

- ²¹ According to Omer Aydin the first person in the Sunni tradition who argued that free will is uncreated was Sadr us-Sharia. See Omer Aydin, 1998, p. 82.
- ²² Sadr us-Sharia, *at-Tadvih fi Halli Gawamiz at-Tankih* (Beirut, no date), vol. 1, p. 178.
- ²³ Omer Aydin, 1998, p. 69.
- ²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 67.
- ²⁵ Sadr us-Sharia, *at-Tadvih fi Halli Gawamiz at-Tankih*, vol. 1, pp. 178–188.
- ²⁶ Ibn Sina, *Kitab al-Shifa* (Cairo, 1961), p. 31 (Ibn Sina [Avicenna], 980–1037).
- ²⁷ John Searle, *The Construction of Social Reality* (London: Penguin Books, 1995), Chapters 1, 2, 5.
- ²⁸ Nicholas Malebranche, *The Search after Truth*, in *Philosophical Selections*, ed. by Steven Nadler (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1992), p. 94 (Malebranche, 1638–1715).
- ²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 96.
- ³⁰ Nicholas Malebranche, *Premotion*, in *Oeuvres Completes de Malebranche (OC)*, ed. by A. Robinet (Paris: J. Vrin, 1958–1967), vol. 16, p. 40.
- ³¹ Nicholas Malebranche, *Elucidations* in *OC*, vol. 1, p. 547 and *Reflexions* in *OC*, vol. 10, pp. 43–44.
- ³² *Ibid.*, *OC*, vol. 1, p. 46.
- ³³ *Ibid.*, *OC*, vol. 9, p. 1129.
- ³⁴ Elmar J. Kremer, *Malebranche on Human Freedom*, in *Cambridge Companion to Malebranche*, ed. Steven Nadler (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 211.
- ³⁵ Nicholas Malebranche, *The Search after Truth*, in *Philosophical Selections*, p. 95.
- ³⁶ Sadr'us-Sharia, *at-Tadvih*, vol. 1, p. 180.
- ³⁷ Gilbert Ryle, *The Concept of Mind* (London: Penguin Books, 1963), p. 20.
- ³⁸ Brian O'Shaughnessy, *The Will: A Dual Aspect Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), vol. 2, p. 544. O'Shaughnessy makes a distinction between deciding and choosing. In the former act, "an uncertainty as to what to do finds resolution in the formation of an intention." He adds that not all intentions emerge out of deciding. The act of choosing is an act of selection. This selective act does not need to involve necessarily a decision procedure. These distinctions are useful to understand the mental phenomena better but my worry in this paper is just to deal with the problem of human freedom within an occasionalistic context. So I ignore these distinctions for my purpose in this paper.
- ³⁹ Said Nursi, *Risale-i Nur Kulliyati* (Istanbul: Nesil Yayinlari, 2001), vol. 1, p. 232 (Said Nursi, 1878–1960).
- ⁴⁰ Said Nursi, 2001, vol. 2, p. 1515.
- ⁴¹ Said Nursi, 2001, vol. 1, p. 598.
- ⁴² Nicholas Malebranche, *OC*, vol. 7, p. 568.
- ⁴³ *Ibid.*, *OC*, vol. 16, p. 29.
- ⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, *OC*, vol. 6, p. 163.
- ⁴⁵ Rene Descartes, *A Letter to Mersenne (27 May 1630)*, in *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, vol. III, ed. and tr. by J. Cottingham, R. Stoothoff, D. Murdoch, and A. Kenny (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 25 (Descartes, 1596–1650).
- ⁴⁶ Elmar J. Kremer, *Malebranche on Human Freedom*, in *Cambridge Companion to Malebranche*, p. 214.
- ⁴⁷ I would like to thank Oliver Leaman, David Bradshaw, Tahsin Gorgun, Ilhan Inan, Majid Amini, and Craig Streetman for their valuable comments and suggestions for the earlier drafts of this paper.

REVELATION AND REASON: IBN 'ARABI'S SUFISM
AND G.W. LEIBNIZ'S IDEALISM

Abstract:

In this chapter, I analyze the Sufism of Ibn 'Arabi using the rational idealism of G. W. Leibniz as a comparative backdrop. After a brief overview of the history of Sufism and Ibn 'Arabi's biography, I expose the tenets of the Ibn 'Arabi's version of Sufism and analyze his method in espousing those precepts. I will illustrate Ibn 'Arabi's articulation of the meta-material reality followed by an explanation of how to approach that reality and how to receive its approach. Leibniz agrees with 'Arabi's claim that, ultimately, reality is unseen and meta-material, while, their approaches differ. However, if rationalists, friendly to Leibniz's method, take heed of the Sufi way, they might create conditions favorable to the experience of revealed truth. This capacity might curtail their dualistic tendencies that separate their philosophic and worldly endeavors. Leibniz's and of Ibn 'Arabi's philosophy both have an ethical purpose, and this marks their convergence in philosophical significance.

Key words: Revelation, reason, mysticism, sufism, rationalism, idealism, immanence, imagination, the perfect man, gnostic, manifestation, epiphany, vassal, divine names, monad, recollection, ontology, axiology, theophany, meditation, photism, logos

Revelation and reason: are these methods two sides of the same coin, or are they mutually exclusive? Is mysticism a problem for philosophy and is philosophy a hindrance to religious revelation? Are mystical spiritualism and rational idealism compatible, or are they negatively attracted like two positively charged magnets? These questions approach the problems of religion and philosophy at their cognitive and imaginative limits. The philosophy of Ibn 'Arabi represents an instance of a tradition amenable to revelation, but his method employs all the tools of traditional philosophy in order to present a metaphysics of revelation. Sufism represents a mystical and experiential route to truth. The rationalism of the Cartesian tradition is emblematic of the discursive path to truth. The idealism of G. W. Leibniz represents an instance of this tradition, but its *telos* demarcates it as amenable to the traditions given to revelation. When studied from the isolated perspective of epistemology, rational idealism and mysticism diverge, and appear antithetical. From this perspective, Ibn

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too much with the tendency of the Iraqi sources and is unable to bridge the contrast with other documents about Ibn al-Rēwandī (cf. Texts 3–34). The same conventional picture is reproduced in her contribution to Patlagean/Le Bolluec, *Les retours aux écritures* 269ff., where she discusses Ibn al-Rēwandī together with Rhazes (*Ecritures alternatives? Tradition et autorité chz les libre-penseurs en Islam medieval*). It should not be overlooked that the material studied only ever contains statements on other statements, never statements on reality; ‘being faithful to the sources’ alone does not get us any further.

In the following we shall document this in more detail, looking at the individual topics discussed in the book. The structure does not claim to follow the original; rather, it is aligned with the internal logic of the argumentation. It does, however, take the sequence in the available sources into account wherever possible.⁷

8.2.2.3.1.1 A: The Compatibility of the Revelation with Reason

The more the Mu‘tazila became accustomed to the concept of natural religion, the more insistent became the question of where its boundaries lay. Our text carries rationalism to the extreme: He who ‘flies on the wings of reason to the furthest horizons of knowledge’¹ does not require a prophet. Everything that goes beyond the understanding of reason ‘contradicts’ it; one does thus not have to accept it. Those things that agree with reason, on the other hand, are mere affirmation; this does not justify the investment of a prophetic mission. This is what, according to Mu‘ayyad, the ‘Brahmins’ said in the *K. al-zumur-rud*; he declares it to be a literal quotation.² Māturīdī makes similar claims concerning Abū ‘Īsā al-Warrāq,³ although he – if we understand the text correctly – expresses the negative side of the dilemma more harshly: if a prophet commands something that ‘contradicts’ reason, it can only claim validity if the laws of reason are changed. Abū ‘Īsā appears to have demonstrated this using the example of the sacrificial animals: if Islam allows these sacrifices based on the Quran, this comes at the cost of abolishing the general command

6 The sections in Māturīdī’s text are decidedly difficult to understand; the text was certainly corrupted in places. In Maj. Kull. Ādāb Baghdād, ‘Abd al-Amīr A’sam reprinted the MS in facsimile and re-edited the text in an improved form.

1 Thus after a presumed quotation from the introduction (Text 48, b).

2 Text 49.

3 Text 50, a.

Nazzām did not trust them much in any case (see p. 423f. above), it was even more important to add the caveat that their opinion must be uncontested and unmistakable; a mere divergent opinion was not sufficient. In this interpretation I presume that Nazzām, who is mentioned only in 201, i, was not only the author of sentences *g–h* which are introduced with *qāla*, but also a supporter of the opinion presented previously *d–f* to which his sentences refer. We do not learn the names of those who championed the first view in *a–c*, but considering the similarities with Text x 6, it might go back to 'Amr b. 'Ubayd or his school.

3.2.2.2.4.2.2.3 Divine Speech. The Quran

When the scripture tells us that God speaks, Nazzām interpreted it to mean that he is not mute, not that he speaks like humans. That would not, in fact, be possible, as human speech is movement and as such an accident.¹ The human moves his tongue which affects the sound (*ṣawt*) which is an existing body. His articulation structures and divides this amorphous body into pieces; interrupted in this way, the sound reaches our ear which perceives it as speech.² In accordance with the phonology of his time Nazzām understood human speech to be *aṣwāt muqatta'a*, 'articulated sounds',³ although he translated *aṣwāt* as 'sound moments' into the language of his system, and also understood *taqtī* more literally than was usual. We may imagine this process as the sound tied up in the flow of air that emanates from a human. Within this, the sound is neutralised and inaudible; only when it is divided into pieces does it become free and audible to us.⁴

It is the same when one recites the Quran, as recitation is movement.⁵ Divine speech, on the other hand, is not generated through movement; God does not, after all, have a mouth. It is only sound, and consequently a body. It, too, consists of *aṣwāt muqatta'a* and is thus structured and composed like

1 Text 205, a. Cf. p. 411 above.

2 Text 207 and 208, c; also 112, f.

3 Cf. the definition of the *ḥurūf* in the *K. al-ḥudūd* of the *Corpus Jābirianum* (*Rasā'il* 109, 4f.); cf. Kraus, *Jābir* II 244, and WKAS II 914 b (after Tawḥīdī). Regarding Abū l-Hudhayl see Text XXI 112, b; but his theory is rather more complex (see p. 305f. above). A single sound does not constitute speech (cf. Baghdādī, *Farq* 123, 10ff./139, 9ff., who based an argument against Nazzām on this).

4 Cf. the parallel in Text 206; also 208, c. Nazzām was probably aware that the throat played a part in articulation as well as the tongue. Sībawayh believed that vocal pressure (*i'timād*) transforms the flow of air into sound (cf. Danecki in: *Studies in the History of Arabic Grammar* II 92), but Nazzām used the term *i'timād* differently (cf. p. 352ff. above).

5 Text 205, c; cf. sura 75:16.

good deed does not become good because God wills it, and the act of will does not immediately imply that it will come to pass.³²

Discord arose when it came to the example of faith. The sources' discussing this as a separate issue indicates that Abū l-Hudhayl did not treat faith as one act of obedience among many. The reason was probably that even in Abū l-Hudhayl's day numerous Mu'tazilites considered faith to be created.³³ Abū l-Hudhayl now disagreed; otherwise he would not have been able to take on the *aṣḥāb al-makhlūq*.³⁴ He did not, however, admit that by willing faith God simply commanded it;³⁵ he neither commanded nor created it in this way.³⁶ Unfortunately this is ambiguous, like all negative statements. One thing only seems to be clear: he does not mean an act of will in the sense of the *fiat*. Willing is less than creating and more than commanding. Maybe Abū l-Hudhayl had in mind a divine mercy to ensure support by the surrounding circumstances; after all, one does not usually believe without precondition, like doing a good deed based on a sudden decision, but is born into the faith. However, as long as there are no new sources confirming this, we must leave this question unanswered.

3.2.1.3.4.5 Divine Speech

If the *fiat* was a mere accident, this surely applied to all divine speech. In addition it requires a substrate:¹ when God spoke to Moses, it inhabited the burning bush;² when God speaks to the Muslims it exists as the Quran in the form of a book, in the memory of humans, or in the recitation.³ While the Quran also exists somewhere in heaven, on the 'preserved tablet', it is an accident there as well and created as such.⁴ Consequently it can be in many places at once, and it can cease to exist in any place: such as when a copy of the Quran is destroyed, or when someone finishes his recitation,⁵ but this does not mean that the Quran as such, God's speech, is constantly moving around; one and

32 Text 105, d; also 104, a.

33 See p. 115 above.

34 Cf. Text 90, u–y; also p. 298 above.

35 Text 100, l.

36 Text 104, c, and 105, b.

1 Text 110.

2 Text 86, p; cf. p. 78 and 178 above.

3 Text 113, a–b; 114, b.

4 Text 114, a.

5 Recounted in distorted form by Lālakā'ī, *Sharḥ uṣūl i'tiqād ahl al-sunna* 221 no. 363.

CHAPTER 3

Revelation

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Strong convictions about the reality of divine revelation or inspiration are widely documented in the history of religion, and nowhere more prominently than in the three major Western monotheistic traditions. In Islam, this conviction has focused on God's scriptural revelation and Prophetic inspiration, and their textual instantiation in Qur'an and hadith, respectively, but it has extended also to include other, post-scriptural, post-Prophetic, divine revelatory activity such as God's guidance of Shi'i imams or his communion with Sufi adepts. The strong sense that scripture and the sunna of the Prophet are the primary sources of revealed truth and guidance has been historically a widely accepted, fundamental premise of Muslim religious thinking for the majority of Muslim scholars and religious thinkers, Sunni, Shi'i, and Sufi alike, as well as for the wider community of the Muslim faithful, whatever their orientation. This has ensured the place of both Qur'an and hadith as dual sources of divine revelation or inspiration at the heart of the vast majority of Muslim traditions of thought, piety, and practice.

We focus here on conceptions of divine revelation/inspiration through Qur'an and hadith that can be found in these texts themselves and in other classical Sunni sources (e.g. *tafsīr*, *sīra*) from primarily the first four centuries AH (seventh to tenth century CE). While the antiquity or authenticity (e.g. as words of Muhammad or a companion) of some, if not many, of the traditions and views cited from early and even later sources can be questioned (as they have been in both Islamic and non-Islamic scholarship), our interest is not in the origins of these traditions and views but in their preservation and ongoing usage in the developing Islamic tradition.¹

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