qur'ān 43:86.
4. Qur'ān 29:69.
5. Qur'ān 56:10–11.
6. Cf. al-Muḥaqqiq al-Ḥaqīqī al-Sijistānī, *Kitāb al-Yanābī'*, in the discussion of *al-nisbatayn*.
7. Qur'ān 59:24.
8. *Ḥadd al-fatrah ilā Sa'd al-Dawlah* — a marginal note in some copies.

Thus, loftiness and nobility came to him from the offspring of his own kind. Yet if they had not turned heedfully toward what he was granted, nor hastened to what was raised above them, they would have remained below him.

For it was by God's honor (*sharaf Allāh*) that He ennobled him, elevated his rank, and distinguished him with His illumination — may He be exalted — and He caused them to incline toward him in humility and reverence.

And this — may God honor him — is what Ḥamīd al-Dīn (al-Kirmānī) meant in *al-Misbah*, that this second “illusion” (*wahm*) is the lower *nisbah* (relation), and that the name *al-Adwan* (“the lower”) was not opened upon it except because a form (*ṣūrah*) occurred that resembled the noble form.

From this arises the fact that many who master knowledge and wisdom imagine they have attained its reality — yet they have only reached its shadow or semblance, not its essence. Such a person is heedless, deceived by the reflection of that reality, thinking himself among the perfected, when in truth he merely increases in the shared participation between the two forms — the higher and the lower.

This then is the lower *nisbah*, which is attributed to the self of the *Adwan*.

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Indeed, it is like the example of a man who, when the time of prayer (*ṣalāh*) arrived, went to the mosque with a group of worshippers.

He stood before them, leading them, instructing and directing them in their prayer, while each of them followed him in his standing (*qiyām*), his bowing (*rukū'*), and his prostration (*sujūd*). Their hearts and intentions were bound to his own — their thoughts were directed toward his direction, their remembrance followed his remembrance, and their glorification (*tasbīḥ*) was united with his glorification.

Thus, his act became the model for their acts, and his devotion (*khushū'*) the measure of their devotion.

Their states differed only by the degree of their comprehension of what he performed, and by the sincerity of their following him.

Footnotes translated:

- The connection of the lower *nisbah* is from the aspect of the *Mawjūd* (the Existent), as its relation is cut off from the realities of the transcendent.

- By this, Ḥamīd al-Dīn (al-Kirmānī) refers to the descent of the *Dā'ī al-Kāmil* (Perfect Summoner) from the degree of the *Ruhānīyyah* (spiritual) to the degree of the corporeal, in order to call others toward the divine *da'wah* (summons).
- The *Adwan* here is the “lower” manifestation — a reflection and image of the higher degree.
- The Ismā'īlīs believe that the preceding intellect emanates into the following one just as the heavenly spheres emanate into those beneath them; hence, this descent produces *ta'yīd* (divine support) in the succeeding ranks.
- “Khalqah fī ṣalāhihi” — the phrase “his creation in his prayer” — refers to the correspondence between *fī'l* (action) and *'amal* (deed) in the world of forms and the world of meaning.

They did not err in this, but rather the form itself became two forms: one is the *ṣūrah* of the *ṣalāh* (prayer), which is sensory and perceptible, and the other is the *ṣūrah ma'qūlah* (intelligible form), which is inward and spiritual — and the difference between the two is vast beyond measure.

For the first is outward (*ẓāhirah*), and the second is hidden (*bāṭinah*), and about it God — exalted is He — said:

**“O you who believe, bow and prostrate yourselves...” (Q. 22:77)**

and also:

**“...and do not be like those who forgot God, so He caused them to forget themselves.” (Q. 59:19)**

This is the meaning of the *nisbatayn* (the two relations): the *ḥadd al-fāḍil al-kāmil al-awwal* (the higher, perfect, and first boundary), and the *qāḍim* (the preceding) which acts upon what is beneath it — for its act (*fī'l*) exists in its own essence, and by it everything below it is perfected.

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As the *dhikr ḥakīm* (the wise remembrance) says:

**“He glorifies God all that is in the heavens and the earth;  
He is the Mighty, the Wise.” (Q. 57:1)**

**“His is the dominion of the heavens and the earth; He gives life and causes death,  
and He has power over all things.” (Q. 57:2)**

**“He is the First and the Last, the Manifest and the Hidden;  
and He is All-Knowing of everything.” (Q. 57:3)**

**“He it is who created the heavens and the earth in six days,  
then established Himself upon the Throne;  
He knows what penetrates the earth and what emerges from it,  
and what descends from the sky and what ascends therein;  
and He is with you wherever you are;  
and God sees all that you do.” (Q. 57:4)**

**“His is the dominion of the heavens and the earth,  
and to God all matters return.” (Q. 57:5)**

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Hence, all these verses revolve around a single truth —  
namely that the *āyāt* (signs) pertain to His *amr* (command),  
and that nothing exists apart from His order.

Our master Ḥamīd al-Dīn said:

“Indeed, things do not cease rising from multiplicity (*kathrah*) to unity (*waḥdah*),  
until they end in One Single Cause (‘*illah wāḥidah*) encompassing them all,  
by whose power and governance they subsist.”

For that *wāḥid* (One) there is no composition in His essence,  
nor does He possess a partner in His being.  
He is not in Himself an ‘*ālim* (knower) or *fā’il* (doer) by accident,  
nor is He a *ma’lūl* (effect) of any matter,  
for He is beyond every possibility of action or passivity.

He does not “deserve” (*yastahiq*) that one say of Him “He acts” (*anna fā’il*),  
for He is the Cause of all causes (*sabab al-asbāb*) without being subject to cause Himself.

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Footnote References (as in the Arabic):

1. ‘*Ulūm fī tarḥ al-j*. — Refers to sciences of emanation.
2. Q. 22:77
3. Q. 59:19
4. Q. 57:1
5. Q. 57:2
6. Q. 57:3–5

...for matter is other than it.

And we have already said that the *fā’il* (act) exists within His own essence,  
for His being the First Existent (*awwalu mawjūd*) means that His act in His essence is not  
from matter,  
and what we mentioned earlier — that He is an *fā’il* (agent) —  
is not like other agents whose actions are within matter.

Rather, His act follows only what He Himself has determined in His own locus.

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He said in another section:

“The appearance (*zuhūr*) of the First Existent (*al-mawjūd al-awwal*) is the root to which  
every existent terminates.

For it has been made clear that it is the ‘*illah* (cause) for other than itself,  
and that its act (*fī’luh*) is perfect in itself.”

And just as the *nāṭiq* (the speaking intellect / Prophet) has existence through his utterance, and his utterance is an expression of his essence —  
so too, the First Existent is not limited by any kind of form from among forms.

For it has been made explicit by the *‘ālim* (the knower) that  
“the *nāṭiq* is not of the same *jins* (genus) as those of the human kind.”  
Hence the *mawjūd al-awwal* (First Existent) is not of the genus of any existent;  
rather, it is like the difference between the *‘ālim* and the *nāṭiq* —  
the one who perceives, and the one who gives perception.

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He also said:

“The attributes (*ṣifāt*) and the *mu‘allaqāt* (dependent realities)  
are attached through relations (*iḍāfāt*),  
just as the two perfections (*kamālān al-awwal wa al-thānī*) are attached by their  
correspondence.”

The *kamāl al-awwal* (first perfection) pertains to the existence of the *dhāt* (essence) which is  
in the *mawṣūf* (subject),  
while the *kamāl al-thānī* (second perfection) pertains to the existence of that essence in the  
*ṣifah* (attribute),  
like the difference between knowledge ( *‘ilm*) as a perfection in itself  
and speech (*kalām*) as a perfection that manifests that knowledge outwardly.

Both are from the same essence,  
and the *wāḥid al-awwal* (the First One) gathers unity and multiplicity together —  
that is, His unity (*waḥdah*) is inclusive of all multiplicity (*kathrah*) by way of order and  
proportion (*nizām wa qadr*).

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Therefore, the existence of the *wājib* (Necessary Existent) is the very existence of what  
emanates from Him.

His existence is one in all respects;

yet, what proceeds from Him is twofold:

one as a cause ( *‘illah*) and the other as an effect (*ma‘lūl*).

Thus, what proceeds from Him corresponds in itself to what proceeds by His act.

And among the verses indicating His unity and governance is His saying:

**“Exalted is He — the One, the Subduer.”** (Q. 13:16)

**“He is the Creator of everything, and He is, over all things, Disposer.”** (Q. 39:62)

**“He originates creation and then repeats it,  
and this is easy for Him.”** (Q. 30:27)

**“His command, when He wills a thing, is only to say to it: Be! — and it is.”** (Q. 36:82)

So, His act of origination (*ibdā‘uh*) is one with His essence,

and His origination of what proceeds from Him is His very existence.

And His origination is *muḍāf* (relational) only when it is referred to what issues from Him —  
but it is *ibtidā‘ī* (primordial) when referred to His own being.

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Footnotes (as indicated in the Arabic text):

1. The author here applies the theory of the relation between *faʿl* (act) and *mafʿūl* (object), *zāhir* (manifest) and *bāṭin* (hidden), as discussed in *Rasāʾil al-Ikhwān al-Ṣafā* and the *Risālah al-Ḥurūf*.
2. Because the *nāṭiq* (Speaker, i.e. Prophet) has no need or deficiency, for his act proceeds by divine support, not by personal faculty.
3. As previously mentioned in the section on *al-ibdāʿ al-awwal*, that the First Emanation (*al-mawjūd al-awwal*) acts without dependence upon matter or potentiality, and its act is by necessity of essence.

...that these **idāfat** (relations or “additions”) should not be internal to His *dhāt* (essence) by way of alteration, and that the two *kamālāt* (perfections) which belong to the Creator (*al-bāriʿ*) are both from the *dhāt* of the *mubdīʿ* (Originator). Each of the two deserves, from the right of origination (*ḥaqq al-ibdāʿ*), what the other deserves by right of origination. Thus the first *kamāl* which flows upon the totality of what is originated (*al-kull al-mubdaʿ*) is itself an originator (*mubdīʿ*), just as the second *kamāl* of what is originated (*al-thānī min al-mubdaʿ*)—from the perspective of the act of origination (*min jihat al-ibdāʿ*)—is one and the same act. And from the standpoint of the *dhāt* of the Originator, they are two originations (*ibdāʿ ān ithnān*) in one act, and each of the two is “a beginning and a repetition” (*kullān awwalan wa-karrāran*).

So, may God aid him, the Shaykh has shown here that the *kamāl al-awwāl* is that perfection which pertains to the divine act of origination (*al-ibdāʿ al-mashār ilayhi bi-l-ḥayāh*), and that the *kamāl al-thānī* is the perfection belonging to His act that is imaged within the essence of the *mubdaʿ*.

Thus the *dhāt* of the Originator becomes the locus of the first *kamāl*, while the image (*ṣūrah*) reflected in the *mubdaʿ* bears the second *kamāl*; the two together are like the form and the reflection, one and the same in act but differing in aspect (*min jihatīhi mubdaʿ ān ʿamūdan, wa-min jihatīhi kānū ibdāʿ an fardan*).

So the first *kamāl* and the second *kamāl* are, in reality, a single perfection that has occurred within His own *dhāt*, expressing what He intends of His existence.

And the proof (*burhān*) of this is that the human being (*insān*)—in the likeness (*mithālahu*) that is within the very origin of his existence—is itself an image of this process of perfection and origination.

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Footnotes (summarized and clarified)

1. The commentator explains that *kamāl al-awwāl* (First Perfection) belongs to the totality of existents because all things share a degree of potentiality. *Kamāl al-thānī* (Second Perfection) corresponds to actuality, or the state of the form being realized—as with the transition from potency (*quwwah*) to act (*fiʿl*).
2. This passage parallels the treatment in al-Shaykh al-Ishrāqī (Shihāb al-Dīn al-Suhrawardī)’s **al-Maṭālīʿ al-anwār** and **al-Talwīḥāt**, concerning the two levels of perfection:

- The **first** concerns *wujūd al-dhāt* (existence of the essence),
- The **second** concerns *wujūd al-ṣifah* (existence of the attribute).  
The two are joined like the **sun and its radiance** (*ka-l-shams wa-ḍiyā'ihā*), or **form and reflection**.

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The two are joined like the **sun and its radiance** (*ka-l-shams wa-ḍiyā'ihā*), or **form and reflection**.

...for this is the **first perfection (al-kamāl al-awwal)**.

When it becomes joined with *'ilm* (knowledge) and *ḥikmah* (wisdom), as in the case of the *awliyā' Allāh* (friends of God), it attains a new *ṣūrah* (form): it becomes for him two

*kamalān*—the first and the second. His natural life (*ḥayāt ṭabī‘iyyah*) becomes a life infused with the light of that divine life.

Thus, from one perspective, they are two distinct individuals; yet from another, they are one and the same (*fardan min jihah wa-ithnān min jihah*).

And likewise, our master **Sayyidunā Ḥamīd al-Dīn** was asked:

“Does the act of *ibdā‘* (origination) entail *taklīf* (obligation)?”

He replied:

*Taklīf* has two aspects: one is absolute (*muṭlaq*), and the other is specific (*muqayyad*). The absolute *taklīf* applies to the celestial bodies (*al-ajrām al-‘ulwiyyah*) and the pure souls (*al-anfās al-ṭāhirah*); the specific *taklīf* applies to humanity (*‘ibādat al-bashar*), so that through ignorance he might rise toward gnosis (*ma‘rifah*).

The worship of the intellect (*‘ibādat al-‘aql al-awwal*) for its Originator (*mubdi‘uh*) is in its very negation of divinity from its own *dhāt*—in its total orientation toward Him, submission to Him, humility before Him, glorification of Him, and sanctification of Him.

It does not perceive Him through sense (*idrāk ḥissī*), for He is beyond perception; and thus its praise (*tasbīḥ*) and sanctity (*taqdīs*) are unceasing and perpetual.

Were that cycle ever interrupted, the balance of the heavens and earth would collapse; the order of unity (*niẓām al-tawḥīd*) would be broken; steadfastness would vanish; limits would dissolve; and the world of decree (*‘ālam al-qaḍā‘*) would cease.

Hence, the *‘ibādah* (worship) of the First Intellect (*al-‘aql al-awwal*) is not for reward (*thawāb*) or recompense (*jazā‘*), but to sustain the flow of divine action (*‘amal al-fayḍ*), and to pour forth the graces of the *ghuraf al-mu‘minīn* (lofty chambers of the believers) and the gardens of the striving ones (*riyāḍ al-mujāhidīn*).

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#### Footnotes (summarized)

1. When both *kamalān* become united, they form a single perfection encompassing **oneness and multiplicity**. This corresponds to the Qur’ānic verse “*He it is who began the creation and repeats it*” (Q 10:34). The first *kamāl* is the act of origination (*ibdā‘*), and the second *kamāl* is its reflection and renewal.
2. The “apparent worship” (*‘ibādah ṣāhirah*) of human beings corresponds to the “inward worship” (*‘ibādah bāṭinah*) of the *‘aql al-awwal*, the latter being the hidden obedience through pure knowledge and constant awareness of the divine act.
3. The author notes that this philosophical exposition follows the method of the Ismā‘īlī masters, such as Nāṣir-i Khusraw and Ḥamīd al-Dīn al-Kirmānī, who identify a correspondence between cosmic worship (*‘ibādah kawniyyah*) and spiritual worship (*‘ibādah rūḥiyyah*).

He also said:

*Al-ibdā‘* (origination) — that is, the act of the *mubdi‘* (Originator) — is itself the very essence of perfection (*‘ayn al-kamāl*).

For if it were possible that He possess deficiency (*nuqṣān*) within His own *dhāt* (essence), or that He depend on another besides Himself to complete Him, He would be composite and

contingent (*mutahayyil*), which is impossible.  
Thus, His existence (*wujūd*) is perpetual and cannot cease.

Then he continued:

Indeed, *al-ibdāʿ al-awwal* (the First Origination) must not have within it any multiplicity (*tanawwuʿ aw ithnānīyah*).

For such multiplicity would entail division (*inqisām*), and wherever division occurs, composition follows—and thus dependency arises within that which is divided.

Hence, we find that every divided thing is in need of what completes its parts (*mā yutimmu ajzāʾahu*).

Therefore, it is clear that the *mubdiʿ al-awwal* (the First Originator) cannot be deficient, nor can He require any complement external to His *dhāt*.

He has no likeness (*mathal*) in existence; nothing shares His mode of conception (*taṣawwur*).

The act (*fiʿl*) that proceeds from Him — by which existence is established — is termed *ibdāʿ* precisely because it issues from Him without any intermediary (*min ghayri wāsiṭah*), without tool (*bi-lā ālah*), and without time or motion (*bi-lā waqt wa-lā ḥarakah*).

Thus, the *ibdāʿ* is the pure act of *al-ʿaql al-awwal* (the First Intellect) receiving existence directly from Him.

The first to be originated (*awwal al-mubdaʿāt*) was the *ʿaql*, followed by the *nafs* (soul), and after it the *ṭabīʿah* (nature).

The highest of them in rank is the Intellect (*ʿaql*), which alone faces the Originator (*al-Mubdiʿ*) and recognizes Him in truth, bearing the knowledge (*maʿrifah*) of His perfection and unity (*waḥdāniyyah*).

And this *ḥadd al-jalīl* (limit of the Exalted) — exalted is He — is described with glory and might, because through Him appear divine power (*qudrah*), the knowledge of limits (*maʿrifat al-ḥudūd*), and the disclosure of eternal realities (*al-azaliyyāt*).

In Him, the signs of permanence (*baqāʾ*) and loftiness (*sumū*) are manifest.

The relation of all that exists returns to His existence and His *ṣūrah* (form), and His own form is beyond all forms (*fawqa kull taṣawwur*), though His *jalāl* (majesty) is known through His effects.

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#### Footnotes (summarized)

1. The commentator clarifies that *ibdāʿ* here is not to be confused with *takwīn* (formation) or *taṣwīr* (fashioning), since those imply change and composition — impossible for the *Mubdiʿ* whose essence is pure simplicity.
2. The note on *tanawwuʿ al-ithnayn* (“duality of kinds”) cites Qurʾān 39:62 (“*Allāh is the Creator of everything*”), implying that multiplicity pertains only to the created, not the Originator.
3. “He has no likeness” (*lā yushbihuhu shayʿ*) recalls the Qurʾānic verse 42:11, “*Laysa ka-mithlihi shayʿ*.”
4. The mention of *ḥadd al-jalīl* indicates the Ismāʿīlī concept of the “highest boundary” — the first effect, the *ʿaql al-awwal*, through which divine knowledge manifests without implying plurality in the *dhāt* of God.

They (the Companions) thus became believers (*mu'minīn*) and Muslims (*muslimīn*) through *al-islām* — that is, through true assent (*taṣdīq*).

When they were addressed by the Messenger of God ﷺ, and responded to his call, their lives acquired a true spiritual life (*ḥayāt ḥaqīqiyyah rūḥāniyyah*) through their *islām* (submission) and *taslīm* (surrender).

This is indicated by the divine word:

**“This day I have perfected your religion for you, completed My favor upon you, and chosen for you Islam as your religion.”**

(*Qur'ān* 5:3)

— a confirmation of their assistance (*nuṣrah*) and obedience to the Prophet, and their acceptance of what he brought forth.

Whoever obeyed him in what he called to, responded with love (*ḥubban*), sincerity (*niyyah*), speech (*nutqan*), and action (*fi'lan*), and performed it perfectly — fully, completely, intentionally, and consciously —

such a one believed with *ḥaqīqah*, awareness (*ilm*), perception (*ma'rifah*), and truth (*ḥaqqan*).

Whoever turned away in arrogance or refused obedience thereby opposed that completion (*kamāl*).

As for the *awṣiyā'* (designated successors) and *a'immaḥ* (Imams), they are the ones who, at the second degree of finality (*al-nihāyah al-thāniyyah*), preserve within themselves the pure essence (*jawhar ṣafā'ihim*), the refinement (*luṭf*) of their natures, and the radiance (*ziyādah*) of their souls.

They embody what the creative essences (*al-dhawāt al-ibdā'iyyah*) deserve in rank and sanctity.

Each *ḥadd* (hierarchical rank) of this world corresponds to a *ḥadd* from the limits (*ḥudūd*) of the *dīn*,

and the three who are the first to manifest among the higher ranks — possessing spiritual finality (*al-ghāyah al-ilāhiyyah*) and sacredness (*al-qadāsah al-insāniyyah*) — their perfection (*kamāl*) was the first to appear in the sacred boundaries (*al-ḥudūd al-ilāhiyyah*).

Sayyidunā **Ḥamīd al-Dīn al-Kirmānī** (may God sanctify his secret) said:

“The *ḥaqq* (the Truth) is the first attribute (*ṣifah al-awwalā*) — He is the *ḥaqq*, He is the first existence (*al-wujūd al-awwal*), He is unity (*al-waḥdah*), He is the One (*al-wāḥid*).

He is the first cause (*al-awwal*), the first Intellect (*al-'aql al-awwal*), the first spoken Word (*al-manṭūq al-awwal*), the first Knowledge (*al-'ilm al-awwal*), the first Power (*al-qudrah al-awwal*), and the first Life (*al-ḥayāh al-awwal*).”

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#### Footnotes (in the text)

1. This refers to the Prophet ﷺ being informed by revelation (*waḥy*) to appoint ‘**Alī**’ (**alayhi al-salām**) as the *waṣī* (legatee), whose acceptance completed the *islām* of the believers.

When the verse “*al-yawm akmalu lakum dīnakum*” was revealed at **Ghadīr Khumm**, it signified the perfection of religion through *wilāyah* (guardianship).

2. This citation from *Hamīd al-Dīn al-Kirmānī* appears also in his **Rasā'il al-Ḥikmah**, in the third *sirr* (epistle) known as *al-Sirr al-Thālith*, concerning the 'Aql al-Kull (Universal Intellect) and *al-Ḥaqīqah al-Awwalā* (the First Reality).
3. The note clarifies that the *ḥaqq* described here is the same as *al-wujūd al-awwal* (the First Existence), *al-wahdah* (Unity), *al-wāhid* (the One), *al-'aql al-awwal* (First Intellect), and *al-qudrah al-awwal* (First Power) — all of which are expressions of one single metaphysical reality that precedes all multiplicity.

He (*i.e.*, the First Intellect – *al-'aql al-awwal*) is the First Living (*al-ḥayy al-awwal*), a single essence (*dhāt wāḥidah*) that encompasses all these attributes (*ṣifāt*).

This section clarifies what has been briefly stated and summarized above.

He said: “Indeed, *al-ḥayāh* (Life) is receptive to perfection according to its degrees in *al-wujūd* (Existence).

If the existence of *al-ḥayāh* were concurrent with existence itself, like *al-ibdā'* (Origination), then its existence and the existence of *al-wujūd* would be one and the same.

But since this is not the case—there being nothing that precedes it—it follows that their existence was together, but distinct:

thus, the existence of *al-ḥayāh* (Life) is secondary (*thānīyah*) in rank, proceeding from the First (*al-awwal*),

and encircling it with what encompasses it completely.”

Therefore, *al-ḥayāh* (Life) is the most ancient (*aqdam*) of all that comes after the First, for it is derived from His radiance (*bahā'ihī*), beauty (*jamālihi*), majesty (*jalālihi*), and might (*'aẓamatihi*).

It cannot be described except by reference to Him, for it longs eternally for that which is external to itself —

namely, that from which its existence proceeds.

It yearns (*ishtāqat*) for that which contains it,

for it is within the Great Name (*al-ism al-a'ẓam*) and the Most Exalted Reality (*al-musammā al-a'ẓam*).

And if all of the *ṣifāt* (attributes)—such as wisdom (*ḥikmah*), knowledge (*'ilm*), power (*qudrah*), greatness (*'aẓamah*), exaltation (*'uluww*), glory (*jalāl*), beauty (*jamāl*), and radiance (*bahjah*)—

exist within *al-ḥayāh*, then *al-ḥayāh al-thānīyah* (the Second Life, *i.e.*, the Universal Soul) is the perfection (*kamāl*) of all things, either by its essence (*bi-jawharihā*) or through its manifestations (*bi-ẓuhūrihā*).

And every *kamāl thānī* (secondary perfection) that arises in things comes from its influence, just as the perfection of the *malakūt* (spiritual kingdom) perfects the *mulk* (corporeal kingdom).

#### Footnotes (as per marginal references)

1. See *al-Sirr al-Thālith* (The Third Secret), *al-Far' al-Khāmis*, concerning *al-aṣl wa-l-far' fī al-wujūd wa-l-ḥayāh wujūdan mā* — that the origin (*aṣl*) and branch (*far'*) of existence are one in essential being (*wujūd*), differing only in rank.

2. Every later entity (*mā dūna al-awwal*) must necessarily possess its perfection only through the First (*al-awwal*), which is perfect in itself.  
The second (*al-thānī*) receives its form through it, not independently.
3. What proceeds from the First (*mā yajurru ‘an al-awwal*) has no being apart from it — its existence is nothing but *bi-ghayrih*, not *min ghayrih* (by other than it, not from other than it).
4. Cf. *al-Sirr al-Thālith* and *al-Sirr al-Sādis* (The Third and Sixth Secrets), where the hierarchy of *al-‘aql* (Intellect) and *al-nafs* (Soul) is discussed in connection with *al-kamāl al-thānī* (secondary perfection), and the Divine attributes (*al-ṣifāt al-ilāhiyyah*) such as life (*ḥayāh*), power (*qudrah*), might (‘*aḥamah*), glory (*jalāl*), beauty (*jamāl*), radiance (*bahjah*), and purity (*naqā’*), which all reflect their origin from the First Intellect and the Universal Soul.

That which is in their knowledge (‘*ilmihim*), their understanding (‘*aqluhum*), their command (*amruhum*), their governance (*siyāsatuhum*), their authority (*ḥukmuhum*), and their joy and delight (*masarratuhum wa-ḍiḥkahum*) —

this corresponds to the position of plants (*al-nabātāt*) on the earth’s surface:  
it is the manifestation of *al-bahjah* (splendor), *al-majd* (glory), and *al-surūr* (delight).

As for the *inbi‘āth* (emanation) of that which follows, it is like the emanation of the second from the first.

For indeed, if *al-ibdā‘ al-awwal* (the First Origination) is that of *al-wujūd al-awwal* (the First Existence),

then *al-ibdā‘ al-thānī* (the Second Origination) is greater in that it includes what proceeds from it and what arises after it,  
not other than it —

for the majesty (*jalāl*), greatness (‘*aḥamah*), power (*qudrah*), might (*kubrā’*), loftiness (‘*ulūw*), and splendor (‘*aḥamah*) which belong to it cannot be surpassed.

The difference between *al-awwal* and *al-thānī* lies only in the degree of manifestation, and this is clear to those who understand.

And this corresponds to what is indicated by the Prophet ﷺ in his noble saying:

**“O human being! What has deceived you concerning your Lord, the Most Generous—the One who created you, then fashioned you, then proportioned you, in whatever form He willed He composed you.”**

(*Qur’ān* 82:6–8)

This is an *ishārah* (symbolic allusion) to the *tarbiyyah* (nurturing) of the human being by the Messenger ﷺ —

both *bi-l-ṭarīq al-‘ilmiyyah* (by the path of knowledge) and *bi-l-ṭarīq al-‘amalīyyah* (by the path of action).

And thus it is also said:

**“Our master Ḥamīd al-Dīn said (peace be upon him):**

**If there were no barrier (‘*ā’iq*) between the first origination (*al-ibdā‘ al-awwal*) and its reflection,**

**then what proceeds from it would be like the reflection of the shining sun in the clear mirror of their souls.”**

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Footnotes (as indicated by the marginal notes)

1. Cf. *al-Sirr al-Sābi‘ min al-Surūr al-Thālith* — in *al-Far‘ al-Thālith wa-l-Sādis*, where it is said: “*Thumma inna al-ibdā‘ alladhī huwa al-wujūd al-sābiq ‘alā kulli kā’in, law lam yakun lahu ‘alla li-wujūdihi mā sawāhu, lam kānat li-l-mawjūdāt wujūd.*” (“Then indeed the Origination that is prior to all being—if it had no cause for its existence beyond itself, there would be no existence for created things at all.”)
2. See *al-Sirr al-Thālith al-Far‘ al-Sābi‘* from *Kitāb Rāḥat al-‘Aql*, for further exposition of the relation between *al-ibdā‘ al-awwal* and the *ṣuwar al-mawjūdāt* (forms of existence).

The perfection of His *qudrah* (power) is such that nothing external to Him can precede Him, nor does anything arise from His essence requiring renewal ( *‘ibādat ta‘arrufihi*).

For if *al-ibdā‘ al-awwal* (the First Origination) were the cause ( *‘illah*) of the existence of created beings (*al-mawjūdāt*), then, according to His saying —

“If *al-mubdi‘ al-awwal* were not *al-ḥayy al-awwal* (the First Living One), there would be no life (*ḥayāh*) without preference or distinction” —

then *al-mubdi‘ al-awwal* (the First Originator) must necessarily be *fā‘ilan* (active), and *al-maf‘ūl* (the acted-upon) must necessarily be that whose existence depends upon its *maf‘ūliyyah* (being-acted-upon).

Hence *al-mubdi‘ al-awwal* is the cause of the existence of its effect (*maf‘ūluh*), and *al-maf‘ūl al-awwal* (the first effect) is the cause of what follows it.

Thus, *al-ḥarakah al-ūlā* (the First Motion) and *al-‘illah al-ūlā* (the First Cause) are identical.

This chapter makes clear that *al-faḍl al-awwal* (the First Grace) is that which proceeds according to what is most fitting and most deserving — so that, as the Prophet ﷺ said:

“The First Motion (*al-ḥarakah al-ūlā*) is the First Cause (*al-‘illah al-ūlā*), and the motion that follows it is only the motion of his *da‘wah* (invitation) to the unity of God and His worship.”

Thus, the latter movement is like the Prophet’s movement in his *da‘wah* to *tawḥīd Allāh ta‘ālā wa ‘ibādātihi* (the Divine Unity and worship).

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And our master **Ḥamīd al-Dīn (Q)** has made this truth evident by saying:

“The First is the movement (*ḥarakah*) of all motions; everything that arises from motion arises by His command. And perfection (*kamāl*) is that by which subsists the reality of all motion—for the motion that is from Him, and by Him, and toward Him, is *qidam* (pre-eternal), for it has no cause other than Him, nor does it return except to Him.”

Hence He is the **Pre-eternal** (*al-qadīm*),  
the one to whom all motion arrives and in whom all motion rests,  
for He precedes all things not by time, but by **rank** (*rutbah*) and **dignity** (*sha'n*).

And this is in agreement with what has been transmitted from our master **Ḥamīd al-Dīn (Q)**  
in *al-Zāhirah*,  
in the second chapter, regarding this very matter.

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## Footnotes

1. In *Rāḥat al-ʿAql*, it is explained that *al-ibdāʿ al-awwal* (the First Origination) is the cause of the existence of all beings,  
and that there can be no division (*inqisām*) or change (*taghayyur*) in its essence, for it precedes all multiplicity.
2. It is also indicated that the **awṣiyāʾ** (legates), **anbiyāʾ** (prophets), and **aʾimmah** (imams)  
are the manifestations of that *ʿibdāʿ* in the world of humanity—  
thus their intellects, commands, and governance arise from the Divine command.
3. Because *al-wujūd al-awwal* (the First Existence), *al-ḥarakah al-ūlā* (the First Motion), and *al-ʿillah al-ūlā* (the First Cause)  
all proceed without any intermediary,  
and what arises from them arises by necessity and without composition.
4. Hence all that exists in *ʿālam al-dīn* (the world of religion) and *ʿālam al-mithāl* (the imaginal realm)  
flows from His command, His will, and His joy (*masarratihi wa-saʿādatihi*).

## ʿAyn al-Masāʾil (The Core of the Questions)

1 If you wish to assert that *al-qadīm* (the Pre-eternal) is God — *Allāh al-Bārīʾ taʿālā* —  
then it must be clear to you that this assertion, in its literal sense, contains a logical flaw (*fasād al-qānūn*).

For the corruption that this statement entails lies in that *al-qidam* — according to the classification of scholars and philosophers —  
is a **noun (ism)** applied to that which is connected to something (*waqiʿ ʿalā shayʿ*).

Now, every noun that is applied to something implies that the thing so named is **associated with something else** —

and that association (*iqtirān bi-shayʿ*) necessarily indicates either **priority or posteriority**.  
Thus, *al-qadīm* (the Pre-eternal) is a name that suggests something preceded (*taʾakhkhara ʿanhu ghayruhu*),  
and that which is preceded by nothing deserves to be called *qadīm*.

Therefore, the *Bārīʾ* (the Creator) existed (*kāna*) when nothing else existed (*lā shayʿ maʿahu*).

When there is nothing else with Him, there is no longer any basis to call Him *qadīm*—  
for the term itself implies comparison or relation (*nisbah*).

2 To say *al-qadīm* is to ascribe a relational quality —  
and the Pre-eternal (*al-qadīm*) has no peer, partner, or co-existent by which such a relation could be measured.

3 The term *shay'* (“thing”) also cannot apply to Him in the same sense,  
for *shay'* denotes that which is distinct (*mutamayyiz*) from other things,  
and God Most High (*Allāh ta'ālā*) transcends every form of distinction or delimitation (*tahdīd*).

Thus, He is before all *ashyā'* (things) not by temporal precedence,  
but because He is their **source and origin** —  
whether those things be great or small, manifest or hidden, noble or base.

4 Therefore, if something other than Him existed (*kāna ghayruhu mawjūd*),  
then it would follow that He, exalted be He, was not truly without associate.  
But since His existence preceded all others (*sabqa al-ashyā'*),  
He is *al-Qadīm* in the truest sense — not because of time, but because of **priority in being** (*taqaddum bi-l-wujūd*).

5 And if it were supposed that with God there existed something other than Him,  
then that thing would have been dependent on Him,  
for He is the **cause** (*'illah*) of its being and the **source** (*maṣdar*) of its existence.  
So even that thing's *qadām* (pre-eternity) would be derived and contingent, not essential.

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6 Likewise, when God is described as possessing **al-khayr al-muṭlaq** (absolute goodness),  
this is not to say that there exists “good” apart from Him,  
for that would entail composition (*tarkīb*) in His essence.  
Rather, *al-khayr* (goodness) is a name for His essence,  
and all that is good derives from Him, not from something beside Him.

So when the Qur'ān says,

“That is because God is the Truth (*al-Ḥaqq*),  
and whatever they call upon besides Him is falsehood (*bāṭil*),”

it means that He alone is the real existence (*wujūd ḥaqīqī*),  
and everything besides Him is false (*bāṭil*) insofar as it has no independent being.

7 Hence, if something's existence depends on Him,  
it cannot truly be *qadīm*,  
for pre-eternity (*qidam*) belongs only to that whose being depends on nothing.

If something comes after Him (*muta'akhkhir 'anhu*),  
it is created (*muḥdath*).  
And if it is created, it necessarily has a beginning (*ibtidā'*),  
and so it cannot be called *qadīm*.

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8 Therefore, when we say *al-qadīm shayʿ* (“the Pre-eternal is a thing”), this is only a linguistic convenience.  
For the created thing (*al-muḥdath*) is a “thing,”  
and the Pre-eternal (*al-qadīm*) is “a thing” only insofar as He **exists truly** (*mawjūd ḥaqīqī*), not in the sense of being one thing among many.

9 The existence of things (*wujūd al-ashyāʿ*) is of three kinds (*aḍrāb thalāthah*):

- that which existed before (*sābiqan fī al-wujūd*),
- that which exists simultaneously (*muqāranan fī al-wujūd*), and
- that which exists after (*mutaʿakkharan fī al-wujūd*).

The first is *al-qadīm* (the Pre-eternal),  
the second is *al-bāqī* (the Everlasting),  
and the third is *al-muḥdath* (the originated).

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10 Thus, what is temporally prior (*mutaqaddim fī al-zamān*) does not imply what is pre-eternal (*qadīm bi-l-ḥaqīqah*),  
just as what is natural (*ṭabīʿī*) does not imply what is divine (*ilāhī*).  
For *al-qidam* is not a temporal category,  
but a mark of **necessity of existence** (*wujūb al-wujūd*) —  
that is, existence through itself, not by another (*bi-dhātihi lā bi-ghayrihi*).

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Footnotes (in the printed edition)

1. Words enclosed in brackets like ( ) are interpolations from later manuscripts.
2. The discussion parallels the argument in *Rāḥat al-ʿAql* about *al-ibdāʿ al-awwal* as the First Cause,  
emphasizing that the **Bārī** (Creator) precedes creation not temporally but ontologically —  
by His essence (*bi-dhātihi*) and by the necessity of His being (*wujūb wujūdihi*).

(Continuation of ‘*Ayn al-Masāʾil* – On the Meaning of *al-Qidam*)

1 The term *qidam* (pre-eternity) may be understood in two ways:  
Sometimes it is used **relatively** (*bi-l-idāfah*),  
and sometimes **essentially** (*bi-dh-dhāt*).

When it is relative, it refers to something that is “earlier” than another —  
for example, when we say that the first of two things precedes (*taqaddama*) the second.  
This type of precedence belongs to the *ashyāʿ* (things) and pertains to **temporal sequence** (*taʿakkhur wa-taqaddum zamānī*).

But when *qidam* is essential, it refers to that which has **no cause, no beginning, and no external dependence**.

This is what belongs to the *Bārī* (Creator), exalted is He.

Thus, His *qidam* is not a matter of comparison (*iḍāfah*) but of intrinsic being (*dhāt*).

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2 The precedence (*taqaddum*) of created things over one another —  
some being prior (*sābiq*) and others later (*lāḥiq*) —  
belongs to the realm of *al-zamān* (time) and *al-ḥarakah* (motion).  
But *al-qidam al-ilāhī* (divine pre-eternity) is beyond both.

For God Most High (*Allāh ta'ālā*) existed when there was no *zaman* and no *ḥarakah*.  
He is *al-Awwal* (the First) not by temporal priority,  
but by **being the origin of all existence** (*mabda' al-wujūd kullihi*).

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3 What certain speculative theologians (*al-mutakallimūn*) have innovated in their attempts to explain *qidam* is not free from error (*ghalaṭ kabīr*).  
For they have imagined *qidam* as if it were a quality inhering in God's essence like an '*araḍ* (accident),  
or as if it were a "duration without beginning."  
But this is false, for duration itself belongs to the category of *zamān*,  
and *zamān* presupposes change (*taghayyur*).

God Most High (*ta'ālā Allāh*) is exalted above change, increase, or decrease.

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4 Therefore, the distinction must be made between the **name** (*ism*) *al-Qadīm* and the **meaning** (*ma'nā*) it implies.  
The name *al-Qadīm* applies only to that which exists without cause (*mawjūd bi-lā 'illah*) and without any prior being.  
Anything that requires a cause or a prior condition cannot truly be called *qadīm*.  
This is the difference between saying "God is *al-Qadīm*" and saying "God existed before everything else."  
The first expresses His essential independence (*ghinā' dhātī*),  
the second expresses His priority over creation (*taqaddum 'alā al-makhlūqāt*).

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5 The philosophers (*al-ḥukamā'*) have also said that when we call God *al-Qadīm*, we mean not that He "preceded" something —  
for such precedence would imply the existence of something with respect to which He could be compared —  
but rather that **His being is not preceded by non-being** (*lā yataqaddam wujūdahu 'adam*).

Thus, His *qidam* is **negation of beginning** (*nafy al-ibtidā'*),  
not **comparison of order** (*muqāranah fī al-tartīb*).

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6 Hence, the discussion now clarifies what is meant by the name *al-Qidam*:

it is an **expression of the impossibility of non-being** (*istiḥālat al-‘adam*) for the Necessary Being (*al-wājib bi-dhātihī*).

So when the theologian says “God is *al-Qadīm*,” he means “God’s being is necessary and without beginning.”

And when the philosopher says the same,

he relies on the principle that the Necessary Existent (*al-wājib al-wujūd*) cannot be preceded by potentiality (*imkān*).

In both cases, the sense is that **God is eternally actual (*bi-l-fi‘l*)**, never preceded by non-existence, and the cause of every other existence.

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7 Thus, it is incorrect to call God *fā‘il* (agent) in the temporal sense —

for *fā‘il* implies something that acts at a certain time after not having acted before.

Rather, He is *Fā‘il bi-lā zamān* (an agent without time),

whose act (*fi‘l*) is the very being of things in their dependence on Him.

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8 As Sayyid Ḥamīd al-Dīn (Q.) made clear in some of his *rasā’il* (treatises),

one must not say of God that He “became” a doer (*ṣāra fā‘ilan*),

for that would imply transition from potentiality to actuality (*intiqāl min al-quwwah ilā al-fi‘l*).

He has ever been (*lam yazal*) as He is —

and His being a doer (*fā‘ilīyah*) is eternal (*qidamiyyah*),

without temporal sequence or novelty.

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9 Hence, to say that God’s act (*fi‘l Allāh*) is “new” (*muḥdath*) is incorrect if one means His power (*qudrah*) changes —

for His act is identical with His will (*mashī‘ah*) and His will is identical with His essence (*dhāt*).

The renewal (*tajaddud*) occurs only in the *ma‘lūlāt* (effects), not in the *‘illah* (cause).

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#### ◆ Summary (taḥṣīl al-ma‘nā)

- *Al-qidam al-dhātī* → pre-eternity that belongs to God alone, signifying **absolute necessity of being**.
- *Al-qidam al-idāfī* → relational precedence among created things, signifying **order in time**.

- Calling God *al-Qadīm* is metaphorical (*bi-l-ishtirāk al-lafẓī*), not because He shares a genus with things, but because human language cannot speak of the Eternal except through relations known in time.

1 The *fā'il* (Agent), the *āmīr* (Commander), and the *mubdi'* (Originator) — exalted is He — are such that His act (*fi'l*) and His command (*amr*) and His origination (*ibdā'*) are not things that exist outside His own essence (*dhātihī*).

For the *mubdi'* whose act were something separate from His essence would be **in need of an instrument or intermediary** (*'illah wa-wāsiṭah*).

But the *fā'il* of God is not like that: His act is His very existence (*wujūdahu*), and His existence is not something external to Him, exalted and glorified be He.

That is why the Qur'ān declares:

**“There is nothing false about it; [it comes] from before Him and behind Him.”** (Q 41:42)

Meaning: *lā yātihi al-bāṭil min bayni yadayhi wa-lā min khalfihī* —

the false does not approach it from before or from behind —

for it descends (*tatanazzal*) from One whose wisdom (*ḥikmah*) is perfect and whose command is true.

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2 And the word of the Most High:

**“God Himself bears witness that there is no god but He.”** (Q 3:18)

That is, God Himself (*Allāh nafsuhu*) bears witness to Himself — not by something *outside* of Him, nor by means of another.

For whoever witnesses by means of something external has a separation between the *shāhid* (witness) and the *mashhūd* (witnessed).

But there is no separation between God and His act (*baynahu wa-bayna fi'lihī*).

Hence, the *'aql al-awwal* (First Intellect) that proceeds (*fāḍa*) from Him, proceeds **without separation or distance** (*bi-lā tafṣīl wa-lā bu'd*),

for He encompasses all things in knowledge (*yuhītu bi-kulli shay' 'ilmā*).

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3 The First Intellect (*al-'aql al-awwal*) thus contemplates (*yatafakkar*) in its own essence (*dhātihī*) and reality (*ḥaqīqatihī*),

and by this contemplation it knows its cause (*'illah*) and its origin (*mabda'*).

In this way, it realizes that it is not independent (*lā qā'im bi-naḥsihi*) but subsists by the One who originated it (*bi-l-mubdi' alladhī abda'ahu*).

From that awareness arises its **testimony** (*shahādah*) — the utterance:

**“He bears witness that there is no god but He.”**

Meaning: the *‘aql* confirms the truth of divine oneness (*yuqirr bi-l-tawḥīd*), acknowledging that there is no *ilāh* except the One whose act is not from outside Himself (*lā fi ‘l lahu min khārij ‘anhu*).

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4 Thus, the meaning of His saying:

**“He bears witness that there is no god but He.”**

is that **the First Intellect** (*al-‘aql al-awwal*) recognizes that the *Bārī* (Creator) is **the only true agent** (*al-fā ‘il al-ḥaqq*).

There is no god, no father, no origin (*lā ilāh, wa-lā wālid, wa-lā ghāyah*) besides Him.

Therefore, when He says “*lā ilāha illā Huwa*”, the pronoun *Huwa* (He) refers back to that very Essence whose act is not external, and whose existence is identical with His act (*wujūdahu ‘aynu fi ‘lihi*).

Hence, the meaning of the verse is:

“There is no god but that He Himself — for His act is His being.”

Glorified and exalted is He far above what the ignorant suppose.

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5 The *amr al-awwal* (first command) is like the *lam ‘al-baṣar* (flash of sight) — instantaneous and undivided.

It is the first emergence (*al-ẓuhūr al-awwal*) from the One who does not change (*lā yataḡhayyar*) and does not shift (*lā yantaqil*).

The *ma ‘lūl al-awwal* (first effect) arises from His essence without mediation or delay.

The *‘illah al-awlā* (first cause) and the *ma ‘lūl al-awwal* (first effect) are thus **inseparable in relation** (*lā tafṣīl fi al-idhāfah*),

though distinct in mode (*mukhtalif fi al-wujh*).

For the cause is pure actuality (*dhāt al-fi ‘l*),

while the effect is actuality derived (*fi ‘l ma ‘lūl*).

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#### · Summary (*taḥṣīl al-ma ‘nā*):

- *Fi ‘l Allāh* is **not separate from His essence** — it is His very being (*wujūd*).
- The Qur’ānic verses about “bearing witness” and “falsehood not approaching” signify that **divine action and word are inward to the divine reality**, not temporal events.
- The *‘aql al-awwal* recognizes this truth and thus bears witness to the divine unity (*tawḥīd*).

- Causation in the divine order (*al-‘illah wa-l-ma‘lūl*) is not spatial or temporal, but relational (*iḍāfī*) and ontological (*wujūdī*).
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1 That which proceeds from Him (*‘anhu*) exists as an *‘illah ‘āliyyah* (higher cause), and from His aspect (*jihah*) proceeds what exists below it. Thus, if the *amr* (command) comes from Him in one respect, it is by virtue of the *‘illah al-‘ulya* (supreme cause) that issues from Him — and from another respect, by the *isti‘dād* (receptivity) of that which receives.

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2 Therefore, what proceeds from the Divine (*al-amr al-ilāhī*) proceeds from Him not through a change (*taghayyur*) or transition (*intiqāl*) of His essence, but through a relation of *amr* (command) and *isti‘dād* (preparedness). For if something were to appear from Him *without* that relation of command, then the act (*al-fi‘l*) would be other than the commanded (*al-ma‘mūr*), and the commanded other than the act — which is impossible, for in Him there is no multiplicity (*kathrah*) nor difference (*ikhtilāf*).

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3 Rather, the distinction is conceptual (*i‘tibārī*), not substantial (*dhātī*). Hence, when we speak of the “First Intellect” (*al-‘aql al-awwal*), we mean by it the first level of existence (*wujūd awwal*) proceeding from the divine act (*ṣudūr ‘an al-fi‘l al-ilāhī*). And this meaning is nothing but **the first self-disclosure** (*al-ẓuhūr al-awwal*) of God’s own being.

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4 The First Intellect (*al-‘aql al-awwal*) is thus the first existent (*al-mawjūd al-awwal*), and it is inconceivable (*lā ya‘qil*) that anything else should exist alongside it (*yushāriku fī al-wujūd*). For nothing can exist simultaneously with what is necessary by itself (*wājib bi-dhātihī*), since the existence of another beside Him (*ma‘ahu*) would imply composition (*tarakkub*).

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5 The act (*al-fi‘l*) that issues from God Most High is the emanation (*ṣudūr*) of the Intellect from the divine agent (*al-fā‘il al-ilāhī*), and this emanation is one (*wāḥid*), not multiple (*ghayr kathīr*).

Thus, in this passage is clarified the difference between the witness mentioned in the verse

—  
**“God bears witness that there is no god but He” (Q 3:18) —**

and the witness of the intellect (*shahādat al-‘aql*).

For the latter bears witness by means of an addition (*bi-l-iḍāfah*),

whereas the divine witness (*al-shahādah al-ilāhiyyah*) pertains to His very essence (*dhātihi*).

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6 The Shaykh also said in *Rāḥat al-‘Aql* (Book IV):

“When the existent things (*al-mawjūdāt*) are established, their existence leads the mind (*‘aql*) to perceive that their being proceeds (*yafīdu*) from what is not preceded by another.”

For there is no multiplicity in essence (*lā fī kathrah bi-dh-dhāt*),

no multitude in cause (*lā fī al-illah*),

and no fewness in any of the things that are called *jawāhir* (substances) or *a‘rāḍ* (accidents).

Just as it is impossible (*muḥāl*) that the existence of the originated things (*al-mawjūdāt al-muḥdathah*) should be independent (*qā’im bi-naḥsihā*),

it is likewise impossible that the First Existent (*al-mawjūd al-awwal*) should be multiple in essence (*mutakaththir bi-dhātihi*).

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7 For if there were multiplicity or plurality in the attributes (*ṣifāt*),

the First Existent would be composite (*murakkab*) rather than simple (*basīṭ*),

and this is impossible (*muḥāl*).

Hence, the First Existent is **absolutely one** (*wāḥid ‘alā al-iṭlāq*),

without division (*lā tafṣīl*),

without partner (*lā sharīk*),

and without second (*lā thanī*).

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· **Summary (taḥṣīl al-ma‘nā):**

- All *ṣudūr* (emanation) occurs through relation, not change — *bi-l-iḍāfah lā bi-taghayyur*.
- The *‘aql al-awwal* is the first manifestation of divine self-disclosure (*ẓuhūr al-dhāt*).
- No multiplicity (*kathrah*) or co-existence (*ishtirāk*) can exist alongside the *wājib al-wujūd*.

- The *nafs al-kulliyya* (Universal Soul) will soon be described as the *ṣudūr* from this First Intellect,  
not directly from the Divine Essence.

(On the Uniqueness of the First Existent and the Emergence of Multiplicity)

1

And if [the First Existent] were not simple (*ghayr mutakaththir*), it would not be possible (*lā yajūz*) that it be such.

It is necessary (*wajaba*) that what proceeds from His essence (*dhātihi*) be such that nothing resembles it (*lā yashbahu shay'an minhā*),  
but rather that it be one whole (*kullan wāḥidan*),  
single (*afrād*), without multiplicity (*lā takaththur*),  
originating entirely from the Divine (‘*an al-Muta‘āl Subḥānah*).

---

2

So, if the First Existent (*al-mawjūd al-awwal*) is one (*wāḥid*) and unique (*aḥad*),  
then, according to what has preceded, it cannot be said that something else exists alongside it (*yūjad ma‘ahu*).

For to posit a second beside this one, the *aḥad al-mawjūd al-awwal*,  
would make it an “other” (*ghayr*) to this first being —  
thus violating the degree of *wāḥidiyya* (oneness) inherent in its existence (*fī al-wujūd*).  
Hence, its oneness (*wahdāniyyah*) is absolute and complete (*ḥaqqan wa-tamma*).

---

3

And when it is said that the existent (*al-mawjūd*) “was one,”  
this oneness (*al-aḥadiyya*) implies a **pairing of opposites** (*zawjiyyah*) in potential,  
for everything that is one (*fard*) in existence is defined in relation to another (*bi-l-nisbah ilā ghayrih*).

Thus, multiplicity (*ta‘addud*) arises only by the addition of relation (*bi-l-idāfah*),  
not in the essence (*lā bi-dh-dhāt*).

So it becomes evident that what proceeds (*yafīdu*) from the First Existent  
is itself of one genus (*jins wāḥid*) — that is, intellect (‘*aql*) proceeding from the divine  
creative act (*al-ibdā‘ al-ilāhī*).

---

4

Hence, from the *mubdi‘* (the Emanator) who is *al-Mawjūd al-Awwal*,  
there proceeds only one (*wāḥid*) —  
namely, the ‘*Aql Awwal* (First Intellect).

And the *aḥadiyya* (divine unity) which is the sign (*āyah*) of divine origination (*ikhtirā‘*)  
is the very trace (*āthar*) of the perfection of God’s act (*kamāl fī lihī*).

For it is impossible (*muḥāl*) that two of the same genus (*jins wāḥid*) proceed from Him,  
since the *ibdā‘ al-awwal* (first origination) that issues from Him is a single act (*fī l wāḥid*),

and the creative act (*al-fi'l al-ibdā'ī*) can only produce one effect (*ma'lūl wāḥid*) from a single cause (*'illah wāḥidah*).

---

5

Were two things to issue from Him,  
they would necessarily differ in genus (*min jinsayn mukhtalifayn*),  
since the divine act (*al-fi'l al-ilāhī*) proceeds without instrument (*bi-lā ālah*),  
and whatever proceeds from Him is one (*wāḥid*) by the necessity of His unity  
(*waḥdāniyyatihi*).

Therefore, both cause (*sabab*) and effect (*musabbab*) are contained within that unity —  
as was explained previously regarding the '*aql al-awwal* and its emanation (*ṣudūr*).

---

6

Hence, the existent which proceeds from the *mubdi'* (Emanator) — that is, the First Existent

—  
is only one (*wāḥid*).

This establishes that **the First Intellect** is the first act of existence (*awwal ṣudūr al-wujūd*),  
and that from it proceeds the next stage of emanation — the **Universal Soul** (*al-naḥs al-kullīyya*),

as will be clarified in the following section.

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• Summary of Page 63

- The **First Existent** (*al-mawjūd al-awwal*) is absolutely simple and one (*wāḥid basīṭ*).
- From the **Divine Essence** only **one** proceeds — the '*aql al-awwal*.
- Multiplicity arises not in the divine essence but through relation (*iḍāfah*).
- Every emanated being (*ṣādir*) has a distinct ontological rank (*martabah*) corresponding to its degree of dependence on the One.
- This sets the groundwork for the next emanation: **the Universal Soul** (*al-naḥs al-kullīyya*).

*On the Emanation of the Universal Soul from the First Intellect (Ṣudūr al-Naḥs al-Kullīyya 'an al-'Aql al-Awwal)*

---

1

It follows necessarily (*yaltafiḍī*) that what proceeds (*yaṣḍuru*) from the First Existent (*al-mawjūd al-awwal*) —  
which is the Exalted (*al-Muta'āl*) —

is through the states of unity (*al-waḥdāniyya*) and singularity (*al-aḥadiyya*) and primacy (*al-awwaliyya*).

That which proceeds from Him must be **one and unique** (*wāḥidan aḥadan*).

For when there was no pair (*zawj*), the existence of a pair necessarily required a counterpart (*ṣāhib*),

and by that duality (*zawjiyya*) the **potentiality of receptivity** (*quwwat al-infī'āl*) was affirmed.

---

## 2

Thus, the **soul** (*al-rūḥ*), by virtue of this duality, becomes receptive (*munfa'il*)

to what emanates from its companion (*ṣāhibihā*),

just as the active (*fā'il*) stands in relation to the receptive (*munfa'il*).

There is therefore no difference between them except by the distinction of their rank (*bi-ikhtilāf al-martabah*).

The one who emanates (*al-mubdi'*) — the First — stands as the cause (*'illah*) of the being of what proceeds from him,

and the one proceeding (*al-maṣdūr*) receives existence by that relation (*bi-nisbatihī ilayh*).

---

## 3

The **First Intellect** (*al-'aql al-awwal*), then, by its very nature,

becomes the **cause** (*'illah*) of the existence of the **Second Being** (*al-mawjūd al-thānī*),

which is the **Universal Soul** (*al-naḥs al-kullīyya*).

This soul must be of **the same genus** (*min jins wāḥid*) as that from which it proceeds, for that rank (*al-martabah al-thānīyah*) of *thanāniyya* (duality) cannot be realized except by relation (*bi-nisbah*).

Hence, duality (*al-ithnīyah*) is not an opposition (*tanāquḍ*) within the essence, but a relation between two aspects (*tarāfayn*) of one reality.

---

## 4

Thus the **First Intellect** (*al-'aql al-awwal*) possesses a **rank of oneness** (*martabat al-waḥdāniyya*),

while the **Universal Soul** (*al-naḥs al-kullīyya*) possesses a **rank of duality** (*martabat al-ithnīyah*) in relation to it,

for the soul is receptive (*munfa'ila*) to the intellect, and the intellect is active (*fā'il*) toward it

— both, however, remain of one genus (*min jins wāḥid*).

Hence, the *mubdi'* (Emanator) — who is the First Existent —

is not of the same genus as the beings that emanate from Him,

since His rank of unity (*martabat al-waḥdāniyya*) admits no division (*lā taqabbala al-ta'addud*).

---

5

Both [the First Intellect and the Universal Soul] proceed from the *mubdi* ' — one as *mubdi* ' (emanating), the other as *munfa* 'il (receptive).

Their connection (*ittiṣālhumā*) is by relation (*bi-l-iḏāfah*) to that from which they emanate. Thus, they together form the **first completion of being** (*tamām al-wujūd al-awwal*) — the union of the active and receptive principles (*al-fā 'il wa-l-munfa 'il*).

---

6

Therefore, because **nothing can proceed from the First Emanator** (*al-mubdi ' al-awwal*) that is of more than one genus (*min jinsayn mukhtalifayn*), the **First Intellect and the Universal Soul** must both be of **one genus**, and their distinction lies **only in rank and relation** (*bi-l-martabah wa-l-iḏāfah*).

For multiplicity (*kathrah*) belongs to relation (*bi-nisbah*), not to essence (*lā bi-dh-dhāt*).

Thus, **the First Intellect** (*al- 'aql al-awwal*) is *al-mawjūd al-awwal*, and **the Universal Soul** (*al-naḥs al-kullīyya*) is *al-mawjūd al-thānī*, both united under the principle of **the First Origination** (*al-ibdā ' al-awwal*), which proceeds from *al-Muta 'āl*, the Absolutely One (*al-Aḥad al-Muṭlaq*).

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• Summary of Page 64 (Folio 183v)

- **The First Existent** (*al-mawjūd al-awwal*) = *'Aql Awwal* (*First Intellect*)
- **The Second Existent** (*al-mawjūd al-thānī*) = *Nafs Kullīyya* (*Universal Soul*)
- The *soul* emerges by the principle of **duality** (*ithnīya*), while the *intellect* is **pure unity** (*waḥdāniyya*).
- Their distinction is **relational**, not essential — both belong to **one genus** of created being.
- **Emanation** (*ṣudūr*) continues hierarchically: the soul will next give rise to **Nature** (*al-ṭabī 'a*) and the **Heavens** (*al-aflāk*).

*On the Distinction Between the Intellect in Act and the Intellect in Potentiality* (*fī farq bayn al- 'uqūl bi'l-fi 'l wa'l-quwwa*)

---

1

It is not possible (*lā yajūz*) that what proceeds (*yaṣḍuru*) from Him be of **two kinds** (*jinsayn*), nor that there be **two intellects** (*'aqlān*): one actual (*bi'l-fi 'l*), the other potential (*bi'l-quwwa*).

Rather, all the intellects that proceed from Him are **intellects in potentiality** (*'uqūl qā'imah bi'l-quwwa*), and intellects in actuality (*'uqūl qā'imah bi'l-fi 'l*) arise from these.

Thus it has been shown (*fa-qad tabayyana*) by what we previously explained, that the **First Cause (al-‘illah al-ūlā)**, from which existence proceeds, produces from the *mubdi‘ al-awwal* nothing but what is of a single genus (*lā mā yajūdu ‘an al-mubdi‘ al-awwal illā min jins wāḥid*).

---

## 2

Hence it is established — as God Most High willed — that the **existence of beings proceeding from Him** includes two kinds of intellects:

- Intellects *in act* (‘*uqūl qā’imah bi’l-fi’l*), and
- Intellects *in potentiality* (‘*uqūl qā’imah bi’l-quwwa*).

The multiplicity (*kathrah*) of beings thus divides across two aspects (*wajhayn*): those that are **by essence active** (*bi-dhātihā fā’ilah*), and those that are **by essence receptive** (*bi-dhātihā munfa’ilah*).

Yet the **principle of existence** (‘*aṣl al-wujūd*) in all remains **one and the same** (*wāḥid fī dhātihī*).

---

## 3

As mentioned earlier, the **existence of the cosmos** (*wujūd al-‘ālam*) was brought forth in **one instantaneous act** (*daf‘atan wāḥidah*), with all its constituent possibilities (*mustawiyān mutakāminayn*) in the meaning of **the first perfection** (*al-kamāl al-awwal*).

Life (*al-ḥayāh*) in potentiality (*bi’l-quwwa*) moved within this totality, as the **First Intellect** was stirred by its own essence (*bi-dhātihī*), which was **motion and vitality of thought** (*ḥarakah dhihniyyah fikriyyah*), seeking expression in the mode of existence and majesty (*kayfiyyat al-wujūd wa’l-majd*).

---

## 4

From this **conceptual motion** (*ḥarakah dhihniyyah*), there arose the awareness (*idrāk*) of the two sides — the active (*al-fā’il*) and the receptive (*al-munfa’il*). Thus, intellect (‘*aql*) became differentiated by a **subtle aspect** (*nuṭṭah dhikriyyah*), and the image (*ṣūrah*) of the world appeared (*zuhirat ṣūrat al-‘ālam*).

The result was that this world (*al-‘ālam hādhā*) became **a reflection of the spiritual world** (*‘ālam al-rūḥāniyyah*), not differing from it except by degree (*lā yakhtalif ‘anhu illā bi’l-martabah*).

---

5

Hence, this process (*hādhihi al-ḥarakah*) was **the descent of forms** (*ṣuwar*) **from the intellectual to the imaginal** (*min al-‘aqlī ilā al-khayālī*).

The *mubdi‘ al-awwal* (First Emanator) established in them the **knowledge of beginnings** (*ma‘rifat al-ibtidā‘*) and assigned to them their **ranks** (*marātib*), such that each was a **unified essence in itself** (*dhāt mufradah muttaḥidah bi-dhātihā*).

Yet these essences appeared in **two mirrored forms** (*ṣūratayn mutaqābilatayn*), which the sages named “**children of their bodies**” (*abnā‘ ajsāmi-hā*) — meaning *emanated forms within matter*.

---

6

Thus, there arose the **two poles** (*al-ḥaddān*) — the *right* (*al-yamīn*) and *left* (*al-shimāl*) — each corresponding to one aspect of the emanation:

- the first representing the **intellect in act** (*al-munba‘ith al-awwal al-qā‘im bi’l-fī‘l*),
- the second the **intellect in potentiality** (*al-munba‘ith al-thānī al-qā‘im bi’l-quwwa*).

These two mark the **first differentiation** (*ta‘alluq awwal*) between the **World of Spirits** (*‘ālam al-arwāḥ*) and the **World of Bodies** (*‘ālam al-ajsām*).

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### *On the Awareness of the Second Emanated Intellect and the Origin of Revelation* (*fī shu‘ūr al-mubda‘ al-thānī wa-aṣl al-waḥy*)

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1

The **First Emanated Intellect** (*al-mubda‘ al-awwal*) beheld with complete awareness (*shuhūd bālighah*) its Emanator (*mubdi‘ahu*), and glorified Him (*sabbāḥahu*), sanctified Him (*qaddasahu*), and humbled itself before Him (*khasha‘a lahu*).

It declared sincere recognition (*iqrār bi-niyyah ṣādiqah*) and heartfelt submission (*ṭawīyyah ‘afīfah*).

By that very act, **speech came into being** (*bi-dhālika yukhlāqu al-nuṭq*), and what is *audible* (*masmū‘*) and *intelligible* (*ma‘qūl*) became correct and proportionate (*ṣaḥīḥ*).

So He preferred it over all that emanated from Him (*fa-faḍḍalahu ‘alā mā yanba‘ith ‘anhu min jamī‘ al-mabda‘ ān*).

---

2

Then, when its glorification (*tasbīḥ*) and sanctification (*taqdīs*) were complete, there issued from it the **second emanated intellect** (*al-mubdaʿ al-thānī*), one of whose sides (*nuṣf aḥadihimā*) was formed by the *tongue of the First Emanated Intellect* (*lisān al-sābiq al-awwal*).

The **First Emanator** (*al-mubdiʿ al-awwal*)

bestowed upon it from His holiness (*qudsiḥi*), greatness (*ʿazamatiḥi*), and nobility (*sharafīḥi*), and granted it the sublime rank of being **the speech of the Creator to the created** (*ʿuḡmat al-ʿālī al-mubdiʿ al-ḥaqq*).

---

3

It (the *second emanated intellect*) did not stand apart from what preceded it (*lam yantaẓim al-sābiq illā mā sabīna ilayhi*), but rose into actuality (*qāma bi-l-fiʿl*) — and its honor was the **honor of revelation** (*sharaf al-waḥy*).

It was, therefore, **the first world of creation to comprehend through inspiration** (*ʿālam al-khalq al-awwalu alladhī ʿarafa bi-l-waḥy*), knowing the nature of the command (*ʿalima bi-l-amr ʿalā mā ṣuwirah*).

---

4

Then the **Second Emanated Intellect** (*al-mubdaʿ al-thānī*)

glorified the First Emanator (*sabbah al-mubdiʿ al-awwal*) and sanctified itself by following His command (*qaddasa nafsahu bi-l-iqtidāʾ bi-amr al-awwal*).

It did not claim independence (*lam ya ʿtarif bi-sibq lahu*), nor did it boast of precedence (*wa-lā faḍl lahu ʿalayhi bi-faʿl*). Its **perfection lay in its receptivity** (*kamālahu bi-l-inqiyād*), its **completion in its obedience** (*ghāyatuhu bi-l-quwwah*), and not in autonomous action (*lā bi-l-fiʿl dūn al-fiʿl*).

---

5

Thus, it was the **first of the created worlds** (*awwal ʿālam min al-khalq*) whose people differed concerning response (*alladhī ikhtalafū ʿan al-ijābah wa-takaththarū*), and all of that occurred **swifter than the blink of an eye** (*asra ʿ min lamḥ al-baṣar*), as God the Exalted has said:

"Our command is but one,  
like the twinkling of an eye"  
— *Sūrat al-Qamar*, 54:50

(*innamā amrunā illā wāḥidatun ka-lamḥin bi-l-baṣar*)

Incomplete