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Search this site

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Correspondences
Field Notes
Firesides
Jensen Writings
Principles
Research Papers
Timeline

About This Site**Morrisite Letters**

1867 Vision of Mahomet
April 1873 Vision of the Danish King
aug 12 1863
Aug 15 1864
August 21 1865
august 21 1865 (#2)
August 9 1865
December 27 1881 (pyramids)
February 14, 1862
Interview with Celestial Beings
february 24 1865
gems of inspiration
Jan 6th, 1879
january 4 1865
july 4 1865
june 4 1865
march 1864
March 26th 1879
tribes of azareth
morrisite cosmology
november 1865
november 29 1864
october 10th 1876
high priest imprisoned
october 1864

Rainbow Gathering Studies

alchemical fires
Baha'i Teachings (Firesides) at Gathering
Cha'i Baha'i Pics
Hopi Prophecy Rock
Indigenous Prophecies
Legend of the White Buffalo (Pahana)

[www.Covenantbahais.info](#) > [Research Papers](#) > [Cosmos as Meditation](#) >**chapter 3 - neo-platonism in islamic thought****Chapter 3 - Neo-Platonism in Shi'a Philosophy****By Michael McCarron****Neo-Platonism and Islamic Philosophical Shi'ism:**

To begin Plotinus was a 3rd century C.E. philosopher of the Greek tradition, originally an Egyptian he was born in Alexandria, Egypt and eventually came to study under Ammonius Saccas, also the teacher of the early Christian philosopher Origen, Plotinus' contemporary and fellow peer, later he founded his own philosophical school in Rome. His *Eanneads* are a collection of essays compiled by his student Porphyry. They entail his philosophy of emanationalism and mixture of Platonic and Aristotelian thought. Introduced into the Islamic world as the *Theology of Aristotle* (Eanneads III-VI) they have had an impact on theosophy (hikma), theology (kalam) and gnostic ('irfan) traditions. Farhad Daftary, an authority of great competence on Islamic philosophy, records:

"...Neo-platonism, continuing in the tradition of Greek philosophy, especially that maintained by the Platonist school, had been founded in the third century A.D. by Plotinus. After Plotinus, known to Muslims as al-Shaykh al- Yunani, Plotinian philosophy was further developed by a number of his disciples, notably Porphyry and the latter's student Iamblichus. Neoplatonism received its major systematization by the philosopher Proclus, of the famous Platonic Academy of Athens. It was during the 3rd (A.H.), 9th (C.E.) century, in the course of translating the philosophical texts of the various Greek masters, that the Muslims became familiar with the writings of the Neo-platonist and adopted some of their ideas."(Daftary, I, pg. 324)

Corbin summarizes the germinal elements of Neo-Platonism in Islam as:

1. The utter transcendence of the First Principle or God
2. The procession or emanation of the things from It
3. The role of Reason as the instrument of God in his creation, the locus of the form of things, as well as the source of the illumination of the human mind.
4. The position of the Soul at the periphery of the intelligible world and the link or "horizon" between the intelligible and the sensible worlds.

5. The contempt in which matter was held as the basest creation or emanation from the One and the lowest rung in the cosmic scale. (Corbin, IP, pg. 18)

In the following we shall see how each of these points has impacted Islam and how it has helped Islamic philosophers understand and comprehend the revelation of the Prophets in greater magnitude. The Isma'ili's sometimes referred to as Seveners, and pejoratively as "Assassins" in the west, are a sect of Shi'a Islam, most notably they are resident in Central Asia, however they have been in a position of power in North Africa and the Middle East, and the establishment of the Nizari Isma'ili State under the leadership of Hasan-i Sabbah in Iran lasted some 160 years in the 11th-13th centuries (1090-1256 CE). Their philosophical beliefs can be related in a system of an Angelic Hierarchy or levels of Being, alternatively known as world, spheres, or concourses and resemble Aristotle's idea of Being mixed with some Platonic elements of the Ideas. This Hierarchy is responsible for the establishment of the cosmic order of physical reality. The 19th century Iranian messianic movement (referred to as the 'Baha'i') has its roots in Ithna Ashari Shi'a Islam of 19th century (Qajar) Iran. Its principle leaders were Mirza Husayn-'Ali Nuri (Baha' Allah) and the Sayyid Ali-Muhammad, al Bab. al-Bab proclaimed to be a Herald of "Him Whom God shall make manifest" (man yazhiruhuzzullah) a messianic figure not unlike the Qa'im or Mahdi of other Islamic eschatological expectations. The Baha'i hold that the world is ordained by God through a manifestation of God (zuhur) which interprets the Will of God to mankind. Its Hierocosmic teachings resemble closely the teachings of the Five Divine Presences found in mystical traditions of the Sufis, Isma'ilis, and other movements. However, the exact relationship between all these terms and how each movement uses the term is unique to that particular movement and thus the Baha'i cosmic hierarchy is unique and sui generis. The writings of Mulla Sadra a respected Shi'a Muslim thinker have their basis in traditional Shi'a cosmology and the teachings of the sufi teacher Shaykh Ibn Arabi.

Plotinus' World

Plotinus posited that reality as we know it was a by-product of emanations having their origin in an transcendental realm composed of Three Hypostasis these hypostasis where: the One, The Divine Mind or First Thinker and Thought and the All-Soul or First and Only Principle of Life.

THE ONE: holds the position in most cosmological (christological) schematics as that of the Father. It is the First, that which stands above all and everything else. And gives power and breathes life into all others below it.

The One in Eannead V.2.1 is described as

"...all things and no one of them; the source of all things is not all things; and yet it is all things in a transcendental sense--all things, so to speak, having run back to it: or, more correctly, not all as yet are within it, they will be. It is precisely because there is nothing within the One that all things are from it: in order that being may be brought about, the source must be no Being but Being's generator, in what is to be thought of as the primal act of generation. Seeking nothing, possessing nothing, lacking nothing, the One is perfect and, in our metaphor, has overflowed,, and its exuberance has

produced the new; this product has turned again to it's begetter and been filled and has become it's contemplator and so an Intellectual-Principle." [McKenna, PL, pg. 380]

It is also described as not having body nor shape and being above generation or being the creator an apparent contradiction as it is the First of all things this is where the intermediary role of the Intellective-Principle or the Projection out of the First takes it's most important role in standing between the One and the Third which in actuality is the demiurge or that which forms the lower hierocsmic emanations and the necessary step inbetween disembodied spirits and embodied physical nature. The similarities to the Originator of the Isma'ilis is apparent where the The One of Plotinus is transcendental and no body can contain it so to is the thought of the Isma'ilis in agreement here. For the Ismailis envision their God as a spiritual essence which is unapproachable by human conception. It also is reflected in the Hierarchy of Being of the more common Islamic teaching of the Five Divine Presences, which to this day can be seen reflected in the teaching's of Mirza Husayn-'Ali Nuri, Baha' Allah, as Hahut, who defines Presence as:

"By this Presence (liqa'llah-- Ar. meeting) is meant The Presence of Him Who is the Dayspring of the signs, and Dawning-Place of the clear tokens, and the Manifestation of the Excellent Names (Lahut), and the Source of the attributes (Jabarut), of the true God, exalted be His glory. God in His Essence and in His Own Self hath ever been unseen, inaccessible, and unknowable (Huwahut). By Presence, therefore, is meant the Presence of the One Who is His Viceregent (Imam) amongs men. He, moreover, hath never had, nor hath He, any peer or likeness. For were He to have any peer or likeness, how could it then be demonstrated that His being is exalted above, and His essence sanctified from, all comparison and likeness." [Baha' Allah, KI, pg. 356]

This hierarchy of the Five Divine Presences (Huwahut, Lahut, Jabarut, Malakut and Nasut [see Sufi Symbolic Cosmology]) which is credited by some scholars to Abu Talib al-Makki (d. 996) maintains that the Godhead which is ineffable by human standards exists in the realm of Hahut (derivation of 'huwa' or 'He') which is beyond Being. It is like the Platonic 'the One who is One' and the Brahma beyond qualities or nirguna brahman. It is reflected in the Qur'anic Surah al-Ikhlās (sincerity):

"Say: 'He is God, One God, the Everlasting Refuge, who has not begotten, and has not begotten and equal to Him is not any one.'" Qur'an 112:1-5

And by Mirza Husayn-'Ali Nuri, Baha' Allah, the One is characterised as:

"God was, and His creation had ever existed beneath His shelter from the beginning that hath no beginning, apart from its (creation) being preceded by a Firstness which cannot be regarded as firstness and originated by a Cause inscrutable even unto all men of learning." (Baha' Allah, BW., pg. 355)

and in another passage Mirza Husayn-'Ali Nuri, Baha' Allah, writes of God being above the "Throne of God" the Isma'ili station of Kuni or Sabiq or the Intellectual-Principle or the Realm of

Lahut, he quotes herein the Qur'an:

"Concerning the Divine Presence there hath been sent down what no denier hath been or is now able to refute or repudiate. He --blessed and exalted be He--saith: 'It is God Who hath reared the heavens without pillars thou canst behold; then mounted His throne, and imposed laws on the sun and moon: each traveleth to its appointed goal. He ordereth all things. He maketh His signs clear, that ye may have firm faith in the Presence of your Lord.'"(Baha' Allah, BW, pg. 355)

THE INTELLECTUAL-PRINCIPLE:

In the words of Plotinus:

" the Divine Thought is a Real Being, the first thing of whom existence may if only in some vague sense, be affirmed: it is an Intelligence or rather is the Universal-Intelligence. As the act, offspring, and image of the First, it is a sort of mediation to us of the Unknowable One."(McKenna , PL, pg. XXVI)

This Intellectual-Principle is that which is the cause of causes in the Aristotelian sense. It through it's own act gives rise to the All-Soul.

Below this One is the Intellectual-Principle which in V.1.4 is:

"the yet more authentic sphere (above the All-Soul): there we are to contemplate all things as members of the Intellectual--eternal in their own right, vested with a self-springing consciousness and life--and, presiding over all these, the unsoiled Intelligence and the unapproachable wisdom. That, Archetypal world is the true Golden Age, age of Kronos, whose very name suggests Abundance and Intellect (nous). For here is contained all that is immortal: nothing here but is Divine Mind; all is God; this is the place of every soul...and everything in that entire content, is Intellectual-Principle entire and Being entire. Intellectual-Principle by its intellectual act establishes Being, which in turn, as the object of intellection, becomes the cause of intellection and existence to the Intellectual-Principle--though, of course, there is another cause of intellection which is also a cause to Being, both rising in a source distinct from either." (McKenna, PL, pg. 372)

This Intellectual-Principle is the First Principle of the Isma'ili Hierarchy, that is the First Principle below the One, it is the Universal Intellect and as such it is the archetype of all other emanations below it as the Third is created through a process of duplication and all other emanations below it a duplication of the duplication. The cause of intellection in Plotinus is described as the combining of Kaf-Nun in the Isma'ili cosmos where the command to Be is a Command to think or duplicate, an act. This also is found in the common Islamic presence of

Lahut, which is that realm of Being and the 'Personal God (al-Rahman)", which is embodied in the messenger like Muhammad. Mirza Husayn-'Ali Nuri, Baha' Allah, writes:

"If the wayfarers (salik) goal be the dwelling of the Praiseworthy One (Mahmud) this is the station (maqam) of primal reason (raja' bi-'aql) which is known as the Prophet and the Most Great Pillar (rukn a'zim). Here Reason signifieth the divine, universal mind ('aql kulli rabba fiy maqsud) whose sovereignty enlighteneth all created things (rutbah tarubiyat imkan)" (Nuri, CV, pg. 53)

From this station God's manifestation become manifest into the lowest emanation of the Hierarchy. The realm of Lahut which is the heavenly seat of the Manifestation is interestingly used in the Arabic for Divinity (lahut) and according to a neo-platonic reading all the Three Hypostasis; the One, Intellectual-Principle and All-Soul in Isma'ili terms, Mubdi, Sabiq and Tali all would be in the realm of Divinity, that is to say as higher and lower principles of Lahut (lahutiyyat): Sabiq and Tali, and as the One separated even higher than these in the realm of Hahut. It, the First Principle or Intellectual-Principle is the 'Throne of God" which can be taken to mean that which sits below the Divinityhead Himself. It is recorded in the *Umm al-Kitab*:

"E questa cupola e lo Spirito Supremo dal vuoto dei mille colori e questo cervello e proprio come la Terra Bianca che si trova al di sopra dei sette cieli, all stessa maniera che il Mare di Biancore e sopra ai sette Consessi del Trone [di Dio]. A fede, secondo la parola di Lui--che sia esaltato!--'Rivelazione disces da Colui che creo la terra ed I cieli sublime. Il misericordioso e seduto sopra il Trono: a lui appartiene quanto vi ha nei cieli e nella terra ed in mezzo ai due e sotto allo humus'. cio vale a dire che il Signore e al di sopra del Mare di Biancore ed il Mare di Biancore e il Trono del Re Sublime--se esaltata la Sua maesta!--Presso il quale, al di sopra della cupola del Mare di Biancore, Egli ha dispiegato le Huri, I castelli, I lumi, le lapade, I gilman ed 'I fanciulli resi eterni--come perle scorinate..." (Ronconi, UK, pg. 32)

[roughly meaning that the Supreme Spirit is hidden in the Land of Whiteness or Purity. Next is the Throne in the Sea of White from which descends the revelation to the created earth. It descends through seven layers or realms]

As this level of Being is the Idealic and archetypal realm this is reflected in an alternative understanding of the Isma'ili hierarchy where the Seven Cherubim (karibiyyun) are created as the offspring, so to speak, of Kuni, the First Principle, instead of the higher aspect of the Second Principle (the Third One) they become the Ideals of the earthly sensual realm, and are the Differentiated entities within the Second One, where in Isma'ili these seven stand for the seven intimates of God: Muhammad, 'Ali, Fatima, Hasan, Husayn, Abdu'l, and Abu Talib.

THE ALL-SOUL:

Is the Universal Soul the product of the Intellectual-Principle:

"The Supreme Intellectual Principle cannot be unproductive: accompanying its Act of Thought there is what we may indicate as an Act of Act: the Divine Thinking engenders a power apt to the realization of its Thought, apt that is to Creation: this engendered power is the Third Hypostasis of the Divine Triad." (McKenna, PL, pg. XXVI)

It is the emanation created by the Second which has two Acts: contemplation of the Higher or Leading Principle of the Soul (it is the act of a subject thinking about it's own object) or the Celestial Soul. The Lower Soul or Generative (the product of the act of thought), the demiurge of the lower emanations including Nature. The Logos^[1] of the Universe--that all, which in the Hericletan sense, all else is steered through--or the Reason-Principle of the Universe. The Soul is resident in Man in three aspects:

1. The intellective Soul (Spirit);
2. The reasoning Soul (scientific);
3. The Unreasoning Soul (animal).

These Three Hypostasis are the members of an Emenation Hierarchy of Being of which all lower emanations or copies or structures within structures are derivative of. The One is the inaccessible and stands above Creation, the Second is that of the Intellect as Intellect is needed to form and shape and guide the soul it stands over the All-Soul it is Real Being and the Archetypal world of the Ideas is at this level of True Reality. Below this is the All-Soul, the twin beams of light of the Zoroastrian mythos which is one; the contemplative intelligence of the Soul and two; the creator or demiurge of the lower realms of the lesser emanations from the principle of the All-Soul.

The All-Soul is that according to Plotinus in V.1.3. is,

"Soul, for all the worth we have shown to belong to it is yet a secondary, and image of the Intellectual-Principle: reason uttered is an image of reason stored within the Soul, and in the same way soul is an utterance of the Intellectual-Principle: it is even the total of its activity, the entire stream of life sent forth by that Principle to the production of further being; it is the forthgoing heat of a fire which has also heat essentially inherent. But within the supreme we must see energy not as an overflow but in the double aspect of integral inherence with the establishment of a new Being. Sprung, in other words, from the Intellectual-Principle, soul is intellective, but with an intellection operating by the method of reasoning; for its perfecting it must look to that Divine Mind, which may be thought of as a father watching over the development of his child born imperfect in comparison with himself." (McKenna, PL, pg. 37)

Here we are reminded of the primordial stuff of Hericletus, the fire, which is the energy bearing the logos; the logic of the heat of the fire the reasoning principle of the lower realms which is itself conditioned by it's higher principle the Intellectual-Principle and is the product of that Principle. In this way too the Isma'ili idea of Tali, the Second Principle below the One, created

out of duplication of the First Principle which this second as tablet is written upon by the pen and the logic is conditioned by that writing for the rest of the lower angelic realms and on down tell it reaches the concrete expression written in the stone of sensual worldly existence. As Plotinus writes:

"Yet the offspring of the Intellectual-Principle must be a Reason-Principle, that is to say, a substantial existence (hypostasis) identified with the principle of deliberative thought: such then is that (higher Soul) which circles about the Divine Mind, Its light, it's image inseparably attached to it: on the upper level united with it, filled from it, enjoying it, participant in its nature, intellective with it, but on the lower level in contact with the realm beneath itself, or rather, generating in turn an offspring which must lie beneath; of this lower we will treat later; so far we deal still with the Divine."(McKenna, PL, pg. 406)

The Active Intellect, for the Isma'ilis, is the vehicle for the transmission of the logos or Word of God (kalam Allah) which becomes the cement holding each limit (hadd) to each other. Mirza Husayn-'Ali Nuri, Baha' Allah, writes regarding this Third One (Reason-Principle, Logos, Command of God, All-Soul, Tali):

"Only those will attain to the knowledge of the Word of God that have turned unto Him, and repudiated the manifestations of Satan. Thus God hath reaffirmed the law of the day of His Revelation, and inscribed it with the pen of power upon the mystic Tablet hidden beneath the veil of celestial glory." (Baha' Allah, BW, Kitab-i Iqan, pg. 106)

"Know thou, moreover, that the Word of God--exalted be His glory--is higher and far superior to that which the senses can perceive, for it is sanctified from any property or substance. It transcendeth the limitations of known elements and is exalted above all the essential and recognized substances. It became manifest without any syllable or sound and is none but the Command of God which pervadeth all created things. It hath never been withheld from the world of being. It is God's all pervasive grace, from which all grace doth emanate. It is an entity far removed above all that hath been and shall be."(Baha' Allah, BW, Lawh-i Hikmat, Pg. 241)

"Every thing must needs have an origin and every building a builder. Verily, the Word of God is the cause (kun yafakun) which hath preceded the contingent world--a world which is adorned with the splendours of the Ancient of Days, yet is being renewed and regenerated at all times. Immeasurably exalted is the God of Wisdom Who hath raised this sublime structure." (Baha' Allah, BW, Lawh-i Hikmat, pg. 241)

Mirza Husayn-'Ali Nuri, Baha' Allah, describes the Tablet (lawh-i mahfuz) in the same terms of the Isma'ilis as being beneath the second principle or that which is the 'Glory of the Lord'. This third One is the Logos of the Universe and is creative and forms in the same function as the demiurge.

Thus from the descriptions of Plotinus we can corroborate a close similarity to Isma'ili Hierocosmological thinking in that the One is Mubdi, the Intellectual-Principle is Sabiq and the All-Soul is Tali; for the Bahai Symbolic cosmology the One is God, and resident in the realm of Hahut; Sabiq is the higher of the realm of Lahut, and referred to as glory (baha'); and the Third is the Logos or demiurge originated in the Intellectual-Principle seated in the Third One which is independent and is the 'Tablet' beneath the 'Pen of Glory', but also, resident in the realm of Lahut. Also, Plotinus shows how the Three Hypostasis coordinate to the Greek Pantheon of Ouranos, Kronos, and Zeus.

"Zeus (Universal Soul) is in this a symbol of him. Zeus who is not content with the contemplation of his father (Kronos, Divine Intellect) but looks to that father's father (to Ouranos, the Transcendent) as what may be called the divine energy working to the establishment of real being."

So that now if one wanted the Greek myth with the beliefs of the Isma'ili symbolic cosmology it would be easy to see the comparison between Ouranos as a being of the realm of Hahut and the Isma'ili Mubdi, and Kronos as a being of Lahut and compared to Sabiq and Zeus as the comparable counterpart to Tali, the Universal Soul. Another interesting comparison is that of Zoroastrianism as R.C. Zaehner points out:

"The main doctrines preached by the Prophet Zoroaster....There is a supreme Deity who is creator of all things both spiritual and material. He thinks his creation into existence by his Holy Spirit: he is holy and righteous, and by holiness are also understood creativeness, productivity, bounty, and generosity. He is surrounded by six other entities of which he is said to be the father and Creator. There can be said to be inseparable from his own essence--the Holy Spirit through which he creates, the Good Mind (akin to Nous), and Truth (akin to Reason-Principle), He dwells in his Kingdom, which means, no doubt, that he is absolute Lord of all that he has created--a kingdom which is now marred by the onslaughts of evil but which will be restored to its purity in the last days." (Zaehner, Z, pg. 60)

The Isma'ili World The Isma'ili's take their name from Isma'il the son of the sixth Imam, Jafir Sadiq. The Isma'ilis of Central Asia have at the base of their view of the world ('alam) a system of Hierocosmic Emanations like the system of Plotinus they have the One as the Father or prime originator (mubdi) from the Absolute One goes forth the command (Gr. Logos, Ar. Kalima or Amr) this command through the intentions of God (mashi'a) and His Will (irada) creates the divine command Kaf-Nun or BE, this divine light is reflected through duplication in the principle of Kuni and Qdr. Kuni is the correlary to the Universal Intelligence, the Intellectual-Principle known as Sabiq or the 'pen' it is the First Principle, the light of God which creates the Second Principle; likewise, it is also called the 'Spirit of Glory' (ruhani baha') also, it is the "Throne of God" (arsh). The Second Principle which is that of Qdr or Tali which is the tablet of God or that which is written upon by the pen (qalam) of God. This product of the First Principle is the Universal Soul of Isma'ili belief and is correlary to the All-Soul of Plotinus. One may speculate that the lower emanations of this Symbolic cosmology is like that of the dividing into two acts of the All-Soul where Kuni-Qdr become reflected as two aspects of the Third Station of Tali, the lower aspect of Qdr creates out of it's light the Twelve Spiritual ranks of angels and Kuni, as the higher aspect creates Seven Cherubs. And both together create a mediation Pentad composed of the elements of Imagination (khayal), esoteric interpretation (fath), enunciation of shari'a (jadd), principle of consciousness and understanding ('aql) and soul (nafs); each of which

corresponds to the Angelic persons of Kuni, Qdr, Mikhail, Israfil, and Gabriel. This pentad now becomes responsible for the creation of the lower emanations below it and the natural cosmic order. It may be said that Qdr becomes the demiurge as the Third station and that the pentad is the tool of the demiurge to create the natural cosmos keeping in line with Plotinus's vision of the world and Real Being. The cosmology of the Isma'ilis is contained in its earliest known codification in the works of Abu 'Isa al-Murshid (4th century A.H./ 10th C.E.) he writes:

"He (God) existed when there was no space, no eternity (dahr) no time (zaman), no things occupying space and no minutes of time. When He conceived a will and a wish (irada wa mashi'a), He created (kalaqa) a light (nur) and produced out of this light a creature (khalq). This light remained for some length of its eternity not knowing whether it was a creator or a created thing. Then Divinity breathed into it a spirit and directed at it a voice: 'Be' (kun yafaqun), thus it came into being with God's permission. All things were made by Divinity through creating them (mubda'atan) from the letters kaf and nun (making the word 'kun'). There is bringing-into-being, and a thing which is brought-into-being, one who brings-into-being, and a thing which is brought-into-being. Then there is God (wa takuwwna wa makuwwna wa kan shum allah). Then through the waw and the ya', which became a name for what is above it, calling it there for 'kuni'. Then the command (amr) of the Creator of all things went to kuni: 'Create for yourself out of your own light a creature to act for you as a vizier (wazir) and helper and to carry out our command". Thus it created a creature out of its light and gave it a name, calling it qadar. Through kuni God brought to being (kawwana) all things, and through qadar He determined (qaddara) them." (Stern, SI, pg. 18)

In this passage we see that there are several key elements of the Isma'ili creation story. It is first a creation acted by God. It differs not in the basic ideas of creation but in the manner of the creation through what is known as Kuni. It is Kuni out of which Qdr is created or emanated. It is important that Kuni brings into existence in the sense of prime matter and Qdr proportions all creations in the sense of reason. The rest of the hierocosmic account is also noted by al-Murshid:

"Kuni consist of four letter (ahruf), qadar of three, which makes seven letters. This indicates that when he (kuni) had created qadar, he created out of the light which is between itself and qadar seven Cherubim (karubi), giving them esoteric names ('asma batinah) the meaning (ma'ani) of which can only be understood by the Friends ('awliya) of God (peace be upon them) and the sincere believers (mu'iminiyn husana) who follow them. These names are: 'azama (might), 'izza (glory), huda (right guidance), baha' (splendour), ra'fa (mercy), 'amr (command), mu'tamar. (counsel). (Stern, SI, pg. 19)

It is clear in this passage that the Seven Cherubim are emanated out of the Light of Kuni and that this emanation consists of relationship to the inherent design of Kuni being based on the numerological archetype within the term 'to be'. Angelology plays an important part in Theological Neo-Platonism as shall be seen. Along with this Symbolic cosmology of the Isma'ilis are the various teachings I think are addressed in the Eannead under consideration. The doctrine of ta'wil related to Intellectual Beauty and inner and outer realities of the Idealic and the Sensual are expressed vertically in the Isma'ili belief system of the typos of the soul in heaven with its manifest earthly correspondence (Idea/Form); horizontally this is expressed as zahir and batin, outer and inner reality in the entity itself. This has been known as the Primal

Man, the universal Adam and his earthly counterpart the 'Adam juizi'. Or as Daftary defines him as the 'qutb', the pole, or most perfect human being of Islamic mysticism the 'al-insan al-kamil'. For the Baha'i this would be the station of the Bab, the pole of the world who is to revolutionize the world. As Mirza Husayn-'Ali Nuri, Baha' Allah, has written:

"The sign of the invisible heaven must needs be revealed in the person of that perfect man who, before each Manifestation appeareth, educateth, and prepareth the souls of men for the advent of the divine Luminary, the Light of the unity of God amongst men." (Baha' Allah, WB, Kitab-i Iqan, pg. 85)

The Isma'ili Symbolic Cosmology: In addition to this Creative Hierarchy is the Hierarchy of the Firmaments. Where the absolute unknowability and seperateness of God is expressed in the identification of the realm of Ilahiyat (Divinity) with Gods Essence (dhat), with a descending list of hierachical order assigned to each realm which signifies Gods knowledge and Gods Command ('Amr). The *Umm al-Kitab* records that:

"E questo Spirito secondo la Sua Essenzialita Divino (ba-ilahit), che e stata detta; secondo la Sua Essenzialita Luminosa (ba-nuranit), e il Sole (logos); secondo la Sua Essenzialita Spirituale (ba-ruhanit) il Suo nome e Cosciente..." (Ronconi, UK, pg. 41) [and this Spirit according to the Divine Essentiality, since the word states, according to the Essential Lights, it is the Sun, according to the Essential Spirit it is His Rational Name]

It is seen that the Essential Divinity of God is symbolized in the realm of Ilahiyyat which is analogous to the typical Iranian hierarchy of Huwahut. Gods Essential Light is identified with the realm of Nuranit it is symbolised in the allegorical writing of the *Umm al-Kitab* as The Sun (a il Sole) it is commented on by Pio Filippini-Ranconi as the Logos or 'Amr of God-- here the Sun is analogous to the Spirit and the Spirit is the embodiment of the Logos (logos endiathetos), understood as such it is the stage of the "Kuni"--the first projection of God's Will. Below this realm is that of Ruhuniyyat (Spirit) which is identified in the allegory as being Conscience (cosciente) or as the Word (logos prophorikos). The Kalima'llah, it is at this stage that the 'Point' (natiq) is identified with the Prophet of God. Below these are lesser realms, including Lahut. It is written in this passage that Spirit (Ruah) is second to all these Essentialities. It may be suggested by the context that all these realms-- Ilahiyyat, Nuraniyyat, Ruhaniyyat-- are not realms to be identified with any created realm. Which would mean in a way all these realms are identified with Huwahut or Lahut of the Bahai and Sufi Hierarchy we shall see in a later section. 'Allamah Nasir al-Din Hunzai defines Uluhiyyat as,

"The third part of the 'Fatihah' is about divinity or uluhiyyat and this is hidden in the word 'God'. The word 'God' which originally was 'al-ilah', is the definite form of 'ilah', but because of frequent usage it became 'God', which thus is derived from 'ilah'. [divinity] The word 'God' is mostly used in the sense of Divinity. Sometimes it also means Worshipped and in fact this is it's original meaning...."(Hunzai, Ibadut, pg. n/a)

Interesting also is the following passage:

"Ora questo principe dei miscredenti per ben sette volte nego che avesse creato tutti gli altri Divini Consessi: quei sette colori splendenti, ognuno dei quali e di mille e mille tonalita diverse, Salman gli tolse ad ognuno dei sette diwan: un colore per il Divino Consesso dell-Ilahit, uno per il Divino Consesso ed il velame in cui se manifesta la Malakutit, uno nella cortina della Rabubit, uno nel mare della Gabarutiyyat, uno nei mari della Lahutit, uno per la distesa della Nuranit ed uno per la manifestation dell Ruhunit..."(Ronconi tr., UK, pg. 75)

According to this passage in each of the presences or realms of God there is a 1000 colors of resplendent diverse hues. Through which Salman must combat the evil Iblis and expell him from each realm to the earthly realm which is his prison. Later we shall see how this earthly realm of matter is considered evil and we see in Isma'ilism the symbolic representation of this Neo-Platonic belief. In regards to the orthodox Islamic idea of Seven realms with a command in each realm we can see in the story of the Mi'raj of Muhammad (the Night Journey) the representation of similiar ideas as that regarding Hierocosmic thought it is recorded in the Sahih al-Bukhari:

:"[narrated by Abu Dhar] God's Apostle said, 'While I was at Mecca the roof of my house was opened and Gabriel descended, open my chest, and washed it with zam-zam water. Then he brought a golden tray full of wisdom and faith and having poured its contents into my chest, he closed it. Then he took my hand and ascended with me to the nearest heaven, when I reached the nearest heaven, Gabriel said to the Gatekeeper of the Heaven, 'Open (the gate).' The gatekeeper asked, 'Who is it?' Gabriel replied, 'Gabriel'. He asked, 'Is there anyone with you?' Gabriel replied 'Yes, Muhammad is with Me.' he asked, 'Has he been called?' Gabriel said, 'Yes'. So the gate was opened and we went over to the nearest heaven and there we saw a man sitting with some people on his right and some on his left. When he looked towards his right, He laughed and when He looked toward His left he wept. Then he said, 'Welcome! O pious prophet and pious son.' I asked Gabriel, 'Who is He He replied, 'He is Adam and the people on His right and left are the souls of His offspring. Those on his right are the people of Paradise and those on his left are the people of Hell and when he looks towards his right he laughs and when he looks towards his left he weeps.' Then he ascended with me till he reached the second heaven and he said to its Gatekeeper, 'Open (the gate).' The gate keeper said to him the same as the Gatekeeper of the first heaven had said and he opened the gate. Anas said: 'Abu Dhar added that the prophet met Adam, Idris, Moses, Jesus and Abraham, he did not mention on which heaven they were but he mentioned that he met Adam on the nearest heaven and Abraham on the sixth heaven..... Then Gabriel took me till we reached Sidrat-ul-Muntaha (the Lote Tree of the Utmost Boundry) which was shrouded in Colours, Indescribable. Then I was admitted into Paradise where I found small (tents) or walls (made) of pearls and its earth was of musk."

We see that in this hadith that the Prophet was guided into the seven heavens where he saw therein a Commander for each heaven and that in the ultimate experience of this episode, similar to the Isma'ili symbolic cosmos that the veil of the Tree of Life (Tree of Wisdom in Judaic mysticism, possibly the Manifestation of God in the Baha'i tradition) that it is engulfed by the wondrous spectacle of many colored veil and that Paradise is comprised of walls made of pearls which resemble the spheres or lights of the Isma'ili mythic epic. The Isma'ili idea of an

Imam of the Time in each realm is similar to Qur'an 41:12 which describes God assigning a command for each of the seven firmaments. Of course we can also see the similarity in the Mi'raj. It may be the rationale for the Isma'ili representation for the Seven 'Nutqs' as well as Seven 'Dahrs' (durations) in the cyclical history of Isma'ilism, this also is rationalized in the *Umm al-Kitab* with the explication of seven episodes of expulsion of Iblis from the heavenly realms of the Symbolic cosmology.

Ibn `Arabi's School:

The school of Ibn Arabi, an 12th century sufi theosophist, taught a neo-platonic schema as well. His student al-Kashani explicated on this schema as well incorporating the First Intelligence and Universal Soul, or the All-Soul:

"Above is God, the One, the Alone; from him proceeds, by a dynamic emanation, the Universal Reason (al-aql al-awwal), called also the Primary or Universal Spirit (al-ruh al-awwal) and the Highest Knowledge (al-'ilm al-a'la). This is a spiritual substance and the first of the properties which the divine essence implies. From it two other substances are produced, one spiritual (ruhaniyya) which is the substance of the world of the Universal Reason, considered as apart from God and inhabited by particular intelligences, somewhat as fractions of the Universal Reason, which are the angels of revealed religion; the other is psychical, being the Universal Soul (nafs). Finally come the material elements with their natural forces and laws. In the Universal Reason are the types of all things, as universals and this Reason, with its types is known directly by God. God's omnipotence (qahiriyya) is manifested through these angels or Intelligences and their world is therefore call the World of Power ('alam al-qudra). But they also, in their perfection, repair the imperfections of other beings. Their world again, therefore is called the World of Repairing ('alam al-Jabarut). Some, however, take the other sense of the root jabar and render it, the World of Constraint, because they constrain other being towards perfection. This world is also called the Mother of the Book (umm al-Kitab; Qur'an 13:39; 43:4) from it comes all knowledge of divine mysteries, it is above all fetters of time and change. The world of the Universal Soul, on the other hand called the World of Ruling ('alam al-malakut), is a step nearer the particular, material world. The types which exist in the Universal Reason becoming its general conceptions, and these are further specialized, determined. limited, brought near to what we know by being engraved on the individual reasonable souls, which are the souls of the heavenly bodies, corresponding to the Angelic Intelligences, the fraction of the Universal Reason. This world, from it's likeness to the human imagination, is called the Imagination of the world (khayal al-'alam) and the Nearer Heavean (al-sama' al-dunya). From it issue all being in order to appear in the World of Sense ('alam al-shahada), it moves and directs everything, measuring out matter and assigning causes. The heavenly bodies, then, have reasonable souls just like our own, these are the imaginative faculties of the particular reasonable souls, into which the Universal Soul divides. On their changes all change in this world below depends." ("Abd al-Razzak al-Kashani", EI, pg. 89, D. B. McDonald)

Thus from the One is derived Universal Reason, the Intellectual Principle and thus Universal Soul and Angelic Intelligences.

Adam and Cyclical Time in Isma'ili Thought:

Time (zaman) plays an integral part in the cosmology of Isma'ilism. In fact, it is the only Islamic interpretation that integrates the concept of time to the extent that it does. In the "Hermetic" traditions of Empedocles and Pythagoras time is thought of as recurring. The Pythagorean doctrine of the eternal return recounts that all that has existed exists now. It was the belief that time was a continuous cyclical loop as pictured in the Orobous snake eating its own tail. Likewise, in Isma'ilism time is cyclical and proceeds through periods (dahr) of duration each duration accorded to a 'nutq' or prophet beginning with Prophet Adam to Prophet Muhammad. Adam is known as the Third Intelligence, as corollary to the 'mate' and manifest on a lower level of the higher Qdr that which gives measure to time the duration of time. This Heavenly Archetype of Adam is known as 'Adam Ruhani' or the Spiritual Adam in the mystical allegory. In the Isma'ili interpretation of the fall of Adam from the garden of Paradise (firdaus, jannat) it is recounted that Adam falls from His position as the Third Intelligence to the rank of the Tenth Intelligence, the earthly plane. Thus becoming the archetype for each prophet of each age He is 'adam al-awwal al-kulli'. He is to be distinguished from the 'Adam juizi' who inaugurates the entire process with Eve. This Adam is simultaneously the epiphanic form (Arabic: mazhar, mirror or manifestation) and the Veil of the Celestial Adam (adam ruhani) His own cycle was one of epiphany (dahr al-kashf, unveiling). Each prophetic adam appears with 27 companions with 12 deputies. The seven ranks 'adam al-awwal al-kulli' falls through become the seven periods of the cyclical time. Each revelation brings Adam to a Higher Intelligence until He reaches that station (maqamat) that He descended from. With each epiphanic dispensation conclusion with the ascension of the prophet a period of 'satr' (hiddenness) is begun until the descension of the next prophetic adam.

The Divine Pentad:

In the Isma'ili system of emanation there is a conjunction of five hypostatic entelechia known collectively as the Divine Pentad: Fath--esoteric interpretation, Khayal-- imaginative faculty, Jadd--enunciation of Shari'a, 'aql--principle of consciousness and understanding, intelligence and nafs--soul. Together they form the 'alam al-mithal or symbolic archetypal world. An archetype is defined as "in modern times, the term has been used to refer to fundamental structures in man's psyche as well as in his religious life. In either sense, an archetype is a pattern that determines human experience (whether on a conscious or an unconscious level) and makes itself felt as something both vital and holy".[ER, "Archetype"] Plotinus the archetype was the ordering system for the expression of the divine in nature. Thus the Divine Pentad is a heavenly symbol of the sign that is each human soul. These five are resident in the psychologies of the individual and help in the ta'wil--interpretation for the rendering of the Qur'an in batini terms. It is evinced by using the way of the Hikma Ilahiyuh or Divine Philosophy. If we are to separate the five out in terms of quality of function then we would have three groups:

1. Intellective: 'Aql and Fath,

2. Power: Nafs and Khayal,

3. Logos: Jadd.

There is an axis between higher and lower functions like a human mind with autonomic and cerebrum which in turn has a two fold division the axis being jadd; the higher is 'aql and nafs and lower fath and khayal. It would be parallel to the division in the monad of kalima (jadd), kaf ('aql), nun (nafs), kuni (khayal) and qdr (fath). Jadd establishes a structure or framework or schematic where the intelligence ('aql) is empowered by soul (nafs) to duplicate kuni-qdr (fath and khayal) the pen and tablet which creates a portrait of the schematic drawing of the jadd which in turn becomes a new structure or sketch for the additional portraits thereof. Jadd is the catalyst to another level of artistic or intellectual creation and that creation becomes the catalyst to further creations based on the first sketch. One could also see a similarity to the Sufi doctrine regarding the five lata'if^[ii].

"...Divino Consesso, soto la specie di cinque immagini risplendenti, le quali presso gli uomini sono denominate: Intellecto ('aql), Anima (nafs), Vittoria (fath), Gloria (jadd), Immaginazione (hayal)...e l'Angel a schiera a schiera...Queste centoventiquattromila aure luminose in questo Divino Consesso sono altrettanto luminose a splendenti quanto centomila lune e soli misti a rosso..." (Ranconi, UK, pg. 51)

(the Divine Concourse, gives 5 resplendent images, they dominate over humanity: Intellect ('aql), Anima (nafs), Vittoria (fath), Glory (jadd), Imagination (khayal)...and the Angel light upon light...With 154,000 luminous lights in which the Divine Concourse is bathed in luminosity resplendent with 100,000 lights of mystic suns a rosa)

Symbolically the Divine Pentad is embodied in the Angelic Beings of Salman, Michael, Azriel, Israfil and Ba Huraira or as the Intimates of God: Muhammad, 'Ali, Fatima, Hasan and Husayn. Symbolically 'Ali is married to Fatima; that is, creative imagination to esoteric interpretation and only through these faculties can the ta'wil have power to interpret the sacred word, thus only through these can the Command of God (Muhammad) be understood, thus the Reason-Principle of 'Ali and Fatima, embodied in the Isma'ili Imam, is the means of making the Shari'a understood to the community. In this way the feminine is married to the masculine (the dark-eyed huri's married to the faithful). The pentad can also be seen in Sufi thought on the microcosmic level where the pentad is embodied within each individual self. The Sufis of the Naqshbandi order, specifically, Mujaddidi, taught that there were subtle (lata'if) organs in each person, it was considered a spiritual rather than physical organ for perceiving the divine in creation. These five organs were known as Qalb (heart), Ruh (soul), Sirr (secret), Khafi (hidden), and Nafs (animal self). The Imam, throughout the religious history, is present and at times in occultation, which necessitates the return of the Imam to commence a resurrection in preparation for the announcement of a new Shari'a; these periods are known as dawr-i kashf--period of manifestation, dawr-i satr--period of concealment, dawr-i qiyama--period of resurrection, and finally the qiyam-i qiyamat--resurrection of resurrections. This can be expressed in the aspect of time of zaman or religious history as the announcement of Shari'a by Muhammad as the jadd aspect of the Pentad, the intelligence and soul of the world in the new revelation with the interpretation of that revelation in the position of the Imam, a marriage between esoteric interpretation and imaginative intellect (fath and khayal). From the point of view of the Isma'ilis reality is divided into three levels the zahir (outer), the batin (inner) and the haqa'iq (the inner and true reality, that Intellectual Beauty ascribed Truth by Plotinus). This can be visualized by the structure of a tree, the bark, the inner layer and finally the hardwood of the

trees interior. These levels of reality are related in the hierarchy of the religious community which is emanated out of the Pentad, there are seven prophetic cycles; corresponding to the horizontal emanation at the same magnitude of a given realm. In each of these cycles there is the hierarchy of the community which reflects the symbolic Divine Pentad:

Natiq-- speaking prophet who reveals the Shari'a

Samit or Asas-- interprets the shari'a according to the rules of ta'wil, the unchangeable truths were the exclusive sovereignty of the pure Imam.

Imam or Wasi- guarded the true meaning of the scriptures and laws in both their zahir and batini aspects

Hujja or the Proof-- maintained control of the Da'is.

Da'i-- Isma'ilis re-interpreted the Shi'i principle of taqi to include guarding against their secret teachings from falling into the hands of the unauthorized person, the da'is protected and preached the message.

Based on the archetypes of the Pentad the process of the revealed Shari'a was to culminate in the transformation of the religious community with specific functions assigned to different layers of the Spiritual and Religious Hierarchy. This transformation has been summed up in the words of one researcher as:

" in short, the passage from zahir to batin, from shari'a to haqi'qa, from tanzil (outer form of the letter) to ta'wil, entailed the passage from the appearance to the true reality, from the letters of the revelation to the inner message behind them, and from the symbol to the symbolized. It corresponded to a passage from the world of phenomenon to the world of noumenon. The initiation into the haqa'iq, attained through the ta'wil or ta'wil al-batin...The tawil, translated also as spiritual hermeneutics or hermeneutic exegesis." (Daftary, I, pg. 98)

Thus also, the Pentad served as archetype for the function of emanation and spiritual transformation. The emanations of other realms is accomplished through the power of the Active Intellect of which the Pentad is the substantial existence. Each of the Five is a part of the Active Intellect: Jadd; 'Aql; Nafs; Khayal; Fath = al-'Aql al-Fa'il (understanding = active intelligence).

Monad and Dyad:

An issue for contemplation would be that of the Monad (unity) and Dyad (diversity) how duality comes out of unicity. In Islam a firm belief is in the Unity (tawhid) of God and any conception, as sometimes perceived in Christianity by the Muslim onlooker, of dividing God, the One, into three stations is to be considered shirk or illicit. Separating the conception of Divinity (lahut) into active (dyad) and inactive (monad or essential) categories shows how God can be unitary and in His essential aspect and active in His attributes (sifah) revealed through the acts of the Intellectual-Principle which enfolds out of the One as an act and in the All-Soul

as the heat which emanates the realms of the lower half, as the Act of Act, of the Hierocosmos. It is important to understand the philosophical operation of subject/object designation to understand these basic points. A thinker is the subject of thought, the actor, the object of thought is the loci of the thinkers contemplation and the process of thought is the act of the thinker. Thus, any results of the subjects act of contemplation of an object are referred to as Ideas. Plotinus writes regarding the monad and dyad that

"the dyad has come into being, but the precedent monad still stands; and this monad is quite distinct within the dyad from either of the two constituent unities, since there is nothing to make it one rather than the other: being neither, but simply that thing apart, it is present without being inherent." [McKenna, PL, pg. 407]

and

"The Dyad is a secondary; deriving from unity, it finds in unity the determinant needed by its native indetermination; once there is any determination, there is Number, in the sense of course, of the real (the archetypal) Number... Thus by what we call the Number and the dyad of that higher realm, we mean Reason-Principles and the Intellectual-Principle: but while the Dyad is undetermined--representing, as it were, the underlie (or Matter) of the Intellectual World--the number which rises from the Dyad and The One is always a Form-Idea: thus the Intellectual-Principle is, so to speak, shaped by the Ideas rising within it--or rather, it is shaped in a certain sense by the One and is another sense by itself, since its potential vision becomes actual and intellection is, precisely, an act of vision in which the subject and object are identical." [McKenna, PL, pg. 373]

Thus we have the unity safeguarded in the Monad which the Dyad is a Duality which enfold out of the previous monad by power of the act of intellection. We start at the level of unicity of the One then enfolding out through the act of intellection the first half of the dyad comes into being, the Intellectual-Principle and further down through the determination of Number of Divinity the All-Soul takes its place among the Three. Additionally below the level of the present dyad is a further intellective division in the All-Soul which brings about the further emanation of the lower cosmos. Which brings us to the question of the Origin of the Hierocosmos itself out of the Three initial Hypostasis.

In the writings of Mirza Husayn-'Ali Nuri, Baha' Allah, we can see similar motifs:

"We have already in the foregoing pages assigned two stations unto each of the Luminaries arising from the Daysprings of eternal holiness. One of these stations, the station of essential unity, We have already explained. 'No distinction do We make between any of them.' (Qur'an 2:136) The other is the station of distinction, and pertaineth to the world of creation and to the limitations thereof. In this respect, each Manifestation of God hath a distinct individuality, a definitely prescribed mission, a predestined Revelation, and specially designated limitations. Each one of them is known by a different name, is characterized by a special attribute, fulfills a definite

Mission, and is entrusted with a particular Revelation." [Baha' Allah, BW, Kitab-I-Iqan, pg. 125]

"That which hath been in existence had existed before, but not in the form thou seest today. The world of existence came into being through the heat generated from the interaction between the active force and that which is its recipient. These two are the same, yet they are different. Thus doth the Great Announcement inform thee about this glorious structure. Such as communicate the generating influence and such as receive its impact are indeed created through the irresistible Word of God which is the Cause of the entire creation, while all else besides His Word are but the creatures and the effects thereof. Verily thy Lord is the Expounder, the All-Wise." [Nuri, BW, Lawh-i-hikmat pg. 241]

We have the station of the Prophet as a unity, a monad, and out of this monad through differentiation a number of prophets manifest into the realm of existence along different intervals of the linear time line (zaman afaqi) each individual prophet has His unique attributes and activity of revealing a shari'a of His age. This monad/dyad aspect is exhibited in the other passage as the aspect of an inactive and active force the active force the act of differentiation and the inactive the monad of the enfolded order, that which is whole within itself not yet unfolded into a existence below it's current stasis. In this way we see how physical reality is the three times removed (if not more) stasis of the original act of the Original Stasis or Enfolded One, the Monad, Undifferentiated Substance. The Word of God again is the catalyst or the mover of the emanation, the efficient cause, the act which is differentiation.

In the Ismaili cosmos the belief that Sabiq, the Universal Intellect creates an angelic realm of Seven Cherubim which in turn have their earthly correspondents. These Ideals within the Universal

Intellect have their individual Ideas attributed to them as embodied in differing functions of the archangels. In the *Umm al-Kitab* we read:

"Questi Sette e Dodici si trovano ne velame dei sette Angeli, Che sono il simbolo delle sette lettere di bismi'l-lahi, cioe Salman e Miqdad e Ba-Darr e Ammar e Ba Huraira e Ba Gundab e Ba Kumail. I sette Velami e Cortine sono venuti ad essere da questi Sette e Dodici" [Ronconi, UK, pg. 34-35]

(These Seven and Twelve form the the veil of the Seven Archangels, they symbolize the seven letters of Bismallah, these are Salman...)

In Plotinus we see a similar idea,

"So too the objects of intellection (the ideal content of the Divine Mind)--identical in virtue of the self-concentration of the principle which is their common ground--must still be distinct each from another; this distinction constitutes Difference. The Intellectual Cosmos thus a manifold, Number and Quantity arise: Quality is the specific

character of each of these Ideas which stand as the principles from which all else derives." [McKenna, PL, pg. 373]

So here Difference constitutes the individual cherubs and Quality is the virtue of each of these individual archangels and the specific function they serve. Likewise in Ismaili cosmological thinking of this type the Seven become symbolised in the typology of Spheres or worlds of God, similar to the idea of the realms of God in the writings of Mirza Husayn-'Ali Nuri. Each world having a specific quality and differing from the other spheres in the manner of which of the seven virtues is more emphatically displayed by the given sphere even though all the virtues are present in each of these differing realms. So that downwards or upwards differing levels of emanation are accomplished as Plotinus explains:

"The Supreme in its progress could never be borne forward upon some souless vehicle nor even directly upon the Soul: it will be heralded by some ineffable beauty: before the great King in his progress there comes first the minor train, then rank by rank the greater and more exalted, closer to the King the kinglier; next his own honoured company until, last among all these grandeurs, suddenly appears the Supreme Monarch himself, and all--unless indeed for those who have contented themselves with the spectacle before his coming and gone away--prostrate themselves and hail him." [McKenna, PL, pg. 405-6]

An Isma'ili reading of this passage would place Sabiq as the ineffable beauty, the minor train the earthly believers, the ranks the limits or concourses in the heavens, honoured company the vahid or one; comprised of the saying "BismGod ar-rahman ar-rahim", and then the Supreme Monarch of the One (alternatively this might be viewed as the Sabiq appearing out of the honoured company). So we see that the Hierocosmos becomes inundated with manifold realms of emanations preceding downward through the hierarchy of being till we reach the level of Nature. Plotinus alludes to Nature with its corollary in the Isma'ili hierarchy of the "Blue Sphere" and in the Baha'i hierarchy as Nasut as "still remains pregnant with this offspring; for it has, so to speak, drawn all within itself again, holding them lest they fall away towards Matter to be brought up in the House of Rhea (in the realm of flux)." [McKenna, PL, pg. 376] And Mirza Husayn-'Ali writes "We accidentally came upon the story of the 'Mir'aj' of Muhammad, of Whom was spoken: 'But for Thee I would not have created the spheres'..." How well and true is the saying: Flingest thou thy calumnies unto the face of Them Whom the one true God hath made the Trustees of the treasures of His seventh sphere." [Baha' Allah, BW, pg. 86, The Kitab-i-Iqan]

The letter uttered in the heavenly realms, the spheres of the Isma'ilis is that of the first letter of the command of God, it could be taken to be the Prophet in allegorical cloaking symbolized in the Ba of Bismallah. Also, the glimmer of the effulgent "Glory" and the company of the dwellers is like that honoured company of Plotinus which is also like the effulgent 1000 points of light in the heavenly concourse described in the Ismaili *Umm al-Kitab* (2nd century A.H./ 8th century C.E.).

The emanations proceeding hypothetically downwards, in actuality the emanations are falling inward; into the Principle or limit before and above it, form the Hierocosmos which lie in between the realms of Divinity and the realm of physical reality described alternatively as the

"House of Rhea", "Nasut" and the "Seventh or Blue Sphere". The Isma'ili account of this meta-cosmos is From the One through God's Intentions (iradah) and His Will (mashiah) goes forth the command which is an act creating the syzygy of Kaf-Nun the essential aspect of Kuni-Qdr. Through the act of BE at the same instance is the creation through the process of duplication the First Principle of Sabiq (Second One) which is the only part of the Ipseity approachable by human comprehension. This Principle is the Universal Intellect or in other words the hypostization of the Essential Act. Within the Essential act we have God's intentions taking on the form of Power of the Essential thought or intellect or a guiding principle the Will represents the energy of thought or the spirit of the Act of Intellection. This Second One creates out of another act of Its' subject and object the Third One or the All-Soul of Plotinus and thus Tali of the Ismailis which through its act creates the lesser emanations down to physical reality. The entire process is a process of act producing a new entity which becomes a subject and object to be acted out. Thus each level has a monad, the Principle itself, and the dyad the process of the Principle's object being acted against which is the lower half of the Principle creating in the end a new Hypostasis. Within the higher aspect of each Principle are the contents of the monad, the Ideas in the case of Sabiq, the ideas are manifest as the Seven Cherubim, in the Universal Soul or Tali these ideas become the 12 Mothers or Angelic Ranks (6 male, 6 female which form pairs to form three parts of the Divine Pentad: Fath, Khayal, Jadd; Kuni and Qdr are added to form five. The Seven mark off each of the Spheres one per each world of God. The Qur'anic verse reads: "It is God who has created seven heavens, and earths as many. His commandment descends through them, so that you may know that God has power over all things, and that He has knowledge of all things." (65:12) Thus they are the vertical principle of Guidance, the 1st dimension, the second dimension or horizontal plane is formed by Twelve with the pentad manifest in each concourse as the Five Divine Presences. The Seven Ideas, as the Intellectual-Principle is a principle of action or movement, represents the number or differentiation of the Intellectual-Principle, thus marks off the number of acts in the Hierocosmos. Seven Ideas would necessitate seven emanations. The quality of the contents of each of these emanations is determines the attributes prevalent in the particular emanation.

Rectifying Isma'ili Ta'wil on Creation with the Qur'anic Creative Typology:

The historical development of the Isma'ili interpretation of God's creation is understood in correlation with the development of mystical Shi'ism, a vision of the Imam as a spiritual office rather than political. With the establishment of the Nizari Isma'ili state in the 12th Century C.E. we have the founding of Isma'ili mystical understanding in Iran. This establishment consequently develops the Iranian Shi'ite mystical tradition in the dissemination of Isma'ili mystical doctrines through various Sufi tariqas, additionally their doctrines were spread by non-Isma'ili Shi'a such as the Qarmatians of Bahrain which later developed an influence on Iraqi Shi'ism.

Creation has an unprecedented importance in mystical traditions in Isma'ili Thought for in the Creation is the foundation of most Isma'ili doctrines as has been seen with the development of the concept of Sabiq and Tali (the Pen and Tablet) or more orthodoxly in Isma'ili terms the role of Kuni-Qdr (kaf-nun). Resolving the Isma'ili mystical understanding with the Qur'anic revelation is not as difficult as most Orthodox scholars of the Ahl as-Sunnah would posit. To begin we must focus on the understanding of the role of the "Person" and "Mate" in Ayah 4:1. Muhammad Asad comments regarding these terms:

"Out of the many meanings attributable to the term nafs--soul, spirit, mind, animate being, living entity, human being, person, self (in the sense of a personal identity), humankind, life-essence, vital principle, and so forth-- most of the classical commentators choose 'human being', and assume that it refers here to Adam.....My rendering of nafs, in this context, as 'living entity' follows the same reasoning [not tied to Adam]. As regards the expression zawjaha ('its mate'), it is to be noted that, with reference to animate beings, the term zawj ('a pair', 'one of a pair' or 'a mate') applies to the male as well as to the female component of a pair or couple; hence, with reference to human beings, it signifies a woman's mate (husband) as well as a man's mate (wife). Abd Muslim--as quoted by Razi-- interprets the phrase 'He created out of it (minha) its mate' as meaning 'He created its mate out of its own kind [own genus] (min jinsiha)'...The literal translation of minha as 'out of it' clearly alludes, in conformity with the text, to the biological fact that both sexes have originated from 'one living entity'." (Asad, Q, note #1, pg. 100)

We see that the commentators interpret 'Nafsi' as a 'living entity' or 'Person' or 'Soul'. The mate (zawjaha) is not specifically is not gender specific. So we can extrapolate that it is not definitively the Prophet Adam as the 'Person'. We must also understand the development of the mate out of the same nature of the Person in the sense of emanation. In Isma'ilism the term for creation is conceptualized into two distinct spheres:

'inbiath'--the emanation of a thing out of another, which is the equivalent to 'tajalli' of Mirza Husayn-'Ali Nuri and the 'Khalq' of the Naqshbandi sufi saint Shah Wali'ullah; and

'abda--' which is the creation of something by another not part of, as is the case of the creation of Kuni by God by origination, 'badaa'.

Thus the Isma'ili understanding is that of the creation of the 'mate', equivalent to Qdr which is created by 'inbiath or in Qur'anic Arabic as 'ja'ala'. For Isma'ilis one of the fundamentals of Islam is imported in the belief of the absolute transcendence of God apart from creation. Thus, the orthodox doctrine of Tawhid is observed and Kuni is not emanated out of the Essence of God, rather, Kuni is a product of God's creation. However, there is a concept of emanation, inbiath, which appears in the stage of the development of Qdr. Comparing the Isma'ili idea of Creation in two folds of 'abda and inbiath to Shah Wali'llah we see that Shah Wali'llah writes:

"The works of God are many but they do not exceed the following four kinds: Ibda'a, Khalq, Tadbir, and Tajalli. Ibda'a means to bring out a thing from pure non-existence....By Khalq is meant making a thing from a thing (as the making of Adam from dust). This is between God and what passes from one state to another state....tadbir, it refers to the free acting in the universe so that the happenings therein should turn in conformity with the Universal Expediency....Tajalli originally means the appearance [manifestation, Ar.Mazhar] of the Real as an Administrator in the world in the same manner as the human soul is the administrator of the body." (Sirhindi, SW, Lamha 33)

We see that the Isma'ili use of creative terms is distinct from other Sufi or mystical accounts of creative processes. It is however analogous to Qur'anic Arabic terminology. So when we see that Kuni/Qdr is interpreted as being created we see they develop out of the same typology as the 'Person' and 'Mate' of ayah 4:1. The question really is whether or not it can be interpreted to be a non-corporeal creation or a corporeal creation as is the tradition in Sunni Islam. I would point out that some have argued that the Person of ayahs 4:1 and 39:6 is the 'Soul' of ayahs 6:97 and 91:7. Whereas, others have argued that the 'Soul' in ayah 6:97 is the 'Mate' of ayahs 39:6 and 4:1. However, we see that 'Soul' does not equal 'Mate'. The 'Soul' of 6:97 is the Adamic soul the created soul of the lower realms of the created dominion. Since, the creative terminology is that associated with a creation or production from pre-existing matter, the creation of the 'Mate' is an emanation (abda, ja'ala) as in 'ja'ala' in 39:6. So every creative act of God is a 'kalaqa' but not every creation (kaliq) is solely by 'kalaqa' it may be a initial 'kalaqa' plus an qualifying term such as 'ja'ala. So we see the Person by creative terminology is associated with creation out of nothing thus the Person is created out of no previously created entity since 'kalaqa' is always the creative term for the 'Person' it is a creation out of no previously created entity and our realm, the realm of earth with seven divisions, is a creation out of something fashioned. Therefore, the 'Person' inhabits a realm higher than ours. Additionally, if Adam is created out of 'dust' or 'clay' then Adam is created out of something.

For the Isma'ilis this typology is a manifestation repeated in the Spiritual realm and on the earthly plane thus the 'Person' is the Universal Spiritual Adam and is manifest on earth by the Prophet Adam (adam juizi). It is understood by the Isma'ilis that the Qur'anic verse of 42:11 which declares to God belong both high and low similitudes (Ar. 'mathal') we see the high similitude of the Spiritual Adam with the low similitude of the Prophet Adam. Regarding Shah Wali'llah we see he thinks similarly in:

"Being in the sense of Reality and not as a concept is of three stages: Pure Essence, Stage of Intellect, Stage of the Great Body[Person]....Shakhs Akbar by its being one of the unities (wahid) is one thing: but when we split it, two parts become manifest. The Universal Soul and the Rahmani Soul. The universal Soul is a penetrating one and a determiner while the Rahmani Soul is an object of penetration and a substratum." (Sirhindi, SW, Sata'at)

Having addressed this question we see that Qdr as 'time' is another consideration. The Isma'ili philosopher al-Kirmani addresses this matter. The early debate in Isma'ili philosophical discussions was the role of time: was time a part of Divinity or was it a creation. Al-Kirmani points out, as Dr. Paul Walker accounts, that: Intellect gives rise to two--ibda'i and inbiathi, which contains time. The soul, which is second to Intellect, cannot be trapped by Nature. This soul is the first procession (al-mubaa'ith al-awwal) and the second existent being. It is not body nor in body. At this stage time cannot be a part of the realm, rather at the level of the Mate, time becomes an operative function as 'qadara' as is the typology of the Qur'an, since the 'mate' is created by 'ja'ala' at the same level of 'qadara' functionality.

To recount we see that creation is first established by 'kalaqa' with the product being 'Person' (nafsi) [see 4:1,39:6] which in God creates out of it the 'Mate' (zawjaha) [see 4:1, 6:97] by 'ja'ala'. Now the question is does the 'nafsi' of ayah 6:97 equate to the same meaning as in 4:1? It is if we consider the overall context of the passage however what is established in the allegorical spheres of the Isma'ilis is that everything on earth correspond to an higher similitude thus the reflection of this process has it's origin in the spiritual realms. Therefore, we have

mankind produced by 'anshaa' out of the 'mate' or according to the Isma'ili "adam juizi", which now corresponds to the Biblical story of Adam and Eve. This corresponds to the Isma'ili spiritual analogy of the creation of 1. Kuni, out of which we get 2. Qdr, out of which we get the pairs of angelic ranks, corresponding to the creation of pairs out of the soul of 6:97.

Isma'ili and Zoroastrian Tradition:

A short note on the similarities of Isma'ilism to Zoroastrian inspired religious systems (i.e. Manicheism, Mazdakism and the Mithraic cultus) is needed to identify some of the primordial analogs to the Isma'ili doctrine. It is recorded in the Qur'an that there where a people known as the Sabaeans with the Book, it is supposed by many commentators that these Sabaeans were in fact the Zoroastrians (ca. 8th Century B.C.E.). The Zoroastrian hierarchy consisted of Ahura Mazda "Ormazd", the High Divinity (God), and with the coexisting evil deity Angra Maniu (Ahriman, Ar. Shaitan). It is held by the Zurvanites of Zoroastrian tradition that there in fact was not a dualistic existence between Good and Evil (Ahura Mazda and Angra Maniu), but rather that a High Divinity known as Zurvan (the Divinity of Time) created both Ahura Mazda and Angra Maniu. Subsequently Ahura Mazda creates Seven archangelic beings (similar to the Four Archangels of the Book of Revelation of John) each given sovereignty to protect the creation of Ahura Mazda of these are Vohu Maniu, the Good Mind (Nous) and Asha^[iii], order or reason (Logos). Of the similarities to Isma'ilism is the concept of Seven Creations. Evil becomes trapped in a protective realm beneath Divinity. Ohrmazd forms his creation out of light and in a spiritual state. Zurvanite deity of Zurvan creating the Good and Evil which is similar to the Isma'ili concept of Sabiq and Shaitan being born out of the same light with one obedient and the other disobedient to the Will of God. And interestingly is the concept of Zoroastrianism that Divinity creates through a recitation or verbal formula, Ohrmazd fashions his creations in a form (getig), by celebrating a "spiritual yasna" (yasna=recitation [ayah or sura]). This process is begun by Ohrmazd's recitation of the Ahunwar which spells out Ahrimans ultimate defeat. Each of his creations is placed under the protection of one of the seven Amahraspands (Avestan, Amesta Spenta [i.e. Vohu Maniu, Asha, etc.]) Additionally, there are three periods of creation in Zoroastrianism: Material Creation, The Mixture of Good & Evil and the Separation of Evil from Good which occurs outside of time. There is also the primordial man, like Adam, known as Gayormad whose protector is Ohrmazd and from which the first human couples develop from his seed.

Besides these Zoroastrian parallels there are also the derivatives of Zoroastrianism of Manicheism (ca. 3rd Century C.E.) and Mazdakism (6th Century C.E.) which in each there are some parallels to Isma'ilism. Of course it should be noted all of these traditions were active in lands where Isma'ilism was active. In Mazdakism we see that there are Four faculties: discernment (at-tamyiz), understanding (al-fahm), memory (al-hafz) and joy (al-sorur). There are also Seven wazirs who each are in charge of a given affair: the commander (salar), the provost (peskar), unknown (b'lwn), the messenger (bivn) the expert (kardan), the statesman (dustur), the page (kodag). Additionally, there are 12 spiritual beings (ruhaniyun) that the seven wazirs revolve within. We see that the faculties are similar to the Isma'ili Pentad and the wazirs similar to the Seven Natiq and the 12 spiritual beings similar to the 12 mothers of the Isma'il symbolic cosmology.

In terms of the similarity to Manicheism we can see that the Manichean idea of the creation of the Mother of Life and the First Man primordially and supra-materially can be similar to the

relationship of the Sabiq and Tali and that the subsequent creation of the Living Spirit similar to the role of Salman and of ar-Ruh. There is additionally the archetype of the Active Intellect or Logos in the Column of Glory which is described as an evocation (Jesus, the Splendour) of the Third Messenger (Living Spirit) through which portions of Light ascend and are purified first passing through the moon and the Sun then ultimately ascending to the primordial heavenly existence.

It is important to note the difference between Zoroastrianism and Manicheism which is a difference of the respect of the creative power of Evil. In Zoroastrianism material creation is a product of the Good and in Manicheism it is a creation of Evil. However, one could say the process of purification of the light trapped in the dark evil creation of Manicheism is a movement toward a positive idea behind creation.

Archetypically, it is important to note that there may be some confusion between these similarities and one may posit that these similarities devise a direct causation and plagiarism in religious authorship. However, understood, aside from the Manichean idea of creation by demonic forces, that all these traditions are based on a Archetype which is founded anciently and perhaps firstly in Zoroastrianism or perhaps the original Adamic religion, which is said to have started in the Central Asian steppes somewhere out of the malaise of Shamanism. Archetypically, which is to say that in the Jungian tradition that there is a deep imbedded imprint of primordial existence within the individual conscious and collective conscious of humanity which gives an imprint like map of the original situation of creation-- a symbolic expression of a reality, all these traditions share a single origin, which among believers is indicated as Divine, and therefore the similarities become understandable as a Divine Archetype which is shared amongst religious traditions, not as a simple human deficiency of plagiarism.

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[i] David Roochnik in his *The Tragedy of Reason: Toward a Platonic Conception of Logos* defines 'logos' as: 1. the word, or the outward form by which the inward thought is expressed; 2. the inward thought itself. This dual nature of its meaning gives logos' extraordinary range. Primarily it refers to those outward sounds that express thought. Logos differs from 'voice' or the production of mere sound. It is the ability to give voice some reasoned thought. Word, sentence, talk, speech, explanation, language, discourse, story, argument, rational account-- all these function at different times as the proper translation of 'logos'. It can also be internal talk which goes on within. 'Logos' thus comprehends virtually all that is verbal and rational within us. The one phrase that begins to capture both of these meanings is 'rational account', a speech that attempts to render rational or intelligible any given phenomenon. A third meaning should be added. 'Logos' refer to something like 'rational structure'. It can refer to that which exists outside of the human mind or the voice...this logos is not a human speech or thought but the structure of the world 'out there' that can be apprehended by human beings and then expressed in language (in logos)."

[ii] Marcia Hermansen in "SHAH WALI ALLAH'S THEORY OF THE SUBTLE SPIRITUAL CENTERS (LATA'IF): A SUFI MODEL OF PERSONHOOD AND SELF-TRANSFORMATION" remarks: "Shah Wali Allah in his theory of the lata'if further developed a system existing among the Naqshbandi Sufis, particularly the Mujaddidiyya branch, so called because they followed the teachings of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhind (d. 1625), who was known as the Mujaddid, or "renewer" of the second millennium. This system was based on the idea that the human being had ten parts—five material, five immaterial. The lower level of the material parts consisted of the Lower Soul (nafs) and the four elements (fire, air, earth, and water), while the higher level consisted of the five lata'if, sometimes called the 'five jewels' (al-jawahir al-khams): the Heart (qalb), Spirit (ruh), Mystery (sirr), Arcane (khafi), and the Super-Arcane (akhfa). The two levels of this Naqshbandi system were said to correspond respectively to the distinction between the World of God's Creation ('alam al-Khalq) and the World of God's Command ('alam al-'amr), a distinction based on Qur'anic terminology and having a long history in Sufi thought. For example, the Qur'anic verse (17:85) 'the Spirit is

from the command of my Lord" (al-ruh min amr rabbi) is taken by the sufis to mean that the ruh, or human spirit, comes from an immaterial timeless realm of God's command ('amr) which precedes physical manifestation.

It is interesting to note that the five-fold structure of the lata'if according to the Naqshbandiyya-Mujaddidiyya seems to parallel the model of the Islamic version of Greek medical theory (tibb) in which there are five inner and five outer senses.[23] The model of the lata'if which appeared early in Sufism clearly developed and was refined over time. Najmuddin al-Razi (d. 1256), a Kubrawiyya Sufi of Iran and author of the *Mirsad al-'ibad*, formulated a system of five lata'if and found a Qur'anic basis of the terms *sirr* and *khafi*—Qur'an 20:7, 'if thou makest utterance aloud, verily He knows the secret (*sirr*) and what is more hidden (*khafi*).'[24] 'Ala ad-Daula Simnani (d. 1336), whose works influenced Sirhindi, expanded the system of Najmuddin al-Razi to a seven-fold one by adding below the five lata'if the concept of a physical form or mold (*qalab*) and above them a further center called the *haqiyya* or *ananiyya*. Sirhindi's model then expanded to represent the lata'if as part of a distinct set of symbols and practices (see figs. 1 and 2),[25] and this was finally developed by Shah Wali Allah into a three-tiered model with a total of some fifteen components."

[iii] Mary Boyce writes regarding 'asha': "The vastness of the steppes encouraged the Indo-Iranians to conceive their gods as cosmic, not local, divinities; and they apprehended a universal principle of what ought to be, Av. 'asha', Skt. 'rta', variously translated as 'order, righteousness, truth'. This principle should govern everything, from the workings of nature to human as and all human conduct. It was guarded, they held, by a great triad of ethical divinities, the Lords, Ahura. The greatest of them, known to the Iranians as Ahura Mazda, 'Lord of Wisdom'..." pg. 9, in *Textual Sources for the Study of Zoroastrianism* Barnes and Noble: New Jersey (1984)