

**Thinking Methods of  
Muslim Thinkers  
From Experience to  
Mystical Experience**

**Nadia Maftouni**



**London Academy of Iranian Studies  
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- *Thinking Methods of Muslim Thinkers  
From Experience to Mystical  
Experience*



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*To Abolfazl*

*The act or fact of love  
filled up well-nigh all of  
my life also your life  
along with every dove*



## **Preface**

My excursion into Muslim thinkers, by and large, has encountered Farabi's works. Some of my foregoing books endorse this claim: *Farabi, Imagination, and Artistic Creativity*, *Farabi and Conceptualization of Religious Arts*, *Farabi and Philosophy of Religious Arts*, and *The Ethics of Arts in Farabi*. For the most part, however, my contemplations on Farabi undergo comparing with the other Muslim thinkers like Ibn Sina, Suhrawardi, Mulla Sadra, to name a few. In *A Research on Philosophy of Science in Muslim Scientists* I have taken such an approach. And in some works, I have centered on other than Farabi, in particular on Suhrawardi, like *Negareha-ye Ishraqi* or *Ishraqi Images*. Looking across the breadth of Muslim thinkers' works, the development of thinking methods can seem fascinating. Throughout this book, I will try to view the trajectory of this development from forging its bedrock, i.e. mathematics, experience, and empirical method, to more sophisticated philosophical voices on art interweaving mystical experience and *Quranic* approaches.

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My current concern, for all that, is philosophical roots of economic decline. The introduction of a dichotomy in the taxonomy of philosophical areas of specialization in Iran has resulted in the relegation of what would elsewhere be considered the majority of philosophical disciplines. Most philosophical fields have, accordingly, not begun to gain a foothold in domestic academia. Crucially, one such area is economic philosophy, which due to its vital role in the daily livelihood of the average person is abnormally popular among the populace in industrialized countries. The uniquely pervasive influence of this philosophical discipline is, in turn, a consequence of its make-or-break impact on economic development in a country. Indeed, no country has had a successful economic overhaul without a philosophical one beforehand. Having arisen as the empirical implications of various theories of economic philosophy, schools of economics themselves have all been founded by philosophers. Thus, what we have been trying to do in Iran to no avail, as in many other stagnant models of development, is to upend the edifice of civilization, erecting the superstructure of economics before forging its philosophical bedrock.

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## **Introduction**

Throughout this book, the discussion on Muslim thinkers is positive in the sense that it merely described some part of the world as it is. Here is some brief information about Islam and its people.

### **Brief Information on Islam**

Islam is one of the Abrahamic or the Abrahamic religions that the other major ones are Judaism and Christianity.

Islam is a religion based on faith in one supreme God (Arabic: Allah). And every follower of Islam believes in Prophet Muhammad being the last messenger of God. Muslims should believe in all messengers of God.

*Quran* is the central religious text of Muslims which they believe to be a revelation from God.

Here is two verses from *Quran* entails believing in all prophets and God's messengers:

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Believers, believe in Allah and His Messenger (Muhammad), in the Book He has sent down to His Messenger, and in the Book He sent down before. Whosoever disbelieves in Allah, His angels, His Books, His Messengers, and the Last Day, has surely gone astray into far error.<sup>1</sup>

The Messenger believes in what has been sent down to him from His Lord, and so do the believers. Each believes in Allah and His Angels, His Books, and His Messengers, we do not differentiate between any one of His Messengers. They say: We hear and obey. (We ask) Your forgiveness Lord, and to You is the arrival.<sup>2</sup>

It deserves note that the *Quran* and Hadith deem sources of the Muslim thinkers, probably all of them to some extent. And our discussion continues on their thinking methods rather than their sources.

### Muslim Civilization

Civilization is a French word, first used by the French economist Anne Robert Jacques Turgot<sup>3</sup> in 1752, and first

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<sup>1</sup> 4:136.

<sup>2</sup> 2:285.

<sup>3</sup> Turgot was a French economist and statesman, who is called the French Adam Smith, born in 1728 in Paris, and died in 1781 in Paris.

published by Victor de Riqueti<sup>1</sup> four years later. As Ferguson puts it:

A civilization, as the etymology of the word suggests, revolve around its cities. ... But a city's laws (civil or otherwise) are as important as its walls; its constitution and customs – its inhabitants' manners (civil or otherwise) – as important as its palaces. Civilization is as much about scientists' laboratories as it is about artists' garrets. It is as much about forms of land tenure as it is about landscapes. The success of a civilization is measured not just in its aesthetic achievements but also, and surely more importantly, in the duration and quality of life of its citizens. And that quality of life has many dimensions, not all easily quantified.<sup>2</sup>

However, looking at cities and civilizations, we find eras and cultures where nations have excelled at one subject or another. There is a dawn of that era where they excel and then there is a peak, and once and again there is a dusk. What was going on in those civilizations to excel and then what happened while they dropped off?

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<sup>1</sup> Victor de Riqueti (1715-1789), Marquis de Mirabeau was a French economist of the Physiocratic school.

<sup>2</sup> Ferguson, *Civilization: The West and the Rest*, pp. 2-3.

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Human civilizations are effectively based upon thoughts and thinking methods. The revolutions in the world and changes out there are indebted to the changes in our way of thinking. During the Islamic Golden Age, between eighth and thirteenth centuries, the world embraced a variety of new ideas and opinions. Isolated regions of the world with different cultures were connected via the far-reaching Muslim trade networks.<sup>1</sup> The splendors of this Golden Age tempt us to delve into the thinking methods of Muslim thinkers who belonged to that era. I have singled out some of the most influential figures of different areas of thought and science: Kharazmi, Ibn al-Haitham, Farabi, and Suhrawardi.<sup>2</sup> The two former are scientist and the two latter are philosopher.

Kharazmi<sup>3</sup> is a profound figure of the third/ninth century. He had several influential books on mathematics which usually affects other sciences and improves their methods. Ibn al-Haitham is a famous scientist of the fifth/eleventh

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<sup>1</sup> Hobson, *The Eastern Origins of Western Civilization*, 29-30; Labib, "Capitalism in Medieval Islam", pp. 79-96.

<sup>2</sup> These figures save Ibn al-Haitham are mentioned in: Mojlum Khan, *The Muslim 100: The Lives, Thoughts and Achievements of the Most Influential Muslims in History*. For me, Ibn al-Haitham is a crucial scientist because of his empirical method, as will be explained in this book.

<sup>3</sup> Three names of Kharazmi, Farabi, and Suhrawardi are spelled here close to conventional spelling in Persian.

century who reckoned as a key scientist developing empirical method based on observation and experiment. Farabi as a philosopher living in the forth/tenth century sets out a socio-political plan for the virtuous city focusing primarily on reason and secondarily on art, literature, and rhetoric. The artists and rhetoricians of virtuous city, as the conveyors of religion, bring rational issues and intelligible happiness to people's mind through their imagination.<sup>1</sup> Suhravardi, known as the founder of Illumination school in the sixth/twelfth century, turned the discourse toward intuition and mystical experiment as the primary guide without giving up the discursive reason. He also exemplified the artist of Farabi's virtuous city and allegorized intelligible truth and happiness in his fictions.

Mystical experience and Sufism endured in Muhyiddin Ibn Arabi al-Andalusi, Jalal al-Din Rumi, Sheikh Safi al-Din Ardabili, just to name a few, among which Sheikh Safi's creed might considered a hallmark in virtue of his lasting socio-political impacts.

### **A Historical Remark**

The intuitive notion here is that not only Muslim civilization but human civilization owes this expansion of thought as

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<sup>1</sup> Frank in his article "Castrated Raphael: Friedrich Overbeck and Allegory" pointed it out: "True art reflects the divine" (pp. 87-98).

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well. All in all, historians pointed the influential role of Muslim figures out. In *Introduction to the History of Science*, for example, Gorge Sarton mentioned:

Medaevalists have given us an entirely false idea of the scientific thought of the Middle Ages, because of their insistence upon the least progressive elements and of their almost exclusive devotion to Western thought, when the greatest achievements were accomplished by Easterns. Thus did they succeed, not in destroying the popular coception of the Middle Ages as “Dark Ages,” but, on the contrary, in reinforcing it. The Middle Ages were dark indeed when most historians showed us only (with the exception of art) their darkest side; in fact, those ages were never so dark as our ignorance of them.<sup>1</sup>

Sarton suggested a chronology divided into periods of fifty years, allocating each one of them to a scientist as exemplar of that age.<sup>2</sup> That being the case, from 450 to 400 B.C., is regarded as the time of Plato.<sup>3</sup> The next ensuing period is

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<sup>1</sup> Sarton, *Introduction to the History of Science, Volume 1, from Homer to Omar Khayyam*. p. 16-17; see also Asadulla, *Islam vs. West: Fact or Fiction*, p. 61.

<sup>2</sup> Sarton, *Introduction to the History of Science, Volume 1, from Homer to Omar Khayyam*.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, p. 113.

the time of Aristotle.<sup>1</sup> And then follows the half-centuries of Euclid,<sup>2</sup> Archimedes,<sup>3</sup> just to name a few. From 600 to 700 A.D. is the Chinese century of Hsian Tsang and I Ching. Then from 700 A.D., the following seven half-centuries, there is a staggering period which is characterized in this way:

It will suffice here to evoke a few glorious names without contemporary equivalents in the West: Jabir ibn Haiyan, al-Kindi, al-Khwarizmi, al-Farghani, al-Razi, al-Masudi, al-Tabari, Thabit ibn Qurra, al-Battani, Hunain ibn Ishaq, Abul Qasim, al-Farabi, Ibrahim ibn Sinan, al-Biruni, Ibn Sina, Ibn Yunus, al-Karkhi, Abul Wafa, 'Ali ibn Abbas, Ibn al-Jazzar, Ibn al-Haitham, 'Ali Ibn 'Isa, al-Ghazali, al-Zarqali, Omar Khayyam! A magnificent array of names which it would not be difficult to extend. If anyone tells you that the Middle Ages were scientifically sterile, just quote these men to him, all of whom flourished within a relatively short period, between 750 and 1100.<sup>4</sup>

Muslims had realized the need of science, even Greek science, in order to establish their own culture and

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid, p. 125.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, p. 153.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, p. 169.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, pp. 16-17; see also Asadulla, *Islam Vs. West: Fact or Fiction*, p. 61.

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civilization. Reviewing the thinking methods of some historic figures, I just hint at the significance of each thought and method for constituting human civilization.

## Chapter I

### **Kharazmi: Mathematics**

For the time being, I set out my journey in thinking methods from mathematics and Kharazmi, considering math the cornerstone of reasoning.

Muhammad ibn Musa Kharazmi (c. 780-850 CE), Latinized as Algoritmi, was a Persian<sup>1</sup> scholar in the House of Wisdom<sup>2</sup> in Baghdad during the Abbasid Caliphate, under the leadership of Caliph al-Mamun, the son of the Caliph Harun al-Rashid.

He was a mathematician, astronomer, geographer, and cartographer as well as one of the first Directors of the

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<sup>1</sup> Persia of that time, as Ibn al-Nadim holds, Khwarezm in Greater Khurasan, modern Xorazm Region, Uzbekistan.

<sup>2</sup> The House of Wisdom or *Bait al-Hikmah*, a major intellectual center during the Islamic Golden Age, was founded by Caliph Harun al-Rashid and culminated under his son al-Ma'mun who is credited with its formal institution. See al-Khalili, *The House of Wisdom: How Arabic Science Saved Ancient Knowledge and Gave Us the Renaissance*, pp. 67-78.

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House of Wisdom in Baghdad.

He played a major role in the development of science, having very widely contributed to two major divisions of mathematics: arithmetic and algebra.<sup>1</sup>

### Numbering System and Arithmetic

The way of doing arithmetic based on Roman numerals was really inefficient and inelegant. To see why, consider multiplying 22 by 33; you get 726.

Once again try doing it with Roman numerals:

$$22 = XXII$$

$$66 = XXXXXXIIIIII$$

It is clumsy to write down the figures, let alone to calculate.

Kharazmi proved that there is an easier way of doing arithmetic. Translating the Indian system including zero of positional notation into Arabic, he set out his innovative idea in his book entitled *The Hindu Art of Reckoning (Kitab al-Jam' wa al-Tafriq be Hesab al-Hind)*.

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<sup>1</sup> Corona, Al-Khwarizmi the Inventor of Algebra; al-Khalili, Pathfinders: The Golden Age of Arabic Science, pp. 93-123.

The concept of zero as nothing existed has always been in human mind. Yet it had taken a long time to signify nothing as zero. For Kaplan, “the reasons reach down to the ways we turn thoughts and words into each other.”<sup>1</sup> The zero which has been applied to arithmetic is not the mere concept of nothing but the zero signified as zero of positional notation. Kharazmi was amongst the first to use zero as a placeholder in positional base notation.

It was the zero of positional notation which they had found in India and which was in Baghdad along with the other Hindu numerals by 773 AD, and which gave them such fluency in estimating, bargaining and reckoning - for while they may have used these numerals to record results arrived at on the counting board, they were calculating directly with them by around 825, when Al-Khowarizmi<sup>2</sup> wrote his work on arithmetic.<sup>3</sup>

Kharazmi went further than just bringing up the Indian system including zero into Arabic when he introduced the decimal positional number system. One of his greatest contributions was to provide a comprehensive guide to the numbering system which originated in India about 500 CE.

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<sup>1</sup> Kaplan, *The Nothing That Is: A Natural History of Zero*, p. 14.

<sup>2</sup> “Al-Khowarizmi” is consistent with Kaplan’s book.

<sup>3</sup> Kaplan, *The Nothing That Is: A Natural History of Zero*, p. 90.

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This system later called the Arabic system, Hindu-Arabic, or Arabic number system, employing 10 as the base and requiring 10 different numerals, the digits 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9; because it came to Western world from Kharazmi and became the basis for our modern numbers. It was first introduced to the Arabic-speaking world by al-Kindi, but it was Kharazmi who brought it into the mainstream with his book on the use of the Indian numerals named *Ketab fi Isti'mal al-'Adad al-Hindi* in which he stated the system clearly. Along with the decimal number system, English also gained another word, algorithm, for a logical mathematical process, based on the spelling of Kharazmi's name in the Latin title of his book, *Algoritmi de numero Indorum*.

### Algebra

Kharazmi also introduced a new word to the language, algebra, and a whole new branch of mathematics. Related to his work on algebra, Kharazmi wrote another book: *The Compendious Book on Calculation by Completion and Balancing (Al-Kitab al-Mukhtasar fi Hisab al-Jabr wa'l-Muqabalah)* in which worked with both what now is called linear equations and quadratic equations.<sup>1</sup> He effectively reduced every equation to its simplest possible form by a

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<sup>1</sup> Linear equations involve units without any squared figures while quadratic equations involve squares and square roots.

combination of two processes: *al-jabr* and *al-muqabalah*. *Al-jabr* means “bringing back,” referring to the process of moving a subtracted quantity to the other side of an equation while *al-muqabalah* means “comparing” and refers to subtract equal quantities from both sides of an equation.<sup>1</sup>

From another perspective, the practice of Islam demanded Muslims have some crucial information. So, Kharazmi had something applicable in mind, not just abstract theory. According to one report, he wrote his book on algebra in response to a request from the Caliph to present a simple method for calculating Islamic rules on inheritance, legacies and so on. In his introduction to the book in which he describes algebra, he says that the aim is to work with “what is easiest and most useful in mathematics, such as men constantly require in cases of inheritance, legacies, partition, lawsuits, and trade, and in all their dealings with one another, or when measuring lands, digging canals and making geometrical calculations.”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See Asadulla, *Islam Vs. West: Fact or Fiction*, pp. 62-63.

<sup>2</sup> Masood, *Science and Islam: A History*, pp. 139-145; on Kharazmi see also al-Khalili, *Pathfinders: The Golden Age of Arabic Science*, pp. 93-123; Deen, *Science Under Islam: Rise, Decline And Revival*, pp. 75-87; Alkhateeb, *Lost Islamic History: Reclaiming Muslim Civilization from the Past*, pp. 66-67.

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It is fair to say that today's mathematics owes Kharazmi as well as several other noteworthy names in the field. Abu Jafar Muhammad ibn Hasan Khazini (c. 900-971), for instance, was a Persian Muslim astronomer and mathematician from Khorasan that worked on astronomy and number theory.<sup>1</sup> And Omar Khayyam (c. 1048-1131) and his manuscript, *Algebra (Maqalah fi al-Jabra wa-al Muqabalah)*, are known for the solution of the various cases of the cubic equation. No doubt about it, all science and technology are founded on mathematics.

### Ghazali as a Turning Point?

When I speak of Kharazmi, all the while my mind flashes forward to Ghazali on whom there are controversial voices.

Abu Hamid Muhammad ibn Muhammad Ghazali (c. 1058–1111) is known to the Western medieval world as Algazelus or Algazel, constitutes a Persian theologian, jurist, philosopher, and mystic. Keeping abreast of knowledge in a variety of fields, Ghazali had an important influence on both Muslim philosophers and Christian medieval philosophers. Smith writes in her book *Al-Ghazali: The Mystic (A Study of the Life and Personality of Abu Hamid Muhammad al-Tusi al-Ghazali, together with an account of his Mystical*

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<sup>1</sup> Deen, *Science under Islam: Rise, Decline And Revival*, p. 80.

*Teaching and an estimate of his place in the History of Islamic Mysticism):*

It was at Toledo, also, that a School of Oriental Studies was started in 1250, and Arabic became a subject of study not only in Southern, but Northern Europe. There can be no doubt that al-Ghazali's works would be among the first to attract the attention of these European scholars. It has now been fully realised that Christian scholasticism and mediaeval Christian mysticism derived certain conceptions from Muslim writers, among whom al-Ghazali was included.

Then she emphasizes, "The greatest of these Christian writers who was influenced by al-Ghazali was St. Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274), who made a study of the Arabic writers and admitted his indebtedness to them, having studied at the University of Naples where the influence of Arab literature and culture was predominant at the time."<sup>1</sup>

Also included here are questions of Ghazali's negative role. As his thought came to override people's mind, the Islamic Golden Age drew to its close and ground to a halt. It raised questions about what happened in the twelfth century. Weinberg holds that Muslims fell under the retrogressive influence of Ghazali who argued against the very idea of laws of nature. Goldziher also focuses attention on the

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<sup>1</sup> Smith, *Al-Ghazali: The Mystic*, p. 220.

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negative role of Ghazali, namely bringing Islamic science to a screeching halt.<sup>1</sup>

In his speech entitled “Space as Culture”, Neil DeGrasse Tyson demonizes Ghazali as the villain of the Islamic Golden Age.<sup>2</sup> At first, He points out the mistake of US then-President George Bush:

President Bush, I don't remember where he said this, on the steps of the White House, in the rose garden at the Capitol,...., In an attempt to distinguish “we” from “they”, the terrorists who flew these planes into the buildings ... that went down in Pennsylvania and in Washington - to distinguish “we” from “they”, he loosely quotes a phrase out of the Bible by saying:

“Our God is the god who named the stars.”

Now, this is before I was on his rolodex, ok, because I could have helped him out there!

Then Tyson continues explaining the fact that two-thirds of stars which have names have Arabic names. He shows the list of names:

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<sup>1</sup> Numbers, *Galileo Goes to Jail and Other Myths about Science and Religion*, pp. 39-40.

<sup>2</sup> Tyson, *Space as Culture*.

## Chapter I: Kharazmi ♦ 29

While the constellations are Greek and Roman, the names are Arabic, alright? And the list just goes on! And on! And on! And on! And so where does this come from? ... How does this happen?! How you get stars named with Arabic names?!

Tyson maintains that it happens because there was a particularly fertile period we had the advances in like engineering, biology, medicine, and mathematics. And around that 300-year period the intellectual center of the world was Baghdad. Baghdad was completely open to all visitors, all travelers, Jews, Christians, doubters - which today we might call atheists - they were all there exchanging ideas.

Our numerals are called what? Arabic numerals! Did you ever stop and think about that!? You know ... in America, do we take pause at this? Why are they called Arabic numerals? Ok? They fully exploit the discovery of the zero; create a whole field called algebra, itself an Arabic word; algorithm is an Arabic word. All this is going on and it's all traceable, not to some long 1000-year tradition in Islam, it's traceable to this 300-year period, this 300-year period. And then... so they had naming rights! The most expensive beautifully... carved astrolabes come out of this period. There's a great collection of these at the Adler Planetarium in Chicago, if you ever want to check them out. So navigation, celestial ... all of this is traceable to this period.

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Notwithstanding Ghazali's devotees, Neil Tyson afterward attributes the fall of this period to Ghazali:

And so... something happened. ... 12th century kicks in, and then you get the influence of this scholar: al-Ghazali. And so out of his work, you get the philosophy that mathematics is the work of the devil. And nothing good can come of that philosophy. That combined with other sort of codifications, philosophical codifications of what Islam was and would become, the entire intellectual foundation of that enterprise collapsed and it has not recovered since. Over that period, all these books were translated into Arabic on a scale not seen since then.<sup>1</sup>

Tyson refers to *Deliverance from Error* or *al-Munqidh min al-Dalal* where Ghazali maintains the Divisions of the Philosophical Sciences, "Know that the sciences of the philosophers, with reference to the aim we have in mind, include six divisions: mathematical, logical, physical, metaphysical, political, and moral."<sup>2</sup> Such being the case, he deems mathematics a science of the philosophers. Ghazali submits that the mathematical sciences deal with arithmetic, geometry, and astronomy. He admits that nothing in these sciences entails denial or affirmation of religious matters.

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<sup>1</sup> Tyson, *Space as Culture*.

<sup>2</sup> Ghazali, *Deliverance from Error (al-Munqidh min al-Dalal)*, pp. 8-9.

On the contrary, they concern rigorously demonstrated facts which can in no wise be denied once they are known and understood. Ghazali nevertheless holds that two evils have been engendered from them, first of which is explained in such a way:

Whoever takes up these mathematical sciences marvels at the fine precision of their details and the clarity of their proofs. Because of that, he forms a high opinion of the philosophers and assumes that all their sciences have the same lucidity and apodeictic solidity as this science of mathematics. Moreover, he will have heard the talk of the town about their unbelief, their negative attitude, and their disdain for the Law. Therefore he ceases to believe out of pure conformism, asserting: "If religion were true, this would not have been unknown to these philosophers, given their precision in this science of mathematics." Thus, when he learns through hearsay of their unbelief and rejection of religion, he concludes that it is right to reject and disavow religion. How many a man have I seen who strayed from the path of truth on this pretext and for no other reason!

One may say to such a man: "A person skilled in one field is not necessarily skilled in every field. Thus a man skilled in jurisprudence and *kalam* is not necessarily skilled in medicine, nor is a man who is ignorant of the speculative and rational sciences necessarily ignorant of the science of syntax. On the contrary, in each field there are men who have

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reached in it a certain degree of skill and preeminence, although they may be quite stupid and ignorant about other things. What the ancients had to say about mathematical topics was apodeictic, whereas their views on metaphysical questions were conjectural. But this is known only to an experienced man who has made a thorough study of the matter.”

When such an argument is urged against one who has become an unbeliever out of mere conformism, he finds it unacceptable. Rather, caprice’s sway, vain passion, and love of appearing to be clever prompt him to persist in his high opinion of the philosophers with regard to all their sciences. This, then, is a very serious evil, and because of it one should warn off anyone who would embark upon the study of those mathematical sciences. For even though they do not pertain to the domain of religion, yet, since they are among the primary elements of the philosophers’ sciences, the student of mathematics will be insidiously affected by the sinister mischief of the philosophers. Rare, therefore, are those who study mathematics without losing their religion and throwing off the restraint of piety.

The second evil likely to follow from the study of the mathematical sciences, according to Ghazali, derives from the case of an ignorant friend of Islam who supposes that Islam must be championed by the refusal to every science attributed to the philosophers.

So he rejects all their sciences, claiming that they display ignorance and folly in them all. He even denies their statements about eclipses of the sun and the moon and asserts that their views are contrary to the revealed Law. When such an assertion reaches the ears of someone who knows those things through apodeictic demonstration, he does not doubt the validity of his proof, but rather believes that Islam is built on ignorance and the denial of apodeictic demonstration. So he becomes all the more enamored of philosophy and envenomed against Islam. Great indeed is the crime against religion committed by anyone who supposes that Islam is to be championed by the denial of these mathematical sciences. For the revealed Law, nowhere undertakes to deny or affirm these sciences, and the latter nowhere address themselves to religious matters.

The saying of Muhammad — God’s blessing and peace be upon him! — “The sun and moon are two of the signs of God Most High: they are not eclipsed for the death or life of any man; so when you see an eclipse, fly in fear to the mention of God Most High,” contains nothing demanding the denial of the science of calculation which apprises us of the course of the sun and the moon and their conjunction and their opposition in a specific way. As for his (alleged) saying — Peace be upon him! — “But when God manifests Himself to a thing, it humbles itself before Him,” this addition is not found at all in sound tradition. This, then, is the judgment to

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be made on the character of mathematics and its evil consequences.<sup>1</sup>

The issue remains unsettled. I do not claim to have a definite answer for the question at hand. Rather, Ghazali's influence on the Islamic Golden Age is a subject of continuing debate.<sup>2</sup> However Tyson's concern, *inter alia*, holds the attention. Looking out for the naming period in Islam that stopped and it never recovered, he worries over the dangers of some sort of thought in the United States of America.

And so why am I even going here? Because I'm trying to explain to you... the dangers here is that ... you fast forward to 21st century America, and ask: what influences do we, are we feeling now? ...Because ... the way of thinking about the natural world... Revelation replaced investigation. So fast forward to 21st century and what you find? You get things like this, ok? This is in America! So now ... What I find interesting is the level of passion that it requires to actually do this. You got to like pay for this, ok? And it means- a lot of people are pissed off at the Big Bang. They're pissed off at the Big Bang. At our museum in New York, the American Museum of Natural History, they come to the Big Bang

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<sup>1</sup> Ghazali, *Deliverance from Error (al-Munqidh min al-Dalal)*, pp. 8-9.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Saliba, *Islamic Science and Making of the European Renaissance*, pp. 233-234.

## Chapter I: Kharazmi ♦ 35

exhibit, and sometimes I don't feel like having that conversation. I say like: "Why don't you go to a hall of human biology first? And then come to us?" That's where we have sort of monkeys holding hands with people in skeleton forms and then they never make it back to the Big Bang! They're gone forever. Ok? So however egregious the Big Bang is, monkeys and people is a worse transgression apparently.<sup>1</sup>

The point to keep in mind is that the way in which you think assigns the way in which you act, and your thinking method is bound to determine the destiny of science and technology and the destiny of human civilization.

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<sup>1</sup> Tyson, *Space as Culture*.



## Chapter II

### Ibn al-Haitham: Experience and Scientific Method

**The Second Ptolemy.** Ibn al-Haitham is greatly regarded as one of the first theoretical physicists, and an early proponent of the concept that a hypothesis must be proved by experiment based on confirmable procedures or mathematical evidence.<sup>1</sup>

Abu Ali al-Hasan Ibn al-Hasan Ibn al-Haitham<sup>2</sup> (965-1040), also Latinized as Alhazen or Alhacen, was a great polymath scientist, mathematician, astronomer, and philosopher, who worked in Fatimid Cairo (al-Fatimiyyun) during the eleventh century under the ruler al-Hakim.<sup>3</sup> During the Late Middle Ages, in the Western Europe, Ibn al-Haitham was

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<sup>1</sup> Ackerman, *Distance Points: Essays in Theory and Renaissance Art and Architecture*.

<sup>2</sup> Another spelling: Ibn al-Haytham.

<sup>3</sup> Masood, *Science and Islam: A History*, pp. 121-122.

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considered *Ptolemaeus Secundus*, i.e. the Second Ptolemy, for his significant contributions in the field of astronomy.<sup>1</sup>

Ibn al-Haitham worked in a range of disciplines and made major contributions to the scientific method as well as optics, mathematics, meteorology<sup>2</sup>, and astronomy. He laid many of the foundations for integral calculus, which is used for calculating areas and volumes.<sup>3</sup> However by and large, he is known in the West for his works on optics and astronomy, including *The Book of Optics* (*Kitab al-Manazir*)<sup>4</sup>, *On the Spherical Burning Mirror*, *On the Light of the Moon*, and *Doubts Concerning Ptolemy*. In *Doubts Concerning Ptolemy* or *Shukuk 'ala Batlamyus*, he raised questions, criticizing elements of the Ptolemaic models.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Varvoglis, *History and Evolution of Concepts in Physics*, p. 24.

<sup>2</sup> The three most recognizable Islamic contributors to meteorology are Ibn al-Haitham, Ibn Sina (Avicenna 980-1037), and Ibn Rushd (Averroes 1126-1198).

<sup>3</sup> Masood, *Science and Islam: A History*, p. 145.

<sup>4</sup> Its Latin translation named *De Aspectibus*.

<sup>5</sup> As Masood pointed out, "He focused on Ptolemy's concept of the eccentric motions and equants, because he could not see how they could possibly be real. Real objects, he knew, simply did not move like that. A real sphere simply can't rotate off-centre and yet stay in the same place. Yet 'no motion exists in this world in any perceptible fashion,' Ibn al-Haitham argued, 'except the motion of [real] bodies.' There just had to be a central point about which everything rotated." Masood, *Science and Islam: A History*, p. 131.

## Empirical Method

Ibn al-Haitham constitutes an experimentalist who used his abilities to great effect when testing out the theories of the day.<sup>1</sup> Ibn al-Haitham's some main contribution to optics was in suggesting that the mathematics of optics, such as reflection and refraction, need to be consistent with what we know about the biology of the eye.

In addition, Ibn al-Haitham, as an empirical physicist, overhauled our understanding of eyesight. He is credited with describing an early imaging device (a *camera obscura*). His theory of vision was enormously prominent and much of our understanding of optics and light is based upon his groundbreaking discoveries.<sup>2</sup> Figuring out the mechanisms for sight and the nature of vision are amongst the oldest questions in the history of physics and philosophy. These were of interest to scientists from the Islamic world too, and by the time of the Translation Movement from Greek to Arabic, Ibn al-Haitham was conscious of the leading theories of the day.

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<sup>1</sup> Selin (ed.), "M", *Encyclopaedia of the History of Science, Technology, and Medicine in Non-Western Cultures*, vol.1, p. 1667.

<sup>2</sup> Masood, *Science and Islam: A History*, pp. 5, 84, 89-90.

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### The Theories of Vision

Perhaps the most popular of these theories of vision was what is now called the emission or extromission theory, whose proponents included Plato. Although our current understanding of vision did not come directly from Ibn al-Haitham, he was among the first to demonstrate critical flaws in the emission theory.<sup>1</sup> According to emission theory, the human eye is able to see objects because the eye releases a special kind of optical energy. This energy can be regarded as being a bit like electromagnetic radiation; it streams ahead out of the eye in pulses, shining a sort of light, which allows humans to see.

The emission theory wasn't without its critics, including Aristotle. The critics of emission theory hold that, instead of a light pulsing out of the eye, our vision is more likely to come from a light that is released from physical objects themselves, which then interacts with the eye. This theory is known as intromission, and is not far from our latest knowledge of vision.

Galen<sup>2</sup> (129 AD – c. 200/ c. 216) had yet another view: he

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<sup>1</sup> Masood, *Science and Islam: A History*, pp. 173-175.

<sup>2</sup> Aelius Galenus or Claudius Galenus, otherwise known as Galen of Pergamon, was the Greek physician, surgeon and philosopher in the Roman Empire.

## Chapter II: Ibn al-Haitham ◆ 41

shared the emission idea that the eye emits optical energy, but he also held that our ability to see happens when this energy combines with the surrounding air and with sunlight.<sup>1</sup>

Ibn Sina's critiques of emission were powerful and to a certain extent convincing. However, he was unable to significantly advance our understanding of vision. Instead, the job of taking the study of optics to new heights fell to Ibn al-Haitham. He began his criticism of emission by describing what happens when people are exposed to bright lights. For example, anyone who tries to look directly at the sun feels pain as do those who try to look at the sun's reflection in a mirror. No matter what the light source, the effect of bright lights was always the same. This suggested to Ibn al-Haitham that light entering into the eye from an external source had some role in eyesight.

Furthermore, he argued, even provided we accepted Galen's view, holding that the eye released a visual energy which interacts with the air, the result of this interaction would need to flow back into the eye so that vision could be registered by the observer's brain. This confirmed even provided we accept emission, some form of intromission would be needed for the eye to be able to see.

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<sup>1</sup> Masood, *Science and Islam: A History*, pp. 170-171.

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To try his ideas further, Ibn al-Haitham began to experiment with refraction, which is the bending of light as it passes from one medium to another. According to Ibn al-Haitham, provided vision is what happens when light passes from an object and into the eye, it is likely to bend once it enters the eye. This refracted light could lead to a distorted image, so Ibn al-Haitham implemented many tests to see if it was possible for light to transfer from one medium to another without being bent.

The crucial notion is that the idea that light travels through transparent bodies in straight lines confirmed by Ibn al-Haitham just after years of effort. His demonstration of the theory was to place a straight stick or taut thread next to the light beam to prove that light goes in a straight line.<sup>1</sup>

He explained his method presenting the problem: “How does light travel through transparent bodies? Light travel through transparent bodies in straight lines... We have explained this exhaustively in our *Book of optics*. But let us now mention something to prove this convincingly.” He asserted the fact that light goes in straight lines is clearly observable in the lights entering into dark rooms through holes. And the entering light will be perspicuously

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<sup>1</sup> Guimaraes, *Research Anyone Can Do It*, p. 105; Sambursky, *Physical Thought from the Presocratics to the Quantum Physicists*, p. 136.

## Chapter II: Ibn al-Haitham ◆ 43

observable in the dust which fills the air.<sup>1</sup>

By dint of this manner, Ibn al-Haitham constitutes one of the key figures in the development of the scientific method.<sup>2</sup> The central theme in scientific method is that all evidence must be empirical. In scientific method the word empirical points to the use of working hypothesis that can be tested using observation and experiment.<sup>3</sup>

Ibn al-Haitham used experimentation to support most of the statements in his *Book of Optics* and grounded his theories of vision, light and color, as well as his research in catoptrics and dioptrics. In effect, he combined observation, experiment and rational argument to support his intromission theory of vision, in which rays of light are emitted from objects rather than from the eyes. He used similar demonstrations to show that the ancient emission theory of eyesight supported by Ptolemy and Euclid, and the ancient intromission theory supported by Aristotle, were both wrong.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Guimaraes, *Research Anyone Can Do It*, pp. 102, 105.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, p. 102.

<sup>3</sup> Pickett, "Empirical", *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, p. 585.

<sup>4</sup> Three century later, Kamal al-Din al-Farisi (d. c. 1320) wrote *Kitab Tanqih al-Manazir (The Revision of Optics)*, revising Ibn al-Haitham's views.

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### Induction

Ibn al-Haitham also explained the role of induction in syllogism, and criticized Aristotle for his lack of contribution to the method of induction, which Ibn al-Haitham regarded as superior to syllogism, and he considered induction to be the basic requirement for true scientific research.<sup>1</sup>

Rashed points out that Ibn al-Haitham may have been the first scientist to adopt a form of positivism in his approach. Ibn al-Haitham wrote that “we do not go beyond experience, and we cannot be content to use pure concepts in investigating natural phenomena,” and that the understanding of these cannot be acquired without mathematics. After assuming that light is a material substance, he does not further discuss its nature but confines his investigations to the diffusion and propagation of light. The only properties of light he takes into account are those treatable by geometry and verifiable by experiment.<sup>2</sup>

Ibn al-Haitham explained his method himself, saying: “Whosoever seeks the truth will not proceed by studying the writings of his predecessors and by simply accepting his

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<sup>1</sup> Plott, *Global History of Philosophy Vol. 4: Study of Period of Scholasticism (Pt. 1) (800-1150 A.D.)*, p. 462.

<sup>2</sup> Rashed, "The Celestial Kinematics of Ibn al-Haitham", p. 19.

## Chapter II: Ibn al-Haitham ♦ 45

own good opinion of them. Whosoever studies works of science must, if he wants to find the truth, transform himself into a critic of everything he reads. He must examine tests and explanations with the greatest precision and question them from all angles and aspects.”<sup>1</sup>

### Historians’ Remarks

George Sarton considered Ibn al-Haitham “the greatest Muslim physicist and one of the greatest students of optics of all times.”<sup>2</sup>

In *Theories of Vision from Al-Kindi to Kepler* another science historian said: “Alhazen was undoubtedly the most significant figure in the history of optics between antiquity and the seventeenth century.”<sup>3</sup>

Of the many sources describing Ibn al-Haitham as the father of modern optics, the UNESCO mentions:<sup>4</sup> “One name stands out as that of a rare genius in physical research: Abu

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<sup>1</sup> Masood, *Science and Islam: A History*, p. 169.

<sup>2</sup> Sarton, *Introduction to the History of Science*, p. 721.

<sup>3</sup> Lindberg, *Theories of Vision: from al-Kindi to Kepler*, p. 58.

<sup>4</sup> UNESCO, *Impact of Science on Society*, p. 140.

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Ali Al-Hasan Ibn Al-Haitham of Basrah, without question the father of modern optics.”<sup>1</sup>

No doubt Biruni (973-1048) and Ibn Sina (980-1073) are also landmarks in the history of the subject, yet I confine my review to the above-mentioned pioneers.

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<sup>1</sup> In addition to optics and the scientific method, he had some other contributions to world civilization. Falco holds “Impressive and accurate as that characterization is, it significantly understates the impact that al-Haitham had on areas as wide-ranging as the theology, literature, art, and science of Europe.” See Falco, “Ibn al-Haitham and the origins of computerized image analysis.”

## Chapter III

### Farabi: Philart Approach in Theory

Abu Nasr Muhammad ibn Muhammad Farabi (c. 872-950), known in the West as Alfarabius is regarded as the Second Teacher after Aristotle who is entitled the First Teacher, mostly in Islamic-Arabic philosophical tradition.<sup>1</sup> He was a renowned philosopher having a variety of writings in the fields of metaphysics, political philosophy, jurisprudence, ethics, logic, mathematics, and cosmology. He was also a musician and music scholar.

Farabi impressed outstanding philosophers like Ibn Sina and Maimonides<sup>2</sup>. Moreover, he is credited with his treatises and commentaries on the original Greek texts during The

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<sup>1</sup> López, Xavier, “Al-Farabi’s Psychology and Epistemology”; a remark: the phrase of the article is “known in the Arabic philosophical tradition as the Second Master (*al-mu‘allim al-thānī*) which we changed to “Islamic-Arabic philosophical tradition.”

<sup>2</sup> Moses Ben Maimon (1135-1204), Jewish philosopher, theologian, jurist, and physician who lived in Spain, author of *Guide to the Perplexed*.

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Middle Ages.<sup>1</sup>

However, what compels me to single out Farabi is significance of imagination and art besides reason in his philosophy. In this section, I try to flesh out this notion.

Farabi planned ahead for a virtuous city with five parts: “the most virtuous or excellent, the eloquents, the assessors or measurers, the combatants, and the wealthy.”<sup>2</sup> Farabi himself interpreted these five parts. The first part, called the most excellent, are the wise, the men of practical wisdom and decision makers in great affairs. The next and the second part, named the eloquents, are the conveyors of religion who include the rhetoricians, the eloquent, the poets, the musicians, the writers and the like, belonging to their number. The third part, called the measurers, includes the accountants, geometers, physicians, astronomers, to name a few. The forth part, the combatants, are the army, watchmen, margraves, and the like, considered with them. The fifth part and the last, named the wealthy, are the obtainers of riches in the city, such as the farmers, herdsmen, merchants, and so forth.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> On this point see Iskandar, “Review of F. W. Zimmermann 'Al-Farabi's Commentary and Short Treatise on Aristotle's De Interpretatione'”, p. 183.

<sup>2</sup> Farabi, *Fusul Muntaza'ah*, pp. 54-55.

<sup>3</sup> Farabi, *Fusul Muntaza'ah*, p. 55.

In the virtuous city, Farabi regarded the poets, the rhetoricians, the musicians, the writers and the like as the bearers of religion, locating them in the second position of the city. Why are they settled in the second stage of virtuous city? What are they doing there? And what does it mean to bear the religion? The answers depend on the features and functions of imagination and art according to Farabi.

Art in its broader account includes literature. That being the case, artist could be applied to the poets, the musicians, the writers and the like. Farabi speaks of art in general, making references to the particular branches of art, such as poetry, music, singing and visual art.<sup>1</sup> He gives an account of art including its function in virtuous city or utopia.<sup>2</sup> As will be shown the utopian artist should represent intelligible truth and rational happiness through the use of imaginary forms. Such type of artist would be called philartist or sciartist. Farabi's artist who generates some sort of connection between philosophy and art would be called a philartist or sciartist.<sup>3</sup> Before proceeding, I will give a more precise

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<sup>1</sup> Farabi, *Kitab al-Musiqi al-Kabir*, pp. 13, 19- 24, 554, 555, 559.

<sup>2</sup> Farabi, *Fusul Muntaza'ah*, p. 55.

<sup>3</sup> Philosophy is regarded as a branch of science in the broader concept, allowing us to call philart sciart.

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account of sciart or scientart for purposes of clarification and contrast.<sup>1</sup>

### **Scientart, Bilateral Relations between Science and Art**

Scientart refers to bilateral relations between art and science. I try to work out the conception of scientart in three types of scientartists: artistically-inclined scientists, science-minded artists, and those equally involved in both artistic and scientific activities.

To more clearly define “scientart”, there are two concepts we should be clear about from start: science and art. Science covers different disciplines such as physics, metaphysics, economics, and medicine. And art, in this analysis, includes literature and so many different types of art: painting, sculpture, architecture, music, poetry, theatre, film, photography, conceptual art, and printmaking. McCleese says: “Most people think of art as paintings hanging on museum walls. However, art includes literature, sculptures, paintings, murals, and probably whatever else artists want to present as art.”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> On the purposes of definition see Qaramaleki, *Methodology of Religious Studies*, pp. 157-178.

<sup>2</sup><http://coursesite.uhcl.edu/HSH/Whitec/LITR/5439utopia/models/finals/f2013/f13E2McCleese.htm> 6/12/2015.

As Copley holds, both art and science, in spite of their divergences, are brought about by creative process.<sup>1</sup> In this process, they have bilateral services to each other. Science may assist art with enriching artworks, as I explain later in philosophical fictions. Moreover, in some media, such as computer graphics, holography, and space art science have been applied for the creation of art.<sup>2</sup>

Art, on the other hand, can assist science with presenting scientific issues to the public as well as motivating their creativity. Many scientific improvements inspired by sci-fi.

In subsequent sections, I try to distinguish three approaches among scientartists, analyzing the issue in greater detail: artistically-inclined scientists, science-minded artists, and equally involved in both artistic and scientific activities, albeit I do not claim distinct borders between them.<sup>3</sup>

### **1. Artistically-inclined Scientists**

Artistically-inclined scientists are the scientists who inclined

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<sup>1</sup> Copely, “On Knowledge in Art and Science”, p. 213.

<sup>2</sup> Garfield, “Art and Science”, pp. 62-64.

<sup>3</sup> It is mentioned in *SciArt Center Community*: “Whether you're a science-minded artist or an artistically-inclined scientist (or both!), for our SciArt membership you will be added to our exclusive mailing list...” (<http://www.sciartcenter.org> 5/12/2015)

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to artists. For example, they protect artists or perform art programs. James Webb, who directed the start-up of the NASA Art Program, says:

Important events can be interpreted by artists to provide unique insight into significant aspects of our history-making advances into space. An artistic record of this nation's program of space exploration will have great value for future generations and may make a significant contribution to the history of American art.<sup>1</sup>

### 2. Science-minded Artists

Science-minded artist can be used to refer to artists inspired by scientific issues or those inspire scientists. For instance, there are scientific issues in theater,<sup>2</sup> fiction,<sup>3</sup> or poetry.<sup>4</sup> As I mentioned earlier, science includes, in this concept, all academic disciplines form humanities and social sciences to natural sciences. And art includes literature, music, painting etc.

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<sup>1</sup> Webb, International Space Hall of Fame: New Mexico Museum of Space History: Inductee Profile of James Webb, 4/12/ 2015.

<sup>2</sup> Grünzweig, *The Sciartist: Carl Djerassi's Science-in-Literature Transatlantic and Interdisciplinary Context*, pp. 61-132.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 133-154.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 155-182.

**Artists inspired by science.** In some cases science is front and center and artists are following it. In other words, scientists are inspiring artists to produce quasi-scientific artworks.

Joyce Yamade describes inspiring by science:

Science is the lens through which I understand the world, particularly paleontology and evolutionary biology. The writer who most significantly shaped my view of life was Stephen Jay Gould, whose essays I greatly miss. Often without conscious intent, my paintings reflect natural history and frequently contain oblique references to whatever I am reading.<sup>1</sup>

The NASA Art Program produced a collection of more than 2,000 artworks in an effort to present NASA's cutting-edge research to the public in a way more accessible than complex scientific reports. Artists from many different disciplines and backgrounds chronicled NASA's missions.

Quasi-scientific arts could be seen in every movie on Netflix, in the 1950s, their rockets had fins. And in that era, the V2 rocket shaped was the rocket in every sci-fi story told. As Tyson put it, "Our presence in space is affecting not

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.sciartcenter.org/un-natural-nature-virtual-exhibit.html>  
5/12/2015.

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only the engineers and the mathematicians and the scientists, it's affecting the creative dimension of that we call culture."<sup>1</sup> Steve Miller's mixed media can be regarded as a quasi-scientific artwork. He says:

This work is a product of research at the Large Hadron Collider at CERN, Switzerland. The text is from the chalkboards of the Theory Group at CERN with the background images taken inside the tunnels and detectors of the Large Hadron Collider.<sup>2</sup>

Another example would be seen in *Art Meets Science* exhibits.<sup>3</sup> In Washington University's Hope Center for Neurological Disorders, Michael Eastman, a contemporary photographic artist, transformed scientific images into abstract works of art.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, the MDI Biological Laboratory's fifth annual *Art Meets Science* exhibit featured science-inspired work by artists.

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<sup>1</sup> "The headlines that were writ large over that era had built into them the fact that innovation created those headlines. Innovation brought to you by an ambitious community of scientists, technologists, engineers and mathematicians." (Tyson, *Space as Culture*).

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.sciartcenter.org/un-natural-nature-virtual-exhibit.html>  
5/12/2015.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.newscientist.com/blogs/culturelab/2010/05/art-meets-science-aesthetics-politics-and-metaphysics.html>.

<sup>4</sup> <https://magazine.wustl.edu/2012/june/Pages/WhereArtMeetsScience.aspx>.

Some of artists inspired by science focus attention on nature and natural world,<sup>1</sup> the nature of gravity, environmental science, climate change, and geomorphology,<sup>2</sup> biology, evolution, neurobiology and applied mathematics, quantum physics, and energy.<sup>3</sup>

As an example for metaphysics, one on SciArt Center says about their collage:

My artwork is map collage that offers the viewer a combination of imaginary landscapes with mystical, biblical, scientific and ecological themes. The visual description of a three-dimensional world on a flat plane is conjoined with the depiction of the metaphysical.<sup>4</sup>

Buntaine, regarding herself as a science-based artist, limited sciart to this sort of sciart:<sup>5</sup> “It has only been for the past few decades, however, that artists have turned their creative gaze

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.sciartcenter.org/un-natural-nature-virtual-exhibit.html> 5/12/2015.

<sup>2</sup> Buntaine, Founder of SciArt Center in America & Editor-in-Chief, <http://www.sciartinamerica.com>.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.sciartcenter.org/un-natural-nature-virtual-exhibit.html> 5/12/2015.

<sup>4</sup> Anna Fine Foer, <http://www.sciartcenter.org/the-new-unconscious.html>.

<sup>5</sup> She says science-based art has a strong presence in the UK and Berlin contemporary art scenes, but the SciArt community in the United States is barely established and SciArt remains scattered in America.

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towards the sciences as their sole source of artistic information, inspiration, and conceptualization.”<sup>1</sup>

**Artists inspire scientists.** Sometimes, artists captivate and inspire scientists. Jules Verne’s *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea* could be counted as a quasi-scientific artwork which fascinated American inventor Simon Lake, Known as the father of the modern submarine.

Igor Sikorsky, inventor of the modern helicopter, was inspired by a Verne book, *Clipper of the Clouds*. “Anything that one man can imagine, another man can make real.” Sikorsky often quoted from Verne.

Robert H. Goddard, who built the first liquid-fueled rocket, became captivated with spaceflight after reading an 1898 newspaper serialization of H.G. Wells’ classic novel about a Martian invasion, *War of the Worlds*, and the concept of interplanetary flight gripped his imagination.

In 1914, H.G. Wells published a novel, *The World Set Free*, imagining the emergence of artificial atomic energy by 1933, followed by a devastating world war and the eventual emergence of a peaceful global government. Physicist Leo Szilard was inspired to solve the problem of creating a nuclear chain reaction when read the novel.

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<sup>1</sup> Buntaine, <http://www.sciartinamerica.com/about.html>.

In the 1930s and '40s, Edward Elmer Smith with his “Lensmen” novels chronicled the adventures of a futuristic Galactic Patrol. Sci-fi editor James W. Campbell wrote to Smith that the Directrix, a command ship featured in his series, had inspired a US naval officer to introduce the concept of combat information centers aboard warships.<sup>1</sup>

There are many inventions like the internet, organ transplants, the tablet computer, smartwatches, voice-controlled robots, Credit cards, Chess-playing computers, and Mobile phones were inspired by stories by the likes Jules Verne, Mary Shelley, Mark Twain and Arthur C. Clarke.

### **3. Scientartists Involving both Artistic and Scientific Approaches**

Some artworks are equally involving both artistic and scientific aspects. As an example, *The Hellstrom Chronicle*, an American film released in 1971, commingling elements of documentary and science fiction to present a gripping satirical depiction of the Darwinian struggle for survival between humans and insects.

In the field of metaphysics, some authors describe

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/ten-inventions-inspired-by-science-fiction-128080674/?no-ist> 24/12/2015.

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philosophical issues with stories like *Alive Son of Awake*<sup>1</sup> and dramas like “Rattlesnake”<sup>2</sup>, and “Intuition”.<sup>3</sup> Wartenberg in his article “Illustrating philosophy: Mel Bochner’s Wittgenstein drawings” dealt with illustrating the abstract claims of philosophy.<sup>4</sup>

Such thinkers are philosopher as well as artist. Suhrawardi, known as the founder of the illumination school, do this way in his ten symbolic treatises: “A Tale of Occidental Exile”, “On the Reality of Love”, “The Red Intellect”, “The Simurgh’s Shrill Cry”, “The Sound of Gabriel’s Wing”, “A Day with a Group of Sufis”, “On the State of Childhood”, “The Language of the Ants”, “The Towers”, and “The Treatise of the Birds”.<sup>5</sup>

For instance, the Avicevian philosophical psychology, including the five internal and the five external senses,<sup>6</sup> is allegorized in “The Towers”, “A Tale of Occidental Exile”,

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<sup>1</sup> Ibn Tufail, *Alive Son of Awake: Hayy Ibn Yaqzan*.

<sup>2</sup> See in: Maftouni, *Farabi and the Philosophy of Religious Arts*, pp. 174-204.

<sup>3</sup> See Nouri, *The Manner of Infatuation*, pp. 169-201.

<sup>4</sup> Wartenberg, “Illustrating Philosophy: Mel Bochner’s Wittgenstein Drawings”, pp. 233-248.

<sup>5</sup> Suhrawardi, *The Philosophical Allegories and Mystical Treatises*.

<sup>6</sup> Copeland and Struck, *The Cambridge Companion to Allegory*, pp. 91-92.

“The Simurgh’s ShriII Cry”, “The Red Intellect”, and “On the Reality of Love”. Ten towers, ten graves, ten flyers, ten wardens, five chambers and five gates are symbols for ten senses, respectively.

The allegory of ten towers is seen in treatise on “The Towers”.<sup>1</sup> The first five towers refer to the five external senses or five traditionally recognized methods of perception: sight, sound, touch, smell, and taste.

The five internal senses are explained by analogy with the second five towers, which for Reichert undertake these activities: the first of them corresponds to the sensorium,<sup>2</sup> the second to the representative imagination, the third to the estimative capacity of the brain, the ninth (the fourth interior sense) to the active imagination (in the *Ishraqi* and Avicennian sense) and the tenth (the fifth interior sense) to

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<sup>1</sup> This treatise, otherwise known as “al-Kalimat al-Dhawqiya” and “The Risalat al-Abraj”, is controversial. Walbridge says of it: “Its authenticity has been questioned by some modern scholars (See Pourjavady N. Masala Intisaab Risaalat al-Abraj be Shaykh Ishraq // idem. *Ishraq wa Irfan: Maqala-ha wa Naqd-ha*. Tehran: Markaz-e Nashr-e Danishgahi, 2001, pp. 95–113). However, the manuscripts seem to consistently attribute it to Suhrawardi, so I see no justification for questioning its authenticity. At any rate, Musannifak thought it was Suhrawardi’s.” (Walbridge, “The Devotional and Occult Works of Suhrawardi the Illuminationist”, p.96)

<sup>2</sup> A sensorium (plural: sensoria) is the sum of an organism’s perception, the “seat of sensation” where it experiences and interprets the environments within which it lives. (See “Sensorium.” *Oxford English Dictionary*.)

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the function of memory.<sup>1</sup>

Suhravardi uses many other allegories in his writings such as the allegory of the Ptolemaic system of heavenly spheres versus ten intellects in “The Sound of Gabriel’s Wing”.<sup>2</sup> This is an amazing study which I will examine later on.

### Conclusion

Scientart might be defined as interaction between the worlds of art and science. Three types of these interactions might be considered: artistically-inclined scientific activities, science-minded artistic activities, and intertwined artistic and scientific activities.

In this account, different disciplines such as physics, metaphysics, economics, and medicine could be counted as science. Furthermore, we consider literature as art.

The artistically-inclined science can be seen in scientists leading an art program, such as what happened in the artists’ program to document NASA missions. Science-minded art could be regarded in the artworks include scientific themes.

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<sup>1</sup> Reichert, *Between Courtly Literature and al-Andaluz: Oriental Symbolism and Influences*, p. 108.

<sup>2</sup> Suhravardi, *The Philosophical Allegories and Mystical Treatises*, p. 11; See also Copeland and Struck, *The Cambridge Companion to Allegory*, pp. 91-92.

The science-minded artwork could be inspired by science, such as the collection of more than 2,000 artworks in NASA Art Program, or could inspire scientists like Jules Verne's books and Edward Elmer Smith's novels.

An instant of intertwined artistic and scientific activities could be seen in the allegorical treatises, describing philosophical subjects and rational issues in fictions.

### **Farabi's Account of Imagination and Art**

After my analytical account of sciart, I continue with Farabi's account of imagination and art. He holds that imagination has three main activities; it keeps sensory forms; it analyzes and synthesizes sensory forms; and it uses allegories and embodiment. Among the different faculties of the soul, only the imagination is able to portray the sensible and the intelligible. It can even depict the intelligible truths of utter perfection, such as the prime cause and abstract beings. Of course, it embodies these truths using the most exalted and most perfect sensible forms, beautiful and stunning things. It also embodies the imperfect intelligible affairs through the use of ugly and imperfect sensible forms.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Farabi, *Ara' Ahl al-Madinah al-Fazilah wa Muzddatiha*, pp. 84, 95, 106-107.

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Farabi defines art in general as a taste and a talent, combined with an intelligible element, reflecting concepts and imaginings that exist within the soul. When describing the characteristics of a poem, he says, “Poetic speech consists of words that excite a mood in the audience, or demonstrate something higher than what it is or below the reality.” He stresses that when we listen to poetic words our imagination creates sensations so real that they resemble our feelings when we look at the objects.<sup>1</sup> In this account, he emphasizes two elements: its ability to excite emotions, and its tendency to create strong responses in the imagination.

Elsewhere he divides the arts of singing, music, and poetry into six types: three of these are desirable, and the other three are not. The first type described as the highest form, aims at improving the faculty of reason, as well as thoughts and actions. It aims to produce happiness, glorifying the virtues; it leads the mind to consider divine actions. The second type of art attempts to moderate radical qualities and attitudes: these include anger, egotism, possessiveness, acquisitiveness, and the like. The third type of desirable art aims at the opposite qualities: that is, it tries to do away with apathy and feebleness. This kind of art tries to correct these deficiencies, to moderate lassitude, fear, grief, etc. The three kinds of undesirable arts are of the opposite of the three

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<sup>1</sup> Farabi, *Ihsa' al-Ulum*, pp. 66-67.

ones, working to corrupt thoughts, and produce immoderate, sensual qualities and moods.<sup>1</sup> In short, when describing the desirable arts, Farabi centers on those that produce goodness and happiness in the imagination, as well as those that moderate the emotions.

Dealing with the motives for multiple branches of art like singing and playing music, images, statues, and paintings, he revolves around four kinds; to create comfort and pleasure, and to forget their fatigue and the passage of time; to create emotions like satisfaction, affection, anger, fear, and the like; to create imaginary forms; to enable humans to understand the meaning of the words that accompany the notes of the song.<sup>2</sup>

To sum up, Farabi focuses on constituents such as imagination, understanding the intelligible, and emotions. Moreover, people come to understand intelligible truths through the use of their imagination. And feelings and emotions often originates in their imagination.

According to Farabi, final happiness is the state in which a human being successfully perceives the intelligible, and achieves the nearest possible status to the Active Intellect.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Farabi, *Fusul Muntaza'ah*, pp. 53-54.

<sup>2</sup> Farabi, *Kitab al-Musiqi al-Kabir*, pp. 13, 19-24, 554, 555, 559.

<sup>3</sup> Farabi, *Risalah fi al-Aql*, p. 31.

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But there are two sorts of perceiving: one can perceive the essence of something and imagine it in its true form, or one can imagine an idea, and all the things similar to it.<sup>1</sup> It is not feasible, however, to speak of or bring into action the particular details of that which is non-sensible such as the ten intellects. Although such things cannot be felt, we can imagine them through analogy, parallelism, or allegory.<sup>2</sup> In addition, the majority of people are not used to reasoning about the intelligible. In most people, the soul is attracted to the imagination, and the imagination controls the self. Thus, the proper method for educating the public on such affairs is through transferring images and resemblances into their minds through the imagination.<sup>3</sup>

Furthermore, Farabi reiterates that the public is not to follow the intelligible. Human actions are often guided by the imagination, even though the imagination may be in conflict with one's knowledge, or be subject to one's suspicions.<sup>4</sup> In some cases, one's beliefs are actually contrary to what one imagines. For instance, when a person merely imagines something frightening, he or she feels a sense of horror as if

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<sup>1</sup> Farabi, *Al-Siyasah al-Madaniyah*, pp. 225.

<sup>2</sup> Farabi, *Kitab al-Musiqi al-Kabir*, p. 43.

<sup>3</sup> Farabi, *Al-Siyasah al-Madaniyah*, p. 225.

<sup>4</sup> Farabi, *Al-Mantiqiyat*, vol. 1, p. 502.

the idea were real.<sup>1</sup> People are afraid to sleep next to a corpse, even though we know that dead bodies are harmless.

Eventually, in order to make people approach happiness, it is necessary to convey intelligible happiness through the use of imagination.

This *devoir* initially is undertaken by the Prophet, who has himself been linked to the Active Intellect, and has thus received all facts in both intelligible and imaginary forms. In Farabi's utopia, some artists by and large do this way. The utopia is governed by five kinds of wise leaders. The first section is composed of the sages, as well as those who are clear-sighted in important affairs.<sup>2</sup> The ultimate leader of the utopia, however, is none other than the prophet.<sup>3</sup> In second place, there are the "religion-conveyers" including orators, missionaries, poets, singers, writers, to name a few.<sup>4</sup> Farabi places these poets, singers and the like, all of whom he refers to as artists, immediately after the prophet, and next in importance to orators and religious missionaries.

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<sup>1</sup> Farabi, *Fusul Muntaza'ah*, pp. 52-53.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, p. 55.

<sup>3</sup> Farabi, *Al-Millah wa Nusus Ukhra*, p. 44.

<sup>4</sup> Farabi, *Fusul Muntaza'ah*, p. 55.

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Among the elements mentioned in Farabi's discussion of art, imagination and the comprehension of the intelligible are most useful in explaining the task of the utopian artist. As mentioned above, believes that the most exalted art is in the kind that uses imaginary forms to lead the people to imagine divine thoughts and actions. Moreover, desirable art, by nourishing the imagination, works to moderate extremes of emotions.

According to Farabi's theory of the imagination, there is a relation between the imagination and the intellectual faculty. The imaginary faculties are able to access the intelligible through imaginary and sensory forms. The ultimate goal of the utopian rulers is to provide the public with intelligible happiness. The prophet, through revelation, perceives all the truths, both rationally and in his imagination. He has the ability to perceive the essence of truths; in addition, he realizes the allegories through which he can describe these truths.

But since intellectual perception of true happiness is not possible for the public, allegories are provided that will appeal to the peoples' imaginary faculties.

The utopian artist produces intelligible happiness through creating sensory and imaginary forms. So he/she performs

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an activity similar to that of the prophet.<sup>1</sup> Such artist would be called “sciartist” or, in the narrower sense of the term, “philartist”.

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<sup>1</sup> See also Maftouni, “Art as It Is, and Art as It Should Be: an Analytical Study of Farabi”, pp. 239-248.



## **Chapter IV**

### **Mystical Experience**

Mysticism has a range of formal moguls like Sheikh Shahab al-Din Suhrawardi, Sheikh Muhyiddin Ibn Arabi al-Andalusi, Jalal al-Din Rumi, and Sheikh Safi al-Din Ardabili. In the bargain, comprises mysticism many literary figures like Ferdowsi and Sa'di, in the broader sense.<sup>1</sup> Reviewing some figures of mysticism, I single out Suhrawardi due to his philart approach and develop his notions in greater detail.

#### **Suhrawardi: Mystic and Philartist**

Shahab ad-Din Yahya Suhrawardi (1154-1191) was a Persian philosopher and the founder of the school of Illumination, an important school in Islamic philosophy and mysticism. Being affected by the sixth/twelfth-century anti-

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<sup>1</sup> For instance see Safavi, G., "Mysticism of Ferdowsi's Shahnameh: An International Epic, Mystical and Sagacious Persian Masterpiece", pp. 321-332; Nazari, "Sa'di va Irfan", pp. 19-36.

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Avicennan current which took its cue from Ghazali's *Incoherence of the Philosophers* (*Tahafut al-falasifa*), the value of reason decreased in Suhravardi's thought.<sup>1</sup>

Suhravardi set the reason after intuition, embodying the philartist of Farabi's virtuous city and symbolizing intelligible happiness and rational truth in his mystical treatises. Fleshing complicated philosophical issues on by allegory, he might be considered a philartist.<sup>2</sup> Metaphysics in literature emerged in full force in his fictions and the works of Ibn Sina and Ibn Tufail (1105-1185).<sup>3</sup> The theory have I set out from Farabi's works is realized, by and large, in Avicenna, Ibn Tufail, and Suhravardi. That being the case, these three sages would constitute philartist.

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<sup>1</sup> See also Shihadeh, "A Post-Ghazalian Critic of Avicenna: Ibn Ghailan al-Balkhi on the Materia Medica of the Canon of Medicine", pp. 135-174.

<sup>2</sup> There is another reason for using allegory as an implicit language. Brown argued that the mystical ideas of Ibn al-Arabi (1165- 1240) "should not be allowed to seep down to the masses unmediated. The Makkan Sufi scholar Ahmad al-Qushashi (d. 1661) thus did not allow his scholarly associates to discuss difficult passages from Ibn Arabi's controversial Sufi text *The Makkan Illuminations* (*al-Futuh al-makkiyya*) when uneducated people were present. He would do so only behind locked doors." (Brown, "Is Islam Easy to Understand or Not?: Salafis, the Democratization of Interpretation and the Need for the Ulema", pp. 117-144)

<sup>3</sup> Allegory in Islamic literatures as a developed literary practice begins at the turn of the eleventh century, As Heath once put it. "Yet allegory draws on earlier periods for crucial constituent narrative forms, topics, themes, source materials, and interpretational frameworks." (Heath, "Allegory in Islamic Literatures", pp. 83-100.

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Looking out for the recital of *Salaman and Absal*,<sup>1</sup> Avicenna symbolizes the rational issues in two allegorical treatises, *The Birds*<sup>2</sup> and *Hayy Ibn Yaqzan*. Ibn Tufail in *Hayy Ibn Yaqzan* allegorizes his philosophical views. Ibn Tufail usually is reckoned an straightforward opponent of the mainstream of philosophy. Yet there is another side to me: Ibn Tufail as a philartist. In this approach, he has much in common with Avicenna and Suhravardi as well as Farabi. In the future works, I will take up Tufail and his *Hayy Ibn Yaqzan*. And Suhravardi takes a philart approach in his occult treatises: “A Tale of Occidental Exile”, “On the Reality of Love”, “The Red Intellect”, “The Simurgh’s ShriII Cry”, “The Sound of Gabriel’s Wing”, “A Day with a Group of Sufis”, “On the State of Childhood”, “The Language of the Ants”, “The Towers”, and “The Treatise of the Birds”. “The Treatise of the Birds” originally is not from Suhravardi, but rather from Avicenna which Suhravardi translated from Arabic to Persian.

Avicenna exerted a lasting impact on Suhravardi both in the notion of philart approach as well as philosophical standpoints. So in the historical order, I start by discussing Avicenna’s treatises as Suhravardi’s background. Then I will look at Suhravardi’s recitals.

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<sup>1</sup> Avicenna, *Isharat va Tanbihat*, vol. 3, p. 364.

<sup>2</sup> Published in Avicenna, *Al-Rasael*, p. 401.

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### **Suhravardi's Background: (1) Avicenna and Philart Approach in Action**

Abu 'Ali al-Husayn ibn 'Abd Allah ibn Al-Hasan ibn Ali ibn Sina (c.980 –1037) is better known in Europe by his Latinized name, Avicenna. He was a Persian polymath and one of the most significant thinkers and writers of the Islamic Golden Age the fame of whom has not waned with the passing of time.

He had a variety of writings in the fields of philosophy, logic, theology, psychology, astronomy, alchemy, geography, geology, medicine, mathematics, and physics. Yet, I focus my discussion on the larger issue in respect of this book. Avicenna is the first Muslim philosopher who put philart approach into action. Deciphering his allegorical recitals, I trace his effects on Suhravardi. For this reason, I need to put the whole text in front of readers, adding some comments upon the links with Suhravardi.

#### ***The Birds***

Avicenna in the treatise of *The Birds* visualizes the souls as birds.<sup>1</sup> Avicenna himself is one of those birds, intoning “I

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<sup>1</sup> In the Middle English, the soul is allegorized as a lady besieged in a castle. (Bergs and Brinton, *English Historical Linguistics*, vol. 1, p. 438)

## Chapter IV: Mystical Experience ◆ 73

was one of the troop of birds.”<sup>1</sup> Addressing the other souls, story begins:

Is there none among my brothers who will lend me ear for a time, that I may confide some part of my sorrows to him? Perhaps he could fraternally share my burden. For the friendship of a friend is not unalloyed unless, in good as in evil fortune, he guards its purity from all stain. But where shall I find so pure and sincere a friend, in a time when friendship has become a trafficking to which one turns when the necessities of a situation require an application to one's friend, whereas one ceases one's attentions to him as soon as the need is gone? No longer is a friend visited save when you yourself have been visited by misfortune; no longer is a friend remembered save when some necessity has restored your memory. There are, it is true, brothers united by the same divine kinship, friends who are brought together by the same frequentation of what is above; they contemplate the True Realities with the eyes of inner vision; they have purified the depths of their hearts from all stains of doubt. Such a society of brothers can be assembled only by the herald of a divine vocation. Are they so assembled? Then let them receive this testament.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Corbin, *Avicenna and the Visionary Recital*, p. 188.

<sup>2</sup> Corbin, *Avicenna and the Visionary Recital*, p. 186.

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The narrator afterwards emphasizes secrecy. In a similar way Suhravardi holds that the truth should be shrouded in secrecy.<sup>1</sup>

Brothers of Truth! Impart your secret one to another. Meet together, and let each raise before his brother the veil that hides the depths of his heart, so that each may instruct the other, and that you may all realize your perfection through one another.

In lieu of “Brothers of Truth”, it could be seen that Suhravardi uses “Brothers or Brethren of Abstraction”.<sup>2</sup>

Hereafter Avicenna put to use some allegories:

Brothers of Truth! Retire as the hedgehog retires, which in solitude displays its hidden being and hides its apparent being. As God is my witness! It falls to your hidden being to appear, while it falls to your apparent being to disappear. Brothers of Truth! Strip yourselves of your skins as the snake casts his. Walk like the ant, the sound of whose steps none hears. Be like the scorpion that ever bears its weapon at the end of its tail, for it is from behind that the demon seeks to

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<sup>1</sup> See the treatise of “On the State of Childhood” in: Suhravardi, *Majmu'e-ye Musannafat-e Shaykh-e Ishraq*, vol. 3, pp. 254-255.

<sup>2</sup> Suhravardi, *The Philosophical Allegories and Mystical Treatises*, pp. 92, 94; Suhravardi, *Majmu'e-ye Musannafat-e Shaykh-e Ishraq*, vol. 3, pp. 314, 319, 462, 463, 465.

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surprise men. Take poison, that you may remain alive. Love death, that you may still live.

“Death” would refer to Abstraction because of which Suhravardi prefers the term “Brethren of Abstraction”. The term “flight” that follows might also be considered an allegory of Abstraction:

Be ever in flight; choose no settled nest, for it is in the nest that all birds are captured. If you have no wings, steal wings, get them by sleight, if need be, for the best of illuminators is what has the strength to rise in flight. Be like the ostrich that swallows burning stones. Be like the vultures that gulp down the hardest bones. Be like the salamander that lets itself be wrapped in flame, at ease and confident. Be like the bats that never come out by day; yes, the bat is the best of birds.

Brothers of Truth! The bravest man is he who dares to face his tomorrow; the greatest coward is he who dares to remain behindhand with his own perfection.<sup>1</sup>

The treatise continues with explaining the difference between the human soul and the Angel:

Brothers of Truth! It is nowise surprising if the Angel flees from evil, whereas the beast commits wickedness, for the

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<sup>1</sup> Corbin, *Avicenna and the Visionary Recital*, pp. 186-187.

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Angel has no organ of corruption, while the beast has no organ of comprehension. No, what is surprising is that a human being, invested with command over his evil desires, should let himself be subdued by them, while yet he has within him the light of intelligence. But truly, like to the Angel becomes that man who stands firm under the assault of evil desires. But he whose strength does not suffice to drive away the evil desires that tempt him, that man does not even reach the rank of the beasts.<sup>1</sup>

After giving some advice about overriding evil desires to “Brothers of Truth”, Avicenna gets to narrate the adventures:

And now, let us come to our recital and explain our sorrow. Know, O Brothers of Truth! that a party of hunters went into the desert. They spread their nets, set out their lures, and hid in the thickets. For my part, I was one of the troop of birds. When the hunters saw us, they tried to attract us by whistling so delightfully that they put us in doubt. We looked; we saw an agreeable and pleasant place; we knew that our companions were beside us. We felt no uneasiness, and no suspicion kept us from setting out. So we hastened to the place, and suddenly we fell into the snares. The meshes closed on our necks, the strings entangled our wings, the

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid, pp. 187-188.

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ords hobbled our feet. Every movement that we tried to make only tightened our bonds the more and made our situation more desperate.

As Heath points it out, an allegory of isolation would be seen in following passage. He states, “Here one further motif is added, that of isolation. Entrapped, the soul is separated from its companions, estranged from its point of origin, and denied the rewards of association with prior comrades.”<sup>1</sup>

Finally, we gave ourselves up for lost; each of us thought only of his own pain and no longer considered that of his brother. We tried only to discover a ruse to free ourselves. And in the end we forgot what a fall our condition had undergone. In the end we ceased to be conscious of our bonds and of the narrowness of our cage, and there sank to rest.<sup>2</sup>

The rational soul symbolized as a bird descends to the level of practical intellect controlled by bodily desires. So, the soul loses the rational dimensions that make it uniquely

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<sup>1</sup> Heath, *Allegory and Philosophy in Avicenna (Ibn Sina): With a Translation of the Book of the Prophet Muhammad's Ascent to Heaven*, p. 93.

<sup>2</sup> Corbin, *Avicenna and the Visionary Recital*, p. 188.

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human.<sup>1</sup> This notion exemplifies the content of Avicenna's ode on the soul, *Qasida al-'ayniyya*:

It descended upon thee from out of the regions above,  
That exalted, ineffable, glorious, heavenly Dove.  
'Twas concealed from the eyes of all those who its nature  
would ken,  
Yet it wears not a veil, and is ever apparent to men.  
Unwilling it sought thee and joined thee, and yet, though it  
grieve,  
It is like to be still more unwilling thy body to leave.  
It resisted and struggled, and would not be tamed in haste,  
Yet it joined thee, and slowly grew used to this desolate  
waste,  
Till, forgotten at length, as I ween, were its haunts and its  
troth  
In the heavenly gardens and groves, which to leave it was  
loath.  
Until, when it entered the D of its downward Descent,  
And to earth, to the C of its centre, unwillingly went,  
The eye (I) of Infirmity smote it, and lo, it was hurled  
Midst the sign-posts and ruined abodes of this desolate world.  
It weeps, when it thinks of its-home and the peace it  
possessed,

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<sup>1</sup> Corbin, *Avicenna and the Visionary Recital*, p. 188. See also Heath, *Allegory and Philosophy in Avicenna (Ibn Sina): With a Translation of the Book of the Prophet Muhammad's Ascent to Heaven*, p. 93.

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With tears welling forth from its eyes without pausing or rest,  
And with plaintive mourning it broodeth like one bereft  
O'er such trace of its home as the fourfold winds have left.  
Thick nets detain it, and strong is the cage whereby  
It is held from seeking the lofty and spacious sky.  
Until, when the hour of its homeward flight draws near,  
And 'tis time for it to return to its ampler sphere,  
It carols with joy, for the veil is raised, and it spies  
Such things as cannot be witnessed by waking eyes.  
On a lofty height doth it warble its songs of praise  
(For even the lowliest being doth knowledge raise).  
And so it returneth, aware of all hidden things  
In the universe, while no stain to its garment clings.  
Now why from its perch on high was it cast like this  
To the, lowest Nadir's gloomy and drear abyss?  
Was it God who cast it forth for some purpose wise,  
Concealed from the keenest seeker's inquiring eyes?  
Then is its descent a discipline wise but stern,  
That the things that it hath not heard it thus may learn.  
So 'tis she whom Fate doth plunder, until her star  
Setteth at length in a place from its rising far,  
Like a gleam of lightning which over the meadows shone,  
And, as though it ne'er had been, in a moment is gone.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Browne, *A Literary History of Persia*, vol. 2, pp. 110-111. For another English translation see Arberry, *Avicenna on Theology*, pp. 77-78. See also Janssens, *Avicenna and His Heritage: Acts of the International Colloquium*, pp. 9-11, for French translation. The French one begins with this verse: "Elle est tombee vers tou du lieu sublime, la colombe pleine de fierte et de

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As could be seen, once again the allegory of bird appears in *Qasida al-'ayniyya* in which the motif of human soul is a dove.

But one day it happened that I was looking out through the meshes of the nets. I saw a company of birds who had freed their heads and wings from the cage and were ready to fly away. Lengths of cord could still be seen tied to their feet, neither too tight to prevent them from flying nor loose enough to allow them a serene and untroubled life. Seeing them, I remembered my earlier state, of which I had lost all consciousness, and what had long ago been my familiar fellowship made me feel the wretchedness of my present state. Would that I might die, I thought, from the excess of my grief, would that at the mere sight of their departure my soul might noiselessly slip from its body! I called and cried to them from the depths of my cage: "Come! Approach! Teach me by what sleight to seek deliverance; sympathize with my suffering, for truly I am at the end of my strength." But they remembered the ruses and the impostures of the hunters; my cries only frightened them, and they hastened from me. Then I besought them in the name of the eternal brotherhood, of the stainless fellowship, of the unviolated pact, to trust my

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reserve." See again Kholeif, *Avicenna on Psychology: A Study of His Poem on the Soul (Al-Qasidah Al-'Ayniyyah)*.

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words and to banish doubt from their hearts. Then they came to me.

When I questioned them concerning their state, they reminded me thus: “We were prisoners of the same suffering as thine; we too have known despair; we too have been made familiar with sorrow, anguish, and pain.” Then they applied their treatment to me. The cord fell from my neck; my wings were freed from their bonds; the door of the cage was opened to me. They said: “Profit by thy deliverance!” But again I prayed to them: “Free me also from this hobble that still clings to my foot.” They answered: “Were it in our power, we should have begun by removing those that encumber our own feet. How should the sick cure the sick?”<sup>1</sup>

The allegory of “sick” and “cure”, once again appears in Suhrawardi’s treatise, “A day with a Group of Sufis”.<sup>2</sup> Suhrawardi portrays human soul controlled by bodily emotions as an ailing person. “Cure” means that in the appropriate terms human soul gets to awake.

I arose from the cage and flew away with them. They said: “Far on, straight before thee, is a certain country; thou wilt not be safe from every danger until thou hast crossed all the

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<sup>1</sup> Corbin, *Avicenna and the Visionary Recital*, pp. 188-189.

<sup>2</sup>. Suhrawardi, *Majmu'e-ye Musannafat-e Shaykh-e Ishraq*, vol. 3, pp. 248-249.

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distance that separates thee from it. Therefore, follow in our track, that we may save thee and lead thee by the right way to the goal thou desirest.”

Our flight led us between the two flanks of a mountain, through a green and fertile valley. We flew pleasantly on, until we had passed all the snares, paying no heed to the whistling of any hunter. Finally, we reached the summit of the first mountain, whence we saw eight other summits, so high that eye could not reach them.

Adding the first mountain and the eight others we get nine mountains by which Avicenna symbolizes the nine spheres. In subsequent chapters, as we will see in Suhravardi’s cosmology, he uses this allegory in “The Red Intellect”.<sup>1</sup>

We said to one another: “Let us hasten! We shall not be out of danger until we have passed those mountains safe and sound, for in each there is a company that is interested in us. If we heed them, and linger in the charm of those pleasures and the quiet of those places, we shall never arrive.”

With great labor we passed six mountains one after the other and came to the seventh. When we had passed beyond its borders, some of us said to the others: “Is it not time for us to rest? We are spent with fatigue. We are far from the hunters

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<sup>1</sup> Suhravardi, *The Philosophical Allegories and Mystical Treatises*, p. 22.

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now, for we have traveled a long distance. An hour's rest will help us to reach our goal, whereas if we add to our weariness now, we shall perish." So we halted on the summit of the mountain. There we saw green gardens, beautiful palaces, charming pavilions; there were fruit trees, streams of living water. So many delights refreshed our eyes! Our souls were confounded, our hearts troubled, by so much beauty. And we heard lovely songs, ravishing instrumental music. We inhaled perfumes that not even the most exquisite amber and musk could approach. We gathered fruits, we quenched our thirst at the streams of living water, lingering until we should be completely rested. Then we said to one another: "Let us hasten! No snare is more dangerous than false security; there is no safety save in vigilance, no fortress so good as warning suspicion. We have already lingered too long here. To stay longer would be dangerous. Our enemies are on our trail, seeking the place where they may find us. On!"

So we renounced that place. Though it was so pleasant there, our salvation was worth more. Having agreed to depart, we tore ourselves from those scenes, and thus we came to the eighth mountain. Its summit was so lofty that it was lost in the firmament. Birds peopled its slopes; never had I heard such ravishing music, nor beheld such splendid colors, such graceful forms, nor encountered such sweet companions. When we had come down among them, they treated us with such charm, delicacy, and affability that nothing created could describe it or make it comprehensible. When we were

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perfectly at our ease with them, we told them of the sufferings we had endured. They sympathized in them with the utmost solicitude.

The motif of “king”, which follows in the next part, is a recurring theme in Suhravardi’s works: “The Red Intellect,”<sup>1</sup> “The Language of the Ants,”<sup>2</sup> “A Tale of Occidental Exile,”<sup>3</sup> and “On the Reality of Love.”<sup>4</sup>

Then they said to us: “Beyond this mountain is a city in which the supreme King resides. If any who are oppressed come to implore his protection and trust themselves wholly to him, the King by his strength and his aid frees them from all injustice and suffering.”

Relying on what they told us, we determined to reach the city of the King. We came to his court and awaited audience with

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<sup>1</sup> Suhravardi, *The Philosophical Allegories and Mystical Treatises*, p. 28; Suhravardi, *Majmu'e-ye Musannafat-e Shaykh-e Ishraq*, vol. 3, p. 234.

<sup>2</sup> Suhravardi, *The Philosophical Allegories and Mystical Treatises*, pp. 86-89; Suhravardi, *Majmu'e-ye Musannafat-e Shaykh-e Ishraq*, vol. 3, pp. 305-308.

<sup>3</sup> Suhravardi, *The Philosophical Allegories and Mystical Treatises*, pp. 116, 121; Suhravardi, *Majmu'e-ye Musannafat-e Shaykh-e Ishraq*, vol. 2, pp. 285, 295.

<sup>4</sup> Suhravardi, *The Philosophical Allegories and Mystical Treatises*, pp. 59, 70; Suhravardi, *Majmu'e-ye Musannafat-e Shaykh-e Ishraq*, vol. 3, pp. 270, 284.

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him. Finally, the order came that the new arrivals were to be brought before him, and we entered his castle. We found ourselves in an enclosure whose vastness no description could compass. When we had crossed it, a curtain was drawn up before us, disclosing a hall so spacious and radiant that it made us forget the first court, or, rather, compared with this, the other seemed of little account. Finally, we reached the King's oratory. When the last curtain had been drawn and all the King's beauty shone before our eyes, our hearts hung upon it and were seized with a stupor so great that it prevented us from giving words to our complaints. But he, perceiving our weakness, restored our assurance by his affability; so that we were emboldened to speak, and to recite our story to him. Then he said to us: "None can unbind the bond that fetters your feet save those who tied it. Now will I send them a Messenger to lay it upon them to satisfy you and remove your fetters. Depart, then, happy and satisfied!"

And now, lo! We are on the road, we are journeying in company with the King's Messenger.

King I found him who is in full possession thereof. For all beauty, in the true sense, is realized in him; all imperfection, even in the sense of a metaphor, is banished from him. By his beauty, he is all a Face that thou contemplatest; by his generosity, he is all a Hand that bestows. Whoever approaches him will have found supreme bliss; whoever cuts

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himself off from him will have lost this world and the world to come. . .

Like Avicenna in following passage, Suharavardi complains about the wrong people in “On the State of Childhood.”<sup>1</sup>

How many of my brothers will there not be who, my recital having struck upon their ears, will say to me: “I see that thou art some what out of thy wits, unless sheer madness hath fallen upon thee. Come now! It is not thou who didst take flight; it is thy reason that has taken flight. No hunter ever made thee his prey; it is thy reason and naught else that has been hunted down. How should a man fly? And how should a bird fall to speaking? Verily, one would say that the bile has overflowed in thy *complexio* and that *siccitas* has taken its seat in thy brain. 'Twere well to diet: drink a decoction of thyme dodder, take frequent hot baths, pour warm water over thy head, take inhalations of oil of water lily. Then go on a light diet, avoid sitting up late; and, above all, no overexertion of mind. For in the past we have always known thee as a reasonable man, of sound and penetrating judgment. God knows how greatly we are concerned over thy state. Seeing thee thus deranged, we feel utterly sick ourselves!”

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<sup>1</sup> Suharavardi, *The Philosophical Allegories and Mystical Treatises*, pp. 43-44; Suharavardi, *Majmu'e-ye Musannafat-e Shaykh-e Ishraq*, vol. 3, pp. 253-255.

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Oh, what a waste of words! And with what a miserable result! The worst kind of discourse is this chatter with which people are so liberal without any occasion!

Eventually, *Quranic* approach which will be discussed further in Chapter IV is seen at the end of the treatise of *The Birds*:

But in God be my refuge; toward men, my freedom! He who professes another dogma will lose his life in the world to come and in this world too, “for those who attack the first will one day learn by what an overthrowing they shall be overthrown.” (*Quran*, 22:11)<sup>1</sup>

### *Salaman and Absal*

Explaining his mystical views, Avicenna in the ninth *Namat* of the third part of *Isharat va Tanbihat* refers to *Salaman and Absal* and emphasizes its importance. “If, among other recitals, the *Recital of Salaman and Absal* has struck thine ear, and its development has been well narrated to thee, know that Salaman is a figure typifying thyself, while Absal is a figure typifying the degree that thou hast attained in

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<sup>1</sup> Corbin, *Avicenna and the Visionary Recital*, pp. 186-192.

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mystical gnosis. Therefore, resolve the symbol, if thou canst.”<sup>1</sup>

It is worth noting from the outset that Avicenna himself does not narrate the story, but rather, in his commentaries on *Isharat va Tanbihat*, Khwaja Nasir al-Din Tusi expresses two versions of *Salaman and Absal*, preferring one of them to another.<sup>2</sup>

The first version, according to Tusi’s commentary, apparently is translated from the Greek by Hunayn ibn Ishaq (d. A. H. 260 / A. D. 873). In this version, a king held the Byzantine Empire to the shore of the sea, including the country of Greece and the land of Egypt. Salaman is the king’s son and Absal is a babysitter. In the second version, Salaman and Absal are two half brothers on the mother’s side. This second one seems more plausible and attractive for Tusi.

Despite of Tusi,<sup>3</sup> I take up the first version because it has more in common with Suhrawardi’s allegorical works.

It is worth pointing out Corbin’s view does not tally with that of Tusi while he says: “We cannot but agree with him

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid, p. 206.

<sup>2</sup> See in: Avicenna, *Isharat va Tanbihat*, vol. 3, pp. 364-368.

<sup>3</sup> Khaja Nasir al-Din Tusi (1201-1274).

in his opinion that this second version is the only one that is really consonant with the intention motivating the reference made by Avicenna at the beginning of the ninth *namt* of the third part of the *Isharat*.<sup>1</sup> Bearing in mind that I zoom in on philart approach, the distinction between the various versins of *Salaman and Absal* settles no important questions.

### **The Hermetic Version of *Salaman and Absal***

*Salaman and Absal* begins by giving the reader some biographical information.<sup>2</sup> As will be seen, the soul that is allegorized by a bird in *The Birds*, turns up here as Salaman.

In ancient times, before the deluge of Fire, there was a king named Hermanos son of Heraql. He held the Byzantine Empire to the shore of the sea, including the country of Greece and the land of Egypt. It was he who had caused the building of those immense theurgic constructions called the pyramids, against which neither the elements nor the centuries in their thousands have been able to prevail. This king possessed profound knowledge and extensive power; he was versed in the influences of the stars, knew natural properties, and practiced theurgic operations. Among his intimates was a Sage, Aqliqulas the divine, by whom he had been initiated into all the secret sciences. For a whole cycle

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<sup>1</sup> Corbin, *Avicenna and the Visionary Recital*, p. 205.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 210-217.

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this divine man had devoted himself to spiritual practices in a cave called the Sarapeion; for nourishment he ate only a few herbs every forty days, and his life reached the length of three cycles.<sup>1</sup>

Deciphered by Tusi, Rizi,<sup>2</sup> and Jami,<sup>3</sup> characters mentioned in the recital constitute allegories as follows:

Hermanos: the Active Intellect;

Aqliqulas: the grace of the Active Intellect;

Salaman: the soul;

Absal: the body.<sup>4</sup>

To this Sage the king one day complained that he had no child. The reason was that Hermanos had no inclination for women and could not prevail upon himself to approach them. As he continued to refuse to do so, despite the Sage's advice, the Sage realized that only one solution remained: to determine a suitable "ascendant" by astrological observation,

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid, pp. 210-211.

<sup>2</sup> Ismail ibn Muhammad Rizi (fl.ca.1280).

<sup>3</sup> 'Abd al-Rahman Jami (1414-1492).

<sup>4</sup> See Avicenna, *Isharat va Tanbihat*, vol. 3, pp. 364-366; Rizi, *Hayat al-Nofus (Life of Souls)*, pp. 501-505; Yasami, *Salaman va Absal-e- Jami*.

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procure a mandragora, and put a little of the king's semen in it, the Sage then undertaking to treat the mixture in an environment suitable for the operation, until it should be ready to receive a soul to govern it and become a complete human being. The proposal was carried out; the child born of this alchemical operation was named Salaman.<sup>1</sup>

Influenced by Avicenna, Suhrawardi in "The Sound of Gabriel's Wing" speaks of ten intellects, including the Active Intellect. Somewhere in that recital, the wayfarer of "The Sound of Gabriel's Wing" asked the tenth elder, i.e. the Active Intellect, "Do you have children and property and things like that?" replied the tenth elder, "We have never had spouses, but each one of us has a son."<sup>2</sup>

A nurse had of course to be provided for him. A young woman of great beauty, aged eighteen years, was found; her name was Absal; she set about caring for the child. Hermanos now asked the Sage what he could do to show his gratitude; the Sage advised him to undertake the construction of a gigantic edifice that neither Water nor Fire could destroy. For the Sage foresaw the revolt of the elements: the edifice was to be of seven stories; it would have a secret door to be known only to the Sages, for whom it would be a secure refuge; as

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<sup>1</sup> Corbin, *Avicenna and the Visionary Recital*, pp. 211-212.

<sup>2</sup> Suhrawardi, *Majmu'e-ye Musannafat-e Shaykh-e Ishraq*, vol. 3, pp. 213; Suhrawardi, *The Philosophical Allegories and Mystical Treatises*, p. 12.

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for the rest of mankind, they might as well perish in the cataclysm.

To these precautionary measures the king responded by proposing the construction of two edifices: one for the Sage and another that would serve at once to shelter their treasures, their sciences, and their bodies after death. Thus the two pyramids were built.

As for the child Salaman, when he had grown the king wanted to take him from Absal, but the boy was in despair, so great was his attachment to her. So the king left them together until the boy should have grown older. Thus Salaman's affection for Absal changed into love, and a love so passionate that he was entirely taken up with her and frequently neglected the king's service.<sup>1</sup>

Salaman's love for Absal typifies the soul's love for the body that requires neglecting the Divine last part of which is the Active Intellect. This state of affairs came to Suhrawardi's notice, as would be seen in his allegorical stories. For example, in "The Red Intellect" the wayfarer who is created in the form of a falcon says, "I forgot my

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<sup>1</sup> Corbin, *Avicenna and the Visionary Recital*, p. 212.

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nest, my realm and everything I had known. I thought I had always been the way I was then.”<sup>1</sup>

And in the chapter eight of “The Language of the Ants” which is the story of the king’s peacock, once again the motif of king and bird could be seen. The narrator says, “A king had a garden, which in all four seasons was never without fragrant herbs, greenery and pleasant spots. Water flowed abundantly through it, and all kinds of birds sang from the branches of the trees. Every good and beautiful thing that could be imagined was found in that garden. And among those things dwelt a group of gorgeous peacocks.” Afterwards the king took one of the peacocks and ordered it sewn up in a leather skin so that its plumage could not be seen and so that it would not be able to contemplate its own beauty. In addition, the king ordered the peacock to be placed under a basket that had only one hole, through which a bit of grain could be poured. Passed a long time, the peacock forgot itself, the king, the garden and the other peacocks.<sup>2</sup> And thereby the state of forgetting the king recurs.

The king summoned his son and addressed him in the terms usual in such cases. Their apparent brutality is, however, at

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<sup>1</sup> Suhrawardi, *Majmu'e-ye Musannafat-e Shaykh-e Ishraq*, vol. 3, p. 227.

<sup>2</sup> Suhrawardi, *Majmu'e-ye Musannafat-e Shaykh-e Ishraq*, vol. 3, p. 306; Suhrawardi, *The Philosophical Allegories and Mystical Treatises*, p. 86.

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once offset by the prospect that opens before a Hermetic Sage, and before him alone: the human being must seek to draw constantly to the world of the higher Light, which outshines every other light and is his true abode, whereas the abode of sensible things represents a condition lower than all others. An intermediate degree is attained when man becomes the contemplator of the “Lights of Victory,” but the higher degree is to attain to knowledge of the ideal realities (*haqa'iq*) of all beings. Hence Salaman must abandon Absal: he has no need of her, she cannot help him toward this sublime goal. Let him act as a man, strong in his isolation, until Hermanos finds him a bride, a maiden of the celestial world who will be united to him for the eternity of eternities, and let him thus make himself pleasing to the Lord of the worlds.<sup>1</sup>

The king and the Sage as the two characters of the story of *Salaman and Absal* might be seen in Suhravardi. In the beginning of the treatise of “On the State of Childhood”, there is a master who is an old man and also another old man. At first, Suhravardi mentions the master: “Once during my childhood, as I was playing in the lane as children do, I saw several children in a group and was struck by them. I went to them and asked where they were going. They were going to school, they said, to acquire knowledge. I asked

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<sup>1</sup> Corbin, *Avicenna and the Visionary Recital*, p. 212.

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what knowledge was. “We do not know the answer,” they said. “You’ll have to ask our master.” Having said this, they left me.”<sup>1</sup>

After a while the wayfarer of the story said to himself “What can knowledge be? Why didn’t I go with them to the teacher and learn knowledge?” Then he set out after the children but could not find them. In the wilderness, he found an old man and advanced, greeting him. The old man replied and very kindly beckoned him to approach. The wayfarer reported his problem, “I saw a group of children who were going to school. I asked them what the purpose of going to school was. They said I would have to ask their master. I was not thinking at the time, and they got away from me. After seeing them, a desire aroused in me too and so I set out after them. I have not been able to find them and am still looking for them. If you have any knowledge of them, tell me about their master.” The old man said to the wayfarer that he himself is their master. The wayfarer demanded to instruct him in knowledge and the master got to teach.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Suhravardi, *Majmu’e-ye Musannafat-e Shaykh-e Ishraq*, vol. 3, p. 252; Suhravardi, *The Philosophical Allegories and Mystical Treatises*, p. 43.

<sup>2</sup> Suhravardi, *Majmu’e-ye Musannafat-e Shaykh-e Ishraq*, vol. 3, p. 253; Suhravardi, *The Philosophical Allegories and Mystical Treatises*, p. 43.

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The wayfarer encountered the second old man is in *khanqah*. One day as the wayfarer was entering *khanqah*, he saw seated at the end of the room an old man wearing an iridescent cloak, half of which was white and half black. This old man is an allegory of the Active Intellect and the white side of his cloak refers to the celestial world and intellects while the black side alludes to the sublunary world.

It goes without saying that Salaman was not convinced by these most sage exhortations. He hastened to repeat the entire conversation to Absal, who advised him in her turn: "Pay no heed to that man's words. He would deprive you of present joys for the sake of promises of which the greater part are vain. I am a woman who answers to all that delights your soul. If you are an intelligent and determined man, go and reveal our secret to the king: you are not one who can abandon me, nor I one to abandon you." It would no doubt be better not to announce this decision in person. So Salaman confided it to the vizier, who undertook to transmit it. The situation now seemed hopeless; the king gave way to violent grief. His remonstrances remained as unconvincing as before, even when the idea of a compromise was suggested: let Salaman divide his time into two equal parts, one in which to profit from the teaching of the Sages, the other to be given to Absal. And so it was decided. Unfortunately, when Salaman, after having devoted all the stipulated time to the study of the exalted sciences necessary to his education, found that he

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must still serve the king, he had only one idea—to return to Absal and play with her. The king could not but admit that he was again defeated. He consulted his Sages: would not the only way to get rid of Absal be to have her killed? But the vizier protested firmly: let none make bold to destroy what he cannot himself raise up. If the king put this project into effect, it was to be feared that the very foundations of his dwelling would be overthrown and that the elements brought together to constitute his nature would dissolve. And this would not open the way for him to the choir of the *Kerubim* (in other words, the therapy of the soul can have as its goal not the destruction but only the sublimation of the sensible nature). The “child” must little by little discover for himself what it was incumbent upon him to do.

A kindly informer reported this conversation to Salaman, who immediately conveyed the news to Absal. Together they considered how best to frustrate the king's plans; finally, they resolved to flee beyond the Western Ocean.<sup>1</sup>

“The Western Ocean” might be regarded as another allegory influencing Suhrawardi. One of his allegorical treatises entitled “A Tale of Occidental Exile”<sup>2</sup>, begins with

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<sup>1</sup> Corbin, *Avicenna and the Visionary Recital*, pp. 213-214.

<sup>2</sup> Suhrawardi, *Majmu'e-ye Musannafat-e Shaykh-e Ishraq*, vol. 2, pp. 274-297; Suhrawardi, *The Philosophical Allegories and Mystical Treatises*, pp. 111-122.

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mentioning the lands of the occident: “When I traveled with my brother *Asim* from the region of *Transoxiana* to the lands of the occident on order to hunt down a flock of birds on the shore of the Green Sea, we suddenly fell into a town whose inhabitants were wicked, that is the town of *Kairouan*.”<sup>1</sup> The lands of occident or the Western lands may refer to the realm of matter or material world.

But the king received information of what they were doing; for he possessed two golden reeds, decorated with thaumaturgic designs and pierced with seven holes corresponding to the seven climes. By blowing on one of these holes, after placing on it a pinch of ashes, which then broke into flame, one was informed of what was taking place in the corresponding clime. Thus Hermanos learned where Salaman and Absal had hidden; he learned too that they were suffering all the miseries of exile (*ghurba*);<sup>2</sup>

We can trace the origin of the name of Suhrawardi’s work, “A Tale of Occidental Exile”, to this part of *Salaman and Absal*: some sort of exile that occurs in the lands of occident.

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<sup>1</sup> Suhrawardi, *Majmu’e-ye Musannafat-e Shaykh-e Ishraq*, vol. 2, pp. 275-276; Suhrawardi, *The Philosophical Allegories and Mystical Treatises*, pp. 111-112.

<sup>2</sup> Corbin, *Avicenna and the Visionary Recital*, p. 214.

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...he was touched, and ordered that they receive some little help. But since Salaman persisted in his voluntary exile, Hermanos' wrath presently turned upon the spiritual entities (*ruhaniyat*) of their passion, and he resolved to destroy these. For the two lovers, this was the most intolerable suffering and the most sinister torture: they gazed at each other, felt ardent desire, but could not unite. Salaman understood that what had befallen them was also caused by his father's anger; so he rose and went to the king to obtain remission. In a last effort, the king tried to make his son understand that he could not assume the throne and at the same time remain Absal's companion, for either kingship or Absal would claim him entirely. While he clung to the throne with one hand, Absal would be like a fetter fastened to his feet, preventing him from attaining the throne of the celestial spheres. And to confirm his words by a convincing experience, he had the two lovers suspended in this awkward position for a whole day. At nightfall they were set free.<sup>1</sup> The king gained nothing by his stubborn resistance to love...<sup>2</sup>

The two unfortunate lovers take each other by the hand and go to cast themselves into the sea. But the king commands the spiritual entity of Water to spare Salaman until he has

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<sup>1</sup> p. 214.

<sup>2</sup> Corbin enters at this point some comments from Jami about the second pair of lovers in Persian literature, Wamiq and Azra.

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sent a band to rescue him; as for Absal, she was drowned. When Salaman understood that Absal had vanished and that he had survived her, his grief was so violent that he was on the verge of finding the death he had so earnestly sought. The king understood at last that he had proceeded wrongly. Again he consulted the Sage Aqliqulas: what should he do, his only child was on the point of dying in madness? The Sage has far-reaching plans and immense powers. ... The Sage summons the boy: "O Salaman, would you be with Absal again?" "What else could I wish?" "Then come with me to the cave of the *Sarapeion*; there we shall together spend forty days in invocations; Absal will thereby be restored to you." Salaman agrees, and they set off together. But the Sage makes three conditions: first, Salaman will wear a robe exactly like Absal's, and whatever he sees the Sage do, he will also do; however, the Sage will fast for forty days continuously, whereas Salaman will break fast every seven days; finally, during all his life he will love no other woman but Absal. "All this I accept from thee, O Sage," replied Salaman.

Then the Sage gave himself up to prayers and invocations to Venus for forty days. And every day Salaman saw the form of Absal come to him; she sat down beside him, talked to him lovingly. He told the Sage all that he had seen, and thanked him for having brought him this vision of Absal. Then, at the end of forty days, there appeared a marvelous Form, a strange Figure whose extraordinary beauty surpassed every

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anticipation of beauty: the figure of Venus herself. And Salaman fell in love with her, with a love so intense, so great, and so complete that he forgot the love of Absal: “O Sage! I no longer wish for Absal. In this Figure I have found a sign that has made me averse to the company of Absal. I desire nothing but this Figure... O Sage, help me, I want naught save this Figure.” ... Pure love of the ideal Image establishes itself permanently in Salaman’s soul as he becomes increasingly conscious of it as the Presence that is within his own being and that preceded everything that he had perceived outside of himself. The Figure abolishes the phantom of Absal or, rather, transfigures Absal through sublimation of love in the true sense, and becomes Salaman’s companion for eternity, the “celestial bride” who for the “father” was still only a hope or a hypothetical promise. There is no longer any conflict between Absal and “royalty”; each has become the other. Integrating with himself what he had previously believed to be other than himself, Salaman becomes a complete Man, *Homo totus*, and accedes to the royal dignity of the perfect Sage.”<sup>1</sup>

Examining with care, Avicenna develops his view on love in “A Treatise on Love.” Among other opinions of Avicenna, the problem of love have exerted a lasting impact on Suhrawardi. He has ten visionary treatises, the main

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<sup>1</sup> Corbin, *Avicenna and the Visionary Recital*, pp. 215-217.

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theme of some of which is mystical love. The hero of these treatises is a wayfarer who loves God, looking for the right way to the Divine. This love is to be some sort of spiritual emotion rather than passionate love. This claim would be proved by analyzing Suhrawardi's fictions, decoding the allegories. On his way to God, the wayfarer may become waylaid by his own perceptions, i.e., five internal and five external senses. The wayfarer, however, must overcome these senses, that is, he should not be overwhelmed by his perceptions. These ten senses are symbolized in "On the Reality of Love" by five chambers and five gates, in "Treatise on Towers" by ten towers, in "A Tale of Occidental Exile" by ten graves, in "The Simurgh's Shriill Cry" by ten flyers, and in "The Red Intellect" by ten wardens. And finally, the wayfarer conquers all of them. I take up these allegories later.

### *Hayy Ibn Yaqzan*

*Hayy Ibn Yaqzan* is the name of two totally different tales from Avicenna and Ibn Tufail. Ibn Tufail drew the name of his tale from Avicenna's tale, but the plot and characters were fully different. In this section, I will review Avicenna's *Hayy Ibn Yaqzan*. In brief, Ibn Tufail's tale is the story of an autodidactic feral child a gazelle raised whom in a desert in the Indian Ocean. Without contact with other human beings, Hayy discovers ultimate truth.

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Connecting Asal, comes Hayy into contact with civilization and religion.

Ibn Tufail's recital recounts the problem of consistency between philosophy and revelation on which wrote Averroes, Ibn Tufail's pupil, *Kitab Fasl al-Maqal wa Taqrir ma baina aSh-shari'a wa-l-Hikma min al-Ittisal*.

*Hayy Ibn Yaqzan* in Avicenna's recital<sup>1</sup> is a poetical name for the Active Intellect. It may be observed that Avicenna in the treatise of "Al-Qaza wa al-Qadar" or "The Divine Decree and the Predestination" mentions the name of *Hayy Ibn Yaqzan* without allegory or a tale.<sup>2</sup>

Avicenna's *Hayy Ibn Yaqzan* I will take up in some detail from now on. The manner of Avicenna in the first passage would be seen in Suhrawardi. In the beginning of *Hikmah al-Ishraq*, Suhrawardi addresses his brethren in very much the same way.<sup>3</sup>

Your persistence, my brothers, in demanding that I set forth the *Recital of Hayy ibn Yaqzan* for you has finally triumphed over my stubborn determination not to do so; it has untied the

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<sup>1</sup> Avicenna, *Al-Rasael*, pp. 132-141; Corbin, *Avicenna and the Visionary Recital*, pp. 137-150.

<sup>2</sup> Avicenna, *Al-Rasael*, p. 348.

<sup>3</sup> Suhrawardi, *Majmu'e-ye Musannafat-e Shaykh-e Ishraq*, vol. 2, p. 2.

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bond of my firm resolve to defer and delay. Thus I have found myself ready to come to your aid. May we look to God for help and support!<sup>1</sup>

Once when I had taken up residence in my city, I chanced to go out with my companions to one of the pleasure places that lie about the same city. Now, as we were coming and going, making a circle, suddenly in the distance appeared a Sage. He was beautiful; his person shone with a divine glory. Certainly he had tasted of years; long duration had passed over him. Yet there was seen in him only the freshness proper to young men; no weakness bowed his bearing, no fault injured the grace of his stature. In short, no sign of old age was to be found in him, save the imposing gravity of old Sages.<sup>2</sup>

The striking features of the old man or old Sage of Avicenna's Hayy Ibn Yaqzan recurs in Suhrawardi's allegories. In "The Sound of Gabriel's Wing", the wayfarer narrates that there was a *khanaqah* with two doors, one onto the city and one onto the field and orchard. The wayfarer shut the door to the city and opened the door to the field. When he looked he saw ten old men of beautiful countenance seated on a bench. He was so amazed by their magnificence and splendor and so staggered by the sight of

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<sup>1</sup> Corbin, *Avicenna and the Visionary Recital*, p. 137.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, p. 137.

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their throne, their beauty, their white hair, their garments and trappings that he could not speak.<sup>1</sup> These ten old men allude to the ten intellects tenth of which is the Active Intellect.

In another allegorical story in “The Red Intellect”<sup>2</sup> the wayfarer meets an old man with a young face. The wayfarer narrates: “I said, “Young man, where do you come from?”

“My son,” he replied, “you have addressed me mistakenly. I am the first child of creation. You call me young?!”<sup>3</sup>

In two parts of another treatise, “On the Reality of Love”, these phrases refer to the young old man:

“Although I am ancient of days, I am still young.”<sup>4</sup>

“At the gate to that city (the City of the Soul) is stationed a young old man whose name is *Jawed Khirad*.... He is old in

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<sup>1</sup> Suhravardi, *The Philosophical Allegories and Mystical Treatises*, pp. 9-10.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, pp. 20-32.

<sup>3</sup> Suhravardi, *The Philosophical Allegories and Mystical Treatises*, p. 21.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, p. 63; Suhravardi, *Majmu'e-ye Musannafat-e Shaykh-e Ishraq*, vol. 3, p. 275.

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years but has never seen the passage of time. He is very, very old but is still untouched by decrepitude.”<sup>1</sup>

When I had seen this Sage, I felt a desire to converse with him. From my inmost depths arose a need to become intimate with him and to have familiar access to him. So, with my companions, I went in his direction. When we had approached, he took the initiative; he wished us peace and honored us with his salutation. Then, smiling, he addressed us in words that were sweet to our hearts.<sup>2</sup>

Once more, it bears a remarkable similarity to Suhravardi. In “The Sound of Gabriel’s Wing”, the wayfarer states: “In utter amazement and total awe I put one foot in front of me and the other behind me. I said, “Let me be bold and attain the felicity of meeting them, come what may.” I tiptoed forward and was about to greet the old man who was on the end of the bench when-I must admit in all fairness - he greeted me first in a most kindly - disposed manner and gave me such a warm, broad smile that his teeth sparkled in the pupils of my eyes.”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Suhravardi, *The Philosophical Allegories and Mystical Treatises*, p. 64; Suhravardi, *Majmu'e-ye Musannafat-e Shaykh-e Ishraq*, vol. 3, p. 275.

<sup>2</sup> Corbin, *Avicenna and the Visionary Recital*, p. 137.

<sup>3</sup> Suhravardi, *The Philosophical Allegories and Mystical Treatises*, p. 10.

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Many words were exchanged between us, until at last the conversation led us to such a point that I questioned him about everything to do with his person, and sought to learn from him what his mode of life and profession were, and even his name and lineage and country. Then he said to me: “My name is *Vivens*; my lineage, *filius Vigilantis*;<sup>1</sup> as to my country, it is the Celestial Jerusalem [lit., the “Most Holy Dwelling,” *al-Bait al-Muqaddas*].<sup>2</sup> My profession is to be forever journeying, to travel about the universe so that I may know all its conditions.<sup>3</sup>

This passage explains the propriety of the name: “Hayy Ibn Yaqzan” or “Alive, Son of Awake.” His country, *Bait al-Muqaddas*, and his profession, namely, to travel about the universe, repeatedly will be seen in Suhrawardi’s works. In “On the Reality of Love”, this time the character of Love introducing himself/herself, says, “I am from the Sacred Abode (*al-Bait al-Muqaddas*)... My job is to travel.”<sup>4</sup> Another case might be seen in following dialuge between the wayfarer and the Active Intellect in “The Red Intellect”:

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<sup>1</sup> Avicenna’s words: “Hayy ibn Yaqzan”

<sup>2</sup> Avicenna’s phrase: “Madinah Bait al-Muqaddas”

<sup>3</sup> Corbin, *Avicenna and the Visionary Recital*, pp. 137-138.

<sup>4</sup> Suhrawardi, *The Philosophical Allegories and Mystical Treatises*, p. 63; Suhrawardi, *Majmu’e-ye Musannafat-e Shaykh-e Ishraq*, vol. 3, p. 275.

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“... Then I said, “Elder, where do you come from?”

He replied, “From beyond Mount Qaf, where my residence is. Your nest too was there, but you have forgotten it.”

“What are you doing here?” I asked.

“I am a traveler,” he said. “I continually wander about the world and I look at marvelous things.”<sup>1</sup>

Once again, looking at the “The Sound of Gabriel’s wing”, we find out that all ten intellects including the Active Intellect are travelers.<sup>2</sup>

My face is turned toward my father, and my father is *Vigilans*. From him I have learned all science, he has given me the keys to every kind of knowledge. He has shown me the roads to follow to the extreme confines of the universe, so that since my journey embraces the whole circle of it, it is as if all the horizons of all climes were brought together before me.”

Our conversation continued without interruption. I questioned him concerning the difficult sciences. I learned

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<sup>1</sup> Suhravardi, *The Philosophical Allegories and Mystical Treatises*, p. 22; Suhravardi, *Majmu'e-ye Musannafat-e Shaykh-e Ishraq*, vol. 3, p. 229.

<sup>2</sup> Suhravardi, *The Philosophical Allegories and Mystical Treatises*, p. 10; Suhravardi, *Majmu'e-ye Musannafat-e Shaykh-e Ishraq*, vol. 3, p. 211.

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from him how to solve their obscurities, until finally, from transition to transition, we came to the science of physiognomy.<sup>1</sup> I observed in him such penetration and sagacity in that science that I was filled with admiration; for it was he who took the initiative when we came to physiognomy and the various facts that have to do with-it. He said to me: “The science of physiognomy is among the sciences the profit from which is paid cash down and whose benefit is immediate, for it reveals to thee what every man conceals of his own nature, so that thou canst proportion thine attitude of freedom or reserve toward each man, and make it befit the situation.

In thee, physiognomy reveals at once the most excellent of creatural types and a mixture of clay and of inanimate natures that receive every impression. It shows thee to be such that, to whichever side thou art drawn, to that side thou goest. When thou art held upon the right road and art called to it, thou becomest upright and pure. But if a deceiver seduce thee into the road of error, thou dost submit to be led astray. These companions who are about thee and never leave thee are evil companions. It is to be feared that they will seduce thee and that thou wilt remain captive in their bonds, unless the divine safekeeping reach thee and preserve thee from their malice.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> ‘Ilm al-firasah (Avicenna, *al-Rasael*, pp. 132-133).

<sup>2</sup> Corbin, *Avicenna and the Visionary Recital*, p. 138.

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These companions in Suhravardi's allegories frequently might be observed. A concise case would be seen in "The Simurgh's ShriII Cry": "Those who wish to tear down the spider's web must expel nineteen pincers from themselves: of these, five are visible flyers and five are concealed, two are swift walkers that are obvious in their movements and seven go so slowly that their motions are invisible. It is difficult to get all these flyers away from oneself."<sup>1</sup>

In the treatise of "On the reality of Love", Suhravardi develops another case of companions in great detail: "Whoever would reach that city must cut six ropes from the four arches, make a harness of love, place the saddle of intuitive experience on the steed of yearning, paint his eyes with the paint of wakefulness with the brush of hunger, take the sword of knowledge in hand, and seek the way to the microcosm. Let him come from the direction of the north and seek the inhabited quarter. When he reaches the city he will see a three-storied pavilion. The first story is fitted with two chambers. In the first is a divan placed over water, and on it reclines someone whose nature is inclined to humidity. He is extremely clever but his dominant trait is forgetfulness. He can solve any problem in a flash, but he never remembers anything. Next to him in the second

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<sup>1</sup> Suhravardi, *The Philosophical Allegories and Mystical Treatises*, pp. 104-105; Suhravardi, *Majmu'e-ye Musannafat-e Shaykh-e Ishraq*, vol. pp. 331-332.

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chamber is a divan placed over fire, on which reclines someone whose nature is inclined to dryness. He is very nimble and quick but unclean. It takes him a long time to discover allusions, but once he understands he never forgets. When [the seeker] sees him he will begin to speak smoothly and try to seduce him with various things. Every moment he will present himself in a different guise. Let [the seeker] pay him no attention but turn away and cry out to his steed to go to the second story.

There too he will see two chambers.

In the first is a divan of air on which someone reclines whose nature is inclined to coldness. He loves to lie, confuse, speak nonsense, waylay and murder. He is always passing judgment on things he knows nothing about. Next to him in the second chamber is a divan of vapor on which someone reclines whose nature is inclined to heat. He has seen much of good and evil. Sometimes he appears angelic and sometimes demonic. Strange things can be found in his presence. He knows sorcery will and has learned magic. When he sees [the seeker] he will start to fawn over him. He will grab the reins and try to destroy him, but let him brandish a sword before them and threaten them until they run away.

When he reaches the third story he will see a delightful chamber where there is a divan of pure earth, on which

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reclines someone whose nature is near equilibrium. He is absorbed in thought. The many things left to him in trust are piled around him, and he never betrays anyone's faith in him. Whatever profit is made from these things is entrusted to him so that they may be put to use again. When [the seeker] leaves there he will be confronted with five gates.

The first has two doorways, in each of which is an oblong, almond-shaped. Throne with two curtains, one black and the other white, hung before. There are many ropes fastened to the gate. On both of the thrones reclines someone who serves as a look-out. He can see many years' distance and is usually off on a journey. When he moves from his place he can arrive in one instant wherever he wants to go, no matter how great the distance. When [the seeker] arrives, let him command that no one should be let through the gate and that if a chink should appear at any place he should be informed immediately.

Going to the second gate, he will find two doorways, beyond each of which is a corridor, long and twisted and talismanically sealed. At the end of each corridor is a round throne, and over the two reclines someone who is a master of news and information. He has messengers who are continually on the go seizing every sound that comes to be and delivering it to the master, who comprehends it. Let [the seeker] order him to put back everything he hears and not to be influenced by every sound or led astray by every voice.

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From there he will go to the third gate. It too has two doorways. From each one he will go through a long corridor until he emerges in a chamber in which there are two seats, on which someone sits. He has a servant called Air who goes around the world every day and brings a bit of every good and foul thing he sees. These things he takes and disperses. Let [the seeker] tell him not to engage in much commerce and not to associate with good-for-nothings.

From there he will come to the fourth gate. This one is wider than the other three. Inside is a pleasant spring surrounded by a wall of pearl. In the middle of the spring is a divan that moves and on it sits someone who is called the Taster. He distinguishes between four different things, which he can divide and classify. Night and day he is occupied with this labor. Let [the seeker] order him to continue his labor only as is necessary.

Then he will come to the fifth gate, which surrounds the city. Everything that is in the city is within the scope of this gate, around about which a carpet is spread, and on the carpet sits someone so that the carpet is filled by him. He rules over eight different things and distinguishes among the eight. Not for one instant is he negligent in his labor. He is called the Distinguisher. Let [the seeker] order the carpet to be rolled up and the gate shut.

Having passed through the five gates, he will emerge in the

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city. Let him head for the city forest. Arriving there he will see a fire kindled and someone sitting cooking something over the fire. One person is fanning the flames while another waits anxiously while it is being cooked. Another separates the lighter portion that boils up from that which remains at the bottom of the pot and distributes it to the subtle and the heavier to the gross. Another very tall person stands by and seizes by the ears those who have finished eating and pulls them up. A lion and a boar wait in the forest: the former is occupied day and night with killing and tearing apart while the latter is busy pilfering, eating and drinking.”<sup>1</sup>

Now let's go on with *Hayy Ibn Yaqzan*'s companions:

That companion who walks ever before thee, exhorting thee, is a liar, a frivolous babler, who beautifies what is false, forges fictions; he brings thee information without thy bidding and without thy having questioned him; he mingles false and true therein, he sullies truth with error, even though, in spite of all, he is thy secret eye and thy illuminator. It is through his channel that news reaches thee of what is foreign to thy neighborhood, absent from the place where thou art. It is laid upon thee to separate the good money from among all

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<sup>1</sup> Suhravardi, *The Philosophical Allegories and Mystical Treatises*, pp. 64-67; Suhravardi, *Majmu'e-ye Musannafat-e Shaykh-e Ishraq*, vol. pp. 276-280.

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the counterfeit coins, to glean what is true among the lies, to free what is right from the matrix of errors, since thou canst not wholly do without him. It may happen that sometimes divine aid will lead thee by the hand and rescue thee from the straying that leads nowhere, and that sometimes thou wilt remain in perplexity and stupor; and sometimes it may happen that false testimony will seduce thee.

As for the companion on thy right, he is greatly violent; when he is roused by anger, no advice can restrain him; to treat him courteously nowise lessens his excitement. He is like a fire catching on dead wood, like a torrent dashing down from a height, like a drunken camel, like a lioness whose cub has been killed. Lastly, that companion on thy left is a sloven, a glutton, a lecher; nothing can fill his belly but the earth; nothing satisfies his appetite but mud and clay. He licks, tastes, devours, covets. He is like a pig that has been starved and then turned loose among refuse. And it is to these evil companions, O wretch, that thou hast been bound. There is no way for thee to get loose from them save by an expatriation that will take thee to a country whose soil may not be trodden by such as they. But because the hour of that expatriation is not yet come, and thou canst not yet reach that country, because thou canst not break with them and there is no refuge for thee where they cannot come at thee, so act that thou shalt

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have the upper hand of them and that thine authority shall be greater than theirs.<sup>1</sup>

The word “expatriation” or *al-ghurba* might be considered the background of the name of Suhravardi’s work, namely *Qissa al-Ghorba al-Gharbia* (“A Tale of Occidental Exile”).<sup>2</sup>

Let them not seize thine own rein, suffer them not to put the halter upon thee, but overcome them by acting toward them in the fashion of an experienced master; lead them by forcing them to remain in the right path, for each time that thou showest thy strength, it is thou who subduest them, no longer they who subdue thee; it is thou who mountest them, no longer they who make thee their mount.

As for stratagems and effectual means to which thou canst have recourse in respect to these companions, there is one that consists in subduing the slack and gluttonous companion by the help of the one who is violent and malicious, and in forcing the former to retreat. Conversely, another way will be gradually to moderate the passion of the intolerable angry one

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<sup>1</sup> Corbin, *Avicenna and the Visionary Recital*, p. 138.

<sup>2</sup> Suhravardi, *Majmu'e-ye Musannafat-e Shaykh-e Ishraq*, vol. pp. 274-297; Suhravardi, *The Philosophical Allegories and Mystical Treatises*, pp. 106-125.

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by the seduction of the gentle and caressing companion, until he is completely pacified. As for the third companion, the fine talker skilled in fictions, beware of trusting him, of relying on his words, unless it befall that he bring thee some weighty testimony from God.<sup>1</sup> In that case, yes, rely upon his words, receive what he tells thee. Beware, that is, of systematically suspecting all his words, turning a deaf ear to the news he brings thee, even though he mingle true with false therein, for, in it all, there cannot but be something to be received and investigated, something whose truth it is worth while to realize."

When he had thus described these companions to me, I found myself very ready to receive what he had taught me and to recognize that his words were true. Submitting my companions to trial and setting myself to observe them, [I found that] experience confirmed what I had been told of them. And now I am as much occupied with curing them as with submitting to them. Sometimes it is I who have the upper hand of them, sometimes they are stronger than I am. God grant that I may live on terms of good neighborhood with these companions until the time comes when I shall at last part from them!<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Quran* 12:66; 4: 154.

<sup>2</sup> Corbin, *Avicenna and the Visionary Recital*, pp. 138-140.

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Then I asked the Sage to guide me on the road of the journey, to show me how to set out on a journey such as he himself was making. I addressed him in the fashion of a man who burned to do so, who had the greatest desire for it. He answered me: “Thou, and all those whose condition is like thine—you cannot set out on the journey that I am making. It is forbidden you; the road is closed to you all, unless thy fortunate destiny should aid thee, for thy part, to separate from these companions. But now the hour for that separation is not yet come: there is a time set for it, which thou canst not anticipate. For the present, then, thou must rest content with a journey interrupted by halts and inactivity; now thou wilt be on the road, now thou wilt frequent these companions. Each time that thou goest alone, pursuing thy journey with perfect ardor, I walk with thee, and thou art separated from them. Each time that thou sighest after them, thou turnest back toward them, and thou art separated from me; so shall it be until the moment comes when thou shalt break with them wholly.”

Finally, the conversation led me to question him concerning each of the climes to which he had traveled, all those that were included in his knowledge and of which he was fully informed.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Corbin, *Avicenna and the Visionary Recital*, pp. 140-141.

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Preceding part describes the journey in some detail. The journey constitutes a main theme of Suhravardi's tales. In his allegorical treatises, some wayfarer is to travel to the heaven spheres and the ten Separate Intellects, pursuing intelligible happiness. In subsequent debates, I will analyze the isstu in greater detail.

He said to me: "The circumscriptions of the earth are threefold: one is intermediate between the Orient and the Occident. It is the best known; much information concerning it has reached thee and has been rightly understood. Notices even of the marvelous things contained in that clime have reached thee. But there are two other strange circumscriptions: one beyond the Occident, the other beyond the Orient. For each of them, there is a barrier preventing access from this world to that other circumscription, for no one can reach there or force a passage save the Elect among the mass of men, those who have gained a strength that does not originally belong to man by right of nature.

What aids in gaining this strength is to immerse oneself in the spring of water that flows near the permanent Spring of Life.

When the pilgrim has been guided on the road to that spring, and then purifies himself in it and drinks of that sweet-tasting water, a new strength arises in his limbs, making him able to cross vast deserts. The deserts seem to roll up before him. He does not sink in the waters of the ocean; he climbs Mount

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Qaf without difficulty, and its guards cannot fling him down into the abysses of hell.”<sup>1</sup>

Once again, it may be observed that Suhravardi’s terminology is greatly indebted to that of Avicenna. The Red Intellect who comes from beyond Mount Qaf reports seven wonders he has seen in the world: “First, Mount Qaf, which is our realm; second, the Pearl-that-glows-by-night; third, the Tuba tree; fourth, the Twelve Workshops; fifth, David’s chain mail; sixth, the sword Balarak; seventh, the Spring of Life.”<sup>2</sup>

We asked him to explain that spring to us more fully. He said: “Thou hast heard of the Darkness that forever reigns about the pole. Each year the rising sun shines upon it at a fixed time. He who confronts that Darkness and does not hesitate to plunge into it for fear of difficulties will come to a vast space, boundless and filled with light. The first thing he sees is a living spring whose waters spread like a river over the *barzakh*. Whoever bathes in that spring becomes so light that he can walk on water, can climb the highest peaks without weariness, until finally he comes to one of the two circumscriptions by which this world is intersected.”

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<sup>1</sup> Corbin, *Avicenna and the Visionary Recital*, p. 141.

<sup>2</sup> Suhravardi, *Majmu’e-ye Musannafat-e Shaykh-e Ishraq*, vol. pp. 228-229; Suhravardi, *The Philosophical Allegories and Mystical Treatises*, p. 23.

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Then I begged him: “Teach me what the circumscription of the Occident is, for the Occident is nearer to our cities.” He said to me: “At the uttermost edge of the Occident there is a vast sea, which in the Book of God is called the *Hot* (and Muddy) *Sea*. It is in those parts that the sun sets. The streams that fall into that sea come from an uninhabited country whose vastness none can circumscribe. No inhabitant peoples it; save for strangers who arrive there unexpectedly, coming from other regions. Perpetual Darkness reigns in that country. Those who emigrate there obtain a flash of light each time that the sun sinks to its setting. Its soil is a desert of salt. Each time that people settle there and begin to cultivate it, it refuses; it expels them, and others come in their stead. Would any grow a crop there? It is scattered. Is a building raised there? It crumbles. Among those people there is perpetual quarreling or, rather, mortal battle. Any group that is strongest seizes the homes and goods of the others and forces them to emigrate. They try to settle; but in their turn they reap only loss and harm. Such is their behavior. They never cease from it.

All kinds of animals and plants appear in that country; but when they settle there, feed on its grass, and drink its water, suddenly they are covered by outsides strange to their Form. A human being will be seen there, for example, covered by the hide of a quadruped, while thick vegetation grows on him. And so it is with other species. And that clime is a place of devastation, a desert of salt, filled with troubles, wars,

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quarrels, tumults; there joy and beauty are but borrowed from a distant place.

Between that clime and yours there are others. However, beyond this clime of yours beginning at the region in which the Pillars of the Heavens are set, there is a clime that is like yours in several ways. In the first place, it is a desert plain; it too is peopled only by strangers come from distant places. Another similarity is that that clime borrows its light from a foreign source, though it is nearer to the Window of Light than the climes we have described hitherto. In addition, that clime serves as foundation for the heavens, just as the preceding clime serves as the seat for this earth, is its permanent base. On the other hand, the inhabitants who people that other clime are sedentaries there in perpetuity. Among the strangers who have come there and settled, there is no war; they do not seize each others' homes and goods by force. Each group has its fixed domain, into which no other comes to inflict violence upon it.

In relation to you, the nearest inhabited country of that clime is a region whose people are very small in stature and swift in their movements. Their cities are nine in number”<sup>1 2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> In *Al-Rasael*, the phrase is “Mudunuha thaman”, namely eight. (Avicenna, *Al-Rasael*, p.136)

<sup>2</sup> Corbin, *Avicenna and the Visionary Recital*, pp. 142-143.

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The preceding passage allegorized the Moon, and following parts are about Mercury, Venus, Sun, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn. As will be seen, also important in Suhrawardi's recitals is this allegorical cosmology.

After that region comes a kingdom whose inhabitants are even smaller in stature than the former, while their gait is slower. They passionately love the arts of the writer, the sciences of the stars, theurgy, magic; they have a taste for subtle occupations and deep works. Their cities number ten.<sup>1</sup>

As I mentioned, the motives of “king” and “kingdom” will recur in Suhrawardi's treatises: “A Tale of Occidental Exile,”<sup>2</sup> “The Language of the Ants,”<sup>3</sup> “The Red Intellect,”<sup>4</sup> and “On the Reality of Love.”<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> In *Al-Rasael*, the phrase is “Mudunuha tis”, i.e. nine. (Avicenna, *Al-Rasael*, p. 136)

<sup>2</sup> Suhrawardi, *The Philosophical Allegories and Mystical Treatises*, pp. 116, 121; Suhrawardi, *Majmu'e-ye Musannafat-e Shaykh-e Ishraq*, vol. 2, pp. 285, 295.

<sup>3</sup> Suhrawardi, *The Philosophical Allegories and Mystical Treatises*, pp. 86-89; Suhrawardi, *Majmu'e-ye Musannafat-e Shaykh-e Ishraq*, vol. 3, pp. 305-308.

<sup>4</sup> Suhrawardi, *The Philosophical Allegories and Mystical Treatises*, p. 28; Suhrawardi, *Majmu'e-ye Musannafat-e Shaykh-e Ishraq*, vol. 3, p. 234.

<sup>5</sup> Suhrawardi, *The Philosophical Allegories and Mystical Treatises*, pp. 59, 70; Suhrawardi, *Majmu'e-ye Musannafat-e Shaykh-e Ishraq*, vol. 3, pp. 270, 284.

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After that region comes a kingdom whose inhabitants are extremely beautiful and charming; they love gaiety and festivities; they are free from care; they have a refined taste for musical instruments, and know many kinds of them. A woman reigns over them as sovereign. A natural disposition inclines them to the good and the beautiful; when they hear of evil and ugliness, they are seized with disgust. Their cities number nine.<sup>1</sup>

Next comes a kingdom whose inhabitants are very tall in stature and extremely fair of face. The characteristic of their nature is that they are highly beneficial for whatever is at a distance, whereas their immediate neighborhood is calamitous. Their cities number five.<sup>2</sup>

Next comes a kingdom in which are settled people who bring destruction to the earth; they love to wound, kill, mutilate, make examples, for their diversion and amusement. Over them reigns a red personage always inclined to hurt, to kill, to strike. Sometimes, as the narrators of their chronicles report, he is seduced by the fair-faced queen whom we just

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<sup>1</sup> The phrase of *Al-Rasael* is “Mudunuha thaman”, i.e. eight. (Avicenna, *Al-Rasael*, p. 136)

<sup>2</sup> This number corresponds to the version of *Al-Rasael* to which we refer.

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mentioned and who inspires him with passionate love. Their cities number eight.<sup>1</sup>

After their country comes a vast kingdom whose inhabitants are endowed to the utmost with temperance, justice, wisdom, and piety, and bestow all necessary good on all parts of the universe. They maintain a compassionate friendship toward those who are near to them as toward those who are far from them; they extend their goodness to him who recognizes it as to him who knows it not. They are of extraordinary beauty and brightness. Their cities number eight.<sup>2</sup>

After that comes a country inhabited by a people whose thoughts are abstruse and inclined to evil. However, if they tend to goodness, they *go* to its utmost extreme. If they attack a troop, they do not lightly fling themselves upon it, but proceed in the fashion of a seducer full of wiles; they do not hurry over what they do, and do not refuse to wait for long periods. Their cities number eight<sup>3,4</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> In *Al-Rasael*: “Mudunuha sab” which means seven cities. (Avicenna, *Al-Rasael*, p. 137)

<sup>2</sup> Once again the phrase of *Al-Rasael* is “Mudunuha sab” which means seven cities. (Avicenna, *Al-Rasael*, p. 137)

<sup>3</sup> Herein also, the phrase of *Al-Rasael* is “Mudunuha sab” which means seven cities. (Avicenna, *Al-Rasael*, p. 137)

<sup>4</sup> Corbin, *Avicenna and the Visionary Recital*, pp. 143-144.

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After describing Moon, Mercury, Venus, Sun, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn based on then-astronomy, the following two kingdoms depict the eighth sphere or sky of fixed stars (*mantaqa al-buruj*) and the ninth sphere or the sky without stars (*atlas*).

Next comes an immense kingdom, with great scattered countries. Its inhabitants are numerous. They are solitaries; they do not live in cities. Their abode is a desert plain where nothing grows. It is divided into twelve regions, which contain twenty-eight stations. No group goes up to occupy the station of another except when the group preceding it has withdrawn from its dwelling; then it hastens to replace it. All the migrants expatriated in the kingdoms that we have described hitherto travel about this kingdom and perform their evolutions there.

Marching with it is a kingdom of which no one has descried or reached the boundaries down to this day. It contains neither city nor town. No one who is visible to the eyes of the body can find refuge there. Its inhabitants are the spiritual Angels. No human being can reach it nor dwell there. From it the divine Imperative and Destiny descend upon all those who occupy the degrees below. Beyond it there is no earth that is inhabited. In short, these two climes, to which the heavens and the earth are respectively joined, are on the left side of the universe, that which is the Occident.

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Now, when thou proceedest toward the Orient, there first appears to thee a clime in which there is no inhabitant: neither human beings nor plants nor minerals. It is a vast desert, a flooding sea, imprisoned winds, a raging fire. Having crossed it, thou wilt come to a clime where thou wilt find immovable mountains, streams of living water, blowing winds, clouds that drop heavy rain. There thou wilt find native gold, silver, precious or base minerals of all kinds, but thou wilt find nothing that grows. Crossing it leads thee to a clime filled with the things already mentioned, but in which thou wilt also find all kinds of vegetation, plants and fruit trees and other trees, giving fruits with stones or seeds, but thou wilt find there no animal that whines or peeps. Leaving this clime in its turn, thou wilt enter another where thou wilt find all that was mentioned before, but also living creatures of every species not endowed with the logos, those that swim, those that crawl, those that walk, those that fly beating their wings and gliding, those that engender, and those that hatch, but no human beings are there. Thou wilt escape from it into this world that is yours, and thou knowest already through sight and hearing what it contains. Then, cutting straight across toward the Orient, thou wilt come upon the *sun rising* between the two troops [lit., the two “horns”] of the Demon.

Returning in Suhravardi, following motives might be deciphered as the faculties of the human soul, for instance, “one that flies” refers to sense perceptions, “one that plods” refers to locomotive faculty which presides over the various

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bodily movements, “the tribe that has the ferocity of beasts of prey” means faculty of wrath, “the tribe that has the bestiality of quadrupeds” means appetites or passions, “five great roads there for the courier” refers to five external senses, “the five men-at-arms” alludes to five internal senses.

For the Demon has two troops: one that flies, another that plods. The troop that plods contains two tribes: a tribe that has the ferocity of beasts of prey, while the other has the bestiality of quadrupeds. Between the two there is perpetual war, and both dwell in the *left* side of the Orient. As for the demons who fly, their quarters are in the *right* side of the Orient. They are not all of the same constitution. Far from it, for one would say that each individual among them has his particular constitution, different from every other, so that some of them are constituted of two natures, others of three, others of four, as a flying man would be or a viper with a boar’s head. Some of them too are but a half, others but a fragment of a nature, like an individual who should be only one half of a human being, or the palm of a hand, or a single foot, or any other corresponding part of an animal. One would almost think that the composite figures that painters represent come from this clime!

The authority that governs the affairs of this clime has laid out five great roads there for the courier. It has made these roads so many fortified bulwarks for its kingdom, and has

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stationed men-at-arms upon them. If inhabitants of this world present themselves, the men-at-arms take them prisoners. They inspect all the baggage that the prisoners bring with them. Then they deliver them to a Guardian who is in authority over the five men-at-arms and who stands watching at the threshold of that clime. The information that the captives bring and that is to be sent on is put into a letter on which a seal is placed, without the Guardian's knowing what the letter contains. Now, the duty that lies upon the Guardian is to send the letter on to a certain Treasurer, who will present it to the King. It is this same Treasurer who takes charge of the prisoners; as for their effects, he delivers them to another Treasurer for safekeeping. And each time that they take prisoners some troop from your world, whether of human beings, or of animals, or of other creatures, those creatures proliferate, whether by a happy mixture in which their forms are preserved or by engendering only abortions.

Sometimes a group from one of these two troops of demons sets out for your clime; there they surprise human beings, they insinuate themselves into their inmost hearts with their breath. As for the plodding tribe that resembles beasts of prey, it lies in wait for the moment when someone will do a man the slightest wrong. Then it stirs him up, shows him the worst actions in a fair light, such as killing, mutilating, ruining, inflicting suffering. It nourishes hatred in the secrecy of his heart; it urges him to oppress and destroy. As for the second of the two plodding tribes, it never leaves off talking

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secretly to a man, beautifying sins, unworthy acts, and scoundrelly behavior; it inspires him to desire them, gives him a taste for them; riding the mount of obstinacy, it persists until it has succeeded in swaying him. As for the flying troop, it leads a man to declare that everything he does not see with his bodily eyes is false; it persuades him that it is excellent to adore what is only the work of nature or made by men; it suggests to his heart that after this earthly life there is no birth into another world, nor consequences for the good and the evil, and finally that there is no being who reigns eternally in the celestial kingdom.

Severing themselves from these two demoniac troops, there are, however, some groups who haunt the frontiers of a certain clime lying next after that inhabited by the *terrestrial angels*. Letting themselves be guided by these angels, they find the straight road; thus they depart from the aberrancy of the demons and choose the road of the *spiritual Angels*. When these *daimons* mingle with men it is neither to corrupt nor to misguide them; on the contrary, they beneficently help them to become pure. These are the “fairies” or “genii” [peri], those who in Arabic are called *jinn* and *hinn*.

He who succeeds in leaving this clime enters the climes of the Angels, among which the one that marches with the earth is a clime in which the terrestrial angels dwell. These angels form two groups. One occupies the right side: they are the angels who know and order. Opposite them, a group occupies

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the left side: they are the angels who obey and act. Sometimes these two groups of angels descend to the climes of men and genii, sometimes they mount to heaven. It is said that among their number are the two angels to whom the human being is entrusted, those who are called “Guardians and Noble Scribes” —one to the right, the other to the left. He who is to the right belongs to the angels who order; to him it falls to dictate. He who is to the left belongs to the angels who act; to him it falls to write.

He who is taught a certain road leading out of this clime and who is helped to accomplish this exodus, such a one will find an egress to what is beyond the celestial spheres. Then, in a fugitive glimpse, he descries the posterity of the Primordial Creation, over whom rules as king the One, the Obeyed.

There, the first delimitation is inhabited by intimates of that sublime King; they ever assiduously pursue the work that brings them near to their King. They are a most pure people, who respond to no solicitation of gluttony, lust, violence, jealousy, or sloth. The mission laid upon them is to attend to the preservation of the ramparts of that empire, and it is there that they abide. Hence they live in cities; they occupy lofty castles and magnificent buildings, whose material was kneaded with such care that the result is a compound that in no wise resembles the clay of your clime. Those buildings are more solid than diamond and jacinth, than all things that require the longest time to wear away. Long life has been

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bestowed upon that people; they are exempt from the due date of death; death cannot touch them until after a long, a very long term. Their rule of life consists in maintaining the ramparts in obedience to the order given them.

Proceeding passage refers to heavenly spheres while hereafter are allegorized the intellects:

Above them is a people that has more intimate dealings with the King and that is unceasingly bound to His service. They are not humiliated by having to fill this office; their state is preserved against all attack, nor do they change their occupation. They were chosen to be intimates, and they have received the power of contemplating the highest palace and stationing themselves all about it. It has been granted them to contemplate the face of the King in unbroken continuity. They have received as adornment the sweetness of a subtle grace in their nature, goodness and penetrating wisdom in their thoughts, the privilege of being the final term to which all knowledge refers. They have been endowed with a shining aspect, a beauty that sets the beholder trembling with admiration, a stature that has attained its perfection. For each of them, a limit has been set that belongs to him alone, a fixed rank, a divinely ordained degree, to which no other contests his right and in which he has no associate, for all the others either are above him or each respectively finds sweetness in his lower rank. Among them there is one whose

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rank is nearer to the King, and he is their father, and they are his children and grandchildren.

“Father” alludes to the Active Intellect. Suhravardi in “A Tale of Occidental Exile” repeats this allegory.<sup>1</sup> This following feature of intellects, “never does the course of time expose their nature to the marks and witherings of age and decrepitude,” came to Suhravardi’s notice about fifteen decades after.<sup>2</sup>

It is through him that the King’s word and order emanate to them. And among other marvels pertaining to their condition is this: never does the course of time expose their nature to the marks and witherings of age and decrepitude. Far from it, he among them who is their father, though the oldest in duration, is thereby all the more abounding in vigor, and his face has all the more of the beauty of youth. They all live in the desert; they have no need of dwelling places or shelter. Among them all the King is the most withdrawn into that solitude. Whoever connects Him with an origin errs. Whoever claims to pay Him praise that is proportionate to Him is an idle babbler. For the King escapes the power of the

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<sup>1</sup> Suhravardi, *The Philosophical Allegories and Mystical Treatises*, p. 120; Suhravardi, *Majmu’e-ye Musannafat-e Shaykh-e Ishraq*, vol. 2, p. 293.

<sup>2</sup> Suhravardi, *The Philosophical Allegories and Mystical Treatises*, pp. 9-10, 21-22, 64.

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clever to bestow qualifications, just as here too all comparisons fail of their end. Let none, then, be so bold as to compare Him to anything whatsoever. He has no members that divide Him: He is all a face by His beauty, all a hand by His generosity. And His beauty obliterates the vestiges of all other beauty. His generosity debases the worth of all other generosity. When one of those who surround His immensity undertakes to meditate on Him, his eye blinks with stupor and he comes away dazzled. Indeed, his eyes are almost ravished from him, even before he has turned them upon Him. It would seem that His beauty is the veil of His beauty, that His Manifestation is the cause of His Occultation, that His Epiphany is the cause of His Hiddenness. Even so, it is by veiling itself a little that the sun can be the better contemplated; when, on the contrary, the heliophany sheds all the violence of its brightness, the sun is denied to the eyes, and that is why its light is the veil of its light. In truth, the King manifests His beauty on the horizon of those who are His; toward them He is not niggardly of His vision; those who are deprived of contemplating Him are so because of the wretched state of their faculties. He is mild and merciful. His generosity overflows. His goodness is immense. His gifts overwhelm; vast is His court, universal His favor. Whoever perceives a trace of His beauty fixes his contemplation upon it forever; never again, even for the twinkling of an eye, does he let himself be distracted from it.

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Sometimes certain solitaries among men emigrate toward Him. So much sweetness does He give them to experience that they bow under the weight of His graces. He makes them conscious of the wretchedness of the advantages of your terrestrial clime. And when they return from His palace, they return laden with mystical gifts.

Then the sage *Hayy Ibn Yaqzan* said to me: “Were it not that in conversing with thee I approach that King by the very fact that I incite thy awakening, I should have to perform duties toward Him that would take me from thee. Now, if thou wilt, follow me, come with me toward Him. Peace.”<sup>1</sup>

According to Suhrawardi’s comment in the beginning of “A Tale of Occidental Exile”, that tale begins just where *Hayy Ibn Yaqzan* ends. While putting forth “A Tale of Occidental Exile”, Suhrawardi admits that when he saw the tale of *Hayy ibn Yaqzan*, he was struck by the marvels of spiritual words and profound allusions. Nevertheless, Suhrawardi holds, it lacks “intimations to indicate the greatest stage, which is the ‘great calamity’<sup>2</sup> that is stored away in divine books, deposited in the philosopher’s symbols and hidden in the tale *Salaman and Absal* put together by the author of *Hayy ibn Yaqzan*, that is, the mystery upon which the stages of the

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<sup>1</sup> Corbin, *Avicenna and the Visionary Recital*, pp. 145-150.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Quran* (79:34).

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adherents of Sufism and the apocalypics are based. It was alluded to in *Hayy ibn Yaqzan* only at the end of the book, where it is said: “Sometimes certain solitaries among men emigrated toward Him,” etc.”<sup>1</sup>

It is for this reason that Suhravardi decided to set out “A Tale of Occidental Exile” and remark on some of those things in it.

### **Suhravardi: Philart Approach in Action**

Suhravardi might be considered an Avicennian philartist. He is philartist due to apply allegory, fleshing complicated philosophical issues on. And his allegories based to a large extent on Avicenna’s stance. Such being the case, he might be counted as an Avicennian sciartist. In this section, I will not consider the Avicenna’s contentions, nor except in passing those of Suhravardi. However, I lead off with Suhravardi’s philart issues.

In his allegorical treatises, some wayfarer has journeys to the heaven spheres and the ten Separate Intellects, pursuing intelligible happiness. There are three profound philosophical issues Suhravardi deals with: sense

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<sup>1</sup> Suhravardi, *The Philosophical Allegories and Mystical Treatises*, p. 111.

perception, emanation, and cosmology.<sup>1</sup>

### **Sense Perception**

The first problem I focus on is sense perception. Ibn Sina is the first major thinker holding five exterior as well as five interior senses.<sup>2</sup> The latter consists of the *sensus communis* or sensorium that intermingles what it receives from the five exterior perceptions; the imagination that keeps these forms deposited; the imaginative power or active imagination that mingles and separates forms kept in the imagination; the estimative faculty that figures out the specific significances, like the fear of one particular snake; the memory that stores the specific significances.

Suhravardi criticized Avicenna's stance on five interior senses, reasoning that there is at most one faculty for all internal perceptions. Of the foundations of Suhravardi's disposition of the theory of imagination, the most prominent is the principle of seeing, which he has developed in multiple positions, and based on which he has accounted for

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<sup>1</sup> Suhravardi, *The Philosophical Allegories and Mystical Treatises*.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Sina, *Isharat va Tanbihat*, vol. 2, pp. 308-404; Ibn Sina, *Shifa (al-Tbi'iyat)*, pp. 33-171; Ibn Sina, *Nejat*, pp. 321-330; *Daneshnameh-ye Alayi*, pp. 82-100; Ibn Sina, *The Treatise on Psychology*, pp. 7-10. Avicenna differs from Aristotle and Farabi on sense perception. On this point see Maftouni, *Farabi and the Philosophy of Religious Art*, pp. 45-54.

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imagination as the illumination of the soul.<sup>1</sup> Apart from intuitive proofs, Suhravardi's major argument for illuminationist imagination is the refutation of manifold cognitive faculties.<sup>2</sup> Notwithstanding all this, he indicates the faculties of ten sense perceptions in allegory.

The allegories of ten sense perceptions comprise ten towers, ten straps, ten graves, ten flyers, ten wardens, five chambers and five gates.

In "Treatise on Towers" the towers are ten in number with the five external towers, allegorizing the five traditionally recognized methods of perception, and the internal towers the five parts of the brain reputed to be the seat of our mental capacities.<sup>3</sup>

In "The Language of the Ants" we find the following allegory of the ten senses. And so commences the story: "Key-Khosrow had a cup that showed the whole world: in it he could see whatever he wanted, be informed of all things and gain access to hidden things. It is said that it had a

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<sup>1</sup> Suhravardi, *Majmu'e-ye Musannafat-e Shaykh-e Ishraq*, vol. 2, pp. 150, 214.

<sup>2</sup> It is based on this refutation that he devotes an echelon of the universe to suspended archetypes or incorporeal forms. See Suhravardi, *Majmu'e-ye Musannafat-e Shaykh-e Ishraq*, vol. 2, pp. 209-215.

<sup>3</sup> Suhravardi, *Majmu'e-ye Musannafat-e Shaykh-e Ishraq*, vol. 3, pp. 462-471.

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sheath of leather made in the shape of a cone, and there were ten wide straps placed around it.”<sup>1</sup> It is a long shot that we can justifiably regard the ten wide straps as distinct from the ten senses.

“A Tale of Occidental Exile” implies the allegory of ten graves, where the wayfarer utters: “And I cast the sphere of spheres onto the heavens until the sun and moon and stars were crushed, then I was rescued from fourteen coffins and ten graves.”<sup>2</sup> And the treatise of “The Simurgh’s Shrill Cry” includes the allegory of ten flyers: “Those who wish to tear down the spider’s web must expel nineteen pincers from themselves: of these, five are visible flyers and five are concealed.”<sup>3</sup>

In “The Red Intellect” is amplified the allegory of ten wardens. One day the hunters, Fate and Destiny, laid the trap of Fore-ordination and filled it with the grain of Will, and in this manner they caught the wayfarer and appointed ten wardens to watch over him. Five of them faced him with their backs towards the outside. These five refer to the five external senses. The other five wardens faced him

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<sup>1</sup> Suhrawardi, *The Philosophical Allegories and Mystical Treatises*, p. 81.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, pp. 117-118.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, pp. 104-105.

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representing five internal senses.<sup>1</sup>

Suhrawardi fleshes out the last allegory of senses, five chambers and five gates in “On the Reality of Love”. On his way, the wayfarer seeks the inhabited quarter and reaches the city, catching sight of a three-storied pavilion. The first story is fitted with two chambers. In the first is someone extremely clever but his dominant trait is forgetfulness. “He can solve any problem in a flash, but he never remembers anything.” This first chamber alludes to *sensus communis*. The faculty of imagination is epitomized by the next chamber. “It takes him a long time to discover allusions, but once he understands he never forgets.”<sup>2</sup> Then the wayfarer goes to the second story. There are two chambers representing the estimative faculty and the imaginative power. The memorizing faculty exists in the third story, storing specific significances. “He is absorbed in thought. The many things left to him in trust are piled around him, and he never betrays anyone’s faith in him. Whatever profit is made from these things is entrusted to him so that they may be put to use again.”<sup>3</sup>

On the way, confronts the wayfarer with five gates. By the

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid, pp. 20-21.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, pp. 64-65.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, p. 65.

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five gates, Suhravardi alludes to the five exterior senses. At first, the faculty of seeing is depicted: “The first has two doorways, in each of which is an oblong, almond-shaped. Throne with two curtains, one black and the other white, hung before. There are many ropes fastened to the gate. On both of the thrones reclines someone who serves as a look-out.”<sup>1</sup>

The faculty of perceiving sounds is the next:

Going to the second gate, he will find two doorways, beyond each of which is a corridor, long and twisted and talismanically sealed. At the end of each corridor is a round throne, and over the two reclines someone who is a master of news and information. He has messengers who are continually on the go seizing every sound that comes to be and delivering it to the master, who comprehends it.

The power of smelling is represented by the third gate having two doorways from each one the seeker will go through a long corridor until he emerges in a chamber in which there are two seats, on which someone sits. “He has a servant called Air who goes around the world every day and brings a bit of every good and foul thing he sees.”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, pp. 65-66.

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The fourth gate illustrates the mouth and teeth and the power of tasting. “This one is wider than the other three. Inside is a pleasant spring surrounded by a wall of pearl. In the middle of the spring is a divan that moves and on it sits someone who is called the Taster.”<sup>1</sup>

The faculty of touching is the last gate which surrounds the city. Everything that is in the city is within the scope of this gate, around about which a carpet is spread, and on the carpet sits someone ruling over eight different things and distinguishes among the eight.<sup>2</sup> The eight different things hint at the eight tastes, usually enumerated as: sweet, greasy, bitter, salty, sharp, harsh, salty like the sea, and vinegary.<sup>3</sup>

### **Emanation**

Emanation is the second philart issue I pointed it out. The Peripatetic philosophers believed in ten separate intellects emanate from the First Being. The tenth one, the Active Intellect, generates the sublunary realm.<sup>4</sup> The philosophers did not assert that they were acquainted with the manner in which all the other numerous existents emanated, but

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid, pp. 66-67.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, p. 67.

<sup>3</sup> Freedman, *Food: The History of Taste*, p. 168.

<sup>4</sup> Ibn Sina, *Shifa (al-Ilahiat)*, pp. 386-393.

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concerned themselves only with the nine spheres. They have claimed ten intellects, only because it is unfeasible for there to be less than that in view of the nine universal spheres and the sublunary realm. In traditional cosmology, the nine spheres and the sublunary realm managed by ten intellects are on the well known descending route of the Origin.<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless, in the book of *Hikmah al-Ishraq* Suhrawardi concentrates on the manifold of planets located on the sphere of the Fixed Stars, arguing that's not feasible just one intellect emanate all of them. And this begged the question how many are the intellects. Suhrawardi holds that the intellects are more than ten, twenty, and two hundred.<sup>2</sup> In *Alvah Emadi*, he also emphasizes that there are too many intellects, quoting *Quran*'s verse: "None knows the armies of your Lord save Himself", yet in his allegorical treatises, Suhrawardi symbolizes the theory of the ten intellects and the nine spheres in which Avicenna believes.<sup>3</sup> Suhrawardi

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<sup>1</sup> As Chittick holds: "The basic outline is the same as that already present in the Arabic Plotinus: intellect, soul, heavenly spheres, four elements.... Some of the philosophers have developed it into several degrees as did Farabi and Avicenna, who spoke not of one intellect and one soul, but of ten intellects and ten souls." See Chittick, *The Heart of Islamic Philosophy: The Quest for Self-Knowledge in the Teachings of Afdal Al-Din Kashani*, p. 57.

<sup>2</sup> Suhrawardi, *Majmu'e-ye Musannafat-e Shaykh-e Ishraq*, vol. 2, pp. 139-140.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, vol. 3, pp. 148-149; Ibn Sina, *Isharat va Tanbihat*, vol. 3, pp. 165-166; Ibn Sina, *Shifa*, p. 401; Ibn Sina, *Nejat*, p. 648; and Ibn Sina, *Mabda va Maad*, pp. 67-68.

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briefly hints at ten intellects by ten old men in “Treatise on Towers”.<sup>1</sup>

In “The Sound of Gabriel’s Wing”, ten intellects are symbolized by ten old men again. The wayfarer says of them, “When I looked I saw ten old men of beautiful countenance seated on a bench. I was so amazed by their magnificence and splendor and so staggered by the sight of their throne, their beauty, their white hair, their garments and trappings that I could not speak.”<sup>2</sup>

The old man who was on the end of the bench greeted the wayfarer in a most kindly-disposed manner, saying, “We are a group of abstracted ones, come from the direction of Nowheresville.” that denotes the ten intellects are not from material world but are Separate Intellects.

“Why do the elders seated above you keep silent?” asked the wayfarer. “Because the likes of you are unworthy to approach them,” responded the tenth and last of them, the Active Intellect, “I serve as their tongue, for they will never deign to address the likes of you.”

In some cases just the tenth intellect is mentioned. In “A Tale of Occidental Exile” the Active Intellect is allegorized

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<sup>1</sup> Suhravardi, *Majmu’e-ye Musannafat-e Shaykh-e Ishraq*, vol. 3, p. 470.

<sup>2</sup> Suhravardi, *The Philosophical Allegories and Mystical Treatises*, pp. 9-10.

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by the father: “I ascended the mountain and saw our father, an old man from the brilliance of whose light the heavens and earth were nearly split open.” narrates the wayfarer.<sup>1</sup>

The luminous elder, the first child of creation, and the Red Intellect are other allegories of the tenth intellect brought in the treatise of “The Red Intellect”. Here is a short conversation the wayfarer struck up with him:

I said, “Young man, where do you come from?”

“My son,” he replied, “you have addressed me mistakenly. I am the first child of creation. You call me young?!”

“Why are your features not white?” I asked. “My features are white,” said the Red Intellect. “I am a luminous elder.”<sup>2</sup>

And in “On the Reality of Love” the tenth intellect is a young old man called Eternal Wisdom.

Above this nine-storied pavilion is a vault called the City of the Soul. ... At the gate to that city is stationed a young old man whose name is Eternal Wisdom... He is old in years but

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid, p. 120.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, p. 21.

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has never seen the passage of time. He is very, very old but is still untouched by decrepitude.”<sup>1</sup>

The Active Intellect has never seen the passage of time because he is the tenth Separate Intellect and there is no time in their world. Consequently, he is young.

The nine-storied pavilion above which is the City of the Soul hints at Suhravardi’s cosmology I will develop it in the next section.

The Red Intellect describes that every white thing that is connected to light appears red when admixed with black, like the sunset at the beginning of evening or the end of dawn, which is white where it is connected to the Sun’s light. One side of it is toward the light, which is white, while the other side is toward the night, which is black. Therefore it appears red. When the crescent moon rises, although its light is borrowed, it is nonetheless described as light. Since one side of it is toward day and the other side toward night, it appears red. A flame has the same quality.<sup>2</sup>

The white side is the allegory of the Separate Intellects while the black side is the allegory of the sublunary world. For the Active Intellect is the last Separate Intellect and is

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid, p. 64.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, pp. 21-22.

## Chapter IV: Mystical Experience ♦ 147

responsible for the sublunary realm, he has located between the white and the black sides.

Suhravardi explains the relation between the intellects and the spheres as well as the relation between the intellects themselves. In “The sound of Gabriel’s Wing”, when the wayfarer asks the old man about a basin with eleven layers, he explains the relation between the intellects and the spheres. The first layer whose body is greater than any of the others, was arranged and put together by the old man who is seated at the highest level.

The second was done by the second one, the third by the third, and so on down to me. These nine comrades and companions produced the nine layers by their own labor and handicraft. The two bottom levels, along with the bit of water and sand, were produced by me. Since their foundation is stronger, their handiwork cannot be rent or pierced, but what I have made can be.<sup>1</sup>

Then the old man explains the relation between the intellects themselves. The elder who is in the highest place is the master teacher and tutor of the second elder, who sits beside him. He has signed the second elder’s order of

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid, pp. 11-12.

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investiture, the second has signed the third's order, the third the fourth's order, and so on down to the tenth.<sup>1</sup>

As I remarked, the idea of the ten Separate Intellects results in that of the nine spheres. In "A Day with a Group of Sufis" Suhravardi himself has decoded his allegories about nine spheres.<sup>2</sup>

At first, he mentions the theory in allegorical form. Then he explains his own allegories. Given that Suhravardi is clear about his cosmology, we are allowed to decode his cosmology, corresponding the allegories to the nine and eleven spheres.

The master says, "There is a well-known tale in their craft, but no one tells it fully, and no one knows the meaning of it." "What is this tale?" asks the wayfarer. His master goes through the story:

Once, an engraver had a jewel. He wanted to display his skill on it. So from it he made a round shell like a ball. Then, from

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> Despite Suhravardi Ibn al-ʿArabī's method considered highly complex, subtle, as well as resisting any simple and straightforward understanding. Nettler says: "It yields itself only to the most strenuous interpretative efforts and then only partially, often leaving unresolved problems and some degree of ambiguity." (Nettler, *Sufi Metaphysics and Quranic Prophets: Ibn al-Arabi's Thought and Method in the Fusus al-Hikam*, p. 2).

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the residue left in the middle of the shell he made another shell inside the first. Again, from the residue of the second he made a third, and so on until he had made nine shells.

The engraver then polished the first shell and engraved a few medallions on the second shell and gilded it. On the third, fourth, and so on to the ninth shells he engraved one medallion each.

After the allegorical tale, Suhravardi starts decoding it. “When the Creator created these spheres, he sent a light to the first sphere.” For a sphere is an intermediary between being and non-being, the first sphere was too subtle to bear it. It borders on existence. Then again, it is continuous with nonexistence. As a consequence, the light reached the second sphere, which was able to bear it.

The light was broken up against the second sphere, and every part became a star. What was left over from these stars, came to the third sphere, and from that residue Saturn came into being. Again, what was left over from Saturn reached the fourth sphere, and the body of Jupiter came into being. And so on, Mars from residue of Jupiter, the Sun from the residue of Mars, Venus from the residue of the Sun, Mercury from

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the residue of Venus, and from the residue of Mercury, the Moon.<sup>1</sup>

Sometimes Suhravardi speaks of the eleven spheres, adding two spheres of *zamharir* and *ether*.<sup>2</sup> In “A Day with a Group of Sufis”, asked the wayfarer, “Why is the body of the Sun bigger and brighter than the other stars?” His master said “Because it is in the middle. The Sun is in the middle, provided you count the seven planets. And just as there are two spheres above the seven, there are two other spheres below them, *ether* and *zamharir*. Therefore, by any reckoning the Sun is in the middle.”<sup>3</sup>

The eleven spheres, in “The Red Intellect”, are symbolized by the eleven mountains.<sup>4</sup> And in “The Sound of Gabriel’s Wing” there are eleven layers of a basin which the wayfarer saw in the courtyard.<sup>5</sup> The first level had no button at all, whereas the second level had many luminous buttons on it. Because the first level of the basin is allegory of the Sphere

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<sup>1</sup> Suhravardi, *The Philosophical Allegories and Mystical Treatises*, pp. 34-35.

<sup>2</sup> The eleven spheres system is attributed to Ptolemy and his disciples. See more details in: Cachey, “Cosmology, geography, and cartography”, pp. 221-240.

<sup>3</sup> Suhravardi, *The Philosophical Allegories and Mystical Treatises*, p. 36.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, p. 22.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*, p. 11.

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of the spheres and the second level is the allegory of the sphere of the Fixed Stars. “On each of the remaining seven of the upper nine levels of the basin a bright button was fastened.” These buttons represent Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Sun, Venus, Mercury, and Moon.<sup>1</sup>

The wayfarer seeks the intelligible happiness, getting away from sublunary realm and these spheres to the Separate world.<sup>2</sup>

### **Suhravardi’s Background: (2) Ibn Tufail**

Along with philart approach, Suhravardi and Ibn Tufail take a *Quranic* approach. The *Quranic* approach would be seen in Ibn Tufail’s sole surviving manuscript, *Hayy Ibn Yaqzan* and Suhravardi’s “A Tale of the Occidental Exile.” Even though Suhravardi does not refer to Ibn Tufail, his influence on Suhravardi is clear on this count. The treatise of “A Tale of the Occidental Exile” is replete with allegories about philosophical issues on the one hand, and intertextuality of *Quran* pervades mostly the entire recital on the other.

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid, pp. 10-12.

<sup>2</sup> I hold this aspect is the superiority of Suhravardi over Mulla Sadra sharing reason and intuition as well as revelation. See Zailan, *Revelation, Intellectual Intuition and Reason in the Philosophy of Mulla Sadra: An Analysis of the Al-Hikmah Al-'arshiyyah*.

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### Intertextuality

Coined in 1966, the term of intertextuality means some sort of interrelation between a text and other texts or the shaping of a text's meaning by another text. Transposition, another term for intertextuality, "implies the abandonment of a former sign-system, the passage to a second via an instinctual intermediary common to the two systems and the articulation of the new system with its new representability."<sup>1</sup>

Both allusion and quotation is considered intertextuality. Intertextuality might be applied by writers in novels, poetry, and even in non-written texts such as painting, digital media, performances, to name a few.<sup>2</sup>

Here I try to categorize *Quranic* approaches in four variants all of, or at least some of <sup>3</sup> which include intertextuality:

1. General approach
2. Quotation or Direct approach

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<sup>1</sup> Kristeva, *Kristeva Reader*, p. 112. See also Hanemann, *Sites of Resistance: Language, Intertextuality, and Subjectivity in the Poetry of Diane Wakoski*, P.11.

<sup>2</sup> See Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*; Hallo, *The World's Oldest Literature: Studies in Sumerian Belles-Lettres*, p. 622.

<sup>3</sup> provided one disputes the definitin of intertextuality.

3. Mystic Allegory

4. Aesthetic Approach

### ***Quranic Approaches***

**1. General Approach.** The first of *Quranic* approaches is “general approach to *Quran*.” I mean by general approach to adopt *Quran* as the cornerstone of one’s whole philosophy. Suhrawardi takes such an approach in “Kalimah al-Tasawof” where he emphasizes to hold fast to the bond of *Quran*.<sup>1</sup>

**2. Quotation or Direct Approach.** Quotation or direct approach means that one quotes the verses of *Quran* in his/her text. Suhrawardi does quote *Quran* in many of his works, some of which follows:

“The Treatise of the Birds” (27:227)<sup>2</sup>, “The Sound of Gabriel’s Wing” (32:7-9; 19:17; 4:171; 31:27; 18:110; 79:4-5; 37: 165-166; 37:1-2; 2:124)<sup>3</sup>, “On the Reality of Love” (12:3)<sup>4</sup>, to name but a few.

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<sup>1</sup> See “Kalimah al-Tasawof” in: Suhrawardi, *Majmu’e-ye Musannafat-e Shaykh-e Ishraq*, vol. 4, p. 102.

<sup>2</sup> Suhrawardi, *The Philosophical Allegories and Mystical Treatises*, p. 7.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, pp. 15-16.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, p. 58.

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**3. Mystic allegory.** At times intertextuality includes the reference to or application of some verses or part of a verse, connoting the meaning of the verse.

For example in the beginning of “A Tale of the Occidental Exile”: “All of a sudden, we came to the City whose people are evildoers (4:75)”<sup>1</sup> is a reference to this verse:

“So why is it, that you do not fight in the way of Allah, and for the abased among men, women, and children who say: 'Our Lord, bring us out from this village whose people are harmdoers, and give to us a guardian from You, and give to us a helper from You.'”

Two references to *Quran* are seen also in this passage of “A Tale of the Occidental Exile”: “Whilst we were ascending at night and descending at day, we saw on a moonlit night how the hoopoe (cf. 27:20) entered through the window and saluted us. It carried in its beak a note, sent from the right bank of the watercourse, in the sacred hollow, coming from the tree (28:30).”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Translation of Hämeen-Anttila in “Suhrawardi’s Western Exile as Artistic Prose”, p. 107; See also Suhrawardi, *The Philosophical Allegories and Mystical Treatises*, p. 113.

<sup>2</sup> Translation of Hämeen-Anttila in “Suhrawardi’s Western Exile as Artistic Prose”, p. 108; See also Suhrawardi, *The Philosophical Allegories and Mystical Treatises*, p. 114.

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“The hoopoe” refers to this verse: “He reviewed the birds and said: Why is it that I do not see the hoopoe here? Or is he among the absent?”

“It carried in its beak a note, sent from the right bank of the watercourse, in the sacred hollow, coming from the tree” is a reference to this verse: “When he came to it, he was called from the right bank in the blessed plot of the tree: Moses, I am Allah, Lord of the Worlds.”

**4. Aesthetic Approach.** In some cases references do not connote the meaning of the verse but just employ the words of *Quran*, using its aesthetic aspects.

Once again in the treatise of “A Tale of the Occidental Exile” is seen this approach.

Consider this sentence: “I was freed from fourteen coffins and ten tombs from which the shadow of God emanates so that I was drawn gently (25:46).”<sup>1</sup>

This part: “I was drawn gently” (*qabdan yasiran*) refers to the verse:

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<sup>1</sup> Hämeen-Anttila, “Suhrawardi’s Western Exile as Artistic Prose” p. 110; see also Thackston’s translation, “an easy contraction”, in Suhrawardi, *The Philosophical Allegories and Mystical Treatises*, p. 118.

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“Thereafter We seize it to Us withdrawing it gently.  
(*qabdan yasiran*)”

Another example: “Go where you are told to”<sup>1</sup> or “Go wherever you are commanded.”<sup>2</sup> It refers to the following verse: “Go to a place where you are commanded.”<sup>3</sup>

Throughout the treatise of “A Tale of the Occidental Exile”, we see the variants of intertextuality.

### “A Tale of the Occidental Exile”<sup>4</sup>

Suhrawardi’s poetic language and intertextual technique reflects the process by which he lays the philosophical issues out in two philart and *Quranic* approaches. After examining his philart approach, here I center my discussion on his *Quranic* approaches, albeit I cannot place distinct borders between these two approaches. It is fair to say throughout “A Tale of the Occidental Exile,” Suhrawardi has a literary style, weaving together the words and phrases of

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<sup>1</sup> Hämeen-Anttila, “Suhrawardi’s Western Exile as Artistic Prose”, p. 108.

<sup>2</sup> Thackston’s translation: Suhrawardi, *The Philosophical Allegories and Mystical Treatises*, p. 115.

<sup>3</sup> The last part of the verse 15:65.

<sup>4</sup> Hämeen-Anttila, “Suhrawardi’s Western Exile as Artistic Prose”, pp. 105–118.

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*Quran*. Giving and explaining several examples, follows the full text of “A Tale of the Occidental Exile”.

At the beginning of “A Tale of the Occidental Exile”, Suhravardi names narrator’s brother *Asim* which is repeated three times in *Quran*: “... They have no protector from Allah...” (10:27), “... Nuh said: There is no protector today from Allah’s punishment but He Who has mercy...” (11:43), “... there shall be no savior for you from Allah...” (40:33).

I was traveling with my brother Protector (*Asim*) from Transoxania to the *Maghreb*, to catch some birds on the banks of the Green Abyss.

In the following passage, Suhravardi describes the town in which were captured the narrator and his brother, referring to three verses of *Quran* (4:75), “... Lord, set us free from this town of wrong doers...,”

(22:45) “How many populations have We destroyed, which were given to wrong-doing? They tumbled down on their roofs. And how many wells are lying idle and neglected, and castles lofty and well-built?” and (29:31)

“... we are about to destroy the people of that township, for its people are wrong-doers.”

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All of a sudden, we came to the City whose people are evildoers. I mean the city of *Qayrawan*.

The next phrase refers to these two verses: “When the fetters and chains are round their necks they shall be dragged,” (40:71) and

“Indeed, for the unbelievers We have prepared chains, fetters and a Blazing (Fire)” (76:4).

When its inhabitants perceived that we had come upon them unexpectedly and that we were children of the old man known by the name of Guiding, the son of Good, the Yemenite, they surrounded and captured us, putting us in chains and iron shackles.

Once again two parts of following passage refers to the verse (22:45).

They imprisoned us at the bottom of a well, infinitely deep. The neglected well was filled with life by our presence. Above, there was a lofty palace with numerous towers.

The following underlined phrase includes intertextuality from these verses: “... Do not slay Yusuf, and cast him down into the bottom of the pit...” (12:10) and “... and agreed that they should put him down at the bottom of the pit...” (12:15).

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It was said to us: “It will not be held against you if you ascend to the palace naked in the evening. But in the morning you cannot evade falling back to the bottom of the pit.”

“Darkness above darkness” is the very phrase of *Quran* in following verse while the remainder differs from in the part of speech. “Or like utter darkness in the deep sea: there covers it a wave above which is another wave, above which is a cloud, (layers of) utter darkness one above another; when he holds out his hand, he is almost unable to see it; and to whomsoever Allah does not give light, he has no light” (24:40)

At the bottom of the well there was darkness above darkness; when we put forth our hands, well nigh we could not see them. Yet at evening times we used to climb up to the palace and look from a window at the open space. Oftentimes doves came to us from the thickets of Yemen to tell us about the state of the holy meadow. At other times, we were visited by Yemeni lightning which flashed on the right, eastern side and told us about the nocturnal events of *Najd*. The fragrance of *arak* added emotion to our emotion. We became filled with emotion and yearned for our homeland.

The Hoopoe is mentioned in the verse (27:20), “... Why is it I see not the Hoopoe? Or is he among the absentees?”

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Whilst we were ascending at night and descending at day, we saw on a moonlit night how the hoopoe entered through the window and saluted us.

And the next sentence refers to the verse (28:30): "... He was called from the right bank in the blessed plot of the tree."

It carried in its beak a note, sent from the right bank of the water-course, in the sacred hollow, coming from the tree.

The following phrase refers to the verse (27:22): "... and I come unto thee from Sheba with sure tidings."

It said to us: "I have comprehended a way for your salvation and I have come to you from Sheba with a sure tidings.

This very part of the verse (27:30) follows in the treatise: "... and it is 'In the Name of Allah, the Merciful, the Most Merciful.'"

That will be explained in this letter of your father." We read the note, and it said: "It is from your father Guiding." It read: "In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate. We aroused longing in you but you did not long. We summoned you but you did not set forth. We signaled to you but you did not understand."

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“All of you united hold fast to the rope of God...” (3:103) could be seen in the next passage with a difference in the part of speech:

He (i.e., our Father) addressed me in the note, saying: “O you, if you wish to be saved with your brother, then you two must not tire of traveling determinedly. Hold fast to our rope which is the Dragon’s Tail of the holy sphere, the master of the regions of eclipse.

The use of “Valley of the Ants” would be regarded as aesthetic approach, referring to the verse (27:18): “And when they came to the Valley of the Ants, an ant said: ‘Ants, go into your dwellings lest Solomon and his army should, unknowingly, crush you.’”

When you come to the Valley of the Ants dust the lowest part of your garment and say:

The concept of “brought me to life after having made me dead” might be seen in these verses: (2:28), (41:39), (22:66), (53:44), (2:243), (45:5), (16:65), (29:63), (2:164).

The very phrase of “and to Whom is the uprising” is in the verse (67:15): “... and to Him is the return after death.”

Praised be God who brought me to life after having made me dead and to Whom is the uprising.

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This phrase “your wife who belongs to those bygone” refers to five verses: (29:32), (29:33), (15:60), (77:57), (7:83).

Then cause your family to perish and kill your wife who belongs to those bygone.

“Go where you are told to” might be a reference to the verse (15:65): “... Go to a place where you are commanded.” There is a distinction just in the part of speech. And the remainder, “because the last remnant of these will be cut off in the morning,” is a part of the verse (15:66).

Go where you are told to because the last remnant of these will be cut off in the morning. Embark the ship and say: ‘In the Name of God shall be its course and berthing’ (11:41).” In the note he explained all that was to happen on the road. The hoopoe went before us until the sun (cf. 27:24) was above our head and we arrived at the edge of the shade. We boarded the ship which ran with us amid waves like mountains (11:42). We wanted to ascend Mount Sinai to visit the hermitage of our father. The waves came between me and my child, and he was among the drowned (11:43). I knew that the promised time of my people was the morning: was the morning not nigh (11:81)? I also knew that the city that had been doing deeds of corruption (21:74) would be turned uppermost nethermost and stones of baked clay, one on another, would be rained on it (11:82). When we arrived at a place where waves hit against each other (cf. 18:61) and

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waters were rolling I took my wet nurse who had given me breast, and threw her into the sea (28:7). We had been traveling on a ship (jāriya, 69:11) which had planks and palm-cords (54:13). We made a hole in the ship (18:71) being afraid of a king behind us who was seizing every ship by brutal force (18:79). The laden ship (26:119) had sailed with us by the island of Gog and Magog (cf. 18:94), to the left of Mount al-Jūdī (11:44). I had with me some satans who worked before me (34:12) and under my command was the Fount of Molten Brass (34:12). So I said to the satans: “Blow!” until it became like fire (18:95). I set up a rampart (18:94) so that I was separated from them. Thus, the promise of my Lord became fulfilled (18:98). On the road I saw the skulls of ‘Ad and Thamūd. I wandered in that region which was fallen upon its turrets (22:45). I took the two burdens along with the spheres and put them, together with the satans, into a round bottle which I had myself made and which had stripes on it, like circles. I crossed the rivers in the centre of the sky (or: I cut the rivers from the liver of the sky). When water was cut off from the mill, the building (cf. 2:22) collapsed and air was freed into the air. I cast the sphere of the spheres on the skies so that it ground the sun and the moon and the stars. I was freed from fourteen coffins and ten tombs from which the shadow of God emanates so that I was drawn gently (25:46) to holiness after He had set the sun to be a guide to it (25:45). Then I encountered God’s path and realized that this was my road, straight (6:153). A chastisement of God had enveloped (12:107) by night (7:4)

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my sister-consort and she spent the night in a dark portion of the night (10:27; 11:81), feverish and haunted by nightmares that resulted in a serious fit (cf. 69:7). Then I saw a lamp containing oil, and from it flowed light which spread to all corners (cf. 55:33) of the house (cf. 24:36). Its niche was illuminated and its inhabitants lit up from the illumination of the sun's light above them (cf. 24:35). I put the lamp into the mouth of a dragon which rested in the tower of a water wheel. Below, there was a Red Sea and above, stars. The places where their rays fell were only known to the Creator and those firmly rooted in knowledge (3:7). I saw that the lion and the bull had disappeared and the bow and the crab had been folded within the fold of the spheres' revolution. The scales remained balanced when the Yemenite star rose from behind thin clouds composed of what the spiders of the elementary world's corners had knit in the world of generation and corruption. We had some small cattle with us. These we left in a desert where earthquakes destroyed them and the lightning's fire fell upon them. When the distance had been crossed, the road cut off and the oven boiled (11:40; 23:27) from the conical shape, I saw the celestial bodies. I came to them and heard their tunes and melodies. I learned their songs, and their sounds reverberated in my ears like the sound of a chain drawn across a solid rock. My sinews were almost cut and my joints torn apart by the rapture I felt. This went on until the clouds dispersed and the membrane was torn. I emerged from the cavities (9:57) and caves (cf. Surah 18) until I had passed the chambers (49:4), heading for the

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Fountain of Life (cf. 18:86). I saw the great rock (18:63) on the top of a hill, like a great mountain. I asked the fish (7:163; 18:63) which had assembled in the Fountain of Life, enjoying and taking pleasure in the great, overtowering mountain's shade: "What is this mountain? What is this great rock?" One of the fish took its way in the sea, burrowing (18:61), and said: "This is what you were seeking (18:64). This hill is Mount Sinai and the rock is your father's hermitage." I asked: "What are these fish?" He replied: "They are your likes. You are sons of one father. To them happened like unto you. They are your brothers." When I heard and realized this, I embraced them. I rejoiced in them and they rejoiced in me. I climbed the hill and saw our father, a grand old man. The heavens and the earth were well nigh split asunder (19:90) through the revelation of his light (cf. 7:143). I remained baffled and confused (cf. 7:143) because of him but I went to him. He greeted me and I prostrated myself before him and was almost annihilated in his radiant light. I cried for a while and lamented to him the imprisonment of Qayrawan. He said to me: "Come now! You have freed yourself, except that you must return to the Western imprisonment because you have not as yet completely laid aside your chains." When I heard his words, I lost my mind. I sighed and yelled like one who is on the verge of ruin and I pleaded with him. He answered: "The return is now inevitable. But I give you glad tidings of two things. One is that when you have returned to your imprisonment, you may come to us and ascend easily to our paradise whenever you want to. The second is that in the end

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you will be free in our presence and you will totally leave all the Western regions." I rejoiced in what he said. Then he said to me: "Know that this is Mount Sinai. Above this hill is Mount Sinin (95:2), the abode of my father, your grandfather. In relation to him, I am no more than you are in relation to me. We have further ancestors, until the lineage ends with the king who is the greatest ancestor and has no ancestor or father. We are all his slaves, from him we borrow our light and take our fire. To him belongs the greatest splendor, the loftiest majesty and the most dominant light. He is the highest of high, the light of light and above light, for all eternity, past and future.

He is manifest to all things and all things perish, except His face (28:88)." In the middle of this tale my state changed and I fell from on high into the pit (101:9) among people who were not believers and was again imprisoned in the *Maghreb*. Yet there stayed with me a pleasure which I cannot explain. I wailed and supplicated and sighed because of the separation. That comfort passed as quickly as dreams. May God save us from the captivity of Nature and the chains of matter. And say: "Praise belongs to God. He shall show you His signs and you will recognize them. Thy Lord is not heedless of the things you do" (27:93). And say: "Praise belongs to God. Nay, but most of them have no knowledge" (31:25). Prayers be upon His prophet and all his family.

### **Ibn Tufail: Philart Approach in Action**

Abu Bakr Ibn Tufail al-Andalusi<sup>1</sup> (c. 1105–1185) is reckoned as a polymath: philosopher, theologian, physician<sup>2</sup>, astronomer, vizier, and court official. His writings did not survive save for *Hayy Ibn Yaqzan*. *Hayy Ibn Yaqzan* is deemed the first philosophical novel.

As I have already remarked, Farabi holds that true art and the ideal artist of his ‘Utopia’ (Al-Madina Al-Fadilah) should make a variety of images for philosophical issues and divine happiness, making these abstract concepts conceivable for the public. Suhrawardi plays the role of Farabi’s ideal artist of the Utopia, i.e., philartist. In his allegorical treatises, Suhrawardi illustrates his philosophical views through visual metaphors, telling the story of the worshipper who seeks divine happiness by traveling toward the heavenly spheres.

Considering him a novelist, Ibn Tufail would be considered a philartist as well. Although his work, by and large does not include allegory, at least relative to Avicenna and

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<sup>1</sup> Abu Bakr Muhammad ibn Abd al-Malik ibn Muhammad ibn Tufail al-Qaisi al-Andalusi; Latinized form: Abubacer Aben Tofail; Anglicized form: Abubekar or Abu Jaafar Ebn Tophail.

<sup>2</sup> Expressing autopsy in his novel, he constitutes an early supporter of dissection.

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Suhravardi, literature by itself is reckoned as art in its broader account. That being the case, artist could be applied to, for example, the poets, the musicians, the writers as well as the novelists.<sup>1</sup>

Lacking allegory, Ibn Tufail's manner seems more consistent with Farabi's theory. As I discussed beforehand, Farabi holds the public, based on their nature and general habits, are not able to perceive intelligible truths. The path to intelligible happiness, then, must be presented to them via their imagination. This task is undertaken by the Prophet, who has been linked to the Active Intellect and has thus received all facts in both intelligible and imaginary forms. Apart from the Prophet, artists must handle the problem and deal with people's different capacities of understanding. Avicenna's allegories and those of Suhravardi suggest its own elaboration, so that led on by it we are drawn to decode clearly the standpoint from which we can best interpret philosophical conceptions. On the contrary, in Ibn Tufail's novel there is no need for us to decipher complexities.

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<sup>1</sup> See my conceptualization of sciart and philart in preceding parts.

**Ibn Tufail's *Hayy Ibn Yaqzan*<sup>1</sup>**

“In England Papists, Turks, and Muhammadans<sup>2</sup> were indiscriminately lumped together as atheists threatening both Church and State.”<sup>3</sup> As for Russell in an age which was characterized, contrary to its label,<sup>4</sup> by unreasonable currents of religious persecution and intolerance, *Hayy Ibn Yaqzan* surprisingly became a bestseller within a short period of time. “Although one should not discount the appeal of its charismatic title, *Philosophus autodidactus*, to the age of the new philosophy, it is not sufficient to explain why an Islamic work from the medieval past should sustain such interest to become literally a bestseller.... Therefore in the face of virulent hostility to Islam as a false religion, the enthusiastic reception of an Arabic text which was not

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<sup>1</sup> Abu Bakr Ibn Tufail, *The history of Hayy Ibn Yaqzan*, translated from the Arabic by Simon Ockley, revised, with an introduction by A.S. Fulton. London: Chapman and Hall, 1929.

<sup>2</sup> Muhammadan (also spelled Mohammedan, Mahommedan, Mahomedan, or Mahometan) is archaic term for Muslims. The word was formerly common in usage, but the terms Muslim and Islamic are more common nowadays.

<sup>3</sup> Russell, “The Impact of *Philosophus Autodidactus*: Pocockes, John Locke and the Society of Friends”, P. 228.

<sup>4</sup> He refers to the Enlightenment or the Age of Enlightenment. While French historians traditionally place the Enlightenment between 1715, the year that Louis XIV died, and 1789, the beginning of the French Revolution, some recent historians begin the era in the 1620s, when starts the scientific revolution.

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scriptural, nor specifically mathematical, astronomical, or medical, defies expectation.”<sup>1</sup>

Russell seeks the answers in the content of *Hayy Ibn Yaqzan* and its relevance to the central intellectual concerns of the second half of the seventeenth century.

*Hayy Ibn Yaqzan* for the first time was translated into English by Simon Ockley in 1708.<sup>2</sup> Ockley dedicated it to the Reverend Edward Pococke:

Mr. Edward Pococke,  
Rector of  
MINAL, in Wiltshire.

Reverend SIR,

Hai Ebn Yokdhan returns to you again, in a Dress different from that which you sent him out in. Wherever he comes, he acknowledges you for his first and best Master; and confesses that his being put in a Capacity to travel thro’ Europe, is owing to your Hand. I could not in Equity send him to any other Person, you being the sole Proprietor. And as your Learning enables you to do him Justice, so your Candor will

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<sup>1</sup> Russell, “The Impact of *Philosophus Autodidactus*: Pocockes, John Locke and the Society of Friends”, P. 228.

<sup>2</sup> London: Printed and sold by E. Powell, 1708.

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incline you to pardon what is by me done amiss. Both which Qualifications you enjoy, as a Paternal Inheritance, descending from the Reverend and Learned Dr. Pococke, --- the Glory and Ornament of our Age and Nation. Whose Memory I much reverence, and how much I acknowledge my self indebted to him for his Learned Works, I thought I could no way express better, than by taking some Opportunity to pay my Respects to you, Sir, the worthy Son of so great a Father. And no fitter Bearer than--- Hai Ebn Yokdhan, with whose Character and Language you are so well acquainted, and to whom you have long ago shown so great a Respect, that I have no reason to fear but he will be welcome.

I am,  
SIR,  
Your most humble Servant,  
Simon Ockley<sup>1</sup>

Ockley in the preface of the treatise of *Hayy Ibn Yaqzan* mentioned that the first publication was in 1671. In 1671, Edward Pococke translated *Hayy Ibn Yaqzan* into Latin under the title *Philosophus Autodidactus*.

When Mr. Pococke first publish'd this Arabick Author with his accurate Latin Version, Anno 1671. Dr. Pococke his

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<sup>1</sup> This dedication and the following preface lack page numbers.

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Father, that late eminent Profelpr of the Oriental Languages in the University of *Oxford*, prefix'd a Preface to it; in which he tells us, that he has good Reason to think, that this Author was contemporary with *Averroes*, who died very ancient in the Year of the *Hegira* 595, which is coincident with the 1198th Year of our Lord; according to which Account, the Author liv'd something above five hundred Years ago.

He liv'd in *Spain*, as appears from one or two Passages in this Book. He wrote some other Pieces, which are not come to our Hands.<sup>1</sup> This has been very well receiv'd in the East; one Argument of which is, that it has been translated by *R. Moses Narbonensis* into *Hebrew*, and illustrated with a large Commentary. The Design of the Author is to shew, how Human Capacity, unassisted by any External Help, may, by due Application, attain to the Knowledge of Natural Things, and so by Degrees find out its Dependance<sup>2</sup> upon a Superior Being, the Immortality of the Soul, and all things necessary to Salvation.

How well he has succeeded in this Attempt, I leave to the Reader to judge. 'Tis certain, that he was a Man of Parts and very good Learning, considering the Age he liv'd in, and the way of studying in those Times. There are a great many

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<sup>1</sup> The spellings and upper cases are exactly according to the original text.

<sup>2</sup> In each case including this one, spellings correspond to Ockley's original writing.

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lively Stroaks in it; and I doubt not but a judicious Reader will find his Account in the Perusal of it.

Then Ockley mentioned two English translations: “I was not willing (’though importun’d) to undertake the translating it into English, because I was inform’d that it had been done twice already; once by Dr. Ashwell, another time by the Quakers, who imagin’d that there was something in, it that favoured their Enthusiastick Notions. However, taking it for granted, that both these Translations we’re not made out of the Original Arabick, but out of the Latin; I did not question but they had mistaken the Sense of the Author in many places.”

The Ockley’s translation is revised with an introduction by A. S. Fulton.<sup>1</sup> Another English translation is *Ibn Tufail’s Hayy ibn Yaqzan: a Philosophical Tale*, translated with an introduction and notes by Lenn Evan Goodman.<sup>2</sup> Another one is *The Journey of the Soul: the Story of Hai bin Yaqzan*, translated by Riad Kocache.<sup>3</sup> The other one is *Two Andalusian Philosophers* translated by Jim Colville with an

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<sup>1</sup> Abu Bakr Ibn Tufail, *The history of Hayy Ibn Yaqzan*, translated from the Arabic by Simon Ockley, revised, with an introduction by A.S. Fulton. London: Chapman and Hall, 1929.

<sup>2</sup> New York: Twayne, 1972.

<sup>3</sup> London: Octagon, 1982.

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introduction and notes.<sup>1</sup> A much condensed translation is *Medieval Islamic Philosophical Writings*, edited by Muhammad Ali Khaldidi.<sup>2</sup>

Among others, a reviewed work which could be seen in *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* is “*Ibn Tufayl’s Hayy Ibn Yaqzan: A Philosophical Tale* by Lenn Evan Goodman, Ibn Tufayl” review by Michael E. Marmura.<sup>3</sup> Another reviewed Work is “*Ibn Tufayl’s Hayy Ibn Yaqzan, a Philosophical Tale Translated with Introduction and Notes* by Lenn Evan Goodman” review by Parviz Morewedge in *Philosophy East and West*.<sup>4</sup>

### ***Quranic Approaches in Ibn Tufail***

As I mentioned beforehand, Ibn Tufail’s *Hayy Ibn Yaqzan* is the adventures of an autodidactic feral child a gazelle raised whom in some desert. Hayy discovers ultimate truth on his own. Connecting Asal, comes Hayy into contact with civilization and religion. Ibn Tufail’s novel proves there is

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<sup>1</sup> London: Kegan Paul, 1999.

<sup>2</sup> Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2005.

<sup>3</sup> Marmura, Reviewed Work: “*Ibn Tufayl’s Hayy Ibn Yaqzan: A Philosophical Tale* by Lenn Evan Goodman, Ibn Tufayl”, pp. 426-428.

<sup>4</sup> Morewedge, Reviewed Work: “*Ibn Tufayl’s Hayy Ibn Yaqzan, a Philosophical Tale Translated with Introduction and Notes* by Lenn Evan Goodman”, pp. 117-119.

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no conflict between philosophy and revelation. The verses of *Quran* will be seen in both parts of novel, namely, before and after connecting religion.

The novel's original text includes an introduction the English translation lacks. At the end of the introduction, there are two cases of direct approach, i.e. quote from *Quran*: a part of the verse (12:111), "in their stories is a lesson for those of understanding," as well as some part of the verse (50:37), "a Reminder for him who has a heart or listens attentively while witnessing."<sup>1</sup> Indeed, compelling readers' attention, Ibn Tufail states, "We describe to you Hayy Ibn Yaqzan's tale and Salaman and Asal<sup>2</sup> which named Abu Ali (Avicenna). Then 'in their stories is a lesson for those of understanding,' and 'a Reminder for him who has a heart or listens attentively while witnessing.'"

Showing various and sundry cases of *Quranic* approach follows the full translation of Simon Ockley revised by Alexander Strathern Fulton.

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<sup>1</sup> Ibn Tufail, *Hayy Ibn Yaqzan*, with an introduction and notes from Nader, p. 25; Mahmoud, *Falsafatu Ibn Tufayl Wa Risalatahu*, p. 66.

<sup>2</sup> This character in Avicenna's treatise was named Absal rather than Asal.

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### The Beginning of the *Hayy Ibn Yaqzan*<sup>1</sup>

Narrating two versions of the birth of Hayy Ibn Yaqzan, Ibn Tufail goes on with the story. Based on the first version, Hayy came into the world without father and mother, obviously alluding to the creation of Adam. The second version, as will be seen, has much in common in some respects with the birth of Prophet Musa (Moses).

For the most part, intertextuality would be seen in the end of Ibn Tufail's novel. Throughout Ibn Tufail's *Hayy Ibn Yaqzan*, the *Quranic* comments will appear in the text and the other ones in the footnotes.

***Quranic Approach in Section 1.*** In the phrase “where men come into the world spontaneously without the help of father and mother,” there is a reference to the verse (3:59): “To God the case of Jesus is as that of Adam whom He created from the earth and then said, ‘Exist,’ and Adam came into existence.”

### §1

Our virtuous ancestors (may God be gracious to them!) tell us, that there is an Indian island, situate under the

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<sup>1</sup> Ibn Tufail, *The History of Hayy ibn Yaqzan*, Simon Ockley (trans.) and A.S. Fulton (ed.), New York, Frederick A. Stokes Company, 1929.

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Equinoctial, where men come into the world spontaneously without the help of father and mother. For this island enjoys the most equable and perfect temperature of all places on the Earth, because it receives its light from the highest possible point in the heavens; though it must be confessed that such an assertion is contrary to the opinion of the majority of philosophers<sup>1</sup> and the most celebrated physicians, who affirm that the fourth clime has the most equable temperature of all inhabited regions. Now if they say this because they are convinced that there are no inhabited regions under the Equinoctial, by reason of some terrestrial impediment, their assertion that the fourth clime is the most equable of all places on the rest of the earth would have some appearance of reason. But if their reason be, because of the intense heat of those lands situate under the Equinoctial (which is that which most of them assign) it is absolutely false, and the contrary is proved by undeniable demonstration. For it is demonstrated in Natural Philosophy, that there is no other cause of heat than motion, or else the contact of hot bodies, or light. It is also proved that the Sun, in itself, is not hot, nor partakes of any quality of temperature: it is proved moreover, that the opaque and polished bodies receive light in the greatest degree of perfection; and next to them, the opaque which are

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<sup>1</sup> *Hayy Ibn Yaqzan* is preceded by an introduction which does not appear in Ockley's translation. (See Mahmoud, *Falsafatu Ibn Tufayl Wa Risalatahu*, pp. 56-66) In his introduction, Ibn Tufail presents a review of philosophy of Ibn Baja, Farabi, Avicenna, and Ghazali.

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not polished, and those which are entirely without opacity receive no light at all. This was first demonstrated by Avicenna,<sup>1</sup> never mentioned before by any of the Ancients.<sup>2</sup> From these premises, this consequence will necessarily follow, viz. that the Sun does not communicate his heat to the Earth, after the same manner as hot bodies heat those other bodies which are near them; because the Sun is not hot in itself. Nor can it be said that the Earth is heated by motion, because it stands still, and remains in the same posture, both when the Sun shines upon it, and when it does not, and yet it is evident to sense that there is a vast difference in it, in respect of heat and cold, at those several times. Nor does the Sun first heat the air, and so the Earth; because we may observe in hot weather, that the air which is nearest the Earth is hotter by much than that which is higher and more remote.

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<sup>1</sup> In his original Arabic text, Ibn Tufail addresses Avicenna as Sheikh Abu Ali.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Tufail as a physician-philosopher is controversially considered the first to demonstrate Avicenna's theories of empiricism and tabula rasa as a thought experiment, as he characterized the development of the mind of a feral child from a tabula rasa to that of an adult, in complete isolation from society on a deserted island. The Latin translation of his work inspired John Locke's formulation of tabula rasa in *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, which went on to become one of the principal sources of empiricism in modern Western philosophy, and influenced many Enlightenment philosophers, such as David Hume and George Berkeley. The theory of tabula rasa later generated the nature versus nurture debate in modern psychology (See Russell, "The Impact of *Philosophus Autodidactus*: Pocockes, John Locke and the Society of Friends", pp. 224-262).

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It remains therefore that the Sun has no other way of heating the Earth but by its light, for heat always follows light, so that when its beams are collected, as in burning-glasses for instance, it fires all before it. Now it is established in the exact sciences by precise demonstration, that the Sun is a spherical body, and so is the Earth; and that the Sun is much greater than the Earth; and that part of the Earth which is at all times illuminated by the Sun is above half of it; and that in that half which is illuminated, the light is most intense in the midst, both because that part is the most remote from darkness, as also, because it offers a greater surface to the Sun; and that those parts which are nearer the circumference of the circle, have less light; and so gradually, till the circumference of the circle, which encompasses the illuminated part of the Earth, ends in darkness.

### §2

Now that is the center of the circle of light, where the Sun is vertical to the inhabitants, and then in that place the heat is most extremely intense; and so those countries are the coldest, where the Sun is farthest from being vertical. And if there were any such place where the Sun was always vertical, it must needs be extreme hot. Now it is demonstrated in astronomy, that the Sun is vertical twice a year only, to those which live under the Equinoctial, viz. when he enters into Aries and Libra; and all the rest of the year he declines from them, six months northward, and six months southward; and

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for that reason they are neither too hot nor too cold, but of a moderate temper between both. There's much more to be said about this argument, in order to the explaining it fully, but it is not suitable to our purpose; I have only hinted it to you, because it makes it something more probable that a man might in that region be formed without the help of father and mother; and there are some which affirm positively that Hayy Ibn Yaqzan was so, others deny it, and tell the story thus:

### ***Quranic Approach in Section 3 and 4.***

The next reference to *Quran* is seen in the second version of Hayy's birth. The phrase "O God, you formed this child out of nothing" refers to the verse (76:1), "There surely came over man a period of time when he was a thing not worth mentioning." It might be better to translate: "it was not a thing worth mentioning." (*lam yakon shayan mazkura*) Anyway, the phrase of Ibn Tufail is the very that of *Quran*.

The second allusion to *Quran* is the story of Maryam (Mary) and Musa (Moses) in some following respects: fear and sorrow, suckle, and to throw into the sea.

The phrase "and being afraid that it should be discovered, she took him in the evening, and when she had suckled him she put him into a little ark which she closed up fast, and so conveys him to the sea shore," refers to two verses (28:7), "We revealed this to Moses' mother: Suckle him, but when

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you fear for him cast him into the water (*al-yam*). Neither fear, nor sorrow because We shall restore him to you and make him among the Messengers;” (20:39), “Throw him into the ark, and throw it into the river.” It should be observed that the words of Ibn Tufail are those of *Quran*, namely, *tabut* (ark/little ark) and *al-yam* (sea/river).

### §3

They say, that there lay, not far from this our island, another great island very fertile and well peopled; which was then governed by a prince of a proud and jealous disposition: he had a sister of exquisite beauty, which he confined and restrained from marriage, because he could not match her to one suitable to her quality. He had a near relation whose name was Yaqzan, that married her privately, according to a rite of matrimony then in use among them: it was not long before she proved with child, and was brought to bed of a son; and being afraid that it should be discovered, she took him in the evening, and when she had suckled him she put him into a little ark which she closed up fast, and so conveys him to the sea shore, with some of her servants and friends as she could trust; and there with an heart equally affected with love and fear, she takes her last leave of him in these words: “O God, you formed this child out of nothing, (76:1) and did cherish him in the dark recesses of my womb, till he was complete in all his parts; I, fearing the cruelty of this proud and unjust king, commit him to thy goodness, hoping that

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thou who art infinitely merciful will be pleased to protect him, and never leave him destitute of thy care.”

### §4

Then she set him afloat, and that very night the strong tide carried him ashore on that island we just now mentioned. It fortuned that the water, being high, carried the ark a great way on shore, farther than it would have done at another time (for it rises so high but once a year) and cast the ark into a grove, thick set with trees, a pleasant place, shielded from wind and rain and veiled from the Sun, which could not penetrate there neither when it rose nor when it set.(cf. 18:16) When the tide ebbed, the ark was left there, and the wind rising blew an heap of sand together between the ark and the sea, sufficient to secure him from any future danger of such another flood.

### §5

The nails and timbers of the ark had been loosened when the waves cast it into that thicket; the child being very hungry wept and cried for help and struggled. It happened that a roe which had lost her fawn, heard the child cry, and following the voice (imagining it to have been her fawn) came up to the ark, and what with her digging with her hoofs from without, and the child's thrusting from within, at last between them both they burst open a board of the lid. Thereupon she was

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moved with pity and affection for him, and freely gave him suck; and she visited and tended him continually, protecting him from all harm. This is the account which they give of his origin, who are not willing to believe that a man can be produced without father or mother. We shall tell anon how he grew up and rose from one state to another, till at last he attained the state of highest perfection.

### ***Quranic Approach in Section 6.***

These two phrases: “For this spirit emanates continually and abundantly from the most high and glorious God;” “So that spirit which comes by the command of God” refer to the verse (17:85), “They question you about the spirit. Say: The spirit is from the command of my Lord. Except for a little knowledge you have been given nothing.” On this intertextuality, see also two another verses, (40:15) and (16:2).

### **§6**

On the other hand, those who affirm that Hayy Ibn Yaqzan was produced without father and mother, tell us, that in that island, in a piece of low ground, it chanced that a certain mass of earth was so fermented in some period of years, that the hot was so equally mixed with the cold , and the moist with the dry , that none of them prevailed over the other; and that this mass was of a very great bulk, in which, some parts were better and more equally tempered than others, and fitter

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to form the seminal humors; the middle part especially, which came nearest to the temper of man's body. This matter being in a fermentation, there arose some bubbles by reason of its viscousness, and it chanced that in the midst of it there was formed a very little bubble, which was divided into two with a thin partition, full of spirituous and aerial substance, and of the most exact temperature imaginable. The matter being thus disposed, there was, by the command of god, a spirit infused into it, which was joined so closely to it, that it can scarce be separated from it even so much as in thought. For this spirit emanates continually and abundantly from the most high and glorious God, and may be compared to the light of the Sun which is sent forth continually and abundantly over the world. Now there are some bodies from whence we perceive no reflection of this light, as the thin air: others from which we do but imperfectly; such are opaque bodies which are not polished (but there is a difference in these, and the difference of their colours arises from the different manner of their reception of the light); and others reflect the light in the highest degree, as bodies which are smooth and polished, such as looking-glasses and the like; so that those glasses when hollowed out after a particular manner will collect so much light as to produce fire. So that spirit which comes by the command of God, does at all times act upon all creatures, in some of which notwithstanding, there appears no impression of it, but the reason of that is because of their incapacity into whom it is infused; of which kind are things inanimate which are fitly represented in this

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similitude by the thin air. There is another sort again, in which there does appear something of it, as vegetables and the like, which are represented by the opaque bodies we mentioned, which are not polished. And then lastly, there are others, (represented by those polished bodies in our comparison) in which the influence of this spirit is very visible, and such we reckon all sorts of animals. Now, among those polished bodies, some besides having the eminent faculty of receiving the Sun's light, give an image resembling the Sun; so also among the animals, some not only have the eminent faculty of receiving the spirit, but resemble it and are formed in its image. Such is man particularly, and to him did the Prophet allude when he said, God created Adam in his own image.

### §7

Now, when this image in Man prevails to such a degree that all others are nothing before it, but it remains alone, so as to consume, with the glory of its light, whatsoever stands in its way; then it is properly compared to those glasses, which reflect light upon themselves, and burn everything else; but this is a degree which is peculiar to the Prophets (the blessing of God be upon them!).

***Quranic Approach in Section 8.*** At the beginning of section 8, the passage “But to return, and finish the account of those who describe this kind of generation: they tell us,

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that as soon as this spirit was joined to the receptacle, all the other faculties immediately, by the command of God, submitted themselves to it. (*sajadat*)” once again is a reference to *Quran*, (38:71-73), “When your Lord said to the angels: “I am creating a human from clay, after I have shaped him and breathed of My spirit (I created) into him, fall down prostrate before him.” So all the angels prostrated themselves.” (*sajada*) Also in this case, the expression of Ibn Tufail accords with that of *Quran*.

### §8

But to return, and finish the account of those who describe this kind of generation: they tell us, that as soon as this spirit was joined to the receptacle, all the other faculties immediately, by the command of God, submitted themselves to it. Now, opposite to this receptacle, there arose another bubble divided into three ventricles by thin membranes, with passages from one to the other, which were filled with an aerial substance, not much unlike that which was in the first receptacle, only something finer than the first; and in each of these three ventricles, which were all taken out of one, were placed some of those faculties, which were subject to this governing spirit, and were appointed to take care of their respective stations, and to communicate everything, both great and small, to that spirit, which, we told you before was

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placed in the first receptacle. Right against this first receptacle, and opposite to the second, there arose another third bubble, filled with an aerial substance, which as grosser than that which was in the other two. This receptacle was made for the entertainment of some other of the inferior faculties.

### §9

Thus these three receptacles were made in the same order which we have described, and these were the first part of that great mass which was formed. Now they stood in need of one another's assistance; the first wanted the other two as servants, and they again the assistance and guidance of the first, as their master and director; but both these receptacles (the former of which had more authority than the latter), though inferior to the first, were nevertheless superior to all those organs which were formed afterwards. The first receptacle of all, by the power of that spirit which was joined to it and its continual flaming heat, was formed into a conical figure, like that of fire, and by this means that thick body, which was about it, became of the same figure, being solid flesh covered with a thick protecting membrane. The whole of this organ is what we call the heart. Now considering the great destruction and dissolution of humours, which must needs be where there is so much heat, it was absolutely necessary that there should be some part formed, whose office it should be continually to supply this defect; otherwise

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it would have been impossible to have subsisted long. It was also necessary that this forming spirit should have a sense both of what was convenient for him, and what was hurtful, and accordingly attract the one and repel the other. For these services there were two parts formed, with their respective faculties, viz. the brain and the liver: the first of these presided over all things relating to sense, the latter over such things as belonged to nutrition: both of these depended upon the heart for a supply of heat, and the recruiting of their proper faculties. To supply these divers needs, there were ducts and passages interwoven, some bigger, some lesser, according as necessity required; and these are the arteries and veins.

Thus much for a taste; they that tell the story go on farther, and give you a particular account of the formation of all the parts, as the physicians do of the formation of the foetus in the womb, omitting nothing till he was completely formed, and just like an embryo ready for the birth. In this account they are forced to be beholding to this vast mass of fermented earth, which you are to suppose contained in it all manner of materials proper for the making man's body, those skins which cover it &c.; till at last, when he was complete in all his parts, as if the mass had been in labour, those coverings, which he was wrapped up in, burst asunder, and the rest of the dirt dried and cracked in pieces. The infant being thus brought into the world, and finding his nourishment fail him, cried for want of victuals, till the roe which had lost her fawn

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heard him. Now, both those who are of the other opinion and those who are for this kind of generation, agree in all the other particulars of his education: and what they tell us is this.

### § 10

They say that this roe lived in good and abundant pasture so that she was fat, and had such plenty of milk, that she was very well able to maintain the little child; she stayed by him and never left him, but when hunger forced her; and he grew so well acquainted with her, that if at any time she staid away from him a little longer than ordinary, he would cry pitifully, and she, as soon as she heard him; came running instantly; besides all this, he enjoyed this happiness, that there was no beast of prey in the whole island.

***Quranic Approach in Section 11.*** Aesthetic approach, i.e. using the words and phrases of *Quran* is seen in the following part, “Now, when they went out in the morning, and when they came home again at night” which refers to the verse (34:12), “To Solomon the morning course of the wind was a month’s journey, and its evening course was also a month’s journey.”

Ibn Tofail’s word is that of *Quran*, *ghuduw*, meaning “when they went out in the morning”, and *rawah*, meaning “when they came home again at night.”

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### § 11

Thus he went on, living only upon what he sucked till he was two years old, and then he began to step a little and breed his teeth. He always followed the roe, and she showed all the tenderness to him imaginable; and used to carry him to places where fruit trees grew, and fed him with the ripest and sweetest fruits which fell from the trees; and if they had hard shells, she used to break them for him with her teeth; still suckling him, as often as he pleased, and when he was thirsty she showed him the way to the water. If the Sun shined too hot, she shaded him; if he was cold she cherished him and kept him warm; and when night came she brought him home to his old place, and covered him partly with her own body, and partly with some feathers taken from the ark, which had been put in with him when he was first exposed. Now, when they went out in the morning, and when they came home again at night, there always went with them an herd of deer, which lay in the same place where they did, so that the boy being always amongst them learned their voice by degrees, and imitated it so exactly that there was scarce any sensible difference; nay, when he heard the voice of any bird or beast, he would come very near it. But of all the voices which he imitated, he made most use of the deers', and could express himself as they do, either when they want help, call their mates, when they would have them come nearer, or go farther off (for you must know that the brute beasts have different sounds to express these different things). Thus he contracted

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such an acquaintance with the wild beasts, that they were not afraid of him, nor he of them.<sup>1</sup>

### § 12

By this time he began to have the ideas of a great many things fixed in his mind, so as to have a desire to some, and an aversion to others, even when they were absent. In the meanwhile he considered all the several sorts of animals, and saw that they were all clothed either with hair, wool, or feathers; he considered their great swiftness and strength, and that they were all armed with weapons defensive, as horns, teeth, hoofs, spurs, and nails; but that he himself was naked and defenceless, slow and weak, in respect of them. For whenever there happened any controversy about gathering of fruits, he always came off by the worst, for they could both keep their own, and take away his, and he could neither beat them off nor run away from them.

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<sup>1</sup> In 1671, for the first time in his writing, John Locke centered on the query of the nature of mind and its emergence out of experience without innate ideas. As Russell mentions, “In 1671, the year when Locke started on the first drafts of his *Essay on Human Understanding*, a bilingual text in Arabic and Latin was published at Oxford, entitled the *Philosophus Autodidactus* (self-taught philosopher). The work depicted the development of the mind of a child from a *tabula rasa* to that of an adult, in complete isolation from society. By means of sensory experience and reasoning, without any innate ideas, he discovers the natural and physical sciences, God, and morality. One could call this work, with perfect justification, a case study for the main thesis of Locke’s *Essay*.” (Russell, “The Impact of *Philosophus Autodidactus*: Pocockes, John Locke and the Society of Friends”, p. 224)

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### § 13

He observed besides that his fellow-fawns, though their foreheads were smooth at first, yet afterwards had horns bud out, and though they were feeble at first, yet afterwards grew very vigorous and swift. All these things he perceived in them, which were not in himself; and when he had considered the matter, he could not imagine what should be the reason of this difference. Then he considered such animals as had any defect or natural imperfection, but amongst them all he could find none like himself. He took notice that the passages of the excrements were protected in all other creatures besides himself: that by which they voided their grosser excrements, with a tail; and that which served for the voiding of their urine, with hair or some such like thing. Besides, he observed that their genital organs were more concealed than his own were.

### § 14

All these things were matter of great grief to him, and when he had perplexed himself very much with the thoughts of them, and was now near seven years old, he despaired utterly of having those things grow upon him, the want of which made him so uneasy. He therefore got him some broad leaves of trees, of which he made two coverings, one to wear behind, the other before; and made a girdle of palm leaves and rushes, to hang his covering upon, and tied it about his

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waist. But alas it would not last long, for the leaves withered and dropt away; so that he was forced to get more, which he plaited in Layers one upon another, which made it a little more durable, but not much. Then having broke branches from a tree and fitted the ends of them to his mind, he stripped off the twigs and made them smooth; with these he began to attack the wild beasts, assaulting the weaker, and defending himself against the stronger. By this means he began a little to know his own powers, and perceived that his hands were better than their fore-feet; because by the help of them, he had provided wherewithal to cover his nakedness, and also gotten him a defensive weapon, so that now he had no need of a tail, nor of those natural weapons which he had so wished for at first.

### § 15

Meanwhile he was growing up and had passed his seventh year, and because the repairing of his covering of leaves so often, was very troublesome to him, he had a design of taking the tail of some dead beast, and wearing it himself; but when he perceived that all beasts did constantly avoid those which were dead of the same kind, it made him doubt whether it might be safe or not. At last, by chance he found a dead eagle, and observing that none of the beasts showed any aversion to that carcass, he concluded that this would suit his purpose: and in the first place, he cuts off the wings and the tail whole, and spreads the feathers open; then he drew off

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the skin, and divided it into two equal parts, one of which he wore upon his back, with the other he covered his navel and secrets: the tail he wore behind, and the wings were fixed upon each arm. This dress of his answered several ends; for in the first place it covered his nakedness, and kept him warm, and then it made him so frightful to the beasts, that none of them cared to meddle with him, or come near him; only the roe his nurse, which never left him, nor he, her; and when she grew old and feeble, he used to lead her where there was the best pasture, and pluck the sweetest fruits for her, and give her them to eat.

### § 16

Notwithstanding this she grew lean and weak, and continued a while in a languishing condition, till at last she dyed, and then all her motions and actions ceased. When the boy perceived her in this condition, he was ready to dye for grief. He called her with the same voice which she used to answer to, and made what noise he could, but there was no motion, no alteration. Then he began to peep into her ears and eyes, but could perceive no visible defect in either; in like manner he examined all the parts of her body, and found nothing amiss, but every thing as it should be. He had a vehement desire to find that part where the defect was, that he might remove it, and she return to her former state. But he was altogether at a loss how to compass his design, nor could he possibly bring it about.

§ 17

That which put him upon this search, was what he had observed in himself. He had noticed that when he shut his eyes, or held anything before them, he could see nothing at all, till that obstacle was removed; and so when he put his fingers into his ears, that he could not hear, till he took them out again; and when he closed his nostrils together, he smelt nothing till they were opened; from whence he concluded that all his perceptive and active faculties were liable to impediments, upon the removal of which, their operations returned to their former course. Therefore, when he had examined every external part of her, and found no visible defect and yet at the same time perceived an universal cessation of motion in the whole body, not peculiar to one member but common to them all, he began to imagine that the hurt was in some organ which was remote from the sight and hidden in the inward part of the body; and that this organ was of such nature and use, that without its help, none of the other external organs could exercise their proper functions; and that if this organ suffer any hurt, the damage was general, and a cessation of the whole ensued.

§ 18

This made him very desirous to find that organ if possible, that he might remove the defect from it, that so it might be as it used to be, and the whole body might enjoy the benefit of

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it, and the functions return to their former course. He had before observed, in the bodies of wild beasts and other animals, that all their members were solid, and that there were only three cavities, viz. the skull, the breast, and the belly; he imagined therefore that this organ which he wanted must needs be in one of these cavities, and above all, he had a strong persuasion that it was in the middlemost of them. For he verily believed that all the members stood in need of this organ, and that from thence it must necessarily follow that the seat of it must be in the centre. And when he reflected upon his own body, he felt the presence of such an organ in his breast. Now since he was able to hinder the action of all his other organs, such as hands, feet, ears, nose and eyes, and deprive himself of it, he conceived that it might be possible to subsist without them; but when he considered this organ within his breast he could not conceive the possibility of subsisting without it, so much as the twinkling of an eye. And upon this account, whenever he fought with any wild beast, he always took particular care to protect his breast from being pierced by its horns, because of the apprehension which he had of that organ which was contained in it.

### § 19

Having, by this way of reasoning, assured himself that the disaffected organ lay in the breast; he was resolved to make a search in order to examine it, that whatsoever the impediment was, he might remove it if possible; but then again, he was

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afraid on the other side, lest his undertaking should be worse than the disease, and prove prejudicial. He began to consider next, whether or no he had ever remembered any wild beasts or other animals which he had seen in that condition, recover again, and return to the same state which they were in before, but he could call to mind no such instance; from whence he concluded that if she was let alone there would be no hopes at all, but if he should be so fortunate as to find that organ and remove the impediment, there might be some hope. Upon this he resolved to open her breast and make enquiry;<sup>1</sup> in order to which he provided himself with fragments of flint, and splinters of dry cane almost like knives, with which he made an incision between the ribs, and cutting through the flesh, came to the diaphragma; which he finding very tough, assured himself that such a covering must needs belong to that organ which he looked for, and that if he could once get through that, he should find it. He met with some difficulty in his work, because his instruments were none of the best, for he had none but such as were made either of flint or cane.

### § 20

However, he sharpened them again and renewed his attempt with all the skill he was master of. At last he broke through, and the first part he met with was the lungs, which he at first

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<sup>1</sup> For this part of novel, including proceeding and following passages, Ibn Tufail is considered an early supporter of dissection and autopsy.

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sight mistook for that which he searched for, and turned them about this way and that way to see if he could find in them the seat of the disease. He first happened upon that lobe which lay next the side which he had opened and when he perceived that it did lean sideways, he was satisfied that it was not the organ he looked for, because he was fully persuaded that that must needs be in the midst of the body, as well in regard of latitude as longitude. He proceeded in his search, till at last he found the heart, which when he saw closed with a very strong cover, and fastened with stout ligaments, and covered by the lungs on that side which he had opened, he began to say to himself: "If this organ be so on the other side as it is on this which I have opened, then it is certainly in the midst, and without doubt the same I look for; especially considering the convenience of the situation, the comeliness and regularity of its figure, the firmness of the flesh, and besides, its being guarded with such a membrane as I have not observed in any other part." Upon this he searches the other side, and finding the same membrane on the inside of the ribs, and the lungs in the same posture which he had observed on that side which he had opened first, he concluded this organ to be the part which he looked for.

### § 21

Therefore he first attacks the pericardium, which after a long trial and a great deal of pains, he made shift to tear; and when he had laid the heart bare, and perceived that it was solid on

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every side, he began to examine it, to see if he could find any apparent hurt in it; but finding none, he squeezed it with his hand, and perceived that it was hollow. He began then to think that what he looked for might possibly be contained in that cavity. When he came to open it, he found in it two cavities, one on the right side, the other on the left. That on the right side was full of clotted blood, that on the left quite empty. “Then (says he) without all doubt, one of those two cavities must needs be the receptacle of what I look for; as for that on this right side there’s nothing in it but congealed blood, which was not so, be sure, till the whole body was in that condition in which it now is” (for he had observed that all blood congeals when it flows from the body). “This blood does not differ in the least from any other; and I find it common to all the organs. What I look for cannot by any means be such a matter as this; for that which I seek is something which is peculiar to this place, which I find I could not subsist without, so much as the twinkling of an eye. And his is that which I looked for at first. As for this blood, how often have I lost a great deal of it in my skirmishes with the wild beasts, and yet it never did me any considerable harm, nor rendered me incapable of performing any action of life, and therefore what I look for is not in this cavity. Now as for the cavity on the left side, I find it is altogether empty, and I have no reason in the world to think that it was made in vain, because I find every organ appointed for such and such particular functions. How then can this ventricle of the heart, which I see is of so excellent a frame, serve for no use at all?

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I cannot think but that the same thing which I am in search of, once dwelt here, but has now deserted his habitation and left it empty, and that the absence of that thing has occasioned this privation of sense and cessation of motion which happened to the body.” Now when he perceived that the being which had inhabited there before had left its house before it fell to ruin, and forsaken it when as yet it continued whole and entire, he concluded that it was highly probable that it would never return to it any more, after its being so cut and mangled.

### § 22

Upon this the whole body seemed to him a very inconsiderable thing, and worth nothing in respect of that being he believed once inhabited, and now had left it. Therefore he applied himself wholly to the consideration of that being. What it was and how it subsisted? What joined it to this body? Whither it went, and by what passage, when it left the body? What was the cause of its departure, whether it were forced to leave its mansion, or left the body of its own accord? And in case it went away voluntarily, what it was that rendered the body so disagreeable to it, as to make it forsake it? And whilst he was perplexed with such variety of thoughts, he laid aside all concern for the carcass, and banished it from his mind; for now he perceived that his mother, which had nursed him so tenderly and had suckled him, was that something which was departed; and from it

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proceeded all her actions, and not from this inactive body; but that all this body was to it only as an instrument, like his cudgel which he had made for himself, with which he used to fight with the wild beasts. So that now, all his regard to the body was removed, and transferred to that by which the body is governed, and by whose power it moves. Nor had he any other desire but to make enquiry after that.

***Quranic Approach in Section 23.*** More again includes intertextuality the verse (5:31) “God sent down a raven which started to dig up the earth to show the killer how to bury the corpse of his brother. On seeing the raven,<sup>1</sup> (Cain)<sup>2</sup> said, “Woe to me! Am I less able than a raven to bury the corpse of my brother?” He became greatly remorseful,” to which refers the underlined following passage.

### § 23

In the meantime the carcass of the roe began to putrefy and emit noisome vapours, which still increased his aversion to it, so that he did not care to see it. It was not long after that he chanced to see two ravens<sup>3</sup> engaged so furiously, that one of them struck down the other stark dead; and when he had

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<sup>1</sup> *Ghurab.*

<sup>2</sup> *Qabil.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ghurab.*

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done, he began to scrape with his claws till he had dug a pit, in which he buried the carcass of his adversary. The boy observing this, said to himself: “How well has this raven done in burying the body of his companion, though he did ill in killing him! How much greater reason was there for me to have been forward in performing this office to my mother?” Upon this he digs a pit, and lays the body of his mother into it, and buries her. He proceeded in his enquiry concerning what that should be by which the body was governed, but could not apprehend what it was. When he looked upon the rest of the roes and perceived that they were of the same form and figure with his mother, he could not resist the belief that there was in every one of them something which moved and directed them, like that which had moved and directed his mother formerly; and for the sake of that likeness he used to keep in their company and show affection towards them. He continued a while in this condition, contemplating the various kinds of animals and plants, and walking about the coast of his island, to see if he could find any being like himself (as he observed that every individual animal and plant had a great many more like it). But all his search was in vain. And when he perceived that his island was encompassed by the sea, he thought that there was no other land in the world but only that island.

§ 24

It happened that by friction a fire was kindled among a thicket of canes, which scared him at first, as being a sight which he was altogether a stranger to, so that he stood at a distance a good while, strangely surprised. At last he came nearer and nearer by degrees, still observing the brightness of its light and marvellous efficacy in consuming every thing it touched and changing it into its own nature; till at last his admiration of it and that innate boldness and fortitude which God had implanted in his nature prompted him on, that he stretched out his hand to take some of it. But when it burnt his fingers and he found there was no dealing with it that way, he thought to take a stick which the fire had not as yet wholly seized upon; so taking hold on that end which was untouched he easily gained his purpose, and carried it home to his lodging (for he had found a cave which served as a convenient abode). There he kept this fire and added fuel to it, of dry grass and wood, admired it wonderfully, and tended it night and day; at night especially, because its light and heat supplied the absence of the Sun; so that he was extremely delighted with it and reckoned it the most excellent of all those things which he had about him. And when he observed that it always moved upwards, he persuaded himself that it was one of those celestial substances which he saw shining in the firmament, and he was continually trying of its power, by throwing all manner of things into it, which he perceived it always vanquished, sometimes sooner, sometimes slower,

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according as the bodies which he put into it were more or less combustible.

***Quranic Approach in Section 25.*** In following part, Ibn Tufail again employs the expressions of *Quran* from the verse (5:96), hunting (*sayd al-bar*), and fishing (*sayd al-bahr*).

### § 25

Amongst other things which he put in to try its strength, he once flung in some sea animals which had been thrown ashore by the water, and as soon as ever he smelt the steam, it raised his appetite, so that he had a mind to taste of them; which he did, and found them very agreeable, and from that time he began to use himself to the eating of flesh, and applied himself to fishing and hunting till he understood those sports very well: upon this account he admired his fire more and more, because it helped him to several sorts of excellent provision which he was altogether unacquainted with before.

### § 26

And now when his affection towards it was increased to the highest degree, both upon the account of its beneficial effects and its extraordinary power, he began to think that the substance which was departed from the heart of his mother the roe, was, if not the very same with it, yet at least of a

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nature very much like it. He was confirmed in his opinion because he had observed in all animals, that as long as they lived, they were constantly warm without any intermission and as constantly cold after death. Besides he found in himself, that there was a greater degree of heat by much in his breast, near that place where he had made the incision in the roe. This made him think that if he could dissect any animal alive, and look into that ventricle which he had found empty when he dissected his dam the roe, he might possibly find it full of that substance which inhabited it, and so inform himself whether it were of the same substance with the fire, and whether it had any light and heat in it or not. In order to this he took a wild beast and tied him down, and dissected him after the same manner he had dissected the roe, till he came to the heart; and essaying the left ventricle first, and opening it, he perceived it was full of an airy vapour which looked like a little mist or white cloud, and putting in his finger, he found it hotter than he could well endure it, and immediately the creature dyed. From whence he assuredly concluded that it was that hot vapour which communicated motion to that animal, and that there was accordingly in every animal of what kind soever, something like it upon the departure of which death followed.

### § 27

He was then moved by a great desire to enquire into the other parts of animals, to find out their order and situation, their

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quantity and the manner of their connexion one with another and by what means of communication they enjoy the benefit of that hot vapour, so as to live by it, how that vapour is continued the time it remains, from whence it has its supplies, and by what means its heat is preserved. The way which he used in this enquiry was the dissection of all sorts of animals, as well living as dead, neither did he leave off to make an accurate enquiry into them, till at length he arrived to the highest degree of knowledge in this kind which the most learned naturalists ever attained to.

***Quranic Approach in Section 28.*** Once more is repeated the reference to the verse (5:96), including hunting (*sayd al-bar*) and fishing (*sayd al-bahr*).

### § 28

And now he apprehended plainly that every particular animal, though it had a great many limbs, and variety of senses and motions, was nevertheless one in respect of that spirit, whose original was from one firm mansion, viz. the heart, from whence its influence was diffused among all the members, which were merely its servants or instruments. And that this spirit made use of the body in the same manner as he himself did of his weapons; with some he fought with wild beasts, with others captured them, and with others cut them up; the first kind of weapons were either defensive or offensive; the second kind for the capture either of land or water animals;

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the third, his dissecting instruments, were some for fission, others for fraction, and others for perforation. His body, which was one, wielded those diverse instruments according to the respective uses of each, and the several ends which it proposed to obtain.

### § 29

Likewise he perceived that this animal spirit was one, whose action when it made use of the eye, was sight; when of the ear, hearing; when of the nose, smelling; when of the tongue, tasting; and when of the skin and flesh, feeling. When it employed any limb, then its operation was motion; and when it made use of the liver, nutrition and concoction. And that though there were members fitted to every one of these uses, yet none of them could perform their respective offices without having correspondence with that spirit by means of passages called nerves; and that if at any time it chanced that these passages were either broken off or obstructed, the action of the corresponding member would cease. Now these nerves derive this spirit from the cavities of the brain, which has it from the heart (and contains abundance of spirit, because it is divided into a great many partitions) and by what means soever any limb is deprived of this spirit, its action ceases and it is like a cast off tool, not fit for use. And if this spirit depart wholly from the body, or is consumed or dissolved by any means whatsoever, then the whole body is deprived of motion and reduced to that state which is death.

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### § 30

Thus far had his observations brought him about the end of the third seventh year of his age, viz. when he was one and twenty years old. In which time he had made abundance of pretty contrivances. He made himself both clothes and shoes of the skins of such wild beasts as he had dissected. His thread was made of hair, and of the bark of the stalks of althwa, mallows, or hemp, or any other plants which afforded such strings as were fit for that purpose. He learned the making of these threads from the use which he had made of the rushes, before. He made awls of sharp thorns, and splinters of cane sharpened with flints. He learned the art of building from the observations he made upon the swallows' nests. He had built himself a store-house and a pantry, to lay up the remainder of his provision in, and made a door to it of canes bound together, to prevent any of the beasts getting in during his absence. He took birds of prey and brought them up to help him in his hunting, and kept tame poultry for their eggs and chickens. He took the tips of the buffalo's horns and fastened them upon the strongest canes he could get, and staves of the tree al-Zan and others; and so, partly by the help of the fire, and partly of sharp edged stones, he so fitted them that they served him instead of so many spears. He made him a shield of hides folded together. All this pains he took to furnish himself with artificial weapons, because he found himself destitute of natural ones.

§ 31

Now when he perceived that his hand supplied all these defects very well, and that none of all the various kinds of wild beasts durst stand against him, but ran away from him and were too nimble for him, he began to contrive how to be even with them, and thought there would be no way so proper as to chose out some of the swiftest beasts of the island, and bring them up tame, and feed them with proper food, till they would let him back them and then he might pursue the other kinds of Wild beasts. There were in that island both wild horses and asses; he chose of both sorts such as seemed fittest for his purpose, and by training he made them wholly obedient to his Wishes. And when he had made out of strips of skin and the hides of beasts such things as served him competently well in the room of bridles and saddles, he could very easily then overtake such beasts as he could scarce ever have been able to have caught any other manner of way. He made all these discoveries whilst he was employed in the study of anatomy, and the searching out of the properties peculiar to each part, and the difference between them; and all this before the end of that time I speak of, viz. of the age of 21 years.

§ 32

He then proceeded further to examine the nature of bodies in this world of generation and corruption, viz. the different

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kinds of animals, plants, minerals, and the several sorts of stones, and earth, water, vapour, ice, snow, hail, smoke, flame, and glowing heat; in which he observed many qualities and different actions, and that their motions agreed in some respects, and differed in others. And considering these things with great application, he perceived that their qualities also agreed in some things, and differed in others; and that so far as they agreed, they were one; but when considered with relation to their differences, a great many: so that when he came to consider the properties of things by which they were distinguished one from another, he found that they were innumerable and existence seemed to multiply itself beyond his comprehension. Nay, when he considered the difference of his own organs, which he perceived were all distinct from one another by some property and action peculiar to each, it seemed to him that there was a plurality in himself. And when he regarded any one organ, he found that it might be divided into a great many parts, from whence he concluded, that there must needs be a plurality not only in himself but in every other thing also.

### § 33

Then viewing the matter from another side, he perceived that though his organs were many, yet they were conjoined and compacted together so as to make one Whole, and that what difference there was between them consisted only in the difference of their actions, which diversity proceeded from

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the power of that animal spirit, the nature of which he had before searched into and found out. Now he remembered that that spirit was one in essence, and the true essence, and that all the organs serve that spirit as instruments; and so, viewing the matter from this side, he perceived himself to be one.

### § 34

He proceeded from hence to the consideration of all the species of animals and found that every individual of them was one. Next he considered them with regard to their different species, viz. as roes, horses, asses and all sorts of birds according to their kinds, and he perceived that all the individuals of every species were exactly like one another in the shape of their organs, both within and without, that their apprehensions, motions, and inclinations were alike, and that those little differences which were visible amongst them were inconsiderable in respect of those many things in which they agreed. From whence he concluded that the spirit which actuated any species was one and the same, only distributed among so many hearts as there were individuals in that species; so that if it were possible for all that spirit which is so divided among so many hearts to be collected into one receptacle, it would be all the same thing, just as if any one liquor should be poured out into several dishes and afterwards put all together again in one Vessel, this liquor would still be the same, as well when it was divided as when it was altogether, only in respect of that division it may be

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said in some sort to be multiplied. By this way of contemplation he perceived that a whole species was one and the same thing, and that the multiplicity of individuals in the same species is like the multiplicity of parts in the same person, which indeed is not a real multiplicity.

### § 35

Then he represented in his mind all the several kinds of animals, and perceived that sensation, and nutrition, and the power of moving freely where they pleased, were common to them all; which actions he was assured before, were all very proper to the animal spirit, and that those lesser things in which they differed (notwithstanding their agreement in these greater) were not so proper to that spirit. From this consideration he concluded that it was only one and the same animal spirit which actuated all living creatures whatsoever, though there was in it a little difference which each species claimed as peculiar to itself. For instance, suppose the same water be poured out into different vessels, that which is in this vessel may possibly be something colder than that which is in another, though it is the same Water still, and so all the portions of this water which are at the same degree of cold will represent the peculiar state of the animal spirit which is in all the animals of one species. And as that water is all one and the same, so is that animal spirit one, though there has occurred in it an accidental multiplicity. And so under this

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notion he looked upon the whole animal kingdom to be all One.

### § 36

Afterwards contemplating the different species of plants, he perceived that the individuals of every species were alike, both in their boughs, leaves, flowers, Fruits, and manner of growing. And comparing them with animals he found that there must needs be some one thing which they did all of them partake of, which was the same to them that the animal spirit was to the living creature, and that in respect of that they were all one. Whereupon, taking a view of the vegetable kingdom, he concluded that it was one, by reason of that agreement which he found in the functions of plants, viz. their nourishment and growing.

### § 37

Then he associated in his mind, the kingdoms of animals and plants together, and found that they were both alike in their nutrition and growing, only the animals excelled the plants in sensation and apprehension and movement, and yet he had sometimes observed something like it in plants, viz. that some flowers do turn themselves towards the sun, and that the plants extend their roots that way the nourishment comes, and some other such like things. From whence it appeared to him that plants and animals were one and the same, in respect of that one thing which was common to them both; which

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was indeed more perfect in the one, and more obstructed and restrained in the other; like water that is partly running and partly frozen. So that he concluded that plants and animals were all one.

### § 38

He next considered those bodies which have neither sense, nutrition nor growth, such as stones, earth, water, air, and flame, which he perceived had all of them three dimensions, viz. length, breadth, and thickness, and that their differences consisted only in this, that some of them were coloured, others not, some were warm, others cold, and the like. He observed that those bodies which were warm grew cold, and on the contrary, that those which were cold grew warm. He saw that water was rarefied into vapour, and vapour again condensed into water; and that such things as were burnt were turned into coals, ashes, flame and smoke, and if in its ascent smoke were intercepted by an arch of stone, it thickened there and became like certain earthy substances. From whence it appeared to him that all these things were in reality one, though multiplied and diversified accidentally as the plants and animals were.

### § 39

Then considering with himself what that thing must be which constituted the unity of plants and animals, he saw that it

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must be some body, like those bodies, which had a threefold dimension, viz. length, breadth, and thickness; and that whether it were hot or cold, it was like any of those other bodies which have neither sense nor nutrition, and differed from them only in those acts which proceeded from it by means of animal or vegetable organs. And that perchance those acts were not essential, but derived from something else, so that if those acts were to be produced in those other bodies, they would be like this body. Considering it therefore abstractedly, with regard to its essence only, as stripped of those acts which at first sight seemed to emanate from it, he perceived that it was a body, of the same kind, with those other bodies; upon which contemplation it appeared to him that, all bodies, as well those that had life, as those that had not, as well those that moved, as those that rested in their natural places were one; only there were some from which acts proceeded by means of organs; concerning which acts he could not yet determine whether they were essential, or derived from something without. Thus he continued, considering nothing but the nature of bodies, and by this means he perceived that whereas at first sight, things had appeared to him innumerable and not to be comprehended; Now, he discovered the whole mass and bulk of creatures were in reality only one.

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### § 40

He continued in this State a considerable time. Then he considered all sorts of bodies, both animate and inanimate, which one while seemed to him to be one; and another, a great many. And he found that all of them had a tendency either upward, as smoke, flame, and air when detained under water; or else downward, as water, pieces of earth, or parts of animals and plants; and that none of these bodies were free from one or other of these tendencies, or would ever lie still unless hindered by some other body, and interrupted in their course; as when, for instance, a stone in its fall is stopped by the solidity and hardness of the Earth, when it is plain it would otherwise continue still descending; and if you lift it, you feel that it presses upon you by its tendency toward the lower place to which it seeks to descend. So smoke still continues going upwards, and if it should be intercepted by a solid arch, it would divide both to the right and left, and so soon as it was freed from the arch, would still continue ascending and pass through the air, which is not solid enough to restrain it. He perceived also that when a leathern bottle is filled with air and its neck tightly bound, if you hold it under Water it will still strive to get up till it returns to its place of air, and then it rests, and its resistance and its propensity to ascend ceases.

§ 41

He then enquired whether or no he could find any body that was at any time destitute of both these motions, or a tendency toward them, but he could find none such among all bodies which he had about him. The reason of this enquiry was, because he was very desirous to know the nature of body, as such, abstracted from all manner of properties, from whence arises multiplicity. But when he found this too difficult a task for him, and he had examined those bodies which had the fewest properties, and could find none of them void of one of these two, viz. Heaviness or lightness; he proceeded to consider the nature of these two properties, and to examine whether they did belong to body quatenus body, or else by reason of some property superadded to corporeity. It seemed to him that gravity and levity did not belong to body as such; for if so, then no body could subsist without them both: whereas on the contrary, we find that the heavy bodies are void of all lightness and the light bodies are void of all heaviness. Without doubt they are two sorts of bodies, and each possesses an attribute which distinguishes it from the other, and which is superadded to its corporeity, otherwise they would be both one and the same thing, in every respect. From whence it appeared plainly that the essence both of an heavy and light body was composed of two attributes; one, which was common to them both, viz. corporeity; the other, by which they are distinguished one from the other, viz.

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gravity in the one, and levity in the other, which were superadded to corporeity.

### § 42

In like manner he considered other bodies, both animate and inanimate, and found their essence was composed of corporeity, and some thing or more superadded to it. And thus he attained a notion of the forms of bodies, according to their differences. These were the first things he found out, belonging to the spiritual world; for these forms are not the objects of sense, but are apprehended by intellectual speculation. Now among other things of this kind which he discovered, it appeared to him that the animal spirit which is lodged in the heart (as we have mentioned before) must necessarily have some attribute superadded to its corporeity, which rendered it capable of those wonderful actions, different sensations and ways of apprehending things, and various sorts of motions; and that this attribute must be its form, by which it is distinguished from other bodies, which is the same that the philosophers call the animal soul. And so in plants, that which was in them the same that natural heat was in beasts, must have something proper to it, which was its form, which the philosophers call the vegetative soul and that there was also in inanimate things (*viz.* all rocks, besides plants and animals, which are in this sublunary world) something peculiar to them, by the power of which every one of them performed such actions as were proper to it, the form

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of every one of them, and this is the same which the philosophers call nature.

### § 43

And when by this contemplation it appeared to him plainly that the true essence of that animal spirit on which he had been so intent, was compounded of corporeity and some other attribute superadded to that corporeity, and that it had its corporeity in common with other bodies; but that this other attribute which was superadded was peculiar to itself: immediately he despised and rejected the notion of corporeity, and applied himself wholly to that other superadded attribute (which is the same that we call the soul) the nature of which he earnestly desired to know. Therefore he fixed all his thoughts upon it, and began his contemplation with considering all bodies, not as bodies, but as endued with forms, from whence necessarily flow these properties by which they are distinguished one from another.

### § 44

Now by following up this notion and comprehending it in his mind, he perceived that all the bodies of a certain category had one form in common, from whence one or more actions did proceed. And that there was in this category a class whose members, though they agreed with all the rest in that one common form, had another form besides superadded to it, from whence some actions proceeded. And further, that

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there was in this class a group, which agreeing with the rest in those two forms which they had, was still distinguished from them by a third form, superadded to those other two, from whence also proceeded some actions. For instance, all terrestrial bodies, as earth, stones, minerals, plants, animals, and all other heavy bodies, do make up one category, and possess in common the same form, from whence flows downward movement, whilst there is nothing to hinder their descent; and whensoever they are forced to move upwards, if they are left to themselves, they immediately by virtue of their form tend downwards again. Now a class of this category, viz. plants and animals, though they do agree with all that multitude before mentioned, in that form, yet still have another form superadded to it, from whence flow nutrition and accretion. Now the meaning of nutrition is, when the body that is nourished, substitutes in the room of that which is consumed and wasted from itself, something of the like kind, which it draws to itself, and then converts into its own substance. Accretion, or growing, is a motion according to the three dimensions, viz. length, breadth, and thickness in a due proportion. And these two actions are common to plants and animals, and do without doubt spring from that form which is common to them both, which is what we call the vegetative soul. Now a group of this class, viz. animals, though they have the first and second Forms in common with the rest, have still a third form superadded, from which arise sensations and local motion. Besides, he perceived that every particular species of animals had some

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property which distinguished it and made it quite different from the rest, and he knew that this difference must arise from some form peculiar to that species, which was superadded to the notion of that form which it had in common with the rest of animals. And the like he saw happened to the several kinds of plants.

### § 45

And it was evident to him that the essences of those sensible bodies, which are in this sublunary world, had some of them more attributes superadded to their corporeity, and others, fewer. Now he knew that the Understanding of the fewer must needs be more easy to him than the understanding of those which were more in number. And therefore he endeavoured to get a true notion of the essence of some one thing which had the fewest essential attributes. Now he perceived that the essences of animals and plants were composed of a great many attributes, because of the great variety of their actions; for which reason he deferred the enquiring into their forms. As for the parts of the Earth, he saw that some of them were more simple than others, and therefore resolved to begin his enquiry with the most simple of all. So he perceived that Water was a thing far from complex, which appeared from the paucity of those actions which arise from its form. The same he likewise observed in the fire and air.

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### § 46

Now he had already perceived that all these four might be changed one into another; and that there must be some one thing which they jointly participated of, and that this thing was corporeity. Now it was necessary that this one thing which was common to them all should be altogether free from those attributes by which these four were distinguished one from the other, and be neither heavy nor light; hot nor cold; moist nor dry; because none of these qualities were common to all bodies, and therefore could not appertain to body as such. And that if it were possible to find any such body, in which there was no other form superadded to corporeity, it would have none of these qualities, nor indeed any other but what were common to all bodies, with what form soever endued. He considered therefore with himself, to see if he could find any one adjunct or property which was common to all bodies, both animate and inanimate; but he found nothing of that nature, but only the notion of extension, and that he perceived was common to all bodies, viz. that they had all of them length, breadth, and thickness. Whence he gathered, that this notion belonged to body, as body. However, his sense could not represent to him any body existent in Nature, which had this only property, and was void of all other forms: For he saw that every one of them had some other notion superadded to the said extension.

§ 47

Then he considered further, whether this three-fold extension was the very Notion of Body, without the addition of another Notion; and quickly found that behind this Extension there was another Notion, in which this Extension did exist, and that Extension could not subsist by itself, as also the thing which was extended could not subsist by itself without extension. This he experimented in some of those sensible bodies which are endued with forms; for example, in clay: which he perceived, when moulded into any figure, (spherical suppose) had in it a certain proportion, length, breadth, and thickness. But then if you took that very same ball, and reduced it into a cubical or oval figure, the dimensions were changed, and did not retain the same proportion which they had before, and yet the clay still remained the same, without any change, only that it must always have a length, breadth, and thickness, in some proportion or other, and could not be deprived of these dimensions: Yet it was plain to him from the successive alterations of them in the same body, that they constituted a notion distinct from the clay itself; as also, that because the clay could not be altogether without them, it appeared to him that they belonged to its essence. And thus from this consideration it appeared to him that body regarded as body, was composed in reality of two notions: The one of which represents the clay, of which the sphere was made; the other, the threefold extension of it, when formed into a sphere, cube, or what other figure soever. Nor was it possible

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to conceive body, but as consisting of these two notions, neither of which could subsist without the other. But that one, (namely, that of extension) which was liable to change and could successively put on different figures, did represent the form in all those bodies which had forms. And that other which still abode in the same state, (which corresponded to the clay, in our last instance) did represent the notion of corporeity, which is in all bodies, of what forms soever. Now that thing which is represented by clay in the foregoing instance, is the same which the philosophers call matter, and which is wholly destitute of all manner of forms.

### § 48

When his contemplation had proceeded thus far, and he was got to some distance from sensible objects, and was now just upon the confines of the intellectual world, he was diffident, and inclined rather to the sensible world, which he was more used to. Therefore he retreated a little and left the consideration of abstracted body (since he found that his senses could by no means reach it, neither could he comprehend it) and applied himself to the consideration of the most simple sensible bodies he could find, which were those four about which he had been exercised. And first of all he considered the water, which he found, if let alone in that condition which its form required, had these two things in it, viz. sensible cold, and a propension to move downwards: But if heated by the fire or the sun, its coldness was removed, but

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its propension to move downwards still remained: But afterwards, when it came to be more vehemently heated, it lost its tendency downwards, and mounted upwards; and so it was wholly deprived of both those properties which used constantly to emanate from its form. Nor did he know any thing more of its form, but only that these two actions proceeded from thence; and when these two ceased, the nature of the form was altered, and the watery form was removed from that body, as soon as it manifested actions whose nature is to emanate from another form; and it received another form which had not been there before, from which arose those actions, which never used to appear in it whilst it had the first form.

***Quranic Approach in Section 49.*** There is a direct approach, namely quotation from the *Quran*, the verse (8:17), at the end of this section.

### § 49

Now he knew that every thing that was produced anew must needs have some producer. And from this contemplation, there arose in his mind a sort of impression of the maker of that form, though his notion of him as yet was general and indistinct. Then he paused on the examining of these forms which he knew before, one by one, and found that they were produced anew, and that they must of necessity be beholden to some efficient cause. Then he considered the essences of

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forms, and found that they were nothing else, but only a disposition of body to produce such or such actions. For instance, water, when very much heated, is disposed to rise upwards, and that disposition is its form. For there is nothing present in all this, but a body, and some things which are observed to arise from it, which were not in it before (such as qualities and motions) and an efficient cause which produces them. And the fitness of a body for one motion rather than another, is its disposition and form. The same he concluded of all other forms, and it appeared to him that those actions which emanated from them were not in reality owing to them, but to the efficient cause which produced in them those actions which are attributed to them. Which notion of his is exactly the same with what the apostle of God says (may God bless him and grant him peace!): “I am his Hearing by which he hears, and his seeing by which he sees”<sup>1</sup>; and in the Clear Book of Revelation: “You did not kill them, but God killed them; when you threw the darts, it was not you that threw them, but God.” (8:17)

### § 50

Now, when he had attained thus far, so as to have a general and indistinct notion of this agent, he had a most earnest desire to know it distinctly. And because he had not as yet

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<sup>1</sup> Hadith Qudsi.

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withdrawn himself from the sensible world, he began to look for this agent among sensible things; nor did he as yet know whether it was one agent or many. Therefore he enquired strictly into all such bodies as he had about him, viz. those which he had been employed about all along, and he found that they were all liable to generation and corruption. And if there were any which did not suffer a total corruption, yet they were liable to a partial one, as water and earth, the parts of which, he observed, were consumed by fire. Likewise among all the rest of the bodies which he was conversant with, he could find none which were not produced anew and therefore dependent upon some agent. Upon which account he laid them all aside, and transferred his thoughts to the consideration of the heavenly bodies. And thus far he reached in his contemplations, about the end of the fourth septenary of his age, viz. when he was now eight and twenty years old.

### § 51

Now he knew very well that the heavens, and all the luminaries in them, were bodies, because they were all extended according to the three dimensions, length, breadth and thickness, without any exception; and that every thing that was so extended, was body; ergo, they were all bodies. Then he considered next, whether they were extended infinitely, as to stretch themselves to an endless length, breadth and thickness; or, whether they were circumscribed by any limits, and terminated by some certain bounds beyond

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which there could be no extension. But here he stopped a while, as in a kind of amazement.

### § 52

At last, by the strength of his apprehension and sagacity of his understanding, he perceived that the notion of infinite body was absurd and impossible, and a notion wholly unintelligible. He confirmed himself in this judgment of his by a great many arguments which occurred to him, and he thus argued with himself: That this heavenly body is terminated on this side which is next to me, is evident to my sight; and that it cannot be infinitely extended on that opposite side, which raised this scruple in me, I prove thus. Suppose two lines drawn from the extremity of this heavenly body, on that terminated side which is next to me, which lines should be produced quite through this body, in infinitum, according to the extension of the body; then suppose a long part of one of these lines cut off at this end which is next to me; then take the remainder of what was cut off, and draw down that end of it where it was cut off, and lay it even with the end of the other line from which there was nothing cut off; and let that line which was shortened lie parallel with the other; then follow these two lines in the direction in which we supposed them to be infinite. Either you will find both these lines infinitely extended, and then one of them cannot be shorter than the other, but that which had a part of it cut off will be as long as that which had not,

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which is absurd: Or else the line which was cut will not go on for ever like that other, but will stop and consequently be finite. Therefore if you add that part to it which was cut off from it at first, which was finite, the whole will be finite; and it will be no longer or shorter than that line which had nothing cut off from it, but equal to it. But this is finite, therefore the other is finite. And the body in which such lines are drawn is finite. But such lines may be drawn in all bodies. Therefore if we suppose an infinite body, we suppose an absurdity and impossibility.

### § 53

When by the singular strength of his genius (which he exerted in the finding out such a demonstration) he had satisfied himself that the body of Heaven was finite, he desired, in the next place, to know what figure it was of, and how it was limited by the circumambient superficies. And first he observed the Sun, Moon and stars, and saw that they all rose in the East, and set in the West; and those which went right over his head described a great circle, but those at a greater distance from the vertical point, either northward or southward, described a lesser circle. So that the least circles which were described by any of the stars, were those two which went round the two poles, the one North, the other South; the last of which is the Circle of Sohail or Canopus ; the first, the Circle of those two stars which are called Alpherkadani . Now because he lived under the equinoctial

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line (as we showed before) all those circles did cut the horizon at right angles, and both North and South were alike to him, and he could see both the pole-stars. He observed that if a star arose at any time in a great circle, and another star at the same in a lesser circle, yet nevertheless, as they rose together, so they set together: and he observed it of all the stars, and at all times. From whence he concluded that the Heaven was of a spherical figure; in which opinion he was confirmed, by observing the return of the Sun, Moon and stars to the East, after their setting; and also, because they always appeared to him of the same bigness, both when they rose, and when they were in the midst of Heaven, and at the time of their setting; whereas, if their motions had not been circular, they must have been nearer to sight at some times than others, and consequently their dimensions would have appeared proportionally greater or lesser; but since there was no such appearance, he concluded that the Heaven was spherical. Then he considered the motion of the Moon and the planets from West to East, till at last he understood a great part of astronomy. Besides, he apprehended that their motions must be in different spheres, all which were comprehended in another which was above them all, and which turned about all the rest from East to West in the space of a day and a night. But it were too tedious to explain particularly how he advanced in this science; besides, it is taught in other books; and what we have already said is as much as is requisite for our present purpose.

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### § 54

When he had attained to this degree of knowledge, he found that the whole orb of the heavens and whatsoever was contained in it was as one thing compacted and joined together; and that all those bodies which he used to consider before, as earth, water, air, plants, animals and the like, were all of them so contained in it, as never to go out of its bounds: and that the whole was like one animal, in which the luminaries represented the senses; the spheres so joined and compacted together, answered to the limbs; and in the midst, the world of generation and corruption, to the belly, in which the excrements and humours are contained, and which oftentimes breeds animals, as the greater world.

### § 55

Now when it appeared to him that the whole World was as one individual, and he had united all the parts of it by the same way of thinking which he had before made use of in considering the world of generation and corruption; he proposed to his consideration the world in general, and debated with himself whether it did exist in time, after it had not been; and came to be out of nothing; or whether it had been from eternity, without any privation preceding it. Concerning this matter he had very many and great doubts, so that neither of these two opinions did prevail over the other. For when he proposed to himself the belief of its eternity,

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there arose a great many objections in his mind; because he thought that the notion of infinite existence was pressed with no less difficulties than that of infinite extension: And that such a being as was not free from accidents produced a-new, must also itself be produced a-new, because it cannot be said to be more ancient than those accidents: And that which cannot exist before accidents produced in time, must needs itself be produced in time. Then on the other hand, when he proposed to himself the belief of its being produced a-new, other objections occurred to him; for he perceived that it was impossible to conceive any notion of its being produced a-new, unless it was supposed that there was time before it; whereas time was one of those things which belonged to the world, and was, inseparable from it; and therefore the world could not be supposed to be later than time. Then he considered that a thing produced must needs have a producer: And if so, why did this producer make the world now, and not as well before? Was it because of any new chance which happened to him? That could not be, for there was nothing existent besides himself. Was it then upon the account of any change in his own nature? But what should produce that change? Thus he continued for several Years, arguing pro and con about this matter; and a great many arguments offered themselves on both sides, so that neither of these two opinions in his judgment over-balanced the other.

***Quranic Approach in Section 56.*** A direct approach, i.e. a quotation from *Quran* (67:14) appears at the end of this

section. In this case and many other cases, the original text includes “In the Name of Allah, the Merciful, the Most Merciful.”

§ 56

This put him to a great deal of trouble, which made him begin to consider with himself what were the consequences which did follow from each of these Opinions, and that perhaps they might be both alike. And he perceived that if he held that the World was created in time, and had come into existence after a total privation, it would necessarily follow from thence that it could not have come into existence of itself, without the help of some agent to produce it. And that this agent must needs be such an one as cannot be apprehended by our senses; for if he should be the Object of sense, he must be body, and if body, then a part of the world, and consequently a created being; such an one as would have stood in need of some other cause to create him; and if that second creator was body, he would depend upon a third, and that third upon a fourth, and so ad infinitum, which is absurd. Therefore the world stands in need of an incorporeal creator: And if the creator thereof is incorporeal, it is impossible for us to apprehend him by any of our senses; for we perceive nothing by the help of them but body, or such accidents as adhere to bodies: And if he cannot be perceived by the senses, it is impossible he should be apprehended by the imagination; for the imagination does only represent to us the forms of things

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in their absence, which we have before learned by our senses. And if he is not body, we must not attribute to him any of the properties of body; the first of which is extension, from which he is free, as also from all those properties of bodies which flow from it. And if he is the maker of the world, doubtless he has the sovereign command and knowledge of it. “Shall not he know it, that created it? He is wise, omniscient” (67:14)!

### § 57

Furthermore, he saw that if he held the eternity of the world, and that it always was as it now is, without any privation before it; then it would follow that its motion must be eternal too; because there could be no rest before it, from whence it might commence its motion. Now all motion necessarily requires a mover; and this mover must be either a power diffused through some body, that is through the body of a being which moves itself, or through some other body without it, or else a certain power not diffused or dispersed through any body at all. Now every power which passes, or is diffused, through any body, is divided or doubled according as the body is divided or doubled. For instance; the gravity in a stone, by which it tends downwards, if you divide the stone into two parts, is divided into two parts also; and if you add to it another like it, the gravity is doubled. And if it were possible to add stones in infinitum, the gravity would increase in infinitum too. And if a stone should grow to a

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certain size and stop there, the gravity would also increase to such a pitch, and no farther. Now it is demonstrated that all body must necessarily be finite; and consequently, that power which is in body is finite too. If therefore we can find any power which produces an infinite effect, it is plain that it is not in body. Now we find that the Heaven is moved about with a perpetual motion, without any cessation, since we admit the Heaven to be eternal. Whence it necessarily follows that the power which moves it is not in its own body, nor in any other exterior body; but proceeds from something altogether abstracted from body, and which cannot be described by corporeal adjuncts or properties. Now he had learned from his first contemplation of the world of generation and corruption, that the true reality of body consisted in its form, which is its disposition to several sorts of motion; but that the reality which consisted in its matter was very mean, and scarce possible to be conceived. Therefore the reality of the whole world consists in its disposition to be moved by this mover, who is free from matter and the properties of body, abstracted from every thing which we can either perceive by our senses or reach by our imagination. And if he is the efficient cause of the divers motions of the heavens, which he produces by an action in which there is no irregularity, no abatement, no cessation; without doubt he has power over them, and a knowledge of them.

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***Quranic Approach in Section 58.*** In following section, once more there is a quote from *Quran* (36:82) from which “In the Name of Allah, the Merciful, the Most Merciful” is omitted.

### § 58

Thus his contemplation this way brought him to the same conclusion it did the other Way. So that doubting concerning the eternity of the world, and its existence de novo, did him no harm at all. For it was plain to him both ways, that there was an agent, which was not body, nor joined to body, nor separated from it, nor within it, nor without it, because conjunction and separation, and being within any thing, or without it, are all properties of body, from which that agent is altogether abstracted. And because the matter in all bodies stands in need of a form, as not being able to subsist without it, nor exist really, and the form itself cannot exist but by this agent; it appeared to him that all things owed their existence to this agent, and that none of them could subsist but through him: and consequently, that he was the cause, and they the effects, (whether they were newly created after a privation, or whether they had no beginning in time ‘twas all one) and creatures whose existence depended upon that agent; and that without his continuance they could not continue, nor exist without his existing, nor have been eternal without his being eternal, but that he was essentially independent of them, and free from them. And how should it be otherwise, when it is

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demonstrated that his power and might are infinite, and that all bodies and whatsoever belongs to them are finite? Consequently, that the whole world and whatsoever was in it, the heavens, the Earth, the stars, and whatsoever was between them, above them, or beneath them, was all his Work and creation, and posterior to him in Nature, if not in time. As, if you take anybody whatsoever in your hand, and then move your hand, the body will without doubt follow the motion of your hand, with such a motion as shall be posterior to it in nature, though not in time, because they both began together. So all this World is caused and created by this agent, out of time, “whose command is, when he would have anything done, be, and it is.” (36:82)

***Quranic Approach in Section 59.*** At the end of this section, will be seen another quote from *Quran* (34:3), omitting the sentence “In the Name of Allah, the Merciful, the Most Merciful”.

### § 59

And when he perceived that all things which did exist were his workmanship, he looked them over again, considering in them attentively the power of their author, and admiring the Wonderfulness of the Workmanship, and such accurate Wisdom and subtle knowledge. And there appeared to him in the most minute creatures (much more in the greater) such footsteps of wisdom, and wonders of the work of creation,

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that he was swallowed up with admiration, and fully assured that these things could not proceed from any other than an agent of infinite perfection, nay, that was above all perfection; such an one “to whom the Weight of the least atom was not unknown, whether in Heaven or Earth; no, nor any other thing, whether lesser or greater than it.” (34:3)

***Quranic Approach in Section 60.*** The following passage is intertextualized with a part of the verse (20:50), “He said: Our Lord is He Who gave to everything its creation, then guided it.”

In section 60, Ibn Tufail repeats this part “... gave to everything its creation, then guided it” with “In the Name of Allah, the Merciful, the Most Merciful.”

The word of translation amounts to fail to show similarity between the Ibn Tufail’s text and the verse of *Quran*.

### § 60

Then he considered all the kinds of animals, and how this agent had given such a fabric of body to every one of them, and then taught them how to use it. (20:50) For if he had not directed them to apply those members which he had given them, to those respective uses for which they were designed, they would have been so far from being of any service that they would rather have been a burden. From whence he knew that the creator of the world was supereminently bountiful

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and exceedingly gracious. And then when he perceived among the creatures, any that had beauty, elegance, perfection, strength, or excellence of any kind whatever, he considered with himself, and knew that it all emanated from that agent, and from his existence and operation. And he knew that what the agent had in his own nature, was greater than that which he saw in the creatures, more perfect and complete, more beautiful and glorious, and more lasting; and that there was no proportion between the one and the other. Neither did he cease to prosecute this search, till he had run through all the attributes of perfection, and found that they were all in this agent, and all flowed from him; and that he was most worthy to have them all ascribed to him, above all the creatures which were described by them.

***Quranic Approach in Section 61.*** At the end of this section, there is a quote from *Quran*, including some part of the verse (28:88), “All things perish, except His Face.”

### § 61

In like manner he enquired into all the attributes of imperfection, and perceived that the maker of the world was free from them all. And how was it possible for him to be otherwise, since the notion of imperfection is nothing but mere non-existence, or what depends upon it? And how can he any way partake of non-existence, who is the pure existence, necessarily by his essence; who gives being to

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every thing that exists, and besides whom there is no existence; but He is the being, He the perfection, He the plenitude, He the beauty, He the glory, He the power, He the knowledge? He is He, and besides Him all things are subject to perishing. (28:88)

### § 62

Thus far his Knowledge had brought him towards the end of the fifth septenary from his birth, viz. when he was 35 years old. And the consideration of this supreme agent was then so rooted in his heart, that it diverted him from thinking upon any thing else: and he so far forgot the consideration of the creatures, and the enquiring into their natures, that as soon as ever he cast his eyes upon anything of what kind soever, he immediately perceived in it the work of this agent; and in an instant his thoughts were taken off from the work, and transferred to the worker. So that he was inflamed with the desire of him, and his heart was altogether withdrawn from thinking upon this inferior world, which contains the objects of sense, and wholly taken up with the contemplation of the upper, intellectual world.

### § 63

Having now attained to the knowledge of this supreme being, which has no cause of his own existence, but is the cause why all things else exist; he was desirous to know by what means

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he had attained this Knowledge, and by which of his faculties he had apprehended this being. And first he examined all his senses, viz. his hearing, sight, smelling, tasting and feeling, and perceived that all these apprehended nothing but body, or what was in body. For the hearing apprehended nothing but sounds, and these came from the undulation of the air, when bodies are struck one against another; the sight apprehends colours; the smelling, odours; the taste, savours; and the touch, the temperatures and dispositions of bodies, such as hardness, softness, roughness and smoothness. Nor does the imagination apprehend anything but as it has length, breadth, and thickness. Now all these things which are thus apprehended are the adjuncts of bodies; nor can these senses apprehend anything else, because they are faculties diffused through bodies, and divided according to the division of bodies, and for that reason cannot apprehend anything else but divisible body. For such a faculty being diffused through something divisible, it is impossible, but that when it apprehends any thing whatsoever, that thing so apprehended must be divided as the faculty is divided. For which reason, no faculty which is seated in body can apprehend anything but what is body, or in it. Now it was already demonstrated that this necessarily existent being is free in every respect from all properties of body; and consequently not to be apprehended but by something which is neither body, nor any faculty inherent in body, nor has any manner of dependence upon it, nor is either within it, or without it, nor joined to it, nor separated from it. From whence it appeared to him that he

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had apprehended this being by that which was his essence, and that the notion of this being was grounded in him. And from hence he concluded that this essence wherewith he perceived this being was incorporeal, and free from all the properties of body; and that all the external and corporeal part which he perceived in his being, was not in reality his essence; but that his true essence was that, by which he apprehended that being of necessary existence.

### § 64

Having thus learned that his essence was not that corporeal mass which he perceived with his senses and was clothed with his skin, he began to entertain mean thoughts of his body, and set himself to contemplate that noble essence, by which he had reached the knowledge of that superexcellent and necessarily existent being; and began to consider whether this noble essence of his could possibly perish, or become corrupt and dissolve; or whether it were of perpetual duration. Now he knew that corruption and dissolution were accidents of body, and consisted in the putting off one form, and putting on another. As for instance: when water is changed into air, and air into water; or when plants are turned into earth or ashes, and earth again into plants (for this is the true notion of corruption). But an incorporeal thing, which has no dependence upon body, but is altogether free from the accidents proper to body, cannot be supposed to be liable to corruption.

§ 65

Having thus secured himself in this belief that his real essence could not be dissolved, he had a mind to know what condition it should be in when it had laid aside the body and was freed from it; which he already knew would not be, till the body ceased to continue a fit instrument for its use. Therefore he considered all his apprehensive faculties, and perceived that every one of them did sometimes apprehend potentially, and sometimes actually; as the eye when it is shut, or turned away from the object, sees potentially (for the meaning of apprehending potentially is, when it does not apprehend now, yet can do it for the time to come). And when the eye is open, and turned toward the object, it sees actually (for that is called actual, which is present). And so every one of these faculties is sometimes in power, and sometimes in act. And if any of them did never actually apprehend its proper Object, so long as it remains in power it has no desire to its particular object; because it knows nothing of it (as a man that is born blind). But if it did ever actually apprehend, and then be reduced to the power only: so long as it remains in that condition, it will desire to apprehend in act; because it has been acquainted with the Object, and is intent upon it, and lingers after it; as a man who could once see, and after is blind, continually desires visible Objects. And according as the object which he has seen is more perfect and glorious and beautiful, his desire towards it is proportionally increased, and his grief for the

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loss of it so much the greater. Hence it is that the grief of him who is deprived of that sight he once had, is greater than his who is deprived of smelling; because the objects of sight are more perfect and beautiful than those of smelling. And if there be any thing of boundless perfection, infinite beauty, glory and splendour, that is above all splendour and beauty, so that there exists no perfection, beauty, brightness, or comeliness, but flows from it; then certainly he that shall be deprived of the sight and knowledge of that thing, after he has once been acquainted with it, must necessarily, so long as he continues in that state, suffer inexpressible anguish; as on the contrary, he that continually has it present to him must needs enjoy uninterrupted delight, boundless felicity, and infinite joy and gladness.

### § 66

Now it had been already made plain to him that all the attributes of perfection belonged to that being which did necessarily self-exist, and that he was far from all manner of imperfection. He was certain withal, that the faculty by which he attained to the apprehension of this being was not like to bodies, nor subject to corruption, as they are. And from hence it appeared to him that whosoever had such an essence as was capable of apprehending this noble being, must, when he put off the body as the time of his death, have been formerly, during his governorship of the body, first, either one who was not acquainted with this necessarily self-existent being, nor

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ever was joined to him, nor ever heard any thing of him; and so would, at the separating with the body, never desire him, nor be concerned at the want of him; because all the corporeal faculties cease when the body dies, nor do they any longer desire or linger after their proper objects, nor are in any trouble or pain for their absence. (This is the condition of all animals deprived of reason, whether they be of human shape or no) or else, secondly, such an one, who during his governorship of the body, did acquire a notion of this being, and had a sense of his perfection, greatness, dominion, and power; but afterwards declined from him, and followed his carnal desires, till at length death overtook him whilst in this state; he shall be deprived of that vision, and yet be afflicted with the desire of enjoying it, and so remain in lasting punishment and inexpressible torture; whether he be to be delivered from his misery after long pain, and enjoy that vision which he used to desire, or, everlastingly to abide in the same torments, according as he was fitted and disposed for either of these two, during his continuance in the body. Or lastly, he were such an one, who while in the body acquired the notion of this necessarily self-existent being, and applied himself to it with the utmost of his ability, and has all his thoughts continually intent upon his glory, beauty, and splendour, and never turns from him, not forsakes him, till death seizes him in the act of contemplation and intuition: such a man as this shall, when separated from body, remain in everlasting pleasure and delight and joy and gladness, by reason of the uninterrupted vision of that self-existent being,

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and its entire freedom from all impurity and mixture; and because all those sensible things shall be removed from him, which are the proper objects of the corporeal faculties, and which, in regard of his present state, are no better than torments, evils and hindrances.

### § 67

Being thus satisfied that the perfection and happiness of his own being consisted in the actually beholding that necessarily self-existent being perpetually, so as not to be diverted from it so much as the twinkling of an eye, that death might find him actually employed in that vision, and so his pleasure might be continued, without being interrupted by any pain; he began to consider with himself by what means this vision might actually be continued, without interruption. So he was very intent for a time upon that being; but he could not stay there long, before some sensible object or other would present itself to his view, or the voice of some wild beast would rend his ears, or some fantasy affected his imagination, or he was touched with some pain in some part or other, or he was hungry, or dry, or too cold, or too hot, or was forced to rise to ease Nature; so that his contemplation was interrupted, and he removed from that state of mind; and then he could not, without a great deal of difficulty, recover himself to that state he was in before; and he was afraid that death should overtake him at such a time as his thoughts were diverted

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from the vision, and so he should fall into everlasting misery and the pain of separation.

### § 68

This put him into a great deal of anxiety, and when he could find no remedy, he began to consider all the several sorts of animals, and observe their actions, and what they were employed about; in hopes of finding some of them that might possibly have a notion of this being and an endeavour after him; that so he might learn of them which way to be saved. But he found that they were all wholly taken up in getting their provision, and satisfying their desires of eating and drinking and copulation, and choosing the shady places in hot weather, and the sunny ones in cold; and that all their lifetime, both day and night, till they died, was spent after this manner, without any variation, or minding anything else at any time. From whence it appeared to him that they knew nothing of this being, nor had any desire towards it, nor became acquainted with it by any means whatsoever; and that they all tended toward a state of privation, or something very near akin to it. Having passed this judgment upon the animals, he knew that it was much more reasonable to conclude so of vegetables, which had but few of those apprehensions which the animals had; for if that whose apprehension was more perfect did not attain to this knowledge, much less could it be expected from that whose apprehension was less perfect; especially when he saw that

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all the actions of plants reached no farther than nutrition and generation.

### § 69

He next considered the stars and spheres, and saw that they had all regular motions, and went round in a due order, and that they were pellucid and shining, and remote from any approach to change or corruption. Which made him have a strong suspicion that they had essences distinct from their bodies, which were acquainted with this necessarily self-existent being; and that these understanding essences were neither bodies nor imprinted in bodies. And why might it not be supposed that they might have incorporeal essences, when he himself had, notwithstanding his weakness and extreme need of sensible things? For he partook of corruptible body, and yet nevertheless, all his defects did not hinder him from having an incorporeal incorruptible essence. From whence he concluded that the celestial bodies were much more likely to have it; and he was assured that they had a knowledge of that necessarily self-existent being, and did actually behold it at all times, because they were not at all encumbered with those hindrances, arising from the intervention of sensible things, which debarred him from enjoying the vision without interruption.

§ 70

Then he began to consider with himself, what should be the reason why he alone, above all the rest of living creatures, should be endued with such an essence as made him like the heavenly bodies. Now he understood before the nature of the elements, and how one of them used to be changed into another, and that there was nothing upon the face of the Earth which always remained in the same form, but that generation and corruption followed one another perpetually in a mutual succession; and that most of these bodies were mixed and compounded of contrary things, and were for that reason the more disposed to corruption; and that there could not be found among them all anything pure, but that such bodies as came nearest to purity, and had least mixture, are least subject to corruption, as gold and jacinth; and that the heavenly bodies were simple and pure, and for that reason far removed from corruption, and not subject to a succession of forms. Furthermore it was clear to him that the real essence of those bodies, which are in this sublunary world, consisted in some, of one single form added to the notion of corporeity, as the four elements; in others of more, as animals and plants; and that those, whose essence consisted of the fewest forms, had fewest actions, and were farther distant from life. And that if there were any body to be found, that was destitute of all form, it was impossible that it should live, but was next to nothing at all; also that those whose essence most forms, had the most operations, and had more ready and easy entrance to

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the state of life. And if this form were so disposed, that there were no way of separating it from the matter to which it properly belonged, then the life would be manifest, permanent and vigorous to the utmost degree; but on the contrary, whatsoever body was altogether destitute of a form, was  $\nu Xy$ ,<sup>1</sup> matter without life, and near akin to nothing. And that the four elements subsisted with one single form only, and are of the lowest rank of existence in the sublunary world, out of which other things endued with more forms are compounded. And that the life of these elements is very weak, both because they have no variety of motion, but always tend the same way; and because every one of them has an adversary which manifestly opposes the tendency of its nature, and endeavours to deprive it of its form; and therefore its existence lacks stability, and its life is weak. But that plants had a stronger life, and animals a life more manifest than the plants: the reason of which is, because that whenever it happened that in any of these compound bodies, the nature of one element prevailed, that predominant element would overcome the natures of the rest, and destroy their power, so that the compounded body would be of the same nature with that prevailing element, and consequently partake but of a small portion of life, because the element itself does so.

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<sup>1</sup> See Ockley's translation, p. 104;  $\nu Xy$  seemingly stands for *jomlah* in the Arabic text.

§ 71

On the contrary, if there were any of these compounded bodies, in which the nature of one element did not prevail over the rest, but they were all equally mixed, and a match one for the other; then one of them would not abate the force of the other, any more than its own force is abated by it, but they would work upon one another with equal power, and the operation of any one of them would not be more conspicuous than that of the rest; and this body would be far from being like to any one of the elements, but would be as if it had nothing contrary to its form, and consequently the more disposed for life; and the greater this equality of temperature was, and by how much the more perfect, and further distant from inclining one way or other, by so much the farther it is distant from having any contrary to it, and its life is the more perfect. Now since that animal spirit which is seated in the heart is of a most even temperature, as being finer than earth and water, and grosser than fire and air, it has the nature of a mean between them all, and which has no manifest opposition to any of the elements, and by this means is capable of the form of animality. And he saw that it followed from hence, that those animal spirits which were of the most even temperature, were the best disposed for the most perfect life in this world of generation and corruption, and that this spirit was very near having no opposite to its form, and did in this respect resemble the heavenly bodies which have no opposite to their forms; and that the spirit of such an animal,

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because it was a mean between all the elements, had no absolute tendency, either upwards or downwards; but that, if it were possible it should be placed in the middle space, between the centre and the highest bounds of the region of fire, and not be destroyed, it would continue in the same place, and move neither upwards nor downwards; but if it should be locally moved, it would move in a round, as the heavenly bodies do, and if it moved in its place, it would be round its own centre; and that it was impossible for it to be of any other figure but spherical, and for that reason it is very much like to the heavenly bodies.

### § 72

And when he had considered the properties of animals, and could not see any one among them, concerning which he could in the least suspect that it had any Knowledge of this necessarily self-existent Being; but he knew that his own Essence had the Knowledge of it; he concluded from hence that he was an animal, endued with a spirit of an equal temperature, as all the heavenly bodies are, and that he was of a distinct species from the rest of animals, and that he was created for another end, and designed for something greater than what they were capable of. And this was enough to satisfy him of the nobility of his nature, namely, that his viler part, i.e. the corporeal, was most like of all to the heavenly substances, which are without this world of generation and corruption, and free from all accidents that cause any defect,

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change or alteration; and that his nobler part, viz. that by which he attained the Knowledge of the necessarily self-existent being, was something sovereign and divine, not subject to corruption, nor capable of being described by any of the properties or attributes of bodies; not to be apprehended by any of the senses or by the imagination, nor to be known by the means of any other instrument but itself alone; and that it attained the knowledge of itself by it self, and was at once the knower, the knowledge, and the thing known; the faculty and the object. Neither was there any difference between any of these, because diversity and separation are properties and adjuncts of bodies; but body was no way concerned here, nor any property or adjunct of body.

### § 73

Having apprehended the manner by which the being like the heavenly bodies was peculiar to him above all other kinds of animals whatever, he perceived that it was a duty necessarily incumbent upon him to resemble them, and imitate their actions, and endeavour to the utmost to become like them. He perceived also that in respect of his nobler part, by which he had attained the Knowledge of that necessarily self-existent being he did in some measure resemble it, because he was separated from the attributes of bodies, as the necessarily self-existent being is separated from them. He saw also that it was his duty to endeavour to make himself master of the

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properties of that being by all possible means, and put on his qualities, and imitate his actions, and labour in the doing his will, and resign himself wholly to him, and submit to his dispensations heartily and unfeignedly, so as to rejoice in him, though he should lay afflictions upon his body, and hurt, or even totally destroy it.

### § 74

He also perceived that he resembled the beasts in his viler part, which belonged to this generable and corruptible world, viz. this dark, gross body, which sought from that world a variety of sensible things, such as food, drink, and copulation. And he knew that his body was not created and joined to him in vain, but that he was obliged to preserve it and take care of it, which he saw could not be done without some of those actions which are common to the rest of the animals. Thus it was plain to him that there were three sorts of actions which he was obliged to, namely 1. those by which he resembled the irrational animals; or, 2. those by which he resembled the heavenly bodies; or, 3. those by which he resembled the necessarily self-existent being. And that he was obliged to the first, as having a gross body, consisting of several parts, and different faculties, and variety of motions; to the second, as having an animal spirit, which had its seat in the heart, and was the first beginning of the body and all its faculties; to the third, as he was what he was, viz. as he was that essence, by which he knew the necessarily self-existent

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being. And he was very well assured before, that his happiness and freedom from misery consisted in the perpetual vision of that necessarily self-existent being, without being averted from it so much as the twinkling of an eye.

### § 75

Then he weighed with himself, by what means a continuation of this vision might be attained, and the result of his contemplation was this, viz. That he was obliged to keep himself constantly exercised in these three kinds of assimilation. Not that the first of them did any way contribute to the helping him to the vision (but was rather an impediment and hindrance, because it was concerned only in sensible objects, which are all of them a sort of veil or curtain interposed between us and it) but because it was necessary for the preservation of the animal spirit, whereby the second assimilation, i.e. the assimilation to the heavenly bodies was acquired, and was for this reason necessary, though encumbered with those inconveniences. But as to the second assimilation, he saw indeed that a great share of that continued vision was attained by it, but that it was not without mixture; because, whatsoever contemplates the vision after this manner continually, does, together with it, have regard to, and cast a look upon his own essence, as shall be shown hereafter. But that the third assimilation was that by which he obtained the pure vision, and absolute absorption,

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without being diverted from it one way or other by any means whatsoever, but being still intent upon that necessarily self-existent being; which whosoever enjoys, has no regard to any thing else, and his own essence is altogether neglected, and vanished out of sight, and become as nothing; and so are all other essences both great and small, except only the essence of that one, true, necessarily self-existent, highest and all-powerful being.

### § 76

Now when he was assured that the utmost bound of all his desires consisted in this third assimilation, and that it was not to be attained without being a long time exercised in the second, and that there was no continuing so long as was necessary for that purpose, but by means of the first (which, how necessary soever, he knew was an hindrance in itself, and an help only by accident), he resolved to allow himself no more of that first assimilation than needs must, which was only just so much as would keep the animal spirit alive. Now, in order to this, he found there were two things necessary; the former, to help it inwardly, and supply the defect of that nourishment which was wasted; the latter, to preserve it from without, against the extremities of heat and cold, rain and sun, hurtful animals, and such like. And he perceived that if he should allow himself to use these things, though necessary, unadvisedly and at adventure, it might chance to expose him to excess, and by that means he might do himself

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an injury unawares. Whereupon he concluded it the safest way to set bounds to himself, which he resolved not to pass; both as to the kind of meat which he was to eat, and the quantity and quality of it, and the times of returning to it.

### § 77

And first he considered the several kinds of those things which were fit to eat, and found that there were three sorts, viz. either such plants as were not yet come to their full growth, nor attained to perfection, such as are several sorts of green herbs: or secondly, the fruits of plants which were fully ripe, and had seed fit for the production of more of the same kind (and such were the kinds of fruits that were newly gathered and dry): or lastly, living creatures, both fish and flesh. Now he knew very well that all these things were created by that necessarily self-existent being, in approaching to whom he was assured that his happiness did consist, and in desiring to resemble him. Now the eating of these things must needs hinder their attaining to their perfection, and deprive them of that end for which they were designed; and this would be an opposition to the working of the supreme agent, and such an opposition would hinder that nearness and conformity to him which he so much desired. Upon this he thought it the best way to abstain from eating altogether, if possible; but when he saw that this would not do, and that such an abstinence tended to the dissolution of his body, which was so much a greater opposition to the agent than the

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former, by how much he was of a more excellent nature than those things, whose destruction was the cause of his preservation; of two evils he resolved to choose the least, and do that which contained in it the least opposition to the creator; and resolved to partake of any of these sorts, if those he had most mind to were not at hand, in such quantity as he should conclude upon hereafter; and if it so happened that he had them all at hand, then he would consider with himself, and choose that in the partaking of which there would be the least opposition to the Work of the creator: such as the pulp of those fruits which were full ripe, and had seeds in them fit to produce others of the like kind, always taking care to preserve the seeds, and neither eat them, nor spoil them, nor throw them in such places as were not fit for plants to grow in, as on rocks, salt earth, and the like. And if such eatable pulpy fruits as apples, pears, plums, &c. could not easily be come at, he would then take such as had nothing in them fit to eat but only the seed, as walnuts and chestnuts, or such green herbs as were not fully grown; always observing this rule, that let him take of which sort he would, he still chose those that there was greatest plenty of, and which increased fastest, but so as to pull up nothing by the roots, nor spoil the seed. And if none of these things could be had, he would then take some living creature, or its eggs; but when he took any animal, he must choose that sort of which there was the greatest plenty, so as not totally to destroy any species.

§ 78

These were the rules which he prescribed to himself as to the kinds of his provision. As to the quantity, his rule was to eat no more than just what would satisfy his hunger; and as for the time of his meals, he designed, when he was once satisfied, not to seek any more till he found some disability in himself which hindered his exercise in the second assimilation (of which we are now going to speak). As for those things which necessity required of him towards the conservation of his animal spirit, in regard of defending it from external injuries, he was not much troubled about them, for he was clothed with skins, and had a house sufficient to secure him from those inconveniences from without, which was enough for him; and he thought it superfluous to take any further care about those things; and as for his diet, he observed those rules which he had prescribed to himself, namely, those which we have just now set down.

§ 79

After this he applied himself to the second operation, viz. the imitation of the heavenly bodies, and expressing their proper qualities in himself; which when he had considered, he found to be of three sorts. The first were such as had relation to those inferior bodies which are placed in this world of generation and corruption, as heat, which they impart by their essence, and cold by accident, illumination, rarefaction, and

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condensation, and all those other, things by which they influence these inferior bodies, whereby these bodies are disposed for the reception of spiritual forms from the necessarily self-existent agent. The second sort of properties which they had were such as concerned their own being, as that they were clear, bright and pure, free from all manner of turbidness, and whatsoever kinds of pollution; that their motion was circular, some of them moving round their own centre, and some again round the centre of another. The third kind of their properties were such as had relation to the necessarily self-existent agent, as their continually beholding him without any interruption, and having a desire towards him, being busied in his service, and moving agreeable to his will, and not otherwise, but as he pleased, and by his power. So he began to resemble them in every one of these three kinds to the utmost of his power.

### § 80

And as for his first conformity, his imitation of them consisted in removing all things that were obstructive or hurtful, either from animals or plants, if they could be removed. So that if he saw any plant which was deprived of the benefit of the sun by the interposition of any other body, or that its growth was hindered by its being twisted with any other plant, he would remove that which hindered it if possible, yet so as not to hurt either; or if it was in danger of dying for want of moisture, he took what care he could to

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water it constantly. Or if he saw any creature pursued by any wild beast, or entangled in a snare, or pricked with thorns, or that had gotten any thing hurtful into its eyes or ears, or was hungry or thirsty, he took all possible care to relieve it. And when he saw any watercourse stopped by any stone, or any thing brought down by the stream, so that any plant or animal was hindered of it, he took care to remove it. And thus he continued in this first kind of imitation of the heavenly bodies, till he had attained it to the very height of perfection.

### § 81

The second sort of imitation consisted in his continually obliging himself to keep his body clean from of manner of dirt and nastiness, and washing himself often, keeping his nails and his teeth clean, and the secret parts of his body, which he used to rub whenever possible with sweet herbs and perfume with odours. He used frequently to make clean his clothes, and perfume them, so that he was all over resplendent with beauty, cleanliness and fragrance, Besides this, he used different sorts of circular motion, sometimes walking round the island, compassing the shore and going round the utmost bounds of it; sometimes walking or running a certain number of times round about his house or some stone, at other times turning himself round so often that he was dizzy.

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**Quranic Approach in Section 82.** Ibn Tufail has intertextualized the verse (95:5), “Then we reduced him to the lowest of the low,” (*asfal al-safelin*) in the phrase “bring him down to the lowest degree.”

### § 82

The third sort of imitation consisted in confining his thoughts to the contemplation of that necessarily self-existent being. And in order to this, he removed all his affections from sensible things, shut his eyes, stopped his ears, and refrained himself as much as possible from following his imagination, endeavouring to the utmost to think of nothing besides him, nor to admit together with him any other object of contemplation. And he used to help himself in this by rapidly turning himself round, in which when he was very violently exercised, all manner of sensible Objects vanished out of his sight, and the imagination and all the other faculties which make any use of the organs of the body grew weak; and on the other side, the operations of his essence, which depended not on the body, grew strong, so that at some times his meditation was pure and free from any mixture, and he beheld by it the necessarily self-existent being. But then again the corporeal faculties would return upon him and spoil his contemplation, and bring him down to the lowest degree where he was before. Now, when he had any infirmity upon him which interrupted his design, he partook of some food, but still according to the aforementioned rules; and then

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removed again to that state of imitation of the heavenly bodies, in these three respects which we have mentioned. And thus he continued for some time opposing his corporeal faculties, and they opposing him, and mutually struggling one against another; and at such times as he got the better of them, and his thoughts were free from mixture, he did apprehend something of the state of those who have attained to the third assimilation.

***Quranic Approach in Section 82.*** Intertextualized in the underlined phrase, will be observed the term of *shirk* from the verse (4:116), “God will not forgive the sin of considering something equal to Him, but He may forgive the other sins of whomever He wants. One who considers anything equal to God has certainly gone far away from the right path.”

Also take a look at the verse (4:48), “God does not forgive the sin of considering others equal to Him, but He may choose to forgive other sins. Whoever believes in other gods besides Him has indulged in a great sin.”

### § 83

Then he began to seek after this third assimilation, and took pains in the attaining it. And first he considered the attributes of the necessarily self-existent being. Now it had appeared to him during the time of his theoretical speculation, before he entered upon the practical part, that there were two sorts of

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them, viz. positive, as knowledge, power and wisdom; and negative, as immateriality, not only such as consisted in the not being body, but in being altogether removed from anything that had the least relation to body, though at never so great a distance. And that this was a condition not only required in the negative attributes, but in the positive too, viz. that they should be free from all attributes of body, of which multiplicity is one. Now the divine essence is not multiplied by these positive attributes, but all of them together are one and the same thing, viz. his real essence. Then he began to consider how he might imitate him in both these kinds; and as for the positive attributes, when he considered that they were nothing else but his real essence, and that by no means it could be said of them that they are many (because multiplicity is an attribute of body), and that the knowledge which he has of his essence is his essence; it appeared to him, that if he would know the divine essence, this knowledge would not be a notion superadded to the divine essence, but be the very being itself. And he perceived that his way to make himself like to him, as to what concerned his positive attributes, would be to know him alone, abstracted wholly from all attributes of body.

### § 84

This he applied himself to; and as for the negative attributes, they all consisted in the exemption from corporeity. He began therefore to strip himself of all bodily properties. This he had

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made some progress in before, during the time of the former exercise, when he was employed in the imitation of the heavenly bodies; but there still remained a great many relics, as his circular motion (motion being one of the most proper attributes of body) and his care of animals and plants, compassion upon them, and industry in removing whatever inconvenienced them (for this too belonged to corporeal attributes, since in the first place it was by a corporeal faculty that he saw them, and then by a corporeal faculty that he laboured to serve them). Therefore he began to reject and remove all those things from himself, as being in no wise consistent with that state which he was now in search of. So he continued, confining himself to rest in the bottom of his cave, with his head bowed down, and his eyes shut, and turning himself altogether from all sensible things and the corporeal faculties, and bending all his thoughts and meditations upon the necessarily self-existent being, without admitting any thing else besides him; and if any other object presented itself to his imagination, he rejected it with his utmost force, and exercised himself in this, and persisted in it to that degree, that sometimes he did neither eat nor stir for a great many days together. And whilst he was thus earnestly taken up in contemplation, sometimes all manner of beings whatsoever would be quite out of his mind and thoughts, except his own essence only.

***Quranic Approach in Section 85.*** In this section, there is an intertextuality of the verse (56:6), “Then We shall

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advance upon the work which they have done and render it as scattered dust,” and a quote from *Quran*, (40:16), “To whom now belongs the Kingdom? To God, the One, the Almighty.”

### § 85

But he found that his own essence was not excluded his thoughts, no not at such times when he was most deeply immersed in the contemplation of the true, necessarily self-existent being. Which concerned him very much, for he knew that even this was a mixture in the pure vision and the admission of an extraneous object in that contemplation. Upon which he endeavoured to disappear from himself and be wholly taken up in the vision of that true being; till at last he attained it; and then both the heavens and the earth, and whatsoever is between them, and all spiritual forms, and corporeal faculties, and all those faculties which are separate from matter (namely the essences which know the necessarily self-existent being) all disappeared and vanished like scattered dust (56:6) and amongst these his own Essence disappeared too, and there remained nothing but this One, True, Perpetually Selfexistent Being, who spoke thus in that Saying of his (which is not a Notion superadded to his Essence) To whom now belongs the Kingdom? To God, the One, the Almighty (40:16). Which words of his Hayy Ibn Yaqzan understood, nor was his being unacquainted with words, and not being able to speak, any hindrance at all to the

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understanding them. Wherefore he deeply immersed himself into this state, and witnessed that which neither eye hath seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it ever entered into the heart of Man to conceive.<sup>1</sup>

### § 86

And now, let not thy heart crave a description of that which the heart of man cannot conceive. For if a great many of those things which the heart doth conceive are nevertheless hard to be explained, how much more difficult must those be which cannot be conceived by the heart, nor are circumscribed in the limits of that world in which it converses. Now, when I say the heart, I don't mean the substance of it, nor that spirit which is contained in the cavity of it; but I mean by it, the form of that spirit which is diffused by its faculties through the whole body of man. Now every one of these three is sometimes called the heart, but it is impossible that this thing which I mean should be comprehended by any of these three, neither can we express any thing by words, which is not first conceived in the heart. And whosoever asks to have that state explained, asks an impossibility; for it is just as if a man should have a mind to taste colours, quatenus colours, and desire that black should be either sweet or sour. However, I shall not dismiss you

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<sup>1</sup> Hadith qudsi.

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without some indications whereby I shall convey to you in some measure what wonderful things he saw when in that station, but all figuratively and by way of parable, without knocking upon the door of truth; for there is no means to the knowledge of that station, but by coming thither. Attend therefore with the ears of thy heart and look sharply with the eyes of thy understanding upon that which I shall show you; it may be you may'st find so much in it as may serve to lead you into the right way. But I make this bargain, that you shall not at present require any further explication of it by word of mouth, but rest thy self contented with what I shall commit to these leaves. For it is a narrow field, and it is dangerous to attempt the explaining of that with words, the nature of which admits no explication.

### § 87

I say then, when he had abstracted himself from his own and all other essences, and beheld nothing existing but only that one, permanent being: when he saw what he saw, and then afterwards returned to the beholding of other things; upon thus coming to himself from that state,(which was like drunkenness) he began to think that his own essence did not at all differ from the essence of that true being, but that they were both one and the same thing, and that the thing which he had taken before for his own essence, distinct from the essence of the true one, was in reality nothing at all, and that nothing existed but the essence of this true one. And that this

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was like the light of the Sun, which, when it falls upon solid bodies, shines there; and though it be attributed, or may seem to belong to that body upon which it appears, yet it is nothing else in reality but the light of the sun. And if that body disappear, its light also disappears; but the light of the sun remains in its integrity and is neither diminished by the presence of that body nor increased by its absence. Now when there happens to be a body which is fitted for such a reception of light, it receives it; if such a body be absent, then there is no such reception, and it signifies nothing at all.

### § 88

He was the more confirmed in this opinion, because it had appeared to him before that the essence of this true, powerful and glorious being was not by any means capable of multiplicity, and that his knowledge of his essence was his very essence; from whence he argued thus:

He that has the knowledge of this essence, has the essence itself, but I have the knowledge of this essence, the essence itself. Ergo, I have.

Now this essence can be present nowhere but with itself, and its very presence is the essence, and therefore he concluded that he was that very essence. And so all other essences which were separate from matter, which had the knowledge of that true essence, though before he had looked upon them as many, by this way of thinking, appeared to him to be only

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one thing. And this misgrounded conceit of his had like to have firmly rooted itself in his mind, unless God had pursued him with his mercy and directed him by his gracious guidance; and then he perceived that it arose from the relics of that obscurity which is natural to body and the dregs of sensible objects. Because that much and little, unity and multiplicity, collection and separation, are all of them attributes of body. But we cannot say of these separate essences which know the essence of this true one, that they are many or one, because they are immaterial. For multiplicity is because of the separation of one essence from another, and there can be no unity but by conjunction, and none of these can be understood without compound notions which are mixed with matter. But the explication of things in this place is very straight and difficult; because if you go about to express what belongs to these separate essences, by way of multitude, or in the plural, according to our present way of speaking, this insinuates a notion of multiplicity, whereas they are far from being many; and if you speak of them by way of separation, or in the singular, this insinuates a notion of unity, whereas they are far from being one.

§ 89

And here methinks I see one of those bats,<sup>1</sup> whose eyes the Sun dazzles, moving himself in the chain of his folly, and saying, “This subtlety of yours exceeds all bounds, for you have withdrawn yourself from the state and condition of understanding men, and indeed rejected the authority of reason, for this is a decree of reason, that a thing must be either one or more than one.” Soft and fair; let that gentleman be pleased to consider with himself, and contemplate this vile, sensible world, whereof he is a part, after the same manner which Hayy Ibn Yaqzan did, who, when he considered it one way, found such a multiplicity in it, as was incomprehensible; and then again considering it another way, perceived that it was only one thing; and thus he continued fluctuating and could not determine on one side more than another. Now if it were so in this sensible world, which is the home of multiplicity and singularity, and the place where the true nature of them is understood, and in which are separation

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. the allegory of the bat in Avicenna and Suhravardi. While Avicenna assigns a positive role to bats in his “The Birds”, they are among the villains in Suhravardi’s “The Language of the Ants” (see Avicenna’s “The Birds” in Corbin, *Avicenna and the Visionary Recital*, p. 187; and “The Language of the Ants” in Thackston, pp. 83-84).

In his Persian rendering, Suhravardi gives the bats’ heroic role to moths (*shabpareh*). For what could only charitably be described as reasons unknown to me, however, Thackston still translates the Persian term *shabpareh* to bat. (see Thackston, p. 2).

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and union, aggregation and distinction, agreement and difference, what would he think of the divine world, concerning which we cannot justly say, all, nor some, nor express any thing belonging to it by such words as our ears are used to, without insinuating some notion which is contrary to the truth of the thing, which no man knows but he that has had the vision of it, nor truly understands, but he that has attained to it.

***Quranic Approach in Section 90.*** The underlined part includes a direct approach, namely another quotation from *Quran*, the verse (30:6).

### § 90

And as for his saying, “That I have withdrawn myself from the state and condition of understanding men, and rejected the authority of reason”: I grant it, and leave him to his understanding, and his understanding men he speaks of. For that understanding which he, and such as he, mean, is nothing else but that logical faculty which examines the individuals of sensible things, and from thence gets an universal notion; and those understanding men he means, are those which make use of this sort of speculation. But that kind, which we are now speaking of, is above all this; and therefore let every one that knows nothing but sensible things and their universals, shut his ears, and pack away to his company, who know the outside of the things of this world, but take no care of the

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next. (30:6) But if thou art one of them to whom these allusions and signs by which we describe the divine world are sufficient, and dost not put that sense upon my words, in which they are commonly used, I shall give thee some farther account of what Hayy Ibn Yaqzan saw, when he was in the state of those who have attained to the truth, of which we have made mention before, and it is thus:

### § 91

Having attained this total absorption, this complete annihilation, this veritable union, he saw that the highest sphere, beyond which there is no body, had an essence free from matter, which was not the essence of that one, true one, nor the sphere itself, nor yet anything different from them both; but was like the image of the Sun which appears in a well polished looking-glass, which is neither the Sun nor the looking-glass, and yet not distinct from them. And he saw in the essence of that sphere, such perfection, splendour and beauty, as is too great to be expressed by any tongue, and too subtle to be clothed in words; and he perceived that it was in the utmost perfection of delight and joy, exultation and gladness, by reason of its beholding the essence of that true one, whose glory he exalted.

### § 92

He saw also that the next sphere to it, which is that of the fixed stars, had an immaterial essence, which was not the

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essence of that true one, nor the essence of that highest sphere, nor the sphere itself, and yet not different from these; but is like the image of the Sun which is reflected upon a looking-glass from another glass placed opposite to the Sun; and he observed in this essence also the like splendour, beauty, and felicity, which he had observed in the essence of the other highest sphere. He saw likewise that the next sphere, which is the sphere of Saturn, had an immaterial essence, which was none of those essences he had seen before, nor yet different from them; but was like the image of the Sun, which appears in a glass, upon which it is reflected from a glass which received that reflection from another glass placed opposite to the Sun. And he saw in this essence too, the same splendour and delight which he had observed in the former. And so in all the spheres he observed distinct, immaterial essences, every one of which was not any of those which went before it, nor yet different from them; but was like the image of the Sun reflected from one glass to another, according to the order of the spheres. And he saw in every one of these essences, such beauty, splendour, felicity and joy, as eye hath not seen nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive;<sup>1</sup> and so downwards, till he came to the lower world, subject to generation and

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<sup>1</sup> Intertextuality of Hadith qudsi.

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corruption, which comprehends all that which is contained within the sphere of the Moon.

### § 93

This World he perceived had an immaterial essence, as well as the rest; not the same with any of those which he had seen before, nor different from them; and that this essence had seventy thousand faces, and every face seventy thousand mouths, and every mouth seventy thousand tongues, with which it praised, sanctified and glorified incessantly the essence of that one, true being. And he saw that this essence (which seemed to be many, though it was not) had the same perfection and felicity, which he had seen in the others; and that this essence was like the image of the Sun, which appears in fluctuating water, which has that image reflected upon it from the last and lowermost of those glasses, to which the reflection came, according to the forementioned order, from the first glass which was set opposite to the Sun. Then he perceived that he himself had a separate essence, which one might call a part of that essence which had seventy thousand faces, if that essence had been capable of division; and if that essence had not been created in time, one might say it was the very same; and had it not been joined to its body so soon as it was created, we should have thought that it had not been created. And in this order he saw essences like his own, which had belonged to bodies existing heretofore but since dissolved, and essences belonging to bodies which

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existed together with himself; and that they were so many as could not be numbered, if we might call them many; or that they were all one, if we might call them one. And he perceived both in his own essence, and in those other essences which were in the same order with him, infinite beauty, splendour and felicity, such as neither eye hath seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man;<sup>1</sup> and which none can describe nor understand, but those which have attained to it, and experimentally know it.

### § 94

Then he saw a great many other immaterial essences, which resembled rusty looking glasses, covered over with filth, and besides, turned their backs upon, and had their faces averted from those polished looking-glasses that had the image of the Sun imprinted upon them; and he saw that these essences had so much filthiness adhering to them, and such manifold defects as he could not have conceived. And he saw that they were afflicted with infinite pains, which caused incessant sighs and groans, and that they were compassed about with torments, as those who lie in a bed are with curtains; and that they were scorched with the fiery veil of separation, and sawn

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<sup>1</sup> Intertextuality of Hadith qudsi.

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asunder by the saws of repulsion and attraction. And besides these essences which suffered torment, he beheld others there which appeared and straightway vanished, which: took form and soon dissolved. And he stayed a while regarding them intently, and he beheld an immensity of fear and vastness of operation, an incessant creation and ordaining wisdom, construction, and inspiration, production and dissolution. But after a very little while his senses returned to him again, and he came to himself out of this state, as out of a swoon; and his foot sliding out of this place, he came within sight of this sensible world, and lost the sight of the divine world, for there is no joining them both together in the same state. For this world in which we live, and that other are like two wives belonging to the same husband; if you please one, you displease the other.

### § 95

Now, if you should object, that it appears from what I have said concerning this vision that these separated essences, if they chance to be united to bodies of perpetual duration, as the heavenly bodies are, shall also remain perpetually, but if they be united to a body which is liable to corruption (such an one as belongs to us reasonable creatures) that then they must perish too, and vanish away, as appears from the similitude of the looking-glasses which I have used to explain it; because the Image there has no duration of itself, but what depends upon the duration of the looking-glass; and if you break the

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glass, the image is most certainly destroyed and vanishes. In answer to this I must tell you that you have soon forgot the bargain I made with you. For did not I tell you before that it was a narrow field, and that we had but little room for explication; and that words however used, would occasion men to think otherwise of the thing than really it was? Now that which has made you imagine this, is, because you thought that the similitude must answer the thing represented in every respect. But that will not hold in any common discourse; how much less in this, where the Sun and its light, and its image, and the representation of it, and the glasses, and the forms which appear in them, are all of them things which are inseparable from body, and which cannot subsist but by it and in it, and therefore depend upon body, and perish together with it.

***Quranic Approach in Section 96.*** The underlined phrase is intertextualized with *Quran*, referring to the verses (2:163), (2:255), (3:18), (28:88), (9:31), (59:22), (3:6), (59:23), (40:65), (13:30), (4:87), just to name a few.

### § 96

But as for the divine essences and sovereign spirits, they are all free from body and all its adherents, and removed from them at the utmost distance, nor have they any connection or dependence upon them. And the existing or not existing of body is all one to them, for their sole connection and

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dependence is upon the essence of that one true necessary self-existent being, who is the first of them, and the beginning of them, and the cause of their existence, and he perpetuates them and continues them for ever; nor do they want the bodies, but the bodies want them; for if they should perish, the bodies would perish, because these essences are the principles of these bodies. In like manner, if a privation of the essence of that one true being could be supposed - far be it from him, for there is no God but him - all these essences would be removed together with him, and the Bodies too, and all the sensible World, because all these have a mutual Connection.

***Quranic Approach in Section 97.*** The word “Shadow” (*dhil*) refers to the verse (25:45), “Do you not see how your Lord stretches the shadow?”

The phrases “moving the mountains and making them like tufts of wool, and men like moths, and darkening the Sun and Moon; and eruption of the sea, in that day when the Earth, shall be changed into another Earth, and the Heavens likewise” are intertextualized with the verses (101:4-5), (81:1), (82:3), and (14:49), respectively.

### § 97

Now, though the sensible world follows the divine world, as a shadow does the body, and the divine world stands in no need of it, but is free from it and independent of it, yet

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notwithstanding this, it is absurd to suppose a possibility of its being annihilated, because it follows the divine world: but the corruption of this world consists in its being changed, not annihilated. It is this that the glorious book expresses where it speaks of moving the mountains and making them like tufts of wool, and men like moths, and darkening the Sun and Moon; and eruption of the sea, in that day when the Earth, shall be changed into another Earth, and the Heavens likewise. And this is the sum of what I can hint to you at present, concerning what Hayy Ibn Yaqzan saw, when in that glorious state. Don't expect that I should explain it any farther with words, for that is even impossible.

### § 98

But as for what concerns the finishing his history, that I shall tell you, God willing. After his return to the sensible world from the excursion which he had made, he loathed this present life, and most earnestly longed for the life beyond; and he endeavoured to return to the same state, by the same means he had sought it at first, till he attained to it with less trouble than he did at first, and continued in it the second time longer than at the first. Then he returned to the sensible world; and then again endeavoured to recover his station, which he found easier than at the first and second time, and that he continued in it longer; and thus it grew easier and easier, and his continuance in it longer and longer, time after time, till at last he could attain it when he pleased, and stay in

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it as long as he pleased. In this state he firmly kept himself, and never retired from it, but when the necessities of his body required it, which he had brought into as narrow a compass as was possible. And whilst he was thus exercised, he used to wish that it would please God to deliver him altogether from this body of his, which detained him from that state; that he might have nothing to do but to give himself up wholly and perpetually to his delight, and be freed from all that torment with which he was afflicted as often as he was forced to avert his mind from that state by attending on the necessities of the body. And thus he continued, till he was past the seventh septenary of his age, that is, till he was about fifty years of age. And then he happened to be acquainted with Asal, the narrative of which meeting of theirs, we shall now (God willing) relate.

### § 99

They say that in that island where Hayy Ibn Yaqzan was born (according to one of the two different accounts of his birth) there had arrived one of those good sects founded by some one of the ancient prophets (upon whom be the blessings of God!). A sect which used to discourse of all the true realities by way of parable and similitude, and by that means represent the images of them to the imagination, and fix the impressions of them in men's souls, as is customary in such discourses as are made to the vulgar. This sect so spread itself in this island, and prevailed and grew so eminent, that at last

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the king not only embraced it himself, but induced his subjects to do so too.

### § 100

Now there were born in this Island two Men of extraordinary Endowments and Lovers of that which is Good; the Name of the one was Asal, and the other Salaman, who meeting with this sect, embraced it heartily, and obliged themselves to the punctual observance of all its ordinances, and the daily exercise of what was practised in it; and to this end they entered into a league of friendship with each other. Now among other passages contained the law of that sect, they sometimes made enquiry into these words, wherein it treats of the description of the most high and glorious God, and his angels, and the resurrection, and the rewards and punishments of a future. Now Asal used to make a deeper search into the inside of things, and was more inclined to study mystical meanings and interpretations. But as for his friend Salaman, he kept close to the literal sense, and never troubled himself such interpretations, but refrained from such free examination and speculation of things. However, notwithstanding this difference, they both were constant in performing those ceremonies required, and in calling themselves to an account, and in opposing their passions.

***Quranic Approaches in Section 101.*** The verse (23:97), “Say, ‘Lord, I seek your protection against the strong

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temptations of the devils,”” is the reference of the phrase “promptings of devils” *hamazat al-sahyatin*.

### § 101

Now there were in this law some passages which seemed to exhort men to retirement and a solitary life, intimating that happiness and salvation were to be attained by it; and others which seemed to encourage men to conversation, and the embracing human society. Asal gave himself up wholly to retirement, and those expressions which favoured it were of most weight with him, because he was naturally inclined to contemplation, and searching into the meanings of things; and his greatest hope was, that he should best attain his end by a solitary life. Salaman, on the other side, applied himself to conversation, and those sayings of the law which tended that way, went the farthest with him; because he had a natural aversion to contemplation and free examination of things. And he thought that conversation did drive away temptation, and banished evil thoughts, and afforded a refuge from the promptings of devils. In short, their disagreement in this particular was the occasion of their parting.

### § 102

Now Asal had heard of that island, in which we have told you that Hayy Ibn Yaqzan had his breeding. He knew also its fertility and conveniences, and the healthful temper of the air, so that it would afford him such a retirement as would serve

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the fulfilment of his wishes. Thither he resolved to go, and withdraw himself from mankind the remaining part of his days. So he took what substance he had, and with part of it he hired a ship to convey him thither, the rest he distributed among the poor people, and took his leave of his friend Salaman, and went aboard. The mariners transported him to the island, and set him ashore and left him. There he continued serving God, and magnifying him, and sanctifying him, and meditating upon his glorious names and attributes, without any interruption or disturbance. And when he was hungry, he took what he had occasion for to satisfy his hunger, of such fruits as the island afforded, or what he could hunt. And in this state he continued a while, in the mean time enjoying the greatest pleasure imaginable, and the most entire tranquillity of mind, arising from the converse and communication which he had with his lord; and every day experiencing his benefits and precious gifts, and his bringing easily to his hand such things as he wanted and were necessary for his support, which confirmed his belief in him, and refreshed his heart.

### § 103

Hayy Ibn Yaqzan, in the mean time, was wholly immersed in his sublime ecstasies, and never stirred out of his cave but once a week, to take such provision as first came to hand. So that Asal did not light upon him at first, but walked round the island, and explored its various parts, without seeing any

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man, or so much as the footsteps of any: upon which account his joy was increased, and his mind exceedingly pleased, in regard of his compassing that which he had proposed to himself, namely, to lead the most retired life that was possible.

### § 104

At last it happened, one time that Hayy Ibn Yaqzan coming out to look for provision in the same place whither Asal was retired, they spied one another. Asal, for his part, did not question but that it was some religious person, who for the sake of a solitary life, had retired into that island, as he had done himself, and was afraid, lest if he should come up to him and make himself known, it might spoil his meditation, and hinder his attaining what he hoped for. Hayy Ibn Yaqzan on the other side could not imagine what it was, for of all the animals he had ever beheld in his whole life, he had never seen any thing like it. Now Asal had a black coat on, made with hair and wool, which Hayy Ibn Yaqzan fancied was natural, and stood wondering at it a long time. Asal turned and fled, for fear he should disturb his meditation; Hayy Ibn Yaqzan ran after him, out of an innate desire he had to know the truth of things. But when he perceived Asal make so much haste, he retired a little and hid himself from him; so that Asal thought he had been quite gone off, and then he fell to his prayers, and reading, and invocation, and weeping, and

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supplication, and lamenting, till he was altogether taken up, so as to mind nothing else.

***Quranic Approach in Section 105.*** As an aesthetic approach, some part of the verse (2:247), “...God has chosen him as your ruler and has given him physical power and knowledge ...” could be regarded as the reference of the phrase “power both of knowledge and body.”

### § 105

In the mean time Hayy Ibn Yaqzan stole upon him by degrees, and Asal was unaware of him, till he came so near as to hear him read and praise God, and observed his humble behaviour, and his weeping, and heard a pleasant voice and measured words, such as he had never observed before in any kind of animals. Then he looked upon his shape and lineaments, and perceived that he was of the same form with himself, and was satisfied that the coat he had on was not a natural skin, but an artificial habit like his own. And when he observed the decency of his humble behaviour, and his supplication and weeping, he did not at all question but that he was one of those essences which had the knowledge of the true one; and for that reason he had a desire to be acquainted with him, and to know what was the matter with him, and what caused this weeping and supplication. Whereupon he

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drew nearer to him, till Asal perceiving it, betook himself to his heels again, and Hayy Ibn Yaqzan (answerably to his vigour and power both of knowledge and body, which God had bestowed upon him) pursued him with all his might, till at last he overtook him and seized on him, and held him fast, so that he could not get away.

### § 106

When Asal looked upon him, and saw him clothed with the skins of wild beasts with the hair on, and his own hair so long as to cover a great part of his body, and observed his great swiftness and strength, he was very much afraid of him, and began to pacify and entreat him. But Hayy Ibn Yaqzan did not understand one word he said, nor knew any thing of his meaning, only he perceived that he was afraid, and endeavoured to allay his fear with such voices as he had learned of some of the beasts, and stroked his head, and both sides of his neck, and showed kindness to him, and expressed a great deal of gladness and joy; till at last Asal's fear was laid aside, and he knew that he meant him no harm.

### § 107

Now Asal long before, out of his earnest desire of searching into the meaning of things, had studied most languages, and was well skilled in them. So he began to speak to Hayy Ibn Yaqzan in all the languages which he understood, and ask him questions concerning his way of life, and took pains to

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make him understand him; but all in vain, for Hayy Ibn Yaqzan stood all the while wondering at what he heard, and did not know that was the meaning of it, only he perceived that Asal was pleased and well-affected towards him. And thus they stood wondering one at another.

### § 108

Now Asal had by him some remainder of the provision which he had brought along with him from the inhabited island from whence he came; and he offered it to Hayy Ibn Yaqzan, who did not know what to make on it, for he had never seen any such before. Then Asal ate some of it himself, and invited Hayy Ibn Yaqzan by signs to eat too. But Hayy Ibn Yaqzan bethought himself of those rules which he had prescribed to himself, as to matter of diet; and not knowing the nature of that which he offered him, nor whether it was lawful for him to partake of it or not, he refused it. Asal still continued urgent, and invited him kindly: Now Hayy Ibn Yaqzan had a great desire to be acquainted with him, and was afraid that his continuing too stiff in his refusal, might vex him; so he ventured upon it, and ate some. And when he had tasted of it, and liked it, he perceived that he had done amiss, in breaking those promises which he had made to himself concerning diet. And he repented himself of what he had done, and had thoughts of withdrawing himself from Asal, and retreating to his former state of sublime contemplation.

***Quranic Approach in Section 109.*** The phrase “a great reward” refers to the verse (73:20), and “a nearer approach to God” is intertextualized with the verses (34:37), (39:3), (38:40), and (38:25).

The verse (2:31), “He taught Adam all the names,” is the reference of the sentence “Thus he continued till he had taught him all the nouns.”

### § 109

But the vision did not easily appear to him at first, upon which he resolved to continue with Asal in the sensible world, till he had thoroughly satisfied himself concerning him, that so when he had no further desire towards him, he might apply himself to his former contemplations without any interruption. Wherefore he applied himself to the society of Asal, who perceiving that he could not speak, was secure of any damage that might come to his religion by keeping company with him; and besides, had hopes of teaching him speech, knowledge and religion, and by that means, of obtaining a great reward, and a nearer approach to God. He began therefore to teach him how to speak; first, by showing him particular things, and pronouncing their names, and repeating them often, and persuading him to speak them; which he did, pointing to each object as he spoke the word. Thus he continued till he had taught him all the nouns, and so

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improved him by degrees, that he could speak in a very short time.

### *Quranic Approach in Section 110.*

Ibn Tufail with the phrase "... the saints of God, which have no fear upon them, neither shall they suffer Pain," makes a direct reference to the verse (10:62), "The friends of God will certainly have nothing to fear, nor will they be grieved."

### § 110

Then Asal began to enquire of him concerning his way of living, and from whence he came into that island. And Hayy Ibn Yaqzan told him that he knew nothing of his own original, nor any father or mother that he had, but only that roe which brought him up. Then he described to him his manner of Living, from first to last, and by what degrees he advanced in knowledge, till he attained the union with God. When Asal heard him give an account of those truths, and those essences which are separate from the sensible world, and which have the knowledge of the essence of that true one, (whose name be praised); and heard him give an account of the essence of that true one with its sublime attributes, and describe, as far as was possible, what he witnessed (when he had attained to that union) of the joys of those who are near united to God, and the torments of those whom the veil

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separates from him; he made no doubt but that all those things which are contained in the religious law concerning God, his angels, books and messengers, the Day of Judgment, Paradise and Hell, were symbols of what Hayy Ibn Yaqzan had seen. The eyes of his heart were opened, the fire of his mind was kindled, and he found that the teaching of reason and tradition did exactly agree together. And the ways of mystical interpretation became easy to him, and there remained nothing difficult to him in the divine law, but all was clear; nor any thing shut up, but all was open; nor any thing obscure, but all was plain; and he began to be of those who truly understand. Thenceforth he looked upon Hayy Ibn Yaqzan with admiration and respect, and assured himself that he was one of the saints of God, which have no fear upon them, neither shall they suffer Pain. (2:36) Upon which he addressed himself to wait upon him, and imitate him, and to follow his Direction in the Performance of those Works ordained by the revealed Law which he had occasion to make use of, and which he had formerly learned from his Religion.

### § 111

Then Hayy Ibn Yaqzan began to enquire of him concerning his condition and manner of living, and Asal gave him an account of the island from whence he came, and what manner of people inhabited it, and what sort of life they led before that religious sect, which we mentioned, came among them, and how it was now, since the coming of that sect. He also

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gave him an account of what was delivered in the law relating to the description of the divine world, Paradise and Hell, and the awakening and resurrection of mankind, and their gathering together to judgment, and the balance and the bridge. All which things Hayy Ibn Yaqzan understood very well, and did not find any of them disagreeable to what he had seen when in that sublime station; and he recognised that the describer of these things was true in his description and sincere in his words, and was a messenger sent from his Lord; and he believed him and affirmed his veracity and bore witness to his divine mission.

### § 112

Then he began to ask him concerning the precepts which the messenger of God had delivered, and the rites of worship which he had ordained. And Asal told him of prayer, alms, fasting and pilgrimage, and such other external observances. These Hayy Ibn Yaqzan accepted and took upon himself and practised, in obedience to his command, of whose veracity he was very well assured. Only there were two things stuck in his mind, which he wondered at, and could not comprehend wherein the wisdom of them did consist. The one was, why this messenger of God, in describing most things which relate to the divine world, used to express them to men by parables or similitudes, and waived a clearer revelation of them; which occasioned men to fall into that grave error of asserting a corporeity in God, and attributing to the essence of that true

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one things from which it is absolutely free; and so in like manner, concerning those things which relate to the rewards and punishments of a future state. The other was, why he went no farther than these precepts and rites of worship, but gave men leave to gather riches, and allowed them a liberty as to matter of food; by which means they employed themselves about vain things, and turned away from the truth. Whereas his judgment was, that nobody ought to eat any thing, but only just to keep him alive; and as for riches, he had no opinion of them at all. And when he saw what was set down and prescribed in the law with relation to wealth, as alms, and the distribution of them, and trading and usury, restrictions and punishments, these things seemed all very odd to him, and he judged them superfluous; and said that if men understood things aright, they would lay aside all these vain things and follow the truth, and content themselves without any thing of all this; and that no man would challenge such a propriety in riches as to have alms asked of him, or to cause his hands to be cut off who privily stole them, or their lives to be taken away who had openly robbed him.

***Quranic Approach in Section 113.*** In the following passage, “insomuch that they are like brute cattle, nay, more apt to wander out of the way,” has intertextualized the verses (25:44) and (7:179).

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### § 113

Now that which prompted him to this persuasion, was this, that he thought all men were endued with an ingenuous temper, and penetrating understanding, and a mind constant to itself; and was not aware how stupid and deficient they were, how ill-advised, and inconstant in their resolutions, insomuch that they are like brute cattle, nay, more apt to wander out of the way. Since therefore he was greatly affected with pity towards mankind, and desired that he might be an instrument of their salvation; a resolution came into his mind of going over to them, to declare and lay before them the truth. This intention of his he communicated to his friend Asal, and asked him if there could possibly be any way contrived to come at them.

***Quranic Approach in Section 114.*** The following underlined part, refers to the verse (18:10), “When the youth sought refuge in the cave they prayed ‘Lord, grant us mercy and help us to get out of this trouble in a righteous way’.”

### § 114

But Asal told him what sort of people they were, and how far from an ingenuous temper, and how averse from obeying the commands of God; but this he could not fully comprehend, and his mind was still intent upon that which he hoped to compass. So Asal, being desirous that it might

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please God, by his means, to direct some of his acquaintance which were of a more pliable temper than the rest, and more capable of salvation, into the right way, at last agreed to further the design of Hayy Ibn Yaqzan. Upon which they resolved to keep close to the seashore, without stirring from it either day or night, till God should please to afford them an opportunity of crossing the sea. And all the while they were intent upon this, they continued praying to God to direct them in this their business.

### § 115

At last, as God (whose name be praised) would have it, it happened that a ship which had lost her course was driven by the wind and water upon the shore of that island; and as it drew nearer to land, they who were in it, seeing two men upon the shore, made towards them. Then Asal spoke to them, and desired them to carry him and his companion along with them in the ship; to which they consented and took them into the ship, and it pleased God to send them a fair wind, which, in a short time, carried them to the isle which they desired. There they landed, and went into the city; and Asal's friends came all about him, and he gave them an account of Hayy Ibn Yaqzan, and his manner of living; so that people flocked to him from every side, and admired and revered him. Then Asal told him that this class was superior to all other sorts of men in knowledge and sagacity; and that if he

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could not work upon them, there were much lesser hopes of doing any good upon the vulgar.

***Quranic Approach in Section 116.*** In the underlined parts may be observed aesthetic approach and linguistic intertextualization, referring to the verses (71:5, 6, 8, 9).

### § 116

Now Salaman (Asal's friend, who we told you chose conversation, rather than solitude and retirement which he judged unlawful) was prince and sovereign of this island. So Hayy Ibn Yaqzan began to teach them, and explain the mysteries of wisdom to them; but so soon as ever he began to raise his discourse above external things a little, and to inculcate that, the contrary whereof had been settled in their minds; they began to withdraw themselves from him, and their minds had an abhorrence for what he spoke. And though they carried themselves civilly to him, both because he was a stranger, and out of the observance which they thought due to their friend Asal, yet they were angry with him inwardly in their hearts. However, he continued reasoning with them mildly night and day, and teaching them the truth, both in private and public; which only increased their hatred towards him, and made them avoid his company, though otherwise they were lovers of goodness and desirous of truth. However, through the defect of their nature, they did not pursue it by the right path, nor ask for it at the right door, nor take it in the

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right manner; but sought the knowledge of it after the common way, like the rest of the world. So that he despaired of doing any good upon them, and all his hopes of amending them were defeated, because they were not willing to receive what he taught them.

***Quranic Approach in Section 117.*** The phrase “every sort of them placed their delight in those things which they possessed at present” refers to the verses (23:53) and (30:32).

The phrase “and that their appetites were their God” has intertextualized the verse (25:43). And the next expression “the desire of getting more kept them employed till they came to their graves” refers to the verses (102:1, 2).

In addition, the sentence “and what they have sought after has covered their hearts like rust” refers to (83:14), “Nay, but that which they have earned is rust upon their hearts.”

Finally, the phrase “God has sealed up their hearts and their ears, and a dimness covers their eyes, and a sore punishment awaits them God has” has intertextualized the verse (2:7), “Allah has set a seal upon their hearts and upon their hearing and there is a covering over their eyes, and there is a great punishment for them.”

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### § 117

And afterwards, taking a view of the several ranks and orders of men, he perceived that every sort of them placed their delight in those things which they possessed at present, (23:53; 30:32) and that their appetites were their God, (Cf. 25:43) and that they lost themselves in gathering up the crumbs of this world; and that the desire of getting more kept them employed till they came to their graves; (Cf. 102:1, 2) and that all good counsel was lost upon them; and that disputing with them had only this effect, that it made them the more obstinate. And as for wisdom, there was no way for them to attain it, neither had they any share in it. For folly had overwhelmed them, and what they have sought after has covered their hearts like rust (83:14) God has sealed up their hearts and their ears, and a dimness covers their eyes, and a sore punishment awaits them (2:7).

***Quranic Approach in Section 118.*** “When therefore he saw them compassed about with the curtains of punishment” refers to (18:29).

“covered with the darkness of the veil” refers to (10:27), “... their faces had been covered with slices of the dense darkness of night...”

“and sold them for a small price” has intertextualized (3:184).

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“and that their Merchandize and Trading diverted them from thinking upon God” make a reference to (24:37), “are men who exalt Him there, whom neither trade nor sale can divert from the remembrance of Allah...”

“they had no fear of that day in which both their hearts and eyes shall be turned round” refers to (24:37), “... they fear a day in which the hearts and eyes shall turn about.”

The phrase “such an one as had a longing for that future life and laboured earnestly to obtain it, and was a believer” refers to (17:20).

The expression “but that Hell would be the habitation of the impious who preferred the life of this present world,” refers to (79:37, 38, 39).

“Now all these things are darkness upon darkness in the depth of the sea” makes a reference to (24:40).

“neither is there any of you that doth not enter in thither, for such is the unchangeable decree of your Lord” refers to (19:72) and (79:37-39).

### § 118

When therefore he saw them compassed about with the curtains of punishment, and covered with the darkness of the veil; and that all of them (a few only excepted) minded their

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religion no otherwise, but with regard to this present world; and cast the observance of religious performances behind their backs, notwithstanding the easiness of them, and sold them for a small price; (Cf. 3:184) and that their Merchandize and Trading diverted them from thinking upon God, so that they had no fear of that day in which both their hearts and eyes shall be turned round; (Cf. 24:37) he was fully satisfied that it was to no purpose to speak to them of the pure truth, neither that it was expedient any works should be enjoined them beyond this measure; and that the greatest benefit which accrued to the generality of men by the law, was wholly placed in relation to things of this world, viz. that they might be in a comfortable way of living, and that no man might invade another's property; and that there was but here and there one that attained to happiness hereafter, namely, such an one as had a longing for that future life and laboured earnestly to obtain it, and was a believer; (17:20) but that Hell would be the habitation of the impious who preferred the life of this present world. (79:37, 38, 39) And what weariness can be greater, or what misery more complete than his, among whose works, if you observe, from the time he awakes, till he goes to sleep again, you will find nothing but what tends to the attaining of some one or other of these vile sensible things; namely, either riches, to heap them up; or pleasure, which he may take; or lust, which he may satisfy; or revenge, whereby he may pacify his mind; or power, to defend himself; or some outward work commanded by the law, whereof he may make a vain-glorious show, or whereby

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he may save his own neck? Now all these things are darkness upon darkness in the depth of the sea (Cf. 24:40) neither is there any of you that doth not enter in thither, for such is the unchangeable decree of your Lord (19:72), (79:37-39).

***Quranic Approach in Section 119.*** The references of the phrase “this was God’s way of dealing with those which were gone before, and you shall find no change in his way” could be observed in the verses (79:37-39) and (68:23).

“and stand on the right hand: but as for those that out-went them, they should also take place of them, and be the nearest to God,” refers to the verses (56:10-11), “And the foremost are the foremost, these are they who are drawn nigh (to Allah).”

### § 119

And when he understood the condition of mankind, and that the greatest part of them were like brute beasts, he knew that all wisdom, direction and good success, consisted in what the messengers of God had spoken, and the divine Law delivered; and that there was no other way besides this, and that there could be nothing added to it; and that there were men appointed to every work, and that every one was best capable of doing that unto which he was appointed by Nature; that this was God’s way of dealing with those which were gone before, and you shall find no change in his way. (79:37-39) (Cf. 68:23) Whereupon returning to Salaman and

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his Friends, he made Excuses for what he had said to them, and desired to be forgiven, and told them that he had come to the same opinion with them, and had adopted their rule of conduct. And he exhorted them to stick firmly to their resolution of keeping within the bounds of the law, and the performance of the external rites; and that they should not much dive into the things that did not concern them, but that in obscure matters they should give credit and yield their assent readily; and that they should abstain from novel opinions, and from their appetites, and follow the examples of their pious ancestors and forsake novelties; and that they should avoid that neglect of religious performances which was seen in the vulgar sort of men, and the love of the world, which he principally cautioned them against. For both he and his friend Asal knew that this tractable, but defective sort of men, had no other way of salvation; and that if they should be raised above this to the realms of speculation, it would be worse with them, and they would not be able to attain to the degree of the blessed, but would waver and fall headlong, and make a bad end. But on the contrary, if they continued in that state in which they were till death overtook them, they should find safety, and stand on the right hand: but as for those that out-went them, they should also take place of them, and be the nearest to God.

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***Quranic Approach in Section 120.*** In the phrase “and thus they continued serving God in this island till they died,” there is some intertextuality referring to the verse (15:99), “Worship your Lord till the certainty (death) comes to you.”

### § 120

So they took their leave and left them, and sought for an opportunity of returning to their island, till it pleased God to help them to a convenience of passing. And Hayy Ibn Yaqzan endeavoured to attain to his lofty station by the same means he had sought it at first, till he recovered it; and Asal followed his steps, till he came up with him, or wanted but very little of it; and thus they continued serving God in this island till they died.

***Quranic Approach in Section 121.*** Considering the phrase “nor can any be ignorant of it, but those which have not.” English translation does not convey precise meaning. *Ahl al-gharrah bi-Allah* makes a clear reference to these three verses (31:33), “...nor let your pride deceive you about God,” (35:5), “Let not the devil deceive you about God”, and (57:14), “The devil deceived you about the mercy of God.”

### § 121

And this is that (God assist thee and us by his spirit) which we have received of the history of Hayy Ibn Yaqzan, Asal

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and Salaman; which comprehends such choice of words as are not found in any other book, nor heard in common discourse. And it is a piece of hidden knowledge which none can receive, but those which have the knowledge of God, nor can any be ignorant of it, but those which have not. Now we have taken a contrary method to our pious ancestors as to their reservedness in this matter, and sparingness of speech. And the reason which did the more easily persuade us to divulge this secret, and tear the veil, was, because of the corrupt notions which some pretenders to philosophy in our age have broached and scattered, so that they are diffused through several countries, and the mischief which arises from thence is become epidemical. Fearing therefore lest those weak ones, who reject the authority of the prophets (of blessed memory) and make choice of that which is delivered them by fools, should imagine those corrupt notions to be that secret which ought to be hidden from the unworthy, and so should the more eagerly incline toward them; we have thought good to give them a glimpse of the secret of secrets, that we might draw them into the way of truth, and avert them from this other. Nevertheless, we have not so delivered the secrets which are comprehended in these few leaves, as to leave them without a thin veil or cover over them, which will be easily rent by those who are worthy of it, but will be so thick to him that is unworthy to pass beyond it, that he shall not be able to get through it. And I desire of those my brethren who shall see this discourse, that they would excuse me from being so careless in my exposition and so free in my

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demonstration; seeing I had not done so, if I had not been elevated to such heights as transcend the reach of human sight, and wished to express the matter in easy terms that I might dispose men and raise a desire in them to enter into the right way. And I beg of God mercy and forgiveness, and that he would please to lead us to the well of the pure knowledge of himself, for he is gracious and liberal of his favours. Peace be to thee, my brother, whom it is my duty to assist, and the mercy and blessing of God be upon thee.

The End of *Hayy Ibn Yaqzan*

### **Sheikh Muhyiddin Ibn Arabi al-Andalusi**

Abu Abd Allah Muhammad ibn Ali ibn Muhammad ibn Arabi al-Hatimi al-Tai (1165-1240) is an Andalusian mystic and philosopher of Islam, of Arab origin. He also is regarded as a genuine saint and as the greatest master, going by the names al-Shaykh al-Akbar (the *Great Shaykh*) and Muhyiddin ibn Arabi.<sup>1</sup>

Henry Corbin<sup>2</sup> and Toshihiko Izutsu<sup>1</sup> introduced him to the West as an extraordinarily broad-ranging and highly

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<sup>1</sup> Al-Suyuti, *Tanbih Al-Ghabi Fi Tanzih Ibn Arabi*, pp. 17-21; Al-Alusi al-Hanafi, *Ruh ul Ma'ani fi Tafsir al-Quran al-'Azim wa al-Sab al-Mathani*, vol. 7, p. 741.

<sup>2</sup> Corbin, *L'imagination créatrice dans le soufisme de Ibn Arabi*.

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original thinker with much to contribute to the world of philosophy.<sup>2</sup> The *Journal of the Muhyiddin Ibn Arabi Society*, which has been published since 1982, deals with his thoughts, focusing on contemporary concerns.<sup>3</sup>

Chittick as an outline of some of the topics addressed by Ibn Arabi, mentions methodology, ontology, things and realities, the return, and human perfection.<sup>4</sup> Here I limit the discussion on comparing his cosmology with that of Suhrawardi. As I said earlier, the Peripatetic philosophers believed in ten separate intellects emanate from the First Being. The tenth one, the Active Intellect, gives rise to the sublunary realm.<sup>5</sup> The philosophers have claimed ten intellects, because it is impossible to be less than that in view of the nine universal spheres and the sublunary realm.<sup>6</sup> This traditional cosmology could be seen in Muslim philosophers for the most part, as well as in Suhrawardi and Ibn Arabi.

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<sup>1</sup> Izutsu, T., *A Comparative Study of the Key Philosophical Concepts in Taoism and Sufism*.

<sup>2</sup> See Chittick, "Ibn Arabi".

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.ibnarabisociety.org/journals.html>

<sup>4</sup> See Chittick, "Ibn Arabi".

<sup>5</sup> Ibn Sina, *Shifa*, vol. 5, pp. 386-393.

<sup>6</sup> Al-Jami, *The Precious Pearl Al-Jami's Al-Durrah al Fakhirah*, p. 69.

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Suhravardi, as a philartist with both artistic and philosophical approach, conveys mystical experiences and rational issues with art and literature. Some of his allegories might be depicted by Ibn Arabi's view.<sup>1</sup> Now and then, Suhravardi alludes to eleven spheres. Do eleven layers of a basin in "The Sound of Gabriel's Wing" and eleven mountains in "The Red Intellect" allude to Ibn Arabi's eleven spheres? Explaining this notion, I continue with an account of Suhravardi's cosmology. I try to portray that of Suhravardi in details, giving a brief account of Ibn Arabi. So, I pursue the liable distinctions and/or resemblances between them.

### A Compare and Contrast Issue

Suhravardi elucidated some sort of cosmology in some of his allegorical treatises. In his allegories, Suhravardi

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<sup>1</sup> Contrary to Suhravardi, Ibn al-Arabi as a mystic concentrates on mystical experiment and eminently abandons reason. He not only as his own manner relies on intuition but also encourages other profound figures of the time to his manner. He wrote a letter to the foremost theologian of his day, Fakhr al-Din al-Razi (1149-1209). Rustom, in his article, discusses "on the manner in which Ibn Arabi attempts to convince al-Razi to channel his aspirations in the right direction, namely to empty himself of his reliance upon his discursive powers and turn to the Sufi path. In order to drive his point home, Ibn al-Arabi offers a fundamental distinction between knowledge gained by way of intellectual reflection and knowledge afforded by 'unveiling', taking as his point of departure Razi's own well-known crisis of certitude." (Rustom, "Ibn al-Arabi's Letter to Fakhr al-Din al-Razi: A Study and Translation", pp. 113-137)

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symbolized nine spheres. Ibn Arabi, a contemporary of Suhrawardi, based on his own mystical experiences added the two supreme spheres of the Divine Pedestal (*al-kursi*) and of the Divine Throne (*al-'arsh*) to the nine spheres, attributing many functions to them. Every now and then, Suhrawardi speaks of eleven symbols, for example, the eleven layers of a basin in “The Sound of Gabriel’s Wing” and eleven mountains in “The Red Intellect”, yet his eleven spheres including *ether* and *zamharir* rule out Divine Pedestal (*al-kursi*) and Divine Throne (*al-'arsh*) of Ibn Arabi. However, Suhrawardi like Ibn Arabi underlines the symmetry of the spheres with respect to Sun.

### Eleven Spheres of Ibn Arabi

Ibn Arabi based on his mystical experiences added the two supreme spheres of the Divine Pedestal (*al-kursi*) and of the Divine Throne (*al-'arsh*) to the nine spheres, attributing many acts to them.<sup>1</sup> The sphere of the Divine Pedestal is created after that of the Divine Throne and is very little with respect to it.<sup>2</sup> The sphere of the Divine Pedestal is located

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<sup>1</sup> Ibn Arabi , *Uqlat al-Mustawfiz*, p. 59.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Arabi, *Al-Futuhāt al-makkiyya*, (*The Meccan Openings*), vol. 1, p. 149; *Uqlat al-Mustawfiz*, p. 59.

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between the Divine Throne and the sky without stars (*falak al-atlas*).<sup>1</sup>

Ibn Arabi, however, focuses on the symmetry of the spheres relative to Sun. Burckhardt points that feature out:

The Sun is not only in the centre of the six known planets - Mars, Jupiter and Saturn being further away from the Earth than the Sun, and Venus, Mercury and the Moon being closer-but beyond the sky of Saturn is situated the vault of the sky of the fixed stars<sup>2</sup>, that of the sky without stars<sup>3</sup>, and the two supreme spheres of the Divine Pedestal and of the Divine Throne, concentric spheres to which symmetrically correspond the four sub-lunar spheres of ether, of air, of water and of earth.<sup>4</sup>

### Suhravardi's Cosmology without Allegory

A contemporary of Muhyiddin Ibn Arabi, Shahab al-Din Yahya Suhravardi is portrayed as the founder of the philosophical School of Illumination in the Islamic East; on top of that, Suhravardi and Ibn Arabi are placed in the same

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<sup>1</sup> Ibn Arabi, *Al-Futuhat al-makkiyya*, (*The Meccan Openings*), vol. 2, p. 440.

<sup>2</sup> *falak al-borouj* or *thawabit*.

<sup>3</sup> *muhaddad al-jihat* or sphere with limited aspects

<sup>4</sup> Burckhardt, *The Mystical Astrology according to Ibn Arabi*, p. 12. See also Yousef, *Ibn Arabi - Time and Cosmology*, pp. 10-12.

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spiritual family.<sup>1</sup>

Suhravardi in the book of *Hikmah al-Ishraq* holds that the intellects are more than ten, twenty, and two hundred.<sup>2</sup> In *Alvah Emadi*,<sup>3</sup> he also emphasizes that there are too many intellects, quoting *Quran*'s verse: "None knows the armies of your Lord save Him self".<sup>4</sup> Therefore, the heavenly bodies would be more than nine. Because intellects figure corresponds to spheres figure.<sup>5</sup> But in his allegorical treatises, Suhravardi symbolizes the theory of the nine spheres and ten intellects.

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<sup>1</sup> Corbin, *Creative Imagination in the Sufism of Ibn Arabi*, p. 20.

<sup>2</sup> Suhravardi, *Majmū'a-i Musannafāt-i Shaykh-i Ishrāq*, vol. 2, pp. 139-140.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, vol. 3, pp. 148-149; vol. 4, p. 65.

<sup>4</sup> *Quran*, 74:31.

<sup>5</sup>. The multiplicity of intellects and angels could be seen in other opinions: "In his Hebrew adaptation of Avicenna's Hayy Ibn Yaqzan, Ibn Ezra describes the nine spheres, followed by the supernal world of the various groups of angels beyond the spheres, and culminating with God. While Ibn Ezra does not explain these classes, they probable should be understood in terms of the Aristotelian view adopted by Avicenna of the Separate Intellects who are the Movers of the spheres. Ibn Ezra does not attempt to list ten classes of angels, corresponding to the ten Separate Intellects (nine Movers of the spheres and the Active Intellect) in Islamic Aristotelian philosophy" (Kreisel, "From Esotericism to Science: The account of the chariot in maimonidean philosophy till the End of the Thirteenth Century", p. 32).

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In “A Day with a Group of Sufis” Suhravardi himself has decoded his allegories about this theory. First, he mentions the theory in allegorical form.

When the wayfarer said to his master, “The engraver’s craft is amazing.” his master said, “There is a well-known tale in their craft, but no one tells it fully, and no one knows the meaning of it.” “What is this tale?” the wayfarer asked. His master went through the story:

Once, an engraver had a jewel. He wanted to display his skill on it. So from it he made a round shell like a ball. Then, from the residue left in the middle of the shell he made another shell inside the first. Again, from the residue of the second he made a third, and so on until he had made nine shells. Afterwards, from the remainder of these shells he made a jewel, which he wrapped in two pieces of cloth, one of which had no color and the other of which was whitish. These he placed in the middle of the shells. He then polished the first shell and engraved a few medallions on the second shell and gilded it. On the third, fourth, and so on to the ninth shells he engraved one medallion each.

After the allegorical tale, Suhravardi starts decoding it. When the wayfarer heard the tale from his master, he said, “I do not understand what you are saying to me. Tell me clearly that I may benefit fully.” His master started explaining the allegories, “When the Creator created these

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spheres, he sent a light to the first sphere.” For a sphere is an intermediary between being and non-being, the first sphere was too subtle to bear it. It borders on existence. Then again, it is continuous with nonexistence. As a consequence, the light reached the second sphere, which was able to bear it.

The light was broken up against the second sphere, and every part became a star. What was left over from these stars, came to the third sphere, and from that residue Saturn came into being. Again, what was left over from Saturn reached the fourth sphere, and the body of Jupiter came into being. And so on, Mars from residue of Jupiter, the Sun from the residue of Mars, Venus from the residue of the Sun, Mercury from the residue of Venus, and from the residue of Mercury, the Moon.<sup>1</sup>

Sometimes Suhravardi speaks of the eleven spheres. In “A Day with a Group of Sufis”, the wayfarer asked, “Why is the body of the Sun bigger and brighter than the other stars?” His master said “Because it is in the middle. If you count the seven planets, the Sun is in the middle. And just as there are two spheres above the seven, there are two other spheres below them, *ether* and *zamharir*. Therefore, by any

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<sup>1</sup> Suhravardi, *The Philosophical Allegories and Mystical Treatises*, pp. 34-35.

reckoning the Sun is in the middle.”<sup>1</sup> At this juncture, Suhravardi underlines the symmetry of eleven spheres relative to Sun.

Since he is clear about his cosmology, we are can decode his cosmology, construing the allegories as the nine and eleven spheres. And it is obvious that his eleven spheres differ from those of Ibn Arabi.

### **Allegorical Cosmology**

Cosmology issues in Suhravardi’s writings encompasses “A Day with a Group of Sufis” and his five other treatises: “The Sound of Gabriel’s Wing”, “The Red Intellect”, “On the State of Childhood”, “On the Reality of Love”, and “The Language of the Ants”. I have just explained the account of “A Day with a Group of Sufis”. “The Sound of Gabriel’s Wing” is the next treatise in my account.

In “The Sound of Gabriel’s Wing”, ten intellects are symbolized by ten old men seating on a bench. The wayfarer says of them,

When I looked I saw ten old men of beautiful countenance seated on a bench. I was so amazed by their magnificence and splendor and so staggered by the sight of their throne,

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid, p. 36.

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their beauty, their white hair, their garments and trappings that I could not speak.<sup>1</sup>

The old man who was on the end of the bench greeted the wayfarer in a most kindly-disposed manner, saying, “We are a group of abstracted ones, come from the direction of *Nakuja-abad* (Nowheresville).” that means they are ten Separate Intellects.

“Why do the elders seated above you keep silent?” The wayfarer asked. “Because the likes of you are unworthy to approach them,” the tenth and last of them, the Active Intellect said, “I serve as their tongue, for they will never deign to address the likes of you.”

Then the wayfarer saw in the courtyard a basin with eleven layers.<sup>2</sup> By these eleven layers, Suhravardi allegorizes the eleven spheres. There is no crack or no crevice on the surface of the upper nine levels of the basin. This means there is no crack and no crevice on the surface of nine spheres according to traditional theory. “Although no hole could be made through the nine upper levels, one could

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid, pp. 9-10.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, p. 11.

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easily pierce through the lowest level.”<sup>1</sup> For the lowest level refers to the sublunary world.

The first level had no button at all, whereas the second level had many luminous buttons on it. Because the first level of the basin is the allegory of the Sphere of the spheres and the second level is the allegory of the sphere of the Fixed Stars.

“On each of the remaining seven of the upper nine levels of the basin a bright button was fastened.” These buttons refer to Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Sun, Venus, Mercury, and Moon.

When the wayfarer asks the old man what this basin is, he explains the relation between the intellects and the spheres.

“The first layer,” he said, “whose body is greater than any of the other levels, was arranged and put together by the old man who is seated at the highest level. The second was done by the second one, the third by the third, and so on down to me. These nine comrades and companions produced the nine layers by their own labor and handicraft. The two bottom levels, along with the bit of water and sand, were produced by me. Since their foundation is stronger, their handiwork cannot be rent or pierced, but what I have made can be.”

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid, pp. 10-12.

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Then he explains the relation between the intellects themselves. The elder who is in the highest place is the master teacher and tutor of the second elder, who sits beside him. He has signed the second elder's order of investiture, the second has signed the third's order, the third the fourth's order, and so on down to the tenth.

The next allegories of the spheres, in "The Sound of Gabriel's Wing", are the son as the soul of the sphere and the mill as the body of the sphere.

"Do you have children and property and things like that?" the wayfarer asks. "We have never had spouses," he said, "but each one of us has a son. Each of us also has a mill and we have appointed our sons to supervise the mills. We have never looked at the mills since we built them, but our sons maintain them in good running order by keeping one eye on the mill and the other on their fathers.

The mill of tenth intellect, the Active Intellect, is a dismal place and fraught with dangers and pitfalls, consisting of four levels, i.e., the four elements: earth, water, air, and fire, for the sublunary world is so.<sup>1</sup>

Also in "The Red Intellect", Suhrawardi speaks of the eleven spheres by allegory of eleven mountains. The first one of the

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid, pp. 10-12.

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Seven Wonders of the World is the Mount Qaf that surrounds the world consisting of eleven mountains.<sup>1</sup> The Active Intellect who instructs the wayfarer approached him as politely as possible. The wayfarer looked at that person whose countenance and color were red. Thinking him young, he said, “Young man, where do you come from?” “My son,” he replied, “you have addressed me mistakenly. I am the first child of creation. You call me young?!” “Why are your features not white?” I asked. “My features are white,” he said. “I am a luminous elder. But that person who captured you in the snare and placed these disagreeable fetters on you and appointed the wardens over you<sup>2</sup> threw me long ago into a black pit. This color of mine, which appears red to you, is because of that. Otherwise I am white and luminous.

The Red Intellect describes that every white thing that is connected to light appears red when admixed with black, like the sunset at the beginning of evening or the end of dawn, which is white where it is connected to the Sun’s

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid, p. 22.

<sup>2</sup>. In the beginning of this tale, the wayfarer was caught. He narrates himself, “one day the hunters, Fate and Destiny, laid the trap of Fore-ordination and filled it with the grain of Will, and in this manner they caught me. Then they took me from the realm where our nest was into another realm, where they stitched my eyes shut, put four different bonds on me and appointed ten wardens to watch over me.” (Suhravardi, *The Philosophical Allegories and Mystical Treatises*, p. 20)

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light. One side of it is toward the light, which is white, while the other side is toward the night, which is black. Therefore it appears red. When the crescent moon rises, although its light is borrowed, it is nonetheless described as light. Since one side of it is toward day and the other side toward night, it appears red. A flame has the same quality.<sup>1</sup>

The white side is the allegory of the Separate Intellects versus the black side is the allegory of the sublunary world. For the Active Intellect is the last Separate Intellect and is responsible for the sublunary realm, he has located between the white and the black sides.

The origin of the Active Intellect or Red Intellect is Mount Qaf which its position is above all eleven spheres.

Then the wayfarer asked the Red Intellect about wonders he has seen in the world. He answered that he has seen Seven Wonders. First of all is Mount Qaf, which is their realm, surrounding the world and consists of eleven mountains. When the wayfarer is delivered of his bondage he will go there.” The second is the Pearl-that-glows-by-night that refers to the Moon. The third one is the Tuba tree that refers to the Sun. The fourth wonder is the Twelve Workshops that symbolize the sphere of Fixed Stars. The fifth is David’s

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<sup>1</sup> Suhravardi, *The Philosophical Allegories and Mystical Treatises*, pp. 21-22.

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chain mail and it probably refers to human's body. The sixth is the sword Balarak. Maybe it symbolizes the Death. And seventh is the Spring of Life.<sup>1</sup>

The fourth treatise, in my account, is "On the State of Childhood" in which is some clear hints on the Moon, the Sun, the Earth, and the sphere. Moreover, the Moon is allegorized in it by the Pearl-that-glows-by-night like "The Red Intellect".<sup>2</sup>

I asked my master, "Does the Sun have such strength that the brightness within the Pearl-that-glows-by-night can come from it?"

"It has such strength," he said "All the world is obligated to it, but no one is willing to own up to his obligation."

Then the wayfarer said when the Moon is full and the Sun and Moon are in direct opposition, it is obvious that the Earth is in between, asking "why does the Earth not block the light between the Sun and Moon as the dragon's tail does when it comes in front of the Sun or Moon?". The master clearly responded in details, not by allegories.

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid, pp. 22-23.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, pp. 47-49.

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The fifth treatise, “On the Reality of Love”, includes allegorizing nine spheres by the nine-storied pavilion.

Know that above this nine-storied pavilion is a vault called the City of the Soul. It has ramparts of might and a moat of power. At the gate to that city is stationed a young old man whose name is *Jawed Khirad* (Eternal Wisdom). He continually travels about in such a way that he never moves from his place. He is a good guard. He knows how to recite from the divine book and is extremely eloquent, but he is mute. He is old in years but has never seen the passage of time. He is very, very old but is still untouched by decrepitude.<sup>1</sup>

The young old man is the very Active Intellect. He has never seen the passage of time because he is the tenth Separate Intellect and there is no time in its world. Consequently, he is young.

The sixth and last treatise that I want to mention is “The Language of the Ants”. There are some dialogues between Enoch and all the stars and heavenly bodies. The belief in the Divine source of astronomy was traditionally attributed to the prophet Enoch or Idris some called him also Hermes.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid, p. 64.

<sup>2</sup> Nasr, *An Introduction to Islamic Cosmological Doctrines*, p. 132.

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All the stars and heavenly bodies spoke with Enoch, who asked the Moon, “Why is your light sometimes less and sometimes more?” “You should know,” answered the Moon, “that my body is pure, polished and black. I myself have no light, but when I am opposite the Sun, a likeness of its light appears in the mirror of my body in proportion to the degree of opposition, just as other corporeal forms appear in a mirror. As the degree of opposition increases I progress from the nadir of being a crescent to the zenith of being a full moon.”

Enoch asked the Moon to what extent its friendship with the Sun was. It responded, “To such an extent that whenever I look upon myself as we stand opposite each other, I see the Sun.”<sup>1</sup> The conversation goes on, as might be seen, without allegories.

### Conclusion

Suhrawardi’s allegories on cosmology spread in his treatises. In “A Day with a Group of Sufis”, the nine shells are the allegories of the nine spheres while the first shell is polished, and there are a few medallions on the second shell. On the third, fourth, and so on to the ninth shells, there is just one medallion. In “The Sound of Gabriel’s Wing”,

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<sup>1</sup> Suhrawardi, *The Philosophical Allegories and Mystical Treatises*, pp. 88-89.

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eleven layers are the allegories of the eleven spheres with no crack and no crevice on the surface of the upper nine levels of the basin. The two lower ones might refer to *zamharir* and *ether*. Another allegory could be seen in “The Sound of Gabriel’s Wing” is the son as the soul of the sphere and the mill as the body of the sphere. In “The Red Intellect”, eleven mountains, surrounded by Mount Qaf, refer to eleven spheres. The Tuba tree refers to the Sun and the Twelve Workshops refer to the sphere of Fixed Stars. In “On the State of Childhood”, there are clear hints on the Moon, the Sun, the Earth, and the sphere. And there is no allegory in it on cosmology, but the Moon is allegorized by the Pearl-that-glows-by-night like “The Red Intellect”. The nine-storied pavilion is the allegory of the nine spheres in “On the Reality of Love”.

In short, Suhrawardi now and again speaks of eleven spheres, like Ibn Arabi. But the two added spheres in Suhrawardi include *ether* and *zamharir* while those of Ibn Arabi include the two supreme spheres of the Divine Pedestal (*al-kursi*) and of the Divine Throne (*al-'arsh*). Putting the Sun at the center, symmetry is discernable for Suhrawardi as well as Ibn Arabi.

### **Jalal al-Din Rumi**

Jalal al-Din Muhammad Rumi, also known as Jalal al-Din Muhammad Balkhi, Maulawi, and Maulana (1207-1273) is

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a Persian poet, theologian, jurist, and one of the greatest Muslim Sufis. He was born in 1207 in Persia<sup>1</sup> and died in 1273 in Konya.<sup>2</sup>

The fame of Jalal al-Din Rumi has not waned with the passing of time. By contrast, it appears to wax stronger. Affecting many nations and cultures around the world, he considered most popular poet and the best selling poet in the United States.<sup>3</sup> In the 1960s and 1970s, allegedly numerous Anglophone poets and readers discovered Rumi, “the thirteenth-century mystic, thinker, and poet who was born in Vakhsh,<sup>4</sup> contemporary Tajikistan, lived most of his life and

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<sup>1</sup> Aflaki Arefi (d. 1360) says: “The form of address used for him as khodawandgar is the statement of Baha Walad, may Allah be pleased with him; His Majesty, Maulana, was born in Balkh on the sixth of Rabi al-Awal in 604.” (Manaqib al-Arifin, p. 73; today Balkh is situated in the northern part of Afghanistan.

<sup>2</sup> On Maulawi’s biography see also Alavi, “Rumi’s Life at a Glance”, pp. 243-264; Ritter and Bausani, “DJalal al-Din Rumi b. Baha al-Din Sultan al-Ulama Walad b. Husayn b. Ahmad Khatibi”; Franklin, *Rumi- Past and Present, East and West: The life, Teaching and poetry of Jalal al-Din Rumi*.

<sup>3</sup> “Rumi Rules”, *Time*, 2014-04-22; “The roar of Rumi—800 years on”, *BBC News*, 2007-09-30; “Why is Rumi the best-selling poet in the US?”, *BBC Culture*, 2014-04-22.

<sup>4</sup> Vakhsh was a village located on the Vakhsh River in the greater Balkh region in today’s Tajikistan, while the city of Balkh located in presently Afghanistan.

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died in Konya, contemporary Turkey, and wrote in Persian.”<sup>1</sup> As Patel remarks:

One of the best selling poets in America is a 13<sup>th</sup> century Muslim named Jelaluddin Rumi. His words are read aloud at open-mike poetry nights and invoked at wedding ceremonies. Mainstream bookstores carry well over a dozen books of his poems and stories. And the *New York Times* recently declared Rumi the most influential poet in America since 1960s.<sup>2</sup>

Connected to the spiritual lineage of Najm al-Din Kubra, Rumi’s father, Baha al-Din Walad, was a mystic, theologian, and jurist from Balkh went by the name Sultan of the Scholars (Sultan al-Ulama).<sup>3</sup> It needs no explanation that Rumi is greatly affected by two other Persian poets Attar and Sanai. Rumi himself expresses this influence in verse:

Attar has traversed the seven cities of Love  
We are still at the turn of one street  
Attar was the spirit,  
Sanai his eyes twain,  
And in time thereafter

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<sup>1</sup> Elmarsafy, “User-Friendly Islams: Translating Rumi in France and the United States”, p. 264.

<sup>2</sup> Patel, “Islam and America: Poetic Connections”, pp. 383-386.

<sup>3</sup> Nasr, *Islamic Art and Spirituality*, p. 115.

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Came we in their train<sup>1</sup>

Rumi in turn proved greatly persuasive over time. His major poetic work is the *Mathniwi Ma'nawi* (*Spiritual Couplets*) a six-volume poem containing approximately 27,000 lines of Persian poetry. *Mathnawi* is regarded widely as one of the greatest works of mystical poetry. Abd al-Rahman Jami (1414-1492), the greatest Sufi poets of the 15th century, reckoned it as the Persian-language *Quran*:

What can I say in praise of that great one?  
He is not a Prophet but has come with a book.  
The Spiritual *Mathnawi* of Maulawi  
Is the *Quran* in the language of Pahlavi (Persian).

Sheikh Bahayi (1547-1621), a great Iranian philosopher and jurist influencing Mulla Sadra,<sup>2</sup> said in verse about *Mathnawi*:

I do not say that this respected person is a prophet  
but he has the book.  
His *Mathnawi* is a guide like *Quran*  
that leads some people and misleads others.

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<sup>1</sup> Arberry, *Sufism: An Account of the Mystics of Islam*, p. 107.

<sup>2</sup> On this notion see Qaramaleki, *The Methodology of Mulla Sadra's Philosophy*, p. 245.

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Named in honor of Rumi's master Shams, *Diwan-e Kabir* (*Great Work*) or *Diwan-e Shams-e Tabrizi* is Rumi's other major poetic work. In addition to about 35000 Persian couplets and 2000 Persian quatrains, the Divan contains 90 Ghazals and 19 quatrains in Arabic, a couple of dozen or so couplets in Turkish (mainly macaronic poems of mixed Persian and Turkish) and 14 couplets in Greek.

*Fihi ma Fih* (*In It What's in It*), *Majales-e Sab'a* (*Seven Sessions*), and *Makatib* (*The Letters*) are Maulawi's prose works in Persian. *Fihi ma Fih* contains seventy-one talks and lectures given by Rumi on various occasions to his disciples. *Majales-e Sab'a* includes seven sermons (as the name implies) or lectures given in seven different assemblies. *Makatib* contains Rumi's letters to his family members, disciples, and men of state and of influence.

Here, in a nutshell, we look at some philosophical issues recently propounded in regard to Rumi. Perfect Man<sup>1</sup> in Rumi's works as one of the most important concepts of his spiritual thought compels attention. This Perfect Man, as we saw earlier, is the hero of Suhrawardi's allegorical novels---the wayfarer who loves God, looking for the right way to

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Little, John T., "Al-Insan al-Kamil: the Perfect Man according to Ibn al-Arabi", pp. 43-54; Arnel, *The concept of the perfect man in the thought of Ibn 'Arabi and Muhammad Iqbal: a comparative study*; Iqbal, "Mevlana Rumi on the Perfect Man," pp. 353-384.

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the Divine through spheres and intellects. Rumi's Perfect Man is discussed in some respects such as his position in existence, his attributes, and the mutual relations between him and the spiritual wayfarer. As for Safavi, this profound set of characteristics identifies the Perfect Man:<sup>1</sup>

The Perfect Man is the vicegerent of Allah and is the reflection of His Essence. He is the 'alchemist', 'elixir', 'spiritualist', 'the antidote of separation', 'the door of Divine mercy', 'the shadow of God' and 'the lion of Truth'. All of the different dimensions of Perfect Man are in the state of perfection; these dimensions include 'good speech', 'good acts', 'good ethics' and 'unique and exalted intuitive knowledge'. He has annihilated in Allah and has gained subsistence in Him. He is the symbol of patience, bravery, chivalry, generosity and justice.<sup>2</sup>

Clearly, leadership is a *sine qua non* for Rumi's Perfect Man. So in addition to private facets, this evidence might suggest that Rumi's Perfect Man is concerned with public aspects and socio-political tasks:<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> We should not lose sight of the fact that the concept of Perfect Man does not used to exclude women in itself.

<sup>2</sup> Safavi, G., "Perfect Man in Rumi's Perspective", p. 119.

<sup>3</sup> The political sides of the Perfect Man are not overlooked in Suhrawardi. On this point see Maftouni, *Negareha-ye Ishraqi (Ishraqi Images)*, pp. 157-159.

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Perfect Man is responsible for leading and guiding humanity. The spiritual wayfarer must heed to the commands and teachings of Perfect Man, and must be ‘observant of manners’. Five spiritual manners that the spiritual wayfarer must observe in relation to the sheikh or pir or Perfect Man are: 1) Purity of intention in relation to the pir; 2) Accepting the speech of the pir with desire and certainty; 3) Concealing the secrets of the pir; 4) Submitting to and having patience towards the commands of the pir; 5) Not objecting to the speech, acts and states of the pir. The Perfect Man cares about the spiritual wayfarers and guides them to the straight path.

The prototypical examples of Perfect Man are prophets and Shiite Imams, like Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, Muhammad, ‘Ali, Hassan, Hussain and the Mahdi of Fatima , one of which must exist in each era “for leading and guiding humanity; the rest of the Divine Saints are his vicegerents in different places and societies.”<sup>1</sup> Depicting concrete examples of Perfect Man, Rumi’s spiritual Shiism recurs in another study. Safavi takes textual evidence from *Mathnawi* for three types of welayat: solar, lunar and stellar:

Shiism, in its true form, believes in the welayat (authority) of Imam Ali and his eleven descendents following the demise of

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<sup>1</sup> Safavi, G., “Perfect Man in Rumi’s Perspective”, p. 119.

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Prophet Muhammad. Allah has chosen Ali and his descendents, as the true spiritual and religious successors of Prophet Muhammad, after whom there will always be a representative from Ali's family to guide and lead human kind.<sup>1</sup>

Discussing the Guardianship (wilayat) of Allah, wilayat and love is also a main theme of the sixth book of *Mathnawi*. "He sees the true perfection of the human being in annihilation in the essence of the Beloved and subsistence within the being of The Subsistent. Reaching this most exalted station is possible by the ladder of love."<sup>2</sup>

Another notion in Rumi's *Mathnawi* which came to Safavi's notice is Reason. The third book of *Mathnawi*, he argues, through hermeneutics and synoptic reading, is constituted of three blocks, the first of which discusses particular reason ('aql jozei); the second, the Divine intellect ('aql rabbani) compared to particular reason ('aql jozei); and the third, the Intellect of intellects or Universal intellect ('aql Kulli). "It can also be said that the third book of *Mathnawi* explains how one can pass particular reason and reach the Universal

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<sup>1</sup> Safavi, G., "Rumi's Spiritual Shiism", p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Safavi, G., and Alavi, "The Structure and Hermeneutics of the Sixth Book of *Mathnawi*", p. 288.

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intellect. The heart of the third book is Divine heart and intellect, and its destination is the Universal intellect.”<sup>1</sup>

Once again using the terms Theoretical and Practical, Reason is classified into three main types: Universal Reason or First Reason (Meta Theoretical and Practical Reason), Theoretical Reason, and Practical reason. “Everyone has Reason which upon finding a perfect man may help him to transcend from particular Reason to Universal Reason.”<sup>2</sup>

As a final remark, I would like to stress that Rumi’s thought is still a viable link with a diversity of contentions. Regarding his voice as user-friendly Islam, it is said that “the affinities between several strands of the New Age movement and the openness of Rumi’s message paved the way for its widespread acceptance. By 1997, several American newspapers declared Rumi the best-selling poet in the United States.”<sup>3</sup> Considering Rumi’s defense by far more inclusive than most early modern theories of toleration, it is held that Rumi presents one of the most

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<sup>1</sup> Safavi, G., “The Structure and Hermeneutics of the Third Book of Rumi’s *Mathnawi*”, pp. 31-32.

<sup>2</sup> Safavi, G., “Rumi and Mulla Sadra on Theoretical and Practical Reason”, p. 19.

<sup>3</sup> Elmarsafy, “User-Friendly Islams: Translating Rumi in France and the United States”, p. 264.

extensive and vigorous Islamic theories of toleration---not only as a policy but also as a language.<sup>1</sup>

### **Sheikh Safi al-Din Ardabili: Socio-Political Stand**

Sheikh Safi al-Din Ardabili (1252-1334) is counted as the origin of the later Safavid dynasty (1501–1736) in Iran, and the founder of Safavid Sufi order, one of the fourteen major orders of Sufism mentioned in classical texts as follows: Bektarshi order, Chisti order, Khalwati order, Kubrawi order, Marufiyah order, Noorbakshi order, Naqsbandi order, Ni'matullahi order, Qadri order, Rifai order, Safavi order, Shadhili order, Shattari order, and Suhrawardi order.<sup>2</sup>

Sheikh Safi al-Din was the spiritual heir and son-in-law of Sheikh Zahed Gilani, the Grand Master or the Great Sufi Murshid. His sole surviving manuscript is some mystic interpretations of *Quranic* verses and the Prophet's Hadith in Ibn Bazzaz Ardabili's book, *Safwah al-Safa* or *Osos al-Mavaheb al-Saniya Fi Managheb al-Safaviyya*. Six chapters in the part four of *Safwah al-Safa* attests to the Sheikh Safi's standing not only as a politician leader, also as a knowledgeable learned poet. In his interpretations, Sheikh Safi cites poems from Rumi, Attar, Sanayi, Araqi, and Sa'di.

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<sup>1</sup> Masroori, "An Islamic Language of Toleration: Rumi's Criticism of Religious Persecution", p. 243.

<sup>2</sup> Yamin, "Sufism: The Mystical Path of Islam", p. 135.

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Including some Persian poems, another book, *Qurra-e Majmu'a*, is attributed to Sheikh Safi.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, in biographical texts, draw attention some quotes from Sheikh Safi.<sup>2</sup>

It is worth noting the Sheikh Safi's Khanegah and Shrine Ensemble in Ardabil, Iran, compels attention in both spiritual and artistic aspects. representing the fundamental principles of Sufism in words and sentences from *Quran*, it has magnificent universal value as an architectural masterpiece.<sup>3</sup> A word of warning is in order given the religious culture prevailing in the Iranian mainstream:

One of the most important attributes of the Safavid Dynasty was the formation of a strong cultural and religious society; where the production of art was directly connected to the religious, cultural, political and historical events of the time. The Safavids tendency towards culture and religion created a

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<sup>1</sup> See Ibn Bazzaz, *Safvah al-Safa*, part four, pp. 434-596; Velayati, *Taqvim-e Tarikh-e Farhang va Tamadon-e Islam va Iran*, vol. 1, part 2, p. 1403.

<sup>2</sup> Katib Shirazi, *Tazkerah Sheikh Safi al-Din Ardabili*, p.527; see also Alavi, "The Principles of Safaviyyah Tariqah", p. 225.

<sup>3</sup> For instance, see Safavi, H., "A Hermeneutic Approach to the Tomb Tower of Sheikh Safi al-Din Ardabili's Shrine Ensemble and *Khanqah*"; cf. Melville, "The Illustration of History in Safavid Manuscript Painting", pp. 163-197; Losensky, "Coordinates in Space and Time: Architectural Chronograms in Safavid Iran", pp. 198-219; Golombek, "A Safavid Bottle with Matchlock Hunt in the Royal Ontario Museum", pp. 123-149.

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bond between art and religion which resulted in a proliferation of art and architecture in Iran, which is the highest form of Islamic-Iranian art and architecture including the production of Sheikh Safi al-Din's shrine in Ardabil alongside the Shah Square in Isfahan and the many other great Safavid monuments.<sup>1</sup>

During his travel to Iran, Della Valle (1586-1652) described Sheikh Safi Ensemble as the most sacred for Iranians after Mecca and Ali and Housain Shrines.<sup>2</sup> Visiting Iran between the years 1096-1105 AH/1685-94 AD, Kaempfer (1651-1716) held the most prominent, largest, and most beautiful holy Shrines in Iran are undoubtedly as follows: First, Imam Reza's Holy Shrine in Mashhad, second, the Shrine of his sister, Ma'soumeh, in Qom, and third, Sheikh Safi's Shrine in Ardabil.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Safavi, H., "A Hermeneutic Approach to the Tomb Tower of Sheikh Safi al-Din Ardabili's Shrine Ensemble and *Khānqāh*," p. 9; Shaiestefar and Golmaghani, "Katibe haie Namaie Biroonie Bogh'e Sheikh Safi al-Din Ardabili," pp. 89-90.

<sup>2</sup> Della Valle, *Suite Des Fameux Voyage Pietro Della Valle*, pp. 497-504. Pietro Della Valle was an Italian who traveled throughout Asia during the Renaissance era. His work, *Travels in Persia* (2 parts), was published by his sons in 1658.

<sup>3</sup> Kaempfer, *Journey notes in kingdom palace*, p.136. Engelbert Kaempfer, German naturalist, physician, and writer, is famous for his tour of Russia, Persia, India, South-East Asia, and Japan between 1683 and 1693.

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Looking across the breadth of the Sheikh Safi's mindset, it expanded to an international plane beyond Iran, in particular to Anatolia, Syria, and Diyarbakir. Covering a really vast area, it stretched out to Ceylon<sup>1</sup> and China in the East.<sup>2</sup> In his 700th anniversary, Sheikh Safi's historical stand is pointed out:

Although he is not as well known in Western Orientalism as he should be, he is one of the most important figures of Islamic history, not only in *tasawwuf*, but also in history itself, because it was he who founded the seminal and extremely important *silsilah/tariqah of tasawwuf* two centuries before the rise of the Safavid period; that in turn led to a transformation of Iran into a state for the first time after 900 years; and so all Persians, and Persians of that time included all of Afghanistan and much of Central Asia and Caucasia and for a while of Iraq, owe a great deal to this remarkable man whose spiritual heritage is very much alive in Iran today.<sup>3</sup>

Based on what is mentioned in *Safwah al-Safa* by Ibn

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<sup>1</sup> Ceylon is the former name of Sri Lanka.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Bazzaz Ardabili, *Safwah al-Safa*, pp. 15, 714, 1119; Petroshevski, *Islam in Iran*, pp. 3, 384.

<sup>3</sup> Nasr, "Islamic Spirituality and the Needs of Humanity Today - in commemoration of the 700th anniversary of the death of the founder of the Safaviyyah Sufi order, Sheikh Safi al-Din Ardabili", pp. 67-68.

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Bazzaz Ardabili, Sheikh Safi's credo is regarded as some sort of conflation of Suhrawardiah and Molaviah, two prominent mystic schools of that time, however distinct from each of them.<sup>1</sup>

Sheikh Safi's thought by which guided people over thirty-five years is held to be the very principles of Thaqaalain, i.e., *Quran* and 'Itrat.<sup>2</sup> In greater detail, Safavid credo is held based on eight following principles:<sup>3</sup>

- (1) Thaqaalain (*Quran* and Ahl al-Bait);
- (2) The rules of Shariah (the body of Islamic laws), Tariqah (the Way), and Haqiqah (the Reality);
- (3) Asceticism and love;
- (4) Zikr (invocation), Fikr (meditation), and Amal (act);
- (5) Social ethics;
- (6) Love and knowledge;
- (7) Khalwah (Spiritual Solitude, seclusion, or loneliness) and Muraqaba (meditation, to watch over, to take care of, or to keep an eye);

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<sup>1</sup> Tabatabayi Majd, *Dard-e Talab*, pp. 6-8, 90-91.

<sup>2</sup> Safavi, G., *Theoretical and Practical Principles of 'Irfan and Safaviyya Spiritual Path*.

<sup>3</sup> Alavi, "The Principles of Safaviyyah Tariqah", pp. 222-237.

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(8) Politics.

The point to keep in mind is that Sheikh Safi's influence is carried on out of Khanegah, affecting socio-political areas. Although there is a long way toward assessing and evaluating mystic schools, the relevance of those that do not wield some socio-political influence to human civilization being discussed.

Consider Bayazid Bastami (804-874), Khwaja Abdollah Ansari (1006-1088), Sheikh Ahmad Jami<sup>1</sup> (1048-1141), Shah Nematollah Vali (1330-1431), even Jalal al-Din Rumi (1207-1273). Eminently they possessed far-reaching thoughts and teachings but some of them did not gain ground in an international plane. Sheikh Ahmad Jami and his successors improved their village, Ma'd Abad<sup>2</sup>. Preaching to his followers, Sheikh Ahmad built a Khanegah and improved just his province, Khorasan. Compared to those have international reputation like Rumi, Sheikh Safi's standing among different mystic schools would be distinctive by virtue of his socio-political impact.

Focusing on Safavid social aspect, it is held that "by looking at history of Iran since the disintegration of the Sassanid

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<sup>1</sup> Ahmad Zhendeh Pil.

<sup>2</sup> Torbat-e Jam.

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Dynasty until the establishment of the Safavid Dynasty we can realize that active mysticism could operate as a solidarizing force in making of social cohesion.”<sup>1</sup>

In a comprehensive look at Sheikh Safi’s movement, it considered of “long lasting influence in Islamic mysticism, art, civilization, political geography, and international relation of Shiism, which is not comparable to any of the other school of jurisprudence, theology and philosophy, or military, political or cultural figures.”<sup>2</sup> The political aspects, however, seem much more remarkable:

The most important heritage of the spiritual movement of Sheikh Safi al-Din is the independence of the political geography of Shiism and creating a center of power in Iran for Shias across the world as a unified people. In Iran, it is famously said amongst the scholars of Islam that if it was not for the Safavids, today we would pray with our arms closed. Dhul Faqar the two headed sword of Imam Ali became manifest in the spirituality of sheikh Safi al-Din and in the sword of Shah Isma’il, and created a unique effect in the history, culture and civilization of Shiism, the cultural and

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<sup>1</sup> Miri, “Eurocentrism and the Question of the Safavid Order: An Alternative Perspective”, p. 726; see also Pazuki, “Safaviyya: The Climax of the Iranian-Islamic Civilization”, pp. 57-60.

<sup>2</sup> Safavi, G., “The Safavid order and the importance of Sheikh Safi al-Din Ardabili in Shi’a thought and modern history of Iran”, p. 20.

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political effects of which continue until today in international relations.<sup>1</sup>

It should be noted that if the thinking method at hand generates the political constitution and major institutions and social arrangement, then ipso facto it plays a strong social and cultural role. In this regard, Sheikh Safi is to constitute the hallmark of mysticism. Thus it seems appropriate to draw to its close our book by mentioning Sheikh Safi al-Din Ardabili.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Safavi, G., “The Safavid order and the importance of Sheikh Safi al-Din Ardabili in Shi’a thought and modern history of Iran”, p. 20.

<sup>2</sup> Socio-political implications of Imam Khomeini’s mystic thoughts might be addressed in a broad international and historical measure. The artistic narration of Imam Khomeini’s irfan on stage could be seen in *Saer* (published in Nouri, *The Manner of Infatuation*, pp. 49-73; and on its philosophical analysis see Maftouni, *Philosophizing on Stage*).

## **In Brief**

During the Islamic Golden Age, a variety of thinking methods flourished amongst Muslim scientists and philosophers each of which would contribute human civilization. The thinking methods of Muslim thinkers include a variety of approaches: mathematical method, empirical method, reason, mystical intuition, and philart or sciart.

Kharazmi is the most critical figure in mathematics as the basis of empirical method. Ibn al-Haitham constitutes the crucial figure in the scientific method. Farabi as a profound philosopher focused on imagination and art for distributing wisdom and reason among public. In his virtuous city, artists have this task and they are called the conveyors of religion. Suhrawardi concentrated on intuition besides wisdom and reason. In addition, Suhrawardi typified the artist of Farabi's virtuous city. In Suhrawardi's mystical treatises, he allegorized intelligible happiness.

A highly developed mathematics is the first crucial component of the scientific method. Such being the case,

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Kharazmi took the first critical step to practice the scientific method. Kharazmi as an influential figure in mathematics translated the Indian system into Arabic and introduced the decimal positional number system in a comprehensive guide. The logical mathematical process, named algorithm, and a whole new branch of mathematics, called algebra, are indebted to Kharazmi. He also worked with both what now is called linear equations and quadratic equations, reduced every equation to its simplest form. Through arithmetic and algebra, Kharazmi affected other sciences and their methods.

Ibn al-Haitham is a key scientist developing empirical method based on observation and experiment. He is considered the greatest Muslim physicist and the most significant figure in the history of optics between antiquity and the seventeenth century.

Farabi as a philosopher sets out a socio-political plan for the virtuous city focusing on reason and art. In his plan, the wise men stand in the highest position and the artists and rhetoricians stand in the second level of the city. The artists of virtuous city are the conveyors of religion, bringing intelligible truth to people's mind through their imagination.

Besides the reason, Suhrawardi remarked on intuition and mystical experiment. Furthermore, he himself exemplifies the philartist of Farabi's virtuous city and allegorizes

intelligible truth and happiness in his fictions.

In the field of sense perception, ten interior and exterior senses are allegorized by ten towers, ten wide straps, ten graves, ten flyers, ten wardens, five chambers and five gates. In the theory of emanation, the ten Separate Intellects are allegorized by the ten old men, whereas the Active Intellect by the father, the master, and the Red Intellect. In cosmology, the spheres are symbolized by nine shells, eleven layers of a basin, eleven mountains, sons, and mills.

In his works, it is art that allows philosophy to be held up against peoples' minds; and it is philosophy that allows art to be held up against supposed realities.

*Quranic* approaches could be seen in both Ibn Tufail and Suhrawardi. *Quranic* approaches have no less than four variants:

1. General approach
2. Quotation or Direct approach
3. Mystic Allegory
4. Aesthetic Approach

In Muslim cultures and societies arose various mystic schools such as schools of Bayazid Bastami, Khwaja Abdollah Ansari, Sheikh Ahmad Jami, Rumi, Sheikh Safi al-Din Ardabili, and Shah Nematollah Vali, none of them

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exerted a socio-political impact but Sheikh Safi al-Din. His mystic trend established Safavid Dynasty entailing the political system, major institutions, and social arrangement. In this respect, he is esteemed as the hallmark of mysticism rehabilitating its image.

A set of thinking methods is required for surviving and developing civilization. However dramatically important in today's world is that the balance ought to be maintained.

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## **Indexes**



## **Indexes: *Quran* Verses**

All of you united hold fast to the rope of God... (3:103)

All things perish, except His Face. (28:88)

Allah has set a seal upon their hearts and upon their hearing and there is a covering over their eyes, and there is a great punishment for them. (2:7)

... And I come unto thee from Sheba with sure tidings. (27:22)

... And it is "In the Name of Allah, the Merciful, the Most Merciful." (27:30)

And the foremost are the foremost, these are they who are drawn nigh (to Allah). (56:10-11)

... And to Him is the return after death. (67:15)

And when they came to the Valley of the Ants, an ant said: "Ants! Go into your dwellings lest Solomon and his army should, unknowingly, crush you." (27:18)

... Are men who exalt Him there, whom neither trade nor sale can divert from the remembrance of Allah ... (24:37)

Believers, believe in Allah and His Messenger (Muhammad), in the Book He has sent down to His Messenger, ... (4:136)

Do you not see how your Lord stretches the shadow? (25:45)

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For those who attack the first will one day learn by what an overthrowing they shall be overthrown. (22:11)

... Go to a place where you are commanded. (15:65)

God does not forgive the sin of considering others equal to Him, but He may choose to forgive other sins. Whoever believes in other gods besides Him has indulged in a great sin. (4:48)

...God has chosen him as your ruler and has given him physical power and knowledge ... (2:247)

God sent down a raven which started to dig up the earth to show the killer how to bury the corpse of his brother. On seeing the raven, (Cain) said, “Woe to me! Am I less able than a raven to bury the corpse of my brother?” He became greatly remorseful. (5:31)

God will not forgive the sin of considering something equal to Him, but He may forgive the other sins of whomever He wants. One who considers anything equal to God has certainly gone far away from the right path. (4:116)

He said: Our Lord is He Who gave to everything its creation, then guided it. (20:50)

He taught Adam all the names. (2:31)

... He was called from the right bank in the blessed plot of the tree (28:30)

Indeed, for the unbelievers We have prepared chains, fetters and a Blazing (Fire). (76:4)

Let not the devil deceive you about God. (35:5)

... Lord, set us free from this town of wrong doers... (4:75)

Nay, but that which they have earned is rust upon their hearts. (83:14)

None knows the armies of your Lord save Him self (74:31)

... Nor let your pride deceive you about God. (31:33)

... Nuh said: There is no protector today from Allah's punishment but He Who has mercy... (11:43)

Or like utter darkness in the deep sea: there covers it a wave above which is another wave, above which is a cloud, (layers of) utter darkness one above another; when he holds out his hand, he is almost unable to see it; and to whomsoever Allah does not give light, he has no light. (24:40)

Say, "Lord, I seek your protection against the strong temptations of the devils." (23:97)

Shall not he know it that created it? He is wise, omniscient! (67:14)

The devil deceived you about the mercy of God. (57:14)

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The friends of God will certainly have nothing to fear, nor will they be grieved. (10:62)

The Messenger believes in what has been sent down to him from His Lord, and so do the believers... (2:285)

... Their faces had been covered with slices of the dense darkness of night... (10:27)

Then we reduced him to the lowest of the low. (95:5)

Then We shall advance upon the work which they have done and render it as scattered dust. (56:6)

... There shall be no savior for you from Allah... (40:33)

There surely came over man a period of time when he was a thing not worth mentioning. (76:1)

... They fear a day in which the hearts and eyes shall turn about. (24:37)

... They have no protector from Allah... (10:27)

They question you about the spirit. Say: The spirit is from the command of my Lord. Except for a little knowledge you have been given nothing. (17:85)

Throw him into the ark, and throw it into the river. (20:39)

To God the case of Jesus is as that of Adam whom He created from the earth and then said, "Exist," and Adam came into existence. (3:59)

To Solomon the morning course of the wind was a month's journey, and its evening course was also a month's journey. (34:12)

To whom now belongs the Kingdom? To God, the One, the Almighty. (40:16)

... To whom the Weight of the least atom was not unknown, whether in Heaven or Earth; no, nor any other thing, whether lesser or greater than it. (34:3)

... We are about to destroy the people of that township, for its people are wrong-doers. (29:31)

We revealed this to Moses' mother: Suckle him, but when you fear for him cast him into the water (*al-yam*). Neither fear, nor sorrow because We shall restore him to you and make him among the Messengers. (28:7)

When the fetters and chains are round their necks they shall be dragged. (40:71)

When the youth sought refuge in the cave they prayed "Lord, grant us mercy and help us to get out of this trouble in a righteous way". (18:10)

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When your Lord said to the angels: “I am creating a human from clay, after I have shaped him and breathed of My spirit (I created) into him, fall down prostrate before him,” So all the angels prostrated themselves. (38:71-73)

... Why is it I see not the Hoopoe? Or is he among the absentees? (27:20)

Worship your Lord till the certainty (death) comes to you. (15:99)

You did not kill them, but God killed them; when you threw the darts, it was not you that threw them, but God. (8:17)

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