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The Right Path: A Post-Mongol Persian Ismaili Treatise

The Epistle of the Right Path (Risāla-yi Širāṭ al-Mustaqīm) is an anonymous treatise, possibly dating to the late fourteenth or early fifteenth century. It may be the earliest Persian Ismaili prose work of the post-Mongol period to come to light, and is here introduced, discussed, edited and translated. A clearly articulated, philosophically inclined treatment of numerous themes in Ismaili thought, the text draws frequently from Nasir al-Din Tusi's spiritual autobiography, The Voyage (Sayr wa-Sulūk). Its subject matter includes the correspondence between the exoteric and esoteric worlds, the concept of the divine command through which creation attains perfection, the role of the Imam and the esoteric hierarchy, and the fact that esoteric exegesis (ta'wīl) of divine revelation must be compatible with the principles of the intellect.

Background

In his spiritual autobiography, *The Deliverer from Error (al-Munqidh min al-Dalal)*, the famous Sunni scholar al-Ghazali (d. 505/1111) judged only four Muslim groups worthy of evaluating as "seekers after truth." These were the theologians, the philosophers, the Sufis, and the Shi'i Ismailis. Throughout his life, al-Ghazali struggled with Ismaili thought, which had come to represent one of the most powerful intellectual voices in the Muslim world of his time. The latter years of his life corresponded with the establishment of an Ismaili regional state at the gateway of the great Saljuq empire. Here, the community established a network of fortresses led from Alamut in the area of Daylam. What is particularly noteworthy about the Ismaili state is that despite the extremely hostile milieu and almost constant state of warfare, it managed to maintain a remarkable tradition of intellectualism. Hasan-i Sabbah, who first captured the fortress of Alamut, is himself credited with establishing an impressive library there. Throughout Persia and Syria, many of the major Ismaili fortresses came to house their own collections of books and scientific instruments. Patronage of scholars was not

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limited to the Shi'ī Ismailis, but was extended to Twlever Shi'is, Sunnis, and even non-Muslims.

While the ferocity of Saljuq actions against the Ismailis had taken its toll, the menace of the Mongols, an even more formidable adversary, was on the horizon. We hear an ominous foreboding of the coming destruction from William of Rubruck, a Franciscan friar at the court of King Louis IX of France, who was sent on a diplomatic mission to the Great Khan Mongke. He narrates that the Great Khan had sent his brother Hulagu to the lands of the Ismailis with an army, “and he ordered him to put them all to death.”¹ When the fortress of Alamut was subjugated by the Mongols in 654/1256, ‘Ata-Malik Juwayni, Hulagu Khan’s attendant and historian, requested permission to visit the celebrated library, “the fame of which had spread throughout the world.”² There he found multitudes of books relating to the religion of the Ismailis, which he condemned to be burned, saving only copies of the Quran and a few other treatises.³ Consigned to a fate similar to that of their religious books, the Ismailis themselves were hunted down and slaughtered indiscriminately. Henceforth, it would seem that they had simply ceased to exist, disappearing from the pages of history.

The destruction of the state centered at Alamut ushered in a period in the Ismaili community’s life so dim and indistinct that the first half a millennium after the Mongol conquest has had to be classified by researchers under the amorphous title of “post-Alamut history.”⁴ In his work, *The Isma‘ilis: Their History and Doctrines*, Farhad Daftary echoes the sentiments of over a century of previous scholarship in bemoaning this period as “the darkest phase” in the annals of the community.⁵

Only recently has major research into this phase of Ismailism been attempted.⁶ One of the main obstacles to progress in this direction has been the dearth of source material from the earliest part of this period. The discovery of *The*

¹Cited in Farhad Daftary, *The Ismā‘īlīs: Their History and Doctrines*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, 2007), 15.

²‘Alā’ al-Dīn ‘Aṭā-Malik Juwaynī, *Ta’rīkh-i Jabāngushāy*, ed. by Muḥammad Qazwīnī, 3 vols. (Leiden, 1912–37), vol. 3, 269–270, trans. by John Andrew Boyle, *The History of the World-Conqueror*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, MA, 1958), vol. 2, 719.

³Juwaynī, *Jabāngushāy*, vol. 3, 186–187, 269–270, vol. 2, 666, 719.

⁴Farhad Daftary, *Ismaili Literature* (London, 2004), 59, Daftary, *The Ismā‘īlīs: Their History and Doctrines*, 403ff.

⁵Farhad Daftary, *The Ismā‘īlīs: Their History and Doctrines* (Cambridge, 1990), 435. He is preceded in this regard by Hamid Algar, “The Revolt of Āghā Khān Maḥallātī and the Transference of the Ismā‘īlī Imamate to India,” *SI*, 29 (1969): 55; Syed Mujtaba Ali, *The Origin of the Kbojāhs and their Religious Life Today* (Würzburg, 1936), 55; E. I. Howard, *The Shia School of Islam and its Branches, Especially that of the Imamee-Ismailies: A Speech Delivered by E. I. Howard, Esquire, Barrister-at-Law, in the Bombay High Court, in June, 1866* (Bombay, 1866), 57–59.

⁶In this regard, see, for example, Nadia Eboo Jamal, *Surviving the Mongols: Niẓārī Qubistānī and the Continuity of Ismaili Tradition in Persia* (London, 2002); and Shafique N. Virani, *The Ismailis in the Middle Ages: A History of Survival, A Search for Salvation* (New York, 2007).

Epistle of the Right Path (*Risāla-yi Širāṭ al-Mustaqīm*), introduced, discussed, edited and translated in this paper, is therefore of great significance. Though undated, it appears to be the earliest hitherto-known Persian Ismaili prose work of the post-Mongol period to come to light.⁷

Introduction to The Epistle of the Right Path

The Epistle of the Right Path (*Risāla-yi Širāṭ al-Mustaqīm*) is preserved in a single uncatalogued manuscript at the Institute of Ismaili Studies, London, with the accession number 15034. The anonymous text is a clearly articulated, philosophically inclined treatise consisting of a brief preamble, ten short missives, and an epilogue. While anonymous, the *Epistle* has a number of indications that allow us to cautiously postulate a late fourteenth or early fifteenth century authorship. The names of several people appear in the text, almost all of whom are quoted. These include Muhaqqiq Tusi (i.e. Nasir al-Din Tusi; d. 672/1274); Ra'is Iftikhar al-Din (Salah al-Din) Hasan, the prominent Ismaili poet and author, and a contemporary of Tusi; Pir-i Rumi, apparently for Shams-i Tabrizi (fl. seventh/thirteenth c.), whom Jalal al-Din Rumi considered his teacher;⁸ and the Ismaili Imams Shams al-Din Muhammad Tabrizi (d. ca. 710/1310) and 'Abd al-Salam. All these figures are datable to the end of the thirteenth or the beginning of the fourteenth century, with the exception of the Imam 'Abd al-Salam, who may be any of the three Imams of this name, the first of whom may have passed away in about 827/1424 and the third of whom may have passed away about 899/1494.⁹ The anonymous author of the *Epistle of the Right Path* attributes to this Imam a treatise entitled *The Epistle of Sorrow* (*Risālat al-Ḥuzn*).

This *Epistle of Sorrow* is not mentioned by the anonymous author of the *Epistle of the Discussion* (*Risāla-yi Mumāẓara*), a contemporary of the third Imam 'Abd al-Salam, who does mention his ode (*qaṣīda*) to the seekers of union, which has been discussed elsewhere.¹⁰ Khayrkhwah-i Harati, writing within two generations of this Imam, also alludes to the ode, but omits mentioning the *Epistle of Sorrow*.¹¹ The omission of any reference to the work by both these writers tentatively suggests that it was probably not authored by the third Imam of this name,

⁷This treatise was first presented as “Risāla-yi Širāṭ al-Mustaqīm,” in *Seekers of Union: The Ismailis from the Mongol Debacle to the Eve of the Safavid Revolution*, ed. by Shafiqe N. Virani (PhD dissertation, Harvard University, 2001). Further references and discussion may be found in Virani, *The Ismailis in the Middle Ages*, 26, 50, 56, 60–61, 94, 99.

⁸The quotation attributed to “pīr-i Rūmī” is not found in the known oeuvre of Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī (d. 672/1273). It is not impossible that Shams-i Tabrīzī himself may have composed some odd bits of poetry, including the fragment found here.

⁹In this regard, see Virani, *The Ismailis in the Middle Ages*, 107, 121.

¹⁰Virani, *The Ismailis in the Middle Ages*, 120, 168–169, 176–178.

¹¹Muḥammad Riḍā b. Khwāja Sulṭān Ḥusayn Ghūriyānī Khayrkhwāh-i Harātī, *Taṣnīfāt-i Khayrkhwāh-i Harātī*, ed. Wladimir Ivanow (Tehran, 1961), 78.

but by one of the first two. There is some further support for this earlier dating. The anonymous author of *The Epistle of the Right Path* explicitly mentions the cities Uch and Multan, which were once the headquarters of the Ismaili *da'wa* in India. However, towards the end of the fifteenth century there was a crisis in these cities. The headquarters of the Ismaili *da'wa* was likely transferred to Gujarat soon after troubles broke out.¹² The absence of any reference to Gujarat or of the crisis suggests that the anonymous author wrote before this occurrence and therefore that *The Epistle of the Right Path* predates the transfer of the *da'wa* headquarters that occurred in South Asia. This dating is, however, tentative.

The anonymous author quotes Nasir al-Din Tusi in a passage that can be traced directly to *The Voyage (Sayr wa-Sulūk)*, Tusi's spiritual autobiography. The arguments in *The Voyage* clearly had an impact on the text, as portions are almost verbatim quotations.¹³ It is thus possible that parts of the *Epistle* are largely a compilation of received knowledge. This, however, does not diminish its significance as testimony to the continuation of Ismaili literary activities in this period. It preserves a quotation from the *Epistle of Sorrow* by the Imam 'Abd al-Salam, which has yet to be discovered, and poetry of the prominent Alamut poet Ra'is Hasan, whose opus remains scattered.¹⁴ References regarding the Ismaili *da'wa*, or mission, in India in this period are also unprecedented.

With regard to the contents of the work, it begins by explaining some of the various names by which the community was known. Elucidating the epithet of *Batiniyya*, the Esotericists, the author comes to his main subject matter. The Ismailis are known by this name because they believe that corresponding to every exoteric form there is an esoteric spirit, which is the source of that form, while the exoteric is the epiphany of the esoteric spirit. The exoteric and esoteric worlds are said to correspond to the Quranic expressions "visible and hidden" (*shabādat wa-ghayb*) and "creation and command" (*khalq wa-amr*).¹⁵ The *Epistle of Sorrow* of the Imam 'Abd al-Salam, in which the Imam explains that the creation was brought forth by the Command or Word of God, is then quoted. In Ismaili thought, the Command is thus the first cause and the Universal Intellect the first effect. This is necessary in order to exalt God beyond being either a cause

¹²For more information on this transfer, see Virani, *The Ismailis in the Middle Ages*, 124–126 and Shafiqe N. Virani, "The Voice of Truth: Life and Works of Sayyid Nūr Muḥammad Shāh, a 15th/16th Century Ismā'īlī Mystic" (MA thesis, McGill University, 1995), 17–22.

¹³Some of the parallel passages are indicated in the notes.

¹⁴Representative translations of selected poems may be found in Faquir M. Hunzai and Kutub Kassam, ed. and trans., *Shimmering Light: An Anthology of Ismaili Poetry* (London, 1996), 84.

¹⁵Quran 6:73 and 7:54. This topic is dealt with extensively from an Ismaili perspective by al-Shahrastānī (d. 548/1153) in his *majlis* delivered at Khwarazm; see Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Karīm al-Shahrastānī, *Majlis-i Maktūb-i Shabrastānī mun'aqid dar Khwārazm*, trans. by Diane Steigerwald, *Majlis: Discours sur l'Ordre et la Création* (Saint-Nicholas, 1998). Al-Shahrastānī was the author of the well known *Kitāb al-Milal wa-al-Nihāl* on religions and Islamic sects.

or effect, in contrast to many other schools of Islamic thought that posit God as being the first cause.

This concept requires some elaboration. In Ismaili circles, speculation about God's unity (*tawḥīd*) gave rise to a unique conception of the godhead and of God's relationship to the world. It also engendered an intricate cosmogony in which the concept of God's Command (*amr*) plays a central role. The Quranic verse *And there is none comparable to him* (112:4), in the Ismaili understanding, precluded the possibility of positing anything that resembled God in any manner. Thus, Quranic references to God's face and hands, and his powers of hearing, seeing and speaking, accepted without asking how (*bilā kayfa*) by the Ash'arites and others, were rejected outright by the Ismailis as anthropomorphism (*tashbīb*). Such references had to be understood by esoteric exegesis (*ta'wīl*), in order to comprehend their true import. In the first chapter of his *Unveiling of Hidden Things* (*Kashf al-Mahjūb*), the Ismaili thinker Abu Ya'qub al-Sijistani aspires to affirm God's transcendence by eliminating from him the concepts of thing (*chīz*), limit (*ḥadd*), attributes (*ṣifāt*), place (*makān*), time (*zamān*) and even the supreme attribute of being (*bastī*).¹⁶ He explains this last negation by asserting that to connect being to God is repugnant, because all beings came into existence by his Command, "Be!" (*kun*).¹⁷ The reference here is to two Quranic verses: *The originator of the heavens and the earth! When he decrees a thing, he says to it only: "Be!" And it is* (2:117) and *Indeed his command, when he intends a thing is only that he says to it: "Be!" And it is* (36:82). Thus, to Sijistani, the notion of being is tied to that of createdness.

However, he was not content to establish God's absolute transcendence simply by negating all attributes from him. In his *Book of Glory* (*Kitāb al-Iftikhār*), Sijistani criticizes the Mu'tazilites and others who utilized the method of *via negativa*:

The so-called 'people of justice' believed in the negation of attributes, states and organs, but they did not know that their negation is not sufficient for the recognition of the True Worshipped (*al-ma'būd al-ḥaqq*), for the one from whom they have been negated is (also) someone of His creatures and it is not befitting for the glory of the True *mubdī'* [lit. originator] to be like him.¹⁸

¹⁶Abū Ya'qūb al-Sijistānī, *Kashf al-Mahjūb*, trans. by Henry Corbin, *Kashf al-Mahjūb: Le Dévoilement des Choses Cachées* (Lagrasse, 1988), 33–45 and partial English trans. by Hermann Landolt as "Unveiling of the Hidden," *An Anthology of Philosophy in Persian*, ed. by S. H. Nasr and M. Aminrazavi (Oxford, 2001), vol. 2, 80–124.

¹⁷Al-Sijistānī, *Kashf/Dévoilement*, 13.

¹⁸Abū Ya'qūb Ishāq b. Aḥmad al-Sijistānī, *Kitāb al-Iftikhār*, ed. Ismail K. Poonawala (Beirut: 2000), 91, Abū Ya'qūb al-Sijistānī, *Kitāb al-Iftikhār*, ed. Muṣṭafā Ghālib (Beirut, 1980), 29, trans. in Faquir M. Hunzai, "The Concept of Tawḥīd in the Thought of Ḥamīd al-Dīn al-Kirmānī" (PhD dissertation, McGill University, 1986), 65. Cf. Paul E. Walker, *Ḥamīd al-Dīn al-Kirmānī: Ismaili Thought in the Age of al-Ḥākim* (London, 1999), 83–89 and Daniel de Smet, *La Quiétude de l'Intellect: Néoplatonisme et Gnose Ismaélienne dans l'Oeuvre de Ḥamīd ad-Dīn al-Kirmānī* (Xe/XIe s.) (Leuven, 1995), 35–100.

Thus, Sijistani considers the method of *via negativa*, what was sometimes called denudation of the divine essence (*ta'tīl*), to be simply anthropomorphism (*tashbīb*) in another guise. This method gave its supporters the false sense of security that they had somehow understood God by divesting him of attributes. In his *Book of Keys (Kitāb al-Maqālīd)* he writes, "Whoever removes from his Creator descriptions, definitions, and characteristics falls into a hidden anthropomorphism just as one who describes Him, defines Him, and characterizes Him falls into obvious anthropomorphism."¹⁹ To avoid this error and to maintain the absolute purity of the godhead, Sijistani adopted the method of double negation. According to this method, the first negation of the attributes of God is insufficient for the above reasons and therefore necessitates the negation of the initial negation. For example, it is not satisfactory to deny the attribute of God being existent by saying "God is not existent," unless this is immediately followed with a negation of the initial negation, namely, "God is not not-existent." The ultimate goal then was to remove God from any understanding in terms of existence or being and thus exalt him beyond any category of human comprehension. Accordingly, in the seventh section of the first chapter of his *Unveiling of Hidden Things*, Sijistani negates all his negations of the previous six sections.²⁰ Hence, "the Creator is neither a thing nor a non-thing, neither limited nor non-limited, neither describable nor non-describable, neither in space nor in non-space, neither in time nor in non-time, and neither in Being nor in non-Being."²¹ Thus, in Ismailism, God can only be expressed in terms of *coincidentia oppositorum*. What was sought by this method was to deny the attributes of both existence and non-existence by the action of the particle of negation (*lā*), and not the exalted ipseity of God. That is to say, in the statements "God is not existent" and "God is not not-existent," it is the conception of God in terms of either existence or non-existence that is denied, not his ipseity, which is emphasized through the use of the word "God" in both sentences.

The author of *The Epistle of the Right Path* realizes that this absolutely transcendent conception of God exalts him above human knowledge. This is because, as Tusi argues on the basis of Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics*, acquired knowledge can only be absolutely certain if it proceeds from cause to effect. The reverse is impossible. Since the first cause, or God as posited by the philosophers, has no cause by definition, it follows that by philosophy's own admission it cannot have certain knowledge of it. Indeed, even the prime intellect, which is the

¹⁹Cited in Paul E. Walker, "An Ismā'īlī Answer to the Problem of Worshipping the Unknowable, Neoplatonic God," *American Journal of Arabic Studies*, 2 (1974): 13, cf. *Early Philosophical Shiism: The Ismaili Neoplatonism of Abū Ya'qūb al-Sijistānī* (Cambridge, 1993), 75.

²⁰al-Sijistānī, *Kashf/Dévoilement*, 44–45.

²¹*Kashf al-Mahjūb*, translated in Shigeru Kamada, "The First Being: Intellect ('*aql*/'*kbiradb*) as the Link Between God's Command and Creation According to Abū Ya'qūb al-Sijistānī," *The Memoirs of the Institute of Oriental Culture, University of Tokyo* 106 (1988): 5.

first effect in the Peripatetic system, cannot have this knowledge, despite its being the closest being to the first cause, since there cannot be any certainty about that which itself has no cause.²² A prime teacher (*mu'allim-i anwal*) must therefore be posited at a superior ontological level to the first intellect. This intermediary between God and the first intellect is his Command, or Word. It is this Command which, in reality, is the first cause. As the Imam 'Abd al-Salam avers in his *Epistle of Sorrow*, God *qua* God is completely beyond cause and effect. It is thus through the divine Command that both the worlds exist and attain perfection.

As the author of the *Epistle* argues from the outset, every esoteric spirit must have an exoteric form. Thus, the Command must have a manifestation in the sensory world. This is the Prime Teacher, the Imam of the time, who is the locus of manifestation of the Command. As the Command is the originator of all the existences, they must also return to it in order to complete the circle of existence. God must be recognized through the person of this Prime Teacher, who faces the world of unity and godhead on one side, and the world of plurality on the other, and is thus able to bring all existence, whether physical or spiritual, from potential to actual perfection. As there is no intermediary between the Command and God, the Command is perfect in actuality and is thus able to perfect others.

The author avers that the Command must have a manifestation in the physical realm, which is the unbroken lineage of Imams. He continues to explain how this manifestation is to be recognized, quoting the Quranic dicta *And we made it a Word abiding in his progeny* (Quran 43:28) and *descendants, one after the other* (Quran 3:34). The indication is of two types: the physical, which is descent, and the spiritual, which is the explicit designation of each Imam's successor (*naṣṣ*). In the ninth missive, the descent of the Imams is traced through a period of seven cycles.²³ In addition to the two indications already indicated for the physical and spiritual worlds, the elite, who can perceive the realm of unity, recognize him directly through himself.

The author then comments on his own age, in which the Imams were in concealment from the outside world (*saṭr*), but were always accessible to their disciples, if not in person, then through the *da'wa*, the Ismaili mission. The two highest ranks of the *da'wa*, the *bab* and the *hujjat*, were always in contact with the Imam.

²²This and the discussion that follows draw upon the present treatise, Naṣīr al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Muḥammad Ṭūsī, *Sayr wa-Sulūk*, ed. and trans. by S. J. Badakhchani, *Contemplation and Action: The Spiritual Autobiography of a Muslim Scholar* (London, 1998), which explains a number of presumptions made in the present treatise, and the excellent summary and analysis of Ṭūsī's philosophical arguments in Hermann Landolt, "Khawāja Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī (597/1201–672/1274), Ismā'ilism, and Ishrāqī Philosophy," in *Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī: Philosophe et Savant du XIIIe Siècle*, ed. by N. Pourjavady and Ž. Vesel (Tehran, 2000), 17–22.

²³With regard to some of the names found in the treatise, reference should be made to Wladimir Ivanow, "Noms bibliques dans la mythologie ismaélienne," *Journal Asiatique*, 237 (1949): 249–255.

Finally, in the epilogue, the author affirms that in Ismailism, esoteric exegesis (*ta'wīl*) of divine revelation must be compatible with the principles of the intellect. He concludes with a telling prayer, beseeching that the believers be saved from disobedience and be led to recognition of the Imam's gnosis.

About the Edition

As mentioned above, the edition is based on a photocopy at the Institute of Ismaili Studies Library in London of what is the only known manuscript containing the work. There is no indication of the name of the scribe or a date of transcription. The copy appears to be a section from a larger manuscript, which may preserve such information. The work contains many verbatim quotations and paraphrases from *The Voyage* by Nasir al-Din Tusi, which, when it gave a better reading, was used to reconstruct the text. Wherever this was done, it is indicated by the letter س (سير و سلوك = س), followed by the section number in Badakhchani's critical edition.²⁴ Where I have made emendations because a preferable reading suggested itself, the text in the original manuscript, indicated by ن (نسخه =), has been recorded in the notes. The locations for Quranic citations and the meter of poetic quotations have been indicated. Diacritical marks, *idafa* and punctuation to assist in the reading of the text have been added, but no attempt has been made to incorporate the orthographical conventions of modern Persian.

The Epistle of the Right Path

Guide us on the right path. The path of those upon whom you have bestowed favors, not of the accursed, nor of those who have gone astray.

The Quran 1:6–7

This epistle, consisting of ten missives and an epilogue, is about the religion of the Ismailis and how they came to be known by this auspicious name.

Missive One

The name [Isma'iliyya] has been applied to this community since the imamate was transmitted from Mawlana Ja'far al-Sadiq to Imam Isma'il, may peace be upon us from both of them, even though, in truth, all the Imams are one and there is a change only in form, not in meaning or reality. After that, the Imams remained concealed until Mawlana Mahdi manifested in the lands of the Maghrib.

²⁴Tūsī, *Sayr wa-Sulūk*, 1–22.

In times gone by, this community was also called the Seveners (*Saba'iyya*), because from Mawlana 'Ali to Mawlana Isma'il there were seven manifest Imams, Mawlana Hasan being a trustee (*mustawda'*) Imam. This community is called the Esotericists (*Bāṭiniyya*), because (we affirm that) every exoteric form (*ẓābir*) has an esoteric spirit (*bāṭin*) and spiritual meaning (*ma'nī*), which is the source (*maṣdar*) of that exoteric form, while the exoteric form is the epiphany (*maẓhar*) of that esoteric spirit. An exoteric form that has no esoteric spirit is just like a mirage, while an esoteric spirit without an exoteric form resembles a chimera that has no basis in reality (*aṣl*). This has been elucidated in the sciences of reality, just as the eminent verifier of truth, [Nasir al-Din] Tusi, hallowed be his dear secret, has alluded with reference to this matter:

Beyond this world of sensory objects is another world that is of intellect. That world is related to this one as the soul is related to the body. This is why it is called the spiritual world while this world is called the physical world. Corresponding to every sensory thing in this world is an intelligible thing in that world, parallel every individual here is a soul there, and analogous to every exoteric form here is an esoteric spirit there. Conversely, corresponding to every intelligible entity over there is a sensory object here, parallel to every soul over there is an individual here, and analogous to every esoteric spirit over there is an exoteric form here. The intelligible entity is the source (*maṣdar*) of this sensory object and this sensory object is the epiphany, the expression (*maẓhar*) of that intelligible. For example, if a sensory object appears here that has no corresponding intelligible entity there, that appearance is a deception, as has been mentioned. It is like a mirage and the hallucinations seen by delirious people and melancholics, because a derivation or branch (*far'*) cannot exist without a principal or root (*aṣl*). If it is supposed that an intelligible entity exists there that has no corresponding sensory object here, that intelligible entity would be a thought or idea that has no reality, for no existent is inoperative.²⁵

With reference to these two worlds, the physical and the spiritual, the expressions “visible and hidden” (*shabādat wa-ghayb*) and “creation and command” (*kebalq wa-amr*) appear in the (Quranic) revelation: *He knows the hidden and the visible* (6:73) and *Lo! To him belong the creation and the command. Blessed be God, the lord of the worlds* (7:54).

Missive Two

His eminence Mawlana 'Abd al-Salam, may peace be upon us from him, in the *Epistle of Sorrow* (*Risālat al-Ḥuẓn*) has made a merciful allusion to the (aforementioned) matter:

²⁵The parallel passage is found in Tūsi, *Sayr wa-Sulūk*, §31.

The first thing that the Exalted God brought forth was the Command. As a result of the Command, the Universal Intellect was produced. The Universal Soul was produced as a result of the Universal Intellect and the hyle, or prime matter, the heavens, the four natures, minerals, plants and animals were produced as a result of the Universal Soul. In reality, the purpose of creating these substances is humankind's existence. Then, the issuance of the existents from the Exalted God, who is the first origin, is through the mediation of something which, in the parlance of this community, is called his Command or his Word, may he be exalted. Thus, the first cause is the Command and the first effect is the Universal Intellect, for the Exalted God is pure from being a cause or an effect.²⁶

*Missive Three*²⁷

Thus, if the Word of the Exalted God, upon which the subsistence of the existents of both worlds depends and through which each of these attains perfection, had no connection with the sensory world, the sensory world would never have come into existence. However, as there is a connection, and as that connection must be of the same type, it has to be perceptible to the senses. It follows that the Command or Word must have a manifestation in this world and that its locus of manifestation (*maẓhar*) must be a perceptible and specific person. This community calls such a person the Imam of the age and the Prime Teacher (*mu'allim-i awwal*). That is why this community is called the People of Teaching (*ta'līmiyya*), for true teaching comes from this noble person, may his word be glorified. He is called the Supreme Name (*ism-i a'zam*) because a name is that which indicates the one who is named. Here, the physical person (of the Imam) indicates the one who is named and his essence, may he be exalted and hallowed. In reality, the true Ka'ba, the Inhabited House (*bayt al-ma'mūr*),²⁸ the world-showing goblet (*jām-i jahān numā*),²⁹ and the tree of Mount Sinai,³⁰ are indications of his illustrious person, while the epiphany of the Universal Intellect is recognized as the Annunciator (*nātiq*).

²⁶It is difficult to establish whether this entire passage is, indeed, a quotation from the *Risālat al-Ḥuẓn* or whether the author of the *Risāla-yi Širāt al-Mustaqīm* is merely alluding to the Imam 'Abd al-Salām's having mentioned this matter in the treatise. In view of the anonymous author's extensive quotations of the *Sayr wa-Sulūk*, the former seems more likely.

²⁷Large portions of this missive are drawn from Ṭūsī, *Sayr wa-Sulūk*, §32.

²⁸An allusion to Quran 52:4.

²⁹An allusion to the fabulous goblet of the Iranian king Jamshīd, in which the entire world could be seen.

³⁰An allusion to Quran 23:20.

Missive Four

Just as his illustrious Command, may his Word be exalted, is the origin of the existents, it is incumbent that their return also be to his Command and Word, may he be exalted, so that the circle of existence may be completed through him.³¹ As the eminent Ra'is Iftikhar al-Din Hasan has said, with regard to this matter:

He is both beginning and end, for without him beginning and end
Whole and part of both worlds would disappear in an instant

Since even his greatest proof³² has no equal nor peer
What say you? How can his own peer or equal be spoken of?

In form he resembles the creation so that
This created world may have a complete existence

Otherwise, in terms of spiritual meaning and absolute truth he is
Beyond any form that our intellects can conceive.³³

In fact, if his hallowed person were not manifested, nobody would have existed. If his person, may he be exalted, were not to appear as an aged man, a youth or a sperm, nobody would have these attributes. Moreover, the rest of his activities and stillnesses, his actions, words, states and so on, must be thought of in this manner:

In the world, with the eyes of createdness, you are a creature
You both resemble the creatures and live among them

But your true face is beyond the sight of the created
In your ineffable and inexpressible essence, you are exalted beyond both this
and that

Whether it be the creation or the created, whether the command or the
commanded
You both grant its existence and issue its decree.³⁴

³¹Cf. Ṭūsī, *Sayr wa-Sulūk*, the last few lines of §32.

³²I.e., the *ḥujjat-i a'zam*, the highest rank of the *da'wa* after the Imam, sometimes referred to as the *bāb*.

³³The full text of this poem can still be found in scattered manuscripts of the writings of Ra'is Hasan. The first verse is:

بگوش ساکنان باب اعلی شهر مولانا در آمد مزده ی اکبر که سبحان الذی اسرا

³⁴As indicated in the notes to the Persian edition, this is also a poem of Ra'is Hasan that is frequently quoted in Ismaili works. The full text of the poem is still extant in manuscript form. The first couplet is:

الا ای دل نه نی لایق باین زندان ظلمانی خرد زین سان نمی دارد باین زندانت ارزانی

Missive Five

In order for the subsistence of the world's people to be preserved and perpetuated, his person, may he be exalted, has a manifestation in this world. Had such a manifestation not existed, nobody would arrive at recognition of him, may he be exalted. The human form pertains specifically to his hallowed person, the remaining human forms being his reflections and shadows, as mentioned in a prophetic tradition, *Verily, God created Adam in his own form*,³⁵ and in the Quran, *Had we made him [the messenger] an angel, we would certainly have made him a man and disguised [him] before them in garments like their own* (6:9).³⁶ In the spiritual world, which is [his] pure essence, he is a sage with boundless knowledge and omnipotent with infinite power. All sciences and perfections are showered by him on the intellects and souls.

*Missive Six*³⁷

The people of the law and wisdom affirm that the species of man is not bereft of a person who is the possessor of divine knowledge (*'ilm-i ladunī*) and a hallowed soul (*nafs-i qudsī*). With the mere attention of the soul without the mediation of a book or the trouble of searching, the realities and truths are known to him in their entirety. He knows all the sciences without the mediation of learning (*ta'allum*). This individual is eternally perfect and there is no intermediary between him and the lord, may he be hallowed. Had there been an intermediary, he would not be perfect in actuality, but rather perfect in potentiality and that intermediary would have to be the Prime Teacher rather than him. However, we have posited that he is the Prime Teacher and perfect in actuality. Thus, in the species of man, the Prime Teacher and perfect in actuality in every age is his noble person, may he be exalted and hallowed. All people, by degrees and intermediaries, attain perfection according to their aptitudes and abilities through the teaching of this noble person, becoming gnostics through his recognition. The proof of his eternal existence and confirmation of him are well known and famous in countless, innumerable references in the Quran and traditions. For example, the dictum of God, may he be exalted: *descendants, one after the other* (Quran 3:34) and the prophetic traditions, *Were the world to be bereft of an Imam for but an instant, it would be convulsed with all its inhabitants*, and also *Every progeny and heritage shall be cut off, save my progeny and my heritage*, and *The descendants of Muhammad are like the stars of the sky, when one descends another rises (to take*

³⁵Cf. Genesis 1:26, "And God said: Let us make man in our image, after our likeness."

³⁶For this translation of the verse, see Ṭūsī, *Sayr wa-Sulūk*, 69-70 n33. For the following sentences, cf. *Sayr wa-Sulūk*, §32.

³⁷Parts of this missive parallel Ṭūsī, *Sayr wa-Sulūk*, §§20–21.

its place). This means that the Imams, may peace be upon us from them, will succeed and follow each other without interruption, just as before a star sets, another rises to take its place. Since the manifestation of the Imam in this world is the reason for its subsistence and perfection, so long as the world persists it cannot be devoid of his hallowed existence.

*Missive Seven*³⁸

It is thus incumbent upon people to have a path to him or to the light of his Command, may he be exalted, lest they fail to attain perfection and the benefit of the manifestation be in vain. Based on the aforesaid propositions, three aspects of his noble person, may he be exalted, are incumbent: the aspect that he, may he be exalted, is a person like other people; the aspect that since he is the origin of the existents, he is the cause while others are caused, that he is the teacher while others are learners, and that he is perfect while others are imperfect; and the aspect that only he is he, while nothing other than him is worthy of being called existent or a thing.³⁹ The three realms that, in the terminology of the People of the Summons, are known as the realm of similitude (*ḵawn-i mushābahat*), the realm of distinction (*ḵawn-i mubāyanat*), and the realm of unity (*ḵawn-i waḥdat*), refer to these three aspects. If these three aspects did not exist, these three realms would not have the aspect of existence. According to the dictates of philosophy (*ḥikma*), the fact that humanity has been distinguished from the simple and compound species of the sensory world by his manifestation is demonstrated because humans are the most noble of existents and beings, as they are nobler than the three kingdoms of nature [minerals, plants and animals]. The three kingdoms are nobler than the elements and the constituent parts [earth, air, fire and water], while the elements and constituent parts are nobler than their physical principles, that is to say, matter and form. Thus, the noblest sources have manifested in the noblest epiphanies. Meanwhile, according to the dictates of the law and the exoteric aspect of the revelation, [this was] the trust that the heavens, the earths and the mountains were too weak to accept, but which was accepted by the species of man, *Lo, we offered the trust to the heavens, the earths and the mountains, but they shrank from bearing it and were afraid of it, while man bore it* (Quran 33:72).

³⁸The parallel passages are found in Tūsī, *Sayr wa-Sulūk*, §36, followed by §§33–35.

³⁹On the concept of “thingness,” see R. Arnaldez, “*Ṣḥay*,” *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed. (online version) (Leiden, 2008), Brill Online, University of Toronto subscription, http://www.brillonline.nl.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/subscriber/entry?entry=islam_SIM-6881 (accessed 6 October 2008). What the author may have in mind here is the Quranic dictum, “Indeed his command, when he intends a thing is only that he says to it: “Be!” And it is” (36:82).

*Missive Eight*⁴⁰

In the realm of similitude, individual human beings must pass away, so one person's succession to another can be known by parentage and relationship. Were the continuity and lineage indicated by parentage to be disregarded, people would be deprived of the means of attaining him. There are two types of parentage, spiritual and physical. The explicit designation of one's successor (*naṣṣ*) is spiritual and the succession of generations is physical. These two relationships demonstrate the continuity of these individuals, one after the other. This is rendered abundantly clear (by the Quranic verses) *And we made it a Word abiding in his progeny* (43:28) and *descendants, one after the other* (3:34). By the testimony of these two indications, birth and explicit designation, all the people of the world have a way to find the person, may he be exalted, who is the epiphany of that light. The elite, however, have an additional sign, which is among the traces of the realm of unity. This is his uniqueness in claiming, "I recognize God by God and I lead people to God," for this claim and summons are vouchsafed to none save him.

Missive Nine

From the beginning of time until its end, generation upon generation, the imamate has been fixed and established in this hallowed lineage and is proven by *descendants, one after the other* (Quran 3:34), such as from the time of Mawlana 'Ali, may peace be upon us from him, going back to the time of Mawlana Ma'add, may he be exalted and hallowed, the Annunciator of that time being Jesus the Chaste, upon whom be peace, as is clear and evident in the Book; and from the time of Mawlana Ma'add going back to the time of Mawlana Seth (Shith), may peace be upon us from him, the Annunciator of whose time was Adam of Ceylon, peace be upon us from him, for there was not more than one Annunciator for the disciples of each age. This claim is not satisfied by anyone save Mawlana, may he be hallowed, who is present in the most beautiful names of the preceding Imams.⁴¹ With regard to this matter it is clearly stated that just as in the time of Mawlana Shem (Sām), upon whom be peace, Noah was the Annunciator, in the time of Mawlana Malik al-Salam, upon whom be peace, Abraham was the Annunciator, and it is still the illustrious prayer of Mawlana Malik al-Salam that the disciples take as a means of intercession. In the time of Mawlana Aaron, may peace be upon us from him, Moses, upon whom be peace, was the Annunciator. In the time of Mawlana Ma'add, the noble Jesus was the Annunciator, as has been mentioned. In the time of Mawlana 'Ali, the noble Muhammad, upon whom be peace, was the

⁴⁰The parallel passages are found in Ṭūsī, *Sayr wa-Sulūk*, §§36–37.

⁴¹The translation of the preceding paragraph is tentative, as the text appears to be partially corrupt. The discovery of another manuscript may help solve the ambiguities.

Annunciator. These are the six cycles of the six Annunciators. In truth, after that they were uninterrupted and successive *descendants, one after the other* (Quran 3:34) reaching the time of the noble [Hasan] *‘ala dbikribi al-salam*, the lord of the resurrection, which is the seventh cycle. From the time of Mawlana ‘Ali until the time of Mawlana Isma‘il the Imams were manifest. From the time of Mawlana Isma‘il until the time of Mawlana Mahdi ‘Abd Allah, the Imams were concealed. Mawlana Isma‘il manifested in the cities of Uch and Multan, leaving indications among the people of India and displaying marvels. A community from among that Imam’s descendants still remain in that realm, and by means of those indications those people will never entertain doubts. Mawlana Mahdi manifested in the lands of the Maghrib and the succeeding Imams were manifest until the time of Mawlana Mustansir of Egypt. Mawlana Mustansir of Egypt had several children but the imamate was with Mawlana Nizar. Musta‘li falsely claimed the imamate, but it was cut off with his descendant ‘Adid. They martyred Mawlana Nizar and the following Imams were concealed until the time of Mawlana Hasan *‘ala dbikribi al-salam*, the lord of the great resurrection. The Imam’s manifestation reached the entire world. Since then, the Imams have been in concealment until our day. However, this concealment was for the exotericists, not for the esotericists (*abl-i bātīn*, i.e., the Ismailis). Even when there is concealment for the esotericists, it is not for all of them, for it is decreed that the epiphany of the Universal Intellect, who is the proof (*hujjat*) of the Imam, always has access to the Imam of the Age and Time in the spiritual world (*‘ālam-i bātīn*):

There is a path from the heart of the *hujjat* to the Imam
He is aware by the divine support (*ta’yīd*) of his heart.

The pir of Rumi [Shams-i Tabrizi?], may his dear spirit be sanctified, has said:

If the millstone of recognition spins without a load, O ‘Ali!
I will take a seat atop the nine firmaments and issue orders.⁴²

Because of this, the noble *hujjat* is the possessor of divine support (*ta’yīd*). However, it is possible for there to be concealment for the other ranks of the faith (*hudūd-i dīn*) because of the disobedience of the servants, as it happened during the time of Mawlana Shams al-Din Muhammad Tabrizi.

Missive Ten

It is impossible for the world to be bereft of the Universal Intellect and the Universal Soul and for them to be unaware of the Imam of the time, for they

⁴²The meaning of this verse is obscure, and it does not seem to appear in Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī’s known oeuvre. A tentative translation is given. The word *yargū* has been understood in the sense of *yarghū*.

are the possessors of divine support (*ta'yīd*). Their epiphanies are the *bab* (gate) and the *hujjat* (proof), and in reality they participate in the attributes of God. The attributes are not separate from the essence. In the science of esoteric exegesis (*ta'wīl*), a solar eclipse symbolizes the period of concealment. The sun is not completely obscured, as it is covered by the veil of the moon, which is smaller than it. This symbolizes the lord of the law (*ṣāhib-i sharī'a*, i.e., the *nātiq*) whose exoteric command veils the reality (*ḥaqīqa*). However, the portion of the sun's rays that remain symbolize the fact that the recognition of the Imam of the time is not completely veiled by the exoteric aspect of the law. Mawlana 'Alī must have a slave like Salman, as has been mentioned in the Blessed Epistles (*fuṣūl-i mubārak*). Thus, it is never possible for there to be a (period of) concealment such that nobody has access to him, may he be exalted and hallowed.

Epilogue

The path of the People of Teaching (*ta'līmiyya*) is such that, to the extent possible, the dictates of the canonical law can be taken on board and made compatible with intellectual principles and the wisdom of esoteric exegesis. Thus, the arguments adduced by the sages to prove the Command correspond to this noble verse (of the Quran): *Indeed his command, when he intends a thing is only that he says to it: "Be!" And it is* (36:82). If considered with justice, many verses can be shown to be compatible, in this manner.

May the noble Mawlana – may he be exalted and hallowed – keep all his servants safe and secure from disobedience to the command of reality and lead them to a recognition of the light of his gnosis, for the sake of the truth and its people.

رساله صراط المستقیم

إِهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ.⁴³

در بیان مذهب اسماعیلیه که چرا باین نام خجسته فرجام موسوم شده اند و این رساله مشتمل⁴⁴ است بر ده فصل و خاتمه.

فصل اول

اطلاق این اسم برین طایفه از آن تاریخ واقع شد که امامت بامام اسماعیل از مولانا جعفر صادق علینا منهما السلام منتقل شد هر چند که در حقیقت ائمه واحدند و تغییر در صورتست نه در معنی و حقیقت. و بعد از آن ائمه مستور بودند تا آن زمان که مولانا مهدی در بلاد مغرب ظاهر شد. و دیگر این طایفه را در ازمنه سابقه سبعیه میگفتند چون از مولانا علی تا مولانا اسماعیل هفت امام ظاهر بودند،⁴⁵ مولانا حسن که امام مستودع بود. و این طایفه را باطنیه میخوانند بسبب آنکه هر ظاهری را باطنی و معنای⁴⁶ هست که آن مصدر آن ظاهر است و آن ظاهر مظهر آن باطن. و ظاهری که او را باطنی نباشد مثل سراپست. و باطنی که او را ظاهری نباشد حکم خیالی دارد که آنرا اصلی نیست. و این⁴⁷ در علوم حقیقی روشن شده است⁴⁸ چنانچه حضرت محقق طوسی، قدس⁴⁹ سره العزیز، بدین معنی اشارتی فرموده اند که:

ورای این عالم محسوس عالمی⁵⁰ دیگرست معقول که نسبت آن عالم با این عالم چون نسبت جان با تن باشد. و از اینجاست که او را عالم روحانی میگویند و اینرا عالم جسمانی. و بازاء هر محسوسی⁵¹ درین عالم معقولیست دران عالم، و مقابل هر شخصی اینجا روحی آنجا، و نظیر هر ظاهری اینجا باطنی آنجا. و همچنین بر عکس نیز: بازاء هر معقولی آنجا محسوسی اینجا، و مقابل هر روحی آنجا شخصی اینجا، و نظیر هر باطنی آنجا ظاهری اینجا که آن⁵² معقول مصدر این محسوس باشد

⁴³سوره ا، آیه ۶-۷

⁴⁴ن: مشتمله

⁴⁵ن: بود

⁴⁶ن: معنی

⁴⁷ن:-

⁴⁸ن: -، س ۳۱

⁴⁹ن:-

⁵⁰ن: عالم، س ۳۱

⁵¹ن: محسوس، س ۳۱

⁵²ن: -، س ۳۱: که آن

و این محسوس مظهر آن معقول. مثلاً اگر اینجا محسوسی⁵³ نماید که آنجا بازاء آن معقولى نبود آن نمایش باطل بود چنانچه گذشت و مانند سراب و صورتهائی باشد که میرسمان⁵⁴ و اصحاب مالخولیا میبینند،⁵⁵ چه هیچ فرعى بى اصلی نتواند بود. و اگر آنجا معقول فرض کنند که بازاء آن اینجا محسوسی نبود آن معقول و همی یا خیالی تواند بود که آنرا هیچ حقیقتی نبود چه هیچ موجودی⁵⁶ معطل نیست.

و در⁵⁷ تنزیل، شهادت و غیب و خلق و امر که⁵⁸ آمده است: "عَالَمُ الْغَيْبِ وَ الشَّهَادَةِ"⁵⁹ و⁶⁰ "إِلَّا لَهُ الْخَلْقُ وَ الْأَمْرُ تَبَارَكَ اللَّهُ رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ"⁶¹ اشارت بمعنی همین دو عالم جسمانی و روحانی است.

فصل دوم

حضرت مولانا عبد السلام علینا منه السلام در رساله الحزن اشارتی رحمتی فرموده بدین معنی که:

اول چیزی که ایزد تعالی ظاهر کرد امر بود. از نتیجه امر عقل کل حاصل آمد. و از نتیجه عقل کل نفس کل. و از نتیجه نفس کل هیولی و افلاک و طبایع اربعه و معادن و نبات و حیوان. و مقصود از آفرینش این جوهرها⁶² بحقیقت وجود انسان است. پس صدور موجودات از باری تعالی که مبداء اولست⁶³ بواسطه چیز است که آنرا در عبارت این جماعت امر او تعالی

⁵³ ن: محسوس، س ۳۱

⁵⁴ ن: میرسمان، س ۳۱

⁵⁵ ن: ببینند، س ۳۱

⁵⁶ ن: حقیقت... موجود، س ۳۱

⁵⁷ ن: -، س ۳۱

⁵⁸ ن: -

⁵⁹ سوره ۶، آیه ۷۳؛ سوره ۵۹، آیه ۲۲

⁶⁰ ن: -

⁶¹ سوره ۷، آیه ۵۴

⁶² ن: جوهرهای

⁶³ ن: اوست، س ۲۴

Both Naṣīr al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Muḥammad Tūsī, *Sayr wa-Sulūk*, ed. and trans. S. J. Badakhchani, *Contemplation and Action: The Spiritual Autobiography of a Muslim Scholar* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1998), §§30, 32 and the fourth and seventh missives of this text identify the command as the origin (مبداء), not God. However, in his *Sayr wa-Sulūk*, Tūsī uses the expression *مبداء اول* in a special sense when referring to God, mirroring the use of the word *مبدع*, the originator, in Fatimid texts.

یا کلمه او تعالی میخوانند. پس علت اولی امر باشد و معلول اول عقل کل چه باری تعالی از علتی⁶⁴ و معلولی منزّه است.

فصل سیم

پس اگر کلمه باری تعالی را که قیام موجودات هر دو عالم و وصول هر یکی بکمال خویش از و و باوست بعالم محسوس تعلقی نبودی عالم محسوس خود اصلاً نبودی. و چون تعلقی هست و آن⁶⁵ تعلق هم ازین جنس باید⁶⁶ بود، پس⁶⁷ از روی حس هم محسوس باشد. پس امر و کلمه را درین عالم لا محاله ظهوری باشد و مظهر او شخصی⁶⁸ محسوس و⁶⁹ معین، و او را این طایفه شخص امام زمان و معلم اول می نامند. بنابراین، این قوم را تعلیمیه میگویند که تعلیم بحقیقت از حضرت او جلت کلمته دارند. و او را اسم اعظم میخوانند زیرا که اسم آنست که دلیل بر مسمی باشد. اینجا شخص او دلیل بر مسمی و ذات اوست تعالی و تقدّس. و کعبه حقیقی و بیت المعمور و جام جهان نما و درخت طور سینا بحقیقت عبارت از شخص بزرگوار اوست و مظهر عقل کل را ناطق می شناسند.

فصل چهارم

پس همچنانچه مبدء موجودات امر بزرگوار اوست جلت کلمته لازم می آید که معاد نیز امر و کلمه او تعالی باشد تا دایره وجود باو بهم رسد. چنانچه حضرت رئیس افتخار الدین حسن اشارتی بدین معنی فرموده اند:

همانند کل و جزو هر دو عالم یک نفس بر جا	هم او اول هم او آخر که بی او اول و آخر
چه گونی چون توان گفتن مرورا همسر و همتا	چو اعظم حجت ⁷⁰ او را نه همتا هست و نه همسر
که تا این عالم خلقی وجودی یافت مستوفی	بشکلی صورتش مانند خلق از بهر آن آمد
ز هر صورت که عقل ما صفات آن کند بالا ⁷¹	و گرنه از ره معنی و عین راستی هست او

⁶⁴ ن: علت

⁶⁵ ن: نبودی، پس آن، س ۳۲

⁶⁶ ن، س ۳۲: تواند

⁶⁷ ن: یعنی، س ۳۲

⁶⁸ ن: شخص، س ۳۲

⁶⁹ ن:-

⁷⁰ ن: حجت است

⁷¹ بحر هزج مثنی سالم

و فی الواقع اگر ظهور شخص مقدّس او نبودی هیچکس را وجود نبودی. و اگر شخص آن تعالی بظاهر پیر و جوان و نطفه نمودی هیچکس باین صفات متصف نشدی. دیگر باقی حرکات و سکنات و افعال و اقوال و احوال برین قیاس باید کرد:

وجود خلق میداری بچشم خلق در دنیا	تو هم با صورت خلقی و هم با خلق می مانی
ولی روی حقیقی را و رای بینش خلفان	بذات بی چرا و چون منزّه زینی و زانی
اگر خلق است و گر خلقی اگر ⁷² امرست و گر امری	وجودش هم تو می بخشی و حکمش هم تو میرانی ⁷³

فصل پنجم

بنابر آنکه قیام اهل عالم محفوظ باشد و مستدام، شخص او را تعالی ظهوریست درین عالم که اگر چنان⁷⁴ ظهور نبودی هیچکس بمعرفت او تعالی عارف نشدی. و صورت انسانی خاص بشخص مقدّس اوست و باقی صور انسان عکس و سایه اویند، چنانچه در خیرست که "انّ الله تعالی خلق آدم علی صورته" و بقوله⁷⁵ تعالی "و لَوْ جَعَلْنَاهُ مَلَكًا لَجَعَلْنَاهُ رَجُلًا وَّ لَلْبَشَرِ عَلَيْهِمْ مَا يَلْبَسُونَ".⁷⁶ و در عالم روحانی که ذات مجرد بوده⁷⁷ عالم⁷⁸ بعلمی است⁷⁹ نامتناهی و قادر بقدرتی⁸⁰ است نامتناهی و جملگی علوم و کمالات ازو بر عقول و نفوس فایض.

فصل ششم

⁷² ن: وگر

Cf. *Faṣ l dar Bayān-i Shinākht-i Imām [Attributed to Khayrkhwāb Harātī by Wladimir Ivanow]*, ed. Wladimir Ivanow, 3rd rev. ed. (Tehran: 1960), 10.

⁷³ بحر هزج مثنی سالم

The first hemistich from this poetic quotation is missing in the manuscript, but can be reconstructed from the citation of the same poem in *Ibid*, ed. 9, *Faṣ l dar Bayān-i Shinākht-i Imām [Attributed to Khayrkhwāb Harātī by Wladimir Ivanow]*, trans. Wladimir Ivanow, 2nd rev. ed. (Mumbai: Thacker, 1947), trans. 26, which identifies the poet as Ra'īs Ḥasan.

⁷⁴ ن: چنین

⁷⁵ ن: لقوله

⁷⁶ سوره ۶ آیه ۹

⁷⁷ ن: بود، س ۳۲

⁷⁸ ن: -

⁷⁹ ن: بعلم

⁸⁰ ن: بقدرت، س ۳۲

نزد اهل شرع و حکمت مقرر است که نوع انسان از شخصی⁸¹ که صاحب علم لدنی باشد و نفس قدسی خالی نیست که او را بمجرد التفات نفس، بی وسیلت الکتاب و رنج طلب، حقایق و⁸² معارف بتمام روشن باشد و بی واسطه تَعَلَّم⁸³ همه علوم حاصل بود. این شخص همیشه کامل بود و میان او و خداوند تَقَدَّس واسطه نباشد که اگر واسطه باشد او کامل بالفعل نباشد بلکه کامل بالقوة باشد، و معلم اوّل آن واسطه باشد نه او. ولیکن⁸⁴ ما او را معلم اول و کامل بالفعل فرض کرده ایم.⁸⁵ پس در نوع انسان معلم اول و کامل بالفعل در همه زمان شخص حضرت او باشد، تعالی و تَقَدَّس. و هر کس بقدر استعداد و قابلیت خود بتعلیم حضرت او بتدریج و بواسطه کمال پیدا⁸⁶ میکند و بمعرفت حضرت او عارف میشود. و دلیل وجود دوام و ثبات حضرت او از نصّ و اخبار بسیار و بی شمار⁸⁷ معروف و مشهور است. امثال بقوله⁸⁸ تعالی "ذُرِّيَّةَ بَعْضُهَا مِنْ بَعْضٍ"⁸⁹ یعنی نسل بعد نسل و اخبار "لو خلت الارض من امام ساعة لمادت باهلها" و ایضاً "کل حسب و نسب ینقطع الا حسبی و نسبی" و "مثل آل محمد کمثل النجوم السماء. اذا اخفی نجم فاطلع نجم،" یعنی ائمه علینا منهم⁹⁰ السلام متعاقب و متواتر یک دیگر باشند چون ستاره ای غروب کند پیش از غروبش⁹¹ ستاره ای⁹² دیگر طالع شود. چون ظهور او درین عالم سبب بقا و کمال این عالم است، تا این عالم نباشد از وجود مقدّس او خالی نتواند بود.

فصل هفتم

81 ن: شخص

82 ن:--

83 ن: تعلیم، س ۲۰

84 ن:--، س ۲۱

85 ن: کردیم، س ۲۱

86 ن: پید

87 ن: شما

88 ن: لقوله

89 سوره ۳ آیه ۳۴

90 ن: منه

91 ن: غروب

92 ن: ستاره.. ستاره

همچنین واجب باشد خلق را که باو یا بنور امر او تعالی راه باشد و الا از رسیدن بکمال باز مانند و فایده ظهور باطل شود. بنابراین مقدمات سابقه حضرت او تعالی را سه اعتبار لازم آید.⁹³ اعتباری آنکه او تعالی شخصی⁹⁴ بود مانند دیگر اشخاص، و اعتباری آنکه او علت است چون مبداء موجودات است و دیگران معلول، و او معلّم و دیگران متعلّم و او کامل و دیگران ناقص، و اعتباری دیگر⁹⁵ آنکه او خود اوست و هیچ چیز را جز او استحقاق اطلاق اسم شینیت و وجود⁹⁶ نه. و صورت چنانست که در⁹⁷ آن سه کون که در عبارت اهل دعوت می آید کون مشابهت و⁹⁸ کون مابینت و⁹⁹ کون وحدت، این سه اعتبارات مذکورست. و اگر این سه اعتبار نبودی این سه کون را اعتبار وجود نبودی. و دلیل بر آنکه نوع انسان بظهور او از دیگر انواع بسایط و مرکبات عالم محسوس ممتازست از روی حکمت آنست که انسان¹⁰⁰ اشرف موجودات و کایناتست چه از موالید ثلاثه او شریفتر است. و موالید ثلاثه از عناصر و ارکان شریفتر است. و عناصر و ارکان از مبادی جسمانی خویش یعنی هیولی و صورت شریفتر اند. پس شریفترین مصادر در شریفترین مظاهر ظهور کرده.¹⁰¹ و از روی شریعت و ظاهر تنزیل آن امانت که آسمانها و زمینها و کوهها از قبول آن عاجز بودند نوع انسان آنرا قبول کرد که "إِنَّا عَرَضْنَا الْأَمَانَةَ عَلَى السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَالْجِبَالِ فَأَبَيْنَ أَنْ يَحْمِلْنَهَا وَأَشْفَقْنَ مِنْهَا وَحَمَلَهَا الْإِنْسَانُ".¹⁰²

فصل هشتم

فرموده اند که چون در کون مشابهت¹⁰³ اشخاص انسانی را تلافی لازم است قیام شخصی بعد از شخصی بعلاقه و مناسبی معلوم تواند شد چه اگر از ان علاقه که دلیل بود بر اتصال و تعاقب قطع نظر کنند،¹⁰⁴ طریق وصول خلق باو مسدود گردد. و

⁹³ ن:، س ۳۳

⁹⁴ ن: شخص، س ۳۳

⁹⁵ ن:، س ۳۳

⁹⁶ ن: جز او اسم شینیت و وجود، س ۳۳: جز او استحقاق اطلاق اسم سبب وجود

⁹⁷ ن:، س ۳۳: از

⁹⁸ ن:، س ۳۳

⁹⁹ ن:، س ۳۳

¹⁰⁰ ن:، س ۳۴

¹⁰¹ ن: کند، س ۳۴

¹⁰² سوره ۳۳ آیه ۷۲

¹⁰³ ن: مشابهات

¹⁰⁴ ن: کند، س ۳۶

علاقه دو نوع بود: روحانی و جسمانی. روحانی نصّ یکی بود بر دیگری و جسمانی توالد بر¹⁰⁵ سبیل تعاقب تا باین دو
علاقه اتصال این اشخاص بیکدیگر معلوم شود و اثر¹⁰⁶ "وَجَعَلَهَا كَلِمَةً بَاقِيَةً فِي عَقْبِهِ"¹⁰⁷ و "ذُرِّيَّةٌ بَعْضُهَا مِنْ بَعْضٍ"¹⁰⁸
روشن گردد. و تمام عالم را باستشهاد این دو دلیل یعنی ولادت و نصّ بشخصی¹⁰⁹ که مظهر آن نور باشد باو تعالی راه بود.
هر چند خواصّ را نشانی دیگر باشد که آن نشان اثری باشد از آثار عالم وحدت و آن تقرّد او بود بدعوی آنکه "خدائی را
بخدائی میشناسم و خلق را بخدا میرسانم" چه هیچکس را جز او این دعوی و دعوت مسلم نتواند بود.

فصل نهم

امامت درین نسل مقدّس من الازل الى الابد نسلا بعد نسل ثابت است و مقرر و "ذُرِّيَّةٌ بَعْضُهَا مِنْ بَعْضٍ"¹¹⁰ مقرر چنانچه از
زمان مولانا علی علینا منه السلام تا زمان مولانا معدّ تعالی و تقدّس که ناطق آنزمان عیسی مجرد بود علیه السلام و در کتاب
واضح و لائح است و از زمان مولانا معدّ تا زمان مولانا شیث علینا منه السلام که ناطق زمان او آدم سرنیدی بود علیه
السلام بندگان در هر زمان بیک ناطق بیش حاضر نیستند و هیچکس را این دعوی نمیرسد غیر از مولانا تقدّس که باسما
حسنی ائمه ماتقدم حاضر باشد که درین باب صریح فرموده اند چنانچه در زمان مولانا سام علیه السلام نوح ناطق بود و در
زمان مولانا ملک السلام علیه السلام ابراهیم ناطق بود و هنوز دعای بزرگوار مولانا ملک السلام است که بندگان وسیله
شفاعت میگردانند و در زمان مولانا هارون علینا منه السلام موسی علیه السلام ناطق بود و در زمان مولانا¹¹¹ معدّ چنانچه
گذشت حضرت عیسی ناطق بود و در زمان مولانا علی حضرت محمد علیه السلام ناطق بود. این است شش دور شش
ناطق. و بعد از آن بحقیقت متواتر و متعاقب "ذُرِّيَّةٌ بَعْضُهَا مِنْ بَعْضٍ"¹¹² بودند تا زمان حضرت علی ذکرة السلام قائم قیامات
که دور هفتم باشد و از زمان مولانا علی تا زمان مولانا اسماعیل ائمه ظاهر بودند. و از زمان مولانا اسماعیل تا مولانا

¹⁰⁵ ن: جسمانی توالد بر، س ۳۶: جسمانی اتصال مولود بود بوالد بر

¹⁰⁶ ن: شود،، س ۳۶

¹⁰⁷ سوره ۴۳ آیه ۲۸

¹⁰⁸ سوره ۳ آیه ۳۴

¹⁰⁹ ن: شخصی، س ۳۶

¹¹⁰ سوره ۳ آیه ۳۴

¹¹¹ ن: مونا

¹¹² سوره ۳ آیه ۳۴

مهدی عبد الله ائمه مستور بودند. مولانا اسماعیل که بشهر اوجه و ملتان ظهور کرد و نشانیها در میان مردم هند گذاشت و معجزات نمود. و هنوز جماعتی از اولاد آنحضرت دران دیار باقی اند و بواسطه آن نشانیها هرگز آن مردم را اشتباه نمیشود. مولانا مهدی بیلاذ مغرب ظاهر شد و دیگر ائمه ظاهر بودند تا زمان مولانا مستنصر مصری. و مولانا مستنصر مصری را چند فرزند بود و نقد امامت پیش مولانا نزار بود. و مستعلی بناحق دعوی امامت کرد و بر فرزند او عاضد قطع شد. و مولانا نزار را شهید کرد. دیگر ائمه مستور بودند تا زمان مولانا علی ذکرة السلام حسن قایم قیامت کبری. و ظهور حضرت بهمه عالم رسید. بعد ازان ائمه مستور بودند الی یومنا. و این ستر بر اهل ظاهر بود نه بر اهل باطن. و آنکه بر اهل باطن ستر میشود چنین¹¹³ نیست که بر تمام اهل باطن ستر شود که فرموده اند که هر گز نیست که مظهر عقل کل که حجت است او را بمعرفت امام وقت و زمان راه نباشد در عالم باطن. فرد:

از دل حجت بحضرت ره بود او ز¹¹⁴ تائید دلش آگه بود¹¹⁵

و پیر رومی قفس سره العزیز میفرماید که، فرد:

گر آسیای معرفت بی بار گردد یا علی من بر فراز نه فلک بنشینم و بر قو ز¹¹⁶

جهت آنکه حضرت حجت صاحب تائید است. اما می تواند بود که جهت نافرمانی بندگان بر باقی حدود دین نیز ستر باشد چنانچه در زمان مولانا شمس الدین محمد تبریزی واقع بود.

فصل دهم

چون عقل کل و نفس کل که خداوندان تائیداند و مظهر ایشان باب و حجت است و ایشان در حقیقت داخل صفات الله اند و صفات از ذات جدا نیست، پس محال است که عالم بی ایشان باشد و ایشان عارف نباشند بامام زمان. و آنکه کسوف آفتاب در تاویل عبارت از دور ستر است. و آفتاب تمام تاریک نمیشود چون کسوف بواسطه حجاب ماه است و ماه اصغر است از آفتاب و دلیل بر صاحب شریعت است¹¹⁷ که حکم ظاهر او حقیقت را میپوشد. اما آنکه مقدار¹¹⁸ روشنائیکه¹¹⁹ می ماند از

113 ن: و چنین

114 ن: وز

115 بحر رمل مسدس محذوف

116

This couplet is written in a *nijaz*-type meter, مستفعِلن مفاعِلن مستفعِلن مستفعِل

117 ن:-

118 مقدا

119 ن: روشنی

آفتاب اشارت بدان است که بواسطه ظاهر شریعت معرفت امام زمان بتمام پوشیده نمیشود. و هرگز نیست که مولانا علی را همچو سلمان بنده ای نیست چنانچه در فصول مبارک مذکور است. پس معلوم شد که چنان ستری نمی توان شد که هیچکس را باو تعالی و تقدس راه نباشد.¹²⁰

خاتمه

طریق تعلیمیه اینست که بقدر امکان قواعد معقول و حکمت تاویل با¹²¹ احکام شریعت را که¹²² بر دوش میتوانند نمود الفت میدهند چنانچه دلایلی که حکما بر اثبات امر فرموده اند موافق است باین آیه کریمه که "إِنَّمَا أَمْرُهُ إِذَا أَرَادَ شَيْئًا أَنْ يَقُولَ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ" و اکثر آیات را برین قیاس الفت می تواند داد اگر کسی از روی انصاف تأمل نماید.

حضرت مولانا تعالی و تقدس جمیع بندگان را از نافرمانی امر حقیقت¹²³ در حفظ و امان بداراد و بنور معرفت خود شناسا¹²⁴ فرماید بحق الحق و اهله.

¹²⁰ ن:-

¹²¹ ن:-

¹²² ن:-

¹²³ ن: بحقیقت

¹²⁴ ن: شناسائی