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BELIEF IN GOD

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The Jerusalem Treatise

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(Ihya' 'ulum al-din)

His Oneness

He is one in being without partner, unique without peer, ultimate without opposite, alone without equal. He is one, preeternal, beginninglessly uncreate, everlastingly abiding, unceasingly existent, eternally limitless, the ever self-subsisting through whom all else subsists, ever enduring, without end. He is, was, and ever will be possessed of all attributes of majesty, unannihilated by dissolution or separation through the passage of eons or terminus of interims. He is the First and Last, the Outward and Inward, and He has knowledge of everything.

His Transcendence

He is not a body with a form, or a limitary, quantitative substance, not resembling bodies in quantifiability or divisibility, or in being a substance or qualified by substance, or being an accident or qualified by accidents. He does not resemble anything that exists, nor anything that exists resemble Him. There is nothing whatsoever like unto Him, nor is He like unto anything. He is not delimited by magnitude, contained by places, encompassed by directions, or bounded by heavens or earth. He is 'ascendant over the Throne' (mustawin, Koran

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20:5) in the way He says and the meaning He intends, 'ascendant' in a manner transcending contact, settledness, position, indwelling, or movement. The Throne does not bear Him up, but is borne up by the subtlety of His infinite power, as are the angels who carry it, and all are powerless in His grasp. He is above the Throne, the heavens, and all else to the farthest reaches of the stars, with an aboveness that does not increase His nearness to the Throne or the heavens, or His distance from the earth and what lies beneath it. He is as exalted in degree above the Throne and the heavens as He is above the earth and its depths, though He is near to everything in existence, nearer to a servant than his own jugular vein, and is witness to everything. His nearness no more resembles the nearness of objects to one another than His entity resembles the entities of objects. He does not indwell in anything, nor anything indwell in Him. He is as exalted above containment in space as He is above confinement in time. He was, before creating time and space, and is now even as He was. He is distinguished from His creation by His attributes. There is nothing in His entity other than Him, nor is His entity in what is other than Him. He is beyond change and motion: events neither occur within Him nor changes befall Him. He remains in His attributes of majesty exalted above change, and in the attributes of His perfection beyond needing any increase in perfection. The existence of His entity is known by human reason, and in the afterlife is beheld by the eyesight of the righteous as a beatitude and favor, to consummate their perfect joy with the sight of His Noble Countenance.

His Life and Almighty Power

He Most High is living, almighty, overmastering,

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triumphant, unaffected by inability or weakness; unsusceptible to drowsiness, sleep, annihilation, or death; possessed of absolute sovereignty and might, of irresistible power and force. His is the majesty and sway, the creation and command. The heavens are enfolded in His right hand and all beings are powerless in His grasp. He alone creates, begins, gives existence, and originates. He creates all beings and their acts, ordains their sustenance and terms. Nothing possible is out of His grasp, the disposal of no matter is beyond His power. The number of things He can do is limitless, the amount He knows is infinite.

His Knowledge

He knows all things knowable, encompassing all that takes place from the depths of the earth to the highest heaven. He knows without an atom's weight in the earth or heavens escaping His knowledge. He knows the creeping of a black ant across a great stone on a lightless night, and the motion in the air of a particle of dust on a windy day. He knows the concealed and the yet more hidden, the buried recesses of hearts, the movement of thought, and the opacities of the inmost soul; with preeternal, beginningless knowledge that He has always possessed from the limitless reaches of past eternity, not with awareness originating within Him through being imparted or conveyed.

His Will

He Most High wills all that exists and directs all events. Nothing occurs in the physical or spiritual world, be it meager or much, little or great, good or evil, of benefit or detriment, faith or unbelief,

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knowledge or ignorance, triumph or ruin, increase or decrease, obedience or sin; save through His ordinance, apportionment, wisdom, and decision. What He wills is, and what He does not will is not. Neither sidelong glance nor passing thought is beyond His design. He originates all and returns it, does what He wills, and none can repulse His command. There is no rescinding His destiny, no flight for a servant from disobeying Him except through divinely given success therein and mercy, and no strength to obey Him save through His choice and decree. If all mankind, jinn, angels, and devils combined their efforts to move or to still a single particle of the universe without His will and choice, they would be unable to. His will, like His other attributes, exists in His entity and He ever possesses it. He has willed from preeternity the existence of all things at the times He has chosen. They occur at the times which He has destined from beginningless eternity, occurring neither before nor after, but taking place in accordance with His knowledge and will, without substitution or alteration. He directs events without successive thoughts or waiting for time to elapse, which is why nothing diverts Him from anything else.

His Hearing and Sight

He Most High is all-hearing and all-seeing. He hears and sees, no sound however slight eluding His hearing, and no sight however minute escaping His vision. Distance does not obscure His hearing nor darkness hinder His vision. He sees without pupil or eyelids, and hears without ear canal or ears, just as He knows without a heart, seizes without limb, and creates without implement. His attributes no more resemble the attributes of His creatures than His entity resembles the entity of His

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creatures.

His Speech

He Most High speaks, commands, forbids, promises, and warns with beginninglessly eternal speech that is an attribute of His entity, not resembling the speech of creatures in being a sound generated by the passage of air or impact of bodies nor in letters articulated by compressing the lips or moving the tongue. The Koran, Torah, Evangel, and Psalms are His Books, revealed to His messengers (upon whom be peace). The Koran is recited with tongues, written in books, and memorized in hearts despite being beginninglessly eternal, an attribute of the entity of Allah Most High, unsubject to dis severance and separation by conveyance to hearts or pages. Moses (Allah bless him and give him peace) heard the speech of Allah without sound or letter, just as the righteous see the entity of Allah Most High in the afterlife without substance or accident.

Since Allah possesses all of the above attributes, He is living, knowing, omnipotent, willing, hearing, seeing, and speaking by virtue of His life, power, knowledge, will, hearing, sight, and speech, not merely by virtue of His entity.

His Acts

Everything besides Him Glorious and Exalted exists through His action, proceeding from His justice in the best, fullest, most perfect and equitable way. He is wise in His acts and just in His decrees. His justice is not comparable to the justice of His servants, since injustice may only be imagined from a servant through his

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disposal of what belongs to another, while this is inconceivable from Allah Most High, since nothing belongs to anyone besides Him that He should unjustly dispose of it.

Everything besides Him, be it human, jinn, angel, devil, heaven, earth, animal, vegetable, mineral, substance, accident, intelligible, or sensory, is contingent, and was brought into existence through His power after not being, created by Him after it was nothing. He alone existed in preeternity, and nothing else. He then originated creation, that His omnipotence might be manifest, His prior decree effected and His eternal word realized; not from needing or requiring anything in creation. Our origination, beginning, and responsibility are of Allah's generosity, not because of their being obligatory for Him, and His blessings and benefaction exist because of His favor, not because of being due from Him. Everything that exists is indebted to Him for His generosity and goodness, His blessings and benevolence; for He is well able to pour all manner of torments upon His servants and try them with every variety of suffering and illness, and were He to do so, it would be just on His part and not wicked or unfair. He Mighty and Majestic rewards His servants, the believers, for their acts of obedience because of His generosity and in fulfillment of His word, not because of their deserving it or His owing it to them. He is not obliged to anyone to do anything, nor is injustice on His part conceivable, for He does not owe any rights to anyone. The obligation of men and jinn to perform acts of obedience is established by His having informed them of it upon the tongues of the prophets (upon whom be peace), and not by unaided human reason. He sent the prophets and manifested the truth of their messages by unmistakable, inimitable miracles. They have communicated His commands, prohibitions, promises, and

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warnings, and it is obligatory for mankind and jinn to believe in what they have conveyed.