Translation of al Hamdani's

Tractate on Space and Time

Ghayat al Imkan fi Dirayat al Makan

with Iqbal's
'A Plea for Deeper Study of the Muslim Scientists'
as Introduction

Translation by

A. H. KAMALI

Iqbal Academy Pakistan
Karachi

Translation of al Hamdani's

Tractate on Space and Time

Ghayat al Imkan fi Dirayat al Makan

with Iqbal's
'A Plea for Deeper Study of the Muslim Scientists'
as Introduction

Translation by

A. H. KAMALI

Iqbal Academy Pakistan
Karachi

First Edition	500
Price	Rs. 7/00
Internationl Price	$ 1.50
Year of Publication	1971

Printed at
AL-HAMD Printing Industries,
60/Z-3, Block 6, P.E.C.H.S., Karachi-29.

CONTENTS

MUHAMMAD IQBAL'S

A Plea for Deeper Study of the Muslim Scientists

(Iqbal delivered a Presidential Address at the Arabic and Persian section of the Oriental Conference, Lahore session, 1928. It is reproduced below. In it, Iqbal introduced modern scholars to the themes and contents of this tractate 'Ghāyat al Imkān fi Darāyat al Makan'.)

Sometime ago various questions arose in my mind regarding the culture of Islam as embodying the world feeling of a specific group of mankind. Is modern Scienc purely Western in origin ? Why did the Muslims devote themselves to architecture as a mode of self-expression; and why did they comparatively ignore music and painting ? What light, if any, do their mathematics and their decorative art throw on their intellectual and emotional attitude towards the concepts of space and time ? Are there any psychological conditions which determined the rise and final acceptance, as an orthodox religious dogma, of a boldly conceived Atomic theory wholly unlike the Greek theory ? What is the psychological meaning of MI'RAJ in the cultural history of Islam ? Professor Macdonald has recently tried to prove the existence of Buddhistic influence on the rise and growth of Atomism in Islam. But the cultural problem which I have ventured to raise is far more important than the purely historical question answered by Professor Macdonald. Similarly Professor Bevan has given us valuable historical discussion of the story of the MIRAJ. To my mind, however, what is, culturally speaking more important is the intense appeal that the story has always made to the average Muslim, and the manner in which Muslim thought and imagination have worked on it. It must be something more than a mere religious dogma, for it appealed to the great mind of Dante, and through Muhyiuddin Ibn-l-Arabi furnished a model for the sublimest part of the Divine Comedy which symbolises the culture of mediaeval Europe. The historian may rest satisfied with the conclusion that the Muslim belief in the Prophet's Ascension finds no justification in the Quran ; yet the psychologist

who aims at a deeper view of Islamic culture cannot ignore the fact that the outlook given by the Quran to its followers does demand the story as a formative element in the world-picture of Islam. The truth is that it is absolutely necessary to adjust their answers into a systematic whole of thought and emotion. Without this it is impossible to discover the ruling concepts of a given culture, and to appreciate the spirit that premeates it. However, a comprehensive view of the culture of Islam, as an expression of the spiritual life of its followers, is easy of achievement.

The Culture of Islam is the youngest of all Asiatic Cultures. For us moderns it is far more easy to grasp the spirit of this culture than to imagine the world-picture of those ancient cultures whose intellectual and emotional attitude it is extremely difficult to express in a modern language. The difficulty of the historian of Muslim culture is mainly due to the almost total lack of Arabic scholars trained in special sciences. European scholars have done good work in the domain of Muslim history, philology, religion and literature. Muslim philosophy too has had share of their attention ; but I am afraid the work done in philosophy is, on the whole of a superficial kind, and often betrays ignorance of both Muslim and European thought. It is in Art as well as in the concepts of special sciences and Philosophy that the true spirit of culture is revealed. But, for the reason mentioned above, the student of Muslim culture is yet very far from understanding the spirit of that calture. Briffault, in his *Making of Humanity* a book which every student of the history of culture ought to read, tells us that "neither Roger Bacon nor his later namesake has any title to be credited with having introduced the experimental method." And further that "The experimental method of the Arabs was by Bacon's time widespread and eagerly cultivated throughout Europe." Now, I have reasons to believe that the origin of Descartes' Method and Bacon's *Novum Organum* goes back to Muslim critics of Greek logic, e.g., Ibn Taimiyya, Ghazzali, Razi and Shahabuddin Maqtul. But it is obvious that the existing material which would prove this thesis can be handled only by those Arabic scholars who have made a special study of Greek, Muslim and European logic.

Again, our ignorance of the concepts of Muslim science sometimes leads to erroneous views of modern culture. An instance of this I find in Spengler's extremely learned work, Untergang des Abendlandes,

in which he has developed a new theory of the birth and growth of cultures while discussing the concept of number in the Classical, Arabian and Modern cultures, and contrasting the Greek notion of magnitude with the Arabian indeterminateness of number, he says :

"Number as pure magnitude inherent in the material presentness of things is paralleled by number as pure relation, and if we may characterize the Classical World, the cosmos, as being based on a deep need of visible limits and composed accordingly as a sum of material things, so we may say that our world-picture is an actualising of an infinite space in which things visible appear very nearly as realities of a lower order, limited in the presence of the limitable. The symbol of the West is an idea of which no other culture gives even a hint, the idea of function. The function is anything rather than an expansion of, it is complete emancipation from, any pre-existent idea of number. With the function, not only the Euclidean Geometry but also the Archimedean arithmetic ceased to have any value for the nearly significant mathematics of Western Europe."

The last three sentences in this passage are in fact the foundation-stone on which the superstructure of Spengler's theory largely rests. Unfortunately, the thesis that no other culture gives even a hint of the idea of function is incorrect. I had a vague recollection of the idea of function in Al-Beruni, and not being a mathematician, I sought the help of Dr. Zia-ud-Din of Aligarh who very kindly gave me an English translation of Al-Beruni's passage, and wrote to me an interesting letter from which I quote the following :

"Al-Beruni in his book, *Qanun-i-Masudi* used Newton's formula of Interpolation for valuing the various intermediary angles of Trignometry functions from his tables which were calculated for every increase of fifteen minutes. He gave Geometrical proof of Interpolation formula. In the end he wrote a paragraph saying that this proof can be applied to any function whatsoever whether it may be increasing or diminishing with the increase of arguments. He did not use the word function, but he expressed the idea of function in generalising the formula of Interpolation from Trignometrical function to any function whatsoever. I may add here that I drew the attention of Prof. Schwartzchild—Professor of Astronomy in the Gottingen University—to this passage and he was so much surprised that he took Prof. Andrews with him to the

library, and got the whole passage translated three times before he began to believe it."

It is not possible for me here to discuss Spengler's theory, and to show how materially his oversight affects his view of history. Suffice it to say that a genetic view of the cultures associated with the two great Semitic religions reveals their spiritual relationship which tends to falsify Spengler's thesis that cultures, as organic structure, are completely alien to one another. But this brief reference to one of the most important concepts of modern mathematics reminds me of غائت الامکان فی درائت المکان ('The extent of possibility in the science of space')of Iraqi.During my correspondence with Maulvi Syed Anwar Shah, one of the most learned traditionists in the Muslim world of today regarding the meaning of the word "Dahr" (Time) occuring in the well-known tradition لا تسبوا الدهر ان الدهر هو الله "Deal not in invective against Time (with Time's vicissitudes), Lo: Time is Allah." The Maulvi Sahib referred to this manuscript; and later, at my request, very kindly sent me a copy of it. I consider it necessary to give you an account of the contents of this valuable document, partly because it will furnish additional reason for dissatisfaction with Spengler's theory, but mainly because I mean thereby to impress upon you the need of Oriental research in concepts of special sciences as developed in the world of Islam. Moreover, it is likely that this small manuscript of great value may lead to the opening up of a fresh field of inquiry about the origins of our concepts of space and time, the importanee of which has only recently been realised by modern Physics.

There is, however, some doubt about the authorship of the booklet. Haji Khalifah attributes it to one Sh. Mahmud whom I have not been able to trace. About the middle of the text the following sentence occurs :—

این مخدره غیبی ... چون بمشاطگئی بیان این بندهٔ ضعیف بآخر زمانیان جلوه کند امید وارم که تشنگان جرعه حقیقت در ایام اخرالزمان از دست این ساقی عراقی جمال زلال شیرین مشاهده نمایند ـ

Personally I am inclined to think that in this manuscript we are in a more intimate touch with the Persian Sufi Iraqi whose freedom of though and action brought on him the odium of the orthodox both

in Egypt and India. However the reason why he was led to reduce his thoughts to writing is thus explained :—

و بایستے که این اسرار عزیز در صمیم جان و سریدائے دل مکنون و مخزون داشتی - نه از راه بخل بل از راه عزت و نفاست و لیکن عذر در جلوه کردن این مخدره عذرا آنست که وقتے در اثنائے سخن و گرمی دل بر زبان لفظ مکان رفت - و چون لفظ مکان در اخبار آمده است انکار نباید کرد و لیکن مکان را بباید شناخت که عبارت از چیست تا تشبیه از راه خیزد پس جماعتے از کور دلان شور بخت چون لفظ مکان شنیدند از سر تعصب و حسد و عناد و جحود این کلم را دست آویز ساختند و بر نجانیدن ماميان بستند - و رقم تشبیه برما کشیدند و تکفیر ما فتوائے نوشتند پس ناچار از بهر برات ساخت دل خود از غبار تشبیه ایں مخدره عذرا ازابدان عالمیان عالم طبیعت عرض بایست کردن و ایں یوسف با جمال بان کوران جلوه بایستے داد تارفع ظن ایشان بوده باشد - اگرچه معلوم بود که درد تعصب و حسد درمیان نمی پذیرد چنانچه باران که ماده حیات است مردار راجز تباهی نمی افزاید - ان الذین حقت علیهم کلمته ربک لا یومنون ولو جاء تهم کل آیه حتیٰ یدو العذاب الالیم -

Assuming, then, that the writer is Fakhruddin Iraqi, it is significant to note that he was a contemporary of Nasir-ud-Din Tusi. Tusi's work on Euclid was printed in Rome in 1594, and Jhon Wallis introduced it to the University of Oxford about the middle of the 17th century. It is Tusi's effort to improve the parallel postulate of Euclid that is believed to have furnished a basis in Europe for the problem of space which eventually led to the theories of Gauss and Reimann. Iraqi, however, was not a mathematician, though his view of space and time appears to me to be several centuries ahead of Tusi. This necessitates a very careful inquiry into the progress of mathematical thought in Islam with a view to discover whether Iraqi's conclusions were ever reached through a purely mathematical channel.

I will now proceed to summarise the substance of Iraqi's discussion of Time and Space mainly in his own words. The secret of Time and Space is the greatest of secrets. To know it is to know the secret of the Being and attributes of God. The existence of some kind of Space in relation to God is clear from the following verses of the Quran :—

"Dost thou not see that God knoweth all that is in the Heavens and all that is in the Earth? Three persons speak not privately together, but He is their fourth; nor five, but he is their sixth; nor fewer nor more, but wherever they be He is with them". (58 : 8)

"Ye shall not be employed in affairs, nor shall ye read a text out of the Quran, nor shall ye work any work, but We will be witness, over you when yon are engaged therein; and the weight of an atom on Earth or in Heaven escapeth not thy Lord; nor is there weight that is less than this or greater but it is in the Perspicuous Book." (10 : 62)

"We created man: and we know what his soul whispereth to him, and we are closer to him than his neck-vein." (50 : 5)

But we must not forget that the words proximity, contact and mutual separation, which apply to material bodies, do not apply to God. Divine life is in touch with the whole Universe on the analogy of the soul's contact with the body, The soul is neither inside nor outside the body; neither proximate to nor separate from it. Yet its contact with every atom of the body is real, and it is impossible to conceive this contact except by positing some kind of space which befits the subtleness of the soul. The existence of space in relation to the life of God, therefore, cannot be denied; only we should carefully define the kind of space which may be predicated of the Absoluteness of God. Now there are three kinds of space—the space of material bodies, the space of immaterial beings, and the space of God. The space of material bodies is further divided into three kinds. First, the space of gross bodies of which we predicate roominess. In this space movement takes time, bodies occupy their respective places and resist displacement. Secondly, the space of subtle bodies e.g. air and sound. In this space two bodies resist each other and their movement is measurable in terms of time which, however, appears to be different to the time of gross bodies. The air in a tube must be displaced before other air can enter into it; and the time of sound-waves is practically nothing compared to the time of gross bodies. Thirdly, we have the space of light. The light of the Sun instantly reaches the farthest limits of the Earth. Thus in the velocity of light and sound, time is reduced almost to zero. It is, therefore, clear that the space

of light is different to the space of air and sound. There is, however, a more effective argument than this. The light of a candle spreads in all directions in a room without displacing the air in a room ; and this shows that the space of light is more subtle than the space of air which has no entry into the space of light. In view of the close proximity of these spaces, however, it is not possible to distinguish the one from the other except by purely intellectual analysis and spiritual experience. Again, in the hot water the two opposites-fire and water which appear to interpenetrate each other cannot, in view of their respective nature, exist in the same space. The fact cannot be explained except on the supposition that the spaces of the two substances, though closely proximate to each other are nevertheless distinct. But while the element of distance is not entirely absent there is no possibility of mutual resistance in the space of light. The light of candle reaches up to a certain point only and the lights of a hundred candles intermingle in the same room without displacing one another.

Having thus described the spaces of physical bodies, possessing various degrees of subtleness, Iraqi proceeds briefly to describe the main varieties of space operated upon by the various classes of immaterial beings, e.g., angels. The element of distance is not entirely absent from these spaces ; for immaterial beings, while they can easily pass through stone walls, cannot altogether dispense with motion which, according to Iraqi, is evidence of imperfection in spirituality. The highest point in the scale of spatial freedom is reached by the human soul which, in its unique essence, is neither at rest nor in motion, thus passing the Divine space which is absolutely free from all dimensions, and constitutes the meeting point of all infinities.

In a similar manner Iraqi deals with time. There are infinite varieties of time relative to the varying grades of being intervening between materiality and pure spirituality. The Time of gross bodies which arises from the revolutions of the heavens is divisible into past, present, and future ; and its nature is such that as long as one day does not pass away, the succeeding day does not come. The time of immaterial beings is also serial in character ; but its passage is such that whole year in the time of gross bodies is not more than a day in the time of immaterial beings. Rising higher and higher in the scale of immaterial beings we reach the notion of Divine Time which is absolutely free from the quality of 'Passage' and consequently does not

admit of divisibility, sequence and change. It is above eternity; it has neither beginning nor end. The 'eye' of God sees all the visible act of perception. The priority of God is not due to the priority of time, on the other hand the priority of time is due to God's priority. Thus Divine Time is what the Quran describes as the "Mother of Books' in which the Whole of History freed from the net of causal sequence is gathered up in a single super-eternal 'now'.

From this summary of Iraqi's view, you will see how a cultured Muslim Sufi intellectually interpreted his spiritual experience of time and space in an age which had no idea of the theories and concepts of modern mathematics and Physics. In fact his theory of a plural space may be taken as a primitive stage in the modern hyper-space movement which originated in Nasir-ud-Din Tusi's efforts to improve the parallel postulate of Euclid. In modern times it was Kant who first definitely suggested the idea of different spaces as you will see from the following passage which I quote from his Prolegomena :—

"That complete space (which is itself no longer the boundary of another space) has three dimensions ; and that space in general cannot have more, is based on the proposition that not more than three lines can intersect at right angles in one point... That we can require a line to be drawn to infinity, a series of changes to be continued (for example, spaces passed through by motion) in indefinitum, presupposes a representation of space and time which can only attach to intuition."

But Kant was not a mathematician. It was left for professional mathematicians of the 18th and the 19th centuries finally to reach the concept of space as a dynamic appearance, and as such generable and finite. Irqai's mind seems to be vaguely struggling with the concept of space as an infinite continuum ; yet he was unable to see the full implications of his thought, partly because he was not a mathematician and partly because of his natural prejudice in favour of the traditional Aristotelian idea of a fixed Universe. If he had been able to raise the question whether dimensionality is a property of the world or a property of our knowledge of the world, he would have felt the necessity of searching examination of his own consciousness, and this would have opened up to him a line of thought much more in keeping with his

sufistic standpoint. Again the interpenetration of the super-spatial 'here' and the super-eternal 'now' in the Ultimate Reality suggests the modern notion of space-time which Professor Alexander, in his lectures on 'Space, Time and Deity', regards as the matrix of all things. A keener insight into the nature of time would have led Iraqi to see that time is the more fundamental of the two ; and that it is not a mere metaphor to say, as Prof. Alexander does say, that time is the mind of space. Iraqi conceives God's relation to the Universe on the analogy of the relation of the human soul to the body ; but, instead of philosophically reaching this position through a criticism of the spatial and temporal aspects of experience, he simply postulates it on the basis of his spiritual experience. It is not sufficient merely to reduce space and time to a vanishing point instant. The philosophical path that leads to God as the Omni-psyche of the universe, lies through the discovery of Living Thought as the ultimate principle of space-time. Iraqi's mind, no doubt moved in the right direction ; but his Aristotelian prejudice coupled with a lack of Psychological analysis blocked his progress. With this view that Divine Time is inadequate analysis of conscious experience — it was not possible for him to discover the relation between Divine Time and serial time, and to reach, through this discovery, the essentially Islamic idea of continuous creation which means a growing universe.

Note :—The above address was published in the *Islamic Culture*, April 1929 issue, Hyderabad. Then, after a long time, it was again published by S. A. Vahid in his valuable compilation of Iqbal's works, under the title of '*Thoughts and Reflections of Iqbal*', Lahore, 1964. Its full translation in Urdu was rendered by Mr.B. A. Dar and included in his '*Anwar-i-Iqbal*', Karachi, 1966.

OBSERVATIONS

ON

Iqbal's Comments on the Tractate

The manuscript of the tractate, *Ghāyat al Imkān fi Dirāyat al Makān,* which Iqbal used for his Address at the Oriental Conference and for some parts of his lectures, entitled as *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam,* is untraceable. He had secured it through the courtesy of Anwar Shah, the noted Muhaddith of Indo-Pak sub-Continent during his time. Anwar Shah died in 1932, and after his death, every effort to trace it out failed. But, it so happened that an Iranian Scholar Rahim Ferminish published it from Tehran in 1338 Shamsi/1959 A.D. in his *Āthār wa Aḥwāl i 'Ain al Kaḍā* and sometime after it, a copy of it was found in the Rāmpūr Library. It was all a chance. Before the whole story is narrated, it seems desirable to note that Iqbal attributed its authorship to Fakhruddin Irāqi (d. 688 A.H.) on the basis of the following lines occuring in the Anwar Shah manuscript :

این مخدره غیبی . . . چون بمشاطگئی بیان این بندهٔ ضعیف باخر زمائیان
جلوه کند امید وارم که تشنگان جرعه حقیقت در ایام اخرالزمان از دست این
ساقی عراقی جمال زلال شیرین مشاهده نمایند -

We have in our use the published Tehran text and photo copies of the Rampur text as well. The above lines occur in them with variations as follows :

1. Ṭehrān Manuscript :

خداوند این مخدره غیبی که . . . بر دست مشاطهٔ هدایت و توفیق
طالبان آخرالزمان جلوه کند و تشنگان آخرالزمان را که در بیدائی حیرت سر
گر دانند بر دست ساقی لطف شربتی شافی فرست -

2. Rāmpūr Manuscript :

خداوند این مخدره غیبی را که . . . بمشاطئی بیان این بنده ضعیف بر
آخرزمائیان جلوه گرکن و تشنگان باده طلب را بر دست ساقی ازل زلال جمال
او شربتی فرست -

Thus, the Rampur and Tehran copies of the tractate do not contain *Saqi Iraqi*. The case of attributing its authorship to the poet Iraqi, then, obviously becomes very weak. By granting that the manuscript with Iqbal contained the correct transmission from al Hamdani, Hafeez Hoshiarpuri has drawn very valuable conclusions in this connection on the basis of purely literary criticism in a communication to me, which I must reproduce here: "Incidently the phrase ' ساقی عراقی جمال ' occuring in al Hamdani's manuscript was misunderstood by Iqbal. He thought that Iraqi was a proper name and the phrase referred to the well-known poet as the author of the manuscript. The fact is that the word Saqi (cup-bearer) precedes the adjective ' عراقی جمال ' The phrase rendered into simple English would thus mean 'the cup-bearer of Iraqian beauty'. According to the Persian literary tradition Iraq was known for its beauties".

It seems that the Iranian academic transmission continuously preserved the tradition that this tractate *'Ghāyat āl Imkān'* was one of the writings of 'Ain al-Kaḍā Abul Mu'āli b. 'Ali al Ḥamdāni (d. 525 A.H.), a respectable authority of his time on Fiqh and Mysticism. Rahim Ferminish, consequently did not find it difficult to identify its author when he found the manuscript. He says ; "It is not hidden from the authorities on knowledge and literature that this treatise *Ghāyat al Imkān fi Dirāyat al Makān* is one of the compilations of 'Ain al Kaḍā Abul Muāli 'Abdullan b. Mohammad b. 'Alī b. al Ḥassan b. 'Alī."

'Ain al Kaḍā was a great author but manỹ of his works are lost. Rahim Ferminish narrated how just as per chance this tractate fell to his good fortune. "It was an episode of the month of Amardād of the year 1338 Shamsi, I paid a visit to J'afar Tabraizi, the book sellers. There, I saw a good collection of folios. It was a piece of fine Naskh calligraphy in the style of the ninth century Hijra (i.e., sixteenth century A.D.), consisting of 570 folios. In it were copied a number of rare works from various authorities" including 'Ali b. Abi Ṭālib (peace be on him), Shaikh Najmuddīn Rāzi, Maḥmūd al Kāshi, Moḥammad al Ghazāli, 'Abdullah al Anṣāri, etc. In addition, there were more than thirteen treatises at the margin of the folios. The tractate of 'Ain al Kaḍā along with those of Nūrullah, Ṣadruddīn Kaunavi, Maḥmūd al Shabistri, etc,. was included in the works at the margin. Rahim Ferminish secured the volume from J'afar Tabraizi and included the tract of *Ghāyat al Imkān* in his book published as *Āthār wa Aḥwāl i 'Ain al Kaḍā* from Tehran.

Rahim Ferminish rightly holds that 'Ain al Kadā's writings are masterpiece of Persian literature. But the text of the *Ghāyat al Imkān* as published by him in 1959, was not free from oddities here and there. It is difficult to attribute them to 'Ain al Kadā or to the subject handled in it. But, there was no means to remove or correct them. This problem is also nearly solved because of another happy accident. A young scholar of Pakistan, Mohammad Riaz was working at the Tehran University in 1965—69, for his doctoral dissertation on the life and works of Syed Alī, a great sufi writer and poet of Hamdan (b.713/1313). 'Ali Hamdani migrated to Kashmir along with his entourage and died in 786/1384. Consequently, he is a known figure in Indo-Pak literary history. Mohammad Riaz who was in correspondence with the Rampūr Library in connection with his work, received in June, 1968 photos of this tractate on space and time. It is obvious that the cataloguers of the Rampūr Library arranged and preserved it all along with other works of 'Alī al Hamdanī. The error might be due to the chance that its true author was also from Hamdan, and if not 'Ali al Hamdanī, he was bin 'Ali al Hamdanī. When Mohammad Riaz returned to Karachi, he came in contact with the Academy where the identity of the Rampūr manuscript was easily established on the basis of Rahim Ferminish's publication. Dr. Riaz very kindly handed it over to the Academy.

Comparison of the Tehran text with the Rampur text has not gone unrewarded. At a number of places omissions were noticed in the Tehran text. They were filled in. Other errors in both of the texts were however checked by projecting them upon one another. Now it is possible to edit and publish a highly reliable text and use it for academic reference. The present English translation has been prepared on that basis. But, it should not mean an absolute reliability on it, for it appears that Iqbal's manuscript had its own variation from both of the Tehran and Rampur texts. The thing which, however causes complete satisfaction, from research point of view, is that the main body of contents and writing is the same in those manuscripts inspite of their variations. The errors or omissions in them are so minor that they do not control, in any manner whatsoever, the arguments, themes, and meanings of the compilation as it might have been handed down by its author.

Iqbal's concluding comments on this tractate *Ghāyat al Imkān* more particularly his impression of the Aristotlean prejudice in favour of

a static universe about its discussion is not free from a sort of anachronism. Iqbal was an organismic thinker working in terms of totalities. As he attributed its composition to Fakhrūddin Iraqi, it was inevitable for him to project in its substance the idioms and ontological approach, life feeling and outlook of that Muslim Civilization of which Fakhruddin Iraqi (d.688/1289) was a part. It was post-Tartarian civilization.

In contrast, this tractate by Abu l Mualī Abdullah bin Alī (d.575/1137) was a product of an altogether different civilization, the civilization of Classical Islam, which emerged in history after the culture of true Islam and its civilization. Thus, Muslim Classicism was a new phase in the history of Islam, in its career as a culture and pattern of emphasis. It rolled on with a peculiar Life-feeling and developed its own primary symbols, and accordingly moved with its own anguish, definition of problems, and framework of solutions. In this tractate *Ghāyat al Imkān* all of the moments of this Classicism are manifest.

It may be said of the pre-Tartarian Classical Muslim that he was nearer to the spirit of Islam, vigilant upon its intellectual horizons, and looked with contempt upon those speculations in which was surmised the rebirth or revival of Hellenistic traditions, Zoroastrian world feeling, and Buddhist illuminationism. Thus, the Muslim Culture of that era could not accept the *Opuscules* of the Brethern of Purity, *Fusus* li Farabi, *Ishārāt* li ibn Sinā and the bulk of Aristotlean Platonism with its magian trappings as part of the consciousness of Islam. In Hasan Basrī (d.110/728), Jāfar Sādiq (d.148/765), Abu Hanīfa (d.150/767), Ahmad bin Hanbal (241/855), Mohasibi (d.243/857), Junayd Baghdadi (d.298/910) lies its main spring. Growth of the Maturidi, Mutazilite, and Ash'arite Schools embodied its spirit and experience. Fakhr Rāzī (d.606/1209) and ibn Rushd (d.595/1198) were last of its manifestations. Abu l Muāli al Hamdāni was a flower of this phase of Muslim Culture and as emphasized earlier, in him were manifest all those agitations and issues which were latent in its main drive and were unfolded in the details of its movements, debates and literature laying down a definite frame of reference, system of problems and cantour of meanings. His *Ghāyat al Imkān* is therefore amenable to understanding, only in the environment of this culture.

When this tractate is banished from its proper habitat and is treated as a product of the later phase, that is, the post-Tartarian

Career of Muslim Culture, its meanings and intentions are completely modified. The post-Tartarian Civilizations was in fact a metamorphosis of the Spirit of Muslim Culture. It now became susceptible to all of those influences to which it was invulnerable earlier, Al Farabi, Ibn Sina and other neo-Platonists, in whom the Magian life-feeling was dressed in Greek logic, were enthroned atop its echelon of intellectuals. Nasiruddin Tūsi (d.572/1274), Fakhrūddin Irāqi (d. 688/1289), Shaykh Sādi (d. 690/1291) Mahmud Shabistari (d. 710/1310), Amir Khusru (d.725/1325), 'Abd al Rahmān Jāmi (d.898/1491), etc., shaped its cultural destiny, articulated its global consciousness and embossed its ultimate meanings. The change was no less than a resurrection of the Magian soul with Plotanian doctrine of the One and its emanations as syntax, on which the Sufi theologians, delighted in Nihilism and Irrationalism, raised the edifice of this new civilization in which the Classical spirit of Islam disintegrated and disappeared. Reality was now measured as of the Class of dream ; the stretches of space and flow of time were beheld as Karishma of imagination. It sought relinquishing of the Cosmic responsibility thrown on man, by silent retreat from the nightmare of history. Its soul groped about extinction pure and simple in the great ocean of being. Mystic catechisms, shot through with allegories of escapism adorned by unmanly love poetry became popular in its body politique as master-piece of good taste and fine literature. Al Hamdani's tractate was simply impossible in it.

To al Hamdani, Space Time are real, and not imaginary. This sense of reality in him was in the spirit of Classicism, as it were, before the diffusion of Magian influences in Islam. Consequently, comparison of al Hamdani's theory with that of Kant is not rewarding as such. Kant's is an ingenius attempt to reduce the spatio-temporal frame of reference to the forms of perception. Moreover, to him, these forms are confined to the sensible world, while, to al Hamdani, space and time are general categories for all the orders of existence right up to the realm of Divinity. Kant's confession of the possibility of those theorems which may not be part of the Euclidean Geometry does not bring him closer to al Hamdani any more, because he does not believe in their validity for space. According to him, Geometry, as knowledge of space, is obliged to satisfy the criterion of imaginative construction. In other words, only those deductions and theorems, for him, constitute the totality of geometrical system which fulfil the demand of construction by imagination, a fulfilment by which, to him, they are validated as related to the knowledge of space. Our age is a

witness to the phenomenal rise of non-Euclidean Geometries consisting mostly of such theorems that have no representations in imagination yet they are truer than the Euclidean system for the external world. It means that the spatial system goes beyond the 'sensible' or 'perceptible' organization. This development in geometrical sciences implies a complete rejection of Kant's criterion and a general confirmation of the views of al Hamdani, who generalized space and time to realms, beyond the sensible world.

The methodology of al Hamdani's tractate *Ghayat al Imkan* is remarkable. In the modern sense, it is close to the phenomenological approach. Thus, it cannot be squared with the mystic experience, so popular as raison d'etre for the epistles of gnostics and opuscules of the sages of the post-Tartarian Islam. It is immensely terse, complex, and powerful ; much the same as it was embodied in and authenticated by the native faculties of the Muslim culture ; the same in terms of which the mighty Classical thinkers worked out their meanings and expounded their intentions in every walk of life ; law, society, history, and ontology. The method had an open, unpretentious, and straight leanings towards rationalism, not of course, towards Greek Rationalism. In it, *inner* vision had a due place of its own, but was not allowed to engulf other criteria of truth. For its authentication, it had to equate itself with the concrete movement of thought, the object of thought being anything: physical, temporal, spiritual. Thus al Hamdani feels no hesitation in appealing to the inner vision of his readers whenever he deems it necessary and yet he remains at the plane of rational discourse. Thus, by his appeal to intuition, he wants to stimulate his readers to draw proper conclusions from his experimental demonstration and grasp the different spaces like that of air and light. His approach proves that the terms *'Heart's eye'*, *'Inner vision;'* *'Insight'*, were not filled with that content in the gadget of Classicism, which later filled them in the post-Tartarian Civilization as correlate of emotionalism when Magianism rose in Islam. The Classical spirit of Islam was made of that stuff which allowed no emotive utterance to have ravaged the rational judgements. But this was not all.

Meticulous about its propositions, and about the systematic totality of its consciousness, the Classical mind was not satisfied with only two criteria; intuition and reason. It always sought revelation as the completing criterion for its meanings. The Classical thinker tested his propositions by their direct consistency with and deduction from

the Quranic Revelations and Apostolic Traditions. A positive, explicit and confirmative support from the Nuṣuṣ was demand of his nature. Thus there was no moment of lapse for him into the infirmities of poetic consciousness or grotesque imageries of the mystic flashes. By comparison, the *Ḥikmah* of post-Tartarian Islam, fed on the mystic visions, usually required a very round about method of *ṭāvil* or interpretation for establishing its harmony with reason as well as with revelation. Having no round-aboutness of that kind, Hamdani's work stands out distinctly like a monument to the Classical methodology. As a passing remark, it may be said that the works of Ibn Rushd and Fakhr Rāzi are the last and perhaps most glorious works of this Classical culture in which the methodology of multiple testing (i.e, the test of rationality, the test of inner vision, and confirmation by divine revelation) weaved the texture of propositions and filled the outlook of Islam.

After translating the *Ghāyat al Imkān*, an attempt in another work has been made by this writer to penetrate deeper into its classical background and identify the issues, which are entailed by it in its discussion of Space and Time. By going through those discussions, which were exhaustively conducted by the Classical thinkers, Iqbal's remark that the problem of space and time is an issue of life and death for Muslim culture turns out to be one of the acutest observations about the spirit of Islam. One may find the same anxiety for the problem in Ibn Ḥazm, al Ghazāli, Fakhr Rāzi, and Ibn Rushd, which we find in Iqbal and which makes it a problem of life and death.

The post-Tartarian Civilization, like most of the good things of the past including the Classical spirit, lost the problem itself. In its world feeling, the problem lurked behind as simply a reminiscence or an exercise in commemoration of the old poilosophers till the dawn of modern time in which Iqbal tried to rehabilitate it to its true significance in his *Reconstruction*. Iqbal felt it necessary to do some major work on it in its own right, because he was convinced that the basic life image of a culture was determined by its space time feeling. Thus, he wrote in a letter in 1933: "The subject on which I propose to write is *Space and Time in Muslim Thought*. It is a difficult subject and involves a good deal of research on manuscripts which are yet unknown, at least some of them. Nor has yet anybody written on it (B. A. Dar; *Letters & Writings of Iqbal*, p.34)". This project of Iqbal did not materialize for all of his time and energy was progressively absorbed in the pressing natianal problems as he had to play an important role in the freedom movement of the Indo-Pakistan

sub-Continent agaist the British rule. Since at least 1931, he worked devotedly for the national cause. His health was poor and his eye sight was giving way during the same years. He died in 1938.

That the problem of space and time occupied his mind till the last is evinced by a personal narration of (Maulvi) Fayūḍ ar Raḥmān, a great scholar, who then used to teach and lecture at the Masjid i Nilā Gumbad, Lahore. The Maulvi Ṣāhib narrates it as follows : "Chaudhri Moḥammad Ḥussain Ṣāhib, a friend of Iqbal, took me over to Iqbal's residence. It was 1st March, 1938. The marḥūm (late Dr. Iqbal) asked of me questions on the established Islamic concept of space and time. (His throat was affected, so the questions were in writing). He was pleased with my replies and desired of me to visit him daily. But I apologized, for the month of Ramdān was about to commence from the 3rd of March. Then, he asked me to resume the sittings after the month. But as soon as the month was over, his health worsened, and he passed away on the 21st April 1938 (B.A. Dar, *Anwār i Iqbāl*, p. 248)."

Had he been spared, he must have made some very far reaching contribution to the problem. Nevertheless, his notice of al Hamdāni's treatise in his *A Plea* and his discussions on it in his *Reconstruction* for advancing his own view on the world order is by no means ordinary. He penetrated into the very heart of Classicism, rent asunder the Magian encrustration of Islam and dived into its spirit. Iqbal exactly discussed those problems which ravaged the minds of the Classicists, Ibn Rushd, Ghazāli, Ibn Ḥazm, and Rāzi. He is a Muslim mind who re-establishes the Muslim outlook and re-defines the Muslim sense of Space, Time, and world order.

Note

In the *Observation* as well as the translation of *Ghayat al-Imkan*, the spellings of proper names used by Iqbal in his *A Plea*, forming the preface of all that follows, have been retained. Consequently, *q* has been retained for ق But wherever necessary *K* has been used for the letter, for *q* does not sound as ق The words like Islam, Muslim and many other words which are originally Arabic, yet which may be considered as English now are left without diacritical marks. This is in line with the Urdu, Persian and Arabic language practice. Diacritical marks are not necessary, but are left to the readers who observe them in reading. The same practice is desirable in the European languages to make reading of Muslim literature an easy going activity.

Ghayat al Imkan
fi
Dirayat al Makan

By

Abul Muali Abdullah
bin
Mohammad al Hamdani
(*d.* 525 *A. H.*)

Translation based on the
Tehran and Rampur
Manuscripts

In The Name Of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

And we beg of Him, the Sustainer of all, His help. Praise be to God, whose being first is free from a last, and being last is free from a first; whose externality has no interior, and whose interiority does not admit an exterior; whose substance is qualityless and whose attributes defy specificity; whose nearing has no complexion, and whose production is unrelenting; whose Position denies a whither and whose Time is invulnerable to a *when*; whose glory is never ageing; there is no whence to be His *whence*, and there is no then to be His *then*: He is what He is; He is as He is; He is not but He is; He is "but God, your sustainer; there is no God but He, the Creator of all things (al Quran; 6 : 103)".

May the blessings and peace of God be on Mohammad al Mūstafa, the Chief of the Beyond: on his descendants, the keys of guidance; on his companions, the lamps in darkness; countless invocations of blessings from all be on them. The Pure and the High (God) says; "And when my servants ask thee concerning Me, Surely I am nigh. I answer the prayer of the suppliant (2 : 186".) And says He, the High; "And We are nearer to him than his life-vein (50 : 16)".

May God improve your knowledge and extend your grasp. Know that when He, the Lord of worlds, High and Supreme, intends good to a servant, bestows on him knowledge of His own being. The Apostle - blessings and peace be on him - said; "when God wills good for His servant, grants him understanding of the dīn" thus opening his eye to Divine nearness. The servant is reborn with a consciousness that God is just in the vicinity. Veneration and glorification of the (Real Lord) enters into his

being as properties of his frame. He is then, scrupulously on guard to nourish the right habit. Every moment of his life brings him an increase of joy and love, and an yield of new, ever new treasures.

The depravity and despair which sap the path (i.e. human situation) and are blown from the pitfall of whim and corruption of imagination conjure up the fancy to take oneself as having no touch with the Divine Proximity. Thus, lapsus casts its veil and separates man from (his) God. But God's nearness (to his creation) can not be disrupted by the faults of human fancy. By it, only man is lost; the wealth of being close (to God) is denied to him; and he becomes deprived of all the benefits accruing from it. Thus, entrapped in whims, he grossly commits thousands of transgressions and idiosyncracies. Then Divine chastisement is his lot.

If you say: The Divine Essence transcends all the properties and directions to which the generable is subject. Inconceivable for Him is tangence, correspondence, comparison, and identification with the bodies. Rest, motion, change, quantum, differentiation affect Him not. How is it then possible to square His Nearness with His Transcendence, and reconcile His Sublimity with the lowness of the accidents and generables ?

I would answer: The being and attributes of the Sustainer of words are free from, loftier than, and above all of that the whim hits at, intellect is informed of, imagination casts its nest upon, and understanding gets around. Nevertheless, He is nearer to you than your life-vein, speech of your tongue, hearing of your ear, and wisdom of your heart.

Follow it that the nearness of the generables to one another is but an appearance. Remoteness may effect this nearness in terms of form, meaning, or imagination. Whereas, the nearness, which is real, is for the Real High; for it is His attribute, and His attributes are but real. In real nearness, remoteness, whether of form, meaning, or whim is impermissible. And in consideration of the complete transcendence of the Real High from the generable and that of His absolute freedom from the imperfect directions,

grasp of it is not an easy task. Understanding cannot knock at the lofty secret of this nearness, unless it has come to terms with the knowledge of the spaces and times of the corporal and spiritual entities. Knowledge of the Divine Nearness posited with a full notice of the Divine Sublimity and Transcendence, which defy identification with and diffusion in (the generable), is only possible on the basis of this knowledge. It is secret of the secrets, key to the gateway of gnosis, approaching the Lord of lords. With utmost firmness of my very being, I kept this awful and lofty secret in the inmost safe of my heart, not because I was less generous, but because of its delicate nature and superb heights. My apology, for openly exposing it now lies in an episode that on one occasion it slipped out from tongue in the heat of discussion thus: 'The word *makān* (space/place) is mentioned in the Traditions. Its denial, consequently, is impertinent. It is however neccssary that the space which is proper for an entity should be grasped to avoid confussion'. Out of sheer prejudice, jealously, evil and crookedness, a clique of blind hearts and mischief mongers seized those words and hoisted them as blasphemy. I was put to the charge of similitude and judgment of my infidelity was pronounced. Thus the duty of defending myself, before the worldly men engrossed in their physical nature, by having cleared the dirt of similitude from the countenance of this secret, devolved upon me. This secret of Joseph like beauty is thus brought in open amidst those blinds, who are possessed of defective knowledge. I know that prejudice and jealously have no extinguisher. A drop of water is a means of sustenance to life, but it is also an agent of destruction to a dead corpse as God High says: "Surely those against whom the word of thy Lord is proved true will not believe. Though every sign should come to them till they see the painful chastisement (10 : 96-97)".

But, I am not given to disappointment, I am sure that there will be someone, at least, who being endowed with the wealth of pain and love, will go through my writing, derive benefit from it, and remember me in sincere prayers.

I have made up my mind to write a fasl (section) on Tauhid (unity) before embarking on the main theme. Every reasonable man will acknowledge thereby, that my words are by no means

troublesome to the ahl l Tarikā (the people of sufi orders), in whose eye nothing has existence, beside the Lord. Is there any similitude for Him, who defies all likeness ? (No.)

This collection is entitled as *Ghāyat l'Imkān fi Darayāt al Makān* (The extent of Possibility in the Exploration of Space).

O, God, I beg of Thee. Of Thy Bounty and Kidness, bless this work that it be a means of increase in faith and knowledge for those who are its readers and listners. Protect me from mischief, and let not the creatures do any harm to me.

Fasl Fil'Tahauhid

ON UNITY

God, the High says; "And your god is one God. There is no god beside Him; He, the Beneficent and the Compassionate (2:163)." The way-farers of the tarīkat (sufi order) said; "He, who is attached to Him, has not secured the attachment. It was none beside God to have demonstrated the unity of God". Husain Mansur's hymns; mercy of God be upon him; rendered the same as follows: "I hold Thee exalted above all that by which the unitarians prove Thy Unity." And Shaykh l'Islam Abdullah Ansarī composed it thus:

"No unitarian can ever prove the Unity of the Single One.

Those who pretend to do, have grossly done its negation.

His unity is His unity indeed. No signifying sign ever signifies it.

The unity as spelt out by attribution is only a simile, which is undone before the Single Himself".

Nothing, borne out of duality and direction, has share in the supreme unity. And God, the Most Glorious, is singular in His commanding comprehension of the supreme unity, and accepts the nomenclature which comes from it. Thus the origin of Names: the One, the Monad, the Single, the Individual, the Bounteous, the Generous. And all that which is subject to Quantity, to more or less, to predication and to condition, is not even a conjecture towards the supreme unity. Sublimity does not admit anything and is exalted above all. Knowledge of the unity, except so far as it means a spectacle of glory and splendour, is not a fortune of the creatables. The flight of fancy does not reach it; conjecture does not make its mark upon it; no symbol has a grasp of it.

Lovers are but to sew their lips,

And gaze in the direction of thy Castle.

They can't dare stay (at thy door),
Knocking at it they pass away.

In His Mercy and Compassion, He has granted us, the creatures of clay, a unity of another Quality, to be known as the Graceful Unity (Tauhīd altaf). It has three levels. The first is *Unity by Speech*, sufficing all the commoners of the right belief. The second is *Unity by Knowledge* and is confined to the elites. And the third is *Unity by Act*. It is for those who are the choicest amongst the elites.

Unity by Speech depends on a vow by heart under requisite conditions as follows: "I witness that there is no god but God; He is one and none is His associate." This vow is just like a husk or a form in relation to the (true) Unity. It liberates from open associationism, sanctifies life and wealth, provides basis for the values (judgments) of Islam, helps in survival across the Fire, and a bounteous reward is its end. *Unity by Speech* is not subject to decay and decline. Peace and Strength are in it, while in a mere verbal unity, the smoke of looseness tarnishes the intellect which remains fettered with carnal desires and enwrapped in vanity. When it is difficult, almost too difficult for an intellect purified from the base elements and disciplined against licentiousness, to have approached the lofty secret of the majestic Unity, how is it possible for a tarnished intellect to have comprehended it? When the falcon of intellect zooms at height towards the realm of Unity, it bounces into doubt and uncertainty. Though the dialectician composes arguments for unity corroborating its certainty, yet stormed by doubts and uncertitude is he within himself. Once at a beach of Dajla when Ibn l'Saka Baghdadi snapped one after another about a hundred arguments of Unity and true Oneness, he was overtaken by dread as he found that every argument of unity was opposed by a threefold smashing it. Had he obtained full illumination about only one of the arguments in favour of Unity, this would not have been his fortune!

Unity by Knowledge is dependent on the knowledge of Space and Time and full comprehension of the nature thereof. It cannot be the case that one is fully conversant with the Graceful unity (Tauhid altaf), but has not known Space and Time. That God is not a thing and nothing has existence except by Himself is a truth one has attained but has not attained the knowledge of Space and Time; it cannot happen. It is also impossible that one has realized that the Real High is neither within nor is without, nor is united with, nor is separate from the universe and that not a single atom of it is free of or remote from

Him,—yet has not gained comprehension of Space and Time. It is impossible to have access to the root of *'be—so it becomes'* and the (modality of) divine silence unless the knowledge of Space and Time is given. That He is speaker from eternity to eternity; that His Speech is one without ever being subject to multiplication, division, variation or differentiation ; that the one hundred and fourteen scriptures granted to the Apostles (of God) are indeed one, that how the Real High said to Moses; "Take off thy shoes"; even before the existence of Moses and Mount Sinai and that Moses could hear Him in Hebrew ; that He had conversed with Isaiha, before Isaiah existed and received the Speech in Syriac ; that He had conversed with Mūstafā, blessings and peace of God be upon him, before the latter could exist and gracefully hear the Speech, which is eternal, sublime, pure and superior to all else ; that the Truth, Most High is the First and the Last, the Manifest and the Hidden ; and that in His one Knowledge He knows all the infinite knowables ; and that in His one Determination, contains all the unlimited determinables ; and that in His one Hearing holds together all the audibles ; and that in His one Seeing contains all the visibles from eternity to eternity ; and that His one eternal Will has its grip upon all of the volitions. Access to and knowledge of all those truths is denied unless the Space and Time of God are known. The entire lofty knowledge i.e. knowledge of the attributes and the eternal Essence and understanding of the six or more books before the Quran, all along with their connotations, and realization of the eternity of the Quran and of all those scriptures ; all of that depend on the knowledge of the Space and Time of God. In this tractate, I will try to compose a satisfactory and sufficient explanation, after which it will not be possible for a just and reasonable mind to deny what I say. There is however no remedy if the heap of ignorance has made one blind folded, prejudice has headed one's intellect to the abyss of darkness, and the very words *Space and Time* are become source of allergy to oneself. It is as the following Arabic couplet :

"Precious are the gems from the mines.
But worthless are they for a cow, which senses them not"

There is a Persian couplet for the same purpose :

"From the depths of river
Dog does not come with gems in its mouth"

And *Unity by Act;* it has three stages. Its first stage is a blowing from the blowings of eternality, an emotion from the noble emotions, a

lightning from the lightning of nullity striking an impressionable tablet (countenance), preparing it for receiving (the knowledge) of *Pre-ennity* (kidm). Taking hold of the postulant, it washes away his ignorance, tears to pieces his indifference and opens his eye to the truth : 'But now. We have removed thee thy veil, so thy sight is sharp this day (30 : 22)'.

A sincere and intelligent postulant grows sensitive to the flashes. He then, realizes that notwithstanding all of his wherewithal of (the knowledge of) unity and (spiriual) exercises, he is yet enchained with the *Zunar* (the ceremonial thread of the worshipper of fire) and his soul is strung beyond doubt to thousands of idols. This realization causes in him the flame of shame. It rises high in his bosom; and all else is set to fire. The tears of repentence gush out continuously from his eyes. A long ordeal; he turns to everything for peace, till he is disillusioned that there is no peace, but in Him, Who has afflicted him (with this burning fire): 'And they know there is no refuge from God but in Him (9:18)'. The postulant, then, with utter humility throws his head in prostration before Him, the Generous to the servants; secrets are whispered unto Him, the Winder of affairs and the anguish is plained to Him, the Knower of the hidden and Healer of pains, till the goal is reached and promise is fulfilled as 'Or, who answers the distressed, when he calls upon Him and removes the evil (27:62).' The postulant is now attached to Him and a voice resounds in his mind: "O, of the right heart, don't you know that in your Lord lies your goal. 'Seest thou him who takes his desire as his God (45:23).' What you cherish, you bow before it. Anything, which attracts your heart, is sure to be your God. Your Lord is a wish and nothing more. Then, of what use is your utterance and profession that God is one? If you are in prostration before a thousand of idols, as severed from your action, your knowledge is indeed a catastrophe, and your utterance not demonstrated by your deed is worthless. If you are keen to have the Unity ingrained in you, then set your heart in its single direction and make it closed to all else, till your actions do come in concord with what you say". The postulant then, begins his efforts anew. He is now engaged in tearing at the bonds of all else and setting himself free from it. He strives hard and becomes very scrupulous about his routines, until divine grace and bounty delivers him from countless wishes and he is pulled by nothing beside God. Cleansed of all, his heart gains unity. In his eye, public applause and condemnation, acceptance and rejection fall in scale to be of equal or of no

consideration. In all of the circumstances and phases, the Lord of lords becomes his refuge and goal. He, who is immersed in this state, achieves the first stage of the *Unity by act.*

The second stage consists of light from the manifestation of the Truth descending on the self of the postulant. The elements of existence disappear from his sight. The affluence of light engulfs the atoms of existence. It is as in the glare of sunshine. The airy particles are overrun by its surging forth and are not seen. It does not mean that they have ceased to exist. They are only gone out of sight in the dazzling light of sun. 'When God flashes out, every thing shakes off." When, the Sovereign of the apparent light rises and Eastern horizon is flooded with its light, the particles have no recourse but to hide. It is not that the attribute of creation is articulated into the attribute of God, nor is it that the creation is united with or submerged in Him. God is loftier, greater, and higher than all this. It is also not that the servant has ceased to exist. To be non-entity is one thing, and to be imperceptible another. When you look into a mirror, you do not perceive the mirror for you are engrossed in your own projection in it. You cannot say that the mirror has ceased to exist, or that it has changed into your own projection or that the latter has itself become the mirror. Contemplation of the (swaying) force (kudrat) as unceasing in (the mirror of) all the determination is designated as 'extinction in the unity' (*fana fi l'Tauhid*) by those, the postulants of eternality. This is the place, where the legs shamble and many a postulant stagger and are thrown away from the path. It is impossible to tread this desert unhelped, unaided by the milestone of knowledge, sharpness of intelligence, Grace of God, and guidance from a leader of insight and attainment.

Different postulants attain different degrees of access to this position. Some of them have access to it but only for a moment in a week; others for a moment in a day. There are still others, whose most of the time passes in the vision unintruded by absence even for a moment. I have heard of from Khwaja Islam, may God honour his soul, that he is truly great and ennobled, who stays in this position for three consecutive days and nights.

"In this unfathomable ocean be like a frog,
Which exerts limbs indifferent to the crocodile.
Though in this path, this (indifference) should not be
Yet there is no harm if the limbs are exerted".

It is hardly believable that in spite of its vasty sweep, this Dominion (of God), has no place even for a foothold. God extends his help and support to those who are steadfast to this goal and exert. Unceasing is God's help to the postulant, till he achieves the wealth (of gnosis): He protects him from the evil designs of those of the fraternity of Devil; and suffices is He against them in all situations and calamity: 'He is the excellent Guardian (3:172).'

The third stage is 'extinction from extinction' *(fana An il'fana)*. Attainment of perfect absorption and concentration leads the postulant (beyond) to the awareness of his own extinction, and makes him realize in it the sign of the manifest glory and splendour. In one stroke of its flash, for the perceiving eye (of the postulant), existence is swung out of existence; (in another flash) the consciousness is replete with plurality. It is here that the postulant beholds every sign as transcending itself like a pointer towards the reality which lies beyond differentiation. *Ain al'jama* (Identity of the Totality) and *jama al jama* (Totality of Totality) are posited here. In it oneself and the whole of the universe is lost in the manifestation of the *Light True*, and with it self-consciousness is also lost; and what is lost is also lost. Nothing is beheld except the Truth; absorption in absorption, annihilation in annihilation. No name (names it) and no sign (signifies it); existence and non-existence, description and symbolization, high and low, have no meaning in it. This ocean is in surge beyond trace and notice. No star except "all are to perish (55.26)" twinkles in its constellations; and no breeze, except "All are to annihilate except His Face (28:88)" blows in is sphere. *'I am the Truth Exalted'*, except here, grows nowhere. *Unity* untainted by associationism does not take shape except at this centre of the Dominion. And all that, which is describable as knowledge of unity is in realization at this exalted (station of) unity.

The approach of the Mutezilites and the philosophers is vicious in the matter. Their crooked eye does not behold the splendour of Unity, and perceives one as two. In spite of the thousands of ways in their experience, they remain clung to their own self (limits). There is no doubt that the darkness which originates from their ownself casts its net upon them, and denies them the knowledge of God, the High. Thus, they cannot describe Him except by negating the attributes. They accordingly, say; 'we exist'; but dare not say; 'He exists'; they say; 'we are knower'; but cannot admit that He is Knower; they say; 'We have power'; but cannot call Him the 'Wielder of power.'

They do not however say that He is non-existent, ignorant, or power-less. If the method of those of manly courage (the postulants of the Sufi order) is viewed, it lies in dropping of the accidental and affirming of the pre-ennity (Kidm) in all of the attributes. As the light, i.e. manifestation of the Truth illuminates their self, it dawns upon them that nothing is manifest in the shein of the exalted light except God, leading (them) to posit all of the attributes of perfection, symbols of splendour and glory in the Truth of Him, who is Magnificent with ever more glory. (In this experience), the denial of other than Him is carried over and the postulant admits that Knower is He and all else is ignorant; 'Wielder of Power' is He and all else is humbled; Existent is He and all others are non-existent:

"From top to bottom before the perceiving eye
non-existence is through and through and
effacement is in display."

Look at the difference between this appreach and that; this postulant and that. Don't be ridiculous to these words and think of them as calamity out of your narrow mindedness, ignorance and lack of courage. By the glory of the Magnificent, inquiry is this; Unity is this. And all other unity beside it is defective or erroneous. And in it, which lies beyond the pale of description stumbling of the steps is frequent. Two postulants, in the realm of Unity, do not put their step at the same place. Every step of illumination means a darkness (which is to be overcome); then the postulant treads his path through non-existence (Adm), till he realizes the sphere of eternality, wherein, eye perceives not, ear hears not, and heart feels not.

Well, I know that you do not have access to the wealth of this anguish and to the angnish that lies in this wealth but try to possess it by your faith, so that the dust of the way, unsettled by the mounts of the leaders of religion is settled on your countenance and you are honoured thereby. And don't be like those: "And as they are not guided thereby, they say: it is an old lie (46:11)."

FASL al-MAKAN

THE SPACE

May Divine Support, Mercy and Bounty with innumerable blessings of life be for him who goes through this fasl with a just, and not sour eye and exerts himself for the truth over against the inclination towards the trodden path (of taklid).

The Real Lord has self-regard and does not allow the secret of his samadiyah (un-Supportableness) to lay spread in every nook and corner. He preserves the secret in the secret itself.

This one, who has uttered these words, is of the view that heaven and earth are not intimated of a more exalted secret than that of Space and Time. A multitude of secrets about the Lord, Most High, have been spelled out by the chiefs of Order (Tarīka) and Scholars (Ulamā) of the *right path*, but that one which is gateway to the Divine Essence and Attributes is the secret of Space and Time, and commanding knowledge thereof. He, before whom this secret is exposed, becomes recepient of the light of Divine Essence and Attributes.

Space and Time are objects of worthiest consideration. Leaders of the order (tarīkā), from the very beginning have been maintaining silence on them. What a goodness, if we are also not to depart from this (tradition) but as God says; "He might bring a matter which was to be done (8:44)."

First of all, I will advance an argument based on Authority to prove that there is a Space of God. It will be demonstration by Shari'ah. The (Divine) Space has no limit or dimension. I will try to represent it as if we are perceiving it by our own eye. I will put it in as simple a description as possible for mitigating its obscurity.

The Existence of Divine space is demonstrable on the authority of the Qurānic verses and sound Traditions; (The proof being) in con-

formation with the tenets of the *ahl 'Sunnah wa l Jamāah* (People of Tradition and Group), and the Consensus of the *Umma* on the principles and rules of Islam.

The Real, Most High, says in the verses; "And He is with you, wheresoever you are (37:4)"; "Nowhere is there a secret counsel between three persons but He is the fourth of them, nor between five but He is the sixth of them, nor less than that nor more but He is with them wheresoever they are (58:7)"; "And We are nearer to him than his life-vein (50:16)"; "And there does not lie concealed from your Lord the weight of an atom in earth or in the heaven (10:61)". And there are numerous other verses as such in the Qurān. All those verses obviously mean that the Real, High is Himself compresent with even the smallest atom (of the universe). But His compresence is not like that of the bodies with the bodies as it occurs in the world of corporeal things, for Divine Existence is free from corporeality ; nor is it like that of the essence with the bodies, nor is it like that of the substance with the accidents. The Divine compresence with the whole of the universe is like the compresence of soul with body. The soul is neither within nor is without the body; the former and latter are members of different worlds. Soul belongs to one world, and the body to the other. The bodily properties, say, of exit and entrance, conjunction and separation do not apply to soul, yet there in not a single atom (of the body) with which it may not be present. The compresence of God with the creation is on its like. The proverb; '*he, who knows his self, knows his Nourisher*'; alludes to this mystery. In short, I have interpreted those verses as to have referred to a space, which must be appropriate to His eminence and transcedence. (It is such that) He is with every tiny particle of the Universe and yet is high and above it. The description of other types of Space, if God willing, would follow (at their proper place).

There is a number of Traditions from the Apostle, may peace be on him. On the narration from Anas bin Malik, May God be pleased with him, the Apostle said; "Says God, Most High; 'By My Might, by My Glory, by My Unity, by My creation, by recourse to Me, by My stay at the Throne, and by My Exalted Plane, indeed I am shy of my servants, male and female, who grow old in Islam (unless) I grant them relief from chastisement'. " And says God, Most High; "By My Majesty and by My Exalted Plane (Space), no one shall have entered Paradise and shall have a dark heart". Thus, the Traditions have frequent usage of the words like My Might, My Mejesty, and My Exalted Plane (or Space).

If all of the Traditions are quoted here, this thesis will become unwieldy. Consequently, it seems enough to quote only one more Tradition. The Commander of the Faithful 'Alī b. Abi Ṭālib and Thaubān, may God be pleased with them, reported the Apostle as saying; "Moses said: 'O, the Nourisher, art Thou near so that I must lower my vioce? Art Thou farther away so that I must approach Thee loudly? Indeed, I sense Thy gentle vioce, but don't perceive Thine whereabout". The Lord replied; 'I am behind you and in front of you, at your right, at your left, and I am companion of My servant, when he remembers Me; and I am with him when he is in supplication before Me'. *Tafsir-i-Nāṣiri* contains a Tradition as reported by Thaubān from then arrations, of Anas, may God be pleased with them; "Once the Apostle of God passed by a man, who was uttering; 'By Him, who is veiled in six heavens'. The Apostle interrupted and said; 'Wait; He is above everything, below everything and His Majesty fills all." Ibn 'Abbās narrated; "One who believes that He ascended from the Tomb of Rock at Jerusalem, is in error. His command surrounds all and permeates every part of this earth. No space —neither in heaven, nor in earth, nor in sea, nor in land, nor in air—is vacant of Him. He, the Most High and Manifest, is in every place". *Tafsir-i-Nāṣiri* has a narration from Ibn 'Abbās: "Once the Apostle of God recited; 'He is the First, and (He is) the Last; and (He is) the Apparent and (He is) the Hidden (57 : 3)', and said; 'He is the First, for there is nothing before Him; He is the Last, for there is nothing after Him; He is the Apparent, for there is nothing external to Him; and He is the Hidden, for there is nothing beside Him'." Moreover it has been reported in the Traditions that 'God is not merged in nor is absent from a thing'. Traditions on this subject clearly demonstrate that God has a distinct Place (Space) of His Own. The Traditions however, further establish that His Space is free from the particularity of dimension. Not a single particle of the world is alienated from the Divine Existence, though He is not in the neighbourhood of nor is at distance from any of His creation, and He is not contiguous with them either.

All this comperhension lies beyond the ken of the disputant, who does not understand the compresence that the Being, Single and Unique, has with existence, and does not follow how the Real, Most High, is with everything at its position without being obliterated in or merged with it. So he is given to deny it (Divine Space) and concocts vain interpretations (of the Divine Verses and Apostolic Traditions). Had he been in commerce with the essence of Space, he would not

have resorted to frivolties of that kind. So far as the Consensus of the Umma (on the issue) is concerned, Abū l Kāsim al-Balkhī an eminent leader of the Mutezilites, has described it in his treatise entitled as "*Makalat*". In the very beginning, the author mentioned its year of compilation as 279 A.H. Why he did mention it is explained by him as follows: ".....So that you may know that any other thing (beyond this writing) you will come across after it (this year, *i.e.* 279 A.H.) will be an innovation and misguidance". In this work of such a prestigious nature, al-Balkhi writes; "Mutazila and the Khwarij, and the Rubiyah and the Murdjiya say (believe); God, Most High, is in all the space, and it is impermissible (to hold) that He is in space without there being space". The author included all the Traditionists (ahl l'Hadith) and particularly Abu Hanīfa in the group of the Murdjiyas. He did not include in them one particular group—(the Hashviya), but, then did not fail to quote Hishām and (others of) the group of al-Hashviyah, and the Mūshbiha as saying; "God in in all the space, and it is invalid that He is in space, without there be space".

This reference (to the treatise) shows that in the year mentioned above, the Umma Universally agreed on and had certitude about the existence of Space. If they had any disagreement, it was on the attributes, nature, and states of space and not on its being as such. It further shows that, the Consensus of the Umma on it was not on its own, but was rooted in and based on the Qurān, the Tradition, the narrations from the Companions, the Followers, and the Followers of the Followers. In addition to this, it brings to light that this Consensus was so much universal and obvious that the Mutazila, too allowed no doubt in it though according to them difference from the Consensus was allowed in matters of principle (Usūl), while disallowed in matters of corollary (furuāt). Pray, let us know on which basis a true seeker may allow himself to indulge in the denial of space, notwithstanding that space (makān) connotes privacy. No limit can be set to privacies, and it is an open disbelief and zandika to hold that God does not occupy those privacies; that He is not compresent with time, that he is neither above them nor below, though there might be infinity of their series. The dialectitian, whose assertions are as above, has no other reason to hold them but his antipathy (to the very word of Space) and says that entrance or exit, occupation or vacation, confrontation and comparison, to be above or below are attributes of corporeal things and since God transcends corporeality, these attributes are not for Him.

I answer: It is true that these attributes do not denote Him. But

let not words concern us any more. In order to purge out falsehood from truth, we may express ourselves in terms of 'being/existence' and ask: Is the Real, Most High, not existent in all the high and low, apparent and hidden worlds? If you say, 'He is', then our purpose is achieved. But, if you say, 'He is not', then Lo: It is a clear disbelief and misguidance. It means that His Existence is void of the spiritual and material positions.

Thus, we have proved spatiality, so far as it is appropriate to the Divine Existence, Most High, The (Divine) Space, by its very nature and meaning, is above all the spiritual and material space. It is a Space, in which there is no length, no breadth, and no depth. It has neither distance, nor locomotion. For it, all is nearness. No atom of the seen and unseen worlds, even less than it, is external to it. Intellect, fancy, and imagination cannot tread its span. Perception and understanding cannot scale it. Intelligence being confined to be in commerce with hither and thither fails to grasp it. It is impossible for the creation to have penetrated it; and fancy, understanding, and intellect are but creations.

The existence of the Real, Most High, is related to the things of the world, as soul is related to the cells of body. 'And for God are supreme analogies (16:62).' The attributies of exit and entrance, out and in, continuity or discontinuity, contact and touch, correspondence and confrontation, low and high; all of them are of the kind of corporeal accidents. It is unreasonable to apply them to soul. The latter is member of the 'World of Command ('Alam l Amr), and not of the corporeal world ('Alam l Adjsam). Nevertheless, there is no atom of the body which is alien to or separate from it, though contiguous with it is not. Soul has its own space. God willing, its space and other spaces will, now, be explained. Help from Him, we seek.

FASL L AMKINA

(ON SPACES)

Know that discriminatory comprehension of the various spaces is just impossible except by inner sense, illumination of the heart, and spiritual perception. The acid test of the inspirations (M'ārif) from those sources lies in the Qurān, the Traditions, and the consensus of the Ummah. Whatever we, thus, gained from our insight and inner perception, we put to test in the light of the Qurān, Traditions and consensus of the Ummah, and found it correct and sound. Then, we thanked God and accepted it; and now state it openly. What we say now is not, therefore, contaminated by similitudinarian elements (tashbih) and disbelief. Piety and good inspiration is from God. Here, we will explain 'Space' on the pattern of ṭarika (method of mystic experience) to the extent to which it is conducive to insight.

O Lord, expose to broad day light this denizen of the unseen, veiled in the veils of awe and hidden in the attire of light from the alien sight, at the hand of this beautician of guidance, before the postulants of this last age. And let those ones of this last age, bewildered in the vale of surprise, have pegs of sweet drink from this cup-bearer. The world seems to be edging to the end of its course. Then, for which King, O Lord, these brides of moonlike face are reserved ? Expose this lofty secret to lucid exposition and clear demonstration. May those ones who are lost to alienation and sunk in denial and those ones who are dextrous but in hounding the servants of God as if hounding the sheeps and those who have their deeds glutted in the fire of slandering others and keep the fire ablaze by wrong ideas, be redeemed of darkness and guided to light thereby.

May God inspire and guide you, Lo and behold. There are three kinds of space ; the space of corporeal things ; the space of spiritual things ; and the Space of God.

The space of corporeal things is of three kinds : the space of

dense bodies, the space of light bodies, and the space of very light bodies.

The space of dense bodies is of this earth. Resistance and heaviness, that it possesses, are quite well known. In it, a thing cannot replace the other, unless the place has not been vacated by the latter. That in this space the bodies have proximity or remoteness with each other is also known. For instance, it is not known whether Hamdan is nearer to Nishāpūr or to Baghdād. Movement from each place to another in this space is also impossible without exerting legs and treading the distance. There is no difficulty in (understanding) it

But, in corporeality, light space belongs to air. This space also is not free from resistance. It is demonstrable by the fact that so far as 'an air' occupies a place, 'another air' does not enter into it before the former has vacated it. If you could not follow this example, turn up to the case of an air pump. Fill it with air. Note that no further air can be pumped into it, till you have not released the air filled in it. Know that while the space of dense corporeality is spread into distance, the space of light corporeality is packed into closeness. In other words, by comparison the light space is characterized by nearness. Thus, the distance, you tread in one or two months in the dense space, is treaded in an hour or so in the light space (of air). Consequently, a bird traverses so great a distance in a single hour of its flight that it is equal to a month's distance on land. Similar is the case with thunder and other sounds (in travelling fastly). Behold that the light space is not void of distance. Thus, birds and sounds, whether travel from East to West (or vice versa), require time to reach their destination.

But the case is very different in the corporeality of very light bodies; sun, moon, stars, fire, etc. Their space is characterized by enormously more closeness than is it possible in the space of light bodies. The remoteness of East and West in the light space contracts to a sharp closeness in this space of superbly light bodies. Its proof is that when sun rises from East, its light is undelayed in its radiation to West. Had its radiation been through, say, the space of air, it would have been delayed (much). Fire and its radiation and other things of its kind have the same properties. It shows that the space of light is different from the space of air. Another proof of it is that when you enter a hall with a candle, its light propagates instantaneously in all the four corners. It does not wait for the

vaccum of air. This demonstration convincingly proves that the space of light is different from and subtler than the space of air. And air cannot pass through it because air is denser. Light also cannot traverse the space of air because it has finer substance. But both of these spaces, of light and of air, are close to one another.. It is their closeness which makes it difficult to discern them out from one another. Nevertheless, they may be discriminately apprehended and recognized (in their own right) by inner perception, illumination of heart, and spiritual perception. There is no other way.

If there is some objection, let me put another demonstration. Know that the essence of fire is heat and its property is burning. And what is known to you as flame is a form of fire, and its work is to burn to ashes. Fire, by nature, is opposed to water. And conjunction of opposites at the same place is impossible. Thus, it cannot happen to fire and water that both of them are at one and the same place. But know that in hot water, there is fire. It is fire, and not water, which burns the hand. You already know that fire and water cannot be together. It means that in this demonstration fire has a sphere different from that of water. In the sphere of water, fire is void and in the sphere of fire, water is void. What actually happens is this : both the spheres, (in this case), are so close to one another, that there is no atom of water, which allows one to say that it is without fire. And there is no part of the fire, which allows one to say that it is without water, notwithstanding that fire and water exist discretely (in their respective spheres). Thus, they are neither contiguous nor discontiguous with one another. If you have followed it then know that the sphere (of light) is free from resistance and heaviness. Consequently, when you enter a hall with a candle in your hand, its light is irresistibly propagated to all of its corners. Moreover, you need not remove the lit up candle, if there was any to allow the light of your candle to propagate.

Know that this space (of light) is also informed of distance. The light of fire and sun does not penetrate through opaque objects, and when the distance is great, it becomes weak. It means that light from behind an opaque medium or from a long distance gets weakened.

The second space is that of the spiritual entities, and it has many kinds. Subtler a spirit, subtler is its space. On the whole, this space may be classified into four grades : the space of the spirits

of low order ; the space of the spirits of middle order, the space of the spirits of high order, and the space of souls.

In the spirits of low order are included those angels who are appointed at Hell and the strates of Earth. Of higher category are those angels who are fixed at mountains, rivers and forests. There are also other classes which are required to preserve orderliness in this base world (sub-lunar world). Their station is at the lunar sky. Thus, they cannot go beyond the first heaven. Though they are great in power and are capable of treading across the first heaven, yet, by their rank they are fixed by their appointment, and thus cannot move a step bayond their appointed position : "And there is none of us but has a known position (al Quran, 37 : 164)." There is a great difference between the various classes and ranks of these angels mentioned above. But we have put them in one category which is designated as the 'Low Spirituality', lest the problem appears cumbersome. All that lies above the (first) heaven is beyond the position of those angels.

The angels who belong to other eclestial spheres are those of "Middle Spirituality.' Those of one sphere are forbidden to trespass the other. An intrudence even of an ant's pace will burn thee: this ordinance is for all.

Just as there are angels in the heavens, so also there are angels who are stationed with the Throne, around the Throne, and below the Throne. Infinite are their ranks and classes. But we have included all of them in only one category—'High Spirituality'.

Difference among them is proportionate to the difference of position, as it is in the Courts of Kings. Every one has to him a position in relation to the Royal Throne, and cannot dare advance beyond it.

Then, there are the souls of very high order, very close in the audience of the Lord, Most High. There is no limit to their position. They are so much fine that they may dive into the flood of (divine) light far above the position of those angels, who are ranked only next to them. Due to the immensity of refinement, their position is incomprehensible for us. Nothing of space resists them. Thus, they may traverse a solid wall, as if it were a door wide open. They may pass through heavy stone like one who walks in open air. Their spheres (spaces) are also characterized by distance. Consequently,

though they may reach a place in twinkling of an eye, yet they are subject to movement. This fact of movement is an incompleteness against perfect spirituality.

The angels of various positions are endowed with the above-mentioned characteristics, but every one of them manifest those characteristics in accordance with his rank and appointment.

The Space of Soul also consists of different classes in line with the differences informing the various orders of the souls themselves. In subtility, human soul is at perfection. It is so great in fineness that no other creature attains its height. Not a single atom from the Throne to the lowest point (Thurriya) is remote from this space.

Do exert and you will realize it. The soul is not contiguous nor is discontiguous (with any thing). It is neither in, nor out ; not at rest, nor in motion. All of these properties (of human soul) may be established by rational demonstration. But since, the method of intellect is not attuned to perception, and since rational demonstration is widely discussed by a number of other authorities, I will not recount it. A rational demonstration may prove beneficial to one, who is unfamiliar with inner vision, and blind to spiritual observation (of realities). When the sun of m'arifa (gnosis) rises, the candle of intellect becomes useless.

Know that this space also conforms to a specification in terms of distance. Only, the sphere of Supermacy is infinite and is exalted above it. The space of soul is finite and being finite, it cannot contain the in finite.

Peace be on you ; Let me return to my purpose.

Lo, the Real, Most High, Transcends all the kinds of space described above. Thus, permeation in those Spaces is an improper epithet for Him. Moreover, to think of Him as contiguous with them is also improper. It is not right to compare Him (his position) with them. God, Most High and Glorious, has His Space above all other spaces. Its differentiations, one and all, are rent in nearness, free from all shades of 'remoteness' and distance. The highest of all the heights and the nearest of all the lowlies, including all the infinite positions are naught but a speck in comparison to it. And thus the Divine Space, has neither length, nor breadth, nor height, nor distance, nor locomotion.

There is no high and low, left and right, front and rear in it. If you wish to conceive of its latitude it is narrower than twinkling of an eye, nay, even less. If you think of its compactness (then beware), all the (countless) infinitesimals are lost before it. No one knows it, but He. Of it is knowable nothing but this (as stated above).

And behold that, by following the footsteps of Mohammad ; Peace be on him; and by spiritual discipline and regulation, the soul has to it the capacity of developing its power to such an extent that it may bear and undergo the states of light space in the dense body. Its sign is traversing a distance of two or three months in an hour. It might not have gone unheard that Earth was folded or contracted for a saint, who reached Macca in only one night. This was possible for the saint, because of the power, he developed, the power of transposing his body of (dense) elements into sphere of subtle bodies. (Furthermore), as a mark of it, one may walk in a river, and no portion of the dress or body may be wet. On such occasions, one actually moves through the space of fire and not that of water. When the case is this how he would be touched by water. In one breath, one may dash from East to West. You may come across such feats on their proper moments. Thus, the man has not left the place, nor has left his body, (and the feat is performed). When the soul of a man achieves perfection of its power, he develops the capacity to raise his body to the sphere of spirituality. Now, he may walk in fire, and he is not burned, for in the fire he is making his way through the space of spirituality which is free from burning. And as it is reported, Hell does not hurt its agents (i.e. the angels of Hell); and the prophets do make visitation into it and personaly verify the Divine promise: "And there is not one of you but shall come to it. This is an unavoidable decree of thy Lord (19:71)". They are saved because they are wrapt in purity (i.e. in the spiritual space), though they have the same body. Consequently, they go and come back, unhurt by the agony and cataclysm of Hell as God says: "Those of whom the good has already gone forth from Us, they will be kept far off from it (21:101)". They are indeed, away from Hell, though they pass through it just like us, when we have (only) an idea of fire in our mind. The idea passes away; we do not have the sensation of fire, nor are we hurt by it. It is because, the idea is not in the space of fire, and fire is not in the space of (that) idea.

Another sign of it is a saint's walk through a wall, as if he were passing through a gate. There is no obstacle. There is yet another

sign; a saint may hide himself from the sight of others. All this was, is and will not be impossible, but it is imponderable (to hold) that the Real, Most Glorious, descends to the spaces, mentioned by us; that He holds contiguity with them, or that He is squared with them, Or that any of his creation achieves the height which He possesses. His space is transcendental. No creation partakes of it. The Space is not *high* in the sense of a particular direction and elevation that the men of appearance may posit it as such. There are countless worlds and numberless creations as being below the Throne. It might have been comprehended by you that *direction* is bounded in itself by *elevation* and creations share it (as bounded), while the height of God's Space is unsharable. None of the creations has access to it.

Then, O, Dear, how long will you go about the world? And how far will you discuss high and low? You are yourself the epitome of existents and mundus sensibilis. Turn to your own existence. God says, "And in yourself—do you not see (51:21)," so that whatsoever is proved to be existing in the world is immediately beheld to be in your own self. Your conquests ond achievements, all inhere in it. Do go through this Section as being a Muslim, and redress yourself by strength and proximity and do you realize that whatever is necessary for you lies in your own being. May God open your heart and make it easy for you (to comprehend).

Behold that your body is composed of four elements, which oppose each other. It is a compound of clay, air, water, and fire. All these four are thus collected together in your body. After its decomposition, clay will remain. Its moisture is from water, and its dryness is from air. The place of clay in you is heart. It is self-evident, and what more of the obvious? In this clay, water has a different sphere which is as light as water. According to the demonstration, I made in the above pages, clay and water are opposites and thus their 'inherence' together is impossible. They cannot dwell in the same space. Moreover, there is narrowness and resistance in their respective dwellings. So long as one is there, the other cannot occupy the position. Its demonstration is the same, which was put earlier. Air has also a different space, lighter than that of water. Water and air also, according to the same demonstration, cannot get together. In air, fire has a space of its own, lighter than that of air itself. And in your soul, the Real, Most High, has His own dwelling. And there is no dwelling over and above the dwelling of God. The space of clay has no water, no fire, no air. Morever, soul connot be in it, nor can be God. The Space of air has no earth, no

water, no fire; it has neither Soul, nor God. The space of fire; it does not contain clay, water, and air; nor is soul in it, nor is God. The space of soul is free from clay, water, air, and fire; also it does not possess God either. And the Space of God; there is neither clay; nor is water, nor is air; nor is soul in it. And this Space is with all, with everything, and without everything. It is the farthest, the compresent, the nearest.

O, Thou who dwellest in heart and Spirit, but is hidden from them; O, Thou, who is light of the eye, yet no trace of Thine for it; O, Thou, who is the clamour of heart; but the heart is nowhere (without Thee); O, Thou, who is near but not joined; O, Thou, who is away, but not separate; Thou art present everywhere, but I know not where Thou art. Supplication to Thee, where to seek Thee. Repairing to Thee against Thy closeness while remoteness betakes the servant. Repairing to Thee, that present Thou art but absent is the servant. Repairing against Thy Perfection and Splendour (comparing) with the blindness of the Servant. O, Thou, that thousands of life be hidden against Thy voice, pray to Thee.

If some questioner puts thus: "Is the space, you have proved, eternal ? If you say : 'yes', it is ; then its pre-ennity is claimed, and the claim of pre-ennity for a thing beside God means disbelief. If you say : 'no, it is not'; then it means that it is contingent and created. And it is impossible that the Eternal Being is identified with the created and the renewed. Consequently, it is difficult to assert the space (of God)."

Our reply is that identification with anything cannot be attributed to the Real, Most High, for nothinn of the creation is identified with Him, nor does His *eternal being* descend to be identified with any of the created things. But, do we (hereby) assert, by this, an existence (in the Divine Space) for the created things in the manner of identification ? No, we do not. Only that kind of relation is stipulated by us which obtains between soul and body. The soul is with every part of the body, and there could be no particle of the body to be free from it ; viz : without having identification, the soul is compresent with every part of it. Contiguity, mergence, union, transposition, etc. being properties of bodily existence, cannot be predicated of soul, which exists in its (own) space with the fineness, which is proper to it. The exalted being of the *Nourisher* of the world is also co-existent with the being of the creatables, but He transcends every identification, joining, disjoining, touch, and comparison with them. He occupies

a place, which accords with His sublimity, transcendence, and loftiness, as has been discussed earlier.

If some one objects as follows : "The above arguments prove that God is present in all the heavens and Hell and in all the seven strata of earth, and that no part of the created entities is remote from or unoccupied by His sublime Being, though impermissible it is to attribute to Him identification with and permeation in the things. But we are uprooted with an apprehension in our heart, and are struck by a fear causing us tumble before we accept (the idea). It amounts to be a belief in Divine compresence with unclean things and places, like grass and refuge ; and its very thought is unwholesome and unbearable."

God willing, I will develop a satisfactory answer of this objection by three methods. The first thing, I will urge at the outset is a proper regard, as necessary pre-requisite to all (such) matters. Thus, when the discourse is on God's Essence and Attributes, it is an irrevocable obligation to be with proper regard and manners for God. Don't be such, (in this discourse), as to speak (with contempt) of the things as "this is bear, and that is boar." One and the same God is Nourisher of the snakes and scorpions, and gives existence to thorns and bushes. There are other (humble) things like them, which have no existence but by His creating them. Nevertheless don't you see God's revelation of what Abraham said, "And when I am sick, He heals me (26:80)" Thus Abraham attributed illness to oneself, and attributed cure to God, though there is none except God, who may cause illness. And God has said, "whatever good befalls thee, it is from God and whatever misfortune befalls thee, it is from thy self (4:79)." In this way, regard (for God) is cultivated just to keep the plane of his *being free from wanting* (biniyazi) as above all bad reflections and illusions. Consequently, wrong doing should also not be attributed to Him, for it is not worthy of His status.

The second reply is : all the ūmmah of Islam are of the consensus that God is creator of unclean and polluted things (also), and whatever is in the string of scorpion and the bite of (other) poisonous creatures is from Him: and all dirt, hay, and corrupted material is also from Him and is in His comprehension, because it is His care by the lack of which, they cannot survive. He is agent of all, but no bad reflection on Him is cast thereby. Thus, it is not right to hold for Him that by being with

all, His sublime Divinity is caught in some defect, though it is known that there is no action without an agent and no predicate without a subject.

The third reply is : it is established that the being of God and its position is exalted above and transcends all the elements and heavenly bodies and (also) unclean things. The Space of God is a thousand times more removed from the space of creation than the distance envisaged by their meanings (for us). Thus, if a man is of the age of a thousand years, and in every breathe he makes one thousand steps, even then it will be impossible for him to scale the place of God from the place of corporeal things or even from the plane of spirituality. If the inner distance turns out to be of such a nature then no aspersion could be cast on His nearness. To make it more cognizable I may couch two illustrations. The rays of Sun are propagated to every clean and unclean thing, and increase its property. But, the light of Sun itself does not increase thereby. The fragrance of musk and ambar does not magnify it, nor some more fineness is added to it. Similarly, decomposing dead corpse and the heaps of rotten stuff do not cause it pollution.

The second illustration is of soul. It is present in and is agent for every part of the body. It is the very life itself and all life of the body is from it. But, it is not contaminated by the existence of all kinds of excretion, blood, and components in the body. No impurity touches the transcendence and fineness of the soul. If the soul continues to maintain its relation with this unclean and impure body for thousands of years, it will continue with the same purity and cleanliness which belongs to its essence. (As if God says), 'O, friend, I wish your soul smell the fragrance of My closeness. But you make a pretext of remoteness. Those who seek the pretext of remoteness are many, and are dragged farther and farther away from Me. Make My closeness your pretext, so that you are drawn nearer and nearer to Me every instant, Your authority, attainment, prosperity and relation is all from Me. But, by rocking yourself to corrupting ideas, debasing whims, ignorant opinions and devilish suggestions, you have thrown yourself away from Me. (Beware) My nearness (to you) does not depend on your affirmation or denial. I am near to you whether you love it or not. It is neither conducive to nor is distracting from it (the nearness). My purpose is to make you blessed, comforted.

If the questioner says : "If *'Space'* is as you have described then

what does it mean; 'the Beneficent is established on the Throne (20 : 4)' " ?

Answer : We would reply that the sovereignty of the Sovereigns has a form of expression and that the Most Glorious is the (true) Lord of all Lords (Sovereign of the Sovereigns).

Sovereignty has two places of formalization. One is the *Sanctum sanctorum*, which is reserved for the sovereign and his attendants and confidents. And the other is public court, within the access of all. Thus, the suppliants seek redress here, and the royal staff is in service within it. It is the place where royal vision is sought by those who are its seeker, royal dignities are conferred upon the elects, and the culprits are sentenced. Thus the cxpediency and regulations of the entire dominion is fashioned and shaped at this public court and not in the Sanctum. After this clarification, know that every particle of creation is in itself Sanctum Sanctorum of the Lord of lords, the Most glorious. And none but the confidents of the Lord have admittance in it. And none but His Messengers and elect saints are accorded His vision in it. But, the Mighty Throne is public court for all, the place where the needy supplicates, and the Angels of affairs (viz: administrator of affairs) return (for instructions from above) and submit the deeds of the subject; the place where, the lovers are granted vision and the chosen are bestowed honours and the wicked are sentenced with chastisement. And thus all that takes place in the Dominion, by way of good or bad fortune, has its locus with the Throne.

And to make the Throne as determining nucleus of all these affairs is Beneficence and Mercy in itself to let the bewildered have a resort and the distressed supplicate their plains. For this reason it is said; "the Beneficent is established on the Throne (20 : 4)."

'Establishing on' is a symbol, eloquent in meaning, for unceasing Divine manifestation, unveiled (and unmediated). "And for God is Supreme analogy (16 : 60)." After it, let you know that the meridian of Sun is at noon. But, meridian or no meridian, it has no effect on Sun and its light. The needy are however flooded with light, when it is in meridian. On this analogy, the being of the Real Most High and His Attributes are not effected by His establishing or not establishing on the Throne. His Splendour, Glory, Transcendence and Perfection are not subject to change. It however, effects the fortune of the needy (creation). Thus, there is no better analogy.

He hears, if He is called devotedly.
But, where is such devotion to call Him ?

FASL FI ZAMAN

(ON TIME)

Comprehension of 'Be and it becomes' ; The Most High and Glorious says "And our Command is not but one, like twinkling of an eye (54 : 50)," and says the High ; "Indeed we utter to the thing, when we will (of it) ; we utter to it 'be' and 'it becomes' (16 : 12)."

Problem : According to those of *Sunnah wa l 'Jama'ah,* God is volitional with an eternal will, having no beginning, in relation to the infinity of volitions. The will eternal is but the will necessary. Necessary is that without which no object attains its realization. As it is known that the (particular things are not posited by the eternal will, for the volition which underlies and sustains an accident cannot be (by its very nature) eternal. Thus, the directness of relation between the accidents and the eternal will is imposssible.

[The question is] how, then, the objects of volition, which may go on springing unstopped to the endless future, are connected with the eternal will. Moreover, the existing things include in their class such entities (also) which have taken six thousand years in their becoming, like the heaven and earth (they were created thus) 'In six days (7 : 52) ; 'And a day with thy Sustainer is like one thousand years of thy reckoning (22 : 46).' There is one more entity which passed through forty thousand years in its becoming, and it was Adam, May peace be on him. 'I raised the composition of Adam by my hand in forty days'.

Then how does the formulae "Be and it becomes" apply to such entities ?

Answer : With God is succour and errorlessness. We say that the Eternal Will is dispensator to the objects of volition. But there are four pre-requisites of the perfect and complete dispensation of the Will. If any of them is missing, some imperfection (limitation)

creeps in. The fount of these imperfections, however, lies in the Will itself. There is a saying; 'sublimity of the eternal Attribute is predicated of contingency when it is tainted by some imperfection.'

The first condition (imperfection) of an object of volition is that it should appear at the time fixed for it, and not at any other time.

The second is that, it should appear at the place marked out for it, and not at any other place.

The third is that it should undergo the duration in its becoming, which has been appointed for it, and not any other period.

The last is that, it should come into existence with those characteristics, which the volition behind has affirmed for it, and not with others.

With the Measurement (Takdir) as it was determined for him, Adam ; peace be on him, was commanded ; 'Be thou with such and such characteristics at such and such time, by passing through forty thousand years (at a place) between Macca and Taif.' Consequently, he appeared at the place and at the time and passed through the fixed duration in his becoming with those properties as were ordained for him. That all this should have happened in twinkling of an eye would have been a naked contradiction of the (particular) volition, '*be so it becomes*'. The Divine Will had enacted for Adam that he would take forty thousand years, that he would appear at such and such time and that he would be at such and such place with such and such characteristics.

The above exposition makes it clear that whatever the Real, Most High, creates it with a necessary, volition (peculiar to it), and decrees it to 'Be and it becomes'. Difference of time and place in the objects of volition is (thus) from the decree itself, i.e., from the command of 'Be' and 'it becomes'.

O, seeker of truth, diver of the river of mystery, beware that despite the lucidity of my exposition and transparency of it, many a priceless jem lie hidden in its bosom. Even, the pebbles and shells at its shore are comparable with the unfathomable oceans. Notwithstanding all this, the truth of '*Be—and it becomes*' belies every comprehension. Our contention is supported by Divine Revelation ;

'And our Command is but one like twinkling of an eye (54 : 50)'. At another place, He says ; "And the affair of *that Moment* is but twinkling of an eye, or even smaller and yes it is shorter (70 : 4)". In other words, the entirety of the Day of Judgement is smaller than the twinkling of an eye. But the Day is known to have a duration of fifty thousand years ; 'of the Day, its span would be fifty thousand years (16 : 74)", Thus, we come to know that the period of a fifty thousand years, near the Lord, Most High, is less than the twinkling of an eye. It may be realised that an intelligent knowledge of this splendid secret is impossible of attainment untill the details of (various) *Times* were duly understood. But, this kind of understanding is superbly difficult and delicate. It is not amenable to the method of agreement and inference. Again, there are things in it which are inaccessible except by inner perception. They are illuminated by an approach with conviction; as is the method of Order (Tarika).

Now, we start with the description of *Time.* May God bless you ; Time (zaman) has three kinds ; The Time of Corporality, the Time of Spirituality and the Time of God, High.

The first has two planes : one is the Time of dense corporality caused by the movements of celestial spheres. It unfolds past and future, yesterday, today and Tomorrow. Its different lengths are quite familiar. It is common knowledge that a year is lengthier than a month, which (in turn) is lengthier than a day. It (thus) contains past and future, and also contains the present. This time is fastened to a structure and is rippen with an opposition. Yesterday is all past, tomorrow is all future, and what lies in between is present. Before yesterday is over, today does not dawn ; and before today is not past, tomorrow does not begin. Thus, past and future contradict synchronization.

The other (type of) corporeal Time belongs to the plane of light bodies, the realm of jinn. The long of the plane of dense bodies is the short at the plane of light bodies. Consequently, an hour-work in the latter competes with a work of one month or so in that of the dense corporality. Thus, it might have been heard, how quick at work are the Jinn and devils. A baby Jinni grows in a day as much as a human baby grows in years. It is understandable, because they grow in a Time, a little bit of which in itself is of a big size (for man-kind). This Time is also characterised by past, present,

and tomorrow. But, its yester and morrow have durations (of such length) that the future and past of man-kind are within the embrace of their present time. Thus, what to them is present time is still (coextensive with the) past and present years of mankind. Here, our discourse is replete with the ideas of compresence and nearness. They should not be confused with the ideas of limit/boundry.

Though, it seems difficult to handle the subject with arguments, yet it does not contradict knowledge. Then, no doubt should impede you in its following up.

The second kind of Time is spiritual ; it belongs to the angels, be peace on them. We shall be very brief here, for its treatment is not unlike the above discussion. It is worthy of grasp that the Time of Jinn has a great extendedness, while the Time of angels is infinitesimal. Thus, a thousand years of ours are contained in only a single moment of their (angel's) time. Work a of breath in their Time compares with that of a thousand years in our Time.

Their Time transcends, as it were, structuration. Moreover, resistance does not vitiate it. A thousand past years and a thousand future years (of mankind) may synchronize at only a tinny point of its duration. But, it does not embrace eternal past and eternal future in its extension for after all it is finite, and no finite contains the infinite in its fold.

Above all is God's Time. Its modality does not admit of pastness and futurity. The eternal past and the eternal future lie in its fold but are not apart from more than an insignificant instant of its modality. Its eternal past is its eternal future, and its eternal future is its eternal past. Truer is to say that in it eternal past and eternal future cease to be. If from the aspect of duration, God's Time is viewed, both eternal past and eternal future are less than the twinkling of an eye. And if it is viewed as from its infinitesimality, eternal past and eternal future would not emerge as more than a moment. There is no bygone and will be in it. Divisibility, recursion, and differentiation do not enter it. It is comparable with God's space, which is one, not many and is indivisible, yet not a single bit of creation is away from it. It is such that every particle of the universe is so embraced in it as you would be impelled to admit that the entire Dominion has no other thing besides that particle. This our time is one unmultipliable. And there is no instant of the eternal past, which contains no first

(moment) ; and of the eternal future, which contains no last moment so determined by Him, Who is One, as to be comparable with our time, or as to be describable in terms of before and after it, thus allowing identity of our time in it.

The Real, Most High, has sway over this Time, which admits of no division and parts, with a single, and not multiple sway. He commands over all the infinity of volitions by an indivisible act of will. He knows all ; infinity of all the knowables is encompassed in His unsegemented and undifferentiated one Knowing. He sees all ; all the visible are encompassed in one Seeing, and not in many. He is hearer of all the infinity of audibles ; but all of them lie in a single Hearing, admitting of no multiplicity. He is speaker. He commands all the 'speakables' in his single speech, and no many.

Blind of this clear illumination, the innovators are begotten of disbelief in the eternality of the Quran, and remark ; 'When Moses and Mount Sinai had no existence, how could have God spoken to Moses as 'Take off thy shoes : surely Thou art in the sacred valley Tuwa (20 : 12)'. These pitiable creatures are not alive to the discrimination which underlies *Time* and are no better than cow and ass. Since never they have been through the spiritual times, they are held fast to shallow doubts and false guesses. Had they been set free from the karnal bonds and had they sensed the spiritual time for not more than a breath, they would have felt the Time to which past and future cease to apply. There is no division, no recursion, and no segementation in it. Eternal past and eternal future are only a mark at it. Moses was there in This time before his existence and the Speech was delivered to him in it. Objection : but, these are words and mere words, not succour to the hearts of the seekers. A perfect guide is indispensable to educate the heart with this knowledge.

Answer : Let me reply that spiritual experiences, mystic vision, and inner perception are no argument but for those of right humour. (To others, arguments would be different as follows) I will speak of a state from the states of the Chief of the Apostles, May peace be on him. The true seeker might get to the illustration. In the story of Ascension (M'rāj), he said, 'I saw Yunus in the stomach of the fish.' And Sahā, under the same title, have reported the Apostle as saying ; "I saw 'Abd al Rahman bin 'Auf having entered Paradise crawling on his knees". In other words, the Apostle saw 'Abd al Rahmān as entering very lately. He asked of him why he was so late. 'Abd al

Rahmān said "O, Apostle of God, I was betaken by a knowledge, which turns the young old. So I could not reach you. I was worried that I might not see you". Now Yunus' being in the stomach of fish is an event upon which nearly three thousand years had passed before the Apostle saw it in his Ascension. And the state of 'Abd al Rahmān as he saw it, might come (some) fifty thousand years after it (the vision). The talk with him must not have lasted for more than a moment. Since in that sphere (of the Ascension), a thousand years of the past and a thousand years of the future were just synchronized, all the past and future states were accessible in it. The Apostle truly saw himself busy in talking with 'Abd al Rahman, an event which would take place after fifty thousand years. It was a real perception, and not a product of imagination. Then, how is it not possible for the Real, High, to address Moses at Mount Sinai in eternity, while the latter had no existence in this (our) time ? (The illustration just cited above from the life of the Prophet should suffice to answer it.)

If the Mutezilites object to it by that the 'Mirāj of the Apostle of God was in dream consciousness, and not in waking state, we have answer. First, those of the *Sunna wal Jama'a*, hold that the M'irāj was with body and in the waking state. This is a topic, on which there are many discourses which cannot be reproduced in this small tractatus. Nevertheless, our purpose to prove the existence of a spiritual order is however served, even on the basis of the spiritual character of the *M'iraj*. In dream consciousness the *bygone* and the *would be* cannot be apprehended but by the soul in a spiritual order. These events (of dream) are (thus) actual.

Behold that the creature in general has access to the (spiritual) time in dream only, while, the Apostles and saints of God have access to it in the waking consciousness. When it is like that, then the *Crown and Creation* and the *best of mankind* should have his M'irāj both spiritually and bodily.

Question : the discussion is entangled with a problem. If all those entities, whichever have been or ever will be, are in that time, designated as *'Mother Book'*, and if that Time lasts from the eternal past, rather embraces the beginningless past, does it not imply eternality of those entities. This implication (if admitted) accords with the religion of the *filasifa* and Dehariya (Temporalists) as against the credal rules of the people of Islam.

Answer : This point, raised by you, is very terse indeed and its solution is more so. Hearken to it, and exert after it. If God wills, you will be rewarded. Know that the eternal past and the eternal future, the first and the last do not apply to the Time (denoted as the *Mother Book)* The epithet of existing in eternal past, as applied to the things has its origin in the identification of this Time. All what lies in the eternal past is identical with all what lies in the eternal future; and also what is first is what is last. Thus, what you grasp as to be the first and by which the epithet of existence in eternal past is caused, should be attempted as grasped by you in eternal future. All what you grasp as future must be recomprehended by you to have been in the eternal past.

Let me explain this mystery more clearly and with a greater illumination. Khow: '*Mother Book*' is beyond the narrow guages of this time, which originates from the movement of celestial bodies. It is also above eternal past and eternal future. It has a flavour of the predicate of eternality. But, actualization in this world or in eternal past and eternal future is not at all necessitated for what it contains. We have just illustrated it by the story of *M'iraj*. The Apostle of God, peace be on him, stepped out the narrow strats of Time and Space, even beyond those of the eternal past and the eternal future, (which are) the wherewithal of creation, and ascended to (a plane) where he saw 'Abd al Rahmān b. 'Auf and chatted with him, as the latter was entering Paradise. It was not necessary for this particular state of that time to have existed in this time of ours. It will emerge out after (some) fifty thousand years. Thus, this state which existed for the Apostle in his M'irāj has no existence for us. (The conclusion is) eternality of the world (is a case which) does not belong to *our time*. It does not follow either that it belongs to the Lord of the World and to His Time. And with God is succour.

Know : The human soul has capacity to develop its power by self-purifications, spiritual exercises and loyalty to the footsteps of the law-giver (the Apostle of God). It may attain the power to raise its body to (the plane of) time of the light bodies. Its sign is that the man has performed a feat which cannot be performed by others over years. Is not a similar story of Khidr heard of ? He removed a mount from the farm of a dehkān (landlord) who was busy in levelling it ; and cleared of its debris, all but only in one day's labour. There is also another very popular story of Abī Hasan Kharkānī, who himself

narrated it as follows: "One night, we were detained away from our spiritual states. Our exercises ceased. When, we were released, our faces and beard were still wet with the water of ablution. There is one person in our company, who may recite the holy Koran a hundred times only in a single instant'. The Apostle's M'irāj is also of that order. Details of all the universe passed through his vision only in a single instant and he was admitted in the audience of the Real, Most High, with the grant of ninety thousand words in it (in the audience) but when he returned back, warmth of his bed was not yet over. If some one of the base mettle is in doubt, he is routed. For how would he then save the expeiences of his own dream? How would he deny it that illustrations of this kind in dream are plenty? Some one may have in his dream that he went to Turkistān, married himself, and settled there for a thousand of years in which he had a thousand children and passed a very busy life. This span of a thousand years in a brief span (of a dream) cannot be realized except in the medium of that Time, which we have discussed. No other explanation stands for it.

Actuation of events like that in waking state is not impossible. There is a narration. A companion of Junayd Baghdadi went to Dajla for a bath. He put off his clothes, and made a dive, When he raised his head, he found himself in India. He married there. A child was also born of the marriage. Several years passed on, in this way. Then, one day he went to the river for a bath. He dived. When he raised his head, he found himself at the same beach of Dajla. The clothes he had put off were still lying there. He put on the clothes and darted towards the monastry. As he reached there, he saw his companions performing ablution for the very prayer for which he had gone to a bath. It is all possible. This entire episode must have its locus at the *World of Forms* ('Alami Mithal), which has no trace of Corporality. Happening of this episode is also possible with body for the Lord, Most High, has power over it. You may not be unaware that there are saints who claim that a moment of theirs is more valuable than a thousand years of the common folk. You may be however, prone to interpret this claim in terms of their holiness and greatness. The truth however in this: when a postulant is raised to the plane (just discussed), he may perform the prayer of a thousand, may of a hundred thousands of years, in one and only in one breath. All these heights lie within the orbit of creation, but no creation si able to reach or cogitate the Time of God. It is this Time, the Time

of God which is 'Mother Book'. All of the eternal past and eternal future is in it. By comparison, the *Preserved Tablet* is limited in compass. Israfil knows the writing on the Tablet, but no one except God knows the Mother Book. The inscriptions on the Preserved Tablet may stay or fall away. The Divine words : "Effaces God what He pleases and establishes (what He pleases) (13 : 39)" ; alludes to it. But everything of the Time of God, i.e., of the Mother Book, is above change and modification, That, 'My sentence (utterance) cannot be changed (50 : 29)' ; alludes to it.

The Most High does not partake of (what is called as) the Divine Time. The latter has the property of to be in the knowledge of God. This specific property makes it denoted as the Time of God, on the like of as we say, *The House of God*, *'the she-camel of God'*, and *'the Spirit of God'*. Brood over it, and you will be convinced. God is eternal, beginningless, endless, and immortal. His utterance is (also) intransient and abides by all Time. His word is one, and unmultipliable. He is speaker with a single unceasing speech.

Know : all the actuation comes into effect by only one command, 'Be' ; and 'it becomes'. It is this one command which comprehends everything from eternal past to eternal future, not being absent even for twinkling of an eye or less than it from all becoming. It should be firmly understood that the Real, Most High, is Onipotent. All the determinations lie in his singular Power, admitting of neither number. nor recurrence. He is Omniscience by a single knowledge subject to no division. He envisions all the visibles, in one vision, which cannot be broken up. In one Hearing, He hears all the audibles, and all the volitions are just contained in His Will, which is one, indivisible, and unmultipliable.

Know : His primacy does not depend on the primacy of Time. It is Time, which owes its primacy to His primacy. Again, finality of God does not depend on his being at the end of Time. There is end of Time, because, God has Finality over all things. To be the First and to be the Last are His two eternal attributes. He is the First and the Last, the Last and the First. In His being first, He is the Last. His being last is such that the last time has no beginning (for it). In his being Last, he is the First. His being first is such that the very first time has not ended (for it).

O, dear; what I have tried to put before you is only a droplet

from the mysteries of Space and Time. Countless secrets and priceless gems of innumerable count lie untouched in the depth of this ocean. There is no use to open them before you, for right aspiration alone may give you access to them. I must stop, because you don't have it.

"Lot of things to be said, but memory helps not.
Pray, even Prayer helps not".

O, listen you who have the patience to listen, all I have said is for you a key to the treasure of gnosis. Since it is in your hand, a priceless store of mysteries is by now yours. Then, offer thanks to God. The secrets, which were in the bosom of *unalloyedness, untouchability* and *loftiness* are, thus, in the open market. These wicked hands (of mine) have piled them for sale. Take them and embellish your heart. There is no cure, if you do not endear them and continue to say 'I have no knowledge.'

You are no match even for the dust of the riches, which are confided to those, who are bearers of the secrets and keepers of the mysteries and their lights. This (your poverty) is permissible. But it does not, however, mean that storms of oppression and injustice are let loose on the seekers who themselves are so (delicately) placed that they have no safe conduct and are not immune from their own psyche (inward weakness), nor are they free from the sorrows caused by others. But he who has a will to strive after the light must be prepared to face every pain and suffering. There is no dearth of mischief makers in his path. He should, then, keep a hold on himself, lest his own self starts playing mischief upon him. The deeds of those who sow thorn in his path are but a price paid (for the lofty object). A seeker who has patience, unswervingly progresses from higher to still higher stations. The mischief-maker in his way, on the other hand, is headed towards the basest placement of the Prison (Hell).

O, the courageous, if knowledge is not in your possession, don't forget that its want will stir you up. And you will have it to your full capacity. But if its care is not strong in you, beware that its flow in you will recede, and will cripple the mount of your gnosis, Don't boast of your excellence ; don't relex ; strike hard ; and dedicate yourself with your entire being to it.

The Apostle of God said : "Of all the knowledge, given to man, there is one which lies above the comprehension of the masses. None but the *scholars with God* know it. So none beside the scholar with God, High, may profess it.

O, dear, if knowledge is that which is learnt from the teachers, then, take it that the knowledge with the Commander of the Faithful (Ali b Abī Tālib), may God be benign to his face, truly speaks of its own character. 'If I wish', he said; 'seventy camels may be loaded with the exegesis of the *Sūrat 1 Fāteha* (God or the Apostle must have taught him this knowledge). Suhail 'Abd allah, may God have mercy on him, said; "Every verse of the Quran comprehends seventy thousand meanings. And the Glorious says;" Utter, if the sea were ink for the word of my Lord, the sea would surely be consumed before the words of my Lord were over (18 : 109)'.

The Question is what should be our precept ? If knowledge is as mentioned above, is it possible that all the claimants of knowledge share it ? 'Abd allah b. Abbās said; "you will stone me"; and in some narration; "you will declare me an infidel, if I disclose all that I know about this verse 'Allah is He who created seven heavens and the earth and the like thereof (65 : 12)'."

The problem is, why could not other Companions and the Followers, join him ? Wherefrom did he learn the lofty knowledge, hidden treasure, and aweful secret, which looked like an infidelity to other Companions and Followers because of its unbearable comprehensiveness and immense delicacy ?

O, the courageous, why don't you be just ? How is it that the mysteries of the unSupportableness (Samadiya) are not conceded ? How is it that the scope of knowledge is confined only to the problems of stomach, Rahn (assurance), shufāh (neighbourly interest in property), commerce, wages, compensation, etc. ? Why not a knowledge (of the invisible mysteries) be admissible to him who has capacity for it ? Why should it not be valid ? It is surprising, you learn syntax (grammar) and have regard for its scholars, pay homage to the physicians, have a place for the crafts of shoe-makers, spinners, pot-makers, etc. but have no sympathy and recognition for those who are ardent pilgrims in the path of God. They have abstained away

from lucrations of the world, kept in restraint the passions of their human frame, and pressed themselves to limit for seeking Divine Nearness. They are those who left the youthful fanfare in the blooming spring of their life, lest they were denied the favour of God and His bliss. They are those who :

"Swim in Labour
Love and Longing ;
In the arms of day and
Laps of night".

Then, why don't you believe in the validity of the kind of knowledge (they have) ? May the Real, Most High, bestow on them clear and bright methods ; save the creeds of the believers from corruption, heresy, and errors. May He keep them under His protection. Indeed, He is the Comprehending and the Responding. May God send His Beneficence and Peace to the Apostle, his Line, and Companions.