



the realm of  
existence who bow down and prostrate. In the exposition of its truth, we desire  
to unfold the  
details of the balances of discernment [mawázíni'l-'idrák] that the people  
possess, and to explain  
and refute them, so that it will be evident and clearly proven that the divine  
balance is the inmost  
heart, the fountain-head of guidance [ar-rashád].

Therefore, know that all the peoples and kindreds possess four balances with  
which they weigh  
the realities [al-Haqá'q], the significances [al-ma`ání], and the divine  
questions [al-masá'il]. All  
of them are imperfect, unable to quench the burning thirst or heal the sick. We  
shall therefore  
make mention of each one and demonstrate its limitation and inaccuracy.

The first balance is the balance of the senses [mízánu'l-Hiss], which is the  
method of most of the  
European philosophers in this age. They say that it is a perfect and complete  
balance, and that  
whatever is decided by it, no doubt or misgiving is attached thereto. The  
truth, however, is that  
the proofs limiting this balance are as clear as the Sun at midday. Verily, if  
thou dost look at the  
mirage, thou wilt see refreshing and drinkable water. Further, if thou dost  
gaze upon mirrors,  
thou wilt see forms within it and wilt be certain that it is unquestionably  
real. In reality,  
however, the forms are reflections in the glass and are nonexistent. Moreover,  
if thou dost look  
at a whirling point in the darkness, thou wilt think that it is a circle or an  
extended line. The  
reality is that it is nonexistent, but only appears so to the vision.  
Furthermore, if thou dost look  
at the firmament and its sparkling stars, thou wilt see them as tiny bodies. In  
reality, however,  
each one of them is a thousand times larger than the earth. If thou dost gaze  
at a shadow it  
appears still, but is really in motion; spokes appear unbroken but are  
actually disconnected; and  
the earth appears flat but is actually a sphere. Therefore, if it be  
established that the senses, of  
which the power of vision is, in itself, the most mighty sensory power, are a  
limited balance and  
an imperfect proof, then how can it be relied upon in ascertaining [`irfán]  
the divine truths, the  
heavenly signs, and the contingent phenomena?

As for the second balance, which the Illuminati and the peripatetics rely upon, it is the balance of reason [al-mízánu'l-`aqlí]. In like manner, the other schools of the first philosophers in the ancient and middle centuries depended upon it. They said that that which is judged by reason is firmly established, clear and indubitable, and that there is no doubt or defect either in its foundations or its outcomes. All of these schools, by virtue of their reliance upon the balance of reason, have differed on all questions [al-masá'il] and their opinions are divided on all truths [al-Haqá'iq]. If the balance of reason is a just, accurate, and firm balance, then they should not differ in truths and questions, and the opinions of the former and latter generations should not diverge. Because of their conflict and their differences, therefore, it is established that the balance of reason is imperfect. Verily, if we were to conceive of a perfect balance and if thou wert to assess the weight of a hundred thousand souls with it, there would be no difference among them. Their lack of consensus, however, is sufficient and irrefutable proof of the deficiency of the balance of reason.

The third balance is the balance of tradition [al-mízánu'n-naqlí]. This, too, is defective, and the people cannot rely upon it since tradition is understood through reason and weighed in its

This could also be rendered as "rays of light." balance. If the foundation of reason is deficient, how is it possible that the understanding of the tradition will be consistent with reality or lead to certitude? Verily, this matter is clear and manifest.

As for the fourth balance, it is the balance of inspiration [mízánu'l-'ilhám]. Verily, inspiration consisteth of inclinations of the heart [khuTúrátin qalbiyyatin]. And the whisperings of Satan are also inclinations which arrive successively upon the heart by the agency of the soul. If there occureth to the heart a certain idea or question, how is it to be known whether it is an inspiration of the All-Merciful or a whispering of Satan?

Therefore, it is evident that all of balances current among the people are

defective and their  
conclusions are unreliable. Nay, they are confused dreams, doubts, and idle  
fancies that neither  
allay the sore athirst nor satisfy the seeker of knowledge [ʿirfán].

As for the true, divine balance which never strayeth, and which ever  
apprehendeth the universal  
realities [al-Haqáʿiq al-kulliyyah] and the sublime inner meanings  
[al-maʿání al-`aTHímah], it is  
the balance of the inmost heart [mízánu'l-fu'ád], of which God hath made  
mention in the blessed  
verse. It is an effulgence of the brilliant lights of the Divine Outpouring  
[tajaliyyat suTu` anwár  
al-fayD al-iláhí], the secret of the All-Merciful [as-sirr ar-raHmání], the  
manifestation of  
consciousness [aTH-Thuhúr al-wijdání], and the lordly sign [ar-ramz  
ar-rabání]. Verily it is an  
ancient outpouring [fayD qadím], a manifest light and a mighty bounty. Should  
God favor with  
this gift one of His chosen ones [aSfiyá'íhi], showering it upon one of His  
loved ones possessing  
certitude, verily he will draw nigh unto that station of which 'Ali (upon him  
be peace) hath  
spoken, "If the veil be lifted, I would not increase in certitude!" Speculation  
and argumentation  
are the utmost degree of weakness and understanding, for the result is  
dependent upon the  
exigencies of the lesser and greater propositions, so that, however thou  
orderest these terms, an  
outcome is obtained which cannot be implicitly relied upon: hence the differing  
opinions of the  
philosophers. Therefore, O thou who hast turned towards God, purify thine  
inmost heart from all  
impediments to righteousness [as-sadád] in the reality of true guidance  
[ar-rashád], and weigh all  
divine questions with this just, accurate, and glorious balance which God hath  
elucidated in the  
unerring Qur'an and the Great Announcement, that thou mayest drink from the  
fount of certitude  
[ʿayn al-yaqín],<sup>2</sup> savor the truth of certitude [Haqq al-yaqín], be guided  
unto the Straight Path,  
and walk in the way of righteousness. Praise be to God, the Lord of the worlds!

A play on the “eye of certitude” (ʿayn al-yaqín) and “truth of  
certitude” (haqq al-yaqín) of the Qur'an (see for  
example Suratu'l-Takkathur) which unfortunately must be lost in the  
translation.

