

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

1. <sup>v</sup>Praise be to God, Who became manifest (*tajallā*) through His essence (*bi-dhātihi*) to His essence (*li-dhātihi*), so that the manifestations (*majālī*) of His essence and of His attributes <sup>v</sup>became individuated (*ta'ayyana*) in His inner knowledge, <sup>v</sup>the effects (*āthār*) of these manifestations being then reflected <sup>v</sup>upon His outward aspect (*zāhir*) from within (*al-bāṭin*), <sup>v</sup>such that unity (*al-waḥdah*) became multiplicity (*kathrah*), <sup>v</sup>as you see and behold. May God's blessing and peace be upon him through whom <sup>v</sup>this multiplicity reverted to its original unity, and upon his family and companions, <sup>v</sup>who have inherited of this virtue a large portion.

2. *To Proceed*, this is a treatise dealing with the verification of the doctrines of the Ṣūfīs, the theologians, and the early philosophers, and with the establishment of their beliefs concerning the existence of the Necessary Existent in Himself (*al-Wājib li-Dhātihi*), the realities (*ḥaqā'iq*)<sup>1</sup> of His names and attributes, the manner in which multiplicity emanates from His unity without any impairment (*naqṣ*) to the perfection of His sanctity and glory, and other subsequent inquiries (*mabāḥith*) prompted by thought (*al-fikr*) and reason (*al-nazar*). It is hoped that God will permit every unbiased seeker to benefit from this treatise and that He will protect it from every unthinking bigot, for He is sufficient for me and an excellent guardian.

3. *Preface*. Know <sup>v</sup>that there is in existence a necessary existent (*wājib*), <sup>v</sup>for otherwise that which exists (*al-mawjūd*) would be restricted to contingent being (*al-mumkin*), <sup>v</sup>and consequently nothing would exist at all. <sup>v</sup>This is because contingent being, even though multiple (*muta'addid*), is not self-sufficient (*lā yastaqill*) with respect to its existence, as is obvious, nor with respect to bringing another into existence, since the stage of bringing-into-existence (*martabat al-ijād*) is consequent to that of existence.<sup>1</sup> Thus, if there is neither existence nor

bringing-into-existence, there can be nothing that exists, either through itself or through another. Thus the existence of the Necessary Existent (*al-Wājib*) is proven.

4. The apparent position (*madhhab*) of both al-Shaykh Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ash‘arī<sup>1</sup> and al-Shaykh Abū al-Ḥusayn al-Baṣrī<sup>2</sup> of the Mu‘tazilites is that the existence of the Necessary Existent (*al-Wājib*) indeed the existence of everything, is identical with its essence (*dhāt*)<sup>3</sup> both in the mind (*dhihnan*) and externally (*khārijan*).<sup>4</sup> This implies that existence is common (*ishtirāk*) to proper existences (*al-wujūdāt al-khāṣṣah*)<sup>3</sup> in name only (*lafzan*) rather than in meaning (*ma‘nan*), and this is obviously false, because, as has been explained elsewhere in works dealing with this subject, belief concerning [the existence of] something in an absolute sense endures even though belief as to its particular characteristic (*khuṣūṣīyah*) ceases,<sup>5</sup> and because [existence] is subject to division in meaning (*al-taqṣīm al-ma‘nawī*).<sup>4</sup> Some people, therefore, did not interpret their position literally, but claimed that what they meant by identity (*al-‘aynīyah*) was indistinguishability in the external world, that is, that there is not in the external world something which is the quiddity (*al-māhīyah*) and something else subsisting in it (*qā‘im bihā*) externally which is existence, as one who follows their proofs understands.

5. The majority of the theologians (*jumhūr al-mutakallimīn*) took the position that existence is a single concept (*mafḥūm wāḥid*) common to all existences, and that this single concept becomes multiple and is divided into portions (*ḥiṣṣah*) through its attribution to things (*al-ashyā’*), as, for example, the whiteness of this snow [as distinguished from the whiteness of] that snow.<sup>6</sup> The existences of things are these portions, and these portions along with that concept (*al-mafḥūm*) intrinsic to them (*al-dākhil fihā*) are external (*khārijah*) to the essences of things and only mentally superadded to them (*zā‘idah ‘alayhā*) in the view of their verifiers (*muḥaqqiqihim*),<sup>1</sup> and both mentally and externally in the view of others.[<sup>1</sup>]

6. The gist (*ḥāṣil*) of the position of the philosophers<sup>1</sup> is that existence is a single concept common to all [proper] existences. These [proper] existences, however, are dissimilar

realities which are multiple in themselves not merely through the accident of attribution (*'āriḍ al-iḍāfah*), for in that case they would be similar to each other (*mutamāthilah*) and agree in reality, nor through specific differences (*al-fuṣūl*), for in that case absolute existence (*al-wujūd al-muṭlaq*) would be their genus (*jins*). On the contrary, existence is an accident concomitant with them (*'āriḍ lāzim lahā*) like the light of the sun and the light of a lamp. Although both sun and lamp differ in reality (*al-ḥaqīqah*) and in concomitants (*al-lawāzīm*), they, nevertheless, have in common the accident of light. <sup>5</sup>Similar to this are the whiteness of snow and the whiteness of ivory, or quantity and quality, which have in common accidentality (*al-'araḍīyah*), or even substance and accident, which have contingency (*al-imbkān*) and existence in common. However, since each [proper] existence does not have its own name, as is the case with the divisions of contingent being (*aqsām al-mumkin*) or the divisions of accident (*aqsām al-'araḍ*), it was imagined that the multiplicity (*takaththur*) of existences and their division into portions was due entirely to their attribution to the quiddities which are their substrata, like the whiteness of this snow and [the whiteness] of that, or the light of this lamp and [the light] of that. Such, however, is not the case. On the contrary, they are different and dissimilar realities subsumed under this concept which inheres [in them] but is external to them. When one considers that this concept becomes multiple and is divided into portions through its attribution to quiddities, then [one realizes] that these portions also are external to those existences with dissimilar realities (*al-wujūdāt al-mukhtalifat al-ḥaqā'iq*).<sup>[2]</sup>

7. Three things are thus [involved]: the concept of existence (*mafḥūm al-wujūd*), its portions individuated through its attribution to quiddities, and the proper existences with dissimilar realities (*al-wujūdāt al-khāṣṣah al-mukhtalifat al-ḥaqā'iq*). The concept of existence is essential (*dhātī*) and intrinsic to (*dākhil fī*) its portions, but both<sup>[3]</sup> are external to (*khārij 'an*) proper existences. Proper existence is <sup>5</sup>identical with the essence in the case of the Necessary Existent (*al-Wājib*), but superadded (*zā'id*) and external (*khārij*) in the case of everything else.

8. <sup>v</sup>Ramification. If you have understood this, we say further:<sup>1</sup> Just as it is possible for this general concept (*al-mafhūm al-‘amm*) to be superadded to Necessary Existence (*al-Wujūd al-Wājibī*) and to contingent proper existences, on the assumption that the latter are dissimilar realities, it is also possible for it to be superadded to a single absolute and existent reality (*ḥaqīqah wāḥidah muṭlaqah mawjūdah*) which is the reality of Necessary Existence (*ḥaqīqat al-Wūjud al-Wājib*)[<sup>4</sup>] as is the position taken by the Ṣūfīs who hold the doctrine of the unity of existence (*waḥdat al-wujūd*). This superadded concept would then be a mental entity (*amr i’tibārī*)<sup>2</sup> existing only in the intellect (*al-‘aql*), and its substratum (*ma’rūd*) would be an external and real existent (*mawjūd ḥaqīqī khārijī*) which is the reality of existence.[<sup>5</sup>]

9. Furthermore,<sup>1</sup> <sup>v</sup>that existence is predicated by analogy (*al-tashkīk al-wāqī’ fīhi*) does not indicate that it is an accident with respect to its singulars (*afrād*),[<sup>6</sup>] for no proof has been adduced to show that it is impossible for quiddities and essential attributes (*al-dhātīyāt*) to differ by analogousness (*bi-al-tashkīk*).<sup>2</sup> The strongest argument they have mentioned is that if a quiddity or an essential attribute differs in its particulars (*al-juz’īyāt*), then neither the quiddity nor the essential attribute is one. <sup>v</sup>This [argument], however, is refuted (*manqūḍ*)<sup>3</sup> by the case of the accident.[<sup>7</sup>] <sup>v</sup>Also, a difference in completeness or incompleteness in the same quiddity, such as a cubit or two cubits of measure does not imply a difference in the quiddity itself.[<sup>8</sup>]

10. Al-Shaykh Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī said in his *al-Risālah al-Hādiyah*:<sup>1</sup> If a reality differs “by being more powerful (*aqwā*), prior (*aqdam*), stronger (*ashadd*), or superior (*awlā*) in something, all of that is due, in the opinion of the verifier (*al-muḥaqqiq*), to its manifestation (*al-zuhūr*) rather than to any multiplicity (*ta’addud*) occurring in the reality [itself] which is becoming manifest. [This is so] regardless of whether that reality is one of knowledge, of [real] existence, or of something else. There is, thus, a recipient (*qābil*) predisposed for the manifestation (*zuhūr*) of the reality such that the reality is more complete in its manifestation in one recipient than it is in its

manifestation in another, even though the reality [itself] is one in all [recipients]. The inequality (*al-mufaḍalah*) and dissimilarity (*al-tafāwut*)[<sup>9</sup>] occurs between its manifestations in accordance with the command causing its manifestation (*al-amr al-muḥḥir*) and requiring an individuation (*ta'ayyun*) of that reality which is different from its individuation<sup>2</sup> in some other matter. There is, thus, no multiplicity (*ta'addud*) in the reality as such, nor is there any division (*tajzi'ah*) or partition (*tab'īd*). What has been said to the effect that if light and knowledge necessitated [respectively] the cessation of night-blindness (*al-'ashā*) and the existence of something known, then every light and knowledge would do the same, is true, 'as long as one does not mean by this that there is any difference in the reality.'

11. Moreover, the basis (*mustanad*) of the position taken by the Ṣūfīs is mystical revelation and insight (*al-kashf wa-al-'iyān*) rather than reason and demonstration (*al-naẓar wa-al-burhān*).[<sup>10</sup>] For indeed, since they have turned towards God in complete spiritual nudity (*al-ta'riyah al-kāmilah*) by wholly emptying their hearts 'of all worldly attachments (*al-ta'alluqāt al-kawniyah*) 'and the rules of rational thought (*al-qawānīn al-'ilmīyah*), and by unifying the will (*tawaḥḥud al-'azīmah*), persisting in concentration (*dawām al-jam'īyah*), and persevering along this path without slackening, interruption of thought (*taqṣīm khāṭir*) or dissolution of will (*tashattut al-'azīmah*), God has granted to them 'a revealing light (*nūr kāshif*) to show them things as they really are.<sup>1</sup> This light appears within 'at the appearance of a level beyond the level of the intellect (*ṭawr warā' ṭawr al-'aql*). Do not think the existence of that improbable, for beyond the intellect are many levels whose number is hardly known except by God.[<sup>11</sup>]

12. The relation of the intellect to this light is the same as the relation of the estimation (*al-wahm*) to the intellect. And just as it is possible for the intellect to judge something to be true which cannot be apprehended by the estimation, such as the existence of a being (*mawjūd*), for example, which is neither within the world nor outside it,<sup>1</sup> so also can that revealing light judge to be true certain things which cannot be apprehended by the intellect, [<sup>12,13</sup>] such as the existence of an all-encompassing

and absolute reality (*ḥaqīqah mutlaqah muḥīṭah*) unlimited by any determination (*taqayyud*) and unrestricted by any individuation (*ta'ayyun*), although the existence of such a reality is not [a proposition] of this sort, <sup>v</sup>for many of the philosophers and theologians have taken the position that natural universals (*al-kullī al-ṭabī'ī*)<sup>2</sup> exist in the external world. Moreover, all those who have undertaken to prove the impossibility [of this proposition] have used premisses which are not free from suspicion of being defective. The intention here, however, is merely to eliminate from this proposition (*al-mas'alah*) any logical impossibility along with the usual reasons for thinking it improbable, not to establish it with proofs and demonstrations. Indeed, those who have studied this proposition, either to verify or support it or to invalidate or impair it, have been able to produce only insufficient proofs and demonstrations of it or to point out uncertainties (*shukūk*) and raise weak and unfounded objections (*shubah*) against it.

13. One of the proofs for the impossibility of the [external] existence of natural universals is that given by al-Muḥaqqiq al-Ṭūsī in his *Risālah* written in answer to the questions asked him by al-Shaykh Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī.<sup>1</sup> He argues that “a concrete thing (*al-shay' al-'aynī*) does not subsist in (*lā yaqa' alā*) numerous things, because if it were in each one of those things, it would not be one concrete thing (*shay' bi-'aynih*) but rather [many] things. Alternatively, if it were in the whole [of them] insofar as [they are] a whole (*min ḥayth huwa kull*), the whole constituting in this respect a single thing, then it would not subsist in [numerous] things. If, on the other hand, it were in the whole in the sense of being divided among its units (*āḥād*), then there would be in each unit only a part of that thing. Thus if it is neither in the units nor in the whole, it does not subsist in them.”

14. Al-Mawlā al-'Allāmah Shams al-Dīn al-Fanārī answered him in his commentary on *Miftāḥ al-Ghayb*.<sup>1</sup> Choosing the first alternative (*al-shiqq al-awwal*)<sup>2</sup> [for refutation] he said: “The meaning of the realization (*taḥaqquq*) of a universal reality (*al-ḥaqīqah al-kullīyah*) in its singulars (*afṛād*) is its realization at one time qualified by this individuation (*al-ta'ayyun*) and at

another by that individuation. This does not necessitate its being many things, just as the transformation (*taḥawwul*) of a single individual into different (*mukhtalifah*) or even completely distinct (*mutabāyinah*)<sup>3</sup> states does not necessitate its being [many] individuals." He then said: "Should you say: How can what is one in essence (*al-wāḥid bi-al-dhāt*) be described by contrary qualities (*al-awṣāf al-mutaḍāddah*) like easternness and westernness, or knowledge or ignorance, and so forth? I should answer: You think this improbable because you make universals analogous to particulars and the invisible world (*al-ghā'ib*) analogous to the visible world (*al-shāhid*). There is no proof for the impossibility of this with respect to universals."

15. Another [proof] is that of al-Mawlā Qutb al-Dīn al-Rāzī,<sup>1</sup> which states that numerous realities such as genus, difference, and species, are all realized in one singular (*fard*). If they existed [externally], however, predication between them would be impossible because of the impossibility of predication between multiple [external] existents (*mawjūdāt muta'addidah*).

16. Al-'Allāmah al-Fanāri<sup>1</sup> answered him saying that "it is possible for numerous related realities (*ḥaqā'iq mutanāsibah*) to exist through a single existence which includes them as such, just as fatherhood subsists in the sum total of the parts of the father as a whole." The lack of multiple existences (*'adam al-wujūdāt al-muta'addidah*) does not imply the lack of existence absolutely. Indeed they explicitly state that the creation (*ja'l*) of the genus, the difference, and the species is one.<sup>2</sup>

17. As for the proofs for the existence of natural universals in general,<sup>[14]</sup> they are not such as to be useful [in proving] this thesis (*al-maṭlūb*) to the point of certainty but only to the point of probability, although they are mentioned in the well-known works [dealing with this subject] together with the objections raised against them. We have, therefore, avoided taking up these proofs and shall concern ourselves only with what serves to prove this thesis itself.

18. We say, therefore, that there is no doubt that the Source of Existents (*Mabda' al-Mawjūdāt*) exists,<sup>[15]</sup> and that this source can be either the reality of existence (*ḥaqīqat al-wujūd*) or something else. It cannot, however, be something else, since

everything except existence is in need of another, namely existence, in order to exist, and to be in need is inconsistent with necessary existence (*al-wujūb*). Therefore, this source must be the reality of existence. <sup>v</sup>Moreover, if it is absolute (*mutlaq*), then the thesis (*al-maṭlūb*) is proven. If, on the other hand, it is individuated (*muta'ayyin*), then it is impossible for its individuation to be intrinsic to it (*dākhil fīhi*), for otherwise the Necessary Existent (*al-wājib*) would be compound. Its individuation must, therefore, be extrinsic (*khārij*) [to it]. It follows that the Necessary Existent is a simple entity (*maḥḍummā*), which is existence, and that its individuation is an attribute inhering [in it].

19. Should you ask: Why is it not possible for its individuation to be identical with it? I should answer: If by individuation you mean that through which it is individuated, then it is possible for it to be identical with it. However, this does not harm our position, because if that through which it is individuated is its essence, <sup>v</sup>then it cannot in itself be individuated, otherwise an endless chain would result. On the other hand, if what is meant is the individuation (*al-tashakhkhus*) itself, then this cannot be identical with its essence, because it is one of the second intelligibles (*al-ma'qūlāt al-thāniyah*)<sup>1</sup>, to which nothing corresponds in the external world.[<sup>16</sup>]

20. It is evident to anyone familiar with the doctrines promulgated in their books that what is related of their revelations (*mukāshafāt*) and visions (*mushāhadāt*) attests only to the affirmation of the existence of an absolute essence (*dhāt mutlaqah*) encompassing the intellectual and concrete planes (*al-marātib al-aqlīyah wa-al-'ayniyah*) and expanding over both mental and external existents, but having no individuation which prevents it from appearing in other individuations whether divine or created. Thus, it is not impossible to affirm of it an individuation which is consistent with (*yuḡami'*) all individuations and is not inconsistent with (*lā yunāfi*) any of them, which is identical with its essence and not superadded to it either in the mind or externally, <sup>v</sup>and which the intellect, should it conceive of it in a certain individuation, would be unable to imagine as being common (*mushtarak*) to many in the same way that universals



are common to their particulars, but would be able to conceive of as being transformed into or as appearing in numerous forms (*al-ṣuwar al-kathīrah*) and infinite manifestations (*al-mazāhir al-ghayr al-mutanāhiyah*), both cognitively and concretely (*'ilman wa-'aynan*) and in the invisible world as well as the visible (*ghayban wa-shahādatan*), in accordance with various relations (*al-nisab al-mukhtalifah*) and different aspects (*al-i'tibārāt al-mutaghāyirah*).<sup>1[17]</sup>

21. <sup>v</sup>Consider this by analogy with the rational soul (*al-nafs al-nāṭiqah*), which pervades the parts of the body and their external senses and internal faculties (*quwāhā al-bāṭinah*); <sup>v</sup>or even better (*bal*) by analogy with the perfectional rational soul (*al-nafs al-nāṭiqah al-kamālīyah*), which, if realized (*taḥaqqāqat*) as a manifestation of the comprehensive name (*mazharīyat al-ism al-jāmi'*),<sup>1</sup> is spiritualized (*kān al-tarawḥun*)<sup>2</sup> of some of its concomitant realities (*ḥaqā'iqihā al-lāzimah*) and appears in numerous forms without determination (*taqayyud*) or limitation (*inḥiṣār*), all of which can be predicated of it and of each other because of the unity of its individual essence (*'ayn*) just as it becomes many because of the variation of its forms.

22. For this reason it was said [<sup>18</sup>] of Idrīs that he was Ilyās sent to Baalbek,<sup>1</sup> not in the sense that his individual essence (*al-'ayn*) shed the Idrīsid form (*al-ṣūrah al-idrīsīyah*) and put on the Ilyāsīd form, since this would be a profession of metempsychosis (*al-tanāsukh*), but rather in the sense that the ipseity (*huwīyah*)<sup>2</sup> of Idrīs, while subsisting in his individual existence (*annīyah*)<sup>3</sup> and form (*ṣūrah*) in the fourth heaven, nevertheless appeared and became individuated (*ta'ayyanat*) in the individual existence of Ilyās, who remains to this time. Thus the ipseity of Idrīs with respect to his individual essence (*al-'ayn*) and reality (*al-ḥaqīqah*) is one, but with respect to formal individuation (*al-ta'ayyun al-ṣūri'*) is two. In like manner Jibrīl, Mikā'il, and 'Izrā'il appear at one and the same time in 100,000 places in different forms, all of which subsist in them.

23. <sup>v</sup>Similar to this are the spirits of the perfect (*arwāḥ al-kummāl*). For example, it is related of Qaḍīb al-Bān al-Mawṣilī<sup>1</sup> that he was seen at one and the same time in numerous gatherings, in each of which he was occupied with a different matter.

And since the estimations (*awhām*) of those immersed in time and place could not understand this account, they received it with opposition and resistance and judged it false and erroneous. Those, on the other hand, who had been granted success in escaping from this predicament (*al-madīq*), <sup>v</sup>seeing him exalted above time and place, realized that the relation of all times and places to him was one and the same; and they thus believed it possible <sup>v</sup>for him to appear in every time and every place, for any matter he wished, <sup>v</sup>and in any form he desired.

24. <sup>v</sup>*Analogy*. If a single particular form (*ṣūrah wāḥidah juz'īyah*) is impressed (*inṭaba'at*) in many mirrors which differ with respect to being large or small, long or short, flat, convex or concave, and so forth, then there can be no doubt that this form multiplies (*yatakaththar*) in accordance with the multiplicity of the mirrors, and that its impressions differ in accordance with the differences in the mirrors. Furthermore, this multiplicity [of impressions] does not impair the unity of the [original] form, nor does the appearance [of the form] in any one of these mirrors preclude it from appearing in the others. The True One (*al-Wāḥid al-Ḥaqq*), "and God's is the loftiest likeness,"<sup>1</sup> is thus analogous to the one form, whereas quiddities (*al-māhīyāt*) are analogous to the many mirrors with their differing predispositions (*isti'dādāt*). God appears in each and every individual essence (*'ayn*) in accordance with that essence, without any multiplicity (*takaththur*) or change (*taghayyur*) occurring in His holy essence. Moreover, His appearing in accordance with the characteristics (*aḥkām*) of any one of these individual essences does not prevent Him from appearing also in accordance with the characteristics of the others, as you have learned from the foregoing analogy.

25. *On His Unity (waḥdah)*. Inasmuch as the Necessary Existent (*al-Wājib*), in the opinion of the majority of theologians, is a reality (*ḥaqīqah*) existing through a proper existence (*wujūd khāṣṣ*), <sup>v</sup>and, in the opinion of their two leaders (*shaykhayhim*) and the philosophers, is [itself] a proper existence, they all found it necessary, in order to prove His unicity (*waḥdānīyah*) and deny a partner to Him, to make use of proofs and demonstrations, which they have provided in their works. The Ṣūfīs

who profess the unity of existence (*waḥdat al-wujūd*), however, since it was evident to them that the reality of the Necessary Existent (*ḥaqīqat al-Wājib*) is absolute existence (*al-wujūd al-muṭlaq*), did not find it necessary to put forward a proof for the assertion of His unity and the denial of a partner to Him. In fact, it is impossible to imagine in Him any duality (*ithnaynīyah*) and multiplicity (*ta'addud*) without considering individuation (*ta'ayyun*) and determination (*taqayyud*) to be in Him also. For everything multiple, whether seen, imagined or apprehended, is either an existent (*al-mawjūd*) or attributive existence (*al-wujūd al-idāfi*)<sup>1</sup> not absolute [existence] (*al-muṭlaq*), since its opposite is nonexistence (*al-'adam*), which is nothing.<sup>2</sup>

26. Furthermore, the True Existence (*al-Wujūd al-Ḥaqq*) possesses a unity (*waḥdah*) which is not superadded to His essence, but is rather His being considered as He is in Himself (*min ḥayth huwa huwa*), for when considered in this way (*bi-hādihā al-i'tibār*) His unity is not an attribute (*na't*) of the One (*al-Wāḥid*), but is rather identical with Him. This is what the verifiers (*al-muḥaqqiqīn*) mean by essential oneness (*al-aḥadīyah al-dhātīyah*), from which are derived the unity (*al-waḥdah*) and the multiplicity (*al-kathrah*) which are familiar to all (*al-jumhūr*), namely numerical unity and multiplicity. Moreover, if it is considered as being devoid of all aspects (*al-i'tibārāt*), it is called oneness (*aḥadīyah*), but if considered as being qualified by them, it is called singleness (*wāḥidīyah*).<sup>1</sup>

27. *On His Attributes in General.* The Ash'arites took the position<sup>1</sup> that God has eternal and existent attributes superadded to His essence. He is, thus, knowing through knowledge, powerful through power, willing through will, and so forth.<sup>[19]</sup> The philosophers, on the other hand, took the position that His attributes are identical with His essence, not in the sense that there is an essence which has an attribute and that the two are in reality united, but rather in the sense that what results from (*yatarattab 'alā*) His essence is what [in other cases] results from an essence and attribute together. For example, your own essence is not sufficient to reveal things to you but requires for this the attribute of knowledge which subsists in

you. God's essence is altogether different, for, in order that things be revealed and made apparent to Him, God does not need an attribute subsisting in Him. Indeed, all concepts (*al-mafhūmāt*) are revealed to Him through His essence, so that, in this respect, His essence is the reality of knowledge. It is the same in the case of His power, for His essence is effective (*mu'aththirah*) in itself rather than through an attribute superadded to it, as in the case of our own essences. Thus, in this respect, His essence is power, and consequently His essence and attributes are in reality united, although they differ from each other with respect to aspect (*al-i'tibār*) and concept (*al-mafhūm*).

28. <sup>v</sup>As for the Ṣūfīs, they took the position that God's attributes were identical with His essence with respect to existence (*bi-ḥasab al-wujūd*) but other than it with respect to intellection (*al-ta'aqqul*).<sup>[20]</sup> Al-Shaykh [Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn 'Arabī] said: "Some <sup>v</sup>denied His attributes, although the intuition (*dhawq*) of the prophets and saints testifies to the contrary; others affirmed them and judged them to be <sup>v</sup>completely different from His essence. This is complete unbelief and pure polytheism.

29. Someone,<sup>[21]</sup> may God sanctify his soul, said:<sup>1</sup> "Whoever affirms [God's] essence but does not affirm [His] attributes is an ignorant innovator (*mubtadi'*), and whoever affirms attributes which are entirely different from [His] essence is an unbelieving dualist (*thanawī kāfir*) as well as ignorant." <sup>v</sup>He also said: "Our essences are imperfect (*nāqiṣah*) and are only perfected by attributes. God's essence, however, is perfect (*kāmilah*) and <sup>v</sup>in no way is in need <sup>v</sup>of anything, for everything which is in need of something in any way is imperfect, and imperfection does not befit the Necessary Existent. His essence is <sup>v</sup>sufficient for everything and <sup>v</sup>with respect to everything. It is, thus, knowledge with respect to objects of knowledge (*al-ma'lūmat*), power with respect to objects of power (*al-maqdūrāt*), and will with respect to objects of will (*al-murādāt*). It is one and <sup>v</sup>has no duality (*ithnaynīyah*) in it whatsoever."<sup>[22]</sup>

30. *On His Knowledge.* <sup>v</sup>All are in agreement in affirming His knowledge except a small and insignificant group of early philosophers. Since the theologians affirmed attributes super-

added to His essence, <sup>v</sup>they found no difficulty with respect to the connection (*ta'alluq*) of His knowledge with things outside His essence by means of forms (*ṣuwar*) corresponding to those things and superadded to Him.

31. Since the philosophers, on the other hand, did not affirm the attributes, their doctrine was confused on this question. The gist (*ḥāṣil*) of what al-Shaykh [Ibn Sīnā] said in *al-Ishārāt*<sup>1</sup> was: "Since the First (*al-Awwal*) <sup>v</sup>apprehends (*'aqala*) His essence by means of His essence and because His essence is the cause (*'illah*) of multiplicity (*al-kathrah*), <sup>v</sup>it follows that He apprehends multiplicity because of His apprehension of His essence by means of His essence. Thus, his apprehension of multiplicity is a concomitant (*lāzim*) effected by Him (*ma'lūlahu*), and the forms of multiplicity, which are the objects of His apprehension (*ma'qūlāt*), are also His effects (*ma'lūlāt*) and His concomitants ranked in the order of effects and therefore posterior to (*muta'akhhirah 'an*) the reality of His essence as an effect is posterior to its cause. His essence is not constituted (*mutaqawwimah*) by them or by anything else. It is one, and the multiplicity of concomitants (*al-lawāzim*) and effects (*al-ma'lūlāt*) is not inconsistent with the unity of their cause (*'illah*), of which they are the concomitants, regardless of whether these concomitants are established (*mutaqarrirah*) in the cause itself or distinct (*mubāyinah*) from it. Therefore, the establishment (*taqarrur*) of caused multiplicity (*al-kathrah al-ma'lūlah*) in the essence of the Self-Subsistent One, who is prior to them with respect to causality (*al-'illiyah*) and existence, does not necessitate His being multiple. The gist of this is that the Necessary Existent is one, and His unity does not cease on account of the multiplicity of the forms established in Him."

32. To this the learned commentator [Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī]<sup>1</sup> objected: "There is no doubt that to acknowledge the establishment of concomitants of the First in His essence is to acknowledge that a single thing can be <sup>v</sup>both an agent (*fā'il*) and a recipient (*qābil*) at the same time, that the First is qualified <sup>v</sup>by attributes that are neither relative (*iḍāfiyah*) nor negative (*salbiyah*), that He is <sup>v</sup>a substratum (*maḥall*) for His multiple

and contingent effects, may He be high exalted above that, <sup>ν</sup>that His first effect<sup>[23]</sup> is not distinct (*mubāyin*) from His essence, <sup>ν</sup>and that He does not bring into existence (*lā yūjid*) anything which is distinct from Him through His own essence directly but rather through the mediacy (*tawassuṭ*) of entities subsisting in Him, as well as other [propositions] which contradict the apparent <sup>ν</sup>positions (*madhāhib*) of the philosophers. In fact, the early philosophers who denied God's knowledge, as well as <sup>ν</sup>Plato, who affirmed the self-subsistence of intelligible forms (*al-ṣuwar al-ma'qūlah*), and the Peripatetics, who affirmed the union of knower (*al-'āqil*) and known (*al-ma'qūl*), took these absurd positions only in order to avoid committing themselves to such ideas as these."

33. <sup>ν</sup>He then indicated<sup>[24]</sup> what he himself believed the truth to be, saying:<sup>1</sup> "Just as an apprehender in perceiving his own essence through his essence does not require a form <sup>ν</sup>other than the form of his own essence through which he is what he is, so also in perceiving that which emanates from his essence he does not need any form other than the form of the emanation through which the emanation is what it is. Consider your own case when you apprehend something <sup>ν</sup>by means of a form which you have imagined or brought to mind. This form does not emanate absolutely from you alone, but rather with a certain participation of something else. Nevertheless, you do not apprehend this form through another form, but rather, just as you apprehend that thing through the form, so also do you apprehend the form itself through that same form without there being any doubling of forms within you. <sup>ν</sup>Indeed, the only things that double are your [mental] considerations (*i'tibārāt*) connected with your essence and that form <sup>ν</sup>only,<sup>[25]</sup> <sup>ν</sup>or by way of superimposition (*al-tarakkub*).<sup>[26]</sup> <sup>ν</sup>If such is your situation (*ḥāl*) with respect to what emanates from you with the participation of something besides yourself, what, then, do you think of the situation of an apprehender (*al-'āqil*) with respect to what emanates solely from his own essence without the intervention (*mudākhalah*) of anything else?"

34. "Do not think that a condition for your apprehending this form is your being a substratum (*maḥall*) for it,<sup>[27]</sup> for you

apprehend your own essence, although you are not a substratum for it. Your being a substratum for that form is merely a condition for the occurrence (*huṣūl*) of that form to you, and the occurrence is, in turn, a condition for your apprehending the form. Therefore, if the form occurs to you in any way other than by inhering (*al-ḥulūl*) in you, then the apprehension (*al-ta'aqqul*) also occurs without inhering in you. It is well known that the occurrence [of the form] of a thing to its agent (*fā'il*), insofar as it occurs to something other than itself, is not inferior to its occurrence to its recipient *qābil*.[<sup>28</sup>] <sup>v</sup>Therefore, the essential effects (*al-ma'lūlāt al-dhātīyah*) <sup>v</sup>of the Apprehender and Agent through His:essence (*al-'āqil al-fā'il li-dhātihī*) <sup>v</sup>occur to Him without inhering in Him, and He apprehends them without their being inherent in Him."

35. "Having presented the foregoing I proceed as follows: You have learned that the First apprehends His essence without there being any difference (*taghāyur*), with respect to existence (*fī al-wujūd*), between His essence and His apprehension of His essence, except as conceived in the minds of those considering [this] (*fī i'tibār al-mu'tabirīn*). Moreover, you have concluded (*ḥakamta*) that His apprehension of His essence is the cause ('illah) of His apprehension of the first effect (*al-ma'lūl al-awwal*). Therefore, if you have concluded that the two causes, namely, His essence and His apprehension of His essence, are one thing with respect to existence without there being any difference between them, you can conclude that the two effects also, namely, the first effect and the First's apprehension of it, are, with respect to existence, one thing without there being any difference between them which would require one of them to be distinct (*mubāyin*) from the First and the other to be established (*muqarrar*) in Him. Therefore, just as you concluded that the difference between the two causes was purely mental (*i'tibārī*), you can conclude that the difference between the two effects is also mental.[<sup>29</sup>] <sup>v</sup>The existence of the first effect is thus identical with the First's apprehension of it without there being any need for a newly effused form (*ṣūrah mustafāḍah musta'nafah*) to subsist in the essence of the First, may He be exalted above that."<sup>[30]</sup>

36. "Furthermore, since the intellectual substances (*al-jawāhir al-'aqliyah*) apprehend those things which are not effects of theirs through the occurrence of the forms of those things in them, and since they also apprehend the Necessarily Existing First (*al-Awwal al-Wājib*), and because nothing exists which is not an effect of the Necessarily Existing First, all the forms of both universal and particular beings, exactly as they are in existence (*'alā mā 'alayhi al-wujūd*), occur in them. The Necessarily Existing First apprehends these [intellectual] substances, together with these forms, not through other forms but rather through those identical substances and forms. In this way [He apprehends] existence exactly as it is (*al-wujūd 'alā mā huwa 'alayhi*). Thus, 'not an atom's weight escapes Him'<sup>1</sup> nor must any of the aforementioned impossibilities be resorted to." End of quotation from al-Ṭūsī.<sup>[31]</sup>

37. One of the commentators on the *Fuṣūs al-Ḥikam*<sup>1</sup> raised against him the objection that 'because those intellectual substances are contingent (*mumkinah*), they are therefore originated (*ḥādithah*) and preceded by essential nonexistence (*al-'adam al-dhātī*), as well as known to the Truth (*al-Ḥaqq*) before their existence. How, then, can the First's knowledge (*'ilm*) of them be identical with their existence? Furthermore, [such a position] nullifies divine providence (*al-'ināyah*), which is explained by the philosophers 'as [God's] active and eternal knowledge (*al-'ilm al-azalī al-fi'lī*) connected with universals in a universal manner (*kullīyan*) 'and with particulars in a universal manner also 'and which is prior to the existence of things. Moreover, it also implies that His essence, 'with respect to the most noble of His attributes, is in need of that which is other than He and emanates from Him.<sup>[32]</sup> The truth is that one who is fair-minded will realize that He who created (*abda'a*) things and brought them out of nonexistence into existence, whether that nonexistence was temporal (*zamānī*) or not, knew both the realities of those things and their concomitant mental and external forms (*ṣuwaruha al-lāzimah laḥā al-dhihnīyah wa-al-khārijīyah*) before He brought them into existence. 'Otherwise, it would have been impossible to give them existence. Thus, knowledge of them is not the same as



their existence. Moreover, the doctrine that it is impossible for His essence and His knowledge, which is identical with His essence, to be a substratum (*maḥall*) for multiple entities is valid only if they are distinct from Him, as in the opinion of those veiled from the truth (*al-maḥjūbīn 'an al-ḥaqq*). If, on the other hand, they are identical with Him with respect to existence (*al-wujūd*) and reality (*al-ḥaqīqah*), but different from Him with respect to determination (*al-taqayyud*) and individuation (*al-ta'ayyun*), then it is not impossible [for Him to be a substratum]. In reality, however, He is neither subsistent (*ḥāll*) nor is He a substratum (*maḥall*), but is, rather, a single thing appearing sometimes with the quality of being a substratum (*al-maḥallīyah*) and at other times with the quality of being subsistent (*al-ḥāllīyah*).

38. *Further Substantiation.* If the First knows His essence through His essence, He is, considering that He knows and is known, both a knower (*'ālim*) and something known (*ma'lūm*), and, insofar as He knows His essence through His essence and not through a form superadded to Him, He is knowledge (*'ilm*). Three things are thus involved which are indistinguishable from each other except as considered in the mind (*bi-ḥasab al-i'tibār*). If His essence is considered (*u'tubira*) as being a cause (*sabab*) for His appearing to Himself, then luminosity (*al-nūrīyah*) attaches to Him. If He is considered as being a giver of existence (*wājid*) to the object of His knowledge (*ma'lūm*) and not a depriver of it (*ghayr fāqid lahu*), as being present with it (*shāhid iyyāhu*) and not being absent from it (*ghayr ghā'ib 'anhu*), then the relation (*nisbah*) of existence (*al-wujūd*), of presence (*al-shuhūd*), of giving existence (*al-wājidīyah*), of receiving existence (*al-mawjūdīyah*), of being present (*al-shāhidīyah*), and of being the object of presence (*al-mashhūdīyah*) is determined.<sup>1</sup>

39. There is no doubt that His knowledge of His essence and of these considerations (*al-i'tibārat*), which are His attributes, does not require a form superadded to Him. Neither does His knowledge of the quiddities (*māhīyāt*) of things or their ipseities (*huwīyāt*), for their quiddities and ipseities are nothing but His transcendent essence (*al-dhāt al-muta'āliyah*) clothed in

these aforementioned considerations whose intellections are derived one from another (*al-muntashi'at al-ta'qqul ba'duhā 'an ba'd*), collectively and individually (*jam'an wa-furādā*) in either a universal or a particular manner (*'alā wajh kullī aw juz'ī*).<sup>[33]</sup> Thus, in knowing them He does not need a super-added form (*ṣūrah zā'idah*), and consequently there is neither act (*fi'l*) nor receptivity (*qabūl*), nor subsistent (*ḥāll*) nor substratum (*maḥall*). Moreover, He has no need, with respect to any of His perfections, for what is other than He and emanates from Him. High may He be exalted above what the evildoers say!

40. *That His Knowledge of His Essence is the Source (man-sha') of His Knowledge of All Other Things.* The philosophers said: the First knows things by reason of His knowledge of His essence. This is because He knows His essence, which is the origin (*mabda'*) of the particulars of things (*tafāṣīl al-ashyā'*). He thus possesses a simple entity (*amr basīṭ*), which is the origin of His knowledge of the particulars of things, and this is His knowledge of His essence. This is because knowledge of the cause entails knowledge of its effects regardless of whether these effects occur through an intermediary (*wāsiṭah*) or not. Thus, His knowledge of His essence, which is the essential cause (*'illah dhātīyah*) of the first effect (*al-ma'lūl al-awwal*), includes knowledge of the first effect. Then the combination [of the two] is a proximate cause (*'illah qarībah*) of the second effect (*al-ma'lūl al-thānī*), so that knowledge of it is entailed also, and so on to the last effect. Thus, His knowledge of His essence includes the knowledge of all existents as a whole (*ijmālan*). Moreover, if what is in His knowledge is particularized (*fuṣṣila*), these existents then become differentiated from each other and particularized (*mufaṣṣalah*). His knowledge is thus like a simple entity (*amr basīṭ*) which is the origin (*mabda'*) of the particulars of numerous things (*tafāṣīl umūr muta'addidah*), and just as His essence is the origin of the characteristics (*khuṣūṣīyāt*) of things and their particulars (*tafāṣīl*), so is His knowledge of His essence the origin of His cognitions (*al-'ulūm*)<sup>[34]</sup> of things and their particulars. <sup>v</sup>This is analogous to what has been said to the effect that knowledge of a quiddity

includes the knowledge of its parts (*ajzā'*) as a whole (*ijmālan*), and that such knowledge is the origin of its particulars.

41. Do not let it escape you that this doctrine implies His knowledge of particulars (*al-juz'īyāt*) as particulars, for particulars are caused by Him just as are universals, and He must, therefore, know them also. Although the philosophers are known for having claimed that He has no knowledge of particulars as particulars, since this would imply change (*al-taghayyur*) in His real attributes (*ṣifātihā al-ḥaqīqīyah*), one of the more recent philosophers (*ba'd al-muta'akhhirīn*)[<sup>35</sup>] has disclaimed this, saying:<sup>1</sup> "The denial that His knowledge is connected with particulars is something that has been ascribed to the philosophers by those who do not understand their doctrine. 'How can they deny that His knowledge is connected with particulars when these emanate from Him, and when, in their opinion, He apprehends His essence, and when their position is that knowledge of the cause necessitates knowledge of the effect? Indeed, having denied His being in space, they made the relation of all places to Him a single identical relation (*nisbah wāḥidah mutasāwīyah*), and having denied His being in time, 'they also made the relation to Him of all times, past, future, and present, a single relation. They maintained that just as one who knows places, although he is not himself spatial (*makānī*), knows, nevertheless, Zayd's position with respect to 'Amr's, how each of them can be pointed out with respect to the other, and what the distance between them is, and so forth with respect to all substances of the universe (*dhawāt al-'ālam*) and just as he does not relate any of these things to himself because he is not spatial (*makānī*), so also does one who knows times, if he is not himself temporal (*zamānī*) know at what time Zayd is born and at what time 'Amr, how much time separates them, and so forth with respect to all events tied to [particular] times. He does not relate any of them to a [particular] time which is [then] present to him, and, therefore, does not say: This has passed, this has not yet happened, and this exists now. Rather, all things which are in time are present to him and equally related to him, although he knows their relationship to each other as well as the priority of some of

them to the others.[<sup>36</sup>]"

42. "Although this [doctrine] was established among them, and they determined upon it, nevertheless the estimations (*aw-hām*) of those immersed in space and time were unable to understand it, and some of them consequently judged God to be spatial, and they point to a place proper to Him. Others judged Him to be temporal and say that this has passed Him and that that has not yet happened to Him. They therefore attribute to those who deny this of Him the doctrine that He does not have knowledge of temporal particulars (*al-juz'iyāt al-zamāniyah*), although such is not the case."

43. The Šūfīs, may God sanctify their souls, say that inasmuch as the Truth (*al-Ḥaqq*) necessitated (*iqtaḍā*) everything either through His essence or through one or more conditions (*shurūt*), everything is therefore one of His concomitants or a concomitant of one of His concomitants, and so forth. Consequently, the Creator (*al-Šāni'*), who is not distracted from anything by anything, the Kindly One and the Well-Informed (*al-Laṭīf al-Khabīr*), who lacks no perfection, inevitably knows His essence as well as the concomitant of His essence and the concomitant of His concomitant, both collectively and individually (*jam'an wa-furādā*), as a whole and in particular (*ijmālan wa-tafṣīlan*) to an infinite degree. They also say<sup>1</sup> that the Truth, because of His essential absoluteness (*itlāqihī al-dhātī*) possesses essential coextension (*al-ma'īyah al-dhātīyah*)<sup>2</sup> with every existent thing, and that his being present (*ḥuḍūr*) with things is His knowledge of them, so that not an atom's weight escapes His knowledge on earth or in the heavens.

44. <sup>v</sup>The gist of this is that He knows things in two ways. One of these is through the chain of succession [of causes and effects] (*silsilat al-tartīb*) in a manner close to that of the philosophers.[<sup>37</sup>] The other is through his oneness (*aḥādīyah*), which encompasses all things. It is obvious, of course, that His knowledge of things by the second way is preceded by His knowledge of them by the first way, for the first is <sup>v</sup>absentational knowledge (*'ilm ghaybī*) of them prior to their existence, and the second is presentational knowledge (*'ilm shuhūdī*) of them during their existence. In reality, however, there are