

Al-Jafr: An Occult Science of Islam

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Abstract: This article studies the manuscript heritage and intellectual science of ‘ilm al-Jafr, placing it within the wider Islamic occult sciences - Ulum Khafiyyah. It focuses on manuscript repositories and scholarly pathways connected to al-Najaf al-Ashraf, Qom, Mashhad, Yemen, and North Africa. In pre-modern Muslim learning, these subjects were preserved through Rasa’il Ikhwan al-Safa, coded vocabularies, and restricted methods of Talim rather than open classrooms. Modern scholarship—often shaped by Orientalist curiosity—has frequently catalogued and publicized these texts, yet has not always understood their internal interpretive rules and lived scholarly setting. The study explains al-Jafr as a Semitic letter-number science based on Huruf/Abjad and Hisab al-Jumal. Here, Arabi letters carry numerical values, and practitioners read cosmic correspondences through those values. This includes Qur’ani symbols, especially the Huruf Muqatta’at, and broader metaphysical relations among the elements, planets, and realms of creation. Jafr literature, as presented in this account, treats language and number as keys for mapping hidden structure in the cosmos. A central doctrinal claim, especially prominent in Shi’i sources, is that the fullest custodianship of these “keys to the unseen” belongs to the Imams of Ahl al-Bayt, culminating finally in the Imam al-Zaman as Mazhar’e ‘ilahi and inheritor of ‘ilm al-Khafi. Drawing on narrative reports attributed to al-Kafi and related Shi’i compilations, the article outlines transmitted typologies such as al-Jafr al-Abyad and al-Jafr al-Ahmar. It also notes later engagements by Sufi and Shi’i Fatimi-Ismaili traditions, including the intellectual project of the Rasa’il Ikhwan al-Safa. Methodologically, the paper treats claims of efficacy—healing, prediction, and problem-solving—as part of an emic epistemology linking successful practice to Taqwa, Taharah, licit livelihood, and authorized instruction, while acknowledging ethical concerns about misuse, fraud, and manipulation. The article argues that the “hiddenness” of these sciences reflects not only limited evidence but a clash of epistemic expectations: modern philology seeks transparent procedures and reproducible outcomes, whereas Jafr texts embed meaning in initiation, secrecy, and symbolic compression. Finally, it proposes a protocol for historians: (i) trace attribution and transmission chains; (ii) distinguish abjad dating from analytical Jafr operations; (iii) contextualize terms like Bast, Qawa’id, Naqush, Alwah; and (iv) evaluate social functions such as counseling and Tilsam production in contemporary Muslim population.

Keywords: ‘ilm al-Jafr; Abjad; Hisab al-Jumal; Ulum Khafiyyah; Huruf Muqatta’at; Ahl al-Bayt; Shiah; Ikhwan al-Safa; Manuscripts; Esotericism

1. Introduction:

The pre-modern era writings on the occult sciences draw attention towards the rich collection of manuscript of Al Najaf al-Ashraf, Qom al-Muqaddas, Mashhad al-Muqaddas, Yemen and North Africa. There is a difference of opinion on how this legacy has been revealed to the modern world - through saints or orientals? Orientals in the last two centuries adopted the occult sciences as an important and interesting topic. We should not ignore the contribution of the Muslim intellectuals of the medieval era who transferred the occult sciences safely through their Rasa'il. It is no doubt the modern scholarship which highlighted these manuscripts and attempted to study the difficult subjects, but these researchers can not understand even ABCD of these unique Islamic Sciences. Islamic occult sciences are still considered hidden by the experts of post-enlightenment sciences. Only the Imam-al-Zaman (as), as Mazhar'e 'ilahi - Manifestation of Aql and the Door of 'ilm (which is his exclusive heritage in eschatological times), is the master of his Dawr (cycle) and possessor of the Asrar, including Jafr. In this light it is important to note that only those Ulama who have Marifah of Ahl al-Bayt (as) are aware of the ABIAD of this science of Jafr and they can help solve the issues faced by people with the Barakah of Ahl al-Bayt (as). The science of Jafr - characteristic of the Semitic world - is considered to be the key to all other sciences, and for this reason it is superior to them. These sciences are manifestations of mystical thought, and there appears to be a rebirth of interest in them.

Undoubtedly, 'ilm al-Jafr is the father of Islamic occult sciences and superior to all hidden sciences which deal with cosmic rays and the hidden powers of letters, planets, elements and Aalam al-Ibda (the world of creations). This Elahi 'ilm was delivered by Jibra'el (as) to Rasulullah (S) and he passed it to his Wasi Ali ibn Abi Talib (as). Amir al-Mumineen (as) passed it on to Al-Imam al-Hasan (as) and "Al Imam al-Mustaqar"[1], Husayn Ibn Ali (as). Only a miniscule part of Jafr was discussed by Moula Abi Abdillah al-Imam Jafar al-Sadiq (as) with his selected Ash'ab, who in turn shared this precious 'ilm with the chosen Muttaqi Ulama who they deemed deserving. It is this science through which secrets and wonders of the Universe can be discovered. Moreover, it helps in providing remedies of the problems where Ins'an feels helpless. The possessor of Jafr has immense Ma'arif because Jeem of Jafr is a spring of Ulum-Khafiyyah (hidden 'ilm) of the heavens and the Earth, and the learned have kept it hidden from those illiterate and non-eligible. One of the reasons for maintaining secrecy is to prevent its misuse from those who may use it for evil deeds. For the security of Ins'an it is never recorded in the books but transmitted from lips to ears. It was only the Imam from Ahl al-Bayt (as) who safeguarded this science in code-words that can only be decoded by those scholars who are blessed by Allah and his Chosen-Ones.

As an example, 'ilm al-Jafr is akin to a TV screen that can only be powered spiritually. If the spiritual power is weak then the result will be not upto the mark. Hence 'ibadah, Taqwa, and Tahrat are necessary to achieve the desired result. Halal earning and eating is the first necessity of practicing 'ilm al-Jafr and the next is abstaining from Har'am - this is a basic rule. "Al Jafr al-Jame", also known as "ilm al-Jafr", is the science which opens windows to the unseen world. This is not a new science as Anbiya Bani Israel used to practise this. Daniyal (as) discussed this sacred science in his Book [2], but today its authenticity is doubtful, like other Scriptures. It is

also known as the 'ilm al-Huruf (Science of Letters) which helps to evaluate the upcoming events. 'ilm al-Jafr is said to be the master of the Sciences in Islam - and its source is Madinat al-'ilm Rasulullah (S) who taught 1000 chapters to his sole successor, Bab Madinat al-'ilm, Ali ibn Abi Talib (as) and from each chapter 1000 new doors of 'ilm further opened for him. Thus, the science of Jafr is exclusively attributed to Amir al-Muminen Ali Ibn Abi Talib (as). It plays a vital role in understanding the Asrar (secrets) of Qur'an (symbolic interpretation). Harun bin Saeed al-'ijili [3] was one of the prominent scholars who learnt Asrar al-Qur'an from Moula Abi Abdillah al-Imam Jafar al-Sadiq (as) in depth. One of the methods employed by people who engage in this is to compare symbolic forms with the letter's values. The main difference between "Abjad" and "Jafr" is that the former refers to what has already taken place, while the latter to what is likely to take place in the future.

According to the philosophers of Islam, through al-Jafr, Fayd of "al-Qalam" [4] continues and it deals with Qada [5], while in "al-Jame"[6], Tayed (divine inspiration) of "al-Lawh"[7] is extended and it deals with Qadr [8]. Awliya employ this faculty of 'ilm for the benevolence of humanity, when necessary. The writer of Basa'ir ad-Darajat al-Kubra fi Fadail Ale Muhammad: [9], Shaikh Hasan al-Saffar and "al-Kulayni"[10] recorded:

"There are 2 types of "Jafr" - Abyaz (white), and Ahmar (red)". The white "Jafr" contains the previous scriptures e.g. the "Zubur" (Psalms of Nabi Dawood (as)), "Torah" (Old Testament of Nabi Musa (as)), "Injil", the New Testament of Nabi Essa (as), and even the "Suhuf", the Scrolls of Nabi Ibrahim (as). The Red "Jafr" is a leather bag which contains the weapons of the Anbiya".

Moreover, this Science is accorded great importance among the Sufya [11] as well. In the long course of Islamic history, Shi'i Fatimi Ismaili intellectuals have written Rasa'il on the amazing subject of "al-Jafr", with the majority of them destroyed by the Umayyad and Abbasid monarchs. A major source which has survived fortunately is the contribution of the 9th Shi'i Fatimi Ismaili Imam Ahmad al-Mastur (as) [12] who is better known amongst philosophers as "Al Shakhs al-Fadil, Saheb al-Rasa'il Ikhwan al-Safa" (4th century). "Al Jafr" or "Al Huruf" deals in the "Rasa'il Ikhwan al-Safa" with extraordinary skill is plentiful proof of the significance of "al-Jafr" as access to the information from the unseen world. Each Hurf (word) signifies supernatural indications and opens a new vista of learning. Likewise, "al-Adad"[13] (the science of numbers) is considered in "Ikhwan al-Safa" as the way leading to the grasp of Tawhid.

2. Method and Power of the Words:

"Al Jafr al-Jame" can be called Islamic Numerology. The following group of letters spells the words ABJD – Alif =1, Bey =2, Jeem = 3, Daal = 4, Hawwaz, Hutti, Kaliman, Sa'fas, Qarshat, Sak haz, Zazigh. The word ABJD is an abbreviation derived from the first four Huruf (letters) of the Arabi alphabets - Alif, Baa, Jeem, Daal. As such abjad designates the letters of the Arabi alphabet in the phrase Huruf Abjd. Nowadays the Arabic alphabet does not follow the sequence A-B-J-D, which is a very old form of order. Scholars have differed on the origin of the word ABJD; either it is Arabi or Hebrew, Phoenician or some other, but the sequence is very old. Although the letters are no longer generally used as numbers, this does not mean that the numerical associations have died. Spiritualists have invested the letters and their associated numerical

values with mystical significance. Every letter in the Arabi alphabet has a numerical (geometrical) value. In other words, in Arabi, every letter stands for a number. A number of calculations can be made on this basis. These are referred to as numerological (abjad) calculations or “His’ab al-Jumal”. Muslims who took advantage of the fact that every letter of the alphabet represents a number have used this in a number of fields - Al Jafr al-Jamey being one of these.

When certain Ay’ah of the Qur’an are examined in light of the ABJD method, we see that a number of dates emerge which are in accordance with the meanings of those Ay’ah. When we see that the things referred to in these Ay’ah have actually happened on the dates obtained by this method, we understand that there is a secret indication regarding those events in the Ay’ah. Huruf Muqatta’at available in Qur’an invites the attention of the readers to ponder deeply and compare the value of each word as per Hisab al-Jumal. All Huruf of the Qur’an are like secret codes, the key of which is available to the one who is the custodian of “ilm al-Ladunni” [14]. Hence, Haqaiq (divine realities) are hidden in the Qur’an.

This method of calculation is a form of writing which goes back several centuries, and which was widely used before the Nuzul of the Qur’an. Everything which happened in history was written down by attributing numerical values to letters, thus the date of every event was recorded. These dates were obtained by adding up the particular numerical values of every letter employed.

Like arms of a government, there are divine agencies that enforce the command of Allah. This command is available in a “Latif” (subtel, delicate, interesting) form and only those can sense it who have been bestowed Tawfiq. Each Huruf which is spoken has power. The Qur’an which was brought by Jibra’el (as) towards Rasulullah(S) in the form of Noor contains many treasures, whose keys are available to Ahl al-Bayt (as). They discovered Hikmah ‘ilahiyyah according to the need of the time, and as per the level of understanding, to maintain the sacred policy. No other language of the world holds the ability which Arabic encompasses. To explain one word “Alif” requires volumes and volumes. And for the understanding of twenty-eight (28) “Huruf”(letters), which consists of Haqaiq (divine realities), human life span is very short. These are the transformers of energy, and capable of transferring the energy of “Alif” in “Ya” - their end is in their beginning, and their beginning is their end.

This code of Jafr is based on Huruf al-Muajam - Huruf Muqataat , like Alif, Laam, Meem, etc. keys of secrets, but bear this in mind - that to succeed in this Jim, one must be attached under the command of a guide who is in turn attached with the Imam of Ahl al-Bayt (as), the gateway of ‘ilm. Taqwa is the first step to reach the destination and Walayah of Ahl al-Bayt (as) which is a spirit which leads towards this science like a torch in darkness. Consumers of Har’am shall not get blessings of this science. The practitioner must be clean in his companionship, ponder in the creation and must eat, talk and sleep conservatively. He must abstain from sexual activities and must maintain Taharah, spiritually as well as physically. One must bathe and wear clean clothes every day, and wear non-alcoholic perfumes. The people around him must also act in the same way. One can understand how difficult it is to observe and practice all this.

This science is a branch of mathematics and its calculation is not easy, but very difficult. Today's science is still busy in discovering the solar system, which although is an amazing discovery, but not for the masters of 'ilm al-Jafr who have 'ilm of the other world more than this world, where the modern science has no access. Contrary to other sciences, the unique feature of 'ilm al-Jafr is if one makes an error, the outcome will still good, however to a lesser degree. The most important point of Jafr is to understand the rules of Haruf Basta (opened alphabets) and their use means to make an alphabet from another alphabet. The science of Jafr and its affairs are interconnected with Qamar (moon). There are only 360 Qawa'id Basta but not one source has mentioned more than a few ordinary Qawaid. I got Asb'aaq from my learned Ustad which I am trying to communicate for the information so that one can benefit from it.

3. Historical Background:

Abu Basir said: I went in the presence of Moula Abi Abdillah al-Imam Jafar (as) and said: [15]

"May Allah take my soul in service for your cause; I would like to ask you a question. Is there anyone else in this house who can hear my words"?

The Imam then drew the curtain between his room and the other room next to it and made sure that there was no other person. Then the Imam said: "O Abu Muhammad! Ask whatever you wish".

I said: "May Allah take my soul in service for your cause, your followers narrate this Tradition with reference of Ali (as):

"Rasulullah (S) taught me (Ali ibn Abi Talib) a thousand chapters of 'ilm and from each chapter there opened another thousand chapters".

I then said:

"This, I swear by Allah, is knowledge."

The Imam marked the ground with his staff (a sign of thinking in normal people) for a while and said,

"That is 'ilm but it is not that you think".

"O Abu Muhammad, with us there is "al-Jame".

I asked: What "al-Jame" is?"

The Imam remained silent for a while and then said,

"With us, there is "al-Jafr"(the parchment).

I then asked: What is "al-Jafr"-the parchment or a container?"

The Imam said:

"It is a container made of skin that contains the 'ilm of the Anbiy'a and the Awsiy'a(executors of their wills) and the 'ilm of the Ulama in the past from Bani Israel".

Bakr ibn Karib al-Sayrafi said that he heard Abu Abdillah (as) say the following: [16]

"With us, there are such things due to which we have been ordained to become saviours to people who need us. With us, there is a book that Rasulullah(S) had dictated and which Ali had written it down".

Jabir ibn Hayy'an [17], a renowned pupil of Al Imam Jafar (as) was a specialist of Alchemy, a science where Astrology and Numerology are connected. Normal people only see this science as a source to get advantages in this world, but those whose hearts are purified will recognize that it is, in fact, the science that explore the wonders of the Universe.

4. A few branches of al-Jafr:

"ilm al-Hird (Science of Tawidh or amulet)" is one of the numerous branches of "al-Jafr", taught by Moula Abi Abdillah Al-Imam Jafar (as). He was the first amongst Ahl al-Bayt (as) who opened up the Sacred Scrolls to spread the essential basic 'ilm derived from "al-Jafr". The Science of this branch is common amongst the limited Ulama, around the global village. "Taskhir al-Arw'ah"[18] is also one of its branches. "al-Naqush (esoteric discipline of inscribed figures, letters, numbers, and symbolic forms used in talismanic and operative practice), "al-Alwah", is the esoteric art of Tilsam inscription on plates or tablets, involving sacred formulas, letters, numbers, and symbols prepared upon a material surface for protective or operative ends; in later occult usage, it closely overlaps with 'ilm al-Nuqush and 'ilm al-Huruf, yet distinguishes itself by emphasizing the Lawh itself as the material bearer of inscription are other related branches.

Exploiters misuse the name of "al-Jafr" for nefarious purposes. They prepare Hirdh (amulet), but its outcome can rarely be seen. A few Ulama hold a high reputation of "al-Jafr" in the cities of Qum al-Muqaddas, Al Najaf al-Ashraf, Najran and in Haraz range of mountains in Yemen. I have attained primary Talim of this Science under a competent scholar at al-Najaf. Al Jafr al-Kabir has one thousand formulas, while Al Jafr al-Saghir has seven hundred formulas; besides this Al Jafr al-Mutawassit which handles Huruf al-Shamsi and Huruf al-Qamari are ones whose charts are independent. In Tawidh, chart of Huruf al-Qamari is followed.

5. Concluding Remarks:

"Al Jafr" is indeed an esoteric science taught by Ahl al-Bayt (as) to a few. To say that it is not legal is pure non-sense, at the same time it is a very sensitive issue, as dealing with the unseen always implies some risk. It hence remains an elite science. There are different ways to get solutions to problems. It happens like this; you go on writing the alphabets according to a set of mathematical calculations expanding the alphabets, and in the process, you start receiving your answers when you try to join them into legible sentences. This is of course not everybody's cup of tea. Very few people, who are pious in nature, can avail "al-Jafr". I have not even touched on the surface of "al-Jafr", as it is a very vast ocean of amazing Haqiq. Modern science cannot reach the mysteries of the Universe however it recognizes today a number of issues which were discovered in previous Scriptures and finally revealed in the Qur'an. Risalah al-Jaljalutiyyah [19] attributed to Amir al-Mumineen Ali bin Abi Talib (as), deals on Jafr, describes the forthcoming events in the world. The Jaljalutiyyah is not usually treated as a straightforward Qasidah in the ordinary literary sense. It belongs more to the world of Hurufi letter mystries, invocations, tilsam formulae, and Asma Khafiyyah. its meanings, properties, methods of use, benefits, litanies, seals, tables, and Sahar strongly places it a supernatural poem. A few features repeatedly associated with it are unusual and non-standard words, invocations built around letters and Asma Khafiyyah, references to Syriac, Hebrew, Greek, Arabi names, and promises spiritual help, and discoveries.

Notes:

[1] *Mustaqar*: *Mustaqar* means a definite resting place-where something becomes established. It is regarded as male. *Mustawda* means a temporary deposit-where something is placed briefly. It is regarded as female. As the female receives sperm from the male, the *Mustawda* receives 'ilm from the *Mustaqar* Imam. Rabb's Word settles (*tastaqirru*) and dwells (*tuqimu*) in the Imam, so he becomes the *Mustaqar* of Rabb's Word/Will. He is sometimes called *Muqam* (from *Aqama*), meaning the place where Rabb's Word/Will dwells. In short, the *Mustaqarr* is the legitimate Imam, in whose progeny the Imamah continued from Amir al-Mumineen Ali bin Abu Talib (as) to Al Imam al-Husayn (as) and continues to the present. At times, when the *Mustaqar* Imam was inactive for political or religious reasons, the Imamah's functions were entrusted (*Istawda*) to a trustee Imam, the *Mustawda*, who acted on the real Imam's behalf and followed his instructions. A *Mustawda* holds office only temporarily and cannot pass it to his own progeny-like Al Imam al-Hasan bin Ali bin Abu Talib (as).

[2] *Book of Daniyal* (as): It was in the Hebrew, divided in two parts: (i) *Qasas*, interpretation of royal dreams, the fiery furnace, and the lions' den; and (ii) visions in *Daniyal* featuring symbolic apocalyptic imagery and themes of divine control over empires, judgment, deliverance, and the end times. The book emphasizes integrity under pressure, sovereignty of Rabb Ta'ala over history, hope during persecution, and apocalyptic symbolism. Now it is distorted version.

[3] *Harun bin Saeed al-'ijali al-Kufi*, nicknamed *al-Awar*, Kunya Abu Muhammad appears in two main contexts. In *Rijāl/Hadīth* literature he is listed as a narrator; he was a staunch in Shi'i Aqaid and critique narrating from him. He discussed about *al-Jafr*, in the *Muqaddimah* of Ibn Khaldun, he states that the "*Jafr*" was transmitted by Harun al-'ijli from Al Imam Jafar al-Ṣadiq, written on the skin of a young ox.

[4] *al-Qalam*: In classical Ismaili Neoplatonic cosmology, *al-Qalam* refers to the First Intellect - *al-Aql al-Awwal* - the first creation of Rabb and the highest created spiritual reality. It is the first emanation from the Divine Command - *Amr*. Through it, all 'ilm, order, and existence are articulated, just as a pen writes. The metaphor comes from Qur'an 68:1 - "Nun. By the Pen and what they write."

[5] *al-Qada*: In Ismaili theological and philosophical terminology, *al-Qada* carries a cosmological and metaphysical meaning, rather than merely the common sense of "fate" or "divine decree." In classical Ismaili doctrine, *al-Qada* refers to the universal divine decree or the primordial determination of the cosmic order, originating from the Divine Command (*al-Amr*).

[6] *al-Jame*: *al-Jame* refers to a comprehensive esoteric repository of 'ilm attributed to the Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt, containing the inner meanings of *Wahy* and 'ilm of future events. The term *Jafr* originally means a skin or parchment (often of a young animal) used for writing. In Shi'i and Ismaili traditions it came to signify a secret book or corpus of *Asrar* transmitted within the line of the Imams.

[7] *al-Lawh*: In Ismaili cosmology and philosophical theology, *al-Lawh* is understood symbolically as the Universal Soul - *al-Nafs al-Kulliyyah*, the second principle in the hierarchy of creation. This interpretation is part of the Neoplatonic cosmological system developed by classical Ismaili thinkers, where Qur'ani symbols such as the Pen and the Tablet describe metaphysical realities rather than physical objects.

[8] *Qadr*: *Destiny*, Represents the initial plan, specification, and measurement of all things in the universe. It is the foundation.

[9] *Baṣair ad-Darajat al-Kubra fi Faḍail Ale Muḥammad*: Shaikh Hasan al-Saffar

[10] *al-Kulayni*: Abu Jafar Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā ibn Ishāq al-Kulayni ar-Razi 255 AH / 868 CE – 329 AH / 941 CE) was a Persian Shi'i Ithna Ashari scholar, Hadith compiler, and the author of *Kitab al-*

Kafi. He was known for his extensive travels in search of Hadith, particularly in Qom and Baghdad, and received his talim under numerous Ulama, many of whom were contemporaries of the tenth and eleventh Shi'i Ithna Ashar Imams. He was also a teacher of several prominent scholars, including Shaikh al-Saduq and Ibn Qulawayh.

[11] Sufiya: Al Imam Jafar al-Sadiq (as) have to condemned the Sufiyya who introduced Bidah, departed from the Zahir of the Shariah, ignored the authority of the Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt (as), and elevated their Shaikhs to a rank approaching that of the Imam. He also rebuked forms of self-imposed Zuhud that resembled Christian monks practice, arguing that such conduct was wrongly presented as Taqwa and Riyazat, while in fact distorting the Faraid of Islam and departing from al-Şiraṭ al-Mustaqim. The Sufis were deviated from the true understanding of Islam, lawful conduct, and taat to divinely appointed Imams of Ahl al-Bayt (as). See Murtadha Mutahhari, *Narratives of the Veracious*, vol. i, "Story 15: Imam al-Sadiq and a Group of Sufis"; *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, "Jafar al-Sadiq iii. And Sufism"; Rebecca Masterton, "A Comparative Exploration of the Spiritual Authority of the Awliya in the Shi'i and Sufi Traditions," *American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* (2015).

[12] Rasail Ikhwan al-Safa: The celebrated Rasa'il Ikhwan al-Safa, regarded in the Fatimi-Isma'ili tradition as the first encyclopaedic work in Islam, is understood to have been compiled under the guidance of the Fatimi Imam Ahmad al-Mastur (as) as a means of safeguarding the Shariah and the true religion of Islam in an age of profound intellectual disturbance. Although later confusion arose regarding its authorship, the work is, in Fatimi-Isma'ili understanding, inseparably connected with the Imam's divinely guided wisdom and stands as an expression of esoteric insight ordered toward the preservation of religion. The Rasa'il emerged during the Abbasid period, particularly in the intellectual climate fostered by al-Mamun (L), when the large-scale translation of Greek sciences and philosophy led many among the educated elite to elevate Hellenic thought as the highest criterion of truth and, at times, to conflate it with Islam itself. While this movement stimulated inquiry, it also generated doctrinal confusion and interpretive strain within the Muslim community. The Rasail therefore sought neither to reject reason nor to surrender to speculative philosophy, but to restore the proper balance between intellect and revelation. They affirm the dignity of the human intellect while also recognising its limits: reason may analyse and infer, yet it cannot independently attain complete truth in metaphysical and spiritual matters. For this, the guidance of divinely appointed authority remains indispensable. In this sense, the Rasail represent a synthetic and corrective project, gathering the sciences into an ordered vision so as to protect Islamic teaching from philosophical excess, reconcile rational inquiry with Shariah, and guide seekers from discursive knowledge to higher wisdom. Their enduring significance lies not merely in their encyclopaedic scope, but in their role as an intellectual intervention directed toward restoring clarity, preserving faith, and subordinating all knowledge to the guidance of truth.

[13] 'ilm al-Adad: In this context, the science of al-'adad means the science of number, that is, arithmetic or number theory in its classical philosophical sense. In medieval Islamic classifications of 'ilm, Adad is the standard term for arithmetic and forms part of the mathematical sciences alongside geometry, astronomy, and music/harmonics. In the Ikhwan al-Safa tradition, however, 'ilm al-Adad is more than practical calculation. Number is treated as a foundational principle of order, proportion, harmony, and intelligibility in the cosmos. Their concern with number is therefore both mathematical and metaphysical: numbers explain quantity and structure, but also symbolize deeper realities in creation. One study of the Ikhwan notes their special emphasis on the science of number and its

cosmological significance. As per the Rasa'il, the best compact definition of 'ilm al-Adad is the science of number, or arithmetic, understood in the Rasail Ikhwan al-Safa not merely as computation, but as a foundational discipline revealing the order, proportion, and intelligible structure of the universe.

[14] 'ilm al-Ladunni: From an Ismaili point of view, 'ilm al-Ladunni may be understood as Rabb Taala-bestowed, inner, divinely granted 'ilm - that is not acquired merely through ordinary study, deduction, or sense-perception, but through divine favour and guidance. In strictly Ismaili doctrinal language, however, the more characteristic terms are Talim (authoritative teaching), Tawil (esoteric interpretation), and the Imam's special 'ilm as divinely guided 'ilm; these are the concepts through which the Ismaili tradition usually expresses what other Muslim vocabularies may call 'ilm Ladunni. Accordingly, in Ismaili Studies such 'ilm is not treated as a vague private inspiration available independently to anyone, but as 'ilm mediated through the Imam, who, as the divinely guided Moula of the age, discloses the inner meaning of Wahy and gives the Talim necessary for true understanding. The Imam complements by enabling Mumin to grasp both the exoteric and esoteric dimensions of the Qur'an, and this instructional role is central to Ismaili thought. In Ismaili understanding, 'ilm al-Ladunni is divinely bestowed 'ilm al-Batin, historically embodied and authoritatively communicated through the Imam, whose Talim and Tawil guide Mumineen from the Zahir to the Batin of religion. 'ilm al-Ladunni, in Ismaili terms, denotes divinely granted spiritual knowledge whose normative interpretation and transmission belong to the Imam as the authoritative teacher of esoteric truth. One point of precision: the expression 'ilm al-Ladunni itself is more commonly foregrounded in Sufi usage, whereas Ismaili doctrine more often emphasizes the Imam's inheritance.

[15] Abu Basir: In Ismaili literature, Abu Basir is usually understood as a great Ismaili author, but as an early Shi'i disciple-transmitter who appears in reports connected especially with Imam al-Baqir (as) and Imam Jafar al-Sadiq (as). Al Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq had three disciples known by this name, including Layth b. al-Bukhturi al-Muradi, Abd Allah b. Abi al-Asadi al-Kufi, and Yahya b. Abi al-Qasim al-Asadi, with Layth appearing to have been the best known of them. In the wider esoteric Shi'i and early Ismaili-adjacent milieu, Abu Basir often functions as a recipient of the Imam's Batini Talim. Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq opens Abu Basir's "spiritual eye," enabling him to behold hidden realities, and also records the well-known dialogue in which Abu Basir asks whether Rabb may be seen, to which the Imam replies in terms of vision by the heart rather than by the physical eye. These reports are important because they present Abu Basir as a paradigmatic disciple of 'ilm al-Batin, which is why he remains significant in texts valued in esoteric Shi'i and Ismaili contexts. From an Ismaili doctrinal perspective, then, Abu Basir is best described as an early Ash'ab and transmitter whose dialogues with the Imam preserve Talim later appreciated in Ismaili intellectual and esoteric traditions, rather than as a formal Ismaili Imam, Hujjah, and an independent doctrinal author. Abu Basir al-Muradi was among the prominent Hujjah of Imam al-Sadiq who did not rally behind Musa al-Kazim after Al Imam al-Sadiq's death, a point sometimes used in Ismaili succession arguments.

[16] "Al Kafi", vol. 4, ch. 40. Al-Kafi is a Hadith collection of the Shi'i ithna Ashar tradition, compiled in the first half of the 10th century CE (4th century AH) by Muḥammad ibn Yaquḥ al-Kulayni (c. 868–941). It is one of the Four major Books in Shi'i Imamiah Madhab.

[17] Jabir ibn Hayyan (d. ca. 815) is revered in Shi'i literature as a premier student of Al Imam Jafar al-Sadiq (as), and a pioneer of various branches of science. He is often depicted as a key figure in integrating Ulum Khafiyyah with experimental science, directly attributing his intellectual and spiritual knowledge to the Talim of the Imam.

[18] *Taskhir al-Arwah*: literally means “the subjugation or commanding of spirits.” In occult and esoteric usage, it refers to a supposed “science” concerned with calling, controlling, or employing spirits for hidden ‘ilm, influence, or extraordinary effects. *Istinzal al-Arwah* (bringing down spirits) and *istihdar al-Arwah* (summoning spirits)-among the branches of *Ulm Khafiyyah*.

[19] *al- Jaljalutiyyah*: *Al-Jaljalutiyyah* is an esoteric litany or poem traditionally attributed to Amir al-Mumineen Ali ibn Abi Talib (as), composed of mystical letters, Asma al-Husna, divine names, invocations, and symbolic formulae. In later Islamic manuscript culture, it is associated with ‘ilm al-ḥurūf, talismanic practice, and protective or operative recitation, and its wide circulation is reflected in the existence of both the text itself and numerous commentaries upon it. Within the devotional and esoteric tradition, it is revered as an expression of the inner sciences connected with Moula Ali (as), the locus of Wilayah, Hikmah, and ‘ilm Khafiyyah through which the seeker passes from outward form to inward meaning.

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