HEKHAL · READER'S EDITION

رسالة الأحدية

Risala al-Ahadiyya

Risāla al-Aḥadiyya · Treatise on Oneness

Hekhal Targum Project (machine-assisted draft; pending scholarly review)

PROVISIONAL EDITION · MACHINE-ASSISTED · NOT YET REVIEWED BY A CREDENTIALED EDITOR

Edition of 2026-08-13 · hekhal.org

About this edition

The Arabic text is unimpeachably public domain (composed in the thirteenth century). T. H. Weir published an English translation as "Treatise on Being" in the Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society in 1901, which is public domain. Current spreads carry Hekhal Editorial section summaries with verified Arabic technical vocabulary; verbatim Weir reproduction in passage-aligned form is pending textual verification against the JRAS original.

TRADITION	islamic-mysticism
LANGUAGE	Arabic
PERIOD	early 13th century · attributed to Andalusia / Damascus
ATTRIBUTION	Attributed to Ibn Arabi (1165-1240); attribution contested; some scholars assign to Awhad al-din Balyani (d. 1288)
TRANSLATION	Hekhal Targum Project (machine-assisted draft; pending scholarly review)
LICENCE	Arabic original public domain (13th century). The English on this page is Hekhal Editorial section summaries and apparatus, CC-BY-SA-4.0; Weir's 1901 public-domain translation is not reproduced here.
ONLINE	https://hekhal.org/texts/risala-al-ahadiyya/

> **Cite this edition:** Hekhal Targum Project, trans. "Risala al-Ahadiyya." Hekhal reader's edition, 2026-08-13. https://hekhal.org/texts/risala-al-ahadiyya/

> What this is: a machine-assisted, provisional translation. Every rendering choice and every unresolved reading is recorded in the apparatus beside the text. If you read the original and something looks wrong, write to community@hekhal.org; corrections are credited.

Four pages, in translation, that contain the compressed logic of an entire cosmology. The *Risāla al-Aḥadiyya*, the Treatise on Oneness, is either the most concentrated statement of Ibn Arabi's central metaphysical position or a later text written in his register by someone who understood it with unusual precision. The attribution debate has not been resolved. What has not been seriously contested is that the text *works*, that it does what the greatest short mystical texts do, which is to move the reader, through a sequence of apparently simple propositions, to the edge of something that cannot be said and then gesture, with considerable exactness, at what is there.

The central move is this: the *shahāda*, the Islamic declaration of faith, *lā ilāha illā Allāh*, there is no god but God: is read not as a theological statement about monotheism in the ordinary sense, but as a precise metaphysical proposition about the structure of being. The *lā*, the negation, is the operative term. It negates everything that exists contingently rather than necessarily, including the mystic themselves in their ordinary self-understanding. What remains is what Ibn Arabi calls **al-Aḥadiyya**, the Oneness that precedes and exceeds even the divine names through which the tradition addresses God.

The structural parallel to the Kabbalistic **Ein Sof** is the most important cross-tradition resonance the corpus has yet recorded. Both name the prior condition, the Oneness before names. Both are reached by negation. Both precede all predication. Both are the ground from which a structured emanative cosmology proceeds. Whether this reflects direct historical transmission through Andalusian channels or independent convergence on

the same logical demand, the parallel is precise enough to demand attention rather than footnote status.

CROSS-REFERENCES

- Sefer Yetzirah, Ein Sof as the prior condition; the structural parallel to Ahadiyya.
- Sefer ha-Bahir, the divine names tradition (*asma' al-husna* ↔ *Sefirot*) as parallel emanative systems.
- Batin (باطن), the inner/esoteric register Ibn Arabi inhabits.
- Apophasis (ἀπόφασις), the negation that reaches the Real.

Hekhal Editorial summary. The English passages on this page are Hekhal Editorial section summaries presented alongside the verbatim original-language text. They are not a verbatim translation; verbatim PD reproduction in passage-aligned form is pending. The original-language text is unimpeachably public-domain.

Risala al-Ahadiyya

TREATISE ON ONENESS

CANONICAL

ARABIC · 13TH C. · ATTRIBUTED TO IBN ARABI

OPENING · THE SHAHADA AS METAPHYSICAL PROPOSITION

الافتتاح · الشهادة

Section summary by Hekhal Editorial. Weir 1901 PD reproduction pending verification.

§ 1 The text opens with the *shahāda*: *lā ilāha illā Allāh*, “there is no god but God.” Ibn Arabi, or whoever wrote in his register, treats this not as a creedal formula but as a metaphysical proposition concerning the structure of being itself. The grammar of the Arabic is the operative content: the *lā* (no) is a categorical negation, and what it negates is the entire field of conditional existence.

§ 2 The negation does not stop at false gods. It negates *everything* that exists contingently rather than necessarily: every limited, qualified, dependent being. The mystic themselves, considered as a separate self with claims of its own, falls under the *lā*. What is being asked of the practitioner is not assent to a doctrine but a metaphysical

الشهادة

إِلَٰهَ إِلَّا اللَّه

lā ilāha illā Allāh: “ther

”is no god but Go

◆ ◆

لَا

lā: the negation, th

operative terr

◆ ◆

الحق

operation performed on their own self-understanding.

§ 3 What remains after the negation is not nothing. It is also not a thing that can be named in the ordinary sense. The text calls it *al-Ḥaqq*, the Real, and points toward it through the negation rather than describing it through positive predication. The reader is positioned for the central distinction the treatise will turn on.

1

al-Ḥaqq: the Real, wha

remains after negatio

Arabic terms verified · PI

origina

2

AHADIYYA AND WAHIDIYYA · THE CONCEPTUAL HINGE

الأحدية والواحدية

Section summary by Hekhal Editorial.

§ 4 The hinge of the treatise: the distinction between *al-Aḥadiyya* (الأحدية) and *al-Wāḥidiyya* (الواحدية). Both words derive from the root w-ḥ-d, oneness. Both name attributes

الأحدية / الواحدية

.The conceptual hing

الأحدية

of God. The distinction between them carries the weight of Ibn Arabi's entire metaphysics.

§ 5 *Wāḥidiyya* is the unity *expressed*: the oneness that becomes manifest through the ninety-nine divine names (*al-asmā' al-ḥusnā*), through the prophets each of whom embodies a distinct divine attribute, through the cosmos itself as the *tajallī* (self-disclosure) of the Real in form after form. Wāḥidiyya is the oneness we can *speak of*. It is the ground of relation.

§ 6 *Aḥadiyya* is prior to all of this. Not temporally prior but ontologically prior: the condition from which even the divine names emerge and to which they cannot be applied without qualification. Aḥadiyya is the Oneness *before* it has expressed itself as oneness-of-many. It is the unconditioned. It is what the *shahāda*'s negation reaches when followed all the way through.

al-Aḥadiyya: the Oneness before names, prior to a relatio

↕

الواحدية

al-Wāḥidiyya: the unit expressed through name and self-disclosur

◆ ◆

الأسماء الحسنى

al-asmā' al-ḥusnā: th ninety-nine beautifu

§ 7 The distinction is exact. It is what separates Ibn Arabi's metaphysics from simpler forms of Islamic monotheism while remaining, in his own insistence, entirely within the logic of Quranic revelation. The Real has both faces: the face of relation (Wāḥidiyya) and the face that precedes relation (Aḥadiyya).

3

name

التجلي

al-tajallī: self-disclosur

of the Real in forr

4

FANA · THE ANNIHILATION THAT DOES NOT ABOLISH

الفناء

Section summary by Hekhal Editorial.

§ 8 The treatise traces the mystic's movement *through* and *beyond* the divine names toward the prior condition. The movement is not spatial and not temporal. It is a progressive stripping, not of the world, which Ibn Arabi insists is not

الفناء

.Annihilatio

الفناء

illusory but is the Real's own self-disclosure, but of the mystic's identification with any particular locus of that disclosure.

§ 9 The practitioner who has genuinely entered the station of *fanā'* (annihilation) has not ceased to exist. They have ceased to exist *as a separate existent* claiming independence from the ground of existence. What remains is not nothing. It is the ground itself, aware of itself through what was previously the mystic's awareness.

§ 10 This is the move that generated centuries of controversy. Ibn Arabi was accused of *ḥulūl* (divine indwelling, the heresy of God literally inhabiting created forms) and of *ittiḥād* (union as merging that abolishes the distinction between Creator and creation). His defenders, beginning with his immediate student Sadr al-Din al-Qunawi and running through a

al-fanā': annihilation c

the separate self, not c

bein

◆ ◆

وحدة الوجود

waḥdat al-wujūd: th

unity of bein

◆ ◆

THE ACCUSATIONS

حلول

ḥulūl, divine indwelling

اتحاد

ittiḥād, merging union

commentary tradition extending across the Persian, Turkish, and Indian philosophical worlds for seven centuries, have consistently argued both accusations misread the metaphysical precision of his position.

§ 11 *Waḥdat al-wujūd*, the unity of being, the phrase most commonly used to name his doctrine, though Ibn Arabi himself did not use it as a technical term, does not assert that God and the cosmos are identical in the way a pantheist might claim. It asserts that *being* is one, that whatever exists participates in the single Being identical with the Real, and that the apparent multiplicity of existents is real *as appearance* and not real *as independent being*.

5

6

APPARATUS · AHADIYYA ⇔ EIN

THE PRIOR CONDITION · ACROS TWO TRADITIONS

SOF

The first documented cross-tradition resonance in the corpus.

In Ibn Arabi's metaphysics

Aḥadiyya is the Oneness before names. Reached by the negation of the *shahāda*. Prior to *Wāḥidiyya* (the unity of names and self-disclosure). The unconditioned, from which the divine names emerge. The condition that cannot be predicated, only pointed toward.

In the Kabbalistic tradition

Ein Sof (אין סוף, "without end") is the unknowable Godhead, prior to even the first of the ten Sefirot. Reached by negation. Beyond every attribute. The condition from which the Sefirotic emanation proceeds. The condition that the named God of the tradition is the *expression* of, not identical with.

Ibn Arabi · the prior condition

الأحدية

al-Aḥadiyya: Oneness before names



Kabbalistic tradition · the prior condition

אין סוף

Ein Sof: without end, beyond the Sefirot

Both reached by negation · both prior to predication

8

Both reached by negation. Both prior to all predication. Both the ground from which a structured emanative cosmology proceeds. Whether this reflects direct historical transmission through Andalusian channels, and there is genuine scholarly debate about the routes by which Neoplatonic and Jewish mystical ideas reached Ibn Arabi's formation, or whether it reflects the same logical demand arising independently in two traditions pressing toward the same limit, the parallel is precise enough to demand attention rather than footnote status.

The *Sefer Yetzirah*'s cosmology begins where the *Risāla*'s ends: at the point where the condition that cannot be spoken begins to speak itself into structure.

7

▽

Ibn Arabi · An orientation

There is a document attributed to the greatest metaphysician of the Islamic mystical tradition that runs to perhaps four pages in translation and contains, in those four pages, the compressed logic of an entire cosmology. The *Risāla al-Aḥadiyya*, the Treatise on Oneness, sometimes rendered the Treatise on Unity, is either the most concentrated statement of Ibn Arabi's central metaphysical position or a later text written in his register by someone who understood it with unusual precision. The attribution debate has not been resolved. What has not been seriously contested is that the text *works*, that it does what the greatest short mystical texts do, which is to move the reader, through a sequence of

apparently simple propositions, to the edge of something that cannot be said and then gesture, with considerable exactness, at what is there.

Ibn Arabi, Muhyî al-Dîn Muḥammad ibn ʿAlî ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿArabî al-Ḥātimî al-Ṭāʾî, born in Murcia in 1165, died in Damascus in 1240, wrote more than three hundred works across six decades of intellectual productivity that took him from Andalusia through North Africa, Egypt, Mecca, Baghdad, Anatolia, and finally Syria. His two major works, the *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam* and the encyclopedic *Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya*, are among the most demanding texts in the Arabic language. The *Risāla al-Aḥadiyya* is the place to begin not because it is simpler than the major works but because it is more *concentrated*: it performs the central move of Ibn Arabi's metaphysics in a space small enough to hold in a single reading, and it performs it in a way that makes the logical structure visible rather than distributed across hundreds of chapters.

The central move is this: the *shahāda*, the Islamic declaration of faith, *lā ilāha illā Allāh*, there is no god but God, is not, for Ibn Arabi, a theological statement about monotheism in the ordinary sense. It is a precise metaphysical proposition

about the structure of being. The *lā*, the negation, is the operative term. It negates not merely false gods but the entire category of conditional, limited, qualified existence, everything that is not the absolute, everything that exists contingently rather than necessarily, everything including the mystic themselves in their ordinary self-understanding. What remains after the negation is not a thing that can be named, not an object that can be known in the ordinary sense, but the condition of possibility for all naming and knowing, what Ibn Arabi calls *al-Aḥadiyya*, the Oneness that precedes and exceeds even the divine names through which the tradition addresses God.

This distinction between *Aḥadiyya* and *Wāḥidiyya*, between the absolute oneness that precedes all relation and the unity that is expressed through the diversity of divine names and attributes, is the conceptual hinge the *Risāla* turns on, and it is the distinction that separates Ibn Arabi's metaphysics from simpler forms of Islamic monotheism while remaining, in his own insistence, entirely within the logic of Quranic revelation. *Wāḥidiyya* is the oneness we can speak of, the unity that expresses itself through the ninety-nine names, through the prophets who each embody a distinct divine

attribute, through the cosmos that is the self-disclosure (*tajallī*) of the Real in form after form. *Aḥadiyya* is prior to all of this: not temporally prior but ontologically prior, the condition from which even the divine names emerge and to which they cannot be applied without qualification.

What the *Risāla* traces is the mystic's movement through and beyond the divine names toward this prior condition. The movement is not spatial and not temporal. It is a progressive stripping, not of the world, which Ibn Arabi is at some pains to insist is not illusory but is rather the Real's own self-disclosure, but of the mystic's identification with any particular locus of that disclosure. The practitioner who has genuinely entered the station of *fanā'*, annihilation, has not ceased to exist. They have ceased to exist as a *separate* existent claiming independence from the ground of existence. What remains is not nothing. It is the ground itself, aware of itself through what was previously the mystic's awareness.

This is the move that generated centuries of controversy in the Islamic intellectual world. Ibn Arabi was accused of *ḥulūl*, the heresy of divine indwelling, the claim that God literally inhabits created forms, and of *ittiḥād*, union in the

sense of a merging that abolishes the distinction between Creator and creation. His defenders, beginning with his immediate student Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī and running through a commentary tradition that extends across the Persian, Turkish, and Indian philosophical worlds for seven centuries, have consistently argued that both accusations misread the metaphysical precision of his position. *Waḥdat al-wujūd*, the unity of being, the phrase most commonly used to name his doctrine, though he himself did not use it as a technical term, does not assert that God and the cosmos are identical in the way that a pantheist might claim. It asserts that *being* is one, that whatever exists participates in the single Being that is identical with the Real, and that the apparent multiplicity of existents is real as appearance and not real as independent being. The distinction is exact and the *Risāla* makes it with unusual clarity for a text of its length.

What makes the *Risāla* particularly valuable as an entry point is that it does not require the reader to carry the full weight of Ibn Arabi's symbolic system. The *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam* requires knowing the prophetic typology, that each prophet in the series from Adam to Muhammad embodies a distinct

divine wisdom, that the series is not historical sequence but ontological structure. The *Futūḥāt* requires orientation across hundreds of chapters organized by a cosmological scheme of extraordinary intricacy. The *Risāla* requires only the *shahāda* and the willingness to follow its negation to where it actually leads. That willingness is what Ibn Arabi's tradition identifies as the beginning of the contemplative path, and it is what the text itself is designed to cultivate in the reader who engages it seriously rather than academically.

The cross-tradition resonances here are structural and worth naming precisely. The prior condition that the *Risāla* calls *Aḥadiyya*, the oneness before names, before attributes, before the divine self-disclosure in created form, occupies a position in Ibn Arabi's metaphysical architecture that is structurally identical to what the Kabbalistic tradition calls *Ein Sof*, the limitless, the condition that precedes even the first of the ten Sefirot. Both are reached by negation. Both precede all predication. Both are the ground from which a structured emanative cosmology proceeds. Whether this parallel reflects direct historical transmission, and there is genuine scholarly debate about the channels through which Neoplatonic and Jewish mystical ideas reached Andalusian

Islamic philosophy in Ibn Arabi's formation, or whether it reflects the same logical demand arising independently in two traditions pressing toward the same limit, the parallel is precise enough to demand attention rather than footnote status. The *Sefer Yetzirah*'s cosmology begins where the *Risāla*'s ends: at the point where the condition that cannot be spoken begins to speak itself into structure.

Ibn Arabi died in Damascus in 1240, having dictated and revised the *Futūḥāt* to the end. His tomb in the Salihiyya quarter of the city became a place of visitation within his own lifetime. Selim I, the Ottoman sultan, built a mosque and lodge over it in 1516. The controversy over his legacy, whether he was the greatest of the Sufi metaphysicians or a dangerous innovator whose influence had corrupted Islamic philosophy, continued for centuries after his death and has not entirely subsided. The *Risāla al-Aḥadiyya*, whoever wrote it, distills the position that generated both the reverence and the controversy into a form that a careful reader can hold entirely and examine from every side. That is a rare achievement in any tradition's literature. It is the right place to begin.

The Akbarian commentary tradition is the most extensive of any Sufi school. **Sadr al-Din al-Qunawi** (d. 1274), Ibn Arabi's stepson and principal disciple, produced the foundational systematic exposition that organized Akbarian metaphysics into a teachable system. Through Qunawi the corpus reaches the Persian tradition (Fakhr al-Din al-Iraqi, Abd al-Rahman Jami) and ultimately the School of Isfahan (Mulla Sadra, late 16th-early 17th c.), where it intersects with Avicennan and Illuminationist (*ishraqi*) sources to form the dominant philosophical theology of late Safavid Persia.

The standard modern English-language reference for Akbarian metaphysics is **William Chittick**'s *The Sufi Path of Knowledge* (1989) and *The Self-Disclosure of God* (1998), both selecting and translating from the *Futuhat al-Makkiyya*. **Henry Corbin**'s *Creative Imagination in the Sufism of Ibn 'Arabi* (1969) is the foundational European academic study and remains influential in comparative-religion contexts. The attribution of the *Risala al-Ahadiyya* specifically to Ibn Arabi is contested (see Debates).

Colophon

Risala al-Ahadiyya. Hekhal reader's edition of 2026-08-13. Generated from the living edition at https://hekhal.org/texts/risala-al-ahadiyya/; the online text may since have been corrected. The English rendering and apparatus are released under the licence stated above (Arabic original public domain (13th century). The English on this page is Hekhal Editorial section summaries and apparatus, CC-BY-SA-4.0; Weir's 1901 public-domain translation is not reproduced here.); you may copy, share and adapt them with attribution to Hekhal and a link to the online edition, under the same licence.

Hekhal is an open, sourced reference to the world's mystical traditions. New texts, maps and lexicon entries: hekhal.org. To fund the translation of a text that has none in English, see hekhal.org/sponsor.

© 2026 Hekhal · hekhal.org