

Ḥayy's Two Nativities: Cosmology and Ismā'īlī *ta'wīl* in Ibn Ṭufayl's *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān*

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The twelfth-century narrative *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān* by Ibn Ṭufayl recounts the life of Ḥayy, a feral man who teaches himself philosophy while living on a desert island. Ibn Ṭufayl gives two explanations of how Ḥayy came to the island. In one version, Ḥayy generates spontaneously on the island; in another, he washes up on the island as an infant. This paper attempts to resolve these contradictory narratives by appealing to a previously unexplored source text for *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān*, *Sarā'ir al-nutaqā'* by Ja'far b. Maṣṣūr al-Yaman. *Sarā'ir* is an esoteric Ismā'īlī text in which the author uses stories about Adam and other prophets to elaborate a Neoplatonist-inspired theology. Ja'far distinguishes between Adam as a symbol of the atemporal origination (*ibdā'*) of all natural forms, and the corporeal Adam of Ismā'īlī history. Due to narrative and conceptual similarities between Ja'far's and Ibn Ṭufayl's treatment of their protagonists, I argue that the two versions of Ḥayy's nativity allegorize the duality of Neoplatonic cosmology. Spontaneous generation dramatizes the atemporal creation of the human form, whereas the infant Ḥayy's landing on the island reinforces the philosophical belief in the eternity of species. Both Ja'far and Ibn Ṭufayl appeal to the Neoplatonic doctrine of emanation to reconcile the eternity of the physical world with belief in God's creative agency. The resemblance of *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān* to *Sarā'ir* prompts broader reconsideration of Ismā'īlī influence on non-Ismā'īlī intellectual culture.

Introduction

Readers of Ibn Ṭufayl (503-580 or 1/1110-1185 or 6) have puzzled over the narrative ambiguities of his desert island tale, *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān*.¹ Ibn Ṭufayl states that the purpose of the work is to divulge the secrets

¹ All citations of *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān* are from Ibn Ṭufayl, *Ḥayy ben Yaqdhān: roman philosophique d'Ibn Thofaïl*, ed. Léon Gauthier, 2nd ed. (Algiers: P. Fontana, 1900) and Ibn Ṭufayl, *Ḥayy ben Yaqdhān: roman philosophique d'Ibn Thofaïl*, ed. Léon Gauthier, 2nd ed. (Beirut: Imprimerie Catholique, 1936). The short citation will include page numbers from both editions: "*Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān* [1st ed.]/[2nd ed.]."

(*asrār*) of Ibn Sīnā's "oriental philosophy."² The names of the story's principal characters—Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān, Asāl, and Salāmān—all derive from Ibn Sīnā's *Visionary Recital*. Yet, Ibn Ṭufayl's characters bear little resemblance to Ibn Sīnā's beyond their names.³ Another striking element of *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān* is the author's inclusion of *two*, mutually exclusive versions of the protagonist's birth. In the first, the infant Ḥayy spontaneously generates on a desert island in the Indian Ocean. In the second, Ibn Ṭufayl tells us that Ḥayy was born to an aristocratic couple on a nearby island, who marry against the wishes of their kinsman, the island's tyrannical king. Fearing for herself and her child, Ḥayy's mother places him in an ark and commits him to the ocean. The infant ultimately arrives on the desert island. From here onward, Ibn Ṭufayl assures us, the story remains the same.⁴

Recent scholarship has tended to address these two nativity stories separately. Remke Kruk's and Lutz Richter-Bernburg's studies focus on theories of spontaneous generation in classical antiquity

All translations are mine, unless otherwise noted. Additional translations are from *Ibn Ṭufayl's Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān: A Philosophical Tale*, trans. Lenn E. Goodman (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009).

All citations of *Sarā'ir wa-asrār al-nuṭaqā'* are from Ja'far b. Maṣṣūr al-Yaman, *Sarā'ir wa-asrār al-nuṭaqā'*, ed. Muṣṭafā Ghālib (Beirut: Dār al-Andalus, 1984). *Encyclopedia of Islamic Civilisation and Religion*, Ian Richard Netton (ed.), (London and New York: Routledge, 2008), 222. Ibn Ṭufayl's comment about his delay in completing *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān* suggests that the work was written after 1182, the year Ibn Ṭufayl retired from the Almohad court.

² *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān* 3-4/3-4. On Ibn Sīnā's oriental philosophy, see Dimitri Gutas, "Avicenna's Eastern ('Oriental') Philosophy," *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy* 10 (2000), 159-80.

³ Henry Corbin, *Avicenna and the Visionary Recital*, trans. Willard R. Trask (New York: Pantheon, 1960), 130. See also, "The Recital of Salaman and Absal," 204 ff. The liaison between Salāmān's wife and Absāl bear at least some relation to the "parental narrative" in *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān*. The earlier Greek version of the story involves spontaneous generation, but the plot is altogether different from Ibn Ṭufayl's novella.

⁴ *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān*, 26-27/33: "After this point, they give the same description of his upbringing as the first party (sing.: *ṭā'ifa*)."

and the medieval era.⁵ Godefroid de Callataÿ has explored *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān* through the island motif present in the narrative sections of *The Epistles of the Brethren of Purity* (*Rasā'il ikhwān al-ṣafā*).⁶ Each of these studies emphasizes the influence of the Brethren of Purity and the esoteric (*bāṭinī*) traditions native to al-Andalus in the story. However, few scholars have attempted to explain the coexistence of these two, mutually exclusive nativity stories. Léon Gauthier claims that Ibn Ṭufayl's interest in spontaneous generation is a narrative device meant to introduce a "human being free of any social background," rather than a good-faith defense of the possibility of spontaneous generation.⁷ Though intuitive, Gauthier's solution is unsatisfying. If Ibn Ṭufayl uses spontaneous generation as a plot device to extricate Ḥayy from human society, why does he include a *second* nativity story that performs the same function? Which is more credible?

Although there is a growing consensus that esoteric (*bāṭinī*) literature, such as the Brethren of Purity, Ibn Masarra, and the *Picatrix*, had an impact on Ibn Ṭufayl, scholars have neglected to consider the Ismā'īlī Shī'ī "Adamology" literature which circulated within the Fāṭimid "mission" (*da'wa*) in North Africa. In particular, I will focus on *Sarā'ir al-nuṭaqā'* ("Secrets of the Speaker Prophets"), composed by the Ismā'īlī *dā'ī*, Ja'far b. Manṣūr al-Yaman (fourth/tenth century), as a possible source text for *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān*. The "Introduction" to *Sarā'ir* and "The Story of Adam" (*Qiṣṣat Ādam*) have much in common with Ibn Ṭufayl's novella. Both are set on islands in the Indian Ocean. The protagonists

5 See Remke Kruk, "A Frothy Bubble: Spontaneous Generation in the Medieval Islamic Tradition," *Journal of Semitic Studies* 35, vol. 2 (1990), 265-282; and "Ibn Ṭufayl: A Medieval Scholar's Views on Nature" in *The World of Ibn Ṭufayl: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān*, ed. Lawrence I. Conrad (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1996). See also Lutz Richter-Bernburg, "Medicina ancilla philosophiae: Ibn Ṭufayl's *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān*" in *The World of Ibn Ṭufayl: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān*, ed. Lawrence I. Conrad (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1996).

6 See Godefroid de Callataÿ, "The Two Islands of Allegory in the *Rasā'il Ikhwān al-Ṣafā'*: A Walk through Philosophical Metaphors and Literary Motifs," *Ishraq* 4 (2013), 71-81; and Godefroid de Callataÿ, "Did the Ikhwān al-Ṣafā' Inspire Ibn Ṭufayl to his *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān*?" *Ishraq* 4 (2013), 83-89.

7 Léon Gauthier, *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān* (Beirut: Imprimerie Catholique, 1936), xi. Remke Kruk, "A Frothy Bubble," 276.

in each story are abandoned on an uninhabited island and are later reintroduced to human society.⁸ Both narratives give two separate accounts of their protagonists' births. In *Sarā'ir*, Adam's abandonment on the island pertains to his "corporeal birth" (*al-wilāda al-jismāniyya*). However, this corporeal birth is a "trace" (*athar*) of Adam's "spiritual birth" (*al-wilāda al-rūḥāniyya*) in the higher world.

The distinction between corporeal and spiritual birth plays a significant role in Ja'far's Neoplatonic cosmology and his understanding of humanity's place in it. The "Adam" of the higher world emanates from the Universal Intellect. He is "the first among natural beings" (*awwal al-maṭbū'āt*), and therefore the blueprint for the natural beings which comprise the lower world. For Ja'far, the corporeal Adam and his successors among the prophets and *imāms* offer the denizens of the lower world privileged insight into the spiritual world, which, though hidden from sense perception, governs the corporeal world. I contend that Ḥayy's two nativities perform a similar function: one representing spiritual creation, and the other reflecting the origination of the corporeal world.

In this essay, I argue that *Sarā'ir* is a major source text of *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* on the basis of the many narrative and philosophical elements they share. Furthermore, because Ja'far explicitly decodes (i.e., performs *ta'wīl*) received narratives about Adam according to an emanationist cosmology, *Sarā'ir* offers us insight into the symbolism of *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, particularly the metaphors surrounding Ḥayy's two nativities. I begin by discussing how Ibn Ṭufayl presents each nativity. Next, I give an overview of the relevant sections of *Sarā'ir* and how they fit into Ja'far's Ismā'īlī cosmology. By reading *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* as cosmological allegory, we see that the conflict over Ḥayy's origin story parallels the protagonist's own inability to demonstrate whether the world is created or eternal.⁹ Ḥayy determines that one's answer to this question does

8 Ja'far's Adam grows up on an uninhabited peninsula (*khalīj*) of a large island.

9 For an introduction to the eternity of the world in the Islamic context, see Cristina Cerami, "The Eternity of the World," in Richard C. Taylor and Luis Xavier López-Farjeat (eds.), *The Routledge Companion to Islamic Philosophy* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 141-55.

not matter because both positions entail the same conclusions about God's oneness (*tawḥīd*) and transcendence (*tanzīh*).

However, the weakness of Ḥayy's arguments against eternalism and later comments about cosmology suggest that this peaceful solution is neither his nor Ibn Ṭufayl's final position on the topic. If we understand the two nativity stories as allegories which, like those in *Sarā'ir*, represent the distinct natures of the divine world and the physical world, we see that the two nativities and the two cosmologies are reconcilable. Within the emanationist cosmology common to Ja'far and Ibn Ṭufayl, the world is both eternal and created: eternal in the sense that the divine and physical worlds forever exist alongside God, and created in the sense that everything that emanates from God is ontologically dependent on and subordinate to God. Therefore, although a literal reading of Ḥayy's two nativities mutually exclude each other, in their allegorical senses, these stories together express the duality of the cosmos in medieval Neoplatonism.

Ḥayy's Nativities

Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān consists of four main sections: (I) Ibn Ṭufayl's introduction to Ibn Sīnā's "oriental philosophy"; (II) the two versions of Ḥayy's nativity; (III) Ḥayy's self-education; and (IV) Ḥayy's encounter with Asāl and Salāmān. I will begin with section II, which I divide into into four parts: (i) a preamble; (ii) the first description of spontaneous generation (N1a); (iii) the parental account (N2); and (iv) the second description of spontaneous generation (N1b).

(i) Preamble

The preamble introduces the basic elements of the spontaneous generation account:

Our righteous forebears—may God be pleased with them—have mentioned that there is an island among the islands of India below the equator. On this island, human beings are spontaneously generated without mother or father (*yatawallad bi-hā al-insān min ghayr umm wa-lā ab*) because it has the most

temperate climate on earth. The island is perfectly prepared by the radiation of the supernal light (*al-nūr al-a'lā*) upon it.¹⁰

Both N1a and N1b posit that Ḥayy spontaneously generates on this equatorial island because the “supernal light” bestows upon it a unique potential or “preparedness” (*isti'dād*) to generate human life apart from sexual intercourse. Yet, although Ibn Ṭufayl speaks as if N1a and N1b propose identical accounts of spontaneous generation, N1a offers a physical explanation of spontaneous generation, whereas N1b appropriates the physical elements of N1a to elaborate a spiritual or metaphysical interpretation. Ibn Ṭufayl's attribution of N1 to “our righteous forebears” (*salafunā al-ṣāliḥ*) suggests his sympathy for this account of Ḥayy's origins over N2. Although *salaf* normally refers to the first three generations of Muslims, some argue that Ibn Ṭufayl intends his philosophical or Ṣūfī forebears.¹¹

(ii) *N1a: Physical Spontaneous Generation*

Immediately following the preamble, Ibn Ṭufayl feels pressed to defend his story's setting. The notion that an equatorial island would be conducive to human flourishing (let alone spontaneous generation) “stands in contradiction to the opinion of the majority of philosophers and the greatest physicians, who believe the fourth clime to be the most temperate region.”¹² According to the Ptolemaic theory of climes adopted by medieval Islamic geographers, the fourth clime corresponds to the Mediterranean. Medieval geographers typically regarded the region of India around the equator as uninhabitable (or barely so).¹³ Ibn Ṭufayl argues that this prevailing view about the habitability of the equator

¹⁰ *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, 17/20–21.

¹¹ See, for example, Lenn E. Goodman, “Notes to the Text” in Ibn Ṭufayl, *Ibn Ṭufayl's Ḥayy Ibn Yaqzān: A Philosophical Tale*, trans. Lenn E. Goodman (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 186 (n. 62). For an examination of Ibn Ṭufayl's relationship to Ṣūfism, see Vincent J. Cornell, “Ḥayy in the Land of Absāl: Ibn Ṭufayl and Ṣūfism in the Western Maghrib during the Muwahḥid Era,” in Lawrence I. Conrad (ed.), *The World of Ibn Ṭufayl: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 133–64.

¹² *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, 17/20–21.

¹³ See J.T. Olsson, “The World in Arab Eyes: A Reassessment of the Climes in Medieval Islamic Geography,” *Bulletin of SOAS* 77, no. 3 (2014), 487–508.

stems from a misunderstanding about the intensity of heat near the equator.

In order to revise the theory of climes, Ibn Ṭufayl borrows two premises from Ibn Sīnā's physics. First, the sun itself is not hot. Second, highly reflective bodies take up more light than transparent bodies and opaque bodies. From these premises, he concludes that the sun does not warm the earth in the way that bodies warm each other by conduction. Nor does the earth (a stationary body according to medieval physics) conduct heat. Since the air closer to the earth is warmer than the air above the earth, he rules out the possibility that the sun warms the earth by convection. It follows that the sun's warming of the earth is accomplished by light radiation (*idā'a*). Only the regions of the earth closest to the equator receive consistent sunlight throughout the solar year. Except for two zero shadow days that occur in the tropics on the solstices, the equatorial regions decline "six months to the south and sixth months to the north."¹⁴ As a result, regardless of the season, he argues that these regions are "not excessively hot or cold."¹⁵ In N1a, the supernal light (*al-nūr al-a'lā*) that disposes Ḥayy's island to spontaneous human generation is the sun, a physical source of light radiation.

(iii) N2: Parental Account

Ibn Ṭufayl breaks off his narration to address a group that has rejected (*ankara*) N1. Because they deny the very possibility of spontaneous generation, they give another account in which Ḥayy was born in the conventional way on an inhabited island near the desert island on which *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* takes place. Ḥayy's mother is the sister of the island's king, "a proud and possessive man." He forbids her to marry "because he had not found a suitable match for her" (*idh lam yajid lahā kufiwan*). She marries a kinsman of theirs named Yaqzān "in secret, [but] in accordance with the law of their religion (*madhhab*)."¹⁶ Later, she conceives and gives birth to Ḥayy. Fearing how her brother will react to seeing the boy, she places Ḥayy in a small ark (*tābūt*) and commits

¹⁴ *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, 19/23-24.

¹⁵ *Ibid.* For Ibn Ṭufayl's entire account of Ibn Sīnā's theory of radiation, see 17-20/21-25.

¹⁶ *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, 20/24-25.

him to the sea. The ark eventually lands on the desert island where a doe who has lost her fawn discovers the baby and cares for him.¹⁷

N2 reads like a folk tale about an Indian kingdom in the style of the *1,001 Nights* or *The Case of the Animals versus Man before the King of the Jinn* by the Brethren of Purity. However, it also contains many allusions to the Qur'ān. The king's belief that he had not found a suitable match for Ḥayy's mother resembles the language applied to God in *Sūrat al-Ikhlāṣ*: "There is none comparable to Him" (*wa-lam yaḥid lahu kuḥuwan aḥad*). The preceding verse—"He does not bear offspring, nor was He born"—suggests some irony on Ibn Ṭufayl's part.¹⁸ N2 portrays the mother's *surrendering* of her baby to the sea as a great act of *islām*. When laying the ark in the water, she prays:

God, You Yourself created this child when he was nothing, a thing not worth mentioning. You provided for him in the darkness of the womb and watched over him, making sure he was perfectly formed and even. In fear of this oppressive, tyrannical, and prideful king, I have submitted him to Your grace (*anā qad aslamtuhu ilā lutfika*) and beg You to show Your favor to him. Most merciful God, be with him and never surrender him (*wa-lā tusallim-hu*)!¹⁹

Lenn E. Goodman notes that, aside from the ark (*tābūt*), a clear reference to the Biblical and qur'ānic biographies of Moses, the above passage alludes to passages in the Qur'ān about the creation of human-kind.²⁰ Goodman argues that, by applying these words to the infant

¹⁷ *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān*, 20-22/25-27; 27-28/33.

¹⁸ Qur'ān, 112:3-4.

¹⁹ *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān*, 20/25.

²⁰ See *Sūrat al-Insān*: "Is there not a period of time when a human being is nothing worth mentioning? We created the human being from a drop of mixed fluid in order to test them. Thus we made the to hear and see" (76:1-2). *Sūrat al-Ḥijr*: "As your Lord said to the angels, 'I am going to create a human being from dried clay from dark mud. When I form him perfectly and blow My spirit into him, you must prostrate before him'" (15:28-9). *Sūrat al-Sajda*: "He began to create the human being from clay, then made his progeny from a drop of semen and lowly water. Then he gave them an even shape and breathed His spirit in to him" (32:7-9). *Sūrat Ṣād*: "As your Lord said to the angels, 'I am going to create a human being from

Ḥayy, Ibn Ṭufayl is “putting him in the place of Adam as the archetype of mankind.”²¹

(iv) *Nīb: Spontaneous Generation Revisited*

Ibn Ṭufayl builds Nīb upon the material account he lays out in Nīa. Although Nīb appears merely to resume where Nīa broke off, the manner of Ibn Ṭufayl’s explanation takes on metaphysical, rather than purely physical, dimensions. Ḥayy generates spontaneously within a “pocket of earth” (*baṭn al-arḍ*) in which, over the span of years, clay (*ṭīn*) ferments. Owing to the island’s temperate climate, the mass of clay maintains a delicate balance of heat and moisture, forming a gas bubble. The gas bubble joins “the spirit that is from God’s command (*al-rūḥ al-ladhī min amr Allāh*). At this stage, the physical account of spontaneous generation becomes a formal, theological account. Ibn Ṭufayl stipulates that “this spirit continuously emanates from God” (*haddhā al-rūḥ dā’im al-fayḍān min ‘ind Allāh*).²² He compares the emanation of the spirit to sunlight:

It is like (*bi-manzilat*) the light of the sun that continuously flows over the earth. Among physical bodies, that which is not illumined by it is very transparent air. That which is somewhat illumined by it are the translucent bodies which differ in their reception of light; they differ according to their colors. That which is illumined by it the most are the smooth bodies like mirrors... In the same way, the spirit which is from God’s command forever flows over all beings. Some of these beings do not manifest any trace (*athar*) [of the light] due to their lack of preparation (*istī’dād*). These are the inanimate objects which do not possess life. These are like (*bi-manzilat*) air in the analogy (*mithāl*). Some manifest some trace [of the light] according to their preparation; these are the various species of plants. These are like the translucent bodies in the analogy. Some manifest some trace [of the light] quite well. These are

clay. When I form him perfectly and breath My spirit into him, you must prostrate before him” (38:71-72).

²¹ Lenn E. Goodman, “Notes to the Text,” 188-189 (n. 71-72).

²² *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, 33/28.

the species of animals, which are like the smooth bodies in the analogy. That which best receives the light of the sun reflects the form and likeness of the sun. In the same way, the animal that best receives the spirit, reflects the spirit, and is formed in its image is the human being. There is an allusion (*ishāra*) to this in [the Prophet's] statement—may God bless him and grant him peace—“God created Adam in His image” (*inna Allāh khalaqa Ādam ‘alā šūratihī*).²³

The above reference to a famous *ḥadīth* (al-Bukhārī, 6227; Muslim, 2841)²⁴ underscores that, while the supernal light is the counterpart of the radiation that readies the earth's matter to generate Ḥayy, the supernal light also bestows a particular *form* on this matter. Goodman notes that sunlight as an analogy for emanation supersedes the literal reading of the supernal light as radiation in N1a. Had philosophers prior to Ibn Sīnā and Ibn Ṭufayl realized that heat radiates from a single source, they would have fully understood “the fundamental metaphysical fact of the Universe, the fact of emanation.”²⁵ The symbolic significance light radiation takes in N1b casts doubt on the claims (such as Kruk's) that Ibn Ṭufayl desires to demonstrate the possibility of spontaneous generation.

Ibn Ṭufayl's association of “the spirt that is from God's command” with light and emanation expands the allegorical significance of N1b. The gas bubble surrounded by the fermenting clay then splits into three chambers, which solidify to become Ḥayy's heart. In turn, the heart's chambers correspond to the three faculties of the human form, or soul: the intellective, the sensitive, and the nutritive. According to N1b, the material, climatic conditions on Ḥayy's island are not themselves sufficient to spontaneously generate a living being. The formal conditions that allow the infant Ḥayy to burst forth from his coverings “as if in

23 *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān*, 23-24/28-29. This *ḥadīth* comes from *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, 6227.

24 The phrase “*inna Allāh ta‘ālā khalaqa Ādam ‘alā šūratihī*” also appears in the Twelver Shī‘ī traditions set down by Ibn Bābawayh. See *‘Uyūn akhbār al-riḍā* (Qom: Mu‘assasat Āl Bayt li-lḥyā’ al-Turāth, 2010), vol. I, ch. 11, §12, 156. See also *Kitāb al-tawḥīd*, ed. Hāshim al-Ḥusaynī (Qom: Mu‘assasat al-Nashr al-Islāmī, 2009), ch. 12, §§10-11, 147-148.

25 Goodman, “Notes to the Text,” 187-188 (n. 66).

labor” (*bi-shibh al-makhād*) result from the clay’s submission to God’s spirit and command. The co-generative power of the solar radiation and the supernal light reveal the cooperation of the physical and divine worlds in Ibn Ṭufayl’s cosmology.

Ibn Ṭufayl uses the term “God’s command” (*amr Allāh*) three times in N1b. Shlomo Pines has shown the Shī‘ī Neoplatonic origin of this term and its currency among Muslim and Jewish philosophers in al-Andalus. One of the earliest attestations of *amr Allāh* or *amr ilāhī* appears in *al-Risāla al-jāmi‘a* attributed to the Brethren of Purity. It denotes the connection between the Universal Intellect, the Universal Soul, and “the elect” among human beings. An individual’s conjunction (*ittiṣāl*) with the Universal Intellect and Soul, according to the Brethren, confers “the rank of prophet.”²⁶ Within Ismā‘īlī circles, *amr Allāh* came to signify the spiritual order that the prophets or *imāms* imitate in the physical world. According to Pines, Ja‘far b. Maṣṣūr al-Yaman’s *Kitāb al-kashf* contains one of the earliest elaborations of *amr Allāh* from an Ismā‘īlī Fāṭimid perspective:

Allāh’s command remains continuous (*muttaṣil*) from the first ones among His prophets, messengers and the leaders of His religion (*a‘immat dīnihi*) to the last one among them. Whoever obeys the last one among them, it is as if he obeyed the first one among them, for Allāh’s command remains continuous from the first one, through the one who follows and down to the last one. What is meant is Allāh’s command which He establishes through each and every one of them in his own age; then it reaches the one who follows him.²⁷

Ibn Ṭufayl seems familiar with the prophetological and imamological meaning of *amr* that Pines sees, not only in the Brethren and Ja‘far, but also in the *Kuzarī* by the Jewish Andalusī philosopher, Yehuda Halevi (1084-1141). A similar explanation appears in N1b. A human being achieves the rank of prophet when he prepares himself to receive God’s

26 Shlomo Pines, “Shī‘ite Terms and Conceptions in Judah Halevi’s *Kuzarī*,” *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* II (1980), 177.

27 Ja‘far b. Maṣṣūr al-Yaman, *Kitāb al-kashf*, 28; trans. Michael Ebstein in *Mysticism and Philosophy in Al-Andalus*, 58. Shlomo Pines, “Shī‘ite Terms and Conceptions,” 174.

spirit or form, which flows from God via the divine command without distortion. Ibn Ṭufayl compares the prophet's self-preparation to a mirror so polished that, when it receives the supernal light, it burns everything else that is not that form. This burning removes the lower faculties of the human soul—the nutritive and the sensitive—until only the divine, intellectual aspects remain.²⁸ In Ja'far's *Sarā'ir* (and *al-Risāla al-jāmi'a*) the divine command has a special relationship with Adam, insofar as he is both the first prophet and the first human being.

Ibn Ṭufayl leaves us with several key symbols: “flow/emanation” (*ḥayḍān*), “spirit” (*rūḥ*), “God's command” (*amr Allāh*), “trace” (*athar*), and “preparation” (*isti'dād*). Within the context of Ḥayy's spontaneous generation, the spirit functions as Ḥayy's soul (*nafs*), the principle of his animation. From N1a, we know that preparation refers to the disposition of matter to receive a particular form. Emanation is the action whereby spirit and prepared matter come together. In this union (*ittiṣāl*), the spirit leaves a trace upon the material substratum. The origin of this entire procession is God's command, a causal principle which, though from God, is not identical with Him. By homing in on these symbols, we come to understand that N1b dramatizes the instantiation of the human form in a particular individual within an emanationist cosmology.

We should also note the figuration of Adam in N1b and N2. The materials of which Ḥayy's pocket of earth (*baṭn al-'arḍ*) consist are clay (*ṭīn*) and water (*mā'*). We find these same terms used in reference to Adam in the Qur'ān passages alluded to in the prayer of Ḥayy's mother. Ibn Ṭufayl confirms Ḥayy's Adamic qualities in N1b in citing the *ḥadīth*, “God created Adam according to His form.” The fact that Ibn Ṭufayl invokes this tradition within the sunlight analogy, rather than applying it directly to his description of Ḥayy's pocket of earth, indicates that the Adamic form pertains to emanation.

Ismā'īlī ta'wīl and Ibn Ṭufayl – Ja'far b. Maṣṣūr al-Yaman

Historians of Andalusī and Maghribī thought are cautious about attributing Ismā'īlī Fāṭimid influence to philosophers and theologians who were not themselves members of the Fāṭimid *da'wa* (“mission”) in

²⁸ *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, 24/29.

Ifriqiya or Egypt. Heinz Halm notes that the Ismāʿīlī adept “took an oath (‘ahd or *mīthāq*) by which he was solemnly sworn to secrecy.”²⁹ While Fāṭimid missionaries (sing. *dāʿī*) could share esoteric *taʿwīl* texts with their students after testing their allegiance to the *daʿwa* over time, it is likely that the more esoteric texts did not have a wide circulation outside of the *daʿwa*. Any Shīʿī resonances found in Andalusī and Maghribī texts are normally accounted for by tracing them to Ibn Masarra or the Brethren of Purity, whose *Epistles* were introduced to the Iberian Peninsula by Maslama al-Majrīṭī (ca. fourth/tenth century). Shlomo Pines and Alfred Ivry have challenged this line of transmission in that they have discovered evidence of Ismāʿīlī influence on Jewish Neoplatonism and the two most famous Andalusī Jewish authors, Yehuda Halevi (1075–1141) and Moses Maimonides (1135–1204).³⁰ Although Maimonides lived in Fāṭimid Cairo from 1165 onward and could have encountered Ismāʿīlī texts there, the Shīʿī ideas we see in Halevi’s *Book of the Kuzari* were likely available in some form in al-Andalus. In the same way, the presence of Ismāʿīlī concepts and narrative elements in *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān* suggests that Ibn Ṭufayl had access to Shīʿī sources.

Michael Ebstein asserts that “[t]he Fāṭimī–Ismāʿīlī impact on political-religious life in medieval al-Andalus was far greater than commonly assumed.”³¹ The Andalusī Umayyads and the Fāṭimids not only engaged in regular diplomatic missions with one another, but Ismāʿīlī Fāṭimid *dāʿīs* were also active in the region before and after the founding of the Fāṭimid Caliphate. Ebstein likewise notes that Andalusī and Maghribī Muslims and Jews could have been exposed to Ismāʿīlī *daʿwa* literature in Qayrawān, Alexandria, and Cairo.³² The parallels between Jaʿfar’s *Sarāʾir* and *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān*—composed more than two centuries later—suggest that *daʿwa* literature and Shīʿī

29 Heinz Halm, *The Fatimids and their Traditions of Learning* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2001), 18.

30 See Alfred L. Ivry, “Ismaili Theology and Maimonides’ Philosophy,” in *The Jews of Medieval Islam: Community, Society, and Identity: Proceedings of an International Conference Held by the Institute of Jewish Studies, University College London, 1992*, ed. Daniel Frank (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 271–299.

31 Michael Ebstein, *Mysticism and Philosophy in al-Andalus* (Boston: Brill, 2014), 4.

32 Ibid, 4–7.

ideas continued to flow into al-Andalus and the Maghrib well after Ibn Masarra and al-Majrīṭī.

Reliable information about Ja'far b. Manṣūr al-Yaman's biography is very limited. From Ibn Mālik al-Yamanī's anti-Ismā'īlī polemic we know that Ja'far's father, Ibn Ḥawshab (d. 312/914 or 915) received the title *Manṣūr al-Yaman* ("Conqueror of Yemen") because of his work to found the Ismā'īlī community in Yemen. Ibn Ḥawshab and his family permanently immigrated to Fāṭimid Tunisia (likely Qayrawān) during the reign of al-Qā'im (r. 322-334/934-946). Ja'far likely died around 346/957 before the Fāṭimid court relocated to Cairo.³³ Aside from *Sarā'ir wa-asrār al-nuṭaqā'*, Ja'far is known for *Kitāb al-kashf* and the dialogue *Kitāb al-ālim wa-l-ghulām*. Since Ja'far wrote these works at a relatively early date, they offer unique insight, not only into the Fāṭimid *da'wa*, but also into the history of philosophy in Islamic North Africa.

Ja'far stands at an important juncture in the history of Shī'ī theology. Not only did Ja'far bring early eastern Ismā'īlī theology (much of which has not come down to us) to North Africa, but he also elaborated a unique Neoplatonic reading of the Qur'ān by connecting the historical Adam and the other "speaker prophets" (*nuṭaqā'*; sing. *nāṭiq*) to a higher cosmological order.

Of particular importance to our understanding of Ja'far's relationship to Ibn Ṭufayl is his Adamology. The many narrative and conceptual parallels between *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* and Ja'far's *Sarā'ir al-nuṭaqā'* (specifically the "Introduction" and "The Story of Adam") not only suggest that Ja'far's work is a significant source text for Ibn Ṭufayl's philosophical novella, but also that *Sarā'ir* offers unique interpretive insight. The latter possibility is especially promising because *Sarā'ir*, aside from presenting narratives specific to Ismā'īlī Islam, likewise contains Ja'far's *ta'wīl* ("interpretation") of these narratives, as well as novel readings of familiar passages from the Qur'ān. Although Ja'far does not dispense with esotericism altogether, the allegorical significance of what he relates in *Sarā'ir* is far clearer than what we see in *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*. Ibn Ṭufayl claims that he has "broken the precedent of our righteous ancestors" in speaking so openly about the secrets of Oriental

33 James W. Morris, "Introduction," to *The Master and the Disciple* [*Kitāb al-ālim wa'l-ghulām*] (London: I.B. Tauris, 2001), 22-24.

Philosophy, yet, he has “not left the secrets set down in these few pages entirely without a veil,” in order to guard these “esoteric doctrines... from those unfit to know them.”³⁴

The table in appendix 1 shows the similarities between Ja‘far’s and Ibn Ṭufayl’s choice of setting, characters, and plot.

Narrative Parallels

The Cosmological Doctrine behind *Sarā’ir al-nuṭaqā’*

Ja‘far begins *Sarā’ir* with a general discussion of cosmology and cosmogony. He states that qur’ānic terms “the world below” (*al-dunyā*) and “the hereafter” (*al-ākhirā*) hint at the existence of an unseen, spiritual world behind the veil of the corporeal world. This bipartite cosmology entails a corresponding cosmogonical or ontological difference. Ja‘far describes God’s disposition toward each world in two different ways: “origination” (*ibdā’*) and “creation” (*khalq*). Properly speaking, origination applies to the emanation of the Universal Intellect and the Universal Soul from God. For Ja‘far and later Ismā‘īlīs, the term origination steers a middle course between a more literal reading of creationism, on the one hand, and the involuntary emanationism characteristic of Neoplatonism, on the other. Ja‘far describes the path of emanation as “God’s light”³⁵ and “the light of origination” (*nūr al-ibdā’*).³⁶ Creation, by contrast, speaks only to what comes to be in the lower world.

Ja‘far stresses that origination is prior to creation, stating that “He originated (*abda’a*) before He created (*khalaqa*).”³⁷ From the priority of the origination of the spiritual world, we know that the creation of the corporeal world, if not posterior *in time*, is *ontologically* posterior to the spiritual world. Moreover, we must say that the corporeal world *depends on* the spiritual world, insofar as the corporeal derives its form and being from and through the spiritual. By describing the corporeal world as an imitation of the spiritual, Ja‘far removes the possibility

34 *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān*, 117-118/155-156.

35 Ja‘far, 17. Literally, “His light” (*nūruhu*).

36 Ja‘far, 19.

37 Ja‘far, 17.

that creation (*khalq*) means creation *ex nihilo*: “Origination was from nothing; creation was from something (*wa-kāna al-ibdā‘ min lays wa-l-khalq min ays*).”³⁸ Rather, the spiritual world stands as an eternal blueprint for the corporeal world which emanates from the One and the Universal Intellect. This blueprint, though coeternal with God, is in some sense *ex nihilo* because God bestows His being upon it.

Having established these points, Ja‘far informs us that *Sarā’ir* will focus upon two basic questions. First, how does the world of origination, also called “the voluntary world” (*al-‘ālam al-ikhtiyārī*), determine the created world, “the compelled world” (*al-‘ālam al-majbūr*)?³⁹ Second, how do we human beings, who lack access to the spiritual world due to our corporeal natures, *gain* such access? For Ja‘far, proper *ta’wīl* of the lives and message of the “speaker prophets” (*nuṭaqā’*) leads us to knowledge of the higher world. Adam, as the first, archetypal prophet, grants us privileged insight into the world of origination and its influence on the created world.

Henry Corbin uses the term “Adamology” to refer to the set of anthropological and cosmological doctrines associated with the prophet Adam in Ismā‘īlī *dā‘ir* literature. He understands “Ismailian Gnosis” as an historical outgrowth from heterodox Christian traditions—particularly Ebionism.⁴⁰ Ja‘far’s Adamology begins in the introduction to *Sarā’ir*, just

38 Ja‘far, 17.

39 Ja‘far, 19.

40 Henry Corbin, “Divine Epiphany and Spiritual Birth in Ismailian Gnosis,” in *Cyclical Time and Ismaili Gnosis* (London: Routledge, 2013), 65. For Corbin, the central doctrine of Ebionite Christianity resides in “the idea of the True Prophet and in a unique myth of Adam.” Rather than embracing the Pauline Christology of Christ as the “second Adam,” the Ebionites view Adam and Christ as hierohistorical manifestations of the spirit of True Prophet (*prophētēs alēthēs*). By uniting individual prophets (along with the Ebionites’ rejection of Christ’s divinity), Ebionite theology understands the True Prophet and his manifestations (or “epiphanic Forms”) as impeccable (*anamartētos*). Revelational history is not, then, a gradual climb from Adam’s fallen state toward Christ. Instead, the ever-stainless True Prophet reveals himself in history through a series of epiphanic Forms, who, though formally different, represent a facet of the spirit of the True Prophet. Citing Epiphanius of Salamis (d. 403), Corbin suggests that the fourth-century mention of Syrian Ebionite community in the *Panarion* may have influenced early Shī‘ī imamology. Whether or not we agree with Corbin’s Ebionite thesis on a historical level, there

prior to *Qiṣṣat Ādam*. Here, he specifies that the Adam we see in *Qiṣṣat Ādam*—the historical Adam—constitutes a trace of “the first among natural beings” (*awwal al-maṭbū‘āt*) in the spiritual world. His parents, as well as the other inhabitants of Warān, likewise pertain to facets of the spiritual world (*al-‘ālam al-rūḥānī*). Before the historical Adam, there existed several previous “cycles” (*akwār*; sing. *kūr*) “the likes of which we cannot grasp (*lā yumkin l-amthālinā al-wuqūf ‘alayhā*), since they are spiritual and unknowable by observation or speculation.”⁴¹ Adam, as the archetypal natural being, represents the end of the spiritual cycle, which “manifests itself in the corporeal cycle (*ẓāhir bi-l-kūr al-jusdānī*) which has six directions, length, width, and death.”⁴² For Ja‘far and other Ismā‘īlī theologians, Adam serves as a cosmological lynchpin connecting the higher and lower worlds.

Ja‘far’s cosmology is roughly Neoplatonist. The “higher,” or spiritual world is governed by the Universal Intellect (*al-‘aql [al-kullī]*) and the Universal Soul (*al-naḥs [al-kullī]*). Above this is God (or “the One”), who completely transcends the spiritual world. Below the spirit is the “lower world” (*al-‘ālam al-suflī*), which Ja‘far also calls the “corporeal world” (*al-‘ālam al-jusdānī*) and “the world of compulsion” (*al-‘ālam al-majbūr/al-jabrī*). The Intellect and Soul act as an intermediary (*wāsiṭa*) between the lower world and “the light of origination” (*nūr al-ibdā‘*).⁴³ This light is the creative force from which the Soul and lower world derive their existence.

Ja‘far likewise associates the light of origination with God’s command (*amr Allāh*). He uses *amr* and its variations eight times in the introduction to *Sarā’ir* and forty-one times in *Qiṣṣat Ādam*. Although the *amr* ultimately originates in God, the divine command may transfer to a “speaker prophet” (*nabī nāṭiq*) or to a prophet’s “legatee” (*waṣī*). After the life of the prophet Muḥammad, God’s command transfers to the

are several noteworthy similarities between the extant Ebionite literature and Ismā‘īlī Adamology: 1) the universal nature of the True Prophet (*pananthrōpos; Ādam al-awwal al-kullī*); 2) the spiritual nature of the True Prophet; and 3) the impeccability of the True Prophet (*anamartētia; ‘iṣma*).

⁴¹ Ja‘far, 21.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ja‘far, 19.

seven Ismāʿīlī *imāms* and their successors. The prophetic *amr* has two functions. On the one hand, the divine command offers its possessor unique insight into the esoteric meaning of the Qurʾān (*taʾwīl*). On the other, God's command sanctions the actions of the prophets and the *imāms* in religious and political matters.

In the lower world, the prophetic *amr* itself *imitates* the *amr Allāh* in the higher world. When applied to God or to the archangel Gabriel, *amr* has creative, cosmogonic meaning. According to the *ẓāhir* handed down by the “biographers and historians,” by which Jaʿfar means the text of the Qurʾān:

...when God wanted to create Adam, He commanded (*amara*) Gabriel to go down to the earth and rebuke it aloud until its wickedness (*khābīthuhā*) mixed with its clay. From [the earth's] highlands, [Gabriel] took a handful [of clay] and, with it, ascended to heaven and placed it in God's hands. He enlivened the firm clay and, from it, created Adam's body according to His plan. Then, He breathed His spirit into him.⁴⁴

The *amr Allāh* figures into Jaʿfar's *bāṭinī taʾwīl* in quite a different manner:

According to *taʾwīl*, Adam was, in reality, one of those responsible to Imām of the age charged with [His] *dhikr*. He was a *mujtahid* of the highest caliber. His parents fled with him from place to place out of fear for the king and Pharaoh of that age... God (may He be exalted), who created Adam with His hands from the firm clay, refers to the Imām of the age, since he was appointed by God and acted in accordance with God's command (*bi-amr Allāh*). God's name refers to him.⁴⁵ The “earth” is the Imām's *daʿwa*. The “highlands” are the believers, children of the *daʿwa*. The “handful” that the king took from the highlands is Adam, who was extracted from among [the believers], whom he chose without them and dedicated to himself.⁴⁶

44 Jaʿfar, 21.

45 I.e., the *Imām* of the age was called by the name “God” (*Allāh*).

46 Jaʿfar, 22.

For Ja'far, the transition from Adam's spiritual birth (*wilāda rūḥāniyya*) and his corporeal birth (*wilāda jusdāniyya*) is integral to our understanding of the unseen influence the spiritual world exerts upon the corporeal. This passage indicates that Adam's corporeal birth is birth in the conventional sense. God does not *create* the corporeal Adam from nothing. Rather, the corporeal Adam's relationship to the spiritual world is one of adoptionism. Corbin cautions us not to understand Adam's adoption in the sense that he is "simply metamorphosed, into the celestial person who adopted him."⁴⁷ Adam and the king of Būrān who adopts him into his *da'wa* on earth reenact the eternal drama of the higher world. Adam's subordination to the *Imām* represents the subordination of the physical to the spiritual world.⁴⁸

Beyond explaining the relationship of the prophets and *imāms* to the Universal Intellect, Ja'far's Adamology has a cosmological purpose. On the surface, "The Story of Adam" concerns an alternate account of the life of the qur'ānic Adam. However, in the introduction to *Sarā'ir*, Ja'far places greater emphasis on Adam insofar as he descends from a hidden spiritual order. The cosmological principle which the corporeal Adam represents not only preempts the human form, but also contains the form of all natural beings.⁴⁹ In this way, Ja'far can speak of Adam's *spiritual* birth (*al-wilāda al-rūḥāniyya*) and his *corporeal* birth (*al-wilāda al-jusdāniyya*). In later Ismā'īlī texts, the spiritual or "universal Adam" (*Ādam al-kullī*) is distinguished from "partial Adams" (*Ādam al-juz'ī*).⁵⁰

47 Henry Corbin, "Divine Epiphany," 69.

48 Ibid.

49 Ja'far, 21.

50 Since Ja'far's Adamology is quite early, some details of his Adamology clash with the Adamology Corbin and Farhad Daftary describe, which is based on much later Musta'li and Nizārī texts written after the fall of the Fāṭimid Caliphate. Unlike later Adamologies, Ja'far simply divides Adam into spiritual and corporeal. Because Ja'far offers multiple *ta'wīl* āt for each of his narratives, it is difficult to determine whether he understands the Indian island story to be history, in which case the Qur'ān narrative is of purely spiritual value, or that both the Indian island story and the Qur'ān narrative speak of Adam as he appeared in two different historical cycles. The latter is the case in later Ismā'īlī Adamology. The Universal Adam is hierohistorical and the initiator of the first corporeal cycle, whereas the qur'ānic Adam is the historical Adam. See Henry Corbin, "Divine Epiphany," 68-70; and

The former pertains to “the Cycle of Cycles,” whereas the latter are merely the exoteric manifestations of this primordial Adam across various historical cycles.⁵¹ As Hollenberg notes, Ja‘far’s *ta’wīl* of “The Story of Adam” reveals that the narrative of Adam on the island of Būrān mimics, albeit in a corporeal way, the structure of the spiritual world. The king of Būrān who discovers and adopts Adam symbolizes the *imām al-zamān*, a role which corresponds to the Universal Intellect (*al-‘aql al-kullī*) in the spiritual world. The king appoints Adam as his “deputy” (*khalīfa*) in the same way as his counterpart, the Universal Intellect, appoints “the first among natural beings” as its successor.⁵² The corporeal world is composed of traces (*āthār*) and impressions (*nuqūsh*) from the spiritual world. The prophets and *imāms* manifest these traces and impressions by their mere existence, while their legatees (*awṣiyā’*) interpret (*yu’awwīlūn*) these signs and, from them, gain insight into the order of the higher world.⁵³

Ja‘far’s Adam simultaneously *has parents* and *does not have parents*. The corporeal Adam—as well as the corporeal prophets and

Farhad Daftary, *The Ismā‘īlīs: Their History and Doctrines* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 271-272.

51 Henry Corbin, “Divine Epiphany,” 69.

52 David Hollenberg, *Beyond the Qur’ān: Early Ismā‘īlī Ta’wīl and the Secrets of the Prophets* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2016), 87. Ja‘far, 29.

53 David Hollenberg, *Beyond the Qur’ān*, 87. Ja‘far and Ibn Ṭufayl’s concept of the lower world as a “trace” or imitation of the higher world has a pedigree that hearkens back to Plotinus’ cosmological interpretation of games, dances, and theater in Plato’s *Laws*. See, for example, Pierre Hadot, *Plotinus or The Simplicity of Vision*, trans. Michael Chase (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 105-106. Hadot quotes from *Enneads* III 2, 15, 31-59: “There is a Life full of multiplicity in the universe, and it creates and varies all things as it lives, and it cannot bear not to constantly produce beautiful and well-shaped living toys. The arms of men who attack each other—even though they are mortal, they fight in graceful order, as is done for fun in the Pyrrhic dances—go to show that all mankind’s serious concerns are only children’s games... Just like on a theater stage, that is how we must consider all murders and rapings and sackings of cities: these are all changes of scenery and costume, acted-out wailings and lamentations. In this world, in each event that happens to us in life, it is not the inner soul, but the outer shadow of a person which laments and grieves; everything it does, it does on the stage of the entire earth...” See also Plotinus, *Enneads* III 2, 17, 32-39.

imāms—may be born in the conventional way, but “they do not partake of divine support (*al-ta’yīd*) by way of [their] human form” nor by way of “a father or a mother.”⁵⁴ This is because the souls of the prophets and *imāms* are *identical* to their Adamic counterpart in the spiritual world, the same “spirit” which God breathes into the clay in Qur’ān 38:72: “*wa-nafakhtu fīhi min rūḥī*.”⁵⁵ In Ja‘far’s cosmology, the spiritual reality which Adam represents on earth is not “born” or created in time (*makhlūq*), but is rather an emanation eternally brought into being in the spiritual world by “the light of origination” (*nūr al-ibdā’*).⁵⁶ The corporeal Adam and his successors among the prophets and *imāms* are merely *adopted* by the Universal Intellect and the intermediary angels. This adoption pertains to the world of creation (*‘ālam al-khalq*), whereas Adam, as “the first among natural beings,” participates eternally in the world of origination (*‘ālam al-ibdā’*). The coexistence of an Adam who originated from nothing and his corporeal counterpart who is born of parents allows for the coexistence of an eternal lower world—as Aristotle and the Greek Neoplatonists would have it—and a higher world that God brings into existence *ex nihilo*. Based on these formulations, creation *ex nihilo* does not entail that there was some past time at which the higher world did not exist, since God eternally originates the higher world from nothing. And, because the lower world necessarily emanates from the higher, it follows that the higher and lower worlds have always existed.

What scientific explanation does Ja‘far offer to justify this bipartite cosmology and its corresponding Adamology? Rather than appealing to Ismā‘īlī tradition alone, Ja‘far claims that a literal reading of the Qur’ān’s passages regarding God’s creation of Adam from clay is philosophically untenable:

As for the wise (*al-ḥukamā’*), what they say contradicts the literal meaning of the scriptures (*ẓāhir al-sharā’i’*), since the literal meaning of the scriptures is predicated in a manner conducive to different and conflicting interpretations, and the causes of [the literal meaning’s] existence and truth is hidden from the

⁵⁴ Ja‘far, 24; 27.

⁵⁵ Ja‘far, 21-22.

⁵⁶ Ja‘far, 19.

uninitiated. The martyrs have confirmed and established what the wise have said, since their statement is absolute knowledge (*‘ilm maḥḍ*) deriving from their grasp of reality. Thus, they have judged it impossible to create an animal or human being capable of speech by the organ of speech (*bi-ālat al-nuṭq*), a sentient being having dimensions and spatial definition, or that it would come into existence from nothing (*min lā shay’*). Additionally, we have not seen any beast or human being come into existence except by way of a seminal emission from the male member during sexual intercourse into the womb of a female.⁵⁷

For Ja‘far, the passages in the Qur’ān concerning the creation of human beings from clay and water are not intended as a literal explanation of human genesis (since Ja‘far implicitly accepts the philosophical view of the eternity of the world and the human species), but rather the manner in which God adopts some human individuals as prophets, *imāms*, and legates, as well as of the initiation of non-Ismā‘īlī Muslims into the *da‘wa* through instruction in *ta’wīl*. For example, Jesus states: “I create for you from something in the shape of a bird from clay; I breath into it, and it is a bird by God’s permission” (3:49). According to *ta’wīl*, the clay symbolizes the uninitiated believers (*mu‘minīn*). The bird brought to life by Jesus’ breath symbolizes the Ismā‘īlī *da‘wa* created from formerly uninitiated Muslims. In the same way, the “water” (*mā’*) and “earth” (*turāb*) God brings together to create Adam (as in 3:59) “are symbols of the science of *ta’wīl* and the believers.”⁵⁸

Ja‘far’s emanationist cosmology offers much to the philosophically inclined Muslim theologian. The radical distinction between temporal origination and atemporal creation allows one to posit that one God creates and sustains the universe while at the same time maintaining God’s transcendence (*tanzīh*) of the material world. Atemporal creation likewise harmonizes the creationist position with the Aristotelian view on the eternity of the world and of species.⁵⁹ Ja‘far adopts this cosmology out of genuine scientific concerns. Since like comes from

⁵⁷ Ja‘far, 22-23.

⁵⁸ Ja‘far, 23.

⁵⁹ On the eternity of species, see Aristotle, *Physics* III, 6 206a25-27.

like, the mere fact that humans exist as sentient and intelligent beings indicates that the human species has existed for eternity, contradicting a literal reading of passages about creation in the Qur'ān, not to mention *kalām* creationism.

Creation or Eternity: Ḥayy's Cosmological Conundrum

In the final sections of this paper, I show how Ibn Ṭufayl uses literary parallelisms to associate the conflict over Ḥayy's nativities with Ḥayy's perplexity regarding creationism and eternalism. During the fifth septenary of his life (ages 28-35), Ḥayy occupies himself with the study of astronomy. Ḥayy draws three major conclusions about the nature and structure of the cosmos. He determines that: (i) due to the impossibility of an actual infinite, the cosmos must be finite; (ii) the cosmos is spherical in shape; and (iii) the stars follow a spherical course of motion.⁶⁰

Recognizing that the heavenly spheres form the limits of the finite universe, Ḥayy draws an analogy between the cosmos and a "living being" (*ḥayawān*), each of whose parts are connected to the others in a complete whole. The light-giving stars "are comparable to" (*bi-manzilat*) its senses, the heavenly spheres to its body parts, and the world of generation and corruption (i.e., the sublunar sphere) to its stomach, which digests and distributes nutrients.⁶¹ Having determined the world to be "in reality like one individual" (*ka-shakhṣ wāḥid fī al-ḥaqīqa*), he can now raise the question of the origin of the universe as a whole, rather than identifying the origin of its constituent parts.

Ḥayy contemplated the world as a whole (*tafakkara fī al-ʿālam bi-jumlatihi*). Was it something that came into being after it had not been, having emerged into existence after non-being (*hal huwa shay' ḥadatha ba'd an lam yakun wa-kharaja ilā al-wujūd ba'd al-ʿadam*); or was it something that had never ceased to exist with regard to what came after it and was in no way preceded by non-being (*huwa amr lam yazil mawjūdan fī-mā salafa wa-lam yasbiqhu al-ʿadam bi-wajh min al-wujūh*)? He had many

⁶⁰ Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān, 59-63/75-79.

⁶¹ Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān, 63-64/80.

doubts (*tashakkaka*) about that [question] and neither judgment prevailed over the other.⁶²

Ḥayy outlines his arguments for and against the world's temporal origination and the eternity of the world. In his argument against eternalism, he argues that, if an actual *spatial* infinite is impossible, then an infinite chain of *temporal* events must likewise be impossible. Since the world consists in temporal events (*ḥawādith*), the world cannot precede temporal events. That which cannot precede temporal events necessarily originates in time. When arguing against temporal origination, Ḥayy argues that “since time derives from the world as a whole and is inseparable from it” (*wa al-zamān huwa min jumlat al-‘ālam wa-ghayr munfikk ‘anhu*), it is absurd to say that the world came into being at some point after time came into being. Ḥayy also acknowledges that temporal origination requires the existence of a principle or cause of temporal origination (*al-muḥdith*). Accounting for the relationship between the originator and what is originated raises further questions. Why did the originator cause the world to come into being at one moment rather than another? Did something accidental motivate the originator, even though nothing else existed? Was the temporal origination of the world precipitated by a change in the originator's essence?⁶³

Ḥayy never hits upon an argument that would tip the scales in favor of one position. Instead, he bypasses this conundrum by arguing that, whether one assumes temporal origination or eternalism, the world possesses the same need (*iftiqār ilā*) for an agent (*fā‘il*).⁶⁴ Assuming the world came into being in time *ex nihilo*, then there necessarily exists a non-corporeal, eternally existent agent who accomplished this act. Were the agent to possess a body, he would be part of the world, rendering it impossible for him to originate the world in time. The agent must be eternal in order to avoid an infinite regress. Even if we assume that a *created* non-corporeal agent (e.g., a demiurge or angel) originated the world, one must nevertheless posit an eternal agent to

62 Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān, 64/80.

63 Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān, 64-65/80-82.

64 Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān, 65/82.

account for this created agent.⁶⁵ Eternalism likewise presupposes the existence of an eternal, non-corporeal agent. Rather than bringing the world into existence *ex nihilo*, the agent proper to the eternalist model is a mover (*muḥrik*) capable of sustaining celestial motion for eternity. That this mover must be eternal is clear: if the world exists and is moved from eternity, it requires an eternal principle of motion. This principle cannot have a body or be a force distributed in a body because the very nature of corporeality entails the division of motive forces. If this force can be divided, then it is finite. A finite force cannot eternally sustain celestial motion. Therefore, the principle of motion in an eternalist cosmology is necessarily non-corporeal.⁶⁶

Ibn Ṭufayl tells us that, upon realizing that creationism and eternalism hold the same implications regarding the existence and nature of the agent, Ḥayy ceases to occupy himself with the question of the world's origin. On the surface, Ḥayy's cosmological agnosticism is appealing, especially given the historical background of the creation vs. eternity debate in medieval Islam. If the arguments in favor of creationism are equal to those in favor eternalism as scientific explanations—and if both cosmological models entail the same conclusions about God—then any allegiance to one view at the expense of the other is unwarranted.⁶⁷ However, upon close inspection, Ḥayy's creationist arguments (redolent of Ash'arī *kalām*) are demonstrably weaker than those he offers for eternalism. He argues that eternalism is impossible on the grounds that impossibility of an actual infinite.⁶⁸ However, Ḥayy's objection stems from an invalid analogy. Earlier in the fifth septenary, Ḥayy correctly concludes that the cosmos, like any other body, is necessarily finite. He observes that the earth constitutes one boundary of the cosmos, but he cannot personally observe the outer limits of the cosmos. In order to visualize what he cannot see, Ḥayy imagines two lines extending from the earth to these outer limits. He then imagines cutting a large segment out of one line while leaving the other intact. If the cosmos

65 *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, 65-66/82-83.

66 *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, 66-67/83-85.

67 *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, 68-69/86-88.

68 St. Bonaventure would deploy a similar objection against the eternity of the world in the thirteenth century.

is finite, the cut line would be shorter than the intact line. Yet, if the cosmos is infinite, the length of cut line would equal the intact line, which is absurd.⁶⁹ Later, Ḥayy says that he can apply this argument against the existence of an actually infinite *body* “analogically” (*bi-mithl al-qiyās*) to the question of the possibility of infinite *time*. To make this leap, he must make two problematic ontological assumptions. First, he must grant substantive existence to time independent of matter or motion.⁷⁰ Second, he must concede that, like matter, the totality of all time exists in the present.

The first assumption is defensible within a *kalām* framework, but it fails to do justice to the Aristotelian conception of time as an accident of motion. In *Physics* IV, 10-14, Aristotle stipulates that time is a measure of motion. Put another way, time is but an accident that inheres in the subject motion.⁷¹ Ḥayy’s objection to eternalism on the grounds of an actual infinite of temporal events is insufficient because it does not address the possibility of eternal motion, of which time is only a measure. Ibn Sīnā develops Aristotle’s position in *The Healing* (*Kitāb al-Shifā’*), a work of which Ibn Ṭufayl cites in the introduction to *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān*. In *The Physics of the Healing* III, 11, 2-3, Ibn Sīnā presents a modal proof for the eternity of motion.

Outline of Ibn Sīnā’s Proof of the Eternity of Motion

- (a) Let us assume that motion begins at some point.
- (b) The potential for the existence of motion necessarily subsists in a substance other than the mover.
- (c) The existence of that which is of the character to be moved (*min sha’nihi an yataḥarrak*) precedes the beginning of the motion’s existence.

69 *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān*, 60-61/76-77.

70 The independent existence of time “substances” or “atoms” is a significant element within *kalām* atomism. See Harry Austryn Wolfson, *The Philosophy of the Kalam* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1976), 494.

71 See especially Aristotle, *Physics* IV, 11-12. See also Cecilia Trifogli, “Robert Kilwardby on Time,” in Henrik Lagerlund and Paul Thom (eds.), *A Companion to the Philosophy of Robert Kilwardby* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 227-228.

- (d) The motive cause does not yet exist, but will exist afterward.
- (e) There will necessarily be a change of state (*taghayyur al-ḥāl*) before that motion.
- (f) This change requires some necessitating cause *x*.
- (g) If there is no *x*, *x*'s non-existence would be just as fitting as *x*'s existence.
- (h) One state must be preferred on account of some other factor *f*.
- (i) *f* must prefer either the existence of *x* or the non-existence of *x*.
- (j) Some cause *y* must determine this factor in preference of *x*'s existence.
- (k) There must therefore be an infinite number of causes (akin to *y*) all existing together or in succession.
- (l) If they exist together, there would be an actual infinite—which is absurd.
- (m) If they exist in succession, then either each cause endures for a period of time, or the causes follow successively.
- (n) If they endure for a period of time, then one motion would be after another, such that there will be no discontinuity in between.
- (o) If (n), then there will be a motion before the first motion.
- (p) If (o), then motion would be eternal.
- (q) But the eternity of motion contradicts (a).
- (r) If the causes follow successively without an intervening period of time, then motion is eternal.
- (s) But the eternity of motion contradicts (a)⁷²

From this, Ibn Sīnā concludes that “whenever we assume that motion has some starting point...some motion is before it, then motion, considered absolutely (*al-ḥaraka al-muṭlaqa*), does not have a starting point but involves an atemporal creation (*al-ibdāʿ*).”⁷³ Moreover, accepting

⁷² The original text of this argument in schema can be found in Ibn Sīnā [Avicenna], *The Physics of the Healing*, trans. Jon McGinnis (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 2009), 2:361-363.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 364.

the Aristotelian concept of time as a measure or accident of motion, if motion is eternal, then time is likewise eternal. Ibn Sīnā develops this argument in *The Metaphysics of the Healing* VI, 2 in relation to the concept of “atemporal creation” (*ibdāʿ*), which I address below in relation to Ibn Ṭufayl.

Ibn Sīnā’s argument also frustrates Ḥayy’s second premise (i.e., that the totality of time exists in the present) insofar as he regards the succession of temporal instants, one after another, to be impossible. The temporal origination of individual things (*ḥudūth*) one after another is only possible through eternal motion because it preserves the continuity of the causes of their temporal origination.⁷⁴ If time existed all at once or in a discontinuous succession of instants, this would mean that there would be “no motion undergoing transition from one thing to another, [and that] the causes and effects would necessarily occur simultaneously.”⁷⁵ For Ibn Sīnā, this state of affairs not only leaves us without a modal explanation of the possibility of temporal origination, but also contradicts empirical observation of motion and change. Ḥayy’s analogical application of the impossibility of an actually infinite body to object to eternalism is invalid within an Aristotelian context. Aristotelians do not recognize time as a substance the totality of which exists at any present moment. In the next century, Thomas Aquinas would summarize this point succinctly: “For, even though the infinite does not exist all at once if it is actual, it can exist successively; understood in this sense, any infinite is finite.”⁷⁶

Although Ḥayy correctly observes that both creationism and eternalism imply the need for a cause, this need is not the same in each model. According to the creationist account, the world—whether the whole or its individual parts—requires an agent (in the sense of an efficient cause) to bring about its origination in time. Eternalist

74 Note that Ibn Sīnā uses *ḥudūth* here with reference to the coming to be of individual things. This usage should not be confused with the *kalām* usage of *ḥudūth* to refer to God’s creation of one thing, many things, or the whole world *ex nihilo*.

75 Ibn Sīnā [Avicenna], *The Physics of the Healing*, 2:362-363.

76 Thomas Aquinas, *On the Eternity of the World* in Thomas Aquinas, Siger of Brabant, and St. Bonaventure, *On the Eternity of the World*, trans. Cyril Vollert et al. (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1964), 42-43.

cosmologies do not necessarily look to an efficient cause as a first principle. To take an obvious example, Aristotle's *nous* is not an efficient cause that moves the celestial spheres by contact. Rather, it is a final cause characterized by activity of self-intellection. This activity provokes a desire in the separate intellects to imitate the *nous*, though imperfectly. This *mimēsis* in turn imparts motion to the celestial spheres.⁷⁷ On the other hand, Plotinus posits an eternalist cosmology in the which the first principle, "the One," possesses both final *and* efficient causality in relation to the first emanated, the Intellect.⁷⁸ Yet, even though one may properly describe the One of Neoplatonism as an agent, it does not follow that creationism and eternalism point to an identical concept of God because efficient causation in Neoplatonism does not accomplish temporal origination in the manner it does in *kalām*.

For Ḥayy to determine that the case for creationism stands on equal footing with the case for eternalism, he must render an account of how God *qua* efficient cause originates the world in time that is as scientifically developed as his explanation of eternalism. He offers no such account. Rather, he simply speaks of God as "an agent that brings the world into existence" (*fā'il yukhrījuhu ilā al-wujūd*).⁷⁹ If by "brings into existence" he means creation *ex nihilo* in the strong sense (as in *kalām*), then he must either explain how matter comes to be from nothing or admit that he does not know how this happens (*bi-lā kayfa*). If he intends creation *ex nihilo* in the sense of "after privation" (*'adam/sterēsis*), then the non-being to which he refers is not absolute non-being, which one may only predicate of the world as a whole. Instead, he means the privation or non-being an individual substance experiences when its form is separated from matter, such as when a material substrate takes on a new form through the process of generation and corruption. The second possibility is unsatisfying from the standpoint of the *kalām* creationism which Ḥayy considers a viable

77 See especially *Metaphysics* XII 1074b, 22-35.

78 See Lloyd Gerson, "Plotinus' Metaphysics: Emanation or Creation?" *The Review of Metaphysics* 46 (March 1993), 568-569. See also Mark J. Nyvlt, *Aristotle and Plotinus on Intellect: Monism Revisited* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2012), 154-155.

79 *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, 65/82.

position because this sort of privation applies only to beings in the sublunar sphere, and entails the pre-existence of matter.

Ḥayy's arguments for eternalism fare much better within the framework of medieval Islamic philosophy. In assuming the eternity of the world, Ḥayy does not need to account for the existence of the material substrate of the sublunar sphere or the heavenly spheres—they exist from eternity. He simply needs to explain the origin of the motion of the heavenly spheres and the manner in which these spheres interact with the sublunar sphere. In this manner, his version of eternalism does not differ significantly from that of Aristotle in *Physics* VIII.⁸⁰

The Two Nativities as a Cosmological Allegory

The uncertainty around Ḥayy's origin story in the beginning of the narrative mirrors Ḥayy's hesitation between creationism and eternalism. Like his protagonist, Ibn Ṭufayl never settles the question of whether Ḥayy was spontaneously generated or born of parents in the conventional way, even if he displays greater sympathy for the former.⁸¹ Ibn Ṭufayl likewise adopts an irenic solution to the conflict between the two versions of Ḥayy's birth. Although the two parties disagree about Ḥayy's origin, "what [those who deny spontaneous generation] relate after this point is identical to what the first party relates about [Ḥayy's] education (*tarbiyya*)."⁸² That is, whether we assume one version or the other, Ḥayy's philosophical journey remains the same.

Ibn Ṭufayl offers us a means of resolution via the Brethren of Purity's idea of "man as microcosm/world as macranthropos." As mentioned above, the premise that allows Ḥayy to consider the origin of the world as a whole is his comparison of the cosmos to a "living being"

80 See especially Aristotle's arguments for the imperishability of motion in *Physics* VIII, 1; 5. See *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, 64-65/81-82; 66-68/83-85.

81 Ibn Ṭufayl evinces his preference for the spontaneous generation narrative by calling its partisans "our pious forebears," as opposed to those who believe Ḥayy had a mother and father. See Ibn Ṭufayl, 17/20; 20/24. Ibn Ṭufayl likewise expends great effort in defending the philosophical possibility of spontaneous generation, which appears to place him among the partisans of spontaneous generation. See Ibn Ṭufayl, 22-26/26-33.

82 *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, 27/33.

(*ḥayawān*), and “one individual” (*shakhṣ wāḥid*). Ḥayy uses this human-as-world analogy consistently throughout the remainder of *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*. His ethical thought is predicated on the resemblance of his own locomotion to that of the cosmos. Since soul is the principle of both types of motion, Ḥayy determines that he must conform the motion of his soul to the more perfect motion of the world-soul. Ḥayy circumambulates the island in imitation of the circular motion of the heavenly spheres. Later, when he discovers that God is the ultimate principle of the motion of the world-soul, he abandons circumambulation for an ascetic life in a cave in order to emulate God, who is simple, neither moving nor requiring sustenance. Inasmuch as Ḥayy sees himself in the cosmos, Ibn Ṭufayl permits us to see the cosmos in Ḥayy.

By understanding Ḥayy as a metaphor for the world, we can push the comparison of *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* and Ja‘far’s *Sarā’ir al-nuṭaqā’* beyond an examination of their narrative parallels. The Adamic typology Ibn Ṭufayl uses to describe Ḥayy in N2 and N1b reveals a wider symbolic web “Adam = Ḥayy = cosmos.” If we understand the Ḥayy of N1b as indicative of the spiritual world and the Ḥayy in N2 as indicative of the corporeal world, the conceptual framework of *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* maps onto *Sarā’ir*: See appendix 2.

Ḥayy’s irenic solution to the debate between creationism and eternalism is not the last word on cosmology. In his seventh septenary, Ḥayy undergoes “death to self” (*fanā’*) and experiences a mystical ascent (*mi‘rāj*) during which he apprehends the cosmos in its totality. The content and language of this scene strongly resembles the analogy (*mithāl*) Ibn Ṭufayl constructs in N1b.

If you are content with this sort of hint at and allusion to what is in the divine world (*al-‘ālam al-ilāhī*), and if you do not take my words in their normal sense, then we will tell you more about what Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān saw in this state (*maqām*) ... He witnessed the highest heavenly sphere which has no body behind it and the essence of which is separate from matter. It is not the essence of the One, the Truth, nor is it the soul of the sphere, nor anything other than these two. It is as if it were the form of the sun that appeared in a polished mirror, but it is neither the sun nor the mirror nor anything other than these two. He saw

that the essence of that separate sphere was of such perfection, splendor, and beauty that it could not be described in words or letter. He saw it as the pinnacle of pleasure, happiness, and joy, a vision of the essence of the Truth—lofty is His majesty! He also witnessed a sphere below this one. It was the sphere of the fixed stars, the essence of which is also separate. It is not the essence of the One, the Truth, nor is it the essence of the highest separate sphere; neither is it its soul or anything other than these. It is as if it were the form of the sun which appears in a mirror. Opposite to this mirror is another mirror which receives the sun... For each sphere he saw an essence separate from matter which is neither identical with the essences before it nor different from them, as if the form of the sun reflected from mirror to mirror according to the order of the spheres... until he ended in the world of generation and corruption, the bowels of the sphere of the moon. He saw that it also had an essence separate from matter, neither identical to the essences before it nor distinct from it.⁸³

In Ḥayy's final word on the structure of the cosmos, he confirms that, behind the perceptible world (*al-ʿālam al-maḥsūs*), there exists a divine world from which the visible world emanates. The divine essence in which this procession originates stands out of reach, but is reflected in the highest heavenly sphere. The highest sphere reflects the divine to the lower spheres until it reaches the sphere of the moon, the abode of the Active Intellect. In this separate essence, he sees "seventy thousand faces...as if the form of the sun from the last mirror were reflected in rippling water."⁸⁴ Beyond this, Ḥayy has hellish visions of beings like rusted mirrors turned away from the form of the sun reflected in the polished mirrors. Because of their inability to receive the form of the sun, they experience a great deal of agony and suffering.

The cosmic structure Ibn Ṭufayl describes here resembles the quasi-Aristotelian universe al-Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā detail in their philosophy. Ibn Ṭufayl follows the Neoplatonic inclinations of Ibn Sīnā

83 *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān*, 98-100/127-129.

84 *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān*, 100/129-130.

and al-Ghazālī by making a division between the perceptible world, which includes the visible aspects of the heavenly spheres, and the divine world, by which he intends the suprasensible essences (whether intellects or souls) that impart being and motion to the heavenly spheres.⁸⁵ In making this division, Ibn Ṭufayl can now speak to the distinct origins of the divine and perceptible worlds, as well as how each relates to the other.

Ibn Ṭufayl compares the divine and perceptible worlds, the *ākhirā* and the *dunyā*, to two co-wives: “If you please one of them, you will displease the other.”⁸⁶ From a human perspective, “it is impossible to bring them both together in one state of consciousness” (*lam yumkin ijtimā‘uhumā fī ḥāl wāḥida*).⁸⁷ Ibn Ṭufayl stipulates that the separate essences that populate the divine world completely transcend (*munazzaha ghāyat al-tanzīh ‘an*) the physical world and have no link (*irtibāt*) to it.

Rather, they are linked to and dependent upon the essence of the One, the Truth, the Necessary Existent which is the first of them, as well as their first principle, their cause, who brings them into existence and grants them endurance for eternity. They have no need of bodies, but bodies have need of them. Were they to go out of existence, bodies would also go out of existence, for they are the principles [of all bodies]. In like manner, if it were possible for the essence of the One, the Truth...to pass out of existence, all of these essences would cease to exist. Bodies would cease to exist—the entire perceptible world would cease exist and no being would remain, since everything is linked one to another! Although the perceptible world imitates the divine world (*in kān tābi‘an li-l-‘ālam al-ilāhī*) as if it were its shadow, the

85 Ibn Ṭufayl gives credit to Ibn Sīnā and al-Ghazālī for pointing to the way to the philosophical discoveries he seeks to divulge in *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān*. See *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān*, 15/18.

86 On “co-wives,” see *Sunan al-Nasā’ī*, 4821-4823, 4827; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, 1682a-b; *Jāmi‘ al-Tirmidhī*, 1411.

87 *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān*, 101-102/132. In fact, Ḥayy spends much of his remaining life attempting to experience this vision as often as possible. See *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān*, 104/135; 107/139.

divine world is self-sufficient and separate from [the perceptible world]. However, *it is impossible to posit the non-existence [of the perceptible world] precisely because it imitates the divine world. The corruption (fasād) [of the perceptible world] simply means that it changes, not that it passes out of existence altogether.*⁸⁸

This passage constitutes the best evidence that, in the end, Ḥayy rejects the possibility of creation *ex nihilo* on the grounds that the absolute nonexistence of either the divine or perceptible world is impossible. One might object to the above conclusion due to the fact that Ibn Ṭufayl stipulates only that the perceptible world imitates the divine; were God to create the divine world from nothing, then the perceptible world would come into existence only once it could emanate from and imitate the divine world. This objection neglects the possibility that the imitation of what is higher is a transitive relation.

If the perceptible world cannot pass out of non-existence by dint of the fact that it imitates the divine world, it follows that the divine world cannot pass out of existence because it imitates the One. Since the One is eternal and possesses the essential properties that merit imitation from eternity, it is likely that Ibn Ṭufayl also means that the One, the divine world, and the perceptible world coexist in this relationship from eternity. As in Ja'far's account, the cosmic structure Ḥayy witnesses in his vision is eternal. All language pertaining to creation does not so much express the temporal order of cosmogony as it does an ontological hierarchy. God and the two worlds exist from eternity, but the lower world remains ontologically dependent on the higher world, and the higher world on God.

Conspicuously absent from Ibn Ṭufayl's account is an explicit distinction between the creative principles proper to each world on par with Ja'far's division of "atemporal creation" (*ibdā'*) from "temporal creation" (*khalq*). Ibn Ṭufayl would have been familiar with atemporal creation from Ibn Sīnā's *Metaphysics of the Healing*, a concept which he invokes frequently to account for God's influence on an eternal cosmos. Ḥayy's initial opposition of *kalām* creationism and Aristotle's teaching suggests that temporal origination (*ḥudūth*) and the first mover

88 Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān, 102-103/133-134.

(*al-muḥrik al-awwal*) are the only conceivable alternatives. Yet, the bipartite cosmology of Ḥayy's *mi'rāj* requires us to posit separate, yet *compatible* creative principles for the divine world and the perceptible world.

In his discussion of the ontological dependence of the perceptible world on the divine world, Ibn Ṭufayl hints that temporal creation (*ḥudūth*) refers, properly speaking, to the origination of individual substances in the world of generation and corruption. If the perceptible world's imitation of the divine world entails that the perceptible world cannot pass out of existence, then "the corruption [of the perceptible world] simply means that it changes, not that it passes out of existence altogether."⁸⁹ If the converse holds, the generation (*kawn*; *tawallud*) of the perceptible world entails that the perceptible cannot pass into existence, but only that it changes.

Ibn Ṭufayl never explicitly mentions "atemporal creation" (*ibdāʿ*). The resemblance of his bipartite cosmology to Ja'far's emanationist stance, however, allows us to ask if the concept of atemporal creation is implicit in the text. I argue that Ibn Ṭufayl uses Ḥayy's spontaneous generation (*tawallud*) "from neither father nor mother" (*min ghayr umm wa-lā ab*) and Adamological typology to symbolize the atemporal creation of the divine and perceptible worlds in the same way Ja'far does. The structure of the divine world and the mere existence of the perceptible world eternally emanates from the One. Like Ja'far's Adam, the Ḥayy of N1b represents the human form. Insofar as the human form is the final cause of the perceptible world, Ḥayy contains within himself the totality of natural forms, the "traces" (*āthār*) of which eternally allow prime matter to reflect the more stable structure of the divine world. The minute description of the gaseous bubble out of which Ḥayy emerges in N1b reflects the principle of man as macrocosm to which Ibn Ṭufayl alludes later in the story.

89 *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, 103/134.

<i>Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān</i> , 21-27/26-33.	<i>Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān</i> , 63-45/80-81.
Ḥayy's pocket of earth (<i>baṭn al-arḍ</i>) "formed a very small bubble bisected by a thin membrane and fill with a light, gaseous body... In that moment, it joined with the spirit which is from God's command...which eternally flows (<i>dā'im al-fayḍān</i>) from God."	"The heavenly sphere in its entirety (<i>al-falk bi-jumlatihi</i>) and what is encompassed was one being, each part connected to the other (<i>ka-shay' wāḥid muttaṣil bi-ba'dihi bi-ba'd</i>).
"When the spirit joined with this chamber (<i>qarāra</i>), all of the chamber's powers bowed down to the spirit by God's command (<i>sajadat bi-amr Allāh</i>)."	"All of the bodies that he had long observed, such as the earth, the water, the air, the plants, the animals, and everything like them, were included in it, and none stood outside of it."
A second bubble forms and divides into three chambers; though each are separated by membranes, they are joined by ducts (<i>masālik nāfidha</i>). Some of the "powers subordinate to the spirit" (<i>ṭā'ifa min tilka al-quwā al-latī khaḍa'at la-hu</i>) enter these three chambers. Two other bubbles like this form.	"The whole resembled an individual living being (<i>ashbaha bi-shakhṣ min ashkhāṣ al-ḥayawān</i>)..."
The three bubbles correspond to three organs and their respective faculties: * Heart = imaginative faculty; conveys sense perceptions "to the spirit"; regulates other organs * Brain = sensory faculty; "distinguishes what is advantageous for survival from what is disadvantageous" * Liver = nutritive faculty	Luminous stars = senses Heavenly spheres = bodily members
The brain and the liver are subordinate to the heart; the heart is subordinate to "the spirit from God's command."	World of generation and corruption = stomach

Although there are obvious parallels between the faculties Ibn Ṭufayl attributes to each chamber and those Ḥayy attributes to the perceptible

parts of the cosmos, Ḥayy does not discover the corollary of the heart and the spirit until the sixth septenary. Then, Ḥayy determines that the cosmic animal requires a principle of motion, as well as an explanation for its particular shape and operations. He immediately attributes the formal arrangement of the universes to “craftsmanship” (*ṣināʿa*) of the Necessary Existent. However, he recognizes that there must exist some intermediary between the Necessary Existent and matter that not only accounts for the arrangement and motions particular to the visible world, but also for his very ability to infer the existence of the Necessary Existent. The only way in which one can apprehend this noncorporeal Craftsman is by a noncorporeal faculty. Ḥayy calls this faculty—a clear reference to *soul*—“his true self” or “essence” (*ḥaqīqat dhātihī*). He later infers that the heavenly spheres likewise possess a noncorporeal essence (*dhāt*) which accounts for their motions and characterizes their relationship to the Necessary Existent. In fact, he concedes that the souls of the spheres are superior because their apprehension of the Necessary Existent is “continually actual” (*ʿalā al-dawām bial-fiʿl*).

Yet, although Ḥayy exists within the realm of generation and corruption, his awareness of the Necessary Existent separates him from all other animals. “He felt with great certainty that he was the perfectly balanced animal (*al-ḥayawān al-muʿtadil*), a spirit (*rūḥ*) resembling the heavenly bodies. It became clear to him that his species was distinct from all other species of animals and that he had been created for a different end (*khuliqa li-ghāya ukhrā*) and intended for a great task (*uʿidda li-amr ʿaẓīm*).”

By observing the heavenly spheres, Ḥayy sees that their proper *telos* consists in the imitation (*tashabbuh*) of the pure activity of the Necessary Existent through eternal, spherical motion. Based on his soul’s kinship to inarticulate animals (*al-ḥayawān ghayr al-nāṭiq*), the heavenly spheres, and the Necessary Existent, Ḥayy establishes an *ethos* for himself consisting in “three duties” (*aghrāḍ*) or “characteristic activities” (sing. *ʿamal*; Gk. *ergon*):

He was obliged (*yajib ʿalayhi*) to imitate the characteristic activity of animals insofar as he had a dark body possessed of distinct parts and conflicting faculties. He was obliged to imitate the

characteristic activity of the spheres insofar as he had an animal spirit (*ruh hayawānī*) whose abode is the heart, the principle (*mabda'*) of the rest of his body and whatever faculties resided in it. He was obliged to imitate the characteristic activity of the Necessary Existent insofar as he was himself (*min haythu huwa huwa*) and to the extent that he was the self (*ayy min haythu huwa al-dhāt*) by which he became aware of that Necessary Existent.

In this passage, Ibn Ṭufayl completes the parallelism between Ḥayy's cosmic animal and his description of Ḥayy's spontaneous generation in N1b.

Ḥayy (N1b)		Cosmic Animal (fifth-sixth sept.)
Spirit from God's command (<i>al-rūḥ al-ladhī min amr Allāh</i>)	→	Necessary Existent (<i>al-wājib al-wujūd</i>)
Heart (<i>qalb</i>)	→	Separate Intellects (<i>'uqūl/dhawāt mufāriqa</i>)
----- Non-Corporeal/Corporeal -----		
Brain (<i>damāgh</i>)	→	Luminous Stars (<i>kawākib munīra</i>)
[Bodily Members]	→	Spheres (<i>aflāk</i>)
Liver (<i>kabid</i>)	→	World of Generation and Corruption (<i>'ālam al-kawn wa-l-fasād</i>)

Ḥayy's capacity as a human being to imitate the characteristic activities of God, the spheres, and inarticulate animals reflects an understanding of the particularity of the human form similar to what we find in Ja'far's Adamology. Since the human form (whether symbolized by Adam or Ḥayy) possess this capacity, it not only stands out as the perceptible world's final cause—the different end or great task which Ḥayy mentions—but also contains within itself the totality of the cosmos. Therefore, the human form is uniquely prepared (*musta'idd*)

to apprehend the perfect activity of God and the heavenly spheres such that individual human beings can elevate the situation of the world of generation and corruption by uniting the characteristic activity of animals, the preservation of mere life, with the characteristic activities of God and the spheres, eternal duration, and the intellection of the highest good. Ḥayy presents the three functions of the human being in both ethical terms (i.e., as “duties”) and soteriological terms. Ibn Ṭufayl does not, of course, accept an Ismāʿīlī imāmology, but he nevertheless echoes Jaʿfar’s teaching on the purpose of the creation of humankind: “God created human beings in order to perfect the material world through their conformity to what is noble in the higher, spiritual world by way of the traces from the Intellect and the Soul it left on them.”⁹⁰ What is more, the philosophical ethics and soteriology of *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān* rest upon an emanationist cosmology which, like Jaʿfar’s doctrine, requires a creative principle sufficient to explain the procession of the natural forms—above all, the human form—from the divine world to the perceptible world. Because temporal origination only instantiates in matter the forms which exist eternally in the divine world, Ibn Ṭufayl cannot account for the ontological origin of the forms, as well as their subordinate relationship to God, without tacitly holding some concept of atemporal origination (*ibdāʿ*). This corrective reading holds if we recall that the symbolism through which Ibn Ṭufayl hints at atemporal origination—*rūḥ*, *amr Allāh*, *āthār*—is identical to that which Jaʿfar explicitly applies to temporal origination.

The literary and conceptual similarity of *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān* to Jaʿfar’s *Sarāʾir* allows us to deal with Ibn Ṭufayl’s silence on temporal origination. As I have demonstrated, Ḥayy’s stated belief that creationism is as scientifically viable as eternalism is unjustified and does not represent Ḥayy’s final thoughts on the matter. Ibn Ṭufayl’s presentation of Ḥayy’s two nativities as mutually exclusive is another matter. Just as Ismāʿīlī Adamology seeks to reconcile an eternal cosmos with qurʾānic statements concerning creation and divine providence, Ḥayy’s two nativities allow us to speak of the world as both eternal and created without contradiction. In my reading, the spontaneous generation narrative (N1b) corresponds to a Neoplatonic interpretation of the

⁹⁰ Jaʿfar, 20–21.

Qur'ān's account of creation, whereas the narrative concerning Ḥayy's parents (N₂) corresponds to the philosophical belief in the eternity of species. However, we must understand each narrative as pertaining to the creation of only *one* of the two worlds that make up Ibn Ṭufayl's universe. The spontaneous generation narrative allegorizes the creation of the divine world and is reminiscent of Ja'far's and other Ismā'īlī teachings concerning the origination (*ibdā'*) of Adam's counterpart in the spiritual world. The story of Ḥayy's parents reflects the eternal generation and corruption of individual substances. Ibn Ṭufayl tells us that some reject N₁ because, taken literally, spontaneous human generation goes against the Aristotelian and Neoplatonic view that it is impossible for a living being to originate from inanimate matter.

Conclusion

Once we understand the allegorical significance of Ḥayy's two natiivities, their contradictions dissolve. Ibn Ṭufayl *must* include both stories in *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* because, like Ja'far's Adam, Ḥayy represents the totality of natural forms emanating from the divine world and the eternal process of generation and corruption in the material world. The connection between the Ḥayy created in the divine world and Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān in the sensible world is bound up with the divine command and the prophetology Ibn Ṭufayl develops in the emanationist account (N_{1b}). Ḥayy's spontaneous generation pertains to the pure human form—God's spirit—as it is in the divine world. The lower, corporeal Ḥayy receives this form perfectly (or nearly so) because he spends the remainder of the tale learning and disciplining his soul, such that, when his concave mirror receives the supernal light, everything around him that is not the pure human form is temporarily burned away. If we apply the medieval principle of “man as microcosm” (or, as the Brethren of Purity say, “the world as macranthropos”), the lower world, as a whole, mimics or receives the form of the higher world.⁹¹ Ḥayy's dismissal of the question as to the world's eternity or creation is not Ibn Ṭufayl's

⁹¹ On this tradition, see Brethren of Purity, “Epistle 34 – The Universe as Macroanthropos,” trans. David Simonowitz, in *Epistles of the Brethren of Purity: Sciences of the Soul and Intellect Part I* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 81–108.

final word on the matter. In reconciling the two nativities, we see that the world is both eternal and created. The lower world exists eternally as the Aristotelians allege; however, Ibn Ṭufayl's "righteous forebears" are correct about creationism, if by creation they mean the creation of forms in the divine world.

That Ibn Ṭufayl's accounts of Ḥayy's nativity so strongly resemble the form and function of Ja'far's Adamology suggests that *Sarā'ir al-nuṭaqā'* had some readership outside of Fāṭimid circles in Ifrīqiyya and Egypt. By extension, Ismā'īlī Fāṭimid texts and ideas must have enjoyed a wider and longer circulation in the Maghrib and al-Andalus than modern historians had previously supposed. Further work must be done in order to establish the particular means by which Maghribīs and Andalusīs came into contact with, digested, and employed Shī'ī theology and *ta'wīl* literature to express ideas adjacent to (in the case of *bāṭinīs* or Ṣūfīs) and even in opposition to Ismā'īlī Fāṭimid interests. Such research must not only consult the literature produced by scholars, but also revisit popular literature and forms of religious expression among the Muslims, Jews, and Christians in Iberia and North Africa.

In the absence of clear manuscript traditions connecting Ismā'īlī literary production to non-Shī'ī intellectual centers in the region, I believe that the type of narrative and conceptual comparison I have undertaken here offers a way around this problem. What *Sarā'ir* can tell us about *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* is not limited to its literary motifs. The cosmological allegories that permeate Ibn Ṭufayl's desert island tale indicate that the philosopher had greater affinities to Neoplatonism than previously understood.⁹² The remarkable similarity of *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* to *Sarā'ir*, an "in-group" text written centuries prior, indicates

92 Sarah Stroumsa argues that the portrayal of Ibn Ṭufayl as an Aristotelian stems from the writings of the Almohad historian 'Abd al-Wāḥid al-Marrākushī (Twelfth-Thirteenth c.). Al-Marrākushī places Ibn Ṭufayl in an "Aristotelian *silsila*" between Ibn Bājjah and Ibn Rushd in order to highlight the Almohad Caliph's patronage of philosophical rationalism. Although Ibn Ṭufayl certainly associated with Andalusī Aristotelians, other sources indicate that he was "firmly rooted in al-Andalus's Neoplatonist tradition. Sarah Stroumsa, *Al-Andalus and Sefarad: On Philosophy and Its History in Medieval Spain* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019), 128; 136-137.

that we must revise our understanding of how sectarianism affected the transmission of ideas and texts in the medieval Islamic world.

Appendix 1: Narrative Parallels

	<i>Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān</i>	<i>Sarā'ir al-nuṭqa'</i>	Additional Notes
Setting	Ḥayy's island is "one of the islands of India which is below the equator." ¹ In N2, Ḥayy's island is in the vicinity of his parents' island, which is much larger and more expansive. ²	Ja'far's Adam is born on an island called Warān in the city of Sūbāt, which he says is among the territories (<i>a'māl</i>) of Sri Lanka (<i>Sarandīb</i>). Later, Adam's parents hide him from the king of Warān on island called Būrān. While Būrān is not completely deserted, Adam grows up on a completely uninhabited portion of it.	Both Ja'far and Ibn Ṭufayl mention that the deserted islands where their protagonists grow up have date trees, likely alluding to the tree Mary shakes while giving birth to Jesus. ³
Parents	In N2, Ḥayy's mother commits her son to the ocean so that her brother will not discover that she has married Yaqzān against his wishes.	Ja'far's Adam is born to parents who live in an island kingdom renowned for its knowledge of philosophy and astrology. Upon Adam's birth, his father conducts an astrological reading and learns that the heavenly spheres are fortuitously arranged. The island's king grows jealous of the newborn. Fearing the king, Adam's father hides him on the island of Būrān, which is under the authority of another king. ⁴	Ja'far relates that Adam's father hid him in "pocket [of earth]" (<i>baṭn [al-arḍ]</i>). Ibn Ṭufayl describes the pocket of earth in which Ḥayy is spontaneously generated in Nib as a <i>baṭn</i> .
Foster Mother	The infant Ḥayy is nursed and cared for by a doe living on the island.	Ja'far's Adam survives in much the same way, but is instead suckled by a lioness (<i>labwa</i>).	Ja'far characterizes the peninsula of Būrān where Adam dwells as a haven for wild beasts (<i>al-wuḥūsh</i>). Curiously, Ibn Ṭufayl stipulates that there are no "beasts of prey [or lions]" (<i>sibā'</i>) on the island. ⁵
Discovery of the Protagonist	In Ḥayy's fiftieth year, Asāl leaves his native island in order to live out the rest of his days as an ascetic. The first time he sees Ḥayy, he believes him to be an "anchorite." ⁶ Having never seen another human, Ḥayy captures Asāl to learn about him. Asāl describes his captor as wearing animal furs and having long hair. He initially fears Ḥayy because of his ability to run quickly and grapple. Asāl tries to communicate with the feral man in several languages, but Ḥayy can only muster animal sounds and gestures. ⁷	Ja'far relates that, one day, the king of Būrān goes hunting and encounters Adam in a remote place on the island. The king's companions describe Adam as having "the best form, a perfect build, a beautiful face, a brilliant appearance, and [displaying] great dignity." ⁸ When the king sees Adam, he is delighted and astounded. He attempts to speak to Adam, but the young man does not understand his speech. The king charges himself with Adam's education, teaching him the language of his people and their customs.	

¹ *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, 16-7/20.

² *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, 19-20/24.

³ Ja'far, 28; *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, 17-18/20-11. See Qur'ān, 19:23-26.

⁴ Ja'far, 28.

⁵ Ja'far, 28-29; *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, 26-27/33.

⁶ *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, 107/139.

⁷ *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, 107-111/141-145.

⁸ Ja'far, 32. The above epithets—"best" (*ḥasan*), "perfect" (*kāmil*), "beautiful" (*jamīl*), "brilliant" (*bahī*), "great" (*ʿāzīm*)—are similar to those Ibn Ṭufayl applies to Ḥayy's mother in N2 ("...*wa-kānat lahu* [i.e. the island's king] *ukht dhāt al-jamāl wa-ḥasan bāhir*...") and to God. *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, 20/24.

	<i>Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān</i>	<i>Sarāʾir al-nuṭṭaqāʾ</i>	Additional Notes
Political Conflict	Upon learning about the exoteric features of Asāl's religion, Ḥayy is deeply moved to reveal the nature of things as they really are to mankind.⁹ Though Asāl and Salāmān are lifelong friends, Salāmān, the ruler of their island, does not readily welcome Ḥayy's presence. Salāmān, the quintessential <i>ẓāhirī</i>, seeks "to preserve the literal [in religion]" and avoids "giving too free reign to his thoughts."¹⁰ Moreover, contrary to Asāl's ascetic inclinations, Salāmān believes "in living within society" and that it is "unlawful to withdraw [from it]."¹¹ Asāl, by contrast, typifies not only the simple, solitary life away from society, but also the <i>bāṭinī</i> mindset and its accouterments: "getting down to the heart of things," "spiritual values," and "allegorical interpretation."¹² But Ḥayy discovers that the great mass of human beings are not disposed to see things as they really are, and that the prophets who founded the religion of Asāl and Salāmān prudently shrouded their wisdom in allegories and legal statutes.¹³ For Ḥayy, the islanders (and humanity as a whole) have no hope of checking their worst passions and appetites without exoteric religion. Ḥayy's esoteric wisdom would, for the majority of the islanders, only have the deleterious effect of undermining this religion and its law. Ḥayy approaches Salāmān and his friends and apologizes; he recants everything he has taught them and urges them remain steadfast in their religion and to shun innovation. With Asāl, Ḥayy "discretely" seeks passage back to his island, where he and Asāl live out the rest of their days in contemplation.¹⁴	Ja'far's Adam is similarly opposed to Iblīs, known in this epoch as al-Ḥārith ibn Murra. Iblīs is a high-ranking member of the king of Būrān's <i>ḥudūd al-daʿwa</i>, a term used to describe the hierarchy of the Fāṭimid <i>daʿwa</i>.¹⁵ In one interpretation (<i>taʿwīl</i>), Iblīs and Adam are rival preachers competing for the king's (whom Ja'far identifies as the <i>imām al-zamān</i>) favor. When the king hears Adam's speech, he commands Iblīs to listen and show obedience to Adam. Iblīs, citing his "spiritual" (<i>rūḥānī</i>) and "luminous" (<i>nūrānī</i>) nature, refuses to bow to Adam, who is merely "corporeal" (<i>jusmānī</i>) and "tenebrous" (<i>ẓulmānī</i>). The king then casts Iblīs out of the <i>daʿwa</i>.¹⁶ Adam and Iblīs likewise symbolize the tension between <i>bāṭin</i> and <i>ẓāhir</i>. Ja'far interprets the tree in <i>janna</i> as the "highest rank" (<i>a'lā al-marātib</i>) in the king's (i.e., God's) <i>daʿwa</i>. Achieving this rank implies the acquisition of the secret, esoteric sciences (<i>ʿulūm</i>) directly from God. Iblīs, pretending to act as Adam's advisor (<i>nāṣiḥ</i>), tricks Adam into divulging God's secrets to him "against God's order" (<i>bi-ghayr amr min Allāh</i>). When God discovers what Iblīs has done, he cuts him off from the <i>daʿwa</i>, he erases Iblīs' knowledge of esoteric subjects (<i>amsaka ʿanhu mawāddahu</i>), and determines that "nothing of the science of <i>taʿwīl</i> will be open to him except what is purely exoteric" (<i>lā yuftaḥ ʿalayhi shayʾan min ʿilm al-taʿwīl illā al-ẓāhir al-maḥḍ</i>).¹⁷	The triumph of the <i>bāṭinī</i> in Ja'far's <i>Sarāʾir</i>, and its conscientious surrender to the <i>ẓāhirī</i> in <i>Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān</i>, reflects each author's attitude toward esotericism.

9 *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān*, 113/147.

10 *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān*, 107/137.

11 *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān*, 114-115/150.

12 *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān*, 107-108/136-137.

13 *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān*, 114-115/150.

14 *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān*, 116-117/153-154.

15 Ja'far, 32.

16 Ja'far, 33.

17 Ja'far, 35-37.

Appendix 2: The conceptual framework of *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān* mapped onto *Sarā'ir*

<i>Sarā'ir al-nuṭaqā'</i>	<i>Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān</i>
Adam in the Spiritual World: * The story of Adam's creation in the Qur'ān symbolically expresses the emanation of the entire cosmos from God, the One. "God's command" (<i>amr Allāh</i>) indicates the order of emanation: Intellect → Soul → Physical world. * Ja'far divides the cosmos into two worlds: the spiritual world (<i>'ālam rūḥānī; al-ākhirā</i>) and the corporeal world (<i>'ālam jūdānī; al-dunyā</i>). The spiritual world is the preserve of Intellect and Soul. The corporeal world emanates from the spiritual. Though material, the corporeal is imbued with the plethora of natural forms that differentiate prime matter because the spiritual world leaves "traces" (<i>āthār</i>) of the universal forms in the corporeal world. * This emanation occurs eternally. "Atemporal creation" (<i>ibdā'</i>) refers to the eternal emanation of the forms from the One. The One is ontologically, though not <i>temporally</i>, prior to the forms. "Temporal creation" (<i>khalq</i>) does not refer to creation <i>ex nihilo</i>, but rather to the particular instantiation of a form in matter. * Adam is "the first among natural beings" (<i>awwal al-maṭbū'āt</i>) in the spiritual world. This priority refers to ontological priority of the human form in relation to all other natural forms. The human form, or Adam as "the first among natural beings," encompasses all other natural forms insofar as Adam is their final cause: "God created human beings in order to perfect the material world through their conformity to what is noble in the higher, spiritual world by way of its traces (<i>bi-āthārihi</i>) left on them from the Intellect and the Soul."¹⁸	Ḥayy (N1b): * Ḥayy's spontaneous generation allegorizes the emanation of the cosmos from God. * Ibn Ṭufayl divides the cosmos into "the divine world" (<i>al-'ālam al-ilāhī</i>) and "the perceptible world" (<i>al-'ālam al-maḥsūs</i>). The divine world pertains to God and all beings capable of intellection, such as the separate intellects and Ḥayy himself. The existence of the perceptible world depends on the divine world and receives definite form by imitating (<i>tashabbuh</i>) the divine world. The "spirit which is from God's command" (<i>al-rūḥ al-ladhī min amr Allāh</i>) imbues Ḥayy's bubble with faculties. Just as the heart, the seat of the intellectual faculty, bows to God's command, the brain and liver bow in subordination to the heart. * Ibn Ṭufayl stipulates that the supernal light (<i>al-nūr al-a'lā</i>) and spirit which are responsible for Ḥayy's spontaneous generation emanate eternally toward the earth. * Ibn Ṭufayl makes a clear comparison between Ḥayy and the Islamic account of Adam's creation. Ḥayy not only resembles Adam in that he takes on the form (<i>ṣūra</i>) outside of sexual reproduction, but also insofar as his bearing of the human form makes moral demands upon him. Ḥayy <i>qua</i> human being must imitate God (intellect), the heavenly spheres (soul), and inarticulate animals (mere life) in just proportion to fully realize the human form and maintain its particular instantiation in matter.
Corporeal Adam: * The corporeal or <i>historical</i> Adam was conceived through sexual intercourse and born in Sri Lanka (<i>Sarandīb</i>). Ja'far explicitly rejects the possibility that God created Adam from literal clay. * The Qur'ān's narratives about Adam, God, the Angels, and Iblīs reflect eternal facets of the spiritual world. Since the corporeal world eternally manifests traces of the spiritual world, the corporeal Adam's biography corresponds to these facets. * Adam is a gifted child born under auspicious astrological signs. The island's tyrannical king (who corresponds to Iblīs) is jealous of Adam's talents and the respect they garner him among the people. The <i>imām</i> of the age, who the people call "God," is a religious figure on the island. He commands Adam's parents to hide their son on a neighboring island ruled by another king. In another version of the narration, Ja'far associates God with the just king who discovers Adam hiding on his island. Realizing his talents, he educates him and appoints him to a high position in his court. * Adam's journey from the island of his birth, "the abode of his enemy" (<i>dār dīddihi</i>), to the island of the just king dramatizes the human struggle to rise above the limitations and defects of the material world by gaining knowledge of the spiritual world.	Ḥayy (N2): * The corporeal Ḥayy is conceived through normal sexual intercourse on an island. Ibn Ṭufayl attributes this account to those who reject the possibility of spontaneous generation. * Ḥayy manifests many traits of the prophet Adam. Ibn Ṭufayl alludes to several passages in the Qur'ān about God's creation of Adam from clay (<i>ṭīn</i>). * Ḥayy is the child of an aristocratic couple, suggesting that his later abilities are related to his noble birth. Ḥayy's uncle, the tyrannical ruler of the island, has forbidden Ḥayy's mother from marrying because he has not found her an equal match. Fearing her brother, she places the baby into an ark (<i>tābūt</i>) which carries him to the island. * Ḥayy's self-education on his desert island enables him to discover the duties incumbent upon him as a bearer of the human form unencumbered by human institutions. Upon arriving on Asāl's island, he experiences a great degree of enmity and opposition from Salāmān and his coreligionists. Ḥayy attempts to communicate his knowledge and ethical teachings to the islanders, but they resist him because his message contradicts the literal meaning of their prophetic books. According to Ḥayy's philosophy, Ḥayy and Asāl retreat to the island to live out the remainder of their days. Salāmān's legalistic religion offers human beings minimal protection against their worst inclinations, but it does not bring the human form into a harmonious relationship with the perceptible and divine worlds.

¹⁸ Ja'far, 20–21.