

Jalāl al-Dīn Davānī

*Figures of Houris, Commenting on Suhrawardī's The Temples of Light<sup>1</sup>*

Translated by Carl W. Ernst

*The Fifth Temple: Demonstrating that the Chain of Events is Infinite, and that they Depend on a Continuous Perpetual Motion*

Chapter One. On the Proof of the Circular Motion of the Heavens, and that their Motion is Voluntary, not Natural.

§1. **Know that every contingent being** is temporal, i.e., it is what comes into existence after it was not; [it] **requires a cause**, or something that sustains its existence, whether as a condition, an instrument, or an invalidating prohibition, **[that is] contingent**. This is necessary, because if all that sustains it were eternal, it would be eternal, from the impossibility of the lack of an effect for a complete cause.<sup>2</sup> **This reasoning applies to the contingent cause**, because it also requires a contingent cause, and so on ad infinitum. **It is sufficient** or rather required **that the chain of contingent causes extend infinitely, inasmuch as it will not have an origin, for the postulated contingent origin is covered by this reasoning**, just as was established. Thus it is not an origin, since this would be a contradiction of the postulate.

§2. It is established that in existence there are contingent beings that are subsequently renewed without interruption. **This certainly leads to that which requires renewal and continuity with its own essence. The thing that requires renewal for its own essence is motion.** Now time, even if it requires renewal, that is not essential for it;

rather, it is so for its locus, which is motion, for time is the quantity of motion inasmuch as its parts are not unified. **To be correctly described in terms of uninterrupted circular continuous motions, and to be appropriately the cause of contingent beings without ceasing, this is the property of the heavens.** Thus it is in the text that we have seen. His saying, “To be correctly described” is the subject of the predicate “the property of the heavens,” and “circular” is the adjective of “motions.” It is possible that “circular” is a predicate for a subject. His saying “the property of the heavens” is a qualifier, or a predicate after the predicate. The meaning of this sentence is that linear motions undoubtedly end, if the existence of an infinite extent is precluded in logical proofs regarding limited distance. But linear motions are not continuous in terms of retrograde motion and curvature. Logical proof does not explain both kinds of linear motion in terms of rest. The author does not completely believe this, as is mentioned in *The [Book of Encounters and] Conversations*,<sup>3</sup> and Plato and other philosophers deny it. This is because linear motion is either natural, by compulsion, or voluntary. If it is natural, it must cease when it reaches its natural goal. If it is by compulsion, it is only possible in terms of the [four] elements, since, as they maintain, there is no influence in the heavens.

§3. Their argument implies either that the compulsion is from a compeller or his volition. If the first, [the motion] must cease when the compeller reaches his natural goal, and if the second, it must cease also. Sublunar entities capable of voluntary motion (i.e., the species of animals) cannot sustain [motion] perpetually, because their actions depend upon bodies, nor are their bodies perpetual, since their elemental compounds must dissolve. Thus [it is stated] in *[The Wisdom of] Illumination* and in its commentary.<sup>4</sup> I say that this is only achieved if the compeller is a moving body that moves the compelled object with a

motion that is in principle not concomitant. But a necessity is concomitant with the void, compelling bodies in their motions, as in the case of the urine specimen bottle when it is filled and then poured out in water, or also a man who casts a stone upwards and follows through with his hand, and the stone keeps moving. Would that I knew why its cessation is necessarily connected to impossibility in the world of the elements and to dissolution in compounds.

§4. There is no individual body in the elementals that is perpetual so that it could undergo perpetual linear motion and continue in the same state. It is not conceivable that linear motions should reach successive individuals. This is common to both perspectives, and it only refutes what some philosophers have said, that time is a single thing joined to another. But it must be connected to something similar in the single connection. From these introductory remarks it is demonstrated that linear motion is not appropriately called perpetual or continuous; rather, it is appropriate that the latter be circular, but the elements do not sustain perpetuity, while the celestial order does. It is established that the proper motion that is perpetual and continual is this circular motion of the heavens, but the argument to establish this point is long, and space does not permit it.

§5. **This**, i.e., the circular motion of the heavens, **is the cause of the events in our world**, the world of the elements, and that is by the preparation of matter for receptivity to temporal form. The likeness for that is that the sun rises over water, gradually warming it until cold is completely eliminated. It becomes subtle and the form of water is deprived of its matter, becoming air by its separate radiation on the airy form that is upon it. Then the air is heated further until it becomes subtler, and the form of water is deprived of its matter, as it radiates upon it the form of fire. Let it not be thought that its preparation is only

through the cause of the perceptible natural qualities belonging to its rays. Rather, these are hidden connections, the depth and detail of which are unknown except to the upholder of the heavens and the earths. If you wish, then follow the influences experienced in conjunctions and other astrological matters. The years will see wonders that dazzle minds.

§6. He confirms the foregoing by saying, **since the First Cause does not change**, because it is impossible for it to undergo change, and it has been demonstrated that it is not subject to an attribute that changes it. **So it is not a cause for contingent motions.** The eternity of these motions is dictated by the eternity of their complete cause. **Were it not for the motions of the heavens, the origination of the contingent would not occur**, because of the impossibility of contingent beings ever depending on the eternal, as you have learned. There is no doubt that by the addition of a renewed thing [i.e., motion] the complete cause produces these contingent beings.

§7. Thus he demonstrated that their motions are voluntary, saying, **The motions of the heavens are not natural, for the heaven departs from every point which it sought** by the essence of the motion with which it tended. **That which is moved by nature stops when it reaches the position it sought, since it does not flee by nature from that which was its desire.** [1] [He says] “by nature,” for it is not possible that it be compelled; were it compelled, it would be in accord with the compeller, and the motions would be uniform in direction, speed, and delay, but that is not the case, as astronomical observations attest. [2] It is said that it has been proved that what lacks a source of natural inclination is not subject to compelled motion. It has also been proved that there is no source of natural inclination in the heavens, because they are not subject to linear inclination, and natural inclination can only be linear. This is because nature requires an outcome in the natural domain, by the

nearest of paths, which is the straight line. [3] It is also said [that heavenly motion is not compelled] because compulsion is evil, and there is no evil in the heavens, only pure good.

§8. Are you aware that the substance of these three points is open to objection?

[1] Regarding the first point, it is as just described [i.e., that heavenly motion is incompatible with compulsion].<sup>5</sup> [2] Regarding the second point, it is [open to objection] because the proof of the first premise is as they have mentioned; after its premises are accepted, it only demonstrates that what lacks in its essence the source of a certain natural inclination is not subject to compelled motion. Then that which is proven demonstrates that in the heavens there is no linear inclination. This does not require that they contain no source of any inclination whatever, because of the possibility that they contain the source of another, circular inclination; so it was said. I say that it is possible to reply that there is impeding inclination. If on the one hand it is linear, he has shown its impossibility, in that linear inclination does not in principle impede the circular, as appears in the sphere rotating around its center [while] descending from above. If on the other hand it is another circular [inclination], this is also absurd, because it is already established that nature does not require circular inclination. But the likelihood remains that the impeding circular inclination is voluntary, and that there is perceptible circular motion [of the planetary sphere] to the extent that there is an excess of compelled inclination over it. [3] Regarding the third point, it has two unproven premises that are not evident [i.e., the evil of compulsion and absence of evil in the heavens]. I say that if its motion is compelled, if the compulsion is perpetual, this would require the cessation of nature from its activity. If it is completely suspended, it requires the cessation of the motion that preserves time. But it has been shown that time has a unitary essence and is connected and single. Its preserving motion must be thus.

Since it was established that the motions of the heavens are neither natural nor compelled, **its motion can only be voluntary.** In some manuscripts after these words, one finds the phrase, “thus they are living and intelligent.”<sup>6</sup>

Chapter Two. On the Proximate Contact belonging to Celestial Motion.

§9. **The source emanating the motion of the heaven is its sphere,** because of the proof that its motion is voluntary. There is no doubt that voluntary motion is connected to the moving soul, and because contact belongs to the motion of the body, it is not possible that it be an intellect, since the meaning of intellect is the essence completely separated from matter and its relationships. **And so its motive action belongs to the motion of the body of the heaven.** This is loose in expression, and it means the body of the moved heaven. **[It] is a voluntary motive action, and the motion of the body of the heaven by its motive action is compelled motion,** because the moving object, which is the separate soul, is not the essence of the body, nor is it a part of it, since it is external. **If we consider the body of the heaven and its soul as things isolated from one another, thus their motion is by the motive action of its soul** which is external to it. **So their motion is compelled in relation to the soul,** as mentioned; the feminine subjects [“their”] refer to the heavens or to heaven. **And if we consider them together as a single thing, its motion is voluntary.** This is because its origin is not something external to the totality.

§10. I say that this is something that we do not run across in the theory of anyone else. It does not derive from a philosophical reality, since the like of this expression borders on natural motions. This is because it is said, when referring to the body of the earth in a comparison, that it is a thing separate from its special form; its motion is

compelled, since its source is external to that which is moved. This is particularly so in terms of what the author maintains regarding the existence of special forms as causal conditions for the body, which is on first consideration the extended known substance.

For the essence of the body is then established without it [the soul]. It [body] is only produced from the fact that it contains the species of bodies from earth, water, etc.

Regarding what he mentions, the former argument will be compulsion eternally, and the latter argument will be compelled motion without impeding inclination. Both of them are contrary to the agreement of philosophers. If that is admitted, then because it is not possible that there be another compeller than the soul, it is not voluntary. But since its motion is voluntary, **it is living and intelligent** by necessity, since volition is not experienced without these characteristics.

§11. **And the heavens need no sustenance**, since nothing is digested by them; otherwise, they would be subject to rectilinear motion [from desire]. Regarding this proposition, and its ancillary definite propositions, however, the proof is based upon it. But all the heavens [may be considered to] share in these [propositions] by way of intuition. **[Nor do they need] growth**, since it is a kind of nourishment, but that depends on rectilinear motion, which is impossible for it. **[Nor do they need] to beget**, since it also is a kind of nourishment, and because the object of generation is the preservation of the species through a succession of individuals. Rather, it [does not?] need it inasmuch as it does not undergo continual individuation, for the individuals of the heavens are perpetual, not undergoing corruption. Thus they do not need to beget their like. **Nor do they have desire**, since the object of that is preservation of the individual or the species from corruption, and they are safe from that. **Nor do they have a rival** in space or nearby, **nor**

**anything to resist them** in existence, **so they have no anger**, since the object of anger is guarding against the rival or that which resists one's desire in general. Anger is appropriate either to the body that is acted upon and changes from a suitable condition to an unsuitable one, then returns to the suitable condition and enjoys it, or to that which conceives of a situation that requires it to depart from a suitable condition, so that it longs to reject it. **Their motion does not tend to that which is low, since it has no power over them.** The noblest is not moved by the lowest; otherwise the lowest would have influence upon the noblest by its position as agent. For the final cause is an efficient cause for the activity of the agent.

§12. **Thus when we purify ourselves from the preoccupations of the body** with the aid of subtle disciplines tempered for the soul that is incited toward submersion in the desires of the world of lies and darkness, **we consider the might of the Real, and the Glory.** "Glory" (*khurra*) is a Persian word, the meaning of which, according to the *Commentary on [the Wisdom of] Illumination* [by Quṭb al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī], is transmitted "from Zarathustra of Azarbaijan, the author of the Book of Zand, the perfect prophet, the excellent sage: it is the light that dawns from the essence of God the transcendent. By this one person rules over another; by its aid every one has power over an action or product. That which is restricted to the wise kings is called 'the glory of kings' (*kayān khurra*).<sup>7</sup> As he says in *The Tablets of 'Imād*, 'The conquering and blessed king Kaykhusraw established sanctification and worship, and he received<sup>8</sup> the ability to speak with the holy spirit; the hidden world spoke to him, and he ascended in his soul to the highest world, inscribed with the wisdom of God. The lights of God confronted him directly, and from them he realized the meaning known as 'the kings of glory,' which is God in himself. All necks were

humbled to him.”<sup>9</sup> Nonetheless, they call it that because *khawar* [i.e., *khurra*] in their language is light, and they connect it to the *kayān*, who are the emperors in their language, with the genitive object preceding the subject, as is customary in this language. He describes it as **expansive**, because that implies expansiveness of the soul and the breadth of its comprehension in terms of knowledge and influence.

§13. **[It is] the light emanating from his presence**, or, from the presence of the Real, either from his essence, or from his lights that are separate from existent things, and by that light every existent being is guided to the perfection appropriate to it. **We find in our souls shining flashes of light, and dawning illuminations; we witness lights, and we obtain our desires**, or needs for information about hidden things, and control over the world of images and the elements. In one manuscript, it says **[we obtain our] states**, but this appears to be a mistake.<sup>10</sup> **And what is your opinion of the persons** who are the spherical bodies **[that are] noble of form**, on account of being in the natural shape that is the best of shapes. In one manuscript it says [instead of “of form”] “divine,” meaning sanctified beyond the opposing qualities that are the source of defects, or in love with the divine lights. That fits what he says later about the divine lovers.<sup>11</sup> **[Having] perpetual forms** or eternal forms, **with fixed bodies** that do not move from their places, **safe from corruption**, from the corruption of these eternal forms **because of their distance from the world or opposition**--a cause for [all of these] three or four propositions. **Since nothing distracts them** from the world of light, **the transcendental dawnings of the lights of the transcendent God**<sup>12</sup> **are not interrupted for them, nor the benefits of divine graces.** This means that the motions do not belong to a concupiscent or irascible cause, but to the attainment of a holy and delightful thing, which is the dawning of lights from their sources

above. These most resemble the motions issuing from the soul stripped of the connections of nature, on account of the holy gleams and intimate dawnings, as the masters of ecstasy and witnessing attest. **If the object of their desire were not incessant, their movements would cease.** Inevitably, the cessation of their motion would be necessitated by their attaining the desired goal. If their motions ceased even once, this would require that no event come into existence from it at all, because the first event that takes place from it undoubtedly will be an unlimited event, and there is no event at all between cessation and its occurrence, by law. The chain of interrupted events is not a required cause, for otherwise it would be connected, so understand that.

§14. **So each of the heavens has a beloved in the higher world.** One beloved differs from another, and that is due to the difference in their motions in terms of quantity and direction. **It is the victorious light, and it is its cause and the one that extends its light;** that is, it is the lord of its limited species in its individual. **[The beloved is] the intermediary between it [the heaven] and the first light that is transcendent; by its presence it witnesses his glory and attains his blessings and his lights. From every illumination arises a motion** related to that illumination. If the reality of that relationship is unknown to us, and we are in the world of alienation as it aids us, the soul within us is overjoyed, to the point of dancing and clapping. **For each motion another illumination stands ready.** Just as man stands ready with the prescribed legal motions of worship for the holy dawnings, so the realizers of truth among the people of transcendence may witness in their souls a holy stimulating delight, and they are moved to dance, clap, and turn. By this motion they stand ready for the dawning of other lights until that state ceases in them from some cause, as is indicated by the experiences of the wayfarers. That is the secret of

listening to music (*samā'*), and, for the divine [sages], its principle leading to its establishment, so that one of the leaders of this group [the Sufis] said, "The wayfarer in the assembly of listening to music is opened up to things that are not found in forty-day retreats." It is related of Plato that whenever he wanted to pray, he moved the power of his soul by listening to appropriate voices, when he wanted to be moved by the power of wrath or love.<sup>13</sup> One of the great Sufis said that the relationship of music to the power of the soul is the relationship of the flint and steel to fire; therefore they have prohibited it to beginners and those engrossed in bodily pleasures, since it incites in them the desires hidden within them. **The renewal of illuminations is perpetuated by the renewal of [celestial] motions, and the renewal of motions is perpetuated by the renewal of illuminations.** But there is alternation in this [process], for the motion produced by illumination is not the motion prepared for it.<sup>14</sup>

§15. I say that the proof of this is that they [the celestial motions] have a unitary continuously renewed illumination from which a single unitary continuous motion is produced. But here there are two motions, one belonging to the soul of the heavens in the illuminative qualities, and the other belonging to their body in its position. Each of these motions presupposes [that the two motions are] parts. If the parts are proportional to each other, the situation is as he described.<sup>15</sup> But if the two motions are considered as being unitary, then the first is the cause for the existence of the second, and the second is the cause for the subsistence of the first. There is no difficulty here, inasmuch as the acquired intellect is a condition for the production of intellect in act, and that is a condition for the subsistence of the acquired intellect. **By this double chain, the production of contingent beings is perpetuated in the sublunar world.** Their motion prepares matter

for the reception of contingent beings, as indicated previously and subsequently. **Were it not for their illuminations and their motions, only a limited amount of the generosity of God most high would be produced.** These are the lights and bodies that are the fixed entities.<sup>16</sup> **Emanation would be interrupted,** since at that time there would be no production of the contingent beings that are unlimited in terms of their origin and that do not comprehend their goal or the victorious lights. If proofs do not demonstrate the absurdity of the chaining as an impossibility, neither do they affirm it, due to the possibility that they [the contingent beings] proceed with unordered accidental distinctions, because illuminative intuition indicates that light does not proceed from every light. This is because descent through the levels of light makes the light defective, to the degree that it ends as a weakened victorious light, near the level of souls and lacking the power to give existence to another light.

§16. I say that here is a discussion known to some, the accidental temperament containing unlimited levels between the extremes of neglect and excess. Perhaps it will be objected that the levels of the lights are combined in existence, but that is not possible, nor does this affirm it, due to their hierarchy of strength and weakness. Gradation occurs among them in a manner contrary to the levels of accidental temperament; their combinations in existence are unlimited entities.

§17. I say that for this reason it is necessary to affirm the separate souls as the essence of what he maintains, based on limiting the distinction between the lights in terms of strength and weakness. It necessarily follows that the difference between lights is absolute, nor is it limited to them at certain times. It is possible that they proceed from the transcendent distinguished by its accidental relationship with its effects. Unlimited lights

may differ in terms other than strength and weakness, but in principle that will not be a level. That proof is not complete, though it does answer the question, explaining that the distinction between the lights is only in terms of strength and weakness.

§18. The most likely argument here is that the difference between the lights utterly separated from matter and its connections is limited to [the lights] themselves. Or it is that the difference between lights joined to matter, regardless of whether it is a condition in them or connected to them like souls, is nonetheless a quality not limited to them. Spontaneity, despite its accidental character, decrees that the difference between levels of light perceived by the individual lies in strength and weakness, as with bodies equal in receiving light with a unified relationship to luminosity. Lights having obstacles then differ individually because of the difference in their locations, despite their lack of difference in strength and weakness. It is possible that he means that only a limited quantity is then produced from the forms of bodies. **Since there is no change in the essence of the first transcendent that would require change**, and change in the effect despite the cause remaining in a fixed condition is impossible, **thus, by the generosity of the Real, the production of contingent beings persists, by the ecstasy of divine lovers.** The commentary on generosity will follow below [§37]. “Divine lovers” means those stripped of material connections to the extent possible for them, as is said of the divine solitaries seeking perfection, or the lovers of the divine lights, which are the intellects resembling them. **The empyrean heaven’s motions necessarily benefit the lower ones** as the secondary intention and accidentally, not as the primary intention and essentially. The supreme does not act upon the lowly, since it has no power to do so in itself, as was mentioned. That is similar to the intercourse between a

male and a female caused by concupiscent love, the purpose of which is the production of offspring, despite its not being intended by them.

§19. **This is not to say that the motions of the heavens give existence to things.** For then they would vanish when their effects came into existence. So how could an impermanent entity give existence to a permanent entity such as human souls and elemental forms? **But they do produce potentialities**, not in the sense that they give existence to these potentialities, for they are also things, but rather in the sense that they are a condition for their production.

§20. **The first reality gives to each thing that which is appropriate to its potentiality**, since the transcendent is not miserly about that, rather, it is the eternal absolute whose emanation does not cease except according to the capacity of the recipient.

§21. If you said that the potentialities are also from its existence and its emanation, as I indicated, and there is no miserliness in the transcendent, then there is no cause for their differentiation.

§22. I replied that the difference in potentialities is from the [heavens], on account of the difference in the preceding potentialities, and so on without end; the chain continues throughout contingent beings. This is not a problem, due to the lack of combination of their individual instances as they [the heavens] settle it in its place.

§23. I say that the proof is that elemental matter has a motion in the potential quality, just as the heavens have a directional motion in their bodies, and an illuminative qualitative motion in their souls. The elemental potential motion is dependent on directional heavenly motion, and it is dependent on the motion of the soul, mentioned in connection with that which precedes its settling. Each of these three motions is a

continuous unitary motion, as we have indicated previously. If their unitary character is distinct [from one another], their order is as mentioned. If they must have parts, every subsequent part is dependent on the preceding one.

§24. If that is agreed, then we say that if the question concerned the cause of the partial potentialities, the reply is what was mentioned at first [§22]. If it concerns the cause of potential unitary motion related to matter, the reply is that the quiddity of this matter is restricted to this motion; that is why one of the philosophers among the masters of unveiling and vision said that existent partial potentialities are created dependent on uncreated universal potentialities. You will intuit from a kind of summary the secret of the difference occurring between individuals in terms of defect and perfection. Further discussion on this subject will come later on.

§25. **Since the agent does not change, its effect is renewed by the renewal of the potentiality of [the agent's] recipient. It is possible that a single thing renews its influence, but that there is a difference according the conditions of the recipient, though the difference [of conditions] is not due to the different condition of [the agent].** By joining the conditions of the recipient to the agent, diverse causes are produced that require diverse effects. Now he will indicate his approximation to the understanding and to a removal. But what fancies could possibly occur to students in this subject through examples, in which fancy obeys the intellect as is its custom, as was repeated and agreed? The argument for those who seek guidance, whose aim is the embellishment of souls with the forms of perfection, does not follow the sources of disputation and the conversations of debate.

§26. Let this man consider as an hypothesis a person who is unmoved and unchanging, and, to continue the simile, that opposite him are mirrors differing in terms of greater or lesser size and clarity or turbidity. In them there appear from him, i.e., from that person, forms differing in terms of lesser or greater size, and perfect appearance of color or lack of it. The person whose form it is does not change, and the difference is only in the receptacles which are different. The person is in the position of the cause, and the mirrors are in the position of the material bases. Their difference is in characteristics, like the difference in potentialities. The difference in forms is difference in forms and accidents. **The Real (glory be to his greatness) has connected fixity with fixity**, that is, fixed entities with fixed entities, **and contingency with contingency** or contingent beings with contingent beings. When divine grace decrees the production of contingent beings, the chain of existentionation is limited to the entity fixed in essence, necessitating difference in connections and subsequent relations. That is perpetual circular motion; from the perspective of its perpetuity, it depends upon an eternal cause, and from the perspective of its contingency, contingent beings depend upon it.

§27. In detail, that which comes into existence from motion is a continuous unitary entity, which is the intermediary between the demonstrated or assumed origin, and the goal, in one of two aspects. This is a single person who is compelled by difference in relationships in terms of the limits assumed in distance, until, when it is considered in terms of one of these limits, it becomes the above-mentioned intermediary, which is existence in the middle term. Considering that this accident exists in that limit from the middle term, which is a perpetual entity, considering that its essence is contingent, and considering that this accidental relationship is in accordance with necessity, then from the perspective of the

fixed essence it depends upon the fixed intellect, while from the perspective of relationships subsequent to it, contingent beings depend upon it.

§28. This is the summary of their argument, and it will not surprise you that the argument persists in the chain of these subsequent relationships to the eternal essence, and it is of no use at all. It is said that they are assumed entities that do not presuppose an external cause, but there is no doubt that they are not pure assumptions, like a third wife; how shall the like of that become probable for an external existent? Rather, they have a kind of existence, regardless of whether it is in act in the entity itself, or in one of the levels of potency, or call it what you will. But we know suddenly that the mover at the time of reaching an assumed limit of distance has a condition that he did not have prior to this time, and which he will not have afterward. Similarly, there is no doubt that an existent thing, whether in act or in a level of potency, derives from something like what has just been said. The point of the proof of this position is that it is said that the source for every one of these relationships is the relationships prior to it. Thus, if unitary continuous motion is considered in its unity, it is fixed and dependent on fixed causes; if subsequent relationships are considered, they assume parts, to the degree that every one of these relationships is dependent on the one preceding.

§29. It is said [by Ibn Kammūna],<sup>17</sup> “It is as though this motion is continuous and connected, having no parts in fact; rather, in accordance with the assumption, the chain of contingent beings is thus unitary and connected. The sound intellect decrees that the continuity and connection of the effect follow upon the continuity and connection of the cause. From this it appears that non-existence of the contingent is not real non-existence in the sense of external elimination of the quiddity. Rather, it is relative [non-existence],

which is something being devoid of something else, as in the transference of the quality from the qualified thing. So it is said, ‘this is devoid of that.’ Or, just as the thing seen is distanced from the seeing person, therefore it is said of that thing that it does not exist in the perception. This is in reality change and transference. If something is said to be non-existent metaphorically and conceptually, these ideas are subtle.”

§30. I say that we have already stated something similar in discussing the dependence of elemental potentialities on heavenly motions, and I have seen the like of that in the Platonic writings. You are aware of what he mentioned regarding the connection of contingent beings, that their parts in act only originate in human souls according to the postulate of their contingency. He does not understand their assumed partial existence as pertaining to a unitary entity, but this theorist [Ibn Kammūna] asserts the eternity of the soul, as he explains in his books, and this is also reported of Plato.

§31. **And it, the transcendent, is the source and the goal in this connection.** That is, inasmuch as the transcendent is the efficient cause for the system of the world and the order of existence, it also is its goal, and the goal is commonly known to be that for which action is the consequence as an essential consequence. If it is attributed to the actor in place of the act, it is called purpose by analogy with the actor, and an efficient cause by analogy with the action. But goal is more common, and goal is restricted to that which is not attributed [to the actor], and it differs in this sense from purpose.

§32. The actions of God the transcendent are not caused by purposes, because of the preceding [argument], in that the final cause is the efficient cause for the activity of the actor. This is what makes the actor an actor. If this were the case [i.e., if God had purposes], the necessary [being] would be defective in its essence, seeking perfection

through another, which would be the final cause. Surely that too has goals, which are uncounted wisdoms and advantages known to the transcendent, but they do not have influence over its essence by making it an actor. These goals refer to completing existent beings with their primary perfections, and to perfecting them afterward with secondary perfections, so that they resemble their highest origin to the extent conceivable and appropriate for them. That is only set in order by a love demanding the protection of existent perfection, and longing for absent perfection, whether voluntary or natural. Love produces in every existent being the state in which its perfection exists, and at the same time the state in which it is lacking. Longing is restricted to the lack of [perfection]. Therefore you see that Ibn Sīnā and other great philosophers have established that love is diffused in all existent beings, and things in their totality seek similarity to the origin as much as possible, for they love it. Love is the inclination toward unification with something, not for some reason, but because the transcendent in its essential perfection is the goal of goals. It is that which is pursued by all and which all seek, i.e., they seek similarity to it and approximation to it. It is said that love requires the consciousness of the difference in levels. This demonstrates that all existent beings have a certain consciousness differing in level according to the difference in the levels of love. So know and intuit this.

§33. Here “goal” is employed in the well-known sense mentioned previously, requiring some effort, since it means that the transcendent is a goal in that one becomes assimilated to it as we indicated. You should posit the goal here in the sense of the final cause, and the meaning of being the final cause is that the essence of the transcendent is sufficient in its own existence for that which comes into existence from it. In its essence it

is an efficient cause from the perspective of influence, and it is a final cause from the perspective of its being that which requires its own activity. In the same way, the very essence of the transcendent precedes the existence of its attributes. So consider both aspects [i.e., efficient cause and final cause], and choose for yourself that which is agreeable. **So that the good is perpetuated**--the entity that produces something else, considering it as being an influence upon it, or more appropriate and more proper for it, is called a good; considering that its production of a thing requires a certain detachment from potency, [it is called] a perfection.

§34. From *The [Book] of Indications* [by Ibn Sīnā] and its commentary, it is understood that perfection is that which produces in act absolutely, and the good relative to a thing is the perfection that this thing seeks by its primary potentiality. By the primary [potentiality], it guards against acquiring the vices that man seeks by his secondary potentiality, which is an extraneous factor to the primary potentiality that one has according to one's nature. But it [i.e., perfection] will not be a good in relation to the essence of the man, rather it will be in relation to his essence along with that extraneous factor, not without it. In this manner perfection is absolutely more common. Their previous position [§33] is that the thing that produces something else, considered as being an influence, is called a good, and considered as detached from potency, [it is called] a perfection. This does not deny that perfection is more common, and it does not require that the two [perfections] be equal, nor is this concealed. Thus the meaning of the good here is existence and the perfections that follow upon it. **And so that emanation is established.** This is the act of an actor who acts perpetually without variation or purpose. **So that its mercy does not reach a limit** among the fixed entities nor cross over them to the subsequent entities or by a

limit among contingent beings. **Its existence is neither imperfect, defective, nor is it interrupted at either extreme.**<sup>18</sup>

§35. It is possible that his statement, “so that the good is perpetuated” [§33], indicates the perpetual entities, and this is a result that connects fixity with fixity. His statement, “so that emanation is established” [§34], indicates the contingent beings. The perpetuity of the act only appears in its bringing them into existence. His saying, “so that its mercy does not reach a limit [at either extreme]”, indicates denial that it has a beginning and an end. Then his statement, “its existence is not imperfect”, is not confined to contingent beings. His statement, “nor defective,” is not confined to the fixed entities. His statement, “nor is it interrupted at either extreme,” means that contingent beings have no beginning point nor end point.

§36. But it is apparent that he did not intend that. He and those belonging to the rank of the great philosophers do not refrain from repetition to emphasize the point. Their purpose is to shorten the journey to the good and to perfection. Anything that is easier as a path to its attainment, and which sets the student upon it, is approved by them. A certain scholar has explained something similar to what we have mentioned in glosses to *The Commentary on the Indications*. Anyone who follows the sources and origins of the initiates has witnessed what we have mentioned, and has condemned the painstaking efforts studied by the moderns from the commentaries on philosophy of [the initiates]; they write down their meaning only in terms of what they know and according to what they prefer, though they [the moderns] lack the experience that is proper to the faculties of [the initiates], and they consider unlawful the dawns kindled from the emanation of their illumination.<sup>19</sup>

§37. Then he begins to explain generosity, after repeating his reference to it [in §18], saying, **Generosity is a gift of what is sought**, or is appropriate. The failure to mention by whom it is sought is because the passive verb does not need it.<sup>20</sup> The omission of its being one of the relative entities is only in relation to the one by whom this is sought.<sup>21</sup> **[It is] not for compensation** as an existing thing that is, even if one acquired something praiseworthy or rejected its opposite. He fails to mention the postulated subject because he does not need to, since the compensation is not all property or even anything else, including praise, eulogy, and freedom from blame, as Ibn Sīnā says in *The Indications*. **One who acts for compensation, though he achieve it, is yet poor**, because he seeks to produce by that act the compensation the existence of which precedes its non-existence, so he needs the compensation for his perfection. **The rich one does not need anything other than himself in his essence and his perfection**, i.e., his real attributes beyond the relative ones, and the pure relationships by which and without which he is connected. They have no distinction in essence, nor is he related to them, though they have a perfection. In that matter it may suffice you to consider the transformation of the relationship between Zayd and what is external to him, it being left or right according to its external transfer while Zayd remains in the same state. This describes one who is rich in the absolute sense. One who does not need any specific thing in his essence and his perfection is rich in relationship to himself, though he may be poor in relation to another. **The one who is absolutely rich**, that is, rich in relation to everything except himself, who is not sullied at all by even a particle of poverty, **is the one whose existence is from his essence**. Then his perfections are also from his essence, but his very essence is as described. **He is the manifest light of lights** in his essence, which manifests to what is other than him, which is

everything except him. That is a spark from his light, or a spark from a spark of his light, etc. **He has no purpose in his creation**, that is, no entity is ascribed to him in act.

**Rather, his essence possesses the emanative source for mercy** by his essence, by awareness and will. These two [attributes] are the very essence in connection with what has proceeded from it and the benefits of wisdom that order it, not like the action of nature which is unaware of what proceeds from it. **Because he is the absolute king; to him belongs the essence of everything, though his essence does not belong to anything.**

“The light of lights” is such because everything is either from him or from that which is from him. The goal of the act regarding him is his being an actor for [the goal]. The causation of all things is rightly his, by the fact that the being of things is from him. So it is stated in *The Commentary on the Indications*.<sup>22</sup>

§38. It is possible that this is stated because the essence of all things is from him, and he is their existentiating cause; because they depend upon him, they are his possession, with or without intermediary. Nothing else but him has access to him. The slave and what belongs to him belong to his master. You may have learned from one of the principles of *[The Wisdom of] Illumination* that the stronger light cannot possibly be influenced by the defective light, or else it is clear in the second introduction [to that work].<sup>23</sup>

§39. **It is inconceivable that existence is more perfect than that which has existence as its special property.** The essence of the Real does not need the lower or **abandon the nobler**, because it would extend to ignorance, impotence, or greed, in him who transcends that. **Rather, his essence requires the nobler, and he is the noblest.**

§40. This indicates the principle of the nobler possibility, which we have indicated previously. Its exposition is according to what the master [Suhrawardī] mentioned in his other books,<sup>24</sup> that when the lowest possible being comes into existence, it requires that the noblest possible being have come into existence prior to it. Otherwise, either the existence of the lower is by an intermediary, which contradicts the postulate, because this intermediary can only be nobler, because the cause is nobler than the effect. Or else it is without intermediary; then, if it is possible for the nobler to proceed from the necessary, that requires the possibility of the many issuing from the one, by necessity. The nobler cannot possibly proceed by the intermediary of that which is lower. Or else it is without intermediary, or with an intermediary that is not lower. If it is not possible for the nobler to proceed from the necessary, then if it is possible from its effect, that permits that the cause is lower than the effect, by necessity. Restricting the intermediary to the lower is based on the principle that “from the one only one proceeds,” and that it is not possible for the nobler to proceed either from the necessary or from its effect, despite the fact that this possibility was assumed. The possible does not require an assumption the existence of which is impossible. If it is required, it is only required of another thing that is not its essence, otherwise it will not be possible. This contradicts the postulate. The assumption is existent, but it does not proceed from the necessary existence nor from its effects, because the discussion postulates the impossibility of its issuing from either one. So of necessity its existence demands an aspect required in the essence of the necessary that is nobler than that which has existence as a special property, and that is impossible. This is its exposition according to the contents of *The Commentary on the Indications*, with additional notes and glosses.

§41. I say that the refutation of the last difficulty is only complete if the possibility of the effect is a requirement for the possibility of the cause, but this is disproved, because the disappearance of the first effect is possible despite [the existence of] its cause, and the disappearance of the necessary is absurd. The proof is that the possibility of the effect requires the possibility of the cause, seeing the effect in a sense such that when one sees the effect, nothing exists in it that would necessitate its absurdity. The disappearance of that [cause] is denied in the form of the disputed [effect] as it is in the form of the affirmed [one].

§42. It is possible that he means this: that which is not an existent being prior to possible existent being is not possible [but is] nobler than it. This is converted to the converse of our statement: that which is possible is nobler, for it is a prior existent being.

§43. The demonstration of the first point is that if it were possible, it would be nobler to the degree that it exists. Either it exists from the necessary without intermediary, though it is assumed that the existence of the lower is from it without intermediary, which requires the procession of the many from the one. Or it exists by an intermediary, and it is restricted to the lower, which requires that the cause be lower than the effect. Both requirements are impossible. That which requires it [to exist] to the degree that it is impossible is itself impossible. Even its possibility requires that it is impossible. Here is something like the previous view; the truth is that if I mean by denial of the nobler that which includes the denial of the other, then that is the case. But if I mean the denial of the essence, then what he said is incomplete.

§44. These points are not affirmed or needed after it was established that the effect in its existence and its non-existence is connected to a cause that requires it. This is

because we say that the purpose of [the effect] is an absurdity, regardless of the will and volition of the actor. What was established is the necessity of the effect, as existence or non-existence, with regard to the cause. This does not prevent the will and volition of the actor from being part of this cause. To this extent, the purpose is not produced upon which was based the negation of the three imperfections from the first source, who transcends that. Persisting in the necessity of any one of these imperfections in the origin is sufficient in this subject, as we have indicated. One of the great masters of Sufism<sup>25</sup> relates that from the imam and proof of Islam, Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī, and he approved of it completely. **Just as the reflection of the light is nobler than the reflection of its reflection**, and so on to the end, to that which is the lowest of all, which is the isthmus between it and the darkness, by which I mean the levels of light that are connected to the darkness. The equivalent in this discussion, by way of example, is the level of bodies. **Anything more perfect than that which has existence as its special property is absurd** because of what was mentioned. This is a repetition of the preceding [§39]. It is as though he returns to it to make it a preparation for the account of good and evil.

§45. He states, if that is the case, “Because some people will be excluded from that which is nobler. We see that most people are excluded from their perfections, the production of which is most important for them.”<sup>26</sup>

§46. It is replied in *The Commentary on [the Wisdom of] Illumination*, from *The [Book of Encounters and] Conversations*, “This principle is only rejected in the case of the continually existing fixed possible beings [i.e., the heavens], because of their perpetual fixed causes, which are uninfluenced by heavenly motions, in distinction from those taking place beneath them, [which are influenced by them,] such as [the elementals of] the three kinds,

etc. It is denied because of external causes. The possible belongs to them essentially, as does the nobler and more perfect. Therefore it is possible for something to be given at one time something noble and at another time something low, not to its essence but to its potentiality, by unlimited causes among contingent beings.

§47. “Now the entities that are above the motions, among the heavenly intelligences, souls, and bodies, and the concomitants of universal natures, are not excluded from that which is nobler than they or from the most perfect of the external entities. This is because they are either causes or effects, or neither the one nor the other. The last two are both false, because its causality of a thing is not admissible if its nonexistence does not entail the nonexistence of the thing. The difference between their nobility and their lowliness is not due to the difference in contingent potentialities. They have it from the motions, because they precede them, and their causality is because of fixed causes, which is the difference in actors and the difference in their aspects. So the nobler is affected by the nobler and the lower by the lower.”<sup>27</sup>

§48. I say in summarizing the reply that the sublime entities that have lofty motions are not prevented from attaining their possible perfections. They have a strange property, contrary to the entities occurring below them, because of their conjunctions with motions. The causes of these perfections in the fixed entities are not foreign to their existent essence. They are either the essence of the actor or a necessary entity to which belongs the activity of their perfections. They are, in their essence, the cause of the essence, or that which necessitates it, contrary to contingent beings. The causes of their occurrence are in one respect special. The causes of their perfections may be other than the causes of their existence or that which requires their existence. If a comparison is

made, they are not nobler than their states. They are not given existence in their essences. There are no causes in their existence, nor is anything that renders them impossible found in their necessities. The difference between the two lies in their occurrence in the nobler respect. But regarding the matter of their impossibility, the nobler individuals of the ordered chain precede the others in the vertical and horizontal hierarchies, with no basic difference, so let them govern [their sphere of activity].

§49. Now, here is another reply, and that is that divine grace is connected with governance of the universal, insofar as it is universal, primarily and in essence, and with governance of the particular secondarily and by accident. It is not possible that the order of the universal can be more beautiful than the actual order. If it were possible for every individual, its greatest perfection would be separate with regard to its special characteristic, but that would be disruptive to the beauty of universal order, even if the particular aspect is concealed from us. This can be likened to the architect submitting a building plan. It may be more beautiful for this building from the total perspective if one side in particular is an outhouse, another is a sitting room, and another is a bedroom. This is because if there were a different arrangement, it would be defective for the beauty of the entire building, even if it is more beautiful, considering the special characteristic of each part, for [each] to be a sitting room, for example. This is instructive regarding the present subject, in that the universal, insofar as it is qualified by the most beautiful order, is related to the complete origin in every respect. This relationship merits the emanation of existence from [the origin], and it undoubtedly comes into existence in this perspective and no other, though from these [other] perspectives it [the universal] is farther from the relationship with the origin. Perhaps the explanations of the quality of that [universal] beauty and its

imperfection are by the change in condition of an individual apart from that which conditions it, which is the secret of destiny, which God possesses exclusively by his knowledge, and of which no one else is aware, or of which one after another of the prophets and philosophers is aware; but God knows best the reality of the situation.

§50. **And the absurd does not come under the power of anyone who is powerful.** From this it does not follow that there is a basic defect in the one who is powerful, rather the defect is in the absurdity, inasmuch as it is not properly related to the power. Since it is known that anything more perfect than the actual order is impossible, then this order is the best of possible orders. That which opposes it is evil, and that which proceeds from the first transcendent can only be good. This [discussion] encompasses the problems relating to the procession of evils from it, and it does not need to be prolonged.

§51. **This only extends the discussion of good and evil,** by intending the problems of establishing their quiddity, and the quality of their procession from the origin or from another, as mentioned in the books of the moderns, particularly the theologians. Some of them deny that there are evils that proceed by the existentiating power of God the transcendent, and they are the Mu'tazila; they are the ones referred to by the Prophet (God bless him and grant him peace), when he said, "The Qadariyya [or advocates of unrestricted free will] are the Magians [i.e., the dualists] of this community." They maintain that there are influences upon God the transcendent, which by volition overpower the volition of God the transcendent, but this is pure ignorance and manifest heresy. **One who thinks that the sublime has consideration for the base--**this means that the sublime origins by their essence bring about the existentiating of the base--**[such a person] imagines that God has no other world beyond this darkened piece of dirt,** that is, the world of elements, and

**that God does not have beyond these diversions**, meaning animals both rational and otherwise, **some creatures** nobler than them, such as the intelligences and the heavenly souls. One who knows that would have no consideration for this lower world. There is [no] proof of their conditions except from the perspective that they proceed from the sublime realities. He does not prolong the likes of this discussion; one only does so who does not know that. **He does not know that if it were to happen otherwise than it is, evils would necessarily result, and a destruction of order on a scale unrelated to that which one now imagines.** Consider burning fire; did it not exist, many beneficial necessities would be destroyed for humanity and others. But with its existence, it is only necessary to distinguish some parts of elemental compounds, with the possibility of avoiding others. Or you may imagine that the existence of fire is possible in this world to cook and to burn that which it is useful to burn, and not to burn what damages it, and thus it would be, according to its nature. But this is a vain fancy.

§52. **And this**, that is, this visible order, fixed in place, refers to a subject assumed by his words. And when he says, **is the ultimate possible order**, it refers to his predicate, that is, “if it were to happen, etc.,” “he does not know that” (§51) this visible order is the ultimate possibility. It is not possible for the world of elements to comprehend oppositions and disasters. **And the world that is untouched by goals is another world.**<sup>28</sup> This is the world of images and the world of the heavens, and the superior world of souls and intelligences. It is **the resort of the pure ones** from supposed and created vices, **[other than] our world**, the companion of humanity. If pure human souls are tightly connected to the use of natural faculties and long for them greatly, after severing the connection with the elemental body they are translated to an internal imaginal body. They enjoy the

witnessing of the forms of that world, such as sensuous food and magnificent sexual intercourse. When they are connected to the heavenly bodies they become themselves a locus for imaginalization of these forms that they have, but here in the forms of the elements their benefits are realized without their evils. Other things that are conceivable, if they exist in this world, are more beautiful. If they are stripped of the connection with nature, which strongly attracts them to their origins, then they become linked with the heavenly spirits and intelligences, ranked differently according to their different degrees in separation.

§53. **It is not the situation that the sublime holy ones are only occupied with ripping off veils, rejecting orphans from their nurses' embrace, tormenting those who are free from bodies, planting false religions,** for their manifestation and growth is similar to the planting of a tree, **seducing souls, coddling fools, and punishing the wise,** and other disasters occurring in our world. This is because, if the activity of these holy substances was limited to [this description], there would be an obvious defect in their activity, and that is impossible. **Their only occupation is the witnessing of the lights of God the transcendent from every place where they may be witnessed.** They witness the lights of God the transcendent in themselves, in their causes, in their effects, and in the other intelligences proceeding by accidental<sup>29</sup> considerations. **Their motions require necessary requirements** that inflict certain evils on some lower entities. **If they returned to a position that benefited those people, they would thereby injure other worlds.** Either they [the other worlds] are parts of that world, like forms in the case of fire, and as in the case of the form of the pouring rain that inflicts ruin on certain structures at times. If it did not exist, that would injure crops and trees, and it would inflict harm on animals. Or

else they are in the sublime worlds, in that no similarity to their objects of love is produced, although these contingent beings have no primary object, for they occur in the most perfect possible aspect that they have. So he indicates by saying, **Nevertheless, they do not move for the sake of lower entities**, as was established. Lower entities are not an intention for them in essence, such that if a defect occurred in them relative to one of the parts, it would require that the defect be in these sublime ones. This is because there is no defect in their essences, nor in their actions, nor in that which is basically an intention for them in essence. That which appears, that is, the defect, although it is not a defect in actuality, is rather the most perfect thing possible, as you know. Only that which is included in the necessary is the intention in essence, not that which is in something. **But when eternal radiances and divine lights shower upon them**--it is possible that by "eternal radiances" he means that which emanates upon them from the first origin, and by "divine lights" that which emanates from the intelligences--**they are overcome by awe in the divine stations, and by the power** or an overwhelming force attached to awe **of the holy rays, which does not allow them to see their essences, let alone anything else.** They are absorbed in the witnessing of the origins, inasmuch as it is not possible for them to consider anything else at all. **Despite that** overpowering force and the total absorption that is necessary to it, **they know all, whether open or concealed**, since knowledge is not limited to consideration, so all things are known to them without their having to consider them. This is like our knowledge of ourselves and our characteristics by presence, at the time of total absorption in something, such as in the state of extreme anger, or complete concentration on an intellectual or imaginative matter, or the presence of a beloved. **Nothing escapes their knowledge or the knowledge of their creator**, since it would cross

their existence as pure lights. **This demonstrates the perpetuity of the heavenly bodies, and the fact that they are not compounded of the elements, and are free from corruption,** that is, the [lack of] corruption of their forms is attached to their not being compounds; these two points are in the position of commentary on “the perpetuity of the heavenly bodies,” as though he had said, “the fact that they are not of the genus of the elements,” as the text demonstrates. So they are not elemental at all, as will be shown below. **That which was stated in the Fifth Temple concerned the necessity that their motions be perpetual. If they were compounds of the elementals, they would be dissolved,** because elemental parts are by their nature prone to fall apart and to incline toward their natural limits. The nature of the compound is that they essentially are these parts. The power of universal nature continues to abate, on account of the powers of the particular natures, gradually, until it is altogether abated. The power of these natures overpower it so that it is dissolved. **And as long as their motions continue,** which is attached to the phrase “they would be dissolved,” **they are not elemental at all.** That is, they are not compounded of the elements, nor are they of their genus. This is a conclusion for the syllogism mentioned in the course of his argument. The syllogism is thus: If the heavens were compounded of the elements, they would not be perpetually in motion, but they are perpetually in motion. The conclusion is that the heavens are not compounded of the elements. He neglects to mention the conclusive syllogism for their freedom from corruption, leaving it to the understanding of the student. Its form is thus: If the heavens were susceptible of corruption, their motion would not be perpetual, but they are perpetually in motion, therefore they are not susceptible of generation and corruption.

§54. **Because heat is light, it only moves by nature upwards**, absolutely or relatively. **Cold is heavy, and it only moves downwards**, because of the preceding commentary. **Wet easily accepts form or the lack of it, or conjunction or disjunction, and dry accepts them**, that is, form and conjunction in existence and cessation, **with difficulty**. **The heavens basically cannot be pierced** easily or with difficulty. **They do not move in a straight line, nor toward the center, nor away from it**, that is, neither upwards nor downwards, according to what precedes. This demonstrates the impossibility of piercing, because that is by motion in a straight line. I say regarding piercing, that inasmuch as an aperture occurs, it only exists in a straight line. Either it is pierced absolutely, in which case it may be that part of it is moved with a circular motion and the remaining part is at rest, or it is moved circularly in a different direction. That is also impossible for the heavens, because it is impossible for them to be at rest or to change their movements. Otherwise time would depart from continual unity, because of the preceding. You realize that this and similar matters are only established by demonstration in that which is limited in time and place, but it applies to the rest of the heavens by intuition. **Rather, their motions circulate around the middle**, that is, around the center, **and they are not heavy or light**, because weight is the inclination downwards, and lightness is the inclination upwards, **nor are they hot or cold**, because that would require the two inclinations just mentioned, **nor are they wet or dry**, because these require the possibility of accepting form or the lack of it, and conjunction or the lack of it, either easily or with difficulty, as mentioned. **For they are a fifth nature [i.e., quinta essentia]**, that is, differing from the natures of the four elements, **and they encompass the earth** from all sides. **If heaven did not encompass the earth, the sun would not return to the east after setting except by**

**doubling the length of the day.** That is, a day would be produced by two sequences, one traveling from east to west and the other the reverse. The conclusion is evidently absurd. Because this situation occurs among all the planets that rise and set in all regions, there is no doubt [about this proposition], and that it encompasses the earth from all directions.

§55. **The heavens are all spherical**, because of their circular motions. After the establishment of circular motion, the argument that the heavens lack spherical shape would require the establishment of division within them, which is contrary to that which is proper to these noble bodies, as confirmed by Ptolemy in many discussions in the *Almagest*; understand that, for it is a marvelous method. **Some of them encompass others**, because all of them encompass the earth, viewing the sight of the rising of all the planets from two opposite points, in reality or in love, in all regions, intuition being added to that. **[They are] living**, because that is established from the fact that their motion is voluntary, and volition without life is impossible. **[They are] rational**, that is, they comprehend universals, and that is because voluntary motion undoubtedly has a goal of which the seeker is conscious. This is not motion itself, because its reality is a first perfection,<sup>30</sup> since it is potential qua potential. This means it is a perfection regarding which matter is not separated from potency. That can only be conceived in that it exists essentially as a link with another perfection, and whatever is essentially a link is not in essence an intention. I say,<sup>31</sup> this is prior to what was stated, because it is not possible for an essentially established mover to necessitate them [i.e., motions] according to its nature, volition, or anything else, because that which necessitates a thing persists by the perpetuity of its essence, and it necessitates them not by its essence but by something else [i.e., its goal]. That is because the fact that it does not necessitate the essentially established mover according to its nature,

volition, or anything else, does not require that it be an intention in essence. This is because of the possibility that the mover necessitates them, by the addition of something that is not established, which is a part of the cause required by them and not desired by anything else. The meaning of one thing being desired by another is that the other [the goal] should be a final cause for it, and that is not required by the fact that it does not necessitate the essence of the mover by its nature, volition, or anything else. So after hinting at that, we shall shift the discussion to that other thing [the goal]. If it is an established entity, it is not possible that it proceeds from that which is moved by the addition of motion. If it is not established, it is not possible that it proceeds from that which is moved by its [own] nature, volition, or anything else, as stated in the deduction. Since it is proved that motion necessarily has a goal, and its goal is either a place, a position, a quality, or a quantity, since motion only occurs in these categories, and the heavens can only have positional motions, therefore their goal is the positional. It is not a particular position, otherwise something would happen to it, so it is consequently a universal position, and it is something that apprehends the universals. Now, that does not suffice for the procession of the particular motion. A particular longing does not originate from the universal observer. There is no doubt that the heavenly bodies have a faculty impressed upon their nature, by reason of the apprehension of the particular motions and particular positions desired by them. The relation of this faculty to the heavenly souls is the relation of the sensory faculties to our souls; this is repeated by the followers of the Peripatetics.<sup>32</sup>

§56. I say that in this subject there is no need for motion to be unintended in its essence, rather it will suffice them if they say that the object of desire is not the particular motion, otherwise it will be interrupted after its completion.

§57. It may be asked, why it is not possible that the object of desire is the particular unitary motion that is continuous from pre-eternity to post-eternity, not requiring interruption?

§58. I would say that the bodily faculty does not apprehend the unlimited, hence the analogy of that prohibition applies to position, which is intended essentially in their opinion. But if we follow the method of illumination, then we say that you already know that the purpose of their motions is the illuminations that unfold to them from their origins, that they may resemble them by these illuminations, as indicated by his phrase, **They love the radiance of holiness**, that is, the lights which are their origins.<sup>33</sup> They seek to resemble them, with all the noble luminous relationships that they have. This only occurs by the outflow of the lights from the origins, so the heavenly souls undoubtedly conceive of the origins and their noble luminous attributes. But they are separate, and the unseparated does not apprehend the separate. They are separate souls, and every separate being apprehends the universals as was established, although among them it is established that whatever apprehends something apprehends itself. The Master [Suhrawardī] has explained in other books that whatever apprehends itself is a separate substance, so it apprehends the universals. Whatever apprehends itself is a light to its own essence, since its manifestation to itself is not an entity added to its essence. Now, the Master in *The [Wisdom of] Illumination* maintains that the victorious relationships that may be repeated are limited, although the victorious relationships are not absolutely limited.<sup>34</sup> This is because not every relationship that may be repeated is limited. If repetition occurs to them in that which may be repeated during cycles and eons, the resurrection will occur; then the repetition will start over again. So consider the matter in this way. Were it not for fear

of prolixity, we would adduce that which proves the position; it may be that we will return to it in another book, with the aid of the excellent benefactor.

§59. **They obey their originator**, because the purpose of their motions is to attain similarity with it and to approximate it, as explained. Ibn Sīnā says in *The Salvation* that heaven is a living being that obeys God the mighty and glorious. **There is no death in the world of ether**, because he explained that all of them possess a separate soul, and it is doubtful that he intended that [they should die] after clarifying that they are living [§55]. The reference is to the fact that every body among the heavenly beings possesses an individual soul, as many philosophers maintain, so that they establish that the planets have circular motion in their locations. Ibn Sīnā in *The Healing* inclines to this theory and prefers it. He explains it in *The Indications*, and that is because what applies to the planets applies to the heavens, in terms of the necessity of removing possible positions from potency to act.

§60. He says in his *Commentary*<sup>35</sup> that this thing is not perceptible in the translunar region. Either the black spots of the moon, even if imaginary, appear in it by reflection, as you see with mirages and the rainbow; or there are stable existent bodies opposite it [the moon], rather something is existent in it and fixed at all times in a single condition lacking circular motion. But there is a difficulty in the decisive point. It is evident that there is not an existent thing in it [the moon], because of the necessity that it be simple and the impossibility of it changing from its natural position. This position was taken in *The Memoir*,<sup>36</sup> that the black spots are small dark planets embedded with the moon in its orbit. I say that as the moon is simple, so is its orbit. If simplicity requires that there not be an existent thing in the moon, that requires that there not be an existent thing in

its orbit either, although the position was taken in *The Memoir* that the black spots of the moon are small dark things embedded in the body of the moon, contrary to what he maintains here. Now, the previous demonstration, that is, the necessity of its simplicity, does not demonstrate the point, since simplicity does not deny that there could be another simple body embedded in its body, as in the heaven and the very same planets. This is not a demonstration of the impossibility of the planets encompassing another planet with a discrete body. What he says regarding the impossibility of it changing from its natural position is not conducive to the point, and it is obvious that he speaks of its natural shape. Perhaps he means by position part of the category, that is, the relationship of the parts to each other; change in this requires change in the shape. After this concern, which is under examination, as you know, unless indeed the most appropriate thing is said regarding these noble bodies, then there is no opposition established in them requiring their natures by necessity--and there is no necessity in that, despite the support of sound possibilities. Then the theory remains in the soundness of these possibilities.

The Conclusion of the Temple. On the Distinction of Existent Beings in General, and the Indication of their Ranks.

§61. **The first fixed relationship in existence is the relationship of the existent subsisting substance** (*al-jawhar al-qā'im al-mawjūd*), that is, the first effect, **to the first eternally subsistent being** (*al-awwal al-qayyūm*), which is existent by its essence and gives existence to others. **It**, that is, this relationship, **is the source** (lit. “mother”) **of all relationships**, because it contains them all, **and the noblest of them**, since it is the origin of all and because it also contains them. **It is the lover of the first**, for every effect

is the lover of its cause, longing to be similar to it, as just mentioned, especially the noblest possibility, which has no veil whatever between it and the transcendent first. **The first is victorious over it, overwhelming it, by the light of its eternal subsistence, with a vanquishing that cannot be encompassed or even named as its light,** as the light of the sun is victorious over the lights of vision, with a vanquishing that cannot be beheld. **This relationship contains a love** from the side of the effect **and a vanquishing** from the side of the cause.<sup>37</sup> According to what the Master says in his books, love encompasses both the aspects of cause and effect, except that the love of the cause follows upon vanquishing, while the love of the effect follows from submitting. This is the real, as the illuminationist experience attests.

§62. **The one side,** which is from the cause, **is nobler than the other,** which is from the effect. **The condition of this relationship becomes effective,** by containing both sides, the active and the passive, which are referred to as vanquishing and submitting, **in all the worlds.** The authority of the principles becomes effective in the ramifications, as is established among the possessors of unveiling and vision. **[So that] divisions take place [in existence] in pairs** in every level of existent beings. **Substance is divided into the embodied,** which is vanquished and influenced by the origins above it, **and the bodiless,** which vanquish the latter, as indicated.

§63. **The bodiless dominates it,** that is, the body, **and it, the bodiless, is its beloved and its cause** as was shown previously. **One of the two sides,** namely, the side of the embodied, **is inferior, and in this way is divided the substance that is separate from matter, in two parts:** a part that is **lofty and victorious,** which is the intelligences, and a part that is **descending, passive and vanquished, into the degrees [of existence],**

which is the souls. **Likewise bodies are divided into the etheric and the elemental.** The former is active and victorious, and the latter is passive and vanquished. Then he turns away from that to establish that those divisions exist in some of the parts of each of the two divisions, i.e., the etheric, as he says, **Rather, some of the etheric bodies,** namely, the planets, **are divided into those that sustain felicity,** called the auspicious celestial bodies, such as Jupiter and Venus, **and those that sustain vanquishing,** called the unlucky ones by the masses, such as Saturn, Mars, etc. Then he turns away from that, advancing to establish division among some of the parts of each part, that is, some of the planets. So he says, **Rather, there are two luminosities [i.e., the sun and the moon],** referring to the preceding divisions, assuming the meaning as though he had said, “Rather, from this division two luminosities are produced.” Otherwise, it is obvious from the phrase, “Rather, there are two luminosities,” since it is a reference to the object of the preposition [“into,” i.e., the planets]. It is possible that it is a reference to some of the etheric bodies, as is evident. If these two [luminosities] are included among some of the etheric bodies, still their division<sup>38</sup> is of a higher degree than the division of all the planets. This division [of luminous bodies] occurs in two, contrary to the division of all the planets, which is in common to a large group. **One of the two,** which is the sun, **is like the intellect,** since it is an active source of emanation, **and the other,** which is the moon, is like the soul, since it is a passive recipient of emanation. Then he indicates the outflow of that division into bodies in a general way, in a way that encompasses everything he says, by saying, **there is the high and the low, the right and the left.** This division flows into all bodies, high and low; then its outflow enters the heavens particularly, as he says, **there is east and west.** Then its outflow enters some of the genera of elementals, which are most conspicuous of all.

He says, **there is the male and the female among animals.** Then he summarizes all that by saying, **a perfect side is joined with an imperfect one,** that is, in all the divisions mentioned, **in imitation of the relationship with the first.** **He understands that,** the secret just mentioned regarding the effectiveness of pairing in all existent beings, which is true because sex is called “effective in all species,” **if he understands the saying of God the transcendent, “For everything we have created in pairs; perhaps you shall remember” [Qur’ān 51:49].** They understand that it remains the first relationship, which is “the source [mother] of all relationships” [§61], and they learn from the unity of the source, which is the origin of this duality.

§64. **Since light is the noblest of existent beings,** by the testimony of sound nature, so that dumb animals love and adore it, sometimes risking their lives to approach it, like the moth, **so the noblest of bodies is the most luminous of them.** **It is the most sacred,** [“most sacred” (*qaddīs*)” being] the emphatic form of “the sacred” (*al-quds*), or purity, **the father,** so called because it is the one who brings forth the three kinds [of elemental matter], which are the fountainhead of the emanation of life, **the king,** because it was given kingship, as was established by the possessors of experience and unveiling, who penetrated the commands of the stars and the secrets of theurgy, among the sages of Babylon and the masters of the sciences who preceded them and followed them. **It is Hurakhsh,** the name of the sun in Persian, **the mighty** since it overwhelms and is not overwhelmed, **the one who is victorious over the twilight,** or the darkness, by its lights, **the chief** of heaven; how could it be otherwise? It is the greatest of the luminous bodies in it, rather, it holds for it the position of the heart. **It is the maker of day** by its rising, **the perfecter of potencies, the master of marvels,** as was shown to the masters of the

secrets of the stars, theurgy, and talismans. **It is mighty of form**, divine, and its radiance suffices for all the lights, and for the disappearance of them all in its victorious rays, and the disappearance of all the lights in the sublimities of the glory of the light of lights. **It is the one who gives all the bodies their radiance, not taking anything from them.** This indicates its outward form, in that the lights of all the planets are borrowed from it, as some of the pillars among the philosophers maintain. **It is the image of God, the transcendent, the almighty**, in emanating light on all receptacles and the vanquishing of all the lights. In general, the light of lights, which is the sun of the world, is the intellect. **It is the greatest aim**, and therefore it [the sun] was the prayer-direction of devotions in the ancient religions. By its nature fire became a prayer-direction, for they called it daughter of the sun; it was as though it took the place of [the sun] in that [role], by existing and appearing in all times and places, unlike the sun. **After it**, that is, after Hurakhsh in nobility and excellence, **are the mighty lords of dominion**, or the individual stars, both fixed stars and planets, **and in particular the master of felicity, the lord of goodness and blessings**, that is, the lesser light, which is the moon. An indication of this is that the Master, in his *Hymns* addressed to the planets, describes the moon in similar terms.<sup>39</sup> **Glory be to its originator.** The subject is the “most sacred” described above, or each one of the entities mentioned above. Origination here is in its literal sense, which is giving existence without imitating a model; it is not in its technical sense, which is giving existence without any intermediary. **It transcends** what the heretics say regarding its attributes, and what the abstractionists say regarding its essence, **[transcending] him to whom it gave form** with the best of forms. **Blessed be God**, that is, may he increase good, for his essence is

transcendent, **the best of creators**--the plural, in popular fashion, is metaphorical, since in reality there is no source of influence except him, as in the preceding.

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1. Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Sa’d al-Dīn As’ad al-Ṣiddīqī al-Davānī, *Shawākil al-ḥūr fī sharḥ hayākil al-nūr*, ed. Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq and Muḥammad Yūsuf Kūkan (Madras: Government Oriental Manuscripts Library, 1373/1953), pp. 147-93 (the Fifth Temple), 208-225 (the Seventh Temple). Paragraphs follow this edition, though I have added the numbering for convenience. In this translation Suhrawardī’s text is indicated by bold print. The original Arabic text of Suhrawardī’s *Hayākil al-nūr* was edited by Muḥyī al-Dīn Ṣabrī Kurdī (Cairo, 1335/1916-7), but I did not have access to this. For a Persian translation of the base text, see Shihāb al-Dīn Yaḥyā Suhrawardī, *Majmū’a-i muṣannafāt-i Shaykh-i Ishrāq/uvres Philosophiques et Mystiques*, vol. 3, ed. Sayyed Hossein Nasr (2nd ed., Tehran, 1355/1977; reprint ed., Tehran: Mu’assasa-i Muṭālī’āt u Taḥqīqāt-i Farhangī, 1372/1994), pp. 83-108, and the introductory remarks of Henry Corbin, “Prolégomènes III,” *ibid.*, pp. 25-45. For a French translation of the base text, see Shihāboddīn Yaḥyā Sohrawardi\* Shaykh al-Ishrāq, *L’Archange empourpré, Quinze traités et récits mystiques*, trans. Henry Corbin (Paris: Fayard, 1976), pp. 33-66; several longer extracts from the commentaries of Davānī and Ghiyāth al-Dīn Shīrāzī are translated there also (pp. 67-73), and a few more translations from these commentaries are found in the notes (pp. 74-89).
  2. A “complete cause” (*illa tamāma*) is defined as “that which requires the existence of the effect; it is said that the complete cause is the totality upon which the existence of a thing depends.” Cf. ‘Alī ibn Muḥammad al-Sharīf al-Jurjānī, *Kitāb al-ta’rīfāt*, ed. Gustavus Fluegel (Leipzig, 1845; reprint ed., Beirut: Librairie du Liban, 1978), p. 160.
  3. Suhrawardī, *Kitāb al-maṣāri’ wal-muṭārahāt*, in *uvres*, ed. Corbin, I, 375-76.

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4. Suhrawardī, *Hikmat al-ishrāq*, in *~ uvres*, ed. Corbin, II, 173.
  5. A marginal note adds, “This is only complete if the compeller (reading *al-qāsir* for *al-qāṣir*) is a body.”
  6. This phrase also occurs in the Persian translation.
  7. A marginal note adds, “That is, Kaykhusraw, Kayqubād, Kay Luhrāsp, and Kayumarth, from the kings of Persia.”
  8. Following Corbin’s reading *fa-atathu* for the erroneous *fā’ita*.
  9. Suhrawardī, *Hikmat al-ishrāq*, in *~ uvres*, ed. Corbin, II, 157; cf. Suhrawardī, *al-Alwāḥ al-’Imādī*, in *~ uvres*, ed. Nasr, III, 186-87, with slight differences in the Persian text. This comment by Davānī is translated by Corbin, *L’archange*, p. 71, while Suhrawardī’s Persian text is translated in *ibid.*, p. 112.
  10. The mistake is *aṭwār*, “states,” for *awṭār*, “desires.”
  11. Reading “divine lovers” (*’ushshāq ilāhiyyīn*, cf. Corbin’s reading *’ushshāq ilāhiyya* [*L’Archange*, p. 80, n. 54], instead of “lovers of goddesses” (*’ushshāq ilāhatīn*); cf. §18 below.
  12. Corbin’s text (*L’Archange*, p. 55) reads “lord of lords” (*rabb al-’arbāb*) instead of “the transcendent God” (*allāh ta’ālā*).
  13. This passage is translated by Corbin (*L’Archange*), pp. 71-72, who cites a marginal note identifying the author of the Sufi saying as Rūzbihān Baqlī.
  14. Following the alternate reading *al-ḥaraka* rather than *al-muḥarraka*.
  15. A marginal note adds, “That is, one of them would be a cause prepared for the other. But it is not the case that one thing is adapted to another, but is not related to the other, in some [medium] supported by them both.”
  16. The phrase “fixed entities” (*umūr thābita*) appears to be modelled on the “fixed essences” (*a’yān thābita*) of the Sufi thinker Ibn ‘Arabī.
  17. A marginal gloss.

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18. A variant reads, “Its generosity.”
  19. This passage uses terms with a strong mystical flavor to bring out the difference between earlier intuitive philosophers and the later rationalistic thinkers whom Davānī wishes to criticize. The term translated here as “initiates” is *al-qawm*, literally “the folk,” often used in Sufi writings to indicate the true mystics. The term translated as “experience” is *dhawq*, literally “taste,” a common synonym for mystical experience.
  20. A marginal note adds, “[In the case of] one who gives to someone who does not seek, this gift is not ‘a gift of what was sought.’”
  21. A marginal note adds, “One who mentions it [the relationship] intends to distinguish those who are related.”
  22. The first phrase commented on in this paragraph, “Generosity is the gift of what is sought without compensation,” is quoted by Suhrawardī from Abū ‘Alī ibn Sīnā, *al-Ishārāt wal-tanbīhāt ma’a sharḥ Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī*, ed. Sulaymān Dunyā, Dhakhā’ir al-’Arab, no. 22 (Egypt: Dār al-Ma’ārif, 1957), III, 555.
  23. See, e.g., Suhrawardī, *Ḥikmat al-ishrāq*, in *~ uvres*, ed. Corbin, II, 133.
  24. Suhrawardī, *Ḥikmat al-ishrāq*, in *~ uvres*, ed. Corbin, II, 154.
  25. A marginal gloss identifies this figure (literally “one of the masters of unveiling and realization”) as Muḥyī al-Dīn ibn al-’Arabī in *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya*.
  26. Suhrawardī, *Ḥikmat al-ishrāq*, in *~ uvres*, ed. Corbin, II, 154 (the commentary of Quṭb al-Dīn Shīrāzī).
  27. Suhrawardī, *Ḥikmat al-ishrāq*, in *~ uvres*, ed. Corbin, II, 154, commentary of Quṭb al-Dīn; cf. Suhrawardī, *Kitāb al-maṣāri’ wal-muṭāraḥāt*, in *~ uvres*, ed. Corbin, I, 434-35.

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28. Here the text of Davānī has “goals” (*ghāyāt*) in place of the “maladies and afflictions” (*‘āhāt wa balliyāt*) of the Persian translation (III, 102), rendered by Corbin as “les malheurs et les épreuves” (*L’Archange*, pp. 57-58).
  29. An alternate reading is “postulated” (*farḍiyya*) rather than “accidental” (*‘araḍiyya*).
  30. “First perfection” (*kamāl-i awwal*) in Ibn Sīnā’s Persian vocabulary means postulated created existence (*āfarīnash-i farīda*, cf. Afnan, p. 259).
  31. A gloss refers this discussion to *Sharḥ al-ishārāt*, the end of the third part.
  32. A marginal gloss adds, “The Peripatetics hold that the heaven has a soul that is impressed upon it, and Ibn Sīnā holds that it has a separate soul. Imām al-Rāzī holds that it has two souls, one impressed upon it and one separate. The philosopher al-Ṭūsī says that this is something that no one believed before him [al-Rāzī], for the single body cannot possibly have two souls, i.e., two essences, it being an instrument for both of them. The truth is that it has a separate soul and an imaginative faculty, and this is what is meant by the Imām, as a kind of goal in this topic. Amīr Ḥusayn refers to the imaginative faculty as the impressed soul in his glosses to his commentary on *al-Hidāya al-athīriyya*.”
  33. Corbin, (“Prolégomènes II,” in *~ uvres*, II, 39) identifies these illuminations (*ishrāqāt*) as the victorious lights or archangels.
  34. Suhrawardī, *Hikmat al-ishraq*, in *~ uvres*, ed. Corbin, II, 176; this is a discussion of the repetition of the cosmic cycle through a return of the planets to their original positions, in a kind of “eternal recurrence.” “Victorious relationships” appears to mean the celestial configurations of the planetary spheres as loci of the angel-intelligences.

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35. A marginal gloss locates this remark at the end of the sixth part of the *Sharḥ al-ishārāt*, presumably the commentary of al-Ṭūsī.
36. Possibly the *Tadhkira-i Naṣīriyya* of Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī; cf. Muḥammad Mudarrisī (Zanjānī), *Sar-gudhasht wa 'aqā'id-i falsafī-i Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī*, *Intishārāt-i Dānishgāh-i Tihrān*, 309 (Tehran: Chāpkhāna-i Dānishgāh, 1335/1956), p. 114.
37. The terms translated here as “vanquishing” (*qahr*) and “victorious” (*qāhir*) have the general sense of force, conquest, overpowering, and they recall the Qur'ānic name of God as *al-qahhār*, the all-powerful. Corbin translates *qahr* as “domination d'amour,” while he renders the term “love” (*maḥabba*) as “obédience d'amour.”
38. Corbin (*L'Archange*, p. 82, n.68) apparently reads *anfusuhumā* rather than *inqisāmuhumā*, translating “leurs Ames” instead of “their division.”
39. For these hymns (*Taṣbīḥāt*), see Corbin's translation, *L'Archange*, pp. 483 ff.





