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FROM THE EDITORS

Greetings,

This issue of *Ilahiyat Studies* features three articles and four book reviews on various themes within the classical Islamic sciences. The first paper by Murat Kaş, "Apprehension and Existence, Appearance and Reality: The Reception of *Nafs al-amr* Debates after the 13th Century," analyzes a sophisticated topic, the concept of *nafs al-amr*, which has a unique place in the history of Islamic thought. The article articulates the debate, especially how it has evolved around the notion of apprehension and existence and appearance and reality, with a specific purpose of creating a map of treatments, arguments, and counter-arguments vis-a-vis the reception of *nafs al-amr* debates specifically after the 13th century.

In the second article, "Expansion or Contraction of the Prophetic Experience? An Analysis of the Prophetic Dream Theory of ʿAbd al-Karīm Surūsh," Asiye Tığlı presents a lengthy discussion of revelation and how it relates to the notion of dreams and imagination as articulated by Dr. Surūsh in a series of articles. To that end, the article first attempts to clarify the distinction between the concept of dream and the traditional approaches to revelation. Second, it examines the relevance of revelation with dreams to compare what she calls "alternative imagination" found in Islamic philosophy and Sufism. By doing this, the author aims to show how Dr. Surūsh tries to resolve the age-old debate regarding this matter by clarifying the meanings of the relevant concepts.

The final article by Roghayeh Farsi, "Discourse Strategies and Narrative Repetition in the Qurʾān: A Special Reference to *al-Shuʿarāʾ*," challenges the Orientalist narrative that the Qurʾān is an incoherent book because of the occurrence of similar and

contradictory accounts. Although there have been various attempts to react to this claim, there has not been a full-blown theory that settles the matter convincingly. This article aims to fill that gap by presenting how the seemingly fragmented narratives in the scripture bring to the text thematic and stylistic value and significance, proving the Qurʾān's overall coherence at the inter-verse and inter-surah levels. The analysis reveals some striking findings that can be summarized as follows: First, each of the narrative's topoi in the social actors' representation evinces the dominance of predicational strategies; second, the Qurʾānic discourse is bias-free and is significantly distinguished from the political discourse.

As already indicated on the website of *Ilahiyat Studies*, with the current issue, the journal's executive board has decided to open up the journal for full access without any restrictions. We would like to inform the authors that no fees will be charged for submitting, reviewing, or publishing papers. The paper edition of the journal will continue to be published as it has been up until now.

As the entire editorial board, we wish you all a healthy and peaceful future during the challenging times we are going through.

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ARTICLES

Apprehension and Existence, Appearance and Reality: The Reception of Nafs al-amr *Debates after the 13ᵗʰ Century*

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Expansion or Contraction of the Prophetic Experience? An Analysis of the Prophetic Dream Theory of ʿAbd al-Karīm Surūsh

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Discourse Strategies and Narrative Repetition in the Qurʾān: A Special Reference to "al-Shuʿarāʾ"

Roghayeh Farsi

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APPREHENSION AND EXISTENCE, APPEARANCE AND REALITY: THE RECEPTION OF *NAFS AL-AMR* DEBATES AFTER THE 13TH CENTURY

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Abstract

The structure of human cognition and the means of apprehension is suitable only for partly and gradually conceiving reality. This limitation has led to a certain distance between appearance and reality. This means that there will always be a gap between the judgments of the mind about the external world and its contents, which are entities, cases, facts, and states. This partiality and partiteness of human understanding has produced the truth-maker problem with regard to mind judgments. Muslim scholars who admit the correlation between the structure of reality and the categories of the mind but reject the notion of the construction and the determination of reality by the mind refer to the realm that is independent of the mind's personal judgments as *nafs al-amr*. This realm is concerned with the all degrees of reality, namely—from the existent to the non-existent, from the necessity to the contingency and impossibility, from the absolute to the relative, from the material to the non-physical, from the external to the mental, and from the real entities to the abstracted ones—which step into the shot of human cognition or not. Carrying the concept of *nafs al-amr*

from the logical plane to the metaphysical realm that intersects epistemology and ontology has led to debates that pave the way for various treatments. In particular, Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī's (d. 672/1274) *nafs al-amr* epistle that posited it to the cosmic sphere resulted in criticisms of this conception of *nafs al-amr*, and these criticisms are the same ones directed to the Avicennian theory of emanation and its epistemological implications. Scholars who use this concept free from any metaphysical presumption and implication argue against his leap from the logical to the cosmic sphere. During the following period, this tension occasioned debates that led to the approaches that refer to the various degrees of reality, i.e., to the cosmic spheres, the spiritual realms, and the divine realms. This work aims to create a map of treatments, arguments and problems with regard to the concept of *nafs al-amr*.

Key Words: *Nafs al-amr*, truth, apprehension, mind, reality

Introduction

Human understanding of the external world has been subject to various philosophical investigations. These discussions, which may be gathered under the title of *appearance and reality*, focus on the structure and categories of the human mind and on the unfretted structure of the universe. This problem, minimally present even at basic sensible perceptions, grows deeper in regard to philosophical problematics, such as time, space, motion, causality, necessity, contingency, knowledge, and will. Regardless of whether the expansion of human knowledge substantially reduces the distance between appearance and reality, man, who comes to world with a cosmic inquisition as to being and becoming, pursuant to his destiny to go after reality beyond/under the apparent, continues his quest similarly to a person who becomes curious about what is behind the next hill once he surpasses the present.

The traditions of Islamic thought have different approaches to the criteria for true and exact knowledge; nevertheless, there is an agreement that reality outside man is not merely a construction of the human mind. The process of the understanding/apprehension of information, which takes place in the form of the manifestation of things, the particular attributes of which the subject is not aware in the first place, is actually realized within a framework where the objective

is the knowledge as to the situation of the objects and the facts themselves. On the one hand, the distance and distinction between appearance and reality, as well as between construction and truth, provides man with a gradually self-manifesting awareness as to the limits and structure of his own mind; on the other hand, it sets a plane where he can test his knowledge, obtained throughout history, in reference to the plane itself. In Islamic philosophy, the discussions about the quiddity of *nafs al-amr* (fact of matter) can be read as a history of its association with logic, real, cosmic, spiritual and/or divine spheres and has depended on the quest for a *criterion of truth of judgments*. Few studies about the concept of *nafs al-amr*[1] deal with the problem in local terms; therefore, there is a clear need for a study that outlines the map of relevant arguments and sets forth various aspects of the problem.

When *nafs al-amr* refers to something in itself, independent of its external and mental existence, its association with the Avicennian concept of "quiddity in itself" comes to the fore. Indeed, quiddity in itself expresses a level where something is independent of external realization or existence in the intellect through abstraction. According to Ibn Sīnā, quiddity in itself is preserved both in external objects and in the mind; it is only accompanied by accidents arising from existing in these planes. Quiddity in itself exists as a common nature without losing its absoluteness in external particulars; when it is abstracted by mind, it acquires the quality of being predicated of many aspects, that is, the quality of universality. The first aspect corresponds to natural universal, which is commonly present in multiplicity, whereas the second expresses intellectual universal, which is an actual predicate of

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[1] A limited number of studies about *nafs al-amr* include the following: Hasan Spiker, *Things as They are:* Nafs al-Amr *& The Metaphysical Foundations of Objective Truth* (Abu Dhabi: Tabah Research, 2021), 1-248; İhsan Fazlıoğlu, "Seyyid Şerîf'in Nefsü'l-emr Nazariyesi ve Matematik Bilimlere Uygulanması: Şerhu'l-Mevâkıf Örneği," in *İslam Düşüncesinde Süreklilik ve Değişim: Seyyid Şerîf Cürcânî Örneği*, ed. M. Cüneyt Kaya (Istanbul: Klasik Yayınları, 2015), 163-197; id., "Hakikat ve İtibar: Dış-Dünya'nın Bilgisinin Doğası Üzerine –XV. Yüzyıl Doğa Felsefesi ve Matematik Açısından Bir İnceleme," *Nazariyat: İslam Felsefe ve Bilim Tarihi Araştırmaları Dergisi* 1/1 (2014), 1-33, http: dx.doi.org/10.15808/Nazariyat.1.1.M0001; Hacer Ergin, "Celâleddîn Devvânî'nin Nefsülemr Anlayışı," in *Osmanlı Düşüncesi: Kaynakları ve Tartışma Konuları*, ed. Fuat Aydın, Metin Aydın and Muhammed Yetim (Istanbul: Mahya Yayıncılık, 2019), 87-99.

multiplicity. Intellectual universal is related to nature, which commonly exists in multiplicity. In other words, the ground for the predication of intellectual universal to individuals is the common nature of individuals. In the face of criticisms by Fakhr al-Dīn al-Razī (d. 606/1210) about quiddity in itself, al-Ṭūsī develops a response that turns out to be a rejection of a common nature between external individuals. In such cases, since the ground for the predication of intellectual universal to individuals is removed, the problem of predication has emerged; accordingly, al-Ṭūsī built *nafs al-amr* as a base for meanings in the mind and identified it with the active intellect.[2]

The discussions about *nafs al-amr* reached another stage upon the assessments of claims and expressions in the tracts by al-Ṭūsī regarding the proof of it as a separate substance[3] before expanding even further in the course of time. The text is formed, in a sense, by a question posed by Ibn al-Muṭahhar al-Ḥillī (d. 726/1325) to al-Ṭūsī. In his statements in both *Kashf al-murād* and *Nihāyat al-marām*, al-Ḥillī asks al-Ṭūsī the meaning of the phrase, "the trueness of a judgment is its correspondence with *nafs al-amr*," thereupon, in his response, al-Ṭūsī establishes a chain of reasoning in order to prove that *nafs al-amr* is the active intellect/first intellect.[4] Thus, the discussions that began

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2   For an analysis on how al-Ṭūsī interprets Avicennian absolute quiddity, see İbrahim Halil Üçer, "Realism Transformed: The Ontology of Universals in Avicennian Philosophy and Quṭb al-Dīn al-Rāzī's Theory of Mental Exemplars," *Nazariyat: Journal for the History of Islamic Philosophy and Sciences* 6/2 (2020), 50-52, 43-52, https://dx.doi.org/10.12658/Nazariyat.6.2.M0116; For the connection between concept of absolute quiddity and emergence of debates as to *nafs al-amr*, see Ömer Türker, *İslam Felsefesine Konusal Giriş* (Istanbul: Bilay Yayınları, 2020), 183-185.

3   The tract can be found in records under various titles: *Risālat ithbāt al-jawhar al-mufāriq, Risālah fī ithbāt al-ʿaql, Risālat ithbāt al-ʿaql al-kull, al-Risālah al-nafs al-amriyyah, al-Risālah al-Naṣīriyyah, Risālah fī ithbāt al-lawḥ al-maḥfūẓ, Risālat al-burhān ʿalá wujūd al-jawhar al-mufāriq*. See Ṭayyibah ʿĀrifniyā, introduction to *Risālat ithbāt al-ʿaql al-mujarrad wa-shurūḥ ān*, by Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī, ed. Ṭayyibah ʿĀrifniyā (Tehran: Mīrāth-i Maktūb, 2014), 52-53.

4   Jamāl al-Dīn al-Ḥasan ibn Yūsuf ibn ʿAlī Ibn al-Muṭahhar al-Ḥillī, *Kashf al-murād fī sharḥ Tajrīd al-iʿtiqād*, ed. Ḥasanzādah al-Āmulī (Qom: Muʾassasat al-Nashr al-Islāmī, 1422), 103-104; id., *Nihāyat al-marām fī ʿilm al-kalām*, ed. Fāḍil al-ʿIrfān (Qom: Muʾassasat al-Imām al-Ṣādiq, 1430), 233-235.

with the dialog between al-Ṭūsī and al-Ḥillī before expanding in such a manner to include separate intellects, Platonic ideas, ʿālam al-amr and divine knowledge laid the foundation for a significant literature by means of both theological and philosophical works, as well as independent texts. Scholars, such as Shams al-Dīn al-Kīshī (d. 695/1296), al-Dawwānī (d. 908/1502), Mullā Muḥammad Ḥanafī al-Tabrīzī (d. 925/1519), Mullā Ḥusayn al-Ardabīlī (d. 950/1543), Mullā Shams Jīlānī (d. 1098/1687), Mullā Aḥmad al-Jandī (?), and Muḥammad Kashmīrī (d. 1136/1723), have written glosses to this tract by al-Ṭūsī[5], whereas others, including al-Taftāzānī (d. 792/1390), al-Sayyid al-Sharīf al-Jurjānī (d. 816/1413), Dāwūd al-Qayṣarī (d. 751/1350), Ibn Turkah al-Iṣfahānī (d. 835/1432), Bahāʾ al-Dīnzādah (d. 952/1545), Mīr Dāmād (d. 1041/1631), Mullā Ṣadrā (d. 1050/1641), ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī (d. 1143/1731), and al-Sabzawārī (d. 1289/1872), have touched upon the matter through various comments and expansions. The objective of this study is to map the relevant arguments and approaches and point out the problematic issues to provide a framework for future studies.

I. Course of Discussions, Allegations, and Criticisms: Argument Map

The narrative by al-Ṭūsī in his tract on *nafs al-amr* is highly similar to Ibn Sīnā's (d. 428/1037) expressions about the proof of the active intellect in the third chapter of *al-Ishārāt*.[6] Al-Ṭūsī differs only in terms of the connection he establishes between *nafs al-amr* and the active intellect and associates it with the concepts of religious thinking, such as the *preserved tablet* or *clear book*. Such associations by al-Ṭūsī might have been motivated by the following.

- Al-Ṭūsī sought metaphysical-religious grounds in the fear that *nafs al-amr* might be instrumentalized and turned into logical constructions.

- In the face of destructive criticism against procession in general and the active intellect in particular, al-Ṭūsī wanted to preserve it

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[5] For further information about commentators and their respective comments, see ʿĀrifniyā, introduction, 53-79.

[6] Abū ʿAlī al-Ḥusayn ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAlī Ibn Sīnā, *al-Ishārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt*, ed. Mujtabá ez-Zāriʿī (Qom: Muʾassasah-ʾi Būstān-i Kitāb, 1392 HS), 245-247, 252.

through an association with *nafs al-amr*, which is legitimate in the logical sphere, as well as with the concepts of religious thinking.

- By asserting that the active intellect is actually *nafs al-amr*, al-Ṭūsī wanted to eliminate active intellect in a cosmic sense, design it as a logical plane of reference, and build it as a reflection of divine order in man, expressing it similarly to other various concepts within religious thinking.

- Since he negates natural universal in the sense of it being present commonly in multiplicity, he sought a new justification for correspondence, trueness, and exactitude.[7]

Al-Ṭūsī's narrative and the relevant criticisms against him make it impossible to accept the third explanation. In addition, his effort to find a non-mental ground for mental meanings seems sufficient to refute this option. The first and second comments look meaningful on their own; nevertheless, they are incomplete since none refers to the problem of predication and quiddity in itself. Notwithstanding the issues above, it is possible to claim that all should be evaluated in consideration of the entire philosophy of al-Ṭūsī and that they require further supportive data. The fourth option, which we set forth in the introduction and seems the most plausible, leads to the following questions as to his approach to the nature of knowledge and the problem of predication: al-Ṭūsī often distances himself from concept realism, that is, from the idea of a common nature in multiplicity and a form identical to the quiddity of an object. Rather, he comes closer to the idea of mental images and conceptualist attitude. Therefore, how are we to explain his inclination for the surrealist approach in regard to *nafs al-amr*? Al-Ṭūsī does not consider the common nature within individuals in the external world as a foundation of mental meanings and thus moves away from the realist position. Therefore, how are we to interpret why he carries the ground for predication to active intellect, namely, a source beyond external reality, and why he refuses natural universal and puts forth cosmic form instead? Al-Ṭūsī denies the base of correspondence to external reality to ground it in cosmic reality; then again, doesn't such an attitude denote the substitution surrealism in place of reality and the search for the ground of predication even further away? Given the position to which al-Ṭūsī is

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7   For an assessment focusing on this possibility, see Üçer, "Gerçekçiliğin Dönüşümü," 50-52, 62-63.

pushed due to criticisms by al-Rāzī, is it possible to claim that the option of solving the problem of predication through forms separated in the active intellect causes fewer problems than efforts to explain the same through the common nature present in multiplicity? The criticisms and comments by commentators and thinkers involved in the debate include some data to determine the beleaguered aspects of this preference by al-Ṭūsī. Once these statements are put forth, we can present his arguments, as well as how they are perceived in the course of history.

The tract by al-Ṭūsī has an argumentative structure, with seven premises and consequential premises. It seems convenient to analyze his chain of reasoning within a structure of five stages, including the comments and assessments by commentators. The most striking qualities of his argumentation are the inclusion of a leap from the logical plane to the cosmic-metaphysical plane and the association of *nafs al-amr* with the concepts of religious thinking.

In the first stage, al-Ṭūsī aims to put forth the existence of a reality independent of the human mind. Accordingly, even though humans have certain contemplations and judgments, some of these are right, while some are wrong. Since the mind is the realm of both right and wrong premises, the righteousness of the right premise requires a reference to a plane (permanence) outside the human mind. For al-Ṭūsī, it will be misleading to restrict this non-mental plane only to an external reality. The non-mental includes all planes, whether it refers to external existence as explained by the statement "fire burns" or to the logical plane as elaborated in the statement "man is universal." Indeed, universality is imposed on the human mind by a reality outside the human mind (the correspondence of the human concept with numerous individuals). Al-Ṭūsī describes such permanence as "what is in *nafs al-amr*" instead of as *nafs al-amr* itself. Thus, he sends out the first signals of moving away from the approach where *nafs al-amr* is considered as a fact itself, that is, where it is possible to handle it in a plane, such as "the fact that fire burns" and "man is universal." Al-Ṭūsī tries to ground his assertion that a reality independent of the human mind should be an entity based on the correspondence between what is in the mind and "the exterior." Accordingly, if a thing corresponds to another, the two should be separated on the true plane. Thus, the judgment of the mind refers to the non-mental form and understanding to which this judgment corresponds; this form and meaning, in turn,

refs to an entity. This entity is *nafs al-amr* itself; what is in it is the form and meaning to which the judgment of the mind corresponds.

At this point, it is necessary to clarify what al-Ṭūsī means with "non-mental permanence." In grammatical terms, "ثبوت خارج" can be read as a possessive construction or an adjective clause. When it is considered a possessive construction, it means the permanence of an external thing. When it is read as an adjective clause, that is, when "permanence" is mentioned as a verbal noun to signify a derived noun, this also denotes the permanence of an external thing. If it is read as an adjective clause and permanence is used in its true sense, then it signifies not an external object but the external reality itself.[8] In the first two cases, the idea to see *nafs al-amr* as an entity comes to the fore, whereas the final example refers to the factual reality itself beyond the mental construction and assumption. Al-Ṭūsī proceeds to transition from "permanence" to "permanent" in the following phase of his argumentation; therefore, he represents *nafs al-amr* as an entity. He claims that "non-mental permanence" expresses "what is in *nafs al-amr*." Al-Jandī, who is one of the commentators of the text, asserts that "non-mental permanence" is indeed expressed as *nafs al-amr* itself in some versions but that this would mean a deviation from the apparent meaning of what al-Ṭūsī says. Therefore, according to al-Ṭūsī, *nafs al-amr* is an entity in itself, and what is in *nafs al-amr* is a form and meaning that subsists with this entity.

Criticisms about this stage of his reasoning focus on his leap from the logical to the cosmic-metaphysical plane and the weakness of his justifications with regard to the concept of correspondence he employs in order to justify such a leap. According to the relevant response, in regard to the two judgments that are separated with regard to correspondence and non-correspondence, the response related to the corresponding judgment does not need to have permanence outside the mind since correspondence is sufficient. This is proven by the fact that an availability for correspondence is realized merely through being subject to representation. Indeed, this is the case for negative

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8   Mullā Aḥmad al-Jandī, "Sharḥ Risālat ithbāt al-ʿaql al-mujarrad," in *Risālat ithbāt al-ʿaql al-mujarrad wa-shurūḥ ān,* ed. Ṭayyibah ʿĀrifniyā (Tehran: Mīrāth-i Maktūb, 2014), 130.

premises and judgments about the impossible.[9] According to al-Jīlanī, this is why unlike false propositions, the assertion, which claims another plane to be owned by true propositions, is controversial. Indeed, in addition to an intellectual space where false propositions and true propositions are common, there is a level of intellectual existence peculiar only to true propositions. This plane is sometimes expressed with the word "exterior." In such cases, it becomes meaningless to claim a non-mental entity, or more precisely, an eternal intellect, for true propositions.[10] Likewise, according to al-Dawwānī, it is problematic on the side of al-Ṭūsī to put forth individual distinction (*bi-l-shakhṣ taghayyur*) as a condition for the realization of correspondence in order to establish *nafs al-amr* as an external entity, since the constructional difference between two corresponding things is sufficient.[11] For instance, even though there is no particular distinction between "man" and "the living" or between "individual man" and "man," there is a correspondence between them. According to al-Ardabīlī, it would be better if al-Ṭūsī contented himself with an "essential distinction" rather than asserting individual distinction in correspondence.[12]

In the second phase of his argumentation, al-Ṭūsī takes the steps that will transform such permanence and reality into a mental entity, namely, the knowledge of a separate intellect. This stage apparently includes a distinct leap from the logical plane to the cosmic-metaphysical plane. The clearest evidence is that "permanence," which took place at the end of the previous phase, now turns into "permanent." Thus, *nafs al-amr* becomes the intellect, whereas what is in *nafs al-amr* becomes something that is represented in it. At this

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[9] Shams al-Dīn Kīshī, "Rawḍat al-nāẓir fī sharḥ nafs al-amr," in *Risālat ithbāt al-ʿaql al-mujarrad wa-shurūḥ ān,* ed. Ṭayyibah ʿĀrifniyā (Tehran: Mīrāth-i Maktūb, 2014), 16-17; Al-Jandī, "Sharḥ Risālat ithbāt al-ʿaql al-mujarrad," 131.

[10] Mullā Shamsā (Shams al-Dīn) al-Jīlanī, "Ḥāshiyah ʿalá Risālat ithbāt al-ʿaql al-mujarrad," in *Risālat ithbāt al-ʿaql al-mujarrad wa-shurūḥ ān,* ed. Ṭayyibah ʿĀrifniyā (Tehran: Mīrāth-i Maktūb, 2014), 67.

[11] Abū ʿAbd Allāh Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Asʿad ibn Muḥammad al-Dawwānī, "Sharḥ Risālat ithbāt al-ʿaql al-mujarrad," in *Risālat ithbāt al-ʿaql al-mujarrad wa-shurūḥ ān,* ed. Ṭayyibah ʿĀrifniyā (Tehran: Mīrāth-i Maktūb, 2014), 49.

[12] Mullā Ḥusayn al-Ardabīlī, "Ḥāshiyah ʿalá Risālat ithbāt al-ʿaql al-mujarrad," in *Risālat ithbāt al-ʿaql al-mujarrad wa-shurūḥ ān,* ed. Ṭayyibah ʿĀrifniyā (Tehran: Mīrāth-i Maktūb, 2014), 78.

point, al-Ṭūsī makes use of the method of investigation and division, indicating that any attempt to associate the represented thing with a certain time, space or position will contradict the situation "being it itself" that defines it. Accordingly, he tries to eliminate the idea of considering external objects and facts or even mental beings which are independent of assumption as *nafs al-amr* itself. However, again, he claims that what is in *nafs al-amr* cannot be a self-subsisting entity because such an approach will lead to the acceptance of Platonic ideas. Thus, he concludes that "*nafs al-amr* is something that exists in an abstract being."[13]

As al-Ṭūsī eliminates the option of seeing *nafs al-amr* as spatiotemporal beings, incidents and facts themselves, he asserts that things within *nafs al-amr* are free of spatiotemporal reservations.[14] Such an approach will render it impossible to associate objects and situations, which are obliged to constant change, with *nafs al-amr*. Therefore, mathematical propositions, certain logical propositions, such as "something either exists or not," intellects supposedly immune to change, and anything except God cannot be subject to *nafs al-amr*. Indeed, in *nafs al-amr,* a phrase, such as "it is raining," that refers to a particular and temporal incident may well be true assuming that it corresponds to a situation in the external world. Al-Ṭūsī is asked, "Cannot the things within coordinates of time and space have an aspect that makes it possible to associate them with *nafs al-amr*?"[15] This question is actually a proposition to solve the abovementioned problem. In this question, the existence of knowledge as a particular form and universal meaning is presented as an example that may lead to such a possibility. More precisely, in our process of knowing, which includes the effort to attain universals through particulars subject to time and space, the universal refers to what is timeless and constant,

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[13]   Al-Ṭūsī actually talks about four possible positions of *nafs al-amr* in the text: 1) *Nafs al-amr* is something with a self-subsisting position, 2) *Nafs al-amr* is something without a self-subsisting position, 3) *Nafs al-amr* is extant with something in a position, and 4) *Nafs al-amr* is extant in something that is not in a position. Nevertheless, as the third option can be treated in the same framework as the first, al-Ṭūsī conducts the debate over three alternative options.

[14]   Abū Jaʿfar Naṣīr al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan al-Ṭūsī, "Risālah fī ithbāt al-ʿaql al-mujarrad," in *Risālat ithbāt al-ʿaql al-mujarrad wa-shurūḥ ān,* ed. Ṭayyibah ʿĀrifniyā (Tehran: Mīrāth-i Maktūb, 2014), 5.

[15]   *Ibid.*

and the subjection of particulars to change does not eliminate the unity and timelessness of this meaning; likewise, *nafs al-amr* might be related to them in the context of the nontemporal aspects of spatiotemporal objects, situations, and facts. Thus, beings with a position may be related to *nafs al-amr* in a manner not relevant to their having a position. According to Shams al-Dīn al-Kīshī, it is incorrect to compare the aspects of a mental form as meaning and knowledge and the changing, nontemporal aspects of what is subject to *nafs al-amr*. Indeed, mental form and meaning are not self-subsisting. Al-Ṭūsī, however, tries to eliminate here the option that *nafs al-amr* is something dependent on time and space and self-subsisting. Therefore, the question should be constructed from the point of things that are within the coordinates of time and space and which are self-subsisting. In such cases, the response by al-Ṭūsī to the question will lose its value.[16] Accordingly, al-Dawwānī points out that the mentioned assimilation and comparison between mental forms and *nafs al-amr* is not carried out in every aspect, wherefore the response by al-Ṭūsī is not correct.[17] Mullā Muḥammad Ḥanafī criticizes the justification by al-Ṭūsī, indicating that the judgments that correspond to *nafs al-amr* may well be free of space and time, as this quality is necessary only for things subject to such judgments.[18]

Al-Ṭūsī appeals to a second ground where he makes use of the notion of "consciousness/awareness" to eliminate the option of considering *nafs al-amr* as the very self of spatiotemporal beings, incidents and facts. Accordingly, it is impossible to talk about knowledge regarding the existence of correspondence without the consciousness of what is subject to correspondence. Even though there is no consciousness about whether the things to which the true judgments in *nafs al-amr* correspond have a position, we have no doubt about the correspondence of such judgments to *nafs al-amr*. This means that *nafs al-amr* is not a spatiotemporal thing with a position.[19] This weak justification by al-Ṭūsī has been subject to criticism by commentators, such as Shams al-Dīn al-Kīshī, al-Dawwānī,

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[16]   Al-Kīshī, "Rawḍat al-nāẓir," 24.

[17]   Al-Dawwānī, "Sharḥ Risālat ithbāt al-ʿaql al-mujarrad," 51.

[18]   Mullā Muḥammad Ḥanafī, "Sharḥ Risālat ithbāt al-ʿaql al-mujarrad," in *Risālat ithbāt al-ʿaql al-mujarrad wa-shurūḥ ān*, ed. Ṭayyibah ʿĀrifniyā (Tehran: Mīrāth-i Maktūb, 2014), 98.

[19]   Al-Ṭūsī, "Risālah fī ithbāt al-ʿaql al-mujarrad," 5.

and Mullā Muḥammad Ḥanafī, since it is also employable against the argument that *nafs al-amr* is actually the forms within a separate intellect.[20]

The third justification by al-Ṭūsī aims at eliminating the option of seeing *nafs al-amr* as the very self of spatiotemporal beings, incidents, and facts; this view is grounded on the idea of a sharp distinction between intellectual and sensible understanding. In this respect, we understand judgments through intellect and understand things with position only through the senses or by means of a similar function. The correspondence between things subject to intellectual understanding and those subject to sensible understanding cannot be realized with regard to their subjection to sensible understanding.[21] Pursuant to this argument, since judgments are understood through intellect and material beings with a position are not subject to representation with their material forms, their correspondence with *nafs al-amr* makes it impossible for the latter to have a position. According to al-Dawwānī, this argument may face the objection that things, which are within spatiotemporal coordinates and subject to sensible understanding, can be subject to intellectual understanding not through construction of their material aspects but via intelligible forms.[22] Al-Ardabīlī reminds that the argument that intellect only understands the universal is controversial; for instance, according to verifiers, it is the intellect that makes judgments about things subject to sensible understanding.[23]

Al-Ṭūsī insists that what is in *nafs al-amr* cannot be a self-subsisting entity; otherwise, one has to accept Platonic ideas. This evidently is grounded on the well-known interpretation that Platonic ideas are self-subsisting substances.[24] In light of this interpretation, al-Ṭūsī leaps from the impossibility of ideas to the impossibility of self-subsistence of

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[20]   Shams al-Dīn al-Kīshī, "Rawḍat al-nāẓir," 25; al-Dawwānī, "Sharḥ Risālat ithbāt al-ʿaql al-mujarrad," 52. Mullā Muḥammad Ḥanafī says he is surprised to see a verifier and meticulous man such as al-Ṭūsī to use such a justification ("Sharḥ Risālat ithbāt al-ʿaql al-mujarrad," 101).

[21]   Al-Ṭūsī, "Risālah fī ithbāt al-ʿaql al-mujarrad," 5.

[22]   Al-Dawwānī, "Sharḥ Risālat ithbāt al-ʿaql al-mujarrad," 52.

[23]   Al-Ardabīlī, "Ḥāshiyah ʿalá Risālat ithbāt al-ʿaql al-mujarrad," 81.

[24]   For various comments and assessments on Platonic ideas, see Mullā Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Yaḥýá al-Shīrāzī (Mullā Ṣadrā), *al-Ḥikmah al-mutaʿāliyah fī l-asfār al-ʿaqliyyah al-arbaʿah* (Beirut: Dār Iḥyāʾ al-Turāth al-ʿArabī, 1990), II, 46-81. Hereafter referred as *al-Asfār*.

what is in *nafs al-amr*; given other comments on Platonic ideas and the lack of exactitude of the arguments about the impossibility of ideas, his approach has been questioned by commentators.[25]

Al-Ṭūsī uses the term "the intelligible (*maʿqūlāt*)" to express what is in *nafs al-amr* within the abstract being. This situation opens up the mode of the existence of intelligible forms in the abstract for discussions, as well as relevant issues. Are the intelligible within the abstract being actually forms that are distinguished in such a manner to require seeing separate intellect as a store of forms, or even, as Ibn Sīnā puts it, are they the simple meaning of being without any separation? The relevant criticisms against al-Ṭūsī, as we will see below, are based on the acceptance that what is meant here is separated forms. Indeed, according to al-Jandī, it is clear for philosophers that the knowledge of God does not occur with form; in addition, there is no textual ground by which they characterize the knowledge of separate intellects through inscription (*irtisām*). Nonetheless, the argument that what is in *nafs al-amr* is exactly what is in the active intellect refers to this.[26] As the fourth phase of argumentation shows, al-Ṭūsī grounds his argument on the impossibility that God can actually include infinite multiplicity, while he eliminates the probability of *nafs al-amr* being divine knowledge; therefore, he presumably means separated forms within a separate intellect.[27] The abovementioned criticisms can be invalidated by asserting that the knowledge of separate intellects is neither acquired nor based on impression;[28] however, al-Ṭūsī is still subject to severe

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[25] Al-Kīshī, "Rawḍat al-nāẓir," 25-26; al-Dawwānī, "Sharḥ Risālat ithbāt al-ʿaql al-mujarrad," 52-53; al-Ardabīlī, "Ḥāshiyah ʿalá Risālat ithbāt al-ʿaql al-mujarrad," 81; Mullā Muḥammad Ḥanafī, "Sharḥ Risālat ithbāt al-ʿaql al-mujarrad," 102-103; al-Jandī, "Sharḥ Risālat ithbāt al-ʿaql al-mujarrad," 134-136; Mullā Muḥammad al-Kashmīrī, "al-Lawḥ al-maḥfūẓ ʿan al-hazl al-manbūdh fī sharḥ Risālat ithbāt al-ʿaql al-mujarrad," in *Risālat ithbāt al-ʿaql al-mujarrad wa-shurūḥ ān,* ed. Ṭayyibah ʿĀrifniyā (Tehran: Mīrāth-i Maktūb, 2014), 175-177.

[26] Al-Jandī, "Sharḥ Risālat ithbāt al-ʿaql al-mujarrad," 149.

[27] For more information on the debate about the position of al-Ṭūsī in the context of natural universals, see Üçer, "Gerçekçiliğin Dönüşümü," 43-52.

[28] As a matter of fact, Mullā Ṣadrā points out the same emphasis, as he comments on the relevant explanations and the evaluations of al-Ṭūsī, al-Ḥillī, and al-Dawwānī. See *al-Asfār*, VII, 276-277; id., *Tafsīr al-Qurʾān al-karīm*, ed. Muḥammad Khwājawī (Qom: Intishārāt-i Bīdār, 1988), II, 143-146.

criticism because he underlines the distinction between separate intellects and the forms therein.

One of the criticisms against this second stage of argumentation is constructed on the assertion that "*nafs al-amr* is the form in separate intellect" and the acceptance that "intellect only apprehends the universal." Pursuant to this criticism quoted by al-Kīshī, in such cases, both universal and particular judgments of mind will correspond with *nafs al-amr*. For instance, the judgment that the "diagonal of a square does not equal its side" corresponds with *nafs al-amr*; likewise, the statement that "Zayd is wise" also corresponds with *nafs al-amr*. Regarding *nafs al-amr* as the form within separate intellect, since this form is universal, we will either be unable to talk about the correspondence between particular judgments and *nafs al-amr* or even to talk about a different meaning for the correspondence with *nafs al-amr* depending on the universal or particular judgments. Since both options are wrong, *nafs al-amr* cannot be the form in a separate intellect.[29]

Another criticism against the second stage is articulated by certain thinkers, especially al-Jurjānī and al-Kīshī. In this respect, the criterion for the trueness of forms in separate intellects is problematized. Accordingly, the trueness of a judgment is its correspondence with *nafs al-amr*. Since forms within separate intellects are true, they should also correspond with *nafs al-amr*. If these forms are *nafs al-amr* itself, their trueness means their correspondence with *nafs al-amr* and thus with themselves. However, nothing can be in correspondence with itself. Therefore, *nafs al-amr* cannot be formed in separate intellects.[30]

In this context, al-Kīshī points out another criticism that refers to the problem of priority-posteriority between the self of the separate intellect and the form therein. The separate intellect itself should be prior to everything called *nafs al-amr*; if *nafs al-amr* is in the form of the separate intellect, since the separate intellect precedes form, it will precede *nafs al-amr* as well. If the knowledge of the separate intellect

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[29] Al-Kīshī, "Rawḍat al-nāẓir," 35; al-Jandī, "Sharḥ Risālat ithbāt al-ʿaql al-mujarrad," 150.

[30] Al-Kīshī, "Rawḍat al-nāẓir," 35-36; al-Sayyid al-Sharīf Abū l-Ḥasan ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī al-Jurjānī, *Ḥāshiyat al-Tajrīd*, along with Maḥmūd ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Iṣfahānī's *Tasdīd al-qawāʿid fī sharḥ Tajrīd al-ʿaqāʾid*, ed. Eşref Altaş et al. (Istanbul: İSAM Yayınları, 2020), 202.

in itself is identical to its self and this knowledge should correspond with what is in *nafs al-amr*, then what is in *nafs al-amr* should precede the separate intellect. Thus, what is in *nafs al-amr* will precede the separate intellect. Then, again, if what is in *nafs al-amr* precedes the separate intellect, that corresponding with the self of the separate intellect, namely, *nafs al-amr*, will have preceded the separate intellect itself.[31] This problem of priority-posteriority is also applicable to the knowledge of God. Indeed, the knowledge of God corresponds with *nafs al-amr*. Since the knowledge of God precedes the self of the separate intellect, which, in turn, precedes *nafs al-amr*, that is, the form in it, *nafs al-amr* will have twice preceded itself. Then, again, if *nafs al-amr* is a separate intellect, the knowledge of God that precedes creation will become controversial.[32]

At the third stage of argumentation, al-Ṭūsī puts forth the quality of what is in *nafs al-amr*. Accordingly, this thing in *nafs al-amr* is definitely far from the qualities of potentiality, possibility, change, and cessation; instead, it has the qualities of actuality, necessity, constancy, and eternality. If what is in *nafs al-amr* has such qualities, then *nafs al-amr* itself should be the same.[33] Thus, the reasoning process is constructed in such a manner that *nafs al-amr* is a separate intellect and what is in *nafs al-amr* comprises intelligible forms. Since the separate intellect is a self-subsisting, non-positioned being in the external word and actually includes all the intelligible and since it cannot come from potentiality to actuality, change, renew, or cease, any intelligible forms therein will have the same qualities. Importantly, this conclusion makes it possible to define *nafs al-amr* as the self of God and to define what is in *nafs al-amr* as the knowledge of God. Indeed, God is also self-subsisting; it never comes from potentiality to actuality and does not change; in addition, in the context of such a quality, the knowledge of God encircles everything. Therefore, if the mentioned qualities are applicable for both the separate intellect and its knowledge as well as God and His knowledge, there is no obstacle against the association of what is in *nafs al-amr* with divine knowledge. Well-aware of this fact, al-Ṭūsī eliminates the abovementioned option in the fourth phase of his argumentation. For

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[31] Al-Kīshī, "Rawḍat al-nāẓir," 36.

[32] *Ibid.*; al-Ardabīlī, "Ḥāshiyah ʿalá Risālat ithbāt al-ʿaql al-mujarrad," 84.

[33] Al-Ṭūsī, "Risālah fī ithbāt al-ʿaql al-mujarrad," 7.

this purpose, he indicates that a separate intellect actually includes an infinite multiplicity but that it is impossible to say the same for God.[34]

The third stage, where attributes of *nafs al-amr* are determined, takes us to the point that there is a being that exists in the external world but has no position and that it is self-subsisting and incorporeal (*mujarrad*). This being actually includes all the intelligible that are either actual or that have the capacity of coming from potentiality to actuality. This being or the intelligible therein cannot change, transform, renew, or cease to be. The separate substance itself and the intelligible in it eternally have these qualities.

If the intelligible in a separate intellect are to have the abovementioned qualities, then the separate intellect itself should be of the same quality. Otherwise, if we assume that the self is a potential, the actual existing intelligible should exist independent of any receptacle/substrate. al-Ṭūsī, however, had already eliminated this alternative. The actual inclusion of the intelligible by separate intellection means the latter cannot mature with them. Talking about intelligible forms in *nafs al-amr*, he refers to permanence and necessity. Accordingly, things in *nafs al-amr* are not related to space and time, and their permanence is necessary. For al-Ṭūsī, since the correspondence between what is or can actually be present in the human mind in any given time and what is potential is impossible, then the intelligibles in separate intellects should be actual. Again, since the trueness of judgments by mind in line with *nafs al-amr* are constant and independent of space and time, the intelligibles in separate intellects should be the same.[35] Nevertheless, al-Ṭūsī has been subject to severe criticism for his effort to justify actuality and permanence on the basis of correspondence. In the eyes of al-Ardabīlī, the main reason behind such criticism is that the mentioned reasoning includes a leap. More precisely, the permanence of something that corresponds with *nafs al-amr* signifies either the permanence of relevant understanding or the permanence of its occurrence. In the first case, the trueness of the proposition does not require continuous understanding of the unity between the subject and predicate. Indeed, its trueness is indifferent to the understanding of the unity between its subject and predicate. Therefore, the permanence of trueness does not require the permanence of relevant understanding. In the second case,

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[34] *Ibid.*, 7.

[35] *Ibid.*, 6-7.

notwithstanding my understanding, the permanence of the mentioned unity between the subject and predicate does not require the existence of a substrate that will carry this permanence outside the subject-predicate and the unity between them.[36]

The attributes of actuality, constancy, and eternality also apply for God and His knowledge. In the fourth phase of his reasoning chain, al-Ṭūsī grounds his argument on the impossibility of associating God with multiplicity to eliminate the option of considering *nafs al-amr* as divine knowledge itself. He negates all three likely manners of association.

i. No multiplicity can be present in God.

ii. God cannot be the first principle of multiplicity.

iii. God cannot be the receptacle/substrate for multiplicity.

Well then, while al-Ṭūsī asserts that a separate substance includes infinite multiplicity, which forms the existence of multiplicity, which he negates for God, does he appeal to a separate substance? In consideration of the first alternative, saying a separate substance includes multiplicity, he means that just as an object consists of atoms or matter-form, the multiplicity is a part of it in mereological terms or that the separate substance is a substrate for multiplicity. The first is unacceptable, while the second is already expressed in the third option. The same applies for the fact that separate substances are principles of multiplicity. Indeed, if this means that it is the first efficient cause, then in this sense, God is clearly the principle. Therefore, such a quality cannot be negated for God. If this, however, means that a separate substance is receptive for multiplicity, it would be synonymous with the third option; that is, it would "be a receptacle/substrate for multiplicity."[37]

If the first option denotes consisting of several parts, this cannot be negated only for God. Indeed, even if we say that intelligible forms distinctively exist in separate intellects, this will still not signify such a meronymy. In the second option, the statement that God cannot be the first principle of multiplicity reflects a conscious preference. Indeed, this implies that God cannot be the first principle of multiplicity but that God can be the indirect principle of it. In such cases, the separate

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[36] Al-Ardabīlī, "Ḥāshiyah ʿalá Risālat ithbāt al-ʿaql al-mujarrad," 81-82.

[37] Al-Kīshī, "Rawḍat al-nāẓir," 30-31.

intellect will be the first principle of multiplicity. Then, again, what is the origin of this multiplicity in a separate intellect? According to al-Dawwānī, if multiplicity comes to it from God, this would contradict the argument that multiplicity cannot be present in God. If multiplicity originates from a separate intellect itself, then it would be both the subject and the recipient of such multiplicity.[38] In the eyes of Mullā Muḥammad Ḥanafī, even if a separate intellect acknowledges multiplicity and the realization of multiplicity in a separate intellect originates from God, this does not mean God is a receptacle for multiplicity.[39] In other words, when we say separate intellect is principle of multiplicity, we mean the existential meaning, which will enable separate intellect to be receptacle of multiplicity, comes to it from God. The third option, namely, that God is not the receptacle of multiplicity, means that no separated form can be present in God. The narrative by al-Ṭūsī seems to denote the inclusion of infinite multiplicity by a separate substance in such a manner that it does not impede the existence of the intelligible forms in it. According to thinkers, such as al-Ardabīlī, al-Jandī, and Mullā Muḥammad Ḥanafī, if the option of considering *nafs al-amr* as the knowledge of God is eliminated and it is identified with the intelligible in a separate intellect, this approach will entail problems in terms of both the knowledge of God and the predications about God. For them, grounding the knowledge of God on intelligible forms in a separate intellect would mean that the reference and argument for phrases about God is a separate intellect that represents *nafs al-amr*.[40]

At the end of his chain of reasoning, al-Ṭūsī points out a non-mental plane for *nafs al-amr*; with regard to actual reality, he refers to an

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[38]   Al-Dawwānī, "Sharḥ Risālat ithbāt al-ʿaql al-mujarrad," 57.

[39]   Mullā Muḥammad Ḥanafī, "Sharḥ Risālat ithbāt al-ʿaql al-mujarrad," 109.

[40]   Al-Ardabīlī, "Ḥāshiyah ʿalá Risālat ithbāt al-ʿaql al-mujarrad," 86; Mullā Muḥammad Ḥanafī, "Sharḥ Risālat ithbāt al-ʿaql al-mujarrad," 113; al-Jandī, "Sharḥ Risālat ithbāt al-ʿaql al-mujarrad," 134. Al-Kashmīrī backs al-Ṭūsī and opposes the mentioned comment as follows: Knowledge of God cannot ground on it in the sense that the receptacle of multiplicity (=separate intellect) is the receptacle of the forms of things. Knowledge of God does not require acquisition of the mentioned forms in another receptacle. Instead, it (=separate intellect) is something that God creates first and whose form He projects in the later creations. God made it the example for forms of all creatures in order to spread His competent potency ("al-Lawḥ al-maḥfūẓ," 183).

abstract being other than God, as he eliminates both the latter and God's knowledge in this respect. Qualities, such as the lack of coming from potentiality to actuality and constancy, denote that a celestial soul cannot be a candidate for *nafs al-amr*. Indeed, the soul has perfections that are yet to be present in it and realized.[41] Thus, all premises are constructed in such a manner to lead to a separate intellect. Thus far, we have deliberately used the term "separate intellect" in the presentation of argumentation. This is because al-Ṭūsī employs *universal intellect* for *nafs al-amr* in the fifth phase. He prefers the *universal intellect* over the *active intellect* to signify *nafs al-amr*. For al-Ḥillī, *nafs al-amr* of al-Ṭūsī is the active intellect or the first intellect. There is no apparent problem with this point, since the term active intellect can be used for any intellect, including the first and the universal intellect. Nevertheless, *nafs al-amr* may vary in scope depending on whether it is the first or tenth intellect. On the other hand, according to al-Ṭūsī, the separate intellect that represents *nafs al-amr* includes infinite multiplicity, and his narrative does not allow for the qualification of actuality on all aspects. As a result, Shams al-Dīn al-Kīshī, al-Dawwānī, and other thinkers argue that this approach makes it more difficult to suggest that he means the universal intellect/first intellect with *nafs al-amr*. In fact, the intelligible of the first intellect which is a kind of intellect of both the universal intellect and the entire universe are necessary in them and are not forms that are distinguished therein.[42]

Positioning *nafs al-amr* with regard to a cosmic-metaphysical plane, al-Ṭūsī takes the problem to the realm of religious thinking; as a result, he associates *nafs al-amr*, which he expresses as the universal intellect, with a preserved tablet and the clear book. According to Shams al-Dīn al-Kīshī, preserved tablet includes all particulars and universals, whereas universal intellect includes only universals; therefore, it seems unlikely to correspond to preserved tablet.[43] In this

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[41] Al-Dawwānī, "Sharḥ Risālat ithbāt al-ʿaql al-mujarrad," 59; al-Jandī, "Sharḥ Risālat ithbāt al-ʿaql al-mujarrad," 144.

[42] Al-Kīshī, "Rawḍat al-nāẓir," 31; al-Dawwānī, "Sharḥ Risālat ithbāt al-ʿaql al-mujarrad," 58.

[43] Al-Jandī believes this justification may face objections. Indeed, all universal and particular things exist in intellect; nevertheless, the existence of particulars in the intellect is not in the form of a change or a transformation in the temporal

case, it would be more accurate for a person who wants to reconcile philosophical concepts with the *sharʿī* terms to say that the preserved tablet corresponds to the universal soul. Indeed, similar to preserved tablet, the universal soul also incorporates infinite forms that are separated in a universal and particular manner. The first intellect is named "pen" (*qalam*) because it is a means for reflecting knowledge to the universal soul. In this case, it would be more appropriate to name the universal soul a "tablet" (*lawḥ*). Indeed, the soul is like a tablet for this pen. On the other hand, the attempt to associate the universal intellect with the clear book is also controversial in the eyes of al-Kīshī. In fact, commentators refer to three things for the clear book: the Qurʾān, the knowledge of God, and the preserved tablet. Al-Kīshī finds the second more appropriate. According to him, the reference to the verse, "With Him are the keys of the unseen," reinforces the idea that the term "clear book/record" at the end of the verse signifies divine knowledge.[44] For al-Kashmīrī, the assumption that the universal intellect is a preserved tablet contradicts general acceptance.[45] Al-Taftāzānī criticizes al-Ṭūsī, saying "if only he did not associate *nafs al-amr* with these" and indicating that words of al-Ṭūsī are clearly against the abovementioned Qurʾānic verse.[46]

II. Meaning of *Nafs al-amr*: Map of Approaches

Evidently, approaches about understanding *nafs al-amr* cannot be reduced to meanings ascribed to wordings that constitute phrases or that are revealed only through reference to them. A question put by al-Ḥillī to al-Ṭūsī shows that the problem is based on a debate about the criterion for the trueness of judgments of the mind. The relevant literature provides a significant number of correspondences for *nafs al-amr*: self of thing, domain of the real world, universal intellect, universal soul, active intellect, material world, world of images, world of incorporeal, divine knowledge, immutable entities, divine names, divine entity, preserved tablet, the clear book, and Platonic ideas. It is

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dimension. Instead, it is in a single mode; "Sharḥ Risālat ithbāt al-ʿaql al-mujarrad," 145.

[44]   Al-Kīshī, "Rawḍat al-nāẓir," 32-33.

[45]   Al-Kashmīrī, "al-Lawḥ al-maḥfūẓ," 185.

[46]   Saʿd al-Dīn Masʿūd ibn Fakhr al-Dīn ʿUmar ibn Burhān al-Dīn ʿAbd Allāh al-Harawī al-Taftāzānī, *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid* (Istanbul: Dār al-Ṭibāʿah al-ʿĀmirah, 1277 AH), I, 71.

necessary to determine the pivotal meaning around which all these terms are located; in addition, it is possible to categorize them in various aspects. In terms of categorization, they can be classified through their relation with the logical, real, cosmic, spiritual, and divine spheres. A more compact categorization might include mentalist, realist, and surrealist categories. We may also attain a well-defined categorization if we say that they are entities and planes that substantially have the same content, even though some of them are expressed through different concepts in respective terminologies of various traditions of philosophical, scientific, or religious thinking.

In his dialog with al-Ḥillī, al-Ṭūsī takes *nafs al-amr* to the cosmic plane and associates it with the separate intellect. This approach of al-Ṭūsī transformed it into a philosophical problem that thanks to the contributions of numerous thinkers, would be expanded throughout the following centuries, laid the foundation for various approaches, and put forth various other subject matters in relation to different problematics of logic and metaphysics. Shams al-Dīn al-Kīshī, who was one of the first thinkers to join the debate and to write a gloss for a tract of al-Ṭūsī, refuses the assertion that *nafs al-amr* is the first intellect, and he thus does not adopt the approach that appoints a high rank to *nafs al-amr* in the hierarchy of cosmic intellects. Seeing *nafs al-amr* as an instrument of the human mind to comprehend reality, he refers to the fact that an object has a real existence independent of the human mind.[47] In the chapter about predicting the quality of existence and nonexistence in *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, in response to the conclusion that correspondence occurs in *nafs al-amr*, al-Taftāzānī analyzes and criticizes the approach of al-Ṭūsī. Accordingly, al-Taftāzānī, who is frequently referred to in this matter, thinks it is incorrect to interpret *nafs al-amr* as the active intellect. In linguistic terms, *nafs* means essence, whereas *amr* signifies thing and matter; therefore, *nafs al-amr* refers to something *per se*. The existence of something *per se*, namely, in itself, means to exist independently of understanding, construction, and assumption.[48] In this regard, in the distinction between the real and the constructional, *nafs al-amr* is on the side of the former; nonetheless, there is no object to place it against constructionally. Nevertheless, since constructional quality includes what is assumptional (*faraḍī*) and extractional (*intizāʿī*), it requires a

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[47] Al-Kīshī, "Rawḍat al-nāẓir," 38.

[48] Al-Taftāzānī, *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, I, 70-71.

reflection on the content of what is true and what corresponds with *nafs al-amr*.[49] Indeed, just as mental or external entities are described through nonexistential things, there are examples where the thing that is included in the subject or predicate of a proposition does not externally exist or even where the mental or external existence is not a part of the predicate. Propositions, such as "Phoenix (ʿAnqāʾ) is nonexistent," "Partner of God is impossible," "possibility is constructional," "quiddity exists," "genus is the constituent of species," "nonexistence of cause is the cause for nonexistence of effect," and "Zayd is blind," are in this category; nonetheless, their subjects are qualified by their respective predicates in *nafs al-amr*. Al-Jurjānī joins the debate and in a similar manner to al-Taftāzānī, before adding that it is highly improbable to claim *nafs al-amr* is the active intellect, he indicates *nafs al-amr* means a thing in itself. According to al-Jurjānī, this may be only if *amr* in this phrase is used in the sense that it corresponds to creation (*khalq*) and is employed for the realm of abstract beings. This, however, leads to certain problems caused by the presence of intelligible forms in the active intellect, as we also touched upon in Chapter one.[50] In consideration of all these assessments, *nafs al-amr* is essentially used in a framework that includes the permanence of existence, quiddity, and constructional notions.

To crystallize the relevant approaches, it seems important to further clarify the definition of *nafs al-amr* as a "thing in itself." The picture of the content of *nafs al-amr* shows that in peripatetic essentialism, it is impossible to identify a "thing in itself" with "quiddity in itself." The problem about the status of quiddity in itself evidently has an influence in expanding relevant debates; nonetheless, it will not be accurate to claim that *nafs al-amr* is available for use only in Avicennian metaphysics. Indeed, talking about the existence of something in *nafs*

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[49] Al-Tahānawī uses the term "inventive" for what we mean by "assumptive." For him, the attribution of external and mental entities in *nafs al-amr* through things acquired from them via extraction falls under the general sense of *nafs al-amr*. In addition, he associates attribution with real things, which excludes the extractional, with the narrower sense of *nafs al-amr*; Muḥammad Aʿlá ibn ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad Ḥāmid al-Tahānawī, *Mawsūʿat Kashshāf iṣṭilāḥāt al-funūn wa-l-ʿulūm*, ed. ʿAlī Daḥrūj (Beirut: Maktabat Lubnān Nāshirūn, 1996), II, 1720.

[50] Al-Jurjānī, *Ḥāshiyat al-Tajrīd*, 201-202. Strikingly enough, in *al-Taʿrīfāt*, al-Jurjānī allows for the description where *nafs al-amr* is defined as divine knowledge. See *al-Taʿrīfāt*, ed. ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd Ṣāliḥ Ḥamdān (Cairo: ʿĀlam al-Kutub, 1990), 315.

al-amr or its correspondence with *nafs al-amr* is not dependent on whether it is handled in metaphysical theories on the basis of its essence-attribute or existence-essence or handled even in physical theories through a substance-accident or matter-form. On the other hand, if we construe that the existence of something in itself means it exists independently of understanding, construction, or assumption, we will face the question of whether *nafs al-amr* refers to an ontological plane or whether it is mere construction. In this respect, if *nafs al-amr* is not a category outside the mind and an externality, isn't it fair to say that the 'independence of understanding, construction or assumption' will transform it into a construction? The consideration of something independently of understanding, construction, or assumption evidently requires its existence independently of understanding, construction, or assumption. This does not mean that the thing does not exist in dependence on another. For instance, even though an accident exists only in dependence on a substance, namely, a bearer, it is also existent in *nafs al-amr*, and the substance is qualified in *nafs al-amr*, or more precisely, independently of one's understanding, through such accident. Then, again, even though universal concepts are present only in the mind, they are qualified in *nafs al-amr* through their universality. Indeed, the universality of a concept does not depend on whether one takes it into account or even on one's assumption. As a result, even if we acknowledge a plane where *nafs al-amr* is seen as construction, it has to have an ontological ground. The term *wāqiʿ* used by philosophers to explain *nafs al-amr*, can be read as a sign that it is not considered merely as a construction. On the other hand, when this concept is used on its own, it has a quiddity that is available for identification with the self of the object, occurrence, or fact. Given that *amr* is used in the sense of "thing" and *nafs* is employed as the "essence (*dhāt*)," *nafs al-amr* may signify the self of a thing. In such cases, *nafs al-amr* will be the very self of a realized thing, whereas the exterior and the mind will be the casing for such a realization. This explanation faces the criticism that the correspondence of something with *nafs al-amr* entails the correspondence of such a thing with itself. All these acceptances take us outside the mind to a real plane of discussion. Mīr Dāmād is among the thinkers who focus on the quiddity of such an ontological ground and who deal with it in relation to other problematic areas.

Mīr Dāmād refers to the realization of something in itself by confirming the pivotal meaning of *nafs al-amr*; consequently, he

frequently uses the concepts of *nafs al-amr* and *matn al-wāqiʿ/ḥaqq al-wāqiʿ* (inner dimension of the real world) together.[51] Mīr Dāmād employs these concepts as a casing for the absolute permanence/existence or reality of something and incorporates them in the theory of perpetual creation.[52] Going beyond the approach that sees *nafs al-amr* merely as a construction, Mīr Dāmād refers to an ontological plane including it. Thus, he expands the abovementioned absolute permanence to contain all other planes proposed for *nafs al-amr*. In this regard, according to the approach of Mīr Dāmād, al-Ṭūsī's identification of *nafs al-amr* with the active intellect is wrong because it restricts the realm of *nafs al-amr*, but it is right because it is one of the ranks of *nafs al-amr*.[53] This approach associates *nafs al-amr* with the presence plane of every single thing, including being and quiddity, the existential and the nonexistential, the true and the extractional, the external and the mental, the material and the noncorporeal, and the cosmic and the metaphysical/divine. Nevertheless, we need responses to certain questions to understand this approach: Is *nafs al-amr* constructed as a metaphysical container that includes all these things? If we identify *nafs al-amr*, which is taken beyond a construction and is not identified with any cosmic, spiritual or divine sphere, with the permanence of an occurrence or fact in its respective stage, doesn't such an attitude bear the risk of considering each thing subject to change and transformation as if it consists of its very own essence? If this, despite all its differences, is identical with being and becoming at any stage and is another thing that provides it with the quality of association with *nafs al-amr*, then what is this thing?

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[51] For example, for information on how these concepts are used by Mīr Dāmād, see Dāmād Mīr Muḥammad Bāqir al-Ḥusaynī al-Astarābādī, *Kitāb al-Qabasāt*, ed. Mahdī Muḥaqqiq, 2nd ed. (Tehran: Dānishgāh-i Tahrān, 1988), 4, 16, 62, 224, 365, 410.

[52] For a few examples of this association by him, see his "al-Īmāẓāt," in *Muṣannafāt-i Mīr Dāmād: mushtamil bar dah ʿunwān az kitābhā wa-risālahā wa-ijāzahā wa-nāmahā*, ed. ʿAbd Allāh Nūrānī (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Anjuman-i Āthār wa-Mafākhir-i Farhangī, 2003), 18; id., "al-Taqdīsāt," in *Muṣannafāt-i Mīr Dāmād: mushtamil bar dah ʿunwān az kitābhā wa-risālahā wa-ijāzahā wa-nāmahā*, ed. ʿAbd Allāh Nūrānī (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Anjuman-i Āthār wa-Mafākhir-i Farhangī, 2003), 196.

[53] For an evaluation by Mīr Dāmād of the approach of al-Ṭūsī, see *Kitāb al-Qabasāt*, 385-387.

Those who reject *nafs al-amr* as a merely logical construction and oppose its consideration as immanent to the structure of the mind or reality identify it with certain metaphysical entities or planes that include the knowledge of everything *per se* and that are free of change or transformation. In this context, given their relation with the cosmic/spiritual and divine spheres in essence, the relevant approaches can be evaluated in two groups.

For the word *amr* (command), which is used as equivalent to *khalq* (creation), some philosophers identify *nafs al-amr* with *ʿālam al-amr*, which they consider to be the realm of noncorporeal beings. According to al-Sabzawārī, separate intellects are occasionally associated with *amr* by certain philosophers because their creation is realized merely through divine command, without the need for any further matter, form, aptitude, motion, and time. According to another comment, this is because they in fact have no quiddity and are identical to divine commands, which is synonymous with the command *kun* (be), representing mere existence.[54] Pursuant to this approach, if something is in *nafs al-amr*, it corresponds with what is in a separate intellect. Indeed, the separate intellect includes the knowledge of all that is existent. Here, the separate intellect signifies the active intellect, first intellect, or universal intellect, but this does not make any difference as to the ontic status of intelligible forms. The identification of intelligible forms in a separate intellect with *nafs al-amr* requires a confrontation with three major problems analyzed in Chapter one.

i. The first problem is the mode of existence of intelligible forms in a separate intellect. Various situations arise depending on whether they are separated forms. If we accept a single, unseparated meaning, then there is the problem of how we will establish the relation between it and the judgments that correspond with *nafs al-amr*. If it is separated, then we have to answer how the ensuing multiplicity occurs in a separate intellect.

ii. The second relevant problem is that for intelligible forms that are also subject to *nafs al-amr*, their correspondence with the latter will be synonymous with themselves.

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[54] Mullā Hādī Sabzawārī, *Sharḥ al-Manẓūmah*, scr. Ḥasanzādah al-Āmulī, ed. Masʿūd Ṭālibī (Tehran: Nashr-i Nāb, 1371 HS), II, 216-217; id., *Sharḥ al-asmāʾ*, ed. Najafqulī Ḥabībī (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Balāgh, 2006), 607-608.

iii. The third problem is the status of entities or planes or even related judgments that exceed intelligible forms in separate intellects with regard to *nafs al-amr*. Indeed, the intellects themselves, God, His knowledge, names and attributes, and all relevant judgments correspond with *nafs al-amr*.[55]

Given the identification of *nafs al-amr* with intelligible forms in a separate intellect, the permanence of mentioned things and the criterion for the trueness of the relevant judgments, this approach leads to several consequences that trouble both the correspondence and the hierarchy with regard to existence. Particularly, the questions about the mode of existence of intelligible forms in a separate intellect reminds another possible meaning, namely, the universal soul.[56] Indeed, contrary to a separate intellect, forms and intelligible forms can exist in it in a separate manner. However, even if we think that it brings a solution to the first problem, then the second and third problems remain unsolved because of the association between *nafs al-amr* and the universal soul. Similar consequences arise when the world of images or the interpretation of Platonic ideas other than divine knowledge are identified with *nafs al-amr*.

Complications in the association of *nafs al-amr* with the cosmic plane pave the way for another interpretation, or more precisely, its association with the divine sphere. According to Dāwūd al-Qayṣarī, *nafs al-amr* is the essential knowledge that includes forms of all beings, whether they are universal or particular, small or large, external or mental.[57] Pursuant to the principle of absolution (*tanzīh*), no multiplicity can be present in God. This principle stopped al-Ṭūsī from considering *nafs al-amr* as the knowledge of God. Nevertheless, such absolution clearly is grounded on the supposition that intelligible forms, which he says are in the separate intellect, are present in it in a separated manner. However, whoever claims *nafs al-amr* is divine knowledge and includes the knowledge of all beings does not mean the form subject to acquired knowledge. Pursuant to this approach, allegations that *nafs al-amr* is the first intellect, universal intellect,

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[55] Ṣāʾin al-Dīn ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad Ibn al-Turkah, *Tamhīd al-qāwāʿid: Kitāb al-Tamhīd fī sharḥ qawāʿid al-tawḥīd*, ed. Ḥasanzādah al-Āmulī (Qom: Alif Lām Mīm, 1381 HS), 34.

[56] Al-Kīshī, *Rawḍat al-nāẓir*, 32-33.

[57] Dāwūd al-Qayṣarī, *Sharḥ Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, ed. Ḥasanzādah al-Āmulī (Qom: Bustān-i Kitāb, 1382 HS), 78; Mullā Ṣadrā, *al-Asfār*, 261-262.

active intellect, or the preserved tablet do not pose any problem because these forms are manifestations of divine knowledge.[58] In this case, all ranks that are hierarchically under divine knowledge transform into manifestations of *nafs al-amr*. This comment identifies *nafs al-amr* with divine knowledge and is grounded on the idea that divine knowledge is not identical to essence but is an addition to the latter. Then, again, if *nafs al-amr* is divine knowledge and divine knowledge is subject to *nafs al-amr*, given the correspondence of divine knowledge with *nafs al-amr*, doesn't this also denote its correspondence with itself? In addition, if divine knowledge is the criterion of correctness for the judgment that God exists in *nafs al-amr* or is qualified therein with any faculty, then wouldn't this mean grounding the correctness of something that precedes divine knowledge on divine knowledge? Thinkers such as Bahāʾ al-Dīnzādah and ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-Nābulūsī agree on the core meaning of *nafs al-amr* as *something in itself*; in the face of the abovementioned problems, these philosophers refer to a plane (*ḥaḍrat al-nafs al-amr*) that constitutes the foundation for all levels of existence.[59] In this context, *nafs al-amr* is expanded in such a manner to besiege divine knowledge and to become identical to divine essence; therefore, it is referred to as divine existence. Pursuant to this comment, since all beings, whether they are natural, exemplar or intellectual, exist with this divine existence, the latter deserves to be named *nafs al-amr* more than anything.[60]

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[58] Dāwūd al-Qayṣarī, *Sharḥ Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, 79.

[59] Bahāʾ al-Dīnzādah puts forth several arguments in order to oppose the alternatives to see *nafs al-amr* as a space of mind or a construction; he refers to a permanence and a realization that is the basis for all stages. See Mullā Muḥyī al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Bahāʾ al-Dīn ibn Luṭf Allāh (Bahāʾ al-Dīnzādah), *Risālah mutaʿalliqah bi-ḥaqāʾiq al-ashyāʾ* (Istanbul: Süleymaniye Library, Ragıp Paşa, 1460), 237v. Al-Nābulusī, in turn, refers to *nafs al-amr* as a plane that is the origin of all effects, divine attributes, and name stages. See ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-Nābulūsī, *Iṭlāq al-quyūd fī sharḥ Mirʾāt al-wujūd* (Istanbul: Süleymaniye Library, Yazma Bağışlar, 2961), 16r.

[60] Mullā Ṣadrā, *al-Asfār*, VI, 261-262; Bahāʾ al-Dīnzādah, *Risālah mutaʿalliqah bi-ḥaqāʾiq al-ashyāʾ*, 238r.

Conclusion

The debates on *nafs al-amr* arise from the problem of the external correspondences of predications and mental propositions; these debates lead to a sphere of problems where numerous approaches are put forth and for which there is an agreement on the judgment that trueness "corresponds with reality." *Nafs al-amr* is embodied in the deepening debates about the status of quiddity in itself; accordingly, the identification by al-Ṭūsī of *nafs al-amr* with the active intellect led to a broader discussion about the problem. This move by al-Ṭūsī seems a step back from the Avicennian attitude in favor of the second option. In fact, the Avicennian approach rejected both solely extant ideas and the forms immanent to divine intellect and grounded predicational unity on universal nature. The effort to identify *nafs al-amr* with elements of peripatetic metaphysics/cosmology has caused a reaction among philosophers who use the term for referring to each stage of reality in the sense that "something exists independently of understanding, construction, or assumption." If we don't say *nafs al-amr* is a construction, that is, if we are not talking about considering something independently of understanding, construction or assumption, then the assertion that reality itself is *nafs al-amr* includes an ambiguity that requires clarification. Indeed, the proposition subject to judgment that "the trueness of a proposition is its correspondence with reality" mentions a part of reality; therefore, such a judgment gives the impression of bearing a controversy expressed as the "trueness of the proposition about reality is its correspondence with reality." Apparently, these commentators, most of whom are philosophers from the tradition of religious thinking, were convinced that the comprehension of structure and the functioning principle of factual reality, which is shaped in line with divine knowledge and does not include determinism, allows explaining each particular situation with reference to the mentioned structure and principles. In their eyes, since this order is determined by divine knowledge, it becomes possible to justify trueness and correspondence based on an intellectually monitorable process, even though it comprises unlimited possibilities in proportion to divine power.

Mīr Dāmād constructs *nafs al-amr* as a dimension immanent to the structure of reality; evidently, his approach requires a more detailed analysis and clarification. On the other hand, there is another argument that asserts that beings in spatiotemporal coordinates also exist with dimensional existence. Apparently, such an argument enables us to

position him against supra-realist approaches. In addition, note the close connection between the view that associates *nafs al-amr* with divine existence and the Avicennian approach that calls universal nature "divine existence." Moreover, if we can put forth concrete evidence in the sense that these two, namely, divine existence and universal nature, correspond to the same thing similarly to the dimensional existence to the existent, it would become possible to claim all three views are in the same pot, despite slight differences in details. All the foregoing shows that various approaches that agree on the pivotal meaning of *nafs al-amr* interpret the term in line with their respective metaphysical framework. In principle, however, these approaches can be evaluated under two categories: those that assert *nafs al-amr* is immanent to the structure of external reality and those that explain it with reference to various planes.

We think that a general outlining of a problem map about *nafs al-amr* debates would set the guidance for future studies.

Al-Ṭūsī constructs his reasoning on the basis of judgments that correspond with *nafs al-amr*; his approach reveals the relation between the debates on the problem of *predication*. While they discuss the problem of predication, the various philosophers' emphasis on this issue actually shows this connection.

Another issue that should be addressed as an extension of the predication problem is the status of *nafs al-amr* within the context of the *distinction of truth construction*. Certain existential and even nonexistential qualities, which are not a part of external beings in a mereological sense but are derived of them and are their predicates, are also present in *nafs al-amr*. Consequently, not only entities with physical/real existence but also some constructional/extractional concepts, such as possibility, nonexistence, unity, and multiplicity, are evaluated within the scope of *nafs al-amr*. We also observe that mathematical objects and models in various scientific disciplines are handled in this regard.[61]

Since *nafs al-amr* is treated in the same pattern with the concepts of exactitude, constancy, primordiality, and continuity, it should also be analyzed in connection with the theory of demonstration. Apparently, the mentioned debates have overlooked this aspect of the problem. The analysis of epistemological exactitude and continuity is

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[61]   For a relevant analysis, see Fazlıoğlu, "Hakikat ve İtibar," 1-33.

important to determine how the correspondence with *nafs al-amr* is related to which types of propositions.

The argument that *nafs al-amr* is related to a realm of being that is becoming independent of understanding and is on a plane accompanied by constancy and continuity paves the way for its association with a kind of creation, namely, perpetual creation, which is used in the sense of *prioritization with pure nonexistence beyond temporal and essential nonexistence.*

The attribution of constancy, primordiality, and continuity to what is in *nafs al-amr* brings *Platonic ideas* into the debate. Evidently, in the consideration of each comment about Platonic ideas, it is necessary to answer how they represent the things in *nafs al-amr*. Nevertheless, the effort to identify the essence of something with ideas should engage an explanation of issues, such as correspondence and predication, understanding and knowledge, and continuity and change, within the context of their relation between *nafs al-amr* and the ideas for any approach.

Within the context of *nafs al-amr*, another controversial issue is the essence of the *knowledge of God about the existents*. An effort to position *nafs al-amr* as the active intellect, universal intellect, universal soul, or the world of images brings forward the question of how we will explain the predications as to essence, attributes and the knowledge of God. In addition, its interpretation as divine knowledge attracts arguments that God cannot be the principle or receptacle of multiplicity.

Therefore, *nafs al-amr* incorporates a network of problems that should be analyzed through independent studies in relation to all the foregoing issues and their respective subsets.

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EXPANSION OR CONTRACTION OF THE PROPHETIC EXPERIENCE?
An Analysis of the Prophetic Dream Theory of ʿAbd al-Karīm Surūsh

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Abstract

This paper analyzes the theory that ʿAbd al-Karīm Surūsh proposes through an article series called *The Prophet Muhammad: The Messenger of Prophetic Dreams*, in light of previous approaches about revelation (*waḥy*) with regard to dreams and imagination. For this purpose, the first chapter of this paper centers on the distinction between the word "dream" (*ruʾyā*), as in Surūsh's theory, and traditional approaches to revelation to determine differences in terms of content. The second chapter associates the explanation of revelation with dreams in order to compare alternative "imagination" (خیال، متخیلة) based approaches in Islamic philosophy and Sufism, in turn clarifying how Surūsh distinguishes them and resolves the relevant problematics.

Key Words: Revelation, ʿAbd al-Karīm Surūsh [Abdolkarim Soroush], imagination, prophetic dream

Introduction

ʿAbd al-Karīm Surūsh, a thinker known for his innovative ideas in religious thought, stands out in regard to his approach to revelation. His first views in this respect can be seen in *The Contraction and Expansion of Religious Knowledge*.[1] Presumably, views in this work are molded in parallel with his post as a counselor of culture and education on the Advisory Committee on Cultural Revolution in the wake of Iran's Islamic Revolution back in 1979. Indeed, following the Islamic Revolution in Iran, problems arising from new social and educational practices led Surūsh to reconsider both the constant and changing aspects of religion. Thus, he sought to open the door slightly for change through distinguishing between "religion," which is constant, and "religious understanding," which denotes human understanding of religion. Accordingly, the ultimate meaning of religion is only within the knowledge of Allah, whereas what we understand about religion remains within the realm of knowledge, which in any case includes errors and may evolve depending on historical circumstances. Therefore, the realm of jurisprudent provisions (*sharīʿah*) is contracted (قبض), and it becomes possible to make religious life coexist in a more peaceful manner with the period in which one lives.[2]

Nevertheless, in a later text called *The Expansion of the Prophetic Experience*,[3] Surūsh is no longer content with the abovementioned separation between religion and religious understanding, and feels the need to expand the sphere of change. In this regard, he scrutinizes the phenomenon of "prophecy" that matures in parallel with the evolution of the Prophet Muhammad over the course of history. Accordingly, the

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[1]   ʿAbd al-Karīm Surūsh, *Qabḍ u basṭ-i tiʾūrīk-i sharīʿat: Naẓariyya-i takāmul-i maʿrifat-i dīnī*, 10th ed. (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Şirāṭ, 1387). The book was translated to Turkish and published under the title *Maximum & Minimum Din*, trans. Yasin Demirkıran (Ankara: Fecir, 2002).

[2]   For further information, see Asiye Tığlı, *İran'da Entelektüel Dinî Düşünce Hareketi* (Istanbul: Mana, 2017), 91-105.

[3]   This paper was published as a book with the same name, together with other writings by Surūsh about historicity, pluralism, etc. See *Basṭ-i tajruba-i nabawī*, 5th ed. (Tehran, Muʾassasa-i Farhangī-i Şirāṭ, 2006).
      For an English translation of the work, see Abdulkarim Soroush, *The Expansion of the Prophetic Experience: Essays on Historicity, Contingency and Plurality in Religion,* trans. Nilou Mobasser, ed. Forough Jahanbakhsh (Leiden: Brill, 2009).

prophetic experience contains a divine characteristic, as well as a human feature that evolves gradually. Indeed, the Qurʾān has such a quality that it is molded not only by historical circumstances, but also by the personality, mind, and even joys and sorrows of the Prophet Muhammad.[4] In this sense, the Prophet gradually improved in acknowledging divine messages, and gained more experience and depth in comprehending visible and hidden realms (عالم الغيب) alike. The divine quality of this experience does not necessarily require overlooking human factors therein, or stipulating that all phrasal patterns in its wording have to be divine. In the words of Surūsh, "divine quality of experience does not entail a divine or holy quality for the language conveying this experience."[5] In other words, the Prophet Muhammad is not a "mediator" who merely echoes what he is told as a recorder. In contrast, just as a bee digests pollen from a flower to make honey, the Prophet has internalized divine messages in line with his personal faculties.[6]

In his later article series called *The Prophet Muhammad: The Messenger (Narrator) of Prophetic Dreams*, Surūsh elaborates on his views about the "expansion of the prophetic experience." This time, however, he adopts a different approach as to divine experience and the nature of divine speech. In this recent series of writings,[7] Surūsh indicates that the Qurʾān is actually a crop of holy dreams from the Prophet Muhammad. Accordingly, the Prophet Muhammad was an

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[4] Michel Hoebink, "Kalām-i Muḥammad: Goftehgū bā ʿAbd al-Karīm Surūsh dar bāra-i Qurʾān," in *Kalām-i Muḥammad rūyā-yi Muḥammad* (n.p.: Intishārāt-i Şuqrāṭ, 1397 HS)*,* 14.

[5] Surūsh, "Muḥammad rāwi-yi rūyāhā-yi Rasūlānah (1)" in *Kalām-i Muḥammad rūyā-yi Muḥammad* (n.p.: Intishārāt-i Şuqrāṭ, 1397 HS), 86.

[6] Surūsh likens this situation to the fact that a fruit is named after the tree it grows on. To be a believer of oneness, you do not have to say the fruit is created by Allah, and that it is not a peach tree. Surūsh, "Bashar u Bashīr," in *Kalām-i Muḥammad rūyā-yi Muḥammad* (n.p.: Intishārāt-i Şuqrāṭ, 1397 HS), 25.

[7] This series of articles by Surūsh includes his latest thoughts on revelation. The series was published on his website (http://drsoroush.com/) in Persian between 2014 and 2016. See http://drsoroush.com/fa/category/articles/page/2/, accessed February 28, 2021. In 2019, these articles, including certain additions, were published by "Intishārāt-i Şuqrāṭ" and "Madrasah-i Mawlānā" under the title *Kalām-i Muḥammad rūyā-yi Muḥammad.* (These papers were also translated in Turkish. See Asiye Tığlı, comp. and trans., *Güncel Vahiy Tartışmaları: Nebevî Rüyaların Râvisi Hz. Muhammed* (Istanbul: Mana, 2018).

object of divine revelation (*waḥy*) through dreams, and articulated what he saw in his dreams in sentence patterns within the framework of his culture, language and personality—just like a reporter. Therefore, we need interpretation to comprehend the Qurʾān, since its content consists of dreams. However, the interpretation (تعبیر) herein should not be understood as an explanation of literary methods or concepts (such as allegories, metaphors, representations, or figurative expressions). Indeed, the Prophet did not compile the Qurʾān's verses in a conscious way, making use of such literary arts. On the other hand, these visions presented to him when he was not awake and beyond his will have both divine (objective) and human (subjective) qualities, and are not immune to surrounding circumstances.

This theory, which is the final phase of perspectives by Surūsh on revelation, represents an effort to speak about the language of dream-based revelation. With this theory, he principally addresses those who believe the Qurʾān comes from revelation. Hence, Surūsh says he does not seek to demonstrate the truth of prophethood or the reliability of holy dreams. As will be analyzed in detail below, the objective of his theory is "to open a hitherto closed window towards comprehension of revelation." Thus, he says, he complements all his relevant standpoints until then.[8]

The theory of prophetic dreams by Surūsh has received much criticism since day one. Critiques have vary greatly, including those based on the Qurʾān,[9] as well as through philosophical,[10] historical, and literary[11] perspectives. In this context, the theory of prophetic

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[8]   Surūsh, "Muḥammad rāwi-yi rūyāhā-yi Rasūlānah (1)," 87.

[9]   For an example of this approach, see the following papers: Muḥsin Ārmīn, "Pāsukhī ba Duktur Surūsh," https://www.cgie.org.ir/fa/news/5545, accessed October 17, 2020, and "Naẓariyya-i ruʾyāhā-yi rasūlānah wa masʾala-yi iʿtibār wa maʿnā-yi matn," https://neeloofar.org/1398/04/08/080498-3/, accessed October 17, 2020. ʿAbd al-ʿAlī Bāzargān, "'Hawā' yā 'Hudá' dar kalām-i waḥy." http://bazargan.com/abdolali/soroush.htm, accessed October 17, 2020.

[10] Dabbāgh, Surūsh, "Az Tajruba-i nabawī tā ruʾyā-yi Rasūlānah," *Falsafa-i New,* September 25, 2013; http://new-philosophy.ir/?p=297, accessed October 17, 2020).

[11] Ḥasan Anṣārī, "Naqd-i naẓariyyah-i Duktur Surūsh dar bārah-i waḥy (1-5)," https://ansari.kateban.com/post/2801, accessed October 17, 2020. For a selection of papers translated in Turkish, see Asiye Tığlı, comp. and trans., *Güncel Vahiy Tartışmaları II: Nebevî Rüyaların Ravisi Hz. Muhammed Kitabına Eleştiriler* (Istanbul: Mana, 2018).

dreams—which argues that one should express a "never told," problematic, approximately 1,400-year-old revelation—has become an issue of debate because of this discourse, and has been widely condemned for ignoring the historical context, as well as the literary, miraculous, and inimitable quality of the Qurʾān's language (Arabic). In addition to objections about dreams, Surūsh and his theory were criticized for a lack of clear differentiation between exegesis and interpretation, the absence of a practical example about the methodology of such interpretation, and a lack of solid philosophical or religious grounds. Such criticisms also require an analysis. This paper, however, will essentially dwell upon the concepts of dreams, *mutakhayyilah,* and interpretation, which, in our opinion, have not been duly examined in pertinent criticisms, despite constituting the foundation of Surūsh's theory. Indeed, it seems impossible to conduct the debate on a consistent and accurate basis without clarifying the meanings of these concepts within the context of his theory of prophetic dreams. For this purpose, theory of prophetic dreams shall be put through a brief analysis via its traditional foundations, before certain assessments are carried out within the context of revelation-*mutakhayyilah.* Hence, our objective is to lay down a more solid foundation for discussion by explaining how Surūsh and his theory of dreams are differentiated from earlier views, which problems he seeks to resolve, and whether the theory is consistent in and of itself.

I. The Traditional View of Revelation and the Theory of Prophetic Dreams

A. Revelation not in Dreams, but in the Quality (ماهيّة) of Dreams

The theory of prophetic dreams by Surūsh asserts that the conventional perception of revelation has to change. Therefore, the theory claims to have developed a new perspective for understanding the content of revelation, and to express what is hitherto unsaid about the Qurʾān. Thus, Surūsh does not worry about aligning his views with the traditional lens; instead, he wants the latter to be abolished:

> The envisagement that the Qurʾān's verses were brought down to the heart of Muhammad (pbuh) by an angel and that he said them should change. Instead, it is necessary to adopt the approach that "the Prophet

reported the facts just as if he were a reporter who was present at the scene in person and animated and molded the incidents.[12]

On the other hand, in regard to interpreting prophetic dreams, Surūsh also pays attention to historical circumstances, social structure, and the culture in which the Prophet was raised. Accordingly;

His [the Prophet's] experiences, even at the level of coming-into-being (*takawwun*), incorporate numerous images such as the history and geography of his society or the lifestyle of his tribe, in addition to his personal and mental situations. In brief, Allah neither spoke nor wrote a book. In contrast, it is the historical human who spoke and wrote a book in His place. This, however, happened upon the word of Allah, whereupon divinity almost wrapped Himself in the guise of a human and became a man.[13]

For Surūsh, it is possible to make use of traditional concepts such as disclosure, an example (مثال), united or separated imagination (*khayāl muttaṣil* or *khayāl munfaṣil*), etc. instead of a "prophetic dream." Nevertheless, a "dream" seems more appropriate to him than ambiguous and intimidating metaphysical concepts, since a "dream" renders the truth of prophethood more accessible and more distinct. At first glance, such an approach may seem objectionable to the reliability of revelation. In this sense, Surūsh complains that the concept of a dream is deprived of its earlier value:

Unfortunately, we live in a time where dreams have lost their original importance and value. The word "dream" brings confusing and scattered images to mind, and all dreams are thought to be equivalent … However, a dream, just like a true poem or work of art, exists whereby the unsaid can be stated and the unrepresented can be embodied … Dreams and facts, and sleep and wakefulness, are interrelated. Where the language of wakefulness falls short, dreams come to the rescue to express the unsaid.[14]

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[12] Surūsh, "Muḥammad rāwi-yi rūyāhā-yi Rasūlānah (1)," in *Kalām-i Muḥammad rūyā-yi Muḥammad* (n.p.: Intishārāt-i Ṣuqrāṭ, 1397 HS), 88.

[13] *Ibid.*, 86.

[14] Surūsh, "Muḥammad rāwi-yi rūyāhā-yi Rasūlānah (2): Khāb-i Aḥmad Khāb-i Jumlah Anbiyāst," in *Kalām-i Muḥammad rūyā-yi Muḥammad* (n.p.: Intishārāt-i Ṣuqrāṭ, 1397 HS), 113-114. In this context, Watt indicates that Arabs think dreams are real experiences, unlike our modern and materialist approach. He demonstrates a well-known narrative as evidence of this argument. According to

Surūsh is well aware that "dream" evokes a more complex meaning in the minds of contemporary humans. This is why he refers to the earlier value of dreams as a way to communicate with a hidden realm. According to Surūsh, we also have dreams that can be qualified as "supreme" in addition to complex or ambiguous ones. Hence, the visions and sights of prophets can be likened to "supreme, noble, high" (رفيع) dreams. The differences in the dreams of messengers and the wise should be established in terms of their heavenly faculties.[15]

However, it is impossible to assert what Surūsh means, as "dream" herein is synonymous with the word in light of Arab understanding. He does point out exploration of spiritual truths through dreams with a method similar to Sufism. Nevertheless, the meaning Surūsh attributes to "dream" is not immune to human and social influences, and thus to a modern scientific perspective. Moreover, for Surūsh, any dream—including a prophetic one—has a different space than the state of wakefulness and requires interpretation.[16] As such, the most controversial and distinguishing point of his theory arises from these attributes of revelation in the quality of a dream. By means of these expressions, Surūsh talks about "revelation in the quality of a dream" rather than "revelation in a dream." In other words, this theory differs from classical tradition in the sense that revelation is not received/ heard through dreams, but is seen and watched in dreams, and it is not independent of sociological or psychological factors.

Therefore, Surūsh considers dreams to not be real experiences corresponding to an awakened world at the time of the Prophet, but rather visions of an imaginative language that is not truly dependent

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this narrative, ʿĀḭ_ah, who saw in her dream that they would lose the Battle of Badr, faces a reaction from Abū Jahl: "*O the sons of ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib! Aren't you done with allegations from your men for prophethood now that even your women claim to be prophets?*" This narrative is shown as an example of the difference between the Arab view on dreams and today's common approach. W. Montgomery Watt, *Muhammad's Mecca: History in the Quran* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1988), 61; For the narrative, see Abū Muḥammad Jamāl al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Malik Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah al-nabawiyyah li-Ibn Hishām,* ed. Ṭāhā ʿAbd al-Raʾūf Saʿd (Beirut: Dār al-Jīl, 1992), III, 154; Mustafa Fayda, "Âtike bint Abdülmuttalib," in *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi (DİA),* IV, 73.

15   Surūsh, "Muḥammad rāwi-yi rūyāhā-yi Rasūlānah (2): Khāb-i Aḥmad Khāb-i Jumlah Anbiyāst," 114.

16   *Ibid.*, 105.

on the earthly atmosphere. In his earlier texts, Surūsh insists that Islam is a historical movement, and that revelation is molded within the framework of the Prophet's spiritual and social surroundings. In his latest theory, he maintains that the language of dreams also has a history, similar to wakeful literature.[17] Indeed, for Surūsh, prophetic dreams take form in terms of coherence with the Prophet's heart and mind, namely, his inner and outer world.[18] Nevertheless, these dreams are described in relation to the language of dreams:

> We read the Qurʾān as if we forget it is a book of a dream in the language of a dream, and not a book of wakefulness. For sure, the language of the Qurʾān is customary, human, and sounds sweet to the listener. However, it also contains the language of a dream. A dream, in turn, is always mysterious and misty, even in its most explicit form, and thus requires interpretation…[19]

Hence, Surūsh identifies the nature of revelation with a dream; for him, the purpose becomes to use each of these two concepts in place of one another.[20] In his latest book, Surūsh reminds us gradually more often that a dream incorporates sensual phenomena such as sounds, smells, tastes and touch, in addition to sight.[21] In any case, his view differs from the conventional perspective about revelation, where the Prophet sees Jibrīl in a dream or vision (يقظة) and literally transmits words he hears from the angel.

In fact, given the expressions in the Qurʾān and the Sunnah about the nature of the prophetic experience and the pertinent literature, it is possible to claim that the connection between dreams and revelation is somewhat grounded. As is known, in classical texts, revelation is used in the sense of confidential, private, and serial information or pointing out. Nevertheless, the concept of revelation is also provided with broader meanings such as "a report through a dream or inspiration, and delivering [a message in a way] other than [through]

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[17] Surūsh, "Rūyārū-yi Rūyā (3): dar Bāb-i Naqd-i Ḥasan Anṣārī," in *Kalām-i Muḥammad rūyā-yi Muḥammad* (n.p.: Intishārāt-i Ṣuqrāṭ, 1397 HS), 368.

[18] *Ibid.*, 355.

[19] Surūsh, "Muḥammad rāwi-yi rūyāhā-yi Rasūlānah (1)," 95.

[20] Surūsh clearly indicates that dream means revelation. Surūsh, "Rūyārū-yi Rūyā (2)," in *Kalām-i Muḥammad rūyā-yi Muḥammad* (n.p.: Intishārāt-i Ṣuqrāṭ, 1397 HS), 302.

[21] Surūsh, "Rūyārū-yi Rūyā (3)," 367.

oral expression,"[22] unlike oral communication. "Dream" has often been distinguished from the word *aḥlām*[23] and is considered a form of contact with a hidden realm; in this regard, dreams are seen as worthy of being described as "truthful." In this vein, the word "sleep" (نوم) has also been discussed and shown, like dream, to be one of the paths of revelation (الْوَحْي فِي الْمَنَام). Classical references include various relevant reports, such as the following: revelation began in truthful dreams;[24] true dreams are one of the 46 parts of prophethood;[25] and Abraham intended to sacrifice his son upon having a dream.[26] Then again, the Prophet Muhammad said that divine messages would be over after his demise, whereupon believers would have nothing but truthful dreams as gospel.[27]

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[22] For instance, إلقاء, which is used in the expression "وكلُّ ما ألقيته إلى غيرك يقال," is one of the concepts used in this sense. See Abū l-Faḍl Muḥammad ibn Mukarram ibn ʿAlī Ibn Manẓūr al-Anṣārī, *Lisān al-ʿArab*, XV, 379. Likewise, Rāghib al-Isfahānī (d. the first quarter of Vth/XIth century) mentions the meanings, such as sayings without implications, allegories, implicit statements, or any other sentence. Abū l-Qāsim al-Ḥusayn ibn Muḥammad al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt fī gharīb al-Qurʾān* (Beirut: Maktabat Nizār Muṣṭafá al-Bāz, n.d.), 668.

[23] In light of the expression أضغاث أحلام in the Qurʾān (12:44), this concept is often loaded with negative connotations. For instance, according to *Lisān al-ʿArab*, *ḥulm* is from Satan while *ruʾyā* is from Allah. See Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-ʿArab*, XII, 145. Additionally, see al-Bukhārī, "Kitāb at-Taʿbīr," 3.

[24] The narrative, based on Aisha, reads as follows: "The revelation to the messenger of God began with a faithful dream in his sleep. Whatever he saw in dreams became real like morning light…" al-Bukhārī, "Taʿbīr," 1; Muslim, "Īmān," 252.

[25] Surūsh frequently refers to this narrative. Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-ʿArab*, XII (I-XV), 145; al-Bukhārī, "Taʿbīr," 4; al-Tirmīdhī, "al-Ruʾyā," 1. According to some ḥadīths, it is one of 45, 70 or 40 fascicles. That is, faithful dreams of true believers are also considered part of prophethood.

[26] Q 37:102.

[27] "Revelation is over, what good news is left? They said: 'What is good news?' He replied: 'It is the truthful dream.'" See al-Bukhārī, "al-Taʿbīr," 5. In addition, the following ḥadīth, narrated through Jābir—albeit based on a weaker chain of evidence—is meaningful in this sense: "The most truthful dream is the one you have during the day, for Allah sent revelation to me in daytime" (أصدق الرؤيا ما كان نهارا لأن الله خصني بالوحي نهارا). See Abū l-Faḍl Jalāl al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Abī Bakr al-Suyūṭī, *Al-itqān fī ʿulūm al-Qurʾān*, ed. Markaz al-Dirāsāt al-Qurʾāniyyah (Medinah: Mujammaʿ al-Malik Fahd li-Ṭibāʿat al-Muṣḥaf al-Sharīf, n.d.), I, 148.

The term "through a dream" (إلا وحيا) in the Qurʾān (42:51) is often referred to as the main theme of descriptions and interpretations about revelation through dreams; exegetes and linguists have mostly interpreted the term as "inspiration; delivering which occurs in sleep or dreams, or even is realized by means of admission to one's heart."[28] In other words, the term إلا وحيا is considered an expression for revelation through dreams in classical sources. However, there are also examples of broader senses being attributed to this expression, such as inspiration, instruction, or meaning put in the heart.[29] Moreover, as Izutsu points out, the term إلا وحيا signifies not direct verbal revelation in technical terms, but rather in a sense similar to inspiration, that Allah delivers His will to man in a direct manner without any intermediary (angel).[30]

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[28] For instance, in his *Maʿānī l-Qurʾān*, the early exegete Yaḥyá ibn Ziyād al-Farrāʾ (d. 207/822), interprets the term *illā waḥyⁿ* as "seeing in sleep" (يرى في المنام) and "inspiring." Likewise, in his *tafsīr*, Abū l-Barakāt al-Nasafī (d. 710/1310) mentions the ḥadīth "dreams of prophets are revelation" and indicates that *illā waḥyⁿ* refers to inspiration or a dream. See Abū Zakariyyā Yaḥyá ibn Ziyād al-Farrāʾ al-Daylamī, *Maʿānī l-Qurʾān*, ed. Muḥammad ʿAlī al-Ṣābūnī (Mecca: Jāmiʿat Umm al-Qurā, 1409 AH), VI, 146; Abū l-Barakāt Ḥāfiẓ al-Dīn ʿAbd Allāh ibn Aḥmad al-Nasafī, *Tafsīr al-Nasafī: Madārik al-tanzīl wa-ḥaqāʾiq al-taʾwīl*, ed. Marwān Muḥammad al-Shaʿʿār (Beirut: Dār al-Nafāʾis, 2000), IV, 163.

For similar uses about the relationship between dreams and revelation, see Abū l-Qāsim Maḥmūd ibn ʿUmar ibn Muḥammad al-Zamakhsharī al-Khwārazmī, *al-Kashshāf ʿan ḥaqāiq ghawāmiḍi al-tanzīl wa ʿuyūni l-aqāwīl fī wujūh al-taʾwīl*, ed. ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Mahdī (Beirut: Dār Iḥyāʾ al-Turāth al-ʿArabī, n.d.), IV, 238; Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*, 1141; Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥusayn ibn Masʿūd ibn Muḥammad al-Farrāʾ al-Baghāwī, *Tafsīr al-Baghāwī (Maʿālim al-tanzīl)*, ed. Muḥammad ʿAbd Allāh al-Namr, ʿUthmān Jumʿah Ḍamīriyyah, and Sulaymān Muslim al-Ḥarsh (Riyāḍh: Dār Ṭībah, 1997), VII, 201; Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Qurṭubī, *al-Jāmiʿ li-aḥkām al-Qurʾān*, XVI, 48., Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad ibn Jarīr ibn Yazīd al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-bayān ʿan taʾwīl āy al-Qurʾān*, ed. Aḥmad Muḥammad Shākir (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Risālah, 2000), XXI, 558.

[29] For example, in his comment about verses 7-9 of Sūrah al-Qaṣaṣ, Abū l-Ḥasan ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad ibn Habīb al-Māwardī (d. 450/1058) mentions the narrative where a revelation is sent to the mother of Moses in her dream, and includes the phrase أنه كان رؤيا منام ، حكاه ابن عيسى; al-Māwardī, *Aʿlām al-Nubuwwa*, ed. M. Muʿtaṣimbillāh al-Baghdādī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿArabī, 1987), 42.

[30] Toshihiko Izutsu, *God and Man in the Qurʾān* (Kuala Lumpur: Islamic Book Trust, 2008), 174. The second alternative for the reception of revelation is defined as

On the other hand, the other option, namely, revelation "through sending of a messenger" (أَوْ يُرْسِلَ رَسُولًا), is often considered actually seeing the appearance and hearing the voice of Jibrīl or Rūḥ.[31] This third way of delivering a message, indicated in Sūrat al-Shūrá, corresponds to the most solid way of conveying the Qurʾān. Indeed, the arrival of revelation to a messenger through both hearing and sight constitutes the distinguished quality of the Qurʾān.[32] In this case, the traditional approach states that it is plausible that this form of revelation—which includes both hearing and sight—would occur in a dream. Indeed, an angel could have appeared to the Prophet when he was asleep and made him into a vehicle for verbal communication. According to a narrative (*riwāyah*), while the Prophet Muhammad was asleep, Jibrīl came to him; then, he woke up after the revelation was complete, as if writing were imprinted into his heart.[33]

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being "behind a curtain" (مِن وَرَاءِ حِجَابٍ) and signifies receiving it without any image, and thus by "hearing." For Watt, these three forms of revelation might be the same; nonetheless, he also allows for the classification traditionally adopted by exegetes. See *Muhammad's Mecca,* 63.

[31] al-Isfahānī, *al-Mufradāt,* 1141; al-Farrā, *Maʿānī l-Qurʾān,* IV, 146; al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-bayān,* XXI, 558; Abū ʿAbd Allāh Fakhr al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn ʿUmar ibn Ḥusayn al-Rāzī, *al-Tafsīr al-kabīr,* XXII, 619. Additionally, see other foregoing references.

[32] In this context, in *The Venture of Islam,* Hodgson explains how revelation is realized through hearing and ocular vision, using examples from the Qurʾān. For instance, the Prophet Muhammad receives revelation when he sees a bulky image wherever he looks (Q 53:5-18). Marshall G.S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1974)*,* I (The Classical Age of Islam)*,* I, 161-162. Likewise, Izutsu approves that Muhammad not only heard a revelation, but also saw the person who spoke it. Izutsu, *God and Man in the Qurʾān,* 191.

[33] قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: فجاءني جبريل ، وأنا نائم ، بنمط من ديباج فيه كتاب ، فقال اقرأ ؛ قال: قلت: ما أقرأ ؟ قال: فغتني به حتى ظننت أنه الموت فقرأتها ثم انتهى فانصرف عني وهببت من نومي ...,see; Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah al-nabawiyyah* II, 72; According to another narrative, al-Ḥārith ibn Hishām asked Muḥammad how he received his revelation. The Prophet replied: "Sometimes it comes to me with a sound like a rattle. This is the most intense form of revelation. Once I was relieved of this state, I had already memorized the subsequent one. Sometimes the angel appears in the form of a man and talks to me. In addition, I memorize what he says." See al-Bukhārī, "Badʾ al-waḥy," 2; the same ḥadīth is available in al-Muslim, al-Tirmīdhī, al-Nasāʾī, etc.

After all, the term إلا وحيا in Q 42:51 is presented in classical references as an option that includes dreams; it is seen as a broader manner of reporting which, in the case of Moses, covers his relationship with his mother, bees and angels,[34] or, in the case of Jesus, with his apostles, or even the order given to Moses to cast down his staff.[35] Dreams might well be one of these divine ways of delivering a message, in addition to the technical concept of revelation that is unique to prophets. In this regard, exegetes interpret this last option (أَوْ يُرْسِلَ رَسُولًا) as the way of revelation unique to prophets, and consider it the way the Qurʾān was brought down to earth.[36]

Therefore, traditional texts and reports point out a relationship between prophethood and dreams, but do not use the latter in a broader sense to correspond to revelation. More importantly, this approach does not provide us with any evidence to enable us to consider visions or incidents seen in sleep, as the Qurʾān's verses are more about content. Moreover, in the traditional sense, there is no serious problem in saying that the Qurʾān was completely revealed through a dream. Indeed, even if the Prophet saw Jibrīl in his dreams and heard the Qurʾān's verses from his voice, this fact changes nothing in the content of revelation, for there is a significant difference between revelation through dreams and revelation in the quality of a dream. The aspect that requires interpretation is the dream quality of a revelation in terms of content. Thus, the main discrepancy in theory is illuminated: It is about accepting revelation as a symbolic, misty phenomenon that requires interpretation (تعبير). In other words, neither the Prophet nor his people used the words "dream" and "interpretation" in the sense employed by Surūsh with regard to their relationship with revelation. Hence, the most controversial aspect of

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[34]   Q 28:7-9; Q 16:68; Q 41:12; Q 99:5.

[35]   Q 7:117.

[36]   Even though Q 42:51 is often interpreted by exegetes in this manner, there are some exceptions, and varying comments are also possible. For instance, the early *tafsīr* scholar Abū Jaʿfar al-Naḥḥās (d. 338/950) defines *illā waḥyʸⁿ* as "what is blown into one's heart" (ان ينفث). For al-Naḥḥās, the word *rasūlʸⁿ* in a *yursila rasūlʸⁿ* is "all messengers sent for humanity" (ان يرسل رسولا إلى الناس عامة). See, Abū Jaʿfar Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Ismāʿīl al-Murādī al-Mıṣrī al-Naḥḥās, *Maʿanī al-Qurʾān al-Karīm*, ed. Muḥammad ʿAlī al-Ṣābūnī (Mecca: Jāmiʿah Umm al-Qurá, H. 1409), VI, 327. For alternative interpretations about Q 42:51, see also *Majmaʿ al-Bayān* by Ṭabarsī, *al-Zarīʿa* by Rāghib al-Isfahānī, *al-Hidāyah* by Makkī ibn Abū Ṭālib, and *al-Jāmiʿ li-aḥkām al-Qurʾān* by al-Qurṭubī.

Surūsh's theory arises from the meaning attributed to the concept of "interpretation." In the end, Surūsh adopts a reformist approach that goes beyond providing a long-lost meaning due to the institutionalization of religion over time; accordingly, he suggests that the Qurʾān be reassessed through the language of dreams, and not through the awakened world (i.e. to interpret it).

B. Interpretation (تعبیر): The Translation of Prophetic Dreams (Past) into a Wakened (Contemporary) World

Surūsh does not give a proper definition for "interpretation." Nevertheless, what he means by the word is apparently dissimilar to the symbolic interpretation of, say, the story of Adam and Eve. Alternatively, Surūsh's process of interpretation does not intend to interpret well-known words—such as *balance* (میزان) or *pencil* (قلم)—in a way that is different from the established one, such as "writing and measuring all." Indeed, according to Surūsh, such literary uses—namely figures, metaphors, or allegorical uses—have no place in the language of dreams, because such denominations involve consciousness and mind. However, it is necessary to follow the path of the Prophet Joseph, and to take into account the method of interpretation (تعبیر) instead of referring to the abovementioned explanations and words to better comprehend the Qurʾān's verses.[37] Accordingly, even though the Prophet transmitted into Arabic whatever he saw and heard in his dreams, he must have adopted words from the Qurʾān's verses (such as *mountain, sun, sea*) into his dreams.[38] For Surūsh, this is obvious because something—which is classified as a type of dream—will be expressed in the same manner.[39] Therefore, there is no controversy between the inner experience of a wise person or a prophet, and the expression of revelation in the form of a report. In other words, the Prophet may have indicated the Qurʾān's verses as he heard them in dreams. Surūsh, however, claims that the Prophet can also express some of these images in his own language. However, revelation essentially consists of his visions in dreams.[40]

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[37] Surūsh, "Muḥammad rāwi-yi rūyāhā-yi Rasūlānah (1)," 96.

[38] Surūsh, "Rūyārū-yi ʿrūyā' (3)," 359.

[39] Surūsh, "Rūyārū-yi ʿrūyā' (4): Dar Bāb-i Naqd-i ʿAbd al-Bashīr Fīkrat," in *Kalām-i Muḥammad rūyā-yi Muḥammad* (n.p.: Intishārāt-i Ṣuqrāṭ, 1397 HS), 375.

[40] *Ibid.*, 404. Statements that revelation is not entirely based on observation are seen in his responses to criticisms.

Well then, as the Prophet expresses the visions in his dreams in the form of the Qurʾānic verses, does he perceive them as real experiences corresponding to facts? Or even during or after his reporting of verses, does he give an explanation that might account for interpretation? In addition, according to numerous reports, the Prophet told his companions about his dreams in words different than revelation, and even interpreted them in person.[41] Hence, the Prophet apparently allocated a different place for the Qurʾān's revelation than his dreams in the quality of truthful reports. If so, what is the criterion of distinction between the Qurʾānic verses and other dreams he saw and interpreted in person? Moreover, how should one explain the absence, in the narrations, of any expression by the Prophet Muhammad such as "I was called over in my dream" and then "And the Trumpet will be sounded, when all that are in the heavens and on earth will swoon..." (Q 39:68), or why do we not come across any report of his interpretation of the Qurʾānic verses about doomsday?[42]

Given such questions, Surūsh apparently underlines our capacity to better understand the Qurʾān than its early addressees, thanks to interpretation and by means of contemporary science. Even though Surūsh considers such dreams superior to being awake, he seems to believe they have yet to be interpreted. He even argues that we are to carry out this interpretation today. Surūsh most likely did not overlook the fact that the interpretation—which is nourished by modern approaches (such as the subconscious, personality, surroundings, etc.) and should be realized with the help of contemporary science—is not mentioned in classical references in this sense. Further, Surūsh does not claim that prophets did not interpret the revelation they received. Rather, he says prophets may have erred in the explanations (interpretation) they gave within the circumstances of their time. In

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[41] Such dreams, abundant in chapters by al-Bukhārī and Muslim about "interpretation" and "dreams," often appear in reports about afterlife occurrences or future incidents in real life. One narrative reads as follows: "One night, I saw myself in the house of ʿUqbah ibn Nāfiʿ in my dream. We were served dates of Ibn Tāb. I interpreted *(taʾwīl)* it as the sublimity of the world, a beneficent outcome in the afterlife, and perfection for our religion." See Muslim, "al-Ruʾyā," 18. For similar narratives, see al-Bukhārī, "al-Taʿbīr," 44; Ibn Mājah "al-Ruʾyā," 22 ff.

[42] In this regard, it is important that, based on the abovementioned Qurʾānic verses, Montgomery Watt states that dreams and observations are not expressions related to the way the Qurʾān was revealed. Watt, *Muhammad's Mecca*, 60, 62.

parallel, relevant theories to comprehend revelation incorporate a kind of perfection.[43]

In this respect, Surūsh follows the comments of Ibn al-ʿArabī: Even though a dream is an experience belonging to the world of imagination, the Prophet Abraham tried to directly realize this dream without any interpretation. Indeed, since Abraham's dream could not coincide with the awakened world, it would become clear that he should sacrifice a sheep and not his son. For Surūsh, it is wrong to interpret an image (which occurs in the world of imagination) as if it corresponded to or coincided with reality. Therefore, we need another practice, namely, the science of interpretation, to unearth the will of God.[44] Likewise, Allah revealed to Muhammad that the number of enemy soldiers was smaller it actually seemed. Muhammad followed Abraham's example; he was convinced that the dreams directly coincided with reality, whereupon he reported them to his people as they were. For Surūsh, however, this misinterpretation should be considered holy since it turned out to be psychologically useful in battles. Thus, interpretation might always incorporate a mistake. Nevertheless, a dream is not right or wrong in and of itself.[45]

Surūsh has been subject to criticism about "who is authorized to carry out the most accurate interpretation" given that even prophets can err in comprehending their very own dreams.[46] Even if the need to interpret the Qurʾān is acknowledged, it is still unclear who would do so. For Surūsh, just as in the example of Abraham, anyone who aims to interpret the Qurʾān has to explain the truths therein by adapting them to the realm of observation in compliance with the structure of a dream. Nevertheless, since Surūsh himself "cannot dare to climb such high roofs," it is necessary to ask the gnostics, who are capable of seeing the world of sovereignty and follow esoteric paths, about the meaning of such peculiarities.[47] On another occasion, he claims that most figurative expressions in the Qurʾān can be clarified via a holistic

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[43] Surūsh, "Rūyārū-yi ʿrūyā' (3)," 352.

[44] Surūsh, "Muḥammad rāwi-yi rūyāhā-yi Rasūlānah (1)," 118.

[45] Surūsh, "Muḥammad rāwi-yi rūyāhā-yi Rasūlānah (5): Shabī bar Nishast az Falak Dergodhasht," 306-307.

[46] Ārmīn, "Pāsukhī ba Duktūr Surūsh;" Ārmīn, "Kur'an'ın Rüya Olarak Tasavvuruna Eleştiri," in *Güncel Vahiy Tartışmaları: Nebevî Rüyaların Ravisi Hz. Muḥammed Kitabına Eleştiriler*, comp. and trans. Asiye Tığlı (Istanbul: Mana, 2018), 85.

[47] Surūsh, "Muḥammad rāwi-yi rūyāhā-yi Rasūlānah (2)," 104-105.

interpretation, namely, preserving their apparent meaning and without the need for glossing. In this respect, he criticizes a comment by Ṭabāṭabāʾī about verse 10 of al-Ṣāffāt, as follows:[48]

> If al-Ṭabāṭabāʾī thought that the pursuit of Satan was a dream of the Prophet, then he would have given up this far-fetched exegesis, headed for anthropology and sought out such a meaning. How should we interpret the fact (given cultural and historical conditions in the Hejaz region at the time) that a person sees a meteor chasing Satan in his dream? If we do not follow such an approach and consider the words *meteor* and *Satan* in the language of the awakened world, we cannot help but make a comment that takes us to a situation of deadlock.[49]

The suggestion herein is that the interpreter of a dream does not necessarily have to be a wise religious man; instead, he must be a person with sufficient knowledge in terms of geography, history, anthropology and even dreams. Within the framework of the actual scientific approach, psychiatrists and psychologists should also be included. In this case, the interpretation must be carried out by a wise man who is familiar with the humanities of his time and who shares the "pleasure of this experience"[50] because his interpretation can be valid. Therefore, on the one hand, "the dreams which are superior to wakefulness" should be explained by the wise who are equally "awakened." On the other hand, it is necessary to make use of current scientific developments in light of human aspects of revelation. Accordingly, in his earlier writings, Surūsh often underscores the influence of the Prophet's human aspect on the formation of revelation:

> According to traditional accounts, the Prophet was only an instrument; he merely conveyed a message passed on to him by Jibrīl. In my view, however, the Prophet played a pivotal role in producing the Qurʾān.

> The metaphor of poetry helps me to explain this. Just like a poet, the Prophet felt that he was captured by an external force. However, in fact—or better: at the same time—the Prophet himself is everything:

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48 إِلَّا مَنْ خَطِفَ الْخَطْفَةَ فَأَتْبَعَهُ شِهَابٌ ثَاقِبٌ (Q 37:10); Surūsh indicates that according to al-Ṭabāṭabāʾī, the foregoing verse should be revaluated in light of new scientific data. Surūsh, "Muḥammad rāwi-yi rūyāhā-yi Rasūlānah (1)," 100-101.

49 Surūsh, "Muḥammad rāwi-yi rūyāhā-yi Rasūlānah (1)," 100-101.

50 Ibid.

the creator and the producer. The question of whether inspiration comes from outside or inside is truly not relevant, since at the level of revelation, there is no difference between outside and inside. The inspiration comes from the Self of the Prophet. The Self of every individual is divine, but the Prophet differs from other people in that he has become aware of its divinity. He has actualized his potential. His Self has become one with God…[51]

Another striking point in the citation above is that the Prophet Muhammad felt as if he were seized by an external force, just like the poets of that era, who were inspired by *jinn*. For Surūsh, however, this is not the case, even though the Prophet was not aware, for there was no distinction made between internal and external in this regard. Through the perspective of Surūsh's theory, the Prophet's holy dreams are wrapped up in a form within the framework of his own language, style and knowledge, similar to those of a poet. In addition to the personality of Muhammad, his past, experiences, and even sorrows or joys influence the formation of the Qurʾānic text.[52] As a result, since the truths introduced to Muhammad in a specific dream language will always have a human quality, their interpretation requires a human approach.

Notwithstanding, it is questionable how prophetic dreams—which differ from scientific or philosophical experience—can be explained through sciences such as anthropology and psychology.[53] Likewise, Surūsh sounds paradoxical for he, on the one hand, complains that "unfortunately, we are living in a time when dreams have lost their former importance and value." On the other hand, he proposes benefiting from the humanities for interpreting prophetic dreams. In parallel with his suggestion, it would be necessary to claim that the Prophet and his people were incompetent in interpreting dreams, since they lacked today's humanities such as anthropology. Moreover,

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[51] Hoebink, "The Word of Mohammad: An Interview with Abdulkarim Surūsh," 2007, http://drsoroush.com/en/the-word-of-mohammad/, accessed May 15, 2020; for Persian translation, see Hoebink, "Kalām-i Muḥammad: Goftehgū bā ʿAbd al-Karīm Surūsh dar barah-i Qurʾān," *Kalām-i Muḥammad rūyā-yi Muḥammad,* 15-16.

[52] Hoebink, "Kalām-i Muḥammad," 17.

[53] Surūsh actually indicates that scientific experience and religious experience are different from one another; otherwise, we had to consider both as one. Surūsh, "Rūyārū-yī Rūyā (3)," 379.

according to Surūsh, this long-lasting perception has been overlooked by Islamic scholars throughout history.

Evidently, Qurʾānic verses are meant for believers much more than the transmission of what Muhammad saw in his dreams, and they were understood by addressees as told by the Prophet. The best evidence for this argument is the actual history. Indeed, 23 years of Muhammad's prophetic experience is interwoven with real life. Qurʾānic orders, such as Hegira and war, are literally implemented by believers who never considered them to be misty or in need of interpretation. Beyond his experiences, wise thoughts, and literary joys, the Prophet stands before us as a concrete, historical figure who bore witness by putting his life at stake. In fact, Surūsh is well aware that in the course of history, believers perceived Qurʾānic expressions and accordingly molded their lives in compliance with actual incidents, and without the need for further interpretation. Instead, Surūsh often stresses the influence of historical facts on the Qurʾān's formation during those 23 years, and he keeps including this phenomenon in his theory. Then again, what does Surūsh actually mean by the interpretation of prophetic dreams? At this point, an analysis on the conception of Allah and the external aspect of revelation in the eyes of Surūsh may prove decisive to better scrutinize the problem and determine the points of objection.

C. The External (Objective) Quality of Revelation

Sunnī scholars, as well as other Muslim scholars (e.g. Shīʿī and Wahhābī), agree that Allah's call to the Prophet Muhammad during his retreat in the cave of Hirāʾ was an external (objective; through external power, without the Prophet's own involvement) intervention, and that the words of the Qurʾān were conveyed to Muhammad as both "wording and meaning" by means of Jibrīl, the angel of revelation.[54] The transmission of revelation through a messenger angel upon divine order, and not through a jinn or Satan, is often emphasized by tradition as the most important feature that ensures the divine, binding nature of revelation. Accordingly, notable scholars such as Goldziher, Hodgson and Izutsu point out the realization of revelation without Muhammad's intervention, and share some expressions approving this

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[54] Surūsh determined two essential features of the classical approach to revelation: (1) Revelation was conveyed to the Prophet within word patterns; (2) The difference between who brings down verses and who receives them. See Surūsh, "Muḥammad rāwi-yi rūyāhā-yi Rasūlānah (7): Zabān-i Rūyā Zabān-i Ḥāl," 255.

argument. For instance, Goldziher indicated that the Prophet Muhammad was addressed in an order-like manner through vision, waking dreams, or hallucinations. According to Goldziher, the Prophet was asked to inform the public about the outcomes of good and devil deeds, and to behave as a compulsory guide.[55]

Izutsu, in turn, claims that the Qurʾānic dialogue took place in a vertical and unilateral manner; he thus confirms the external nature of revelation in a different way. In other words, as A moves actively as the speaker, some of his/her requests and thoughts are conveyed to B through certain signs. Therefore, this is unilateral communication, and B is only a receiver. An explicit introduction to B and outsiders can never comprehend the content of this perfect communication. For Izutsu, this feature also distinguishes the Qurʾān from bilateral inspiration between *jinn* and *seer*.[56] At this stage, Izutsu makes an important inference; B (Jibrīl), who reports what A (Allah) says, must have memorized the speech of A, word by word. In other words, memorization is necessary for the reporter so that what is said can be literally conveyed to C.[57] In such cases, the Prophet Muhammad inevitably displayed the same attention while receiving and transmitting the revelation.

The factors that led Izutsu to this conviction include classical religious texts and, at least, the apparent meaning of the Qurʾānic verses, for they lay a solid foundation for such a perception. The following Qurʾānic verses are put forth as evidence of this objective aspect of revelation: "O Prophet! Convey what has been revealed to you from your Lord!" (Q 5:62); "And so We have sent to you a revelation by Our command. You did not know of 'this' Book and faith 'before'" (Q 42:52); "And indeed, you 'O Prophet' are receiving the Qurʾān from the One 'Who is' All-Wise, All-Knowing" (Q 27:6). Then, again, according to the Qurʾān, the prophet has no esoteric knowledge

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[55] Ignaz Goldziher, *Introduction to Islamic Theology and Law*, trans. Andras and Ruth Hamori (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1910), 7.

[56] Izutsu, *God and Man in the Qurʾān*, 174-175.

[57] Izutsu explains this situation as follows: "The Divine words, as an objective *sprachwerk* in this sense, are called the *Qurʾān*." More precisely, divine words are presented to the Prophet in a relationship of receiver and transmitter. In such a case, the Qurʾān becomes a divine word, literally conveyed as objective *sprachwerk*. For the concept used by Izutsu, see his *God and Man in the Qurʾān*, 192-195.

beyond what is revealed to him since he is only human (Q 6:50). Since the prophet is obliged to obey Allah (Q 41:6), he cannot speak on his own behalf (Q 53:4), so much so that he is told to say "…nor do I know what will happen to me or you… I am only sent with a clear warning" (Q 46:9). He is condemned for tending to come to terms with polytheists due to a lack of progress in Mecca (Q 17:73) or for facing Umm Maktūm, who interrupts his speech with prominent figures of the city (Q 80:2). While he receives the revelation, he is put to a heavy test to perfectly listen to what is said, and not to hurry in receiving and conveying the revelation (Q 20:114).

As a matter of fact, Surūsh has been subjected to severe criticism whereby it is impossible to overlook such explicit verses in the Qurʾān.[58] For Surūsh, however, the apparent aspect of the Qurʾān can only represent an image of its spiritual meaning. These verses are a manifestation of truth. The truth, however, inevitably adopts a human aspect once it comes down to earth into the patterns of language. According to Surūsh, we cannot expect Allah to be subjected to environmental factors. This is plausible only for the Prophet, who is human. As indicated in the Qurʾān, it is impossible to claim that Allah undergoes emotional ups and downs, or becomes seized by conditions such as happiness or anger.[59] At this stage, Surūsh argues that we should inquire about the "role of the Prophet in receiving revelation."[60] Is the Prophet merely a receiver? For Surūsh, this question has to be answered, whereupon we should not dwell on the apparent aspect of the Qurʾānic verses. As a result, the Qurʾānic verses become wrapped up in the "Muhammadan" image in this regard, and are formed pursuant to his personality. Their ascription to Allah is figurative.[61] For instance, when a piece of iron melts and glows, it is called fire; likewise, thanks to his affinity with Allah, the words of the Prophet are a quality of divine speech.[62]

However, again, how can we explain the emphasis on the external aspect of revelation received by the Prophet, as shown in the foregoing

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[58] For relevant criticisms particularly by Muḥsin Ārmīn and ʿAbd al-ʿAlī Bāzargān, see footnotes 9, 10, and 11.

[59] Surūsh, "Rūyārū-yi 'rūyā' (2) Dar Bāb-i Naqd-i Muḥsin Kadīwar," in *Kalām-i Muḥammad rūyā-yi Muḥammad* (n.p.: Intishārāt-i Ṣuqrāṭ, 1397 HS), 314.

[60] *Ibid.*, 328.

[61] *Ibid.*, 314.

[62] Surūsh, "Rūyārū-yi 'rūyā' (4)," 413.

examples? Does this show that the Prophet also has such a perception? Apparently, the concept of a "dream" in the theory of Surūsh—which he calls "the last closed window of revelation"—makes sense in this way. Indeed, even though the Prophet is the one who makes Jibrīl send down revelation or visualizes it,[63] he sees all these in dreams, where his senses are off. In other words, no matter how "Muhammadan" the Qurʾān is, this is not a conscious product by the Prophet. In a dream, passive imagination is at work—not the mind or contemplation. This is why the Qurʾān has an untidy style of verse and a semiotic language.[64]

Changes in the Prophet's physical condition or even ecstasy (ناهوشیاری) during the reception of revelation are often referred to in narratives; this is what Surūsh calls a dream.[65] However, his surprise and fear in the beginning of prophethood,[66] his wakefulness (یقظة) while receiving the revelation, extreme sweating, and the call for a cover on himself are all considered by tradition to result from external intervention and the struggle to comprehend the Qurʾān's verses, which do not belong him. In the words of Hodgson, these narratives tell us that revelation is not under the control of the Prophet Muhammad.[67]

Surūsh agrees with this view. For him, this suggestion is not contradictory to the theory of prophetic dreams. Dreams, by nature, require such ecstasy. Therefore, by defending the dreamlike quality of revelation, Surūsh does not object to the apparent discourse of the Qurʾān. For him, this does not mean that the Prophet Muhammad did not intervene in revelation, or that the text points out a "metaphysics of separation [*firāq*]" between Allah and His messenger. In fact, pursuant to the metaphysics of union [*wiṣāl*] adopted by Surūsh, the Prophet is submerged in truth through his enchanted self. Therefore, his words cannot differ from the speech of Allah.[68]

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[63] Surūsh, "Rūyārū-yi 'rūyā' (2)," 318.

[64] Surūsh, "Rūyārū-yi 'rūyā' (3), 353; "Rūyārū-yi 'rūyā' (1): Dar Bāb-i Khwānish Ḥussayn Wāli," in *Kalām-i Muḥammad rūyā-yi Muḥammad* (n.p.: Intishārāt-i Ṣuqrāṭ, 1397 HS), 300.

[65] Surūsh, "Rūyārū-yi 'rūyā' (2): Dar Bāb-i Naqd-i Hussayn Wali," 298.

[66] Muslim "al-Īmān," 255-257.

[67] Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam*, I, 162.

[68] Surūsh, "Muḥammad Rāvi-yi Rūyāhā-yi Rasūlanah (7): Zabān-i Ruʾyā Zabān-i Ḥāl," 256.

II. The Theory of Prophetic Dreams within the Context of the Conception of Allah and Imagination

A. The Conception of Allah and the Theory of Prophetic Dreams

In the beginning of his writings called *The Prophet Muhammad: The Narrator of Prophetic Dreams*, Surūsh opts for a phenomenological approach to explain revelation without allowing for an ontological conception or an epistemological content. Nevertheless, it seems fair to claim that, in contrast with his allegedly phenomenological method, Surūsh approaches the Qurʾān with the premise of resolving problematic issues, rather than understanding metaphorical expressions therein.[69] In addition, as a believer of revelation, Surūsh not only adopts an epistemic premise, but also acts in an ontology close to Sufism. As a result, it was revelation that complied with the Prophet, not the Prophet who complied with revelation. For "Allah created the Prophet Muhammad, and Muammad compiled the Qurʾān."[70]

For Surūsh, the main mistake of his critique is "to separate the Creator (*al-Khāliq*) from the creature (*makhlūq*)." In his eyes, the common mind—which cannot comprehend this oneness—distinguishes the creature from its Creator, places Allah on a throne like a sovereign sultan, and believes that Allah sends His messages to His subjects from far away.[71] At this stage, Surūsh adopts the "metaphysics of union" and not the "metaphysics of separation." For him, Allah speaks not from outside, but from inside the Prophet:[72] "Since Allah is in the Prophet and the Prophet is in Allah, whatever Muhammad thinks

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[69] Even though Surūsh claims to have adopted a phenomenological approach to reach this conclusion, this method actually does not enable us to analyze how the experience of revelation, which is unknown to us, evolves, but rather to focus only on what it yields. This finding has been indicated in previous criticisms as well. See Muḥammad Manṣūr Hāshimī, "Naqd-i Ruʾyā-yi Rasūlānah," http://mansurhashemi.com/2020/10/17/نقد-رؤیای-رسولانه, accessed December 20, 2020. The Iranian critic Ḥasan Anṣārī makes a similar point, stating that in any case, we are facing the literary criticism of the available word or text. See Anṣārī, "Naqd-i Naẓariyyah-i Duktur Surūsh dar bārah-i waḥy (1-5)."

[70] Surūsh, "Muḥammad rāwi-yi rūyāhā-yi Rasūlānah (6): Zi Hay Marātib-i Khāb-i ki bah zi Bidārīst," 211-212.

[71] Surūsh, "Muḥammad rāwi-yi rūyāhā-yi Rasūlānah (2)," 109.

[72] Surūsh, "Muḥammad rāwi-yi rūyāhā-yi Rasūlānah (7)," 250.

is the same with the divine. According to followers of oneness, Allah is present in the universe in a ceaseless and uncovered manner; likewise, the realm of possibilities in the universe is not distinct from Him."[73]

Foregoing expressions show how Surūsh utilizes the concept of Oneness of Being (*waḥdat al-wujūd*); however, he does not entirely adopt the Sufi conception of prophethood. During his attempts to demonstrate the manifestation of revelation through the language of dreams, his approach also allows for philosophy and modern sciences in interpretation. Yet given that he is also a Neo-Muʿtazilite, it is fair to claim that Surūsh[74] rather lays a foundation on a philosophical *ʿirfān*. In his last book, he places particular importance on benefiting from metaphysics as rarely as possible, and explicitly declares his attitude, saying, "We are living in a post-Kantian era."[75] In the same book, he acknowledges the traditional origins of his theory of prophetic dreams, but also indicates that "I cannot disregard truths I attained in modern world."[76] This is because Surūsh wants to derive reasonable aspects of both approaches, and tries to establish a dialogue between past and present.[77]

Therefore, according to Surūsh, incidents such as al-Isrá and al-Miʿrāj,[78] angels worshipping Adam,[79] or, more strikingly, eight angels carrying the throne of Allah (heavens) on their shoulders,[80] can be explained through nothing but dreams. Likewise, stories similar to the

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[73] Surūsh, "Muḥammad rāwi-yi rūyāhā-yi Rasūlānah (2)," 110; "… He (the Prophet) is the message. He is the prophet not because he receives the message (payāmgīr) (from Allah), but because he is full of the message (payāmbar)…"; "Muḥammad rāwi-yi rūyāhā-yi Rasūlānah (7)," 249.

[74] Surūsh, "Neo-Muʿtazilī Hastam: Goftegū bā Duktur ʿAbd al-Karīm Surūsh," Interview by: Matīn Ghaffaryān, 1387 HS, http://www.drsoroush.com/Persian/Interviews/P-INT-13870200-NoMotazeli.html, accessed November 24, 2020; Mohammed Hashas, "Abdolkarim Soroush: The Neo-Muʿtazilite that Buries Classical Islamic Political Theology in Defense of Religion Democracy and Pluralism," *Studia Islamica* 109 (2014), 147-173.

[75] Surūsh, "Rūyārū-yi 'rūyā' (3)," 344.

[76] *Ibid.*, 394.

[77] *Ibid.*

[78] See the Qurʾān chapters 17, 18, and 53.

[79] Q 2:34.

[80] Q 69:16.

example of "the table descending from the sky to the Apostles" (Q 5:112-120) or verses about doomsday scenes, should be considered as dreamscapes within this framework.[81] Moreover, bidding and forbidding (*amr u nahy*) are also seen in dreams.[82] Nevertheless, provisions of Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*) are not heavenly. Since they do not belong to the realm of mysteries, they cannot be considered religious experiences. Indeed, they already exist in society. Such Qurʾānic verses are results of the mind of the Prophet. Since they are reinterpretations and implementations already present in society, we do not have to repeat them. These non-profound Qurʾānic expressions can be considered superficial dreams.[83] After all, the Qurʾān has only one language. In addition, this is the language of dreams.[84]

Therefore, Jibrīl (Rūḥ) is not an external being, but an image seen in dreams, even though the traditional approach to revelation considers this character to be an intermediary between Allah and His subject, and as a messenger of divine speech told to the Prophet after preserving it from satanic intervention. According to Surūsh, the verse in Sūrah al-Faṭir, namely, "All praise is for Allah, the Originator of the heavens and the earth, Who made angels as His messengers with two, three or four wings…" (Q 35:1) should not be considered even metaphorical, let alone the conception of angels as being ontological in the common mind. Indeed, Jibrīl should be accepted as a divine sight seen by the Prophet in his dreams. Similarly, an angel or angels, which write down human deeds (Q, 82:10-11), blow the trumpet,

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81   A question that springs to mind in this case is the presence of these anecdotes in the Old and New Testaments. However, Surūsh tries to explain this fact by indicating that the dreams of Muhammad include experiences of former prophets as well. In other words, "The dream of the Prophet Muhammad becomes the dream of all prophets." For sure, since this argument is merely for apparent consistency and has no evidential value, we will not dwell upon it.

82   According to Surūsh, we should read the Qurʾān from two angles: one includes elements of invisible realms such as angels, *jinn*, the heavens, doomsday, etc., whereas the other incorporates problems of real life with all its order and inhibitions. In regard to the visible, the explanations are highly consistent with the real world, whereupon the state of a dream is overlooked. In the eyes of Surūsh, ascription of this aspect to the entire Qurʾān, as did earlier exegetes, would mean converging descriptive language into a sharʿī language. Surūsh, "Muḥammad rāwi-yi rūyāhā-yi Rasūlānah (2)," 108-109.

83   Surūsh, "Rūyārū-yi 'rūyā' (3)," 381.

84   Surūsh, "Muḥammad rāwi-yi rūyāhā-yi Rasūlānah (2)," 109.

recite the name of Allah day and night, settle in seven heavens (Q, 82:11; 3:11; 2:102) etc. are not intermediaries that drive a wedge between creature and Creator, but are rather images seen in dreams. According to Surūsh, once the distinction between Creator and creature is eliminated, the distance between the two will disappear, and the language of the Qur'ān will attain a rational explanation that coincides with dreams. Hence, Surūsh claims a close relationship between the imagination-based language of revelation and the conception of Allah. Once the conception of Allah is accurately placed, we can better understand and explain the nature of language of the Qur'ān.

B. The Theory of Prophetic Dreams with Regard to the Faculty of Imagination

For Surūsh, the theory of prophetic dreams is based on the evidence that the language of revelation originates from imagination (خيالين).[85] Ḥashwiyya and Ḥanbaliyya aside, all Muslim philosophers, including al-Fārābī, Ibn Sīnā, Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī, and Shīrāzī, agree that the occurrence of revelation to the Prophet is connected with imagination. According to Surūsh, "Even if there is a Jibrīl, [he] has also become an image in the imagination of the Prophet…"[86] There is a parallelism between the efforts of Surūsh to explain the imaginative language of the Qur'ān through images in a dream, and how Islamic scholars explain prophethood via the faculty of imagination. Both explanations are based on the argument that the common mind—which cannot comprehend beyond the senses and imagination toward abstract thinking—needs to ascribe an image to both God and angels to define them.

In the eyes of Surūsh, whoever understands the language of the Qur'ān as if it coincided with facts, and distinguishes Creator from creature, represents the ordinary mentality, which is incapable of comprehending the oneness in being. Hence, Surūsh's thinking seems very close to Islamic philosophers, who underline religion's need for an imaginative language due to its all-pervasive universal message.

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[85]   *Ibid.*, 109.

[86]   Surūsh, "Ṭūṭī ve Zanbūr," in *Kalām-i Muḥammad rūyā-yi Muḥammad* (n.p.: Intishārāt-i Ṣuqrāṭ, 1397 HS), 64. For another reference to al-Fārābī, see "Rūyārū-yi 'rūyā' (2)," 321.

Surūsh even claims that Arabs do not understand everything the Prophet says.

> Conceptions (*taṣawwurāt*) that the Prophet utilized were understandable for the public. The Prophet also incorporated the assents (*taṣdīqāt*), which constitute the heart of this new call. Inevitably, the entirety of these assents was not comprehensible. Future generations had to understand and steep themselves in some of these assents.[87]

Surūsh then quotes Iranian Shīʿī scholar al-Fayḍ al-Kāshānī (d. 1090/1679), who says, "Allah revealed the Sūrat al-Ikhlāṣ and the verses at the beginning of the Sūrat al-Ḥadīd, which state that He is the Apparent and the Unapparent, for He knew people with a deeper understanding would eventually come along." According to Surūsh, the first addressees could only comprehend the apparent meaning of these verses. It is improbable that the simple and ordinary Arabs some 1,400 years ago could exceed superficial meaning and explore the deeper one. Indeed, to explain the conceptual meaning of these verses, years after the revelation, it has become necessary to learn from sages like Mullā Ṣadrā.[88]

Given such similar statements, Surūsh and Muslim philosophers apparently agree that only ordinary minds consider the imaginative language of the Qurʾān as if it directly coincided with the facts. For instance, Ibn Rushd indicates that Allah grants ordinary minds the ease of understanding, through examples and similes, the deep truths they cannot comprehend due to the inability to attain absolute demonstrations. The esoteric aspect of these examples, which, on the surface, address the public, can only be known by profound persons.[89] Accordingly, those who cannot attain the level of scholars or wise persons (الخواص) should be addressed through imagination. The Prophet said that on one occasion, when a black concubine said "Allah is in the skies," Allah told her owner "to free her, for she is a believer."[90]

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[87]   Surūsh, "Rūyārū-yi 'ruyā' (3)," 351.

[88]   *Ibid.*

[89]   Ibn Rushd [as Ibn Rüşd], *Faslu'l-Makāl: Felsefe-Din İlişkisi*, trans. Bekir Karlığa (Istanbul: İşaret, 1992), 92.

[90]   *Ibid.*, 94. The hadith is narrated as follows: "In the renowned authentic 'Hadith on Concubine,' the concubine asks: 'Where is Allah? (أَيْنَ اللَّهُ) He is in the heavens' (فِى السَّمَاء). Then, Rasūl Allāh asks: 'Who am I?' (مَنْ أَنَا) The concubine replied: 'You are

In fact, the woman was excused, for she had yet to attain the level of abstract thinking necessary. Therefore, those unable to comprehend the allegorical interpretation [*taʾwīl*] of the Qurʾān's verses might perceive Allah in an anthropomorphic manner; this is not a huge problem. Indeed, religion uses an imaginative language because it addresses the masses.[91]

A similar classification applies to the residents of the Virtuous City of al-Fārābī. The people of the Virtuous City are categorized as elites (those with reasoning) and commoners (those with imagination) pursuant to their capacity to comprehend theoretical knowledge (reasoning) to lead them to happiness. Indeed, not everyone can know on his/her own what to do to attain true happiness. They need an instructor or a guide.[92] This is where the Prophet's function becomes meaningful; most people [*ʿawām*] are incapable of reasoning about principles of apparent thinking, or reaching conceptual thinking from the particular to the universal. Consequently, due to their nature or habits, they lack the privilege of theoretical thinking and comprehend the principles behind the apparent to lead them to true happiness. Therefore, these principles should be indicated to them through imaginative language.[93] This duty, in favor of the masses, is carried out by prophets, who are equipped with an extraordinary capacity of imagination. As a result, according to Muslim philosophers, the power

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Rasūl of Allah.' (أَنْتَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ) Thereupon, the Prophet said: أَعْتِقْهَا فَإِنَّهَا مُؤْمِنَةٌ 'Let her free for she is a believer.'" For this hadith, see also Muslim, *al-Ṣaḥīḥ*, I, 381; Mālik ibn Anas (d. 179/795), *al-Muwaṭṭāʾ*, ed. Muḥammad Muṣṭafá al-Aʿẓamī (Abu Dhabi: Muʾassasah Zāyid ibn Sulṭān Āl-i Nahyān, 1425/2004), V, 1129-1130.

91   According to Ibn Rushd (Averroes), sharia addresses three types of people: The first class consists of people of rhetoric (اهل الخطاب). They cannot carry out allegorical interpretation [*taʾwīl*] like wise men about evidential truths. The second group are people of *taʾwīl* based on dialectics. This class is inclined towards dialectical thinking and is more likely to be convinced through discussion. The true experts of *taʾwīl* [*burhāniyyūn*] are those with a nature suitable for wisdom and philosophy. Since the first group lacks the capacity for allegorical interpretation, one should not share evidential knowledge with them, Ibn Rushd, *Faṣlu'l-Makāl*, 103-107.

92   Al-Fārābī, Abū Naṣr (d. 339/950), *Kitāb al-siyāsah al-madaniyyah al-muqallab bi-mabādiʾ al-mawjūdāt*, ed. Fawzī M. Najjār (Beirut: Dār al-Mashriq, 1993), 78.

93   Al-Fārābī (as Fârâbî), Kitābü'l-Mille: Din Üzerine, trans. Yaşar Aydınlı (Istanbul: Litera, 2019), 108-109. Al-Fārābī, *al-Siyāsah al-madaniyyah*. 73-74.

of imagination plays an important role to provide divine knowledge with practical value and to make it functional.

"Divine scenes" are another similarity between Surūsh, who insists on the dream-based language of revelation, and the theory of prophethood by Islamic scholars. For instance, al-Fārābī explains prophethood in regard to dreams, like Surūsh. In *al-Madīnah al-fāḍilah*, al-Fārābī establishes a significant connection between dreams and prophethood. According to him, prophethood incorporates two different aspects. In the first aspect, the truth, which emanates from active intellect (*ʿaql al-faʿʿāl*) to imagination, might be a hidden report about particular incidents of the past, present or future. Such reports are among truths that originate from practical reasons and not theoretical ones; consequently, because of their particular features, they might be manifested as they are, or even through the imitation of other sensitive phenomena. According to al-Fārābī, truthful dreams arise from such particulars, provided by the active intellect for imagination in sleep. However, in case the active intellect carries out an emanation about the universal—in other words, the intelligible (*al-maʿqūlāt*)—thence emerge divine things and prophecy (prophetic reports as to the metaphysical realm). For sure, their reflection will become actual once again through their imitations, in line with imagination, thanks to their universal character. More importantly, the power of imagination is often activated in sleep. In turn, most of those seen during sleep are about particulars. On the other hand, the emanation of the active intellect to the power of imagination while wake is mostly about the intelligible, and can be attained by very few.[94] In other words, a human being, who is at the utmost level of perfection thanks to intelligible and imaginative faculties, can convey reports (*nubuwwah*) about divine things thanks to the intelligible thoughts he receives from the active intellect while awake.[95] True "vision" becomes real only when the imagined thing(s) is/are collected in the power of common sense, and is/are transformed into an image/images. Thus, a person experiences images as if he actually sees them.[96] In other words, whatever emanates from the active intellect to the power of imagination becomes a vision seen by the person just before him/her.

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[94] Al-Fārābī, *Ārāʾ ahl al-madīnah al-fāḍilah ve muḍāddātuhā*, ed. ʿAlī Bū Mulhim (Beirut: Dār wa-Maktabat al-Hilāl, 1995), 107-108.

[95] *Ibid.*, 121.

[96] *Ibid.*, 109.

Consequently, in the explanations by both al-Fārābī and Surūsh about prophethood, the truth is manifested in the form of contemplated divine visions in terms of content. These visions may become more qualified depending on a person's intellectual and inner purification-based level. There is, however, a slight difference: In the theory of al-Fārābī, divine scenes of intelligible quality are expressed with the word "vision," whereas information about news of the past, present and future is included among dreams everyone can have. Therefore, unlike Surūsh, al-Fārābī indicates that the truths, which emanate in the imaginative power of prophets, take place mostly while they are awake. Being subjected to revelation during a state of reverie is considered superior in the traditional approach as well. Indeed, a prophet, as a kind of superman, can eliminate the effects of senses even when awake.

On the other hand, for Surūsh, even though sublime dreams of messengers and the wise are "superior to being awake,"[97] they take place, in terms of content, in sleep, similar to anyone's experiences. This is why Surūsh points out the narratives about the Prophet's ecstasy during revelation, and considers it strong evidence for prophetic dreams. Indeed, the Prophet Muhammad did not deliberately make up the anecdotes in the Qurʾān.[98] At this stage, Surūsh refers to Egyptian thinker Amīn al-Khūlī and Muḥammad Aḥmad Khalaf Allāh, since they claim the Qurʾānic anecdotes do not have to abide by history and facts:

> It is worth noting that the Prophet told these anecdotes after he regained consciousness. Therefore, we cannot say he deliberately made his point through anecdotes. He merely told what he saw [*ruʾyah*]. This does not reduce the factual and exploratory aspect of revelation (شناختاری و کاشفیت وحی).[99]

Another similarity between Islamic scholars and Surūsh is that the prophets used their own words while telling their visions to the public.

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[97] Surūsh, "Muḥammad rāwi-yi rūyāhā-yi Rasūlānah (1)," 98.

[98] Surūsh, "Rūyārū-yi 'rūyā' (1)," 300.

[99] *Ibid.*, 300. Elsewhere, Surūsh says that while the Prophet was experiencing the revelation, the content of unveiling and creation became intertwined. He explains this fact through the analogy of a sculptor employed by philosophers. A sculptor creates a beautiful sculpture using a rock. You may either say the sculptor just carves off the excessive parts in the rock and sets it free, or he attentively carves the rock to create work of art. Likewise, both the Prophet's God and his religion are both his unveilings and creations of his mind and dream. See *ibid.*, 333.

According to Surūsh, the divine nature of an experience does not necessarily entail divine language. Therefore, these major truths, born out of the inner spring of the Prophet, are introduced to the latter with the specific language of dreams, whereupon he relates what he has seen to those around him.[100]

Al-Fārābī also thinks that prophets have an extraordinary power of imagination, which they use to express divine truths to their addressees (in line with the intellectual capacity of the latter) through imitative phrases, allegories or similes.[101] According to both approaches, the foundation of the Qurʾānic sentences is carried out by the Prophet himself. Hence, since prophethood is understood not as a miraculous and external intervention, but in a cause-effect relationship, the wording of revelation is elucidated in a parallel manner with this. Unlike the classical approach, the prophet is no longer a mere receiver; a prophet plays an active role in forming revelations and carries out the wording of the truth, without the need for a miraculous external intervention. Moreover, the essential definitive feature of a prophet for al-Fārābī is that he conveys to citizens what they should know[102] through a symbolic language they can understand, and establishes laws to lead them to happiness. Thus, various representations of truth become possible in different communities.[103] Consequently, the arrival of revelation by way of imagination points out the imaginative, the particular, the localness, and therefore something with a certain limit and image. After all, the religion, or *millah* in the words of al-Fārābī, is equipped with a definition with regard to ordinary man, who appreciates and determines the complex of faiths and deeds pursuant to actual circumstances.[104]

Muslim philosophers, however, do not mention the interpretation of "dreams" in any manner when they highlight the power of imagination as a faculty necessary for explaining universal truths to the

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[100] Surūsh, "Muḥammad rāwi-yi rūyāhā-yi Rasūlānah (2)," 105-106.

[101] Al-Fārābī, *al-Madīnah al-fāḍilah*, 110.

[102] For the First Cause and its attributes, see things other than matter and their respective attributes, divine substances, etc., see al-Fārābī, *Kitâbü'l-Mille: Din Üzerine,* 88.

[103] Ibid.*,* 108-109; Al-Fārābī, *Taḥṣīl al-saʿādah*, ed. ʿAlī Bū Mulhim (Beirut: Dār wa-Maktabat al-Hilāl, 1995), 52-53; al-Fārābī, *al-Madīnah al-fāḍilah*, 107-108.

[104] Al-Fārābī, *Kitâbü'l-Mille: Din Üzerine*, 9.

masses. The only interpretation—if any—applies to truthful dreams that arise from the particulars provided by the active intellect for the power of imagination in sleep. Images—which prophets equip with divine emanation thanks to their faculty of imagination—do not require interpretation; moreover, they should remain as they are so they can be useful to the public. In the end, philosophers do not need to interpret representations used in the language of religion to attain the truth. They are already elite persons who have reached the level of acquired intellect (*al-ʿaql al-mustafād*) and come together with the active intellect, which is the origin of truth. Pursuant to this perspective, clearly no one but them can know what the Qurʾān truly means, and what Ibn Rushd calls the esoteric meaning behind the exoteric, in light of the truth they attain. Indeed, according to Islamic scholars, prophets first comprehend the universal truth in their mind and then present it in the form of images and verbal expressions of the sensual world, thanks to their strong faculty of imagination.[105]

The problem of interpretation, introduced by Surūsh as a resolution of the accurate comprehension of the Qurʾān, also becomes a point of differentiation in his approach to imagination. The interpretation in Surūsh is different from the theory of allegorical interpretation (*taʾwil*) by Ibn Rushd or imitative phrases, allegories, and similes indicated by al-Fārābī. According to Surūsh, the language of dreams does not allow for figurative expressions, allegories, or literary metaphors. This is why the Qurʾānic language, which is symbolic and misty even in its most explicit state, requires not *tafsīr* or *taʾwīl*, but interpretation.[106] Hence, as the Prophet tells the public about his divine visions, he relates them

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[105] In the end, Ibn Rushd, al-Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā agree that since the religion addresses all of society, it needs a language understandable to everyone, namely, a representative and figurative narrative expression. Prophets are capable of comprehending intellectual knowledge; moreover, they have the (imaginative) ability of relating such sublime truths to people by means of representation. Nevertheless, Ibn Sīnā also allows for "verbal revelation," or more precisely, the representation of truth with words in representative expression. See, Abû ʿAlī Ḥusayn ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAlī Ibn Sīnā, *Tisʿ rasāʾil fī l-ḥikmah wa-l-ṭabīʿiyyāt.* 2nd ed. (Cairo: Dār al-ʿArab, n.d.), 66; Fazlur Rahman says that Ibn Sīnā, unlike al-Fārābī, considers seeing the appearance and hearing the voice of an angel as an intellectual phenomenon, which does not harm the objective solidity of the message. See Fazlur Rahman, *The Prophecy in Islam: Philosophy and Orthodoxy* (London: G. Allen and Unwin, 1958), 38-39.

[106] Surūsh, "Muḥammad rāwi-yi rūyāhā-yi Rasūlānah" (1), 95.

without opting for methods such as metaphors. The Prophet tells of whatever he sees, and even tastes and hears in his dreams with passive imagination[107] in the quality of a reporter. This is why Surūsh describes the Prophet as a "messenger" (*rāwī*).

Accordingly, Surūsh is convinced that prophetic dreams reflect the Prophet's personal circumstances, knowledge, and limited imagination. In other words, the Qurʾān includes a narrative version of truths that are presented to Muhammad in his dreams within the framework of his religious experience and sphere. In his article, "The Expansion of the Prophetic Experience," Surūsh refers to the verse "My Lord! Increase me in knowledge,"[108] and defends Muhammad, who improved day by day and became a better prophet. Surūsh even claims that the content of revelation evolved in parallel with the Prophet's improvement in terms of the prophetic experience.[109] Experience inevitably entails maturation and perfection. Hence, mistakes and fallacies are inevitable on the way to perfection.

In the eyes of philosophers, religion is a manifestation of not the truth conceived of by prophets via the active intellect, but of their expressions, depending on the level and circumstances of nations. In the end, however, both perspectives agree that religion is a varying reflection of absolute truth depending on time. At this stage, Surūsh emphasizes perfection, claiming that religion can only survive if it abides by gradual maturation and improvement. Moreover, not only the material and social aspects, but also the spiritual side of religion, such as the "ascension and experience of the Prophet," are open to enrichment and perfection. Such enrichment will be provided by the wise person, who experiences the pleasure tasted by the Prophet.[110] Indeed, all unveilings (*kashf*) are incomplete. This is where Surūsh differs from other gnostic philosophers. For Surūsh, even prophets cannot carry out a complete exploration:

> In regard to the expression of ultimateness, the gnostic says that the Prophet of Islam has attained the highest level of exploration and conquered all horizons of possible faculties. Muhammad is the last prophet, for he has not left anywhere to conquer to others…However,

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[107] Surūsh, "Rūyārū-yi 'rūyā' (3)," 367.

[108] Q 20:114.

[109] Surūsh, *Basṭ-i Tajruba-i Nabawī*, 10.

[110] *Ibid.*, 17.

I am not convinced that the experience of unveiling is complete and over. Indeed, this unveiling is not consistent with the Prophet's limited knowledge. In fact, all divine unveilings are incomplete. For sure, it is hard to compare these deficiencies, and we cannot easily claim whether there is any unveiling better than that of the Last Prophet … This experience, unveiling or dreams are so diverse, roundabout, and intertwined that it is hard to say if one is superior to other. In this regard, we may talk about [matters] with relatively weaker or stronger ones, but no exact completeness can be in question…[111]

In another, later article, Surūsh says that the theory of prophetic dreams does not include "any content related to the Five Divine Presences [*al-ḥaḍarāt al-ilāhiyyah al-khams*] or their epistemology" and separates his views from this perspective. Nevertheless, he clearly benefits from mystic tradition if needed. For instance, in his article "Obvious Contrasts," Surūsh indicates that the text of the Qurʾān reflects an atmosphere beyond nature, and shows this feature as evidence of it being a dream. Accordingly, the lack of causality, the coexistence of conflicting facts, and differences in the concept of time (in words of Ibn al-ʿArabī, "*jāmiʿ al-aḍḍād*" in the Qurʾān are manifestations of the realm of dreams and imagination.[112] These features, highlighted by Surūsh, are also observed in explanations by earlier Islamic scholars about imagination, including Ibn al-ʿArabī on imaginative faculty. However, these features do not correspond to the same meaning in Surūsh with regard to Islamic philosophers or the Sufi conception of revelation.

For example, in the philosophy of Ibn al-ʿArabī, imagination (خيال)[113] has ontological value as well as epistemological value. In other

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[111] Surūsh, "Rūyārū-yi 'rūyā' (1)," 287-288.

[112] Surūsh, "Muḥammad rāwi-yi rūyāhā-yi Rasūlānah (3): Maqrāḍ-i Tīz-i Tanāquḍ," 129-130.

[113] For Ibn al-ʿArabī, since imagination (خيال) is created in such a way as to be accepted in its aspect as *jāmiʿ al-aḍḍād*, it is the closest faculty to comprehending Allah. It is also called *barzakh*, for it is between matter and the metaphysical (the apparent-esoteric), soul and body, divine and inferior. Therefore, the faculty of imagination enables man to talk about Allah in a representative way. In other words, it enables likening Allah to His creations through His attributes and vice versa, thus speaking about Him. Moreover, according to Ibn al-ʿArabī, no existence other than Allah truly exists; anything other than Allah is mere "fantasy" or "shadow." Hence, this real universe also requires interpretation. Indeed, all of humanity is asleep in this

words, a dream is an element of not only thought, but also a realm outside man. Since imagination reflects pure meanings in an imaginative manner by means of images, it has an important function in the process of revelation and inspiration. Surūsh presumably agrees with this. However, according to Ibn al-ʿArabī, in addition to their capacity to include contrasts, dreams gain a clearer meaning in regard to the seat of messengers. For the Prophet, we can talk about neither mediation nor ambiguity as related to the content of revelation. There is a significant difference between the Qurʾānic verses having an apparent meaning and the specific language of dreams, unlike the language of the awakened world. More importantly, according to Ibn al-ʿArabī, the angel of revelation is embodied ceaselessly in a psychological dream; in other words, through dreams independent of humans. More precisely, Jibrīl (a) is not an image that comes to mind in the imagination of the Prophet, but an ontological being that may be manifested as a human, and is even sometimes observable by others.[114]

The state of quiescence, also stressed by Surūsh, is defined by Ibn al-ʿArabī as the transition from the visible world to the world of imagination (*barzakh*), which is the most perfect place, and where the origin of all is located.[115] According to Ibn al-ʿArabī, Allah created the states of quiescence and reverie to make man comprehend certain things. Nevertheless, what ordinary people can only see in their sleep can be seen and conceived of by prophets and Islamic saints in reveries (يقظة).[116] In case the revelation arrives in one's sleep, it becomes a dream; if it happens in a reverie, just like when Jibrīl appeared in human form, it becomes imagination. Then, the angel of revelation appears to him and makes him hear its words.[117]

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universe, and will wake up only once dead. In this regard, *barzakh* is the realm where the cosmos comes into the stage of existence. Imagination in the absolute sense (or distinguished/ontological fantasy) is the first level of divine appearance. Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥyī al-Dīn Muḥammad Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyyah*, ed. Aḥmad Shams al-Dīn (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah, 1999), III, 275-276; Ibn al-ʿArabī, *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, gloss. ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Kāshānī (Cairo: Dār Āfāq li-l-Nashr wa-l-Tawzīʿ, 2016), 99-101; William C. Chittick *The Sufi Path of Knowledge* (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1989), 180-182.

[114] Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Futūḥāt,* III, 445, 467, 468.

[115] *Ibid.*, 275.

[116] Ibid.*, IV, 5-6.

[117] Ibn al-ʿArabī, *Fuṣūṣ,* 99-100.

As emphasized by Ibn al-ʿArabī, receiving the revelation in a state of reverie is the distinguishing feature of the seat of the Prophet in both the traditional approach and Islamic philosophy. Prominent figures of Islamic thought, including al-Fārābī—probably the closest thinker to Surūsh in this regard—agree that prophets, like superhumans, can relieve their faculty of imagination from the effects of the senses, even when they are awake. Ibn Sīnā indicates that a prophet knows everything as if it were ever present in himself, even without the need to communicate with the active intellect.[118] Hence, traditional Islamic philosophy asserts that the Prophet Muhammad is the perfect human being. For Surūsh, the spiritual experience of even the Prophet is open to improvement.

Consequently, within boundaries of this paper, Islamic thought traditionally acknowledges dreams and thus imagination as a source of obtaining hidden knowledge; in any case, the capacity of prophethood and one's seat as a guide have always been granted a privileged level superior to ordinary humans. Indeed, ordinary people lack the required depth in the sense explained by philosophers and Sufis; as a result, they cannot comprehend the truth as necessary. This fact also clarifies the need for guidance formulated through sharīʿah. In this regard, traditional Islamic thought considers imagination a highly functional and valuable faculty because it enables introducing the necessary and practically applicable laws of Islam to lead people to salvation.

For Surūsh, however, the "true objective of Shāriʿ is to constrain fiqh and spread morals,"[119] even though he acknowledges spiritual experience in the form of exploration as a common ground among the gnostics and prophets. In this case, the only outstanding difference of prophets is that, having stuck to their religious experience and "ascended to miʿrāj" for guiding the public,[120] they come back.

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[118] According to Ibn Sīnā, this state of material intellect should be called "Holy Intellect" عقلا قدسيا or "sacred spirit" الروح القدسية for it is a kind of "dispositional intellect." Such knowledge may also overflow as "heard speech" in addition to all examples perceived or seen through the senses pursuant to the faculty of imagination. Ibn Sīnā, *al-Nafs min Kitāb al-shifāʾ*, ed. Ḥasan Ḥusayn-zādah al-Āmulī (Qom: Maktabat al-Iʿlām al-Islāmī, 1417 AH), 338-339.

[119] Surūsh, "Muḥammad rāwi-yi rūyāhā-yi Rasūlānah (4)," 185.

[120] To put forth his view, Surūsh cites the following phrase, which Muhammad Iqbal quotes from ʿAbd al Quddūs Gāngahī: "The Prophet ascended to *miʿrāj* and came

Therefore, neither a religious experience nor seeing an angel is sufficient to make someone a prophet.[121] When we reason as Surūsh does, however, it is difficult to give a contemporary explanation for the return of prophets to the public in material or spiritual terms.

Conclusion and Evaluation

Suggesting that the Prophet Muhammad "heard the Qurʾān's verses in a dream," Surūsh objects to the classical approach on revelation. Essentially, he lays a foundation for the possibility of change and positions himself closer to alternative perspectives about the revelation. As of the 1979 Iranian Revolution, Surūsh began to question practical problems caused by new rules put into effect by sharīʿah; accordingly, he tried to instill some dynamism in the religious sphere. Therefore, his arrival at the point of "theory of prophetic dreams" is not independent of his earlier views, and perfection, in parallel with change, constitutes the focus of all his theories.

Change and related perfection can only be in question in the human realm; therefore, it should be the Prophet, and not Allah, who speaks in the Qurʾān. Once the Qurʾān is provided with human quality in terms of its image, any mistakes therein become understandable. Surūsh asks the following question: How can we get involved in the modern world if neither justice nor freedom is considered among the principles of *fiqh*?[122] For him, if we ascribe to God some facts that contradict contemporary science and universal values, a more serious problem will follow. Therefore, the issue is not only whether Islamic jurisprudence is in line with universal human rights, justice or freedom. Surūsh also touches upon expressions of faith in the Qurʾān, such as the anthropomorphic presentation of Allah, His sending angelic envoys to humans as the sultan of the heavens, scenes of doomsday, etc.

In brief, the theory of prophetic dreams developed by Surūsh seeks to clarify certain matters, including the conceptions of Allah, heaven and hell, the world of sovereignty, the afterlife, doomsday, and miraculous anecdotes, because these problems are hard to explain in the modern world, despite their relative reasonability in the world of

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back; if I were him, I would have never come back down." Surūsh, *Basṭ-i Tajruba-i Nabawī*, 6.

[121] Surūsh, *Basṭ-i Tajruba-i Nabawī*, 6-7.

[122] Surūsh, "Rūyārū-yi ʿrūyā' (1)," 293.

the imagination of the past. Indeed, if it is understood that the Qurʾān's verses are heard in dreams, controversial questions—such as whether Adam's descendants are born out of incestual relationships, whether this contradicts the theory of perfection, how clay became flesh, the number of wings of angels, etc.—will become pointless, since it will become clear that such anecdotes only apply in the world of imagination.[123] Anything that happens in the realm of imagination or dreams does not have to comply with reason (the realm of the awakened). We need to seek help from the sciences, which is the language of this world, to adapt them to reason (interpret).[124]

Therefore, interpretation in Surūsh's thinking means explaining the Qurʾān's verses, seen in prophetic dreams, in a manner consistent with the language of the awakened world, or more precisely, the rules of this world. Hence, science is the language of the realm of the awakened, whereas dreams are the language of the world of sovereignty. Revelation, as a phenomenon in the quality of a dream, signifies that Qurʾānic texts, which are a product of this experience, have language and imaginative content different from real life. As a result, it is no longer necessary to construe Qurʾānic verses with regard to real life without interpretation. In addition, in employing the concept of a "dream," Surūsh brings prophethood closer to the human experience, and explains the revelation in a more natural, rational manner. Moreover, such an explanation will bring a definitive end to debates about the "word of God."

Surūsh uses the word "dream" instead of a mythological, representative, or metaphorical explanation about Qurʾānic language; in this way, he also wants to stress that the Prophet was not awake when he received the revelation. More precisely, the Prophet was right in his claims, and was in a passive position when he received the revelation. In other words, he had no conscious intervention in the

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[123] Surūsh, "Muḥammad rāwi-yi rūyāhā-yi Rasūlānah (7)," 243.

[124] In this regard, Surūsh gives the metaphor of rain as example. When we say, "it is Allah who makes it rain" and attribute the action directly to Allah, we use a symbolic language far from the causalities of real life (the language of dreams). Likewise, it is possible to explain the phenomenon of revelation as if it were the speech of Allah in the language of dreams. Nevertheless, in the real world, we have to explain all divine deeds in a natural manner, namely through causes, for the language of the awakened world is the natural sciences, which explain how Allah creates in nature. Surūsh, *Kalām-i Muḥammad,* 54, 266, 379.

process of revelation. That is, the Prophet did have a role in receiving the revelation, but did not carry it out deliberately. The Prophet received the revelation not in a reverie, but in a dream; this is important to show his unconsciousness. Therefore, despite contrary allegations by Muslim philosophers, the Prophet did not have the mission of reducing the revelatory truths—which had an image in his powerful imagination—to the inferior public understanding. Instead, the Prophet received such truths and explained them to the public as he believed and understood them. In his articles, Surūsh insists that his aim is not to claim that Qurʾānic anecdotes have a symbolic or allegorical language. Unlike Yaḥyá al-Suhrawardī, Surūsh does not see the Prophet as a man of letters who refers to figurative speech or metaphors. Muhammad was a prophet, and truths were shown to him in dreams, which are superior to being awake.[125]

Apparently, as a thinker of the post-Kantian world, Surūsh is convinced that both classical and alternative approaches to revelation bring different problems. Even if we are to reject the classical perspective on revelation and prefer imagination-based explanations of Islamic scholars, we still have to acknowledge a metaphysical background that is no longer applicable in terms of contemporary philosophy. In addition, since it is impossible to see the Prophet as a man of literary skills (with active imagination), dreams become the most rational way to attain hidden, invisible knowledge. This approach enables the comfort of understanding and leads to a collective solution to various problems, including scientific contradictions and surrealistic depictions, provisions belying human rights or the conception of Allah.

In this regard, the theory of dreams by Surūsh can be compared with methods employed to seek scientific explanations for miracles, or to eliminate contradictions between science and religion or reason and revelation. Indeed, these efforts try to introduce revelation, which does not seem rational today, to coincide with the rules of the real world. Surūsh, in turn, tries to realize such rationalization through an external approach and as a whole. Accordingly, he identifies the experience of revelation with dreams and its correspondence in the real world.[126] For

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[125] Surūsh, "Muḥammad rāwi-yi rūyāhā-yi Rasūlānah (1)," 98.

[126] The nature of revelation is no different than something similar to a dream, and so is its language. Surūsh, "Rūyārū-yi 'rūyā' (2)," 321.

him, any expression contrary to the rules of the real world (causality) and reason cannot belong to this world.

Interestingly, Surūsh, on the one hand, distinguishes between the realms of sleep (vision, religion, theology) and being wake (reason, science, philosophy), while on the other hand, he tries to put his theory of dreams to their service. In other words, he seeks a way of bringing together these two completely separate realms by means of "interpretation." Moreover, he proposes realizing interpretation with the help of science, which should be accepted as the language of this world. In this case, is it not paradoxical to explain the realms of dreams and being awake through one another after declaring they are two separate realms? Indeed, is not the imaginative language of religion considered necessary for, as philosophers claim, these two realms cannot be reduced to one another?

In addition, if we explain incidents in a metaphorical narrative as a manifestation of the world of sovereignty in the world of wakefulness, does this mean that the true message is missing? Indeed, the representative language, used in areas such as metaphysics—which is beyond ordinary human understanding—has to be a sign of a picture of truth that can never be entirely revealed. This may be likened to literary genres called fables. Thanks to this method, concrete language is employed to tell children (the public) about abstract values that they cannot easily comprehend. In this regard, any argument that these stories occur and end in a dream on the grounds that no such thing happens in the real world will be equivalent to a discussion on whether animals actually speak. Accordingly, in their explanation of the language of revelation through the faculty of imagination, Islamic scholars never thought it was necessary to interpret these expressions, even though they believe in an esoteric truth hidden behind them. According to them, the symbolic language of religion is a necessity for society to abide by the rules.

On the other hand, if interpretation is to be carried out with the help of sciences such as anthropology or psychology, how can we assure the authority of the Qurʾān? Once handed over to science, how can the influential aspect and sanction of the power of religion survive? On the other hand, any allegation about possible mistakes by the Prophet in interpretation means that an interpretation, which makes use of contemporary sciences, may be more accurate. Moreover, any actual interpretation will have no final meaning as long as human progress continues. Well then, how can we talk about the consistency of a

religion or a religion without constant aspects? In other words, if the Prophet can err even in issues about faith, what can the religion, which is to be reinterpreted, offer us today?

Another reasonable criticism of Surūsh is the lack of a system or integrity in which he presents his views. Regardless of their acknowledgment, the relationship between revelation and dreams throughout Islamic philosophy and Sufism is located in a meaningful position within their respective structural integrity. For instance, explanations by Islamic scholars about imagination are in parallel with their knowledge of their lifetime, coincide with their ontological and epistemological conceptions, and are well placed within the hierarchical structure of the universe. Surūsh, however, does not appropriately define dreams or imagination as necessary, even though he claims to adopt a phenomenological method before introducing his explanations; nor does he clarify the ontological or epistemological grounds of his theory.

Nevertheless, the theory of prophetic dreams, presented by Surūsh to solve the problems expressed and experienced within the framework of the Qurʾān, is worth studying for the challenges it points out, particularly with regard to the traditional approach to revelation, rather than his suggestions. Having been interested in the matter of revelation and suggested unusual theological opinions in this regard, Surūsh makes a significant contribution to the contemporary Muslim world and particularly Iran. However, while seeking solutions to the problems pointed out, Surūsh makes us doubt how faithful he is to the Qurʾān's right to express its own truth. For sure, it is open to discussion as to what extent the conceptions of revelation throughout the history of Islam reflect the genuine truth of the Qurʾān. For the Qurʾān, which is nothing but a text available to us, cannot disclose itself; it always has to be subjected to exegesis, allegorical interpretations, or the interpretations of some people. Nevertheless, this fact should not give us the right to read independently of the Qurʾān, and the hitherto relevant literature should be, I guess, a common ground where we will agree at a minimum level.

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DISCOURSE STRATEGIES AND NARRATIVE REPETITION IN THE QURʾĀN: A SPECIAL REFERENCE TO *AL-SHUʿARĀʾ*

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Abstract

This paper attempts to explain some discursive strategies in relation to the cyclic structure of narratives in the Qurʾānic context of Sūrat "al-Shuʿarāʾ." To that end, the paper works on three essential interrelated aspects of study. First, it detects the cyclic structure that interconnects the seven prophets' narratives within the Sūrah. Second, it investigates the cross-Sūrah interconnections by examining the (re)occurrence of each prophet's narrative in the preceding and following sūrahs. Third, it discusses how such coherent interrelationships among the relevant sūrahs can reveal certain discourse strategies such as narrative extension, intention, expansion, juxtaposition, and inversion among these sūrahs. Another, yet interrelated, aspect of the study is to explain the "Us/Them" distinction counted in the Qurʾānic narratives involved, and to show how such dichotomy is realized through the use of referential and predicational strategies. The study adopts and adapts Reisigl and Wodak's strategies to address this aspect. Within this analytical approach, the narratives are examined on the basis of two strategies; namely, "despatialization" (actionyms, perceptionyms, anthroponyms, and metaphors of spatiality) and "collectivization"

(pronouns and possessive determiners). The analysis of data reveals some striking findings that can be summarized in two major points: first, each of the narrative's topoi in the social actors representation evinces the dominance of predicational strategies; second, the Qurʾānic discourse is bias-free and is, thereby, drastically distinguished from other types of discourse such as political discourse.

Key Words: the Qurʾān, prophets, narratives, topoi, discourse strategies.

1. Introduction

The text of the Holy Qurʾān has a complicated structure in terms of form and content. A glance over the content of Qurʾān calls reader's attention to its thematic and stylistic repetitions. These repetitions that occur on all levels (semantic, syntactic, graphologic, narrative, rhetorical, etc.) are supposed to cement the verses and *sūrahs* to one another; however, they do at times add to the text semantic and thematic tensions. They rupture the text and, thereby, confuse the reader. This feature renders the text nonlinear so that, literally speaking, it sounds fragmented.

The nonlinearity and fragmentation have resulted in the emergence of a huge body of exegeses, trying to clarify Qurʾānic text semantically, thematically, narratologically, and syntactically. For instance, al-Qushayrī responds to the changing style and content of the Qurʾān by shifting "back and forth between expository prose, rhymed prose, metaphors, and poetry." (Sands 2017, xvii). Rashīd al-Dīn Maybudī's exegesis, the longest Sunnī commentary in Persian language, attends to lexicography, the derivation of words, Arabic grammar, Qurʾān recitation, biographies, Ḥadīth, the principles of jurisprudence, the science of the legal rulings, the science of transactions and interactions, and the science of bestowal (Chittick 2015, ix-x). Another mostly referred to exegesis is *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* written by Jalāl al-Dīn al-Maḥallī and Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī. Bin Talal, in his introduction, contends the primary and overall goal of *Tafsīr* is "only to clarify the immediate sense of the Qurʾānic text, thereby facilitating the reading of the Qurʾān." (Bin Talal 2008, xi). In contrast to *al-Jalālayn* whose writers try to "remove any obstacles to understanding any word or sense in the holy text" (Bin Talal 2008, xi), al-Tustarī's *Tafsīr al-Qurʾān al-aẓīm* has an "allusive, elliptical, and even obscure style." (Keeler

2011, xxvii). The difference lies in their approaches. *Al-Jalālayn* tries to make the holy text understandable at least literally; al-Tustarī's *Tafsīr*, however, attempts to convey spiritual guidance and illumination. The other two exegeses are *Tafsīr Namūnah* and *Tafsīr al-Mīzān* that provide detailed interpretations of the Qurʾānic text with an emphasis on its semantic and thereby thematic significance.

The study of the organic unity of the Qurʾān arises out of the analysis of textual relations in the Qurʾān which marks the intersecting point between Tafsīr and linguistics. The approach of Muslim scholars in this sense can be divided into two main categories: those who insist on the inimitability of the Qurʾān and the authenticity of its text and order. Scholars such as Muṣṭafá Ṣādiq al-Rāfiʿī (1995) and Muḥammad Rajab al-Bayyūmī (2000) base the unity of the Qurʾān, despite its variety of topics and their thematic irrelevance, on its unifying mission to convey the preaching of Islam to all mankind, its physical and spiritual unity expressed via rhythms and rhymes that dominate each particular sūrah.

The other category of Muslim scholars focuses on individual sūrahs; they argue the various topics and themes within a single sūrah serve the central idea around which that particular sūrah revolves. Among these, one can refer to Sayyid Quṭb (1967), Muḥammad ʿAbd Allāh Dirāz (2000), and Neal Robinson (1986, 1996). Salwa M. S. El-Awa is another scholar who attends to the issue of coherence and relevance in the Qurʾān, focusing only on the "inter-verse level that is between verses of each *sūra*" (original emphasis; 2006: 11). Amin Ahsan Islahi seeks to establish a theory that covers both inter-verse level and cross-sūrah level throughout the Holy Qurʾān; his *Tadabbur-i Qurʾān* divides the whole Qurʾān in seven groups named *ʿamūd* (central theme). Each section revolves around a specific theme. This renders his theory solely thematic; it does not cover the linguistic or narrative strategies used in the Qurʾān (Rauf 2009, 213).

Although these interpretations pay attention to the narratives which are embedded in Qurʾān's text, they approach these narratives as mere stories that are brought for advice and admonishment of people. The cross-*sūrah* interrelationships between the stories and their contribution to the structure of the *sūrah,* wherein they appear, are not worked on. The present study attempts to fill in the gap, showing how the apparent fragmentations that the narratives bring to the text add to it thematic and stylistic significance.

An obvious feature of the Qurʾānic narratives is their heavy reliance on Us/Them distinction. The occurrence of this dichotomy in political discourse renders it highly biased. Analyzing such a distinction through referential and predicational strategies deployed in the Qurʾānic text would achieve two points simultaneously: first, the distinction between religious and political discourse is highlighted; second, the inter- as well as intra-*sūrah* connections are laid bare.

The present study analyzes discoursal features of the Qurʾānic text and its narrative structure with a special reference to the 26th *sūrah* of the Holy Qurʾān, "al-Shuʿarāʾ." This *sūrah* has been selected because, in comparison to other *sūrah*s, it contains almost all of the main narratives (seven stories) that recur every now and then throughout the Qurʾān. After "al-Baqarah," this *sūrah* stands as the second for its number of verses (227 verses or *āyah*s). This article approaches the *sūrah*'s text from two perspectives: its proximization discourse and its narratological dimension. It argues that "al-Shuʿarāʾ" has a cyclic narrative structure which interlinks the beginning of the *sūrah* to its concluding part. The article detects a circular narrative structure that not only keeps "al-Shuʿarāʾ" running on, but also all the other *sūrah*s that cohere with it through allusion, repetition, symmetry, or rhetorical structure. This circularity is shown to be kept on through Us/Them dichotomy of the narratives.

2. Literature Review

"Al-Shuʿarāʾ" is the second long *sūrah* by verse. *Tafsīr al-mīzān* takes the whole *sūrah* as consolation for the prophet in knowing that other prophets were worse off in their missions (Ṭabāṭabāʾī, 1997, XV, 248-249). Exegetes are all of the view that "Al-Shuʿarāʾ" is a Meccan *sūrah* except for its last four verses which have been revealed to the prophet in Medina (Makārim Shirāzī 2008, XV/203). Moreover, due to its denouncement of poets or "Shuʿarāʾ," after which the whole *sūrah* has been named, this *sūrah* has been referred to by many exegetes for proving that the Qurʾān is far from being *a poetic work and the prophet is not a poet* (Q 26: 224).

"Al-Shuʿarāʾ" contains seven main stories of the previous prophets who were rejected by their people. Almost all Qurʾān scholars have attempted an interpretive account of these stories in the *sūrah*. They have not paid attention to the structure of each one of the narratives and how they are interlinked to one another in the body of the *sūrah,* as well as, in cross-*sūrah* relations. The present study tries to find out

a narrative structure in "al-Shuʿarāʾ." It analyzes the narratives and their structures from a narratological perspective. In Snævarr's words, "[s]tory is *what* is being recounted, independent of the medium used. Narrative is the *way* the story is told" (Snævarr 2010, 168). Polkinghorne contends the concept of a storyis prototypical in the sense that it

> [i]dentifies a protagonist and, a predicament, attempts to resolve the predicament, then the outcomes of such attempts, the reactions of the protagonist to the situation, and the causal relationship among each of the elements inthe story. (Polkinghorne 1988, 112)

Similarly, Snævarr emphasizes the causal connection between the events and situations, "If there are no causal connections between them, then we have only a chronicle of non-related events, not a real story, no unity." (Snævarr 2010, 172).

The other point highlighted by Snævarr about a story is "logical preconditions for actions, not only causes" (Snævarr 2010, 173). By this, he means the actors in a story should have reasons for acting. Thus, Snævarr's definition of a narrative well applies to the way the Qurʾānic stories are structured; he writes,

> [w]e can safely say that N is a narrative if it is a full-fledged, non-schematic 'told' (in the wide sense) representation of events, which form a whole, in part owing to causal connections between the events in the story, which N relates and N is told by an explicit or implicit narrator to a likewise explicit or implicit narratee. (Snævarr 2010, 174)

He further explicates any "told" representation of events can be taken as a narrative if and only if it has a "storied structure;" and by "storied structure," he means it has a given beginning, middle, and end, and it forms a unified whole. (Snævarr 2010, 174-175)

On the significance of narratives, one can refer to Danto for whom narratives are means for explanation and description. He further accentuates the relevance of the narrative to the intentions of the storyteller (Danto 1985, 132). The explanatory and descriptive mission of narratives reveals the storyteller's intention and interests, and simultaneously accounts for inclusion of some details and exclusion of some others. He writes, "any narrative is a structure imposed upon events, grouping some of them together with others, and ruling some out as lacking relevance." (Danto 1985, 132). Envisaged as such, the stories in the Qurʾān are explanatory and descriptive narratives, since

they all have a unified "storied structure;" their narrator is God and the people are the narratees. The stories bear God's intentions which get revealed in the *sūrah*, wherein they occur.

A glance at the stories that the Qurʾān narrates reveals not only do they develop out of Us/Them distinction, but for their affective purpose they depend on this dichotomy in which God stands as "We" or "I" and the people to whom a prophet is sent represent "They." This dichotomy has been widely utilized in political discourse and renders it highly prejudiced. Theorizing Us/Them dichotomy entails clarification of two main points: group, and the related referential and predicational strategies. The notion of group has been worked on by advocators of referential strategies. Originally, group-living was based on survival strategy (Schaller and Neuberg 2008, 403). Banding together resulted in boundaries between groups (Lovaglia, Houser, and Barron 2002). While the intra-group relations were mostly cooperative, inter-group relations were competitive and conflictual over the limited resources. Gradually, group-living came to rely on the categorization of the social world into "us" versus "them." (Kurzban, Toobyand, and Cosmides 2001, 15387). This dichotomy led to binary conceptualizations like self/other, friend/foe, familiar/alien (van der Dennen 1999; Chilton 2004).

In Schaller and Neuberg's observation, what promotes avoidance is not mere categorization of an individual as an out-group; it requires "the activation of some sort of negative stereotype." (Schaller and Neuberg 2008, 405). They further call the cognitive categories and associations that link the out-group with expectations of harm and harmful intent as prejudice "syndromes." (Schaller and Neuberg, 2008; Schaller et al. 2004). These syndromes or stereotypes are characterized as ideologies. According to van Dijk, ideologies include a "very general polarisation schema defined by the opposition between Us and Them" suggesting that "groups build an ideological image of themselves [...] in such a way that (generally) We are represented positively, and They come out negatively." (van Dijk 1998, 69). Associating the out-group members with threats or threatening intentions provokes the in-group members' discriminatory and exclusionary behaviors (Schaller et al., 2004; van Dijk, 2000a and 2000b).

The in-group/out-group distinction is best presented through referential and predicational strategies. Reisigl and Wodak regard referential strategies as the basic ones in the communication of prejudice (Reisigl and Wodak, 2001). Adopting a broader definition,

they contend referential strategies construct social actors as "ingroups and outgroups." (Reisigl and Wodak 2001, 45). They refer to "nationalisation," "de-spatialisation," "dissimilation," and "collectivisation" as referential strategies (Reisigl and Wodak 2001, 48-52). For Reisigl and Wodak, nationalization is nationality-oriented. But in the Qurʾānic stories, the people's nationality is not always a discriminating factor; rather, in some cases nationyms become a generalizing force. The linguistic means that the Qurʾān draws upon in its stories are mostly those related to de-spatialization defined in terms of action (actionyms), anthropology (anthroponyms), metaphors of spatiality, and collectivization (pronouns and possessive determiners) (see Figure 2.5 in Reisigl and Wodak 2001, 48-52).

In addition to referential strategies, there are predicational strategies that activate cognitive modules and promote behavior (Hart 2010, 62). Therefore, they are emotively coercive. Coercion is a proposed strategy in political discourse (Chilton 2004; Chilton and Schäffner 1997) and it means to "affect the beliefs, emotions and behviours of others in such a way that suits one's own interests" (Hart 2010, 63). For Chilton, there are two kinds of linguistic coercion: cognitive coercion and emotive coercion. Cognitive coercion is propositional and produces cognitive effects in text-consumers; emotive coercion appeals to the text-consumer's emotions to make them behave in a certain way (Chilton 2004, 118). While referential strategies are more often evaluative (Reisigl and Wodak 2001, 46), predicational strategies are provocative.

Predicational strategies aim at achieving emotive and cognitive coercion. For achieving emotive coercion, text-producers represent the out-group in relation to a particular, recurring "topoi." Van Eemeren et al. (2013, 38) translate a "topos" as a rule or procedure. Topoi are related to pragmatic presupposition and defined in terms of "assumptions the speaker makes about what the hearer is likely to accept without challenge" (Givon 1979, 50). For Reisigl and Wodak (2001, 74), topoi are content-based, expressed as conditional "conclusion rules." It is in terms of these two strategies that the topoi in the Qurʾānic narratives are to be analyzed and discussed.

3. Methodology

This part comprises two sub-sections: corpus and analysis procedure.

3.1. Corpus

The data of the present study are driven from "al-Shuʿarāʾ," since it is the only *sūrah* wherein the main narratives appear together in a well-defined systematic structure. It then moves on through the other *sūrah*s such as "Hūd," "al-Nisāʾ," "al-Anbiyāʾ," "Sabaʾ," "al-ʿAnkabūt," "al-Baqarah," "Ṭā-Hā," "al-Aʿrāf," "al-Anʿām," "al-Naḥl," "Āl ʿImrān," "Yūnus," "al-Dhāriyāt," "al-Najm," "al-Muʾminūn," "al-Qamar," "al-Taḥrīm," and "al-Māʾidah" to present how the narratives are exposed to discoursal extension, intension, expansion, juxtaposition, and inversion throughout the text.

3.2. Analysis Procedure

This study adopts and adapts Reisigl and Wodak's (2001) referential strategies of de-spatialization and collectivization. The stories in the Qurʾān and the way the Qurʾānic discourse represents social actors have been analyzed as shown in *Table 1*.

Selected strategies	Linguistic means	Examples
De-spatialization	▪ Actionyms ▪ Perceptionyms ▪ Anthroponyms ▪ Metaphors of spatiality	Rejection, telling lies, accusation Non-believers Residents of the Hell
Collectivization	▪ Pronouns ▪ Possessive determiners	We (I), they, Us (Me), them Our (My), their

Table 1. Referential Strategies in the Narratives of the Qurʾān

Topos	Association
Character	Unreliable, hypocrites
Sin	Sinners, perverse
Threat	*dangerous (danger)
Power	Exploiters and loiters

Table 2. Recurring Topoi and Typical Associations

The study also detects and analyzes the topoi that span the Qurʾānic text by way of its stories. The following table summarizes the topoi that have been detected in *sūrah*s.

4. Results

This part is divided into three main sections: narrative structure in which the cyclic structure of the seven prophets' narratives in "al-Shuʿarāʾ" is presented. In addition, different narrative strategies such as narrative extension, exclusion, inversion, ellipsis, or expansion are presented. Two succeeding sections deal with discourse strategies, referential and predicational. The detection of these strategies is restricted to the seven prophets' narratives. The part on referential strategies is based on the dominant linguistic means: actionyms, perceptionyms, anthroponyms, and metaphors of spatiality. The last section deals with predicational strategies and is divided into topoi of character, sin, threat, and power.

4.1. Narrative Cycle

"Al-Shuʿarāʾ" comprises 227 verses. The narration of seven main stories begins from verse 10 and ends in verse 190. These stories are both preceded and succeeded by "And verily, your Lord is He, the Exalted in Might, most Merciful" (Q 26:9 and 191). The same verse comes between the stories, separating the story of each nation from one another (Q 26:68, 104, 140, 159, and 175). Narratologically, the stories in this sūrah meet the requirements that Snævarr has enumerated for a narrative. First, they have storied structures; second, they have middle, beginning, and end. Third, they are a unified whole. The narrator in all of them is God and the narratee is, first, the prophet and, then, people. The stories in this *sūrah* have a basic schema: God sends a prophet to a people. The people reject, accuse, or ridicule him. God punishes the people for disobeying and saves the prophet. In these short stories, the people's actions have causal relations and their doomed end is the logical result of their disobedience. Although the first story which is about Moses and Pharaoh is longer and has more details (Q 26:10-67), it follows the same narrative schema. The repetitive narrative schema in these seven stories, and their being

separated from one another by a single verse, gives the recounting verses a cyclic structure which can be shown in the following figure:
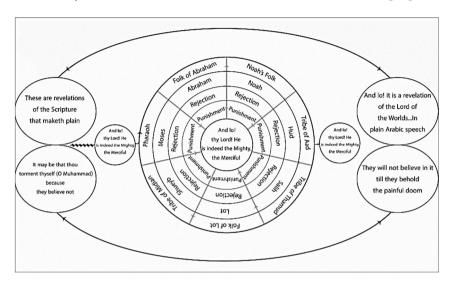

Figure 1: The Designed Cyclic Structure of Seven Prophets' Narratives in "al-Shuʿarāʾ"

As *Figure 1* shows, this cycle does not run on its own; there are four major forces in the *sūrah*; three of these forces will be discussed here and the fourth will be elaborated on in the part related to referential strategies. First, the same demarcating verse (situated at the center) appears on both sides of the cycle (Q 26:9 and 191) and thus interlinks the stories with the main body of the *sūrah*. Besides, the second verse of the *sūrah* which refers to the Holy Book, "[t]hese are Verses of the Book that makes (things) clear" (Q 26:2), is given further details and descriptions in the verses that immediately appear after the cycle, "Verily this is a Revelation from the Lord of the worlds" (Q 26:192). The third point that makes the stories relevant to the context of the whole *sūrah* is God's intention of narrating them to His prophet. In the third verse, God wants his prophet not to torment himself because "they do not become Believers" (Q 26:3). Then, He starts narrating the stories of seven preceding prophets who were similarly rejected by their nations. Narrating their stories in much the same manner, God draws a parallel line between all the previous prophets and the prophet of Islam. Through this juxtaposing repetition, God compares the Arab nation with the previous ones and predicts for them the same end. Foreseeing

such a doom for the prophet's people has a gesture to any reader who is the Qurʾān's narratee and, thus, makes the cyclic structure of the stories run on endlessly. This in itself can be taken as one of the signs of the miraculous narration of the Holy Book.

4.1.1. Narrative Extension

The first mention of Moses and his conflicts with Pharaoh occurs in "al-Baqarah" (Q 2:47), where God directly addresses "O Children of Israel!," in a reminding gesture to His graces on them and their mischievous ingratitude. He refers to the sufferings they went through and the fact that only He could save them, "And remember, We delivered you from the people of Pharaoh: they set you hard tasks and punishments, slaughtered your sons and let your womenfolk live; therein was a tremendous trial from your Lord" (Q 2:49). In the following verse, God refers to the way He saved them, "We divided the sea for you and saved you and drowned Pharaoh's people within your very sight" (Q 2:50). This *sūrah* does not disclose more about how Moses' folk were brought to the sea and rescued. This hole in the narrative is filled in Ṭā-Hā, verse 77, where God states, "And We sent an inspiration to Moses: 'Travel by night with My servants, and strike a dry path for them through the sea, without fear of being overtaken (by Pharaoh) and without (any other) fear" (Q 20:77). Yet still, some point remains untold in this story, and that is how Moses strikes a dry path in the sea. The details about this event are given in al-Shuʿarāʾ: "Then We told Moses by inspiration: 'Strike the sea with your rod.' So it divided, and each separate part became like the huge, firm mass of a mountain" (Q 26:63). Following up Moses' story about the way he rescued his folk through the sea interconnects the *sūrah*s across the Book and, simultaneously, in each repetition of the story some detail is added to the story; this can be called a case of narrative extension.

4.1.2. Narrative Exclusion

In Moses story which appears first in "al-Baqarah," God reminds Children of Israel of the torments Pharaoh inflicted on them (Q 2:49). However, the *sūrah* does not reveal the reasons for these tortures. The whole story then is recounted in al-Aʿrāf, where Pharaoh's wizards are defeated by Moses' miraculous staff and, thus, fall down prostrate, "Saying, we believe in the Lord of the worlds" (Q 7:121). Whereupon, Pharaoh decides to torment the believers, "Their male children will we slay; (only) their females will we save alive" (Q 7:127). Before the final

annihilation of Pharaoh in the sea, God strikes them with "years (of droughts) and shortness of crops" (Q 7:130); then, He sends "(plagues) on them: Wholesale Death, Locusts, Lice, Frogs, and Blood: Signs openly self-explained: but they were steeped in arrogance,—a people given to sin" (Q 7:133). After all, when they insisted on their non-belief, God drowned them in the sea. The details before their getting drowned are omitted from al-Shuʿarāʾ, because God's intension here is not to show Pharaoh's perseverance with denial of His signs and His endurance; rather, He wants to show the doom of deniers. After all, if such details were included here, the balance (in terms of length) between Moses narrative and the other stories would have been disturbed. This discoursal technique is called narrative exclusion.

4.1.3. Narrative Inversion

Al-Aʿrāf continues Moses' folk story, after their survival from the sea, and recounts the way they turned against him; first, they asked him to give them idols to worship (Q 7:138), and then in his forty-day absence, they made a calf and worshipped it (Q 7:148). However, al-Nisāʾ reports that Moses' folk chose the calf "after Clear Signs had come to them." (Q 7:153). One of those proofs was shown to them for their request to see Allah, "Show us Allah in public." Upon this, "they were dazed for their presumption, with thunder and lightning" (Q 4:153). After this, they turned to worshipping the calf. However, the same events are presented somehow else in al-Baqarah. In this sūrah, it is said that Moses returned to his people after forty days of absence to find them worshipping a calf. When he blamed them for this, they said, "O Moses! We shall never believe in you until we see Allah manifestly" (Q 2:55). This is called inversion in repetition; and inversion in sequence of the events of the story each time it is repeated gives the text narrative tension. The tension may apparently confuse the reader. However, there is a delicate rhetorical trick behind this inversion and that has to do with people's stubbornness in their unbelief. The inversion of the sequence of events in Moses story may imply that no matter before the calf incident, the lightning seized his folk's gaze or after that; in any way, they did not and would not believe and remained doomed.

4.1.4. Narrative Ellipsis

In al-Shuʿarāʾ, the incidents of the calf and the request of Moses' people to see Allah are omitted; however, these incidents had already

been related in detail in three *sūrah*s before al-Shuʿarāʾ: Al-Baqarah, al-Nisāʾ, and al-Aʿrāf, respectively. Thrice repetition of the story is in itself of significance and highlights its importance. Therefore, when it is omitted from al-Shuʿarāʾ, it does not imply their insignificance. Rather, the mention of Moses and his folk brings onstage all the events that had already been mentioned in previous *sūrah*s. This kind of repetition is called narrative ellipsis in which the already stated is not overtly but only implicitly (elliptically) repeated in what is mentioned right now.

The same applies to Abraham's narrative. The Abraham al-Shuʿarāʾ speaks of is the prophet whose story has already been recounted in al-Baqarah. In this *sūrah*, Abraham asks God to show him how He revives the dead in order to put his heart at ease, "He said: Take four birds; tame them to turn to you; put a portion of them on every hill and call to them: they will come to you (flying) with speed" (Q 2:260). Abraham reappears in al-Anʿām to argue against his non-believing father, Āzar, and proves no entity in the universe (star, the moon, and the sun) equals God in power and deserves to be worshipped (Q 6:74-81). He is the prophet who begets a child by God's power while he and his wife are both old (Q 11:69-72). These stories provide a good background for Abraham's reappearance in al-Shuʿarāʾ wherein he challenges his people's disbelief. Narratologically, Abraham's previous experiences of death and (re)birth well justifies his firm belief in the Almighty. In this way, the previous stories, ellipticized, can function as logical reasons for what the prophet says and does. The mention of Abraham in the succeeding sūrah, al-ʿAnkabūt has a gesture back to what had gone on in al-Shuʿarāʾ, "And if you reject (the Message), so did generations before you" (Q 29:18). Thus the following mention of Abraham emphasizes his mission in an act of repetition.

4.1.5. Narrative Expansion and Exclusion

The first mention of Noah appears in al-Aʿrāf. This sūrah simply relates how Noah asked his people to believe in God, how they denied him, and thereupon received God's punishment (Q 7:59-64). This story with almost the same details reappears in Yūnus, verses 71 up to 73. It is in Hūd that Noah's story is detailed from the start of his mission till he is inspired by God to build an ark to save his household save for his son, "O Noah! He is not of your family: for his conduct is unrighteous. So ask not of Me that of which you have no knowledge ..." (Q 11:46). The detail about his son is omitted from al-Shuʿarāʾ. With respect to the

previous *sūrah*s, al-Aʿrāf and Yūnus, the addition of details in Hūd is an instance of narrative expansion; but with respect to al-Shuʿarāʾ the omission is one of narrative exclusion.

4.2. Referential Strategies

4.2.1. Collectivization: Pronouns and Possessive Determiners

All through the Qurʾānic narratives, God as the speaker appears in the form of first-person singular or plural pronoun ("I" or "We"). This distinguishes God and His people from non-believers who are referred to in third-person plural pronoun ("them" and "their") and sometimes in third-person singular pronoun ("he" and "him"). As an instance, one can refer to this verse, "If (such) were Our will, We could send down to them from the sky a sign, to which they would bend their necks in humility." (Q 26:4). In this verse, "We" has the position of a subject which objectifies "them." Through objectifying pronouns and possessive pronouns, God collectivizes the non-believers and puts them all (the ancient and the new) in the out-group. In the seventh verse of al-Shuʿarāʾ, God refers to His power, stating, "Do they not look at the earth, – how many noble things of all kinds We have produced therein?" Distinguishing "We" as the omnipotent power separated from "they" that have limitation in vision, this verse segregates the speaker from the out-group. Assigning the prophetic mission to Moses, God expresses His support against the Pharaoh whom Moses fears for his life (Q 26:14). The following verse reads, "Allah said: 'By no means! proceed then, both of you, with Our Signs; We are with you and will listen (to your call)." (Q 26:15). In this verse, the speaker is distinguished by "We" and the possessive determiner "Our" both of which are also capitalized. Read in the light of the previous verse, God extends His support towards Moses and his brother against any harm from Pharaoh's part. The verse thus discriminates Moses and his brother as members of God's in-group from Pharaoh and his troop categorized as the out-group. Thus when in the next verse, Moses speaks using "we" in "We have been sent by the Lord and Cherisher of the worlds." (Q 26:16), this first-person plural, non-capitalized pronoun "we" puts Moses and his brother in God's in-group distinguished from the out-group.

4.2.2. De-spatialization

De-spatialization strategies that the Qurʾān draws upon in its distinction of believers from non-believers are actionyms, perceptionyms, anthroponyms, and metaphors of spatiality. Actionyms applies to people's deeds, and perceptionyms to their beliefs. Actionyms are closely related to perceptionyms. Since the Qurʾān specifies Hell for wrongdoers and Heaven for the righteous, their anthroponyms are also involved. The common actionyms of non-believers against the prophets is rejecting them and disobeying their commands.

In al-Shuʿarāʾ, the non-believers are de-spatialized in terms of their perceptionyms and actionyms; thus the pronoun "they" occupies the subject position of an agent only when they "will not believe" (Q 26:201), "perceive it not" (Q 26:202), "Our penalty to be hastened on" (Q 26:204), "disobey you" (Q 26:216), "wander distracted in every valley" (Q 26:225), and "they practise not" (Q 26:227). All the stories that condemn non-believers to sever punishment de-spatialize them as non-believers which is their anthroponyms. Therefore, they are demarcated from God's in-group as being residents of the Hell and the receivers of His doom.

Hūd's folk resist his invitation, relying on the religion they had inherited from their fathers, "Hast come unto us that we should serve Allah alone, and forsake what our fathers worshipped?" (Q 7:70). Rejecting him, they accuse him of lying and madness, "We see you are an imbecile!' and 'We think you are a liar!'" (Q 7:66). They even shun him as being "seized ... with imbecility" by one of their gods (Q 11:54). His folk are described as those that ascribe partners to God (Q 11:54), "they rejected the Signs of their Lord and Cherisher; disobeyed His messengers; and followed the command of every powerful, obsrinate transgressor." (Q 11:59). Thus they were the receivers of "a severe penalty" (Q 11:58). His folk are described as pleasure-seekers (Q 26:128) and "men of absolute power" (Q 26:130).

Ṣāliḥ presents a she-camel as a token from God and warns his people not to harm her. Being scornful and unbelieving, they hamstrung the camel which is their actionyms (Q 7:73-78). Similarly, Moses' non-believing folk are discriminated as the out-group in terms of their actionyms: they chose a calf for worship; "they did wrong themselves" (Q 2:57); "when they were commanded to fight, they turned back" (Q 2:246); "they broke their covenant" and slew the

prophets wrongfully (Q 4:155). They are also dichotomized for their perceptionyms at the core of which lies their non-believing in Moses and God's signs to them.

The character of Noah as a member of the in-group is presented as a "warner" (Q 11:25); and his people are objectified as "those who had been warned" (Q 12:73); yet they are "the ignorant ones" (Q 11:29), "wrongdoers" (Q 29:14), persisting in sin (Q 51:46), and "most unjust and most insolent transgressors" (Q 53:52). They reject him as a liar (Q 11:27); while he was building the ship, his people "threw ridicule on him" (Q 11:38). His folk were exposed to God's punishment and got drowned.

Referentially, Abraham is often distinguished from his folk, "he joined not gods with Allah" (Q 2:135; Q 3:67 and 95; Q 6:79 and 161; Q 16:120 and 123). This description sets up the character of out-group in terms of their actionyms calling them idolaters; these are abandoned by God; thus God orders, "Do not marry unbelieving women (idolaters) until they believe: a slave woman who believes is better than an unbelieving woman ... Nor marry (your girls) to unbelievers until they believe... Unbelievers do (but) beckon you to the Fire. But Allah beckons by His Grace to the Garden." (Q 2:221). This verse discriminates the idolaters through their actionyms and de-spatializes them, making them residents of Fire in contrast to those of the Garden. These idolaters are receivers of God's curse, "They are (men) whom Allah has cursed." (Q 4:52). In another verse, God distinguishes idolaters from believers and condemns them, "and those who reject Faith fight in the cause of Evil: So fight you against the friends of Satan: feeble indeed is the cunning of Satan." (Q 4:76). In al-Māʾidah, idols are represented as Satan's handiwork (Q 5:90) and are thus condemned.

In Hūd, the people of Lūṭ are described as sexually perverse ones, desiring his male guests instead of his daughters (Q 11:78). In return for their sins, "We turned (the cities) upside down, and rained down on them brimstones hard as baked clay, spread, layer on layer." (Q 11:82). His folk are "marked as from your Lord: nor are they ever far from those who do wrong" (Q 11:83). Al-Anbiyāʾ discriminates Lūṭ from his folk, "And to Lūṭ, too, We gave judgment and knowledge, and We saved him from the town which practised abominations. Truly, they were a people given to evil, a rebellious people." (Q 21:74). His people's immoral lust is well detailed in al-Shuʿarāʾ where Lūṭ scorns them, "Of all the creatures in the world, will you approach males, /

And leave those whom Allah has created for you to be your mates? Nay, you are a people of transgressing (all limits)." (Q 26:165-66). Upon his resistance, his people threaten him, "If you desist not, O Lūṭ! you will assuredly be cast out." (Q 26:167). This *sūrah* only suffices to inform that God rained on them "a shower (of brimstone): and evil was the shower on those who were admonished (but heeded not)." (Q 26:173). In al-Naml, Lūṭ discriminates his folk for their actionyms, "Would you really approach men in your lusts rather than women? Nay, you are a people (grossly) ignorant!" (Q 27:55).

Shuʿayb's people are discriminated by their actionyms detailed in al-Aʿrāf: "Give just measure and weight, nor withhold from the people the things that are their due; and do no mischief on the earth after it has been set in order ... / And squat not on every road, breathing threats, hindering from the path of Allah those who believe in Him." (Q 7:85-86). Thus they are described as "those who did mischief" (Q 7:86). Like Noah's people, his folk are scornful and disbelieving.

4.3. Predicational Strategies

The recurring topoi in al-Shuʿarāʾ are rendered in terms of character, sin, threat, and power. The sūrah describes and thereby discriminates the out-group as non-believers (Q 26:201), liars (Q 26:223), the doomed (Q 26:213), "removed far from even (a chance of) hearing it" (Q 26:212), deniers (Q 26:189), tyrants (Q 26:130), extravagant (Q 26:151), transgressors (Q 26:166) and accusers (Q 26:185 and 186). They are marked as "lying, wicked" persons (Q 26:222), the wrong-doers (Q 26:227) and "people of iniquity" (Q 26:10), in possession of "hearts of the sinners" (Q 26:200),"those who are in error" (Q 26:20). This sūrah discriminates the out-group members in terms of the threats they have for the in-group. Moses asks God to protect him against Pharaoh or Pharaoh will kill him (Q 26:14); Pharaoh is said to have "enslaved the Children of Israel" (Q 26:22). He threatens his people who believed in Moses, "Be sure I will cut off your hands and your feet on opposite sides, and I will cause you all to die on the cross." (Q 26:50). Noah is also threatened to be stoned to death (Q 26:116). The folk of Lūṭ threaten to outcast him (Q 26:167). These tribes are cast as out-groups in terms of power; although they outnumber the prophets and most of them are in position of supreme power for being kings, they are disempowered by God, the Almighty.

Describing Noah's son as "of evil conduct" banishes him as an out-group member who deserves severe punishment. Noah's folk are

described as "a people given to evil" (Q 21:77). His folk are predicationally depicted as accusers and mockers who take him as "only a man possessed: wait (and have patience) with him for a time" (Q 23:25; Q 54:9); further on, they become a source of danger for Noah, threatening him, "They said: 'If you desist not, O Noah! you shall be stoned (to death)." (Q 26:116).

Ṣāliḥ's deniers describe him as "one of those bewitched" (Q 26:153). Like the other folks, his people refuse to believe him, sticking to the religion of their fathers. He warns them against "evil and mischief on the earth" (Q 7:74). His folk are described as being "arrogant," despising the believers (Q 7:75).

Al-ʿAnkabūt portrays Lūṭ's folk as "wickedly rebellious" (Q 29:34), "(addicted) to crime" (Q 29:31), and "people who do mischief" (Q 29:30). In contrast to them, Lūṭ is repeatedly reported to be among the "righteous" (Q 29:27). Like the other people, his folk challengingly accuse him of lying, "Bring us the wrath of Allah if you tell the truth." (Q 29:29). When punishment is to come, his wife is categorized as an out-group member, not one of his household; she is "of those who lag behind" (Q 29:33). In al-Taḥrīm, God discriminates Noah's and Lūṭ's wives from the righteous, calling them betrayers (Q 66:10); they are de-spatialized as residents of Hell, "Enter you the Fire along with (others) that enter." (Q 66:10).

People threaten Shuʿayb, "We shall certainly drive you out of our city – (you) and those who believe with you; or else (you and they) shall have to return to our ways and religion." (Q 7:88). God discriminates them as "ruined" (Q 7:92) and strikes them with earthquake. In Hūd, Shuʿayb narrative reappears with almost the same details, "Give not short measure or weight." (Q 11:84). In al-Shuʿarāʾ, Shuʿayb advises his folk to "And weigh with scales true and upright / And withhold not things justly due to men, nor do evil in the land, working mischief." (Q 26:182-3). He is rejected as being "bewitched" and a liar (Q 26:185 and 186). Like the previous tribes, Shuʿayb's folk threaten him to death, "among us we see that you have no strength! Were it not for your family, we should certainly have stoned you! For you have among us no great position." (Q 11:91). They accuse him of lying (Q 11:93). Like the previous people, they received God's doom, "the (mighty) blast did seize the wrong-doers, and they lay prostrate in their homes by the morning." (Q 11:94).

5. Discussion

The analysis of the stories in al-Shuʿarāʾ has revealed their cyclic narrative structure. The cycle is firmly embedded within the *sūrah* and thus interlinks the earlier verses with the later ones. Then the analysis takes a step further to see how this cyclic structure interconnects the other *sūrah*s across the Qurʾān. The recurrence of each prophet's story in the previous and succeeding *sūrah*s creates a link that runs all through the Qurʾān. It is also shown that the repeated stories may contribute to the cyclic narratives in al-Shuʿarāʾ in different ways: they may extend, invert, or expand the narrative. Accordingly, they may re-emphasize the significance of the narrative or even give the text narrative tension. Therefore, the narratives here function as means of cohesion leading to coherence.

The other important issue followed up in the analysis is extracting the way Us/Them dichotomy is realized all through the seven narratives in their different versions. It can be argued that God as the narrator and sole speaker in the Qurʾān discriminates between believers and non-believers. He puts His messengers, the righteous, and the believers in the in-group and distinguishes them from the wrongdoers, deniers, and non-believers. This discrimination is carried out through referential and predicational strategies. The out-group are always referred to by pronoun "they," and objectified as "them" and "their." They are discriminated in terms of their perceptionyms since they do not believe the messengers and God. This perception leads them to act wrongfully (their actionyms). Their wrong deed leads to their getting de-spatialized as the folk who deserve severe punishment and residency in Hell.

As for predicational strategies, the non-believers are depicted in terms of their character, sin, threat, and power. The Qurʾān presents their characters differently, but all in a morally negative way. In Moses narrative, they are condemned as liars and hypocrites; in Abraham story, they are idolaters. For Noah, they are denouncers, and for Hūdthey are of evil conduct. In Ṣāliḥ narrative, they are disobedients, and for Lūṭ they are lewd and sexually pervert. For Shuʿayb, his folk are cheaters in people's goods. Therefore, their characters are portrayed based on their wrong deeds and the sins they commit.

The non-believers pose threats to God's messengers; Pharaoh threatens to slay Moses and his followers. Abraham's folk fling him into a big fire. Noah and Shuʿayb are threatened to get stoned to death.

Ṣāliḥ, Hūd, and Lūṭ are threatened to get outcast from their society. Only a few of their folk did believe in the prophets; so they comprised the minor who were rejected and mocked by the major. The major had power over the minor especially in the case of Moses whose opponent was the king. In the case of other prophets, the chieftains of their folk posed the greatest resistance and threat. In comparison to the chieftains, the non-believers were stronger and their strength itself was a threat for the believers. However, in comparison to God, the Almighty, their power was nothing. This point is quite clear in the way they all were wiped out of the face of the earth, "As if they had never dwelt and flourished there." (Q 11:95).

As already mentioned, any discourse based on Us/Them dichotomy is highly biased. The discourse analysts have based their theories on political discourse. Christopher Hart studies the referential and predicational strategies applied by politicians and statesmen against immigrants and asylum seekers (Hart 2010; see also van Leeuwen 2008; Fairclough 1999, 2010). In the works of these analysts, the bases of discrimination between the in-group and the out-group are race (ethnicity, nationality), class, and gender. The in-group as the speaking self located here and now regards the out-group located there and then as the threatening "other" and thus seeks ways to evade the (spatial, racial, sexual, and cultural) intrusion or fusion of the other. However, such discriminational bases do not apply to the Qurʾānic discourse. As the analysis of actionyms and perceptionyms of the *sūrah*s reveal, the out-group, as non-believers, are distinguished and demarcated from the in-group because of their own beliefs and actions, not because of such biological differences as gender or race. Even social class has no voice in God's approach to man, or His messengers would have been selected from among the rich or the chieftains so that they would not have to suffer so much. This point is expressed explicitly in Sabaʾ where God says, "It is not your wealth nor your sons, that will bring you nearer to Us in degree, but only those who belive and work righteousness." (Q 34:37). Also in al-Ḥujurāt, the racial, social, and sexual discriminations are rejected as invalid criteria for membership in the in-group: "O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know each other (not that you may despise each other). Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you." (Q 49:13). In fact, all those people God has exposed to His doom are receivers of punishment only because of denouncing

their prophets, mocking them, threatening them, instead of believing in them and their message. This point draws a sharp contrast between political and the Qurʾānic discourse. In contrast to the political discourse where Us/Them dichotomy renders it highly prejudiced, the Qurʾānic discourse which deploys the same dichotomy but defines it in other terms is far from being biased or prejudiced against any nation or group.

6. Conclusion

The present study reacts to the Orientalists' challenging claim against the Qurʾān as an incoherent book (Jeffery 1958). Adopting and adapting the narrative and linguistic methodologies, this study tries to fill the gap in the Qurʾān studies to prove its overall coherence at both levels of inter-verse and inter-*sūrah*. It starts with the analysis of the narratives in al-Shuʿarāʾ and detects a cyclic narrative structure in the *sūrah* which interlinks the beginning with the ending parts. It also investigates the mention of each one of the prophets narratives in other *sūrah*s and shows the kind of relation different versions of the same narrative has to the cyclic structure in the selected *sūrah*. It pinpoints the referential and predicational strategies that the Qurʾānic discourse deploys to discriminate non-believers as the out-group from believers, the in-group. In a comparison between the Qurʾānic discourse and political discourse it is discussed that unlike the latter, the former is bias-free and its Us/Them dichotomy is based neither on social class, nor on biological differences (race and gender). Rather, it is only people's actions and perceptions (beliefs) that discriminate them from one another and procure for them membership in the in-group or outcast them as the out-group.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Anthropomorphism in Islam. The Challenge of Traditionalism (700–1350), by Livnat Holtzman.

Pavel Pavlovitch

ﺪﻋﻼ

Ḥanafī-Māturīdīsm: Trajectories of a Theological Legacy, with a Study and Critical Edition of al-Khabbāzī's Kitāb al-Hādī, by Ayedh A. Aldosari

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Arabic Humanities, Islamic Thought: Essays in Honor of Everett K. Rowson, edited by Joseph E. Lowry and Shawkat M. Toorawa

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ﺪﻋﻼ

Anthropomorphism in Islam: The Challenge of Traditionalism (700-1350), by Livnat Holtzman (Edinburgh Studies in Classical Islamic History and Culture, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018), xi + 434 pp., ISBN: 9780748689569, £85 (hb)

Traditions with explicit or implied anthropomorphic depictions of the divinity (*aḥādīth al-ṣifāt*) had been a perennial topic in Muslim theology and *ḥadīth* scholarship. Western academic inroads into the field have been mostly limited to passing references or sections in general studies on the theology of the divine attributes in Islam. Now, Livnat Holtzman takes a comprehensive and innovative view on *aḥādīth al-ṣifāt* during the formative and classical age of Sunnī Islam, in her monograph *Anthropomorphism in Islam. The Challenge of Traditionalism (700-1350)*.

In Chapter 1 (pp. 21-67), Holtzman argues that *aḥādīth al-ṣifāt* are fictional narratives. Whereas this aspect of historical reports (*akhbār*, sg. *khabar*) and legal traditions has been demonstrated by Daniel Beaumont and Sebastian Guenther, *aḥādīth al-ṣifāt* have been studied so far as theological not literary units. Without disregarding their hermeneutical significance, Holtzman calls attention to the "literary value of *aḥādīth al-ṣifāt*, their potential to entertain, stimulate, provoke or frighten, their structure, style and language" (p. 21). These aspects should be treated by narratological tools. Modern-day *ḥadīth* analysts will appreciate Chapter 1: It provides them with important tools to canvas the structure and purport of Muslim traditions in general.

In Chapter 2 (pp. 68-119), Holtzman studies several anthropomorphic traditions about the beatific vision (*ruʾyah*). Apart from the narratological approach, she uses literary-historical analysis of their chains of transmission (*asānīd*; sg. *isnād*) and texts (*mutūn*, sg. *matn*). The traditions at issue, usually associated with two prophetic Companions, Abū Razīn al-ʿUqaylī (d. ?) and Jarīr ibn ʿAbd Allāh al-Bajalī (Kūfah; d. 51/671), are often couched as extensive

sessions of questions and answers that take up different aspects of divine anthropomorphism.

Such a combined *isnād* and *matn* analysis is capable of yielding both relative chronology, within a group of several variant texts, and absolute chronology, when these texts are associated with specific chains of authorities. In its first/seventh- and second/eighth-century sections, Abū Razīn's tradition was carried by unverifiable family *isnād*s comprising only members of the Banū Muntafiq tribe in Iraq. A patchwork narrative, the tradition gained popularity in the third/ninth-century Ḥanbalī circles. The Jarīr al-Bajalī tradition was likely circulated by the Kūfan centenarian *mawlá* Ismāʿīl ibn Abī Khālid (b. 49/669-70, d. 145-6/762-4), an illiterate who committed grave grammatical errors in transmission. Below Ismāʿīl, the confused *isnād* is populated by exceptionally long-lived transmitters (*muʿammarūn*).

In the last section of Chapter 2 (pp. 99-105), Holtzman presents the reader with a captivating overview of the role that Jarīr's tradition played during the political and dogmatic conflict between Ḥanafī and Muʿtazilī rationalists, on the one hand, and traditionalists, on the other, which came to be known as the Miḥnah (*c.* 218-37/833-52).

Chapter 3 (pp. 120-84) is an original contribution to the study of gestures in anthropomorphic traditions. A rarely visited topic in *ḥadīth* studies, gestures are habitually performed by the main protagonists of traditions. Following David McNeill, Holtzman divides gestures in *ḥadīth* into iconic, metaphoric, deictic, and beat. Holtzman shows how the first type might give rise to anthropomorphic exegesis when a gesture referring to God is understood as iconic, that is, as a direct representation of its divine referent. This chapter includes an insightful prosopographical study on the Baṣran traditionist Ḥammād ibn Salamah (d. 167/784), who was responsible for the spread of many anthropomorphic traditions of dubious authenticity.

Once admitted into the traditionalist curriculum, anthropomorphic *ḥadīth* began to pose theological problems. Chapter 4 (pp. 185-266) follows the tension between the traditionalist reception of such *ḥadīth* and its rationalization by the Ashʿarī theologians. Both sides sought to avoid corporealism (*tajsīm*) and anthropomorphism (*tashbīh*) by recourse to the famous *bi-lā kayfa* (without [asking] "how") principle, which Holtzman analyzes in impressive detail. Contrary to Henri Laoust's conclusion that *bi-lā kayfa* originated among the third/ninth-century Ḥanbalīs in Baghdad, which continues to be popular in Western academic discourse on Islam, Holtzman shows that it was

articulated by such early traditionalist jurisprudents as al-Awzāʿī (Syria; d. 157/774), Sufyān al-Thawrī (Kūfah; d. 161/778), al-Layth ibn Saʿd (Egypt; d. 175/791), Mālik ibn Anas (Medina; d. 179/795), and Abū ʿUbayd al-Qāsim ibn Sallām (Baghdad; d. 224/838), of whom only Abū ʿUbayd belonged to the circle of Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal. Consequently, an early proto-Sunnī detestation (perhaps of a Medinese origin) of theological debates, especially such debates that could stir controversy about God's attributes, was adopted and expanded on in the third/ninth-century Ḥanbalī and Ashʿarī circles (pp. 190-2; 224-5; 234-48).

By the *bi-lā kayfa* principle, Muslim traditionalists countered what they saw as two extreme positions on anthropomorphic *ḥadīth*. At the one extreme were rationalist theologians of various affiliations who advocated figurative interpretation of the divine attributes, which, from the traditionalist standpoint, amounted to their negation (*taʿṭīl*). The other extreme was occupied by the crude anthropomorphists, the Ḥashwiyyah, who envisaged God as having bodily parts similar to that of a human being. On the example of Ibn Qutaybah (Iraq; 213-76/828-89), Holtzman shows how, while avoiding purely rationalist explanations, middle-of-the-road traditionalists drew away from the Ḥashwiyya and carefully deployed various exegetical tools in an attempt to reconcile anthropomorphic descriptions of God with human reason.

In this chapter, Holtzman thoroughly discusses the workings of *ḥadīth* censorship (one is tempted to say "Verschiebung"). The tradition about the *raḥm* (the word may be understood as either "kinship" or "womb") that clings to *ḥaqw al-Raḥmān* ("the loin of the Merciful") sounded outrageously anthropomorphic as to be transmitted verbatim. To allay its sensualistic implications, some traditionists and editors omitted the embarrassing reference to God's loin, while others experimented with exegetical approaches. The latter were sometimes inspired by the Ashʿarī *kalām*, but occasionally involved bending the semantic boundaries of Arabic figurative speech with the aim of glossing over the embarrassing mention of the "loin of the Merciful" (pp. 230-6).

In Chapter 5 (pp. 267-359), Holtzman turns her attention to the performative aspects of anthropomorphic *ḥadīth*, which was far from confined to the chambers of theoretical study. Based on the theory of "iconic books" as embodiments of spiritual power and societal influence, Holtzman analyzes the role played in the public sphere by

the Qādirī Creed, Ibn Khuzaymah's *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd*, Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī's *Asās al-taqdīs*, and Ibn Taymiyyah's *al-Ḥamawiyyah al-kubrā*.

Throughout the monograph, Holtzman masterfully navigates her way through the intricacies of theological debates, paying close attention to the teachings of a spectrum of Muslim theologians who addressed the issue of the divine attributes over a period of 650 years. To achieve her research goals, she draws on a multifaceted methodology ranging from comparative analysis of the chains of *ḥadīth* transmission to narratology and the study of scripture as a public-sphere phenomenon. These approaches are applied—separately or in concert—on a wide range of sources, which guaranties the methodological homogeneity of the work and helps it to describe in a precise and nuanced manner the changing scholarly and social perceptions of *aḥādīth al-ṣifāt*.

The primary goal of Holtzman's book is to reveal the theological debates behind *aḥādīth al-ṣifāt*, which she pursues with impressive clarity and persuasiveness. Less important to her is the question of *ḥadīth* authenticity, which, although occasionally referenced, is not a major topic in the monograph. Thus, Holtzman rightfully points out that, albeit fictional narratives, anthropomorphic traditions have their historical context (p. 23). She, nevertheless, does not delve into the question of authenticity, that is, the degree of reliability of each transmitter along the chain of transmission, and the related issue of historicity, that is, the legitimacy of the tradition's purport to describe events from the lifetime of the original speaker, say, the Prophet.

When dealing with the *ruʾyah* traditions in Chapter 2, Holtzman only alludes to the problematic nature of Ismāʿīl ibn Abī Khālid's transmission on the authority of Qays ibn Abī Ḥāzim, without drawing a definite conclusion about the unreliability of the chain below Ismāʿīl (pp. 98-9). Moreover, the large number of *isnād*s that branch out from Ismāʿīl ibn Abī Khālid may be the result of retrospective ascriptions driven by the fame that *ḥadīth al-ruʾyah* attained over the course of the Miḥnah and the corresponding impulse of the traditionalist party to demonstrate its wide dissemination, hence, its authenticity.

Holtzman has an impressive command of the Muslim prosopographical literature (*kutub al-rijāl*), which is indispensable in the study of *ḥadīth* transmission. Her only omission is Mughalṭāy ibn Qalīj's (Cairo; d. 762/1361) *Ikmāl Tahdhīb al-Kamāl fī asmāʾ al-rijāl*, a treasure trove with excerpts from many presently lost biographical sources. Citing ʿAbd al-Bāqī ibn Qāniʿ (Baghdad; 265-351/879-962),

Mughalṭāy reports that Ismāʿīl ibn Abī Khālid was born in 49/669-70. This information, which is unavailable in the biographical sources studied by Holtzman, bolsters her argument that the Jarīr al-Bajalī tradition is based on a chain of extremely long-lived transmitters, known as *muʿammarūn* (pp. 95-6).

To Holtzman's nuanced categorization of gestures in *ḥadīth*, one may add an important tradition that falls under the rarely attested category of beat. According to many reports, as he answered ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb's question about the cryptic Qurʾānic word *kalālah*, the Prophet poked ʿUmar with his finger in the chest or, alternatively, pushed him in his belly (e.g., Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Kitāb al-Masājid wa-mawāḍiʿ al-ṣalāh, Bāb Nahy man akala thūm^{an}*, no. 78 [567]).

Holtzman translates *munkar*, which is one of the widest-spread categories of disparaged *ḥadīth*, as "rejected" (pp. 94, 103) and "objectionable" (pp. 98, 218, 256 n. 188). While referencing the critical notion that such *ḥadīth* is invalid as a legal argument, these two terms take no notice of the reason for its invalidation, namely, its being unrecognized (or "unknown," as mentioned in G. H. A. Juynboll's *EI²* lemma), either because it differs in some respect from a group of similar traditions or because it is unparalleled in its text or chain of transmission. For the non-specialist reader, it is better to translate *munkar* as "unrecognized, hence objectionable."

Another term that needs a more precise translation is *akhbār al-āḥād*. Holtzman defines it as "*aḥādīth* with few transmitters" (p. 240), but, actually, *khabar al-wāḥid* is an unparalleled report by a single transmitter.

Throughout the monograph, Holtzman transliterates the personal names taking into account only the *ʿayn* and the *hamzah* while discounting the long vowels and the other specificities of Arabic phonetics. In this manner, she hardly makes a difference between al-Anbārī and al-ʿAnbarī and leaves the reader wondering about the spelling of some uncommon names as al-Birzali and Ibn Battal. Holtzman adheres exclusively to the Common Era calendar and places the notes at each chapter's end. These inconveniences certainly go to the credit of the publisher not the author.

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***Ḥanafī-Māturīdīsm: Trajectories of a Theological Legacy, with a Study and Critical Edition of al-Khabbāzī's* Kitāb al-Hādī**, by Ayedh A. Aldosari (Sheffield: Equinox, 2020), 695 pp., ISBN: 978-1-78179-425-8 (hb) & 978-1-78179-509-5 (ePDF), £95.00 / $125.00

The historical neglect of the Ḥanafī-Māturīdī tradition of Islamic theology in comparison to other schools, especially its closest rival Ashʿarism, is well rehearsed. A price has been paid for the absence of reliable Arabic editions and translations of many texts, as well as the failure to study the development of the tradition on its own terms and in its interactions with other interlocutors. This state of affairs is starting to change with an increase of scholarly productions emerging in English and German, as well as an extremely dynamic period of Turkish scholarship. Ayedh Aldosari's new volume, based on his 2012 doctoral dissertation, should be seen in the context of this development. He thus seeks to contribute to the field in two distinct ways: to produce a critical edition of a noted classical Māturīdī text, the *Kitāb al-Hādī* of Abū Ḥafṣ ʿUmar ibn Muḥammad al-Khabbāzī (d. 691/1292) and to provide not only a thorough study of the author's life and times, but of the entire prior development of Ḥanafī-Māturīdism.

That Aldosari has produced two books in one is obvious from the structure. After a short introduction, mainly distinguished by twelve "claims" to investigate in the course of the work, the book is laid out as follows. Part One consists of (1) the authorship of *al-Hādī*, (2) al-Khabbāzī's personal details, and (3) his life and times. Part Two covers (4) the early Ḥanafī elements of Māturīdism, (5) the Sunnī Ḥanafīs after al-Ṭaḥāwī and al-Māturīdī, (6) the rise of the school to wider prominence, and (7) the contents and significance of *al-Hādī*, the manuscripts used for the edition, and the editing process. This is followed by a conclusion, two appendices of photocopies of *al-Hādī* and other miscellaneous documents, references, and an index. Upon reaching Part Three, the edited text, on page 379, one is instructed to turn to the back of the volume and to read the remainder of the book

in Arabic up to page 695, which includes its own set of notes, references and index.

Given the book's attention to the sweep of the formative and classical Māturīdī tradition, especially up until the end of seventh/thirteenth century, as well as the detailed presentation of the life and works of a mostly forgotten representative, al-Khabbāzī, it would have been better to switch the order of the first two parts. Study of the tradition could have provided the historical context to appreciate the significance of al-Khabbāzī and began the book with content of greater interest to a wider audience. Chapter 7, concerning the text *al-Hādī* and details on the production of the edition, makes sense where it is, but would be more coherently preceded by the author-focused details of the first three chapters. This means that my suggested reading order for the English content of this book is Chapters 4, 5, 6, 1, 2, 3, 7.

As it is printed, in Chapter 1 the reader gets bogged down in exhaustive details that establish al-Khabbāzī's authorship of *al-Hādī* without yet properly knowing what is at stake or where he fits into the tradition. In fact, the chapter does not center on al-Khabbāzī at all, but on another figure, ʿUmar al-ʿAqīlī, who some have suggested is the true author of *al-Hādī*. The amount of space devoted to the discussion of tangential questions, such as the correct names of al-ʿAqīlī's first, second and third great-grandfathers (p. 10-12), would be hard to justify even if he had a serious claim to authorship. But it turns out that the first person to attribute the text to him was a modern scholar, Khayr al-Dīn al-Ziriklī (d. 1976). Aldosari's careful sleuthing to correct this error is impressive—including documenting calls to public and private manuscript collections (p. 41, n. 149, p. 46, 193)—but this investigation could have been seriously cut down, saved for a dedicated article, or at least placed in a later chapter.

The decision to take the importance of al-Khabbāzī to Māturīdī theology as self-evident for most of the book is a shame, because in the middle of Chapter 7, Aldosari shows that he does have an argument for this, and it is one worth quoting:

> If we wish to recognize the status of *al-Hādī* in the Māturīdī tradition, we can consider its heritage as comprising three stages. The first founding stage is represented by al-Māturīdī's book *Al-Tawḥīd*. Second is *Tabṣirat al-Adilla*, the grandest and most important book in the Māturīdī tradition. This is the stage of explanation, elaboration, and supporting of the founder's thought. The third is the stage of

summarizing, refining, and simplifying the earlier ideas. *Al-Hādī* is one of the most important books of this third stage, as it is evident that first and foremost it comprises the best of the content of *Tabṣirat al-Adilla* and, secondarily, the content of other books. Whereas Maymūn al-Nasafī and other Māturīdī scholars arguably failed to write a summarized volume that represented this school, al-Khabbāzī succeeded (p. 257).

Aldosari here suggests that *al-Hādī* represents the best synthesis of Māturīdī theology in the mature classical period. Al-Khabbāzī produced a medium-sized textbook suitable for teaching in the madrasah, which was the use that he put it to as the foremost Ḥanafī scholar in seventh/thirteenth-century Mamlūk Damascus. Apart from his skilful abridgement of *Tabṣirat al-adillah*, the paradigm for classical Ḥanafī texts in the period, the main quality of al-*Hādī* that Aldosari highlights is the excellence of its arrangement. For instance, he argues that al-Khabbāzī differs from most previous works by placing discussion of the attribute of God's creative activity (*takwīn*) after His will, because the former is not shared by rival schools. He also differs from other Māturīdīs in discussing God's wisdom prior to human obligation, and capability before prophethood, because such arrangements provide better rational grounding for his theological positions (pp. 248-49).

In a book of this length, it would have been good to have seen this comparative angle developed further. First, more substantial analysis and documentation would be needed to vindicate the claim that *al-Hādī* is superior to similar works of the period. Second, *al-Hādī*'s relative obscurity raises the question of why other medium-sized Māturīdī texts and commentaries on shorter creeds became more popular in various pedagogical settings. But Aldosari does a good job of introducing the text and its author, setting the stage for others to address these debates in the light of wider social and intellectual developments in the classical and late classical periods.

In terms of the longer historical lens leading up to al-Khabbāzī, Aldosari argues that the classical Māturīdī school was formed from two main strands of Ḥanafī thought: a tradition of rational theology that can be traced back to Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī (d. 333/944) and one of creedal traditionalism from Abū Jaʿfar al-Ṭaḥāwī (d. 321/933). Although the existence of these trends is well known and has been explored by previous scholars, such as Wilferd Madelung and Ulrich Rudolph, their development through *kalām* works and authors has not

been properly mapped out in the English language. In Chapter 5, by examining fifteen scholars, from al-Ḥakīm al-Samarqandī (d. 342/953) to Mankūbars al-Nāṣirī (d. 652/1254), he charts the rise of scholastic theology in the Ḥanafī tradition. Whereas traditionalist Ḥanafism remained common in the fourth/tenth and fifth/eleventh centuries, the next two hundred years saw the supremacy of the classical Māturīdī theological approach. Of particular interest in Aldosari's account are his summaries of later figures outside of Transoxiana: Jamāl al-Dīn al-Ghaznāwī (d. 593/1197) of Aleppo, Ibn al-Mawṣilī (d. 629-30/1232-33) of Damascus and Mankūbars al-Nāṣirī of Baghdad (pp. 190-94). They seem to have been the earliest in the tradition to write commentaries on al-Ṭaḥāwī's creed (though Aldosari does not mention al-Ghaznāwī's text). One could hypothesize that commentarial activity on such a well-respected creed was significant in expanding the reach of Māturīdī theology to Ḥanafīs beyond its heartlands and into regions with stronger traditionalist theological roots.

A related question is when the name *Māturīdī* was first used by Ḥanafīs to describe their theological school. Previous scholarship in English has established that this was a relatively late development, but Aldosari seems to be the first to pin down the earliest named scholar to mention the term. This is Mankūbars al-Nāṣirī who quotes from an anonymous predecessor that the name—as is often the case—was initially used by opponents, here the Muʿtazilah (p. 193).

Another of Aldosari's achievements is his identification of manuscripts of the creed penned by the early traditionalist Ḥanafī Muḥammad ibn al-Faḍl al-Balkhī (d. 419/1027), which is known as *al-Iʿtiqād fī iʿtiqād ahl al-sunnah wa-l-jamāʿah* or *al-Khiṣāl fī ʿaqāʾid ahl al-sunnah* (pp. 172-74, 198, n. 86). Aldosari has also published a separate Arabic edition and study of the work (Dār al-Nahḍah al-ʿArabiyyah, 2020). This makes an important early creed accessible to scholarship and demonstrates the continuation of traditionalist Ḥanafism in Transoxiana into the fifth/eleventh century.

Aldosari has gathered and carefully read many relevant sources: Arabic *kalām* treatises (many in manuscript form), classical Arabic biographical and historical literature, and contemporary Arabic and English studies (he neglects Turkish scholarship, which is a lacuna, albeit an understandable one given the language barrier). Chapters 4-6 provide the best showcase of Aldosari's deep reading and documentation of the Ḥanafī-Māturīdī tradition between the fourth/tenth and seventh/thirteenth centuries. My main criticism of

Aldosari's use of primary sources is his omission of the early Samarqandī Ḥanafī school from his narrative.

Aldosari claims that Muḥammad (Abū l-Yusr) al-Bazdawī (d. 493/1097) is the first known figure to mention al-Māturīdī by name and to adopt his theological views (pp. 178, 194). Al-Bazdawī is doubtless of central importance for the consolidation and transmission of his teachings and may be one of the first to single him out as the leading figure of the Samarqandī Ḥanafī tradition. Nevertheless, there are extant writings that mention al-Māturīdī's name and adopt many of his positions from theologians in the three generations immediately after him: theological responsa from his student Abū l-Ḥasan al-Rustughfanī (d. ca 345/956), the *kalām* manual *Jumalʿⁿ min uṣūl al-dīn* by his grand-student Abū Salamah al-Samarqandī (fl. mid-late fourth/tenth century), and a commentary on this text by Abū al-Ḥusayn Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyá al-Bashāgharī (fl. late fourth/tenth century).

The Arabic critical edition of *al-Hādī*, which takes up just under half of the printed text of *Ḥanafī-Māturīdism* is a notable contribution to the field. Aldosari has collected ten manuscripts, which he argues are the total extant copies of the text. Having discarded four as incomplete or inferior, he bases his edition on the remaining six, specifying as original the manuscript in Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyyah in Cairo, which was copied in a Ḥanafī madrasah in Damascus four and a half months before the author's death (p. 261). Aldosari's edition of *al-Hādī* is primarily based on this manuscript with variations in footnotes and missing text from the other copies added in parentheses. As well as 3644 short footnotes, Aldosari refers the reader to 252 endnotes over forty pages of small Arabic typeface. These provide definitions of key *kalām* terminology, individuals and groups, as well as referencing for ḥadīths mentioned in the text. These features make his edition not only superior to that published by Adil Bebek (Istanbul: Marmara Üniversitesi İlâhiyat Fakültesi Vakfı Yayınları, 2006) from three manuscripts, but more useful for scholarly work, especially when combined with the detailed study in the remainder of the volume.

Any final verdict on *Ḥanafī-Māturīdism* deserves to be given individually to each of its two main elements. For the reasons stated in the previous paragraph, the critical edition of *al-Hādī* is a triumph. Although the discursive study does not fully succeed as a historical monograph due to its questionable structure, pacing and focus, the book still works remarkably well as a vade mecum, that is, a guide to

sit on the desk of serious researchers of the tradition. As the history of Māturīdism continues to be written, it should be regularly consulted.

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***Arabic Humanities, Islamic Thought: Essays in Honor of
Everett K. Rowson***, edited by Joseph E. Lowry and Shawkat M.
Toorawa (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2018), XXIX - 514 pp., ISBN : 978-
90-04-34324-5, $ USD 179,00; € 155,00 (hb).

This Festschrift, presented to its dedicatee on the occasion of his
seventieth birthday, reflects well the outstanding quality and wide
range of scholarship of one of the leading American Arabists of the last
several decades, Everett K. Rowson. Looking at the list of this latter's
publications (pp. XX-XXIX) one cannot but admire the wide variety of
subjects which the latter has seriously dealt with: from philosophy to
literature, the Qurʾān to Islamic erotica, and from classical Islamic Law
to contemporary legal and social issues in the Islamic world (with a
special attention to Egypt) —just to mention the most important foci of
his research. This rich variety of topics across such diverse areas is also
present in the Festschrift. This makes any thematic presentation
extremely difficult and the editors have decided wisely to offer none.

The book opens with two studies related to two interesting notions
in the Qurʾān: *rūḥ* and *kayd*. Regarding the former S. Tlili offers
convincing evidence of the existence of a growing anthropocentric
tendency in the commentarial tradition in interpreting the term. She
rightly insists that this is astonishing. Indeed, in the Qurʾān (more
precisely in s. XVII, 51) it is precisely the profundity and inaccessibility
of the concept of *rūḥ* is emphasized — or, at least, strongly suggested.
It is somewhat regrettable that Tlili says nothing—not even in the form
of a small remark— concerning a possible relation between the
Qurʾānic notion and that of God's *ruaḥ* in *Genesis* 1, even if this is not
the proper topic of her—otherwise, most valuable—contribution. As
for *kayd*, Z. Mahmoud evidences that this term in the sūrah of Yūsuf,
is neither inherently destructive, nor essentially feminine. Hereafter, S.
Spectorsky presents a legal issue: i.e., she surveys some Ḥanbalī views
on secret marriages from the classical days to the present.

D. Hollenberg deals with a quasi-Nuṣayrī fragment in an early
Ismāʿīlī treatise ([partially] published by St. Guyard in 1874, based on

an unknown manuscript of Syrian origin), in which he signals the presence of other quasi-Nuṣayrī tropes outside the fragment as well. Hollenberg offers an edition of the Arabic text, according to the ms. 1283 of the Institute of Ismaili Studies of London, as well as an English translation. On a few occassions (e.g., p. 17, n. 15; p. 18, n. 4 and 20) the expected or corrected reading is attested in Guyard's edition and in one dubious case (p. 55, n. 16) the latter has an interesting variant, namely *ifaḍā* instead of *afāḍal*, since it avoids the problem of a lacking verb (see St. Guyard, *Fragments relatifs à la doctrine des Ismaélîs.* Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1874, pp. 246-247 [which covers only the first part of the fragment]). One wonders why Hollenberg has not taken any profit of Guyard's edition in these cases. The translation offered is valuable. However, in the passage where God says to the Intellect: "you are one (…) and I am one…" (p. 61, last paragraph) I would replace the former 'one' (Arabic: *wāḥid*) with 'unique' and put a majuscule to the latter 'one' (Arabic: *aḥad*)—but, of course, this concerns a minor detail.

Hereafter follow different contributions which mainly are related to poetry, song, or language in the early classical period (8th-10th. cent.): on the crucifixion poem of ʿAlī ibn Jahm (d. 863) (D. Laren); on animal speech in the theologian and litterateur of the same century, al-Jāḥiẓ (J. Miller); on intermedial poetry in Ibn Dāwūd al-Iṣfahānī (d. ca. 910) (L. Harb); on poetry and madness in Arabic literary history (8-9th. cent.) (G. J. van Gelder); on the concept of music according to Abū Zayd al-Balkhī (d. 934) (H. Biesterfeldt); on Zoroaster's many languages, based on classical Arabic sources (al-Bīrūnī, al-Masʿūdī, Ibn al-Nadīm) (K. van Bladel) and on semi-fictional or hybrid narratives in classical Arabic historiography (A. Talib). Each study offers many interesting insights, both technical and doctrinal. In addition, they often highlight psychological or social-political aspects that lie in the background as well. Finally, they often contain well-reflected translations of sometimes very complicated texts. Regarding these latter, very minor reservations sometimes arise, although very seldom. Let me offer three examples:

(1) Miller's translation of "*miqdār al-maṣlaḥa wa-nihāya al-rasm*" as "the degree needed for providential benefit and the purpose of providing a periphrastic definition" (p. 103) is not very appropriate in the context in which it functions—I would propose instead: "the degree of (strict) requirement and the limit of description"

(2)   Talib translates of a verse of a pre-islamic poem of Zuhayr ibn Abī Sulmā (d. 609) that starts with *"a-lā lā arā"* in the affirmative as "I've never known"(p. 240). Logically, one would expect an interrogation—I would therefore propose: "Can I [or: Is it possible to?] know (that a blessed man…)?"

(3)   As to van Gelder's translation of "*fa-anniyya fattish fiyya talqānī*" as "search me in me" (p. 170), albeit literally correct, in my view it misses the profound mystical implication of Ibn al-ʿArabī's affirmation, i.e., the human soul as mirrorring God's image—I therefore would articulate the translation as follows: "(Therefore) search Me [the Truth, i.e., God] in me [i.e., the soul]."

However, let me once more stress that these points concern details—as such, they in no way countervail the overall quality of each of these translations.

Nine contributions then follow that deal with various topics. Their major text source (or, at least, one of their major text sources) can be situated in the somewhat later part of the classical period of Islamic culture, i.e., during the 11-14th centuries: the existence of three major views of Ancient Egypt in the writings of scholars of that period, coming from all over the Islamic world (T. Stephan); a (not literal, but sublime) translation of al-Hamadhānī's *al-Maqāmah al-Mawṣiliyyah* (M. Cooperson), as well as a new edition of this *Maqāmah*, based on the oldest known manuscript, i.e., ms. Fatih 4097 (B. Orfali); an analysis of the expression "*māṣṣ baẓr ummihī*" or its close derivates, with special attention given to Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿah (d. 1270), but also to two earlier authors as well, i.e., al-Ṭabarī (d. 923) and Abū l-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī (d. 967) (J. Nawas); the presence of a rich manuscript variation in the manuscript tradition in which the exordium of the *Maqāmāt* of al-Ḥarīrī (d. 1122) has been preserved (M. Keegan); the understanding of the conception of *mayl*, 'inclination' or 'impetus', in Najm al-Dīn al-Qazwīnī al-Kātibī (d. 1276) and Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 1209) (J. McGinnis); and the unusual, but extraordinary letter to Ibn Nubāta which is present in the book *Maṭlaʿ al-nayyirayn* of Burhān al-Dīn al-Qīrāṭī (d. 1379) (Th. Bauer). These contributions also testify to a high level of scholarship and offer many innovative insights for the interested reader. Here, as well, I see at best room for minor remarks. For example, Keegan states (p. 296) that the ms. Cairo Adab 105 "was copied from an autograph manuscript in 504/1111 and authorized by al-Ḥarīrī," but somewhat later (p. 300) he affirms that it "was authorized at the first reading session and contains an attendance record of its

notable participants"—I find it puzzling that an attendance record can be identified as a copy of an autograph. As to McGinnis (p. 331, and n. 51), he notes that his translation of *qaṭʿ* by 'deprivation' is context-based and deviates from its technical sense—given his own observation that one can make sense of it in the framework of al-Rāzī's discussion, one wonders, however, why he does not withhold the latter. Finally, regarding Bauer's qualification of al-Qīrāṭī's letter as a *mufākharah*, it is far from evident and, as such, questionable—it is worthwhile to note that Bauer himself (p. 343) specifies it as a "*mufākhara* manquée."

The chapter which comes after the nine just mentioned ones, occupies a somewhat isolated place. In it A. Akhtar shows an interesting comparison between Venice and Baghdad (as the new Byzantium, respectively new Baghdad) in the fifteenth century. He focuses as well on the complex issue of their mutual relationschip, and this in a most nuanced way.

The last five papers deal with contemporary issues: M. ʿAbduh's views on family (K. Cuna); conduct books for Egyptian youth at the beginning of the twentieth century (M. Booth); inter-communal violence between Jews and Muslims in Yemen (M. Wagner); internationalism and surrealism in the work of the Egyptian novelist, poet and critic, Idwār al-Kharrāṭ (d. 2015) (H. Halim) and the link between Islamic development and the movement to transform Egypt (J. Toth). They too demonstrate a high level of scholarship level, and, in the last two studies, present undoubtedly challenging, although plausible interpretations.

An index of Qurʾān citations as well as a general index complete this Festschrift, which both by its high scholarly quality and its rich thematic variety constitutes an appropriate homage to the leading scholar who Everett K. Rowson was, and still is.

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Philosophical Theology in Islam: Later Ashʿarism East and West, edited by Ayman Shihadeh and Jan Thiele (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2020), x+1-440 pp., ISBN: 9789004426603, €99.00, $119.00 (hb)

Philosophical Theology in Islam, edited by Ayman Shihadeh and Jan Thiele, is a thirteen-chapter work of robust scholarship into post-classical Ashʿarī theology that boasts papers covering the four corners of the Muslim world. With a book of this scope and size, it is impossible for the reviewer to satisfactorily treat each chapter equally. Specifically, therefore, I attend more closely to chapters dealing with philosophical theory and its development in accordance to the limits of space and personal interests.

The first chapter, by Ulrich Rudolph, deals with al-Ghazālī's view of theology and the legacy inherent in his approach to truth. Perhaps surprisingly, his theological work is announced at the outset as predominantly unoriginal, while al-Ghazālī's critical remarks on kalām, and his being less than enthusiastic about it as a science, are also highlighted. Here, Rudolph concludes that the theologian's goal was not to reform kalām but something greater. However, his inference that kalām was not "a major role in [al-Ghazālī's] intellectual positioning" appears only plausible if taken to mean that while a pivotal factor in the direction of the latter's thought, it was not the most fundamental. In any case, Rudolph endeavors to gather various "theoretical elements" in search of what al-Ghazālī's larger aim was, and inquire about his influence in this regard. Here, he focuses, under separate headings, on logic, scepticism, and knowledge. His view that al-Ghazālī was a mere pragmatist regarding logic, anxious to prove his credentials in the discipline rather than apply it, will undoubtedly be contested. However, the stress on al-Ghazālī's general "tendency to skepticism," appears justified. Certainly, it is strengthened by Rudolph's argument that the theologian criticizes peripatetic metaphysics for being principally based on the imaginative faculty. One of the most interesting claims of the chapter is that al-Ghazālī did not divorce mystical enlightenment from rational achievement,

meaning that he tied sound knowledge to purification of the soul. In this regard too is Rudolph's thought-provoking assertion that the theologian uses light as a metaphor not just for mystical illumination but also the sound operation of reason. All this is undoubtedly significant in determining the intended legacy of Ḥujjat al-Islām, yet, unfortunately, the chapter feels fleeting in its overall method, like being in audience to a teacher who has little time to share their knowledge and insight in detail. Here, Rudolph's brief explanation (and justification) of this type of "intermediate level" inquiry does not satisfy. Nevertheless, despite such drawbacks, it is an exciting chapter, admirably pointing to a large vista of inquiry with many unanswered questions.

Ayman Shihadeh's investigation into the authenticity of an early text newly attributed to al-Rāzī constitutes the book's second chapter. The study is led by the motivation to "provide precious new insight into [al-Rāzī's] study, early career, and wider milieu" and show that "the classical Ashʿarism of al-Juwaynī survived in the east largely unaffected by al-Ghazālī's new style of kalām" (as stated in the introduction). The work in question is a theological summa of which only one manuscript is extant. The first sections of the chapter are mostly an attempt to demonstrate the text's authenticity, which is largely composed of passages, either paraphrased or taken verbatim, from the *Irshād*, with additions primarily drawn from other sources, especially the *Shāmil*. The book shows little free-thinking, and where there is a critical remark, does not inspire confidence. For example, one cited passage expresses a dubious claim that the Eternalists, Exponents of Antemundane Matter, Dualists, Exponents of the Theory of Natures, and Astrologers "are all in reality one and the same group." Apart from al-Rāzī, Shihadeh identifies Abū Naṣr al-Qushayrī and Abū l-Fatḥ Nāṣir al-Anṣārī as possible authors. His applaudable investigative work following up on the writer's reference to his father, "the imām," is unfortunately inconclusive. The rest of the evidence summoned is textual, involving comparisons of the compendium to the respective authors' works, but this too elicits no conclusive proof. In all, it appears the writing on the title page of the manuscript, written in a later hand and giving al-Rāzī's name as the author, is the main evidence for attribution. Scholars of al-Rāzī will no doubt be pleased to be able to draw upon another source in their studies, even if the summa demonstrates little apart from an overwhelming reliance on al-Juwaynī.

The third chapter is by Meryem Sebti and, like the Shihadeh chapter, sets out to demonstrate al-Rāzī's authorship, this time of a text previously (mis)attributed to Ibn Sīnā. Sebti demonstrates that the contents of a Qurʾānic commentary, *Tafsīr Sūrat al-aʿlá*, conform with segments of al-Rāzī's later work, *al-Maṭālib al-ʿāliyah*. Her analysis proceeds, with lengthy quotations, into the topics of embryogenesis, the concept of nature, prophecy, and the doctrine of virtue. In each case, correspondence with al-Rāzī's views and contrasts with Ibn Sīnā's accounts in other works make for an irrefutable case in favor of reattribution. Indeed, the evidence is, in fact, so compelling, one wonders why the text was ever attributed to Ibn Sīnā in the first place. Nevertheless, Sebti's effort here is a solid example of that needed for the larger project of reconsidering works hitherto included in the Avicennian corpus.

Peter Adamson and Andreas Lammer contribute with another chapter focusing on al-Rāzī, though here on his eventual adoption of a conception of time inspired by Plato. The authors concentrate mainly on al-Rāzī's *al-Maṭālib al-ʿĀliya*, but substantial reference is also made to his *Mabāḥith* and *Mulakhkhaṣ* in order to follow al-Rāzī's theoretical advances and preceding criticism of the Avicennian-Aristotelian position. The authors make clear that al-Rāzī's perception of Ibn Sīnā's account of time is characterized by suspicion from the start. The former's extended discussion of time's metaphysical aspect is studied in detail, along with its implications for concepts such as everlastingness, eternity, and measure. Whatever might be said of al-Rāzī's final theory, which is arguably circular, his journey toward the conclusion that time is a metaphysically independent substance from motion constitutes an intricate dialectical labyrinth that the chapter navigates with finesse.

Fedor Benevich's chapter follows developments surrounding the concept of the Necessary Existent, and al-Rāzī's reaction to the Avicennian system. Like the chapter before, this displays great erudition, as Benevich surveys al-Rāzī's corpus to discern the latter's theory on the essence-existence relationship, tracing the history of the debate before al-Rāzī to aid his explanations. The discussion is structured around to two main problems: univocity and composition regarding existence and the divine essence. However, Benevich's decision to omit an exposition of Ibn Sīnā's position means that he fails to explain how it is possible for al-Rāzī to be criticizing Ibn Sīnā while arguing for an Avicennian position. Additionally, more could have

been said on Ibn Sīnā's own hesitation of assigning an essence to the Necessary Existent. It is Ibn Sīnā's considered view that God's *essence* consists in necessary existence. This means that the philosophical progress covered by the chapter occurs not in response to Ibn Sīnā *per se*, but al-Rāzī's understanding of the former's position. Indeed, Benevich discusses whether al-Rāzī's position is not actually Avicennian in his concluding remarks. Nevertheless, the chapter offers an extensive discussion of what is a central article of debate within Islamic philosophy and theology, showing al-Rāzī to make pioneering advancements.

Bilal Ibrahim's study addresses views regarding the causing of essence (*jaʿl al-māhiyyah*), which encompasses issues ranging from mereology to the status of divine knowledge. This is another chapter dealing with al-Rāzī, though the debates on the topic extend well beyond him, as Ibrahim shows. Perhaps one of the most technically complex and fascinating of all the articles in the book, it will reward careful study. However, the discussion is too much presented in the style of detailed research notes, and though the author subheads his chapter accordingly, some working thesis would have benefitted the presentation. It is likely for this reason that the reader will find there appears insufficient comment on how it was deemed possible for one to think that an essence can be caused. As the central subject of exposition, the state of knowledge regarding the matter's philosophical and historical foundations, as well as al-Rāzī's theory of essence, deserved greater discussion and elucidation.

The next chapter, by Jon Hoover, explores Mamlūk Ashʿarism via the reactions to Ibn Taymiyyah's opposition to Ashʿarī theological hermeneutics. This has the benefit of shedding more light on Ibn Taymiyyah's contemporaries rather than the famous Shaykh al-Islām, who has already been the subject of substantial recent scholarship, not least by Hoover himself. However, the reader must forgive the impression that Ibn Taymiyyah's more literalist approach, though unique, was not closely aligned with usual conservative Ḥanbalī theology, and that Abū l-Ḥasan al-Ashʿarī had not already skillfully responded to such hermeneutic austerity centuries earlier. In other words, the topic is a direct continuation (and, in some ways, mere repetition) of an older debate that goes significantly unrecognized. In any event, the chapter otherwise represents a fine contribution to understanding the history of exegetical methods, such as *tafwīḍ* and *taʾwīl*, in relation to Ibn Taymiyyah's "double perspective" of denying

knowledge of the modality (*kayfiyyah*) of God's attributes while affirming it for their meaning (*ma'nâ*).

The eighth chapter, written by Aaron Spevack, is more historical in tone. Though he starts by introducing the matter of salvific religious belief, the study is an effort in the wider and vaguely specified exploration to find "evidence of robust and innovative continued conversations" that demonstrate "vibrancy of later theological traditions." The first mentioned topic is, in fact, just one of three that the author tackles to achieve his aim – the others being the nature of existence and developments in logic. Spevack focuses mainly on al-Sanūsī and al-Bājūrī, but aptly notes numerous other figures involved in important theological work, showing the geographical and chronological width of deliberation. His account of the first topic, however, proves little engagement with philosophy or development of thought, only continued debate. And notwithstanding the intriguing nature of the second topic, which overlaps with the discussions of previous chapters, the mere fact that thinkers were "free to determine their own positions" does again not represent much by way of philosophical development. As for the third topic, it receives barely two pages of explication. In all, it seems arguable that even the modest aim of proving intellectual innovation was not achieved here.

The last five contributions are also more historical in approach, and we have not the space to comment except briefly. Like Spevack's, these all add to the geographical comprehensiveness of the book's character and make an important contribution to relatively neglected areas. Xavier Casassas Canals and Delfina Serrano-Ruano demonstrate in detail that not all scholars shared the critical stance versus al-Ghazālī in Almoravid and Almohad al-Andalus, and that figures such as Ibn Rushd al-Jadd and al-Qurṭubī made persuasive arguments against the negative and ill-informed judgements against him. Jan Thiele similarly explores the Islamic West, this time Ifrīqiyah under the Ḥafsid's, going through evidence to show high activity in kalām in the Maghrib. The aim is relatively modest (and Thiele notes only the decades-old work of R. Brunschvig as a target for rebutting the idea that theological work was limited in the region). This contribution reflects the historical approach adopted in some of the other chapters and presents an excellent overview.

The twelfth chapter shifts attention to the east, specifically the lands of the Ilkhanate. Reza Pourjavady's account of al-Ījī's work does a commendable job of surveying the historical context, major works, and

impact of this key scholar vis-à-vis leading students to shed light on Ashʿarī kalām in the fourteenth century. In the next paper, Harith Ramli discusses the fascinating connection between Ashʿarism and Sufism via Ibrāhīm al-Kūrānī's two types of *taḥqīq*, representing intellectual and spiritual disciplines. Finally, Asad Ahmed looks southeast at Ashʿarism in India through the reception of al-Ījī's *Mawāqif*, admirably exploring the scholarly networks of the region and key figures, such as Mīr Zāhid al-Harawī.

Again, some of these chapters give the impression of extensive research notes that merely set the foundation for more decisive gains in knowledge. What is more, the book displays a formal disbalance between chapters that go into the theoretical minutia of sophisticated debates and those that are more akin to historical overviews. However, this is a minor complaint and readers may appreciate the variety of approaches respectively adopted in the book. Indeed, where chapters delve in less depth, it is generally on areas that have been understudied. Clearly, this volume will be a key resource for those interested in the complex theological legacy bestowed by al-Rāzī to later generations of thinkers and developments in post-classical Ashʿarī kalam right across the Muslim world.

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The Concept of Freedom in Judaism, Christianity and Islam,
edited by Georges Tamer and Ursula Männle (Berlin/Boston:
Walter de Gruyter, 2019), viii+168 pp., ISBN 9783110560558, €25.95
(pb)

I have to confess that, when I first came across this book, I was
somewhat wary of what I would find between the covers of this slim
volume. For the past couple of centuries, *a particular* conception of
freedom became *the universal* benchmark against which all other
conceptions had to be measured, and if they were not the same as *the
only one* admissible, well, they were not really conceptions of
freedom.

On the one hand, this conception is intertwined with the so-called
liberal democracy [for Carl Schmitt (1888-1985), a contradiction in
terms] and market economy, which, in turn, are themselves *particular*
forms of democracy and economy elevated to the category of
universal ones, including in the academic world, which is supposed to
be the realm of scientific and objective enquiry (but that is another
matter), despite the fact that the practice of some of its apologists led
to the *unfreedom* of several parts of the world. On the other hand, and
despite its religious overtones, or because of it, this conception of
freedom sees religion as one of its enemies, not to say *the enemy*,
considered as a fortress of irrationality, darkness, and servitude
(whatever these may mean).

Usually, works dealing with issues such as "Judaism," "Christianity"
and, especially, "Islam" are always prone to vapid, sweeping
generalizations ("Judaism and Islam are religions of law" or
"Christianity separates church and state"), and, instead of being
descriptive, they are *prescriptive*, not being unusual to read, or hear,
old-chestnuts such as "Islam needs an urgent reform similar to that
which occurred during the Christian Reformation…" (If we are going
to accept linear time and "Western" history as the *models*, then by the
20th Hijri century "Islam" will finally have its own concentration camps
and gas chambers...)

As Ellen Meiksins Wood (1942-2016) reminded us, there has been much confusion about Islam and the consequences of its belief in a single divinely revealed system of law, encompassing the whole range of human practice, secular as well as religious. We have become familiar with a strain of Islam, for which this view of the law requires an "Islamist" state, replacing secular governance with a so-called "fundamentalist theocracy." But this was certainly not characteristic of Islam in the medieval and early modern periods. The belief in a single divinely revealed law meant not the dominance of mullahs but, on the contrary, the absence of an institutional power comparable to the Christian ecclesiastical establishment, with its own distinct claims to authority and obedience. There was no autonomous Islamic power such as the Catholic Church for policing theology, let alone laying claim to authority over the whole temporal domain. There were no jurisdictional claims and disputes of the kind that characterized Christianity; and this permitted, among other things, an openness to the idea that truth could be arrived at in various ways - for example, by means of secular philosophy no less than by means of Islamic theology. By the same reasoning, a secular government could be perfectly consistent with Islamic theology - and perhaps without all the tensions engendered by jurisdictional conflicts of Western Christianity. Christian theology did not prevent secular governments from claiming their authority as divinely ordained; and, if anything, the jurisdictional dualism of Christianity could easily accommodate, indeed invite, a doctrine of strict obedience to secular authority imposed on sinful human beings, in the manner of Saint Augustine (354-430) and Martin Luther (1483-1546).

So, when I read the back cover of the book under review, my expectations became high. This volume, the third in the *Key Concepts in Interreligious Discourses* series, but the first to be published, is divided into five parts: a Preface by the editors, three chapters on the concept of freedom in, respectively, Judaism (pp. 1-44), Christianity (pp. 45-100) and Islam (101-146), and, finally, an Epilogue (pp. 147-158). Its main aim is to investigate the roots of the concept of freedom in Judaism, Christianity and Islam and its relevance for the present time. The idea of freedom in terms of personal freedoms, which include freedom of conscience, freedom of speech and bodily integrity, is a relatively new one and can in some aspects get into conflict with religious convictions. At the same time, freedom as an emancipatory power from outer oppression as well as from inner

dependencies is deeply rooted in Judaism, Christianity and Islam. It is still a vital concept in religious and non-religious communities and movements. The volume presents the concept of freedom in its different aspects as anchored in the traditions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam, and unfolds commonalities and differences between the three monotheistic religions as well as the manifold discourses about freedom within these three traditions. All the chapters have introductory remarks, a conclusion, bibliography, and suggestions for further reading, but my expectations were not met.

The first chapter, by Kenneth Seeskin, is less about freedom in Judaism than personal reflections about some issues, more or less interlocked with that concept. The chapter is divided into five sections (The Giving of Law; Sabbath Observance; Repentance; Freedom of Thought; and Messianism), and draws heavily on previous works by the author, who is a Professor of Jewish Civilization, and best known for his interpretation and defense of the rationalist tradition in Jewish Philosophy, including such figures as Maimonides (113?-1204), Spinoza (1632-1677), and Hermann Cohen (1842-1918).

The chapter on Christianity by Nico Vorster is very well structured and organized, and should have been used as a template for the other two chapters. It was the chapter I enjoyed the most and it starts with basic Biblical terminology and essential theological and philosophical features. Then, it gives the reader the historical development of the Christian concepts of freedom, showing us that there are several concepts and not just one. In a fourth sub-chapter, the author refers to the main differences between contemporary Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox approaches to freedom, and the last two parts of the chapter are about the current use and impact of the concept of freedom within Christianity, and the practical application and future relevance of the Christian concept of freedom. There is also a sub-chapter, the fifth, on Christian concepts of freedom in relation to Judaism and Islam, which felt like an exercise in Christian intellectual imperialism - that comparison is not made by the other two authors and that task should have been the monopoly of the editors of the volume.

The chapter on Islam is by Maha El Kaisy-Friemuth. The author starts by referring to the perception of freedom in pre-Islamic Arabic culture and in the Qurʾān, and to the concept of freedom in Islamic theology. A reader not acquainted with Islamic history will not have the faintest idea of what or who the author is talking about, since no dates and no historical contextualization are given. The next two sub-

chapters deal with freedom and individuality among the Muslim philosophers, and the Sufis and their concept of freedom. For this, the only sources that the author uses are Ibn Sīnā [Avicenna (980-1037)] and al-Ghazālī (1058-1111): where are Ibn Bājjah [Avempace (1085-1138)], Ibn Ṭufayl (1105-1185), Ibn Rushd [Averroes (1126-1198)], the Ismāʿīlī thinkers, Farīd al-Dīn ʿAṭṭār (1145-1221), Ibn ʿArabī (1165-1240), Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī (1207-1273),...? And then, as if nothing had happened during seven and a half centuries, the author jumps from al-Ghazālī directly to al-Afghānī (1838-1897): it seems that no one thought about freedom in the Ottoman Empire, in Safavid Iran, in Mughal India, in the Malay world, in sub-Saharan Africa... Not even Ibn Khaldūn (1332-1406) is mentioned.

Considering that there were no references to women in the chapters about Judaism and Christianity, it was odd to read about freedom and the rights of women in Islam, as if there is something particular to Islam in what refers to women, perpetuating old stereotypes (One just needs to look at the numbers concerning gender and sexual violence, murders, and so on, in Jewish, Christian, and "secular" societies to see that there is nothing exceptional about "Islam").

Parts seven and eight are about freedom of belief and apostasy, and critical free thinking versus blind following. But the worst was still to come. In the ninth sub-chapter, about freedom in the Shīʿa thought (if there is a section on Shīʿa thought, where is the Sunnī counterpart? I have to assume that the author considers Sunnī thought as the norm and, so, it does not need a separate section), Maha El Kaisy-Friemuth summarizes in one paragraph, less than six lines, a millennium of history and then, to give two examples of contemporary Shīʾī thinkers, she refers to the Iranian Mohammad Mojtahed Shabestarī (b. 1936) and to the Irāqī Muḥammad al-Bāqir al-Ḥakīm (1939-2003). El Kaisy-Friemuth also refers two of the books by the latter, *Our Philosophy* and *Our Economy*. The problem is that these two books are by Muḥammad Bāqir al-Ṣadr (1935-1980), who was executed by the Irāqī regime. Although she cites his book *Our Economy*, she made a gross mistake by not noticing that they were two different persons. The final part, on freedom and its limitation, is clearly misplaced, since it deals with Islamic theology of the early days of Islam.

The book ends with an Epilogue, by Georges Tamer and Katja Thörner, where the reader finds a summary of the concepts of freedom from a Jewish, Christian, and Islamic perspective as well as common features and differences [one wonders why the authors did not use the

term "Muslim" instead of "Islamic" – Maimonides was a Jewish thinker who worked and lived in an Islamic environment, and Edward Said (1935-2003) was born into a Christian family and he considered himself as being part of an Islamic culture]. Finally, the last section is about the confrontation with secular ideas of freedom in modernity.

The book series aims to bring together academic studies of essential concepts and discourses in Judaism, Christianity and Islam, offering a new approach to the study of these religions by investigating the original understandings and major developments of the central concepts responsible for shaping each one of these traditions, and aims to establish an *archaeology of religious knowledge*, which can enable a new understanding of religious concepts as evolving products of living discourses that emerge under diverse historical and cultural circumstances, creating a new conceptual platform capable of engendering further interreligious discourses and fruitful interreligious exchange. This is commendable and, in order to achieve these goals, it has to be defined a template followed by each and every author, whose quality, of course, should be paramount.

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Eichner, Heidrun. "Dissolving the Unity of Metaphysics: From Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī to Mullā Ṣadrā al-Shīrāzī." *Medioevo* 32 (2007): 139-197.

Aydınlı, Abdullah. "Ebû Zer el-Gıfârî." In *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi (DİA)*, X, 266-269.

Book

Kātib Chalabī, Ḥājī Khalīfa Muṣṭafā ibn ʿAbd Allāh. *Kashf al-ẓunūn ʿan asāmī l-kutub wa-l-funūn*. 2 vols. Edited by M. Şerefeddin Yaltkaya and Kilisli Rifat Bilge. Istanbul: Maarif Matbaası, 1941-1943.

Michot, Yahya M. *Ibn Sīnā: Lettre au Vizir Abū Saʿd: Editio princeps d'après le manuscrit de Bursa, traduction de l'arabe, introduction, notes et lexique.* Beirut: al-Burāq, 2000.

Book Chapter

Janssens, Jules. "The Reception of Avicenna's *Physics* in the Latin Middle Ages." In *O ye Gentlemen: Arabic Studies on Science and Literary Culture in honour of Remke Kruk,* edited by I. Vrolijk and J. P. Hogendijk, 55-64. Leiden: Brill, 2007.

Online Citation

Frank, Richard. "Elements in the Development of the Teaching of al-Ashʿarī." *Le Muséon: Revue D'Études Orientales* 104 (1991), 141-190. https://doi.org/10.2143/MUS.104.1.2006086.

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