Universal Science: An Introduction to Islamic Metaphysics

The Modern Shīʿah Library

VOLUME 2

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Universal Science: An Introduction to Islamic Metaphysics

علم کلی

By

Mahdī Ḥā'irī Yazdī (d. 1420 AH/1999)

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To the friends of the Shīʿah Institute

﴿ وَمَن يُؤۡتَ ٱلۡحِكۡمَةَ فَقَدۡ أُوتِيَ خَيۡرٗا كَثِيرٗا ﴾

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Foreword

It is a great privilege to present the second volume in The Modern Shīʿah Library, 'Universal Science: An Introduction to Islamic Metaphysics' (*ʿIlm-i kullī*), the first singly authored work by Mahdī Ḥāʾirī Yazdī (d. 1420 AH/1999), translated here into English by John Cooper (d. 1997). This is the first of Yazdī's several influential works on philosophy, jurisprudence, and political theory, to have been translated from Persian into English—and only the second to have been published in the West. Its author, Mahdī Ḥāʾirī Yazdī was born into a scholarly family, son of the founder of the Islamic Seminary at Qum—one of the main loci of Shīʿī intellectual activity—Shaykh ʿAbd al-Karīm Ḥāʾirī Yazdī. He studied jurisprudence, philosophy, the 'rational sciences', and astronomy with many of the leading intellectual authorities of his day—including Āyatullāh al-Sayyid Aḥmad Khwānsārī (d. 1406 AH/1985) and Āyatullāh Rūḥ Allāh Khumaynī (d. 1409 AH/1989)—before going on to teach at the University of Tehran. The work before you was written in the 1950s amidst a period of great political turbulence in Tehran, which coincided with a crossroads in the life of its author; who soon after chose to leave Iran for the United States, where, having already developed a thorough grounding in Islamic philosophy, he then spent many years studying the Western philosophical canon and contemporary analytic philosophy at the Universities of Michigan and Toronto, respectively. He later went on to teach at Oxford, Yale, and McGill Universities; making Mahdī Ḥāʾirī Yazdī almost unique in his ability to navigate both the worlds of Islamic and Western philosophy.

The *Universal Science* itself is an introduction to 'metaphysics proper'; originally conceived as the first part of a trilogy that would go on to elaborate on both 'theology proper' and psychology. As an introduction it is remarkable both for its sheer philosophical breadth and for its clarity of exposition, and as such it serves as a fitting riposte to the still-prevalent Orientalist supposition that 'Islamic Philosophy' reached its peak in the mediæval period and has hitherto been in decline. This edition of John Cooper's translation therefore provides Western academia with a rare, but exemplary, insight into the 'living tradition' of Islamic philosophy as it continues to be practiced today in the Shīʿī seminaries of Najaf and Qum; a metaphysical–theological and epistemological discipline that has been transmitted continuously for the best part of a thousand years, which is concerned with examining matters of causality, existence, knowledge, and quiddity as these pertain to an understanding of the Divine. Although the permit of the *Universal Science* is often recondite in nature, the accessibility of its prose and the abundance of examples with which its author seeks to illuminate and invigorate

the arguments of previous philosophical schools and authorities (Sadrian, Illuminationist, Peripatetic, and Avicennan), are qualities that have seen it utilised as a philosophical textbook for many years at the University of Tehran. Thus this translation will provide a guide through Islamic metaphysics for undergraduate students and scholars alike.

A note of thanks is here due to the friends of the Shīʿah Institute, for their support, to Brill, for their commitment to this series, and to my dear colleagues, here at the Shīʿah Institute, namely, Aun, George, Mohammed, Nizam, and Sajjad, without whose indelible efforts and collective endeavour this work would still have remained a neglected draft of handwritten notes, queries, and untranslated passages amongst John Cooper's papers.

It is our hope that the *Universal Science* will be of special interest to academics in Islamic Studies and to philosophers seeking to understand and explore the shared philosophical heritage of the Western and Islamic worlds.

بنده شیرخدا
Sayyid Amjad H. Shah Naqavi
Series Editor, The Modern Shīʿah Library
The Shīʿah Institute
Bloomsbury, London
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Editor's Introduction

> Philosophy is the foundation of all sciences. It is the *universal science* (*ʿilm-i kullī*). Without philosophy no other science can be established (*banā kard*)...Philosophy is the ontology of any reality (*ḥaqīqat*). For example, the reality (*ḥaqīqat*) of man. If you put philosophy to one side, you have put man aside. Because man is a rational and perceiving animal... the perceiver of 'reality'. Āyatullāh Mahdī Ḥāʾirī Yazdī (d. 1420 AH/1999)[1]

These observations on the centrality of philosophy in the human experience, by the author of *ʿIlm-i kullī,* are redolent with the wisdom of the living Islamic philosophical tradition, a tradition which survives in all its fullness into our own times only among the Shīʿah. Āyatullāh Mahdī Ḥāʾirī Yazdī was not only an authority on all aspects of the Shīʿah intellectual tradition, but he was also among the few such authorities in its history to have acquired the highest philosophical credentials from a Western university and written works of great insight in the light of his twin intellectual attainments.[2] Glimpses from the extraordinary story of Mahdī Ḥāʾirī Yazdī's life journey are offered herein by way of introduction to the English translation of his Universal Science (*ʿIlm-i kullī*). In this work his own journey intersected with that of another seeker of knowledge, John Yaḥyā Cooper (24 August 1947 - 9 January 1998), who commenced its

1 Raḍawī, Masʿūd, *Sīyāsatgarī wa sīyāsatandīshshī: zindigī wa fikr-i sīyāsī-yi Mahdī Ḥāʾirī Yazdī*, Tehran, 1387 AH/ 2008, p. 82.

2 In this regard Mahdī Ḥāʾirī Yazdī is somewhat akin to Nishitani Keiji (d. 1990) who was among the first Japanese Zen Buddhist scholars and philosophers to pursue higher studies in the West after a thorough grounding in his own tradition in Japan. He studied with Martin Heidegger (d. 1976) and Edmund Husserl (d. 1938) in Germany and, in Japan, was a disciple of Nishida Kitarō (d. 1945)—the founder of what is known as the 'Kyoto School'. Another modern Asian intellectual figure to whom Mahdī Ḥāʾirī Yazdī may be compared is the Chinese Taoist scholar and philosopher Youlan Feng [in older works 'Yu-lan Fung'] (d. 1990). Feng was a student of John Dewey at Columbia University; where he received his PhD in 1924. He also met Ludwig Wittgenstein (d. 1951) in Cambridge. See the volume *Japanese Philosophy: A Sourcebook*, (eds.) James W. Heisig, Thomas P. Kasulis, and John C. Maraldo, Honolulu, 2011, pp. 639–69 (Overview of the Kyoto School, Nishida Kitarō), pp. 713–732 (Nishitani Keiji). On Youlan Feng see: Moeller, Hans-Georg, *Daosim Explained* [orig. pub. in German by Insel Verlag in 2001 as *In der Mitte des Kreises: Daoistisches Denken*] Chicago, 2004, pp. 21–3, 27–8, 162n. Representative Works: Nishitani Keiji, *Religion and Nothingness*, Berkeley, 1983; Nishida Kitarō, *An Inquiry into the Good*, New Haven, 1992; Yu-lan Fung, *A History of Chinese Philosophy*, 2 vols., Princeton, 1952–53; and, Feng Youlan, *The Hall of Three Pines: An Account of My Life*, Honolulu, 2000, p. 279 where he describes his meeting with Wittgenstein.

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translation from the original Persian in consultation with the author. Cooper was E. G. Browne Lecturer in Persian at the University of Cambridge until his death in 1998. The incomplete manuscript of his translation languished in obscurity among his private papers and has remained unpublished until now. It was due to the efforts of Professor Sajjad H. Rizvi, one of Cooper's doctoral students at the University of Cambridge in the late 1990s, that the translation was spared almost certain loss by his salvaging of these papers. Thanks are due to the continuing and tireless support of Dr Sayyid Amjad H. Shah Naqavi, Dean of the Shīʿah Institute, whose direction, perseverance, and vision has led to its publication and the opportunity for the *ʿIlm-i kullī* to reach a wider audience for the first time.

The intersecting lives of John Cooper and Mahdī Ḥāʾirī Yazdī are an integral part of the context of *ʿIlm-i kullī*. Accordingly, the work will be approached here in the light of their respective biographies and intellectual contributions; followed by a word on the translation and an account of the historical context as well as the content of *ʿIlm-i kullī*.

1 Mahdī Ḥāʾirī Yazdī: A Philosophical Life

Mahdī Ḥāʾirī Yazdī was born in 1341 AH/ 1923 in the holy city of Qum into one of the most prestigious scholarly families of recent times. His father, Āyatullāh ʿUẓmā ʿAbd al-Karīm b. Muḥammad Jaʿfar Yazdī Mihrjirdī al-Ḥāʾirī,[3] was born in Mihrjird —which at the time was a village outside of the present-day Iranian city of Yazd—in the month of Rajab 1276 AH/1859. He travelled in search of knowledge to the cities of Samarra, Najaf, and Karbala, returning to Iran in 1332 AH/1913 and, after settling for a time in the city of Arāk,[4] moved to Qum in 1340 AH/1921.[5] To him belongs the singular distinction of having not only transformed the city—which had hitherto been a significant centre of Imāmī Shīʿī *muḥaddithūn* in the 3–4th /9–10th centuries[6]—into a locus of Shīʿī learn-

3 The term *ḥāʾirī* refers, by implication, to someone from the shrine city of Karbala since it is one of the names by which the tomb of Imam Ḥusayn in Karbala is known. Apparently, this appellation became part of the family name due to migration and residence in Karbala of Mahdī Ḥāʾirī Yazdī's father before his return to Iran. See Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusayn al-Ḥusaynī al-Jalālī, *Fihris al-turāth*, 2 vols., ed. Sayyid Muḥammad Jawād al-Ḥusaynī al-Jalālī, Qum, 1422 AH, 2001, vol. II, p. 615, under the biography of Mahdī Ḥāʾirī Yazdī's elder brother Murtaḍā al-Ḥāʾirī (1333–1405 AH/1914–1984) who predeceased him.

4 The co-ordinates for Mihrjird are 32° 8' 5" N, 53° 37' 30" E, for Yazd 31° 53' 50" N, 54° 22' 4" E, and for Arāk 34° 5' 30" N, 49° 41› 21" E.

5 Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusayn al-Ḥusaynī al-Jalālī, *Fihris al-turāth*, vol. II, p. 332.

6 See Ḥasan b. Muḥammad b. Ḥasan b. Sāʾib b. Mālik Ashʿarī Qummī, *Tārīkh-i Qum*, Qum, 1385

ing and the traditional *ḥawzah*, but of having made it into a serious rival to the great seminary of Najaf in neighbouring Iraq.[7] He died in Qum in 1355 AH/1937.

Mahdī Ḥā'irī Yazdī followed, along with his elder brother Murtaḍā, in the footsteps of his illustrious father to become a jurist. The elder members of the family were known for their piety and spirituality and this was also inculcated in the Ḥā'irī brothers. One may gain some idea of the spiritual atmosphere in which they were formed by an anecdote told of the older of the pair, Murtaḍā Ḥā'irī Yazdī, by our teacher Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusayn al-Ḥusaynī al-Jalālī (b. 1362 AH/1943), whom he visited many times in his home and whose lessons he attended in 1393 AH/1973 and from whom he received an *ijāzah* in the same year. He tells us that Āyatullāh Murtaḍā:

> [...] had authored numerous works but had forbidden [many of] them from being published out of disdain for self-aggrandisement telling me jokingly that "What has been published already is sufficient to satisfy the base craving for publication and the ego (*inna fīmā ṭubi'a kifāyatan li irḍā'i shahwat al-ta'līf wa irḍā' al-nafs*)".

We are fortunate, however, that despite Mahdī Ḥā'irī Yazdī's pious upbringing such a severe *askesis* regarding matters of publication was not carried by him to the same lengths as that of his elder brother, and that he was ultimately to leave behind a published *oeuvre* of about a dozen works.

Mahdī Ḥā'irī Yazdī received his earliest training at the hands of his father and then commenced his formal training with the scholars of Qum. His teachers in jurisprudence included Āyatullāh al-'Uẓmā al-Sayyid Ḥusayn b. al-Sayyid 'Alī al-Ṭabāṭabā'ī al-Burūjirdī (d. 1380 AH/1961), who would assume leadership of the *ḥawzah* after his father's death, and Āyatullāh al-Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥujjat b. al-Sayyid 'Alī Kūhkamarihī Tabrīzī (d. 1372 AH/1953),[8] with whom he pursued the so-called 'external studies' in Islamic Law (*sharī'ah*), known as *dars-i khārij*.[9] After fifteen years in the *ḥawzah*, and at the still tender age of twenty-eight, he was granted the prerogative to engage in

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SH/2006.

7 For further details on Shaykh 'Abd al-Karīm Ḥā'irī Yazdī's role in the founding of the Qum seminary see, Ghulām Riḍā Karbāschī, *Tārīkh-i Shafāhī-yi inqilāb-i islāmī: tārīkh-i ḥawzah-yi 'ilmiyyah-yi Qum*, Tehran, 1380 SH/2001, Chapter 1.

8 Ḥā'irī Yazdī, Mahdī, *Khātirāt-i Mahdī Ḥā'irī Yazdī*, p. 17. On these two scholars see Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusayn al-Ḥusaynī al-Jalālī, *Fihris al-turāth*, vol. II, pp. 440–42 (Burūjirdī) and vol. II, p. 407 (Kūh Kamarī Tabrīzī).

9 Fischer, Michael M.J., *Iran: From Religious Dispute to Revolution*, Madison, Wisconsin, 1980, pp. 63–4.

'juristic reasoning' (*ijtihād*) by Āyatullāh al-'Uẓmā Burūjirdī. Such permission indicates that a seminarian has arrived at an expert level of competence in directly deriving rulings of the Law from its scriptural and other sources and is thus no longer allowed to merely comply with the conclusions of the skilled practitioner of juristic reasoning.[10] Instead they must determine the legal ordinances of religion for themselves—through their own juristic reasoning.[11]

Mahdī Ḥā'irī Yazdī's interests were not confined only to jurisprudence, however, and he also zealously pursued the 'rational sciences' (*'ulūm 'aqliyyah*) through studying also with such masters as Āyatullāh al-Sayyid Aḥmad Khwānsārī (d. 1406 AH/1985) of Tehran with whom he read: Mullā Ṣadrā's (d. 1045 AH/1636) commentary on the Peripatetic compendium of Athīr al-Dīn al-Abharī (d. 663 AH/1265 CE), known as *Sharḥ al-hidayat al-athīriyyah*; Shaykh Khwājah Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī's (d. 672 AH/1274 CE) commentary on Ibn Sīnā's (d. 428 AH/1037 CE) *al-Ishārāt wa al-tanbīhāt*; as well as texts of traditional mathematics such as Euclid (fl. between 347 BCE and 287 BCE).[12] With Mīrzā Mahdī b. Ja'far b. Aḥmad al-Ṭahrānī al-Āshtiyānī (d. 1372 AH/1953) he studied Ibn Sīnā's *Kitāb al-Shifā'*,[13] Mullā Ṣadrā's *Kitāb al-Asfār*, and he also read Mullā Hādī Sabzawārī's *Sharḥ ghurar al-farā'id* with Āyatullāh Rūḥ Allāh al-Mūsawī al-Khumaynī [hereafter, Khomeini][14] (d. 1409 AH/1989), the founder of the modern day Islamic Republic of Iran[15] to whom he was related through the marriage of his niece to Khomeini's eldest son.[16] Finally, he even journeyed to Mashhad to study traditional astronomy with Sayfullāh Īsī and also acquired an expertise in traditional astrology.[17]

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10 For such terms, see al-'Allāmah al-Ḥillī's *Foundations of Jurisprudence: an Introduction to Imāmī Shī'ī Legal Theory; Mabādi' al-wuṣūl ilā 'ilm al-uṣūl*; introduction, translation, and Arabic critical edition by Sayyid Amjad H. Shah Naqavi, Leiden, 2016.

11 Ḥā'irī Yazdī, Mahdī, *Khātirāt-i Mahdī Ḥā'irī Yazdī*, p. 18.

12 Seyyed Hossein Nasr, foreword to Mahdī Ḥā'irī Yazdī, *The Principles of Epistemology in Islamic Philosophy: Knowledge by Presence*, Albany, NY, 1992, pp. IX–X; see also the Persian introduction to the new edition of *'Ilm-i kullī* by Muṣṭafā Muḥaqqiq Dāmād in Mahdī Ḥā'irī Yazdī, *'Ilm-i kullī*, Tehran, 1384 SH/2005, pp. IX–X.

13 Ibid.

14 The conventional spelling in English has become 'Khomeini' and this orthography will therefore be followed from herein onwards.

15 Ibid.

16 'Abdallāh Nāṣrī, *Dar just wa jū-yi ḥikmat: sayrī dar zindigī, athār wa andīshahhā-yi falsafī-yi Mahdī Ḥā'irī Yazdī*, p. 39.

17 Naṣr, foreword to Mahdī Ḥā'irī Yazdī, *Principles*, pp. IX–X; for his having studied traditional astrology see the Dāmād introduction to new edition of *'Ilm-i kullī*, p. X where he explicitly states: '*Mahdī Ḥā'irī Yazdī riyāḍiyāt-i sunnatī wa hattā nujūm wa hay'at rā nazd-i ustādān-i barjastah-yi har rishtah āmūkht*', however Muḥaqqiq Dāmād does not indicate

Following this prolonged period of intense study, Mahdī Ḥā'irī Yazdī decided to move from Qum to Tehran and begin teaching in the capital. It was at this point that he began his life-long association with the University of Tehran, where—despite long periods abroad—he would remain a professor until his death in 1420 AH/ 1999. Thus in 1370 AH/ 1951, upon arriving in Tehran, he first taught at what is now known as the Shahīd Muṭahharī School (formerly *Madrasah-yi Sipāhsālār*), which was built by Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh Qajar for the philosopher 'Alī Mudarris Zunūzī (d. 1307 AH/1889),[18] one of the four *hakīms* of the 'School of Tehran' and a leading commentator on Mullā Ṣadrā.[19] Ḥā'irī initially assumed responsibility for teaching the rational and transmitted Islamic sciences in keeping with his training in Qum. But following the death of the school's principle—the prominent philosopher and mystic, Mīrzā Mahdī Āshtiyānī, with whom Mahdī Ḥā'irī Yazdī himself had studied the *Kitāb al-Shifā'* of Ibn Sīnā—in 1372 AH/1332 SH/1953, Mahdī Ḥā'irī Yazdī was bestowed custodianship of the school as a whole.[20] At the same time, from 1374 AH /1955 onwards he also taught at the University of Tehran, and because of his background and experience was quickly elevated to Associate Professor (*dānishyārī*) when the university recognised his capacity for *ijtihād* as bestowed by Burūjirdī and other *'ulamā'* as being equivalent to a doctorate. Within five years he had been promoted to full professor, a post he would hold until his retirement in 1408 AH/1987.[21]

In the nineteen fifties he witnessed first-hand the immense pressure to which the government of Dr Muḥammad Muṣaddiq [Mosaddegh] (d. 1386 AH/1345 SH/1987) was subjected following the nationalisation of the Anglo–Iranian Oil Company, and the aftermath of the *coup d'état,* which ousted the nationalist prime minister from power.[22] It was during this turbulent

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with whom he studied this subject. I could not find any biographical details on Īsī.

18 'Alī Mudarris Zunūzī wrote important commentaries on Mullā Ṣadrā and Mullā Hādī Sabzawārī and is one of the earliest individuals to engage with European philosophy, in particular the philosophy of Immanuel Kant, from a perspective thoroughly grounded in the metaphysical traditions of the Islamic world. Mehdi Aminrazavi, *Suhrawardi and the School of Illumination*, London and New York, 1997, pp. 134–5.

19 Nasr, Seyyed Hossein, *Islamic Philosophy from its Origins to the Present: Philosophy in the Land of Prophecy*, New York, 2006, p. 227.

20 Ḥā'irī Yazdī, Mahdī, *Khātirāt-i Mahdī Ḥā'irī Yazdī*, p. 19. After the Islamic Revolution, 1399–1400 AH/1978–1979, the Sipāhsālār School would be renamed, the Madrassah-yi 'ālī-yi Shahīd Muṭahharī, and in 2009 (1388 SH/ 1430–31 AH) was promoted to Shahīd Muṭahharī University.

21 Ḥā'irī Yazdī, Mahdī, *Khātirāt-i Mahdī Ḥā'irī Yazdī*, 2001, p. 20.

22 See Ali Rahnema, *Behind the 1953 Coup in Iran: Thugs, Turncoats, Soldiers, and Spooks*, Cambridge, 2015.

time that Mahdī Ḥā'irī Yazdī taught Mullā Ṣadrā's magnum opus, *al-Ḥikmah al-mutaʿāliyah fī al-asfār al-ʿaqliyyah al-arbaʿah* (henceforth *Asfār*), as well as *uṣūl al-fiqh*, at Sipāhsālār and doctoral students at Tehran University's Faculty of Theology. It is also in this period that the current work, *ʿIlm-i kullī*, was written.

Soon after writing this work, Mahdī Ḥā'irī Yazdī would begin a new phase of his intellectual life; one which, to this day, distinguishes him from many other scholars in terms of both intellectual depth and geographical breadth. Following the *coup d'état* which restored Muḥammad Riḍā Shāh Pahlavī (d. 1400 AH/1359 SH/1980) to power, Mahdī Ḥā'irī Yazdī decided to leave Iran,[23] and it is this departure, which coincided with his full-blown academic engagement with Western philosophy. The exact motives for this pursuit are not entirely clear. Apart from the undesirable political situation prevailing inside Iran, this move also seems to have been spurred by his innate intellectual curiosity; hastened by the influx of foreign ideas and ideologies emanating from the Western philosophical canon, which had begun to make their presence felt, and increasingly found themselves taken up by the burgeoning Iranian intelligentsia. Some eminent traditionalist *ʿulamā'* simply repudiated such ideas outright, while others, like ʿAllāmah Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ṭabāṭabā'ī (d. 1402 AH/ 1981) in works such as *Uṣūl-i falsafah wa rawish-i riʾālism*,[24] or Āyatullāh Sayyid Muḥammad Bāqir al-Ṣadr (executed 1400 AH/ 1980) in his *Falsafatunā*,[25] writing in Persian and Arabic, respectively, fashioned responses which were rooted in Islamic philosophy and centred on indigenous adversaries inspired by the Marxist theory of dialectical materialism. Mahdī Ḥā'irī Yazdī, by contrast, took the unusual decision to leave Iran for the United States, at first for a mission at the behest of Āyatullāh Burūjirdī —for whom he acted as a representative in Washington—but soon thereafter

23 Ḥā'irī Yazdī, Mahdī, *Khātirāt-i Mahdī Ḥā'irī Yazdī*, p. 23.

24 *Uṣūl-i falsafah wa rawish-i riʾālism,* along with the explications of Murtaḍā Muṭahharī, was published between 1953–1985. See introduction, particularly Khusrūshāhī's comments pertaining to the 'agents of the development of materialism in Iran' during this time. Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *Uṣūl-i falsafah wa rawish-i riʾālism*, edited and introduced by Sayyid Hādī Khusrūshāhī, Qum, 4th ed., 1394 SH/2015, pp. 18–20. See also Hamid Dabashi, *Theology of Discontent: The Ideological Foundation of the Islamic Revolution in Iran*, with a new introduction by the author, New Brunswick & London 2006, pp. 110–11. For a brief summary of the text's origins and its basic arguments see, chapters 3 and 5 of the same.

25 There are many editions, e.g. Muḥammad Bāqir al-Ṣadr, *Falsafatunā*, Beirut, 1406 AH/1986 as well as an English translation by Shams Inati published as *Our Philosophy*, London, 1987. See also Mallat, Chilbli, *The Renewal of Islamic Law: Muhammad Baqer as-Sadr, Najaf and the Shiʿi International*, Cambridge & New York, 1993.

beginning the study of Western philosophy anew, casting himself in the role of a *tabula rasa.* He had become convinced of the necessity of developing a thoroughly philosophical response to materialism and secularism from within the Islamic tradition itself. As Ḥā'irī recalls in his memoir:

> When I came to the [United States] I felt that an individual who really wants to properly research the Islamic sciences, must not only be satisfied with the Islamic sciences and the traditional framework proposed by Islamic methods. This is because that method, however good it may be; in the end, our youth, the Islamic youth as a whole, not only from Iran, but other countries as well, they come to America and Europe and in the end their mind collides with a series of other issues, and a series of questions replace previous learning, and these must ultimately be analysed ... In this regard I thought it was simply not enough for one to merely start to learn the language here or in his own country, to become familiar with English or French. Suppose that we become familiar with English or French, but when we turn to the structure of their thought—meaning, their thought and intellectual system, and we are not familiar [with it], it is of no use.

He continues,

> I said to myself that if we want to begin from the substructure (*zīrbanā*) and become acquainted with the foundational system of Western thought, we must entirely abandon our own methodology, albeit temporarily, [and begin] a new day.[26]

One should therefore bear in mind that not only is *'Ilm-i kullī* Mahdī Ḥā'irī Yazdī's first singly authored work, but that it also pre-dates his move to the United States, and full immersion in Western philosophy. In any event, it was in this spirit that Mahdī Ḥā'irī Yazdī enrolled as an undergraduate in Western philosophy at Georgetown University, after which he went to the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor for graduate studies. Then, following the completion of his Masters in Michigan, he left for Canada to undertake a PhD in Analytic philosophy at the University of Toronto.

Mahdī Ḥā'irī Yazdī's doctoral thesis was later published with a foreword by Seyyed Hossein Nasr and under his editorship by the State University of New York Press with the title of *The Principles of Epistemology in Islamic Philosophy: Knowledge by Presence* in 1992; a work which showed him to be

26 Ḥā'irī Yazdī, Mahdī, *Khātirāt-i Mahdī Ḥā'irī Yazdī*, p. 24.

uniquely at home not only with the epistemological ruminations of Ibn Sīnā, Shihāb al-Dīn al-Suhrawārdī (d. 587 AH/1191 CE), Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606 AH/1209 CE), Ibn ʿArabī (d. 638 AH/1240 CE), Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī, and Mullā Ṣadrā, but also those of Immanuel Kant (d. 1804), William James (d. 1910), Bertrand Russell (d. 1970), and Ludwig Wittgenstein. In this challenging volume he deals in the first place with epistemological problems, most notably what is known as 'knowledge by presence' (*ʿilm-i ḥuḍūrī*).[27] The latter has the nature of an immediate cognition unmediated by rational demonstration, as in one's direct perceptions of inner states such as pain. Moreover, mystical experience is identified as a species of knowledge by presence in contradistinction to discourse about mystical experience. It is interesting to note that this volume seems to have been more or less ignored by the Western philosophical establishment.[28] Moreover, even prior to the completion of his doctorate Mahdī Ḥāʾirī Yazdī authored a notable work on theoretical rationality and Islamic metaphysics entitled, *Kāvushhā-yi ʿaql-i naẓarī* (1347 SH/1968). Graduating in 1979 with a PhD in hand, he returned to Georgetown to take up a position as a Senior Fellow at the Kennedy Institute of Ethics where he remained until 1980, when he was invited to become a Visiting Professor at Yale University in New Haven.[29]

Thousands of miles away from the revolution unfolding in his homeland, Mahdī Ḥāʾirī Yazdī had for the most part lived the life of the itinerant scholar, pursuing his research, as was his wont. When still in the United States—and following the abandonment and removal of the Shah's diplomats and staff from Iran's embassy in Washington—Karīm Sanjābī (d. 1416 AH/1995), the Foreign Minister at the time, and a leading member of the National Front, suggested Ḥāʾirī as someone who could supervise activities at the embassy until a formal appointment could be made.[30] Thus in the course of the

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27 Ḥāʾirī Yazdī, Mahdī, *The Principles of Epistemology in Islamic Philosophy: Knowledge by Presence*, foreword by Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Albany. NY, 1992.

28 We have seen the following reviews: David B. Burrell, *The Journal of Religion* 74.1 (January 1994), pp. 141–42; Intisar-ul-Haque, *Islamic Studies* 34.3 (Autumn 1995), pp. 356–59; Oliver Leaman, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, University of London, 56.2 (1993), p. 361; and Ian Richard Netton, *Religious Studies*, 29.2 (June 1993), pp. 270–71. All of these are by known specialists in Islamic studies, except Intisar-ul-Haque about whom we have no information. The point is that none of these reviews is by a Western philosopher. Of these, Burell is perhaps the most philosophically inclined and strongly criticises Mahdī Ḥāʾirī Yazdī for not studying the views of St Thomas Aquinas (d. 1274 CE), the debates between the Franciscans and Dominicans in the High Middle Ages, and the works of the modern Catholic philosopher Bernard J. F. Lonergan (d. 1984).

29 Ḥāʾirī Yazdī, Mahdī, *Khātirāt-i Mahdī Ḥāʾirī Yazdī*, pp. 25–6.

30 Ḥāʾirī Yazdī, Mahdī, *Khātirāt-i Mahdī Ḥāʾirī Yazdī*, p. 102; Nāṣrī, ʿAbdallāh, *Dar just wa jū-*

heady concatenation of events unfurling inside Iran, and on Sanjābī's initial prompting, Ayatollah Khomeini proceeded to directly appoint Mahdī Ḥā'irī Yazdī as guardian of the embassy and representative of the Foreign Minister in Washington, given his former student's many years in the United States and his standing as the son of Khomeini's teacher. It was hoped by Sanjābī that Mahdī Ḥā'irī Yazdī might bring some calm and order to the embassy amidst an otherwise chaotic and unpredictable time in the two countries' bilateral relations. But after a brief stint of two weeks, and ultimately unable to bring the situation to heel or control the younger revolutionaries in his midst who continually sought to undermine his authority, Mahdī Ḥā'irī Yazdī submitted his resignation to Sanjābī and returned to focus on his responsibilities at Georgetown.[31]

On a routine visit to Iran to see his wife and child in the summer of 1980, Mahdī Ḥā'irī Yazdī was not permitted to leave the country and, in his own words, was effectively placed under 'house arrest' in Tehran.[32] The exact reasons for his detainment seem to have even eluded Mahdī Ḥā'irī Yazdī himself, insofar as he does not elaborate at any length on this episode in his memoir, except to detail one instance where he contacted Ayatollah Khomeini, proposing to speak with Edward 'Ted' Kennedy (d. 1430 AH/2009) in order to mediate a peaceful resolution to the hostage crisis—an offer which was firmly rebutted by his former teacher.[33] It is of course worth mentioning that Ḥā'irī's intellectual disagreements with the ideological bases of the newly founded state would hardly have been a secret to those who were acquainted with him and his philosophical orientation. These years were not spent in idle expectation of returning to the United States, however. Mahdī Ḥā'irī Yazdī published several of his most important works during this period, which often originated in lectures he delivered at research institutes such as *Anjuman-i ḥikmat wa falsafah* in Tehran. The more distinguished works conceived during this time were, *Haram-i hastī: taḥlīlī az mabādī-yi hastī shināsī-yi taṭbīqī* (1360 SH/1981),[34] in which he attempted to elaborate upon the bases of comparative ontology in the Western and Islamic traditions,

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yi ḥikmat: sayrī dar zindigī, athār wa andishahhā-yi falsafī-yi Mahdī Ḥā'irī Yazdī, Tehran, 1393 SH/2014, p. 34.

31 Ḥā'irī Yazdī, Mahdī, *Khātirāt-i Mahdī Ḥā'irī Yazdī*, p. 103.

32 Ḥā'irī Yazdī, Mahdī, *Khātirāt-i Mahdī Ḥā'irī Yazdī*, p. 27; Nāṣrī, ʿAbdallāh, *Dar just wa jū-yi ḥikmat: sayrī dar zindigī, athār wa andishahhā-yi falsafī-yi Mahdī Ḥā'irī, Yazdī*, Tehran, 1393 SH, /2014, p. 37.

33 Ḥā'irī Yazdī, Mahdī, *Khātirāt-i Mahdī Ḥā'irī Yazdī*, p. 127.

34 Ḥā'irī Yazdī, Mahdī, *Haram-i hastī: taḥlīlī az mabādī-yi hastī shināsī-yi taṭbīqī*, Tehran, 1385 SH/2006.

and a work on meta– and applied ethics, *Kāvushhā-yi ʿaql-i ʿamalī: falsafah-yi akhlāq* (1361 SH/1982).[35] The provenance of both works lay in lectures Mahdī Ḥāʾirī Yazdī had delivered at the *Anjuman-i ḥikmat wa falsafah* during the early nineteen eighties.

By 1983 Ḥāʾirī was again free to travel and accordingly left for the United Kingdom; going briefly to Oxford and then on to London. In his memoir he speaks of students from the University of Oxford visiting him regularly in order to study with and ask him questions.[36] While he does not mention John Cooper by name, it is highly probable that the list of students with which he maintained contact included the Englishman and former *ṭalabah*. It was in London that Ḥāʾirī would publish a work on political theory, *Ḥikmat wa ḥukūmat* (1995).[37] In this endeavour he drew not merely on traditions in Islamic metaphysics, jurisprudence, mysticism, and political thought, but also on social contract theory—upon which he centred much of his own theoretical edifice in defence of the inalienability of humankind's natural rights. In the course of this decisive theoretical intervention into the foundations of political legitimacy and representative government, he notes his disagreements with Hugo Grotius (d. 1645) and Thomas Hobbes (d. 1679), offers strident criticisms of Jean-Jacques Rousseau (d. 1778) and the latter's conception of the 'general will', while also dutifully acknowledging the abiding importance of John Locke (d. 1704) and his *Two Treatises on Government*. He achieves this by consistently and consciously demonstrating areas of agreement and disagreement with the propositions of the Qurʾān and *ḥadīth*, Shīʿī legal theory, and Imam ʿAlī's (40 AH/661 CE) *Nahj al-balāghah*.[38]

Mahdī Ḥāʾirī Yazdī continued to go back-and-forth from Europe and the United States to Iran, and outlived his elder brother, Āyatullāh Murtaḍā Ḥāʾirī Yazdī who passed away in 1406 AH/1986, and whose daughter had married Ayatollah Khomeini's elder son, Sayyid Muṣṭafā Khumaynī (d. 1397 AH/1977) who pre-deceased the revolution. In the final years of his life Mahdī Ḥāʾirī Yazdī contracted Parkinson's disease and passed away on 24 Rabīʿ al-Awwal 1420 AH/ 17 Tīr 1378 SH/ 8 July 1999, and was buried like his brother and father before him in the city of his birth at the Shrine of Fāṭimah Maʿṣūmah (*fl.* 2nd

35 Ḥāʾirī Yazdī, Mahdī, *Kāvushhā-yi ʿaql-i ʿamalī: falsafah-yi akhlāq*, Tehran, 1384 SH/2005. Originally published in 1361 SH/1982.

36 Ḥāʾirī Yazdī, Mahdī, *Khātirāt-i Mahdī Ḥāʾirī Yazdī*, p. 28.

37 For a terse analysis of Mahdī Ḥāʾirī Yazdī's political thought in English see Farzin Vahdat, 'Mehdi Haeri Yazdi and the Discourse of Modernity', in *Iran: Between Tradition and Modernity*, ed. Ramin Jahanbegloo, Oxford, 2004, pp. 51-65.

38 Ḥāʾirī Yazdī, Mahdī, *Ḥikmat wa ḥukūmat*, London, 1995, p. 104, 153.

century AH/7-8th century CE), sister of Imām Riḍā (d. 203 AH/818 CE), in Qum.[39]

1.1 *Selected Bibliography of Works by Mahdī Ḥā'irī Yazdī* (*in order of year of publication*)

1. *ʿIlm-i kullī* (Universal Science), introduction by Muṣṭafā Muḥaqqiq Dāmād, Tehran: 1384 SH/2005. Mahdī Ḥā'irī Yazdī's first monograph published in 1956.
2. *Kāvushhā-yi ʿaql-i naẓarī* (Investigations in Theoretical Reason), Tehran, 1384 SH/2005. Authored in 1347 SH/1968.[40]
3. *Āgāhī wa gawāhī: tarjumah wa sharḥ-i intiqādī-yi risālah-yi taṣawwur wa taṣdīq-i ṣadr al-muta'allihīn shīrāzī* (Concept and Judgement: Translation and Critical Commentary on Mullā Ṣadrā's Treatise on Concept and Judgement (*Risālah fī al-taṣawwur wa al-taṣdīq*)), Tehran, 1360 SH/1981.
4. *Haram-i hastī: taḥlīlī az mabādī-yi hastī Shināsī-yi taṭbīqī* (The Pyramid of Existence: An Analysis of the Sources of Comparative Ontology), *Mu'assasah-yi pazhūhishī-yi ḥikmat wa falsafah-yi īrān*, 1385 SH /2006. Based on lectures delivered by Mahdī Ḥā'irī Yazdī in 1359 SH/1980 at the *Anjuman-i ḥikmat wa falsafah* in Tehran, and published in 1360 SH/1981.
5. *Kāvushhā-yi ʿaql-i ʿamalī: falsafah-yi akhlāq* (Investigations in Practical Reason: The Philosophy of Ethics), Tehran, 1384 SH/2005. Originally published in 1361 SH/1982. Based on Mahdī Ḥā'irī Yazdī's lectures delivered in 1360 SH/1981 on the philosophy of ethics at the *Anjuman-i ḥikmat wa falsafah* in Tehran.
6. *The Principles of Epistemology in Islamic Philosophy: Knowledge by Presence*, foreword by Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Albany, NY, 1992. Based on Mahdī Ḥā'irī Yazdī's doctorate and first published in Iran in 1362 SH/1983 by the *Anjuman-i ḥikmat wa falsafah*.
7. *Ḥikmat wa ḥukūmat* (Philosophy and Government), London, 1995. This is the final work which Mahdī Ḥā'irī Yazdī authored.
8. *al-Taʿlīqāt* (Glosses on *Tuḥfat al-ḥakīm*), Tehran, 1377 SH/1998. Mahdī Ḥā'irī Yazdī's commentary on the *Tuḥfat al-ḥakīm* by Shaykh Muḥammad Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad Ḥusayn al-Gharavī al-Kumpānī al-Iṣfahānī (d. 1361 AH/1942).
9. With Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ṭabāṭabā'ī Burūjirdī, *al-Ḥujjah fī al-fiqh* (Proof in Jurisprudence), Qum, 1378 SH/1999. Lectures of Āyatullāh

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39 'Abdallāh Nāṣrī, *Dar just wa jū-yi ḥikmat: sayrī dar zindigī, athār wa andishahhā-yi falsafī-yi Mahdī Ḥā'irī Yazdī*, p. 39.

40 Ḥā'irī Yazdī, Mahdī, *ʿIlm-i kullī*, introduction by Muṣṭafā Muḥaqqiq Dāmād, Tehran, 1384 SH/2005, p. 13.

Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ṭabāṭabā'ī Burūjirdī and Āyatullāh Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥujjat Kūhkamarihī Tabrīzī as transcribed by Mahdī Ḥā'irī Yazdī when he was seventeen years old. The first volume of four was published in 1999, the year of his death.[41] At the time of writing, the other three volumes do not seem to have been published.

10. *Khātirāt-i Mahdī Ḥā'irī Yazdī: faqīh wa ustād-i falsafah-yi islāmī* (The Memoir of Mahdī Ḥā'irī Yazdī: Jurist and Professor of Islamic Philosophy), ed. Ḥabīb Lājavardī, Bethesda, MD: Center for Middle Eastern Studies of Harvard University, 2001. Transcribed from Ḍīyā' Ṣidqī's interview with Mahdī Ḥā'irī Yazdī for the Harvard University Oral History Project, supervised and edited by Ḥabīb Lājarvardī.
11. *Justārhā-yi falsafī: majmū'ah-yi maqālāt,* (Philosophical Inquiries: Collected Articles), ed. 'Abdallāh Nāṣrī, Tehran, 1384 SH/2005. This volume contains articles and interviews predominantly from the last two decades of Mahdī Ḥā'irī Yazdī's life, though some of the material in this posthumous volume was published in an earlier collection in 1360 SH/1981 entitled, *Mitāftzīk*, also edited by 'Abdallāh Nāṣrī.[42]
12. *Falsafah-yi taḥlīlī wa naẓariyyah-yi shināKht dar falsafah-yi islāmī* (Analytical Philosophy and Epistemology in Islamic Philosophy), ed. 'Abdallāh Nāṣrī, Chāvūshgarān-i naqsh, 1385 SH/2006. Published posthumously in 1379 SH/2000. The text is based on classes given by Mahdī Ḥā'irī Yazdī in 1360 SH/1981 and 1364 SH/1985.[43]
13. *Sharḥ uṣūl-i kāfī: kitāb al-'aql wa al-jahl; kitāb al-tawḥīd* (A commentary on *Uṣūl al-Kāfi*: Book on the Intellect and Ignorance, and The Book of Unity), ed. Parvīz Pūyān, Tehran, 1391 SH/2013.

2 John Cooper: Oxford, Qum, and Cambridge

As John Gurney remarked in his obituary of John Cooper, 'his background and earlier education gave little indication of the strange trajectory that his subsequent life would take'.[44] Cooper was born in Brighton in 1947, the only child of

41 Muḥammadzādah, Amīn, 'Murūrī bar kitābhā-yi muntashar shudah-yi mahdī ḥā'irī yazdī dar īrān', *Mihrnāmah*, No. 13, Tīr 1390 SH/June-July 2011.

42 Nāṣrī, 'Abdallāh, *Dar just wa jū-yi ḥikmat: sayrī dar zindigī, athār wa andishahhā-yi falsafī-yi mahdī ḥā'irī yazdī*, p. 84.

43 Nāṣrī, 'Abdallāh, *Dar just wa jū-yi ḥikmat: sayrī dar zindigī, athār wa andishahhā-yi falsafī-yi mahdī ḥā'irī yazdī*, p. 72.

44 Gurney, John, 'Obituary: John Cooper, 1947–1998', *Iran*, British Institute of Persian Studies, Vol. 36, 1998, VIII.

a bank manager and Scottish mother. He grew up in North London and attended Highgate School where he studied Maths and Physics for his A-levels, going on to St. John's College, University of Oxford, where he undertook a degree in Philosophy, Physiology, and Psychology. After graduating from Oxford, Cooper spent five years in North Africa from 1970–1975 as director of English Studies at a language institute in Casablanca. At this point in his life, he was still yet to take a serious interest in Islam or the Arabic language. Instead he improved his French and picked up 'a smattering of Berber'.[45]

After leaving Casablanca in 1975, it was Cooper's next destination and his experience in the run up to the Iranian Revolution of 1399–1400 AH/1978–1979 that had a decisive impact on his life's trajectory. Upon arriving in late 'Pahlavī' era Iran, Cooper spent a year teaching English at an army technical school in Masjid-i Sulaymān, the city where George Reynolds and his team first struck commercial quantities of oil in 1326 AH/1908. The following year Cooper went on to teach physiology at the Medical Faculty of Jundī Shāpūr Ahwāz. Not yet thirty, he slowly started becoming drawn to Islam and Islamic philosophy and began his study of Arabic and Persian. The factors motivating Cooper to eventually embrace Shīʿah Islam remain unclear, but what seems to be the case is that his study of the Islamic sciences, both rational (*maʿqūl*) and transmitted (*manqūl*), only acquired further impetus and momentum with his conversion, as he enrolled to study philosophy at the Qum *ḥawzah* in 1397 AH/1977. Cooper was free to choose those areas in which he desired to specialise and develop his knowledge, ultimately deciding to focus on *fiqh* and Islamic philosophy. Covering both preliminary and more advanced texts with Shaykh Muḥammad Riḍā Jaʿfarī and Sayyid Muṣṭafā Muḥaqqiq Dāmād, who was at the time a young seminarian, Cooper's conversance in these areas quickly blossomed.

This period of bookish quietude would not, however, last for long. Throughout 1398 AH/1978 the cycle of protests that would reach their denouement in Muḥarram 1399 AH/December 1978, and eventually spell the end of the Pahlavī regime, continued apace and the British *talabah* would have witnessed first-hand these fateful events as they unfolded at the time. It was at this crucial and historic juncture that Cooper found himself thrust into the limelight as he began to act as a voluntary translator for Āyatullāh al-ʿUẓmā Sayyid Muḥammad Kāẓim Sharīʿatmadārī (d. 1406 AH/1986), as he had been studying and living at the latter's institute, the *Dār al-tablīgh*. It was also during this time that Cooper became acquainted with the author of *ʿIlm-i kullī*, Mahdī Ḥā'irī Yazdī, who had only recently returned from North America. Cooper attended his postgraduate classes in Islamic philosophy, which he

45 Ibid.

delivered in his capacity as professor of philosophy at the University of Tehran.[46] It was during this time that Cooper began to translate *'Ilm-i kullī* with Mahdī Ḥā'irī Yazdī, which had since become an established textbook[47] at the university due to its succinct exposition of the central questions of metaphysics.[48] In these clamorous years, Cooper—with his fluency in Arabic and Persian and knowledge of philosophy and jurisprudence—was a much sought after translator. He embarked upon numerous translations of the writings of Āyatullāh Murtaḍā Muṭahharī (d. 1399 AH/1979), one of the leading thinkers and ideologues of the newly established Islamic Republic of Iran, and some translation projects for the Muhammadi Trust of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Additionally, with his teacher Shaykh Muḥammad Riḍā Jaʿfarī, he began work on Shaykh Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad b. Yaʿqūb al-Kulaynī's (d. 329 AH/941 CE) *al-Uṣūl min al-kāfī*, one of the sacred 'four books' collating the *riwāyāt* of the Twelve Imāms.

By 1981, Iran was in the throes of a brutal and bloody war with neighbouring Iraq and the profound turmoil brought about by this conflict would still be very much underway for another seven years.[49] Under these circumstances it was no longer possible for the Englishman to isolate himself from the surrounding maelstrom and carry on his scholarly pursuits without attracting attention. The new managing committee at the Fayḍiyyah School did not renew his paperwork for a residency permit, and requested Cooper to leave immediately. Thus, as Gurney tells the story: 'he packed up within a week… and returned to England after an interval of nearly six years'.[50]

Thus after a long respite, Cooper eventually came full-circle, returning to Oxford and British academic life, albeit having left physiology firmly behind. He first continued his studies in Arabic metaphysics with Fritz Zimmermann, and after a year enrolled as a DPhil student under the supervision of Wilferd Madelung. In Cooper's DPhil dissertation, provisionally entitled 'Intellect and Language: A Study of the Philosophical Foundation of Shīʿī legal methodology (*uṣūl al-fiqh*)', he pioneered studies which had been non-existent

46 Gurney, John, 'Obituary: John Cooper, 1947–1998', *Iran*, British Institute of Persian Studies, vol. 36, 1998, VIII.

47 Ḥā'irī Yazdī, Mahdī, *Khātirāt-i Mahdī Ḥā'irī Yazdī*, p. 22.

48 Gurney, John, 'Obituary: John Cooper, 1947–1998', *Iran,* British Institute of Persian Studies, vol. 36, 1998, VIII.

49 This war began with Saddam Hussein's (d. executed 10 Dhū al-Ḥijjah 1427 AH/30 December 2006) invasion of Iran on 31 Shahrīvar 1359 SH/ September 1980 and continued until 29 Murdād 1367 SH/ August 1988.

50 Gurney, John, 'Obituary: John Cooper, 1947–1998', *Iran*, British Institute of Persian Studies, Vol. 36, 1998, VIII.

in English-language scholarship prior to him. Cooper had set himself the mammoth task of attempting to delineate the main phases of the development of Shīʿī *uṣūl al-fiqh* from Shaykh al-Ṭūsī through to the twentieth century and the decisive contributions of Ākhūnd Mullā Muḥammad Kāẓim Khurāsānī (d. 1329 AH/ 1911). Through his historical research into the primary legal texts he hoped to address the deeper epistemological questions surrounding *uṣūl al-fiqh*'s complex mediation of reason and revelation and its theoretical engagements with language and semantics. For obvious reasons this required a fundamental engagement and appraisal of the key texts of the Shīʿī legal tradition, and in this regard he was greatly helped by Sayyid Ḥusayn Mudarrisī Ṭabāṭabā'ī—Hossein Modarressi, now of Princeton University—with whom he read Khurāsānī's *Kifāyat al-uṣūl* at Oxford in the academic year 1983–1984; who fondly remembers Cooper as an 'excellent student and a great human being'.[51]

As his three-year grant came to an end, financial pressures compelled Cooper to undertake several side–ventures which ultimately distracted him from the completion of his thesis. These included a collaborative project, which entailed an abridged translation of al-Ṭabarī's (d. 310 AH/923 CE) *Jāmiʿ al-bayān ʿan taʾwīl āy al-Qurʾān* and the establishment of an academic and journal production company. It was only after his appointment as E.G. Browne Lecturer in Persian at the University of Cambridge that Cooper was able to return full-time to his academic preoccupations with renewed vigour and energy. At Cambridge he taught elementary Persian, classical texts, introductions to Islam and the religious sciences, and mediaeval Islamic thought, among other subjects.[52] Apart from his translations and sporadic articles, it is arguably Cooper's legacy as a teacher that has most endured and that will continue to live on in the years to come. His mastery of the original languages, and his breadth of knowledge—covering everything from Islamic mysticism to theoretical innovations in semiotics—not to mention his personal experience of both Western and traditional Islamic teaching methods and pedagogy, made him truly unique amongst his peers.

His death from a heart attack as he returned home from holidaying in Austria and Geneva on 9 January 1998 (corresponding to 9 or 10 Ramaḍān 1418 AH) came as a huge shock and loss to his friends and loved ones, and the many students upon whom he had left an indelible mark. The burgeoning field of Shīʿah Studies was also deprived of one of its potential champions,

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51 Correspondence with Sayyid Ḥusayn Mudarrisī Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 8 Jumādā al-thānī 1437 AH/18 March 2016.

52 Gurney, John, 'Obituary: John Cooper, 1947–1998', Iran, *British Institute of Persian Studies*, 36, 1998, p. IX.

with the many projects he regrettably left unfinished, including his DPhil. thesis, a study of the first book of Mullā Ṣadrā's *al-Asfār al-arbaʿah*, and the work herein, to name but a few; amounting, altogether, to a plethora of entwined threads left for posterity to take up and follow through to their own conclusions.

3 The Translation

Every effort has been made to remain as faithful as possible to the translation undertaken by John Cooper. He based this on the second printing of 1380 AH/1960 of the original edition of 1376 AH/1956 published by Tehran University Press for the Faculty of Rational and Revealed Sciences (*Dānishkadah-yi Maʿqūl wa Manqūl*). However, whilst his original work was an impressive achievement, it was not a final draft and thus required editing in a number of respects. There were some brief portions left untranslated and, naturally, these had to be translated by the editor, who did his utmost to remain true to Cooper's style. In certain other instances, minor stylistic refinements were also made. Apart from going through the translation carefully against the original Persian text, the editor has compared Cooper's rendering of Ḥā'irī's book paragraph by paragraph with the updated edition of *ʿIlm-i kullī*, which contained Mahdī Ḥā'irī Yazdī's own minor corrections and some brief additions to the original text published in 1376 AH/1956.[53] However, these brief additions did not add much to the book and thus were not added to Cooper's translation which we have preserved as he left it with the minor corrections already mentioned above. It should also be noted that, we have been unable to trace all of the quotations the author employed as, in many instances, he relied either on older editions which were not available to us or on translations of Western works into Persian which we have been unable to locate. Care has also been taken to indicate in the footnotes whether the author was Yazdī, the translator, or the editor.

It should also be acknowledged that English-language scholarship and secondary literature upon the history of Islamic philosophy, particularly the philosophy of Mullā Ṣadrā, was relatively scant when Cooper in all likelihood began his translation of *ʿIlm-i kullī* in the early nineteen eighties. At this time there was little by way of consensus on the translation of such vexing concepts as *tashkīk al-wujūd* [variously rendered as 'modulation of being', 'analogicity of being', and 'amphiboly' among others], central to Ṣadrian

53 Mahdī Ḥā'irī Yazdī, *ʿIlm-i kullī*, introduction by Muṣṭafā Muḥaqqiq Dāmād, Tehran, 1384 SH/2005.

ontology.[54] The editor has therefore tried to reflect, in as lightly a manner as possible, some of these scholarly deliberations over terminology and their conclusions, so that the translation of pertinent philosophical diction can be recognisable to readers familiar with previous scholarship in the field.

4 *ʿIlm-i kullī*: Historical Context and Content

4.1 *Historical Context*

ʿIlm-i kullī is a concise overview—as indicated by its subtitle—of metaphysics. It was to be followed by two other volumes also written as overviews of 'theology in the most specific sense', which was seen as *metaphysica specialis* (*al-ilāhiyāt bi al-maʿnā al-akhaṣṣ*), and of psychology (*ʿilm al-nafs*) neither of which, unfortunately, ever materialised.

In order to better understand *ʿIlm-i kullī* we must understand the tradition of which it forms a part. In Islamic philosophy, metaphysics proper was regarded both as 'first philosophy' (*al-falsafat al-ūlā*) as well as *metaphysica generalis* 'theology in the most general sense' (*al-ilāhiyāt bi al-maʿnā al-aʿamm*) in which the chief concern was with ontology, the science of being (*ʿilm al-wujūd*) as well as with certain dimensions of logic (*manṭiq*). A number of elaborations of this *metaphysica generalis* emerged in Islamic history, of which the most famous is the Peripatetic (*mashshāʾī*) school of Ibn Sīnā, who was heavily indebted to al-Fārābī (d. 339 AH/950 CE). The next in order of importance is the Illuminationst (*Ishrāqī*) school founded by Shihāb al-Dīn Yaḥyā b. Ḥabash b. Amīrak al-Suhrawardī al-Maqtūl al-Shahīd (d. 587 AH/1191 CE). *ʿIlm-i kullī*, however, is a concise modern *summa* of the metaphysical doctrines of a school founded after these, namely the 'School of Transcendent Wisdom' (*al-ḥikmah al-mutʿāliyah*) of Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī, known to posterity as Mullā Ṣadrā; which continues to be regarded as definitive today by a fair amount of Shīʿī scholars.

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54 The most important monographs in English discussing Mullā Ṣadrā's philosophy preceding Cooper's translation, as well as several notable works in the 2000s are: Fazlur Rahman's *The Philosophy of Mullā Ṣadrā*, Albany, NY, 1975; Seyyed Hossein Nasr's *Ṣadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī and His Transcendent Theosophy: Background, Life and Work*; Ibrahim Kalin, *Knowledge in Later Islamic Philosophy: Mullā Ṣadrā on Existence, Intellect and Intuition,* Oxford, 2010; Zailan Moris, *Revelation, Intellectual Intuition and Reason in the Philosophy of Mulla Sadra: An Analysis of al-Hikmah al-ʿArshiyyah*, Abingdon & New York, 2003; Christian Jambet, *The Act of Being: The Philosophy of Revelation in Mullā Ṣadrā*, New York, 2006; Sajjad H. Rizvi, *Mullā Ṣadrā and Metaphysics: Modulation of Being*, London & New York, 2009, especially pp. 1–53; Mohammed Rustom, *The Triumph of Mercy: Philosophy and Scripture in Mullā Ṣadrā*, Albany, New York, 2012

The great genius of Mullā Ṣadrā was not only in the intrinsic originality of his ideas, but also in the breadth of his synthesising vision; which incorporated nearly every significant philosophical trend that preceded him. His system is a totalising synthesis of the philosophical tradition of Ibn Sīnā,[55] the illuminative wisdom of Shihāb al-Dīn al-Suhrawardī,[56] the Shīʿī rational theology (*kalām*) of Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī,[57] the unitive mysticism of Muḥyī al-Dīn ibn ʿArabī,[58] and the pristine vision of direct insight into the nature of the Real in the teachings of the Shīʿī Imāms preserved in the *ḥadīth*.[59] Nothing like it had existed before. Yet, Mullā Ṣadrā's synthesis was not based purely on conceptual elaborations and mere discursive procedures, but was also the expression of a direct witnessing (*mushāhadah*) and unveiling (*kashf*) of reality attained through a comprehensive *askesis* (*tajrīd*). In truth the life-blood of philosophy resides not so much in its answers as in its questions,[60] and no question can be more fundamental than that of 'being', or 'existence'.

What does it mean to say that something is or that it exists? Is it possible to define existence? Is the notion of existence simply a mental construct, or does it refer to something real in the external world? Is being truly the 'ultimate reality', as some philosophers and mystics claim, or is 'ultimate reality' instead to be identified with non-being as claimed by still other philosophers and mystics? If so, how can non-existence be the ultimate ground of all that exists? These are epochal questions of an exceedingly ancient pedigree and it is in these fundamental areas that Mullā Ṣadrā interrogated the meaningfulness and validity of the metaphysical systems that preceded him and inaugurated a new beginning. It was Aristotle (d. 384–322 BCE) who, in trying to construct a science of being *qua* being (*al-wujūd min ḥaythu huwa al-wujūd*), introduced the distinction between quiddity and existence; instead

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55 See his *al-Shifāʾ,* 10 vols., various editors Qum: Manshūrāt-i Kitābkhānah-yi Marʿashī, various years and his *al-Ishārāt wa al-tanbīhāt*, 4 vols., Sulaymān Dunyā, ed., Cairo, n. d.

56 See his *Ḥikmat al-Ishrāq* embedded in Quṭb al-Dīn Shīrāzī, *Sharḥ ḥikmat al-ishrāq*, ʿAbdullāh Nūrānī and Mahdī Muḥaqqiq (eds.), Tehran, 1380 SH/2001.

57 See his *Tajrīd al-iʿtiqād* embeded in al-ʿAllāmah al-Ḥillī's (726 AH/1325 CE), *Kashf al-murād fī sharḥ tajrīd al-iʿtiqād*, Ḥasan Ḥasanzada Āmulī, ed., Qum, 1422 AH/2001.

58 See his *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*, ed. al-Sayyid Niẓām al-Dīn Aḥmad al-Ḥusaynī al-Lakhnawī, Cairo, 1436 AH/2015 and *al-Futūḥāt al-makkiyyah,* 4 vols. Cairo, 1329 AH/1911.

59 The most important of which to have published in this regard are: *al-Kāfī, Biḥār al-Anwār, Baṣāʾir al-Darajāt,* and *Kamāl al-dīn wa tamām al-niʿmah* each of which exist in a variety of editions.

60 Here we have re-phrased the observation of Roy Sorensen in *A Brief History of Paradox: Philosophy and the Labyrinths of the Mind*, Oxford, 2003, p. XI: 'Philosophy is held together by its questions rather than by its answers'.

of a science of being/existence (*wujūd*), however, he created a philosophy of existing things (*mawjūdāt*), or what he called 'substance' or 'essence' (Gk., οὐσία *ousia*, lit: 'thinghood').[61] It was left to the philosophers of Islam to work out the implications of the distinction between quiddity and existence. This distinction is, of course, a purely mental one and in the external world we are merely confronted by an object. The question subsequently arose as to which of the two was more fundamental, or primary, in the external world. That is to say: was it quiddity that was fundamentally real (*aṣīl*), with existence being a mere mental abstraction (*amr iʿtibārī; amr intizāʿī*), or was it rather the reverse, namely that being was fundamentally real in the external world with quiddity having only a mentally posited reality? Prior to Mullā Ṣadrā the dominant view was that of the fundamental reality of quiddity (*aṣālat al-māhiyah*) in the external world.[62] Indeed, Mullā Ṣadrā too originally

61 See Book Z (i.e. Book VII), ch. 1, (Bekker numbers: 1028b, 4–5) in each of: Aristotle, *Aristotle's Metaphysics*, trans. Joe Sachs, Santa Fe, New Mexico, 2002, p. 118: 'And in fact, the thing that has been sought both anciently and now, and always, and is always a source of impasses, "what is being?" is just this: "what is thinghood?" (For it is this that some people say is one and others more than one, and some say is finite and others infinite.) So too for us, most of all and first of all and, one might almost say, solely, it is necessary to study what this kind of being is'. Aristotle, *Aristotle's Metaphysics*, trans. Hippocrates G. Apostle, Bloomington, Indiana, 1966, p. 109: 'And indeed the inquiry or perplexity concerning what being is, in early times and now and always, is just this: What is a substance? For it is this that some assert to be one, others more than one, and some say that it is finite, while others that it is infinite. And so we, too, must speculate most of all, and first of all, and exclusively, so to say, concerning being which is spoken of in this sense. What is being?' Aristotle, *The Complete Works of Aristotle: The Revised Oxford Translation*, 2 vols., ed. Jonathan Barnes, Princeton, 1984, *Metaphysics*, pp. 1552–1729, trans. W. D. Ross at p. 1624: 'And indeed the question, which now and of old, has always been raised, and always been the subject of doubt, viz. what being is, is just the question, what is substance? For it is this that some assert to be one, others more than one, and that some assert to be limited in number, others unlimited. And so we also must consider chiefly and primarily and almost exclusively what that is which *is* in this sense [emphasis in the original]'. Aristotle, *The Metaphysics of Aristotle*, trans. Thomas Taylor, London, 1801, p. 151: 'Indeed, that which formerly has been, and which now is, continually investigated and continually doubted, viz. what being is, is an inquiry what essence is. For this is by some said to be one, but by others more than one; by some it is called things finite, and by others infinite. Whence we also must especially, and in the first place and only, as I may say speculate respecting that which is thus being'.

62 There is some confusion and ambiguity on this issue. It is beyond the scope of this introduction to delve into this question in any detail, however, there are passages in Ibn Sinā that can be cited to illustrate either position. Suhrawardī upheld the view that *wujūd* was an abstract mental notion without real referent in the external world, however, according to the contemporary Iranian scholar ʿAbd al-Rasūl ʿUbūdiyyat, it seems the first person

adhered to this position, however he went on to completely reject it and took the fundamental reality of existence in the external world (*aṣālat al-wujūd*) as the starting point of his new system. Yet, Mullā Ṣadrā did not arrive at this conclusion by mere discursive thought alone. We are fortunate to have a brief account in his own words of how he was led to this view:

> In the earlier days I used to be a passionate defender of the thesis that the quiddities are *aṣīl* and that existence is *iʿtibārī*, until my lord gave me guidance and let me see His demonstration. All of a sudden my spiritual eyes were opened and I saw with utmost clarity that the truth was just the contrary of what the philosophers in general had held. Praise be to God who, by the light of intuition, led me out of the darkness of the groundless idea and firmly established me upon the thesis which would never change in the present world and the Hereafter.
>
> As a result (I now hold that) the existences (*wujūdāt*) are primary realities, while the quiddities are the permanent archetypes (*aʿyān thābitah*) that have never smelled the fragrance of existence. The existences are nothing but beams of light radiated by the true Light, which is the absolutely self-subsistent Existence, except that each of them is characterised by a number of essential properties and intelligible qualities. These latter are the things that are known as quiddities.[63]

Mullā Ṣadrā sought a balance between Islamic gnosis and discursive thought. Philosophy without spirituality is not true philosophy. The true philosopher is not just a 'thinker' who speculates about the Ultimate Truth, but one who practices some method of noetic and psychic *askesis,* which enables him to concentrate upon this Ultimate Truth. In short, he must follow a regimen of spiritual exercise. Of course, for Mullā Ṣadrā, these are none other than the

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to deal explicitly with the question of which of these two alternatives obtained in the external world was Mullā Ṣadrā's teacher, Sayyid Burhān al-Dīn Muḥammad Bāqir b. Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad, known as Mīr Dāmād (d. 1041 AH/1631); see ʿAbd al-Rasūl ʿUbūdiyyat, *al-Niẓām al-falsafī li madrasat al-ḥikmah al-mutaʿāliyah* (Per. *Dar Āmādī bih niẓām-i ḥikmat-i ṣadrāʾī*), 3 vols., trans. ʿAlī al-Mūsawī, Beirut, 2010, vol. 1, pp. 105–6, fn.1, citing Mīr Dāmād, *Muṣannafāt mīr dāmād* vol. 1, p. 507.

63 This is the translation of Toshihiko Izutsu (d. 1414 AH/1993) who quotes it in his 'The Fundamental Structure of Sabzawārī's Metaphysics', in Mullā Hādī Sabzawārī (d. 1289 AH/1873), *Sharḥ ghurar al-farāʾid*, ed. Mehdi Mohaghegh and Toshihiko Izutsu, Tehran, 1981 p. 77. The original Arabic is in Mullā Ṣadrā, *Kitāb al-Mashāʿir* (*The Book of Metaphysical Prehensions*), ed. Henry Corbin, 1982, p. 35, paragraph 85.

well-known Islamic practices of supererogatory (*nawāfil*) prayer (*ṣalāh*), fasting (*ṣiyām/ṣawm*), supplication (*du'ā'*), invocation (*dhikr*), and periods of seclusion (*khalwa*). It is a well-known fact that spiritual exercises were, also, central in the Platonic tradition, although this was rarely given much attention until recently.[64]

Thus, for Mullā Ṣadrā, true philosophy is lived wisdom with its roots in a spiritual way of life. In terms of his ontology, this is seen in his observation that the human being *qua* human being has an innate understanding of the deep meaning of being/existence (*wujūd*), insofar as we all understand what the meaning of 'is', is. Yet, here we are confronted with a profound paradox. Despite this universal intuition—basic to our humanity of what is meant by existence—no definition of being is possible since it is the basis of all conceptual elaboration. Thus, all attempts to define it or describe it must fail. Moreover, despite this basic, pre-conceptual—even pre-*linguistic*—intuition of what being is, such an intuition can never constitute a pristine cognition of its true nature. Mullā Ṣadrā writes:

> The ipseity of being is the clearest of things in its immediacy and unhidden-ness, [whereas] its true reality is the most hidden of things conceptually and in terms of getting to its very core, [while] its notion is the least of things in need of definition due to its apparent-ness and obvious-ness in addition to its being the most general of things due to its comprehensiveness. [However] its 'that-ness' is the most specific of specificities in entification and individuation, for it is by [none other than] it that every individuated thing is individuated, and every completed thing is completed, and every entified and particularised thing is entified; and it is individuating in itself and entifying in itself as you shall come to know. [65]

Mullā Hādī Sabzawārī, a much later representative of the school of Mullā Ṣadrā, eloquently encapsulates this insight in a few short verses from his

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64 Most prominent in this regard has been Pierre Hadot's *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, Oxford, 1995. See also the paper written under the influence of Hadot by Sajjad H. Rizvi, 'Philosophy as a way of life in the world of Islam: Applying Hadot to the Study of Mullā Ṣadrā Shīrāzī (d. 1635)', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 75.1 (2012), pp. 33–45.

65 *Kitāb al-mabdā' wa al-ma'ād* (*The Book of the Origin and the Return*), ed. Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī, Qum, 1422 AH/2001, *maqālah* [discourse] 1, p. 107. The translation is by the editor.

metaphysical poem embedded in his *Sharḥ ghurār al-farā'id* (*Glittering Gems*), which is an epitome of the doctrines of the founder.[66]

> All defining terms of "being" are but explanations of the name; they can neither be a definition nor a description (*mu'arrif al-wujūdi sharḥ al-ismi laysa bi al-ḥaddi wa lā bi al-rasm*).
>
> Its notion is among the most well-known of things, yet its true reality lies in the extremity of hiddenness (*mafhūmuhu min a'rafi al-ashyā' wa kunhu-hu fī ghāyat al-khafā'*).

Mullā Ṣadrā's magnum opus is his *Kitāb al-asfār* (*The Book of the Four Journeys*) in which he sets out his system in great detail. Both modern editions of this work run to nine volumes. Mahdī Ḥā'irī Yazdī's *'Ilm-i kullī is* loosely modelled on Sabzawārī's *Sharḥ ghurār al-farā'id* and, like this work, is ultimately rooted in the doctrines elaborated in detail in *Kitāb al-Asfār*. Mullā Ṣadrā appropriated the notion of spiritual wayfaring (*sulūk*) or journeying (*safar*) as a symbolic framework in which to cast his system. These four journeys are identified with different areas of philosophy (*falsafah*): which Mullā Ṣadrā uses interchangeably with the Qur'ānic term for wisdom (*ḥikmah*). Although Mahdī Ḥā'irī Yazdī's *'Ilm-i kullī* touches only on elements of the first journey the work is rooted in the overall system of the *Asfār* and thus it behooves us to examine these journeys in detail.

The notion of a journey (*safar*) is an apt symbol for the spiritual path and has a long and venerable history in the spiritual heritage of the world. To undertake even a profane journey is to be changed, for one never returns as the same person who left. To journey is to undergo a transformation. Indeed, even in pre-Islamic *jāhilī* culture we see the transformative power of the journey undertaken by the poet in the *raḥīl* sections of the Seven Odes

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66 Mullā Hādī Sabzawārī, *Sharḥ ghurar al-farā'id*, ed. Mehdi Mohaghegh and Toshihiko Izutsu, Tehran, 1981, p. 4 and p. 9 of line 1 of the lithograph edition of 1298 AH/ 1858 published in Tehran by Āqāyi Mashhadī Muḥammad Taqī Lawasānī. Sabzawārī is perhaps the most important late representative of the school of *al-Ḥikmah al-muta'āliyah*. According to Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī (d. 1429 AH/2009), his glosses on Mullā Ṣadrā's *Asfār* are the most detailed and most important. In many of his writings he favoured the style of poetic *mutūn,* perhaps tofacilitate memorisation. Noteworthy among such works are what is known collectively as *manẓūmatayn* in the *ḥawza*, namely *manẓūma-yi ḥikmat* and *manẓūma-yi manṭiq*. Their proper titles are *Ghurar al-farā'id* and *al-La'ālī al-muntaẓama*. He also wrote his own commentary on both rhymed compositions in prose. They were published together as lithographs along with the further glosses in the marginalia.

(*al-muʿallaqāt al-sabʿ*). Islam's fifth pillar is also a spiritual journey, namely the pilgrimage to Makkah. So it is not at all surprising that Mullā Ṣadrā should employ the journey as the symbolic principle of organisation of his *Asfār*. He is certainly not the first person in Islamic history to take recourse to such symbolism. It would be difficult, and beyond our abilities, to determine whom first employed such an image, however we will very briefly mention the main figures of *ʿirfān* (gnosis) prior to Mullā Ṣadrā who did so.

Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Ghazālī (d. 520 AH/1126 CE)[67] authored a work known as *Risālat al-Ṭayr* which was later elaborated upon in poetic Persian by Farīd al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm al-ʿAṭṭār (d. 586 AH/1190 CE) in his own *Manṭiq al-Ṭayr*: in which a group of birds set out on a journey in search of the mythical bird known as the *sīmurgh* which symbolises the spiritual guide. All but thirty of them perish on their quest in which they do not undergo *four journeys*, but must instead cross seven valleys (*haft wadī*) after which each realises that he is the Sīmurgh.[68]

Shihāb al-Dīn al-Suhrawardī also authored a *Risālat al-Ṭayr*, however, the more significant work for our discussion is his *Qiṣṣat al-ghurbah al-gharbiyyah.*[69] This tale of the occidental exile introduces a geographical symbolism wherein 'the occident'—the place where the Sun sets—is associated with exile and alienation from the Origin, which is symbolically associated with 'the orient'—the place where the Sun rises. Thus, we are all in exile in the occident and must undertake a journey of return to the orient of lights. Ibn Sīnā (d. 428 AH/1037 CE)[70] espoused similar ideas in his Persian 'visionary recitals', as they were termed by Henry Corbin.[71] However, to my knowledge, neither of them spoke of four journeys, as such.

Implicit in any notion of a journey, and particularly a spiritual one, is the idea of *stages*; which is to say, a progressive set of phases of spiritual transformation. Whilst none of the figures mentioned above introduced a symbolism of *four* journeys, the notion of the spiritual journey being one of gradual transformation does seem to be implicit in their works. A very early Ṣūfī figure, Khwājah ʿAbd Allāh Anṣārī (d. 481 AH/ 1089 CE)[72] authored an influential work on the spiritual path entitled *Manāzil al-sāʾirīn,* which, although it sets out numerous stages of the spiritual path, also does not speak of four

67 *Encyclopædia of Islam, New Edition,* Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1954–2005; hereafter referred to as *EI2,* 2:1042, "al-Ghazālī," (H. Ritter).

68 *EI2*, 1:753, "ʿAṭṭār," (H. Ritter).

69 *EI2* 9:783, "al-Suhrawardī" (Hossein Ziai).

70 *EI2* 93:942, "Ibn Sīnā" (A. M. Goichon).

71 See his *Avicenna and the Visionary Recital*, Princeton, 1990.

72 Serge de Beaurecueil, *EI2*, 3:942, "al-Anṣārī al-Harawī".

journeys. Nevertheless, Mullā Ṣadrā quotes from the section on the Divine Unity (*tawḥīd*) in the *Asfār*.[73]

Perhaps the first Ṣūfī to speak of Four Journeys[74]–or three[75]–was Muḥyī al-Dīn ibn ʿArabī (d. 638 AH/1240 CE), but these do not seem to correspond with those of Mullā Ṣadrā. In fact, he speaks of all existence other than Allah as being in a condition of perpetual journeying (*safar*). This seems similar to Mullā Ṣadrā's idea of a continuous spiritual transformation known as *al-ḥarakat al-jawharīyyah* and generally referred to in English as 'transubstantial motion' or 'motion-in-substance' (*al-ḥarakah fī al-jawhar*) rather than his Four Journeys.

Abd al-Razzāq al-Kāshānī (d. 736 AH/1335 CE)[76] and al-Sayyid al-Sharīf ʿAlī b. Muḥammad al-Jurjānī (d. 816 AH/1413 CE)[77] speak of four journeys in an almost identical fashion and, indeed, it seems that the latter was paraphrasing and further expounding upon the views of the former. Kāshānī describes the notion of journey itself as 'the turning of the heart towards the Truth' (*tawajjuh al-qalb ilā al-ḥaqq*) and maintains that the [spiritual] journeys are fourfold. The first is described as journeying *to* Allah (*al-sayr ilā allāh*) from the way–stations of the soul (*manāzil al-nafs*) until arrival at the 'clear horizon' (*al-ufuq al-mubīn*) which is the end of the station of the heart and the beginning of the self–revelations of the Names (*nihāyat maqām al-qalb wa mabdaʾ al-tajalliyāt al-asmāʾiyyah*). The second is the journey *in* Allah (*al-sayr fī allāh*), which is to say it consists of acquiring His attributes (*ṣifāt*) and becoming established in His names until arrival at 'the highest horizon' (*al-ufuq al-aʿlā*) which is the end of the station of the Presence of Oneness (*ḥaḍrat al-wāḥidiyyah*). The third is rising to 'the source of gatheredness' (*ʿayn al-jamʿ*), which is a state of non-duality and is the Presence of Singularity (*ḥaḍrat al-aḥadiyyah*) which is the Station of Two Bows' Lengths (*qāb qawsayn*). If one rises further to the level of 'or less' (*aw adnā*) [less than two

73 See Muḥsin Bīdārfar's introduction to his critical edition of ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Kāshānī's commentary on ʿAbdullāh al-Anṣārī's *Manāzil al-sāʾirīn*, Qum, 1385 SH/1427 AH, p. 42. The passage is in Mullā Ṣadrā, *al-Ḥikmah al-mutaʿāliyah fī al-asfār al-ʿaqliyyah al-arbaʿah*, 9 vols., R. Luṭfī, I. Amīnī, and F. Ummīd (eds.), Beirut, 1401 AH/1981, vol. II, p. 338.

74 Bīdārfar, *Ibid.,* p. 22 where he quotes the relevant passage and cites Ibn ʿArabī, *al-Futūḥāt al-makkiyyah*, vol. I, pp. 468–9. I have not been able, however, to locate this reference in my edition which appears to be different than the one used by Bīdārfar.

75 Bīdārfar, *Ibid.,* p. 23. See also Ibn ʿArabī, *Kitāb al-isfār ʿan natāʾij al-asfār* in *Rasāʾil ibn ʿarabī*, with an introduction by Maḥmūd al-Ghurāb, 1st edn., Beirut, 1997 p. 457. Here he limits them to *only* three journeys.

76 See his *Iṣṭilāḥāt al-ṣūfiyyah*, ed. Majīd Hādīzādah, Tehran, 1381 SH/ 1423 AH, p. 83.

77 See his *al-Taʿrīfāt*, ed. Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Ḥakīm al-Qāḍī, Cairo & Beirut, 1411 AH/1991, p. 132.

bows' lengths] then this is the end of sanctity (*nihāyat al-wilāyah*). The fourth is the journey *by* Allah together with Allah for completion (*bi allāh ʿinda allāh li al-takmīl*), which is the station of subsistence after annihilation (*al-baqāʾ baʿd al-fanāʾ*) and discernment after unification (*al-farq baʿd al-jamʿ*). Both Kāshānī and Jurjānī speak the language of the Ṣūfīs; presumably based on their lived spiritual experience.

The Indian scholar Muḥammad ʿAlī b. ʿAlī Thānvī (d. 1158 AH/1745) speaks of only *two journeys*: 'to Allah' (*ilā allāh*) and 'in Allah' (*fī allāh*).[78] Another Indian scholar, ʿAbd al-Nabī b. ʿAbd al-Rasūl al-Aḥmadnagarī (d. after 1173 AH/1745) only briefly alludes to the four journeys, but does not say what they are: 'The journeys according to them are four in number as is set out in detail in the [well-known] works of spiritual wayfaring (*sulūk*)'.[79]

Although there are certain points of convergence, none of the examples we have considered matches exactly with Mullā Ṣadrā's notion, which is very specific. He writes:

> Know that the wayfarers (*sullāk*) among the sages (*ʿurafāʾ*) and sanctified ones (*awliyaʾ*) undergo four journeys:
>
> [1] The first of these is the journey from the creatures to the Truth (*min al-khalq ilā al-ḥaqq*).
>
> [2] The second of these is the journey by the Truth in the Truth (*bi al-ḥaqq fī al-ḥaqq*).
>
> [3] The third journey parallels the first for it is from the Truth [back] to the creatures by the Truth (*min al-ḥaqq ilā al-khalq bi al-ḥaqq*).
>
> [4] The fourth in a way parallels the second for it is by the Truth in the creatures (*bi al-ḥaqq fī al-khalq*).
>
> Thus, I have arranged this book of mine in the form of four journeys to conform to their movements among the lights and shadows, naming it *The Transcendent Wisdom regarding the Questions of Lordship* (or *The Transcendent Wisdom regarding the Journeys of the Intellect*).[80]

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78 See his *Kashshāf iṣṭilāḥāt al-funūn*, 4 vols., Beirut, vol. II, n.d., pp. 362–4.

79 See his *Dastūr al-ʿulamāʾ*, 4 vols., ed. Ḥasan Hānī Faḥṣ, Beirut, vol. II, p. 124.

80 We have translated this from the original Arabic based on the edition established by Āyatullāh Ḥasan Ḥasanzada Āmulī that includes his commentary, *al-Ḥikmah al-mutaʿāliyah fī al-asfār al-ʿaqliyyat al-arbaʿa*, 6 vols., 3rd edn, Tehran, 1383 SH/2003, vol. I, p. 19.

Based on this passage we can see that Mullā Ṣadrā is in agreement with his predecessors on the first journey insofar as Allah may be seen as a 'destination', namely that the Absolute Truth is seen as distant and thus must be journeyed toward by journeying away from creation. Having thus 'arrived' to Him, one can obviously journey back. However, one can also 'stay there' for some time before going back. Having come back to creation, however, one is changed and continues to journey 'within' creation. Mullā Ṣadrā does not offer any further explanation of what he means by the four journeys other than to state that the book is heuristically organised into its four major parts according to this principle. How the topics correspond to the journeys is presumably to be discerned from the overall organisation of the book to be seen in the titles of its divisions. However, according to Āyatullāḥ Ḥasanzāda Āmulī[81] in his edition, previous printings of the work have garbled some of these headings, thereby dividing the work in a rather confusing fashion.

At any rate, we must make the best of the situation and try to discern what is involved in these journeys by analysing the published editions available to us. Such an analysis leads us to examine certain correspondences. The First Journey is concerned—mostly—with Metaphysics/First Philosophy/Theology in its most general sense/*Metaphysica generalis* (*al-ilāhiyāt bi al-maʿnā al-aʿamm*); the Second Journey is concerned with Physics; the Third Journey is concerned with Theology or *Metaphysica Specialis* (*al-ilāhiyāt bi al-maʿnā al-akhaṣṣ*); and the Fourth and final Journey is concerned with Psychology. According to this schema, then, Mahdī Ḥāʾirī Yazdī's *ʿIlm-i kullī* is concerned exclusively with the first journey, and its projected second volume would have been concerned with the third journey, whereas its projected third volume would have been concerned with the fourth journey.[82]

Unfortunately, the editor did not provide details of which manuscript(s) he used. The passage quoted differs from the wording in the most widely used nine volume edition, where the passage occurs on p. 13, in one place where it gives the title as *al-Ḥikmah al-mutaʿāliyah fī al-masāʾil al-rubūbiyyah* rather than *al-Ḥikmah al-mutaʿāliyah fī al-asfār al-ʿaqliyyah.* However, the editor does note the latter reading in parenthesis as a *'nuskhat badal'*.

81 Āyatullāh Ḥasan Ḥasanzada Āmulī, *Ibid*., p. 24.

82 It is interesting to note that Mahdī Ḥāʾirī Yazdī's teacher, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, regards the conclusion of Islam's obligatory prayer as symbolizing the completion of the fourth journey. He alluded to this fact near the end of his *Miʿrāj al-sālikīn wa ṣalāt al-ʿārifīn* and elaborated upon this matter at length in his *Miṣbāḥ al-hidāyah ilā al-khilāfah wa al-wilāyah*. See Sayyid Amjad H. Shah Naqavi's introduction to his translation of the former, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, *The Mystery of Prayer: The Ascension of the Wayfarers and the Prayer of the Gnostics*, The Modern Shīʿah Library vol. I, Leiden, 2015, translator's introduction, pp. XXIII–XL. The passage alluded to above appears on p. 140

Mullā Ṣadrā's characterisation of the Four Journeys differs from those of his predecessors; Kāshānī and Jurjānī speak only in purely Ṣūfī terms. Mullā Ṣadrā radically differs from these two as well as from nearly all philosophers and Ṣūfīs who preceded him, in his harmonious blending of what we may call the 'discursive pursuit of wisdom' (*al-ḥikmah al-baḥthiyyah*) and the 'illuminative pursuit of wisdom' (*al-ḥikmah al-kashfiyyah al-dhawqiyyah al-ishrāqiyyah*). The system set out at such length in his book is a harmonisation of the ways of purely discursive reason and illumination. One does not find in his thought the exclusive reliance on mere conceptual elaboration and apodictic proof (*burhān*) as a means of attaining to the Ultimate Truth, that can be seen elsewhere, for instance, in some adherents of the school of Ibn Sīnā, or amongst pure Aristotelians like Ibn Rushd (d. 595 AH/ 1198 CE).

One also does not find the sort of anti-intellectualism which asserts that reason and spiritual realisation are incompatible and which was the hallmark of much of Ṣūfī thought prior to Mullā Ṣadrā as well as in his own time and even now wherein all reason is sacrificed to notions of *kashf*, dreams, visions, so-called 'ecstatic utterances' (*shaṭaḥāt*), etc. Mullā Ṣadrā retains the notion of Four Journeys because it conveniently encapsulates the four logically possible modes of spiritual wayfaring; which cover, in a general way, all spiritual stations. Moreover, he identifies each of these Four Journeys with specific areas of inquiry in traditional Islamic philosophy, namely metaphysics, physics, theology, and psychology. To recapitulate, any journey presupposes a point of origin and a destination—a departure and an arrival: the spiritual path is none other than the quest for the Truth (*al-ḥaqq*), but here Allah is both origin and destination. Having completed the journey from the creatures to the Truth, the soul must further complete its movement from potentiality to actuality, and thus journey by the Truth in the Truth. Having accomplished the latter; the third journey is a kind of return inasmuch as it proceeds from the Truth back to the creatures by the Truth. The fourth and final journey represents the last stage of the soul's movement from potentiality to actuality and is by the Truth in the creatures.

Mahdī Ḥā'irī Yazdī's *'Ilm-i kullī*, while it does not explicitly mention the four journeys, is intimately connected to this tradition of unifying the discursive and the illuminative in the pursuit of wisdom. As noted above, it is concerned with the topics of the first journey alone, namely *metaphysica generalis*. Although it broadly follows the plan of Sabzawārī's *Sharḥ ghurar al-farā'id* it differs from this work in a number of significant ways; the most obvious of which being that it is written in Persian, and is thus more readily

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and the relevant extract from *Miṣbāḥ al-hidāyah* is translated on pp. XXV–XVII of the translator's introduction.

understandable to someone for whom this is their mother–tongue even if they are well grounded in Arabic. The second mark of distinction is that it seeks to make the presentation of ideas as accessible as possible. This attempt at clear presentation may be seen as foreshadowing similar developments pursued later by Āyatullāh Sayyid Muḥammad Bāqir al-Ṣadr to simplify the teaching of Islamic jurisprudence (*uṣūl al-fiqh*) in his *Durūs fī ʿilm al-uṣūl* (*Lessons in Islamic jurisprudence*).[83] This effort in philosophy came to fruition in the 1390s AH/1970s with ʿAllāmah Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ṭabāṭabāʾī's (d. 1402 AH/1981) works *Bidāyat al-ḥikmah* (*The Beginning of Philosophy*) and *Nihāyat al-ḥikmah* (*The End of Philosophy*).[84] Mahdī Ḥāʾirī Yazdī's *ʿIlm-i kullī* predates all of these works by decades.

4.2 *Content*

While the *ʿIlm-i kullī* tries to simplify its subject, by presenting it in the clearest terms possible, Mahdī Ḥāʾirī Yazdī nonetheless assumes a certain measure of philosophical preparation on the part of his readership and it is in respect to this that the modern reader approaching the *ʿIlm-i kullī* can be placed at a disadvantage. The preparation in question is a thorough grounding in logic. There was a time in the West when schooling was built on a solid foundation of instruction in logic, (Latin) grammar, and (Latin) rhetoric; altogether known as the *trivium*. This ceased to be the case quite a long time ago with results whose full examination lies beyond this introduction. Suffice it to say that many people today have scarcely any idea what the laws of logic are and how pivotal they are for orienting any serious discussion.

Logic is best considered as an instrumental science, which concerns itself with establishing the laws by which one is prevented from making errors in thought. Sabzawārī's *Sharḥ ghurar al-farāʾid* in its lithograph edition of 1298 AH/1880, which is the one that most Shīʿī seminarians used until very recently, is bound along with another book in the same volume; *al-Laʾālī al-muntaẓamah*, a textbook on logic which forms a pre-requisite for understanding the metaphysical text which follows it. The kind of logic taught in

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83 This was originally published in three separate volumes designated *ḥalaqāt*, which were later combined into only two volumes since the first *ḥalaqah* was so brief compared to the two that followed. Many editions exist, see for example *Durūs fī ʿilm al-ūṣūl*, 2 vols., Qum, 1421 AH/2000.

84 *Bidāyat al-ḥikmah* was completed in Rajab 1390 AH/September 1970 and *Nihāyat al-ḥikmah* in Muḥarram 1395 AH/January 1975 and both were shortly published thereafter. Both works exist in numerous editions, sometimes with commentary; for example *Bidāyat al-ḥikmah*, Beirut, 1406 AH and *Nihāyat al-ḥikmah*, 2 vols., annotated by ʿAbbās ʿAlī al-Zirāʿī al-Sabzawārī, Qum, 1426 AH. There is also an English version of *Bidāyat al-ḥikmah*, *The Elements of Islamic Metaphysics*, trans. Sayyid ʿAlī Qulī Qarāʾī, London, 2003.

al-La'ālī al-muntaẓamah, whose knowledge is assumed by *'Ilm-i kullī*, is the traditional logic founded by Aristotle and further developed by those who came after him well into modern times. However, this has all now been completely discarded except by the Muslims, mainly the Shī'ah and less so the Sunnīs, and the Catholic philosophers known as Thomists or Neo-Thomists. This 'old logic' has largely been superseded by a modern, symbolic, logic, which was developed mainly by mathematicians—there are other newer forms of logic such as modal logic, fuzzy logic, etc. but they are not central to our argument. A reader grounded in the confusions of modern symbolic logic, is perhaps likely to miss the significance of much of the argument in *'Ilm-i kullī.* In order to address this situation the key issues will be dealt with by way of conclusion to this introduction.[85]

The bedrock of traditional logic is the fact that man is a rational animal (*al-insān ḥayawān nāṭiq*), that human beings think and, moreover, that thought has structure. This structure is exhibited in the three fundamental acts of the mind:

1. Simple apprehension
2. Judging
3. Reasoning

To these three fundamental kinds of thinking correspond the mental products:

1. Concepts
2. Judgements
3. Arguments

Which are expressed in logic as:

1. Terms
2. Propositions
3. Syllogisms

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85 In what follows I am heavily indebted to Peter Kreeft, *Socratic Logic*, 3rd edn., Indiana, 2010, pp. 18–23, 28–30. This is one of the only modern-day textbooks in the English language that still espouses the traditional logic along with that of Scott M. Sullivan, *An Introduction to Traditional Logic: Classical Reasoning for Contemporary Minds*, North Charleston, South Carolina, 2005. The last truly comprehensive treatment of the subject was the massive volume published in 1906 in Oxford by H. W. B. Joseph entitled *An Introduction to Logic*.

And which are, in turn, given expression in language as:

1. Words
2. Declarative sentences
3. Paragraphs

For example:

1. 'Man'
2. 'Avicenna is a man'
3. 'All men are mortal, and Avicenna is a man, therefore Avicenna is mortal'

A term stands alone; it is a word and has no parts, whereas a proposition consists of a subject term (*mawḍūʿ*) and a predicate term (*maḥmūl*), and an argument is composed of at least one premise (*mutaqaddim*) and a conclusion (*tālin*). Terms answer the question of what is, and thus are either clear or ambiguous; propositions answer the question of whether something is or is not, and thus are either true or false; and finally arguments answer the question of why something is or is not the case, and thus are either valid or invalid. Metaphysically, terms reveal quiddities (*māhiyāt; what* a thing is), propositions reveal existence (*wujūd; whether* a thing is), and arguments reveal causes (*ʿilal; why* a thing is). Now, the effect of modern symbolic logic has been far more drastic than simply introducing a mathematical shorthand for expressing our arguments, for it has eliminated the study of terms; it has, in so doing, repudiated the study of the first act of the mind. Modern symbolic logic is not interested in the study of quiddities or essences. The reason for its (anti-)metaphysical roots lies in the repudiation of both epistemological realism and metaphysical realism. Epistemological realism affirms that the object of the intellect (*ʿaql*), when working naturally and rightly, is objective reality (*ḥaqāʾiq al-ashyāʾ*) as it really is (*kamā hiya*). In other words, not only can we know objective reality, we can sometimes even know it with certainty. Modern logic, however, is not comfortable with such seemingly obvious truths and deems them to be naive. Metaphysical realism affirms the intelligibility of reality. This two-fold rejection is the legacy of David Hume (d. 1776) and Immanuel Kant (d. 1804).

Hume, like John Locke (d. 1704) before him, argued that the immediate objects of human knowledge were not those of objective reality, but rather the products of our mentation—and that we could not know if these mental images truly corresponded to 'real' objects. He makes this point early on in his *An Inquiry concerning Human Understanding*.[86] Accordingly, Hume speaks of

86 David Hume, *An Inquiry concerning Human Understanding,* ed. with an introduction by

two kinds of propositions corresponding to these ideas or images, which he terms 'matters of fact' and 'relations of ideas'.

> All the objects of human reason or inquiry may naturally be divided into two kinds, to wit, 'Relations of Ideas', and 'Matters of Fact'. Of the first kind are the sciences of Geometry, Algebra, and Arithmetic, and in short every affirmation which is either intuitively or demonstrably certain. *That the square of the hypotenuse is equal to the square of the two sides* is a proposition which expresses a relation between these figures. *That three times five is equal to half of thirty* expresses a relation between these numbers. Propositions of this kind are discoverable by the mere operation of thought, without dependence on what is anywhere existent in the universe. Though there never were a circle or triangle in nature, the truths demonstrated by Euclid would forever retain their certainty and evidence.
>
> Matters of fact, which are the second objects of human reason, are not ascertained in the same manner, nor is our evidence of the truth, however great, of a like nature with the foregoing. The contrary of every matter of fact is still possible, because it can never imply a contradiction and is conceived by the mind with the same facility and distinctness as if ever so conformable to reality. *That the sun will not rise tomorrow* is no less intelligible a proposition than the affirmation *that it will rise*. We should in vain, therefore, attempt to demonstrate its falsehood. Were it demonstrably false, it would imply a contradiction and could never be distinctly conceived by the mind.[87]

In the thought of Kant, Hume's 'relations of ideas' correspond to his 'analytic propositions' and 'matters of fact' correspond to his 'synthetic propositions'.

> In all judgements in which the relation of a subject to the predicate is thought (I take into consideration affirmative judgements only, the subsequent application to negative judgements being easily made), this relation is possible in two different ways. Either the predicate B belongs to the subject A, as something which is (covertly) contained in this concept A; or B lies outside the concept A, although it does indeed stand in connection with it. In the one case I entitle the judgement analytic, in the other synthetic. Analytic judgements (affirmative) are there-

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Charles W. Hendel, Upper Saddle River, New Jersey, 1995, pp. 26–7.

87 Ibid. p. 40.

> fore those in which the connection of the predicate with the subject is thought through identity; those in which this connection is thought without identity should be entitled synthetic. The former, as adding nothing through the predicate to the concept of the subject, but merely breaking it up into those constituent concepts that have all along been thought in it, although confusedly, can also be entitled explicative. The latter, on the other hand, add to the concept of the subject a predicate which has not been in any wise thought in it, and which no analysis could possibly extract from it; and they may therefore be entitled ampliative. If I say, for instance, 'All bodies are extended', this is an analytic judgement. For I do not require to go beyond the concept which I connect with 'body' in order to find extension as bound up with it. To meet with this predicate, I have merely to analyse the concept, that is, to become conscious to myself of the manifold which I always think in that concept. The judgement is therefore analytic. But when I say, 'All bodies are heavy', the predicate is something quite different from anything that I think in the mere concept of body in general; and the addition of such a predicate therefore yields a synthetic judgement.[88]

Thus, we see that Humean 'relations of ideas' and Kantian 'analytic propositions' correspond to 'tautologies' in today's logic, namely propositions that are true by definition since the predicate in question only repeats all or part of the subject; e.g. 'Milk is milk', or 'The gryphon is not a non-gryphon', or 'Bachelors are unmarried men'. As for Hume's 'matters of fact' and Kant's 'synthetic propositions', these are propositions whose predicates *do* add some new information to their subjects, e.g. 'No giraffe is blue', or 'Some planets exhibit retrograde motion'. For Hume such propositions are matters of fact since they can only be known by sense observation and thus are always particular—'*These two men* have moustaches'—, rather than universal—'*All* men are mortal'—since we cannot experience universals through the five senses, only particulars. Hume argued that we cannot truly be certain of universal truths such as 'All men are mortal'—despite the fact that the mortality rate for all of human history has never fallen below one hundred percent! For him, particular facts deduced from general principles are only *probable* and can never be known or predicted with certainty and, thus, there can be no *certain* knowledge of objective reality ('matters of fact'), only of our own mentation ('relations of ideas'). This extends for Hume even into the domain of scientific knowledge, which he also reduces to a matter of mere probabilities since we cannot assume any necessary con-

88 Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Norman Kemp Smith, Hampshire, 2007 re-print of 1929 edition, pp. 48–9.

nection between cause and effect—only a 'constant conjunction' of particular causal instances. It is interesting to note that the same sort of repudiation of causality was vigorously defended by the Sunnī *mutakallim* al-Ghazālī (d. 505 AH/1111 CE) in his *Tahāfut al-falāsifah* (*Incoherence of the Philosophers*).[89]

Even though he accepted much of this analysis, Kant did not go as far as the radical scepticism of Hume. His novel solution—of, which he was sufficiently enamoured to term it his 'Copernican revolution in philosophy'—was to argue that it was not for human knowledge to *conform* to objective reality, but to *construct* it as a painter paints a picture; thus, human knowledge does not consist of learning but of making. Therefore, the world of experience is formed by our knowing, rather than our knowledge being formed by the world.[90]

Whether one upholds Humean scepticism or Kantian idealism, as his view is known, logic is in any case reduced to the mere manipulation of symbols by agreed upon conventions and does not offer us systematic principles for structured knowledge of an ordered universe. Thus, on such a view, 'relation', 'cause', 'quality', 'time', etc. are mere mental constructs that have no objective referent. Moreover, the five universals (*al-kulliyāt al-khams*) of Aristotle: 'genus' (*jins*), 'differentia' (*faṣl*), 'species' (*naw'*), 'proprium' (*khāṣṣah*), and

89 See Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Ghazālī (d. 505 AH/1111 CE), *Tahāfut al-falāsifah*, 7th edn., ed. Sulaymān Dunyā, Cairo, 1987, *mas'alah* ['problem'], 17, pp. 239–51.

90 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 22: 'Hitherto it has been assumed that all our knowledge must conform to objects. But all attempts to extend our knowledge of objects by establishing something in regard to them *a priori*, by means of concepts, have, on this assumption, ended in failure. We must therefore make trial whether we may not have more success in the tasks of metaphysics, if we suppose that objects must conform to our knowledge. Thus would agree better with what is desired, namely, that it should be possible to have knowledge of objects *a priori*, determining something in regard to them prior to their being given. We should then be proceeding precisely on the lines of Copernicus' primary hypothesis. Failing of satisfactory progress in explaining the movements of the heavenly bodies on the supposition that they all revolved around the spectator, he tried whether he might not have better success if he made the spectator to revolve and the stars to remain at rest. A similar experiment can be tried in metaphysics, as regards the *intuition* of objects. If intuition must conform to the constitution of the objects, I do not see how we could know anything of the latter *a priori*; but if the object (as object of the senses) must conform to the constitution of our faculty of intuition, I have no difficulty in conceiving such a possibility'. We shall leave it to the reader to ponder whether Kant's intuition here of the absence of difficulty in conceiving of the second possibility is an instance of said absent difficulty conforming to the constitution of his intuition, or an instance of his intuition conforming to the constitution of the absent difficulty.

'common accident' (*ʿaraḍ ʿāmm*) are reduced to mere names for classes and sub-classes that we mentally construct.

Such then are the metaphysical roots of modern symbolic logic. Due to its initial development having been at the hands of the mathematician-philosophers Gottlob Frege (d. 1925),[91] Alfred North Whitehead (d. 1947), and Bertrand Russell (d. 1970),[92] modern symbolic logic is greatly concerned with notions of mathematical consistency. This concern thereby leads to a host of other problems, namely the so-called 'paradoxes' of what is termed 'material implication' which are in fact nothing more than fallacies. In what follows we shall discuss this and two other fallacies rooted in modern symbolic logic and Set Theory, which we have dubbed 'the fallacy of incompleteness' and 'the transfinite number fallacy'. It is important that the contemporary reader understand what is at stake in these fallacies since the arguments in *ʿIlm-i kullī* are based on traditional logic and the notion that philosophical reasoning based on apodictic proof *does* yield necessary truths. A number of arguments in traditional philosophy are also based on the impossibility of an infinite regress. However, certain developments in mathematics during the nineteenth century have led some people to hold that an infinite regress is indeed possible. These ideas are developed at length in what follows.

4.3 *Material Implication: Paradox or Fallacy?*

Modern symbolic logic seeks to give mathematical expression to human reasoning. Its distinguishing feature is that it seeks to render *all* parts of an argument as symbols expressly designed for analysis. However, rather than the simple use of symbols employed in the old logic, such as in 'all As are Bs, all Bs are Cs, therefore all As are Cs', in modern symbolic logic no words from the language in question remain and all is reduced to symbols. This approach has its roots in the investigations of Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (d. 1716),[93] and was further developed around the same time by George Boole (d. 1864) and

91 Gottlob Frege, '*Begriffsschrift*: *a formula language, modeled* [sic.] *upon that of arithmetic, for pure thought*' original work of 1879 re-printed in Jean van Heijenoort (ed.), *From Frege to Gödel. A Sourcebook in Mathematical Logic* 1879–1931, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1967, pp. 1–82.

92 Alfred North Whitehead and Bertrand Russell, *Principia Mathematica to *56*, Cambridge, 1976 re-print of 1910 edition.

93 See William and Martha Kneale, *The Development of Logic*, Oxford, 1962, pp. 336–45.

Augustus De Morgan (d. 1871),[94] finally culminating with the 'concept script' (*Begriffsschrift*) of Gottlob Frege.[95]

Logic is very much concerned with inference, in fact one may even go far as to call it the science of necessary inference. The latter involves a process of thinking by which we draw a conclusion from evidence; moving from one proposition to another until we reach a conclusion, using propositions, known as premises, to infer the conclusion. The simplest example of such reasoning in action, is the syllogistic movement from true premises to a true conclusion. An argument is logically valid when the conclusion necessarily follows from its premises. Therefore, in a logically valid argument, if the premises are true, it necessarily follows that the conclusion must be true: 'All men are mortal, Avicenna is a man, therefore Avicenna is mortal' is a valid argument. However, in an invalid argument this is not the case: 'Men have two legs, Avicenna has two legs, therefore Avicenna is a man' is not a valid argument. Although, Avicenna is indeed a man, it does not follow from the premise used in the argument, and therefore the conclusion that 'Avicenna is a man' cannot be established by this argument. In traditional logic a true conclusion can only be established on the basis of some, not all, premises. Thus, the second example was seen to be invalid by traditional logic and, indeed, this agrees with our innate logical 'common sense' as well. However, in modern symbolic logic the second example would be considered a valid inference. Modern symbolic logic establishes a relationship between premise and conclusion known as 'implication', often also called 'material implication' that is known as a 'truth functional connective'.[96] That is to say the truth of a statement is simply a function of its parts akin to a mathematical equation. Thus, the simple negation or denial of a proposition p, that is to say ¬p, is calculated, as it were, by recourse to the truth table given below.

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94 *Ibid*., pp. 404–34. See also: Augustus De Morgan, *A Formal Logic, or The Calculus of Inference, Necessary and Probable,* London, 1817; George Boole, *The Mathematical Analysis of Logic*, Cambridge, 1847; George Boole, *An Investigation of the Laws of Thought, on which are founded the Mathematical Theory of Logic and Probabilities*, London, 1854; and George Boole, *Studies in Logic and Probabaility*, ed. R. Rhees, London, 1952.

95 *Ibid*., pp. 478–512. See also Gottlob Frege, '*Begriffsschrift, a formula language, modeled* [sic.] *upon that of arithmetic, for pure thought*' original work of 1879 re-printed in Jean van Heijenoort (ed.), *From Frege to Gödel. A Sourcebook in Mathematical Logic* 1879–1931, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1967, pp. 1–82. This is a rather advanced work. For an introduction to Frege and his *Begriffsschrift*, see Edward Kanterian, *Frege: A Guide for the Perplexed*, London, 2012.

96 On what follows see W. V. O. Quine, *Mathematical Logic*, rev. edn., Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1981, pp. 1–15.

Negation

p	¬p
T	F
F	T

Similarly, conjunction and (inclusive) disjunction are calculated from the following truth tables:

Conjunction

p	q	p & q
T	T	T
F	T	F
T	F	F
F	F	F

Disjunction

p	q	p v q
T	T	T
F	T	T
T	F	T
F	F	F

The ultimate motivation behind all of this mania for symbols, since Leibniz, has been to render the determination of an arguments' validity a purely clerical task which could be performed without recourse to the words of the argument. Paradoxically, the idea was to accomplish the task of thinking without any thought at all but merely by recourse to the inspection of the bare symbols and whether they appear in the order specified by the rules governing them: thus, reasoning is reduced to a purely formal, clerical exercise. The earliest computing machine merely represents the natural step from the clerical to the mechanical, and then to the electronic. This process of mathematizing thought reaches a bizarre culmination in the notion of material implication. For, in modern symbolic logic, the truth-value of material implication is not at all dependent on the content of any of the propositions of the material implication, but only on whether the premises ('antecedents') are true or false and whether the conclusion ('consequent') is true or false. Material implication is calculated according to the truth table below:

Material Implication

p	q	p —> q
T	T	T
T	F	F
F	T	T
F	F	T

By way of clarification and example, the first row tells us that if the premise is true and the conclusion is true, then the implication is true. Let *p* be 'lapis lazuli is blue' and let *q* be 'gold is a precious metal'. Thus, the material implication will be 'if lapis lazuli is blue, then gold is a precious metal'. Now, obviously *p* and *q* each considered on its own is true, however *q* certainly does not follow from *p*. In the second case, illustrated in the second row, if the premise (antecedent) is true and the conclusion (consequent) is false, then the implication is false. So, 'if lapis lazuli is blue, then gold is a fruit'. Note that *p* is certainly true and *q* is certainly false, but again *q* does not follow from *p*. In the third case, if the premise (antecedent) is false and the conclusion (consequent) is true, then the implication is true. So, 'if lapis lazuli is green, then gold is a precious metal'. Here *p* is certainly false and *q* is certainly true, and yet again *q* does not follow from *p*. Finally, if each of the premises (antecedents) and the conclusion (consequent) are both false, then the implication is true. Thus, 'if lapis lazuli is green, then gold is a fruit'.

According to the rules of material implication, if any statement *q* is true, then it is implied by any statement *p* whatever. Thus, 'the square root of two is an irrational number' is implied by 'the moon is made of green cheese'. In modern logic, even self-contradictory statements such as 'cats are not cats' validly imply any true conclusion. Also, if a proposition is false, material implication permits it to imply any statement whatever. 'The earth is flat' implies that 'Eve is female' and also that 'Eve is male' and that 'three squared is nine', as well as 'three squared is not nine'.

These strongly counter-intuitive results are commonly known as the 'paradoxes of material implication'. Logicians such as P.H. Grice attempted to explain away their paradoxical appearance, through positing a notion of 'conversational implicature'.[97] However there remains a strong case to be made that the absurd consequences engendered by the 'truth-functionality' of material implication—in its abandonment of what we ordinarily mean

97 See, P.H. Grice, 'Logic and Conversation', in *Studies in the Ways of Words*, Cambridge, Mass. & London, 1991.

by 'valid implication'—go so far as to greatly undermine the reasonability of symbolic logic.

4.4 *The Fallacy of Incompleteness*

In 1930 Kurt Gödel (d. 1978) proved his famous Incompleteness theorem which states that in any system sufficient to axiomatise arithmetic there will always exist some proposition *p*, such that it will not be possible to decide whether *p* is true or not on the basis of that system. Thus, the complete disjunction: '*p* or not *p*', in symbols: $(p \vee \neg p)$ will be formally undecidable on the basis of the system, hence the title of his seminal paper *On Formally Undecidable Propositions* of Principia Mathematica *and Related Systems* published that year in the *Monantshefte für Mathematike und Physik*.[98] Due to works published in the twentieth century which popularised these aspects of mathematics, especially Douglass Hofstadter's *Gödel, Escher, Bach: An Eternal Golden Braid*[99] and Rudy Rucker's *Infinity and the Mind*[100] an impression has been fostered amongst a not inconsiderable number of people that this result establishes that logic is incapable of arriving at necessary truths through apodictic proof. It is this that we have in mind when speaking of the 'fallacy of incompleteness'. In reality, Gödel's Incompleteness Theorem (1931) is specifically concerned with the limitations inherently present in the axiomatisation of arithmetic, by Russell and Whitehead in their *Principia Mathematica*. He later extended this theorem to include *any* systematisation of mathematics sufficiently sophisticated enough to define basic arithmetic. Those who interpreted his result to mean that we can never really be sure of our logical structures in their entirety—and thus took it to be the destruction of rationality itself—are guilty of a gross misunderstanding and misrepresentation of his position. Quite to the contrary, Gödel saw his result as evidence of an eternal objective truth independent of the human mind, which could only be imperfectly apprehended. It is beyond the scope of this introduction, as well as lying outside of its immediate aims, to delve any

98 See Kurt Gödel, *On Formally Undecidable Propositions of* Principia Mathematica *and Related Systems*, B. Meltzer (trans.), introduction by R. B. Braithwaite, New York, 1992 this is a translation of his original paper in German 'Über formal unentscheidbare Sätze der Principia Mathematica und verwandter System I', *Monantshefte für Mathematike und Physik* 38, (1931), pp. 173–98. See also Ernest Nagel and James R. Newman, *Gödel's Proof*, New York, 1958.

99 Douglas R. Hofstadter, *Infinity Gödel, Escher, Bach: An Eternal Golden Braid,* New York: Vintage Books, 1989.

100 Rudy Rucker, *Infinity and the Mind. The Science and Philosophy of the Infinite*, Boston/Basel/Stuttgart, 1982, pp. 287–317. The author's full name is Rudolf von Bitter Rucker and he is the great-great-great-grandson of the famous philosopher Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (d. 1831).

further into Gödel's position on matters of metaphysics and mathematical philosophy, but suffice to say he adhered to a Platonist conception of mathematics and was also a believer in God after the fashion of Leibniz.[101] It is this *misuse* of Gödel's otherwise perfectly sound theorem that we have characterised as being fallacious rather than the Incompleteness Theorem it self.

4.5 *The Transfinite Number Fallacy*

The final discussion of *ʿIlm-i kullī* concerns the use of the concepts of the vicious circle and the infinite regress in philosophical argumentation. An infinite regress is impossible and is often employed in cosmological arguments for the existence of God;[102] the impossibility of an infinite regress, whether of temporal events such as, causes and effects, contingencies, etc., is that such would constitute an actual infinite and that an actual infinite cannot exist. At the close of the nineteenth century, Georg Cantor (d. 1918) developed a rigorous mathematical theory of a new class of numbers 'greater' than infinity, which he called *transfinite* numbers.[103] His insight was that, whilst what are known as the natural numbers with which we count, 1, 2, 3, ..., etc., constitute our basic notion of infinity; when taken as a totality in their abstract numeracy, so to speak, this is seen to be only one 'kind' of infinity. Thus, if one conceives of the odd numbers in their totality, and the even numbers in their totality each of these sets taken as a totality will also constitute an infinity. Moreover, this infinity is of the same kind as the infinity we associate with the natural numbers since the odd numbers 1, 3, 5, ... as well as the even numbers 2, 4, 6, ..., etc., can, in our imagination, all be put into a one-to-one correspondence with 1, 2, 3, ..., etc. On the basis of such insights, Cantor proceeded to define transfinite ordinal numbers denoted by the Greek letter ω (omega) as well as transfinite cardinal numbers denoted by the Hebrew letter ℵ (aleph). Employing subscripts attached to these symbols he worked out the rules for an arithmetic of transfinite numbers. However, there is another kind of infinity, different from

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101 On Gödel's life and thought see the following works: Kurt Gödel, 'The Modern Development of the Foundations of Mathematics in Light of Philosophy'(1961) in Gödel, Kurt, *Collected Works*: *vol. III*, Oxford, 1981; Hao Wang, *A Logical Journey: From Gödel to Philosophy*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1996; Richard Tieszen *After Gödel. Platonism and Rationalism in Mathematics and Logic*, Oxford, 2011; Juliette Kennedy (ed.), *Interpreting Gödel. Critical Essays* Cambridge, 2014; Palle Yourgrau, *A World without Time. The Forgotten Legacy of Gödel and Einstein*, New York, 2005; Rebecca Goldstein, *Incompleteness. The Proof and Paradox of Kurt Gödel*, New York, 2005.

102 On cosmological arguments see, for example, William Lane Craig, *The Cosmological Argument from Plato to Leibniz*, Eugene, Oregon, 2000.

103 See Georg Cantor, *Contributions to the Theory of Transfinite Numbers*, trans and intro. Philip E. B. Jourdain, New York, 1915.

that associated with the natural numbers, namely that of the 'number', so to speak, of points on a line. In this case, it is not possible to imagine putting all the points on the line into a one-to-one correspondence with 1, 2, 3, ..., etc., because between any two points there will always be another point. Therefore, this set exhibits another sort of infinity greater than the infinity of the set of numbers 1, 2, 3, ..., etc.

It is on the basis of these realisations that Cantor developed a full-blown theory of transfinite numbers. It is sometimes alleged that the concept of an infinite regress and the arguments based on it have now been invalidated by Cantor's discoveries as well as subsequent developments in Set Theory.[104] However, as in the case of the fallacy of incompleteness, so too with what we have here termed the 'transfinite number fallacy'; such an interpretation can only constitute a gross misunderstanding or misrepresentation. The notions of the infinite employed in Cantor's transfinite numbers as well as in modern Set Theory belong to the mathematical abstractions which exist, to be sure, in the mind, but *not* in the external world. The actual infinite does not leave the world of the mind to become actualised in the external world. Philosophical arguments employing the impossibility of an infinite regress deny only the existence of the actual infinite in the external world.

4.6 *Nominalism and the Repudiation of Universals*

Of the fallacies that we have so far examined above, the one that impinges most directly on logic itself is, of course, that of so-called 'material implication'. This notion, together with the repudiation of both epistemological realism and metaphysical realism are what distinguish modern symbolic logic from

104 See, for example William Lane Craig, *The Kalām Cosmological Argument,* Eugene, Oregon, 2001 re-print of 1980 edition published by Harper and Row Publishers, New York, pp. 65–140 and p. 155, n17: 'For example, R. L. Sturch dismisses the *kalām* argumentation against the existence of an actual infinite with one sentence: "...the result of applying Cantorian theory to [these] paradoxes is to resolve them..." (R. L. Sturch, 'The Cosmological Argument' [PhD thesis, Oxford University, 1970], p. 79). W. I. Matson similarly asserts that since there is no logical inconsistency in an infinite series of numbers, there is no logical inconsistency in an infinite series of events, and therefore the first cause argument is incurably fallacious; Wallace I. Matson, *The Existence of God,* Ithaca, New York, 1965, pp. 58–60. Matson fails to understand that the *kalām* argument holds that the existence of an actual infinite is really, not logically, impossible. That there is a difference can be seen in the fact that God's non-existence, if He exists, is logically, but not really, possible; if He does not exist, His existence is then logically, but not really, possible. Analogously, the existence of an actual infinite is really impossible, even if it may not involve logical contradiction'. See also William Lane Craig and James D. Sinclair, 'The Kalām Cosmological Argument' in William Lane Craig and J. P. Moreland, (eds.), *The Blackwell Companion to Natural Theology*, Oxford, 2012, pp. 101–201 at pp. 103–24.

its traditional ancestor.[105] Thus, in this new logic not only does the object of the intelligence not conform to the real, but also in knowing we construct an order on a random and chaotic 'reality', which is ultimately unknowable. Thus, in modern logic, categories such as 'man', 'rational', 'thing', and 'attribute' are to be considered names rather than universals; a repudiation (of universals) which is known as 'nominalism' and has roots far older than Hume. Nominalism is associated with the philosopher William of Ockham (d. 1347 CE) and, although his position was eventually condemned by the Catholic church, which adopted the theological formulation of Thomas Aquinas as definitive, his real influence—despite his deep and genuine faith in God—was to culminate in the scepticism and nihilism of the modern age. The author of *Nihilism before Nietzsche* makes the following observations on the effects Ockham's nominalism had on logic:

> For scholasticism, ontological realism had gone hand in hand with syllogistic logic. If the basic premise of realism, the extra-mental existence of universals, is accepted and, if these universals are identified with God's thoughts in the Neoplatonic manner of Porphyry, Boethius, and the Arabs, then logic becomes a universal science that explicates the necessary and essential relations of all created things. No real knowledge of scripture is necessary to grasp the truth of nature. The rejection of realism thus undermines syllogistic logic. If all things are radically individual, then universals are merely names (*nomina*), verbal tools created by finite human beings for the purpose of dealing with the vast array of radically individual things. Universals in this sense have *only* a logical meaning. Logic thus becomes a logic of names or signs rather than a logic that expresses the real relations among things.[106]

Mahdī Ḥā'irī Yazdī's *ʿIlm-i kullī* is the fruit of a tradition that never accepted such sophistry. Indeed, after making an allusion to an anti-philosophical bias among a minority of Shīʿī scholars he rejects such anti-intellectual and sceptical tendencies at the outset of his work where he paraphrases Plato's *Phaedo*, thus:

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105 The far-reaching consequences of these changes in logic have been studied in great detail in the works of Henry Babcock Veatch, for example, in his *Two Logics. The Conflict between Classical and Neo-Analytic Philosophy*, Chicago, Illinois, 1969 and his *Realism and Nominalism Revisited*, The Aquinas Lecture, 1954, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 1954.

106 See Michael Allen Gillespie, *Nihilism before Nietzsche*, Chicago, 1995, pp. 14–28 at p. 18 as well as his *The Theological Origins of Modernity*, Chicago, 2008, pp. 1–43.

> In one of his discourses, Socrates said to his pupil Phaedo: "The worst affliction is that someone should turn his back on reasoning, just as some people turn away from the human species. By which we mean that it sometimes happens that someone, without consideration and involuntarily, takes someone else as the repository of his confidences; he takes him for a truthful, sincere, and honest person. After some time he finds him to be a wicked man and a liar. When this event has occurred several times, and the unfortunate person has been frequently deceived by those whom he takes to be his best and most sincere friends, he becomes tired and fed up with all men, and believes that no right and sincere man can be found. O Phaedo! have you not seen how some people in this way gradually turn their backs on their fellow humans?"
>
> Phaedo: "Yes, indeed, how well you have analysed the matter, O Socrates, my dear and beloved teacher".
>
> Socrates: "Now let us examine the abandoning of the intellect. In this case it happens that someone has no knowledge of reasoning or intellection, and in that state he accepts some proof. Then, in fact or by mistake, it transpires that his reasoning was in error, and he chooses the opposite opinion. Then he becomes involved in a conflict and gets used to accepting differing opinions, and finally he is led into confusion concerning the faculty of intellection and reasoning. He believes that neither is there any reality in the world, nor is reason and the intellect a good criterion or a firm base".
>
> "So, Phaedo, is it not a great affliction that someone should turn his back on intellection and reasoning because he applies the incorrect and fallacious reasoning that every fact is sometimes true and sometimes false, and arrives at the conclusion that, instead of recognising himself to be defective and in error from his own lack of discernment, it is intellection and reasoning that are completely false, and that he should imagine that he can derive no benefit from knowledge and the investigation of reality?"

Shīʿah Islam also wholeheartedly rejected the anti-intellectualism of groups such as the literal-minded 'Ḥadith-folk' (*Ahl al-Ḥadith*) whose most prominent figure was Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal (d. 241 AH/855 CE), and Ashʿarism, which was founded by Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ashʿarī (d. 324 AH/936 CE) who came under the influence of Ibn Ḥanbal and who had much in common with William of Ockham. Ashʿarism was further championed by al-Ghazālī who repudiated philosophy and in the end bequeathed a soporific, anti-intellectual, and irrational

Ṣūfī thought to Islamic posterity. This is strikingly similar to developments in Mediaeval Christian theology, which laid the foundations for the emergence of modern scepticism and a new logic at odds with everything that had come before. This thesis has been argued at length by Michael Allen Gillespie who writes:

> The epochal question that gave birth to the modern age arose out of a metaphysical/theological crisis within Christianity about the nature of God and thus the nature of being. This crisis was most evident as the nominalist revolution against scholasticism. This revolution in thought, however, was itself a reflection of a deeper transformation in the experience of existence as such. Scholastics in the High Middle ages were ontologically realist, that is to say they believed in the real existence of universals, or to put the matter another way, they experienced the world as the instantiation of the categories of divine reason, They experienced, believed in, and asserted the ultimate reality not of particular things but of universals, and they articulated this experience in a syllogistic logic that was perceived to correspond to or reflect divine reason. Creation itself was the embodiment of this reason, and man, as the rational animal and *imago dei*, stood at the pinnacle of this creation, guided by a natural *telos* and a divinely revealed supernatural goal. Nominalism turned this world on its head. For the nominalist, all real being was individual or particular and universals were thus mere fictions. Words did not point to real universal entities but were merely signs useful for human understanding. Creation was radically particular and thus not teleological. As a result, God could not be understood by human reason but only by biblical revelation or mystical experience.[107]

Sunnī Islam has followed a very similar path. The Shīʿī Imāms, however, taught that Man has been endowed with intellect (*ʿaql*) and it is by virtue of this very intellect that man is bound to God:

> Ibn Idrīs (d. 306 AH/ 908 CE),[108] on the authority of Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Jabbār,[109] on the authority of one of our narrators who gave his chain

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107 Michael Allen Gillespie, *The Theological Origins of Modernity*, Chicago, 2008, p. 14; see also pp. IX–43, 289–294.

108 On him see Shaykh ʿAbdullāh b. Muḥammad Ḥasan al-Māmaqānī (d. 1351 AH/1932–33), *Tanqīḥ al-maqāl fī aḥwāl al-rijāl*, 3 vols., Najaf: Lithograph, 1350–53 AH, vol. I, p. 49, lines 23–32, entry no. 292. Shaykh Māmaqānī classifies him to be *thiqah*.

109 It seems no death date is available for him. However Aḥmad Ibn Idrīs did indeed relate

of narrators back to (*ʿan baʿḍ aṣḥābinā rafaʿahu ilā*) Abū Abdullāh (the Sixth Imām Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq, (d. 148 AH/765 CE)), who said:

I asked him: "What is intellect?"

He [the Sixth Imām Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq] replied: "That by which the Infinitely Compassionate is worshipped and by which the Garden is attained".

"Then what did Muʿāwiyah (d. 60 AH/680 CE) have?"

He replied: "That was merely wickedness; diabolical cunning which seems to resemble intellect, but is not intellect".[110]

Abū ʿAbdullāh al-Ashʿarī,[111] on the authority of one of our narrators who gave his chain of narrators back to (*ʿan baʿḍ aṣḥābinā rafaʿahu ʿan*), Hishām b. al-Ḥakam (d. *ca.* 179 AH/795 CE):[112]

ʿAbū al-Ḥasan Mūsā b. Jaʿfar (al-Kāẓīm, the seventh Imām, d. 183 AH/799 CE) told me: "…O Hishām! Truly Allah has two proofs against mankind an outwardly manifest proof and an inwardly hidden proof. As for the outwardly manifest, it is the Messengers, Prophets, and Imāms and as for the inwardly hidden it is the intellect (*al-ʿuqūl*)…".[113]

At the very outset of this introduction it was observed that the philosophical enterprise in Islam came to be almost uniquely identified with the Shīʿah. This was no mere profession of sectarian chauvinism. Just as William of Ockham argued vigorously for nominalism so too did the Sunnī *mutakallim* Abū al-Ḥasan

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ḥadīth from him, so their lives did intersect. Shaykh Māmaqānī also classifies him to be *thiqah*. See Shaykh Māmaqānī, Ibid., vol. III, p. 135, line 28 to the end of the page to p. 136, lines 1–2, entry no. 10,912.

110 Shaykh Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad b. Yaʿqūb al-Kulaynī (d. 329 AH /950), *al-Uṣūl min al-Kāfi*, 2 vols. ʿAlī Akbar al-Ghaffārī, ed., Tehran, 1366 SH/1408 AH, vol. I, p. 11, no. 3.

111 I could not locate biographical details for this person. Shaykh Māmaqānī does not list an 'Abū ʿAbdullāh al-Ashʿarī' in the *kinā* and *alqāb* section of *Tanqīḥ al-maqāl* which appears at the end of vol. III.

112 An extremely important early Shīʿī scholar. On him see Shaykh Māmaqānī, *Tanqīḥ al-maqāl*, vol. III, p. 294, line 8 to the end of thepage until p. 301, lines 1–16, entry no. 12,853.

113 al-Kulaynī, *al-Uṣūl min al-kāfi*, vol. I, pp. 13–20, no. 12 at p. 16. This is a very long *ḥadīth* and is broken up into paragraphs in this edition each of which begins with *Yā Hishām* ('O Hishām…'). The paragraph in question is the 14th by my account.

al-Ashʿarī. In the case of al-Ashʿarī, however, the tendency he fostered rose to ascendency especially through the efforts of Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī, and resulted in a Sunnī theology that belittles the use of the human intellect, places an extreme emphasis on the utter transcendence of the Creator, absolutises the Divine Will at the expense of other Divine Attributes, denies (secondary) causality, effectively renders epistemology impossible, denies an objective basis for ethics and morality, and repudiates free-will. By contrast, for Mahdī Ḥāʾirī Yazdī metaphysics is to be considered a 'universal' science because it deals with the most general of things; existence (*wujūd*); and, moreover, philosophy—as outlined above—is thereby integral to the human experience. The *ʿIlm-i kullī* makes this abundantly clear through its intricate examinations of the eternal verities of primordial and unchanging wisdom as well as those of revelation, which are, in the end, seen to be one and the same.

Saiyad Nizamuddin Ahmad
12 December 2016

Universal Science: An Introduction to Islamic Metaphysics

Preface

It is often asked what metaphysics (*falsafah*)[1] is, and what the use of it is; and how it is possible for man to establish a cognitive (*ʿilmī*) relationship with matters which are outside the realm of the senses.

It is also asked what essential or natural need man has for metaphysics, that he should spend his time and effort in order to acquire knowledge of it. Such people say that man should only occupy himself with sciences which have some relevance to the necessities of life, and which lead him, from the social or individual point of view, towards some kind of material perfection. They ask how problems whose conceptualising is purely abstract and which have no effect on the life of man can be included among those sciences pursued by him and they say that, for this reason, time should not be wasted in investigating this kind of problem; for time has great economic and material value.

We shall not answer these objections, like some contemporary philosophers, with a lengthy discourse which would probably be a waste of time; neither do we seek to divest—for no good reason and without any logical justification—metaphysics of the noble designation of 'science' (i.e. knowledge), for it is the best knowledge of the best knowable things (*bihtarīn ʿilm bih bihtarīn maʿlūm*), but rather we shall succinctly state that, if philosophy truly enquires into reality at every level and in every form in which it exists, and if its essence is the understanding of reality, then no way can be conceived

1 The word *falsafah* is the Arabic and Persian form of the Greek word which also gives us 'philosophy'. But it would be a mistake to conclude that the two words have the same connotations, especially in present-day usage. Unfortunately, the word 'metaphysics' has also suffered some ups and downs in its career, but it is a more faithful representation of the word *falsafah*, for the latter deals in general with the mathematical and natural sciences, but, in particular, with the epistemological foundation of these sciences, which take their source in the ontological framework of reality, and, more particularly, with the nature of that reality itself, which is, by definition, 'above nature' or metaphysical. It should also be stated that the mystical science of *ʿirfān* (gnosis) is also included among those sciences which take their source in *falsafah*, and that the true *faylasūf* (metaphysician), or *ḥakīm* (from *ḥikmah*, 'wisdom', another word used for *falsafah*), is also a man who is deeply conversant with realities of a mystical nature, which thus form for him a part, and perhaps the highest part, of that greater reality which is the subject of his study. Expressed in these terms, it will be seen that there is no need at this juncture to use the expressions 'Islamic metaphysics' or 'Islamic philosophy', or, which is worse still, such phrases as 'the philosophy of the Arabs', which only serve to draw the mind away from the truly universal nature of the science, and make it appear a purely cultural phenomenon. We have, however, used such terms as 'Islamic philosophy' when there is a reference to actual historical persons or theories. [Translator].

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to deny it, for the denial of philosophy will then be a product of the denial of understanding and reality, whereas neither can reality be denied, nor can understanding and intellection be switched off, for they are the central core of mankind and the factor which distinguishes him from other animals.

Even if somebody is inwardly blind and also in the darkness of ignorance and denies truth and reality, quite apart from the fact that his denial is a sure proof of his ignorance and lack of understanding, it is an even more certain evidence for the proof of truth, which is the opposite of what was sought, because he who has been able to deny the truth has admitted his own being, which is a fixed or changeable reality countable among the numbers of the realities of the universe, and it should be said to him: 'You, who deny reality, have yourself existence and reality'. In another respect, too, his belief in this denial is a kind of existence and reality in his mind, something which arose in his thinking; so from one denial at least two realities have been revealed to him, and the discussion of reality and existence, whatever form it may take, is first and foremost the responsibility of metaphysics. Man, to whatever extent and in whatever branch of the sciences he may need an understanding of reality, will, to that very extent, require metaphysics, which alone is the means to enquire into reality—whether this need is in connection with the actions and reactions of a body and its analysis and composition, or whether it appears in the problems of mathematics, or in problems which have no connection or relation with matters external to the mind, such as the secondary intelligibles (*maʿqūlāt-i thānawiyyah*), which are problems of logic.[2]

2 In metaphysics a distinction is made between primary and secondary intelligibles. This distinction is based on how these concepts are combined, so to speak, as subject and predicate in the mental act of predication. The predicate-quality is said to 'occur' (*ʿurūḍ*) to the subject-thing, whilst the latter is said to undergo 'qualification' by the predicate-quality. In the case of a primary intelligible, both occurrence and qualification happen in the external world, whereas in the case of a secondary intelligible, both occurrence and qualification take place in the mind alone. The concept of existence (*mafhūm al-wujūd*) is a secondary intelligible. For a detailed discussion of this distinction in English see the introduction of Toshihiko Izutsu's (d. 1414 AH/1993) article, 'The Fundamental Structure of Sabzawārī's Metaphysics', in Mullā Hādī Sabzawārī (d. 1289 AH/1873), *Sharḥ ghurar al-farāʾid*, ed. Mehdi Mohaghegh and Toshihiko Izutsu, Tehran, 1981, pp. 41–4; also p. 67, line 10 of the Arabic root-text by Sabzawārī, as well as his own gloss to the root-text which appears in this edition in the form of an endnote on p. 304 both of which correspond to the single page numbered 39 of the lithograph edition of 1298 AH/1881 published in Tehran by Āqā-yi Mashhadī Muḥammad Taqī Lawasānī; see also the gloss of Muḥammad Taqī Āmulī (d. 1391 AH/1972) on pp. 304-5 of the Mohaghegh and Izutsu edition of the above mentioned *Sharḥ ghurar al-farāʾid* which, in turn is quoting from the autonomous edition of Āmulī's glosses published in two volumes in 1368 SH/ 1989 at Qum, vol. I, pp. 133–4. A modern study has been devoted to secondary intelligibles by Mohammad Fanaei Nematsara, 'Secondary Intelligibles: An Analytical and

Some of those who have had a modern schooling (*mustaḥdathūn*), although they have benefitted from a higher education, have never undertaken an investigation, an enquiry, or even a rudimentary study of the profound problems of metaphysics, which usually lead to some kind of definite conclusion. The only research or effort which is the result of their course of higher education is into the history of Islamic metaphysics, and how it came into existence and evolved in the hands of certain people; and there can be no doubt that this method of thinking, even if we do not say that it is general among this class of people, at least exists among the majority of them. It is the result of ideas which they have heard from the mouths of professors of orientalism and copied *verbatim*. It is abundantly clear that it is in no way possible to plumb the depths of questions concerning metaphysics via such a [superficial] manner of teaching and learning, for each of these questions is a matter for intellectual analysis and examination.

Some of the orientalists, from the information that we have, have shown us that they have neither studied a single one of the famous books of Islamic metaphysics with any of the masters of this knowledge, nor had they the good fortune to have derived benefit from a careful reading of them. The extent of their efforts only encompassed, for example, in what period Abū ʿAlī Ibn Sīnā lived, in which school (*madrasah*) he studied, where he was engaged in teaching and writing, and how, and under what circumstances, he wrote his books *al-Ishārāt* and *al-Shifā*'; then how a special school arose with followers like Bahmanyār and Abū ʿUbayd Juzjānī who developed his ideas after his death.

The high point of their research[3] is that the *Asfār* is a travel book; or that the *Asfār* is the plural of '*sifr*', meaning 'book'; that this book is made up of several parts and several chapters; that the compiler mentions the name of Aristotle (*arisṭū*) with praise and respect; that he did not have a very respectful attitude towards Plato (*aflāṭūn*) or Empedocles (*anbādhaqulis*) the Greek, whose names he got from old Arabic translations; and this kind of thing, which bears more similarity to literature than to metaphysics and science.

Comparative Study on First and Second Intentions in Islamic and Western Philosophy', M. A. diss., McGill University, 1994, see especially chapter 2. [Editor].

3 The first mistake is due to Comte de Gobineau, who remarked: '*Il a écrit de plus quatre livres de voyages*' (*Les religions et les philosophies dans l'Asie central*, p. 81. The second mistake was committed by Edward G. Browne: 'The two most celebrated of Mullā Ṣadrā's works [...] are the *Asfār-i-Arbaʿa* or 'Four Books, [note omitted]' and the *Shawāhidu'r-Rubūbiyya*', *A Literary History of Persia*, vol. IV, p. 430. See Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Ṣadr al-Dīn Shīrāzi and his Transcendent Theosophy*, pp. 55 & 68. [Translator and Editor].

Again, in a recent book by the name of *Rāh-i ṭayy shudah* (*The Road Travelled*) a certain author[4] has tried to establish a connection between the teachings of the prophets and the repudiation of metaphysics, and even with the refutation of the metaphysical. He has presented metaphysics, without any logical proof or evidence, as a science that deceives and misleads people; although it has been pointed out that metaphysics is nothing other than the understanding of reality, and that within the measure of human capability; how can the understanding of reality lead people astray? If we want to close down metaphysics, then we shall not only trip up on our own power of human understanding, but we shall also let the realities of the world slip through our fingers, and in the end we shall have estranged ourselves from our own essence and humanity. According to A. S. Rappoport, in his book *The Foundation of Philosophy*, the purpose of someone's studying philosophy is that he enquires into the reality of things and the way in which they are related to each other, and no man, in any moment of his life, can rest from this activity in any way at all. For this reason we can say that each individual human being, to whatever degree he is able to investigate reality, has to that same extent engaged in metaphysics. Having said this, a 'metaphysician' is normally a technical term for someone who is proficient, who is a master, and who can carry out investigation into the universal order of creation to whatever degree may be possible.

Not long ago there was a pious, religious man living in Khurāsān who was endowed with good character and pure intention, but who had none of the lively intelligence which could lead him through the complexities of problems and guide him from true premises to true and certain conclusions, and for this reason he was badly bruised by the differences in the opinions of the philosophers, and imagined that this was proof of the utter barrenness of syllogistic reasoning and logical forms. He thought that the way of wisdom (*rāh-i khirad*) was a *cul-de-sac* and that reason was worthless and without credibility, and he said such things to those around him who had been drawn towards him. Imagining that he was increasing the splendour of religion, he presented the way of knowledge as separate from the way of religion.[5]

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4 Namely: Mahdī b. 'Abbās Qulī al-Tabrīzī Bazārgān (d. 1416 AH/1995), generally known as 'Engineer (*muhandis*) Bāzārgān'. He served very briefly as prime minister of the Islamic Republic of Iran (from 11 February 1979–6 November 1979) having been appointed by Ayatollah Khomeini himself until he fell out of favour mainly due to his disagreement with him over the American hostages. Regarding the work in question, *Rāh-i ṭayy shudah*, see: Muhandis Mahdī Bāzārgān, *Mabāḥith-i bunyād-i dīn, majmū'ah-yi āthār 1*, Tehran, 1377 SH/1998, pp. 17–267. [Editor].

5 The author is referring to Mīrzā Mahdī Iṣfahānī, a man who believed that one should rely on the Qur'ān and the *ḥadīth* and not meddle with metaphysics, logic, etc. [Translator].

We do not want to comment here on the ideas of this worthy man which were spoken in all sincerity with all their intricacy and consequences, but we must also not refrain from mentioning one point, and that is that if someone universally rejects any productive value (*intāj*) in first syllogistic form, which is the most obvious of the logical forms, then he will no longer be able to make any kind of claim, whether purely intellectual or not, which can be proved or derived by way of reasoning; and, according to his own utterance, all his ideas will be without any foundation and devoid of any harmony. How can someone measure the worth of an idea, which, according to the speaker himself, does not repose on any kind of foundation?

In one of his discourses, Socrates said to his pupil Phaedo:

> The worst affliction is that someone should turn his back on reasoning, just as some people turn away from the human species. By which we mean that it sometimes happens that someone, without consideration and involuntarily, takes someone else as the repository of his confidences; he takes him for a truthful, sincere and honest person. After some time he finds him to be a wicked man and a liar. When this event has occurred several times, and the unfortunate person has been frequently deceived by those whom he takes to be his best and most sincere friends, he becomes tired and fed up with all men, and believes that no right and sincere man can be found. O Phaedo! Have you not seen how some people in this way gradually turn their backs on their fellow humans?
>
> Phaedo: Yes, indeed, how well you have analysed the matter, O Socrates, my dear and beloved teacher.
>
> Socrates: Now let us examine the abandoning of the intellect. In this case it happens that someone has no knowledge of reasoning or intellection, and in that state he accepts some proof. Then, in fact or by mistake, it transpires that his reasoning was in error, and he chooses the opposite

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Mīrzā Mahdī b. Mīrzā Ismāʿīl Gharawī Iṣfahānī Khurāsānī (1303–1365 AH/1885–1945) was the founder of the so-called *maktab-i tafkīk*, or the 'school of separation', which could be characterised as a form of fideism which arose out of his teaching activities in Mashhad, Iran. On the *maktab-i tafkīk*, its major figures, and its major works see Muḥammad Riḍā Ḥakīmī, *Maktab-i tafkīk*, 2nd edn., Tehran, 1376 SH/1997, pp. 187-317; 'Wīzha-yi maktab-i tafkīk', *Kayhān-i Farahangī* 95, Isfand, 1371 SH/1993; Ghulām-Ḥusayn Ḥujjatī-niyā, 'Kitābshināsī-yi Maktab-i Tafkīk', *Andīsha-yi Ḥawza*, Ādhar wa Dīh, 1378 SH/1999-2000, no. 19, pp. 198-216; and Sajjad H. Rizvi, '"Only the Imam Knows Best" The Maktab-e [*sic.*] Tafkīk's Attack on the Legitimacy of Philosophy in Iran', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 22 (October 2012), pp. 487-503. [Editor].

opinion. Then he becomes involved in a conflict and gets used to accepting differing opinions, and finally he is led into confusion concerning the faculty of intellection and reasoning. He believes that neither is there any reality in the world, nor is reason and the intellect a good criterion or a firm base.

So, Phaedo, is it not a great affliction that someone should turn his back on intellection and reasoning because he applies the incorrect and fallacious reasoning that every fact is sometimes true and sometimes false, and arrives at the conclusion that, instead of recognising himself to be defective and in error from his own lack of discernment, it is intellection and reasoning that are completely false, and that he should imagine that he can derive no benefit from knowledge and the investigation of reality?[6]

6 The author is clearly paraphrasing a discussion found in Plato's *Phaedo* (Stephanus Pagination: 89c–90d). For comparison, we include here the text as translated by Benjamin Jowett, *The Dialogues of Plato*, 2 vols., New York: Random House, 1937, vol. 1, pp. 474–475. The discussion begins with Socrates speaking, after which Phaedo replies and the discussion continues. (The discussion is not actually direct speech but rather Phaedo is relating his discussion with Socrates to Echecrates.) '[…] But first let us take care that we avoid a danger. || Of what nature? I said. || Lest we become misologists, he replied: no worse thing can happen to a man than this. For as there are misanthropists or haters of men, there are also misologists or haters of argument, and both spring from the same cause, which is ignorance of the world. Misanthropy arises out of the too great confidence of inexperience;—you trust a man and think him altogether true and sound and faithful, and then in a little while he turns out to be false and knavish; and then another and another, and when this has happened several times to a man, especially when it happens among those whom he deems to be his own most trusted and familiar friends, after many disappointments he at last hates all men, and believes that no one has any good in him at all. You must have observed this process? || I have. || […] when a simple man who has no skill in dialectics believes an argument to be true which he afterwards imagines to be false, whether really false or not, and then another and another,—and especially those who have devoted themselves to the study of antinomies come, as you know, to think at last that they have grown to be the wisest of mankind, and that they alone perceive how unsound and unstable are things themselves and all our arguments about them, and how all existence, like the currents in the Euripis, hurry up and down in a never-ceasing ebb and flow. || That is quite true, I said. || Yes, Phaedo, he replied, and if there be such a thing as truth or certainty or possibility of knowledge, how melancholy that a man should have lighted upon some argument or other which at first seemed true and then turned out to be false, and instead of blaming himself and his own want of wit, should at last out of sheer annoyance be only too glad to transfer the blame from himself to arguments in general: and for ever afterwards should hate and revile them, and lose truth and the knowledge of realities. || Yes, indeed, I said; that would be most melancholy'. [Translator & Editor].

It should be observed that all this enmity and criticism comes from complications in, and lack of study of, problems, and that these hostile shots have been fired at metaphysics throughout its history. As the poet says:

> Behind the veil, you and I, we argued;
>
> But when the veil was lifted, neither you nor I remained.[7]

In order to remove the veil of separation as far as possible from this kind of subject, we have endeavoured, by using a new and interesting method which has not hitherto been used in these sciences to set down the great problems of metaphysics so that those who want to inform themselves more fully of these problems will not be encumbered by linguistic difficulties.

We are sure that man, who is always seeking to civilise himself and to find reality, will come to realise the importance of metaphysics, and will examine its subtleties one by one, and that he will then be guided from the individual and dependent sciences with which he has busied and habituated himself to the noblest science of the most noble knowable things. For, by the decree of his instincts and his human nature, man is moving towards the perfection of himself. Meanwhile, there is a duty for the men of knowledge, who are leading this caravan, to try to quicken this transformation and process of perfection, and to lead man from being just a material existent to the world of the intellect which is the design of the whole universe.

We sincerely hope that readers will point out to us any weak points, of which there are certainly many, so that we may avoid them in the second and third parts of the book,[8] and so that we may correct any mistakes in the

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7 In the original Persian: '*hast az pas-i pardih guftigū-yi man wa tu | chūn pardih bar uftad nah tu mānī wa nah man*'. Found in the *Quatrains* (*Rubā'iyāt*) of two poets linked to the town of Nīshāpūr, namely, Abū Sa'īd b. Abī al-Khayr (d. 357–440 AH/ 967–1049 CE) as well as 'Umar Khayyām (d. 439–517 AH / 1048–1131 CE). [Editor].

8 The concluding line of the volume on the last page of the text (p. 122) upon which this translation is based gives the names of the second and third volumes of the author's projected trilogy as *Theology in the 'More Restricted Sense'* (*Ilāhī bi ma'nā akhaṣṣ*) and *The Soul and Resurrection* (*Mabāḥith-i nafs va ma'ād*). It appears that the author was unable to complete his trilogy. The term theology in the 'most specific sense (*al-ilāhiyāt bi al-ma'nā al-akhaṣṣ*) is specifically concerned with the nature of God, the Divine Essence and the Divine Attributes, and the relationship between them. It is distinguished from theology in the 'more general sense' (*al-ilāhiyāt bi al-ma'nā al-a'amm*) which is concerned with more purely metaphysical matters, especially ontology. It is the latter which is the primary concern of this the first volume of his uncompleted trilogy. [Editors].

subsequent printings. For He is the Knower of all hidden things, the Forgiver of all sins, the Concealer of all faults; He is the all-Wise, the all-Aware.

Mahdī Ḥā'irī Yazdī

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

In The Name of Allah, the Most Compassionate, the Merciful

It is customary before starting on any of the sciences to treat some matters by way of explanation, even if they be somewhat brief, so that those who wish to acquire that science may enter upon the subject with greater insight and clarity, and weigh up the various questions with *rational* wisdom, through a true understanding of the reality, and by means of a search for truth, all of which are necessary prerequisites for reaching profound knowledge (*khirad*).

Now, in this introduction, we shall follow in the footsteps of this excellent custom, and briefly mention some matters in a way that will be of interest to those who pursue learning (*arbāb-i faḍl wa faḍīlat*).

1. The definition of metaphysics (*taʿrīf-i falsafah*). Here we must understand, from the definitions that have been given at various times for metaphysics, exactly what it is.
2. The subject matter of metaphysics (*mawḍūʿ-i falsafah*). That is to say, we must find out what the philosophers were talking about in their profound and lengthy discussions, and what was the central subject matter which they had in mind, so that the basis of these difficult problems may become clear, as well as the heights to which they reach.
3. What is the advantage for man in embarking on this kind of problem?
4. The divisions of metaphysics (*taqsīmāt-i falsafah*).

1 The Definition of Metaphysics

As is known among the practitioners of the art (*ahl-i fann*), metaphysics is the perfecting of the soul by the absorption of the truths of the universe to the degree in which they have essential reality. Another definition of it is that by learning metaphysics, man brings the world of existence into his mind in all its order and regularity, until the pages of the heart (*dil*) are filled with the design of the universe, and it attains, to the extent of humanly possible, similitude with the Creator through a discovery of the truth and the secrets of creation, for it is said: 'Adorn thine selves with the Attributes of God' (*takhallaqū bi*

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akhlāq allāh).[1] However the most eloquent definition, which is current in what the most recent philosophers have said, is that 'metaphysics (or theosophy, *ḥikmat*) is a term for the transmutation of man from a material existent to the world of the intellect, so that he becomes one with, and in conformity with, the whole of the universe of existence'.[2]

Probably this definition agrees most with the exalted station of metaphysics, which is the noblest knowledge of the most noble knowable things, especially as regards the allusions it makes to the benefits of metaphysics and the character of the metaphysician,[3] because the depicting in the mind of the beautiful designs of being, and the perfection and completion (*takāmul*) of man from a material existent to the world of the intellect is the ultimately sought after objective of the perfect wise man, as well as being the innate and unperceived wish of material man.

One point that should be noted is that, after complete attention has been paid to the definitions which have been given for metaphysics, we discover that there is no fundamental difference between the various definitions; it can be said that each of them distinguishes one aspect of the reality of metaphysics, more especially as this kind of definition is an entirely lexical or nominal definition and cannot include an explanation of all its realities nor exclude all those things which do not belong to it. A careful perusal of these definitions will tell us what is the fundamental benefit of metaphysics, which is the perception of realities, for in all these definitions, especially in the last one, the fact that the philosopher is searching for the truth is made perfectly

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1 A widely cited text in works on *ḥikmah* and *'irfān* often characterised as being a *ḥadīth*, although we have not been able to locate it in the standard Sunnī and Shī'ī collections. For a representative sample of *'irfān* texts that cite it see Bāqir Ṣadrīniyā, *Farhang-i ma'thūrāt-i mutūn-i 'irfānī* (*mushtamal aḥādīth, aqwāl, wa amthāl-i mutūn-i 'irfānī-yi fārsī*, Tehran, 1380 SH/2001, p. 184, saying no. 29. [Editor].

2 For the first two definitions of *falsafah* see Mullā Ṣadrā's definition in the *Asfār*: '*Falsafah* is the perfecting of the human soul to the extent of human possibility through knowledge of the existential realities of things as they are in themselves and through judgement concerning their existence established upon demonstration and not derived from opinion or through imitation. Or if thou likest thou canst say, it is to give intelligible order to the world to the extent of human possibility in order to gain "resemblance" to the Divine'. (trans. S. H. Nasr, *Sadr al-Dīn al-Shirazi and his Transcendent Theosophy,* p. 87). [Translator].

3 This definition is based on something which will be a matter for discussion in the chapter on mental existence, where it will be said that, just as the quiddities of things together with all their essential parts and essential characteristics are found in the external world, so these very same quiddities exist and have reality in the world of the mind, only in the special manner of mental existence. The only difference between the mind and the external world is in the manner of existence, not quiddity.

clear, and this is the highest aim which has been determined for the sciences of man.

O Lord, show us the things as they really are.[4]

2 The Central Subject-Matter of Metaphysics

Generally speaking, the subject matter (*mawḍūʿ*) of every science is something that is discussed about its general accidents (*ʿawāriḍ-i dhātī*),[5] and the meaning of this is that in every science only the proof and disproof of those research problems (*maṭālib*) which concern the subject matter of that science should be undertaken. For example, in arithmetic, where we suppose its subject matter to be the number, any kind of endeavour which can be said to be concerned with numbers—addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, and the like—will be counted among the matters (*masāʾil*) of the science of arithmetic, and since these topics are accidentals which are particular to numbers, the subject matter of arithmetic will naturally be the number.

In metaphysics (*falsafah-yi kullī*, universal philosophy), the only thing which can encompass all the objects of inquiry of philosophy is existence or something which exists. The concept of existence is, among other concepts and subjects, to such a degree of universality, that it clearly has perfect applicability to everything, necessary (*wājib*) or possible (*mumkin*), abstract (*mujarrad*) or concrete (*māddī*), substance (*jawhar*) or accident (*ʿaraḍ*), and in the end to everything which can be included among the realities of the universe. Because of this no subjects of problems (*mawḍūʿāt-i masāʾil*) can

4 *Rabbī arinā al-ashyāʾa kamā hiya.* A supplication attributed variously to the Prophet Muḥammad and to Amīr al-Muʾminīn ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib and widely quoted in works on *ḥikmah* and *ʿirfān* in various forms, such as: *Allāhumma arinā ḥaqāʾiq al-ashyāʾ kamā hiya* and *arinā al-ashyāʾa kamā hiya*. However, it is not a *ḥadīth*. It is nevertheless cited as an *athar* by Abū al-Faraj ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. ʿAlī, known as Ibn al-Jawzī, in the form: *ʿAllāhumma arinā al-ashyāʾ kamā hiya'* in his *Ṣayd al-khāṭir,* ed. ʿAbd al-Qādir Aḥmad ʿAṭā, Beirut, 1412 AH/1992, *faṣl* 316, p. 422 and *Ṣayd al-khāṭir fī al-takhallī min al-amrāḍ al-nafsiyyah wa al-taḥallī bi al-ādāb al-sharʿiyyah wa al-akhlāq al-marḍiyyah,* ed. Ḥasan al-Samāḥī Suwaydān, Damascus, 1433 AH/2012, faṣl 316, p. 429. For a representative range of citations from classic texts of ʿirfān in the variant forms of this supplication see Bāqir Ṣadrīniyā, *Farhang-i maʾthūrāt-i mutūn-i ʿirfānī*, p. 42, nos. 350, 351; p. 74, no. 663. [Editor].

5 The essential accidents which form the matters of science are accidentals in the sense used in the *Isagoge* (i.e. they are one of the five predicables), not the (logical) accidents of the *Posterior Analytics* (*Kitāb-i burhān*), nor the accidents of the *Categories* (*Kitāb-i jawhar wa ʿaraḍ*).

be considered as dismissed from the essential accidents of the subject matter of metaphysics, no matter how much they may differ in their quiddities or levels of existence, and for the same reason, the discussions of the existence of the Necessary Being (*wājib-i wujūd*) cannot be set forth as a part of this science because it divinely encompasses all existents; and neither can it be counted as a matter of any other science. It is also the case that Necessary Existence (*wujūd-i wājib*), cannot be counted as the subject matter for a specified science alongside natural science or mathematics (*falsafah-yi ṭabīʿī wa riyāḍī*), each of which have a particular subject matter, because, in both cases, particularisation and restriction, which are automatically incompatible with His universal abundance (*fayḍ-i ʿumūmī*) and absolute principality (*mabdaʾi-i iṭlāqī*), would come into existence.

It is likewise impossible to choose the sempiternal and everlasting existence of God in metaphysics as the subject matter of the science, since it would, like the general concept of existence, become applicable to all realities and objects of enquiry with either a general or particular relationship.

Thus there is no alternative but that theology (*ilāhī bih maʿnā-yi akhaṣṣ*: literally, 'metaphysics in the most specific sense') be proposed as one of the matters of higher metaphysics (*falsafah-yi aʿlā*), and that we include it among the matters of this science.

At the same time the superiority of metaphysics and its absolute precedence over the other sciences is demonstrated; for, in every science, apart from metaphysics, it is first of all necessary to investigate and demonstrate the subject matter of that science and to distinguish it from the subject matters of other sciences, so that the matters of that science can then be dealt with. There can be no doubt that only the science of metaphysics can prove the certainty and the realities of the various subject matters. Expressed logically, that which forms the foundation of the sciences is to be counted among the objects of enquiry of metaphysics.

Ṣadr al-Mutaʾallihīn Shīrāzī says in his commentary on the *Shifāʾ* of Ibn Sīnā:

> Metaphysics is the only science whose subject matter is free from any kind of restriction or condition, and it has no kind of dependence on, or need of, the other sciences. It is the other sciences which are in a position of obeisance to, and are reduced to being the slave of, metaphysics; for the subject matters of other sciences can only be proved by means of the findings of this science. It must be said that it is metaphysics which brings into existence in our intellects the subject matters of the other sciences. Then it gives an opportunity for the scientist in each of the other sciences to argue and research into the limits of the objects of enquiry

of his own science. Therefore, in reality, the scholars of every science take the water of life from the spring of this science, and are the servants of the metaphysicians.

3 The Divisions of Philosophy

Philosophy (*ḥikmat*) is the channelling of the attention of the human soul towards perfection, which can be attained by him from both the theoretical and the practical sides. So it can be divided into practical philosophy (*ḥikmat-i ʿamalī*) and speculative philosophy (*ḥikmat-i naẓarī*), and then each of these can be divided into several parts.

Practical philosophy, whose aim is the acquisition of good and desistance from evil, is called ethical philosophy (*ḥikmat-i khulqī*) or the science of ethics (*ʿilm-i akhlāq*), and it involves the refining of morals (*tahdhīb-i akhlāq*) when it is of a kind that every man can achieve that perfection of the soul by it without the co-operation of others. If its attainment is not practical without co-operation and mutual understanding, and, if it is certain that in order to reach the perfection of what is desired, contact and accord with other individuals must be reached, it is of two varieties. If the accord is reached within the environment of the family and with the members of the family, it will be domestic philosophy (*ḥikmat-i manzilī*) and domestic organisation (*tadbīr-i manzil*); and if the accord is reached outside the household in the civic environment and with citizens, it will be realised as the politics of cities and civilisation (*siyāsat-i mudun wa madanī*), which is called civic philosophy (*ḥikmat-i madanī*).[6]

However, speculative philosophy, whose aim is the perception of realities, and the forging of a cognitive or noetic relationship (*irtibāṭ-i ʿilmī*) with the world of existence, is either an expression for usable concepts and ideas which function only as an introduction and a means, and which are only used in the acquisition of other sciences; or else it is those sciences and research problems which, despite all the difference there may be in their subject matters, are autonomous and are the essential objective of the lovers of knowledge.

The first division is logic, which was brought into existence for metaphysics and whose various parts are gathered together in the introduction to metaphysics. The second part is divided according to its subject matter into metaphysics (the transcendent and metaphysical sciences; *ʿulūm-i ilāhī wa*

6 In older works in English the terms such as *tadbīr-i manzil* and *tadbīr-i mudun* were typically rendered as 'home economics' and 'political economy'. [Editor].

mā baʿd-i ṭabīʿī), natural philosophy (*falsafah-yi ṭabīʿī*) and the philosophy of mathematics (*falsafah-yi riyāḍī*). Together these form the four divisions of speculative theosophy (*ḥikmat-i naẓarī*).

In metaphysics there is also sometimes a discussion of universal and general matters which are applicable to all—or most—existents, and for this reason it is known as 'metaphysics in the most general sense' (*falsafah ilāhī bi maʿnā-yi aʿamm*); and sometimes the existence of the Source of Being is discussed, and it is then called 'metaphysics in the most specific sense' (*falsafah ilāhī bi maʿnā-yi akhaṣṣ*).

4 Metaphysics in the General Sense (*falsafah ilāhī bi maʿnā aʿamm*)

Among these matters and methods of speculative theosophy, since metaphysics in the general sense is more general and nearer to [our] understandings and intellects (*afhām wa ʿuqūl*), the general matters of the 'highest science' (*ʿilm-i aʿlā*; i.e. metaphysics, *falsafah-yi kullī*) are treated like the generalities of natural science (*samʿ al-kiyān*); and it is said that just as in natural science general topics such as the natural form of bodies, the finiteness or non-finiteness of the dimensions, and so forth, serve as an introduction to the rest of the matters concerning natural things, so also in metaphysics universal problems and general matters naturally provide an introduction to the other parts and divisions. We, too, following this custom, will begin with a discussion of general matters in the order which they are dealt with in most of the books of metaphysics.

CHAPTER 2

Existence (*wujūd*)–Being (*hastī*)

1 The Meaning of Existence (Being)

It is true that in every language all words are not equal as regards the way in which they denote meaning. Some words denote their meanings with great generality and extension of meaning, yet precisely, obviously, and without any ambiguity or doubt. The word 'thing' can be used for every object, the highest or the lowest, whether substance or accident, but no-one has the slightest doubt as to the meaning of this word. There are, on the other hand, words that have vagueness in the breadth or narrowness of their meaning, in the sense that we find an explanation or commentary necessary to discover their true, original meanings as they are; and looked at from the point of view of reality and the referents of words in reality, it is also possible that a vagueness arises which has nothing to do with the meaning of the word, but is rather a confusion of reference.

The notion of existence (being) is a notion (*mafhūm*) which is self-evident, and we do not in any way need a definition or explication to understand it. But should it happen that we come across definitions of existence in philosophical terms (such as 'self-sufficiency', or 'existence is something about which people have information', or the suchlike), they are entirely lexical definitions (*ta'rīf lafẓī wa lughawī*), and are not nominal definitions (*sharḥ-i ism*) or real definitions (*ḥadd*) or descriptive definitions (*rasm*).[1]

The Grand Master, Abū 'Alī b. Sīnā, says in his *al-Najāt*:

> It is not possible to define existence except by a nominal definition (*sharḥ-i ism*), because all explications and definitions of things are by means of existence, and there cannot be an explication for existence; on the contrary, the notion (*mafhūm*) of existence is formed by itself in the mind without any intermediary.

1 In the terminology of Sabzawārī, and also in the apparent words of the Grand Master, the nominal definition (*sharḥ-i ism*) is confused with the lexical definition (*sharḥ-i lafẓ*), and each is used in place of the other; whereas the nominal definition (*sharḥ-i ism*) is completely different from the lexical definition (*sharḥ-i lafẓ*). The lexical definition is only a definition of the word (*sharḥ lughawī wa lafẓī*) without any mention of quiddity and reality, but the nominal definition is a definition of the quiddity before existence; and after it takes on existence the nominal definition automatically becomes a real definition and a descriptive definition (*ḥadd wa rasm*).

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2 That Which Makes Existence Known is Neither a Real Definition (*ḥadd*) Nor a Descriptive Definition (*rasm*)

In the terminology of logic, the real definition (*ḥadd*) is the definition of a thing by means of genus and differentia; and the real genus and differentia are grasped from matter and external form. Therefore, only that quiddity which, like a body in the external world, is composed of matter and form can have a real definition and genus and differentia. Now, since real existence is completely non-composite it can have no matter and form, or genus and differentia, and, in consequence, it is never possible to define existence by a real definition. Similarly, existence cannot be made known by descriptive definition (*rasm*), because descriptive definition is a definition which is made through general and particular accidents, and accidental things are entirely from the class of quiddities, and existence is other than quiddity; rather, it bestows existence on quiddity and makes nothing something. And, just as that which makes existence known is not any real definition nor any descriptive definition, neither can it be any nominal definition (*sharḥ-i ism*), because there is no difference between the nominal definition and a real or descriptive definition except from the point of view of logic.

3 Which is Fundamentally Real: Existence or Quiddity?

We mentioned existence in the previous paragraphs only in regards to its being a concept (*mafhūm*). Now it has to be determined whether existence has complete and fundamental reality (*aṣālat*), or whether it is only a non-real, mental concept (*mafhūm-i iʿtibārī*); or whether that thing which gives rise to real effects, and is fundamental, is quiddity rather than existence. And this investigation is known in philosophy as the debate as to whether existence or quiddity is fundamentally real (*aṣālat-i wujūd aw māhiyyat*) [in the external world as opposed to being a purely mental notion (*mafhūm*)].

Before discussing this, the meaning of quiddity must be made clear so that that thing which the philosophers discuss as the reality of its fundamentality may be understood. So, with this understanding, we shall proceed to give an explanation.

4 The Definition of Quiddity

'Quiddity' is an expression for a general nature which occurs in answer to a question about the reality of a thing. For example, if a question is asked about

the reality of Zayd, it will be said in the answer that he is a man, and therefore the quiddity of Zayd will be 'man'.

In the controversy over whether existence or reality is the fundamental, we shall suppose that there is an existent thing that is in reality no more than a single thing in the world outside the domain of the mind: for example, a man, a star, or a tree. From the outside world, we entrust this thing to the mind's analytic apparatus, and thus we analyse it into two things and say that 'the tree exists' or 'the man exists'. This man or tree has one quiddity and one existence. In this way we can see within the territory of the mind itself two things from one thing outside, and that 'thing' which we show to be existent is the quiddity, and 'being' itself we call existence. Now we have to understand whether that reality which has been indisputably proved in the outside world is a referent and a real unit of existence, or a real unit of quiddity. If it is a real unit of existence, then existence is the fundamental reality; if it is a real unit of quiddity, quiddity is the fundamental reality. Thus the aim is to find the fundamentality of whichever thing has reality outside the mind.

In this matter not one of the philosophers has held the opinion that both existence and quiddity are together fundamental, and probably no philosopher could maintain such a dual-fundamentalism, because the fundamentality of each one of them entails the non-fundamentality of the other. Now, the assumption is that in the external world there is not more than one reality, and, if someone believed in a dual-fundamentalism, it would necessarily follow that every single external reality were two distinct realities. Then it would not be possible for either one to predicate the other, for in predication there is a necessity for the uniting of the subject and the predicate, and it is impossible to have a union between two distinct realities; in fact, existence is undoubtedly the predicate of quiddity, and it is said that 'the man exists', 'the sun exists', 'the quarry exists'.

5 Arguments for the Fundamentality of Existence (*al-wujūd*)

5.1 *Argument 1*

Since existence is the origin and source of every good and perfection, it must inevitably have fundamentality (*aṣālat*) and reality (*ḥaqīqat*), for, if it depended on our thinking, how could a subjective concept (*mafhūm-i iʿtibārī*) be the source of effects and the source of good and perfection?[2]

2 This argument seems at first sight to be begging the question (*muṣādarah bi al-maṭlūb*), because one who maintains the fundamental primacy of quiddity will say that existence is not the source of perfection and good, for every perfection is firstly and secondly from quiddity,

5.2 *Argument 2*

The difference between mental existence and external existence is that effects result from an external thing, while from a mental thing there is no resultant effect. For example, a mental sun cannot give off light, whereas the external sun and moon do give off light and the existent things of the world of nature achieve being and growth in their rays. Now, if quiddity were fundamentally real these effects would have to result from quiddity both in the external world and in the mind because quiddity exists both in the external world and in the mind, and everywhere it exists it would have to bestow its effects; whereas, in fact, in all conscience, it is not like this.

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and quiddity has reality, not existence. But it is possible for this argument to be made in such a way that no suspicion of a *petitio principii* occurs, thus it can be said that the source of perfections and goodness is either existence or non-existence; or it is something that is neither existence nor non-existence; or it is something which is both existence and non-existence. Now, it is not possible to say that the source of perfections is something which is both existent and non-existent, because that would be the co-presence of two contradictories (*ijtimāʿ-i naqīḍayn*), and thus against the law of contradiction; similarly, it is not possible for us to say that the source of perfections is something which is neither existent nor non-existent, for the result would be co-absence of two contradictories (*irtifāʿ-i naqīḍayn*), and thus against the law of the excluded middle. Therefore the matter is restricted to our saying that the source of perfections is either existence or non-existence, and non-existence cannot be the source of perfection because the dispute is over something which has reality, and reality cannot be conceived for non-existence. By this elaboration, the source of perfections cannot be anything else other than existence, and if quiddity could produce perfection, it would be necessary that something which, on the level of its own essence is neither existent nor non-existent, be the source of goodness and perfections; and if it is said that it is quiddity related to the Maker of the source of perfection, and not quiddity on its own, we shall say that this is nothing more than a non-real, mental, categorical relationship (*nisbat-i maqūlī iʿtibārī*), and that a real relationship of emanation (*nisbat-i ishrāqī*) cannot be anything else but existence. With regard to emanation, in Islamic philosophy, all those relationships between two things such as '*x* is above *y*', '*x* is far from *y*', '*x* is bigger than *y*', etc., are considered to be constructs of the mind, for they have no real existence; what exists is '*x*' and '*y*', but it is our minds which establish the relation between them. These kinds of relationships are called categorical relationships (*nisbat-i maqūlī*). However, these kinds of relationships cannot be posited between an existent thing and Existence, or between a created thing and the Creator, for there are not two things in reality, the existence and Existence, the created thing and Creation; instead, the relationship is in this case compared to that between light and the thing which becomes visible, and is called *nisbat-i ishrāqī* (a relationship of illumination or emanation). (Translator)]

5.3 *Argument 3*

By means of existence all things have stepped beyond the limit of equality of relation to existence and non-existence, and have become worthy of the attribute of reality.

Quiddity, to the extent of its own substance, is nothing without existence and non-existence. By itself, it cannot be named non-existent, and, by itself, it cannot be named existent. If we want to say that something is existent or non-existent, we must attach to it a cause of existence or a cause of non-existence. Then we interpret it in the first case as being existent, and in the second case as being non-existent. Now, if quiddity is in itself like this (i.e. it is neither worthy of the attribute of reality and being existent, nor worthy of claiming the attributes of not-being and non-existence), and, supposing that existence were also non-real, in what way can we call quiddity existent and positive after it had been related to the efficient doer, the agent (*fāʿil*, *ʿāmil*)?[3] And is it possible that reality can be attributed to a quiddity by the joining together of an existence and a quiddity that are both non-real? If someone does not accept this simple argument, and says that quiddity is, of course, non-real when considered itself without relation to the Source (*mabdaʾ*), but that the discussion relates to the situation after the establishing of the relation, that is, that it becomes a reality after becoming related to the Creator (*jāʿil*), and that quiddity therefore has fundamentality and reality, and existence is nothing more than something non-real which can become detached from the real quiddity, we will ask in reply whether quiddity becomes different after being related, or not. If the effective agent cannot identify a difference in the quiddity, and the quiddity remains in its own state (nothingness) even after the making, and, in the same state obtains reality by itself without acquiring reality and completion through the cause of the Creator, this necessitates a reversal of the contingency and necessity of existence; because something which finds reality and fundamentality by itself and without any outside influence is no longer contingent existence (*mumkin-i wujūd*) but necessary existence (*wājib-i wujūd*); and if the doer creates a difference in the quiddity after the doing, surely that difference will be existence, since, apart from existence, there is nothing else which can be supposed to be the difference in the quiddity with respect to what was before. The fundamentality of existence is demonstrated by this argument.

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3 These terms and the ones which follow refer to the Source of Creation which is Necessary Existence. [Translator].

5.4 *Argument 4*

If existence did not have fundamental primacy, there would never be any possibility of unity and union between two things, and, as a result, there could be no predication between subject and predicate.

Because quiddity is essentially separable (i.e. separateness is part of the essence of quiddity), and every quiddity is totally different from every other quiddity, for this same reason essentially only one of the four relations (*nasab-i arba'*) can be conceived between quiddities,[4] and that is the relation of complete separation, because all quiddities which we compare with other quiddities, without 'existence' coming into the question, are completely different from each other, and no common matter can ever be supposed between two quiddities.

If it should happen that we see some common matter between two quiddities, and even sometimes that there is, in reality, equality between two separate concepts, it must be realised that this is only with the blessing of existence which is the basis and the means for the unity between two separate quiddities. Now, this same unity, accorded by existence, makes predication between two separate concepts possible, in such a way that if we take existence away from quiddities, no quiddity will be predicable of any other quiddity.

By way of an example: man is a quiddity which is different from the quiddity of knowledge from the point of view of the concept of separateness, but in this very matter, from the viewpoint of the union which occasionally exists between man and knowledge in the outside world, we can say that man is knowledgeable. But if we deny this basis of union in man, only the notion of man and the notion of knowledge remain for us. And with this supposition, how can these two clearly different things be predicated of each other, whether they are fundamentally real or whether they are two non-real, mental concepts?

5.5 *Argument 5*

An existent that is moving from imperfection to perfection, and is taking the way of gradual development (*takāmulī*), assumes, during the stages of this journey, various species (*anwā'*) and forms (*ashkāl*). But some of these species are perceptible and distinguishable from each other, while there are others which we can distinguish from each other only in our thinking and through our intellects. For example: an apple which [in ripening] develops from yellow

4 These are the four relations of a) complete separation, b) identicalness, c) inclusion, and d) partial similarity, which are the four possibilities for the connections between things. [Translator].

to red and from red to crimson assumes various species from the various colours of which we can discern in the outside world only yellowness and redness. However, by means of the proof known as the impossibility of there being no material thing which is indivisible (*burhān buṭlān al-juz' alladhī lā yatajazza'*) we can assume an infinite number of species and limits for this movement towards perfection. Now, if quiddity is fundamental, all of these infinite species will be fundamental and real, and, in consequence, for one movement whose starting and finishing points are specific and finite, we must assume an infinite number of species enclosed between these two limits. This is self-contradictory.

However, if existence is fundamental, this objection will not arise, because existence is a single reality which, in all the limits and stages of the journey towards perfection, is the protector of unity (*ḥāfiẓ-i waḥdat*) and the absolute ruler (*ḥākim ʿalā al-iṭlāq*), and its most intense degree has no real or substantial difference from its faintest.

6 The Concept of Existence

For every thing there is a reality and a concept; the reality of everything is those actual things which are existent in the world outside the domain of the mind and thought, and on which the effects of existents depend.

For example, 'man' has a reality and a concept. The reality of 'man' is those individuals who have existence in the outside world: they speak, they listen, they do things. But the concept of man is nothing more than a mere general form in thought, and this form never has the advantages and properties of human-ness. Nevertheless, the concept, by itself, more or less indicates the reality and facts of man. Existence also has a reality and a concept. The reality of existence is that very thing in the outside world which drives away non-existence, and which takes form all over the world of being. It is the origin of all the effects and actions and reactions in the universe.

The philosophers say that the reality of existence is neither cognisable nor intelligible, because cognisance is an expression for the presence of the thing being cognised together with the power of cognition, and the power of cognition must encompass that thing in knowledge so that cognisance may result; however, it cannot encompass the reality of existence because the latter encompasses all things. Moreover, if we accept that the reality of existence is that very thing which is actualised in the outside world, then it is no longer possible that self-same thing should be present in the mind and that the mind should be aware of it; rather, it is the concept of existence which is the clearly conceivable thing, and, what is more, it seems clearer and

more evident than anything else. With this detailed account of the difference between the reality and the concept of existence, there should be no room for false reasoning or mistake, but the following fallacy arose in the thinking of Fakhr al-Dīn Rāzī (d. 606 AH/1209-10 CE), who said:

> Existence is plainly conceivable, and the reality of God, which is this very existence, must be plainly conceivable to everyone, whereas it is otherwise, and they cannot have any thought or idea of the substance of the sacred Essence of God. In this way it is evident that the reality of God is other than the reality of existence.

In reply to him it must be said that real existence and the reality of existence must be understood to be different from, and other than, the mental concept of existence. If the notion of existence is clearly and obviously conceivable, this is in no way a proof that the reality of existence is also evident to every person; and the Essence of God is a real existence which is neither cognisable nor intelligible, it is not a concept of existence which is evidently and primarily conceivable. One of the qualities and properties of the concept of existence is the univocity of existence, meaning that 'existence' is a word with one meaning, and that it applies with this meaning to all particulars and realities, and this is called 'univocity', in contrast to 'homonymy' where one word is used for different things, like the word "*ayn*' in Arabic which can mean many things (an eye, a spring, etc.)

Anyhow, the univocity of the concept of existence can be demonstrated in several ways.

6.1 *Argument 1: The meaning of existence appears to be identical in all individuals and external referents*

The separation of a mental concept from external realities and individuals can, in its basic sense, be compared to a seal which leaves its mark on a sheet of paper, meaning by this that if we press the seal once onto the sheet of paper, the impression that it leaves there is the very same impression that it leaves at other times of the mark of the same seal when it is placed in the same way on the same distinct spot. And if it should happen that we perceive that it has left another mark, different from the first mark, we should certainly understand that the first seal has a different design from the first.

The clear page of the mind is also like a sheet of paper, and it imprints the mark of external existence onto itself. Now, if we carefully make out the image of the being of an existent like 'man' in our mind, the 'mark' of the *being* of that object is exactly the same as the 'mark' which comes into the mind from the *being* of other existents like a tree or a stone. And if there is a

difference in the mental images of existents, this difference has no connection with the 'mark' of the *being*. Rather, all existents, with all their diversity of species and form are identical and mentally uniform from the point of view of existence. And this is a proof of the univocity of the concept of existence.

6.2 *Argument 2: The oneness of meaning of non-existence*

Non-existence, however it may be conceived, and to whatever thing it is appended, has no more than one meaning, and that is 'non-being'; for there is no difference or distinction between non-existences insofar as they are non-existent. Therefore, existence, too, which is the contradictory of non-existence, does not have more than one meaning; and, like non-existence, it is used with one meaning in all situations; for the contradictory of a single thing must be a single thing. If the contradictory of a single thing were more than one thing, it would entail the co-presence or co-absence of two contradictories. For example, if the contradictory of man were two things, one non-man, the other stone, these two things would either require each other for existence, or else their being together would be only accidental. If they required each other for existence, either they would be cause and effect or they would be two effects from one cause, but in either case there would be a common factor between the two dependent things, and since that common factor is one thing, the contradictory of the single thing would be one thing, not many. If those two things were supposed to be accidentally together, they would of course be separable, and on the hypothesis of the separateness of each one from the single thing we derived them from, we get the following result: that [a] single thing (man) is either existent or non-existent. If it has been actualised, then, by comparing it with the contradictory that has been actualised, we have the co-presence of two contradictories; and if it has not been actualised, then, by comparing it with the contradictory that is non-existent and non-actualised, we have a co-absence of two contradictories.

6.3 *Argument 3: The concept of existence can be divided up among all things*

If we want to, we can divide up a general concept (not a part of it) into its particulars and individuals. Certainly, what is divided up exists in all individuals in the same proportion. For example, we say that 'animal' can be divided up among its own species (cow, lion, horse, etc.); 'animal', which is what can be divided up among those individuals, exists in the same proportion in all of its species, and has the same meaning in all of the individual cases. So, also, the concept of existence, if we establish it as divided up into its individuals units, and say it is 'necessary existence' or 'contingent existence', 'substance' or

'accident', 'man' or 'inanimate object', 'sky' or 'earth', or whatever; in all of these individual things it only has one meaning. And if existence were a word with many meanings, it would have a special meaning in each case, and this would never justify its being divided up into those individual units. Therefore, since it is justified in being divided up, its univocity is hereby demonstrated.

6.4 *Argument 4: If existence did not have a univocal meaning, the recognition and perception of thoughts would cease*

At the beginning of this discussion it was pointed out that if the univocity of the meaning of existence were proved and demonstrated, it would be very simple and easy to understand that the reality of existence was in the same way also a single reality, just as the Pahlavī philosophers, on this same point, regarded the reality of existence to be a single reality and a category with equivocity (*tashkīk*). But a number of scholastic theologians (*mutakallimūn*), such as Abū al-Ḥasan Ashʿarī and Abū al-Ḥusayn Baṣrī and their followers, rejected the idea of the univocity of the concept of existence, for they supposed that if the concept of existence was common among all existents in such a way that it was established both for the Essence of the Almighty and for the rest of existents, then surely we would have to believe that both the Almighty and the rest of existents shared the same limitation and had the same order of magnitude, and if a common limitation existed, a distinguishing factor would also be necessary. Then, for Almighty God we should have to believe in two separate things for what He is: (a) the common factor, and (b) the distinguishing factor; and this combination would be in the Essence of the Almighty, and it would also necessitate contingency.

> He is neither composite, nor a body, nor visible nor localised;
>
> He is without partner, utterly singular, and know to a certainty that your mental images of Him are superfluous.[5]

But in reply to this the philosophers say that existence has univocity in its meaning (*yak wujūd-i mushtarak-i maʿnawī*),[6] for if it were not like this, the powers of understanding would cease to function, because, if we said that God

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5 In the original Persian: *nah murakkab būd wa jism nah marʾī nah maḥall | bī sharīk ast wa maʿānī-yi tū ghanī dān wājib* [Editor].

6 Fakhr al-Dīn Rāzī says in his *Muḥaṣṣal afkār al-mutaqaddimūn wa al-mutaʾakhkhirūn* that if existence had univocity in its meaning it would be contrary to quiddity. Thus existence would occur to a thing, which was not existent, and on the basis of this there would be doubt about the existence of solid objects.

exists, what would we mean by the being-existent of God? If the meaning of the existentiality is existence itself, which is also said of the rest of existents, then we would believe in univocity between God and His creation, and this is null and improper according to the theologians. And if we mean by existence a concept opposite to existence, in other words, that being has the meaning of non-being, then the Source of the genesis and being of the world has been denied and ignored. Perforce we must say that we do not understand the being-existent (*mawjūdiyyat*) of God, and that our intellect and thinking fails even to understand the meaning of words which we have created ourselves, let alone the facts of existence and the supernatural world. So the truth is to say that the concept of the being-existent of God is the same as the concept of existence among the rest of existent things, and that when we say that God exists we mean nothing other than the existence of the Source of creation and being (*hastī*) cannot have the meaning of non-being (*nīstī*). In any case, no necessity arises for univocity in the Essence of the Almighty and the rest of existents because the reality of existence is a reality which is of the kind which has equivocity (*tashkīk*), and existence in the degree of everlastingness is realised beyond infinity with an unlimited infinitude of number, time, and intensity, and in other existents it is found with a definite limitation.

6.5 *Argument 5: An Example from* [*Arabic*] *Literary Theory* (*yak shāhid-i adabī*)[7]

Among the things which support the view of the univocity of [the concept of] existence, is an argument based on the view held in Arabic poetics that the repetition of the same rhyme word in the successive lines of a poem is deemed a defect and shortcoming adversely affecting the quality of a poem. Now, if the Arabic word for existence, namely *wujūd*, were to be repeated successively, as the rhyme word in an Arabic poem, then indeed, this would be an instance

7 Note: This entire section, consisting of a single, dense paragraph of five lines over two pages, (pp. 14-15) was left un-translated by the translator with a note in pencil at the top of p. 15 stating: 'to be translated'. Understanding this paragraph requires a thorough grounding in Classical Arabic literature, a grounding that the author's readers would have and thus, a simple translation was not possible. Consequently, in order to accurately convey the intent of the author to an English speaking reader, the editor was compelled to considerably expand upon the original in creating what is more akin to an expansive paraphrase rather than a close translation. Toward this end, the editor benefited greatly from the following: Mullā Hādī Sabzawārī (d. 1289 AH/1873), *Sharḥ ghurar al-farā'id*, ed. Mehdi Mohaghegh and Toshihiko Izutsu (d. 1414 AH/1993), Tehran, 1981, p. 49 which corresponds to p. 17, 4th line from the bottom to p. 18, line 1 of the lithograph edition of 1298 AH/1872; see also the English translation of this text *The Metaphysics of Sabzavārī*, Mehdi Mohaghegh and Toshihiko Izutsu (d. 1414 AH/1993), Tehran, 1991, p. 42. [Editor].

of such a blameworthy repetition. Whereas were the word *wujūd* a homonymous term (*mushtarak-i lafẓī*), then this would not be an instance of blameworthy repetition, but an instance of laudable usage of an homonymous term as a rhyme word paronomasia (*tajnīs al-qāfiyah*).[8] Therefore, it is seen that the term *wujūd* maintains one meaning and is therefore univocal.

7 The Reality of Existence

Various opinions and beliefs have come down to us from the metaphysicians concerning the reality of existence and its unity and multiplicity.

The most famous and lasting of the beliefs which have been proposed for the reality of existence is the opinion of the Pahlavī philosophers, which the members of the Illuminationist (*ishrāqī*) school interpreted as being acceptable and took as the basis of their philosophical ideas.

These philosophers did not believe that there was more than one reality for existence, and they did not consider the differences that can be seen in the particulars of this reality to be at variance with the unity of that reality. They said that, basically, there is the difference between two things or between the essence of those two things, like the difference that exists between the higher genera;[9] then there is the difference in a part of the essence, not in all of it, like the difference seen in the species of one genus; then again there may be no difference in the essence at all, instead there is difference only in things attached to the essence, in the accidents external to the quiddity, like the difference which exists between individuals of the one quiddity of the same species. However, apart from these, another difference is conceivable, which the other philosophers did not wish to acknowledge as being conceivable, and that is the difference in terms of imperfection and perfection, meaning that an imperfect thing and a perfect thing are, in their very difference, from one reality. They do not differ completely in their

8 I have exercised some licence in appropriating this term of Greek origin for my purposes. According to the OED, paronomasia, means 'A playing on words which sound alike; a word-play; a pun'.[Editor].

9 The meaning of the higher genera is the ten categories, the first of which is substance, while the other nine are accidental categories. Each of the ten categories is a higher genus which is not contained in any other genus. Thus each of them is distinct from the others in all its essence. [These are known as *al-maqūlāt al-ʿashar* in Arabic and the remaining nine accidental categories, in order after subtance (*jawhar*), are: quantity (*kam*), quality (*kayf*), relation (*iḍāfah*), place (*ayn*), time (*matā*), position (*waḍʿ*), having/possesion (*judda/milk*), doing (*an yafʿal*), and being affected (*an yanfaʿil*). See Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusayn al-Ṭabāṭabāʾī (d. 1402 AH/1981), *Bidāyat al-ḥikmah*, Beirut, 1406 AH/1985, p. 72.

essence, nor in part of their essence, neither through their external accidents; rather, the perfection and superfluity in the perfect individual is in the very same reality in which the imperfect individual is lacking.

Shaykh Shihāb al-Dīn Suhrawardī, the author of *Ḥikmat al-ishrāq* (*The Wisdom of Illumination*) which gave new life to Illuminationist philosophy, only believed that this kind of difference applied to real light, and he said in his book:

> The reality of light, whether it be substance or accident, has no difference in the fundament of its reality, and the difference which is observed in individuals is only in perfection and imperfection, not in reality.

The best example for this kind of difference among perceptible things is the light observed by the senses, which sheds its rays onto the surface of bodies. If we imagine that we are comparing two individual, perceivable lights, one of which has greater brilliance and luminosity than the other, how can the cause of the difference between these two be anything other than the reality of the light itself?

On looking closely, we find that the strength of light in the completely luminous light is nothing but an accretion in the reality of light, whereas the weakness of light in the weak light is nothing but a lack of that same reality. Thus it must be said that the abundance and the lack in the one reality is not opposed to the unity of that reality, insofar as it is the reason for the difference and variation in individuals.

In the opinion of this group of philosophers, then, the reality of existence must be conceived in the same way; and the difference between individuals in strength and weakness, priority and posteriority, and ultimately in perfection and imperfection,[10] will not disturb the real unity of the oneness of the reality of existence.

In contrast to the Illuminationists, we can place the Peripatetics, who, on the whole, followed the school of Aristotle, and who did not recognise the possibility of this kind of difference in any one reality. Naturally they could not believe in one particular reality for existence. On this basis, they conceived of the individuals of existence as being separate realities in the whole of their essence; in this way they wanted to observe completely the simplicity

10 The manifestations of the equivocity (*tashkīk*) of one reality can be said to be equivocity of various kinds: coming first or not coming first, priority or posteriority, being greater or being lesser, being more or being fewer, being stronger or weaker, being complete or defective; sometimes perfection and imperfection are used in place of all these manifestations.

and un-compoundedness which is one of the special features of existence. For, if they believed in a marked difference in a part of the essence, or in the things appended to individual instances of existence and their external elements, existence would surely become a generic or specific concept, and the compoundedness of genus and differentia, or of species and individual, which they were trying to avoid, would come about, and this in itself would be irreconcilable with the general fundamentals of philosophy. So they conceived of the individual instances of existence as being completely different from each other, and they declared that not a speck of essential universality should be admitted for it. Now, if someone were to ask them what the univocal concept of existence was which is used for all existent individuals and realities with the same meaning, they would reply that the concept of existence is an accidental concept abstracted from its predicate (*mafhūm-i ʿarḍī khārij-i maḥmūl*) and which is used for every existent thing, but that in the univocity itself there is not the slightest bit of essential or quidditative univocity.[11]

The Peripatetics demonstrated the truth of their belief in the following way:

> If the individual instances of existence are universally from one reality, that reality would exist in all individuals equally and in one way, and in that case how would it be possible to consider some of its individual instances as causes and efficient factors for other individuals, and others as effects? And since all are from one reality and are connected to one source, there will be choice and specification of one individual as the cause and having priority in causality, and of the other as the effect and having posteriority, without any justification or reason.

The theologians were placed in opposition to these two groups. They completely denied the reality of existence, and said that there was fundamentally no such reality for existence that could be called a single or multiple reality distinct in all its essence; rather, it must be said that the individual instances of existence are that universal concept of existence which in the case of every quiddity is added to that quiddity; and these they called the 'mental portions' (*ḥiṣaṣ-i dhihnī*).

Despite all these opinions, another group developed a special theory known as 'direct experience of divine realities' (*dhawq-i taʾalluh*) based on intellectual

11 Concepts are either essential or accidental, and accident is either accidental and abstracted from its predicate, or accidental and attached to its predicate. Each of them, accidental or essential, is either found in the section on apodictics or in the section on the five predicated in the books on logic.

intuition, and opined that there was a reality and even a real individuality for existence, and conceived of no kind of multiplicity for it in any way that could measure the difference of each thing from another. They only considered multiplicity to be proved for existents, that is, quiddities which have a kind of relation or connection with the source of existence and the real existent.

They said that if the word 'existent' is used on its own for this reality without any limitation or condition, it will give the meaning of absolute existence; and if it is used for quiddity, then surely a link with the source of existence and the reality of being must be postulated, just as in the case of a person who is called a perfumer because of the connection he has with perfume, but not because he is himself perfume.

However, according to the bases and fundamental principles of philosophy, those who seek reality cannot accept this explanation, because it involves the question of the fundamentality of existence or quiddity, and this matter has already been decided in such a way that leaves no room for discussion.

Another group, this time of Ṣūfīs, took a step further forward. They said that existence and the existent both have oneness, and there is no possibility of any kind of multiplicity either in existence or in the Real existent. If something called existent is seen apart from the Pure Reality of existence, but somehow like it, it is because it is an imaginary existent seen by squint eyes and has no reality. This famous poem is about this group:

> All that exists is but illusion and fancy;
>
> Mere reflections in mirrors, nothing but shadows[12]

Another group, some of whom were Ṣūfī scholars and some of whom were inquirers after reality who were [also known] as great Islamic philosophers, conceived of the reality of existence and the existent as being one, and that in that oneness there was multiplicity. Put in another way, they believed in unity in multiplicity, and multiplicity in unity, and this is one of the specific kinds of equivocity (*tashkīk*).[13] In any case, it does not involve what was to be avoided,

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12 The original Arabic is by ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Jāmī (898 AH/1492 CE): '*kullu mā fī al-kawn wahmun aw khayāl | aw ʿukūs fī al-mirāyā aw ẓilāl*'. [Editor].

13 The philosophers and Ṣūfīs have also referred to equivocity (*tashkīk*) as general (*ʿāmmī*), specific (*khāṣṣī*), specific specificity (*khāṣṣ al-khāṣṣ*), most specific properties (*akhaṣṣ al-khawāṣṣ*), summary of the specific specificity (*khulāsat khāṣṣ al-khāṣṣ*), and the summary of the most specific properties (*khulāsat akhaṣṣ al-khawāṣṣ*). All of these terms are interchangeable.

namely that two opposites—unity and multiplicity—should exist together or should both be absent.

8 Existence is in Addition to Quiddity

In this controversy, the philosophers (*ḥukamā'*) come up against the Ashʿarī theologians: but they prove a perfectly evident matter to dispel some of their illusions.

Some theologians have said that existence, even as a mental conception, has unity with and is identical to quiddity, and that every concept that comes to mind by the word 'existence' comes to mind in exactly the same form as a quiddity. For example, there is no difference, even from the point of view of the meaning of the word, between existence, man, or tree.

But the philosophers emerged in a position to get rid of this illusion. First they analysed existence, which is the subject of the philosophical discussion, into reality and concept, and then showed each of these to be prior to and contrary to quiddity in the mind, by the following means.

1. Existence, which we are comparing with quiddity, has 'appropriateness of negation' (*ṣiḥḥat al-salb*), in the sense that if we say that existence is not quiddity and quiddity cannot be existence, this negation appears to be true. This is itself a proof of the contrariety of these two concepts.
2. The predication of existence to a quiddity is useful, whereas to predicate a thing to itself entails no advantage.
3. If we want to verify that a certain quiddity exists, we must demonstrate its being existent, and if quiddity and existence were identical its being existent would never need to be demonstrated, because the demonstration of a thing for the thing itself is self-evident.
4. Existence, as a concept, is one, in every instance in which it is mentioned: whilst quiddity has different and distinct conceptualisations.
5. It is possible to separate existence from quiddity in the domain of the mind, in the sense that it is possible for someone to fix quiddity in his conceptualising and thinking as an object of attention and observation and to imagine existence as completely disregarded.

Mullā Ṣadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī, in his book, the *Asfār*, states, with all the simplicity befitting his rank and position in philosophy, that:

> All of these various points lead to one matter only, which is by itself obvious and undeniable, and this is that, in spite of the Ashʿarīs, we know

> that the concept of existence and quiddity are separate and distinct. For it is never the aim in matters of philosophy merely to bring up a discussion about a word and to make known the synonymy or non-synonymy of the word: rather the aim is more to prove the difference of existence and quiddity or their unity from the point of view of reality, as some of the followers of the Peripatetic school,[14] who interpreted existence as an additional thing attached to quiddity, had sought to do. But it must be said that this aim is not attained only from these principles and foundations, but rather by decisive proofs which can be put forward to show and to demonstrate the opposite point, viz. that in reality there is a union of existence and quiddity

In the views of some of the recent philosophers, the different parts of the discussion have not found their conclusion even here, and they add a few further points.

First: Particular existence (*fard-i wujūd*), like the concept of existence, is added to and separate from quiddity, because real existence, which gives rise to particulars, is from a special class which quiddity cannot be from. The class of real existence is the rejection of non-existence, but quiddity is not a rejector of non-existence, and for this reason existence must have separateness from quiddity.

Only one point is in need of elucidation, and that is that the meaning of 'particular' is sometimes the particular of the encompassing outside world and general existence, which is explained as the unfolded existence (*wujūd-i munbasiṭ*) and the sacred effusion (*fayḍ-i muqaddas*), and sometimes it is the individual, limited, contained particular which is called, in the terminology of the Illuminationist (*ishrāqī*) philosophers, particular and confined existence (*wujūd-i khāṣṣah wa muqayyad*); however, in any case, particular, or in other words, real existence has separateness from quiddity in whatever sense it may have.

Second: The mental portions of existence (*ḥiṣaṣ dhihnī wujūd*) must also, like the general notion of existence and its particulars, be different from quiddity; and in this connection it must be said also that by the same proof that the general notion of existence is in addition to and separate from quiddity, the portions of existence must also be separate from quiddity,

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14 The Peripatetics were those who subscribed to the wisdom of Aristotle and to the basis of his philosophy, and they reasoned in the same way as he did. When Aristotle, after the death of his master Plato, began to teach his wisdom in a park outside Athens known as the Lyceum, where he engaged his students in discussion whilst walking with them in a conducive environment. Thus his philosophy became famous for being 'Peripatetic'.

because the portions are the same general notion of existence which is added and assigned to quiddities. But the Ashʿarī school believe in union and similarity in all these instances, and they fundamentally do not accept that the general notion of existence or its real particulars or its mental portions are different from quiddities.

9 Truth (God, the Exalted) is Pure Existence

Truth (*ḥaqq*), from the point of view of its verbal concept, means 'certainty', and its adjectival meaning is 'proved' or 'confirmed'; and it is with this meaning that the Essence of the Exalted Creator is called Truth (*al-ḥaqq*), because the certainty of the Reality of the One is the most perfect and most superior of the ways of proof, for it is worthy and deserving of the Divine and Holy Presence. The certainty and truth in Him is free from any kind of insufficiency, contingency, or non-being, and the sentence 'And Allah verifies the truth' (*wa yuḥiqqu allāhu al-ḥaqq*; Q. 10:82) confirms this meaning, for the purport of it is that God gives certainty and existence to all realities.

The philosopher Abū Naṣr Fārābī, who is famous as the *Magister Secundus* (the Second Master), and whom the Grand Master, Ibn Sīnā, mentions with respect—saying that 'Fārābī never spoke idly'—says the following about truth:

> Truth is a word that is used for an utterance, which, if we make that utterance correspond to reality, is in agreement with reality, and the meaning of correctness is the same as this, that is, if the utterance conforms to reality, it is a correct utterance.
>
> Sometimes truth is used for an existent whose existence has actuality and reality.
>
> Sometimes it is applied to a free and pure essence into whose pure limits no kind of annihilation has found its way.
>
> These are the meanings of the word 'truth', and Truth (God, the Exalted) is correctly described by all the meanings of the word.
>
> He is Truth because His Peerless Existence is the reality of pure perfection, and the reality of perfection is in complete conformity with every kind of perfect quality we ascribe to it.

> He is Truth because His Existentiality (*mawjūdiyyah*) is actual and real.
>
> He is Absolute Truth because no kind of annihilation is possible for His Pure Essence, but all things apart from Him, which are mixed with the obscurity of contingency, are completely annihilated.
>
> 'Everything, indeed, except Allah is subject to annihilation'.[15]

In short, the meaning of this is that existence, in the degree of the Divine Essence is not in additional or accidental to the Essence, but rather His Existence is the Essence itself and His Pure Essence is Pure Existence itself. But in contingent beings, existence is everywhere added to and accidental to quiddity, because, if existence were an accidental occurrence in the case of God, it would also be caused by something, for an accidental thing must always be the effect of some cause. Now, if we want to conceive of the existence of God as an effect, is His Existence the effect of His Essence, or the effect of something other than Him?

It can never be said that His Existence is caused by something else, because every effect caused by something else has contingent existence and is not necessary existence. And if we were to recognise His Existence as being the effect of His Essence—which is the cause and the thing to which this accident is accidental—would the existence itself be its own accident, or would it have another existence different from the accidental existence? If the existence itself were accidental, the priority of a thing over itself, which is proof of its own impossibility, would occur, and if another existence is conceived for the thing which is qualified by the accident, the very same difficulty would spread to the existence qualified by the accident, and an unacceptable infinite regress would occur.

Thus it must be said that it is not possible that existence in the case of truth be added to, and accidental to, its essence as it is in the case of other existents. Rather, His essence is the reality of existence and the real existence and is in no way mixed with quiddity. It is contingent existence which is compounded of existence and quiddity and is a mixture of being and non-being.

Therefore, we say that Truth is unmixed existence or pure existence, that is, it is not like contingent things which are compounded of quiddity and existence. In the words of the famous French philosopher René Descartes: 'Endless, Changeless, all-Knowing, all-Powerful'.[16]

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15 This last line is from an ode (*qaṣīdah*) by Labīd b. Rabīʿah al-ʿĀmirī (d. 41 AH/ 661 CE), which reads in its original Arabic as '*alā kulli shay'in mā khalā allāhu bi al-bāṭilu*'. [Editor].

16 The author cites a Persian work as his source for this quotation: *Sayr-i ḥikmat dar urūpā* (*The Story of Philosophy in Europe*) compiled by the late 'Furūghī'. Perhaps the ultimate

10 Mental Existence (or Existence in the Mind) (*wujūd-i dhihnī*)

10.1 *What is mental existence?*

There is no doubt that the quiddities of things take on reality by means of existence alone, with whatever meaning or to whatever degree or in whatever way that may be: but it must be determined whether it is external existence (i.e. existence outside the mind) which demonstrates things and makes them manifest, or whether another existence of a different kind can also indicate and 'make' quiddities.

Up to the point which the power of metaphysics can reach, it is seen that the Unique, Singular Essence of the Utterly Real, may He be exalted (*dhāt-i yaktā-yi ḥaqq-i taʿālā*), Who is Himself the Creator of existents, is far removed from likenesses and similarities; but there is no obstacle in the intellect or difficulty in His bringing signs and indications of Himself into existence and giving them Divine qualities.

And it is for this reason that it might be said that He created the rational soul of man as a reflection of the Essence and Divine Attributes and Acts so as to know himself; or, expressed otherwise, that knowledge of the principle of life, namely the soul, (*falsafah-yi rawān shināsī*) is the best means to know God and the easiest guide for humanity to the knowledge of Unity (*falsafah-yi tawḥīd*) and worship of the Unique (*yaktā parastī*): *He who knoweth himself, knoweth his Lord*.[17]

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source is the third meditation of Descartes' *Meditations on First Philosophy* (paragraphs. 40 and 45), wherein he states, that '...the idea that gives me my understanding of a supreme God, eternal, infinite, <immutable>, omniscient, omnipotent, and the creator of all things that exist apart from him, certainly has in it more objective reality than the ideas that represent finite substances'. and that 'By the word 'God' I understand a substance that is infinite, <eternal, immutable>, independent, supremely intelligent, supremely powerful, and which created both myself and everything else (if anything else there be) that exists'. See René Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, rev. ed., trans. and ed. John Cottingham, Cambridge: 1996, pp. 28, 31. [Editor].

17 This is widely regarded as a Prophetic *ḥadīth* by Ṣūfīs and followers of *ʿIrfān*. However, it is not to be found in the well known Sunnī works, i.e. the *ḥadīth* collections of Bukhārī (d. 256 AH/870 CE), Muslim (d. 261 AH/874 CE), Abū Dāwūd (d. 275 AH/888 CE), Tirmidhī (d. 279 AH/892 CE), Nasāʿī (d. 303 AH/915 CE), and Ibn Mājah (d. 273 AH/886 CE), nor in the collection of Dārimī (d. 255 AH/868 CE), nor in the *Muwaṭṭa'* of Mālik (d. 179 AH/795 CE), nor in the *Musnad* of Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal (d. 241 AH/855 CE). Shīʿī sources ascribe it to Imām ʿAlī (d. 40 AH/661 CE), see al-Muwaffaq b. Aḥmad al-Khawārizmī (d. 568 AH/1172 CE), *al-Manāqib,* 4th edn., Qum, 1321 SH/ 1945, p. 375; Kamāl al-Dīn Mītham al-Baḥrānī (d. 699 AH/1299 CE), *Sharḥ al-miʾat kalimah li al-imām amīr al-muʾminīn ʿalī ibn abī ṭālib ʿalayhi al-salām*, ed. Mīr Jalāl al-Dīn al-Ḥusaynī al-Urmawī al-Muḥaddith (d. 1399 AH/1979), Beirut, n.d., p. 54; Muḥammad Bāqir al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār al-jāmiʿah*

The sacred human soul is, at the root and origin of its being, like a celestial existent, and is free from any kind of material contamination and impurity, and in its potentiality of force (or power), knowledge, will, vitality, seeing, and hearing, it is the locus of the manifestation of the Divine, Sacred Essence.

Omnipotent God brought the likeness of a kingdom into existence for this heavenly being, similar to His own vast Kingdom, so that man might always be the disposer and absolute ruler in his own territory. Thus, like the Prime Creator, Who, by the unique splendour of existence, is the Maker of existents throughout the universe (the soul), also has the capacity of commandership and creativity in the territory under its power, so that it may dress whatever mental forms and conceptual shapes and images that it wishes in the raiment of existence.

But this existent (the soul), with all the power and might that it has, is, in the end, at a low stage of existence, and is remote from the Holy Divine Presence by a great distance. The actions and effects and forms which become manifest from Him are at the extremity of weakness of existence, and, naturally, are not clothed in the properties and effects which are looked for and sought after from an external existent. Rather it should be said that mental forms are generally but shadows and specimens of external existents which the soul has brought into existence so as to become aware of the external world, but that quiddity, which receives existence, is secure and unchanging throughout all the degrees and stages of existence.[18]

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li durar akhbār al-a'immah al-aṭhār, Qum, 1427 AH/2006, vol. II, p. 32 related by Imām Ja'far al-Ṣādiq (148 AH/765 CE). Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī (d. 911 AH/1505) devoted a treatise to establishing this *ḥadīth* as un-authentic in its ascription to the Prophet. See his *al-Ḥāwī li al-fatāwī*, pp. 238–241. Muḥyī al-Dīn ibn 'Arabī (d. 638 AH/1240 CE) is said to have authored a brief work commenting on this text entitled *Risālat al-aḥadiyyah*, which has been translated into English. See Cecilia Twinch (tr.), *Know yourself: An Explanation of the Oneness of Being*, Gloucestershire, 2011. However, it is doubtful that he wrote it. Osman Yahia is of the opinion that it was actually written by one Awḥad al-Dīn al-Balyānī; see his *Histoire et classification de l'oeuvre d'ibn 'Arabī, étude critique*, 2 vols., Damas: Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1964, 1:145–146; and Awḥad al-dīn Balyānī, Épître sur l'unicité absolue *presentation et traduction de l'arabe par Michel Chodkiewicz*, Paris, 1982; 'Abdul-Hâdî (John Gustav Agelii, dit Ivan Aguéli), Milan, 1988. [Editor].

18 In the case of some perfect souls who have stepped beyond the limit of the world of nature and have escaped from the material restrictions which surround humanity on all sides, it is possible to say that they are exempted from this rule and can by their own aspirations as humans and gnostics create things in the external world. But this is a miracle and something supernatural which must be investigated among the stations of the gnostics and is not to be accommodated within ordinary, normal bases and standards. In the words of the Grand Master, Ibn Sīnā, this group have wonderful secrets hidden in their resplendent souls, and they have forever put the seal of absolute silence on these unutterable secrets.

In any case, that existence which becomes the existent for quiddities only in the realm of the mind by the influence and formation of the soul and which does not have any of the looked–for and sought–after effects, is called mental existence; and that existence which takes on reality in the outside world and is the producer of real effects is called external or objective existence.

Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī said:

> Although the external sun is unique,
>
> Still it is possible to imagine one like it.
>
> But the Sun from which comes existence,
>
> Has no equal in the mind or the external world.[19]

10.2 *Proofs of External Existence*

Although mental existence is a completely obvious matter, this subject must, nevertheless, insofar as the topics of philosophy are dependent on reason and logic, also be demonstrated by various arguments and proofs:

1. Sometimes we make a positive, affirmative judgement about things which certainly have no external existence, as when we say 'The diamond mountain is glistening', or 'The co-presence of two contraries is different from the co-presence of two contradictories', and so forth. Since in affirmative judgements firstly we need to have a connection with the existence of the subject, and secondly the subject of this kind of judgement does not have external existence, the subject must certainly have mental existence.
2. We can, without doubt, conceive in our thinking of universals which are characterised by universality and generality, and which can never have external existence as long as they have this characterisation. Now, since a mental concept is an indication in the intellect, the aforementioned concept must certainly have intellectual existence, and if it were not like this, it would be absolute non-existence and we should be unable to indicate it.

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19 In the original Persian, '*shams dar khārij agarchih hast fard | mithl-i ū ham mītawān taṣwīr kard*; *līk shamsī kih azū shud hast-i athīr | nabūdish dar dhihn wa dar khārij naẓīr*'. Found in the sixth story of Book 1 of Rumi's *Mathnawī*, 'The taking of the healer to the patient by the king so that he may see her condition'. Another version of the third line quoted is '*shams-i jān kū khārij āmad az athīr*'. [Editor].

3. Every reality, in the purity and simplicity of its reality, can only be existent in the intellect, and not in the outside world, because every reality can be separated from its accidents and accessories, and its basis intellected and perceived with all its degrees without attachment to anything else. It is obvious that in this kind of intellection, in the case of every reality which can be so intellected, that reality is one and cannot have any kind of multiplicity or repetition, for there is nothing which can repeat itself all by itself. Realities in this condition can only become existent in the mind and not in the outside world, because external existence can never occur with this universality and be cognised in this way. From here we can understand that pure and simple reality, contrary to what some scholars have supposed, is not a natural universal, for natural universals exist in the outside world with attachments and accidents and in multiplicity, whereas reality in its purity and simplicity is neither externally existent nor multiple.

CHAPTER 3

Mental Existence

1 The Enigma of Mental Existence (*wujūd-i dhihnī*)

The philosophical history of mental existence contains within itself a particularly tangled problem that situates this topic in a position of specific importance among the most delicate discussions in Islamic philosophy, thereby setting the scene for a battle between the various views and opinions of the philosophers. The problem is as follows: the essence and the essential parts (*dhāt, dhātiyyāt*) of every quiddity must, without doubt, be preserved and be permanent in all the degrees and modes of existence, and this is a law of the intellect which cannot admit of any exception.

Now it must be seen whether, in the same way as they exist in the external world, the essence and the essential parts of an external quiddity can be presumed to be constant and preserved for the mental existence of that same quiddity. Or do its essence and essential parts entirely disappear when the existence is in the mind, and another quiddity comes into existence there which only has a formal resemblance to the outside world?

For example, man in external existence has genus and differentia, and is himself of the Aristotelian category of substance. But if we bring this man into existence in our thought, would he truly have the same genus and differentia or not?

If we say that genus and differentia, in other words the essential parts of the quiddity, are preserved in the world of the mind as they are in the outside world, it becomes necessary that a mental existent be both substance and accident, both from the category of mental quality and from another category to which its external existence belongs, for mental forms are all from the category of mental quality, and are thus in the last analysis accidents. Now this, in the language of the philosophers, would necessitate the unity of two opposite predicates for one subject (*ijtimāʿ mutaqābilayn fī mawḍūʿ wāḥid*)—which is a logical impossibility.

Sabzawārī says that the unity of substance and accident in one subject is not so very great a problem, because it is possible to say in answer to this that 'accident' is an accidental concept about a predicate abstracted from its subjects, and that it is not one of the concepts pertaining to quiddities of the realities of things such that there would result from this that there were one real existent which had two distinct essences. But the chief problem, the very tangled difficulty, is that two distinct categories seem to be posited together

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for one mental existent, and, if it is undeniable that mental existence belongs to the category of mental quality, and that in fact the highest genus of quality and designates it necessarily and naturally while at the same time it is also a mental substance, certainly two quiddity-concepts and two completely distinct essences will be applied to one actual existent, and thus all the categories will be contained in one category, and this problem is so important that it has attracted the attention of all the great philosophers.

Sabzawārī goes on to add that the difficulty with this riddle is that it has made some weak-minded individuals give up hope of solving this intricate problem, and to reject mental existence outright—whereas it is an undeniable fact—and to suppose that knowledge belongs to the category of relation, which has no external existence.[1]

However, as in all the problems of metaphysics, we must penetrate into the heart of such intellectual difficulties with courage, and not give way to weakness in such problems which are, after all, the very matters which the science of wisdom (*fann-i ḥikmat*) sets out to solve. We must endeavour, in every way that we can, to throw light onto reality and make the existing problems disappear. It is in this spirit that each of the philosophers has explored and ruminated on this problem to try to solve it, and each one, according to his own opinion, has overcome the difficulty.

2 The Solution to the Enigma

Some philosophers[2] have solved the problem by saying that the crux of the matter is that we conceive of a mental existent as really being 'a thing', and in such a case it is clearly impossible that we think of one real existent as belonging to both the categories of substance and quality and being both universal and particular. But, if it can be supposed that a mental existent is like a body having form and colour, which is placed in water or in a clear crystal bowl, it can be seen that the problem completely disappears. For, by supposing this, insofar as the imagined body exists in its place, the form and colour are completely reflected in that place.

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1 This point was made by Fakhr al-Dīn Rāzī who held that knowledge was of the category of relation. He concluded that since the category of relation concerns copulative existence and cannot therefore have any real mental existence, knowledge must also be without any mental existence.

2 In particular, this theory was advanced by Fāḍil Qushjī (d. 879 AH /1474 CE), the famous commentator on Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī's *Tajrīd al-kalām*. [Translator].

As an example, suppose we put an orange or an apple into a clear bowl, we shall, if we look at it carefully, see two things in it, not one. One is the orange or the apple itself which was placed in the bowl, and the other is the form and colour of it which is specifically reflected in the body of crystal close to it.

And the difference between these two existences is that the first is not tied to or connected with the existence of the bowl but has merely been placed in it, while the second existence is completely connected to the existence of the locus and is counted among the latter's qualifications and qualities. For, if we took away the crystal bowl, no effect of the reflection of the orange or apple would remain.

The form that is supposed to come into existence from one substantial quiddity in the crystal tablet of the mind would have the same essence and essential parts as the external quiddity, and it would form a mental substance that existed in this particular locus, although not having any connection with the existence of the mind. Coinciding with that spatial placement, there would also appear a reflection of that substance in the mind which would be completely connected with the mind and would be among the qualities and dependencies of the mind, and the quiddity of a mental quality would become applied to it. In this way it is clear that no further problem remains.

Another group of philosophers have speculated on a solution to the riddle of the intricacies of mental existence, and have concluded that mental forms are to be reckoned only as a series of likenesses to external existents, and are in no way the equivalents of the things which become externally known. In the same way as your speech or writing gives evidence of a world beyond the mind, mental images also disclose the realities of the world, the only difference between the existence on the one hand of speech and writing and on the other hand of mental images being that the evidence of speaking or writing is established by convention whereas the demonstration of mental forms is essential and natural.

In order to strengthen their point of view, this group says that the matter of the preservation and permanence of essential parts in all stages of existence, which, it was said, was a fact established by the intellect and therefore not subject to doubt, only held as long as the source of the quiddity existed so that its essential parts could be judged to be unchangeable according to the intellect. But if, they say, we conceive of mental forms and images as only likenesses and indications of facts and not [as the] facts themselves, then essence and quiddity will not have existence in the mind and the problem of their essential parts in the mind will not arise.

Yet another group[3] believes in 'essential transformation', and says that basically quiddity was a function of and an 'appearance' of existence,[4] and that since mental existence and external existence were completely different there was no obstacle to quiddity following this change and becoming transformed according to the change and conversion from external to mental.

By way of example, according to this view an external substance, as long as it is truly a substance, has reality outside the mind. However, as soon as the external substance changes into a mental form or event its quiddity undergoes a basic alteration and transformation and really enters into the category of mental quality. Perhaps it is for these reasons that these philosophers made a provision concerning external existence when defining substance and accident, and said that substance is something which, if it exists outside the mind, does so without there being a pre-existent subject to which it is applied.

Thus the complicated riddle of mental existence, which came into being as a result of trying to prove essence in the external world and in the mind, is completely resolved by the introduction of this principle.

Jalāl al-Dīn Dawwānī,[5] a scholar of the 9th/10th century AH, followed a separate way of solving this riddle, and, in his opinion, his was an easy and problem-free solution. He said that knowledge had been put in the category of quality due to carelessness and negligence and through being inexact, and that this carelessness had resulted in the explanation which had brought the problem into existence in the first place. In fact, he held, it is not in the category of quality. For the intelligible form of every external existent is the same quiddity which is brought into existence in the outside world, and in the mind it displays itself like a real quality which is an accident free from its substratum.

Therefore mental forms are not universally in any specific category which could give rise to any problem. There is only one small trouble in this, but it

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3 Particularly the philosopher Muḥammad Ṣadr al-Dīn Dashtakī (d. *c.* 903 AH/1498 CE), author of the gloss on the commentary (see footnote above) by Qūshjī on Ṭūsī's *Tajrīd*. [Translator].

4 Ḥakīm Sabzawārī used Persian, as opposed to Arabic, terms for existence, non-existence, and quiddity—using *būd*, *nabūd*, and *nimūd-i būd*, respectively.

5 Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Asʿad Dawwānī, whose death is reported as being between 907 and 918 AH, was from the village of Dawān which is in the area of Kazirūn near Shīrāz. Qāḍī Nūr Allāh, a famous biographer of the Shīʿah, mentions him among the scholars of Twelver Imām Shīʿism, and it is commonly believed that he was a Sunnī at the beginning of his life and then became a Shīʿah. He wrote works on metaphysics, theology, and jurisprudence. He participated in disputes and controversies with Prince Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad Dashtakī, who is remembered as a scholar. [Translator & Editors].

is not difficult to solve, and it is that mental existence, although it does not belong to two categories, is, however, ultimately accidental from the point of view that it is an accident added to the mind, and the co-presence of substance and accident in one real existent is not possible. The answer to this is that 'accident' is not a substantial and real concept, but an accidental concept of a predicate abstracted from its subjects, having a sort of detached existence.

3 The View of Ṣadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī

It is, however, to Ṣadr al-Muta'allihīn Shīrāzī that we must look for the most masterful answer to this problem, for here, as in most of the topics of philosophy, the ideas that he introduces and the method he uses are a true measure of his great stature.

He proves his theory about mental existence and the solution of its riddle, starting with an introduction about a logical matter, and this introduction is not only relevant here, but in many other places.

He says that when talking about the 'unity of predication' (*waḥdat-i ḥaml*)[6] in the discussion of contradiction the logicians have introduced an expanded concept of the conditions which entail contradiction, and they say, concerning the necessity for observing these conditions, that if a concept is predicated of a subject from the point of view of primary essential predication (*ḥaml-i awwalī-yi dhātī*), as when we say 'a man is a man' or 'a particular is a particular', there is no obstacle to that same identical concept being impredicable of that subject from another point of view, such as common predication (*ḥaml-i shā'i'*); for example, while it is true and correct from the viewpoint of primary predication to say 'a particular, is a particular', it is also true and correct to say 'a particular is not a particular' from the viewpoint of common predication whose common basis is [the] unity of existence,[7] and there is no self-contradiction in it so that it should become the target for the attacks and objections of logicians, for each of these two statements is from the viewpoint of separate predications. Self-contradiction would only occur if two statements—one negative, the other affirmative—were made with

6 There are normally eight kinds of unity which must obtain for there to be contradiction between two propositions: unity of subject, unity of object, unity of time, unity of place, unity of actuality or potentiality, unity of part or whole, unity of condition, and unity of relation. To these has been added 'unity of predication'. [Translator].

7 In primary existential predication there is unity of existence and unity of quiddity, but in common predication there is only unity of existence. [Translator].

one kind of predication. Then certainly one must be true and correct and the other incorrect and false.

Having finished the introduction, this result is employed in the discussion of mental existence. Every mental form is from one viewpoint the very same quiddity of the known object, which was in the external world; that is, by primary essential predication the same quiddity of the known object can be predicated of and compared to the mental form. But from another point of view—specifically, common predication—the quiddity of the known object cannot be compared to mental forms, and by common predication quiddity can only correspond to quality. In any case, self-contradiction has not been produced.

He then proceeds to prove this claim by investigation and further analysis. If we merely take one substance-concept as a species-concept, this operation in no way causes the species to be counted among the real instances of the substance, because the taking of one concept which is within another is no greater than the referring of one concept to itself, since it is very clear that no concept can be from among its own instances. For example, it can in no way be held that the concept 'man' is one of the real instances of man. So the mere insertion of one concept into a more general concept is not enough in reality: what makes something the individual of a universal quiddity is that real effects and properties belonging to that quiddity should come from it, and the only things whose real effects can be grasped are the realities outside the mind, and mental images and pictures are not part of that series of concepts called knowledge.

So as to clarify this matter, he mentions an example. If we want to define the surface of bodies in a general way we would say that the surface is a continuous part, which is naturally stable and fixed and divisible in two ways—length and breadth (but not depth). But all these words are of no value from the point of view of the reality and external properties of a surface, [as] the only result that comes from the verbal description is a detailed and comprehensive acquaintance with body surfaces in general, and no more. But if, instead of all these words, we find one real surface in the external world outside our thoughts, every effect and property that we expect from a surface will actually be found there.

It should briefly be stated that, according to this theory, mental forms also have no reality, since they do not have the necessary expected effects or properties: they are only the concepts of external realities.

If it be thought that this theory does not conform with the actuality of mental existence, because it explains mental forms as only a series of concepts lacking reality and existence, and that such an explanation is at variance with the idea of basic mental existence which has been

demonstrated and is something acknowledged by all, it must be said in reply that for every concept, ultimately, an existence is confirmed in our inner self and in our fundamental thinking, and that there is no doubt that this existence, or any other existence, has reality in its own environment and domain. Only the main point is that an existence, which occurs in the conceptualising of the mind, can never be counted as the real existence of that concept, since it does not have the required effects. And so it must be said that mental existence is only a subordinate or 'parasitical' existence of the quiddities of known objects, and not the realities of them. However, from the aspect that this existence has, in its own world, a reality, and embodies the required effects of that reality, a separate quiddity corresponds to it by ordinary predication; and none of the arguments for mental existence can prove anything more than a subordinate or parasitical existence for these quiddities.

The result that can be derived from this rather lengthy discussion is that mental existence, from the point of view of its being a form which carries through or relates to realities outside the mind, is a subordinate existence, in the end unreal. And from the point of view of being existent and being a particular mode of existence it is a basic particular of the quiddity of quality, since it has real properties of mental quality and pure quality. In this way, not only is the most basic difficulty of mental existence settled, but other non-basic difficulties which have cropped up occasionally peripherally to the main matter and which give mental existence a somewhat ambiguous nature are seen to have disappeared, and thus this solution has put an end to the very prolonged history of the problem of mental existence.

And now we shall mention here the other difficulties concerning mental existence in a shortened form for the information of the reader, and we shall leave the solution to them on the basis of the theory of the great Islamic philosopher Ṣadr al-Muta'allihīn Shīrāzī to the student himself.

1. It is extremely easy for us to conceive and picture in our imagination, limited and small as it is, hills touching the sky, vast deserts, boundless oceans, luxuriant forests, and even the whole of the immense earth, the azure sky, the twinkling stars, and the sun and moon of the world of nature. Now, if it should be that imaginary pictures are the real existence of the same quiddities and the realities of those existents, how is it possible to have the picture or the representation of the great in the small?
2. If truly for the realities of things another existence can be conceived in the mind in the form of a general concept, which, without doubt, would have a corporeal kind of natural conformity with all real and material individuals of that universal; and if at the same time we understand from its general

substance and properties that it is an intellected, incorporeal individuality, how can it be conceived that it is completely individual and particular on the one hand, and on the other hand a general concept which is true for many individuals? And if we conceive of it as a vague and non-individual mental existent which remains in vagueness and non-individuality with a kind of existence which it takes to itself, how can it manage to separate existence from individuality and particularity, and yet maintain for existence vagueness and plurality.

3. It is undeniable that the mind has the power at every moment to conceive of heat and at the same time to conceive of coldness, and the same part of it which perceives a straight line can also simultaneously perceive curved lines. It pictures the shape of a sphere to itself, and if it wants to it can also picture the form of a triangle or square. It calls to mind unbelief and also faith. If mental pictures and images are truly the existence of these realities, it is necessary that the mind should be qualified by kinds of contradictory qualities. For example, when it conceives of heat it would become hot, and when it conceives of cold it would become cold; when it thinks of a straight line it would become straight, and at another time when it thinks of a curved line it would become curved; or when by thought it looks at unbelief it becomes unbelieving and when it directs its attention to faith it becomes believing, although the mind is not qualified by these kinds of mental forms with these qualities.
4. The mind itself is surely an external existent, because the mind cannot itself exist in the mind; and if, according to what the supporters of mental existence say, something comes into existence in this external 'container', that thing will, like the 'container' itself have external existence. As when we say that water is in the bowl and the bowl is in the house, therefore the water is in the house, not outside the house. On this account, all mental existents exist in the external world and there is no question of another existence called mental existence which is in contradistinction to external existence.
5. Things which cannot possibly exist but which have been conceived of are not only conceivable—the impossible is not inconceivable—but, on the theory of the supporters of mental existence that the realities of things obtain being in the mind, they will also be existent and definite things in the mind. As an example it can be said that the co-presence of two contradictories or, say, a partner to the Creator, can have a form in the 'container' of the mind and that because we conceive them therefore they exist.

The answer to all these questions is evident when considered in the light of the previous exposition of the ideas of the great Islamic scholar, Ṣadr al-Muta'allihīn.

4 Unity of the Intellector and That Which is Intellected (*ittiḥād-i al-ʿāqil wa al-maʿqūl*)[8]

Porphyry was one of the great scholars who belonged to the Peripatetic school, and, since it was he who classified and wrote down the five universals, his name has been remembered in philosophical writings mostly as the author of the *Isagoge* (*Introduction*).[9] In regards to the subject of mental existence he did not recognise intellected forms as being the same as external quiddities, and he said that the objects of intellection had a specified oneness with the mind of the intellector, and that, in the same way as with existents belonging to the outside world we say that their being is that outside world and the outside world is that being, so also in the objects which are intellected by the mind; being has no contradiction with the mind. For being has a kind of unity and congruence with the mind, as does the mind with its own forms. And this theory is called in philosophy the unity of the intellector with the intellected.

The Grand Master, Ibn Sīnā, brought up this theory from the writings of Porphyry in one of his philosophical books and severely criticised it.

The shower of criticism poured on this theory by Ibn Sīnā was so vehement that it must be said that, contrary to his usual custom, it abandoned the form of a philosophical and scientific discussion and assumed the form of a contemptuous diatribe.

Ibn Sīnā, in broaching this matter in the versatile manner which is always to be seen in his method of proving something and which bears close resemblance to the method of mathematics, reveals the invalidity and baselessness of the theory of the unity of the intellector and the intellected. Then he proceeds to condemn the originator of this theory for short–sightedness and for having superficial knowledge. In his famous book, *al-Ishārāt* he relates what he calls an anecdote, but which it would be more accurate to call a complaint:

> There was a man named Porphyry who wrote a book on the intellector and the intellected which was praised by the Peripatetics and companions of the First Teacher (Aristotle); but it was grotesque nonsense. And they themselves knew that they didn't understand his book—no more

8 This phrase is also often translated as 'the unity of the knower and the known', or 'the unity of the intellect and the intelligible'. [Editor].

9 This was the first book of the nine books in traditional Aristotelian logic, the other eight being genuinely from the pen of Aristotle: *Isagoge, Categories*, *De Interpretatione* (*On Interpretation*), *Prior Analytics*, *Posterior Analytics*, *Topics*, *De Sophisticis elenichis* (*On Sophistical Refutations*), *Rhetoric*, and *Poetics*. For the works of Aristotle's see Barnes, Jonathan (ed.), *The Complete Works of Aristotle*. [Translator & Editor].

> than did Porphyry himself understood his discordant utterance. Even in his own time a man rose up to combat [the latter], and Porphyry replied to this refutation with arguments even more unseemly and banal than the original ones.[10]

He then adds that it must be known that the claim of someone who imagines that a certain thing becomes another thing, other than by means of a change from one state to another, or by way of becoming compounded with another thing so that a third thing results, but rather merely insofar as being some single thing it becomes another, is only a poetical, imaginary claim which is unintelligible.[11]

However, the great Islamic scholar and philosopher Ṣadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī took this very same theory of Porphyry, which, according to Ibn Sīnā, is no more than an unintelligible, poetic statement, and, with his remarkable intellectual ability, was able to turn it into such a well thought-out and researched philosophical theory, that, had Ibn Sīnā been introduced to it he would surely, with the spirit of fairness and the behaviour of a man of learning which we can discern in him, have accepted it as an intellectual analysis of value.

In explaining Porphyry's theory, Mullā Ṣadrā analyses intellected objects into (a) objects intellected in essence (*maʿqūl bi al-dhāt*), and (b) objects intellected in accident (*maʿqūl bi al-ʿaraḍ*) and then he proves the unity of the intellecting mind with objects intellected in essence in a way that no kind of intellectual danger occurs; and this he does by means of the proof by 'mutual correlation' (*taḍāʾuf*).[12] According to this it should be said, the analytic theory of the unity of the intellector and the intellected is founded on the basis of 'the separation of the intellected in essence and the intellected in accident'. Now the separation of these two principles is not only made in metaphysics but also in modern psychology, which can be considered the most recent stage in the history of psychology. According to one of the European scholars, who recently wrote an introduction to philosophy,[13] in every one of our

10 *Kitāb al-ishirāt wa al-tanbīhāt*, Tehran, 1379 SH/ 2000, vol. III, p. 295. [Translator].

11 Ibid.

12 The proof of 'mutual correction' was not considered enough by Sabzawārī to prove this claim, but in the latter part of his *Sharḥ manẓūmah* in some of his glosses he establishes this proof in a way he finds acceptable.

13 This is a reference to Oswald Külpe (d. 1334 AH/1915), German psychologist, philosopher, and historian of philosophy. The work in question is Külpe's *Einleitung in die Philosophie* Leipzig, 1895 which was translated into English by W. B. Pilsbury and E. B. Titchener as *Introduction to Philosophy*, London, 1902. See Arnulf Zwieg, 'Külpe, Oswlad' in Paul Edwards (ed.)., *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 8 vols., New York and London, 1967, vol. IV, pp. 367–8. Ḥāʾirī Yazdī relied on a Persian translation cited below. [Editor].

experiences two elements exist: one is 'essential' and connected to the essence of perception, and the other is 'objective' or external, and connected to the thing perceived. Particular to the first element is that in our experience we perceive this element directly and without hesitation or exertion as the aspect of thought, and its existence is in need of ourselves who are the experiencers, and this need is characterised by being something self-evident. This experiential mental principle, or element, is the same as the 'intellected in essence'. The objective element has no connection with ourselves and its existence and mode of action depend on specific laws. This element is the objective or material element,[14] and in the terminology of our philosophy it is called the 'intellected in accident'.

On this same subject, the proof by 'mutual correlation' can be given thus: the first element is only a mental and essential appearance which has a specific unity with the self of the experiencer, because mental appearances are manifestations of his self; and, generally, real manifestations, which are always attempting to display themselves and demonstrate existence, can never be conceived of as separate and different from the character of this reality. Rather the best explanation is that we say that these are the outward aspect and indication of this reality, and that this reality is the very mind of the intellector which displays itself in a new form at every instant.

> A beautiful face can never be hidden;
> If you close the door, it will appear at the window.[15]

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14 See *Introduction to Philosophy* by Oswald Külpe, trans. Ahmad Aram, 1927.

15 In the original Persian, '*parī rūtāb mastūrī nadārad | dar ar bandī zi rūzan sar bar ārad*'. Apparently a couplet by 'Abd al-Raḥmān Jāmī (817–898 AH/1414–1492 CE). As with some of the other couplets quoted in this text, alternative forms exist. [Editor].

CHAPTER 4

Further Issues Relating to Existence

1 Existence is Absolute Good (*wujūd khayr-i maḥḍ ast*)

In the discussion of the primacy of existence (*aṣālat al-wujūd*), which must be taken as a central principle for establishing the theoretical concerns of philosophy, it was demonstrated that actuality (*wāqiʿiyyat*) and fundamentality (*aṣālat*) are essentially equivalent to existence and that anything which is deprived of existence, is [thereby] deprived of fundamentality [and actuality]. Also, the reality of existence (*ḥaqīqat-i wujūd*) is, with regard to itself (*dar mawrid-i khud*), the very same as actuality (*wāqiʿiyyat*) and fundamentality (*aṣālat*), and, in the case of quiddities, it is the giver of existence and the bestower of reality. If the light of existence does not cast its rays onto quiddities, things completely disappear from the sphere of being and vanish into the darkness of non-existence; for being is that very manner of appearing in reality which illuminates all things from the Source of Creation. Thus there can be no further room for doubt when we say that the good is synonymous with perfection, and that perfection, in whatever sense it is taken—i.e. primary perfection or secondary perfection—corresponds to the reality of existence (*ḥaqīqat-i hastī*), and thus that the good is the same as existence and that existence is the same as the good.

It is said that the question of the equivalence of existence and the absolute good is one of the most self-evident of propositions in philosophy, and that it stands in no need of proof. A mere hint suffices for every sound intellect—not intent upon the denial of the *a priori*—to admit the truth of this matter, yet some scholars have reasoned out this self-evident fact and thereby made it more axiomatic and thus even more self-evident.

According to the same principle, evil, which is an expression for the deficiency of a thing or for the deficiency in a thing's perfection, must be explained, because, if good is equivalent to existence, evil, which is nothing other than the non-existence of goodness, must be the equivalent of non-existence.

And if it be conceded (*musallam*) that existence is goodness and non-existence is evil, then quiddity, which is in its essence neither existent nor non-existent, cannot in itself be either good or evil. An even more interesting point arising from the principle of the equivalence of goodness and being is that if existence in a particular instance admits of shortcoming and limitation and is accompanied by deficiency, goodness will to the same extent be mixed with

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evil; and when existence is free from every kind of inadequacy and shortcoming (*nāravā'ī*), the good, also in its own domain remains uncontaminated by evil. For this reason, absolute good can only be sought in absolute existence which is the Exalted Creator, and the unique Source of Creation must be exclusively recognised as the only source of goodness.

It is possible here that an objection could be made that if it is correct that existence is everywhere equivalent to good, and if in the world of existence nothing exists apart from good, because there is nothing but existence, and if, according to the philosophers, evils are aligned to non-existence, then what of all the pains, injustices, oppression, frustration, injuries, and wickedness which we see with our own eyes in the natural world?

The correct and logical answer to this is that we should examine, by way of induction, each thing which is given the name of evil, and subject each one of them to analysis and to close examination, and then we shall find out with certainty that evils are either by themselves directly matters of non-existence, or else they can be included as effective factors in the non-existence of other things.

By way of example, death, ignorance, and impotence must be counted in the first instance, for death is nothing but the non-existence of a living-being, ignorance nothing but not-knowing, and impotence only not-being-able, all of which are the absence of something or the absence of the perfection of something.

But pain, and other things like it, which are commonly called evil, cannot be conceived in the same rank as the first group, all of which were matters of non-existence, since they are feelings of discomfort and apprehensions of something inconsistent with physical equilibrium. So now it must be seen how many things are connected to the occurrence of the sensation of some physical discomfiture, and, secondly, what is the goodness and evil of each one of them.

Through analysis, philosophy can discover that one troublesome complex thing is in fact several connected things. Here, the first is the feeling of discomfort, which occurs in the consciousness of a person suffering from pain when a part of his body is cut or wounded. The second is the rupture of continuity and the derangement which comes into being in the orderly functioning of the body. The third are the internal physical factors which come into operation with the surrender to this physical derangement. And the fourth are the external factors which cause the occurrence of the event of cutting or wounding in the relevant part of the body.

There can be no doubt that the apprehension or sensation is basically an existent fact, but no-one can call the apprehension, however severe it may be, evil, for the apprehension is a kind of addition and perfecting which befalls

the apprehending person, and, whatever form it takes, it is good and perfect; and the superiority of man over the animal, or of the animal over inanimate things, is in the way of perception and the manner of apprehension.

There can be no doubt that the derangement, which is a physical irregularity, is a matter of non-existence, and that this irregularity, because of its lack of perfection, is nothing but evil.

The internal physical factors also, insofar as they indicate weakness and an abandonment or resistance, are certainly evil and nothingness, but from the point of view that they are ultimately a series of preparatory factors in the physical body which are for the protection of internal order, they should be counted as existent and positive factors, and as being in themselves good.

Now, if these existent factors, or any other existent that is good within the limits of its own being, participates in some abnormal event which terminates in the non-existence of some living thing, or some other existent—however inferior its degree of existence may be—it will, of course, by comparison and correlation, be interpreted as evil.

However, this is called comparative evil, or accidental evil; that is to say, this existent thing, insofar as it is existent, is not evil, and is therefore good; it is only evil from the point of view that the existence of this thing necessitates some disorder and derangement and eliminates the existence of some existent. And this is a cognitive reality which we shall make clear through an example:

Rain brings with itself a blessing which has no contrariety in the pureness of its nature, and it makes the field and the countryside verdant and blossoming; newly bestowing, because of its nature, life, movement, and being. But in a corner of its domain and blessing, it also destroys the house of the weak man and the bird's nest.

Under these conditions, rain cannot by any means be called evil or bad, because, for the reason that it is itself existent and is not non-existence, it is true goodness, and, from the point of view that it gives life and being, it is comparative goodness. It is only because it brings an event into existence which brings calamity to a weak and feeble person that it is unpleasant and evil.

The external factors can also be subjected to this analytic view, and, briefly, those things which are truly existent are, within the limit of their own existence, nothing but goodness and perfection (primary perfection). Ultimately, in the event that their existence brings loss in relation to other existents in such a way that they are effective causes in the non-being of an essence or a lack of perfection in an essence, they are accidental or comparative evil. This is a universal and real standard by means of which good and evil can be genuinely distinguished.

In books on ethics, ways of finding the real standard for good and evil are considered, none of which are reliable in cases of confusion even in the eyes of the important scholars of ethics, because it is possible for one act to be good in one situation and evil in another, since one event may be pleasurable for one person and injurious for another. And this variance naturally gives a character imbued with ambiguity to standards of good and evil, and makes the matter subject to great complications.

However, we are of the opinion that it is possible for this ambiguity to exist in the scope of philosophic debate only in the case of non-real good and evil which is a relative or comparative matter; and as for real good and evil, existence and non-existence can be categorically established as the universal and real criterion. And, what is more, since the science of ethics (as casuistry) discusses particular cases, and is therefore different from the discussions of philosophy as regards subject matter, the ambiguities which exist in the criteria of ethics are completely non-existent from the point of view of philosophers.

Another point which arises from this philosophical analysis is that the famous doubt which has drawn attention in metaphysics from early times under the name of the 'dualist' fallacy will be seen to be illusory when examined in the light of the above analytic discussion which arose from good and evil, because dualists regarded evil as a being real, existent thing. Inevitably, they believed in a source of evil, Ahriman, and consequently imagined that there were two separate sources for the world of creation, Yazdan and Ahriman, who were continually competing with one another and engaged in struggle.[1] However, according to the present theory, evil, which is nothing but non-existence, has fundamentally no need of any causative and existent source. Between non-existents, cause and effect or even difference is inconceivable. Only relative or comparative evil, which comes into existence from the opposition and action and passivity of natural existents, has any connection with an effective agent; and this also, according to Aristotle, must be understood as being from the unique Source of Good, since relative evil,

1 This is a reference to the opposition between what Ḥā'irī Yazdī refers to as 'Yazdan', i.e. the supreme creator God of Zoroastrianism existing eternally and the creator of all good more correctly referred to as 'Ahura Mazda' and a co-existing personification of evil which Ḥā'irī Yazdī refers to as 'Ahriman' but who can be more properly designated as 'Angra Mainyu'. Regarding them, Zororaster proclaims in the scripture known as the *Yasna* (30.3–5) that: 'Truly there are two primal Spirits, twins, renowned to be in conflict. In thought and word and act they are two, the good and the bad...And when these two Spirits first encountered, they created life and not-life, and at the end the worst existence shall be for the followers of falsehood (*drug*), but the best dwelling for those who possess righteousness (*asha*)'. Cited in Mary Boyce, *Zoroastrians: Their Religious Beliefs and Practices*, London: 2001, pp. 19–21. [Editor].

which, within its own limits, is real goodness and has for other things much goodness and benefit, this being proportionately much greater than its slight evil. Only from the Source of Absolute Goodness can it come into existence. If the Source of Creation were to annul from existence all this great goodness on account of the evil of its nothingness, it would be a hindrance for much good, and that in itself would be a great injustice which would never be approved of by Absolute Goodness.

Everything that reaches us from the Friend is good.[2]

2 Existence is a Singularly Unique Reality

The meaning of existence in this section is not the univocal concept of existence, but rather the absolute reality of existence whose univocity and uniqueness in application to the totality of particulars has been demonstrated in previous sections.

A reminder about this point seems to be in place here because, if an affirmative or negative judgement concerning the reality of existence is put forward, the meaning of the subject is sometimes existence in its pure simplicity, and sometimes existence in its absolute sense. By which we mean that, when we say 'existence has fundamentality', or 'existence is goodness and perfection', the judgement clearly derives from the nature of existence—i.e. existence in its absolute sense—because in every case in which the nature of existence is investigated these two propositions will be found to be correct.

However, if we say 'existence is unique and without equal', or 'existence is necessary', the judgement is not correct in every case in which existence is investigated; and for this reason the subject of the judgement, the thing concerning which the predication is made, is not existence in its absolute sense, which applies to every particular, but rather reality in its pure simplicity, or pure existence, and reality in its pure simplicity will not accept multiplicity. So existence is a reality for which a contrary or similar thing cannot be conceived.

Now, to prove this claim, it should be it should be pointed out that the reality of existence can have no generic or specific nature superior to it, since it comprehends essentially all natures and quiddities, and bestows being and reality on every other thing without anything bestowing being on it. For this

2 In the original Persian, '*har chih az dūst mīrasad nīkūst*'. [Editor].

reason, it cannot be placed under any genus or nature which is more general than itself.

Keeping this fundamental point in mind, it will easily be seen that any contrary or comparable thing is impossible for existence, because, firstly in the case of a contrary, it is stipulated in the language of philosophy that two opposites, with the contradictory extremes that belong to them, must be together in one related body; but the reality of existence neither has complete contradiction with anything else, nor can it be said that it can be actualised in coalition with another existent in a related body more general than itself.

Secondly, similarity can also only be conceived in the case of two existents, which have the same genus, and it is completely impossible for the reality of existence to have a general or specific nature, which would allow it to have the same genus or species as another existent.

3 Existence is Not Substance (*jawhar*) and is Not Accident (*ʿaraḍ*)

The reality of existence is not substance, because substance is a quiddity, which, once it comes outside the field of existence, cannot belong to the category of the existence things, and existence is not a quiddity which might fall within such a definition.

Similarly it is not an accident, because an accident is realised at the locus of an existent thing, whereas the distinctive character of existence is never dependent on some object; rather, it must be said, the existentiality (*mawjūdiyyat*) of every object is possible only in the rays of the light of existence.

However, although existence, within the limits of its own reality, is never coloured by substance or accident, it can be said that in substance it is substance and in accident it is accident, for the existentiality of both substance and accident is dependent on existence.

A certain famous learned person has said that existence is the universal light which gives being, which makes every substance a substance, and every accident an accident, every essence an essence, and every thing a thing; and that if we are able to bring into perceptual existence in our minds, conceptualising even absolute non-existence and non-beings, and find a way into the dark obscure quiddities, it must be because of the extent of the power and brilliance of the light of existence, because the mental conceptualisation of absolute nonexistence and of non-beings is itself an existence which is bestowed on these kinds of concept, and this is the reality of the liberality of existence which is not withheld even from bringing imperfections and non-existent things into being as long as it is possible.

All this enamelling is His doing;
All these elixirs are His mysteries.[3]

4 Existence is Not Compound

Existence is a simple, non-composite reality which has no compounded parts, because, if the reality of being, like that of bodies, were compounded of genus and differentia, or matter and form, its compound parts (genus *or* matter) if they were things similar to existence, would be such that genus was the same as differentia, and matter the same as form, and other compounds would have no real meaning. And if these parts were not in the same category as existence, but were some non-existent matter mixed with existence, something compounded of itself and its contradictory would come into being.

It should also be added that existence cannot be a part of other compounded things, because a compound that wanted to arise from existence and something other than existence would be compounded of existence and non-existence, and the concept of such a compound would automatically be the same thing as the non-existence of the compound.

So, since existence has no compounded parts and is not in itself a part of a compound, it is composed with every compound, simple with every single thing, a part with every part, the whole with every whole, with matter it is that very matter, and with form that very form.

5 Absolute Existence and Determined Existence

Propositions,[4] which are always composed of a subject, about which something is stated or judged, the predicate, which is stated or judged about the subject, and the relation of judgement, will, according to the words which are in the predicate, be of different kinds, and naturally they will vary according to the difference in the logical form of the latter. For example:

1. Socrates exists
2. Socrates is a philosopher
3. Man exists
4. Man is able to speak

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3 In the original Persian, *'īn hamih mīnāngarīhā kār-i ūst | īn hamih iksīrhā asrār-i ūst'.* [Editor].

4 The Arabic term for 'proposition' is '*qaḍīyyah*', which is equivalent to the Persian '*guzārih*'. In the *Rahbar-i khirad*, by Maḥmūd Shahābī, *guzārih* is used instead of *qaḍīyyah.*

In propositions 1 and 3, as one can see, existence and being are predicated, and the intention of the propositions is the being of Socrates or man. But in propositions 2 and 4, the purpose of the propositions is not to assert the existence of the subject; rather the person uttering the proposition wanted to relate or predicate a quality or action to the subject after conceiving of the existence of that subject. It is clear that there is a great difference between these two forms, logically speaking. This division, whether it be in metaphysics or in logic, has such value that it has become the occasion for several comments.

Some have explained propositions of the first kind as being 'predicative' (*maḥmūlī*) or 'independent' (*nafsī*) existence, because existence is the real predicate, and those of the second kind as being 'copulative' (*rābiṭ*) or 'descriptive' (*nā'it*) existence, given that here existence is taken as [establishing] a relation [between subject and predicate].

Elsewhere, this very topic has become a matter of attention, and logical propositions have been divided into secondary and tertiary, and the principle of presupposition[5] (*qā'idah far'iyyah*), which is one of the famous laws of philosophy and for which there can be no exception, has been deemed applicable only to tertiary propositions.

In that section of logic which deals with the logical structure of questions (*al-maṭālib*), the same division is found, but in a specific form. According to the kind of question that is being asked about the proposition, the first kind is called the simple 'is-it?' question (*hal-i basīṭ*), and the second kind is called the compound 'is-it?' question (*hal-i murakkab*).[6] The reason for this terminology is that the inquirer first inquires about the being of the thing by asking 'is it?' (i.e. does it exist?); then, if he becomes aware of the being–existent of the thing, he goes on to ask about the qualities or accidents of that thing, again using 'is it?' or some words in the same category. Thus, although these two kinds of propositions are completely different as regards their status as questions, they are both characterised by 'is-it-ness' (*haliyyat*).

However, the reason that 'is-it?' (or a similar phrase) is called 'simple' in the first kind of proposition and 'compound' in the second, is because the meaning of the inquirer in the first kind is absolute being, and absolute being, as was pointed out in a previous section, is simple reality, and thus the meaning of such questions is a simple matter, and 'is it?' is here characterised by simplicity. But in the second kind, the existence, the 'is', which is the inten-

5 The principle of presupposition says that the establishing of a predicate for a subject presupposes the establishment of the subject but not the predicate.

6 In Arabic, *hal* is a particle used at the beginning of a sentence which turns it into a question, rather like 'isn't it?' does at the end of an English sentence. The original sentence is the proposition, and the '*hal*' sentence the question. [Translator].

tion of the inquirer, is compounded from basic existence and a determinator, and so 'is-it?' in this state also has the quality of compoundedness.

The division of existence into absolute existence and determined existence, which is under examination in this section, is in the sense that absolute existence, without any restriction or condition, is what is being predicated in the first kind of proposition. In the second kind, it is appended to the subject as a specific expression or feature which is called a quality or accident. Briefly, the primary perfection, which is the fundamental being-existent of a thing, is absolute existence, and the secondary perfections of a thing, such as 'knowledgeable', 'speaking' and 'seeing', are termed determined existence.

This very same analysis can be used for non-existence, which is the contradictory of existence. Look at the following:

1. Socrates is not existent
2. Socrates is not a philosopher
3. Man is not existent
4. Man is not able to speak

The non-existence, or non-being, which is asserted in the sense of these propositions is not identical in all cases; for in propositions 1 and 3 non-existence is the true meaning, and in propositions 2 and 4 it is determined or descriptive non-existence. Thus the first kind is called absolute non-existence, and the second kind determined non-existence. Sabzawārī says, in this context:

> Existence and the concept of non-existence;
> Are both divided into absolute and determined.[7]

In the section on the 'making' of existence or quiddity, the very same distinction will be mentioned in another form connected to the topic of 'making', and this will be called 'simple making' and 'compounded making', which corresponds to absolute existence and compounded existence, and the whole matter is based on this presupposition. At any rate, this phraseology is met with, and required, in many of the subjects of philosophy; and thus it is necessary to have some practice in distinguishing in this sense, so we ask you to say what

7 This is a couplet from Mullā Hādī Sabzawārī's *Manẓūmah* which, in the original Arabic, reads '*in al-wujūda ma'a mafhūmi al-'adami | kullan min iṭlāqin wa taqyīdin qasama*. There is a typographical error in the original (1st edn.). We have corrected it here by consulting the original source, Mullā Hādī Sabzawārī (d. 1289 AH/1873), *Sharḥ ghurar al-farā'id*, ed. Mehdi Mohaghegh and Toshihiko Izutsu (d. 1414 AH/1993), Tehran, 1981, p. 7, p. 69 which corresponds to p. 40, 2nd line from the top of the lithograph edition of 1298 AH/1881 [Editor].

is the difference in the sense we have been discussing in the dictum: 'I think, therefore I am'.[8] In this, which part refers to absolute existence, and which part to determined existence?

6 The Secondary Intelligible

Accidents which only become manifest in the intellect, and are not worthy of exposure to existence outside the realm of the mind, are known in philosophy under the name of secondary intelligibles (*maʿqūlāt-i duwwum*), and having given the matter careful consideration, it will become clear that they arise from some of the degrees of absolute existence and refer back to the source of pure being. For this reason, the discussion of secondary intelligibles can be included in the matters of philosophy which are dealt with among the accidents of absolute being. For, in the end, just as was proved for mental existence, being is never beyond the confines of realities, and indeed mental forms are also among the degrees of the reality of existence, while the reality of existence, in its physical manifestations, is, in a specific way which is in agreement with external laws, counted as the appearance and display of what is material.

However, not every secondary intelligible, or, in other words, not every thing which has existence in the intellect, can be taken as having the same meaning, for some of them, together with those qualities of something whose field of existence is in the mind, also have a real relation to external existents and are counted as qualities of real existences.

'Possibility', which belongs intrinsically and inseparably to every external quiddity, and which can, without doubt, be ascribed to every real existent which is not Necessary Existence (*wājib-i wujūd*), is of this kind. For, according to the evidence we have, possibility cannot be thought of as an external reality, while, on the other hand, without any figurativeness or exaggeration, the attribute of possibility is one of the real qualities of existents which has identity and fundamentality beyond the mind.[9]

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8 An allusion to the French philosopher René Descartes' (d. 1650) proposition: *Cogito ergo sum*. [Editor].

9 Firstly, 'possibility' has the sense of denial of necessity, and is unquestionably outside the realm of privation towards the direction of existence. Secondly, 'possibility' is integral to a quiddity and is established as the non-existence of its fundamentality; and that which is intrinsic to something which is only conceived in the mind is without doubt itself only mentally postulated. Thirdly, if 'possibility' were an external and fundamental accident, it would, like every other external accident, become attached, after the existence of the subject, to its locus, and in that case it should be asked whether the subject was necessarily existent before the existence of the 'possibility', or whether its existence was impossible, or whether it was

The concept of 'thing', also, which is applicable to every object, is in this respect the same as 'possibility', because 'thingness', although it has no external reality, is not something completely apart from external existence, and cannot, for this reason, be counted as a completely mental phenomenon like 'universality'.

So it must be said in general that this kind of intelligible, although it achieves existence in the mind, belongs to and is connected to real things outside the mind. Although it is displayed in the mind, the qualification of things by this kind of mental description takes place outside the mind. This is one kind of secondary intelligible which philosophy recognises under this name.

Another kind of secondary intelligible does not have this essential property, and is abstract and confined to the intellect. By no means can there be any relation or belonging between them and the outside world. The universality of universals, the specificity of species, the corporeality of bodies, or in fact all things which are objects of discussion in the discourses of logic, are of this kind which neither have external existence, nor can be counted as attributes of existent realities. In other words, their demonstration, manifestation, and attribution are all in the mind.

Secondary intelligibles in logic belong exclusively to this group of mental accidents which can give rise to mental judgements. But in metaphysics, secondary intelligibles have a more extensive meaning. Both kinds are called secondary intelligibles.

In contrast to these are primary intelligibles which have no need of complete intellectual analysis and abstraction. We employ these only when we want to separate an external existent from its perceptible external accidents and to bring the accidents separately and independently to mind. These are called primary intelligibles; and since this kind of intelligible is outside the domain of the science of logic, logicians have not given it a specific name any different from the expression used in philosophy.

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possible. If its existence was necessary or impossible, the occurrence of possibility could be impossible, because something which is necessary or impossible cannot be qualified by possibility. If the subject was itself possible previously, and then another 'possibility' occurred to it, an infinite regression of possibilities would result. Finally, if it be said that the subject was neither necessary nor impossible nor possible (with respect to existence) prior to the occurrence of 'possibility' to it, the thing that is necessary to avoid, namely the occurrence of something devoid of any of the three modes of existence (necessity, impossibility, and possibility) would arise. Thus it must be said that 'possibility' is fundamentally not an external reality, which stands together with its subject like an external accident.

7 A Non-Existent is Not Anything

Since the subject matter of philosophy is existence, and its definition is reaching the reality of the existence of the universe, the following difficulty will attract our attention right at the beginning of this section, namely, how it can be possible for non-existence and the laws governing it, which are outside the realm of existence and reality, to find a place beside the genuine matters of philosophy, and how philosophers can open a chapter for it among the objects of their knowledge which revolves only around realities.

The logical and wise answer to this question is not 'in discussion, one thing leads to another...',[10] for it is better and more laudable to say that we raise the topic of matters of this kind so as to remove non-existences completely outside the bounds of reality and subsistence; and so as to prove that they do not have fundamentality or any individuality in any degree or in any sense of these words; and so as to show that none of the laws of being and subsistence can be considered to hold for them. Now, that in itself is a genuine truth that can be discerned by philosophy alone, for just as metaphysics deals with the question of the existence or non-existence of a vacuum, so too can it, in similar fashion, investigate whether there are non-existent things or not and, if there are, whether there are any differences between them.

The Muʿtazilīs, a group of theologians who were against philosophy, differentiated between subsistence (*thubūt*) and existence, and considered that quiddities, which have neither occurred in the state of non-existence nor shared in existence were in a state of subsistence. They explained subsistence as something wider in meaning than the idea of existence or non-existence, more general than negation. Then, on the basis of this unacceptable interpretation, they conceived of the possibility of a non-existent, at the stage of quiddity, to be something subsistent and non-negative, while they thought the impossible non-existent was not existent, and not subsistent, but negative. Since this supposition was produced on the basis of an incorrect interpretation of existence and non-existence, it can easily be seen that it is groundless merely by a brief reference to the intellect and to sound common sense.

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10 The phrase in the original is given in Persian as *sukhan sukhan mīyāwurd* which is a translation of the Arabic saying: *al-kalām yajurr al-kalām*, which means that in speaking we may be led from one thing to another which is not directly relevant to the original topic of discussion [Translator]. The contemporary scholar, Shaykh Muḥammad Taqī Āmulī (d. 1391 AH/1972) holds that the discussion of non-existence in philosophy was irrelevant and an excursus. [Author] Shaykh Muḥammad Taqī Āmulī died in 1391 AH/1972 [Editor].

Some other philosophers considered that there was an intermediary level between existence and non-existence which are contradictories of each other, and they called this *ḥāl*, or 'state', but they did not consider that this intermediary level was conceivable between negation and subsistence.

The believers in 'state' divide the attributes of existents into three kinds. They say the attributes are negative, positive, or neither negative nor positive. The attributes of say 'capacity' or 'knowledge' of an able and knowing man are the kind of attribute which is neither existent nor non-existent, because, although knowledge and ability have reality and fundamentality, the concepts of 'being-able' or 'being-aware' cannot be supposed to be among the realities of an existent. On the other hand, this kind of disassociated or disconnected concept is not of the same degree as non-existences and negative things so that it could be said that they can be counted as negative attributes of their substantive. Thus 'state' is an attribute which is neither existent nor non-existent.

However, despite all these 'states', this discussion cannot be accepted or considered in philosophy, and one brief look at the terms 'negative', 'subsistent', 'existent', and 'non-existent' is enough to see that the very subject of this discordant discussion, which some of the theologians have sketched out, is completely lacking. For there is no kind of difference between, on the one hand, non-existence and existence, and, on the other hand, negation and subsistence, neither in any dictionary of words nor in any dictionary of ideas, which could lead us to consider an intermediary between existent and non-existent by the name of 'state', and at the same time deny an intermediary between negative and subsistent. The only point that should always be kept in mind is that the reality of existence (*ḥaqīqat-i wujūd*) is not confined to realities outside the mind, and that if something is non-existent in the external world but somehow existent in the mind it must not be construed as absolutely non-existent, and then some specification or particularisation over and above existence called 'state' or subsistence conceived of it. Rather, the fact is that absolute non-being is not anything, and if a non-existent quiddity appears established or displayed in the mysterious faculty of the imagination, it must be observed that, firstly, it is nothing more than an imaginary thing, a thought, and, secondly, that even this imaginary existence is a ray from the brilliance of absolute existence which has given being to the non-existent in the image-crowded *milieu* of the imagination. Their overactive imagination led a group of theologians to suppose that there are real and subsistent things devoid of any kind of existence above and beyond the world of being; and this theory is nothing more than saying that we can imagine a realm belonging to the realms of existence above the world of being.

Therefore, the non-existent, that is, something which takes no part in existence (either mental existence or external existence), is absolutely nothing at all; it has neither substance, nor is it established anywhere; it cannot be pointed out to the senses or to the intellect. It cannot even negate an essence which has not taken on existence from itself,[11] for something which has no existence lacks quiddity and essence.[12]

8 There is No Differentiation between Non-Existences, or Any Causal Relationship

If we say 'Socrates is non-existent' or 'Plato is non-existent' or 'The vacuum is non-existent', these 'non-existences' are surely, from the point of view of the meaning of non-being, to be seen as one and the same. Only when we are able to consider a differentiation or variation between non-existence do we ascribe or assign absolute non-existence to Socrates, Plato, or the vacuum. In this way it will be easily understood that for non-existences, as far as non-existence is concerned, differentiation is inconceivable; but, since this is differentiation between existents, non-existents which are related to existents will naturally become differentiated from each other. However, it should be noticed that, the delineation of non-existences, and thus their differentiation from each other, is only possible in the realm of the imagination, not in reality or in the outside world.

A great philosopher said that an 'additional subsistence' (*thubūt-i iḍāfī*), more general than absolute or determined existence, comes into the determination or definition of negation; and the meaning of 'additional subsistence' is a concept that by itself characterises absolute negation, whether the concept is affirmative or negative. In any case, it is obvious and undeniable that non-existence is not actualised and has no fundamentality in any of the degrees of existence, and it can in no way be pointed out to the intellect or the senses. And if we give expression to a concept called non-existence inside the faculty of the imagination, it is characterised by a specific existence termed 'additional subsistence' (*thubūt-i iḍāfī*). This is itself an existence in the imagination, displaying itself in the form of non-existence; and if it were

11 Thus we can say 'The partner of the Creator is not the partner of the Creator', because the partner of the Creator does not exist. [Translator].

12 In Aristotelian logic, essential, or necessary propositions (*gudhārahā-yi ḍarūrī*) are determined as long as they exist, and even if we predicate a quiddity with itself, its necessity is in a condition in which that quiddity is a partaker of existence. Thus, if there is no existence, even the quiddity will also become negated from itself.

not thus, non-existence would be inconceivable and could not be differentiated and delineated.

For the same reason, there is no action and reaction or cause and effect in non-existences, and it should not be thought that non-existence, whether in being or non-being, can be an effective agent. Although it is sometimes said [even] among knowledgeable people that 'the non-existence of the cause results in the non-being of the effect', this is not a philosophically correct or a closely-examined thing to say, for it is by way of comparison and analogy that non-existence has been given the aspect of activity and being a cause. It is the same as when logicians extend the rules of affirmative and positive propositions on account of their similarity to negative ones and say that a predicative proposition is either affirmative or negative, and a conditional is either negative or affirmative, although there can be no predicate or consequent in a negative proposition.[13]

9 The Coming Back of What Has Become Non-Existent

Ipseity (*huwiyyat*), which is another term for the existentiality (*mawjūdiyyat*) and individuality (*shakhṣiyyat*) of a real thing, can not happen a second time, for if the recurring existence was the very same ipseity and being there would no longer then be any meaning for coming back or returning. Recurrence or coming back, if it really happens, means that the second existence is in no sense identical with the first existence.

Moreover, it is not possible to conceive of the existence of more than one ipseity or individuality for one real unit. Now, if a real unit of existence which had disappeared from the arena of existence and had become annihilated returned as the same existence, with all the particularities and characteristics that it comprised, it could only mean that non-existence had found its way into a particular existence; and an interval of non-existence in the existentiality of a thing is equivalent to the thing being prior to itself and posterior to itself, which ultimately results in a contradiction.

Without going to the trouble of proving this matter, Ibn Sīnā said that the impossibility of the coming back of something which had become non-existent was to a degree of necessity and self-evidentness that rendered close and exact consideration unnecessary.

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13 This is in accordance with the recent theories of the great metaphysicians, who, following the great philosophers of the past, deny the negative relation in negative propositions, and call the contents of negations the negation of the predicate, or the negation of the condition.

Fakhr al-Dīn Rāzī also, despite the fact that he was among the Ashʿarī theologians and quarrelled and disputed with the philosophers in every matter, accepted this verdict of the Grand Master with a pleasing countenance and even some acclamation.

Along the way, countless groups of theologians who consider themselves genuine upholders of the true religions have held that the coming back of something which had become non-existent is real or possible, and this was in order to defend the doctrine of bodily Resurrection, which is acknowledged and confirmed by all divine revelations. But this means they have found a way in their own imaginings to prove bodily Resurrection. However, as one of the great Islamic scholars—namely, Ṣadr al-Muta'allihīn Shīrāzī in his *Asfār*—said, these people have claimed, under the guise of the divine sciences, that they can support and assist Islam and the supreme way of the Unity of God (*tawḥīd*) by these invalid reasons and insights, whereas no-one has been heard of up to now who had been originally wandering in error and had been guided aright with the helping hand of these people. In the view of scholars it has been recognised that it is not possible to investigate the divinely revealed secrets on the basis of the principles and standards of theology.

Either philosophy must derive its conclusions from the sources of divine revelation and prophecy; or else it is true knowledge, perfecting of the faculty of speculation (*quwwah-yi naẓarī*) and ultimately metaphysics and theosophy (*ḥikmat-i ilāhī*) which can allow men of knowledge to enter into this kind of matter and to intervene in the contemplative sciences.

Apart from what has just been said, bodily resurrection will be proved in a future theoretical discussion using a correct and well-researched procedure, in such a way that it will not at all depend on the rejection of a single one of the most irrefutable intellectual principles.[14]

Another matter which has been taken as a pretext by the theologians, and according to which they have counted the recurrence of what has ceased to exist as among those things which are possible, is the principle of possibility which they heard of from some philosophers and then pushed back in their faces.

This principle comes in philosophy in the form of a piece of advice, and can be phrased as follows. 'Do not deny anything you hear from among the oddities and wonders of the world of nature; as long as you have no definite evidence, you should continue to conceive of its possibility'.

The theologians interpreted this sentence as a commonly agreed principle which was to be used whenever there was doubt, and they imagined that

14 Presumably, the Author intended to make this demonstration in the third volume of this trilogy, which sadly was not completed. [Editor].

everywhere impossibility was not justified, intellectual possibility was fundamentally the case.

However, it is quite certain that the true meaning of this sentence is not as they conceived it, because, firstly, possibility in the sense used above means likelihood, not intellectual possibility which stands in opposition to impossibility and necessity; secondly, it has no relation to, or connection with, the established principle of Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*), which is resorted to as a procedural principle (*marjiʿ-i aṣl ʿamalī*) to in case of a lack of a proof [from the Qurʾān, Sunnah, consensus (*ijmāʿ*), or reason (*ʿaql*)].[15]

Having made this point, the reasonable interpretation of this wise dictum is: 'Do not deny any of the wonders of this world which you hear of only because it may be contrary to the normal way in which nature functions'. Moreover, the acceptance and acknowledgement of something out of the ordinary without any sure evidence or reason is not in accordance with the methodology used in searching for the truth. In the face of this kind of doubt a position of doubt should be adopted, and one should not deny or affirm amazing realities without certain proof.

This principle should be used in suitable instances where there is no proof or evidence. However, in the case of the recurrence of something which has ceased to exist there are, to a certain extent, definite reasons, which lead

15 In the Translator's original manuscript, there is a footnote here, but it has been left blank. It would appear that he intended to expound upon the established principle of Islamic jurisprudence alluded to by the author. Also the phrase *aṣl-i ʿamalī* does not occur in the first edition of *Universal Science* (see p. 54, 5th line from the bottom) where we have only *marjiʿ-i ʿamal*. The former is more correct and is used in the second edition (see p. 95, 8th line from the bottom). At any rate, it is not entirely clear to us exactly which principle the author had in mind. However, by way of explanation, Shīʿī law is based on four fundamental sources: the Qurʾān, Sunnah, consensus (*ijmāʿ*), and reason (*ʿaql*). In those cases where the law cannot be deduced from these four, resort is made to what are known as the four procedural principles (*uṣūl ʿamaliyyah*): exemption (*barāʾah*), prudence (*iḥtiyāṭ* or *ishtighāl*), option (*takhyīr*), and continuance (*istiṣḥāb*). According to Hossein Modarressi, 'they cover all cases where the real obligation is not known. If the case has a precedence [*sic*.], the same law should continue according to the last principle. Otherwise the first principle excludes any legal obligation where it is not known if there is such an obligation. However, if there is a known obligation, but it is uncertain between two or more options, all must be followed according to the second principle if it is possible. But one option should be chosen according to the third principle if it is impossible to follow both or all'. See his *An Introduction to Shīʿī Law,* London, 1984, p. 10. For an alternative legal terminology, giving *ʿaql* as 'intellect', *takhyīr* as 'choice', and *istiṣḥāb* as 'the presumption of continuity', see also al-ʿAllāmah al-Ḥilli's, *Foundations of Jurisprudence: an Introduction to Imāmī Shīʿī Legal Theory*, introduction, translation, and Arabic critical edition by Sayyid Amjad H. Shah Naqavi, Leiden, 2016 [Editor].

Fakhr al-Dīn Rāzī, despite all the prejudices he had concerning abstract philosophical matters, to recognise that the impossibility of the recurrence of what had ceased to exist was in accordance with the standards of wisdom and the exigencies of common sense. In recognising this he said that if such a self-evident matter as this should become subject to doubt because of some external factors, it was not surprising, because it also sometimes happened that abstract matters became clear and evident on account of the existence of external corroboration.

10 History Does Not Repeat Itself

The nights and days with their hours and minutes in which the living and the dead are rolled up together and which become effaced from the pages of existence do not return or come back; for the recurrence of past times would mean that the specific instants of time, its beginning and its end, the past and the future, were identical, and it is obvious that the conjunction of the beginning with the end in time, or even with a specific moment in time, is quite impossible.

Furthermore, if past time returned again either now or in the future, the new birth, which we are to call the recurrence of the past because of its coming into existence once again, cannot be a recurrence of the past, because neither is the past renewed, nor is the present the past.

Quite apart from this, in the case of a recurrence in history, there would be no way of distinguishing between the history of the past and the history of the recurrence, since the recurring history, with all the specific details that it comprised, would be the very same as the history of the past, and there would be no reason to call one the past and the other its recurrence. Basically, how can past time be made to come back now or in the future; this would produce nothing but an impossible infinite regress.[16] To take something other than time itself, we find the same story in the case of temporal existents (*mawjūdāt-i zamānī*), with the addition of one thing, and that is that if a temporal existent seeks to show itself for a second or third time (or more) in the pages of existence, its necessary causes and even conditions as possibilities would most certainly return as well. There would certainly be a complete coming

16 Because if the past came into existence in the future, time would be existent within time, and then that time would require a third time, and so on without end. If in answer it is said that the origin of time is first by virtue of its essence, not through the intermediary of a previous time, we would reply that an essential thing cannot be something which it is not, and that it is impossible for the past to become the future. Thus the return of the past is not possible.

back in the case of all these causes, as well as all the other factors, conditions, and possibilities. So, in the end, when a thing which had ceased to exist returns, all the circumstances and states of the universe and the cycle of time and space would come back, and this would be a universal, comprehensive, and endless reaction that does not correspond at all with the laws of nature and the standards of wisdom. Thus, contrary to the oft-repeated opinion that history repeats itself, it has to be said that the hands of time do not go back even for one moment in the mind.

11 Making (*ja'l*) and Effecting (*ta'thīr*)

The meaning of 'making' (*ja'l*) is the acting of a cause, or, in other words, the real effect of something which makes an effect or is effective; and since existence was divided into independent existence (*al-wujūd al-nafsī*) and copulative existence (*wujūd-i rābiṭ*), 'making' is similarly sometimes simple (*basīṭ*) and sometimes in a compounded state (*hālat-i tarkībi*).

The reality of 'simple' and 'compound' is nothing other than this: in simple 'making' we assume independent existence, and in compounded 'making', copulative existence. The meaning of independent existence and copulative existence was explained in the discussion which arose around the subject of absolute and determined existence. Now, to add to the explanation, the examples that were mentioned before will be commented on together with their simplicity and compoundedness.

1. Socrates is existent.
2. Socrates is a philosopher.

As was mentioned, these two propositions are fundamentally and completely different from the point of view of their logical form, because, in the first one, predicative existence occurs, and the basic meaning of the utterance of the proposition is the being of Socrates. This proposition will be of use to someone who is uninformed of the existence of Socrates. Since there is no more than one existence and one bringing into being, the consequence of this proposition is simple 'making' (*ja'l-i basīṭ*). However, in the second proposition existence is in no way considered, and so there is no mention of the existence of Socrates as such here; the basic intention of the utterer is only the wisdom of Socrates, which is a secondary perfection, and existence makes a relation of unity and oneness between wisdom and Socrates. This means that the result in this proposition is that Socrates and wisdom, which are different from each other from the point of view of word and concept, find a common existence

in one existential unit. Both of them have one subject as their referent, and the indication of this concordance is that we can call one real existent both Socrates and a philosopher. Since two existences and two events of bringing into existence are being considered here in this proposition, the concept of it is compounded 'making'.

Out of this explanation another matter arises. Compounded 'making' only exists between a thing and its separate accidents; but between an essence and its essential parts, and similarly between an essence and the necessities of the essence which become necessary when they are attached to what requires them, it is not reasonable to say compounded 'making'.

One of the famous dictums of the Grand Master, Ibn Sīnā, is that the Creator did not make an apricot an apricot, rather he gave it being.[17]

The meaning of this is that compounded making is never between a thing and its existence, because no reality can be compounded with itself. m becomes necessary always between two distinct things. The essential parts and the necessities of an essence come into existence with the essence itself, and do not need anything or a compound to bring them into existence. For example, if we say 'man is a man', or 'man is an animal and is able to speak', or 'the number four is even', we have not said anything new that conveys the idea of compounded 'making'; for 'being-human' for man, and 'evenness' for the number four are necessary things, and are created together with the simple 'making' of the essence.

Up to now we have been talking about simple 'making' (*ja'l-i basīṭ*) and compounded 'making' (*ja'l-i tarkibī*), but the aim of what we have been saying is not merely to define the concept of 'making' and its divisions. Rather our basic purpose is to specify a reality which exists in action and reaction, in the true meaning of influencing and being influenced, between the maker and what is made, or, in a more clearly understandable expression, between cause and effect (*'illat wa ma'lūl*). Is quiddity a real effect of the Maker, or is it existence which arises from the Source of Being (*mabda' hastī*)? It is clear that one of these must be fundamentally created and the other accidentally created. Another point to be noted is that insofar as this discussion is ultimately about real causing and effecting it has a specified affinity with the question of the primacy of existence (*aṣālat-i wujūd*) or quiddity, and it can ultimately be said that both these matters spring from one basic origin. If the primacy of existence (*aṣālat-i wujūd*) or quiddity has been raised here, it is in order to arrive at certainty about the primacy of what is 'made' (*maj'ūl*); and

17 No reference is provided, but the remark is widely cited in the literature. See for example, *Hazār wa yak nuktah*, Āyatullah Ḥasan Ḥasanzādah Āmulī, Tehran, 1365 SH/1986, p. 676. [Editor].

if we are basically considering the primacy of existence, we are also forced, as a result of this principle, to accept essential 'making' for existence.

Some of the philosophers believed in the 'making' of 'becoming' (*ṣayrūrat*) or 'qualification' (*ittiṣāf*), but their opinion does not conform at all with the methods of philosophy, and so we shall dispense with an explanation of their ideas and only deal with the discussion and investigation of the theory of the 'making' of existence or quiddity.

Many of the Illuminationists, especially in the time of Shaykh al-Ishrāq Shihāb al-Dīn Suhrawardī, thought that quiddity was 'made' or created in essence, and the cause for the prevalence of this way of thinking was that in that time there was enormous influence from the theologians, who supported the idea of the establishing of quiddity devoid of any kind of existence (what they called 'pre-eternal subsistents' (*aʿyān-i thābitah*)).[18] The scholars of those times brought forward the idea that quiddities were created, because they had proved that quiddity had, in itself, no kind of existence; and thus they started to believe that quiddities were 'made', which was in opposition to the theologians. Thus, the theory of the making of quiddity, which basically arose as the result of a deep and long-standing enmity and quarrel between the theologians and the philosophers, and which took the form of a dispute, cannot be said to be based on scientific principles or on philosophical methods of investigation.

However, the Peripatetics, who could think in a more liberal environment, explicitly said that existence was both fundamental and 'made' in essence.

The Peripatetics proved their theory in several ways. Among them was by proving that quiddity and its necessary parts are constructed in the mind (i.e. they are *iʿtibārī*). They said that the necessary parts and the accidents belonging to quiddity were a kind of effect and dependency, which arose from the quiddity itself without the intermediary of existence. And since it is unanimously agreed that quiddity without existence is constructed in the mind, there can be no doubt that its necessary parts will also be mental constructs, for the necessary parts of something which is a mental construct can never be fundamental and real. So we obtain the result that if quiddities become 'made' in essence, throughout the world of existence, everything would be constructed in the mind and therefore unreal, for the world of existence is the first emanation from the necessary parts of quiddity. Thus the idea that quiddities are 'made' is a completely unsound one, which is incompatible with the methods of philosophical research, more especially with the basic idea of the primacy of existence.

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18 This could also be translated as the 'permanent archetypes'. [Editor].

12 The Three Modes of Existence

Mode is a condition of the relationship which exists between the subject, and the relationship is sometimes characterised by necessity, sometimes by impossibility, and sometimes by possibility—the negation of necessity. In the first case we call it necessary, in the second case impossible, and in the third case possible. The following examples illustrate these three modes respectively.

1. God exists
2. A partner of the Creator exists
3. Man exists

In these propositions, although existence is predicated generally in all of them, and predicative existence has everywhere a direct relationship to its subject, the relationship of existence has nevertheless acquired a special state in each case. Therefore, although the above propositions have no difference from the point of view of logical form, they are completely distinct from each other when seen from the aspect of the quality of the relationship contained within them. For the existence of God is without cause, in a necessary and essential manner, and He is pure and free from any kind of imperfection, unworthiness, possibility, or limitation. Thus, for Him, predicative existence is without any restriction or condition as it is established and necessary. As for the existence of a partner for God, the Creator, this is characterised by impossibility. That is to say, the relationship which is conceived between existence and a partner for the Creator is modalised only by impossibility and the necessity of non-existence. However, existence for Man, or any other possible quiddity like him, has no necessity and no impossibility, meaning that it is neither impossible for a man to be existent, nor is it necessary, and everything which is neither impossible nor necessary within the limits of its own essence is characterised by an essential possibility.

Here too the dispute that arose here between philosophy and theology was as to whether the three modes, which are known as the 'three matters' (*mawād-i thulāth*), were to be counted as things created in the mind or as realities.

Among the theologians, there are those who recognise that the modes are truly among existent realities beyond the mind; and they made up some reasons to justify the reality of them. Among their reasons was that if the modes were non-existent, non-real things, then non-existence means in every case nothingness (whether it be non-existent possibility or the non-existence of possibility, whether non-existent necessity or the non-existence of necessity, these are synonymous expressions between which there is no kind

of difference). Thus every possibility will be impossible and every necessary existence will be unnecessary.

Moreover, if the existence of these modes is connected to a subjective consideration (*iʿtibār*), then the work of subjectivity has no value, for if the subjective consideration of possibility from what is possible is not feasible, and the subjective consideration of necessity for necessary existence is similarly infeasible for the person who is considering them subjectively, then again the impossible will be possible and the unnecessary necessary.

However, in the eyes of philosophy this kind of reasoning is not very wise, because non-existent things acquire distinction and particularity on becoming added to, or particularised by, existents, and, therefore, if possibility is recognised to be a non-existent thing, the non-existence of possibility, which is the removal of possibility and its opposite, must not be thought of as having the same meaning. Basically, in philosophy, the things which are conceived in the mind are not such as to be completely at the disposal of the person who conceives them, since they ultimately come forth from a real and fundamental origin.

Furthermore, it was explained in detail in the section on the secondary intelligible (i.e. Section VI, above) that some secondary intelligibles, although they only exist in the mind, have, nevertheless, a real relationship to existent, fundamental, and real things. This was in such a way that if the fundamental existent was actually characterised by, and furnished with, qualities and accidents, it should never be imagined that the qualities certainly exist outside the mind, for it is possible that the characterising takes place in the external world while the qualities exist in the mind. Possibility, necessity, and perhaps impossibility, belong to this kind of quality which, if they are attached to an external existent, must not be thought of as akin to aforesaid (*mawṣūf*) external realities.

More important than anything is that there are clear-cut reasons by which it can be shown that the modes can be generally thought of as being mentally conceived in the terminology of philosophy, as we shall now explain.

Firstly, just as the three modes can be applied to fundamental existents, so they can also be applied to non-existents. For example, it can be said of a non-existent that might possibly exist that it is possibly existent, and if this quality were an external quality or accident, how could it find reality in a substantive which is non-existent.

Secondly, if the three modes had real existence and individuality, they would be of the same rank as other existents, and surely, like every other existent, they would have existence and a particular quiddity; and then the relation between their existence and their quiddity would also not be free

from one of the three modes. Thus an impossible infinite regress in these modes would come about.

CHAPTER 5

Contingency (*imkān*)[1]

Contingency, which is one of the most commonly met with words in philosophy, can be used with a variety of meanings. Now, in order to make all the technical meanings clear for students of philosophy, we shall list them below.

1 General Contingency

Meaning the negation of the necessity of the opposite mode in a proposition; by which is meant that if we say 'man is a writer', or 'Ḥasan is rich', writing and riches are not impossible for man or Ḥasan, since the non-existence of writing or riches is not a necessity or something certain for man or Ḥasan, they are therefore contingent for them. The 'generality' of this is that, firstly, it is more general than specific contingency, and, secondly, it is used with this meaning in general usage, as when we say that travel to Mars is possible or contingent, that is to say, not travelling to Mars is not intellectually necessary.

2 Specific Contingency (*imkān-i khāṣṣ*)

The negation of the necessity of the two sides (i.e. the opposite and what is in agreement) is called specific contingency. By careful consideration it will be understood that it is composed of two general contingencies. For example, if we say that man is learned and powerful, clearly knowledge and power are not certain and necessary things for him; similarly, ignorance is not certain. Thus this proposition, insofar as there is a negation of necessity on the two sides of it, possesses the logical necessity of specific contingency. Contingency, in the terminology of specialists (*ahl-i fann*), is usually said with this meaning, and in this way it is famous as possibility.

1 It is important to bear in mind that *imkān* can also connote 'possibility'. 'Contingency' has been generally used throughout this section in light of the categories of 'necessity' in contradistinction to 'contingency' as deployed in the metaphysical system of Ibn Sīnā.[Editor].

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3 Most Specific Contingency (*imkān-i akhaṣṣ*)

This title holds true for the negation of the necessity of essence, property, or time. Which means that if we compare the concept of the property with the general essence and nature and find out that every kind of necessitating or exigency is precluded between that nature and the property, that is to say that it has no essential necessity, no temporal necessity, and no necessity of property, then the most specific contingency has been achieved.

As an example, let us compare writing with the essence of man; we can find no kind of necessary relationship between these two. Besides, we can conceive of no condition or time together with the subject, man, that would make writing necessary for him. Thus we reach the result that this quality does not have necessity of property or necessity in time for him. However, if we imagine a quality which is additional to the essence of the subject which has a natural and automatic relation to the act of writing then writing will, of course, in this case, also become necessary for man.

4 Future Contingency (*imkān-i istiqbālī*)

Ordinary philosophers, devoid of innovativeness in theoretical matters, use this kind of contingency for the uncertainty which is observable in future conditions and states of events; and they have argued, to prove the fundamentality of this, in the following way. Those of the events of the universe, either in the past or in the present, which have found their final nature as either happening or not happening, have left the limits of contingency, and necessarily either existence or non-existence has come to them, and thus the description of possible is no longer applicable to them. It is only the future which has a state of doubt or uncertainty in relation to contingent events, and there is no way in which something in the future can be known as definitely going to occur or definitely not going to occur. This very uncertainty makes it necessary for doubt to hold for future events, and it will thus indicate future contingency.

However, true philosophers do not agree that this opinion rests on the foundations of a scientific reality, and they consider future time together with the past and the present as being one from the point of view of causes and conditions of existence. They say that philosophical knowledge has recognised the essential chain and connection of causes and effects, whether in the past or in the future, as an intellectual and certain law. Thus the events of the created world (*ʿālam-i takwīn*) cannot be met with the slightest real doubt or uncertainty which could be called contingency. Doubt can only possibly be found in the mind or in the senses which perceive reality, and here also the

contingency of the occurrence of this doubt is only of one kind, whether it be in the case of past or present events, or even future ones. Thus it must be said that philosophical system (*nizām-i falsafī*) has deemed it impossible to accept future contingency.

5 Pre-Dispositional Contingency (*imkān-i istiʿdādī*)

There can be no doubt that every existent which is mixed with matter and its accidents is set on a course of development and perfection. And it is obvious that every kind of natural or voluntary transformation or perfecting is in relation to a certain measure of suitability or propensity which is stored in an existent which is developing. Thus the progress and advance of nature can never be subject to chance or any ordinary accidental happening, for, in a general way and without any exception, it is based on a pre-dispositional contingency, which exists in its very structure.

On this basis, a natural existent which, according to the law of progression, is ready for an essential transformation, or a change in its accidents, or any other kind of change, can have its potentiality analysed in two different respects; firstly preparations and suitability are called the 'pre-disposition', for the reason that they are an external reality and exist in their proper place—i.e. in the thing that is prepared—and secondly they are called 'pre-dispositional possibility' because the grounds of perfections and progressions are a matter of anticipation. Sometimes we say that this pre-disposition is towards being human, or another time we say that being human in relation to this contingent thing is by pre-dispositional contingency. The thing which is being examined in this section is pre-dispositional contingency, not predisposition and potentiality, which are among the accidents of bodies and actual realities.

One of the particular features of pre-dispositional contingency is that it is a mode both in actuality and in potentiality, and, up to the last stage, until the sought after perfection is attained, pre-dispositional contingency will remain.

6 Contingency of Occurrence (*imkān-i wuqūʿī*)

'Something from whose conceiving of its occurrence no impossibility follows' is a description of the contingency of occurrence, as opposed to the impossibility of occurrence, which would be 'something from whose occurrence the opposite of intellectual necessity follows'. If we imagine a matter to ourselves, and if the concept of that thing, by itself and without an intermediary, changes the acceptance by, and the resultant view of the judgement of the intellect to

impossibility, the impossibility of that thing will be essential, like the conceiving of the co-existence of two contradictories, whose impossibility the intellect admits without the need of any guidance. But in other cases the matter is not so simple, for the intellect discovers the possibility (*imkān*) or impossibility (*imtināʿ*) according to a necessary principle.

7 Contingency in the Sense of Likelihood (*imkān bi maʿnā-yi iḥtimāl*)

Likelihood and mental doubt represent another of the special meanings of contingency which is very much in general usage in common speech. In ordinary conversation we say 'The Greek Alcibiades was possibly a philosopher' meaning that there is a likelihood that, like Socrates and Plato, he knew philosophy. This kind of contingency has no meaning other than indication of mental doubt or vagueness, and no kind of philosophical characteristic is conferred on it. If we hear from the philosophers that 'One should admit the contingency of any wonder one hears which tells of something extraordinary', this is no more than a piece of wise advice, and one must not use the contingency of this in any specified philosophical sense.

8 Indigent Contingency (*imkān bi maʿnā-yi faqr*)

There is no doubt that every contingent existent can be analysed in the mind into quiddity and existence, and for each of these two parts an analysis of properties and qualities can be made. Essential possibility, which is the negation of both existence and non-existence, is among the essential properties of quiddity, but possibility in the case of possible existents has the meaning of an essential connection or relation which existents have with the source of their necessity and creation; and, since they have no kind of ipseity (*huwiyyat*) and reality apart from their connection and relation with cause, privation and need, are their very reality and the foundation of their being and essence.

These existences among these realities are like the concepts of propositions among concepts, and just as the concept of a proposition cannot be understood independently, so a possible existence cannot possibly become real or be intellected without conceiving of a cause. This essential need, which, anyway, is the basis of nearness to the Creator and perfection for a thing, is construed as the contingency of existence, and like existence it has degrees, and it can have weakness, priority, posteriority, nearness, and coming after.

9 Analogical Contingency (*imkān bi al-qiyās*)

The concept of this contingency only becomes true when there is no natural or essential attachment between two things, for the true interpretation of contingency in relation to something else is the negation of the necessity of either the existence or the non-existence of something because of something else. Thus, in two completely independent things which have no kind of relation—essential or natural—with each other, it is true to say that neither of them requires existence or non-existence in relation to the other. This kind of contingency is noteworthy and useful in connection with the subject of the unity of God (*tawḥīd*).

CHAPTER 6

Priority and Posteriority

1 Coming-Into-Being (*ḥudūth*) and Eternity (*qidam*)

Coming-into-being and eternity can be explained as 'being preceded by something else' and 'not being preceded by anything else' respectively; and since existence and non-existence have a specific way of acting in each of the levels of existence, and have a particular designation, so, also, coming-into-being and eternity naturally take on a characteristic hue, as it were, in each case.

For example, an existence which occurs in time, and is, in this way, preceded by an antecedent time, is called coming-into-being-in-time (*ḥudūth-i zamānī*); and an existence which is outside the domain of time and place and is only preceded by possibility or by essential non-existence is an event with essential-coming-into-existence (*ḥudūth-i dhātī*); and existence preceded by perpetual non-existence (*ʿadam-i dahrī*) is known as coming-into-being-in-perpetuity (*ḥudūth-i dahrī*).

Eternity is also divided into various kinds in each of these instances, like coming-into-being. An important point which arises in connection with coming-into-being and eternity and is a matter of controversy between the scholars of philosophy is the antecedent non-existence of the existence which is sometimes parallel with the existence in question, and sometimes precedes and is opposed to it. The essential peculiarity of coming-into-being-in-perpetuity and coming-into-being-in-time is this very fact that the antecedent non-existence, with the subsequent existence which is compared to it, is a non-existence, opposite and contrary to the existence and detached from it, and this kind of non-existence, in these two cases, is antecedent non-existence, or, in other words, a 'dissociated' non-existence (*ʿadam-i infikākī*).

If Ḥasan comes into existence and is born on Friday, then on Thursday he is surely non-existent. In this way the non-existence of Ḥasan is in a time in which the being of Ḥasan is inconceivable. Thus, when Ḥasan is born, his non-being disappears and changes into existence; and in this way his non-existence and his existence occur at two reciprocal points, and, as far as time is concerned, in two separate temporal instants. However, no similar disjunctive property is in any way possible for essential non-existence. Basically the opposite of this property pertains, because essential non-existence and existence are compatible with each other and can go together. Even if existence were dissociable from this kind of non-existence, the non-existence

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would never be dissociable from the existence, for this non-existence is the same as essential possibility, which necessitates the inseparability of quiddities both in the state of existence and in the state of non-existence. Now, since essential possibility is defined as the negation of the necessity of either existence or non-existence, and since the negation of this necessity is the essential non-necessity of the quiddities that can go together with the necessities of existence, this kind of non-existence is called parallel non-existence. Essential non-existence is capable not only of going together with the existence of possibilities, but can also coming together, according to the same relationship and parallelism, with the non-existence of possibilities.

1.1 *Non-Existence in Perpetuity* (*ʿadam-i dahrī*)

Non-existence-in-time is not the only non-existence to find disjunction; for non-existence-in-perpetuity is also in this situation in relation to perpetual events. If we want to obtain a detailed account of both perpetual events and the peculiarity of the disjunctivity of non-existence-in-perpetuity with perpetual events, we must refer to those books that treat the matter in depth, especially the famous book *al-Qabasāt* by the celebrated philosopher and scholar Mīr Muḥammad Bāqir Dāmād. However, for the information of students we shall here briefly explain coming-into-existence-in-perpetuity (*ḥudūth-i dahrī*) and its disjunctive non-existence (*ʿadam-i infikākī*).

Now, coming-into-being-in-perpetuity is an expression for the fact of an existence which exists in the vertical hierarchy of the world of existence being preceded by its non-existence-in-perpetuity. If it be asked what this vertical hierarchy of the world of existence is in which hierarchy alone coming-into-being-in-perpetuity can only exist in it, the brief answer is that existences which each have essential antecedence to each other in the order of causality, starting with the origin of origins (*mabdaʾ al-mabādī*), and which eventually end the chain of emanation and originating of the process of creation with the last degree of descent which is the world of matter, are called the vertical hierarchy of being. The world of nature, which is continually in motion, change, transition and natural evolution, and all of whose existents and ontological particles display at every moment a milling about, mutual competitiveness, creation and decay, action and reaction, and which have no kind of priority or essential causal relationship with each other, is called the horizontal hierarchy.

Therefore we can conclude from this division the following point. Since existence in the vertical hierarchy has a fixed and unchanging order and organisation, each level is firmly seated in its own essential position and degree, and it is not possible for it to ascend or descend to another position or degree. By preserving this order and organisation we arrive at the follow-

ing result: every one of the existents in the vertical hierarchy, insofar as it is preceded by the existence above it, will also automatically be preceded by its own non-existence, because the preceding existence, since it has superiority from the point of view of the degree of existence, also carries or traces out the existence of what is below as well. Thus the existence below is preceded by a non-existence, which, in its own degree, is transformed into existence. We can call this non-existence 'disjunctive non-existence-in-perpetuity'.

In accordance with this view, the world of nature, although it is eternal in time, is ultimately brought into being by coming-into-being-in-perpetuity, and this latter has the peculiarity that the Islamic scholars of *ḥadīth* and theology were looking for in coming-into-being-in-time.

At the beginning of *al-Qabasāt*, Mīr Muḥammad Bāqir Dāmād says:

> Grand Master Ibn Sīnā, following the method of the *Magister Primus* [i.e. Aristotle, the First Master],[1] subscribes to the view in the dialectics of his *al-Shifā* that some of the problems of philosophy can basically be argued both for and against, and he believes that it sometimes happens that there is fundamentally no proof either way in such a matter; then this problem becomes merely a point of argument and is not susceptible to proof. The problem of the pre-eternity or coming-into-existence of the universe is of this kind. However, we [i.e. Mīr Dāmād] are now going to demonstrate and prove the coming-into-existence-in-perpetuity of the world in this book, despite the Master, so that it will be understood that the universe of creation came into existence and was not pre-eternal.[2]

Then he conceives of the universe of nature as being preceded by the universes, which are antecedent to nature, and he says that the universe of the intellects, since it exists on a level above the universe of nature, naturally traces out the natural non-existence of what comes under it in its own high station and level. And just as nature is preceded in existence by the world above and superior to it, for the same reason it is also preceded by its own dissociated non-existence, and this preceding is a specific kind of coming-before which is explained as coming-into-being-in-perpetuity. This is completely other than essential-coming-into-being, which is essential possibility, in every respect. And thus a coming-into-being other than essential-coming-into-being was propounded for nature which, from the aspect of discontinuity and reciprocity with existence, contains the same characteristics as coming-into-being-in-time, but without

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1 Mīr Dāmād was himself called the *Magister Tertius*, the *Magister Secundus* being al-Fārābī. [Translator].

2 Mīr Dāmād, *Kitāb al-Qabasāt*, ed. Mahdī Muḥaqiq, Tehran, 1367 SH/1988, 2.

the latter's intellectual and philosophical pitfalls. Just as was seen before, the non-existence which is conceived in coming-into-being-in-perpetuity before the existence of nature is a non-existence opposite and contradictory to nature; for nature, in the stages which precede its being, is not characterised by anything other than non-being, and on the level of its own existence it rejects this non-being and adorns itself with the jewels of existence. Thus the non-existence of nature is an opposite and discontinuous non-existence in comparison with the existence which it precedes, and not a parallel non-existence, and thus the universe (the whole of natural existence) comes into existence both with essential-coming-into-being and with coming-into-being-in-perpetuity, and is thus not pre-eternal.

1.2 *Coming-Into-Being and Pre-Eternity Together*

According to the metaphysicians, the universe (*jahān*), which is the name of the totality of creation, is continually displaying itself in the field of existence, and there has been no moment when the Source of Creation and absolute good begrudged or held Himself back from originating and outpouring benefits upon it. Against this view, those who held the fundamentality of religion—as opposed to the intellect—and supposed that the eternity of the universe was in contradiction with the fundamental Unity of God (*tawḥīd*), and was contrary to the teachings of the prophets, took up their position against the philosophers and persisted in their recognition of the world as something created in time like the rest of everyday phenomena. For this reason a deep rift occurred which persisted for a long time between proponents of *ḥadīth* and the proponents of philosophy which transformed the peaceful atmosphere of knowledge into one of darkness and quarrelling.

Ṣadr al-Muta'allihīn, with his superiority in knowledge, his sagacity, and his outpouring genius, used his originality in this matter, solved it, and settled this difference once and for all, and afterwards his great work was the object of acclaim both from the philosophers and from the religious scholars.

His theory was based on transubstantial motion (*ḥarakat-i jawharī*) which reigns without exception over all existent things and every particle which comes under the rule of the laws of nature. If nature, in a universal sense, is continually in a state of transubstantial and evolutionary movement, there can be no doubt that every one of its stages will be necessarily situated in the middle between a preceding existence and a subsequent one, and since each of these stages of motion is always excluded from the preceding and subsequent temporal instants which lie on either side of it, they are enclosed by the preceding and subsequent non-existences of themselves. This is like the hours and minutes of time, which are always connected to the past instant and the future instant, and it is a rule which is established and is inviolable

for all the pieces, particles, and parts of the world of nature from the beginning to the end of things. Since all the countless parts of creation possess this characteristic of renewal and movement, and will always have it, it will be seen that all the countless individual units in all the infinite instants of time truly come into being in time and are transformed in time. Similarly, since all the units and parts of nature, however infinitely in the past they are thought to stretch, come into being in time and are transformed in time, the whole universe, which is nothing but these units and parts, also comes into being in time. Since the field of existence never rests from the process of natural creation, and since at no time is matter completely subject to annihilation, it can be said that nature is both new and old, and that matter's impetus for renewal (*tajaddud*), although it comes into being in time at every instant, can also be harmonised with precedence and age.

2 The Divisions of Priority and Posteriority

Priorities, coming before, and posteriority, coming after, are divided into different sections according to a common basis which determines what kind of precedence one thing has over another.

1. *Priority and posteriority in time*, like the priority of the past over the present and the future, or the priority of those before over those who are to come, with the difference that the priority of predecessors over those to come is [primarily] with respect to past and future time, while the priority of the past over the future concerns time itself; which is the very essence of what here precedes and comes after.
2. *Priority and posteriority in degree* (*rutbī*), like the priority of the genera of a quiddity over its differentia, which is realised at the level of the intellect (*martabah-yi ʿaqlī*), or like the priority of what is in front over what is behind, which is observable at the level of the sensible (*ḥisī*).
3. *Priority and posteriority in superiority* (*bi al-sharaf*), like the supremacy and pre-eminence of someone over someone else in a non-material sense.
4. *Natural priority and posteriority*, like the priority of the incomplete cause over its effect.
5. *Causal priority and posteriority*, like the priority of the complete cause (*ʿillat-i tāmmah*) over the effect.
6. *Substantial* (*jawharī*) *priority and posteriority*, like the priority of genus and differentia over species.
7. *Real* (*bi al-ḥaqīqah*) *priority and posteriority*, like the priority of existence over quiddity in the quality (*ṣifat*) of actualisation and existence.

8. *Priority and posteriority in perpetuity*, like the priority of created things[3] (*ibdāʿiyyāt*) over nature.

The matter in which priority and posteriority are manifested, which is held in common between the preceding and the succeeding thing, and which gives priority to the preceding thing, is called, in the terminology of philosophy, the 'common basis' (*milāk*). For example, the relationship of time is the common basis of temporal precedence, and the preceding thing has priority thanks to this relationship; for until time passes over the existence of the preceding thing, the succeeding thing cannot create that relationship in time. Being near to, or far from, a certain point of reference is the cause of priority and posteriority in degree. Excellence or non-material supremacy forms the common basis of the priority and posteriority of superiority. External existence and being real is the common basis of natural priority. Necessity is the distinguishing feature of the priority of the cause over the effect. While, in substantial priority, the common basis is the essential position and standing of the things; in real priority the basis of precedence is the attribute of being real, although in a figurative sense.[4] In the case of priority in perpetuity, also, since it is the vertical levels of the whole of existence which are in question, the common basis will necessarily be subsistence and actuality in the world of reality.

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3 Namely, those things created *ex nihilo*, as distinguished from others forms of creation.

4 In the example given of the real priority of existence over quiddity, the latter has, of course, no realness at all. Therefore, if being-real is to be taken as the common basis, it must be taken in a figurative sense. [Translator].

CHAPTER 7

Unity, Multiplicity, and Predication

1 Unity and Multiplicity

Unity (*waḥdat*), which, in all places and from all points of view has a specific congruity with existence, is, like existence, without need of any kind of real or descriptive definition (*taʿrīf-i ḥaddī yā rasmī*), and, incidentally, the definitions which have been proposed for unity face the very same difficulties which occurred for the definitions of existence. Thus, in the transcendent philosophy (*falsafah-yi mutaʿāliyyah*), unity has been defined, like its close relative, by lexical definitions (*sharḥ lafẓī*) such as 'the absence of any possibility of division or equivalent'.

The interesting point is that, not only from the point of view of the meaning of the word, but in reality also, unity does not lose any of the privileges and particularities of existence, because, in spite of the generality and obviousness which its concept possesses, the understanding of its reality, like the perception of the reality of existence, is outside the domain of the faculty of perception. The cause of this fact—as has been made clear from the philosophical research undertaken by Ṣadr al-Muta'allihīn—is that unity in the external world is nothing other than existence; and if we conclude from a comparison of unity and existence that unity is the same as existence and existence the same as unity, we should realise that, basically, the similarity is the consequence of a verbal difference, and that this difference is apparent only in the words 'unity' and 'existence', and not in their reality and essence which is nothing other than true oneness and sameness. From the point of view of philosophy there is nothing which needs to be feared in having complete congruity, entirely devoid of multiplicity, between two different concepts in their specific essence and reality. And, certainly, the concepts of unity and existence and individuality are among those things, which all clearly denote one simple reality.

In any case, unity, which has been defined as the absence of any possibility of division insofar as it is unity, and considering the common origin it has with the intellect and the objects of intellection, manifests itself in the intellective stages of the soul more apparently, more especially and more clearly than in the faculties of particular apprehension like imagination (*khayāl*) and estimation (*wahm*), because intellective apprehensions are generally from common facts (*umūr-i ʿāmmah*) which correspond to all or most of the facts of existence, and each one of the common facts is a simple, general and

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all-embracing fact when it is first looked at by the intellect, which becomes divided and separated after becoming compounded with, and added to, other intelligibles whose extent of correspondence with reality is less. But multiplicity is always apprehended in the domain of sensory objects, which are traced out in the faculty of the imagination (*quwwah-yi khayāl*) in such a way that what is drawn out in the imagination is a sensory object not an intellectual one, and a sensory object is something which cannot be thought of as one and simple, without examination and analysis. So we deduce that unity is basically clearer and more evident in the realm of the intellect, whereas multiplicity is more easily and obviously perceived in the *milieu* of the imagination.

One of the cases in which unity is apparently the same as existence is repetition in the degrees of number which someone looking with the eyes of a gnostic (*ʿārif pīshah*) can perceive to be a clear example of the manifestation of existence in quiddities in a way which is connected to the origin of multiplicity in unity. For 'one', by repetition, or by its manifestation in the degrees of number, creates the fixed order of the defined states and different and infinite forms of the numbers, just as the Absolute Creator, by His manifestation and theophany and infinite pure blessing, bestows being, life, movement, and the power to produce effects on quiddities and essences of things with the most wonderful order which cannot be changed or rivalled. If we find that all numbers, with the different degrees and infinite multiplicities that they have, yet present the essential property of being in specific harmony with one and its repetition, we must also clearly perceive that the infinite multiplicities of existence all originate from one Active Source and Everlasting Will, Who efficiently rules throughout the entire world of existence and casts rays of light on all existent things, who, by the manifestation which each of them has in the field of existence, removes the veils from the mystery of creation.

Some have sought to present unity as one of the philosophical secondary intelligibles, which are mentally conceived entities, and to prove their claim they invented this pretext. If unity were one of the fundamental realities, they reasoned, it would surely, like other realities, be qualified by unity, and this attribute, since it has been supposed to exist among the numbers of the realities, would automatically have the individuality and unity which it calls for. In this way an infinite number of things would become fundamental for one finite unit outside the realm of what is mentally conceived. However, remembering the fundamental sameness of unity and existence, it is not difficult to find a solution for this kind of complexity. As it happens, this very same matter was brought up in the discussion of the fundamentality of existence by the person who thought that existence was something created in the mind [i.e. Suhrawardī], and in the same way it was protested that an infinite regress

in existence would come about for a fundamentally real existence. In our opinion, this resemblance is another proof of the perfect union and congruity of existence and unity whose harmony will not be given up even when the enemy attacks. Now, since this criticism is the same, the correct and definite answer is also the same as that which was given in the section on existence. In brief, then, the matter is as follows: just as existence is essentially existent, so real unity is also essentially one, and something which is one by its own essence does not need to have unity ascribed to it.

The only thing that can be said is that unity, in its conceptual form of being one, is something conceived in the mind and separate from external existence which has no fundamental individuality outside the mind, and it is one of the philosophical secondary intelligibles whose occurrence takes place in the mind, but whose attribution of application to the thing which displays it takes place in the outside world.

Against the theory of the oneness of unity and existence, Abū ʿAlī b. Sīnā, in his *Shifā'*, took recourse to a logical objection to prove their separateness. He reasons in the following way:

> 'Many', insofar as it is many, certainly exists; and, without doubt, no plurality, insofar as it has multiplicity, can be one. Therefore, we reach the conclusion that since not every existent, insofar as it is existent, is one, so unity must be something other than existence.

Now it must be observed that this proof, although it was thought up by the brain of a great thinker who rightly holds the highest of titles among logicians, is, nevertheless, not free from all weak points, and for this reason it does not arrive at the certain conclusion that it has revealed the separateness of unity and existence. For, if 'many' really exists, for the very same reason as it exists, it must also be one; and if truly, as the Grand Master imagined, we can deny that unity is an existent which is called 'many', then we have automatically denied its existence. Therefore, with care and a little investigation of the major and minor premises of the syllogism, it becomes clear that the major premise cannot be accepted by reason, because 'many', if it exists, insofar as it is existent, is surely also one. And if an independent existence cannot be contemplated for 'many', we must necessarily say that the minor premise is not true. In either case, the weak point of the Master's proof becomes clear.

Believers in the separateness of existence and unity have pursued their purpose in another way. They say that a body, which is one interconnected unit, certainly has, prior to its analysis and division, one ipseity and one individuality, and, in the end, one existence and one unity. But after analysis, although it has completely given up its interconnected unity, and, through

becoming divided up, has taken on multiplicity, it can never be said that it has also denied individuality and existence for itself. Therefore we must be of the opinion in this case that existence is different from unity, and thus it is proved that existence is not always and everywhere the same as unity.

The convincing answer to this is that whenever the interconnected unity of a continuous body disappears, the existence and individuality of that body will also undergo a change in ipseity, and just as two continuous and interconnected units newly come into existence, so also two new existences and individualities will also become apparent. Thus according to this intellectual reality, not only is the above idea not a sure proof of separateness, but it must also in all fairness be said that the oneness of unity and existence has been proved by an even more interesting method.

The result that we obtain from the sum of our enquiry is that unity, individuality, ipseity, existence and necessity are all words for which, although it must be acknowledged from the aspect of their lexical meaning that they are not synonyms, it is nevertheless sure that, however much we search in the world of reality, we will never find more than one reality.

2 Divisions of the One (*wāḥid*) [That is to say an investigation into how many ways things are said to be 'one']

'One' can be divided into two kinds, real and non-real, and for each of them separate divisions can be described.

As for the real 'one' (*wāḥid-i ḥaqīqī*), it is something, which has no need of any intermediary in its qualification (*ittiṣāf*) by unity. This means that if we call it 'one', this quality (*ṣifat*) is essential to it; in grammatical terminology it may be described as being in a 'state of essence' (*bih ḥāl-i dhāt*)—that is to say it is 'one' in its own right—and not in a 'state of attachment' (*bih ḥāl-i muta'alliq*)—in which case it would be called 'one' only incidentally; but as for the non-real 'one', if there is qualification by unity, it is surely not possible except by accidental or figurative attribution, because in reality it is 'many'. For the same reason, it is said that in the case of the 'real one' there is a real unity yet also a multiplicity conceived of in the mind, while in the 'non-real one' there is a real multiplicity yet also an imagined or mentally-conceived unity.

However, the 'real one' is not identical and with one meaning in all its divisions, for sometimes it is used for an essence which has the attribute of unity, and, at other times, essence or the attributing of something does not come into it at all, but rather, in the same way as existence itself is called existent, unity itself also becomes pure 'one'. However, unity which is called real,

essential 'one' (*wāḥid ḥaqīqī bi al-dhāt*) may possibly be used merely for the verbal concept of unity which is the same as the absence of divisibility, or it may possibly be used for true, precise unity which is totally real. In any case, any essence or quiddity which is at variance with this attribution cannot be included in this division, but must be fixed in other divisions of the real 'one', because it involves the attributing or qualifying of unity, and the attribute of unity is made as an addition to the essence.

Specified 'one' (*wāḥid bi al-khuṣūṣ*), and generalised 'one' (*wāḥid bi al-ʿumūm*) constitute other divisions of real 'one'. The difference is that generalised 'one' is sometimes used in the case of concepts which have generality and univocity (*ishtirāk*), and sometimes it means 'unfolded existence' (*wujūd-i munbasiṭ*), all-embracing existence, from the particularisations and epiphanies of whose unlimited and unconditioned essence all contingent beings come. In this case the meaning of generality is the 'extent' (*siʿah*) or 'scope' (*iḥāṭah*) of being, which is used in the philosophical terminology of the Illuminationists just as the ideas of the 'universal' and the 'absolute' are used with this same meaning. But generalised 'one' is a concept which shares the same fivefold division into which universal logic has divided it. As opposed to generalised 'one', we find specified 'one', which has been divided into various kinds according to that which is qualified by it, for the thing which is qualified by unity is perhaps a distinct thing which can be analysed and divided up, or perhaps it is something without the property of divisibility, like a single point, or a soul, or a single intelligence, none of which can be divided up by anything.

All of the above divisions were of real 'one' (*wāḥid-i ḥaqīqī*), which is truly qualified by this description. If it happens that the possibility of multiplicity exists in some of its divisions, this multiplicity must be understood to be hypothetical (*farḍī*), or mentally conceived (*iʿtibārī*), in the terminology of philosophy. Moreover, this kind of multiplicity can be regarded in another respect as being a kind of unity which is not at variance with real unity.

But non-real 'one', which is really multiple and accidental, and for which unity is conceived in the mind, has divisions, among which are, for example: 'one' with regard to species, 'one' with regard to genus, 'one' with regard to differentia, 'one' with regard to quality, and 'one' with regard to quantity.

The thing which it is necessary to mention here is that 'one' with regard to genus, or with regard to species, or accident, is very different from generic 'one', and so forth, for 'one' with regard to species and its relatives are divisions of non-real 'one' which acquires unity by figurative attribution, while specific 'one' and its relatives are divisions of real, generalised 'one', which can truly be attributed with the quality of unity.

3 Predication (*ḥaml*)

Just as existence has accidents like 'necessity' and 'individuality', which are derived from the reality of existence, so, also, unity has specified accidents, which its reality requires in every way and in every conceivable degree.

The identity of something with something else (*hūhūwiyyat*), whose definition in philosophy is 'union' (*ittiḥād*), is counted as a point of division of predication and one of the accidents and concomitants of unity, just as opposition (*mughāyirāt*), which is the origin of the divisions of oppositeness, is one of the accidents of multiplicity. According to this, everywhere that union and identity occur, a true and suitable predication will occur, and everywhere that multiplicity and division are produced, opposition and ultimately valid negation will certainly occur.

The identity of something to something else, which has been used in the terminology specifically for union in existence—of course in common predication (*ḥaml-i shāʾiʿ*), not in primary essential predication (*ḥaml-i awwalī dhātī*)—stands exactly for the contents of a predicative proposition whose predicate forms a relation of union with the subject. Since the agreement of union must surely take place between two real things, when the predicate is looked at from an aspect other than that of unity, opposition of a certain kind will also become a natural necessity for the meaning of union in the predication. If we suppose that we deny opposition in the reality of the predication, there can be no doubt that it enters into it in the actual way the proposition is put together and used.

4 Division of Predication

The true divisions that can be used for predication are based on the principle that, since predication is nothing but the union and oneness of the subject and the predicate, the divisions that can be conceived of for it derive from the aspect of the quality of the union that exists in reality between the two sides of the proposition. On the basis of this principle, when there is a case of pure union in existence, there will be common predication, and this kind of predication is common in the speech of ordinary people and in all sciences and technical subjects, and it is for this reason that it is called common predication (*ḥaml-i shāʾiʿ*).

In common predication the connection is on the common basis of ontological union. Now, sometimes an existence which is based on union has an essential connection or ascription without intermediary both for the subject and for the predicate; sometimes its connection is essential and without in-

termediary only to the subject, while it is accidental and with an intermediary to the predicate; and sometimes its connection is not essential on either side. Examples of each of these respectively are:

1. 'Aristotle is a man'.
2. 'The man is a writer'.
3. 'The writer is a thinker'.

Whenever there is also a kind of union between the concepts of the subject and the predicate over and above the ontological unity between them, primary essential predication will be said to have occurred. This kind of predication is only used for predication of essence with essence, or of a quiddity with its essential parts. But it should be remembered that in union, and ultimately, in predication in whatever form it is envisaged, there is a singular thing which is the basis of the predicative proposition, and without it, evident confusion would take place among all predicative propositions, namely, existence. Even the establishing (*thubūt*) of essence for essence, whose predication is primary and essentially necessary, is not possible without existence, for essence which has not been granted existence not only is unable to be granted existence, but is also deprived of every thing, even its own essence and essential parts, and it is for this reason that logicians have qualified all the necessities of an essence as being 'as long as there is existence' (*mādām al-wujūd*).

4.1 *Author's Opinion*

As opposed to what is generally believed in philosophy, in our opinion, primary essential predication (*ḥaml-i awwalī-yi dhātī*) is not limited to cases of predication which contain conceptual union between the subject and the predicate, because sometimes predication—although it may be primary and essential—in no way displays union of the two concepts of the subject and the predicate when we look at them closely. This happens when we get an essential instance (*fard bi al-dhāt*), which is the real existence of the predicate without it being mixed with accidents and characteristics of the subject of the proposition, and we predicate the predicate, which is the essential title (*'unwān-i dhātī*) of the same reality, as an essential necessity. For example, if we predicate 'white' for a body which has whiteness, it will surely be a common predication; and if we make the universal quiddity of whiteness the subject and 'white' its predicate it will be an essential conceptual predication. But if we separate a real, individual whiteness from its body and the rest of its accidents, and conceive of it as the subject of a proposition, and then predicate 'white' for that whiteness which is an essential instance of it, it will certainly be a primary essential predication, without there being any question of conceptual union. If it is said

that a particular whiteness gives up its particularity when it is separated from its subject and the rest of its concomitants, and the universal nature of whiteness remains, which has conceptual union with 'white', not ontological union, we shall answer that existence is the only common basis for individuality and distinction, and it is that which gives realness and individuality to a universal nature, and not the things which are attached to it; and we can separate real whiteness from all the things attached to it while keeping its individuality and existence, and make it the subject of a proposition, just as it is possible to separate one of the contingent realities from its quiddity and make it in the same way the subject of a proposition whose predicate is the concept of existence. Now this is a scientific reality, through whose discovery we can overcome many of the difficulties in philosophy, as well as many of the problems which occur in the principles of jurisprudence (*uṣūl al-fiqh*).

4.2 *Another Division*

Another division which has been proposed for predication is from the point of view of the derivation (*ishtiqāq*) or absence of derivation of the predicate which divides the predication into derivative predication (*ḥaml ishtiqāqī*) or non-derivative predication (*ḥaml muwāṭātī*). Sometimes it can be observed that the predicate of the proposition is connected to, and, as a result, predicated of, the subject without any need of derivation (or recourse to the idea of possession), although in some other cases this is not possible without derivation or compounding. For example, if we say 'Ḥasan is a man', or 'Man is an animal', we relate the predicate to the subject and predicate it without there being any derivation or compounding, and the sense (*madlūl*) of this proposition is its predicative identity (*huwa huwa*), or, in other words, it can be said to be univocal (*muwāṭāt*); but if we want to establish philosophy for Aristotle, or knowledge of Islamic jurisprudence for al-ʿAllāmah al-Ḥillī, we must first of all produce philosophy and knowledge of jurisprudence in the form of a derivative concept like 'philosopher' or 'jurisprudent', or in a compound form with 'possessor of…' (*dhū*). Then we can predicate it of its subject and say 'Aristotle is a philosopher', or 'al-ʿAllāmah al-Ḥillī is a jurist', or 'Socrates was a possessor of wisdom', and this predication is known in philosophical terminology as derivative predication (*ḥaml-i ishtiqāqī*).[1] This is also the case when one wishes

1 Jamāl al-Dīn Abū Manṣūr al-Ḥasan b. Sadīd al-Dīn Yūsuf b. Zayn al-Dīn ʿAlī b. al-Muṭahhar al-Ḥillī (648–726 AH/ 1250–1325 CE), known as al-ʿAllāmah al-Ḥillī, played a considerable role in shaping Shīʿah theology and jurisprudence. Born in Ḥillah, Iraq, he studied with Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī, among others. For more biographical information see the introduction to al-ʿAllāmah al-Ḥillī's, *Foundations of Jurisprudence: An Introduction to Imāmī Shīʿī Legal Theory*, introduction, translation, and Arabic critical edition by Sayyid Amjad H. Shah Naqavi, Leiden, 2016 [Editor].

to employ the exaggerative form (*mubālaghah*) in Arabic in a statement such as: 'Zayd is justice' (*zayd ʿadl*).[2]

Then there are other divisions which classify predication according to the form of the proposition into various categories, in such a way that all the logical divisions of the proposition can be referred back precisely to divisions of the predicate. Just as propositions are conditional or predicative, so predication is similarly either with a certain uncertainty and qualified by a condition, or else it is in a state of definiteness. In the state of definiteness, it either has the meaning of simple 'is-it?-ness' (*haliyyat*) or compound 'is-it?-ness', and since we have introduced and explained the meaning of simple and compound 'is-it?-ness' in a previous section, there is no point in repeating ourselves here. The only point to be borne in mind is whether the principle which states that ascribing something, *A*, to something, *B*, presupposes the existence of *B* but not of *A*, and which is known as the principle of presupposition (*qāʿidah-yi farʿīyyah*), can be applied to simple 'is-it?-ness' which is no more than one quiddity and one existence, or whether it is only applicable to compound 'is-it?-ness'; and, assuming that it is applicable to simple 'is-it?-ness', whether or not a way has been thought of to solve the problem of the infinite regress that would come about if a quiddity were established before it had existence.

The correct answer is that, by analysis and careful comparison of the meaning of the principle and the contents of simple 'is-it?-ness', it becomes clear that the principle of presupposition does not apply to that kind of proposition which only informs us about the establishing of a quiddity. Now, the only thing we get from simple 'is-it?-ness' is the establishing of something—i.e. the giving of existence to it—and it is perfectly clear that the establishing of something is very different from the ascribing of something to something else, which is the precise meaning of the principle of presupposition. Here, also, the answer to the second question is to be found, and it is that with the true description of the quiddity and the existence, and with the fact that existence in the outside world is exactly the same as the actualisation of the quiddity, there can be no place for an objection about an infinite regress.

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2 In the first edition, p. 78, this statement is incomplete: *zayd ʿadl kih bi ʿunwān-i mubālaghah guftah mīshawad.* However, this is corrected in the second edition: *zayd ʿadl nīz kih bi ʿunwān-i mubālaghah guftah mīshawad az īn gūnah ast.* The translator left this portion blank. We have added this sentence from the second edition. [Editor].

5 Multiplicity (*kathrat*), Alterity (*mughāyirat*), and Opposition (*taqābul*)

The counterpoint to unity is multiplicity, one of the essential accidentals (*ʿawāriḍ*) and attachments (*mutaʿallaqāt*) of which is alterity (*mughāyirat*). Two things, which are different from each other, which are in a contrasting aspect with one another (*jihat mukhālif*), and whose co-presence in one place and one time and one mode is impossible, are called, in philosophical terminology, two opposites (*mutaqābilayn*). Thus multiplicity is the fundamental source of alterity, and alterity is the point of division for the varieties of opposition.

In order to explain the different divisions of opposition, it must be said that when two existing things acquire opposition to each other as a result of their being different, and when their opposition is of a kind that in their very opposition the intellection of each one is not only connected to, but dependent on, the intellection of the other, co-relative opposition (*taqābul taḍāyuf*) is obtained. And if two existing things have maximum separation and difference between each other without being intellected in relation to each other, they will be contraries (*mutaḍādd*). In the case of the opposition of an existing thing with a non-existing thing, if the possibility and propensity (*istiʿdād*) for the existence of the non-existing thing in the logical subject of that thing is being thought of, like blindness (which is the non-existence of sight) for a man, who should have the faculty of sight, it is called the opposition of non-existence and disposition (*taqābul ʿadam wa malakah*); but if the non-existence of a quiddity is being compared to its existence, without that non-existence being thought of in an existent logical subject (*mawḍūʿ-i mawjūdī*), and without the possibility of its existence in that subject being taken into account, there is opposition of privation and necessity (*salb wa ījāb*), which is the most intense of the divisions of opposition.

Another thing beyond dispute is that the root of the divisions of opposition is exactly this privation and necessity, which the intellect can distinguish without reflection or enquiry into the difference and mutual incompatibility (*tanāfī*) of their essences, while the other three—opposition of contraries, opposition of non-existence and disposition, and co-relative opposition—are not so obvious to the intellect. Indeed, after the investigation and consideration of the latter divisions, it will be observed that their opposition springs from the essential mutual incompatibility of privation and necessity, which is the point to which all differences and divisions of opposition return.

A kind of opposition sometimes occurs between two propositions which is given the name of contradiction (*tanāquḍ*), and the explanation which the logicians have given for this is that from the truth of either one of them, the falsity of the other necessarily follows, which also means that it is never

possible for two contradictory propositions to be present together, both true or both false. Sometimes this opposition can occur between two individual concepts which can in no sense be said to be propositions, and about which we cannot use the criterion of truth and falsity which was used in the above definition by the logicians.

By way of example, consider the mutual incompatibility that exists between 'man' and 'not-man', which are certainly not propositions. These must surely be counted as examples of the opposition of privation and necessity. In this connection, privation and necessity, which are opposite one other without the formation of any proposition, must, according to the Grand Master's, be called simple opposition (*taqābul basīṭ*) and not contradiction, because of the limits imposed by logical terminology. But if we choose not to be hindered by logical terminology, we may, as a result of careful consideration and investigation, say that essential mutual incompatibility, even in propositions—which is 'contradiction' in the terminology of the logicians—is basically only between the negation and affirmation which take place in those propositions—i.e. between p and $\neg p$, in symbolic form. For otherwise a proposition, which is composed of a subject, a predicate and the copula between them, could have no essential mutual incompatibility with its contradictory proposition. In this way, in every instance where this kind of mutual incompatibility occurs, whether it is in propositions or in individual concepts, there will definitely be opposition of privation and necessity, which is contradiction.

One of the properties of the opposition of privation and necessity is that its reality is something perceived only in the intellect. Afterwards, it is possible to make this intellective reality manifest and understandable in a spoken form in the verbal world by employing terms that are especially used for negation and non-existence. But since one of the two sides of this opposition is negative and non-existent, it must never be thought that this kind of opposition can become in any way manifested beyond the bounds (*muhīt*) of the mind (*dhihn*) and words (*alfāz*).

Another particularity (*khāṣṣiyat*) is that no corporeal (*jismānī*) or non-corporeal object can ever be free of privation and necessity, because everything, however it is thought of, is either existent or non-existent. It is only at the level of quiddities that we can, by analysis, separate the idea of a quiddity from both existence and non-existence and conceive of their difference from quiddity.

A final point which can be added in this section is that logicians considered various unities (*waḥdāt*) for contradiction which are in general one of the characteristics of logical contradiction and can only be attributed to propositions which clearly have privative and necessary mutual incompati-

bility, and these are known as the 'eight unities'. Ṣadr al-Muta'allihīn Shīrāzī added to these unities a further one, the unity of predication, and established this as a foundation for some of his original research. We have referred to one of his discoveries based on the unity of predication in our section on mental existence.

CHAPTER 8

Quiddity

1 Quiddity and Its Necessary Parts

Quiddity (*māhiyyat*) is the answer to the question about the essence (*gawhar*) of a thing (*shay'*). It is a word originally derived from *mā* and *huwa* ('what' and 'is', i.e. 'what it is', the 'is' being understood in Arabic), and, in the form of an invented noun, it informs about the reality (*ḥaqīqat*) and essence (*dhāt*) of things without reference to existence or its necessary parts. 'Essence' and 'reality' can also be applied to a quiddity which has external reality and which is not just a thing which is imagined and conceived of in the mind. Now, since it has been said that quiddity is the answer to a question about a thing's essence (*gawhar*), we must clarify what exactly 'answer' and 'question' are in the terminology of philosophy and logic.

The questions, which are employed in the discussion and investigation of things, have a natural and logical order whose every stage has been given a name so that the seekers of reality may find reality, to whatever degree is possible. To this end, the basic and general objects which in any situation may possibly be the intention of the inquirer's question are divided, in the first instance, into three, which are famous in Islamic logic as the 'three objects of questions' (*maṭālib-i thalāthah*). Subsequently, each of these divisions is again divided into two parts, so that, in short, every utterance can be given its place and every point made at an appropriate time.

By way of explanation and example, let us suppose that the inquirer has heard only the name "*anqā*", but has no awareness of its reality, meaning that not only is he uninformed of its being, its particularities, its conditions and states, and its lofty nest, but that he is also ignorant of any understanding of its genus and differentia, and even of its being a bird. This person then asks someone who knows: 'What is an *'anqā*'?' At this stage, his question is an enquiry about the name *"anqā"*, and the answer he will receive will be that the *'anqā'* is a bird. The first kind of question and its answer, the nominal definition, is extremely common. Afterwards, the question of the being and reality of this thing will occur: does this bird, with this name and designation exist in the external world, or not? This question, which normally begins in Arabic with the word '*hal*', is the simple 'is-it?' (*hal basīṭah*), since the enquiry and the reply do not extend beyond simple existence to other characteristics. After this, the inquirer will repeat his question in another form: what is the reality of this existent? Although this question can, from the point of view

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of the external form of its phrasing, be likened to the first question, the aim of the enquiry will be very different, since the enquirer has now traversed several stages in his quest and has been given a few indications, and since, in the first stage, he asked his question without realising or attending to the reality of the object. Now he is studying the truth of the thing under investigation with attention to its reality, just as a zoologist might. Since this question concerns the quiddity, the answer too will be about the quiddity. Finally, after passing these stages, it is the moment to look into the secondary perfections and accidental qualities, and to this end the enquiry about them is called the compound 'is-it?' (*haliyyat-i murakkabah*).[1]

What is interesting to note is that there is an attractive connection between the 'what?' questions and the 'is-it?' questions which, when seen as a whole, create an elegant nexus in the mind. Thus, each of the 'what?' and 'is-it?' questions precedes, and follows on from the other, and leads the enquirer to reiterate his questions of 'what?' and 'is-it?' one after the other.

The inquiry into causation is given the name 'object of "why?"' (*maṭlab lima*), since it begins with the word 'why?', or '*lima*' in Arabic. Since the enquiry that is raised about the cause of a thing may sometimes be made in order to find out the real, objective cause of the thing, and sometimes in order to affirm or prove it, the object of 'why?' is divided into the objective 'why?' (*lima thubūtī*), and the confirming 'why?' (*lima ithbātī*).

Now that the three objects of questions have been to some extent understood, we must carefully determine in which of these questions quiddity is the basic aim of the enquiry and reply.

What is well-known in philosophy is that quiddity is the answer to the question about the substance of a thing, but, in our opinion, quiddity cannot be explained and understood everywhere according to this well-worn maxim, because quiddity is definitely more general than reality and essence which are used for a thing which has reality and exists. Thus, for a thing, or concept, to which existence or non-existence cannot validly apply sometimes only quiddity (*māhiyyat*) is used, and not essence (*dhāt*). Quiddity, in this sense—i.e. the sense in which its existence has no reality—cannot be the answer to the question about the substance of a thing and thus take on the appearance of reality. Rather, in this situation, quiddity is only the answer to the first question, from which, through that which seeks explanation, the question and answer can be made. Thus it is better to say that only that quiddity which is synonymous with reality and essence is the answer to the question about the substance of a thing.

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1 The *'anqā* is a mythical bird reminiscent of a griffin. [Editor].

2 Quiddity in Itself is Neither Existent Nor Non-Existent

It is not easy for someone who is not thoroughly acquainted with the problems of philosophy to understand this declaration, and it is even possible that such a person will quite bluntly condemn this phrase which is so easy to say but so difficult to realise, as being against the Law of the Excluded Middle. Some famous scholars have even been persuaded that the knotty problem of two contradictory judgements both being false can be solved in this case, albeit in a rather difficult way.[2] However, investigation of the matter not only lifts this declaration out of its position of obscurity and convolutedness, but also shows that it is a simple matter, the like of which is frequently come across.

By way of example: Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle were three famous Greek philosophers whose investigations are still frequently discussed by the aficionados of this subject, and we can picture a distinct individuality for each of them and say: Socrates is Socrates and not Plato; Socrates is not Aristotle; therefore Socrates is not Plato and not Aristotle.

In the realm of mental concepts and images we can consider ourselves entitled to postulate three concepts, each different from the other, namely, existence, non-existence, and man; and we can say that existence is existence, existence is not non-existence, existence is not man, therefore existence is not man and not non-existence. Saying this is just as correct as saying Socrates is not Plato and not Aristotle; they are both equally true. By the same token, we can certainly say that man, who is a specific quiddity, is not existence, and that man is not non-existence. Therefore man is not existent and not non-existent; and this statement is evident to the same extent that the previous parallel examples are self-evident.

Now it should be asked whether, when solving philosophical problems we make a difficult statement even more difficult, we have opened a way which will advance thinking, and whether this method is compatible with the essential quality of knowledge, which brings light to the darkness of the unknown. These are questions, which must be asked in this matter of someone of such great stature as Ḥakīm Sabzawārī.

The only thing which must be well attended to here is that this double negative sentence must always be presented in such a way that existence is denied any relation to quiddity, because the aim of it is that the consideration of quiddity should be opposed to the consideration of existence. This advice to differentiate between them must not be interpreted to mean that some fraudulent or objectionable result has been obtained; nor must it be imagined

2 Ḥakīm Sabzawārī [= Mullā Hādī Sabzawārī (d. 1289 AH/1873)], with particular ingenuity, placed these negations in different degrees, and by this means he resolved the contradiction.

that quiddity in itself has absolutely no existence. For this reason, the way of sound judgement and precaution is always to take this negation as a preliminary consideration and say, for example, 'man', considered in itself, is not 'existent man' (*laysa al-insān min ḥaythu huwa insān bi-mawjūd*), or, existence is not a part of the quiddity of man, nor the whole of that quiddity.

3 Mental Conceptions of Quiddity (*iʿtibārāt-i māhiyyat*)

The meaning of 'mental conceptions of quiddity' is the ways in which the intellect makes divisions for quiddity when it bears in mind existence, or any other thing, as an accidental (*ʿāriḍ*). For example, if we examine the quiddity of man in parallel with existence, the intellect will perceive that this quiddity can be in any one of three conditions: either mixed with existence (mixed quiddity, *māhiyyat-i makhlūṭah*), or free from existence (pure quiddity, *māhiyyat-i mujarradah*), or else without any consideration of either existence or non-existence (non-conditioned quiddity, *māhiyyah lā bi-sharṭ*).

After taking note of these divisions, a problem arises: if one of these particular divisions is non-conditioned (*lā bi-sharṭ*), while the thing divided is itself also a non-conditioned quiddity, we have a thing divided which is identical with one of its divisions, and then the way in which the division was made will be completely confused, for it is impossible in any instance of division for the thing divided to be identical with all or one of its divisions.

By way of explanation, if we say that 'animal' has species and parts, one of which is 'animal', the way in which the division was made will be rejected by the intellect. But if we make the division by bearing in mind certain conditions, one of which is the incompatibility of the division with the thing divided, we shall then say that 'animal' is either 'speaking', or 'crawling', or 'flying'. This way of division will thus have been performed correctly and in a well-balanced way with regard to orderliness and logical form.

In those discourses of Socrates which are available to us, we sometimes find a Socrates who is a philosopher and truth-seeker, who delves into the realities of existence with diligence and thoroughness, but, at other times, we see him squabbling and occasionally engaging in sophistry, a man who lays into his stubborn opponents, ridiculing them. The pictures of these two characters we derive from the discourses of Socrates, so that we can say that Socrates is a sage and he is a contrarian (*jadalī*), and this division is completely logical and correct. However, if we say that Socrates is a sage and he is Socrates, the form of the division is not correct, for the reason that the thing that was divided up is exactly the same as one of the divisions.

Returning to the divisions of quiddity, we note this objection, but no way of refuting or changing any one of the divisions can be found, unless we completely change the rationale of the method of division, for quiddity is sometimes existent and sometimes non-existent: if we look at it in the state of existence, it will be mixed quiddity; if we make it free from existence or any other accidental (*ʿāriḍ*), it will be pure quiddity. However, since it is sometimes existent and sometimes non-existent, it cannot possibly be bound to existence or non-existence within the limits of its own essence, and must therefore be unconditioned by both being and non-being. Therefore non-conditioned quiddity cannot be refuted, and the problem must be solved in another way. We must think carefully about the incongruity of the division and the thing divided.

In this matter, every famous scholar has taken his own path, all of which end up, in one way or another, with incongruity. But in our opinion a solution will not be found for the objection as long as we are required to think too much in the process of solving it. Perhaps we can even say that those who have spent a great deal of time over this problem have not arrived at the reality of the meaning of the thing which is divided.

A thing which has been divided up, that is, something divided into divisions, has no independent existence apart from its appearance in the divisions which would allow it to be compared with some of the divisions and judged to be in contradiction with, or the same as one of them. If a quiddity arises quite independently in the mind, we say that it is completely free of existence or non-existence within the limits of its essence. Such a quiddity cannot be conceived of as the thing which is divided up into parts, for quiddity is free from ambiguity when seen in its essence and with its essential parts, and cannot be divided up. For this reason, it comes into the mind quite independently and is entirely without any of its non-essential accidentals (*ʿawāriḍ*), for, if we create in the mind a concept such as 'animal', this 'animal' will never be a genus or a thing to be divided up into parts.

In short, the response to this objection which led great thinkers to spend considerable time on it, is that quiddity, in itself, can never be something divided up into any of the previously mentioned divisions, because there is no kind of ambiguity in quiddity as far as genus and differentia or any internal or essential parts are concerned, and it is not possible for something which has no ambiguity be divided up when the reality of division is nothing but ambiguity in the parts. The only thing which can be said about understanding the thing which is divided up is that the source of division is the ambiguous aspect or consideration which occurs in the quiddity when it is seen and examined with its non-essential accidentals, and this ambiguity is

something which cannot be intellected independently and called the source or origin of the division.

4 The Natural Universal

After this, another topic arises: should the natural universal, which, in the end, is a quiddity, given that quiddity is the answer to the question about a thing's substance, be considered as a division or as the thing which is divided up?

According to Muḥaqqiq Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī, it became widely agreed that the natural universal was non-conditioned as a division. Others have found fault with this and have said that the natural universal is non-conditioned as the thing divided. Both sides have cited reasons for the truth of their positions, but to relate all this would be contrary to the method which we have undertaken in this book.

However our philosophical thought is not in agreement with either of the two sides with respect to this problem. With the investigation which we have made into the meaning of the thing divided up, we can, in summary, assert that the natural universal has nothing at all to do with the thing divided up into the previously mentioned divisions, and neither can it in any way be one of the divisions, because, if the natural universal is a quiddity, and if quiddity is the answer to the question about a thing's substance, and a thing's substance is the essence and the essential parts of that thing, as was said before, quiddity in this sense cannot be divided up. So how can the natural universal be the thing divided up into these divisions or one of the divisions? It can only be said that the natural universal is a quiddity, and quiddity is the answer to the question about a thing's substance, and is something to which divisibility, division, and any other kind of non-essential accidental can be applied, but which in itself is neither the thing divided, nor the division, nor any of their equivalents, just as it is neither existent nor non-existent.

5 Existence of the Natural Universal

The existence of the natural universal is another story, however, which has become an occasion for differences between scholars. A small number of them believed that the natural universal has no real existence, and that if we say 'man exists', or 'horse exists', the meaning is that it is individual men and horses which have reality for the senses and sight, not the nature of man or horse, and the relation between existence and these natures is no more than a figurative relation. But most of the learned scholars of philosophy are of the opinion that

the natural universal really is existent without any kind of figurativeness, and whose existence should not be doubted, because one of the divisions resulting from the dividing up of quiddity was mixed quiddity (*māhiyyat-i makhlūṭah*), that is, quiddity joined with existence, and there can be no doubt about the existence of this. Therefore, the natural universal and the source of these divisions is certainly existent, and if someone who is aware of this denies the existence of the natural universal, it is as if he completely denies the existence of whiteness or of mountains in the world, although he acknowledges and admits the whiteness of snow or the height of Mount Damavand.

Now, once the existence of the natural universal has been established by this method—or by any other—we should look at an instructive story about the way in which it exists which relates an exchange of views and a dispute between Grand Master Ibn Sīnā, and an aged man of Hamadān.[3]

Ibn Sīnā said that he ran into a long-bearded old man in the town of Hamadān. This man held that the natural universal was existent with a single existence, which was an individual and numerical unity. If he was asked the nature of the relation between the universal and its individuals, the old man would answer that the universal and its individuals is like a father who has many children, and, just as a father is a numerical, individual unity for his many children, so also the natural universal is one numerical, individual unity which has an equal relationship with all its individuals.

However, what this man said, with all the fame that it has won, does not possess a logic or a logical form by which we can extract this idea from the major and minor premises, nor determine the truth or falsity of it; and if he included a proof, either the Grand Master forgot to mention it, or it has not come down to us. The only thing that remains as a souvenir is the parallel he created between the natural universal and its individuals, on the one hand, and the father and his children, on the other. In countering this example, Ibn Sīnā explained this comparison with the father and his children, and said that the research findings of philosophy require that we point out that, insofar as the natural universal is singular with a single individual and adopts multiplicity with multiple individuals, but is, in the limits of its essence, neither singular nor multiple, the comparison is with children who are born from different fathers, and these fathers, although they are numerous individuals, have no difference as regards their aspect of paternity in relation to their own children; but, in the same way as the harmony and unity which they have in

3 Ibn Sīnā mentions the discussion between himself and the aged man of Hamadān in a separate treatise known as *A Treatise to the Scholars of the Abode of Peace* (*Risālah ilā ʿulamā dār al-salām*). A handwritten copy of this treatise is in the library of the Martyr Muṭahharī Advanced School (formerly Sipāhsālār) Advanced School in Tehran.

respect of their paternity is no proof that they are also one and single in existence and number, so also [the] unity of name and quiddity which the natural universal has can in no way be conceived as a convincing proof of the numerical and individual unity of the natural universal.

The Grand Master, in one of his books,[4] starts a debate with another of the scholars of his time who expressed the intention to deny the existence of the natural universal, and his reasoning was as follows:

> Suppose that man, or anything else which can be called a natural universal, is existent and real—is it particular to this individual, or not? Surely you will say that the natural universal is something which is not particular to Zayd or ʿAmr or anyone else. Thus, if it is really existent, and is not restricted to this or that, it must surely be conceived of as free from matter and its concomitants. And, if you cannot accept that a natural universal is a completely pure existent, you must certainly take it to be an individual existent which is numerically one, which, nevertheless, is qualified by multiple existent individuals and by the conflicting attributes, which are found in individuals. And this is itself an absurdity which no-one can accept except that old long-bearded man of Hamadān.

Ibn Sīnā attributed this reasoning to someone who wrongfully thought himself a philosophiser (*tafalsuf*). Now, in answer, he said:

> This discourse (*guftār*) is, in a number of respects, fallacious. One of them is that it is supposed that if an individual exists from a natural universal that individual does not include the nature, whereas I have said and considered the point that wherever an individual exists from the individuals of nature, the existence of the existence of the nature will be realised with that individual (*wujūd-i ṭabīʿat bā ān fard muḥaqqiq khwāhad būd*). On this reasonable account, it must be said that, not only does the nature exist in every place together with its natural or intellected individuals, but that, since the individual is always compounded of the nature and accidents, and since the simple (*basīṭ*) has existential precedence over its compound (*murakab*), the nature also has precedence over the individual.

Here the debate between Ibn Sīnā and the philosophaster comes to an end. Though with respect to the principles and criteria (*mawāzīn*), the Master's comments on the principle of the existence of the natural universal cannot

4 *al-Shifāʾ*, Ilāhiyāt, 202.

be repudiated, our speculative intellect (*ʿaql-i naẓarī*), with all its defects and deficiencies, cannot acquiesce to all of his points in this instance. Because the compound, which he considers for the essence (*ṭabīʿat*) and the individual, and even the priority of the essence (*ṭabīʿat*) over the individual which he categorically holds to be prior in existence, does not conform very well with the investigative methods of philosophy. The reason for this is that the essential individual (*fard bi al-dhāt*) of the essence (*ṭabīʿat*) has no kind of difference with the essence external to the mind, which could give us the criterion (*milāk*) for supposing priority or posteriority between them; and, seen in this way, it can not be imagined that the individual external to the mind is compounded of essence and particularities (*khuṣūṣiyāt*) in such a way that this compound could be the grounds for the priority of the simple part (*juz'-i basīṭ*) over the whole (*kul*) which would follow from its being compounded.

This description is logical and true only in the case of an accidental individual (*fard bi al-ʿaraḍ*), which is a compound of the nature of the essential individual (*fard bi al-dhāt*) and existential particularities and non-essential accidentals, but this has no connection at all with the subject of the discussion.

CHAPTER 9

Potentiality (*quwwah*) and Actuality (*fiʿl*)

Since the word *quwwah* is used with various different meanings, it is not possible to find a comprehensive and exclusive interpretation (*tafsīr jāmiʿ wa māniʿī*) which will cover all its meanings equally well. For this reason we must proceed to enumerate the description of each of its meanings one by one, so that we can clarify those instances where it is used, appropriate (*tanāsub*) to the situation and context of the discussion.

Among these uses is the case where *quwwah,* meaning 'potentiality', is used in technical opposition to 'actuality' (*fiʿliyyat*) and realisation (*ḥuṣūl*), and, in this sense, Primary Matter (Greek: *hyle*, Arabic: *hayūlā*), which is the receptive substance (*jawharī-yi qābil*, i.e. receptive of forms), is called potentiality. It is said that Primary Matter is 'pure potentiality', which is to say that in itself it has no actuality or realisation, and is a substance *in potentia* (*jawhar bi al-quwwah*). Similarly, it is said that the reality of things is not *in potentia,* that is, it is not in Primary Matter, but rather [their reality subsists] in their actuality, that is, in the specific forms, which are the reality of things.

One of the proofs which materialists produce in natural sciences (*ṭabīʿiyāt,* i.e. physics) to prove their theory of the compound nature of bodies (*tarkīb-i jism*) is the proof of potentiality and actuality. Without doubt the meaning of *quwwah* used here is potentiality, as opposed to actuality, and, in the end, this means Primary Matter.

Another meaning of *quwwah* is the strength (*shaddat*) of anything, which is opposed to the weakness (*ḍaʿf*) of that thing, like the firmness and hardness which is sensed in some bodies, or the strength of the brilliance and luminosity which is apparent in shining things.

The third meaning is the point of origin (*mabdaʾ*) of transformation (*taḥawwul*) or any kind of change (*taghyīr*) which is produced in another thing. If the name 'faculties of the soul' (*quwwah-yi nafsānī*) is given to the factors and sources of psychological effects it is for this very reason, specifically, that *quwwah* is conceived of as the point of origin of transformation. The factors of nature (*ʿawāmil-i ṭabīʿyyat*) are similarly called the forces of nature (*quwwah-yi tabiʿyyat*) in accordance with the same technical explanation. The potential for being acted upon by a single action, or a finite or infinite number of acts, is called passive potentiality (*quwwah-yi munfaʿilah*), while active potentiality (*quwwah-yi al-fāʿilah*) is the source of action of a finite or infinite number of acts and effects, which, if it is linked to the consciousness (*shuʿūr*) or will of the agent, will be called 'power' (*qudrat*). This

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quwwah, power, is a special attribute, which is realised in existents of the animal species, and, in a more perfect sense, of the human species. Some have said that if we really want to understand this *quwwah,* which means 'power', we must say that it is the power of having the possibility to do an action or not to do it, which is continuously realised in an individual who possesses an ability (*tawānā*).

However, since this definition contains the word 'possibility', it can only be used in the case of existents which have predispositional possibility (*imkān-i isti'dādī*), or at least those which are possible with essential possibility (*imkān-i dhātī*), whereas the unique (*yaktā*) and single (*yagānah*) source of the universe is essential necessary existence (*wājib al-wujūd bi al-dhāt*) and necessary existence subsists in the totality of aspects (*wājib al-wujūd min jamī' al-jihāt*) with perfect and eternal (*azalīyah*) power which exists in contraction (*qabḍ*) and expansion (*basṭ*), and possibility cannot be admitted for the rest of the meanings of His holy (*muqaddas*) and unique Essence (*dhāt*), which is Essence (*dhāt*) itself. Thus the thinkers who devised this definition of power must admit that it has not been defined in such a way that it may be applied to both the necessary and the possible.

As a result of this error, scholars have completely abandoned this explanation and have defined the reality of power in a broader perspective, in such a way that no opportunity may arise for this kind of objection. They have said that if power depends on knowledge and will alone, it can be defined by a conditional proposition whose truth is not concomitant with (*mulāzim bā*) the two conditional terms of the proposition both being true. Thus they say: 'One who has power is a person who, if he wants to, acts, and if he does not want to, does not act'. In the form in which it is composed with conditional conjunctions and without reference to possibility or any synonymous terms, this definition can be applied in a real manner both to the perfect, eternal power of the divinity, and also to limited possible powers as well. The point is that, by the use of the conditional conjunctions, it is both compatible with the essential and predispositional possibility of possible things to act or not to act, and is also not incompatible with the necessitating of an act from Essential Necessary Existence.

What is more, power is one of the attributes of perfection (*ṣifāt-i kamāliyyah*) which are derived from the reality of existence (*wujūd*), and it finds application through objective equivocality (*tashkīk*), to the Necessary and the possible, just like existence.

CHAPTER 10

Cause (*ʿillat*) and Effect (*maʿlūl*)

1 Causality

The cause is something of which another thing is in need (*niyāzmand*), and the effect is the thing which is in need; but the need of the effect for the cause sometimes obtains with respect to emanation and existence, and sometimes in the composition and constitution of the essence. In each case, the cause is divided up into the material cause (*ʿillat-i māddī*), the formal cause (*ʿillat-i ṣūrī*), the efficient cause (*ʿillat-i fāʿilī*) and the final cause (*ʿillat-i ghāʾī*), on the one hand, and, on the other hand, into the complete cause (*ʿillat-i tāmmah*) and the incomplete cause (*ʿillat nāqiḍ*); and each of these divisions has various and numerous sub-divisions, all or some of which we shall attempt to explain and comment upon if we find a suitable opportunity.

In *al-Hidāyat al-athīriyyah* each of the four causes is explained through the story of a potter who made clay from earth and water, and made from that clay a porous pot to make refreshing drinking water.[1]

In this book it is said that although the material cause is part of the effect, it does not necessarily follow that with its existence the effect acquires existentiality and actuality. This is the case with the clay, for, although the potter's hands have produced it, the pot has not yet come into existence so that the water may be drunk from it. The formal cause is also a part of the effect, but with its existence the effect certainly does become real and existent without there being any condition of expectation (*intiẓārī*), and this is when the clay assumes the form and appearance of the pot and leaves the potter's workshop like a baby setting out into the realm of existence. The efficient cause is the potter who has chosen this work as his profession and who has skilfully formed the clay into a pot. The final cause, for which the pot came into existence, is the purpose and desired result which is naturally expected from the pot.

Another example frequently cited by the masters of this subject is that of a carpenter who fashions a royal throne from planks of wood by his artistic and stylish craftsmanship in order that the king may ascend to the throne of his realm and from thence direct and lead his country, and also so that the master-carpenter may earn his living wages. In this example, the material cause

1 *Sharḥ-i hidāyat al-athīriyyah*, Ṣadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī, transcribed and corrected by Muḥammad Muṣṭafā Fulādkār, Beirut, n.p. n.d., p. 282.

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is the pieces of wood, which are used for the royal throne, and this may also sometimes be called the elemental cause (*ʿillat-i ʿunṣurī*). The efficient cause is the master-carpenter who creates the throne with his own originality and skill with a beauty worthy of the position of the king. The formal cause is the manifest form and visible shape of the throne, which is designed from the pieces of wood in a masterly fashion. The final cause is the king's sitting and reposing, which is ultimately accomplished. The final cause is also called the cause of perfection (*ʿillat-i tamāmī*), because the perfection of every action is related to the achievement of the desired result. In the words of the ancients: 'Perfection is achieved when the desired result and what was intended takes places before the eyes of the friend'.[2] The final cause is also the carpenter's necessities of life and the earning of his livelihood, which motivated him to do the job.

So, the final cause, whether it has an economic, recreational, or ceremonial aspect, or some other non-material aspect, is ultimately something for which the effect comes into existence. Thus it is possible that a great number of final causes may be attained by doing one particular thing, although these causes will, of course, be arranged hierarchically and longitudinally with respect to one another and not on the same level, or horizontally (*dar ṭūl-i yakdīgar khwāhand būd nah dar ʿaraḍ-i ham*). In addition to this, except for the final cause, which in this example consists in sitting on the throne, other final causes and ends are secondary (*thānawī*).

2 The Divisions of the Efficient Cause (*ʿillat-i fāʿilī*)

The efficient cause, from which the effect comes into existence, is divided up into various divisions, namely the 'essential agent' (*fāʿil bi al-dhāt*) and the 'accidental agent' (*fāʿil bi al-ʿaraḍ*). The essential agent is like a doctor who heals a patient with his medical expertise, and the accidental agent is like a writer who, incidentally, is effective in the cure of the sick person.

If the doctor is effective in the treatment of the patient it is self-evident that his knowledge of medicine has had some effect in the cure, and the effectiveness of the doctor in the treatment of the patient is an essential effectiveness with regard to medicine. But if a writer, who is not a doctor, is

2 'The ancients' here refers to the philosophers of ancient Greece, and the context would suggest that it is Aristotle who is being alluded to here since it was he who introduced the doctrine of the four causes in his *Physics Book II,* ch. 3 and *Metaphysics*, Book Delta (v), ch. 2 However, I have not been able to locate a phrase akin to the one quoted by Ḥāʾirī Yazdī. [Editor].

established as the agent of the treatment of the patient, it is clear that the effect of the writer in the cure is not with respect to any essential relationship, and thus the effective aspect which the writer acquires in the treatment of the illness will be a figurative (*majāzī*) and accidental (*ʿarḍī*) attribute (*ṣifat*). Similarly, if we call the doctor the effective agent (*fāʿil muʾaththir*) in the return to health of the sick patient, his effectiveness will be accidental and inessential, because good health is something, which comes into existence after the treatment of the sickness, from another source, and that is the patient's natural constitution (*ṭabīʿat mazāj*).

2.1 *Another Division of the Agent*

The agent is either 'natural' (*ṭabīʿī*) or 'forced' (*qasrī*). If the agent of the act performs without knowledge or information about its act so that the act is in accordance with its nature, its influence (*taʾthīr*) and agency (*fāʿiliyyat*) in the act will be natural. But if the same agent who has no consciousness (*shuʿūr*) or awareness (*idrāk*) of its act falls under the influence of another agent (*ʿāmil*) and produces an act against its nature, it is called a forced agent.

So long as a stone which we throw up into the air is influenced by the force which we have imparted to it, its motion will be forced and the agency of the stone in its own motion will be by force (*bi al-qasr*), but from the moment it starts its natural motion uninfluenced by the one who applied the force (*qāsir*), its motion will be by nature (*bi al-ṭabʿ*). The waterfall which naturally cascades down into the valley is certainly moving naturally, but the jet of water from the fountain that spouts into the air due to some external influence is a forced action.

When an agent of an act is conscious and aware of his act, but his act is not produced of his own free-will and choice, it will be 'coerced', and his agency in this act which is not performed according to his free-will and choice, even though it may be with his knowledge and awareness, is a 'coerced' agency (*fāʿiliyyat bi al-jabr*); but in the case where it is carried out with his knowledge, will and free-choice, either his act is exactly the same as the detailed knowledge (*ʿilm-i tafṣīlī*) of the act, and the preceding knowledge is only an essential nonspecific knowledge (*ʿilm-i ijmālī*), in which case this kind of agent is a 'consenting' agent (*fāʿil bi al-riḍā*), or else his act will differ from the detailed knowledge of it, and in this case, provided the preceding detailed knowledge is connected with a motive (*dāʿī*) added to the essence, it is an 'intending' agent (*fāʿil bi al-qaṣd*)

Since all the voluntary actions (*afʿāl-i ikhtiyārī*) which humans produce day and night happen after knowledge and a motive has been added to the essence, they are called 'intended' actions (*afʿāl-i qaṣdī*), and the kind of agency involved in them is that which is called the 'intending' agency. In the

case where the detailed knowledge preceding an action is not connected to an additional motive, but where only active knowledge, without additional motivation, is the source of the existence of the actions which are known, then either the knowledge of the action is additional to the essence of the agent and he will be an 'attentive' agent (*fāʿil bi al-ʿināyah*), or else the knowledge of the action is not additional to the essence of the agent, but rather the knowledge of the action is the very knowledge of the essence of the agent, and knowledge of the essence of the agent is also the very essence of the agent, and this kind of agent is called the 'manifesting' agent (*fāʿil bi al-tajallī*); his knowledge (*ʿilm*) of the essence involves nonspecific knowledge of the action, which, in its very lack of details entails the detailed disclosing of the actions of the essence.

Thus the divisions of the effective agent can be summarised as follows: the essential agent and the accidental agent, the natural agent and the forced agent, the coerced agent and the consenting agent, and the attentive agent and the manifesting agent.

In the case of the natural agent, and similarly with the voluntary and consenting agent, it is worth adding that although a natural agent is engaged in his own natural action or reaction, or else a willing person is performing some action according to his free-will, consciousness, and knowledge, it is possible for this nature and free-will to be overpowered by a higher commanding will. For example, there is no obstacle to the nature of the body of man, which is the natural agent in the bodily actions of absorption (*jadhb*) and excretion (*dafʿ*), action and reaction, and in which the laws of nature govern, being ruled and overpowered with its internally non-conflicting order by the commanding will of the soul (*nafs*). In this case, the nature, although it is the natural agent, is at the same time, called the 'subjugated' agent (*fāʿil bi al-tashkīr*). The will and free choice of a consenting agent may also be placed under the power and influence of a superior commanding will.

The best example for understanding the various divisions of the agent is the soul (*nafs*) and the quality (*kayfiyyat*) of the rule and affect (*taʾthīr*), which it exerts on the body and its faculties. For example, if we want to find an example for the consenting agent we should look at the cognitive forms (*ṣūrathā-yi ʿilmī*) of the soul and understand how these kind of mental forms (*ṣūrathā-yi dhihnī*) by which we explain knowledge, come into existence, and what kind of connection there is between them and the human soul which creates and forms them. One thing, which is obvious, is that if we wish to discover a reality which is outside the mind, we must surely bring an impression (*naqsh*) of that reality to the mind, and establish a relation (*irtibāṭ*) with the outside world by means of that mental impression. Now it must be seen whether this mental impression has a well-defined (*mushakhaṣ*)

reality, or not, and, on the premise that it does have a well-defined reality, by what means it can establish a relationship with this reality itself. Must this cognitive reality, like external realities, also be distinguished and perceived by means of another mental form, or do we have no need of mental forms in the discernment of cognitive realities? For, if there were any need for further mental forms in the identification of cognitive realities (*wāqʿīyyathā-yi ʿilmī*), an infinite regress of cognitive forms (*ṣūrathā-yi ʿilmī*) would arise, which is not acceptable. Thus we must admit that we are able through presential perception (*idrāk ḥuḍūrī*) to perceive cognitive realities without the need of any intermediary cognitive forms, exactly as they are in our consciousnesses (*wijdān*). So, we reach the conclusion that although cognitive realities are to be considered as part of our detailed knowledge (*ʿulūm-i tafṣīlī*), they are themselves the acts and phenomena of our souls which come into existence through the creativity of the soul and which find real existence in the realm of the mind and consciousness (*dhihn wa wijdān*). The kind of relation, which the soul has with this kind of reality, is the same relation that an efficient cause establishes with its own creation (*makhlūq*) and effect. Thus it must surely be said that the soul has consenting agency and effectiveness in relation to the mental forms, which are created by it.

Similarly, the agency of the soul in relation to its creation and effects can be seen as being by manifestation (*bi al-tajallī*), for, when we have understood that cognitive realities are entirely voluntary and willed creations of the soul, it can be seen that the soul always perceives the sum total of its internal levels and faculties (*shuʾūn wa quwwah-yi dākhilī*) at the degree (*martabah*) of simple essence with the presential knowledge (*ʿilm ḥuḍūrī*) which it has of its own essence, which is simple and the entire totality (*jāmiʿ jamīʿ*) of the levels of the faculties of the soul, and thus this knowledge is a simple nonspecific knowledge (*ʿilm-i basīṭ-i ijmālī*) which, in its very nonspecificity is a detailed revealing (*kashf*). It is this kind of knowing comprehension which can be seen to correspond to the manifesting agent.

The depiction of the other divisions of agents in the soul and of the acts which emanate from it with respect to the consciousness is not difficult, and all the divisions can easily be compared with the effects of the soul and its creative faculties.

3 The Final Cause

It is said that the material and formal causes are the two causes for the essence and quiddity of the effect, while the effective and final cause are the two existential causes of the effect.

There can be no doubt that every compound thing has essential subsistence (*taqawwum dhātī*) through material and formal causes, and it would seem that there could be no difference of opinion or scepticism about this. Moreover, there is the fact that every contingent existent is in need of an effector (*muʾaththir*), and an effective cause is counted among the primary propositions of logic (*maṭlab-i awwaliyah-yi manṭiq*), which are the most necessary of the six kinds of necessities (*ḍarūriyat-i shīsh-gānih*). But there is doubt and controversy concerning the final cause, and whether a final cause is definitely necessary for every effect which manifests itself in the realm of genesis (*takwīn*) and being (*hastī*), and we shall now set out this doubt for the judgement of those thinkers who have some acquaintance with the problems of philosophy.

It has been said that among those things which definitely have external existence there are some absurd and useless things from which no kind of benefit or purpose results, and, similarly, that there are events which happen by chance, which everyone agrees are fortuitous, and for whose existence no kind of aim (*qaṣd*) or goal (*gharaḍ*) or preponderating factor (*murajjaḥ*) for existence can be imagined, and also actions which have no motive (*dāʿī*), which are produced by agents which have both consciousness (*shuʿūr*) and free-choice (*ikhtiyār*). Apart from all these, some actions have a final cause which itself has a final cause, and thus final causes will come into existence *ad infinitum*; but something that has an infinite number of ends and purposes cannot have any ultimate end or purpose. It is as if we found for every beginning another beginning, whereby it would be impossible for us to lay our hands on a real beginning, and, as if for every end another end existed, whence, naturally, no real end would be discovered.

But in all these problems, philosophy, which deals with causes and effects and the way in which causes effect things, in no way accepts or submits to these kinds of doubts, and can supply decisive and convincing answers to each of them.

The most outstanding examples that are adduced for an effect without a final cause are chance events, which were [best] expressed by scholars and thinkers like the two Greeks, Democritus and Empedocles, in the form of a philosophical theory. This theory has had many supporters from that very ancient time up until now. The summary of it, as Ṣadr al-Muta'allihīn attributed it to these two Greeks in his *al-Asfār al-arbaʿah,* is that they supposed that the phenomena of the world happened accidentally and by chance, and that thus there was no aim or goal in the birth of things. In order to identify whether the phenomena of the universe happen by chance, or whether there is a kind of end and purpose, which is effective in creation, the source of being (*mabādī-yi hastī*) of the universe must be examined. According to

these two philosophers, the source of the universe took the form of extremely small indivisible bodies called 'atoms' which existed from the beginning of time and were dispersed in an infinite vacuum, continually in motion. It happened, they said, that some of these bodies collided with and impinged on one another, and, as a result of the collecting together of groups of them, a specific form and shape came into existence for each body, and gradually the world came into being in the specified state (*waḍʿ-i makhṣūṣ*) and determinate (*muʿayyan*) order in which we know it. Thus, they argued, if nature possesses no consciousness, nor any intelligent deliberation (*rawiyyah maʿqūlī*), one cannot stipulate an aim or purpose with the name of 'final cause' for its acts (*afʿāl*), or in other words, its 'accidental compounds' (*tarkībāt-i taṣādufī*).

For the refutation of this theory, two logical answers have been put forward. The first involves the division of existent things into four kinds: either they always or continually come into existence, or they exist most of the time, and are non-existent the remainder of the time, or their existence or non-existence is relatively equal, or their existence is less than their non-existence. Now, considering each case in turn, continual or frequently occurring coming-into-existence, by which is meant that a determinate (*muʿayyan*) cause exerts its effective influence on a determinate effect all or most of the time, can never be called a chance happening (*amr-i ittifāqī*), because chance is something which comes into existence without any major or minor logical premises, on the basis of an accident, and which seldom happens. For example, if a well-digger digs a well for water and adventitiously hits treasure and not water, their finding of the treasure is said to be by chance, but the digging of the well for water, since it is always happening, or happening frequently, can never be supposed to be a chance event. But if it is a case of an existence occurring half the time or less, assuming that chance is a truthful (*ṣādiq*) description, it is so by virtue of the kind of premises which are taken into account by those who are ignorant of the relation between cause and effect, not because of ordered (*munaẓẓam*) causes which result in the existence and occurrence of chance events, for the effect, even if it rarely exists, is, nonetheless, an inevitable occurrence as far as the relation it has to the effecting factors within itself are concerned, and in this respect 'chance' can no longer be correctly applied to it.

For example, human beings normally have five fingers, and in this case chance has no meaning; but, if we find the odd individual whose fingers or toes number six, and we compare this individual with the kinds of factors in conception and birth which influence a human's coming-into-existence, we shall consider his natural form to be fortuitous (*ittifāqī*). While, if we refer back to the natural and individual factors bearing on that individual and take into account the specified conditions, circumstances, and situations

which influence the coming-into-existence of those like him, we will surely recognise his six-fingered natural form as natural and necessary, not fortuitous (*ittifāqī*). Similarly, in the case of the well-digger, if we consider the specific factors which necessitated his digging the well in that particular spot, we shall never think that finding treasure in that spot, in particular for that person, together with the specific factors of the situation, is fortuitous, for necessity has ordained that he discovers such a treasure; but it will be fortuitous insofar as finding treasure has absolutely no causal connection with digging a well. With this explanation, it will be easily understood that chance events have absolutely no external existence which would allow them to be interpreted as examples of finding effects without final causes.

Regarding the coming-into-existence of the universe according to Democritus' hypothesis, it must be said that if, for the sake of argument, we accept his postulate of indivisible particles, we still cannot deduce that the generation of bodies, species, and, in the end, the universe, is the result of adventitious circumstances and a chance coming together of a group of these indivisible particles, because this collection (*ijtimāʿ*) and concentration (*tarākum*) of particles surely also arises from a series of natural or non-natural factors such that the universe is built up in this specified, necessary, and inviolable (*takhaluf nāpazīr*) way. And thus these specific natural or non-natural factors which give rise to the compounding of a group of these particles have, without doubt, natural ends and a logical conclusion, such that this conclusion is necessary and inviolable for the preceding conditions with respect to its particularities (*khuṣūṣiyāt*). For, otherwise, if chance and fortuity occurred in their real sense in one instance, certainty could no longer be obtained as the result of any preceding condition.

If the meaning of chance (*bakht*) and fortuity (*ittifāq*) is effect without an effective cause, the answer to this can easily be given by the essential property of the possible which stands in need of an effecting factor and which will not become existent until necessity is produced, as a result of causes. If the meaning [of chance] is an effect that is brought into existence without a purposeful preponderance, it must be observed that no natural or willing agent will be able to bestow effectiveness or agency until the purpose of its action is determined.

According to this explanation, it will be understood in all clarity that no causes, whether they are ones that are included in common, everyday, language, among fortuitous causes, or whether they are ones that are definite (*ḥatmiyyah*) causes, can be separated from the final cause through which the effect finds existence and which gives effectiveness to the effective cause; the only difference is that in the case of chance causal events, the final cause

must be interpreted as having an unexpected and accidental (*ʿaraḍī*) goal, not an essential one.

For example, if a stone which falls down from a height to the ground reaches the ground and arrives at the natural end of its trajectory, it will have reached its essential and expected goal without any chance being involved; but if it hits some obstacle on the way which prevents it from carrying on in its natural trajectory, it is obvious that its motion cannot be called completely aimless or goalless, even though it has not reached its essential, natural goal. Rather, its goal should be called an accidental (*ʿaraḍī*) and unexpected one which has reality insofar as the real causes (*asbāb-i wāqiʿī*) are concerned and in the special case of this trajectory, but which was unexpected and unforeseen (*majhūl*). Thus, only people who are completely uninformed of the law of causality of being and order can use the word 'chance' (*bakht*) in situations like the ones above; and in the dictionary of philosophy, which contains no other matter apart from the perception of reality, reflection on the truth, and causality, no meaning can be ascribed to this word.

The second answer is that nature (*ṭabīʿat*), albeit without thought (*tafakkur*) or method (*rawiyyah*), is continually in motion and evolving; but it does not necessarily and surely follow that a thing which has no thought (*rawiyyah*) or consciousness (*shuʿūr*) is without direction towards a point which it is aimed at—i.e. a final cause—in its motion and activity. For that something which requires a final cause for every action is not thought (*tafakkur*) and deliberation (*rawiyyah*), in the absence of which the final cause also disappears. Rather, it is the essential and integral property of acts that they must, in every situation, from any agent by which they come into existence, definitely be connected to their final cause, in such a way that this essential property can never be related to (*nisbat dād*) the making of the maker (*jaʿl-i jāʿil*) and the effectiveness of the doer (*taʾthīr-i ʿāmilī*). Even if, supposing the impossible we were to separate the soul, which certainly has will and freedom to choose (*ikhtiyār*), from the conflicting claims and causes for disturbances in the mind, in fact from the disorder of acts (*afʿāl*), it will carry on with its own activity in a single, corresponding (*mushābahī*) way, which will in no way be based on deliberation (*rawiyyah*) and will hasten towards essential independence (*istiqlāl-i dhātī*).

4 Premature Death (*ikhtirām*)

According to these same principles and standards, premature death, which, according to a superficial view, is an accident against nature, and can never really be considered as a chance or accidental death as far as the reckoning of

causality is concerned, since the latter works in the order of existence in an unalterable way. Rather, it has to be said that the sure and natural life-journey of the existent in question, which, as far as can be seen, has still not reached its end, has had the lamp of its life blown about in the storm of events to such an extent that it has been extinguished. It is thus because the ultimate point of its life-journey, either as regards the extent of influence by causes which have had an effect in the coming-into-being and the duration of its life, or else as regards the external factors and obstacles which have befallen it, can be none other than this final stage which, in our ignorant imagination (*takhayyul-i jāhillānah*), is seen to be premature and far too soon. Even if, in comparison with examples that are delayed in the universe until later, we count the death of a young child as an adventitious and premature event, in the words of Ḥakīm Sabzawārī: 'the book of someone's life must not be copied from the pages of another's life-story'. It is according to the same precise reckoning of the system of creation that not only birth and death, but also any event, large or small, must be realised as the logical result and mathematical outcome of the arrangement of material or non-material causes. In terms of this arrangement and regularity, the active order of the whole of existence can be conceived of as one logical syllogism, or one mathematical formula, which terminates in a definite and determined conclusion.

And in the universal order everything is systematic.[3]

5 The Formal Cause (*'illat-i ṣūrī*)

The actuality of everything, which is also that which is composed (*muqawwam*) of the matter and place of that thing, is determined by the formal cause. If this actuality (*fi'liyyat*) is conceived in a material compound body as a part of that compound, another part of which is matter, it will be called the formal cause, but if it should happen that, in consideration of the fact that it brings matter into existence and determines its place, its name is changed from formal cause to effective cause or to the form of the place (*ṣūrat-i maḥal*), this difference in naming must not be construed as evidence for a difference in reality.

However, *ṣūrat* like some other words in philosophy, is a technical homonym which is used with many meanings. We shall explain below its various meanings as given by the Grand Master in his *Shifā'*:

3 This is an Arabic quotation from a work Mullā Hādī Sabzawārī (d. 1289 AH/1873), *Sharḥ ghurar al-farā'id* (popularly known as *Sharḥ-i Manẓūmah* or *Manẓūmah-yi ḥikmat*), lithograph edition, Tehran, 1298 AH/1881, p. 128: *fa fi niẓāmi al-kulli kullun mantaẓimun*.

Sometimes *ṣūrat* is used for any actual meaning (*maʿnā bi al-fiʿl*) which can be intellected, and it is with this meaning that 'form' is used for completely abstract substances (*gawharhā-yi mujarrad*) which have no kind of attachment to material things—pure non-material things, (*mufāraqāt maḥḍah*); and if essential necessary existence, which is pure actuality, is denoted in some particular branches of philosophy as the form of forms (*ṣūrat al-ṣuwar*), it is maybe because this kind of meaning is being considered.

At other times, *ṣūrat* is attributed to any mode of being or action which occurs to a single object or to an object which is compounded of parts, and by this meaning *ṣūrat* (mode, aspect, phase) can be used for all movements and accidents which are produced in simple (*basīṭ*) or compound (*murakkab*) bodies. And *ṣūrat* is also used for a substance (*gawhar*) through which matter acquires constitution and actuality. This particular denotation can only be applied to substances that have a natural attachment to matter, so for abstract substances, and similarly for accidents which are simple external things but are not compounded from matter, *ṣūrat*, cannot be used in this sense.

Yet again, *ṣūrat* is used for anything which is a necessary consequence of the development (*takāmul*) of matter, even though matter may not be connected with it, and with the adoption of this expression, good health can be called 'form' for every sickly man.

Another meaning of *ṣūrat* are the specified shapes (*ashkāl-i makhṣūṣ*), which come into existence through the agency of craftsmen in particular materials such as wood or stone; and 'form' is used for each of these species, genus, and differentia, and also for all of them. Apart from the above meanings, the whole is also, in general, counted as a *ṣūrat* (form *or* mould) for its parts.

6 The Material Cause (*ʿillat-i māddī*)

Fakhr al-Dīn Rāzī, in his *Mabāḥith al-mashriqiyyah*, in defining matter said that the material cause is the thing which embodies the possibility of another thing's existence. For example, the pieces of wood which have the possibility of the existence of the king's throne in them, or the metal which is suitable for a sword, can be given as the material causes for a bed or a sword, when it should not be imagined that a quantity of wool or rubble could be the material cause for a throne or a sword.

7 The Names for Matter

When considered as potentially a receiver of forms into itself, matter is called *hyle,* Primary Matter (*hayūlā*); and when considered as actually having accepted a form it is called the substratum (*mawḍūʿ*). But the word '*mawḍūʿ*' for matter is a homonym (*mushtarak-i lafẓī*), because the *mawḍūʿ* which is opposed to the predicate and means the subject, and also the *mawḍūʿ* which is mentioned in the definition of substance (*jawhar*), that is, 'when a substance exists, it does not exist in a *mawḍūʿ* (subject)', both share with matter homonymy in *mawḍūʿ*.

Insofar as *hyle* is that which is in common between forms, it is matter or basic material (*ṭīnah*), but, insofar as it is the ultimate, simple part resulting from the analysis and breaking down of something, it is called *usṭuqus* (Greek: *stoecheion*, στοιχειον, the ultimate element), which is the name given to the simplest part of a compound thing. When it is the primary simple part from which a compound body is built up, it is called *ʿunṣur* (the constituting element), and, in the end, since *hyle,* is one of the foundations and causes of the coming-into-existence of a body, it is given the name *rukn al-jism* (pillar of bodies).

These are the specified terms which have been mentioned with various meanings for matter, so that precision may be observed in speaking of these aspects and meanings, but sometimes 'matter' is used in a more general sense, and its meaning is then a comprehensive one which includes Primary Matter (*hayūlā awwalī*), the substratum for accidents (*mawḍūʿ al-aʿrāḍ*), and the body, which is dependent on the soul; and sometimes it is felt that there is no criterion whatsoever for the use of this word under consideration, and that each of these words is used without heed in each of these meanings.

8 The Divisions of Matter

Matter, which, it has been said, embodies the potential of the existence of the effect, is divided into parts in the following way from the point of view of the manner in which its capacity (*qābilī*) bears upon the effect, which we shall term its receptivity (*padhīrish*). If the receptivity of the matter for the thing received (*maqbūl*) occurs in isolation and without the cooperation of any other thing, and if, at the same time, this receptivity does not entail any transformation in the matter, it is, in this case, like a blank page, on which something is written or drawn. If the matter receives the thing to be received in isolation but with a transformation in the direction of an increase in essence (*ziyādatī dhātī*), it will be like an embryo which, by receiving substantial perfections

(*kamālāt jawharī*), is elevated from animality to humanity, even though this essential perfection, or, in fact, any kind of perfection, is co-joined with the abandonment of existent forms, circumstances, and situations. If it receives a form in isolation, but with a transformation in the direction of a decrease in essence (*nuqṣān*), it will be like a plank of wood, which, although it decreases under the carpenter's saw, is fashioned into the form of a throne for the comfort of those reposed upon it. In those cases where matter takes on the thing to be received in isolation but with a change in the direction of qualitative or accidental—not essential—increase, it will be like wax which through the embellisments added by a skilled sculptor brings forth a statue or a beautiful statue into existence, or like an infant who, little by little, through bodily growth, reaches maturity and manhood.

If the matter receives something as a form in isolation but with an accidental decrease (*nuqṣān-i ʿaraḍī*), it is like a delicate white visage, which becomes dark when exposed to the sun. But as for matter which, in acceptance, exerts its influence on the effect together with another thing without any change in qualification or essence, it will be like a brick which forms a part of the structure of a building together with iron and other materials. In arithmetic, too, if we need the existence of a particular number we must necessarily bring it into existence from numerical units which we add to one another, and, in this sense each of these units will be matter (*māddah*) for this particular number. Also, the logical steps which are involved in the formation of logical syllogisms (*ṣurat-i qiyās-i manṭiqī*) are to be regarded as being this kind of matter.

However, matter which receives something to be received both by combination and change (*taghyirāt*) is like the constituents and substances, which are used in making compound drugs and from which some elixir is obtained. The matter, which embraces only one form and withholds from receiving any other forms, is the matter of each heavenly sphere (*falak*), which receives a particular form for itself and is always clothed in the same form. The matter which receives various, but finite, forms is like the juice of a fruit which may turn into wine or may turn into vinegar. The matter that is ready to receive an infinite variety of forms, and at every instant manifests the succour of the companion and at every moment a form, is Primary Matter, *hyle* (*hayūlā awwalī*), which glories in the face of love.

The ancient philosophers compared *hyle* to the 'subtle genus' (*jins al-laṭīf*), and form to the 'opposed genus' (*jins al-mukhālif*), and they demonstrated the instinctual instinctive desire (*gharīzah-yi ishtiyāq*) of the former for the latter. But the Grand Master said that the form of this desire (*ishtiyāq*) cannot be truly grasped. Is it a psychic factor (*ʿāmil nafsānī*) which makes *hyle* [something to be] enamoured and enchanted [with] (*wālih wa shaydāʾī*), or is it its nature which throws *hyle,* without volition or consciousness, into

the embrace of form? It is an unacceptable supposition that *hyle* is mixed with form through desire (*ishtiyāq-i nafsānī*). The second supposition also becomes unacceptable in the case of *hyle,* because if *hyle* moves or tends towards a particular form according to a natural desire (*miyl-i ṭabīʿī*), then it will go on to accept other forms automatically, and this is not compatible with its essential desire (*ishtiyāq*) for all forms. If the direction of its inclination (*tamāyul*) is towards absolutely any form, then the longing of *hyle* would naturally come to an end with the appearance of one of them.

Ṣadr al-Muta'allihīn proved the desire (*nafsānī*) and natural forms of longing in *hyle* from first principles, by likening it to a woman who is at every moment in the embrace of another man. She hasn't affection for her present lover, nor does she ever get weary of better and more beautiful lovers. She attaches herself to every form, which turns up, but always loves a better and more beautiful form.

Here Mullā Ṣadrā is surprised at how the Grand Master himself proved love in the nature of existents, however low their degree of being may be, in a treatise which he wrote upon the reality of love. In particular, he introduced the phenomenon of the amorous ways (*shīwahhā-yi ʿāshiqānah*) of *hyle,* which does not flinch at disgracing itself; and there is nothing that remains to be added to that.

After the Master had recognised that the whole universe, to a general degree, the small and the great, the part and the whole, is inebriated from the wine of love, he tackled some simple existent things (*mawjūdāt-i basīṭ*), which, like *hyle,* are apparently deprived of life and consciousness. Moreover, with proofs, he also condemned this group of existents to captivation by an instinctual love (*ʿishq-i gharīzī*), which is mixed with their essence and existentiality. Concerning *hyle,* he says it hides from its disgrace behind the veil of forms (*pardah-yi ṣurathā*), and, at the same time, it is because of this pagan (*kāfirkīsh*) love and its amorous ways that it comes from non-being into being and is not prepared to give up its completely sordid (*ālūdah*) and shameful existence and display itself in absolute extinction and non-being. It is for this reason that, although *hyle* is undiscoverable and hidden, it never becomes non-existent, because of love and due to its amorosity (*ʿāshiqpīshigī*). In this amorous behaviour it is like an ugly lady who is not prepared to reveal her ugliness, however much she is the talk of the town and the bazaar. If the veil drops aside from her frightful visage, she hurriedly covers up her hideousness.

9 Things in Common between all the Causes

It is possible for each of the four causes to be simple (*basīṭ*) or compound (*murakkab*). For example, an agent which is simple in all respects is like the First Source (*mabdaʾ al-awwal*), the Absolutely Bountiful, Whose Unique and Peerless Essence, because it is free from the maculation of possibility or becoming nothing, is innocent and purified from all kinds of compoundedness, which is, in any case, nothing other than contingency (*imkān*). The compound agent is like those individuals who, with each other's help, get a heavy body to move. In the same manner, the other causes are also divisible into simple and compound, and for each of them definite and clear examples have been brought forward. Similarly, other divisions have been mentioned for causes, which are common to all of them: common, special, general, particular, essential, accidental, actual, and potential. Since these latter are not in agreement with the writer's opinions, any detailed account of them is omitted.

10 Some of the Properties (*khawāṣṣ*) of the Bodily Causes (*ʿilal-i jismānī*)

One of the properties of bodily causes is that their effects (*taʾthīrāt*) are limited as far as time, and also as far as quantity, number, and intensity are concerned. The meaning of 'limited' (*mutanāhī*) here is that one particular unit of the causes which are connected to matter can never bring into existence an infinite causing which is at the same time instantaneous (*dafʿī*), even though it is under the influence of the natural law of transubstantial motion (*ḥarakat-i jawharī*), and transubstantial motion binds all its· essential parts and levels to gradual attaining (*ḥuṣūl*), and passing (*inqiḍāʾ*), and essential transformation (*taḥawwul*). If it should happen that infinite effects (*taʾthīrāt*) attain reality from some bodily causes, it must be realised that the non-finiteness (*ʿadam mutanāhī*) of these effects could never have happened all at the same time time and all together (*bi-ṭūr-i dafʿī wa ijtimāʿī*); and it was certainly some function of the law of gradation and substantive motion (*qānūn-i tadrīj wa ḥarakat*) that was named in the higher knowledge (*ʿilm-i aʿlā*) as the 'non-terminating sequence' (*tasalsul lā yaqifī*); and the 'non-terminating sequence', which is surely one of the most necessary laws and requirements (*lawāzim*) of nature, can never be measured by the standards of the invalid and impossible infinite regress.

11 Things in Common between the Cause (*ʿillat*) and the Effect (*maʿlūl*)

The meaning of cause and effect in this section is the complete process of influencing and being influenced (*taʾthīr wa taʾaththur-i tām*), in which any kind of temporal disjunction (*tafkīk*) or interval (*fāṣilah*) between the two, however short or insignificant it may be, is precluded (*muntafī*). It is only the creative power of the intellect which can, in the rays of its cognition (*shinākht*), separate the existence of the effect from the cause, and perceive between them a kind of priority (*taqaddum*) and posteriority (*taʾakhur*), which has become famous as 'essential priority and posteriority' (*taqaddum wa taʾakhur-i dhātī*). This essential antecedence (*sabq*) and succession (*luḥūq*) is then explained by the Arabic phrase '*wajada fa wujūd*', that is, it (the cause) brought it into existence, and it (the effect) was brought into existence.

It is best to give the respected readers the explanation of things in the words of the Grand Master as well as the distinguished commentator on the secrets of the *Ishārāt,* Khwājah Ṭūsī. The Master states that:

> The existence of the effect, which has essential posteriority in relation to the existence of the cause, is in the sense that a posterior thing is not worthy of existence unless another thing which has the capacity (*samt*) of causality and agency occurs and exists. But the cause has in no way this specific connection to its effect, rather it becomes existent without its existence flowing from the effect, although the occurrence of the effect is in a way that existence 'passes over' (*murūr*) from the cause and reaches the effect.[4]

Khwājah says:

> It must be understood from something that is posterior to the existence of the cause by virtue of its being an effect that it is never possible for it to have acquired its posteriority and separation (*tafkīk*) from the prior thing within the measure of time, and it is a necessary concomitant between the two that with the removal of either one, the other completely disappears. However, the difference is that the vanishing of the effect is

4 Ibn Sīnā, *al-Ishārāt wa al-tanbīhāt,* 4 vols., ed. Sulaymān Dunyā, Cairo, 1994, vol. III, discussion 5, section 7 (*namaṭ* 5, *faṣl* 7), pp. 84–86. Ḥāʾirī Yazdī has not given an direct quote from the original Arabic here but a paraphrase in Persian. This edition includes the commentary by Khawājah Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī which Ḥāʾirī Yazdī quotes next. [Editor].

> dependent on, and the result of, the vanishing of the cause, while the vanishing of the cause can never be based on the vanishing of the effect.

However, the preparatory causes can never have this specific relation with each other which is peculiar to cause and effect alone, however much they may interfere in the occurrence of the effect. For the same reason, the relation between the cause and the effect has exclusive laws and properties, the like of which must not be expected from any other kind of bond. Among these are the following two considerations:

1) In itself, the effect is a possible thing, and a possible thing is something which, in its coming-into-being, stands in essential need of a cause. This need is to the extent of necessity and indispensability and it terminates in the existence of the effect. Bearing this in mind, we see that the possible thing leaves the state of equality and reaches the frontier of existence; however, unless it reaches the extent of necessity from the direction of the cause, it will not become existent.

The commentator of the intricacies and secrets of [Avicenna's] *al-Ishārāt* says:

> The fact that in its exit from the state of essential equality the possible thing is in need of an external effector is a judgement which every intellect should acknowledge right at the outset, but it is possible that, in fact, this kind of primary judgement may sometimes involve the intellect in doubt behind the veil of inattention. Then, in order to draw aside this veil and guide the intellect in precise discrimination there is no other remedy than to have recourse to some evidence and examples from the senses, and to say, for example, that a possible thing, which is, from the point of view of its essence, equally disposed with respect to existence and non-existence, is like a balance whose two pans are positioned in true equilibrium and equality. Just as the balance will not relinquish its state of equilibrium without some external preponderating factor, so it is also inconceivable for the possible effect, on its own, and without the influence of an agent outside its own existence, to upset its equidistance between existence and non-existence, or to disturb it even by the smallest amount.[5]

Now that the necessity for an external preponderating factor for every possible quiddity has definitely been grasped in the discernment of the intellect, the

5 *Ibid*. Here too Ḥā'irī Yazdī provides a paraphrase in Persian rather than a direct quote from the original Arabic. [Editor].

following point must also be well pondered over with sagacity. Does the emanation of the possible effect become necessary without exception with the coming-into-existence of this preponderance from the direction of the cause? Or does this agential preponderating factor not have any influence in the transit from the state of possibility to the frontier of necessity? If it is said that, with the existence of the preponderating factor, the possible thing remains within the frontier of its possibility, this will be recognised as impossible according to the judgement which the intellect most certainly recognises for every possible thing, namely that it can never leave the state of possibility and occur in reality, without an external preponderating factor which would call for the need for another preponderating factor to be produced, and this need would thus continue for an infinite number of preponderating factors, one after the other, in the manner of an impossible infinite regress, for the coming-into-being of just one, single, possible thing. It is for this reason that there is no alternative but to say that the emanation of the effect from the cause becomes necessary, without exception, with the existence of the agential preponderance, and this is the same existential necessity which the possible thing acquires from the cause in consideration of its connection with the cause. From this the general rule it is deduced that, as long as the cause is complete and has reached the degree of exerting its influence, the effect becomes necessarily and certainly real, and that until the possible thing is taken to the limit of necessity by the cause, its existence is not possible.

> As long as a thing is not necessary it will not exist.[6]

2) One of the fruits which results from the connection between the true cause and effect is the famous 'rule of one', whose purport, despite its simplicity, is held by some to be impossible and to be an unacceptable theory. In brief, the substance of this rule is that a real unit of existence, which has accepted no kind of multiplicity or compoundedness in itself, can, in accordance with its unitary and simple character, only bring into existence one particular and non-mediated effect.

Bahmanyār learnt this rule from his illustrious teacher [i.e. Avicenna] thus:

> A single, simple thing into which no kind of compoundedness has found its way cannot possibly be the cause of two effects which keep essential company with one another, because the source of an emanation will not proceed to issue an imperative except in the case where its issuance reaches the stage of necessity. Therefore, if we suppose, according to a

6 In the original Arabic, '*al-shay' mā lam yajib lam yūjad*'. [Editor].

> mathematical reckoning, that from *A*, which is a single source of imperative and the only origin of emanation, for the same reason that an effect called *B* reached the stage of necessity and emanated forth, another effect, *C*, being the other effect of *A*, also necessarily emanated, then the emanation of *B* from that source would not be a necessary emanation, because, if *C* emanated at the moment when *B* had reached the stage of emanation, the source of emanation would have produced something that was not *B*, although *B* necessarily had to emanate. For this same reason, specifically, that something other than *B* was produced, it will be completely clear that the emanation of *B* from that source was not a necessary emanation, and a thing whose emanation from its agential source is not necessary can, following the same law mentioned before, never become existent. Thus we successfully arrive by this way at the result that from any single, simple source the only thing that can emanate at the first stage is a single essence.[7]

This is the way in which the Grand Master's intelligent student thought out and proved the matter, and perhaps he adapted and summarised it from the teachings of his master, but since this style of proof does not coincide in every respect with the method which his teacher used to demonstrate the above rule in some of his own books, specifically *al-Ishārāt*, it is proper that we should relate the basic part of the Master's proof from that book.

First of all it must be observed that this rule is especially mentioned in *al-Ishārāt* as a *tanbīh* (a point for careful consideration), although the Master's customary practice in most of the problems of philosophy in this book was to lay out and discuss each matter as an *ishārah* (an indication).

Ṭūsī, a perspicacious commentator on *al-Ishārāt*, remarks in this connection:

> Since the 'rule of one' is not very obscure, the Master has begun this section with the title of *tanbīh*. If it is found that people hesitate in accepting this matter, which is relatively clear, their attention must be drawn to an understanding of the meaning of true unity, not to the obscurity of the rule.

In any case, the actual words of the Master are as follows.

> What is understood by a single thing giving rise to an effect, which we can call *A*, is certainly inconsistent with what we understand by the very same

7 Reported in Bahmanyār's *al-Taḥṣīl*.

> thing giving rise to another effect, which we can call *B*, in the sense that the causing and effecting which the single thing gives rise to in each of the two effects is different from its effecting in the other effect. Since we understand, from the difference between these two ideas, two effectings, two causings, and, in the end, two realities, we will certainly discover in this way that this cause, which we called a single thing and supposed to be the precursor of two things really was not one, but was masquerading in a single form, or else that it had two qualities, by means of which it brought two effects from itself into existence.

After he had written down what he had availed himself of from the words of the Master, Muḥaqqiq Ṭūsī made a brief note and said that if more than one imperative issues forth from one source, there is no alternative but to affirm that a kind of compoundedness or multiplicity has occurred in that source; and this compoundedness or multiplicity is either in the quiddity of the cause or else in its existentiality, or otherwise it must be a multiplicity which becomes real after the partition or division of the existent thing.

The first kind is a compoundedness in which a body, according to its quiddity, acquires a substance from matter, form, genus, and differentia. The second kind of multiplicity in the existentiality of things is the corresponding abstraction of the intellect which can analyse them into quiddity and existence only in the mind. The third kind is a multiplicity which is produced through partition in the continuity of the body and its division into quantitative parts; and these are the kinds of multiplicity which find a way before existence, with existence, or after existence, into everything in proportion to the essence of the thing, and which, in the end, automatically transform the unicity and simplicity of a thing, however much it may manifest oneness in a primary form, into a kind of compoundedness and multiplicity. It is very obvious that multiplicity, of whatever kind and in whatever form it occurs, is incompatible with true unity, which is the subject of the rule. Thus, the clear-cut result of this investigation is that any cause which brings two accidental effects into existence without one of them obtaining existentiality by another means is condemned in one way or another to multiplicity in its essence, or compoundedness in its existence, and something which accepts multiplicity will fall outside the boundary of the 'rule of one'.

If attention is paid to these considerations, there can be no further room for doubt that from a single cause, that is, from a unique and sole origin which is free from all kinds of multiplicity and compoundedness, more than one effect cannot arise without some intermediary.

The matter that two effects cannot arise in one instance from a real unity is because no kind of intellected obstacle can be conceived for multiple ema-

nation from a single source in the vertical order and the system of causality which necessitates a determined order.

This much would seem sufficient for grasping the gist of the 'rule of one', and for removing any kind of doubt or carelessness, for a person who does not really deny the declarations of the intellect, but individuals who always regard the matters of philosophy unfavourably—not in their reality—have taken this rule, more than any other, as the object of their objections and even abuse, and they have tried to find many things which violate it.

The 'Leader of the Doubters' (Imām al-mushakkikīn), Fakhr al-Dīn Rāzī, more than any other scholar, sought to find fault with this rule, which is, according to Khwājah Ṭūsī, almost self-evident, and, following his usual custom, started to criticise it by raising doubts and controversy, and, as has been observed, some individuals who tried to gain a false reputation as scholars extracted the doubts of Rāzī from books of theology in a random fashion, and, appointing themselves as public deceivers, unadvisedly attacked philosophy. Now, we prefer to extract these doubts and their convincing answers from Ṭūsī's commentary on *Al-Ishārāt*, from Rāzī's *Muḥaṣṣal al-afkār* (and its critique by Ṭūsī), from Rāzī's *Mabāḥith al-mashriqiyyah*, and from Ṣadrā's *Asfār*, and present them in the form of a stimulating discussion between these scholars, leaving the final judgement unto the lovers of knowledge.

12 A Discussion between Men of Wisdom

Rāzī: The evidence supporting the invalidity of the discussion in philosophy about the 'rule of one' is that we understand through our senses that bodies both require occurrence in a place and also accept bodily accidents which are among their characteristics; and it is the senses which, in this case, give the obvious and convincing answer to all the yarns of philosophy.

Khwājah Ṭūsī: It is inconceivable that this evidence could create certainty even in your eyes, because if we recognise occurrence in a place as a real effect for bodies, the acceptance of accidents (*qubūl aʿrāḍ*) is not an existential matter in your opinion which would enable you to establish two existential events for one body and thus obtain something which violates the 'rule of one'. And, let us suppose that we back up your argument by recognising the acceptance of accidents just like occurrence in a place as a real matter, even then, this acceptance, which means receiving, is nothing more than a kind of impression or reaction which has no connection with the substance of the rule which says: 'One cannot be the source of emanation of two different effects'.

Rāzī: Another evidence supporting the invalidity is that the centre of a circle has, without doubt, a binary relation and direct connections with all the points on the circumference, each one separately and independently. And, for the same reason that a binary relation with each of these points is no proof for any difference or compoundedness within the central point, so, also, the difference between two individual effects cannot be a proof for compoundedness and multiplicity within the single source.

Khwājah Ṭūsī: Binariness is a relation which must definitely exist between two different things, and it is not possible for any relation to be realised in a single thing, and philosophers who consider that a single cause, in its unicity, cannot produce two effects are in no way opposed to the idea that two dissimilar effects can emanate from two aspects of a single cause, and can be attached or related to two different sides. And in this way, there is no obstacle to the single central point, with the various aspects that it has, having relations and binariness attributed to it in the mind, and having, with its numerous sides, different connections and associations.

What is more, relations are things entirely fabricated in the mind, and they are centred only within the perimeter of the faculty of the mind; they have no reality or emanation beyond what is mentally conceived which could enable them to be considered, according to the example of the centre of the circle, as things which violate the 'rule of one'.

Rāzī: We can conceive in our minds that any simple, single thing which is supposed to be subject to the 'rule of one' can be united with another single thing, and that a compound can be created from them. Similarly, we can conceive of the very same first single thing being compounded with a third single thing, and another 'whole', like the first one, being created. The result will be that the products of the first and second compoundings will be two different 'wholes'. Now, according to the same proof of the Grand Master using the difference between two 'wholes', it can easily be shown that the simple, single thing which appears in each of the two 'wholes' has automatically assumed multiplicity because of the difference which exists between the two compounds, and that thus it does not conform to the substance of the 'rule of one' which is a single, simple thing.

Mullā Ṣadrā: Following the perfect exactitude which is employed in this kind of discussion, one is struck by the likelihood that the writer has not been able to thoroughly perceive or understand the real meaning of the effect which a single, completely simple source can have; for, with reflection on the meaning of oneness and the way in which it influences and causes, it would seem improbable that there could remain any further room for this kind of dispute.

Bahmanyār: So as to dispel the basis for any kind of misunderstanding, and in order to put an end to possible doubts and contentions, we corresponded with the Grand Master and asked him to demonstrate the 'rule of one' in the most elegant way possible. In his reply, the Master wrote: 'If a real unit is the source of emanation of two effects, *A* and *B*, since *B* is obviously not *A*, the source of emanation will automatically be the origin of *A* and the origin of something which is not-*A*, and a thing which is the origin of *A* and the origin of something which is not-*A* will end up at variance with the law of contradiction.

Rāzī: The thing which is in contradiction with the emanation of *A* is the non-emanation of *A*, and the emanation of *B* can never be the non-existence of the emanation of *A* unless there is some kind of logical contradiction between the two.

By way of explanation, if a body is in motion, and, at the same time, assumes various colours, there can be no doubt that colour is not motion, and that thus the body has assumed something which is not motion while it is moving. Just as we do not clash with the law of contradiction in this example, so, also, there is no logical necessity for contradiction in what the Master says.

The surprising thing is that the Master reasons here according to the necessity of avoiding contradiction, and, in this way, he seeks to demonstrate the 'rule of one' by a different method. But in the *Categories* of the *Shifā'*, he considers this kind of thing completely outside the section on contradiction, and he cites the following logical examples:

> The clear wine has a fine bouquet.
> The clear wine has no bouquet.
> The clear wine has a fine bouquet.
> The clear wine has something which is not a fine bouquet

However much it may at first appear that these two pairs are, on the face of it, similar to each other, they are clearly different from the point of view of contradiction, because the first pair are completely contradictory and cannot both be affirmed or denied, while the second pair can both be affirmed together and denied together since they do not possess the conditions for contradiction.

In our opinion, the Master's original example is like the second pair which expresses no kind of contradiction, and this kind of proof falls to a certain extent below the level of logical credibility, and persons without any capacity for knowledge can also easily spot this fall. So, how can someone who claims to be endowed with genius be led into error to such a degree? It is quite surprising that when someone who has spent his entire life studying and

teaching the rules of logic, so as to thereby immunise his thought from error, wants to approach the noblest goal, the uncovering of realities, he forgets all the fabric he has woven, and becomes entangled in such enormous mistakes that even children would ridicule his way of thinking.

Mullā Ṣadrā: The fact is that the more we seek in the words of Rāzī, the less we find, because we should have hoped that before this most excellent man looked to make objections to the writings of the Master and others, he would have compared real, simple unity with other unities with the complete impartiality which the philosophers have recommended. Then he would have clearly understood the way in which it produces its influence on its effect. He would then have realised that his out-of-place observations have not caused the slightest dent to appear in the strength of the 'rule of one'.

In our opinion, the story of this most excellent man is a repetition of the short tale which the Grand Master told about a pretentious man who lived in ancient times and claimed that he could battle with Aristotle using Aristotelian logic, and who spoke with him using the way of logic. Now, the Grand Master condemned this man for speaking rashly, and said: 'A man who wants to speak before Aristotle using logic must realise that his words are only "counterfeit logic" for the school of the Peripatetics whose head is Aristotle'. The logical pretentiousness of our most excellent Rāzī before Ibn Sīnā, who holds a special distinction among philosophers, is rather similar to this logic which the Master termed 'counterfeit logic'. Is it possible to find any other words to describe this 'counterfeit logic' than aberration, folly, and idiocy, however much we may wish not to step beyond the bounds of courtesy?

Now, in order to reveal this 'counterfeit logic' we must say that the only thing which produces effects and causes from a true unity which has emanative and causative power is its simple, undivided essence, which is real unity. Thus, if real undividedness is the source of an effect *A*, and at the same time a source for something which is not *A*, surely the emanating power which it has for not-*A* is different from the emanating power which we suppose it to have for *A*, and since the source's emanating power for *A* is the very same thing as its essence, the essence of the source will automatically be different from its own essence, and it is this opposition between the essence and itself which the Master established as the basis of his elegant and logical proof.

Rāzī: Leaving aside all these doubts and disputes, let us consider how the Grand Master reasoned concerning emanation and bringing into being according to the difference between the two ideas which emanate, so as to prove the 'rule of one'. We can also quite well challenge his examples by using the same method, but applying it to negation and qualification, and say that a single thing may be taken as an instance of many things, in such a way that

it can be said, for example, that: 'This man is not a tree, he is not a stone, he is not an angel, he is not a heavenly sphere'. Certainly, all these negative relations are different from each other as regards the meaning of the propositions even though they all have complete concordance with their subject. Similarly, we can take a single thing as an instance of many attributes; for example, we can say, 'This man is standing and is speaking, he is a hero and fair-skinned', or, 'This body takes on many colours, and is moving towards some particular point, [and] it can be made into a beautiful sculpture', and there can be no doubt that all these propositions vary and differ in their meanings, for there is no conceptual commonality, in the example of the body, between its taking on colours, its assuming movement, or its form. Now if we were to extend the former line of reasoning, we should say that just as one cannot be the source of emanation of more than one, one can neither be an instance of the negation of more than one thing just by taking advantage of the difference in meaning: one cannot be qualified by more than one qualification, and one cannot adopt more than one bodily characteristic.

Now, consider the matter in an unbiased way. Would we not be a disgrace in the streets and in the marketplace if we were to say such a thing according to this line of reasoning? Can such a dissonant procedure be attributed to philosophy?

Khwājah Ṭūsī: The proof which you have produced as a counter-example can be, when taken as a whole, seen as made up of three kinds of proposition. The first: generally speaking, the thing to be negated is negated of the thing it is to be negated of. The second: generally speaking, the thing to be attributed is qualified by the attribution. The third: a body assumes things such as colours, movement, and form. It is obvious that in all the aspects of these propositions, the existence of a single, simple thing is not sufficient for the realisation of the proposition. It can never be said that all these things, with all the differences that they have as concerns negation and acceptance, or else as regards meaning, have come into existence from a single thing and in one way without any kind of multiplicity. Thus, for the realisation of these things, numerous considerations must first be taken into account as implied in the subject, so that something can be negated in one respect of a particular subject, and something else be made a qualification in another respect for the same subject, and an activity or characteristic taken as occurring to that subject. And since these multiple considerations come into existence in the subject, it will fall outside the 'rule of one' and will no longer be covered by it.

However, contrary to negation, qualification, and acceptance: the emanation of the effect from the cause has absolutely no need of multiplicity. Rather, the existence of the simple cause alone, without the consideration of aspects, is enough for an effect to come from non-existence into the realm of

being. And the witness for the truth of what this means is that, if emanation depended on multiplicity, like negation and qualification do, how could it be possible for all the existent things of the universe, with all the multiplicity and diversity which they possess in their essences and attributes, and in this wonderful and regular fashion which represents the ultimate degree of beauty and perfection, lead to the single Source of the Eternal Essence of the Creator?

13 Vicious Circles and Infinite Regresses

Not every set of events that can be called circular or sequentially infinite involves circular reasoning (*dawr*) or regressive reasoning (*tasalsul*) of the sort whose impossibility is clearly stipulated by the intellect. Rather, such a rule only definitely holds in connection with sets between whose units there is, without any exception, a causal relation, and that must be a complete (*tāmm*) causal relation. Thus there should be talk of vicious circles and infinite regresses only in this section which is concerned with the rules and specific characteristics of complete and real causality.

A comprehensive formula which can serve as a description of both a vicious circle and an infinite regress is that of the designation of being a cause and being an effect [insofar as] is applied to its instances—in succession—without a stop and *ad infinitum*, there will occur either a vicious circle or an infinite regress. The only difference is that if this non-finiteness exists both in the accidental attributing of being a cause and being an effect and in that to which the [designation of] being a cause and being an effect is attributed, in such a way that corresponding to each accidental attributing in the mind there exists also in the external world causes and effects *ad infinitum*, then there will be an infinite regress, and if this is not so then there will be a vicious circle.

The invalidity of the vicious circle follows solely because of the resulting priority of a thing over itself, and posteriority of a thing over itself. However, although the intellect recognises the impossibility of this quite intuitively, the vicious circle can be systematically reduced to an infringement of the law of contradiction (*ijtimāʿ naqīḍayn*) so as to satisfy those who only accept the clear precepts of the intellect with difficulty, and so as to deny any opportunity for doubt. If the causing and being caused in one set of things circles round a finite number of causes and effects, each one of them will, in its own existence, automatically need an effector, which effector will also, in its existence, need an existing effected thing. Thus, the existence of each one thing becomes an effector in its own existence through one or several intermediar-

ies, and in this way it will be prior to itself and posterior to its own existence. Thus posteriority, which is an essential necessity for an effect, comes about through its own existence; and the priority of a thing over itself will mean that the thing that is prior is, at the same time as it is prior, not prior.

However, the infinite regress can be shown to be invalid in several famous ways, one of which is that which is attributed to the Grand Master and which has become known as the 'most apposite and concise of proofs' (*asad wa akhṣar al-barāhīn*), although it is not the proof which is most famous under that name, and some of the great philosophers have called it the 'middle and end proof' (*burhān wasaṭ wa ṭaraf*).

In short, this proof is as follows: Since each item in a finite or infinite sequential set is both a cause and an effect, it must definitely be seen to be in the middle between two sides, one of which is the cause and the other the effect. Thus, if we imagine a set of three items in such an order that one of them is the last effect, the second the cause of that effect, and the third the cause of that cause, each one of the items in this sequential set will naturally possess some particularity which does not exist in another. For example, the particularity which is the exclusive property of the first item is that it is solely an effect, and that there is in its existence no kind of causing or effecting with regard to any other thing; while the particularity specific to the second item is that it both causes and is caused, and the particularity of the third existence is that it causes without being caused. Hence it is perfectly clear that something which is both a cause and an effect cannot be anything but an intermediary which is 'effect' in relation to what is above it, and 'cause' in relation to what is below it. Now, when we come across an item in a sequential set which is both a cause and an effect, we can quickly see that the sequential set, whether it be infinite or finite, has also taken on a state intermediate between a cause and an effect.

According to the above description, if an infinite regress of causes were permitted, it would be possible for us to obtain a sequential set of infinite causes which, in its non-finiteness, would be both a cause and an effect. It would be a cause when seen in the aspect that the whole infinite set leads from the direction of causes to the last effect, to which no other description can be given than that of being an effect; and it would be an effect when seen in the aspect that the continuous set is nothing but the sum of an infinite number of individual effects. Now, since, according to the assumption, there is no supreme cause (*ʿillat al-ʿilal*) for the sequential set, all its items are effects, and the sum total which is obtained from the individual effect-units will be all the more worthy of being an effect. Thus, the infinite sequential set which is both a cause and an effect naturally has, like the intermediate individual, an intermediary status, and, if we admit an intermediary status for

an infinite set, it will then be impossible to doubt the existence of a supreme cause, that is, an upper end. So anything which is in an intermediary position cannot be infinite since it is confined between two limitations (*maḥṣūr bayn al-ḥāṣirayn*).[8]

The second method of proof depends on the correspondence between two infinite sequential sets, one of which is the defective derivative (*maḥṣūl nāqiṣ*) of the other. It is formulated in this way: if it be supposed that an infinite series of causes and effects comes into existence, this series will, in the direction which ends in an effect, be finite, but infinite in the other direction. Now, since we have no way out of the infinite end, let us take away from the finite end a small set of units and put them aside. The remainder will automatically be once again infinite in one direction, but finite in the other, but it will be smaller than the first series from which the small set was subtracted. Now, for the purposes of the explanation, the remainder, which is in reality a part of the first series, will be called the 'defective whole', and the original series the 'complete whole'. Since the defective whole is the same as the original whole but with a bit missing from its finite end, the complete whole will naturally begin from its assumed last unit and extend to infinity, while the defective whole will begin from a point after that and continue to infinity. In order to eliminate this deficiency, let us bring the finite end of the defective whole forward a bit from its preceding point so that it coincides exactly with the finite end of the complete whole, in such a way that both wholes now start from the same point and lead off into infinity. Now that both the defective and the complete wholes entirely coincide with each other at the finite end, and since this conformity also extends equally with not the slightest discrepancy in the infinite direction, the whole, which is the original series, will be equal to the part, which is its defective derivative—the defective whole. But equality between the whole and the part is impossible. And if a difference exists on the infinite side of the defective whole on account of its defectiveness, that difference will surely be of the same magnitude as the small finite set that was subtracted from the complete infinite whole at the beginning, and since this deficiency does not exist in the complete whole, the complete whole will exceed the defective whole by that same finite amount. Thus, if we want to explain the excess of the complete over the defective in

8 We have given and explained the proof of the intermediary according to our own proof. It will be noticed that our proof has an obvious difference in comparison to that of Ḥakīm Sabzawārī [=Mullā Hādī Sabzawārī (d. 1289 AH/1873)], for the illustrious Ḥakīm said, in his commentary on the causality in a sequential set, that since the set as a whole is in need of the individual items in it, it is thus an effect; however, we have established this by way of the priority of being an effect (*awlawiyyat al-ma'lūliyyah*).

this case, we shall be forced to say: The infinite complete thing exceeds the finite defective thing by a finite amount, and everything that exceeds a finite thing by a finite amount must surely be finite.

The third way is the 'most apposite and concise proof' for the invalidity of the infinite regress which came originally from Fārābī: just as, from the point of view of the quality of relation, every possible single thing is possible with specific possibility (*imkān khāṣṣ*) and needs something to effect it, so, also, an infinite set of possible things will be possible and need something to effect it however infinite it may be, and there can be no doubt in this. In the same way, if every individual is, without exception, related in its existence with another antecedent existence, so too will an infinite set of things be; and, according to this criterion, the intellect can intuitively recognise and adjudge that as long as there is no existent which is superior to, and pre-eminent over, all existents, and prior to whose existence (in degree) there is no existence at the head of the chain of this set of things, none of the units of the series, in the degrees of descent, will come into existence.

Other proofs and demonstrations have been given either for the invalidity of the infinite regress or for the impossibility of the infiniteness of the dimensions (*tanāhī al-abʿād*) which are, in some respects, equally good, but, from fear of over-extending the thread of what we have here set down and making it wearisome, we shall dispense from an explanation an a prolongation of what we have written.

And Allah is the Guide on the Straight Path.

*

So ends the first part of the book. The second and third parts are: *Theology in the Most Specific Sense* (*al-Ilāhiyāt bi al-maʿnā al-akhaṣṣ*) and *On the Soul and Resurrection* (*Mabāḥith-i nafs wa maʿād*).[9]

9 It seems that these second and third parts were never completed, or, if they were, they remain unpublished. [Editor].

Appendix
Notes on the Philosophers

This appendix provides brief details of most of the philosophers mentioned in this book, given in order of date of death.

Empedocles (*c.*495–*c.*435 BCE). Physician, politician, philosopher, and poet. Known for two poems, *On Nature* and *Purifications*. Born in Acragas (now Agrigento) on the Mediterranean island of Sicily.

Socrates (469–399 BCE). A controversial figure in his own time for his interrogation of received wisdom. Little information is reliably known about him but he is the main figure in most of Plato's dialogues. He was born in Athens and, as legend has it, was executed by the Athenian authorities for his behaviour by being given hemlock to drink.

Democritus (*c.*465–*c.*370 BCE). Considered to be, along with his teacher Leucippus of Miletus, the founder of atomism; the view that matter is not infinitely divisible. Born in Abdera on the coast of Thrace. The first significant philosopher born in mainland Greece.

Plato (429–347 BCE). Alongside Aristotle he is one of the most influential individuals in the history of Western thought. An important exponent of Socrates and a teacher of Aristotle. Noted for writing in dialogues; Plato was a citizen of Athens.

Aristotle (384–322 BCE). Alongside Plato he is one of the most influential individuals in the history of Western thought. He was born in Stagira, Macedonia (in northwest Greece) and studied with Plato in Athens. He died in Chalcis on the large Greek island of Euboea in the Aegean Sea.

Porphyry (*c.*234–*c.*305 CE). An influential and prolific Neoplatonist philosopher. Born in Tyre, Phoenicia (in modern-day Lebanon) and died in Rome.

Fārābī, Abū Naṣr Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. Ṭarkhān b. Awzalagh (*c.*260–339 AH/ *c.*870–950 CE). Known as the Second Master (Magister Secundus; *al-muʿallim al-thānī*), with Aristotle being the first and Mīr Dāmād being the third, although somewhat overshadowed by later Islamic philosophers. Also known as the Philosopher of the Muslims (*faylasūf al-muslimīn*) and by the Latin name Alpharabius. An original thinker who displayed both Aristotelian and Neoplatonic tendencies. His country of birth and death is unknown, but he was perhaps born in Turkestan and died in Damascus.

Ibn Sīna, Abū ʿAlī Husayn b. ʿAbd Allāh (428 AH/1037 CE). One of the most significant Islamic philosophers to have ever lived, particularly in the pre-modern era; a polymath who became known as the Grand Master (*Shaykh*

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al-raʾīs) and the Authority of the Truth (*Ḥujjat al-ḥaqq*). His Latin name is Avicenna. Born in Afshānah, near Bukhara in Transoxiana (approximates to modern-day Uzbekistan) and died in Hamadan, Iran.

Bahmanyār, Abū al-Ḥasan b. Marzbān Kīyā (d. 458 AH/ 1066 CE). The most famous of Ibn Sīnā's students who became a close friend. Born in Azerbaijan. He is the author of *Kitāb al-taḥṣīl*, which for the later traditions represented the school of Ibn Sīnā.

Suhrawardī, Shihāb al-Dīn Yaḥyā b. Ḥabash b. Amīrak Abū al-Futūḥ (549-587 AH/ 1154-1191 CE). Platonist critic of Ibn Sīnā and founder of the Illuminationist (*ishrāqī*) philosophical school. Born in Suhraward, north-west Iran and executed in Aleppo, modern-day Syria.

Rāzī, Abū ʿAbd Allāh Abū al-Faḍl Muḥammad b. ʿUmar b. Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī Imām Fakhr al-Dīn (543–606 AH/ 1148–1210 CE). Known as the Leader of the Doubters (*imām al-mushakkikīn*) and wrote on a wide range of topics in the sciences and humanities including philosophy and Qurʾānic exegesis. Born in Rayy, Iran and died in Muzdakhān near Herat in modern-day Afghanistan.

Abharī, Mufaḍḍal b. ʿUmar Athīr al-Dīn (597–663 AH/ 1200–1264 CE). A philosopher, mathematician, and poet who was an important student of Fakhr al-Dīn Rāzī and who corresponded with Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī. His main contribution to philosophy was the production of works used widely for teaching the subject.

Ṭūsī, Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. Ḥasan Naṣīr al-Dīn (597–672 AH/ 1201–1274 CE). A reviver of Ibn Sīnā's peripateticism who ensured the continuation of Islamic philosophy in the eastern Muslim lands even though it waned in the western Muslim lands after the death of Ibn Rushd. Known for founding philosophical theology as a discipline of study amongst the Twelver Shīʿah. Given the epithet Khawājah. Born in Ṭūs, Khurāsān, Iran and died in Baghdad, Iraq.

Qūshjī (Qūshchīzādih), Abū al-Qāsim ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn ʿAlī b. Muḥammad (d. 879 AH/ 1474 CE). A philosopher, theologian, mathematician, astronomer, and linguist. Known as Fāḍil Qūshjī. Probably born in Samarqand (modern-day Uzbekistan) and died in Istanbul.

Dashtakī, Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm Ṣadr al-Dīn (828–903 AH/ d. *c.* 1425–1498 CE). A prominent philosopher of his day known for his protracted debate with Jalāl al-Dīn Dawwānī which produced much literature. He was a forerunner of the 'School of Isfahan'.

Dawwānī, Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Asʿad (830–908 AH/ 1426–1502). A prominent philosopher of Shiraz in his day. One of the first philosophers to blend Peripateticism and Illuminationism together with Ṣūfism and Shīʿah

teaching, and hence also a forerunner of the 'School of Isfahan'. Born and died in Dawān, near Kazirūn, Iran.

Maybudī, Qāḍī Amīr Ḥusayn b. Muʿīn al-Dīn (d. 910 AH/ 1503-4). A student of Jalāl al-Dīn Dawwānī. A Peripatetic yet also deeply engaged in theology and Ṣūfīsm, along with poetry and science. His life is an indication that Islamic philosophy was not just continued by Shīʿah. Born near Yazd, modern-day Iran and executed by the founder of the Safavid dynasty, Shah Ismāʿīl.

Dāmād, Mīr Burhān al-Dīn Muḥammad Bāqir (950–1041 AH/ 1543–1631). Known as the Third Master (Magister Tertius; *al-muʿallim al-thālith*), with Aristotle being the first and Fārābī being the second. A teacher of Mullā Ṣadrā. Integrated Aristotelian and Neoplatonic views together with Islamic mysticism. Born in Astarabad, north Iran and died en route to Karbala, Iraq.

Shīrāzī, Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm Qawāmī (979–1045 AH/1571–1636). Commonly known as Mullā Ṣadrā but also know by the epithet 'Ṣadr al-Muta'allihīn' (Master of the Theosists). Perhaps the most significant Islamic philosopher after Ibn Sīnā. Born in Shiraz, Iran and died in Basra, Iraq en route to Makkah for pilgrimage.

Descartes, René (1596–1650). Often called the father of modern Western philosophy, Descartes is especially remembered for his contributions to epistemology, philosophy of mind, and mathematics. Born in La Haye, Touraine, France and died in Sweden.

Sabzawārī, Hādī b. Mahdī (1212–1289 AH/ *c.* 1797–1873). The most influential Iranian philosopher of the nineteenth century. Given the epithet 'Mullā'. Born and died in Sabzawār, Iran.

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