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THE NOTION OF CREATION IN THE DRUZE FAITH



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Introduction

The Druze movement originated at the beginning of the eleventh century (A.D. 1017) and developed out of the Ismāʿīlī faction of Shīʿī Islām. Founded by the Ismāʿīlī Ḥamza ibn ʿAlī, the Tawḥīd is a philosophical and spiritual path that incorporates the fundamentals of Islam, Christianity, and Judaism referred to in the Qurʾān, together with the ancient philosophies of Pythagoras, Plato, Aristotle, Plotinus, and others. It is a synthesis and a unification of the most contradictory thoughts, a synthesis that leads to the real Tawḥīd or “third course” (*al-maslak al-thālith*).

The specificity of the Tawḥīd consists in establishing a bridge between monotheism and non-dualism. To say that God is One does not merely mean that there is “no God but God,” but that only God exists and is absolutely real, and that all beings are in Him. Thus, the term “Tawḥīd” should be understood as the knowledge of the unity of God.

It is among the Sufis that the term “Tawḥīd” generates greater speculation, since the Tawḥīd becomes a spiritual experience. This will be, for example, the meaning of *waḥdat al-wujūd* of Ibn ʿArabi, who affirms the Oneness of Being or the Unity of Existence.

It is important to bear in mind that the Tawḥīd is based on the *taqiyya* or “dissimulation,” whose essence lies in revealing indirectly what the doctrine of the Tawḥīd is. The *taqiyya* is a means to protect the wisdom of the doctrine. It serves to discourage the reader who does not diligently seek the truth. Because of its Gnostic, initiatory aspect, the doctrine addresses two messages in two different approaches to what it considers two categories of humanity: the enlightened and unenlightened. Thus, the *taqiyya* is related to humanity’s needs and its preparedness for esoteric knowledge. On a deeper level, the *taqiyya* is an indirect way to reveal the truth of God: God is the Unspeakable whom no word befits.

Creation and Divine Personality

What characterizes the creation in its very essence? Creation entails that what is created is not created from any matter: it is *ex nihilo*. God is therefore the total, integral Cause of everything. He is the ultimate Creator:

thus, what He creates must not be merely an appearance; rather it must be real and, to that extent, endowed with a certain ontological autonomy. But at the same time this autonomy can be conceived only under the previous condition, which is logically that of an absolute and unilateral ontological dependence of the created upon the Creator, the former deriving its whole being (autonomy included) from the Creator. Finally, the creation is an act that takes place in the divine eternity, and not in time itself. We must therefore speak of what is created, and not of the act of creation. What is created is time, but it has been created since eternity.

Creation differs from emanation, since the latter is a direct consequence of what it emanates from: it is a reflection of the reality from which it emanates. Not only is the emanated not autonomous, but the Cause cannot but reflect itself in its own emanation. Thus, there is a reciprocal dependence between the emanated and that from which it has emanated and an absence of substantial distinction between them. This is therefore a monism.

As the opposite of a movement of natural and necessary deployment, creation implies, in fact, the notion of an intentional act, of a will for creation and therefore of freedom. This is why it embodies the personality of a Creator, endowed with the specific characteristics of a person, which are conscience, will, and freedom (this is not the case, for example, with Plato's Form of the Good).

Thus, creation is determined by personality, since impersonality and creation are incompatible. Understanding creation in the Tawḥīd necessarily depends upon our conception of God: is God a person or should we talk about the impersonality of the Absolute?

The question of the personality of God and the impersonal divinity develops on three levels: individuality, personality, and impersonality. Individuality refers to the self as the subject of attribution. Personality is the self as ego or reflexivity. Impersonality is understood as of an absolute principle, beyond any subjectivity as well as any attribute; thus, it is essentially indeterminable.

The specificity of the Tawḥīd consists in developing a conception that suggests a different reading of the divine notion traditionally known in monotheistic religions and generally designated by the expression "personal God."

According to the Tawḥīd, impersonality refers to the *lāhūt* or divinity. Names and attributes that appear at first glance to relate to God have only a partial meaning and relative reality; God is referred to by names and attributes only by necessity but not in truth. These attributes are conditionally required and not intrinsically real: their only function is to help man to understand God. God is neither personal nor impersonal, since personality and impersonality are terms that are in an alternating relationship relative to each other. God is neither qualified nor unqualified; He is beyond these two characteristics. He is the Ineffable toward which the Apophatic way leads us. Ḥamza ibn 'Alī explains:

Neither do I say that He has a soul or a spirit, for He would then be like created beings, susceptible to progress and regression. Nor do I say of Him that He has a person or a body or a corporeality [of any sort] or a figure or a substance or any extrinsic qualities, because each of these attributes necessarily implies a position relative to six limitations: above and below, right and left, in front of and behind. Anything which can be given an attribute is in need of that attribute. Furthermore, each of these six limitations requires by necessity six more of the same limitations, and so on, progressively and endlessly. God, the Exalted, glory be to Him, is too great to be associated with numbers or with beings whatever they may be, together or individually. Neither do I say of Him that He is a being, for a non-being is merely naught. Nor is He on a thing, because He would then be subject to it. Nor is He in a thing, because He would be limited to it. Nor is He dependent on a thing, because He would be in need of it. He is neither standing nor sitting, neither asleep nor awake, and there is naught which is similar to Him. He is neither going nor passing through or by. Neither is He non-physical nor corporeal, neither powerful nor weak. Our Lord, glory be to Him, is exalted over names, attributes, genera and expressions, and over all things.¹

Here, the Tawḥīd echoes the Mu'tāzila,² who were the first Islamic school of theology to adopt the *tanzīh* of God, that is, the denial of any quality or attribute, and so of any comparison, corporeality, or limit to God. In this regard, it also echoes the *Kashf al-Maḥjūb* of Abū Ya'qūb as-Sijistānī, which establishes a series of negations concerning God.³ But Pythagoras, Hermes, Plotinus, and Plato in the *Parmenides* also made use of Apophatic theology. The philosophy of these Greek thinkers had a major impact on all Bātiniyya, in particular on Ismā'īliyya,⁴ hence their influence on the Tawḥīd. Moreover, the Tawḥīd meets, in some aspects, the concept of Çankara of an unqualified *brahman*.

Personality refers to the 'Aql, or cosmic principle, which is the first personal being, God reflecting on himself as Person. In this sense, we can say that personality is second, if not secondary. As for individuality, it refers rather to man insofar as he is an Ipseity or selfhood.

These three levels—impersonality, personality, and individuality—are real, but they do not represent three independent and separate entities. If this were the case, the doctrine of the Tawḥīd would be dualist, which it is not. God, being transcendent, is at the same time immanent in this world, which is entirely dependent upon His power. Non-dualism, safeguarded by immanence, does not exclude the duality that is real within the One (*aḥad*). Here, the Tawḥīd meets the concept of the non-dualism of the qualified proclaimed by Ramanūja, Prime Philosopher of Vishishtadvaita Vedānta (qualified non-dualism), since the Tawḥīd similarly maintains an intermediate position between pure non-dualism (*Advaita Vedānta*) and dualism (*Dvaita Vedānta*).

But is this not to imply that there exist two opposite and independent realities, God on the one hand and the world on the other? Yet are we not

to understand there is only one reality? If nothing other than God is real, and God Himself is the Uncreated, does this not imply that nothing is actually created? Not even Creation?

God as a "Cause" or Mu'ill

If impersonality and creation are incompatible, how can the existence of the universe be explained? If God is "the One-without-second," how does the One manifest Himself as diverse? Where does the multiplicity come from? How can the non-relational Absolute be related to the world of relations? And how does the Tawḥīd preserve non-duality if the Absolute coexists with the reality of the phenomenal world?

God emerges in the Tawḥīd as the supreme "Cause" (*Mu'ill*), or "the Cause of causes" (*Mu'ill al-'ilal*). The Druze *dā'ī* al-Muqṭanā Bahā'uddīn states:

If we go from the effects to the causes, we will require that we get to the *Mu'ill* of all things, beyond Whom we can go no further. . . . When we want to trace effects back to the causes, it is absolutely necessary that there is an ultimate terminus, and that terminus is Our Lord.⁵

Ḥamza ibn 'Alī defines the term *mu'ill* by identifying it with the term *Mubdi'*:

Our Lord, Glory be to Him, is the *Mu'ill* of the Cause, that is to say its Originator (*Mubdi'*) and initiator.⁶

God appears as the supreme Cause, which is the first meaning of the term *mu'ill*. Assuming that God is the supreme "Cause," He is the "Cause" of five cosmic principles (*ḥudūd*) and the phenomenal world, which present themselves as His effects. Thus, the phenomenal world is an effect of God and has no independent existence from his cause. While being the "Cause" of all, God Himself is without a cause; He presents Himself as the "Cause" of the whole process of causes and effects, which would suggest a relationship of causality between Him and the rest of all things.

However, the etymology of the terms *mu'ill* and *'āll* (which are interchangeable in the scriptures) means quite the opposite, that is, that God is not the "Cause." The Arabic terms *mu'ill* and *'āll* derive from the verb *'ālla*. *'Āll* is the active noun of the verb *'ālla*, while *mu'ill* is the active noun of the fourth form of *'ālla*, namely *a'ālla*. The term *'lla* means "a cause," which leads us to think that the term *'ālla* should be translated by the term "cause," meaning that the active nouns *mu'ill* and *'āll* should be understood as "He who causes." However, the terms *mu'ill* and *'āll* have a different meaning than *'illa* or cause; indeed, according to the Ismā'īlī and Druze texts, the verbs *'ālla* and *a'ālla* should mean "pushing something or someone to act as a cause," and not "causing something or someone to be," and as such must be the translation of the verbal nouns *'āll* and *mu'ill*.⁷

The *Mu'ill* (or 'Āll) is not Himself the "Cause." If this were the case, we should speak of emanation (*inbi'āth* or *fayḍ*). In emanation, there is a relation of causality, and therefore a relation of necessity between the emanated and that from which it has emanated. Ismā'īlī *dā'īs* such as Abū Ya'qūb as-Sijjīstānī and Aḥmad Ḥamīd al-Dīn al-Kirmānī, as well as Druze *dā'īs* assert that God is not He who Causes.

Yet, the *ibdā'* (origination) implies the free will of the *Mubdi'*. Thus, God is the 'āll of the Cause ('illa) of origination (*al-ibdā'*), Who is the *mubda' al-awwal* (the first originated being) or 'Aql. He prompts the 'Aql to act as a Cause without being Himself subject to movement or the process of causality. Indeed, the Cause of all causes ('illat al-'ilal) is the Prime Mover. Al-Muqṭanā Bahā'uddīn states:

God is the āll of the Cause of causes ('illat al-'ilal), the *Mubdi'* of the Prime Mover (*al-muḥarrīk al-awwal*) and of things that are moved.⁸

Therefore the *Mu'ill* does not Himself directly "cause" the "caused"; for He is not the "Cause" in the sense of a causality that implies a relationship of cause and effect; rather He is equivalent to the *Mubdi'* or Originator. He is the Transcendent Principle. Consequently, it is only to emphasize this transcendence that God is called the *Mu'ill* or 'āll. He transcends His creatures, to Whom He has given Being. He is also transcendent in the sense that the world emerges from the 'Aql. To say that God is transcendent is not to deny that He is wholly present in the tiniest atoms of the universe: He is the infinitely immense and the infinitely minute. He is ever present in the absolute presence of all; He is omnipresent. This is why the Tawḥīd stresses the non-dissociation of *tanzīh* (transcendence) and *wujūd* (existence). Ḥamza says:

He does not occupy a definite place, for He would be limited to it, and other places would be vacant from Him. There is no place where He is not, or else His power would be deficient. He is neither first, for this would imply a notion related to a last, nor is He the end, for this would make Him have a beginning. Neither is He external, for this would necessitate a notion related to something internal, nor is He internal, for He would be irrevocably covered by something external. Such appellations necessarily lead to a notion of correlation with something else.⁹

The Mu'ill and the Architect

The Druze *dā'ī* al-Muqṭanā Bahā'uddīn draws an analogy between the relationship of the *Mu'ill* and the existence of created things with that of an architect and a house. The construction of the house is not necessitated by the plan of the designed house conceived by the architect. The architect does not necessarily cause the actual construction of the house. The plan

(the architect) is therefore unilaterally necessary with regard to the house, without reciprocity. The plan of the architect, which belongs to the formal cause, is separate from the actualization of the house. Various factors are involved in the conception of the plan and they may or may not lead to the construction. The architect could have conceived several plans because he is not obliged to be limited to one, but he is free to determine the plan he wishes to finally execute. Thus, we are faced with two possible “freedoms”: several plans are feasible and the plan may or may not pass into the execution phase.

The house indicates that the four causes have been mobilized; the architect is outside the process of creation, but without him no plan could be executed, and the four causes (including the plan) would not be able to interact in the process of this execution. The four causes make the creation of the house necessary but they are not necessitated by the architect, who is free to do whatever he wants.

Similarly, the *Mu’ill* is free to put or not put into action the four causes that allow the world to pass into existence. He Himself is not involved directly in the process of creation, but the law of causality starts from the *’Aql*, who is the Cause (*’illa*), and extends to the whole universe. Thus, the *Mu’ill* is not a direct “Cause” for the passage into existence. He is not the “efficient cause,” yet he makes the “creation” possible. It is not inherent in his nature to “create.” Here, the *Mu’ill* seems to refer to Plato’s Form of the Good—the Good being that without which things cannot exist. Everything depends on it yet it supposes nothing, requires nothing. This unilateral dependence is essentially non-reciprocal.

The “Creative Cause” is a sufficient cause; it suffices that God should merely will for what He wills to happen. In this sense, the “creative cause” remains totally free from its act, without necessitating anything to act. As soon as the divine determines Himself, what He wants happens. This is sufficient causality, totally free and without conditions. It creates without needing anything and requires nothing to achieve the creation. Thus, the *Mu’ill* is more than a simple condition in the creation of the world; He is the sufficient, total, integral “Cause.”

Therefore, to the four causes of Aristotle—the material, the efficient, the formal, and the final—Bahā’uddīn adds the idea of *Mu’ill*. Thus, we need a fifth principle that activates these four causes, but without itself being involved in the process of causality. Since God is free to “create” or not “create,” if He “creates,” just like the architect, He produces something organized that has a function and a purpose. If, on the other hand, he does not “create,” it does not change anything as to His existence, since His nature is ontologically indifferent as to whether the world exists or not.

According to the true meaning of the term *Mu’ill*, God is not the “Cause,” but He prompts something to act as a Cause. He is the “*Mubdi’*” of the Cause (*’illa*) of creation (*khalq*).” The cause (*’illa*) refers to the *’Aql*, from

which the process of causality begins. Since the 'Aql is itself the cause ('illa), the world pre-existed already in it, but in a non-manifested form. Thus, the effect (the world) pre-exists in its cause (the 'Aql). The 'Aql is both matter (*hayūlā*) and form (*sūra*) or potentiality and actuality; it is the material cause of everything, the Origin of existence. In fact, all forms are potentially contained in it as its effects or preexist in it before being actualized. Ḥamza ibn 'Alī states:

God issued from His sparkling Light a pure and perfect form, namely divine Will. It is the "matter" (*hayūlā*) of all things from which everything was made. . . . That principle, which God called 'Aql, was perfect in substance¹⁰ and potentiality, and complete in actuality and form.¹¹

A verse of the Qur'ān used by Ḥamza ibn 'Alī to explain the cause of all beings says: "His Will, when He desires a thing, is to say to it, 'Be', and it is."¹² Ḥamza ibn 'Alī calls this divine Will 'Aql, which is an Arabic infinitive noun that originally signifies "to bind" or "to contain." This Will of God contains all existing beings. It "binds" and encompasses the world.

Finally, when the forms contained in the 'Aql are manifested, they themselves become the causes of the universe or *ḥudūd*. Therefore, three movements are deployed in this system: a first movement from God to the 'Aql that does not imply a causal relationship; a second movement from the 'Aql to other forms; and a third movement from the *ḥudūd* to the universe. Thus, God is the *Mubdi'* who originates the 'Aql, and the 'Aql as Cause ('illa) actualizes the forms that God has deposited in him in potentiality. Finally, the *ḥudūd* are the causes of Humanity, the ultimate result of all this process.

Creation versus Origination

The Tawḥīd sometimes describes God as the *Mubdi'* (Originator) and sometimes as the *khāliq* or the *bāri'* (Creator). What, therefore, distinguishes Creation (*khalq*) from Origination (*ibdā'*)?¹³ Do origination and creation designate two distinct modes of production in the world? Or is the author of origination different from the author of creation?

The term *al-khalq* means "the creation of something new (*ibtidā'*) on a model that has not been previously employed."¹⁴ The terms *khalq* and *khāliq* are the terms that are most commonly used in the Qur'ān. The name *al-Bāri'* is found in the Qur'ān three times only and the verb *bara'a* is synonymous with *khalāqa*.¹⁵ It is equivalent to the Hebrew *bārā*. *Al-Bāri'* would be the One who creates without copying from a model, but not necessarily always.

The Qur'ān also refers to God as the *bādi'*, that is, the absolute Creator, the Innovator, but the term *ibdā'* itself is not Quranic. According to the etymology of the term *ibdā'*, the root *bd'* connotes the idea of a "commencement" that calls forth—more specifically, a radical innovation,

an absolute origination in being, rather than a “first time.”¹⁶ This term especially appears in the lexicons of Shī’ism, and in particular in Ismā’īlism and the *falsafa*, which highlight the absolute power of the creator act. Shī’ism emphasizes the imperative *kun* (be) and its immediacy, while the *falsafa* emphasizes an absolute production of being.

Abū Ya’qūb as-Sījstānī establishes a distinction between Origination (*ibdā’*), which is accomplished by an imperative or *amr* that addresses a person, that is, intelligences capable of hearing the divine call, and of answering it, and the “creation” or the creative initiative that produces the creatures of the inferior world that cannot answer this imperative. This classic distinction between *‘ālam al-amr* (the world of divine command) and *‘ālam al-khalq* (the world of creation) is common to Sufism and Ismā’īlism. Where does the Tawḥīd stand with regard to these definitions?

Although several passages in the literature of the Druze faith present God as the *khāliq* or *bāri’* of all things, Ḥamza ibn ‘Alī seems to cancel the validity of this statement in the passage below:

Therefore I say, and this by necessity (*ḍarūra*), but not in truth (*ḥaqīqa*), that He is the Creator (*bāri’*) of all things, and He is who gave them being (*mukawwin*) and has formed them (*muṣawwir*). He originated (*abda’a*) from His light (*nūr*) the universal or particular things, and all things will return to His power and His greatness.¹⁷

Let us note that the “universal things” refer to the cosmic principles or *ḥudūd* and that the “particular things” are all things, that is, all existing things. Several terms designate God here as the “Creator”: the *bāri’*, the *mukawwin*, the *muṣawwir*, and the *mubdi’*. The terms *mukawwin* (the One who gives Being) and *muṣawwir* (the One who informs) refer to the *bāri’*. Indeed, the term *muṣawwir* is synonymous with *khāliq* (which is synonymous with *bāri’*), since, as explained by Ḥamza, “the *muṣawwir* is the *khāliq*.”¹⁸

According to this passage, the function of creation (*khalq* or *bar’*) seems to be falsely attributed to God, because it is not *in truth* but *by necessity* that He is the *bāri’*. From the “point of view” of the Absolute or from the “point of view” of truth, creation seems to be an illusion. Thus, it appears that God is designated as the “Creator” in the same way that He is given attributes, that is, in order to enable man to comprehend God, which echoes Çankara’s thoughts. This statement appears to invalidate all other statements relating to creation, relegating creation to the realm of relativity.

Since the doctrine of the Tawḥīd contains two apparently contradictory statements, “God is Creator” and “God is not the Creator,” which of these two statements invalidates the other? How can we assert the validity of one rather than the other, given that both cannot be true at the same time?

On the one hand, the statement “God is Creator” is a constant in the Druze literature, whereas the second statement appears only once, which may lead us to believe that the former is more authoritative than the second

because of its frequent repetition. But, on the other hand, the statement “God is not the Creator” can be taken to cancel the first, since in this passage Ḥamza intends to unveil the Truths and reveal what has been hidden. Thus, the statement “God is not the Creator” seems to be one that is valid. Consequently, God appears exempted from the function of creation.

Let us re-examine the following passage: “Therefore I say, and this by necessity (*ḍarūra*), but not in truth (*ḥaqīqa*), that He is the Creator (*bāriʿ*) of all things, and that He is who gave them Being (*mukawwin*) and has formed them (*muṣawwir*). He originated (*abdaʿa*) from His light (*nūr*) the universal or particular things. . . .” Here the sentence, “Therefore I say, and this by necessity (*ḍarūra*), but not in truth (*ḥaqīqa*),” aims at three things: He is the Creator (*bāriʿ*) of all things; He is who gave them Being (*mukawwin*); and He is who has formed them (*muṣawwir*). This is evident in the use of the conjunction “and” that binds these three ideas.

However, “Therefore I say, and this by necessity (*ḍarūra*), but not in truth (*ḥaqīqa*),” does not refer to the rest of the sentence, “He originated (*abdaʿa*) from His light (*nūr*) the universal or particular things” The conjunction “and” is not at the beginning of this sentence, so that the latter announces a new idea.

Even within this statement, which comes after a series of negations (not . . . , not . . .) concerning the attributes of God, it is still possible to distinguish two forms of affirmations. According to the first, we can say God created things only by necessity, but not in truth. This statement itself contains an indirect negation, since while assigning the function of creation (*khalq*) and its annexes (*takwīn* and *taṣwīr*) to God, it also somewhat denies it by placing it in the realm of necessity or relativity. It therefore asserts only in order to negate, to state what God is *not*, that is, the Creator. According to the second statement, God originated from His light the universal and particular things. It is only this affirmation that has a really positive meaning; what is retained is the function of *mubdiʿ*, the necessity referring to creation (*khalq*) and not to origination (*ibdāʿ*). Origination (*ibdāʿ*), unlike creation (*khalq*), therefore seems real.

One could also interpret this passage differently from the first-presented hypothesis by questioning the terms “necessity” (*ḍarūra*) and “truth” (*ḥaqīqa*).

If God is Creator (*bāriʿ*), it is surely not because of His being that it would be a necessity for Him to create; on the other hand, one can understand that He is necessitated by all the rest, according to the necessity that they all necessitate Him. It is necessary to admit a Creator, in the sense that the created necessitates a Creator. We must therefore suppose God as Creator of everything that is not by itself self-sufficient. He is the ultimate prerequisite—what everything requires, what is necessary in order for anything to be. But this necessity is unilateral, because to Him the creation is not necessary.

As for the term “truth” (*ḥaqīqa*), it is meant in the sense of “not in his own inner truth,” that is, that God is not inherently, by His very nature or by His essence, essentially Creator (*bāri'*), since creation is a free act. He could create, just as He could not create; but this is not inherent in Him. Literally, He is not, in truth, Creator, but He creates. The function of creation pertains to Him only in his relation to the rest, but not to himself, because it is inessential for him to *be* Creator. He is not Creator by His essence, yet He has the power to create, and thus to *be* Creator. Creation manifests him to us, thus opening up a relation with Him. It is according to this relation that He appears to us as the Creator. The manifestation supposes something to which it manifests, and that, in effect, is creation. It is because He is the Creator that He creates all determinants, but He cannot be determined by anything because He is beyond Being. The second part of the sentence, “He originated (*abda'a*) from His light (*nūr*) the universal or particular things,” means that the light of God is that through which He is in relation with the rest.

Conclusion

To be Creator is to be the author of something else. Is there consequently a substantial distinction between God and beings? If we want to maintain the absolute unity of God, and if there is a substantial distinction between Him and the 'Aql, then we must speak of creation *ex nihilo*. Indeed, and in order not to have duality, the author must be completely *the* author; a substance must depend entirely and immeasurably upon the other.

The Tawḥīd confirms that the “creation” is an act *ex nihilo*, and refers this act to the *Mubdi'* and not to the *khāliq*. God originated (*abda'a*) all things without models.¹⁹ For neither did God give form to undetermined matter already in existence, nor did He form the world from a model similar to the world of Ideas. He originated things, not from pre-existing things, nor any matter or instruments, nor a preset model. Ismā'īl ibn Muhammad at-Tamīmī states:

From His pure Light and by His divine Omnipotence, God originated the 'Aql without any means nor any exemplary form. He made it contain all things at once. Within it He bound all creatures and made it the source of all things which He has originated. He confirmed it with His godly power and divine influx, and thus He safeguarded it from any imperfection. He made it present in all ages and times and made it the cause of all things.²⁰

Thus, things have not been made from something that had pre-existed, that is, from an initial state of the universe that would have developed. This production is not the simple actualizing of a potentiality and therefore is not the result of an internal necessity. Moreover, things have been produced neither by any matter nor by any instrument external to God.

The *ibdā'* and *khalq* seem therefore to refer to two modes of generation; the first is a creation *ex nihilo*, which is primordial and universal—the *ibdā'*—which originates the 'Aql, while the second is another form of production that “succeeds” the *ibdā'*—the *khalq*—and which is not *ex nihilo*.

The first refers to the originated beings (*mubda'āt*), which are subtle and spiritual, that is, to the *ḥudūd*, while the second refers to the created beings (*makhluqāt*), which are gross, cosmic, and corporeal, that is, to all the rest. While *ibdā'* refers to the imperative origination, the *khalq* refers to the structured, organized form of creation.

Affirming the reality of production, the Tawḥīd differs from dualism, because dualism supposes a duality of substances or two principles of equal ontological density, which are in a state of either independence or interdependence. There is no dualism in creationism because there is no common measure between God and Humanity. We should exclude from creationism not only dualism but also duality, since duality supposes the coexistence of two entities that differ in nature but have a common denominator. The Druze faith therefore seems to have achieved conciliation between production and non-dualism.

Notes

I am grateful to Pierre-Marie Hasse, Ray Brassier, and Moussa Wehbe for their helpful comments.

- 1 – Epistle 13. See also [Sylvestre de Sacy 1838](#), vol. 1, pp. 15–17. Sami Makarem describes the Druze Epistles and their numbering “in a *Druze Compendium* in MSS held in the Shaykh Nasib Makarem collection, Aytat, Lebanon” ([Makarem 1974](#), pp. 41–42).
- 2 – The Mu'tazila is a religious movement founded in Basra in the first half of the eighth century by Wasil ibn 'Atā', that later became one of the largest theological schools of Islam.
- 3 – [as-Sijjīstāni 1988](#), pp. 33–45.
- 4 – [Jambet 1990](#), p. 155.
- 5 – Epistle 67.
- 6 – Epistle 14.
- 7 – [Makarem 1984](#), pp. 81–91.
- 8 – Epistle 52.
- 9 – Epistle 13. See also de [Sylvestre de Sacy 1838](#), 1:15–17.
- 10 – [Makarem 1974](#), p. 44. Makarem writes: “The word used in the Arabic origin is *nūr*, which means light.” I translated it here as “substance”

because Ḥamza intends to say that the substance of the 'Aql is derived from God's divine Light. See a commentary on Epistle 5 by the Druze commentator as-Sayyid al-Amir Jamaluddin 'Abdallah at-Tanukhi, fol. 80 v (MS in the Shaykh Nasib Makarem collection).

11 – Epistle 13.

12 – [The Qur'ān 1964](#). This verse is quoted by Ḥamza in Epistle 13.

13 – [Corbin 1961](#), p. 19 n. 19. According to Corbin, the term *ibdā'* can be defined as "origination" and the term *khalq* as "creation." Corbin writes:

. . . jamais perdre de vue que le *Mobdī'*, le Principe, l'Instaurateur de l'être, n'est pas le premier Être; il reste le Super-être, *hyperousios*, au-delà de l'être et du non-être ou plutôt au-delà du non-être et du non non-être, comme l'explique longuement Abu Ya'qūb dans le premier chapitre du *Kashf al-Mahjūb*. Le premier Être est par essence du fait-être. Le *Mobdī'* ne peut pas être un étant; il est le faire-être. D'où le premier étant est la première Intelligence, l'Instauré primordial, *protoktistos*, le premier des Kérubim. Celui que les philosophes appellent *al-ḥaqq al-awwal* serait donc en fait au niveau de ce premier Être.

14 – [Encyclopaedia of Islam 1978](#), new ed., vol. 4, p. 980.

15 – [Lane 1968](#), vol. 2, p. 178.

16 – [Encyclopaedia of Islam 1978](#), 3:663.

17 – Epistle 13. See also [Sylvestre de Sacy 1838](#).

18 – Epistle 15: "the work (*'amal*) is what is produced (*sin'a*) and the demiurge (*al-sāni'*) is the one who informs (*al-muṣawwir*) and the *muṣawwir* is the *khāliq*."

19 – Epistle 33.

20 – Epistle 39. See also [Sylvestre de Sacy 1838](#), 2:108.

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