

The Nature of Revelation: In Defense of Revelation as the Divine Word from the viewpoint of the Shi‘a Mystic Sayyid Ḥaydar Āmulī

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Abstract

The present article deals with the nature of revelation from Sayyid Ḥaydar Āmulī’s viewpoint through an analytic method. In his works, particularly in his major exegesis of the Quran titled *al-Muḥīṭ al-A‘ẓam*, he uses words and expressions that clearly indicate that he considers Quranic verses (the revelation) to be, by nature, the outcome of a divine act in terms of form and meaning. On several occasions, he explicitly states that Quranic verses are the *Words of Allah* revealed to the Prophet. The Prophet made no modifications in the words of Allah. Our evidence in this article shows that, although the concept of prophetic experience and the propositional model of revelation have been attributed to mystics, Sayyid Ḥaydar, as a mystic, rejects the views of revelation as a prophetic experience or as a propositional revelation. Instead, he considers it as a divine act, rather than an act of the prophet.

Keywords: Sayyid Ḥaydar Āmulī, propositional revelation, speech act revelation, Quran, *al-Muḥīṭ al-a‘ẓam*.

Introduction

Divine religions share the same source, which is revelation, notwithstanding notable differences in the holy books and how their followers perceive revelation. For example, in Christianity, revelation is sometimes presented as an existential manifestation of God’s “existential action,” which God manifests and which finds embodiment in Jesus (Swinburne 2007, 24-26), and sometimes revelation is also the inspiration of truths to a prophet. These truths are sometimes in the form of spiritual propositions and meanings and are sometimes revealed from God to a prophet in a verbal form. Most Christians largely focus on revelation as an existential action. In the Islamic thought, while verses of the Quran give special attention to existential action, and in this vein, consider Jesus the word of God, for example the Quran (4:171), it is mainly focused on revelation as a “verbal action.” Imam ‘Alī (a) introduces

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God as manifested, although people do not perceive Him (Sharīf al-Raḍī 1364 Sh, sermon 147). Āmulī, who sees revelation as a manifestation of God, believes that people have not reached the depth of Imam ‘Alī’s words when he says that God manifested Himself for His servants in His book but they do not see Him. Similarly, Imam al-Ṣādiq (a) states that God manifested Himself in His words but people do not see Him (Majlisī 1403 AH, 89:107; Āmulī 1389 Sh, 5:23). This article addresses how this verbal manifestation emerges in the Holy Prophet (s) according to Āmulī

Accounts of the Nature of Revelation

There are fundamentally different accounts of revelation:

1. On one account, revelation has a human nature where a human being experiences truths within himself in his ascending course of development and perfection and personal mystical experience. In this vein, the Holy Prophet plays the role of an agent in revelation, transmitting his verbal actions to others in a lexical and verbal format. This view ultimately results in the negation of the originality of the revealed revelatory words from God. According to this idea, revelation is produced by the Holy Prophet in terms of form and meaning. Similarly, the Quran is not the miracle of God and is rather the miracle of the Prophet, since God does not actually speak. This description of revelation is known as “prophetic experience.” An advocate of this view is Abdolkarim Soroush (Soroush, 1378 Sh, 171, 173). Clearly, a consequence of this view is lack of an *a priori* plan of the Quran in divine knowledge. Considering that experience is possible for people, therefore, the doctrine of the seal of prophethood is also called into question.

2. On the second view, however, human beings have the capacity for existential perfection in which they can become connected to the divine realm and can comprehend spiritual truths from the divine source, and these formless unspecified truths, which do not possess a verbal form, become specified through the receiver (the prophet) in worldly terms created by him. This view is known as “propositional revelation.” Remarks by scholars like Avicenna seem to be closer to this view as he sees revelation relevant to the imaginative faculty (Qaeminiya, 1381 Sh, 148).

3. According to the third idea, apart from accepting the existential capacity of the receiver and aside from semantic facts, the prophet receives the exact words of revelation in their particular form from the divine source, which is termed as “verbal action revelation” and the person of the prophet does not play the role of an agent in any degree. Rather, his role is that of a receiver. On the verbal revelation view, revelation has stopped after Prophet Muhammad. Thus, Āmulī explains prophethood as divine permanent vicegerency, considering the announcement of the seal of prophethood as eternal as God’s Lordship continues through vicegerency (Āmulī 1383 Sh, 256-57).

I aim to explain Āmulī's view concerning the nature of revelation while employing an analytic approach, although I also survey other views in this regard. However, it is in his Quranic exegesis, *al-Muḥīṭ al-a'zam*, that he delves more into revelation, compared to his other works.

The Quran in Āmulī's View

Āmulī holds that the Quran is a manifestation of God in the form of words, and in the course of his exegesis, he relies on hadiths that imply "verbal action." In what follows, we will mostly be concerned with this issue.

1. The Mystical Meaning of the Quran

Āmulī believes the Qur'an to have an external reality independently of the Prophet's mind, and taking an esoteric approach, he suggests that the secret behind naming the divine book as the "Qur'ān" is that this book encompasses both the divine macrocosm or the Great Book (the created realm, or the book of horizons: *al-kitāb al-āfāqī*) and divine microcosm or the Little Book (the human being, or the book of the souls: *al-kitāb al-anfusī*) (Āmulī 1389 Sh, 2:15). The combination of the two worlds as the secret underlying the Quran as the name of the divine book can be further explained by reference to the extensive signs of the world of horizons (the Great Book) in this world and their diminutive realization in the world of physical bodies.

Types of Revelation

Āmulī believes that revelation is the grace of knowledge and teachings bestowed on the specific intellect (intellects of the prophets and messengers) by the Universal Intellect (Gabriel) (Āmulī 1389 Sh, 5:380), and in a general sense, which includes inspiration (*ilhām*) as well, he divides revelation into two categories:

1. "Manifest revelation" (manifest verbal revelation). This type of revelation occurs in two ways: through an intermediary (Quran 42:52) and directly (Quran 53:10): "Whereat He revealed to His servant whatever He revealed."

2. "Veiled Revelation" (hidden) which refers to inspiration (Āmulī 1389 Sh, 381-82; Āmulī 1424 AH, 453-61). He does not view all instances of revelation in its general sense to be in the same sphere because, in some cases, neither perception nor reason is present, while in others, instinct is dominant. Similarly, in human instances, some occur as a result of one's effort and others as a result of being drawn to it (revelation in its specific sense).

2. Āmulī's Exegetic Principles

Āmulī has founded his exegesis on particular principles, on which he embarks on his exegesis of the Quran.

2.1 The Book is More General than the Quran

Assuming that the Quran is God's word, Āmulī employs an ontological approach in the field of mysticism to present evidence from Quranic verses to show that the Book is more general than the books that are macrocosms and microcosms or legal religious and revealed books. He does not believe that divine books simply refer to the Quran, the Torah or the Gospel; rather, he believes that the macrocosm is also God's book (Āmulī 1389 Sh, 2:15-16).

2.2 The Quran Possesses Layers and Semantic Levels

Drawing on hadiths, Āmulī believes that the Quran has semantic levels and possesses exoteric and esoteric aspects. Accordingly, he even believes that each of its letters has specific limits. He holds that the Quran has a comprehensive truth, from which everyone can benefit (Āmulī 1414 AH, 1:303-20). He cites a hadith from Imam al-Šādiq to the effect that "the book of God includes four truths" which, on his interpretation, points to the comprehensiveness of the Quran and the levels of creation, and given its comprehensiveness, everyone benefits from it (Āmulī 1414 AH, 358-59).

Given the correspondence that he establishes between macrocosmic and microcosmic books, Āmulī believes that just as each of the words and letters of the Quran can be relied upon, and if one word or letter is taken away, it would be rendered incomplete, the macrocosm also has a similar status with respect to the legislative book (Āmulī 1414 AH, 1:364).

2-3 Mystical Experience

Āmulī addresses mystical experiences and their position in the domain of mystical knowledge in various works, noting its due importance in accordance with his mystical inclination. He believes that attaining mystical experience is instrumental in having a better understanding of Quranic truths, particularly in understanding the esoteric interpretation or *ta'wīl* of the verses. Through reflection, he believes in the microcosmic book, holding that its exegesis would result in the essential external manifestation of God, just as a true human being can be observed in a comprehensive manner (Āmulī 1414 AH, 1:242).

However, despite his acknowledgment of mystical experience, its contribution to mystical knowledge, and its role in understanding the semantic levels of Quranic verses, he does not consider revelation a type of mystical experience or the result of a personal experience of the prophet.

2.4 Prophethood, Divine Bestowal, and that Prophets do not need Mystical Experiences

Āmulī suggests that revelation is exclusive to prophets, and prophethood is a gifted perfection from God, rather than a personal experience. Therefore, prophets do not need mystical experiences, and God’s eternal favor on the prophets can be taken as evidence that there is no prophetic experience, because messengership is a divine favor, and from a mystical ontological perspective, it is located in the descending (or creation) arc of existence. Its purpose is to help human beings find God. This divine favor which was present in all nations can be understood very well from the revealed verses; for example: “And there is not a nation but a warner has passed in it” (Quran 35:24).

Prophets do not need way-faring or to strive to have access to metaphysical realities and they have attained God’s favor from the very beginning and observed it, without any mediation. They connect to God regardless of spiritual way-faring or personal experience (Āmulī 1414 AH, 1:257-64). Therefore, the prophets are directly connected to God through His direct grace. Thus, the Holy Prophet said: “I was a prophet while Adam was (still) between water and clay”. Since prophethood and *wilāyah* (mastership) existed for the prophets and *walī* (master) before the creation of human beings and creation, therefore, prophets do not need way-faring or personal experience to receive realities. (Āmulī 1414 AH, 1:269).

The status of the prophets, Imams, and saints is too great to consider them as the attracted (*majdhūb*) to a personal experience, because the perfect perfection-giver (*kāmil-i mukammil*) is too great to be given titles such as spiritual way-farer and spiritually attracted. According to the leader of the mystics, ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib (peace be on him), when the divine prophets and Imams are connected to God, there is no visible difference between the lover and the beloved (Āmulī 1414 AH, 1:266).

3. The Macrocosmic Book and the Quranic Book are both created by God

In the discussion concerning the book (*kitāb*), Āmulī divides them into three types: (1) the macrocosmic book; (2) the microcosmic book (i.e., a human being); and (3) the Quranic book. He then establishes a type of correspondence between them (Āmulī 1389 Sh, 5:379). He believes that there is a necessary and inescapable correspondence and connection between the grand macrocosmic book and small microcosmic book (Āmulī 1389 Sh, 2:399).

The macrocosmic letters of Allah correspond to His Quranic letters, because the Quran has applied “word” to physical entities; for example, *Ṭāhā* and *Yāsīn* which have been used with regards to the Holy Prophet (Ṣadūq 1361

Sh, 22, hadith no. 1). Similarly, Allah's macrocosmic words also correspond with the Quranic words, just as the macrocosmic verses of Allah correspond to His Quranic verses (Āmulī 1414 AH, 1:198).

In his discussion of the correspondence between the Quranic and macrocosmic books, Āmulī believes that the Quranic book, like the macrocosmic book (the word), is God's creation and was revealed from Him. Both the existential (*takwīnī*) and legislative (*tashrī'ī*) books are divine creations and are not creations of Prophet Muhammad's mind and thoughts (Āmulī 1414 AH, 1:399-405).

Āmulī and the Nature of Revelation

Taking into consideration the above issues and principles and by referring to Āmulī's works, we analyze and examine his account of revelation.

1. Revelation as Mystical Experience

Since Āmulī is a great mystic, he has addressed issues of mystical revelation and intuition in different works of his, but he does not offer an explicit account of whether revelation is a matter of "prophetic experience" or is "propositional" (Āmulī 1426 AH, 506). He sometimes uses expressions about the Quran and revelation that might initially seem to refer to experiential or propositional revelation. For example, in the introduction to fifth volume of his *al-Muḥīṭ al-a'zam*, he uses the phrase "revelation of the Quran through the speech of the truthful Prophet" (Āmulī 1389 Sh, 5:9), which implies that the environment and regional language of the Prophet plays a role in the type and kind of revelation. A person unfamiliar with other texts and assertions of his may think of revelation as amounting to propositional revelation or prophetic experience. However, further in the same introduction, there are proofs to corroborate his belief in revelation as a verbal action, rather than a prophetic experience because in them he suggests that "book" means a compilation formed of letters, words, and verses sent down from God. He says that God has made the Quran comprehensive of all heavenly books, which were revealed to prophets such as Jesus, Moses, David, and Abraham (Āmulī 1389 Sh, 5:9). Similarly, the word "*inzāl*" (sending down) also denotes that revelation possess a prior reality in divine knowledge, which was then sent down on the Holy Prophet, rather than being created by the Prophet.

2. Propositional Revelation

Āmulī's discussion about the Quran 4:113 ("and He has taught you what you did not know..."), where he talks about the formation of human sciences, initially seems to imply that he does not make us think of verbal revelation; however, he goes on to use phrases that imply revelation as a "verbal action":

2.1 Human sciences, which are created through a human agent: this is a tangible path that all rational beings traverse. Such knowledge can be attained in two ways: (a) through a factor outside of human beings; (b) through inner thinking.

2.2 Knowledge learned from God: this type of awareness can also be attained in two ways: (a) through revelation, which occurs when a human being's soul reaches essential perfection by purging himself of the impurities of nature such that he can learn from the Universal Soul (intellect) and draws all of its knowledge into himself. In this case, without partaking in the process of learning (*ta'allum*) and thinking (*tafakkur*), all forms are imprinted on his existence. This type of knowledge is known as "revelation."

2.3 Inspirational knowledge, which every soul receives from God to the extent of its capacity. This type of knowledge is known as *al-'ilm al-ladunnī*; that is, divinely inspired knowledge (Āmulī 1414 AH, 1:472-75). However, he goes on to talk in a way that appears to rule out propositional revelation or prophetic experience, as he says that revelation is the heritage of the prophets, the door of which was closed with the missionary revelation to the Holy Prophet. On this account, revelation is not of the category of religious experience, and so, it cannot continue (Āmulī 1414 AH, 1:474).

On the other hand, in his account of "the nature of prophethood (*nubuwwa*)" in a general sense, Āmulī construes it as the reception of truths and acceptance of the soul through the substance of the First Intellect (Gabriel or *Rūh al-Qudus*, i.e., the Holy Spirit). However, he believes that *risāla* (messenger-ship) is the propagation of these teachings to others (Āmulī 1389 Sh, 3:241). Although this remark seems closer to propositional revelation, he does not explain the full nature of revelation here; rather, he observes the totality of prophethood and the capacity of a prophet's heart to receive divine truths.

Similarly, as for the secret behind the challenge that the Quran offers (to bring verses or chapters similar to those of the Quran if one can)—that no one can bring something similar to the Quran—Āmulī suggests that only someone in the Muhammadan position can bring forth the Quran (Āmulī 1389 Sh, 5:25).

Though one can interpret these remarks as referring to propositional revelation, it should be noted, however, that (1) these words do not explicitly denote propositional revelation or prophetic experience, and (2) due to ample evidence elsewhere in his works, these words should also be interpreted as referring to verbal revelation.

In explaining the difference between revelation and inspiration, Āmulī thinks of revelation as an adornment of prophets and as knowledge specific to them, bestowed upon them by the Universal Intellect, and inspiration as the beauty of the Imams and saints, although its source is still the domination of the Universal Intellect. As a consequence, inspiration is of a lower degree than revelation. Āmulī's words here do not explicitly point to verbal revelation.

Therefore, one can construe them as pertaining to propositional revelation as, in explaining the difference between messengership and prophethood, he believes that the nature of prophethood is reception by the soul of the truths of knowledge and intelligibles through the First Intellect, whereas messengership is the communication of those same rational and known received truths. Although these words are not explicit in pointing to prophetic experience and propositional revelation, at first glance, the possibility is not far-fetched and does not seem unlikely (Āmulī 1414 AH, 1:475-76).

Āmulī presents seven premises through which he argues that the Quran was sent down from God and is citable by everyone (Āmulī 1414 AH, 1:363).

The Quranic Book in its Physical Realization in the Descending Arc

In his exegesis of the Quran 35:32, Āmulī suggests that the Quran has a physical realization, like macrocosmic and microcosmic (Āmulī 1414 AH, 1:276).

However, one must also note that the terms *inzāl* (sending down), *nazzalnā* (we sent down), and the like, as used in in Quranic verses (e.g., Quran 16:89, “We have sent down the Book to you”), are concerned with the Quran being sent down, in the descending arc (of creation) and not the inspiration of the meanings to the Prophet (s), which is the same as the prophetic experience that occurs in the ascending arc (of perfection) as a result of the Prophet’s spiritual journey. Accordingly, these terms are evidence that, according to Āmulī, the Quran is of the category of verbal revelation.

1. Revelation: God’s Speech Act

As pointed out before, although there are few remarks by Āmulī that might initially seem to allude to prophetic experience or propositional revelation, they are nothing compared to his many and explicit words that indicate his belief in revelation as a verbal action, particularly since this small number of expressions also contains evidence that show his belief in verbal revelation.

As for the study of the Qur’an, world, and human beings, he explains the necessity of recognizing the revealed verses, which consist of words. Moreover, he clearly says that God is “the maker of the letters of the Quran.” Therefore, he denies revelation in both forms of “religious experience” and “propositional type,” and given his view that God is the maker of Quranic words, he clearly presents the idea of “verbal action” (Āmulī 1414 AH, 1:247).

2. Is the Role of the Prophet like that of a Honeybee?

Āmulī believes in the correspondence between macrocosmic and microcosmic books, and by doing so, he says regarding the Quran that legislative books are a direct grace of God to prophets, without requiring mediation or a prior cause, as God says to the Holy Prophet: “Allah has sent down to you the Book and

wisdom, and He has taught you what you did not know, and great is Allah's grace upon you" (Quran 4:113). According to Āmulī, the Prophet is not like a honeybee that produces honey instinctively. With this analogy, he argues that the connection of the Prophet to God is that of "grace, manifestation, and instantaneous revelation." By bringing up the issue of gradual revelation, he assigns a physical reality to legislative and macrocosmic books, a reality that is separate from the Prophet's personal experience (Āmulī 1414 AH, 1:258).

In the introduction to his exegesis of the Quranic chapter al-Ḥamd, he suggests that the Quran is a divine action. In his view, the repetition of Basmala (that is, the verse "In the name of Allah, the All-beneficent, the All-merciful") at the beginning of each Quranic chapter to be repetitious and unbecoming, because it is a divine act, and since He is absolutely beautiful, the repetition of Basmala as a "divine act" (God's verbal act), is also beautiful (Āmulī 1389 AH, 5:10).

In his discussion of the Quran 41:30, he similarly characterizes the Quran as God's word. In this vein, he presents the words of Imam 'Alī regarding the Quran where he states: "It is me and those like me from the Prophet's Household (*Ahl al-Bayt*) who can be the voice of the Quran since the Qur'an, as the divine word from cover to cover, cannot speak (Sharīf al-Raḍī 1364 Sh, sermon no. 125). In his explication of the words of Imam 'Alī, Āmulī explicitly says that the Quran is the word of God (Āmulī 1414 AH, 1:343). Citing another part of this sermon, he has already introduced the Quran as the unparalleled divine word (Āmulī 1414 AH, 1:342).

He regards the Quran as a divine command and a reality separate from prophetic experience, and metaphorically, he considers it similar to the instructions and laws issued by a ruler, on which governors and executors of the law can rely (Āmulī 1414 AH, 1:346).

In his consideration of the Hadith of *Thaqalayn* (the two weighty things), he introduces the Quran as the greater weight (Āmulī 1414 AH, 1:356). Accordingly, if the Quran was basically the Prophet's personal experience, what justification is there to leaving the weight (book of God) to people? Because, the "book of God" does not apply to the Prophet's personal experience, and if the verses were formed by the Prophet, the Quran would not be an "independent weight" besides hadiths.

3. How the Quran is Perceived and Received

In his discussion of the Quran 2:37 ("Then Adam received certain words from his Lord..."), Āmulī addresses the Prophet's perception of the Quran. He says that *talaqqā* (reception) in the verse means perception of something in the verbal form. Similarly, in explaining the Quran 27:6 ("Indeed you receive the Quran from One who is all-wise, all-knowing"), he suggests that "reception of words" means to get something from someone else (Āmulī 1389 Sh, 2:275).

This statement is only consistent with verbal action revelation, which is to deliver words to someone else, and not with accounts of revelation as personal and spiritual experience or inspiration of meanings.

He takes the word “book (*kitāb*),” as mentioned in the Quran 6:59 (“... nor anything fresh or withered but it is in a manifest Book”) and the Quran 16:89 (“... We have sent down the Book to you as a clarification of all things...”), to mean that the Quran refers to the written lines between the two covers, whether we explain the book as the “Quran” or the “*al-Lawḥ al-Mahfūz*” (the well-preserved tablet). All the letters and words of the Quran have been sent down from God (Āmulī 1414 AH, 1:482-83).

4. The Apparent and the Hidden: Evidence for Verbal Revelation

Āmulī cites the views of Quranic exegetes about the number of chapters (114), verses (6660), and words (77437) of the Quran, and the like. Given the hadith from the Prophet to the effect that “there is no verse unless it has an apparent and a hidden aspect...” (Majlisī 1403 AH, 92:78), he argues that all Quranic letters and words have been revealed from, and made by, God in particular calculations and measures. This view is only consistent with the view of revelation as “verbal action” (Āmulī 1359 Sh, 2:402).

5. The Disjointed Letters: God’s Direct Verbal Action

In his view of revelation as a “speech Act” or “verbal action,” Āmulī also sees *al-ḥurūf al-muqatta‘a* ‘a (disjointed letters in the Quran) as divine revelation, rich in divine truths and secrets. He believes that if these letters were not full of secrets, God would not have started a Quranic chapter with them. Similarly, in another instance where he addresses the esoteric aspect of Quranic letters, he suggests that each letter has more than seventy meanings. In a similar vein, the verses and chapters of the Quran also possess depths and layers, which is why, the Quranic chapter *al-Ikhlās* is deemed equal to one-third of the Quran (Āmulī 1414 AH, 1:350). Not only Āmulī, but all Quranic exegetes, consider the disjointed letters as God’s words, rather than prophetic speech.

6. The Imams (as) as the Inheritors of the Divine Book

In keeping with the definition that Āmulī as a Shi‘a mystic provides for “book,” he deals with the knowledge of the Imams, whom he regards as the inheritors of the apparent and hidden knowledge of the Prophet. In this regard, he mentions certain hadiths, all of which imply that the Imams possess a special place in relation to the “Book of God,” which is the verbal action of God. According to him, the Quran 35:32 also affirms this inheritance (“Then We made those whom We chose from Our servants heirs to the Book...”) (Āmulī 1414 AH, 1:500-501).

7. Prophethood, Bestowed not Acquired Knowledge

The issue of whether prophethood is essentially something bestowed and favored or something acquirable is relevant to what type of view one espouses regarding the nature of revelation. If revelation is personal experience, then a prophet's ascent to the rank of prophethood is bound to his personal spiritual way-faring. However, if revelation is taken as a propositional or verbal action, then it is bestowed and favored by nature. Āmulī believes that prophethood is bestowed and favored by character; therefore, in his interpretation of sermon one of *Nahj al-Balāgha*, he says the reason why a particular person is chosen as a prophet is his possession of prophetic perfection, which is a divinely gifted grace and favor that God took as a covenant and pledge from the prophets so that they truthfully commit to revelation, protect it, and draw others towards it (Āmulī 1389 Sh, 2:302-304).

8. The Quran, an Inherited, rather than Learned Knowledge

Āmulī divides knowledge into two types: (1) traditionally acquired; and (2) inherited, believing that prophets have both. However, inherited knowledge is more beneficial in his view, while the outcomes of acquired knowledge are sometimes very detrimental to human beings, as the least of its harm is that it prevents human beings from gaining genuine teachings and divine knowledge, which are beneficial for a person in this world and the Hereafter.

Initially, he explains the difference between the terms “inheritance” (*irth*) and “acquisition” (*kasb*) through a discussion of the conventional, terminological, and religious legislative uses of the terms. Based on this, he does not hold that the term “inheritance” is true of something that has been acquired through efforts. Therefore, a scholar who has acquired some knowledge is not known as an “inheritor,” and such scholars are not instances of the Quranic verse “and to make them the heirs” (Quran 28:5). He presents an argument to show the distinction between traditional knowledge and inherited knowledge. The argument, in the form of a syllogism of the first form, is as follows:

This is inherited. (Minor premise)

All that is inherited is not acquired. (Major premise)

Therefore, this is not acquired. (Conclusion)

He concludes that the knowledge possessed by the prophets is unacquired and inherited; indeed, it is a divine favor and grace (Āmulī 1426 AH, 472-506). He believes that diligence and asceticism play no role in inherited knowledge (Āmulī 1426 AH, 508).

9. All Quranic Verses are God's Words

Since the problem of the nature of revelation has not been addressed based on the contemporary categorization (prophetic experience, propositional

revelation, and verbal action), he views Quranic verses in a context that is free of these discussions, suggesting that all Quranic verses are definitely God's verbal actions. While he believing in the Prophet's personal spiritual experiences, he does not see Quranic verses as belonging to the category of mystical experience, which originated in the soul and mind of the Prophet, because he says things that are only consistent with the view that revelation is God's speech act. For example: "as God said"; "He indicated in His invaluable book"; "and this is what God said in His invaluable book"; "it has been said by the command of God"; "for His words; His words; when God said in his right"; "and like His words"; "God also communicated in His honorable book," etc.

At the beginning of *Jāmi' al-asrār*, he refers to the Quran as God's word and speech, seeking to affirm his words through the words of God, the prophets, the Imams, saints, and scholars. Elsewhere he says: "the first rule in citing God's word regarding the reality of *tawhīd* (the uniqueness and oneness of God)" (Āmulī 1426 AH, 256). Similarly, in another instance, he uses the term "word of God" in the same conventional meaning (specific word structure), which he applies to the Prophet. On the other hand, he maintains that God's word (the Quran) and the Prophet's words (hadiths) are distinct from one another (Āmulī 1426 AH, 24).

10. The Difference between the Prophet's Words and God's Words

In his discussion of the soul-body relation, Āmulī believes in the precedence of the soul over the body, and to substantiate this claim, he cites the words of the Prophet and the Quran, implying that the reality of the Quran is separate from the words of the Prophet in that the former was sent down from God. He believes that the Quran has indicated this precedence as in some of its verses. "Verily the Holy Prophet (s) has said: God had created the spirits before the bodies by two thousand years."

And the Quran pronounces that the spirits preceded the bodies in a number of its verses, including: "When your Lord took from the Children of Adam, from their loins, their descendants..." (7:172); "Then We produced him as [yet] another creature. So blessed is Allah, the best of creators!" (23:14)" (Āmulī 1389 Sh, 4:259-60, 278).

11. The Quran: The Prophet's Direct Reception and an Instance of Useful Knowledge

Āmulī classifies knowledge into useful and useless, and then explains two ways of attaining useful knowledge: (1) directly from God, which is known as "revelation, inspiration, and intuition." The following Quranic verses, the words of God, point to this type of knowledge: Quran 96: 3-5; (2) knowledge attained through people who are the mystics, prophets, Imams, saints, and messengers. Quran 3:187 alludes to this type of knowledge (Āmulī 1389 Sh, 4:271-72).

In his discussion of the reason why the Quranic book was revealed and created, he suggests that the reason for this was “cognizance and worship” according to the hadith of the “hidden treasure” (*kanz makhfī*) and Quran 51:56. Moreover, he holds that there are two requirements for a prophet: (1) practical miracles; (2) revelation of a book concerning rulings that regulate the life in this world and the Hereafter. In this part, as in many others, Āmulī sees the Quranic book, which includes letters, words, and verses, as a verbal action, which was sent down from God. Furthermore, in his view, the presence of nouns such as “Satan,” “dog,” “Pharaoh,” and so on in the Quran is evidence of the completeness of the Quran, as stated in Quran 6:59 (Āmulī 1414 AH, 1:351, 364). Āmulī, as a Shiite scholar, regards the Shiite Imams (a) as the exegetes and guardians of God’s revealed book, and in his discussion of Imamate, he believes that it is obligatory for God to appoint an Imam. On his account, the reason for this obligation is the protection of the rulings of Shari‘a (Islamic legislation) and explanation of what was sent down to the Prophet; that is, God’s book (Āmulī 1414 AH, 1:356).

11.1 The Bā’ in the Basmala is a Divine Revelation

In his discussion of the comprehensiveness of the bā’ of the Basmala (the first letter of the Basmala), Āmulī once again emphasizes that the entire Quran is the word of God, suggesting that God revealed 104 books and placed knowledge of one hundred books among those in four of those books: the Torah, the Gospel, Psalms of David, and the Furqan (another title of the Quran). Moreover, God placed the knowledge of all these in the Quran. God has placed all the knowledge of the Qur’an in its details, which is then placed in its disjointed letters, and then God placed all of that knowledge in Sūra al-Fātiḥa (the first Quranic chapter), and finally, He placed all of that in the bā’ of the Basmala. These remarks clearly show that Āmulī believes that all Quranic verses are divine actions, and it is God who has created this capacity for them and sent them down (Āmulī 1389 Sh, 5:17-18).

In “the virtues of the Basmala,” Āmulī holds that the Quran and the Basmala are divine words, noting that what he has stated are virtues that have been mentioned in keeping with the human capacity for the divine word, because divine words are greater than any other virtues (Āmulī 1389 Sh, 5:37).

11.2 The Limitedness of the Number of Letters, Words, and Chapters, Evidence against Prophetic Experience

Āmulī believes that the number of Quranic letters, words, and verses is limited to a specific number that cannot increase. For example, on his count, there are 6600 Quranic verses. The argument proceeds as follows: if revelation was of the category of prophetic experience or propositional, its words and letters

would not be limited to a particular number; rather, over time and depending on the Prophet's personal experiences, they would continuously increase. It was even possible that, with the increase in prophetic experience, the chapters would also grow in number (Āmulī 1389 Sh, 5:80).

11.3 Sura al-Fātiḥa, Direct Revelation

In his interpretation of the attribute “*umm al-kitāb*,” which has been used for the Quranic chapter al- Fātiḥa, Āmulī believes that the Quran as well as other heavenly books were sent down from God, suggesting that the Quranic chapter “al- Fātiḥa” is the source and foundation of the Quran and other revealed books. This is because the books that God has sent down have all been accumulated in this chapter (Āmulī 1389 Sh, 5:47). Therefore, al- Fātiḥa is God's revealed speech, rather than a prophetic experience. It is not merely the perception of a kind of meaning that the Prophet received from the divine source, the words of which were then created by the Prophet.

Āmulī interprets Quran 13:43 as God's words concerning the *wilāya* (mastership) of Imam ‘Ali (a), which were directly revealed from God (Āmulī 1414 AH, 1:483-85). It is obvious that these remarks are only consistent with revelation as a verbal action by God which.

Āmulī cites many Quranic verses in support of his view in various works, and by employing terms like “for God said” and “as God said,” he shows that Quranic verses are words revealed from God. These expressions are explicit in indicating that the Quran is God's verbal action. (For more references in Āmulī's works, see 1414 AH, 1:332, 334, 54; 1389 Sh, 3:316, 511; 1389 Sh, 4:14, 248, 351; 5:102-103; 6:21, 68, 114; 1380 Sh, 20, 134; 1383 Sh, 102, 191).

Conclusion

In this article, I examined the nature of revelation from Sayyid Ḥaydar Āmulī's viewpoint, a scholar in the eighth century AH). I have inferred Āmulī's viewpoint by an *ijtihād* method, and based on my studies of his works, especially his book *al-Muḥīṭ al-a‘ẓam*, and I conclude that, according to Āmulī, the Prophet did not add anything to, or subtract anything from, the words or meanings of Quranic verses. That is, such verses were not made by the mind and language of the Prophet, but were direct words of Allah. Āmulī says: “anyone who reads the Quran should find the greatness of the speaker and know that what he reads is not the words of man” (1389 Sh, 2:319).

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