Principles by Shah Ni‘matullah Wali

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In the Name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate

According to the Sufis and the masters of theology, existence as it is in itself, that is, not conditioned,3 is more general than universal and particular, singular and general,4 absolute and restricted and mental and external.

Couplet:

Absolute5 over both absoluteness and non–absoluteness6
Without need of being described as even or odd.7

Principle 1.
Considering the reality8 of existence under the condition that there is nothing with it, it is said to be the level of oneness,9 the station of the all–comprehensive,10 and the reality of realities.11

Couplet:

It is absolute over the restrictions12 of name and attributes.13
Essence14 is not its name, though you might say essence.15

Rather essence is said of it for understanding, and absolute for incomparability.16

Principle 2.
Existence is neither called an existent nor a non–existent.17 However, necessary existence18 is known as an existent. Understand this.

Couplet:

This is a precise distinction, well said
A subtle pearl, well pierced.19

Principle 3.

ḥaqq[20] is pure existence,[21] and is one[22] by the unity[23] of reality, that is, its realization in the correct knowledge of the verifier does not depend on the conceptualization of unity or on the conceptualization of the opposite of unity, or on intellection about unity as opposed to multiplicity. Rather unity is an establishing established reality, not [merely] established.[24]

Line of verse:

We said unity, however it is understood,

Not in order to refer to the idea[25] of unity, as is imagined by veiled minds.[26]

Principle 4.

The existence of necessary existence is the same as its essence; and the existence of contingent existence is additional to contingent whatnesses.[27] Rather the existence of contingent existence is from the treasury of the generosity[28] of necessary existence.

Couplet:

Whatever we have is all His generosity. His generosity for us is His existence.

Principle 5.

The first level associated with entification[29] is inclusive of all entifications, a comprehensive oneness, which is specific to the real human, whose form is Adam.[30]

Couplet:

Know the face and meaning of Adam.
Know yourself and know the cosmos.

Principle 6.

The first intellect,[31] that is, the tablet of the decree, the highest pen and the Adam of meaning is the simplest of existents; but it is not void of intellectual composition because the first intellect is itself a whatness to which existence is attributed. And of the properties[32] of contingent multiplicity, there is one for it.[33]

Principle 7.

The fixed entities[34] are forms of the divine names in the [divine] cognitive presence[35] and are realities of the world. Insofar as they are fixed in knowledge but are non–existent in the external world, they have not smelled the scent of existence. Allah, the Exalted, says, **All things are perishing but His face (*28:88*)**.

Couplet:

From pre–eternity to post–eternity it is like this.
The speech of the mystics is also like this.

Principle 8.

The reality of no existent is blameworthy, although some are blameworthy because of base attributes. You know that an existent without existence cannot be an existent, and existence is pure goodness.[36] Therefore, an existent, with regard to its existence, is not void of goodness.

Couplet:

Although Iblīs is supremely an evil doer,
Look at his existence, for it is not bad.[37]

Principle 9.

The nobility of the indicator[38] is because of the nobility of what it indicates.[39] The cosmos is an indicator of the existence of necessary existence.

Couplet:

Whatever is, whether good or bad,
All can have this nobility.

Perfection characterizes one to the extent of one's divine characteristics,[40] and imperfection is according to weakness in this. Nobility is by the fewness of intermediaries [to Him], and baseness is by the abundance of them.[41]

Principle 10.

The vastest and greatest of things are mercy, the heart of man and knowledge. Regarding the vastness of mercy, Ḥaqq, the exalted, said: ***My mercy embraces all things*** (***7:156***)*. On the vastness of mercy and knowledge, by the tongue of the prophets He said: ***O our Lord! You comprehend all things in mercy and knowledge*** (***40:7***). On the vastness of the heart of the 'ārif of Allah, He said: "Neither My earth nor My heaven comprehends me, but the heart of My pure and pious believer servant."[42]

Stanza:

The treasure that was hidden from the eyes of all the world,[43]
Became manifest to me; I am the familiar of that treasure.
The treasure that does not fit in any treasury exists,
But it fits in a corner of my heart. Where do I fit in being?

Principle 11.

Contingent entified existents constantly request the assistance of the presence of necessary existence, and absolute generosity, that is, Ḥaqq, the exalted and holy, assists them from the treasury of generosity with existence.

Couplet:

A deserving drunken rogue,[44] *such as I,*
Would see that the cup bearer gave some of that wine to me.[45]

Principle 12.

The single entity, externally, shows itself as a multiplicity of entities; and the numerous entities, internally, are a single entity.[46]

Quatrain:

An entity appears externally as entities.
In every entity, an entity is shown to us.
In the world showing goblet it is perfectly shown.
Look at it, so that it shows you!

Principle 13.

Couplet:

The most holy effusion[47] gives existence and capacity
to the capacitated by the name "Interior".

The existence of the fixed entities in the presence of knowledge is by the most holy effusion, that is, more holy than the mixture of multiplicity of names and the imperfections of contingent realities. This is the disclosure of essential love, which is what brings about the existence and capacities of entities.

Sacred effusion is the disclosure of the names by the love of the appearance of what is required by the entities in the external world. Sacred effusion succeeds the most holy effusion. Understand this.

Principle 14.

Ḥaqq, the exalted, at every moment, discloses Himself to every entity, through the one of the names, according to, **Every day He is in a state** (**55:29**). One of the divine affairs is sent down from the presence of oneness[48] to unity,[49] and from unity to the level of intellect, and from the intellectual to that of the tablet, and from that of the tablet to universal nature, and from the universal nature to corporeal matter.

Line of verse:

After this, the throne, then its footstool. [50]

When one of the divine affairs is sent down from the seven heavens, and passes through the levels of universal and particular until it reaches man, it takes on the coloring of all of these levels. The coming down of a divine affair through all these mentioned levels occurs at a single moment.[51]

Couplet:

In its coming down, no time passes,
Rather, not even a moment passes.

After this, the states that have dominated it are peeled off with a spiritual peeling, and it returns to the divine presence.[52] Then from Him it originates, and to Him it returns.

Couplet:

The guest is dear. Hold him as dear.
Do not debase that dear friend.

Principle 15.

The existence of multiplicity in names[53] is the same as the divine essence, in one aspect. They[54] are manifested by the forms of the fixed entities according to different states.

Couplet:

Know unity and plurality in this way.
Call forth the inclusive unity.

A name is the essence with a determinate attribute.[55] An attribute is an intellectual relation, not an entified affair, and in relation to the external world they are nothing. Therefore, the multiplicity of the names is with regard to attributes, and the unity of the names is by the essence. Whenever a perspectival[56] letter is combined with a real letter, it has meaning.[57] Understand this.

Principle 16.

By correct knowledge and explicit unveiling, it is verified for the verifier that the existence of the world is by the disclosure of real[58] existence. It is manifest in the mirrors of the fixed entities. The existence of the entities is impossible without real existential disclosure.[59]

Couplet:

An existent, whatever it is, has its existence from His generosity.
The generosity of His existence to others is His existence.[60]

Principle 17.

In the first disclosure *ḥaqq* appears[61] in the mirrors of creation, and creation is hidden.[62]

Couplet:

First, our state was this way.
Whoever reaches here says this.

In the second disclosure *ḥaqq* appears in the mirrors of the existence of *ḥaqq*, and *ḥaqq* is hidden. However, in the comprehensive disclosure, which is the station of *Muḥammadan* perfection, *ḥaqq* is witnessed in creation itself, and creation is witnessed in *ḥaqq* Himself.

Couplet:

Look at the light of the sun in the moon.
Look at creation and ḥaqq [reflected] in each other.

Principle 18.

Existence, universal and particular, specific and general, mental and external, and absolute and

restricted, from the aspect of existence63 is one, and by restrictions and respects64 is numerous. The divine names are many according to concepts,65 but in view of what they are true of, they are one.

Couplet:

An essence has a hundred thousand names by appearance,66
Find that as one until you know,67 and peace be unto you.

Principle 19.

Representations68 in numerous mirrors are shown variously, while the thing represented is one and the mirrors, on account of entification and restriction, are unlimited,69 but the utmost70 is one.

Couplet:

Zayd, 'Amr, Bakr and Khālid, all four
Are man itself, be well aware of this!

Principle 20.

The exterior of every locus of manifestation is from the divine name, the Exterior,71 and its interior is from the name, the Interior.72 The locus of manifestation, with respect to oneness is the same as the one who manifests. The collection of all individuals of the world, are loci of manifestation of the names of Ḥaqq, individually, while the perfect man is the locus of manifestation of the comprehensive name, generally. The reality of the locus of manifestation, in reality, returns to the one who manifests, and the reality of Ḥaqq, the exalted and sacred, is unknown. Therefore, the reality of nothing is known.

Poetry:

I have not understood the reality of anything.
How can I understand, while you are in it?

Principle 21.

Stopping at oneness is the level of a unitarian who is veiled from creation in the joining with Ḥaqq. Stopping at the plurality of the world is the job of one covered who is in the desert of separation, covered from Ḥaqq by creation.

But the verifier is the one who witnesses Ḥaqq by Ḥaqq in intellectual, entified, spiritual, imaginal and sensory forms. This is the meaning of, "I did not see anything without seeing Allah in it."73

Couplet:

Since the light of my eyes is from the light of His beauty,
I look at the light of His face by His light.

Principle 22.

Every individual in the world is the locus of manifestation of one of the divine names with specific particularities.

Couplet:
The rogue and the ascetic, however they are viewed
In form and meaning, look at God.

The existence of bubbles is by water, and the appearance of water is by bubbles.

Couplet:
From the cup of bubbles, drink water,
*Find that water in these bubbles.*74

Principle 23.
The existence of a number is by repetition of the unit. The elaboration of the levels of unity are by number. A number is half the sum of its predecessor and successor.75 The least sum is the double, and two is one and one, which are summed in a single form so that two is obtained. The principles of any number do not appear except by finitude (numerosity), and the levels of unity are not explained except by number. Therefore, there must be number and finitude.

In every level of the levels of unities, tens, hundreds and thousands, unity has come repeatedly. With the repetition of one more, the odd becomes even, but without it, it is odd.
The Apostle of Allahص said, *"Verily Allah is odd; He loves the odd."*

Couplet:
The odd such that other than Him there is no one,
is the root of number, but is not a number.

Principle 24.
If it were not for the generosity of the existence of necessary existence, which granted existence to existents, the world of being would not be. Likewise, if there were no intellectual universal realities, there would appear no principles of the divine names and attributes in the entified loci of manifestation.

Couplet:
There must be a bright mirror
For the light of His beauty to be shown.

Principle 25.
The first entity to be made determinate (as an entified thing) is the reality of man, and the obtaining of entities is by the elaboration of him, and the numerosity of the names is by determinations (entifications).

Couplet:
It is entified by the entifications of things.
The wave and bubbles are both from water.

Principle 26.

The divine identity, by the manifestation of royal sovereignty, is disclosed in the mirrors of the loci of manifestation of the infinite names, and according to the principle, **and He is with you, wherever you are** (**57:4**), He is with all. Rather, the reality of Him is all, and He with all the names and attributes appears in some of the loci of manifestation, as in the perfect one and the *quṭbs*; and with some appears in some. Therefore, the single identity, according to the manifestation of the names and attributes, appears more excellently in some loci of manifestation and in others [merely] excellently.

Couplet:

That one is more excellent; this one is excellent;
By identity they are one, O intelligent one!

Principle 27.

Whoever is annihilated in things, sees that the mover and the stopper of things is *ḥaqq*. If one is annihilated from oneself and from all things:

Couplet:

ḥaqq remains, and other than ḥaqq is nothing.
Other than ḥaqq, the self is nothing; nothing is in view.

Annihilation is a relation we have to ourselves, but subsistence is a relation we have to *ḥaqq*. You are free, so take whatever relation you consider to be more appropriate for yourself.

Principle 28.

Lightning-like essential disclosures are obtained by those who are empty of all attributes and states and from the principles of necessity, names and contingency. This complete and absolute emptiness76 is not opposed to the absoluteness of *ḥaqq*.

Couplet:

I constantly see this emptiness,
Even though it does not last for more than a moment.

Principle 29.

Existence is absolutely permitted. Knowledge of its depth is absolutely forbidden.

1. This treatise has been translated from "Usūl", in Risāleh-hā-ye ḥaẓrat-e Sayyid Nūr al-Dīn Shāh Ni'matullāh Walī, Vol. 2, ed. Dr. Javād Nūrbakhsh (Tehran: Khānaqāh Ni'matullāhī, dated according to the Iranian royalist calendar 2536, corresponding to 1977), 359–369. The author, Shāh Ni'matullāh Walī was born in Allepo circa 730/1330 and lived for a hundred years. He died in Mihān near Kermān, where his shrine is still maintained. Although he is remembered more for his revival of Sufism in Iran and for his poetry than for his work on the philosophical theology of Sufism, or theoretical 'irfān, his essays include a number of works on this subject which display his familiarity with the works of Qūnawī and Qayṣarī in the school of ibn 'Arabī.

2. I would not have understood the text and the translation could not have been accomplished without the assistance of Dr. Amīr Dīvānī. Infelicities in the translation and misunderstandings found in the comments are entirely my own

responsibility.

3. Existence (wujūd) is the main topic of theoretical mysticism or 'irfàn, which is a sort of philosophical theology of the Sufis, who identify God with existence, that is with absolute existence, in the sense of existence without any conditions such as those indicated by the adjectives in the terms mental existence, external existence, particular existence, necessary existence, non–necessary existence, etc. To speak of existence in this perfectly general way without any stipulations, i.e. not conditioned (là bi sharṭ shay'), about its instantiation, is to speak of existence as it is in itself (min haytha huwa huwa), from the aspect of it being it, that is, as it is in itself.

This sort of view is often confused with pantheism, or worse yet, with panentheism. Pantheism involves some sort of identification of God with the world. According to 'irfàn, God is not identified with each thing in the world, nor with the mereological sum of things that is the world, as in some forms of pantheism. God is not taken to be a substance as in Spinozistic philosophy, which is also labeled pantheistic. Panentheism is the view that the world is in God as the finite is within the infinite or as cells are in an organism, but there is no possibility of any such relation of inclusion to be found in theoretical Sufism.

4. Here we find a typical paradox. Absolute existence is "more general than... general". The paradox may be resolved in several ways. By singular existence is meant the existence of a single thing, e.g., this man or that flower. By general existence is meant the existence of various kinds of things, such as human existence, the existence of man in general or the existence of flowers. Absolute existence is not restricted to either of these but extends to both and in this sense is more "general", i.e., more extensive, than singular and "general", i.e. existence of pluralities of things or types of things.

5. What is absolute, muṭlaq is what is free or released from ties or restrictions. In English we use absolute over in the sense of transcending, but it would be closer to Arabic and Farsi if we were to say absolute from, meaning unfettered by. So, the line also could be translated as: "Unbounded by unboundedness and boundedness."

6. The paradox again appears in the couplet. Existence in itself is existence as it is without regard to its being one way or another. This is not to deny its being one way

or another. Likewise we can speak of Socrates in himself, without regard to the fact that he was Greek or a philosopher. This is not to deny that he was a Greek philosopher. To consider existence absolutely is to consider it without regard to the fact that it is in any sense absolute. This is not to deny this fact, only to consider existence aside from it, without regard to it. Qayṣarī explains in his introduction to the Fuṣūṣ that existence becomes qualified as absolute or conditioned, general or particular, etc., because of the levels of its self–disclosure or manifestation.

7. The suggestion is that just as number itself is neither either nor odd, but only particular manifestations of number are even or odd, likewise existence in itself is beyond being absolute existence or conditioned existence, which are merely two levels of the manifestation of existence. The analogy has its limitations, however, for number, in itself, could be described as being neither even nor odd because of its universality, while absolute existence should not be described as being non–absolute, for this would be yet another negative condition. It would be better to say that existence in itself is indeterminate with regard to the pairs of opposites that can be ascribed to the various levels of existence, except that one should not in so doing imagine this indeterminacy to be a particular restriction or condition in which existence becomes manifest.

8. ḥaqīqat

9. aḥadiyyah

10. jam' al–jam'

11. ḥaqīqah al–ḥaqā'iq

12. Restrictions translates quyūd (sing. qayd), which term is also used for adverbs and signifies any sort of qualification.

13. The words for name (ism) and attributes (ṣifāt) are also used for noun and adjectives, making the line into a pun on the grammatical terms. Theological discussions of God include discussions of the divine names and attributes. The divine names are generally nominalized verb forms prefixed with the definite article. Without the article they can be used as adjectives, and are said to refer to the divine attributes.

14. dhāt

15. It is sometimes said that out of piety, one should only refer to God by the names and attributes He has used to describe Himself in the Qur'ān. Essence (al-dhāt) is not among the divine names.

16. To assert incomparability (tanzih) is the opposite of asserting similarity (tashbih). Although God is not an essence, the term is used to aid in our understanding by way of comparison or asserting similarity, and this is balanced by the assertion of incomparability by using the term absolute (muṭlaq).

17. A non-existent is a maʿdūm, from ʿadam, nought, parallel to the construction of existent, mawjūd, from existence, wujūd.

18. The standard proofs for the existence of God found in Islamic philosophy are proofs of necessary existence, wājib al-wujūd.

19. The fine piercing of beads for necklaces and rosaries was considered a craft requiring the utmost precision.

20. Ḥaqq is God, as the Truth or Reality. Aside from its religious use, the term ḥaqq is used for reality, right, one's due, truth, and what is authentic. In the plural, ḥuqūq is used for rights. The fact of a matter is a ḥaqīqah (pl. ḥaqāʾiq), although the term is also used for the core truth about something. A researcher is a muḥaqiq, one who engages in research taḥqīq, which is the pursuit of truth. Sometimes the term muḥaqiq (verifier) is used for an ʿàrif, one who knows the truths that are found on the path of spiritual wayfaring. Finally, taḥaquq is realization in the sense in which a thing occurs or becomes real.

21. Pure existence is wujūd-e maḥẓ, existence unmixed or unadulterated.

22. wāḥid

23. waḥdat

24. The unity of reality is a fixed, unshakeable truth, independent of whether it is proven to be so by anyone.

25. mafhūm

26. I.e., those who are veiled from the direct knowledge of reality.

27. There are two Arabic terms used in Islamic theology and philosophy that could be translated as essence. Aristotle's ti ésti, was translated rather literally into Arabic as mā hiyyah, i.e., what is that, which became the technical term, māhiyyah, for which Chittick appropriately suggests using the term whatness. Other translators use quiddity, but whatness serves as a convenient reminder of the Arabic-Greek etymology. The other Aristotelian term translated into English as essence, and more appropriately so, is ousia, which in Arabic is the owner or possessor of attributes, the dhāt. Sometimes ḥaqīqat is used as a synonym for dhāt.

28. There is a play on word sounds here, also used in the following couplet, for generosity is jūd and existence is wujūd.

29. Entification is a major theme of Sufi metaphysics. It is the process by which the divine grace creatively emanates determinate entities as distinct loci of divine manifestation.

30. Adam is not only the first human being, and as such the paradigm human, but is also the first prophet and perfect man. In Farsi the word is also used for man generally, in the sense of human being.

31. The ʿurafā, like the Muslim philosophers, took over much of the neo-Platonist accounts of emanation, and describe the process of emanation as having the first intellect (ʿaql awwal) as the first created thing. For Qayṣarí, there are a series of conditions that can be placed on existence that result in viewing it at the levels of oneness, unity, the pervasive ipseity, the absolute interior, and only after these do we arrive at the first intellect, when existence is taken as conditioned only on universals being in it, which is the level of the name of the Merciful (al-Raḥmān), lord of the first intellect, called the tablet of the decree (lawḥ al-qaḍāʾ), the mother of the book and the highest pen (al-qalam al-aʿlā).

32. The word translated as properties here is aḥkām (sing. ḥukm), literally meaning judgments.

33. In other words, it is a contingent existence and part of a multitude.

34. The fixed entities (ʿayān thābit) are explicitly stated by ibn ʿArabī to correspond to the whatnesses of the philosophers, although he credits the Muʿtazilites for the term. (See Chittick, The Sufi Path of Knowledge, 83–88, 204; and The Self-Disclosure of God, xxxviii, 389 n. 9.) Qayṣarí explains the idea in his introduction to his commentary on the Fuṣūṣ as follows: "Know that the divine names have cognitive forms in the knowledge of the Exalted, for He is the essential knower of His essence, His names and His attributes. In the terminology of the folk of Allah, these cognitive forms, regardless of whether they are general or particular, are called fixed entities, insofar as they are the same as the essence, which is disclosed in particular entifications and in determinate relations. In the terminology of the folk of theory (the philosophers), the generalities among these cognitive forms are called whatnesses and realities, and their particularities are called ipseities (huwiyyāt). Whatnesses are general forms of the names that are entified in the cognitive presence (ḥaḍrah ʿilmiyyah) by the first entification. These forms are effused from the divine essence by the most holy

effusion and the first self–disclosure because of essential love and the seeking of the keys of the occult that are unknown except to Him for their manifestation and their perfections."

35. For an explanation of the presences, see William Chittick, The Sufi Path of

Knowledge, 4f. Ibn 'Arabī and his followers use the term presence (ḥaḍrah) as if it were an honorary title, like His Honor or His Eminence, but for realms rather than people, such as the sensory world, the realm of divine knowledge, the realm of divine lordship, etc. The term presence is also used by Qayṣarī to designate five levels of divine manifestation, called the Five Divine Presences. The five Presences are: (1) the Presence of absolute absence, which is the same as the Presence of divine knowledge, whose world is the world of the fixed entities; (4) the Presence of absolute witnessing, whose world is sensible world. Then come two Presences between these with a common name: the Presence of relative absence which is divided into two Presences, (2) one for what is closer to absence and (3) one closer to witnessing. The fifth Presence is (5) the perfect man. The Five Presences were introduced by Qūnawī. See William C. Chittick, "The Five Divine Presences: From al–Qūnawī to al–Qayṣarī" The Muslim World 72 (1982), 107–128.

36. khayr maḥḍ

37. Iblīs is the devil who tempted Adam and Eve. Evil is ascribed to his deeds, but not to his existence. This is a standard theme in Sufi writings. For a brief review, see Annemarie Schimmel, Deciphering the Signs of God (Albany: SUNY Press, 1994, 232–233.

38. dāl

39. madlūl

40. Or morals, virtues, akhlāq.

41. In Principle 8, a distinction is made between moral judgment and ontological status, in the sense that a negative evaluation does not carry over to reflect poorly on

existence. In Principle 9, the connection between the ontological and the moral is affirmed: greater nobility accrues to what is nearer to pure existence. Existence itself always has positive value, even if it appears very faintly.

42. This ḥadīth is frequently cited in Sufi texts, but is not in the standard collections. It is in Ghazālī's Ihyā (III. 1.5.; III, 12) and Fayḍ Kāshānī's Maḥjat al–Bayḍā (V, 26).

43. This is an allusion to the famous ḥadīth qudsī, not found in the standard collections, but often narrated in Sufi texts: "I was a treasure but was not known, so I loved to be known; I created the creatures and made Myself known to them, so they came to know Me." See Chittick, The Self–Disclosure of God, 21, 22, 70, 211, 329.

44. The rend is a character developed in the poetry of Ḥāfiẓ, a clever person who seems to disregard the outward aspects of religion while maintaining an exquisitely sincere faith.

45. The spiritual meanings given to the imagery associated with wine drinking reaches its pinnacle in Ḥāfiẓ, but had become fairly standardized much earlier.

46. The single entity ('ayn al–wāhidah) is explained by Chittick in The Self–Disclosure

of God, 72f. It is in ibn 'Arabī's discussion of this topic that he comes closest to using the expression waḥdat al–wujūd which would later be used as a label for the view advanced by him and his followers, and would give rise to much controversy.

47. In ibn 'Arabī's school, two levels of grace or effusion are distinguished, the higher of which is called the most holy effusion (fayḍ al–aqdas) and the lower, sacred effusion (fayḍ al–muqaddas). As Qayṣarī explains: "Divine effusion is divided into the most holy effusion and sacred effusion. By the former the fixed entities and their fundamental capacities are obtained in knowledge, and by the latter, those entities are obtained in the outside along with what they imply and what follows from them. Shaykh [ibn 'Arabī] alludes to this in his saying, 'The receptor is not obtained except by His most holy effusion.' This seeking first goes back to the name the First (al–Awwal) and the Interior (al–Bāṭin), then through these it goes back to the Last (al–Ākhar) and the Exterior (al–Ẓāhir), because firstness and interiority are established in cognitive existence, and lastness and exteriority are established in the outward existence."

48. ḥaḍrat aḥadiyat

49. wāḥidiyat

50. The throne ('arsh) is mentioned in connection with the footstool (kursī) as related

to the highest and next highest cosmic realms, the empyrean and the level of the fixed stars, respectively; but from as early

as the time of Tustarī (d. 283/896) the throne and footstool of God are likened to the heart and breast of man. See Gerhard Böwering, The Mystical Vision of Existence in Classical Islam (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1980), 163.

51. Emanation or effusion is not a temporal process.

52. As Qayṣarī explains, the levels of the descent of existence and its ascent form a circle. The level prior to this world is one of the levels of descent, while the level after this world is one of the levels of ascent.

53. Or nominal multiplicity (kathrat asmā'iyah), but referring to the multiplicity of the divine names.

54. That is, the divine names.

55. For example, one of the divine names is the Powerful (al-Qadīr). The term, the Powerful, refers to the divine essence through mention of the attribute, powerful.

56. Perspectival here is i'tibāriyah, more usually one finds i'tibārī, which is translated
by Chittick as mental, and could also be translated in some cases as subjective. The root of the word ('abr) has a meaning of crossing over, and i'tibārī thus takes the meaning of pertaining to one means of crossing, or from one approach, consideration, perspective, respect. The word i'tibār is also used in the sense of validity, in the sense of something credible, authorized, or logically or financially valid, like a proof or a check. Perhaps the sense is that in which a crossing is successful, enabling one to reach the destination. In any case, the term has an evaluative dimension that is not found in such terms as mental and subjective. In Ayatullah Miṣbāḥ's Philosophical Instructions (Binghamton: Global Publications, 1999) the following explanation is given:

The term i'tibārī (respectival), which is frequently encountered in philosophical discussions, is employed with various meanings and is really equivocal. One must take care to distinguish among its meanings so as not to confuse them or make mistakes.

In one sense, all secondary intelligibles, whether logical or philosophical, are called i'tibārī, and even the concept of existence is counted as i'tibārī. This term is used externsively by Shaykh al-Ishrāq, and in various books of his he uses 'intellectual i'tibārī' with this meaning.

Another sense of i'tibārī is specified for legal and ethical concepts, which in the language of recent scholars are called 'value concepts'. In a third sense, only concepts which have no external or mental instances and which are constructed with the help of the faculty of imagination are called i'tibārī, such as the concept of a ghoul. These concepts are also called 'fantastic'. I'tibārī also has another sense to be contrasted with fundamentality (aṣālat) which is employed in discussions of the fundamentality of existence (aṣālat wujūd) or fundamentality of whatness (aṣālat māhuwiyāt), and which will be mentioned in its proper place. (122–123).

57. Another way of putting this point is that a letter of credit only has worth when it is backed up by cash.

58. Or divine, ḥaqqānī.

59. Again, real means ḥaqqānī, or divine. The disclosure is one in which divine or real existence is made manifest.

60. Compare Principle 4, above.

61. That is, becomes manifest, exterior, ẓāhir.

62. Interior, bāṭin.

63. min ḥaythu al-wujūd

64. i'tibārāt

65. mafhūmāt

66. ẓuhūr

67. That is, you should discover that it is one so that you find it to be so and know it.

68. tamathālāt

69. bā ḥaṭṭ

70. ḥadd, what is at the furthest limit. The usage here is unusual.

71. Al-ẓāhir

72. Al-Bāṭin

73. This is a famous saying attributed to Imam 'Alī عليه سلام

74. There is a lovely alliteration in the Persian: "ān āb dar ān ḥubāb daryāb."

75. The first number was considered to be two, because number was so defined that it required a predecessor. Zero

doesn't count!

76. firāgh

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