

A Treatise on Love¹

By IBN SINA²

Translated by Emil L. Fackenheim

INTRODUCTION

I.

IBN SINA'S *Risalah fi'l-'ishq*, a translation of which is offered here, was edited critically by M. A. F. Mehren in 1894³ and again in Cairo in 1917,⁴ the latter edition being mostly, though not invariably, in agreement with the former. Our translation is based on Mehren's edition as the critical one of the two, but attention is drawn to any important deviation of the Cairo edition. Manuscripts in addition to those used by these two editions are listed by Brockelmann⁵ and Ritter.⁶

Along with his edition of the text Mehren published a resumé in French. Nevertheless, a new and complete translation can be offered without apology for the following reasons: (i) not being a complete and literal translation, Mehren's resumé cannot adequately serve the student who does not read Arabic; (ii) in addition to being not literal and incomplete, Mehren's resumé is at times inaccurate or incorrect; (iii) Mehren's work is not readily accessible; but the *Risalah fi'l-'ishq* is of sufficient historical and systematic importance to merit wide accessibility in a complete English translation.

II.

To show the historical importance of the *Risalah fi'l-'ishq* would be a task transcending the scope of the present article. Ritter has already given some impression of its position in the development of the general Arabic doctrines of sacred and profane love.⁷ Our task here is to supplement this by indicating its position in the development of the philosophical Arabic doctrines of love, thus correcting the erroneous impression in Ritter's article that Ibn Sina's *Risalah fi'l-'ishq* had no predecessors in the field of Arabic philosophy.

As a matter of fact, it is known that al-Kindi wrote a special treatise on love although that treatise itself is not extant.⁸ Furthermore, the thirty-sixth treatise of the *Encyclopedia* of the Brethren of Purity is entirely devoted to the subject

¹ 'ishq, cf. A. M. Goichon, *Lexique de la langue philosophique d'Ibn Sina* (Paris, 1938) (henceforth quoted as *Lexique*), pp. 223 ff.—St. P. reads instead: "... to establish the existence of love in all beings ..." For technical reasons, the system of transcription adopted cannot avoid some ambiguities: t is used for both emphatic and non-emphatic Ta; z for both emphatic and non-emphatic Za; h for both emphatic and non-emphatic Ha; s for Sin and Sad; d for Dal and Dad. St. P. will indicate the St. Petersburg manuscript used by Mehren, B. M. the manuscript of the British Museum. We shall indicate only those variant readings in the notes which alter the meaning of the text. All italics not indicating quotations or foreign words are ours, used for the purpose of clarifying the meaning of

the text.

² Lit. the great professor, cognomen of Ibn Sina.

³ *Traité mystiques d'Abou Ali al-Hosain b. Abdallah b. Sina ou d'Avicenne III* ième fasc. (Leyden, 1894), pp. 1-27.

⁴ *Jami' al-bada'i' yahtawi 'ala 19 risala libn Sina* . . . , Cairo, 1917.

⁵ C. Brockelmann, *Geschichte der Arabischen Literatur I* (Weimar, 1898), p. 456, and *Supplementband I* (Leyden, 1937), p. 819.

⁶ *In Der Islam XXI* (1933), p. 92.

⁷ H. Ritter, 'Arabische und Persische Schriften ueber die profane und die mystische Liebe,' *Der Islam*, XXI, pp. 84 ff.

⁸ Cf. Muhammad Ibn Ishaq, *Kitab al-Fihrist*, ed. G. Fluegel (Leipzig, 1871), p. 259, also G. Fluegel, *al-Kindi* (Leipzig, 1857), pp. 31, 47.

of love.⁷ In addition thereto, there are scattered references to this subject in the so-called *Theology of Aristotle* and in the writings of al-Farabi.

The doctrine of love found in the *Theology of Aristotle* is determined by its Neoplatonic evaluation of reality, i.e., by a radical differentiation in value between the "high", "spiritual" and the "low", "natural" world. Thus the beauty of an "image" is, in Platonic fashion, characterized as inferior compared with that of the idea.⁸ Even external bodily beauty is due to form not to matter,⁹ a type of beauty which thus may be found also in non-material things.¹⁰ Furthermore, in human beings the beauty of character and disposition is much to be preferred to external beauty, and internal beauty goes often hand in hand with external ugliness.¹¹ The most significant fact to remember is that bodily beauty is merely derived from the beauty of soul, a fact which proves the superiority of the latter.¹² Since the degree of the beauty of a being depends on the position it has in the cosmic hierarchy, God is the highest beauty¹³ and, the desire of the multitude for external beauty notwithstanding,¹⁴ man's true destiny is to seek the highest beauty.

Insofar as it is attraction to external beauty,¹⁵ such as that of women,¹⁶ love is a disposition of "nature" aroused by a certain "sorcery" or "seduction" (*sihir*) which, although not to be condemned since it is "natural", is yet to be looked on with disapproval since it leads man to "nature" and away from true spirituality. A truly speculative man who has freed himself from practical affairs will be immune to this seduction and free from the dependence on the external object of love it involves, free in his self-sufficiency with his inner resources.¹⁷ However, insofar as love is "true", i.e., "intellectual" love, it is a force binding together everything spiritual and truly living; it is an eternal force in the "high world" where all discord and contrast are overcome. More than that, "the high world is identical with love".¹⁸

Summarizing references to the subject of love found scattered through al-Farabi's writings we can form this very incomplete picture: "With the First lies the form of love and It is loved *per se*, lovable *per se* even if no being loved It."¹⁹ It is the first object of love,²⁰ but also the first subject of love.²¹ Its love must have Itself as object.²²

Love for the First leads the second intelligences to perfection.²³ To be sure, each of these has a specific object of love, but at the same time they all have the First as the common object of their love.²⁴

Love for the First leads human beings, too, to the limits of perfection of which they are capable, i.e., it makes them reach a certain amount of community with the immaterial intelligences.²⁵ As for the love of human beings in general, this is to be characterized as a state of their substance rather than a constitutive

⁷ *Die Abhandlungen der Ichwan as-Safa*, ed. F. Dieterici (Leipzig, 1886) (henceforth quoted as Br. P. text), pp. 493-507, and F. Dieterici, *Die Lehre von der Weltseele* (Leipzig, 1872) (henceforth quoted as Br. P. Weltseele), pp. 70-84.

⁸ *Die sogenannte Theologie des Aristoteles*, ed. F. Dieterici (Leipzig, 1882), p. 46.

⁹ Op. cit. pp. 47 ff.

¹⁰ Op. cit. p. 48.

¹¹ Op. cit. p. 50, cf. the contrast with Ibn Sina's teaching, below p. 221.

¹² Op. cit. p. 51.

¹³ Op. cit. p. 143.

¹⁴ Op. cit. p. 50.

¹⁵ Op. cit. pp. 66 ff., 72 ff.

¹⁶ Op. cit. p. 72.

¹⁷ Op. cit. pp. 72 ff.

¹⁸ Op. cit. pp. 93 ff.

¹⁹ *Philosophische Abhandlungen*, ed. F. Dieterici (Leyden, 1890), p. 71.

²⁰ Op. cit. p. 83.

²¹ Op. cit. p. 58.

²² *Ibid.*; *Die Staatsleitung*, translated by Dieterici-Broennle (Leyden, 1904), p. 22.

²³ *Der Musterstaat*, ed. F. Dieterici (Leyden, 1895), p. 23.

²⁴ *Philosophische Abhandlungen*, p. 62.

²⁵ *Der Musterstaat*, p. 24.

part of it. Nevertheless it is part of that emanation which ultimately stems from the One. For it is a quality whereby human beings are connected and harmonized with each other, and it is of the nature of the One to bestow on the beings along with their substances such states as are conducive to order, harmony and organization.²⁹

The treatise *On the Essence of Love* found in the *Encyclopedia* of the Brethren of Purity is probably the most explicit and important treatment of love to be found in Arabic philosophy prior to Ibn Sina, a treatise which would well merit a new translation and a detailed analysis. The basis of the doctrine of this treatise, which deals exclusively with love as a quality of the human soul, is the Platonic division of the soul into (i) nutritive-appetitive, (ii) emotional-animal and (iii) rational parts.²⁷ Each of these three parts has a specific type and specific objects of love, namely, (i) food and sexual gratification, (ii) victory, revenge and supremacy, and (iii) knowledge and the acquisition of perfection, respectively. In all its manifestations love is definitely a quality of the soul, never of the body; for love is most properly defined as the desire for unification with the object of love,²⁸ and unification is an entirely spiritual achievement, bodies allowing merely of mixture and proximity.²⁹ Even in the manifestations of the lowest type of love the body serves merely as an instrument in an activity which is of the soul.³⁰

Thus all love has its place and type of unification. Embracing, kissing³¹ and sexual intercourse,³² for instance, are types of unification in accordance with the capacity of the animal soul, the desire for the preservation of the species being part of the nature of most animals.³³ And all love—which is never ceasing in the souls—³⁴ is a perfection given by God's grace for the purpose of leading the souls toward good aims.³⁵

However, all love is of a perishing nature except spiritual love and especially the love of God;³⁶ and God is the "first object of love".³⁷ The real and final aim of all love is to "awaken the soul from slumber and folly" and to lead it away from the sensual-bodily to the spiritual world, away from mere bodily ornament and beauty to the beauty of the spiritual world.³⁸ Therefore, those who are truly wise try in their actions, insights and character to become assimilated to the universal soul just as the universal soul attempts to become assimilated to the Creator Himself.³⁹

III.

An indication of the connection between the *Risalah fi'l- 'ishq* and Ibn Sina's general philosophical doctrine is to be found in the annotations to the translation given below; a more thorough exhibition of this connection would lead beyond the scope of this introduction. It remains here merely to point out one fact: that Ibn Sina's psychology is the basis on which his doctrine of love is built.⁴⁰ To exhibit this by some examples: the third chapter of the *Risalah*

²⁹ *Op. cit.* p. 17.
²⁷ Br. P. text, p. 495, Br. P. Weltseele, p. 73.
²⁸ Br. P. text, pp. 494 ff., Br. P. Weltseele, p. 72.
²⁹ Br. P. text, p. 496, Br. P. Weltseele, pp. 73 ff.
³⁰ Br. P. text, p. 497, Br. P. Weltseele, p. 75.
³¹ Br. P. text, p. 496, Br. P. Weltseele, p. 74.
³² Br. P. text, p. 500, Br. P. Weltseele, p. 78.
³³ *Ibid.*
³⁴ Br. P. text, p. 493, Br. P. Weltseele, p. 70.

³⁵ Br. P. text, p. 501, Br. P. Weltseele, p. 79.
³⁶ Br. P. text, p. 503, Br. P. Weltseele, p. 80.
³⁷ Br. P. text, pp. 506, 507, Br. P. Weltseele, pp. 83, 84.
³⁸ Br. P. text, pp. 504 ff., Br. P. Weltseele, pp. 81 ff.
³⁹ Br. P. text, p. 506, Br. P. Weltseele, p. 83.
⁴⁰ Cf. most conveniently Ibn Sina's short treatise on psychology published by S. Landauer, *Die Psychologie des Ibn Sina*, ZDMG XXIX (Leipzig, 1875), pp. 335-418;

fi'l- 'ishq, with its basic division of the nutritive soul into three parts, is virtually a summary of doctrines expounded more fully elsewhere" with the addition of such conclusions as appertain to the subject of love; the division of the animal soul into perceptive and appetitive parts and the division of sense-perception into external and internal, which are basic to the conclusions arrived at in the fourth chapter, are likewise summary of doctrines fully expounded elsewhere.⁴¹

But Ibn Sina's psychology is in a yet deeper sense the basis of his doctrine of love. In Ibn Sina's psychology as a whole, Platonic have given way to Aristotelian conceptions. The concept of a harmonious hierarchical order of the parts of the soul has taken the place of a concept leading readily to a doctrine advocating the suppression of the lower parts of the soul in the attempt to reach the perfection of the highest. It is on this basis that some of Ibn Sina's most important doctrines on love are formulated, especially those of the fifth chapter where a great attempt is made to allot to the love of external beauty a role which will remain positive, valuable and honorable even when compared with the most exalted and unearthly love.

TRANSLATION

IN the name of the all-merciful God: O Abdullah 'l-Ma'sumi,¹ the lawyer, you have asked me to compose for you a clear and brief treatise on love. In reply let me say that with the following treatise I have done my utmost to win your approval and to satisfy your desire. I have let it consist of the following seven chapters:

- (i) On the power of love as pervading all beings;
- (ii) On the existence of love in those substances² which are simple and inanimate;³
- (iii) On the existence of love in those beings which have the faculty of assimilating food, insofar as they possess that faculty;⁴
- (iv) On the existence of love in the animal substances, in respect of their possession of the animal faculty;
- (v) On the love of those who are noble-minded and young⁵ for external beauty;
- (vi) On the love of the divine souls;
- (vii) General conclusion.

more explicitly his *Opus egregium De Anima* which is part of the *ash-Shifa'*. Of this work we have used a typewritten copy of the Latin edition of Venice 1508, the Arabic original being unavailable.

⁴¹ Cf. Landauer, *op. cit.*, pp. 349 ff., 384 ff.; *Opus egregium De Anima*, 4v col. 2B.

⁴² Cf. Landauer, *op. cit.*, pp. 353 ff., 391 ff.; *Opus egregium De Anima*, 4v col. 2B ff.; cf. H. A. Wolfson, 'The Internal Senses in Latin, Arabic and Hebrew Philosophic Texts', *Harvard Theological Review* (Cambridge, 1935), pp. 95 ff.

⁴³ Cf. on him C. Brockelmann, *Geschichte der arabischen Literatur*, *Erster Supplementband* (Leiden, 1937), p. 828; cf. also Mehren's resumé, p. 1 note 2.

⁴⁴ *Jawhar*; this term is here used in a sense

which includes accidents. For this usage which is quite general in Arabic philosophy cf. also al-Farabi, *Der Musterstaat*, ed. F. Dieterici (Leyden, 1895), p. 44 and Ibn Rushd, *Compendio de Metafisica*, ed. C. Q. Rodriguez (Madrid, 1919), part I, chapter 24.

⁴⁵ Cf. A. M. Goichon, *Introduction à Avicenne* (Paris, 1933), p. 82. By adding the character "inanimate" to that of simplicity Ibn Sina excludes souls, intelligences and God so that only prime matter, form and accident remain.

⁴⁶ B.M. reads instead: "On the existence of love in the vegetative beings."

⁴⁷ I.e. in the prime of life (cf. Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon*, (London, 1863 ff.) book I, part 6), p. 2337, article *fatā*; this root has the secondary meaning of "generous".

On the Power of Love As Pervading All Beings.

Every being which is determined by a design⁸ strives by nature toward its perfection, i.e., that goodness of reality which ultimately flows from the reality of the Pure Good,⁹ and by nature it shies away from its specific defect which is the evil in it, i.e., materiality and non-being,—for every evil results from attachment to matter and non-being. Therefore, it is obvious that all beings determined by a design possess a natural desire and an inborn love, and it follows of necessity that in such beings love is the cause of their existence. For everything that can be signified as existing belongs into one of these three categories: (i) either it has arrived at the specific perfection, (ii) or it has reached the maximum of defect, (iii) or it vacillates between these two states with the result that¹⁰ it is essentially in an intermediate position between two things. Now that which has arrived at the extreme of defect has been carried to absolute non-being, and to that which has no attachments left the term “absolute non-being” is suitably¹¹ applied. Thus, while that which is disposed with complete non-being may deserve to be counted among the “beings” in a classification or in thought, its “being” must not be considered as *real*¹² being. And existence, in an unqualified sense, cannot appropriately be applied to it except by way of metaphor. And in a classification it must not be made to belong to the group of beings except *per accidens*. Beings in the real sense, then, are either such as are prepared for the maximum of perfection or such as are in a position intermediate between a defect occurring by reason of some cause and a perfection existing in the

(p. 3) nature itself. Therefore, no being / is ever free from some connection¹³ with a perfection, and this connection with it is accompanied by an innate love and desire for that which may unite it with its perfection.

This becomes clear also from another aspect, that of causality and the “why”:¹⁴ since (i) no being which is determined by a design is devoid of a perfection specific to it; since (ii) such a being is not in itself sufficient cause for the existence of its perfection, because the perfections of the beings determined by a design emanate from the *per se* Perfect; and since (iii) one must not imagine that this Principle from which perfection emanates intends to cause a loss to any one of

⁸ This rendering of the term *mudabbār* must be preferred to Mehren's *organique* (resumé p. 1), (i) because it denotes both internal entelechy and the dependence on a superior cosmic principle; (ii) because it is free from such connotations as would make it inapplicable to entities which are “inorganic” but nevertheless according to the doctrine at hand determined by a design. Cf. also, note 25.

⁹ *Al-khayr al-mahd*, technical term for God. Cf. Ibn Sina, *ash-Shifa'* (Teheran, 1886) vol. ii, p. 585 (quoted *Lexique* p. 114): “That that which exists necessarily *per se* is the Pure Good”. Cf. also Ibn Sina, *an-Najjāh* (1938) p. 229, N. Carame, *Avicennae Metaphysices Compendium* (Rome 1926), p. 75. This term which is of Neoplatonic origin is used with great frequency by Ibn Sina's predecessors, cf. e.g. the so-

called *Liber de Causis*, ed. O. Bardenhewer (Freiburg, 1882), pp. 58 ff. which uses it as its very title. Cf. also the pseudo-Aristotelian *Theology of Aristotle* ed. F. Dieterici (Leipzig, 1882), e.g. pp. 12, 23; al-Farabi, *Philosophische Abhandlungen*, ed. F. Dieterici (Leiden, 1890), p. 58.

¹⁰ If we accept the emendation suggested by Mehren (text p. 2, note d) the text reads: “. . . then its root is essentially . . .”

¹¹ We should perhaps read *bilharā* instead of Mehren's *bilharriyyi* (text p. 2), cf. Lane, *op. cit.*, vol. ii p. 558.

¹² Lit. essential (*dhati*), cf. *Lexique* pp. 137 ff.

¹³ Ibn Sina uses the root *lābasa* to denote association in the most general and indefinite sense, cf. note 35.

¹⁴ Read *l'mayyah* instead of Mehren's *lim'yyah* (p. 3), cf. *Lexique* p. 374.

the particular beings—as the philosophers have expounded¹⁵—; since all this is so, it is a necessary outcome of His¹⁶ wisdom and the excellence of His governance to plant into everything the general principle of love. The effect is that He thus indirectly preserves the perfections which He gave by emanation, and that He thus expresses His desire to bring them into being¹⁷ when they are absent, the purpose being that the administration [of the universe] should run according to a wise order. The never-ceasing existence of this love in all beings determined by a design is, therefore, a necessity. If this were not so,¹⁸ another love would be necessary to preserve this general love in its existence, to guard against its non-being and to retrieve it when it has lapsed, anxious lest it might disappear. But one of these two loves would be superfluous, and the existence of something superfluous in nature—which is divinely established—is impossible.¹⁹ Therefore, there is no principle of love other than this absolute and general love. And we can conclude that the existence of every being determined by a design is invariably accompanied by inborn love.

Let us now in this undertaking set out from a platform higher / (p. 4) than our previous one by proceeding to an examination of the Highest Being and the way things behave under the governance of the Governor, to the full extent of its magnitude. Here we make the statement: The good is loved in its very essence. If this were not so, why should every being set up before itself as work and aim something it desires, aims at and works for, in imagining its goodness? If goodness were not in its very essence loved, why should every type of endeavour invariably be directed toward the good, in all its free actions? Therefore the good loves the good, for love is in truth nothing but whole-hearted approval of the pleasing and suitable. And this love is the source of its yearning for it when it is absent²⁰—if it is the sort of thing which may be absent²¹—, and of its unification with it when it is present. Therefore every being approves of what is suitable for it and yearns for it when it is not there. And the specific good²² is the natural propensity of a being and the recognition of the truly suitable as such.²³ Now approval and desire, and disapproval and aversion result in a thing from the attachment to its goodness.²⁴ And a thing is in itself approved of only by reason of its goodness, for if approval is due to a thing in itself, then this is on account of its rightness and goodness. It is clear, then, that the good is loved *qua* good, whether it is the specific goodness of a thing or a goodness it has in

¹⁵ Passages containing this doctrine which Aristotelianism and Neoplatonism have in common could be adduced in large numbers from all Arabic philosophers. Cf. as a mere example al-Farabi, *Der Musterstaat* pp. 15 ff.

¹⁶ While there is no differentiation in Arabic between the personal and the impersonal pronoun, the context does not allow complete consistency in the translation. Ibn Sina's doctrine obliges the translator to use the impersonal pronoun wherever reference is made to God except where the context has personalistic connotations deriving from Ibn Sina's religious rather than from his philosophical convictions. Cf. notes 87, 88, 104.

¹⁷ St. P. reads instead: unification.

¹⁸ I.e. if this love did not exist without ever ceasing.

¹⁹ Cf. for the use of this Aristotelian argument (cf. e.g. Aristotle *G.A.* 744 a 36, b 16; *De Caelo* 291 a 24, b 16; *P.A.* 686 a 22) also S. Landauer, *Die Psychologie des Ibn Sina* (ZDMG vol. XXIX), p. 351.

²⁰ B.M. remote.

²¹ B.M. may become manifest.

²² Mehren wants to read “love” instead of “good” (resumé p. 2 note 2). However, the Cairo edition (p. 71 ll. 9-10) reads the whole passage differently: “the specific good is what is in reality suitable for the thing and, apart from the real state of affairs, the opinion wherein it is held to be suitable.”

²³ B.M., omits the last words from “of the . . .”

²⁴ In B.M. the following sentence is, according to the Mehren (text p. 4 note e), completely confounded.

common with others. Every type of love has as object either something already attained or something which is still to be attained. Whenever the goodness of a thing increases, the merit of the object of its love (p. 5) increases also, / and so does the love for the good.

If this is established, then let us proceed to say this: that Being which is too exalted to be subject to the governance²⁵ must be the highest object of love, because It must be the maximum in goodness. And the highest subject of love is identical with the highest object of love, namely, Its high and sublime Essence. Because the good loves the good through that attainment and penetration whereby it is connected with it, and because the First Good penetrates Itself in eternal actuality, therefore Its love for Itself is the most perfect and complete. And because there is no distinction among the divine qualities of Its Essence, love is here the essence and the being purely and simply, i.e. in the case of the Pure²⁶ Good.

In all beings, therefore, love is either the cause of their being, or being and love are identical in them. It is thus evident that no being is devoid of love, and this it was our intention to show.

II.

On the Existence of Love in the Simple Inanimate²⁷ Entities.

Simple inanimate entities are divided into three groups: (i) matter in the real sense of the term,²⁸ (ii) that type of form which cannot subsist in separation,²⁹ and (iii) accidents. The difference between accidents and this type of form lies in the fact that this type of form is constitutive of the substances.³⁰ Therefore earlier metaphysicians have considered it proper to classify this type of form among the substances, because it is part of the self-subsisting substances,³¹ and they did not deny to it the name of substantiality merely because it cannot exist separately by itself,—for such is the state of the material substance.³² In spite of this, then, it is to be counted among the substances, and this is because it (p. 6) is / in its very essence part of such substances as exist *per se*. Furthermore, the metaphysicians assess a special value to it, i.e., to form over matter with respect to the attainment of substantiality.³³ The reason for this is that the substance subsists as an *actual* substance on account of the substantiality of this type of form, and that whenever the latter exists it necessitates the *actual* existence of the substance.

²⁵ *Tadbîr*, cf. supra, note 8. For this use of the term cf. Ibn Rushd, *Tahâfut at-Tahâfut*, ed. M. Bouyges (Beyrouth, 1932), p. 155 where it denotes that organic quality whereby the animal is alive.

²⁶ This word is added by B.M.

²⁷ Cf. supra, note 5.

²⁸ Lit. true (*haqiqî*) matter.

²⁹ Cf. for all senses in which Ibn Sina uses the term "form" *Lerique* pp. 185 ff. More relevant here is his classification of substances wherein he makes the basic distinction between such forms as do and such as do not exist separately. This is clearly formulated in *an-Najjâh* pp. 200 ff., Caramé, *op. cit.* pp. 6 ff.

³⁰ Cf. e.g. Goichon, *Introduction à Avicenne*, p. 109, and Ibn Sina, *Le Livre des*

Théorèmes et des Avertissements, ed. J. Forget (Leyden, 1892) pp. 116. Cf. also al-Farabi, *Die Staatsleitung*, ed. P. Broennele (Leyden, 1904), p. 12.

³¹ It is a "constituent" (cf. note 34) part. I.e. that to be a "self-subsisting" substance it needs both form and matter both of which are not in themselves self-sufficient.

³² Cf. e.g. al-Farabi, *as-Siyâsah al-Madaniyah* (Hyderabad, 1346 A.H.), pp. 2, 9; *Die Staatsleitung*, pp. 1 ff., 11. For Ibn Sina cf. further e.g. his *ar-Risâlah al-'arshiyah* . . . (Hyderabad, 1353 A.H.), p. 4. Cf. however for the radically different doctrine of the Brethren of Purity E. L. Fackenheim, "The Conception of Substance in the Philosophy of the Ikhwan as-Safa' *Mediaeval Studies* V (1943), pp. 117 ff.

For this reason it has been said that form is a substance in the mode of actuality.

As for matter, this is counted among those which receive substantiality potentially. For actual existence does not necessarily result from the existence of the matter of a substance. Therefore it has been said that it is a substance in the mode of potentiality.

The true nature of form has thus definitely been established, and, also, that it has nothing at all in common with the accident, because the latter is not a constituent³⁴ of the substance and cannot be considered as a substance from any point of view.

If that is clear, then we proceed to say this: every one of these simple inanimate entities is accompanied by an inborn love, from which it is never free, and this love is the cause of their being. As for matter, this is not there for the time when it merely desires to have a form, and when it exists it does so on account of its yearning for form. For that reason you will find that whenever it is deprived of a form it will hurry to receive another form in its stead, being always on guard against absolute non-being. For it is an inexorable law that all beings by nature shy away from absolute non-being. But matter is the abode of non-being. Thus, whenever a form does not substantially subsist in it, this will be equivalent to relative non-being, and if matter is not connected with a form at all, there will be absolute non-being.³⁵ There is no need here for a water-tank to disclose that this is water.³⁶ Matter is like a low-born and blameworthy woman who tries to prevent her (p. 7) ugliness from becoming known / and whenever her veil is uncovered she conceals her defects with her sleeve. It is established, then, that matter possesses an inborn love.

As for the type of form which is our concern here, the existence of inborn love in it is obvious in two respects: (i) one type of evidence lies in its clinging to its subject and its rejection of those things which would remove it from that subject; (ii) the second type of evidence lies in its adherence to its perfections and natural places when it happens to be at them, and its yearning movement toward them when it is separated from them, as is the case with the forms of the five simple bodies³⁷ and the things composed of the four elements. These are the only types of thing to which form ever adheres.

As for accidents, the existence of love in them is quite obvious in their adherence to the subject, and the way this works is that³⁸ the subject is connected with opposites by turns.

We conclude, then, that not one of these simple entities is devoid of love which is inborn in their nature.

III.

On the Existence of Love in the Vegetative Forms, i.e., the Vegetative Souls.

³⁴ *Muqawwim*, cf. *Lerique* p. 328.

³⁵ "Subsist" (*qâma*) indicates the specific relation between form and matter whereby an actual substance is constituted, whereas "to be connected" (*lâbasa*) indicates relation in the most indefinite and general sense. Cf. supra, note 13.

³⁶ The Cairo text reads instead (p. 73 l.

11): "there is no need to wade through it (*khawd* instead of *hawd*) to disclose that this is water".

³⁷ The marginal note explains: "the heavenly and the elemental bodies."

³⁸ St. P. reads instead: "... and this explains the fact that . . ."

Putting this matter briefly let us say: the vegetative souls are subject to a division into three parts, namely, (i) the nutritive faculty, (ii) the faculty of growth and (iii) the faculty of procreation. Correspondingly, there is a specific love in the vegetative faculty according to these three parts: (i) The first of these is specific to the nutritive faculty, and this is the source of its desire for the presence of food in accordance with the need of matter for it, and for its maintenance in the body which receives it after its assimilation to the nature of the latter. (ii) The second type of love is specific to the faculty of growth, and this is the source of its desire for the³⁹ increase fitting the proportions of the body which is nourished. (iii) The third type of love is specific to the faculty

(p. 8) of procreation / and this is the source of its desire to produce a new principle similar to the one from which it derives itself.⁴⁰

It is clear, then, that whenever these faculties exist, these types of love are attached to them. They, too, are therefore by nature endowed with love.

IV.

On Love in the Animal Souls.

There is no doubt that all animal faculties and souls⁴¹ are characterized by a type of behaviour which is impelled by an inborn love. If this were not so,—if they did not possess a natural aversion whose source is an inborn detestation, and a natural desire whose source is an inborn love—, then their existence in the animal body would have to be considered as superfluous and without function.⁴² And this is obvious in all parts into which these faculties may be divided.

As for that part of sense-perception which is external, this functions by way of seeking familiarity with some sense-objects in preference to others, and by finding some more repulsive than others. Otherwise, the animals would not be able to discriminate between perceptible events and to guard against the occupation with things that cause harm, and the faculty of sense-perception would really be superfluous.

As for that part of sense-perception which is internal, this functions by way of finding rest in the enjoyment of restful imaginations and suchlike when they are present, and by striving for them with desire when they are absent.

As for that part which contains anger, this results from the animal's desire for revenge and mastery and from its shying away from weakness and humiliation and what resembles them.

Turning now to that part of the animal soul which is appetitive, we shall let this be preceded by an introduction which will be helpful in the treatment of this part itself, and also for that portion of our discourse which is constructed on our conclusions here.

(p. 9) Love branches off into two parts: / (i) the first part is *natural* love. Its possessor will not come to rest at any state other than its aim, as far as its essence is concerned and as long as no external force⁴³ interferes with it. A stone, for instance, cannot possibly fall short of reaching its aim—to arrive at its natural place and find rest in it, which is its

essential intention— except by reason of a forcing obstacle. Into this category of love falls the nutritive faculty and the other vegetative faculties: the former at no time ceases to attract food and to feed it to the body, except when an alien impediment prevents it from doing so. (ii) The second type of love is *spontaneous and voluntary*. Its possessor will sometimes turn away under its own initiative from the object of its love. For when it foresees some harm about to befall it, it will weigh the extent of this harm against that of the benefit of which the object of love would be. Thus, for instance, when a donkey sees from afar a wolf approaching, he will stop crunching barley and run away in flight. For he knows that the impending harm that would befall him far outweighs the benefit of pasture.

Sometimes two subjects of love have one and the same object, and one of the two is natural and instinctive, the other spontaneous and voluntary. For instance, both the procreating vegetative and the appetitive animal faculties are related to the aim of procreation.

If this is established, then let us proceed to the following statement: the existence of this disposition⁴⁴ in the appetitive faculty of the animal is most obvious of all to the mass of the people, and there is no need to exhibit this as a fact. Generally speaking, the object of the love of the non-rational animal is identical with that of the vegetative faculty, except that from the vegetative faculty only such actions derive as belong to the natural, lower and inferior kind, whereas from the animal (p. 10) faculty actions result / which are accompanied by free will, belong to a higher and more excellent kind and stem from a finer and more beautiful source, so much so that at times some animals employ therein the faculty of sense-perception. People usually imagine that the type of love here alluded to is specific to the latter, but in truth it is specific to the appetitive faculty, even though the sense-faculty has a sort of mediating partnership. Quite often the appetitive animal faculty resembles the vegetative one by reason of the absence of free will in it, while, on the other hand, the vegetative faculty sometimes resembles the appetitive one, because it reaches its aim through free will.⁴⁵ Thus, it is true that there is a differentiation in the way activity springs forth from these faculties according to the presence or absence of free will, as we see for instance in the case of the propagation of the species. But, nevertheless, in another sense even the non-rational animal set in motion by natural and inborn love has also some free-willed motion, and this is by reason of divine providence. The immediate aim is here not intended *per se*, for this type of love has two kinds of aim. In saying that, this is what we mean: Divine providence necessarily establishes the preservation of sowing and reaping;⁴⁶ but this cannot be achieved through the extension of the duration of the individuals which come into being, owing to the necessary occurrence of destruction wherever there is generation; therefore, His wisdom establishes of

³⁹ St. P. adds: "of love".

⁴⁰ The last phrase from "while" on is missing in St. P.

⁴¹ We propose here an emendation of the *Sad* in *nasl* to *Sin*, for the following reasons: (i) the Cairo edition reads *nasl* with a *Sin* (p. 76); (ii) *al-harth wan-nasl* (with a *Sin*) is an idiom used elsewhere by Ibn Sina (cf. text p. 25 ll. 12-13, below p. 227); (iii)

the phrase as it stands (*nasl* with a *Sad*) can only with great difficulty be given a satisfactory sense: *harth* may mean "female", but to give to *nasl* (with *Sad*) the meaning "male" we must create an uncommon metaphorical interpretation of its literal meaning. Cf. also, note 101. Cf. for the use of *nasl* (with *Sin*) in the same sense by other writers Br. P. text p. 500.

³⁹ St. P. adds here: "natural".

⁴⁰ St. P. reads instead: "... similar to the one in which it is ...".

⁴¹ St. P. reads instead: "... faculties of

the animal souls ..."

⁴² Cf. *supra*, note 19.

⁴³ St. P. reads instead: "curtailing factor".

necessity a kind of providence which maintains these two in species and genera, and which imprints in every individual, by way of *representing* the respective species, the desire to pursue the propagation of its like, and to that end it prepares suitable tools.

Because the non-rational animal is lower than the level at which the faculty of reason is obtained,—the faculty through which a being may abide in the truth of the universals—, it cannot have the benefit / (p. 11) to be derived from the penetration of a specific aim from among the universals. For this reason its appetitive faculty resembles the vegetative faculty inasmuch as it obtains the same end.

What we have established in this chapter, as well as in the one preceding it, will be of assistance in the establishment of much of what is to follow in this treatise, with the help of God and the goodness of His ordinance.

V.

On the Love of Those Who Are Noble-Minded and Young⁴⁷ for External Beauty.

We must preface the treatment of the subject-matter of this chapter with a fourfold introduction:

(i) Whenever any of the faculties of the soul is conjoined with another higher in rank, then it enters a close connection with the latter, and the result of this alliance with such excellence will be an increase in nobility and ornament for the lower faculty, so much so that the functions issuing from it surpass what they would be were the faculty in a state of separation in number, or in the quality of persistence, nobility and the method of reaching their aim. For the higher faculty supports and strengthens the lower one, and, in averting harm from it, causes it to receive an increase in excellence and perfection; and it assists it in various ways which are of benefit for beauty and high rank. Thus for instance the appetitive faculty of the animal assists the vegetative one; and the faculty of anger wards off things liable to harm its matter,—at least as long as its natural time of withering away has not come—, and it generally averts harmful things. As a further example, the rational faculty of the soul assists the animal (p. 12) faculty in its aims, / improving the quality and rank of the latter by enlisting its help for its own aims. It is for this reason that one does not often find the faculties of sense and desire in man transgress their proper measure in the way they function. This sometimes leads to the point at which the aims become altogether transformed during their functioning and do no longer subsist in *their*⁴⁸ accomplishment, but purely in that of the faculty of reason.

In the same way, the faculty of reason sometimes transforms the faculty of imagination in some of its aims by way of enlisting its support, and the latter derives an increase in strength and energy from the fact that the faculty of reason leans on it. This sometimes leads to a point where the faculty of imagination aspires to the attainment of such an aim in independence from reason. It then rebels against reason, adorns itself⁴⁹ with its nature and character, makes the claims properly

made by reason and fancies complete and independent attainment in the contemplation of the intelligible beings with which, in truth, the soul [i.e., the rational soul] alone is familiar and wherein the understanding finds rest. In all this it acts like a bad servant whom his master has commanded to assist him by joining him in an important enterprise and who thinks, after its successful completion, that he himself has achieved the desired end, that he has achieved it without his master, that his master would have been unable to do it and that he himself is the true master,—whereas in truth he has merely carried out the desired end whose attainment the master has planned; but of this he knows nothing. Similar is the situation in the case of the human faculty of desire. True, this faculty is one of the causes of corruption, but it is necessary in the general desired order which is good, and it is not part of the divine wisdom to abandon a great good because of the adverse character of an evil which is small in relation to it.

(ii) Many human activities, impressions and reactions⁵⁰ belong to the animal soul alone and by itself, such as sense-perception, imagination, sexual intercourse and the spirit of aggression and warfare. However, because the animal soul of man acquires some excellence on account of the proximity of the rational soul, it executes such functions in a nobler (p. 13) and more refined manner, and it pursues / among the objects of sense those which are of a better constitution and have a sounder composition and relationship,—things of which the other animals are not mindful, let alone that they pursue them.

Along the same lines man applies his faculty of imagination toward noble and more than ordinary matters, so much so that the activity of his imagination often almost resembles that of the pure intellect. As for the various types of action due to anger, he prefers here to act in conformity with the opinion of the people of taste, perfection, justice and intelligence.

Often human actions are quite evidently based on an essential partnership between the rational and the animal faculties, as, for instance, when the rational faculty of a man makes use of his faculty of sense in order to derive universals from the particulars by way of induction.⁵¹ The same thing is the case when in his reflection⁵² he resorts to the faculty of imagination. This sometimes leads to a point where he fully reaches with it the penetration of whatever his aim may be among the objects of the intellect. A further example of this we find when the rational faculty imposes on the appetitive sexual faculty something other than its essential aim and different from pleasure, *viz.* the imitation of the First Cause by way of the preservation of the species, and especially the most excellent of them, the human species; or when the rational faculty bids the appetitive faculty strive for food and drink not at random, but from the point of view of aims different from the mere desire for pleasure, namely, with the purpose in view of assisting the natural constitution to preserve an individual belonging to the most excellent species, *viz.* the human individual; or when it makes the faculty of anger wish to fight heroes and to embrace war for the sake of turning an enemy away from a flourishing city or a righteous people. Thus, sometimes actions result which appear to derive purely from the rational faculty, such as the conception of intelligible beings, the desire

⁴⁷ Cf. *supra*, note 7.

⁴⁸ I.e. of the faculties of sense and desire.

⁴⁹ Lit. finds pleasing.

⁵⁰ These two words are needed to reflect the full meaning of the one Arabic word.

⁵¹ *Istiqrā'*, cf. *Lerique* p. 303.

⁵² *Tafakkur*, cf. *Lerique* p. 280, especially the quotation from Ibn Sina's *Livre des Théorèmes et des Avertissements*, p. 127.

for high purposes, the love of the world to come and intimacy with the All-Merciful.

(iii) There is some goodness in every part of the divinely established order, and each one of these goods is sought after. However, / the pursuit of one of these worldly goods often interferes with the acquisition of a good which is of greater value. Thus, it is generally accepted that an ample enjoyment of life pursued at random should be avoided, although it may in itself be desirable. For it would do harm to something more desirable than it, viz. the abundance of wealth and the sufficiency of property.⁵³ Here is another example taken from the functions of bodies: to drink an ounce of opium is desirable and good to stop bleeding of the nose, but nevertheless it should be flung away because of the harm it does to something more desirable than it, viz. good health in general and life. In the same way those characteristics of the animal soul which are considered as an excess when they are found in the non-rational animal,—however, in *animals* such an excess is not considered as a vice, but rather as an excellence of their faculties—, are considered as vices in the case of *man* because of the harm they do to the rational faculty; and it is proper to eschew them and to turn away from them. This I have explained in a treatise entitled "*The Present*" (*at-Tuhfah*).⁵⁴

(iv) Both the rational and the animal soul—the latter by reason of its proximity to the former—invariably love what has beauty of order, composition and harmony, as for example harmonious sounds, harmoniously blended tastes of well-prepared dishes and suchlike. But, whereas in the animal soul this is due to natural instinct, in the case of the rational soul it results from its occupation with the conception of the ideas which are higher than nature.⁵⁵ It recognizes that the closer a thing is to the First Object of love, the more steadfast is it in its order, and the more beautiful in its harmony, and that what follows it immediately attains a greater degree of unity and of such qualities as result therefrom, viz., harmony and agreement,—whereas, on the contrary,⁵⁶ the more remote a thing is from It, the nearer is it to multiplicity and such characters as follow it, / viz., contrast and disharmony. This the metaphysicians have fully explained.⁵⁷ Whenever the rational soul obtains possession of a thing of beautiful harmony, it watches it with an eager⁵⁸ eye.

After having established these premises we can now make the statement that it is part of the nature of beings endowed with reason to covet a beautiful sight; and that this is sometimes,—certain conditions granted—, to be considered as refinement and nobility. This disposition is either specific to the animal faculty alone, or it results from a partnership [of the rational and animal faculties]. But if it is specific to the animal faculty alone, the sages do not consider it as a sign of refinement and nobility.⁵⁹ For,⁶⁰ it is an incontrovertible truth that when

⁵³ Mehren translates: "*La munificence et la libéralité*" (resumé, p. 7), but this is not true to the text.

⁵⁴ Cf. on this Mehren's resumé p. 8 note 2. ⁵⁵ Or: "... with the comparison of the higher world with nature", cf. Mehren's resumé p. 8.

⁵⁶ In the text the phrase "on the contrary" has obviously got into the wrong place.

⁵⁷ For this Neoplatonic doctrine innumerable passages from the *Theology of Aristotle*, the *Liber de Causis* and the writings of the

Brethren of Purity could be adduced. For al-Farabi cf. e.g. *as-Siyāsah al-Madaniyah*, pp. 2, 24 ff., 29; *Die Staatsleitung*, pp. 1 ff., 32 ff., 38. Cf. also the principle "*de uno nihil nisi unum*" of which Ibn Sina is an adherent (e.g. *Libre des Théorèmes et des Avertissements*, p. 173, M. Horten, *Die Metaphysik Avicennas*, (Halle, 1907), pp. 597, 610 ff., Carame, op. cit., p. 192 ff.

⁵⁸ Lit. azure.

⁵⁹ In St. P. the last two sentences are omitted.

⁶⁰ The following is to prove that this type

a man expresses animal desires in an animal-like fashion, he becomes involved in vice and is harmed in his rational soul. On the other hand, [this type of love] is not specific to the rational soul alone either, for the endeavour of the latter requires the intelligible and eternal universals, not sensible and perishable particulars. This [type of love], then, results from an alliance between the two.

This is obvious also from another angle: If a man loves a beautiful form with animal desire, he deserves reproof, even condemnation and the charge of sin, as, for instance, those who commit unnatural adultery and in general people who go astray. But whenever he loves a pleasing form with an intellectual consideration, in the manner we have explained, then this is to be considered as an approximation to nobility and an increase in goodness. For he covets something whereby he will come nearer to the influence of That which is the First Source of influence and the Pure Object of love, and more similar to the exalted and noble beings. And this will dispose him to grace, generosity and kindness. For this reason one will never find the wise—those who belong to the noble and learned, and who do not follow the way of those who make greedy and avaricious demands⁶¹—to be free from having their hearts occupied with a beautiful human form. Therefore, if a man acquires over and above those perfections which humans have in addition [to those possessed by other beings] / the excellence of a harmonious form,—which derives from the integrity⁶² and harmony of nature and from the exhibition of a divine impression—, then that man has the strongest claim to receive the very kernel of the fruit of the heart and the very essence of the purest kind of love. Therefore the prophet says: *Seek ye satisfaction of your needs in those of beautiful countenance*, the plain meaning⁶³ of which is that beauty of form is to be found only where there is a good natural composition, and that this good harmony and composition serve to improve the internal disposition and to sweeten the character. It does sometimes happen, however, that a man is ugly in external form and beautiful in internal disposition. In such a case only two explanations are possible: either his external ugliness is not due to an ugliness of harmony within lying in the very essence of the composition, but to an external accidental damage; or else the beauty of his internal disposition is not due to nature but to long habit. Similarly it sometimes happens that a man who is beautiful in external form is of an ugly disposition. In that case, again, only two explanations are possible: either the ugliness of his character is something that has happened accidentally to his nature after the completion of its composition, or it is due to a strong influence of habit.

Three things follow from the love of a beautiful human⁶⁴ form: (i) the urge to embrace it, (ii) the urge to kiss it and (iii) the urge for conjugal union with it.⁶⁵

As for the third, it is obvious that this is specific to the animal soul alone, and its hold on the latter is very strong, so much so that it maintains the position of a steady companion, more, of a master, and

of love can result only from a "partnership" of the two faculties and not from either one of them in separation.

⁶¹ St. P. adds: "and rush after blind desire"—The Cairo edition (p. 61) has a slightly different text, but the meaning is not altered.

⁶² Lit. steadfastness.

⁶³ St. P. reads: "the plain and certain meaning".

⁶⁴ This word is added by St. P.

⁶⁵ These same three urges are mentioned also in Br. P. text, pp. 496, 500; Br. P. *Weltseele*, pp. 74, 78.

(p. 17) certainly not of a tool. / It is very hideous. Rational love can, therefore, not be pure except when the animal faculty is altogether subdued.⁶⁷ With respect to the desire for conjugal union, it is fitting that a lover who entices the object of his love with this purpose in mind should be suspected, except if his need has a rational purpose, i.e., if his purpose is the propagation of the species. This is impossible with a man, and with a woman who is forbidden by religious law it is abominable. It is permissible and may find approval only in the case of a man with either his wife or female slave.

As for embracing and kissing, the purpose in them is to come near to one another and to become united. The soul of the lover desires to reach the object of his love with his senses of touch and sight, and thus he delights in embracing it. And he longs to have the very essence of his soul-faculty, his heart mingle with that of the object of his love, and thus he desires to kiss it.⁶⁸ These actions, then, are not in themselves blameworthy. However, feelings and actions⁶⁹ of excessive lust happen to follow them frequently, and this makes it necessary that one should be on guard against them, except if the complete absence of physical appetite and immunity even from suspicion is beyond doubt. For that reason it is not reprehensible to kiss children, although this is in principle open to the same suspicion, on condition that its aim is to be drawn near toward each other and to be united, without secret thought of shameful corrupting things.

Whoever is filled with this type of love is a man of nobility and refinement, and this type of love is an ornament and a source of inner wealth.

VI.

The Love of the Divine Souls.

Whenever a thing which really exists penetrates or acquires some (p. 18) good, / it loves the latter by its very nature, as for instance the animal souls love beautiful forms. Again, whenever a really existing thing penetrates with the senses or with the intellect a thing that is of advantage to its being, and whenever it is led toward it by natural instinct, then it loves that thing by its very nature, especially when the thing in question is of advantage for its specific being. Examples thereof are the love of the animal for food and that of children for the parent. Again, whenever it is evident to a being that it is conducive to an increase in excellence and rank to imitate a certain being, to come close to it and to establish a special relation with it, then the former will invariably love the latter by its very nature. An example thereof is the case of an apprentice and his master.

Thus we can say this: the divine souls, be they human or angelic, have no claim whatever to divinity if they do not acquire knowledge of the Absolute Good. For it is obvious that these souls are characterized by perfection only after they have gained knowledge of those objects of the intellect which are caused, and the only way to conceive these is to let their conception be preceded by knowledge of the true causes,

Br. P. *Weltseele*, pp. 74 ff.

⁶⁸ Lit. things.

⁶⁷ I.e. reduced to a tool.
⁶⁹ Similar ideas are elaborated in much greater detail in *Br. P. text*, pp. 496 ff.

especially that of the First Cause, just as it is impossible for the intelligible beings to exist, except if the causes themselves, and especially the First Cause, exist prior to them. All this we have explained in our commentary on the beginning of the first chapter of the *Physics*.⁷⁰

The First Cause is identical with the Pure Good⁷¹ which is absolute in Its essence. [This is proven in the following way:] reality⁷² is absolute in It, and the reality of nothing that is is devoid of some goodness. Now goodness is either absolute and part of the essence or derived from something else. The goodness of the First Cause—which is good—will (p. 19) thus either be essential / and absolute, or derived from something else. But if it is derived from something else it can be so only in one of two ways: either the existence of Its goodness is necessary for the existence of the First Cause,—in which case that from which the goodness derives will be the cause of the First Cause, which is absurd; or the existence of Its goodness is not necessary for Its subsistence, and this is also absurd, as we have explained above.⁷³ Should we, however, not admit the absurdity of the latter alternative, then the question is still open. Namely, if we allow *this* goodness to be non-essential and eliminate it as such, then clearly Its essence still remains both existing and endowed with goodness. *That* goodness will either be necessary and essential or derived from something else. If the latter alternative is accepted, we are reduced to an infinite regress which involves an impossibility.⁷⁴ If, on the other hand, this goodness is posited to be essential, then we have arrived at what we search for.

Again, it is impossible that the First Cause should derive from somewhere a goodness which is not part of Its essence and does not necessarily belong to It. For the First Cause necessarily achieves perfection by its very substance. For if the First Cause did not from Its own essence completely receive all those qualities which in their relation to It really merit to be classified as “goodness”, and if there was some element of potency in Its goodness, the First Cause would derive this goodness from something else. But since there is nothing outside It except the sum of the things caused by It, that from which It would derive goodness would be something caused by it. Now that which is caused by it has no goodness either in its nature or in its derivations apart from that which is derived from the First Cause. Therefore, if that which is caused by It is to bestow by emanation goodness on It, it can bestow only such goodness on It as is derived from It to begin with. But, in the case at hand, the goodness derived from the First Cause is to have its ultimate origin in something else. In that case, this goodness would have to be not in the First Cause but in something (p. 20) outside It from which the First Cause would derive it. / But it has already been said that it *must* be in the First Cause. Thus the whole suggestion [that any goodness in It is non-essential] is absurd.

In the First Cause there can be no defect of any kind or in any respect. [This is proven in the following way:] a perfection which is the opposite of a defect is (i) either impossible, and in that case there can be no defect correlative to it, or (ii) it is possible. Now, to conceive

⁷⁰ Cf. Mehren's resumé p. 10 note 1.

⁷¹ Cf. the chapter in *an-Najjāh*, p. 229, entitled: “That that which exists necessarily *per se* is the Pure Good”. Cf. *supra*, note 9.

⁷² *Haqiqah*, cf. *Lexique* pp. 82 ff.

⁷³ Cf. *supra*, p. 214.

⁷⁴ The Aristotelian doctrine of the impossibility of an infinite regress (cf. e.g. *Physics* 209 a 25, 210 b 27, 256 a 13 ff.) is commonly accepted in Arabic philosophy, cf. e.g. al-Farabi, *Philosophische Abhandlungen*, p. 78.

the possibility of that type of thing whose existence does not rest in anything else⁷² is to conceive along with that thing itself the cause which leads to actual achievement that which in itself has merely the potency for it. But we have already made clear that the First Cause has for Its perfection no outside cause of any kind or in any respect. Thus, there is no real possibility to a "possible" perfection in It, and consequently no defect correlative to it. The First Cause achieves *per se* completely anything that may, in its relation to It, be characterized as good. Those exalted goods which are good in every respect are not relative, and this is the type of good to which the First Cause has a relation of complete possession.

It is clear, then, that the First Cause possesses *per se* the complete sum of those perfections which in relation to It deserve that name, and that there is no element of possibility in It. It is also clear that the First Cause is good not only in Its substance but also in Its relations to all other beings, because It is the First Cause of their existence and preservation, more especially, of their being and their desire for their respective perfections. Therefore, the First Cause is good, absolutely and in every respect.⁷³

(p. 21) The perfection of both human and angelic souls lies in two things: (i) the conception / of those intelligible beings to which they have a possible relation,—each according to its capacity; this is in an effort to become assimilated to the essence of the Absolute Good⁷⁴—, and (ii) in the consequent emanation from them of such actions as are in harmony with their nature, and as are just in relation to the latter. Examples of such actions are noble deeds of men, and the movements imparted to the high substances⁷⁵ by the angelic souls whose purpose is to preserve generation and destruction,⁷⁶ again in an effort to become assimilated to the essence of the Absolute Good. These imitations occur for no other purpose than to make possible an approximation to the Absolute Good, and in order that from this proximity excellence and perfection should result. Now this can happen only by reason of help given by It,⁷⁷ and they conceive this as coming from It. And we have already explained⁷⁸ that in such a situation a being loves the thing toward which it moves. According to the preceding discourse it is necessary, then, that the Absolute Good should be loved by all souls endowed with a divine nature.

This love exists in them without ever ceasing. For they are always either in the state of perfection or in that of preparation.⁷⁹ We have already explained⁸⁰ that love exists in them of necessity whenever they are in the state of perfection. As for the state of preparation, this is to be found only in human and not in angelic souls. For the latter possess eternally the perfection in which their existence rests. The former

⁷² Lit. "the thing which is not in any other thing", i.e. substances. The qualification is made because in the case of accidents it is not possible to speak of causes in the proper sense of the term.

⁷³ Cf. the explicit treatment of this whole doctrine in the eighth treatise of the *Metaphysics*, Horten, *op. cit.*, pp. 474 ff., and the first treatise of the second part of the *Compendium*, *an-Najjāh* pp. 225 ff., Carame, *op. cit.*, pp. 66 ff.

⁷⁴ This phrase, based on a passage in Plato (*Theaetetus* 176 B), is commonly used by

all Neoplatonists, cf. Fackenheim, *art. cit.*, p. 115 note 4, al-Farabi, *Philosophische Abhandlungen* p. 70.

⁷⁵ I.e. the heavenly bodies.

⁷⁶ Cf. Horten, *op. cit.*, pp. 558 ff., 609 ff.; *an-Najjāh* pp. 280 ff., Carame, *op. cit.*, pp. 202 ff.

⁷⁷ B.M. reads instead: "by reason of desire for It."

⁷⁸ Cf. above p. 222.

⁷⁹ *Istī'ād*, cf. *Lexique* p. 211.

⁸⁰ Cf. *supra*, pp. 222 ff.

which can be in the state of preparation are, while they are in that state, filled with a natural desire for the knowledge of the intelligible (p. 22) beings which is their perfection, / especially for the knowledge of that to conceive which is most effective⁸¹ for the acquisition of perfection. This leads to the conception of what is similar to It,⁸² and this quality of the First Object of the intellect is the cause whereby all other objects of the intellect become object of the intellection of the souls, and it is the cause of their existence also.

It is not an absurd thing to say that these souls have a love inborn in their nature for Absolute Reality primarily and for the other objects of the intellect secondarily. If this were not so, their specific states of preparation for their respective perfections would be without effect.

Therefore, the real object of the love of both human and angelic souls is the Pure Good.

VII.

General Conclusion.

We want to show in this chapter (i) that every single being loves the Absolute Good with an inborn love, and (ii) that the Absolute Good manifests Itself⁸³ to all those that love It. However, the capacity of the latter to receive this manifestation differs in degree, and so does the connection they have with It. The highest degree of approximation to It is the reception of Its manifestation in its full reality, i.e., in the most perfect way possible, and this is what the Sufis call unification (*ittihād*).⁸⁴ In Its excellence It desires that Its manifestation should be received, and the existence of things depends on it.

(p. 23) Thus we say: since every being has a natural love for its perfection,—and "perfection" means the acquisition of its goodness—it is obvious that the term by reason of which its goodness results to the thing—no matter what the situation and form of realization—should of necessity / be loved as the source from which its goodness stems. But as far as this function is concerned, there is nothing more perfect than the First Cause and nothing prior to It. It follows that It is loved by all things. The fact that most things do not know It does not contradict the fact that love of It is inborn in them,—a love which is in these things directed toward their perfections. As far as Its essence is concerned, It is revealed and manifest to all beings. If It were in Its nature veiled from all things and not manifested to them, It could not be known and nothing could be obtained from It. If, on the other hand, It were manifested, but only under the influence of something else, there would have to be an external influence in Its essence which is too exalted to be subjected to such an influence; and this is impossible. [The truth is this]: as far as Its essence is concerned, It manifests Itself. If it appears veiled, this is due to the impotence of some things adequately to receive Its manifestation. Thus, in truth, the veil lies in those which are veiled, and this veil consists in impotence, weakness and defect. As far as Its

⁸¹ Lit. "most useful" or "most lasting".

⁸² I.e. the other intelligences.

⁸³ *Tajallā*, cf. *Lexique* p. 47 where the present passage is quoted.

⁸⁴ Cf. also the following passage found in the writings of the Brethren of Purity (Br. P. text, p. 493): "Some scholars are of the

opinion that love ('ishq) is an extremely strong desire toward unification (*ittihād*). This is of all the discourses the most correct, weighty and profound." Cf. *supra* n. 210.—For the use of the term *ittihād* in Ibn Sina cf. Goichon, *Introduction à Avicenne*, p. 181.

manifestation is concerned, this is nothing short of Its essence itself. For, as the metaphysicians have expounded,⁸⁵ as far as It *per se* is concerned, It never manifests Itself except in Its pure unmingled essence. It is Its noble essence itself which manifests itself, and for that reason the philosophers have called It "the Form of the Intellect".⁸⁶

(p. 24) The first recipient of this manifestation is that divine angel⁸⁷ who is called the "universal intellect". His substance receives His⁸⁸ manifestation in the fashion of a form reflected in a mirror so that the individual of which it is an image becomes manifested. Related to this concept is what has been said with regard to the agent intellect being an image of It. And one must be careful to say that it is Its image, i.e., of the Necessary and True.⁸⁹ Everything that is brought into being by some immediate cause comes into being through the mediation of an image occurring in the universal intellect⁹⁰ under Its influence. This is proven by induction.⁹¹ For instance, the heat of the fire exerts its influence on a body only through the mediation of its image, namely, heat.⁹² The same thing holds for other types of faculties. / A rational soul acts upon another rational soul by imposing upon it its image, namely, the intelligible form. The sword cuts by imposing on whatever it effects its image, its shape. The whetstone sharpens the knife by putting into its edges the likeness of that part with which it touches it, namely, smoothness.

Should anyone raise the objection that the sun causes heat and blackness without these being its images, we would say in reply: we do not claim that *every* influence of an agent on that which it affects takes place in such a way that an image of the original quality which exists in the agent proceeds from the latter to the affected entity. What we do claim is that the influence of the *immediate*⁹³ agent on the affected entity is mediated by an image occurring in the latter under the influence of the former. This is also the case with the sun; for it, too, acts on the *immediately* affected entity by way of imposing on it its image, namely, brightness. In that affected entity a new quality arises under the influence of this brightness, namely, heat. And what is thus

⁸⁵ Cf. e.g. al-Farabi, *Philosophische Abhandlungen*, p. 79; *Der Musterstaat*, p. 16; *Die Staatsleitung*, pp. 22 ff.

⁸⁶ We have not been able to find this formulation in a pre-Avicennian writer. It is found, however, in St. Thomas (*Comp. Theol.* c. 105, ed. Mandonnet, vol. ii, p. 70: *Deus forma intellectus*), who uses it without referring to a source; and Maimonides uses a similar phrase (*Moreh Nebukhim*, part I, chapter 69: "God . . . is the form of the universe").—The doctrine basic to this formulation is a synthesis of Aristotelian and Neoplatonic doctrine: according to Aristotelian doctrine God is the ultimate form (cf. numerous passages in numerous writers); according to Plotinus the entity higher in the hierarchy is the cause of the lower one, and in certain cases it may be said that the higher is the "form" of the lower (*Enn.* V, 9, 3: intellect is the "form of the soul"); however, the One cannot be termed "form of the intellect", because the term form implying duality is inapplicable to the One.—Al-Farabi's doctrine would permit him to call God the "form of the intellect". For, on the one hand, he accepts

the principle that "the more perfect is the form of the less perfect" (*Philosophische Abhandlungen*, p. 46) and, on the other hand, he does not hesitate to call the First and absolutely Simple Principle from which the mover of the first heaven receives its nature "First Intellect" (*Risalah fi'l 'aql*, ed. M. Bouyges, (Beyrouth, 1938) p. 36. And, of course, every intellect is a form.

⁸⁷ Cf. *supra*, note 16, also notes 88, 104.

⁸⁸ We must use here the personal pronoun as an angelic person cannot very well be made to depend on an impersonal first cause.

⁸⁹ This translation is somewhat awkward, as far as the text is concerned, but it is the only one compatible with Ibn Sina's doctrine.

⁹⁰ The text itself is ambiguous: ". . . an image occurring from it in it . . ." Our interpretation is shared by Mehren (resumé, p. 13).

⁹¹ Cf. *supra*, note 51.

⁹² B. M. reads: ". . . through the mediation of an image occurring from it in it, namely that it imposes on it its image, namely, heat . . ."

⁹³ Lit. closest.

affected, in turn affects with heat another entity, by imposing on it its image which is its heat. Thus, with the occurrence of heat, it heats and blackens. This much can be concluded from induction. But as for a general demonstration,⁹⁴ this is not the place for it.

Returning now to our actual subject, we say this: the agent intellect receives the manifestation⁹⁵ without mediation, by penetrating its⁹⁶ essence and that of the other intelligible beings through it, which it does *per se*, actually and eternally. For those entities which conceive the intelligible beings without the assistance of sense-perception or imagination cognize what is posterior as implied in what is prior, what is caused as implied in that which causes it, and the inferior as implied in the superior.⁹⁷

(p. 25) Next, the divine souls receive the manifestation, again without mediation. Or rather, if we say mediation, we mean the assistance given by the agent intellect which leads from potency / to act and procures the means of forming and preserving conceptions.

Next, the animal faculty receives it, then the vegetative one and then nature.⁹⁸ Every entity which receives the manifestation does so with the desire to become assimilated to It to the full extent of its capacity.⁹⁹ Thus the natural motions of the natural bodies imitate It in their aims,—which is to remain in the positions specific to them when they have reached their natural places—, even if they have no resemblance to that aim in their beginning, namely, motion.¹⁰⁰ In the same way, the animal and vegetative substances imitate It in their aims when they carry out the actions specific to them. The aim is here the preservation of the species, or that of the individuals, or the development of the power and strength of the latter and suchlike, even though in their beginnings aims such as sexual intercourse and nutrition have no resemblance to It. In the same way the human souls perform their good activities, both intellectual and practical, by way of imitating It in their aims. This assimilation is brought about by the exercise of justice and intelligence. However, there is, again, no resemblance to It in the beginnings of these aims, e.g., self-instruction and suchlike. The divine angelic souls, too, imitate It when they perform their motions and other activities whereby they maintain the continuity of generation and destruction, and of sowing and reaping.¹⁰¹

The reason why the animal, vegetative, natural¹⁰² and human powers resemble It in the aims of their activities but not in the origins of the latter, lies in the fact that these origins are merely preparatory and potential states,—and the Absolute Good must be declared free from any community with states of preparation and potency—, whereas their aims are actual perfections, and to the First Cause absolute actual

⁹⁴ *Burhān*, cf. *Lexique* pp. 21 ff.

⁹⁵ It would seem that this refers to the manifestation of the "universal intellect".

⁹⁶ Because of our interpretation of this passage (cf. note 95) we do not use the capital letter.

⁹⁷ Cf. e.g. Horten, *op. cit.*, pp. 520 ff.

⁹⁸ I.e. inorganic nature; the last three words are omitted by St. P.

⁹⁹ Cf. *supra*, note 74.

¹⁰⁰ St. P. reads instead: ". . . and the heavenly and elementary bodies have in the beginning this aim, namely, motion." Possibly this passage is corrupted. Mehren

interprets it as follows: *ainsi les corps élémentaires ne se meuvent qu'en imitant les êtres sublimes dans leur efforts pour arriver à leur but, lequel, quoique fort différent au commencement, est, pour ces corps, de maintenir leur positions une fois fixées, et, pour les corps célestes, de conserver leur mouvements.* (resumé, p. 14).

¹⁰¹ The word *nast* means literally "offspring". Our translation is intended to preserve the idiomatic character of the phrase without deviating unduly from the literal meaning. Cf. *supra*, note 46.

¹⁰² I.e. elemental.

(p. 26) perfection must be attributed. / Thus, it is possible that they should resemble It in the perfections which are their aim, but it is impossible that they should resemble It in their incipient states of preparation.

As for the angelic souls, they acquire resemblance to It in the forms of their essence and thus possess it eternally in complete actuality. For they contemplate It eternally and love It eternally, inasmuch as they contemplate It. And they are assimilated to It eternally inasmuch as they love It. Their desire lies in their penetration and conception of It,—the most excellent kind of penetration and conception. On account of these they turn away from the direct penetration of everything else and from the direct conception of what is similar to It among the other intelligible beings. However, true knowledge of It becomes indirectly also the knowledge of the rest of existence. They conceive It, as it were, purposely and with desire, and what is similar to It concomitantly.¹⁰³

If it could happen that the Absolute Good did not manifest Itself, nothing could be obtained from It, and if nothing were obtained from It, nothing could exist. Thus, there can be nothing if Its manifestation is not present, since it is the cause of all existence. Because It, by Its very nature, loves the being of what is caused by It, It desires to manifest Itself. And since the love of the Most Perfect for Its own perfection is the most excellent love, it has as its true object the reception by others of Its manifestation, and this is most properly its reception by those divine souls which have reached the highest degree of assimilation to It. In this way it is possible that they become the object of Its love. This is the meaning of the tradition: *God hath said: the servant of such and such a quality loves Me, and I love him.* Just as wisdom in general will not allow anything that is precious in some respect to be overlooked, even though it fall short of the peak of excellence, the Absolute Good desires in Its wisdom that things should obtain some of Its gifts, even though the degree in which they will be obtained will not reach perfection. Thus, the Exalted King¹⁰⁴ desires (p. 27) that others should imitate Him, in contrast with earthly¹⁰⁵ kings / who become angry when someone dares to imitate them. For the Exalted King will not bid those turn back from their aim who desire to imitate Him, whereas earthly kings will.

As we have now completed the task of this treatise we conclude it at this point. God is the Lord of all the worlds, and it is with His help alone that this treatise has been completed.

¹⁰³ Cf. *supra*, p. 225.

¹⁰⁴ Cf. *supra*, notes 16, 87 and 88.

¹⁰⁵ Lit. kings that pass away.