

A Study of *al-Risālah al-Bāhirah*

Boustan Hirji

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Canada

Abstract

Name : Boustan Hirji
Subject : A Study of *al-Risālah al-Bāhirah*
Department : Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University
Level : Ph.D.

A Study of *al-Risālah al-Bāhirah* presents a departure in the interpretation of Abū Yaʿqūb al-Sijistānī's (d. approximately between 386/996 and 393/1002-3) writings. It is the first critical edition and translation of *al-Risālah al-Bāhirah*.

Previous scholarship has concentrated on the quest for the historical Sijistānī and his alignment with the Fāṭimid Imāms. This thesis explains Sijistānī's relationship with the Fāṭimids through a critical analysis of his doctrines of revelation, resurrection and retribution using the *Bāhirah* as its focus.

Resume

Nom : Boustan Hirji
Sujet : A Study of *al-Risālah al-Bāhirah*
Department : L'Institut des études islamiques, Université McGill
Niveau : Ph.D.

Une étude du texte intitulé *al-Risālah al-Bāhirah*. constitue un nouveau départ dans l'interprétation des écrits de Abū Yaʿqūb al-Sijistānī. Ceci est la première traduction ainsi que la première édition critique du texte *al-Risālah al-Bāhirah*.

Les travaux précédents effectués sur Sijistānī se sont contentés d'examiner Sijistānī en tant que figure historique et son affiliation aux imāms fāṭimides. Cette thèse s'appuie sur *Bāhirah*. pour expliquer les liens de Sijistānī avec les fāṭimides à travers une analyse critique de ses doctrines portant sur la révélation, la résurrection et le châtement.

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Technical Details

[1] Transliteration

The Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University transliteration system for Arabic and Persian has been followed. All Arabic and Persian terms are italicised. As a well-known term Allah has not been transliterated. Other well-known terms such as Imām, Shīʿah, Qurʾān have not been italicised if they are used in a general sense. If the usage of these terms signifies a specific meaning differing from the generally known meaning the term is italicised. The Arabic term *nafs zakīyah* translated as the *pure soul* is italicised even in its English usage where it is used in a specific technical sense.

[2] Translation of Arabic Terms

Arabic terms used in the thesis are translated in the specific meaning in which Sijistānī uses them. This method of translation also applies to the Glossary. The general usage of the Arabic term is not given.

[3] Citations

All authors have been cited in accordance with *Chicago Manual of Style*. First citations in the footnotes are full citations. Subsequent citations follow the *Chicago Manual of Style* author-date system i.e. the name of the author followed by the date of publication of the relevant text and the page number/s, e.g. (Stern, 1983, pp. 222-223). Documentation within the text also follows the *Chicago Manual of Style*. Titles of sources are italicised.

[4] Dates

Relevant dates are given according to both Muslim and Christian calendars

[5] Short Titles

Short titles are used for all of Sijistānī's books, a list of which appears below. All other primary sources are cited with full titles the first time followed by short titles thereafter.

<i>Al- Risālah al-Bāhirah</i>	<i>Bāhirah</i>
<i>Al-Maqālīd al-Malākūtiyah</i>	<i>Maqālīd</i>
<i>Ithbāt al-Nubuwwāt</i>	<i>Ithbāt</i>
<i>Kashf al-Mahjūb</i>	<i>Kashf</i>
<i>Kitāb al-Iftikhār</i>	<i>Iftikhār</i>
<i>Kitāb al-Yanābīʿ</i>	<i>Yanābīʿ</i>
<i>Sullam al-Najāh</i>	<i>Sullam</i>

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I dedicate this work to my father
who makes all things worthwhile

Roshanally Muhammad Hussein Hirji

Introduction

This thesis is a critical edition, translation and analysis of *al-Risālah al-Bāhirah*.¹ The thesis seeks to establish that the views Sijistānī presents in *al-Risālah al-Bāhirah* are almost identical to those which he presents in *Kitāb al-Ifṭikhār*. It seeks to clarify the reasons why the *Ifṭikhār* was accepted by the Fāṭimids as standard teaching, while the *Bāhirah* was identified as heretical. The primary issue discussed in both these works is revelation and its relation to prophecy. Derived from the issue of revelation are two problematic beliefs held by Sijistānī, metempsychosis and the identification of the resurrector.

1. Introductory Remarks on *al-Risālah al-Bāhirah* and its Author

Abū Yaʿqūb al-Sijistānī (d. approximately between 386/996 and 393/1002-3) was one of the most important exponents of the Ismāʿīlī movement in the tenth century. He is considered to be a leading figure of what is referred to as the Persian school.² The existence

¹ B. Hirji, 1992, *Critical Edition of Risālah al Bāhirah* in *Taḥqīqāt-i Islāmī*, Vol. 7, No. 2 pp. 21-62. Journal of the Encyclopaedia Islamica Foundation, Tehran.

² S. M. Stern, 1983, *Studies in Early Ismāʿīlism*, Jerusalem: Magnum Press, pp. 222-223

school distinguishes itself by two key elements: (1) the belief in the role of Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl as the *mahdī* and (2) the syncretising of Neoplatonic thought into a Shīʿite theosophy. It is generally assumed that the synthesis of Neoplatonism and theosophy remained standard Ismāʿīlī doctrine in Persia in the tenth and eleventh centuries, and that it formed the basis for thinkers such as Sijistānī and Nāṣir-i Khusraw.⁴ The source of these two central distinguishing characteristics, according to Madelung, is Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad al-Nasafī (d. 942). Walker presents him as one of the most eminent philosophers and theologians of Khurasān.⁵ Except for one treatise, *Kawn al-ʿĀlam*⁶, in the manuscript collection of The Institute of Ismāʿīlī Studies, his only other known works are the excerpts of the *Kitāb al-Maḥṣūl* which are quoted in both Ismāʿīlī and non-Ismāʿīlī sources.⁷

The assumption that Nasafī's system remained standard Ismāʿīlī doctrine in Persia during the tenth and eleventh centuries, and that it formed the basis for succeeding thinkers such as Sijistānī, who was his student, and Nāṣir-i Khusraw (Stern, 1960, p. 79; Kamada, 1988, pp. 1ff) has given rise to another scholarly trend which views the Persian Neoplatonic

Halm, 1978, *Kosmologie und Heilslehre der frühen Ismāʿīliya; eine Studie zur islamischen Gnosis*, Wiesbaden: Steiner, p. 16

- ⁴ S. M. Stern, 1960, "The Early Ismāʿīlī Missionaries in North-West Persia and in Khurasān and Transoxiana", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 23, p. 79; S. Kamada, 1988, *The First Being: Intellect (ʿaql/khīradh) as the Link between God's Command and Creation According to Abū Yaʿqūb al-Sijistānī*, Tokyo: Tōyō Bunka Kenkyūjo, Showa 63, pp. 1ff.
- ⁵ In P. Walker, 1974, *Abū Yaʿqūb al-Sijistānī and the Development of Ismāʿīlī Neoplatonism*, Ph.D. Thesis, University of Chicago, p. 22; Nizām al-Mulk, 1891, *Siyāsāt Nāmā*, Ed. Charles Schefer, Paris, pp. 187-188.
- ⁶ B. Hirji, *Critical Edition of Kawn al-ʿĀlam*, presented at the American Oriental Society, Madison, Wisconsin, 1994; forthcoming in *Tahqīqāt-i Islāmī*, Journal of Encyclopaedia Islamica Foundation, Tehran, 1995.
- ⁷ In *Kitāb al-Riyāḍ* by the Fāṭimid *dāʿī* Ḥamīd al-Dīn al-Kirmānī and in the *Kashf al-Asrār al-Bāṭiniyah wa Ghawār Madhhabihim* by Abū Qāsim al-Bustī al-Zaydī, published in S. M. Stern, 1983, p. 21.

Ismāʿīlī school as being internally polarized. This view places Sijistānī with Nasafī and Kirmānī with Rāzī, a conclusion based solely on the evidence of the *Kitāb al-Riyāḍ*, written by Kirmānī. However, S. M. Stern and W. Madelung maintain that, at least initially, Rāzī was a Qaramiṭah (Madelung, 1988, pp. 101; Niẓām al-Mulk, 1960, p.186). Among the four, Kirmānī is the sole indisputable Fāṭimid. Sijistānī's attitude to the Fāṭimid Imāms remains open to speculation.

Current scholarship has provided Sijistānī with a somewhat misleading biography.⁸ Indeed, attempts to reconstruct Sijistānī's biography with any degree of certainty appear impossible on the basis of available information. According to Walker the political and ideological reversals of the Ismāʿīlī *daʿwah* up to the time of Nasafī and Rāzī account for the veiling of the *daʿwah* activities. Consequently, we find almost no definitive information on Sijistānī, who as we know, was very prominent in the eastern *daʿwah* (Walker, 1974, pp. 26-30), only the date of his death is recorded by Rashīd al-Dīn almost three centuries after the fact in *Jāmiʿ al-Tawārīkh* (p. 12; a similar account is found in Kāshānī, 1965, p. 21).⁹

We shall not list all the works known to have been written by and/or attributed to Sijistānī. These occur in several comprehensive accounts of his works.¹⁰ However, we shall briefly mention some of his works in an attempt to suggest reasons for the lack of their mention in the *Fihrist* by Majdūʿ¹¹, a lack of usage by the Fāṭimids, and their destruction.

⁸ For details on Sijistānī's biography see Stern, 1983, pp. 220-233; Walker, "Abū Yaʿqūb al-Sejestānī", *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, ed. E. Yarshater, Vol. I, Routledge and Kegan Paul; Walker, 1993, *Early Philosophical Shiism*, Cambridge Studies in Islamic Civilization, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, pp. 16-19.

⁹ For the tentative reliability of Rashīd al-Dīn as a historian, especially in the recording of Sijistānī's death, see Stern, 1983, p. 229.

¹⁰ Brockelmann, 1943-49, Ivanow, 1963, Fyzee, 1973, Goriawala, 1965, Tajdin, 1986 and Gacek, 1984; see bibliography for details.

¹¹ The *Fihrist* is a bibliography of Ismāʿīlī works specifying the level at which each work was used. Therefore, the omission by Majdūʿ is significant.

1. In the *Ithbāt* (p. 28), Sijistānī mentions a work called *al-Kāmil*. He writes: a "statement on the circumstances of the cause for the differences of individuals in bearing and temperaments from the point of view of Nature's design to display wisdom, is beyond the scope of this chapter. Perhaps we will explain in our book called *al-Kāmil*, should God aid us in that." However, *al-Kāmil* is neither extant nor mentioned by anyone else.
2. *Ithbāt al-Nubūwāt* is mentioned twice in the *Maqālīd*. Furthermore, the fourth chapter of the seventh section of the *Ithbāt* is cited in *Iqlīd* 27. It is also mentioned by Majdū^c (p. 183-185) and in *Kanz al-Walad*, a later Yamanī Ismā^cīlī work. However, Walker points out that the seventh chapter of *Ithbāt* concerning "*The Marvels Existing in the Qur^ʿān and the Religious Law and the Indications Establishing the Prophethood of Muḥammad, peace be upon him and his Family*" is missing in the existing surviving manuscripts (P. Walker, 1974, p. 200). Also, he maintains that the sixth chapter in Tamer's edition of the *Ithbāt* entitled, "*The Quantity of the Sacred Cycles of the Legislative Prophets and that is between each Sacred Cycle and the Last Sacred Cycle*" has been tampered with. It is unclear at present if Majdū^c had a copy of *Ithbāt* different from the extant version which includes the original sixth section and the now lost seventh.
3. *Kitāb al-Mawāzīn* is listed by Majdū^c (p. 189-90) but is neither mentioned in Sijistānī's other works nor in any other source. H. Corbin mentions a manuscript of the same title in *Le Temps Cyclique* (p. 191, nt. 26). Both H. Landolt and P. Walker hold that this work is not by Sijistānī, though it is listed as such.
4. *Tuḥfat al-Mustajībīn* is not mentioned by Sijistānī or any other source, except by Majdū^c (p. 193) as being written by Sijistānī.

5. *Kitāb al-Ifṭikhār* has within its text that it was written after 961. It is listed by Majdū^c (p. 140-141) and is mentioned in *Maqālīd* (*Iqlīd* 8 and 9 which are on "*Divine Unity*").
6. *Sullam al-Najāt* mentions *Iqlīd* 9 and is listed by Majdū^c (p. 196).
7. *Kitāb al-Yanābī^c* is mentioned by al-Bustī in *Asrār al-Bāṭiniyya* according to M. Stern (p. 22, P. Walker, p. 206). The 33rd *Yanbu^c* is mentioned in the *Iqlīd* 29 and is entitled "*That the World had no form with the Innovator before Divine Innovation*". It is listed by Majdū^c (p. 142-144).
8. *Al-Maqālīd al-Malākūtiyah*, a work comprising 67 *Iqlīds* is mentioned in *Sullam al-Najāt* and in *Ifṭikhār* (fol. 84b). It is also quoted by Kirmānī in *Kitāb al-Riyād* (p. 93). However, it appears in Majdū^c (p. 145, 231) only because it is referred to in another work. In the *Iqlīd* 27, "*The Word is that which is the article of Denial or Contradiction*" and in *Iqlīd* 63 "*That the Scrutiny of the Truths of the Holy Laws does not Invalidate their Effects*", we find the fourth *faṣl* of the lost 7th *maqālat* of *Iṭhbāt*.

In *Iqlīd* 45 entitled "*The Return of the Souls with Bodies as They were before when the Sphere reaches a Certain Point is Impossible*", *Kitāb al-Bishārāt* is mentioned.

In *Iqlīd* 29 entitled "*The Impossibility of Eternal Hayūlā being with God*", *Yanbu^c* 33 is cited.

9. *Al-Mabda² wa al-Ma^cād*, presumably written after 996, mentions al-Ḥākim as the *Imām al-^cAṣr*. This work is not listed in Majdū^c but is mentioned by Kāshānī (*Ta²riḫ-i Ismā^cīliyah*, p. 21).

10. *Musliyāt al-Ahzān and Kitāb al-Wā'iz* are listed by Majdū^c (p. 55, 54 respectively) but no other citations are attested.
11. *Al-Risālah al-Bāhirah* is mentioned only by Nāṣir-i Khusraw as an example of Sijistānī's ideas on metempsychosis (*Zād al-Musāfirīn*, p. 422).
12. *Al-Bishārāt* is cited in *Ifṭikhār* and *Iqlīd 45*. It is quoted by 'Alī ibn Hāṭim al-Ḥāmidī in *Rawḍat al-Ḥikm al-Ṣāfiyah* (Walker, 1974, p. 214). It apparently dealt with: a. Religious Hierarchies b. The Imams c. The Beginning of the Spiritual letters and the Spiritual Lights. d. The Legislative Prophets who are parts of the Universal Soul. It is not mentioned by Majdū^c.
13. *Kitāb al-Nuṣrah* is mentioned only in *Kitāb al-Riyāḍ* and not listed by Majdū^c. Like *al-Bishārāt*, this work dealt with legislative prophecy and maintained views which Kirmānī rejects.
14. *Sūs al-Baqā'* is mentioned along with *Al-Risālah al-Bāhirah* in connection with metempsychosis (*tanāsukh*) by Nāṣir-i Khusraw in *Zād al-Musāfirīn* (p. 422). It is not listed by Majdū^c.
15. *Kashf al-Mahjūb* is mentioned by Bīrūnī (*Hind*, p. 49), by al-Bustī and by Nāṣir-i Khusraw (*Khwān al-Ikhwān*, p. 117, *Zād*, p. 422). It is not listed by Majdū^c.
16. *Asās al-Da'wah*, *Kashf al-Asrār* and *Ta'wīl al-Sharī'ah* are mentioned by Baghḍādī (*Farq*, p. 283). They are attributed to Nasafī by Abū Muzẓ`afar Isfarā'īnī (*Tabṣīr fī al-Dīn*, p. 84 with the change in the last title to *Ta'wīl al-Sharā'ī*).

17. *Sarāʿir al-Maʿād waʿl-Maʿāsh* is attributed to Sijistānī by Majdūʿ (p. 196).
18. *Kitāb al-Başāʿir* is mentioned by al-Bustī only. (Stern, 1983, p. 22).
19. *Kitāb al-Burhān* is mentioned by A. Tamer in *Khams Rasāʿil* as an extant manuscript (Poonawala, 1977, pp. 87-89).
20. *Al-ʿIlm al-Maknūn wa al-Sirr al-Makhzūn* is cited in al-Daylānī (p. 43, 94, 48, 49).

If we accept the Ismāʿīlī tradition, in its broad definition, as being our source of information, then Kirmānī, Nāṣir-i Khusraw and Majdūʿ are the three most prominent sources for reference to Sijistānī's lost works. From this perspective, the works mentioned above can be categorised under four groups: (1) those mentioned only by Majdūʿ; (2) those not mentioned by Majdūʿ but mentioned by others; (3) those mentioned by Sijistānī himself; (4) those mentioned by Majdūʿ and others. In the first group we find: the *Tuḥfat*, *Sarāʿir al-Maʿād*, *Mawāzīn*, *Musliyāt*, *al-Wāʿizz*. The second group includes: The *Bāhirah*, *Sūs*, *Bishārāt*, *Kashf*, *Nuṣrah*. The third group comprises of: *Maqālīd*, *Ithbāt*, *al-Kāmil*, *Sullam*, *Bishārāt*, *Yanābīʿ*. The fourth group includes: *Ithbāt*, *Iftikhār*, *Sullam*, *Yanābīʿ*, *Maqālīd*.

In the second group we find that of the five works not mentioned by Majdūʿ, one, *Bishārāt*, is mentioned by Sijistānī himself. Four of the works, the *Bāhirah*, *Bishārāt*, *Kashf* and *Sūs* are mentioned by Nāṣir-i Khusraw and one, *Nuṣrah*, is cited by Kirmānī. It is interesting to note that all these works deal with prophetology, the last cycle of prophecy, specifically the cycle of Muḥammad, metempsychosis and the universal soul. These were precisely the issues on which Sijistānī disagreed with the Fāṭimids and for which he is taken to task by both Kirmānī and Nāṣir-i Khusraw in *Riyāḍ*, *Khwān* and *Zād*.

The rift between Fāṭimid and non-Fāṭimid Ismāʿīlī doctrine is evident in a number of instances. The famous Fāṭimid jurist al-Qāḍī al-Nuʿmān (d. 363/974) who was closely allied to four Fāṭimid Imāms was never sympathetic to the more philosophical views of the eastern school of Ismāʿīlis. The views of Nasafī, who did not accept the Fāṭimids and whom Sijistānī defended against Rāzī, were incorporated into official Fāṭimid teaching only during the reign of al-Muʿizz.¹² Kirmānī acted as arbiter in the debate between Nasafī and Sijistānī on the one hand and Rāzī on the other.¹³ In Sijistānī's case, even the Imām, al-Muʿizz tried to accommodate him by declaring him to have taught metempsychosis while he was unwell (*Zād*, 1923, pp. 421-423). By declaring Sijistānī unwell the imām avoided an open confrontation with him, yet made it plain that the belief in metempsychosis was unacceptable. Sijistānī was obviously required to recant these ideas to be part of the official Fāṭimid *daʿwah*. We find that in *Bāhirah*, which may have been written either to Muʿizz or Ḥākīm, Sijistānī is not as discreet as the Fāṭimid Imāms would have liked. It should

¹² The Persian school of Ismāʿīlism is referred to by Walker as the Qarmatian school. The thesis that there were at least two strands of Ismāʿīlī thought was first put forward by Stern, 1983, pp. 264-265. He presents evidence from *al-Majālis waʿl-Musāyarat* (dated 351 A.H.), by a *dāʿī* Ḥalam b. Shaybān, about the reconciliation between the two strands during the imāmate of al-Muʿizz. There is also evidence that imām al-Muʿizz was planning to rid the *daʿwah* of the dissenting *dāʿīs*. Stern speculates that one of the dissenters from the eastern *daʿwah* might have been Sijistānī. Madelung, 1990, concurred with Stern and labeled the earlier, more philosophical strand, represented by Nasafī and Sijistānī, as the "Persian School". Halm, 1978, maintains that the ideas in the *Iftikhār* demonstrate that Sijistānī changed his position during the time of Muʿizz and abandoning the early position accepted official Fāṭimid doctrine. Halm nonetheless, maintains that Sijistānī adopted the Neoplatonic system, incorporating it into Fāṭimid thought. See also Walker, 1993, p. 11; Stern, 1983, pp. 264-265. F. Daftary (1990, *The Ismāʿīlis*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, p. 238-239) modifies the Stern-Madelung position by concluding from the same sources that Sijistānī in the *Nuṣrah* believed the Fāṭimids to be only the representatives (*khulafāʾ*) of the true imāms and the *qāʾim*, changed his position and accepted Muʿizz as the true imām in the *Ithbāt* and the *Iftikhār* (*Ithbāt*, pp. 178, 186-187; *Iftikhār*, pp. 72-73). This thesis argues that Sijistānī did not change his own doctrinal position, and it would seem that he was nevertheless tolerated by the Fāṭimids until he wrote the *Bāhirah*.

¹³ Daftary, 1990, p. 235.

therefore, neither come as a total surprise if his works categorised in the second group were not included in Majdū's *Fihrist*; nor should we be astonished that none of these works survived in the western *da'wah* (Daftary, 1990, pp. 236). To this we may add that the only reference to Sijistānī's death comes to us three centuries later by Rashīd al-Dīn whose accuracy is questionable (for details see, Stern, 1983, p. 229). Therefore, it may not be misplaced to suggest that because Sijistānī upheld his dissident views as recorded in the *Bāhirah* till the end, he could neither be accommodated, nor tolerated by the Fāṭimid power. Given his position in the *da'wah* he had to be dealt with in a definitive manner so as to ensure the security of Fāṭimid teaching. This imāmī disfavour could have resulted in his death and the destruction in the western *da'wah* of those of his works which were deemed non-conformist.

Besides his views on metempsychosis, Sijistānī's view of revelatory activity was suspect. In the *Ithbāt* (p. 180) he writes that the people themselves will abolish the law (*sharī'ah*) so that neither the *qā'im* nor his representatives (*khulafā'*) will need to do this. Nāṣir-i Khusraw, while recording (*Khwān al-Ikhwān*, p. 135) Sijistānī's definition of the *barzakh* as the religious laws of the prophets, writes that Sijistānī refers to them as the lords of the cycle of concealment (*khudāwandān-i satr*) in whose time souls receiving divine teaching (*ta'līm*), come into the physical world through the divine help (*ta'yīd*) of these prophets. But it is only through the power of the *qā'im*, the lord of the great cycle, that the souls become spiritual. That is to say that, during the cycles of concealment revelation is still seen as being of a physical nature, i.e. the *sharī'ah*; it is only with the *qā'im* that law is transformed into the spiritual. This idea of the nullification of the *sharī'ah* by the community (*ummah*) should be distinguished from the concept of its abrogation by the *qā'im*, for in his time it will be transformed into something spiritual. The time of the *qā'im*, whose manifestation is resurrection, raises the final and the most original component of Sijistānī's thought: revelatory activity, its relationship to prophetology-imāmology and their coalescence in resurrection. He discusses these problems in *al-Risālah al-Bāhirah*.

1.2 Review of the Literature on Sijistānī

Western pioneers in the field of Ismāʿīlī studies date back to the eighteenth century.¹⁴ Modern progress in the field of both Fāṭimid and non-Fāṭimid Ismāʿīlī studies include as the most prominent scholars, Rudolph Strothmann (1877-1960), W. Ivanow (1886-1970), Marius Canard (1888-1982), Henry Corbin (1903-1978), Paul Kraus (1904-1944), Bernard Lewis, Samuel Miklos Stern (1920-1969), Marshall Hodgson (1922-1968).

Interest in Abū Yaʿqūb al-Sijistānī is both recent and limited. Samuel Stern, Henry Corbin, Wilfred Madelung, Heinz Halm, Paul Walker, Mohamed Alibhai, Shigeru Kamada, Farhad Daftary and Ian Netton are those who have worked on Sijistānī. The major part of Stern's research concerned itself with a reconstruction of the historical circumstances of the early *daʿwah* and the identity of Sijistānī. His conclusion is that although the references in the literature to the person we now refer to as Sijistānī are by a variety of names, they all point to a single individual, Abū Yaʿqūb Ishāq al-Sijistānī. This position has never been challenged by subsequent scholars, even though the evidence is tentative. Another issue arising from Stern's research is the differences between Sijistānī and his teacher Nasafī. Daftary, in his extremely comprehensive work, addresses the same historical issues as Stern. However, he does not question Stern's thesis that the disputes between Sijistānī and his teacher Nasafī were not doctrinal but pertained to the teaching methods within the *daʿwah* (Daftary, 1990, p. 240).

It is with Madelung's more recent publications that we find some departure on the important issue of homogeneity within the *daʿwah*. In his early work Madelung agreed with Stern's position regarding the homogenous character of the Ismāʿīlī *daʿwah*. However, in his recent work Madelung not only identifies the eastern Persian school of Ismāʿīlism, but also accepts that the differences between Nasafī and Sijistānī were of a more serious nature concerning doctrine. However, he has not explored this question further.

¹⁴ For a detailed historical account of western scholarship see Daftary, 1990, pp. 1-31.

One of the more crucial elements in the reconstruction of the historical Sijistānī is his belief in the imminence of the messiah's (*mahdī*) return and the belief that Muḥammad ibn Ismāʿīl was that messiah. A clarification of this issue would help determine Sijistānī's position with the Fāṭimids of Cairo. Madelung maintains that although Sijistānī waited for the return of Muḥammad ibn Ismāʿīl as the *mahdī*, in the meanwhile he also accepted the Fāṭimid Caliphs as the rightful imāms. Walker accepts Madelung's position. Alibhai has not dealt with this issue directly, but by stating that Sijistānī's cosmological structure is an effort to justify the Fāṭimid imām, implies that Sijistānī unequivocally accepted the Fāṭimids. This thesis demonstrates that Sijistānī's position with the Fāṭimids is not as clear as is made out to be. Even though he did accept the leadership of the Fāṭimids starting with al-Muʿizz, Sijistānī was not ready to abandon his theological stands on metempsychosis and resurrection. These theological positions, especially metempsychosis and the concept of the *pure soul*, were not acceptable to the Fāṭimids. In fact Sijistānī's formulation of the *pure soul* undermines the position of the Fāṭimid imām. Both Madelung and Walker credit Sijistānī with very little autonomy within the Ismāʿīlī *daʿwah*, nevertheless maintaining that he was the head of the eastern Persian *daʿwah*.

Walker has published several works on Sijistānī which besides addressing historical questions, attempt to deal with the philosophical content of Sijistānī. Alibhai in the edition of *Sullam* has highlighted Sijistānī's unique concept of substance. Kamada's excellent article on the concept of the intellect begins to pierce the shell of Sijistānī's cosmology. These are isolated works. It is only Henry Corbin, a Sijistānī scholar of great magnitude, who has left a legacy of insightful scholarship to those currently working in the field. Although Corbin is criticised for portraying Sijistānī in a more mystical light than is accurate, Corbin's work on the *Kashf* and on the *Yanābīʿ* remains as definitive.

In the *Kosmologie* Halm raises an interesting question regarding Sijistānī's assimilation of Neoplatonic ideas and structures into his own system of thought. Halm demonstrates that a strand of the Persian Ismāʿīlī school to which Sijistānī belonged believed in the primacy of the feminine principle in the creation scheme. Halm asserts that with the assimilation of

Neoplatonic ideas, the feminine principle represented by the soul was ousted by the masculine principle represented by the intellect, in the hierarchy of the emanation process. Halm believes Sijistānī to be the man responsible for this change. Unfortunately Halm's thesis has neither received much attention nor has it been the subject of serious scholarship.

A further review of current scholarship on Abū Ya'qūb al-Sijistānī is deemed unnecessary here because as each issue in Sijistānī's thought is discussed the views of various relevant scholars are presented.

2. General Intellectual Background

Sijistānī proposes a cosmic system in which God existentiates in a timeless instant through his creative command (*amr*), the intellect (*'aql*), which in turn engenders the soul (*nafs*). The soul emerges and establishes the world of sensibles. Already possessing the light of the intelligible world, the soul inclines towards the intelligible world. The inclination of the soul to the intellect is its effort to comprehend the intellect perfectly (*Yanābī'*, pp. 32-34ff). The act of the soul in its attempt at comprehending the intellect, leads us to the questions of who is the creator of the intelligible and sensible worlds and how they are created.¹⁵

¹⁵ Up to the early part of the ninth century creation was defined as the opposite of eternity. However, there was an unresolved debate over the essential character of the act of creation: whether it was out of nothing or out of eternal pre-existent matter (H. A. Wolfson, 1976, *The Philosophy of the Kalam*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, pp. 359ff). Besides being the *khāliq* God is also referred to in the Qur'ān as the *badī'* of the heavens and the earth (2:117; 6:101). The theologians assert that as *badī'*, God is designated as the absolute creator of a radical innovation (Corbin translates it as "primordial establishing"), whereas, as *khāliq*, God is creator (L. Gardet, EI, pp. 663-665). The act of innovation (*ibdā'*) was linked to the divine fiat (*kun*), and it was used in this manner, by the theologians, both Shī'ite and Sunnī, as well as the philosophers. But, it appears to be the Ismā'īlī, specifically Sijistānī, who articulated this idea in its most crystallised form, who brought the

Sijistānī deals with this matter in almost all of his works. He maintained a position which distinguished God as the originator (*mubdiʿ*) from His functions as the creator (*khāliq*). The debate on the nature of God revolves around whether as the cause of all creation He was a necessary cause, as the philosophers claim, or, whether He willed to be a creator, as is the implication of the position of the theologians. Sijistānī's refutation of the Muslim

question of the concept of time into the reason-revelation debate. The Muslim philosophical position held that nothingness [*maʿdūm*] was not the same as 'no thing' [*lā shayʿ*] but eternal matter without order (*ghayr tarkīb*). See R. M. Frank, 1980, *Al-Maʿdūm waʾl-Mawjūd*, MIDEO, pp. 185-209. Hence, the infinite creative act of causing the temporal world is the fashioning of a cosmos out of chaos, not as a single act in time but infinitely. The Aristotelian and the Neoplatonic strains in Muslim philosophy adopted the causation and emanationist schemes respectively, and adhered to a cyclical continuum of time and the eternity of the world. The understanding of revelation as being a personal divine intervention in linear history, makes the search for ultimate knowledge inherently grounded in revelation and not reason. The reason-revelation debate thus arose partially because of the diverse interpretations of Qurʾānic (i.e., revelatory) statements regarding God's nature and power. In order to safeguard the doctrine of God's absolute power, the theologians maintained that the world was created *ex nihilo*, i.e. that God created the world as an act of will in time out of nothing (*al-shayʿ al-maʿdūm*) and that the persistence of being from one instant to another depended solely on God (A. J. Wensinck, 1965, *The Muslim Creed*, Frank Cass & Co. Ltd., London, pp. 188-210). As early as the mid-ninth century the implications of the thesis of the eternity of the world had been disavowed as heretical. Implicit in this thesis was the arbitrary limitation of God's absolute power, the denial of His anteriority to being a creator, His relationship to His creation and His relationship to Time.

philosophers and the theologians regarding the nature of God¹⁶ reveals that, as is found in the Plotinian scheme, Sijistānī creates for the creator a category beyond that of both the sensible and intelligible realms, thereby removing the anthropomorphism (*tashbīh*) which is the logical outcome of the emanationist system.¹⁷ Even the element of "being" (which is distinct from existence in the created sense) is relational according to Sijistānī and,

¹⁶ The reason-revelation debate introduced three broad perspectives into the understanding of the nature of God and His attributes: (a) through revelation conceived as an extranatural act of a transcendent personal God; (b) through revelation conceived as the inherent outcome of an emanatory principle; (c) through revelation conceived as a manifestation of the highest state of the individual intellect/soul. The most obvious and central concerns of this debate were the discussions on the nature of God, centering around: (a) a literal affirmation of God's attributes which according to its opponents equalled *tashbīh* (anthropomorphism), (b) a negation of the attributes by speculative reasoning which according to its opponents equalled *ta'ṭīl* (stripping), (c) an intermediate position which allowed neither *tashbīh* nor *ta'ṭīl* so that God's unicity (*tawḥīd*) was not compromised by a relationship to creation. Both Mu'tazilah and Ash'ariyah theologians, debated with the philosophers in the tradition of Islamic Aristotelianism and Neoplatonism on the issue of creation.

¹⁷ The causation scheme of the Muslim philosophers made the world ontologically and epistemologically contingent upon God, the Existential Cause. Though the world was eternal and emanated from God, it was also eternally dependent on God. Creation, therefore, was for the philosophers a simultaneous actualising of logical and material potentialities with Reason as an ontological category. M. Hodgson states "Its religious meaning emerges when it is seen that human reason is a reflection of that Active Reason that presides over our world...thus reversing in our own consciousness the descent from unity to multiplicity by re-ascending intellectually from multiplicity to ultimate unity (1974, *The Venture of Islam*, 3 Vols. University of Chicago Press, Chicago, vol. 1, pp. 424-427)". In the emanationist scheme of Plotinus the one was placed in a category beyond the Aristotelian God. Indivisible, beyond being and intellection, the One was free of all determination. It is the *nous*, the second hypostasis which answers the problem of multiplicity emerging from the One, which was inherent in both Platonic and Aristotelian schemes. This unqualified substance had two aspects: an aspect of unity, and an aspect in relation to the sensibles (J. M. Rist, 1980, *The Road to Reality*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, pp. 112-129). Here, the Persian School of Muslim emanationists found a way to safeguard God's absolute uniqueness as well as to explain creation. It was the *pneuma* or the soul, the second hypostasis, which assumed the epistemological function of travelling from the temporal eternity of the world to the timeless eternity of the one.

therefore, demands causation. Thus, the originator has no being, cannot be predicated and needs no cause. Sijistānī's argument is designed to protect the unicity of God (*tawḥīd*). He accomplishes this through the "double negation" argument in the context of his creation scheme, where the 'coming-into-being' includes both levels of spiritual substance (*al-jawhar al-rūḥānī*) and physical substance (*al-jawhar al-jismānī*). This coming-into-being comprehends both the subtle existents of the intelligible world (*laṭāʾif*) and the material existents of the physical world (*kathīf*), which are characteristic of the non-composite world (*ʿālam al-basīf*) and the composite world (*ʿālam al-murakkab*), i.e. the intelligible and the sensible planes, respectively (*Tuḥfat*, p. 139; *Maqālīd*, fol. 34b).

The categories of creator-created are directly linked to another theological debate, which is epistemological, debating the possibility of creation to know its creator. Viewed from the epistemological perspective of the possibility of creation to know its creator the debate between reason and revelation crystallised in two principal areas¹⁸: (1) the primacy of the use of reason in the implementation of the *shariʿah*; (2) the use of reason in the understanding of God and his attributes. The argumentation between the Muʿtazilah, the Ashʿariyah and the Ahl al-Sunnah was conducted at the level of the use of human reason as distinguished from the intellect (Wolfson, 1976, pp. 4ff).¹⁹ It was in this climate of debate

¹⁸ Revelation and reason are not metaphysical categories but tools in a historical debate. In Islam revelation is enshrined in language. Therefore, the understanding of reality is intermeshed with language and the intellect. It is no exaggeration to maintain that *kalām Allāh* is the origin, the creator and the methodology of the intellectual sciences in Islam. *Kalām* had started exegetically, but by the middle of the ninth century it stood as a distinctly sophisticated science (Frank, 1978, pp. 9-11). Parallel to *kalām*, Islamic philosophical developments, whose growth was also stimulated by exegesis, were extended intellectually as the elaboration of the revelatory paradigm by the believer. Thus, inadvertently, the use of reason appeared as a rival to revelation.

¹⁹ The Muʿtazilah began a trend characterized by an openness to accept the use of speculative reason from other traditions for theological argumentation (Wolfson, 1976, pp. 19-33). However, they do not represent an homogenous school adhering to an unified body of teaching, even on the basic issue of the nature of God and His attributes (Frank, 1978, pp. 3-4).

The Muʿtazilah provided a strong stimulus for many groups. A case in point is Ibn Taymiyah's position that contemporary Shīʿite opinion about God's justice and man's freedom initially came from the Muʿtazilah (McDermott, 1986, p.2). Even earlier than al-Mufīd (d.1022), al-Khayyāt writes that a small group of the Rāfidah associated with the Muʿtazilah, and accepted their position on *tawhīd*. As a result the larger group repudiated them (Madelung, EI, Shiah, pp. 242-270).

From the death of al-Kulaynī in 941, and the subsequent appearance of the codification of the Imāmite corpus of Tradition, intellectual growth and exchange in Shīʿite circles flowered, to 1054 at the end of the Būyid rule in Baghdad (M. Momen, 1985, *Shīʿi Islam*, Yale University Press, New Haven, London, pp. 77ff; McDermott, 1986, p.3). A stream of Muʿtazilah-inclined Imāmite thinkers survived along with the mainstream Shīʿites. Momen argues the doctrines of this latter group were based on earlier *ghuluww* speculation. In Baghdad there were at least three distinct Muʿtazilah groups: the once pro-Alid school, the Baṣran school and the Ikhshīdiyya (McDermott, 1986, pp. 4-6).

In the seventh century, the center of Imāmite intellectual activity had already shifted from Kūfā to Qum and Khurāsān. It was the school of Qum which reacted strongly against the infiltration of Muʿtazilah ideas and methods (McDermott, 1986, pp. 12-13). A century and a half later Imāmite Shīʿism came to accept Muʿtazilah views on the anthropomorphism of God, his possessing a physical body and his changing his mind. Probably the only doctrine which remained unaffected was that of the Imāmate.

With ʿAbd al-Jabbār, by 1024, the recognition of reason as a tool for certitude was firmly established for the Muʿtazilah. The knowledge about God stated as fact by revelation, was justified by reason. This position on rational investigation assumed with al-Ashʿarī (d. 935) the theological prescription of *bi-lā kayf*. The Ahl al-Sunnah abstained from theological speculation, thus entering the debate from the position of *naql vs. ʿaql*. The Muʿtazilah lent to the Imāmite tradition a defensive use of reason. By the time of Jaʿfar al-Šādiq (d.765) and Kulaynī (d.939) the concept of the Imāmah and the ʿAql were identified with other Qurʾānic terms such as *Qalam* and ʿArsh, and became a mythological entity. At the same time the use of *taqlīd* was accepted as a method of argumentation, although, it was qualified by the injunction that faith be based on intellectual knowledge. Reason was never considered to be independent of revelation.

The latter part of the ninth century saw a decentralisation in political power (Hodgson, 1974, II, p. 12), in spite of the existence of the three caliphates. The establishment of the Fāṭimids in Tunisia and Egypt forced the intellectual explication and crystallisation of general "Ismāʿīlī" thought into a more or less Fāṭimid and non-Fāṭimid position. One must see the Ismāʿīlī school in this increasingly loosely knit intellectual context. According to Madelung, the communal and doctrinal history of the Ismāʿīlīyah prior to the ninth century is full of splinter sects. In the middle of the ninth century with the emergence of the doctrine

that the Ismā'īlī school sought its answers. The syncretistic tendencies of the Ismā'īlīs allowed them to formulate a new approach to the problem of the possibility of creation to know its creator. Sijistānī's position seems to tread the middle path between the heretical philosophers and the orthodox theologians. The issue for Sijistānī is epistemological, i.e., whether the intellect and/or the soul is related to knowledge and God, and if so, the nature of this relationship. For him the question was neither, whether the individual rational faculty should be involved in understanding how God's ipseity is related to creation through revelation; nor was it, whether revelation is self-explanatory by the very fact of its existence. Sijistānī's epistemological concern deals with the identification of the transcendent God, the creator, and the world.

Several scholars point to a close relationship between the Persian school of Ismā'īlīsm and Gnostic thought in a number of areas.²⁰ Even though it is virtually impossible to establish which one of the numerous gnostic systems influenced Sijistānī, it can be safely assumed

that held Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl to be the Mahdī Ismā'īlīsm becomes a well organised system. "The religious doctrine of this period which is largely reconstructed from later Ismā'īlī sources and anti-Ismā'īlī accounts distinguished between the outer, exoteric (*zāhir*) and the inner, esoteric (*bāṭin*) aspects of religion...the *bāṭin* consists of the esoteric, unchangeable truths (*ḥaqā'iq*) hidden in all structures and laws and behind the apparent sense and revealed by the method of esoteric interpretation called *ta'wīl*, which often relied on Qabbalistic manipulation of the mystical significance of letters and their numerical equivalents. The esoteric truths embody a gnostic cosmology and a cyclical, yet teleological history of revelation" (Madelung, *Shiism*, p. 247ff). The fight for leadership within the Ismā'īlī community was closely related to the debate about Prophecy-Imāmology. Factors such as the claims of Maymūn al-Qaddāh and the Fāṭimids to 'Alid descent, the subsequent isolation of the Qaramiṭah from the Fāṭimids and their alliance with the Abbasids speak of a mercurial intellectual and political situation.

²⁰ Halm in *Kosmologie* (pp. 115-128) points to a very close relationship between Gnostic and Ismā'īlī thought in the concepts of time and theophanic visions as does H. Corbin, in 1983, *Cyclical Time and Ismaili Gnosis*, Kegan Paul International, London, pp. 151-195.

that the influence probably arose from the eastern Iranian stream.²¹ However, certain Gnostic concepts, such as, the destruction of the cosmos, the evil nature of matter, the forgetfulness of the soul, and the concept of esoteric knowledge (gnosis) and personal redemption, do not coincide with Sijistānī's views. For example, in the Gnostic system, the presence of the divine "spark" in man is the basis of the identification between man and God. This form of monism is combined with a dualism that links evil with matter (Rudolph, 1984, pp. 57-60). As will be demonstrated, Sijistānī's concept of the individual soul being part of the universal soul, retains the idea of the divine spark, but rejects the clear identification of evil with matter. Sijistānī introduces an ontological dualism in the individual soul that maintains the difference between 'being' and 'becoming'.

In gnostic cosmogony the problem of why the higher world finds itself in the lower due to forgetfulness, is answered by the concept of the "fall" being due to an imperfection (Rudolph, 1984, pp. 70ff, 84-89). One of Sijistānī's debates with Rāzī and Kirmānī in *K. al-Riyāḍ* is precisely on this issue. In the emanationist system the subtle intelligible world logically ends in matter and in the pure creationist system it is the divine fiat "be" which brings creation into being. Both views share the categories of the creator and the created. However, the question of the nature of the creator and/or the creating cause and the relationship between these two categories remains to be resolved.

The dualism of the Qur³ānic position of creator-created can be de-polarised if examined as suggested by Izutsu,²² with the introduction of a third category, *'ālam al-ghayb*. This

²¹ This assumption can be made simply on the grounds of geographical proximity. Although a thorough comparison is beyond the scope of this thesis, a cursory examination yields the same conclusion.

²² Izutsu introduced a concept, 'relational meaning', as a methodological concept of semantics. When a concept has a specific meaning because of its relationship to another concept/s, the specific meaning is viewed as relational. He states that the ontological relationship between God, the creator, and man, creation can also be categorized as communicative and ethical relationships. See T. Izutsu, 1964, *God and Man in the Koran*, Tokyo, Keio Institute of Cultural and Linguistic Studies, pp. 76, 83-85.

category creates an intermediate stage and suggests a relationship between the created world (*al-dunya*) and the world of the Hereafter (*al-ākhirah*), which are conceptually opposed in world view (Izutsu, 1964, pp. 85-91). This third category of creation, *‘ālam al-ghayb*, serves as a relational dimension between the creator and the created, and between the domain of the unseen and the domain of the visible (Izutsu, 1964, pp. 129-130). In gnosticism we find a similar concept, Pistis, whose creation becomes a curtain between the heavenly and the lower realms..." Sophia (Wisdom) which is called Pistis (Faith or Trust) wished to create a work alone without her consort. And her work became an image of heaven, (so that) a curtain exists between the heavenly and the lower regions (aeons). And a shadow came into being beneath the curtain, and that shadow became matter..." (Rudolph, 1984, p. 73; cf. p.78). The idea of only the pair being capable of creating perfect forms is also found in Sijistānī, when the soul is made out to be the imperfect partner and the intellect-soul the perfect pair from which creation comes forth.²³ Sijistānī grapples with the same problem, attempting to harmonise the dualism of the *kalām* position of the strict dichotomy between creator-created. He deals with this issue in his concept of the *barzakh* and the *‘ālam al-mithāl*.

In his attempt to understand the first element in his scheme, the transcendental God, Sijistānī states that the originator (*mubdi‘*) is not describable (*lā mawṣūf*) and further is not non-describable (*lā lā mawṣūf*), (*Iftikhār*, fol. 23). This second qualification has been interpreted by Walker (*AJAS*, pp. 7-21) as being simply a negation of the first negation. But in fact, there appears to be evidence that this is not the case. In reality it appears that Sijistānī uses the first *lā* as a particle of negation; while the second *lā* of *mawṣūf* is a negation of the positive attribute of non-description which is applied to all created things (*mubda‘āt*).²⁴ It can be concluded then, that the second particle *lā* is not one of simple

²³ See the conclusion in this thesis; Halm, 1978, pp. 115-118.

²⁴ For a detailed description of Sijistānī's position on *tawḥīd* and a discussion of the "double negation" argument, see F. M. Hunzai, 1986, Ph.D. Thesis, *The Concept of Tawḥīd in the Thought of Ḥamīd al-Dīn al-Kirmānī*, pp. 68-72; and M. A. Alibhai, 1983, *Abū Ya‘qūb al-Sijistānī and Kitāb Sullam al-Najāt*, Ph.D. Thesis, Harvard University, pp. 80ff.

negation but of opposition, difference and separateness. Sijistānī was not interested solely in the problem of avoiding attributing partners to God (*shirk*) and of anthropomorphism (*tashbīh*), since he had dealt with them by placing the originator in a separate category altogether, through the application of the *via negationis* argument. By introducing the second particle Sijistānī avoided the dualism of *kalām* and the pure identification of the creator-created.²⁵

From the above discussion arises the corollary problem of the relationship between the multiple and the one: how the former issues from and cognises the latter. The incapacity of the soul to comprehend the intellect perfectly has been cited as the root of multiplicity. Sijistānī provides us the following clues: till the second originated level (the soul) there is no multiplicity and it is with the soul that the imperfection of comprehension begins; matter which cannot manifest itself is manifested due to the imperfection of the soul (*Yanābīʿ*, YN 22 & 24, pp. 53-56).²⁶ There is absolutely no question of the originator being the cause of multiplicity in any manner or form.

Therefore, rather than the issue of anthropomorphism, it is the cognition of the originator by his creatures which, is for Sijistānī a major concern. He states that there are three possible modes of relationship between the originator and his creatures (*kāʾināt*): (1) that he be similar to his creatures; (2) that he be similar in some aspects to his creatures; (3) that he not be similar at all to his creatures. The first and second possibilities commit hidden and obvious anthropomorphism (*tashbīh*). That leaves open only the third possibility.

The originator's relationship to creation includes both originated things (*mubdaʿāt*) at the level of innovation (*ibdāʿ*) and created things (*makhlūqāt*) at the level of creation (*khalq*).

²⁵ The issue of the unknowable God in Sijistānī's thought has been dealt with by Walker (AJAS, pp. 7-21). His conclusions are that Sijistānī's concept of God's unknowability is a Neoplatonic borrowing from the Arabic translation of the *Theology of Aristotle*, a work actually by Plotinus, in which God was conceived as being unknowable and ineffable.

²⁶ Walker, *Wellsprings of Wisdom*, unpublished, pp. 88-94.

Originated things from the realm of the intelligible possess the modality of eternal becoming which ultimately brings into being the realm of created things. The relationship between the creator-created presents a dichotomy which Sijistānī may possibly have addressed in his doctrines of *‘ālam al-ghayb* and *barzakh*. The teaching of these two doctrines implicated him as upholding metempsychosis.²⁷ The reason-revelation issue is translated in Sijistānī into two central doctrines: resurrection and metempsychosis. He developed a cosmology in which the two elements of the governance by law (*sharī‘ah*) and mystical discipline, are held in an historical and epistemological dialectic. The former, concerns his imāmology and his maintenance of the principle of imāmah and a wariness to the accusation of incarnationism. The latter is a challenge to the institutionalization of that principle and everything which it represents and a wariness to the accusation of metempsychosis.

3. Technical Description of the Manuscripts

The text of the treatise is in Arabic. The critical edition of it in this thesis is based on the textual analysis of the two available manuscripts. The first is located in the Institute of Ismaili Studies and the second in the private collection of Dr. A. Hamdani.

²⁷ Bīrūnī in *Kitāb fī Taḥqīq mā lī‘l Hind* records that Sijistānī in his *Kashf al Mahjūb* teaches a form of *tanāsukh* (i.e., metempsychosis; Bīrūnī, 1958, p. 49). Nāṣir-i Khusraw writes in *Zād al-Musāfirīn* that Abū Ya‘qūb taught when he was declared unwell by the lord of the time, in his *Sūs al-Baqā‘*, *Kashf al-Mahjūb* and the *Risālah al-Bāhirah* that reward and punishment occur on this earth (1923, pp. 421-422). In *Khawān al-Ikhwān* Nāṣir-i Khusraw describes the controversy between Nasafī, his son Dihqān, and Sijistānī regarding *barzakh* and reward and punishment and Dihqān's accusation that Sijistānī taught metempsychosis (*tanāsukh*) (pp. 132-133).

4. Sources of the Manuscripts

The most comprehensively descriptive source of reference for literature in the field of Ismā'īlī Studies is I. K. Poonawala's *Biobibliography of Ismā'īlī Literature* (1977).²⁸ He lists five manuscripts of the *Bāhirah* which are extant (Poonawala, 1977, p. 87, #13). Of these five only one was available for this study: the Hamdani manuscript designated as H or ٥; ; the IIS manuscript, the second manuscript used in this thesis is designated as I or ١ (Gacek, I, 1984, p.94, #112). I cannot definitively be traced as being one of those listed by Poonawala. Of the others listed by Poonawala, three belong to the private collections of A.L. Quazi (Poonawala, 1977, pp. 440, 87) and one to the collection of Da'ūdī Atbā'ī Malak Wakīl (Poonawala, 1977, p.455). These four were unavailable for this study.

The I manuscript of *Bāhirah* is bound with twelve other manuscripts according to the *Catalogue of Arabic Manuscripts in the Library of the Institute of Ismaili Studies*, A. Gacek, p.171, #5, as follows:

p.3 #5, *al-Akwār wa'l Adwār*, Mas'ūd [ibn Md?]al-Nakhshabī (according to Gacek, author also known as Al-Nasafī), Poonawala 75 (1). (copyist's date: 1277)

p.35 #43, *Kawn al-Ālam*, Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Nakhshabī, Poonawala 43 (7). (copyist's date: 1276)

p. 51, #62, *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd fī al-Ḥaqā'iq*, anon. (copyist's date: 1276).

²⁸ Other references are: Brockelmann, 1943-49, Ivanow, 1963, Fyzee, 1973, Goriawala, 1965, Tajdin, 1986 and Gacek, 1984; see bibliography for details. Gacek's work on the Arabic manuscript collection of the Institute of Ismaili Studies is excellent for its description of technical details.

- p. 53, #62, *Lubb al-Ma'ārif*, 'Alī ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Walīd. Poonawala 158 (4), Majdūc 244-46. (copyist's date: 1276).
- p.84, #100(A), *al-'Ibādah*, al-Mu'ayyad [al.] Shirāzī. Poonawala 105 (15). (copyist's date: 1263)
- p.87, #105, *al-Radd 'alā man Waqafa 'inda al-Falak al-Muḥīṭ min al-Falāsifah*. [attributed to: Abū Ya'qūb Ishāq ibn Aḥmad al-Sijistānī]. (copyist's date: 1276). Poonawala 89 (25)
- p.94, #112, *al-Risālah al-Bāhirah*, Abū Ya'qūb [Ishāq ibn Aḥmad] al-Sijistānī. (copyist's date: 1276). Poonawala 87 (13).
- pg. 109, #136 (A), *Risālat al-Shaykh al-Wafī Shahriyār*, Shahriyār ibn al-Ḥasan. (copyist's date: 1276). Poonawala 126(2)
- pg. 118, #141, *Sharḥ Dalālat Hurūf al-Mu'jam*, [Ja'far ibn al-Ḥasan ibn Maṣṣūr al-Yaman] (copyist's date: 1277). Poonawala 73 (10).
- pg. 122, #147 (A), *Sullam al-Najāh*, Abū Ya'qūb [Ishāq ibn Aḥmad al-Sijistānī] Poonawala 86(8), Majdūc 196.
- pg. 123, #150 (A), *Ta'rif al-Arwāḥ*, Abū Ya'qūb [Ishāq ibn Aḥmad al-Sijistānī] (copyist's date 1276). Poonawala 88(23).

5. Description of Manuscript I / 1

Al-Risālah al-Bāhirah with the copyist's date of 1276/1859 appears in a collection bound with the other treatises as enumerated above. It is the eighth, starting from folio 83b and extending to 90a; folio 87 appears to be from some other manuscript (Gacek, 1984, p. 94). The name of the treatise appears as the first sentence at the head of the manuscript in another hand, which suggests that it was added by the scribe who attributes it to Sijistānī (Gacek, 1984, intro. xii-xiii). The treatise opens with... "*Allāhu mawlā alladhīna āmanū..*" The title is as follows: *Al-Risālah al- Bāhirah* by the *dā'ī*, the esteemed *sayyidnā* Abū Ya'qūb al-Sijistānī, may God exalt him.

The pages are not numbered. Twelve of them have twenty lines each, and two have fourteen. The script is in the *naskhī* style and is neither very legible nor elegant. The two pages in the middle of the manuscript, specifically folio 87, have fourteen lines each and are written in a different hand. Their point of insertion is marked by a number in the text, and these numbers are repeated at the top and the bottom of the inserted pages.

Insertions besides the one described above are made in the left (two) and right (one) hand margins in a more legible and elegant hand which incidentally corresponds to the writing style of manuscript H.

The colophon occurs in the following form:

تمت الرسالة بمن الله وعونه وصلى الله على سيدنا محمد وآله وسلم في اليوم

الخامس والعشرين من المحرم الحرام ١٢٧٦

"The treatise was completed by the grace of God and his help. May his peace be upon sayyidinā Muḥammad and on his family on the twenty-fifth day of Muḥarram 1276".

The name/s of the scribe/s are not mentioned. The fact that the manuscript is clearly written by more than one hand and has obviously been worked over leads to the conclusion that more than one scribe was responsible for the production of the text. This particular copy appears in a collection of works which were all copied at approximately the same time, and which all deal with similar themes. In all probability they were copied and bound together for the purposes of study.

6. Description of Manuscript H/ ٦

This copy is a separate booklet of seventeen folios, each page being 5" by 3 1/2". It has no pagination or title. The first four words..."*Allāhu mawlā alladhīna āmanū...*" are missing. Except for the first page, which has seven lines, all the rest have ten lines. The script is in *naskh*, legible and clearer than in I. The name of the scribe is given as follows: "Shaykh Ishāq ʿAlī b. Hādī al-Fāḍīl Miyan Ṣāhib Sulaymānjī Shahjapūrwalla, student of Shaykh Muḥammad ʿAlī Hamadānī. There is a distinct family seal of Ṭāhir b. Muḥammad ʿAlī on the back of the last page.²⁹ The manuscript is not dated. Insertions and corrections are made by marking them by a number and adding them in the margin. They are written in the same hand.

The colophon appears in the following form:

تمت الرسالة بعون الله ومنه ومادة نبيه سيدنا محمد وآله وسيدنا محمد

صاحب الرسالة

²⁹ This manuscript was given by Shaykh Muḥammad ʿAlī Hamadānī to his brother Ṭāhir b. Muḥammad ʿĀlī who passed it on to F. Hamadānī. The latter passed it on to A. Hamdani. I would like to thank Professor A. Hamdani for this information and for making a copy available for study.

“The treatise was completed by God's help and grace and the bounty of his prophet *sayyidinā* Muḥammad and his family and *sayyidnā* Muḥammad the lord of the message”.

Certain considerations suggest that there is reason to accept the authenticity of the manuscripts. The first consideration, as discussed above, is that Sijistānī was accused of teaching metempsychosis in the *Bāhirah*. These passages are present in both our manuscripts. The second consideration is the additions and insertions in both manuscripts rendering them identical. This evidence of editorial work suggests that at some later date, this treatise which was not recorded in the *Fihrist*, became a work that was studied. Another indicator of the authenticity of the *Bāhirah* is that ms I, appears bound with eleven other manuscripts all of which contain esoteric teachings (*‘ilm al-bāṭinī*). Three of these are attributed to Sijistānī, *al-Radd*, *Sullam* and *Taʿlīf al-Arwāh* (Gacek, 1984, p.171, #716; c.f. Poonawala, 1977, pp. 87-89). Two treatises are attributed to the *dāʿī* al-Nasafī, whose work *al-Maḥṣūl* Sijistānī defends, as recorded in the *Riyāḍ*; and there is one treatise by Jaʿfar ibn al-Ḥasan ibn Maṣṣūr al Yaman.

7. Orthographic Characteristics

7.1 Manuscript I

الـ is often written as الـ

the *tāʾ marbūṭah* is not always dotted.

if the end of a line is reached before the scribe finishes copying it he adds it on top.

the *yā* is not always dotted.

masculine and feminine pronouns are sometimes confused.

errors are corrected by:

crossing the word out with a number on top and the corrected word written in the margin simply writing the correct word above the incorrect one.

at the end of the page the first word of the following page is written in the bottom left hand corner. The only exception is the two inserted pages.

yā's in *ṭabīʿīyah* and in *taghayyurāt* are sometimes left out.

the scribe makes use of the cipher ۴ ۳

7.2 Manuscript H

at the end of the page the first word of the next is written in the bottom left hand corner.

there are corrections of errors added by marks, or in the margins.

the *yā* is not always dotted.

الى is usually written as: الى

if the end of a line has been reached the word is often completed above the line, as: ^{صدقنا}... الذي

the masculine and feminine pronouns are sometimes confused.

8. The Relationship Between I and H

The primary question is whether one is derived from the other. The evidence to consider in order to answer this question is the following:

1. I is dated and H is not.
2. The writing differs in I and H; whereas in H the hand is consistent, even the insertions, I appears to have been worked on or studied by at least two persons.
3. Neither has substantially differing errors.
4. H in some places has extra words, but they do not affect the meaning; however it appears to be grammatically smoother in structure than I
5. H has errors not found in I; and I has errors not found in H.
6. The colophons are different.

The cumulative evidence strongly suggests that the manuscripts do not have a direct genetic relationship. Each might have existed contemporaneously in two separate geographical locations and at some point been brought together and compared since some of the corrections in I seem to be in the same hand as that of H.

9. Stemmatic

Although it seems clear that the two sources are not related in a linear way, they could have shared a common source. Evidence for this must be judged as follows:

1. There do seem to be some common errors.
2. The insertions of the two pages in I are part of the text of H.
3. There are grammatical errors in I which are not in H and grammatical errors in H which are not in I.

It appears from the consideration of the above points that the two manuscripts could have had a common source; however no other source besides the ones already discussed mentioning or describing a text of the *Bāhirah* is known to us at present. If the other listed manuscripts were available, a more conclusive position could be reached. There is no way to settle the question of sources without the other four manuscripts. The Arabic text presented is one where the editor has selected the most coherent reading by combining the two variants wherever deemed necessary. All textual emendations made by the editor are indicated in the footnotes.

**The Edited Arabic Text of
*al-Risālah al-Bāhirah***

Each page of the Arabic text is followed by notes to that page.

الرسالة الباهرة

١

٢

للداعي الاجل سيدنا ابي يعقوب السجستاني اعلى الله قدسه

٣

(١) الله مولى الذين آمنوا، اطال الله بقاءك يا ابن السادة النجباء والقادة

٤

العظماء . ينبوع المجد والكرم، ومحل الفضل والنعمة. وأدام لك ما خولك من

٥

الهداية الى دينه، وأنعم عليك بالسلوك في طريقه. وشرّفك في عقبك، كما

٦

اكرمك في اولاك، وأمتع اهل العلم والحكمة ببقائك، وأعزّ الدين بنورك

٧

وبهائك. وأرانا فيك كل خير وسعادة وكل شرف وكرامة. وبلغك من

٨

الدرجات اعلاها، ومن المراقي اسناها، وبارك لك في كل خير تطلبه، ونور

٩

عقلك لدرك كل مطلوب تقصده، وحرّسك من آفات الزيغ والضلالة، والكفر

١٠

والجهالة، وجعلك من الفائزين المهتمدين.

١١

(٢) فهمت، نور الله خاطرك بنور الايمان، ما كانت نفسك تتوق اليه وتنزع

١٢

نحوه من الوقوف على القيامة الكبرى وأحوالها وكيفياتها. وأنك رايت جملا

١٣

منه مسطورة في كتب مؤلفة لم يكن لديها غنية. ولا في الاحاطة بما أحطت

١٤

به منها كفاية. فسألتني ان اشرح لك في هذه الرسالة ما لك يكون اقرب الى

١٥

الدرك وأسهل الى الاحاطة، وان يكون ذلك مقرونا بالبراهين النيّرة والدلائل

١-٢ الرسالة... قدسه آ (بخط اخر): ء- ء

٣ الله... امنوا آ: ء

٤ والكرم ء: ء

٦ اولاك ء: الاول آ ال وامتع آ: وامتع: ء

٨ المراقى ء: المرتبى آ

٩ لدرك كل ء: ء

١١ نور ء: نورك آ

١٣ منه آ: منها ء ال لديها ء: بها عنها آ

١٤ منها ء: فيما آ ال ما... الى ء: ما يكون لديك اقرب آ

١٥ الى الاحاطة ء: لك احاطة آ

١ الواضحة، وإن اُحذف منها ما يكون مجراه مجرى الاقتناع والتقليد. فقد
 ٢ اخذت في الشرح والابانة منه بحول الله وقوته وبركة قبلتنا الذي توجه عباد
 ٣ الله نحوه. فركلُ ذهنك وعقلك بها فقس كل شيء منها بنظائرها واستخرج
 ٤ عن كل شيء منها نتائجها. فقد تَوَخَّيتُ الايجاز والاختصار فيها وترك
 ٥ التطويل والإطناب، اذ الشرح عنها بالتطويل محجور على أهل الدين، لما
 ٦ يتوقى من فساد، ويشوب به أهل الباطل بالخوض فيه قبل أن ينعموا
 ٧ النظر في الابنية التي عليها أصولنا في المعاد. فأرجو إن الله يوفقك،
 ٨ ويسدّدك ويعصمك من الخطأ والزلل. إن ذلك بيده.

٩ (٢) فنقول إنّ الكون كونان، كون طبيعي وكون نفساني. فالكون الطبيعي ما
 ١٠ يحدث من تأثيرات الأجرام العلوية في الاجرام السفلية، وينقسم ذلك
 ١١ قسمين. فالقسم الاول منهما ما يحدث في الامهات من تأثيراتها. فتكون
 ١٢ من ذلك الاستحالة بعضها الى بعض. والقسم الاخر ما يحدث في المواليد من
 ١٣ تأثيراتها. فيكون من ذلك الكون والفساد فيها من النشوء والبلى. والكون
 ١٤ النفساني ما يحدث من افاضات العقل الكلي والنفس الكلية في الانفس
 ١٥ الجزئيات وينقسم ذلك ايضا قسمين. فالقسم الاول منهما ما يحدث في
 ١٦ الانفس الجزئيات من افاضاتها فيكون من ذلك قبول التأييد واشترائه بين

- ١ منها هـ: ـآ || الاتناع هـ: الاتباع آ || فقد هـ: وقد آ
- ٢ اخذت آ: اجدت هـ || منه آ: عنها هـ || بركة هـ: ترك آ
- ٣-٤ بنظائرها... منها هـ: آ (بخط اخر فى الحاشية)
- ٥ الاطناب آ: الإكثار هـ || اذ آ: اذا هـ || محجور هـ: محصور آ
- ٦ ينعموا النظر هـ: يتعمقوا ـ آ
- ٧ فارجو آ: وارجون هـ
- ٩ الطبيعى هـ: طبيعى آ
- ١١ الاول منهما هـ: اول منه آ || فتكون هـ: يكون آ
- ١٢ النشؤ هـ: آ (بخط اخر فى الحاشية) || البلى هـ: لبلاء آ
- ١٥ ايضا هـ: ـآ
- ١٦ من ذلك هـ: ـآ

١ اربابه. والقسم الاخر ما يستشف ويحدث في الانفس الجزئيات من افاضتها.
 ٢ فيكون من ذلك قبول التعليم والرياضة اللذين بهما حياتها وبلوغها الى اقصى
 ٣ مراتبها.

٤ (٤) والكون الطبيعي محصور كله في تأثيرات الجرم المستدير، بما فيه من
 ٥ اجرامه ونيّراته وممرّها في دوائرها. والكون النفساني محصور كله في
 ٦ الصورة الانسانية التي لولاها، لما كانت افاضات عقلية، ولا استفادة نفسية،
 ٧ ولا سياسة شرعية. وصارت هذه الصورة اشرف، فيها تستشف الصور كلها
 ٨ طبيعية كانت او نفسانية. واذا صحّ ان الصورة الانسانية تستشف الصور
 ٩ كلها، طبيعية كانت او نفسانية، وباستشفافها صورة الفلك بما فيه من
 ١٠ اجرامها ونيّراتها وافعالها وحركاتها، كان من ذلك وجوب الحكمة على ان
 ١١ الصورة الانسانية خارجة عن الفلك وانه لا يؤثر فيها، بل هي التي تؤثر فيه
 ١٢ وترفعه عن القوة، وعن هذه الصورة خيرا للفلك وشره على ما نشرحه ان
 ١٣ شاء الله.

١٤ (٥) اعلم ان النفس اذا تغيرت اخلاقها وزالت عنها مكارمها التي هي العلم
 ١٥ والحلم والشجاعة والعفة والجود والصدق والامانة والوفاء وما اشبهها التي هي

- ١ يستشف و آ:ءة اا افاضتها ء:ءآ
- ٢ فيكون...قبول ء:ءآ
- ٤ محصور كله ء: محصورة كلها آ اا فيه ء: فيها آ
- ٥ اجرامه ء: اجرامها آ اا نيراته ء:ءآ اا محصور كله ء: محصورة كلها آ
- ٦ صورة ء: صورته آ اا افاضة آ: افاضة ء اا استفادة ء: استفادات آ
- ٧ اشرف الصور آ: الصورة اشرف ء اا تستشف آ: يستشف ء
- ٩ وباستشفافها ء: من استشفافها آ
- ١٠ واجرامها آ: اجرامه ء اا نيرتها: نيراته: ء: تاثيراتها آ
- ١١ الصورة آ: صورة ء
- ١٢ ترفعه عن القوة ء: يرفعه القوة آ
- ١٥ والحلم ء: والحكمة آ اا اشبهها ء: يشبهها آ

١ افاضات عقلية، ظهرت فيها اصدّادها التي هي الجهل والحدة والجبن والشره
 ٢ والبخل والكذب والخيانة والجفاء وما اشبهها التي هي امارات طبيعية. فاذا
 ٣ استشقت الانفسُ في حال تَمَكَّنِ الامارات الطبيعية فيها صورة الفلك بما فيها
 ٤ من اجرامها، حدث من تأثيراتها المناحس والمعاطب والكوائن الهائلة التي
 ٥ هي سبب البوار والهلاك. واذا استشقت الانفس في حال تَمَكَّنِ الافاضات
 ٦ العقلية فيها صورة الفلك بما فيها من اجرامه ونيراته، حدث من تأثيراتها
 ٧ المساعد والمواهب والكوائن النافعة الشريفة. واذا حدثت من تأثيراتها
 ٨ المناحس المعاطب والكوائن الضارة كانت الاشخاص المتولدة من تأثيراتها في
 ٩ غاية من الافراط بعيدة من الاعتدال، فتتبعها النفس المتحدة بها متباعدة
 ١٠ من مكارم الاخلاق، متوسطة في مساوئها. فيكون من ذلك عكس لنوع
 ١١ التغيرات وتأثيراتها في غاية من الفساد والبوار وبالضد. فانه متى حدثت
 ١٢ من تأثيراتها المساعد والمواهب والكوائن النافعة كانت الأشخاص المتولدة من
 ١٣ تأثيراتها في غاية الاعتدال والمساواة فتتبعها الانفسُ المتحدة بها متباعدة من
 ١٤ مساوى الاخلاق، متوسطة في مكارمها. فيكون من ذلك عكس لنوع تأثيراتها
 ١٥ في غاية من الصلاح. هذه صورة ازدواج اللطيف والكثيف بالوجيز من
 ١٦ القول.

١ افاضات آ: اضافة ءَ || ظهرت ءَ: وظهرت آ || الحدة ءَ: احكم آ

٢ الخيانة ءَ: العيانة آ || و ما اشبهها ءَ: آ

٣ تمكن ءَ: يمكن آ

٥ واذا ءَ: فاذا آ || تمكن ءَ: يمكن آ || الافاضات ءَ: الامارات آ

٦ فيها ءَ: آ || من اجرامه ونيراته ءَ: آ تأثيراتها ءَ: ذلك تأثيراتها آ

٦-٧ المساعد... تأثيراتها ءَ: (بخط اخر فى الحاشية): المساعد... الشريفة فاذا

منها آ

٨ المناחס ءَ: آ || المتولدة ءَ: التى يتولد آ

٩ المتحدة ءَ: التى يتحد آ

١٠ مساوئها ءَ: مساويتها آ || فيكون ءَ: فتكون آ || عكس لنوع ءَ: عكس

انواع آ

١١ التغييرات و: ءَ: الخيرات يكون آ

١١-١٢ تأثيراتها... من ءَ: آ

١٢-١٤ الاعتدل... غاية آ: ءَ (فى الحاشية).

١٥ ازدواج ءَ: الازدواج آ

١ (٦) والدليل على ما أومأنا اليه أنه متى قام قائم الرسالة كان قيامه امنا
٢ لأمته وقومه من العذاب والفساد، لانه يستشفّ الفلك في نفسه الشريفة.
٣ فيكون الفلك في زمانه في غاية من المساعدة والقوة والخير والشرف. ولا
٤ يمكن ان يكون فيه فساد ووقوع عذاب، كما أخبر الله تعالى عن الكفار حين
٥ سألوا نزول العذاب السماوى حيث قالوا : اللَّهُمَّ إِن كَانَ هَذَا هُوَ الْحَقَّ مِنْ
٦ عِنْدِكَ فَأَمْطِرْ عَلَيْنَا حِجَارَةً مِنَ السَّمَاءِ أَوْ أُنزِلْ عَلَيْنَا آيَاتٍ فَسَوَاءٌ
٧ سَبَّحَانَهُ بِمَا هُوَ قَرِيبٌ إِلَى مَا أَوْمَأْنَا إِلَيْهِ. فَقَالَ وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُعَذِّبَهُمْ وَأَنْتَ
٨ فِيهِمْ. مِنْ جِهَةِ تَأْثِيرَاتِ سَمَاوِيَّاتٍ يَعْنِي وَأَنْتَ تَسْتَشْفَى الْفَلَكَ فِي نَفْسِكَ
٩ الشَّرِيفَةِ الرَّفِيعَةِ النَّيِّرَةِ الْخَيْرَةِ. ثُمَّ أَكَدَّ هَذَا الْمَعْنَى بِالِاسْتِغْفَارِ فَقَالَ وَمَا
١٠ كَانَ اللَّهُ مُعَذِّبَهُمْ وَهُمْ يَسْتَغْفِرُونَ، يَعْنِي مَا دَامَتْ أَنْفُسُهُمْ رَاغِبَةً إِلَى ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ
١١ تَعَالَى ذَكَرَهُ مَسْتَمِدَّةً الْمَزِيدَ مِنْهُ وَكَانَتْ أَنْفُسُهُمْ مُسْتَشْفَّةً صُورَةَ الْفَلَكَ الَّذِي
١٢ مِنْهُ نَزَلَ الْعَذَابُ وَالتَّغْيِيرَاتِ الطَّبْعِيَّةِ، فَلَا يُمْكِنُ أَنْ يَكُونَ مِنْهُ إِلَّا الْخَيْرُ
١٣ وَالصَّلَاحُ.

١٤ (٧) فقد قام بهذه المقدمة بعض ما نريد ان نجعله بناءً لما نشرح عنه من
١٥ امر القيامة واحوالها واسبابها. والقيامة مصدر من قام يقوم قياما. وهى
١٦ مصدر من كلام يقوم مقام التأنيث والتغييرات مما يؤنث عنها الكلام.

١ اومأنا اليه أنه متى هـ: اومينا اليه متى آ

٤ فيه هـ: منه آ ١١ تع هـ: عج آ

٥ سألوا هـ: سالوه آ

٧-٨ و انت فيهم - هـ: و انت فيهم و ما كان الله معذبهم و هم يستغفرون آ

٩ النيرة هـ: البرة آ

١٠ الى ذكر الله تعالى آ: الى- الله هـ

١١ انفسهم آ: صورهم هـ ١١ الذى منه هـ: التى منها آ

١٢-١٣ ان ...الصلاح هـ: الا ان يكون الصلاح والخير آ

١٥ هي آ: هو هـ

١٦ مصدر من كلام هـ: مصدر كلام آ

- ١ والقيامة اذاً من اسباب النفس واحوالها. ولما كان المذكور من اشراطها ان
- ٢ تتقدمها اشياء هائلة واسباب فظيعة مثل الزلازل والخسوف، وتكوير
- ٣ الشمس، خسف القمر، وانتثار الكواكب وانكدارها، وتسيير الجبال وتعطيل
- ٤ العشار، وتسجير البحار، ووضع ذوات الاحمال احمالها، وما أشبهها من
- ٥ علاماتها، فانها بجملتها تغييرات طبيعية مؤدية الى الهرج والفساد. ثم تَتَّبَعُهَا
- ٦ من امر القيامة، بعث الاموات، الارض بغيرها وبسط الارض البيضاء،
- ٧ ومحاسبة الخلق ببسط العدل، ومجازاة الانفس، ووضع الموازين بالقسط،
- ٨ ونصب الصراط، ودخول الجنان في جوار الرحمان، وما أشبهها من احوالها.
- ٩ فانها ايضا بجملتها تغييرات نفسانية مؤدية الى الدوام والصلاح. يعنى
- ١٠ اشراط الساعة، وما يتقدمها من الاشياء الهائلة من استعلاء الاضداد،
- ١١ وتسلبهم على العالم الذين طغوا في البلاد، فاكثروا فيها الفساد من القتل
- ١٢ والغشم والظلم والزنا واللواطه وتحريف الكلام عن مواضعه. فاستشفت انفسهم
- ١٣ الرجسة النجسة صور قوالب الطبيعة فغيرتها عن مساعدتها. فحدثت من
- ١٤ تأثيراتها الكوائن الضارة المهلكة المتلفة، وظهرت شرورها وعكوراتها. فحدث
- ١٥ من تأثيراتها في اشرف المواليد، وهو الانسان، الاشخاص المختلفه المتباعدة
- ١٦ من الاعتدال والمبدية من ذواتها اخلاق السباع والبهائم.

٢ وخسوف القمر ءَ:ـآ.

٤-٢ و تعطيل العشار ءَ:ـآ || الحملها ءَ:ـآ

٦ امر القيامة آ: ائثر القيامة ءَ || الارض بغيرها وبسط الارض البيضاء

آ: وتبديل غير الارض بارض بيضاء ءَ

٧-٦ ومحاسبة...العدل ءَ:ـآ

٨ في جوار آ: وجوار ءَ

٩ بجملتها ءَ:ـآ

١٢ اللوطة آ: اللواط ءَ || الكلام آ: الكلم ءَ

١٤ وعكوراتها ءَ: وعلوزتها آ

١٥ الاعتدال والمبدية ءَ: العتدال المبدية آ

(٨) ولما كان تقدير الله تعالى ذكره ان رحمته سبقت غضبه، قدر من قيامة
الانفس عند تناهي عكورات الطبيعة، ان يقوم قائم قد وقر عليه من
افاضات العقل و افاداتها ما اذا قيس اليه جميع ما وقر على جميع الانفس
في الادوار والاكوار من الافاضات والافادات، كان جميعها بالاضافة اليه
كالجزء من الكل. فيخرج هذا القائم متباعدا عن جميع الشرور، محتويا على
جميع العلوم والخيرات والفضائل. فينفى عن قوالب الطبيعة جميع مناجستها
وعكوراتها وتقابلها المساعد والانوار العقلية. فيكون بعد ذلك من تأثيراتها
الكوائن النافعة الباقية وتظهر خيراتها وصفوتها فتحدث من تأثيراتها في
اشرف المواليد، وهو الانسان، الاشخاص المتفقة المتواطنة بالاعتدال المبدي
من ذواتها اخلاق الملائكة وافعالها من التسبيح والتقديس. فيكون من ذلك
بعث الاموات وبسط العدل، ووضع الموازين بالقسط، ووصول الثواب ودخول
الجنان. وليس لشرح كل وصف من هذه الاوصاف هاهنا وجه الا وقد أخذنا فيه.

(٩) فمن عرف القيامة بهذه الاوصاف وانتظر ما هو منتظر من الطبيعة
والنفس وافعالها وتغييراتها كان انتظاره انتظار حق وصدق. ومن صرفها عن
وجهها وانتظر ما لم يقدر الله تعالى فيها و منها كان انتظاره انتظار كذب
وزور و غرور. ويعرف بهذه الاوصاف مخالفة انتظار المنتظرين لها ليكون

- ١ تَعَلَى ذِكْرِهِ: سَبَّحَانَهُ آ || قَدَرَ مِنْ هَ: اللَّهُ قَدَرَ مِنْ آ
- ٢ عَكُورَاتٍ هَ: مَكُونَاتٍ آ
- ٣ اِفَاضَاتٍ هَ: اِفَاضَةٌ آ || وَاِفَادَتِهَا مَا آ: وَمَادَتُهُ دَ || جَمِيعٌ مَا.. عَلَى آ: هَ
- ٤ جَمِيعُهَا دَ: جَمِيعًا آ
- ٥ عَنِ آ: مِنْ دَ || الْعُلُومُ هَ: لَ آ
- ٦ وَالْخَيْرَاتُ هَ: لَ الْخَيْرَاتُ آ || مَنَاجِسَتِهَا هَ: مَا مِنْهَا آ
- ٧ عَكُورَاتِهَا دَ: عَلُوزَتِهَا آ || فَيَكُونُ هَ: فَتَكُونُ آ
- ٨ وَتَظْهَرُ... فَتُحَدِّثُ هَ: وَظَهَرَ صَفْوَتِهَا وَخَيْرَاتِهَا فَيُحَدِّثُ آ
- ٩ الْإِنْسَانُ الْإِشْخَاصُ هَ: الْإِنْسَانُ وَالْإِشْخَاصُ آ || الْمَتَّفِقَةُ الْمَتَّوَاطِنَةُ بِالْإِعْتِدَالِ هَ: الْمَتَّفِقَةُ مَعَ الْعِتْدَالِ آ || مِنْ هَ: فِي آ
- ١٣ وَلَيْسَ لِشَرْحِ دَ: ثُمَّ لَيْسَ لِسِرِّ آ || وَجْهٌ إِلَّا وَقَدْ أَخَذْنَا آ: وَجْهٌ إِذَا أَخَذَ فِيهِ دَ
- ١٤ حَقٌّ وَصَدَقَ هَ: حَقًّا وَصَدَقًا آ
- ١٥-١٦ اِنْتِظَارُ كَذِبٍ... غُرُورٌ آ: كَذْبًا وَزُورًا وَغُرُورًا هَ
- ١٦ وَيَعْرِفُ هَ: لِيَعْرِفَ آ

١ ذلك دليلا لتحقيق الحق وتبطليل الباطل. فاقول ان اهل الباطل ينتظرون
 ٢ من امر الساعة والقيامة بطلان الكل من الطبيعة وقواها وأفعالها. واذا وقع
 ٣ البطلان عليها وعلى قواها كان من ذلك بطلان الانفس [واتحادها] بأشخاصها.
 ٤ فليت شعري كيف يتوهم ما ينتظرونه من امر القيامة و الساعة، والسموات
 ٥ قد طويت والشمس قد كورت والنجوم قد آنكدرت والبحار قد سجرت
 ٦ والجبال قد سيرت. أيكون للأشخاص بعدها بقاء ام يكون للانفس دونها
 ٧ استفادة و استقامة؟

٨ (١٠) وهب انا نسلم اليهم ان البارئ المتعالى عن المسميات والاضافات،
 ٩ ينصب نفسه وذاته، تقدرت عظمته، لمحاسبتهم و مخاطبتهم. ايكون من
 ١٠ الحكمة وفضيلة القدرة ان يعطل حكمته، ويهدم ملكه وسلطانه؟ ام الحكمة
 ١١ توجب خلافه و تحكم بتدبير ملكه وتمهيد حكمته، ليكون ذلك ابلغ لرعه
 ١٢ ووعيده، وأنفذ لسلطانه وتدييره؟

١٣ (١١) وقد شرط الله تعالى ذكره فى تخليد الفريقين من الاشقياء والسعداء
 ١٤ ديمومية السموات والارض الا ماشاء ربك. ولو لم يكن ديمومية السموات
 ١٥ والارض شئ واجب فى الحكمة، لما اشترط فى تخليد الفريقين ديمومتها.

٢ واتحادها باشخاصها: وايجادها آ: - واشخاصها هـ (بخط نفسى فى الحاشية)

٦ تكون آ: يكون هـ

٧ استقامة هـ: استقالة آ

٩ اىكون هـ: اىكون آ

١١ واتحكم بتدييرة: وبحكم تدبير آ

١٣ صفحة ٨، س ١١ الى صفحة ١٠، س ١، الفريقين... اعتدات (١/١٠)

هـ: آ أبخط اخر وفى غير موضعه

١ واذا أوجب للسّموات والأرض ديمومتها، أترى انه يعطلها من الأفعال
 ٢ والأسباب. هذا مما لا يحسن في الحكمة ولا يجعل في النظر انه يُبقي شيئاً
 ٣ معطلاً. واذا بطل تعطيل السّموات والأرض بعد وجوب ديمومتها ظفرت من
 ٤ ذلك فكرة من له أدنى عقل وتميز ما أخذنا فيه الى كشف فضله.

٥ (١٢) وثبت ان القيامة التي دعا اليها المرسلون انما هي تأثيرات نفسانية
 ٦ تظهر بظهور نفس زكية، قد نالت من افاضة العقل فضيلة ما امكن نفساً
 ٧ مثل تلك الفضائل. فيفيد تلك الفضيلة انذار انفس جزئيات قد سبقته في
 ٨ الأدوار والأكوار، وليكون لمن ياخذ منها الوصول الى الثواب الذي هو افادات
 ٩ علمية وافاضات عقلية. وذلك هو المجازاة لها، اللهم الا لمن حقّت عليه كلمة
 ١٠ العذاب، فخالفوا ارباب الازمنة وصدّوا عن سواء السبيل يعبدون ما ينحتون،
 ١١ قد رضوا لانفسهم بالجهل المكتسب. فعمل الجهل في انفسهم فنشف عنها
 ١٢ رونقها، حتى اعجزها عن قبول الثواب واعجزها عن قبول النور من صاحب
 ١٣ القيامة. فليس لهم مأوى الا النار فهي مأواهم. وبئس المصير!

١٤ (١٢) فان قال قائل نحن نعلم يقيناً ان القرون السالفة قد انقرضت ولا
 ١٥ نرى لهم خيراً ولا أثراً، فكيف نتوهم وصول الخيرات اليهم والشروع من

١ واذا...ديمومتها: هـ (في الحاشية) || اترى هـ: ترى آ || يعطلها

هـ: يعطلها آ

٢ هذا...النظر هـ: آ الشينا آ: شيء هـ

٣ معطلا آ: معطل هـ || والارض بعد هـ: تعين || آ ظفرت هـ: ظفر آ

٤ فكرة هـ: آ || ادنى: ادنا هـ: آ

٥ ثبت هـ: يثبت آ

٦ امكن هـ: امكنه آ || نفسا هـ: نفسانية آ

٧ فيفيد...انفس هـ: اذ ابدا انفسنا آ

٨ افادات هـ: الات آ

٩ اللهم الا هـ: اللهم _ آ

١١ قد هـ: آ || فعل هـ: بعمل آ || فنشف آ: وكشف هـ

١٣ الا آ: الا هـ (فوق الخط)

١٥ نرى هـ: يرى آ || نتوهم هـ: يتوهم آ || اليهم والشرور هـ: لهم سرور آ

١ الأَشقياء والسعداء؟ فيقال له ان الاشراف على كيفية وصول الثواب،
 ٢ والشُرور والخيرات الى الغريقتين صعب جدا، الا لمن كان له نفس زكية
 ٣ صافية قد اعتادت درك الاشياء الروحانية النورانية. ولكنني اقرب المعنى الى
 ٤ الفهم فيما اريد الشرح عنه في الفاظ سهلة يسيرة جامعة للغرض والقصد.

٥ (١٤) فأقول ان معرفة البرازخ مما يُغني على معرفة هذا المطلوب. وذلك ان
 ٦ الله تعالى ذكره ذكر في كتابه قوله : وَمِنْ وَرَائِهِمْ بَرَزَخٌ إِلَى يَوْمٍ يُبْعَثُونَ.
 ٧ فمعرفة البرازخ ان يعرف المرء ان العالم في كل وقت مملوء من انفس
 ٨ متحدة باشخاص وحيدة. فاذا تخلى العالم من اشخاص استخلف مثلهم بدلهم
 ٩ ويكون المستخلف صورة المنقرض منهم. لانك تعلم يقينا ان الذين هم اليوم
 ١٠ في العالم انما كلامهم والفاظهم ومنطقهم ومخاطباتهم وعلومهم وكلمتهم وسياستهم
 ١١ وحرفهم وصناعاتهم هي ما قد اكتسبوه من المنقرضين. فصاروا هؤلاء برازخ
 ١٢ المنقرضين وليست الانفس الا ما اورثوهم.

١٣ (١٥) فيقوم عن كل طائفة، من الأبرار والفجّار والضلالّ والمهتدين، من
 ١٤ يستخلفونهم بعدهم ويورثون ما قد ورثوه من المنقرضين الى من بعدهم، لان
 ١٥ يكون وصول الثواب والعقاب الى الانفس المكتسبة للخير والشر باقية موصولة

١ الاشراف ءَ: الاشيا آ

٢ اقرب ءَ: اقربت آ

٥ يغني ءَ: تغني آ || وذلك ءَ: آ

٦ قوله آ: قولهم ءَ

١٠ وسياستهم ءَ: وسياساتهم آ

١١ ما قد اكتسبوه ءَ: ما التبسوه آ

١٢ والفجار آ: ءَ

١٥ الشواب ءَ: الشواب والصواب آ

- ١ الحبال الى ان تقوم القيامة الكبرى. فعندها يحشر الجميع ويوفى ما استحق
- ٢ الكل عليهم. فمن استحكَم معرفة البرازخ وقع على سواء الصراط ولم يشتبه
- ٣ عليه كيفية وصول الثواب و العقاب الى من انقضوا من القرون السالفة،
- ٤ الذين اندرست آثارهم و امحّت اخبارهم. ولم اشبع هذا القول في هذا
- ٥ القانون اتكالا على لطافة فهم صاحبه وذكاء فطنته وبعد همت.
- ٦ (١٦) وانما وقع التكذيب و الانكار للمعطلّة والدهرية ولاكثر الناس بقلوبهم،
- ٧ وان لم يصرحوه بالسنتهم، بالقيامة والساعة، لانهم قد سمعوا صفتها من
- ٨ المتقدمين على غير ما وصفه الله سبحانه ورتبه. فلم يصدق عقولهم بها، ولا
- ٩ اطمانت نفوسهم بحدوثها على الصفة الموصوفة. فيرون عند الثنوية لها صفة
- ١٠ موصوفة، وعند المجوس لها صفة اخرى، وعند اليهود لها صفة موصوفة. و
- ١١ عند المسلمين لها صفة مخالفة لصفات الامم. وعند كل فرقة من فرق
- ١٢ المسلمين لها اوصاف مخالفة بعضهم لبعض، ويرجع جميعها في الصفة الى
- ١٣ تغييرات طبيعية يؤدي الى الهرج والفساد. فاذا تفكر ذو العقل الراجح
- ١٤ والمنتصف لعقله، لم يجد لما وصفوه من اوصافها لها مساعا بالعقل ولا قرارا
- ١٥ في النفس. فيتسرع الى التكذيب باصله لما لم يحط بكيفيته. فلو وقفت
- ١٦ الدهرية والمعطلّة المكذبون بالقيامة و علموا انها تأثيرات نفسانية، ليكون منها

١ الجميع ء:الجمع آ اا ويوفر ء:آ

٢ وصول ء:آ

١٠-١١ لها صفة موصوفة. وعند المسلمين: لها صفة وعند المسلمين ء:لها

صفة موصوفة وعند المجوس لها صفة اخرى ر عند اليهود لها صفت وعند

المسلمين آ

١١ لصفات الامم ء:لصفات القوم آ اا فرقة ء:آ(فى الحاشية)

١٢ يرجع ء:ترجع آ

١٣ طبيعية ء:الطبيعة آ اا يؤدي آ:تؤدي

١٤ المنصف...يجد ء:المنصفون لعقولهم لم يجدوا آ اا بالعقل آ:ء

١٥ فيتسرع ء:فتسرع آ اا يحط ء:تحط آ

١٦ ليكون آ:لتكون ء

١ ظهور خيرات وسعادات، لما اسرعت الى التكذيب ولصدقت بها وانتظرتها.

٢ (١٧) الا ترى ان محمدا صلى الله عليه وعلى آله انه قد قرن نفسه بالساعة،

٣ فقال، بُعِثْتُ انا والساعة كهاتين. فجعل بعثه مقرونا ببعث الساعة. وانت،

٤ ادام الله تائدك، تعلم يقينا ان بعث محمد صلى الله عليه وعلى آله لم يحدث

٥ بتغييرات طبيعية قد اوهنت ركنا من اركانها وابطلت فعلا من افعالها. واما

٦ هي تأثير نفساني ظهر بظهوره. فكان منه بلوغ الخيرات والسعادات المجموعة

٧ في كتابه وشريعته. فلما كان من امر محمد صلى الله عليه وعلى آله المبعوث

٨ مع الساعة ظهور هذه الخيرات وبلوغ هذه السعادات، كان ذلك تأثيرا

٩ نفسانيا، غير طبيعي. فغير ممكن ان يكون من الساعة، وان يكون مقداره

١٠ اعظم من مقداره ورتبته اشرف من مرتبته، الا ظهور خيرات شريفة

١١ وسعادات فاضلة. فانها تأثير نفساني. وانه علة كل تأثير طبيعي ونفساني

١٢ فاعرفه ان شاء الله.

١٣ (١٨) وللقيامة اسماء وسمات والقاب وهي الساعة، والصاخة، والطامة،

١٤ والواقعة، والحاقة، والقارعة والقيامة. وانها بجملتها تأثيرات نفسانية مربوطة

١٥ بظهور النفس الزكية. تكون لتلك الانفس مع تلك النفس الزكية، الذي قد

٢ صلى... انه ءَ: صلعم آ

٤ صلى... اله ءَ: صلعم آ

١٠ الـ ءَ: لـ آ

١١ طبعى ءَ: طبيعى آ

١٥ تلك النفس ءَ: تلك الانفس آ || الذى اكذا فى النسختين)

١ بلغ اقصى مراتب الانسانية، صبة روحانية وكلها كنفس واحدة، وان كانت
 ٢ التغييرات النفسانية مختلفة عند ظهور كل نفس وعند قيام كل نفس. وآخر
 ٣ كل اسم من هذه الاسامى و الالقاب، حرف الهاء الى ان يرجع القائم بخلفائه
 ٤ وقد تمت لهم دائرة النفس.

٥ (١٩١) فمن عرف القيامة بالصفة التى وصفها الله تعالى، والمنزلة التى انزلها
 ٦ الله تعالى، لم يكن به من الغفلة والجهل ان تأتبه الساعة بغتة وهو لا يشعر
 ٧ بها. بل يعلم عند مجيء الساعة وظهور القيامة انه فى اى زمرة من الزمر
 ٨ اى زمرة اهل الجنة ام فى زمرة اهل النار. وان لأهل النار ابوابا تفتح لهم
 ٩ اذا سيقوا اليها. وطوبى لمن فتحت لهم ابواب الجنة فيدخلونها. ويؤسا لمن
 ١٠ فتحت لهم ابواب النار فيدخلونها فالويل كل الويل لمن دخل ابواب النار،
 ١١ وهو يحسب انه قد دخل ابواب الجنة اغترارا بما تعلم ونشأ عليه. والخير
 ١٢ كل الخير، لمن يسّر الله له دخول الجنان ووقع فى جوار الرحمان. وما
 ١٣ ابواب الفريقين من اهل الجنة والنار، الا رؤساء الضلال، ورؤساء المشركين،
 ١٤ ورؤساء المهتمدين فمن أتبع الهداة، وتقلدها، فقد دخل باب الجنة. وعند
 ١٥ دخول زمرة اهل الجنة ابوابها يحمدون الله ينزهونه ويقولون الحمد لله،
 ١٦ الذى صدقنا وعده، اورثنا الارض نتبوا من الجنة حيث نشاء. فنعم اجر

١ وكلها هـ: فكلها آ

٢ كل اسم هـ: كل اسم آ (بخط اخر فوق السطر) ا الهاء الى ان

يرجع القائم آ: الهاء التي يرجع الى القائم هـ

٤ بخلفائه آ: وخلفائه هـ اا وقد... لهم هـ: بعد بعث لهم آ

٥ والمنزلة هـ: وانزلها المنزلة آ

٤ لم... من هـ: لم تكن له آ

٧ بها هـ: آ

٩-١٠ الجنة... ابواب هـ: آ (بخط اخر في الحاشية)

١١ تعلم هـ: يعلم آ اا نشأ: نشاء آ: تشاء هـ

١ العاملین عند وراثۃ الارض . فان فی الاشراف علی المتبوء من الجنة ، بعد
 ٢ وراثۃ الارض ، کل المعارف التي یحتاج الیها المسترشد . و شأن القیامة انما
 ٣ هی تغییرات نفسانیة لا طبیعیة . فاعرف ان شاء الله .

٤ (٢٠١) وقد قلنا فی هذه الرسالة ما فیہ کفاية لمن یعمل النظر فیها ، و وکل
 ٥ عقله ، ولم تظلم علیه المقاصد و المعارف منه إغترارا بما نشأ علیه . وقد
 ٦ ختمت هذه الرسالة بالحمد للموقق و الشکر للملهم ، و بالصلاة علی رسوله
 ٧ المصطفى محمد و المرتضى علی ابوی المؤمنین ، و علی صاحب یوم الدین و
 ٨ خلفائه الراشدين ، و علی جمیع اولیائهم و انصارهم السلام ، و حسبنا الله نعم
 ٩ الوکیل و نعم المولی و نعم النصیر لا حول ولا قوة الا بالله العلیّ العظیم .

١ المتبوء آ: التبوء هـ

٢ نفسانية لا طبيعية: نفسانية طبيعية هـ: لا تغييرات طبيعية آ

٥ اغترارا هـ (فوق الخط): آ

٧ المصطفى محمد المرتضى على هـ: المصطفى المرتضى محمد وعلى آ

٩ ونعم المولى...المعظيم هـ: آ

Translation of *al-Risālah al-Bāhirah*

— ¶ 1 —

God is the patron of those who believe,³⁰ may God grant you long life, O son of noble lords and great leaders! You, who are the source of glory and blessings, and the place of virtue and grace. May He continue to entitle you to the guidance of His religion and may He grace you with following His way. May He honour you in posterity, as He did in the beginning! May He make people of knowledge and wisdom enjoy your existence and strengthen religion through your light and brilliance. May He make us see in you every goodness, happiness, nobility and honour. May God enable you to reach the highest ranks and afford to you the highest ascension! May He bless you in everything good you ask for. May He illuminate your intellect so you can grasp every object you intend to [know], and guard you from the affliction of deviation and straying, of unbelief and ignorance, and establish you among those who are successfully guided.

³⁰

47:11; this phrase is added in I in a different hand and missing in H.

— ¶ 2 —

You have understood (may Allah enlighten your heart³¹ with the light of belief) what your soul yearns for, and what you desire, namely, an understanding of the Great Resurrection, its conditions and modes. You have read inadequate statements concerning resurrection written in books. The books [you read on resurrection] were not comprehensive. Therefore, you asked me to explain [resurrection] in this treatise, in a comprehensible manner, closer to your understanding. [You asked me] to combine illuminating arguments and clear proofs [in my explanation], and to omit [the methods of] either specious argument or unquestioning acceptance. I have started the exposition and explanation with the grace of God, His power and the blessings of our direction [of prayer] to whom³² the worshipers of God turn. Engage your mind and intellect in it and compare it with that which corresponds to it and deduce its conclusions from each of its elements. I have aimed at brevity and conciseness, and refrained from being lengthy and detailed. In any case, an exhaustive exposition [of resurrection] is prohibited to the *ahl al-dīn*. One must guard it [the exposition of resurrection] against corruption and alteration which might be caused by people of falsehood hankering after it if they were permitted to penetrate the complexities on which our fundamentals concerning the Return (*maʿād*) are based. I hope that God makes you successful, leads you and protects you from errors and mistakes. That is, indeed, in His hands!

³¹ The term *khāṭir* signifies both the intellect and desire contained in the heart. The use of the term here is comparable to the Ṣūfī usage; often the relationship between *khāṭir* and *khaṭra* is played on. see *Lisān al-Arab al-Muḥīṭ*, I, pp. 856ff.

³² Note the masculine pronoun *alladhī* for a grammatical feminine *qiblah*; possible allusion to a person; c.f. notes 70 and 78 below.

— ¶ 3 —

We say, that everything that comes into being is [of] two [kinds]: the natural world and the soul world. The natural world occurs due to the influences of higher [celestial] bodies on lower bodies. There are two influences. The first influence occurs within the elements because of their own effects. Because of the effect they have on one another, some of the elements³³ are transformed into others. The second influence occurs in the organic domain³⁴ through its own effects. From the effects of the organic domain generation and corruption occur, in other words, growth and decay. The world of soul occurs from the emanations of the Universal Intellect and the Universal Soul in individual souls. It [the world of soul] is also divided into two. The first occurs in individual souls from its (the Universal Soul's)³⁵ emanations. As a result, there is an acceptance of divine help (*ta'yīd*) and a sharing among those who are masters of it. The second is what is rendered transparent (*mā yustashiffū*) and occurs in individual souls from its [own] emanations. As a result, an acceptance of teaching (*ta'lim*) and discipline (*riyāḍah*) occurs through which souls possess life and attain their farthest ranks.

— ¶ 4 —

The natural world is confined totally to the influences of an encircling body, including its bodies (i.e. spheres), luminous stars and their motions in their own cycles. The soul world is totally confined to the Form of Man, without which there would be neither emanations from the Intellect, nor benefits for the soul, nor any administrative culture (*siyāṣah sharī'ah*). This form is the most honoured of forms, [and] renders all forms, natural or

33 I.e. the elements

34 *Mawālīd*, the mineral, vegetable and animal kingdoms. In all other instances the term "nature" refers to *ṭab'ī*.

35 The pronoun is the feminine singular, referring to the Universal Soul.

soul-related, transparent. If it is correct, that the human form renders all natural or soul-related forms transparent, thereby rendering the Form of the Sphere with whatever exists in it: spheres, stars, actions and movements, transparent, then it is philosophically necessary [to say that] the Form of Man is outside the Sphere. The Sphere does not affect the Form of Man, but rather, the Form of Man affects the Sphere and pre-empt its power. Indeed the good and evil of the heavens come from this form, as we will explain, if God wishes.

— ¶ 5 —

[You should] know that if the soul changes its moral character and if its intellectual emanations which are its noble qualities, such as fortitude, wisdom, bravery, chastity, generosity, truthfulness, trustworthiness and loyalty are removed from it, then their contraries, which are the marks of nature, such as ignorance, impetuous violence, cowardice, greediness, stinginess, lying, deceiving and oppression appear in it. If souls render the Form of the Sphere and its bodies transparent, while they are in a condition where the marks of nature have mastery over them, envy, ruination and terrifying events³⁶ are produced, which are the causes of perdition and destruction. But if souls render transparent the Form of the Sphere and all its bodies and luminous stars in a condition where emanations of the Intellect have mastery over them, then from their influences [good] fortune, divinely granted talents and beings who bring advantage and nobility, are produced. If envious ruination and damaging creatures are produced from the souls' influences [then] the [human] bodies which are born, are the farthest from equilibrium. The soul is united to them [the disharmonious bodies], follows them and is distant from virtues. The soul is in the medial [position] with regard to evil. Consequently, this state is reflected in a change to extreme corruption and perdition. If, from the souls' influences, good

³⁶ *Kawā'in* is plural of *Kā'inah* (occurrence, incident, happening). cf. A. Spitaler and M. Ullmann, 1970, *Wörterbuch der Klassischen arabischen Sprache*, I:473, Wiesbaden, Otto Horrossowitz.

fortune, talents and beings who bring advantage are produced, then bodies are born in extreme harmony and equality. Thus, souls united to them, follow them and are distant from faults of character. These bodies are placed in the medial position with regard to virtues. Consequently, this state is reflected in influences of extreme goodness. In brief, the pairing of the subtle and the dense takes this form.

— ¶ 6 —

The proof of what we have elucidated is this: when the upholder of the Message arose, his rising ensured the security of his people and his community from punishment and destruction; [this is] because he renders the Sphere transparent in his noble soul. As a result, in his time, the Heavens are [found to be] in extreme prosperity, power, goodness and nobility. Thus, it is not possible that corruption and pain occur. This is just as God the Exalted, and the Highest, has informed [us] concerning the unbelievers when they asked [Him] about the descent of celestial punishment. "They said, "O God, if that is the Truth from You, make it rain stones on us from the sky or give us an excruciating punishment".³⁷ Then God, may He be glorified, answered them, with a similar explanation to the one we have provided. He said, "it is not for God to punish them while you are amongst them",³⁸ due to heavenly influences; namely, [there is no punishment] while you [the upholder of the message] render the Heavens transparent in your noble, sublime, illuminated and good soul. Then He confirmed this meaning through the meaning of forgiveness, by saying, "God would not be their Punisher while they ask for forgiveness",³⁹ namely, as long as their souls desire the remembrance of God and are asking for help, and [as long as] their souls are themselves rendering the Form of the Heavens transparent, from which descend

³⁷ 8:32

³⁸ 8:33

³⁹ 8:33

punishment and the mutations of nature, it is not possible that anything but good and prosperity arise.

— ¶ 7 —

This preface has raised some of what we want to establish as a basis for what we are about to explain concerning the matter of Resurrection, its conditions and its causes. Resurrection is the verbal noun from *qāma*, *yaqūmu*, *qiyām*. Linguistically, it is a feminine verbal noun and changes [to it] are expressed by the feminine. Consequently, resurrection, arises from the conditions and states of the soul.⁴⁰ Since its well known indicators are that resurrection is preceded by terrifying things and heinous states, earthquakes,⁴¹ eclipses, the darkening of the sun,⁴² eclipses of the moon,⁴³ scattering and dimming of the stars,⁴⁴ the movements of the mountains, destruction of the pregnant, the gushing forth of the sea, the miscarriage of the ones who are carrying and other such signs, [therefore, these indicators are] in total, mutations of nature leading to turmoil and corruption. They⁴⁵ are followed by the matters of resurrection, namely, the rising of the dead,⁴⁶ the exchanging of the earth with a white earth,⁴⁷ creatures being brought to account through the imposition of justice, the compensations of the souls,⁴⁸ the placing of the balances with equity,⁴⁹ the preparing of the

⁴⁰ Since the soul (*nafs*) is also feminine in Arabic

⁴¹ 99:1

⁴² *Sūrah* 81:1

⁴³ 75:8

⁴⁴ 22:2

⁴⁵ I.e. the indicators

⁴⁶ 22:7

⁴⁷ 14:48

⁴⁸ 45:14

⁴⁹ 21:47

way, the entering of paradise in the neighborhood of the Merciful and other similar conditions. These are in totality, soul-related mutations, leading to continuity and goodness. This means that the conditions of the Hour and what precedes it are terrifying things, [consisting] of the arrogance of the Antagonists and their mastery over the world, causing excesses and the increase of corruption in the land, such as, murder, oppression, fornication, sodomy and the corruption of language.⁵⁰ Hence, their dirty and impure souls render forms of the structures of nature transparent, thus altering their fortunate position. From their influences injurious and damaging deadly beings are produced who make their barrenness and turbidity appear. From their influences individual bodies are generated, farthest from balance, making the character of predatory animals visible in the noblest of the organic domain, who is Man.⁵¹

— ¶ 8 —

Since God decreed that His mercy precedes His anger,⁵² He [also] decreed concerning the resurrection of souls, that a *Qā'im* would arise at the final moment of the deterioration of nature, upon whom He had bestowed an abundance of Intellectual emanations and their benefits. If this abundance were compared to the entire bestowal of emanations and its benefits on all souls, in the major and minor cycles, then this [bestowal] would be in relation to [the *Qā'im*], as a part to the whole. This *Qā'im* emerges far removed from all evils, a receptacle of all knowledge, goodness and virtues. Consequently, he eliminates all impurities and turbidities from the structures of nature. Confronting these⁵³ are fortunate

⁵⁰ Meaning hypocrisy and lying c.f.: 4:46; 2:75.

⁵¹ So the noblest of the three organic kingdoms of nature is man; yet once born physically, he is subject to the influences of evil destruction as well as goodness.

⁵² *Ḥadīth Qudsi, Ibn Ḥanbal*, 2, 313; for details on variants see Graham, 1977, pp. 184-185.

⁵³ There is a possibility that the verb *tuqābiluhā* [i.e., *yuqābiluhā?*] should refer to the *Qā'im* parallel to *yunfi*.

signs and the Intellectual Lights. From the effects [of the Intellectual Lights] good creatures will endure, and their purity and goodness will appear. Hence, from their influences in Man, the noblest of the organic domain, occur bodies which are in accord and are rooted in harmony. They render transparent, through their essences, the character of angels and actions, such as glorification and sanctification. Consequently, the resurrection of the dead, the spreading of justice, the placing of the balances with equity, the [arrival of] reward and the entrance to paradise occur. There is no point in explaining here every one of these descriptions (of reward), except what we have chosen.⁵⁴

— ¶ 9 —

He who knows Resurrection through these descriptions and expects what should be expected from nature, the soul and its actions and alterations, his expectation is real and [his waiting] is the true waiting. He who distorts the signification [of resurrection] and waits for what God did not decree, his expectation is of falsehood, false testimony and delusion. One can know the conflict between the [various] expectations through these descriptions. Thus, this is the evidence of the verification of the Truth, and the falsehood of the false. I say, that the people of falsehood expect the total annihilation of nature, its powers and its actions, in matters pertaining to the Final Hour and to Resurrection. If nature and its powers be annihilated,⁵⁵ it follows that, souls united with their bodies will be abolished [also]. But I wish I knew how they expect [what they do] pertaining to Resurrection and the Final Hour, since the skies will have folded in,⁵⁶ the sun been darkened, the stars dulled, the seas made

⁵⁴ This reading is somewhat uncertain (c.f. for variant, see Arabic text ¶ 8).

⁵⁵ I.e. nature

⁵⁶ 21:104

to gush forth and the mountains moved?⁵⁷ I wonder how they imagine that after this any bodies would survive? Or, would any souls without these (i.e., bodies) rise and benefit?

— ¶ 10 —

Assume for the sake of argument that we accept their [idea] that the creator, (whose greatness is sanctified), [although] He is the highest above named things and relations, lowers Himself and His essence, in order to reckon with and address them. Would this be [an act of] wisdom and a [sign of the] virtue of His power that He annihilates His [own] wisdom and destroys His [own] kingship and [own] power? Doesn't wisdom rather require the opposite, and rule the ordering of His kingdom and the facilitation of His wisdom in order that His promise and His threat be more effective and fulfill His power and His planning?

— ¶ 11 —

God, (may His name be exalted), has perpetuated two groups, the unfortunate and the fortunate ones, conditional on the permanence of the heavens and the earth, except for what your Lord wishes.⁵⁸ If the permanence of the heavens and earth were not required by wisdom, then He would not have made the perpetuation of the two groups conditional upon it. If He made permanence necessary for the heavens and the earth, can you indeed see that He strip them of acts and causes?⁵⁹ This would not be in accordance with wisdom nor is it

⁵⁷ *Sūrah 21*

⁵⁸ Cf., 6:178

⁵⁹ I.e. making them useless, destroying them

correct speculative reasoning that He should destroy anything [which He made] permanent. If the destruction of the heavens and the earth is invalidated, given the necessity of their permanence, he who possesses the slightest intellect and sense of discernment, can grasp what truth we have chosen to unveil.

— ¶ 12 —

Thus, it is established that the Resurrection to which the Messengers refer is nothing but the influences of the soul, which appear through a Pure Soul,⁶⁰ who has acquired as much virtue, similar [to the virtues of the Intellectual emanations] as is possible for a soul from [the virtues of the] Intellectual emanations. It makes these virtues beneficial [as] a sign (admonition)⁶¹ for individual souls who preceded him⁶² in the major and minor cycles. Thus, whoever takes from them will receive reward, the benefit of knowledge and the emanations of the Intellect. Thus, that is the retribution given to them, except those who deserve the Word of Doom,⁶³ who disagreed with the Lords of the Times⁶⁴ and went astray from the right path, worshipping graven images, being pleased with themselves because of acquired ignorance. Consequently, ignorance worked upon them, washing away their splendour from them, and as a result, they were unable to accept the reward and the Light from the Lord of Resurrection. At that time there will be no asylum for them except the fire. That is their abode. What a wretched outcome!

⁶⁰ Used in Qurʾān, 18:74

⁶¹ The term *indhār* is used relating this possibly to prophecy. The prophet is referred to as *nadhīr* in the Qurʾān

⁶² The Pure Soul

⁶³ Qurʾānic usage, 39:71, 16:25.

⁶⁴ This appears to be an synonym for *Khudāwand-i Dawr*, referring to the prophets and maybe the imāms; although this is problematic as is discussed in the thesis.

— ¶ 13 —

If someone questions us: how can you imagine goodness and evil reaching the unfortunate and fortunate ones, since we know for certain that the centuries preceding [us] are gone forever and we neither see signs nor traces of them? He will be told that the [understanding of the] mode of retribution for the two groups, good and evil, is very difficult, except for him who has a pure and transparent soul (*nafsun zakīyatun ṣāfiyatun*), habituated to grasping spiritual and luminous things. However, I will facilitate comprehension concerning the purpose and aim of what I want to explain, in easy, simple terms.

— ¶ 14 —

Hence, I say, to have knowledge of *barāzikh*,⁶⁵ is sufficient (in order) to know this aim. Namely, God the Most High has said in His Book, "And from behind them is a *barzakh* to the Day they are raised".⁶⁶ Thus, the knowledge of *barāzikh* means, one knows that at all times the world is filled with souls, each united to individual bodies. When the bodies leave the world they are replaced by others of the same kind. The replacements are the form of the departed ones. Because you know for certain that those who are in the world today, their language, their words, their thinking, their communication, their knowledge, their speech, their politics, their professions and their crafts, are only what they acquired from the ones who departed.⁶⁷ Thus, these become the *barāzikh* of the departed ones and the souls are nothing except what they [the departed ones] made them inherit.

⁶⁵ On *barzakh* see later discussion.

⁶⁶ 23:100

⁶⁷ *Iltabasa* used in I which colors the reading substantially in favour of *tanāsukh*. However H has *iktasaba*.

— ¶ 15 —

From every community, from the pious, and from the libertines, from those who have gone astray and those who have been rightly guided arise the ones whom they [the departed ones] make their replacements. They make those who come after them inherit what they themselves inherited from the departed ones, in order that reward and punishment reach the souls who have acquired goodness and evil, as they [the souls] remain like connected cords until the rising of the Great Resurrection. When it [resurrection] occurs all are gathered and given full retribution of whatever is deserved. Thus he who has become strong in the knowledge of the *barāzikh* has arrived at the right path and is not confused concerning the mode of reward and punishment to those from the past centuries who have departed, whose traces have been wiped out and whose remembrance erased. I am not dealing explicitly with this tenet, trusting the subtlety of the understanding of its reader⁶⁸ and the wisdom of his sagacity, and the nobility of his aim.

— ¶ 16 —

The Atheists (*al-Muʿaṭṭilah*) and the Materialists (*al-Dahrīyah*) deny Resurrection and the Final Hour and regard it as a fabrication, and so in their hearts do many others, though they do not say it openly. This is the result of their having heard the interpretations of [human] commentators rather than the version God (may He be glorified) Himself decreed. So their intellects do not consider it to be true nor are their souls satisfied with [the thought of] it occurring in the way it is described. They see that the Dualists (*Thanawīyah*) have a certain conception of it [i.e., Resurrection and the Final Hour]; the Magians have another conception and the Jews have still another. The Muslims have a conception different from [all] the others, and in fact each group of Muslims has its own distinct conception. Every

⁶⁸ Referring to the owner of the tenet i.e., the addressee.

one [of these groups] reduces it [Resurrection] to a set of natural mutations involving agony and necrosis. Therefore, if the possessor of a superior intellect deliberates on this matter carefully and is true to his intellect, he will not find what they described to be readily acceptable to his intellect or satisfying to his soul. Consequently, because he does not grasp its [spiritual] modality, the result is that he jumps to the conclusion that it is a fabrication. But if the Materialists and the Atheists who are denying it had understood and appreciated that it refers to soul-related influences resulting in the realization of Goodness and Happiness, then they would not have been so hasty to call it a fabrication and would have [instead adopted an attitude of] respect and expectation.

— ¶ 17 —

Don't you see that Muḥammad (may peace be upon him and on his family) had coupled himself to the Final Hour when he said, "I and the Hour were sent like two joined fingers".⁶⁹ In this way he linked his being sent with the coming of the Final Hour. You (may Allah continue your spiritual fortification (*ta'yīd*)) certainly know that the sending of Muḥammad (may peace be upon him and his family) was not the result of purely natural causes, undermining any of its pillars or invalidating any of its processes. It was rather a soul-related influence which was exhibited through his appearance [on earth]. From this resulted the goodness and happiness contained in his Book and his *sharī'ah*. Since the manifestation of this goodness and the maturation of this happiness is the essence of the mission of Muḥammad, (may peace be upon him and his family), who was sent together with the Hour, it must be a soul-related influence, rather than of the processes of nature. Consequently, it is impossible that resulting from the Hour there occur anything but the appearance of good which is noble, and of happiness which is virtuous, even though his

⁶⁹ Ibn Mājah, Introduction, 7, *fatn* 25; Ibn Ḥanbal, 4, pp. 309, 5, 9. This *ḥadīth* appears in connection with the *tafsīr* of *sūrah* 79.

measure is greater than its and his rank is nobler than its.⁷⁰ Because it [the Hour or the happiness] is a soul-related influence. And that is the cause of all natural and soul-related influences. You should know this, if God wishes.

— ¶ 18 —

And *qiyāmah* has names and characteristics and titles such as, The Hour,⁷¹ The Shout,⁷² The Cataclysm,⁷³ The Event,⁷⁴ The Reality,⁷⁵ The Calamity⁷⁶ and The Resurrection.⁷⁷ These are in totality, soul-related influences which are connected through the manifestation of the Pure Soul. Those souls have spiritual company with that Pure Soul who⁷⁸ has already reached the extreme rank of humanity, and all of them are like one soul, even though the soul-related mutations are different at the time of the manifestation of each soul, and during the time of the rising of each soul. And the ending of every one of these names

⁷⁰ Both MSS have *hu* in both cases. The use of a masculine pronoun for a feminine subject (*al-sā'ah*) is accepted in classical and medieval texts. For details of usage see, "Das frühe Neuarabisch in mittel-arabischen Texten", by J. Blau in *Grundriss Der arabischen Philologie*, ed. W. Fischer, pp. 96-109. Sijistānī refers to the appearance of the *nafs zakīyah* in the *Iftikhār* using a masculine verb form (p. 64, line 19) A significant occurrence of this is found in paragraph 18 of the Arabic text, where the author speaks about the *nafs al-zakīyah* and the *Qā'im*. Our passage therefore could read that either the Hour is greater than Muhammad; or that the *Qā'im* is greater than the prophet; or the other way around.

⁷¹ 18:36.

⁷² 80:33.

⁷³ *Ṭāmmat al-Kubrā*, 79:34.

⁷⁴ 56:1, 69:15.

⁷⁵ 69:3.

⁷⁶ 101:1ff., 69:4, 13:31.

⁷⁷ 4:88, 3:77, etc.

⁷⁸ Another example of the masculine pronoun (*alladhī*) for a grammatical feminine (*Nafs Zakīyah*, i.e., the *Qā'im*).

and titles is the letter “h” until the *Qā'im* returns with his *khulafā'* and the cycle of the soul is completed for them.⁷⁹

— ¶ 19 —

Thus, whoever knows Resurrection according to the descriptions God the Most Exalted has given it, and according to the position into which God, may He be exalted and glorified, has placed it, forgetfulness and ignorance will not occur to him [in such a way], that the Hour comes suddenly without his knowing it. Rather, he knows when the Hour and the manifestation of Resurrection comes, to which group he belongs, the People of Paradise or the People of the Fire. Indeed for the People of the Fire gates open for them when they are driven to them.⁸⁰ And beatitude is for those for whom the gates of Paradise are opened in order that they enter. Woe to the people for whom the Gates of Fire are opened so that they enter; and sorrow of all sorrows to him who enters the gates of Fire⁸¹ while he reckons that he has entered the gates of Paradise, deluded by his learning and by upbringing. Good of all good for him for whom God has made easy the entrance to Paradise, and who enters the neighborhood of the Merciful. And what are the gates of the two groups of the People of Paradise and of Fire except the leaders of those gone astray and of the polytheists and of the rightly guided? So whosoever follows the [right] guides and binds himself to them has already entered the gates of Paradise. When the people of Paradise enter through those gates, they praise God and glorify Him, and they say "*al-ḥamdu lillāh*", He who has fulfilled His promise to us, and made [us] inherit the earth and enter Paradise as we want.⁸² How good is the reward for those who work at the time of inheriting the earth. For after

79 MS H has the variant reading...is the letter h which refers to the *Qā'im* with his *khulafā'*.

80 Qurʾānic allusion 39:71

81 Qurʾānic allusion, 67:6.

82 Qurʾānic allusion, 39:74

their inheriting the earth, in seeing those who enter Paradise there is all the gnosis which a guidance-seeker needs. The matter of Resurrection is indeed that it is exclusively a soul-related mutation, not a natural mutation. Know this, God Willing!

— ¶ 20 —

In this treatise we have stated enough for him who examines it using his intellect and for whom its purpose will not be obscure and its knowledge not hindered due to the delusions he was brought up in. I have finished this treatise by offering praise to the One who gives success and thanking the One who inspires. I seek blessings for His prophet *al- Muṣṭafā* Muḥammad and *al-Murṭadā* ʿAlī, the fathers of the believers and for the Lord of the Day of Religion⁸³ and his rightly guided *khulafāʾ*, and peace be to all their *awliyāʾ* and their helpers, and God is our Reckoner.⁸⁴ He who is the best Custodian and the best of Lords and Helpers. There is no capacity or power except from God, the Highest, the Exalted.

⁸³ *Yawm al-dīn* i.e., The Day of Resurrection.

⁸⁴ In I the variant is as follows:... and how trustworthy is He!

Discussion of Themes in *al-Risālah al-Bāhirah*

This chapter will introduce the themes, both explicit and implicit, which Sijistānī conceptualises in the *Bāhirah*. The treatise is not always self-explanatory since the *Bāhirah* was not written for the purposes of teaching in the *daʿwah*. It appears to be private correspondence between Sijistānī and a Fāṭimid imām.⁸⁵ Sijistānī often refers to doctrinal formulations and concepts which he does not explain in the treatise itself. Sijistānī's explicit reason for writing *al-Bāhirah* is a request made to him to elucidate the causes and the conditions of the great resurrection. In addition to this primary concern, Sijistānī had to contend with several major themes which, although he does not elaborate upon them, are related to resurrection and stand by themselves as theological and philosophical issues.

The work contains the defense of a doctrinal position and some polemical refutation. There are basically two categories of people whom Sijistānī refutes: the Muslim groups and the non-Muslim groups, specifically the Jews and the Magi. Their belief is that resurrection is a natural mutation leading to corruption and decay. His accusation of the Muslims is stronger than his accusation of the non-Muslims, whom he identifies as the Materialists. He feels that the Muslims, in spite of knowing the truth from the word of God have wrongfully followed their predecessors. The refutation of the views of groups like these, including the theologians and the philosophers, occurs in his other works, e.g., the *Iftikhār* (pp. 28ff,

⁸⁵ P. Walker holds the opinion that Sijistānī wrote the *Bāhirah* to the Ismāʿīlī Amīr al-Marwazī, who was the head of the eastern *daʿwah* before Nasafī. To the author this appears unlikely as is discussed below. For details of the Marwazī-Nasafī relationship see Walker, 1993, nt. 28, p. 160.

39ff), in the context of arguments against physical resurrection and the unicity of God (*tawḥīd* of the *Mubdi*⁴) and in the *Kashf* (Kamada, 1988, pp. 4-5). *Bāhirah*, however, is neither primarily polemical, nor does it belong to the genre of purely theological literature, that is of *kalām*, since there is an absence of emphasis on theological prescriptions, their consequences and the formulation of doctrine. Rather, the *Bāhirah* appears to be a commentary on the idea of the primacy of the soul-related world (*al-ʿālam al-nafsānī*) and the implications of this doctrine for theological issues such as resurrection, prophethood, revelation and the nature and position of man.

Dating the *Bāhirah*

The identity of the person who made the request and his reasons for doing so are the first questions to consider. The answer to these questions would help to determine the nature and function of the treatise more accurately. Sijistānī communicates two presuppositions in this treatise which help clarify this point. Sijistānī's first presupposition is that the addressee has the capacity to understand the tenet of the relationship of *barāzikh* to resurrection (Arabic text, ¶ 15. 4-5). The second presupposition is the formula of address which, in fact, clearly indicates that Sijistānī holds the addressee in very high esteem. He expects the addressee, the son of "the great lords", to strengthen religion through his light and brilliance. Sijistānī is emphatically clear about the addressee being the source of glory and blessing (Arabic text, ¶ 1. 3-10). On examining the formula of address we find that it contains several interesting features. Line one addresses the patron as "*ibn al-sādat al-nujabāʾ wa al-qādat al-ʿuzamāʾ, yanbūʿ al-majd wa al-karam wa maḥal al-faḍl wa al-niʿm...*" the son of the noble lords and great leaders and as the source of glory and blessings and the place of virtue and grace". The person addressed is he through whom goodness, happiness, nobility and honour are made manifest. ¶ 1.7 reads "*wa ballaghaka min al-darajati aʿlāhā wa min al-marāqī asnāhā*", stating "and may the Lord make you reach the highest ranks and ascend to the highest radiance", suggesting that the person in question, although exalted, is

obviously not an Imām himself since he is yet to reach the highest ranks. However, Sijistānī also uses the verb *nayyara* in reference to the patron; this word has an established precedent of being used for the Imāms tracing back to Jaʿfar al-Şādiq (¶ 1. 8).⁸⁶

Since there is no explicit reference to the addressee by name directly or by a recognised title, the dating of the manuscript is crucial. The dating of the manuscript would determine whether the *Bāhirah* is the last work of Sijistānī. If it is, it proves that Sijistānī's beliefs, which he outlines briefly in the *Ifīkhār* and writes explicitly in the *Bāhirah*, remained unchanged, in spite of opposition from the Fāṭimid Imām. In order to attempt a date we must reconstruct Sijistānī's historical context with the scant facts which are available. The only certain dates we have to work with are three references in the *Ifīkhār* (pp. 11, 82, 111). Around 322/934 Sijistānī was in Baghdad returning from pilgrimage. This is ascertained by his remark about his presence in Baghdad at the time of the deposition of the Abbasid Caliph al-Qāhir and the accession of al-Rāḍī.⁸⁷ If it is to be assumed that Sijistānī is the head of the *daʿwah* in Rayy after Rāzī,⁸⁸ then this is the place where Sijistānī started his career. According to Madelung, Rāzī was loyal to the older branch of the Ismāʿīlīyah, the Qaramīṭah, until the climactic disaster of Abū Ṭāhir's proclamation of the *Mahdī*.⁸⁹ In 331-2/942 Nasafī was killed in Khurasān and it appears that Ishāq or Abū Yaʿqūb took over the *daʿwah* there to be known henceforth as al-Sijzī or al-Sijistānī.⁹⁰

⁸⁶ For details on the precedent usage of *nayyara* applying to the Imāms consult al-Kulaynī, introduction to *Uşūl al-Kāfī*, p. 8.

⁸⁷ Cf. *Ifīkhār*, introduction, p. 11; Poonawala, 1977, p. 83

⁸⁸ Daftary, 1990, pp. 234-246; Walker, 1974, p. 24; Ibn Nadīm, *Fihrist*, pp. 240-241; Stern, 1983, pp. 204ff

⁸⁹ Madelung, 1988, pp. 96-97; c.f. Niẓām al-Mulk, *Siyāsat Nāme*, 1960, ed. C. Schefer, Paris, 1891; English translation by H. Drake, *The Book of Government or Rules for Kings*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, p. 214.

⁹⁰ Walker, 1974, p. 25-26; Stern, 1983, pp. 221-222

According to the accepted view, it was not until Mu'izz's (342-365/953-975) attempt to regain ties with the eastern provinces that Sijistānī accepted the Fāṭimids as Imāms.⁹¹ Approximately thirty years later, sometime after 360/971 *Iftikhār* was written (Poonawala, 1977, p. 83; Sijistānī, *Iftikhār*, where he refers to the death of the prophet having occurred three hundred and fifty years before, p. 82, 111; Walker, 1974, p. 27). This would place *Iftikhār* in the time of either Mu'izz or 'Azīz. The only record of Sijistānī's death occurs in Rashīd al-Dīn's *Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh*.⁹² This reference states that Sijistānī was killed by the amīr Khalaf b. Aḥmad Sijzī whose governorship ended in 393/1002-3. Poonawala places the date of the death between 386/996 and 393/1002-3 on the basis that two treatises attributed to Sijistānī, *Risālat al-Mawāzīn* and *Risālat al-Mabda' wa al-Ma'ād* mention al-Ḥākim who acceded as Fāṭimid Caliph in 386/996 (Poonawala, 1977, p. 83). Sijistānī's authorship of these two treatises has, however, not been established beyond doubt.

Hence the *Bāhirah* could have been written: (1) before the time of Mu'izz, while Sijistānī was in Rayy; (2) during the time of Mu'izz or 'Azīz; or (3) during the time of Ḥākim (386-411/996-1021).

If the first option is entertained, that it was written prior to Mu'izz the mention of the terms *ahl al-dīn*, *muhtadin* etc. would have to refer to the Qaramiṭah, Sijistānī's own group. The term *muhtadin*, (successful and guided) is used also in *Yanābī'*, (p. 92 as is *al-mu'ayyadūn* appearing in a similar manner; in the plural it appears in *Yanābī'*, pp. 36, 80, 94-96). In *Iftikhār* the term *muhtadin* is linked with the guidance of the Imām and supported by Qur'ānic verses (*Iftikhār*, pp. 70ff). A few lines later the term *ahl al-dīn* is used referring to those who are the guardians of the Truth. In this context the use of *muhtadin* is no longer ambiguous; it clearly refers to Sijistānī's own group. Thus, one can conclude that Sijistānī

⁹¹ Kamada, 1988, p. 3; Madelung, *Karmati*, Encyclopaedia of Islam, 2nd edition, pp. 662-663; Poonawala, 1983, p. 277

⁹² Text published in Stern, 1983, pp. 221, 228; Rashīd al Dīn, *Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh*, 1960, ed. M.T. Dānesh Pazhūh and M. Modarresi, Tehran, p. 12; see also, Kāshānī, 1965, *Zubdat al-Tawārīkh: Ta'rikh-i Ismā'īliyah*, ed. M.T. Dānesh Pazhūh, Tabriz, p. 21.

not only held the addressee in high esteem, but placed himself in his ideological circle. If the addressee had been the Amīr al-Marwazī why would Sijistānī not mention his name? Marwazī was the head of the *daʿwah* and an extremely powerful and prominent man. Had Sijistānī written the *Bāhirah* very early in his career to a patron like Marwazī, he would not have to fear any reprisals. Therefore, although Sijistānī wrote the *Bāhirah* to someone in his own ideological circle, he was ambivalent about naming the person.

Sijistānī's statement about his method in the second paragraph is an interesting feature. He makes a point of stating that he will not go the way of *taqlīd* and *iqnāʿ*, both established methodologies for the Shīʿah. The treatise could not have been addressed to a Muʿtazilite or an Ithnā ʿAsharite since he refutes the former, and his own belief in Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl, if that can be established, would exclude him from the latter. We have no clues as to whom he might have been addressing among the Qaramiṭah.

The second hypothesis is that the *Bāhirah* was written at the request of Muʿizz who had rallied Sijistānī to the Fāṭimid cause. However, the formula of address does not allow the treatise to have been written to an established Imām. There is always the possibility that it was written to Muʿizz just before Sijistānī capitulated to the authority of the Fāṭimids. Perhaps the fact that Sijistānī was declared unwell by Muʿizz after writing the *Bāhirah* caused him to write the *Iftikhār* which possesses similar content but in a more acceptable form.

The third hypothesis is that the *Bāhirah* was written to Ḥākim while he was in regency, prior to becoming a fully reigning Imām. This option would date it after the *Iftikhār* and possibly make it Sijistānī's last work. This dating might also explain why he does not mention it in any of his other works. Then we must assume the treatise to be addressed to Ḥākim who was only a boy of eleven when ʿAzīz died leaving him as successor.⁹³ By the time of Nasafī's death (332/942), Sijistānī was a representative of the most significant

⁹³ S. Assad, 1974, *The Reign of al-Ḥākim bi Amr Allāh*, Beirut: The Arab Institute for Research and Publishing.

group differing from Kirmānī who appears as the official Fāṭimid spokesman.⁹⁴ During the twenty-five year long reign of Ḥākim, the *daʿwah* was transformed from an unstructured network to a highly organised institution. This appears to have been a time when ideas were freely exchanged among disagreeing *dāʿīs* and even amongst the Shīʿah and the Sunnī (Assad, 1974, pp. 86-92). Therefore, it is highly likely that the Imām, who was concerned about maintaining harmony among his Christian, Jewish and Muslim subjects, would have been equally concerned about maintaining the harmony within his own *daʿwah*. To achieve this end he would have had to be familiar with the teachings of the most prominent *dāʿīs*, especially those of the far eastern provinces, so recently rallied to the cause of the Fāṭimids (Madelung, 1983, p. 100-101). Thus, one can conclude that the *Bāhirah* was written to the boy-imām al-Ḥākim and because Sijistānī had not recanted his earlier doctrinal positions which had earned him the displeasure of Muʿizz he was still ambivalent about his relationship to the Fāṭimid Imāms.

The ideas contained within the *Bāhirah* also indicate three possibilities concerning its date. If the *Bāhirah* was written prior to the *Iftikhār*, Halm's thesis that Sijistānī held an early Ismāʿīlī belief in the primacy of the feminine, the soul, would find expression in this work.⁹⁵ If the *Bāhirah* was written at the time of the *Iftikhār*, which is what Halm claims, and Sijistānī shifted from the older strand of Ismāʿīlī belief in the primacy of the feminine soul to the Neoplatonic structure of the primacy of the male intellect, then the co-existence of a clearly identifiable Neoplatonic structure and evidence of the primacy of the feminine would both have to exist in the *Bāhirah*. A third possibility is that the *Bāhirah* was composed after the *Iftikhār*, allowing either for the synthesis of the two strains, or the

⁹⁴ Daftary, 1990, pp. 234-246; Walker, 1974, *Abū Yaʿqūb al-Sijistānī and the Development of Ismāʿīlī Neoplatonism*, Thesis, University of Chicago, p. 11, note. 1. The Fāṭimid Ismāʿīlīs did not accept the philosophical doctrines on prophecy, imāmah and cosmology of the Persian school of Ismāʿīlīs of which Nasafī and Sijistānī were the most prominent leaders. It was only at the time of Muʿizz that Rāzī and Sijistānī joined the Fāṭimids.

⁹⁵ The accommodation of the priority of the intellect can also be argued from the perspective of Sijistānī's acceptance of the Fāṭimid Imāms. See Halm, 1978, pp. 101, 115-119; Stern, 1983, p. 297.

preference of one over the other. Most scholarship on Sijistānī, based on the examination of his other works, leans toward the position that he was a Neoplatonist. This position coincides neatly with Stern's thesis.⁹⁶

Themes in the *Bāhirah*

The *Bāhirah* has five distinct themes which are interconnected in Sijistānī's exposition of resurrection. The following section is an explanation of the themes. The order in which they are dealt with corresponds to the order in which they appear in the Arabic text. The reason for this is to preserve the internal logic of the argument for resurrection being a soul-related and not a nature-related phenomenon, as presented by Sijistānī.

1. Soul, Intellect and Nature

The first theme comprises aspects of the natures and the relationship of three elements, namely, the intellect, the soul and nature. After a short introduction Sijistānī draws a cosmological characterization of being, dividing it into the worlds of nature and the soul. At this stage his description is strictly structural. The world of nature is briefly described as having two levels: (1) creative activity through the transformation of elements; (2) the organic birth-growth-degeneration-death cycle which takes place after the first creative process. For example in the *ummahāt*, the elemental forms of creative substance, the

⁹⁶ Stern's thesis is that Nasafī was the founder of Ismā'īlī Neoplatonism, by introducing Neoplatonism into Islamic thought. Since Sijistānī was Nasafī's student and successor, and defended Nasafī against the criticisms of Rāzī, Stern and Madelung argue that it is logical that Sijistānī followed Nasafī's teachings. The differences between them pertained only to the method of teaching and were not doctrinal. Current scholarship on Sijistānī accepts this thesis. Daftary, 1990, pp. 239-245, 247; Stern, 1983, pp. 79; 1960, p. 107; This thesis argues to the contrary, see pp. 8-11 above; 89-90 below.

process of transformation, that is, dryness to moisture, air to water, consists of the effect that the preceding element has on the emergent one. The transformation process is hierarchical with the organic (i.e. *mawālīd*) form of creativity placed after the elemental (i.e. *ummahāt*). The elemental domain consists of the elements, air, earth, fire and water. They belong to the physical world of nature and possess order (*tarkīb*), but not the physical cycle of birth-growth-degeneration-death (*tawallud*), which the organic domain possesses. The organic domain is characterised by the physical cycle of birth-death, with not only a transformation of one element to another, but also from one material form to another. Both the organic and the elemental modes of being are confined solely to the material sphere which encircles them. The effects generated from them are operative only in the cycle of the material [i.e. nature or *ṭabīʿiyah*.] (Arabic text ¶ 3-4).

The characterization of the world of soul is more complex. It consists of the intelligible sphere of being and is created by the emanations of the universal intellect and the universal soul. There are two distinct emanations. The first emanation is that which occurs in the individual soul. This emanation grants the soul the ability to receive *taʿyīd* and to share this divine guidance with those who are its masters (Arabic text ¶ 3). The second emanation occurs in individual souls through the acceptance of *taʿlīm* and discipline. Whether there is any essential difference between the emanations of the intellect and the soul is not yet specified.

The most striking feature of this cosmological structure is the terminology used by Sijistānī. The subtle world is not described as the world of the intellect but as the “soul world”. Here he explicitly mentions the intellectual realm only in two ways: (1) when speaking about emanations, and these are always coupled with the soul; (2) when he mentions the intellectual lights (¶ 8). This usage raises the issue of why he chose to dwell on the role of the soul as opposed to emphasising the role of the intellect, which Kirmānī did.

Halm has asserted that in reference to the soul-world Sijistānī preserves an older strand of Ismāʿīlī thought which maintained that the feminine preceded the masculine. However, he

believes that the change of this positioning of the *kūnī-qadar* came at the beginning of the tenth century under the influence of Neoplatonism which required the priority of the intellect. The primacy of the feminine did not assimilate easily into the Plotinian Neoplatonic emanationist scheme (Halm, 1978, pp. 119, 209ff; based on *Iftikhār*, fol. 67ff). Therefore, Sijistānī changed the position of the soul, thus maintaining the Neoplatonic priority of the intellect. An examination of Sijistānī's hierarchy of the *'ulūwīyah* letters can help solve the problem. Here he describes how two letters meet and form a pair from which an unique letter results. These two letters are the feminine and the masculine (*Iftikhār*, fol. 67).⁹⁷ Here the feminine, representing the soul, stands at the head and the masculine, representing the intellect, follows. In the *Bāhirah* none of this is explicit. The terms *kūnī-qadar* are not used. However the importance of the soul in the treatise is evident. A careful analysis of the *Bāhirah* will help clarify whether Sijistānī holds the doctrine of the primacy of the feminine soul and if so, his rationale for it.

Sijistānī begins the parallel between the soul and resurrection by the linguistic examination of the synonyms for resurrection. He notes that all of them contain the final letter "h" which is the feminine element. He then links this to the claim that the soul is also feminine and that resurrection is completed in the cycles of the soul and not in the material state of being. Besides the primacy of the soul world in the points mentioned above, Sijistānī's likening resurrection to the feminine soul requires the primary position of the feminine element in his cosmology. If he does hold to its primacy, as Halm maintains, then his position might be considered as a preservation of the older strand of Ismā'īlism (Halm, 1978, pp. 115-117). If he does not, then does the position of the feminine element signify a change in his thought? Is this change reflected in the *Iftikhār* as the result of the impact of Neoplatonism?

⁹⁷ To paraphrase: These two letters, the *kūnī* and the *qadar*, are named as the feminine and the masculine. The feminine stands at the head and the masculine after; while from the original pair (*al-zawj al-awwal*) which appeared through the *'amr* of God, which is the *sābiq*, the masculine, and the *tālī*, the feminine. Nevertheless one should place the word in the feminine form in front and that of the masculine after because the *zāhir* is the influence of the universal soul and is the *tarkīb* (composed of elements), and is clearly visible and is nearer to us, while the hidden which is the *āthār* of the intellect (*ta'yīd*), is secret.

A corollary question, and indubitably an Ismāʿīlī concern, is the manner in which the nature and the function of the intellect and the soul are linked to the issue of the exoteric (*ẓāhir*) and the esoteric (*bāṭin*.) Sijistānī sees the functions of the *ẓāhir* and the *bāṭin* as distinct. This can be deduced since he uses the two terms *taʿlīm* (teaching and discipline in the external physical world) and *taʿyīd* (spiritual guidance given to the soul) to signify two separate sources of knowledge. In the *Iftikhār* Sijistānī argues the necessity of the Imām as the *Ṣāhib al-Taʿwīl* (*Iftikhār*, pp. 70-71; *Yanābīʿ*, pp. 32-36). In the *Bāhirah* he uses *Ṣāhib al-Qiyāmah* and *Ṣāhib al-Zamān* (c.f. *Iftikhār*, p. 130). Alibhai concludes that Sijistānī was committed to maintaining the Imāmah and therefore, could not fully develop his idea that the intellect is a priori a higher internal source for knowledge than revelation and its *taʿwīl* (Alibhai, 1983, pp. 164ff). Alibhai's contention is that Sijistānī's position on knowledge was intended to uphold the doctrine at the core of the Ismāʿīlī movement, the Imāmah. Sijistānī justified this position by arguing that the purpose behind the *sharīʿah* and the real striving for divine wisdom could come only through the Imām. He cites the *Sullam* as the most evident source for this (Alibhai, 1983, p. 152).

Even though in the *Bāhirah* Sijistānī speaks of *taʿyīd* to signify the internal (*bāṭin*) source of knowledge, he does not use the term *taʿwīl* in connection to the true understanding of the law. There is the assumption that the true understanding of the law and all esoteric knowledge is restricted to the few who belong to the group of the rightly guided. In the introductory paragraph Sijistānī writes that the exhaustive exposition of *bāṭin* knowledge (of *qiyāmah*) is restricted to the guardianship of the People of the (true) Faith (*ahl al-dīn*.). At the end of the treatise he speaks of the necessity of the true leaders (*riʾāsah*), the acceptance of a true leader (*raʾīs*) or a false one determines reward or punishment for the individual. In the *Kashf* he writes about the necessity of an unerring teacher who must teach the unworthiest of pupils and how the worthiest of pupils, already in the possession of knowledge, can be led astray by the errant teacher (*Kashf*, pp. 90-92).

In the *Bāhirah* Sijistānī writes that two emanations occur within the individual soul. These originate from the universal intellect and the universal soul in the world of *ibdāʿ*, the

Intelligible sphere. They assume the forms of *ta'yīd* and *ta'lim* once individual souls are united to bodies in the organic domains. With this concept of *ta'lim* and *ta'yīd*, one may ask whether Sijistānī is alluding to some form of physical *da'wah*, or to a group of physical individuals who possess the ability to receive and impart *ta'yīd* and *ta'lim* who are distinguished not only by their functions, but also by their natures. This issue centers around the metaphysical dilemma of having eternal intelligible universals which must relate to created sensible particulars. The problem is not that of formulating analogous correspondences between the two spheres of being; rather, it concerns the matter of how and why dense created entities are generated from subtle eternal intelligible realities. Further, the difference, priority and superiority of the two emanations in the organic world must be clarified. This is the existential dimension over which the intellectual Sijistānī anguishes. In addressing incarnationism in his Imāmology, the case of one eternal intelligible reality manifesting itself only in one event, in one time and in one place, Sijistānī appears to approach Imāmology as the relationship between the knower and knowledge itself.

2. The Form of Man

The second theme in his cosmology is the concept of the Form of Man. The primary questions to address concerning this theme are: are either the intellect or the soul, or both, identified with the Form of Man? Sijistānī states that the Form of Man penetrates all forms of both nature and soul-related levels of being, affecting even the form of the heavens in their entirety and affecting the nature of individual men by virtue of being of a higher rank. The position of the Form of Man to which he refers in the *Bāhirah* as *ṣūrat al-insānīyah* is related to the figures of the *Qā'im*, the Lord of Qiyāmah, the *nafs zakīyah*, and the prophet. First we will examine his use of the term *nafs zakīyah*. In ¶ 12 resurrection, which is the influence of the soul, is brought about through the *nafs zakīyah*. The *nafs zakīyah* in ¶ 18, is described as having reached the extreme rank of humanity. It is not subject to time or space since it manifests resurrection, even though resurrection occurs at different times for different souls. This characterisation seems to refer to a cosmic figure. However, in ¶ 13 he

uses *nafs zakīyah ṣāfiyah* to mean one who has the capacity to understand fully the concept of retribution which he is describing. In this context it is probable that Sijistānī views the addressee to be the *nafs zakīyah ṣāfiyah*. In the *Iftikhār* he uses *nafs zakīyah* in a number of ways. For instance, here too, it is connected with the manifestation of resurrection. He points out that the position of the *nafs zakīyah* is specific to it, and a particular role and status is kept aside for it and concealed from the rest of humanity (p.76). So, the pure soul is in a separate category from the rest of creation. It is integral in the process of retribution in which it is connected with the *ḥudūd al-rūḥānīyah*. Another important way in which the *nafs zakīyah* is mentioned is in relation to renewing the *sharī'ah* in view of its capability to create through the divine command (p.64). In this function it is directly linked to prophecy.

However it is ultimately the soul, Sijistānī states, which influences the form of the heavens. In this connection he refers to the soul as a Universal. The emanations from the universal intellect and the universal soul can be altered in either direction: they either predominate by being in existence and thus giving rise to goodness, purity and noble beings; or they fail to operate by being absent and thus allow their contraries, the symptoms of the natural mode of being to appear, giving rise to awesome, terrifying and destructive events. Particular souls make the forms of the prevalent condition visible. This condition could be either the predominance of intellect/soul related emanations or a predominance of those of Nature. The form of the heavens cannot in any way determine the predominance of one or the other state. It is only the Form of Man, the soul qua soul in its absoluteness, which undertakes the process of affecting and influencing conditions (¶ 4-5).

3. The Connection Between Morality and Cosmology

The Form of Man possesses the capacity to accept *ta'yīd* and be a shareholder amongst those who are its masters by virtue of being emanations from the universal intellect and the universal soul. It is through teaching (*ta'lim*) and discipline that the soul reaches its greatest heights becoming capable of making the forms corresponding to its conditions visible,

whether good or evil. However, once he has been born, man in his physical state is influenced by the surrounding natural conditions.

As stated above, with respect to this capacity to accept spiritual guidance (*ta'yīd*) Sijistānī does not distinguish between the physical form of man and the individual soul. One is forced to ponder on the place of the individual intellect and the individual soul. Sijistānī is far more forthcoming in his discussions of the individual soul in the *Yanābīc*, *Nuṣrah*, and the *Maqālīd*. About the individual intellect he is strangely terse. Concerning the former, he states that, the condition in which the physical Form of Man is attached to the individual soul is that of *izdiwāj*. (¶ 5-6). This point is clarified further by his use of the term *ḥadatha* (created), when describing the individual soul attached to the body (¶ 5. 7). Individual bodies united to souls born during the time of the destructive modes of being are removed from absolute virtue and are placed in an environment where they are prone to incline towards evil. In contrast, by virtue of their attachment to their souls, individual bodies born during an harmonious time are removed from absolute faults and are placed in an environment where they are prone to incline toward good (¶ 5).

Sijistānī states that the world of the soul is manifested in two beneficial modes in the individual soul. The first of its benefits is its capacity to accept spiritual guidance (*ta'yīd*) and the second is the benefit of the administration of the law (*siyāsiyāt al-sharī'ah*). By this he does not seem to point to the law (*sharī'ah*) in the confined sense as used in *fiqh*. Rather, it may be suggested that he is referring to the concrete physical systems of culture and the order of the organic domain which administer the life of the individual man in his particular society and time, a matter also dealt with in several passages in the *Kashf*.⁹⁸ The manifestation of the Form of Man in this dimension raises the questions of the importance of the law and the antinomian tendencies of which the *Bāṭinīyah* were accused. It poses an issue of how this ontological level relates to prophetology and imāmology.

⁹⁸ Discussion on *kār-i sharī'ī* and *kār-i 'aqlī*, below, pp. 162 ff.

4. Law, Prophetology and Imāmology

Within the Ismā'īlī movement itself there appears to have been some disagreement about the place of the law (*sharī'ah*). Rāzī criticises Nasafī for his position that Adam was not a bearer of divine law. Sijistānī defends the latter's position in *al-Nuṣrah*, not by a simple affirmation of Adam as a non-law bearer, but through the argument that it is possible to know God's unity without the law.⁹⁹ Despite his defense of Nasafī, Sijistānī appears to have had a difference with Nasafī's group since he maintained that the *sharī'ah* was essential in its allegorical interpretation (Stern, 1983, p. 308). Judging from the record of this dispute in *al-Bustī* it is unclear whether the disagreement was between Sijistānī and the followers of Nasafī, or, whether the dispute was between the followers of Sijistānī and the followers of Nasafī. The following is recorded in *al-Bustī*:

"A great controversy concerning the *da'wah* occurred among the people of Khurasān. Al-Nasafī and his followers were of the opinion that the *da'wah* must concern itself with the soul, the cycles, and the problem of creation, while according to Khayshafuj the *da'wah* must begin with the *sharī'ah* and its allegorical interpretation (*ta'wīl*); there was between his followers and those of al-Nasafī much quarreling and enmity" (Stern, 1983, pp. 307-308).

From this record, Stern concludes that the difference between the groups was not doctrinal but pertained to the method of educating the *da'wah*.¹⁰⁰ The question of Sijistānī's position on the law (*sharī'ah*) is one which will be examined in this work. It was not so much the existence of the law (*sharī'ah*) but its efficacy as a medium of knowledge that was debated in the Muslim milieu. For Sijistānī even that does not appear to be the issue. Indeed, his

⁹⁹ Ḥamīd al-Dīn al-Kirmānī, 1960, *Kitāb al-Riyāḍ*, ed. A. Tamer, Beirut: Dār al-Thaqāfa, *faṣl* 9; W. Madelung, 1961, "Das Imamāt in der frühen ismailitischen Lehre", *Der Islam*, 37, pp. 103-107

¹⁰⁰ Madelung, who in *Religious Trends*, 1988, agreed with this view, appears to have changed his position in "Abū Ya'qūb al-Sijistānī and Metempsychosis", pp. 139-140, in: 1990, *Iranica Varia, Papers in Honor of Ehsan Yarshater*, Acta Iranica 30, vol. 16, Leiden: E. J. Brill.

discussions of the intellectual (*‘aqlī*) and the practical (*shar‘ī*) functions of the intellect within the individual man, in the *Kashf*, indicate a more complex problem (*Kashf*, pp. 22, 52, 70-76). More specifically, Sijistānī addresses the relationship of the law to prophecy. The debate between Nasafī and Rāzī occurred in a climate fraught with political and doctrinal uncertainties, particularly concerning prophecy vis-à-vis revelation and the relationship between doctrine and actual leadership. Nasafī's conviction was that Adam and Muḥammad b. Ismā‘īl had not brought law but spiritual truths. The belief in Muḥammad b. Ismā‘īl's appearance as the *Mahdī* strengthens the interpretation of him not bringing a law but unveiling spiritual truth. Nasafī's views on Muḥammad b. Ismā‘īl were in direct contradiction to the Fāṭimid position. After the Qaramiṭah disaster Rāzī was swayed by the Fāṭimids and could not afford to hold such a view.¹⁰¹ If Sijistānī had upheld Nasafī's views, his own contested allegiance to the Fāṭimids would have been further jeopardised.

5. The Verb *Istashaffa/Yastashiffu*

The term which Sijistānī uses for the process by which the Soul-Form of Man affects its surrounding conditions is singularly interesting. It is the verb *yastashiffu*. The tenth form of *shaffa*, the word appears to be used in a technical sense in the *Bāhirah*. In *Tāj al-Ārūs* (Volume 12, 1994, pp. 308-311) of al-Zābidī the *maṣḍar* is defined as a fine cloth, but also used for the transparency of emotion. In its common usage it means to intuit an idea or sense the mood of a situation. In the tenth form it means a raising or lifting of darkness. It occurs in one manuscript of Ghazālī's *Mishkāt al-Anwār wa Muṣfat al-Asrār* where it is used in the tenth form in the context of divine lights from behind human veils.¹⁰² Avicenna uses the tenth form participle *مستشف* . in the context of optics in the *Kitāb al-Najāh*.¹⁰³ F.

¹⁰¹ W. Madelung, 1987, *The Encyclopaedia of Religion*, ed. M. Eliade, Vol. 13, N.Y.: MacMillan Publishing Co., *Shiism*, p. 251

¹⁰² W. Ahlwardt, 1980, *Verzeichnis der arabischen Handschriften*, Vol. III, # 2812-4357, Buch 5 and 6, Georg Olms Verlag, Hildesheim and New York, p. 161, # 3207, fol. 81-102

¹⁰³ 1364, Ed. Dānesh Pazhūh, Tehran: Intishārāt va chāp-i dāneshgāh, p. 393

Rahman in his translation, renders it as translucent.¹⁰⁴ Directly related to the usage in our text, is again a reference from Avicenna in *al-Adḥwīyah fī al-Maʿād*.¹⁰⁵ Avicenna, referring to the teaching of Thābit ibn Qurrah, defines it as a 'subtle body'. This he says does not resemble other bodies, but is *مشفّاة او متخلخل لين*. And whatever it might be, it is a *jism ṭabīʿī* and the carrier of the soul (p.119). In the *Bāhirah*, the verb is also used in connection with the process of producing equally positive and negative conditions, specifically the heralding of the harmonious and the oppressive by the souls. The negative usage of the verb occurs in ¶ 7. 12-13, where the souls have a negative influence on their surroundings. The verb which is crucial to the central argument of resurrection in this treatise is, curiously, not found in any of Sijistānī's other extant works. The text (¶ 5. 2) reads *fā idhā istashaffat al-anfus fī ḥālin*, indicating that it is not one individual soul but rather a collectivity of souls which is the subject of the *istishfāf* process. Later in the text (¶ 18. 14-16) souls who are in spiritual accompaniment with the *nafs al-zakīyah* are mentioned as being like one soul. At this point the identity of the *nafs al-zakīyah* is enigmatic, in terms of whether it refers exclusively to one person.

An element of great consequence in *Bāhirah* is Sijistānī's idea that a soul is equally capable of acquiring ignorance as it is capable of acquiring knowledge. This is a rather bold statement relevant to the debate about free will and predestination and hence about the issue of God's transcendence and immanence. Related to this question is the definition of the *Mubdiʿ* as the originator, who is set apart from the function of God as a creator and retributor. Within the confines of these distinctions lies Sijistānī's statement on the place of the Form of Man and its relationship to its physical manifestation. The presence of some form of Imāmology in Sijistānī's thought should not provoke surprise. The figure of the prophet as the *Ṣāhib al-Risālah* and that of the *Qāʾim* as the *Ṣāhib al-Qiyāmah* do not present a problem. The fundamental question is rather whether the creator who intervenes in the human condition does so unilaterally and unequivocally, or in a cyclical continuum

¹⁰⁴ F. Rahman, 1952, *Avicenna's Psychology*, London: Oxford University Press, p. 67

¹⁰⁵ 1984, Ed. Ḥasan ʿĀṣī, Beirut: al-Muʿassasah al-Jāmiʿīyah li'l-Dirāsāt wa-al-Nashr wa-al-Tawzī.

through the universal soul. The central issue of the *Bāhirah* is the relationship of the *nafs al-zakīyah* to the person of the *qā'im* and the latter's relationship to resurrection. The resolution of this issue focuses on Madelung's question of whether Sijistānī believed that the return of Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl was imminent.

6. Resurrection

Using the figure of the prophet as the manifestation of God's forgiveness Sijistānī presents the sixth central theme in the *risālah*: resurrection.¹⁰⁶ He maintains that resurrection is solely a soul-related phenomenon and does not occur due to natural causes i.e. any cause related to the forms of the material mode of being. Rather, the terrifying conditions described in the Qur'ān leading up to the condition of resurrection are, in actuality, natural mutations arising out of a corrupt condition. Resurrection is intrinsically unrelated to the preceding conditions which are exclusively elements of the nature-related mode of being.

Preceding the state of resurrection is a time in which arrogance and force rule the world, and souls make impurities visible in the form of bodies and thus, turn fortune away. Hence a predatory, bestial substantiation appears as a mutation of nature arising from the condition of corruption. Conversely, the conditions accompanying the rising of the dead and the entrance to paradise are mutations related to the soul, and preceding these mutations are events that result from the harmony of the effects of the soul related intellectual lights. The souls who are in this condition make the bodies who possess harmonious characters, like angels, visible and expose actions of glorification and sanctification.

¹⁰⁶ See Madelung, 1990, for an excellent introduction to the arguments concerning Resurrection and their implications for metempsychosis.

7. The *Qā'im*

The seventh theme links prophecy to the person of the resurrector; in the *Bāhirah* the term *qā'im* is used exclusively unless *nafs zakīyah* (Arabic text, ¶ 12 and 18) also refers to the *qā'im*. Sijistānī quotes the *ḥadīth qudsī* (¶ 8.1-2): before God decreed his anger, his punishment, he decreed his mercy, the *qā'im* who is the last of each cycle of prophecy. Through the *qā'im*, God completes and fulfills his promise in the way of bestowing intellectual emanations upon all souls. The *qā'im* is crucial to the completion of the cycle of revelation. He is intrinsically related to the cycle in its growth and harmony or its corruption and disunity. He negates all natural structures since the very event of the advent of the *qā'im* symbolises the end of one order, the judgment, and the beginning of another order, different yet not discontinuous.

According to the *Bāhirah*, the key to understanding resurrection is the knowledge of the *barzakh*. The relationship of resurrection to the knowledge of *barāzikh* is twofold: (1) the problem of recognizing the true reality of resurrection; (2) the problem of defining *barzakh* as related to the issue of metempsychosis (*tanāsukh*). In this connection it can be pointed out that: (1) Sijistānī explicitly states that the physical world is filled at all times with souls united to bodies who are the *barzakh* for the succeeding generations (2) the continuity of cyclical time and its link with physical forms is a necessity for resurrection, retribution, and divine justice. Hence, the concept of *barzakh* is not only axial to the explanation of Sijistānī's position on metempsychosis, but to his identification of the figure of the resurrector as well. Time and resurrection being cyclical in this case, neither resurrection nor the Lord of resurrection, can be one particular person and/or event.¹⁰⁷

Sijistānī argues that an eternal creation on the level of the physical individual man, till the Day of Judgment or resurrection, is untenable from the point of view of numbers. A limited physical earth would not accommodate an unlimited number of physical bodies. Yet, God

¹⁰⁷ It is interesting to note that in the *Bāhirah* the term *imām* is never mentioned. The terms used are *nafs zakīyah*, *qā'im*, *ṣāhib al-qiyāmah* and *ṣūrat al-insānīyah*.

has ordered the element of permanence as an integral cosmological component and therefore there must be some manner in which eternity/permanence can be rationally understood in relation to the Day of Accounting. Thus, Sijistānī interprets *barzakh* as physical substantiated existence. Each generation serves the function of being the *barzakh* for the preceding ones. Sijistānī reasons, since the world is at all times filled with bodies who are united with souls, and since creation is eternal, then logically it follows that the world must always have had beings in existence in it. These beings in their concrete forms appear to be a *barzakh* for those who came before. The succeeding generations are made to inherit their speech, their professions, their crafts and all manners of life from the predecessors. Thus the inheritance comprises not only what is good, pious and rightly guided but also includes what is wayward, straying and libertarian. The process of inheritance is a chain (*sulūk*) whereby each generation of being makes the succeeding generation inherit what they themselves inherited. This continuous link is eternal. The promise of God is fulfilled since all creation must arrive at reward and punishment and thereby allow for the successive forms of good and evil.

In ¶ 14.11, Sijistānī uses a verb which differs in the two manuscripts. Manuscript I has *iltabasa*, “to put on” and manuscript H has *iktasaba*, “to acquire”. In ¶ 14.12 another verb, *awratha*, “to inherit” is used in the fourth form. One must pose the question: is the fourth form of the verb “made to inherit” a deliberate choice used to relegate the action of inheriting to the predecessors in order to restrain the ability of the present generation to act independently of those who come before them? Regardless of whether *awratha* is used in conjunction with *iltabasa* or *iktasaba*, the verb usage implies that the present generation are born with predetermined givens according to the actions of their predecessors. Hence, the accusing finger of Bīrūnī and Nāṣir-i Khusraw pointed at Sijistānī for his views on metempsychosis (*tanāsukh*).

Sijistānī deduces that the element of permanence is introduced by God to validate the enduring of both those who are fortunate and those who are unfortunate. He states that if the two categories of people are not eternal, the question of how God can judge annihilated

bodies would present itself. Having established that the *mubdi*^c is above relational modalities, it would be ridiculous if he allowed himself to be placed in the position of a judge since this would be a lowering of His transcendent status. It would be sacrilegious to place God in the position of judging annihilated bodies. Sijistānī in his desire to destroy his opponents' arguments, interprets them at the most literal level, thereby reducing them to the absurd. This strategy is typical of his polemical argument (Kamada, 1988, p. 7).

Sijistānī further invalidates the argument that resurrection is nature-related when he discusses the manner in which souls are united with annihilated bodies. He argues that if the bodies were, in fact, non-existent, there would be no other possibility but that God recreate bodies for them. He ridicules this argument at great length in the *Kashf*, but does not venture into details in the *Bāhirah*. Another possibility which his opponents advocate is that God annihilate the acts and the causes of created things, but keeps the heavens and the earth eternal. This alternative effaces the effectiveness of God's threat of punishment and promise of reward. The entire point of the eternity argument is rendered useless by this possibility since its aim is to establish the justice of God.

According to Sijistānī, the resurrection to which the messengers (prophets) allude, therefore, is not a physical phenomenon but the influence of a soul-related phenomenon which appears with the *nafs al-zakīyah* who is strongly linked to intellectual emanations. Sijistānī explains that the Prophet Muḥammad (as in the *ḥadīth*) had clarified that he was related to the Hour of reckoning as two fingers in a hand are related to each other. For Sijistānī, just as resurrection cannot belong to the world of natural mutations, neither can prophecy. The commissioning of Muḥammad (and the Hour) is of the higher luminous world. Hence, if prophecy is a function of the soul-related sphere, then the same is necessarily true of the Hour.

8. Retribution

The eighth theme is that of retribution. Sijistānī introduces this theme through the argument about the prophet who, being a soul of nobility, penetrates the form of the heavens completely; the same argument is presented in the *Kashf* (see Kamada, 1988, pp. 12-13). Hence during his physical time in the state of *izdiwāj* even those immersed in ingratitude and unbelief (*kuffār*) are secure. In support Sijistānī cites the Qurʾānic verse 8:33 which promises that, God will not punish the *kuffār*, since the prophet who is the forgiveness of God is present. The meanings and implications of what punishment truly is arise here. Punishment is not, in fact, accomplished by any act of God but by the state of the souls' own ignorance in rejecting God's messenger and his wisdom and knowledge (¶ 6).

Retribution is used both as a proof of resurrection and as its ethical elucidation. Individual souls who agreed with the Lord of the time preceding the *qā'im*, arrive at reward through intellectual emanations; this reward is in itself divine retribution. Those who disagreed with the Lord of the Time acquire ignorance by rejecting the truth and wilfully embracing ignorance. They wash away their own capacity to accept the light from the Lord of resurrection, the *qā'im*, and hence destroy their innate potential to acquire brilliance. Their portion, Sijistānī states, is the asylum of the fire. The argument against Sijistānī's view is obvious: if people are cut off either by space or by time from the Lord of the Time how is resurrection applicable?

Finally, Sijistānī parallels resurrection and initiation. Resurrection is for those who have already reached the extreme ranks of humanity. The *nafs al-zakīyah* is accompanied by other pure souls in spiritual discipleship so that they are all like one soul. From this fact Sijistānī concludes that those who enter paradise and the fire do so only through their acceptance of their leaders with whom they have become united by the sheer act of their acceptance. Hence those who follow true guidance have already entered the gates of paradise.

Fearing perhaps that he had been too explicit, Sijistānī stops abruptly here, adding that he has said enough for those with intelligence and for those for whom the goals are not obscure. This statement strongly implies that the treatise was written for someone who was well known and who already belonged to his circle. Ultimately Sijistānī returns to the familiar debate about the relationship of knowledge to reason and revelation which we find at the heart of his thought. It is this problem of knowledge that defies resolution. He concludes that the intellect and the soul of an individual cannot accept the idea of a resurrection in terms of physically related phenomena and that if they do, they have not comprehended its true modality.

Arguments Presented in *Iftikhār*

This chapter will present four sections: *al-risālah* (the messengership), *al-qiyāmah* (resurrection), *al-ba'ath* (spiritual rebirth) and *al-thawāb wa'l 'iqāb* (reward and punishment). These four sections are an almost exact translation of Sijistānī's arguments in the Arabic text of *Iftikhār*. The purpose of reproducing these arguments is to highlight the fact that both the *Iftikhār* and the *Bāhirah* share identical content on these themes. Through the systematic paraphrase of the themes presented below, the links between the four themes will become clear and thereby the entire fabric of Sijistānī's cosmological system can easily be visualised.

1. *Al-Risālah* (The Messengership)¹⁰⁸

The arguments presented in this chapter are among those which Sijistānī has mentioned and/or alluded to in the *Bāhirah*.

¹⁰⁸ Even though *al-risālah* has been translated as 'the messengership' referring to the messengership of Muḥammad, it must be noted that Sijistānī's use of the term encompasses a wider meaning than that commonly understood, namely, revelation from God to a prophet. Therefore, when the meaning of *al-risālah* in the text is other than the above specific meaning, it has been translated as 'message' or been left untranslated.

Sijistānī says that his opponents explain *risālah* and prophecy as being revealed through an angel in a way which is not associated with reason/intellect. They view the coming of the angel to the prophet like a bird which flies great distances to descend and which engages in discourse as is done in the human world. The speaking voice is the angel's and the listening ear is the prophet's. This implies that the angel of the world of spirit is able to make the message reach the prophet only through the physical properties of voice and ears, and that the prophet is capable of receiving this message only by listening with his ears. If indeed this were the case, then the entire community would be able to receive the message and there would be no necessity of a phenomenon such as prophecy. If the hearing of prophecy depended on hearing composed of sounds, the entire community would be able to hear what the angels have to say since the hearing organs of the people are like those of the prophet. Furthermore, it would be more beneficial and convenient if the entire community could hear the angel directly.

Since this does not occur, one can conclude that listening to discourses between spiritual beings through the physical organs of hearing possessed by the general community is not a possibility; neither is the premise that the discourse of the angels is expressed through the composition of sounds and letters. Since listening is not dependent on the physical organs of hearing and since the discourse of the angels is not composed of sounds and letters, God has singled out the discourse of the angel as a specific phenomenon by targeting the heart of the messenger chosen to be its recipient. Here Sijistānī expounds a point of doctrine: that messengership is an act of grace, one of the special favours of the mercy of God (p.57, ¶ 1).

Sijistānī goes on to say that messengership is connected to the universal soul, which is the totality of speech.¹⁰⁹ Individual souls who are ready to accept knowledge ascend to subtle

¹⁰⁹ The importance of 'speech' (*kalām*) in Islam can hardly be overemphasized. 1. The conception of 'Speech' as an attribute of God is related to the debate about the relationship between real, eternal things and attributes (*maʿānī and ṣifāt*) and the essence of God. 2. The disputation about the speech of God is related to the issue of the createdness/uncreatedness

and pure natures time after time, in order to reach the grace of God.¹¹⁰ It is difficult for these souls to follow the path.¹¹¹ unless they submit to it.¹¹² Here the concept of the universal soul is the 'logos' clothed in prophecy.¹¹³ The universal soul is the totality of speech, namely, the speech of God.¹¹⁴ Knowledge and messengership are the means of communication and communion between the universal soul and the individual souls.

Furthermore, writes Sijistānī, at the time when the divine command reached him it was easy for Muḥammad to accept the grace of God, because he had traveled the same path as those individual souls who had preceded him. Once the prophet's soul accepts the grace of God and is illumined by it, then the prophet's soul is accompanied by its *jadd*,¹¹⁵ without

of the Qurʾān. See H. A. Wolfson, 1976, pp. 235-244. God's will and His word are predicated by His speech. God's speech is viewed by Sijistānī as a manifestation of divine will and intent which is imprinted on the Universal Intellect and the Universal Soul, both of whom are vehicles of the messenger.

¹¹⁰ *Bāhirah*, ¶ 14 uses *waqt*, whereas in *Iftikhār zamān* is used for 'time'. Both passages imply cyclical time. In the *Bāhirah waqt* clearly points to time in a physical world.

¹¹¹ There seems to be a problem in the text, p. 58.2-3 concerning the reading of.. *fayataʿadharu ʿalayhā sulūkhā illā anhā qad (ta)dhallat baʿdu al-musāliki*. here it has been understood idiomatically as the phrase *salaka maslaka*. The TB ms. has the same text.

¹¹² *Bāhirah*, ¶ 12.10, ¶ 19.12-14.

¹¹³ The 'word' (*kalimah*) in the Qurʾān is associated with the figure of Jesus (4:169). The 'word' (*kalām*) refers to the preexistent Qurʾān (See Wolfson, 1976, pp. 236-241). The debate over the relationship between the created and the uncreated word of God resembles the Christian debate on the divinity and humanity of Jesus. The Muslim deliberations on the subject finally led to the issue of whether the word of God was a creator. In Sijistānī we find that the command and will of God are indeed related to His speech/word and play a significant role in creation as well as in resurrection.

¹¹⁴ See note # 109 above.

¹¹⁵ Sijistānī has a chapter in the *Iftikhār* on the three entities, the *jadd*, *fath* and *khayāl*. For Sijistānī the *jadd* (glory), *fath* (opening) and the *khayāl* (imagination) are three of the spiritual intermediaries in the *ḥudūd* hierarchy. As is evident in the passage in our text, Sijistānī maintains that the *jadd* has its physical counterpart, the *rasūl*, namely, the messenger who brings a law. F. M. Hunzai, 1986, discusses the issue of *ḥadd* in Ismāʿīlī

interruption or change, from one moment to the next, unceasingly.¹¹⁶ The *jadd* causes intellectual benefits to descend on the prophet's heart, in which (intellectual benefits) lie the welfare of his cycle (*dawr*) and the completion of his law (*sharī'ah*). Due to the *jadd*'s unceasing revelation to the heart of the prophet, he continues to speak words of such clarity and purity that his listeners are constantly amazed and surprised (p. 58.5-9).

Once Sijistānī has established that prophetic speech is different from ordinary speech, he further claims that the essence of prophetic revelatory speech confounds those who attempt to use human reason to understand theology. Therefore, according to Sijistānī, the *ahl al-zāhir* are not able to distinguish between the preferred individual and the one over whom another is preferred (*al-fāḍil and al-mafḍūl*).¹¹⁷ Establishing the prophet as the preferred one, by implication Sijistānī extends the category of 'the preferred one' to include those who repeat the prophetic pronouncement in the same measure of clarity and purity as the prophet himself, by saying that the repetition is just as efficacious as it was in the first instance (p. 58. 6ff). The evidence that the purity of the words spoken is in the same measure as the purity of the pronouncer amazes and confounds the *ahl al-zāhir*.¹¹⁸ Sijistānī uses the

thought around the time of Sijistānī. The relationship between creation and creator is not a direct one. It occurs through intermediaries. These intermediaries constitute the *ḥudūd*. They are an hierarchy of epiphanies which allow a personal link between creature and creator (see discussion on pp. 72-76). For a wider discussion see, Halm, 1978, pp. 67-74.

¹¹⁶ Here the term *waqt* not *zamān* is used

¹¹⁷ The Imāmis and the Sunnī debated over the criterion of preference (*afḍal*) in the choosing of a leader; for the Sunnī preference was defined in terms of which leader was more practicable; in the *Iftikhār* the discussion on 'preference' is about the criterion for prophets and the Imāms. Sijistānī's criterion of the *afḍal* in this passage is based on the degree of purity of knowledge. See A. A. Sachedina, *Islamic Messianism*, 1981, State University of New York Press, Albany, 1981, pp. 19-23; M. Momen, 1985, *Shi'ī Islam*, Yale University Press, New Haven, London p. 49--51, 149-150, 156-157.

¹¹⁸ *Iftikhār*, p. 58-59: Sijistānī maintains that the belief of the *ahl al-zāhir* in a literal understanding of prophecy and messengership is untenable according to the dictates of both reason and the traditional point of view (*‘aql and naql*). Sijistānī has already demonstrated that from the perspective of reason. Prophetic and revelatory activity cannot be equated with

'preferred-preferred over' formulation to establish the differences between the types of prophets and messengers and consequently the types of their messages.

Sijistānī introduces the concept of the differing degrees and stations of excellence among messengers (*rasūl*) with the Qur'ānic verses 2:253, "We have made more excellent these prophets, some of them over others", and 46:35, "Continue with patience then (O, Muḥammad), as the *ūlu'l-ʿazm* among the messengers had patience" (p. 58-59). The *ūlu'l-ʿazm* have been singled out by God as being the most preferred among the messengers. They are the exemplars of patience for Muḥammad, who is equated with them by Sijistānī, since the verse 46:35 was addressed to him. In order to explain how the verses designate the *ūlu'l-ʿazm* as being more excellent and higher in station and degree, Sijistānī states that the term 'ʿazm' must be reflected upon (p. 59.5). According to Sijistānī's definition ʿazm constitutes rank and authority and thus, the power to make decisions to set up boundaries (*ḥudūd*) concerning what is permissible and prohibited. In other words ʿazm refers to the authority to establish the law (*sharīʿah*) for the administration of the community. Therefore, according to Sijistānī, it is the messenger in the category of the *ūlu'l-ʿazm* who legislates the law on behalf of God.

Five messengers are designated as *ūlu'l-ʿazm* by Sijistānī: Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Muḥammad.¹¹⁹ Each of these is distinct from the other messengers and from each other

the ordinary. He examines the traditional enumeration of the prophets in order to prove that it is also illogical. He states that the *ahl al- zāhir* simultaneously claim that God sent 100, 000 and 100 plus 24, 000 prophets. Furthermore, Sijistānī states that there were 313 among them who had the trait of being sent (*mursal*), i.e., of messengership. However the *ahl al- zāhir* are unable to name or account for even 20 of them. Therefore, not only have the *ahl al- zāhir* mistakenly chosen the *mafḍūl* over the *afḍal*, they have also increased the number of divinely appointed prophets. This, to Sijistānī, is ample proof of their ignorance. In contrast, the *ahl al-ḥaqāʾiq*, follow the commands of their religion and the family of the prophet and the delegated ones (*waṣī*).

¹¹⁹ Supported by the Qur'ānic verses "What was commanded unto Noah and what was commanded unto Muḥammad, we have commanded unto Abraham, Moses and Jesus",

by being specified by name and their role as a law-giver. Muḥammad, the fifth, is "the best messenger and the best of the lords of the *sharī'ah* and he is their seal and is at the greatest level and the highest station". The excellence of each other messenger depends on his position in relation to his nearness or farness from Muḥammad (p. 60.1-2).¹²⁰ So the messengers, excepting the *ūlu'l-'azm*, in the cycle of Jesus were the most excellent messengers, since they were closest to the time of Muḥammad.¹²¹ After establishing the gradation of the messengers in relation to their excellence, Sijistānī goes on to establish a

42:13 and "We exacted a covenant from the prophets and from you Muhammad and from Noah, Abraham, Moses and Jesus", 33:7.

¹²⁰ The figure of Adam here presents a problem. Sijistānī continues that the messengers in the cycles of Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses and Jesus are different from each other. We know from the debates of the Nuṣrah that Sijistānī held the view that Adam was one of the prophets who did not bring a law. But here it appears that Adam is included among the messengers who each brought a law. Perhaps the difficulty can be resolved if the mention of Adam is attributed to Sijistānī's attempt to establish the differing grades of messengers-prophets. In this capacity he has included Adam in the list as the prophet without a law who was the farthest away from Muḥammad. Also, in these passages Sijistānī uses the term messenger (*rasūl*) to designate a person who brings a message, but not necessarily a law. The law is brought by the *ūlu'l-'azm*. Therefore Adam can technically speaking be a messenger and yet not be one of the *ūlu'l-'azm*.

¹²¹ It is difficult to reconstruct what Sijistānī really means by this passage. There are several possibilities: on p. 60.7-8, he links each messenger in a kind of chain by the creative command (*amr*), which finally reaches Muḥammad; so he might be saying that the *ūlu'l-'azm* are excluded from this particular chain of messengers. As we know there is some ambiguity concerning who he considered the *ūlu'l-'azm*. The other possibility is to read this passage in conjunction with a passage in the same work in the section on *ba'ith*, p. 88, ¶ 4: here the creative command of God is responsible for the manifesting of all creation in a certain order of time. Therefore, Sijistānī might simply be stating that the cycles of messengers, both *rasūl* and *ūlu'l-'azm* occur because the command manifests them and their excellence is determined by the command, which has deemed Muḥammad the most excellent of all of them. The third possibility is that he is making the point that the *ūlu'l-'azm* who bring the law are not as excellent as some of the *rasūl*, i.e., messengers from God who are not prophets, who were closest to the time of Muḥammad. If this is what he meant, then, Sijistānī is suggesting that the pure souls of the cycle of Muḥammad are more excellent than those who have brought a law in previous cycles.

fixed number of messengers. This is the second point on which he attacks the *ahl al-ḡāhir*. He insists on a numerical correspondence between the spiritual and physical hierarchies only to introduce the idea that messengership is a soul-related process whose aim is to lead the soul in its journey to completion.¹²² The leader rises in one cycle to allow the subtle temperaments to descend from the influences of the celestial bodies and to be actualised in individual souls, through the passage of the cycles of time. When these subtleties are actualised in the souls, then a soul's journey is complete, and its destiny designated by the Word of its Originator (*min kalimati mubdi'iha*) is unveiled (p. 60. ¶ 2).¹²³ If there were only six leaders then each soul's destiny would remain unveiled. As a result, the soul would not reach its completion. So the numerical correspondence between spiritual and natural hierarchies is necessary in order that creation be not lost in its journey and the wisdom of God be not nullified. Thus, there must be seven leaders of religion as there are seven planets. This correspondence shows that via the soul the stars influence both the physical world and the process of the spiritual completion of the soul (p. 60, ¶ 2).¹²⁴

The other justification Sijistānī presents for having a limited number of messengers is as follows: if the number of messengers were infinite, as the common Sunnī believes, then there would be no discontinuation of the message, which implies that it would never reach completion. Yet, Allah has declared that the message and prophecy were sealed by

¹²² The point of his insistence that there are seven leaders and seven cycles seems to establish a correspondence between prophecy and the soul-related world. Thus, the hierarchy in the spiritual world has some sort of hierarchial bearing on the physical world. Since the guides (i.e., planets) in the skies are seven, it follows that the guides of religion should also be seven. There is no point in the soul searching for an eighth leader because he has not been pre-ordained by the wisdom of God.

¹²³ The term *al-mizājāt*, translated here as 'temperaments', designates mixtures of subtle and physical elements which are the make-up of human beings in the natural world. Just as the planets influence nature, so the leaders of religion influence the individual souls which are actualised in the mixture/temperament of subtle and physical.

¹²⁴ In this passage Sijistānī appears to be referring to the world/universal soul when he speaks of influence in the physical world.

Muḥammad because he represented the fulfillment and completion of both prophecy and the message.

Sijistānī holds a cyclical view of time through which the souls are guided by the messengers in order to complete their journey and reach the grace of God. He expresses his views by asking his opponent the question, if we accept the correspondence of the seven leaders to the seven planets, then why does prophecy cease while the planets continue moving? (p. 61, ¶ 1). Having established that there are seven leaders in the sphere of religion, Sijistānī proceeds to argue in favour of a cycle of heptades of leaders: each heptade beginning with a prophet and the seventh messenger in the heptade completing the cycle by initiating the next cyclical heptade.

Sijistānī solves the apparent contradiction by stating that the *ahl al-ḥaqāʾiq* deny neither the continuity of movement of the planets nor the flowing of the heptades within the soul. But when the flowing into a certain number of souls has been completed, then the flowing begins again in another way.

He illustrates the point by using the example of a man who cultivates his land and then reaps its harvest. When he reaps the harvest, he eats what he has reaped and benefits from it. The body which cultivated the land and the body which eats is the same. Likewise, the leaders who rise in the heptades after the completion of the cycle i.e., the seventh *nāṭiq*, are part of another tradition. Each leader is different just as the act of cultivation/reaping is different from the act of eating. The benefit of the tradition following the seventh *nāṭiq* is intellectual. The benefits reaped in the second cycle are sowed in the previous one, i.e., “the day”, which is an image for the cycle of concealment. The “night”, the second cycle, is the time when the body eats, i.e., when the intellectual benefits are reaped. These benefits are matchless in their nobility and excellence.

Sijistānī next discusses the message itself. He addresses the issue of designating the messenger with the title *nāṭiq* (pp. 61-62). Quoting Qurʾānic verses 53:3 and 45:28, he

establishes that the name 'speaker' is a noble and praiseworthy name because the two verses show that the messenger does not speak out of mere passion and that the book speaks with truth.¹²⁵ Hence, to designate the messenger with the title of *nāṭiq*, "speaker", accords with Qurʾānic truth. Alluding to another Qurʾānic verse, Sijistānī implies that the fact that the unbelievers' 'speech' witnesses against them on the day of judgment justifies the designation of the messengers as "speakers". The unbelievers have no access to 'speech' since they have not heeded it, i.e., the Qurʾān (77:35),¹²⁶ yet they also speak. In other words, Sijistānī establishes that the term "speech" is of various kinds. The speech of prophecy is different from 'general' speech.¹²⁷

Next he addresses two questions: (1) why do the *ahl al-ḥaqāʾiq* link the concept of sending (*arsala*) with the *ūluʾl-ʿazm*? (2) if the term 'sending of a message' is linked with other than the *ūluʾl-ʿazm*, what is the distinction between the types of messages corresponding to the types of messengers? (p. 62. 6-12). In answer to the first question, Sijistānī quotes a number of Qurʾānic verses in which the term 'arsala' and/or its derivatives are used in connection with other than the *ūluʾl-ʿazm*.¹²⁸ Sijistānī answers the second question by the following argument: if one does not accept the distinction between the types of messages, then by accepting all the messages to be of equal excellence one is inadvertently increasing the number of messengers beyond the divinely ordained number. Therefore, if one accepts

¹²⁵ 53:3: "He (Muḥammad) does not speak out of his own desire", 45:28: "It (revelation) speaks out against you with truth".

¹²⁶ "That is a day on which they will not be able to speak...Woe on that day unto those who reject the truth".

¹²⁷ According to Halm, 1978, ch. 'Cycle of the Seven Prophets', the terms *nāṭiq/sāmit* are a characteristic of the *bāṭinī* sects. The Sunnī and Ithnā ʿAshariyah do not use the term *nāṭiq* for the prophet.

¹²⁸ 27:45: "We (Allah) sent to Thamūd their brother Sāleh", 7:66 (the editor cites 7:64): "To ʿĀd We (Allah) sent their brother Hūd", 44:18: "I am a trustworthy messenger sent to you by God", 37:139/40: "Jonah was also one of the messengers". None of these messengers brought a law.

a fixed number of messengers and the distinctions among them, logically one must also accept the distinctions among the messages.

Now that the distinctions between the messengers and their messages are set up as categories, the different types of messengers and messages must be linked in some way to ensure continuity and inviolability. Sijistānī links them by using a whole-part distinction. He writes that the *imāms* and the *awṣiyāʿ* are the limbs of the *nuṭaqāʿ*, i.e., their parts through which the condition of continuity is completed (p. 62. 13). His use of the whole-part distinction has two possible ramifications: (1) since the whole is real and has true being, therefore a part of the whole possesses a part of this truth; (2) the individual part is real, therefore the whole is real because it is a combination of the parts.¹²⁹ He deduces from his examples that we cannot deny naming the part by the name of the whole, even though the true name refers to the whole and the name of the part is metaphorical.

Sijistānī claims that the message can be sent to a general populace or, it can be specific to a messenger. The name of the true message is what the lord of the *sharīʿah* has revealed while its metaphorical name is what refers to the *imāms* and the *awṣiyāʿ*. Sijistānī justifies the use of the metaphorical name as the *imāms* and the *khulafāʿ* by quoting Qurʾānic verse 44:18. This verse is interpreted as referring to Aaron but not to Moses.¹³⁰ Sijistānī uses the verse to support his idea that the *imāms* and the *khulafāʿ* are representative of the *nuṭaqāʿ* just as Aaron was of Moses. He states that messengership belongs to the true messenger in the absolute sense and is not related to him through any particular part (p. 63. 12-13). In the

¹²⁹ He uses the examples of the earth, fire and living beings to establish his point, using an inductive argument, going from the general to the particular. Sijistānī here takes for granted the following philosophical position: the real significance of the general/abstract and the metaphorical/part is their applicability to concrete individualities. He does not consider the philosophical problem of how the universals translate into the individual in a concrete sense.

¹³⁰ See footnote 120. Sijistānī uses the same verse as evidence that messengers other than prophets, namely, Aaron rather than Moses, is signified. The Qurʾān does not name the messenger. Aaron is mentioned in 4:164 as receiving revelation.

cycle of Jesus he presents the example of Yūnus, who received a message, as did everyone in Yūnus' community. So although Yūnus had leadership and *imāmah*, the Qur'ān speaks of the message in connection with the common people who were lower than an *imām*. From this example Sijistānī concludes that the message is applicable to the lower ranks as well as the higher.

To support this view he alludes to the Qur'ānic verses dealing with Yūsuf in the court of Potiphar. In this passage the brothers of Yūsuf asked their father to send (*arsala*) Yūsuf with them (12:63). Here none of the characters are prophets, *imāms* or *khulafā'* (pp. 63. ¶ 3. 3ff-p. 64. 1-3). So the verb *arsala*, sent, has various meanings and is applicable to different categories of people specified in the Qur'ān. If the term *arsala* applies to even the lowest category of people, then surely it cannot be reprehensible to apply the term to the protectors of religion who administer the community and are the inheritors of the truths of the message, such as the *imāms* and the *awṣiyā'*.

The last point that Sijistānī discusses in this section is the fact that the message is extended to a period longer than is commonly held and the reasons why and how the message should be allowed to prove itself, the description of its end and the figures who will be associated with it. Sijistānī gives two reasons for why the message is extended: (1) when the lord of the *sharī'ah* (law) composes his *sharī'ah* and recites his book which was revealed to him, that law influences (targets) the hearts of his community. The community must be left with this law for a long period to test if any signs appear that the law is not taken seriously (p. 64, ¶ 2. 1-5). (2) the message must prevail over an extended period of time in order that individual souls which lie close to¹³¹ individual bodies mature over the passage of time and develop their capacity to become mounts of the *pure soul*.

Regarding the first reason Sijistānī makes a distinction between the 'book', which was revealed and the 'law', which was composed by the lord of the law. It is not the book which

¹³¹ In ¶ 2, p. 64, line 11, the text has '*tujāwiz'*'; but here I read it as '*tujāwir'*' meaning to 'neighbour', as it is in the TB ms. p. 106.

might manifest any weakness but the law. He states that if weaknesses are manifest in a short period of time, then, the visibility of the weakness demonstrates the weakness of the builder who constructed the law.¹³² Weakness cannot be reconciled with a messenger who is representing the creator to creation. Rather, the messenger must be strong, one who is *al-muṣṭafā*, and wise, one who is *al-mujtabā* (p. 64, ¶ 2. 6-7).¹³³ The law would remain stable for a long period of time if the strong and the wise were the builders of the law; and even though no new messenger were sent to renew it, there would be no corruption or weakness in its observance.

Sijistānī elaborates on the second reason by specifying that the individual souls are repeatedly joined to individual bodies and are the vehicles for the *pure soul*. This process can occur only over many centuries. The *pure soul* appears in a harmonious body in order to take up the message.¹³⁴ The individual souls joined to the bodies, being the mounts of the *pure soul*, are actually the cause of the appearance of the *pure soul*. The *pure soul* appears in the extreme of its power and subtlety with these other souls, devised to bring a renewed law, by the order of God (p. 64, ¶ 2., 11-15). If the pure soul is not preceded by the other souls, he is weak and cannot be the target of the celestial lights.¹³⁵

Thus, Sijistānī concludes this section. He has proven to his satisfaction, that there must be a fixed number of seven messengers, corresponding to the seven celestial guides, who are not all equal; that there exists a distinction in the messages according to the different grades

¹³² On line 6, ¶ 2, p. 64, *yaʿnī* is read as *yabnī*

¹³³ It is curious that Sijistānī does not stop with the phrase... 'the strong one who is *al-muṣṭafā*', since his arguments have to do with the messenger who creates a strong law rather than a weak one. His extension including... 'and the wise one who is *al-mujtabā*' can be construed to signify 'Alī, who is often referred to as *al-mujtabā*. *Al-muṣṭafā*, of course, signifies Muḥammad. This could mean that Sijistānī was not only making an argument for the strength or weakness of the law, but was also extending the law-makers beyond Muḥammad.

¹³⁴ *Bāhirah*, ¶ 8.7-10, ¶ 18.15-2.

¹³⁵ See ¶ 8 footnote 53 of the translation of the *Bāhirah*.

of messengers; that there is an acceptable explanation as to why a post-Muhammad 'message' has been so long in coming, that is: the problem of the expected *mahdī*. By necessitating the extension of the message, which might be of a different nature from the law of Muhammad, he introduces his next section, *qiyāmah*, in which he will expound his views on the nature of resurrection and the person of the resurrector and how they are related to the figure of the pure soul.

2. *Qiyāmah* (Resurrection)

In this section Sijistānī names his opponents specifically. His arguments on the subject of resurrection are addressed to two groups, the Literalists and the Philosophers.¹³⁶ Sijistānī claims that the *ahl al-ḥaqāʾiq* are proudest of their knowledge about resurrection, its nature and its causes. According to him, the Literalists (*ahl al-zāhir*) are the disavowers of the truth and heedless to true knowledge and are opposed to the *ahl al-ḥaqāʾiq*, especially on the issue of resurrection, while the Philosophers (*aṣḥāb al-falāsifah*) make light of the subject (p. 74, ¶ 1). Before engaging in detailed refutations of his opponents, Sijistānī states the doctrine of the *ahl al-ḥaqāʾiq* in the beginning of the section.

He begins with the statement of the doctrine that God, the one who originated (*abdaʿa*) all things, created (*khalāqa*) them, formed (*baraʿa*) them and nurtured (*nashaʿa*) them, and did so in one instant with his perfect creative command (*ʿamr*). If there was any suspicion of deficiency in the command, this four fold act of creation could not have occurred. He states that one of the factors which introduces a concept of deficiency in the command is a

¹³⁶ In the *Bāhirah*, Sijistānī names his opponents as the Atheists, the Materialists, the Dualists, the Magians, the Jews. He also uses other terms such as, the 'people of falsehood' (¶ 2). The term 'Muslims' occurs in ¶ 16. In this passage it is clear that he believes that all Muslims do not have the correct understanding of resurrection. One infers, since he is refuting a physical understanding of resurrection, that he considered these Muslims to be the *ahl al-zāhir*.

cessation of those created things, such as nature, which the command has brought into being. The concept of deficiency which is attributed to the command in this regard is due to the incapacity of our faculty of conception to conceive of being and not-being at the same time (pp. 74, ¶ 2; 75, ¶ 1).¹³⁷ Therefore, the *ahl al-zāhir* are either unable to conceive of the latter or, they attribute deficiency to God's command by holding that nature will be annihilated at the time of resurrection. Sijistānī justifies his argument by stipulating that the weakness of the structure of originated things is connected to the cause. If there is such a connection, then the cause is deficient. To conceive of being and not-being together is seen as low and contemptible, because this type of conception attributes deficiency to the cause. The reason for viewing the simultaneity of being and not-being as despicable is that the being (existence) of originated things is due to generosity and abundance and not-being is due to miserliness and vice. The latter constitute the path of weakness and manifest deficiency. If being is conceived to possess weakness in any manner, then the cause of being, the divine command, would also have to possess weakness. But the command cannot possess weakness or be deficient because the command of the originator is perfect. Thus, originated things must be permanent (seen as having being) and cannot be

¹³⁷ In the *Yanābīʿ*, *Yanbuʿ* 13: "Concerning that Being (*ʿays*) does not Become Not-Being (*lays*)", ¶ 66.3-7: Sijistānī states: "the Originator originated being out of not-being, and therefore, to conceive of being becoming not-being is impossible, since conceiving that would introduce a concept of defect in God. ¶ 67.8-11: "Further, if being becomes not-being and not-being is the cause of the appearance of being, then the cause of being in the second instance, which is the effect, is being annihilating itself. And this is absurd". ¶ 69.7-10: "not-being does not have a limit before the manifestation of being. If we were to say that being becomes not-being, beingness (*ʿaysīya*) would be finite from the (time of its) manifestation till the moment of its not-being. Therefore, a finite thing (being) is a cause of an infinite thing (not-being); and an infinite thing (not-being) is the cause for the manifestation of a finite thing (being). Therefore, being does not become not-being in the same way as not-being became being". From the above we can conclude that Sijistānī maintains that neither can being in a manifest form of being become not-being, nor can being itself be annihilated. However, in the *Ifikhār*, he simply states that either the *ahl al-zāhir* cannot conceive of the states of being and not-being as occurring simultaneously, or, that they attribute deficiency to God's command, since it is absurd to hold that finiteness can cause infinity. Therefore, the concept of annihilation held by the *ahl al-zāhir* is against God's command and is a total misconception as well.

annihilated. Therefore, according to Sijistānī, the perception of resurrection as being connected to change in creation and its annihilation, as held by the *ahl al-zāhir*, is ignorant and nonsensical. Since this is so, the contrary view of resurrection must be true.

The contrary view holds that man must be considered something noble in the essence of creation (*ḥāṣil al-khalq*) and the kernel of nature (*labb al-fīṭrah*). The advent of nobility in this kernel can occur only by the rising of the most excellent, the noblest and the most steadfast among them, who arises in a fortunate time. The radiance of soul-related traces (influences: *āthār*) which will connect those who believed in him and waited for him occurs through the rising of this person. And those who rejected him and did not wait for him will be deprived of this soul-related radiance (p. 75, ¶ 1. 8-11).

Sijistānī asserts that the *ahl al-zāhir* believe that resurrection is embodied in violent natural acts: the splitting of the starry sky, the spreading of the stars, the movement of the mountains, the disappearance of water, the quaking of the earth, the eclipse of the moon and the arrival of the creator (*al-bārī*) to stand in reckoning (p. 75, ¶ 2). He says that if a person is fair to his soul, by using his intellect correctly, then no soul would trust such a belief. In fact, he says, that in both cases, namely, the appearance of these horrendous events and, the appearance of the creator, the contrary of the above is true.

He reasons by presenting a parable: if a king wanted to gather his subjects for an occasion which administration (*siyāsah*) necessitates, he would choose a fortunate day for it. If there was heavy rain or a blowing wind then these would prevent the people from gathering, because each of them would be busy protecting himself against what would harm him (pp. 75-76). Similarly, why would God choose terrifying events causing the annihilation of the structures of creation, to accompany the day of reckoning and retribution for his creatures? If so, he would create circumstances that would prevent His creations from identifying themselves (p. 76. 4).¹³⁸ Preventing each person from identifying itself, Sijistānī believed,

¹³⁸ *Huwīyah* has been translated as self. The term *huwīyah* is not used in the *Bāhirah*. The point about the recognition of a personal identity raised here by Sijistānī has important

was against the power of the true originator. Therefore, by implication it appears that one of the things which is rightly to happen at resurrection is that creation will "identify" itself. Whether the identification is retribution or these are two separate actions has yet to be discussed.

He continues the argument through Qur'ānic exegesis. He quotes the Qur'ānic verse 43:67..."But they wait for the Hour to come suddenly upon them, while they perceive it not" According to Sijistānī, the 'hour' spoken of in the Qur'ān cannot be a temporal hour, because all temporal hours come 'suddenly'. Thus the fact that this specific hour came suddenly would make it indistinguishable from all other hours. Secondly, if this hour is to be accompanied by horrible catastrophes, then how would a person not be able to sense that the hour was coming? Yet, here the Qur'ān speaks of people being unaware that the hour was upon them. The only explanation according to Sijistānī is that the hour mentioned in 43:66 signifies a soul-related spiritual state, one hidden in such a way that creation will not sense it because it is hidden and stored away for a *pure soul*, who is made specifically for it (p. 76, ¶ 1. 7-11).¹³⁹

Continuing in the exegetical mode, Sijistānī uses a series of Qur'ānic verses to argue that the literal, physical understanding of the descriptions of the conditions accompanying the hour are not tenable.¹⁴⁰ He explains that if these adverse conditions did occur then what

implications for the understanding of the relationship between the universal and the individual soul at resurrection. This issue will be discussed in the next chapter.

¹³⁹ Sijistānī's point relative to concealing the soul-related event of resurrection and knowledge of it is compared to his concept of the law as concealing knowledge and being a *barzakh* in the next chapter.

¹⁴⁰ 43:66-74:..."But the parties differed among themselves. So woe to the wrongdoers because of the chastisement of a painful day! They but wait for the hour to come suddenly upon them, while they perceive it not. Friends on that day will be enemies of each other, except the righteous, who believed in Our Signs and submitted. O My servants, there is no fear for you this day, nor shall you grieve. Enter the Garden, you and your companions, delighted and joyful. Dishes and cups of gold will be passed round to them, and in them

would result would be contrary to what the *Qurʾān* describes. In other words, at times of natural disasters friends help one another; yet the verse describes how humans will fail to come to each other's aid. Therefore, he concludes that, the matter of resurrection is more concerned with the soul and its traces, which radiate only in one soul and not in another soul. This hierarchy (in knowledge due to the radiance) raises an enmity between the different sects and schools between which there existed a superficial friendship. But the ones who shield themselves (presumably against falsehood) and the *ahl al-ḥaqāʾiq* are certain about the knowledge and truths they have stored away for themselves. He continues giving other examples of the fallacy of the concept of physical resurrection, such as, that on a day when the appearance of paradise will be widened for the righteous, how could there be such horrible conditions.

Another of Sijistānī's points of contention with his opponents is the identity of the judge who metes out retribution. Sijistānī examines his opponents statement that the creator himself will sit on a chair and call his creation into account. He maintains that they are saying either one of two things: either, (1) that God has personality,¹⁴¹ form and limbs, or that he is beyond all that. If you put the originator above personality, form and limbs, then how would he carry through the function of the reckoner? His opponents cannot answer this. Or, (2) if they maintain that the reckoner has personality, form and limbs, then the figure must be a man, since God cannot have these attributes. So they must agree with Sijistānī's conclusions, except that they persist in attributing divinity to the human form of

will be all that the hearts desire and in which the eyes delight. Therein you will abide. This is the Garden to which you have been made the heirs, because of what you have practised. Therein for you is fruit in abundance, of which you will eat. The guilty will abide in the torment of hell; it will not be reduced, and they will be a prey to despair. We wronged them not; they themselves were the wrongdoers. They will cry: O master, Let thy Lord make an end of us. He will answer: You will tarry therein. We brought you the truth; but most of you were averse to the truth."

¹⁴¹ *Shakhs* is translated in this passage as 'personality' which conveys the idea of an human persona in a body.

the judge by calling him God.¹⁴² Sijistānī concludes that the command of God through the spiritual hierarchy, is connected to a *pure soul*, which is united to an individual human body (p.77, ¶ 3). Sijistānī's meaning could not be clearer: the figure of the reckoner who will mete out retribution to all creation is the *pure soul* who abides in an individual human body and is connected to the command of God. Furthermore, the hour of reckoning is not a temporal hour, but a spiritual state. He has not yet however, explained the nature of the process of reckoning and retribution, nor has he clarified whether reckoning/retribution and resurrection constitute the same event.

Up to this point Sijistānī has dealt with one of his opponents, the *ahl al-zāhir*. Now, he will address the other, the philosophers. According to Sijistānī, even though the philosophers ridicule the *ahl al-zāhir* more than the *ahl al-ḥaqāʾiq*, they are the ones who should be ridiculed because they deny the concept of resurrection altogether. He questions whether or not the study of philosophy benefits the soul. For Sijistānī the philosophers' views that resurrection is only a spiritual phenomenon excluding the body, makes as little sense as the *ahl al-zāhir* belief that it is exclusively a physical affair. If, he says, the philosophers maintain that resurrection is only spiritual, then what proof do they have that a soul returns to a world in which its substance is stable, but its parts are stripped off its human form? He is certain that they have no evidence for this (p. 78, ¶ 1). Here he appears to be challenging the philosophers' position that only souls without their human bodies, will be present at resurrection.

According to Sijistānī, if the existence in the world of parts of the soul stripped of the human form is confusing to the philosophers, then they must admit his opinion, namely, that in order for the reward acquired by the soul from the study of philosophy to reach it, it must accept the appearance of a *pure soul* in which is manifest the traces of the luminous world, which enables the pure soul to recompense for the souls (p. 78, ¶ 1. 4-8). So,

¹⁴² See *Bāhirah*, ¶ 10.

according to Sijistānī the soul should study philosophy because philosophy prepares it to return to its own place in the luminous world and recognise itself in front of its lord.

Sijistānī is willing to grant the usefulness of philosophy to the human soul if retribution is seen as coming through the *pure soul*. However, he will not concede to the philosophical position of retribution taking place to disembodied souls in their substance (*jawhar*). According to Sijistānī, the substance is actually in the form of the *pure soul*, which cannot exist in a disembodied form (p. 77, ¶ 3.3-4). In an argument presented in his section on "*baʿth*", Sijistānī states that the part of man which deserves and receives retribution is the essence (p. 87, ¶ 1: *huwīyah*). In this passage, which is also directed against the philosophers, he makes a distinction between the soul and the essence of the soul (*huwīyah*). But in our present passage he makes no mention of the essence of the soul, only of its substance (*jawhar*).¹⁴³

Sijistānī states that he wants to prove that God made guardianship/authority (*wilāyah*) a noble station, reserving it for some among his creation (p. 78, ¶ 2). In the following argument he outlines the logic of God establishing *wilāyah* and the figure of the *pure soul*.¹⁴⁴ He specifies two hierarchially related categories of people created by God. The proof he puts forward is as follows: God established interconnected relationships among created things. He made some of them dominant and some subordinate; some who exercise an influence and some who receive it; some who are leaders and others who are led; some who are messengers and others who receive the message. These hierarchial relationships among created beings are related to the command of God and to his power. The group of created beings closest to the glory and majesty of the originator is his angels, who are put in charge of governing creation and ordaining its essential natures. In this capacity, some of his angels are in charge of capturing souls, as it is said in 32:11, "Say to them: the angel of

¹⁴³ As will be discussed in the next chapter, the distinctions between the substance and the essence have a bearing on the differences between *qiyāmah* and *baʿth*.

¹⁴⁴ This argument is useful because in the *Bāhirah* Sijistānī assumes the position of the *pure soul* as retributor to be a given, without providing the argument to support it.

death that has been appointed over you will cause you to die". Here God says that since the act of the angel of death is by his command, it is as if God commits the act. Furthermore, it is said in verse 39:42..."Allah takes charge of souls at the time of death". Thus, it is not possible that God commits the act of making a person die and then makes the angel perform the same function, for then the angel's act would be redundant. But since it is the angel who actually commits the act of making the person die, and the act is connected to God through the fact that the angel is connected to God's command and God appointed the angel to commit the act, there is no superfluity of action.

Similarly, God made some angels in charge of conveying the message to the messengers (p. 78, ¶ 3.1-2; p.79, ¶ 1-3).¹⁴⁵ Concerning the act of teaching the messenger, it is agreed upon, says Sijistānī, that God himself did not teach the messenger, but did this through an angel via his command.¹⁴⁶ Therefore, God connected the commanding of his angel to himself and to his essence. After being taught by the angels, the messengers obligated people to follow many laws in which they established the permitted and the prohibited. The messengers then connected these laws to God.¹⁴⁷ These are the soul-related spiritual causes which point to God delegating acts to others who are directly and indirectly connected to him.

Sijistānī points to the physical causes of the act of creation as an example of God delegating acts. He states that all Muslims agree that it is God who brings forth the natural realm

¹⁴⁵ 35:1..."All praise is due to Allah...who will make the angels His messengers ", 4:113..."and has taught thee".

¹⁴⁶ Therefore, God is connected to the angel who teaches, but He is not directly connected to the process of the teaching of the messenger.

¹⁴⁷ 4:79: ..."Whosoever obeys the messenger has indeed obeyed Allah"; 48:10: ..."Those who swear allegiance to you (Muḥammad) swear allegiance to Allah". Sijistānī is ambiguous in his interpretation of this verse whether it is God or the messengers who do the permitting and the prohibiting. But, he is clear that revelation is connected to God while the law (*sharī'ah*) is not directly connected to God. The latter is the direct function of the messenger, who links it to God.

(*mukhrij mawālīd*) and governs it; he is the one who gives the natural realm life and death. However, if one examines the causes of the world, one finds that the natural realm is engendered by the elements and both the elements and the engendered realm are tied to the influences of the celestial bodies. The effects of the celestial bodies are clearly seen as the cause of the night and the day. Yet, God asserts that this phenomenon is connected to him in 25:62: "He (Allah) it is who made the night and the day to follow each other for him who would take heed and would be grateful".¹⁴⁸ The examples of the various other functions which God has delegated to others cause Sijistānī to ask why then would God not delegate the function of retribution to someone else by appointing someone suitable? (p. 80. 13-14) And if God appointed one amongst his creation whom he thought deserving, why should this be thought of as strange? On the contrary, the delegation of the function of retribution by God to the resurrector makes the relationship of the *qā'im* (resurrector) to the originator (God) even more necessary, because retribution constitutes spreading justice among the souls. Thus here, Sijistānī attributes the appointment of the resurrector and his function of retribution to God.¹⁴⁹ Just as the rule of Islām is the rule of God, and just as God appointed Muḥammad a messenger rather than assume rule himself, so also he appointed a resurrector for retribution. If the acceptance of Muḥammad is not denied or thought of as reprehensible, why should the acceptance of someone who will discharge the

¹⁴⁸ Sijistānī states that there is no dispute about the definition of what constitutes day and night (p. 79, ¶ 3.7-10). But since God embedded the sun in the heavens (16:12..."He (Allah) has constrained to your service the night and the day, the sun and the moon...by His command") for the welfare of man, whatever might appear as a result of the sun's actions is attributed to God. Therefore, all the actions of the sun, namely, heating the earth to generate vegetation and nurturing animals are all attributed to God, since he was the sun's primary cause (p. 80. 1ff). Sijistānī also quotes in this connection. "He (Allah) it is who sends breezes as heralds of His mercy", 25:48 and..."Of His (Allah's) signs it is that He sends the breezes as heralds of good fortune, that He may grant you of His mercy", 30:46.

¹⁴⁹ In response to the imaginary opponent's request for evidence from the Qurʾān, Sijistānī quotes:..."You will judge between your slaves concerning that in which they differ", 39:46, and..."Do they seek judgment in accordance with the standards of the Jāhiliyah? Who is better than Allah as a judge for a people who have firm faith?", 5:50.

rule of *al-ākhirah* be denied? ¹⁵⁰ Therefore, everything which the appointee rules in his time and in his cycle is really the rule of God, identical with the rule of Muḥammad.

All along Sijistānī maintains that only he truly accepts the Hour, who understands it as it should be understood, and neither the *ahl al-zāhir*, nor the philosophers understand it. After having dealt with the benefits of studying philosophy the correct way, i. e., the way Sijistānī understands it, he considers the first group among his opponents, specifically, the *ahl al-zāhir* and their acceptance of the physical annihilation of the natural realm at the time of resurrection.¹⁵¹ He presents his own interpretation of some of the physical conditions listed in the Qurʾān which accompany the hour of reckoning, ridiculing the beliefs of his opponents. The first of these conditions is the “quaking of the earth”. He poses his opponents the question of how they explain the fact that they have not felt the quaking of the earth, even though they are on it? The earth is a sphere on which creation is placed, and likewise souls are placed in nations. The earth moves and so do souls, who do not stay still but move from nation to nation. Therefore, in his opinion, the “quaking of the earth” does not signify the quaking of the sphere but of the souls.¹⁵²

The second condition he deals with is the “splitting of the sky”. Again, he asks his opponents if the laws (*sharīʿah*) they took to be their shelter and their ceiling and from whose use they derived blessings, have not already been weakened. He presumes that the

¹⁵⁰ In this passage (p. 81.1-3) Sijistānī plays with the words '*qā'im*' meaning someone who rises or the upholder of the message and the verb '*qāma*'. The latter is used for God's action, meaning making someone rise or appointing someone.

¹⁵¹ On p. 76 Sijistānī writes that although the *ahl al-zāhir* accept the annihilation of the world as a condition for resurrection, it is only he who understands the real interpretation of annihilation. Similarly, in this passage he accuses the *ahl al-zāhir* of being unaware of the reckoning which is coming closer:..."The time of reckoning is drawing near for the people, yet they are heedless and turn away", 21:1. According to Sijistānī the hour is nearing and his opponents are refusing to accept the correct interpretation of it, therefore, refusing to submit to it and to its masters (p. 81.10-11).

¹⁵² See discussion in *Kashf, maqālat 3, justar 2*, pp. 29-31.

law has been weakened because his opponents do not accept its true reality and no longer permit what it has made permissible; nor do they prohibit what it has made unlawful. Therefore, the “splitting of the sky” refers to the weakening of the law.

The final condition discussed is the “spreading of the stars”. Sijistānī asks his opponents whether or not their stars are actually not their learned guides (*‘ulamā’*) who guide them and upon whom they depend for the knowledge of their religion? If so, haven't these men already gone?¹⁵³ Thus, if the "stars" have already gone, what about the rising of the sun in the west? He says that the sun has already risen and its rays are visible and its lights are pure (p. 81).¹⁵⁴ His interpretation of all three of the above conditions immediately preceding the Hour indicate events that have already occurred or, are occurring, during the opponents' own time. Therefore, the three physical conditions referred to point to the condition of the soul, the quality of the law and the rising of the true guide in the west, namely, the Fāṭimids.

Sijistānī accuses the *ahl al-zāhir* of waiting for an event which has already occurred, and which they are unaware of because of their heedlessness. He says that if they were honest with themselves, they would accept their deprivation of their share of their religion because they are veiled from their imāms, and because of their incorrect interpretation. Therefore, they have only themselves, not God, to blame, for he is not their oppressor. Instead they oppress themselves by choosing ignorance.

In the final argument of the chapter Sijistānī makes his hypothetical questioner pose a question which assumes his own position. He sums up the previous arguments: We know that God created the two worlds in order to manifest through them the natural realm

¹⁵³ This is a reference to the *ḥadīth*: “Indeed, the *‘ulamā’* on earth are like the stars in the sky”, Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, 3: 157, Wensinck, 1967, *Concordance de la Tradition Musulmane*, Volume 4, Leiden, E. J. Brill, p. 363.

¹⁵⁴ This passage is a strong indication that Sijistānī did in fact accept the Fāṭimids as his imāms: i.e., the allusion to the sun of the west (*maghrib*) having risen (p. 81, ¶ 2.9-10).

(*mawālīd*); that he sent messengers in order to lead the affairs of the noble ones of the natural realm, namely, men, to goodness; and that he established resurrection in order to spread justice amongst his creation, rewarding the obedient and punishing the disobedient, in order to make these two groups permanent, the pious who would be in comfort, and the libertines who would be in hell. This question follows: when God finished doing all these things, and when the two groups were in states of permanent reward and punishment, what would be the point of God's lordship? What would be the point of his power since he had already annihilated creation?

According to Sijistānī, the absolute, perfect power of God is tied to his absolute lordship. Thus, there is a problem in linking him directly to the events of resurrection, regardless of which description of resurrection one subscribes to. For after he has completed the process of resurrection, what happens to the absoluteness of his lordship? Sijistānī challenges his questioner-opponent to answer this question, saying that if the opponent can answer the question in such a way as to satisfy the mind (*dhihn*) and be accepted by the pure souls,¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁵ In the *Bāhirah* the *pure soul* is used in at least two instances to mean, "one who is habituated in the way of grasping spiritual luminous things", referring to a person whose intellect is illumined and whose soul corroborates this knowledge, namely, a mystic. This is an example of the mystical strain in Sijistānī's thought, where knowing is not a theoretical matter of either theological or philosophical doctrine, but the experiential way leading to absolute knowledge. There is obviously, an established *kalām* tradition regarding the nature, substance and the relation of the soul to the body. See: D.B. MacDonald, "Development of the Idea of the Spirit in Islam", *Muslim World*, Volume 22, for an exposition of the *Ṣūfī* position that the soul can know Allah because it is related to God. In this case the term soul could correspond to both *nafs* and *rūḥ*. MacDonald writes that Ghazālī recognises that the Qur'ān uses *nafs* generally to refer to the human soul. H. Landolt in his article on Ghazālī's *Mishkāt al-Anwār*, points out that Ghazālī frequently uses *rūḥ* and *ʿaql* (the universal intellect) interchangeably, 1991, "*Ghazālī and 'Religionswissenschaft'*", *Asiatische Studien/ Etudes Asiatiques*, Volume XLV. In this context the *nafs* (universal or world soul) is not identical to *rūḥ*. Landolt specifies that the *nafs* and the *ʿaql* in the *Mishkāt*... "simply stands for the Neoplatonic World-Soul...and...the nous or the universal Intellect" (Ibid., pp. 41-42). In the passage under discussion Sijistānī's use of the *nafs zakīyah* seems to correspond with *rūḥ*, but takes the position of the universal soul rather than the universal intellect. It would be interesting to pursue

then Sijistānī will accept his definition of resurrection and its influences. If the answer is not forthcoming, then, says Sijistānī, he has the complete answer, thanks to the grace of God and thanks to the *ahl al-ḥaqāʾiq* and to all people.¹⁵⁶ This answer which all the skilled philosophers were unable to provide is explained in detail in the *K. al-Bishārāt* (p. 82, ¶ 1).¹⁵⁷

Sijistānī's next concern is to address the issue of the *qāʾim* (resurrector). Even if the opponent is convinced of the arguments so far presented, he could still ask the question: where is the *qāʾim* and what evidence does one have that it is he who disappeared since there is no trace of him since his disappearance? (p. 82, ¶ 2) Although no name is mentioned it appears that Sijistānī is referring to the disappearance of Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl and the doctrine of his expected return as the *mahdī*. Sijistānī counters that Muḥammad said that he had come joined to The Hour as two fingers on a hand; yet 350 years had passed since his death. Where then, was the Hour which the opponents describe and believe in? If the answer to this is that the hour will manifest itself at a later time, then, the same answer is applicable to the question of the appearance of the *qāʾim*.

Sijistānī writes that God states in the Qurʾān that the hour cannot be understood as temporal time (*Iftikhār*, p. 76); so also the traces of the *qāʾim* may not be physical. For the *qāʾim* is veiled because his *daʿwah* is not of a practical (*ʿamalīyah*) nature, but is a call to knowledge (*daʿwah al-ʿilmīyah*). Participation in this *daʿwah* can be achieved only by a serious effort in the search for it. Here Sijistānī identifies 'hiddenness' as the mark of the *qāʾim*.¹⁵⁸ The

Sijistānī's interpretation of the Shīʿite Ḥadīth of the spirit of prophetic revelation (42:52), mentioned by Landolt (p. 48). In ch. 5 we will address the question of the relationship of revelation, or knowledge, to the universal soul and intellect more fully.

¹⁵⁶ 12:38... "This is Allah's grace upon us and upon the people, but most people are not grateful".

¹⁵⁷ *Kitāb al-Bishārāt* is not extant.

¹⁵⁸ On pp. 82-83 Sijistānī uses the argument of hiddenness with respect to resurrection: it is not simply physical and the *qāʾim* did not appear physically. In this passage he applies this

phase of the *daʿwah al-ʿamalīyah* is enforced through domination and oppression of everyone, whether they have a sincere aim to accept the truth or not. It is for this reason that the ones who entered the *daʿwah* of the messengers were ranked into two groups: the believers (*muʾmin*) and the hypocrites (*munāfiq*). The former category are those with a sincere aim, while the latter category, are those without such an aim. However, they enter the *daʿwah* because of fear or greed.¹⁵⁹

Like the *qāʾim*, knowledge too is veiled. Knowledge is that which is hidden by the *ṣāhib al-ʿilm* from being directly witnessed by creation, so that the reward of every soul is in direct measure to the effort which that soul has expended to gain knowledge. Therefore, to enter this category of *daʿwah*, one must possess true sincerity (*qaṣd*) (p. 83. 1-11).

God has fulfilled his promise of retribution by manifesting the banner of the *qāʾim* over the head of one of his appointed *khulafāʾ* who had attained a nobility and rank which had never before been attained. Therefore, the *daʿwah* has been publicly designated to him.

3. *Al-Baʿth* (Individual Spiritual Rebirth)

Sijistānī says that the *ahl al-zāhir* speak of resurrection without having any true recognition of it. If they looked into their hearts they would find them empty of the certain knowledge (*maʿrifah*) of resurrection, even though they say with their tongues that God resurrects the

concept to the *daʿwah* being *ʿilmīyah*. In the same vein in the section on "*ṣawm*" in *Iftikhār*, Sijistānī explains that *ṣawm* can be understood in two dimensions: first in relation to ʿAlī, and secondly, in relation to the hiddenness of the *qāʾim*, who is to return after the *khulafāʾ* (p. 127).

¹⁵⁹ Sijistānī categorises people according to how close or how far they stand in relation to the beliefs held by the *ahl al-ḥaqāʾiq*.

dead.¹⁶⁰ They claim that God resurrects scattered bones by blowing a trumpet. But when you ask them to prove this and to demonstrate the mode in which this occurs, they cannot afford any explanation in terms of what is natural and attribute it to God's power. Sijistānī mocks their belief by asking whether the treasure houses of God are so restricted that in order to resurrect, he must first assemble and revive the scattered parts of the body? (¶ 1.1-11)

He begins his own argument by discussing the aspect of time with regard to *ba'ṭh*. Sijistānī asks: why is it necessary for the *ba'ṭh* of creation to occur in one same hour when, in fact the unfolding of creation did not occur at only one time? Just as the unfolding of creation took place at different times so also the rebirth must take place at different times. Perhaps, he says, stages of the rebirth have already appeared several times, but the *ahl al-zāhir* are simply ignorant about them (p. 86.1).

Sijistānī protests that the *ahl al-zāhir* accuse the *ahl al-ḥaqā'iq* of being deniers of *ba'ṭh*, when in actuality they merely raise the power of the originator above absurdities and understand *ba'ṭh* in accordance with nature.¹⁶¹ Rather the former are the greater deniers of *ba'ṭh* because they truly do not know it, their intellect and soul abhorring the matter which is being denied.¹⁶² He proceeds to point out the absurdities of the beliefs of the *ahl al-zāhir*. If God raised (*ba'atha*) the dead in exactly the same state as when they died, with their limbs, conditions, elements, structures and shapes, would it not then be necessary for them

¹⁶⁰ *Bāhirah*, ¶ 16. 6-9.

¹⁶¹ The word translated as nature is *fiṭrah*. This is a primordial creation, in which the nature of the person is given by God. Ghazālī also speaks of *al-fiṭrah al-aṣliyah* or original nature. See: H. Landolt, 1991, *Ghazālī and "Religionswissenschaft"*, *Asiatische Studien/Etudes Asiatiques*, Volume XLV, pp. 20 ff. There is the well known Prophetic Tradition, "Everyone born is born according to the *fiṭrah*, it is his parents who make him a Jew or a Christian or a Magian", Bukhārī 23:80, 93, Muslim 46:22-25, Tirmidhī 30:5. Accordingly, Sijistānī refers to *fiṭrah* as the primordial condition of truth and perfect knowledge being in accordance with God's laws. It is only the People of the Truth who are in this condition.

¹⁶² *Bāhirah*, ¶ 16.6-9.

to have the exact same attributes which they possessed in their lifetimes? If the attributes adhered to the bodily structures then all the attributes of physical existence, would have to follow, including actions such as eating, drinking, sleeping and dressing; in that case youth, old age, sickness and death would all have to be resurrected (*ba'atha*). If these are necessary accidents which must be attached to the resurrected body, there would be no permanence for one who is the subject of retribution. And if permanence is removed from him, then the promise of reward and the threat of punishment will not have any efficacy. But, we know that these are efficacious; therefore, those subject to retribution are not annihilated (p. 86, ¶ 1).¹⁶³

Sijistānī now feels that he has demonstrated the invalidity of a physical resurrection. For, not only would God have to restore the body, i.e. the essence of the person, but, He would have along with the body to restore the accidents, i.e. the attributes or functions which were part of the body in its lifetime. Since the accidents change, Sijistānī does not consider the unit of body-accidents as a permanent thing. Therefore, the subject of permanent retribution would be only a collection of changing accidents. This in itself shows the invalidity of the argument in favour of physical resurrection (p. 86, ¶ 2).

Sijistānī continues his discussion of resurrection by quoting Qur'ānic verse 4:55, "We (Allah) shall soon cause those who disbelieve in Our signs to enter the fire. As often as their skins are burnt up, We shall give them in exchange other skins that they may feel the torment keenly". He interprets the verse as follows: God changes the skins in order that the punishment to the wrongdoer be eternal. The punishment is tasted by the essence by means of the skin, just as the accidents attached to the body in its lifetime served as vehicles for eating, drinking, disease and old age. Sijistānī maintains that the skin does not commit the wrong which has merited the punishment; but it is permissible for God to direct the punishment to the skin because the sin of wrong-doing is attached to the souls which are enclosed in the skin (p. 87, ¶ 1). It is the soul which is to bear the retribution, but the only

¹⁶³ *Bāhirah*, ¶ 11: Sijistānī assumes the argument of the *Ifikhār* when he speaks of the permanence of the fortunate and the unfortunate ones in the *Bāhirah*.

way for the essence of the wrongdoer to taste eternal punishment is through the accident of the skin. Therefore, the soul is linked with a body/skin at *ba'th*, but that body is not the first original body which the soul had in its lifetime. Thus, God does not raise man in the same body which he possessed in his lifetime, but in another body. What is connected to a raised one (*mab'ūth*) in regard to retribution is the ipseity of man, his self-ness (*huwīyah al-insān*) which is his permanent substance (*jawhar*).¹⁶⁴

Sijistānī's next argument illustrates the above point. He argues that retribution is directed to the permanent ipseity of man and not to the accidents. He writes that the power within the artisan to make a house, a door, a painting or to write a book, is limited. The form of his work exists in the soul of the artisan. When the product decays and the artisan wishes to remake it, he does not reuse the materials he used the first time; neither does he care about whether the materials (for the rebuilding) are part of the first batch or from other stock. This is so because the artisan is capable of making the second article appear just like the first, regardless of the materials used. If a builder rebuilds a house both in its essence and in its form, with clay and tools other than those he used the first time, and still he views the house in its first form, then there can be no doubt that it is the same house in its individual

¹⁶⁴ There are two problems with Sijistānī's exposition. 1. the first problem concerns the nature of ipseity of the individual soul: On p. 86. 20-24 skins and bodies are used interchangeably as being the eternal accident attached to the soul. Thus, by 'skin', Sijistānī means the body, whereas, retribution is directed to the essence of the soul while it is in the body. The question which faces us is: does Sijistānī regard ipseity as the same in all bodies, in the sense that it is permanent and unchanging, or, is it changeable in the degree of its purity as discussed in the *Bāhirah* (¶ 7.12-15; ¶ 6.8-13), depending on its capacity of *istishfāf*? Sijistānī is against the position of the philosophers who do away with bodies altogether. Yet, if the universal soul particularises all individual souls, then all of them would be the same in their ipseity. Therefore, the act and the process of *istishfāf* would not affect the quality of the individual soul; yet it does. 2. The second problem concerns *al-jawhar al-bāqīyah* and *al-huwīyah* (p. 87, ¶ 1.4). These are philosophical terms which deny corporeality (as in Ibn Sīnā), but this is not how Sijistānī uses them. He only denies that there is one body, all the while maintaining that the only permanent thing is the *jawhar*, which is eternally tied to a series of bodies which constantly replace each other.

identity (*bi ʿaynīhā*). For those with insight, the fact that the second house is built from a second set of materials does not stop it from being the original house (p. 87, ¶ 2.5-16).

With this argument Sijistānī denies both the orthodox position that the soul is linked to one particular body, and the position of the philosophers, that the soul exists without the body. Since one may identify new artifacts as being the preceding ones, despite the imperfection of the artisan, can one not imagine that the most wise and powerful God would be able to do the same? That is, if God wants to re-enliven the parts of the body, He can do so by using other matter (*māddah*) and another base/foundation (*aṣl*). This procedure would, in fact, be the appropriate manner in which the perfect power of God would enliven bodies by exchanging the matter of the discarded bodies for new matter. Therefore, Sijistānī concludes that God does indeed enliven the dead and raise them, but not in their original bodies and skin, and this is because the second way is more in keeping with His power (p. 87, ¶ 3).¹⁶⁵

Sijistānī continues asking his opponents whether they can prove their arguments about limbs being gathered and revived by God? Since they cannot, should the intellect reject the arguments for their own position? If the intellect denies this view, then Sijistānī says that his opponents are saying, in effect, that the divine verses contradict the intellect. But God does not address the ignorant; rather he proves his point through his verses to those with intelligence. And if the questioner asks Sijistānī's group about the judgment of the intellect

¹⁶⁵ Sijistānī assumes as the presupposition an orthodox position in this argument: that God does not go against His own *ḥikmah* (wisdom). In this case the wisdom is presumed to accord with human logic. From another point of view, this position could be seen as anthropomorphic and condemned. This position would go against the Ismāʿīlī position of placing God beyond all human categories; for from the Ismāʿīlī point of view there would be no sense in building arguments for his justice on images and analogies of the world. The argument of the craftsman and God's acts of retribution are also based on analogy, which is not permissible according to the Ismāʿīlī school of law.

and about the wisdom concerning *ba'ṭh* from Sijistānī's point of view, he says that it does not contradict the intellect (p. 88, ¶ 1).¹⁶⁶

The reasons for this position are as follows: God raises people and revives them through his generous, noble power as he ordains and as his wisdom requires. This act of God has no need to revive dead created beings which have their parts and limbs scattered and torn. At the end of this lengthy repetitive argument Sijistānī makes a startlingly important point: creation knows and each one of the created beings know, when God revives them, that he is who he was in this world (p. 88, ¶ 2.13-14).¹⁶⁷

Sijistānī is emphatic about the fight of the *ahl al-ḥaqāʾiq* against anyone who denies *ba'ṭh* after death; he maintains their position through illuminating arguments of proof in the *Kitāb al-Bishārāt*. However, he also makes it clear that they understand *ba'ṭh* differently from their opponents (p. 88, ¶ 3). Furthermore, writes Sijistānī, according to the latter *ba'ṭh* happens after the annihilation of creation. While some things within creation are still in existence, God commands an angel to blow a trumpet, and through this act the dead are resurrected from their graves. And after pondering this explanation the intellect cannot agree with it and is disgusted, because the form of things described is the form of primordial creation (*ṣūrat al-ibdāʿ*), where there was no matter, basis, substance or

¹⁶⁶ *Bāhirah*, ¶ 4.5-6: "the soul world is totally confined to the Form of Man". ¶ 4.8-13: in this passage Sijistānī explicitly states that not only the Form of Man but the human form (the human being in the physical world) is capable of rendering the heavens transparent, namely, comprehending the essence of the heavens. Therefore, the human intellect cannot deny the divine verses. Another example of a comprehending subject is found in *Yanābīʿ*, *Yanbuʿ* 19, ¶ 92, 95.

¹⁶⁷ Sijistānī thus claims that the individual identity and conscience are preserved at *ba'ṭh*. Notably here Sijistānī is not talking about *qiyāmah* or resurrection. If he claimed that the identity was preserved at *qiyāmah*, then we would be presented with a dilemma in Sijistānī's thought. That is, there would be an apparent contradiction. If the individual soul is a part of the universal soul particularised in a body but is reunited with the universal soul at the time of *qiyāmah*, then the individual soul loses its individual identity at the time of *qiyāmah*.

thing(*māddah, aṣl, jawhar, shayʿ*) (p. 88, ¶ 4).¹⁶⁸ Rather, *baʿth* occurs after the primordial creation and the manifestations of thing, substance, bases and matter(s). The command (*amr*) of God does not manifest itself, except as God made the command descend. God structured it (*rattaba*) through time, and in the space where God foreordained (p.88, ¶ 5-p. 89, ¶ 1). If one is not able to establish this, then the faith that arises from this inability is one which is not close to true understanding (*maʿrifah*). And faith by word alone, unaccompanied by understanding, is useless.

Sijistānī next deals with the argument of the *ahl al-zāhir*, which he treats in an ironic and sarcastic fashion. He says they should explain why, from the perspective of justice, it is necessary that a person who had died ten years after Adam should remain in the earth seven thousand years while one who had died just before resurrection, remains in the earth only for the shortest period. This makes God seem as if He did not have the ability to raise the dead who had died earlier until he causes the end of the entire creation. If God is capable of raising the dead at any point in time, then what is the benefit and wisdom of leaving them dead? Sijistānī writes that the natural order of things is such that it is not possible to imagine things which are annihilated time after time to be annihilated in a state where the first and the last are annihilated together (p. 89, ¶ 2).¹⁶⁹

The above argument is followed by an allegorical example of Abraham who asks God to show him how He revives the dead. God asked Abraham why he wanted to know: was it because Abraham did not believe? Abraham answered that he wanted to know in order that

¹⁶⁸ The intellect cannot accept that the condition of *ibdāʿ* be repeated since it can occur only once as the primordial creation brought into being by the *mubdiʿ*.

¹⁶⁹ We ask ourselves if Sijistānī is comparing God's power to nature's because he feels that in some way God is bound to nature. This is clearly not the case. What Sijistānī is saying is that God acts according to his own wisdom, and that his power and wisdom are manifest in nature. So unless there is a reason for the first and the last not to be revived together, the rule of nature prevails, i.e., each one is revived when it dies.

his heart be satisfied.¹⁷⁰ God orders Abraham to bring four birds; then he is ordered to scatter them on every mountain. After this he is to call to them and Abraham will see that the birds once more whole and alive, will fly back to him swiftly.¹⁷¹ The explanation (*ta'wīl*) according to Sijistānī, is that the nature/disposition of man is made up of four elements. Each bird symbolises a particular element which, after annihilation, flies and returns to its origin (i.e., man). It is through these elements that instinct, or the nature of man, is brought forth (p. 90, ¶ 1). The blending of each one of these four elements: air, water, fire and earth creates man.¹⁷² The composition (*tarkīb*) and order of all humankind are based upon these four elements. When the parable speaks of the birds returning to the mountains, it means people returning to their elements (*arkān*). Therefore, when God

¹⁷⁰ Sijistānī uses the phrase 'heart being satisfied' here as he does the phrase 'soul being satisfied' in the *Bāhirah*, meaning that whatever is being referred to is in accordance with divine truth and intent. In the *Bāhirah* this reference to the soul/heart is used interchangeably with the knowing of the intellect. Therefore, in the above passage Abraham's desire is to know divine truth and intent and is not merely an act of curiosity.

¹⁷¹ Verse 2:260: "Call to mind when Abraham supplicated: Lord show me how you bring the dead to life. Allah said: Hast thou not believed? said Abraham: indeed I have believed; but I have asked this question that my mind may be comforted. Said Allah: take four birds and train them to be attached to you. Thereafter, put each one of them on a hill. Then call to them; they will hasten towards you. Know then that Allah is mighty, wise".

¹⁷² Here Sijistānī argues that God brings forth a primal creation; at the physical level there is a natural birth-decay-death cycle which is not really creation. He makes this distinction by using the verb *ansh'aa* (p. 90, ¶ 1.9). Therefore, *insha' al-awwal* is a different phenomenon than *ibdā' al-awwal*. This is made explicit in the following passage on p. 91, ¶ 2.3-8. Since he mentions the four material elements and not a spiritual non-material quality, such as the essence (*huwīyah*), Sijistānī must be looking at *ba'th* within the natural order of the created physical world, even if the revival is a non-material phenomenon.

revives the dead, they return to him without slackness or hesitation.¹⁷³ In fact, writes Sijistānī, God himself has said: 36:78-79: "And he (man) had coined for us a similitude and has forgotten the fact of his creation; he asks who will revive the bones when they are decayed: Tell them, He who created them the first time. And He is the knower of every creation".

Sijistānī makes it very clear that he does not think very highly of his opponents. He writes that the above parable should be enough for a person to know that God has guided him, relative to the measure of the intellectual level of the questioner; when the question is posed with sound knowledge, then the answer is according to that same measure of wise knowledge and sound judgment. But if the question is asked by a fool and an idiot, then the answer will be relative to his intelligence. Therefore, God said in the above verse that the one who asked the question about the nature of the revival is one who has forgotten the meaning of the symbol; just as he does not believe in the truth of the creation of his soul, so also he cannot believe in the truth of being revived (p. 90, ¶ 2). Again Sijistānī alludes to Qur'ānic verses¹⁷⁴: "Say he who revives it (the bones), has raised (*ansha'a*) it for the first time, making it need by the virtue of this raising, which is not from flesh, bones, veins and nerves; rather the first raising was from a drop which became a clot and then a fetus, brought forth from the mother and brought up with food and drink" (p. 91, ¶ 1).¹⁷⁵ Similarly, it is permissible, says Sijistānī, for God to revive the possessor of the bones,

¹⁷³ Since the birds fly back without hesitation and slackness, this signifies that dead bodies do not have to wait, but are revived immediately. Therefore, Sijistānī is not speaking here of a collective resurrection, but rather, of an individual revival. Repeatedly, Sijistānī makes the same point: that the essence (*huwīyah*) of man remains constant, and the natures, in their degrees and forms of blending, are the accidents which change. Therefore, *ba'ith* is according to the rules of nature as God ordained it, and it is not a phenomenon which is supernatural, heralded in some bizarre manner, such as the blowing of the trumpet.

¹⁷⁴ 86:6-8; 22:6; 35:12; 76:2

¹⁷⁵ The point here is that although birth and life are given by God, he does not create as he did through the act of *ibdā'*. The act of creating a person in the physical world is the creative act of *ansha'a*, which is the natural process of development inside the womb and subsequent growth due to food and nourishment.

without necessarily reviving those bones, flesh and skin, which are rotten and decaying. Even if God had explained the mode of the revival of the rotten bones of the last stage of creation, this would not mean anything to a person who does not know enough. Therefore, God is silent on the subject.

With this Sijistānī ends the section on *ba‘th*.

4. *Al-Thawāb wa’l-‘Iqāb* (Reward and Punishment)

In this section Sijistānī discusses the nature of reward and punishment and the means to attain the three levels of paradise. He begins by establishing the eternity of the link between retribution and the soul and outlines the stages the soul must go through to reach the highest paradise. Reward is a bliss connected to souls, through which the souls attain good and have blessings bestowed upon them. The first blessing is that of bliss, which is a capacity of the substance (*jawhar*) of the souls. The blessing is that the capacity for bliss in the substance of souls enables souls to acquire spiritual colors through the purity of knowledge and through the soul’s subtlety and power (p. 92, ¶ 1.1-3).¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁶ Reward is related to the soul and the soul acquires it through its own capacity to receive. It is the substance of the soul which has this capacity. The substance of the soul becomes capable of receiving reward through its own acquisition of pure knowledge: *Bāhirah*, ¶ 3.13-16; 1-3. In the *Yanābī‘*, *Yanbu‘* 29, ¶ 137. 5-7: the soul receives reward due to the subtlety and purity of its own substance. Since in the *Yanābī‘*, *Yanbu‘* 27, ¶ 128-130, Sijistānī states that reward cannot be comprehended through corporeal sensations because they are not permanent, we can deduce that by ‘spiritual colors’ Sijistānī means some form of spiritual knowledge. Here, as in the *Yanābī‘*, *Yanbu‘* 29, ¶ 137, Sijistānī suggests that spiritual bliss is not the same for all souls: because the purity and refinement of the substance (*jawhar*) of every individual soul is different, the degree of spiritual bliss bestowed as reward differs. Note that the differentiation is made in the substance of the soul and not in the essence. If the essence remains constant in every soul, then the fusion of

If the soul is able to receive spiritual colors, it becomes the possessor of spiritual forms and the possessor of its substance. Spiritual colors are the guardian over good, and are responsible for increasing the capacity of the soul to receive. Therefore, its happiness and blessings from above, and below do not cease; it is surrounded by non-composite lights and the subtleties of the generated world reach it. Through this (image) God has described the place of reward: 41:31: "Therein (in this life and the hereafter) you shall have whatever your souls shall desire, therein you shall have whatever you ask for". Sijistānī writes that in the above verse God has summed up the subject concerning the soul's desire and demand. Since the verse is terse it requires explanation and interpretation, says Sijistānī; therefore, it is incumbent upon the People of the Truth (*ahl al-ḥaqā'iq*) to think about and explain this terse statement in order to have knowledge of reward as it should be (p.92, ¶ 1).¹⁷⁷

He holds that the soul is responsible for the retribution it receives, since it is given what it asks for. Sijistānī elaborates on the subject of every soul deserving (*mustaḥaqqatan*) reward: when the soul is given what it desires, the soul is accountable for what it desired at the time when it was united (*ittiḥād*) with the body, remembering all the while that desires are numerous and diverse according to the difference in temperaments. Diverse desires of the different temperaments of the body would necessitate temperaments also to differ in the spiritual world, in order that the desires in their entirety be showered in abundance upon the souls. When temperaments differ, then souls will follow their temperaments in order that desires may differ. This is the form of the physical world, which is characterised by annihilation and extinction (p. 92, ¶ 2-p. 93, ¶ 1).¹⁷⁸

the individual with the collective remains an open possibility. This point has bearing on the issue of the relationship between the individual soul and the universal soul.

¹⁷⁷ Sijistānī does not refer to the authority of the Fāṭimid or any other imām for this interpretation (*ta'wīl*) of the verse.

¹⁷⁸ Sijistānī states that according to the Qur'ānic verse it is the soul which deserves reward. It is given what it desires while it is still united with the body. But in the physical world which is where the soul is when it is united to the body, there are numerous desires which

In other words, when it is said that the spiritual world is the world of continuity and permanence, then it is necessary that its substance be extrinsic to the (world of) temperaments, in order that the souls look towards their substance and their natures (*gharīz*).¹⁷⁹ Through this reflection¹⁸⁰ on their substance, there is the giving and the seeking

arise because of the various temperaments which demand these desires. Therefore, if the souls were to be rewarded in the spiritual realm according to their desires which they had when they were in the physical world, there would have to be differentiation in the spiritual world also. Yet differentiation is a characteristic of the physical world. The idea that reward applies to individual souls which do not fuse into one contradicts the positions of such philosophers as Fārābī and Ibn Rushd in whose thought the individual is lost in the collective of the Active Intellect. This philosophical position is unacceptable to the theologians, since it takes away reward and punishment individually based on individual merit/demerit. H. Halm, 1978, (pp. 110-115), interprets Sijistānī's concept of reward as being gnostic. The primordial fall of the soul constitutes its forgetfulness and its consequent descent into the material world. Therefore, the soul's redemption and ascent must be realised through its awareness of its own alienness to the physical world and its merging into the universal spirit. Halm (pp. 112-113) quotes the *Yanābīʿ* and the *Nuṣrah* to support his claims. Sijistānī writes, *Yanābīʿ*, *Yanbuʿ* 4, ¶ 33. 2-5: "the spiritual distance between a pure individual soul and the universal soul breaks down; as a result that soul is not wearied in his path, because within him are eternal joy, glory and grace". It is clear here that Sijistānī refers to reward at two levels: the physical and the spiritual. Sijistānī, in *Yanābīʿ*, *Yanbuʿ* 38, ¶ 177: employs the argument that just as retribution is affirmed by a person through a promise/threat in the physical world so also spiritual retribution is affirmed by his 'inborn rationality' (*gharīz*, see below, footnote #179 in his soul); and both these levels underline the individuality of the individual soul as distinct from the universal soul.

¹⁷⁹ The term *gharīzatan* has been translated as 'inborn rationality', by H. A. Landolt, 1991; this, according to my reading, would differentiate it from '*taqlīd*'. As long as the term 'rationality' is understood as that faculty posited within the nature of man which is in accordance with divine intent and ordinance, it poses no problems. It should not be confused with the human process of reasoning.

¹⁸⁰ Here the term '*nazar*' appears to be a realisation of the identity of the self through self-contemplation.

of help. The giving of help applies to the world of composition (*tarkīb*), and seeking help applies to the non-composite intelligibles (*basā'it al-ʿaql*) (p. 93, ¶ 2).¹⁸¹

When the giving and seeking of help are necessary for the soul, the magnitude of what it covets and asks for arises because of the essence (*fāṣṣ*) of its substance, and not because it is paired to a temperament. If what Sijistānī has described is true, then it is incumbent to reflect on the mode of desire of souls in their substance (p. 93, ¶ 3).

Sijistānī maintains that the desires of the soul while it is in the generated world are a consequence of the mixture of elements. When the soul is removed from the generated world into a paradisaal world, the mixture of elements becomes irrelevant to it. Therefore, he

¹⁸¹ Sijistānī maintained in the *Kashf* and in the *Yanābīʿ* (*Yanbuʿ* 38, ¶ 175.7-9) that a soul must be united to a body to gain knowledge. But he also presented the opposing view in the *Yanābīʿ* and the *Maqālīd*, namely, that the soul has a heightened realisation without the body. Sijistānī writes in *Yanbuʿ* 11, ¶ 57-62 that the intellect discourses with the soul in regard to both corporeality and spirituality since the soul is attached to both. This learning of the soul from the intellect takes place in the essence of the soul. The intellect and the soul in their essence are not contained within the physical world of form; rather, the material world is contained in the former (*Yanbuʿ* 4, ¶ 32-36). This point is alluded to in the *Bāhirah*, ¶ 4 and in *Yanbuʿ* 19. Since the discourse of the intellect to the soul comprises learning, namely, knowledge, we can conclude that the soul does not necessarily need the body to acquire knowledge. The passage in the text above from *Iftikhār* (pp. 92-93) seems to clarify his position. Here he states that knowledge (the help) is either acquired by the soul or given to it while it is united with a body in the physical world. However, the knowledge which is the help the soul seeks, comes to it from the non-physical world. Sijistānī's use of the active verb *imdād* signifies that the action is initiated by the substance of the soul. The substance of the soul transmits the knowledge/help to the individual soul united to the body in the physical world. The use of *istimdād* signifies the passive action of the soul receiving knowledge/help from the non-physical world. It could be suggested here that the substance Sijistānī refers to is the universal soul which transmits knowledge to the individual soul. This view can be supported by evidence in the *Kashf* and the *Yanābīʿ*, *Yanbuʿ* 18, ¶ 90.3-6, where the substance (*jawhar*) is in the intermediary position of receiving and giving. It appears that the two seemingly opposed positions are reconciled in the *Iftikhār*. When we discuss the position stated in the *Bāhirah*, ¶ 3, we will see this matter further elaborated and explained.

says that honey, nectar and sugar are among the sweet, delicious things which the soul recognizes because of their sweetness, when it mixes with the taste of the palate. The recognition of sweetness by the soul is knowledge, and thus, desire is a consequence of the mixture (of the humours, i.e., the body elements) which concern taste. He asks, do you not see that if there were in the taste-perception of a thing, something due to the predominance of yellow bile, then (the mixture) would not be conveyed to the sense as sweet, but as bitter? (p. 93, ¶ 4) The desire of the soul is a consequence of its being a mixture and is not related (*dāfa*) to the soul when the soul is in the place of permanence. In the place of permanence the soul is related to its substance. The soul knows that sweetness is sweetness, even though taste perception has not touched it.¹⁸² The Form of Sweetness was preserved in its substance and nature (p. 93, ¶ 5.18-19).

When the soul is in need of using the form of sweetness, either through inference or through direct sensation, there is no obstacle for it to benefit from what is preserved in the form of sweetness, no matter what changes may occur in the conditions.¹⁸³ As long as the soul is mixed with the body and reasons and senses through it, the soul comprehends its desire incompletely. A person benefits from the sweetness of what he eats during his lifetime. His benefit from the sweetness does not increase more than that which nature has given him, even if the amount of sweetness is made to exceed a thousand years.¹⁸⁴ In other

¹⁸² Even though tasting sweetness depends on the organ of taste which is given the clues by the mixtures, the knowing/grasping of sweetness can be done only by the soul. There is a transitory enjoyment by the body, but the permanent enjoyment can be only by the soul, because it is in the substance of the soul that the form of sweetness is imprinted.

¹⁸³ Regardless of whether the conditions in the physical world are conducive for the tasting of sweetness or not, the soul knows sweetness because the form of sweetness is preserved in its substance. Although the soul learns in the physical world through being united with the body, sweetness is imprinted on the substance of the soul, and it can recall the preserved form.

¹⁸⁴ Apparently Sijistānī means that no matter how much sweetness the body eats it cannot grasp 'sweetness' in any clearer way. That is to say that only the soul can grasp the complete knowledge of sweetness.

words a soul acquires sweetness/goodness relative to its lifetime. It cannot acquire more goodness even if that goodness exists.

When the soul grasps and transcends the absolute universal (form of) sweetness, which resides in the nature of the soul and its substance, then the soul has already preserved a form encompassing all of sweetness possible in nature; namely, sweetness from the primordial beginning (*dahr*), through placing the (form of) sweetness in nature, to the end of post-eternity (p. 94, ¶ 1.2-5).¹⁸⁵ This transitory species (the body) will not stop the soul from enjoyment. The soul is capable through what it has preserved of the intellectual form of sweetness to make an inference of (other) intellectual things. Other intellectual forms are similar to the intellectual form of sweetness in regard to their quality of encompassing time from the primordial beginning to post-eternity.¹⁸⁶

Sijistānī goes on to show the relationship of the physical and the non-physical worlds. This relationship explains why retribution is the way it is. He writes that since the closeness of the two worlds is due to *ibdāʿ*,¹⁸⁷ one of them is not free of the other. Sensible (physical) things are closer with respect to existence and more easily grasped than intelligible things.¹⁸⁸ The perception of sensible things implies the perception of intelligible things but, not vice versa. In the same manner as the perception of sensible things leads to the

¹⁸⁵ post-eternity: non-ending future (*al-abad*). *Al-dahr* is used as *al-azal*.

¹⁸⁶ The preservation of the intellectual form of sweetness allows the soul to infer/understand an(other) intellectual form in a way similar to that in which it comprehended the form of sweetness.

¹⁸⁷ This is the case because God's command binds the physical world to the intelligible world by making the intellectual world appear through the initial primordial creation. Sijistānī uses the same verb *jawwara*: to neighbour, in the section entitled "*al-risālah*" to explain the relationship of the individual souls to bodies and their connection to the *nafs zakīyah*, i.e., the relationship between the physical world (body) and the intelligible world (soul). See *Ifīkhār*, p. 64, ¶ 2.14-15.

¹⁸⁸ The assumption is that because the individual exists in the physical world s/he can understand the realities of that world better than they can those of the intelligible world.

perception of intelligible things, it is through the bounties of reward that one recognises intellectual forms. The expression of intellectual forms is through the senses. By being sensory expressions, intellectual forms are conveyed more profoundly and more emphatically (p. 94, ¶ 2).¹⁸⁹

The sensuous pleasures, which are abundant in the generated (composite) world reach those souls who are pure in their substance. The substance of the soul is connected to the place of retribution. The giving of help, which reaches the souls connected to the place of retribution, is reflected on those in the generated world in order that the retribution of both the worlds be a retribution of primordial origin and that neither of them differ from the other (p. 94, ¶ 3).¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁹ Since the two worlds are related through *ibdāʿ*, and the sensibles are closer to the individual and easier to grasp, and since the sensibles imply intelligibles; therefore, for all these reasons it is necessary to think about reward by way of what is known to the senses. Sijistānī appears in this passage to try to reconcile the philosophical stance of ¶ 2, where the prophets speak of physical things but mean intelligibles, with the position of the *ahl al-sharīʿah* who view retribution in purely physical terms.

¹⁹⁰ In this passage Sijistānī writes that retribution belongs to both the sensible and the intelligible worlds. It is eternal as well, linked to the state of primordial origination (*ibdāʿīyah*). Retribution is reflected onto individuals in the physical world by the souls who are the givers of help (*istimdād*: defined above as pure knowledge) and who are actually connected to the place of retribution. Sijistānī does not say as yet, whether this place is in the physical or intelligible world, or in both. Retribution occurs simultaneously in both worlds. The souls are both the source of and the effect of the reflections. Normally, Sijistānī maintains that the individual soul is a part of the universal soul; here he seems to be saying either, that the reflection (knowledge) is from the universal soul, or, that the reflections are from the individual soul. An identical idea of retribution is found in the *Bāhirah*, ¶ 3. Here we have the idea of *taʿyīd/istimdād* as a movement from the universal intellect/soul downwards and in ¶ 5 the idea of individual souls acquiring purity and thereby influencing and changing their environment and in ¶ 3 accepting learning (*taʿlīm*) and practising discipline (*riyāḍah*), as a movement upwards, so that retributive results flow both upward and downward.

Furthermore, the form of paradise, which is the place of reward is as the *sharī'ah* has described it. If one cannot imagine it, then this is denial (*ta'ṭīl*) such as the philosophers hold. If the imagination is free in order to imagine it, then such imagination is not possible except through what the senses have previously sensed, namely: palaces, gates, streams, trees and furniture, food, drink, meat and all that we enjoy through the senses and our desires concerning our senses (p. 94, ¶ 4).¹⁹¹ If the generated world (composite, *al-tarākīb*) is invalidated and paradise is located in the non-composite world (*al-basā'it*), the characteristics of paradise described in the *sharī'ah* are negated. The other possibility is that the physical characteristics of paradise described in the *sharī'ah* may be subsequently imagined by being generated by the composite world, such that the pleasures are permanent rewards valid in both the composite and non-composite (worlds). And, if the pleasures are permanent, then it becomes unnecessary to invalidate the limiting (or defining) of reward. Therefore, the composite world has the characteristics of *ibdā'* (are *ibdā'īyah*) and the souls move between their composite and non-composite (worlds), so that the wisdom of God endures, and so that the souls, by virtue of their movement (between the two worlds) of desire/yearning, have an overview over the treasures of the *sābiq*¹⁹² which are bestowed upon it (the *sābiq*) from the light of the oneness of the true originator (p. 95, ¶ 1).¹⁹³

The higher spiritual world where paradise was promised for the pious is prior to the lower physical world with respect to *ibdā'*, rank, proximity and position. There is nothing in the

¹⁹¹ Since denial (*ta'ṭīl*) is forbidden, retribution has to be able to be imagined. If it is to be imagined at all, the senses are required, because a person can imagine something only through the imagery of something already known.

¹⁹² The *sābiq* is the first originated entity, namely the universal intellect.

¹⁹³ The souls cannot have insight of the true originator (*mubdi'*), but they can see the treasures of the first intelligible entity, i.e., the intellect, upon which is bestowed the light of oneness of the true originator, who is beyond all categories of human intellection. It is interesting to note that in this passage Sijistānī uses the derivative of *fayḍ* and not *ibdā'*, for the bestowal from the originator upon the intellect. It suggests that the *sharī'ah* is the effect of this *fayḍ*, since the *sharī'ah* is accepted by Sijistānī as being divinely revealed by the universal intellect. This is one of the few places where the term is used, though not in the strictly technical sense of the emanationist scheme of the Muslim Aristotelians.

lower world, not even for the twinkling of an eye, stripped of the action of the higher spiritual world. God created and originated paradise to exist till the time of the retribution of creation. God also caused the spiritual and the physical world to be related closely. After creating paradise to exist till retribution and linking it to the physical world, how can God have stripped paradise of the action of the spiritual world? This is obviously absurd (p. 95, ¶ 2.7-10).¹⁹⁴

According to Sijistānī, the truth is that God could not destroy a thing which He Himself originated through His act, because He created the thing for a purpose. Similarly, paradise is not devoid of its own actions and goals.¹⁹⁵ Once the action and purpose of paradise is established, what else can we say about paradise? God originated it, and what kind of reward can one imagine in paradise when a soul does not acquire good in such a way that its good action endures permanently?¹⁹⁶

Sijistānī writes that the order of the names of paradise occurs only on account of the fact that paradise is not stripped of its acts since God originated it. Rather, the actions of one paradise flow out of it as do the actions of the ones below it, and the chain continues until the actions reach the extreme limit of all creatures.¹⁹⁷ Among the names of paradise are:

¹⁹⁴ The spiritual or non-composite world has priority over the physical world not in terms of time, since at the level of *ibdā'* time does not exist, but with respect to its closeness to the intelligible level of primordial origination. Paradise is part of that spiritual world, but like the rest of the spiritual world is constantly acting on and affecting the lower composite world. There was reference to this idea earlier in this section, see p. 94, ¶ 4 & p. 95, ¶ 1. Therefore, retribution is not an action which occurs only at one given time, but is being effected eternally.

¹⁹⁵ Since God created paradise for the act of retribution, it would make no sense if he were to then to void it; since the function of paradise is retribution.

¹⁹⁶ It is obvious that Sijistānī is being ironic here, since his own conclusion is the reverse of what he has stated.

¹⁹⁷ The actions/influences of paradise are such that reward flows down upon the souls in the physical realm, just as the actions of the souls who are 'below' flow horizontally

firdaus, *khuld* and *na'im*. Each one is called "paradise" and each has a function (p. 95, ¶ 3.11-18).

Firdaus is the highest paradise and is connected to the word of God. The function of the word *firdaus* lies in its union with the first originated entity, so that *firdaus* illuminates the substance of the first originated entity.¹⁹⁸ *Khuld* is the "paradise" in which the potential to make things appear is strengthened. This potential is sown in the substance (*jawharīyah*), of the *sābiq*, and is eternal in it, not separating from it nor abandoning it, nor ever changing.¹⁹⁹ *Na'im* is the "paradise" which the *sābiq* bestows, from the light of the word of God, on his follower (*tālī*) in order that the *tālī* have the capacity to ascend to *khuld* and *firdaus*. Through the flow of the light of the word of God into the form of man, the form's bounty is made eternal. The perpetuation of this illumination in the form of man is through the light of *firdaus* (p. 96, ¶ 1).²⁰⁰

influencing all of creation. See *Bāhirah*, ¶ 5 for the same idea. There is a relationship between the action of paradise on the souls and the action of those souls on other souls.

¹⁹⁸ To reach *firdaus* a soul would have to reach the word of God which is, as we will see, related to if not identical with the command of God. This fact implies that union with the universal intellect is the condition of *firdaus*. Theologically, Sijistānī is explaining 'paradise' as activity or functional 'space': *firdaus* is the activity of the word of God, namely, the illumination of the universal intellect. This act of illumination is parallel to the act of origination by *ibdā'*.

¹⁹⁹ *Khuld* appears to be a cosmological space within the substance of the universal intellect, where all things of the intelligible and sensible world are eternally present in potentia.

²⁰⁰ The *tālī* is the universal soul (for further elaboration see Halm, 1978, pp. 128-133: "this... is the pivot of Neoplatonic cosmology and Ismā'īlī theology..."). He is referring to the hierarchial structure of the intellect and the soul described in the *Yanābī'*. *Na'im* seems to be the 'space' where eschatology is possible due to the capacity of the universal soul (given by the universal intellect) to ascend into the two higher 'spaces' of paradise. This capacity is made possible in the form of man. Sijistānī does not indicate that this capacity flows into an individual soul/body in the physical world.

According to the description above, it is possible for a person, after passing through the stages, to reach a high extent of knowledge which lifts the veils between him and the three paradises, namely, *nā'īm*, *khuld* and *firdaus*; then he, in turn, becomes the “paradise” of the person who has benefited from him and been illumined by his knowledge (p. 96, ¶ 2.4-6).

If a teacher begins to bestow benefits, he ennobles and exalts the student. Simultaneously, the teacher eternalises these benefits in himself and in his students. It is through the gifts of the teacher’s wisdom that the student’s life and subsistence is assured. If the bounties are continuous and endure, the souls are illumined and enlightened; and through the illumination and enlightenment, the souls have a noble pleasure which surpasses all other pleasures (p. 96, ¶ 2). This is, in brief, one of the forms of reward.

As for punishment, it is a misfortune which clings to the soul and which causes constriction of the soul’s substance, its sinking from attaining its proper ranks and its falling into the stages of hell. The soul falls into these negative conditions due to its oblivion and negligence of its own world of luminosity and its attachment to and its deception by mean material things which make the soul inherit meanness and lowliness. Thus, even the souls who are in bliss are always in the peril of sinking and falling into misfortune (p. 96, ¶ 3).²⁰¹ Words which would purify these erring souls from doubts and contradictions pass through their ears, but they are deaf and do not listen while statements which are not confirmed by anything amongst the signs of the external world and the souls penetrate their ears and rest in their hearts.²⁰²

²⁰¹ See *Bāhirah*, ¶ 7 where souls choose to alter their fortunate position. The first action which the soul chooses is *ghaflah*, heedlessness. The second action is to be attached to and be deceived by this attachment to material things (p. 96, ¶ 3.13-15). The fact that the process of the souls sinking is ceaseless, strongly suggests metempsychosis, *Bāhirah*, ¶ 15.13-15, 1. Halm opposes this view, believing that the fall of the soul due to forgetfulness occurs just once (1978, pp. 110-115).

²⁰² This appears to be a Qur’ānic allusion, verse 42:6 where God warns people to heed the signs of revelation.

If those souls who do not listen are offered a provision²⁰³ for their substance, will they accept a provision which is in disagreement or in agreement with the substance of their souls? If the substance of their souls flees from their souls, then what will be the foundation of the souls and through what will their liberation be effected? If the substance of the soul agrees with the souls, then the soul and its substance have agreed with their own essence. Hypothetically, if it is assumed that the substance (of the soul) agreed with something other than its own essence, then the soul would not be harmonious within itself. If the soul was not harmonious, it could not be the cause of the signs of the external world and the essence of the soul (p. 96, ¶ 4-p. 97, ¶ 1).²⁰⁴ If the soul is not in agreement with itself, it falls into the stages of hell and comes up with absurdity and impossibilities and keeps itself busy thwarting itself, until its traces in the composite world reach low mean misfortune.²⁰⁵

Sijistānī states that if the condition of reward and punishment is what he has exemplified of sublime and mean things, and of fortune and misfortune, then, it is the right of the People of the Truth (*ahl al-ḥaqq*) not to shorten nor to spare any effort, even for an hour, to acquire

²⁰³ By 'provision' Sijistānī might be suggesting revelation; this identification is close to the concept of the *anthropos* myth or the myth of the 'true prophet' in Gnosticism signifying the soul. This concept of the prophet is found in many Gnostic traditions such as the Ebionites, the Judaeo-Christians. See Halm, 1978, pp. 123-124; Corbin, 1983, pp. 76-84.

²⁰⁴ The soul is, itself, the cause of the signs of the horizons and the souls. Therefore, the signs of the horizons and the souls are in agreement with the substance of the souls; so if the signs of the horizons and the souls do not confirm what penetrated into the substance of the souls and rested in their hearts, then, the souls are not in agreement with their own substance. Sijistānī points out that it is the soul who is the cause of revelation. This is similar to his idea that the prophetic soul, Muḥammad, was the legislator. However, he is making a distinction between the soul as a vehicle and the substance of the soul, which must be in accord with the third element, the essence/self of the soul.

²⁰⁵ *Bāhirah*, ¶ 7.12-16, a passage where Sijistānī writes that vice-ridden human forms are born as a result of the impure influences of souls who have chosen ignorance and vice.

knowledge, and to store it in their own souls ²⁰⁶ and to (to take from it as a) provision for their return, and to struggle and to go out (in the effort of) purifying their souls (p. 97, ¶ 2.6-12). He admonishes his readers to accept only truth and distance themselves from the absurd and the impossible, because the latter corrupt the substance of the soul and make it fall into the stages of hell. He writes, "...And do you not see that God, when he begins describing those who will inherit *firdaus*, begins with the quality of modesty which is patience and peace (*sākina*). So if man begins to teach the truth, and makes it conceivable and does not take it away from its firmness, nor from reaching its utmost, then it makes him inherit peace/happiness. If someone has an inkling of the knowledge of paradise, he does not give up. If he is not patient, he may spoil what he has begun and move into eternal misfortune".

²⁰⁶ This further indicates that knowledge can be stored and is therefore, unceasing, unless the soul chooses ignorance, giving up the radiance of knowledge it had acquired by recognising and following the right guides, *Bāhirah*, ¶ 19 & 12.5-13.

Comparative Analysis of *Iftikhār* and *Bāhirah*

This chapter will elaborate four major themes found in the *Iftikhār: risālah, qiyāmah, ba'ath,* and *thawāb wa'l-ʿiqāb*. We will demonstrate that the *Bāhirah* contains much the same content. Sijistānī's arguments concerning these four themes have been stated in the previous chapter and will not be repeated, but their conclusions will be made explicit and commented upon.

1. The Law, Resurrection and the Appearance of the Pure Soul

1.1 The Role of the Intellect in the True Understanding of Resurrection:

In this section we will show Sijistānī's argument for the role of the intellect in discerning the truth. He holds the view that a true understanding of resurrection is compatible with both reason and revelation. He maintains that true faith cannot be devoid of reason. Furthermore, the intellect-soul is imprinted with divine knowledge; therefore, the intellect is a faculty beyond just human reason. The intellect is connected to the soul, and together they form what is essential to the individual person in the physical world in its journey towards absolute knowledge of the grace of God.

In the *Bāhirah*, Sijistānī sets up the category of truth versus the category of delusion regarding the knowledge of resurrection. These two categories are based on the capacity of the intellect to discern the truth. The intellect is not only the human faculty which acquires

knowledge and recognises the truth, it is also the faculty which recognises the rightful bearers of revelation and thereby gains the way to eternal reward. In the *Bāhirah* ¶ 16.6-9 the intellect and soul recognise the reality of resurrection. In ¶ 4.5-6, 8-13 the human form is capable of rendering the heavens transparent, i.e., of knowing their essence. Thus, the human form is capable of knowing not only facts about the nature-related world, but also the heavenly spheres. In the *Ifūkhār* (*baʿth*, p. 4), Sijistānī writes that God addresses divine verses to individuals in the physical world. God addresses man because he knows that man has an intellect through which he comprehends and corroborates the Truth. Sijistānī argues that God in His wisdom addressed man with a logic which is intrinsic to both divine wisdom and to man's intellect/soul; and the latter has the ability to corroborate this logic. In the *Ifūkhār* (p. 82, ¶ 2) as well as in the *Bāhirah*, ¶ 16, 19, 20, the act of knowing on the part of man is the act of corroboration by his intellect/soul. This act is the understanding of the wisdom of God and is what constitutes faith exemplified by the act of Abraham asking God about reviving the dead (*Ifūkhār*, p. 90, ¶ 1). Therefore, the intellect's striving to know, comprehend and corroborate God's wisdom is an act of faith. In other words the intellect does not stand opposed to revelation, but corroborates its truth.

Sijistānī introduces the views on resurrection of several groups because they understand it differently from him. In the *Ifūkhār* and his other works, Sijistānī divides people into categories: the Literalists (*Ahl al-Zāhir*), the Materialists (*Dahriyah*), the Atheists (*Muʿaṭṭilah*), Jews, Magi, idol worshippers, the Philosophers (*Aṣḥāb al-falāsifah*) and the People of the Truth (*ahl al-ḥaqāʾiq*). These categories are drawn on the basis of those who, according to Sijistānī, have knowledge of the truth and those who do not. Obviously, it is only the *people of the truth* who recognise the intellect for what it truly is. The leaders of each of these groups are the gates through which the believer enters, either the "fire", or "paradise", depending on whether he is one of the true or false believers (... and what are the gates of the two groups of the People of Paradise and of Fire except the leaders of those gone astray and of the polytheists and of the rightly guided?" ...¶ 19. 12-14).

1.2 Resurrection

The first theme we will address will be that of *qiyāmah*, referred to in translation henceforth, as resurrection. In the *Bāhirah*, Sijistānī refers to the Atheists, Materialists, Dualists, the Jews, some Muslims and the Magi as holding beliefs regarding resurrection which are contradictory to the truth. The Atheists and the Materialists deny resurrection altogether because they rightly reject, on intellectual grounds, the descriptions of resurrection such as the destruction of the physical world based on an unquestioning following (*taqlīd*), yet they do not know the real truth. Most people hold the same position as the Atheists and the Materialists in their hearts but do not speak of it openly. In the *Bāhirah* Sijistānī writes that most people ascribe to the belief of the Materialists in their hearts not because their intellects and souls are satisfied with the belief but because these descriptions of resurrection have been given to them by their predecessors. Therefore, they assent to them with their tongues (¶ 16).

Sijistānī's view that most people are hypocritical, verbally accepting beliefs which they do not hold true in their hearts, leads him to prefer the method of reasoning, providing proofs and evidence instead of using *taqlīd*. He clarifies this preference not only in the beginning of the *Bāhirah*, but in several other places where he admonishes the reader to know through his intellect. In the treatise (¶ 2. 4-7) Sijistānī warns the *people of the truth* whom he refers to as the guardians of religion (*ahl al-dīn*), to guard the truth from those who try to penetrate it without understanding its foundations. In his own arguments supporting the view of the *ahl al-ḥaqāʾiq* in the *Bāhirah* and the *Iftikhār*, Sijistānī refutes the belief that resurrection is intrinsically a physical condition of nature-related changes or disfigurements leading to the total destruction of the world.

Sijistānī writes that the word *al-qiyāmah* is derived from the verb *qāma*, *yaqūmu* and is grammatically in the feminine gender. All the names, titles, and characteristics of resurrection are contained in the “**h**”, the last letter common to the spelling of all labels for resurrection. The **h** is the indicator of the grammatical feminine. Resurrection is completed

in the cycle of the soul, which incidentally is also feminine (¶ 18).²⁰⁷ The issue of Sijistānī's understanding of the feminine soul and its relation to resurrection relates to his statement that the *qā'im*'s return occurs in the cycles of the soul, which occurs in the same passage.

1. Sijistānī's first argument is that resurrection cannot be purely physical since Muḥammad associated resurrection with himself. The coming of Muḥammad as a messenger from God was not determined by the conditions of the nature-related world, but ordained by God. When Muḥammad received revelation, there was no destruction of the physical world. Therefore, if resurrection is like Muḥammad, why should it be interpreted as a time when destructive conditions prevail in the physical world? In the *Bāhirah* Sijistānī quotes a tradition in which the prophet is said to have likened himself to The Hour (i.e. of Reckoning) as two fingers on the same hand (*Bāhirah*, ¶ 17..."Don't you see that Muḥammad (may peace be upon him and on his family) had coupled himself to the [Final] Hour when he said, "I and the Hour were sent like two joined fingers"; *Iftikhār*, p. 82, ¶ 2). Since the commissioning of the Prophet (and the Hour) was neither the result of a natural mutation, nor was the nature-related world weakened or destroyed in any manner as a result of his coming, Sijistānī concludes that the circumstances, conditions and effects of the Hour should not be any different from the arrival of Muḥammad (*Bāhirah*, ¶ 17).

There are different descriptions of resurrection in the *Iftikhār* and the *Bāhirah*. Let us first examine the circumstances, conditions and effects of the Hour as set forth by Sijistānī. In the *Bāhirah*, the physical indicators of resurrection are described as being preceded by terrifying and heinous events, such as, earthquakes and solar eclipses, which he refers to as the 'rolling up' of the sun, eclipses of the moon, the exploding and dimming of stars,

²⁰⁷ The feminine is explicitly mentioned only once in the *Bāhirah* in the above passage. It is an issue of considerable importance because it is related to Halm's thesis that Sijistānī initially held that the feminine was prior to the masculine, as in an older strand of Ismā'īlī belief. Later, holds Halm, 1978, under the impact of Neoplatonism, Sijistānī changed his views to the priority of the masculine intellect over the feminine soul (pp. 119, 297ff.).

mountains erupting, the miscarrying of the pregnant, flooding of seas and other such tumultuous signs which he defines as mutations of nature leading to turmoil and corruption (¶ 7.1-5).

On the other hand Sijistānī's descriptions of resurrection in the *Iftikhār* are interpreted quite differently. Sijistānī writes that the metaphors describing physical conditions of the Day of Resurrection set forth in the Qur'ān must be understood correctly. The *āthār al-qiyāmah*, or the physical influences of resurrection, in which the scattering of the stars, the eclipses of the sun and the moon and the folding of the skies and earthquakes occur, must be interpreted metaphorically. The sky must be interpreted as the *sharā'i* which have been folded, (i.e., been forsaken). Earthquakes signify the repeated revolutions of the earth on which the souls have no stable rest, presumably indicating the repeated cycles of time into which the souls enter. The stars who have been scattered are the Sunnī 'ulamā', who are dead.²⁰⁸ And the rising of the sun in the west²⁰⁹ is the Imām, who has already risen from the west (*Iftikhār*, p. 81, l. 12ff). Sijistānī uses reason and analogy to understand the metaphors describing resurrection. Thus, he is not discounting the use of reason as a means to understand revelation correctly. His point of variance from the theologians is his definition of the intellect. Sijistānī makes a distinction between reason and the intellect. Reason is the physical means to understand revelation, God's intent, in the nature-related world. The intellect is the divine imprint in man, meaning that man has within him knowledge of God's intent.

²⁰⁸ This is a reference to the *ḥādīth*: "Indeed, the 'ulamā' on earth are like the stars in the sky", Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, 3: 157, Wensinck, 1967, *Concordance de la tradition musulmane*, Volume 4, Leiden, E. J. Brill, p. 363.

²⁰⁹ "The rising of the sun in the west" is among the traditional, though non-Qur'ānic, "signs of the Hour". Here Sijistānī seems to be alluding to the Fāṭimids, as suggested by the editor, *Iftikhār*, p. 81, note # 2.

1.3 Appearance of the Pure Soul and Resurrection as Spiritual

Sijistānī demonstrates the use of reason by explaining another metaphor. In the *Ifṭikhār*, (p. 75, ¶ 2ff) he introduces the image of the king or judge. His argument is as follows: the world is created at once by the most perfect command of God (ʿ*amr*); therefore its destruction, as believed by the *ahl al-zāhir*, would imply a weakness in his command, which is impossible. Thus, the opposite of destruction must be the true meaning of resurrection, i.e., *ḥudūth* or *qiyām*, the rising/creation of the most excellent among the best of creation, who is man. Through this rising (*qiyām*), in a fortunate time, a soul-related influence (*lumūʿ āthār nafsānī*) adheres to those who believed in, and expected the coming of the one who rises.²¹⁰ Those who did not believe in the figure of the king/judge are excluded from this fortunate event. Assuming, like the Literalists, that God himself will judge mankind as its king at the time of resurrection, He would hardly chase people away by initiating horrifying events, but rather would invite them to His audience hall. Above all, He would certainly not destroy them. Furthermore, the Hour cannot be characterized by special physical events of which people would be aware, since it is supposed to come "suddenly", while they are not aware.²¹¹ Sijistānī concludes, resurrection must be a spiritual event, which may occur at any time without warning or terror. A "pure soul"²¹² is designated for the specific function of the judge (*Ifṭikhār*, pp. 75, l. 14-21; 76, l. 1-11).²¹³

²¹⁰ *Al-muttaqīn* of verse 43:67 refers to the *ahl al-ḥaqāʾiq*.

²¹¹ 43:66: "They but wait for the Hour to come suddenly upon them, while they perceive it not".

²¹² Since the term "pure soul" is used to mean a specific entity, it will be treated as a technical term and italicised henceforth.

²¹³ There may be some contradiction here, because on p. 81, Sijistānī speaks of the *qāʾim* (the resurrector) in his 'time and cycle', which certainly suggests an historical dimension to resurrection. The image of the *pure soul* 'having resurrection' i.e. knowledge, stored within it maybe compared to the image of the law which conceals the real ultimate truth. The *pure soul* is described as the 'the kernel of nature' and the 'essence of creation'. See footnote 214 below; *Ifṭikhār*, p. 75, ¶ 1.8-11.

A corollary argument to establish the *pure soul* as the judge is forwarded both in the *Bāhirah* and the *Iftikhār*. If God himself is to sit on a throne and judge creation, then He must possess personality, form and limbs (*shaksiyah, šūrah, jawārih; Iftikhār, p. 77, l. 6-17; Bāhirah ¶ 10*). If one agrees that He does not possess these (and one must, otherwise one would stray into anthropomorphism), then it is impossible to conceive of Him as a judge. Sijistānī cannot have been unaware that he was disregarding all the finer points of the *kalām* debate about anthropomorphism in the above argument. His objective here was certainly not to deal with the issue of anthropomorphism with any seriousness, but to introduce the idea of the *pure soul* (*nafs zakīyah*). While maintaining that God as the Originator is not an anthropomorphic conception, he proposes that God as judge is. Sijistānī's reasoning is as follows: he who sits in judgment must have some link with the creation under judgment. Therefore, judgment must be administered by a form which is as physical as the world of nature but which is in a position to judge, i.e., to be above the world of nature. For this purpose he introduces a spiritual hierarchy (*ḥudūd al-rūḥānīyah*) as the medium between the two worlds. Through this hierarchy the command of God is connected with the *pure soul* (*nafs zakīyah*) which in turn is united with one human body. Sijistānī sets up the *pure soul* (*nafs zakīyah*) as the judge, appearing in the human body in the physical world.

Through the above argument Sijistānī has removed God as the Judge and put the *pure soul* in that position. Sijistānī justifies his identification in several ways. The first justification is through an analogy with the prophet: both are human forms ruling (*ḥukm*) on behalf of God (*Iftikhār, p. 78-80, ¶ 1*). The difference between them rests only on the fact that the rule of the *qā'im* is spiritual, hidden, concerning *al-ākhirah*, whereas, the prophet's rule concerns the laws applicable for the administration of society. In the *Kashf* (*maqālat, 3, justār 7, ¶ 3*) he elaborates on this point further: while the performance of the law-related obligations is laid down for the administration of culture and the order and governance of

society, the performance of deeds which are intellect-related are for the subsistence and the well-being of the world.²¹⁴

His second justification is that the intellect cannot accept that resurrection occurs after the destruction of creation in its entirety which would then be revived by the blowing of a trumpet. Resurrection described by the *ahl al-zāhir* is the total annihilation of creation making the condition of resurrection identical to that of the state of original origination (*ibdāʿ*). This cannot be possible since the instant of origination is unique and cannot be repeated. According to Sijistānī's argument, if resurrection is in the form of origination (*ṣūrah al-ibdāʿ*) when there is no matter, elements, substance or individual material thing, then by that very token, to conceive of a physical resurrection is absurd (*Iftikhār*, p. 88, ¶ 4-5- p. 89, ¶ 1). Since that primordial origination occurs only once, it cannot occur again, whereas resurrection occurs after the primordial origination. Matter, substance, elements and individual material things appear only gradually and are physically manifest in the times which God has measured for them and placed them in.

Sijistānī claims that resurrection as described by the *ahl al-zāhir* does not occur at the level of primordial origination and cannot occur in the second, physical cycle of creation either. It appears that Sijistānī maintained there were two phases of resurrection. In maintaining this position he was consistent in adhering to a bipartite scheme which occurs in his cosmological structure where creative activity takes place at two levels: the intelligible and the sensible. In the *Iftikhār* the physical conditions describing the destruction of the world as the advent of resurrection are to be understood as metaphors. Yet what the metaphors signify, for example, the death of the *ʿulamāʾ* and the rise of the Fāṭimids, are events related to the physical world. The activity described in this phase, as the *āthār al-qiyāmah*, are physical events occurring in the physical nature-related world of organic generation and corruption. Yet Sijistānī is emphatic that resurrection is intrinsically related to the spiritual

²¹⁴ In this context retribution is not related to ontology but to ethics. Yet, later we will see that in the metempsychosis arguments the ontological status of souls depend on the degree of knowledge they have obtained. The ethical argument is secondary.

realm. It may be that he contradicts himself to show that these events are not essentially related to resurrection at all.

In the *Bāhirah*, Sijistānī speaks of the *ʿamr al-qiyāmah*, the real matter of resurrection, which could possibly indicate the second, purely spiritual-related phase: "They (that is the physical indicators of resurrection) are followed by matters of resurrection, the rising of the dead, the exchanging of the earth with a white earth, creatures being brought to account through the imposition of justice, the compensations of the souls, the placing of the balances with equity, the preparing of the way and the entering of paradise in the neighbourhood of the Merciful and other similar conditions. These are in totality, soul-related mutations, which lead to continuity and goodness" (*Bāhirah*, ¶ 7. 5-9).

However, another point made in the *Bāhirah* (¶ 7.9-16) appears to contradict the position that the real matters of resurrection are purely spiritual. Here he asserts that the conditions of the Hour, and the terrifying things preceding it consist of the arrogance of the Antagonists, and their mastery over the world. This dominance of corruption causes excesses, such as, murder, oppression, fornication, sodomy and distorting the true nature of speech (which is divine in its essence) by lying and hypocrisy. Hence, souls in the physical world during this time are dirty and impure and make the prevalent corrupt structures of nature transparent, thus altering the possibility of achieving a fortunate position. From these souls' influences, injurious, deadly and damaging beings occur which make their own barrenness and turbidity appear. Furthermore, from these impure influences individual bodies which are farthest from harmony are born in the organic domain. The noblest of the three organic kingdoms of the nature-related world is the domain of man. However, once man is born physically into the nature-related world, he is subject to the influences of evil destruction as well as to the influences of good making the character of predatory animals visible in himself.

Another passage is relevant to this discussion, ¶ 8.7-12, that in which Sijistānī describes the state of purity and goodness resulting from the influences of good creatures who are

present because of the effects of pure souls. They too, influence the organic domain of man²¹⁵ and from their influences harmonious bodies are produced. These bodies through their essences render the character of angels and their actions, such as glorification and sanctification, transparent. Consequently, resurrection of the dead, the justice of retribution and the entrance to Paradise result.

In the two above passages, souls can affect and change the physical conditions of their sensible world through their essences, by the alterations within themselves. Therefore, Sijistānī holds that the real matters of resurrection are purely spiritual, in the sense that these matters of resurrection are brought about solely by the soul. By describing the purely spiritual-related phase at the heart of resurrection by the events of the rising of the dead, the judgment of their deeds and their retribution Sijistānī does not specify whether these events occur to souls in the physical world or in the intelligible world after physical death. The soul-related world is connected to the physical world and therefore, influences it. The influences depend on the positive or the negative effects that the individual souls generate from their essences through their actions. In other words, regardless of where the events occur, they are caused by the soul and this makes them purely spiritual in nature.

Yet another element is involved in the problem of whether or not Sijistānī postulates two phases of resurrection: his understanding of the law and its abolition. If the second phase lies beyond the physical in the intellectual or the intelligible level of existence, would this mean that the physical administrative law of the prophet is replaced by the concealed spiritual law of the *qā'im*? Or do the two operate in a parallel fashion, one outside the individual (for the evolution of society), and the other, within the individual (for the development of the mystical self)? An answer to these questions can be entertained only by examining Sijistānī's idea of the two different roles of the *qā'im* and the prophet. Sijistānī specifies that the summons of Muḥammad, when likened to the Hour, are ritualistic (*ʿamalīyah*), whereas the summons of the *qā'im* is intellectual (*ʿilmīyah*). The reason the

²¹⁵ In the *Iftikhār* (p. 75, ¶ 1.8-11) the pure soul is referred to as the 'kernel of nature'.

qā'im is absent at the time of the prophet is that his summons are different from that of the prophet (*Iftikhār*, p. 83, ¶ 1). The distinction between the two types of prophecy in Sijistānī's thought is interesting because it provides an element uniquely suited to a mystical *wissenschaft*. But this mystical position is neither a totally individualistic gnostic position, nor is it purely legalistic.²¹⁶

In the *Iftikhār* (p. 82, ¶ 2), Sijistānī speaks about the absence of any trace of "this *qā'im*". Why he does so is unclear. There appear to be two possible reasons: (1) a polemical stance, where he taunts his opponents that resurrection according to them has not come for more than 350 years; (2) the second reason maybe the intrinsic nature of resurrection. Since the *qā'im*'s call is intellectual (*da'wah* is *'ilmīyah*)²¹⁷ the *qā'im*'s knowledge is not visible; whereas the prophet's (*rasūl*) call (*da'wah*) is *'amalīyah*. Therefore, while hypocrites may enter the *da'wah* of a prophet, only the sincere can enter the *da'wah* of the *qā'im*; and their souls will be recompensed according to that effort of sincerity. Sijistānī holds that God has ordained the *da'wah* of the *qā'im* as intellectual, not ritualistic. It is intellectual because it cannot be operative through force since force would make its followers hypocrites, not true believers. Therefore, the believer must possess knowledge (*'ilm*), and the *ṣāhib al-'ilm* is he who deals with those who profess a belief without the use of force, i.e. without an externally motivating factor (*Iftikhār*, p. 83). Therefore, a believer is defined as the one who is intellectually convinced of the truth of revelation and accepts this as an intellectual conviction and not as a mere acceptance and observance of the law.

²¹⁶ Sijistānī maintains that there are two kinds of prophets, the external and the internal. And that the external has an internal co-respondent. For a discussion of these two categories see Alibhai, 1983, pp. 82ff. The question raised here is whether true resurrection concerns the external or the internal prophet and whether the resurrector takes on an external or an internal form.

²¹⁷ Sijistānī writes in *Iftikhār*, p. 61 that the era of the *qā'im* is distinguished from the time of the other prophets by its activity, just as the acts of cultivation are distinguished from the acts of harvesting. The benefits harvested in the era of the *qā'im* are intellectual and must be sown in a previous cycle.

In summary, Sijistānī distinguishes between the intellect and reason, holding that while reason is necessary to interpret revelation correctly, the intellect is the knowledge of God's intent. He argues that resurrection may have two phases, one to which the *Qur'ānic* metaphors apply, where physical conditions in the nature-related world change, the other where a spiritual condition within the soul of man occurs. In both cases the physical world is not annihilated. To avoid the concept of anthropomorphism Sijistānī holds that a special figure, the pure soul, not God, is the judge at resurrection. Finally, just as there are two phases of resurrection, there are two phases of the law: the first is initiated by the prophet and is ritualistic in order to maintain stability and justice in the physical world; the second is initiated by the *qā'im* and is intellectual in order that souls receive and acknowledge the knowledge of God.

2. Messengership, Prophecy and the Law

2.1 Messengers and the Message

In this section we will discuss the distinctions among the prophet, imām, *mahdī* and the *qā'im* according to Sijistānī. His concept of the relationship between the message and the messenger is unique for his times. The time of the *qā'im*, whose manifestation is the advent of resurrection raises the most original component of Sijistānī's thought. Revelation is related to time in a cyclical process of imāms. The seventh imām reaches and completes the limit of revelation culminating in the arrival of the *mahdī* who is himself the unveiling of the grace of God. No Ismā'īlī thinker before Sijistānī had dared to formulate the esoteric meaning of resurrection so explicitly. According to Sijistānī, the person of the *mahdī* is the grace of God. Thus, resurrection is the encounter between the individual soul and the *mahdī*.

Though there is a distinction between the two types of *daʿwah*, the messenger or *rasūl* is a category which encompasses the prophet, the *awṣiyāʾ*, the *āʾimmah*, the *khulafāʾ* and those such as Yūsuf, who belonged to none of these categories. It stands to reason then, that the *qāʾim* is included in the category of *daʿwah* as, 'one who is sent' and therefore, referred to as a *rasūl* (*Iftikhār*, p. 63, ¶ 3-p. 64, ¶ 1).²¹⁸

Sijistānī makes the distinction between the *qāʾim* and the rest of the category of *rasūl* in two ways. First he qualifies the law of the *qāʾim* as being different in its essence, i.e., by its being spiritual or intellectual. Second, he claims that God has made "the banner of this *qāʾim*" appear "over one of his representatives (*khulafāʾ*)" (*Iftikhār*, p. 83, ¶ 1.12). This last statement is one indication used as evidence by current scholarship to maintain that Sijistānī did not believe that one of the Fāṭimids was to be the *qāʾim*, but that they were only the *qāʾim*'s legitimate representatives. In the *Iftikhār* (p. 72, ¶ 2-73, ¶ 1) he writes that it is the *āʾimmah*, who are designated as the *qāʾim*'s representatives. The *Ithbāt*, supports both these references, where he writes that the function of the *khulafāʾ* will continue till the advent of the *qāʾim* (p. 178, 186-187). With the evidence available it is very difficult to come to a conclusion about whether Sijistānī accepted the Fāṭimids as *āʾimmah*, *khulafāʾ* and/or *qāʾim*. It is clear, however, that he does draw fine distinctions among them.²¹⁹ All that can be maintained for certain is that Sijistānī accepted the Fāṭimids as *rasūl* and thus, as the rightful leaders of the people of the truth.²²⁰

²¹⁸ It can be suggested that the point of using the verb 'arsala' for all who are sent, including those who did not bring a law, is that there is a type of message which all pure souls may bring to others whenever the pure souls influence the nature-related world with their purity.

²¹⁹ An examination of whether the differences among these various types of *rasūl* are based on elements other than their function in the physical and spiritual world would be very useful for the reconstruction of Sijistānī's *hudūd/daʿwah* structure. This inquiry is beyond the scope of this thesis. Even though W. Madelung, P. Walker, M. Alibhai and F. Daftary have all dealt with this issue cursorily, there is no detailed work on the subject.

²²⁰ In the *Bāhirah*, the *qāʾim* is described as having all the intellectual emanations within him and is the whole, which in relation to the part, is the total of all souls (¶ 8.2-5). Similarly,

The rank of the *qā'im* exceeds that of the *nāṭiq*, as well as that of the six preceding Lords of resurrection and that of the *mahdī*, as the most absolute manifestation of the universal intellect. The message of the *qā'im* stems from and calls for an affirmation by the soul. Supporting this idea Sijistānī quotes the Qur'ānic verse "We shall show them our signs in their souls and horizons so that they will see it" (*Kashf*, pp. 81-84).²²¹

The idea that the law brought by the messengers from God becomes redundant and useless is related to the idea of cyclical time and the functions of the different kinds of messengers. Each cycle has a messenger who proclaims a specific law required only in that cycle. According to Sijistānī, the redundancy of the law occurs either because the people have outgrown it, or because the *qā'im* has transformed the ritualistic law into a spiritual relationship between man and God. The concept of the redundancy of the law is linked to the accusation of antinomianism levied against the Ismā'īlis by their opponents. Sijistānī demonstrates that the rejection of a specific law which is replaced by another code is not antinomian. Rather, the chain of laws, one replacing the other, is related to the spiritual progress of the soul in its journey to the grace of God.

in the *Iftikhār* (p. 62), Sijistānī writes either that the whole is what is real and has true being, and the part, by virtue of belonging to that whole, also, has true being and is real; or, that the part is what is real and possesses true being, and since the whole is an abstraction of its parts, this makes it real and to possess true being. In either case, the process of the unfolding of the 'message' in any one given cycle, whether that of Muḥammad (a prophet bringing a law), the *pure soul* (bringing knowledge through its own purity) or of the *qā'im*'s (bringing resurrection), is as real as its unfolding in any other cycle.

²²¹ This interpretation of Sijistānī lends a mystical character to Sijistānī's thought. As the message is maintained by a physical hierarchy (the *da'wah*) in the nature-related world, so the spiritual hierarchy (*ḥudūd al-rūḥānīyah*) maintains the soul-related world. Cutting across both the worlds and forming a bridge across (like a *barzakh*) is the soul: the soul, who searches for knowledge of its own absolute, who creates its own separation and thereby the path and the vehicle of the search, and who stands finally - as that unique point, at once both creator and created.

In *Ithbāt al-Nubūwāt* there is a passage about the rescinding (*rafa'a*) of the law by the people before the advent of the *qā'im*.²²² Sijistānī states that the people themselves will rescind the *sharī'ah* so that by the time of the manifestation of the *qā'im* there will be no need for him or his *khulafā'* to do this. This could mean one of two things: (1) the rescinding of the law by the people's rejecting it is negative and is part of the destructive chaotic condition preceding the advent of the *qā'im*; (2) the time preceding the *qā'im* is a time of purity and sincerity in which people do not need the ritualistic law because the *pure soul* has appeared along with other souls who possess an high degree of virtue, spiritual strength and knowledge. In this particular passage in the *Ithbāt*, it is important to note that when Sijistānī refers to the rescinding of the law, he is referring only to what he considers as ritualistic law (*'amalīyah*) and not to the law which he considers to be intellectual knowledge (*'ilmīyah*).

Nāṣir-i Khusraw, when recording Sijistānī's definition of *barzakh* as the religious laws of the prophets in his *Khwān al-Ikhwān*, wrote that Sijistānī refers to the prophets as *khudāwandān-i saṭr* (the lords of the cycle of concealment) in whose time souls receiving *ta'lim*, come into the physical world through the *ta'yīd* of these prophets. But it is only through the power of the *qā'im* who is the lord of the Great Cycle that they become spiritual.²²³ Therefore, it is clear after examining the issue of the rescinding of the law that Sijistānī did not view the replacement of the ritualistic law by a spiritual intellectual code to be negative or antinomian in character. Sijistānī is not concerned about the esoteric interpretation of the ritualistic law, or about its redundancy. He wants to emphasize that the time of the *qā'im* is a time of divine grace, during which all souls will to some degree or the other be in an harmonious state where purity, goodness and knowledge will prevail. This is

²²² Ed. A. Tamer, Beirut: Imprimerie Catholique, 1966, p. 180. For a discussion of the relation between law and prophecy, see M. Alibhai, 1983, pp. 160-165.

²²³ Ed. A. Qawīm, Tehran, 1959, p. 135. Daftary, 1990, interprets these passages to conclude that Sijistānī does not advocate *ta'wīl* and because Sijistānī restricts the abolition to certain ritualistic obligations by the *qā'im*, his position cannot be viewed as antinomian (p. 238). Daftary does not view the dissolution of the law to be negative. We agree with Daftary upto this point. But Daftary has missed the significance of Sijistānī's position altogether.

Sijistānī's concept of the "kingdom of God" on earth. Thus, the point Sijistānī emphasises is the condition of grace. The redundancy of the law is simply a by-product resulting from the level of intellect-consciousness achieved by society.

Thus during the cycles of concealment the revelatory relationship between creator-created is still seen as being of a physical nature i.e., the *sharī'ah*, and it is only with the *qā'im* that revelation becomes non-material, in this case, a call to knowledge. A passage from the *Iftikhār* is relevant here (p. 83, ¶ 1)... "knowledge is that which is hidden by the lord of knowledge from being directly witnessed by creation" ...here Sijistānī expresses the concept of the people being kept away from knowledge by the prophets until they are ready to receive it through the *qā'im*. Viewed from this angle, the *sharī'ah*, becomes a 'concealer' (a *barzakh*) and the prophets, lords of concealment. This view is repeated in the *Kashf* as we will see below.

The idea that the *sharī'ah* is, in a sense, outgrown by the people before the coming of the *qā'im* should be distinguished from the concept of its transformation into something of a spiritual nature by the *qā'im*. The passages above are significant for the discussion of this concept for a number of reasons. First, the law is seen by Sijistānī as being brought by the Lords of Concealment. He refers to this in the *Kashf* where he metaphorically describes the prophets as doctors who prescribe medicines and the abstention from certain foods (i.e. the concealed law). The idea that the law conceals ties in with his concept of the law as *barzakh*. This interpretation indicates Sijistānī's mystical tendency which sees the law as a stage of spiritual development which the soul must transcend in order to reach the level beyond: that of the spiritual law of the intellect and of knowledge which is unveiled by the *qā'im*.

In the above passage, Sijistānī uses the metaphor of disease for the period of concealment of knowledge. In this state, the imāms restrain their followers from certain foods, i.e. do not allow the flow of unrestricted knowledge. Each imām, from the first to the seventh, prescribes a certain medicine i.e. law, with certain prescriptions and prohibitions. The

seventh reaches and completes the limit of revelation culminating in the arrival of the *mahdī* who is himself the unveiling of the grace of God.²²⁴

The relationship between the lords of resurrection and the *mahdī* (both presumably referring to the imāms) appears to be functional. That is to say that, the *mahdī* is the Lord of resurrection in his aspect of making the truth manifest in its complete form. In addition, he allows the pure to have access to absolute knowledge, and thereby transcends the limitations of the nature-related world (*Bāhirah*, ¶ 8.5-7: "...this *qā'im* emerges far removed from all evils, a receptacle of all knowledge, goodness and virtues. Consequently, he eliminates from the structures of nature all their impurities and turbidities; and confronting these are the fortunate signs and the Intellectual Lights").²²⁵

The issue of the *qā'im* in Sijistānī's thought is one of controversy and speculation. If textual evidence could be found to support whom he believed to be the *qā'im*, it would establish to some degree of certainty whether he was one of the Qaramiṭah (Madelung, 1958, pp. 43-135; Stern, 1961, pp. 99-108), a Fāṭimid or a Neoplatonic philosopher influenced by gnosticism (Halm, 1978, pp. 115ff). Whichever group he belonged to, Sijistānī obviously believed himself to be part of the people of the truth who were the guardians of religion. This was the group who followed God's manifest signs and from which the prophets, the imāms, the *awliyā'* and the *khulafā'* can rise. These leaders are the gates through whom the believer acquires the light of knowledge. Through their initiation, the individual receives divine help and teaching in order to recognise the truth, without which people would be tricked by their own knowledge and thereby, enter the state of hell

²²⁴ In the Persian, the reflexive pronoun, *khish*, is used to refer to the grammatical subject, i.e. the *mahdī*, instead of the normal usage of referring to its logical subject i.e. the unveiling. This leads to the above reading. *Kashf*, pp. 82-83.

²²⁵ *Kashf*, pp. 81-84; By the act of facing the intellect-related Lights (which refer to the universal intellect) natural structures are negated. This specific use of the term 'light', in relation to the universal intellect occurs only once in the treatise.

i.e. ignorance and heedlessness (*Bāhirah*, ¶ 19, *Yanābīʿ*, YN 36, pp. 82-85; *Kashf, maqālat* 6, *justār* 5, ¶ 1).

The reason why Sijistānī labeled the seventh lord of resurrection as the *mahdī* is unclear. Perhaps he did so because the *mahdī* embodied the unveiling of the grace of God, or perhaps Sijistānī used the term to be more specific and intended to specify the actual name of a particular individual i.e. Muḥammad ibn Ismāʿīl.²²⁶ However, Sijistānī has not, in any surviving work, specifically named or identified a person as being the *mahdī*. The identification of Muḥammad ibn Ismāʿīl seems too premature a conjecture to be treated as conclusive based on the evidence we have at hand.

On the one hand Sijistānī leads his reader to believe that the *mahdī* is a specific individual; on the other hand the idea that the law will be abolished is explained in a general sense of the entire community reaching a certain level of spiritual understanding through their intellect. The idea that the law is outgrown by the people does not have only the positive aspects discussed above. People could fall into wrong-doing and corruption by going against their intellect and soul and heeding the falsehood of their predecessors who "make them inherit" everything from them. In the *Ithbāt*, Sijistānī writes (p. 180) that it is the intellect, the word of God's sincere affection (*ikhilās*) for His creation, which repudiates corruption from the world in order that the soul reach the presence of the divine grace (*quds*). The substance of the intellect (*sābiq*: that which precedes) is both the word of God and divine grace.

Souls who distance themselves from harmony, manifest dense, impure structures of nature, making the destructive and the predatory visible. The negative act of *istishfāf* not only represents the absolute antagonist, but any straying on the part of the soul. The term *didd* is typically Ismāʿīlī (Halm, 1978, pp. 104-106)²²⁷ and in the *Bāhirah* can be seen to be that

²²⁶ Walker, 1993; Madelung, 1988; and Stern, 1983 hold the view that Sijistānī was waiting for the appearance of Muhammad ibn Ismāʿīl whom he believed to be the *mahdī*.

²²⁷ According to Halm Iblīs and Azāzīl are personifications of the *didd*.

duality which characterises the nature-related world. It is not a dichotomy, as in the separation of the body and soul, but is the dual character of the body-soul unit. The process of resurrection also, is characterised by the duality of good/bad, wisdom/ignorance and life/death. Viewed in this manner, resurrection is an exercise of the soul which, by the token of acquiring knowledge, loses ignorance, and vice versa (*Kashf, maqālat* 3, *justār* 4, ¶ 1). The soul's self-awareness of its true substance bears within it the duality of knowing its closeness to the intellect, and at the same instant realising that its comprehension of the closeness is the fact of its separation. In passage ¶ 12 in the *Bāhirah*, although the imagery of light i.e. of radiance and brilliance is used, the major motif is that of rising - i.e. of a knowledge which stands witness to the truth and a process of ascent.

There are two forms of action which contribute benefit and harm to the event of resurrection and reach the soul after physical death.²²⁸ In the *Kashf* Sijistānī writes that there are laws, the fruit of prophetic activity: (1) the *ʿaqlī* and (2) the *sharʿī*. The *ʿaqlī* (the individual human intellect) and the *sharʿī* (the pragmatic ritual code) are parallel streams of emanation from the universal intellect. Related to this are the (pp. 93-96) two forms of actions of the pure ones: (1) *kār-i ʿaqlī* and (2) *kār-i sharʿī*. The *kār-i ʿaqlī*, namely, intellectual action, prevents one from harming his own kind and provides for the well-being and subsistence of the physical world. Going against *kār-i ʿaqlī* results in the destruction of

²²⁸ *Qiyāmah* and *baʿth* are two different concepts for Sijistānī. *Qiyāmah* (*rastakhīz*) essentially concerns the rising of the *qāʾim*, i.e., the messianic idea and his interpretation of traditional eschatological beliefs. *Baʿth* (*bar anghikhtan*), on the other hand, concerns the "resuscitation of the dead", i.e., of individual souls. The "events" that, according to Sijistānī, are supposed to manifest the two concepts, are associated and combined in many ways, especially in the *Yanābīʿ*. This interlinking causes difficulty. In the final analysis, the crucial question is: does Sijistānī conceive of a series of *baʿths* leading up in time to a final *qiyāmah*? (as W. Madelung suggests) Or, does he spiritualise even *qiyāmah* in such a way that it becomes a non-temporal quintessence of all *baʿths*? In the *Ifikhār* a distinction is made between *baʿth* and *qiyāmah*, since Sijistānī discusses them in two separate sections: "*Maʿrifah al-Qiyāmah*", and "*Maʿrifah al-Baʿth*". Madelung makes the same point by clarifying the distinction between *baʿth* and *qiyāmah* in the *Kashf*. *Baʿth* is used synonymously with *bar anghikhtān*; which signifies the rebirth of the individual soul through gnosis rather than a single event in time. However, *qiyāmah* is the advent of the *Qāʾim* (1990, p. 143, nt. 27).

the physical world, its stable forms of administration and the degeneration of the world and its systems of order. In the *Bāhirah* Sijistānī confirms that the benefits of intellectual emanations as well as those of the culture which governs man's physical life, are protected by the fact that the form of man is the manifestation of the soul: "The world of soul is totally confined to the Form of Man which (is such that) if it were not, then there would be neither emanations from the intellect, nor benefits for the soul, nor any administrative culture (*siyāsah sharī'ah*)" (¶ 4. 5-7). Therefore, it follows that actions governed by the intellect are not only in accordance with the truth, they are necessary for the maintenance of the physical realm. The *kār-i shar'ī*, namely, the actions of the law, are those actions which were made obligatory by God and transmitted through the lords of the time (*khudāwandān-i dawr*).

2.2 The Pure Soul (Nafs Zakīyah, Nafs Zakīyah Šāfiyah)

In the *Bāhirah* Sijistānī raises another issue, of concern here: the appearance of the *pure soul* to receive the *risālah*, or message: he states, if souls are in a condition such that intellectual emanations have mastery over them, and in this condition they render the Form of the Sphere including all its bodies and luminous stars transparent, then good fortune, divinely granted talents and beings who bring advantage and nobility occur from their influences (¶ 5. 5-7). Furthermore, in this condition of intellectual dominance the *pure soul* appears, having acquired benefits from the emanations of the intellect, and been granted by divine ordination an abundance of virtue similar to the virtues of the intellect. When the *pure soul* appears the influences of the other good pure souls are visible. Thus, concludes Sijistānī, it is established that the resurrection to which the messengers call is nothing else but these visible influences of purity and goodness of souls (¶ 12. 5-7). He asserts that anyone who has true knowledge of the *barāzikh* has arrived at the right path. Such a person is not confused concerning the mode of resurrection and retribution. But, he does not elaborate on the meaning of *barzakh* since he is writing to a person whom he feels has the sagacity, intelligence and a capacity for grasping subtle tenets of the faith (¶ 15. 2-5). Thus

according to Sijistānī, when there is a predominance in society of people who embody the intellect, which is the corroborator of divine intent and wisdom, they influence their environment to such an extent that the world is ready for the appearance of the one *pure soul* who is the upholder of the true message and the giver of retribution.

This idea is replicated in the *Iftikhār*, in Sijistānī's discussion about the law. Here the reason why each *sharī'ah* remains applicable for a long span of time is that it leads to the appearance of the *pure soul*. It is not the messenger (*ṣāhib al-risālah*) in person who tests the 'strength' of the law, but history. If the law retains its vigour for a long time, roughly one thousand years, before it becomes 'sapless', then the legislator is strong and wise and has been a real bearer of the message (*rasūl*). Time tests whether the law is effective; the test of time can be achieved only if the law is allowed to stay in practice for a reasonably long period. If its uselessness were apparent within a short period, this fact would only point to the weakness of him who constructed the law, and such a person would not be suitable as a *rasūl*. It is striking here that Sijistānī while evaluating the applicability of the law, imputes the element of "weakness" not to the law itself, but to the person who legislates it.²²⁹

Sijistānī's idea expressed in the *Iftikhār*, is that the law is operative successfully without corruption over a long span of time and without a messenger being sent to renew it. His idea set forth in the *Ithbāt* is that people "conceal" the law. If we juxtapose the two ideas, a scenario of a society who are governed by their intellects can be constructed. Here Sijistānī does not envisage 'perfection on earth' or an utopia, but a time when the law is so internalised in the hearts of the people that they are ready to receive a spiritual law, i.e., knowledge from the *qā'im/pure soul*. During this time particular souls are vehicles for the *pure soul* (*nafs zakīyah*) which thus appears in the harmonious body of a person in order to receive the message (*risālah*). The appearance of particular souls in human bodies cause the *pure soul* to appear in the extreme of its power and capacity to create what the divine

²²⁹ Sijistānī uses the terms..."*al-qawī al-muṣṭafā al-ḥākīm al-mujtabā*", to refer to Muhammad and 'Alī (*Iftikhār*, p. 64, ¶ 2.7; see also ¶ 20, translation of *Bāhirah*).

command requires. If the particular souls do not precede it, then the *pure soul* is weak and is not able to attain the heavenly lights (*Ifṭikhār*, p.64). This most extraordinary statement establishes three facts: (1) the appearance of particular special souls united to human bodies precedes the *pure soul* (2) the effectiveness of the *pure soul* in its legislative capacity is dependent upon the particular souls (3) the *qā'im* or the seventh *rasūl* may well appear only a thousand years after Muḥammad.

Sijistānī describes the particular souls as those whose intellectual and practical actions are pure. He repeats his idea of the preeminence of the intellect as a corroborative source of divine intent in the *Ithbāt* (pp. 49-53). He writes that there are two conveyances of prophecy: (1) the physical messenger (*rasūl jismānī*) and (2) the spiritual messenger (*rasūl rūḥānī*). The vehicle for the first are the prophets or the *aṣḥāb al-dawr*, whereas the vehicle for the second is the intellect. He upholds the preeminence of the intellect by making the acceptance of the law brought by the prophet dependent upon the nature of the intellect. For the prophet conveys only what the intellect already knows; thus the intellect's acceptance of the law is a self-reflexive corroboration. Without the corroborative and discriminatory powers of the intellect the physical law is a mere set of sounds.²³⁰

²³⁰ For a detailed discussion see M. Alibhai, 1983, pp. 61-64. However Alibhai concludes that, because of this point in Sijistānī's thought, we can classify prophecy as *'aql bi-quwwah* and the intellect as *'aql bi-fī'āl*. If he means to suggest that Sijistānī is really operating in an Aristotelian conceptual frame then this opinion must be regarded as untenable. For Sijistānī neither maintains that prophecy can in any way be regarded as being in potentia, nor that the actualisation of revelation takes place through the intellect. Sijistānī's point in the above passage is that the prophetic law can only be fully comprehended as being imprints of divine intention when the intellect-soul corroborate it. For Sijistānī, the intellect is the most perfect originated entity, containing all forms as undifferentiated pure ipseity. These will assume physical and spiritual forms by the action of the soul. By virtue of this quality, the intellect is able to corroborate the law when it appears physically. For discussion on the preeminence of the *'aql* In *Kitāb 'Aql wa al-Jahl* of Ja'far al-Ṣādiq and in his thought, see K. Crow, "The *'Aql* in the Thought of Ja'far al-Ṣādiq", M. A. Thesis, McGill University, p. 197.

Sijistānī makes the same point in the *Bāhirah*. Here man is held to be equally responsible through the process of *istishfāf*, in making, both the good (qualified as the character of the angels, ¶ 8. 7-10) and the evil (the character of predatory animals, ¶ 7. 12-16) visible. The conditions of both these instances arise because of a predominance, or an absence of intellectual emanations, caused not by the cessation of the intellectual emanations, but by man's refusal to allow them to be received because of his own heedlessness and willfulness. According to Sijistānī, God decreed that a *qā'im* would arise upon whom He had already abundantly bestowed the emanations of the Intellect and its benefits. As a result of receiving these benefits and emanations the *qā'im* eliminates all impurities and darkness from the structures of nature. Fortunate signs and the intellectual lights confront the world of nature, from whose influences harmonious bodies are produced in the organic domain, specifically in the noblest species, man. These harmonious human bodies render transparent the character of the angels and their actions, such as glorification and sanctification, through their essences (¶ 8. 2-10).

Conversely, the arrogance of the antagonists and their mastery over the world cause excesses and corruption, such as murder, oppression, fornication, sodomy, hypocrisy and deceit. Hence, when the dirty and impure souls of the antagonists render transparent forms of the structures of nature, they alter the fortunate position of these structures. From their influence injurious, deadly damaging beings are produced who make their barrenness and darkness appear. From the influences of these impure souls, individual bodies, manifest disharmony and the character of predatory animals. They are born into the noblest of the organic kingdoms, the domain of man (¶ 7. 9-16). Here he clearly makes the point that the predominance and influence of the intellect create the type of individual, who is capable of rendering the character of the angels transparent because of the intellectual emanations and the absence of the predominance of intellectual emanations creates an individual who is predatory, evil and corrupt. Since the predominance and influence of the intellect is pivotal in the endurance and acceptance of the law, and in the emergence of the *pure soul* and the process of resurrection, the relationship of the intellect and the essence of the individual is important.

Besides the ways discussed above in which the intellect plays a role in resurrection, Sijistānī also stresses the position of the intellect in other capacities. In ¶ 1. 8-9 of the *Bāhirah* he states..."may He illuminate your intellect so you can grasp every object you intend to know". In ¶ 15. 2-5 he stresses the importance of the knowledge of *barāzikh*, and writes that he is not dealing explicitly with this tenet of *barzakh* because he trusts the subtlety of the intelligence of his reader and Sijistānī is assured of the reader's sagacity and nobility. By juxtaposing the definition of the intellect found in the two above passages one realises that Sijistānī is not referring to reason in terms of discursive understanding. Rather he is pointing to an understanding and acceptance by the intellect per se. So when in ¶ 13. 1-3 he writes..."he will be told that the distinction of the mode of retribution, good and evil, reaching the two groups is very difficult, except for him who has a pure and transparent soul (*nafsun zakīyatun ṣāfiyatun*), which is habituated to grasping spiritual and luminous things", the place of this intellect becomes more specific. Thus, in this context the intellect is understood by Sijistānī as not only the faculty of reason but also as the inherently spiritual and luminous intellect which belongs to the originated world. In the final analysis it can only be the one who possesses the perfect manifestation of this intellect in the created world who is able to grasp the mode of retribution.

Finally in ¶ 16 he berates the Atheists, the Materialists, the Dualists, the Magians, the Jews and some Muslims for accepting a false conception of resurrection. He states that the Atheists and the Materialists deny Resurrection and the Final Hour and regard it as a fabrication. Even though most people do not deny the concept of Resurrection and the Final Hour openly, they do so in their hearts, having heard its description from their predecessors. This they do because the description they have heard is contrary to the version God has described and decreed. Thus, their intellects do not consider it to be true and their souls are not satisfied with the descriptions they have heard. Here Sijistānī makes the point clearly that what their intellects and souls would accept is what God had ordained resurrection to be. So it is clear that the knowledge of the intellect and the soul is in accordance with the truth, i.e. divine intent and ordinance. Further clarification of this is found in ¶ 19 where he writes that resurrection will not come as a surprise to those who

know resurrection in accordance with God's description. Not only will they be able to recognise the manifestation of resurrection and the Hour when it arrives, they will also know whether they belong to the People of Paradise, i.e. the rightly guided, or to the People of Fire, i.e. the misled ones. In ¶ 20 Sijistānī writes..."in this treatise we have stated enough for him who examines it using his intellect and for whom its purpose will not be obscure and its knowledge not hindered due to the delusions he was brought up in". Thus, Sijistānī sets up the intellect (the level of origination), as a category of truth, as opposed to man's environment (the level of creation), which, without the former, is in the category of delusion. The originated intellect is distinguished from reason which is created, and it is clear that Sijistānī links the intellect to the essence of a person, which, as we will see, he describes as the soul.

In conclusion, we can suggest that Sijistānī has established: (1) resurrection on two levels, physical and intellectual (2) the completion of the first, which is the law, leads to the second phase in the same cycle (*dʿwr*) of time, which is an intellect and soul-related condition (3) the responsibility for the progression of both phases lies squarely with the individual intellect which is both reason (the capacity to understand metaphors, to corroborate, to recognise, i.e., the rightful bearers of revelation) and intellect (the capacity to recognise the truth, to possess the *ʿilm*, which is part of the second phase of the law and resurrection, to be the vehicle for the *rasūl al-rūḥānī*) (4) the figure of the *pure soul* who inherently grasps spiritual and luminous things, and who appears at the time when intellectual emanations predominate to receive the *risālah*.

3. Resurrection, Retribution and The Eternity of the World

One of the elements in Sijistānī's arguments against resurrection being purely physical, is the belief in the eternity of the world. Three questions arise from Sijistānī's position on this

issue: (1) Does Sijistānī mean the form of the world or the physical natural world? (2) what does he mean by eternity? (3) how do the above relate to resurrection?

First, Sijistānī uses the idea of the eternity of the world to combat the concept of absolute annihilation. He writes that if the natural world were subject to corruption and decay and annihilation, God would have to "recreate" physical bodies in order to judge them. If He recreated these bodies, this is the same as holding that creation is eternal, if God wishes it. However, the second body, though a duplicate of the first, is not the first. Therefore, this concept of God recreating bodies means that there is no end to nature. Furthermore, recreation cannot be associated with the act of absolute destruction. The eternal creative process of the natural world is incompatible with the linear concept of a beginning and an end. The creative process is presented by Sijistānī as a series of mutations in eternal matter which simply receives new forms. Therefore, since there is effectively no idea of the end or annihilation of nature, resurrection cannot be linked to the concept of absolute destruction (*Kashf*, pp. 83-97).

In the *Bāhirah* the argument for the eternity of the world is linked with that of the effectiveness of God's threat of punishment and promise of reward (*Bāhirah*, ¶ 11). In the *Iftikhār* (p. 82, ¶ 2), Sijistānī holds that although the soul-body unit is permanent and eternally recreated, the original body with its set of original accidents is not an eternal unit. If he had maintained the original unit to be eternal, there would be no point in the body returning to the physical world in order to purify itself by gaining knowledge; nor would the concept of individual spiritual rebirth/regeneration (*ba'ath*) have had any place in his scheme.²³¹

²³¹ In the *Iftikhār* (*al-qiyāmah*, p. 1) the eternity of the world is linked to the eternity of the divine command, a link not explicitly mentioned in the *Bāhirah*. But the premise that the world is eternal is clearly presumed (¶ 11). In the *Yanābī'* (above footnote 137), Sijistānī maintains that once 'being' is conceived as such, it cannot be conceived as 'not-being'. Hence, once the world is conceived of as having been originated, one cannot conceive of it as being annihilated. One can conceive of the world as changing its form, but not as not

The argument for the eternity of the world is linked to the eternity of retribution. Sijistānī holds that if retribution is eternal, then the subject receiving retribution must also be eternal. His originality in this argument is his explanation of how the soul receives retribution. Sijistānī writes in the *Bāhirah* ¶ 11. 13-15, 1-4 that if God annihilated the actions and forms in the physical world which are subject to decay and corruption, yet kept the heavens and the earth eternal, then their eternity would be useless, since the very point of the eternity is the effectiveness of the threat and the promise. If the object responding to the threat and the promise has been destroyed, there is little point in making the threat and the promise eternal. Sijistānī argues that reward and punishment are related to the eternal essence of man (*huwīyah al-insān*), which is the essence of his soul, and not to the particular physical form in which he inhabits the physical world (*Iftikhār*, p. 87, ¶ 1). To support this idea he quotes the Qurʾān: "Verily those who do not believe Our signs, We will put them into the fire and whenever their skins will be burnt, We will change them (for) another skin so that they may taste the punishment." The renewal of the skin in the Qurʾānic verse is interpreted as a symbol for a series of bodies. Sijistānī explains that the skins are not being punished as they committed no wrong, but rather the soul or the essence of the person is punished (*Iftikhār*, p. 87, ¶ 1).

As a logical result of holding to the eternity of retribution, Sijistānī must also hold to the belief in the eternity of the physical world including the human body. This is not surprising. However, what is striking is that Sijistānī distinguishes between the two elements within the soul: the substance (*jawhar*) and the essence (*huwīyah*). The substance has the inherent

existing. As mentioned in *al-qiyāmah*, ¶ 2 (pp. 110-112 above), after God originated the world as 'being', he had two other levels of creative activity: the creation of material forms such as the physical world (*khalaqa*) and the growth-decay-regeneration cycle within the physical world (*tawallada*). At these two levels destruction and re-formation is possible. However, annihilation cannot be linked to the first level of origination. Therefore, resurrection can be linked to a change in form at the levels of creative activity pertaining to the physical material world, but cannot be linked to the level of origination since it would entail an annihilation of 'being'.

capacity to give and receive knowledge and therefore, develop the soul, but the essence receives retribution from the universal soul (i.e., union [reward] or distance [punishment]). Sijistānī seems to tread the middle road by adhering to the theological positions regarding resurrection and retribution, yet he flavors his stance with a distinctly mystical dimension, the relationship of the individual soul to the universal soul and to God. However, if Sijistānī were strictly mystical or strictly emanationist, there would be no distinction between the individual and the universal soul at resurrection, since completion for the individual soul would mean union with the universal soul. This is clearly not the case. In the *Iftikhār* (p. 88, ¶ 2.13-14) he writes that at the time of spiritual rebirth each individual soul becomes aware of what he truly was in the world and this awareness is his retribution. So reward/punishment is measured by the distance/closeness of the individual soul to the knowledge of God. The distance/closeness is the degree of self-awareness of the individual soul. In other words, resurrection is an intellectual/spiritual awakening, not a physical gathering and a material reward. Resurrection is an intellectual condition involving the ipseity or the individual identity of man. Here resurrection occurs while the individual ipseity is within a body in the physical world and can be repeated depending on whether that individual's self-awareness grows due to his acquisition of knowledge and his understanding of God's wisdom.

Self-awareness is achieved by the individual soul by pursuing knowledge. Revelation is the source of this knowledge. The messengers bring revelation to man, and man's intellect corroborates it as being divine. In the *Iftikhār* (p. 61), Sijistānī writes that the heptades, the message of the seven leaders in a cycle, flow into the souls. Knowledge in the form of the message is given by the leaders to the individual souls. When a certain number of messages reach the individual soul, then the message begins again, in another way. The "message" here refers to the *ta'yīd/ta'līm* given to individual souls by means of the prophet, the *pure soul*, the *qā'im* by the Universal Soul and the Universal Intellect. In the *Bāhirah* Sijistānī states that the world of soul is created by the emanations of the Universal Intellect and the Universal Soul in individual souls. The first of the two emanations is what is present in the individual souls from the emanations of the Universal Soul. As a result of the presence of

this particular type of Universal Soul-emanation, the individual soul accepts divine help (*taʿyīd*). The second type of emanation is present in the individual soul because of its own efforts and is a precondition for the acceptance of teaching (*taʿlīm*) and discipline. These two emanations are prerequisites for the individual souls to possess life and to reach the farthest ranks (*Bāhirah*, ¶ 3.13-3). A conjunctive reading of the two texts, brings us to the conclusion that the condition of receptivity within the individual soul is its reward for striving for purity while the individual soul goes through an individual spiritual rebirth at each rank until it reaches the highest. In the *Ifṭikhār* (p. 61) the benefits of the *qāʾim*'s cycle are at the time of the reaping and are intellectual benefits. This also points to an individual intellectual/spiritual reward.

In the *Kashf* he writes that a soul does not exist without a body. By making a distinction between the soul and the body he identifies two categories or ways of existence and substance. He implies a relationship between the two by linking them because of the necessity of retribution. By virtue of the fact that the substance of the soul is eternal and in eternal relationship to the other, he makes the body eternal also. In the *Bāhirah* the eternal link of the soul to the body is explicit in ¶ 14. 7-8..."Thus the knowledge of *barāzikh* means that one knows that the world at all times is filled with souls, each united to individual bodies. When the bodies leave the world they are replaced by others of the same kind". It is quite clear in this passage that the union of souls with bodies in the physical world will never be arrested.

If reward and punishment were directed to the body, there would be no justice since God would be judging the body and not the essence of the person who committed the act. Hence resurrection is linked to the eternal essence of man and not to the aspect which is subject to decay, age, disease and death (*Ifṭikhār*, pp. 85-89). Sijistānī quotes another Qurʾānic verse in support, "Allah resurrects the people and revives them" (*Ifṭikhār*, pp. 85-89). By forwarding this argument Sijistānī establishes that the essential element receiving reward and punishment is the soul, which is the eternal part of man; however the physical dimension is also recreated and revived.

A contradiction in Sijistānī's thought on the soul's ability to learn without a body is evident if we compare the *Kashf* and the *Maqālīd*. In the *Kashf* (*maqālat* 7, *justār* 3-5; pp. 87-91) Sijistānī writes that a body cannot receive learning without being in a body. But, in the *Maqālīd* (*iqḷīd* 37) he maintains that it is possible. Halm's thesis that the Gnostic motif of "forgetfulness" is the cause of the soul's descent, must be reevaluated in the light of the above statements. Since Sijistānī explicitly talks of the *pure soul* as being united with a body, a question arises: why would a soul which has received such perfect repose and knowledge and is in a state of purity and spiritual companionship, enter a body blemished with the defect of opacity and forgetfulness? The answer to this is unclear. According to Halm, even though the Neoplatonic motif of the soul's descent/ascent is used by the Persian school, the Ismā'īlis amend the relation between the universal soul and the human soul (1978, p. 115ff). He refers explicitly to the dispute recorded in *Riyāḍ* where *al-Maḥṣūl* of Nasafī is defended by Sijistānī in his work *Nuṣrah* against the criticisms of Rāzī (*Riyāḍ*, p. 53ff). Sijistānī is one of the major disputants criticised by Kirmānī for holding what Halm categorises as "gnostic" views. Halm writes that Sijistānī does not believe in a fully developed universal soul but in one that is below the universal intellect, and which causes melancholy and obscurity. The soul moves to the intellect and is lighted and radiant against the gloom of matter. According to Halm the soul's affinity to the lower material world is but a gnostic portrait of the primordial Fall: it forgets (*hiya sāhiyah*) its origin and loses itself in matter (*Nuṣrah* in *Riyāḍ*, p. 87ff; Landolt, 1987, p. 484ff; Halm, p. 112; *Yanābīc*, YN 16, p. 33).

In order to resolve the questions of whether the soul needs the body and whether the body is in a category contradistinct to the soul, we must examine Sijistānī's concept of matter. In Sijistānī's scheme, all physically manifest things are a mixture of the subtle and the dense (*latīf* and *kathīf*). Sijistānī's concept of substance (*jawhar*) differs significantly from the Neoplatonic because he includes spiritual and physical substances under the same genus. A passage in *Iftikhār* states that the creative command is the cause of both the seven higher letters which establish the spiritual forms, and the stars, which establish the physical forms. The creative command is manifest in the bodily forms of the seven law-giving prophets

(*nutaqāʿ*) responsible for the administration of society . Similarly, the command is manifest in man in the seven limbs of the human body through which are established wonderful, unprecedented works.

According to Sijistānī, the body-soul link centres around the issue of ‘substance’ including the physical and spiritual. Since ‘substance’ includes both under the same genus, physical and spiritual matter do not differ in their essence. Sijistānī’s concept of matter and the case of the pure soul choosing to enter a physical body weakens the thesis of the “forgetfulness” of matter and the soul’s fall into matter. The question of whether the soul is capable of receiving learning without a body is secondary to Sijistānī’s definition of matter in this case. Another concept corroborates the point that the soul-body is an unit, without the one being ‘evil’ or forgetful. This concept is of ‘pairing’ or *izdiwāj*. Sijistānī appears to be consistent in the "pairing" concept which is both cosmological and functional. In the *Bāhirah*, ¶ 5. 15-16 Sijistānī talks of *izdiwāj* when he describes the positive and negative capabilities of souls while they are still "paired" with the body. He goes on to further his argument by using the Qurʾānic verse, "Then He said, it is not for God to punish them while you are amongst them" (8:33). By quoting this verse Sijistānī points out that God refers to the power of the prophet as His agent of forgiveness even while being in a physical body. This verse demonstrates that the soul is fully capable of recalling its intellectual subtle state even while united with the body. Just as in the letters *K* and *N* of the command (*KuN*, *amr*) there is the pairing of the *Kāf* and *Nūn*, so all created things (*mawjūdāt*) are a result of the pairing of the subtle and the dense (*kathīf* and *laṭīf*) and the reason for this mixture is their link to the creative command.

Therefore, here Sijistānī does not oppose the concept of physical resurrection per se. He establishes that the physical world and the soul are both eternal, and that these two are eternally attached to each other. He also establishes the mystical relationship between creator-created through the link of the intellectual repose (*sukūn*) given to all creation in degrees by the intellect.

He elaborates on the idea that the soul is always paired with the body through the parable of the craftsman who builds a house, or makes a door or writes a book. A firmly established form exists in the soul of the craftsman according to which he creates the object in the natural world. When corruption and obliteration befall these objects the craftsman has the intention to rebuild or renew them through his knowledge and his skill. He does not bother using the remnants of the first material. He uses new material, but the second object corresponds in form to the first object. In the same way God certainly has the power to recreate a second body to be present at the time of resurrection, but it is unnecessary for Him to gather the scattered parts of the dead person when He is quite capable of creating a new form which corresponds perfectly to the first one. As quoted above, in the *Bāhirah*, Sijistānī writes in ¶ 14 that when the world is emptied of bodies, then it replaces those bodies with similar ones. Therefore, though it is perfectly true that God resurrects the dead, He does not resurrect the first skin or body/form but the successive ones.

In summary, Sijistānī holds that resurrection is not an unique event in time occurring only once. The nature-related physical world is eternally linked to the spiritual world and neither is ever annihilated. Regeneration of the physical world is eternal, just as retribution is eternal. According to him, these are the true interpretation of the Qurʾānic verses related to resurrection and retribution. Although resurrection is spiritual, occurring within the individual soul, this fact does not preclude that the soul is in a body. At spiritual rebirth, the soul is aware of its individual identity and does not lose itself in the universal soul. Retribution is the degree of distance or closeness to the universal soul that the individual soul has achieved. Thus, after examining the *Bāhirah* and the *Ifīkhār*, we can conclude that Sijistānī maintains that the soul does need to be in a body to receive learning, but this body maybe either dense or subtle.

3.1 Eternity of the World

The next issue to discuss is how time is related to resurrection: whether resurrection takes place as one event at the end of time and history or whether it is a repeated process. Sijistānī

has already made it clear that resurrection cannot be related to an absolute end of nature, i.e., history and time. He argues that it is unjust that bodies departing the earth at different times must all wait for the grand reunion. In the *Kashf* he ridicules this argument by describing the impossibility of the world's being able to accommodate so many waiting bodies. In both *Iftikhār* and *Kashf* Sijistānī maintains as we have pointed out, a distinction between resurrection and rebirth (*qiyāmah* and *ba'ath*). The question is how time is related to these two events. To understand the intricate relationship between time and resurrection, it is necessary to examine Sijistānī's view of the relationship between time and the world.

Sijistānī believes that the world is eternal. His argument is as follows: the originator (*mubdi'*) can have no priority to creation, for if he did, it would establish the anteriority of time to God as the originator. Therefore, the world originated by the command of the originator cannot be related to time, since at the level of the command there is no time. The relationship between the originator (*mubdi'*) and the intellect (*'aql*) through the divine command (*amr*) illustrates this point.²³²

The creative command is indispensable in Sijistānī's cosmology at the level of *ibdā'*. This becomes apparent in his argument for the eternity of the world. He attempts to steer his solution between the contradictory concepts: (1) the creation of the world out of a pre-existing matter; and (2) creation *ex nihilo*, the concept adhered to by the theologians.²³³ By

²³² The concept of *amr* has earned Sijistānī both acclaim and accusation. He is well-known for having provided an unique function, definition and nature to *amr* in the Islamic milieu (Daftary, 1990, pp. 241-242. He is criticised for having borrowed an entirely Neoplatonic cosmology and clumsily upsetting its scheme by inserting a Qur'ānic concept into it (for the latter view, see Walker, 1974, *AJAS*, pp. 7-21).

The *amr* or command of God is a term occurring in several places in the Qur'ān. It is inextricably linked to the *kun* or the divine fiat (*Yanābī'*, *YN3*, pp. 17-19). Like the *kun* it is related to creative activity, specifically to *ibdā'*. It also links the worlds of *al-jawhar al-jismānī* and *al-jawhar al-rūḥānī* are by causing them (*ma'lūl*) and thus making them enter the world of *khalq* at the physical level.

²³³ Wolfson, 1976, pp. 357-373. If the world were created of spiritual substance (*jawhar*) or *maddah* then one could conclude that *jawhariyah* was present in its cause. This implies that

making the world manifest by the action of the command, i.e. the *kun*, Sijistānī creates a process of the eternal origination of matter both spiritual and physical, which is caused by the relationship between the unity (*waḥdah*) of the originator and the intellect. The unity of the originator and the intellect is manifest in his identification of the intellect with the creative command and the unity of the Originator, as he has stated in *Yanābīʿ* and in *Iftikhār*.²³⁴ Further, he states that the intellect (*sābiq*) is the absolute substance (*jawhar muṭlaq*) but refutes the attribution of substance to God (*Iftikhār*, pp. 24ff, 30ff). He distinguishes three levels in the *Iftikhār* (p.26): *wāḥid al-maḥd*, the creative command, *wāḥid al-aḥad*, the originator, *mubdiʿ* and the *wāḥidal-muṭlaq*, the universal intellect.

The divine discourse, via the creative command, is the first subsisting thing (*qāma*) by virtue of its being a discourse between the originator and the intellect (*Yanābīʿ*, YN 3, pp. 17-19). This discourse is not a mere verbal address, but the actual activity of creating. This activity is manifest in the individual man whose limbs continue to manifest that unique divine discourse through intention and action, albeit not in perfect wholeness. Man is the repository of the command and thus, is the only physical creation graced with this intellectual power which, through the true exercise of the soul, will lead him back to his source, to the initial divine discourse.

In conclusion, since the originator is beyond all predications, both he and his command cannot have time predicated of them. Secondly, since there is no question of temporal creativity at the level of pure ipseity, there is no question of time. The form of the world occurs in the intellect which is pure existention without differentiation (*ibdāʿ-i maḥd*). But the intellect is also present in man in the physical nature-related world, to whom God made two promises, one physical, one spiritual. But how can a non-permanent physical

the Creator is directly linked with "thingness" even of being (*ays*; *Yanābīʿ*, YN2 - where *ays* is used as *shayʿ* in the sense of thingness, and not a mere thing *shayʿ*)

²³⁴ The unity: *waḥdah* is the command: *amr*, which is the intellect: *ʿaql*, who is the preceding one: *sābiq*

being be promised a permanent retribution? (*Bāhirah*, ¶ 11; *Yanābīʿ*, YN 33, pp. 87-90). The non-eternity of either the physical or the spiritual element would invalidate divine retribution. Accordingly, if God's promise and threat are to be justly carried through, then the originated world of the intellect-soul, the imaginal world and the created world, must all be represented within man.

Some conclusions Sijistānī has established follow from the above: (1) the eternity of the physical world is through the omnipotence of the creator; (2) the purpose of the eternity of the physical world is the effectiveness of reward and punishment which is intrinsically linked to the soul and not to the body; (3) the distinction between *qiyāmah*, which is collective and *baʿth*, which is individual and related to the intellect-soul; (4) the physical world has to be eternal if the mystical link between creator-created is established, since the creator is eternal; (5) the body, although subject to decay, is not subject to annihilation but is transformed into another body which replaces the first in an eternal cycle because the soul-world is eternal; (6) the imaginal world bridges both the intellect-soul world and the created world.

III. 2. Jurisdictions of the Nature and the Soul-Related Worlds:

The concept of resurrection in the *Bāhirah* is concerned with the jurisdiction of the physical nature-related world and the soul-related world. In ¶ 4 of the treatise, Sijistānī states that the nature-world is confined to the influences of the all comprehensive Sphere. He goes on to state that the soul-related world is confined in the form of man, without whom there would be no benefits of any kind, for the soul. He specifies the benefits as coming both, from the emanations of the intellect and from the administrative culture. When he speaks of an "administrative culture" he is not referring to a metaphysical law, but the laws which govern the cultures of man in the physical world. In this passage and in ¶ s 5, 7 and 8 as we will see below, Sijistānī is describing a condition for the soul in the physical world.

According to ¶ 4 of *Bāhirah*, the form of man is the most honoured of all forms. All other forms, whether soul-related or physical, can be made manifest by it. In fact, Sijistānī ends the section with a categorical judgment: that the good and evil of the heavens derive from this form. Sijistānī may intend this statement to mean that the form of man is the cause of both good and evil; or, that this form has the power to make good and evil manifest, or lastly, that this form has the capacity to transform good into evil and vice versa. Before we can proceed with an investigation into the nature of the form of man, let us attempt to clarify the nature of physical man, so that we are able to determine whether the form of man belongs to the soul-related intelligible world or to the physical nature-related world.

Once Sijistānī has established that the physical world is eternal and is intrinsically linked with the spiritual world, he has laid the ground for his next step: to establish that man in the physical body is in fact a part of the higher, luminous world of the soul and the intellect. The *Bāhirah* states that all creative activity, resurrection, reward and punishment, and all progression of physical and spiritual life and its regeneration are confined to the soul and to the soul-related world (*‘ālam al-nafsānī*), which includes the intellect. To establish Sijistānī’s views of the individual soul being part of the universal soul one must attempt to place it within his ontological hierarchy.

As discussed earlier, the first element in this hierarchy after the originator is the first originated entity (*mubda‘ al-awwal*). The question of precedence is important not only to establish the hierarchial order, but also to identify the figures of the creator, the rightful guide and the resurrector. So far it appears that the intellect is the first originated entity (*mubda‘ al-awwal*, *Yanābī‘*, *YN* 8, pp. 27). Just as the intellect contains the elements of affinity and separateness in its relationship to the originator, so the soul contains the elements of desire and helplessness, in its relationship to the intellect. Corresponding to the affinity which the intellect feels for the originator, the soul feels desire for the intellect, which in the physical form of man takes the form of intellectual repose. The separateness from the originator felt by the intellect corresponds to the soul’s helpless inability to completely comprehend the intellect. The soul’s attempt to comprehend the intellect

generates movement. Movement is visible as the physical form of man. On the one hand, the soul's desire to know the intellect manifests itself in the aspiration of matter eternally to receive new forms. On the other hand, the absence of the desire manifests itself in a helplessness which makes a form unable to be another form at the same time as it is itself (*Yanābīʿ*, *YN* 11, pp. 32-34). This tension is required to maintain the soul's own identity (*dhāt*) in spite of its desire for the totality of what the intellect can bestow. This constraint keeps the soul from engaging itself in what might make it exceed its measure and rank (*Yanābīʿ*, *YN* 11, pp. 32-34). The soul's inherent eternal desire to join its cause, the intellect, in an ecstatic flight seeking the source is limited only by its own self-consciousness, as a direct parallel to the intellect-originator relationship (*YN* 11, pp. 32-34).

Sijistānī uses specific verbs for each level of creative activity. These different verbs are clues to understanding the different levels of creation. Sijistānī uses the verb *baʿtha* in the seventh form *inbaʿtha* when discussing the origin of the soul, which is a deliberate change from the level of *ibdāʿ*. In *Yanābīʿ* he states that just as the physical universe is homogenous with the physical realities of which it is comprised, so also, the universe of the intellect and soul are homogenous with each other and with their realities (*YN* 3-4, pp. 20-24). It is curious that in the *Bāhirah*, Sijistānī uses only one term, *ʿālam al-nafsānī*, comprehensively for any condition existing, where he thinks that the subtle world of *ibdāʿ* is involved even in the physical world of nature. Here he does not use terms which distinguish between the world of the intellect and the world of the soul. At the same time the soul-related world is set up as a category opposed to that of the nature-related world. For example, we read in ¶ 3. 9, 13-15..." we say that everything that comes into being is [of] two [kinds], the natural world and the soul world...The world of soul occurs from the emanations of the Universal Intellect and the Universal Soul in individual souls".

The soul, as in the case of the intellect, produces forms (of the physical universe and time). This process of production is described in the *Yanābīʿ*. Sijistānī writes that the soul is internal to the object it projects. After the soul has projected a body, it becomes external to it

(*Yanābīʿ*, *YN* 3-4, pp. 20-24). In this case, by the term "internal" Sijistānī means the soul is immanent in the object. He does not mean that the soul is localised or captive in a physical body, since according to Sijistānī the subtle substance of the soul is not quantitatively divisible. Similarly, he states that the soul cannot be "outside" an object as would a substance surrounding the physical universe as a mass (*YN* 3-4 pp. 20-24). In a physical sense it is impossible to conceive of the intellect and the soul to be "outside" the spheres.

Having set up these premises, Sijistānī argues that distance cannot be represented in a physical sense, since the intellect does not separate from the soul for even a moment (*Kashf*, pp. 27ff; *Yanābīʿ*, *YN* 4, pp. 20-24). The intellect contains and is simultaneously aware of the separateness of the soul. It is through the soul's awareness of its separateness that differentiations are actualised. Similarly, when the physical world enters the "interior" of the worlds of intellect and soul, it is not expelled from its physical aspect of being, nor is it physically altered (*Yanābīʿ*, pp. 20ff). In the *Bāhirah* ¶ 4, as we have seen, Sijistānī describes the limits of the sphere of influence of the soul. He sets up a typology of "being", distinguishing between two worlds of being, the nature-related world and the soul-related world. The nature-related world is surrounded by the spheres. In turn, the Spheres are surrounded by the form of man, which encompasses the soul-related world.

4. Form of Man: *Nafs Zakīyah*?

By ¶ 3 in the treatise, it is evident that the form of man is a major element in Sijistānī's cosmology. Are either the intellect or the soul, or both, identified with the form of man? Sijistānī states that the form of man penetrates all forms of both the nature-related and the soul-related levels of being, affecting even the entirety of the form of the heavens, although it is unclear whether he is referring to the encircling body of ¶ 4 or to the soul-related world. Further, the form of man affects the nature of individual men by virtue of being of a higher rank. The position of the form of man, referred to in the *Bāhirah* as *ṣūrat al-*

insānīyah, is related to the figures of the *qā'im*, the lord of resurrection, the pure soul and the prophet.

If the form of man is taken to be a universal, then it is linked unequivocally to the world of soul. However, in the very same paragraph ¶ 4 Sijistānī writes that the form which renders all nature-related and soul-related forms "transparent" is the human form. In this instance it is clear that he speaks of the universal form of man interchangeably with the individual form of man. This must indicate that he believed that the individual soul was a part of the universal soul. In ¶ 17 of the same treatise the parallel made between Muḥammad and the Hour is used to make the same point.

Sijistānī is not always explicit about the difference between the universal (originated-intelligible) and particular (created-physical) levels of being. In substance or essence (*jawhar*) the two levels are identical. But in their form and function the universal and particular levels are different from each other. In ¶ 17 Sijistānī writes that, nature was not disturbed by the prophet's coming since the his commissioning was a soul-related phenomenon. And since the prophet has likened himself to the hour of resurrection, the hour, therefore, resurrection too, must be soul-related. Yet all this soul-related revelatory activity and resurrection takes place in the physical world with the prophet as a human body. Therefore, one can conclude that even resurrection, essentially a soul-related phenomenon, occurs in the physical world because its essential element is the soul which is eternally present in the human form.

As proof for his argument, Sijistānī quotes a Qur'ānic verse, which states that God told the unbelievers that as long as his forgiveness was among them, He could not punish them (*Bāhirah* ¶ 6. 7-10). Sijistānī interprets the prophet to be God's forgiveness and, indirectly to be spiritual prosperity which would never end due to the presence of the remembrance (*dhikr*) of God. Since the prophet is directly linked to God's forgiveness and mercy (*Bāhirah* ¶ 6.7-9, ¶ 8. 1), which had been decreed before His anger, Sijistānī concludes that these qualities cannot belong to the physical world. Hence they belong to the soul-related

world, but occur in the nature-related physical world. The prophet and/or the *qā'im* are perceived as the mercy of God which precedes his anger. His anger in turn is perceived as distance from God's mercy.

Sijistānī's debate with Rāzī and Kirmānī recorded in *Kitāb al-Riyāḍ* regarding the nature of individual souls is relevant in this context. This debate is recorded in the fifth part of the fifth chapter of *al-Riyāḍ*, where Rāzī maintains that man is a fruit of the physical world only.²³⁵

Rāzī and Kirmānī both argue that the individual souls are traces (*āthāriyah*) of the universals (*kulliyāt*), whereas, Sijistānī maintains that they are in their essence i.e. quiddity, parts of the universal soul, although they may assume various forms of beingness (*chistī*: *Kashf, maqālat* 3; *Yanābī*^c, pp. 44ff). To enable himself to reach this conclusion Sijistānī claims that the individual soul is a part of the universal soul and not as Rāzī and Kirmānī assert, simply a trace (*āthār*). The universal soul works in the cosmos producing perfect forms and figures, just as in the physical sphere the individual soul produces works in the form of art, music etc. (*Yanābī*^c YN 18, pp. 46ff, ¶ 88-90). Thus the creative functions of the universal and individual souls correspond completely.

The essential characteristic of the spiritual is contrasted with the physical in functional terms, i.e. vis-à-vis the power to create and the act of creating. Sijistānī uses the image of the infinite circle to elucidate this point. The intellect-soul world resembles an infinite circle, which by its nature defies definition, as an infinite circle has no parameters of time and space. This infinite circle resembles a unique point (YN4, ¶ 36). If it is maintained that the world of the intellect-soul is the farthest point from whatever can be cognised, then this

²³⁵ The physical world is brought into existence through its fundamentals, the first of which is prime matter. The basis for the composite world are motion and rest which are animate elements. Thus, the *afṛāḍ al-muttawallada* is physically created and composed (*tarakkaba*) as the form of man, which then becomes ready to receive the three souls: vegetative, sensory and rational.

world can be reached only by the individual soul, since the individual soul is the only part of man in the physical world which is also part of the world of universals (*Yanābīʿ*, YN 28, pp. 47ff, ¶ 90; *Nuṣrah* in *Riyāḍ*, pp. 119ff). The intellect-soul world is the circle in its infinity, both centre and radii, and the superimposition of origin and end.

So the differentiation between exterior body and interior soul and between that which contains and that which is contained merely constitute a process of the physical universe. Outside of the process they lose their distinction and are one. Whereas the intellect preserves the forms in perfection, even when they are existentiated by the Soul, the physical world conserves the original forms only in the soul, but subjects them to corruption and decay in existence (*Yanābīʿ*, YN 7, pp. 26ff, YN 4, p. 22, ¶ 36). Therefore, the existentiation of the human form united with the individual soul retains the perfection of the intellect.

The universal soul produces all the forms of nature which are used by individual souls either positively or negatively, through the process of *istishfāʿ*²³⁶ In the *Bāhirah* this term, is used by Sijistānī in a technical sense (¶ s 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8). In all of its occurrences the basic meaning is the act of the individual soul of making a condition or state of the physical or the soul world, appear or be manifested in the physical nature-related world. Let us examine these passages to determine a more accurate understanding of the term and its place as one of the functions of the soul.

In ¶ 3. 13-16, 1-3, Sijistānī describes the soul-related world emanating from the universal intellect and the universal soul in individual souls. The soul-related world occurs in individual souls from two sources, just does as the nature-related world. The first source for the soul-related world is the emanations of the universal intellect in individual souls. As a result of these emanations, the soul accepts divine help (*taʿyīd*) and is among those who are masters of it. By accepting divine help the individual allows the soul-related world to

²³⁶ See above, p. 90

enter him. The second source for the soul-related world to enter the individual is what is rendered transparent (*mā yustashiffu*) from the emanations of the universal soul. As a result of these emanations, the soul accepts teaching (*ta'lim*) and discipline (*riyāḍah*) through which individual souls derive life and reach the farthest limits of their potential and capacity. In this passage the verb refers to the action of rendering the emanations of the universal soul, the second element of the soul-world (the first element being the emanations of the intellect), transparent or visible in the individual soul.

In ¶ 4. 7-12, Sijistānī specifies the form of the soul which is the subject of the action of rendering transparent. This Form is the Form of Man, the most honoured of all forms. All other forms of the nature and soul-related worlds are rendered transparent (*tastashiffu*) within it. Sijistānī argues, if it is correct that the human form renders transparent (*tastashiffu*) all forms, be they natural or soul-related, and thereby renders transparent (*istishfāf*) the Form of the Sphere, then it is philosophically necessary to maintain that the Form of Man is outside the influence of the Sphere and that the latter does not affect it. Rather, the Form of Man affects the Sphere. In this passage the action of making forms manifest is attributed to the Form of Man, in whom is contained the entire soul-related world. This Form is identified with the human form, but, Sijistānī has not yet linked the human form (*ṣūrah*) with the human body. An important question confronts us in this passage: by making forms manifest/rendering transparent, is Sijistānī suggesting that the Form of Man brings all forms of the nature and soul-related worlds into being? If so, then, the Form of Man is classified higher than the Spheres and is the creator of the physical nature-related world at the level of *khalq*, the cycle of generation and decay.

In ¶ 5.2-7, The act of 'rendering transparent' must be understood clearly if we want to understand the position of the Form of Man as creator. Sijistānī claims that souls render transparent (*istashaffat*) the Form of the Sphere and its bodies, in conditions which bear the marks of nature and in conditions in which emanations of the intellect are predominant. While in conditions where nature predominates, the influences of the soul produce envy, ruination and terrifying creatures, which cause perdition and destruction. But if the souls

render transparent (*istashaffat*) the Form of the Sphere, all its bodies and luminous stars, in a condition of intellectual predominance, the influences which the soul manifests result in good fortune, divinely granted talents and beings who bring advantage and nobility. Here it is clear that the action of rendering transparent or making manifest is in itself neither good nor bad. The action has negative or positive results depending on whether the conditions in which the souls render something transparent are dominated by the influences of nature, or, the emanations of the intellect. In this context the action of the soul of bringing into being appears to occur in the physical nature-related world. However, the prevailing condition, whether nature dominated or intellect dominated, is determined not by the soul which is doing the manifesting, but by some other unidentified agent.

In ¶ 6. 1-3, 7-13, Sijistānī applies the verb to describe a prophetic act. He states that the rising of a messenger ensures the security of his people and his community from punishment and destruction. Security is ensured because the messenger renders the Sphere transparent (*yustashiffu*) in his noble soul. As a result, during the prophet's stay on earth, the Heavens experience extreme prosperity, power, goodness and nobility. Even God has said that it is not for Him to punish any transgressors while the prophet is amongst them (8:32). God abstains from punishing the ungrateful because the prophet, due to heavenly influences, renders (*tastashiffu*) the Heavens transparent in his noble, sublime, illuminated and good soul. According to Sijistānī, God confirmed the meaning of the absence of punishment because of the presence of the messenger through the meaning of another term, 'forgiveness'. He did this by saying that He would not punish the transgressors while they ask for forgiveness, namely, as long as their souls desire the remembrance of God and they ask for help, and as long as their souls are themselves rendering transparent (*mustashiffa*) the Form of the Heavens from which punishment and the mutations of nature descend. In this passage the possessor of the message ensures the good of his people, by making the sphere manifest within his own soul.

Here Sijistānī does not use the term prophet, but rather the term, "the possessor of the message". But because he quotes the Qur'ān (8:33) it is clear that he means the prophet

when he uses "the possessor of the message". But this is true only if we are certain that he accepted the traditional theological interpretation of the verse²³⁷; and we cannot be certain that he did. The possessor of the message is also identified as the "forgiveness" of God. When this person, a prophet or some other figure, renders the Sphere transparent within himself, the power of nature, which in this case is identified as the origin of disfigurations and punishment, is nullified (cf. ¶ 4. 11-12..."Rather, the Form of Man affects the Sphere and pre-empts its power"). Furthermore, as long as the people ask for "forgiveness", i.e., for the figure who is the possessor of the message, then they themselves in their own souls also render the Spheres and Form of the Heavens transparent. Therefore, by recognising the possessor of the message and asking for his help the individual souls are endowed with a capacity similar to his, of bringing forms into being. It is clear that the encircling Body in ¶ 3.1 and the Sphere in ¶ s 3, 4 and 5 and the form of the heavens in ¶ 6 refer to the same entity, which is both the physical nature-related world and the Form of the Nature-Related World.

In ¶ 7.12-14, Sijistānī explains the negative use of the verb. He states that dirty and impure souls render (*istashaffat*) forms of the structures of nature transparent, thus altering their own fortunate position. From their influences occur injurious, deadly and damaging beings which make (*hadathat*) their own barrenness and darkness appear. Here the neutrality of the act of rendering transparent is clear. It is the impurity of the souls which makes the action bear negative results. Because the structures of nature have been brought into being by the impure souls, they have lost their fortunate position. Here again, Sijistānī uses the term *istashaffat* for the action of the souls, and *hadatha* for the action of the physical nature world, thereby maintaining the distinction between creating at the intelligible level and the transforming of matter into different physical forms at the physical level.

In ¶ 8. 7-10, Sijistānī uses another verb instead of a form of *shaffa*. Good pure creatures manifest their own purity in the organic domain of man, and from their influences occur

²³⁷ Reference to Qur'ānic verse 8:33.

harmonious human bodies, rendering transparent (*al-mubdīyah*) through their essences the character of angels and actions such as glorification and sanctification. This passage is the inverse of the passage above. Here, pure souls influence the physical world, and the resulting human bodies are virtuous, harmonious creatures. These then bring their own angelic characters to light through their essences. But here Sijistānī has not used the verb *istashaffat*. Rather, he uses *badā*, which also means to manifest /reveal. We have no evidence at this point to indicate whether his choice was deliberate. Perhaps he uses *badā* because he makes a distinction in the type of action that occurs, namely, the bodies making their own pure essences manifest in the physical world, rather than the souls bringing into being something other than themselves.

After examining the relevant passages we find that Sijistānī links the Form of Man to a human form. The soul-related intelligible world of universals inhabits the nature-related physical world of particulars. The Form of Man is the figure of the *pure soul* in a human body. Individual souls share the capacity with the prophets and the *pure soul* to render the Spheres and the Form of the Heavens transparent.

Sijistānī presents us with another problem related to the issue of universals and particulars. In the *Iftikhār* (p. 87, ¶ 1) he seems to hold that the ipseity of an individual, that is his 'self-awareness' (*huwīyah*), is the permanent substance of man and therefore, his soul. It is the ipseity which is responsible for actions, good or bad. Therefore, retribution must be directed at ipseity. Sijistānī believes ipseity to be permanent and eternally present in a succession of bodies. Hence, the position of the soul in relation to its ipseity must be identified.

Sijistānī specifies four actions pertaining to the soul. The actions of the soul are: (1) an individual soul by virtue of its own degree of purity, attained through the acquisition of knowledge, makes this acquired knowledge manifest, which it obtained through the teachings (emanations) of the Universal Soul. Due to its ability to make the teachings of the universal soul clear, the individual soul acquires one additional ability: the capacity to accept

teaching and discipline in its journey to perfection; (2) the individual makes his own inner purity and goodness manifest and uses them to influence his physical surroundings so that others born into these surroundings will have an advantage and will be in an environment of goodness, purity and knowledge; (3) the individual soul which is born into the environment of purity, goodness and knowledge, makes manifest (the term *badāʾ* is used) his own purity; (4) the form of man through whom all soul and nature-related forms are manifested, influences the spheres and the heavenly bodies.

Sijistānī presents the form of man in different ways in the *Bāhirah*. In ¶ 4.7-12 in the *Bāhirah*, the form of man is not referred to as an individual form in the physical world; however, in ¶ 4.8-13 he has a physical form. The two references lead to the conclusion that man contains all forms and is, therefore, at the level of the universals, while he simultaneously appears in the physical world in a human form which places him at the level of particulars. Sijistānī's description of the form of man coincides with that of the *pure soul* and the *qāʾim*. The four actions pertaining to the soul are all performed by the ipseity of the individual soul. Individual souls can also decide to acquire ignorance and not manifest harmony and goodness but manifest evil, oppression and killing (*Bāhirah*, ¶ 5 & 6). Hence the capacity within an individual soul to manifest is based on the will of that ipseity to seek knowledge or ignorance. Therefore, ipseity cannot be viewed as a static, unchanging entity.

The ipseity of individual souls cannot remain constant or the same as it was at the moment of particularisation or birth when the universal soul particularises itself in the individual souls. This fact means that the universal soul, except in the case of the Form of Man (the messenger or *pure soul*), is not simply an extension of individual souls. Conversely, individual souls, although related to the universal soul in a real way, are not simple emanations of the universal soul. At the moment when ipseity enters a body and becomes an individual soul as a result of the creative activity of the universal soul, a radical change takes place. A disjunction occurs whereby the ipseity of the individual soul is now an independent entity with its own will to acquire knowledge or ignorance. The individual soul is intrinsically imprinted with the initial attempt of the universal soul to comprehend the

universal intellect. Likewise, the individual soul yearns for the knowledge of its own total reality. If the individual soul were only a trace it would not show any inclination to know its cause, since according to Sijistānī, an effect is only the action exercised by the cause which has produced it. The effect neither has an independent will and possesses no desire to know its cause, nor does it possess the attribute of comprehension (*Yanābīʿ*, YN 18, ¶ 89).

Sijistānī uses the concept of the individual soul being a part of the universal soul, to explain why there are differences in the souls of human beings in terms of virtues and vices. He defines the differences in the degree of virtue in terms of the amount of repose (*sukūn*) that the individual soul has obtained from the intellect. Thus, the variance in the degree of repose causes the difference between individual human beings i.e. in the sages and the *ʿulamāʾ* (*Yanābīʿ*, YN 12, pp. 35ff, ¶ 64). The more repose the soul possesses before the bestowal of the gifts from the intellect, the more receptive it is. If the individual soul has received perfect repose (*al-sukūn al-tāmm*) from the intellect's initial address to the soul, then the gifts received later by that individual soul will be unchangeable and uninterrupted. These are the souls, Sijistānī maintains, whom God comforts directly through spiritual energy (the *muʾayadūn*; *Yanābīʿ*, YN 12, pp. 35ff, ¶ 64). Notably, Sijistānī does not use the term *muʾayadūn* as a preferred category referring only to the prophets and the *awṣiyāʾ* and the Imāms. He uses it in a more comprehensive sense and, therefore, it could include those who are spiritual disciples of the *pure soul* (*nafs al-zakīyah*) as in *Bāhirah.*, ¶ 18..." And *qiyāmah*...are in totality soul-related influences which are connected through the manifestation of the *pure soul*. Those souls have spiritual company with that pure soul who has already reached the extreme rank of humanity, and all of them are like one soul...". In ¶ 12 resurrection, appears through the pure soul (*nafs zakīyah*.) In ¶ 18 the pure soul (*nafs zakīyah*) is described as having reached the extreme rank of humanity. It is not subject to time or space since it manifests resurrection, even though resurrection occurs at different times for different souls. This description specifies a cosmic figure. However, in ¶ 13 Sijistānī uses *nafs zakīyah ṣāfiyah* to indicate one who has the capacity fully to understand

the concept of retribution. Thus, it is probable that Sijistānī views the addressee to be the *nafs zakīyah ṣāfiyah*.

For corroboration of the identity of the *pure soul* in the *Bāhirah*, Sijistānī's use of the term in the *Iftikhār* is relevant. He uses the term *nafs zakīyah* in a number of ways. For instance, it is connected with the manifestation of resurrection. In this case the *pure soul* has a specific position kept aside for it and concealed from the rest of humanity (p.76). Furthermore, it is integral in the process of retribution where it is part of the spiritual hierarchy (*ḥudūd al-rūḥānīyah*). Significantly, Sijistānī also relates the *pure soul* (*nafs zakīyah*) to renewing the law (*sharī'ah*) in view of its capability to create through the divine command (p.64). In this function, it is directly linked to prophecy. In the *Iftikhār* resurrection is the manifestation of a nobility in the essence of creation and in the best part of nature, embodied in man. The appearance of this nobility is possible only with the rising of the most exalted, the most noble and the most just person at the appropriate time (p. 75).

In order for the pure soul, the noblest among his species to manifest himself he requires the help of several other strong souls (*Iftikhār, al-risālah*, p. 64). As we have seen, the strength or weakness of the *pure soul* is partially dependent on these other souls, to whom Sijistānī refers in the *Bāhirah*, as those in spiritual discipleship (¶ 18. 13-15; 1-2; cf. *Ikhwān al-Ṣafā*, vol. 2, p. 280). The reliance of the *pure soul* on souls in the state of spiritual discipleship shows that the condition of resurrection is not heralded by an individual alone, but by society at large.

The strength of the pure soul and of the other souls in spiritual discipleship depends on the degree of knowledge they possess. Since the acquisition of knowledge is the responsibility of the individual soul, the process through which the soul acquires strength is relevant. Sijistānī claims there are two ways to acquire knowledge: (1) through the emanations of the universal intellect and universal soul; (2) by accepting the teachings of the true guardians of religion. There is no guarantee that the gifts received from the intellect will be continuous and unchangeable, except where the prerequisite of having perfect repose (*al-sukūn al-*

tāmm) is present. As long as the soul, before receiving the gifts, has not learnt or received perfect repose, the benefits received are mixed with physical realities subject to decay and change. It is in this "mixture" dimension that the individual souls resemble the physical bodies to which they are united (YN 12, pp. 35ff, ¶ 63-65). The individual soul can be the most perfectly balanced creature if it possesses qualities which link it to both the subtle and the physical worlds. The individual soul feels an absence of repose (*‘adam al-sukūn*) caused by an inclination once more to physical realities. It is this retardation which causes the soul to be tired and weak (*Yanābī‘*, YN 12, pp. 35ff, ¶ 65).

Being part of both the soul-related and the nature-related worlds, the individual soul is an intermediary which has the capacity to act at two levels: (1) the level where matter is physically transformed from one form to another (*khalq*); and (2) the level of bringing into being (*inbi‘āth*.) from the intelligible to the physical level. Although Sijistānī rejects the idea that the soul is a trace, in the *Kashf* (*maqālat* 3, *justār* 5) he uses the image of an imprint made on wax as representing the individual soul. However, he explains that the imprint occurs not at the physical level of transformation (*takwīn*), but, at the level of that which is "becoming" (*būdanihā*) from the intelligible to the physical. He argues that one cannot hold that the imprint "becomes" existent, because that would pre-suppose that it had not been in existence prior to its becoming existent. This is another example of Sijistānī's view that the soul, the imprint in this case, has being/existence prior to taking on the form of an existent. *Būdanihā* in this context means "that which must come into existence". Returning to Sijistānī's image, the wax receives many imprints, but in substance, it remains the same. So also the soul receives various forms but in substance remains itself.

Elsewhere in the *Kashf*, Sijistānī writes that when a sensation returns to the sensor there is nothing new in the sensation which it did not possess prior to its return. This can be applied to the soul; that is, when the physical form returns to the soul, the form has only what it left with (*Kashf*, *maqālat*, 3, *justār* 5). Hence imprints or forms cannot be acquired by the soul in any unique or new manner because they can be brought into being only through the soul's own substance. Therefore, each form in succession acquired by the soul is not unlike

the one which preceded it. The concept of the pre-existent substance of the soul contributes evidence for the view that Sijistānī held to the thesis of *tanāsukh*.²³⁸ The soul has in its mind (*dhihn*)²³⁹ the capability to produce a perfect, beautiful and radiant form, which is subject to its use. Sijistānī refers to the soul as the manifestor of essence (*bārizat al-mā'iyah*; *Yanābī'*, YN 35, p. 82, ¶ 161). The soul manifests essence in the nature-related world by bestowing form upon essence.

Physical differentiation of existents occurs in the nature-related world and is created by the soul. The noblest and most complete way for the soul to create a form corresponding to the soul is through its intellect. In other words, the soul works through the benefits it receives from the intellect, which is not the simple faculty of reason at the physical level, but absolute knowledge (*Kashf*, *maqālat* 3, *justār* 5). Unlike the soul which belongs to the soul-related world of intelligibles, since the faculties of the form are operative at the physical level, there is the danger that they maybe deficient. This point is explicit in the *Bāhirah*, when Sijistānī argues for the indispensability of the intellect for cognizance of the truth, whether truth means the knowledge of resurrection, retribution, *barzakh* or the leaders whom one follows. If the knowledge obtained is deficient, and not absolute truth (*ḥaqā'iq*), then the soul is a captive of falsehood.

Sijistānī views the individual soul as "participating" in the universal soul. This is one reason for his position that man is the fruit of the higher luminous world of the universal soul. The two views Sijistānī states in the *Nuṣrah* appear strangely contradictory. On the one hand he claims the soul is the fruit of the Pleroma (*Nuṣrah* in *Riyāḍ*, p. 128ff; *Ithbāt*, p. 182); on the other hand he states "...an evidence of the imperfection of the soul and the perfection of the intellect is that the rational (i.e., the human) soul sent to the world below from the intellect becomes consumed by lust and pleasure and their world and forgets its light" (*Nuṣrah* in *Riyāḍ*, p. 87). Thus, the individual soul is the fruit of the world of

²³⁸ See below pp. 205 and 224.

²³⁹ For a discussion on the five senses of the soul i.e. *fikr*, *khāṭir*, *dhihn*, *'aql*, *ḥifz* see *Kashf*, *maqālat*, 102.

universals and is of light; yet it is able to forget itself in the lust of opacity. The cause of this change of condition must lie either in the very nature of the individual soul or in some stronger external cause which influences it. We know from *Bāhirah* that the individual soul, who participates in the soul-related world while being in the physical world, is capable of acquiring both ignorance or knowledge. A soul changes its moral character if its noble qualities, its intellectual connections, are removed from it. In the absence of soul and intellect related emanations contraries, such as the marks of nature, occur.

If ruination and damaging creatures are produced from the souls' influences, then the human bodies who are born are, because of these influences, unbalanced, inharmonious, unvirtuous and already midway in their path to evil. If however, a soul's intellectual connections are present, then, bodies are born in the extreme of harmony and equality, so that souls united with them follow them in virtue and have few faults of character and are midway to absolute virtue (*Bāhirah*, ¶ 5. 14-15, 1-2, 7-10, 11-14). In ¶ 7. 12-16, the acquisition of evil does not suggest unwilled, uncontrolled helpless descent into sleep and forgetfulness. Rather, it emphasizes that drunken heedlessness can be willful and chosen. The occurrence of knowledge is not an automatic bestowal by a higher being. The soul itself creates knowledge or ignorance by rendering transparent, pure or impure forms. In ¶ 8. 7-10 Sijistānī suggests that the imprisonment in forgetting or the gaining of knowledge is brought about by the individual soul itself, and the soul is not inherently bound to exist in one condition or another.

It is untenable to hold that Sijistānī believed that the individual soul lapsed into forgetfulness because it inclined to the gloom and evil of matter. He believed that prophets, imāms and the circle of spiritual disciples (*ṣuḥbah al-rūḥānīyah*) all take forms in the physical world. Thus, he could not have accepted that the noblest fruit of the spiritual world would incline to gloom and evil. Another clue to Sijistānī's real opinion is his statement that when the intellect communes with the soul through its gifts and repose, the communion of the two becomes visible in the manifestation of the form of man (*Kashf, maqālat*, 3). The interaction between the intellect and the soul is implicitly the immediate cause of the

bursting forth of forms. This interaction is described as movement (*ḥarakah*) which constitutes both the substance and the nature of the world of nature (*tabīʿīyāt, Yanābīʿ, YN 12, pp. 35ff, ¶ 63-65*). The physical gifts from the spheres and the stars embodied in the Form of Movement combine with the physical world and make individual physical forms submit to generation and dissolution. Similarly, the communion between the intellect and the soul in the spiritual realm results in the bursting forth of eternal spiritual forms (*YN 12, pp. 35ff*).

The disjunction between the spiritual and the physical worlds is significant because, were the two worlds identical, then the individual soul would not forget the world of sensibles in order to incline to the world of light (*Yanābīʿ, YN 21, pp. 21, ¶ 35*). Sijistānī states that when a body decays and the soul leaves it, the soul loses knowledge of temporal things but retains the degree of the spiritual knowledge it attained while it was united with the body (*Maqālīd, Iqlīd 37; Kashf, pp. 87, 91*). Although the link, says Sijistānī, is represented in the most minute form in comparison with the universe of Light, it is sufficient to provide the individual soul strength to forget the world of materiality. Sometimes the spiritual distance between the individual purified soul and the universal soul is erased. This erasure results from the soul's joy in the relationship and because of the forces of desire. This condition, Sijistānī states, occurs when the individual soul forgets the material universe and is on its way to its own spiritual world (*Yanābīʿ, YN 4, pp. 20ff, ¶ 35-36*).

Corresponding to the interaction of the intellect-soul, is the pair, matter-form, coming into being from the soul (*Yanābīʿ, YN 11, pp. 32-34, ¶ 62*). Man is viewed as being in complete harmony with both the intellectual and the sensible spheres. The balance of the intellect, the *maghz* of the soul rests in his heart. The quintessence of being and the potential of becoming are in proportion to the intellectual and the physical, when the soul descends and links itself to life in the physical form (*Kashf, pp. 27ff*). This process can be visualised as a circular movement where the individual soul enters a physical body created by the motion of the soul. The individual soul then goes through the stages of learning, and finally having realised the Truth, oversees the exalted secrets. At this rank the soul is in continuous

purity and unceasing excellence and descends into the form of man where it resides eternally, having been able to penetrate the heavens and the spheres (*Kashf, maqālat* 3). This final descent does not have negative connotations. It consists of the deliverance of the self, even during the influence of physical things, through participation in the benefits of pure intellect (*Yanābīʿ: YN2*, pp. 32-33, ¶ 59). Sijistānī views the physical form of man, as the gem of the physical world, the final fruit of the pulse of the universal soul (*YN 11*, pp. 32ff, ¶ 57).

Man, the fruit of a higher, luminous world, needs the teachings of the intellect in the forms of revelation and reason, which warn him to seek the eternal abode of his return. Here Sijistānī is in debate with Rāzī who maintains that man is the fruit of the corporeal world in its entirety (*Riyāḍ*, ch. 5). Accusing Rāzī of holding the same view as the *Dahriyah*, Sijistānī maintains that the fact that the physical world is unable to retain man from transferring to another world is proof of the soul's permanence and of its search for its own sphere of being.

Since the individual soul is the essential part of the nature of man, it lives in the physical world. But since it is a part of the universal soul, it also resides in the subtle world and shares the aim of the universal soul. Already being a part of the spiritual subtle world, the individual soul longs for it, and hence the journey into gnosis. The scheme of Rāzī and Kirmānī, which maintains that the individual soul is a trace of the universal soul would not work in Sijistānī's framework of qualitatively distinct levels of creation. According to Kirmānī, man is the fruit of both the physical world bringing him the first perfection, and the spiritual world bringing him the second (*Riyāḍ*, ch. 5). However, in Sijistānī's cosmology the element of mixture-pairedness is the basic structure, one not provided for by the emanation process.

In conclusion, Sijistānī establishes (1) the individual soul is the part of the universal soul which is present in the physical world; (2) the individual soul which possesses perfect intellectual repose is most harmoniously balanced and forms a link between the soul-related

and nature-related worlds, comprehending them; (3) this most harmonious soul is united to a human body, and the union of the two is the *pure soul*, the prophet, *qā'im*, and the form of man (*ṣūrat al-insāniyah*); (4) the purest, most harmonious souls have the capacity to bring entities into being from the intelligible to the physical level, as well as to create at the physical level; (5) the soul is pre-existent to the body, which it receives eternally.

4.1 Time and Matter: *Barzakh*

The relationship between the universals and the particulars concerns the problem of the relationship of matter to time, particularly the relationship between the physical and the non-physical levels of creation. For a simultaneous embodiment of both levels, Sijistānī uses the figure of the form of man. In the form of man, all three levels of creation are involved, *ibdā'*, *inba'ṭha* and *khalaqa*. Thus, the form of man embodies the question of the relationship of time to creative activity. This leads into the second question of the relationship among the three levels and the role of the form of man in them. A third question related to this issue is the definition of *barzakh*, that is the parameters of each level as they are related to matter and time.

The last question will be considered first. According to Sijistānī, *Bāhirah* ¶ 14, the key to understanding resurrection is the knowledge of *barzakh*. The relationship of resurrection to the knowledge of *barāzikh* is twofold: (1) recognizing how the knowledge of *barzakh* bears on the true reality of resurrection; and (2) defining *barzakh* as related to the issue of metempsychosis (*tanāsukh*). Relating to the latter issue, Sijistānī explicitly states that the physical world is filled at all times with souls united to bodies who are the *barzakh* for the succeeding generations and that the continuity of cyclical time and its link with physical forms is a necessity for resurrection, retribution and divine justice. Hence the understanding of *barzakh* is not only crucial to his position on metempsychosis, but for the identification of the figure of the resurrector as well. Time and resurrection are cyclical; thus, neither resurrection nor the Lord of resurrection can be one particular person and/or event. Seen in

this light, resurrection and retribution are a process with the figures of *nafs zakīyah*, *qā'im*, *ṣāhib al-qiyāmah* and *ṣūrat al-insānīyah*, who are included in the Form of Man. It is interesting to note here that in the *Bāhirah* the term *imām* is never mentioned. If Sijistānī had accepted the Fāṭimids as *imāms*, the rightful bearers of revelation, as is claimed by some scholars, it is strange that the term *imām* would not be mentioned in *Bāhirah*, a treatise on the knowledge of resurrection. Perhaps Sijistānī accepted the Fāṭimids as the representatives of the true *imām*, the *qā'im*, Muḥammad ibn Ismā'īl. This would explain the lack of the term *imām* in the *Bāhirah*, as well as Sijistānī's unrepentant attitude regarding his belief in cyclical resurrection and metempsychosis. Sijistānī reckoned with the Fāṭimids as an important and unavoidable political force by accepting their authority over most matters; over some spiritual matters such as resurrection and metempsychosis, Sijistānī felt his own authority superceded theirs. The ultimate spiritual authority for Sijistānī was not the Fāṭimids, not the *qā'im*, Muḥammad ibn Ismā'īl, but his own intellect-soul, the repository of divine knowledge.

The term *barzakh* is mentioned twice in the *Bāhirah*, ¶ 15.2-4..."Thus he who has become strong in the knowledge of the *barāzikh* has arrived at the right path and is not confused concerning the mode of reward and punishment to those from past centuries, whose traces were wiped out and whose remembrance erased." And in ¶ 14..."Hence I say that the knowledge of the *barāzikh* is sufficient [in order] to know this aim. Namely, God the Most High has said in His Book, "And from behind them is a *barzakh* to the Day they are raised". Thus the knowledge of *barāzikh* means that one knows that at all times the world is filled with souls, each united to individual bodies. When the bodies leave the world, they are replaced by others of the same kind. The replacements are the form of the departed ones. Because you know for certain that those who are in the world today, their language, their words, their thinking, their addressing, their knowledge, their speech, their politics, their professions and their crafts, are only what they acquired from the ones who departed. Thus these become the *barāzikh* of the departed ones, and the souls are nothing except what they [the departed ones] made them inherit".

Besides these two passages in the *Bāhirah*, we know from Nāṣir-i Khusraw (*Khawān al-Ikhwān*, pp. 132-133) that Sijistānī was embroiled in a controversy with Nasafī and/or his son, Dihqān, regarding the subject of *barzakh*. According to Nāṣir-i Khusraw, Dihqān, accused Sijistānī of teaching metempsychosis. This accusation was a consequence of Sijistānī's view of the relationship of *barzakh* to retribution. However, Nāṣir-i Khusraw also records that Sijistānī defined *barzakh* as the religious laws of the prophets (*Khawān*, 1959, p. 135). According to Sijistānī, the times necessitate a veiling of the law so that the entirety of its teachings remain hidden (*Kashf*, pp. 81-84). He argues that if the truths of resurrection, absolute knowledge, were known at the outset to all souls, then they would no longer experience the conditions of hope and fear. It is through hope and fear that the subsistence and well-being of the physical world are ensured (*Kashf*, ch. 6, *maqālat* 3, *justār* 3, ¶ 1-3).

When Sijistānī discusses messengership being connected with the universal soul (*al-risālah* in the *Iftikhār*, p. 57), he states that individual souls who are ready to accept knowledge ascend to the subtle and pure natures time after time in order to reach the grace of God. Here retribution is the ascension, and resurrection does not occur in an after-life but during time in the physical world. Therefore, one generation, i.e., physical bodies and the 'time' of that cycle, act as a *barzakh*, both a divider and a veil uplifted, as a gate into the next generation. The *barzakh* is a divider separating souls at the different stages of knowledge. The *barzakh* conceals knowledge of the higher levels from the soul who is at a lower level. But, once a soul has ascended to a higher level, the levels lower than his are unveiled to him. The *barzakh* is that unveiling. As a soul acquires knowledge and purity and is ready to enter the next stage, the *barzakh* is the veil which will be lifted to allow him to enter.

This process continues in order for the individual soul to reach the grace of God. This passage as well as the one quoted above (*Bāhirah* ¶ 15) both clearly indicate Sijistānī's belief in metempsychosis. Retribution is viewed as knowledge, and the universal soul is the logos of prophecy, available to the individual souls who make themselves pure enough

through *istishfāf*.²⁴⁰ The usefulness of the purity of the individual soul is clear in the passage on *al-risālah* in the *Iftikhār* (pp. 57-58), where Sijistānī states that what amazes the listeners of a prophet is the measure of purity and the clarity of the message. The prophet, or any soul who has accepted knowledge from the universal soul has moved closer to the grace of God. The efficacy of communication (through speech, revelation) of such a soul, is in direct relationship to the measure of the speaker's purity. Sijistānī points out here that retribution is not only the condition of purity within the soul, but rather, the efficacy of retribution is the influence that the individual soul can manifest upon its surroundings. Therefore, there are two modes of retribution: (1) the soul's purity, located within the soul; (2) that soul's ability to influence its surroundings and bring other souls closer to the grace of God.

5. The Role of Divine Guidance and Teaching

5.1 Divine Teaching (*Ta'lim*)

Sijistānī states that the channel for divine teaching is the soul (*Bāhirah* ¶ 3.15-3). The individual souls have emanations from the universal soul and the universal intellect, within themselves, which make up the soul-related world. As a result of the presence of these emanations in the individual souls, they are capable of accepting divine guidance (*tā'yīd*). As a result of accepting divine guidance, the souls obtain the capacity to accept divine teaching. The development of the two capabilities bestowed on the individual soul by the universal soul causes it to have life and allows it the possibility to attain the grace of God, which is the farthest rank in the soul's journey to perfection.

²⁴⁰ Retribution can be earned just by the act of acceptance or rejection of the true leaders, who are the rightful bearers of revelation (*Bāhirah*, ¶ 19.12-14).

Once the soul has accepted the responsibility of possessing the two emanations from the universal soul, it is faced with the choice of whom to accept as its teacher. Three areas need to be examined in this context: (1) the nature and role of the learner-soul; (2) the process of learning; (3) the learner-soul's use of knowledge.

The principle of divine teaching can be approached from more than one angle. The concept of the continuation of God's involvement in history through the *imāms* after the end of prophecy with Muḥammad is based on the belief that the justice of the creator could not allow for the termination of His guidance. The justice of God is a theme which Sijistānī discusses in connection with resurrection. Linking the concepts of teaching, the justice of God and resurrection is one way of approaching the issue of the continuation of divine teaching. As we have seen, divine teaching is used by Sijistānī in a wider sense than law-bearing prophecy. It includes any message which aids the soul to reach the grace of God. Another way in which to approach the theme of divine teaching is to view the relationship among the triad teacher-teaching-taught, as a scheme that presupposes the continuous existence of knowledge, the eternal perpetuation of knowledge and its culminatory climax in the final confrontation with the grace of God.

The issue of divine guidance and teaching is perhaps clearer in Sijistānī's writings than the identification of the guide/s. In this context, messianism does not centre around one person but is extended to all those who are masters of knowledge (*Bāhirah*, ¶ 3.15-1). All souls can share in the acquisition of knowledge and rise in their ranks. Pushed to its logical limit, Sijistānī's concept of messianic eschatology allows for a collective movement, albeit with the *qā'im/mahdī/pure soul* at its head. A type of egalitarianism is implied by the extension of the messianic qualities to the wider base comprised of all who have knowledge. Allowing the concept of messianic eschatology to be a collective movement strengthens the focus of the end: the transformation of the souls during the time they live in the physical world, a place where harmony prevails due to the predominance of the intellectual nature of men. The intellectual nature of man, according to Sijistānī, is not knowledge based on human rational elements, but a knowledge which is a mystical knowing of the grace of

God. Messianism transcends the particular, and even the collective consciousness and is in fact, not a movement towards a particular fulfillment but the ultimate manifestation of the truth. Each individual human soul experiences gnosis and transcends the tension of separation from the universal soul by the relationship of knowledge.

Thus, the soul is the instrument through which the absolute intellect makes itself visible. One element of Sijistānī's system is perceived by his critics as antinomianism: Sijistānī's discussion of the abolition of the law, includes the idea that the law is restricted to a certain time, whereas, spiritual law appears throughout all cycles in the nature-related, as well as the soul-related, world.

The increase in knowledge enables souls to render the essence of all things visible, to such an extent as to be able to bring about the condition necessary for the appearance of the *pure soul* and resurrection. The time of the *pure soul* is a time of purity, not because it has appeared, but rather because of the preponderance of the number of souls who have acquired the required level of purity. Thus, knowledge is not linked primarily to obedience to the law, but to the soul's manifestation of the truth.

Revelation as a form of knowledge is two-fold: it takes the form of the law, its exoteric, revealed dimension, and it takes the form of the awareness of the essence of being, its esoteric, veiled dimension. The first includes the administrative maintenance of the nature-related world, whereas, the second form is concerned with the realm of spiritual growth. In the *Maqālīd (Iqlīd 52)* Sijistānī explains the difference between the esoteric (*taʿwīl*) and the exoteric (*tanzīl*) forms: it is like the difference between a manufactured object and an object in its natural state. Its benefits and purity are hidden in the latter and need to be brought out. For example, the luminous nature and the knowledge of the soul lie dormant, until vivified by the intellect. This metaphor brings the role of teaching sharply into focus whether its results are revealed or hidden. Virtue signifies the actions of the soul which help it to acquire purity, knowledge and goodness. The cause of misfortune, i.e. ignorance, is not the absence of knowledge, but rather the soul's own lack of orientation towards it. That is to

say, truth as an object is not invalidated simply because the soul does not embrace it (*Kashf, maqālat 6, justār 5, ¶ 1*). If a student follows an erring (*bī rāhī*) teacher, then he errs, even if he once knew the truth. The above image of the “student” alludes to the soul’s pre-existence to matter and its imprint of divine truth. The image could refer to either the original state of the soul before individuation or to the state of the soul’s embodiment, since the soul never loses its primal condition.

The concept of divine teaching revolves around the nature of the true teacher, i.e., whether he must be a lawgiver as opposed to a messenger. In the debate recorded in the *Riyāḍ*, about whether Adam brought a law Kirmānī and Rāzī believe that Adam’s position as lawgiver is absolutely necessary if he is to be regarded as knowing divinity. In contrast, Nasafī and Sijistānī maintain that the word is not limited by the law, nor contained in it exclusively. They hold that all beings are manifestations of the process of knowledge and therefore are indicators of the absolute truth (*Riyāḍ*, ch. 5). This is clearly demonstrated by Sijistānī’s concept of the *pure soul* and the souls in spiritual discipleship on whom depend the manifestation of the pure soul as set forth in the *Ifīkhār* and the *Bāhirah*.

The search for the true teacher and recognition of him is the first step towards the acceptance of divine teaching. Those individual souls who are the companions of those who possess wisdom and gnosis, by their very act of choosing to be in such company, acquire divine teaching (*Kashf, maqālat 6, justār 5, ¶ 3*). The act of companionship is emphasised by Sijistānī as being the most influential act in the process of acquiring knowledge. This is attested to by a statement that once a disciple has recognised and accepted the true leader, he has already entered the paradisiacal state of knowledge and vision (*Bāhirah* ¶ 19.12-14). The question of the legitimate teacher is linked to his identification in both the nature-related and the soul-related world. The soul through its separation from the intellect, realizes its own identity. Divine teaching is not confined to teaching specifically spread by the prophet, *awṣiyāʿ*, *imām*, and/or the *pure soul*. Sijistānī’s thought embraces a broader perspective on divine revelation which encompasses him who is granted knowledge by divine grace. (*Kashf, maqālat 6, justār 7, ¶ 3*).

In the process of God revealing His intent, the first element is the act of choice made by the individual soul to acquire gnosis. To reach the extreme rank in the hierarchy of the acquisition of knowledge the soul must be able to comprehend the intellect. After the desire to acquire knowledge comes the desire to be initiated into the acceptance of the teacher. At this level, two currents, teaching and receiving, occur. The teacher, the embodiment of the truth, gives to the disciple according to the latter's station and capacity, and nurtures him out of the negative tension of helplessness manifest in ignorance. Through creating a balance of harmony in the soul, the teacher allows the individual disciple to transcend the physical plane (*Kashf*, *maqālat* 6, *justār* 7, ¶ 2 ; *Bāhirah*, ¶ 19.12-14). Thus, the nature-related world is not regarded as a prison from which one must escape, but rather as a level of knowledge constituting a particular dimension of total reality.

5.2 Metempsychosis (*Tanāsukh*)

It is not surprising that the issue of metempsychosis invariably arises when Sijistānī is discussed. It constituted a major part of the debate in which he was involved and is one of the charges brought against him, not only by those not of his immediate circle, but also by those within the Ismā'īlī hierarchy itself. Bīrūnī in *Kitāb fī Taḥqīq mā lī-l-Hind* records that Sijistānī in *Kashf al Maḥjūb* teaches a form of metempsychosis (Bīrūnī, 1958, p. 49; first pointed out by S. Pines in REI, XXII, 1954, p. 16). Nāṣir-i Khusraw writes in *Zād al-Musāfirīn* that Abū Ya'qūb taught in *Sūs al-Baqā'*, *Kashf al-Maḥjūb* and the *Risālah al-Bāhirah* that reward and punishment occur on this earth and was declared unwell by the lord of the time, namely, the imām (1923, pp. 421-422). In *Khwān al-Ikhwān* Nāṣir-i Khusraw describes the controversy among Nasafī, his son Dihqān, and Sijistānī regarding *barzakh* and reward and punishment and Dihqān's accusation that Sijistānī taught metempsychosis (pp. 132-133).

The Arabic term for metempsychosis, *tanāsukh*, is a verbal noun from the verb *nasakha* in its sixth form. It means change, succession or chain. Technically *tanāsukh* is defined as the

transfer of an individual soul into another material body when the former body dies.²⁴¹ The immediate question under debate is the existence of successive incarnations in different bodies, both within and outside its own species.²⁴²

Even though many Qur'ānic terms lend themselves to an interpretation sympathetic to metempsychosis, Muslim theologians could not possibly accommodate this doctrine once they had established their positions on the temporality of creation and on physical resurrection. Although the philosophers of the Aristotelian persuasion rejected the above positions, they could hardly subscribe to metempsychosis which would require them to believe that the soul pre-existed the body. The mystical dimension of this debate crystallized in the belief in the mystical transformation of the heart of man, rather than his body. The Fāṭimid Ismā'īlī *da'wah*, more particularly Rāzī, Kirmānī and Nāṣir-i Khusraw, did not accept the belief in metempsychosis.²⁴³ Kirmānī attacks Sijistānī's position on the pre-existence of the soul. He argues extensively against the pre-existence of the soul stating that in *Nuṣrah* Sijistānī contradicted what he maintained in the *Maqālīd*.²⁴⁴ This vehement opposition to metempsychosis by the Fāṭimid *da'wah* existed because their acceptance of the cyclical concept of time implicated them in a position which logically led to a belief in metempsychosis. The concept of the major and minor cycles (*adwār* and *akwār*), added to the doctrine of successive imāms, makes the Ismā'īlī position susceptible to a position which accepts metempsychosis (Corbin, 1983; Landolt, 1984, pp. 293-294; 1987, p. 484). Nasafī and Sijistānī, both of whom are said to belong to the Plotinian school of

²⁴¹ For a detailed definition see al-Sayyid al-Sharīf Jurjānī, 1882, *al-Ta'rifāt* .

²⁴² Landolt, 1980, presented a paper at the Institute of Ismaili Studies, London, England, detailing the historical context of metempsychosis in Islam. In 1984 Landolt raised the issue of metempsychosis with special reference to the *Bāhirah*, see *ICHSANA*, 1984, pp. 293-294.

²⁴³ *Khwān*, chapter 42, where the concept of *barzakh* and the relation of the soul to resurrection is discussed, criticising Nasafī and Sijistānī.

²⁴⁴ Kirmānī in *Riyāḍ*, pp. 364, 397ff section II, fs. 5, pp. 171-172

Neoplatonists (Halm, 1978, p. 101, Stern, 1983, p. 297, Daftary, 1990, pp. 239-240) are examples of this logical conclusion.

The surviving accusations of propagating the belief in metempsychosis are directed specifically against Sijistānī. The *Kashf* and the *Bāhirah* are the two works criticised. Sijistānī's refutation of belief in metempsychosis is evinced in the *Maqālīd* (*Iqlīd* 44), where the arguments follow the pattern of al-Baghḍādī's and al-Bīrūnī's accusations. However, a close examination of the relevant section of *Maqālīd* presents a slightly different picture. Sijistānī writes that those upholding transmigratory beliefs are misguided and do not understand the nature of the soul's union with bodies and the reason for their existence. Therefore, for Sijistānī the question of metempsychosis is clearly centered around the misunderstanding of the nature of the soul and its functions.

Sijistānī accepts the framework of cyclical time. The cycles of time are eternal. The nature-related and soul-related worlds are eternal. Resurrection is a repetitive event linked to both time and matter because resurrection, *qiyāmah* and *ba'ṭh*, occur within the soul while it is in a body. Between the nature-related and soul-related worlds lies the *barzakh*, linking both worlds. *Barzakh* here, depending on the context, is the law or the soul itself. Similarly, between the universals and the particulars lies the eternal link of man who participates in discourse, bridging the world of the Universal Intellect and the Universal Soul and the world of the individual intellect and the individual soul. The common denominator of the two worlds is a primal eternal substance, the soul, which gives all things 'beingness' (*Kashf*, *maqālat* 3). Inherent in the essence of the soul is the characteristic of movement. The soul moves constantly, receiving benefits from the intellect to actualize in particular souls, which are born into the nature-related world. When the body dies, the soul continues to the next cycle of receiving intellectual emanations (*Maqālīd*, *Iqlīd* 49; *Kashf*, p. 83).

Another point Sijistānī discusses is that 'beingness' cannot be transformed into 'non-beingness' once it has been originated. The parallel between the two eternal worlds is of

particular significance to the issue of metempsychosis. The physical world being eternal is not only eternal in its pre-material state as an universal form, it is also eternal in its physical state. Everything within the confines of the physical world (matter, man, civilisation, society and retribution) is eternal. The fact that resurrection is made repetitive shows Sijistānī's cosmology to be based on a cyclical search of the individual soul for the absolute. The soul is seen as an independent, immaterial substance (*Kashf*, p. 30) and resurrection as a transformation of the soul (*Kashf*, pp. 85-87). All of Sijistānī's known works are pervaded with these ideas.²⁴⁵

There are several salient points in Sijistānī's refutation in the *Maqālīd*. First, Sijistānī takes exception to the belief that the soul descends into a body because of sleep or sin (*Maqālīd*, *Iqlīd* 44). Since evil and sin in his system are not entities in the logically positive sense but merely retardations or absences of good,²⁴⁶ it is clear why he rejects such a cause. As we have discussed earlier, Sijistānī rejects the explanation of 'forgetfulness' being the cause for descent of the soul into the body. He states that if God created a soul and it then "slept" and came into a body, this process would suggest that the descent into the body was a punishment. Yet, the most exalted state of prophecy occurred at this level! Sijistānī thus argues that a soul who is "asleep" cannot be a prophet who preaches awareness, awakening and accountability, for he who is in need of mercy and forgiveness cannot represent that mercy and forgiveness to others (see Landolt, 1987, p. 484; *Kashf*, pp. 1, 13, 27, 17; *Maqālīd*, *Iqlīd* 44).

A second point which Sijistānī refutes concerns the nature of existence. The physical levels of existence are not seen as the captors of the soul but rather as states which the soul

²⁴⁵ We have presented in the preceding chapters the arguments and passages in which these ideas are most evident (*YN* 36, 22, 19, 11, 2; *Maqālīd*, *Iqlīd* 37, 38, 45, 47, 48, 49, *Iftikhār*, pp. 84-91) and explicitly in the entire text of the *Bāhirah*.

²⁴⁶ To place Sijistānī's conception of the soul striving for perfection in physical time, see Corbin, 1983, pp. 34-38, where Corbin discusses the concept of the generation of time and the concept of redemption by time in Ismā'īlī thought.

projects and perpetuates depending on its own will to acquire wisdom or ignorance. In *Bāhirah*, ¶ 12.7-13, Sijistānī states that reward is given to all except those who deserve the Word of Doom. By the 'Word of Doom' he means punishment. According to him, those who disagreed with the Lords of the Times, went astray from the right path, and worshipped graven images were pleased with themselves because of the ignorance they acquired. Consequently, their ignorance worked upon them, and washed away the innate splendour contained in their souls. As a result, they were unable to accept reward and light from the Lord of Resurrection. For these souls who willfully acquired ignorance and chose the wrong leaders there is no asylum except the fire. That is their abode. In *Bāhirah*, ¶ 7.10-16, the arrogance and lordship of the antagonists causing corruption, murder, oppression, fornication, sodomy and hypocrisy alters their fortunate position. From their influences injurious, damaging humans are produced who are enveloped in darkness. These individuals are unbalanced and make the character of predatory animals visible in themselves. In both of the above quoted passages Sijistānī makes the point that a soul chooses wisdom or ignorance; neither one of them is thrust upon the soul because it lives in the physical level of existence. Taking on the form of a body is seen as a vehicle for the soul's use in order to complete the journey to gnosis. This stands in the tradition of the mystical return in the *ḥadīth*, "I was a hidden treasure and wanted to be known, so I created the world"²⁴⁷ The mystical tradition in Islam attributed to God the desire to love and be loved. God in His eternal loneliness creates man for His own sake, so that man might know God (Schimmel, 1975, p. 139). Thus, the decision to be in a body is not imposed on the soul as a punishment, but is an act of choice and love for God, as the means through which creation is brought into a continuous culmination of perfection.

The third point Sijistānī discusses in order to refute metempsychosis in the sense of incarnation, is the soul's consistent, innate inclination to unite with a body. The substance of the soul cannot be divided, or fall into matter, or be subject to any limitations of the

²⁴⁷ See A. Schimmel, 1975, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, pp. 139, 189, 268, 291, 382. For full Arabic text see, Badī'uz Zamān Furūzānfar, 1955, *Aḥādīth-i Mathnawī*, Tehran, AM # 70.

physical plane. The soul is the *barzakh* which links it to both aspects of being: the physical and the spiritual, the dense and the light, the negative and the positive. These dualities are part of the soul when it exists in the nature-related world. The soul has within itself the power of obtaining either reward or punishment as retribution. The soul is not subjugated or tainted by being associated with matter. Rather, it seeks out the body, in order to attain its final goal, the grace of God. Therefore, the soul's link with the physical plane is based on an innate tendency to incline towards perfection in knowledge of the spiritual world, which it never abandons. If the ascent-descent vertical view of the soul is replaced with a cyclical view and the body housing the soul is replaced by the soul projecting the body, then it becomes clear that Sijistānī is refuting one argument for metempsychosis: the argument that the soul is forced to descend into the body as a punishment. However, his refutation of one argument for metempsychosis does not establish that he would deny all arguments for metempsychosis.

There is enough textual evidence on the subject of metempsychosis in the *Bāhirah* to clarify Sijistānī's position on the matter. In preceding sections passages from the *Bāhirah* have been quoted extensively to establish that generation (creation) is linked to eternity in the reward and punishment arguments.²⁴⁸ Based on his interpretation of Qur'ānic verses Sijistānī argues that the world must be eternal because God promises eternal retribution; if the world is annihilated, souls in the world would be destroyed and would not receive eternal retribution according to God's promise. Therefore, God's justice would be in question.

²⁴⁸ *Bāhirah*, ¶ 11 "God, (may His name be exalted), has perpetuated two groups, the unfortunate and the fortunate ones, conditional on the permanence of the heavens and the earth, except for what your Lord wishes. If the permanence of the heavens and earth were not required by wisdom, then He would not have made the perpetuation of the two groups conditional upon it. If He made permanence necessary for the heavens and the earth, can you indeed see that He strip them of acts and causes? This would not be in accordance with wisdom nor is it correct speculative reasoning that He should destroy anything [which He made] permanent. If the destruction of the heavens and the earth is invalidated, given the

The state of resurrection constitutes movement, a "rising" from one condition to another, bringing the souls into different cycles.²⁴⁹ This movement occurs because the forms of creative forces reside within the soul. Even though the physical form decays, being subject to nature-related forces, the substance of the soul persists; and a new form is cast. We recall Sijistānī's image of the craftsman rebuilding products corresponding to former products in *Iftikhār*. Even in the passage dealing with the description of punishment he claims that in the same way as a house is built and then demolished and rebuilt, but with other materials, so also God burns the skins in order that retribution may be directed to the souls, and then makes for the souls repeated 'skins', bodies (*Iftikhār*, pp. 89-91). The punishment, as we have already discussed, does not pertain to the physical nature of man but to the essence of his individual identity. Nothing within the essence has been separated from its form.²⁵⁰ Furthermore, Sijistānī claims that the soul finds life which it had lost by being in a body.

This statement suggests that taking on a body caused both the loss of life and subsequently the rediscovery of life. This point is again alluded to when Sijistānī discusses how a disciple errs after cognition of the truth, because of the influence of an erring teacher (*Kashf*, *maqālat* 6, *justar* 5, ¶ 1). The teacher signifies the leaders/gates mentioned in the *Bāhirah*, ¶ 19. Therefore, even though the soul has the truth in its heart and intellect, by choosing the wrong leader, it errs and thus enters hell, which is defined as the ignorance acquired by the soul when it allows the teachings of its environment to lead it erroneously.²⁵¹ Furthermore, Sijistānī maintains that an individual knows divine intent in

necessity of their permanence, he who possesses the slightest intellect and sense of discernment, can grasp what truth we have chosen to unveil".

²⁴⁹ *Bāhirah*, ¶ 12.7-9, "...It makes these virtues beneficial [as] a sign (admonition) for individual souls who had preceded him in the major and the minor cycles. Thus, whoever takes from them will receive reward, the benefit of knowledge and the emanations of the Intellect."; *Yanābīʿ*, p. 36)

²⁵⁰ for the term 'form' or 'body', *shakt*: used in the *Kashf*, chapter 6, *justar* 1; *khirqāt* is used in *Maqālid*, *Iqlid* 44

²⁵¹ *Bāhirah* ¶16. 6.9 and ¶ 19.8-11.

his heart and intellect, but is often lead astray by the teachings of his environment (*Bāhirah*, ¶ 20.4-5), "...in this treatise we have stated enough for him who examines it using his intellect, and for whom its purpose will not be obscure and its knowledge not hindered due to the delusions he was brought up in".

Sijistānī is metaphysically bound to a dimension of metempsychosis due to his identification of the nature and function of the universal soul. He denies metempsychosis on the level of ethical acts and retribution, since he does not uphold the belief that the soul is impelled to be in a body as a punishment.

We see this argument clarified in the *Kashf* (*maqālat* 6, ¶ 2) as in the *Bāhirah* (¶ 5 and 7) where Sijistānī writes that the state of the people who are in this world engaging or abstaining from acts in accordance with the command of their intellect, create either well-being or ruination. Both of these resulting conditions affect those who are to be raised in succeeding cycles. Here it can be argued that resurrection is under discussion rather than the transmigration of souls. However, it must be noted that he has already established a link between the deeds done in life and retribution. Thus, resurrection and the soul are invariably connected. Hence, if the deeds of people affect the quality of resurrection, and since resurrection is linked to their souls, then, the actions performed in one cycle and the quality of the soul's knowledge, affects those who come to the physical world in succeeding cycles. There would not be much point in establishing the link between the actions and knowledge of the soul in one cycle to the souls of the next cycle, if the souls in the succeeding cycles were not the same as those in the previous ones; for then how could they learn from the cumulative consciousness of their past?

Sijistānī explicitly links the understanding of metempsychosis to resurrection in the *Bāhirah*. He does this through a third concept, *barzakh*. In ¶ 14: "Hence, I say, to have knowledge of the *barāzikh* is sufficient [in order] to know this aim." Sijistānī quotes Qur'ānic verse 23:101: "And from behind them is a *barzakh* to the day they are resurrected". According to Sijistānī, since resurrection is repetitive, and the *barāzikh* are

linked to it, the soul must also be linked to the *barāzikh* in some fashion. Resurrection, *barzakh* and the soul appear to be in a relational progression, in which the eternal soul eternally receives forms/bodies in its journey to the grace of God and is resurrected at each station of its journey, according to the level of wisdom or ignorance it has acquired. At each level of its individual spiritual rebirth, the soul becomes a *barzakh* for the next level.

Nāṣir-i Khusraw concerning *barzakh*, (*Khwān*, ch. 42), summarises Sijistānī's views. He holds that the accepted interpretation of the Qur'ānic usage of *barzakh* is the interval between the beginning of creation to the day of resurrection. Sijistānī quotes the verse in the *Bāhirah*, ¶ 14 to mean a condition of veiling or unveiling for souls; but according to Nāṣir-i Khusraw and Nasafī's son, Dihqān, Sijistānī misunderstood the meaning of *barzakh*. In the *Zād al-Musāfirīn* (pp. 421-422), Khusraw writes that Sijistānī's beliefs about *barzakh* displeased the lord of the time (presumably al-Mu'izz, the Fāṭimid imām), who declared Sijistānī to be under the influence of melancholia (Daftary, 1990, pp. 235-236; Walker, 1974, pp. 24-30). The *Zād* records that Nasafī holds that the soul migrates to an imaginal realm between the physical and the spiritual, i.e. the *barzakh*.²⁵² Sijistānī further defines that realm as part of the nature-related world. He states that the souls have no place to go outside this world. Hence, *barzakh* is a part of the eternal physical world. Sijistānī also uses *barzakh* as a synonym for the laws of the prophets. The time during which the law prevails is the time of concealment. The time of unveiling is not the time of the lord of resurrection. The unveiling is the person of the lord of the time. Sijistānī's description of the

²⁵² Nasafī defined *barzakh* as a material plane attached to the lowest level of light (B. Hirji, *Critical Edition of Kawn al-Ālam*, forthcoming in *Tahqīqāt-i Islāmī*, *Journal of the Encyclopaedia Islamica Foundation*, Tehran. Sijistānī disagreed with his teacher on this point. For a general discussion on the concept of the imaginal world in Islam, see Corbin, 1972, *Mundus Imaginalis or the Imaginary and the Imaginal*, SPRING, Zurich; translated by R. Horine. Original text in Corbin, *En Islam iranien: aspects spirituels et philosophiques*, Paris: Gallimard, 1971-1972.

qā'im/mahdī/pure soul are similar to the description of a Christ figure.²⁵³ For Sijistānī, the leader, at the moment of resurrection is the embodiment of absolute truth. He is truth incarnate, so that all pure souls are able to see themselves in their own true identities. It is clear that Sijistānī did not view the figures of the *qā'im/mahdī/puresoul* as God incarnate.

In an attempt to understand Sijistānī's cosmology as a whole, the following interpretation could absolve Sijistānī from the accusations of belief in same-species metempsychosis: In the *Bāhirah*, ¶ 14, Sijistānī claims that the world is filled at all times with souls who are united with bodies. He does not specify this "world" as being the physical world. Since the soul-related world is linked to the physical world by the form of man, the body referred to could indicate a subtle body, i.e., the body that man assumes in the spiritual or soul-related world. According to this interpretation Sijistānī's description of the continuous populating of the world, would refer to both the physical and the spiritual worlds. For spiritual growth through the realisation of truth continues even in the intelligible sphere when the soul is in a subtle body. The relevant passage in *Bāhirah* ¶ 14 reads: "when the bodies leave the world they are replaced by others of the same kind". If we assume that Sijistānī was not talking about rebirth in the physical world alone, then we must modify our understanding of the above passage. Perhaps Sijistānī intended an ascent of the soul, in the form of man, which embodying ipseity, changes from the physical to the subtle.

However, in the *Iftikhār*, the argument explaining why the dead decayed physical body does not need to be reincarnated for resurrection, revolves around God's power to recreate a body identical to the first. In this case, the identification of the body in successive cycles of resurrection as being a subtle body cannot be maintained. Perhaps the soul's body in the intelligible world was subtle, before it came into the nature-related world. Therefore, the subtle body would be the soul's first body; therefore, its final body recreated by God, would also be a subtle body, rather than a physical one.

²⁵³ According to Halm, 1978 (pp. 121-122), Sijistānī was strongly influenced by Christian doctrine. As proof of this influence Halm cites Sijistānī's exposition of the symbol of the Cross in *Yanābīf*.

A passage in the *Bāhirah*, ¶ 15 may well support this interpretation“...From every community, from the pious, from the libertines, from those who have gone astray, and those who have been rightly guided, arise the ones whom they [the departed ones] make their replacements. They make those who come after them inherit what they themselves inherited from the departed ones, in order that reward and punishment reach the souls who have acquired goodness and evil as they [the souls] remain connected cords until the rising of the Great Resurrection. When it [resurrection] occurs, all are gathered and given full retribution of whatever is deserved. Thus he who has become strong in the knowledge of the *barāzikh* has arrived at the right path and is not confused concerning the mode of the arrival of reward and punishment to those from the past centuries, whose traces have been wiped out and whose remembrance erased.”

In the above passage the form which comes into the physical world is taken by souls of those extinct ones who were in different forms in preceding cycles. Since the world is at all times filled with bodies united to souls, the continuity in their succession must form a chain whereby each generation becomes a *barzakh* for the succeeding one. The *Bāhirah*, ¶ 14 reads that there is no doubt that those who are in the physical world today **received** their language, mode of speech, thinking, addressing, knowledge, politics, professions and crafts from those who preceded them. The verb used for ‘received’ is ‘*iltabasa, yaltabisu*, the eighth form of ‘*labisa*’ to wear. His use of this verb, suggests mistaking one generation for the other, the two being identical in form. This would mean that the preceding and the succeeding souls had bodies which were so alike in every way that they are taken to be the same.

When the succeeding souls have put on the forms of speech, manners, ways of thought etc. of those who preceded them, then the physical form of the preceding souls becomes a *barzakh* for the latter. That is to say, the physical form acts as an instrument which allows a one way cognition and memory. So the extinct forms have vision of the bodies and souls which come after them; but once in the body, the soul has no memory of previous bodies or souls. The argument in the *Kashf* about souls losing knowledge of the temporal world

supports this point. This state of *barzakh* can be overcome only by the soul which has acquired purity and knowledge. The souls who are engaged in this process are not only the sinners²⁵⁴ but also the rightly guided. Sijistānī claims that the ones who precede make the successors inherit what they had inherited from the forms who are extinct, in order that eternal reward and punishment reach all of them.

The accusations against him for belief in cross-species metempsychosis by al-Baghḍādī, al-Bīrūnī and Nāṣir-i Khusraw appear unjustified and to arise from a gross misunderstanding of Sijistānī's writings. However, he seems to assert very strongly that rebirth is a resurrection linked to retribution, which must be fulfilled to protect the belief in the absolute justice of God. Although Sijistānī seems to argue for metempsychosis from the angle of reward and punishment, yet he does not ascribe any retributive causes to it. The soul does not return to the physical world as a result of retribution, negative or positive. Rather souls choose to take on physical bodies to acquire knowledge. The bodies of successive generations appear to be identical, but the souls which 'wear' these bodies are not. Furthermore, retribution is received by the substance of the soul and not the body. The soul emerges from its decayed physical body into a subtle body through which it continues its journey towards achieving the grace of God.²⁵⁵

Once again, the soul is established as being the most significant player in the cyclical continuum of the creation of the body, resurrection, retribution, *barzakh* and the final unveiling, i.e. the state of God's absolute grace. In the *Iftikhār* (p. 60) Sijistānī states that messengership leads individual souls in their journey to completion. This journey is a soul-related process and not one unique historical event. The aim of the bearers of

²⁵⁴ This is a reference to his refutation of the common understanding of metempsychosis vis-à-vis ethical retribution.

²⁵⁵ Sijistānī makes the distinction in the *Iftikhār*, (p. 93, ¶ 1) between the physical world, which is characterised by decay and corruption, and the spiritual world, which is characterised by permanence and continuity. See footnote 181, pp. 134-5; 173, where the question of whether the soul needs the body to acquire knowledge is discussed.

messaging is to aid these souls on their journey. Sijistānī maintains that the leader is the embodiment of God's absolute knowledge and the gateway to God's grace for the individual soul. The concept of the true leader is evident in several passages in the *Bāhirah*. In ¶ 1.6-7, the recognition of the leader's physical existence is what strengthens religion: "...may He make people of knowledge and wisdom enjoy your existence and strengthen religion through your light and brilliance".

In ¶ 3.15-1, the leaders are the masters of divine guidance and teaching since they are personifications of the universal intellect and the universal soul: "...as a result there is an acceptance of divine help and sharing among those who are masters of it". In ¶ 6.1-2, it is the leader who protects his community by being present. Sijistānī quotes the Qur'ānic verse which states that while the prophet is among his people God will punish them: "...when the upholder of the message rose, his rising ensured the security of his people and his community from punishment and destruction". In ¶ 12, retribution is meted out to the individual souls according to the leaders they chose to follow. If the souls chose the pure soul, they would benefit from his virtue, purity and intellectual emanations. This benefit is the retribution for the soul is following the true guide. Its reward is knowledge. The souls who choose to follow false guides deserve the Word of Doom. These souls disagreed with the Lords of the Times and went astray from the right path, being pleased with themselves because of their acquired ignorance. Consequently, ignorance is their retribution. Their punishment is that the ignorance that they chose themselves washed away from them their splendour, as a result of which they were unable to accept the reward, the light from the Lord of Resurrection.

In ¶ 17.2, 6-8, Sijistānī specifically mentions Muḥammad as an example of a leader, who is not only the manifestation of goodness and happiness, but is linked to resurrection. Muḥammad drew a parallel between himself and the Final Hour by saying, "I and the Hour were sent like two joined fingers".²⁵⁶ Those who accepted Muḥammad, received the virtue

²⁵⁶ Ibn Mājah, Introduction, 7, *fatn* 25; Ibn Ḥanbal, 4, pp. 309, 5, 9. This *ḥadīth* appears in connection with the *tafsīr* of *sūrah* 79.

and happinesses contained in his Book and his law. In ¶ 19.12-14, the importance of the leader is emphasized. By accepting the true leader the individual soul has already entered paradise: “..And what are the gates of the two groups of the People of Paradise and of Fire except the leaders of those astray and the leaders of the Polytheists and the leaders of the Rightly Guided? So whosoever follows the [right] guides and binds himself to them, has already entered the gates of Paradise.” From all the above passages it is evident that it is the leader who aids the soul in its journey towards the grace of God.

The individual receives divine fortitude and teaching through initiation in order to recognise the truth. Knowledge is the instrument, the end and, the element which establishes the relationship between the individual and the recognition of divinity. The leader is the manifestation of pure knowledge. Sijistānī states that the paradisial state is gained by inheriting a new earth, meaning an earth of the truth.²⁵⁷ The truth is known through the acceptance of the leader who is the gate, without whom people would be tricked by what they think is knowledge and thereby, enter the state of hell i.e. the pain of ignorance and heedlessness that separates them from the knowledge of God (*Bāhirah*, ¶ 12.10-11; *Yanābī*^c, *YN* 36, pp. 82-85; *Kashf*, *maqālat* 6, *justar* 5, ¶ 1). The destiny which the divine command had ordained for the soul is unveiled only at the end of the journey. This unveiling is the soul’s final enlightenment and therefore, its final individual spiritual rebirth. The journey takes place through several cycles of time, but the question is: who is the leader?

²⁵⁷ *Bāhirah*, ¶ 7.6: “...the exchanging of the earth with a white earth”, *Qurʾān* 14:48: “...the day will come when the heavens and the earth will be changed into other heavens and another earth”

Conclusion

The thesis has established that the views Sijistānī presents in *al-Risālah al-Bāhirah* are identical with those which he presents in the *Iftikhār*. We know that the *Iftikhār* was accepted by the Fāṭimids as standard teaching while the *Bāhirah* was destroyed for being heretical. We have demonstrated that even though Sijistānī wrote *Iftikhār* after he had accepted Muʿizz as the legitimate representative of the *qāʾim*, its content is no different from the content of the 'heretical' *Bāhirah*, possibly the last work Sijistānī wrote before he died. This great degree of similarity between the two writings has been demonstrated in this thesis. However, there is one significant difference between the *Iftikhār* and the *Bāhirah*; the difference becomes evident when Sijistānī mentions the soul-related world. The primacy of the soul-related world is stated categorically in the *Bāhirah*, whereas in the *Iftikhār*, it is not as obvious. The primary issue discussed in both these works is revelation and its relation to prophecy. The accusations of antinomianism and metempsychosis levied against Sijistānī derive from his definition of revelation. Since he broadens the meaning of revelation to include any manifestation of God's will, three problematic beliefs arise, the identity of the resurrector, the identity of the creator of the nature-related world and metempsychosis.

The Resurrector

Sijistānī's quest regarding revelation relates to the problem of knowledge. He works with a complex structure of relationships between God, Nature and Man. The issues that the *Bāhirah* addresses are placed squarely in the arena of the general Muslim debate on reason-revelation. The position of the 'rationalists' in this debate was the primacy of reason in understanding the will of God; the Traditionalist position was the acceptance of revelation without questioning; the Ṣūfī position was of *ʿirfān*, or the mystical gnosis of God. Sijistānī walks the middle road: he accepts revelation as being the manifestation of God's will, but he broadens the receivers of revelation to all human beings. All messengers, in varying degrees, unveil God's will. Prophecy is a sub-category under messengership. At the close of the seventh heptade, the *qāʾim* ushers in resurrection. During the period of resurrection, the *pure soul*, supported by other strong souls, appears. This is a time when God's will is so predominant in the hearts of men, that no specific religious law is required to ensure virtuous moral conduct in society. The rescinding of the ritualistic law of the prophets gives way to a spiritual code dictated by the intellect and soul in every individual in the physical world. Therefore, the time of the *qāʾim* and *the pure soul* is a time when the grace of God, namely Absolute Knowledge, is unveiled to its fullest extent and all of human society embodies this knowledge and becomes the manifestation of the grace of God.

Sijistānī does not envision one figure as the resurrector or the messiah. He envisions an entire society governing itself in accordance with divine will and ordinance. The figure of a single individual as the resurrector becomes as insignificant as the prophetic law when Sijistānī's concept of collective messianism takes shape. Each individual who makes up society is responsible for the hastening or the retardation of the advent of resurrection. Through the act of rendering transparent the essence of each created and originated thing, the individual soul grows in its knowledge of God. The concept of an internal prophetic capacity which each soul possesses was dangerous to the Fāṭimids, since, theoretically, every soul is a potential *imām*, *khalīfah*, and even *qāʾim*. Viewed in this light Sijistānī's teachings could very well have been a latent if not an open threat to Fāṭimid power.

However, since Sijistānī himself accepted a physical and spiritual hierarchy and Muʿizz as the rightful representative of the *qā'im* in the *Iftikhār*, he was not as egalitarian as he might appear. In the *Bāhirah* Sijistānī does not mention the figure of the imām. This is puzzling because he wrote the *Bāhirah* after he had accepted Muʿizz as the rightful leader. Therefore, Sijistānī either accepted Muʿizz as some type of leader other than an imām, or, he was convinced that the station of an imām, *khalif*, *qā'im* and *the pure soul* could be shared by many individuals of every cycle. If this was the case, it would explain why the identification of a particular figure by name was not essential. It is the individual intellect and soul which are Sijistānī's focus in this cosmic play. It is in the conceptualization of the soul-related world and its functions that Sijistānī is extraordinarily original.

Creation

Sijistānī chooses the middle road between the philosophical stance of emanation and the theological view of creation *ex-nihilo*. Throughout his cosmology he maintains a bipartite scheme in which everything that exists is made up of two types of substance, subtle and dense. The verbs he uses for the creation process divide creation into the intelligible and sensible spheres. Initially, it appears that Sijistānī makes the originator's relationship to creation include both originated things (*mubda'āt*) at the level of innovation (*ibdā'*) and created things (*makhlūqāt*.) at the level of creation (*khalq*). Originated intelligible things are real and eternal, but originated, and possess the characteristic of being in the process of eternally becoming. This capacity to 'become' ultimately brings them into being in the realm of created things. The capacity to 'become' does not cease once the intelligible has entered the nature-related world. Hence, even after the intelligible, namely, the soul-intellect, has entered the physical world and becomes subject to growth, decay and death, it continues in its path of reaching the grace of God by continuously living in the new forms which it projects. This exposition of the creation process makes Sijistānī prone to accusations, as we know, of belief in metempsychosis.

It is quickly clear that Sijistānī leaves the originator out of the creation scheme as soon as He has spoken the divine fiat, 'Be!'. The command of the Originator, His essence and the process by which the divine fiat conjures up the Universal Intellect are real and eternal but are not classified as created things. The Universal Intellect is the first originated thing proceeding from the command and with it the Universal Soul. In the *Bāhirah* Sijistānī makes no distinction between the intellect and soul-related worlds, except in terms of logical priority, and in terms of their respective creative functions. The function of the intellect is to contain forms in its essence in the way of perfect repose. The function of the soul is to generate movement which is responsible for the creation of the nature-related world. The distinction between the intellect and the soul is that the 'creative' functions of the two are different. The intellect is the Absolute Essence of all creation. The soul is the manifestor of that Essence, giving it form and individual identity in the nature-related world. Comparing the ontological status of the soul to the status of the intellect, one finds no difference. In fact, the *Bāhirah* clearly defines the soul-related world as the intelligible world with the intellect subsumed under it. In Sijistānī's system the primacy of the soul-related world is obvious. But, the soul-related world includes the intellect, and is not exclusive of it. The thesis that Sijistānī abandoned the early Persian strand of Ismā'īlī thought regarding the primacy of the feminine soul is untenable after the examination of *Bāhirah*.

The soul is not blemished, forgetful, sinful or fallen as scholars on Sijistānī have presumed and argued. The condition of forgetfulness and fallen-ness are not an automatic ontological imperfection within the soul. The state of ignorance synonymous with forgetfulness warranting punishment is a condition partially chosen by the individual soul and partially inherited from its predecessors. The intellect and the soul are measured by the yardstick of the degree of knowledge they possess. An high degree of knowledge results in purity and nearness to the grace of God, synonymous with reward. In this regard there is no difference between the intellect and the soul, since both have divine truth and intent imprinted on their innate natures and therefore, recognize these elements when they come across them in the nature-related world. As this study of the *Bāhirah* has demonstrated even

in the physical world both the intellect and the soul act as corroborators of divine truth; and both are subject to the delusions of the environment they assume in the physical world. Thus, we conclude that the intellect is prior to the soul only in its position as the first originated entity. This appears to be one of the few concessions Sijistānī made in accommodating the Neoplatonic system. In every other ontological and cosmological aspect the soul is equal to the intellect, and assumes a far greater function in the creative process than the intellect.

It is a not unlikely conclusion in Sijistānī's scheme that the soul is the creator of the nature-related world. Sijistānī states clearly that it is the soul that generates movement, which is the cause for the creation of matter and form. However, in the *Bāhirah* he writes that the Form of Man is higher than the Spheres and encompasses them. Sijistānī states in the *Bāhirah* that this Form exists in the physical world as the form of a human being. It is the individual human form that is capable of rendering visible the essence of both vice and virtue in the nature-related world. According to Sijistānī the human being, depending on his intent and will to accept divine guidance, not only creates his own retribution, but he also affects the condition of the physical world around him. As a result of his action of *istishfāf* he influences the extent of purity and good fortune in the nature-related world for successive generations. The intentions, will and action of human beings in one generation can be either a veil which hides the grace of God or be the vehicle which makes the grace of God visibly manifest in the physical world. In both cases every generation is a *barzakh* for the generation preceding it and for the generation succeeding it. The Form of Man belongs to the soul-related world, and although in the physical world it is identified with *the pure soul* and the *qā'im*, Sijistānī widens the definition of both potentially to include all human beings. The human form houses the intellect and the soul which are imprints of divine knowledge.

During Sijistānī's time the Muslims were debating the relationship between the essence and the attributes of God, and Sijistānī's resolution of this issue is startling. According to Sijistānī, the intellect and the soul are the embodiment of God's speech. The generally

agreed Muslim position was that the command of God was directly responsible for creation. The issue which prompted diverse opinions was how the divine command was related to God's essence. Sijistānī holds that the divine command is identical with God's unicity and with the Universal Intellect. Thus, if the divine command is a form of God's speech then, Sijistānī argues, the speech of God is identical with the Universal Intellect. Therefore, since the divine command is responsible for creation, one would expect Sijistānī to hold that the Universal Intellect is responsible for creation. However, he does not. Sijistānī identifies the Universal Soul as the totality of speech. Since the Universal Soul is an imprint of divine knowledge, even if it is not identical with the divine command, the Universal Soul is related intrinsically to God's attribute of knowledge. In the *Bāhirah*, the Universal Soul is referred to as the Form of Man. Thus, if the Universal Soul is the creator of the nature-related worlds, then so also is the Form of Man. In the nature-related world the Form of Man is the physical manifestation of the soul-related world in the shape of a human being. Thus, we come to the startling conclusion that what Sijistānī is really saying is that it is the human form that creates and perpetuates certain conditions in the physical world through its capacity of *istishfāf*.

Retribution and Metempsychosis

Through the human being God's purpose for creation to complete the cycle of gaining knowledge and to reach the grace of God is fulfilled. Thus, the theme of creation becomes related to the themes of revelation and resurrection. The relationship between creation, revelation and resurrection is translated in Sijistānī into two central doctrines: retribution and metempsychosis. Sijistānī's concept of resurrection centres around the soul. Resurrection involves a specific condition in the nature-related world when a predominance of pure souls exists. Resurrection may be physical occurring at the time of the *qā'im* and the pure soul. Individual souls from preceding generations may be physically present in the nature-related world at the time of resurrection, but they will not possess the bodies that

they had in the original cycle of their existence. The bodies through which the souls receive retribution will be identical with those which have decayed, but are not the original bodies. Resurrection occurs once, not as a single event, but as a period of time, within each cycle. This time is characterized by the predominance of purity and knowledge when the grace of God is unveiled to all. On the other hand, individual spiritual rebirth is the internal repeated spiritual awakening of the individual soul determined by the level of spiritual knowledge it has acquired while it is in a body in the physical world.

The degree of purity of intention and will and the level of knowledge acquired by the individual soul is its reward. Through knowledge and purity God's grace is bestowed on the individual. The ultimate purpose of creation, to know God, is achieved. If the individual soul deliberately chooses to ignore divine codes and revelation, if it is heedless of good and willful in its rejection of the grace of God, then its retribution is the punishment of separation from the grace of God. Sijistānī's concept of retribution is directed at the ipseity of the individual soul. At the moment of retribution, the individual soul retains its distinct identity and at no time does it merge completely with the Universal Soul. In maintaining its own identity, each soul protects its own individuality, which makes it impossible to view Sijistānī as purely mystical in his orientation.

According to Sijistānī, retribution is not metaphysical but ethical. A society that acts according to the intellectual, non-ritualistic laws in the interests of the well-being and subsistence of all mankind maintains justice, goodness and moral purity. The divine imprints intrinsic to the individual intellects and souls of human beings must be actualized into actions corresponding to the dictates of God. Thus, a knowledge of the divine necessitates ethical action.

The concept of retribution is linked to time through the soul in the nature-related world. The individual soul is responsible for recalling divine knowledge which was imprinted in its nature at the moment of its origination. According to Sijistānī, the soul remembers this knowledge with the help of the intellect. It acquires knowledge from the true and rightful

bearers of revelation, from their guidance and teaching, and conducts its physical life in an ethical manner in the nature-related world. In its role as the seeker of divine grace, the individual soul is responsible for its own acquisition of knowledge and for its own heedlessness. However, there exists another dimension in this pursuit of knowledge: individuals are born into times in the physical world whose conditions were created by the human beings of a preceding generation.

Depending on whether the souls of the preceding generation were pure or impure, they influence the earth, causing corruption or spreading justice. So each human being presently alive in the physical world is forced to live in conditions which are beyond his control. If an individual should be born into a time of moral darkness, he suffers because of it. He is not punished directly for the prevailing condition, but indirectly, because he is farther away from divine grace, which is punishment in itself. He must work harder to change the world, in order to restore justice in it. Sijistānī is unclear whether the number of individual souls taking on bodies is finite or infinite. If they are finite, then, the cycle of creation and retribution is fair. This is so since the souls of preceding generations would at some point take on bodies in the physical world.

However, if the souls were infinite, then it appears unfair that some individuals be punished because of the heedlessness of others. One point of vindication may be that Sijistānī wanted to emphasize the collective responsibility in maintaining a world which at the time of resurrection is viewed as the kingdom of God. In neither the *Ifūkhār*, nor the *Bāhirah* does Sijistānī link retribution to the physical form of the soul in the nature-related world. The only reasons why the soul and the body are linked are: (1) the soul is in a physical form while it receives retribution, (2) the soul needs the body for the process of recalling the knowledge it possesses about God. The second link is not unequivocally established as we have discussed earlier. Sijistānī does not mention in any of his surviving texts that the soul is linked to the body as retribution. Had he done so, the charge of belief in metempsychosis would have been justified.

Sijistānī has explicitly refuted the accusations of Bīrūnī in the *Maqālīd*. Thus, he vindicates himself of the belief in metempsychosis as it was commonly understood. The fact that Sijistānī holds that once matter has been created/originated it cannot be destroyed leads to the conclusion that since matter eternally receives new forms, it cannot become non-matter. As a result the soul lives a chain of existences which amounts to the same thing as metempsychosis within the same species. According to Sijistānī, in the *Bāhirah*, the succession of bodies (forms) takes place in the physical world and is necessary to prepare for the time of the *qā'im* and the pure soul. Thus, the reason the soul takes on successive bodies is not related to ethics. The existence of the soul in a body is not viewed as punishment for its previous unethical impure life in the physical world. Rather, metempsychosis is a metaphysical issue related to the ontology of the soul. The nature of the soul is that it is indestructible and relentless in its pursuit of knowledge. Therefore, it exists in successive bodies, cycle after cycle, until the time of the *qā'im* and *the pure soul*, when the absolute grace of God is unveiled to all of mankind.

Appendix 1: Glossary of Terms

As mentioned in the Technical Details Arabic terms are translated in the specific meaning in which Sijistānī uses them.

<i>abdaʿa</i>	originated; creation <i>ex nihilo</i>
<i>ahl al-ḥaqāʾiq</i>	guardians of the Truth, i.e., the Fāṭimid Ismaʿīlīs
<i>ahl al-ẓāhir</i>	the Literalists, i.e., the ṣunni
<i>al-ākhirah</i>	the hereafter
<i>ʿālam al-basīṭ</i>	the non-composite world
<i>ʿālam al-ghayb</i>	the unseen domain
<i>ʿālam al-murakkab</i>	the composite world
<i>amaliyah</i>	summons, ritual summons of the prophet as opposed to the intellectual <i>ʿilmiyah</i> summons of the <i>qāʾim</i>
<i>amr al-qiyāmah,</i>	the real matter of resurrection which indicates the second purely spiritual-related phase
<i>amr</i>	creative command
<i>anshaʾ</i>	raised
<i>ʿaql</i>	intellect
<i>ʿaqlī</i>	related to the individual human intellect
<i>arkān</i>	the four elements

<i>arsala</i>	to send; Qur ^ā nic verses dealing with Yūsuf in the court of Potiphar. In this passage the brothers of Yūsuf asked their father to send Yūsuf away.
<i>aşl</i>	base/foundation
<i>aşhāb al-dawr</i>	prophets
<i>aşhāb al-falāsifah</i>	the philosophers
<i>āthār</i>	influences
<i>āthār al-qiyāmah</i>	are physical events occurring in the physical nature-related world of organic generation and corruption.
<i>‘azm</i>	rank and authority and thus, the power to make decisions to set up boundaries <i>hudūd</i> concerning what is permissible and prohibited the soul’s journey is complete, and its destiny designated by the Word of its Originator <i>min kalimati mubda’iha</i>
<i>bara’ā</i>	formed
<i>al-bārī</i>	god as the maker of forms
<i>ba’th</i>	individual spiritual rebirth
<i>ba’atha</i>	to raise
<i>barzakh</i>	veil, level of existence, body acting as a wall
<i>bi ‘aynīhā</i>	individual identity
<i>dahrīyah</i>	the Materialists
<i>da’wah</i>	summons to the true doctrine; religious hierarchy
<i>da’wah al-‘amalīyah</i>	call to the practice of revealed laws
<i>da’wah al-‘ilmīyah</i>	call to spiritual intellectual knowledge
<i>dawr</i>	cycle
<i>dhāt</i>	soul's own identity
<i>dhihn</i>	mind

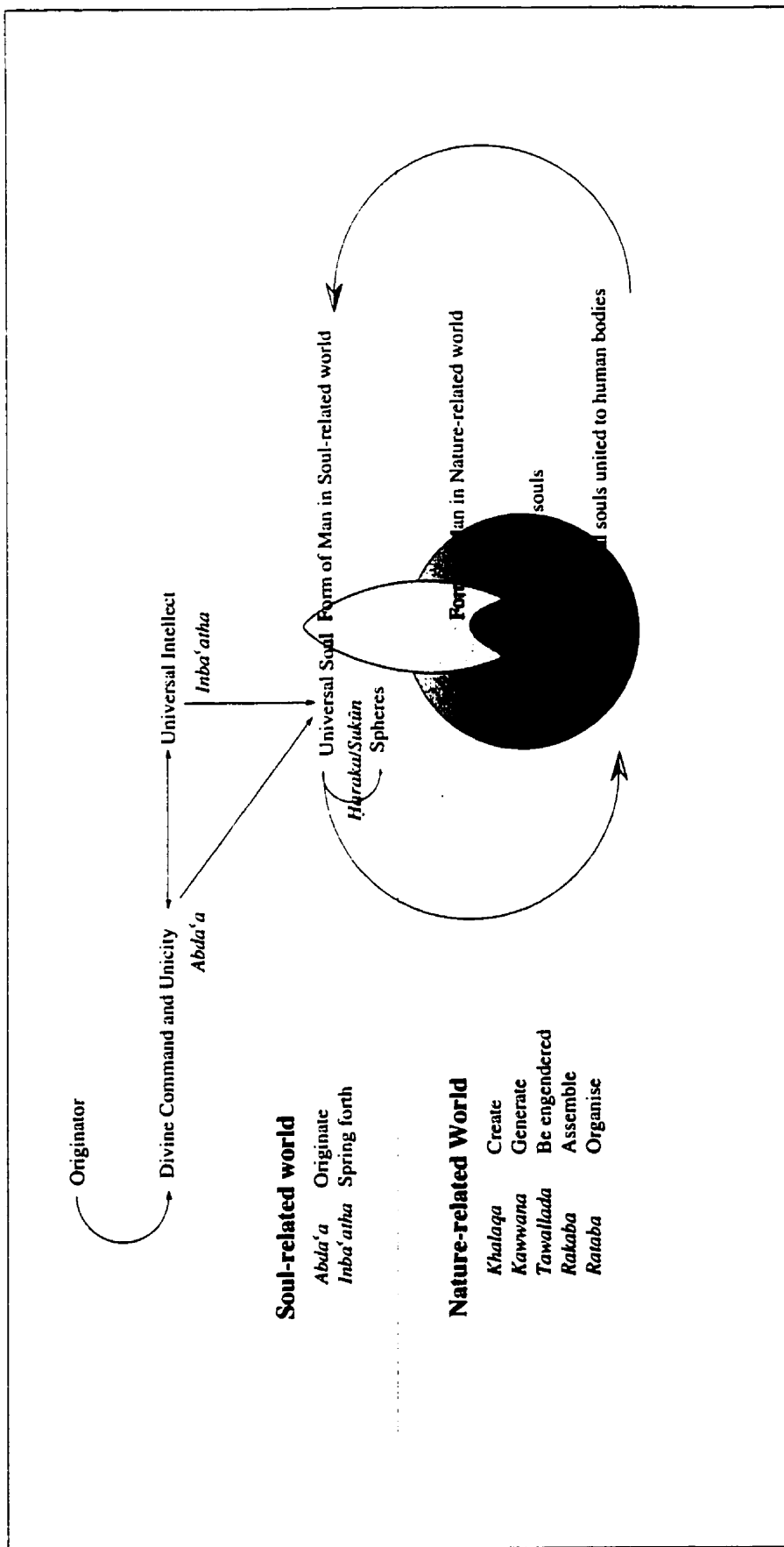
<i>didd</i>	the concept of the antagonist, the contrary, the antichrist
<i>al-fāḍil and al-mafḍūl</i>	preferred individual and the one over whom another is preferred
<i>ḥāṣil al-khalq</i>	essence of creation
<i>ḥudūd al-rūḥānīyah</i>	spiritual hierarchy
<i>ḥudūth or qiyām</i>	the rising/creation of the most excellent of creation, man. Through this rising a time of good fortune results
<i>huwīyah</i>	essence of the soul
<i>huwīyah al-insān</i>	unique self-ness of individual man
<i>‘ilmīyah</i>	intellectual
<i>izdiwāj</i>	pairing; the "pairing" concept is both cosmological and functional. <i>K</i> and <i>N</i> of the command <i>KuN</i> there is the pairing of the <i>Kāf</i> and <i>Nūn</i> , so all created things <i>mawjūdāt</i> are a result of the pairing of the dense and the subtle <i>kathīf</i> and <i>laṭīf</i>
<i>jadd</i>	internal spiritual faculty which causes intellectual benefits to descend on the prophet's heart
<i>jawhar</i>	substance
<i>al-jawhar al-jismānī</i>	physical substance
<i>al-jawhar al-rūḥānī</i>	spiritual substance
<i>kāʿināt</i>	creatures
<i>kathīf</i>	material existents of the physical world
<i>khalaqa</i>	created
<i>khāliq</i>	god as creator
<i>kār-i ‘aqlī</i>	intellectual action, prevents one from harming his own kind and provides for the well-being and subsistence of the physical world

<i>kār-i sharʿī</i>	the actions of the law, are those actions which were made obligatory by God and transmitted through the lords of the time <i>khudāwandān-i dawr</i>
<i>khudāwandān-i saṭr</i>	lords of the cycle of concealment
<i>khulafāʾ</i>	representatives of the imām
<i>labb al-fiṭrah</i>	the kernel of nature
<i>laṭāʾif</i>	existents of the intelligible world
<i>lumūʿ āthār nafsānī</i>	soul-related influence
<i>mabʿūth</i>	the raised one
<i>maddah</i>	matter
<i>mahdī</i>	The person who is the grace of God. The difference between the <i>mahdī</i> and the <i>qāʾim</i> is functional. They may or may not be the same person.
<i>maʿrifah</i>	certain knowledge
<i>makhluqāt</i>	created things at the level of creation <i>khalq</i>
<i>mawālīd</i>	natural realm comprising the four kingdoms, mineral, vegetable, animal and man.
<i>muʿaṭṭilah</i>	The Atheists
<i>mubdaʿ al-awwal</i>	the first subsisting thing
<i>mubdaʿāt</i>	intelligible creatures at the level of innovation <i>ibdāʿ</i>
<i>mubdiʿ</i>	god as the originator
<i>mubdiʿ lā lā mawṣūf</i>	originator is not non-describable
<i>mubdiʿ lā mawṣūf</i>	originator is not describable
<i>mukhrij mawālīd</i>	brings forth the natural realm
<i>munāfiq</i>	hypocrite
<i>muʾmin</i>	believer
<i>al-mujtabā</i>	the wise one

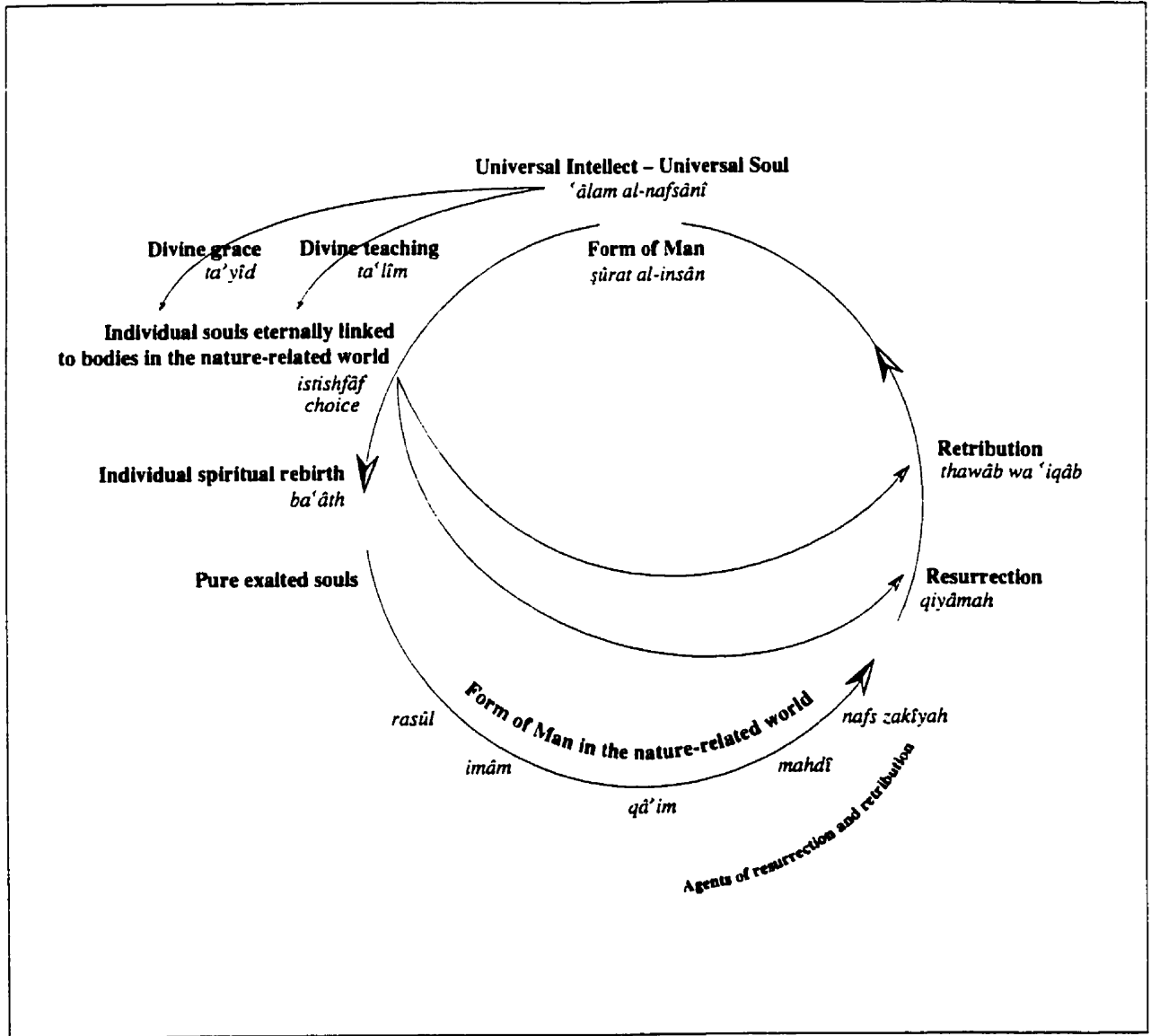
<i>al-muṣṭafā</i>	the strong one
<i>nafs</i>	soul
<i>nafs zakīyah ṣāfiyah</i>	the <i>pure soul</i> who metes out retribution at the time of resurrection
<i>nashaʿa</i>	to nurture
<i>nāṭiq</i>	<i>imāms</i> and the <i>awṣiyāʾ</i> are the limbs of the <i>nuṭaqāʾ</i> , i.e., their parts through which their mission is completed
<i>nuṭaqāʾ</i>	seven law-giving prophets responsible for the administration of society <i>siyāsah al-namūsīyah</i>
<i>qāma</i>	to rise
<i>qāʾim</i>	the one who ushers in the time of resurrection, resurrector
<i>qiyāmah</i>	resurrection
<i>rafaʿa</i>	rescinding of the law
<i>rattaba</i>	the structuring of creation through time
<i>risālah</i>	the message, prophecy, revelation associated with reason/intellect
<i>sābiq; jawhar muṭlaq</i>	the Intellect as absolute substance
<i>shaksīyah, sūrah, jawāriḥ</i>	for God to sit on a throne and judge creation He must possess personality, form and limbs
<i>sharīʿah</i>	the pragmatic ritual code responsible for the governing of society
<i>sharʿ</i>	the pragmatic ritual code
<i>siyāsah</i>	administration of society
<i>ṣūrat al-ibdāʿ</i>	the form of primordial creation
<i>taʿlīm</i>	divine teaching
<i>tanāsukh</i>	metempsychosis

<i>tashbīh</i>	anthropomorphism
<i>tawḥīd</i>	unicity of god
<i>taʿwīl</i>	explanation of the esoteric
<i>tāʿyīd</i>	the divine gift of fortitude and the capacity to accept divine teaching and knowledge
<i>al-thawāb waʾl ʿiqāb</i>	reward and punishment
<i>ʿulamāʾ</i>	non-Fāṭimid theologians
<i>ūluʾl-ʿazm</i>	singled out by God as being the most preferred among the messengers who legislates the law on behalf of God
<i>wāḥid al-aḥad</i>	the originator, <i>mubdiʿ</i>
<i>wāḥid al-maḥd</i>	the creative command
<i>wāḥid al-muṭlaq</i>	the universal intellect
<i>wilāyah</i>	guardianship/authority

Appendix 2: Sijistânî's Cosmology



Appendix 3: The Epistemological Quest



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