

## **Appendix A**

# Ghayat al-Imkan fi Dirayat al-Makan

*Shaikh Taj al-Dīn Ushnohi<sup>1</sup>*

1. Praise be to Allah, Who is the First, having no last, and has no first to His being the Last. There is nothing hidden in His manifestation, and nothing manifest in His secrecy. His Being has no form, there is no portrayal of His Attributes, there is no intermingling in His proximity, no treatment of His designs. His place has no “where,” His affairs are unfathomable, where He is has no direction, and where He is has no “where.” There is no “when” while He is there, and there is no “how” He is. He is as He is. There is no one except Him, and nothing without Him but Him. He is Allah your Nourisher, the Creator of all things. There is no god but He.<sup>2</sup> Peace be on our Prophet, Muhammad Mustafa, and his family, the source of all guidance, and on his Companions, the torchbearers in darkness, abundant blessings on all of them.

2. Allah, the Most Exalted, has said: “When My servants ask you concerning Me, I am indeed close to them.”<sup>3</sup> He has also said: “We are nearer to him than his jugular vein.”<sup>4</sup> Be informed, may Allah improve your knowledge and perception, that when the Most Exalted King wishes to benefit His servant, He makes him better acquainted with Himself and more aware of His proximity. Therefore the servant is ever-conscious of His presence, that He is always with him, and that he is always in His presence. Consequently, sanctity and reverence become part of his characteristics and he upholds the etiquette of communion. His pleasure and solace continually

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<sup>1</sup> Sheikh Taj al-Dīn Ushnohi, “*Ghayat Imkan fi Dirayat al-Makan*,” Section 1 in *Asar-i-Farsi*, ed. Mael Harovi (Tehran: Kutub Khana Tahuri, Khiyaban-i-Inqelab, 1368 F), p.45. English trans. by Nizar Ahmed Faruqi.

<sup>2</sup> Shaykh Safiur Rahman al-Mubarakpuri et al., *Tafsir ibn Kathi*, vol.3 (Riyad, Houston and New York: Darussalam Publishers & Distributors, 2000), p.428; Qur’an, 6:102.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, vol.1, p.505; Qur’an, 2:186.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, vol.5, p.227; Qur’an, 50:16.

increase and he finds new treasures in life. All the distress and deprivation affecting the vile and wicked have been the result of their false whims and fancies in regarding themselves far from the Holy Presence of Allah. They remain deprived of His Blessings because of their own ignorance. His proximity is not made void by their false whims, yet they remain deprived of the wealth of His proximity and its benefits. Owing to their delusion of their remoteness, they distance themselves yet further from Him, and commit thousands of erroneous acts of misconduct. O God, save us from that.

3. If you say that the Sacred Being is free from all indication of origination, tangency, interaction, physical encounter, or incarnation, that is not conceivable in His case. Mobility, immobility, transformation, change, plurality, and divisibility have no relationship with His Being or Attributes. So, bearing in mind His lack of anthropomorphism and all indication of existence, how can I perceive His proximity?

4. Upon my life, we say that to whatever extent our imagination can be stretched, our wisdom can perceive, our conception can grasp, and whatever we may comprehend, the Attributes and the Being of the Sustainer of the universe transcends all that. Nevertheless, He is nearer than your jugular vein, closer to your eyes than your eyesight and more in communion with your heart than its own feelings. This is because the mixing of creatures with one another can only be figurative. There is always some distance in their vicinity, either externally or internally or in imagination. True proximity is that of Allah the Exalted, because proximity is His Attribute and indeed, His Attribute is a reality. True proximity is that which has no apprehension of separation, externally or internally, either in fancy or in imagination. The perception of His proximity at such a perfect stage with purity, sanctity, incarnation, comprehension of the secret of His Being free from all indication of occurrence, negation of any signs of deficiency, is extremely subtle and delicate. Not

everyone can understand this weighty secret. This is because the recognition and gnosis of the space of physical bodies and spirituality and their eras are related to the gnosis of Allah the Exalted, with the sense of His perfect sanctity, purity, negation of incarnation and anthropomorphism. Understanding of this ultimate secret is the key to the treasures of gnosis and the means of attaining the Kingdom of Heaven.

5. Perhaps I should keep these great secrets hidden and preserved deep in my heart and soul, not out of avarice and miserliness, but because of their exquisite subtlety. However, the excuse for unveiling this concealed virgin is that once in a heated discussion, I declared that since the word *makan* (space) occurs in the *khobar* (Traditions of the Prophet), we should not deny it. We must discover the space of each thing to erase and discard doubt.

A group of unfortunate and empty-headed people made it a point of litigation out of sheer jealousy, rigidity, animosity, and evasion. They persisted in needling me by saying that I advocated anthropomorphism. They also issued a fatwa (legal ruling) declaring me an infidel and heretic. Of necessity I emerged to clarify my position in the mist of uncertainty and to put forward this veiled virgin before these incompetent individuals, the handsome Joseph among these stupid people, although I knew that their pain of jealousy and orthodoxy would not be cured. The rainwater that is the source of life will not revive the lifeless, but rather, cause further decay. “Truly, those against whom the word of your Lord has been justified will not believe, even if every sign should be brought to them, until they see the painful torment.”<sup>5</sup>

6. Nevertheless, I am still not disappointed. Someone of deep perception with a strong desire to grasp the truth will realize that this treatise has benefited from it and will remember us in his prayers and invocations.

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid., vol.4, p.657; Qur'an, 10:96–97.

7. Now, before beginning the main subject of this treatise, I am writing a chapter on *tawhid* (unity of Allah) so that the wise and just should know that anthropomorphism has no place in the way of those who tread the path because in their view of testimony nothing exists or can exist. So how can they compare Allah to anything when nothing exists with Him?

8. This treatise was given the title “*Ghayat al-Imkan fi Dirayat al-Makan.*” May Allah make it a means of increasing the knowledge and gnosis of the reader and the listener. May He, with His limitless mercy and compassion, not make us subject to trial and discord caused by other people and other people subject to trial and discord caused by us.

### **On the Unity of God**

9. Allah, the Most Exalted, says: “And your God is One God. There is no God but He, Most Gracious, Most Merciful” (2:163). The great saints have said: “Only God Himself has explained the Unity of God.”

10. It occurs in the supplication of Mansur al-Hallaj: “I purify You from what has been described by the Unitarians.”

11. Shaykh al-Islam ‘Abd Allah Ansari has made the following statement:

None of the Unitarians has explained His Unity because all those who propound His Unity are deniers. Whoever praises Him by describing His Unity is deficient and frustrated. He Whose Unity and praise are limitless describes His Unity Himself.

12. The author says:

The Sacred Unity of His Being was glorified  
From the development of evolutionary people.  
Alas! If ‘Anqa [a fictitious bird] could be trapped in this world of immortality  
or  
The spiders of their ideas could catch it with their saliva.

13. Whatever has the indication of duality or occurrence is simply a hypothesis of the Great Unity. Allah the Most Exalted is unique in comprehending the secret of His Oneness. He claims the monopoly of His Names derived from Unity, because the

epithets *wahid, ahad, awhad, fard, jawad, ajwad* or any similar words do not indicate His Absolute Unity at all. These names indicate numbers and deficiency and warrant negation of additions and conjunctions. The Sacred domain of Oneness is pure and free of all this. The fate of creatures is merely to have a glance at that Glory and Sublimity. Imagination cannot penetrate it, nor can it be explained in words. Even an indication of it is not possible:

What can your lovers do except  
Tighten their lips and gaze at you silently.  
They cannot stay on your doorstep,  
So they sit for a while and then pass on.

However, there is another Unity – *tawhid al-ataf* (most subtle Unity) – which is the robe of honor from the Most Compassionate and Most Merciful for us ordinary people. It is of three kinds: first, *tawhid qawli* (by word of mouth), which is the *tawhid* of ordinary believers; second, *tawhid `ilmi* (scientific, supported by logic), which is the *tawhid* of a particular group of people; and third, *tawhid `amali* (practical), which is that of the most competent people.

14. Spoken *tawhid* is to recite with heartfelt conviction, “I attest that there is no god but Allah the One, and there is no partner to him.” It is the outward form and mold of *tawhid*. Deliverance from a natural propensity to *shirk* (polytheism) depends on it. The prevention of bloodshed and the protection of wealth and property are contingent on it. It is also the sanction for the execution of all Islamic laws. It gives salvation from remaining in Hell eternally. Its reward is the assurance of living forever in the abode of happiness and amenity. This *tawhid* is far removed from decline and fall and nearer to safety and security in comparison with the *tawhid* of those whose intellect is clouded with the mist of ignorance and who are fettered with mundane desires and wrapped in trivial notions. They embark to reach the sacred precinct of *tawhid*. It is impossible to reach the domain of *tawhid* even by devices and resources or with a pure intellect free of thoughtlessness, divested of mundane

desires, not to mention pessimistic and limited wisdom. When the bird of intellect hovers in the unlimited space of *tawhid*, its prey is only doubt and uncertainty. The advocate of *tawhid* propounds his argument that appears outwardly acceptable, but inwardly it is still contaminated by suspicions. Ibn al-Saqqā al-Baghdadi stood on the bank of the River Dijla, putting forward a hundred arguments in support of *tawhid*. Then he converted to Christianity, stating on oath that to refute his own arguments, he would present fresh proof in favor of the Trinity. Had only one of the several arguments in favor of *tawhid* been dazzlingly clear to him, that event would never have happened.

15. The *tawhid `ilmi* (scientific) depends on the knowledge of time and space and the understanding of their intricacies. It is impossible for anyone to be aware of the most subtle philosophy of Oneness without comprehending the reality of time and space.

Similarly, it never happens that anyone understanding the basic fact that Allah the Exalted does not resemble anything, nor does anything resemble Him, still does not recognize time and space. It is also very strange that anyone knowing that Allah is neither outside nor inside the world, that He is neither associated with nor remote from it, that every single atom of the whole universe is close to Him, can still be ignorant of space and time. Nor can it occur with the knowledge of *kun fa yakun*,<sup>6</sup> the understanding of the transformation of the silence of Allah the Exalted, and knowing that He is the Eternal Speaker without a pause. His word is One, which does not accept multiplicity, division, change, or repetition. Knowing that Allah revealed 104 scriptures to His messengers, how can it be One? Further, bearing in mind the knowledge that Allah the Exalted before the existence of Musa and that of the Tur

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., vol.3, p.381; Qur'an, 6:73.

Mountain addressed Musa as follows: “Take off your shoes,”<sup>7</sup> it could be asked why He listened to that voice in Hebrew. How, before the existence of ‘Isa, did He speak to ‘Isa in Syriac? Similarly, how, before the birth of the Prophet (peace be upon him), could He have talked to him and listened to what he said in Arabic? Moreover, ancient speech must have been free of all this relativity. We know that He is the First, the Last, the Manifest, the Concealed,<sup>8</sup> that His unique knowledge comprises limitless information, and that by His Sole Might He can give existence to all that was, or that is, or that is non-existent. He listens with His unique hearing all that is audible till eternity. He see with His unique vision all that is visible and will be so till eternity. With a unique ancient volition He forms all His intentions. Appreciation and comprehension of all this is possible only by understanding the time and space of Allah the Exalted.

16. In short, recognition of the major attributes of that ancient Being and awareness of the infinite pre-existence of the Qur’an and other scriptures are conditional on the knowledge of His time and space.

Following this section, we will comment on this point in sufficient detail and in such a manner that the just and wise will not find any room for refutation or disagreement. If some stupid person, out of sheer ignorance and misunderstanding, turns irretrievably obstinate and evasive, hating the terms “time” and “space” and insisting on rejecting and discrediting them, I am not afraid of him.

I carve out rhyming words from their mines;  
What can I do if goats do not appreciate them?

A river that produces pearls  
Cannot be polluted by a dog.

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., vol.6, p.326; Qur’an, 20:12.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., vol.9, p.461; Qur’an, 57:3.



17. Practical *tawhid* has three stages. First, a fragrance on the breeze from antiquity, fascination at the dominance of His Magnanimity, and a flash of lightning from the invisible world appears to receive the walker on this path. Curtains of ignorance and veils of negligence are removed from what he has the right to see. “Now, we have removed your covering from you and your sight is sharp today.”<sup>9</sup> A sincere and farsighted pupil sees through that sharp lightning and finds himself surrounded by a *zunnar* (“conventional ring of idolators”), contrary to his assertion and presumption of reaching the essence of Unity. The flame of jealousy that consumes all that is unlike Him ignites in his heart and tears of sorrow begin to pour from his eyes. In his spiritual agony he cries for quite some time and in search of its cure seeks the help of everything, until he realizes that relief from his agony can also be obtained from the same place from which came the pain. “They perceived that there is no escape from Allah and the only refuge is with Him.”<sup>10</sup> Then he bows down before Allah and presents his sorrow and grief to the Omniscient and the Remover of agonies. When his plight reaches saturation level, his anxiety is over and then His promise is fulfilled: “He Who responds to the distressed when he calls on Him, and removes the evil.”<sup>11</sup> Then it is revealed to him: “O man of sincere heart, are you not aware that your God is He Who is the object of your heart?” “Have you seen him who takes his own lust as his god?”<sup>12</sup>

So long as you love an object other than Me and worship different gods, your heart is fettered with desires and your desires become your god.

18. What is the use of knowing and saying that “Allah is One” when you bow down before a thousand idols. Knowledge without practice is a curse, and to profess

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid.vol.9, p.227; Qur’an, 50:22.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., vol.4, p.530; Qur’an, 9:118.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., vol.7, p.342; Qur’an, 27:62.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., vol.9, p.27; Qur’an, 45:23.

faith verbally without translating it into action is a punishment. If you wish your *tawhid* to be approved, choose a single *qiblah* (direction) for your worship and denounce all that is other than Me so that your actions may attest to your words. A *murid* (follower) begins his strenuous efforts by repelling and pushing back all bonds. He does not allow any delay, nor does he neglect his efforts and preparation, to the extent that, with the blessings and gratification of the Invisible, he sheds all his desires and does not pay heed to anything other than Allah. His heart becomes free and absolute. For him, praise and condemnation, approval or disapproval, all become one and the same. The Master of all kings becomes his sole shelter and refuge in all circumstances. When a *salik* (follower of the spiritual path) acquires this quality, he reaches the first stage of *tawhid `amali* (practical Unity).

19. The second stage is when the light of the Manifestation of the Truth is seen through his soul and all the particles of existence in the glow of that light conceal themselves before his visionary sight, just as the atoms of the air are concealed in radiant sunlight. If we cannot see the atoms in the sunshine, it does not mean that the atoms have lost their existence, but that when the sun shines, the atoms are concealed. "When Allah manifests Himself to something, it becomes submissive." When the authority of the light of appearance and the manifestation of illumination become a shining quality, all the atoms of the world of existence have no option but to conceal them. It is not that the servant becomes God or integrates with Him or hides in Him. Allah transcends all this in His Sublimity. Nor does the servant really cease to exist, because non-existence and invisibility are two different things. When you look in the mirror, you do not see the mirror itself because you are absorbed in your own beauty. You cannot say that the mirror has disappeared or that it has turned into beauty or that beauty has turned into the mirror. Watching the power of nature in its objects is exactly like this. This stage is called *fana fi al-tawhid* (to be lost or

extinct in the state of Unity). This is likely to cause many followers of the path to slip; indeed they have stumbled on this point and have produced false presumptions. One can pass through this desert only with the guidance of knowledge, the device of wisdom, succor from His favor, and the companionship of a perfect and perceptive *pir* (spiritual mentor).

20. Followers are of different kinds at this stage. Some are granted access for only one hour per week; others one or two hours every day. Some remain absorbed in observation most of the time; they are seldom unaware and not for more than three minutes. I have heard from Khwaja-e-Islam (may Allah sanctify his soul) that he who could stay in this stage for three days and nights continuously would be a unique person.

In this unfathomable ocean, like a frog  
Move your hands and feet in your struggle;  
If you do not do that in this way,  
Your struggle will not cause you any harm.

Alas! If in this large, spacious, and expansive state, with the whole of its latitude and longitude, you could not find a path!

21. O God, send Your help to those dear ones who have some credibility on this path so that they may reach the ultimate stage of this wealth. O God, keep the mischief of the Brethren of Satan away from them. You are their Trustee, and the Best Trustee, in all their deeds and various circumstances. Protect them as well from the confusion produced by ignorant people.

22. The third stage is *al-fana`an al-fana* (obliteration of the consciousness of extinction). It means that in the state of absolute absorption and by the power of utter oblivion, the follower (of the spiritual path) loses his individual consciousness. He is also unaware that the Manifest Authority of His Elegance and Glory removes all phenomena from the sight of existence to the oblivion of non-existence in one stroke.

This is because in *ṭariqah* (the canon of spiritual practice), the follower's consciousness of all these also indicates departure (from the right path) and aimless wandering. There are also *`ayn al-jam`* (exact union) and *jam` al-jam`* (integrated union), when he is lost with all that exists in the manifested light of the Truth. He should also forget that he has been lost. Nor should he see anything except Allah without realizing that he is not seeing anything except Allah. This is "effacement in effacement and obscurity in obscurity." In this state there is neither nomenclature, nor rituals, nor being, nor non-being, nor words, nor signs, nor *`arsh* (Throne), nor *farsh* (Earth). There are neither traces in this state, nor relics, nor information. The star of "all that is on Earth will perish"<sup>13</sup> shines only on this territory, and the blowing of the breeze of "everything [that exists] will perish except His Face"<sup>14</sup> can be felt only in this atmosphere. The meaning of "I am the Truth" and "I am the Sublime" is realized only in this place. Unadulterated *tawhid* is found only in this realm. What I have stated is the knowledge of *tawhid*, for the essence and reality of pure *tawhid* is far from our wishful thinking.

23. The attitude of the philosophers and the Mu`tazilites toward the knowledge of *tawhid* is hostile, suspicious, and ill-fated. They have looked at the beauty and grace of *tawhid* with narrowed eyes. As a result, they have seen not only two, but a thousand reflections of it. Their objective has been to see the reasons and to affirm their "selves." So many things have appeared to them because of the darkness of their own "selves" that they have missed Allah and remain lost in the wilderness of confusion, denying all His Attributes and describing Him in negative terms based on their own qualities.

They have asserted:

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., vol.9, p.385; Qur'an, 55:26.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., vol.7, p.452; Qur'an, 28:88.

We exist and cannot describe Him as existent. We are learned and cannot call Him Omniscient. We are powerful and cannot pronounce Him to be Omnipotent. Nevertheless, He is not non-existent, nor powerless, nor ignorant, and we can say the same about all His Attributes.

Then the aim of their discussion was to abrogate origination and to affirm the timelessness of God. Consequently, so much radiance penetrated their souls from the appearance of the light of God that everything else became absolutely nothing in the glow of that sacred light. So they asserted and affirmed all the qualities of beauty and glory in favor of Allah and described everything else in negative terms. They said:

He is Omniscient; everyone else is ignorant. He is Omnipotent; everyone else is incapable. His is the real existence and everything else is non-existent.

In the sight of an observer, everything from Heaven to Earth is absolutely nothing in imaginary existence.

See the difference between this fanciful notion and that imagination, between this follower (*ravinde, salik*) and that follower. So it is that, because of your unfruitful efforts, incapacity, lack of perception and sheer ignorance, you call it *shathiyyat* (stray sayings) and wishful thinking. By the Glory of Allah, this very research is the precise and real *tawhid*, and all other conceptions of *tawhid* are warped and trivial.

24. At this juncture, there are many stages beyond what has been discussed here. Never have two followers been at the same stage of *tawhid*, nor did they ever meet at the same point. At every stage His Being becomes nothing, and the stage of nothingness it becomes sempiternal with the help of magnetic attraction until it reaches the world of eternal existence. There is “what the eye never saw, nor the ear heard, nor what ever occurred in the human heart.”<sup>15</sup>

25. I know you do not have the agony of this wealth and the wealth of this agony, yet you accept it for the sake of faith so that the dust of the pageant of

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<sup>15</sup> Ezzedin Ibrahim and Denys Johnson-Davies, translators, *Forty Hadith Qudsi* (Cambridge, UK: The Islamic Text Society, 1997)), hadith 37.

religious authority covers your face and becomes the insignia of honor for you. Do not be of those who, “when they have not been guided by it, they say: ‘This is ancient falsehood.’”<sup>16</sup>

### **Statement on Space**

26. May Divine kindness and trust be showered on him who will read this section with an open mind and will not be prejudiced against it. He should examine it in the spirit of a search for the truth and should not follow a false trail. This is because Allah is possessive, for He does not disclose the secret of His Glory to anyone who denies Him or is obstinate. Instead, He makes His own secret the veil of that very secret. The narrator believes that no secret is weightier, more beneficent, and more advantageous than the secret of time and space. Most of the secrets on which the holy saints and knowledgeable scholars have expressed their views are those of the actions of Allah. Knowledge of time and space is the recognition of His Being and Attributes. He who does not know time and space cannot perceive His sacred Being and Attributes. Because of the utmost protection given to this secret, from the earliest times to the present day, the holy saints (*masha`ikh al-ṭuruq*) have not spoken specifically about the subject nor have they made any reference to it. Would that I also had not spoken about the subject; however, I have done so only because “Allah might accomplish a matter already decided” (8:42).

Now, first I put forward clear (traditional) arguments that Allah has space, and then with canonical arguments I will prove that His space has no particular direction. Then I will describe that space as it is understood from observation. All this I will narrate in simple and straightforward language so that it should be easily comprehensible.

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., vol.9, p.51; Qur’an, 46:11.

27. The statement that Allah has space is supported on traditional grounds by verses in the Qur'an, the basis of gnosis, the enlightening and sound Traditions of the Prophet, which are the point of reference for the *Ahl al-Sunnah* (Followers of the Traditions), and arguments derived from consensus (*ijma'*), which is the foundation of all the Ummah's affairs.

28. Regarding the verses in the Qur'an, Allah says:

He is with you, wherever you may be.<sup>17</sup>

Where there is a secret consultation among three people, He is the fourth person. Where [it is held] among five [people], He is the sixth [person]. Where [it is held] among fewer or more [people], He is with them, wherever they may be.<sup>18</sup>

And when My servants ask you concerning me, I am indeed close to them.<sup>19</sup>

We are nearer to him than his jugular vein.<sup>20</sup>

Not even the weight of an atom on the earth or in Heaven is hidden from the Lord. Even the smallest and the greatest of these things are clearly recorded.<sup>21</sup>

There are many verses like these in the Qur'an. Their essential meaning is that Allah is associated with all atoms of existence by His Being. However, His association does not resemble that of bodies among bodies, because He is without substance. Of course, the mingling of body and soul resembles the association of Allah with the whole universe, since the soul is neither inside nor outside the body, nor is it close to the body nor dissociated from it. The soul is from another world and the body from a different world. Physical obstructions and ailments, association or dissociation, or anything else, are not applicable to the soul. Nevertheless, the soul indeed exists with every single atom of the body in a place that is conducive to its sensitivity and dignity. The communion of Allah with His creatures is similar to this

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., vol.9, p.464; Qur'an, 57:4.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p.516; Qur'an, 58:7.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., vol.1, p.505; Qur'an, 2:186.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., vol.5, p.227; Qur'an, 50:161.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., vol.4, p.625, Qur'an, 10:61.

situation. “Whoever recognizes himself, he recognizes his Lord” is an indication of this secret. We interpreted these verses to refer to the space that is worthy of His sanctity and elegance, so that He may be considered Existent with all the atoms of existence and at the same time Free, Sublime, and above everything. The following is a detailed description of spaces according to our ability, if Allah wills.

29. There are many Traditions of the Prophet on this subject. Among is his Tradition transmitted by Anas ibn Malik:

Allah, the Most High, says: “By My Authority and Grace, My Unity, and the indigence of My creatures towards Me, My establishment on the Throne, and the sublimity of My position, I do not feel ashamed of punishing My servant or My people who grow old in Islam.”

Allah, the Most High, the Most Powerful, will say on the Day of Judgment: “I am Pious, I am Master of the Day of Judgment. By My Grace and Greatness, My Grandeur and Sublime position, no one with a darkened heart will enter Paradise.”<sup>22</sup>

The phrase “*wa izzati wa jalali wa irtifa` makani*” occurs at the beginning of many other Traditions. It will take too long to cite all of them here, so a single example will serve my purpose:

30. The Commander of the Faithful, ‘Ali,<sup>23</sup> transmits from the Prophet that he said:

Moses asked his Lord: “Are You near me, so that I should whisper, or are You far from me, so that I may call out to You, because I am aware of the exquisitely refined tone of Your voice but cannot see where You are.”

Allah, the Most High, said: “I am behind you, in front of you, on your right side, on your left side. I am with My servant when he remembers Me, and I am with him when he calls Me.”

31. In the exegetical work on the Qur’an, *Jawahir*,<sup>24</sup> is a citation on the authority of Abban from Anas ibn Malik, who stated:

The Prophet passed by a person who was saying: “By Him Who is hidden under Seven Skies.”

The Prophet said to him: “Relax, He is above everything and beneath everything. His Greatness has filled every object.”

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<sup>22</sup> *Ushnohi, Asar-i-Farsi*, section 1, p.58.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, section 30, p.59. (In other versions: “Amir al-Mu’minin Ali & Thauban.”)

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, section 31, p.59. (In some versions, the title is *Tafsir-e Hariri*.)



It is also recorded in the same *Tafsir* that `Abdullah ibn `Abbas said:

He who believes that the Prophet ascended to Heaven from the rock in the Bait al-Maqdis is under a illusion. The command of Allah is over the whole universe and in the interior of the Earth. Neither space, nor the sky, nor the Earth, nor the land, nor the ocean, nor the air remains devoid of Allah, the Most High, Who is everywhere.

In the same *Tafsir* it is transmitted by `Abdullah ibn `Abbas that the Prophet recited the following verse from the Qur'an:

“He is the First and the Last, the Manifest, and the Hidden.”<sup>25</sup> Then he explained: “He is the First because nothing was before Him, and He is the Last because nothing is after Him. He is Manifest because nothing is evident but Him, and He is the Hidden because nothing is without Him.” Then the Prophet said: “If any of them points toward the Earth, he is indicating toward Allah because there is no space without Him.”

32. The Tradition also records: “Indeed, Allah, the Most High, neither incarnates in anything nor is He absent from anything.”<sup>26</sup> All the Traditions affirm space for Allah. It has also been clearly stated in these Traditions that His space has no specific direction. Not a single atom in existence is far from His Sacred Being, nor is anything alienated from Him. Since no creature is connected with Him, nor is merged with His Being, association of His Sole Being with all the atoms in existence cannot be perceived and comprehended without evaluating the division and illusion of space for His creatures. That is why you denied the space. You submitted all that has been said on this subject to far-fetched interpretations derailing the point from its actual meaning. Had you been aware of the reality of space, you would not have fallen into the exigency of far-fetched interpretation.

33. A description of the Ummah's consensus on the subject of space is given by Abu al-Qasim al-Balkhi, the leader of the Mu`tazilites, in his book entitled

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<sup>25</sup> Al-Mubarakpuri et al., *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, vol.9, p.461; Qur'an, 57:3.

<sup>26</sup> *Ushnohi, Asar-i-Farsi*, Chapter 1, section 32, p.59.

*Maqalat -Firaq Ahl al-Qiblah*<sup>27</sup> (“Essays on the Divisions of the People Having One Qiblah.”). He comments:

I started writing this book in 299 AH and I mention this date to assert that whatever is raised in opposition to the subject after this date will be regarded as heresy and deception.

The Mu’tazilites (those who believe in speculative dogmatism in Islam), the Khawarijites (dissenters) and the Murji’ites (the hopeful) say: “Allah is everywhere. Nevertheless, His Being cannot be attributed to any particular space.”

By the Murji’ites, he means the Ahl al-Hadith (“the Traditionists”), and the jurists. He has specifically referred to Abu Hanifah and has included him among the Murji’ites. Of these groups he has excluded one that has stood out in the Ummah in the affirmation of space. He has said: “Hisham and a group of Hashwiyya and Mushabbiha say: ‘He the Most High is everywhere and His Being in any space other than space is not conceivable.’”<sup>28</sup>

34. So it became evident that on that date the whole Ummah was in agreement on the affirmation of space. Their difference in the description of space was about its essence, not in the matter of space itself. It also became clear that the consensus was not self-designed; rather it was based on the Qur’an, the Traditions, and sayings of the Companions of the Prophet, the *Ṭabi’un* (the Followers of the Companions) and the *Ṭabi` al-Ṭabi`in* (the Followers of the Followers). It also seems that this consensus was widespread during that period to the extent that the Mu`tazilites could not refute it. Had this consensus not existed, the Mu`tazilites would have certainly refuted the idea vehemently because, according to their creed, opposition to *ijma`* (consensus) in principles of faith is permissible. Consensus as an argument is acceptable to them only in subsections of canonical law, not in its principles. I fail to understand how a seeker after truth can deny the space when he knows full well that space is tantamount to isolation and isolation is endless. Further, he asserted, Allah is

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., section 33, p.59.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., section 33, p.60.

nowhere in this isolation. He is neither close to it nor in contact with it, nor in front of it; neither above it nor beneath it. Nevertheless, isolation is endless. It would be an open denial of the Attributes of Allah and sheer heresy.

35: Whatever a *mutakallim* (scholar) says by way of argument, mere debate, and opposition, the fact is that this entry or exit, contact or encounter, confrontation, or being above or beneath, all are characteristics of a body. However, Allah has no physical form, so these terms cannot be applied to Him. Our answer is: “Yes, none of these characteristics is His, yet we do not assert the affirmation of terms. We have altered these words to ‘existence’ to remove the veil and to counter deception.” We say: “Does Allah exist as the principal creator of the upper and lower worlds, physical forms and meaning or not?” If you say, “He does not exist,” it will amount to *ta`fīl* (denial of His Attributes) and clear atheism. On the other hand, if you admit His existence, then we have won the point. Since His existence in physical and spiritual space is impossible, so we prove a space that is suitable for His Sacred and Sublime Being.

36. The precise definition of physical and spiritual space is a place that has neither length nor breadth, neither depth nor distance. It is entirely proximity in proximity. Not a single atom, nor even anything smaller than an atom in all these external and unseen worlds is devoid of Him. It is impossible rationally or by conjecture, or capability, or incidence for human intellect or imagination to reach Him, or for anyone to perceive Him or find Him by rational argument or understand Him.

It is inconceivable that a creature could penetrate His sphere or carve a path toward Him. Wisdom and intellect are also creatures and He is part of the atoms of existence in this world just as the soul permeates every atom of a body.

And the highest model is that of Allah.<sup>29</sup>

Since to enter or exit, associate or dissociate, contact or encounter, to be above or underneath, are contingencies and characteristics of the body, they cannot be applied to the soul. This because the soul is from the realm of *amr* (Divine Command), not from the world of creation. Nevertheless, not a single atom in the body is separated from it or devoid of it, though at the same time it is not united with it. The existence of the soul with the atoms of the body is not in the space of the body, but in a more suitable place. A description of this and other places will be presented in the next chapter, Allah willing, and on Him we depend.

37. You should know that gnosis of these spaces is possibly only by discernment, observation of secrets, or perception of the soul. The Holy Qur'an, Traditions of the Prophet, and Consensus of the Ummah are the touchstone for cognition. So this touchstone was the basis of our examination of whatever we could gather from our mental vision, insight, and observation. It appeared to be correct and justifiable. We offered thanks to Allah and accepted it with our hearts and souls. We applied all those theories to the objects of phenomena without a trace of anthropomorphism or heresy. Protection and favor come only from Allah.

38. Now we begin the description of space in the language of *Ahl al-Ṭariqah* (followers of the Sufi path), which is derived from observation and discernment. O Allah! These maidens have remained under the veils of Your Grace and concealed behind the curtain of Light in the world Unseen for thousands of years. Expose them by means of this humble servant's enlightenment of the people of this present age and send for the thirsty people of this time by the Iraqi cupbearer, [carrying] the nectar of its beauty. I am at the end of my life; for whom have You designated these pretty maidens? O King! Disclose to me in vivid and enlightening style this great

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<sup>29</sup> Al-Mubarakpuri et al., *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, vol.5, p.478; Qur'an, 16:60.

secret and this excellent virtue. Those wandering in the wilderness of exclusion, drowning in the waters of misguidance, and people like goats, who, in the garb of Your servants, have turned like wolves, setting alight their trivial actions in the fire of slander, should shed their misunderstandings and should come out of the darkness of ignorance by the light of Your guidance.

### **Description of Spaces**

39. May Allah inspire, guide, and favor you, and keep you on the right path. You should understand that spaces are of three kinds: (a) physical space; (b) spiritual space; and (c) the space of Allah, the Most High. Physical space is also divided into three categories: the space of dense bodies, that of delicate bodies, and that of the most subtle bodies.

40. The space of dense bodies is the Earth. There is clearly jostling and congestion on it. One cannot acquire space unless the other vacates his place. It is also evident that there is proximity and remoteness. For instance, Nishapur is near and Baghdad is far away. Movement from one place to another in this space is not possible without stepping forward to cover the distance.

41. The space of delicate bodies is the space of air. There is jostling and congestion in this space too. So long as the air in a house cannot escape through a ventilator, the next gust of air cannot enter it. If you cannot follow the example of a house, then a balloon that is in the air will not accept further pressure unless the air that is already in it is released. Further, you should keep in mind that whatever is remoteness in the dense space is nearness in this space. That is, whatever is far in it is near in that space. A place that you can reach in a month or two in the dense space, its distance may be covered in only an hour. When a bird flies in this space, it can cover a longer distance in one hour than could be covered in a month on Earth. It is the same in the case of thunder or other sounds. There is remoteness in this space

too. If air or a bird, or, for that matter, thunder, wants to go from the East to the West, it will also take some time.

42. The space of the most subtle bodies is space in the shape of light, such as the sun and the moon, stars and fire, etc. Whatever is remote in the delicate physical space, is close in this space. As proof of this, we can see that when the sun rises in the East, its light reaches the farthest extent in the West without delay. Had its movement been in the aerial space, it would have taken some time to reach there. It is same for light and fire, etc., up to the point where it is blocked or stopped. It proves that light has a space other than aerial space.

43. The next argument on this point is that when you bring a candle into a house that is filled with air, its light shines throughout the house and it is not necessary to push out the [existing] air. We infer from this that light has a different space in air that is more delicate than the space of the air itself. Air cannot enter that space because of its being comparatively dense. Similarly, light, being delicate, cannot penetrate the space of air because it cannot assess the vacuum in the aerial space. However, we cannot differentiate between the spaces of these two nor can we recognize their difference because of their being extremely close to each other. This fact is evident from rational argument, inward revelation, secret observation, and spiritual experience. If there is some difficulty in following this point, then I present another simple and easily discernable example.

44. The essence of fire is heat and its capacity to burn. What you understand as fire is only its external form. Its characteristic quality is to illuminate. Fire in its nature is the opposite to water, and two opposites cannot remain united. So it is impossible that both fire and water could remain in the same space.

45. Now when you have understood this point, you should know that the fire definitely exists inside the hot water that burns the hand touching it. You have learnt

that fire and water cannot exist together. It means that the fire has a separate space inside the water that is different from that of the water. Fire is not in the space of water and *vice versa*. If fire and water existed in the same space, it would amount to the bringing together of two opposites at the same time, which is logically impossible. Nevertheless, these two spaces are extremely close to each other. No portion of the hot water could be taken as free from fire or that it is the fire minus the water. Each is separate from the other, yet neither is merged with nor alien to the other.

46. Once you have known about that space, you should now understand that it contains neither rivalry nor obstruction. That is proved by the fact that when you bring a candle into the house, its light shines over the whole area, reaching every corner. If you had a hundred candles, their lights would remain in the same space without removing the first candle from it.

47. Further, you should know that space has a dimension, for sunlight cannot pass through thick curtains. When this dimension increases, the light is stopped. It means that whatever is behind the thick curtains or extreme dimension is cut short and stopped in this space, and whatever it is in the space is distant. Favors come only from Allah.

48. The second variety of space is spiritual space. It has many levels. The more delicate its soul or master, the more sensitive the space. Ultimately, it can be broken down into four levels: (a) the space of lower spirits; (b) the space of medium spirits; (c) the space of higher souls; and (d) the space of spirits.

49. Spiritual beings of the lower category are angels posted in Hell or on other earths beneath the Earth. Senior to them in status are angels posted at rivers and on mountains. There are some groups of angels appointed to train the administrative organizations of the lower world, that is, the stations of lunar towers (*falak al-qamar*). Their mobility in ascent does not extend beyond the first heaven.

Although they are capable of it, yet they cannot cross that space. They have been kept in their place and will not budge an inch from it. The Qur'an says about them: "Each one of us [angels] has his appointed place."<sup>30</sup> Although there is great disparity in their ranks and places of appointment, we have included them in a single category with the title of "lower spirits" so that the list is not too long. All that is in Heaven is far above them in status.

50. However, the average categories of spirits (*ruhaniyat al-awsaf*) are the angels of the heavens. The angels of each heaven are hidden from those of the other heavens. "If you proceed an inch, you will be burnt" is a saying applicable to all of them. Similarly, the difference in the rank and file of the Holders of the Throne, those angles lined up, those surrounding it, and the various types of angels under the Throne is like the difference between the status of servants and that of noble kings. One group spreads the tablecloth before the royal throne and another group stands in front of the royal seat. The rank and status of each one are fixed and cannot be exceeded.

51. Owing to their merits, the higher spirits (*ruhaniyat al-a`la*) are the boon companions of the Lord of the Universe. The range of their rank and status has no limit. Their positions are in the loftiest heights. They are extremely subtle and delicate. They are so exquisitely subtle that if they wish they can hide themselves from the sight of other angels lower in rank to them, who cannot behold them because of the subtlety of their space. In their space there is neither veil nor curtain. They can pass through a wall as they go through a door. Their place inside a hard and solid stone is as easy as in an open atmosphere. Their spaces also have some kinds of dimensions. They need movement and in their spaces there is some kind of distance too. Although they can reach a place within a twinkling of an eye, in spirituality the

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid., vol.8, p.294; Qur'an, 37:164.



want of movement is against its perfection. All the other groups of angels also have the same characteristics, yet they are content with their respective positions in their own space.

52. However, the spaces of souls also vary according to the variety of souls. The human soul is perfectly cultured, it is most refined, and no other creature can be its equal in delicacy and refinement. Not a single atom right from Pleiades to the ground is distant from it and its space. You will find it wherever you seek it. It is neither associated nor separate, neither external nor internal, neither in motion nor stationary. All this is known from rational argument. Since every group [of saints and scholars] has taken exception to the fact that gnosis is not intellectual performance, we did not begin our discussion with it. Intellectual arguments are needed for those who do not have inspiration, secret observation, and spiritual experience. When the sun of gnosis rises, the light of the lamp of wisdom is not needed.

53. In addition, you should know that even in this space there is some kind of distance, because the limitless *illiyin* (the loftiest part of Heaven) and everything that is infinite are far from it. It is infinite and finitude cannot encompass infinity. Now we have attained our goal.

54. Know that Allah is Pure and Free from all the spaces that we have described. Incarnation is not possible nor is His contact conceivable in these spaces. Encounter with Him is also not permissible. The space of Him, the Most Gracious, the Most Honored, transcends all spaces and that entire space is proximity in proximity. No distance in any form is possible in it. The *illiyin* (the loftiest height), the *safilin* (the lowest level) and all infinities are one point of that space. That space has no length, no breadth, no depth, no dimension, no distance, no above, no underneath, no right, no left, no rear, no front. If you consider the expansion and capacity of the space, you will find it encompassing all infinities. “Not even the weight of a speck of

dust or less than that or greater escapes His knowledge in the heavens or in the earth, and it is [recorded] in an indisputable book.”<sup>31</sup> Also, if you consider its narrowness, it will appear so narrow that even the twinkling of an eye can not find room in it. Peace be on him who follows the guidance.

55. Let it be known to you that if the soul, in compliance with the Prophet strengthens itself with exertion and effort, it can carry one’s physical density to the space of subtleties. It will be indicated by the fact that he will cover two or three month’s distance in an hour. You have been told that the land was rolled up to help a Sufi and he reached Makkah overnight. So it happens in such a case. If he becomes stronger, he can pull his body to the space of subtle bodies. The indication of that [phenomenon] is that he can walk over water swiftly without getting wet, because he walks over the water being in the space of fire and there is no water in that space. He may also traverse from East to West in a moment and can be seen in several places at once while he remains in a single place. This type of *wali* (Sufi saint) has not crossed the physical spaces as yet. When spiritual power is perfected, it pulls the body toward the spiritual space. It will be observed that even if he enters the fire, he does not burn because he enters the fire through the spiritual space where there is no fire. This is what you have heard about the *zubaniyah*, who enter the fire of Hell and are not hurt by it at all. If the prophets and saints entered Hell, it would be to prove the truth of Allah’s promise: “Each one of you will pass over it: this is a decree from your Lord which must be accomplished.”<sup>32</sup> Having this quality, they would enter it and walk in that space. They would enter there and emerge safely without knowing anything about the horror of Hell. “Those whom the good from Us has preceded, will

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid., vol.8, p.61; (Qur’an, 34:3.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., vol.6, p.295; Qur’an, 19:71.

be removed far from it.”<sup>33</sup> They would be in Hell and would emerge from it just as your imagination enters the fire and emerges without being hurt or knowing about the fire or the fire having any effect on your imagination. This is because the imagination has no space in the fire just as the fire has no place in the imagination. The next indication of this *wali* (saint) would be that he would come through a wall as swiftly as through a door. Nothing would hinder his path. Another indication would be that he could conceal himself out of sight of everyone. All these things are possible and will remain possible.

56. However, it would be impossible, it could not happen, and would not be permissible for Allah, the Most High, to descend to all these spaces that we have mentioned or become incarnated in them or become equal to them, or for any creature to be able to reach His space. This is the highest level of this space; no creature can share this space with Allah, the Most High. The height and sublimity that are understood by the scholars of ratiocinative sciences is simply “above-ness,” not sublimity. That is because there are many other worlds and innumerable creatures over and above the Throne. You refute the fact that many creatures exist above the Throne. It would mean that sublimity had a small and limited dimension, which the creatures can also share. The most accomplished sublimity is the space that we have just described because there is no possibility of any creature entering it.

57. Oh, my dear, how long would you stumble around the universe and utter stray words above and below. You are the essence of existence and the stream of observation. Consider yourself: “Will you not then see it also in your own selves?”<sup>34</sup> Whatever you have known in the whole universe, you can see it in yourself. Your wealth and success are in there. A faithful Muslim who listens to this section is like a

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., p.499; Qur’an, 21:101.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., vol.9, p.57; Qur’an, 51:21.

Muslim adorned with sanctity and dignity. This is so that you can understand, you can even see that you cannot pass through that space without it being assimilated in your heart and soul.

58. May Allah open your heart and smooth [the path of] your affairs. You should know that your body is composed of opposing elements, that is, dust, water, air, and fire. As a matter of fact, these four elements are brought together in your body. Whatever remains after the body dries out is dust. The humidity that it contains is water and the dryness is air. Whatever heat has got is fire. The place of clay in your body is not only apparent but visible. In this clay, water has a different subtle space suitable for the delicacy of water. In the light of the argument presented earlier, dust and water are opposites and their coming together in one space is impossible, and in their space there is congestion and jostling. Unless one vacates its place, the other cannot occupy it. In this water, the air also has a separate space, which is subtler than the space of water, because their coming together in one place is also impossible, as we have just pointed out the impossibility of dust and water being together in the same space. In the air, fire also has its separate space, which is more delicate than the space of the air; the argument in this case is the same as that which we have stated. In this fire your soul has a different space, which is subtle and difficult to perceive. Within your soul, Allah, the Most High, has another space considerably subtler than your soul. Beyond this Divine space there is neither any other space nor could there be. In the space of clay there is no water, no air, no fire, no spirit, and no God. In the space of water there is no clay, no air, no fire, no soul, and no God. In the space of the air there is no clay, no water, no fire, no soul, and no God! Similarly in the space of fire there is no clay, no water, no air, no soul, and no God. In the space of the soul there is no clay, no water, no fire, no God. In the space of Allah there is no clay, no water, no air, no fire, and no Spirit.

59: Being with all and remaining remote from all, away from all yet being one of them all. Apart from all, yet close to all, O the One living inside our hearts and souls, yet concealed from them. O the light of our eyes, and yet our eyes are unable to see. O that which fills our hearts, yet our hearts are deprived of benefit. O the one near us, yet not associated with us, and far from us, yet not alien. You are everywhere, yet I do not know where to find You. Your signs are in everything; still I do not know where to trace You.

60. Alas! Your closeness and my remoteness. Alas! Alas! Your Presence and my absence. Alas! Your Utmost Beauty and my blindness. May my thousand souls be Your ransom. Alas! Alas!

61. If someone asks the question: “Did this space which you assert exist in sempiternity or not?” and your answer is, “It existed,” that would necessarily mean that it was ancient. However, eternity could qualify only Allah. If it qualified anything else, it would amount to atheism. On the other hand, if you say that it was not extant, then it must be an invention, and the incarnation of an ancient in a mortal creature is impossible. It means that it would be difficult to prove the space. Favor comes only from Allah. The answer is:

By my life, I say: Incarnation of the Being and ancient Attributes of Allah, the Most Gracious, is not permissible. Neither can any creature become like Him, nor would He become incarnate in any creature. God forbid, we do not refer to the presence of Allah, the Most High, in this space by way of incarnation. Nevertheless, we believe that it [occurs] according to the same pattern as the soul’s existence in the body, because not a single atom of the body is devoid of the soul and it actually exists in every atom. Moreover, the idea of incarnation is not permissible in His case because descending, falling, or transformation are physical incidents and no contingents of the body could be applied to the soul. So, as the soul actually exists with

every atom of the body, He with His Sacred Being is also effectively present in space, [in a way] that suits His Pure Being, with every atom of creation without incarnation, descent, mingling, direct contact, or encounter. He is in the space that is appropriate to His Purity, Sanctity, and Sublimity, as we have explained earlier.

62. If an inquirer says: “It has now been proved by irrefutable arguments that in the seven strata of the Earth and the Heavens, nay, in the whole world of creation, not a single atom is free from His Sacred Being, though incarnation or mingling is not permissible. Nevertheless, in this respect, another point comes to mind that in such a case Allah, the Most High, is of necessity present in dirty places like the weeds and rubbish tips, etc. This is highly off putting and undignified, and therefore disagreeable.” The response is: We present three answers to this point:

63. First answer: I say that continuing to respect and conform to the Sunnah is the practice of the *Ahl al-Tariqah* (those who follow the Sufi way of life). When the discussion turns toward the Being and Attributes of Allah, the Most High, it is imperative to maintain due respect and to speak with caution. Therefore, it is not suitable to utter “O Creator of the pig and the cock,” and “O Sustainer of the snake and the grass,” although only He could produce all these things. Do you not know that the prophet Ibrahim al-Khalil quoted from the Qur’an: “And when I am ill, is it He Who cures me?”<sup>35</sup> He did not say “When He makes me ill” because illness is detested and he ascribed this unpleasant condition to himself. On the other hand, cure and healing, which are good and pleasant, are ascribed to Allah, the Most High, though only Allah can inflict illness. Allah, the Most High, said: “Whatever is good [O men] is from Allah. But whatever evil happens to you is from yourselves.”<sup>36</sup> This is to teach the correct etiquette for observing the Purity and Sanctity of the

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid., vol.7; Qur’an, 26:80.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., vol.2, Qur’an, 4:79.

Everlasting and avoiding ignominy and unpleasant things. Where our present problem is concerned, it must be considered in the same way.

64. Second answer: The entire Muslim community agrees that Allah, the Most High, is the Creator of all kinds of filth and dirt, and it is He who conserves rubbish and squalor, because without His protection these cannot remain in existence. All this He does, although it does not bring any defect or disgrace to His Pure and Sacred Attributes. So why can it not be permissible to say that He is their Creator if it does not bring any defect or disgrace to His Glory and Sublimity, for we know that no action can take place without an actor and no adjective without a description.

65. Third answer: According to research, we say: the Being of Allah, the Most High, and His space are free even from the offense of purity, as they are free from the offense of impurity. The intrinsic distance between the space of Allah and the spaces of creatures is a thousand times greater than the distance between the heavens and the lowest level of the Earth. However, suppose that the lifespan of a person is thousands of years, and in every breath he makes millions of steps forward, and the length of each of his steps is a millions time greater than the physical space between the heavens and the Earth, he cannot reach the space of Allah, the Most High, because reaching it is itself forever impossible.

66. When the intrinsic distance is like that, what about the apparent nearness? We present two examples on this point just to make it easily perceptible to the ordinary person. First is the example of the sunlight that falls on the pure and impure, filthy and dirty alike, and develops respectively whatever quality they have. Neither the purity nor the pleasant perfume of musk or ambergris adds to its quality, nor does the stink of a cadaver or filth bring a defect or harm to it.

67. Another example is of the soul, which administers all parts of our body. It exists in every single atom and life depends entirely on it. However, the physical body does not bring any harm or defect to its purity and chastity. If the soul remains for thousands of years in a filthy body, it will be as pure and unblemished as it had been before its contact with that body.

68. O My Friend! I wish that the refreshing fragrance of My nearness would reach the sense of smell in your soul every time that you make the excuse of My remoteness. Although those who make the excuse of distance and remoteness make an effort to search for Me, yet they move still further from Me. You should make the excuse of My nearness so as to draw nearer to me every day. Your authority and success are from Me. Do not be seduced by false imaginings and the whims of the ignorant and their evil misgivings. Do not consider Me far from you so that you may not be deprived of the wealth of My nearness and may not remain debarred from My blessings and favors. My nearness is not confined to your denial or affirmation, beholding or not beholding. I am close to you if you long for me, otherwise I am not. I am with you if you perceive me, otherwise I am not. Your denial or affirmation does not increase or decrease in Me. My purpose is your success and revival.

69. If an inquirer asks, “If the space is what you have described, then what is the meaning of: ‘The Most Gracious is firmly established on the Throne?’”<sup>37</sup> we respond as follows. The splendor of the kingdom of worldly kings is also the splendor of the King of kings (Allah, the Most Gracious). The worldly kings have two places. Firstly, their sacred precinct (harem), where only their boon and closest companions can meet them. Secondly, their open court, where the subjects are granted royal audience, the oppressed come to seek justice, and those in need present their requirements. The royal staff fulfils its duties in there. Here, those yearning to

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid., vol.6, p.320; Qur’an, 20:5.



have a look at the Emperor also achieve their desire. This is where benefits are awarded to those entitled to them and where the guilty are punished. In short, the necessary administrative measures and the vigilance of government institutions are implemented in the common court, not in the private precinct.

70. Having known this much, you should now ponder the fact that all particles of creation are the precinct of the Most Gracious Master of kings. Only those who enjoy special favors can enter this inviolable precinct of the Most Exalted King. Only prophets of special status and distinguished saints can behold Him in the atoms of Existence. Next to the Splendid Throne is a common open court. There those in need present their requirements and angels take instructions regarding events and incidents. The actions of the servants are presented. Those eager to witness His splendor behold Him in this space. A robe of honor sent from here to the triumphant and the misfortune of the culprit is recorded here. In short, all that is good or bad, all profit or loss that occurs in a territory is the subject of this Divine Court. It is only a blessing and comfort to make the Throne the location of these events so that those roving in the wilderness of confusion may feel relieved, and in their perplexity and need may seek refuge in Him. For this reason He said: “The Most Gracious is firmly established on the Throne,”<sup>38</sup> and He did not say: “Allah is established on the Throne.”

71. The word *istawa* (to be on the same level, to sit firmly) means everlasting appearance without concealment. You can understand the steadfastness of Allah on the Throne by the tropical position of the sun that is in equipoise from dawn to dusk alike, although those in need of light can enjoy full benefit from its light at noon. Similarly, the Sacred Being and Attributes of Allah, the Most High, are equal and the same in His Grace, Purity, and accomplishment before His establishment on the

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid., p.321; Qur'an, 20:5.

Throne and after it. His steadfastness does not effect any change except that access by the needy to His Magnanimity and Gracious Existence is achieved after His being on the Throne. There can hardly be a clearer and more accurate example [to illustrate the meaning of] *istawa*. Beyond this there is nothing but experience and observation.

If I call a living person, my call could reach him;  
But he whom I am addressing is not alive.

### **Time and Gnosis of *Kun fa Yakun* (“Be and It Is”)**

72. Allah’s Commandment: “And Our Command is only a single word like the twinkling of an eye.”<sup>39</sup> He says: “Concerning anything that We have willed, We only say ‘Be,’ and it is.”<sup>40</sup>

73. Question: Followers of the Sunnah and Convention believe that Allah is a designer with His ancient and eternal will related to His limitless and eternal will, which must entail certain inevitable consequences (*ijabah*). This means that the immediate attainment of all purposes is linked with it. We know that no desired object is eternal because the intention of anything warrants its invention. A relationship of intention with antiquity is impossible. So how can the schemes (*muradat*) related to requirements (*iradat al-ijibah*) come into existence for eternity? Moreover, some things were created in six thousand years, whereas Heaven and Earth were created “in six days.” “Indeed, a day in the sight of your Lord is like a thousand years of your reckoning.”<sup>41</sup> Some things were created in forty thousand years, one of which was Adam: “Adam’s clay was worked by His hands in forty mornings.” So forty thousand years are to be counted for the act of *kun fa yakun* (“Be, and it is”). How should we settle this difference?

74. The answer (favor comes only from Allah): The requisite intention warrants the attainment of intended objects. In addition, four more things are

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid., vol.9, p.366; Qur’an, 54:50.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., vol.5, p.464; Qur’an, 16:40.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., vol.6, p.592; Qur’an, 22:47.

required so that the purpose may be accomplished by the execution of the intention. If one of the four is lacking, the execution of the intention will be deficient. The deficiency of the execution of the intention will amount to the deficiency of intention. The eternal attributes are free from the stain of deficiency and the blemish of adversity. It means that the ancient attribute of Allah is free from deficiency: (a) The purpose should be in accordance with the intention, neither more nor less; (b) it should appear when it is desired, neither later nor earlier; (c) it should occur exactly where the aspirant desires, and nowhere else; (d) it should appear within the stipulated period, neither before nor after. Suppose He said to Adam: "Remain in that form at a certain point between Makkah and Ta'if for forty thousand years." Certainly he would have remained there as He desired, in the form that He desired, and for the period that He desired. If he had come into existence in the twinkling of an eye, it would have been against His command ("Be, and it is"). The requirement of His command "Be, and it is" was that he should come into existence in exactly forty thousand years. This means that whatever Allah creates, it is by His effective intention that is itself created by the command "Be, and it is." The difference that is found between the times of desires is also the requirement of intention and the command "Be, and it is." It is neither contradiction between antiquity and invention nor the negation of the command "Be, and it is."

75. You should know, you who seek the reality of things, and you who desire to know the obscure secrets, that although the above answer is sufficient, satisfactory, clear, and authenticated, yet the pearl lies in the depths of the ocean of gnosis. Indeed, it is the meanest shell lying on the bed of the unfathomable sea. Recognition of the reality of *kun fa yakun* is beyond it. The argument for this assertion is that Allah says: "And Our Command is just a single word, like the

twinkling of an eye”<sup>42</sup> In another context He says: “And the matter of the Hour (of Judgment) is as the twinkling of an eye or even quicker.”<sup>43</sup> It means that the proceedings of the Day of Judgment is a matter of the twinkling of an eye. We know that the length of the Day of Resurrection is fifty thousand years.<sup>44</sup> From this we infer that these fifty thousand years are shorter than the twinkling of an eye in the sight of Allah. This is a unique secret to be perceived and accepted. It can be understood only by having a detailed knowledge of the times. Its recognition is very delicate and inexplicable. Proofs and arguments cannot establish it, because there are many aspects of its recognition that cannot be understood or perceived without observation. However, if you can accept it by way of submission and faith, it will ultimately become abundantly clear to you, Allah willing, that the reality was as propounded by (the people of) the *Tariqah*.

76. Now we turn to the description of time. May Allah invoke His blessings upon you. [You should] know that time is of three kinds: that of physical bodies, that of spirits, and that of sublime reality.

77. The first category has two stages. First, the time of dense bodies. This time is produced by celestial movement, such as last year, this year, yesterday, today, and tomorrow. We know the length and span of this time. The year is long, and the month is shorter. The span of a month is greater than that of a day, and the day is longer than an hour. This time consists of the past, the present, and the future. Yesterday is the past, tomorrow is the future. This is the time in which you find congestion, jostling, and contradiction. Unless yesterday has passed, today cannot take place, and unless today passes, tomorrow cannot come. Their coming together at the same time is impossible.

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid., vol.9, p.366; Qur’an. 54:50.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., vol.6, p.498; Qur’an, 16:77.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., vol.10, p.154; Qur’an, 70:4.

78. The second category is the time of delicate bodies. This is the time of flying creatures. Whatever is lengthy in the time of dense bodies is light and short in this time. If one performs an action in this time, one can do more work in a day than can be accomplished in the time of dense bodies in one month, indeed, in one year. You have heard about the steady growth of the babies of jinn and Satan. Their growth in a day is equivalent to that of our children in ten years, because they grow in the time, the short span of which is long. This type of time also contains the past, the present, and the future. However, in this time, yesterday and tomorrow, that is, the past and the future of humankind, are the present for the jinn and they cannot do anything to alter it. The past and the future are their present, just like humankind's last year and this year. This is simply an explanation, not a definition, nor can this serve as an argument although the people of vision have no doubt about it.

79. The second category of time is that of the spirits and it consists of many kinds. However, we are concerned with one kind and we shall confine ourselves to it. That is the time of the angels.

80. Know that whatever is long in the time of the jinn is short and fleeting in the time of the angels. One thousand years in this are like a single breath. Anyone performing an action in this time can accomplish the work of a thousand years in one moment. There is neither congestion nor jostling in this time. Thousands of the past years and thousands of the years to come can come together in this time. The past of this time is only *azal* (the sempiternity), and its future is only *abad* (the eternity). Nevertheless, *azal* and *abad* neither surround nor encompass that time, for it is infinite and infinity cannot be surrounded by a finite.

81. Beyond all this can be perceived the time of sublime reality (Allah), that has neither a past nor a future, and is surrounded by *azal* and *abad*; indeed, *azal* and *abad* are just like a small point in it. Its *azal* is *abad*, and its *abad* is *azal*. However,

to be precise, it has neither *azal* nor *abad*. If you think about the length of this time, it will appear just like the twinkling of an eye, and if you consider its brevity, you will find that the *azal* and the *abad* in it are shorter than a moment. This time has no coming and no passing. It can be neither limited, nor counted, nor divided. The space of Allah is unique and uncountable, it does not accept variation, nor is a single atom of existence far from Him. Nevertheless, He is in every single atom in such a way as if His realm is that same atom and nothing else.

82. This time is also a single uncountable unit, though neither a single moment of *azal* could be evaluated without a beginning nor could a moment of *abad* be assessed without an end. You will not find a single moment of this time to say that it was so before it or it was so after it. You would say that time itself was not a part of that moment. Allah, the Most High, is in this single uncountable unit of time, that does not accept variety or division, nor can any countable or divisible unit be part of it. Allah, the Most High, is Omnipotent with His unique indivisible power over all unlimited destiny. He is Omniscient with His unique immeasurable knowledge that encompasses the infinite knowledge. He encompasses with His unique immeasurable intention all unlimited purposes. He beholds with His unique immeasurable vision the limitless perspectives. He listens with His unique indivisible hearing all that is both endless and audible, and delivers with His unique indivisible speech all infinite pronouncements.

83. When the heretics remained in hiding from the radiance of this secret, they denied the antiquity of the Holy Qur'an. They said:

When Moses and Mount Sinai were not in existence, how was Allah, the Most High, able to address Moses as follows: "Remove your shoes, for you are in the sacred valley of Tuwa?"<sup>45</sup> Because to address something that does not exist is regarded as foolishness.

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid., vol.6, p.326; Qur'an, 20:12.

These poor fellows knew only of the whereabouts of cattle and donkeys. They had never travelled in spiritual time. Such tedious suspicions and absurdities had destroyed their faith. If they had been free, even for a while, of the narrowness of the time of dense bodies and the density of the external world, their souls would have observed the time of the spiritual world. They would have realized that such time has neither past nor future, that it is immeasurable and indivisible, and that *azal* and *abad* are its one point. [Then they would have understood] how the nonexistent Moses could have been present there and how he could have been addressed.

84. Question: These talks are like sermons and the seeker of Reality cannot find solace in them, so there must be some concrete argument to satisfy the heart.

85: Answer: We say that it is difficult to create evidence from whatever is known by way of revelation, secret observation, and spiritual perception except for those of spiritual discernment. Nevertheless, I narrate an event from the life of the Ultimate Sage that would convince the just aspirant. In his description of the events of the *mi`raj* (Ascension), the Prophet said: “I saw [the prophet] Jonah in the belly of the fish.” It is recorded in the *Sirah* (six authentic collections of hadiths) that the Prophet said in his description of the Ascension:

I saw ‘Abd al-Rahman ibn ‘Auf crawling into Paradise. I said to him: “Why you were so late?” He said: “O Prophet of Allah, I was not able to reach you. I faced such hardships that could render children decrepit and senile. I thought I could not see you.”

Now this shows that the Prophet saw Jonah in the belly of the fish, though he was two or three thousand years before him. He also saw ‘Abd al-Rahman ibn ‘Auf creeping in a situation that was to have occurred years later and talked to him. This can happen only in a time in which thousands of past years and thousands of future years can be in the same condition.

This conversation was possible only in a time in which the past and the future came together. Events which had happened and those which were to happen in the future were present in that time simultaneously. So, how could it happen that the Prophet conversed with `Abd al-Rahman ibn `Auf in a situation that was to have occurred fifty thousand years later, though that situation may not be physically present? And how could it happen that in endless eternity, Allah, the Most High, met Moses and conversed with him on Mount Sinai, while Moses was yet to be born and did not exist physically in our worldly time. There are many such examples in the holy *Sirah* (biography) of the Prophet and this much is sufficient to convince a wise and just person.

86. If the Mu`tazilites say that the *mi`raj* (Ascension) of the Prophet was a vision and did not happen physically, and that the revelations were of his imagination, not of his physical observation, then we reply [as follows]. First, the Followers of the Tradition and Convention (*ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama`ah*) believe that the *mi`raj* of the Prophet was a physical bodily movement which took place in full consciousness, not while he was asleep. There are many rational arguments in support of this belief, which cannot be cited here in this brief description. There are many rational arguments in its support, which cannot be cited here, in this brief description. Even if we accept that the Ascension had been a vision, our point is proved by the affirmation of spiritual time. The past and the future in a situation in which they become a moment of present time can be seen only by spirits and in spiritual time.

87: Ordinary people can also experience in dreams the observation of this spiritual time. We will elaborate this point further, Allah willing. Although prophets and saints experience it while conscious, the pure heart of the most exalted person of the whole Universe experiences it both spiritually and physically.



88. Question: Scholastically, if all existents that were, that are, and that will be, were present in the time that you have described, naming it *Umm al-Kitab*, and that time were in the Limitless Eternity, encompassing the *azal* itself, as you stated, it would necessarily mean that all existents must have been present in the *azal*. If we accept their presence, then all of them must be ancient. This is the belief of philosophers and atheists, contrary to the principles and belief of the Muslims.

89. Answer: This is an important question and its answer is also very critical. You will benefit, Allah willing, if you listen to it carefully with full attention.

90. You should know that there is neither *azal* nor *abad* in this time. It has neither a beginning nor an end. The existence of all beings emerges from the unity and oneness of that time in *azal*, that whatever is in *azal* is replicated in *abad*, and whatever is the beginning, so also is the end. Therefore, whatever you know as *azal* and use it as the base of the sempiternity (*azaliyyat*), you will find that that the eternity (*abadiyyat*) is exactly the same. Now I shall explain this point in clear and unequivocal terms.

91. You should understand that this *Umm al-Kitab* (the basic essential time) transcends the limitations of the time that is created by the rotation of the celestial body, and is beyond the *azal* and the *abad*. It has a trace of the attribute of ancient knowledge. Its existence neither necessarily depends on the physical form in this world nor is it qualified by the *azal* and the *abad*. Its example is the same as that which we narrated in the *mi'raj* episode. That was when the Ultimate Sage passed beyond the limits of time and space, beyond the narrowness of *azal* and *abad*, according to the common definition, and saw `Abd al-Rahman ibn `Auf and conversed with him while the latter was proceeding toward Paradise. Whatever the Prophet observed and said in that time did not necessarily exist in this worldly time. However, that event was to have occurred fifty thousand years later. This situation

was present to the Prophet on the night of the Ascension and to us it was nonexistent. Similarly, the entire existence in the utmost sempiternity (*azal al-āzāl*) was present to Allah, the Most High, while to us it was nonexistent. The antiquity of the universe is impossible in the context of its relationship with our time. It cannot be applied to the knowledge of Allah, the Most High, and to the time that is related to Him.

92. You should understand that when the human soul gains strength by way of purification and instruction, and remains a follower of the Prophet, it may be capable of drawing the dense body toward a state of subtlety and delicacy. The indication of this would be that it would be capable of performing more work in a day than others could do in a year.

93. You have heard the story that Khizr once came across a hillock in the garden of a man who had become its worshiper. Khizr razed the hillock in one day, leveled the ground, and shifted all the material somewhere else. This tells of the same spiritual strength.

94. There is a similar story of Shaykh Abu al-Hasan Kharrikani, who said:

They took us out of ourselves and all our usual daily recitation could not be performed. However, when they released us and we regained consciousness, our beards were still wet with the water of ritual ablution.<sup>46</sup>

95. One of our friends recites every single verse of the Holy Qur'an verbatim one hundred times in less than one hour. This has happened to him many times. If spiritual power can be achieved, one can draw the body to the sphere of spiritual time. Its indication is that one can perform in one hour work that would normally be done in a hundred or a thousand years.

96. The event of the Ascension of the Prophet was in this state. In less than one hour during that night, all the details of the Divine Kingdom were introduced to him one after another. He also listened to ninety thousand words from Allah, the Most

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<sup>46</sup> *Ushnohi, Asar-i-Farsi*, p.79, section 94.

High, yet found that his bed was still warm when he returned. No one denying it, however, could experience something like this in his dreams and yet disprove it. Visions of this kind are possible for everyone. One could experience in a dream that one had emigrated to say, Turkistan, married a woman there, remained there for a thousand years, and fathered a thousand children. The passage of a thousand years in one hour can occur only in the time that we described earlier. The occurrence of an event of this kind is also possible during consciousness. We have come across a story about one of the pupils of Junayd, who went to the bank of the River Dajla to bathe. He removed his clothes, entered the water, and within a few moments reached India. There in India he married a woman, fathered children, and remained for many years. Next, he found himself again on the bank of the River Dijla. He put on his clothes, which were still lying there, and came to the *Khanqah* (monastery of Shaykh Junayd). He saw the men of the monastery performing ritual ablution for offering prayers. It means that the event was related to the heart, not to the body. Its occurrence might also have been effected by the action of the dense body, because Allah, the Most High, is Omnipotent.

97. You might also have heard about the saints, whose single breath is more than that of a thousand years of ordinary people. You may consider this a virtue because of their excellence and honor. This is true, although the reality is that when a *salik* (follower of the Sufi path) reaches this stage, he can perform a thousand years, even a hundred thousand years of worship in a single breath. All that is possible and has happened. Nevertheless, it has never happened that a creature has entered the time of Allah, the Most High, or could even know about it.

98. *Umm al-Kitab* is this time. All the events of the sempiternities and eternities both exist and are recorded therein. In comparison, the Preserved Tablet (*al-Lawh al-Mahfūz*) is very small. Although Israfil knows about it, only Allah, the

Most High, holds any information on the *Umm al-Kitab*. Whatever is recorded in the Preserved Tablet is subject to confirmation or deletion, as indicated in the Qur'an: "Allah erases or confirm what he pleases."<sup>47</sup> However, whatever is in this time (*Umm al-Kitab*) is not subject to change or deletion: "The Word is not changed by Me"<sup>48</sup> refers to it. Although Allah, the Most High, is not in this time, He is aware of it.

99. That time is not called the time of Allah because of its distinction and grace, just as we say *Bayt Allah* (the house of Allah) or *Rūh Allah* (the spirit of Allah), etc. When you have fully understood this point, [you will know] that Allah, the Most High, is undoubtedly Eternal and Sempiternal, His Word is also ancient, without beginning and without end, and His Word is One, uncountable. He is pronouncing that Word right from the time without beginning to endless eternity without a break. You will also understand that He has created the entire Kingdom with a single Word "Be, and it is" and with this "Be, and it is" He encompasses all sempiternity and eternity so completely that even the twinkling of an eye is neither hidden from His sight nor beyond His grasp. You know that Allah, the Most High, is Omnipotent with every power. He is Omniscient of all information with One indivisible knowledge. He beholds with a unique immeasurable vision all visible objects from sempiternity to eternity, and He listens to all that is audible from sempiternity to eternity with His unique hearing. With His single indivisible intention He intends all desires from sempiternity to eternity. You know that his being the First is not due to the preference of time, rather, the preference of time is due to Him. His being the Last is not due to a delay in time, rather, the delay in time is due to Him. Being the First and the Last are His two ancient Attributes. His Attributes do not admit contradiction or negation. He is the First as He is the Last.

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<sup>47</sup> Al-Mubarakpuri et al., *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, vol.5, p.297; Qur'an, 13:39.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, vol.9, p.234; Qur'an, 50:29.

And He is the Last as He is the First. He is the Last in sempiternity and the final end has not come. He is the First in eternity and the time of being First has gone.

100: Yes, My dear! What has been told is a drop in the unfathomable sea of the secret of time and space. Some very significant secrets have not been disclosed and many precious pearls have remained concealed because you are narrow-minded and will not benefit from them.

I have much to say but cannot say,  
And alas! I cannot even complain.

101. O courageous man! Do you know that the above description is the key to the trove of gnosis that I have given to you? Indeed, it is the gate of the treasure house of undisclosed secrets that I have opened for your consideration. You should offer thanks to God that those secrets which remained concealed under the veils of power have been revealed to you. Those precious gems which were in the depths of the ocean of possessiveness for a thousand years have been sent for display in the market of your times. Read and understand it. At least, do not show ingratitude for this blessing by denying it. [Remember] the man who bears the burden of this trust, the personal source of these secrets, and the starting point of enlightenment. Even if you do not become the dust of his feet, at least do not malign him to his face by throwing the dust of antipathy at him. The followers (of the Sufi path) are not the losers when others satirize them. Those who are set (by Allah) to satirize the followers (of the Sufi path) are actually made their ransom. The follower goes straight to Paradise as a reward for his tolerance, whereas the satirist, because of his wrongdoing, heads toward the prison (of Hell).

102. O brave man! If whatever you do not know does not exist, then the field of knowledge narrows considerably and there remains no room for progress. Do not think that perfection has been completed in you. [You should] continue to acquire

further knowledge so that you may know “how many hidden things are lying in corners.” Always remember the following Tradition of the Prophet:

Of the knowledge that has been given to humankind is that which is concealed from ordinary people. Only those who recognize Allah know that. When they speak of that branch of knowledge, only those who are ignorant of Allah dare refute it.

103. O my friend! If knowledge is the same as that which is acquired from teachers, then whence came the erudition of the Commander of the Faithful (‘Ali b. Abi Ṭalib), who described himself as follows: “If I wish, I can overload seventy camels with the explanation of the opening surah of the Qur’an (*Surat al-Fatihah*).” And where did Sahal ibn ‘Abdullah Tastari obtain his knowledge when he said: “There are seventy thousand meanings of each verse of the Qur’an, and there are more than that beyond our grasp.” Allah, the Most Gracious, says: “If the ocean were ink (with which to write) the words of my Lord, the ocean would be exhausted before the words of my Lord.”<sup>49</sup> How will you interpret that? If the participation of opponents in every [branch of] knowledge is necessary, then what did ‘Abdullah b. ‘Abbas mean when he said: “If I disclose the explanation of this verse, I know that you will stone me?” Another version is: “You will say that I am an atheist.” He meant the following verse of the Qur’an: “It is Allah Who created seven heavens and of the Earth a similar number.”<sup>50</sup>

Why was this knowledge not shared among the other Companions of the Prophet and the Followers of the Companions? From whom did he acquire that precious knowledge and the treasures of secrets that could appear to the Companions and their Followers as heresy because of the depth and subtlety of their meaning?

104. O sir! Why do you not apply justice? The secrets of the Most High became confined to the problems of *salam* (payment in advance), *rahn* (mortgaging),

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid., vol.6, p.221; Qur’an, 18:109.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., vol.12, p.55; Qur’an, 65:12.

*shufah* (right of pre-emption), and *ijarah* (leasing out), and became restricted to experts on the subject. It is amazing that, in the knowledge of syntax and grammar, which can be acquired in a week, you recognize grammarians, indeed, in the occupations of shoemaking and weaving you recognize the shoemakers and weavers. However, why do you not recognize those who direct their efforts to acquiring knowledge of Allah, the Most High, those who subdue their desires and shun uncertainty, exhaust their youth and stamina in the way of the Most Gracious so that they may be sustained by the subtlety of His acceptance and favor and their blissful days are like this:

They have tied up the two ends of days and nights  
By their constant struggle, love and longing for Allah.

105. May the Most Exalted King show the illuminated path to everyone, and protect them with His kindness, mercy, and boundless magnanimity from calamities resulting from selfishness and evil feuds. Our final prayer is that all praise is due only to Allah, the Sustainer of the Universe, and peace be upon Muhammad and his entire lineage.