

Imam Ghazali's Works

(Firq al-Islamiyah)

The Just Balance

being a Translation of **al-Qistas al-Mustaqim** of **al-Ghazzali** with
Translation and Annotation.

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APPENDIX III

Al-Qisṭās al-Mustaqīm

This is the work Ghazālī refers to in Paras. 68, 69, 70, 75, and 76. I translate the title as *The Correct Balance*. The expression occurs twice in the Qur'ān: 17.37/35 and 26.182. Blachère translates "la balance exacte," and Arberry "the straight balance." Ghazālī appropriately took his title from the Qur'ān, since this work is a somewhat curious attempt to Islamicize, or "Qurānize," some of the Aristotelian, and Stoic, logic which he expounded more "scientifically" in others of his works. I have used the Arabic text edited by Victor Chelhot, S.J.—*al-Qisṭās al-Mustaqīm*, Beyrouth, 1959, and his French translation Institut Français de Damas, *Bulletin d'Etudes orientales*, Tome XV, années 1955–1957, Damas, 1958. "Ar" followed by a number indicates the pagination of the Arabic text, and "Fr" that of the French text. Some discrepancies seem due to the fact that Father Chelhot did his French translation from other texts before he himself edited the Arabic text. I have enclosed in brackets references, transliterations, variant translations, and explanatory notes. No great deal of explanation is needed. The reader unfamiliar with Arabic will no doubt be interested, and perhaps even intrigued, by the light this work throws on the character and thought of its brilliant author.

[CHAPTER ONE]

Introduction [Fr 43–47; Ar 41–46]

1 First I praise God Most High; secondly I invoke His blessings on His Elect Apostle. Then I say: My brethren, is there among you one who will lend me his ears that I may relate to him something [that took place in one] of my conversations? On a certain trip a companion who belonged to the group professing *al-ta'lim* [authoritative instruction; a Bāṭinite] unexpectedly questioned me and disputed with me like one sure of his skill and his brilliant argument. *He said*: I see that you claim the perfection of knowledge. By what balance, then, is true knowledge perceived? Is it by the balance of independent reasoning [*al-ra'y*] and analogy [*al-qiya's*]? But that is extremely contradictory and ambiguous and is the cause of disagreement among men. Or is it by the balance of authoritative instruction? In this case you would be obliged to follow the infallible Teacher-Imam—but I do not see you desirous of seeking him out.

2 *I replied*: As for the balance of independent reasoning and analogy, God forbid that I should cling to it!—for it is the balance of Satan.

And I ask God Most High to protect religion from the evil of any of my friends who alleges that it is the balance of knowledge, for he is an ignorant friend of religion—and such a one is worse than an intelligent enemy. Had he been gifted with the happiness of [professing] the doctrine of authoritative instruction [Ghazālī is being sarcastic], he would first have learned how to dispute from the Qurʾān, where the Most High said: “Call thou to the way of thy Lord with wisdom and good admonition, and dispute with them in the better way” [16.126/125]. God thus taught that some men are called by wisdom [philosophy; Chelhot: *connaissance rationnelle*, as opposed to the vision of faith], and some by admonition [exhortation, preaching], and some by disputation [dialectic].

3 [Fr 44; Ar 42] If those called by admonition [preaching] are fed wisdom [philosophy] it harms them, just as feeding with the meat of fowls harms the suckling child. And if dialectic is used with those called by wisdom [philosophy] they are nauseated by it, just as the robust man's nature is nauseated by being breast-fed with human milk. And one who uses dialectic with those called by dialectic, but not in the better way as he has learned from the Qurʾān, is like one who feeds the desert Arab with wheat bread, when the latter is used only to dates, or the townsman with dates, when he is used only to wheat. Would that he had found a good example in Abraham, the Friend of God—God's blessings be upon him!—where he disputed with his adversary [Nimrod] and said: “My Lord is He who gives life and makes to die” [2.260/258]. Then, when he saw that that did not suit Nimrod and was not good in his view, so that the latter said: “I give life, and I make to die” [ibid.], Abraham shifted to what was better suited to his nature and more accessible to his understanding, and he said: “God makes the sun rise from the east; do you, then, make it rise from the west”: then the unbeliever was confounded [ibid.]. The Friend [of God]—God's blessings be upon him!—did not stubbornly persist in proving his adversary's inability to quicken the dead, since he knew it would be difficult for him to understand that—for he on his side thought that “slaying” was “making to die.” But proving that would not have suited Nimrod's bent or have been in keeping with the limit and level of his intelligence. And the Friend's aim was not to annihilate Nimrod, but to animate him: and feeding with suitable food is an animating, but stubbornness in forcing to what is not suitable is an annihilation. These are subtleties perceived only by the light of [the true] authoritative instruction acquired from the illumination of the world of prophecy. Therefore they have been excluded from understanding, because they have been excluded from the secret of the doctrine of the [true] authoritative teaching [i.e. that brought by the Prophet Muḥammad].

4 *He said:* If you find their [the Ta'limites'] way rough and their proof weak, with what do you weight your knowledge? *I said:* I weigh it with “the correct balance” [17.37/35 and 26.182] so that its true and its false, its straight and its deviant, may be evident to me. In this I follow God Most High and learn from the Qurʾān sent down on the tongue of His truthful Prophet, where He said: “And weigh with the correct balance” [17.37/35]. [Ar 43] *He said:* And what is the correct balance? *I said:* The five scales

which God Most High sent down in His Book and with which He taught His Prophets to weigh. He who learns from the Apostle of God and weighs with God's scales is indeed rightly guided. But he who turns from them to independent reasoning and analogy indeed errs and is ruined. *He said:* Where are these scales in the Qurʾān—and is this anything but falsehood and untruth [slander]?

5 *I said:* Have you not heard what the Most High said in the Sūra of the Benefactor [All-Merciful]: “The All-Merciful has taught the Qurʾān. He created man and He has taught him the Explanation . . . and heaven—He raised it up, and set the Balance [transgress not in the Balance, and weigh with justice, and skimp not in the Balance] [55.1–3/1–4 and 6/7–8/9]. Have you not heard what He said in the Sūra of Iron: “Indeed, We sent Our Messengers with the clear signs, and We sent down with them the Book and the Balance so that men might uphold justice” [57.25]? Do you think that the Balance joined with the Book is the balance for wheat and barley and gold and silver? Do you imagine the Balance whose setting corresponds to the raising of heaven in His utterance “and heaven—He raised it up, and set the Balance” [55.6/7] is the assay balance [coin balance, “trébuchet”] and the steelyard [*qabbān*: cf. Dozy *Suppl* II, 315; “balance romaine”]? What an improbable reckoning and enormous slander [calumny]! So fear God and do not interpret arbitrarily! Know for sure that this Balance is the Balance of the knowledge of God and of His angels and of His Scriptures and of His Apostles and of His material and spiritual worlds [or: sensible and mental, or, visible and invisible: *mulkihi wa malakūtihi*—cf. Wensinck: *La pensée de Ghazzālī*, pp. 86 ff.], so that you may learn how to weigh with it from His Prophets, as they learned from His angels. God Most High, then, is the first teacher, the second is Gabriel, and the third the Apostle. And all men learn from the Apostles that which they have no other way of knowing [he negative is missing from Chelhot's Arabic text, but is clearly required].

6 *I said:* I also know that by authoritative teaching [*al-ta'lim*—but from the Imam of the Imams [i.e. the supreme Imam], Muḥammad ibn 'Abdallāh ibn 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib—God's blessings be upon him! For I, though I do not see him, hear his teaching [*ta'lim*] which [Ar 44] has come to me through impeccable transmission which I cannot doubt. His *ta'lim* is simply the Qurʾān, and the clearness of the correctness of the Qurʾān's scales is known from the Qurʾān itself. *He said:* Then give me your proof, and educe your balance from the Qurʾān and show me how you understand it and how you understand, from the Qurʾān itself, its correctness and its soundness.

7 *I said:* Then give me your own proof: tell me how you know the correctness and soundness of the balance for gold and silver. Knowledge of that is a prerequisite of your debt, if you owe something, so that you may settle it completely without any deficiency, or, if someone owes you something, that you may receive it justly without any excess. So when you enter a Muslim market and take a balance by which you pay the debt or exact payment of it, how do you know that you are not unjust by paying too little or exacting too much? *He said:* I esteem Muslims, and I say that they would not engage in business except after regulating [equilibrating] the scales. But if a doubt occurred to me about one of the balances, I would

take it and raise it and look at the two pans and the tongue [needle, indicator] of the balance. And if the needle was perfectly vertical with no inclination to one of the two sides, and I saw, along with that, the exact equilibrium of the two pans, I would know that it was a sound and correct balance.

8 [Fr 46] *I said*: Granted that the needle is perfectly vertical and that the two pans are at the same level, how do you know that the balance is correct? *He said*: I know that by a necessary knowledge deriving from two premises, one empirical and the other a fact of sensation. The empirical is that I know from experience that a heavy thing sinks downwards, and the heavier it is the more it sinks. So I say: "If one of the two pans were heavier, it would sink more." Now this is a universal empirical premise which I come to have and [it is] necessary. The second premise is: I see that one of the two pans of this very balance does not sink but is on a perfect level with the other. This premise is [Ar 45] a fact of sensation which I have seen with my own eyes. So I doubt neither about the sensible premise, nor about the first which is an empirical premise. In my mind, then, there necessarily follows from these two premises a peremptory conclusion, viz. the equipoise of the balance. For I say:

If one of the two [pans] were heavier, it would sink more.
But it is perceived by sensation that one does not sink more.
Therefore it is known that it is not heavier.

[This is a conjunctive hypothetical syllogism.]

9 *I said*: But this is independent reasoning and rational analogy! *He said*: Not at all! It is a necessary knowledge following necessarily from certain premises, by which certitude derives from experience and sensation. How, then, could this be independent reasoning and analogy, when analogy is surmise and conjecture not giving serene certitude—and I feel in this serene certitude? *I said*: If you know the soundness of the balance by this proof, by what do you know the [correctness of the] *ṣanja* and the *mithqāl* [weights used as counterpoises]? Perhaps the *mithqāl* is lighter or heavier than the true *mithqāl*. *He said*: If I doubt about this, I take its measure from a *ṣanja* which I know and I compare this with it. If it is equal, I know that the gold, if it is equal to it, is equal to my *ṣanja*: for the equal to the equal is equal.

10 *I said*: And do you know who he was who originally set up the balance?

For he was the first originator from whom you learn this [way of] weighing. *He said*: No! And whence have I need of him, since I have already come to know the soundness of the balance by seeing with my own eyes? Nay, but I eat greens without inquiring about the kitchen garden [truck farm]. For the one who sets up the balance is not wanted for his own sake, but he is wanted that one may know from him the soundness of the balance and the manner of weighing. But I have already known it, as I have related and explained. So I can dispense from consulting the one who set up the balance at [Fr 47] every weighing. For that would take a long time and he would not be accessible at every moment—in addition to my not needing him!

11 *I said*: Then if I bring you a balance for knowledge like this [physical] balance, and even sounder than it, and I add to that that I know [Ar 46] its institutor and its teacher and its user—for its institutor is God Most High, and its teacher Gabriel, and its user the Friend [Abraham] and Muḥammad and all the other Prophets—God's blessings be on them all!—and God Most High has born witness to their veracity in that—would you accept that from me and believe it? *He said*: Yes, by God! How could I not believe it, if it is as clear as what I recounted to you [about the physical balance]?

12 *I said*: Now I see in you the good qualities of intelligence and my hope has come true of putting you right and making you understand the real meaning of your doctrine about your *ta'lim* [authoritative teaching]. So I shall disclose to you the five balances revealed in the Qur'ān that by it [the Qur'ān] you may have no need of any Imam and may surpass the level of the blind. And your Imam will be al-Muṣṭafā [the Elect, Muḥammad] and your leader [chief, director] the Qur'ān, and your norm [standard, gauge] seeing with your own eyes. So know that the balances of the Qur'ān are basically three: the balance of equivalence, and the balance of concomitance, and the balance of opposition. But the balance of equivalence is divided into three—the greater, the middle, and the lesser: so the total is five.

[Ar 47]

[CHAPTER TWO]

On the Greater Balance of Equivalence [Fr. 47–53; Ar 47–54]

[First Figure of the Categorical Syllogism; *Analytica Priora*
I, IV 25b, 26–26b, 34 M–P; S–M; S–P]

13 Then this intelligent companion from the associates of the devotees of *ta'lim* said: Explain to me in the first place the greater balance of equivalence and explain to me the meanings of these terms, viz. equivalence and concomitance and opposition and the greater and the middle and the lesser: for they are strange terms and doubtless beneath them there are subtle meanings. *I said*: As for the sense of these words, you will understand them only after they have been explained and their meanings understood so that you may, after that, grasp the aptness of their names for their realities.

14 I tell you first of all that this balance [of equivalence] resembles the [physical] balance of which you have given an account in sense [notion, essence, "fond"], not in form. For it is a spiritual [*rūḥānī*] balance [Chelhot: une balance pour la pensée] and so is not equivalent to a physical balance. And why should it be equivalent to it, when physical balances also differ? For the *qarasṭūn* [Chelhot: la balance romaine; cf. Dozy II, 335] is a balance and the assay [coin] balance [Chelhot: le trébuchet] another. [Fr 48] Nay, but the astrolabe is a balance [measure] for the amounts of the movements of the celestial body [orbit of celestial bodies], and the ruler a balance [measure] for the amounts of linear distances, and the plumbline a balance for ascertaining straightness [perpendicularity] and deflection [curvature]. These, though their forms differ, share in common the fact that by them

one knows excess from defect. Indeed, prosody is a balance [measure] for poetry by which one knows the metres of poetry so that dragging [or: faulty, i.e. verse] is distinguishable from the correct [straight]. And this is more spiritual than the material [three-dimensional] balances, but it is not devoid of relations to bodies, because it is the balance [measure] for sounds—and a sound is not separable from a body. The most spiritual of [Ar 48] balances [measures] is the balance of the Day of Judgment, since in it will be weighed actions and the beliefs of creatures and their cognitions—and knowledge and belief have no relation at all to bodies. Therefore this balance [measure] is purely spiritual.

15 Similarly the balance [measure] of the Qur'an for knowledge is spiritual.

But its definition in the visible world [*‘ālam al-shahāda*] is bound up with a wrapper [envelope, covering] which itself has a contact [adhesion] with [to] bodies, though it is not itself a body. For in this world communicating something to another is possible only orally, i.e. by sounds [voices]—and sound is corporeal—or in writing, viz. signs [symbols] which moreover are a writing on the surface of the paper and it is a body. This is the determination [status] of its wrapper in which it occurs. But in itself it is purely spiritual and has no connection at all with bodies. For by it is weighed the knowledge of God which is outside the world of sensation—[for God is] far removed from being involved with directions and districts, to say nothing of bodies themselves. Despite that it [the balance of the Qur'an] has an arm and two pans. The two pans are attached to the arm, and the arm is common to the two pans because of the attachment of each of them to it. This is the balance of equivalence. As for the balance of concomitance, it is more like the steelyard [Chelhot: la balance romaine], for it has one pan; but on the other side there corresponds to it a spherical weight [knob] by which the difference and evaluation become evident.

16 *He said:* A mighty booming, this! But where is the meaning? I hear the clapping of the mill wheel, but I see no flour! *I said to him:* Patience! “And hasten not with the Qur'an ere its revelation is accomplished unto thee; and say: O my Lord, increase me in knowledge” [20.113/114]. Know that haste is from the devil and deliberateness [slowness] is from God! [Ar 49]

17 Know that the Greater Balance is that which the Friend [Abraham] used with Nimrod. So from him [Fr 49] we have learned it, but by means of the Qur'an. Nimrod claimed divinity. And “God,” by agreement, is a designation of “the one who can do everything [is omnipotent].” So Abraham said: “God is my God, because He it is who makes to live and causes to die: He can do it and you cannot do it!” Nimrod replied: “I make to live and cause to die,” meaning that he makes the semen live by coitus and causes to die by killing. Then Abraham knew that it would be difficult for him to understand his error. So he turned to what would be clearer for Nimrod and said: “God brings the sun from the east: do you bring it from the west”—and he who misbelieved was astonished [2.260/258]. And God Most High praised Abraham, saying: “And that was Our proof which We brought to Abraham against his people” [6.83].

18 From this, then, I knew that the argument and apodeictic proof were in the utterance and balance of Abraham. So I considered how it weighs, as you considered the balance for gold and silver. And I saw in this argument two principles which were coupled, and from them was engendered a conclusion which was the knowledge [cognition], since the Qur'an is built on ellipsis and concinnity. The full form of the balance is that we say:

Whoever can make the sun rise is God [one principle].
But my God can make the sun rise [a second principle].
[Therefore] my God is God—and not you, Nimrod.

[Darii: A-I-I]

19 Consider now whether one who admits the two principles can then doubt about the conclusion. Or is it even conceivable that anyone can doubt about these two principles? Not at all! For there is no doubt about the statement “God is the one who can make the sun rise,” because, for them [Ta'limites] and for everyone, “God” is a designation for the omnipotent, and making the sun rise belongs to the totality of those things [which he can do]. This principle is known by convention and agreement. And our statement “The one who can make the sun rise is not you” is known by seeing [ocular vision]—[This is not exactly the premise used, but the text is that of the Ms.]. For the impotence of Nimrod [Ar 50] and of everyone except him who moves the sun is attested by sensation. And by God we mean the mover of the sun and the one who makes it rise. So we are compelled to conclude, from the knowledge of the first principle, known by agreed-upon convention, and of the second principle, known by seeing, that Nimrod is not God, but the “God” is God Most High.

20 So consult yourself: do you think this clearer than the empirical and sensible premise on which you built [based] the soundness of the balance for gold? *He said:* This knowledge follows from it of necessity. And I can doubt neither about the two principles, nor about the entailment of this conclusion from them. But this is useful to me only [Fr 50] in this instance and in the way Abraham—Peace be upon him!—used it, viz. to deny the divinity of Nimrod and to affirm the divinity of the one who alone can make the sun rise. So how can I weigh by it the other cognitions [*ma'ārif*: knowledges] which are a problem for me and in which I need to distinguish the true from the false?

21 *I said:* Whoever weighs gold in a balance can weigh in it silver and all the precious stones. For the balance makes known its quantity, not because it is gold, but because it is a quantity. Similarly, then, this proof [*al-burhān*] disclosed to us this knowledge, not because of the knowledge itself, but because it is a truth [*ḥaqīqa*] among truths and a meaning [*ma'nān*] among meanings. So let us ponder why this conclusion necessarily follows from it and take its spirit and divest it of this particular example so that we may profit by it whenever we wish.

22 This necessarily followed simply because “the judgment made regarding the attribute” [*sifa*] is of necessity a judgment regarding the subject [*mauṣūf*: “attributized” cf. Chelhot's note on varying terminological usage

of grammarians, *mutakallimūn*, jurists, and logicians]. The explanation of this is that the abridgment of this argument is:

My Lord is the one who makes the sun rise.
And the one who makes the sun rise is a god.
So it follows from it that my Lord is a god.

[This seems to violate the rule for the First Figure, viz. that the minor must be affirmative and the major universal; also it does not seem to be: M-P; S-M; S-P. ??? Should it rather be: The one who makes the sun rise is a god; and my Lord is the one who makes the sun rise; so it follows from it that my Lord is a god. ?] Thus "the one who makes the sun rise" is an attribute of the Lord. And we have judged regarding "the one who makes the sun rise"—which is an attribute—that he has divinity. So there follows from it the judgment regarding my Lord that He has divinity. And so in every case in which I acquire a knowledge of the attribute of a thing, and acquire [Ar 51] another knowledge of the certain existence of a judgment about that attribute, there will be engendered for me necessarily from it a third knowledge of the certain existence of that judgment with reference to the thing qualified [by the attribute].

23 *He said:* Grasping this is almost too subtle for my understanding. If, then, I doubt, what should I do so that the doubt may disappear?

I said: Take its measure from the balance-weight which is already known to you, as you did in the case of the balance for gold and silver. *He said:* How shall I take its measure? And where is the balance-weight known regarding this sort of thing? *I said:* The known balance-weight consists of the necessary [Chelhot here cites the *Mustazhiri*: "The meaning of a thing's being necessary and in no need of reflection is the sharing of the intelligent in perceiving it"] primary cognitions derived either from sensation, or from experience, or from the nature of the intellect.

24 Reflect, then, on the primary [cognitions]. Can you conceive that a judgment regarding an attribute exists without its being also applicable to the subject [qualified]? For example, if there passes in front of you an animal with a swollen belly, and it is a mule, and someone says: "This animal is pregnant," and you say to him: "Do you know that a mule is sterile and does not bear offspring?" and he says: "Yes, I know this by experience," and you say: "Do you know that this is a mule?" and he looks, then says: "Yes, I know that by sensation and sight," and you say: "Now, then, do you know that it is not [Fr 51] pregnant?"—he will be unable to doubt it after knowing the two principles, one of them empirical and the other a fact of sensation. On the contrary, the knowledge that it is not pregnant will be a necessary knowledge engendered by the two prior knowledges, just as your knowledge about the balance is derived from the empirical knowledge that the heavy sinks and the sensible knowledge that one of the two pans is not sinking with reference to the other.

25 *He said:* I have understood this clearly. But it is not evident to me that the cause of its entailment is that the judgment about the quality [attribute] is a judgment about the qualified [subject]. *I said:* Reflect! For your statement "This is a mule" is a qualifying [description] and the

qualification [quality; attribute] is the mule; [Ar 52] and your statement "Every mule is sterile" is a judgment about the mule which is a quality, of sterility. So there is entailed the judgment of sterility about the animal which is described as [is qualified by being] a mule.

26 Similarly, if it is evident to you, for example, that every animal is sensitive [*ḥassās*: possessed of sensation, sensing], and then it is evident to you about the worm that it is an animal, it is impossible for you to doubt that it is sensitive. Its method [*minhāj*], then, is that you say:

Every worm is an animal.

And every animal is sensitive.

Therefore, every worm is sensitive.

[Barbara: but better to invert the major and the minor ??] For your statement "Every worm is an animal" is an attribution to the worm of being an animal, and "animal" is its attribute [quality]. So when you judge of the animal that it is sensitive, or is a body, or is something else, the worm undoubtedly falls under it. This is necessary and cannot be doubted. To be sure the condition of this is that the attribute be equal to the subject [the qualified], or more general than it, so that the judgment about the qualified will necessarily include that by which it is qualified.

27 Similarly, whoever admits, in legal reasoning, that every wine is intoxicating, and that everything intoxicating is forbidden, cannot doubt that every wine is prohibited. For "intoxicating" is a qualification of the wine, and so the judgment of its being forbidden includes the wine, since the qualified undoubtedly is included in it. And so for all the areas [classes] of speculative matters.

28 *He said:* I have understood necessarily that effecting the union of the two principles in this way engenders a necessary conclusion, and that the proof of Abraham—Peace be upon him!—is a sound proof and his balance a true balance. I have also learned its definition [*ḥaddāhu*: Chelhot—principle de déduction] and its reality [real meaning, essence] and I have known its measure [norm, gauge] from the balance-weights known to me. But I wish to know an example of the use of this balance in the problematic areas of cognitions [or: the sciences]. For these examples are clear in themselves and for them one does not need a balance or a proof.

29 *I said:* Far from it! For some of these examples are not known in themselves, but are engendered from the coupling of the two principles. For only he knows that this animal is sterile who knows through sensation that it is a mule, and knows empirically that a mule does not bear offspring. Only a primary cognition [*al-awwālī*: Chelhot—le premier] is clear in itself. But what is engendered from two principles has a father and a mother: so it is [Fr 52] not clear in itself but by reason of something else. But that something else, i.e. the two principles, may be clear in some circumstances, viz. after experience and seeing. Similarly, the fact [Ar 53] that wine [*al-nabīdh*] is illicit is not clear in itself, but is known by two principles: one is that it is intoxicating—and this is known empirically; and the second is that everything intoxicating is illicit—and this is known through the report which has come down from the lawgiver.

30 This informs you how to weigh with this balance and how to use it.

Should you desire an example obscurer than this, why we have unlimited and endless such examples. Indeed, it is by this balance that we come to know most of the obscure cases. But be content with a single example of that.

31 Among the obscure cases is this: Man is either incipient by himself, or he has a cause and a maker. The same is true of the world. Now when we have recourse to this balance, we know that man has a maker, and that his maker is knowing. For we say:

Every possible has a cause.

But the world's, or man's, being characterized by the quantity peculiar to it [him] is something possible.

Therefore it necessarily follows from this that it [he] has a cause. [Darij]

No one who admits and recognizes the two principles can doubt about this conclusion. But if he doubts about the two principles, then let him deduce the knowledge of them from two other clear principles until he finally reaches the primary cognitions about which there can be no doubt. For the clear primary cognitions are the principles [for knowing] of the obscure and hidden cognitions and they are their seeds. But they are to be exploited by one who is expert in exploiting by cultivation and producing [deduction, inference] in bringing about coupling between them.

32 If you say: I doubt about both of the two principles. So why do you affirm that every possible has a cause? And why do you say that man's being characterized by a specific quantity is possible, and not necessary? I say: My affirmation "Every possible has a cause" is clear if you understand the meaning of *al-jā'iz* [the possible]. For I mean by "the possible" that which hesitates [wavers: is between] two equal divisions [or: parts]. Now when two things are equal, one of them is not specified [marked, singled out for] by existence and nonexistence of itself—because what is established for [affirmed of] a thing is of necessity established for its like: and this is a primary truth. As for my statement "Man's being characterized by this quantity, for example, is possible and not necessary," it is like my saying that the line written by the writer—and it has a specific quantity—is possible. For the line, qua line, has no single determined quantity, but conceivably may be longer and shorter. The cause of its being characterized by its quantity, as against what is longer or shorter, is undoubtedly the agent—since the relation of the quantities to the line's reception of them is equal [in all cases]: and this is necessary [a necessary truth]. Similarly, the relation of the quantities of man's form and extremities is equal: so its specification must undoubtedly be through an agent.

33 [Ar 54] Then I progress from this and say: Man's agent is knowing, because every well-ordered and well-done action is based on the knowledge of an agent. But the structure [physical constitution] of man is a well-ordered and well-made structure. So undoubtedly [Fr 53] its ordering is based on the knowledge of an agent. Here we have two principles: if we know them, we do not doubt about the conclusion. One of them is that the structure of man is well ordered: this is known through seeing the

harmony of man's members and the disposition of each for a special purpose [end], such as the hand for grasping [striking] and the leg for walking; and knowledge of anatomy [the dissection of organs] produces necessary knowledge of this. As for the need of what is well organized and ordered for knowledge, it is also clear. No intelligent man doubts that the well-ordered line of writing proceeds only from one who knows how to write, even though it be by means of the pen which does not have knowledge; and that a construction suitable for the purpose of sheltering, such as a house and a bath and a mill and so forth, proceeds only from one who knows how to build.

34 If it were possible to doubt about any of this, our procedure would be to progress to what is clearer until we come to the primary truths. To explain that is not our purpose. Rather, our purpose is to show that the coupling of primary truths, in the way the Friend [Abraham] effected it—God's blessings be upon him!—is a true balance which gives knowledge of the truth. No one declares this false, for it would be to declare false God's teaching of His Prophets and to deny what God praised—Glorious and Exalted He!—when He said: "And that was Our proof which We brought to Abraham against his people" [6.83]—and the authoritative teaching [*al-ta'lim*: i.e. brought by Muhammad] is undoubtedly true, [even] if independent reasoning be not true; and the denial of this involves the denial of both independent reasoning and authoritative teaching—and no one at all holds this.

[Ar 55]

[CHAPTER THREE]

Discussion of the Middle Balance [of Equivalence] [Ar 55–58; Fr 53–55]

[Second Figure of the Categorical Syllogism:
Anal. Pr. I, V, 26b, 34–28a, 9]

35 He said: I have now understood the Greater Balance and its definition and standard and ordinary use. So explain to me [now] the Middle Balance—what is it, whence came the teaching of it, who instituted it, and who used it?

36 I said: The Middle Balance is also the Friend's [Abraham's]—Peace be upon him!—in the place where God Most High said: "I love not the things which set" [6.76]. The full form of this scale is:

The moon is a thing which sets.

But God is not a thing which sets.

Therefore the moon is not a God.

But the Qur'ān is its foundation by way of concinnity and ellipsis. However, knowledge of the denial of divinity of the moon becomes necessary only by knowledge of these two principles, viz. that the moon is a thing which sets and that God is not a thing which sets. When the two principles are known, the knowledge of the denial of the divinity of the moon becomes necessary.

37 [Fr 54] *Then he said:* I do not doubt that the denial of the divinity of the moon is engendered from the two principles, if both are known. However, I know that the moon is a thing which sets—and this is known by sensation; but that God is not a thing which sets I know neither necessarily nor by sensation.

38 *I said:* My aim, in reporting this balance, is not to make you know that the moon is not [Ar 56] a God. Rather it is to apprise you that the balance is accurate [faithful] and that the knowledge stemming from it by this way of weighing is necessary. From it knowledge resulted in the case of the Friend—Peace be upon him!—only because it was known to him that God is not a thing which sets, though that knowledge was not primary for him, but rather was derived from two other principles which give rise to the knowledge that God is not a thing which changes [a changer]. And every changer is incipient: and setting is changing. So he based the weighing on what was known to him. Do you, then, take the balance and use it where there exists for you knowledge of the two principles.

39 *He said:* I now understand of necessity that this balance is accurate, and that this knowledge follows necessarily from the two principles once the latter are known. But I want you to explain to me the definition [logical principle; principe de déduction] of this balance and its real nature [*ḥaqīqatahu*: Chelhot—son véritable mode d'emploi], and then to explain to me its standard with reference to a weight [counterbalance] known to me, and then [to give me] an example of its use in the area of the obscure: for denying divinity of the moon is like what is clear to me.

40 *I said:* Its definition [logical principle] is that any two things, one of which is qualified by a quality which is denied of the other, are different [distinct one from the other]—i.e. one of them is denied of the other and is not qualified by it. And just as the logical principle of the Greater Balance is that the judgment applying to the more general is a judgment applying to the more particular and is undoubtedly included therein, so the logical principle of this balance is that that of which is denied what is affirmed of another is different [distinct] from that other. Now setting is denied of God and affirmed of the moon: so this necessitates difference [distinction] between God and the moon, viz. that the moon is not a God, nor is God a moon.

41 God Most High taught His Prophet Muḥammad—Peace be upon him!—to weigh by this balance in many places in the Qur'ān, to follow the example of his father the Friend—Peace be upon him! Be content with my calling attention to two places and seek the rest in the verses of the Qur'ān.

42 *One of the two* is the Most High's saying to His Prophet: "Say: Why then does He chastise you for your sins? No, you are mortals, of His creating" [5.21/18]. [Ar 57] That was because they claimed to be the sons of God. So God Most High taught him how to expose their error by means of the correct balance. [Fr 55] He said: "Why then does He chastise you for your sins?" The full form of this balance is:

Sons [of God] are not chastised [by God].

But you are chastised [by God].

Therefore you are not sons [of God]. [Festino]

So they are two principles. That sons are not chastised is known by experience; and that you are chastised is known by seeing. From these two necessarily follows the denial of sonship.

43 The second place is the Most High's saying: "Say: You of Jewry, if you assert that you are the friends of God, apart from other men, then desire death, if you speak truly. But they will never desire it" [62.6–7]. That was because they claimed friendship [with God]. Now it is a known fact that the friend desires to meet his friend; and it was also known that they did not desire death, which is the cause of the meeting. So it follows of necessity that they are not the friends of God. The full form of the balance is to say:

Every friend desires to meet his friend.

But the Jew does not desire to meet God.

Therefore [it follows necessarily from this that] he is not the friend of God. [Camestres]

[This syllogism seems to me to involve four terms. Would it perhaps be more correct to say: Every friend of God desires to meet his friend God. But the Jew does not long to meet God. Therefore the Jew is not a friend of God. ??]

And its logical principle is that desire is attributed to a friend but denied of the Jew: so the friend and the Jew are different and one of the two is denied of the other—so the friend [of God] is not a Jew, nor is the Jew a friend of God.

44 Its standard with reference to a known weight is not, I think, something you need, in view of its clarity. However, if you want a clarification, then consider this: how it is that, when you know that a stone is inanimate, and then know that man is not inanimate, you necessarily know that man is not a stone. It is because inertness is affirmed of the stone and denied of man: surely, then, man will be denied of stone, and stone will be denied of man—so man is not a stone, nor is a stone man. [In form: All stones are inanimate. No man is inanimate. Therefore, no man is a stone. Camestres.]

45 The place of usage of this balance in obscure cases is frequent. One of the two divisions of knowledge [*al-ma'rifa*: here seems to mean the knowledge (gnosis) of God] is the knowledge of declaring [God] holy [*ma'rifat al al-taqdis*, i.e. the negative way, or, *via remotionis*, as opposed to the affirmative way, or, *via affirmationis*], i.e. what the Lord [Exalted and Transcendent!] is too holy to be associated with. All knowledges of God are to be weighed in this balance. For the Friend [Abraham]—Peace be upon him!—used this balance in the case of proclaiming God's holiness and taught us how to weigh with it. For by this balance he knew [Ar 58] the denial of corporeity of God Most High. Similarly, God is not a localized substance, because God is not caused; but everything localized is caused

by reason of its being specified by the locus peculiar to it; hence it follows necessarily from this that God is not a [localized] substance. [Camestres] We also say: God is not an accident, because an accident is not living and knowing; but God is living and knowing; so He is not an accident. [Festino] Similarly the knowledge of the other areas of declaring God holy follow from the coupling of two principles in this fashion: one of the two is a negative principle, its content [purport] negation, and the second is an affirmative principle, its content [purport] affirmation. And from the two of them results a knowledge by [or: of ?] negation and declaring holy [Chelhot: la connaissance de ce qui est nié (de Dieu) et de sa sainteté].

[CHAPTER FOUR]

Discussion of the Lesser Balance [Ar 59; Fr 56]

[Third Figure of the Categorical Syllogism:

Anal. Pr. I, VI, 28a, 10–29a, 19]

46 *He said:* I have understood this clearly and of necessity. Now explain to me the Lesser Balance along with its definition [logical principle] and standard and its usage in obscure cases.

47 *I said:* The Lesser Balance we have learned from God Most High where He taught it to Muhammad—Peace be upon him!—in the Qur'an, viz. in the Most High's saying: "They measured not God with His true measure when they said: God has not sent down aught on any mortal. Say: Who sent down the Book that Moses brought as a light and a guidance to men?" [6.91].

48 The way to deal with this [balance] is that we say: Their declaring the denial of the sending down of revelation upon men is a false declaration because of [read: *lil-izdiwāj* ??] the productive coupling of two principles; or: a declaration devoid of the productive coupling of two principles; [Chelhot: leur négation de la révélation fait à l'homme est une proposition qui ne résulte pas de l'union de deux principes.] One of them is that Moses is a man, and the second is that Moses is one upon whom the Book was sent down: so there necessarily follows from this a particular proposition, viz. some man has had sent down upon him the Book [Scripture]—and by this is refuted the general claim that Scripture is not sent down upon any man at all. The first principle, viz. our statement "Moses is a man," is known by sensation. The second, viz. "Moses is one upon whom Scripture was sent down," is known by their own admission—since they used to conceal part of it and manifest part of it, as the Most High said: "You reveal them [parchments] and you hide [Ar 60] much" [6.91]. And He mentioned this only in the form [manner] of disputing by what is better [cf. 16.126/125: "and dispute with them in the better way"]. A particular feature of disputing is that it suffices regarding the subject [?] that the two principles be conceded by the adversary and accepted by him, even though doubt about it be possible for another; for the conclusion binds him if he admits it [the coupling? the principles?]. Most of the proofs [*adilla*] of the Qur'an proceed in this fashion. So if you

encounter in yourself the possibility of doubting about some of their principles and premises, know that their aim is disputing with one who does not doubt about it [the Qur'an ???]. But the aim in your regard is that you learn from it [the balance ?; or, the Qur'an ?] how to weigh in the other places. [In form: Moses is a man. Moses is one upon whom Scripture was sent down. Some man has had Scripture sent down upon him.—Darapti—if it is valid; Aristotle reminds us that all the syllogisms of this Figure are imperfect.]

49 The standard [gauge] of this balance is that one who says: "It is inconceivable that an animal walk without a leg" knows that when you say: "The snake is an animal, and the [Fr 57] snake walks [moves along] without a leg," there necessarily follows from this that some animal walks [moves along] without a leg, and [knows also] that the affirmation of him who says: "An animal walks [moves along] only by means of a leg" is a false and nullified affirmation.

50 The obscure cases in which it is used are many. For someone says: "Every lie is evil of itself." Then we say: "When one sees a friend [of God] who has hidden himself from a tyrant, and the tyrant asks him where he is, and he conceals it [or: keeps him hidden], is what he says a lie?" He says: "Yes." We say: "Is it, then, evil?" He says: "No, but the evil would be veracity leading to his perdition." So we say to him: "Look then to the balance. For we say: His utterance in keeping his place hidden is a lie—this is a known principle; but this utterance is not evil—and this is the second principle; so it follows necessarily from this that every lie is not evil [strictly: that some lie is not evil]. Reflect now: is doubt about this conclusion conceivable after the admission of the two principles? And is this clearer than the empirical and sensible premise which I cited in the knowledge of the balance of proclaiming [God] holy?"

51 The logical principle of this balance is that when any two qualities [attributes] concur [agree] respecting one and the same thing, then some [part, one] [Ar 61] of one of the two qualities must of necessity be qualified by the other, [cf. Anal. Pr. I, 6, 28a, 10] but it does not necessarily follow that all of it be qualified by it. As for the qualification of all of it, it does not follow in a necessary way; rather it may be so in some cases, and may not be in others—so one cannot rely on it. Don't you see that in man there concurs the quality of animal and of body—so it follows necessarily from this that some body is an animal [Darapti], but it does not follow from this that every body is an animal? And be not deceived by the possibility of describing every animal as a body! For if the qualification of every attribute by the other be not necessary in every case, the knowledge resulting by it is not necessary.

52 *Then my companion said:* I have now understood these three balances.

But why have you specified the first by the name "The Greater," and the second by the name "The Middle," and the third by "The Lesser"? *I said:* Because the Greater includes [is applicable to] many things, whereas the Lesser is its opposite and the Middle lies between them. The first balance is the broadest [widest] of the balances because by it knowledge can be derived by general affirmation and particular affirmation, and by

general negation and particular negation [Anal. Pr. I, 4, 26b, 29]—so it is indeed possible to weigh by this balance four kinds of knowledges. By the second balance one can weigh only negation [Anal. Pr. I, 5, 28a, 8]; but one can weigh by it both general and particular negation. By the third balance one can weigh [Fr 58] only the particular [negation], as I have mentioned. But there follows necessarily from it that a part of one of the two descriptions [attributes] is described by the other because of their concurring regarding one and the same thing. And that which includes only the particular partial judgment is undoubtedly “lesser” [Anal. Pr. I, 6, 29a, 16]. Certainly to weigh the universal [general] judgment thereby is of the balances of Satan. And the adherents of *Ta’lim* have indeed weighed thereby some of their knowledges; and Satan cast it into the aspiration of the Friend [Abraham]—Peace be upon him!—in his saying: “This is my Lord: this is greater!” [6.78]—and I shall recite to you his story hereafter.

[Ar 62]

[CHAPTER FIVE]

Discussion of the Balance of Concomitance [Ar 62–64; Fr 58–60]

[The Conjunctive, or Hypothetical, Conditional Syllogism.
Jadaane, 117 ff.]

53 *He said:* Explain to me the balance of concomitance [inseparability] now that I have understood the three balances of equivalence. *I said:* This balance is derived from the Most High’s utterance: “Why, were there gods in them [earth and heaven] other than God, they would surely go to ruin” [21.22], and from the Most High’s utterance: “If there had been other gods with Him, as they say, in that case assuredly they would have sought a way unto the Lord of the Throne” [17.44/42], and from His utterance: “If those had been gods, they would never have gone down to it [Gehenna]” [21.99].
54 The effectuation of the form of this balance is that you say: If the world has two gods, heaven and earth would have gone to ruin.—This is one principle.

But it is a known fact that they have not gone to ruin.—And this is another principle.

So there follows from these two a necessary conclusion, viz. the denial of the two gods.

And

If there had been with the Lord of the Throne other gods, they assuredly would have sought a way to the Lord of the Throne.

But it is a known fact that they did not seek that.

So there follows necessarily the denial of gods other than the Lord of the Throne.

55 The testing of the accuracy of this balance by a known weight is your saying: If the sun has risen, the stars are hidden [invisible, unseen]—and this is known empirically. Then you say: But it is a known fact that the sun has risen—and this is known [Ar 63] by sensation. So it follows necessarily that the stars are hidden. And you also say: If so-and-so has eaten,

he is sated—and this is known empirically. Then you say: But it is known that he has eaten—and this is known by sensation. So it follows necessarily from the empirical principle and the sensation principle that he is sated.

56 [Fr 59] The use of this balance in obscure cases is frequent, so much so that the jurispudent says: “If the sale of an absent thing is valid, it is obligatory by reason of an explicit obligation [obliging]; but it is known that it is not obligatory by reason of an explicit obliging; so it follows necessarily from this that it is not valid.” The first principle is known by legal induction which gives probability [conjecture], though it does not give sure knowledge; and the second is known by the concession and aid of the adversary.

57 We also say regarding speculative matters: “If the workmanship [*san’a*: fabrication, making] of the world and the structure [*tarkib*: composition] of man are well ordered, marvelous, and well done, then the maker of that is knowing—and this is [something] primary in the intellect; but it is known that it is marvelous and well ordered—and this is perceived by ocular vision; hence it follows from this that its Maker is knowing.” Then we ascend [progress] and say: “If its Maker is knowing, He is living. But it is known that He is knowing by the preceding balance; hence it follows that He is living.” Then we say: “If He is living and knowing, then He is subsisting in Himself and is not an accident; but it is known by the preceding two balances that He is living and knowing; hence it follows from this that He is subsisting in Himself.” Thus, then, we ascend from the quality of the composition of man to the attribute of his Maker, viz. knowledge; then we ascend from knowledge to life, then from it to the essence. This is the spiritual ascension, and these balances are the steps [stairs, ladders] of the ascension to heaven, or rather to the Creator of heaven, and these principles are the steps [rungs] of the stairs [ladders]. As for bodily ascension, no power can effect it, but that is peculiar to the power of prophethood [or: the prophetic mission].

58 The logical principle of this balance is that everything which is a necessary concomitant [*lāzim*] of a thing follows it in every circumstance: hence the denial of the conditioning [*al-lāzim*] of necessity entails the denial of the conditioned [*al-malzūm*], and the existence of the conditioned necessarily entails the existence of the conditioning. But the denial of the conditioned and the existence of the conditioning leads to no conclusion: rather they belong to the balances of Satan, and by this one of the devotees of *ta’lim* may weigh his knowledge. [On *lāzim* Chelhot writes: *ce qui est nécessaire à une chose et lui est indispensable d’une façon telle qu’il la conditionne; on malzūm: ce qui est accompagné et dépend, pour être ce qu’il est, d’un autre au point qu’il en est conditionné.*]

59 [Ar 64] Do you not see that the validity of the Prayer must have as a necessary concomitant [*yalzamuhā lā mahālata*] that the one praying be in a state of ritual purity? Certainly it is correct for you to say: “If Zayd’s Prayer is valid, he is in a state of ritual purity; but [Fr 60] it is known that he is not in a state of ritual purity”—and this is the denial of the conditioning; hence it follows from this that his Prayer is invalid—and this is the denial of the conditioned. And you say: “But it is known that his

Prayer is valid"—and this is the existence of the conditioned; hence it follows from this that he is in a state of ritual purity—and this is the existence of the conditioning. But if you say: "But it is known that he is in a state of ritual purity; hence it follows from this that his Prayer is valid," this is an error, because his Prayer may be invalid for another reason. This is the existence of the conditioning, and it does not denote the existence of the conditioned. Similarly if you say: "But it is known that his Prayer is invalid; hence he is not in a state of ritual purity," this is an error which is not necessary, because it is possible that the nonvalidity is due to the absence of a condition other than that of being in a state of ritual purity. This is the denial of the conditioning and it does not denote the denial of the conditioned. [Chelhot: Mais cela n'est pas nécessairement une erreur, parce qu'il est possible que la non validité découle de l'absence d'une condition autre que celle de la purification. Cela est la négation du conditionné et ne dénote pas celle du conditionnant.]

[CHAPTER SIX]

Discussion of the Balance of Opposition

[The Disjunctive (Conditional) Syllogism]

60 *Then he said:* Explain to me now the Balance of Opposition, and mention its place in the Qur'an and its gauge and the place of its use. *I said:* Its place in the Qur'an is the Most High's utterance, in instructing His Prophet—Peace be upon him!—"Say: 'Who provides for you out of the heavens and the earth?' Say: 'God.' Surely, either we or you are upon right guidance, or in manifest error" [34.23/24]. For He did not mention His utterance "or you" in the form of equalization or inducement of doubt, but rather it contains the concealment of another principle, viz. We are not in error in Our utterance "Surely God provides for you out of the heaven and the earth." For it is He who provides from the heaven by sending down water, and from the earth by causing plants to germinate; therefore you are in error by [your] denial of that. The full form of the balance is: "We or you are in manifest error"—and this is one principle. Then we say: "But it is known that We are not in error"—and this is a second principle. So there follows from their coupling a necessary conclusion, viz. that you are in error.

61 Its gauge among the known weights is that if one enters a house which has only two rooms, then we enter one of the two rooms and do not see him, we know with necessary knowledge that he is in the second room. This is because of the coupling of the two [Fr 61] principles, [Ar 66] one of them his saying that he is definitely in one of the two rooms, and the second that he is in no wise in this room: hence it follows from them that he is in the second room. Hence we know that he is in the second room, at one time because we see him in it, and at another because we see the other room empty of him. If we know it [*alimnāhu*] by our seeing him in it, this is ocular knowledge; but if we know it [*araḥnāhu*] by not

seeing him in the other room, this is balance-knowledge—and this balance-knowledge is peremptory like the ocular.

62 The logical principle of this balance is that when anything is limited to two divisions, the existence [*thubūt*: certainty] of one of them entails the denial of the other, and from the denial of one of them follows the existence of the other—but on condition that the division be restricted [i.e. a complete disjunction], not diffuse [unrestricted, incomplete disjunction]. Weighing with the unrestricted division is the weighing of Satan. With it certain devotees of *ta'lim* have weighed their discourse [*kalāmahum*] in many places which we have mentioned [cited] in *al-Qawāsim* [The Mortal] Blows] and in the *Jawāb miṣṣal al-khilāf* [The Answer to the Detailed Exposition (or: Crux, Decisive Point) of Disagreement; or: controversy; cf. Bouyges: *Essai*, p. 32, no. 23] and in my book *al-Mustaḥirī* and in other books [of mine].

63 The place of the use of this balance in obscure cases is limitless, and perhaps most speculative matters revolve around it. Thus when one denies an eternal being, *we say to him*: Beings are either all incipient, or some [one] of them are [is] eternal. This is restrictive [all-embracing] because it revolves between negation and affirmation. *If he says*: And why do you say that all of them are not incipient? *We say*: Because if all of them were incipient, their incipience would be through themselves without a cause, or among them would be an incipient without a cause; but it is false that the incipience of an incipient [takes place] at a particular time without a cause; hence it is false that all of them are incipient, and so it is certain that among them is an eternal being. And similar cases of the use of this balance are unlimited.

64 *Then he said:* I have truly understood the correctness of these five balances. However, I desire to know the significance of their names, and why you have designated the first by "The Balance of Equivalence," and the second by "Concomitance," and the third by "Opposition." [Ar 67] *I said:* I called the first the Balance of Equivalence because in it are two principles in equilibrium as though they were two parallel pans. And I called the second the Balance of Concomitance because one of the two principles contains two parts, one of them a conditioning and the other a conditioned, like your saying: "If there were gods in the two of them [other than God], they would surely go to ruin" [21.22]. For your saying "they would surely go to ruin" is a conditioning [*lāzim*], and the conditioned [*malzūm*] is your saying "If there were gods in the two of them"—and the conclusion necessarily follows from the denial of the conditioning. And I called the third [Fr 62] the Balance of Opposition because it comes down to the restricting of two parts between denial and affirmation [so that] there follows from the existence [*thubūt*: or, certainty] of one of them the denial of the other, and from the denial of one of them the existence of the other: thus between the two divisions there is contradiction and opposition.

65 *Then he said:* Did you invent these names, and are you the only one who has deduced them [from the Qur'an], or were you preceded in that? *I said:* As for these names, I invented them. And as for the balances,

I deduced them from the Qur'an, and I do not think that I was preceded by anyone in deducing them from the Qur'an. But I was preceded in the deduction of the principles of the balances. Among their deducers from the later [philosophers] they have names other than those which I have mentioned. And among some of the past nations, prior to the mission of Muḥammad and Jesus—God's blessings on them both!—they had other names which they had learned from the books [ṣuḥuf] of Abraham and Moses—Peace be upon them both!

66 But what induced me to change their dress for other names was my knowledge of your weak natural disposition [ability] and your soul's submissiveness to illusions [*awhām*: caprices, delusions, wild fancies]. For I have remarked that you are so deceived by appearances that, were you to be offered red honey [miel rosat, honey of roses] to drink in the glass of a cupper, you would be unable to accept it because of your natural aversion to the cupping-glass, and because your mind is too feeble to apprise you that honey is pure in whatever glass it may be. Nay more, you see a Turk wearing a patched garment and a loose outer garment slit in front and you judge that he is a sufi or a jurisprudent; but if a sufi were to put on a caftan [*qabā'*: outer garment with full sleeves] and a high cap, your fancy would judge him to be a Turk. [Ar 68] Thus your fancy always seeks to draw you to regard the cover [outside] of things and not their quintessence [kernel, marrow, pith]. Because of that you do not look at an utterance with reference to its being an utterance, but with reference to the elegance of its formulation or to your good opinion of him who says it. So if its expression is loathed by you or its utterer is in a shameful state in your belief, you reject the utterance, even though in itself it is true. And if someone were to say to you: "Say: There is no god other than God, Jesus is the Apostle of God," your nature would recoil from that and you would say: "This is what the Christians say: how, then, can I say it?" You would not have brains enough to know that this utterance is in itself true, and that the Christian is odious, not because of this utterance, nor because of the others, but rather because of two assertions only. One of the two is his statement: Muḥammad is not an apostle; and the second is his statement: God is the third of three. His other statements, apart from that, are true.

67 So when I saw you and your Ta'limite companions so feeble of mind and deceived by appearances only, I descended to your level and gave you the remedy to drink in a water jug and I led you thereby to the cure, and I was gentle with you as a physician is with his sick patient. But had I told you it was a remedy and presented it to you in a medicine glass your nature would have shrunk from accepting it—and even if you had accepted it you would have gulped it and scarcely have been able to swallow it. This, then, is my excuse for changing those names and inventing these: he will acknowledge this who knows it, and he who is ignorant of it will reject it.

[Fr 63] 68 Then he said: I have understood all that: but where is what you promised, viz. that the balance has two pans and a single beam from which the pans are suspended? I do not see, in these balances [Chelhot

has singular "règle"], the pan and the beam! And where are the balances you mentioned which resemble the steelyard [la balance romaine]?

69 I said: Did I not derive these cognitions from two principles? So each principle is a pan, and the part common to the two principles, which enters into the two of them, is a beam [middle term]. I shall give you an example of it from legal matters and perhaps you will more readily understand it. So I say: Our statement "Every intoxicant is illicit" is a pan. And our statement "Every *nabīdh* [a wine made by allowing dates or grapes to ferment in water] is an intoxicant." And the conclusion is that every *nabīdh* is illicit. Now we have here in the two principles only three things: "*nabīdh*" and "intoxicant" and "illicit." "*Nabīdh*" is present in only one of the two principles, and it is a pan. And "illicit" is present in the second principle only, which is the second pan. But "intoxicant" is mentioned in both of the principles, and is repeated in both, common to both: so it is the beam [middle term]. And the two pans are suspended from it, because [Ar 69] one of them is attached to it as the subject [*al-mawṣūf*] is attached to the attribute [*al-ṣifa*], viz. your saying "Every *nabīdh* is an intoxicant"—for *nabīdh* is qualified by "intoxicant"; and the other is attached to it as the attribute is attached to the subject, viz. your saying "But every intoxicant is illicit." Reflect on that so that you may know it. So the weakness [*fasād*: incorrectness, falseness] of this balance comes at one time from the pan, and at another from the beam, and at another from the suspension of the pan from the beam, as I shall call your attention to a simple example of that in [the case of] Satan's balance.

70 The balance which resembles the steelyard is the balance of concomitance, for one of its sides is much longer than the other. For you say: "If the sale of an absent thing were valid, it would be binding because of an explicit obliging"—and this is a long principle containing two parts: a conditioning and a conditioned. The second is your saying: "It is not binding because of an explicit obliging"—and this is another principle shorter than the former: thus it is like the short spherical weight corresponding to the pan of the steelyard.

71 In the balance of equivalence two pans are in equilibrium, and one of the two [sides] is not longer than the other, but each of them contains only an attribute and a subject. So understand this along with what I explained to you, viz. that the spiritual balance is not [exactly] like the material balance, but has a certain correspondence to it. Similarly it can be compared [with it] because of the conclusion's being engendered from the coupling of the two principles. For something of one of the two principles must enter into the other, viz. the "intoxicant" present in the two principles, so that the conclusion may be engendered. For if nothing of one of the two principles enters into the other, no conclusion at all is engendered from your saying "Every intoxicant is illicit" and "Everything despoiled is guaranteed." These two are also two principles, but no marriage and coupling takes place between them, since a part [Fr 64] of one of the two does not enter into the other. The conclusion is engendered only from the common part which enters from one of the two into the other—and it is this which we called the beam of the balance.

72 If there were opened for you the door of the comparison between the sensible and the intelligible, there would be opened for you a great door regarding the knowledge of the comparison between this material and visible world and the invisible and spiritual world. This domain contains great mysteries and he who does not come to know [Ar 70] it is deprived of learning from the lights of the Qur'ān and deriving instruction from it and will have attained only the husks of its lore. And just as in the Qur'ān there are the balances of all the sciences, so also in it are the keys of all the sciences—as I have indicated in [my] book *Jawāhir al-Qur'ān* [The Jewels of the Qur'ān]—so seek it there. The secret of the comparison between this visible world and the invisible [spiritual] world is revealed in dreaming by spiritual realities in imaginative examples—because the [true] vision [in dreams] is a part of prophethood, and in the world of prophethood the material and spiritual worlds are perfectly manifested.

73 An example of it from sleep is that a man saw in his dream as though he had in his hand a seal by which he sealed up the mouths of men and the vulvas of women. Then he related his vision to Ibn Sirin. The latter said: "You are a muezzin, and you give your call to prayer in Ramaḍān [the month of fasting] before daybreak." He replied: "That is so." Consider now why his state was made evident to him from the invisible world in this example, and seek the comparison [parallelism] between this example and the call to prayer before daybreak in Ramaḍān [which call was the signal for abstention from eating and from sexual relations]. Perhaps this muezzin sees himself on the Day of Resurrection, and in his hand a seal of fire, and it is said to him: "This is the seal wherewith you used to seal up the mouths of men and the vulvas of women." Then he says: "By God, I did not do this!" And it is said to him: "Yes, you used to do it, but you were ignorant of it—because this is the spirit [profound meaning] of your action." And the real meanings of things and their inner senses are manifest only in the world of spirits. But the spirit [inner meaning] is in an envelope of the image in the world of deception, the world of the imagination. But now "We have removed from thee thy covering, and so thy sight today is piercing" [50.21/22]. And in like manner will be known everyone who forsakes one of the prescriptions of the revealed Law [*al-shar'*]. And if you wish a confirmation of it, seek it in the chapter on the real meaning of death in [my] [Ar 71] book *Jawāhir al-Qur'ān* [The Jewels of the Qur'ān] that you may see the wonders therein and prolong [your] reflection on it and there may be opened for you an aperture to the spiritual world through which you may eavesdrop.

74 But I do not see its door being opened to you while you simply await knowledge of the truths [or: realities] from an absent teacher whom you do not see: and if you were to see him, you would find him much weaker than you in knowledge. So take it from him who has traveled, investigated and become acquainted: for according to the expert it has descended into such [?].

75 Then he said: This is now another question and insisting on it would occupy us both for a long time. For this absent teacher, though

I have not seen his appearance, I have heard the report of him—like the lion: though I have not seen it, I have seen its trace. And my mother, until she died, and our master, the lord of the stronghold of Alamut [i.e. Ḥasan al-Ṣabbāḥ—cf. EI(2) under Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ, III, 253], used to praise him lavishly, even to saying that he is aware of everything that takes place in the world—even at a distance of a thousand parasangs. Shall I then impute lying to my mother, that chaste and modest old lady, or to our master, that leader of good life and conscience? Certainly not! Rather they are two veracious witnesses. How [could they be otherwise] when there agree with them on that all of my comrades of the people of Dāmghān and Isfahan, who possess authority and in their control are the inhabitants of the fortresses? Do you think they are deceived, and they are intelligent people, or that they are deceitful, and they are pious folk? Far from it! Far from it! Forsake slander—for our master is undoubtedly aware of what is taking place between us, for "not so much as an atom's weight escapes him" on earth or in heaven [cf. 34.3]. So I am afraid of exposing myself to his hatred by simply listening and hearkening. So roll up the scroll of drivel and return to discussing the balance, and explain to me the balance of Satan.

[Ar 72]

[CHAPTER SEVEN]

Discussion of the Balances of Satan and How the Devotees of Ta'lim Weigh with Them

76 Then I said: Hear now, poor man, the explanation of the balance of your comrades, for you have greatly exaggerated. Know that Satan has, beside each balance I have mentioned of the balances of the Qur'ān, a balance attached to it, which he likens to the true balance so that one may weigh with it and commit an error. But Satan enters only through places where there are gaps. So one who closes the gaps and strengthens them is safe from Satan. Now the places of his gaps are ten in number, and I have collected them and explained them in [my] book *Mihakk al-nazar* [The touchstone of Speculation] and in [my] book *Mi'yār al-'ilm* [The Criterion (Norm, Standard, Gauge) of Knowledge], with other fine points concerning the conditions of the balance which I have not mentioned now because of the inability of your mind to grasp them. But if you want the knotty points of their summaries [their cruces in general] you will find them in the *Mihakk*; and if you want the explanation of their details you will find them in the *Mi'yār*.

77 But I now offer a single example, that which Satan cast into the mind [thought] of the Friend [Abraham]—Peace be upon him!—[Fr 66] when God Most High said: "We sent not ever any Messenger or Prophet before thee, but that Satan cast into his fancy, when he was fancying; but God annuls what Satan casts, [then God confirms His signs—surely God is All-knowing, All-wise]"—[22.51/52]. And that was only regarding his hastening to the sun and his saying: "This is my Lord; this is greater!" [6.78]. Because it is greater he wished to deceive him thereby.

78 [Ar 73] The way to weigh with it is that: God is the greatest—and this is a principle known by agreement; but the sun is the greatest of the stars—and this a second principle known by sensation; so it follows from this that the sun is a god—and this is the conclusion. Now this is a balance which Satan has attached to the Lesser Balance of the balances of equivalence [i.e. of the Third Figure]. For “the greatest” is an attribute found in God and found in the sun, and so this leads one to suppose that one of the two is qualified by the other. But this is the opposite of the Lesser Balance, since the logical principle of that balance is that two things be present in one thing, not that one thing be present in two things. For if two things are present in one thing, a part of one of them is qualified by the other, as we have mentioned previously [cf. Para. 51]. But when one thing is present in two things, one of the two things is not qualified by the other. See, then how Satan creates confusion by the opposite.

79 The gauge of this false balance is found in a weight which is patently false, viz. color. For this is present in both black and white, but it does not necessarily follow that white is qualified by black, or black by white. On the contrary, were one to say: “White is a color; and black is a color; so it follows from this that black is white,” it would be an absurd error. Similarly, then, with his saying: “God is greater [akbar]; and the sun is greater; so the sun is a god”—this is an error, since two contradictories may be qualified by a single attribute. Thus two things’ being qualified by a single attribute does not necessitate any union between the two: but a single thing’s being qualified by two things does necessitate a union between the two attributes. However, a dim-witted person does not perceive the difference between one thing’s having two attributes and two things’ having one attribute.

80 *Then he said:* The falsity of this balance has become clear to me; but when have the devotees of *ta’lim* weighed what they say [kalāmahum: or, their argument, or, discourse] by it? *I said:* They have weighed therewith many of their utterances—but I am too stingy with my time to waste it in recounting those instances. However, I shall show you one specimen. You have certainly heard their affirmation: “The true is with oneness and the false is with multiplicity; but the doctrine of individual reasoning [al-ra’y] leads to multiplicity, and that of *ta’lim* leads to oneness; so it follows necessarily that the true is in the doctrine of *ta’lim*.” [Ar 74] *He said:* Yes, I have heard this often and believed it, and I know it to be a decisive apodeictic proof about which I do not doubt. [Fr 67] *I said:* This is the balance of Satan. See how your comrades have relapsed [or: fallen headlong]: they have used the analogy [syllogism] and balance of Satan to nullify [falsify, refute] the balance of the Friend [Abraham]—Peace be upon him!—and the other balances.

81 *He said:* And how can it be brought out [elucidated] against him [Satan]? *I said:* Satan creates confusion regarding the balances only by multiplying speech about it and so muddling it that one cannot know just where it is deceptive. This is a frequent argument the substance of which is that the true is qualified by oneness—and this is a principle;

and that the doctrine of *ta’lim* is qualified by oneness—and this is another principle; so he affirms: “So it follows necessarily from this that the doctrine of *ta’lim* is qualified by ‘the true.’” For oneness is in one thing, and two things are qualified by it: so one of the two things must be qualified by the other. It is like one’s saying: “Color is a single attribute by which both white and black are qualified—so it follows necessarily from this that white is qualified by black.” It is also like Satan’s saying: “The greatest is a single attribute by which God and the sun are qualified—so it follows necessarily from this that the sun is qualified by God.” There is no difference between these balances—I mean the presence of color in black and white, and the presence of “the greatest” in God and the sun, and the presence of oneness in *ta’lim* and the true. Reflect, then, that you may understand that.

82 *Then he said:* I have definitely understood this, but I am not content with a single example. So cite for me another example of the balance of my comrades that my heart may have increased assurance of their being deceived by the balances of Satan. *I said:* Haven’t you heard their saying: “The true is known either by pure individual reasoning or by pure *ta’lim*, and if one of the two is false, the other is certain; but it is false that it is known by pure intellectual individual reasoning—because of the mutual opposition of [men’s] minds and doctrines; so it is certain that it is known by *ta’lim*”? *Then he said:* Yes, by God, I have often heard that, and it is the key of their propaganda [mission, claim] and their leading argument. *I said:* This is a weighing with the balance of Satan which he has attached to the balance of opposition. For the denial of one [Ar 75] of the two divisions results in the certainty of the other—but on condition that the division be restricted and not incomplete. But Satan confounds the incomplete with the restricted. And this [division] is incomplete, because it does not turn between negation and affirmation; on the contrary, there can be between them a third division, viz. that the true be perceived by reason and *ta’lim* together.

83 Its gauge from among the weights known to be false is the utterance of one saying: “Colors are not perceived by the eye, but rather by the light of the sun.” We say: “Why?” He replies: “They must be perceived either by the eye or by the light of the sun; but it is false [Fr 68] that they are perceived by the eye—because it does not perceive them at night; so it is certain that they are perceived by the light of the sun.” Then one should say to him: “Poor man! There is a third division between them, viz. that they are perceived by the eye, but in the light of the sun.”

84 *Then he said:* I would like you to add to the explanation of the error occurring in the first example, viz. the discussion of the true and oneness, for understanding the place of the error in it is a very subtle matter. *I said:* The way the error occurs is what I have mentioned, viz. the confusion [ambiguity] of one thing’s being qualified by two things with two things’ being qualified by one thing. But the origin of the error is the illusion induced by the reversal; for he who knows that every true [thing] is one may suppose that every one [single thing] is true. But this conversion is not necessary: rather what necessarily follows from it is a

particular conversion, viz. that part of the one is true. For your saying "Every man is an animal" does not entail a universal contrary, viz. that every animal is a man: rather what is entailed is that some animal is a man.

85 By his ruses Satan does not overwhelm the feeble more effectively and more often than by inducing supposition of the universal conversion, even to the extent of sensibles. Thus one who sees a long parti-colored rope is frightened by it because of its resemblance to a snake. The reason for this is his knowledge that every snake is long and parti-colored; so his fancy rushes ahead to its universal conversion and he judges that everything long and parti-colored is a snake. What is entailed by it is a particular conversion, viz. that some long and parti-colored thing is a snake—not that all of it is such. In the case of conversion and contradiction there are many fine points which you will understand only from [my] book *Mihakk al-naẓar* [The Touchstone of Reasoning] and [my] *Mi'yār al-'ilm* [The Norm of Knowledge].

86 [Ar 76] *Then he said:* In every example you cite I find another reassurance of the knowledge of Satan's balances. So do not niggardly withhold from me another example of the balances of Satan. *I said:* The faultiness of the balance sometimes comes from the bad composition [mounting, structure] because the suspension of the two pans from the beam is not a straight suspension, and sometimes it comes from the pan itself and the weakness of the material from which it is taken. For it is taken either from iron or from copper or from an animal's skin. But if it were taken from snow or cotton, one could not weigh it. A sword may sometimes be defective in shape, by being in the form of a rod [staff] neither flat nor sharp, and sometimes it will be because of the weakness of its substance and matter from which it is made, by reason of its being made from wood or clay.

87 Similarly the falsity of the balance of Satan may be due to the wrongness of [Fr 69] its structure, as I have mentioned in the example of the greatness of the sun and the oneness of the true: for their form is defective and converted, as in the case of one who would put the pans above the beam and would want to weigh with it. And sometimes it is due to the weakness of the material, as in the case of Iblis's saying: "I am better than he; Thou createdst me of fire, and him Thou createdst of clay," in reply to the Most High's utterance: "What prevented thee to bow thyself before that I created with My own hands?" [38.77/76 and 75/74]. And in this Iblis introduced two balances, because he justified the prevention of bowing by his being better, and then confirmed the "betterness" by the fact that he was created from fire. And when one explicates all the parts of his argument, one finds that his balance is correct in structure, but false in matter. Its full form is that he say: "I am better than he; but the better does not bow; therefore I do not bow." Each of the two principles of this syllogism [analogy: *qiyās*] is to be denied, because it is not known: but hidden knowledge is weighed by clear cognitions. And what he cited is unclear and inadmissible: because we say: "We do not admit that you are better—and this invalidates the first

principle; and the other: we do not admit that the better is not obliged to bow—because obligation and merit are by command, not by betterness." But Iblis forsook proving the second principle, viz. that obligation is by command, not by betterness, and busied himself with establishing the proof that "I am better because I was created from fire"—which is the claim of betterness because of relationship [affinity, origin].

88 [Ar 77] The full form of his proof and his balance is that he say: "The related to [originated from] the better is better; but I am related to the better; therefore I am better." And each of these two pans is also unsound [false]. For we do not admit that "The related to the better is better"—rather, betterness is because of essential qualities, not because of relationship [origin]. Thus it is possible that iron is better than glass: then there is made from glass by excellent craftsmanship something which is better than what is made from iron. Similarly we say: Abraham—Peace be upon him!—was better than the children of Noah—Peace be upon him! Yet Abraham was created from Azar, an unbeliever, [cf. 6.74] and the children of Noah [were born of] a Prophet. As for his second principle, viz. that "I have been created from something better—because fire is better than clay"—this also is inadmissible. On the contrary, clay is from earth and water, and one may say that by their mingling comes about the subsistence of animals and plants, and by reason of them generation and growth come about; but fire spoils and destroys everything. So his assertion that fire is better is false.

89 [Fr 70] So these balances are correct in their forms, but unsound in matter, like the sword made of wood—or rather like the mirage of a woody place [a place full of roots] which the thirsty man reckons to be water until, when he comes to it, he does not find it to be anything—but he finds God there and He gives him his full reckoning. And just so the devotees of *ta'lim* will see their states on the Day of the Resurrection when the real natures of their balances will be revealed to them. This also is one of the ingresses of Satan—so it must be blocked up.

90 The correct matter which is used in reasoning is any principle decisively known either by sensation, or by experience, or by perfect, uninterrupted transmission, or by primary rational truths, or by inference [deduction] from this ensemble. But what is used in debate and disputation [dialectically] is that which the adversary admits and concedes, even though it be not known in itself: for it [matter ? his argument?] becomes an argument against him. That is the way certain proofs of the Qur'an proceed—and you must not deny the proofs of the Qur'an, when [but, though] it is possible for you to doubt about their principles, because they were adduced against groups who admitted them.

[Ar 78]

[CHAPTER EIGHT]

*Discussion of One's Being Dispensed
by Muhammad [Peace Be Upon Him!]
and by the Ulema of the Community from Any Other Imam;
and the Explanation of the Knowledge*

of the Veracity of Muḥammad [Peace Be Upon Him!]
by a Way Clearer and Surer
Than the Consideration of Apologetic Miracles,
viz. the Way of the Knowers

91 *Then he said:* You have perfected the cure and removed the veil and have skillfully corroborated. But you have built a castle and destroyed a metropolis. For up to now I have been expecting to learn from you how to weigh with the balance and to get along, thanks to you and the Qur'ān, without the infallible Imam. But now that you have mentioned these subtleties about the ingresses of error, I despair of getting along by myself with that. For I would not feel safe from erring were I to busy myself with weighing—and I indeed know now why [Fr 71] men disagree in doctrines. It is because they have not understood these subtleties as you have [Chelhot has “as I have”; the Arabic is ambiguous]: so some have erred, and some have been right. The readiest way for me, therefore, is to rely on the Imam so that I may be saved from these subtleties.

92 *Then I said:* Poor man! Your knowledge of the true Imam is not “necessary.” For it is either servile conformism to parents, or it is weighed by one of these balances. For every cognition which is not primary necessarily comes to be in its possessor through the existence of these balances in his soul, even though he is not conscious of it. [Ar 79] For you know the correctness of the balance of assessment [*al-taqdir*: valuation] because of the order [systematic arrangement] in your mind of the two principles, the empirical and the sensible. It is also so for other persons without their being conscious of it. One who knows that this animal, for example, does not bear offspring because it is a mule, knows [this] by the arrangement of two principles, even though he is not conscious of the source of his knowledge. Similarly every cognition in the world which comes to be in a man is like that. So if you have accepted the belief of infallibility in the true Imam, or even in Muḥammad—Peace be upon him!—from parents and comrades by servile conformism, you are no different from the Jews [Ch adds: and the Christians] and the Magians [Zoroastrians]: for so they have done. But if you have accepted [it] from weighing with one of these balances, you may have erred in one of the fine points, and so you ought not to trust therein.

93 *Then he said:* You're right! But where, then, is the way? For you have blocked up both the ways of the *ta'lim* and of weighing. *I said:* Far from it! Consult the Qur'ān. For it has taught you the way, where [the Most High] said: “The godfearing, when a visitation of Satan troubles them, remember, and then see clearly” [7.200/201]. He did not say: “They travel, and then see clearly.” You know that cognitions are numerous. So, if you were to begin travelling to the Imam, infallible according to your claim, in every difficulty, your trouble would be long and your knowledge little [you would toil much for little knowledge]. But your way is to learn from me how to weigh and to fulfill its conditions. Then, if something causes difficulty for you, you submit it to the balance and

“remember” its conditions with serene mind and full diligence, and “then you will see clearly.”

94 It is like when you reckon what you owe the greengrocer or what he owes you, or when you settle a question touching religious obligations, and you doubt about being right or wrong. It would take you too long to travel to the Imam. But you learn arithmetic well [lege: *'ilm al-hisāb*] and remember it and keep repeating it [the reckoning] until you are absolutely certain that you have not erred in one of its [Fr 72] fine points. This is known by him who is familiar with arithmetic. Likewise one who knows weighing as I do is finally brought by remembrance and reflection and repeating time after time to the necessary certainty [sure knowledge] that he has not erred. But if you do not follow this way you will never be successful, and you will doubt because of “perhaps” and “it may be.” And perhaps you have erred in your servile conformism to your Imam, nay even to the Prophet in whom you have believed—for knowledge of the veracity of the Prophet is not “necessary.”

95 [Ar 80] *Then he said:* You have helped me to [understand] that the *ta'lim* [of Muḥammad] is true, for the [true] Imam is the Prophet—Peace be upon him! And you [or: I ?] have acknowledged that no one can receive knowledge from the Prophet—Peace be upon him!—without knowing the balance, and that he can know the balance perfectly only through you. So it is as though you claim the Imamate for yourself in particular: what, then, is your apodeictic proof and your apologetic miracle? For my Imam either works an apologetic miracle or argues from successive explicit designation from his forefathers down to himself: where, then, is your explicit designation or your apologetic miracle?

96 *Then I said:* Your saying “You claim the Imamate for yourself in particular” is not true. For I allow that another may share this knowledge with me, and it can be known from him just as it can be learned from me: so I do not make *ta'lim* my personal monopoly [lit. mortmain, endowment]. As for your saying: “You claim the Imamate for yourself,” know that by “the Imam” may be meant he who learns from God by means of Gabriel—and this I do not claim for myself; and there may be meant by it he who learns from God, and not from Gabriel [lege: *walā min Jibrīl*], by means of the Apostle. In this sense 'Alī—God be pleased with him!—is called an Imam—because he learned from the Apostle, not from Gabriel. In this sense I [also] claim the Imamate for myself.

97 As for my apodeictic proof of this, it is clearer than the explicit designation and than what you believe to be an apologetic miracle. For if three persons were to claim in your presence that they know the Qur'ān by heart, and you were to say: “What is your apodeictic proof?” and one of them were to say: “My proof is that al-Kisā'i, the master of reciters, has authorized me, because he authorized the master of my master, and my master authorized me—so it is as though al-Kisā'i authorized me”; and the second were to say: “My proof is that I will change this stick into a snake”—and he changes the stick into a snake; and the third were to say: “My proof is that I shall recite the whole of the

Qur'ān before you without a copy of the Qur'ān"—and he recites: I would like to know which of these proofs is clearest, and to which of them your mind assents most strongly!

98 *Then he said:* To him who recites the Qur'ān. For this is the ultimate proof, since no doubt about it troubles my mind. But his master's authorizing him, and al-Kisā'i's authorizing his master, may conceivably be subject to errors, especially when the chain [of authorizers] is long [Ch reads *al-asfār* (voyages) in place of *al-isnād*]. As for his changing the stick into a snake, he may have effected that by a trick of deception; and if it be not [Ar 81] a deception, it is at most a remarkable feat. But whence does it follow that one who can effect a remarkable feat must be a *hāfiz* [memorizer] of the Qur'ān?

99 [Fr 73] *Then I said:* And my proof also is that just as I have known these balances I made them known and understood and removed from your mind doubt about their [?] correctness. So you are bound to believe in my Imamate. It is like when you learn arithmetic and its science from a master. For when he teaches you arithmetic, you come to have a knowledge of arithmetic and another necessary knowledge that your teacher is an arithmetician versed in arithmetic. Thus you have known from his instruction [*ta'lim*] his knowledge and also the correctness of his claim "I am an arithmetician."

100 Similarly I have believed in the veracity of Muḥammad—Peace be upon him!—and in the veracity of Moses—Peace be upon him!—not by reason of the splitting of the moon and the changing of the staff into a serpent: for that way is open to ambiguity, and one may not rely on it; nay, one who believes in the changing of the staff into a serpent may disbelieve in the lowing of the calf with the disbelief of the Samaritan [or: may disbelieve because of the lowing of the calf; cf. 20.85–97/87–97 and 7.146/148] because there is a very great deal of mutual contradiction regarding the sensible, visible world. But I learned the balances from the Qur'ān, then weighed with them all cognitions about God, and even the circumstances of the afterlife and the punishment of the iniquitous and the reward of the obedient, as I have mentioned in my book *Jawāhir al-Qur'ān* [The Jewels of the Qur'ān]. And I found them all conformed to what is in the Qur'ān and what is in the Traditions. Thus I knew for sure that Muḥammad—Peace be upon him!—was veracious and that the Qur'ān is true. I did as 'Alī—God be pleased with him!—said, when he declared: "Do not know [measure] the truth by men: know the truth and you will know its possessors [adherents]."

101 So my knowledge of the veracity of the Prophet was necessary, like your knowledge when you see a stranger [Ch un arabe; he read *'arabiyyan* in place of *ghariban*] disputing about a legal problem and excelling therein and presenting sound and clear legal argument: for you do not doubt about his being a *faqih* [jurisprudent], and your conviction resulting thereby is clearer than the conviction resulting regarding his *fiqh* [jurisprudence] were he to change a thousand sticks into [Ar 82] snakes, for the latter is open to the possibility of magic and deception and a charm and so forth until it is uncovered—and thereby results a

feeble faith which is the faith of the masses and of the *mutakallimūn*. But the faith of those who possess vision and who see from [through] the niche [lamp] of Lordship [divinity], that is the way it comes to be [lit.: comes to be in the former manner, i.e. by seeing].

102 *Then he said:* I also desire to know the Prophet as you have known him. But you have mentioned that that can be known only by the weighing of all the cognitions of God with this balance, and it is not clear to me that all the religious cognitions can be weighed with these balances. So by what can I know that? *I said:* Far from it! I do not claim to weigh with them the religious cognitions only, but I also weigh with them arithmetical and geometrical and medical and legal and *kalām* cognitions, and every science [cognition] which is true and not positive [conventional, based on authority]—for by these balances I [Fr 74] distinguish its true from its false. How could it not be so, when it is the Correct Balance and the balance which is the companion of the Book and the Qur'ān in God's utterance: "Indeed, We sent Our Messengers with the clear signs, and We sent down with them the Book and the Balance" [57.25]. But your knowledge of my power to do this will not come through an explicit text, nor because of the changing of a stick into a snake, but by your seeking to discover that through experience and examination [trial, testing]. The veracity of one who claims horsemanship is not disclosed until he mounts a horse and races in the race course. So ask me what you will about the religious cognitions, that I may lift for you the veil from what is true in it one by one, and I may weigh it with this balance in a way that will result for you in a necessary knowledge that the weighing is correct and that the knowledge derived from it is certain. But so long as you do not try it, you will not know.

103 *Then he said:* Can you apprise all people of all the truths and cognitions pertaining to God and thus put an end to the disagreements which have occurred among them? *I said:* Far from it! I cannot do it. And it is as though your infallible Imam up to now has put an end to the disagreement among men and has removed difficulties from [their] minds!! Nay more, when did the Prophets—Peace be upon them!—[Ar 83] put an end to disagreement, and when were they able to do it? On the contrary, the disagreement of men is a necessary and everlasting law: "But they continue in their differences excepting those on whom thy Lord has mercy. To that end He created them" [11.120/118–19]. Shall I, then, claim to contradict the judgment of God which He made in eternity? Or can your Imam claim that? And if he did claim it, why has he saved it until now, and the world is overflowing with disagreements? I would like to know whether the Chief of the Community, 'Alī bin Abī Tālib, was the cause of putting an end to disagreement among men, or [rather] was the cause of the setting up of disagreements which will never, never come to an end!

*Discussion of the Way to Deliver Men
from the Darkesses of Disagreements*

104 *Then he said:* How deliver men from these disagreements? *I said:*

If they would listen to me, I would put an end to the disagreement among them by means of the Book of God Most High. But there is no artifice to assure their listening. They did not all listen to the Prophets and to your Imam—how, then, will they listen to me, and how will they agree on listening when it has been eternally judged of them that they “continue in their difference.... [Fr 75] To that end He created them” [11.120/118–19]? That the existence of disagreement among them is necessary you [will] know from [my] book *Jawāb mīṣal* [Ar. text has *mufaṣṣal*] *al-khīlāf* [The Answer to the Crux—or: Detailed Exposition—of Disagreement], which contains the twelve chapters [or: with its twelve chapters].

105 *Then he said:* And were they to listen, how would you do [it]? *I said:*

I would deal with them by a single verse from the Book of God Most High, where He said: “Indeed... We sent down with them the Book and the Balance so that men might practice justice, And We sent down iron, etc.” [57.25]. Now He sent down these three simply because people are three classes, and each one—the Book, the iron, and the Balance—is a treatment of a people [group, class]. *He said:* Who, then, are they, and how are they to be treated? [Ar 85] *I said:* *common people*, who are the safe [sound] people, the dull-witted, the people of the Garden; and *the elite* [privileged], who are the men of insight and special intelligence; and there is formed between them a group who are *the contentious wranglers*—“they follow the ambiguous part [of the Book], desiring dissension” (3.5/7).

106 As for *the elite*, I would treat them by teaching them the just

balances and how to weigh with them, and thus the disagreement among them would be removed in short order. These are people in whom three qualities [traits] are united. One of them is a penetrating natural intelligence [disposition] and a powerful acumen [perspicacity]—and this is an innate, instinctive, natural gift which cannot be acquired. And the second is the freedom of their interior from servile conformism and fanatical enthusiasm for an inherited, orally transmitted doctrine. For the servile conformist does not listen, and the stupid man, even though he listens, does not understand. And the third is that he believes of me that I am a man of discernment in [the use of] the balance—for there is no guidance except after belief, and one who does not believe that you know arithmetic will not be able to learn from you.

107 The second class, *the simple*, are all the common people. These are men who do not have [enough] intelligence to understand realities [truths]. And if they possess natural intelligence, they do not have a motive for seeking [knowledge], but rather their preoccupation is with arts and crafts [or: crafts and trades]. They also have no reason for disputation

and for making a show of the skillfulness of those who pretend to be clever in delving into knowledge, in view of their inability to understand it. So these do not disagree, but they choose among the disagreeing Imams. Therefore I would summon these to God by preaching, as I would summon the men of insight by wisdom [*al-hikma*: philosophy], and I would summon the wranglers by disputation. Now God has indeed united these three in a single verse, as I have previously recited it to you—and it is the Most High's saying: “Call thou to the way of thy Lord with wisdom and good admonition (and dispute with them in the better way)” [16.126/125].

108 So I would say to them what the Apostle of God—God bless him!—said to the desert Arab who came to him and said “Teach me some of the curiosities [marvels] of knowledge [*al-ilm*].” The Apostle of God—God bless him!—knew that he was not fit for that, so he said: “What have you done regarding the beginning [*ra*’s: head, main part] of knowledge, viz. faith and piety and preparation for the afterlife? Go and master the beginning of knowledge, [Ar 85] then come back to me that I may teach you some of its curiosities.” So I would say to the common man: Delving into the differences [*al-ikhtilāfāt*: i.e. differences in legal and dogmatic views] is not a part of your nest [i.e. not your concern, or business]—so leave [it]. Beware of delving into it or listening to it lest you perish! For if you have spent your life in the craft of goldsmithing, you are not a weaver; but you have spent your life in other than knowledge—how, then, can you be fit to delve into it? Beware, beware of losing your soul! For every grave sin committed by a common man is less important than his delving into knowledge with the result that he misbelieves without knowing how! *If he says:* I must have a religion to believe in and act by so that I may thereby attain pardon: but men are different in religions—so which religion do you command me to adopt? *I say:* Religion has roots [*uṣūl*: primary dogmas, fundamentals] and branches [*furū*’: secondary beliefs, applications]; and disagreement occurs in both of them.

109 As for the roots, you are bound to believe only what is in the Qur’ān. For God Most High has not hidden from His servants His attributes and names. So you must believe that there is no god but God, and that God is living, knowing, powerful, hearing, seeing, mighty, magnificent, all-holy, “there is nothing like Him” [42.9/11], and so on of all that has come down in the Qur’ān and that the Community is agreed upon: that is sufficient for soundness [authenticity] of religion. And if anything is unclear to you, say: “We believe in God: everything is from our Lord” [cf. 3.5/7], and believe everything which has come down concerning the affirmation and the negation of the attributes with a view to magnifying and sanctifying [God], along with the denial of resemblance and the belief that “there is nothing like Him” [42.9/11]. And after this pay no attention to discussions [*al-qīl wa’l-qāl*: lit. the “it was said” and the “he said”], for that is not enjoined on you, nor is it commensurate with your ability.

110 If he begins to feign cleverness and says: “I have indeed known from the Qur’ān that God is knowing: but I do not know whether He

is knowing by His essence or by a knowledge superadded to Him—and the Ash'arites and the Mu'tazilites have disagreed about this," then by this he goes beyond the level of the simple folk, because [Fr 77] the heart [mind] of the simple man does not advert to such as this unless it be moved by the demon of dialectic [or: the devil of dispute]. For God Most High makes a people perish only by bringing discussion [dialectic] to them: thus it has come down in the Tradition. And if he is attached to the wranglers, why I shall mention their treatment. This is what I preach [exhort to] regarding the roots, viz. to refer to the Book of God. [Ch Fr adds: For God sent down the Book and the Balance and the Iron—and these (i.e. the wranglers) are men of reference to the Book].

111 [Ar 87] As for the branches, I say: Don't busy your heart [mind] with the places of disagreement so long as you have not finished with all that is agreed upon. For the Community is agreed that the provisions [viaticum] for the afterlife are piety and godfearing, and that illicit gain and forbidden wealth and slander and calumny and adultery and theft and treachery and other prohibited things are illicit, and all religious duties are obligatory. So if you finish with all of these, I shall teach you how disagreement [occurs]. And if he demands [it] of me before finishing with all of that, then he is a wrangler and not a common man: for when would a common man finish with these [to occupy himself] with the places of disagreement? Have you seen your comrades finish with all that, and then the problem of disagreement seized them by the throat? Far from it! Their feeble minds, in this error, are simply like the mind of a sick man who has an illness which has brought him to death's door, and there is for it a treatment agreed upon among the physicians, but he says to the physicians: "Physicians have disagreed about a certain remedy, whether it is hot or cold, and I may have need of it some day: so I shall not have myself treated until I find someone who will teach me how to put an end to the disagreement about it."

112 Certainly, if you were to see a just man who had accomplished all the prescriptions of piety, and he were to say: "Here now I have certain problems: for I do not know if I should perform the ablution because of touching and contact and vomiting and nosebleed, and make my intention to fast at night in Ramaḍān or in the daytime [cf. Faris: *The Mysteries of Fasting*, pp. 9 and 14], and so in other cases," I would say to him: "If you are seeking safety in the way to the afterlife, then follow the path of precaution and adopt what all agree on. So perform the ablution because of anything which is a subject of disagreement, for he who does not enjoin it deems it commendable [preferable, desirable], and make your intention at night in Ramaḍān, for he who does not enjoin it deems it preferable."

113 If he says: Look here: it is hard for me to observe precaution when I am confronted by problems revolving between negation and affirmation, for I do not know whether to stand long in prayer in the morning or not, and whether to raise my voice or not in the *tasmiya* [in saying *bismillāh*], [Fr 78] I say to him: Now form an independent judgment for yourself and consider which of the Imams is better in your view and who

is more generally right in your mind. It is as though you were sick and there were several physicians in the town. For you would consult one of the physicians by reason of your personal judgment, not by reason of your caprice and natural temper; and the like of that personal effort will suffice you [in religious matters]. So whoever you think it more likely that he is the best, follow him. Then if he is right in God's view in what he says, you and he will have two recompenses; but if he errs in God's view, then he and you will have one recompense.

114 And thus said [the Prophet]—Peace be upon him!—when he declared: "Whoso exercises personal judgment and is right will have two recompenses, and whoso exercises personal judgment [Ar 88] and is wrong will have one recompense." And [God] returned the matter to the practitioners of personal effort, and He said: "those of them whose task it is to investigate would have known the matter" [4.85/83]. And [Muḥammad] approved of personal effort by its practitioners when he said to Mu'ādh: "By what will you judge?" He replied: "By the Book of God." Then Muḥammad said: "If you do not find [a basis in the Qur'ān]?" He replied: "By the *sunna* [custom] of the Apostle of God." Then Muḥammad said: "If you do not find [a basis in the *sunna*]?" He replied: "I shall exercise my individual reasoning." He said that before Muḥammad ordered him to do it and allowed him to do it. Then Muḥammad—Peace be upon him!—said: "Praise be to God Who has graciously guided the apostle of the Apostle of God to what the Apostle of God approves." From that it is understood that it was approved by the Apostle of God—God bless him!—on the part of Mu'ādh and of others. Just as the desert Arab said: "I have perished and caused to perish, because I had intercourse with my wife during the daytime in Ramaḍān!" Then [Muḥammad] said: "Free a slave." And it was understood that a Turk or an Indian, in a similar case, is bound to manumit.

115 This is because men are not enjoined to do what is [de facto] right in God's view—for that is something impossible, and there is no imposition of what cannot be done—but rather they are enjoined to do what they deem to be right. It is just as they are not enjoined to pray in a pure [clean] garment, but rather in a garment they deem to be pure. And if they were to remember its impurity, they would not be bound to perform the Prayer again [i.e. to start over], because the Apostle of God—God bless him and grant him peace—took off his sandal during the Prayer when Gabriel informed him that there was some dirt on it, but he did not repeat or recommence the Prayer. Similarly the traveller is not enjoined to pray towards the *qibla* [the direction of Mecca], but rather towards the direction he deems to be the *qibla* by inference from mountains, stars and the sun. If he is right, he will have two recompenses, otherwise he will have one recompense. And men are not enjoined to give the *zakāt* [alms tax] to a poor man, but rather to one they deem to be poor—because the latter's interior cannot be known. And judges are not enjoined, in cases of bloodshed and rape, to seek witnesses whose veracity they know, but rather those they deem to be veracious. Now if it is allowable to shed blood [i.e. to inflict capital punishment] by a sup-

position which may be wrong, viz. the supposition of the veracity of the witnesses, then why is it not allowable by the supposition of the testimony of the proofs in the exercise of personal judgment? [Ch: pourquoi la prière ne serait-elle permise en se basant sur le témoignage des preuves produites par la réflexion personnelle?—But “la prière” is not in the Arabic text.]

116 [Fr 79] I would like to know what your comrades would have to say about this! Would they say that, if one has a difficulty about the *qibla*, he should put off [Ar 89] the Prayer until he travels to the Imam and asks about it? Or would he [sic] enjoin upon him being right, which is beyond his power? Or would he say: “Exercise personal judgment and follow it” [to] one who cannot exercise personal judgment, because he does not know the proofs of the *qibla* and how to infer from the stars and the mountains and the winds?

117 *He said*: I do not doubt that he would permit him to use personal effort, and then would not impute sin to him if he expended his best effort, even though he were to err and to pray in a direction other than that of Mecca. *I said*: If one who makes the direction of Mecca behind him is excused and recompensed, then it is not farfetched that one who errs in other exercises of personal effort will be excused. So those who exercise personal effort, and those who imitate them, are all excused: some of them attaining what is right in God's view, and some sharing with the attainers in one of the two recompenses. Hence their positions are near one another and they have no reason to stubbornly oppose one another and to form fanatical cliques with one another, especially since the one right is not specified, and every one of them thinks that he is right. It is as though two travellers were to exercise personal effort about the *qibla* and were to differ in personal judgment: each would have the right to pray in the direction he thought most probable, and to refrain from disapproving of and objecting to his companion, because he is enjoined only to follow what his own supposition enjoins. As for facing the precise direction of Mecca [as it is] in God's view, he cannot do it. Similarly, in the Yaman, Mu'adh used to exercise personal effort, not in the belief that error on his part was inconceivable, but in the belief that, if he erred, he would be excused.

118 This is because, in the positive legal matters about which it is conceivable that religious laws [*al-sharā'ī*] may disagree, one thing is close to [approximates] its contrary provided it be an object of supposition in the secret [mystery] of preparation [for the afterlife]. [The passage is not clear; Ch: une chose se rapproche de son contraire après avoir été objet de conjecture dans le secret de la recherche; or: read *al-istiḥṣār* in place of *al-istiḍād* and drop “for the afterlife,” giving: in the secret (mystery) of acting reasonably, or, pondering, reflecting.] But there is no disagreement about that on which the religious laws do not differ. And the real nature of this disagreement you will know from *The Secrets of the Followers of the Sunna* [*Asrār atbā' al-sunna*], which I have mentioned in the tenth principle [or: basis, fundament] of external actions [*al-a'māl al-zāhira*] of [my] book *Jawāhir al-Qur'ān* [The Jewels of the

Qur'ān]. [Chelhot reads *Asrār atbā' as-sunna*; It seems to me that it should be: *Asrār ittibā' al-sunna*—The Secrets, or Mysteries, of Following the Sunna.]

119 As for the third class, viz. the wranglers, I would summon them to the truth with gentleness. And I mean [Ar 90] by “gentleness” that I would not be fanatical against them or scold them, but I would be friendly [kind, courteous] and I would “dispute with them in the better way” [cf. 16.126/125]: God Most High enjoined that on His Apostle.

120 The meaning of “disputing in the better way” is that I accept the principles admitted by the wrangler, and I deduce from them [*minhā* seems better than Ch's *minhu*] the truth by means of the verified [or: sure] balance in the way I presented in [my] book *al-Iqtisād* [*fī'l-ītiqād*: The Golden Mean in Belief] and to that degree [extent]. If that did not convince him because of his desiring, in virtue of his intelligence, an additional clarification, I would raise [promote] him to learning the balances. And if it did not convince him, because of his stupidity and his perseverance [Fr 80] in his fanaticism and his obstinacy and his pigheadedness, I would treat him with the Iron. For God Most High made the Iron and the Balance the associates of the Book to make known thereby that all creatures accomplish justice only by these three: thus the Book is for the simple; and the Balance is for the elite [privileged]; and the Iron, which has a terrible strength [power, harm; cf. 57.25 “wherein is great might”; Blachère: qui contient danger terrible] is for those who follow what is unclear in the Book “desiring dissension and desiring its interpretation” [3.5/7] and who do not know that that is no business of theirs and that its interpretation is known only by God and by those firmly rooted in knowledge [cf. 3.5/7], not by the wranglers.

121 And I mean by “the wranglers” a group who possess a certain cleverness by which they have risen above the simple folk: but their cleverness is imperfect—or in their original constitution it was perfect, but in their interior is a malice and a stubbornness and a fanaticism and a servile conformism. That prevents them from perceiving the truth, and these qualities are “veils upon their hearts lest they understand” [57.25 and 3.5/7], and only their imperfect cleverness destroys [damns] them. For a faulty constitution and an imperfect cleverness are much worse than simple-mindedness. Moreover, in the Tradition [it is said] that the majority of the denizens of the Garden are the simple-minded, and that the uppermost heaven is for the possessors of minds [the intelligent], and excluded from the totality of the two groups are those who wrangle about the signs of God: and they, they are “the followers of the Fire”—and God curbs by the power of the Sultan [Ch: par le bras séculier] what He does not curb by the Qur'ān.

122 These must be prevented from wrangling by the sword and the lance, as 'Umar did when a man asked him about two ambiguous verses in the Qur'ān, and he struck him with a whip; and as Mālik replied when he was asked about God's seating Himself firmly on the Throne: “The being firmly seated is a truth, and faith in it is obligatory, and the manner is unknown, and asking about it is an innovation [*bid'a*: or, heresy]”—[Ar 91]

and by that he cut off the way to [shut the door] wrangling; and thus did all [our] pious forbears. But there is great harm for the servants of God in the opening of the door to wrangling.

123 This, then, is my procedure in summoning men to the truth and bringing them forth from the darknesses of error to the light of the truth. And that is that I summon the elite by wisdom, viz. by teaching the balance, with the result that when one of them learns the just balance he is master, not of one knowledge, but of many knowledges. For one who has with him a balance knows thereby the quantities of substances without limit. Similarly, one who has with him the Correct Balance has with him the wisdom which, whoso is given it is not given one good, but is given much good without limit [cf. 2.272/269]. And were it not for the Qur'ān's containing the balances it would not be correct to call the Qur'ān "Light" [cf. 4.174; 5.18/15], for light is not seen in itself but by it other things are seen, and this is the quality of the balance; nor would God's utterance be true: "not a thing, [Fr 81] fresh or withered, but it is in a Book Manifest" [6.59]: for all knowledges are not present in the Qur'ān explicitly, but they are present in it potentially because of what it contains of the just balances by means of which the doors of limitless wisdom are opened. By this, then, I summon the elite [privileged].

124 And I summon the simple man by "good admonition" [16.126/125] by referring him to the Book and restricting myself to the attributes of God Most High contained therein. And I summon the disputatious by the disputation which is better [cf. 16.126/125]. And if he refuses it I give up talking to him and stop his harm by the power of the Sultan and the Iron revealed with the Balance [cf. 57.25].

125 I would like to know now, my companion, how your Imam treats these three classes! Does he teach the simple folk and enjoin on them what they do not understand—and [thus] contradict the Apostle of God—God bless him!? Or does he expel wrangling from the brain of the wranglers by means of argument—when that could not be done by the Apostle of God—God bless him!—despite God's frequent debate with the unbelievers in the Qur'ān? How great, then, is the power of your Imam, since he has become more powerful than God Most High and His Apostle! Or does he summon men of insight to follow him blindly, when they would not accept the utterance of the Apostle by servile conformism, nor would they be convinced by the changing of a stick into a snake? Rather would they say: "This is an unusual feat—but whence does it follow from it [Ar 92] that its doer [or: claimant] is veracious? Among the marvels of magic and talismans [charms] in the world is that by which men's minds are baffled, and only he can distinguish an apologetic miracle from magic and talisman who is familiar with all of them and with their multiple kinds, so that he can know that the apologetic miracle is outside them, just as [the] magicians [of Pharaoh] recognized the feat of Moses because they were among the masters of magic. And who is capable of that?" Rather they would wish to know his veracity from his words [what

he says], as the learner of arithmetic knows, from arithmetic itself, the veracity of his teacher in his saying: "I am an arithmetician."

126 This, then, is the sure and certain knowledge by which the possessors of intelligence and men of insight are convinced, and they are in no wise convinced by anything else. Such men, when they know by the like of this method the veracity of the Apostle and the truth of the Qur'ān, and understand the balances of the Qur'ān, as I have mentioned to you, and take from it the keys of all the sciences along with the balances, as I have mentioned in [my] book *Jawāhir al-Qur'ān* [The Jewels of the Qur'ān]—whence have they any need of your Imam and what could they learn from him? I would like to know what you have learned, up to now, from your infallible Imam, and what religious problems he has solved, and what obscure things he has unveiled! God Most High said: "This is God's creation: now show me what those have created that are apart from Him!" [31.10/11].

127 But this is my method regarding the balances of knowledges—so show me what you have learned of the obscurities of the sciences from your Imam up to now. [Ch adds: and what your friends learn from him. O how I would like to know what you have learned from your infallible Imam! Show me what you have seen....Not in the Arabic.] [Fr 82] The aim of an invitation to a meal is not the bare invitation without eating and taking food from the table! Now I see you invite people to the Imam, then I see that one who accepts the invitation is just as ignorant after it as he was before: the Imam has not loosened any knot for him, but rather has made knotty for him what was untied! And his acceptance of the invitation has brought him no knowledge, but rather he has thereby become more overbearing and more ignorant.

128 Then he said: I have had a long association with my comrades: but I have learned from them nothing except that they say: You must follow the doctrine of *ta'lim*; and beware of personal opinion and analogy [reasoning], for that is contradictory and varying. I said: One of the curious things is that they invite to *ta'lim* but do not busy themselves with *ta'lim*. So say to them: You have invited me to *ta'lim*, and I have accepted the invitation—so teach me some of what you possess! [Ar 93] Then he said: I do not see them adding anything to this.

129 I said: I advocate *ta'lim* and the Imam, and I hold the futility [falsity] of personal opinion and analogy. But I add for you to this—if you could give up servile conformism—the teaching [*ta'lim*] of the marvels of the sciences and the mysteries of the Qur'ān, and I deduce from it [Qur'ān] for you the keys of all the sciences, as I have deduced from it the balances of all the sciences, according to my indication of the manner of the branching of the sciences from it in [my] book *Jawāhir al-Qur'ān*. But I do not summon to any Imam save Muhammad—Peace be upon him!—and to any Book save the Qur'ān, and from it I deduce all the secrets of the sciences. My apodeictic proof of that is what I say and my clear explanation. If you doubt, you ought to try me and test me: do you, or do you not, consider me better suited for your learning from me than your comrades?

[Ar 94]

[CHAPTER TEN]

*Discussion of the Formation
of Analogy and Personal Opinion
and the Showing of Their Futility*

130 Then he said: Breaking with [my] comrades and learning from you might prevent me from what I related to you, viz. the injunction of my mother when she was dying. But I would like you to disclose to me how personal opinion [*al-ra'y*] and analogy [*al-qiya's*: also, syllogism, reasoning] are wrong [weak]. For I think that you deem me weak in mind and you deceive me [make things complicated for me]: thus you call *qiya's* and *ra'y* a "balance," and you recite to me, in accordance with that, a Qur'ān [i.e. a verse of the Qur'ān]—but I think it [the "balance"] is precisely the *qiya's* claimed by your associates. I said: Far from it! And now I shall explain to you what I and they mean by *al-ra'y* and *al-qiya's*.

131 As for *al-ra'y*, an example of it is the assertion of the Mu'tazilites: "God Most High must arrange [contrive, observe] what is best [Fr 83] for His servants." When they are requested to substantiate this, they refer to nothing save that it is an opinion [*ra'y*] of which their minds have approved on the basis of comparing the Creator with creatures, and likening His wisdom to their wisdom. The things approved by men's minds are the *ra'y* which I do not regard as reliable: for it produces conclusions the falseness of which is testified to by the balances of the Qur'ān—like this doctrine [of the Mu'tazilites]. For when I weigh it with the balance of concomitance, I say: "If the best were obligatory on God, He would do it. But it is known that He has not done it; so [that] proves that it is not obligatory—for He does not omit the obligatory." Then if someone says: "We concede that if it were obligatory, He would do it; but we do not concede that He has not done it," I say: "Had He done the 'best,' He would have created them in the Garden and left them there—for this would have been better for them; but it is known that He has not done that; so [that] proves that He has not done the best." This also is a conclusion from the balance of concomitance.

132 Now the adversary [is caught] between [two alternatives]—that he say: He left them in the Garden—and his lie is seen; or that he say: "The best for them was to be expelled into the world, the abode of tribulations, [Ar 95] and [that] He expose them to sins, then say to Adam on the day the hidden things will be disclosed: Bring forth, O Adam, the delegation [to be sent to] the Fire. Then he will say: How many? And God will say: From every thousand nine hundred and ninety-nine."—as has come down in the sound Tradition [cf. Bukhārī: VI, 122—*sūrat al-hajj*]. And [the adversary] claims that this is better than creating them in the Garden and leaving them there, because their felicity in that case would not be because of their effort and merit, and thus the [divine] favor would have been great [oppressive ?] for them—and [divine] favor is weighty [burdensome]. But if they hear and obey, what they receive is a recompense and a wage containing no favor. I make it easy for your hearing

and my tongue [by refraining] from the report of such discourse and consider them [hearing and tongue] above it [too good for it], to say nothing of replying to it!

133 Consider it, then: do you see the abominations of the conclusion of *ra'y*—[how great] they are?! Now you know that God Most High leaves children, when they die, in a place in the Garden below the places of obedient adults. So if they [children] said: "O our God! You are not stingy with what is better for us: but it is better for us that You make us attain their rank," then according to the Mu'tazilites God would say: "How could I make you attain their rank, when they have grown up, toiled and obeyed, and you have died as children?" Then they would say: "It is You Who caused us to die and deprived us of a long sojourn in this life and of noble ranks in the afterlife. So the best for us was that You not cause us to die—why, then, did You cause us to die?" Then God Most High would say: "I knew that if you grew up you would misbelieve and merit the Fire forever: so I knew that the best for you was to die in childhood."

134 Thereupon the grown up unbelievers would call out from the lowest levels of the Fire, shouting [for help] and saying: "Did You not know that we, if we grew up, would misbelieve? So why did You not cause us to die in childhood? For we would be content with a hundredth part of the ranks of the children!" At this [Fr 96] point there remains for the Mu'tazilite no reply to give on God's part, and so the argument would be in favor of the unbelievers against God—Exalted He above what the liars assert! To be sure the doing of the "best" involves a mystery derived from the knowledge of the secret of God Most High concerning *al-qadar* [the divine decree]. But the Mu'tazilite does not reflect [on it] starting from that principle, for he does not get to know that secret by the resources of Kalām. Consequently he gropes after it at random and opinions are for him confused. This, then, is the example of the false *ra'y* [opinion].

135 The example of the [false] *qiya's* [analogy] is affirming a judgment regarding something by analogy [comparison] with something else, like the assertion of the Corporealizers: [Ar 96] "God is—Exalted God above what they say!—a body." We say: "Why?" They reply: "Because He is an agent-maker: so He is a body, by analogy with all the other artisans and agents." Now this is the false *qiya's*, because we say: "Why do you say that an agent is a body because he is an agent?" That cannot be shown when it is weighed in the balance of the Qur'ān. For its balance is the Greater Balance of the balances of equivalence. The form of weighing it is to say: Every agent is a body; but the Creator is an agent; therefore He is a body. Then we say: We concede that the Creator is an agent; but we do not concede the first principle, viz. that every agent is a body. So whence do you know that? At this there remains only resort to induction and extended division [Ch: la division indéterminée]: but neither contains a proof.

136 Induction is that one says: "I have scrutinized the agents, viz. weaver, cupper, shoemaker, tailor, carpenter, etc., etc., and I have

found them to be bodies: so I know that every agent is a body." One should say to him: "Have you scrutinized all the agents, or has an agent eluded you?" "I have scrutinized a part of them"—there does not follow from that the judgment regarding all. And if he says: "I have scrutinized all"—we do not concede [this] to him, for all the agents are not known to him. How? Has he scrutinized in that ensemble the Creator of the heavens and the earth? If he has not, then he has not scrutinized all, but a part; and if he has, did he find Him to be a body? If he says: "Yes," then one should say to him: "If you have found that in the premise of your analogy [syllogism], how have you made it a principle by which you infer it?" Thus you have made your very feeling the proof of what you felt—and this is an error [i.e. a *petitio principii*].

137 On the contrary, he in his scrutiny is simply like one who scrutinizes the horse and the camel and the elephant and the insects and the birds, and sees that they walk with a foot [leg], but he has not seen the snake and the worm. So he judges that every animal walks with a foot. And he is like one who scrutinizes the animals and sees that in [Fr 85] masticating they all move the lower jaw: so he judges that every animal in masticating moves the lower jaw; but he has not seen the crocodile, and that it moves the upper jaw. This is because it is possible for a thousand individuals of a single genus to be the object of a judgment and for one to be different from the thousand. So this does not give serene certainty: this, then, is [the example] of the false *qiyās*.

138 [Ar 97] As for his resorting to extended [indeterminate, inadequate] division, it is like his saying: "I have examined the qualities of agents, and they are bodies. So they are bodies either because they are agents, or because they are existent, or because they are such and such." Then he refutes all the divisions, and so it follows from this that they are bodies because they are agents. This is the indeterminate [inadequate] division by which Satan weighs his gauges [criteria, analogies]—and we have already mentioned its falsity [Paras. 76 ff.].

139 Then he said: I think that, when the other divisions are false, there is imposed [specified] the division which you want. And I consider this a powerful [apodeictic] proof on which most of the *mutakallimūn* rely regarding their beliefs. For they say regarding the question of the ocular vision [of God]: "The Creator is visible because the world is visible [read: because He is existent ?]." It is false that it [He ?] be said to be visible because it [?] has whiteness, because black is visible; and it is false that it [?] be said to be visible because it is a substance, because an accident is visible; and it is false that it is visible because it is an accident, because a substance is visible. And when the divisions are refuted, it remains that it [He] is visible because it is existent. So I want you to unveil to me the weakness [wrongness] of this balance in a clear way about which I cannot doubt. [This Para. is a bit unclear; cf. my *Theology of Al-Ash'arī*, Ch. IV, and my edition of Bāqillānī's *Tamhīd*, 266 ff.]

140 I said: I shall present you with a true example deduced from a false analogy [*qiyās*], and I shall remove the veil from it. So I say:

Our assertion "The world is incipient" is true. But the assertion of one saying: "It is incipient because it is formed [*muṣawwar*: shaped, molded; Ch: has a form], by analogy with the house and other formed structures" is false and does not give [sure] knowledge of the incipience of the world. For you say: its true balance is that it be said: "Everything formed is incipient; but the world is formed; so it follows that it is incipient"—and the second principle is conceded, but your assertion "Everything formed is incipient" is not conceded by the adversary.

141 At this he turns to induction and says: "I have examined every formed thing and found it to be incipient, like the house and the glass and shirt and such and such." Now you already know the falsity of that [i.e. this induction, from the preceding]. He may come back to examining and say: "A house is an incipient: so let us examine its qualities. It is a body, subsisting in itself, existent, and formed. These, then, are four qualities. Now it is certainly false to explain [its being an incipient] by its being a body, and its subsisting in itself, and its being existent: so it is certain that it is explained by its being formed—i.e. the fourth [of its qualities]." [Ar 98] One should say to him: "This is false in many ways, of which I shall mention four."

142 The first is that, if one concedes to you the falsity of the [first] three [qualities], the cause you [Fr 86] seek is not established, for perhaps the judgment [that it is incipient] is explained by a limited cause which is neither general nor transitive [i.e. outside itself], like, for example, its being a house. For if it is certain that something other than a house is an inceptum [*muhdath*], then perhaps the judgment is explained by a notion limited to what is patently an incipient—since it is possible to suppose a particular quality which unites [includes] all and is not transitive [outside itself, i.e. the house. Chelhot remarks "Ce passage est obscure."].

143 The second is that it would be correct only if the examination were effected so exhaustively that it would be inconceivable that any part [division] could escape. But if it is not restrictive, and does not revolve between negation and affirmation, it is conceivable that a part might escape—and restrictive exhaustive examination is not an easy matter. Generally the *mutakallimūn* and the jurists are not concerned about it, but rather they say: "If it contains another part, then show it." And the other may say: "I am not obliged to show it." And they continue in this for a long time. And maybe the "inductor" [Ch: *logicien*] may seek to prove the analogy and say: "If there were another part, we would know it and you would know it: so the nonexistence of our knowledge proves the negation of another part; for the nonexistence of our seeing an elephant in our gathering proves the negation of the elephant." This poor man does not know that we have never known an elephant to be present which we did not see, and then have seen him. But how many ideas have we seen to be present, which we were all incapable of perceiving, then we became aware of them after a while! So perhaps there is in it a part which eludes us, which we are not aware of now—and perhaps we will not be aware of it all our life long.

144 *The third* is that, even if we concede the restriction [i.e. the complete disjunction], the certainty of the fourth does not follow necessarily from the elimination of three. On the contrary, the combinations resulting from four are more than ten and twenty. For it is possible that the cause be the units of these four, or two of them, or three of them; then the two and the three are not specified [determined]. On the contrary, it is conceivable that the cause is its being existent and a body, or existent and subsisting in itself, or existent and house, or house and formed, or house and subsisting in itself, or house and body, or body and formed, or body and subsisting in itself, or body and existent, or subsisting in itself and existent. These are some of the combinations of two—and so for the combinations starting with three. And know that most frequently judgments depend on many causes united. This is a thing is not seen because the seer has an eye—for it is not seen at night; nor because the thing seen is illuminated by the sun—because the blind man does not see; nor because of the two together—because the air [wind] is not seen; but because of the totality of that plus [Ar 99] the fact that the thing seen is colored and other factors. This is the judgment of what exists: but the judgment of the ocular vision [of God] in the afterlife is another judgment.

145 [Fr 87] *The fourth* is that, if the exhaustive examination is conceded, and combination is left aside, then the refutation of three in no wise entails the attachment of the judgment to the fourth, but rather [entails] the judgment's being restricted to the fourth. But the fourth may be divisible into two parts, and the judgment may be linked to one of them. Surely you see that, were one first to divide and to say: "either its being a body, or existent, or subsisting in itself, or formed, for example in a square form, or formed in a circular form," then were to refute the [first] three divisions, the judgment would absolutely not be attached to the form, but perhaps would be relevant to [have to do with] a particular form.

146 So because of [their] neglect of such fine points as these, the *mutakallimūn* have acted rashly and their contention has multiplied, since they held fast to *ra'y* and *qiyās*. But that does not give serene certainty: rather it is suitable for legal, conjectural analogies [syllogisms] and for inclining men's hearts in the direction of the right and the true. For their thought [reasoning] does not extend to remote probabilities, but rather their belief is decided by weak reasons.

147 Surely you see that when somebody says to a simple man who has a headache: "Use rose water, for I, when I have a headache, use it and benefit from it," it is as though he were to say: "This is a headache, so rose water will lessen it by analogy with my headache." So the heart of the sick man inclines to it and he uses it, and he does not say to him: "First establish that rose water is good for every headache, be it due to cold or heat or the vapors of the stomach—for the kinds of headaches are many; and prove that my headache is like yours, and my humors [temperament, complexion] like yours, and my age and occupation and my circumstances like yours—for the treatment will vary because of all that."

148 For the endeavor to verify these things is not the concern of the simple folk, because they do not note these things. Nor is it the concern of the *mutakallimūn*, for they—even though they note them, contrary to the common folk—do not find the ways which produce serene certainty. These are simply the practice of men who have learned them from Aḥmad—God's blessings be upon him!—viz. men who have been guided by the light of God to the brightness of the Qur'ān, and have learned from it the just scale and the Correct Balance, and have become guardians for God of justice [or: energetic executors of justice for God; Ch: ils sont devenus des gens équitables envers Dieu].

149 [Ar 100] *Then he said*: Now indeed the signs and tidings of the truth appear to me from your discourse. Will you, then, permit me to follow you on the condition that you teach me some of what you know to be proper conduct? *I said*: By no means! You will never be able to be patient with me. And how could you be patient with what you have not understood through report [*khabar*: tradition]?

150 *He said*: God willing you will find me patient and I shall not refuse you obedience in anything. [Fr 88] *I said*: Do you think I have forgotten your learning a lesson from the counsel of your companions and your mother and your throbbing conformism [i.e. your deeply ingrained, or, felt conformism]? So you are not suited to be my companion, nor am I suited to be yours. So leave me! This is a parting between us. For I am too busy with correcting myself to correct you, and too preoccupied with instruction [received] from the Qur'ān to instruct you. So you will not see me hereafter, because I shall not see you. I do not have leisure for more than this to reform the evil and to beat the air [take futile steps; lit. to hammer cold iron]. I have indeed "advised you sincerely; but you do not love sincere advisers" [7.77/79].

And praise to God, the Lord of the Worlds!

And God's blessing upon the Prince of Messengers!

[Ar 101]

[Conclusion]

151 So there you have, my brothers, my story with my companion, which I have recited to you with its obvious and its hidden shortcomings [with all its defects], that you might be full of amazement at it and find profit in the contents of these conversations by the comprehension of things more sublime than the correction of the doctrine of the devotees of *ta'lim*. That, then, was not my aim, but: "You I mean [intend], but listen O neighbor!" [A proverb still popular: something is said to A, but is really meant for the listening B.]

152 And I request the sincere to accept my excuse, when they read these conversations, for what I have preferred, regarding the doctrine, of synthesis and analogies, and what I have introduced, regarding names, of change and substitution, and what I have contrived, regarding meanings [notions], of imagery and comparison. For under each one I had a sound aim and a secret plain to men of insight [those with understandings].

153 Beware of changing this order, and of stripping these ideas of this apparel! I have indeed taught you how the "intelligible" is to be weighed [Ar has "adorned," but the reading adopted here is preferable and has manuscript authority] by using the support of the traditional that hearts may be quicker to accept. Beware also of making the "intelligible" a principle and the traditional a consequent and following! For this is abominable and repellent, and God Most High has commanded you to give up the abominable and to dispute in the better way [cf. 16.126/125]. So beware of transgressing this command lest you perish and cause to perish, and go astray and lead astray!

154 But of what use is my injunction when the truth has been obliterated and the flood gates have been broken and turpitude has become widespread [Ar 102] and has taken wing to all countries and has become a subject of pleasantries in all cities? For some people have considered this Qur'ān to be something obsolete [antiquated, uncouth] and they have taken the prophetic directives to be airy nothings. All that comes from the meddling [officiousness] of the ignorant and their claiming, in the defense of religion, the rank of the savants [*al-'ārifīn*: the "knowers"]. "But surely many lead astray by their caprices, without any knowledge; thy Lord knows very well the transgressors" [6.119].