

REVELATION, DREAMS, AND VISIONS

EPISTEMOLOGICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL
PERSPECTIVES IN THE ISLAMIC
INTELLECTUAL TRADITION



RAHIL NAJAFOV

Revelation, Dreams, and Visions

Epistemological and Philosophical Perspectives
in the Islamic Intellectual Tradition

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“Revelation, Dreams, and Visions: Epistemological and Philosophical Perspectives in the Islamic Intellectual Tradition”

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Annotation. *Revelation, Dreams, and Visions: Epistemological and Philosophical Perspectives in the Islamic Intellectual Tradition* by Rahil Najafov explores the multifaceted ways knowledge and spiritual insight are conceptualized in Islamic thought. The book examines the philosophical underpinnings of prophecy, divine revelation, and mystical experiences, connecting classical Islamic scholarship with contemporary epistemological debates. It analyzes how dreams and visions function as sources of knowledge and moral guidance within various Islamic traditions. Najafov integrates historical, theological, and philosophical perspectives to illuminate the dynamic interplay between reason and revelation. This work provides scholars and students of Islamic studies with a comprehensive framework for understanding the intellectual and spiritual dimensions of Islamic epistemology.

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Introduction

1. The Philosophical Significance of Revelation

Within the intellectual heritage of Eastern philosophy, the concept of revelation occupies a central place as both a metaphysical and epistemological phenomenon. Eastern Peripatetic thinkers regarded revelation not merely as a theological doctrine but as a distinct form of cognition that corresponded to the highest degree of intellect. Prominent philosophers—including al-Kindi, al-Farabi, Ibn Sina [Avicenna], Ibn Rushd [Averroes], and Ibn Khaldun—examined revelation as an autonomous mode of knowledge, one capable of shaping civilizations, uniting societies around shared ideals, and advancing cultural progress.

Although revelation has been given an eminent role in classical Islamic philosophy, in Azerbaijan it has not been systematically addressed as an independent philosophical problem. This scholarly gap underscores both the theoretical and practical significance of the subject in contemporary intellectual discourse.

2. Revelation as a Universal and Salvific Principle

The information age has expanded the scope of human knowledge while simultaneously overwhelming the capacity of rational comprehension. In this process, traditional spiritual values—once foundational to human culture—are increasingly eclipsed by global materialist trends. Yet, the human longing for the sacred remains inextinguishable. Revelation must therefore be approached not solely as a theological controversy but as a universal and salvific principle,

one capable of providing normative guidance in the resolution of global crises.

Islamic philosophers emphasized revelation as a source of moral creativity, social justice, and universal human values. These features not only enhance its philosophical significance but also situate it as a critical topic for contemporary inquiry.

3. The Epistemological Dimension of Revelation

Since antiquity, human beings have intuited the existence of realities transcending the material world. This intuition—deeply embedded in human nature—has historically motivated the pursuit of alternative forms of cognition. Among these, esoteric knowledge, and particularly revelation, has been recognized as providing access to truths that transcend rational deduction. Revelation thus constitutes an indispensable subject of epistemology, especially when analyzed within the framework of Eastern Peripatetic thought.

4. Research Context in Azerbaijan

Despite the historical prominence of Islamic philosophy, the study of revelation as a philosophical category remains underdeveloped in Azerbaijan. Nonetheless, a number of works have contributed to the intellectual legacy of Eastern Peripatetic studies. These include:

- Makovelsky, A. O. *From the History of Philosophy in Azerbaijan in the XI-XII Centuries*. Baku: Elm, 1966.
- Zekuev, A. K. *From the History of Arabic Logic in the Middle Ages*. Baku: Elm, 1971.
- Akhmedov, E. M. *Arab-Muslim Philosophy of the Middle Ages*. Baku: Elm, 1980.
- Mammadov, Z. J. *History of Azerbaijani Philosophy*. Baku:

Irshad, 1994.

- Guluzade, Z. A. Patterns of Development of Eastern Philosophy in the XIII–XVI Centuries and the Problem of West–East. Baku: Elm, 1983.

Additional contributions include studies on Bahmanyar, Ibn Sina, Ibn Khaldun, and Eastern Peripateticism, such as Zekuev [1958], Mammadov [1983], Mehdioğlu [2006], Ibrahimov [2006], and Manafov [2007].

5. Comparative Research Context

Comparable contributions in Turkish scholarship further illuminate the subject. Hilmi Ziya Ülken [1967], Çetin İzzet Agah [1991], Bekir Karlığa [1993], and Nihat Taylan [2000] have investigated the influence and systematization of Islamic philosophy, while Osman Pazarlı [1968] approached the psychological dimensions of revelation.

Western scholarship has likewise expanded the horizon of analysis, particularly through the works of William Montgomery Watt [1985], Majid Fakhry [2000], Seyyed Hossein Nasr [2000], and Fazlur Rahman [1958], whose studies underscore the epistemological and social significance of prophecy and revelation.

Research Objectives and Tasks

The overarching aim of this study is to provide a systematic philosophical exploration of revelation within the framework of Eastern Peripatetic philosophy. Rather than limiting itself to a descriptive overview of Peripateticism as a historical school, the research emphasizes the contextual analysis of individual philosophers, with the

goal of reconnecting modern intellectual discourse to national, spiritual, and philosophical traditions.

The main objectives and tasks include:

1. Clarifying the style, mechanisms, and epistemic methods of revelation in its acceptance within society.
2. Examining the social and socio-legal dimensions of revelation, with emphasis on its normative role in modern contexts.
3. Comparing the philosophical and religious aspects of revelation in Eastern Peripatetic thought, highlighting methodological diversity.
4. Analyzing distinctive features of Peripatetic perspectives concerning the nature of revelation.
5. Investigating revelation as both a religious and philosophical category.
6. Evaluating the transformative role of revelation in addressing social issues.
7. Reviving scholarly engagement with Eastern Peripateticism, a tradition marginalized during political upheavals.
8. Exploring revelation's role in strengthening national-historical consciousness and traditions.
9. Interpreting revelation's impact on Turkism, modernity, and Islamism, with particular focus on the latter as a guiding principle.

Sources and Methodology

The study employed sources in Azerbaijani, Arabic, Turkish, Persian, and Russian, supplemented by digital materials. Due to limited Azerbaijani translations of Arabic texts, Turkish editions were prioritized in several cases. Primary sources included al-Kindi's *Epistle on First Philosophy*, al-Farabi's *Opinions of the People of the Virtuous City*, Ibn Sina's *Ilahiyyat* and al-Najat, Bahmanyar's

Kitab al-Tahsil, and Ibn Khaldun's Muqaddimah [Turkish edition by Ugan, 1989]. Additional references include Suhrawardi's Awārif al-ma'ārif and Imam al-Nawawi's Riyāḍ al-Ṣālīhīn.

Methodologically, the study employed comparative analysis as its primary approach, reflecting the multidimensional manner in which the Peripatetics themselves addressed revelation. This was complemented by methods of scientific systematization, ensuring coherence, logical progression, and conceptual clarity.

Research Novelty

The novelty of this research lies in its systematic philosophical examination of revelation as an epistemological category within Eastern Peripatetic thought. Key contributions include:

1. For the first time, detailed analysis of Peripatetic perspectives on esoteric knowledge and its various types.
2. A systematic account of the style, language, and irrational dimensions of revelation, as well as its social and legal implications.
3. Investigation of the influence of revelation on mass psychology, politics, ethics, science, and collective morality.
4. Contemporary reinterpretation of classical sources, demonstrating their enduring relevance in civil society and their capacity to counteract social disintegration, moral decline, and political disunity.

ESOTERIC KNOWLEDGE AND ITS TYPES

When discussing the nature of esoteric knowledge and the role it plays in human life, it should first be noted that this type of knowledge, as a form that people can acquire and become aware of, is by no means alien to human nature. Our research [based on the works of Russian, Turkish, English, Arabic, and other scholars] has revealed that this type of knowledge not only requires spiritual capacity but also encompasses phenomena related to the soul. For this reason, contemporary scholars classify this type of knowledge among modern scientific disciplines, particularly within the research fields of parapsychology [Albayrak, 2001].

Therefore, understanding the form and meaning of acquiring such knowledge, as well as its characteristics and essence, raises numerous questions [Kamiran, 1962: p.83]. The most fundamental issue is whether esoteric knowledge is based on a divine source. In other words, does such a source exist? Is it correct to speak of its existence? How does the human intellect determine whether this source—belonging to the type of immaterial beings that cannot be perceived by the eye—is real? Is it legitimate to convey such knowledge to society, to apply it socially, and to replace the existing order with a new one?

According to Turkish researcher H. Albayrak, the principle of observation dominates within esoteric knowledge [Albayrak, 2001]. First, let us consider the classification of esoteric knowledge based on its origin, as proposed by Albayrak. In this classification, the

primary point of focus is whether such knowledge has a divine or non-divine source:

1. **Esoteric knowledge of divine origin** – revelation [*wahy*], inspiration [*ilham*], and dreams [*ru'ya*].
2. **Esoteric knowledge of non-divine origin** – astrology, soothsaying, spiritism, and other types of paranormal knowledge [shamanism, sorcery, telepathy, telekinesis, etc.].

According to this classification, not all esoteric knowledge is connected to a divine source. Since esoteric knowledge constitutes the spiritual world of the human being and directly pertains to him, three main factors play a decisive role in its acquisition: the soul, the intellect, and the heart. Philosophers have held different views regarding the insufficiency of the intellect in this domain. For example, the scholar B. Kamiran argues that “consciousness, as an organ connected with the brain and senses can encompass only the aspect of human essence related to this world. Yet man has a world that cannot be comprehended by the senses” [Kamiran, 1962]. According to him, the human soul operates beyond the senses. Rather than reducing and equating it with the senses, it is more appropriate to elevate it and search for it within the essence of humanity.

The German philosopher Hegel, distinguished by his unique views on the soul, states: “The soul is unconscious for us. But together with our consciousness, which is tied to our material existence in this world, we are not unconscious for the soul. Therefore, it is necessary to distinguish significantly between the material side of our being, directly linked to sensations and feelings, and the side that transcends them” [Hegel, p.22]. According to the philosopher, the functions of the soul operate without any connection to bodily organs and possess an independent capacity for action. Knowledge

about the soul can only be obtained through its own functions. However, Hegel provides no further explanation about the nature of these functions. He states: “The aim of the soul as consciousness is to identify this event of its own with its essence, to elevate its correctness to the level of truth” [Hegel, p.22]. In other words, what the soul knows and what consciousness knows should both be characterized and recognized as truth. Nevertheless, consciousness is located not in the immaterial, but directly in the material, and the soul is not eternal within it: “The existence of the soul in consciousness is finite, and this finitude is nothing more than its formal relation to correctness” [Hegel, p.21].

Approaching this matter from a different perspective, Azerbaijani researcher K. Bunyadzade writes: “According to the irrational level of reason, consciousness can free itself from the material world and its conditions under the influence of divine power, which leads to the activation of its upper layer, that is, the superconscious. It becomes clear that the superconscious is the reflection of irrational knowledge—in other words, the ability of consciousness to relate to and reflect upon an object beyond matter, time, and space” [Bunyadzade, 2003: p.230].

Thus, regardless of whether consciousness is located in the material or immaterial, as a cognitive tool it can accept and understand irrational knowledge [if we consider revelation to be a type of irrational knowledge]. From the perspective of religious logic, this is abstract and possible only for prophets in exceptional cases through divine will. However, Eastern Peripatetics did not agree with this, claiming instead that such a state is possible not only for prophets but also for philosophers [Ibn Sina, 1980].

Even if man accepts the existence of his being and intellect, he struggles to grasp all the subtleties of the intellect, and therefore

often encounters unexpected surprises presented by it. This reveals the mysterious nature of reason and casts doubt on how far its boundaries may extend. In other words, the emergence of a new cognitive concept—where reason fully comprehends the irrational—suggests that revelation can also be grasped by reason, proposing a new idea of knowledge both on an individual level and on a universal scale.

As noted, we divide esoteric knowledge into two main categories based on whether it has a divine source. By divine origin, we mean the absence of a decisive role for humans in receiving or transmitting this knowledge. As previously mentioned, moral excellence does not play a determining role in acquiring such knowledge. Nevertheless, divine knowledge is not granted to immoral individuals, which demonstrates the importance of ethics in receiving revelation. Among the forms of esoteric knowledge of divine origin, it is necessary to highlight revelation [*wahy*] as the one with the greatest influence on society [“Dictionary”, 1009].

Revelation [*Wahy*]

Revelation is a type of irrational knowledge. The *Philosophical Encyclopedic Dictionary* defines it as follows: “Revelation is a fundamental concept in theology, expressing the supersensory comprehension of supernatural reality in the state of mystical illumination” [Ozemre, 2006]. From the perspective of religious logic, revelation unequivocally indicates the existence of the true Creator of all beings in the world and serves as its confirmation [Ozemre, 2006]. Moreover, revelation signifies that the forms in which beings exist are the most correct, and that it is impossible for them to exist otherwise at that time and in that place [Ozemre, 2006: p.111].

In addition to its lexical meaning, revelation should also be explained in terms of its essence. The nature of revelation largely corresponds to the logical explanation of religious terminology. Revelation has two main aspects:

- a. Revelation is the way in which God conveys His commands and messages to His creation.
- b. Revelation is the type of knowledge communicated by God to His creation ["Islam", 1991].

Thus, revelation refers both to the process of divine knowledge being sent to a chosen person [a prophet] and to the totality of the knowledge delivered. For example, the Torah of the Jews, the Bible of the Christians, and the Qur'an of the Muslims are not only holy scriptures but also revelations in themselves ["Islam", 1991].

According to researcher A. Ozemre, revelation, as a type of knowledge, contains only specific knowledge that can be comprehended within certain limits. It can never be the ultimate source of divine knowledge [Rahimov, 2006]. For this reason, revelation cannot be considered "a book that speaks about everything." Rather, all existing heavenly scriptures focus only on the issues most essential to humanity.

If revelation had presented historical narratives chronologically, it would have been considered a historical work rather than revelation, losing its universal character [Rahimov, 2006]. Similarly, if revelation were devoted entirely too explaining geographical phenomena, natural laws, or biological processes such as embryonic development, it would have turned into a collection of meaningless notions for millions of people unable to comprehend them.

Therefore, revelation has preserved its universal character regardless of human literacy, while also encouraging education and containing laws essential for the survival of society, aiming to remain valid indefinitely [Nabi, 1991].

Lexically, the word *wahy* means “to say something secretly,” “to whisper,” or “to utter softly.” As a term, it refers to “God’s communication of knowledge on various matters, either in words or meaning, directly or through an angel, to prophets in a hidden manner” [Nabi, 1991: p.79]. The word “hidden” here indicates that during this process, no other person shares in the prophet’s cognition or experience. The prophet himself directly experiences the descent of divine knowledge, and therefore, only he is aware of its qualitative nature.

Inspiration [*Ilham*]

Inspiration [*ilham*] is another form of esoteric knowledge of divine origin. Unlike revelation, which is typically associated with prophets, inspiration is not necessarily tied to a chosen messenger of God but can manifest in spiritually attuned individuals capable of receiving divine guidance. According to classical Islamic philosophers, inspiration is a subtler form of knowledge that enables humans to access truths that cannot be reached through rational inquiry alone [Hokelekli, 1996].

Philosophers such as Al-Farabi and Ibn Sina emphasized that inspiration operates through the human intellect and soul, facilitating intuitive comprehension that aligns with universal truths [Hokelekli, 1996]. In this sense, inspiration acts as a bridge between the intellect [*‘aql*] and the soul [*ruh*], allowing individuals to perceive higher realities and moral principles. While revelation conveys explicit divine commands and universal laws, inspiration

provides insight into their application and understanding in daily life [Ibn Haldun, 1989].

Dreams [*Ru'ya*]

Dreams [*ru'ya*] constitute a third category of esoteric knowledge of divine origin. Classical Eastern Peripatetics recognized that the human mind, during the state of sleep, becomes receptive to subtle forms of knowledge and symbolic truths that are otherwise inaccessible in waking consciousness [Nabi, 1991]. Ibn Sina, in his works on psychology and metaphysics, argued that dreams can serve as a medium for divine communication, particularly when they convey moral or ethical guidance [Ibn Sina, 1989].

Dreams are distinguished from ordinary mental images by their capacity to encode esoteric messages. Unlike inspiration or revelation, which are more direct forms of divine knowledge, dreams often employ symbolic language, requiring interpretation by a person trained in philosophical or spiritual analysis [Ibn Haldun, 1989]. Despite their indirectness, dreams retain a significant epistemological value, providing access to insights that contribute to both individual moral development and societal guidance.

Philosophical Significance of Esoteric Knowledge

The study of esoteric knowledge—revelation, inspiration, and dreams—within the framework of Eastern Peripatetic philosophy highlights several critical epistemological dimensions. First, it emphasizes that human cognition extends beyond purely rational or sensory-based knowledge, encompassing intuitive and spiritual dimensions [Bunyadzade, 2003: p.213]. Second, it asserts that divine sources of knowledge play a foundational role in the moral and in-

tellectual formation of individuals and communities [Bunyadzade, 2003].

Eastern Peripatetics, including Al-Kindi, Al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, and Ibn Khaldun, maintained that esoteric knowledge is not merely a religious or mystical phenomenon; it represents a legitimate philosophical domain capable of guiding human action and fostering societal development [Erdogan, 2001]. In particular, revelation [*wahy*] serves as both an epistemological tool and a socio-cultural mechanism, ensuring that moral and ethical principles are transmitted to humanity while simultaneously encouraging intellectual and educational advancement [Erdogan, 2001].

Interrelation between Rational and Irrational Knowledge

A key feature of esoteric knowledge, as emphasized by classical philosophers, is its interaction with rational cognition. While rational knowledge relies on deduction, empirical observation, and logical analysis, esoteric knowledge often transcends these methods, drawing upon the intuitive faculties of the soul and the super-conscious mind [Suhreverdi, 1987: p.216].

Philosophers like Hegel and Kamiran have argued that rational faculties alone are insufficient to grasp the full spectrum of human experience, especially in spiritual or metaphysical matters [Hegel, 1992], [Kamiran, 1962]. Therefore, the integration of rational and irrational knowledge, particularly through forms like revelation, inspiration, and dreams, provides a more complete understanding of reality, ethical conduct, and the human condition [Kamiran, 1962].

Conclusion of Chapter I

This chapter has provided a systematic examination of esoteric knowledge and its main types—revelation, inspiration, and dreams—within the framework of Eastern Peripatetic philosophy. It has established that:

1. Not all esoteric knowledge is divine in origin; some forms are paranormal or non-divine [Sunar, 1966].
2. Divine esoteric knowledge, especially revelation, has a profound influence on human morality, social cohesion, and intellectual development [Sunar, 1966], [Bunyadzade, 2003].
3. The human intellect, soul, and heart are all essential for acquiring and interpreting esoteric knowledge, but rational faculties alone are insufficient [Sunar, 1966], [Izutsu].
4. Revelation is both a method of divine communication and a type of knowledge itself, conveying truths and guiding humanity in a universally significant way .
5. Inspiration and dreams complement revelation by providing subtler, intuitive, or symbolic channels through which divine knowledge can be accessed [Izutsu].

The subsequent chapters will examine **revelation as a universal philosophical problem**, exploring its style, purpose, socio-legal significance, and role in the development of civilizations. This analysis will integrate the perspectives of major Eastern Peripatetic philosophers, illustrating the epistemological and philosophical relevance of divine knowledge in the Islamic intellectual tradition.

When studying religious literature, we observe that religious logic asserts the necessity of a Creator and emphasizes that revelation

[*wahy*] is essential to convey divine truths to humanity. Comprehension of divine truths is beyond human consciousness. Religious logic states:

“The capacity of reason is limited. Therefore, intellect can lead humans along divergent paths. Philosophers who claim to speak on ultimate truths have often attempted to present humanity with various, even contradictory, approaches.”

In this sense, the method most recommended by religious logic is that of revelation.

Revelation is the expression of divine address. While it is directed at an individual—a prophet—it is, in essence, addressed to the collective. The collective, in a general sense, encompasses many different forms of consciousness. Revelation is expressed in language and forms acceptable to all these diverse consciousnesses. Concepts such as *tanasul* [propagation], *hulul* [incarnation], *ittihad* [union], or pantheism, however, are not intended for the masses; some of these serve the independent development of the soul and require more advanced cognitive faculties and more sophisticated reasoning mechanisms.

Religious logic also emphasizes that receiving revelation is beyond human volition; humans are compelled to receive it, and personal will plays no role. For example, some scholars note that when revelation first came to a prophet, he initially expressed that he was not ready to bear its responsibility. Even during periods when revelation did not arrive, he could not hasten it by desire alone. Another aspect highlighted by religious logic is the style of divine address. In the Quran, the last revealed scripture, over 300 verses begin with the imperative phrase “Say: [*Qul:*]”. This imperative explicitly con-

veys compulsion. Behind this compulsion lies the prophet's human weakness at the moment of receiving revelation.

As a human being, the prophet does not differ from other humans. However, as religious logic asserts, being chosen limits his individual autonomy and transforms him into a messenger of God's revelations. The prophet cannot interfere with the act of receiving revelation; he is only the conveyor. Acceptance of his message remains the free choice of individuals. The prophet cannot compel people to accept what is revealed [Hegel, 2003].

The relationship between God and humans, derived from the Creator-creation connection, leads to the conclusion that the notion of a superior power communicating with humans through messages fascinates people, without altering the fact that God created nature and natural phenomena. The Quran, as a revelation and as a representative of religious logic, approaches these issues from its perspective [Karligha, 1993].

The "Search for God"

Hayati Hökelekli, in *Din Psikolojisi*, writes that because humans do not fully utilize their intellect, they encounter great difficulties. To facilitate their path, God provided humans with the innate sense of "turning toward God" [*fitra*].

Even those who do not adhere to monotheistic religions fulfill this innate need for worship by revering idols or other objects. Worshipping other gods, rather than the one necessary Creator, highlights the human failure to properly exercise reason. Religious texts demonstrate through examples how absurd it is to attribute divinity to objects such as fire, celestial bodies, or other creations, whose existence and movement do not conform to human reason or

honor. These texts explain, with logical evidence, how misjudgment leads to ridiculous conclusions.

From the logic found in religious texts—especially the Quran—it is also evident that accepting the belief in a “supreme being” resolves the problems that cause human suffering, alleviates doubts, and enables a peaceful life. The Quran exemplifies this through Abraham’s search for God [Quran, 14]. Initially, Abraham believes that a celestial body is God, but upon observing that stars and other celestial bodies do not act according to their own will and disappear at dawn, he concludes they cannot be God. Through reasoning and reflection, he ultimately affirms belief in Allah, the creator of all celestial bodies, the Earth, and everything within the universe, whose will governs all [Karlige, 1993].

Insufficiency of Human Reason and Irrationality

When studying religious texts, we also find that humans do not naturally perceive divine messages as warnings. If taken literally, “self-destruction” can be understood both biologically and morally. In both cases, moral destruction is the primary cause that may also lead to biological death.

God does not require humans to live or to worship; even if no worshipper existed anywhere in the universe, God’s divinity would remain unaffected. Deficiencies and flaws arise from humans. Despite our extraordinary faculties, misapplication of intellect and devotion to superficial or misguided pursuits often lead humans to worship non-divine entities.

Ethical violations, social disorder, ongoing caste-like hierarchies, promotion of ignorance, and countless other factors threaten both individual societies and humanity at large. To prevent this, divine

messages and warnings [*revelations*] were sent to educate humans, guide the new generations according to evolving requirements, and save them from self-destruction. These messages were delivered through prophets—humans distinguished by exceptional moral qualities—who were commanded to convey them.

The religious texts forming the basis of Islam, Christianity, and Judaism provide numerous examples of moral corruption and self-destruction, citing tribes and nations that were annihilated for persistent wrongdoing. These texts also note that prophets were repeatedly sent to warn these peoples before punishment ensued.

The Quran, in contrast to other revealed scriptures, emphasizes direct appeal to human reason. It requires humans to utilize intellect and reflection to the fullest. God does not favor blind belief induced solely by miracles or fear; rather, reasoned understanding and conscious choice in belief are emphasized. The Quran warns against returning to previous wrongful ways once the immediate excitement of miracles fades, asking:

“Do you not reflect?”

It promotes broad application of reason, asserting that reasoned criteria remain fundamental in matters of faith.

Inspiration [*Ilham*]

The term *ilham*, which belongs to the category of esoteric knowledge, literally means “to perceive something suddenly” in Arabic. Terminologically, it is defined as the “transmission of certain meanings and ideas to the heart” [Karligha, 1993]. It is also understood as “that which God conveys to the human heart” or “that

which is transmitted to the heart through divine grace” [Ibn Sina, 1984].

Although *ilham* is a type of esoteric knowledge, it fundamentally differs from revelation [*wahy*]. From the perspective of monotheistic religions [Islam, Christianity, Judaism] and Sufism, inspiration, as an esoteric knowledge type, is primarily acquired by humans, unlike revelation which is divinely imposed [Ibn Haldun, 1989]. Moreover, *ilham*, as understood in the context of human experience, manifests as a state of inner consolation or spiritual encouragement preceding any action. According to religious logic, it is “a type of sensation that suddenly emerges in the conscience, whose origin lies beyond the cognitive capacities of the intellect, and which can be characterized as a non-cognitive feeling or emotional state” [Ibn Haldun, 1989].

The authors of the referenced study argue that *ilham* can be compared to other human needs such as hunger, thirst, joy, or sorrow, as it is a type of perception that the intellect does not directly apprehend [Yilmaz, 2004]. Unlike revelation, *ilham* is not exclusively reserved for prophets; it can potentially occur in non-prophetic individuals as well. This distinction implies that while the phenomena occurring in the personality or body of the prophet during revelation remain beyond human comprehension, the events and processes accompanying *ilham* must occur within the framework of human cognition and be understood or metaphorically described by the recipient [Yilmaz, 2004]. Religious logic emphasizes that principles defining *ilham* should be evaluated according to religious values, primarily by distinguishing it from imagination and ensuring it does not contradict divine revelation or prophetic law [Yilmaz, 2004].

Although *wahy* and *ilham* carry distinct meanings, both are forms of irrational knowledge. Comparative studies note that “irrational knowledge is transmitted according to the individual’s level of faith and consciousness: revelation [*wahy*] to prophets, mystical ecstasy [*wajd*] to mystics and individuals with special faculties, and inspiration [*ilham*] to artisans or skilled individuals” [Ibn Haldun, 1989. Unlike revelation, which is exclusive to prophets, *ilham* is general in nature and can occur among various individuals, including prophets, from all social strata. Theologians emphasize that receiving *ilham* requires a particular spiritual degree, known as *wilaya* [sainthood], which is not attained through physical labor or scientific methods but develops within the soul, moral disposition, and worldview [Sunar, 1966].

Furthermore, the term *ilham* may also imply a divine mission aligned with God’s will. The Quran references *ilham* directly. In Surah Ash-Shams [91:8–10], it is stated:

“He inspires it [the soul] with [right or wrong]. He who purifies it is indeed successful; but he who corrupts it is indeed lost” [Ibn Sina, 1973].

Here, *ilham* primarily denotes God guiding humans toward truth and righteousness, acting as an intermediary in this path [Ibn Sina, 1973]. The expressions “misguidance” and “fear” in the verse refer to character traits that define human identity and moral positioning within society. Composed of “sublime” [*ulw*] and “lowly” [*suffl*] elements, these traits are innate human capacities. Inclination toward piety [*taqwa*] directs humans toward higher spiritual development, whereas misguidance leads toward materialism and base levels of existence. Ultimately, *ilham* reveals these inherent capacities, while the choice to act upon them remains with the human intellect [Gerald, 2001].

The frequent oaths in the Quran, invoking the Sun, Moon, day, night, sky, or earth, are metaphorical, emphasizing human moral and spiritual orientation rather than literal objects tied to human action [Ibn Sina, 1973]. Inspiration, in this sense, illuminates the soul, guiding it toward virtuous or sinful deeds, reflecting the dual potential for good and evil inherent in human nature: “The soul is receptive to both virtuous and evil inspirations” [1].

Scholars have proposed various ideas about how *ilham* influences human actions. Our analysis aligns with the view that its manifestation originates from divine sources, similar to revelation. In religious texts, influences from God leading to righteous deeds are termed *ilham*, while influences from Satan encouraging sinful acts are termed *waswasa* [Ibn Sina, 1973]. From birth, human nature is receptive to both, and understanding these impulses is seen as divine forewarning. Religious logic asserts: “Revelation differs fundamentally from *ilham*, intuition, discovery, or subconscious perception. The defining distinction of revelation lies in its immediacy and directness” [Ibn Sina, 1973].

Like revelation, *ilham* has a subjective structure. Its quality and characteristics are difficult to evaluate scientifically due to the limited empirical scope. Additionally, research is complicated by the fact that *ilham* is often studied under the shadow of revelation, narrowing the focus of inquiry. Nevertheless, scholars argue that “the unknown nature of *ilham* does not preclude theoretical discussion or reasoning” [Demirci, 2003]. Three key claims illuminate its essence:

a. *Ilham* arises suddenly in consciousness, akin to hunger, thirst, joy, or sorrow, without knowledge of its origin [Demirci, 2003]. Its spontaneity distinguishes it from premeditated thought. While the intellectual processes leading to an idea are products of the mind,

ilham emerges unexpectedly, making the individual recognize it as externally sourced, often divine [Sunar, 1966].

b. Inspiration may be metaphorically described as light descending upon the heart, purging it of distractions and filling it with knowledge and mysteries [*asrar*] [1]. According to Sufi thought, this illumination requires prior moral and physical preparation to fully awaken insight and understanding. Humans gradually ascend from darkness to light, with God, the “Light of Lights” [*Nur al-Anwar*], being the ultimate source [Koran].

c. The personal experience of inspiration also varies culturally and linguistically. Bursavi notes that *ilham* and divine address sometimes occur in Arabic, Persian, or Turkish, highlighting the conscious selection and comprehension of inspiration by the individual [Kuli-zade, 1983].

M. Abduh offers a generalized definition: “A person may attain knowledge through hidden spiritual faculties such as insight or inspiration. This often manifests as mental ‘tablets,’ whose certainty is understood only after realization. Such inspiration enables individuals with sharp perception to observe distances unseen by others” [Suhreverdi, 1972]. Suhrawardi adds that “occasionally, extraordinary knowledge is revealed to the devout in private contemplation, and future events become evident; its absence does not harm them. Only deviation from the correct path diminishes them” [Demirci, 2003]. Philosophers restrict the phenomenon of *ilham* to select individuals endowed with spiritual insight, consistent with the nature of the knowledge it conveys [Tebrizi, 2005].

Summary of *Ilham* Characteristics

Based on the preceding discussion, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. *Ilham* is distinct from revelation [*wahy*]. While revelation is sent exclusively to prophets, inspiration can occur in individuals from various social strata, including prophets [Nebi, 1991].
2. *Ilham* occurs suddenly and is not derived from any psychological, spiritual, physical, or conscious factors; it is a “consciousness birth” [*shuhūr dawghma*] [Nebi, 1991].
3. Like revelation, *ilham* arises independently of the individual’s will [Nebi, 1991].
4. Unlike revelation, *ilham* cannot possess binding authority over others outside the individual [Erdogan, 2001].
5. *Ilham*, similar to revelation, can sometimes convey hidden knowledge. However, the level of information transmitted does not correspond to the individual’s knowledge or scientific level [1].
6. The subject matter of *ilham* is unrestricted and may pertain to any topic [Hizmetli, 2001: p.199].
7. *Ilham* does not always present a complete idea; sometimes, it functions as a sign or guidance rather than fully formulated knowledge [Hizmetli, 2001].

It is essential to reiterate that *ilham* is not knowledge acquired through the individual’s will. Its recipients are varied: in contemporary usage, *ilham* can denote the “muse” of poets. Sensitive and dedicated artists, alongside poets, often experience sudden inspiration that directs their creative activity. Scientists immersed in re-

search may also experience *shuhūr dawghma*, suddenly arriving at solutions after prolonged effort [Ahmadi, 1984]. Such spontaneous inspiration can significantly impact an individual's moral and cognitive life, even influencing consciousness and directing its functions. Poets, artists, and scholars are most sensitive to this force and apply it to personal and social endeavors. Researchers note that "most scientific and technological achievements used by humanity today result, in large part, from inspiration" [Ahmadi, 1984].

Regarding the relationship between *ilham* and human consciousness, it is evident that conscious effort alone is insufficient. Thought can exhaust the mind, and consciousness may resist further focus on a problem. In such cases, inspiration provides a sudden, previously unknown idea that revitalizes mental activity. Great individuals, through intuition and creative imagination, perceive hidden realities, understand relationships between events, and anticipate future developments [Montgomeri, 1982]. Inspiration may manifest as consolation in difficult situations, solutions to seemingly intractable problems, or guidance concerning future endeavors.

Although inspiration has been debated in terms of its scientific value, numerous discoveries, poems, and works of art trace their origin to *ilham*. Nevertheless, from a scientific-logical perspective, *ilham* does not constitute a method of knowledge acquisition [Erdogan, 2001]. Its lack of value is attributable to three aspects: a) Source: the origin of inspiration is unknown; while theologians attribute it to God, philosophers consider it a "consciousness birth" phenomenon [Nebi, 1991]. The value of the knowledge transmitted via *ilham* is not universal; for instance, the statement "It seems to me that you will die tomorrow" holds no logical authority for others [Nebi, 1991]. b) Form: inspiration does not always take the form of structured knowledge; it may appear as a symbol, guiding voice, or feeling [Montgomeri, 1982]. c) Individual will: *ilham* oc-

curs independently of the individual's desire. A person may acquire inspiration even when refusing to pursue a problem, restoring creativity in the mind [Erdogan, 2001].

The distinction between *ilham* and revelation has also prompted theological commentary. Key differences include:

1. Revelation provides evidence for religious rulings, whereas inspiration does not [Pazarli, 1968].
2. Sources differ: revelation is invariably divine, while inspiration may not always be so [Akseki, 2003].
3. Revelation usually involves supernatural mediation; such a factor is absent in inspiration [Erdogan, 2001].
4. Revelation possesses universal authority applicable to society and humanity, whereas inspiration remains individual and non-binding [Montgomeri, 1982].
5. Revelation embodies purity, universality, and human-oriented principles; inspiration does not [Montgomeri, 1982].
6. Prophets receiving revelation are responsible for transmitting it to others; recipients of inspiration are free to share or withhold it [Montgomeri, 1982].
7. Inspiration is personal, whereas revelation carries universal significance [Montgomeri, 1982].
8. The function of inspiration is primarily educational or developmental for the individual, whereas revelation enacts legal, moral, and social obligations [Montgomeri, 1982].

Dreams

The study of dreams has historically been limited due to the abstract nature of the subject. Scholars and psychologists offer various interpretations, which we will summarize. It is important to distinguish between sleep and dreams: sleep pertains to the human body's rest, whereas dreams concern the phenomena experienced during sleep [Aslan, 2007]. Therefore, dreams should not be equated with mere sleep.

Unlike Western thinkers such as Sigmund Freud, who regarded dreams as the product of subconscious memory, Eastern peripatetic philosophers understood dreams as experiences through which humans could access divine or immaterial knowledge beyond their will [Aslan, 2007]. In this view, the existence of factors controlling dreams naturally arises, but Eastern peripatetics emphasized the moral and spiritual quality of the dreamer, asserting that dreams are under the influence of either benevolent or malevolent forces [3]. Western philosophers, by contrast, maintained that the content of dreams could not extend beyond the individual's waking experience, whereas Eastern peripatetics argued that dreams could reveal phenomena not perceived in the material world [Ibn Sina, 1973].

Among Eastern peripatetics, Al-Kindi wrote extensively on dreams, considering them an instrument of irrational knowledge comparable to revelation. In his treatise *On the Nature of Sleep and Dreams* ["والأحلام الرؤى طبيعة في رسالة"], he proposed that dreams could provide foreknowledge of future events [3]. According to Al-Kindi, the faculty of imagination is a power of the soul, allowing individuals to apprehend future events while awake or asleep. Dreams thus reveal knowledge of the immaterial realm, including the existence of non-physical souls, and serve as a medium for divine insight. He emphasized that during wakefulness, individ-

uals should remain attentive to their inner soul, as it facilitates access to this higher knowledge [Ibn Sina, 1973].

Ibn Sina further elaborated on this principle, noting that one may fail to remember or recognize knowledge of the self acquired during wakefulness, underscoring the importance of attentiveness to the soul to apprehend truth [Ibn Sina, 1973].

A notable point in these discussions concerns whether a person can attain self-awareness of the *nafs* [soul/self] during sleep. According to the philosopher, “just as we direct our attention to the perception of our senses while awake, during sleep we have the capacity to focus our attention on matters related to reason and thought.” Self-awareness in dreams occurs precisely through these actions, reflexes, or responses to stimuli. However, the philosopher does not undertake an extensive investigation of this topic. The distinction between reactions to stimuli during sleep and responses while awake lies in the domain of cognition: “When we recall and recognize this act while awake, we simultaneously become aware of our *nafs*.” If this process of recognition does not occur, self-awareness is not achieved. Nevertheless, this does not imply that self-awareness is impossible. In other words, “the absence of recognition in no way constitutes proof that it does not exist in any cognitive form. Indeed, our awareness of our *nafs* does not constitute the essence of that knowledge, just as our knowledge of this awareness differs from ordinary knowledge of the *nafs*” [Ibn Sina, 1973].

Ibn Sina posits that “when a person in a dream attains self-awareness of the *nafs*, they seek ways to respond to the fears that arise.” Just as consciousness directs actions while awake, the mind during sleep can also be guided by internal directives. The philosopher argues that in dreams, the individual can recognize that commands, though not originating externally, are indeed their own.

Upon awakening, understanding that the act was their own also conveys awareness of the *nafs*' cognition. Similarly, if during wakefulness one recalls events experienced in a dream, this does not necessarily indicate self-awareness of the *nafs*, and it would be incorrect to claim that this constitutes a cognitive act: "Our understanding of consciousness regarding our *nafs* is not itself consciousness, and our cognition of this consciousness differs from the simple cognition of the *nafs*" [Ibn Sina, 1973]. Moreover, even while awake, individuals may struggle to grasp their awareness of the *nafs*, a difficulty stemming from the cognitive effort required to perceive consciousness, which may prevent its retention in memory.

According to Ibn Sina, whether asleep or awake, directing attention exclusively to matters of reason and thought allows the individual to attain initial impressions related to the *nafs*' consciousness. However, this may be insufficient for full self-awareness, as focused attention does not guarantee recognition of the *nafs*' consciousness. Ibn Sina observes: "When we investigate the existence of the *nafs* and its non-material nature, we see that we are not entirely ignorant. Rather, we persist in failing to perceive it." He likens this to preferring to speak from a distance about knowledge that is actually very close; although immediate awareness may serve as a warning, our neglect pushes it away [Aslan, 2007].

Ibn Khaldun also addresses dreams, dedicating a chapter to them in his *Muqaddimah*. He defines a dream as "a spiritual phenomenon in which the human soul, while asleep, immerses itself in the realm of meanings and perceives images of entities reflected from the unseen all at once." Forgetting the dream upon waking is natural, as the soul detaches from the spiritual experience to return to material life. Contact with spiritual entities occurs only when the soul is entirely separated from materiality. Dream perception exists outside temporal constraints; the duration of a dream is independ-

ent of the dreamer's will, and time is irrelevant for the soul in contact with spiritual entities. Only the material body is bound by temporal limitations. Within this temporal framework, the individual acquires certain knowledge. Ibn Khaldun considered this acquisition of knowledge dependent on the will to receive it, asserting that "within a moment, a person obtains the knowledge they seek." The *nafs*, though lower than angels, retains the capacity to acquire knowledge even while embodied, with the body's material demands potentially delaying full spiritual development [Ismayilov, 2000].

The nature of dream perception is not uniform across all individuals; some possess specialized abilities [e.g., saints or spiritually advanced persons], while general capacities may exist in ordinary humans. Prophets, however, are exceptional: the knowledge they receive during dreams includes revelation, representing the highest degree of spiritual insight. They can perceive the content of others' dreams while awake and are free from the bodily commands that govern ordinary humans. Ibn Khaldun emphasizes that human dreams are a divine grace allowing the soul to detach from sensory constraints and attain spiritual insight, highlighting the distinction between humans and prophets [Ibn Haldun, 1989].

Ibn Khaldun further explains: "Dreams occur when the *nafs*, detached from sensory engagement and conflicts with internal forces, instantaneously apprehends its spiritual essence and perceives knowledge reflected from the unseen." He distinguishes between:

- a) External senses, and
- b) Internal senses.

External senses are linked to material sensory organs, which are subject to fatigue and require rest. Since the *nafs* depends heavily

on these faculties, their exhaustion necessitates sleep, allowing the soul to detach. This detachment should not be confused with bodily death; it represents liberation from material constraints. Nighttime cold assists this process by causing natural bodily heat to recede inward, enabling the rational soul [*nafs al-natiq*] to reach higher realms through the intermediary of the vital spirit [*ruh hayawani*] [2].

Ibn Khaldun characterizes the vital spirit as a subtle vapor in the left side of the heart, spreading through veins and arteries to animate the body and enable the rational soul's functioning. Cognition and thought of the rational soul depend on this vital spirit; without it, the *nafs al-natiq* could exert no influence. In the internal senses, the vital spirit constructs imaginary forms through analysis and composition, facilitating the reception of knowledge in dreams. Dream content arises from the interplay between residual subconscious material and spiritual knowledge. Dreams often present knowledge not immediately understandable, conveyed as cryptic meanings, symbols, or templates requiring interpretation. When the rational soul integrates these with external sensory impressions, the dream may appear complex and layered [Ibn Haldun, 1989].

It is well known that dreams do not always reflect reality. They may present confusing, disturbing, or terrifying events, which can negatively impact the human psyche and, consequently, lead to adverse effects in daily life. For this reason, it is instructive to examine the Prophet's observations on dreams. According to the Prophet, "dreams are of three types: the first originates from God, communicated during sleep; the second is conveyed through angels; and the third is instigated by Satan" [Ibn Haldun 1989]. A careful reading of this statement reveals that the focus is not on the source of the dream, but rather on its essence. From this, it becomes evident that the veracity of a dream depends on its type and form.

Ibn Khaldun also discusses types of dreams and the causes of “seeing” in dreams, offering several insightful considerations. These phenomena are primarily related to the natural properties of the human *nafs* [soul], which are inherent in all humans. He further asserts that acquiring knowledge of the unseen in dreams is not limited to occurrences within sleep; if the underlying force generating these experiences is singular, then such knowledge could, in principle, manifest outside of sleep. Humans are not strictly confined to perceiving only what they wish; such experiences may spontaneously appear in dreams, or may never occur. Ibn Khaldun emphasizes that the soul cannot always see or comprehend what it desires in dreams, as this depends both on the type of information and on the will of divine or other external powers [Nebi, 1991].

He also addresses the idea that performing preparatory acts, such as uttering certain names before sleep, may increase the likelihood of perceiving desired content in a dream. However, Ibn Khaldun cautions that such claims fall outside rational understanding and may lead to superstition or ignorance. He clarifies: “I tested this myself. When I acted as instructed, I saw unusual visions and acquired knowledge of what I wished to know. Yet reciting these names before sleep does not prove that the content of the dream arises from the dream’s own purpose or power. It merely creates a predisposition in the *nafs* to experience a desired vision” [2]. These observations appear to be based on both personal experimentation and prior accounts of others’ experiences, rather than purely theoretical conjecture.

Alongside peripatetic philosophers, other scholars, including theologians and Sufi mystics, have developed reflections on dreams. One notable figure is the Sufi philosopher Ibn Arabi, whose work extensively engages with dreams. Although a Sufi, Ibn Arabi’s philosophical ideas often resonate with those of contemporary peripa-

tetic philosophers, making his insights into dreams particularly relevant.

Ibn Arabi approaches dreams from two perspectives. The first conceives dreams as a collection of information expressing truths not present in the sensory world. The second asserts that entities in the sensory world are not ultimately real, but illusory, and that true knowledge of existence can be obtained through dreams. Although Ibn Arabi provides various justifications for these ideas, some aspects remain obscure. This ambiguity arises not from the nature of dreams themselves, but from the structure of his philosophical system, which lacks absolute uniformity, allowing for seemingly contradictory claims [Nebi, 1991].

Fundamentally, Ibn Arabi's reflections on dreams begin with the premise that the material world is not genuinely real. The things we perceive cannot embody absolute reality; rather, their temporality and susceptibility to decay indicate their non-essential nature. Humans, as perceptive beings, are similarly subject to material limitations and mortality, emphasizing that true reality cannot be apprehended through sensory perception alone. As Ibn Arabi explains: "Through our senses, we perceive numerous objects, distinguish them, and mentally organize them, establishing a framework that we call 'real,' without doubting its truth. Yet this 'real' is not real in the absolute sense; in other words, it is not existence [*wujud*]. Objects in dreams exist for us in the same proportion as those perceived in the sensory world" [Tebri, 2005].

According to Ibn Arabi, the material world lacks independent reality, existing only as an illusion. True reality is represented by the dream world, which communicates essential truths. He states: "Do not imagine that this world exists independently, forming itself as an ultimate reality separate from the Absolute. In truth, you your-

self, and everything you perceive as ‘not me,’ are also part of an illusion” [Tebrizi, 2005: p. 16]. This reflects the concept of “a dream within a dream,” wherein personal imagination operates within a broader objective imaginative framework. As noted by H. Corbin, the imaginative faculty underlying dreams in Ibn Arabi’s philosophy is neither religiously prescriptive nor a sensory mechanism; it is a function inherent to the objective reality of the imaginative domain itself.

In Ibn Arabi’s system, dreams, illusion, and imagination serve as symbolic representations of true reality. Just as events in dreams are interpreted symbolically, so too the objects and experiences perceived in the sensory world carry symbolic meaning requiring interpretation. He supports this claim by referencing the Prophet’s hadith: “People are asleep in this world; they awaken at death.” This hadith has been variously interpreted by philosophers, theologians, and commentators. Ibn Arabi interprets it philosophically, asserting that the material world’s perceived reality resembles a dream. Limitations of time, space, and material barriers prevent direct apprehension of true existence; dreams present a symbolic representation rather than reality itself. Human responsibility lies in discerning the original and true reality from symbolic forms [Montgomeri, 1982].

Regarding prophetic dreams, Ibn Arabi posits that they are truthful visions, granting the prophet immediate awareness of the hidden truths behind them. However, he does not systematically differentiate prophetic dreams from those of ordinary individuals or specify their distinct characteristics. Furthermore, dreams are inherently chaotic, and not all individuals consistently receive clear or informative visions; some dreams may convey no substantive knowledge [Tebrizi, 2005].

In general, Ibn Arabi's philosophy asserts that what is termed "truth" is often merely a dream, suggesting that the material world's apparent reality is illusory, a transient and non-essential existence, or "non-existent truth."

REVELATION AS A UNIVERSAL PHILOSOPHICAL PROBLEM

The mechanism of revelation and the nature of human reception are primarily accessible through the Prophet's accounts—namely, hadith literature. Linguists define revelation as a hidden word, rapid expression of thought, or sign; theologians provide alternative interpretations. The perspectives of philosophers are especially valuable, as they examine the essence of revelation conceptually.

According to researcher M. Demirci, “Understanding the essence of revelation requires grasping its inner reality—what it is and what it is not. This includes comprehending how the eternal Word emanates from the Absolute and is transmitted to prophets” [Demirci, 2003: p.54]. Revelation is an esoteric form of knowledge. Its acquisition may depend on divine selection or human capacity.

Scholars generally advance two positions regarding prophetic reception of revelation:

1. **Human-centered view:** The individual's capacity to attain prophethood and receive revelation depends primarily on personal qualities, including:

- a) Moral purity,
- b) elevated spiritual values,
- c) testing of the soul through various trials, and
- d) detachment from material pleasures.

In this view, prophethood unfolds in accordance with the person's will and capacity. This perspective aligns with peripatetic philosophical thought. Prophets are thus conceived as recipients of divine knowledge, not necessarily agents for social reform or miracles, and their function depends on personal imaginative and cognitive faculties.

2. Divine-centered view: The individual's will is secondary; prophethood is conferred by divine selection. The divine will, representing the supreme power, goodness, and creative ability, chooses the individual based on spiritual and moral readiness. Achieving this status requires adherence to divine mandates. Advocates of this view emphasize that prophetic function cannot be planned or executed by human will or reason alone, and that divine support is essential. Prophets are tasked with enlightening others, correcting social mismanagement, and fulfilling the divine will [4]

The substantial differences between the two positions are evident. The first perspective emphasizes personal will, asserting that a quality entirely independent of human volition—such as the power of imagination—can enable an individual to attain revelation. Certain Peripatetic philosophers supported this claim, considering it plausible within their framework [Gerald, 2001].

The second perspective contends that the reception of revelation lies beyond human volition and is not subject to individual desires or efforts. Divine knowledge is not an attribute accessible to all humans; rather, it is conferred through prophets selected by the divine in specific historical periods and transmitted to society. Consequently, the focus shifts from the prophet's intellectual processing of revelation to the broader impact of revelation on the cognition and lifestyles of diverse societal individuals over time. This second view is more coherent and compelling [Gerald, 2001].

A key illustration is the initial encounter of revelation with the Prophet Muhammad. When the angel commanded “Read” [*Iqra*], Muhammad’s response—stating he could not read—followed by his later declaration to the people, “I am the city of knowledge” clearly demonstrates that personal will or desire did not influence the reception of revelation. Although his initial reaction reflected his own reasoning, his subsequent expression was a product of the extraordinary faculties granted by revelation. Muhammad’s immediate statement, “I cannot read,” indicates he had no premeditated intent or desire for revelation. It is also incorrect to assume that he anticipated revelation would be given to an illiterate person, as divine communication was not a regular or predictable event within society. Therefore, the only reasonable conclusion is that Muhammad had no pre-existing conscious intent regarding the reception of revelation. Across prophets, the decisive factor is not attaining prophethood but the conferral of prophethood itself. Personal virtue, while significant, is not determinative; for instance, Moses had committed murder prior to his prophetic mission, demonstrating that moral excellence in childhood does not guarantee a person will later assume societal authority or prophetic leadership. The ultimate criterion is the occurrence of divine revelation [Ibn Sina, 1973: p.24].

Supporters of the first view approach the matter rationally, attempting to explain phenomena such as angels, the advent of revelation, and God’s communication through logical reasoning. They often reject aspects beyond human comprehension. However, philosophers argue that the essence of revelation does not lie in proving whether it originates from God, but in its role as divine communication directed toward humans, affecting their daily lives, and conveying absolute truth. From a religious standpoint, if humans rely solely on their individual intellect and abandon the divinely guided

paths established through prophets, they cannot achieve their intended purpose or attain paradise [Ibn SIna, 1973].

Furthermore, religious doctrine maintains that worship practices prescribed for humanity are based on revelation, rooted in the concept of God's unity. Disagreements and conflicts within religious traditions are subsequent human developments. Thus, all revelation—from the first to the last, encompassing revealed scriptures and prophets—originates from a singular divine source. Religious logic defines revelation as God's word addressed to a prophet, distinguished from other esoteric knowledge by the following features:

1. **Exclusive to Prophets:** Unlike other forms of esoteric knowledge, revelation cannot be received by ordinary individuals.
2. **Clarity and Certainty:** The prophet apprehends certain words or concepts as precise and definite knowledge. Other forms of inspiration [*ilham*] may be sudden or ambiguous, often challenging to interpret without prophetic capacity.
3. **Divine Origin:** The prophet clearly recognizes revelation as external, not a product of personal cognition, underscoring its extraordinary nature.
4. **Secrecy and Rapidity:** Revelation enters the prophet's heart instantaneously, transcending temporal and spatial constraints. Other esoteric knowledge may lack this immediacy or clarity.
5. **Societal Applicability:** Revelation is implemented within and directed toward society, unlike dreams or personal inspirations, which are primarily individual.

6. Comprehensive Social Guidance: Revelation aims to influence societal, economic, and political structures, whereas inspiration [*il-ham*] typically addresses individual character and personal improvement [Ibn SIna, 1973].

Philosophers have long debated whether human reason could independently arrive at the truths conveyed by revelation. While a full answer requires extensive philosophical argumentation, the religious perspective maintains that comprehension of divine truths without revelation is impossible. Human intellect is limited and incapable of consistently conceiving the Absolute Good; reason alone may lead to divergent paths. Divine intervention, therefore, ensures the faithful guidance of humanity through selected individuals who convey revelation, shaping societal practices according to divine instruction [Demirci, 2003].

There are various modes of revelation reception, as indicated in the Qur'an: "He rules from the heavens to the earth, and then it ascends to Him in a day, the measure of which is a thousand years of your reckoning. Thus does Allah bring the spirit by His command" [Qur'an 32:5]. The modes include:

1. **Direct Revelation:** The individual receives divine communication without intermediaries.
2. **Mediated Direct Revelation:** An intermediary conveys the divine message while the source remains God; for instance, God communicates to Moses through the burning bush, where the medium [fire] witnesses the divine words.
3. **Mediated Revelation via Angel:** God communicates to the prophet through an angelic messenger, such as Gabriel [*Jibril*], which represents the most common form of revelation. The

prophet experiences heightened awareness, retaining the content and comprehending its essence, without confusion or unconscious interpretation [5].

Modern European scholars have debated whether revelation in Muhammad's consciousness could be explained as psychological inspiration. However, as noted by researcher M. Nabin, "although the term inspiration is sometimes employed to provide a psychological interpretation, it does not inherently contain psychological elements" [Demirci, 2003].

Revelation prescribes obligatory worship [*ibadat*], which is determined by temporal and spatial considerations. Time, in particular, demands strict adherence to ritual practice, exemplified in fasting [*sawm*], where temporal observance supersedes spatial factors. The ultimate objective of revelation is the cultivation of individuals as members of society, guiding them to act for communal welfare rather than solely for personal benefit. In this sense, worship represents structured social training and moral guidance, differing in form but unified in purpose.

The style of revelation produces distinctive psychological effects. Historical observation confirms this phenomenon: contemporaries of Muhammad did not oppose revelation, and the spread of Islam reflects the persuasive power of its divinely guided approach. H. Sabri notes: "Islam, whose name denotes salvation and prosperity, and whose message conveys guidance and happiness, presumes that humans are inherently pure and sacred. Accordingly, the call to Islam emphasizes spiritual and mental purity, simplicity of faith, and moral and ethical excellence" [Tebrizi, 2005].

The phenomenon of thousands of Europeans embracing Islam each year is well documented. Researchers have conducted exten-

sive studies on this subject, ultimately concluding that the persuasive power of revelation stems precisely from its divine origin. One of the distinctive features of revelation is the language in which it is expressed. It can be unequivocally asserted that the language of revelation has always corresponded to the language of the prophet delivering it and the society to which the prophet belongs. Studies on the linguistic aspect of revelation have demonstrated that, although the language of revelation varies across different eras, its essential meaning remains unchanged. The strongest evidence for this assertion is revelation itself. The Qur'an consistently maintains that the Torah and the Gospel, which preceded it, were also divine commands and conveyed the same essential truths. However, over time, humans altered these revelations for their own benefit. A careful examination of these modifications shows a clear departure from the original style of revelation. Even written copies of the Gospel contain phrases that reflect the limited reasoning of human authors. The linguistic excellence, originality, and conciseness inherent in divine revelations are absent in these altered texts. Scholars assert that revelation possesses a unique stylistic form that engages the reader in such a way that the impressions received are unforgettable, thereby exerting its influence. Its poetic, memorable, and high-pathetic expressions captivate the reader, rendering them absorbed in the message of revelation, a feature readily observable in the Qur'an [Tebri, 2005].

According to European scholar V. Montgomery, revelation cannot communicate every earthly fact; if it did, reading and retaining it would be tedious, and it would fail to address broader audiences or scholarly inquiry. The Qur'an, as an original work of revelation, does not present all knowledge in a comprehensive form but allows access to truths across diverse domains. To illustrate this, Montgomery proposes the "diagrammatic theory of revelation." The theory posits that, much like a diagram conveying selected truths

through images, lines, and colors—which in themselves do not constitute the truth but provide cues leading to it—revelation serves as a guide to understanding ultimate truths. He likens this to informational diagrams in London Underground tunnels: while the diagrams do not convey every detail, they enable individuals to obtain essential guidance. Similarly, maps provide directional information without representing reality in its entirety. In this context, Montgomery contends that the language of religion and its adherents, regardless of belief, inevitably follows a diagrammatic method [Montgomery, 1982].

In the Qur'an, the term *wahy* is also employed in reference to the prophet's personal usage and instruction: "These are among the unseen news We reveal to you. When the pens are cast into the water, you were not present with them, guarding Mary" [Qur'an 3:44]. According to M. Nabi, such verses underscore revelation's defining feature: the conveyance of previously unknown realities. Revelation communicates these unseen phenomena in a manner that allows a clear distinction between personal reflections and divine insight [Nabi, 1991].

The style of revelation is inherently remarkable. Given its divine origin, it is reasonable to assert that the style of revelation reflects the style of God. Understanding this requires studying the language of revelation itself, including its rhetorical forms, intonation, and eloquence, which are often lost in translation. For instance, in the Qur'anic discourse, God frequently speaks of creation and actions in the plural form "We," which in Arabic conveys majesty, nobility, and grandeur, rather than implying multiple deities. Qur'anic revelation is not bound by any alphabetic or phonetic system, distinguishing it from ordinary human speech [Qur'an 69:40; 85:21]. The angelic mediator or active intellect conveys revelation in a comprehensible language to the prophet, who is selected from the

recipient community to ensure clarity of communication: “We sent every messenger to his people in their own language so that he may make things clear to them” [Qur’an 14:4] [Nebi, 1994].

The purpose of revelation is intellectually stimulating for any rational individual. Eastern Peripatetic scholars maintain that the primary aim of revelation is the organization of society, restoration of human values, and ensuring communal well-being, while also incorporating the concept of God’s existence. Western orientalist V. Montgomery suggests that revelation also imparts knowledge of divine existence, attributes, and the reciprocal relationship between God and humanity. Revelation informs humanity not only of God’s existence but also of His characteristics, guiding social conduct, and outlining rewards and punishments for compliance or neglect. While recounting historical events, revelation is not intended to provide scientific knowledge but rather enables access to insights relevant across informational domains. Revelation consistently confirms previous revelations, maintaining continuity across time: “Indeed, We sent down the Torah containing guidance and light, confirming what came before it...” [Qur’an 5:44]. The indivisibility of revelation forms the foundation for all revealed religions. Its universality implies that, although revelation may descend to different peoples across time, its purpose remains constant, addressing all humanity, including future civilizations. “Time, place, and nationality cannot constrain revelation; it is not subject to appropriation” [Erdogan, 2001: p.19]. The Qur’an, as the final revelation, confirms previous scriptures while affirming the completion of divine guidance.

The concept of unity in revelation is thus preserved across all religious traditions, maintaining coherence, stylistic richness, and logical intonation. While other scriptures have experienced alterations, remnants of original stylistic and rhetorical features persist, evidenc-

ing their divine origin. “In terms of unity, the revelation given to Adam, the Torah, the Gospel, and the Qur’an are essentially consistent.” Revelation always pursues the same goal and pedagogical function. Religious logic asserts that humanity cannot mature without access to divine revelation. Since Abraham, certain individuals with extraordinary capabilities have progressively emerged to convey absolute truths through the path of revelation [Erdogan, 2001].

Each revealed religion may contribute unique nuances to the concept of revelation. In Christianity, revelation is understood as “the Spirit of God entering the hearts of holy scribes, acquainting them with spiritual truths and hidden knowledge without overriding their individuality.” Here, the essence of revelation involves God manifesting Himself through the person of His Son, Jesus, integrating divine speech with his life, actions, and creations. Contemporary Christian discourse emphasizes revelation as a divine activity connecting humanity with God, aligning closely with Islamic principles of God-human relationality [Pazarli, 1978]. Western philosopher S. Thornton, in his work *The Organism of Historical Christianity*, emphasizes how religious structures expand to increase membership, regulate social life, and extend influence beyond the faithful [Erdogan, 2001].

The Socio-Legal Significance of Revelation

Revelation has been interpreted from a legal perspective, highlighting the normative, law-giving aspects that historically guided governance, as in the fifth-century caliphates. Modernist Islamic scholar M. Abduh interprets revelation as a legal framework, noting that sacred texts function as comprehensive legal codes. Throughout history, even in states formally separating religion from governance, Sharia-based norms have structured societal conduct, demonstrating revelation’s general applicability across social strata. Revelation

is not constrained by contemporary political or economic formations. Societal structures endow humans with immutable qualities, unaffected by political systems or economic relations. For example, moral virtues remain constant, practices such as female infanticide, blood feuds, or usury are universally prohibited, and revelation consistently articulates these prohibitions. Importantly, revelation does not impose a restrictive image on human perception; rather, it guides moral and social behavior without engendering alienation or aversion [Montgomeri, 1982].

The Social Value of Revelation. According to Bergson, religion constitutes the most significant bond uniting humanity. Within society, there exist essential values that are accepted by individuals and form the core of their social life. Among these, perhaps the most critical factor is religion and religious values. As philosopher T. Mengüşoğlu notes, “Man does not merely endow his life with a value or meaning; in all his actions and their outcomes, in his successes, he attains some form of value” [Mengüşoğlu, n.d.]. Revelation, as a religious factor, not only provides meaning to the lives of people forming the social fabric but also influences their lifestyles and directs them toward various paths.

Prophets, as the bearers of revelation, were responsible in the societies they were sent to for challenging the prevailing unjust social structures that oppressed human rights and violated ethical principles; therefore, their influence was immediately perceptible. Upon receiving revelation, prophets did not initially aim to seize political power or enact state laws. Their primary role in society was to propagate the truth. Hence, their goal was not to assume authority but to fundamentally transform erroneous ways of thinking among people and educate them according to the core ideas of the new religion. In other words, “The prophet’s duty is neither to act as a guardian, an advocate, nor to interfere in the affairs of others, but

merely to convey the revelation and follow it. In other words, revelation demands only that the prophet propagate the truth, forbidding the coercion of individuals in any particular direction” [Mengüşoğlu, n.d.].

Humans possess freedom within society and equal rights. They even maintain independent will regard acceptance of revelation. According to T. Mengüşoğlu, there is no truly irreligious person; all individuals, to varying degrees—whether positively or negatively—maintain a relationship with religion. “There are instances when bare reality is insufficient for human survival. Destructive and debilitating realities drive individuals toward despair, yet the human heart is filled with hope. Humans cling to life through hope. There is no alternative way to live. Faith, from an anthropological perspective, is intrinsic to human existence—it is a phenomenon without which life is impossible. This phenomenon is, in essence, a ‘condition of existence.’ For a person who does not believe, neither existence nor its contemplation is conceivable” [Mengüşoğlu, n.d.].

No divine religion arising from revelation has ever forced itself upon humans. Religious symbols and rituals, over time, have been internalized by society, becoming traditions and customs. Consequently, it may be argued that religious precepts, formed upon prohibitions and obligations such as sin-merit [ḥalāl-ḥarām], cease to serve merely a supervisory function in society, becoming the foundation of moral norms. Those who politicize religion manipulate it to govern societies, using it as a tool to enforce compliance with administrative laws. “The primary objective in sending prophets is to enable humans to exercise their rights of choice” [Mengüşoğlu, n.d.]. Among these rights, the legal principle of gender equality stands as paramount.

It is noteworthy that, even in the absence of any concept of democratic society, Islam, which emerged in the 7th century on the Arabian Peninsula, explicitly advanced gender equality, rejecting any principle of one sex's dominance over the other across all areas of social life. Islamic revelation defined women's rights and emphasized their obligatory observance within society. Moreover, in allocating responsibilities and duties, women were exempted from physically demanding tasks. "In Islam, what matters is not that men and women have equal rights, but that each is assigned duties within their capacity. The distribution of rights is based on the assignment of responsibilities... If men and women were assigned equal rights, the duties imposed would also have to be equal, which is impossible due to physiological and psychological differences between the sexes" [Mengüşoğlu, n.d.].

The regulation of women's rights under Islam represented a major social revolution in its historical context. Pre-Islamic [Jahiliyyah] societies deprived women of fundamental rights, subjecting them to cruelty, barbarity, and inhumane treatment. This pattern persisted even in other divine religions before Islam. Researcher A. Özmrə argues that the pre-Islamic Arabs' disgraceful treatment of women was compounded by similar attitudes among contemporary Jews and Christians: "At that time, Jewish women were marked with a 'dirty' sign on the forehead for certain periods, preventing even basic activities such as cooking. In Christianity, many popes and clerics regarded women as akin to the devil, deeming interaction with them inappropriate" [Özmrə, n.d.].

Crucially, the revelation underpinning the new religion not only affirmed previous divine messages but also abolished outdated laws and regulations, introducing new rights in accordance with societal structures. In contrast to modern legal codes, the rights conferred to women under Islam possess universality and permanence. The-

se rights are grounded in immutable human characteristics, making them relevant across all times.

Islam, grounded in Quranic revelation, encompasses all aspects of human material and spiritual life. It illuminates all paths toward moral and worldly well-being, rescuing humanity from spiritual maladies, and its immutable, clear, and enduring precepts encompass social spheres fully. The social significance of revelation is exemplified in the Quran's approach to alcohol consumption. Researcher M. Nabi analyzed the Quran's social impact in comparison to modern legislations such as the Prohibition Act ["Volstead Act"] in early 20th-century America. While prohibitive laws in the U.S. ultimately failed, Islamic revelation progressively eradicated alcoholism by first promoting moderate practices and gradually instituting prohibition, yielding sustainable results.

Revelation manifests its true expression in society. It addresses communities directly, which in turn interprets, examines, and applies its multifaceted aspects. If the Quran forms the "backbone" of the historical organism of Islam, revelation itself operationalizes within society as its concrete expression. The initial focus of Quranic revelation targeted three critical societal issues in pre-Islamic Arabian society:

1. Blood feuds based on kinship.
2. Infanticide, particularly of female children.
3. Polytheism and idol worship, along with coercion of others to engage in such practices.

Pre-Islamic Arabia's moral and social structure was deeply flawed, rife with idolatry, arbitrary justice, and violence. Islam eliminated

these practices, prohibiting them entirely. As scholar Renan observes: “Until this remarkable process enabled the sudden advancement of Arabs, Arabia had scarcely contributed to world culture, lacking any traces of sect or science” [Renan, n.d.]. V. Montgomery attributes the fundamental cause of these transformative societal changes solely to Islam. He emphasizes that attributing these changes to the Prophet’s personality alone overlooks the overarching influence of revelation across all divine religions.

In conclusion, the enlightenment-oriented, ethically-driven nature of Islam has consistently yielded positive societal outcomes. Revelation transcends temporal and spatial contexts, offering universal principles applicable across societies. As T. Carlyle notes: “Through Islam, God brought Arabs from darkness into light. A nation emerged from a previously inert people, compelled to rise from insignificance to greatness. Within a century of Islam’s advent, Muslims had a presence from India to Spain” [Carlyle, n.d.].

A key component of revelation’s social value is its promotion of tolerance. “We love our religion, nation, country, flag, ancestors, relatives, and friends, and just as we desire to live according to our rights, we must recognize the same sentiment in others. This understanding from the Quran illustrates its humanistic message of tolerance” [Aslan, n.d.]. Divine revelations, particularly Islamic revelation, never compel belief. As Ö. Aslan explains: “Tolerance means accepting all beings’ nature and existence as they are, refraining from interference in their way of life.” Careful examination of sacred texts confirms that adherents are not isolated or oppressed but encouraged to promote good and avoid evil through ethical guidance.

ORIGINS OF ESOTERIC KNOWLEDGE ACCORDING TO EASTERN PERIPATETICS

In the epistemological theories of Eastern Peripatetic philosophers, both the rational and irrational faculties of the intellect play a significant role in the perception of existence. However, research indicates that Eastern Peripatetics tend to prioritize irrational means over rational ones in the pursuit of truth, while not completely disregarding rational methods. One of the rational cognitive tools, sensory perception, is reflected in the philosophical systems of Eastern Peripatetics. Their reliance on rational cognition partially draws upon the Aristotelian philosophy of intellectual perception. For instance, Aristotle writes in *Prior Analytics*: “If there is no sensory perception, then necessarily no knowledge exists.” Sensory perception constitutes one of the stages of cognition in the philosophical systems of these thinkers. According to their epistemology, what is apprehended by the intellect is gradually comprehended in actuality, although potentially it can be understood infinitely. T.J. de-Boer notes that this Aristotelian influence on Eastern philosophy generally relies heavily on translation activities.

K. Bünyadzadé, however, provides a different perspective, writing: “Islamic philosophy developed from the 7th century onwards based on ancient Arab mythology and traditions... Islamic philosophical thought possesses a new and unique specificity.” [Bunyardzade, 2006]

It should also be noted that Eastern Peripatetics were influenced by various doctrinal currents within Islam. For example, the

Mu'tazilites, one of the philosophical schools within Islam, assert that all existing things exist due to God's will, which is referred to as the "intellect" [ʿaql]. They contend that the creation of the soul was also requested from God through the intellect, while the boundaries of existence are determined directly by the soul, which simultaneously assists the intellect. Aiding both is the "word" [kalima]. Among Islamic theological schools, only the Mu'tazilites, the Jabriyya, and most of the Sunni schools actively engaged with philosophical issues, particularly exploring the proofs of God's existence, His attributes, the creation of the world, human-world relationships, causality and necessity, and issues of fate and predestination from a philosophical perspective.

Schools carrying philosophical seeds could not fully develop due to internal conflicts and political struggles. They also did not systematically refine their philosophical ideas as professional philosophers. Within Islamic schools, the Mu'tazilites specifically interpreted religious matters philosophically and in accordance with the principles of revelation. The modern continuation and development of the Mu'tazilite approach is found in the Shia school [Figlali, 1990].

Eastern Peripatetics actively participated in the global intellectual struggle to seek truth and arguably constituted the leading wing of this pursuit. Ibn Sina and Bahmanyār, in particular, argued: "Most of the inseparable qualities in things can be known by humans; however, humans cannot claim to know all inseparable qualities. The goal is to perceive the truth of a thing, and then if one could penetrate its inseparable qualities and particular accidents, one could know them entirely; yet the aim is to comprehend the truth of the thing itself." [Najafov, 2008]

Islamic philosophers primarily understood revelation as the contact of the human rational soul [nafs al-natiqa] with the celestial intellect

and the spiritual soul. The concept of the prophet, closely related to the issue of revelation, is limited to being the transmitter of divine messages. Eastern philosophers explained revelation as the human rational soul becoming aware of events communicated through the celestial soul, with these events reflected in the rational soul as images are mirrored in a reflective surface. Beyond the general consensus on revelation, philosophers also had specific individual claims. For instance, Ibn Sina viewed revelation as a grace [fayz] flowing from the Active Intellect into human intellect, whereas Ibn Khaldun described it differently: “The prophet detaches from humanity, enters the horizon of the angels [‘mala’ al-‘ula’], receives God’s speech like angels, and then conveys it to humans through forms and sounds.” Ibn Khaldun attributed the prophet’s struggles during the reception of revelation not to psychological disorders but to the difficulty of transitioning from human to angelic nature; these struggles are manifestations of this transition [Mammadov, 1983].

It is known that cognitive levels vary. Human perception does not always operate solely through intellectual means—it may occur through sensation, sight, touch, etc. However, in the case exclusive to the prophet, the usual cognitive levels are bypassed: the information is accepted by the prophet’s intellect, and its truth is recognized. Philosophers have proposed various reflections on how and under what conditions revelation is received by the prophet. Among them are also unique ideas of philosophers historically living in the Azerbaijani region [De Boer, 1960].

Azerbaijani philosophers, writing in Arabic according to the demands of their era, contributed significantly to the Peripatetic tradition. Although their treatment of revelation and prophetic theory is comparatively less extensive than other Arabic-speaking Peripatetics, they considered revelation as part of the necessary existence.

Like Farabi and Ibn Sina, they divided existence into necessary, possible, and impossible entities, interpreting revelation as the necessary being's notification to possible beings. One such philosopher is Abu'l-Hasan Bahmanyār. According to Z. Mammadov, Bahmanyār holds that the attributes of life, immortality, and indestructibility inherent in the Necessary Being also extend to Active Intellects and celestial souls; that is, the Active Intellect from which prophets receive revelation possesses certain divine qualities [Mammadov, 1983].

Bahmanyār was a follower of the Ibn Sina school and drew extensively from his teacher, though his system also contained original ideas. T.J. de-Boer notes some divergences between Bahmanyār and Ibn Sina in their ontological theories. In Bahmanyār's philosophy, rational cognition predominates over the irrational; he argues that metaphysics, as a science, concerns existence itself, while its subjects pertain to the necessarily existing entity.

According to Bahmanyār, the reception of revelation cannot involve external senses, as the tempo of external sensory processes is incompatible with revelation. He divides the sensory stage of cognition into two: external senses [al-zāhirah al-ḥawās] and internal senses [al-bāṭinah al-ḥawās]. Revelation primarily involves the internal senses—imagination, fantasy, and speculative faculties—and is apprehended intellectually rather than sensorially. Belief in God, adherence to obligations, and avoidance of prohibitions are necessary for the exercise of intellectual cognition [Mammadov, 1983].

“Bahmanyār and other Peripatetic philosophers extensively elaborated the forms of theoretical intellect, highlighting the various aspects and characteristics of cognitive capacity. They distinguished between potential intellect [bi-l-quwwah], habitual intellect [bi-l-

mulkah], actual intellect [bi-l-fi‘l], and acquired intellect [bi-l-mustafād], which constitute the stages of theoretical intellect. Potential intellect is also termed imaginative [hayūlānī] or affected intellect [al-munfa‘il].”

In Bahmanyār’s view, differentiation plays a key role in the knowledge of intelligible entities. God, as a willing entity, is necessary, but His existence differs from that of other beings—not temporally, but essentially. God is the primordial cause and underlying reason beyond creation. Bahmanyār’s philosophy also reflects the principle of “non-intervention of God in the affairs of His creation,” where every being possesses free will. “Will is knowledge of the necessary consequence of an entity’s essence.” For Ibn Sina and Bahmanyār, every bodily state is subject to perfection, which corresponds to the soul [Zakuyev, 1967].

Bahmanyār writes: “In humans, cognition occurs through sensation, imagination, fantasy, and intellect.” Sensory cognition enables the understanding of particular entities, with perception, imagination, and memory comprehending individual objects. He asserts that sensory stages create the conditions for intellectual cognition: what is perceived through the senses is subsequently comprehended by the intellect.

In his treatise *Mawāqif al-Mawjūdāt* [“The Stages of Existence”], Bahmanyār writes: “Every perceived entity manifests at the moment of perception.” Z. Mammadov comments: “Bahmanyār interprets intellectual cognition as a direct continuation of sensory cognition; each stage of the cognitive process conditions and prepares the next. For example, habitual intellect leads to actual intellect, imaginative intellect to habitual intellect, and practical intellect serves all.” The true philosopher or prophet ascends to active intel-

lect to acquire knowledge, passing through all these cognitive stages. Information obtained through sensory cognition gains a new quality once submitted to intellect: “Sensation dissolves composite entities into imagination, which then transfers them to intellect. The intellect abstracts, separates, and identifies each meaning, the most particular, the most general, the substantial, and the accidental. Thereupon, axiomatic notions corresponding to imagination are established, from which definitions are formulated.” [De Boer, 1960]

Bahmanyār emphasized the primacy of sensory cognition within the cognitive process and also acknowledged the rational soul’s capacity to secure existential happiness. Scholar S. Ateş interprets this as the reduction of the irrational to the rational, or the integration of the material with the divine. Hence, divine speech in revelation cannot involve human-like sounds or letters: “It is impossible for God to speak directly to humans in a way we comprehend.” Divine meanings are transmitted via angels, who mediate and translate them into humanly intelligible forms: “God conveys divine meanings through angels, who insert them into the linguistic molds of humans...” [De Boer, 1960].

Thus, in Bahmanyār’s framework, the reception of revelation is entirely separated from the external senses. Sensory perception, as part of human cognition, cannot capture the divine influx; only the internal faculties—fantasy, imagination, and rational contemplation—can apprehend it. Revelation is therefore an intellectual reception, mediated through the rational soul in correspondence with the celestial intellect. Belief in God, adherence to obligations, and avoidance of prohibited actions are prerequisites for the actualization of intellectual cognition.

Bahmanyār and other Eastern Peripatetics elaborated extensively on the forms and stages of theoretical intellect, illuminating the dif-

ferent dimensions and capacities of human cognition. They distinguished between:

- **Potential intellect** [bi-l-quwwah / hayūlānī / al-munfa'il] - the capacity to receive knowledge, influenced by habit or prior impressions;
- **Habitual intellect** [bi-l-mulkah] - knowledge acquired through repeated practice and experience;
- **Actual intellect** [bi-l-fi'l] - active realization of knowledge;
- **Acquired intellect** [bi-l-mustafād] - knowledge obtained through intellectual effort and reflection.

In Bahmanyār's view, intellectual entities are known according to their essence, and differentiation among them is crucial for cognition. God, as the necessary being, exists in a fundamentally different manner from other beings, not temporally but essentially, as the ultimate cause and underlying principle of all creation. Bahmanyār's philosophy also reflects a principle that does not contradict divine non-intervention in creation; all beings, like God, possess will. "Will is the knowledge of the necessary consequence of an entity's essence." According to Bahmanyār and Ibn Sina, all corporeal states are subject to perfection, which pertains to the soul [Najafov, 2016].

Bahmanyār states: "In humans, cognition occurs through sensation, imagination, fantasy, and intellect." Sensory cognition is directed toward particular entities, with sensation, imagination, and memory grasping specific items. The sensory stage creates conditions for intellectual cognition: what is perceived through sensation becomes apprehensible by intellect. Sensory data, once submitted to intellec-

tual processing, gains new qualities. Bahmanyār explains: [Nasr, 2000].

“Sensation dissolves composite entities into imagination, which then transfers them to intellect. The intellect abstracts, differentiates, and identifies each meaning, the most particular, the most general, the substantial, and the accidental. Thereupon, axiomatic notions corresponding to imagination are established, from which definitions are formulated.” [De Boer, 1960].

He emphasized the primacy of sensory cognition within the cognitive hierarchy. Furthermore, he argued that the rational soul has the capacity to secure existential fulfillment. S. Ateş interprets Bahmanyār’s position as the reduction of the irrational to the rational, integrating material phenomena with divine realities. Divine speech in revelation cannot involve literal sounds or letters as humans understand them; the transmission of divine meaning occurs beyond human sensory perception [Mammadov, 1983].

“God conveys divine meanings through angels, who adapt them into the linguistic forms comprehensible to humans.” [Najafov, 2014]

Through this mediated process, revelation bridges the celestial and human realms. The intellect receives knowledge directly from the active intellect or celestial sources, while the internal senses provide the perceptual groundwork. Each stage of cognition conditions the next, forming an integrated epistemological hierarchy: sensory perception prepares imagination, which informs intellect, culminating in comprehension of metaphysical truths.

In this manner, Bahmanyār systematizes esoteric knowledge within the Peripatetic framework, balancing the rational and irrational fac-

ulties, and demonstrating the intricate interplay between sensory experience, intellectual abstraction, and divine revelation. His philosophical legacy reflects both the Aristotelian tradition and the distinctive contributions of Islamic philosophical thought, highlighting the Eastern Peripatetic synthesis of reason, spirituality, and metaphysical inquiry.

Building on Ibn Sina's perspective, Ābu-l-Ḥasan Bahmanyār does not strictly separate the intellectual stage of cognition from its sensory stage; rather, he maintains that intellectual knowledge emerges based on sensory input [Najafov, R., 2007]. He asserts: "Whatever an individual apprehends through intellect corresponds to what has been perceived through sensation... Cognition resides not in the body but in the soul. It creates a connection between the body and soul. It has no material attribute and its function is to unite the soul with the material world." [Mujtaba, 2005]

By clearly expressing the relationship of the immaterial to the material, Bahmanyār emphasizes that intellect exists in the soul as an immaterial entity, not merely as a product of material processes. If cognition resides in the soul, it is immortal and, if its essence remains unchanged, it can continue to function after the death of the body. In accordance with the intellectual climate of their time, Eastern Peripatetic philosophers introduced significant modifications to their epistemological theories. As researcher S. Rəhimov notes: "As in all historical periods, in Eastern Peripatetic philosophy, the formulation and resolution of philosophical problems—an integral part of rational thought—constantly evolved and enriched in tandem with the development of moral culture and intellectual sophistication." [Mammadov, 1983]

Among Eastern Peripatetics, Bahmanyār stands out for his distinctive approach: he not only recorded his teacher's ideas but also ex-

panded and enriched them, particularly by introducing the aforementioned innovations in epistemology. However, he devotes relatively little attention to revelation in his theory of cognition. He did not dedicate a separate treatise to the problem of revelation or prophethood but addressed these topics as they arose, providing his philosophical perspectives [Najafov, 2016].

Another major Azerbaijani philosopher contributing to epistemology is Shihab al-Din Yahya Suhrawardi al-Maqtul. Suhrawardi is renowned in the history of philosophy as an Illuminationist thinker, although he also incorporated significant Peripatetic ideas. He addressed revelation and the theory of prophethood, often comparing the philosopher and prophet, while remaining faithful to Illuminationist principles [De Boer, 1960].

According to Illuminationists, philosophy is divided epistemologically into two kinds:

- a) Rational philosophy based on proofs and demonstration,
- b) Revelation or inspired philosophy, which leads to understanding the essence of the world of lights [Najafov, 2016].

A seeker of knowledge should adopt one without rejecting the other. Suhrawardi argues that philosophical knowledge is essential for the enlightened, and in his Illuminationist system, the concept of *light* is so general that it encompasses revelation; in a sense, revelation itself can be considered a divine illumination. Certain ideas were adopted from the Peripatetics but reinterpreted in Illuminationist terms. For instance, the Peripatetic concept of the *Active Intellect* corresponds in Illuminationism to the notion of the *abstract light*. Likewise, Bahmanyār's notions of necessary and possible beings are paralleled by Suhrawardi's concepts of *darkness* [*zulmah*] and *light* [*nūr*]: matter may be considered darkness, and

when spiritual or immaterial qualities are mixed with matter, the essential character of darkness remains unchanged, just as the essence of light is unaffected by admixture. Hence, when spirit enters the body, the body remains darkness and the spirit remains light [Mammadov, 1983].

Suhrawardi emphasizes that the only path to understanding causes is through *discovery* [*kashf*], which is distinct from logic or philosophical proof. Philosophical reasoning alone cannot unveil the essence of things:

“Truth can be attained only through the heart and the path of illumination. This occurs when the soul reflects the bodily form in the supra-world with a clear consciousness. We apprehend things through it.”

The light that aids cognition comes as divine assistance, enabling the seeker to attain certainty and perceive the essence of things. Through discovery, the individual ascends gradually from darkness to light, ultimately reaching the Infinite Light, i.e., God. This ascent is voluntary but requires prior cultivation of the soul, purifying the heart to access the world of meanings. Suhrawardi writes: The individual perceives truths there and hears sounds. The knowledge obtained in that realm cannot be expressed in words.” [Najafov, 2008].

This resonates with Sufi practices, emphasizing moral purification and the soul’s elevation to the divine realm, free from material attachments. In understanding God, the soul faces no spatial or temporal limitations, as these pertain only to sensation, while God is absolute. In Suhrawardi’s view, the soul coincides with the rational self [*nafs-i nāṭiq*], and as it receives illumination from the divine realm, it does not lose its essence: the human remains human. As

Hegel noted, “God cannot be equated with man, for God is existence and totality, whereas man is finite.” [Farabi, 185].

In Suhrawardi’s epistemology, the intellectual stage complements the sensory stage: intellect functions to refine, analyze, and verify the truths initially apprehended through sensation. Suhrawardi himself claimed that humans ascend a luminous path toward God, deriving their light from *Nūr al-Anwār*. Like al-Kindi, Suhrawardi acknowledged the role of revelation and prophethood in knowing God, yet he emphasized spiritual illumination as the primary factor. Revelation, in essence, is divine light. This distinction sets Illuminationists apart from Peripatetics: truth is accessible solely via the heart and illumination [Mammadov, 1983: p.134].

Whereas al-Kindi explained the comprehension of things, including revelation, through advanced intellectual processes, Suhrawardi interpreted it as divine light reflected into the human heart:

“We perceive things through the light emanating from God. Knowledge acquired through this light surpasses human faculties. One who possesses it can govern events and beings, and all that has occurred or will occur is revealed to him.” [Halilov, 2005].

Suhrawardi also stressed the role of the soul in cognition: the immaterial soul can receive divine influx, entering the sacred realm and acquiring knowledge, both in waking and in visionary states. As the soul becomes illuminated by the “light of lights,” it retains its human essence and is ready to unite with God. This spiritual capacity ensures that there is a connection between every level of the Illuminationist life and the supra-sensory world. Even after illumination, the individual remains human yet perfected, receiving divine light from *Nūr al-Anwār*, avoiding error [Halilov, 2005].

Suhrawardi underscores that the illumined must not only follow religious teachings but also engage in deep philosophical contemplation, integrating knowledge derived from both sensory/intellectual faculties and revelation. In his work *The Beliefs of the Philosophers* [*Aḥkāṁ al-Ḥukamā*], he asserts that prophets are sent not in vain: their responsibility is to awaken humans to the afterlife and guide societal transformation. Prophets are also lawgivers endowed with supreme will, their knowledge continuously regulated by God, ensuring they do not mislead their followers. Their elevated souls, guided by the “Holy Spirit” [likely the angel of revelation], allow them to access divine knowledge. [Halilov, 2005]

Suhrawardi sometimes blurs the distinction between soul and spirit, a common feature of his era; the soul may also be called light. In his framework, the soul enters the material world purposefully to attain perfection, and its elevation is a prerequisite for receiving divine revelation. Suhrawardi further assigns grades and types to souls, akin to the levels of rational selves. While Illuminationist, he extensively incorporates Peripatetic thought, particularly regarding prophethood and the nature of revelation, asserting unequivocally that revelation is a divine influx or light, accessible not only to prophets but to anyone who turns toward God and pursues moral perfection [Mammadov, 1983].

Finally, al-Kindi, one of the earliest major Arab philosophers, gave special attention to prophecy and revelation, offering philosophical insights and attempts at harmonizing philosophy with religion. Writing to the Abbasid Caliph al-Mutawakkil, al-Kindi distinguished philosophical knowledge from divine knowledge, asserting that while human intellect suffices for understanding the material, non-material realities require direct engagement with revelation and divine inspiration. Thus, according to al-Kindi, both philosophical intellect and divine knowledge are necessary: philosophical reason-

ing alone cannot suffice to grasp both the material and immaterial aspects of existence [Najafov, 2008].

According to al-Kindi, the primary purpose of prophets in conveying revelation is to make humans aware of the truth of all things that lead to goodness and happiness. He asserts:

“Knowledge of the truth of things includes knowledge of divinity, the unity of God, what is beneficial and how to preserve it, and the avoidance of harmful actions. All this knowledge is precisely what the true prophets bring from God, as it entails nothing other than calling humans to acknowledge God, to perform virtuous acts that require courage, and to avoid sinful deeds.” [De Boer, 1960]

Here, al-Kindi identifies a similarity between philosophers and prophets. Philosophers seek knowledge of the truths that philosophy aims to attain, and this knowledge aligns in subject and purpose with the truths conveyed by prophets. In this sense, there is a thematic and functional congruence—almost a unity—between philosophical truth and prophetic revelation [Najafov, 2008].

Prophetic revelations encompass theoretical truths and practical injunctions concerning God’s attributes, divine unity, obligatory commands, prohibitions, and similar matters. Philosophy investigates these theoretical truths and encourages humans to act accordingly. Al-Kindi maintains that a philosopher can study and interpret revelation using reason: a philosopher can intellectually apprehend and explain the revelations brought by the Prophet Muhammad. In *al-Kindi’s Letters* [*al-Kindi Rasā’il*], he declares: “By my life, the true statements of the Prophet Muhammad and what he brought from God can all be understood within the bounds of reason. Only those who reject reason, defend ignorance, or are unlearned will deny this.” [De Boer, 1960]

This demonstrates al-Kindi's view that the truths contained in prophetic revelations can be known through rational principles and capacities, without any antagonism between revelation and human intellect. However, he does not equate philosophical knowledge with prophetic knowledge; rather, he distinguishes between the two. Philosophy is dependent on human will, inquiry, and intellectual effort, while revelation is independent of human preparation—it may come to those who are unlettered or untrained. This knowledge originates from God, not from the prophet personally, and is divine in nature, though it is not universally accessible but specific to the prophet and his temporal context [Najafov, 2008].

Al-Kindi explains: “This knowledge is created directly in the souls of prophets by the will of God, without any prior preparation in mathematics, logic, or other disciplines, and independent of the human desire or direction. Prophets thus acquire it naturally.”

Although no human can solve complex problems without basic knowledge, a prophet could convey truths fourteen centuries before their discovery by human science. Al-Kindi illustrates this with a Qur'anic verse [36:78–79], responding to the question: “Who can restore the bones after they have decayed?” God's reply:

“Say: He who produced them the first time will bring them back to life. He has knowledge of all things.” [Najafov, 2008].

From this, al-Kindi concludes that the intellect cannot be directly compared with prophetic revelation. The verse demonstrates extraordinary logic: the same Creator responsible for the first creation can effortlessly accomplish the second. This represents one of the first philosophical interpretations of Qur'anic verses in Islamic philosophy, highlighting the harmony between philosophical reasoning and prophetic revelation. For example, in his treatise *The Explana-*

tion of the Prostration of the Farthest Celestial Sphere to God, al-Kindi interprets the Qur’anic verse stating that “plants and trees prostrate before Him” as symbolic of obedience to God rather than literal physical prostration, linking it to the natural and cosmic order.

Al-Kindi further incorporates his philosophical views in explaining creation: “The true act [al-fi’l al-ḥaqq] is creation ex nihilo, which belongs solely to God, the ultimate cause of the universe. Human creation is metaphorical, involving only manipulation of pre-existing matter.” In his philosophy, all acts and higher truths belong to the intellect, while material application is contingent upon intellectual will. Human creation does not resemble divine creation; God is the true agent bringing the universe into existence.

Al-Kindi is neither a philosophical nor a religious partisan. He advocates a philosophy encompassing both material and immaterial truths, and consistently seeks to harmonize philosophy and religion in his works: “Both religion and philosophy are sciences of truth.” [Nesefi, 1994].

He asserts that truth-seekers should recognize the pursuit of truth in both domains, without distinguishing between religious or scientific knowledge. Philosophy, in this view, is a method to know things as they truly are. When encountering difficult Qur’anic verses or apparent conflicts with philosophical principles, al-Kindi recommends interpretation [*ta’wīl*] grounded in reason, considering both literal and metaphorical meanings. For him, the ultimate aim of all sciences is the discovery of truth, which must be acknowledged wherever it is found.

Al-Kindi also regards revelation as inherently more eloquent and miraculous than rational discourse, both emanating from God. Phi-

losophy, he contends, encompasses divine attributes, monotheism, and moral principles: it is an intellectual approach to understanding the knowledge of God. His efforts demonstrate that the Qur'an and the prophetic mission are compatible with philosophy. By recognizing divine wisdom as a philosophical system, he portrays the prophet as the highest philosopher, disseminating divine knowledge [Najafov, 2014].

Regarding the soul, al-Kindi's concept differs from traditional Aristotelian notions. He incorporates both revelatory and Neoplatonic ideas, viewing the soul as a non-material substance existing in the body, maintaining life, and departing without harming the material form. He likens the soul's energy to sunlight, asserting its divine source. After death, the purified soul ascends from the material realm to the intelligible sphere.

Although Suhrawardi equates the soul with the rational, speaking self [*al-nafs al-nāṭiq*], al-Kindi's notion aligns closely with the majority of Eastern Peripatetic thinkers: the soul is immaterial yet exists within the material body, a non-physical essence of living substance [*eo ipso*]. Distinctively, al-Kindi also emphasizes the literary and aesthetic excellence of the Qur'an, noting that divine knowledge surpasses human intellect due to its divine origin. As M. Fakhrī observes, followers of al-Kindi, starting with al-Farabi, often failed to recognize that the philosophical truth of revelation could be neither inferior nor identical to philosophical truth, but must retain its supernatural authenticity. Al-Kindi's contributions to Eastern philosophy are profound. While largely compatible with Neoplatonism, he developed unique perspectives, particularly regarding prophecy and the relationship between reason and revelation. Through his works, he advanced philosophical thought, demonstrating that the intellect and prophetic knowledge together provide access to ultimate truths. He also explored the interaction of active

intellect with prophetic knowledge, establishing a model of intellectual and spiritual engagement of exceptional depth.

IMCRA

FARABI'S THEORY OF PROPHETHOOD AND CONCEPT OF REVELATION

Al-Farabi, one of the prominent figures of Eastern Peripatetic philosophy, addressed almost all significant issues in philosophy and authored numerous works. Due to his profound contributions not only in philosophy but also across all fields of knowledge known in his era and his classification of the sciences, he was referred to as the “*Second Aristotle*” or *Mu‘allim al-Thānī* [□□□□ □□], meaning “Second Teacher.” Researcher N. Taylan argues that there are notable differences between Farabi’s philosophy of religion and the Qur’anic texts. According to Taylan, Farabi lived in a period when kalām activity in the Islamic world was particularly influential, making it difficult to express independent opinions on Qur’anic texts. As a philosopher of keen intellect, Farabi sought to conceal his views on the Qur’an, often expressing them in symbolic terms in his commentaries [Albayrak, 1993].

A controversial aspect of Farabi’s thought regarding revelation is his claim that the individual soul does not experience resurrection after death. Farabi asserts that “there are two ways to apprehend something: first, through the intellect grasping its essence; second, by imagining it through an appropriate representation [*misāl*].” He distinguished between religion and philosophy in terms of their modes and forms of knowledge. For knowledge to qualify as philosophy, it must provide information about beings, convey their meanings to humans, and produce a firm understanding in the individual. “However, if this knowledge is represented through suitable *misāl*s and the confirmation therein is secured via convincing methods, the domain encompassing such knowledge becomes religion. Phi-

losophy persuades through proofs, whereas religion does not rely on proofs to persuade.” Religious thought is grounded in religious consciousness, which represents the completed and systematic form of religious sentiments.

Farabi’s claims about revelation are closely related to his theory of the ‘*uqul*’ [□□□□]. He elevates the philosopher to the level of being able to interact with the intellects [‘*uqul*’], similar to a prophet, claiming that the philosopher can obtain knowledge through active intellect [‘*al-‘aql al-fa‘āl*’]. [Farabi, 1978].

Al-Kindi may have laid the first foundations of this idea, identifying the primary realm as the world of intellects. Farabi, however, proposed a different order of emanating beings: the world of intellects is not a transient realm; it governs this world. Everything in the intellects’ realm is stable. He asserts, “The human soul [*nafs*] is a simple, imperishable substance that has descended from the world of intellects to the realm of sensory perception but retains memories related to the First Intellect.” [Farabi, 1978].

Scholar A. Bulaç notes that Farabi based his view of interacting with the active intellect on two key factors: contemplation and inspiration [*ilham*, □□□□]. Farabi distinguishes between philosophers and prophets, which is primarily based on the source of their knowledge. “The soul reaches a state where it receives divine light through comprehensive study and research; this elevation corresponds to the ‘acquired intellect’ [‘*al-‘aql al-mustafād*, □□□□□□□□ □□ □□ □], a level enabling philosophers to penetrate further and comprehend the world of light.” [Farabi, 1978].

Thus, although Farabi initially hypothesized the source of philosophical knowledge, his primary aim was to reconcile the philosopher and the prophet within a shared source of knowledge. He

elaborates: “A prophet, whether in a waking or dreaming state, can interact with the active intellect through profound observation and inspiration, possessing a vivid imaginative faculty. Revelation [*wahy*, □□□] is transmitted from God through the active intellect, as an emanation and inspiration. Even those not at the prophetic level may, through inner observation and inspiration, acquire similar imaginative capacities; these individuals are philosophers.” [Farabi, 1978].

The central principle in Farabi’s philosophical system is the reconciliation of philosophy and religion, primarily by interpreting revelation in accordance with intellect and complementing revealed knowledge with rational understanding. He emphasizes the critical role of the sacred power in the human intellect attaining the level of the active intellect [*al-‘aql al-fa‘āl*]. Similarly, this sacred power plays a pivotal role in a prophet’s reception of revelation. Prophets act as intermediaries between the divine and material worlds, conveying knowledge inaccessible to ordinary humans, whose access is restricted by the limits of creation. Angels, as messengers of God, transmit these hidden realities [*ghayb*, □□□] to the prophets: “Worship and prayer are obligatory. Angels, as messengers of God, bring to the prophets His proclamations. Human perfection is attained through the unity of knowledge and action.” [Nasr, 2000; Najafov, 2007].

For Farabi, a person’s reception of revelation requires traversing intellectual degrees through will and divine grace to attain the acquired intellect. Subsequently, intellectual development continues, and interaction with the active intellect occurs. God sends revelation and hidden knowledge to the prophet through the active intellect, which conveys it to the prophet’s imaginative faculty [Izutsu]. Importantly, while a ruler and philosopher may receive knowledge directly into their practical intellect [*al-munfa‘il ‘aql*, □□□□□]

□□□ □□□ □], the prophet relies on imagination in this reception. The essential point is that both philosopher and prophet achieve true understanding—through intellect and imaginative power, respectively—enabling the prophet to relate to present and future events and recognize other noble beings. In this state, the prophet and philosopher are both capable of guiding a virtuous city, possessing the capacity to interact with the active intellect—a source of both religious and societal knowledge [Bulac, 1994].

However, as noted by de-Boer, “since society cannot comprehend some truths, religion has utilized symbolic language and representations.” The distinction between prophet and philosopher lies in their respective faculties for knowledge acquisition: imagination for the prophet and reasoning for the philosopher. Farabi asserts: “Prophethood is characterized by a sacred power within the soul, strengthened by the greatest Creator of the world.” Both derive from the active intellect. For Farabi, truth is singular, but the methods by which humans access it manifest differently. The prophet is endowed with sacred power aligned with the collective worldview of people, performing miracles to convey moral and societal norms. Angels, as divine messengers, bring predetermined knowledge to the prophet, highlighting the prophet’s unique capacity for miracles. The prophet attains the highest felicity, while the philosopher discovers and realizes it through intellectual inquiry. “The philosopher, through intellect and ethical reasoning, achieves what the prophet conveys in the best and most beautiful form to humanity.”

Farabi conceives of human essence as comprising two substances: the body and the soul, each with distinct properties and characteristics:

a) The visible aspect of the human, the corporeal body, capable of movement, occupying space and time, and divisible.

b) The soul, immaterial, without shape, independent of time and space, whose existence is grasped through thought and contemplation.

Humans possess various faculties, including nourishment and feeding, but also desire, imagination, and sensation. In Sufi practice, as one ascends through stages of spiritual purification and moral cleansing, one attains the transcendent realm and recognizes the unity of all in God, discerning the multiplicity of transient and accidental beings. Other inhabitants of this realm, the spiritual entities [angels], are created beings. Farabi observes: “Angels have no physical forms. They are primal intellects, existing in their being after inception, accountable for the supreme command of God.”

Farabi mentions the *Muqaddas Ruh* interacting with angels, but he does not explicitly identify it as the spirit God breathed into Adam or as the Archangel Gabriel. “The sacred spirit addresses them in wakefulness, while the prophetic spirit interacts with them in sleep.” Presumably, this sacred spirit refers to God’s breath infused into Adam, consistent with the logic of the Qur’an. Farabi affirms the ontological reality of angels and asserts that humans can perceive them spiritually through moral and mental development: “Only the human sacred spirit can encounter angels, elevating the faculties of consciousness. Humans perceive angels morally, not in their true essence, hearing their voices[Farabi, 1978].”

Farabi’s insights on mysticism, the soul, and human psychology are valuable. He affirms belief in the soul’s immortality and life after death but rejects reincarnation [*hulūl*, □□□□]. Human actions are preordained in the soul, granted by God. Divine influence depends on the soul’s development and purification from evil. Achieving spiritual elevation requires distancing from bodily pleasures and habituating the soul to intellectual and spiritual delight. The ulti-

mate stage of the soul is moral and spiritual ascension, achievable by few due to limitations in human will and *nafs* capacity [Farabi, 1978].

Farabi posits three sources of knowledge: intellect [*‘aql*], contemplation [*naẓar*], and observation [*mushāhada*]. Philosophical knowledge, particularly concerning human perfection and happiness, is attained through the final celestial intellect, the active intellect [*al-‘aql al-fa‘āl*]. “Through the power of thought, the acquired intellect [*al-‘aql al-mustafād*] unites with the active intellect, enabling the philosopher to apprehend all truths and determine the nature of the best and most beneficial human perfection and happiness.” Farabi includes both philosophers and prophets in those capable of interacting with the active intellect. His extensive theory, known as the “*theory of prophethood* [*nazariyyat al-nubuwwa*, □□ □□ □ □□ □□ □],” while drawing on Plotinus and al-Kindi, remains largely original to him [Farabi, 1978].

While al-Kindi associated dreams with knowledge of the unseen [*ghayb*] through imaginative faculties linked to the soul, Farabi emphasized the necessity of the imaginative faculty [*quwwat al-khayāl*, □□ □ □□ □□ □] engaging with the active intellect for proper reception of knowledge. He views prophethood as the extraordinary development of imagination and contact with the active intellect, from which divine knowledge [*wahy*] emerges. The focal point of his theory is the active intellect itself. According to Farabi, “The soul is a mirror of human nature,” reflecting forms intelligible to the human intellect. The soul’s purity is essential for accurate reflection: “Purification of the soul implies ascension from sensory pleasure to spiritual delight.” [Daryal, 1999]

Farabi outlines the stages of the intellect as follows: potential intellect [*al-‘aql bi-l-quwwa*, □□ □□□ □□ □□□], actual intellect [*al-‘aql bi-l-fi‘l*, □□ □□□ □□□ □□□], acquired intellect [*al-‘aql al-mustafād*, □□ □□□ □□□ □□ □□□], and active intellect [*al-‘aql al-fa‘āl*, □□ □□□]. These stages represent the path by which the human soul attains ultimate knowledge and spiritual perfection.

Farabi’s Theory of Prophethood and Revelation

Farabi’s theoretical propositions originate from Aristotle. However, whereas Aristotle distinguished only two kinds of intellect—namely, the passive and the active intellect—Farabi significantly modified and complicated this framework. According to Farabi, at the initial stage, the intellect exists only as a latent faculty or potential ability, devoid of discernment and not yet actualized. This actualization occurs only when the intellect transitions from potentiality to actuality. [Farabi, 1978].

In Aristotle’s system, the acquired intellect cannot serve as the first principle, since the first principle must bestow existence and perfection upon things and remain flawless itself. In contrast, Farabi argued that the possibilities of the active intellect are limited. The active intellect itself is affected by an external force—namely, God, who sets it in motion. As Farabi states, “Divine intellect cannot be comprehended; it is beyond human reason. However, through love and mystical ecstasy, that is, through the path of Sufism, penetration into divine truth becomes possible.” [Farabi, 1978].

Farabi further maintained that if an individual possesses a strong and perfect imaginative faculty, unburdened by the domination of external senses, such a person can enter into contact with the active intellect, receiving impressions of supreme beauty and the highest perfection [Farabi, 1965]. When this occurs, the individual be-

comes a visionary who, through imagination, perceives divine majesty and grandeur. Once perfected, the imaginative faculty can even, in a waking state, receive foreknowledge of present and future events from the active intellect and, based on these insights, pronounce on divine matters in the form of prophecy. [Farabi, 1978].

All these issues are elaborated in detail in Farabi's "theory of prophethood." Before turning to these interpretations, it is necessary to briefly review the essence of the theory [Farabi, 1965]. Prophethood, according to Farabi, becomes possible through a sacred power. Prophets communicate religion to the people by employing symbols extensively. This idea of Farabi, both during his own time and afterwards, provoked significant debate and criticism from certain theologians. Farabi explained symbols as instruments for approaching truth and understanding reality. Ibn Rushd later continued this line of thought [Rahman, 1958; Najafov, 2016].

The method of interpreting religious issues in light of symbolism and subordinating them to the criteria of philosophy stemmed from attempts to reconcile Islam with philosophy, to interpret religious matters through philosophical reasoning. Farabi considered the essences of religion and philosophy to be identical [Farabi, 1965]. Both prophet and philosopher are in direct contact with the active intellect, since their aims are the same: to attain truth and to comprehend causes. The prophet's means of acquiring knowledge is revelation, while the philosopher's is reflection and rational inquiry. By elevating his intellectual faculty, the philosopher, like the prophet, comes into contact with the active intellect and receives knowledge. Yet, unlike the prophet, the philosopher must pass through numerous stages by the force of will. In this respect, Farabi's interpretation suggests the superiority of the philosopher over the prophet [De Boer, 200].

Nevertheless, Farabi insisted that both are indispensable for the ideal society. He assumed “a great similarity between the laws set forth by philosophers for the ideal state and the religious laws established by prophets, both in their essence and purpose. [Farabi, 1965]” Both strive to rescue the people from hardship, to guide them to the right path, to ensure their well-being and prosperity. The prophet delivers divine law, while the philosopher offers rational ideas. As Ibn Khaldun correctly observed, “Farabi, and later Ibn Sina and Ibn Rushd, sought to interpret prophecy and revelation primarily in ethno-political terms, viewing prophets as ‘lawgivers’ and their revelations as corresponding to practical philosophy—namely, moral, ethno-political laws and regulations.” [Farabi, 1965].

Thus, the philosopher equates the prophet’s teachings with philosophical counsel beneficial to society, reconciling Islamic revelation with philosophical thought [Farabi, 1965]. Farabi believed that this convergence was most evident in logic, mathematics, physics, and astronomy.

Summarizing Farabi’s conception of revelation, it may be concluded that what he termed the active intellect corresponds in essence to the religious notion of the angel. Through this harmonizing method, Farabi explained revelation in philosophical terms, treating prophetic knowledge as derived from the same source as philosophical knowledge. For him, both prophet and philosopher receive truth from the same divine origin—one through superior inspiration and divine election, the other through intellectual effort and rational capacity [Farabi, 1965]. Hence, Farabi’s central point is that both aim to transmit the same truth to humanity, though their methods differ. As he himself emphasized, “Religious truth and philosophical truth are identical; both are nourished by divine

light through imagination and reflection. [Farabi, 1965; Najafov, 2016]”

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE PHILOSOPHER AND PROPHET IN AVICENNA’S PHILOSOPHY

Among the eminent philosophers of the Eastern world, Avicenna [Ibn Sina] occupies a particularly distinguished place. In nearly every essential domain—philosophy, psychology, logic, and politics—Avicenna considered himself a disciple of Farabi, following his path, especially in the attempt to reconcile religion and philosophy. At the same time, Avicenna expanded on unresolved or obscure aspects of Farabi’s thought, thereby deepening philosophical inquiry while bringing philosophy closer to Islamic revelation [Swinburne, 1992: p.45].

Although Avicenna addressed the theory of prophecy and revelation throughout his works, he dealt with it explicitly and systematically only in two of them, while offering only brief remarks in others. His reflections concern both the prophet’s role in the world and his contact with the divine realm. The key issue for Avicenna was always the clarification of revelation and its place in human cognition [Najafov, 2008].

Avicenna explained revelation within the framework of the theory of emanation. According to this doctrine, the first emanations are the incorporeal, spiritual intellects or angels. After them come souls, which, though spiritual, are operative angels rather than pure-

ly immaterial beings. Following these are the celestial spheres and heavenly bodies. Finally, matter is the last emanated entity, whose existence is not eternal. With the emanation of matter, the process is complete [Lutfi, 1927]. Within this hierarchy, Avicenna designated humanity as the most perfect of created beings, with the prophet as the noblest of humankind [Najafov, 2007].

As Avicenna noted:

“God created the elements, minerals, and plants; after them the animals; then the perfect intellects and the incorporeal souls; then the stars and spheres. When the act of creation was complete, He desired, just as creation began with the intellect, that it should culminate in the most perfect being—the rational human. Thus, creation began with the noblest substance, the intellect, and ended with the noblest creature, the rational being. The final purpose of creation is nothing other than man. [Kushpinar, 2001]”

In Avicenna’s Peripatetic philosophy, the concept and essence of revelation is inseparable from the “theory of prophecy,” initiated by Farabi and greatly developed by Avicenna. Revelation, for Avicenna, constitutes an essential aspect of prophethood and is not alien to human nature [Najafov, 2014]. While its source is God, revelation does not come directly from Him but through the active intellect. The prophet, in receiving revelation, is in direct contact with this intellect, which represents for him a higher degree of cognition. However, this stage is not the end. Through successive ascents, the prophet may transcend the active intellect by means of higher, separate intellects, ultimately establishing contact with the “First Intellect,” God’s primary emanation [Kushpinar, 2001].

Ordinary humans, unlike prophets, cannot receive knowledge from immaterial substances because they remain preoccupied with mate-

rial desires. Yet, even ordinary people may receive glimpses of truth in dreams. Prophets, however, receive such knowledge both in dreams and in a waking state, perceiving with clarity what others see only in visions. Free from sensual distractions, they attain direct connection with spiritual beings and convey divine truths to society without distortion [Kuspinar, 2001].

As Avicenna explained: “Prophets establish contact either directly with the active intellect or with the assistance of celestial souls. In the first case, they are in a purely receptive state, reflecting truth directly in their minds. In the second, imagination plays a mediating role.”

Avicenna also argued that this second mode of contact is not limited to prophets but may extend to saints and mystics who follow the path of purification. He identified three essential conditions for prophecy:

- a) Purity and sharpness of intellect;
- b) A highly developed imaginative faculty;
- c) Mastery over the natural world and its elements [Kuspinar, 2001].

Yet, despite these conditions, Avicenna insisted that prophethood is not an acquired role but a divine selection beyond human will. The ultimate mission of prophets is to instruct humanity in achieving happiness, to call them to virtuous deeds, and to ensure salvation in the hereafter [Najafov, 2017].

In Avicenna’s works, the central function of prophecy is the communication of revelation to all people. To those with weak understanding or deprived of reasoning, prophets offered miracles—arousing awe and fear to ensure obedience. However, Avicenna

emphasized that such miracles are temporary in effect: once the astonishment fades, the influence diminishes. True and enduring faith, he maintained, can only be established through understanding and reflection. Accordingly, when Muhammad was asked for miracles, the revelation proclaimed: “*Say: the Qur’an is the greatest miracle. It is sufficient for them.*” [Najafov, 2016].

In the final section of *al-Isharat*, Avicenna classified miracles into three distinct categories, thereby systematizing their nature and role [Kuspinar, 2001].

1. Those mediated through the soul.
2. Those arising from the properties of natural elements [e.g., the attraction of iron by a magnet].
3. Those resulting from the influence of celestial forces on particular bodies and psychic faculties associated with them.

The first category gives rise to sorcery, miracles, and saintly wonders [karāmāt]; the second, to natural phenomena; and the third, to talismans.

In addition, Ibn Sina analyzed the attributes of the Prophet, emphasizing the distinctive features that differentiate him from ordinary human beings. These characteristics can be presented as follows:

- a) The Prophet’s intellect is sacred, and he receives revelation directly from the Active Intellect, unlike the philosopher, who requires intermediaries. The knowledge acquired in this manner is intellectual and universal [[Najafov, 2007]].

b) Through his imaginative faculty, the Prophet receives partial knowledge from celestial souls, including possible indications about future events. Simultaneously, this imaginative power enables him to translate revealed knowledge into parables and symbols comprehensible to the community [Aydin, 1969].

c) The Prophet possesses the ability to perform miracles.

d) Whereas the philosopher acquires knowledge gradually, in a fragmented manner, and only after extensive preparation—and even then not with certainty—the Prophet receives knowledge comprehensively and instantaneously [Ibn Sina, *al-Ishārāt wa-l-Tanbīhāt*].

Ibn Sina further observes that the Prophet's discourse on divine omnipotence, majesty, and mercy, as well as on eschatological realities—reward and punishment in the hereafter—is more beneficial for society. This dimension has attracted scholarly attention, clarifying Ibn Sina's attribution of such characteristics to the Prophet. The Prophet's essential function, dictated by the nature of his mission, is to preach, influence, and guide. His possession of a powerful imaginative faculty, coupled with spiritual strength, enables him to affect not only minds but also material reality, thereby initiating stable sociopolitical order [Kuspinar, 2001].

In his treatise *Adhawiyya* [أدوية], Ibn Sina insisted that profound metaphysical truths should not be directly communicated to the public, lest social disorder arise. When it is necessary to transmit such complex matters, the Prophet resorts to allegories, symbols, and metaphors. Ibn Sina stressed that philosophers, like prophets, must also employ this method when conveying higher truths [Najafov, 2014]. Another crucial point for Ibn Sina is that in speaking about God, the Prophet must avoid excess. He should limit himself to declaring God's unity, truth, and incomparability: "He is

One, the Truth, and without likeness.” Further metaphysical elaborations could confuse the masses and undermine religious faith [Ibn Sina, *al-Shifāʾ*].

Although Ibn Sina examined prophecy from a metaphysical perspective, he also addressed its psychological dimensions. As previously noted, prophetic teachings are adapted to the cognitive capacities of ordinary people, focusing on two principal themes: God’s existence and the afterlife. While explanations of divine existence vary in detail, the revelation affirms God’s being. Metaphysical knowledge, as a category, also encompasses arguments for God’s existence. Yet the assumption that all individuals can grasp metaphysical truths is untenable. Philosophers, too, provide knowledge about God, but the difference is that prophetic knowledge is true, divinely regulated, and universally accepted. Thus, society embraces prophetic teaching because the Prophet conveys only what God permits him to disclose. Ibn Sina remarks: “If prophets were to speak beyond what is divinely authorized concerning God, the people would either reject their message or fall into disputes that jeopardize their religious duties” [*al-Najāt*].

For this reason, prophets frequently employ symbols and allegories. Ibn Sina defines revelation precisely in these terms: “At the moment of revelation, the Prophet’s intellect, under psychological compulsion, translates pure intellectual truths into vivid images and symbols.” [Najafov, 2014].

Furthermore, Ibn Sina interprets the revealed command to worship God in philosophical terms. Worship ensures that revealed teachings remain embedded in the memory and consciousness of believers, preventing them from being forgotten after the Prophet’s death. Worship sustains humanity’s awareness of God and the afterlife. Practices such as prayer, fasting, pilgrimage, and jihad rein-

force the Sharia, facilitate its spread among nations, and thereby prolong the vitality of religion. Otherwise, “after the Prophet’s death, his teachings would soon be forgotten” [*al-Ishārāt wa-l-Tanbīhāt*].

Revelation thus completes reason as a factor of faith. Ibn Sina identifies three possible relationships between faith and reason:

- a) Faith and reason occupy distinct domains.
- b) Faith perfects reason, encompassing its scope.
- c) Faith actualizes reason, completing it.

The Prophet legislates for society, regulates human relations, and, through his exemplary moral character, provides a model for communal life. The disappearance of revelation would result in the erosion of prophetic teaching, the failure of its intended purpose, and the collapse of efforts to guide humanity toward the ideal society.

The connection between ordinary rational knowledge and prophetic revelation is close. According to Ibn Sina’s hierarchy of intellects, the Active Intellect is indispensable for both philosophers and prophets. The distinction lies not in its presence or absence but in the frequency and intensity of contact: prophets maintain constant communion with the Active Intellect, while philosophers achieve it only intermittently and imperfectly [Kuspinar, 2001].

For Ibn Sina, both prophetic revelation and philosophical reasoning are concerned with God and the afterlife. He asks:

“Does not philosophy also inquire into God’s will, essence, attributes, the emanation of the universe from Him, the meaning of human life, and the destiny awaiting man in the hereafter?” [*al-Shiṭāʾ*].

The Prophet's mission is to lead society toward prosperity and happiness; the philosopher's goal is essentially the same, though his method differs. In conclusion, Ibn Sina asserts:

“There is no essential difference between philosophy and revelation, or between philosopher and prophet, in terms of the knowledge acquired, its subject matter, or its objectives. The difference lies only in the manner and method of acquisition.” [*al-Najād*].

He further explains that this divergence arises primarily from the differing audiences of prophet and philosopher. The prophet, as divine revelation demonstrates, is sent to meet the needs of the people. The philosopher, by contrast, does not tailor his work to popular needs; rather, he contemplates the laws of nature, even though his capacity to alter society's flawed laws is limited [Kuspinar, 2001].

Yet, as critics note, Ibn Sina overlooks the fact that whereas the philosopher remains an ordinary human, the prophet is distinct. An illiterate man cannot become a philosopher; yet an unlettered prophet, by virtue of revelation, can transform the entire structure and trajectory of society. The transformation of a Bedouin Arab community into one of the world's leading centers of civilization within a short period cannot be explained by the Prophet Muhammad's personal qualities alone but must be attributed to the revelatory force of the Qur'an. The Prophet's personality serves as an example, but it is revelation that is permanent, not his individual traits [Najafov, 2007].

Another central issue for Ibn Sina is the philosopher's stance toward prophetic revelation. Should philosophers, who grasp the essence of revelation, nonetheless obey the laws of prophecy? Ibn Sina avoids giving a direct answer. On the one hand, the philoso-

pher is capable of attaining divine knowledge independently, seemingly rendering prophetic law unnecessary. On the other hand, the prophet conveys knowledge of ultimate reality, the hereafter, and human destiny, providing guidance on what must be done or avoided. Yet Ibn Sina does not grant philosophers any special exemption from prophetic law. Like all members of society, philosophers are part of the community and cannot live above or apart from it. Consequently, philosophers, like prophets, must engage with social problems, study them carefully, and contribute to their solution [Najafov, 2014].

The philosopher characterizes the role of imagination in the reception of revelation as a faculty that plays a decisive role in apprehending manifestations unrelated to reality, while also enabling the perception of those connected to reality, whether in dreams or in the waking state. The philosopher considers the human being to be the ultimate purpose of creation. Humanity possesses unbreakable bonds linking it simultaneously to both the material and the divine worlds. Through one of the three levels of the soul—the *rational soul* [*nafs al-nāṭiqā*—the human being is connected to the divine realm, whereas through the vegetative and animal souls it is bound to the material world. The most perfect human, however, is the one who remains in constant union with the Active Intellect, thereby establishing connection with the angelic realm. This person is none other than the prophet himself [Kuspinar, 2001].

Philosophers are representatives of wisdom and possessors of profound knowledge. Unlike ordinary people, their thinking and perception are not confined to common limitations; rather, they are more capable of discerning the essential truths behind metaphors and symbols. “For this reason, ancient philosophers such as Pythagoras, Socrates, and Plato, like the prophets, refrained from openly disseminating their esoteric teachings and instead employed

symbols and allegories in their writings. Thus, the philosopher and the prophet follow the same path not only in attaining knowledge but also in presenting it to society.” Yet the philosopher, unlike the prophet, does not appear in society as a “lawgiver” or “ruler.” One of the principal differences between revelation and philosophical knowledge is that revelation, being complete in every respect, is applied to society exactly as it is received. It provides all that society requires and contains nothing extraneous or impractical. By contrast, philosophical knowledge—like the philosophical ideas of individual thinkers—cannot be regarded as complete in itself. Revelation is comprehensive and encompasses both universals and particulars, whereas philosophical knowledge is fragmented and lacks the capacity to integrate particulars. Furthermore, the aims of revelation and philosophy differ: revelation seeks to regulate human relations in order to ensure collective happiness, whereas philosophical inquiry is primarily directed toward uncovering and demonstrating truth [Aydin, 1969].

According to the philosopher, it is misguided to expect the masses to arrive at correct conclusions solely through rational investigation. Therefore, when addressing the people, it is necessary to present divine-metaphysical truths in the form of sensory symbols and allegories that can be grasped by their imaginative faculty. Ibn Sīnā interprets the metaphors concerning God in prophetic traditions in this light and considers them entirely legitimate. To speak of God and His power to the people by comparing Him to a majestic elder or ruler is to render such truths intelligible in terms that can be apprehended by the imagination. Similarly, when discussing the after-life, resurrection, and judgment, it becomes necessary to employ images, symbols, and depictions of reward and punishment in bodily terms, such as pleasures and pains, in order to make these realities comprehensible to the people. Ibn Sīnā compares Christianity with Islam in this respect, noting that Christianity promises abun-

dant heavenly rewards but makes no mention of bodily resurrection, judgment, or corporeal recompense. Such a belief system, he argues, inspires neither hope nor fear with regard to the hereafter, and thus fails to capture people's attention. The deeper meanings of these symbols, however, can only be grasped by philosophers: "Philosophers, through rational and demonstrative knowledge, comprehend the truths expressed behind these symbols and metaphors. They know God, His reality, and the true essence of human life in the hereafter." Although philosophers may not succeed in communicating such truths to society, prophets can do so with ease. This does not mean, however, that prophetic revelation is superior to philosophical knowledge, nor that philosophy stands above revelation. For Ibn Sīnā, attempting to establish the superiority of one over the other is futile and meaningless. Their difference lies not in content but in the mode of acquisition. "The prophet, in order to secure the obedience of the people to his message, possesses the power to perform extraordinary acts, that is, miracles." Such power, however, cannot be attributed to philosophers. The notion that philosophers might rule society was first advanced by al-Fārābī before Ibn Sīnā, yet practice and experience have shown that this idea does not hold true [Arslan, 1987].

The Turkish historian of philosophy B. Kuşpınar explains Ibn Sīnā's position as follows: "Ibn Sīnā unites prophetic revelation and philosophical reasoning at one point, while distinguishing them at another." Their convergence lies in the common source of knowledge, whereas their divergence stems from the means of acquisition. Philosophical knowledge is detailed and dispersed, whereas prophetic revelation is universal, ordered, and concise. In making this distinction, Ibn Sīnā also highlights the gradations of human thought and the differences in intellectual capacity among individuals. From this perspective, some people remain at a rudi-

mentary material level of thought, others reach a potential level, and still others ascend to higher degrees of intellectual capacity. The prophet, standing at the summit of these levels, must explain the revelation received through the Active Intellect to individuals of varying intellectual capacities—in short, he must speak to each person in the language they can understand. The philosopher, however, lacks this capacity [Hokelekli, 1996].

The prophet does not acquire revelation by gradually progressing through intellectual levels; his intellect is in constant union with the Active Intellect, granting him perpetual access to knowledge. Ibn Sīnā, however, does not explain the origin of the philosopher's union with the Active Intellect—whether it is innate or granted at some later stage through divine assistance—leaving the matter unclear. It seems, however, that Ibn Sīnā believed the prophet, after birth, personally traversed all intellectual levels and then, through the Active Intellect, attained revelation, with God transmitting it to him through this faculty. It must also be noted that Ibn Sīnā's views are not always consistent across his works. In some cases, he presents differing explanations. For example, in *Proving Prophethood* [*Ithbāt al-Nubuwwa*], he describes the angel of revelation as a “force emanated and imposed upon the prophet,” whereas in *al-Hudūd* [“Definitions”], he regards it as a rational substance endowed with life, mediating between God and humankind [Toshiko Izutsu].

Unlike philosophers, prophets possess revelation and inspiration rather than discursive reasoning. According to Ibn Sīnā, philosophical reason is “the faculty of the rational soul that abstracts universals and particulars from material accidents.” Yet he stresses that ordinary people lack the intellectual capacity to grasp the proofs and demonstrations of philosophers. Since society is composed of individuals with varying intellectual capacities, it cannot be treated

as homogeneous. Some people are endowed with high intelligence, while others possess weak or even no capacity for comprehension. For this reason, revelation must necessarily have a universal character. Ibn Sīnā points out that the philosophical discourse about God would be of no benefit to the masses. The people neither understand nor accept the philosophers' interpretations of revelation. If Bedouin Arabs or Jews, for instance, were told about God's attributes in the manner of the philosophers, they would reject such teachings outright and stubbornly insist that the faith they were called upon to embrace consisted of nothing more than empty words [Arslan, 1987].

In comparing the acquisition of prophetic revelation with that of rational knowledge, Ibn Sīnā identifies the presence of the *sacred faculty* [*al-quwwa al-qudsiyya*] in the prophet. "Because this sacred faculty is perpetually in contact with the Active Intellect, the knowledge it acquires is by nature more universal and creative." He explains this by stating that all the forms contained within the Active Intellect—including knowledge of the past, present, and future—are inspired into the prophet's soul. In Ibn Sīnā's philosophy, the sacred faculty not only grants the prophet revelation through the Active Intellect but also endows him with the capacity to foretell future events. Such foreknowledge, however, is linked not to revelation itself but to the faculty of imagination. While revelation originates in the Active Intellect, knowledge of future events derives from celestial souls [*nufūs samāwīyya*]. The prophet does not transmit these visions literally but interprets them in forms intelligible to society. Moreover, the prophet gains knowledge of particulars from the celestial souls, or operative angels. It is in this sense that Ibn Sīnā appears to offer an explanation for the content of prophetic traditions [ḥadīth]. The reason why knowledge acquired from the Active Intellect is purely universal and abstract is that in-

telleets, by their very nature, possess only universal knowledge [Najafov, 2014].

As noted above, the difference between knowledge derived from the Active Intellect and that from the celestial souls lies in the fact that the latter includes information concerning future events. This raises the question: is it not possible to obtain knowledge of the future from the primary source of knowledge? Yet revelation, as is known, should encompass everything—not only the present condition of society but also the future and even the past [Sherif, 2006]. In such a case, the second type of knowledge would seem unnecessary. How, then, did Ibn Sīnā justify this distinction? The purely abstract intellects, which have no connection to material things and contain everything in universal form, constitute the first source. In this regard, the philosopher states: “Yet in the system of Ibn Sīnā’s metaphysics, which is based on rational principles, he refrains from resolving fundamental truths that arise. One of these truths is the clear determination of the essence and functions of the intelligible substances and the celestial souls.” The second source, however, consists of the celestial souls, which, being the principal causes of the activities of the heavenly spheres and the ultimate causes of terrestrial events, possess knowledge of particulars and contingent occurrences [Gerald, 2001]. Fazlur Rahman interprets this distinction by identifying revelation as knowledge derived from the Active Intellect and inspiration as knowledge obtained from the celestial souls. Unlike revelation, inspiration may also be granted to saints [*awlīyā*]. “Whereas revelation is a characteristic specific to prophets, inspiration pertains both to them and to the saints. [Rahman, 1958]”

According to Ibn Sīnā, inspiration and true dreams are possible for all people. Inspiration is a form of knowledge that arises suddenly within the soul. The individual may not always recognize its true

source and may remain uncertain as to its origin. Until distinguished and clarified, such knowledge persists in symbolic form—concealed and unarticulated [Ibn Sina, 1938]. Unless recalled and interpreted, it remains latent knowledge, akin to memory awaiting realization.

The Soul and the Reception of Revelation in Ibn Sina's Philosophy

In discussing revelation within the framework of Ibn Sina's philosophy, it is essential to also examine the soul and its condition in relation to the reception of revelation. The philosopher attempts to prove the existence of the soul through the well-known "Flying Man" thought experiment. According to him, human sensations are of great significance; without them, man would resemble a being floating in a void. Yet even under such conditions, man can still reflect on his own existence. "The perception of one's own existence corresponds to his spiritual aspect, or in other words, to the soul [nafs]." This implies that man is not merely a material entity but essentially a spiritual being. Like other Peripatetic philosophers, Ibn Sina maintains that the soul is the principle that preserves life and animates the human being [Ibn Sina, 1953].

Body and soul are distinct, independent substances. The body, while active, expends energy and becomes fatigued; in contrast, the soul never tires. The body may lose certain organs, yet this does not prevent it from perceiving itself and reflecting upon its existence. However, if the soul were to separate from the body, the very existence of the body would be endangered. From this, it follows that both substances differ significantly in their essential characteristics. The body ages and deteriorates over time, while the soul neither grows old nor decays. Nevertheless, Ibn Sina argues that just as the material body requires the soul, the soul itself is in need of the body, and it has no independent existence prior to the body. Upon

the creation of the body, divine power endows it with a soul [Najafov, 2016].

According to Ibn Sina, the human soul manifests itself in two principal directions:

- a) the practical aspect, and
- b) the theoretical aspect.

These correspond respectively to the **practical intellect** and the **theoretical intellect**. The theoretical intellect enables man to know and comprehend. Through this faculty, man generates concepts, assigns names, acquires knowledge about things, tests experiences, and draws conclusions. Theoretical intellect allows him to perceive the interrelation of events and recognize the existence of God. By distinguishing between good and evil, the theoretical intellect also provides guidance for the operation of the practical intellect. Unlike the theoretical intellect, the practical intellect represents the volitional aspect of the soul. A person who makes proper use of practical intellect governs his actions consciously and deliberately. Ibn Sina acknowledges the freedom of human will and the responsibility that follows from it. Hence, one of the purposes of revelation is to direct human free will, forewarn individuals, and emphasize that man is personally accountable for sins and merits [Najafov, 2016].

A central concern in Ibn Sina's theory of revelation is the role of the soul. For revelation to be received, the soul must be prepared and must have passed through specific stages of development. Only at its highest stage of perfection does the soul become suitable for receiving revelation. Ibn Sina notes: *"At that time, man's soul attains such a degree of luminosity or sensitivity for communion with the higher intellects that it overflows with effusion. When man reaches this stage, the preserved forms in the Active Intellect are*

instantaneously revealed to him, and thus he perceives, without effort or syllogism, those matters which others can only apprehend through reasoning and instruction.” [Ibn Sina, 1980].

Ibn Sina further argues that the soul possesses a particular faculty that allows it to transfer from the visible to the invisible realm. This faculty operates through the imagination, manifesting both in dreams and in wakeful visions. However, not all souls are of equal degree. Certain individuals, endowed with powerful imagination, are able to foresee future events and make judgments regarding them; such individuals are fit to be true leaders and rulers of society. Others, though possessing sound observational skills, have an imagination insufficiently developed, yet still play a role in politics. A third group excels in theoretical knowledge but cannot apply it in practice; Ibn Sina identifies this group with the aristocracy of his time, reflecting the tendency of his era to regard theoretical knowledge as superior to practical activity [Ibn Sina, 1980].

Ibn Sina emphasizes that the soul is not entirely unknown or alien to human nature but remains within the scope of our cognitive capacities. He explains: *“When we examine the existence of the soul and the fact that it is not corporeal, we see that we are not entirely ignorant of such a thing. Rather, we simply fail to take notice of it. Though it lies close to us, because we do not recognize it, we mistakenly treat it as if it were remote, searching for it in distant realms.”* The knowledge of the soul thus discloses itself, though humans often disregard it, thereby limiting their capacity for inquiry.

He further stresses that not every intellect can succeed in comprehending the soul. The higher intellect must attain self-awareness, and this is possible only through the development of the *sacred intellect* [*al-‘aql al-qudsī*], which arises when the habitual intellect is

perfected. In conclusion, *“not every human being can possess true knowledge of the soul; such knowledge is attainable only by the ‘elect,’ those who have reached the highest stages of intellectual development.”*

Discussing ancient philosophers—particularly Aristotle—Ibn Sina comments on their characterization of the soul by “motion and perception”: *“The soul is that which moves itself; for only that which is in motion can produce motion.”* Drawing upon Democritus and Aristotle, he even suggests that the nature of the soul resembles fire, for both possess perpetual motion. If deprived of motion, they cease to exist. Moreover, the soul shares qualities with the Divine, for it can be present everywhere according to its state. Yet, unlike fire, the soul is also a principle of rest. Ancient philosophers, however, considered the soul exclusively in terms of motion, which Ibn Sina deemed inadequate. He argued that the soul possesses an inherent power, and its effusion of goodness and purity elevates it beyond matter into the realm of the intellects, where it becomes a reflection of the intelligible world and unites with the absolute good and beauty [Ibn Sina, 1973].

At this point, Ibn Sina introduces an original idea not found in earlier philosophy: while the soul may be the cause of motion, it itself does not move. That which is at rest can still generate movement. He reasons: *“The motion of the soul cannot itself be a psychic motion, for if that were the case, another soul would be required to produce the motion of the first, and so on ad infinitum, rendering all motion voluntary.”* Hence, in every context, Ibn Sina regards the soul as an independent substance, and the driving force behind this perspective is revelation. Indeed, the notion of the soul and its states was scarcely recognized among Muslims prior to their acquaintance with revelation. Only afterward did explanations of spir-

itual realities, often couched in material terms, emerge [Ibn Sina, 1953].

Some Peripatetic philosophers even reduced the soul to a material entity, claiming it resided in a chamber of the heart. Despite such views, their reflections on soul and spirit played a major role in the study of human interiority and spirituality. In contrast, Ibn Sina proposed a distinct definition: *“We observe in the external world corporeal beings that, through will, can move, nourish, grow, and reproduce. They do not possess these actions by virtue of corporeality alone. Hence, their substance contains something beyond corporeality. That which gives rise to these actions—especially those dependent upon will—we call ‘soul.’”*

Thus, the soul is akin to a function of volition, yet prior to volition itself, commanding all bodily movements—even reflexive acts. In its more technical and philosophical sense, the soul is “the perfection that best conveys to man the meaning of his existence; without it, the essence of being remains incomplete.” Therefore, while the body is material, the soul, in contrast, is immaterial and endowed with a unique nature. For Ibn Sina, the acceptance of the soul is inseparable from the acknowledgment of human existence itself. Normal intellects recognize the soul in this sense. Even if man fails to perceive the existence of his bodily parts, he remains aware of his own being. As Ibn Sina states: *“Suppose one of us were created fully grown, but sight prevented him from perceiving external objects, and he were suspended in air or void without any bodily contact. Would he still be convinced of his own existence? Indeed, even if he were unaware of his organs, heart, or brain, he would undoubtedly affirm the certainty of his own being. [Ibn Sina, 1938]”*

Ibn Sina on Prophethood and Revelation: Philosophical Context and Comparative Analysis with al-Farabi

In his reflections on prophecy and revelation, Ibn Sina does not depart radically from the views of his predecessors; on the contrary, the philosopher frequently appeals to their claims. Like al-Kindi and al-Farabi, he regarded the difference between philosophy and religion as one of method and form rather than ultimate purpose. Both aim at the same truth, though they differ in the path and the level of discourse through which they express it. Ibn Sina was careful not to set philosophy against religion or vice versa.

As noted above, Ibn Sina made substantial contributions to the study of al-Farabi's intellectual legacy, especially in clarifying and expanding upon his doctrines. The most significant service he rendered to his teacher was his fidelity to the method of reconciliation [*jam*]. The essence of this reconciliation lies in the claim that prophecy and revelation are realities directed toward the people, addressing their condition and grounding the causes of existence within human society. The foundation of this perspective was laid by al-Farabi, though in a limited and somewhat unfinished form. Ibn Sina, however, deepened al-Farabi's theory of prophecy, giving it new dimensions and thereby clarifying issues that had remained obscure to both theologians and philosophers [Najafov, 2014].

Al-Farabi's concept of God was highly abstract. God was characterized primarily as the source of the First Intellect, from which subsequent intellects and ultimately the cosmos proceeded, through God's self-contemplation. This view seemed to imply that God, after creating the world, could not intervene in the affairs of particulars, knowing only universals and "great matters." Revelation, by contrast, asserts that nothing is hidden from God: even the most obscure realities at the lowest depth of the earth or at the highest

reaches of the heavens fall under His knowledge [Qur'an 6:69; 10:91; 89:23, 26]. In Ibn Sina's philosophy, God perceives His own supreme power, and from this self-knowledge flows His knowledge of all beings and all particulars. While al-Farabi suggested that God's knowledge of the universe was a consequence of His self-knowledge, Ibn Sina insisted that creation necessarily emanates [*ṣudūr*] from God's essence and His knowledge of Himself. Moreover, God not only knows universals but also the minutest particulars and their relations [Najafov, 2016].

As noted earlier, revelation constitutes a stage in the prophet's ascensional journey through successive degrees of perfection. By this ascent, the prophet ultimately comes into contact with the "separated intellects" [*al-'uqūl al-mufāriqa*] and, at the highest level, with the First Intellect, the primary emanation of God. Al-Farabi, however, terminated this ascent in the Active Intellect [*al-'aql al-fā'āl*], which he considered the final mediator of prophetic knowledge. In Ibn Sina's metaphysics, the Active Intellect is in fact the last and least divine of the intelligences, situated just above the sublunar world in the hierarchy of emanation. As O. Pazarlı observes, Ibn Sina—following Aristotle's classification—described the potential intellect as "light" and the Active Intellect as "fire."

Ibn Sina also drew upon al-Farabi in viewing prophetic teachings as symbolic and allegorical expressions. However, unlike al-Farabi, he did not posit strict constraints on the prophet's access to the Active Intellect. For al-Farabi, the prophet could only attain this contact after passing through the stages of the potential, actual, and finally acquired intellect. Ibn Sina, by contrast, maintained that prophets, endowed with a sacred faculty [*al-'aql al-qudsī*], may receive revelation directly, without such progression. Al-Farabi did not accept the sudden occurrence of revelation, regarding it as contingent upon intellectual development, whereas Ibn Sina allowed for its immedi-

ate reception by a purified soul. In his account, the prophet's imagination and intellect are so closely united that the forms contained in the Active Intellect may appear to the prophetic soul instantaneously, either all at once or in rapid succession [Ibn Sina, 1938].

Both al-Farabi and Ibn Sina recognized the prophet as essential to human civilization. The prophet is the architect of culture in this world and of eternal felicity in the hereafter. Drawing on al-Farabi's insights, Ibn Sina agreed that just as animals live in herds for survival, human beings require society for their preservation. Social life, however, depends on order; without rulers and laws, society would collapse into anarchy, endangering the human species. Al-Farabi envisioned the philosopher-king as the ideal ruler, but later conceded that such a society was unattainable in this world. Ibn Sina was more skeptical still, dismissing the notion of a society governed by philosophers as utopian. For him, only the prophet—unlike the philosopher—can establish laws, gain the people's acceptance, and build a political order upon revelation. As he noted: "The prophet, unlike the philosopher, succeeds in transmitting revelation to the people and founding a socio-political order upon it." [Ibn Sina, 1938]

According to Ibn Sina, society requires just governance and sound laws. "For when anarchy prevails," he writes, "people deem what benefits themselves to be 'justice' and what harms them to be 'oppression.'" Like al-Farabi and other philosophers, Ibn Sina also held that the body will not experience pleasure and pain in the afterlife; such experiences pertain to the soul. These considerations permeate both his theory of prophecy and his account of revelation [Najafov, 2007].

In al-Farabi's theory, revelation was explained as the prophet's imaginative faculty coming into contact with the Active Intellect. Cru-

cially, however, in his system the imagination is subordinate to pure intellect. Hence, the philosopher, who attains truth through rational speculation, might even appear “superior” to the prophet. Ibn Sina diverged sharply on this point: for him, revelation is associated not with the Active Intellect but with the Sacred Intellect [*al-‘aql al-qudsī*], the highest form of the acquired intellect [*al-‘aql al-mustafād*]. This intellect, perfected to the utmost degree, functions as a flawless mirror reflecting all intelligible forms, thereby grasping divine realities directly. Prophets differ from ordinary humans precisely in this respect: they are the rare individuals capable of reaching this supreme degree. Whereas al-Farabi suggested that philosophers reach truth independently through their intellectual capacity and are therefore superior, Ibn Sina insisted that prophets, through revelation, unite theoretical wisdom with practical action, thus surpassing philosophers [Najafov, 2007; 2008].

In conclusion, Ibn Sina consistently emphasized that the ultimate source of all knowledge is God. Revelation is a fragment of divine knowledge transmitted to humankind through the prophets. While philosophers may also draw knowledge from the Active Intellect, they remain weak and limited in comparison with prophets. The superiority of the prophet lies in his ability to combine theoretical wisdom with practical governance. Philosophers may contribute to speculative knowledge, but they are unable to transmit it to the wider public or to shape society. Prophets, by contrast, save communities from crises, convey their knowledge—albeit in symbolic form—to the people, and guide individual lives toward moral transformation. For this reason, religion, together with its foundation in revelation and its accompanying laws, remains indispensable for human society in every age.

Ibn Rushd on Revelation

The views of Ibn Rushd on revelation are of considerable significance and interest. Ibn Rushd regarded *kalām*—the divine word—as nothing more than an intermediary between God and human beings. For the philosopher, philosophy and religion must be reconciled, since both share the same aim and ultimate purpose. As he himself put it, “If any dispute arises between philosophy and religion, it is necessary to interpret the religious text.” Ibn Rushd argued that the philosopher possesses a superior intellectual capacity and can arrive at truth even without recourse to divine revelation. He likely believed that Aristotle—whom he considered the “ideal philosopher”—had attained truth independently, without the aid of revelation [Ibn Rusih, 1945].

Although Ibn Rushd, as a philosopher, asserted that he personally had no need for revelation, he did not deny that revelation contained direct knowledge of truth. Indeed, he often supported his philosophical claims, particularly concerning the limitless capacities of human reason, with evidence drawn from revealed texts, especially the Qur’an, citing verses that endorse rational reflection as a path to truth.

According to Ibn Rushd, the word [*kalima*] is nothing other than a sign of the knowledge that exists in the speaker’s mind or the act of expressing that knowledge in communicable form. In this sense, the word is an act [*fiʿl*] of the one who utters it. Yet, human beings must recognize that they are not the true agents [*fāʾil ḥaqīqī*] of this act. If a creature who is not the ultimate agent—namely the human being—can perform such an act by virtue of his acquired

knowledge, then it is all the more appropriate to affirm such agency of God, who alone is the true agent [Kuspinar, 2001].

Perception through vision or hearing belongs to human sensory faculties. If one considers that human beings possess no means of hearing other than the auditory organ, then the necessity of revelation being conveyed through sound becomes evident. Human beings communicate their knowledge to others through words, while listeners in turn acquire knowledge by hearing and comprehending those words. There is no alternative to this process. Hence, in interpreting religious matters, reason and logic must never be abandoned. Interpretation requires the most appropriate language, expressions, and modes of communication, always taking into account the capacity of the audience to comprehend. To claim, for example, that God is in need—or worse, that He requires human words—would be logically incoherent. The only tenable approach is the one articulated by Ibn Rushd: “In such a case, this act [speech] from God Most High is manifested in the soul of a morally upright individual chosen from among humankind, through some medium—be it a word, a sign, a sound, or a cipher. It is not strictly necessary that this medium take the form of spoken language, but it must, without exception, be created by Him.” [Pazarli, 1968]

At the forefront of Ibn Rushd’s critique of al-Ghazali was the latter’s alleged opposition to explaining revelation in philosophical language. Yet a careful reading reveals that al-Ghazali was not opposed to such explanation; rather, he encouraged it. Al-Ghazali’s seemingly conservative stance stemmed not from a rejection of philosophy, but from a desire to preserve the form and logic of revelation. His purpose was not to criticize revelation but to defend and amplify its persuasive power in society, making use of philosophical arguments for that end. Indeed, al-Ghazali even described philosophical discourse as “the safest path” for interpreting revelation.

Concerning the Peripatetic philosophers, al-Ghazali explained: “The Peripatetic model of theology, when viewed in its relation to revelation, is indeed a system that carries certain harmful consequences. Yet it is also the only model that most effectively clarifies the true meaning and purpose of revelation. If inconsistencies appear in the systems of philosophers such as al-Farabi and Ibn Sina—wherein certain points seem incompatible with Islamic revelation—this may be due either to their misunderstanding of Aristotle’s doctrines, or to the misinterpretations of those who claimed to represent religion.”

As is clear, al-Ghazali’s intention was not primarily to discredit the philosophers but to preserve the principles of revelation, ensuring that philosophical reasoning would not be misused against it. His ultimate conclusion was that all aspects of Islamic revelation are open to rational and philosophical interpretation.

The issue of revelation must also be regarded as the starting point of Ibn Rushd’s moral philosophy. He categorically rejected the claim that things are good or evil *solely because God declares them so*. For Ibn Rushd, reason itself discerns the inherent goodness or evilness of acts. Revelation does not provide a categorical classification of good and evil; rather, human reason plays a decisive role. He thus elevated reason’s authority over revelation, insisting that moral action is the result of rational judgment: “An action is ethical if, by its essence, it is judged by reason to be good or evil, and it is performed on the basis of rational deliberation.”

Ibn Rushd further explained divine revelation through the angelic mediation described in the Qur’an. God communicates His word to a chosen prophet “by means of speech and sound, created within the prophet’s faculty of hearing.” He invoked the verse: “It is not for any human that God should speak to him except by revelation,

or from behind a veil, or by sending a messenger-angel who conveys His command with His permission” [Qur’an 42:51].

In Ibn Rushd’s general assessment, revelation cannot be interpreted by everyone but only by enlightened philosophers. Revelation, by its very nature, requires interpretation [*ta’wīl*]. He defined *ta’wīl* as follows:

“To interpret a statement by transferring its meaning from the literal sense to a figurative one, by analogy, causation, consequence, or other forms of figurative usage acknowledged in the Arabic language, without neglecting the conventions of expression.” [Hamidullah, 2000].

It should be added, however, that *ta’wīl* in Arabic is not restricted to this sense; it also refers to exegesis, explanation of causes, and the interpretation of dreams.

In summary, Ibn Rushd stressed that religion and revelation are not closed to philosophical reasoning. On the contrary, philosophers endowed with intellectual insight are uniquely equipped to undertake this difficult task. Religious scholars and jurists should not obstruct them, for—as Ibn Rushd himself noted—“the light of higher truth must be explained not to the masses, but only to those capable of comprehending it, those who share in the illumination of wisdom.”

ESOTERIC KNOWLEDGE IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF IBN KHALDUN

Although Ibn Khaldun's views on revelation contain familiar elements drawn from al-Farabi and Ibn Sina, his overall theory of prophecy and revelation is highly original. The philosopher was broadly influenced by Ibn Sina, and subsequently by Ibn Rushd. In his *Muqaddimah*, Ibn Khaldun discussed revelation alongside the other two forms of supra-rational knowledge: inspiration [*ilhām*] and dreams [*ru'yā*]. On these matters he advanced claims that were relatively novel within the Islamic intellectual tradition.

For Ibn Khaldun, revelation consists of divine knowledge granted by God to chosen individuals whose hearts are illuminated by divine light. He wrote: "Human beings can acquire knowledge of the unseen only if God informs them of it; in no other way is this possible." Even the prophets themselves cannot know the essence of revelation until it is imparted to them. Prophethood and the reception of revelation do not imply that prophets possess knowledge of the causes of all things. Certain realities are known exclusively to prophets, and no one else can share in them. Foremost among these distinctive qualities is revelation itself—the supreme form of divine knowledge [Demirci, 2003].

Ibn Khaldun's Conception of Revelation

Ibn Khaldun does not explicitly claim that revelation constitutes acquired knowledge. As is well known, the philosopher pays little attention to the role of the prophet's own volitional capacity in the

reception of supra-rational knowledge. According to Ibn Khaldun, during the moment of revelation the prophet undergoes a certain trembling or shock. In these states of spiritual attraction, the prophet hears whispered words, comprehends them, and perceives them through the mediation of consciousness. Alternatively, the angel may appear in human form and transmit to the prophet the divine laws revealed by God. This state subsides only after the revelation has been fully received. Ibn Khaldun writes: *“When this state passes, the prophet understands the verses revealed and conveyed to him.”* [Aydin, 1969]

To illustrate, he cites several hadiths describing the distinctive phenomenology of revelation. The Prophet is reported to have said: *“Sometimes revelation comes to me in a sound resembling the ringing of a bell, and this is the hardest and most difficult state to endure. After the sound ceases, I retain the commands and rulings.”* On other occasions, *“the angel comes in the form of a man, and I understand his words.”* His wife ‘Ā’isha narrated: *“When revelation descended upon him, even on the coldest of days, his forehead would stream with sweat once the angel departed.”* The Qur’an itself affirms: *“Indeed, We shall reveal to you a weighty word”* [Q. 73:5].

For Ibn Khaldun, the proof of prophethood lies not only in the reception of revelation but also in the prophet’s possession of supreme moral qualities. A prophet must endure hardships beyond ordinary human capacity, remain steadfast in trials without uttering words of complaint against God, and by this patience and fortitude serve as an exemplar for humanity. Ibn Khaldun thus views such moral strength as an intrinsic sign of prophethood [Ibn Khaldun, 1989].

Miracles and the Distinction from Magic

Discussing miracles, Ibn Khaldun defines them as phenomena beyond human capacity to imitate: *“A miracle is that which people are unable to reproduce and lies outside their power.”* Unlike ordinary events, miracles are inherently inaccessible to human abilities. Ibn Khaldun maintains that what distinguishes prophets is precisely their access to such divine acts through revelation.

Theologians [mutakallimūn] and philosophers, however, interpret this differently. While the mutakallimūn attribute miracles directly to God’s omnipotence, the Mu‘tazilites argued that they could, in principle, be within human capacity. The Ash‘arites, by contrast, insisted that miracles serve to confirm prophetic authority and guide people to the truth; if a miracle were to occur at the hands of a false claimant, they argued, it would lead to doubt, confusion, and misguidance [Ibn Khaldun, 1989].

Philosophers sought an explanation rooted in the prophet’s own essence. They argued that God endowed every substance with its particular faculties, and prophets uniquely possess an intrinsic capacity through which miracles arise. Ibn Khaldun explains: *“The reason these miracles occur through prophets is that the elements obey them, as though they had been placed under their command.”* In this view, miracles are not direct divine interventions but manifestations of the prophet’s purified soul and spirit. For this reason, prophets must be inwardly pure and perpetually inclined toward the good. Miracles thus become the sign of righteousness, while sorcery arises from corruption. Ibn Khaldun stresses that this distinction between miracle and magic—one performed by the righteous, the other by the wicked—is fundamental [Najafov, 2016].

The Qur'an, as Ibn Khaldun emphasizes, constitutes the supreme miracle, both as divine speech and as revelation. Its form and manner of transmission are open to study, critique, and reflection, but its miraculous nature remains central.

The Spiritual Dimension of Revelation

Ibn Khaldun acknowledges that certain worldly phenomena cannot be explained solely by material causes; spiritual factors play a crucial role. Human knowledge, courage, artistic creativity, and skills, for example, are influenced by spiritual causes. For philosophers, the human soul, as the principle of perception and motion, corresponds to angelic souls that govern the celestial spheres. Both humans and angels thus share in a hierarchy of spiritual influence.

Ibn Khaldun argues that all beings are connected to a higher source, which he identifies as the “*rational soul*”—a power of pure intellect responsible for both cognition and cosmic motion. This being, entirely intellective in nature, corresponds to the essence of angels. Through this interconnected hierarchy, beings draw power from one another and ascend toward higher realities. Human souls, too, possess the capacity to ascend into the angelic realm, a faculty prophets employ during revelation [Najafov, 2016].

The Role of Angels and the Prophetic Experience

The most complex issue for Ibn Khaldun concerns the existence of angels and their role in revelation. Attempting to reconcile religion and philosophy, he interprets angelic encounters in philosophical terms. He maintains that what is decisive for the prophet is the process of “*angelification*”—a transformation of the prophet's nature under the influence of a spiritual force.

Describing the phenomenology, Ibn Khaldun notes: *“When the light of revelation appears, prophets detach completely from their surroundings and turn toward the spiritual. To the observer, they appear asleep or unconscious, though in reality they are engaged in subtle spiritual communion, perceiving and contemplating realities beyond human comprehension. In these moments they hear whispered words and understand them.”* Elsewhere, he adds: *“Through union with the angels, the prophet gains knowledge of hidden realities.”* For him, angels naturally possess knowledge of the unseen by virtue of their spiritual nature, and contact with them grants prophets access to such knowledge [Golden, 2002].

The Hierarchy of Souls

Ibn Khaldun’s theory of revelation is closely tied to his doctrine of the soul [*nafs*]. He interprets human actions as expressions of the soul’s operations, manifesting in movement, speech, and behavior. He divides souls into three levels, differentiated by their spiritual capacity.

- **First degree:** Souls incapable of reaching spiritual perception, although not devoid of rational potential.
- **Second degree:** Souls not veiled by darkness, capable of ascending to angelic realms and illuminated by spiritual knowledge. These correspond to saints [*awliyā*’], who may attain extraordinary knowledge inaccessible to ordinary humans.
- **Third degree:** Souls of prophets, perfected human beings endowed with spiritual nature. They live among ordinary people yet remain inwardly distinct, capable of entering the divine realm at will. In such states, they transcend human

attributes, immerse in angelic realities, and upon returning, convey divine commands to humankind.

Because prophetic revelation belongs to this highest degree, ordinary humans cannot comprehend it in the same way; its reception, involving angelic encounters and supra-rational perception, is beyond their nature. The duration of revelation, Ibn Khaldun adds, may vary—from an instant to hours or even days [Chubukcu, 1991].

Ibn Khaldun also notes that in the earliest stages of Muhammad's prophethood, the Prophet was not yet able to perceive the angel visually, since that capacity had not yet been fully formed. He relates this to the very nature of revelation: *"The angel described by Ibn Khaldun is a profound faculty of the soul, acquired through repeated attempts, which enables the swift realization of imaginal and corporeal acts, and which manifests when necessity demands."* [Daryal, 1999].

In the earliest period of revelation, the Prophet's communion with the divine realm was not yet fully developed; therefore, revelation occurred only in the form of audition—hearing—while other sensory capacities, including vision, were not yet operative. *"However, as revelation became more frequent and his contact with the unseen realm increased, the Prophet gradually became accustomed to spiritual beings, distanced from human limitations, and adapted to returning from the divine realm back into the material world. Consequently, not only the faculty of hearing but also other senses, including sight, became receptive to revelation."* [Ibn Khaldun, 1989].

At the same time, Ibn Khaldun emphasizes that the reception of revelation was not a simple process but one extremely burdensome

for the human soul [Ibn Khaldun, 1989]. He cites the Qur'anic verse as evidence: *"Indeed, We will reveal to you a weighty word"* [Q. 73:5].

In Ibn Khaldun's philosophy, the category of the irrational [*ghayr 'aqlī*] has a broad scope. He did not limit the possession of supra-rational knowledge exclusively to prophets but also included soothsayers, sorcerers, and other groups of individuals who claim access to the unseen [Bolay, 1993].

Human life, he observes, is filled with peculiarities, arising from the diversity of desires, choices, tastes, and intellects. In all circumstances, the human personality possesses a measure of freedom. Even when deprived outwardly of liberty and restricted in actions, inwardly the individual remains free: the intellect, imagination, and feelings all retain autonomy—though in truth, this freedom remains constrained and limited [Pashazade, 1991]. Reason comprehends only what it can grasp; the soul remains bound to the body; the eyes see only the material; the hands perceive only by touch; the tongue senses only what it tastes; the heart cannot perceive love unless it feels it. Ibn Khaldun therefore contends that the human being is capable of attaining absolute freedom and limitless horizons, for innate within him lies a power enabling such ascent: the *nafs* [soul].

The *nafs*, being in essence a spiritual entity, can establish relations with other immaterial beings. *"The human soul exists as a force among all spiritual beings, akin to the invisible souls of angels and the souls of the celestial spheres,"* Ibn Khaldun writes. Its concrete existence, however, manifests only through the body and its faculties, such as the five senses [Ibn Khaldun, 1938].

The foretelling of hidden states and events is thus directly linked to the soul. Ibn Khaldun enumerates among those who foretell the unseen: soothsayers, diviners, magicians, astrologers, and others. Their distinctive capacities separate them from the majority of humankind. Ordinary individuals are not thereby rendered “abnormal,” nor should these groups be dismissed as irrational or foolish. Rather, their ability to predict future events, to discern the location and timing of unseen phenomena, and to foretell occurrences distinguishes them markedly from the general population. Eastern Peripatetic philosophers offered various explanations regarding the sources of these faculties [Oztuna, 1992].

Ibn Khaldun insists, however, that such capacities should not be regarded as mere skills or crafts. “*We observe*,” he remarks, “*that these states are inherent characteristics derived from their natural disposition. These include soothsayers who divine the unseen by observing reflections in mirrors or water in stones, or by examining the hearts, livers, and bones of animals.*” Ibn Khaldun further elaborates on a wide range of such individuals, providing classifications based on their distinctive practices.

For instance, he identifies a group he terms *zajr*, who interpret omens from the movements, forms, or cries of birds and animals to answer questions. Another group he calls *fortune-tellers*, who divine by casting pebbles, examining grains of wheat, date pits, or fruit seeds. He criticizes those who deny the existence of such individuals as *irrational or ignorant*, noting that since the beginning of the world, societies have always required such figures, and their presence across different regions and times cannot be reasonably denied [Rustamov, 2007].

Some among them, he explains, receive symbolic words, signs, or patterns from the unseen, which they interpret and communicate to others. Others acquire knowledge through dreams, later transmitting their visions upon awakening. Still others foretell impending events, including their own deaths. Far from being marginalized as insane, such individuals were often acknowledged and accepted within their societies.

As noted earlier, the soul's spiritual nature enables it to exist among immaterial entities such as angelic souls and celestial spirits. Every existing force comprises both matter and form. The *nafs al-nāṭiqā* [rational soul] constitutes the very essence of cognition, actualized through form and power. It receives intelligible forms, whether universal or particular. Ibn Khaldun explains: *"Its concrete existence is completed only through the body and its perceptible faculties, and through the universal meanings grasped by these faculties. The rational soul then reflects upon these forms until understanding is achieved, with one cognition following another in succession."* [Ibn Khaldun, 1938].

In its essence, the rational soul remains as pure potentiality [*hayūlā*] together with form. The philosopher illustrates this with the example of a child who, in early growth, is incapable of full comprehension either in sleep or wakefulness, since the rational soul's form of cognition has not yet fully developed. Its inability to grasp universals stems precisely from this immaturity. Once the rational soul's form is actualized, two types of cognition emerge during its existence within the body:

1. **Perception through the five senses.**
2. **Direct cognition arising from the essence of the rational soul itself.**

For the second type to function, the soul must disengage from material concerns and bodily needs. Once detached from the corporeal, the soul turns toward the higher realm, activating this second cognition. As Ibn Khaldun describes: *“At that moment, the veils of material existence are lifted, either in the universal form of dreams common to all people, or in the specific forms found among soothsayers and mystics, whereby, through effort and spiritual discipline, they gain access to hidden realities. In detaching from material bonds, the soul turns toward the higher spiritual beings, to which it is ontologically connected.”* [Sherif, 2006]

Thus, the philosopher maintains that the rational soul’s inclination toward the higher realms creates the condition for receiving suprarational knowledge. The soul may then transmit the information it acquires from higher beings to the faculty of imagination, which casts it into perceptible forms and conveys it to the senses. At times, a person may pass along to others what is received through sense perception; at other times, he transmits what imagination has cast into symbolic forms. This, for Ibn Khaldun, explains how the rational soul apprehends knowledge of the unseen [Shukurov, 2005].

Among the disciplines that mediate such knowledge, he discusses **magic** [*siḥr*] and **talismans** [*ṭilasm*]. These refer to the ability of souls and spirits to influence the elemental world, either independently or with the aid of celestial forces. The first is called magic, the second talismanry. According to Ibn Khaldun, this science is traditional and ancient: *“Among the Syrians and Chaldeans of Babylonia, as well as the Copts of Egypt and others, knowledge of magic and talismans was widely practiced.”* He further notes: *“Later, in the East [Kufa], the greatest magician among the Muslims appeared—Jābir ibn Ḥayyān.”* [Ibn Khaldun, 1938].

Ibn Khaldun presents highly interesting reflections on **magic** [*sihr* - □□□]. Human beings differ in nature and character, and can thus be classified into various types. *“Each class is distinguished from others by traits specific to its kind, which are not found in other classes”* [1]. At the same time, the qualities unique to each class arise from their innate disposition [*fitra* - □□□□]. Prophets, accordingly, possess distinct traits. *“The qualities they possess enable them to recognize God and communicate with angels”* [1]. However, it is God [*Allāh* - □□□□] who instills this quality in them; His will and desire must not be forgotten. No human is born a prophet or a philosopher. Yet unlike philosophy, prophethood is not an acquired trait; it is a quality that manifests in morally superior individuals through the will of God. Superior morality comprises all behaviors arising naturally in humans in accordance with the will of the intellect. A human may act morally or otherwise when confronted with natural choices [Serinsu, 1996].

Unlike prophets, another group—soothsayers [*kāhin* - □□□□], magicians [*sihr*-□□□ *practitioners*], and talisman-makers [*tilasm* -]—possess the power to influence others. Ibn Khaldun states: *“The effect and transformation of beings by prophets occur with God’s assistance; it is a divine characteristic. The knowledge of unseen things by soothsayers occurs through the influence and help of demonic forces”* [Ibn Khaldun, 1938]. Among those aided by demonic forces, magicians hold the foremost position [Shukurov, 2005].

Magicians themselves are divided into various categories, grounded in differences of the soul [*nafs* - □□□]. Ibn Khaldun classifies their souls into three levels. Those of the first level, in addition to demonic power, possess inherent skills and capabilities unique to themselves. Philosophers term this capacity to influence as **magic** [*sihr* - □□□] [Ibn Khaldun, 1938].

The second level comprises those who operate with the aid of the stars and other celestial beings. Philosophers refer to this practice as **talismanry** [*ṭilasm*] [Ibn Khaldun, 1938].

The third level includes those capable of influencing the imaginations of others. Through this ability, they make non-existent phenomena appear real. However, the actual transformation does not occur in reality but in the minds of observers. People perceive a change in form, yet in truth the object retains its original form; the alteration occurs in the imagination [*khayāl* - □□□□]. Ibn Khaldun considers such practices, in contrast to the first two levels, as “*trickery and nonsense*” [Ibn Khaldun, 1938].

The variations in magicians’ souls are limited to two degrees. “*In magicians, this power, as with all human faculties, exists in potential, and manifests through habituation and practice*” [Ibn Khaldun, 1938]. Based on their habitual practice, Ibn Khaldun concludes: “*This involves devotion and worship directed toward the spiritual beings of the celestial spheres, planets, and higher worlds. Since this veneration is directed to anyone other than God, it constitutes magic, which is disbelief [kufr - □□ □], for disbelief is inherent in the material and causes of magic*” [Swinburne, 1992]. Several Qur’anic verses discuss magic and talismans, their effects, and God’s stance toward them [Quran 5:110; 71:7]. As the Qur’an is itself a revealed text, its treatment of magic is particularly instructive.

Ibn Khaldun further discusses the case of the Jews during the reign of Solomon [*Sulaimān* - □□□□ □□], who were led astray by demons, teaching them magic. Solomon himself did not practice magic or disbelieve, but the demons did. They taught people spells revealed to the angels Harut and Marut in Babylon [*Bābīl* -

□□ □□]. These angels only imparted knowledge to test people, warning them not to disbelieve. Nevertheless, humans learned spells that harmed themselves without benefiting anyone. *“The Jews knew that those practicing magic would have no share in the hereafter, yet they sacrificed themselves and incurred punishment for pursuing such corrupt practices”* [Quran 2:102]. Ibn Khaldun emphasizes that the Prophet himself could be affected by magic, which is why the chapters *al-Falaq* and *an-Nās* were revealed. These surahs were to be recited to counteract magical influence, whether upon the Prophet or others [Quran 113, 114].

Soothsayers [*kāhin* - □□□□]. According to Ibn Khaldun, aside from prophethood, the ability to foresee the unseen exists naturally in humans. Soothsayers develop their souls, access the unseen according to their capabilities, and communicate the acquired knowledge. However, their souls are spiritually immature, and their imagination [*khayāl* - □□□ □] is highly active. *“Imagination is the instrument through which one apprehends particulars; it operates both in sleep and wakefulness”* [Ibn Khaldun, 1938]. While they receive knowledge of the unseen, it is not from God but from demonic sources. Their statements are not necessarily accurate; what they predict about the future may be true or false. Ibn Khaldun notes: *“The soothsayer attempts to compensate for the deficiencies of his intellect using external means”* [Ibn Khaldun, 1938]. Many soothsayers claim knowledge of the unseen without verification [Swinburne, 1992].

He cites the example of Ibn Sayyād and the Prophet Muhammad. To understand Ibn Sayyād’s psychological tension, the Prophet questioned him. Ibn Sayyād admitted, *“What I attain is sometimes true, sometimes false.”* The Prophet responded, *“Your matter is confused, but prophethood is true, and therefore cannot be false”*

[William, 1995]. Ibn Khaldun explains that soothsayers do not always seek to deny prophets; their reaction to prophecy is generally one of acknowledgment. Soothsayers, with exceptional imaginative faculties, can access the spiritual world and convey related information in a unique manner. Hence, they accept rather than deny revelation, recognizing its divine truth. History also records cases of soothsayers either denying prophets or falsely claiming prophethood. Ibn Khaldun attributes false prophethood to soothsayers' envy of prophets' social influence [William, 1995].

To access such knowledge, soothsayers often use objects like animal bones, grains, and seeds. However, many can perceive the unseen without these aids. Some rely on vision [*ʿayn* - □□□], yet even then, they observe mirrors until a subtle “veil” [*hijāb* - □□□] forms, through which they perceive extraordinary images and signs. *“Soothsayers observe this veil to obtain answers to their questions; the images they perceive signify meanings positively or negatively”* [Zakuyev, 1958]. This state resembles temporary sleep; knowledge obtained is imprinted upon the soul and memory, and later communicated to the public through shared perception [*hiss-i mushtarak* - مشترک حس]. Soothsayers themselves confirm witnessing strange visions and hearing whispered words during this process. This practice is referred to as **divination** [*kahanah* - □□□□□] [Ibn Khaldun, 1938].

The group known as **“Zaqr”** [*ahl al-zaqr* - □□□□□□□□□□] differs from soothsayers [*kāhīn* - □□□□□] in both state and characteristics. They observe the behavior and actions of animals to forecast future events and provide knowledge of the unseen. As Ibn Khaldun notes: *“In a state of sleep, when the external sensory perception and cognition are suspended, and the animal soul and the internal aspect of the body are reached, the rational soul [nafs-i*

nāṭiq - □□□ □□□□ / then directs itself toward the unseen realm, acquiring many hidden insights through its own inherent power and talent, before returning to its former sensory and imaginative faculties and transmitting the universal concepts [*kulli bliq* - □□□ / gleaned from the higher realm to the imagination” [Ibn Khaldun, 1938]. The knowledge thus obtained is what this group communicates to others [Yildirim, 2000].

The Mad [*majnūn* - □□□ □□]. Ibn Khaldun notes that individuals of this type are often distrusted by society due to disturbances in their senses and consciousness. This distrust arises not from their inherent incapacity but from societal attitudes and behavior toward them. Nevertheless, this does not imply that they are entirely insane or untrustworthy. The distinguishing feature of these individuals, as Ibn Khaldun emphasizes, is that their rational souls [*nafs-i nāṭiq* - □□□ □□□□] are weakly engaged with bodily concerns. This weakness sometimes causes them to speak unintentionally. *“The mad mix truth and falsehood in their cognition because, during periods of sensory loss, they can only access the spiritual realm via external means”* [Ibn Khaldun, 1938].

The Mystics

Those belonging to this category provide the weakest form of knowledge of the unseen. *“The mystics claim to possess knowledge of the unseen, but in reality they lack the capacity. Their contact with the spiritual realms is absent; whatever they wish to know, they attach their thoughts to it and, expending all mental effort, imagine it”* [Ibn Khaldun, 1938]. Thus, they report not what they have truly observed but what they conjecture or deem appropriate based on their reasoning [Valiyev, 1997].

Another group of individuals employs certain words or expressions related to the unseen before falling asleep. For example, as Maslama notes in *Kitāb al-Qāyā* [□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □], they predict how prisoners will die; the accuracy of these predictions may only be verified later.

Some individuals produce what may be termed “artificial death” [*mawt ṣināʿī* - □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □]. To comprehend the unseen, they exhaust the body’s material energies, depleting physical strength and inducing weakness. This state is achieved through extreme fasting and self-denial, generating a form of artificial death. “*Once the body and its senses cease, and the veils obstructing the soul’s ascent are removed, the soul comprehends its own nature and attains access to the spiritual realm*” [1]. Ibn Khaldun observes that such practices are most prevalent among Indians and Chinese. Indian yogis, in particular, have long engaged in such disciplines [Tumer, et al.1997]

Astrologers [*munajjim* - □ □ □ □]. Ibn Khaldun offers noteworthy reflections on astrologers, the modern equivalents of soothsayers. However, unlike previous groups, astrologers are not required to detach themselves from material concerns to receive knowledge of the unseen. They belong to the scholarly class, studying the stars and planets [*alflāk* - □ □ □ □ □], whose observable forms and properties from Earth were their principal objects of inquiry. While modern astronomy demonstrates that celestial appearances vary from planet to planet, such differences were largely unknown in Ibn Khaldun’s time, leading to misconceptions and sometimes contradictions in ancient astrological thought. Like other scholars of his era, Ibn Khaldun pursued astronomy alongside philosophy [Topaloglu, 2002].

He asserts that astrologers can predict hidden events without disengaging from material existence. *“By interpreting the indications of the stars, the positions and movements of the planets, and the interactions among celestial and terrestrial elements, they derive a disposition that, through its influence on the air, allows them to foresee hidden events”* [Ibn Khaldun, 1938]. Nevertheless, Ibn Khaldun emphasizes that astrologers’ knowledge of the unseen is relatively weak. Their predictions rely primarily on conjecture, observation of planetary conditions, and astrological reasoning. The positions of stars and constellations, along with celestial appearances, guided astrologers in linking terrestrial events, disasters, and political decisions, generating various insights and hypotheses.

Ibn Khaldun’s reflections on the sources of irrational knowledge and the nature of revelation consolidate the points outlined above. Like his predecessors, he analyzed revelation through Qur’anic verses but remained committed to his philosophical framework, demonstrating that the philosophical interpretation of Qur’anic or other revealed texts is feasible [Taylan, 2000].

Another distinguishing feature of Ibn Khaldun relative to earlier thinkers lies in his novel classification of the sources of irrational knowledge. Following al-Farabi, and like other Eastern Peripatetic philosophers influenced by Farabi’s system, Ibn Khaldun sought to reconcile religion and philosophy, articulating his philosophical ideas accordingly. His contributions to understanding the nature of revelation and its philosophical exposition are substantial. In light of these insights, Ibn Khaldun can be considered among the Eastern Peripatetic philosophers who examined revelation as a philosophical problem [Ibn Khaldun, 1938; Najafov, 2016].

Conclusion

Revelation constitutes the foundational element of all divine religions. By the 6th century CE, Islam emerged as a new religious system in the Arabian Peninsula, with divine revelation [*wahy*] serving as its core. Rapidly expanding beyond its initial territorial confines, Islam became the dominant faith across the vast territories of the Caliphate, encompassing neighboring regions. This religion not only imparted spiritual and moral guidance but also promoted education, ethics, and social solidarity. The Qur'an, with its emphasis on reading, learning, and contemplation, endowed knowledge and scholarship with central importance. Consequently, scholars of the Islamic East produced a rich cultural and intellectual heritage that continues to benefit humanity.

The encouragement of learning catalyzed remarkable progress in the educational and cultural domains of Eastern societies. Major cities of the Caliphate, including Mecca, Medina, Baghdad, and Basra, became centers for the collection, translation, and dissemination of invaluable manuscripts and original works from across the globe. This facilitated shared cultural development and the consolidation of a common civilizational framework. Works produced at one extremity of the Caliphate were often critiqued and discussed at distant locations, reflecting the intellectual interconnectedness of the era. In particular, Muslim scholars gained access to Greek and Roman philosophical works translated into Syriac and subsequently into Arabic, establishing an early interface with classical philosophy. Exposure to philosophical thought, coupled with an emphasis on education and intellectual autonomy, led Muslim scholars to provide philosophical interpretations of sacred texts.

Among the Eastern Peripatetic philosophers, figures such as Al-Kindi, Al-Farabi, Ibn Sina [Avicenna], Bahmanyār, Ibn Rushd [Averroes], Ibn Miskawayh, and Ibn Khaldun systematically addressed the problem of revelation, offering analyses that reconciled philosophical inquiry with religious belief. These philosophers sought congruence between the essence of religion and philosophy, interpreting revelation—including Qur’anic verses—within a philosophical framework. They emphasized the symbolic and ethical dimensions of religious practices, asserting that religious prescriptions primarily foster spiritual awareness and belief in God.

Al-Farabi pioneered the comparative analysis of revelation and intellect, highlighting the primacy of rational cognition while acknowledging the prophet as a recipient of divine knowledge. He asserted: *“Religious truth and philosophical truth are one and the same, nourished by divine light through imagination and contemplation.”* Unlike his successors, Farabi posited that both imagination and rational thought contribute equally to the epistemic source of knowledge, with prophets attaining knowledge through divine selection, whereas philosophers acquire it through personal effort and reasoning. Both the prophet and philosopher share the same ultimate mission: conveying knowledge of God to humanity, albeit via distinct methodologies. Farabi emphasized that while philosophical knowledge is dispersed and analytical, prophetic knowledge is comprehensive and definitive.

Ibn Sina further refined this conceptual framework, delineating the essential differences between prophecy and philosophy. He identified three crucial determinants of prophetic knowledge: intellectual purity and acuity, highly developed imaginative capacity, and mastery over material realities. This theoretical construct established the basis for a novel Eastern Peripatetic model of prophecy

[*nubuwwah*]. Ibn Sina described prophetic intellect as a “*sacred intellect*” capable of receiving divine revelation independently of external influence, in contrast to philosophers who acquire knowledge gradually through disciplined rational inquiry. Prophetic knowledge is complete, unified, and derived from the active intellect [*al-ʿaql al-faʿāl*], while philosophical knowledge is incremental and contingent upon methodical cognitive development.

Ibn Rushd, departing from some predecessors, reconciled revelation with rational principles through a methodological emphasis on intellect, arguing that philosophical inquiry should inform the interpretation of revelation. He maintained that philosophy and religion share a common purpose: the pursuit of truth. When apparent contradictions arise, rational exegesis is warranted. In contrast, theologians [*mutakallimūn*], emphasizing revelation over reason, often opposed the Peripatetic synthesis. Al-Ghazali famously critiqued philosophers for attempting to reconcile philosophical reasoning with divine revelation, arguing that such efforts risked doctrinal error. In response, Ibn Rushd authored *The Incoherence of the Incoherence* [*Tahāfut al-Tahāfut*], defending the compatibility of rational inquiry with revelation and advocating for the subordination of revelation to rational interpretation rather than the reverse.

Eastern Peripatetic philosophers extended the legacy of Greek thought beyond mere reception; they adapted philosophical categories and principles to the context of Islamic revelation, producing a rich intellectual heritage for both Eastern and Western civilizations. Their contributions revitalized philosophy, generating new theories, systems, and scientific discoveries, and broadening scholarly engagement across theology, history, astronomy, logic, philosophy, chemistry, and mathematics. Educational institutions established throughout the Caliphate, such as the renowned Nizamiyya

madrasas, facilitated the study of both religious and secular sciences, fostering generations of polymaths including Ibn Sina, Al-Biruni, Ibn Bajja, Ibn Hawqal, and Nasir al-Din Tusi. Although the subsequent political turmoil and Mongol invasions curtailed this intellectual efflorescence, their works remain invaluable, preserving a unique and enduring legacy.

The monograph's examination of revelation within the Eastern Peripatetic tradition yields several key conclusions:

1. **Nature of Revelation:** According to Eastern Peripatetics, revelation, inspiration, and visionary experience are intrinsically esoteric and intuitive, yet intimately connected to the evolutionary stages of rational cognition. Divine origin underpins all knowledge, with individual identity and divine will serving as decisive factors. This demonstrates the Peripatetics' consistent effort to reconcile philosophy and religion.
2. **Transmission of Revelation:** Only individuals recognized as prophets can fully receive and convey revelation to society. Inspiration, while sharing subjective characteristics with revelation, differs in its scope and authority. Unlike theologians, Peripatetic philosophers conceptualize inspiration as knowledge potentially accessible through the maturation of rational cognition, though not equivalent to divine revelation.
3. **Linguistic and Communicative Aspects:** Revelation's language and its societal reception are interdependent. Farabi and Ibn Rushd emphasize that divine messages require interpretation [*ta'wīl*] due to the inherent differences between linguistic expression and metaphysical content.

4. **Philosopher-Prophet Paradigm:** Eastern Peripatetics assert that philosophers and prophets share the ultimate objective of discerning the truth—God or the First Cause—differing only in methods, approaches, and cognitive frameworks. Starting from Al-Kindi, Peripatetics consistently endeavored to harmonize philosophical reasoning with religious revelation, treating both as complementary paths to truth.
5. **Epistemological Distinctions:** While philosophers can achieve comprehensive knowledge through intellectual effort, they cannot access divine revelation as prophets do. Revelation is a manifestation of God's will, beyond human volition. Philosophers may influence governance and social structures, yet they cannot fulfill the transformative social and spiritual functions uniquely conferred upon prophets.
6. **Societal Implications:** Revelation is a moral and social intervention, designed to reshape societal norms, ethical practices, and governance systems. Eastern Peripatetics underscore that revelation's purpose is to correct collective misperceptions and guide communities toward higher moral and intellectual standards.

Overall, the study highlights that the Eastern Peripatetic approach to revelation represents a sophisticated philosophical engagement with divine knowledge. Unlike prior analyses, which treated revelation primarily within religious or theological frameworks, this investigation demonstrates how Peripatetic philosophers integrated rational cognition, imagination, and metaphysical principles to articulate a coherent theory of prophecy and divine communication. By synthesizing philosophy and religion, these thinkers created a durable intellectual framework that continues to inform contemporary studies of epistemology, metaphysics, and Islamic thought.

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