

Mabda Maad The Origin and Return

Sayyidnā al-Ḥusayn ibn ‘Alī ibn Muhammad al Waleed, 8th dai

In the Name of God, the All-Merciful, the Ever-Merciful

Chapter One

Praise be to God, the Lord of the worlds, and blessings upon His Messenger, our Master Muḥammad, the Seal of the Prophets, and upon his legatee, ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, the noblest of legatees, and upon the Imams from their pure and purified progeny. And peace be upon our Master, the Qā’im, the Proof of the All-Merciful, the Master of the Age and Time, the Commander of the Faithful, Imām al-Ṭayyib Abū al-Qāsim, Commander of the Faithful. And peace be upon all of them altogether.

Know, O fortunate and rightly guided brother — may God illuminate the insight of your inner perception and purify the innermost core of your soul in loyalty to your rightful masters — that your letter has reached me. Your causes have become linked to goodness and triumph in the hereafter. You have asked for knowledge that will enable you to draw near and attain felicity upon your return (to God). So I have granted your request, knowing your worthiness due to your firm adherence to the rope of allegiance to the rightly guided Imams, your devotion to what is incumbent upon you from the conditions of religion, and your inclusion among those who act in accordance with the divine ordinances and strive in fulfilling them.

What I explain to you in this book is from the secret of the spiritual realm of sovereignty (malakūt) that is connected to luminous forms (hayākil) of a radiant station, and from them to their dedicated representatives — the purified — who are charged with saving the creatures from the deluge of misguidance. They are the redeemed (al-mukhlaṣīn). This [teaching] is the elixir of souls, by which they are dyed with the most beautiful dye of God — pure and bright — and by which they are transformed from being sensory to luminous, from earthly to rational, and from human to angelic.

So guard this [teaching] from everyone except those I have mentioned to you — may God protect you — and safeguard it through Him. And I take upon you, and upon everyone to whom you permit access to this, the solemn covenant of God, firmly sworn, and the confirmed oath He took upon His nearest angels, His sent prophets, and the guiding Imams of His religion and their righteous deputies — may God’s blessings be upon them all — that:

You do not copy even a single letter from this book — neither less nor more — and that no one may access it other than you or one whom you permit. And that you return this copy to me after completing its reading. And God is witness over what we say.

Section

Know, O brother, that the Mystery of Mysteries (ghayb al-ghuyūb) — toward which no thoughts may venture — cannot be grasped by the knot of intention nor encompassed by thought. No name or attribute applies to it, and there is no way to attain comprehension of it except through acknowledgment that all the worlds have a Creator who originated them — One whom minds are incapable of grasping.

Section

Know also that tawḥīd (divine unity) is the recognition of the ranks — the exalted and the lowly — and the acknowledgment that each rank is one in its own degree, none sharing in it with another.

Tajrīd (abstraction) is the stripping away of divinity from all originated and created things, and affirming it for the Originator of these creations.

Tanzīh (transcendence) is the negation of attributes from the Mystery of Mysteries, and the acknowledgment that all the attributes of majesty and glory — and all that is expressed in every language in reference to divine qualities — actually apply to the First Intellect (al-‘aql al-awwal), as I shall explain to you later, God willing.

So this is the reality of tawḥīd, tajrīd, and tanzīh, and the essence of what has come down from the lords (al-mawālī, i.e., the Imams) concerning divine unity.

Section: On the True Spiritual Origination (الابتداء الروحاني الحقيقي)

Know that the Hidden of the Hidden (ghayb al-ghuyūb), majestic and exalted is He, originated the World of Origination (‘ālam al-ibdā‘) in a single act, without temporal duration or spatial extension. He brought forth numerous luminous forms—beyond count or enumeration—equal in their primal perfection and original existence, which is life, power, and knowledge. This act was in accordance with His justice, as He made them equal, without one being favored over another.

Their sheer multitude—so vast as to defy enumeration—is proof that intellects cannot encompass the extent of His grace and generosity. All of them are called the World of Origination (‘ālam al-ibdā‘) or the Spiritual World (‘ālam al-rūḥānī), for they are luminous spirits without density or corporeality. No place contains them, nor did their Originator require time to bring them forth.

The proof of this is that we find our own souls—though they are but a tiny, insignificant part of that great, majestic whole—able to traverse the distance between East and West with a

single thought, in less than the blink of an eye. They can conceive of things absent and perceive them without being restricted by space or requiring time. Indeed, they can contain in a single moment distant directions, even the heavens and the earth and all between them. If this is the case with us, despite our weakness and limitation, and though our souls are bound to our bodies, then how must it be for those who are perfect and free from union with bodies?

Thus, the forms of the World of Origination exist in a state of majesty, nobility, excellence, and perfection that surpasses the capacity of human intellects to grasp even the least of their qualities. How, then, could intellects possibly comprehend their Originator when they are unable to grasp His originated beings? Rather, He is exalted far beyond that—exalted immensely.

Then one of those originated forms contemplated itself and its peers. Through its own thought—without teacher or inspiration—it realized that it and its kind must have an Originator distinct from themselves, whose nature is beyond their comprehension. It negated divinity from itself and its peers, and affirmed it for its Originator. For this act, it was deemed the First and the Precedent (al-sābiq), and it is named the First Intellect (al-‘aql al-awwal), the First Emanant (al-mubda‘ al-awwal), and the Pen (al-qalam).

Then it was graced by its Originator—glorified and exalted is He—with a unique substance (mādda) not shared by its peers. This was a reward for its act of unification (tawḥīd), glorification (tasbīḥ), and affirmation of divinity for its Originator. Through this substance, it gained knowledge of what was and what will be. It attained, through it, nobility, majesty, and greatness over the entire World of Origination, and thus deserved that the name "Divinity" (al-ilāhiyya) be applied to it—on two accounts:

Because it was bewildered and enraptured in its desire to comprehend its Originator, and failed in that.

Because all the other beings in the World of Origination were similarly bewildered by its majesty and greatness, which were given to it due to its act.

It is also named "Divinity" due to its yearning and longing (lahāniyya) to understand the majesty of its Originator, though its incapacity repelled it from that.

So, everything we have described here falls under the name of Divinity—but it is a final eternity, not eternity without beginning (azalī ghāyah lā azalī awwal).

Then two more forms from that World of Origination came to the same realization. They looked as it had looked, negated divinity from themselves and their peers, and affirmed it for

their Originator. They also acknowledged the Precedent's superiority and prior precedence. For their action, they were called the Two Emanants (al-munbaʿithayn), because they were stirred by the First and followed its example.

One of them preceded the other in glorification, sanctification, and unification. Because of this precedence, the First Intellect adopted him as a gate and veil through which it would address those below. It granted him a share of the substance it had received from the Originator, by which he gained distinction over the second emanant and over all his peers. Through that substance, he came to know what was and what would be. He is named the Universal Soul (al-nafs al-kulliyya), the First Emanation (al-inbiʾāth al-awwal), and the Tablet (al-lawḥ).

The second emanant, however, did not acknowledge the precedence of the first over him. He imagined himself his equal—a mistaken belief that brought about his descent in rank and a fall in station.

Then the First Intellect summoned the entire World of Origination to the unification and glorification of their Originator. His summons came through the First Emanant, whom he had made his veil and gate. In response, seven intellects from among those originated forms answered the call—each one following the next. Within each of these intellects was a world of originated forms too numerous to count. Each intellect served as their chief, leader, and exemplar due to its precedence, and they served it as followers and imitators.

Thus, the ranks of the World of Origination became nine:

The First Intellect (al-ʿaql al-awwal)

The First Emanant (al-munbaʿith al-awwal)

3–9. The seven intellects who answered the call.

Now, when the second emanant failed in rank because of his mistaken assumption and because the seven intellects surpassed him by responding and acknowledging the superiority of their predecessors, he turned in humility to the last of those seven intellects—the ninth. He asked him to explain his fall in rank. The ninth intellect told him it was due to his assumption of equality with his predecessor.

Then he sought intercession through that intellect, who interceded with the one above him, and so on until the intercession reached the Second Intellect, the First Emanant. He realized that the second emanant had repented, that his error was not deliberate or persistent. So he forgave him, accepted his repentance, and granted him a share of the eternal substance that he himself had received—by which all the intellects had attained their perfections.

With that substance, the darkness caused by his error was removed. He came to know what was and what would be, and took his place as the Tenth in rank. He was the second in emanation, the third in enumeration, but the tenth in station. Through this substance, he attained the second perfection and the second mode of existence, which safeguarded all the previous intellects from corruption and annihilation.

Now, among the originated forms, there remained others who had not responded to the call—too numerous to count. They followed the example of the Tenth in his delay. When he repented and received the substance through the intercession of the other intellects—those words which Adam received from his Lord, for he is the spiritual Adam—it was true of him what God said:

"Then Adam received words from his Lord, and He turned to him in mercy. Truly, He is the Accepting of Repentance, the Merciful." (Qur'an 2:37)

At that moment, the Tenth was told: "Now turn to those who followed your lead in delay. Call them and rescue them from what they have fallen into, for whoever breaks a staff must mend it." So he turned to those lagging ones and said to them:

"We have erred and failed to acknowledge the virtue of those who preceded us. I have repented—do likewise, and you shall prosper."

But they all responded:

"They have no superiority over us—nor do you. We are all equally originated by the Originator."

When they said this, their luminous essences darkened. They looked upon the darkness that had afflicted them, denied it, and were frightened by it. They clung to one another, and they are referred to as the First Hylē (al-hayūlā al-ūlā). They moved in unison to remedy their condition, but their movement gave rise to length. Alarmed, they moved again, and from that came breadth. A third movement produced depth. Thus, they became a single body, intermixed within one another.

These movements were instigated by the Tenth Intellect, who had now become responsible for their governance, for he knew from their disobedience that they could not remain in the World of Purity (‘ālam al-ṣafā’), which is a world free from opposition and rebellion. He moved them to become a universal body, from which he could derive tools and instruments to extract them gradually, and a call that he would institute to save whoever among them accepted it, one after another—as we will explain, God willing.

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The Tenth Intellect, after having moved those forms that had darkened—who became the First Hylē (al-hayūlā al-ūlā)—determined to shape from their movements the form of a body (jism). This body was not like the bodies that come later, formed from moisture and dryness, cold and heat. Rather, it was a subtle, balanced, pure body—free from thick density, close in nature to the World of Origination, though not a part of it.

Then the Tenth Intellect fashioned within it celestial forms (ṣuwar falakiyya) arranged in order. He assigned to each of them a movement to carry out, without deviation or change. These movements—circular and constant—preserve the harmony and balance of the body. Their motion is driven by longing and yearning for the World of Origination and for their Originator, which they cannot reach due to their deficiency and obscurity.

Now, when this Universal Body (al-jism al-kullī) was established, with all its celestial spheres ordered, and when their circular movements were in place, the Tenth Intellect caused their motions to stir the body’s central parts. From this stirring, density and thickness were produced. Then came elemental differentiation: heat and cold, moisture and dryness. The first four natures emerged, which combined into the Four Elements: fire, air, water, and earth.

Fire: subtle, hot and dry

Air: light, hot and moist

Water: heavy, cold and moist

Earth: heaviest, cold and dry

These elements settled into distinct layers according to their weight and nature. Fire occupied the highest region, followed by air, then water, and finally earth, which settled at the lowest level due to its heaviness and solidity.

From the intermixing and blending of these four elements, under the governance and ordering of the Tenth Intellect and the influence of the celestial bodies, came to be the physical world (‘ālam al-kawn wa al-fasād), also known as the world of generation and corruption. In this world emerged the various forms of minerals, plants, and animals—each prepared according to the arrangement dictated by the higher spheres, which derive from the Universal Soul and the Intellects above it.

This ordering is not random. It proceeds according to fixed laws and a determined measure (taqdīr), known to the Tenth Intellect and to those from the World of Origination whom he inspires. Every form in this world below has a likeness and archetype (mithāl) in the world above. That is why it is said that this lower world is the shadow (ẓill) of the higher world, or its reflection (‘aks).

Just as light flows from a lamp onto a mirror and casts an image upon the wall, so too do the forms of the higher world reflect into the substances of this lower world. The image is not the lamp itself, but its radiance; not the mirror, but its reflection. And so the bodies here are but shadows and images of the spiritual realities above. Their durability is brief, their perfection limited, and their change constant—because their foundation lies in deficiency and disobedience.

Yet within them remains a potential for return (rujū‘)—a longing implanted by the Tenth Intellect, who desires to extract from the dense body the luminous souls that once fell from the World of Origination. Thus, he fashioned the human form as a noble vessel, combining the perfections of the higher and lower realms, so that the soul—if purified—might ascend and rejoin the ranks of the blessed.

The human being was made from the elements: from earth came his bones and flesh, from water his blood and moisture, from air his breath and movement, and from fire his warmth and vitality. The body became a vessel and the soul a rider, and the entire cosmos became a stage for trial and return.

Thus the cycles of return and emanation (dawr al-rujū‘ wa al-inbi‘āth) began—under the guidance of the Intellects, the governance of the celestial spheres, and the direction of the dā‘īs and imāms who inherit the divine wisdom. The journey from darkness to light continues

until the veils are lifted, and the soul remembers its origin, repents of its delay, and rejoins the lights of the World of Origination.

The Tenth Intellect, by his guidance and governance, ensured that from the admixture of the four elements there came into being the mineral world (al-jamād), followed by the vegetative world (al-nabāt), then the animal world (al-ḥayawān), in ascending degrees of receptivity and perfection. Each of these three kingdoms manifests a more refined capacity to receive form, culminating in the human being—who is the epitome of elemental composition and the summit of physical creation.

The human being—formed in due proportion from the four elements, balanced in nature, and endowed with faculties of sense, imagination, and reason—was prepared to receive the rational soul (al-nafs al-nāṭiqā), which was transmitted to him through divine providence and the influx (fayḍ) of the Universal Soul. This rational soul is a trace of the fallen souls of the spiritual world—souls which, due to their deficiency and forgetfulness, descended into the realm of corporeality, yet retained a hidden yearning for their original abode.

The purpose of this composition and descent is not in vain, nor is it due to abandonment or injustice. Rather, it is divine wisdom (ḥikma) that ordained the descent, so that through trials and the reception of guidance, these souls might be purified and restored. The Tenth Intellect oversees this process, and has appointed guides from among the perfected ones of the spiritual world to instruct and aid the fallen souls in their journey of return.

These guides are the anbiyā' (prophets), awṣiyā' (legates), and a'imma (imams), each of whom appears in his due time and rank, clothed in human form, but inwardly luminous, possessing gnosis (ma'rifa) and divine authority (ḥujja). Through them the call (da'wa) is made manifest, the veils are lifted, and the realities are disclosed to those who possess receptivity and understanding.

Whoever among the souls hears the call, responds with obedience, and purifies his inner nature from the rust of ignorance and disobedience, is aided by the Tenth Intellect and raised step by step until he is returned to the World of Origination. There, he is restored to his proper rank and adorned with light, knowledge, and nearness to the Originator.

But whoever turns away, persists in heedlessness, clings to the shadows of matter, and prefers the lower world, becomes further estranged and sinks deeper into the layers of obscurity. He is left to the governance of the elemental mixture and the tyrannical forces of his lower self, and is recycled through successive bodies and states, until mercy overtakes him—or justice completes its course.

Therefore, understand, O listener endowed with intellect, that the cosmos is not a random structure, nor is man a purposeless being. All that you see in the world below—the

revolutions of the spheres, the seasons, the natures, the growth of plants, the instincts of animals, the reasoning of man—is ordered according to the divine hierarchy, sustained by the Intellects, and aimed at a great end: the return (rujū‘) of the souls to their true abode.

So reflect on the wisdom of the Tenth Intellect, who shaped the body to be a house for the soul, and the world to be a path for its journey. He gave to every form its nature, to every soul its inclination, and to every seeker a guide. The traces of his mercy are apparent in the balance of the cosmos, the perfection of forms, and the sending of messengers who unlock the meanings of the divine signs.

And the most complete guide of this age, the veil (ḥijāb) of the Intellect and the mouthpiece of the Universal Soul, is the Imām of the time—through whose da‘wah the veils are lifted, the truths are clarified, and the ladder of return is raised for those who have eyes to see and ears to hear.

Section: On the Origination of the Human Person

Know that the Director (al-mudabbir) set the celestial sphere (al-falak) in motion, and vapors ascended—arising from the refined essence of minerals, plants, and animals. These vapors became clouds and then descended upon the earth as pure and moderate rains. The earth was furrowed with shallow grooves, and the water was filtered through them, settling into its depths. From there, a vapor ascended once again—higher, nobler, more subtle, and purer than the first—and fell as rain resembling human semen. It descended into those grooves and cavities, which were like the wombs of women. It mingled with the water that had gathered in them, which bore similarity to the fluid of women, and became a single substance.

Then the heat of the earth warmed it, and the mixture began to rise, fleeing from the heat. But it was met by the coolness of the air outside the grooves, which forced it downward again. It continued rising and falling—contracting, becoming more refined, coagulating, and forming through the stages of creation over the course of nine months, by the management of the Director and the influence of the celestial bodies and spheres, until the appointed term was complete.

Then he (the human) opened his eyes and his senses, inhaled the air, and life-giving vitality reached him through the mediation of the air. He stretched out and sat up, writhing in the remaining fluid in which he had been formed, drawing it into his body through his pores, for it had become oil. Then he sought nourishment by his mouth, though he had previously been nourished through his navel from the refined part of that oil. So he began to suck on his thumb, and God caused within it to flow pure milk, by which he was fed. He would sleep at times and sit at times, until a full year passed and he stood upright—his body at that time being as large as that of a four-year-old child. This was because his "parents" were the sky and the earth, both immense.

He walked and ate from what was near him—figs, grapes, and fruits which the Director, glorified and exalted be He, had placed there for him beforehand. This origination took place across all twelve islands of the earth, and from the residual waters, females were formed. The first beings to arise were all male.

Now, the Director had selected from among those waters the most refined, noble, excellent, and subtle, and directed it to the noblest of regions in the beginning of creation—namely, the island of Sarandīb—since it was the place of temperate equilibrium on earth at that time. In the grooves of that island, twenty-eight persons were formed. They were, in nobility, refinement, and virtue, like red rubies among common stones. Among them—these twenty-eight—was one who surpassed the rest in excellence and nobility as the red ruby surpasses other gems. He was the cream of the world, its essence and extract.

This distinction among the twenty-eight over the rest of humanity was due to the purity of their intentions. And the one among them who surpassed the twenty-seven did so due to the purity of his intention and the abundance of his regret over transgression when summoned by the Tenth (al-‘āshir). Thus this one became the quintessence, the purest and noblest of them all.

When he emerged from those cavities as did his peers, he looked upon the world with his own self, without teacher or guide. He saw the built sky and the spread earth, and the diverse classes of creatures, and he realized through his thought and inner resolve that there must be a Creator for himself, for his kind, and for the universe—a Creator unlike them. So he negated divinity for himself and his peers, and affirmed it for their Originator. He bore witness to the Creator and affirmed His divinity.

Thus, in the lower world he assumed the role of the Sābiq al-Awwal (First Preceder) in the spiritual world. He was connected to his portion of spiritual matter and support from the Sābiq al-Awwal, mediated through the other intellects of origination and by the boundary that brought him forth from the world of nature—namely, the Tenth Intellect, the Director of the world of nature.

By virtue of that substance that reached him, he was ennobled above his kind. Through it he came to know what had been and what would be. Then he turned to the twenty-seven companions who had emerged with him and summoned them to affirm God’s oneness, to confess His divinity, and to deny it for all others. They responded to his call.

This is the true meaning of God's saying:

"God bears witness that there is no deity but He, and so do the angels and those endowed with knowledge, upholding justice."

(Qur'ān 3:18)

The name "God" here refers to the First Intellect (al-ʿaql al-awwal al-sābiq) in the world of origination. The "angels" are the immaterial intellects who hastened to answer His call and testified to what He testified to. The "those endowed with knowledge" (ʿulū al-ʿilm) are this noble individual with the creative body and his twenty-seven boundaries who answered his call and testified to what he testified to. They are named ʿulū al-ʿilm because they are the locus of support and the true knowledge, each one of them aided to the degree of his purity and response.

Know this well.

Then the Moon aided Saturn in its governance for a thousand years—an age of felicity and the establishment of the noble daʿwa and the gathering of the powers of all the planets. Then this noble person dispatched twelve of the twenty-seven throughout the twelve islands of the earth, to call people to the worship of God, exalted be He, and to His obedience. They taught them the knowledge of livelihood and the afterlife, and each one of them was taught the language of the people he was sent to—for each island had its own tongue. This is the meaning of God's saying:

"We never sent a messenger except in the language of his people." (Qur'ān 14:4)

Were it not for the revelation and support that was joined to this noble person and his insight into what is in the world—what was and what will be—no human could have independently come to know the properties of minerals, plants, and animals, or their benefits and harms, their effective remedies and lethal poisons. This confirms what God said:

"He taught Adam all the names." (Qur'ān 2:31)

For this noble person is the First Adam—father of humanity in terms of being their teacher regarding both livelihood and afterlife. He was the cause of their life in this world and the next. Were it not for God's grace upon them through what He bestowed on him—what he merited by glorifying and sanctifying God—they would have perished.

Each dāʿī then went to his island and taught its people first how to make clothes from trees, how to take sustenance from trees, minerals, and animals. They taught the way of salvation: the worship of God, obedience to Him, and obedience to His chosen representative (walīhi al-muṣṭafā) on earth, peace be upon him.

This noble person retained twelve among them as ḥujaj al-layl (Proofs of the Night), who were the best of the twenty-seven. Of these twelve, four were called al-ḥaram (the sanctuary), and they were superior to the eight others. Among the four, one was superior to them all—he was the Gate (al-bāb) to that noble station.

He appointed before him, along with his dā‘ī in his island, a mukāsir, a ma’dhūn muṭṭlaq, and a dā‘ī maḥṣūr. These ranks are preserved and uninterrupted with every Speaker (nātiq) in his cycle, every legatee (waṣī) in his era, and every Imam in his time.

Then, every dā‘ī instructed the people of his island that each one must marry a female who was formed in a cavity other than his own. He was prohibited from marrying the one formed in his own cavity from the surplus of his water, for she was like a sister to him—unlawful for marriage.

This is the pure and sanctified path of the people of truth. Whoever follows it is unlike the ignorant people of outward religion, who falsely believe that Adam, peace be upon him, married his sons of the first generation to his daughters of the second generation—making the origin of humanity fornication. We seek refuge in God from such a view. They heard something they did not understand its reality.

The truth is as we have stated, and praise be to God who guided us to this. We would not have been guided were it not for God's guidance.

The birth from the earth was a single event—an initial and unique occurrence. After that, procreation returned to the norm through male-female intercourse. The call (da‘wa) continued until that noble person brought forth his noble son, who would succeed him in his rank, from among his own boundaries and the people of his call—as we will clarify later, God willing.

This, then, is the true beginning (al-ibtidā’ al-ḥaqīqī)—stated clearly without symbol or allusion. So take what I have given you, and be among the grateful to our lords for the blessings they have bestowed upon us. May God recompense them with the best reward. Praise be to God, Lord of the worlds.

Section on the Reality of the Return (Ma‘ād)

Know that when a receptive soul responds (to the call) at the hands of one of the ḥudūd (hierarchical ranks), a luminous point connects to its soul at the moment the noble covenant (‘ahd al-karīm) is recited over them—provided their intention is sincere toward their ḥadd and toward the Master of the Age (peace be upon him), to whom they are being summoned. This point of light is adjacent to their soul but not intermingled with it. It shines upon it, bejeweled for it, and its connection comes through the higher ḥadd above it. The origin of this (connection) stems from the primordial substance (mādda) and the flowing divine support (ta’yīd) from the One beyond the reach of thoughts—namely, the Preceding First Intellect (al-‘aql al-sābiq al-awwal). From Him it flows to the rest of the intellects of the world of origination (‘uqūl al-ibdā’), then to the Tenth Intellect, who governs the world of nature, and from there to every noble station in its own time—be it a Speaker-Prophet (nātiq), a

Legatee (waṣī), or an Imam—then to the ḥudūd above and above them, and then to those beneath, until it finally reaches the sincere responder of upright intention. Their portion of it is apportioned in accordance with their worthiness.

So, the more this responder increases in righteous actions—such as upholding the prescribed obligations (a‘māl shar‘iyya) and persisting in them, and acquiring knowledge from the aforementioned spiritual ḥudūd—and the foundation of all this is the sincerity of intention in the love and loyalty (wilāya) of the mawālī (peace be upon them), purity of inner disposition, and acknowledgment of each ḥadd’s merit in their singular rank—the more they exert themselves in all this, the greater that luminous point grows, and it increases in brilliance and light, purifying and refining their soul.

Accordingly, that image becomes formed from the sum of their good deeds, as God Most High has said:

“Whoever does good, it is for his own soul; and whoever does evil, it is against it” [Qur’ān 41:46],

and He said:

“On the Day when every soul will find what it has done of good present before it, and what it has done of evil—it will wish that between it and that (evil) were a great distance.” [Qur’ān 3:30].

So when the time of the soul's passage (to the next world) arrives, and it is in a state of uprightness—having not transgressed what was commanded of obedience, righteous actions, and worship—that luminous image colors the soul itself, permeates it, and they become a single entity. Then, the divine magnet (al-mijnās al-ilāhī) draws it—that is, the same continuous, flowing column of light previously described, which cannot be perceived by vision nor encompassed by thought due to its grandeur and majesty. It draws that soul until it is connected to the image of its source—meaning, the ḥadd who had actualized this transmission—and the image (of the soul) intermingles with his image, becomes adjacent to his soul, and begins to hear through his ear, respond with his tongue, and convey his message until the moment of his own passage (comes). Then, it intermingles with the image of the one he is transferred to—his successor among the ḥudūd—until they both become a single thing for the soul of that ḥadd. The magnet then draws them both toward the image of their higher ḥadd, adjacent to his soul, intermingled with his image, as was previously explained.

Now, the reason why the one being transferred (al-muntaqil) becomes adjacent to, but does not fully intermingle with, the soul of the ḥadd to whom he is transferred is a divine wisdom and justice. For if the ḥadd had been prone to a slip (zalla) or doubt (shakk) and relapsed and perished, then the soul of the one transferred would ascend with that luminous image previously formed for the higher ḥadd, and the soul of the apostate would be reversed—

stripped of its luminous image, and instead clothed in a dark image, formed from its later evil actions. For actions are judged by their endings (al-a‘māl bi-khawātīmihā). We ask God to grant us and you, O brother, and all our brethren, a blessed final end—by the right of Muḥammad and his pure family, peace be upon him and upon them all.

That noble image continues to ascend with each ḥadd upon his own transfer, to the one above him, until it finally arrives at the gate (al-bāb) of the exalted station—peace be upon him. There, that image settles and all such images are gathered to him from across the isles of the earth. A luminous form is constructed for him in the likeness of a human being—yet it is entirely of light. Were it to become manifest to the human eye, the eye would be unable to grasp it; it would be overcome and consumed by it. If even the light of the sun cannot be looked at directly—being merely a corporeal light—then how can the eye behold the spiritual, sanctified, eternal light?

Thus, the noble image continues to return and arrive at that noble gate, and is placed within it according to what the overseeing spiritual governor (mudabbir) determines it deserves, in accordance with its merit in the world. Some deserve to be in the place of the heart, others in the seat of the brain, others in the position of the eye, the ear, the hand, the foot, or even like the hair, the nail, or the sole of the foot—each according to their knowledge and merit. There is no injustice to anyone, nor favoritism; rather, all proceeds according to what they earned.

These images continue to be sent to him and are used to build there a luminous, sanctified structure (haykal nūrānī qudsānī) until it is completed. For this reason, he is called the bāb (“gate”), for that structure at the bāb is a collected totality—meaning, intellects—since the intellect (‘aql) is the core (lubb). So understand this. And this structure is what is called the Imamate (al-imāma).

Chapter: On How the Imam Who Manifests Imamate Comes to Be

Know that every believer, when his soul departs from his body as I mentioned to you, traces of the growing soul remain in his body, which is the subtle heat (الحرارة الغريزية). This remains latent within the body, internalized. When the body is buried, those remaining lights of the growing soul—called the spiritual soul (النفس الريحية)—appear after three days. Then, on the third day, it emerges as a fine vapor that cannot be seen by the eye. It is met by the rays of the moon, then ascends and is delivered to it by the agency of Mercury and Venus, where it stays as long as the Director (the Divine Manager) wills. Then it is passed on to Jupiter, where it also stays as the Director wills. The spiritual soul returns from all the planets except Mercury and Jupiter, who shorten and refine it until the complete form mentioned earlier at the Gate is perfected. This spiritual soul completes itself at the Sun.

Then, when the Director permits the appearance of the Imam’s person, the Sun moves, and the spiritual souls are transferred to the Moon through Venus and Mercury. The Moon then

conveys it through its rays either to pure water or to noble and good fruit, on which it becomes like dew.

The Director then guards it so that no one can reach it until it is delivered to the Imam, peace be upon him. He and his noble, pure wife—prepared and made ready to be a pure vessel for the Imam's person—feed on it. When they nourish themselves with it, contact occurs between them, and that combines in the pure wife as a *nutfa* (drop of seminal fluid). She draws the rest of that from her nourishment, so it becomes pure for that *nutfa*. The mothers of the Imams, peace be upon them all, are purified from menstrual blood, as God Almighty said:

"God only wishes to remove defilement from you, O People of the House, and to purify you thoroughly." (Quran 33:33)

That nourishment continues until the full gestation period of nine months. Then the noble, pure body appears at birth as a *kāfūrī* (camphor-like) body. The Gate then transfers and connects its noble soul and luminous body, which contained within it the soul of the born Imam. The period for the newborn is no less than forty days and no more than four years. Then that luminous body shines upon that envelope, which is the Imam's physical body.

The luminous body is the Imamate, and the *kāfūrī* body is the Imam. It is called the envelope (الغلاف), the *kāfūrī* phantom (الشبح الكافوري), the *nasūt* (human aspect), and the luminous body (الهيكل النوراني) the divine aspect (لاهورت). The soul of that newborn carries the luminous body.

Chapter: On the Connection of the Designated Imam

When his father designates him to the people of his time, the flowing matter mentioned is connected to him through his father and the intellects above him, starting from the First Intellect. It becomes a veil and a door for him, because his gaze is particularly directed to it among all the limits of the religious world, and the gaze of the First Emitted Intellect is towards his door. The gaze of those intellects below it is towards the Proof (the Imam).

Accordingly, the gaze of every creative intellect is directed toward one of the limits of religion, connected over the passing of days. At that point, the designated Imam accepts the limits with the matter, and then he extracts for himself a second son who will succeed him as his father did. There is no difference in that.

The first Imam then ascends and occupies the tenth horizon (أفق العاشر). The virtuous person, who is the bearer of the creative body mentioned earlier, when ascending to the tenth horizon, immediately succeeds the tenth in rank and becomes the director of the world. The tenth then ascends to his rank, and the one above him to a rank above, and so forth, climbing

the ranks of intellects until the third among them, which is the first of the seven intellects in the circle of the first emanation, whose circle is called the Sanctuary Enclosure (حظيرة القدس).

To him, after the cycles and spheres, all who ascend from the intellects of the natural world come to an end. The rank of the first predecessor is unreachable to anyone, for it is the rank of unity. Know this well.

When the bearer of the creative body ascends to the rank of the tenth after extracting his son who succeeds him, as mentioned, his son upon succeeding him ascends to his father's horizon, who has become the tenth rank. Every Imam after him ascends to him, all within the horizon that has become tenth, waiting for the "Standing One" (قائم القيمة) to arise.

Then all those passing stations come together in him, like the gathering of images at the Gate, forming in him a great luminous structure. Every Imam is a member of that greater structure. Through his hands are judgment, reward, and punishment. He extracts for himself a son in his call who succeeds him. He ascends with all those stations within him, becoming one form, like an intellect from the intellects of the world of creation.

The tenth standing one succeeds in rank, governing matter and the administration of the physical world. The stations then pass to his horizon, Imam after Imam, until the second standing one arises like the first, ascends to his rank, and succeeds him as he succeeded the first. This continues for a duration called the Cycle of Disclosure (دور الكشف), which is fifty thousand years.

Towards its end, evil deeds increase in the world and good deeds diminish, deserving thereby that the truths be concealed from them after having been apparent to them during the Cycle of Disclosure, where they were recited from pulpits and lectures. Then they are veiled from them and only those who seek them through their doors by covenants and agreements reach them.

Thus comes the Cycle of Concealment (دور الستر), its beginning being Adam, the first speaker. Then Noah arose after him, his law was abrogated and a new law came. Similarly did Abraham, Moses, and Jesus act. Finally, their seal, Muhammad, peace be upon him.

Adam and the Imams of his cycle and limits were like the standing one to come, the awaited one. Noah and his Imams were like the nutfa, Abraham and his Imams like the 'alaqa (clinging form), Moses and his Imams like the mudgha (chewed lump), Jesus and his Imams like bones, Muhammad and his Imams like flesh.

Every speaker, guardian, or Imam from Adam to the end of Muhammad's cycle, when he passes on, ascends to the tenth horizon as director of the natural world until the last Imam of

Muhammad's cycle, who is the standing one of resurrection. All the departed Imams from Adam until his time connect to him, and his noble soul carries them all, and they become one luminous, standing form.

Then appears the standing one, peace be upon him, preceded by his proof with the hostile army. God owns all the earth through His proof and compels people to obey Him. He commands whoever calls to all horizons, "Choose for yourselves a religion and be safe." Every limit of belief then appears. The matter intensifies for the people of the call to the Truth by the appearance of falsehood.

Then suddenly the standing one appears, peace be upon him, and all creation from all horizons gather to him. Present before him are all who passed away since Adam, as God said: "Indeed, the first and the last are to be gathered together on a known Day." (Quran 54: 8)

Each Imam and each limit and believer appears to the people of his time and adversaries in agreement with what was from them. Then the standing one commands all believers to slaughter all adversaries. Then fire descends upon them from the heavens and burns them. They then fall into the greatest punishment in the prison, which is the rock at the bottom of the earth.

The standing one, peace be upon him, leaves behind his son whom he extracted from among his call. He ascends with all those stations within him, succeeding the tenth and ascending to the rank of the one above him, as mentioned. The standing one's cycle with his son lasts fifty thousand years, the Cycle of Disclosure.

Cycles alternate between disclosure and concealment. The Cycle of Concealment is seven thousand years, preceded by three thousand years from the end of disclosure, called the period (فترة). Those who pass in this three-thousand-year period were in the tenth horizon, meaning the Imams, until reaching the Imams of the concealment cycle within the standing one of resurrection, who closes the cycle of concealment and opens the cycle of disclosure.

Know that every station of a prophet, guardian, or Imam is connected to the matter from the First Intellect, continually, never interrupted for even a blink of an eye. When he manifests power, miracles, and acts that amaze the intellects of creation, that act is attributed to the one who views it, veiled by what supports him.

When he manifests incapacity, suffers pain, or is afflicted by illness typical of human conditions, that is attributed to the envelope derived from the natural world, composed of the spiritual souls obtained by physical birth.

Know this, and do not exalt any one Imam to divinity, nor believe any of them to be a creator God. Rather, he is God and Lord for those below him in rank, meaning he is below God and is amazed at His greatness. He nurtures those below by the wisdom bestowed to him. All stations and limits deny divinity to themselves but affirm it for God alone, Lord of Lords, Creator of all, whose majesty is exalted, as God said:

"And whoever says from them, 'I am God besides Him,' We will punish him with Hell." Thus do We recompense the wrongdoers.

Know also that many people, when they saw the miracles and astounding acts God showed by the hand of our master, the Commander of the Faithful Ali ibn Abi Talib, exalted him and claimed he was the God who creates and provides and that he was neither born nor gave birth. These people, may God curse them, are misguided, unbelievers, and transgressors.

The correct belief that must be held is that the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, is the best intellect of the natural world and the noblest limit of the religion. The miracles shown by the Commander of the Faithful are by the support of the First Intellect for him, and they only reached him through the Prophet and his matter, for he is his limit, teacher, nurturer, and escalator to that rank, and successor after him in his community and his proof in his time.

The rank of the Prophet is that of the First Preceding Intellect in his time, and the rank of the Commander of the Faithful in religion with him is the rank of the First Emission in his world. The Prophet is like the male in religion, and the Commander of the Faithful is like the female that gives birth from him. The Prophet is like the sky, and the Commander of the Faithful is like the earth.

When the Prophet passed away, the Commander of the Faithful succeeded him, standing in the world of religion in the position of the First Intellect, and his proof is the First Emitted Intellect.

Thus, it must be believed that the Prophet and the Commander of the Faithful are in one rank and station, neither having superiority over the other; they are equal. As the Prophet said: "You and I, O Ali, are like these two fingers," —and he joined his right and left index fingers— "I do not say like these two fingers," —and he joined the middle finger with them— "One preceded the other."

Whoever believes that one is superior to the other has exalted him too much and belittled the other. Do not believe this, and may God curse whoever believes otherwise.

This is the truth of origination and return that I have revealed to you, O dear brother, plainly, simply, without symbol or indication. These words are only disclosed to the great callers, as our limits have taught us.

May God bless them with goodness and reward them on our behalf with the best reward. Know this, and I explain to you the matter of the return of the deniers, misguided, and those who deny the Day of Judgment, so your image is complete and your rank elevated by knowing this. Strive in the deeds of the people of goodness so you may join them and their noble assembly in the Sanctuary Enclosure near the Lord of the Worlds. Avoid the deeds of the people of evil so you are saved from falling into what they fell into.

May God protect us and you from that by His grace and bounty.

Section:

Know that the one who opposes the Truth and is hostile to the People of the Truth acquires from his enmity and evil deeds a dark, shadowy form. When death approaches him, this darkness becomes detached and manifests to him, terrifying and frightening him; he becomes startled and terrified by it, and this is his first torment. Just as the joy of the believers takes on its most noble and beautiful form at their death, this dark form departs from the soul of the opposite (the adversary) and wanders in the horizon seeking to ascend, but it cannot; it seeks to return to the body but is unable. Thus, it roams in the air, and this is what is called Mu'annaf (tormentor), until it finds a deserving host — an ignorant woman, a child, or someone resembling them — then it enters and overcomes that person, possessing them and speaking through their tongue, whispering to them and commanding them to commit sins. This possession may last until that possessed one dies and the form departs.

Then, the image takes refuge with other evil forms, roaming the deserts, wastelands, filthy places, pits, streams, and valleys, and appears to people in their dreams, inciting them to evil deeds and enmity against the People of the Truth. These images are the blamed jinn, devils, rebellious and harmful spirits who afflict humans with troubles and seizures. They are expelled by spiritual healing, prayers, and recitation of the Qur'an; they become dazzled and depart. Each of these forms continues to wander in desolate places as long as the divine Planner wills.

Afterward, it ascends to the "Dragon's Tail" — a darkness called the "Tail" and "Head," which lies beyond the sphere (of the fixed stars). Its origin is from that descending darkness through sin, from the world of creation. This darkness, which is the head and tail, acts as a magnet for the malicious satanic beings due to their affinity; it is their center. It remains there, performing harmful actions in the world, which are too lengthy to explain here.

Then it moves to the lower purgatories of torment, and then to the greater torment. Some among them, if their sins are few, respond to the prayers of certain Prophets and submit, thus serving as purified spirits assisting the saints and rescuing those overwhelmed by hardship.

When their service is fulfilled and they deserve reward, they join the abyss (al-Saḥīq). Then comes the purgatory of ascension, from minerals to plants, animals, until it attains human forms. Then it responds and ascends. This is a summary of the concept of the *tasawwur* (spiritual image or form).

Now, returning to the topic of the return of the body, its opposite, and its soul:

When the image departs and the body is buried after the soul has dispersed within it without leaving except the image, the *naseem* (breeze), called *hawā'iyya* (airy spirit), leaves all animal bodies at death.

When buried, decomposed, and torn apart in the soil, each part returns to one of the original elements: yellow bile to fire, blood to air, phlegm to water, and black bile to earth — all preserved by the power of the divine Planner.

Then what ascended reunites and forms rain that falls among other matter. The part that dissolves joins the remaining earth to produce plants that nourish those who deserve to have them and also pass through the various purgatories of torment. The first of these are like the *Zanj* and their like.

When male and female nourish themselves from any of these, that nourishment manifests in a corrupt form resembling their parents, and they remain for the duration they deserve before dying. Then their souls disperse in their bodies again — first reflected and then upon return, their souls condense through sins to form a body, and then they die and decompose again like the first time, turning into plants once more. These plants nourish those worthy of their presence, like the *nasnas*, 'addār, and bears. Then they die again, transform as before, and descend even lower, nourishing creatures such as monkeys, dogs, pigs, and so on. In summary, they transform into all the blameworthy animal forms.

When this cycle is complete, the soul is in the purgatory of torment in the plant realm, becoming a poisonous, bitter, deadly plant. Each time it transforms and breaks down, it descends further until it completes the purgatory of plants. Then it returns to the blameworthy minerals, such as pitch, sulfur, iron, lead, and similar substances. It fulfills its due in minerals, all by transformation repeatedly.

Its initial existence in animal forms occurs by transformation, nourishment, and birth—not as the adherents of transmigration claim, who mistakenly believe the soul transfers directly from

a dead body to a newly born body. This is falsehood and ignorance, and its belief is condemned and accursed.

When it completes its punishment in these purgatories — the lesser torment — it dissolves near the Resurrection's advent and joins the abyss (al-Saḥīq), nourishing from it those human beings of its kind. A human person then emerges at the time of the Qā'im (the promised one, peace be upon him), who judges the predecessors by their deeds, weeping over their actions, then they are slaughtered and burned by a fire descending from the ether.

Afterward, the soul is taken to a prison where it is eternally punished in the greater torment for the duration of the Great Cycles, which are three hundred and sixty thousand years multiplied by themselves. May God protect us and all believers from that by His power and might, by the right of Muhammad and his purified, pure progeny.

This punishment applies to the great enemies, major sinners, and wicked evildoers. As for the rest of the ignorant, common masses, they do not reach this level because God recompenses each according to their deeds.

Indeed, the dead among the common folk disperse their souls in their bodies and only the airy spirit (hawā'iyya) leaves as mentioned. Then they decompose and transform into purgatories as per their deserved due, to the extent of their knowledge and deeds. Then they return upward by transformation and birth to the human form. If they respond to the call, they are saved and receive what they deserve by their acquisition the second time, for God is Just and does not wrong the servants nor break His promise.

The whole purpose of creation is the extraction and purification of souls fallen into sin and denial. Whoever is saved ascends; whoever refuses and resists the limits falls back and descends.

So be diligent, O brother, in good deeds and lightening your sins. Do not be deceived by the transient world. Act as the Commander of the Faithful (peace be upon him) said: "Lighten yourselves so you may catch up, for indeed what awaits the first of you is the arrival of the last." Know this is a hidden secret entrusted to you, so guard it, and God will guard you and protect it from everyone except those I have mentioned to you.

May God keep you safe. God is the Witness over our words, and you are entrusted with fidelity and trustworthiness. Beware, be very careful not to alter or erase any part of this or its letters.

We ask God to grant us and you success to His pleasure and to conclude for us, for you, and for all our brothers with goodness.

Praise be to God, Lord of the worlds, and blessings upon His Messenger Muhammad, the Seal of the Prophets, and upon our Master Ali ibn Abi Talib, the noblest of deputies, and upon the Imams from their pure and good progeny, and upon our Master and Master Imam al-Tayyib Abu al-Qasim, Commander of the Faithful, and may God grant him abundant peace.

Sufficient for us is God, and He is the best Disposer of affairs, the best Protector, and the best Helper.