

The Translation of the *Mi'râj Nâma* (The Book of the Prophet Muḥammad's Ascent to Heaven)⁷

Introduction

[iv., 79] In the Name of God, the Merciful and the Compassionate. This is the treatise on the (prophet Muḥammad's) Ascension that the First Master, Abû 'Alî ibn Sînâ, may God's mercy be upon him, wrote:⁸

Thanks to the Lord of heaven and earth, praise to the Bestower of spirit [*jân*] and body [*tan*]. And greetings to His selected prophet, Muḥammad the Chosen [*muṣṭafâ*], may God bless him and his family, and to the members of his house [his descendants], and his pure companions.⁹

Now then: A friend of ours has continually inquired about the meaning [*ma'nâ*] of the Ascension, desiring it explained in a rational way [*bar tarîq-i ma'qûl*].¹⁰ I was constrained (from doing this) because of the danger involved until now, when I have entered the service of the Exalted Court of 'Alâ' [ad-Daula].¹¹ I submitted this matter [*ma'nâ*] to his opinion. He consented and gave me permission to delve into it [2r.] and of his own will assisted, so that the bond of indolence was opened, and my diligence and effort in this (topic) could become apparent. For although many subtle truths and symbols [*ma'ânî-yi latîf va-rumûz*] come to mind, when there is no virtuous recipient or perfect intellectual [*'âqil*] (to receive them), they cannot be made manifest. It is a fault to divulge secrets to a stranger; the teller then becomes culpable. As they have said: "Secrets, protect them from others!"¹² But when you speak to someone capable and worthy, it is appropriate to convey the truth to one who is deserving.¹³ Just as lodging secrets with someone ignorant is a mistake, withholding [80] truths [*ma'ânî*] from an intelligent person is inappropriate. And in this age of ours, no one recalls seeing a great person more perfect than the Exalted Court. Indeed, in truth it is known that the sphere [*falak*] has [2v.] not brought forth into the desert of Existence and Appearance anyone more sublime, generous, intelligent, or wise than the noble person of 'Alâ' ad-Daula.¹⁴

Since he is the point of conjunction of all that is praiseworthy, lofty, and sublime, whenever a truth [*ma'nâ*] comes to mind, the faculty of in-

tellect strives to convey it to the informed ear of that great man, so (that it) becomes enobled (by being) a “part” in the shadow of that “whole.” For all truths in minds incline toward him. Indeed, you would say that his pure intellect has become the center for all the intellects of the generous, since all things revolve around their center. Each word someone utters, however noble, bears no refinement and taste if the Exalted Court does not accept it. [3r.] Because his acceptance is like soul [*rûh*] for the words, and body without soul is worthless.

Not everyone who speaks is accepted at that Exalted Court. On the contrary, words must be free of defect and impurity in utterance and meaning for his ear to accept (them).¹⁵ Since his ear is the Lote Tree of the Far Boundary, and nothing unrefined can reach there, (words) must be subtle and spiritual to find (their) way. But each person bears a gift in order to be accepted.¹⁶

We too, bravely and with good intentions toward that august man, presented these words to that Court. We delved into the symbols of the story of the Ascension as far as intellect can help, relying on the magnanimity of (this) great man. [3v.] Whatever fault he sees, may he regard it with the eye of pardon so that it may seem proper. I seek help from Life-Giving God. Only God grants success.¹⁷ [8r]

Chapter In Explanation of the Condition of Prophethood and Apostleship

Know that Absolute Truth [*Ḥaqq*], may He be exalted, created human beings from two different things.¹⁸ One is called body [*tan*], the other, spirit [*jân*]. He brought each from a different world [*‘âlam*]. He brought together the body by gathering the humors [*akhlât*] and combining the elements [*arkân*], and He united with it the spirit, through the influence of the Active Intelligence.¹⁹ He adorned the body with parts, such as the hand, foot, head, face, belly, frame, sensation, and other things, and gave each one, such as the heart, liver, [4r.] and brain, a suitable function. Thus the hand is for taking, the foot for going. This does not do the work of that, nor that the work of this. The body is the mount [*markab*], the spirit the rider. The instrument of the spirit is the body, (while) the splendor [*raunaq*] of the body rests in the spirit. When He created the body, He chose three noble members of it, and into each He put a soul [*rûh*]. He

put the animal (soul) [*ḥayavâni*] in the heart, the natural [*tabîî*] in the liver, and the psychic [*nafsâni*] in the brain. He adorned each one of these with special faculties: the animal with concupiscence [*shahvat*] and irascibility [*ghadab*], external sensation [*ḥiss*], the imagination [*khayâl*], and estimation [*vahm*]; the natural with expulsion [*daf*], digestion [*hadm*], absorption [*jazb*], and retention [*imsâk*]; and the psychic with the faculties of cogitation [*tafakkur*], recollection [*tazakkur*], discernment [*tamayyuz*], memory [*ḥafz*], and other things. These (first) two souls [4v.] are subordinate. The basis [*asl*] of [82] this soul is the psychic (soul). Both of these (former) two are its servants. It is more perfect and nobler, because the animal and natural (souls) are exposed to transitoriness, in the bonds of mortality [*fanâ'*], but the psychic (soul) is not susceptible to mortality; it remains forever after the passing of the body. Hence when the Absolute Truth (may He be praised and exalted) brought forth the body, He made (it) the mount of the spirit [*rûh*]. The intent of this was that the nobility of humankind become clear and distinct, and that it be distinguished from the other animals. For if (their) bases were the animal and natural (souls), humans would not be differentiated from other animals. They would be an (equal) partner [*sharik*] of all animals. But if He only put the psychic (soul in humans), they would have nothing in common with other animals. Hence He gave (humans) all three (souls), so that they share the animal and natural (souls) with all [5r.] but in regard to their psychic (souls) are nobler than all.

The basis of humankind is the psychic (soul). Rationality [*nutq*], wisdom [*khirad*], knowledge [*dânish*], and discernment are of it. The rational [*nâtiqat*] and psychic souls are not called spirit, they are called soul [*ra-vân*].²⁰ Because the spirit is a subtle body, while the soul is not a body but rather a faculty that through the perfection of its subtle nature [*latâfat*] is the helper and activator of the spirit and body. It is the locus of speech [*sukhan*] and the source of knowledge [*'ilm*] and wisdom. When the spirit and body are set free, the body decays, (but) the soul does not decay.²¹

Since humanity's nobility lies in the rational soul, and the body is its mount and instrument, there must be guardians for the mount so it does not fall into harm and destruction, for then it would not function. For this reason [*ma'nâ*], [5v.] the natural soul is placed in the liver and given faculties that always seek aid from nourishment. In this way it conveys power to the body [83] and thus regulates the mount. That which is excessive, it expels by means of another faculty, partly through the pores by means of perspiration and partly by excretion. If there were no faculty for food

consumption, the mount would collapse; if there were no faculty for expulsion, a person would not (be able) to burn up all the food.

The animal faculty is also given so that, by means of the irascible faculty, it holds what is not naturally compatible at a distance; while the concupiscent faculty brings near to one whatever is naturally compatible. The faculties of the (five) senses have been provided as attendants to the rational soul; hence, they take whatever sensibles [*maḥṣûṣât*] reach them and [6r.] convey (them) to the common sense [*ḥiss-i musharak*], which is the form-recipient of all things. Then (common sense) gives to the compositive imagination whatever is suitable, and to estimation whatever is suitable. Whatever is appropriate for the intellect, it separates, with the help of cogitation and discernment, and deposits in the storehouse of memory, so that, when it is of use to the intellect, (the intellect) retrieves it by means of the faculty of recollection. Recollection thus conveys from memory whatever (the intellect) may need.

When it is known that these three souls are put in human beings, it becomes clear that human differences and faculties originate from differences in faculties and the (varying) domination of these souls. Someone for whom the natural (soul) is dominant is concerned with whatever is connected with morsels, gluttony, and food. Someone for whom the animal (soul) is dominant prefers [6v.] concupiscence, irascibility, and other lowly attributes. Those for whom the psychic (soul) is dominant make the natural and animal (souls) their servants, so that whatever relates to learning, wisdom, cogitation, and discernment appears in them. They give way to the animal (soul) to such an extent that they are not given the name of “lifeless” and “passionless.” [84] They operate the natural (soul) to the extent that the mount requires it. When the rational soul is dominant and powerful in someone, it defeats and conquers the animal and natural (souls), because the intellect restrains humans from excess and negligence [*ifrât wa-tafrît*] and encourages moderation [*itidâl*] in all actions.²²

In the same way that the rational soul is the commander and superior of the souls, the intellect is the commander [7r.] and superior of the rational soul. It is provided as an advisor of human beings for the rational soul, which is (also) called the Holy Spirit [*rûḥ-i qudsî*] and pure soul [*ravân-i pâk*]. The senses are its servants, and memory, discernment, recollection, and cogitation are begotten through it. It also has a nourisher and director [the Active Intelligence] upon whom its eyes are fixed and at the door of whose palace of greatness it continually stands, seeking benefit. It is the intellect that perceives everything and receives all the forms, without cor-

ruption finding a way to it. Every kind of knowledge that reaches the soul and every happiness that appears in it are all the fruit of the management of the intellect. The purpose of the intellect is to promote happiness in the soul by means of knowledge [7v.]. And the purpose of the (rational) soul [*nafs*] is that, with (the intellect's) help, it separates intelligibles [*ma'qûlât*] from among sensibles [*mahsûsât*] and conveys them to the intellect. The intellect has nothing to do with sensibles, because whatever is sensible is not on (its) rank of nobility and perfection. On the contrary, perfection, nobility, and greatness lie in intelligibles. The intellect always faces aloft. It does not look down, nor would it go from being noble to being base. However, it has provided the soul with some help, [85] for it manages the best interests of the lower world and sensible states. This (aspect of it) is called the practical intellect [*'aql-i muktasab*].²³

The nobility of human beings thus lies in two things: the rational soul and the intellect. Neither of these two are from the world of corporeal bodies [*ajsâm*]; rather, they are from the higher world. They are the governors [*mutaşarrîf*] of the body, [8r.] not its resident [*sâkin*]. For abstract [*mujarrad*], simple [*basît*] faculties, there is no extension [*hayyiz*] or place [*makân*]; but their effect holds the body in order.

When we say that the soul [*nafs*] and the intellect are two things, we do not mean that they are contained by way of number in a corporeal entity [*haqîqat-i jismiyyat*]. Rather, the intention is verbal distinction in (regard to) that faculty's own management [*tarbiyat*] of identifying conditions, effecting benefits, and bringing forth ideas [*ma'ânî*]. It is something that provides a different benefit everywhere and assumes a different name accordingly. Similarly, the animal soul, which is in the heart, is not more than one entity [*haqîqat*]; but whenever its effect becomes visible in a specific (bodily) member, it assumes a different name. The intent here is that it be easy to specify in regard to apprehending verbal expressions. Therefore, when the animal faculty [8v.] apprehends form, it is called sight [lit. light]; when it becomes a listening instrument, it is called hearing; when scent perception occurs in the locus of the nose, it is called smell; and when it perceives flavor, it is called taste. However, the aspect [*haqîqat*] that occurs in the faculty of discernment is not specific to the eye, ear, place of smell, or taste. Rather, the faculty of discernment occurs in all limbs and members. Thus it is known that faculties are named according to difference(s) in effect, but are, in reality, one thing.²⁴

The states of the rational soul are the same. The difference between knowledge and intellect is only in name. In reality it is one [86] faculty

that perceives and knows. That which knows, perceives; and that which perceives, knows. When [9r.] it perceives truths [*ḥaqā'iq*] as abstract forms, it does not do so in place, nor in matter, and certainly not through an instrument. Since this is the case, the forms of things are not taking each others' places, because there is no multiplicity of quantity or corporeal differentiation there. Abstract forms are received, and also (simultaneously) known and intellected. But each time that the rational faculty appears in faculties and effects a fresh benefit, it assumes a different name.

The rational soul is a substance [*jauhar*] existing through itself. It is of such subtlety that it does not accept a substratum [*maudū'*]. It exists through itself. Whatever it knows, it knows through itself. It is the knower of its own essence. It perceives its own knowledge through itself, and accepts it through itself. That aspect [*ḥaqīqat*] which perceives is called intellect and that which is perceived [9v.] is called knowledge.

When it knows through itself, and perceives and accepts, and true seeing occurs, it is called insight [*baṣīrat*]. When it perceives and seeks perception's end, it is called cogitation. When it separates bad from good, it is called discernment.²⁵ When it stores that which it has discerned, it is called memory. When it divulges (it again), it is called thought [*khātir*]. When it is close to appearance, it is called recollection. When only the wish for divulging (thoughts) is involved, it is called determination [*'azm*] and intention [*niyyat*]. When it is united with language, it is called discourse [*kalām*]. When it is expressed, it is called speech [*qawl*]. From this point, it has assumed sensible accidents [*a'rād-i ḥissī*] and taken on corporeal forms [*jismāniyyāt*]. [10r.] The basis [*sar*] of all these steps [*muqaddamāt*] is called rationality, and the source [*manba'*] of these faculties is called the rational soul.

The nobility of humanity thus stems from the (process) beginning with perception [lit. insight] and ending with speech. The nobility [87] of the bodily senses stems from that which produces speech [i.e., the rational soul]. Expression [*'ibārat*], speech, script [*ḥarf*], and whatever is related to these, do not exist for the purpose of manifesting the nobility of human beings, but rather because of the dullness and extreme ignorance of bodily form, which only finds a way (for expression) by means of specific sensibles.

That which the rational soul affirms with the pen of knowledge [*qalam-i 'ilm*] on the tablet of intellect [*laub-i 'aql*] concerning aspects of truth [*ḥaqā'iq-i ma'ānī*] and abstract form, which is rationality, is shared with the angels.²⁶ It ennobles and cultivates. These others have not seen

the face of majesty. For this reason it is necessary that in the lowly body and senses themselves, etched forms [rov.] be embodied. The pure original (truth) arranges itself this way so that the benefit of rational thought occur and become manifest in speech.

When this is known, know that just as the senses face the intellect, and stand in attendance for whatever it conveys and explains to them—for in this way it helps its own body to maintain the order of sensibles—the intellect also faces its own world, waiting for the emanation [*faid*] of whatever its Betters [*mahtarân*] convey to it. Through their mediation it keeps straight the best interests [*maṣâlih*] of exoteric and esoteric (matters).

The attendance of the intellect, which is the result of the emanation of knowledge, is called aspiration [*himmat*]; while its seeking is called desire [*irâdat*].²⁷ Compulsion and coercion are not suitable for (the intellect). [11r.] It is the appraiser of sciences. The eye of its insight is open; by choice [*ikhhtiyâr*] it constantly seeks.²⁸ This constancy is called yearning [*shauq*].²⁹ That which is revealed to its insight is concealed from sensual sight. This concealed (dimension) is called the invisible world [*ghaib*]. Thus the intellect always has the eye of knowledge opened by means of the pupil of insight; for guidance, it seeks aid from the celestial reaches.³⁰

For most of humankind perfection is not perceived. Unless they transcend the eighth stage, they always receive help from the Active Intelligence [*'aql-i fa'âl*]. One who becomes guided by the First (Intelligence) [88] is united with purity and subtlety.³¹ One who becomes guided by the Second has a quick wit that easily understands fields of knowledge [11v.] related to the science of calculation [*hisâb*] and the like. One who becomes guided by the Third loves mirth [*tarab*] and activity. One who becomes guided by the Fourth becomes distinguished by types of greatness and nobility. One who becomes guided by the Fifth (has an intellect) veiled by the animal faculties. One who becomes guided by the Sixth becomes endowed with asceticism, knowledge, piety, and fidelity. One who becomes guided by the Seventh becomes true in purpose and steadfast in belief [*ra'î*]. Everything toward which this person inclines is perfect; whatever he or she wants to do, he or she can do.

(But) if perfection befriends a person, and so that he or she passes through all the (levels of) guidance, and he or she is aided by all the Supernals [*'ulwiyât*], and passes through everything, and becomes united with the First Guardian [*muhaimin-i avval*], which is the Universal Intelligence [*'aql-i kull*], (then) this person comprehends.³² [12r.]

Unless a human being understands these preliminaries, he or she is

not of a high station, and when a sensible approaches a primary intelligible that which it would have been comes to naught. That person upon whom the First Intelligence gazes, so that he or she becomes refined, cultivated, subtle, beautiful, brave, and perfect in intellect, becomes a prophet. The First Intelligence becomes for this person as our intellect (is for us). And intellect for him or her is on the level of our soul [*nafs*]. Just as the soul that grasps a truth [*ma'nā*] from the intellect is learned, the intellect that grasps from the First Intelligence is a prophet.

But this state varies. Either it occurs in sleep, since in wakefulness the preoccupations of the senses and the multitude of activities become a hindrance; or it occurs in wakefulness, since in sleep the imaginative faculty predominates; or in each [12v.] it is full and true.³³ The motion and repose of this person is pure in legislative function [*shar'*]. It never admits abrogation or distortion [*faskh va-maskh*]. This person is free of worldly distractions and secular controls and is devoted to the affairs of the Necessary Existent. [89] The First Intelligence nourishes his or her soul from itself. This nourishing is called sanctification [*taqdis*]. As the Qur'ān states, "We have supported him with the Holy Spirit."³⁴ (The First Intelligence) reveals itself to this person so that through (its) good auspices he or she comprehends. When he or she fully understands the universal, he or she attains knowledge of the included particulars, since this person does not need time or delay (to understand matters).³⁵ Thus (Muḥammad) said "My Lord instructed me; and how well was my instruction; and I instructed 'Alī, and I instructed him well."³⁶ Similarly (the Qur'ān) said, "And We taught him knowledge from Us."³⁷ And when the Holy Spirit, [13r.] who is higher than souls, Gabriel the Trustworthy, the bearer of prophetic revelation [*valhy*], continually regards that person, it gives that person's movement and repose a divine tincture.³⁸ Thus the Qur'ān says: "The dye of God, and who is better than God as a dye."³⁹ That which is united to the intellect from the Holy Spirit is prophethood [*nubuvvat*]. That which becomes manifest from that intellect is apostleship [*risālat*]. That which the prophet says is the summons [*da'vat*]. That which becomes clear from this summons is religion [*shar'at*]. And the law [*qānūn*] of that religion is religious creed [*millat*]. The acceptance of all this is faith [*īmān*]. The name of that which prophets receive is revelation. When it is united with a human, and the Holy Spirit opens his or her way to itself and becomes governor of that disposition, it makes (that person) lofty in aspiration, and slight in greed, [13v.] rancourless, without envy. Whatever this person does is through that Holy Power. Just as is (found) in the (prophetic) tradition. "I ask of you a faith that my heart touches."⁴⁰

Thus the Holy Spirit is the noblest of all souls, for all (other) souls are subordinate to the Universal Intelligence. The Holy Spirit, however, is that which is the intermediary between the Necessary Existent and the First Intelligence. The faith of that Power is the prophet, who is the messenger and bearer of the Holy Emanation [*faid-i qudsî*]. That Power is the fruit of proximity to the First Intelligence. The prophet has said in a tradition: “Faith is rightward, and wisdom [*hikma*] is rightwardness.”⁴¹ That is: Faith is the Folk of the Right. [90] And “wisdom is rightwardness” means: they are identical. Wisdom and faith are for the Folk of the Right, and not for the Folk of the Left. The first is an expression for heaven, and [14r.] the second is an expression for hell.⁴²

Faith consists of two parts: real [*haqîqî*] and metaphorical [*majâzî*], the husk and the core. Prophets have real faith, the core, for they bear the core and the truth [*ma'nâ*]. Ordinary people [*avâmm*] bear the husk, the form [*şûrat*]. Their faith is sensible, not intelligible. With the aid of the (intellectual) faculty, (the prophet) draws down the Holy Spirit. As he said, “I feel the breath [*nafas*] of the Merciful from the Yemen.”⁴³ This Holy Spirit is a divine faculty. It is not a body, nor a substance, nor an accident. It is the pure divine Command [*amr-i pâk-i îzidî*]; “Indeed, His is the Command and the Creation.”⁴⁴ The intent of (the word Command) is not (physical) speech and expression. People who do not consider this appropriate and consider the Holy Spirit to be a result of the Command do so because they do not know the reality of Command. There is no nobility greater than a soul joined [*mudâf*] to the divine Command. [14v.]

Thus the Qur'ân says, “Say! The Spirit is from the Command of my Lord.”⁴⁵ Absolute Command thus comes only to the prophet, while that which comes to (ordinary) people [*khalq*] is qualified [*kaifiyyat*]. The prophet brings the (absolute) truths of the (divine) Command within the boundaries of religious law [*shar'*]. Divine Command is that which is called Holy Spirit [*nafs-i qudsî*] by the intellect and Gabriel by religious legislation [*shar'*]. It is equal in nobility of rank with all the Souls and Intelligences. Such that the Qur'ân says, “A day in which the Spirit and the Angels arise in a row.”⁴⁶

When these preliminaries are known, it should (also) be known that reason comprehends truth [*ma'nâ*] through itself, while prophethood comprehends truths [*haqâ'iq*] through Holy Support. Just as speech is not reason, reason is not summons, and summons is not [91] prophethood. Recollection [*zîkr*] [15r.] stands between speech and reason, and apostleship between prophethood and summons. Hence, whatever rational concepts that the intellect wishes to convey to the senses, it does so by means

of recollection. (The latter then) formulates it in sensible sounds and unites (it) with speech, so that hearing apprehends.⁴⁷

Similarly, when prophets wish to comprehend the truth of the divine Command and convey (it) to created beings, they permit the faculty of apostleship to bring these concepts into the imagination and make them concrete forms; then with the language of summons, they convey (it) to the community [*ummat*]. Thus summons is like speech, and prophethood like reason. There is no speech without reason, but there is reason without speech. There is also no apostleship without prophethood, but there is prophethood without apostleship. Just as (Muḥammad) said, "I was a prophet while Adam was between water and clay," or in another version, "while Adam was moving in his clay."⁴⁸ [15v.]

The Holy Spirit is like the point, prophethood is like the line, and apostleship is like the surface. Summons is like the substance and the religious creed is like the body. The splendor of the body is in the soul. Similarly, the value of the religious creed is in prophethood. The body is general, the point particular. The body is sensible, apprehended, specific; the point is nonsensible, nonapprehended, nonspecific. So that the Qur'ân says, "Sights do not apprehend him."⁴⁹ Just as the beginning of all things is the point, the beginning of all actions is the Holy Spirit. The sovereignty of the point over (concrete) existents is known, and the sovereignty of the Holy Spirit over intelligibles is manifest. So that the Qur'ân has stated, "He is Victorious over His servants."⁵⁰

This idea is far-fetched for estimation, since imagination adds direction and shape; but it is more reasonable for intellect, [16r.] because the locus of specifying position is (the task of) thought [*khâtir*]. Hence [92] the Qur'ân says, "And We are nearer to him than the jugular vein." And it says, "He is with you wherever you are."⁵¹

Although all things need Holy Emanation, it is free, unattached to souls, unpreoccupied with bodies. (Muḥammad) thus said, "I had a time with God unrivaled by an angel drawn-near or a prophet sent."⁵² Since it is (now) known that prophethood is an emanation of the Holy Spirit, it should (also) be known that the reality of the Qur'ân is divine discourse; the enunciation of the Book, however, is prophetic speech, since speech without form and pronunciation [*ḥarf*] is impossible. For these two exist the throat, lip, teeth, lungs, intestines, and (other) outlets of sounds. All this is in the body. Substance is nobler than the body. [16v.] The First Reality is not (even) substance; negation of corporeality is a primary facet of it. Hence, its discourse is not (physical) speech.

Human beings, however, are composites and have (physical) instruments of speech. So their speech [*nutq*] is by means of pronunciation and voice. (But) it should be known that asserting (physical) speech to that (divine) quarter is impossible. Divine discourse is the unveiling of a concept by the Holy Spirit through the mediation of the Universal Intelligence to the prophet's soul. That which is the prophet's speech [*nutq*] is identical with divine discourse. His control over himself is nonexistent; the name Holy befalls him; his speech [*nutq*] is the Qur'ân. He does not say what he says on the basis of being a created being; he speaks by leave of (divine) Command, no rather, he speaks at the discretion of (divine) discourse. He therefore said, "The Merciful taught the Qur'ân and created humanity."⁵³ When this unveiling [17r.] overwhelms his reason [*nutq*], realities and concepts become the totality of the prophet. But the community [93] cannot be informed of this, for they are bound by their senses. For the best interest of people, prophets are given permission to activate imagination and estimation. In this way, they put the emanation to work and bring that faculty into operation. That which is perceived is put into estimation, so that it makes a concrete form; that which appears is a miracle. That which is rational is put into the imagination, so that recollection [*ziker*] governs it; that which is brought forth as speech becomes a book. Because it is (produced) by divine aid, (God's name) is added, so that one says "The Book of God" just like "The House of God," "The Servant of God," and "The Apostle of God."

That which prophets thus perceive from the Holy Spirit [17v.] is pure intelligible, and that which they say is sensible, with the adornment of the imagination and estimation. Hence, (Muhammad) said, "We, the band of prophets, He commanded us to speak to people according to the capacity of their intellects." One can perceive an abstract intelligible (only) with the abstract intellect. It is something apprehended, not something spoken.⁵⁴

It is thus the condition of prophets that they arrange every intelligible that they perceive as a sensible and put it into speech so that the community can follow that sensible. They perceive it as an intelligible, but make it sensed and concrete for the community. They thus increase (its usefulness) for threats and promises and foster good beliefs, so that its provisions become perfect, and so that the basis and code of religious law [*shar'*] [18r.] and the foundation of religious devotion not be dissolved and disordered and that which is the intention of the prophet not remain concealed. When it reaches intellectuals, they perceive it with their intellect. They know that the prophet's words are all symbols, filled with

intelligibles. When it reaches ignoramuses, however, they look at the external speech; their hearts are satisfied with nonintelligible concrete forms and sensibles. They are enveloped by the imagination and do not pass beyond the doorway of estimation. [94] They ask, unknowing, and listen, uncomprehending. "And praise be to God, for indeed most of them do not know."⁵⁵

It was for this reason that the noblest of men, the dearest of prophets, and the seal of the apostles, upon whom be peace, said to the center of the circle of wisdom, the sphere of truth, and the storehouse of intellect, the Commander of the Faithful, 'Alī, upon whom be peace, "O 'Alī, when you see people approach their Creator by (different) forms of piety, approach (Him) with (different) forms of intellect, then you will precede them."⁵⁶ [18v.]

Such talk as this is only proper for such a great man as he, for among people he was like the intelligible is among sensibles. He said, "O 'Alī, since men toil in many devotions, toil you in perceiving the intelligible, then you will precede them all."⁵⁷ And necessarily so, for with the eye of intellectual insight, he perceived secrets, comprehended all truths, and understood intelligibles. He saw (only) one Ordinance [*ḥukm*], and it was for this reason that he said, "If the veil were drawn away, I would not increase in certitude."⁵⁸

No human fortune is better than apprehending the intelligible. To apprehend that intelligible is Paradise, adorned with (all) kinds of luxuries, ginger and nectar. Hell, with punishments [19r.] and burning thirst, consists of corporeal preoccupations; for humans fall into the burning pit of passion [*ḥavā*] and remain in the bonds of imagination and the torment of estimation. The bonds of imagination and the torment of estimation rise away from human beings more quickly through knowledge than through action, because action is corporeal activity and corporeal activity occurs only sensibly. But knowledge is a faculty of the soul, which occurs only intelligibly. So that the prophet, upon whom be peace, said, "A little knowledge is better than much action."⁵⁹ He also stated, "The intention [95] of the believer is better than his or her action." And the Commander of the People, 'Alī, upon whom be peace, stated that "The value of every person is that which he or she does well."⁶⁰ That is, the value of humans and the nobility of humankind is only in knowledge.

Since these preliminaries have become prolonged [19v.], I will continue no longer, so that we are not detained from the intended subjects. The intention of this book is that we explain the Ascension of the prophet,

may God bless him and his family and grant them salvation, according to the intellect, such as it went and it was. For rationalists know that his intention in that was not that it was a sensible journey, but rather that it was intelligible perception that he related allegorically [*ramzî*] in sensible language, so that neither class of humans be deprived.

(I do) this only with divine support and luminous aid, for thought [*khâṭir*] receives aid and the mirror of the intellect becomes luminous in order that explanation of these words will be given, in brief, and the allegorical meaning of the Ascension, in regard to secrets, will become clear.

Only [20r.] God, may He be glorified and exalted, grants success. [96 is a blank page]

Chapter

In Introduction to the Ascension of the Prophet, Upon Whom be Peace

[97] Know that the explanation of each thing (lies) in the nature of that thing, and the road to a specified destination is determined by that destination's direction. Hence, if a person wishes to set out on the road for a (certain) destination and heads toward another destination whose road is not in that direction, he or she will never reach the destination. Thus, if a person wishes to go to Baghdad and sets out on the Samarqand road, he or she will not reach Baghdad. But when a person sets out on the Baghdad road, he or she reaches the destination. In regard to equipment, it is the same; if [20v.] a person wishes to beat gold (into gold leaf) well, but tailors, or does carpentry, or some other profession whose equipment is not appropriate (to this intention), it will not turn out right. Similarly, if a person thinks that a human body reaches a place where the intellect reaches, it is impossible. Because the intellect reaches through intelligibles; it does not reach through duration or instrument, nor does it go by means of time. Because the intellect is not in place, nor does space encompass it. Hence, a place where the intellect reaches, the body does not reach. The body is a dense substance; it does not (naturally) move upward. If it travels upwards, it does so only by accident and force. If it desires to cover quickly a distance that it has only traveled slowly, [21r.] it cannot. [98]

Destinations are of two types, either intelligible or sensible. The conveyor of sensibles is the senses; the conveyor of intelligibles is the intellect. Elevation is also of two types: either intelligible or sensible. Elevation per-

ceived by the senses, in terms of the visual perception (of moving) upward, becomes a sensible. Intelligible elevation is by way of rank and nobility, because it is not in locality. When the (sensible) destination is downward, travel toward it is downward. When the destination is upward, motion toward it is upward.

Ascent is also of two types: upward, sensible, for the body; or by levels of intelligibles, for the soul. The body's motion to a lofty destination occurs only by movement, transversing space, and temporal motion. But when it is on the level of intelligibles, motion is spiritual, by means of the intellect, not corporeal by means of the foot.

When the body [21v.] is stationary, the faculty of perception (can still) move toward its goal on the mount of the intellect. Its travel is rapid because it moves to its center, and everything tends toward its center. Perceiving intelligibles is the task of the intellect, not the work of the senses. And gazing upon intelligibles is the task of the soul, not the work of the body. When it is known that the elevation of intelligibles is not in an upward direction, (it is understood) that (such) movement is not the work of the body, since the body is slow-moving.

Ascensions, therefore, are of two types, either corporeal, by means of the power [*quvvat*] of (corporeal) upward motion, or spiritual, by means of the power of cogitation [*quvvat-i fikrī*] toward intelligibles. Since the conditions of the Ascension [*mí'rāj*] of our prophet, upon whom be peace, [22r.] are not in the sensible world, it is known that he did not go in body, because the body cannot traverse a long distance in one moment. [99] Hence, it was not a corporeal ascension, because the goal was not sensual. Rather, the ascension was spiritual, because the goal was intellectual.

If a person imagines that when (Muḥammad) said, "I went," and explained experiences [lit. states] in the form of corporeal entities [*mujas-samāt*], that would have all been imagination, it would be complete stupidity because confirming impossibilities is not the task of the intellect. This is not deficiency appearing on the part of the prophet, because capability has no connection with impossibilities. Rejecting inconceivable impossibilities is a state of superiority, not a deficiency. Rather, (the Ascension account) was the symbol(ic rendition) [22v.] of intelligibles given in the language of the external senses.⁶¹

Explanation of the states of made and created things is provided (by him) in a way that literalists would accept within their bounds, while inquiring minds understand these truths. And indeed, people of reason know that the place to which thought goes, the body does not go, and that which insight perceives, the sense of sight does not perceive.

Since the condition of the the Ascension is related to intelligibles, I long contemplated what it could be. When (my) intellect untied this knot, the thought occurred (to me) that the explanation of the symbols of the Ascension should be given so that it would be known how noble the prophet was, and what his aim was in these sayings. [23r.] Only God grants success.

I enjoin that these words be withheld from those who are unworthy, foolish, and uninitiated ignoramuses. For reticence with outsiders in (revealing) truths is one of the religious duties. The Seal of the Apostles, upon whom be blessings and peace, said, "Do not cast pearls before the feet of dogs."⁶² It has also been said, "Secrets, protect them from outsiders!" And it has been said, "Keep your secret, even from your lord!"⁶³ [100] May that person who would reveal these words to every inferior person be unsuccessful, because he or she would be a traitor and scoundrel. "Whoever betrays us, is not of us."⁶⁴ That person would fall into perdition, and perdition and punishment would come to the writer as well. [23v.]

When a rationalist explains an intelligible, only (another) rationalist should peruse it, so that it does not disturb sensual-minded outsiders. And may God judge between us and the unrighteous! [101]

THE BEGINNING OF THE STORY⁶⁵

The best of creatures, upon him be (God's) blessing and salvation, said: *I was sleeping one night in the house. It was a night with thunder and lightning. No animal made a sound, no bird chirped, no person was awake. I was not asleep, but lying between sleep and wakefulness.* That is, I had been desirous of perceiving truths by means of insight for a long time. At night humans are freer, for bodily occupations [24r.] and sensual impediments are suspended.

So it happened one night when I was between wakefulness and sleep means that I was between the senses and the intellect; I fell into the sea of knowledge. *It was a night with thunder and lightning* means that the succor of the celestial caller prevailed so that the irascible faculty died and the faculty of imagination [*khayāl*] ceased its operations.⁶⁶ Tranquility overcame preoccupation.

Then he said: *Suddenly Gabriel descended in his own form with such beauty, splendor, and majesty that the house was alit.* He means: the faculty of the Holy Spirit in the form of the (divine) Command united with me. It had so great an effect that all the faculties of the rational soul became renewed and alit.⁶⁷ [24v., 102]

Describing the beauty of Gabriel, he said: *I saw him whiter than snow, fair of face, curly of lock. On his forehead was written in light, "There is no God but God, and Muhammad is the Apostle of God"; fairly large of eye, delicate of brow, with seventy thousand locks of red ruby dangling down, and six hundred thousand feathers of lustrous pearl opened up.* That is, in my inner eye [*ba-ṣīrat*], by means of intellectual abstraction, I perceived such beauty and fairness that if a trace of that beauty were to appear to the senses, that sensible would look like what he described.

The meaning of "There is no God but God" being written on his forehead is that anyone whose eye beheld his beauty [25r.] would be cleansed from the darkness of skepticism and idolatry, and would attain such certitude and belief in the affirmation of the Creator that every created thing that he beheld would increase his belief in his Oneness. And (Gabriel) was so elegant that if a person had seventy thousand tresses of musk and camphor, he would not attain his beauty. And he was so quick-moving that you would say that he flew with six hundred thousand feathers and wings. (But) he did not move in time and space.

Then he said: *When he reached me, he embraced me and kissed me between my two eyes and said, "O Sleeper, arise! How long you slumber!"* That is, when this Holy Faculty reached me, [25v.] it caressed me and admitted me into its unveiling [*kashf*] and did (me) honor. Such yearning arose in my heart that it cannot be described. Then he said: *"How long you slumber!"* That is, why are you satisfied with counterfeit imaginings? There are worlds beyond this one you are in. You can only reach them in the wakefulness of knowledge. Because of compassion, [103] I shall be your guide. Arise!

Then he said: *I was afraid and leapt up from my place because of that fear.* That is, because of his majesty, I could not think.

Then he said: *He said to me, "Be still, for I am your brother Gabriel."* That is, by the grace of the unveiling [*kashf*] of wisdom, fear was stilled in me. He introduced himself, so that [26r.] he removed my distress.⁶⁸

Then he said: *I said, "O Brother, an enemy has taken control of me (before)." He said, "I will not hand you over to the enemy." I said, "What are you going to do?" He said, "Arise! Be observant and take heart."* That is, illuminate the faculty of memory and obey me so that I may remove difficulties from you.

Then he said: *I was amazed and astonished, and I followed Gabriel.* That is, I turned away from the world of sensibles. With the help of the instinctual intellect [*'aql-i gharizî*], I followed the Holy Emanation.

Then he said: *Behind Gabriel, Burâq caught my eye.* That is, the Active Intelligence, which is the most predominant of the Holy Faculties. Its help comes to the Intelligences before it reaches the world of generation [26v.] and corruption. Among the celestial Intelligences, it is it who is a ruler for the body. It is the bestower of help to souls at any time with whatever is appropriate. (Muḥammad) likened it to *Burâq* because he was traveling [*dar ravish*], and a mount is a help [104] for one who is travelling. In that journey it would be (Muḥammad's) helper, so inevitably he called it a mount.

Then he said: *It was larger than an ass and smaller than a horse.* That is, it is greater than the human intellect and lesser than the First Intelligence.

Then he said: *Its face was like a human face.* That is, it inclines towards instructing [*tarbiyat*] humans; it has the same compassion for humans that a genus has for its species. And its resemblance [27r.] to humans is by way of compassion and instruction. Then he said: *It is long of arm and long of leg.* That is, its beneficence reaches everywhere and its emanation renews everything.

Then he said: *I wanted to sit on it, (but) it shied away. Gabriel helped me until it was tamed.* That is, because I was in the physical world, I wanted to sit on it, that is, to unite with it. But it would not accept, until the Holy Faculty [*quvvat-i qudsî*] cleansed me of the preoccupations of ignorance and impediments of the body, so that I became pure [*mujarrad*] and, through it, attained the emanation and beneficence of the Active Intelligence.

Then he said: *When I had started on the road and passed the mountains of Mekka, [27v.] a traveler came after me and called out, "Stop!" Gabriel said, "Do not speak, go on!" So I went on.* By this he means the faculty of estimation. That is, when I was finished considering my external limbs and extremities, and was not contemplating the senses, and had gone on, the faculty of estimation called out from behind me, "Don't go!" (This is) because the faculty of estimation governs [*mutaşarrif*], has great authority, and is active [*kârkun*] in all states. It is a tool and instrument for all animals. It stands in the place of intellect [*kbirad*], accepting what is agreeable and rejecting what is [105] contrary. It is an influence on human beings, but they should not obey estimation, for then [28r.] they remain on the level of animals. A defect in their nobility thus appears. Whomever is helped by divine beneficence does not blindly follow estimation wherever he or she is.

Then he said: *A woman, alluring in (her) beauty, called from behind me,*

"Stop! So I can reach you." Again Gabriel said, "Go on, don't stop!" That is, the faculty of imagination [*khayāl*], which is alluring and ornamented. He likened it to a woman because most natures incline toward it, and most people are in its grasp. Furthermore, whatever it does is baseless and is tainted by deceit and fraud, and this is (like) the doings of women, for the wiles and stratagems of women are known. And the faculty of [28v.] imagination is also deceitful, lying, and treacherous. In this way it allures, hunting human beings with its representations then not fulfilling its promises, for show quickly becomes false. When humans go after imagination, they never attain intelligibles; they always follow (false) adornments and fall into the grip of meaningless concrete images.

Then he said: *When I went on, Gabriel said, "If you had waited for her until she reached you, you would have become a lover of the world."* That is, the conditions of the world are baseless and quickly disappear, and the vanities and preoccupations of the world, in relation to truths [*ma'ānī*], are like the states and representations of imagination in relation [29r.] to the secrets of intellect. Whoever becomes occupied with (imagination) stays away from intelligibles and, through the folly of passion, becomes a prisoner in the abyss of ignorance.

Then he said: *When I went away from the mountains and left these two persons, [106] I traveled to the Sanctified Abode [bait al-muqaddas], and I entered it.⁶⁹ Someone came forward and gave me three goblets, one wine, one water, and one milk. I wanted to take the wine. Gabriel did not allow this. He pointed to the milk, so I took (it) and drank.* That is, when I went away from the senses and understood the condition of imagination and estimation, I gazed within myself and entered the spiritual realm. I saw three souls, one animal, one natural, and one rational. I wanted [29v.] to follow the animal (soul). He likened it to wine since its faculties, such as lust and anger, deceive, cloak, and increase ignorance, and wine intensifies these two appetites. He likened the natural (soul) to water since it sustains the body. A person survives by managing (this soul's) servants who work in the body. (Similarly), water is the cause of animal life; it promotes growth and increase. He likened the rational (soul) to milk since it is a beneficial nutriment, full of favor and usefulness.

Then he said, *I wanted to take the wine but he only allowed me to take the milk*, because most humans obey these two souls and do not transcend the natural [30r.] and animal (souls), because they are deficient. (Such) people are deficient and remain deficient; whatever they seek, they seek only the corporeal and sensual, and the pleasure and utility of these two

souls is corporeal. Inevitably, that which is animal is lust-driven or power-seeking, loving worldliness, drink, wine, sexual intercourse, and such things (on the one hand), or is irascibleness [*khashm*], which consists of driving away contraries and similar activities (on the other hand). These are all corporeal preoccupations, and a deficient person always seeks out such activities.

Those obedient to the natural soul are the same. They are always involved in eating and sleeping. But when a person is perfectly tempered, his or her rational soul [107] becomes strong. It dominates the appetites of the (other) two souls. It commands the activity of the natural (soul's) faculties [30v.] so that they benefit the body and sustain and govern the person. It also has the faculties of the animal (soul) in its bonds and orders actions at necessary and beneficial times. It directs the concupiscent (appetite) only toward modesty and well-being, so that the soul [*nafs*] continues to exist through reproduction, and the name "dead soul" is lifted from it. It directs the irascible faculty toward the conditions of bravery and piety, so that the name "ardorless" not befall it. It has all the faculties under its rule according to time, opportunity, and benefit. Human beings are called "human" [*kas*] by virtue of this. The dominion of the natural faculty is bestial, the dominion of the animal faculty is devilish, and the dominion of the rational faculty is angelic. Humankind is (such) by virtue of being [31r.] closer to the angelic and further from the devilish and bestial, so that they are not unaware of their (physical) states, nor without a share of spiritual connection.

Then he said: *I arrived there and entered the mosque. The muezzin gave the call for prayer. I was in front, and I saw the group of angels and prophets standing to the right and left. One by one they greeted me and renewed the covenant.* He means by this: when I finished examining and contemplating the animal and natural (souls), I entered the mosque, that is, I reached the brain. By "muezzin" he means the faculty of recollection. By his being "in front" he means cogitation. By "prophets and angels" he means the faculties of the mental spirits [*quvvathâ-yi arvâh-i dimâghî*], [31v.] such as discernment, memory, recollection, and cogitation, and that which is like it.

Their greeting him is his comprehension of all the rational faculties, because Absolute Truth [*Haqq*], may He be praised and exalted, when He created human beings, divided their nature [*nahâd*] into two domains: an external one and an internal one. The [108] external domain is the body. He gave it five senses so that it deals with sensibles. He also gave the internal (domain) five senses, as servants of the intellect. The external

senses are the underlings of the internal senses, and the internal senses are the servants of the intellect. The common sense stands between the two (groups) as an intermediary. The external senses receive information from various sides and deposit it with the common sense. [32r.] (Common sense) then gives it to the faculty of cogitation so that it acts on it. That which does not fully meet (cogitation's) criteria, it discards; estimation and imagination then take it, plunge into it, and make use of it. That which is intelligible and perfect is given to the faculty of memory to preserve its abstract (ideas). When they become useful to the intellect, recollection takes (them) from memory by means of representation [*muṣavvirat*] and gives (them) to it. This foundation is always well-laid [*mumabhad*].

Just as two of the external senses are the most noble, hearing and sight, and are the leaders of the rest, similarly, two of the internal senses are the most noble; cogitation and memory are the leaders of the rest. [32v.] Imagination is on the level of taste. Estimation is equivalent to touch. Estimation is always active, just as touch is never constricted to a specific bodily part at any one time. The other faculties, however, are constricted to specific bodily parts.

Humans are complete [*tamâm*] when these five senses are in place and are working without fault, far from trouble. For if disruption or disturbance appears in one, they become defective [*nuṣṣânî*]. Similarly, the perfection [*kamâl*] of humans lies in their internal senses also being luminous and in their comprehending everything. For if they are negligent and do not preserve these faculties, they become deprived of and unable to control truths [*ma'ânî*]. In time of need they become lost, and then humans are deprived of the nobility of discernment. When humans know all of this, [33r.] and the internal faculties become their guide, they attain [109] the ultimate goal. If this is not the case, they are deprived of it. Just as someone who wishes to go on a roof first needs a ladder and then ascends rung by rung until he or she reaches the roof, rational faculties are like ladder rungs. When someone ascends, rung by rung, he or she reaches his or her goal.

Then he said: *When I was finished, I faced aloft. I found a ladder, one rung of silver, one rung of gold.* He means: from the external senses toward the internal senses. The intention of "silver and gold" is the nobility in rank of the one over the other.

Then he said: *When I reached the first heaven, a door opened. [33v.] I entered and saw Ismâ'il seated on a chair, and a group was placed, face to face,*

in front of his eye. I greeted (them) and went on.⁷⁰ He means by this the sphere of the moon and by Ismâ'il the body [jirm] of the moon. By this group (he means) those whose states are guided by the moon.

Then he said: *When I reached the second heaven, I entered. I saw an angel nearer than the former, with perfect beauty. He had a wondrous form, half of his body was of snow, half of fire. Neither mixed with the other, nor were they antagonistic toward one another. He greeted me and said, "Good tidings to you to whom goodness and fortune belong!"* [34r.]

He means the sphere of Mercury. The intention in this is that every heavenly body has a specific rule, either auspicious or sinister. Mercury, however, has two kinds of influence: conjoined with auspiciousness, it is auspicious; conjoined with sinisterness, it is sinister. For it is half auspicious and half sinister. The tidings of goodness and good fortune allude to the faculty of thought [khâtir] and the many [110] sciences that it bestows.

Then he said: *When I reached the third heaven, I saw an angel whose like in beauty and goodness I had never seen, joyful and glad and seated on a chair of light with angels gathered around.* He means that it was the sphere of Venus. [34v.] There is no need to explain its beauty; it rules over joy and mirth.

Then he said: *When I reached the fourth heaven, I saw an angel, complete in statesmanship,⁷¹ seated on a throne of light. I greeted (him), he responded properly but with complete arrogance. Due to pride and haughtiness, he (usually) spoke to no one. (But) he smiled when he answered (my) greeting and said, "O Muhammad, I see complete goodness and felicity in your royal splendor [farr]. Good tidings to you!"*

By this throne he means the fourth sphere, and by this angel he means the Sun, which rules over the conditions of kings and great men. His smile indicates its influence for good fortune as an (astrological) ascendent [35r.], and his good tidings are its bounty [faid] for the good of everyone.

Then he said: *When I reached the fifth heaven, I entered. I learned of hell. I saw a dominion full of darkness and fear. I saw the proprietor seated at its edge busy torturing and tormenting sinful people.* By this he means the fifth sphere. By the proprietor he means Mars, which rules over the conditions of the bloodthirsty and sinful. By hell he means its sinister influence on the characteristics and conditions of people who are under its rule. [111]

Then he said: *When I reached the sixth heaven, I saw an angel seated on a chair of light, engaged in praising and sanctifying (God).* [35v.] He had

wings and tresses set with pearls and rubies. I greeted him. He responded, greeted (me), and gave tidings of goodness and happiness. He said to me, "I continually sent blessings to you."

He means the sixth sphere, and by this angel he means Jupiter, which rules over folk of rectitude, piety, and knowledge.⁷² By those wings and tresses he means the effect of its light. By his blessings he means its influence for good, for it is the most auspicious (of the planets). All good things come to humankind from it; every benefit joined to a person is the result of its gaze. Because Absolute Truth, may He be exalted, through the perfection of His knowledge, has thus ordained. "He is the Manifest, True King."⁷³ [36r.]

Then he said, *When I reached the seventh heaven, I saw an angel sitting on a chair of red ruby. Not everyone finds a way to him, but when someone does reach him, he is cherished. I greeted him. He responded and blessed me.*

By this he means the seventh sphere, and by this angel he means Saturn, which is red and the most sinister (of the planets). Everything it does, it does perfectly. When it does something sinister, it is completely so. When it does something auspicious, it exceeds everything else. *Not everyone finds a way to him* means that it rarely happens that it is in a good and auspicious location. [36v.] But when it is, its effect is so good that it excels all else.

Then he said: *When I went on, I reached the Lote Tree of the Far Boundary.⁷⁴ I saw a world [112] full of light and brightness so brilliant that the eye was dazzled. When I looked to the right and left, I saw all the spiritual angels busy at worship. I said, "O Gabriel, who are these people?" He said, "These never do anything except worship and praise God. They have specified oratories from which they never depart. As it is said in the Qur'ân, 'Each of us has a known station.'*"⁷⁵

By this he means the eighth sphere, the sphere of the fixed stars. The constellations [37r.] are there. By oratories and stations he means the twelve signs (of the zodiac). Each group of them resides in a specific quarter; they do not crowd one another. Thus the southern ones have nothing to do with the northern ones; each one has a place. Some of the constellations are on the ecliptic, some are in the south, and some are in the north.

Then he said: *I saw the Lote Tree, larger than all things, roots above and branches below, for its shade falls on heaven and earth.* By this he means the greatest sphere, within which are the rest of the spheres. It is larger than all, so that it is said in the Qur'ân: [37v.] "Each gliding in a sphere."⁷⁶

Then he said: *When I passed by I saw four seas, each one a (different) color.* That is, he cognized [*taṣavvur*] through (intellectual) abstraction [*ta-jarrud*] the principles of substantiality, materiality, corporality, and form, which are the principles [*ḥaqāʾiq*] of all this [*in jumlat*]. He found each one (to be) a different rank, and he expresses this rank by (the word) color.⁷⁷

Then he said: *I saw many angels busy praising God and affirming His unity, all [113] immersed in grace.* That is, abstract souls, free of concupiscent and irascible desire. They are pure. For each human being whose soul becomes pure and abstract in learning and knowledge, after becoming separated from the body, is held by Absolute Truth, may He be exalted, in neither place nor locality. [38r.] He makes them like angels, adorned with eternal bliss.

He makes the comparison with angels because angels are the dwelling-place [*maskin*] of sinlessness and the celebration of God's praise.⁷⁸ That is, they become free of corruption, death, the activities of the concupiscent faculties, and the preoccupations and accidents of the irascible (faculties).⁷⁹ They attain the level of angelicness, always engaged in perceiving and learning about the invisible (world). They never look toward the lower world. This is because the body in relation to the soul is base. Noble people who look toward the lower place do so either because of necessity or because of the best interests of that location. When they become separated from that (lower) habitation by (attaining) perfection and hindrances are removed, they attain their perfect nobility. [38v.] They become happy.

That is, they withdraw from sensual preoccupation toward rational perception and become so immersed in its pleasure and ease that they never recall anything base or look toward the lower world, for corporeal need has fallen away from them. At that time, they gain rank and nobility according to the measure of (their) knowledge and perception. "Some of them bow, some prostrate themselves."⁸⁰ Some are spiritual, some praise God and attest to His unity, some sanctify (Him), and some are drawn-near. On this basis, they continue forever.

Then he said: *When I went by this group, I reached a boundless sea. However much I gazed, I could not even perceive its middle.*⁸¹ [39r.] *At the lower part of that sea, I saw a large stream, and I saw an angel who was pouring water from the sea [114] into the stream. From the stream, water reached everywhere.*

By this sea he means the First Intelligence. By the stream he means

the First Soul. For the First Soul is subordinate to the First Intelligence. The first thing that Absolute Truth, may He be exalted, manifested through the creativity [*ibdā'*] of His power [*qudrat*] and knowledge, on the level of uniqueness, keeping it pure from the annoyance of mediation and bestowing upon it the highest rank, was the First Intelligence. As the prophet, upon whom be peace, said, "The first thing God created was the intelligence."⁸² By this he means "first in rank," not "first in creation"; for that substance does not admit a temporal beginning. [39v.]

When the First Intelligence appeared, the First Soul became manifest. The former was on the level of Adam, the latter on the level of Eve. Then after this, two substances became separated from (the First Intelligence) as substances and bodies, like spheres and heavenly bodies and their Souls and Intelligences. After this, it continued until the elements appeared, became divided, and assumed inclinations, (each) according to its constitution, each one in its own domain, in accordance to its nature, fineness, and coarseness, such as water and earth inclining below and air and fire inclining above. After this, it worked on minerals, and then on plants and animals, and then it brought forth human beings. [40r.] They were preferred above all. They were bestowed with the faculty of soul and intellect, so that just as the First Intelligence, who was of noble rank, came in the beginning of creation, complete and beautiful, human beings also attained that rank in nobility at the end of creation. (Humans became) a point at the end so that the circle would be complete. This priority and posteriority about which I speak concerning existents is in rank, not in creation. The intent of that which he said concerning the sea and the water and the stream is what has been said (above).

Then he said: *At the bottom of that sea I saw a great valley, larger than any [115] I had ever seen. However much I gazed, I found neither its beginning or end; nor could I define it by anything.* [40v.] By this he means pure existence [*wujūd-i mujarrad*]. Nothing is more general than it. Only the perfect intellect can perceive pure existence.

Then he said: *In the sea's valley I saw an angel, of complete augustness, majesty, and beauty, who was gazing tranquilly at each of the two halves (of creation). He called me to himself. When I reached him, I said, "What is your name?" He said, "Michael [Mikā'il]. I am the greatest of the angels. Whatever is difficult for you (to understand), ask of me. Whatever you desire, seek of me so that I can show to you the intended aims of everything."*

That is, when I knew all of this, I contemplated (further). I discerned the First Command [*amr-i avval*]. By that angel [41r.] he means that which

is called the Holy Spirit, said to be the Angel Drawn-Near [*malak muqar-rab*]. Whoever makes his or her way to it, and receives help, comes to know so much through its help that he or she becomes cognizant of all unknown things, spiritual pleasures, and eternal felicities, the like of which he or she has never before experienced.

Then he said: *When I was finished with greeting and questioning him, I said, "I have suffered much pain and trouble to reach this place where I am. My goal in coming here was that I attain knowledge and direct vision of Absolute Truth, may He be exalted. Guide me to Him so that I attain my desire and partake of the full benefit, and so return to my house."*⁸³ [4IV.]

That is, as he had wished from the divine Command, which is the pure Word [*kalimat*], when he was finished observing existents by way of insight, the eye of his heart became opened so that whatever was, he knew. By this he meant perceiving Absolute Existence, the First Cause, and the Necessary Existent [116] and knowing its unity [*vahdat*], such that plurality could not be contained in it.

Then he said: *That angel took my hand, transported me through several thousand veils, and bore (me) to a world in which I saw nothing like what I had seen in this world. When he brought me to the Presence of Glory [ḥadrat-i 'izzat], the command came to me: "Draw nearer!"*⁸⁴ [42r.]

That is, that divine, holy Presence is free of body, substance, and accident, which exist in these worlds. It is above these categories. By necessity, it neither needs nor is connected to place, time, locality, how much, how, where, when, activity and passiveness, and the like. The Necessary Existent is neither body nor substance. It is pure and transcendent, beyond admitting those accidents. It is unique in purity. The associationism [*shirkat*] of creation [*maqdûr*] is not contained in its singleness [*far-dâniyyat*]. In its singleness, it is one. The multiplicity of number does not exist in its unicity [*yagânanagî*]. In this regard, it is also able, knowing, and beneficent. It is thus unadulterated being. That unadulterated being is [42v.] the world of pure unity, unaffected by the multiplicity of change and multitude.

Then he said: *I did not see sensation or movement in that Presence. I only saw tranquility [farâghat], stillness [sukûn], and sufficiency [ghanâ].* That is, I saw the abstract knowledge of its existence to an extent that no living creature can encompass by means of sensation. For bodies are perceived through sensation, (external) forms and the imagination are preserved, and substances are cognized through the vigilance of the intellect. But the Necessary Existent is beyond these stages. It cannot be apprehended

through sensation and imagination. In that Presence, there is no movement [*ḥarakat*]. Movement is change in an existent, either by being acted upon in corporeal quantity and quality, [43r.] or (by moving) from place to place desiring a benefit or fleeing an opponent or through bodily movement while remaining stationary. The former is by necessity, [117] the latter by choice. All things that are moved need a mover. But movement is not admissible for it. The Necessary Existent is that which is the mover of all things.

Then he said: *From being in awe of God [khudāvand], I forgot everything that I had seen and known. Such unveiling, grandeur, and pleasure from proximity was produced that you would say that I was intoxicated.*

That is, when my knowledge made its way to the gnosis of unity [*vâhdâniyyat*] [43v.] I was no longer engaged in perceiving and preserving particulars. The rational soul achieved so much pleasure from this knowledge that all the faculties of the natural and animal (souls) stopped working. I was so immersed in unity that I was no longer engaged in the world of substances and bodies.

Then he said: *So affected was I by (divine) proximity that I began to tremble. The command was coming, "Draw nearer!" When I drew nearer, He said, "Fear not, be calm!"*

That is, when I apprehended unity, I knew that the Necessary Existent was beyond these categories. I became afraid of my boldness for a journey that had become very long in affirming unity. [44r.] I thought that it would harm me. *It was said, "Draw nearer!"* That is, draw nearer, away from this thought of mine and this fear and terror. For the realm of unity entails continual immersion in spiritual pleasure [*ladhdhat-i rūḥânî*]. One is never affected by the animal (soul), and fear and hope are conditions of the animal (soul).

Then he said: *When I drew nearer, God's greeting came to me through a voice the like of which I had never heard.* That is, the reality of the discourse [118] of the Necessary Existent, may it be exalted and sanctified, was unveiled to me. For its speech is not like the speech of creatures, with pronunciation and sound. Its speech is the affirmation of knowledge through pure abstraction in the soul. (It conveys) what it wishes by way of [44v.] universality, not particularity.

Then he said: *The command came, "Praise!" I said, "I do not enumerate Your praises, for You have praised Yourself."⁸⁵ I am unable (to say) the like of what You Yourself have said.* That is, when he perceived the beauty of unity and apprehended the reality of the discourse of the Necessary Existent,

and understood that its speech does not consist of pronunciation and sound, he attained pleasure the like of which he had never experienced. He understood that the Necessary Existent was deserving of all praise, but he knew he could not praise it with language that consisted of sounds and therefore fell under (the category of) language. This type of praise is only connected with particulars and universals, [45r.] but it is not appropriate for the Necessary Existent, which is neither a universal or a particular. He knew that praising it through language was not correct, for it is not for the senses to do work befitting the intellect. The intellect knows that anyone praising one who is perfectly praiseworthy must be in agreement with him. For his knowledge must be equal to the one being praised if speech is to be suitable for the intention. The Necessary Existent is Single, One, and Incomparable, so the praise of a human is not concordant with it. Therefore (Muḥammad) left it to (the Necessary Existent's) own knowledge. It utters all knowledge, and its knowledge is the exposition of praise for itself, not through pronunciation or sound, nor through speech. It is its own adornment and it is its own splendor.

Then he said: [45v.] *The command came, "Desire something!" I said, "Give permission that whatever (problem) I encounter, I (can) ask until its difficulties are solved."* That is, when it said to me, "What [119] do you want?" I said, "Give permission!" That is, knowledge. Because in this intellectual journey, only pure intellect had remained, for he had reached the Presence of the Necessary Existent and become knowing. In Unity [*vah-dāniyyat*], the only thing he could have asked for that would have been suitable for him was Absolute Knowledge [*'ilm-i mutlaq*]. So he was given perfect knowledge [*'ilm-i tamām*] in accordance with his rank. Hence, when there was afterwards any problem, he would petition (God's help) and find a clear solution. He would thus lay out the principles of religious law, such as prayer, fasting, and the like, according to the judgments of that knowledge, in the best interests of creation [46r.] and never fall into error. In the reality of the Necessary Existent, he established the goal of his knowledge within the limits of his intellect, in language [*lafz*] harmonious with the hearing of created beings, so that meaning be clear and the curtain of (distortion due to) self-interest not be drawn up. The help of that knowledge was that the explanation of such a journey be given set in a story of an external journey, so that only one knowledgeable in the truth would be on the path of knowing and understanding the content of his speech.

Then he said: *When I did all this, I returned to the house. Because of the*

swiftness of the journey, the bedclothes were still warm. That is, the journey was intellectual [*fikrî*]. He went by thought [*khâtîr*]. (His) intellect [46v.] perceived the order of existents until the Necessary Existent. Then, when cognition [*tafakkur*] was complete, he returned to himself. No time had passed. Returning in that state was quicker than (the glance of) an evil eye. Whoever knows, knows what transpired. Whoever does not know, is excused.

It is not permissible to show the inner meanings [*ramz-hâ*] of these words to one of the ignorant masses. Only a rationalist [*'âqil*] is permitted to enjoy the inner meaning of these words. May God, may He be exalted, grant the favor of true speech and true knowledge.⁸⁶

Notes

1. This translation is based on the text in N. Mâyel Heravî's *Mî'râj Nâma* (*The Book of Ascent*), with a Revised Text by Shamsuddîn Ibrâhîm Abarqûhî, ed. N. Mâyel Heravî (Mashhad: The Islamic Research Foundation, Âstân-i Quds-i Raḍavî, 1986) (hereafter H.). I compared this edition closely with the facsimile edition of the manuscript of the *Mî'râj Nâma*, prepared by Mahdî Bayânî (Tehran: Anjuman-i dūstdârân-i kitâb, 1952) (hereafter B.), that was originally transcribed by Muḥammad ibn 'Umar ar-Râzî (Appendix C, 1), and occasionally I adopt the latter's reading. Pagination for both editions is inserted between brackets; plain page numbers refer to Heravî, numbers indicating recto and verso to Bayânî. I also consulted the generally unreliable text edited by Bahman Karîmî, *Mî'râj Nâma* (Rasht: Matba'at-i urwat al-wuthqâ, n.d.) (hereafter K.) and the late Indian manuscript now in the British Library Add. 16659/4 (Appendix C, 2I, hereafter BM). I identify references to the Qur'ân and to those ḥadîth that appear in A. J. Wensinck, J. P. Messing, et al., *Concordance et indices de la tradition musulmane*, 8 vols. (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1936–88); those interested should also consult Heravî's notes to the text in his *Mî'râj Nâma*, 167–77.

2. Qur'ân, 17.1–3. Concerning the *mî'râj* in general, see Gerhard Bowering's article, "Mî'râj," in *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 9: 552–56, which provides an up-to-date bibliography; see also the articles under "Mî'râj" in *EI*¹, 5: 505–508 and and "Isrâ" in *EI*², 3: 553–54. A good general account of the *mî'râj* and its later influences in Islamic culture, with relevant bibliographical citations, is Annemarie Schimmel, *And Muhammad Is His Messenger: The Veneration of the Prophet in Islamic Piety* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985) 159–75. N. M. Heravî, *Mî'râj Nâma*, 62–67, provides a useful list of *mî'râj* accounts in Persian, while for an overview of the Turkish tradition, see Metin Akar, *Türk Edebiyatında Manzum Mî'râj-Nameler*, Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı Yayınları 804 (Ankara: Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı, 1987).

3. R. A. Nicholson, "An Early Arabic Version of the Mî'râj of Abû Yazîd al-Bisṭâmî," *Islamica* 2 (1926–27) 402–14; Ḥakîm Sanâ'î, *Mathnavîhâ-yi Hakîm*

Sanâ'î ba-inzîmâm-i sharh-i saïr al-'ibâd ila l-ma'âd, ed. Muḥammad Taqî Mudarris-i Razavî, *Intishârât-i Dânishgâh-i Tihân* 1226 (Tehran: Dânishgâh-i Tihân, 1969) 180–233; Ibn Ṭufail, *Hayy ibn Yaqzân*, in Amîn, ed., *Hayy ibn Yaqzân, li-bn Sinâ wa-bn Ṭufail wa-s-Suhrawardî*; al-Ghazâlî, *Risâlat at-ṭair*, ed. L. Cheikho, *al-Mashriq* 20 (1901) 918–24; as-Suhrawardî, *Opera Metaphysica et Mystica* II, ed. Corbin, and *Opera Metaphysica et Mystica* III, ed. Nasr; Shams ad-Dîn Muḥammad ibn Îl-ṭughân Bardsîrî Kirmânî, *Misbâh al-arvâh*, ed. Badî' az-Zamân Furûzânfar, *Intishârât-i Dânishgâh-i Tihân* 1284 (Tehran: Dânishgâh-i Tihân, 1971); Ibn 'Arabî, *Kitâb al-isrâ ilâ maqâm al-asrâ*, in *Risâ'il Ibn 'Arabî* (Hyderabad: Dâ'irat al-ma'ârif al-'uthmâniyya, 1948), vol. 1; *idem*, *al-Futûḥât al-Makkiyya*, 4 vols. (Beirut: Dâr ṣâdir, n.d.) 1: 117–31, 2: 270–354; al-Qushairî, *Kitâb al-mi'râj*, ed. 'Alî Ḥasan al-Qâdir (Cairo: Dâr al-kutub al-ḥadîtha, 1964). An example of a nonreligious use of the *mi'râj* theme is *Risâlat al-Ghufrân*, by Abû 'Alâ' al-Ma'arrî (d. 449/1057) (Beirut: Dâr ṣâdir, 1964).

4. See Heath, “Disorientation and Reorientation.”

5. Some attention has been paid to the rhetorical dimension of works of Islamic philosophy, especially by Leo Strauss and his followers. Much less has been given to this aspect of theological and mystical texts. See, for example, James Morris's well-justified complaints concerning this omission in regard to the study of Ibn 'Arabî, certainly one of the most “rhetorical” of all Muslim mystics, in James W. Morris, “Ibn 'Arabî and His Interpreters, Part I: Recent French Translations,” *JAOS* 106,3 (1986) 539–51, esp. notes 8, 15, and 23. See also Chapter Seven below.

6. I initially intended to produce a critical edition of the text as well. The recent publication of the edition by Heravî, *Mi'râj Nâma (The Book of Ascent), with a Revised Text by Shamsuddîn Ibrâhîm Abarqûbî*, in combination with the facsimile edition of the excellent early manuscript of the work, *Mi'râj Nâma*, ed. Mahdî Bayânî, renders this task unnecessary. The few instances where I disagree with Heravî's readings are noted in the translation.

7. Technical terms are glossed with transliterations in their first occurrence; for further references consult the index. Terms that are equivocal (*ma'ânî*, *ḥaqîqa*) are glossed at each occurrence. I consider *rûḥ* the standard term for *soul* in the treatise and note instances where *nafs* is used instead.

8. This introduction is from B.

9. *Jân*, spirit, here refers to the material life force (the Stoics' *pneuma*) which animates the body rather than to the purely intelligible dimensions of human beings. For the latter sense, Avicenna customarily uses the term *nafs*. This treatise, however, interchanges *rûḥ* and *nafs* as cognates (see also above, Chapter Four, note 31). Compare this introduction with that of the *Dânish-nâma-yi 'Alâ'î* and the Persian translation of *Hayy ibn Yaqzân* in Corbin, *Avicenna*, 281. Subsequent references to *Hayy ibn Yaqzân* cite the edition of Mehren, *Traité mystique*, then the two English translations (the text itself and as it stands in the Persian commentary) in Corbin, *Avicenna*.

10. H. omits the word *ma'nâ* which I take from B. *Ma'nâ* has several senses in this treatise, which are indicated in the text. Compare Corbin's comments in *Avicenna*, 301, note 9.

11. On 'Alā' ad-Daula Muḥammad, see Chapter Two above. For *majlis*, see *EI*², 5:1031–33, and compare the introduction of Avicenna's *Fī ta'bīr ar-rū'yā*, 261–62.

12. Proverb. *Aghyār* here connotes those who are strangers in terms of spiritual kinship rather than ordinary acquaintance. Cf. *at-Tair*, 42.

13. *Ahl*, “worthy,” also perhaps “folk,” a word that is used technically to refer to members of a particular theological orientation; hence mystics are *ahl at-tasawwuf* and *Mu'tazilis* are *ahl ar-ra'y wa-n-naẓar*; see *EI*², 1:258–67, on other common uses of the term.

14. “Appearance” (*ẓuhūr*) is from B.

15. I follow B. here.

16. For *sidrat an-muntahā*, see Qur'ān, 53.13–18.

17. *Lā taufīq illā bi-llāh*, a formula consistently used by Avicenna in his writings.

18. As we have seen, Avicenna uses the term *Haqq* to refer to the Necessary Existent in Book Nine of *al-Ishārāt wa-t-tanbihāt*; he also uses it in *Sharḥ kitāb Athūlūjjiyā al-mansūb ilā Aristū*, 60.

19. The four humors: blood, phlegm, choler or yellow bile, and melancholy or black bile; the four elements: earth, water, fire, and air.

20. In other words, the rational soul; for *ravān*, see *Dānish-nāma-yi 'Alā'i: Tab'iyyāt*, 80; Corbin, *Avicenna*, 284, 285, note 4.

21. Reading from B. H. has “since spirit and body do not last.”

22. For *ifrāt wa-tafrit*, see *ash-Shifā': al-Ilāhiyyāt*, 429–30; *an-Najāt*, 331–32; and *Fi l-quwa n-insāniyya*; for *'tidāl*, *Fi n-naḥṣ*, 137; *Fi s-sa'āda*, 19; and Chapter Five above.

23. See *al-Mubāhathāt*, 235, where the practical sciences are called “acquired” (*muktasab*); see also *al-Hudāya*, 218.

24. Cf. *ash-Shifā': an-Naḥṣ*, 152; *al-Mabda' wa-l-ma'ād*, 95; Chapter Four above.

25. Cf. *ash-Shifā': an-Naḥṣ*, 153.

26. Cf. *Fi l-quwa l-insāniyya*, 47; and Michot, *La destinée de l'homme selon Avicenne*, 117.

27. For *himmat*, see *ash-Shifā': an-Naḥṣ*, 159, 177; *Fi s-sa'āda*, 2, 4; for *irādat*, see *al-Ishārāt wa-t-tanbihāt*, 4:76, 86.

28. Cf. *al-Ishārāt wa-t-tanbihāt*, 4:68–73; *as-Sa'āda*, 4.

29. Cf. *Fi l-ishq*; *al-Ishārāt wa-t-tanbihāt*, 4:41.

30. *al-Ishārāt wa-t-tanbihāt*, 4:41.

31. Avicenna begins with the sphere of the moon, that closest to earth. For the characteristics of each sphere, compare *Ḥayy ibn Yaḡzān*, 10–13; Corbin, *Avicenna*, 143–45, 333–42; and *Fi l-ajrām al-'ulwiyya*, 39–40.

32. I read *muhāmin-i arval* from B rather than H.'s *mahīn-i arval* (First Great One). Cf. *Ḥayy ibn Yaḡzān*, 18–20; Corbin, *Avicenna*, 148–49, 362–71.

33. See the section on prophecy in Chapter Five above.

34. Qur'ān, 2.88.

35. See Marmura, “Some Aspects of Avicenna's Theory of God's Knowledge of Particulars,” 299–312.

36. Ḥadīth (not in Wensinck, *Concordance*).
37. Qurʾān, 16.65.
38. On Gabriel in general Islamic piety, see “Djabrâʾil,” *EI*², 2: 362–63. Here Avicenna equates him with the prophetic aspect of the First Intelligence; see Nasr, *An Introduction to Islamic Cosmological Doctrines*, 268 and Corbin, *Avicenna*, 288, note 15, as well as other citations in Corbin’s index, 406, for numerous references.
39. Qurʾān, 2.138.
40. Ḥadīth (not in Wensinck, *Concordance*).
41. Hadīth, see Wensinck, *Concordance*, 1: 109.
42. Cf. Qurʾān, 56.27–48; and *an-Nafs an-nâṭiqā*, 187; Michot, *La destinée de l’homme selon Avicenne*, 191, note 2.
43. Ḥadīth, see Wensinck, *Concordance*, 6: 508.
44. Qurʾān, 7.54. For *amr*, see *EI*², 1: 449–50, and J. M. S. Baljon, “The ‘Amr of God’ in the Koran,” *Acta Orientalia* 23,1–2 (1958) 7–18; see also Corbin, *Avicenna*, 339, note 8, 342, note 20; *Fi s-saʿâda*, 2; *an-Nairūziyya*, 94; and in the translation below, 134–35.
45. Qurʾān, 17.85.
46. Qurʾān, 78.38. I prefer B.’s reading of “qualified” (*kaiṣfiyyat*) above to H.’s “revelation” (*kashf*), because the opposition between “absolute” (*mutlaq*) and “qualified” (*kaiṣfiyyat*) seems to be primary here.
47. Cf. *al-ʿArshiyya*, 30–31:

(The prophet’s) speech is the effluence of sciences from (God) onto the Tablet of the heart of the Prophet, upon whom be peace, by means of the Inscripting Pen which is expressed by the Active Intelligence and the Angel Drawn-Near [*al-malak al-muqarrab*]. So speech is an expression of sciences (coming to) the Prophet, upon whom be peace. Knowledge, however, admits neither plurality [*taʿaddud*] nor multiplicity [*kathra*].

See also Michot, *La destinée de l’homme selon Avicenne*, 126–29.

48. Ḥadīth (not in Wensinck, *Concordance*). As Avicenna says in *al-ʿArshiyya*, 32, “We see, therefore we know; the Prophet, peace be upon him, knows, then he sees.”
49. Qurʾān, 6.103.
50. Qurʾān, 6.18.
51. Qurʾān, 50.16.
52. Ḥadīth (not in Wensinck, *Concordance*).
53. Qurʾān, 55.2–3. Throughout this paragraph I follow B. rather than H.
54. Ḥadīth (not in Wensinck, *Concordance*). Pertinent here is the well-known controversy between the Muʿtazilīs and the Traditionalists concerning the issue of the “createdness” of the Qurʾān. Avicenna’s position as stated here is close to that of the Muʿtazilīs in that he holds the intellectual essence of prophetic messages to be divine, but their expressed verbal forms to be material; but it is not identical to a Muʿtazilī view in that he would not necessarily declare God’s speech itself to be a secondary, created phenomenon. On the Muʿtazilīs, see Fakhry, *A History of Islamic Philosophy*, 44–65, on the “createdness” of the Qurʾān, esp. 61–63.

55. Qur'ān, 31.25.
56. Ḥadīth (not in Wensinck, *Concordance*).
57. Persian rendering of the above Arabic ḥadīth.
58. Ḥadīth (not in Wensinck, *Concordance*).
59. Ḥadīth (not in Wensinck, *Concordance*).
60. Saying of 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib. Avicenna seldom quotes 'Alī and is probably only indulging his patron by doing so; for another example, however, see the equally late *Sirr al-qaḍar*, 28; trans. 31.
61. I follow B. throughout this paragraph.
62. Ḥadīth (not in Wensinck, *Concordance*); see Gutas, *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition*, 232.
63. Proverbs.
64. Ḥadīth, see Wensinck, *Concordance*, 4: 515.
65. Passages in italics comprise Avicenna's version of the *mi'rāj* narrative; those in regular type are his commentary. For the narrative of Avicenna's version of the *mi'rāj* uninterrupted by commentary, see Appendix D.
66. Cf. *Ḥayy ibn Yaḡzān*, 4–5, Corbin, *Avicenna*, 139, 299–300; for Avicenna's theory of dreams, see *Fī ta'bīr ar-ru'yā*, 282–94; *Fī s-sa'āda*, 20; *Fī l-ajrām al-'ulwīyya*, 31; Gutas, *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition*, 183–84; F. Rahman, *Prophecy in Islam*, 36–39; and Chapter Four above.
67. Cf. Avicenna's Neoplatonic light and mirror imagery discussed in Chapter Three above, as well as his interpretations of the Light Verse (“Āyat an-nūr,” Qur'ān, 24.35) in *Fī ithbāt an-nubuwwāt*, 49–52, and *al-Ishārāt wa-t-tanbihāt*, 2: 388–94, discussed in Chapter Eight below.
68. I prefer B.'s *hamm* here to H.'s *vahm*.
69. Cf. Corbin, *Avicenna*, 292–93.
70. Reading B., *āsmān-i dunyā*, instead of H., *āsmān-i awwal*. This appears to follow a version of the *mi'rāj* found in Ibn Ishāq (d. 150/767) and Ibn Hishām's (d. 218/833 or 213/828) biography of the prophet Muḥammad in which an angel named Ismā'īl is mentioned as the guardian of one of the gates of heaven; see *as-Sīra an-nabawīyya*, ed. Tāhā 'Abd ar-Ra'ūf Sa'd, 4 vols. (Beirut: Dār al-Jil, n.d.) 2: 37; Ibn Ishāq, *The Life of Muhammad*, trans. A. Guillaume (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1955) 185.
71. Following B., I omit *pādshāhvār*.
72. Following B., I insert *ahl*.
73. In Arabic; compare Qur'ān, 20.114.
74. See Qur'ān, 53.15.
75. Qur'ān, 37.164.
76. Qur'ān, 21.33.
77. In this last line I follow neither B. nor H., since neither makes sense. Instead I follow K. (p. 31) and BM. (p. 374^v), reading their *bi-rangī* for B. and H.'s *bar yakī* and their *'ibhārat kard* for the formers' *'ibādat kard* (see note 1 above for manuscript citations).
78. Reading B., *'ismat* (sinlessness), instead of H., *'aql* (intellect); but H., *tasbīh* (praise), instead of B., *tashīd* (?).
79. I follow B. here.

80. Not from the Qur'ân or ḥadīth; perhaps a paraphrase?

81. Reading B., *wasṭ* (middle), instead of H., *shatt* (shore).

82. This is a common—if weak—ḥadīth; it is not in Wensinck, *Concordance*, but see *EI*², 1: 341 and al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā' 'ulūm ad-dīn*, 5 vols. (Beirut: Dār al-ma'rifa, n.d.) 1: 83, that is, the beginning of Chapter 7 (on the intellect) of Book 1; see also *al-'Arshiyya*, 37 and Jean Michot, "L'épître sur la connaissance de l'âme rationnelle et de ses états, attribuée à Avicenne," *Revue Philosophique de Louvain* 82 (1984) 484, note 23.

83. This paragraph as according to B.

84. I follow B. here. H. omits "to me" (*bi-man*). B. gives the Arabic as well as the Persian of "Draw nearer!"

85. A well-known ḥadīth; see Wensinck, *Concordance*, 1: 304; see also Nūrud-dīn Abdurrahmān-i Isfārāyīnī, *Le révélateur des mystères (Kāshif al-Asrār)*, intro., ed., and trans. Heilmann Landolt, *Islam Spirituel* (Paris: Verdier, 1986), 206, note 110.

86. B. continues: "This is the end of his speech, may God sanctify his soul. Muḥammad ibn 'Umar wrote it in the middle of Ṣafar, may it be concluded in goodness and success, in 584 [C.E. April 1188]. Praise be to God, Lord of the worlds, and blessings on His prophet Muḥammad, the best of all creation, and on his family and companions."