

The Texts¹

Şadr al-Dīn Qūnawī

Translator's Introduction

Şadr al-Dīn Qūnawī (d. 673/1274) is generally considered to have been the most influential of Ibn 'Arabī's direct disciples.² In contrast to his master, who seldom speaks of the philosophers in a positive light, Qūnawī demonstrates a good deal of explicit and implicit respect for the philosophical tradition. The most obvious example is found in the philosophical correspondence that he initiated with Naşīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī. He tells us that he was motivated to do so by the desire to combine the results of philosophical demonstration (*burhān*) with those of "realized unveiling" (*kashf muḥaqqaq*) and "direct vision" (*'iyān*).³

Qūnawī's relation with the philosophical tradition can perhaps best be seen in the manner in which he disseminated Ibn 'Arabī's teachings. He used a much more explicitly philosophical language in his writings than did his teacher, with far less reference to Koran and Hadith and a much higher percentage of reasoned and systematic discourse in explanation of basic ideas. He selected certain themes from Ibn 'Arabī's writings that later became the key issues discussed and debated whenever Ibn 'Arabī's name was mentioned. In short, the tradition looks back upon Ibn 'Arabī largely through the eyes of him and his students.

Qūnawī's students include Sa'īd al-Dīn Farghānī, author of an extensive metaphysical commentary on the *Poem of the Way* of Ibn al-Fāriḍ; 'Afif al-Dīn al-Tilimsānī, a philosophically inclined author of several important commentaries on early Sufi works; Fakhr al-Dīn 'Irāqī, author of *Lama'āt*, a classic Persian exposition of the metaphysics of love; and Mu'ayyid al-Dīn Jandī, author of a long and foundational commentary on Ibn 'Arabī's *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*. Jandī in turn was the teacher of the well-known *Fuṣūṣ* commentator, 'Abd al-Razzāq Kāshānī, who in turn was the teacher of Dāwūd Qayşarī, another famous commentator. In short the *Fuṣūṣ* commentarial tradition leads back to Qūnawī.

The text translated here is itself something of a commentary on the *Fuṣūṣ*, though there is no direct reference to it except in the full title of the book, given in the concluding sentence (and not found in all manuscripts). It is certainly no accident that the name of the present treatise, *al-Nuṣūṣ*, differs from *al-Fuṣūṣ* in only one letter.

¹ This is the original text prepared at the request of Seyyed Hossein Nasr and Mehdi Aminrazavi for inclusion in *An Anthology of Philosophy in Persia*. The version printed there was abbreviated because of publishing constraints.

² For his life and works, see Chittick, "Şadr al-Dīn Qūnawī," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, vol. 7 (1995), pp. 753-55.

³ See the edition of the text by Gudrun Schubert, *Annäherungen* (Beirut: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1995), p. 131.

Qūnawī held this treatise in high esteem. He uses the term *nuṣūṣ* (plural of *naṣṣ*) with a view toward its technical sense in the religious sciences, where it means a clear and explicit text that leaves no room for interpretation. As he says in the final *Text*, “Everything I mentioned in this book. . . is the explicit truth of the actual situation.” He seems to have in mind what we might call “pure metaphysics.” He explains in *Text 5* that these writings pertain exclusively to “the station of most-perfectness” (*maqām al-akmaliyya*), which he also calls the station of “equilibrium” (*i’tidāl*) and “the central point of the circle of existence” (*nuqṭa waṣaṭ al-dā’irat al-wujūdiyya*). So, what he means to imply by the title of the treatise is that the texts pertain to the purest metaphysical perception, unsullied by any individual perspective or any specific station of wisdom, virtue, or understanding.

Ibn ‘Arabī seems to have written each of the 560 chapters of his massive *al-Futūḥāt al-makkiyya* with a view toward one of the many stations that are traversed on the path to God. He often tells us explicitly which station he has in mind, and he provides general categories in which he places many of the chapters, such as *Musawī*, *Ibrāhīmī*, *‘Īsawī*, and *Muḥammadī*. In one respect, all the stations are *Muḥammadī*, since *Muḥammad* achieved every perfection. But in the technical sense, “the Muhammadan stations” are those that belong exclusively to him and his inheritors. The highest of these is what Ibn ‘Arabī often calls “the station of no station” (*maqām lā maqām*) or the station of “realization” (*taḥqīq, taḥaqquq*). This is precisely Qūnawī’s “point at the center of the circle,” the “standpoint” from which the *Nuṣūṣ* was written.¹ It is not without significance that he refers to the school of thought of his master and himself, both here and elsewhere, as *mashrab al-taḥqīq*, “The School of Realization.” He commonly refers to those who achieve this station as the realizers (*muḥaqqiqūn*) or the perfect (*kummal*).

In translating the treatise, I have refrained as much as possible from adding explanatory material, even though this is perhaps the densest work of a notoriously difficult author. I have tried to be consistent in rendering technical terminology, so I have usually limited myself to one mention of the original Arabic term (typically in *maṣdar* form).

Qūnawī pays much less attention than Ibn ‘Arabī to the images and symbols implicit in Koranic Arabic. He tends rather to employ words in keeping with the abstract, technical meanings that had been given to them in the sciences. Although I have tried to translate the text using the same terminology that I have employed elsewhere in translating Ibn ‘Arabī, I have often opted instead for a more abstract, philosophical-sounding word. To cite but one example, Ibn ‘Arabī commonly speaks of the *athar* or “trace” of a divine name, a word that

¹ See Chittick, “The Central Point: Qūnawī’s Role in the School of Ibn ‘Arabī,” *Journal of the Muhyiddin Ibn ‘Arabi Society* 35 (2004), pp. 25-45.

carries the same sort of significance as Koranic “sign” (*āya*). But Qūnawī uses the word in a more abstract manner, and I render it as “influence.”

The word *wujūd* is central to Qūnawī’s vocabulary, and indeed, in this treatise we see some of the first instances of the expression *waḥdat al-wujūd*, always associated in the later tradition with Ibn ‘Arabī’s name (though he did not use it). Qūnawī is fully aware of the broad range of meanings embraced by the word *wujūd*, including being, existence, finding, awareness, and consciousness. To choose one English term over another leads to an unwarranted specification of the word’s meaning, so I have left it untranslated. As for the adjective *wujūdī*, I translate it as “of *wujūd*” rather than, e.g., “ontological,” which may or may not be appropriate in a given context.

I have used the edition of the text established by Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī, which includes notes by the early twentieth century scholar Āqāmīrżā Hāshim Ishkawārī (d. 1332/1953).¹ However, the edition has many minor errors, which I have tried to correct by collating it with two good manuscripts from the Süleymaniye Library in Istanbul, copies of which were kindly supplied by the Muhyiddin Ibn ‘Arabi Society in Oxford. These are Şehid Ali Paşa 1351, copied in 690, sixteen years after Qūnawī’s death; and Ayasofya 1724, copied in 813. Neither is without copyist errors, and a critical edition of the text will certainly need to take into account other manuscripts (of which there are well over thirty in the Süleymaniye alone). Significant discrepancies between the Āshtiyānī edition and the two manuscripts have been indicated in the notes.

¹ *Risālat al-nuṣūṣ*, Tehran: Dānishgāh-i Mashhad, 1362/1983.

The Texts:

The Keys to the *Fuṣūṣ*

by

Ṣadr al-Dīn Qūnawī

Praise belongs to God, who, by means of the resting-places of aspiration, clarified the levels and degrees of certainty, which are knowledge, eye, and truth; who, by stilling the disquiet of the seekers upon arrival at the utmost wish of their souls, elucidated the disparity of their degrees in the waystations of knowing Him and being near to Him; and who, from among His creatures, set apart an elect by not giving them any goal among all His worlds and all the Presences of His names and attributes other than His Essence. Rather, He made the utmost aim of their aspirations the most eminent objects of His Essential knowledge and the highest objects of His desire, so the object of their desire and their furthest wish is what He desires through His Essence for His Essence with regard to the highest modalities of His original, first Tasks and the most elevated of His entifications. Hence, He is identical with their knowledge, eye, and truth of certainty, in all the levels of His Essential Knowledge, which is connected first to Him and then to the objects of His knowledge, while they qua they are effaced in Him, though their ruling remains and pervades all His existents and His Presences.

And God bless him who realized Him in respect of the most perfect witnessing and the most complete, eminent, and inclusive knowledge while having perpetual presence with Him in all of his homesteads, states, levels, and configurations—our master Muḥammad; and the purified among his community and his brethren, those who possess the most complete inheritance of his knowledges, states, and stations along with the realization of the results of their own exclusive shares that distinguish them from him; through these become distinct the specificities of the intermediaries, the fruits of the following, and the rulings of the interrelations. May that blessing be continuous in ruling and perpetual in ripening throughout the perpetuity of time in respect of His universal reality and the forms of its differentiated rulings, which are called “His years, His months, His days, and His hours.”

[1] *An Eminent Text, the First of the Texts that Must be Offered*

Know that it is not correct, in respect of the Real’s Essential Nondelimitation [*iṭlāq dhātī*], for Him to be ruled by any ruling [*ḥukm*], to be recognized by any description [*wasf*], or to have any relation [*nisba*] whatsoever ascribed to Him—whether oneness [*waḥda*], the necessity [*wujūb*] of *wujūd*, originatingness [*mabdaʿiyya*], the demand of existence-giving [*ijād*],

the emergence of an influence [*athar*], or the connection [*ta'alluq*] of His knowledge to Himself or to anything other than Himself.

For, all of this demands entification [*ta'ayyun*]¹ and delimitation [*taqayyud*], but there is no doubt that the intellection [*ta'acququl*] of an entification demands being preceded by nonentification [*lā ta'ayyun*], and everything that we mentioned precludes nondelimitation. Or rather, the condition [*sharṭ*] of conceiving [*taṣawwur*] of the Real's nondelimitation is that it be intellected in the meaning of a negatory [*salbī*] description, not that it be a nondelimitation whose opposite [*didd*] is delimitation. On the contrary, it is nondelimited by both the oneness and the manyness [*kathra*] that are known, as well as by restriction [*ḥaṣr*] in nondelimitation or delimitation, in comprehending [*jam'*] all that, or in being incomparable [*tanazzuh*] with it. In respect to Him, all of that is correct while He is incomparable with it all, so ascribing all of it and anything else to Him is equal to negating it from Him. Neither is more appropriate than the other.

Once this has been elucidated, then it is known that oneness, originatingness, influencing [*ta'thīr*], the existentiating act [*al-fi'l al-ijādī*], and so on may correctly be ascribed to the Real from the standpoint [*i'tibār*] of entification.

The first of the intellected entifications is the Essential Relation of Knowledge [*al-nisbat al-'ilmiyyat al-dhātiyya*] from the standpoint of its being distinct [*tamayyuz*] from the Essence, but through a relative [*nisbī*], not a true, distinction. By means of the Essential Relation of Knowledge are intellected the oneness of the Real, the necessity of His *wujūd*, and His originatingness; especially in the respect that [1] His knowledge of Himself is through Himself, and His very knowledge of Himself is a cause [*sabab*] of His knowledge of everything; [2] the “things” [*ashyā'*] consist of the entifications of His universal [*kullī*] and differentiated [*tafṣīlī*] intellections; [3] the “quiddities” [*māhiyyāt*] consist of the intellections; and [4] these intellections are configured [*intishā'*] one from another—not in the sense that they arrive newly [*ḥudūth*] in the Real's intellection (exalted is God beyond what is improper for Him!); rather, the intellection of some is posterior in level [*muta'akhhirat al-rutba*] to others. All are beginningless [*abadī*] and endless [*azalī*] intellections in an identical manner. They are

¹ Use of *ta'ayyun* as a specific technical term apparently begins with Qūnawī. Ibn 'Arabī uses the word on occasion, but not in a technical sense. From Qūnawī onward, it is a standard expression among Ibn 'Arabī's followers. When translated as “determination,” as it often is, its connection with the word *'ayn*, one of the most important technical terms of this school of thought is obscured. *Ta'ayyun* means basically “to become an *'ayn*” or “to take on the characteristics of an *'ayn*.” *'Ayn* means “entity,” that is, a “thing” (*shay'*) as distinct from other things. The “First Entification” is Real *Wujūd* inasmuch as it discloses Itself in characteristics and attributes that allow us to understand and conceptualize It as an entity distinct from that which is absolutely nondelimited and nondistinct, i.e., the Essence (*al-dhāt*).

intellected in knowledge, which becomes connected to them in accordance with what their realities [*ḥaqāʾiq*] demand.

The demand [*muqtaḍā*] of their realities is of two sorts:

The first is that they are intellected inasmuch as their manyness is effaced [*istihlāk*] in the Oneness of the Real. This is the intellection of the differentiated [*mufaṣṣal*] within the undifferentiated [*mujmal*], like the intelligent knower who witnesses in one kernel, with the eye of knowledge, all the branches, leaves, and fruit that it contains potentially and, in each individual fruit, the like of what was in the first kernel, and so on ad infinitum.

The other sort is the intellection of the rulings [*aḥkām*] of oneness in one group [*jumla*] after another such that each group is intellected through the quiddities that it comprises. These are the forms of the multiple, plural intellections of the One *Wujūd*. This is the reverse of the effacement mentioned first, for that consisted of the effacement of manyness in oneness, and this consists of the effacement of oneness in manyness. So, let this be known!

[2] *The Second Text*

Know that the Real, in respect of His nondelimitation and His encompassment [*iḥāṭa*], is not named by any name, nor is any ruling ascribed to Him, nor does He become designated by any description or impression [*rasm*]. The relation of demand [*iqtiḍāʾ*] is not more appropriate for Him than the relation of not demanding, for the demand that is thereby intellected or negated is an entified ruling and a delimited description.

You should also know that although demand is Essential, it has three levels:

Its ruling in respect of the first level is that its entification does not depend [*tawaqquf*] upon any condition [*shart*], nor is there any reason [*mūjib*] that is the cause [*sabab*] of its entification.

Its ruling in respect of the second level is that its entification depends only on one condition.

Its ruling in respect of the third level is that the manifestation of its rulings depends upon conditions, causes, and intermediaries.

So, the ruling of the first demand is the Essential Effusion [*al-fayḍ al-dhātī*], not for any reason. No receptacle [*qābil*] or preparedness [*istiʿdād*] is intellected as its counterpart [*muqābil*].

The ruling of the second demand depends upon one condition of *wujūd* alone, and that condition of *wujūd* is the First Intellect, which is the intermediary between the Real and those contingent things [*mumkināt*] whose *wujūd* has been ordained [*taqdīr*] until the Day of Resurrection.

As for the ruling of the demand in respect of the third level, the manifestation of its influence [*athar*] and ruling depends upon many conditions, such as the rest of the existents [*mawjūdāt*].

I do not mean by this that we have three demands, diverse in their realities. Rather, there is one demand with three levels. In respect of each of the three levels, an influence or some influences become manifest and entified. So understand!

[3] Among the Divine Texts

Know that plurality [*ta'addud*] is ascribed to the unitary, Essential Knowledge in respect of its connection [*ta'alluq*] to the known things [*ma'lūmāt*]. Perception [*idrāk*] of them is realized only in respect of its entifications and connections. Its connection to each known thing follows the known thing as that thing is in itself—whether the known thing be simple or compound, temporal [*zamānī*] or locational [*makānī*], nontemporal or nonlocational, temporary [*muwaqqat*] in reception [*qabūl*] and finite [*mutanāhī*] in ruling and description, or nontemporary and infinite in what we have mentioned. So know this!

Also, one of the branches of the mentioned texts is that the ruling of any ruler [*hākīm*] concerning any ruled thing [*maḥkūm 'alayh*] follows the state [*ḥāl*] of the ruler at the moment [*waqt*] of ruling; and, it follows the state of the ruled thing in the state of the ruler's ruling.

If the ruled thing is such that it undergoes transition [*tanaqqul*] in states, then the rulings of what rules over it will be varied [*tanawwu'*] in each state, and the ruler will differ in keeping with its becoming clothed [*talabbus*] by those states. If, however, the ruled thing is such that it stays fixed [*thābit*] in one manner, then the ruling of what rules over it will be fixed in keeping with the first connection designated by the ruling and the demand of the ruler.

There remains the situation according to the state of the ruler. Is the demand of the ruler's essence {transformation [*taqallub*] in states? Or, is the demand of its essence}¹ that it be fixed, and that the states undergo transformation over it?

So, the ruling of the ruler will follow in accordance with one of the two affairs that restricts the levels of the ruling of every ruler and every ruled thing, since no ruling of any ruler and no ruled thing is outside what I mentioned.²

¹ Missing in the two manuscripts.

² Ishkawārī says in his notes that the purport of this Text is to explain the four possible types of ruling in terms of ruler and ruled. In the first type, both ruler and ruled are fixed, as in the case of the Real, who is the subject and object of his own knowledge. Second, neither ruler nor ruled is fixed, such as the wayfarer who undergoes transformations as he passes over the stations on the path to God. Third, the ruler is fixed but not the ruled, such as *wujūd*, which rules over its entifications, because the Real determines the creatures. Fourth is the opposite, such as the entifications, which rule over *wujūd* and determine the way it becomes manifest, since they are fixed in the First Entification (the fact of their being known to God in Himself).

[4] Among the Texts

Knowledge follows *wujūd*, in the sense that, wherever there is *wujūd*, there will be knowledge, without disjoining [*infikāk*].

The disparity of knowledge accords with the disparity of the quiddity's complete [*tāmm*] or defective [*nāqiṣ*] reception of *wujūd*. So, when something receives *wujūd* in a more complete manner, knowledge will be more complete. Knowledge will be defective in the measure of the defective reception and the domination [*ghalaba*] of the rulings of contingency [*imkān*] over the rulings of necessity [*wujūb*], in contrast to what we mentioned first. So know this!

[5] Among the Realized Texts

I have hinted at something of this in one place in my books in the midst of and in the language of something else. Nonetheless, I have set this book apart for the mention of texts derived from tastings [*adhwāq*] specific to the elect station of perfection [*khuṣūṣ maqām al-kamāl*], leaving aside its common tongue [*lisān ʿumūm*], namely, the delimited tastings gained by the masters of specific stations; at root, these latter depend upon the Presence [*ḥaḍra*] of one of the divine names or attributes, which is the source and headspring of that specific tasting.

So, it is incumbent upon me to single out and distinguish what pertains specifically to the tasting of the most perfect and the most comprehensive station and [to show] the correctness of affirming it and its congruence [*muṭābaqa*] with what God knows in the highest, most complete, and most perfect degrees of His knowledge of the affair that is being spoken of, without stipulating its correctness and affirmation in relation or ascription [*iḍāfa*], or in one station rather than another station, or from the standpoint of a state or a moment to the exclusion of other states and moments or what was mentioned.

So we say, having offered this introduction clarifying the text that we intend to elucidate: When man perceives [*idrāk*] any known thing with his theory [*naẓar*], his unveiling [*kashf*], his senses [*ḥiss*], or his imagination [*khayāl*], together or individually, and when his theory or his unveiling of that affair—or his perception of it through the senses or imagination—does not reach as far as the perception of what lies beyond it after having recognized its essentialities [*dhātiyyāt*] and universal requisites [*lawāzim kulliyya*], then he has not perceived the thing with right perception nor recognized it with right recognition [*maʿrifa*].

It makes no difference whether his perception and recognition are connected to the cosmos in respect of its meanings [*maʿānī*] and spirits [*arwāḥ*], or in respect of its forms [*ṣuwar*] and accidents [*aʿrāḍ*]; or if his recognition is connected to the Real.

When the true state of affairs is unveiled for him along with the form of the entification of every known thing in the Real's knowledge, he will find the affair to be so. This is because, as long as his recognition of the Real does not reach as far as His nondelimitation and the utter, true oneness of His Essence—which is not designated by any name, description, ruling, or impression, nor apprehended [*inḍibāṭ*] by any witnessing [*shuhūd*] or intellection, nor restricted by any designated affair—he will not know that “There is no target beyond God,”¹ that encompassing Him in knowledge and witnessing [*shuhūd*] is absurd [*muḥāl*], and that beyond the Nondelimited *Wujūd* of the Real there is nothing but imaginary nonexistence [*al-‘adam al-mutawahham*].

There is, nonetheless, another path to the recognition of the impossibility of knowing God as He knows Himself that is even higher, more complete, and more unveiled. We have recognized it through tasting and witnessing—by the praise and favor of God the exalted—but it is among the things whose clarification and recording is forbidden. Its utmost clarification is the mentioned hint. So be it.

Tasting, the recognition gained by its possessor, and witnessing—inasmuch as the tasting and station depend upon the Presence of one of the divine names, which is the kiblah of the possessor of that station and the furthest limit [*ghāya*] of his recognition of the Real—are an utmost limit [*nihāya*], especially from the standpoint that demands the name to be the same as the Named [*al-musammā*], as we have elucidated in various places in our discourse. But these are relative furthest limits, for the origins and furthest limits are waymarks of the relative perfections.

The situation in respect of true perfection is otherwise. God alludes to this in His words to the most perfect of His servants, “*Surely at thy Lord is the endpoint*” [53:42]. He placed in this verse a hidden subtlety, and that is the fact that He did not say, “*Surely at thy Lord is thy endpoint.*” Rather, He pointed out to him that his furthest limit in unqualified Lordship [*muṭlaq al-rubūbiyya*] is the furthest limit that is the furthest of all furthest limits. After that, there is nothing but the differentiations of the degrees in most-perfectness [*akmaliyya*], which do not come to a halt at any boundary or furthest limit.

The Prophet alluded to what we have mentioned in one of his intimate prayers, for he said, “I seek refuge in Thy good pleasure from Thy anger and in Thy pardon from Thy punishment and I seek refuge in Thee from Thee. I do not enumerate Thy laudation. Thou art as Thou hast lauded Thyself.” In other words, “I do not reach everything that is in Thee.” Thus he pointed out the impossibility of encompassment, and he combined with it giving knowledge of his having reached the furthest of the furthest limits in his recognition of the

¹ A well-known hadith that is not found, however, in Wensinck's *Concordance*.

Real. This is like a commentary on the mentioned verse, that is, His words, “Surely at thy Lord is the endpoint.”

In the prophetic hadiths there are many pointers that allude to what we have mentioned. Those who explore them after waking up to and understanding what I have mentioned will find them lucid and resplendent.

Now we say: The aforementioned station and tasting has tongues that translate it in diverse styles. Among its tongues in the Koran in respect of naming is “the Ramparts” [*al-a‘rāf*], concerning which He gave news that its “men recognize each by its mark” [7:46]. This is one of the characteristics of gazing over all sides by reaching the point of recognizing things to the furthest limit, which makes it necessary to raise up one’s gaze to what is beyond them.

Its tongue and name in the station of prophethood is “place of cognizance” [*muṭṭala‘*]. Thus the Prophet said concerning the Mother of the Koran, or rather, concerning the mystery of each of the Koran’s verses, that it has “a manifest sense, a nonmanifest sense, a limit, and a place of cognizance, up to seven nonmanifest senses.” According to another version, “up to seventy nonmanifest senses.” I have informed about this in *Tafsīr al-fātiḥa*, so one can look for it there.¹

Its name and tongue in the terminology of the Folk of God is “halting place” [*mawqif*], which is the endpoint of every station and which gazes over the coming station.

Its name and tongue in the tasting of the station of perfection relative to every two stations is “the isthmus [*barzakh*] that comprehends the two,” and, relative specifically to the station of perfection, “the isthmus of isthmuses.”

[6] *An Eminent Text, Difficult of Access*

“The Unseen of the Real’s He-ness” [*ghayb huwiyyat al-ḥaqq*] is an allusion to His nondelimitation from the standpoint of nonentification and His true oneness that erases all standpoints.

The “names, attributes, relations, and ascriptions” consist of the Real’s intellection and perception of Himself in respect of His entification. This entificational intellection and perception follow the mentioned nondelimitation, but, relative to the Real’s entification within the intellection of any intellecter in any self-disclosure [*tajallī*], it is a nondelimited entification; it is the vastest entification and is witnessed by the perfect [*kummāl*]. This is the Essential Self-Disclosure that has the station of the highest *tawḥīd*.

¹ *Tafsīr al-fātiḥa* is the same as *Ijāz al-bayān fi tafsīr umm al-qur’ān* (published by the Dā’irat’l-Ma’ārif al-‘Uthmāniyya, Hyderabad-Deccan, 2nd edition, 1949); the text was also published by ‘Abd al-Qādir Aḥmad ‘Aṭā as *al-Tafsīr al-ṣūfi li’l-Qur’ān* (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Ḥadītha, 1969). For the passage Qūnawī is referring to here, see *Ijāz*, pp. 262-63; *al-Tafsīr*, pp. 377-78.

The “originatingness” of the Real follows this entification. The originatingness is the source of the standpoints and the headspring of the relations and ascriptions that become manifest in *wujūd* while staying nonmanifest in the courtyard of intellections and minds [*adhhān*].

What is said to be “a Nondelimited, One, Necessary *Wujūd*” consists of the entification of *wujūd* in the Essential, divine relation of knowledge. In respect of this relation, the realizers call the Real “the Origin” [*mabdaʿ*], not in respect of any other relation. So understand and ponder this, for I have inserted in this text the root of the roots of the divine knowledges. And God is the right-guider.

[7] *A Text*

When any traveler [*sālik*] travels on a path whose furthest limit is the Real on condition of his winning from Him some sort of felicity [*saʿāda*], that traveler is the possessor of a *miʿrāj* and his traveling is an ascent [*ʿurūj*]. So understand!

[8] *An Eminent, Universal Text*

Containing Resplendent Mysteries

Know that whenever something is described as influencing [*taʿthīr*] one thing or some things, the application of this description to it will not be completely true so long as it does not influence the reality of the thing inasmuch as it is it, without the intellection of the inclusion of another limitation [*qayd*] or some outside condition—whatever it may be—within the reality described as exerting the influence.

I only mention these limitations because of the influences that are ascribed to things in respect of their levels, or in respect of standpoints that are requisites of their realities; and because of what has also become widespread among the folk of theoretical intellect and most of the folk of tastings; namely, that when something is described by mirroriness [*mirʾātiyya*], whether its mirroriness be supraformal [*maʿnawī*] or sensory [*ḥissī*], its mirror has an influence on what is reflected within it, because it gives the form of the reflected thing back to it, and the form of the reflected thing becomes manifest within it according to it.

This is correct in a certain way, but not in an unqualified sense. It would be correct for the mirror to influence the reflected thing only if it influenced its reality per se. This, however, does not happen. One affirms the mirror’s influence on the reflected thing only in respect of the perception of those who do not know the reality of the reflected thing and who perceive it only in the mirror. The mirror, however, is not a locus for the reality of the reflected thing, but rather a locus for the disclosure of its image and some of its

manifestations. Manifestation is a relation that is ascribed to the reflected thing in respect of the reflection of its form in the mirror; it is not the very reality of the reflected thing.

By my words “some of its manifestations” I mean to point out that the Essential, exclusive self-disclosures [*al-tajalliyyāt al-dhātiyyat al-ikhtiṣāṣiyya*] are not within a locus of manifestation [*mazhar*] or a mirror, nor do they accord with some level. For, when someone perceives the Real in respect of these self-disclosures, he has witnessed the Reality as It is outside the mirror, not according to a locus of manifestation or a level, as we said—not a name, an attribute, a designated state, or anything else. It is he who knows by tasting that the mirror has no influence on the Reality. Our Shaykh, the leader, used to name these self-disclosures “the Essential, lightning-like [*barqī*] self-disclosures.”¹ In those days I did not know the reason for this nomenclature, nor what the Shaykh meant by it.

These Essential, lightning-like self-disclosures occur for no one except those who are completely detached [*farāgh*] from all descriptions, states, and rulings—both those pertaining to necessity and [divine] names and those pertaining to contingency. This detachment is a nondelimited detachment that does not differ from the nondelimitation of the Real except that it lingers no more than one breath [*nafas*], which is why it is likened to lightning. The reason for its lack of continuity [*dawām*] is the ruling of the all-comprehensiveness [*jam‘iyya*] of the human reality. Just as this all-comprehensiveness does not demand its continuity, so also, if human all-comprehensiveness did not entail this description—namely, the detachment and nondelimitation that attract these self-disclosures—then human all-comprehensiveness would not be an all-comprehensiveness that fully embraces every description, state, and ruling. So, the ruling of all-comprehensiveness affirms it and negates its continuity.

I found, when God granted me this self-disclosure, that it had wonderful rulings in my inward and my outward. Among them was that, although it did not stay for two breaths, it left in the locus [*maḥall*] descriptions and sciences that no one but God can calculate. I came to know in the night that I wrote down this Arriver [*wārid*]² that he who does not taste this locus of witnessing [*mashhad*] is not a Muhammadan inheritor [*wārith Muḥammadī*]; he does not know the secret of his words, “I have a moment when no one embraces me other than my Lord;” nor the secret of his words, “God was, and nothing was with Him;” nor the secret of God’s words, “*Our command is but one, like a glance of the eyesight*” [54:50]. Nor does he know the secret of the fact that existence-giving does not originate in any existent time.

¹ For a few references to these lightning-like self-disclosures in Ibn ‘Arabī’s writings, see Chittick, *Imaginal Worlds* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1994), pp. 81-82.

² In the technical language of Sufism, an “Arriver” is an influx of knowledge by way of unveiling. See the translation of Ibn ‘Arabī’s chapter on the Arriver from the *Futūḥāt* in Chittick, *The Self-Disclosure of God* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1998), pp. 148-50.

In the same way, when someone tastes this locus of witnessing, having already known that the fixed entities [*al-a'yān al-thābita*] are the realities of the existents; that they are not made [*ghayr maj'ūl*]; that the reality of the Real is incomparable with making [*ja'l*] and influencing; and that there is no third thing other than the Real and the entities; then he will necessarily know—if indeed he has what we have mentioned—that nothing influences anything, that the things influence themselves, and that what are named influencing “causes” [*ilal*] and “occasions” [*asbāb*] are conditions for the manifestation of things in themselves. It is not that one reality influences another reality.

So also he should know the situation in “assistance” [*madad*]. There is nothing that assists anything else. Rather, assistance reaches the manifest side of something from its nonmanifest side, and this is made manifest by the luminous self-disclosure of *wujūd* [*al-tajallī al-nūrī al-wujūdī*]. But making manifest does not take place by influencing the reality of what is made manifest. So, the relations influence each other, in the sense that some of them are the cause of the configuration of the ruling of others and their manifestation in the reality that is their source.

Among the things that come to be known by the taster of this self-disclosure is that the fixed entities, in respect of being mirrors, have no influence on the divine self-disclosure of *wujūd* except in respect of the manifestation of the plurality latent in that self-disclosure. So, this is an influence in the relation of manifestation and a condition of making manifest. The Real, however, transcends being influenced by other than Himself, and the realities of the engendered things [*al-kā'ināt*] transcend being influenced in respect of their realities, for, from this standpoint, they are—in the tasting of the perfect—the same as the Tasks [*shu'ūn*]¹ of the Real, so it is not permissible that others should influence them. Hence, in the respect that it is a mirror, a mirror has no influence on the reality of what is reflected within it, because of the explanation already given.

So, understand this text and ponder it, for I have inserted within it precious sciences and mysteries whose measure cannot be measured by any but God. This is the certain truth and the clear text. Even though something you hear that opposes it may be correct, it is relatively correct. This is the explicit truth within which there is nothing dubious. And God is the right-guider, the guide.

[9]

Among the Universal Texts

¹ This term derives from the Koranic verse, “Each day He is upon some task” (55:29) which Ibn ‘Arabī interprets in terms of the day of the “He-ness” or the Essence, which is the present moment, and the fact that there is no repetition in divine self-disclosure. See Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1989), pp. 98–99.

These are texts that I mentioned in the book *Miftāḥ ghayb al-jam‘ wa tafṣīlihi* and in other books.¹ I composed them without mixing in the words of anyone else, for that is not my custom, because God has preserved me from that—with His high, unadulterated gifts, He has delivered me from any need for low, outside borrowings. But I have specified this book for mentioning the texts, so it is also necessary to mention those texts here.

So, I say: Among them is that inasmuch as something is the cause of the *wujūd* of manyness [*kathra*] and many [*kathīr*], it is impossible for it in that respect to become entified through manifestation, nor will it appear to a gazer [*nāẓir*] except in something gazed upon [*manzūr*].

Among them: Nothing that is opposed to [*muḍādda*] or different from [*mubāyana*] a thing emerges [*ṣudūr*] or results from it, despite the diversity of the sorts and kinds of results [*thamar*]*—*the supraformal [*ma‘nawī*], spiritual [*rūḥānī*], imaginal [*mithālī*], imaginary [*khayālī*],² sensory [*ḥissī*], and natural [*ṭabī‘ī*]. This holds generally for anything that is called “a place of emergence” [*maṣdar*] or “a result-yielding root” [*aṣl muthmir*] for a thing or things. However, it has this description from the standpoint of intellecting it inasmuch as it is it, and, from another, hidden standpoint, of which only rare realizers gain cognizance.

When it is thought that something happens counter to what we mentioned, that will only be so because of and in accordance with a condition or conditions, external to the essence of the thing, and in accordance with the guise [*ḥay‘a*] that is intellected because of the coming together—I mean the coming together of the reality that is described by emergence and result-yielding and the external conditions and standpoints along with the rulings of the level within which the coming together becomes entified.

“*Each works similar to its way*” [17:84]. Nothing results in or makes manifest anything that is the same or completely similar to it, because that would require that *wujūd* had come about and become manifest twice in one reality and in one level in one way and mode. This would be to gain what is already there [*taḥṣīl al-ḥāṣil*], which is absurd; it would be empty of benefit and would pertain to the useless [*‘abath*], but the Wise, Knowing, Real Actor transcends useless acts. Hence, the roots must be different from their results. Moreover, the contingent things are infinite, and effusion from the Real, who is the Root of roots, is one. So, in the view of him who knows what I have mentioned, there is no repetition in *wujūd*. So understand!

This is why the realizers have said, “God does not disclose Himself twice in one form to one individual, nor to two individuals in a form.” On the contrary, there must be a separating

¹ Compare Qūnawī, *Miftāḥ al-ghayb*, text in Fanārī, *Miṣbāḥ al-uns*, edited by Muḥammad Khwājāwī (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Mawlā, 1374/1995), pp. 13-14.

² Şehid Ali Paşa 1351 lacks the word “imaginary,” and Ayasofya 1724 lacks both it and “imaginal.”

factor and a difference in one or more ways, as I pointed out earlier. So understand! And God is the right-guider.

[10] An Eminent Text

Know that, given that it is not possible to ascribe any attribute or name to the Real in respect of His nondelimitation, nor to apply to Him any ruling, whether negatory or affirmative, it is thus known that attributes, names, and rulings are not applied or ascribed to Him except in respect of the entifications.

Once it is clear that every manyness in *wujūd* and intellection must be preceded by oneness, then it becomes necessary that the entifications—in respect of which names, attributes, and rulings are ascribed to the Real—be preceded by an entification that is the origin and source of all the entifications, in the sense that nothing lies beyond it save unmixed nondelimitation; this is a negatory affair that requires the negation of descriptions, rulings, entifications, and standpoints from the core [*kunh*] of His Essence as well as the lack of delimitation or restriction by any description, name, entification, or anything else that we have enumerated or mentioned in summary fashion.

Now, unimpaired intellects, even if they lack sound unveiling, may take the standpoint of the ensuing attributes and names. If they are unable to intellect any names or attributes beyond what they conceptualize [*taṣawwur*] and if their intellective perceptions reach only that, then, in relation to them, these are “the names of the Essence.” In the stage of the theoretical intellect and the state of this veil [*hijāb*], they will draw conclusions about these realities from the inclusiveness [*shumūl*] of their ruling, from the fact that the other names and attributes are subordinate [*taba‘iyya*] to them, and from the fact that what comes after them becomes entified depending upon them.

So, the Essential [*dhātī*] and name-related [*asmā’ī*] divine gifts [*‘aṭā’*] are known from this rule, in the sense that every gift and good [*khayr*] that reaches creation from the Real will be either an Essential or a name-related gift, or it will combine the Essence and the names.

There is no way to reckon the Essential gifts. Their entifications are not restrained or restricted by number.

As for the name-related gifts ascribed both to the Essence and the names, either their relation to the Presence of the Essence will be stronger and more complete than their relation to the Presence of the names and attributes, or the contrary. If their relation to the names and attributes dominates over their relation to the Essence, then they may be reckoned, either with difficulty or ease, according to the domination [*ghalaba*] and the being dominated over [*maghlūbiyya*] that occurs in this case. But here there is a great secret that cannot be divulged.

If the result of domination and being dominated over is that the relation of the gifts to the Presence of the Essence is strong, this will have no reckoning, because the Essential gifts and whatever has a strong relation to them emerge and are received only because of an Essential correspondence [*munasāba*]. There is no reason for them other than this correspondence.

Whoever does not recognize this principle does not know the reality of His words, “*He gives provision to whomsoever He will without reckoning*” [2:212], or the secret of His words, “*This is Our gift, so bestow or withhold without reckoning*” [38:39], or the like of that, mentioned repeatedly in the Exalted Book and also in the prophetic hadiths, such as his words, “Surely from my community seventy thousand will enter paradise without reckoning, and with every thousand, seventy thousand.” These are the possessors of the name-related gifts. Their relation to the Presence of the Essence, however, is stronger than their relation to the Presence of the names and attributes. This is why they follow the possessors of the Essential correspondence and share with them in their states. So know that!

Now that we have mentioned the sorts and the rulings of gifts, let us mention the sorts of their recipients [*qābilūn*]. For, in their taking, they have classes that become numerous according to the requests of their preparedness, state, level, spirit, constitutional [*mizāji*] nature, or accidental [*‘araḍī*] nature. It is these that are expressed by the tongue of the receiving seeker.

In short, the highest level of the recipients in receiving what reaches them from the effusion and gifts of the Real is the vision of the Real’s face in the conditions and causes named “the intermediaries” [*wasā’it*] and “the chain of [cosmic] order” [*silsilat al-tartīb*]. The taker knows and witnesses that the causative intermediaries are nothing but the entifications of the Real in the divine and engendered [*kawnī*] levels in all the diversity of their kinds. In other words, there is nothing between the received effusion of the Real and the recipient except the very entification of the effusion through the delimited receptivity. There is no inclusion of a ruling of contingency [*ḥukm imkānī*] that would be demanded and made necessary by the influence of the effusion’s passing over the levels of the intermediaries and by its becoming colored [*inṣibāgh*] by the rulings of their contingencies. It is seen that the effusion is one of the self-disclosures of the Real’s Nonmanifest, for the pluralities {and entifications}¹ joined with it are among the rulings of the name Manifest in respect of the fact that the Real’s Manifest is a locus of disclosure for His Nonmanifest. So, the rulings of manifestation pluralize the nondelimited oneness of nonmanifestation. It is these rulings that are named “recipients,” and they are the forms of the Tasks, nothing else. So understand. “*And God speaks the truth, and He guides whomsoever He will to a straight path*” [35:41].

¹ Not found in the two mss.

**[11] A Resplendent Text and Universal Rule
Providing Knowledge of the Divine Compliance and
Response, and His Withholding the Two**

Know that the complete, explicit scale [*mizān*] and the taste-derived, sound demonstration [*burhān*] in recognizing when the servant is among those who obey their Lord and when he will quickly be given the divine response [*ijāba*] in exactly what he asks, without substitution or delay, is sound recognition and perfect compliance [*muṭāwāʿa*]. When someone's recognition of the Real is sounder and his conception of the Real is sounder, then the response to him will be quicker in exactly what he requests. When someone is more complete in watching over [*murāqaba*] the commandments of the Real and in undertaking them with perfect compliance, then the Real's compliance with him will also be more complete than His compliance with other servants. This is why the state of the great ones among the Folk of God demands that most of their supplications receive a response—because of the perfection of compliance and the soundness of recognizing God and conceiving of God. God alludes to this with His words, “*Supplicate Me and I will respond to you*” [40:60].

When someone lacks sound recognition by way of witnessing, he is not the supplicant of the Real to whom He guarantees a response with His words, “*Supplicate Me and I will respond to you.*” For he turns his attention only to the form individuated [*mushakkhāṣ*] in his mind [*dhihn*] and resulting from his theory [*naẓar*] and imagination [*khayāl*], or from the imagination and theory of someone else, or from what all this has given him. This is why someone of this sort is deprived of being given a response with exactly what he asked for, or there is a delay in it—I mean, in the response. When someone like this receives a response, its cause is the mystery of the divine witness [*maʿiyya*], which demands that nothing be empty of the Real; or it is the complete concentration [*jamʿiyya*] that is gained by the distressed [*muḍṭarr*], who are promised a response when they supplicate in distress,¹ and the preparedness they have gained from that—that is, the distress.

The state of someone who has this description is different from the state of the possessor of sound conception and realized recognition, for the latter calls the Real to presence [*istiḥḍār*] and turns his attention [*tawajjuh*] toward Him with a realized calling to presence and turning of attention. Even if he does not have this in every respect, it is enough that he has conceived of the Real and called Him to presence in his attention only in some levels and in respect of some names and attributes. This is the state of the intermediate Folk of God, whereas the just-mentioned state is the state of the veiled.

¹ The reference here is to Koran 27:62: “*He answers the distressed one when he supplicates Him, and He removes the evil.*”

As for the perfect [*kummal*] and the solitaries [*afrād*],¹ their attention to the Real follows the Essential self-disclosure that they have, and their realization of the station of perfection depends on having attained it. For them it results in a complete recognition that comprehends the modalities [*ḥaythiyyāt*] of all the names, attributes, levels, and standpoints along with a sound conception of the Real in respect of His already mentioned Essential self-disclosure gained by them through the most complete witnessing. This is why the response is not delayed for them.

Also, the perfect and those solitaries whom God wills are the folk of cognizance of the Guarded Tablet, or rather, of the station of the Pen, or rather, of the Presence of the Divine Knowledge. Hence they are aware of what has been ordained to come to be, because of foreknowledge [*sabq al-‘ilm*] of its inescapable occurrence. So, they do not ask for something absurd, something whose *wujūd* has not been ordained. Their aspirations are not incited to seek [*ṭalab*] or desire [*irāda*] that.

I only say “desire that” because there are those upon whose desire the occurrence of things depends, even if they do not supplicate or ask the Real for it to come about. I witnessed that from our Shaykh—may God sanctify his mystery—for many years in uncountable affairs. He reported to me that he saw the Prophet in one of his visions² and that he gave him good news and said to him, “God is quicker to respond to you than you are to supplicate Him.” This station is above the station of receiving response to supplications and is one of the specificities of perfect compliance.

The station of perfect compliance is above the station of compliance, for the station of compliance is specific to what was alluded to—namely undertaking to observe commandments, following everything that pleases the Real, and performing His rights [*ḥuqūq*] in the measure of ability. The Prophet alluded to it when he replied to his uncle Abū Ṭālib, who said to him, “How quickly your Lord hastens to do what you want, O Muḥammad!,” when he had seen the quickness of the Real’s response to him in what he would ask from Him. According to another version, he said to him, “How your Lord obeys you!”

The Prophet said to him, “And you, O Uncle—if you obey Him, He will obey you.”

This station, which we said is above that, goes back to the perfection of the servant’s fulfilling what the Real desires from him in respect of his reality through the first, universal desire, which is connected to the achievement of the Perfection of Disclosure and Discovery

¹ In Ibn ‘Arabī’s teachings a Solitary is a perfect human being who stands at the same level but outside the scope of the Pole (*quṭb*); the latter governs the unseen world of sanctity. See Chittick, *Sufi Path of Knowledge*, p. 413, n. 23.

² “Vision” translates *wāqī‘a*, which means befaller, happening, event, occurrence. In the Sufi vocabulary it denotes a true vision, typically seen during wakefulness. The word is derived from the Koranic verse, “*When the Befaller befalls, no one will deny its befalling*” (56:1).

[*kamāl al-jalāʾ waʾl-istijlāʾ*].¹ This is the reason for giving existence to the cosmos and Perfect Man, who is precisely God’s Intended Entity [*ʿayn maqṣūda*]. Everything else is intended by way of subordination to him and because of him. For, when there is something without which the sought thing [*maṭlūb*] cannot be reached, that also is sought. This is what I mean by my words, “by way of subordination.”

Perfect Man alone is desired for himself because he is a complete locus of disclosure [*majlāʾ*] for the Real. Through him the Real becomes manifest in respect of His Essence and all His names, attributes, rulings, and standpoints as He knows Himself through Himself in Himself; and through everything comprised by His names, His attributes, and all the rulings and standpoints that I alluded to, and the realities of the things known by Him [*maʿlūmāt*], which are the entities of the things He engenders—without any alteration by reason of defective reception, or a deficient mirroriness that would demand that [Perfect Man] reflect something that becomes manifest other than as it is in itself.

When someone is of this sort, he has no desire distinct from the Real’s desire. Rather, he is the mirror of His Lord’s desire and His other attributes. Thus his supplication is effaced in his desire, which does not differ from his Lord’s desire. So, what he desires occurs, just as He says: “*Doer of what He desires*” [85:16].

If someone who has reached the realization of what we mentioned supplicates, he will be supplicating with the tongues and levels of all the inhabitants of the cosmos, because he is a mirror of them all. In the same way, when he leaves aside supplication, he leaves it aside only in respect of being the Real’s locus of disclosure from the standpoint of that face among his two faces that is adjacent to the Divine Side.² He does not differ from Him in respect of His being “doer of what He desires.” No one can aim at any target or climb to any level or station beyond this station.

Below him is the one who turns his attention toward the Real with complete recognition and sound conception, the one intended by the address, “*Supplicate Me and I will respond to you*”—and the Real’s report is truthful. This has become easy for the servant alluded to, so the result is inescapable, that is, the response, in contrast to the other turners of attention whose characteristics were mentioned.

¹ By this expression Qūnawī is referring to the full actualization of God’s goal in the creation of the universe as announced in the famous *ḥadīth qudsī*, “I was a hidden treasure and I desired to be known, so I created the creatures that I might be known.” For more on Qūnawī’s teachings here, see Chittick and Peter Lamborn Wilson, *Fakhriddin ʿIraqi: Divine Flashes* (New York: Paulist Press, 1982), the discussion of “the perfection of distinct-manifestation and distinct-vision,” pp. 23 ff.

² On the two “faces” (*wajh*) of all things, one directed at the Real and the other at creation, see Chittick, *Self-Disclosure*, pp. 135 ff.

So know this! You will attain exalted mysteries and wonderful sciences to which thoughts and imaginings do not climb, nor do fingers inscribe them with pens. And God is the right-guider.

[12]

An Eminent Text

Know that the highest degree of knowledge of a thing—whatever thing it may be, in relation to whatever knower it be, and whether the thing known be one or more things—is gained only through unification [*ittiḥād*] with the known thing and the knower’s being no different [*mughāyara*] from it; for, what causes ignorance of something and prevents perfect perception of it is nothing other than the domination of the ruling through which the two are distinct [*imtiyāz*]. This is a supraformal distance [*bu‘d ma‘nawī*]. Distance, in whatever respect, prevents perfect perception of the distant thing.

The disparate degrees of knowledge of the thing are in the measure of the disparate domination of the ruling that unifies the knower with the known thing. True nearness eliminates the separation that is true distance, which was alluded to as the rulings through which difference and distinction come to be.

When you witness this affair and taste it with realized unveiling, you will know that the Real has perfect knowledge of things only because He discovers [*istijlā’*] them in Himself while their manyness and otherness are effaced in His oneness. For, when something is within something else—whether the locus be supraformal or formal—it will only come to be and become manifest in accordance with that within which it is entified and manifest. This is why we say that the Real knows Himself through Himself and He knows the things in Himself through His very knowledge of Himself.

Divine reports have come that “God was, and nothing was with Him,” thus negating the otherness of things relative to the oneness that is their unseen¹ locus and affirming the firstness of the Real in respect of the oneness. Through the distinction of the manyness of the things that are intellected in the second place and latent [*kāmin*] before that in oneness, and through the fact that in actuality oneness comprehends [*jam‘*] the things, the perfection that was first concealed in oneness becomes manifest. Thereby the door is opened to the

¹ Reading *ghaybī*, in keeping with Şehid Ali Paşa 1351 and an alternative reading offered in the printed edition. Both the latter and Ayasoyfa 1724 have ‘*aynī*, in which case the meaning would be not “unseen,” but “in entity.” This could mean “as fixed entities” (i.e., invisible objects of divine knowledge) or “in their state of being existent entities” (i.e., as present in the universe).

Perfection of Disclosure and Discovery, which is the true sought object. Thereby become manifest the rulings of oneness in manyness, and of manyness in oneness.

Oneness makes manyness one [*waḥḥadat al-kathra*], for it becomes the common measure [*qadr mushtarik*] among the many things, which are distinct from each other by essence; hence it joins [*tawṣīl*] their separations [*fuṣūl*], because by essence it comprehends, as we mentioned. And the many things [*mutakaththirāt*] pluralize [*ta'dīd*] the One in respect of the entifications, which are the cause of the variation of the One's manifestation in color [*ṣibgh*] and colors and [the cause] of the diverse qualities [*kayfiyyāt*] that demand the diversity of the preparednesses of the many things that receive the One Self-Disclosure. Thereby is renewed recognition of the kinds of manifestations and their requisite rulings, which consist of some influencing others by holding together and taking apart, outwardly and inwardly, high and low, temporarily and not temporarily, correspondingly and not correspondingly—all that by means of the conjunction [*ittiṣāl*] that they have through the unitary self-disclosure of *wujūd* that comprehends them all, as was mentioned.

So knowledge, bliss [*na'īm*], and felicity in all their diverse kinds accord only with the correspondence [*munāsaba*]; and ignorance, chastisement, and wretchedness accord with the strength of the rulings of difference [*mubāyana*] and distinction. As for the intermixing [*imtizāj*] of those rulings through which there is unification and of those rulings through which there is distinction, its governing authority [*salṭana*] has no end.

The source of each group of rulings through a sort of correspondence, the place to which they refer in respect of ascription, and that to which they are traced back [*mustanad*] is named “the level.” So understand!

When I started to write this text, it was said to me in my inwardness while I was writing: In respect of oneness, the root of the rulings ascribed to oneness and to the One Real and called “the rulings of necessity” is one ruling, and that is the reality of the “decree” [*qaḍā'*]. The measures [*maqādīr*] of the influence of the pluralities of the known things belong to the one ruling. The One *Wujūd* becomes manifest by reason of these pluralities, first by being influenced, and second by influencing these pluralized things through returning their influences to them. So know this, and ponder the wonderful thing that I have pointed out! You will attain exalted knowledge. And God is the right-guider.

An Eminent Chapter

Elucidating the Remaining Secrets of this Text

Know that the highest degree of knowledge of a thing, whatever it may be other than the Real, is that you know it with a knowledge that results from your vision of it totally within the knowledge of the Real.

This knowledge has two signs. One is that the knowledge you gain of the thing leaves you without need to resume and repeat your gaze [*nazar*] upon it so as to seek increased recognition of it, for, if you renew the knowledge of the thing by way of increase after having claimed already to have recognized it, the only reason for this would be defective knowledge of it in the first place. If knowledge of it had been perfected the first time, there would have been no need for increase—as is the case with the Real. This depends upon perfect encompassment in knowledge of the thing known.

The other sign from which one concludes that this knowledge has been soundly gained is that the ruling of someone’s knowledge applies to the thing such that he passes beyond its delimitation and reaches the point where he sees the last of it conjoined with the nondelimitation of the Real.

Knowledge of the Real, however, is not like this, for it connects to Him only in respect of His entification in a level, a locus of manifestation, a state, a modality, or a standpoint. As long as He is apprehended [*inḍibāt*] by the one who knows Him through His entification in one of the mentioned ways, for him will become manifest and entified from the Nondelimited Essence, in keeping with the state of the recipient of self-disclosure [*mutajallā lahu*], what had previously not been entified. And just as the states of man do not reach a furthest limit at which he may halt, so also there is no end to the Real’s entifications and the variations of His manifestations to man in accordance with his states, which are the entifications of the Nondelimited Essence of the Real and the variations of Its manifestations. It was already pointed out that the names are names of the states and that {the states undergo transformation [*taqallub*] over [*‘alā*] the entities—in contrast to the Real, for He undergoes transformation in [*fī*] the states. He indicates}¹ this with His words, “*Each day He is upon some task*” [55:29]. So understand, and do not interpret! Rather, strive to see for yourself, or else do not do so, but have faith and submit—you will be safe. And God gives success.

[13] A Majestic Text

Know that no existent in *wujūd* is described by nondelimitation without having a face toward delimitation, if only in respect of its entification in the intellection of one or more intellecters. Likewise, no existent in *wujūd* is ruled by delimitation without having a face toward nondelimitation. No one recognizes this, however, save those who recognize the things with complete recognition after recognizing the Real and recognizing everything that is recognized.

¹ The text in brackets is missing in the two manuscripts.

He who does not witness this locus of witnessing through tasting has not realized the recognition of the Real and creation.

[14] A Text

Clarifying the Secret of Perfection and Most-perfectness

Know that the Real has an Essential perfection [*kamāl dhātī*], as well as a name-related perfection [*kamāl asmāʿī*] whose manifestation depends upon giving existence to the cosmos.

In respect of entification both perfections are name-related, because every ruling concerning an affair by any ruler is preceded by the entification of the object of the ruling in the intellection of the ruler. So, were it not for the intellection of the Real's Essence before the ascription of the names to Him and the fact that He is distinct in His independence [*ghinā*—in the sense that *wujūd* is affirmed for Him to the exclusion of everything else—it would not be ruled that He has an Essential perfection.

There is no doubt that every entification intellected for the Real is a name for Him, for, in the view of the realizer, the names are nothing but the entifications of the Real. Therefore it is true that in this respect, every perfection by which the Real is described is a name-related perfection. Nonetheless, in respect of the fact that the Real's names are configured from the Presence of His Oneness by the demand of His Essence, all the perfections by which He is described are Essential perfections.

Once this has been settled, we say: When someone has this perfection in His Essence from His Essence, He does not become defective through external accidents and requisites such that these would detract from His perfection. Nor is it permissible to imagine concerning His perfection a defect [*naqṣ*] such that He would become perfect through the accidents and requisites. Rather, these may bring about in some levels the manifestation of the description of His most-perfectness [*akmaliyya*]; they include the recognition that He is of this sort.

[15] A Very Eminent Text

The reality of the Real consists of the form of His knowledge of Himself in respect of His entification within His intellection of Himself, such that the knowledge, the knower, and the known are united [*tawḥīd*].

His Essential attribute, which is no different from His Essence, is an all-comprehensive unity [*aḥadiyya jamʿ*] beyond which no all-comprehensiveness (*jamʿiyya*), relation, or standpoint is intellected. The complete witnessing and recognition of this attribute will be realized only by recognizing that in every entified thing the Real is a receptacle for the ruling that He is entified in keeping with the situation; this demands that the Real be perceived

within [the thing] as entified and that it be known that He is not restricted by the entification and that He, qua He, is nonentified. This is the form of His knowledge of Himself.

So, His Essence is recognized as entified in relation to His manifestation in and according to the entified things and in relation to him who witnesses Him only in a locus of manifestation; and He is recognized such that inasmuch as He is He, He is also not entified in the state in which it is ruled that He is entified, because of the incapacity [*quṣūr*] of the perception of those who only perceive Him in a locus of manifestation, whether the locus of manifestation is taken as the same as or other than the Manifest.

The reality of the creatures consists of the form of their Lord's knowledge of them. Their essential attribute is the poverty [*faqr*] that results from unqualified independence, not just any poverty. So understand!

[16] A Very Eminent Text

Know that the result of the intellectual declaration of incomparability [*tanzīh*] is distinguishing [*tamyīz*] the Real from everything named "other than He" [*siwāhu*] by means of negatory [*salbī*] attributes, as a precaution against defects that minds suppose but do not occur in *wujūd*.

The result of the Shari'ite declarations of incomparability is the negation [*nafy*] of any plurality in *wujūd* [*ta'addud wujūdī*] or any sharing [*ishtirāk*] with the Divine Level [*al-martabat al-ulūhiyya*]. This is affirmed also by the Shariah [*shar'*] after the stipulation that the affirmative [*thubūti*] attributes are shared with the Real, so as to negate similarity [*mushābaha*] and equality [*musāwāt*]. To this He alludes with His words, "And God is the best of providers" [62:11], "the best of forgivers" [7:155], "the fairest of creators" [23:14], and "the most merciful of the merciful" [12:64]; "God is greater;" and the like.

As for the declaration of incomparability of the folk of unveiling, it affirms that all-comprehensiveness belongs to the Real without restriction, and it distinguishes the rulings of some names from others, for it is not correct to ascribe every ruling to every name. On the contrary, there are names for which it is absurd to ascribe some rulings, even though these are affirmed for other names. So also is the situation with the attributes.

One of the results of declaring incomparability by unveiling is the negation [*nafy*] of the "other" [*siwā*] along with the subsistence [*baqā'*] of the ruling of plurality, without supposing that a defect has been negated [*salb*] and without intellecting a perfection that is ascribed to the Real by affirming something positive [*muthbat*]. Peace!

[17] *An Eminent Text*

Each thing that is in something else is so only in keeping with the locus, whether the locus be supraformal or formal. This is why the contingent known things, inasmuch as their entification is fixed and impressed [*irtisām*] in the Real's knowledge, are described by eternity [*qidam*].

So also, in another respect, nothing entified in the Real's knowledge is empty of the ruling of new arrival [*ḥudūth*], because the *wujūd* of the cosmos and all the knowledge of its folk are newly arrived and passive [*munfa'īl*], in contrast to the Real's *wujūd* and knowledge. So know this! You will be rightly guided, God willing.

[18] *An Eminent Text*

This is one of the most eminent, majestic, and comprehensive texts concerning the principles of divine and engendered recognition.

Know that the ascription of the name "Essence" to the Real is only true from the standpoint of His entification which, in the intellection of creatures other than the perfect, follows upon a Nondelimitation of unknown description and no name. This Nondelimitation is a negatory description [*waṣf salbī*] of the Essence, for it is posited as distinct from every entification. In fact, what is actually affirmed is the First Entification, which by essence comprises the Essential names, which are "the Keys to the Unseen."¹

What is named "the Essence" is no different from Its names in any respect. As for the names, they differ from and are opposed to each other, and they are also unified [*ittihād*] with each other in respect of the Essence that includes [*shumūl*] them all.

Unity [*aḥadiyya*] is a description of the entification. It is not a description that designates the Nondelimited, for the Nondelimited has no name or description.

In respect of these names and from the standpoint of their not being different from the Essence, we say that the Real exercises influence [*mu'aththir*] by Essence. So understand!

The Essence has only one requisite, which is no different from It except relationally; this requisite is knowledge. Unitariness [*waḥdāniyya*] is affirmed for the Real in respect of knowledge, in and through which the level of Divinity [*martaba al-ulūhiyya*] and the other levels and known things become entified, because all are impressed within it. It is the mirror

¹ Concerning the Essential Names, Qūnawī says that no one knows them except the Perfect. "They are among the greatest secrets of the Real and it is forbidden to divulge them." They are followed by "the Mothers of the Names" (*ummahāt al-asmā'*), to which reference will be made shortly. These are Knowing, Alive, Desiring, and Powerful and "They are like shadows and gatekeepers of the Essential Names." *Kitāb al-fukūk*, edited by Muḥammad Khwājāwī (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Mawlā, 1371/1992), p. 242.

of the Essence in respect of its including the Essential names from which the Essence is no different in any respect, as was mentioned.

It—I mean knowledge—is the source and starting point of supraformal manyness. I said that knowledge is like the mirror of the known things and also of the Essence and Its Essential names because, from the standpoint of the distinction of knowledge from the Essence—a distinction of relation and standpoint—the entification of the Real is intellected in His intellection of Himself in Himself. So, His Essential knowledge is like a mirror for Him. That is why we said elsewhere, “The reality of the Real consists of the form of His knowledge of Himself.” I also called attention to the fact that everything manifest in a locus of manifestation is different from the locus of manifestation in one or more ways, except the Real, for He is identical with the manifest and identical with the locus of manifestation. So bear this in mind!

As for the levels, they consist of universal entifications comprised in the one, Essential requisite, which is knowledge. They are like loci for the nondelimited effusion of the Essence that passes over them inasmuch as the Effuser is no different from the effusion. This was already pointed out in terms of the Real’s situation both as locus of manifestation and as Manifest. The levels enter into the reality of exerting influence, though not in an unqualified sense; rather, in respect of what we said: “They are like loci.”

Every level is a supraformal locus for a group of rulings of necessity and contingency that branch off from the Essential names, from the Mothers of the Divine Names, and from the ensuing names that follow. The levels have fixed entities in the courtyard of knowledge and intellection, but independently they have no influence—rather, by way of *wujūd*. Such is *wujūd* with the levels, for their rulings become manifest in everything that conjoins with them and becomes entified within them through the instilling of qualities [*takyīfāt*] by the nondelimited effusion that reaches them and passes over them. They are like relative ends [*al-nihāyāt al-nisbiyya*] in respect of the journey of the Essential Effusion and Self-Disclosure of *Wujūd* in the waystations and degrees entified between the beginningless and the endless—not to a furthest limit [*ghāya*] or a settling down [*qarār*].

So, what I have mentioned has made clear that the levels comprehend the groups of rulings that settle down within them from the Presence of necessity and contingency; they make manifest the results of all that they comprehend in accordance with themselves, not in accordance with the rulings or the nondelimited effusion. The levels’ ruling is the ruling of the shapes [*ashkāl*] and molds [*qawālib*] of every shaped and molded thing that conjoins with them and dwells within them. This is their influence. They are fixed in entity, and upon them depend and to them are ascribed the results of the rulings in the end, because they are the starting point [*mashraʿ*] and the returning place [*marjaʿ*]. So understand!

Know now that the levels are intellected as being configured one from another, and so also are the names. Thus the Divinity with its universal names—which are Living, Knowing, Desiring, and Powerful—is a shadow [*zill*] of the Essence inasmuch as It includes by essence the Keys to the Unseen. In the tasting of the perfect, however, there is a delicate difference between the Divinity and the Essence; this is that the Essence is intellected as distinct from the mentioned Mothers of the Names, but the Essence is not intellected as distinct from Its Essential Names except by those veiled from the Essential Self-Disclosure.

As for the folk of the Essential Self-Disclosure, they do not intellect this kind of distinction, nor do they witness it except inasmuch as they know the knowledge of those who are veiled. In their view, the distinction here is what I pointed out: The Essence is no different from Its Essential names in any respect, but the names differ from each other, even though there is no disjoining and the degrees of the Keys are disparate; for some follow others, just as I pointed out concerning the names of the Divinity—namely, that the names Creator, Author, Form-Giver, and so on follow the name Powerful. The rest of the Mothers of the Names have a similar situation with those that ensue from them. So bear in mind!

A Chapter in Connection

As for the secret of the correspondences [*al-munāsabāt*], it has to do with sharing [*ishtirāk*] in what demands the removal of the rulings of difference [*mughāyara*] such that the correspondence is affirmed.

The first and highest of the correspondences is the Essential correspondence. The Essential correspondence between the Real and the [Perfect] Man who is the Intended Entity is affirmed in two ways. One of them is in respect of the weakness of his mirroriness in exerting influence on the self-disclosure that is entified within him, for he does not drape it in any description that would detract from his declaration of holiness [*taqdis*] save the limitation of the entification, which does not detract from the Real's magnificence, majesty, and unitariness; he is empty of most of the rulings of contingency and the characteristics of the intermediaries. The disparate degrees of the Proximate [*muqarrabūn*] and the Solitaries with the Real are in this respect.

As for the correspondence with the Real in the other way, that is in keeping with the servant's share in the form of the Divine Presence. This share is disparate according to the disparity of all-comprehensiveness. The correspondence is weak or strong according to the narrowness or expanse of the all-comprehensiveness of that person in respect of his receptivity. Because of this the shares are defective or ample.

In every age and time, perfection belongs to the one who fully embraces what is comprised by the station of necessity and contingency—namely the attributes, rulings, and

everything of these that may possibly become manifest in actuality—and who is also fixed in correspondence in the first way. He is the beloved [*maḥbūb*] of the Real whose entity is intended. In respect of his reality, which is the Isthmus of Isthmuses, he is the mirror of both the Essence and the Divinity along with their requisites. The possessor of the Essential correspondence in the first way is the proximate beloved—no one else. This was already pointed out.

As for essential correspondence among people, this also is affirmed in two ways, and these are images of the two mentioned divine ways. One is in respect to a sharing of constitution [*mizāj*] by the two who correspond. In other words, their constitutions fall into one of the degrees of the equilibriums [*i'tidālāt*] comprised by the unqualified expanse of human constitutions; or, the degree of the constitution of one of them is adjacent to the degree of the other's constitution—this is a magnificent principle in the School of Realization [*mashrab al-taḥqīq*]; few recognize it by tasting.

This is because the spirits of people come from the spiritual worlds. They have disparate degrees in eminence and highness of waystation in respect of the fewness or manyness of the intermediaries, and [in respect of] the multiplication and strength of the modes of contingency because of the intermediaries' manyness, or their fewness and weakness. The reason for this [disparity of degrees]—after God's decree [*qadā'*] and ordainment [*qadar*]²—is the constitution, which requires that the spirit become entified accordingly. So, the one who is nearer relative to true equilibrium—in the central point of whose circle become entified the souls of the perfect—will receive a spirit more eminent and higher relative to the high intellects and spirits. He who is further relative to the mentioned central point of equilibrium will be the contrary—in terms of meanness and descended degree. So know this, and understand what I have mentioned concerning the affair of the shared constitution. Through it you will climb up to the recognition of the spiritual correspondence that pertains to the other way, which is similar to the essential, hidden correspondence.

Once you have recognized this with a witnessing or a realized understanding, you will see that, in entification, the origin of the station of some spirits is the Guarded Tablet; the origin of the entification of others is from the spirituality of the Throne, from the station of Isrāfīl; others are from the Footstool, from the station of Michael; others are from the Lote Tree, from the station of Gabriel; and so on in descent until the affair reaches the heaven of this world, which pertains to Ismā'īl, who is the chieftain of its angels—upon all of them be peace.

In this state you will recognize that the greatest condition making necessary what I mentioned concerning the disparity of the degrees of the spirits of people in this—after the precedent knowledge of God, His solicitude, His decree, and His will [*mashī'a*]³—is what was

mentioned concerning the constitutions and their nearness or farness from the central point of true equilibrium. The influence of solicitude and will pertains specifically to the beauty of the Lordly proportioning [*ḥusn al-taswiyat al-rabbāniyya*], which is followed by the inblowing [*naḥkh*] and entification of the spirit. So understand and bear in mind!

As for correspondence pertaining to level, this is not in one way but in numerous ways. One of these, in regard to some spirits, is their root quarry, which is from the origin of the entifications of the spirits to which reference was just made. For, the origin of the entification of the highest of them in degree—I mean, the spirits of the perfect—is the Mother of the Book. The origin of the entification of some, in unified knowledge and *wujūd*, is the essence of the Highest Pen, which is named “the First Intellect” and “the Universal Spirit.” The origin of the entification of others is the Guarded Tablet. Others pertain to the Throne and *Isrāfīl*; others to Michael, from the station and spirituality of the Footstool; and others to Gabriel, from the station of the Lote Tree of the Endpoint. So it continues until it reaches the last of the genera of these spiritual roots, which is specific to *Ismāʿīl*, the companion of the heaven of this world, who is called by the Peripatetic sages “the Agent Intellect,” as was mentioned.

Another way is in respect of their imaginal loci of manifestation, for, in the view of all the realizers, the spirits, despite the diversity of their levels, are never empty of loci of manifestation through which they become entified and manifest. The first level of the loci of manifestation of the spirits of people—apart from the perfect—is the world of nondelimited images and paradisial forms. Although these forms are configured from the various sorts of matter that are the subtle potencies [*laṭāʿif al-quwā*] of the natural configuration and its purified [*mutaṭahhira*] and cultivated [*muzakkāh*] substances [*jawāhir*] draped in the attributes of the spirits, nonetheless their attributes and states in paradise become manifest only in accordance with their spiritualities, their potencies, and the characteristics of their imaginal loci of manifestation.

The domiciles of the folk of paradise are the loci of manifestation of the levels of the spirits in respect of their ranks with the Real and in respect of their first, imaginal loci of manifestation. The Prophet called attention to this with subtle allusions, such as his words, “O ʿAlī, your palace in paradise is face-to-face with my palace;” and, in another version, “is opposite my palace.” He also said something like this concerning al-ʿAbbās. And he said concerning the generality of believers, “Each of you is better guided to his domicile in paradise than to his domicile in this world.” This is nothing but the ruling of correspondence.

As for the Market of Paradise, which comprises beautiful human forms that the folk of paradise choose to wear as they wish, this derives from one of the streams of the world of nondelimited images, which is the quarry and springhead of the loci of manifestation. It is the watercourse of the assistance that arrives from the world of images to the loci of manifestation

of the spirits of paradise's folk; it is the fountainhead of their foods, their drinks, their clothing, and everything that they enjoy in the earths of the levels of their deeds, beliefs, character traits, and attributes and in the degrees of their equilibriums in all of that.

The conferrals and gifts that the angels bring from the Real to the generality of the folk of paradise when they carry them to the Dune of Vision [*kathīb al-ru'ya*] to visit and sit with the Real are the loci of manifestation for the rulings of the names and attributes upon which the visitors depend in actual fact, even if they do not know it. These gifts strengthen their correspondence with the Real and bring to life the tenuities [*raqā'iq*]¹ of their ties to Him in respect of these names and attributes, which have the degree of Lordship over the visitors. God's saying to the angels about the folk of paradise at the end of the sessions of visitation, "Take them back to their palaces/incapacity,"² is an allusion to the rulings of the correspondences deriving from those conferrals and gifts and to the cessation of the rulings of the names and attributes in respect of which was affirmed the correspondence between them and the Real, making necessary their gatheredness [*jam'iyya*] and presence [*ḥuḍūr*] with Him. So, when the governing authority of names and attributes contrary to the rulings of the names and attributes that demand gathering becomes manifest, then the rulings that demand distinction become manifest, so distance and veiling come about. So understand!

As for the disparity of their levels while sitting [*mujālasa*] with the Real, this accords with the disparity of their levels within the self of the Real; and it accords with the soundness of their beliefs about God, or their sound knowledges and witnessings, and their preferring, in what went before, the side of the Real over everything else.

The length and shortness of the time of the sitting and the disparate eminence in what is addressed [*khiṭāb*] to them and what they understand from His address accords with what we mentioned; and it accords with their presence with what they were knowing of Him, or their calling Him to presence as demanded by their beliefs concerning Him and their correspondence with His side in respect of the station of the Dune of Vision and the self-disclosure specific to it. So know this!

As for the state of the perfect—may God give us benefit from them in what we have mentioned and other than it—it is different from that, for they have passed beyond the Presences of the names and attributes and the self-disclosures specific to them to the courtyard of the Essential Self-Disclosure. They are as the Prophet reported concerning them

¹ The reading follows the two manuscripts. The printed text has *daqā'iq* rather than *raqā'iq*. Ibn 'Arabī uses the term *raqīqa* to designate subtle ties among the levels of being. See Chittick, *Sufi Path of Knowledge*, p. 406, n. 6.

² The word for palace, *qaṣr*, also means incapacity, and its plural, *quṣūr*, can be read as a *maṣḍar* in the same meaning. Hence Qūnawī takes the hadith, which clearly refers to the palaces within which believers dwell in paradise, as an allusion (*ishāra*) to the individual limitations that bestow upon them specific identities.

with his words, “There is one sort of the folk of paradise from which the Lord does not curtain and veil Himself.” This is because they are not restricted to paradise or any of the other worlds and Presences. Thus, I have pointed out elsewhere that neither paradise nor anything other than paradise embraces perfect men.¹ For, although they become manifest in any loci of manifestation that they want, they are free from restriction, limitations, locations, and times, just like their Master. Rather, they are with Him wherever He is—where there is no wherever and no where. Necessarily, there is no distance, no veil, no transferal for visiting, and no beginning due to the ruling of one moment among others or of the names and attributes. So understand, strive, and hope to join with them and to share with them in some of their high levels, for God it is who is the patron of beautiful-doing.

As for the correspondences fixed among people in respect of the isthmus levels [*marātib barzakhiyya*], a sample of them, calling attention to their details for those to whom they are not unveiled and witnessed, is mentioned by the Prophet in the hadith of the Night Journey [*isrāʾ*] and his vision of Adam in the heaven of this world. On his right hand were the multitudes of his felicitous progeny, and on his left hand the multitudes of his wretched progeny. When he gazed to the right he would laugh, and when he gazed to the left he would weep.

This is an allusion to the levels of all the wretched and the felicitous. The folk of wretchedness are those for whom the gates of heaven do not open at death, and they have diverse levels in their wretchedness. The Prophet reported about the spirits of some of the wretched that they are gathered together in Barahūt and al-Khābiyatayn.² So the origin of the levels of the wretched are from the underside of the heaven of this world, within which is Adam, and the lowest of them is what the Prophet mentioned.

The levels of the generality of the felicitous are in the isthmus of the heaven of this world in disparate degrees that are comprehended by one degree. The levels of the elect among the felicitous are what he alludes to in the hadith of the Night Journey after mentioning Adam, namely that Jesus is in the second [heaven], Joseph in the third, Idris in the fourth, Aaron in the fifth, Moses in the sixth, and Abraham in the seventh—upon them all be peace. Such is the situation of those who share with these prophets and those who inherit from them completely—they have disparate degrees in these heavens.

This report from the Messenger is in terms of what he witnessed in one of his Night Journeys, for it has been affirmed that the Prophet had thirty-four ascents [*miʿrāj*]. They have

¹ See Qūnawī, *Kitāb al-fukūk*, p. 249.

² Barahūt is often mentioned in Shiʿite hadiths and is typically said to be a wadi in Hadramawt into which will be thrown the spirits of the unbelievers. I am guessing at the reading of the second word on the basis of the almost identical orthography in the two manuscripts. The Āshtiyānī edition has Ḥillatayn (?). I could not trace either word.

been recounted and collected, and their transmissions have been affirmed, by Abū Nu‘aym al-Iṣfahānī.

How can this state, however, be restricted to these seven prophets and exclude others? It is clear that the messengers and prophets are many, and among them are those that are perfect according to God’s knowledge-giving, like David, concerning whose vicegerency there is a clear text; and others of the great prophets and envoys. So how should their isthmus levels be entified after death, given that there are only the higher world and the lower world? The low world is the locus of the entifications of the levels of the wretched in their diverse classes. Hence it is established that the entifications of the levels of the prophets, the envoys, the perfect among their inheritors, and the elect among the felicitous after death and before the Mustering will be in the heavenly presences; and, the Prophet mentioned what he did because of what was pointed out before, so it is like a sample of what was not mentioned. So understand!

The Prophet had this specific vision pertaining to these seven [prophets] in that state because of a correspondence in attributes, acts, or states, nothing else, like the situation with John, given that sometimes he is with Jesus and sometimes with Aaron. This is only because of something that demands his sharing with both. So ponder! You will be rightly guided, God willing.

[19] An Eminent Text

It is among the greatest of the texts.¹

Know that the Real is Sheer *Wujūd* without any diversity within Him. He is one with a true oneness that is not intellected as the contrary of manyness; its realization in itself and its conception in sound, realized knowledge does not depend upon conceiving of an opposite. On the contrary, it is fixed in itself; it affirms and is not affirmed [by any “others”]. We say “oneness” to assert incomparability, to make understood, {and to add emphasis},² not to denote the notion of oneness as it is conceptualized by the minds of the veiled.

Now that you have recognized this, we say: From the standpoint of His mentioned oneness and His disengagement [*tajarrud*] from loci of manifestation, from the descriptions ascribed to Him in respect of these loci, and from His manifestation within them, He is not perceived, encompassed, known, depicted, or described.

Whenever something is perceived in the entities and whenever any engendered thing is witnessed, in whatever way man may perceive it and in whatever Presence witnessing occurs—except the perception connected to the disengaged meanings and the realities in their

¹ This text is also found in *Miftāḥ al-ghayb*, pp. 19-26.

² Not found in the two manuscripts.

unseen Presence by way of unveiling (which is why I said “in the entities,” that is, what is perceived in any locus of manifestation whatsoever)—that perceived thing is colors [*alwān*], lusters [*aḍwā*], and surfaces [*suṭūh*], diverse in quality and disparate in quantity. Or, it is their images, which become manifest in the world of images [*‘ālam al-mithāl*] conjoined [*muttaṣil*] with man’s configuration or disjoined [*munfaṣil*] from him in a certain respect,¹ just as they are in the external realm [*al-khārij*] or just as their individuals are in the external realm; the manyness of all is sensory [*maḥsūs*], and the unity within it is intellible [*ma‘qūl*] or conjectured [*maḥdūs*].

All of this is the rulings of *Wujūd*; or, you can say that it is the forms of the relations of Its knowledge and Its requisite attributes in respect of Its linkage [*iqtirān*] with all existent entities because of the mystery of Its manifestation within them, through them, for them, and according to them—however you wish to put it. It is not *Wujūd*, for *Wujūd* is one, and It is not perceived by anything in the respect that It differs from it, as was mentioned. For the One qua One is not perceived by the many qua many, and vice versa. Nor is this perception correct for man inasmuch as he is one with a true oneness, like the oneness of *Wujūd*.² Rather, it is correct for him only inasmuch as he is a reality described by *wujūd*, life, the inherence [*qiyām*] of knowledge within him, the fixedness of correspondence between him and what he wishes to perceive, and the removal of the obstacles preventing perception. Hence he perceives what he perceives only in respect of his manyness, not in respect of his unity [*aḥadiyya*]. So, in respect of himself, he cannot perceive that which has no manyness whatsoever, because of what was mentioned.

This point has precious mysteries that I have mentioned in greater detail in my book called *Lifting the Curtain of Jealousy from the Mystery of Bewilderment*.³ Also, in the midst of this book will come additional clarification of what we have mentioned and described, God willing.

Now let us return to the completion of what we were busy with. We say: *Wujūd* in the case of the Real is identical with His Essence, but for everything else, it is something added to its reality.

The reality of each existent consists of the relation of its beginningless entification in its Lord’s knowledge. In the terminology of the realizers among the Folk of God, it is named “a fixed entity” [*‘ayn thābita*]; and, in the terminology of others, “a quiddity” [*māhiyya*], “the

¹ On these two sorts of imagination, conjoined and disjoined, or contiguous and discontinuous, see Chittick, *Sufi Path of Knowledge*, p. 117.

² Notice that the meaning of the phrase *waḥdat al-wujūd* here, one of its earliest instances, does not coincide with any of its later technical senses.

³ This work is not known to have survived.

nonexistent known thing” [*al-ma‘lūm al-ma‘dūm*], “the fixed thing [*al-shay’ al-thābit*],” and the like.

In respect of the oneness of His *Wujūd*, nothing emerges from the Real except one, because it is absurd for the One, inasmuch as He is one, to make manifest and give existence to what is more than one. However, in our view that “one” is the general *wujūd* [*al-wujūd al-‘āmm*] effused [*al-mufāḍ*] upon the entities of the engendered things [*al-mukawwanāt*], both those that have come into *wujūd* and those that have not yet come into *wujūd* but of whose *wujūd* the Real has precedent knowledge. This *wujūd* is shared by the Supreme Pen, which is the first existent, also named “the First Intellect,” and by the other existents. It is not as the folk of theory among the philosophers mention, for, in the view of the realizers, there is nothing but the Real, and the cosmos is nothing in addition to the realities known in the first place by God—as we pointed out before—and qualified [*muttaṣif*] in the second place by *wujūd*.

It would be absurd for the realities—in the respect that they are known and their forms are entified in the Essential, beginningless knowledge of the Real—to be “made” [*maj‘ūl*], because of the absurdity of the inherence of newly arrived things in the Real’s Essence; the absurdity of the Real being a container for or contained by something else; and because of other corrupt ideas not hidden from the clear seer. Hence, in the view of the realizers among the folk of unveiling and also of theory, He is not described by making [*ja‘l*], for the “made” is the existent. When something has no *wujūd*, it is not made. Were it so, the eternal knowledge would exert an influence upon the beginningless entification of the things known within itself, even though they are not outside their knower, for they are nonexistent in themselves and have no fixity save in the self of their knower.

So, if it were to be said that they are made, this would require either that they are coextensive [*musāwīq*] with their Knower in *wujūd*, or that their Knower is a locus of receiving influences from Himself in Himself and also a container for other than Himself, as was mentioned. But all this is false, because it detracts from His utter oneness and demands that the effused *wujūd* fall upon things that are existent rather than nonexistent. But all that is absurd, for it would be to gain what is already there [*taḥṣīl al-ḥāṣil*], and in other ways as well, but there is no need to draw this out by mentioning them. So understand! Thus it is affirmed that, in respect of what we mentioned, [the realities] are not made. There are not two *wujūds*, as was mentioned, but rather one *wujūd* shared by all of them, acquired [*mustafād*] from the Real.

Now, this one *wujūd* that falls [*‘āriḍ*] upon the created contingent things is no different in reality from the Real, Nonmanifest *Wujūd* that is disengaged from the entities and loci of manifestation, except through relations and standpoints, such as manifestation, entification,

the plurality that comes through linkage, the reception of the ruling of sharing, and similar descriptions that join up with It by means of the connection to the loci of manifestation.

The springhead of *Wujūd*'s loci of manifestation from the standpoint of Its linkage, the Presence of Its self-disclosure, and the domicile of Its entification and Its coming down [*tadallī*] is the Cloud [*‘amā’*] mentioned by the Prophet.¹ It is the station of the Lordly descent [*tanazzul*] and the arising place [*munba‘ath*] of the Essential, All-Merciful munificence [*jūd*] from the unseen He-ness [*huwiyya*] and the exalted Ipseity [*inniyya*]. In this Cloud becomes entified the level of the First, Unseen, Covenantal² Marriage [*nikāḥ*], which opens up the Presences of the divine names through Essential, beginningless attentivenesses. We shall break the seal of the key of its keys shortly, God willing.³

So, if you have understood, there are two standpoints on *wujūd*. One is inasmuch as It is *Wujūd* alone, and that is the Real. In this respect, as was pointed out, within Him there is no manyness, composition [*tarkīb*], attribute, depiction [*na‘t*], name, impression, relation, or ruling—rather, mere *Wujūd*. And, our saying “*Wujūd*” is to make understood; this is not a true name for Him. Rather, His name is identical with His attribute, and His attribute is identical with His Essence. His perfection is the same as His Essential *Wujūd*, fixed for Him by Himself, not by someone else. His life and His power are identical with His knowledge. His beginningless knowledge of the things is identical with His knowledge of Himself, in the sense that He knows Himself through Himself and knows everything through His very knowledge of Himself, {for everything comes from His tasks in His Essence, so when He knows Himself through all His tasks, He has known everything through His very knowledge of Himself}.⁴

In Him the diverse things are unified, and from Him the many things arise, without their containing [*ḥawāya*] Him or His containing them; they do not make Him appear from a prior nonmanifestation, nor does He set them apart from Himself so as to make them appear. He has a oneness that is the source of every manyness, and a simplicity [*basāṭa*] that is identical with every composition at last or at first. Whatever is contradictory [*tanāquḍ*] for something else is fixed for Him in the most perfect way.

¹ On the Cloud in Ibn ‘Arabī, see Chittick, *Sufi Path of Knowledge*, pp. 125-27.

² Reading *illī*, as in the two mss. (For Ibn ‘Arabī’s use of this word, see Chittick, *Self-Disclosure*, pp. 233, 235).

Despite the fact that four of the manuscripts used in the preparation of the printed text of *Miftāḥ al-ghayb* (p. 11, n. 2) give *illī* in this passage (an unusual word and therefore less likely to be a copyist error), Khwājawī’s edition, like the printed text of *Nuṣūṣ*, has *azalī*, “beginningless.”

³ The “breaking of the seal” is a reference to extensive later discussions of divine and cosmic marriage in *Miftāḥ al-ghayb*, from which this text is taken, not to the rest of this passage. On marriage in this school of thought, see Sachiko Murata, *The Tao of Islam* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1992), pp. 147-51

⁴ Not found in the manuscripts or in *Miftāḥ al-ghayb*.

Whoever speaks of Him and not through Him, negating [*nafy*] from Him everything dubious and restricting Him within what he perceives, will be a silent mute, a perplexed ignoramus, until through Him he sees every opposite in its very opposite, or rather as identical with it, while he distinguishes between its reality and Him. [He will see that] His oneness is identical with His manyness, and His simplicity is the same as His composition. His manifestation is the same as His nonmanifestation, and His lastness identical with His firstness. He does not become restricted by what is understood from “oneness” or “*wujūd*,” nor is He apprehended by a witnesser or in something witnessed. It belongs to Him to be as He has said and to become manifest as He desires without restriction in nondelimitation or delimitation. He has the meaning that encompasses every letter and the perfection that fully embraces every description.

Whenever the beauty [*ḥusn*] of something is concealed from the veiled because of what is imagined to be a stain and defect within it, once its *leg is unveiled* [68:42] such that the correctness of its ascription to Him is perceived, the form of perfection will be found within it, and it will be seen as a platform [*minaṣṣa*] for the self-disclosure of majesty [*jalāl*] and beauty [*jamāl*].

All the names and attributes are many for Him in a oneness that is His very Entity. He is not incomparable with what is fixed for Him, nor is He veiled from what He brings into appearance so that it may be perfected. His veil, His exaltation [*‘izza*], His independence, and His holiness [*quds*] express His reality’s distinction from everything that is opposed to it, His lack of connection with anything, and His lack of need for anything in the fixedness and subsistence of His *wujūd*. Nothing has any realization through itself or anything else, only through Him. So pay heed!

In this respect intellects and thoughts do not perceive Him, directions and regions do not contain Him, and insight [*baṣīra*] and eyesight [*baṣar*] do not encompass the contemplation and recognition of Him. He is incomparable with formal and supraformal limitations; hallowed beyond the reception of every measurement connected with quantity or quality; transcendent beyond encompassment by conjecture, understanding, supposition, and knowledge; and veiled by the perfection of His exaltation from all His creatures, the perfect among them and the defective, those who presume that they are approaching, and the withdrawing.

All declarations of incomparability by intellects in respect of their thoughts and their insights are negatory rulings that do not convey recognition of His reality; despite this, they are less than what His majesty demands and His holiness and perfection rightfully deserve.

The fountainhead of the connection of His knowledge to the cosmos is from His very knowledge of Himself. This connection becomes manifest through the manifestation of the

relations of His knowledge, which are the things known by Him. He knows the infinite in respect of encompassment in His knowledge and the fact that from Him everything emerges, for He knows His Essence, the requisite of His Essence, and the requisite of the requisite—together and individually, undifferentiatedly and differentiatedly—and so on ad infinitum. When He entifies something, or He knows that something's level will be entified by a condition or a cause, He knows it with its condition, its cause, and its requisite—if He has precedent knowledge of it and its entification. Otherwise, He knows it through Himself and how He wills. Knowledge, however, does not come to Him newly, and no affair or ruling by which He would be restricted becomes entified for Him.

His perfection is through Himself. His *wujūd* is actual, not potential; necessary, not contingent. He is incomparable with known change or new arrival. Newly arrived things do not contain Him so as to make Him appear or to keep Him safe. He does not engender them because of needing something other than Himself, nor because the things are tied [*irtibāt*] to Him in respect of what becomes entified from Him. He is not tied to them in respect of their distinction from Him through their plurality. The *wujūd* they have for themselves depends [*tawaqquf*] upon Him, but He does not depend upon them.

He is independent of everything through His reality,¹ and everything is poor [*muftaqir*] toward Him in its *wujūd*. There is no relation between Him and the things save solicitude, as was mentioned. There is no veil but ignorance, obscurity, and imagination because of His utmost nearness and closeness and the excess of His exaltation and highness.

In reality His solicitude is the effusion of the light of His *wujūd* upon what is reflected in the mirror of His Entity—the relations that are known by Him—and prepared for the reception of the ruling of His existence-giving and being His locus of manifestation.

Glory be to Him! “*Nothing is as His likeness*” in the first respect, “*but He is the Hearing, the Seeing*” [42:11] in the second respect: When He is perceived or witnessed, when He addresses or is addressed, this is from behind the veil of His exaltation and the aforementioned level of Himself; [it takes place] through the relation of His being the Manifest and through the ruling of His self-disclosure in the domicile of His coming down [*tadallī*] in respect of the linkage of His complete *wujūd* to the contingent things and the shining of His light upon the entities of the existents. It is nothing other than this.

In this respect, when the entification of His *wujūd* is looked upon as delimited by the attributes requisite to all the entified contingent entities, which are in reality the relations of His knowledge, together and individually; [as delimited] by what follows upon these attributes, that is, the affairs named “tasks, characteristics, and accidents;” [as delimited] by the influences that follow upon the rulings of the name Aeon [*al-dahr*] called “moments” [*awqāt*];

¹ Not found in the two manuscripts but present in the text of *Miftāḥ al-ghayb*.

and [as delimited] by the levels and homesteads; then that entification and individuation [*tashakhkhus*] is named “creature” [*khalq*] and “other” [*siwā*]. You will recognize the secret of this shortly, God willing.

Then every description is ascribed to Him and He is named by every name. He becomes manifest in every impression, He receives every ruling, He becomes delimited in every station by every impression, and He is perceived by every means of awareness [*mash‘ar*], whether eyesight, hearing, intellect, understanding, or any other of the potencies [*quwā*] and perceptual means [*madārik*]. So remember, and know! This is because He pervades everything through His Essential Light, hallowed beyond partition [*tajazzi*], division [*inqisām*], and indwelling [*hulūl*] in spirits and bodies. So understand! But all of this when He loves and how He wills.

In every moment and state, He receives these two mentioned universal, opposite [*mutadādd*] rulings by His Essence, not by something added to It. He comprehends every two diverse things, whether absent or present, emerging or entering. If He wills, He becomes manifest in every form, and if He does not will, no form is ascribed to Him. His entification and individuation in forms and His being qualified by their attributes do not detract from the perfection of His *wujūd*, His exaltation, and His holiness. His becoming manifest, His making manifest, His entification, His delimitation¹ in and through the things and their rulings as they are, do not preclude His elevation, His nondelimitation by any limitations, and His independence in His Essence from everything that is described by *wujūd*. Rather, through the self-disclosure of His *wujūd* He comprehends the realities that are similar to each other but different, so they combine, and those that are averse to each other and incompatible, so they stay apart.²

Through the self-disclosure of His *wujūd* hidden things become manifest and blessings descend from the Unseen to the Visible in respect of His names Expander [*bāsīt*] and Originator [*mubdi*]. By the lifting of the ruling of His coming down, the existents become hidden and cease to exist, through the names Contracter [*qābiḍ*] and Returner [*mu‘īd*]. When He is veiled by His exaltation, He is “the Forgiver;” and when He loves to be known, He comes down and becomes manifest in whatever He wills just as He wills, so He is “the Loving” [*al-wadūd*]. As Lover [*muḥibb*] He makes appear through love [*maḥabba*], and it makes Him appear; and through it as Lover and Beloved He makes return. Everything is in His grasp and subjugated

¹ In *Miftāḥ al-ghayb*, the text reads, “the making manifest of His entification and delimitation,” which eliminates a certain awkwardness in what we have it here.

² Qūnawī probably has in mind the hadith, “Spirits are assembled troops. Those acquainted with one another become familiar, and those not acquainted keep apart.”

under the strength of His hold because of the strength of His act and the weakness of what is acted upon.

The locus of manifestation for His power, the instrument of His wisdom in His acting by His wont [*sunna*], the locus of manifestation for the mystery of contraction and expansion, making appear and making hidden, the Unseen and the Visible, and unveiling along with the formal, relative veil through which He acts as mentioned—not in an unqualified sense—is His splendid Throne. This is why He says, making apparent the mystery of this affair *for him who has a heart or gives ear while he is a witness* [50:37], “*Surely thy Lord’s hold is severe. Surely it is He who originates and makes return. He is the Forgiver, the Loving, the Possessor of the Splendid Throne, Doer of what He desires*” [85:12-16] in the two levels of nondelimitation and delimitation. His words, “*Doer of what He desires*,” are the answer to a supposed question, known to appear from a veiled protester.

[20] An Eminent Text

Which is the Last of the Texts

The greatest of obfuscations and veils is the pluralities that occur in the One *Wujūd* by reason of the influences of the fixed entities upon It. It is imagined that the entities have become manifest in *wujūd* and through *wujūd*, but only their influences have become manifest in *wujūd*. They have not become manifest, nor will they ever become manifest, because by essence they do not demand manifestation.

Whenever a realizer reports something other than this, or he ascribes to them *wujūd* and manifestation, that report is in the tongue of one of the levels and the relative tastings. In other words, its correctness is affirmed relative to a designated station, or certain specific stations, below the station of perfection. As for the text whose ruling will never be abrogated, that is what we have mentioned. So also is everything I mentioned in this book, for it is the explicit truth of the actual situation. Anything else may be correct in an unqualified way, like what we just mentioned, or correct in relation and connection to a certain station, as was pointed out.

When what I have mentioned in this text becomes clear to you, you will know that manifestation belongs to *wujūd*, but on condition of plurality along with the influences of the entities within it. Nonmanifestation is an essential attribute of the entities, and also of *wujūd* in respect of the intellection of Its oneness. The affair circles between manifestation and nonmanifestation through domination and being dominated over. In other words, what is diminished [*naqṣ*] from the manifest is incorporated [*indirāj*] into the manifest, and vice versa. The relations and ascriptions are the forms of the states and rulings that are configured among

the levels. Some manifest others, and some too hide others, according to the mentioned predominance and being predominated over. So understand!

Completed is *The Texts: The Keys to the Fuṣūṣ*.