AL-ĠAZĀLĪ'S CONCEPT OF PROPHECY: THE INTRODUCTION OF AVICENNAN PSYCHOLOGY INTO AŠʿARITE THEOLOGY

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The traditional argument of Muslim theologians that aims to verify the claims of a true prophet and distinguish him from an impostor is based on the acceptance of miracles performed in history and testified through an uninterrupted chain of tradition (*tawātur*). A second argument that equally involves transmission through *tawātur* is based on the prophet's virtuous and impeccable character establishing the trustworthiness (*ṣidq*) of the prophet. These are, for instance, the types of proofs (singl. *ḥuǧǧa*) mentioned by the Baghdadian Muʿtazilī al-Ǧāḥiẓ (d. 255/869) in his monograph *Ḥuǧaǧ al-nubuwwa*.[1] For theologians of the Ašʿarite school this approach to the verification of prophecy posed a problem. According to classical Ašʿarite theology, good is what God commands and bad is what he forbids.[2] If God chooses prophets to reveal knowledge about what is right and what is wrong, and thus also reveal knowledge about how to live a virtuous life, how can those whom the prophets call upon know that the prophets have a virtuous character before they even know the criteria for virtue? Early Ašʿarite theologians indeed accepted that all prophets had a most virtuous character. This fact, however,

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[1] Al-Ǧāḥiẓ, *Ḥuǧaǧ al-nubuwwa* (*Rasāʾil al-Ǧāḥiẓ*, ed. ʿAbd al-Salām Muḥammad Ḥārūn, 7 vols. [Cairo, 1399/1979], vol. 3, pp. 223–81), pp. 246, 260. On miracles and their definition as ''bringing-about original effects'' (*iḫtirāʿ al-timār*) cf. pp. 259ff. On al-Ǧāḥiẓ's view that all of Muḥammad's character points towards his prophethood cf. pp. 280f. Both criteria are brought to knowledge either through eyewitness evidence (*ʿiyān*), or through credible report (*ḫabar*). Cf. T. Fahd, ''Nubuwwa,'' *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, New Edition, ed. H.A.R. Gibb *et al.* (Leiden and London, 1954ff.) vol. 8, pp. 93b–97a and Josef van Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft im 2. und 3. Jahrhundert Hidschra. Eine Geschichte des religiösen Denkens im frühen Islam*, 6 vols. (Berlin and New York, 1991–97), vol. 4, pp. 112f., 638–44.

[2] Richard M. Frank, ''Moral obligations in classical Muslim theology,'' *Journal of Religious Ethics*, 11 (1983): 205–23, pp. 207ff.

became apparent only after their message gained acceptance within their community and it cannot be regarded as a viable verification of the claim of a prophet to those he calls upon. Al-Ašʿarī (d. 324/935), for instance, is said to have accepted a number of indications that allow humans to distinguish a prophet from ordinary people.[3] He does not mention the claim based on the impeccable moral conduct of prophets. In fact, he stresses that in order to distinguish a true prophet from other people who are close to God (*awliyā'*), but who have no message to reveal, one should put one's trust only in the occurrence of true prophetic miracles.[4]

The epistemological principle that underlies the rejection to verify the claims of a prophet through reference to his moral conduct is the fundamental distinction between human and divine knowledge in early Ašʿarite theology. While God has provided humankind with the capacity to gain knowledge of, for instance, the natural world surrounding us, the kind of knowledge provided through prophecy originates from outside this human sphere. Any human attempt to distinguish a prophet from an impostor by judgment of whether his conduct is right or wrong, assumes either a knowledge of what is right or wrong, received prior to the revelation, and must therefore be dismissed as an attempt to judge God's message by a human standard, or is a circular verification of God's revelation by itself.

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[3] Ibn Fūrak (d. 406/1015) reports that al-Ašʿarī accepted four kinds of indications for the truthfulness (*ṣidq*) of the messenger: ''One way is that miracles attest this. Miracles are the things that – when the messenger claims to have the message – come about in violation of the habitual practice that has occurred previously. A second way is the confirmation of the prophet's veracity (*taṣdīq*) expressed by those people who witnessed the miracles. A third one is that, through the prophet's veracity (*ṣidq*) in his message, those to whom the prophet is sent achieve knowledge about the necessity (of his prophecy). And a fourth one is that messengers who were before him have announced him and identified him (by specifying) his characteristics and his personality in his time, his epoch, his name, and his state.'' (Ibn Fūrak, *Muǧarrad maqālāt al-Šayḫ Abī al-Ḥasan al-Ašʿarī*, ed. Daniel Gimaret [Beirut, 1986], p. 176.16–20.) On prophecy and the evidence (*iṯbāt*) for prophecies in Ašʿarite theology cf. Daniel Gimaret, *La doctrine d'al-Ashʿarī* (Paris, 1990), pp. 453–67, particularly pp. 459f. and Michael E. Marmura, ''Avicenna's theory of prophecy in the light of Ashʿarite theology,'' in W.S. McCullough (ed.), *The Seed of Wisdom. Essays in Honour of T.J. Meek* (Toronto, 1964), pp. 159–78, 161–4.

[4] Ibn Fūrak, *Muǧarrad maqālāt al-Ašʿarī*, pp. 176.21–177.3; Gimaret, *La doctrine d'al-Ashʿarī*, p. 460.

The systematic character of this rejection is most clearly developed in the writings of the Ašʿarite theologian al-Ǧuwaynī (d. 478/1085). He argues that while humans are able to gain theoretical knowledge of what is true and false about, for instance, natural phenomena, and are able to do so independent from revealed knowledge, such a capacity does not exist in the case of normative practical knowledge. Humans are, first of all, incapable of determining what is good and bad in matters of religious obligations.[5] Equally, the moral quality of an action or a person's character cannot be assessed through rational judgment (*ʿaql*). Human epistemological capacities are too weak and therefore unable to penetrate what it really means for an act to be morally good (*ḥasan*). What al-Ǧuwaynī has in mind here is that human moral judgments are intrinsically affected by their interests and therefore cannot recognize the real moral nature of an act.[6]

As a result, humans are unable to distinguish a true prophet from a false one solely through an assessment of his teachings or his moral character. The genuine prophet endows humankind with truths that are unattainable through means other than prophecy. Prior to the prophets' missions, those to whom they are sent have no means to know what will be the knowledge prophets are sent to convey to them.[7] The distinction between a true prophet and an impostor therefore relies solely on prophetic signs (*āyāt*) which – according to al-Ǧuwaynī – can only be miracles (*muʿǧizāt*). Miracles are extraordinary actions that are beyond the capacity of humans.

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[5] Al-Ǧuwaynī, *al-Iršād ilā qawāṭiʿ al-adilla fī uṣūl al-iʿtiqād*, ed. Muḥammad Yūsuf Mūsā and ʿAlī ʿA. ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd (Cairo, 1369/1950), p. 258.4f. Regarding the *Iršād*, cf. the recent English translation *A Guide to Conclusive Proofs for the Principles of Belief* by Paul E. Walker (Reading, 2000).

[6] Al-Ǧuwaynī's *Kitāb al-Burhān fī uṣūl al-fiqh*, ed. ʿAbd al-ʿAẓīm al-Dīb, 2nd ed., 2 vols. (Cairo, 1400 [1979/80]) vol. 1, pp. 93f. Cf. George F. Hourani, ''Juwaynī's criticism of Muʿtazilite ethics,'' *The Muslim World*, 65 (1975): 161–73 (= *id., Reason and Tradition in Islamic Ethics* [Cambridge, 1985], pp. 124–34); A. Kevin Reinhard, *Before Revelation. The Boundaries of Muslim Moral Thought* (Albany, 1995), p. 68. Cf. also Tilman Nagel, *Die Festung des Glaubens. Triumph und Scheitern des islamischen Rationalismus im 11. Jahrhundert* (München, 1988), pp. 214–16.

[7] Al-Ǧuwaynī, *al-Iršād*, p. 304.4f. Nothing in the prophets' message, however, violates reason. The sending of prophets is an expression of God's grace that makes even the most intelligent people (*al-ʿuqalāʾ*) believe in God and continue to follow the judgments of reason (*ibid.*, p. 306. *ult.*f.)

They are acts of God, performing the function to announce the truthfulness (*ṣidq*) of a prophet.[8]

While this is the view of Ašʿarite theologians in the 10th and 11th century, later thinkers of the same tradition express a contrary position. Faḫr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1210), for instance, taught that verifying the claims of a prophet by recourse to miracles that are alleged to him bears so many methodological problems that it is inferior to the method based on a judgment on the message as well as the moral character of the prophet. Being well aware of the problematic character of such a view, al-Rāzī backs it with the statement that earlier scholars including the influential Ašʿarite theologian al-Ġazālī (d. 505/1111) have expressed the same opinion.[9]

In fact, at the beginning of his compendium on the methods of jurisprudence, al-Ġazālī states that ''rationality points towards the fact that the Prophet told the truth.''[10] And in a well-known passage from his autobiography *al-Munqiḏ min al-ḍalāl*, he argued that certainty about prophecy (*yaqīn bi-al-nubuwwa*) can only be achieved by comparing the message of the prophet with what has already been firmly established in the mind of the believer. Knowledge of prophetic miracles, like the changing of a stick into a serpent, cannot provide such firmness, since miracles may always be interpreted as sorcery (*siḥr*) and deception (*taḫyīl*). While knowledge of miracles may in fact support some kind of belief in prophecy, firm belief that is equal to the power of knowledge (*al-īmān al-qawīy al-ʿilmī*) is achieved only through assent to the prophet's message created by the immediate notion of truth the believer finds within himself.[11]

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[8] Al-Ǧuwaynī, *al-Iršād*, pp. 307f.

[9] Faḫr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Muḥaṣṣal afkār al-mutaqaddimīn wa-al-mutaʾaḫḫirīn min al-ʿulamāʾ wa-al-ḥukamāʾ wa-al-mutakallimīn*, ed. Ṭāhā ʿAbd al-Raʾūf Saʿd (Cairo, 1978), p. 208.12–14. A second, more reliable edition of the text is contained in Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī, *Talḫīṣ al-muḥaṣṣal al-maʿrūf bi-naqd al-muḥaṣṣal*, ed. ʿAbdallāh Nūrānī (Teheran, 1980/Beirut, 1985), p. 351.15f.

[10] Al-Ǧazālī, *al-Mustaṣfā min ʿilm al-uṣūl*, 2 vols. (Būlāq, 1322–24 [1904–06]) vol. 1, p. 6.6f.: ''al-ʿaql yadullu ʿalā ṣidq al-nabīy.''

[11] Al-Ǧazālī, *al-Munqiḏ min al-ḍalāl* (= *al-Munqidh min al-ḍalāl/Erreur et délivrance*, ed. and trans. into French by Farid Jabre, 3rd ed. [Beirut, 1969]), pp. 44.5–11, 43.17f.

This passage has confused many interpreters of al-Ġazālī.[12] The text implies that humans are endowed with certain knowledge that precedes the message of the prophets. If prophecy can be verified by a comparison of the prophets' message with the immediate notion of truth the believer finds in himself, then this immediate knowledge must be epistemologically independent of the prophets' message. To deny that miracles are the principal method of verifying prophecy implies that there is a strong independent source of knowledge of what is true, a source that does not come with prophecy.

This article will analyze the development and change in the Ašʿarite views on prophecy that occurred roughly between 1100 and 1200. While al-Ġuwaynī's teachings on prophecy and its verification are deeply rooted in early Ašʿarite epistemology, later Ašʿarites like Faḫr al-Dīn al-Rāzī explain prophecy in terms of Ibn Sīnā's psychology. This article will first analyze al-Rāzī's views on prophecy and briefly compare them to Ibn Sīnā (d. 429/1037) in order to make his reliance on Avicennan psychology apparent. In the second part of this article, I will analyze al-Ġazālī's views on prophecy and determine how he introduced elements of Avicennan psychology into the Ašʿarite theological tradition. This paper will attempt to determine the nature and effect of the earliest influence of Ibn Sīnā's philosophical interpretation of prophecy on the Ašʿarite theological discourse. Al-Ġazālī's position towards Ibn Sīnā's interpretation of prophecy shall first be approached from his comments in al-Ġazālī's two books of refutation (*radd*), *i.e.* the *Tahāfut al-falāsifa* and the *Faḍāʾiḥ al-bāṭiniyya*. Finally, Ibn Sīnā's subsequent influence will be analyzed from its *Sitz im Leben* in al-Ġazālī's theology, his elaborate theory of interpretation (*taʾwīl*) in the first six chapters of his book *Fayṣal al-tafriqa*

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[12] Duncan B. MacDonald, ''The life of al-Ghazzālī, with especial references to his religious experience and opinions,'' *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 20 (1899): 71–132, p. 96; Arend Th. van Leeuwen, *Ghazālī als Apologeet van de Islam* (Leiden, 1947), pp. 95–8, p. 181; Vincenco M. Poggi, *Un Classico della Spiritualià Musulmana* (Rome, 1967), pp. 242–5; George F. Hourani, ''Ghazālī on the ethics of action,'' *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 96 (1976): 69–88, pp. 87f. (= *id., Reason and Tradition in Islamic Ethics*, pp. 135–66, pp. 165f.); Richard M. McCarthy, *Freedom and Fulfillment. An Annotated Translation of Al-Ghazālī's al-Munqidh min al-ḍalāl and Other Relevant Works of al-Ghazālī* (Boston, 1980) (= quoted according to the second edition *Deliverance from Error* [Louisville/Kenn., 2000]), p. 120; Richard M. Frank, *Al-Ghazālī and the Ashʿarite School* (Durham and London, 1994), pp. 67f.; Sabine Schmidtke, *The Theology of al-ʿAllāma al-Ḥillī (d. 726/1325)* (Berlin, 1991), p. 151.

bayna al-Islām wa-al-zandaqa. I will argue that the Avicennan teachings on the soul and its components which al-Ġazālī introduces fill a place in Ašʿarite theology that has been left blank by the self-imposed epistemological restrictions of this school's theology. Al-Ġazālī neglects these restrictions and this filling-of-a-blank-space in Ašʿarite theology leads to important changes in the school's approach to prophecy.

I. FAḪR AL-DĪN AL-RĀZĪ'S APPLICATION OF IBN SĪNĀ'S PSYCHOLOGY

In his compendium on theology, the *Muḥaṣṣal*, which was written early in his life, Faḫr al-Dīn al-Rāzī discusses three methods of proofs that aim to verify the claims of a prophet. The first method he calls ''evidence through miracle'' (*ẓuhūr bi-muʿǧiz*), the second ''inference from moral conduct'' (*istidlāl bi-al-aḫlāq*). The third method is based on the information gathered from previous prophets (*aḫbār al-anbiyāʾ al-mutaqaddimīn*).[13] In this work, he points out that information on events in the distant past that has been passed down through generations of scholars through *tawātur* is not as reliable as the knowledge of events that one has witnessed oneself. Al-Rāzī discusses other methodological reservations against the proof through miracles and *tawātur*. He also dismisses as weak the second method to verify the claim of a prophet through inference from moral conduct.[14] Even if the virtuous character of a person can be established, it would be a sign of distinction but not a sufficient sign for prophecy.[15]

In his later work *al-Maṭālib al-ʿāliya* al-Rāzī revisits the issue and treats it more systematically. In this work, he expresses a much more rationalist view than in his *al-Muḥaṣṣal* and dismisses all these three kinds of verifications in favor of a fourth criterion, not mentioned in the *Muḥaṣṣal*. In the *Maṭālib al-ʿāliya* he begins his treatment by saying that arguments that

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[13] Al-Rāzī, *Muḥaṣṣal*, ed. Cairo, pp. 208–12, ed. Teheran/Beirut, pp. 350–6. Cf. Max Horten, *Die spekulative und positive Theologie des Islam* (Leipzig, 1912), pp. 82f.

[14] On the reservations that rationalist Muslim theologians since al-Naẓẓām (d. 221/836) voiced against the verification of prophecy through *tawātur* cf. van Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft*, III, 382–4; IV, 334f.; *id., Die Erkenntnislehre des ʿAḍudaddīn al-Īcī* (Wiesbaden, 1966), pp. 308–10.

[15] Al-Rāzī, *Muḥaṣṣal*, ed. Teheran/Beirut, p. 306. This passage is missing in the Cairo edition.

involve *tawātur* cannot be regarded as attestations that convey certainty.[16] He presents instead a line of thinking understood as a much more decisive argument first in favor of the necessary existence of prophecy and secondly of the method of verifying the claims of a prophet.[17] The argument begins with the premise that human perfection is knowledge of what is true (*ḥaqq*) and of what is good (*ḫayr*).[18] In regard to this perfection, humans fall into three classes: first, those who are completely devoid of such knowledge, these are the ordinary people (*'āmmat al-ḫalq wa-ǧumhūruhum*). Secondly, those who are perfect in their knowledge of the true and the good, but who are unable to make up for the deficiencies of other people. These are the *awliyā'*. Thirdly, those who are both perfect in their knowledge and who also have the capacity to make up for the deficiencies of others. These are the prophets.[19]

The second major premise of al-Rāzī's argument for the necessary existence of prophecy argues from the unequal distribution of human perfection. Just as there are many people who have a very limited capacity to know what is true and what is right, there must be at least one individual in every epoch who is endowed with both theoretical and practical perfection.[20] The same kind of argument proves, according to al-Rāzī, the existence of a person in a series of epochs that surpasses these perfect individuals and qualifies as the ''sublime messenger'' (*al-rasūl al-mu'aẓẓam*), the ''legislator'' (*wāḍi' al-šarā'i'*) and the ''one who guides to the truths''

[16] Faḫr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *al-Maṭālib al-'āliya min al-'ilm al-ilāhī*, ed. Muḥammad 'Abd al-Salām Šāhīn, 3 vols. (Beirut, 1420/1999), part 8 (included in vol. 3), pp. 44–6. The eighth book of the *Maṭālib al-'āliya* on prophecy is also edited by Aḥmad Ḥiǧāzī al-Saqqā under the title *al-Nubuwwa wa-mā yata'allaqu bihā* (Cairo, 1985) where this passage is pp. 133–9. This edition is to be preferred. Aḥmad Ḥiǧāzī al-Saqqā later published a full edition of the *Maṭālib* (Beirut, 1407/1987) which was not available to me. Al-Rāzī dismisses *tawātur* because the traditions that Jews, Christians and other religious groups transmit prove the possibility of collective error.

[17] Al-Rāzī, *al-Maṭālib al-'āliya*, ed. Beirut, p. 25, ed. Cairo, p. 107. For a short version of this argument cf. Faḫr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Ma'ālim uṣūl al-dīn*, ed. Aḥmad 'Abd al-Rahīm al-Sāyiḥ and Sāmī 'Afīfī Ḥiǧāzī (Cairo, 1421/2000), pp. 66–70. Al-Rāzī's argument is analyzed by Binyamin Abrahamov, ''Religion *versus* philosophy. The case of Faḫr al-Dīn al-Rāzī's proof for prophecy,'' *Oriente Moderno*, 80 (2000): 415–25. Cf. also Schmidtke, *The Theology of al-'Allāma al-Ḥillī*, pp. 151f.

[18] Al-Rāzī, *al-Maṭālib al-'āliya*, ed. Beirut, p. 61.11f., ed. Cairo, p. 163.13–15.

[19] *Ibid.*, ed. Beirut, p. 61f., ed. Cairo, p. 164.

[20] *Ibid.*, ed. Beirut, p. 62, ed. Cairo, p. 164f.

(*al-hādī ilā al-ḥaqā'iq*). He is the ''master of times'' (*ṣāḥib al-adwār*).[21]

Al-Rāzī's argument intends to explain the appearance of a prophet as well as prove the necessary existence of prophecy. Al-Rāzī argues that prophecy is possible and, further, that it must exist.[22] His proof is as follows: While perfection and imperfection are in themselves possible, both together are viewed as a necessary condition of humankind.[23] Perfection is divided into two categories, first, those perfect individuals who cannot make others perfect – the *awliyā'* – and secondly, those who can render others perfect, the prophets. The fact that humankind generally falls into two groups, ordinary people (*'awāmm*) and the elect (*ḫawāṣṣ*) regarding theoretical and practical wisdom is therefore proof for the existence of prophecy. Prophets are most perfect humans who combine the wisdom accessible to the *ḫawāṣṣ* with the capacity to convey it to the *'awāmm*.[24]

This argument implies an important assumption that is hidden in the first premise, namely that humans are capable of reaching theoretical and practical perfection without prophecy. This capacity is, of course, unequally distributed. But al-Rāzī assumes that at least some humans are able to distinguish rationally the genuine prophet from the impostor solely through the consideration of his message.[25] The second group of people (*awliyā'*) would surely be able to judge the prophet's veracity according to whether he calls to right or to

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[21] *Ibid.*, ed. Beirut, p. 63, ed. Cairo, p. 166f.

[22] It is not sufficient to say that al-Rāzī's argument is a ''necessary proof'' for the existence of prophecy as Abrahamov does in ''Religion *versus* philosophy'', pp. 420f. Necessity can be understood in at least two ways. First, regarding the epistemological status of the argument (*i.e.* being logically necessary, allowing no doubts) or, secondly, regarding the ontological status of what is proved to be necessary (*i.e.* existing necessarily, not being able not to exist). Al-Rāzī's argument claims necessity in both these two meanings.

[23] This is expressed in al-Rāzī's *muqaddima rābi'a* of his proof, *al-Maṭālib al-'āliya*, ed. Beirut, p. 62.3f., ed. Cairo, p. 164.20f.: ''Deprivation (*al-nuqṣān*) is common within humankind and may even encompass all of it. Except that there must be (*lā budda*) among them a perfect individual remote from deprivation. The argument (*dalīl*) for this is as follows [. . .]''.

[24] *Ibid.*, ed. Beirut, p. 62.5–9, ed. Cairo, pp. 164.23–165.4. This statement is apodictic: ''lā budda wa-an tūǧada ašḫāṣ kāmila fāḍila, wa-lā budda wa-an yūǧada fīmā baynahum šaḫs yakūnu akmalahum wa-afḍalahum.''

[25] In fact, al-Rāzī – just like Ibn Sīnā in the 3rd chapter of the 10th book of the *Metaphysics* in the *Šifā'* – lays down the elements of a successful prophetic message; *al-Maṭālib al-'āliya*, ed. Beirut, pp. 69–72, ed. Cairo, pp. 175–80.

wrong. This opens the possibility of verifying a prophet's message and distinguishing the true prophet from the impostor:

We say: First of all we know what is true (*ḥaqq*) and what is right (*ṣidq*) regarding the things we are convinced of (*al-i'tiqādāt*). And regarding the things that we do (*al-a'māl*), [we do know] what is right (*ṣawāb*). If we know this, and we then see a man who calls the people to the true religion, and we see that his message includes a strong incitement for people to change from falsehood to truth, then we know that he is a true prophet and that one has to follow him. And this method [to verify the claims of a prophet] is closer to reason (*'aql*), and there is less uncertainty in it.[26]

Al-Rāzī claims that this method of verifying the claims of a prophet falls together with the one of inference from moral conduct (*istidlāl bi-al-aḫlāq*) mentioned by some of the theologians of the classical period.[27] As mentioned above, this method is methodologically superior to proofs based on the reports of prophetic miracles since it does not involve reliance on other people's judgments or on *tawātur*.[28]

It can be shown that al-Rāzī's argument for the necessity of prophecy rests on the writings of Ibn Sīnā or those ascribed to

[26] Al-Rāzī, *al-Maṭālib al-'āliya*, ed. Beirut, p. 61.6–10, ed. Cairo, p. 163.7–12. I follow the text in the Cairo edition. Cf. al-Rāzī, *Ma'ālim uṣūl al-dīn*, p. 69. Cf. also the translation in Schmidtke, *Theology of al-'Allāma al-Ḥillī*, p. 151f.

[27] Al-Rāzī singles out al-Ǧāḥiz, *Muḥaṣṣal*, ed. Cairo, p. 208.12–14, ed. Teheran/ Beirut, 351.15f.

[28] This ''second method'' (*i.e.* the one not involving *tawātur*) is methodologically similar (*yaǧrā maǧrā . . .* and *min bāb . . .*) to a *demonstratio quare sive propter quid* (*burhān al-lima*; al-Rāzī, *al-Maṭālib al-'āliya*, ed. Beirut, p. 74, ed. Cairo, p. 184; *Ma'ālim uṣūl al-dīn*, p. 70.7ff.) The traditional way to prove prophecy through miracles is described as methodological similar to a *demonstratio quia* (*burhān al-inna*), which is according to al-Rāzī in strength inferior to the *burhān al-lima*. The two types of demonstration are distinguished by the status of the middle term. Both may have the same structure and may be formally identical, but in the case of a *burhān al-lima* the middle term is just a concept whose extramental existence is not proven. It therefore does not prove the extramental being of the object, but rather what kind of attributes it has if it exists. To prove, for instance, that a unicorn must be mortal would be a *burhān al-lima*. The *burhān al-inna* of al-Rāzī's terminology would argue for the existence of a thing from empirical evidence like – in this case – eyewitness reports. It is inferior because of the problem of *tawātur*. Al-Rāzī's ''second method'' is similar to a *burhān al-lima* since it proves the existence of prophecy through ''the why'' of prophecy (*al-lima*) and argues from there for its need and subsequently for its existence. Al-Rāzī concedes that he is unable to prove ''the that'' (*al-inna*) of prophecy with something resembling a *burhān al-inna*. No eyewitness report will give sufficient evidence for such a proof. On the distinction between the two kinds of demonstration cf. still Carl Prantl, *Geschichte der Logik im Abendlande*, 2nd ed., 3 vols. (Graz, 1885; reprint Darmstadt, 1957) vol. 2, pp. 324ff.

Ibn Sīnā. Al-Rāzī seems to have been impressed by the argument that an attribute must exist in perfection whenever it exists in deprivation. Al-Rāzī's method to verify the claims of a prophet through comparison with what is already known to be true and to be good is a result of his philosophical treatment of prophecy and is thus equally inspired by philosophical literature.

Ibn Sīnā developed two different arguments aiming to prove the necessity of prophecy. Proofs for the necessity of prophecy aim to demonstrate in an apodictical manner that prophecy must exist and that the world cannot be without it.[29] The first of these two arguments is from the psychological part of *al-Šifā'*. In this work, Ibn Sīnā presents a teleological argument based on God's attribute to choose the best for his creatures. Prophecy is necessary because humans are by nature beings that can only exist and survive through association with other humans. Their nature determines the formation of partnerships and these partnerships need legislation. The best legislation is ordained through prophecy to elected human beings. Before presenting this argument, Ibn Sīnā had already proven that God must necessarily act for the best of his creation. The equally proven possibility that prophecy exists becomes in light of this latter premise a necessity.[30]

This argument for the necessary existence of prophecy, however, seems to have had no impact on al-Rāzī. The premise that God must act for the best of his creation is, in fact, quite far-reaching and for an Ašʿarite difficult to swallow. But al-Rāzī seems to have been impressed by a second Avicennan argument for the necessity of prophecy that appears in a weak version in the psychological part of *al-Šifā'* and in a stronger version in one of the shorter writings of the Avicennan corpus, *Fī iṯbāt al-nubuwwāt*.[31] Al-Rāzī's main argument is that the

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[29] The two meanings of epistemological and ontological necessity are combined in this statement. Cf. note 22.

[30] Ibn Sīnā, *De anima* (= *Avicenna's De Anima*, ed. Fazlur Rahman [London, 1959]), pp. 171–8, 248–50; cf. al-Ġazālī's report of these passages in the next chapter.

[31] Herbert A. Davidson, *Alfarabi, Avicenna, and Averroes on Intellect. Their Cosmologies, Theories of the Active Intellect, and Theories of Human Intellect* (New York and Oxford, 1992), p. 87, note 56 disputes Ibn Sīnā's authorship of this text. Davidson's doubts are prompted by the text's references to *al-ʿaql al-kullī* and *al-nafs al-kulliyya* which do not tally with Ibn Sīnā's scheme of emanative things. The issue is, however, unresolved since scribal errors may be responsible for

intellectual weakness of some humans proves the necessary existence of at least one individual who possesses both theoretical and practical wisdom and who is able to convey it to those who lack such perfection. In al-Rāzī's *Maṭālib* the character of this statement is demonstrative.[32] But it can easily be objected that while such an individual may indeed exist, why does al-Rāzī think that he must exist? In the psychological part of *al-Šifā'*, Ibn Sīnā gives an argument in favor of the existence of an outstanding mind that is blessed with a wide-ranging as well as a quick capacity to find theoretical knowledge through intuition (*ḥads*). This argument is repeated in *al-Naǧāt*.[33] The faculty to come to theoretical knowledge intuitively through syllogisms is unequally distributed among humans. The fact that there are people who are extremely weak in this faculty leads to the conclusion that there is also the potential for an individual who has it in perfection.[34] Michael E. Marmura does not consider this passage to present a demonstrative proof for the existence of prophecy. He believes

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these inaccuracies. Because al-Ġazālī and al-Rāzī, for instance, may have accepted this text as a work by Ibn Sīnā, we will include *Fī iṯbāt al-nubuwwāt* and refer to it as an Avicennan text.

[32] Cf. *supra* footnotes 23 and 24.

[33] Ibn Sīnā, *al-Naǧāt*, ed. Muḥammad Ṣabrī al-Kurdī (Cairo, 1357/1938), p. 167.13–19.

[34] Ibn Sīnā, *De anima*, p. 249.11–18.: ''[The capacity to hit the middle term (*al-ḥadd al-awsaṭ*) in a syllogism] is one of those things that vary both in terms of quantity and quality. [...] Because these variations are not limited by a (fixed) border, but always subject to increase and decrease, and because these variations end on the decreasing side with somebody who does have no intuition (*ḥads*) at all, the variations must (*yaǧibu an*) also end at the increasing side with someone who has intuition in regard to all problems or at least most of them, and with someone whose intuition comes in the shortest time or at least quite a short time.'' This passage is also translated into English in Dimitri Gutas, *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition* (Leiden, 1988), p. 162 and into German and discussed in *id.*, ''Avicenna: De anima,'' in Kurt Flasch (ed.), *Interpretationen: Hauptwerke der Philosophie: Mittelalter* (Stuttgart, 1998), pp. 90–107, 97f. Much of the understanding of this passage rests on the passage ''the variations must end . . .'' (*fa-yaǧibu an yantahī . . .)* in the middle of the sentence. This sentence does not indicate logical necessity, but rather states the fact that the variation of humans being endowed with *ḥads* necessarily ranges from having no insight at all to having the perfect insight of a prophet. This does not mean that there are necessarily persons who have these kinds of insight. It just means that the possibility for the existence of these people exists in a necessary manner. When al-Ġazālī paraphrases this passage (cf. *infra* footnote 45) he rightfully replaces the ''yaǧibu an . . .'' with ''ǧāza an . . .'' (''it is possible that . . .'') thus making it clear that Ibn Sīnā here just states that prophecy is possible, not that it is necessary.

that in this passage Ibn Sīnā argues for the possible existence of such a mind and concludes that in the psychological part of *al-Šifā'* at least, Ibn Sīnā does not claim to give a proof for the necessary existence of a prophetic mind.[35] Al-Rāzī, however, does claim that the existence of the prophet is necessary and he might have read this somehow ambiguous passage to mean that it proves the necessary existence of a person with perfect *ḥads*.[36]

Al-Rāzī's argument may be better explained from one of the shorter Avicennan texts, *Fī iṯbāt al-nubuwwāt*. This text openly claims to demonstrate the necessary existence of the ''holy intellect'' (*al-ʿaql al-qudsī*) or ''angelic intellect'' (*al-ʿaql al-malakī*), i.e. the prophets' faculty to receive perfect theoretical knowledge without mediation. *Fī iṯbāt al-nubuwwāt* says that the capacity to find theoretical knowledge solely through intuition (*ḥads*) exists actually or potentially in many humans. If an attribute exists actually or potentially in a being, it must be an accident of this being. In order for an attribute to exist accidentally in one being, it must exist essentially in a different being. This being is the ''angelic intellect'' of the prophets, whose necessary existence is thus demonstrated.[37] The proof is deeply rooted in Avicennan ontology and in the distinction of beings into necessary and possible. It is, indeed, in its structure similar to Ibn Sīnā's proof for the existence of a ''necessary being by virtue of itself'' (*wāǧib al-wuǧūd*) – i.e. God – from the

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[35] Michael E. Marmura, ''Avicenna's psychological proof of prophecy,'' *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, 22 (1963): 49–56, p. 49, note 1. In his ''Avicenna: De anima'', pp. 94f. and in his *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition*, p. 162, note 36, Gutas points to the connection of this sentence in the *De anima* with the proof properly expounded in *Fī iṯbāt al-nubuwwāt* (cf. *infra*, note 37). Marmura says that Ibn Sīnā argued for the fact that the potential for prophecy exists in a necessary manner. This does not imply that prophecy itself exists necessarily. His analysis is supported by Ibn Sīnā's conclusion of the argument in *De anima*, p. 249.18f.: ''It is thus possible that there is a person amongst humans whose soul has been rendered so powerful through extreme purity and intense contact with intellectual principles that he blazes with *ḥads*.'' (Cf. the translation in Gutas, *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition*, p. 162.) Cf. also Ibn Sīnā, *al-Naǧāt*, p. 166.13–21 and Fazlur Rahman, *Prophecy in Islam* (London, 1958), p. 31.

[36] Abrahamov, ''Religion *versus* philosophy,'' p. 421, for instance, does not believe that al-Rāzī succeeds in his proof. He is, however, unaware of the Avicennan background.

[37] Ibn Sīnā (?), *Fī iṯbāt al-nubuwwāt* (*Proof of Prophecies*), ed. Michael E. Marmura, 2nd ed. (Beirut, 1991), pp. 42–5. This proof and its problems is discussed in Marmura ''Avicenna's psychological proof of prophecy,'' pp. 52–6.

existence of beings that are by themselves only contingent (*mumkin al-wuǧūd*), *i.e.* the world that surrounds us.[38]

Most elements of al-Rāzī's favored method to verify the claims of a prophet are inspired by those parts of the *Šifā'* where Ibn Sīnā gives further explanations of the prophets' office. These parts have no real argumentative role in the Avicennan proof for the existence of prophecy other than to illustrate that prophecy is nothing out of the ordinary and, in fact, quite within the reach of human understanding.[39] Ibn Sīnā teaches that the majority of humankind is incapable of grasping metaphysical truths like the one, for instance, that God is not located in space, or that he is neither inside nor outside of this world. The prophets' teachings should acknowledge this fact and lead the populace on a direct way to virtuous actions that does not aim at their theoretical perfection.[40] A true prophet can therefore be distinguished from a false one through his combination of the different characteristics of prophecy, mainly the acquisition of wisdom, the teaching of justice, and the union with the active intellect.[41] This includes the implicit assumption that at least some humans already know wisdom and justice before the prophets' revelations, and this knowledge puts them in a position to distinguish the true prophet from the impostor. For Ibn Sīnā – just like for al-Rāzī – the characteristics of prophecy and its aims were most perfectly accomplished by Muḥammad and by the law that he brought.[42]

II. AL-ĠAZĀLĪ'S CRITICISM OF THE *FALĀSIFA*'S DOCTRINE OF PROPHECY

Nowhere in his extant writings does al-Ġazālī refute Ibn Sīnā's demonstrative argument for the necessary existence of prophecy. He was aware of Ibn Sīnā's teleological argument from the

[38] Dimitri Gutas, ''Intuition and thinking: The evolving structure of Avicenna's epistemology,'' in Robert Wisnovsky (ed.), *Aspects of Avicenna* (Princeton, 2001), pp. 1–38, at pp. 29f.; *id*., ''Avicenna: De anima,'' p. 96; Marmura, ''Avicenna's psychological proof of prophecy,'' p. 53.

[39] *I.e.* meaning that prophecy is possible in logical terms and thus also a possible being.

[40] Ibn Sīnā, *al-Šifā', al-Ilāhiyyāt*, ed. Ibrāhīm Madkūr *et al.*, 2 vols. (Cairo, 1960) vol. 2, pp. 441–3. This passage is analyzed by Michael E. Marmura, ''Avicenna's theory of prophecy,'' pp. 169f.

[41] Ibn Sīnā, *al-Šifā', al-Ilāhiyyāt*, II, 455.13–17.

[42] *Ibid*., 450.7; Ibn Sīnā (?), *Fī iṯbāt al-nubuwwāt*, p. 47.

De anima of the *Šifāʾ*, which argues that God must choose the best for his creation. Al-Ġazālī reproduces a concise version of this argument at the very end of his *Maqāṣid al-falāsifa*.[43] The second argument from Ibn Sīnā's *De anima* in favor of the possible existence of the extraordinary theoretical capacities of a prophet also appears in the *Maqāṣid*.[44] More significantly, in his *Tahāfut al-falāsifa* al-Ġazālī reproduces this argument almost verbatim from Ibn Sīnā's *De anima*.[45] Al-Ġazālī does not mention the stronger version of this argument from the Avicennan text *Fī iṯbāt al-nubuwwāt*, which claims to proof the necessary existence of a human with a perfect theoretical faculty.

The *Tahāfut al-falāsifa* deals with the philosophers' views on prophecy in the introduction to the part on the natural sciences (*ṭabīʿiyyāt*) and in the preceding 16th discussion on the celestial souls – the last discussion in the part on metaphysics. In the introductory chapter to the natural sciences, al-Ġazālī gives an account of Ibn Sīnā's teachings on prophecy from the *De anima* of the *Šifāʾ*. The passage presents three elements of Ibn Sīnā's psychological teachings on prophecy. All three concern the distinct ways of how prophets receive their revelation and how they perform miracles.[46] First, al-Ġazālī reports that it is possible for prophets to receive imaginative revelation.[47] He gives a concise account of Ibn Sīnā's view that

[43] Al-Ġazālī, *Maqāṣid al-falāsifa*, ed. Muḥammad Ṣabrī al-Kurdī, 2nd ed. (Cairo, 1355/1936), part 3, p. 76.5–14. Divine providence (*ʿināya ilāhiyya*) necessitates the sending of prophets who teach humankind the benefits of this world and the next just as it necessitates sending rainfall for this world to prosper.

[44] *Ibid*., part 3, pp. 74.*ult*.–75.8.

[45] Al-Ġazālī, *Tahāfut al-falāsifa* (= Algazel, *Tahafot al-falasifat*, ed. Maurice Bouyges [Beirut, 1927]), p. 273.7–10. Significantly, the ''it must be that . . .'' (*yaǧibu an* . . .) of Ibn Sīnā's (*De anima*, p. 249.16) text is here replaced by ''it can be that . . .'' (*ǧāza an* . . .), making it clear that Ibn Sīnā does not argue for the necessary existence of an individual who has extraordinary *ḥads*, but just for the possible existence of him.

[46] Al-Ġazālī, *Tahāfut*, pp. 272–4. On Ibn Sīnā's three elementary parts of explaining prophecy cf. Dag N. Hasse, *Avicenna's De Anima in the West. The Formation of a Peripatetic Philosophy of the Soul 1160–1300* (London and Turin, 2000), pp. 154–6; Rahman, *Prophecy in Islam*, pp. 30–52, and Abdelali Elamrani-Jamal, ''De la multiplicité des modes de la prophétie chez Ibn Sīnā,'' in Jean Jolivet and Roshdi Rashed (eds.), *Études sur Avicenne* (Paris, 1984), pp. 125–42.

[47] ''Imaginative revelation'' is a term used by Fazlur Rahman in his *Prophecy in Islam*, pp. 36ff. It is maintained here in order to distinguish this way of revelation from ''intellectual revelation'' mentioned below.

prophets receive revelations as visions in their imaginative faculty (*quwwa mutaḫayyila*). Al-Ġazālī explains this in Ibn Sīnā's terminology. Prophets lack impeding forces that in the case of ordinary people suppress visions while they are awake and receive sense data. Therefore, prophets receive in their waking hours visions that ordinary people receive in their sleep.[48]

Secondly, al-Ġazālī reports Ibn Sīnā's teachings on intellectual revelation.[49] He gives an account of the view that prophets receive revelations as theoretical knowledge in the intellectual faculty of the prophets (*quwwa 'aqliyya naẓariyya*). Prophets have the power of intuition (*quwwat al-ḥads*) and have the capacity to immediately find the middle term of a syllogism. This capacity makes the prophets achieve perfect theoretical knowledge without instruction, solely through intuition (*ḥads*).[50]

Thirdly and finally, al-Ġazālī in this passage gives an account of Ibn Sīnā's view on the ability of prophets to perform miracles by virtue of an exceptionally powerful practical faculty of the soul (*quwwa nafsiyya 'amaliyya*). Since all souls have the capacity to effect physical changes in our own bodies, the extraordinary powers of the prophets' souls have the capacity to bring about changes in natural objects outside of their own bodies. Prophets have the capacity to cause storms, let rain fall, cause earthquakes, or cause people sink into the ground, but they are not capable of changing a piece of wood into an animal or of splitting the moon.[51]

The first two elements of Ibn Sīnā's explanation of prophecy, *i.e.* imaginative and intellectual revelation, pass through al-Ġazālī's *Tahāfut* without further comment or criticism. Only the *falāsifa*'s explanation of miracles is criticized by al-Ġazālī. First, he stresses that he does not reject their explanation and that he agrees with the *falāsifa* on the prophets' capacity to make other bodies do their bidding.[52] But al-Ġazālī objects that

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[48] Al-Ġazālī, *Tahāfut*, p. 72.10f., cf. Ibn Sīnā, *De anima*, p. 173.12.

[49] ''Intellectual revelation'' is also a term coined by Fazlur Rahman in *Prophecy in Islam*, pp. 30ff.

[50] Al-Ġazālī, *Tahāfut*, pp. 272.*ult.*–274.2; cf. Ibn Sīnā, *De anima*, pp. 248–50. On the foundation of Ibn Sīnā's theory of *ḥads* within the Aristotelian system of epistemology cf. Gutas, ''Avicenna: De anima,'' pp. 96–105.

[51] Al-Ġazālī, *Tahāfut*, pp. 274.3–275.11; cf. Ibn Sīnā, *De anima*, pp. 199–201.

[52] Al-Ġazālī, *Tahāfut*, p. 275.12f.

this capacity is limited to a change of some accidents within the bodies. Prophetic miracles, he argues, also include the change of essential qualities like in the transformation of a stick into a serpent.[53] Such miracles are implicitly denied by the *falāsifa*, and it is this denial which leads directly into the 17th discussion of the *Tahāfut* on causality.

The *Tahāfut*'s 17th discussion on causality may be initially caused by Ibn Sīnā's explanation of prophecy, it does, however, not touch on this issue. This is quite different in the case of the 16th discussion of the *Tahāfut*. The subject of this discussion is the *falāsifa*'s teachings on celestial beings, *i.e.* their position that the spheres are connected to intellects and their denial of the existence of an actual ''Preserved Tablet'' (*al-lawḥ al-maḥfūẓ*) in the heavens as it is mentioned in Qur'ān 85:22.[54] Here, al-Ġazālī first concedes that the *falāsifa*'s view on celestial beings having souls is indeed not impossible (*laysa muḥālan*).[55] Similarly, he implicitly concedes that the view of prophecy as knowledge being received from these celestial souls is possible.[56] His argument against these two views is epistemological; it denies the *falāsifa*'s claims to have real insight into these matters. He confronts their epistemological incapacity with the religious point of view based on the authority of revelation. While the interpreters of revelation have certain knowledge, the *falāsifa* only claim to have possible knowledge in these matters:

[53] This is the prophetic miracle that Moses performed in front of Pharao, cf. Qur'ān 7.107, 20.69, 26.45.

[54] According to al-Ġazālī, the *falāsifa* interpreted the *lawḥ maḥfūẓ* metaphorically and understood it as a reference to past and future events that the prophets see in their visions, ''the imaginative faculty (*quwwa mutaḫayyila*) [. . .] sees the Preserved Tablet, the forms of future particular events become imprinted in it'' (al-Ġazālī, *Tahāfut*, p. 273.8–10). Al-Ġazālī's own understanding of the *lawḥ maḥfūẓ* in his later writings like *al-Arbaʿīn fī uṣūl al-dīn* is, however, hardly different from the *falāsifa*'s position (cf. Richard M. Frank, *Creation and the Cosmic System* [Heidelberg, 1992], p. 45).

[55] Al-Ġazālī, *Tahāfut*, p. 255.17.

[56] According to Ibn Sīnā, the source of prophetic visions must be one of the celestial souls (*nufūs samāwiyya*) which are attached to celestial bodies, the spheres of the planets. These souls have knowledge of the unknown (*al-ġayb*). The source of imaginative visions requires a bodily organ and this excludes the celestial intellects and the necessary existent being (*wāǧib al-wuǧūd*) itself as the source of the visions. (Ibn Sīnā, *al-Šifāʾ*, *al-Ilāhiyyāt*, II, 437f.) In al-Ġazālī's report of the *falāsifa*'s teachings the source of prophetic visions is called ''the angel'' (*al-malak*); al-Ġazālī, *Maqāṣid al-falāsifa*, part 3, pp. 75f.

There is no need for any of the things you [*falāsifa*] have mentioned, for there is no proof (*dalīl*) in this.[57] Nor do you have a proof [for your interpretation] of what the religious law conveys regarding 'the Tablet' and 'the Pen.' For the people versed in the law (*ahl al-šar*') do not understand by 'the Tablet' and 'the Pen' the meaning [you have given to these terms] at all. Consequently, there is nothing for you to cling to [your interpretation] in the religious law.[58]

Al-Ġazālī clearly understands that Ibn Sīnā in his *De anima* does not claim to demonstrate that prophets receive revelation on the two ways outlined, *i.e.* on the way of imaginative and intellectual revelation. These are arguments for the possibility of prophecy and not proofs for its existence.[59] The statements on prophecy in the psychological part of *al-Šifā'* were understood as explanations of how prophecy must occur, if it occurs. Al-Ġazālī points out that even the *falāsifa*'s teachings that revelation is received as a result of a connection between celestial beings and the prophets' souls are purely explanatory and not demonstrative.[60]

Al-Ġazālī's subsequent criticism is based entirely on the *falāsifa*'s inability to prove that revelation is received from the celestial souls. If not proven, these teachings are rendered false by the text of the Qur'ān. Here, he implicitly applies his ''law of interpretation'' (*qānūn al-ta'wīl*), as he calls it in his later works. The text of the divine revelation may only be subject to allegorical interpretation (*ta'wīl*) and therefore understood to have an inner meaning (*bāṭin*), if the validity of its literal meaning (*ẓāhir*) is contradicted through a demonstrative proof

[57] The usage of the word *dalīl*, ''any kind of argument,'' instead of the stronger *burhān*, ''demonstrative argument,'' *a fortiori* stresses al-Ġazālī's claim that the *falāsifa* are unable to prove their claims.

[58] Al-Ġazālī, *Tahāfut*, p. 261.2–5, cf. the English translation by Michael E. Marmura in *The Incoherence of the Philosophers/Tahāfut al-falāsifa*, a parallel English-Arabic text, translated, introduced, and annotated by M.E. Marmura (Provo, 1997), p. 160.

[59] Cf. Marmura's notes to his translation of al-Ġazālī's *Tahāfut al-falāsifa*, p. 241, note 6; his ''Avicenna's psychological proof of prophecy,'' p. 49, note 1; and his ''Avicenna's theory of prophecy,'' p. 167.

[60] From what he says in his *Metaphysics*, Ibn Sīnā leaves no other possibility than that the source of prophetic visions can only be the celestial souls (cf. *supra*, footnote 56). In his most explicit treatment of prophetic visions in the psychological part of *al-Šifā'*, Ibn Sīnā leaves open from where the prophets' faculty of imagination receives the visions that make up prophecy. The visions formed in the prophets' imaginative faculty are here described as resulting from a connection ''between the unknown (*ġayb*), between the soul, and between the inner faculty of imagination.'' (Ibn Sīnā, *De anima*, p. 178.1f.)

(*burhān*).⁶¹ Both revelation and demonstration must lead to the same conclusions. If Muslims like the *falāsifa* try to alter one source of truth, *i.e.* revelation, with the support of arguments that are based on some kind of reasoning, but not on demonstrative reason (*burhān*), their interpretations must be rejected. This applies to the *falāsifa*'s view that the prophets receive their knowledge from the celestial intellects and not directly from God:

> With what [argument] would you deny someone who says that the Prophet knows the hidden through God's apprising him of it by way of [direct] initiation (*ibtidā'*)?⁶²

It follows that the *falāsifa*'s teachings on the involvement of celestial souls in the process of revelation are arbitrary in terms of the philosophical discourse (*mutaḥakkam*). These teachings are false in religious discourse, since they contradict the outward meaning (*ẓāhir*) of the revealed text. The Qur'ān teaches direct revelation from God to his prophets.

Al-Ġazālī's second book of refutation (*radd*), the *Faḍā'iḥ al-bāṭiniyya wa-faḍā'il al-mustaẓhiriyya* contains a much more rigorous condemnation of the *falāsifa*'s views on prophecy. The *Mustaẓhirī* – as this book became known – is a refutation (*radd*) of the contemporary Ismāʿīlī *daʿwa*, who here are pejoratively called ''Bāṭinites'' (those who arbitrarily follow an assumed inner meaning (*bāṭin*) of revelation). The reason why al-Ġazālī discusses philosophical views on prophecy in this book lies in his assumption that the Ismāʿīlī movement and the philosophical movement agree on certain issues. Early on in the book al-Ġazālī expresses his understanding that the Ismāʿīlī views on prophecy which were reported to him are ''close to the teachings of the *falāsifa*,''⁶³ and ''with some distortion and change extracted from the teachings of the

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⁶¹ On this rule cf. my *Apostasie und Toleranz. Die Entwicklung zu al-Ġazālīs Urteil gegen die Philosophie und die Reaktionen der Philosophen* (Leiden, 2000), pp. 304–19, 333–5, 432f., and 466f., or Marmura, ''Avicenna's theory of prophecy,'' p. 177, or his ''Al-Ġazali on bodily resurrection and causality in Tahafut and The Iqtisad,'' *Aligarh Journal of Islamic Thought*, 2 (1989): 46–75, 49.

⁶² Al-Ġazālī, *Tahāfut*, pp. 260f. Cf. the English translation by M. Marmura, p. 159.

⁶³ ''wa-al-manqūl ʿanhum qarīb min maḏhab al-falāsifa'' (al-Ġazālī, *Faḍā'iḥ al-bāṭiniyya wa-faḍā'il al-mustaẓhiriyya*, ed. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Badawī [Cairo, 1383/1964], p. 40.18f.).

falāsifa.''[64] The lack of reliable (written) information on the Ismāʿīlī teachings may have led him to discuss the more readily accessible views of the *falāsifa* instead and assume a certain congruity between the two.

Like in the *Tahāfut al-falāsifa*, al-Ġazālī here also distinguishes between several elements of the *falāsifa*'s views and never explicitly condemns all of them.[65] Here, in the *Mustaẓhirī*, al-Ġazālī is concerned with the socio-political aspects of the *falāsifa*'s teachings on prophecy. The eighth chapter of this book is devoted to a legal examination of the Ismāʿīlīs' teachings.[66] The question discussed here is whether the different elements of the Ismāʿīlīs' *daʿwa* are from the Muslim jurist's point of view error (*ḫaṭāʾ*), innovation (*bidʿa*), or unbelief (*kufr*). According to al-Ġazālī's criteria for tolerated and non-tolerated views, the first two categories of error and innovation present no serious problem. These views are false, but give no reason to act for the authorities. Unbelief, however, is for al-Ġazālī a serious legal offense that the apparatus of state prosecution has to tackle.[67]

Elements of the *falāsifa*'s views on prophecy fall under the category of unbelief (*kufr*). In a lengthy passage in the eighth chapter of the *Mustaẓhirī*, al-Ġazālī provides a report of ''the Bāṭinites''' teachings on prophecy. A closer examination of the passage, however, reveals that al-Ġazālī draws entirely on the teachings of Ibn Sīnā, taken mostly from *al-Šifāʾ* and from smaller books on the afterlife.[68] Al-Ġazālī concedes in a first

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[64] ''fa-hāḏihī al-maḏāhib ayḍan mustaḫraǧa min maḏāhib al-falāsifa fī al-nubuwwāt maʿa taḥrīf wa-taġyīr'' (*ibid.*, p. 42.3).

[65] On the strategy of al-Ġazālī's criticism in the *Tahāfut* cf. my ''Taqlīd of the philosophers: Al-Ghazali's initial accusation in the *Tahāfut*,'' in Sebastian Günther (ed.), *Insights into Arabic Literature and Islam. Ideas, Concepts, Modes of Portrayal* (Leiden, forthcoming).

[66] Al-Ġazālī, *Faḍāʾiḥ al-bāṭiniyya*, pp. 146–68. This chapter is selectively translated in McCarthy, *Freedom and Fulfillment*, pp. 226–34; and Ignaz Goldziher, *Streitschrift des Ġazālī gegen die Bāṭinīya-Sekte* (Leiden, 1916), pp. 51–4, 71–3. Cf. also Henri Laoust, *La politique de Ġazālī* (Paris, 1970), pp. 356–9.

[67] Cf. my *Apostasie und Toleranz*, pp. 282–91 and my ''Toleration and exclusion: al-Shāfiʿī and al-Ghazālī on the treatment of apostates,'' *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 64 (2001): 339–54.

[68] Al-Ġazālī, *Faḍāʾiḥ al-bāṭiniyya*, pp. 151–5. I have dealt with this passage in my *Apostasie und Toleranz*, pp. 293–303. On the Avicennan writings on the afterlife that al-Ġazālī draws on cf. Jean R. Michot, *La destinée de l'homme selon Avicenne. Le retour à Dieu (maʿād) et l'imagination* (Leuven, 1986), pp. 49–54, 190–8. There is a second smaller passage earlier in the *Mustaẓhirī* that also criticizes the Ismāʿīlīs' views on prophecy. It is within the fourth chapter on the exposition

step that these views do not explicitly violate any central element of the Muslim creed. Those who adhere to these views profess God's unity and deny polytheism, and when it comes to certain details of the religious law they interpret them without explicitly denying them. Their interpretation (*ta'wīl*) acknowledges the validity of the religious law (*šar'*) in principle.

A closer look into their teachings, however, reveals that they implicitly deny important elements of the religious law. One doctrine they deny is bodily resurrection in the afterlife.[69] Already in the *Tahāfut* this point led to the condemnation of the *falāsifa* as unbelievers.[70] Here in the *Mustaẓhirī*, al-Ġazālī approaches the *falāsifa*'s teaching from a broader angle. The group criticized in this passage of the *Mustaẓhirī*, hold, al-Ġazālī reports, that the symbolic character of the revelation is to the benefit (*maṣlaḥa*) of the ordinary people (*'awāmm*).[71] Revelation on the other hand teaches close to nothing to those who achieve knowledge through demonstration (*burhān*). Since the intellectual capacities of the ordinary people are too weak to understand the hidden things, God – according to this group that we identify with the *falāsifa* – created prophecy, which teaches these matters in a metaphorical language using rhetorical and poetical means of representation.

After a lengthy discussion in which he indicates his hesitation, al-Ġazālī finally condemns this approach towards prophecy on the grounds that it includes the implicit assumption that the prophets' message is beneficial but not the whole truth.[72] Since truth is, however, the most important claim of the prophets' message, these (*i.e.* the *falāsifa*'s) views of prophecy include an implicit accusation of lying. The accusation to lie or not to tell the truth (*takdīb*) is the opposite of belief (*taṣdīq*), *i.e.* belief in the prophets veracity and the truth of their mission. The *falāsifa*'s interpretation of the socio-political

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of the Ismā'īlī doctrines (*Faḍā'iḥ al-bāṭiniyya*, pp. 40–2) and it reports the teachings on prophecy as a process of emanation from the celestial souls. Al-Ġazālī here refers the reader to his earlier criticism of these teachings in the *Tahāfut* (*Faḍā'iḥ al-bāṭiniyya*, p. 42.5).

[69] Al-Ġazālī, *Faḍā'iḥ al-bāṭiniyya*, p. 152.

[70] Al-Ġazālī, *Tahāfut*, p. 376.

[71] Al-Ġazālī, *Faḍā'iḥ al-bāṭiniyya*, p. 153.1f. On the respective teachings of the *falāsifa* cf., for instance, Rahman, *Prophecy in Islam*, pp. 52–64.

[72] Al-Ġazālī, *Faḍā'iḥ al-bāṭiniyya*, p. 153.16ff.

role of prophecy in society is tantamount to unbelief (*kufr*) and apostasy from Islam.[73]

III. AL-ĠAZĀLĪ'S PHILOSOPHICAL APPROACH TO PROPHECY IN HIS *FAYṢAL AL-TAFRIQA*

Al-Ġazālī develops his own explanation of prophecy in the context of an elaborate argument on the distinction between interpretations of the Muslim revelation that are allowed and tolerated in Islam and those that are not allowed and considered clandestine apostasy (*zandaqa*). Al-Ġazālī expounds this argument in the first six chapters of the *Fayṣal al-tafriqa bayna al-Islām wa-al-zandaqa*. The *Fayṣal* was written late in al-Ġazālī's life between 491/1098 and 503/1109.[74] The work deals with the criteria of membership in the Islamic community and thus serves as the background for understanding al-Ġazālī's condemnation of the *falāsifa* and the Bāṭinites earlier in his life.[75] The book begins, however, with an apology. Al-Ġazālī states in an address to an unknown student that he himself has been accused of unbelief because of his teachings. He reminds

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[73] The same condemnation is expressed in al-Ġazālī's *al-Iqtiṣād fī al-i'tiqād*, ed. Hüseyn Atay and Ibrahim Agâh Çubukçu (Ankara, 1962), p. 249.6–9 and is the small work *Mi'rāǧ al-sālikīn* (the latter is analyzed in Rahman, *Prophecy in Islam*, pp. 98f.)

[74] On the dating of the *Fayṣal* cf. my introduction to the German translation of the *Fayṣal*, *Über Rechtgläubigkeit und religiöse Toleranz. Eine Übersetzung der Schrift Das Kriterium in der Unterscheidung zwischen Islam und Gottlosigkeit* (Zürich, 1998), pp. 43–5 and Maurice Bouyges, *Essai de chronologie des œuvres de al-Ġazali* (*Algazel*), ed. Michel Allard (Beirut, 1959), pp. 46f. The *Fayṣal* is a genuine work of al-Ġazālī. It is mentioned by al-Ġazālī in his *al-Munqiḏ min al-ḍalāl*, p. 24, and in his *al-Mustaṣfā min 'ilm al-uṣūl*, I, 185.

[75] Cf. my *Apostasie und Toleranz im Islam*, pp. 304–35. For further literature on the *Fayṣal* cf. Frank, *Al-Ghazālī and the Ash'arite School*, pp. 76–80; Anke von Kügelgen, *Averroes und die arabische Moderne. Ansätze zu einer Neubegründung des Rationalismus im Islam* (Leiden, 1994), pp. 343–9; Iysa A. Bello, *The Medieval Islamic Controversy Between Philosophy and Orthodoxy. Ijmā' and Ta'wīl in the Conflict Between al-Ghazālī and Ibn Rushd* (Leiden, 1989), pp. 53–65; Hava Lazarus-Yafeh, *Studies in Al-Ghazzali* (Jerusalem, 1975), p. 37; Laoust, *La politique de Ghazali*, pp. 350–6; Hans-Joachim Runge, *Über Ġazâlî's Faiṣal-al-tafriqa baina-l-islâm wa-l-zandaqa. Untersuchung über die Unterscheidung von Islâm und Ketzerei*, Dissertation Kiel, 1938. This last publication contains a German translation. The text has also been translated into Spanish by Miguel Asin Palacios, *El justo medio en la creencia: Compendio de teología dogmática de Algazel* (Madrid, 1929), pp. 499–540, into French by Farid Jabre in his *La notion de certitude selon Ghazali* (Paris, 1958), pp. 406–35 and into English by McCarthy in *Freedom and Fulfillment*, pp. 125–49. Cf. also my German translation *Über Rechtgläubigkeit und religiöse Toleranz*.

his student that there are few scholars who have a clear understanding of the criteria for unbelief (*kufr*) in Islam. Many accuse their theological opponents of *kufr* even if they disagree only in minor points. In order to understand the nature of unbelief, one should first draw attention to its definition.

Michael E. Marmura pointed out that while the classical Ašʿarites view prophecy from the perspective of God's attributes, the *falāsifa* analyze prophecy from the prophet's perspective or that of those who are addressed.[76] Such a shift in perspective from an Ašʿarite towards a philosophical attitude occurs in the second chapter of the *Fayṣal*. Here, al-Ġazālī defines unbelief as the implicit or explicit accusation against Muḥammad not telling the truth.

I say, unbelief is the assumption the messenger – peace and prayer be upon him – utters falsehood in anything that comes with him.[77]

Belief, al-Ġazālī continues, is to acknowledge the truth (*taṣdīq*) of everything that comes from Muḥammad.

Al-Ġazālī's two definitions of belief and unbelief rely on the opposition between *taṣdīq* and *takdīb*. Both terms cannot be easily translated into English. *Taṣdīq* originally means to assume that a person is *ṣādiq* or has *ṣidq*. In order to be *ṣādiq* someone must fulfill two conditions not combined in any English word. A person who is *ṣādiq* is first of all trustworthy, *i.e.* the person reports information to the best of his or her knowledge and does not lie. Secondly, the information that a person, who is *ṣādiq*, conveys is true.[78] *Taṣdīq* is both the acceptance of the claim for truthfulness of the messenger and the truth of the message. This claim is lost if the person violates only one of these two conditions. *Takdīb*, the assumption that

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[76] Marmura, ''Avicenna's theory of prophecy,'' pp. 161, 169, 174.

[77] Al-Ġazālī, *Fayṣal al-tafriqa bayna al-Islām wa-al-zandaqa*, ed. Sulaymān Dunyā (Cairo, 1381/1961), pp. 134.7f. References to the text of the *Fayṣal* are according to the most widespread edition by S. Dunyā. The text of this edition is, however, only of poor quality. It has been checked and if necessary amended with Muṣṭafā al-Qabbānī's edition (Cairo, 1319/1901), with Maḥmūd Bīǧū's (Damascus, 1413/1993), and with the MSS Berlin, We 1806 and Istanbul, Shehit Ali Pasha 1712.

[78] On *ṣidq* cf. al-Ġazālī, *Iḥyā' 'ulūm al-dīn*, 4 vols. (Cairo, 1346 [1927–28]) vol. 4, pp. 331f. (XXXVII, 3, 1). It is possible that a person is sincere and truthful in a report that he or she gives, but nevertheless reports things that are not true. On *taṣdīq* as the definition of faith in Islam cf. Wilfried Cantwell Smith, ''Faith as Taṣdīq,'' in Parviz Morewedge (ed.), *Islamic Philosophical Theology* (Albany, 1979), pp. 96–119 and van Ess, *Die Erkenntnislehre*, pp. 70f.

someone has lost his or her *ṣidq*, occurs if either the message that the person conveys turns out to be false, or if it turns out that the messenger did not report it to the best of his or her knowledge. The *falāsifa*'s views of prophecy, for instance, include the assumption that the prophetic message is true, but only in a metaphorical sense in order to serve for the benefit (*maṣlaḥa*) of society. Despite the *falāsifa*'s acknowledgment that the prophets' message is true, the *falāsifa*'s assumption raises the question of whether the prophet has conveyed his message to the best of his knowledge. For al-Ġazālī, such a view translates into *takḏīb al-nabīy*, the accusation that the prophet has not told the truth or was not truthful, and is considered unbelief.

Both *taṣdīq* and *takḏīb* as definitions for faith/belief (*īmān*) and unbelief (*kufr*) have a long tradition in Islamic theology that cannot be dealt with here.[79] In all these discussions, however, God is the object of the believer's *taṣdīq*. Belief, according to the classical Aš'arite definition is ''taṣdīq bi-Allāh'', *i.e.* to accept the truthfulness of God and the truth of his message.[80] Unbelief is according to the Aš'arite definition ''takḏīb bi-Allāh'', *i.e.* to believe that God is either not truthful or that his message is not true.[81] Both these definitions appear in the writings of al-Ġazālī's teacher al-Ǧuwaynī and those of al-Ġazālī's colleagues as students of the Niẓāmiyya in Nishapur.[82]

The change of perspective in al-Ġazālī's approach to prophecy occurs when he defines belief as ''taṣdīq al-rasūl'' and unbelief as ''takḏīb al-rasūl''. The discussion of the assumed *ṣidq* or *kiḏb* that forms the basis of belief or unbelief shifts from the transcendental sphere of God to the human sphere of the

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[79] Cf. my *Apostasy und Toleranz*, index; Richard M. Frank, ''Knowledge and taqlīd. The foundation of religious belief in classical Ash'arism,'' *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 109 (1989): 37–62; van Ess, *Die Erkenntnislehre*, pp. 95ff.

[80] Al-Aš'arī: *Kitāb al-Luma'* (= *The Theology of al-Ash'arī. The Arabic Texts of al-Ash'arī's Kitāb al-Luma' and Risālat Istiḥsān al-khawḍ fī 'ilm al-kalām*, ed. R.J. McCarthy [Beirut, 1953]), § 180. On the early Aš'arite concept of belief as *taṣdīq bi-Allāh* or *li-Allāh* cf. Frank, ''Knowledge and taqlīd,'' pp. 40ff. and Gimaret, *La doctrine d'al-Ash'arī*, pp. 472–4.

[81] Al-Bāqillānī, *Kitāb al-Tamhīd*, ed Richard J. McCarthy (Beirut, 1957), p. 348.

[82] Al-Ǧuwaynī, *al-Iršād*, p. 397.1–2; Abū al-Qāsim al-Anṣārī (d. 511 or 512/1117–19) *al-Ġunya fī al-kalām*, MS Istanbul, Ahmet III 1916, fols. 228*a*f.; al-Kiyā al-Harrāsī (d. 504/1110) *Uṣūl al-dīn*, MS Cairo, Dār al-Kutub, *kalām* 290, fols. 241*b*f. is unspecific on the object of *taṣdīq*, but defines *kufr* as *takḏīb bi-Allāh*.

prophet. Only this transformation allows al-Ġazālī to develop an elaborate system to verify the *ṣidq* of the Islamic message and of its messenger. In the following I will try to explain this system. It relies on the congruency between mental representations of a person and his utterances. Divine transcendence forbids the application of such a verification to God. Applying criteria to verify whether a nominal Muslim holds *taṣdīq* or *takḏīb* in respect to Muḥammad, however, leads to the development of a psychological explanation of prophecy.

Al-Ġazālī's change of the definition of belief is clearly influenced by peripatetic philosophy. Here, al-Ġazālī is inspired by the peripatetic usage of the word *taṣdīq* in the distinction of all knowledge into *taṣdīq* and *taṣawwur*.[83] *Taṣdīq* is an equivocal word and in the logical works of the Arabic peripatetic tradition it refers to propositional knowledge as opposed to knowledge that is expressed in only one word. In addition to the usage in this *taṣawwur-taṣdīq* distinction, which goes back to authors like al-Fārābī, Ibn Sīnā also uses *taṣdīq* to denote the act of assent to a proposition and speaks in at least one passage of different degrees of assent (*taṣdīq*) that can apply both to concepts and to propositions.[84] It is this last usage of Ibn Sīnā that has influenced al-Ġazālī.[85] In the next step

[83] Van Ess, *Die Erkenntnislehre*, pp. 95ff., 110f.; Deborah L. Black, *Logic and Aristotle's Rhetoric and Poetics in Medieval Arabic Philosophy* (Leiden, 1990), p. 71; Renate Würsch, *Avicennas Bearbeitung der aristotelischen Rhetorik: ein Beitrag zum Fortleben antiken Bildungsgutes in der islamischen Welt* (Berlin, 1991), pp. 22, 24; Harry A. Wolfson, ''The terms taṣawwur and taṣdīq in Arabic philosophy and their Greek, Latin and Hebrew equivalents,'' *The Moslim World*, 33 (1943): 114–28; Elamrani-Jamal, ''De la multiplicité des modes de la prophétie chez Ibn Sīnā,'' pp. 126ff.

[84] On this second meaning of *taṣdīq* in Ibn Sīnā's logical works cf. his *Second Analytics* (= *al-Šifā'*, *al-Manṭiq*, *al-Burhān*, ed. Ibrāhīm Madkūr and Abū al-ʿAlā ʿAfīfī [Cairo, 1375/1956]), pp. 51.8–52.2 which distinguishes the strength of *taṣdīq* according to the means of persuasion (*iqnāʿ*) that support the proposition. The word ''taṣdīq'' is strictly speaking equivocal in three meanings: (1) belief, (2) propositional knowledge, and (3) the truth judgment that supports the proposition (*taṣdīq*) itself. In this last meaning the word *taṣdīq* also applies to *taṣawwur* (non-propositional knowledge). This is expressed in Ibn Sīnā's *al-Naǧāt*, p. 60.13f., where he says that ''it is possible that there is a *taṣawwur* without *taṣdīq* like, for instance, in the case that someone imagines (*yataṣawwaru*) the words of another man who says that an empty room exists and he (*scil.* the first man) does not consider it true (*wa-lā yuṣaddiqu bihi*).'' (On this cf. van Ess, *Die Erkenntnislehre*, p. 100.)

[85] Cf. al-Ġazālī's treatment of the several equivocations of *taṣdīq* in his *al-Iqtiṣād fī al-iʿtiqād*, p. 225.11–15 where different degrees of *taṣdīq* are mentioned. For a more thorough discussion of the different meanings of *taṣdīq*

al-Ġazālī limits assent to propositions: In order to be verified, *taṣdīq* and *takḏīb* must apply to a proposition rather than to a person.[86] He means that the proposition must be compared to its own object, *i.e.* the ''beings'' that correspond to the propositions contained in the revelation.[87]

In the third chapter of the *Fayṣal* al-Ġazālī explains the meaning of both *taṣdīq* and *takḏīb*. In order to verify the faith or belief (*taṣdīq*) of a Muslim one cannot simply ask whether he affirms the truth of the whole book of revelation. The faith of a believer can be verified only through an inquiry into whether he affirms (*ṣaddaqa*) the ''objects'' of the revelation. Al-Ġazālī analyzes what it means to affirm a proposition. All this is stated in a very dense and short passage, and it is striking that al-Ġazālī does not expound his underlying ideas of *taṣdīq*, neither does he refer to a book where he has done so. The essence of his teaching is presented in two sentences that immediately follow each other:

fa-aqūlu al-taṣdīqu innamā yataṭarraqu ilā al-ḫabar bal ilā al-muḫbar.[88] I say that *taṣdīq* has to apply only to the proposition, indeed to the object [of the proposition].

In the next sentence al-Ġazālī gives an explanation of the meaning of *taṣdīq*:

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and how they are used by al-Ġazālī in his *Fayṣal* cf. my introduction to *Über Rechtgläubigkeit und religiöse Toleranz*, pp. 34–6.

[86] Al-Ġazālī has an interesting technique to nonchalantly weave important premises of his later arguments or assumptions of his views into early passages of his writings. Equally here, where in the first chapter he already defines *taṣdīq* and *takḏīb* as applying only to propositions. During a passage where he discusses the three books of revelation (Torah, Gospel, and Qur'ān) and their character as propositions (*ḫabar*), he reminds his readers that these books also contain imperatives and prohibitions and says, ''These three [books of revelation] are different in their essences (*ḥaqā'iq*). How could it be otherwise, since the definition of a proposition (*ḫabar*) is: 'That which is subject to affirmation and negation (*taṣdīq* and *takḏīb*).' These two, however, can not be applied to an imperative and not to a prohibition. But how is it possible that one thing is subject to *taṣdīq* and *takḏīb* and at the same time it is not? And how can the negation and the affirmation to one thing be united?'' (*Fayṣal*, p. 132.6–9). The fact that the books of revelation contain different imperatives and prohibitions leads to the conclusion that only the propositions they contain can be compared in term of their truth-claims.

[87] Cf. Ibn Sīnā's definition of *taṣdīq* in his *al-Šifā'*, *al-Manṭiq*, *al-Madḫal*, ed. Ibrāhīm Madkūr *et al.* (Cairo, 1953), p. 17.16f. ''*Taṣdīq* is when there comes about in the mind a connection between this picture (or form) and the things themselves in the way that the picture is correlating (*muṭābiq*) to the things.''

[88] Al-Ġazālī, *Fayṣal*, p. 175.15f.

ḥaqīqatuhu al-i'tirāfu bi-wuǧūdi mā aḫbara al-rasūlu [...] 'an wuǧūdihi.[89]

The essential meaning [of *taṣdīq*] is to accept the being of that thing whose existence the Prophet [...] reports of.

This last sentence is confusing due to the double appearance of *wuǧūd*, "being" or "existence." This word has been used before within Muslim theology and within the Aš'arite school, mostly, however, as the *nomen regens* in genitive constructions in the sense of "the existence of something or of someone." This is how al-Ġazālī employs it in the second appearance within this sentence, *aḫbara 'an wuǧūdihi*. Here the *nomen rectum* of the genitive construction is represented by the possessive pronoun *–hu* which stands in for the earlier appearance of *wuǧūd* within this sentence. In this first appearance, *wuǧūd* refers more abstractly to a given being or an entity. This latter usage of *wuǧūd*, in the following translated as "being", is known from other of al-Ġazālī's writings.[90] What is reported of, is therefore the *wuǧūd al-wuǧūd*, the "existence of the being."

The sentence starts with the assumption that the Prophet both in the revelation and in the *ḥadīṯ* reports of *wuǧūd*, of being. Both *ḥadīṯ* and Qur'ān are the kind of proposition (*ḫabar*) whose object (*al-muḫbar* in the sense of *al-muḫbar 'anhu*)[91] is mentioned in the first sentence. *Taṣdīq* for al-Ġazālī means to acknowledge or to accept that such objects of the Prophet's propositions exist. An explanation of the next step in al-Ġazālī's text will give a better understanding of what he means by the "acknowledgment of being" (*al-i'tirāf bi-wuǧūd*).

What now follows is a categorization of all "being" (*wuǧūd*) that the Prophet reports of into five categories. It is clear that these five categories of being are understood to be the objects of propositions. Al-Ġazālī here applies a theory of representation in which a proposition contains elements of language that represent objects of the outside world. On this occasion "outside" means outside of language. Such an object outside of

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[89] *Ibid.*, p. 175.17.

[90] Cf., for instance, al-Ġazālī, *Mi'yār al-'ilm*, ed. Sulaymān Dunyā (Cairo, 1961), pp. 76.7f., 330.1ff., 383.1ff.; *id.*, *Ilǧām al-'awāmm 'an 'ilm al-kalām*, ed. Muḥammad M. al-Baġdādī (Beirut, 1406/1985), pp. 107f. and *id.*, *Iḥyā' 'ulūm al-dīn*, II, 18.11. (XXI, 9,1) or IV, 218.2 (XXXV.2). This usage seems to be inspired by philosophical literature.

[91] Cf. Ibn Sīnā's usage of *al-muḫbar 'anhu* in *al-Šifā'*, *al-Ilāhiyyāt*, I, 34.7.

the proposition is considered a ''*muḫbar*'' in the first sentence
quoted above and a ''*wuǧūd*'' in the second. Such a theory of
representation applies to all propositions, and therefore also
applies to propositions within the Qur'ān and the *ḥadīṯ* corpus.
Although al-Ġazālī does not give an example at this stage of his
text, an illustration may be taken from Sura 12, the Sura of
Yūsuf. When the Qur'ān, for instance, reports the fact that
Yūsuf had been thrown into a well from which he is picked up
by slavetraders who sell him to Egypt (Qur'ān 12.15–20), all the
elements of this report like Yūsuf, the well, the slavetraders,
and Egypt are considered ''*wuǧūd*'', being. Each of these
elements are beings that Muḥammad reports of, *i.e.* the *muḫbar*
of the first above sentence. To believe in this report, and
thus to believe in the Qur'ān and in the truthfulness of the
messenger, means to acknowledge that Yūsuf, the well, the
slavetraders, and Egypt did indeed exist. This is ''to accept
the being of that thing whose existence the Prophet reports of.''
The believer who trusts the veracity of the report affirms these
objects and the reported facts, *i.e.* he affirms the relationship
that these objects have to one another just as they are reported.
For al-Ġazālī, faith in the Prophet and his revelation is exactly
this acknowledgment.

In his categorization of ''being'' into five degrees, all the
elements mentioned in this passage from Sura 12 belong to one
category of being. This is the ''real being'' (*al-wuǧūd al-ḏātī*)
that comprises all objects of the outside world. Outside here,
means outside of the human mind. Al-Ġazālī writes:

The real being is the true and firm being (*al-wuǧūd al-ḥaqīqī al-ṯābit*)
which is outside of sense perception and the intellect. But sense
perception and the intellect take an image (or: form, *ṣūra*) of it, and this
is called perception (*idrāk*). This is like the being of the heavens or the
earth, the animals, plants, and this is evident (or: outwardly, *ẓāhir*). And
it is known that most people do not know any being that is different.[92]

For al-Ġazālī there are four other kinds of being, and all these
kinds are beings within the mind of a person, or more specifi-
cally, beings within the mind of the Prophet. The four oblique
degrees of beings are as follows:

– Second degree of being, the sensible being (*al-wuǧūd al-
ḥissī*): From the examples that al-Ġazālī gives in his distinction

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[92] Al-Ġazālī, *Fayṣal*, p. 176.4–7.

of the five degrees of being it becomes clear that not all
propositions within the Qur'ān and the ḥadīṯ can be inter-
preted in the above manner. Both al-Buḫārī and Muslim report
in their collections the following prophetic ḥadīṯ:

The paradise (al-ǧanna) *was presented to me on the surface of this wall.*[93]

Al-Ġazālī uses this example in order to explain that the
underlying being of paradise cannot be a ''real and firm'' one.
It is easy to prove that the paradise is much bigger than the
surface of whatever wall Muḥammad saw it on. The word
ǧanna refers to a being that cannot be a ''real'' one, but it must
be a being that is only perceived through the Prophet's
sense perception. This being is a ''sensible being'' (*al-wuǧūd
al-ḥissī*).

– Third degree of being, the imaginative being (*al-wuǧūd
al-ḫayālī*): In the following ḥadīṯ, the being has not been
presented by the senses:

It was as if I saw Yūnus ibn Mattā in two coats of cotton, how he is ready
to receive orders and how the mountain responds to him. And God
exalted says to him, 'at your service, Yūnus (*labbayka yā Yūnus*)!'[94]

The sentence begins with ''it was as if . . .'' which indicates
that all this happened nowhere else than in the Prophet's
imagination. The corresponding being of Yūnus is therefore an
imaginative being ''*al-wuǧūd al-ḫayālī*'' within the Prophet's
faculty of imagination.

– The fourth degree of being is the conceptual, or intellectual
one (*al-wuǧūd al-ʿaqlī*). The prime example here is God's hand.
According to al-Ġazālī, it can be demonstrated (*ʿan burhān*)
that God does not have a hand. The existence of such a hand as
a real and firm being, as a perceived being, and as an imagined
being must therefore be denied. If the being of such a hand can
somehow be acknowledged, this can only be done as a concep-
tual being: the hand exists in order to represent the concept of
giving and taking. Al-Ġazālī defines ''hand'' as being ''the
capacity to give and take.''[95] This is the essence (*ḥaqīqa*) of
''hand.'' God also has the capacity to give and take and this

[93] *Ibid.*, p. 179.20.
[94] *Ibid.*, p. 180.6–7.
[95] *Ibid.*, pp. 178.1–7, 180–3.

correspondence within the field of essential attributes leads to the identification of the word ''hand,'' meaning human hand, with God's capacity to give and take.

– Finally, the fifth and last degree of being is the so-called ''similar being'' (*al-wuǧūd al-šibhī*). While in the case of the ''conceptual being'' a correspondence in the field of essential attributes leads to the fact that one being stands for the other, here, the correspondence is in the field of accidental attributes. An example is anger. God is sometimes referred to as being angry. The description of the essence of anger is ''that which brings blood to boil because one seeks satisfaction.'' God cannot be associated with these emotions and is high exalted above this. However, God's anger is similar to human anger in the sense that it aims to punish. The aim to punish is not an essential quality of anger, but only an accidental one, and this is the only level on which the two beings can be connected. The word ''God's anger'' in the revelation refers on the level of a ''similar being'' to God's will to punish.[96]

The following chart shall clarify al-Ġazālī's distinction of the five degrees of being.

The criteria for the distinction into five degrees of being originate in the philosophical theory of the inner senses – the *ḥawāss bāṭina*. Following in the footsteps of Aristotelian and late antique philosophy, the *falāsifa* divided the human apparatus of post-sensationary perception into several psychological faculties.[97] The *ḥiss* (or: *ḥiss muštarak*) is the place that collects the perceptions of the five ''outward'' senses, the *ḫayāl* is the place where the multitude of single perceptions would be put together to one object. This would be the faculty of imagination. Conceptual knowledge about the definitions of things and their substance is located in the *'aql*. This three-fold distinction of the inner senses is the most basic in Arabic

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[96] *Ibid*., p. 183.5–13.
[97] Davidson, *Alfarabi, Avicenna, and Averroes on Intellect*, pp. 98ff.; Harry A. Wolfson, ''The internal senses in Latin, Arabic and Hebrew philosophical texts,'' in I. Twersky and G.H. Williams (eds.), *Studies in the History of Philosophy and Religion* (Cambridge (Mass.), 1973–77), vol. 1, pp. 250–314; Gotthard Strohmaier, ''Avicennas Lehre von den 'Inneren Sinnen' und ihre Voraussetzungen bei Galen,'' in P. Manuli and M. Vegetti (eds.), *Le opere psicologiche di Galeno* (Naples, 1988), pp. 231–42.
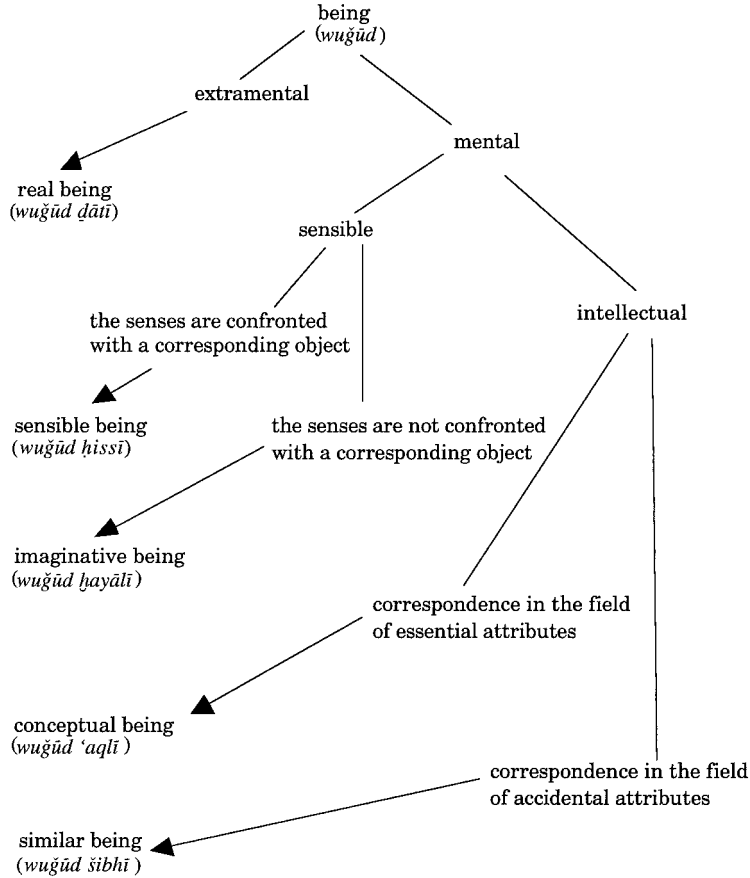
Fig. 1.

peripatetic philosophy, and al-Ġazālī applies it in various passages of his *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn*.[98]

The division of the *Fayṣal al-tafriqa* is most close to the Avicennan treatise on the evidence for prophecies *Fī iṯbāt al-nubuwwāt*. Here, entities are divided into three kinds of

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[98] Cf., for instance, al-Ġazālī, *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn*, IV, 219. 4th line from bottom (XXXV, 2); cf. also III, 18.11. (XXI, 9, 1) where the world and its beings are described in three categories (1.) the "real being" (*wuǧūd ḥaqīqī*), imaginative (*ḫayālī*) being, and conceptual/intellectual (*ʿaqlī*) being. Jules Janssens in a recent article analyzes how al-Ġazālī's works show different applications of Ibn Sīnā's different models to explain the inner senses based on different books by Ibn Sīnā, "Al-Ghazzālī and his use of Avicennian texts," in Miklós Maróth (ed.), *Problems in Arabic Philosophy* (Budapest, 2003), pp. 37–49.

worlds (*'awālim*): *'ālam ḥissī*, *'ālam ḥayālī*, and *'ālam 'aqlī*.[99] This division is applied in a key passage of the short treatise that interprets a *ḥadīt*, which talks about the ways that lead to human salvation.[100] But al-Ġazālī's division of entities in the *Fayṣal* may well be inspired by other passages in the Avicennan corpus, most notably chapter 4 in the psychological part of *al-Šifā'* or even by Ibn Sīnā's medical writings. Ibn Sīnā's concept of mental faculties and their place in the human brain includes a general division into sense perception, image-bearing capacities, and conceptual capacities that is manifest on different levels of human faculties.[101] Al-Ġazālī reproduces the various Avicennan divisions in the 18th discussion of the *Tahāfut al-falāsifa*.[102] The existence of inner faculties is not called into question during the course of this discussion.[103] Al-Ġazālī rather criticizes the *falāsifa*'s claim to know their doctrine of the soul apodictically and through reason *alone*.[104]

In one of the smaller works attributed to al-Ġazālī, the *Ma'āriǧ al-quds fī madāriǧ ma'rifat al-nafs*, the author develops a division of the soul that follows most closely the divisions of Ibn Sīnā into sense perception (*ḥiss*), imagination (*ḥayāl*), and intellect (*'aql*).[105] In this book, the notions of both the soul

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[99] Ibn Sīnā (?), *Fī itbāt al-nubuwwāt*, p. 58.5f.

[100] *Ibid.*, p. 55.4ff.

[101] Cf. Gutas, "Intuition and thinking," pp. 8ff.

[102] Al-Ġazālī, *Tahāfut al-falāsifa*, pp. 298–303.

[103] *Ibid.*, pp. 303.11–304.5.

[104] The 18th discussion of al-Ġazālī's *Tahāfut al-falāsifa* has recently been analyzed in Timothy J. Gianotti, *Al-Ghazālī's Unspeakable Doctrine of the Soul. Unveiling the Esoteric Psychology and Eschatology of the* Iḥyā' (Leiden, 2001), pp. 95–103. Gianotti adequately summarizes al-Ġazālī's criticism saying "his objection is not with the philosophers' doctrine of the soul *per se*; rather with their assertation of how their knowledge is won" (*ibid.*, p. 101). An important aspect of al-Ġazālī's criticism is, however, overlooked. It is generally true that if the *falāsifa* present a doctrine that violates the outward meaning (*ẓāhir*) of revelation, the *falāsifa*'s incapacity to prove demonstrably a certain element of their doctrine renders this element false in light of the authority of revelation. Here, however, the case is different since al-Ġazālī concedes that nothing in the *falāsifa*'s doctrine of the soul violates *šar'* (*Tahāfut*, p. 303.11f.) The authority of revelation is, however, still at stake. Al-Ġazālī wants to force the *falāsifa* to concede that their doctrine of the soul is not known through reason alone. Such an acknowledgment would destroy their claim that revelation cannot teach anything to those who are familiar with the demonstrative method.

[105] Al-Ġazālī, *Ma'āriǧ al-quds fī madāriǧ ma'rifat al-nafs*, ed. Maḥmūd Bīǧū (Damascus, 1413/1992), pp. 56f. This division includes a fourth category, *wahm* (estimation), between *ḥayāl* and *'aql*. I am grateful to Hikmatullah Sahib who made much of his unpublished work on the *Ma'āriǧ al-quds* accessible to me.

and prophecy are explained entirely in terms of Avicennan
divisions and terminology. Indeed, the text responds to many of
the problems that are created by al-Ġazālī's treatment of Ibn
Sīnā's psychology in the *Tahāfut*.[106] The fact that this text is
not only very close to Ibn Sīnā's doctrine of the soul but also
includes large parts of almost verbatim quotations from Ibn
Sīnā's *De anima* led to doubts concerning al-Ġazālī's author-
ship of this book.[107] Al-Ġazālī, however, has never been shy to
borrow from other people's writings, and the fact that the
author of this text copied much of his book from Ibn Sīnā does
not at all exclude al-Ġazālī from being this author.[108]

   Al-Ġazālī nevertheless makes changes in Ibn Sīnā's model of
interpretation, since he adds the entities of a ''real and firm
being'' as the very first one. Similarly, the fifth category of
wuğūd šibhī is not mentioned in this context by Ibn Sīnā. But
the distinction between *wuğūd 'aqlī* and *wuğūd šibhī* is equally
inspired by the writings of the *šayḫ al-ra'īs*. In the third and
the seventh book of his *Metaphysics*, Ibn Sīnā deals with
the different categories of union, and here he distinguishes
between a union ''that is based on substance'' and one that is
''based on accident.''[109] In his textbook of the philosophical
teachings, the *Maqāṣid al-falāsifa*, al-Ġazālī reproduces this
distinction and connects it with metaphors (*mağāz*). He further
divides the union ''per accident'' and refers to the union that is

[106] Most of these questions are put together by Timothy J. Gianotti in his
Al-Ghazālī's Unspeakable Doctrine of the Soul, pp. 115f., who is unaware of the
existence of the *Ma'āriğ al-quds*.

[107] Voiced first by Georges Vajda, ''Le ma'āriğ al-quds fī madāriğ ma'rifat
al-nafs attribué à al-Ġazālī et les écrits d'Ibn Sīnā,'' *Israel Oriental Studies*, 2
(1972): 470–3 and seconded by Jules Janssens, ''Le Ma'ārij al-quds fī madārij
ma'rifat al-nafs: un élément-clé pour le dossier Ghazzâlî-Ibn Sînâ?'', *Archives
d'histoire doctrinale et litteraire du Moyen Âge*, 60 (1993): 27–55.

[108] Cf. Jules Janssens' forthcoming article ''Al-Ghazzālī and his use of
Avicennian texts'' where he renounced his earlier view that this book is not
written by al-Ġazālī and counts it now amongst the writings of al-Ġazālī. The
author was a highly original thinker whose ideas are quite complex, and the
words of Georges Vajda, ''le *Ma'āriğ* mériterait une étude d'ensemble'' are still
valid. A comparison between Ibn Sīnā's psychology and that of al-Ġazālī which
includes the *Ma'āriğ al-quds* has been attempted by Ğamāl Rağab Sīdbī,
Naẓariyyat al-nafs bayna Ibn Sīnā wa-al-Ġazālī (Cairo, 2000) and Muḥammad
Ḥusaynī Abū Sa'da, *al-Aṯār al-sīnāwiyya fī maḏhab al-Ġazālī fī al-nafs
al-insāniyya* (Cairo, 1991).

[109] Ibn Sīnā, *al-Šifā', al-Ilāhiyyāt*, I, 97.4–152; II, 303.15–304.4; cf. *id.*, *Kitāb
al-Nağāt*, p. 99.

based on the identical quality (*kayfiyya*) of two things as a union through *mušābaha*.[110]

The most explicit passage in the writings of Ibn Sīnā where the four distinctions that al-Ġazālī uses are all exemplified is probably in Ibn Sīnā's *al-Išārāt wa-al-tanbīhāt*:

Sometimes a thing is perceived (*maḥsūsan*) when it is observed; then it is imagined (*mutaḫayyalan*), when it is absent through the representation of its image (or: form, *ṣūra*) inside; just as Zayd, for example, whom you have seen, but now is absent from you, is imagined by you. And sometimes [the thing] is apprehended intellectually (*maʿqūlan*) when the concept (*maʿnā*) ''man'', for example, which exists also for other people, is formed out of Zayd. When [the thing] is perceived by the senses, it is found covered by things which are foreign to its essence and which, if they had been removed from it, would not effect its essence (*māhiyya*).[111]

IV. THE FUNCTION OF AL-ĠAZĀLĪ'S FIVE DEGREES OF BEING

It is clear that all elements of this theory of representation are inspired by the writings of Ibn Sīnā. Significantly, al-Ġazālī follows the *šayḫ al-ra'īs* not only in points of detail, he also applies an Avicennan ontological model of being (*wuǧūd*). Ašʿarite *kalām* before al-Ġazālī did not consider the mental states of humans as ''beings.'' The classical Ašʿarite position is that being (*wuǧūd*) and equally thing (*šay'*) is every thing that can be affirmed (*matbūt*), and this definition seems to exclude mental states.[112] Al-Ǧuwaynī, however, developed an

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[110] Al-Ġazālī, *Maqāsid al-falāsifa*, part 2, pp. 37–9. My English translation of ''similar being'' has been chosen following the Latin translation of Domenicus Gundissalinus (*Logica et philosophia Algazelis philosophia Algazelis Arabis* [Frankfurt, 1969] = reprint of the Venice, 1506 print, fol. 21*v*) who translates the union through *mušābaha* as *unio per simultudo*.

[111] Ibn Sīnā, *al-Išārāt wa-al-tanbīhāt*, ed. Sulaymān Dunyā, 4 vols. (Cairo, 1960–68), vol. 2, pp. 367f. The passage is translated and discussed by Dag N. Hasse, ''Avicenna on abstraction,'' in Wisnovsky (ed.), *Aspects of Avicenna*, pp. 39–72, at pp. 60f.

[112] Cf. al-Ǧuwaynī's statement in the *Iršād*, p. 174.10f that ''the *ahl al-ḥaqq* agree upon the view that all being (*kull mawǧūd*) can be seen.'' The matter, however, is not that simple, as al-Ǧuwaynī's student al-Anṣārī points out in his *Šarḥ al-Iršād. First Part*, MS Princeton University Library, ELS 634, fols. 160*b*ff. Recent studies have confirmed the complexity of this subject. Cf. Richard M. Frank, ''The non-existent and the possible in classical Ash'arite teaching,'' *Mélanges de l'Institut Dominicain d'Études Orientales*, 24 (2000): 1–37 and *id*., ''The Aš'arite ontology: I. Primary entities,'' *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy*, 9 (1999): 163–231. The ontological positions of *mutakallimūn* and *falāsifa* seem to be less distinct from one another than initially thought and may indeed be

interesting theory of mental states as ''interior speech in the self'' (*al-qawl al-qāʾim bi-al-nafs*).[113] He developed this category in order to solve ontological problems that arose with the assumption of God's speech being eternal. It describes speech that exists in the minds of persons and that is not represented by sounds. Al-Ǧuwaynī never applied his model of mind-speech to the Prophet Muḥammad. It seems that al-Ġazālī's notion of mental ''beings'' that correspond to the propositions of the revelation is a development of this mind-speech concept. In any case, it would be impossible to develop the concept of being that corresponds to revelation without Ibn Sīnā's notion of *wuǧūd* as a denotation of all possible human knowledge. The connection between *ḫabar* and *wuǧūd* is entirely Avicennan.[114]

More important within the scope of this paper is the under-standing of prophecy that this theory of five degrees of being develops. In order to proceed to further assessments, the purpose of this model must first be understood. After the build-up of this quite elaborate theory of representation in chapters 2 to 4 of the *Fayṣal*, al-Ġazālī presents in chapter 5 the purpose of the five-fold division. The aim of the book is to develop a criterion how to distinguish a tolerated interpret-ation (*taʾwīl*) of revelation from one that is considered unbelief and apostasy from Islam. Chapter 5 begins with the sentence:

You should know that everybody who reduces a statement of the lawgiver to one of these degrees is amongst those who believe. *Takḏīb* is the case only when all these meanings are denied and when it is said that the statements (of the lawgiver) have no meaning and are only pure falsehood (*kiḏb*), that the aim behind (such a false statement) is to

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present things as they are not (*talbīs*), or to improve the conditions in the present world (*maṣlaḥat al-dunyā*).[115]

Unbelief and apostasy is the failure to acknowledge that there are beings that correspond to the reports of revelation. ''Corresponds'' in this regard means not only a correspondence of words to objects of the outside world, but also to the Prophet's sensible perceptions, to his imaginations, and to his metaphors either as metaphors based on similarities of essential or of accidental attributes. Unbelief is the case only when all these possibilities are denied and when it is said that some reports of the books of revelation do not correspond to *anything*. In all other cases, jurists should not concern themselves with the alleged apostasy of people who interpret revelation.[116]

Al-Ġazālī should be considered bold for his optimism that his colleagues on the Qāḍī's chairs would really follow him through this quite complicated text and apply this rule in order to identify alleged apostates. We know that al-Ġazālī did not have a positive opinion on the intellectual capacity of his peers in the Islamic sciences, and this rule is in fact not the last word on this subject. In the eighth chapter of the *Fayṣal*, al-Ġazālī presents both a rule of thumb (*waṣiyya*) and a more detailed ''law'' (*qānūn*) that are much more likely to be applied by jurists. The *qānūn* is based on a distinction between core elements of the Muslim creed and less important elements and does indeed explain the legal background of al-Ġazālī own condemnation of the *falāsifa* and the Bāṭinites, something the present rule doesn't even attempt to do.[117] In addition to these already confusing ideas about how to determine *kufr* in Islam, the *Fayṣal* also contains a most interesting theory of how the five degrees of being can be used in order to determine a true interpretation (*ta'wīl*) of revelation from a false one.[118]

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[115] Al-Ġazālī, *Fayṣal*, p. 184.1–4.

[116] *Ibid.*, p. 184.6f.

[117] On al-Ġazālī's criteria of distinguishing unbelief from belief according to the ''fundamental elements of the creed'' (*uṣūl al-ʿaqāʾid*) and his subsequent ''law'' (*qānūn*) cf. *Fayṣal*, pp. 195.6ff. and my *Apostasie und Toleranz*, pp. 304–19.

[118] On this ''law of interpretation'' (*qānūn al-ta'wīl*) which is distinct from the ''law'' referred to in the previous footnote, cf. *Fayṣal*, pp. 187–9 and my *Apostasie und Toleranz*, pp. 333–5. The content of the ''law of interpretation'' is explained earlier in this paper, cf. footnote 61.

V. AL-ĠAZĀLĪ'S CONCEPT OF PROPHECY

The concept of prophecy that al-Ġazālī reveals in the course
of his explanations in the first six chapters of the *Fayṣal
al-tafriqa* regards the Muslim revelation as a literal represen-
tation of objects that are outside of its text. Revelation
here is understood as a text that represents ''being'', which
is outside of language. Al-Ġazālī does not distinguish between
the Qur'ān and the *ḥadīt* and his examples are taken from
both textual sources, although mostly from *ḥadīt*. Since he
aims to clarify problems that arise with people doing
ta'wīl, it is clear that this involves both Qur'ān and the *ḥadīt*
corpus.

The being that is represented in the text of revelation can be
of two different kinds. First, the text represents events that
have happened at the time of the Prophet or before. In this case
the being that the text represents is considered a ''real'' one
(*dātī*), and in all these cases the text must be understood in its
literal sense. But there are a number of revelations that cannot
be understood this way. In these cases, al-Ġazālī assumes that
the text represents sensible or mental impressions of the
Prophet that appeared either in his sensual faculty (*ḥiss*), in
his faculty of imagination (*ḥayāl*), or in his rational faculty
(*'aql*). Here, the text of revelation represents something that
was going on either in the sense perception or in the mind of
the Prophet. It is important to note that al-Ġazālī does not
touch on the subject of the origins of these sensible or mental
impressions.

Al-Ġazālī's approach to the subject of prophecy in the first six
chapters of the *Fayṣal* is in its details as well as its overall
concept of how prophecy can be understood by humans influ-
enced by Avicennan psychology. The five degrees of being stem
from Avicennan writings. Moreover, the perspective to regard
the Muslim revelation as a conglomerate of propositions
(singl. *ḥabar*) and the approach to verify belief (*taṣdīq*) in the
Muslim revelation through reference to the correspondence of
the propositions with their objects is clearly philosophical. If
we further regard the terminology that al-Ġazālī has chosen,
most notably the choice of ''being'' (*wuǧūd*) for the object of a
proposition (*al-muḥbar 'anhu*), we have to admit that almost
everything in the first six chapters of the *Fayṣal al-tafriqa* is
Avicennan.

There are, however, important elements in Ibn Sīnā's teachings on prophecy that al-Ġazālī does not adopt. These elements are, in fact, criticized in some of his earlier writings. Most notably, these are two notions: First, the view that the sensible and mental impressions, which are the object of revelation, are caused by emanations from celestial souls or are the emanations themselves. Al-Ġazālī seems to reject anything connected to the emanationism of the *falāsifa*.[119] Secondly, the view that the metaphors, which are a result of the Prophet's sensible and mental states, are representing things in a way different from what they are (*talbīs*) and are struck only for the educational benefit of the ordinary people is rejected. The latter notion is, in fact, vehemently denied in the *Fayṣal*,[120] and al-Ġazālī's elaborate theory of comparing the propositions of revelation with their objects tries to counter attempts to allow *talbīs* within the text of revelation.[121] Al-Ġazālī maintains that the Muslim revelation presents things exactly as they are or as are they were. ''As they are or were'' means, as they were either

[119] Richard M. Frank, ''Currents and countercurrents,'' in Peter Rifel and Tony Street (eds.), *Islam: Essays on Scripture Thought and Society* (Leiden, 1997), pp. 111–34, p. 127. Al-Ġazālī seems to replace some references to emanation in the teachings of the *falāsifa* with references to a process of revelation (*wahm*) in his own teachings. It needs, of course, to be analyzed what *wahm* really means for al-Ġazālī.

[120] Cf. *supra* footnote 115.

[121] It is also evident that even if al-Ġazālī has been inspired by Ibn Sīnā's ontology, he doesn't follow him fully in the relationship between *ḫabar* and *wuǧūd*. According to Ibn Sīnā it is impossible that there is a *ḫabar* which has no corresponding *wuǧūd* (Ibn Sīnā, *al-Šifā', Ilāhiyyāt*, I, 32.12–14.) Ibn Sīnā's ontology regards something that exists only in the mind of a person (*wuǧūd fī al-ḏihn, ens rationis*, or *Gedankending* as Immanuel Kant put it) as a being just like any other thing outside of the mind (*ibid.*, 34.7f.) Predication is always predication of something, and there is no predication of the absolute non-existence (*al-maʿdūm al-muṭlaq*) without the implication that it does exist (*ibid.*, 32.*ult.*) The possibility that an object doesn't exist, however, is implied in al-Ġazālī's concept of the verification of revelation. The unbelievers deny that there is a being corresponding to the *ḫabar* of the revelation. They imply that the report of the revelation is made up and that nothing corresponds to it. Al-Ġazālī does indeed not accept Ibn Sīnā's ontological assumption that everything that is possible by itself (*mumkin al-wuǧūd*) is also existing (*mawǧūd* or *šay'*). He criticizes this notion in the discussion of the fourth argument for the pre-eternity of the world in the *Tahāfut al-falāsifa*, p. 71.6–13. What is possible is according to al-Ġazālī not already existing. In fact, the change from possibility to actuality is the result of an act of the creator. The predication of possible beings does not already involve a statement on the existence of the objects of predication. This is also the ontology he follows in his *Maqṣad al-asnā*, his *Iqtiṣād*, and other of his works, cf. Frank, *Creation and the Cosmic System*, pp. 53f and 62f.

happening in the past, or happening in the Prophet's sensual, imaginative, or rational faculty. In the *Fayṣal*, al-Ġazālī ends his inquiry exactly at this point and does not push his investigation further into the providence of these ''beings''. This self-restriction must be understood as a reflection of the classical Ašʿarite *bilā kayf*-attitude to questions of prophecy. The reader understands that God created and creates both the events represented in the text of the Muslim revelation as well as the frames of mind of the Prophet that are equally represented in this text. Humans, however, still seem to be unable to understand how these states are created.

VI. CONCLUSION: HOW TO VERIFY THE CLAIMS
OF A PROPHET?

In his monograph on *Prophecy in Islam*, Fazlur Rahman wrote that among all the authors covered in that book al-Ġazālī proved to be the most difficult one, ''if not an outright impossible one to understand in any coherent manner.''[122] Fazlur Rahman based his analysis of al-Ġazālī's views on prophecy on the *Maʿāriǧ al-quds* and was puzzled by the author's strategy to use philosophic doctrines in order to defend what Rahman calls ''orthodox Islam.'' This, according to Rahman, is puzzling since in some of his books al-Ġazālī condemned views of the *falāsifa* on prophecy as unbelief (*kufr*).[123] ''But then follows the chapter on the 'characteristics of prophecy', which is almost word for word borrowed from Avicenna.''[124]

Since al-Ġazālī's authorship of the *Maʿāriǧ al-quds* is still disputed, this paper aims to analyze one of al-Ġazālī undisputed texts and thus show that al-Ġazālī's views on prophecy are heavily influenced by Ibn Sīnā both in detail as well as in the overall concept of how prophecy can be understood by humans. Al-Ġazālī accepts a great deal of the Avicennan teachings on prophecy, mostly the model that the prophet receives the revelation in his inner senses and verbally represents these impression in his speech, the revelation. It is noteworthy that while Ibn Sīnā recognizes only two kinds of impressions on the prophets' inner senses, imagination and conceptual knowledge,

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[122] Rahman, *Prophecy in Islam*, p. 94.
[123] Rahman quotes al-Ġazālī's *Miʿrāǧ al-sālikīn*, which repeats the earlier condemnation of the *Faḍāʾiḥ al-bāṭiniyya* analyzed above.
[124] *Ibid*., p. 98.

al-Ġazālī divides these impressions into four. His division does not follow Ibn Sīnā's two-fold division of imaginative and intellectual revelation in the *De anima*, but follows the theory of the inner senses in philosophical literature and thus involves more divisions.[125]

The elements al-Ġazālī adopts from Ibn Sīnā are all of a kind that he did not condemn in his two books of refutation, the *Tahāfut al-falāsifa* and the *Faḍāʾiḥ al-bāṭiniyya*.[126] There remain, in fact, a number of elements in Ibn Sīnā's teachings on prophecy that al-Ġazālī criticizes in these books and that do not appear in al-Ġazālī's teachings. Al-Ġazālī's usage of Avicennan psychology must be understood as an attempt to enrich Ašʿarite theology on a subject area where it had not developed any specific views. The epistemological self-restriction that is implied in the *bilā kayf* of early Ašʿarite theology causes this theological system to become quite receptive to the incorporation of elements from peripatetic philosophy once the restrictions are lifted. Al-Ġazālī thus introduces an Avicennan psychological explanation of prophecy into Ašʿarite *kalām*. He does so by pushing his inquiry into prophecy further than his predecessors, and he sets new boundaries for the self-imposed restrictions of Ašʿarite epistemology. Al-Ġazālī, however, seems to maintain the *bilā kayf* when it comes to the source of the divine message and how it was communicated to the human soul of the Prophet. Al-Ġazālī's contribution lies in the adaptation of Avicennan ideas by transforming them to accord with his theology.

As a result, we can first of all conclude that the many Avicennan elements in the *Maʿāriǧ al-quds* as well as the great number of textual borrowings from Ibn Sīnā's books within this text are not alien to al-Ġazālī's view on prophecy. Judged from its content, there is no reason to suggest that the *Maʿāriǧ al-quds* is not authored by al-Ġazālī or, if it is indeed a compilation by some of his students', not authorized by him as one of his genuine publications.

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[125] This must not be understood as a departure from Ibn Sīnā. His two-fold division of revelation in imaginative and intellectual should also be regarded as a result of the various divisions of the inner senses (*ḥawāss bāṭina*), cf. Elamrani-Jamal, ''De la multiplicité des modes de prophétie chez Ibn Sīnā,'' pp. 129–36.

[126] And books depending on this like, for instance, *al-Iqtiṣād fī al-iʿtiqād* or *Miʿrāǧ al-sālikīn*.

With the introduction of Avicennan elements comes an important change in the perspective from which prophecy is approached. Unlike his Ašʿarite predecessors, al-Ġazālī explains all events that happened on the human side of the phenomenon of prophecy. The Prophet Muḥammad received knowledge of past and future events as well as sensible images and concepts that all form the foundation of the text. In his *Fayṣal*, al-Ġazālī does not touch on the subject of who actually coined the words of the revealed text. But since the goal of the inquiry is to establish a method to verify Muḥammad's *ṣidq* (his trustworthiness and the truth of his message), it must somehow be assumed that it was the Prophet who formed the words of the revealed text. His capacity to represent correctly his knowledge of past and future events or his mental states is what the unbelievers deny. The believers assume that Muḥammad has expressed the right words that represent the events in past and future or the states of his soul exactly as they were or will be.

This is a novel view of prophecy not only for the Ašʿarite school but for the Muslim theological discourse as a whole. It is caused by the change of perspective in the second chapter of the *Fayṣal*. Al-Ġazālī approaches prophecy no longer from the perspective of God, but from that of the humans who receive it. It is more appropriate to say that al-Ġazālī approaches prophecy from the side of the revealed text. His change of the definition of ''belief'' from ''taṣdīq bi-Allāh'', as in the classical Ašʿarite school, to his ''taṣdīq al-rasūl''[127] leads to a focus on the text of revelation and his author. And while al-Ġazālī may maintain that God is the ultimate author since he first caused the frames of mind of the Prophet and secondly also the words that the Prophet chose to express these frames of mind, al-Ġazālī treats the text of revelation as if it is authored by a human, *i.e.* by Muḥammad.

This change of perspective has significant repercussions on various elements of al-Ġazālī's theology and there remains much work to be done in order to analyze its impact on Ġazalian thinking. One such repercussion is al-Ġazālī's comment on the verification of prophecy in his influential autobiography *al-Munqid min al-ḍalāl*. Here, he openly departs from the classical Ašʿarite view that prophecy is verified only though miracles. But like in his introduction of certain

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[127] Al-Ġazālī, *Fayṣal*, p. 134.9.

elements of Avicennan thought in the Aš'arite theological edifice, al-Ġazālī's rejection of the classical verification of prophecy is not a rejection of the overall Aš'arite model of how to verify prophecy. Al-Ġazālī does not go as far as al-Rāzī, for instance, who states that humans know what is true in terms of theoretical knowledge and what is right in practical knowledge before revelation. Al-Ġazālī holds that humans have the capacity to know what is true only in certain fields of theoretical knowledge. This capacity fails in some fields of theoretical knowledge like, for instance, the question of whether the world is pre-eternal or created in time. It also fails in the whole field of normative practical knowledge, where humans have no impaired judgment of what is right or what is wrong independent of revelation.[128] In his views on the relationship between revelation and the sources of knowledge that are independent from revelation al-Ġazālī is – unlike al-Rāzī and his statement that humans have certain normative practical knowledge, for instance – still deeply rooted in classical Aš'arite epistemology.

According to the *Munqid*, knowledge about the fact that Muḥammad reached the highest levels of prophecy is necessary or immediate knowledge (*'ilm ḍarūrī*). The necessity of this knowledge is, according to al-Ġazālī, not conveyed through prophetic miracles. Necessary knowledge about Muḥammad's prophecy is rather acquired through the experience (*taǧriba*) that Muḥammad said the truth (*ṣadaqa*) in all of his reports.[129] Such experience comes through a comparison of a prophet's deeds and sayings with what is already known to be true. An example is given in the case of medicine and jurisprudence. ''If you know medicine and jurisprudence, it enables you to identify jurists as well as physicians from witnessing their actions (*aḥwāl*) and listening to what they say, even if you haven't witnessed them (in person).''[130] Those who have a thorough insight into the knowledge conveyed in the books of jurisprudence can easily determine that a man like al-Šāfi'ī, for instance, was a jurist. Similarly, those who have a thorough insight into the books of medicine can easily say that a man

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[128] Reinhard, *Before Revelation*, pp. 72f.; Hourani, ''Ghazālī on the ethics of action,'' (= *id.*, *Reason and Tradition in Islamic Ethics*, pp. 135–66); Michael E. Marmura, ''Ghazālī on ethical premises,'' *The Philosophical Forum*, N.S. 1 (1969): 393–403.

[129] Al-Ġazālī, *al-Munqid min al-ḍalāl*, p. 43.18-*ult.*

[130] *Ibid.*, p. 43.12–14.

like Galen was indeed a physician. They compare the deeds
and words of this particular physician and this jurist with
their own theoretical knowledge of the respective field and
judge that they were acting in concordance with this theoreti-
cal knowledge. Such a comparison leads to the necessary
knowledge that al-Šāfiʿī was a jurist and Galen a physician.[131]

The same can be done in the case of the prophet. In a first
step, al-Ġazālī implicitly acknowledges that humans are
endowed with certain knowledge about prophecy that is inde-
pendent from revelation and that precedes the message of the
prophets. This assumption, however, does not violate the
Ašʿarite principle that there is no normative practical knowl-
edge independent from revelation. The kind of knowledge that
al-Ġazālī has in mind is not practical knowledge about what is
right or wrong, but is theoretical knowledge about the effects
of a prophet's work. The experiences that verify prophecy are
described as follows:

If you have understood the meaning of prophecy and spend much time
reflecting on the Qurʾān and the *aḫbār*, you will achieve the necessary
knowledge that Muḥammad is on the highest level of prophecy. This is
supported by the personal experience (*taǧriba*) of what he says about the
ritual duties and the effects they have on the purification of the souls
(lit. hearts, *qulūb*).[132]

Trying out the ritual duties of Islam leads to the realization
that they purify the soul. If al-Šāfiʿī is considered a jurist by
virtue of his skills to make legal judgments and Galen is
considered a physician by virtue of his skills to heal the sick,
then Muḥammad must be considered a prophet by virtue of his
skills to purify souls. While al-Šāfiʿī's claim is verified through
the effectiveness of his work in jurisprudence and Galen's
claim through his effectiveness in medicine, the prophets' claim

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[131] *Ibid.*, p. 43.14–16.
[132] *Ibid.*, p. 43.17–20. Al-Ġazālī uses ''heart'' (*qalb*) synonymous to what in
philosophy is called ''soul.'' Cf., for instance, the second definition of *qalb* in
Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn, III, 3 (XXI, 1), or the same definition in *Maʿāriǧ al-quds*, p. 21.
In his *al-Risāla al-Laduniyya* (in: *al-Quṣūr al-ʿawālī min rasāʾil Imām al-Ghazālī*
[Cairo, 1964], pp. 97–122), p. 101.13–15 al-Ġazālī says that those engaged in Ṣūfism
(*al-mutaṣawwifa*) use ''qalb'' for the substance (*ǧawhar*) that the philosophers
(*al-ḥukamāʾ*) call ''al-nafs al-nāṭiqa.'' MS Berlin, Spr. 1968 (Ahlwardt 3210), fol.
41b probably has the more complete textual version and says that the
mutaṣawwifa call this substance ''sometimes the *qalb* and sometimes the *rūḥ*.''
Three lines later, both texts have: ''*al-qalb* and *al-rūḥ* are for us (*ʿindanā*) names
for *al-nafs al-nāṭiqa*.'' On the usage of *qalb* in the meaning of ''soul'' cf. also
Gianotti, *Al-Ghazālī's Unspeakable Doctrine*, pp. 13, 178.

to prophecy is verified through the effectiveness of their work on the individual souls of the believers. Thus, the body of theoretical knowledge that verifies the prophet's claim is knowledge of the soul, *i.e.* psychology. The prophet's work, his deeds and words, falls into the field of psychology, and it is the theoretical knowledge in psychology, knowledge about the divisions of the soul, the inner senses (*ḥawāss bāṭina*), and their faculties, that the actions of a prophet must be compared to. For the ordinary believer this field may be determined by his personal experience on matters of the soul or by the experience of how reflections on the Qur'ān and the Sunna effect his soul. For scientists like al-Ġazālī, however, this field is defined in terms of Ibn Sīnā's books on the soul. Such an explanation of prophecy in terms of psychology is part of al-Ġazālī's project in the *Fayṣal*. The yardstick for the verification of a prophet lies, therefore, in the judgment whether his deeds and words fulfill the criteria and have the effects that knowledge about the soul (laid down in psychological literature) ascribes to the actions of a true prophet.[133]

Thus correcting his predecessors in the Ašʿarite school, al-Ġazālī teaches that within the field of human knowledge where rationality is able to prove its case independent from revelation there lies a yardstick for distinguishing the true prophet from the impostor, a yardstick that they have simply overlooked. If the actions of the prophet fulfill the requirements set out in the books on the soul, then this fulfillment provides the most conclusive argument for the truth of his mission and the truthfulness of his office. Against the *falāsifa*,

[133] This criterion for verifying the claims of a prophet doesn't seem to be entirely unknown to Ašʿarite scholarship. It seems to be close to the third criterion of al-Ašʿarī reported by Ibn Fūrak (cf. footnote 3). In al-Ġazālī it is clearly influenced by both philosophical literature as well as Ṣūfism. As stated earlier, the statements on prophecy in the psychological part of Ibn Sīnā's *al-Šifāʾ* were understood as explanations of how prophecy must occur, if it occurs (p. 117 of this paper). Much of the philosophical body of literature on prophecy should be understood as setting such standards for the acceptance of a true prophet. Philosophical literature often compares the work of the prophet with the work of the physician. Cf., for instance, al-Fārābī, *Kitāb Taḥṣīl al-saʿāda (The Attainment of Happiness)* (Hayderabad, 1345), pp. 46f., ed. Ǧaʿfar Āl Yāsīn, 2nd ed. (Beirut, 1403/1983), p. 97. An illuminating example of the dispute between *falāsifa* and religious scholars on whether the effect of the prophet's work can be compared to that of the physician is the discussion between one of the authors of the *Rasāʾil Iḫwān al-Ṣafāʾ*, Muḥammad ibn Maʿšar al-Bīstī al-Maqdisī, with a young scholar named al-Ḥarīrī reported by al-Tawḥīdī in *al-Imtāʿ wa-al-muʾānasa*, ed. Aḥmad Amīn and Aḥmad Zayn, 2 vols. (Cairo, 1373/1952), vol. 2, pp. 11ff.

however, al-Ġazālī also firmly maintains that despite the fact that prophecy can be explained in the science of the human soul, there is a surplus of knowledge once true revelation has set in. This excess knowledge exists in fields where demonstrative reasoning fails to yield certainty. These fields are, for instance, normative practical knowledge, *i.e.* judgments about the moral value of an act, and certain questions in the field of theoretical knowledge like, for instance, the afterlife, and knowledge of the beginning of the world. Knowledge of the source of the prophets' revelations also seems to be a point that al-Ġazālī regards as being not accessible to demonstrative knowledge and thus subject to the information one finds in the literal meaning of the Qur'ānic text. In all his explanations of prophecy al-Ġazālī never explicitly touches upon this topic other than maintaining that the ultimate source of revelation is God.[134] While he explains prophecy from the perspective of human psychology, such inquiry always reaches its limits where the human touches the divine.[135]

[134] One of the more explicit passages where al-Ġazālī deals with the source of revelation is in *Maʿāriǧ al-quds*, p. 115.21–22 (translated in Rahman, *Prophecy in Islam*, p. 97) where the revelation is portrayed as coming from spiritual beings (*rūḥāniyyāt*), who are determined to preserve the order of the word and who act according to God's command (*amr*).