

A Survey of the Cardinal Maxims of Islamic Philosophy in the Bahá'í Writings¹

Vargha Bolodo-Taefi

Abstract

This paper explores the influence of Islamic thought and intellectual tradition on the Bahá'í Writings and presents thirty-four cardinal maxims of Islamic philosophy that are adopted and expounded in the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, the Báb, and 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Each section explains the meaning of a maxim, describes its usage by prominent figures in Islamic intellectual history, and demonstrates its application in the Writings of the Central Figures of the Bahá'í Faith.

Introduction

The development of Islamic intellectual tradition witnessed the emergence of four major schools of thought in its Golden Age. A rationalist form of Islamic theology was created to formulate the principal doctrines of Islamic belief and to rebut criticisms levelled against it by its opponents. It produced able theologians like Shaykh Mufid, Al-Ghazali, Zamakhshari, Fakhr-i-Razi, 'Allamah Al-Hilli, Ijli, and As-Suyuti. The Peripatetic Islamic school incorporated doctrines of Greek philosophy, most notably of Aristotle and Neoplatonism, into early Islamic philosophy. It found such prominent philosophers in its ranks as Al-Kindi, Al-Farabi, Avicenna, and Ibn Rushd (Averroes). Features of Islamic mysticism were gradually incorporated into the Islamic philosophical tradition. Islamic mystical philosophy became a method of attaining esoteric wisdom and of rational expression of the mystical elements within an Islamic milieu. Some outstanding Muslim mystical philosophers include Suhrawardi, Ibnu'l-'Arabi, Qunavi,

Ḥaydar-i-Ámulí, and Jílí. Influenced by Peripateticism, Neoplatonism, Avicenna's philosophy, and Islamic mystical philosophy, Suhrawardí founded the school of Illuminationism. Its holistic and innovative philosophy, based on both discursive and intuitive approaches to knowledge, revived Islamic philosophy after its Golden Age. Some notable Illuminationist thinkers after Suhrawardí include Quṭbu'd-Dín-i-Shírází, Shāhrazúrí, Mír Dámád, and Mullá Ṣadrá.

Mullá Ṣadrá synthesized the many tracts of the Golden Age of Islamic thought into what he termed the Transcendent Theosophy. His several doctrines, such as the ontological primacy of existence and substantial motion, revolutionized Islamic metaphysics. Through his novel approach to philosophy that combined theology and mystical intuition, he introduced a holistic method of understanding reality and philosophical inquiry that harmonized logical and theological reasoning, study of the religious texts and scriptural hermeneutics, exegesis, and spiritual inspiration. Some of the able representatives of the Transcendent Theosophy school of thought include Fayḍ-i-Káshání and Mullá Hádíy-i-Sabzivári.

In the early nineteenth century, at a time when Mullá Ṣadrá's thought had emerged as the dominant philosophical paradigm in the Shí'ih seminary in the Islamic East, heterodox doctrines of Shaykh Aḥmad-i-Aḥṣá'í, and after him Siyyid Kázim-i-Raṣhtí, laid the foundations for a new approach to Shí'ih theology. This messianic, millenarian movement, known as Shaykhism, derived its focus from some of the main themes of the Transcendent Theosophy, such as the names and attributes of God, and the effusions of existence and revelation, and acted as an intellectual link between Islam and the Bábí Faith.

Why and how is a study of Islamic thought useful in understanding the Bahá'í Revelation? Utilizing Aristotle's philosophical theory of hylomorphism, the distinguished Bahá'í philosopher Dr. 'Alí-Murád Dávúdí explains that all beings—except incorporeal essences, such as the Essence of God—are composed of matter and form. Religions,

likewise, at least inasmuch as they relate to the world of creation, are composed of matter and form. The form of religion is the Cause of God, the reality which relates to and emanates from Him. The matter of religion is the potential which appears in the world of creation to receive this form. The form of religion is born of divine revelation. The matter of religion is situated in human civilization in every age and dispensation. Elements of the cultures, sciences, literatures, philosophies, technologies, and ethics of every age enter the religion and shape the development of practices, rites, observances, and laws of the peoples. Every religion speaks in the language of the people in that dispensation; steers the customs, habits, and traditions of its age; benefits from the verse and prose, science and industry, and laws of the day; and assimilates a portion of the histories, anecdotes, and tales of that time. For instance, the influence of Greek philosophy, Roman civilization, and Jewish culture on Christianity, or of Arab, Jewish, Greek, Syrian, and Persian cultures and civilizations on Islam, is well known. All such influences, from whatever source they may be, constitute the matter in which the form of religion appears. The form of religion, however, which is the Cause of God, has no source but divine revelation. Therefore, caution should be exercised, lest we confuse the elements which are derived from worldly sources in any religion with the true and divine source of its revelation which is the cause of its novelty, or reduce the divine form of religion to its earthly matter (*Áhang-i-Badí'* 327:23–24).

With this in mind, Islamic thought and intellectual tradition can be considered as constituting the matter of the Bahá'í Faith and shaping the appearance of its wondrous form. It is important to note, however, that Bahá'u'lláh, the Báb, and 'Abdu'l-Bahá do not merely adopt, confirm, and cite the elements of Islamic thought in Their Writings. They rather breathe the spirit of life into the body of Islamic intellectual tradition; revitalize and reinvigorate the views of the philosophers and theologians of old; choose them as one of means of establishing the new Revelation; associate this matter with others that pertain to the refinement of character, the upholding of justice, the establishment of order and of the kingdom of God on earth; animate this receptive matter

with the quickening form emanating from God; and manifest His Cause in the world of creation. The Bahá'í Faith, therefore, exemplifies, reunites, and integrates within its Sacred Text some of the wholesome and noble elements that can be found in Islamic philosophy (ibid. 28).

It must be remembered that the Writings of the Central Figures of the Bahá'í Faith are not devoid of social and historical context. As the Universal House of Justice explains (1982, 1998), the Báb, Bahá'u'lláh, and 'Abdu'l-Bahá chose to employ philosophical themes, terms, and concepts, among others, as a vehicle, because it is a mode which Their audience is capable of grasping, not because it reflects Their own state or voice. Their understanding and perception transcend those of any human being or the traditions and concepts of any society. They used the familiar mediums of human language and philosophy and common standard of acquired knowledge to raise humanity to a wholly new level of awareness and behavior.

This paper presents thirty-four cardinal maxims of Islamic philosophy that are adopted and expounded in the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, the Báb, and 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Each section explains the meaning of a maxim, describes its usage by prominent figures in Islamic intellectual history, and demonstrates the author's understanding of its application in the Writings of the Central Figures of the Bahá'í Faith. Much of this paper relies on the author's reading of the Bahá'í Sacred Text in its original language, Text for which there is no authorized English translation. The author has provided provisional English translations in a few cases.

1. Contradictory propositions cannot both be true or false

This maxim is comprised of two axiomatic principles that are known in classical logic as the law of non-contradiction and the law of excluded middle. The law of non-contradiction stipulates that two contradictory propositions cannot both be true at the same time and in the same sense. The law of excluded middle states that two contradictory propositions cannot both be false and that either one proposition or its

negation holds. Together, these two laws create a logical dichotomy in which the two contradictory propositions are mutually exclusive—as required by the law of non-contradiction—and jointly exhaustive—as expressed by the law of excluded middle.

This maxim is widely recognized as an *a priori* axiom and one of the foremost among primary principles, indemonstrable premises that are inherent in human intellectual faculty on the basis of their appeal to self-evidence. It is considered to be a sufficient foundation underlying rational discourse, human thought, and all the other theorems and propositions of logic. Without assuming the truth of this maxim, the truth of no other principle can ever be demonstrated. But this maxim is itself a primary premise whose truth does not depend on, and is not inferred from, the proof or the validity of any other principle. Reasoning is the process through which the existence of a thing signifies the existence of another and the non-existence of a thing indicates the non-existence of another. Were we to assume the law of non-contradiction and the law of excluded middle to be false, the existence of a thing would no longer signify the existence of another and its non-existence the non-existence of another; the foundation of reasoning would thereby collapse. The truth of this maxim is indemonstrable because in order to demonstrate the truth of the law of non-contradiction and the law of excluded middle—that is, in order to reason—one must presuppose the truth of this same maxim upon which the truth of all the other principles and propositions of logic must be founded—and, in so doing, commit the fallacy of circular reasoning.

Mullá Šadrá (*Al-Hikmatu'l-Muta'aliyah* 1.3:443), Avicenna (*Al-Ilāhiyyāt* 48), Fakhr-i-Rāzī (*Al-Arba'in* 154), and Ījī (*Šarḥu'l-Mawāqif* 64) have all recognized this maxim as foremost among *a priori* axioms. Some Islamic theologians have even gone a step further and relied on the self-evidence of the law of non-contradiction and the law of excluded middle in order to demonstrate the axiomatic self-evidence of existence (ibid. 170). This indicates that this maxim is considered to appeal to self-evidence more than the concept of existence does.

In one of His Tablets, Bahá'u'lláh utilizes to the logic of the law of excluded middle in His reasoning to outline the only two possible outcomes when an appeal is made to tyrants—either they take heed or they reject (INBA 31:8). The Báb, in several of His Writings, such as the Persian Bayán (INBA 62:10–20), the Kitáb-i-Asmá' (*Selections* 5:19), the Panj Shá'n (INBA 1:5–6, 43), and the Dalá'il-i-Sab'ih (25, 44), invokes this principle when describing the contrast between negation and affirmation, or between denial and acceptance, in the world of existence. 'Abdu'l-Bahá also employs this maxim in multiple settings. In one Tablet, for instance, He compares the views of Bahá'u'lláh and the Arch-breaker of His Covenant, Mírzá Muḥammad-'Alí, concerning the appointment of the Center of the Covenant after Bahá'u'lláh's passing, establishes that these two views are contradictory propositions, states that they cannot both be true or false, and suggests that one guides people while the other leads them astray (*Muntakhabát* 4:157). Similarly, in the Lawḥ-i-Hizár Baytí, 'Abdu'l-Bahá emphasizes the importance of service over names and titles and states that one of the following logics must be true: either we succeed in serving the Faith, in which case all the beauteous names revolve around us; or we are deprived of such a service, in which case names and appellations avail us nothing (ibid. 250). In His commentary on the Islamic tradition "I was a hidden treasure" (*Makátib* 2:26, 39), 'Abdu'l-Bahá quotes an adaptation of the law of non-contradiction twice and states that a thing cannot embody the attributes of its negation. In order to reject a proposition that before their formal existence in the world of creation the essences of things were absolutely non-existent, He cites this maxim and explains that absolute non-existence cannot acquire the capacity and worthiness to emerge from a state of non-existence into the realm of existence. He demonstrates that the essences of all things, as the subjects of God's knowledge, have a pre-existent intellectual existence in God's knowledge and are one with His Essence. In *Some Answered Questions* (53:7), 'Abdu'l-Bahá defines death and non-existence as a transformation in the form of a decomposition of constituent elements. Rejecting death as annihilation and absolute non-existence, He relies on this maxim and concludes that insofar as

created things still have a mineral existence after their decomposition, they cannot be in contradictory states of existence and non-existence simultaneously. In yet another elucidation (ibid. par. 4), ‘Abdu’l-Bahá contrasts the procession of creation from God through emanation with appearance through manifestation and maintains that a belief in emanational procession preserves the transcendence and the pre-existence of God, whereas a belief in manifestational appearance “would require unconditioned pre-existence to take on the attributes of the originated, absolute independence to become abject poverty, and the essence of existence to become pure non-existence.” Applying the law of non-contradiction, He concludes that a belief in manifestational appearance is untenable.

2. A reference is identical with its referent in reality and existence

In its existence and reality, a name is identical with its referent. But in its sense and meaning, a name is different from its referent. Islamic theologians, according to Fakhr-i-Rázi (*Lavámi*‘10), state that a name signifies the essence of a thing, as it is in itself, without it being characterized by an attribute. Examples of names include God, woman, and human. They also suggest that an attribute designates the essence of a thing when that essence is considered from the perspective of a specific quality or feature.

In reference to God, however, some Islamic mystical philosophers believe that without any characterization of an attribute, the Essence is the ineffable station of Supreme Singleness, absolute invisibility, and the hidden treasure. Therefore, according to Qayṣarí (*Sharḥu Fuṣṣús* 44), an expounder of Ibnu’l-‘Arabi’s works, a name, in relation to God, signifies His Essence as characterized by an attribute—not the uncharacterized Essence, as posited by Islamic theologians. In order to explain this maxim, he thus distinguishes between the Essence as characterized by an attribute (name) and the word with which to refer to the Essence as characterized by an attribute (name of name). The name “Merciful”, for example, is then identical with the Essence of God in

the sense that it signifies the Essence as characterized by its mercy—in the sense of its reality and existence. However, as a word with which to refer to the name of God “the Merciful”, it is not identical with the Essence of God in meaning.

Similar to the debate about the relationship between God’s names and His Essence, there are fundamental differences between the various schools of Islamic theology and between Islamic theologians and philosophers concerning the association of God’s attributes with His Essence. Ash’arites, for instance, stipulate that God’s attributes are separate from His Essence. At-Taftázání, a prominent Ash’arite, further states that a multiplicity of pre-existences in God’s attributes is quite plausible; what is logically untenable is rather a multiplicity of pre-existences in His Essence (*Sharḥu’l-Aqá’id* 50). The Mu’tazilites find the Ash’arites’ view on the separation between God’s attributes and His Essence to be indefensible. But they also consider the oneness of God’s attributes and His Essence to be impossible. As a result, they completely reject God’s attributes and hold that all qualities and characters attributed to God are to be found directly in His Essence.

Bahá’ís believe that God is invisible, inaccessible, unknowable, and ineffable (*Gleanings* no. 84; *Selections* no. 30). Therefore, as He is in Himself—not as we recognize Him—He cannot be designated by any names, nor can He be regarded as possessing any attributes (*Tablets* 102, 113). Confessing this precept, Bahá’ís state daily in their Long Obligatory Prayer “I testify that Thou hast been sanctified above all attributes and holy above all names” (*Kitáb-i-Aqdas* 95). The reason for this assertion is that God’s embodiment of human attributes, which are specific and many, would require that His Essence be limited to specific meanings (Dávúdí, “Discourse” 64), be divided into various aspects and relationships, and be in need of component parts. But limitation, plurality, and need are characteristics of created and contingent beings (*Some Answered Questions* ch. 27). Accordingly, in His world, God’s names and attributes are identical with His Essence; otherwise, “there would be a multiplicity of pre-existences” (*ibid.* no 37).

Further, if God's essential names and attributes were not identical with His Essence, inexorably they would be a creation of His Essence and, therefore, not befitting its station. Consequently, the Bahá'í teachings distinguish between the essential names and attributes of God in His world, which are identical with His Essence and therefore unknowable, and the names and attributes that we ascribe to Him within the limits of our existence in the world of creation in order to worship Him and praise His perfections (Bolodo-Taefi, "God, Revelation, and Manifestation" 177). With this framework in mind, depending on the world and the station in which the reference of the names of God is considered, the names of God could signify His Essence; they could refer to the Essence as characterized by an attribute, such as the All-Knowing and the Almighty; or they could designate the Essence of God as the source of an action, such as the Sustainer and the Creator (Dávudí, "Discourse" footnote 47).

Bahá'u'lláh (Rafati, *Yádnámih* 174) writes that names can have multiple stations, allusions, and indications. In one sense, a name is the revelation of the referent. In another respect, a name is identical with its referent and is its truth, its identity, and its essence. In yet another sense, a name is different from its referent. In yet another, a name can testify to, and indicate, its referent. From another perspective, it circles around the referent. He further states that these meanings each have multiple stations and manifestations. Concerning the relationship between names and attributes, He writes that, in one sense, names are the garments of attributes; because attributes, like generosity and dominion, are actions which proceed from the source of the action. He, nevertheless, asserts that names are non-existent in the station of God's Essence and of His revelation in the Manifestations of His signs and perfections.

The Báb cites this maxim in several Tablets. In the Panj *Sha'n* (INBA 1:7), He writes that when one utters the verse "No God is there but God" in order to testify to Divine Unity, one exalts and sanctifies the one Essence of God because none is manifested in names but their

referent. Were one, for instance, to utter the words “No sun is there but the sun”, the referent of the name “sun” will always be the physical sun. He also states that there are different stations of testifying to Divine Unity just as there are different stations of names and attributes. He further instructs (ibid. 72–74) that the reality of all things should be seen when considering their names and that all names should be understood as bespeaking God. This, He explains, is because nothing is manifested in names but their referent, and the referent of all names is essentially—not numerically—one. He likens names to mirrors facing the sun and stresses that the essence of all names can be found in their referent and that nothing is manifested in names but the referent. He subsequently writes that one should not worship the names of God next to their referent to the point that one would join partners with God, nor should one worship the names of God without their referent to the extent that one would commit blasphemy. He further explains that, in one sense, the referent of every name occupies the same station as that name; nevertheless, all things are of God. For example, the referent of the name “the powerful” in every station and sense of that name is a mirror which occupies that same station, but which faces God and betokens Him. In His *Tafsír-i-Súriy-i-Baqarih* (commentary on the Súrih of the Cow), the Báb expatiates upon the relationship between names, their meanings, and their referent by quoting several statements from Imám ‘Alí and Imám Muḥammad al-Báqir about not worshipping names, worshipping names without their meanings, worshipping names together with their meanings, and worshipping meanings (INBA 69:206–207).

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, in His commentary on the Basmalah (*Makátib* 1:49–52), maintains that the names of God derive from attributes which signify the perfections of His Essence. He stipulates that in God’s station of Supreme Singleness, names have no manifestation, entification, or individuation; nor do they signify, indicate, or betoken anything. But they have an uncompounded reality which is identical with the Essence. In God’s station of Oneness, however, His names find a manifestation, entification, and life-giving existence in the form of Fixed

Entities. He then cites this maxim and stresses that in God's station of Supreme Singleness, names are identical with their referent and are its essence and reality. This is because names and attributes are in truth descriptions of God's perfections and designations of one reality. 'Abdu'l-Bahá then clarifies that by names are meant their meanings and truths which are exalted above and sanctified from all indications. He distinguishes them from names which are uttered words pronounced using language and which, He states, are not identical with their referent. The names of God and their meanings which are identical with their referent exist in an uncompounded oneness, without any distinction among them.

3. Knowledge of the realities of things is impossible to the human mind

This maxim conveys that the realities and the inner identities of things are inaccessible to human comprehension. This principle is put forward in the works of Avicenna and Mullá Şadrá, who also believed in an intellectual existence as well as a formal existence of things. They postulated that the essence of things can also exist in the human mind in the same manner that they exist formally in the world of existence. Some have suggested that a belief in the intellectual existence of the essence of things contradicts a belief that knowledge of the realities of things is impossible to the human mind (*Al-Hikmatu'l-Muta'áliyab* 1.1:391).

Ṭabáṭabá'í (ibid. fn1) interprets and defends Avicenna's view of this maxim. Mullá Hádý-i-Sabzivá'í (ibid. 392, fn1) addresses and resolves the perceived contradiction in Avicenna's and Mullá Şadrá's statements by differentiating between the ontic reality of existence and its epistemic understanding. Mullá Şadrá (ibid. 392–393) reiterates this maxim and posits that comprehending the reality of a thing requires its presence and existence within human knowledge; whereas the outer form of things, which is their actuality and existence, and which exists outside of the human mind, cannot become present and encompassed within human knowledge.

'Abdu'l-Bahá utilizes this maxim in His commentary on the Islamic tradition "I was a hidden treasure" and explains that knowledge of a thing means encompassing it. Unless and until one encompasses a thing, one cannot comprehend its reality. He then concludes that since no being can encompass the Essence of God, the knowledge of His Essence is impossible (*Makátib* 2:13, 29). He also quotes this maxim in an utterance (*Some Answered Questions* 59:3–4) and stresses that the essence of things can only be known through its attributes. Since we cannot encompass the originated reality of any created being, how can it be possible to encompass the pre-existent Reality of God? If our knowledge of all created things, no matter how simple they are, is not of their essence but of their attributes, how can it be possible to understand the Essence of God?

4. Change is not instantaneous

The existence of change and transformation in the world of creation is an axiomatic article which cannot be denied. Change and transformation cannot take place in this world without motion. Motion is a facet of existence through which things actualize their potential. Until Mullá Şadrá, it was generally accepted that only accidents of things, such as quantity, quality, and location, are subject of change and motion. The Peripatetics, in particular, also maintained that change can be instantaneous or gradual. Mullá Şadrá introduced his doctrine of substantial motion and argued that all material beings undergo change and transformation in their substance and essence, as well as in their accidental properties. Gradual change in which things constantly move from potentiality to actuality can be more evidently understood as motion. What is referred to instantaneous change, however, is not as readily understood as motion without accepting the truth of the doctrine of substantial motion. Just as gradual change is inconceivable without the existence of motion, what might appear to be an instantaneous change cannot take place in the absence of motion either.

Why do some changes develop gradually, yet others take effect instantaneously? Mullá Šadrá explains this difference with his doctrines of substantial motion and the gradation of existence. When, for example, water evaporates through intense heating, what appears to be an instantaneous transformation of liquid into gas is in fact gradual. Notwithstanding the speed of change from one form or phase to another, it is not incompatible with it being gradual. Motion remains to be continuous. Unless the liquid and gas phases intersect—in other words, unless the water and vapor have the same substance—there would be two successive moments in time which are disconnected. This is impossible because time is one continuous whole and there are infinite number of moments between any two given moments. Another logical problem with the non-intersection of the two forms in an instantaneous change is that at the moment of transformation the matter of the water and vapor would be inevitably without a form, which is impossible (*Naháyatü'l-Hikmah* 202).

In His utterances, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá confirms substantial motion and rejects instantaneous change. In *Some Answered Questions*, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá states that all beings are in motion, that motion cannot be dissociated from them, and that motion takes place at the level of the essence of things. He refers to this as “essential or natural motion” (63:1). He explains that it is “the universal and divinely ordained law and the natural order” that “the growth and development of all beings proceeds by gradual degrees”, through the gradual appearance of what is latent in things (51:3, 5).

5. The uncompounded reality is all things, but it is not any single one of them

Mullá Šadrá considers this maxim to be one of the abstruse subjects of divine philosophy (*Al-Hikmatu'l-Muta‘alíyah* 3.1:110). It is reported to have been espoused by some of the Greek philosophers, such as Aristotle (*Some Answered Questions* 82:2; footnote 162); but Mullá Šadrá

established it as a philosophical subject and maxim and adduced arguments in its proof. In brief, it asserts that any reality or essence in which an attribute can be denied or from which something can be negated is inevitably composed of affirmative and negative aspects and is, therefore, compounded. For instance, to say that an essence is X but is not Y means that it comprises two distinct aspects: the existence of X and the non-existence of Y. The presence of these distinct affirmative and negative aspects requires that essence to be a compounded reality. The contrapositive of this statement infers that in every uncompounded reality, nothing can be denied or negated. Therefore, the Essence of God must be all things in order for it to be an uncompounded reality. Mullá Şadrá also asserts that the predicate in this maxim is only the existential aspects of “all things”; otherwise, a reality that also possesses the imperfections of things is, of necessity, a compounded reality (*Al-Hikmatu'l-Muta'áliyáh* 3.1:110).

The uncompounded reality, therefore, possesses and encompasses the perfections of all things. Then how are God's attributes that negate things are to be understood? Mullá Şadrá explains that to attribute a negation to the uncompounded reality of God is to negate non-existence or to deny that He has any imperfections. This reiterates that He is pure existence and perfection. For example, when we negate matter from the reality of God or deny that He has a quality or a quantity, we are negating negative attributes from His Essence and stressing that He is pure existence (*ibid.* 114).

After Mullá Şadrá, his followers, such as Mullá Hádý-i-Sabzivári and Fayḍ-i-Káshání, also propound the doctrine of uncompounded reality in their works. Mullá Şadrá (*ibid.* 4.1:51) and Mullá Hádý-i-Sabzivári (*Sharḥu'l-Manẓúmáh* 1:309), for instance, argue that the rational soul is an uncompounded reality and, therefore, encompasses all the powers and perfections that are to be found in the animal, vegetable, and mineral kingdoms. Fayḍ-i-Káshání utilizes this maxim to explain God's knowledge of and revelation in His own Essence (*Uşúl* 30).

In one of His best-known works, known as the *Lawḥ-i-Basīṭatu'l-Ḥaqīqih* (the Tablet of the Uncompounded Reality), Bahá'u'lláh confirms the truth of this maxim and unfolds its meaning. He clarifies that by “all things” is meant existence and its perfections and asserts that the Uncompounded Reality, insofar as it is uncompounded in all senses, possesses and encompasses all perfections infinitely. He rejects a misinterpretation of this maxim that God is dissolved into innumerable forms of existence. He further expatiates upon two stations of proclaiming the oneness of God and sanctifying Him from all multiplicity. Existential monotheism consists of denying all existence other than God and confessing the evanescence of all things before His revelation and remembrance. Intuitive, or visible, monotheism involves witnessing in all things signs of the revelation and manifestation of the Uncompounded Reality. Bahá'u'lláh also specifies that in one sense, all that is mentioned concerning the Uncompounded Reality refers to the Manifestations of God, inasmuch as God Himself is unknowable and indescribable and His chosen representatives are the manifestations of His oneness and the dawning-places of His singleness. Outwardly, They are subject to the bounds of the world of creation; yet inwardly, They are an uncompounded reality and free from any limitation. Their uncompounded reality, however, is neither absolute nor uncompounded in every sense; it is a secondary and relative uncompounded reality. This signifies that Their station, as the Word of God and the manifestation of His singleness, is the educator of all beings and the possessor of infinite perfections (*Iqtidárát* 105–109). Bahá'u'lláh also refers to Himself as the Uncompounded Reality which has been manifested in the form of a human temple (*ibid.* 114).

In another Tablet, Bahá'u'lláh informs that the Uncompounded Reality signifies first and foremost the Essence of God. But since all things are reflections of His names and attributes, it is correct to state that the Uncompounded Reality is all things (INBA 31:104–105). In yet another Tablet, Bahá'u'lláh defines the Uncompounded Reality as the Primal Word from which all beings originate, the splendour and sovereignty of which they manifest, and to which they return (*Yádnámih* 207).

In His commentary on the Uncompounded Reality, the Báb addresses a misrepresentation of this maxim through which some seek to prove the appearance of God into all created beings. Rejecting the notion of the dissolution of God into innumerable forms of existence and multiplicity in the Essence of God, the Báb states that the Essence of God is sanctified from all dissolution, division, comparison, and change. He highlights the error of those who attempt to comprehend the Essence of God as though it were a created thing and stresses that, in so doing, they will either have to believe in a multiplicity of pre-existences in the Essence of God or downgrade it to the level of corporeal created beings (INBA 69:422–425).

In an utterance about the unity of existence, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá cites this maxim, attributes it to some of the Greek philosophers, such as Aristotle, and demonstrates how it has been erroneously used in support of a misconception of the doctrine of the unity of existence by some Theosophists and Sufis (*Some Answered Questions* ch. 82). Concerning statements that affirm certain attributes of the Uncompounded Reality or negate other attributes from Him, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá stresses (*ibid.* 37:6–7) that if we ascribe certain names and attributes to God, we are not affirming His perfections. This is because we do not understand them as they are in themselves; we are rather denying that He has any imperfections. This is the basis of the apophatic theology of the Bahá’í Faith. Therefore, we consider God’s attributes to be identical with His Essence and negate everything that is other than His Essence. Were we to ascribe affirmative attributes to Him, therefore, we are not ascribing them to Him as things that can be accepted and possessed; this rather conveys negating some attributes from His Essence—attributes that we see in His creation and that indicate the imperfection of the world of creation compared with His world (Dávúdí, “Discourse”65).

Further, the Writings of the Bahá’í Faith are replete with statements about the uncompounded reality of the rational soul and its possession of the powers and perfections of the animal, vegetable, and mineral kingdoms. Bahá’u’lláh writes that some describe the rational soul as

the “lesser world”, but He regards it as the “greater world” owing to the potentialities inherent in it (*Gleanings* 162:1). In the Seven Valleys, He stresses that all the perfections of the greater world are folded up and hidden within the human creation (*Call* 2:70). ‘Abdu’l-Bahá emphasizes that unlike the vegetable and animal spirit, the rational soul is uncompounded and incorporeal and, therefore, everlasting (*Some Answered Questions* 38:8); that it “is the substance through which the body subsists” (ibid. 66:2); and that it “encompasses all things” (ibid. 55:5), discovers their realities, comprehends their properties, and penetrates the mysteries of existence (ibid. 58:3).

6. An effect cannot be dissociated from its sufficient cause

This maxim stipulates that there is a constant association and union between a sufficient cause and its effect. Sufficient cause, or complete cause, is a cause which is adequate to bring about an effect and which is not in need of any other factor for that effect to occur. Therefore, as long as a sufficient cause for an effect exists, the effect exists too; the effect cannot violate its association with its sufficient cause. This principle plays a prominent role in philosophy and can indeed be considered a foundation of all philosophical reasoning. This is because if effects were to be dissociated from their sufficient causes, the impervious and immutable law of causality would collapse and philosophical and scientific thinking, as well as daily life, would be interrupted.

Many Islamic philosophers and thinkers invoke this maxim when demonstrating the truth of other propositions. Some even regard it as an axiom which is independent of any proof. Avicenna, for instance, writes that if anything, in its essence, is the cause of the constant existence of another thing, then, so long as the former exists, the latter will also exist and as soon as the former appears, the latter will appear too (*Al-Iláhiyyát* 166–167, 266). Expounding Suhrawardi’s thought, Quṭbu’l-Dín-i-Shírází employs the Illuminationist light imagery to prove the permanence of the world of creation. He explains that since God, the Necessary Being, is the sufficient cause of the existence of the

world of creation, it will last as long as God Himself will last (*Sharḥu Ḥikmatī'l-Isbrāq* 378–379). Íjī relies on this maxim as a premise to prove the impossibility of infinite regress of causes and effects, which is itself one of the foundational principles of philosophy (*Sharḥu'l-Mavāqif* 400–401). Fakhr-i-Rāzī (*Al-Mabāḥith* 458, 477–478), Mullá Ṣadrá (*Al-Ḥikmatu'l-Muta'ālīyah* 1.2:131), the mystical philosopher Ibn Fanārī (*Miṣbāḥ* 26), and Qúnavī, quoting Ibnu'l-'Arabī (ibid.), all adduce proofs and arguments in support of this maxim.

The logical argumentations and reasonings present in the Writings of the Central Figures of the Faith evidently accord with the law of causality. The principle of constant association and union between a sufficient cause and its effect, however, specifically informs 'Abdu'l-Bahá's proof of the infinity of God in His Tablet to Auguste Forel. God is the sufficient Cause of the existence of all beings. Beings are created through the composition of their constituent elements and are infinite. Since the existence of the effect cannot contradict the existence of its sufficient cause, the infinity of God can be inferred *a fortiori*.

7. Infinite regress of causes and effects is impossible

Infinite regress in causation occurs when an endless series of causes depend on one another—when a thing or an event is caused by another element, which is itself caused by yet another one *ad infinitum*. Many important philosophical arguments and theorems are founded upon, or derive their truth from, the premise that the chain of causes and effects cannot logically continue endlessly. One example is the argument for the existence of the Necessary Being. The existence of all beings can be either necessary or contingent. For a contingent being to be brought into existence, a cause is needed. That cause, if not a necessary being, will in turn require another cause in order to be called into existence. This chain of causation must end with the Necessary Being Whose existence is not in need of a cause; otherwise, it would continue endlessly, which is logically impossible.

Many Islamic philosophers, like Al-Fárábí (“Ad-Da’áwí” 2–3), Avicenna (*An-Naját* 235), and Suhrawardi (*Sharḥu Ḥikmatī’l-Isḥrāq* 298), rely on an infinite regress argument to demonstrate the existence of the Necessary Being. Very few of them, however, adduce elaborate proofs to establish the truth of this maxim. Avicenna dedicates a section of *An-Naját* to proving this maxim; Fakhr-i-Rázi (*Al-Mabāḥith* 470–476) produces three arguments to demonstrate its truth; Íjī (*Sharḥu’l-Mawāqif* 403–412) provides five reasons to substantiate it in one of the most expansive expositions of this maxim in Islamic theology and philosophy; and Mullá Ṣadrá (*Al-Ḥikmatu’l-Muta’áliyāh* 1.2:144–169) also cites ten elaborate arguments in its support.

In His Tablet to Auguste Forel, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá cites this maxim to stress the absurdity of an infinite regress of causes and to prove the existence of “the Ultimate Cause”, “the Universal Reality”. In another Tablet (*Selections* no. 21), ‘Abdu’l-Bahá similarly employs an infinite regress argument to demonstrate that the growth and development of all beings are dependent upon external influences in a process that must lead to One Who influences all, and yet is influenced by none. In a statement about the connection between God’s Essence and His essential names and attributes (*Some Answered Questions* 37:7), ‘Abdu’l-Bahá stresses that the names and attributes of God—as they really are, not the names and attributes that we ascribe to God in the world of creation in order to praise His perfections—are identical with His Essence, otherwise “there would be a multiplicity of pre-existences” and the distinction between His Essence and attributes would also be pre-existent. The distinction between all these pre-existences, including between pre-existent distinctions, would in turn be pre-existent. Therefore, there would be countless distinctions between distinctions, which are all pre-existent. He asserts that this represents an infinite regression and concludes that it is impossible. In a Tablet regarding the Christian doctrine of the Trinity (*Tablets* 512–514), ‘Abdu’l-Bahá resorts to the same infinite regress argument to reject the pre-existence of the distinction between God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, which would lead to an infinite regress of pre-existent distinctions. In a similar

statement (*Some Answered Questions* 82:5–6), ‘Abdu’l-Bahá employs the same argument in support of the Theosophist and the Sufi belief in the pre-existent intelligible existence of all beings in the Divine knowledge. He states that the objects of the Divine knowledge are identical with His knowledge, which is in turn identical with His Essence. He argues that if the Knower, the knowledge, and the objects of knowledge were not one single reality, this plurality of pre-existences would necessitate an infinite regress of pre-existent distinctions. Refuting their belief in the manifestational appearance of God in all His creatures, however, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá utilizes the same argument to demonstrate that the infinity of God’s creatures and the distinction between them amounts to an infinite regress of God’s manifestational appearances (*Star* 2, nos. 7–8:12). Responding to a question about retributive justice and whether the person administering justice and prosecuting the offender also deserves a sentence for his role in inflicting punishment, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá rejects the notion as one leading to an infinite regress of prosecutions and prosecutors (*Makátib* 1:360).

8. Origination, whether temporal or essential, is preceded by non-existence

The reality of existence can be divided into origination and pre-existence. This division is an essential property of existence. In other words, the undifferentiated reality of existence, before any entification, specification, or individuation, accepts these attributions. Therefore, the attributes “originated” and “pre-existent” are essential attributes of the reality of existence. The concepts of origination and pre-existence do not require a true definition because they are equal to the concept of “existence” itself in clarity and self-evidence and because they do not have a formal and actual existence in order to have a true definition. Any definition of these two terms, therefore, is purely a description.

An originated being is described as one which is preceded by its non-existence. Conversely, a pre-existent being is one which is not preceded by its non-existence. Origination and pre-existence can in turn be

divided into temporal and essential. The case of non-existence preceding the existence of a temporally-originated being, like this table or that bird, is readily understood: there is a point in time before which some originated beings did not exist. How can the notion of non-existence preceding the existence of beings which are not originated in time—essentially-originated beings which have always existed—be explained? Although essential origination is not preceded by a temporal non-existence, or a non-existence in time, nevertheless it receives its existence from another being. Without it being created by another cause, therefore, essential origination would find no existence. Accordingly, considered on its own merits, as it is in itself, essential origination is non-existence; it exists only in its relation to its cause. Examples of essential origination include the Holy Spirit, the world of creation, and the human species.

Consequently, non-existence precedes all originated beings, whether temporal or essential: temporal origination is preceded by its temporal non-existence; essential origination is characterized by non-existence in its essence—a non-existence which precedes its existence through the agency of another cause. No time separates essential origination from its cause. As previously stated, there is a constant association and union between a sufficient cause and its effect such that as soon the former appears, so does the latter. This simultaneity and union in time can be illustrated using an analogy: when a person unlocks a door using a key, the key, as the effect, and the hand, as the cause of the turning of the key, move simultaneously.

Now that it is established that essential origination is not preceded by a temporal non-existence, it also becomes evident that an existence which is not situated in time cannot be described as temporal, be it originated or pre-existent. Therefore, temporal pre-existence has no formal, or actual, application. For an existence described as temporal pre-existence there are two possibilities: either it is situated in time, or it is not. If it is situated in time, then it is defined as essential origination. If it is not situated in time, then it cannot be called temporal.

It can, therefore, be concluded that all originated beings, whether temporal or essential, are preceded by their non-existence: temporal origination is preceded by an actual non-existence; essential origination is preceded by an essential non-existence. The source of actual non-existence is the lack of a sufficient cause for the effect to come into being; the source of essential non-existence is essential contingency, in which the essence of a thing demands or allows neither its existence nor its non-existence (Avicenna, *An-Naját* 213–228; Mullá Şadrá, *Al-Ḥikmatu'l-Muta'áliyab* 1.3:160–162; Mullá Hádý-i-Sabzivári, *Sharḥu'l-Manẓúmab* 1:172–173). The essence of a contingent has no entity prior to its existence: it is neither existent nor non-existent.

In several Tablets (*Gleanings* 82:10; 81:1), Bahá'u'lláh stresses the temporal origination of all that is created, including the human soul. In several others, such as in the Lawḥ-i-Ḥikmat (Tablet of Wisdom), He asserts that the world of creation is essentially originated, as it is preceded by a cause, but has no beginning (*Tablets* 9:8; *Tabernacle* 2:49). 'Abdu'l-Bahá expatiates upon this maxim in His Writings and utterances (*Selections* no. 30; *Some Answered Questions* 53:5). An entire chapter of *Some Answered Questions* (80) is dedicated to the difference between temporal and essential origination and pre-existence.

9. A circular motion is unnatural

Islamic philosophers divide motion into straight and circular and assert that a circular motion can never be natural. Al-Fárábí, the founder of Islamic philosophy, considers motion to be natural when a moving object which has been separated from its original place and natural state returns to it. He concludes that the circular motion of celestial spheres cannot be natural (“Ad-Da’áví” 7). Avicenna (*An-Naját* 258) also argues that the two elements of the definition of a natural motion, namely evading the unnatural position and returning to the natural state, are not found in a circular motion and concludes that a circular motion cannot be natural. In a circular motion, evading the unnatural position and returning to the natural state is impossible because the

moving object will return to any point on the circular path from which it evades. Additionally, returning to the natural state is also impossible in a circular motion because a natural motion, unlike a circular motion, ends once the moving object reaches its target, its original position.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá utilizes this maxim in a statement in which he sets forth several arguments to refute reincarnation. In one of His arguments against reincarnation, He intimates that the advancement and the movement of the human soul in a direct line is according to the natural order, whereas its return to this world after death is incompatible with the natural motion and is against the natural and divine order (*Some Answered Questions* 81:10).

10. The presence of an effect requires the presence of a cause

Whenever and wherever an effect exists, so does inevitably its cause. In other words, the existence of a cause is a pre-requisite for the existence of an effect. This maxim is a law of the intellect upon which all human thought and investigation is founded and from which there is no escape. As a primary premise, the truth of this principle is not established only through experience and inductive reasoning. Rather, every experience and experiment itself is validated by, and receives its credence from, the law of causality. Without causality, an observer can never expect to conclude anything from any experiment.

Avicenna considers facts that come from experience to be axiomatic. He believes that the rational soul accepts the results of experiments and verifies experiences without an intermediary. He also suggests that although experiences are formed after many repetitions of the same observation and sense perception, nevertheless they are always verified through logical deduction, which indicates causality. An experience which is not followed by an inference—which is laden with causality—cannot be trusted and does not give rise to knowledge (*An-Naját* 61). Demonstrating the truth of this maxim, Fakhr-i-Rází stresses that the essence of any effect is contingent, or, in other words, indifferent toward

existence and non-existence, such that potentially it can become either existent or non-existent. It requires a cause to necessitate its existence or non-existence. The presence of an effect whose essence is brought out of its state of indifference and whose existence is necessitated, inevitably indicates the presence of a cause which has determined that existence. An implication of this argument is that an effect requires a cause in both existence and continuance (*Al-Mabáhiṭh* 477).

In the Lawḥ-i-Ḥikmat (Tablet of Wisdom), Bahá'u'lláh writes that the Word of God is the cause which has brought the world of creation, which is essentially contingent, into existence (*Tablets* 9:12). In another Tablet (*Gleanings* 81:1), He affirms that the human soul has a contingent existence and depends on a cause, the grace of God, in order to come into being and to continue its existence after its departure from this world. 'Abdu'l-Bahá also asserts that the continuance, as well as the creation, of the world requires a cause (*Some Answered Questions* 2:5). In several Tablets and utterances, 'Abdu'l-Bahá quotes this maxim to discuss the formation and emergence of life and refutes an accidental composition of life as representing an effect without a cause ("Forel"; *Makátib* 1:377; *Khiṭábát* 1:247; *Star* 6, no. 8:63). In His Tablet to Auguste Forel, 'Abdu'l-Bahá also employs this maxim to reason that the existence of this infinite universe requires the existence of an Ultimate Cause.

11. The presence of a cause requires the presence of an effect

As soon as the existence of a sufficient cause becomes necessary, and as long as it so remains, it necessitates the existence of its effect. As discussed in section 6, dissociation of an effect from, and its violation of, its sufficient cause is logically impossible, because it is tantamount to the collapse of the law of causality. How is then the association of the pre-existent God with the originated world of creation to be understood? The world of creation is an originated effect. Its origination signifies non-existence preceding it; its being an effect indicates its association and union with its sufficient cause from eternity. Fakhr-i-Rází states

that, as explained in section 8, God's precedence before the world of creation is an essential, not temporal, precedence. In essential precedence, the effect is not separated from its cause in time. The essential pre-existence, as the cause, is united in time with the essential origination, as the effect; yet it precedes the effect in essence (*Al-Mabáhiṭh* 477–479).

‘Abdu’l-Bahá states in numerous Tablets and utterances that the world of creation has no beginning. Invoking this maxim, He explains that just as a creator without a creation, a provider without those provided for, a lord without vassals, a sovereign without subjects, and a teacher without pupils are inconceivable, the existence of God necessitates that as long as there has been a God, there has been a creation (*Makátib* 2:158; *Muntakhabát* 3:7–8; *Some Answered Questions* 47:2; *Promulgation* nos. 58, 139).

12. A vicious circle is impossible

A vicious circle occurs when in a series of two or more things or propositions the existence of the first member of the series depends on the existence of another member whose existence, in turn, depends on the first member. The logical absurdity of a vicious circle, like that of an infinite regress of causes and effects, is a foundational maxim upon which many significant philosophical issues are built. One such issue is the proof of the existence of the Necessary Being.

Al-Fárabí states that the existence of any being is either contingent or necessary. A contingent existence requires a cause to bring it into being—a cause which is itself either contingent or necessary. If this cause is a contingent being, it will, in turn, require another cause to necessitate its existence. Were there no Necessary Being, either this chain of causes and effects would continue endlessly, which is logically impossible as shown in section 7, or there would be a vicious circle in which the existence of a being depends on the existence of another being, which itself depends on the existence of the former. This circularity is logically absurd (“Ad-Da’áwí” 2–3). In his rejection of vicious

circle, Avicenna writes that each member of the chain of causes and effects in a vicious circle would at once be the cause and the effect of its own existence. This is logically impossible because it necessarily implies that a thing must precede itself, and succeed itself, existentially, since the existence of a cause necessarily precedes the existence of its effect (*An-Naját* 236). After Avicenna, most Islamic philosophers and theologians rely on the logical impossibility of a thing's preceding itself and succeeding itself in order to refute circularity. Fakhr-i-Rázi, for instance, defines vicious circle as the dependence of a first thing on a second thing and of the second thing on the first thing without or without intermediary and rejects it using Avicenna's arguments (*Al-Mabáhiṭh* 469–470). Íjī similarly defines vicious circle, sets forth arguments against it, and states that Fakhr-i-Rázi considers its impossibility to be axiomatic and not in need of a proof (*Sharḥu'l-Maváqif* 398). Mullá Šadrá adds a third argument, the impossibility of a thing standing in need of itself, to the previous two—the impossibility of a thing preceding itself and the impossibility of a thing succeeding itself (*Al-Hikmatu'l-Muta'áliyab* 1.2:142).

Much of the logical reasoning in the Writings of the Central Figures of the Faith relies on the truth of this foundational maxim. In His commentary on the Islamic tradition “I was a hidden treasure”, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá differentiates between God’s knowledge of the intelligible realities of all things, which is pre-existent and identical with His Essence, and a knowledge of the actual existence of all created beings, which is originated and identical with the existence of created things. He then expatiates upon the appearance of the matter and the form in creation, and of the prime matter—the indeterminate substratum or potentiality—and the prime form. He demonstrates that the matter and the form of each created being are created simultaneously, just as the prime matter and the prime form are created simultaneously. The matter depends on the form in its existence, and the form is in need of the matter in its appearance. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá stresses that this correlation between matter and form does not represent a vicious circle of causes and effects, but rather a concomitance. He defines vicious circle

as dependence of a thing on another, which in turns depends on that thing, with or without intermediary and asserts that matter and form are correlative opposites both of which exist simultaneously and each of which implies the other (*Makátib* 2:35–37). Examples of correlative opposites each of which implies the other, but none of which is the cause of the existence of the other, include father and child, teacher and pupil, and king and subject.

13. A subject can only comprehend an object if they are similar

According to this maxim, a similarity between that which comprehends and the object of its comprehension is essential, such that no comprehension would take place without some similarity between the subject and the object. Avicenna attributes this principle to the Greek pre-Socratic philosopher Empedocles and states that the rational soul comprehends the four basic elements of matter—earth, water, air, and fire—which the ancient Greek philosophers believe constitute everything. He asserts that a subject can only comprehend the objects to which it resembles and concludes that the rational soul is composed of the four basic elements (*Aṭ-Ṭabí‘īyyát* 6:15). Mullá Ṣadrá also affirms that a similarity between the knower and the object of its knowledge is a prerequisite for comprehension. But he goes even further than the notion of similarity and believes in a unity between the subject and the object (*Al-Hikmatu’l-Muta‘álíyah* 4.1:253).

The Bahá’í teachings stress that there is a fundamental separation and distinction between God and His creation (*Paris Talks* no. 17). Bahá’u’lláh writes that while all created things are the signs of God, they are, nevertheless, His creatures and that the Creator can never be likened to His creatures (*Gleanings* 93:7–8). Underlining the absolute transcendence of God, in the Lawḥ-i-Sarráj (*Má’idīy-i-Ásmání* 7:7), Bahá’u’lláh likewise emphasizes that “the One True God, exalted be His glory, is bound unto none by the least tie of relationship or association, of similarity or resemblance” (Dávudí, “Discourse” 62). In the Panj *Shá’n*, the Báb cites this maxim and states that since there is no likeness

between God and His creation, He cannot be known (INBA 1:30–31). In His commentary on the Islamic tradition “I was a hidden treasure”, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá likewise rejects any likeness, similarity, or kinship between God and His creatures in order to demonstrate the difference between knowledge in the contingent world and that in the world of the Necessary Being (*Makátib* 2:33). He then quotes this maxim, gives the examples of the dissimilarity between the human reality and the lower kingdoms, and states that consequently animals, vegetables, and minerals can never comprehend the human being. Additionally, He defines the similarity that is meant in this maxim as the likeness of quality. No two things can be said to be similar unless they are qualitatively alike. He then asserts that quality is an accident that subsists through physical bodies and concludes that God has no physical body in order for an accident to be associated with His reality. Since no created being is qualitatively similar to God, He cannot be known (ibid. 46–47).

14. A subject can only comprehend the objects which it precedes

Avicenna also attributes this maxim to early Greek philosophers. According to this principle, that which comprehends always precedes the mental image and the intelligible form of an object that is being perceived. As a result, they consider the rational soul to be the origin of all the objects that can be perceived, including the four basic elements of matter. As mentioned in the previous section, Avicenna defends the ancient Greek belief that the rational soul is composed of the four elements of matter (*Aṭ-Ṭabí‘īyyát* 6:15). It was also discussed in section 3 that according to Mullá Ṣadrá, comprehension is the presence and the existence of the intelligible reality of a thing within human knowledge. Mullá Ṣadrá further writes that this presence and existence is impossible without an essential connection between that which comprehends and the object of its comprehension and defines this connection as that of cause and effect. Evidently, unlike the early Greek philosophers, Mullá Ṣadrá considers the rational soul to be uncompounded. He, therefore, employs this maxim to an entirely different end and concludes that the relationship between the reality of

the knower and the object of its knowledge is that of a cause preceding its effect (*Al-Hikmatu'l-Muta'aliyah* 4.1:251).

The Central Figures of the Faith often utilize the logically equivalent contrapositive of this maxim as one of the proofs of God's unknowability, a tenet of Bahá'í theology. The Báb, for instance, emphasizes this principle of precedence in causation in relation to comprehension in His commentary on the Súrih of the Cow using a rhetorical question: "how can one who has not created God ever hope to know Him?" (INBA 69:158) In numerous Tablets and utterances, 'Abdu'l-Bahá similarly alludes to this principle and stresses that the contingent and originated human reality can never comprehend the necessary and pre-existence reality of God (*Selections* 21:4; "Forel"; *Some Answered Questions* 59:5; *Abdu'l-Bahá in London* 23; *Promulgation* 46:2; *Khiṭābāt* 2:280). In one statement, 'Abdu'l-Bahá explains that human understanding is preceded by human existence, which is itself preceded by the divine reality. He then asserts that it is impossible for human perception to comprehend the reality of God or for any utterance to unfold its truth or intimate its mystery (*Some Answered Questions* 37:3–4).

15. Nothing ceases to exist *per se*

According to this maxim, nothing by and of itself ceases to exist without the involvement of external factors. The essences of things do not necessitate their own non-existence; rather, non-existence is always an accidental property that befalls them. Had the essence of a thing necessitated its non-existence, it would have never come into being in the first place. This reasoning is found in the writings of Al-Fārābī ("At-Ta'liqāt" 19) and quoted by Suhrawardi (*Sharḥu Hikmatī'l-Ishrāq* 300). Suhrawardi utilizes this maxim to demonstrate the immortality of God (*ibid*).

The theme of the composition and the decomposition of elements—and consequently of existence and non-existence—appears in several Tablets and utterances of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. In His Tablet to Auguste Forel,

for instance, 'Abdu'l-Bahá states that existence, or the coming together of the constituent elements, cannot be compulsory, or an essential property. This would indicate that the essences of created beings would necessarily need to exist and that a decomposition of formation becomes impossible. In another Tablet (*Makátib* 1:375–376), 'Abdu'l-Bahá references material philosophers who posit that all creation is composed of an infinite number of uncompounded elements and that non-existence is the decomposition of these uncompounded elements. While He disagrees with, and refutes, their conclusion that this composition and decomposition of elements can take place without God, He agrees with their argument that by non-existence is meant a relative, not an absolute, non-existence. In a statement recorded in *Some Answered Questions* (80:5), He reiterates this argument, disproves absolute non-existence by equating it with non-existence as an essential property, and stresses that if the essence of a thing had necessitated its non-existence, it would have never come into existence. The very existence of a thing, therefore, indicates that it cannot have been preceded by an absolute non-existence. In one of His talks (*Khiyábat* 1:247), 'Abdu'l-Bahá similarly rebuts existence and non-existence as essential properties of things, thereby proving the contingent existence of all created beings through a voluntary formation. The essences of things necessitate neither their existence nor their non-existence: neither existence nor non-existence is an essential property of a created being. They are both accidental properties imposed upon the essences of things by the Necessary Being.

16. A thing does not exist unless it becomes necessary

Unless a thing reaches the point of necessity, it does not come into being. Another related maxim which is briefly addressed in previous sections, especially sections 10 and 15, is that preponderance without a preponderant is impossible. The contingent, which is indifferent to both existence and non-existence, depends for its existence on a preponderant, a cause which is external to the essence of the contingent and without which it cannot exist. The logical impossibility of

preponderance without a preponderant is a foundational principle for many questions of philosophy. For instance, Islamic philosophers rely on this principle to posit that the reason a thing requires a cause is its contingency, not its origination. Islamic theologians, conversely, argue that the criterion for a thing's requirement of a cause is its origination. Islamic philosophers maintain that when a thing is indifferent to both existence and non-existence, its emergence out of the state of indifference is impossible unless an external preponderant brings it out of the state of indifference to existence and non-existence. This emergence out of the state of indifference, the state which denotes contingency of the essence, demonstrates the need for a cause.

Fakhr-i-Rázi writes that there is a consensus among Islamic philosophers about the logical impossibility of preponderance without a preponderant and that some consider it to be an axiomatic primary premise, whereas others accept it as a proven postulate (*Al-Mabáhiṭh* 125; *Al-Arbaʿín* 104–105). Philosophers who attested to the axiomatic truth of this maxim include Mullá Ṣadrá (*Al-Ḥikmatu'l-Mutaʿáliyāh* 1.1:207) and Fayḍ-i-Káshání (*Uṣūl* 42). Suhrawardi also utilizes this principle to prove other questions of philosophy. He affirms that the essence of the contingent is indifferent to existence and non-existence and is not in itself drawn to either: for if it were, it would not be contingent; it would be either the Necessary Being or a being the existence of which is impossible to think (*Sharḥu Ḥikmatī'l-Isbrāq* 173). Consequently, an essence which exists without an external factor is not indifferent to existence and non-existence: existence is a necessity of its essence; it is the Necessary Being.

Therefore, the possibility of non-existence is never completely removed from the essence of the contingent, unless all the possible paths to non-existence are closed to it, that is, unless it reaches the threshold of necessity. Not only the essence of the contingent but also the preponderance of the external factor which necessitates the existence of the contingent must reach the point of necessity in order to cause the contingent to emerge out of its state of indifference. Thus, a

preponderant which itself does not reach the point of necessity cannot act as the sufficient cause for the existence of a contingent being (*Al-Hikmatu'l-Muta'aliyah* 1.1:223–224). Avicenna elaborates on this maxim in several of his works (*An-Naját* 226; *Uyún* 55–56) and Fakhr-i-Rázi adduces arguments in its proof (*Al-Mabáhiṭh* 131–132). In his expositions of this maxim, Mullá Ṣadrá speaks of two necessities: the necessity which the contingent essence must derive from its cause in order to exist; the necessity which the cause must reach in order to act as the sufficient cause of the emergence of the contingent out of a state of indifference towards existence. He stresses that necessity in both senses is required for the existence of the contingent essence (*Al-Hikmatu'l-Muta'aliyah* 1.1:223–224). Fayḍ-i-Káshání expounds on these views of Mullá Ṣadrá's (*ʿAynu'l-Yaqín* 71) and Mullá Hádí-yi-Sabzivári uses this maxim to prove that the Essence which is necessary in its existence is likewise necessary in its possession of all attributes (*Sharḥu'l-Manẓúmah* 1:260, 348).

In the Ṣaḥífiy-i-ʿAdlíyyih, the Báḅ stresses that God necessitated the existence of all contingent beings, related them to His own Self, and drew them away from non-existence and toward existence (INBA 82:135–136). In another Tablet in response to questions from the governor of Shúshtar, the Báḅ also states that God, through the operation of His sovereign will, brought all things into being; for otherwise, they would never exist (ibid. 67:199). In His commentary on the Islamic tradition “I was a hidden treasure”, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá differentiates between actual non-existence and state of the indifference of the contingent essence toward existence and non-existence. He writes that in the latter state, the contingent essence is not absolutely non-existent, because if it were, it could never come into being. The current existence of contingent beings disproves the possibility of their former non-existence. He argues that according to the law of non-contradiction, a thing cannot embody the attributes of its negation and absolute non-existence cannot acquire the capacity and worthiness to emerge from a state of non-existence into the realm of existence (*Makátib* 2:39). In one of His utterances, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá also explains that just as absolute non-existence cannot acquire

existence, in like manner, things that exist or once existed will not be entirely destroyed and annihilated. Their death, rather than actual non-existence, consists of transformation into a mineral existence. He also affirms that God is the cause that has realized all contingent things and has brought them into existence (*Some Answered Questions* 53:5–7).

17. A thing does not create unless it exists

This maxim is similar in meaning and reference to the principle expounded in the previous section: “a thing does not exist unless it becomes necessary”. That principle identifies the necessity of a thing as the criterion of creation, whereas the maxim “a thing does not create unless it exists” specifies the existence of a thing as the prerequisite for it to create. Since the two notions of necessity and existence are concomitants, these two maxims can also be said to be concomitants. Unless existence reaches the point of necessity, creation is impossible, just as necessity without existence cannot be perceived. This is because necessity is the essential need for existence. Therefore, existence and necessity, two concepts which denote the same reality, are the criteria and the prerequisites for the creation of all beings (Dinani, *Qavá‘id* 1:238).

Mullá Hádý-i-Sabzivárí relies on this maxim to prove the omnipotence of God. He conditions creation upon existence and argues that since contingent beings lack true existence, they cannot create in the true sense of the term. Only the Necessary Being, Who has a true existence, can truly create (*Sharḥu’l-Manẓúmah* 3:621).

The essence of this maxim is captured in a line of the Persian poet Jámí’s verse, which is cited in the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá often to highlight the principles of the Covenant and the Bahá’í social teachings:

That soul which hath itself not come alive,
Can it then hope another to revive?

This intertextuality, for instance, occurs in the Kitáb-i-Badí' (2) where Bahá'u'lláh questions the ability and the motive of Siyyid Muḥammad-i-Iṣfahání, the Antichrist of the Bahá'í Revelation, to guide and to save anyone when he has gone astray himself and broken the Covenant of the Báb. 'Abdu'l-Bahá also uses this motif (*Selections* no. 221; *Ma'ákhidh-i-Ash'ár* 3:290, 292) to stress the importance of perfect unity among the believers before they can invite others to harmony and peace, and of purity and sacrifice before one can teach the Faith. An early translation of this verse also appears in *Memorials of the Faithful* (no. 3) where 'Abdu'l-Bahá states that a teacher must first teach and purify himself before he can teach and guide others:

Shall he the gift of life to others bear
Who of life's gift has never had a share?

'Abdu'l-Bahá likewise employs this principle to refute that a fallible or wayward individual can be the interpreter of the Bahá'í Revelation or the source of guidance (INBA 13:91).

18. The bestower of a thing cannot be deprived therefrom

One can only give what one possesses. An aspect of this principle is explored in the previous section. This maxim stipulates that all the perfections of an effect also exist in its cause and that no perfection can be found in an effect which does not exist in its cause.

In his commentary on the Treatise of Zeno, Al-Fárábí refers to the cause as the bestower and to the effect as the recipient of grace ("Risálatu Zínun" 4). Similar expressions can also be found in the works of Avicenna (*An-Naját* 213). Mullá Ṣadrá uses this principle to demonstrate the truth of his maxim of the uncompounded reality (*Al-Hikmatu'l-Muta'alíyah* 3.1:116) and to support his assertions concerning the attributes of the Necessary Being and God's knowledge of His own Essence (*Al-Mabda'* 189). Mullá Hádý-i-Sabzivári likewise resorts to

this maxim in support of his argument for God's knowledge of His Essence (*Sharḥu'l-Manẓúmah* 3:561).

'Abdu'l-Bahá invokes the logic of this principle in several Tablets and utterances. He states, for instance, that since we can observe infinite perfections, knowledge, and composition of elements in humankind, we can conclude that the cause of its existence, God, must also be infinite in perfections, such as knowledge, power, and existence ("Forel"; *Promulgation* 46:3). In one of His talks, 'Abdu'l-Bahá asserts that the very existence of a worldly being indicates the existence of a Divine Being (*Khiṭábát* 1:149). In another talk, He proves by contradiction that an absence of human perfections—such as the discovery of the realities of things, the power of idealization or intellection, science, memory, perception, and volition—in nature demonstrates that human reality is not a part of, and caused by, the world of nature (*Promulgation* no. 111).

19. A thing in its absoluteness does not yield to distinction or repetition

A thing in its essence and the absoluteness of its substance allows of no distinction or multiplicity. An assumption that the essence and the reality of a thing admits of division or multiplicity leads to contradiction. Were we to assume that in the reality of a thing, which is free of all things beside the pure essence, a duality or multiplicity exists, this duality or plurality must necessarily come from time, location, quantity, quality, or other accidental properties that the substance possesses contingently. This contradicts our original assumption that the absolute substance is free of all things beside the pure essence.

Suhrawardi uses this maxim and the above logic to demonstrate that the reality of existence yields to no repetition or multiplicity. Where the absoluteness of existence is considered, any secondary factor that can be perceived in relation to that reality is nothing but existence

(*Mawsu'atu Muṣannafāt* 56). Mullá Hádīy-i-Sabzivárí arranges the logic of this proposition as minor and major premises of a syllogistic demonstration in order to prove that the reality of existence admits of no repetition or multiplicity (*Al-Hikmatu'l-Muta'aliyah* 1.3:338, fn1). Mullá Ṣadrá draws upon this maxim in his exposition of several philosophical questions. He writes, for example, about the oneness of the rational soul in human species insofar as it is what defines human species. The true reality of human species, without considering accidental properties such as quantity, quality, relation, time, and location, is one (ibid.). He also employs this logic to refute reincarnation. He states that the rational soul, just like the prime matter, is one in the absoluteness of its reality but can accept infinite forms. The oneness of essence is not incompatible with the multiplicity that can take place outside of the essence. The oneness of human species despite a plurality of its members can therefore be explained using the existence of the rational soul, which is one in its essential reality but many in its external references and forms. But it can admit of no multiplicity or repetition in its true reality and the absoluteness of its substance (ibid. 4.2:19–20). Sabzivárí relies on this maxim to demonstrate the truth of Mullá Ṣadrá's statement about the oneness of the prime matter in its absolute reality despite the infinite forms it can accept (ibid. 20, fn1). Fayḍ-i-Káshání uses this principle to prove the supreme singleness of God and to reject any multiplicity in relation to His Essence (*Uṣūl* 14).

In the Súriy-i-Haykal (*Summons* par. 45), Bahá'u'lláh describes His station of essential unity—a station in which all Manifestations of God, owing to Their association with the world of God, are seen as one essence, one soul, and one reality (Bolodo-Taefi, “God, Revelation, and Manifestation” 184)—as a reality which admits of no duality and which should be regarded as one with God. The Báb, in His exposition of the meaning of “the uncompounded reality”, cites this maxim and demonstrates that the names and attributes of God are identical with His Essence. He refutes a statement that the multiplicity of the objects of God's knowledge is tantamount to a multiplicity in the Essence of God and highlights the epistemological error of attempting to

comprehend the Essence of God in the same manner that His creation of the world of being can be understood. He stresses that just as the existence of God is not dependent upon the existence of other forms of life, His knowledge also does not require objects of knowledge (INBA 69:423–424). ‘Abdu’l-Bahá likewise explains that the reality of Divinity admits of no division or multiplicity, which stems from accidental—not essential—properties of things (*Some Answered Questions* 27:2–3). ‘Abdu’l-Bahá also appears to appeal to this maxim as one of His arguments against reincarnation. He states that in the world of creation, “the divine appearances are not repeated” and “no created thing can be identical with another in every way”. He concludes that reincarnation, a “repeated manifestation in this world of the same spirit with its former essence and conditions”, is impossible (ibid. 81:6).

20. Principle of the nobler contingent

According to this principle, a nobler contingent always precedes a baser contingent in existence. Therefore, the existence of a baser contingent necessarily indicates the existence of a nobler contingent prior to it. This maxim is meant to apply only to what exists beyond the world of matter and in the specific setting in which the nobler and the baser contingents are of the same essence, such as the First Intellect or the Platonic Ideas.

Mullá Şadrá attributes this principle to Aristotle (*Al-Ḥikmatu’l-Muta‘álíyah* 3.2:244). Avicenna (*Rasá’il* 2:24), Şhahrazúrí (explicated in *Al-Ḥikmatu’l-Muta‘álíyah* 3.2:245), and Sabzivári (ibid. 3.1:97, fn2) utilize it to prove several philosophical propositions. Suhrawardí quotes this maxim in several of his works (*Mawsú‘atu Muşannaşát* 67–68, 623–624) and uses it to prove the existence of the rational soul and its immortality (ibid. 67). Mullá Şadrá also employs it to prove the intellect, among other things (*Al-Ḥikmatu’l-Muta‘álíyah* 3.2:263).

He demonstrates the truth of this maxim and writes that for the emanation of a nobler contingent from God to not precede the emanation of a baser contingent, one of the following scenarios must necessarily occur:

1. The nobler and the baser contingent must emanate from God simultaneously: This would suggest the emanation of multiplicity from one and extend plurality to the Essence of God.
2. The nobler contingent must emanate from God after the baser contingent does: This would indicate that the effect is nobler than its cause.
3. The nobler contingent, despite its contingency, must not emanate from God at all: The non-existence of a contingent being which God could have brought into existence must be necessitated by a cause which is nobler and loftier than the Necessary Being.

It is clear that all of these scenarios are logically impossible (ibid. 244–246).

In one of His utterances (*Some Answered Questions* 28:4), after discussing causal and temporal kinds of precedence, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá describes precedence with regard to distinction. He states that “the most distinctive precedes the distinctive” and cites the example of the reality of Christ which precedes all created things in essence, attributes, and distinction.

21. A pre-existent being shall never cease to exist

A pre-existent being is a being which requires no cause for both its existence and continuance. It is neither preceded nor succeeded by non-existence. It is a being to which non-existence has no access—it is beyond non-existence. An equally valid inverse of this statement can also be inferred: All corporeal beings will cease to exist.

The first Islamic philosopher, Al-Kindí, considers all material beings to be composed of the four basic elements of earth, water, air, and fire and subject to eventual non-existence (*Falásifatü'l-'Arab* 8:14). In his works, he defines this philosophical dictum and demonstrates its truth (*Rasá'ilu Al-Kindí* 113–114, 169). Al-Fárábí regards the existence as the composition, or coming together, of elements and non-existence as their decomposition and disintegration. He holds that any composition is ultimately followed by decomposition (“Masá'ilu Mutaḥarriqah” 5). Bahmanyár, Avicenna's distinguished pupil, adduces proofs in support of this maxim. Originated beings are preceded by non-existence. This indicates that there was a time when the matter of the world of existence was devoid of the form of originated beings. The matter of the world, then, always contains the potential of being devoid of this form, for without such potential the non-existence of the form of originated beings could have never been actualized. Insofar as the matter of the world of existence was at some point devoid of the form of originated beings, it can also be devoid of this form in the future (*At-Taḥṣīl* 630). Mullá Ṣadrá relies on this maxim occasionally, for instance to demonstrate the immortality of the rational soul. He writes that any being which is not incorporeal and uncompounded—and which is therefore accidental or compounded—is subject to non-existence (*Al-Ḥikmatu'l-Muta'aliyah* 4.1:314, 388). Sabzivári equates the maxim “all originated, material beings are subject to non-existence” with the principle “all compositions are subject to decomposition”. He explains that all compositions consist of diverse elements. The formation of any being as a result of a composition of elements requires that its diverse constituent elements come together against their original nature. This compulsion in nature cannot persist. All compositions will eventually disintegrate and their underlying elements will return to their original conditions according to their respective nature. He also writes that in order for non-existence to befall a being, that being must possess a prior potential for it. Potential requires matter, whereas pre-existence beings are free from matter (*ibid.* 4.1:388, fn1; *Asrāru'l-Ḥikam* 241–242).

The Writings of utterances of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá are replete with statements that associate existence with composition and non-existence with decomposition of constituent elements. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá explains that composition—and therefore existence—is not an essential property of corporeal and contingent beings; for otherwise a decomposition of elements could not take place and nothing would cease to exist. It is, rather, an accidental property bestowed upon them through a voluntary formation fashioned by God (“Forel”; *Selections* no. 225; *Makátib* 1:375–376; *ibid.* 4:146; *Some Answered Questions* 36:2, 39:2, 53:7, 55:4, 60:6, 81:7). Further, the human soul is an incorporeal being; consequently, while not pre-existent, once it comes into being, it shall never cease to exist (*ibid.* 36:3). Nevertheless, as mentioned in section 10, it has a contingent existence and depends on a cause, the grace of God, for its continuance (*Gleanings* 81:1). ‘Abdu’l-Bahá also stresses that the world of God is free of all composition and decomposition and is therefore imperishable (*Makátib* 4:146).

22. Where an essence is predicated on plural subjects, its predication is not from itself

If an essence can be predicated on more than one being, this predication on multiple beings cannot be from the essence itself, but rather from another thing. Al-Farábí asserts that if the predication of an essence on multiple beings is from itself, then that essence *per se* requires plurality and it can never be predicated on only one being. However, predication of essence on a single being is an undisputable fact. It can be concluded then that the predication of an essence on multiple beings is necessarily from a thing which is different from the essence itself. Such predication is, therefore, an effect (“Fuṣúṣ” 4).

It must be noted that essence *per se* is neither singular nor plural. It is indifferent in its relation to both singularity and plurality, as it is to both generality and specificity, or to both actuality and potentiality. Therefore, just as the essence does not demand plurality, neither does

it demand singularity. Both singularity and plurality are accidental properties that subsist through the essence. The difference between singularity and plurality, however, is that singularity and existence are concomitants. Therefore, when an essence exists, it is always predicated on one being. This is because if singularity and existence are concomitants, then the predication of essence on existence is also concomitant with the predication of essence on singularity. But the predication of essence on more than one being requires a cause which is external to the essence itself. Avicenna, for instance, considers plurality to be the effect of singularity and its repetition. He also holds singularity and existence to be concomitants (*An-Najāt* 198). Fakhr-i-Rází (*Al-Mabāḥith* 90) and Mullá Ṣadrá (*Al-Hikmatu'l-Muta'aliyah* 1.2:82) likewise believe in the concomitance of singularity and existence. Mullá Ṣadrá further recognizes singularity as the cause and plurality as the effect, suggesting that a cause is required for plurality to occur (ibid. 122). Sabzivárí similarly upholds the causal relationship between singularity and plurality and emphasizes that plurality is but the repetition of singularity. He adduces arguments to conclude that an admission of plurality in relation to the essence necessitates its non-existence. Therefore, plurality is concomitant with non-existence (*Sharḥu'l-Manẓúmab* 3:511). Fayḍ-i-Káshání posits that the only thing which is potentially plural in essence is the reality of matter (*Uṣūl* 57).

In His commentary on the Súrih of the Cow, the Báḅ expatiates upon the different meanings of life and death and states that singularity is concomitant with life, while plurality is concomitant with death (INBA 69:231).

23. For every motion there is a motive force

This maxim is one of the most important means of proving the existence of God. Through this philosophical principle, as well as the impossibility of infinite regress and vicious circle, thinkers have proved

the existence of the Prime, or the Unmoved, Mover. Such proofs demonstrate either the agency, or efficiency, of the Prime Mover as a cause, or its finality.

Al-Kindí attributes this maxim to Aristotle. Aristotle describes several types of motion, but recognizes generation and corruption—changing from one substantial form to another—as the most notable among them. In order to explain how things come to be and pass away, he states that an originated being *potentially* exists before its coming into being. Potential existence is nothing but the prime matter; once it receives a form, that potentiality is actualized in the form of an actual existence. Aristotle specifies this change from potentiality to actuality as motion. Asserting that every motion requires a motive force, he identifies the final cause as the motive force which causes things to actualize their potentiality (*Rasá'ilu Al-Kindí* 153–154, 162). Al-Fárábí similarly considers the motive force to be the final cause in relation to this maxim (“Ad-Da’áví” 8). Avicenna uses this philosophical principle to prove the existence of the Prime Mover. He concludes that the Prime Mover is the motive force insofar as it provides the end and the purpose of motion (*An-Naját* 262). Bahmanyár (*At-Taḥṣíl* 478) and Sabzivárí (*Sharḥu'l-Manẓúmah* 3:509) consider the Prime Mover to be both the efficient and the final cause.

Philosophers before Mullá Ṣadrá believed that motion occurs in only four categories of accidents: place, quality, quantity, and position. They suggested that the actualization of motion requires a fixed subject that persists as long as motion itself persists. Were the substance of a being to be the subject of motion, they claimed, nothing about that original being would persist through motion. Proving the occurrence of motion in the indeterminate substratum of the world, Mullá Ṣadrá resolved several significant philosophical questions. The scope of the principle concerning the requirement of motion to motive force is, however, confined to motion in the four categories of accidents. Whereas motion in such accidental categories requires a motive force, substantial motion requires a life force. Therefore, according to Mullá

Şadrá, the above maxim would change to “For every moving thing there is a sustainer” (*Al-Hikmatu’l-Muta‘aliyah* 1.3:39–40).

The original form of this principle also gained popularity among rationalist theologians, such as Allámah Al-Ĥillí (*Ídāh* 276–278) and Fakhr-i-Rází, who provides several arguments in its proof. One such argument, for instance, states that if an object were capable of moving *per se* and required no external motive force, then it would never stop moving and its stillness would be impossible. Since the essential properties of an object persist so long as its essence does, the motionlessness of an object indicates that motion is not its essential property but is caused by an external motive force (*Al-Mabáhiṭh* 554). Another argument, presented by Bahmanyár (*At-Taḥṣíl* 475), Fakhr-i-Rází (*Al-Mabáhiṭh* 555), and Mullá Şadrá (*Al-Hikmatu’l-Muta‘aliyah* 1.3:41–42) among others, states that in order for an object to move without an external motive force, motion must be its essential property. This requires the simultaneous potentiality and actuality of the object in relation to motion, which is logically impossible.

As shown in section 4, in His utterances, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá confirms substantial motion. Further, in His Tablet to Auguste Forel, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá uses this maxim in His discussion of the chain of causation in order to prove the existence of the Ultimate Cause. In another Tablet, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá invokes the logic of this maxim to stress that in this day, “the signs of the revelation of the Sun of Truth are present and manifest in all created things”, yet the unfair, the ignorant, and the unheeding “remain utterly unaware of the cause of this growth and development, and the source of this boundless progress”: “They see the motion, but reflect not upon its motive force” (*Light* 45:5). Moreover, Bahá’u’lláh refers to God in a prayer as the “Prime Mover” of the entire creation (*Prayers* 169:2) and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá writes that the motive force of both voluntary and involuntary motions in the world of creation is God (*Má’idiy-i-Asmání* 5:103).

24. All that is known to humankind exists

Whatsoever humankind can know must inevitably exist. The contrapositive of this statement is also equally valid: That which does not exist can never be known to humankind. Human ignorance of that which is non-existent can be considered an axiomatic proposition. Khájih Naşíru'd-Dín-i-Ṭúsí (“Al-Fuṣúḷ” 1) states that from one’s knowledge of an object one’s recognition of its existence can be inferred *a fortiori*. Asserting that human knowledge of an object is inseparable from human knowledge of the principle of existence, Ṭúsí uses this maxim to prove the truth of existence. Fakhr-i-Rází adduces a proof to demonstrate this maxim. That which is known to humankind, according to Fakhr-i-Rází, is necessarily distinguished from other objects, and that which is distinguished from other objects necessarily exists. Having established the truth of this maxim, Fakhr-i-Rází accepts its contrapositive without further proof (*Al-Mabáḥith* 377–378), although he substantiates it elsewhere (*Jámi‘u’l-‘Ulúm* 7).

As described in section 12, in His commentary on the Islamic tradition “I was a hidden treasure”, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá narrates the views of some schools of Islamic thought that differentiate between God’s knowledge of the intelligible realities of all things and a knowledge of the actual existence of all created beings. Concerning the latter, He refers to the view which considers the objects of knowledge—that which is known—to be originated and created (*Makátib* 2:34–35). While this discourse takes place in the context of God’s knowledge of His creation, the principle to which ‘Abdu’l-Bahá refers, the origination and actual existence of that which is known, equally applies to human knowledge.

25. All contingents are compositions

According to this maxim, the cause of any composition is its essential contingency. Conversely, the notions of singleness, simplicity, non-delimitation, and incorporeality fall outside the contingent realm and are associated with the Necessary Being. When an essence is considered in its relation to existence and non-existence, there are only three

possibilities: the essence requires existence; it requires non-existence; or it requires neither existence nor non-existence. If an essence *per se* requires existence, its existence is “essentially necessary”. If it requires non-existence, its existence is “essentially impossible”. If an essence requires neither existence nor non-existence, it is “essentially contingent”. It is this essential contingency that is the subject of this maxim.

Al-Fárábí discusses this principle in his commentary on the Treatise of Zeno (“Risálatu Zínun” 3–4). Avicenna states that if the existence of a reality comes from another source, then that reality is a composition; it is not an uncompounded reality. According to Avicenna, that which comes from another source is different from that which the reality possesses *per se*. A reality whose existence comes from another source then has two distinct aspects and is a compounded reality. Therefore, beside the Essence of God, Which is the only Necessary Being, Whose existence does not come from another source, and Which is truly uncompounded, all other beings, which are contingent, contain some kind of composition (*Al-Iláhiyyát* 47). Mullá Šadrá also describes that the notions of singleness, simplicity, pre-existence, non-delimitation, and incorporeality are concomitants with the concept of essential necessity and their referent is the Essence of God. On the contrary, the notions of plurality, composition, origination, delimitation, and corporeality are concomitants with the concept of essential contingency and their referent is to be found in the essences of created beings. All contingent beings, therefore, are composed of matter and form, of essence and existence, and of potentiality and actuality. Even the world of creation itself can be said to comprise an intelligible matter and form: contingency is its matter, whereas composition is its form (*Al-Hikmatu’l-Muta‘aliyah* 1.1:186–189). He further uses this maxim to assert that a plurality of the attributes that we ascribe to God does not contradict the singleness of His Essence. He argues that despite their plurality and differences in their meanings, all such attributes are united in reference—with God as their single referent (ibid. 3.2:232). For a discourse on the difference between meaning and reference in relation to God’s attributes, see section 2. Mullá Hádý-i-Sabzivárí relies on this maxim

to examine composition and demonstrate the need of all creation to a cause (*Asráru'l-Hikam* 47–48).

A discussion of the Bahá'í Writings concerning composition appears in several sections of this paper, particularly in sections 15 and 21. Moreover, as mentioned previously, in His commentary on the Islamic tradition “I was a hidden treasure”, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá narrates the views of some schools of Islamic thought concerning God’s knowledge of His creation. According to one such view, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá states, all created things are composed of matter and form (*Makátib* 2:35).

26. The existence of all things is commensurate with their station

The portion which every essence takes of existence and its manifestation are commensurate with the station of that essence. Qúnáví introduced this maxim to elucidate the concept of Fixed Entities according to the views of the mystical philosophers (*An-Nuṣúṣ* 70). It is through the concept of Fixed Entities that Islamic mystical philosophers explain God’s pre-existent knowledge of, and His relationship with, all creation. They believe that each essence occupies a station, according to the portion it takes of existence, along the hierarchy and gradation of existence. Some beings, therefore, are nobler than others, precede others on the continuum of existence, and act as causes; yet some beings are baser than others, are further down the hierarchy of existence, and act as effects. Further, any one essence may likewise receive different gradations of existence and, consequently, have different manifestations. For instance, any one essence may have an intelligible existence, an archetypal or ideal existence, an actual or formal existence, a vocal or literal existence, and a written existence, among others. The stations that various essences occupy on the continuum of existence, as well as gradations of the existence of any one essence, therefore, manifest different intensities of existence. A superior being possesses the properties and qualities of an inferior being, but an inferior being does not possess the properties and qualities of a superior being.

Fixed Entities are described as one manifestation of the existence of the essences of things—their intelligible existence in God’s knowledge. Fixed Entities do not have an actual, or formal, existence; they represent the pre-existent fixity of things in the Divine knowledge—things as they are known to God. The mystical philosopher Ibnu’l-‘Arabí and his followers stress the intelligible fixity of all beings in the Divine knowledge prior to their actual existence. Islamic mystical philosophers suggest that the manifestation of all things in the world of creation is determined in the knowledge of God through Fixed Entities, that all things reflect some of God’s attributes, and that only humankind can reflect all of the attributes of God (Jundí, *Sharḥu Fuṣúṣ* 342). Qúnaví further states that any being can be considered pre-existent when considered from the perspective of its Fixed Entity—its fixity in the Divine knowledge. It can also be said that all that is fixed in the Divine knowledge is originated and contingent when viewed in relation to its existence in this world (*An-Nuṣúṣ* 70).

Several aspects of this maxim, such as the oneness of the universal revelation and the outpouring of existence, the difference in stations and capacities of essences, the gradation of existence, the plurality of the manifestations of existence in each station, and a superior being’s possession of the properties and qualities of an inferior being, have been affirmed in the Writings and utterances of the Central Figures of the Faith. In *Tafsír-i-Nubuvvat-i-Khāṣṣih* (INBA 40:95), for instance, the Báb expatiates upon the entification and individuation of the first emanation from God, its manifestation in different stations of existence, and its reflection in the human soul. In another Tablet (*ibid.* 176), the Báb also states that the first emanation from God has different manifestations according to the capacities and stations of beings and according to the portion that the entification of distinctions and degrees—as they are enshrined in intelligible existence of essences in the Divine knowledge—takes of actual and formal existence. As stated in section 2, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, in His commentary on the Basmalah (*Makátib* 1:49–52), stipulates that in God’s station of Oneness, the Divine names find a manifestation, entification, and life-giving existence in the form

of Fixed Entities.² ‘Abdu’l-Bahá (*Some Answered Questions* 82:17) describes the first emanation in the following words:

The first emanation is the outpouring grace of the Kingdom, which has emanated from God and has appeared in the realities of all things, even as the rays emanating from the sun are reflected in all things. And that grace—the rays—appears in infinite forms in the realities of all things, and is specified and individuated according to their capacity, receptivity, and essence.

Further, in His commentary on the Islamic tradition “I was a hidden treasure”, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá relates the views of Islamic philosophers who believe in the origination of the essences and stations of beings. They state, according to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, that the outpouring of the grace of existence and of God’s life-giving creation is one and universal in relation to all beings, without any distinction; each being, however, takes a portion of existence and occupies a station according to the receptivity and the capacity its own essence. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá describes this notion of the gradation of existence using the Illuminationist light imagery: The sun shines and bestows its grace upon all its rays equally. Some rays, however, reside myriad leagues afar, while others abide within the proximity of the sun. It is not that the sun chooses to keep some rays close and send others afar. It casts upon all rays the same effusion of its radiance. Each ray, however, occupies a station according to its own receptivity and capacity (*Makátib* 2:38–39).

In another Tablet, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá affirms and elaborates on the notion of the gradation of existence by differentiating between the singularity of its meaning and the plurality of its references. He asserts that the concept of “existence” has only one meaning, but that existence has different stations in each of which it also has different entifications, individuations, and specific qualities and properties. The mineral, the vegetable, the animal, and the human all exist. None of these essences is deprived of existence. In each station, however, the existence has a unique manifestation and reflects unique qualities and properties

commensurate with the reality and the capacity of that station. In the human station, for instance, the effusion of the grace of existence is most effulgent and its manifestation is most intense (*ibid.* 1:218).

In several talks, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá stresses the oneness of the outpouring of existence and the equality of its life-giving bestowal in relation to all created things notwithstanding the diversity of the stations of beings and the difference in their capacities and receptivity (*Khiṭábát* 1:6; *Promulgation* 62:3). A corollary to this maxim is that, according to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, owing to the difference in stations and degrees of existence, an inferior being in the order of existence does not possess the qualities and perfections of a higher degree and cannot comprehend it. Conversely, a superior being possesses the qualities and perfections of a lower degree and can comprehend it (*Makátib* 4:57–58; *Some Answered Questions* 59:6, 70:5; *Paris Talks* no. 5; *Khiṭábát* 1:5; *‘Abdu’l-Bahá in London* 23; *Promulgation* 62:2). The human being receives the greatest share of the effusion of existence, encompasses all created things, and embodies “all the perfections of the world of creation: the mineral body, the vegetable tenderness, and the animal senses” (*Khiṭábát* 1:6, provisional translation).

Further, as described in section 12, in His commentary on the Islamic tradition “I was a hidden treasure”, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá expatiates upon the appearance of the matter and the form in creation, as well as the prime matter and the prime form, by narrating the views of some schools of Islamic thought. He demonstrates that the matter and the form of each created being are created simultaneously, just as the prime matter and the prime form are created simultaneously. The undifferentiated matter depends on the form in its entification, individuation, specification, and existence, and the form is in need of the matter in its appearance. Therefore, the capacities of essences and the outpouring of existence are created simultaneously (*Makátib* 2:35–36).

27. In every motion, the subject must continue to exist

The question of motion has perplexed philosophers since Classical Greece. Some regard it as the very manifestation of existence, while others deny its actual existence. One of the most celebrated challengers of the truth of motion is Zeno of Elea whose arguments against motion, such as his dichotomy paradox, arrow paradox, and paradox of Achilles and the tortoise, have puzzled the keenest minds for over two millennia. At the opposite end of the spectrum is the view that the world of existence is nothing but the different manifestations of change and motion—a view immortalized by Heraclitus in his philosophical dictum, “No man ever steps in the same river twice”. The constant and ever-present motion of all things is examined thoroughly in Mullá Şadrá’s doctrine of substantial motion. According to this doctrine, not only accidental properties of things but also the very substance and the essence of the world is in a constant flux: Nothing is motionless (*Al-Hikmatu’l-Muta‘áliyāh* 1.3:69–105).

Every motion requires a beginning, an end, a motive force, a distance traversed, a purpose, and a subject. The subject of motion—that which moves and changes from one state to another—must continue to exist throughout the motion. Its continuance is as necessary as its existence in any motion. Should the subject of motion not remain, but cease to exist, in the course of the motion, it cannot be said that a *thing* has moved and actualized its potentiality; it can only be observed that an existent thing ceases to exist and then another thing comes into existence. This would impair the possibility of evolution. Islamic philosophers generally recognize motion in four categories of accidental properties—location, quality, quantity, and position—with the subject of motion being the substance, or the essence, of a thing. They posit that in the case of motion in accidental properties, despite any change, the substance remains intact. They disagree, however, that the subject of motion also continues to exist in the case of motion in substance. Were the substance and the essence of a thing—and consequently its essential reality—to suffer change, a subject would no longer remain in motion in order to connect its future to its past, or its actuality to its

potentiality. The connecting link between the future and the past and between the actuality of a thing and its potentiality in a motion is the continuance of the subject of motion (Dinani, *Qavá'id* 2:723–724).

Fayḍ-i-Káshání, Mullá Ṣadrá's distinguished pupil, maintains that in substantial motion, a material being has different forms and phases. Although these forms and phases constantly change, an all-inclusive factor nevertheless unifies them. Therefore, in its substantial motion, each material being continually moves from one phase of substantiality to another. The continuance of the subject of motion is achieved through two means. Firstly, the active intellect, or the agent intellect, which according to Muslim Peripatetics gives all things their form, encompasses the entirety of the motion of a being. Secondly, the prime matter—the indeterminate substratum or potentiality—finds individuation and specification in each phase of substantial motion by receiving an essential form. This association between the prime matter and forms engenders a single continuous existence through which all phases of substantial motion subsist. These preserve the unique identity of the being and continue the unscathed existence of the subject of motion. The phases and forms in substantial motion can be likened to those in the life of a human being. Through childhood, youth, and old age, the identity of a person, which is the subject of motion, continues to exist (*Uṣūl* 109).

In His utterances, 'Abdu'l-Bahá confirms motion in essence and substance in addition to motion in accidental properties. He states that “nothing that exists remains in a state of repose”, that “all things are in motion”, that they experience qualitative, quantitative, essential, and substantial motion, that “they are either growing or declining, either coming from non-existence into existence or passing from existence into non-existence”, and that motion is an essential property of existence (*Some Answered Questions* 63:1–2; *Khīṭábát* 1:142–143).

28. Any being which can be described as nondelimited is partly delimited

In order to describe a being, one must first perceive it. A being cannot be perceived unless it is an individuated or a specified entity. Such entification demonstrates its delimitation. Therefore, that which can be described as nondelimited is partly delimited.

Islamic mystical philosophers Ibnu'l-'Arabí (*Al-Futúḥát* 4.272:313–315) and Qúnaví (*An-Nuṣúṣ* 39–40, 66) distinguish between two different senses of nondelimitation. When considered from the perspective of their essence, beings can be corporeal, incorporeal, or nondelimited. Although a nondelimited essence is free from delimitation of corporeality and incorporeality, it is still delimited by its being described as nondelimited. When considered from the perspective of existence, however, God, the Absolute Existence, is not only nondelimited, but its nondelimitation is such that it is not even delimited by its nondelimitation. Existentially, God is essentially nondelimited. He is infinite and absolute, undefined and undefinable, indistinct and indistinguishable, whereas the world of creation is distinct, defined, and limited. Therefore, owing to God's essential nondelimitation, one must resort to an apophatic theology in order to consider His existence. His nondelimitation is such that He must be exalted above any description, including a description of nondelimitation, which is tantamount to delimitation.

The Writings of the Central Figures of the Faith are replete with statements that negate all that is other than God's Essence, emphasize His nondelimitation, and exalt Him above any names and attributes, above any description (*Aqdas* 92, 96; *Íqán* 70; *Gleanings* 26:1, 26:3–4, 124:1, 148:1; *Tablets* 102, 113; *Áthár* 4:95; *Má'idíy-i-Ásmání* 7:142; INBA 15:179, 31:107, 41:282–83, 82:54, 86:186; *Prayers* no. 176; *Makátib* 1:134, 1:188, 2:141), above any entification and specification (*Makátib* 2:7), and even above exaltation and sanctification (*Má'idíy-i-Ásmání* 7:81; *Áthár* 6:198; *Some Answered Questions* 27:2–3). Bahá'u'lláh, for instance, writes: “Far is the realm of names from the court of His

presence to which praise itself is ashamed to claim any relation and sanctification itself is abashed to allude. Exalted, immeasurably exalted, is He above every mention and every description” (Dávúdí, “Discourse” 64, provisional translation).³ Further, in an iteration of this maxim, Bahá’u’lláh writes: “Whatsoever in the contingent world can either be expressed or apprehended, can never transgress the limits which, by its inherent nature, have been imposed upon it. God, alone, transcendeth such limitations.” (*Gleanings* 78:2)

29. There is no reason for god’s action save his essence

Any action which proceeds from one’s will is taken for a cause or to serve a purpose. God’s action proceeds from His will. It is logical to conclude then that any Divine action is taken for a reason or to serve God’s purpose. How can the existence of a reason or purpose be justified in relation to God’s action?

Many Islamic rationalist theologians reject the existence of a reason or purpose in relation to God’s action. Fakhr-i-Rází, for instance, asserts that any being who does anything with a motive, an intention, or a goal, is inevitably imperfect and incomplete. He elaborates that a being who takes an action according to a motive, with an intention, or toward a goal, cannot be indifferent to its existence and non-existence. One acts because one will be better off having taken that action. If one does not fulfil that which leaves one better off, one will be imperfect and incomplete. Therefore, one who takes an action according to a motive, with an intention, or toward a goal, has a need which one seeks to satisfy with that action (*Al-Mabáhiṭh* 542–543). Would the existence of a reason or purpose in relation to God’s action then not be tantamount to deficiency and imperfection in His Essence?

As described in section 16, according to Mullá Hádíy-i-Sabzivárí, the Essence which is necessary in its existence is likewise necessary in its possession of all attributes (*Sharḥu’l-Manẓúmah* 1:260, 348). This principle requires that God be sanctified from all aspects of contingency.

Just as God is necessary in His existence, He is also necessary in His knowledge, His will, and all the other attributes. Since His will is a property of His Essence, no reason outside His Essence can exist for His action. As discussed in section 23, God is at once the efficient and the final cause. Therefore, the reason for His action is nothing but His own Essence.

As has been shown in sections 2, 5, and 7, Bahá'ís believe that God's names and attributes in His world are identical with His Essence. Therefore, the reason for the operation of any one of God's names and attributes through His action is nothing but the necessity of His Essence. Further, the Central Figures of the Faith reject need and dependence in relation to God (INBA 69:423–424; *Makátib* 2:11; *Some Answered Questions* 53:4). This precludes the existence of a reason or purpose outside God's Essence in relation to His action. In His exposition of the meaning of “the uncompounded reality”, the Báb highlights the oneness of God's names with His Essence to stress the essential distinction between the Necessary Being and the contingent and to reject God's need of external, contingent factors for the operation of His attributes. He states that just as the existence of God is not dependent upon the existence of other forms of life, His knowledge also does not require objects of knowledge (INBA 69:423–424). By the same token, the operation of His sovereign will, which, like His other attributes in His world, is identical with His Essence, is not in need of a reason or a purpose located outside His Essence. Similarly, in His commentary on the Islamic tradition “I was a hidden treasure”, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá (*Makátib* 2:32–33) contrasts contingency with necessity and completely negates all aspects of contingency from the Necessary Being. He writes:

It is evidently clear and established that all that pertaineth unto the contingent world is in no wise possible in relation to God, inasmuch as no likeness, resemblance, kinship, or affinity can ever exist between the Creator and the created, between the Necessary and the contingent, between God and His creation. For, from time immemorial, the attribute of God, glorified be He, hath been the

absolute power, glory, and wealth, and the condition of the created things and the contingent beings utter abasement, wretchedness, and poverty. Whatsoever the contingent beings and the created things possess of essential attributes, that Essence of essences and Truth of truths is sanctified and exalted therefrom in the supernal heights of His holiness and the sublime dominion of His sanctity. Wherefore, how can the Necessary compare with the contingent and the Creator be likened unto His creatures? (provisional translation)

30. There is a parity between correlative opposites in potentiality and actuality

This philosophical maxim serves as the bedrock of several important questions of philosophy. An essential otherness or duality between two concepts or states which cannot come together in an individual referent at the same time and in the same respect is known as opposition. A relation of opposition is of four kinds: contradiction, contrariety, the relation between privation and possession, and correlation. In correlative opposites, each concept implies the other; neither concept can be perceived without the other; yet, neither concept is the cause of the existence of the other. Examples of correlative opposites include father and child, teacher and pupil, and king and subject (Suhrawardi, *Mawsú'atu Mušannafát* 51). Therefore, two correlative opposites are equivalent and alike not only in their potentiality and actuality, but also in their existence and non-existence. Mullá Šadrá (*Al-Hikmatu'l-Muta'alíyah* 3.2:238–239) and Mullá Hádí-i-Sabzivári (*Šharḥu'l-Manẓúmah* 3:565–566) rely on this principle to demonstrate the oneness of the knower and the objects of knowledge.

As described in section 12, in His commentary on the Islamic tradition “I was a hidden treasure”, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá expatiates upon the appearance of the matter and the form in creation. He demonstrates that the matter and the form of each created being are created simultaneously. The matter depends on the form in its existence, and the form is in need of the matter in its appearance. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá stresses that this correlation

between matter and form does not represent a vicious circle of causes and effects, but rather a concomitance. He defines vicious circle as dependence of a thing on another, which in turns depends on that thing, with or without intermediary and asserts that matter and form are correlative opposites both of which exist simultaneously and each of which implies the other (*Makátib* 2:35–37).

31. An effect must resemble its cause

The unique association of an effect with its cause is the foundation of all philosophical reasoning. Every effect has some similarity, compatibility, and affinity with its cause and every cause has a distinct characteristic in respect to which it can engender its effect. Without this unique association, any cause would bring about any effect, any effect would proceed from any cause, the indispensable and fundamental law of causality would collapse, and philosophical and scientific thinking, as well as daily life, would be disrupted. Fayḍ-i-Káshání relies on this principle to advance the views of Mullá Ṣadrá's Transcendent Theosophy school of thought on God's causation of His creation and the ontological primacy of existence (*Uṣūl* 71–72).

Notwithstanding its centrality to the law of causality, however, Islamic rationalist theologians reject this principle in relation to God, as they consider any notion of resemblance between God and His creation to be incompatible with a belief in His transcendence. Therefore, while they recognize God as the original Cause of the entire creation, they also reject any likeness, similarity, comparison, resemblance, and affinity between God and His creation.

One of the most significant fruits of this principle is the cardinal maxim which declares that “nothing except ‘one’ can emanate from ‘one’”. This maxim and the above-mentioned objection by Muslim theologians concerning the similarity between an effect and its cause in relation to God are explored in section 33.

In a Tablet explicating the meaning of the maxim “nothing except ‘one’ can emanate from ‘one’”, the Báb rejects a view that the Essence of God is the cause of His creation. He argues that an effect must resemble its cause, yet there is no similarity, comparison, and affinity between the Essence of God and His creation. In the absence of the resemblance criterion, no direct causal relation between the Essence of God and His creation can be perceived. The Báb explains that the cause of the world of creation is rather God’s divine creation itself—His very act of fashioning the world of creation through the operation of His sovereign Will in Himself and by Himself. This is known as God’s station of Oneness, which is the first revelation, or mention, of divine creation and the cause of the emanation of multiplicity and the world of creation (INBA 69:430–432).

32. Privation of a sense is tantamount to privation of some knowledge

According to this principle, the source of all human knowledge is the sensory faculty, such that a person who is deprived of some senses is also deprived of some knowledge. By knowledge in this maxim is strictly meant mediated—not immediate—knowledge, which is acquired, in Aristotelian terms, through perception—the reception of a sensible form by a sensory faculty—and thinking—the reception of an intelligible form by an intellectual faculty. Islamic philosophers generally subscribe to Aristotle’s views on knowledge and understanding. They believe that both our universal concepts—concepts like “human”, “flower”, and “book”, which the intellect abstracts from external reality—and our derivative concepts—*a priori* concepts like “existence”, “unity”, “contingence”, and “causality”, which the intellect formulates through analysis—originate from our senses, albeit indirectly (Fakhr-i Rázi, *Tafsír* 20:91–92; Mullá Şadrá, *Ash-Shaváhid* 1:202–203).

Al-Ghazálí recognizes the sensory faculty as the source of all mediated knowledge. He asserts that immediate knowledge and esoteric wisdom

can be acquired, conversely, through sensory deprivation, asceticism, and attraction of the heart (*Iḥyá* '896). Mullá Ṣadrá utilizes this maxim to conclude that the rational soul cannot attain to the station of the active intellect unless it tears away the veils of the senses (*Al-Ḥikmatu'l-Muta'aliyah* 4.2:126).

In His Tablet to Auguste Forel, 'Abdu'l-Bahá appeals to the truth of this maxim and states that “the human intellect develops and weakens, and may at times come to naught”, that “for the mind to manifest itself, the human body must be whole”, that “a sound mind cannot be but in a sound body”, that “it is by the aid of such senses as those of sight, hearing, taste, smell and touch, that the mind comprehendeth”, and that the mind “understandeth not while the senses have ceased to function”. Beyond the scope of mediated knowledge acquired through the sensory faculty, however, the Writings of the Central Figures of the Faith harmonize sensory perception, reason, rational perception, discursive and intellectual learning, scientific knowledge, religious revelation, and intuitive and spiritual perception. They state that some insights, truths, realities, and meanings cannot be comprehended by, and can in fact be acquired without,⁴ the sensory and rational faculties, which are susceptible to error (*Íqán* 148; *Some Answered Questions* ch. 83). Nevertheless, 'Abdu'l-Bahá asserts that none of these criteria of human knowledge can be entirely relied upon and that certitude can be attained only through confirmations of the Holy Spirit (*Some Answered Questions* ch. 83).

33. Nothing except ‘one’ can emanate from ‘one’

This maxim is one of the most important principles of Islamic philosophy and many questions of philosophy are either directly or indirectly founded upon it. Al-Farábí attributes it to Aristotle (“Risálatu Zínun” 3–4). According to this maxim, a thing, insofar as it has only a single ontological aspect, can be the source of the creation of only one thing. In other words, if a cause is “one” in the true sense of the term, is uncompounded, and incorporates no mental, intelligible, or actual

composition—such as composition of essence and existence, genus and differentia, or matter and form—then the effect that emanates from it is necessarily also “one” and contains no composition. The converse of this statement is also equally valid: “one” can emanate from nothing except “one”. This maxim derives its truth from the necessity of the existence of an essential affinity between a cause and its effect—the unique association of an effect with its cause which, as described in section 31, is the foundation of all philosophical reasoning and without which any cause would bring about any effect, any effect would proceed from any cause, and the law of causality itself would be impaired. If it is assumed that a cause is truly one and uncompounded, yet two distinct effects emanate from it, then that cause would necessarily have a unique association with each of the two effects. The existence of two unique associations in the cause contradicts the assumption of its true oneness and is tantamount to its composition. Therefore, where multiple effects emanate from a cause, either the cause is not truly one—that is, it has more than a single ontological aspect—or the effects are not truly plural.

Al-Kindí (*Rasá'ilu Al-Kindí* 207) expatiates upon this maxim; Al-Fárábí (“Ad-Da'áwí” 4) demonstrates its truth in relation to the emanation of creation from God; Avicenna (*Al-Ishárát* 3:122) adduces arguments in its proof; and Bahmanyár (*At-Taḥṣíl* 531) and Averroes (*Taháfatu't-Taháfát* 288–291) discuss it in their works. Suhrawardí (*Mawsú'atu Muṣannafát* 502, 622) elaborates on this maxim in several of his writings. Khájjih Naṣíru'd-Dín-i-Ṭúsí (*Al-Ishárát* 3:122), who formulates this maxim mathematically (ibid. 462–463), and the Illuminationist thinker and expounder of Suhrawardí's works, Quṭbu'd-Dín-i-Shírází (*Sharḥu Hikmati'l-Isḥráq* 305), both recognize it as an axiomatic principle. Mír Dámád (*Al-Qabasát* 351) acknowledges it as an immediate axiom and one of the most foundational principles of reason and Mullá Hádíy-i-Sabzivárí (*Asraru'l-Hikam* 109, 120, 150) discusses it in relation to the emanation of creation from God.

Owing to its prominent status in philosophical reasoning, this maxim serves as a major point of divergence between Islamic philosophers and

rationalist theologians, particularly in relation to its application to the emanation of the world of existence from God. Some rationalist theologians, the most distinguished of whom are Al-Ghazálí and Fakhr-i Rází, reject the truth of this maxim. Al-Ghazálí states that this maxim is incompatible with a belief in the emanation of the world of creation, which is characterized by plurality, from God, Who is the essence of oneness (*Tabáfatu'l-Falásifah* 143). Fakhr-i-Rází questions the arguments which have been adduced in proof of this maxim (*Al-Mabáhiṭh* 460–468) and censures it as a proposition which is at variance with a belief in God's omnipotence (*Al-Arba'in* 333–335).

How can plurality in the world of creation emanate from God's oneness? Mullá Ṣadrá explains, as also described in section 25, that all contingent beings incorporate the two aspects of contingency and existence. Therefore, the first emanation from God, while it is one, is composed of essence and existence. It embodies the two aspects of possession and privation. It is an effect in its relation to God and a cause in its relation to the world of creation. This composition of aspects, and its concomitant plurality, is an essential property of the first emanation through which the rest of the creation comes into being (*Al-Hikmatu'l-Muta'áliyab* 3.2:232). Qúnáví similarly identifies further aspects of plurality in the first emanation from God (*Miṣbáh* 30).

The application of this maxim can be seen in the formulation of several tenets of the Bahá'í teachings, such as the emanation of the world of creation from God and the essential unity of the Manifestations of God despite their diversity and human distinction. The first emanation from God, the universal reality known as the First Intellect, the Primal Will, and the Word of God (*Some Answered Questions* chs. 38, 42, 53, 54), receives the strongest effusion of God's revelation and, "even as a clear mirror in which the Sun of Truth is revealed and manifested in the fullness of its attributes and perfections" (*ibid.* ch. 27), reflects the light of existence upon the rest of the creation. It is the channel, Bahá'u'lláh states, through which other creatures come into being (*Íqán* 73; *Ḥadiqiy-i-'Irfán* 110–111). Further, the first

emanation, that single pre-existent revelation that has emanated from God in eternity, without becoming plural or limited to the bounds of time, is associated successively with a Manifestation of God in every age. Therefore, to consider the Manifestations of God to be distinct and plural in Their station of essential unity, while They are the first emanation from God, is to extend plurality to His Essence, which is tantamount to blasphemy (Dávúdí, *Ulúhíyyat* 182, 187).

In a Tablet explicating the meaning of this maxim, the Báb emphasizes its truth but rejects a view that the “one” from which only one can emanate refers to the Essence of God, insofar as the Essence of God is exalted above any association, relationship, or affinity. He asserts instead that the “one” from which only one can emanate refers to God’s station of Oneness from which the first emanation, the Primal Will, can emanate; that only “one” is capable of reflecting the Supreme Singleness of the Essence of God; that in the absence of any resemblance or association between the Essence of God and anything else no direct causal relation between His Essence and His creation can be perceived; that the original cause which God established as the cause of the entire creation is itself a creation of God; that the “one” which emanates from “one” is characterized by a duality; and that it is impossible for anything except the first emanation, the Primal Will, to emanate from the “one” which is God’s attribute of creativity itself (INBA 69:429–433).

34. ‘One’ is not a number, but is the source thereof

Philosophers do not generally recognize “one” as a number because they argue that the definition of quantity as something which is essentially susceptible to division does not apply to it. Instead, according to Mullá Şadrá, they consider it to be the source and the origin of all numbers because all numbers are formed through the repetition of “one”. Metaphysicians also identify every number on the infinite continuum of numbers as a unique species with a distinct essence and prove the difference between these essences in the sequence of numbers through

the difference between their essential properties. They conclude that no number can be the cause, or the origin, of the creation of the other numbers and that only the unit “one” can be the source of all numbers (*Al-Hikmatu'l-Muta'aliyah* 1.2:98–99). This principle is particularly prominent in Ibnu'l-'Arabi's doctrine of the unity of existence and his view on the emanation of the world of creation from God (*Al-Futúḥát* 1.46:383; 5.348:298).

In one of His Writings, Bahá'u'lláh reiterates this maxim and describes “one” as the ornament of all numbers. He states that although “one” is the source of all numbers and they are all derived from it and composed of it, it is nevertheless not a number itself and is free from such a designation (INBA 33:1, 3). ‘Abdu'l-Bahá echoes this principle in His commentary on the Islamic tradition “I was a hidden treasure”:

Consider the unit “one” and how all numbers emanate from it, yet it is not a number in itself, for it is the basis of all numbers. The first entification and emanation of the unit “one” is the number “one,” and from the number “one” do all numbers come into being. And now, these numbers, in the utmost simplicity and oneness, were folded up within the unit “one,” which was the hidden treasure of all numbers, and from which they emanated. (*Makátib* 2:9, provisional translation)

In a Tablet, ‘Abdu'l-Bahá likewise asserts that “one” is the source of all numbers, yet it is not a number itself. It occupies a throne which is the singularity of the unit “one” (INBA 84:295). In one of His utterances, ‘Abdu'l-Bahá recounts the views of the proponents of the unity of existence, such as the Theosophists and the Sufis. Narrating their imagery of the sea and its waves through which they describe the appearance of the real Existence in countless forms of the originated beings, ‘Abdu'l-Bahá states that “they compare this to the One and the infinite numbers, in that the former has manifested itself in the degrees of the latter, for numbers are the repetition of the One. Thus two is the repetition of one, and so on with the other numbers.” (*Some Answered Questions*

82:4) He then demonstrates and affirms the true meaning of the unity of existence, the real existence of the One through which all things have come to exist, and refutes the manifestational appearance of the One in infinite forms (ibid. 82:12, 16).

Conclusion

This paper demonstrates that topics and concepts within Islamic thought and intellectual tradition have contributed to the efflorescence of the Revelation in the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, the Báb, and 'Abdu'l-Bahá. That numerous precepts of Islamic philosophy are adopted and expounded in the Writings of the Central Figures of the Bahá'í Faith, however, does not mean that the Bahá'í Writings necessarily endorse and uphold them in the sense in which they are used in Islamic milieu and intellectual history. When a philosophical maxim appears in the Writings of the Central Figures, it has ipso facto been revealed by Them, thereby showering Their favors upon the philosopher or theologian who may have first uttered it. In such uses of intertextuality, the Central Figures are engineering Their discourses by weaving into them maxims of Islamic philosophy, investing these maxims with new meaning and life, and at times changing them in the process or even rejecting them. Neither are these dictums static pieces that are inserted in the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, the Báb, and 'Abdu'l-Bahá, nor did the Central Figures possess copies of volumes authored by these litterateurs in order to cite from them.

Elements of the cultures, sciences, literatures, philosophies, technologies, and ethics of every age enter the religions and shape the development of practices, rites, observances, and laws of the peoples. The Bahá'í Faith, unlike other religions, believes in the historicity of divine revelation and religion. Divine revelation is not devoid of social and historical context and does not unfold in a vacuum. It is for this reason that the Bahá'í Faith maintains that spiritual truth is revealed progressively and divine religions must be renewed.

Before the advent of the Báb, divine revelation sent down in the form of scripture never explicitly formulated principles of theology, philosophy, spiritual quest, and law. Therefore, the development of intellectual life witnessed the conflict between those who established a philosophical thought independent of religion and those who formulated a philosophy founded on religion. Islam was not immune from this clash between philosophy and religion either. Even though Islam sought to unify the Muslim community, the diverging approaches of Islamic philosophers, rationalist theologians, and mystical philosophers caused a division among the faithful.

The Bahá'í Faith addresses this challenge using several means. Not only is unity among believers specified as a goal of the Bahá'í Faith and ensured through the Covenant, principles of theology, philosophy, spiritual quest, and law are also established, detailed, and explicated in the Writings of the Central Figures of the Faith. Some distinctive themes in Bahá'í philosophy, as bodies of knowledge that will emerge to facilitate the acceptance of the Bahá'í teachings through reason and faith, may include historicity of divine revelation and renewal of religion, limitation of the criteria of comprehension, process thinking, gradation of existence, divine unity and transcendence, Manifestation of God, oneness, equality of rights, spiritual quest through service and life in society, and practical wisdom and morality.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

‘Abdu’l-Bahá.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá in London. UK Bahá’í Publishing Trust, 1987. reference.bahai.org/en/t/ab/ABL/.

Light of the World: Selected Tablets of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. Bahá’í Reference Library. bahai.org/library/authoritative-texts/abdul-baha/light-of-the-world/.

Má’idiy-i-Asmání. Vol. 5. Comp. ‘Abdu’l-Ḥamíd Ishráq-Khavarí. Mu’assisiy-i-Millíy-i-Maṭbú’át-i-Amrí, 129 B.E. [1972–3]. reference.bahai.org/fa/t/ab/MAS5/index.html.

Majmú’iy-i-Khiṭábát-i-Ḥaḍrat-i-‘Abdu’l-Bahá. Vol. 1. Bahá’í-Verlag, n.d. reference.bahai.org/fa/t/ab/KA1/index.html.

Majmú’iy-i-Khiṭábát-i-Ḥaḍrat-i-‘Abdu’l-Bahá. Vol. 2. Bahá’í-Verlag, n.d. reference.bahai.org/fa/t/ab/KA2/index.html.

Makátib-i-‘Abdu’l-Bahá. Vol. 1. Kurdistánu’l-‘Ilmíyyih, 1910. reference.bahai.org/fa/t/ab/MA1/index.html.

Makátib-i-‘Abdu’l-Bahá. Vol. 2. Kurdistánu’l-‘Ilmíyyih, 1912. reference.bahai.org/fa/t/ab/MA2/index.html.

Makátib-i-‘Abdu’l-Bahá. Vol. 4. Mu’assisiy-i-Millíy-i-Maṭbú’át-i-Amrí, 121 B.E. [1964–5]. reference.bahai.org/fa/t/ab/MA4/index.html.

Memorials of the Faithful. Bahá’í Reference Library. bahai.org/library/authoritative-texts/abdul-baha/memorials-faithful/.

Muntakhabátí az Makátib-i-Ḥaḍrat-i-‘Abdu’l-Bahá. Vol. 3. Bahá’í-Verlag, 1992. reference.bahai.org/fa/t/ab/SWA3/index.html.

Muntakhabátí az Makátib-i-Ḥaḍrat-i-‘Abdu’l-Bahá. Vol. 4. Bahá’í-Verlag, 2000. reference.bahai.org/fa/t/ab/SWA4/index.html.

Paris Talks. Bahá’í Reference Library. bahai.org/library/authoritative-texts/abdul-baha/paris-talks.

Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. Bahá’í Reference Library. bahai.org/library/authoritative-texts/abdul-baha/selections-writings-abdul-baha.

Some Answered Questions. Bahá’í Reference Library. bahai.org/library/authoritative-texts/abdul-baha/some-answered-questions/.

Tablet to Dr. Auguste Forel. Bahá’í Reference Library. bahai.org/library/authoritative-texts/abdul-baha/tablet-august-forel/.

Tablets of Abdul-Baha Abbas. US Bahá'í Publishing Committee, 1909. reference.bahai.org/en/t/ab/TAB/.

The Promulgation of Universal Peace: Talks Delivered by 'Abdu'l-Bahá during His Visit to the United States and Canada in 1912. Bahá'í Reference Library. bahai.org/library/authoritative-texts/abdul-baha/promulgation-universal-peace/.

Al-Fárábí.

"Ad-Da'ávi'l-Qalbíyyah". *Rasá'ilu Abi Naşri'l-Fárábí*. Dá'iratu'l-Ma'árifil-Uṭhmáníyyah, 1349 A.H. [1930].

"At-Ta'liqát". *Rasá'ilu Abi Naşri'l-Fárábí*. Dá'iratu'l-Ma'árifil-Uṭhmáníyyah, 1346 A.H. [1927].

"Kitábu'l-Fuşuş". *Rasá'ilu Abi Naşri'l-Fárábí*. Dá'iratu'l-Ma'árifil-Uṭhmáníyyah, 1345 A.H. [1926].

"Risálatun fí Masá'ilin Mutaḥarriqah". *Rasá'ilu Abi Naşri'l-Fárábí*. Dá'iratu'l-Ma'árifin-Nizámíyyah, 1344 A.H. [1925–6].

"Sharḥu Risálati Zínuni'l-Kabíri'l-Yúnání". *Rasá'ilu Abi Naşri'l-Fárábí*. Dá'iratu'l-Ma'árifil-Uṭhmáníyyah, 1349 A.H. [1930].

Al-Ghazálí.

Iḥyá'u 'Ulúmi'd-Dín. Ibn Ḥazim, 2005.

Tabáfatu'l-Falásifah. Fourth Ed. Dáru'l-Ma'árif bi Mişr, 1966.

Al-Kindí. *Rasá'ilu Al-Kindíyyi'l-Falsafíyyah*. Ed. Abú Rídah, Muḥammad 'Abdu'l-Hádí. Dáru'l-Fikri'l-'Arabí, 1950.

At-Taftázání, Sa'du'd-Dín. *Sharḥu'l-'Aqá'idin-Nasafíyyah*. Dáru Iḥyá'it-Turáthi'l-'Arabí, 2014.

Averroes. *Tabáfatu't-Tabáfat*. Dáru'l-Ma'árif, 1964.

Avicenna.

Al-Iláhiyyát. Vols. 1 & 2. Maktabatu Áyati'lláh Al-Mar'ashí, 1404 A.H. [1983–4].

Al-Ishárát va't-Tanbíhát. Vol. 3. Nashru'l-Balaghah, 1435 A.H. [2014].

An-Naját. Maṭba'atu's-Sa'ádah, 1938.

At-Tabí'íyyát. Vol. 2. Maktabatu Áyati'lláh Al-Mar'ashí, 2012.

Rasá'ilu Ibn-i-Síná. Vol. 2. Horoz Basimevi, 1952.

Uyúnu'l-Hikmah. Dáru'l-Qalam, 1980.

The Báb.

Dalá'il-i-Sab'ih. *Ocean of Lights*. oceanoflights.org/file/Bab-BKW-05-1.pdf.

Selections from the Writings of the Báb. Bahá'í Reference Library. bahai.org/library/authoritative-texts/the-bab/selections-writings-bab/.

Bahá'u'lláh.

Áthár-i-Qalam-i-A'lá. Vol. 4. Mu'assisiy-i-Millíy-i-Maṭbú'át-i-Amrí, 133 B.E. [1976–7].

Áthár-i-Qalam-i-A'lá. Vol. 6. Mu'assisiy-i-Millíy-i-Maṭbú'át-i-Amrí, 132 B.E. [1975–6].

Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh. Bahá'í Reference Library. bahai.org/library/authoritative-texts/bahauallah/gleanings-writings-bahauallah/.

Iqtidárát va Ḥand Lawḥ-i-Dígar. *Bahá'í Reference Library*. reference.bahai.org/fa/t/b/IQT/iqt-1.html.

Kitáb-i-Badí'. Bahá'í-Verlag, 2008.

Má'idíy-i-Asmání. Vol. 7. Comp. 'Abdu'l-Ḥamíd Ishráq-Khávarí. Mu'assisiy-i-Millíy-i-Maṭbú'át-i-Amrí, 129 B.E. [1972–3]. reference.bahai.org/fa/t/b/MAS7/index.html.

Prayers and Meditations. Bahá'í Reference Library. bahai.org/library/authoritative-texts/bahauallah/prayers-meditations/.

Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh Revealed After the Kitáb-i-Aqdas. Comp. Research Dept. of the Universal House of Justice. Trans. Habib Taherzadeh. *Bahá'í Reference Library*. bahai.org/library/authoritative-texts/bahauallah/tablets-bahauallah/.

The Call of the Divine Beloved. Bahá'í Reference Library. bahai.org/library/authoritative-texts/bahauallah/call-divine-beloved/.

The Kitáb-i-Aqdas: The Most Holy Book. US Bahá'í Publishing, 1992. bahai.org/library/authoritative-texts/bahauallah/kitab-i-aqdas/.

The Kitáb-i-Íqán: The Book of Certitude. US Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 2019. bahai.org/library/authoritative-texts/bahauallah/kitab-i-iqan/.

The Summons of the Lord of Hosts. Bahá'í Reference Library. bahai.org/library/authoritative-texts/bahauallah/summons-lord-hosts/.

The Tabernacle of Unity: Bahá'u'lláh's Responses to Mánikchí Sháhib and Other Writings. Bahá'í Reference Library. bahai.org/library/authoritative-texts/bahauallah/tabernacle-unity/.

Bahmanyár. *At-Taḥsíl*. Tīhrán University Press, 1375 S.H. [1996].

Bolodo-Taefi, Vargha. "God, Revelation, and Manifestation". *The World of the Bahá'í Faith*. Ed. Robert H. Stockman. Routledge, 2022.

Dávúdí, 'Alí-Murád.

"Amr-i-Bahá'í va Falsafiy-i-Sharq". *Áhang-i-Badí* 327, nos. 23–24 (1353 S.H. [1974]): 23–30.

"A Discourse on Bahá'í Theology: A Treatise by Dr. 'Alí-Murád Dávúdí on God and Revelation". Trans. and Annot. Bolodo-Taefi, Vargha. *The Journal of Bahá'í Studies* 30, no. 4 (2021): 53–105. doi.org/10.31581/jbs-30.4.298(2020). *Ulúhiyyat va Mazhariyyat*. Ed. Vahid Rafati. Institute for Bahá'í Studies in Persian, 1996. reference.bahai.org/fa/t/o/AM/index.html.

Dinani, Gholam Hossein Ibrahimi. *Qavá'id-i-Kulliy-i-Falsafí dar Falsafiy-i-Islámi*. Vols. 1 & 2. Institute for Humanities & Cultural Studies, 2002.

Hadíqiy-i-'Irfán. 'Andalíb Editorial Board of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Canada, [1994]. reference.bahai.org/fa/t/c/HI/.

Ibn Faná'í. *Misbáhu'l-Uns*. Fajr, 1363 S.H. [1985].

Ibnu'l-'Arabí. *Al-Futúhátu'l-Makíyyah*. Dáru'l-Kutubi'l-'Ilmiyyah, 1999.

Al-Jurjání, Ash-Sharíf. *Sharhu'l-Maváqif*. Al-Ash'arí, n.d.

Iranian National Bahá'í Archives (INBA).

Vol. 1. N.p., 132 B.E. [1975]. *Afnan Library Online*. afnanlibrary.org/docs/persian-arabic-mss/inba/inba-vol-001/.

Vol. 13. N.p., 132 B.E. [1976]. *Afnan Library Online*. afnanlibrary.org/docs/persian-arabic-mss/inba/inba-vol-013/.

Vol. 15. N.p., 132 B.E. [1976]. *Afnan Library Online*. afnanlibrary.org/docs/persian-arabic-mss/inba/inba-vol-015/.

Vol. 31. N.p., 133 B.E. [1976]. *Afnan Library Online*. afnanlibrary.org/docs/persian-arabic-mss/inba/inba-vol-031/.

Vol. 33. N.p., 133 B.E. [1976]. *Afnan Library Online*. afnanlibrary.org/docs/persian-arabic-mss/inba/inba-vol-033/.

Vol. 40. N.p., 133 B.E. [1976]. *Afnan Library Online*. afnanlibrary.org/docs/persian-arabic-mss/inba/inba-vol-040/.

Vol. 41. N.p., 133 B.E. [1976]. *Afnan Library Online*. afnanlibrary.org/docs/persian-arabic-mss/inba/inba-vol-041/.

Vol. 62. N.p., 133 B.E. [1976]. *Afnan Library Online*. afnanlibrary.org/docs/persian-arabic-mss/inba/inba-vol-62/.

Vol. 67. N.p., 133 B.E. [1976]. *Afnan Library Online*. afnanlibrary.org/docs/persian-arabic-mss/inba/inba-vol-067/.

Vol. 69. N.p., 133 B.E. [1976]. *Afnan Library Online*. afnanlibrary.org/docs/persian-arabic-mss/inba/inba-vol-69/.

Vol. 82. N.p., 133 B.E. [1976]. *Afnan Library Online*. afnanlibrary.org/docs/persian-arabic-mss/inba/inba-vol-82/.

Vol. 84. N.p., 133 B.E. [1976]. *Afnan Library Online*. afnanlibrary.org/docs/persian-arabic-mss/inba/inba-vol-84/.

Vol. 86. N.p., 133 B.E. [1977]. *Afnan Library Online*. afnanlibrary.org/docs/persian-arabic-mss/inba/inba-vol-86/.

Kāshání, Fayḍ.

ʿAynu'l-Yaqín. Vols. 1–2. Dáru'l-Maḥajjati'l-Bayḍá', 2011.

Uṣūlu'l-Ma'árif. Dáru'l-Ma'árifil-Ḥikmiyyah, 2010.

Mír Dámád. *Al-Qabasát*. Ṭihrán Univerity Press, 1988.

Qayṣarí, Muḥammad Dávúd. *Sharḥu Fuṣúṣi'l-Ḥikam*. *Shirkat-i-Intishárát-i-'Ilmí va Farhangí*, 1375 S.H. [1996–7].

Qazviní, Najmu'd-Dín. *Ídāḥu'l-Maqāṣid min Ḥikmat-i-Ayni'l-Qavá'id*. Ṭihrán University Press, 1959.

Qumayr, Yúḥanná. *Falásifatul-'Arab: Al-Kindí*. Vol. 8. Al-Maṭba'atu Káthulíkiyyah, 1954.

Qúnaví, Ṣadru'd-Dín. *An-Nuṣúṣ fí Tahqíqí't-Ṭúri'l-Makḥṣús*. Mansha'atu'l-Ma'árif, 2003.

Rafati, Vahid.

Ma'ákhidh-i-Ash'ár dar Áṭḥár-i-Babá'i. Vol. 3. Association for Bahá'í Studies in Persian, 2000. reference.bahai.org/fa/t/o/MASH3/.

Yádnámiy-i-Miṣbāḥ-i-Munír. Bahá'í-Verlag, 2006.

Rází, Fakhrud-Dín.

Al-Arba'in fí Uṣúli'd-Dín. Maktabatu'l-Kullíyyáti'l-Azhariyyah, 1986.

Al-Mabáḥithi'l-Mashriqiyyah fí 'Ilmí'l-Ilāhiyyát va't-Ṭabí'íyyat. Bídár, n.d.

Lavámi'u'l-Bayyinát fí Sharḥ-i-Asmá'i'lláh Ta'álá va's-Ṣifāt. Maṭba'atu'sh-Sharafiyyah, 1323 A.H. [1905].

Jámi'u'l-'Ulúm. Handwritten manuscript. Library of the Iranian Parliament.

Tafsíru'l-Fakḥri'r-Rází (At-Tafsíru'l-Kabír). Vol. 20. Dáru'l-Fikr, 1981.

“Recent Tablets from Abdul-Baha”. *Star of the West* 2, nos. 7–8 (1911): 11–13.
bahai.works/Star_of_the_West/Volume_2/Issue_7_and_8.

Sabzivári, Mullá Hádí.

Asráru’l-Ḥikam fi’l-Muftataḥ va’l-Mukḥtatam. Maṭbú‘át-i-Díní, 1383 S.H. [2004–5].

Sharḥu’l-Manzúmah. Vol. 1. Nashr-i-Náb, 1369 S.H. [1990].

Sharḥu’l-Manzúmah. Vol. 3. Al-Ḥawzah Online. <https://alhawzaonline.com/almaktaba-almakroaa/book/180-Falsafa/0003-Shar7-al-manzouma/03/book-name.htm>.

Ṣadrá, Mullá.

Al-Ḥikmatu’l-Muta‘álíyah fí Asfári’l-‘Aqlíyyati’l-Arba‘ah. Vols. 1–4. Dáru Iḥyá’i’t-Turáthi’l-‘Arabí, 1990.

Al-Mabda‘u va’l-Ma‘ád. Markaz-i-Intishárát-i-Daftar-i-Tablígḥát-i-Islámí, 1380 S.H. [2001–2].

Ash-Shaváhidu’r-Rubúbíyyah fí Manáḥijí’s-Sulúkiyyah. Vol. 1. Al-Markazu’l-Jámi‘í li’-Nashr, 1981.

Shírází, Qutbu’d-Dín. Sharḥu Ḥikmatí’l-Ishráq-i-Suhravardí. Tíhrán University Press, 2001.

Suhrwardi, Shahábu’d-Dín. Mawsú‘atu Muṣannafáti’s-Suhravardí. Dáru Raváfíd, 2018.

Ṭabáṭabá‘í, Muḥammad-Ḥusayn. Naháyatu’l-Ḥikmah. An-Nashru’l-Islámí, 1404 A.H. [1984].

“The Will of the Creator is Effected Through the Process of (Voluntary) Composition”. *Star of the West* 6, no. 8 (1915): 62–64. bahai.works/Star_of_the_West/Volume_6/Issue_8.

Ṭúsí, Khájíh Našíru’d-Dín. Al-Fuṣúl fi’l-Uṣúl. Handwritten manuscript. Library of the Iranian Parliament.

Universal House of Justice.

Letter dated 3 June 1982. www.bahai.org/r/609489226.

Letter dated 8 February 1998. www.bahai.org/r/201498500.

NOTES

- 1 I would like to thank Dr. Iraj Ayman and Dr. Moojan Momen for their encouragement and valuable advice.
- 2 For a discussion of related themes, such as the emanation of plurality from oneness and of origination from pre-existence, intelligible existence in the Divine knowledge, and Fixed Entities, see Dávúdí, “Discourse” footnote 46.
- 3 For a comprehensive exploration of God’s nondelimitation and the apophatic theology of the Bahá’í Faith, including a broad catalog of the Writings and utterances of the Central Figures of the Faith on these themes, see Dávúdí, “Discourse”.
- 4 For instance, an experience, in the world of dreams, of precognition, or of solving a problem by the spirit that could not be solved in the realm of wakefulness (Some Answered Questions 61:2).