

Khuṭba on the `ilm al-ḥurūf

خ Ḥaʿ	ح Ḥaʿ	ج Jim	ث Thaʿ	ت Taʿ	ب Baʿ	أ Alif
ص Ṣad	ش Shiʿ	س Sin	ز Zay	ر Raʿ	ذ Dhaʿ	د Daʿ
ق Qaʿ	ف Faʿ	غ Ghayn	ع ʿayn	ظ Thaʿ	ط Ṭaʿ	ض Ḍaʿ
ي Yaʿ	و Waww	ه Haʿ	ن Nun	م Mim	ل Lam	ك Kaʿ

("The Sermon on the Science of the Letters").

Translated from INBMC 91: 30-36. See also INBMC 67: 228-233.

Stephen Lambden 2007-8 (Under revision).

Last revised 21/11/07

The often faulty Arabic text here is gradually being modified and corrected...

(I)

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate.

الحمد لله الذي قد عرف ذاته بأياته المتجلية في عز الفؤاد بغير تشبيهه ولا
تفريق ليشهد الكل في مقعد الفضل صنع بأرائهم في مقعد الوصل أن لا آله
إلا هو

[1] Praised be to God Who hath enabled the gnosis of His Essence to be realized through His verses which express theophanic self-disclosure (al-mutajalliyya) within the grandeur of the inmost heart ('izz al-fū'ād), though without hint of either anthropomorphism (tashbiyya) or differentiation (tafrīq) [within hypostatsis-personna of the Godhead]. [2] This such that all might bear witness within the Locus of the Divine

Bounty (maq`ad al-faḍl) unto the ordered Handiwork of their Creator in the citadel of Reunion (maq`ad al-waṣl). No God is there except Him.

قد أبدع مثل الاحدية في حقائق الخلق بلا مثل من الوصفية و لا شبه من الضندية ليعلم الخلق في كل شان حكم الربوبية في هيكل العبودية الا اله الا هو و قد اخترع مظاهر الجمع في كل التفريق بلا نعت الجوهرية و لا صورة العرضية ليوقن كل ذرات الوجود في تلقاء وجه المعبود بتتريه الوصف عن حد ال اسمية و النعت الوجودية الا اله الا هو

[3] He generated the likeness of Divine Oneness (al-aḥadiyya) within the realities of Creation (haqā'iq al-khalq) though devoid of even the similitude of any depiction [of His Reality] or any hint of possible description [thereof], to the end that created things might, on every level, realize that the ordinance of Lordship exists within the Temple of servitude (hukm al-rububiyya fī haykal al-`ubudiyya) [for there is indeed] no God, except Him.

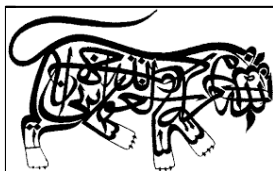
[4] He indeed originated the Manifestations of Comprehensiveness (maẓāhir al-jam`) within every singularity (tafrīq) though without any description of [His] Essential Reality (ni`at al-jawhariyya) and without any form of disclosure [of His Reality] (sūrat al-`arḍiyya) to the end that He might impress certainty upon every atom of existence [when] confronted with the Countenance of the One Worshipped [God] (al-ma`bud) at [the moment of] the perception of union (bi-tatriyyat al-wasl) [exists only] at the very limit of [disclosure from the sphere of] the Divine Names (ḥadd al-asmā'iyya) for such is [nothing other than] the semblance of existence (ni`at al-wujūdiyya), for , there is no God is there other than Him.

و قد إنشا بعز قدرته في ورقات شجرة السينا صور الإبداع و ما يمكن فيها ليخرج كل العباد كل حرف حكم مما يترك في القرآن و ما قد أحاط علم الرحمن الا اله الا هو قد خلق في نقطة الخط علم الحروف و كل شيء لنلا يقول أحد في صنع الله بعضا من القول و ليري في نقطة الذي حكم ما قد خلق الله في شجرة الأول أن لا اله الا هو

[5] He generated through the Might of His Power in the leaves of the Sinaitic Tree (waraqat al-shajarat al-sīnā') the forms of the creative

generation (ṣuwar al-ibdā') and whatsoever came to be therein to the end that all of the servants (al-`ibād) draw out of it every letter (kull al-ḥarf) which is a token (ḥukm) of whatsoever was deposited in the Qur'ān. And no one hath encompassed the knowledge of the All-Merciful, except God, [no God is there] except Him. [6] He indeed created through the Locus-Point of the [Alphabetical] Script (fi'l-nuqṭa al-khaṭṭ) the science of the letters (`ilm al-ḥurūf) and all things besides. This that any soul might give utterance and declare something of the handiwork of God (ṣan` Allāh) [7] and envision in a [Logos-]Point (nuqṭa) He Who decreed that which God created in the Primordial Tree (shajarat al-awwal). No God is there except Him.

(II)



و لقد نرى اليوم عن نفس في السفينة حب علم الحروف و اخرقا بعد ما قد
 سنل حكم اجلها بالعيان فأردت أن نرسل من نقطة البيان حكما من نقطة علم
 الحروف و اخرقا ليشهد الناظرون في تساوقا حكم الشجرة على الطرق الا
 اله الا هو و أن مثل ذلك فيعمل العاملون إلا إذا حرك خيط الضوآء من نور
 الحمراء هنالك فليصعقن السوريون من أهل السماء و ليشهدن الموفدون في
 أفق السمو طلوع خيط البيضاء من أفق السوداء اليص ال خبح من نور
 الجلال فيها قل بلى ر ربي لياتينكم ما لم علم الحرف و اخرقا لا يعزب ص 32
 من علمه شىء و كل شىء فد فضلناه في كتاب حفيظ

[1] We have indeed this day have observed a person in the boat [ark] (safinat) [with a] love of the science of the letters and their culmination [fulfillment/eschaton] (ḥubb `ilm al-ḥurūf wa akhiratihā). Subsequently he had enquired about the mode of their appointed time (ḥukm ajalihā) as observable phenomena (bi'l-`iyān). [2] So it was desired that We dispatch a resolution (ḥukm^{an}) [of the enquiry] from the Point of the Bayān (nuqṭat al-bayān), from the Point of the science of the letters (nuqṭat `ilm al-ḥurūf) [= the Bab] and their culmination (akhirati-hā). This

that the observers of their reading (tilāwatihā) might bear witness unto the judgment of the Tree upon the [Sinaitic] Mount (hukm shajarat `alā al-ṭūr), no God is there except Him. [3] And [that they may] realize that their likeness is even as the activity of causative agents (al-`amilūn), save that is, when the thread of resplendent light (al-khayt al-ḍiwā') is set in motion through the crimson Light (al-nūr al-hamrā'). [4] At this the Sinaitic dwellers [lit. `mountites'] (al-ṭūriyyūn) among the denizens of the Divine Cloud (`ahl al-`amā') are assuredly made to swoon away and the proponents of Divine oneness (al-mawḥidūn) at the horizon of heaven (ufq al-samā') bear witness unto the rising up of the snow-white thread (khayt al-bayḍā') from the black horizon (ufq al-sawdā').

[5] Has not the Dawn time (al-subḥ) broken through the Light of Glory (nūr al-jalāl) therein? [6] Say: Yea! By my Lord! that We might indeed deliver unto thee the universe of the science of the letters (`alam `ilm al-ḥurūf) and their culmination [eschaton] (akhirati-hā). [7] There is nothing that lieth outside of His knowledge. And We have indeed distinguished all things (kulli shay') in a Book Preserved (kitāb ḥafīz).

(III)

و أن في تلك النقطة قدحارت عقول الحكماء من قبل و ضلت أنفس العلماء
من بعد حل قد اعترف الكل بالعجز من علماها و أقروا لاثباتها بالعدل لال الله و
لمن شابا لافت ما يشاؤه ألا أن يشاء الله و كان الله على كل شيء مقتدرآ* ألا
أد ذلك العلم أخت النبوة في هيكل الربوبية و نعت من المعبودة في هيكل
الاندية لن محيط بعلمها أحد ألا ما شاء الله انه لعزيز حكيمة ماذا نطق
الإنسان في الورقاء أن اتقوا الله فان هذا البلد وعر شكواه قد رشح من
طمطام ألفة البيان و قد غرق فيها خلق كثير و كثر و يمشي بأذن الله عليها
فئة قليلة لا يعلم علقم الا الله و سبحان الله عفا يصفونه

[1] With respect to this Point (al-nuqṭa) the intellects of the philosophers of old (hukamā' min qabl) are bewildered and the `ulama (divines) of subsequent times have gone astray. This until all became well aware of the weakness of their `ulama' and gained solace on account of its establishment in justice through the family of God for whomsoever they will for they [the Imams] do not will save God Himself hath willed. And God hath ever been Powerful over all things. [2] Is it

not the case that this science [of the letters] ('ilm) is the sister of prophethood in the Temple of Lordship (ukht al-nubuwwa fi'l-haykal al-rubūbiyya) as well as an aspect of servitude in the Temple of the Divine Oneness (ni`at min al-`ubudiyya fi haykal al-aḥadiyya). [3] And no soul can encompass the knowledge of this science save such as God Himself, the Mighty, the Wise, doth will. [4] Wherefore does humankind (al-insān) cry out through the Dove [Bird] (al-warqa'), "Fear ye God! This is indeed the Path (al-sulk) so CHECK THIS. [5] There hath sprinkled forth from the billowing sea of God (ṭamaṭam Allāh) the Bayan (Exposition) and many multitudes of creatures have drowned therein. [6] And with the permission of God I shall proceed with respect to it, [disclosing] but the merest shadow for none is aware of [the extent of] its magnitude save God. And Glorified be God above that which they suppose.

(IV)

أيها الناظر و تدق النظر وصف البصر و أغمض عينيك و ترق الرقائق و
تعد في معارج الحقائق و ألق ما في يمينك و الشمال من إشارات الدقائق ثم
استقم على الضراطيم اعرف أن لهذه العلم أصول سبعة لا يقدر أحد أن
يخرج من هذا البحر ص 33 المواد قطرة من الماء إلا بعد معرفتها و الإيقان
ما أن اعرف حق النقطة في اولها و علم حروف الطورانية و الألمانية في
آخرها ر علم مراتب الفعل في كل وجه منها

[1] So O thou Onlooker! Examine carefully, refine the gaze and blind thine eyes! so as to render delicate the sensitive feelings (al-raqā'iq) then be restrained over reality generating mi`rāj journeys (ma`arij al-haqā'iq) and cast forth what in in thy right hand and in what is thy left of the subtle allusions about things intricate (ishārāt al-daqa'iq). [2] Then rise up upon the Path (al-sirat) and know that for this science ('ilm) are seven foundations (uṣūl). [3] It is not possible for anyone to draw out of this ocean even those waves which constitute but a drop of the Cosmic Watery Expanse (al-ma'), save, that is, subsequent to attaining into its gnosis (ma`rifat) and a state of certitude regarding it. [4] Know then [something of] the reality of the Point (al-nuqṭa) in its very beginning (fi awwaliha) and the [nature of] the luminous Letters (huruf al-nuraniyya) and those of darkness (al-zullmaniyya) with respect to their ultimacy

(akhiruha) as well as the knowledge of their modes of activity on every level (wajh).

(V)

و علم الهاء عند أخذ الاعداد بعد فثبت الواو ني عدد الحساب و حكم الأيام و نسبتها إلى كواكب السبعة ذلك حكم الله في علم النقطة. مما قد راي الفؤاد بالحق و ما كذب الفؤاد ما راي ذلك ربع مما أخذت من جعفر الأكبر خذ بقوة الله ما ألقيت اليد و كن من الشاكرين

[5] And [know also that] the science of the letter ه "H" (al-ha') is realized through a counting of successive numbers [through gematria : 5 = 1-2-3-4-5] (ʿind adha al-a`dād). [6] Then the [letter] و "W" (al-wāw) is realized through numerical calculation [5+1=6= abjad wāw] (fī `adad al-ḥisāb) for He decreed the days (al-ayyām) and their measure (nisba) relative to the seven stars (al-kawākib al-sab`a). [7] Such is the decree of God relative to the science of the Point (ʿilm al-nuqṭa) since the inmost heart (al-fū`ād) [of the Bab] hath, in very truth, seen and the inmost heart (al-fū`ād) does not lie about what it seeth (cf. Q.53:11). [8] Such is a sprinkling [of knowledge] derived from what was taken from the Greatest [Āqā Sayyid] Ja`far [ibn Abī Ishāq Kashfi Darābī] (d.1267/1850-1) (Ja`far al-akbar). Take ye then, through the power of God (bi-quwwat Allāh), what hath been cast upon thee and be numbered among the thankful.

[VI]

عن أن اتبع حكمي في ارض النقطة جافا هي شجرة لا شرقية و لا غربية قد سيرت مظاهرها كل حرف إلى ما لا غاية أن الأقرب إليها ألف الغيبية كلم الدينية ثم الجوهرية في أحرف التورانية ثم العرضية في أحرف الضدية ثم السواكن ثم المتحرك ثم الألف في أول كل حرف فان حكمها في الكتاب ما نشاهد. ممثل السنة و اعرف بعد حكم الألف في أحرف الثمانية و العشرين. ممثلها دون حرف التي اختصها الله بنفسها من دون مثل يشاكلها و أن لكل حرف من النقطة في مظاهرها حكم لا يعلم لأحد الا الله و من شاء انه عزيز ص 33 حكيم و ها أنا اذكر وجهاً من وجهها ليعلم أهل الأفئدة من كل حرف حكمها ر

[1] So follow My decree in the realm of the Point (arḍ al-nuqṭa) for it is indeed a Tree neither Eastern nor Western (cf. Q. 24:35). Its manifestations have set in motion every one of the letters [of the alphabet] in a manner without finality. [2] Most proximate thereto is the hidden [letter] "A" (alif al-ghaybiyya) then the "soft" ones (al-līniyya) [= و wāw, and ي yā] and those substantive [?] (al-jawhariyya) among the luminous letters (aḥraf al-nūrāniyya). [3] Then are those evident (al-`arḍiyya) among the letters of opposition (aḥraf al-ḍiddiyya), [4] then those motionless [= vowelless medial consonants] (al-sākin) [5] and then those set in motion [= the vowelized consonants] (al-mutaḥarrik).

[6] Then the letter "A" (al-alif) which is at the beginning of every letter, the wisdom thereof being in the Book (al-kitāb) which We evidence by the example of the tradition (sunna). [7] So be aware that the after the decree regarding the letter "A" (al-alif) which is [scribed] within the eighteen letters after its [own] likeness there is something other than a letter which God singled out for His Own Logos-Self and which has other than the likeness of their form [cf. al-Ahsa'i, Jawāmi` al-kalim vol. II: 312]. [8] For every letter derived from the Point (al-nuqṭa) there is a wisdom to its manifestations which none can fathom aside from God Himself and whomsoever He willeth for He is the Mighty, the Wise. [9] Of such [wisdoms] I shall mention but one of their aspects in order that the people of the inmost heart (ahl al-af'ida) might know what [manner of] wisdom lieth within every letter.

[VII]

أن الله قد خلق لحرب الألف حكم الفردوس و أهلها ثم للهاء حكم الإرادة ثم
 للعين حكم القدر و جندهايم للطاء حكم القضاء و مثلها صم للكاف حكم الأذن
 و أختهاثم للام حكم الكتاب و شبهها ثم للقاف حكم الأجل و شكلها تلك السبعة
 و ما نزلت في مظاهرها كتاب كريم في لوح مبين صراط على حق نمسكه
 تلك أحرف النمراننة أربعة و عشر

[1] Know that God created for the letter ا "A" (harf al-alif) [=abjad 1] for Paradise and its people (ḥukm firdaws wa ahlihā). [2] For the [letter]

هـ "H" (al-ha'= abjad 5) He allotted the Divine Intention (al-irada). [3] For the letter ع `ayn [= abjad 70] He allotted of the Divine Destiny (al-qadar) and its host (al-qadr wa jandiha). [4] Then for the [letter] ط "T" (al-ṭā') [= abjad 9] He allotted the Divine Accomplishment (al-qida') and its like. [5] For the [letter] ك "K" (al-kāf) He allotted the Divine Authorization (al-idhn) and its sister (ukht) [6] For the [letter] ل "L" (al-lām) [abjad 30] is allotted the Book (al-kitāb) and its resemblance (shabah). [7] For the [letter] ق "Q" (al-qāf) [abjad 100] He allotted the Appointed Time (al-ajall). [8] And their resultant (shakl) is [the number] seven (al-sab`a). [8] And that which was sent down of its manifestations is a Mighty Book in a Manifest Tablet, a Pathway unto the the Real Truth (al-haqq). [9] Their [mathematical] doubling [submersion ghamasaka ??] of these Luminous Letters (ahraf al-nuraniyya) yields fourteen [7x 2 =14].

[VIII]

فيا أيها الناظر أن كنت تعرف ما أشرت فيها تقدر أن تخرج حكم علم النقطة
و أختها ذلك حكم ما ألقيت إليك في اثنين باب من أحرف السبعة و أما ما
نلقى إليك من مراتب الفعل الكواكب أن الشامس كوكب الضفة و القمر نجم
الإرادة و الخمسة نجم الخمسة لا تبديل لحكم الله في بعض من الشئىء ر كان
الله ربك لقوي عزيز و أما حكم ما أشرت في علم الأيام الأحد للمشئىة و
الاثنين للإرادة و الثلثي للقدر و الأربعا للقضاء و الخميس للامضاء ر الجمعة
يوم الأجل و السبت للكتاب ذلك حكم الله فيها و ما أجد لسنة الله في بعض من
الحروف تحويلاً* ذلك حكم ما قد خلق الله ص 35 في ستة ايام من الأذن

[10] So O Thou Onlooker! If thou did know what is alluded to therein thou would reckon that the result would accord with the wisdom of the knowledge of the Point (ḥukm `ilm al-nuqṭa) and its consequent realities [alphabetical "sisters"] (ukht). [11] Such is the wisdom which I cast unto thee regarding the dual dimensions of the [word] Bāb (ithnayn al-bāb) [= its 2 letter ب "B" s] resulting from the seven letters [this duality باب = B+B with "a" is expressed as Bab = `Ali + Muhammad = 3+4 = 7 letters].

[12] Now regarding that which We [now] cast upon thee about the modes of activity associated with the celestial orbs [stars] (marātib al-fi`l

al-kawākib). The Sun is the orb [planet] expressive of al-mashiyya ("the Divine Will") while the Moon (al-qamar) is the star of al-Irāda ("the Divine Intention" (najm al-irāda). [13] The five stars [presumably 1. Saturn, 1. Jupiter, 3. Mars, 4. Venus and 5. Mercury] [correspond to] the other five for no change is there in the decree of God with respect to a single thing. And God, thy Lord is assuredly One Powerful, Mighty.

[The other five hypostatic potencies are [3] qadar ("the Divine Foreordainment"); [4] qiḍā' ("the Divine Accomplishment"); [5] idhn ("the Divine Authorization") [6] kitāb ("the Cosmic] Book"; [7] ajal ("the Divinely allotted Time"), see Kulaynī, al-Kāfī, 1:149]

[13] Now regarding the wisdom about what is indicated of the days [of the week] (al-ayyām). The first [day configures to] is al-mashiyya (the Divine Will), the second to al-irāda (the Divine Intention), the third to al-qadar (the Divine Foreordainment), the fourth to al-qiḍā' ("the Divine Accomplishment"), the fifth to al-imḍā' (the Divine Realization) and the [sixth] to Friday which is the Day of al-ajal (the Divinely allotted Time") while the seventh (al-sabt) [Saturday] configures to the [Cosmic] Book (al-kitāb). [14] Such then is the decree of God in this connection and I have not found in for the ways (al-sunna) of God with respect to the Letters (al-ḥurūf) [of the Alphabet] any alteration. [15]] This is the wisdom respecting the fact that God created [everything] in six days from the Divine Authorization (min al-idhn).

[IX]

و أما حكم ما ألقى إليك من حكم الهاء بعد حكم ثالث السادس منحرف فاستقر على عرش الإشارة فان الحجاب رقيق رقيق و البحر عميق عميق و الحكم أنيق أنيق أن أردت أن تأخذ ثمرة العلم أخذ حكم الأحرف بالعربية من علم ما تريد على عدد الحروف ثم احفظ يومك و نسبته إلى مراتب الفعل و الكواكب ثم اطرح من راس كل عشر عدد الثالث من السادس و زد بعد كل عشرة سبعة من حرف من الهاء و عدد من ثالث الجيم و احفظ الثلثي الاعداد حين الطرح فإذا جمعت الأحرف خذ الأحاد و ضاعف . ممثلها سبعة حرفا مما أشرت لك من قبل و اترك العشرات يخرج الحكم بأذن ربك ما لا ترى عين و يخطر بقلب من قبل ذلك فضل الله يؤتيه من يشاء و الله ذو فضل عدماً

[1] Now regarding the wisdom which We cast unto thee respecting the decree about [letter] هـ "H" (hukm al-ha') following the decree about threefold sixth among the letters [the threefold letter و wāw = واو w+a+w, abjad numerical value = 6 [13]]. [2] So [it is necessary that you] rise up upon the throne of allusion (ʿarsh al-ishārat) and if the [celestial] veil (al-hijāb) is especially fine and delicate (raqīq wa raqīq), the [cosmic] ocean deep and impenetrable (ʿamīq ʿamīq) and the decree (ḥukm) complex and intricate (anīq anīq) then desire that thou partake of the fruit of that knowledge (thamarat al-ʿilm) which involves obtaining of the wisdom [decree] (hukm) respecting the Arabic letters (bi'l-ahraf al-ʿarabiyya) through the knowledge that results from [an awareness of] the numerical value of the letters (ʿadad al-ḥurūf).

[3] So preserve [safeguard-memorize...] thy day and its designation (nisba) relative to the levels of activity (ilā marātib al-fi'l) and the celestial orbs (al-kawākib) then subtract from the head of all the tens the number of the three from the six (= wāw = 6) adding [multiplying?] there after all the seventeen letters from a letter from the letter "H" (min harf min al-hā') unto the number of the threefold sixth (= wāw = 6) and count from the threefold letter J" (thulth al-jim) and preserve [divine?] the two thirds of the numbers (thulthā al-ʿadād) at the moment of subtraction. [4] Then when [you have] added up [gathered together] the [value of the] letters are gathered together [added up] take the units [cardinal numbers (al-iḥād) and the double [multiple] (dāʿif) for in their image (bi-mithlihā) are seven letters the like of which hath been indicated unto thee before. [5] [Then] relinquish [omit] the tens and there shall emerge the valuation (ḥukm) with the permission of thy Lord, that which the eye doth not see nor had ever occurred to the heart aforetime. [6] Such is the bounty of God (fadl Allah) which He bestoweth upon whomsoever He willeth for God is the One possessed of Great Bounty (fadl ʿazim).

[X]

و أما حكم أخت النبوة فاعرف أن الأمر قد نزلت من مقام كن إلى مقام الجن
ثم مما قبلت من حكم ربك فيما الحكم في ما/ الفؤاد و تزيد ربك عن الأشياء
و الأمثال ماذا حكمت الأمثال بالمثل فقد قضى الأمر ص 3 و كان الحكم

محتوماً و كذلك في كل عالم بكل ما أحصى للكتاب أمره و أن في مقامث هذا
العام خذ شجرة السيناء من رأس الفن ثم اغسله على حد الصافي ثم خذ
مائها أربعة مرات فإذا أخذت ماء الخاسر لا بد أن يكون صفراء رقيق ثم
احفظه و خذ دهن من دهن رابع كبريت بعد تركها من جزء الأول عن الماء
الاجل و مثل ذلك شبه الأول فإذا بلغ الحد إلى السابعة يظهر اسم الله الحج
تطرح على قدر ما شئت من فيض الله و ما أجد لفيض الله تعطيل

[1] Now regarding the matter (ḥukm) of the sister of prophethood (ukht al-nubuwwa), know that the divine Command (al-amr) was [in this respect] sent down from the level of [the creative imperative] "Be!" (kun) unto the level of the jinn ("spirits") and then in line with what preceded it according to the decree (hukm) of thy Lord.

[2] And as for the matter (ḥukm) pertaining to the world of the inmost-heart (‘alam al-fu‘ad) and the ability to glimpse [?] (tatriyya) thy Lord abstracted from existing things and likenesses (al-imthal). [3] When the similitude is narrated as similitude [parable] (al-mithāl bi'l-mithāl) the matter is [divinely] authorized [sanctioned] and the [veracity of the] matter was, in this connection, sealed up (makhtūm^{an}). [4] Wherefore is it that in every world whatsoever pertains to whatever is computed has confirmation through the Book (li'l-kitāb) which is His Command (amr) [see Q. 36:12; 58:6; 72:28;78:29].

[5] Regarding thy station (maqām) which pertains to this world. [6] Obtain the Sinatic Tree (shajarat al-sīnā') from the head of the Youth (ra`s al-fatā)! than cleanse [wash] (gh-s-l) it at the very apex of purity (‘alā ḥadd al-ṣāfā) [7] Then extract its liquid-water (mā') [= mercury] four times. [8] If you extract a fifth part the liquid (khāmis al-mā') without fail it will be a subtle yellow (ṣafrā' raqīq). [9] Then preserve it and extract oil from that oil which is a fourth part sulphur (duhn min duhn rābi` kibrit) [10] after you have abandoned the first portion of the initial liquid [=mercury] (al-mā' al-awwal) and the likeness of that first semblance (mithl dhalik shubba al-awwal). [11] When you have attained that limit [apex] (hadd) at seven [times] there will be manifest the Name of God, the Living One (al-ḥayy) [= abjad 18] [12] then abandon-divide through the Bounty of God (fayḍ Allāh) according to the extent that you desire for there is not found for the Bounty of God any interruption.

SOME NOTES

FN. Hadith from Imam Ja`far al-Sadiq:

[1] Mashiyya ("the [Divine] Will"); [2] irāda ("the [Divine] Intention"); [3] qadar ("the [Divine] Foreordainment"); [4] qiḍā' ("the Divine Accomplishment"); [5] idhn ("the Divine Authorization") [6] kitāb ("the [Cosmic] Book"); [7] ajal ("the [Divinely] allotted Time"). And whoso claims to be able to violate this unitative schemata is assuredly an infidel." (Kulaynī, al-Kāfī, 1:149).

In its Kitāb al-tawḥīd (Book of the Divine Unity) the centrality of mashiyya as a theological-cosmological concept is evident. References to al-mashiyya in Bābī-Bahāī scripture are most centrally rooted in a number of key Shīī traditions deriving from various of the the (twelver) Imams. Among them the following tradition related from Abī `Abd-Allāh [= Imam Ja`far al-Sadiq] (d. c. 148/765) which is frequently cited and commented upon by the Bāb:

"There is not a single thing in the heavens or on the earth but came to be through these seven factors (khiṣāl) :

[1] mashiyya ("the [Divine] Will"); [2] irāda ("the [Divine] Intention"); [3] qadar ("the [Divine] Foreordainment"); [4] qiḍā' ("the Divine Accomplishment"); [5] idhn ("the Divine Authorization") [6] kitāb ("the [Cosmic] Book"); [7] ajal ("the [Divinely] allotted Time"). And whoso claims to be able to violate this unitative schemata is assuredly an infidel." (Kulaynī, al-Kāfī, 1:149).

An almost identical hadīth to the above, narrated through Abū'l-Ḥasan Mūsā ibn Ja`far, reads:

"There is not a single thing in the heavens or on the earth but came to be through these seven [factors]:

- [1] qidā' ("the Divine Accomplishment");
- [2] qadar ("the [Divine] Foreordainment");
- [3] irāda ("the [Divine] Intention");
- [4] mashiyya ("the [Divine] Will");
- [5] kitāb ("the [archetypal-cosmogonic] Book");
- [6] ajal ("the [Divinely] allotted Time");
- [7] idhn ("the Divine] Authorization").

And whoso supposes [the centrality] other than this [schema] assuredly attributes a lie unto God or disputes with God who is to be exalted and glorified (ibid 1:149-150).

Following these two traditions (cited above) there is a section in al-Kāfi entitled, bab al-mashiyya wa'l-irāda ("Section on the Divine Will and the Divine Intention") which contains six traditions (see ibid 1:150-152). In the first of them Abī `Abd Allāh [=Imām Ja`far al-Ṣādiq] is cited as having said,

"There is naught that hath come into being save that which God hath willed (sha`a Allāh) and intended (cf. irāda) , foreordained (cf. qadar) and accomplished (cf. qidā'). I enquired, `What is meant by `He [God] hath willed?' He [the Imam] replied, `It is the commencement of action'. I then enquired, `What is meant by His foreordaining'. He [the Imam] replied, `It is the determining of something in terms of its length (tūl) and its width (`arḍ).' I further enquired, `What is meant by the [Divine] accomplishment?' He [the Imam] replied, `When something is ordained such is

[assuredly] carried out. This then is what cannot be annulled.' (ibid).

The next tradition set down in Kulayni's al-Kāfī is unusual in that it records Imam Ja`far reporting that God had no particular liking when He was involved in willing, intending, foreordaining and accomplishing (cf. 1->4 in the first tradition cited). This enigmatic ḥadīth is probably intended to indicate God's remoteness, his abstraction from these processes in the light of His transcendence and incomprehensibility

NOTES

VI:7. "So be aware that the after the decree regarding the letter "A" (al-alif) which is [scribed] within the eighteen letters after its [own] likeness there is something other than a letter which God singled out for His Own Logos-Self and which has other than the likeness of their form."

There would seem to be allusion to the tradition ascribed to the fifth Imam, Muhammad al-Baqir also recorded in the Usul al-Kafi of Kulayni:

"God created a Name by means of unpronounced letters and by means of an unuttered Word" .

This mystery "Word" is described as the "Complete Word". It is fundamental to created existence (for details see al-Ahsa'i, Jawāmi` al-Kalim vol. II: 312) This has been noted by Cole, 1994:155 and others.

Add here complete text and translation.

