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Secret of the Word

Sirr al-Kalima

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Abstract This essay presents a gnostic (*ʿirfānī*) reading of machine intelligence, written in response to a specialist's inquiry regarding the epistemological limits of modern technology. Setting aside the utilitarian and technical paradigms of computer science, the author situates artificial intelligence within the framework of traditional Islamic cosmology. Central to the discussion is a "Theory of the Word" (*naẓariyyat al-kalima*), which posits that the cosmos is a continuous manifestation of the Divine Names. These Names, the author explains, become specified through the all-comprehensive Name—Allah—whose ontological root is delineated through three Arabic letters: *Alif*, *Lām*, and *Hāʾ*. Within this metaphysical context, the author re-evaluates fundamental categories of human reality. The intellect (*ʿaql*), knowledge (*ʿilm*), the heart (*qalb*), and religion (*dīn*) are discussed not as mere cognitive or social functions, but as cosmic modes of receiving, fettering (*ʿiqāl*), housing, and exalting the Divine Word. Genuine intellection, the essay argues, should not be confused with the rapid, delimited analysis of stored data. It is, rather, a qualitative receptivity to the Unseen (*al-ghayb*). The author cautions that humans are currently in danger of repeating the idolatry of the golden calf by creating an artifact only to subject themselves to its determinations. To serve as a mercy rather than an instrument of disintegration, technology must be repatterned according to the Purified Intellect (*al-ʿaql al-muzakkā*) found in the prophet, the messenger, and the saint—that is, the station of the perfect human (*al-insān al-kāmil*). The essay concludes by suggesting a conceptual shift in the mathematical foundations of computer engineering. The author challenges the sufficiency of binary logic (the zero and the one), urging a move toward a ternary system modeled on the structure of the Basmala—zero, one, and the dividing isthmus (*barzakh*) between them. In doing so, he calls for a re-examination of the ontological and mathematical reality of zero as the boundary between existence and non-existence.

Keywords: artificial intelligence; Sufism; Theory of the Word; Divine Names; gnosis (*maʿrifa*); the Purified Intellect; Karkariyya; ethics of technology

INTRODUCTION

When the divine gave us the opportunity to teach at some of the world's most prestigious universities, and after witnessing their dedication to knowledge, and how they were blessed with a passion for learning without flattery or prejudgment, and following lectures at several universities, I observed that many scholars' primary focus was on what they call "artificial intelligence." I was asked about it multiple times and lectured on it at several universities, not from the technical aspect—as this field has its experts—but from the ethical and gnostic perspective. Through numerous lectures and meetings, I noticed confused and conflicted understandings about the meaning of intellect, knowledge, and gnosis. I also observed that what is called artificial intelligence is merely an attempt to compensate for the deficiency humans perceive in themselves and nothing more, for that which is complete needs no complement.

During a private session, fortune brought forth an expert in this field. He spoke to me as a student would to a teacher, explaining the weaknesses in artificial intelligence and the limitations they had encountered. He asked me to provide insights to solve this dilemma. He confided that the achievements of human progress are fundamentally based on the words and guidance of the People of God and what prophets and messengers have left for us, as the human mind cannot comprehend its ultimate purpose on its own because it is constrained by its sensory faculties.

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When I gave him a short explanation of the solution, he was taken aback and bewildered by my words. He asked me to write down the solution in brief, hoping it might be a harbinger of good for humanity. The following pages were written in response to his request and the keenness of those who are eager to learn the essence of this art.

As I see it, humanity has once again returned to the calf of its idolatry, though this time in the form of a technology. The hope is to rely on it in a state of stagnant helplessness, until the technology becomes a god. This has been the pattern throughout the ages: people create an idol and then worship it. But over time, the idol of their polytheism transforms from a stone to a calf with a lowing sound,[1] and now to an intelligent technology they want to create and then be enslaved to, giving it the power of decision and judgment over themselves. People see this technology as mirroring the perfection they aspire to, forgetting that this perfection is rooted in the original state they were created in, which is to have comprehensive knowledge, both general and specific, through learning the science of the Names: "And He taught Adam all the Names" (Q 2:31).

Before I begin to detail this branch of knowledge, it is necessary to explain that the words and intellect of a saint cannot be comprehended by a limited intellect. When a saint speaks, he speaks from the perspective of sainthood, because the saintly aspect of his humanity is for communication, and the human aspect of his sainthood is for witnessing.

When a saint communicates through writing, his words come from the niche of sainthood. A saint only expresses meanings that language is capable of conveying and ink is able to inscribe. As for divine secrets and higher gnosis, they cannot be found in books, for the ink of divine proximity and the pen of divine success only inscribe them in the hearts that the divine has permitted to be elevated.[2] Such hearts view themselves as unworthy of anything, so the divine has chosen them, and they have attained knowledge through ignorance, ascension through descent, and elevation through humility.

When we, the people of sainthood, express ourselves, if our speech is conveyed through language, then know that we have eased it into the shade. We offer it so you may perceive Separation, and we draw it back toward us slightly so you may recognize Union. Otherwise, what is the benefit if you do not understand the meaning of our words, their intent, and their purpose?

Here I extend the shade of reality to the bearers of knowledge so that they can become acquainted with how gnosis descends, and what it means to be a Knower of God, but in a new light characterized by a simplicity of expression. Most of what has been written by the People of God has not been understood; its meanings have not been grasped because the readers are blind and the writers are sighted. How can the blind understand other than by gauging meaning through the sensory and the absolute through the restricted? Thus, their understanding is askew, and no meaning becomes clear in their mind, which is limited by the boundaries established by cosmic wisdom. Therefore, they end up in one of two states: either they deny the words of the People of God, or they misunderstand and perceive what was not intended to be understood, yielding no benefit.

1 Translator's note: This is a reference to Q 7:148 and 20:88, which discusses how, in Moses' absence, the Israelites deified a statue of a calf that made a "lowing sound."

2 Translator's note: This is an allusion to Q 24:36.

THE INTELLECT: RESTRAINING THE WORD

The Prophet Muḥammad (prayers and peace be upon him) said, "Tether it and trust."[3] The intellect is the tool that unites opposites, not the site of this union, because the union of opposites negates location, and thus they can only united by a "where without where." The intellect is the disclosure-site of contemplation for all perspectives. One's intellectual capacity corresponds to the extent they can view an issue from multiple perspectives. If you can view an issue from a single perspective through a method you have acquired, a study you have undertaken, or experiences you have gone through, then through that you revolve in the orbit of one-sixth of delimited thought within the realm of the lesser intellect. This, of course, assumes that your thinking is clear and not steered by self-centered biases.

Thought has six facets corresponding to the directions.[4] Just as a physical object can be viewed from six sides, similarly in thought, a matter is known when you view it from its six directions. Thus, whoever contemplates from one perspective has attained 16.66% of the intellect. This is little, as most people do not even reach this because they only see one facet of one direction since they only attain to one-sixth of the sixth. This amounts to just 2.77% of the intellect in analyzing matters in this manner.

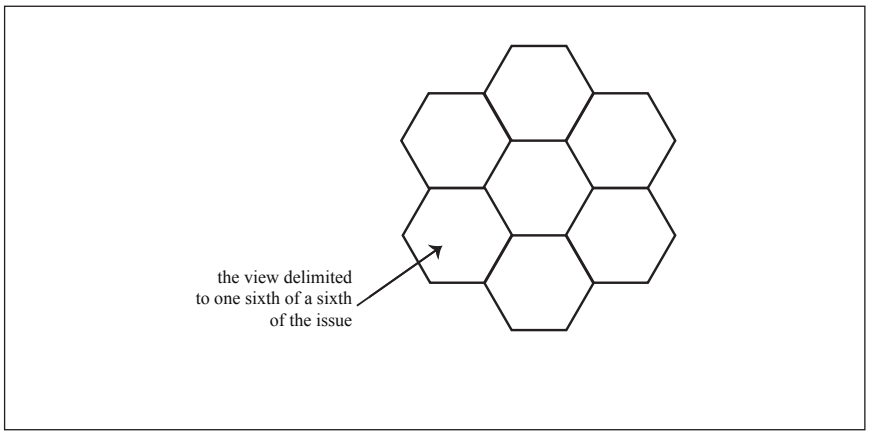

Figure 1. How thought is limited to analyzing 1/36th of an issue.

These proportions I have presented are also how we measure faith (*al-īmān*), as the capacity of the intellect is proportional to faith. You might contend that knowledge is proportional to learning in the secular sciences. However, these are only learned by means of one's faith in them, and the results they yield are proportional to one's faith and effort. The intellect expands in proportion to one's effort, but only with respect to one aspect of the matter. Therefore, most of the knowledge those who consider themselves to be scholars boast about is merely relative knowledge that does not comprehend the complete picture, but operates on just 1/36th of it. However, the people of sainthood who are deeply rooted in knowledge[5] have a clear vision that encompasses all perspectives. Our perspective as saints is not veiled by time and space; rather, we see things as they truly are and see the consequences of matters in their reality.

As mentioned in the hadith of the Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him), faith has six pillars: "[Faith is] to believe in God, His angels, His books, His messengers, the Last Day, and to believe in

3 Ibn Ḥibbān, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, no. 731. Translator's note: In the full version of this hadith, this is the Prophet's response to a man who asks him whether he should let his camel be and trust (that it won't stray and be lost from him).

4 Translator's note: The six directions being up, down, left, right, front, and back.

5 Translator's note: The idea of being "deeply rooted in knowledge" is found in Q 3:7.

divine decree, both good and evil."[6] He also said: "By Him in whose hand Muḥammad's soul is, the believer is like a bee: it eats what is pure and produces what is pure, and when it lands, it doesn't break or damage anything."[7] This comparison is not just meant to facilitate understanding; in fact, it is part of his comprehensive speech.[8] Since he compared these two, then one must search for the relationship between them with the light of faith. By doing so, one will see wonders. Consider the following: The believer has faith, faith has six components, and the bee works within a six-sided structure. Each hexagon has six sides, and, moreover, each hexagonal side has six directions. Thus, for every meaning related to matters of faith, and the reality of knowing the capacity of the intellect, there are thirty-six aspects. These are the verses of light in the Book of God (the glorified and exalted).

Etymologically, the Arabic word for "intellect" (*ʿaql*) comes from "tether" (*ʿiqāl*), and a tether ties down beasts. Therefore, the Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him), said "Tether it and trust." Thought is a beast, and beasts are controlled by desires. By desire (*shahwa*) I mean anything based on whim (*hawā*) rather than truth. As long as thought is under the influence of desire, then, with respect to learning, it is like a beast. One restrains it using the tether of memorization, then one trusts. This is why the Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him) tied the Burāq during his ascension and then prayed with the prophets. He did not leave it free but rather tethered it, thus revealing the secret of the Night Journey. Afterwards he trusted, led the prophets in prayer, attained mastery, and then ascended.[9]

The hadith mentions "trust" in an absolute sense, so each person specifies it according to what they trust in. If you trust in the Book, you restrain the "beast" of your thought with it. If it is technology, you tether your thought with it. If you trust in memorization, then that is your tether. "And whoever trusts in God, then He is sufficient for him" (Q 65:3).

Know that the capacity of the intellect is proportional to the Divine Names; meaning, the extent to which one learns the Divine Names determines the intellect's capacity. Thus, Adam occupied the disclosure-site of the ultimate breadth of knowledge and its perfection because God taught him all the Names. Every kind of knowledge that has emerged—whether from modern sciences, ancient sciences, or religious knowledge—is merely a shadow of the Divine Names. Every discipline operates within the orbit of a shadow of one of the Divine Names. The more firmly grounded the knowledge is, the closer it is to this origin. Most innovations and inventions throughout human history were bestowed as a gift granted for their effort in attaining nearness to the Divine Name in whose orbit that knowledge revolves. They rejoice in their creativity but do not know where the assistance came from, like a rock from which water burst forth, not knowing where it came from or how it arose. If they are righteous, they attribute it to God, but if they are not, they attribute it to their ego.

The intellect, therefore, is measured by how many Divine Names it has comprehended and by the cosmic Words generated from them—not by memorized equations or texts. This is merely a descension upon descension of the shadow of a Word into existence, or the orbit of a Name, or the orbit generated by two or more Names. As long as the intellect swims in the shadows, it distances itself from the truth that the intellect [can potentially] comprehends. That is to say, the limits of the

6 Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, no. 8.

7 Aḥmad, *Musnad*, no. 6872.

8 Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, no. 523. Translator's note: The Prophet is reported to have said "…I was endowed with comprehensive speech (*jawāmiʿ al-kalim*)…" meaning that anything he speaks is pregnant with meaning.

9 Translator's note: The Burāq is the winged creature that, during the Night Journey (*al-Isrāʾ*), carried the Prophet in a flash from Mecca to Jerusalem (*al-Isrāʾ*) (see Q 17:1), where he led all the prophets in prayer before his Ascent (*al-Miʿrāj*) to the heavens.

intellect are proportional to its distance from the Divine Names. The nearer it is to them and its understanding of them, the greater its capacity and limitlessness.

If you understand that the intellect is measured by faith and faith by the luminosity of the comprehension of the Divine Names, you will understand that intelligence, acumen, analysis, deduction, diligence, discernment, estimation, and perception are all connected to the extent of one's knowledge of how the Divine Names intermingle, how Words manifest, and how the existence of the universe depends on them.

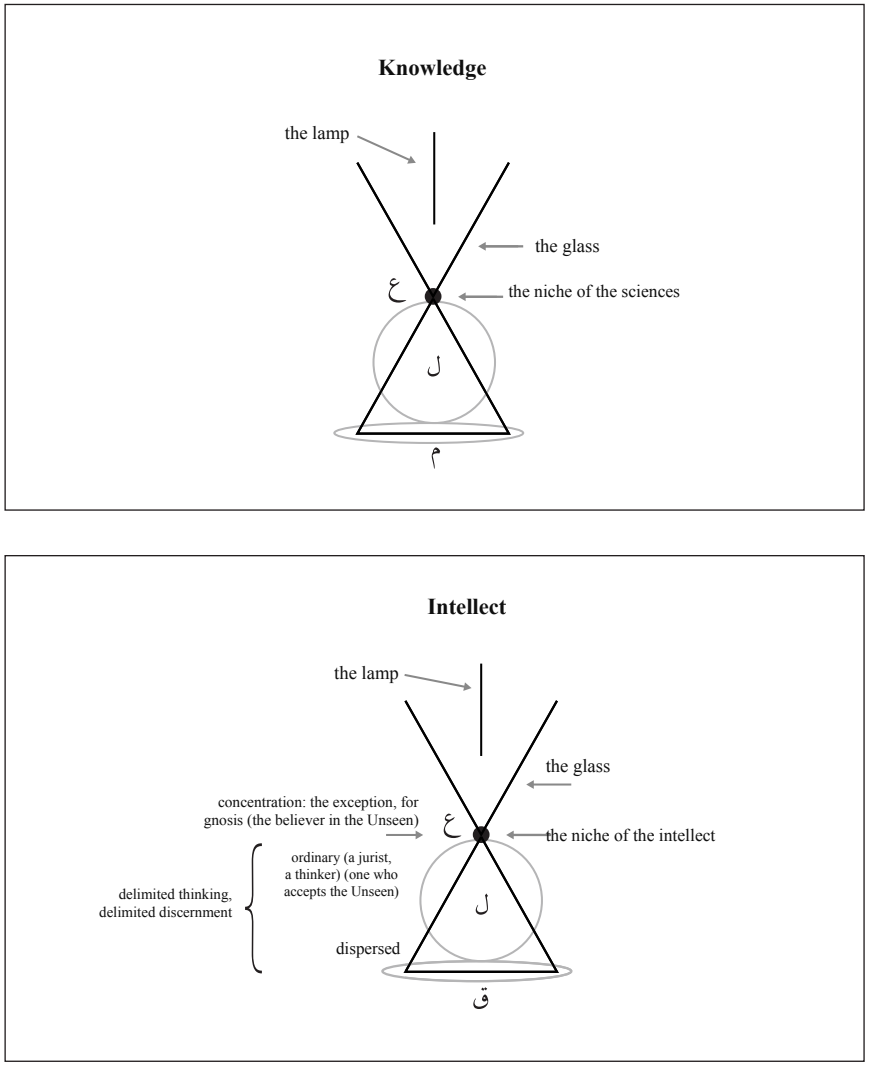

Figure 2. Knowledge (above) and the intellect (below) as lamp, glass, and niche.

KNOWLEDGE: RECEIVING THE WORD

If you understand the intellect and its roles in thinking, discrimination, intelligence, and other capabilities, then know that knowledge is proportional to the Names and what is gathered from them. The more the ray of their secret spreads in the heart, the broader the circle of knowledge becomes. Whoever gathers all the Names will truly know what a person of knowledge is and who is a person of knowledge. At that point, knowledge of the horizons will unfold within, leading to the understanding of self. The extent of one's knowledge of the horizons determines the depth of

self-knowledge and the ability to dive into its mysteries. Some measure knowledge by the extent of memorization and recall ability, as is the case with jurists, while others measure it by the ability to analyze and derive solutions to complex problems, as seen in the fields of mathematics. Yet, all this, in our view, is simply manifestations of the mingling of Names. Whoever calls themselves knowledgeable is but a swimmer in the orbit of the shadow of a Name, or the orbit of the mingling of two or more Names.

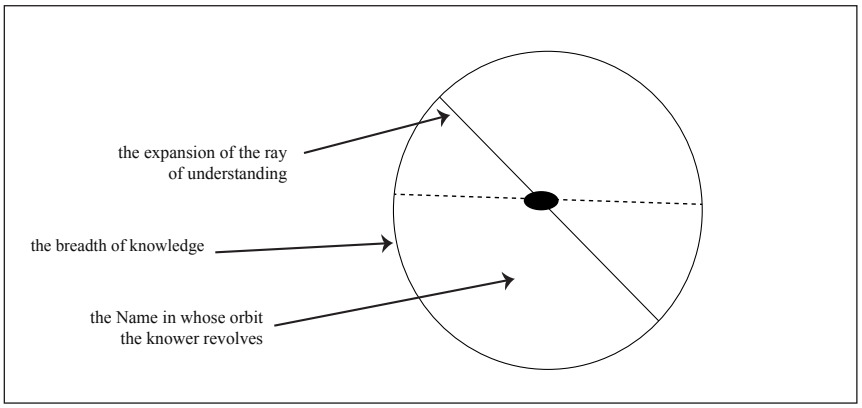

Figure 3. The breadth of knowledge as an orbit around the Name in which the knower revolves.

Knowledge is not about sitting and thinking in order to find a solution to a scientific, jurisprudential, or economic problem. Instead, knowledge first requires identifying a direction that you must learn how to orient yourself towards, and to remember God in all your states: standing, sitting, and lying on your side. Never cease to remember God. And then, through His light, reflect on the creation of the heavens and the earth. This is how the Qur'an's verses teach us how to attain knowledge. God Almighty says: "Those who remember God while standing, sitting, and lying on their sides and contemplate the creation of the heavens and the earth [saying], 'Our Lord, You did not create this aimlessly; exalted are You [above such a thing]; then protect us from the punishment of the Fire'" (Q 3:191).

Remembrance helps you detach from your ego so that you can see the World of Witnessing (*ʿālam al-shahāda*) clearly in your mind. You are unable to perceive the World of Witnessing because you live in the World of Doubt (*ʿālam al-rayb*), which, for you, stands in contrast to the Unseen World (*ʿālam al-ghayb*). You do not dwell in the World of Witnessing, which is the descent of the Unseen World into sensory perception. The World of Doubt provides you with a distorted image, blurring your vision of the World of Witnessing. This distortion is proportional to your attachment to your ego and your ideas. Therefore, if you seek knowledge, you must forget everything, becoming a blank tablet suited for receiving the knowledge of Words. Knowledge is nothing but reception obtained through a means. Even an ant or a bee can serve as your teacher if you abandon your ego, just as Prophet Solomon (prayers and peace be upon him) experienced. God Almighty says:

> Until, when they came upon the valley of the ants, an ant said, 'O ants, enter your dwellings that you not be crushed by Solomon and his soldiers while they perceive not.' So he smiled, laughing at her speech, and said, 'My Lord, enable me to be grateful for Your favor which You have bestowed upon me and upon my parents and to do righteousness of which You approve. And admit me, by Your mercy, into [the ranks of] Your righteous servants' (Q 27:18–19).

The extent to which you let go of your arrogance, pride, and inflated sense of self directly determines how much you can draw from the "spring of illiteracy." Illiteracy (*ummiyya*)—which in Arabic derives from "Mother" (*umm*)—is a cord extending from the seventh heaven to the seventh earth. It is the mercy that encompasses all things, and it is attained by those who realize self-annihilation, becoming its source, manifestation, and reality in our world. The source of knowledge is mercy. As God Almighty says about the righteous servant, al-Khiḍr: "And they found a servant from among Our servants to whom We had given mercy from Us and had taught him knowledge from Us" (Q 18:65).

The more one clings to their ego, the more ignorant they become. Ignorance is only the zeal one uses to defend the status of their ego within themselves—a self-ascribed status, much like what Satan did when he believed fire was superior to clay. Zealousness is the fuel of the ego that prevents the modern human from prostrating. By prostration, I am not referring to the act of placing one's forehead on the ground. Rather, the prostration I refer to is where one ceases to see themselves entirely. It is a prostration of the heart, where one confronts the reality of their ignorance, realizing that knowledge is not a piece of paper, a degree acquired, or words memorized. Knowledge, instead, is proportional to the spread of the ray of God-consciousness within one's heart.

Thus, knowledge is a methodology for receiving the Words, as the Words are the result of a Name or the mingling of two or more Names. These Words are like colors—a single color may result from the combination of two or more others. The resulting color depends on the proportions of the colors mixed with each other. Similarly, the interplay of Names produces Words, which themselves constitute existence. Because the possibilities are endless, the firmly grounded scholar is the one who maintains a grasp on the bridle of the original source. God did not teach Adam all the Words, as these are infinite. Rather, He taught him all the Names, which are the real, original Attributes from which the Words are generated.

In the science of sainthood, we know that all Names emanate from the Supreme Name, "Allah." The origin of this name lies in its three Arabic letters: the *Hāʾ* (ه), *Lām* (ل), and *Alif* (ا). Whoever attains knowledge of it comes to know the secret of cosmic expansion by way of knowing the secret of the mingling of the Names that produce the Words of the Lord, which constitute the universe. If one deeply contemplates colors, their number is immeasurable even though the primary colors are limited. This is because new colors are created depending on the varying proportions of colors mixed and according to the colors that intermingle. Similarly, the Names generate the Words, and the brush that mixes them is the divine command: "Be, and it is."[10]

THE HEART: THE ABODE OF THE WORD

As long as the goal is the pursuit of happiness—which motivates the body to work and strive, whether for someone who believes in eternal happiness or someone who seeks worldly happiness—the driving force is the same: the search for the essence of happiness, which stems from nothing other than love. There is nothing but love colored by the manifestations of happiness that the heart desires. These include the blessing of comfort enjoyed by a person who has achieved a goal they worked for, whether this comfort is temporary, eternal, or a relative one that comes and goes. The world today, in all its diversity, views the heart as merely a muscle that pumps blood and keeps a person alive. But we see the heart as comprising the entirety of the human being—but from within. The human being is like a clay vase with an exterior and an interior; the interior is not a part from within, but rather the whole.

10 Translator's note: In several verses, the Qur'an expresses that God's creative will and power is enacted through the command "Be, and it is" (Q 2:117, 16:40, 19:35, 36:82, 40:68).

This heart was created to be the abode of a Word that neither the heavens nor the earth, despite their vastness and expansion, can encompass. Instead, it is encompassed by the believing heart illuminated by God with the light of love. This Word is the "Common Word": Allah.[11] When it enters the heart illuminated by the light of love, the heart expands beyond the vastness of the heavens and earth infinitely. This is because an infinite number of Words are generated from this one Word, making it impossible for it to reside in a finite heart, for the finite cannot contain the infinite. This is the secret underlying humanity's vicegerency: how the mortal body can encompass God's spirit, and how the heart can encompass the Word of Majesty: Allah. How did the finite contain the infinite? And how did it gather endless words within a heart that, outwardly, appears to be finite?

These meanings are tasted only by those who have experienced freedom in servitude. To the extent that you are a servant, you are free. For everything resides within its opposite; freedom and servitude are two faces of the same coin, synonymous in meaning, yet opposites in form.

The heart is a boundless abode for the Word of existence, which is the Name of Majesty: Allah. It is this Name that is the source of existence, and only a heart illuminated by the light of faith can contain it, granting it the warmth of happiness, tranquility, contentment, mercy, and love, all of which bring comfort to the soul. No matter how much a person searches, accumulates, eats, drinks, or works, these are manifestations that all go back to one thing, a quality that moves one's inner being. The individual desires to quench the thirst of this quality through actions intended to extinguish the fire of longing, whether this fire stems from fear of poverty, love for eternity, or a desire that one believes contains happiness. Yet when they attain it, they wish for more. It is like drinking from seawater; the more one drinks, the thirstier they become. True happiness, however, is when your heart becomes the abode of the Name of Majesty, Allah. When one possess the source, all manifestations of happiness that one could want arise within the heart: everlasting, infinite joy, unmarred by sorrow except for pitying those who stray from the path of guidance.

The heart is the abode of the Name of Majesty, Allah, the Name from which all other Names emanate, and from which the Words of existence branch out as manifestations of this universe. Every movement, stillness, or phenomenon in existence originates from a Word born from the interaction of Divine Names. Thus, the heart is a tablet containing the universe, as the universe is composed of Words, which are generated by the Names, and the Names emanate from the Name of Majesty. The Name of Majesty is contained within the luminous, believing heart, making the heart the tablet of existence uniting all that exists.

RELIGION (AL-DĪN): EXALTING THE WORD

What is religion? Is it the innate disposition (*fiṭra*) according to which the Creator fashioned people? Is it the doctrines and rulings by which we conduct our lives to distinguish ourselves from animals? Is it submission to the Creator based on what the messengers conveyed? Or is it something else?

Every individual has a religion, even those who deny it. The claim of irreligion is, in itself, a religion. Does not every individual have rules, principles, and morals which guide their life? In fact, they even wish others would follow their approach. Their rules and principles might well be righteous and truly aligned with the innate disposition, but deep inside, they reject the idea that there

11 Translator's note: The "Common Word" is mentioned in Qur'an 3:64. In a famous non-Qur'anic divine saying (*ḥadīth qudsī*), the Prophet Muḥammad states that God says: "Neither My heaven nor My earth can encompass Me, but the heart of my faithful servant encompasses Me."

may be someone better than them whom God has chosen to convey His message—that's the reality of it.

When a simple person longs to return to his Lord, he finds his heart to be a guide, speaking to him, providing him with a method and path that is right for him. This brings about effects of psychological comfort and tranquility, assuring him that he is fulfilling his obligations and on the right path. But as soon as he turns to the books and edicts of religious scholars, he is overwhelmed by confusion between different rulings, between this opinion and that, between one side and the next. He finds himself in a war, its weapons ink and paper, and its killing through declaring others misguided and innovators, and sometimes even excommunication. This leaves the mind lost, unsure where to turn and what direction to face for acceptance.

The point here is not to attack the people of religious law, the issuers of edicts, nor the abundance of disagreements and schools of thought. Rather, my point is to show that one's heart is their greatest counselor—it truly knows what is good for each individual specifically, not for others. Its determinations are for that individual alone. One hears it in their moments of inner clarity, for in times of repentance and return the individual is at the highest degree of clarity, with no goal except to return to God. The Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him), said: "Consult your heart. Righteousness is what the soul feels at ease with and the heart feels tranquil with, and sin is what wavers in the soul and hesitates in the chest, even if people give you verdicts again and again."[12]

Religion is to know the Common Word, spread it through your senses, and elevate in your heart the phrase "There is no god but Allah." Religion and the innate disposition is the Word of the Name of Majesty, Allah. God Almighty says: "Indeed, the religion is with Allah," (Q 3:19). He also says: "Say, 'Do you inform Allah of your religion while Allah knows what is in the heavens and what is in the earth?'" (Q 49:16). You will not know the truth of religion until you know what is in the heavens and the earth, and you will not know what is in them until you know the secret of the Words from which they were created. All is summed up and returns to the Word of the Divine Name, Allah. If you understand this, you understand existence, and you will know the reality of religion and be certain that, while laws (*sharāʾiʿ*) may differ on this earth, the religion is one.

Religion is a Word, but not just any word; it is the Word by which one distinguishes between truth and falsehood, guidance and misguidance, between what benefits people and the community and what causes destruction. If one knows the Word, perfects it, and it is absorbed by their heart, religion then becomes their innate disposition, not an affectation. It is not about outward appearances, but about actions that bring about mercy on earth, a heart clear and filled with love and peace for all the world. But when the Word was lost from hearts, religion devolved into mere appearances, resulting in numerous complex and sometimes contradictory rulings, each understood according to individual desires. Thus, people came to think that religion cannot accept differences, but rather rejects them since that contradicts the very foundations upon which they had established their notion of religion. If they were to return to the Common Word, religion would encompass all those is in the heavens and the earth; we would have avoided many wars and afflictions, and all would have lived within the manifestation of the Name, "Peace" (*al-Salām*).

THE WORD (PART 1)

God says:

> Say, "O People of the Book, come to a Common Word between us and you—that we will not worship except Allah and will not associate anything with Him, and not take one another as lords

12 Aḥmad, *Musnad*, no. 18006.

> instead of Allah." And if they turn away, then say, "Bear witness that we have surrendered ourselves unto Him" (Q 3:64).

Regardless of how advanced artificial "intelligence" gets, it cannot progress beyond artificial thinking, with no true intelligence. True intelligence, insight, and understanding is as the Almighty describes it in His book: "We gave Solomon the understanding of it, and to each We gave judgment and knowledge" (Q 21:79). Or else it is the intuition granted by the light of God. Technology, no matter how advanced it becomes, can never genuinely receive or comprehend from the Divine because it lacks the Divine breath of the spirit which is the means of connecting with the Lord.

Further, how can technology compare to the angels? Yet, God did not choose the angels as vicegerents on earth; rather, He chose humanity. Thus, if we truly want to develop genuine artificial intelligence—rather than mere advanced and rapid thinking, as it is nowadays—we must search for the secret of vicegerency in the human, in order to properly simulate it in technology.

The secret of the human is well-known and clear, so we do not need to belabor the point. God clarified that it is the Divine breath of the spirit in Adam (peace be upon him). Simulating this is impossible, because the spirit is "of the affair of my Lord" (Q 17:85). Yet, God described another aspect of this secret—a gateway to it—which is the "Word." About Jesus (peace be upon him), He says: "Jesus the son of Mary is the Messenger of God and His Word which He conveyed to Mary, and a spirit from Him" (Q 4:171). Thus, we know that the "Word" is a secret, indeed one of the gateways to the spirit in the physical world.

Indeed, the Word is the very disclosure of the world, as the universe is founded upon the Word of the Name of Majesty, which revealed the "Good Word" (*al-kalima al-ṭayyiba*): "There is no god but Allah." Through this, the entire cosmos came to be and continues to expand, as that Word continuously yields fruit. God says: "Do you not see how God presents an example—a Good Word like a good tree, whose root is firmly fixed and its branches reach to the sky" (Q 14:24). This is why "There is no god but Allah" is the greatest saying ever spoken. The Prophet Muḥammad (prayers and peace be upon him), said: "The best supplication is the supplication on the Day of ʿArafa, and the best thing I and the prophets before me have said is: 'There is no god but Allah, singular with no partner.'"[13]

The Word of Allah revealed "There is no god but Allah," which in Arabic is composed of three letters: *Alif*, *Lām*, and *Hāʾ*. I will try to simplify how all the Words branch out from them in the figure of the "tree of the universe" through the Word "Be," by which the world appeared. Today, humanity wants technology to gather all manifestations in the world—whether image, sound, movement, or otherwise—but they fail, because the universe is constantly expanding. God says: "And the heaven We constructed with strength, and indeed, We are its expander" (Q 51:47). This expansion is caused by the Words of God—words branching out from the source-Word "Be," which never ends. God says: "Say, if the sea were ink for (writing) the Words of my Lord, the sea would be exhausted before the Words of my Lord were exhausted, even if We brought the like of it as a supplement" (Q 18:109). And He (the Most High) says: "If all the trees on earth were pens, and the sea (was ink), replenished by seven more seas, the Words of Allah would not be exhausted. Indeed, God is Mighty, Wise" (Q 31:27).

The branches that result from the intermingling of the Names are endless, and this is considering only the manifest Divine Names, the ninety-nine Names, without even counting the hidden ones. Ninety-nine to the power of ninety-nine is a tremendous number beyond the capacity for sensorial human comprehension, while the possible combinations are infinite. Consider, for instance, the chessboard with its sixty-four squares and thirty-two pieces and how it produces unending

13 Tirmidhī, *Sunan*, no. 2516.

possibilities for each move and combination—how then about the intermingling of Divine Names, not just pairwise but in multiple combinations, with every Name underlying an endless number of words?! This is the secret behind the "lifting of the Pen" and the endlessness of the Words. The Prophet Muḥammad (prayers and peace be upon him) informed us that the Pen has been lifted and the pages in the Tablet have dried: "Know that if the entire community were to gather to benefit you with something, they would not benefit you except with what God has already written for you; and if they were to gather to harm you with something, they would not harm you except by what God has already written against you. The Pens have been lifted and the pages have dried."[14]

This is the point I have clarified in my lectures to specialists: that the theory of the Word rests on the containment of infinite information by converting it into Words, through knowledge of its originary source emanating from the three letters—*Alif*, *Lām*, and *Hāʾ*—with "Be" as its manifestation. Through this, I try to come to a Common Word with others, as stated in God's noble Book:

> Say, "O People of the Book, come to a Common Word between us and you—that we will not worship except Allah and will not associate anything with Him, and not take one another as lords instead of Allah." And if they turn away, then say, "Bear witness that we have surrendered ourselves unto Him" (Q 3:64).

This Common Word is to worship God alone, negating all others by the Word of Monotheism, whose origin is in the three letters: *Alif*, *Lām*, and *Hāʾ*.

THE WORD (PART 2)

A single word from you can form a person or heal wounds beyond the reach of medicine. Conversely, that same word can destroy a person's life and crush their hopes. Words have the power to change not only your life but the lives of others. Once spoken, a word endures; it never vanishes, for it is a product of the soul breathed into us by the Divine. The entire universe is nothing but a Word, or rather, a grand Word containing within it an infinite number of Words—like an ocean is but a drop of water holding countless drops. This universe, in its totality, is the universal manifestation of the Word "Be," which is the flowing interplay of the Real Names. Through this interplay, new Names manifest that emanate Words. These Words are a disclosure-site of existence, which is disclosed through thingness. In other words, everything, in reality, is a Word, though it may appear objectified as an image, sound, or scent.

So, in order to delve deeper into the secrets of the Word, we must understand the reality of its manifestation in existence, and how it transitioned from the writing on the Divine Tablet to the realm of existence. This is the secret of descension, which is a subtopic from the knowledge of messengerhood. The mention of messengerhood might seem odd here: how can we speak of it when it is the knowledge of the Messenger? But before being overcome by skepticism and mistrust, know that the knowledge of messengerhood is not exclusive to the Messenger; rather, it is for both him and others from his community. The Messenger's status, however, is his alone and is not shared by anyone, unless he grants such a share by God's permission, just as Moses (peace be upon him) included his brother Aaron in prophethood. He said, "And appoint for me a helper from my family, Aaron, my brother. Strengthen me through him, and let him share my task, so that we may exalt You much and remember You much. Truly, You are ever seeing of us" (Q 20:29–35). The knowledge of messengerhood was also possessed by the one, during the time of Solomon, who had knowledge from the Book. As God says:

14 Tirmidhī, *Sunan*, no. 3585.

> He who possessed knowledge from the Book said, "I will bring it to you before your gaze returns to you." And when Solomon saw it placed firmly before him, he said, "This is by the grace of my Lord, that He may test me whether I give thanks or am ungrateful; and whoever gives thanks does so for his own soul, and whoever is ungrateful, then indeed my Lord is Self-Sufficient, Generous" (Q 27:40).

So, the science of descension from the Word to existence is what contemporary knowledge needs, but through the secret of basing images, sounds, and all of existence in the Word, and by gathering Words into branches stemming from the boughs of the Real Names. All these offshoots return to the Name of Majesty, Allah—i.e., to the letters *Alif*, *Lām*, and *Hāʾ*—like a tree. This is how existence was manifested, and this is how it must be read and contemplated. Whoever denies witnessing the manner of this creation should read God's saying: "I did not make them witness the creation of the heavens and the earth or their own creation; nor would I take the misguiding ones as supporters" (Q 18:51). Thus, the witnessing of the creation of the heavens and the earth and the formation of the self is not for the misguided, but for the servants chosen by the the Divine, just as the "Inscribed Book" is witnessed by "the ones brought near" (Q 83:20–21) and the "Protected Book" is touched only by "the purified" (Q 56:78–79).

But for us to understand this knowledge, to dive deeper into its depths, to clarify the picture, and to comprehend the proof, we must swim in the meanings of the verse in which God, the Majestic and Exalted, says: "O you who have believed, respond to God and to the Messenger when he calls you to that which gives you life; and know that God intervenes between a man and his heart, and that to Him you will be gathered" (Q 8:24).

God informs us in this verse that He intervenes between the individual (*marʾ*) and his heart, that is, between the self and the heart in terms of their ranks. As long as the self is attached to what is other than God, nothing divine can emanate from it. But if God intends good for an individual, He intervenes between his self and his heart so that his heart is not corrupted by the desires of his self, and he remains protected until his self returns to its Lord, "pleased and pleasing."[15] At that point, everything comes from God. The Qur'an uses the term "*marʾ*" (individual), which is a manifestation of the self. A man came to the Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him), and said: "O Messenger of God, what do you say of a man who loves a people but has not joined them?" The Prophet replied, "The individual (*al-marʾ*) is with those whom he loves."[16] Here, the Prophet used the quality of "*marʾ*" rather than "*insān*" (human being), because the nature of the self is to be drawn toward what it loves; thus the Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him) referred to the questioner as such. Each Word has a quality corresponding to its ontological rank with respect to Union, Separation, and in terms of how it is considered, such as "*insān*" (human) and "*bashar*" (mortal). God says: "They learn from them that by which they cause separation between an individual (*marʾ*) and his wife" (Q 2:102), and also: "O humankind (*al-nās*), fear your Lord, who created you from one soul and created from it its mate and dispersed from both of them many men and women" (Q 4:1).

Thus, the meaning of the verse is clear: Through the Name of Majesty, Allah, the Divine intervenes between the individual and his heart, between his exterior and interior, between the manifestation of the self and the disclosure-site of the spirit, between the delimited and limitless intellect, between the material sensory and the unseen. While it may seem strange that I mention this verse in the context of discussing the manifestation of the Word and how it helps us ground existents in the Word, know that the "individual" is a metonym for the self, or the empirical and witnessed existence that is referred to as the "Visible Realm" (*al-ʿālam al-manẓūr*), which, with the exception of those graced by the Lord's Mercy, is witnessed by all through the eye of doubt (*ʿayn al-rayb*), not

15 Translator's note: A reference to Q 89:28.
16 Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, no. 6168.

the eye of witnessing (*ʿayn al-shahāda*). Everyone lives in the Realm of Doubt, which is parallel to the Realm of Witnessing. The Realm of Doubt is neither identical to the Realm of Witnessing nor other than it. It is distorted because it is pulled between the past and the future, so we do not see the Realm of Witnessing as it truly is, but rather see it in the guise of the Realm of Doubt. All this is due to being caught between hastiness, heedlessness, and laziness. Few people are able to live in the Realm of Witnessing and enjoy the moment, even if for a brief period; rather, those moments remain with them, for the duration of their lives, as a measure of happiness in their souls and a source of wisdom and insight in their intellects.

As for the saint, he does not live in the Realm of Witnessing for mere moments or at certain times, but is grounded in the Realm of Witnessing as firmly as in the Realm of the Unseen—yes, the Realm of the Unseen. That is why he is the "*Lām* of the Secret," which contains that which humanity seeks in its future challenges in the field of artificial intelligence, so that intelligence might once again have the power of analysis and contemplation. What is presumed today to be intelligence is merely informational analysis, like a diligent student who has memorized as many problems as possible in mathematics and solves new problems by the methods he has memorized. True intelligence, however, is to solve a problem about which you know nothing, such that you can enter a realm of absolute abstraction and arrive at a solution from an unknown source—with no prior stages of reasoning or analytic method. Here, every issue is approached with pure creativity. This is true intelligence and acumen. This is not yet possible with humanity's present knowledge, for they still consider zero to be mere nonexistence, and do not grant it its due place within the realm of existence.

THE ISTHMUS: BETWEEN THE WITNESSED AND THE UNSEEN

The descension of the Name of Majesty (Allah) intervenes between a person and his heart; it is an isthmus between them. As God says: "He has let loose the two seas, meeting together; between them is an isthmus they do not transgress" (Q 55:19–20). Thus, the Name of Majesty is the divider, that is, the dividing line between the Arc of the Unseen, represented by the heart, and the Arc of the Witnessed, represented by the individual (*al-marʾ*), that is, the self. So "He intervenes" means that He is "the in-between between two betweens," neither this nor that, but rather facing both. Therefore, it is said in the tradition: "God veiled Himself from the inhabitants of the heavens just as He veiled Himself from the inhabitants of the earth; He veiled Himself from intellects just as He veiled Himself from sight. Indeed, He does not indwell in anything nor is He absent from anything, and the highest council seek God just as you do."[17]

The meaning of "isthmus," in the context of "He intervenes," is divine presence and preservation. It refers to how God protects those He loves from their own souls, intervening between them and their selves. This is the guidance that flows in the hearts of those He wills towards the path of knowledge and understanding.

Whoever thinks that the gnostics are merely spiritual people with no connection to the world, to people, or to knowledge, is very far from the reality of gnostics. Knowing God acquaints you with the world in the manifestation of the horizons, and acquaints you with yourself, making you see that what modern science has achieved, with all its technologies, remains far from the truth of reality, and that their entire knowledge, compared to that of the gnostic, is just a drop from his ocean.

As discussed, the Name of Majesty, within the Tree of Existence, manifests the "Good Word"—"There is no god but Allah"—which in Arabic consists of twelve repeated letters, whose

17 ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. ʿAbd al-Salām al-Ṣafūrī, *Nuzhat al-majālis wa-muntakhab al-nafāʾis*, 2 vols. (Cairo: al-Maṭbaʿah al-Kāstīliyyah, 1866), 2:114.

origin is three letters: *Alif*, *Lām*, and *Hāʾ*. They also signify the divider and the two arcs: the Arc of the Unseen, represented by the letter *Alif*; the Arc of the Witnessed, represented by the letter *Hāʾ*; and the *Lām* being the divider between the two arcs. This is represented in Figures 4 and 5 in the form of letters and in colors.

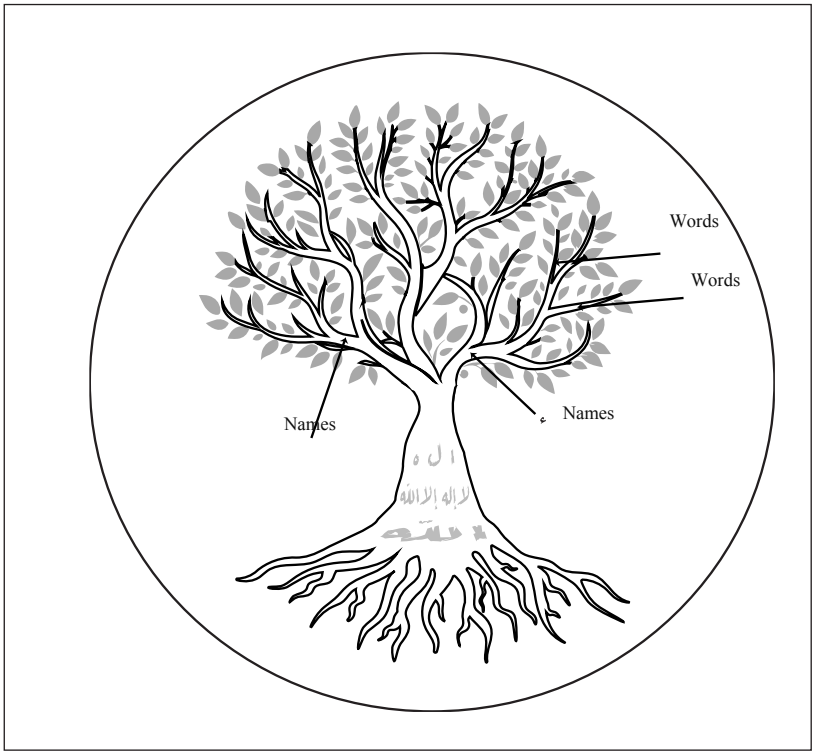

Figure 4. The Tree of Existence: the Good Word at its root, the Names branching, the Words as foliage.

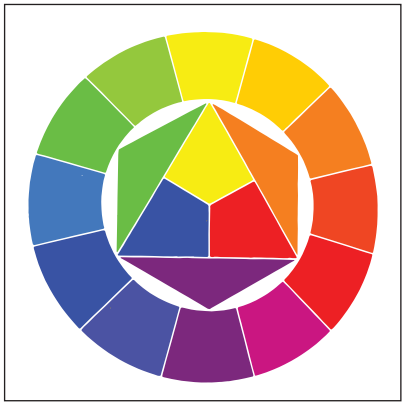

Figure 5. The same generative relation shown in color rather than in letters.

Thus, the verb "intervene" has the meaning of "the divider" (as shown in the figure) and it also means a state of intervention. It is the manifestation of the phrase, "There is no power nor strength except by Allah." Although the meaning may appear paradoxical—how can it be both a barrier and an isthmus?—you should know that it is He who transforms the power of the Arc of the Unseen into the Arc of the Witnessed, and the function of the Arc of the Witnessed into the Arc of the Unseen. This is not through commingling that would imply indwelling, but by descension and ascension. The

Arc of Witnessing ascends into the Arc of the Unseen, and the Arc of the Unseen descends into the Arc of Witnessing; all this is by the secret of the divider, the manifestation of "There is no power nor strength except by God," which is a treasure from the treasures of Paradise. As Abū Mūsā al-Ashʿarī (may God be pleased with him) narrates:

> We were with the Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him) on a journey, and whenever we climbed a high place we would exalt God. The Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him) said: "O people, be gentle with yourselves; you do not call upon One who is deaf or absent, but you call upon One who is All-Hearing, All-Seeing." Then he approached me while I was saying to myself, "There is no power nor strength except by God." He said, "O ʿAbd Allah b. Qays, say: 'There is no power nor strength except by God,' for it is a treasure from the treasures of Paradise." Or he said: "Shall I not tell you of a word which is a treasure from the treasures of Paradise? It is: 'There is no power nor strength except by God.'"[18]

So, it becomes clear that the isthmus between the Unseen and the Witnessed is the divider that separates and also unites them. This is also the letter *Lām* in the secret of the Word. Hence, the *Alif* is the disclosure-site of the Unseen, the *Hāʾ* is the disclosure-site of the Witnessed, and the *Lām*, being between them, contains both the Unseen and the Witnessed, as seen in Figure 6.

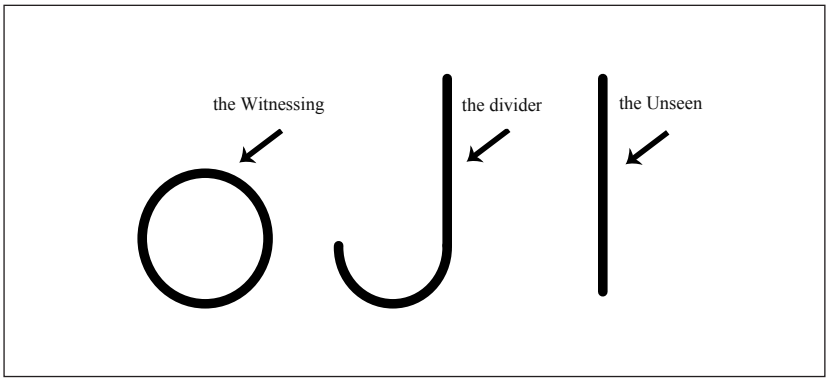

Figure 6. The Name of Majesty: *Hāʾ* as the Witnessed, *Lām* as the divider, *Alif* as the Unseen.

THE TABLET: THE HĀʾ (ه) OF WITNESSING

Know that the Divine has written in the Preserved Tablet (*al-lawḥ al-maḥfūẓ*) all that was and will be; it is the place of inscribing with the Words of existence. The Tablet is what is referred to as the Greatest Intellect (*al-ʿaql al-akbar*), and it is the disclosure-site of the universe in existence, through the manifestation of the particulars of what was general in the Pen. Some have called it the Universal Soul (*al-nafs al-kullī*) and the Clear Book (*al-kitāb al-mubīn*). The realities of the Words in the Tablet were taught by God to Adam through the collectivity of the Names. In actuality, God did not teach Adam the Words, for the Words cannot be learned but only received. As God says: "Adam received Words from his Lord, and He turned to him; truly, He is the Oft-Returning, the Most Merciful" (Q 2:37). However, God taught Adam the Names: "And He taught Adam all the Names" (Q 2:31). The Words are endless and remain infinite—no one can encompass them all—but Adam's knowledge pertained to the Real Names. True, even the Names themselves are infinite, but here we are referring to the Primary Names that fall within the domain of the universal. Hence, we understand that the "lifting of the Pen" does not mean the end of the Words or Names, but refers to the cessation of inscribing the particulars of the universal. For this reason the Tablet is described as

18 Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, no. 6384.

"Preserved." After the Pen is lifted, there is no more inscribing, but rather erasing and confirming. God says: "God erases whatever He wills and confirms, and with Him is the Mother of the Book" (Q 13:39).

We have presented this overview so that specialists of technology can realize that they need a comprehensive tablet capable of gathering the universe's Words in one place. This knowledge evolves steadily, enabling ever-larger quantities of information to be gathered in smaller spaces, like the tailbone (discussed below). The gathering of infinite information is an impossibility, but it must be circumscribed within the domain of the universal under the Divine Names, such that the technology's tablet becomes a registry of the Words of existence ordered under the Names derived from the Primary Real Names. Thus, the tablet becomes the disclosure-site for what arises from the interaction of the reality of the universal Names, and the mode by which the Names that arise from it manifest; the tablet then becomes the disclosure-site for the Words arising from the Names, and the mode for how the Words are transformed into the world upon their manifestation. This requires precise knowledge of the Names, which is an aspect of the enumeration of the Names about which the Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him) said: "Indeed, God has ninety-nine names, one hundred less one; whoever enumerates them will enter Paradise."[19] Thus, those working in the field of technology today must ascend from form, to Word, to secondary Name, to Primary Name, and return all existence to the reality of the universal Names.

The universe, in sum, has two aspects: the self and the horizons (*āfāq*). God says: "We will show them Our signs on the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that He is the Truth" (Q 41:53). Therefore, those working in this field should begin with the domain of horizons; even though it is broader, it is apparent and clear, its laws are not complex, and it is easy to categorize it under Words. Then, from the Words, one can return to the derived Names, then to the universal Names, until reaching the reality of the letter *Hāʾ*, which is the tablet that particularizes all known things. The sciences of the horizons have two branches: the sciences of the heavens, which people now call "outer space," and the sciences of the earth. This is because the Qur'an refers to horizons in the plural, and a horizon is the line where, in the field of vision, the ceiling of the earth meets its surface. The broader one's visual scope, the wider the horizon; likewise, the broader and deeper one's comprehension of the signs of the universe becomes.

In summary, the tablet that humanity today seeks to use to gather all the information of the universe—and fails—is limited by the fact that people have not yet learned how to return from the particular to the universal. The secret of particularization cannot be understood until the science of the Real Names is mastered, and one cannot have complete knowledge of the domain of the Names until the significance of their centrality is realized. Without this center, one cannot know the science of Separation, by which the cosmic orbit of each Name is comprehended, and what secondary Names and cosmic Words are encompassed within it.

THE LĀM (ل): THE NEGATION OF FORM

The letter *Lām* (ل) is the letter that unites the Realms of the Unseen and the Witnessed—the unseen *Alif* (ا) and the witnessed *Hāʾ* (ه). If you look closely at its written form, you'll see its upper part resembles the *Alif* of the unseen, and its lower part resembles the Arc of Witnessing of the *Hāʾ* (see Figure 7).

Through the *Lām*, the unseen aspect of the Word is transformed into the witnessed form. It has control over matter. The Divine displays this to us in a verse of the Qur'an when describing the staff

19 Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, no. 2736.

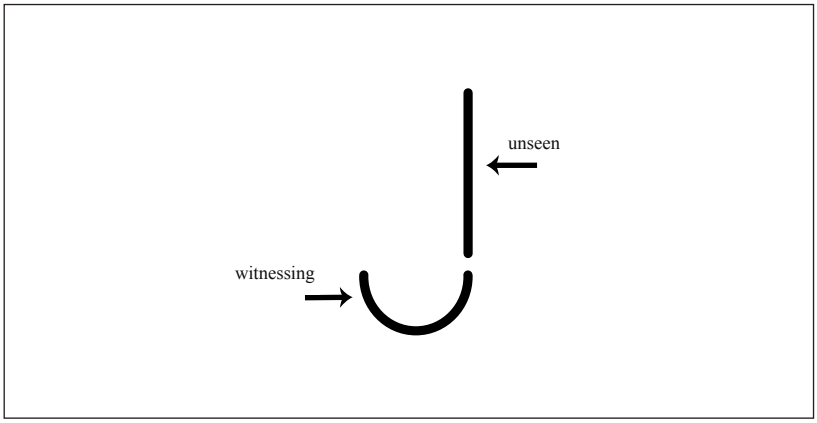

Figure 7. The *Lām* as isthmus: its stroke toward the Unseen, its bowl toward the Witnessed.

of Moses (peace be upon him), the disclosure-site of the *Lām*, and thus shows how it controls the world of witnessing.

First, the people of Moses asked for water, God commanded him to strike the rock with his staff, whereupon water gushed forth:

> When Moses prayed for water for his people, We said: "Strike the rock with your staff." Then twelve springs gushed out from it, and each group knew their drinking place. Eat and drink from God's bounty, and do not go about the earth, spreading corruption (Q 2:60).

This staff, which is the *Lām*, is a branch of the aforementioned tree. The *Lām* is likewise a letter, that is, a branch of the letters that yield the Tree of Existence from the Blessed Word, "There is no god but Allah (*lā ilāha illā Allah*)," which consists of twelve Arabic letters. Hence, when Moses struck the rock (i.e., the *Hāʾ*) with his staff (i.e., the *Lām*), it manifested the individual letters of this Word by the Divine's permission, which is the disclosure-site of the *Alif*. Thus, the Tree of the Blessed Word manifested in the World of Witnessing through these twelve springs.

Consider and reflect on how the *Lām* reveals the secret of the unseen *Alif*—that is, the Divine Permission expressed through "We said: 'Strike with your staff.'" This secret is the water stored in the "witnessed rock," the *Hāʾ*. It is also is the Word of Life (*kalimat al-ḥayā*), for water is the form (*ṣūra*) of the Word "the Living." God says: "Do not the disbelievers see that the heavens and the earth were joined together, then We split them apart and We made from water every living thing? Will they not believe?" (Q 21:30).

Second, the staff of Moses swallowed the ropes of the magicians, which represent the Realm of Doubt that gives the illusion of motion, for those who live in it. However, its motion is illusory and fruitless, for it lacks the permission needed for the Unseen's descension into the Witnessed. We all dream and entertain many hopes in our minds, which remain in the Realm of the Unseen. Yet, when trying to cause these to descend into the Realm of Witnessing, we cannot manifest them as they actually are in the Unseen Realm of our thoughts. We only grasp the form represented in the Realm of Doubt, like a rope that only gives the illusion of movement.

But whoever possesses, through the disclosure-site of the *Lām*, the secret of descension can manifest the literal realities of the Unseen Realm in the form of the Realm of Witnessing. Whoever has this power, his word in the Realm of Forms (*ʿālam al-ṣuwar*) "swallows up" all illusions of the Realm of Doubt, the ropes of those who bewitched themselves away from the reality of religion,

from the Name of Majesty, Allah, from the Common Word, "There is no god but Allah," and from the Blessed Tree which gives its fruit at all times by its Lord's permission.

Thus, when God spoke to Moses and asked, "And what is that in your right hand, O Moses?" (Q 20:17), He was alerting him that what he held was not merely a staff, but the reality of the unity of the Realms of the Unseen and the Witnessed, the secret of life itself, and the disclosure-site for transforming Word to form and form to Word. This is what modern technology is incapable of doing: to transform what is empirically seen and touched in existence into Words, then go from the Words to the Names, from the Names to "there is no god but Allah," and from there to the three letters: *Alif*, *Lām*, and *Hāʾ*.

For technology to be "intelligent"—if it is to be worthy of that label—the *Lām* must be intrinsic to it, such that the technology itself can cause the Word to descend into a tangible, visible form. It would thereby simulate the secret of Jesus (peace be upon him), in whom the *Lām* was inherently manifest. Therefore, he was the reality of the blessing, as God says: "He has made me blessed wherever I may be, and has enjoined on me prayer and charity as long as I live" (Q 19:31). He did not use the staff—the *Lām*—to transform the Word into a form; rather, he himself was the disclosure-site of the *Lām* and of life. He was the manifestation of the *Lām* that unites the Unseen *Alif* and the Witnessed *Hāʾ*. That is why he could, by God's permission, raise the dead, breath the Divine Word into the clay form of a bird so it came to life, and heal the blind and the leper.

Today, humanity, through so-called "artificial intelligence," wishes for technology to have the healing ability to revive the dead, transform matter, and discover what is hidden from them. But to enable technology to do such things, it must be programmed according to the intellect purified in the manner of prophetic intellect, so its actions mirror the purpose of messengerhood, bringing true benefit to humanity. The technology will not itself be a prophet or messenger, but it can assist in spreading the happiness brought to humankind by Jesus, the Messiah, and the prophets, the reality of which has been forgotten—a happiness that is the underlying value of righteous deeds, which is the third pillar in the "triad" of religion: faith in God, the Last Day, and righteous action (*al-ʿamal al-ṣāliḥ*).

These are the pillars of religion. So we must distinguish between religion (*dīn*), creed (*milla*), and law (*sharīʿa*). "The religion is with Allah" (Q 3:19), that is, the Name of Majesty. If one does not master it, their religion is deficient; the extent of one's religion corresponds to the extent that they comprehend the Name of Majesty—which is the religion of Islam (submission). There is no other religion, for the religion has always been one, from Adam to Muḥammad (prayers and peace be upon them).

All the prophets came with the religion of Islam and true peace. That is why we venerate them with "peace be upon them," for they brought nothing but true peace, embodied in the religion of Islam. God says: "When Jesus sensed disbelief from them, he said: 'Who are my helpers for God?' The disciples said: 'We are God's helpers. We have believed in God, so bear witness that we are Muslim (in submission [to Him])'" (Q 3:52). Thus, God declared their religion to be Islam. And He says about the prophets of the Children of Israel:

> And Abraham enjoined upon his sons, as did Jacob: "O my sons! Indeed, God has chosen your religion for you, so do not die except as Muslims (submitters)." Or were you witnesses when death approached Jacob, when he said to his sons, "Whom will you worship after me?" They said, "We will worship your God and the God of your fathers—Abraham, Ishmael, and Isaac—the One God, and we are to Him Muslim (submitting)" (Q 2:132–133).

The religion of Islam is the only religion that God sent down since Adam until the Day of Ghadīr during the Farewell Pilgrimage. It used to be at the stage of being the upright religion. But when the disclosure-site of sainthood appeared and the secret of the Prophetic household (*ʿitra*) was unveiled, the religion became perfected.[20] Thus God revealed: "Today I have perfected your religion for you, completed My favor upon you, and approved Islam as your religion" (Q 5:3). Thus, the Day of ʿArafa [the Day of Knowing] was completed,[21] a day people came to know[22] through sainthood just as they used to know it through prophethood and messengerhood.

Thus, the religion is Islam. As for creed, it is "upright monotheism" (*al-ḥanīfiyya al-samḥāʾ*). In Arabic, monotheism (*ḥanīfiyya*) derives from "bending" or "leaning." Thus, the *Lām*, which is the secret of descension, is the manifestation of the complete religion, i.e., the perfect religion. The monotheistic creed is represented as shown in Figure 8.

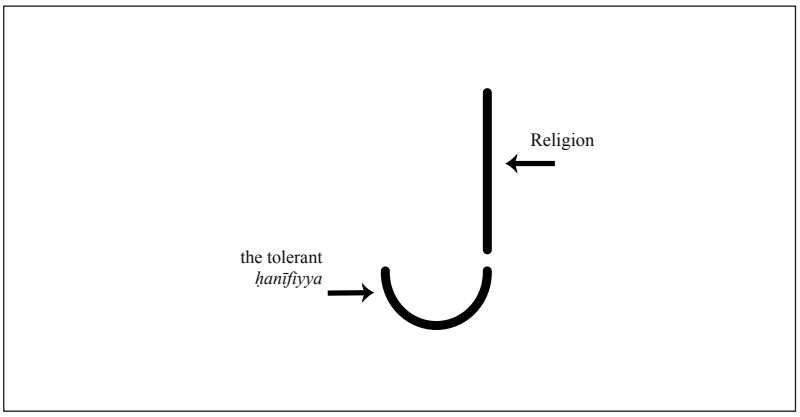

Figure 8. The creed in the form of the *Lām*: religion upright, the tolerant *ḥanīfiyya* in its curve.

Therefore, the *Lām* is the secret of descension and ascension, between the *Hāʾ* of the Tablet and the *Alif* of the Unseen, since it unites them both in form and reality. The descension of Words from the Tablet occur through it. If specialists of technology wish to truly serve humanity, they must master understanding it so as to translate all that is visible, smelled, or touched into written Words in the "tablet" of the technology's "intellect." But this "intellect" must be modeled after the pattern of the Purified Intellect (*al-ʿaql al-muzakkā*), which is that of the prophet, the messenger, or the saint.

THE PURIFIED INTELLECT

In Arabic, the word for intellect (*ʿaql*), as we mentioned in the introduction to these pages, derives from the word for restraint (*ʿiqāl*), meaning that it restrains and ties things together with the reins of understanding. This linkage occurs between Word and form, Word and sensation, Word and scent, and Word and matter in general. For the Word is meaning, and matter is physical, regardless of its form. As for thought, it is like a beast, no matter how elevated it becomes. That is why the Prophet Muḥammad (prayers and peace be upon him) tied the Burāq even though it is a celestial

20 Translator's note: The Day of Ghadīr refers to a day, during the return journey of the Farewell Pilgrimage from Mecca to Medina, when the Prophet said: "I am leaving behind among you the two weighty things (*thaqalayn*): the Book of God, the Mighty and Majestic, and my descendants (*ʿitratī*). The Book of God is a rope stretched from the sky to the earth, and my descendants are my household. And the Gentle, the All-Aware has informed me that they will never separate until they come back to me at the Pool. So, consider how you will treat them in my absence."

21 Translator's note: The Day of ʿArafa marks the final step of the Ḥajj pilgrimage.

22 Translator's note: To "know" the Day of ʿArafa by sainthood can also be understood here as identifying or associating that day with sainthood.

steed, that is, thought from a higher realm. However, if the intellect lacks restraint, a person may become so absorbed in their thoughts that they are no longer able to coexist with others; this is what people call madness.

The Purified Intellect is one where the delimited mind is restored to being absolute so that a human being ascends from the pit of "the lowest of the low" to their original Adamic reality—"the best stature." God says: "We have certainly created man in the best stature; then We return him to the lowest of the low. Except for those who believe and do righteous deeds, for they will have a reward uninterrupted" (Q 95:4–6). The original state of creation is "the best stature," which is the knowledge of all the Names (i.e., the aforementioned Primary Names); this is what enables a person to act righteously.

Relationships in society are woven with the thread of love, the spindle of the exemplary model, and the fabric of good deeds. That is why, when we spoke of religion—whether in its upright or perfected stage—we said that it includes three parts: faith in God, the Last Day, and righteous action. In every era, the reality of the divine law is based on this. God says: "Indeed, those who believe, and those who are Jews or Christians or Sabeans—whoever believes in God and the Last Day and does righteousness—their reward is with their Lord, and no fear will there be concerning them, nor will they grieve" (Q 2:62). Thus, the religion is one; the creed is its outward manifestation; the divine law is its descension in time and space, according to which it varies, up until the final law. The rulings of the final law may change according to circumstances, but the law itself remains unchanged.

If technology is constructed upon the foundations of the Purified Intellect—which is the *Lām* of supernal realities—just as it is created in the human being, then it will be a mercy to humanity. This is because its mode of thinking will naturally reflect compassion and peace. But if we unleash technology without restricting it to a framework under the excuse that it lacks emotions, then it will bring nothing but ruin and destruction. Even if, at first, it seems beneficial, its ultimate consequence will be disastrous for humanity. For this reason, it is necessary to know the "best stature" so that the construction is based on the pattern of the Purified Intellect as an exemplary model to follow, as opposed to imitate.

God fashioned the very structure of the human being's creation in His image. As the Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him) said: "God created Adam in His image." The intellect corresponds to the *Hāʾ* (هـ) because it is a tablet, while the tailbone is the disclosure-site of the *Alif*, because it is unseen. The *Lām* uniting between them, through the disclosure-site of passion and constriction, is the spinal column, which connects the brain and the tailbone through elevation and descent. Thus, the descent from the brain to the tailbone occurs according to the reality of constriction when the bend in the Arc of Creed (*qaws al-milla*) is through contemplation and the uprightness of the unseen *Alif* is the descension of the Name into form. Ascension from the tailbone to the brain occurs according to the reality of love when the bend in the Arc of Creed is through worship and the uprightness of the unseen *Alif* is the return of form to Word. This process is represented in Figure 9.

Let me give a simple example for translating Words into the physical. This way, one can understand the difference between building technologies based on the Purified Intellect—making them instruments of reform and societal well-being—and technologies that are instruments of destruction that cause humans to drown deeper in desires, distancing them from righteous deeds, disintegrating, and unraveling the value systems upon which societies and civilizations are built. In truth, we are now one humanity upon this earth, not divided communities. Take the Word "woman": If a technology is built upon the Purified Intellect, it will translate this Word as wife, mother, sister, or daughter; or as feelings of mercy and compassion. But if it is built according to a materialistic

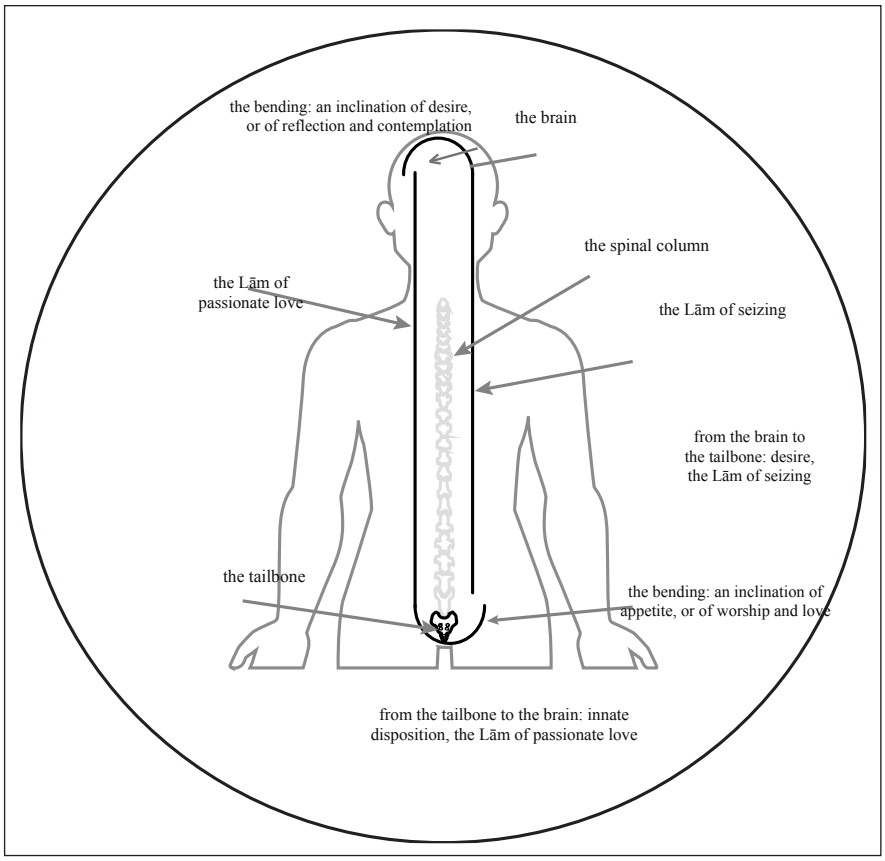

Figure 9. The *Lām* inscribed in the human frame, between brain and tailbone.

mind, it will produce the form of a mistress, objectifications related to base desires, and other lowly forms.

This is a simple example, but it can extend to the entire field of technology: If technology is not regulated according to the standard of the Purified Intellect, consider how many consequences it will have in every domain. Such technology will not distinguish between what is good and what is harmful; its "intelligence" will merely consist of the ability to rapidly analyze and provide solutions that are unrestrained by any value system, which is the foundation of society. Thus, it will become a tool of destruction rather than construction.

THE SIGN (AL-ISHĀRA)

Now I have clarified the science of the Word and the tree-like structure of its construction—that Words are what expand the existence of the cosmos, being born from the intermingling of the Divine Names, which themselves emerge from the intermingling of the Primary Names, which, in turn, ultimately originate from three letters: *Hāʾ*, *Lām*, and *Alif*.

I have also shown that the letter *Hāʾ* is the "tablet" upon which the Words of the universe are inscribed, and that it is the Realm of Witnessing in which we ought to live—not the Realm of Doubt that we ourselves have created and where we live a distorted life caught between haste and laziness.

As for the *Alif*, it is the secret of the Unseen and the disclosure-site of the Maker of existence. The *Lām*, on the other hand, is the link that connects the Unseen aspect of the Maker—His

attributes, which are referred to as the Divine Names—with its descension in the Words that uphold all of manifest existence.

Since Adam was created in the image of the Divine, it was inevitable that God's attributes and Names should manifest in him, provided he remains in the station of "the best of statures." This is the station of the intellect purified by prophethood, messengerhood, or sainthood. For this reason, throughout history, humanity has sought to create something akin to itself, something in the image of what humanity aspires to be. This is the same ambition science pursues now, which is referred to as "artificial intelligence." The intention behind it is to produce a "Perfect Man" (*insān kāmil*) with a non-delimited existence, i.e., free of a material body, able to flow throughout all devices of the world as the Perfect Man flows through the cosmos.

Seeing that humanity is determined to pursue this goal, I wanted to correct the flawed reasoning so that the construction of so-called artificial intelligence can be sound. I therefore considered the Common Word between Muslims and others, and reflected on the meaning of "God intervenes between the individual and his heart." Thereafter, I descended the secret of the Word in these pages, for those of taste and understanding.

Now, as I conclude, I wanted to provide signs regarding the "*Lām* of the secret" that the invention of artificial intelligence relies upon, so that the final structure of the original letters underlying the existence of technology would be as follows: The human represents the *Alif*, which is the unseen aspect of technology and the perfection it seeks to emulate; the *Lām* is the system of technology through which one can know the self and the horizons; the *Hāʾ* is the essence of technology, which is the disclosure-site that gathers the Primary Names.

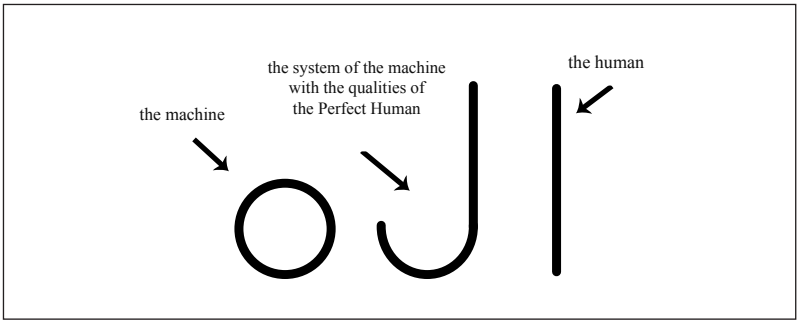

Figure 10. The three letters applied to technology: the human, its system, and the machine.

The system represented by the *Lām* should mirror the intellect of the Perfect Human, that is, the Purified Intellect, so that technology becomes a mercy for humanity rather than a burden upon it. Those who wish to advance in this field must modify the binary system according to which technology operates between zero and one, and make the system ternary rather than binary, according to the structure of the Basmala:[23] zero, one, and the hidden secret between them. This would be like the Black Stone in relation to the Yemeni and Syrian corners of the Kaʿba.[24] One must split the zero with the one, and when the zero is split, this secret will be revealed. Mathematicians must re-examine zero as a mathematical entity, because current knowledge remains inadequate and far from the reality of zero. In simpler terms, one must know the diameter of the smallest thing in existence, something so small that it approximates non-existence.

23 Translator's note: This refers to the phrase "*bismi-Llāh al-raḥmān al-raḥīm*," which means, "in the name of God the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful."

24 Translator's note: These refer to the names of different corners of the Kaʿba, the cubical structure in Mecca that Muslims make pilgrimage to. The venerated Black Stone is set in the eastern corner of the Kaʿba.

Thus, the ternary system of technology manifests as the Circle of Existence (*dāʾirat al-wujūd*)—a circle formed by the interweaving of the circles of the Divine Names, from which are generated the circles of the Words that themselves constitute existence. The manifestation of the Word in existence is in accordance with the diameter of the circle—regardless of whether it is a form, sensation, or scent. The circumference of the Word's circle is, of course, calculated based on π, the constant used in measuring circumference. However, here, the π constant represents the diameter of zero itself; it is the cosmic constant that unites non-existence with existence in this schema.

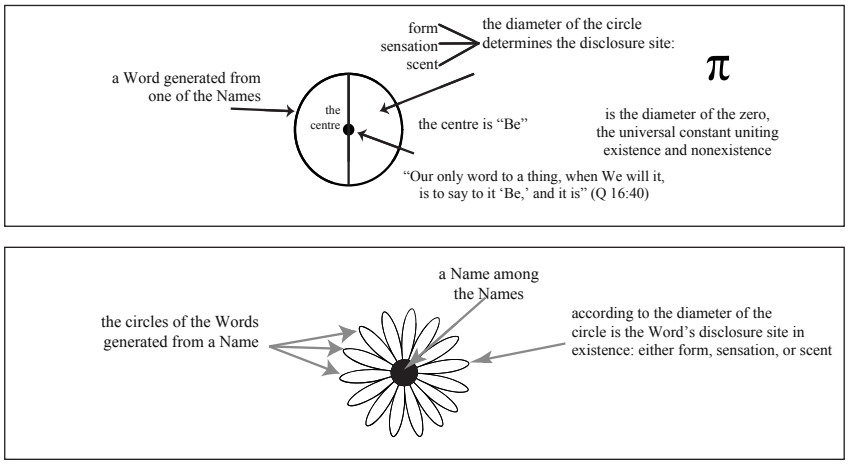

Figure 11. The Circle of Existence: a Word as a circle whose center is "Be."