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## Ismā'īlī Preface



## In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

[1] Gratitude and praise be to the Mighty Presence of the Possessor of Majesty, the lights of the subtleties of whose Wisdom shine from every single particle of the universe, and the effects of the marvels of whose Power radiate from every single part of existent things; to the Powerful who brought forth from the forming mold with the hand of destiny so many luminous bodies; to the Subduer who caused the many spherical bodies to wander submissively in the revolving whirlpool; to the Ordainer who turned one lower point into the center of the equator of the upper circuits; to the Regulator who made a handful of earth the basis for the positions of the stars and orbs to<sup>1</sup> bring into order the rules of both existences and to complete the deficiencies of both worlds. [He who] also illuminated the up and down of the irrealis world by means of a body that stands as the pupil of all creation, and embellished both the beginning and end of the real existence by an individual who is the best of the rank of men of insight, so that the ways and places of ascent towards perfection and consummation, and superiority and generosity, in the stages and ranks of the universe of multiplicity and unity, of which the world of the unseen and the seen

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1. Words in bold represent text that is common between the Ismā‘īlī Preface and the Revised Preface.

is said, became ordered and determined, and the proofs of the oneness of God and means of [His] abstraction, which includes the ways to supplicate to the Originator and Restorer and the pathways of attaining [knowledge of] the provenance and destination, were made clear and demonstrated. “Is not His the creation and the command? Blessed be God, the Lord of the worlds.”<sup>1</sup>

[2] His majesty’s court, that mine of absolute light and source of manifestation of the Truth, that truly is nothing other than the sacred threshold and exalted throne of the lord of the world, commander of the sons of Adam, manifestation of divine decree, source of divine mercy, center of the circle of existence, the embodiment of the knowledge of the Necessary of Existence, lord of the age and interpretation of the Merciful, ‘Alā’ al-Dunyā wa-al-Dīn, glory of Islam and Muslims, shadow of God in the Worlds and His proof to all creation—may God elevate his decree and bless his remembrance—may that court be enveloped by all manner of prayers and all types of greetings, and may the reins of the vicissitudes of fortunes be directed away from the Ka‘ba of the followers of unity and away from the Qibla of the lords of knowledge, by the True One and Possessor [of the Truth].

[3] The purpose of this opening supplication and ordered invocation is that ever since the writer of this draft attained the honor of proximity to the triumphal arch of the sublime court of the king, the knowledgeable, the just, the most perfect, the most erudite, the most equitable, the most triumphant, the most victorious, the most diligent, the most noble, Nāṣir al-Ḥaqq wa-al-Dīn, the felicity of Islam and Muslims, the most just of kings and sultans, spreader of beneficence throughout the worlds, king of kings of the Arabs and Persians, most excellent wielder of the sword and the pen, sultan of the chiefs of the orient and the occident, powerful [one] of the holy threshold (‘Azīz al-Ḥaḍra al-Muqaddasa)

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1. Cf. Quran, 7:54.

[of the Ismāʿīlī Imām], *Chosroes* of the horizons, commander of the world, foundation of the universe, King of Iran, ʿAbd al-Raḥīm ibn Abī Maṣūʿ—may God cause his kingdom to endure forever and magnify his greatness—and has been honored and blessed by the privilege of benefiting and the dignity of seeking grace from that court wherein is a haven for Saturn, his resolution was devoted to attain the fortune of serving the Prince of Iran, pride of the world and worldlings, most magnificent chief, exemplar of the chiefs of the Arabs and Persians, Muʿīn al-Dawla wa-al-Dīn,<sup>1</sup> protector of Islam and Muslims, crown of kings and sultans, treasure of grandees and erudite men in the worlds, personification of nobility and honor, revivifier of the forebearers’ customs of excellency, the distillation of noble virtues, the best of the nobles of the horizons, the most noble descent in the world, pride of the world, the most generous and the noblest of Iran, Abū al-Shams son of ʿAbd al-Raḥīm—may God magnify his glory and perpetuate his ascent to the apogee of glory and nobility—the fame of whose greatness and excellence has spread throughout all horizons and regions, and the truth of the dictum, “He who resembles his father cannot be unjust,” is apparent upon his brilliant forehead, and his [Ṭūsī’s] devotion was dedicated to waiting for facilitating a means that ensures the perception of that nobility. With the extension of the period of deprivation and the unfavorable requirements of the time, the mind was preoccupied with the thought that through what means the manifestation of sincerity to his court might be inaugurated, or through what expedient something of my goodwill and sincerity might be offered, and the aim of my will and the extent of the ambition comprised of this desire, which is, in the desirer’s eye, the noblest of all.

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1. Muʿīn al-Dawla wa-al-Dīn (lit., helper of the state and religion) is the name of Nāṣir al-Dīn Muḥtasham’s son, whence the title of the treatise, *Muʿīniyya*.

[4] It was in the midst of such contemplation and in the wilderness of such perplexity that the dawn of the desire broke forth and from that house of glory and nobility and that family of excellent dispositions an order was issued to this sincere and supportive servant to compose several chapters explaining the circumstances of the bodies [of the World] and something of the knowledge of the stars, [i.e., astronomy] and the judgments [of the stars, i.e., astrology]. Although this hapless, incapable one was aware that his own shortcomings in ability and lack of comprehension of the discipline, as well as other causes for deficiencies such as distractions and preoccupations, were numerous, nonetheless since in conforming to the command the long-lasting wish and long-standing desire was being embodied in undertaking this service and in fulfilling the requirements of servitude, the initiation of this task became inevitable.

[5] Therefore, it seemed appropriate to put together hastily a work containing a summary of the science of configuration (*‘ilm-i hay’at*) and to send it to his presence as a gift and thereafter to engage with the other disciplines [of astronomy] unhurriedly. In accordance therewith the writing of this compendium was begun, and it was named *al-Risāla al-Mu‘īniyya* (The Mu‘īniyya treatise). It is hoped that the Lord of Glory will grant success and guard and protect in all endeavors. It is expected from the benevolence of his mighty majesty that if errors or slips of the pen are observed, due to the apology that precedes, and after being so kind as to correct them, to grant forgiveness, which is one of the customs of greatness, and to couple this audacity with overlooking. May God—may He be glorified and exalted—increase his fortune and exaltedness and make his status and magnificence ever increasing—He is the answerer of prayers.